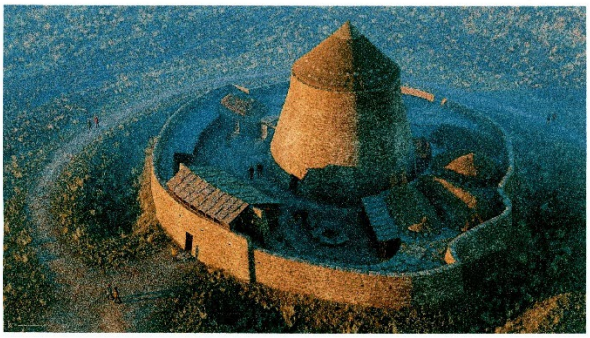
·DORNOCH·
HERITAGE·SOCIETY

Talk by Ken McElroy & Iain Maclean

Tall Towers, Grass Roots



Caithness Broch Project seeks to develop an understanding of these structures...by building one!

Royal Dornoch Golf Club

Thurs Oct 12th 7.30pm

Free entry .....Open to all

HISTORYLINKS
Keeping the Dornoch story Alive

Catalogue No. 2024_014_01

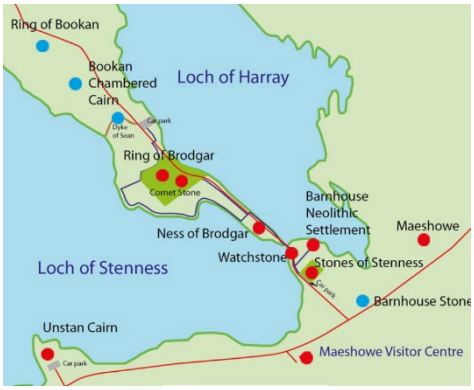
Alongside my colleague Ian McLean, who unfortunately can't be here tonight. Generally, we're a pretty good double act, not quite cannon and ball standard, but we are working our way towards that. But just to point out that it's not just ourselves who are involved in the Caithness Brough project, there's a whole host of people who are behind the project as it's gathered speed and momentum.

We have Robin, Chris, Sarah, Kirsty, who's just become a director actually, based at Edinburgh University and two new recruits, Olivia and Joy, who have joined fairly recently.

So, there's a number of individuals behind the Caithness Brough project. I've always been interested in archaeology and history since a young age, dragged around no doubt by my father to various historical and archaeological sites. I am Scottish, I'm a Scotland rugby fan, especially now that they're okay at rugby. So, I continue this interest in history by volunteering at Wick Heritage Museum. If you've not been to Wick Heritage Museum, you really must go. It's a proper 'Tardis' of history and heritage and I thought this was pretty cool. I thought I was doing a good thing for my community. So I decided to post it on social media and return to archaeology in 2015 when I was lucky enough to get an apprenticeship, or an internship, rather, at Orkney Museum through Museums Gallery Scotland.

I made the first find of 2015, which was quite exciting. A small bit of groove ware pottery, 3,000 or 4,000 years old, from Ness of Brodgar, Orkney. So fortunate enough

to actually participate in some pretty world-renowned archaeological digs. Just as a little point of interest, the year that I moved to Orkney, it was voted the most romantic place in the UK. Coincidence? I don't know, you make your mind up. Most recently, I was able to attend a dig in 2020, actually, of all years, in Kosovo, in a place called Dresnik, in Kosovo which was a Roman urban settlement. Made a lovely broch find, which was quite a fine find for that area, which was very exciting.



That's definitely my high point of archaeology. Ian, at this point, likes to say he's been involved in this project for so long he's lost all his hair. It has had a toll on us. This has been a real labour of love over the last decade, and this is actually our tenth year in operation. It has been a slog, but a mostly enjoyable one.

We're going to talk tonight in a three-part attack in terms of brochs here. We're going to talk about what is a broch, just for the uninitiated. We're then going to talk about how we developed, and then we're going to move on to our ultimate aim, which is to build a broch, if you didn't know.

First of all, what is a broch? And I'd like to point out at this stage, I'm no expert. I do have a degree in archaeology. It does not mean I am an expert in archaeology by any means. So, take everything I say with a pinch of salt. First of all, we are going to step back in time into our time machine. We're going back 2,000 years ago to the British Iron Age. We're going to look at broch origins. I'm sure we're all familiar with what a broch is and what it looks like. Essentially a circular monument, a circular tower. But where did it begin?

Antiquarians from 150, 200 years ago might have argued that the Picts were responsible for it. They were a little bit late with that estimate. Some would have also said that they were a Norwegian introduction or a Norse introduction. Again, false. What we can do is we can trace the lineage of brochs all the way back to the Bronze Age, essentially, when we look at hut circles, circular, largely turf buildings, before progressing into something more monumental with more stonework involved and gradually becoming more and more complex as we became more familiar and more ballsy with their techniques.

Here we can see an example of what a hut circle may have looked like. I can't ever be too sure as to what form they actually took. But you can see that it leaves not very much in terms of a trace in the archaeological record, ditches or perhaps mounds of earth, foundations, post holes, things like that. But from that we get the simple Atlantic roundhouse. This is a term coined by Ian Armit, who is, amongst others, one of the most foremost experts in broch building. So what is a simple Atlantic roundhouse? Well, it's not quite so simple.

These are actually quite monumental, large constructions. Here we can see one of the very first simple Atlantic roundhouses, Bu Broch in Orkney, which is over 2,000 years old. So we're at the cusp of the Bronze Age, moving into the Iron Age, and we can

see that these are large buildings, 5.2 metres thick in terms of the walling, but not an awful lot else.

You'll find some internal divisions, some internal features as well. But then we move into the complex Atlantic roundhouse, and this is more complex, funnily enough. What we'll find here, a great example, is Crosskirk Broch near Thurso, or should I say **was** Crosskirk Broch, because in the 1970s, after being excavated, this really pristine, beautiful example of a broch was bulldozed off a cliff. Perhaps because it was deemed dangerous to visit, people didn't want to be attracted to this broch, but it's a real shame because this is one of the most important brochs in our understanding of brochs. There were features within the walls of this broch. We could see a staircase and a cell, doors with door checks. So, they're beginning to get more confident in their construction techniques. An interesting fact about this broch was that it was excavated largely by the local community, also university students, but also those employed in the Navy, in the radar listening station, which could be found at Crosskirk as well. This was the height of the Cold War, and US servicemen were able to excavate this too. It's one of the few places, or perhaps the only place, where a Navy man had the opportunity to participate in an archaeological dig. Just a little bit of modern history for you there.

Moving from that complex Atlantic roundhouse there are myriad examples, I really only have time to go over one, we move into the kind of eponymous broch tower. This is the kind of broch that you will be familiar with, I am sure. Hands up if you know what this is or shout it out.

Moosa broch. Absolutely, 10 out of 10 imaginary points for you there. This is Moosa broch, probably the finest broch in Shetland. I have not been yet, to my great shame, but I would love to visit. So, what does a broch tower constitute? Well, we've got these famous double walls. So a broch structure is essentially a two-skinned, a two-walled structure, with usually a staircase running through, or a gallery with internal kind of compartments. We have cells and staircases, as previously mentioned with Crosskirk. The staircase is running all the way at least to the first floor, which is usually delineated by a scarcement ledge, which you can see at several brochs, including Carn Leith, which I'm sure many of you have been to. You have the cells as well, things like guard cells, which you find beside the entrance.

They're deemed guard cells, whether they were actually used for security or protection, again we don't know, these are just terms that we apply, because it makes sense to us. You have to remember this is 2,000 years ago, and we do not know really what society might have been like. But you can get numerous cells, you can have more than one cell, Moosa has three cells built into the walls, which are again really thick walls, five metres thick, so they're able to do this.

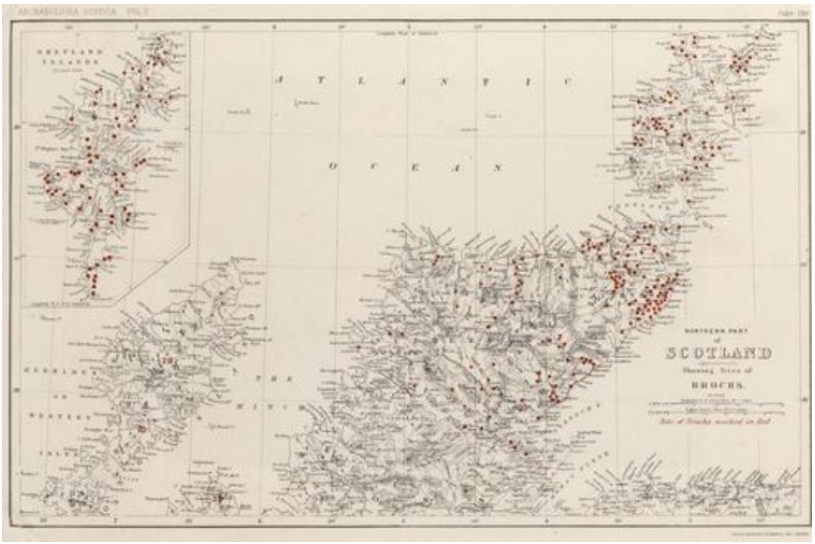
Brochs are largely similar, you'll get variations in terms of these complex Atlantic roundhouses, you'll get things like wheelhouses, you'll get dunes. But brochs are

largely similar in terms of design, perhaps with a few alterations here or there. So, there are discussions being had over whether these were built by itinerant tradesmen, whether it was a copy, or whether it was just something that grew naturally out of one community to another.

They are broadly similar in size and in scale as well. So, something to bear in mind that these grew up at the same time, that people may have been copying one another, or there may have been itinerant tradesmen, or it may have been a history of many different countries. We don't really know if there was a class of master builders if you like, going around Scotland and building these.

In terms of what happens above ground level, that gets more tricky, because so little is left in the archaeological records, and really, it's up to archaeologists, archaeological illustrators to come up with ideas and designs which might seem pragmatic, which might seem sensible. There are those who think that brochs were not roofed. Now I would say, would you like to live in a roofless house in Scotland? Possibly not, it'd turn into a swimming pool quite quickly.

So, there's different ideas as to what brochs may have looked like. There are similarities and there are differences. We may never really understand the real image of a broch, but that's why we are trying to understand them more through excavation and through experimental archaeological projects like ourselves.



There are also kind of regional variations as well. You can see a map here of, I hope you can make it out, but the brochs are largely concentrated in the highlands. And then we get things called dunes, which you'll largely find in the southwest highlands, Argyll, along the west coast, Skye, and Mull, where you'll find a lot of these.

Dunes are similar to brochs. They're a bit more varied in terms of their shape. You can get really small dunes, you can get really large dunes, and they're a bit more oblong as well. Brochs are more circular, more wholly circular than dunes. But the regional differences are that you get these single broch towers in the west. Think of Dun Carloway here in the Western Isles or Dun Dornegal in Sutherland, whereas in Caithness, Orkney and Shetland, we find that these broch villages grow up around brochs, or at the same time or before.

Again, there needs to be some more investigation into whether these are contemporaneous with the broch building itself. There are differences amongst brochs, there are similarities amongst brochs. They are not one thing; they are not static.

In terms of the finds and the purpose of brochs, again, this is where there are slightly, various theories as to what they might be. Most would argue that they are of a domestic nature, and that is led by the finds that we get there, such as quernstones, a fabulous example you can find in Clactoll Broch. And this quernstone really kind of stands out because it's of a different rock completely. I'm not sure which one, but it's a beautiful blue colour. So, they definitely picked that on purpose.

But you'll find things like weaving combs, you'll find bone combs, you'll find pottery, you'll find things really associated with lives being lived. Some would argue that they are defensive. I'm not going to get into that argument just now. That's something for other archaeologists like Martin Carruthers at the UHI. He can give a much more impassioned, eloquent speech about the use of brochs. But I think the main thing to know is that most would say that they are primarily domestic in nature. That's one thing that they probably all share because not every broch is situated very strategically. And brochs are not static. Again, I like to make the point that brochs are not just one thing.

And I like to use Bu Broch again as an example. It has got a staircase and not much else going on there. It started life off as a Neolithic tomb way before it was a broch. This site was a Neolithic tomb, so 2,000, 3,000, 4,000 years before it ever started life as a circular tower. Moving on from that, there was some occupation in the 8th century BC. So, we're talking about the late Neolithic, early Bronze Age before being converted into a souterrain. It becomes the kind of first iteration of the broch.

And I don't know if anyone knows what a souterrain is, but it's taken from the French souterrain, which means underground. So you'll find one quite near Golspie. I forget the name of it, but it's a real beauty. It's an absolute beauty of a souterrain. *[From the floor - there is one close to Dornoch where Sigurd was buried. Oh, I didn't know that. Well, super.]* The walls were about three metres thick.

Remember that image that I showed you earlier on Bu Broch where the walls were about three metres thick in that one? Then that collapses, as brochs sometimes do. Then broch two is built, and the walls are about five metres thick. So, they kind of remodelled it, they re-sculpted this broch. This site was obviously very important to all of these people throughout history in Argyll.

So that's a whistle-stop tour of a broch, what it is made of, what it might have been used for. I'm hoping you probably knew all of that.

What we're trying to do is breathe life back into brochs by constructing one from scratch, a whole scale reproduction of a broch. This is what we want to do. If you've

got Twitter or Facebook, just search for Bob Marshall on those or online and check out some of his work. It's really quite extraordinary, spectacular. He did all of this for free for us. I think that's the pull of the project. We didn't even ask him, he approached us. What we hope to achieve in the next few years is a full-scale reconstruction of a 2,000-year-old tower.

So why are we doing this? What's the aims and the ethos behind it? Well, experimental archaeology is one of these ideas that we like to advocate. We think one of the best ways to understand how brochs were built and why they were built is to actually go and build one, to see how that takes shape, how that affects our own understanding of brochs.

Will our ideas change? Will we find new ideas, new ways, new methods of constructing a broch? And if you think that's a bit of a daft idea, then there's a precedent for this across Europe, certainly. Guédelon Castle in France is a 13th - 14th century castle being built completely using traditional methods and techniques. Even the builders are wearing the clothes of the time. And it operates as a tourist attraction as well, one that I would very much like to visit. *[There is a website with details of the project.]* Closer to home there is the was the Scottish Crannog Centre on Loch Tay, that started life off as an experimental archaeology project before becoming a tourist attraction. So, this is something that we'd like to engage with, the experimental archaeology. We'd like to promote and promulgate traditional skills. First and foremost, the traditional skill of dry-stone diking, which was so crucial to the development of Caithness. And you go to Caithness and you can't chuck a stone for seeing dry stone dikes all over the county. As several history books will say, Caithness paved the empire from Fleet Street down to Argentina. So, we'd like to promote our product of Caithness flagstone. It is having a bit of a renaissance, but I can't think of a better advertisement for Caithness flagstone than a 40-foot high, 2,000-year-old broch tower.

Also, skills such as joinery, thatching. There are very few thatchers left in the UK now. Bumped into one at Leyte Croft Museum. Also weaving, all of these kinds of things. Skills that people want to learn, and I think it's important that we do continue to teach them. Perhaps most importantly, and it's something we're going to discuss very quickly, is we want to create an iconic tourist attraction for Caithness. And I really think this would attract tens, if not thousands, hundreds of thousands of people each year.

So why are we doing this exactly? Well, who knows what that is? Anyone want to hazard a guess? Dounreay, was anyone here employed by Dounreay? No, okay, don't want to admit it, that's fine. So Dounreay, as some of you well know, is going through a process of decommissioning and associated with that is a lot of downturns. Dounreay accounts for around one in every five jobs in Caithness, which sounds great, except it's going. Presently it contributes about £68 million pounds into the local economy each year with about 1,200 employees. When the decommissioning is completed c 2036 there'll be zero employees.

This has led Highland Council to project a decrease of over 20% in Caithness' population, which is quite a worrying statistic. And I cannot think of another area in the UK in the modern period, which has suffered something like this before. Sutherland

is affected too, in that Dounreay employs quite a wide number of people from Tongue, Betty Hill, even Helmsdale.

Orkney does tremendously well out of its tourism, and a large part of that is down to its archaeology, its heritage and its landscape. Orkney makes £67 million pounds from tourism each year, which is very close to the Dounreay contribution to local economy, but the thing about Orkney tourism is it's not really going away anytime soon. I remember when I worked in Orkney in the museum, in that year, whereas Caithness attracted 12 cruise ships. Orkney attracted 126 cruise ships. There are good and bad sides, positives and negatives about that level of tourism, but largely, I would argue, it's pretty positive for the community.

There is a real pull in terms of the archaeology and history. 57% of people visit Orkney for history and culture, 31% visit for archaeology and I would suggest that people maybe mix these two up sometimes. A 2017 report determined that archaeology contributed £4 million towards the local economy of the Western Isles and my final year dissertation at the University of Glasgow focused on the social and economic impact of archaeology and archaeological tourism in Caithness. Prior to me doing this there were no reports specifically directed at Caithness tourism. Not just archaeological tourism, but tourism throughout Caithness. There are now two reports, mine, and another one. After a lot of fancy figures and interviews with businesses, I determined that the tourist spend in Caithness was about £33 million. Of that, about £6 million could be from archaeology tourism. The other report says about £40 million. I think I was being quite conservative with the estimate, and I'd like to point out, I got an award for it as well – 'Best archaeological dissertation in Scotland'. I just put that in there for my mum!

Just going back to Caithness tourism. Caithness has more brochs than anywhere else. That's a fact, a statistic that we like to talk about, we like to discuss, we like to promote the fact that we have more brochs than anywhere else. We are the home of the broch. We have so much archaeology that goes unnoticed. When I showed the Lybster Women's Institute map of the archaeological sites in their area they were stunned, they had no idea. They could name maybe one or two sites, but they had no idea that there was this richness of heritage and archaeology in their area.

The 'Canmore' online database has an index of over 320,000 archaeological sites, monuments, and buildings in Scotland and is a source providing information on the historical sites that you can expect to encounter if you were to visit the Caithness area. So, you know, Caithness is a kind of misunderstood, sometimes maligned county in terms of tourism. When I worked for the North Coast 500, for instance, people would say ignore the East Coast, just whiz through it. There's so much beauty on the East Coast and this might ring true with some of the attendees tonight.

Viscount Thurzo is the Visit Scotland chairman and his particular bête noire of Scottish tourism is the trend of cutting of maps at Inverness. Given my current and previous roles, I do come across a lot of tourist comments. This one caught my eye*. 'Sorry, Caithness, but now having photographed in every county of mainland Britain, I find you the most depressing of the lot. Even more depressing than the Isle of Wight, really'.*

I have a bit of a complex now as well. Whenever I'm leafing through books, I compare how many references or how many mentions Caithness gets compared to Orkney. Orkney always wipes the floor with Caithness, no matter what archaeology or history book. Until this year, when I found Caithness got four mentions, and Orkney, I think, got one or maybe none. Unfortunately, that book was Slaves and Highlanders!

So perhaps not the most positive connotations to draw from there. But this historic maligning of Caithness as a tourism destination, or as just as a destination to visit, goes all the way back to around 1774 and before, presumably, when George Lowe mentions, in a tour through the islands of Orkney and Shetland, he refers to the inhabitants of Stroma, the only island of Caithness'. He says: *'the men are stout, hardy spademen*, ….*the women, while young, are tolerably well-looked, but as they advance in age, grow very hard-favored,(featured) acquiring a peculiar ghastliness in their countenances, contrary to what is observed of the women of Orkney'*. Having lived in Orkney, I'm not going to say anything, I'm not going to make any comparisons and I'm going to quickly move on to how we started.

We are quite young and a new archaeological organization. So, let's go into our time machine again, as we go to the distant past, all the way back to 2013. Here is our time machine, here's me and Ian, we started this, I worked in a call centre, and Ian as a self-employed builder. Not a university qualification between us, just a real interest in archaeology and history and promoting cave myths. So we did our best joining archaeological organizations, digs, trying to network, as some would call it, getting the 'crack', and we were able to make some traction through social media, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram. We certainly weren't the first archaeological organization to utilize social media, but we certainly exploited it to the best of our abilities. We largely did that, and I think we really got a lot of attention through 'memes'. Now what on earth is a meme? Bet you didn't think you'd have memes explained to you today. Well, a meme is a cultural item that is transmitted by repetition and replication in a manner analogous to 'the biological transmission of genes, a cultural item in the form of an image, video, or phrase'. Essentially, it's an image, video, or phrase, which is shared amongst lots of people and sometimes it's tweaked for their own purposes.

I tried to think about memes before there was the internet. Who recognizes that? Most of you perhaps recognize the Kilroy was here motif. Think of that as a meme.

We did kind of silly things involving the Canadian rap artist Drake, or Lev Laff Brox, which is a really popular phrase actually. But there's one thing I've learned about the internet, it's if you can involve a cat in a meme, that just skyrockets every time. I could post that again and again, and it just goes through the roof.

We've done things like World Cup of Brochs, which some archaeologists were a bit annoyed about. Please… just have a bit of fun, it's just Brochs. But we got really nice comments that made it all worthwhile because it is a bit of a slog doing social media.

I was wishing someone, or a group would start to make their archaeology more accessible to the public. This is Watton Primary School who were delighted with our memes and decided to do a fundraising walk along the beach for at least £500, which

is great. This is during lockdown, this nearly made me cry. Glen has just tuned into the Zoom call for the Keith and his Broch talk; he says that this is the best thing he has done during lockdown and loved every minute of it. Okay, this might not even matter to you, but you are enriching my life with these posts. You're one of the main reasons I started studying archaeology, which is bizarre, and I'm not crying, you're crying.

We do get involved in more traditional means of public engagement, whether that's videos, newspapers, writing blogs, writing for magazines. It's a really lovely wee video as part of the Spirit of the Highlands campaign. I think Dornoch Distillery might have featured in that as well, actually.

Well worth checking out Spirit of the Highlands because there's some really nice stuff in there. We've appeared on TV, on BBC Landward, which was a really great bit of exposure for our organisation. Although, if there's one thing I've learned about appearing on TV, do not Google yourself afterwards. The pratfall of fame awaits you.

Aside from all this promotional work, we had to start small. Again, no university qualifications, never really started an archaeological group. We didn't know where to start. So, first of all we attended a kind of public pitching competition in 2015 where we wanted to get some funding for leaflets and some standing stone panels. This was a kind of public event for organisations to attend, and we were up against the likes of kids' sports groups, disability groups, age-concerned groups, smoking cessation, all of these kind of really public health-oriented groups, and I thought we were going to get the floor wiped with us because we just wanted a couple of leaflets and some standing stones. But out of the 150 people that attended, and I swear we only took two or three friends with us; we didn't take an army, we got 80% of the vote! So, I think that demonstrates the desire and interest of the public for a project like this to succeed in Caithness.

We've organised excavations. We try and make archaeology fun, accessible, enjoyable to all sorts of people. Had an auction as well of Broch Art, which raised about £10,000. And of course, the Lego Broch. Have you all been to Caithness Horizons? Yes. Or as it's now known, the North Coast Visitor Centre. If you haven't been, that's where you'll see our 10,000-piece Lego Broch. Just a fun fact here, you can buy ready-made Lego goats! They cost £20 pounds each. So, Dan from 'Brick to the Past', made us some much cheaper goats. We did some Minecraft activities centred around this Broch. Lots of fun and got some really great feedback. According to one participant, this is the best Lego Broch in the world, which I thought was lovely until my friend pointed out, yeah, it's also the only Lego Broch!

Moving to more physical, more longstanding changes to the archaeological environment, this is Achvarasdal Broch off the main road between Thurso and Reay. All that remains is the base of the wall with an internal diameter of 10 m and a height of about 2 m. Do any gardeners amongst us recognise what that is? Giant hogweed, which is particularly nasty stuff. We cleared it out and turned that Broch into something much

more accessible. It was quite a small project, actually but we then moved into something a lot more meaty.

I encourage you to all visit Ousdale Broch. It's signposted just north of Helmsdale. That's our crowning achievement thus far. Here it is. In 2015, Ian and I decided to revisit what was Caithness' best Broch. Colleen Batey said it was the best-preserved Broch in Caithness. Does that look like the best preserved Broch in Caithness to you? The buttress here was constructed by the original excavator, James Mackay, in 1891. And something that is only just over 100 years old has collapsed long before the rest of this 2,000-year-old Broch. So, I think that demonstrates the skill with which these Broch builders were building. We didn't hold out much hope for this, but we were visited by Nicky and Simon from Historic Environment Scotland, who said, yes, you could probably still save this. And we did. So it's conserved now. It's been taken down considerably, but that means it's much safer to visit. You'll notice there's one thing, prominent in this photograph but now missing. It is the tree which was growing and destabilising the structure.

Along with the Broch, it was a bit of an infrastructure project, not just a tourism infrastructure project. We had a car park built, and no sooner had we built that car park than one caravan was fly-tipped on it, and then another fly-tipped caravan, which was a bit of a pain. We had a kilometre of path put in from the car park down to the Broch and it is now a fairly easy approach and skirts the post-clearance village of Borg, which takes its name from the Broch. Really love this. It's an atmospheric place to visit. We've got some lovely interpretation panels there, as modelled by Ian. I think my favourite thing about this though is that we've actually got photographs of some of the inhabitants of Borg. We've got Robert Sunderman and Christina Sunderman. But he was born in the mid to late 18th century, and I think it's wonderful we've got a face that you can imagine.

So that's our crowning achievement and I'm going to just say one thing. All of this has really been quite an enjoyable canter for us, but this really summed up archaeology for me, the majesty and the intrigue. The possibilities of archaeology to really blow your mind!

I'm going to very quickly summarise what Ian usually talks about. He's much more learned in terms of construction techniques, but we're going to show you something that not even residents of Caithness have seen, or maybe a handful of residents have seen. Because some of you may be wondering, well, that's all fine and dandy, Kenneth, but where are you with this project? Well, after 10 years of looking and developing the project and kind of making what we call a portfolio of success, a legacy of projects, we now have a site.

So we're going to quickly look at what we're actually going to do, **build a broch**. And I just want to point out that we're not the first person to have this idea. In fact, Alexander Rind beat us to this idea more than a hundred years ago. A man ahead of his time. It's going to cost quite a lot of money. So just so you know, our broch, our dream broch, takes elements from existing brochs across Scotland. This is not just one kind of broch. We are looking at other brochs and other features of brochs, such as the triangular lintel, which only features on a handful of brochs, but it looks cool. So, we want to include that.

The relevant size and silhouette come from Dun Telve, an iron age broch located about four kilometres (2.5 mi) southeast of Kirkton. The doorway emanates from Cairn Leith, because it's difficult to find a doorway which is big enough to adhere to modern health and safety regulations and, fortunately, Cairn Leith ticks that box.

You will see it's multi-storied. We will have the staircase running through at least to the first floor. The ground floor plan, by the way, is based on the Cairns broch excavation in Orkney being led by the UHI. I'm quite intrigued as to how this will actually feel when you enter the broch, because it's going to be enclosed in darkness with a number of features, ideally lit by some sort of candle but health and safety means we can't do that, thus some similar form of illumination. Then you get through to the first floor and that's a much more open space. I think it's going to be almost like, a kind of orchestral operatic space.

We're only really going to the first floor. Again, when I mentioned things about the archaeology, the further you go up the broch it is more difficult to discern. We're just trying to be pragmatic about things whilst using real examples of archaeology, such as the wicker technique taken from Clactoll Broch, Lochinver. This seems to have collapsed quite catastrophically all at once, but this does mean it essentially preserved the floor from the fire leaving what are essentially charred reed mats. So, we will incorporate that into our broch first floor.

You won't be able to access the second floor because as with most brochs, the shape of the walls eventually prevent access at higher levels. Mousa Broch in Shetland is the exception. As Dr. Noel Fodgett says from Shetland, Mousa is a broch, but not every broch is a Mousa. So, we have to go with the popular convention in terms of brochs that access did not go all the way to the top. Which is a shame, because I would quite like a view, but we have to bear these things in mind.

We may use this as some sort of malting floor. We're undecided, it's up for grabs, but the public probably won't be able to access that. Staff members will through a ladder.

We do not want to build just a broch, we want to build a kind of experience, an Iron Age experience. So it's a broch village that's so popular in Caithness, Orkney and Shetland and we have things like a wheel house, a wag, store houses, something

called a jelly baby house, which you'll find at Bosta Beach, Isle of Lewis. The term was coined by Andy Heald of AOC for a house shaped like a jelly baby.

And of course, on top of all of that, we want to have a number of exciting activities in the broch. We are very much taking the lead here from the Crannock Centre. So, I don't know if anyone's been, I've managed to get down there, but they were always doing, making, spinning, or cooking. And it is a really great experience for all ages.

So finally, this is where we end the talk. Some of you may have been keeping up to date with us. Some of you might have known that we have actually found a site.

The site is here, just north of Latheron. So we won't have Wickers and Thurzonians arguing about who gets the broch. This has been a real struggle, to be honest, to find a site which is authentic, which is conducive to tourism, and moreover, has a landowner who is supportive. We didn't want to take land. We weren't expecting land to be given to us. We were quite willing to pay. However, no one was willing to give anything until we met Jim McGregor, a farmer near Latheron, who has very kindly offered us quite a lot of land, and we're in the preliminary stages of acquiring that land.

That's our ambition. It's something we've been working on for a long, long time. If you want to know more, check us out on social media, ***thebrochproject.co.uk***, and do support us, because I think something like that would be a really special addition to not just Caithness, but for all of Scotland.

Thank you very much.