

MEDIA RELEASE

3,000 year old boat one of the first objects to enter the new Perth Museum after unique conservation treatment

Images available on this [link](#)

Today, one of the highlights of Perth's collection, the 3,000 year old Carpow Logboat, moves into Perth Museum, opening Spring 2024. This new home for one of the oldest public collections in Scotland has been created within the historic fabric of the former City Hall in the centre of Perth.

The Carpow Logboat is one of the first objects to enter the new museum and at 9 metres long is also the largest object going on display. Carved from a single 400-year-old oak tree trunk, it then lay buried in the banks of the River Tay, near Perth, for 3,000 years until it was discovered 22 years ago. It was acquired by Perth & Kinross Council for display and preservation at Perth Museum & Art Gallery, with generous support from the National Fund for Acquisitions. The new displays for Perth Museum have been created by Culture Perth & Kinross, the charitable trust responsible for the delivery and development of the museum, gallery, archive and library, and creative learning in Perth and Kinross.

The logboat is returning to Perth after a year of specialist conservation work at the National Museums Collection Centre in Edinburgh. After 10 years on display at Perth Museum & Art Gallery, the wood had started to 'unroll' and flatten out. National Museums Scotland conservators have undertaken delicate reshaping work and crack repairs to stabilise the ancient structure and adapt the display cradle to ensure the object is preserved for future generations. Specialist electric blankets were used as part of the treatment to warm up the wood before gently bending the fragile structure back to its original shape.

One of the most exciting archaeological discoveries made in Tayside this century, the logboat was first officially reported in 2001 in the mudflats at Carpow during a summer of exceptionally low river levels. An archaeological assessment, led by Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust, established that the protruding wood was a 9m/30ft long logboat.

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The vessel is a rare survival of the Bronze age due to the peaty soil composition of the Perth and Tay Estuary area, a unique environment that preserves ancient organic material that would usually be lost to time. Radiocarbon-dated to around 1,000 BC, the logboat is one of the oldest and best-preserved of its kind in Scotland, giving a tantalising glimpse of the thriving life and advanced technology of the past on Perth's doorstep.

The boat could have been used for a range of purposes, from a cargo craft, fishing vessel, a platform from which to make offerings in the middle of the river, or as a ferry for up to 14 people. The Carpow stretch of the river had several ferry sites as recently as the 19th century, some of them operational since at least the Roman Iron Age. The boat's find-spot was close to one of the busiest of these crossings.

Following its discovery and painstaking excavation in the summer of 2006, the waterlogged boat spent six years undergoing stabilisation of the saturated timbers and controlled drying at the National Museums Collection Centre, originally led by Senior Artefact Conservator Dr Theo Skinner and assisted by Jane Clark and Charles Stable. Charles also undertook the latest conservation work to return the boat to its original shape.

Charles Stable, Artefact Conservator at National Museums Scotland, said: "It's been a privilege to work on this fascinating object, not only when it was discovered, but now in preparation for its redisplay. Although it's large and heavy, it's also very fragile, making the conservation work rather complex. The wood naturally wants to relax and flatten out, so we've had to gently warm it up, making it more pliable and allowing us to reshape it.

"I've become very familiar with the boat over years of working on it and the small details I've noticed are incredible; footrests for the pilot, for example, which really made me think about the people who used it. I look forward to seeing it redisplayed and recontextualised in this exciting new space."

When the logboat returns to public display in 2024, it will be shown alongside some of the other fascinating Bronze Age finds from the river, notably swords and other metalwork that highlight the importance of the River Tay in everyday and ceremonial life.

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Mark Hall, Collections Officer with Culture Perth & Kinross, who has been working with the boat since its discovery, said, "It is a very exciting prospect to think of the boat having undergoing further, innovative, conservation so that it can return to Perth in its best possible shape and be able, once again, to thrill visitors with its rich insights into how people have lived on, in and around the River Tay."

For the first time, these Bronze Age treasures of Perth will be viewed alongside the Stone of Destiny, also known as the Stone of Scone, one of Scotland and the UK's most significant historical objects. Returning to Perthshire for the first time in over 700 years, the Stone will be the centrepiece of the new museum and will be free for all to view.

Conservation and installation of the Carpow Logboat was undertaken by National Museums Scotland and Graciela Ainsworth Sculpture Conservation, funded by donations from Whisky Auctioneer Ltd.

Notes to editors

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About Perth Museum

The new Perth Museum will open its doors in Spring 2024 after a £26.5 million redevelopment project. This world-class cultural and heritage attraction will highlight the fascinating objects and stories that put Perth and Kinross at the centre of Scotland's story.

At its heart will sit the Stone of Destiny, also known as the Stone of Scone, one of Scotland and the UK's most significant historical objects. Returning to Perthshire for the first time in

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over 700 years, the Stone will be the centrepiece of the new Museum and will be free for all to view.

Alongside the stone, the Museum will display Perth & Kinross's Recognised Collections of National Significance as well as iconic loans and exhibitions from the UK and abroad.

The Museum is housed in a heritage Edwardian building that once served as a gathering place hosting everything from markets and concerts to political conferences and wrestling matches. This historic venue has been transformed into a major visitor attraction by award-winning architects Mecanoo. The Museum will also feature a café, shop, learning and event spaces, and a major exhibition programme throughout the year.

Perth Museum is managed in partnership between Perth and Kinross Council and Culture Perth and Kinross, and is supported by £10 million from the UK Government as part of the Tay Cities Region Deal – a £700 million regional investment programme jointly funded by the UK and Scottish governments and regional partners.

perthmuseum.co.uk

About Culture Perth and Kinross

Culture Perth and Kinross is a charitable Trust responsible for the delivery and development of the archive, library, museum and galleries, and creative learning in Perth and Kinross.

As a charity, Culture Perth and Kinross fundraises on an ongoing basis, and donations made are directly reinvested back into the trust. By donating via www.culturepk.org.uk/donate, you would be directly supporting your local libraries, museums and archives in a meaningful way that allows us to do more.

Culture Perth and Kinross operates Perth Art Gallery, Alyth Museum, and the new Perth Museum opening in 2024, as well as libraries and archives across Perth and Kinross. Our vision is to be at the heart of a cultural community that connects people, ideas, knowledge,

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and collections. Our mission is to develop and deliver a range of sector-leading services, public programmes and partnerships which engage a wide and diverse audience in the best of local, national, and international culture.

About National Museums Scotland

National Museums Scotland is one of the leading museum groups in the UK and Europe and it looks after collections of national and international importance. The organisation provides loans, partnerships, research and training in Scotland and internationally. Our individual museums are the National Museum of Scotland, the National Museum of Flight, the National Museum of Rural Life and the National War Museum. The National Museums Collection Centre in Edinburgh houses conservation and research facilities as well as collections not currently on display.

About the National Fund for Acquisitions

The National Fund for Acquisitions, administered with Scottish Government funding by National Museums Scotland, contributes towards the acquisition of objects for the collections of museums, galleries, specialist libraries and archives throughout Scotland. During financial year 2022/23, the NFA made 50 payments totalling £204,129 to 31 organisations, supporting acquisitions with a total purchase value of over £700,000. Find out more about the work of the National Fund for Acquisitions on the National Museums Scotland website: <http://www.nms.ac.uk/about-us/services-and-expertise/national-fund-for-acquisitions/>

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