

ISLAY ARCHAEOLOGY WEEK
10-16 August 2017

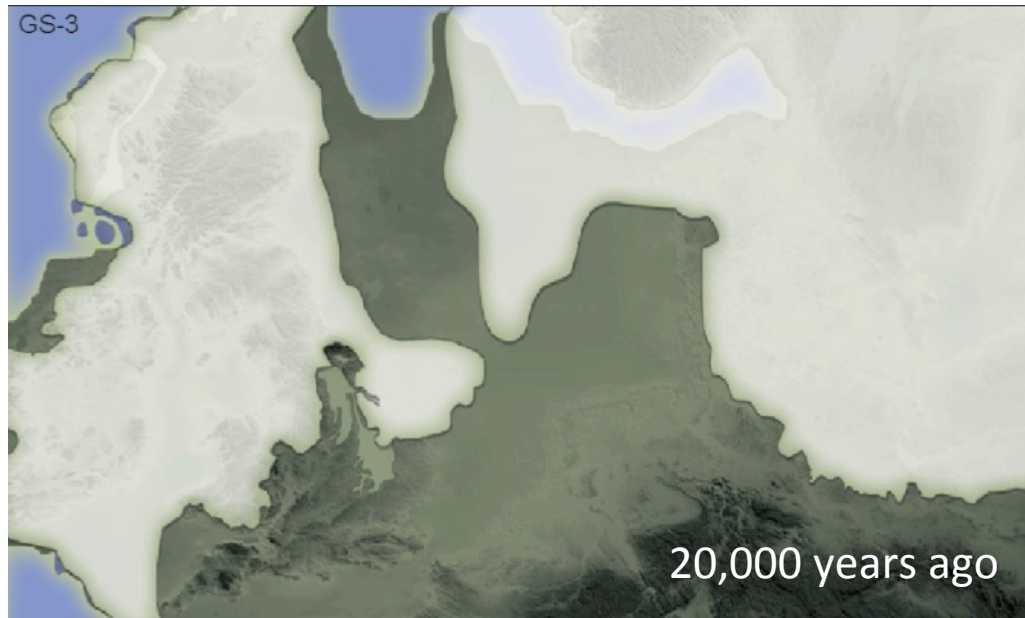
ISLAY HERITAGE
DUALCHAS ÌLE 

Tuesday 15 August, Port Charlotte

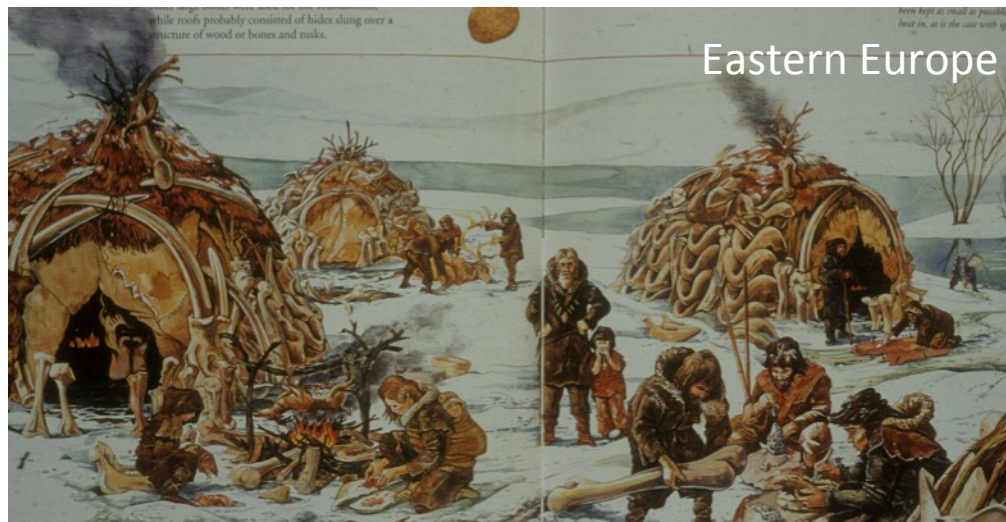
First Footsteps on Islay, 12,000 years ago
Excavations at Rubha Port an t-Seilich

Professor Steven Mithen

Ice age Europe: life on the tundra



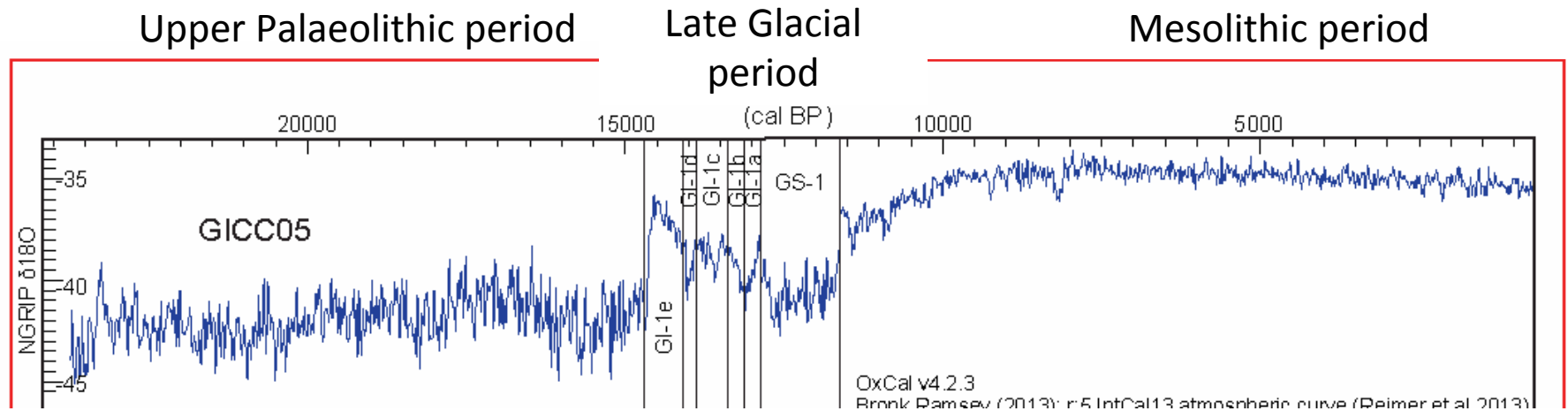
Ice age art from France and



Islay 20,000 years ago



Global warming and the re-colonization of NW Europe



Reindeer hunters across NW Europe using stone points



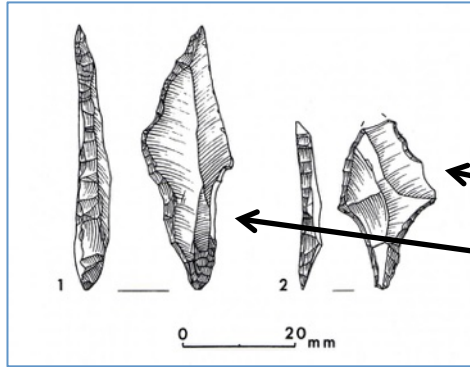
Hamburgian
shouldered points c.
14,000 years ago



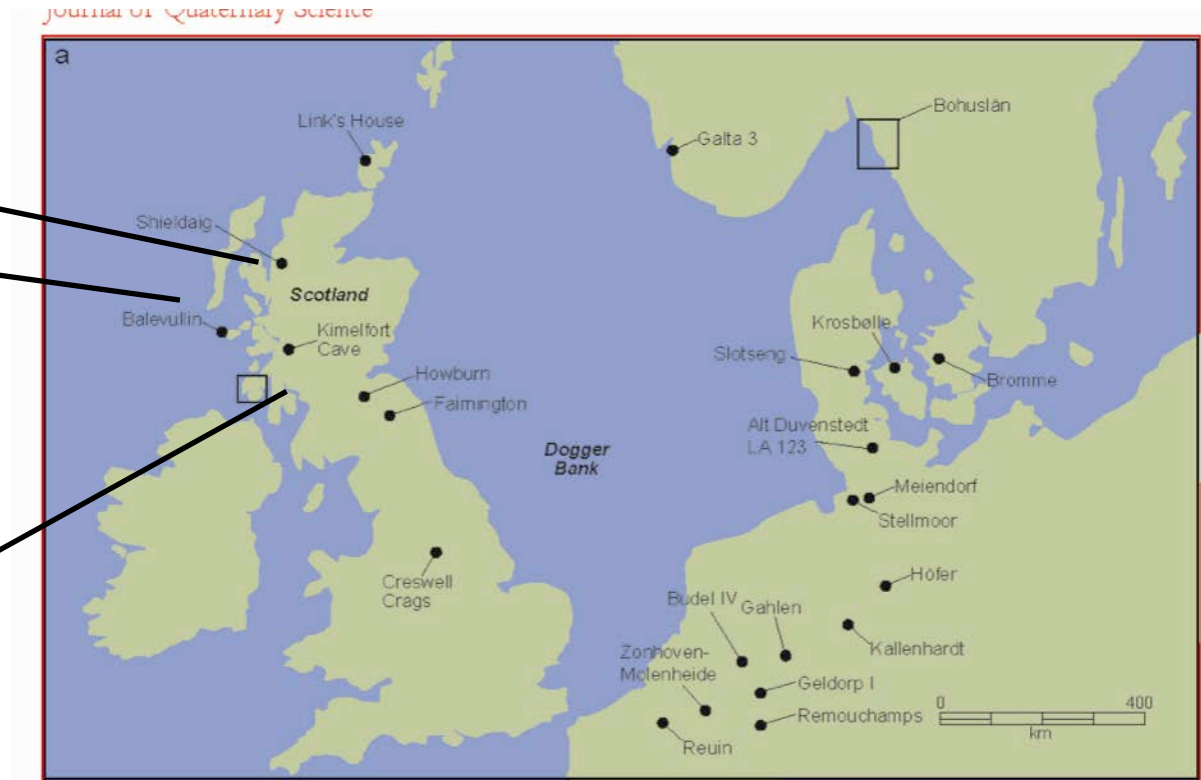
Bromme point,
c. 12,500 years ago

First traces of people in Scotland

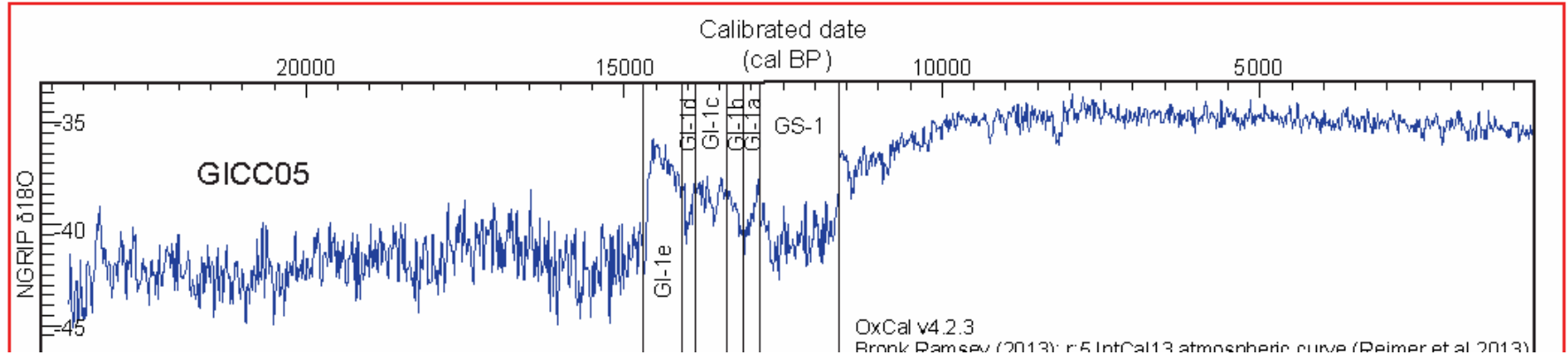
Ahrensburgian-type points from Tiree and Shildaig, 12,500 years ago



Hamburgian-type artefacts from Howburn in South Lanarkshire, 14,500 years old



Islay: a changing landscape



15,000 years ago,
tundra



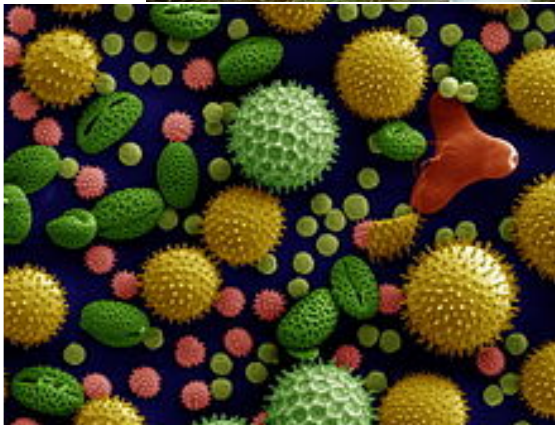
11,600 years ago,
pioneering birch
woodland



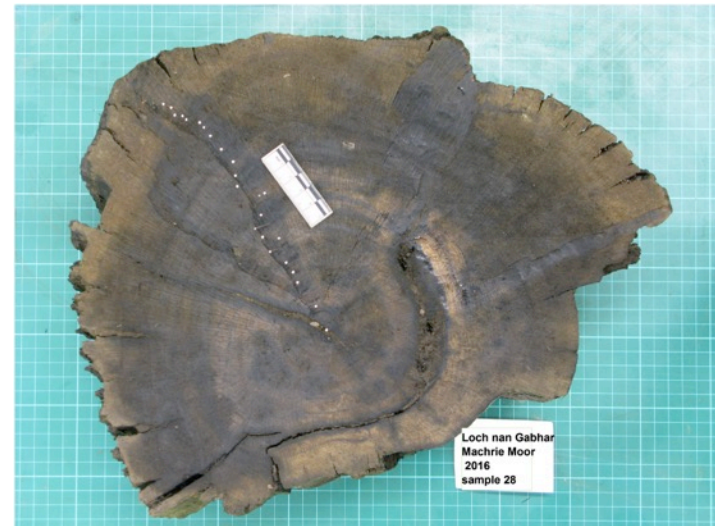
By 8500 BP mixed woodland:
birch, hazel, alder, elm, oak,
rowan,

Reconstructing the vegetation history of Islay

From pollen ...



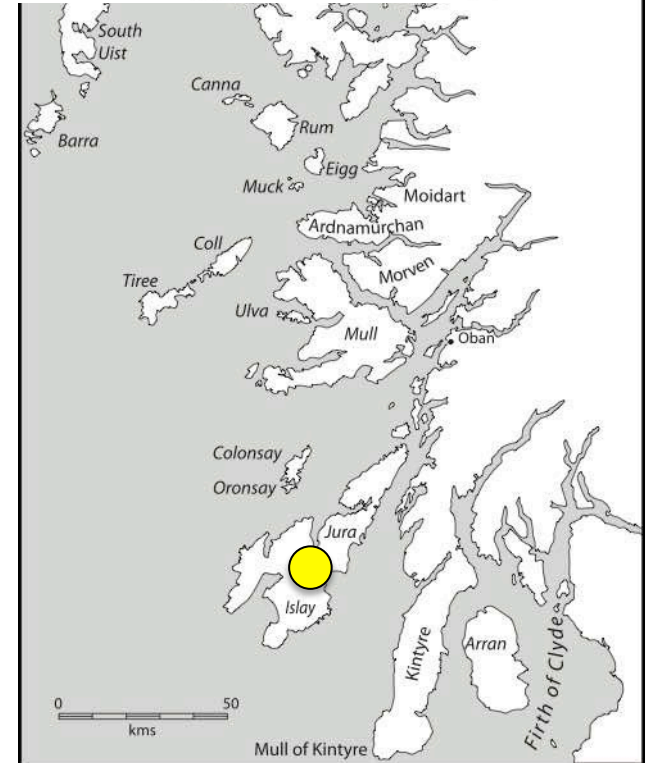
From bog oaks ...



The discovery of prehistoric artefacts at Rubha Port an t-Seilich, 2009-10

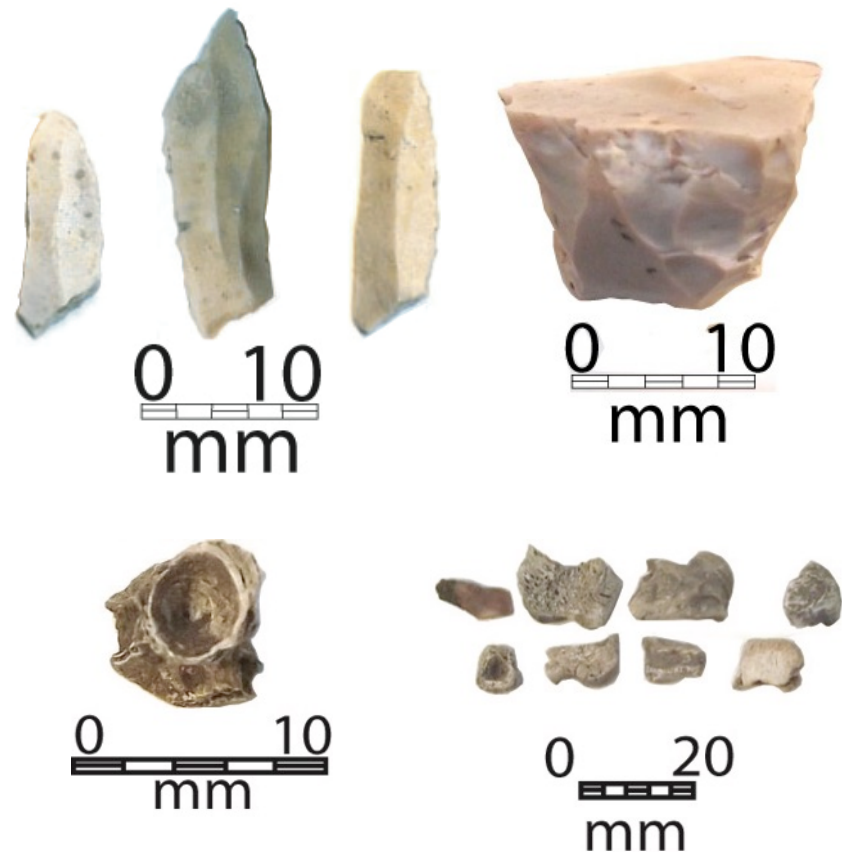


Rubha Port an t-Seilich



2010 investigation at Rubha Port an t-Seilich, 2010

Mesolithic activity, 9,000 – 7000 years ago



Flint pebbles from Islay as a critical raw material



Will Lord at the Islay Show replicating Mesolithic flint pebble technology



The core, blades and debitage from a single pebble



A big pebble ...



... and its products



A less successful flint knapper ...



2013 evaluation at Rubha Port an t-Seilich, 2010



Mesolithic surface with cache of elongated pebble tools



Section through Mesolithic fireplace

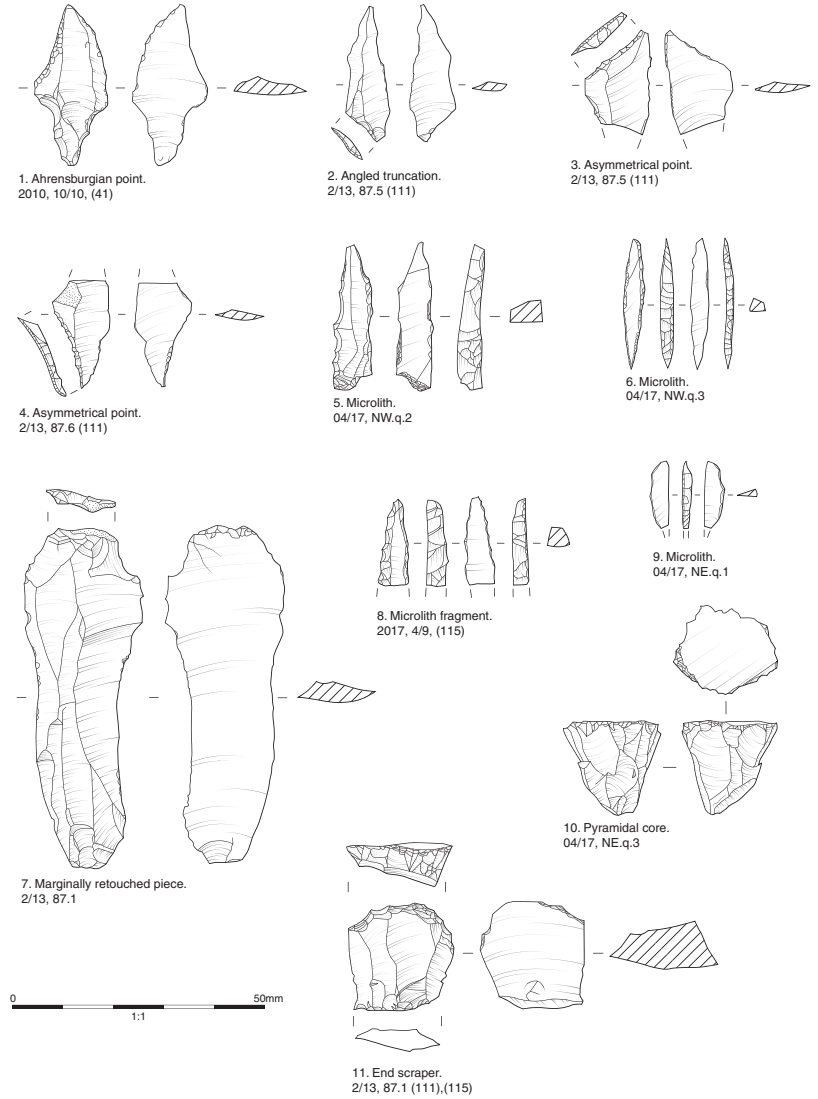


Pre-Mesolithic artefacts

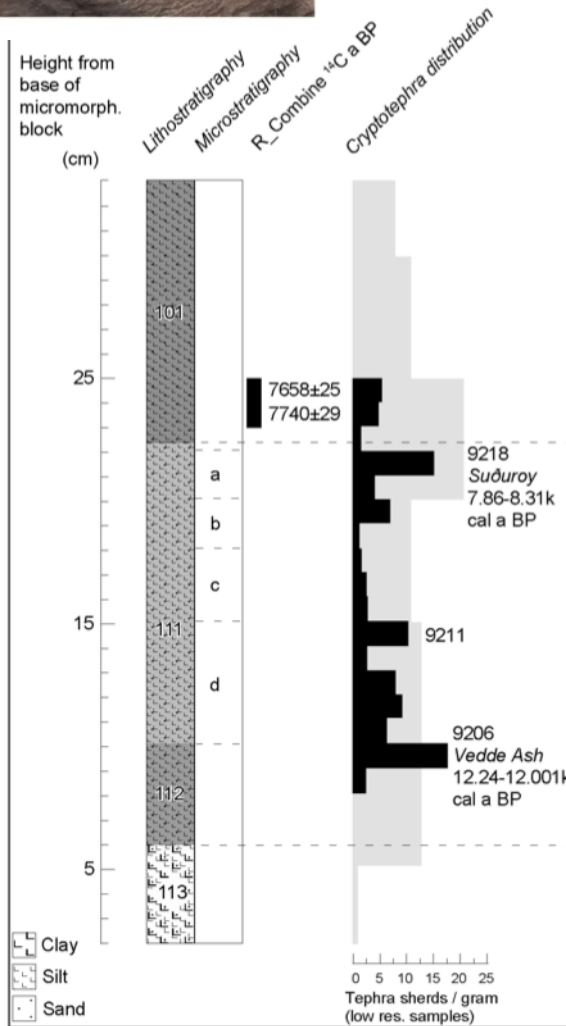
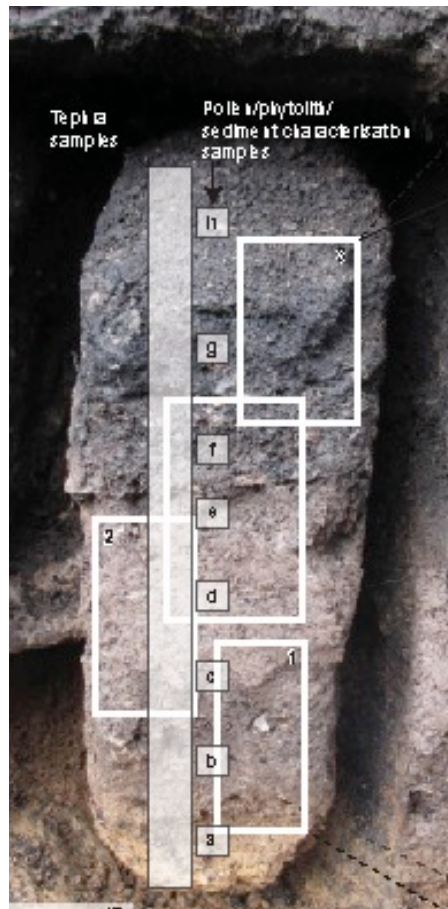
Mesolithic



Ahrensburgian point and other artefacts from RPAS



Dating the artefacts by tephra-chronology



The first people known of Islay were of the Ahrensburgian culture, c.12,000 years ago



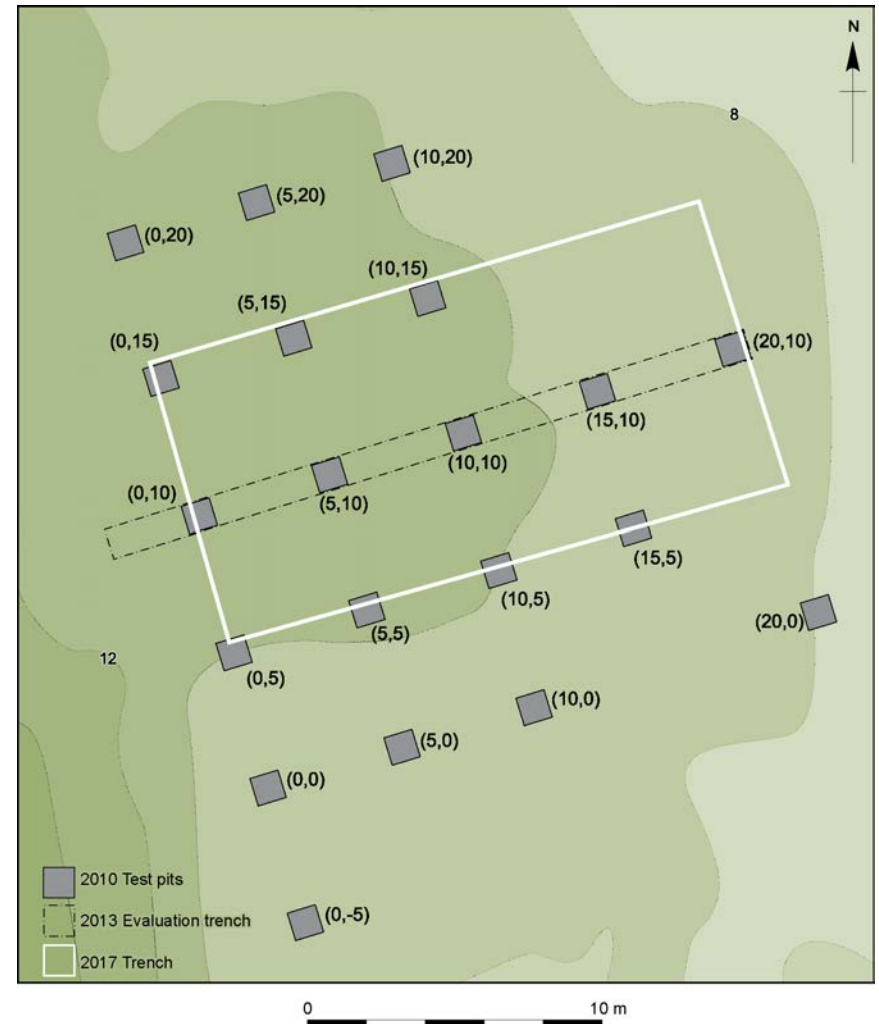
Return to Rubha Port an t-Seilich, Spring 2017



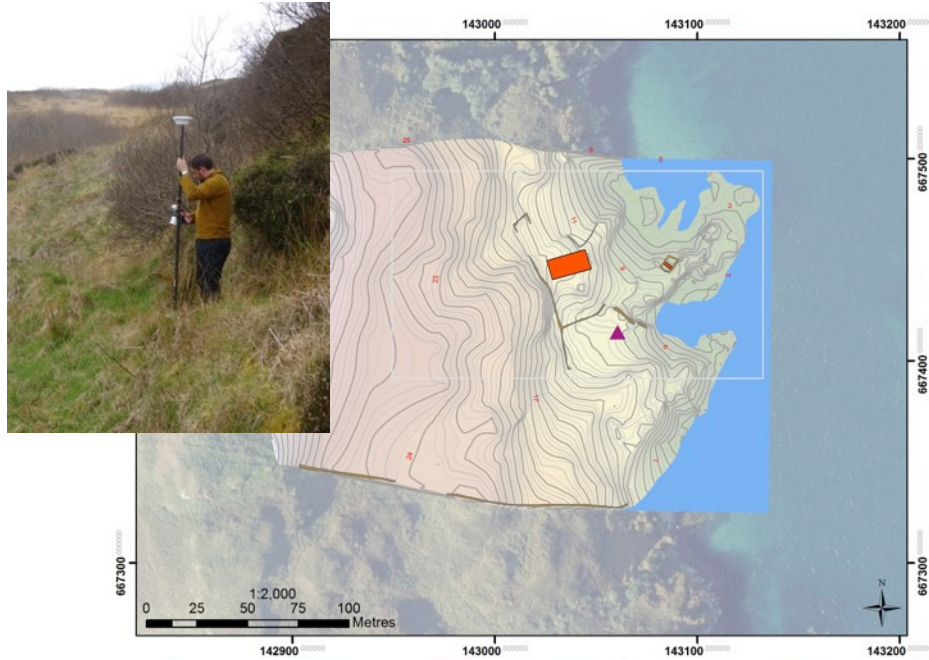
De-turfing



A 10m X 20m trench



Topographic and archaeological survey



'Fisherman's House'



Turf and stone walls



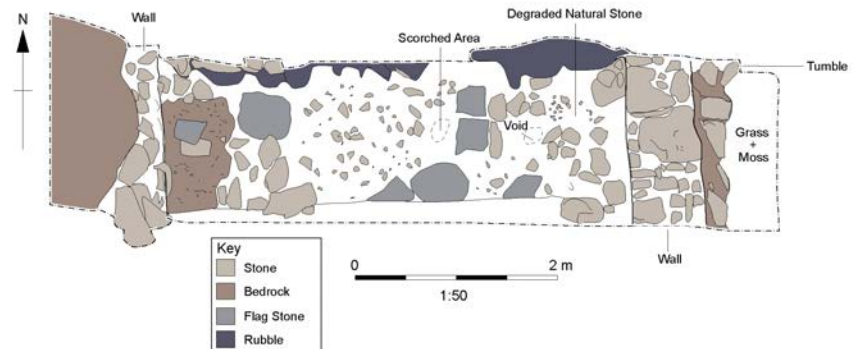
Standing stone



Topographic Survey of Rubha Port an t-Seilich, April 2017

2017 Trenches Fishermans Hut
Walls Standing Stone

Excavation of the Fisherman's House



Pre-Mesolithic artefacts



Excavation – and a piece of Bronze Age (?) pottery



Digging



Digging



Sampling and wet-sieving to recover the smallest artefacts



Washing artefacts and planning



Surface of the Mesolithic settlement



Surface of the Mesolithic settlement



Something like this?





Dr Inger Berg-Hanser, Oslo Museum, Norway



Pebble tools ...and charcoal for radiocarbon dating



Pre-Mesolithic artefacts



Pre-Mesolithic artefacts



Summary

- Rubha Port an t-Seilich is the only known site in Scotland with Late Glacial artefacts 'in situ'
- Its excavation will tell us not only about the prehistory of Islay and Scotland, but also about the process of recolonisation of NW Europe during the end and immediately after the ice age
- Rubha Port an t-Seilich is also one of the most significant Mesolithic sites known in Scotland
- The location was also used in Neolithic, Bronze Age and in Historic periods
- The complete excavation, analysis and interpretation is likely to take up to ten years
- The 2018 excavation will focus on the Mesolithic hearth and seek to expose an area of Late Glacial occupation

THANKS TO ...

- The team
- The Dunlossit Estate
- The University of Reading
- Mr David Bailey who has funded the excavation with a donation to the University of Reading



Please complete an Islay Heritage feed back postcard



ISLAY HERITAGE
DUALCHAS ÌLE

FEEDBACK

Islay Heritage would really appreciate your feedback to help it plan for the community.
Please complete this postcard in the box provided.

Which event did you attend?

- ☐ Islay Show Stone Age exhibition and demonstration | 10 Aug
- ☐ Walk to the Giant's Grave excavation | 11/12/13 Aug
- ☐ Lecture: *Imagining Kildalton* | 14 Aug
- ☐ Lecture: *First footsteps on Islay* | 15 Aug
- ☐ Lecture: *Forgotten lives of the Illeach* | 16 Aug

Are you: A resident of Islay? ☐
A visitor to Islay? ☐

Please circle a number:

How enjoyable did you find the event?
1 2 3 4 5

How informative did you find the event?
1 2 3 4 5

Please provide a comment:

Thank you very much
for your valuable feedback

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ISLAY ARCHAEOLOGY WEEK
10-16 August 2017

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Wednesday 16 August, Bowmore ICCI

Forgotten lives of the Ileach

The archaeology of Iron Age Dun Fhinn and later
settlements of Kintour

Professor Steven Mithen