



Treasure  
Trove

*Protecting our archaeological heritage for the benefit of the nation*

# TREASURE TROVE IN SCOTLAND STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2017 - 2020

*Treasure Trove in Scotland creates a pathway to ensure our archaeological heritage is protected for the benefit of the nation in museum collections across the country. Discoveries of artefacts by the public and archaeologists play an important role in connecting us to the past, helping us to better understand the story of Scotland's people and culture. The Treasure Trove Unit forms a hub within a far-reaching network connecting partners across the heritage sector and public sphere and with the purpose of providing a continuous link from initial discovery to museum allocation. This strategy develops the reach, accessibility, visibility and impact of the Treasure Trove Unit and processes to enhance research and promote knowledge of Scotland's rich and diverse material culture.*

Vision Statement  
Treasure Trove Unit  
January 2017

# *Treasure Trove in Scotland Strategy 2017 - 2020*

## **i. Executive Summary**

**The Vision:** *Treasure Trove in Scotland creates a pathway to ensure our archaeological heritage is protected for the benefit of the nation in museum collections across the country. Discoveries of artefacts by the public and archaeologists play an important role in connecting us to the past, helping us to better understand the story of Scotland's people and culture. The Treasure Trove Unit forms a hub within a far-reaching network connecting partners across the heritage sector and public sphere and with the purpose of providing a continuous link from initial discovery to museum allocation. This strategy develops the reach, accessibility, visibility and impact of the Treasure Trove Unit and processes to enhance research and promote knowledge of Scotland's rich and diverse material culture.*

- The Treasure Trove Unit is the front face of the TT system in Scotland. TTU is funded by the Scottish Government and supports the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer (QLTR). TTU is responsible for facilitating all aspects of the TT system to ensure objects of archaeological significance are protected for the benefit of the nation in museum collections across Scotland, and thus making them accessible for display and research.
- This strategy presents a clear vision to develop the efficiency, reach, accessibility, visibility, and impact of the Treasure Trove Unit in Scotland over the next four years. This strategy reflects the aspirations of partners within the heritage sector, including Historic Environment Scotland's *Archaeology Strategy*, the SMR Forum's, *SHED strategy*, Museum & Galleries Scotland's *Going Further*, and National Museums Scotland's, *Across Scotland: Working to engage and inspire*.
- Building on the success of the TTU since 2011 and the revision of the Code of Practice in 2014, this strategy will focus on aspects of reporting chance finds and excavation assemblages; improving efficiency of internal procedures; digital strategy promoting open information; collaborative partnerships within the heritage sector; research; outreach and engagement programmes; internship and volunteer activities; national and international networking.
- This strategy provides a robust framework to respond to challenges met by TTU, including maintaining high reporting levels; maintaining sustainable working relationships with key stakeholders, both public and professional; potential increases in disclaimed cases due to pressures within the museum sector; increasing work capacity within TTU; ensuring open access to TT data for public and professional dissemination.
- This strategy outlines key priorities in the development of the Unit, which will include improving the efficiency of internal procedures; developing the digital output of TT data; building collaborative partnerships within the heritage sector; and research.
- This strategy benefits all stakeholders by clarifying the role of TTU within the heritage sector. It also highlights the achievements of the TTU and how it fits into a broader heritage network. This strategy provides a clear framework to drive development and innovation within the TTU.

## 1. Context

The Treasure Trove Unit is the front face of the TT system in Scotland. TTU is funded by the Scottish Government and supports the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer (QLTR). TTU is responsible for facilitating all aspects of the TT system providing specialist archaeological expertise regarding material culture and public outreach. TTU is committed to helping public and professional stakeholders navigate TT laws and procedures, creating a pathway to ensure objects of archaeological significance are protected for the benefit of the nation in museum collections across Scotland.

The TTU is based in Edinburgh and occupies offices in the National Museum of Scotland. While independent from NMS, the physical positioning of TTU here allows for valuable access to resources, including research facilities, specialist advice, and collections, and provides an accessible setting for members of the public to report their recent finds.

The TTU is supported by two members of staff, TTU Manager and the TTU Officer. Both staff are experienced archaeologists with specialist training in material culture and heritage management. Staff resources are a key concern within the strategy and approaches to reducing workload, particularly in light of increased reporting, are continually being reviewed. Stream-lining administrative processes and increasing reach through digital media are a first stage in this process.

The primary role of the TTU is to ensure the TT system is managed effectively and efficiently, ensuring high levels of engagement, quality research and the appropriate dissemination of relevant archaeological information. Efficient procedures, high quality research and transparency within the TT process are paramount to ensuring confidence of both public and professional stakeholders. The TT process is governed by the *Code of Practice*, which is continually reviewed to ensure it is effective and relevant to the needs of stakeholders. Annual reports are published each year providing information on reported objects, museum allocation and performance statistics. Minutes for SAFAP meetings and Annual Review meetings are also made available online.

The TTU assesses the significance of all reported chance finds to determine their suitability for claiming as Treasure Trove by conducting research and liaising with other artefact specialists. The TTU also reviews and assesses excavation assemblages reported as organised fieldwork by professional archaeologists.

Maintaining confidence in the TT system remains a key priority of the TTU. Outreach and engagement is essential in encouraging the reporting of archaeological objects to TT and to ensure all stakeholders are informed and engaged with the TT system. While it is a legal responsibility to report archaeological objects, we must continue to encourage reporting and maintain confidence in the TT system. The outreach programme engaged by TTU, including Finds Days, workshops, talks and materials, has been successful in raising awareness of TT in Scotland with a 100% rise in reporting since 2011.

TTU works closely with colleagues within the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), which operates in England and Wales. This close working relationship, particularly with FLOs in the north of England, is valuable and encourages the sharing of information and experience. The TTU is international in its outlook and we work with colleagues across Europe and North America. In recent years TTU has built an extensive network of colleagues in Scandinavia where TT laws and approaches to reporting are directly comparable.

## 2. Background & Purpose

This strategy provides a durable framework to respond to challenges met by the TTU, including maintaining high reporting levels; maintaining sustainable working relationships with key stakeholders, both public and professional; potential increases in disclaimed cases due to pressures within the museum sector; increasing work capacity within the TTU; ensuring open access to TT data for public and professional dissemination.

The strategy will present a clear vision to develop the reach, accessibility, visibility and impact of Treasure Trove in Scotland over the next four years. It will also serve to highlight the successful work of the TTU and will present considered and appropriate approaches to its future development, offering a robust response to external recommendations such as the Royal Society of Edinburgh report (2012)<sup>1</sup>.

The strategy will aim to enhance the visibility of TTU and strengthen its impact within the heritage sector in Scotland. It will meet changes within the heritage sector, reflecting the aspirations of partners within the heritage sector, including Historic Environment Scotland's *Archaeology Strategy*, the SMR Forum's, *SHED strategy*, Museum & Galleries Scotland's, *Going Further*, and National Museums Scotland's, *Across Scotland: Working to engage and inspire*.

## 3. Scope

Building on the success of the TTU since 2011 and the revision of the *Code of Practice* in 2014 this strategy focuses on aspects of reporting chance finds and excavation assemblages; improving efficiency of internal procedures; digital strategy promoting open information; collaborative partnerships within the heritage sector; research; outreach and engagement programmes; internship and volunteer activities; national and international networking.

## 4. Aims

The strategy has identified five aims that provide a clear and sustainable framework to enhance TTU over the next four years:

- i. Improve the efficiency of the Treasure Trove system and procedures within TTU*
- ii. Broaden the reach of Treasure Trove nationally and internationally*
- iii. Widen the accessibility of Treasure Trove data to public and professional stakeholders*
- iv. Increase the visibility of TTU*
- v. Ensure the impact of TTU through high quality research*

## 5. Objectives

The following objectives have been identified to achieve these aims:

### *Improving the efficiency of the Treasure Trove system and procedures within TTU*

- Introduction of a case management system
- Development of the TTU website

### *Broaden the reach of Treasure Trove nationally and internationally*

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<sup>1</sup> While well intentioned the Royal Society of Edinburgh report of 2012 makes unrealistic comparisons to the PAS operating in England and Wales and does not take into account stark differences in population levels of metal detectorists or nature of the archaeological record which is characterised by high concentrations of material culture as a result of continual dense settlement. New research in collaboration with HES and compiled by GUARD Archaeology Ltd has demonstrated low and well spread population levels of metal detectorists.

- Creation of a museum network to support reporting across Scotland
- Developing outreach and engagement programmes to encourage reporting
- National and international collaborative working
- Knowledge transfer through internships and volunteering

*Widen the accessibility of Treasure Trove data to public and professional stakeholders*

- Digital strategy promoting open information
- Improving the sharing of information with the heritage sector

*Increase the visibility of TTU*

- Press and media
- Social media strategy
- Expand website capacity

*Ensure the impact of TTU through high quality research*

- Maintain high quality research of TT material by Unit staff and specialists.
- Publications
- Collaborative working with Universities and other institutions

## **6. Strategic Approaches & Delivery**

The aims and objectives identified are tightly interwoven, therefore to achieve the aims set out it will be necessary to develop a range of specific strategic approaches to ensure focused and sustainable delivery over a four year period. The following section will outline these strategic approaches, providing more detailed information on the objectives outlined above.

### **6.1 Developing and maintaining an efficient TT system**

While it is the legal responsibility of individuals to report any finds of archaeological objects as potential Treasure Trove, it is also the responsibility of TTU to ensure an efficient and high quality service. We must ensure all finders interacting with the TT system enjoy a positive experience based on the sharing of information and recognition of their contribution to our knowledge of the past.

The TT system relies on the responsible actions of the public to report finds of archaeological objects. Therefore it is vital public confidence in the system is maintained with cases being processed, researched and allocated within a reasonable timeframe and to a high standard. Any reduction in reporting of archaeological objects has the potential to have a negative impact on the historic environment of Scotland.

Excavation assemblages are a key output of professional archaeologists from both commercial units and research institutions. Archaeological material recovered through excavation underpins our knowledge of Scotland's past and must be cared for appropriately in museum collections for current and future research. TT must ensure excavation assemblages are efficiently processed and professional stakeholders are informed and engaged with the TT process.

#### ***Case Management System***

TTU aspires to implement a new case management system to replace the current database and internal administrative process. By connecting and processing data more efficiently, the system will have an increased ability to deal with the current caseload and reduce administrative time. This

system will ensure an efficient and sustainable flow of information to finders and other stakeholders.

Increased capacity of the new system will ensure quality of TT data is maintained and adequately archived to improve accessibility for current and future research. It is envisaged the case management system will have the ability to syphon relevant TT data for transfer to the HES heritage database *Canmore* for online professional and public dissemination (see digital strategy for more detail).

### **Website**

The website is the front face of the TTU and is the primary source of information regarding the TT system for members of the public and professional stakeholders. Information must be presented on the website in a clear and approachable format to ensure accessibility to relevant information regarding the TT process. Consistent access to important information such as forms, the Code of Practice, Annual Reports, and minutes of SAFAP meetings are essential in transparency and accountability of the of the TT system. It is crucial in giving the TT system a national presence that supports the range of regional events by providing a permanent resource to support the TTU engagement strategy.

The website is an important tool for engagement providing up to date information on TT outreach events and latest news from the Unit. The website must also represent a reliable source of information relating to encourage reporting and responsible interaction with the archaeological record in the form of guidance notes and other downloadable outreach materials e.g. *Guide to Medieval Artefacts in Scotland*.

The website is a key source of information for researching material culture in Scotland. As will be outlined in the Digital Strategy, open access is a key priority. In collaboration with HES it is envisaged the TTU website will draw TT relevant data from Canmore and host it in a searchable format. This will allow access to an extensive archive of TT cases including images, object details and museum of allocation. (see Digital Strategy and Volunteer Activities).

The website will continue to be developed over a four year period transferring from its current Wordpress format to a Drupal platform ensuring it is sustainable and in line with compliance with Scottish Government standards.

### **Museum support network for reporting**

The deposition of archaeological objects with the Unit for assessment by members of the public is an ongoing challenge, particularly in areas such as Orkney, Shetland, and the Western Isles, etc, which can require additional resources to ensure reach and limited inconvenience to finders. Reporting objects in person is often inconvenient and many opt for insecure methods such as using a postal service. Regular TT finds days are effective (see Outreach strategy) but only to a certain point. Recent research by Ferguson has demonstrated that a system of regional Finds Liaison Officers would not be supported by finder populations or volumes of reported objects<sup>2</sup>. In this light, the challenge of the engagement strategy is to offer a national service where the nature of the archaeology means that insufficient artefacts are found across Scotland to justify a permanent

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<sup>2</sup> See TTU and HES collaborative project report published in 2017 'Assessing the Character and Extent of Hobbyist Metal Detecting in Scotland': <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=3de69b89-5f55-481e-9819-a70c00990d96>

staffed regional presence. A more considered approach is required with the development of a sustainable model which is appropriate to the current context of the heritage sector in Scotland.

Enhancing efficiency of reporting and improving convenience for finders is of key concern. Therefore, in collaboration with the Scottish Museum Federation and NMS National and International Partnerships, the TTU aspire to develop a network of participating museums across Scotland to facilitate a sustainable and secure method for the reporting and transfer of objects to TTU. Finders will have the option to deposit and collect reported objects from museums closer to them, in turn encouraging interaction with local heritage sites. The network will be fully voluntary and will aim to work within a museum's already existing engagement programme. Other benefits of the network will be opportunities for knowledge transfer and collaborative working. It is envisaged that greater collaboration with museums through a support network will reduce the potential of disclaimed TT objects due to no allocation applications being received from museums.

A museum networking project will be scoped early 2017 with an aim to piloting it at the end of 2017/2018.

## 6.2 Digital Strategy

With open information as a key consideration, our digital strategy highlights approaches to improve the accessibility, visibility and sharing of Treasure Trove data for public and professional audiences to enhance research and promote knowledge.

TTU generates significant volumes of high quality data which is recognised to be of national importance within the heritage sector. As a public service TTU has a responsibility to ensure this data is available for current and future research. Therefore improvements must be made for the dissemination of this data in line with the aspirations of open information and sharing of knowledge as outlined in the *SMR Forum's SHED strategy*. Inputting of data into the national heritage database Canmore is a key component in achieving this aspiration.

### ***SMR Forum Data Sharing***

At present TT data is shared via the SMR Forum for dissemination to Local Authority Archaeologists and HER Officers. This is carried out on a 6 monthly basis but the scope of the data is limited. It is envisaged that heritage managers will have easier access to recent TT data either through more efficient case management systems or through links the TT website. Regardless of the method it is essential this data remains open information to ensure changes in the historic environment can be managed effectively by heritage professionals across Scotland.

### ***SURE Partners***

TTU are SURE partners allowing for the direct input of data into Canmore via an external link. Data relating to individual cases are uploaded including object descriptions, images, museum allocation and other relevant archaeological information.

Data entry of TT cases is a time consuming but rewarding task. Volunteers will be recruited to assist in the updating of TT cases into Canmore. Drawing relevant archaeological data from TT cases is a skilled role and will therefore be an opportunity for volunteers to develop experience in dealing with material culture and data entry.

### ***TT Archive Project***

Feeding into the process of inputting data as SURE partners the TTU will continue to develop the TT Archive project with the aspiration to digitise and consolidate the extensive archive of images and documentation, including letters and early outreach material. The majority of this data is uncatalogued and not stored on a suitable format. The aim of the project is therefore to catalogue and digitise the existing archive and make it available for research. The first stage of this project is underway with volunteer students from the University of Glasgow archaeology department. It is expected funding will be required to continue with further phases.

### ***Social media***

Twitter and Facebook are recognised as important outlets to promote TTU activities to a national and international audience, as well as connecting with other similar institutions. It is also an excellent platform to engage with the public and remain approachable and visible. The TTU will continue to post information on TT events and be a source of updated information. Further to outreach activities social media is also an opportunity to build awareness of Scotland's rich and diverse material culture. Therefore posts relating to recently reported and allocated archaeological objects will increase.

### ***Blogs***

Blogs written by TTU staff are an opportunity to showcase significant objects and to highlight their interests and specialist knowledge. Inviting guest bloggers from academia, heritage sector, and encouraging members of the public to participate has the potential to engage audiences with TT in new and diverse ways.

## **6.3 Outreach & Engagement**

Outreach and engagement is an important element in the work of TTU. The role of the TTU is to support members of the public and professional stakeholders helping them navigate through TT laws and processes. While it may be a legal responsibility to report archaeological objects building awareness of the TT system and encouraging reporting underpins the success of Treasure Trove and ensures the protection of significant national heritage. The continuing success of outreach events has resulted in a 100% increase of reported finds since 2011/12. The continuing aim of the TTU is to maintain a consistent presence across Scotland through an annual programme of outreach events in co-ordination with museums, other heritage organisations, regional heritage festivals and initiatives such as DigIt2017. The TTU will continue to broaden the reach of the TT system and engage with other sectors which may come into contact with archaeological material, such as agriculture, forestry, construction, etc.

Engagement with heritage professionals and researchers is also recognised as an important output of TTU to promote the sharing of knowledge and guidance relating to TT processes.

### ***Outreach Materials***

The TT website will remain the key source of information regarding the TT system and procedures. Access to downloaded outreach materials such as the TT leaflet, informative posters and guidance notes will be improved.

The TTU will continue to produce informative posters in the '*Guide to objects in Scotland*' series, including Early Medieval, Romano-British & Roman, and Bronze Age. The posters have played an important role in identifying material some finders may not recognise as potential Treasure Trove. Working with DigIt2017 and the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, TTU is exploring options to publish the posters in other formats to extend their reach as an education tool (see <https://treasuretrovescotland.co.uk/outreach-events/>)

### ***Treasure Trove Finds Days***

Treasure Trove Finds Days are an important part of the TTU outreach programme by encouraging reporting and helping to facilitate opportunities for face to face engagement with members of the public. Finds days are designed to increase visibility of TTU and to provide opportunities for the safe deposition of archaeological finds directly with TTU staff. Taking place across Scotland Finds Days are organised in collaboration with local museums and are normally scheduled to coincide with an already existing event or exhibition to maximise impact.

TTU recognised the need for a regular series of events encourages greater engagement and participation. In collaboration with Glasgow Museums the TTU piloted a series of five TT Finds Days throughout 2015 in the Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow. This was successful in providing a consistent and visible presence outside Edinburgh. The success of the series continued in 2016 and a series of dates have been set for 2017 with additional promotional support from Glasgow Museums. A similar set of regular events will be piloted in other areas of Scotland (see <https://treasuretrovescotland.co.uk/outreach-events/>)

### ***Knowledge Transfer – Workshops***

Since 2013 TTU has been developing a series of workshops for professional and non-professional audiences, some of which have been combined to encourage communication and shared understanding. Workshops are normally organised in collaboration with local museums and in co-ordination with TT Finds Days or talks.

*Non-professional* workshops have three main aims: to promote awareness of TT laws and processes; develop skills in recording and responsible interaction with the archaeological record; and artefact identification skills involving object handling with the TT teaching collection. The majority of audiences consist of hobbyist metal detectorists, but has also included local archaeological societies and groups.

The second non-professional workshop is aimed at archaeological societies engaging in community archaeology involving some form of excavation or interaction with archaeological objects. This workshop highlights areas of the TT system which must be taken into account when conducting fieldwork or community events involving archaeological objects.

Professional workshops are aimed at museum professionals and commercial archaeology units engaging with the Treasure Trove process. The workshops were launched in 2014 to highlight revisions in the Code of Practice, but have also served as a useful platform to inform and discuss issues or concerns. Workshops have continued to be successful with requests from museum services and networks e.g. Highland Museums Forum and AngusAlive. TTU also participates in the National Training Programme Professional workshops and guidance for commercial archaeology units will be developed further with ALGAO and CiFA in Scotland.

### ***Broadening reach to other sectors and potential finders***

TTU has developed close working relationships with key stakeholders, including the hobbyist metal detecting community who are responsible for 95% of chance finds reported by members of the public. While much of our outreach has been geared towards metal detecting it is necessary to ensure our reach is broad and includes others who may interact with the archaeological record. One area of key concern is the agricultural sector, including farming and forestry, and to ensure this sector is informed and reassured by the TT process. Further research is required to scope the position of this sector and gauge their current level of interaction archaeological material and their knowledge of how to deal with it.

## 6.4 Research & Collaborative Working

Our ability to ensure significant archaeological material is preserved for the benefit of the nation is driven by high quality research and the development of specialist knowledge. TTU staff are archaeologists with specialisms in material culture and heritage management. They engage with research networks through collaborative projects, peer reviewed publication, conferences participation, and University teaching.

Maintaining and developing links with other specialists, e.g. curators within NMS, are essential in ensuring the TT system sustains a flexible and inclusive approach to artefact research, allowing for the diverse and complex nature of Scotland's rich material culture to be recognised.

TTU works closely with colleagues in the Portable Antiquities Scheme, in particular Finds Liaison Officers in the northern regions sharing a border with Scotland. We continue to explore new opportunities for partnership working, mutual support, and the sharing of knowledge, particularly in relation to material culture.

### ***Current Research***

In collaboration with HES and GUARD Archaeology, Ltd the TTU have launched a project assessing the extent and character of hobbyist metal detecting in Scotland. The aim of the project has been to gather and analyse quality data on the activities of the metal detecting community, rather than relying on assumption or hearsay. The purpose of the project is to better understand the metal detecting community to encourage responsible and positive interaction with the historic environment, as well as promoting collaborative working and shared understanding. The launch of the report in January 2017 is the first phase of the project and it is envisaged further phases will be developed with external funding with partners including the University of Helsinki, Finland.

TTU contributes to the *North Sea Area Finds Reporting Group*, which includes representation from the PAS in England, Netherlands, Flanders, Denmark and Finland. The aim of the group is to develop approaches to recording and reporting archaeological objects by members of the public, together with sharing knowledge and experience.

### ***Heritage Crime***

The TTU works closely with Police Scotland, HES and UK wide forces and is currently developing key guidance for Scotland on heritage crime issues in concert with these parties. This important work is ongoing.

### ***Knowledge Transfer – internships and volunteers***

Sharing knowledge and skills is a core aim within the heritage sector as a whole. Building partnerships with Universities through internship programmes is an opportunity to share knowledge and develop specialist skills, as well as develop future talent in areas such as material culture studies and heritage management within a workplace environment.

From 2017 the TTU will be developing two postgraduate internship programmes annually, with students drawn from national and international backgrounds. The first internship has been developed in partnership with National Museums Scotland to ensure broad experience of working within a museum environment. The 2017 internship is currently being piloted in association with the University of Glasgow's MLitt in Material Culture and Artefact Studies.

TTU is continually building links with Scandinavia who share similar approaches and legal frameworks with Treasure Trove. Building on the success of past internship placements with

Norway TTU will be developing an internship programme with the University of Oslo in 2017. It is envisaged this programme will be further developed and may include participation from other Scandinavian Universities.

### ***Encouraging research***

The TTU will explore potential partnerships with research institutions to encourage research in TT data and related themes. TTU is in a position to highlight areas of potential research which can be engaged with at undergraduate and postgraduate level. This may include themes in material culture, museum studies, community archaeology and heritage management. It is envisaged research themes will be promoted through the TT website, or via partnership projects.

## **7. Priorities**

Key priorities have been identified within the strategy to ensure the delivery of strategic approaches leading to the continued development and increased impact of the TTU over the next four years. Priorities include:

- Improving the efficiency of internal procedures through the implementation of case management systems and increased access to information through digital media.
- Working towards approaches to open information of TT Data for both public and professional stakeholders.
- Build on the success of current outreach and engagement programme to ensure the TTU has a consistent and visible presence across Scotland.

Continue to build collaborative partnerships with the heritage sector and academia, connecting with both national and international research networks.

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