

CARPOW LOG BOAT: evaluation proposal.

1 INTRODUCTION.

The discovery, made by two metal detectorists from Dundee, was initially reported to Dundee Museum. Details were then forwarded to Fife Museums and from there to the Fife Council Archaeologist and onto the Perth and Kinross Area Archaeologist.

The boat is located on inter-tidal mudflats at NO 199 185, on Carpow bank on the south side of the estuary where the river Earn and the river Tay meet to form the head of the estuary proper. The area has a number of environmental designations, including

- 1) Site of Special Scientific Interest (National designation)
- 2) Special Protection Area (European designation)
- 3) Ramsar Site (International agreement conserving wetlands)

The boat is water-logged and has been preserved because of the largely anaerobic conditions resulting from being submerged for the majority of the time. The vessel is only partly exposed from the mud and estuarine sediments. It isn't clear, however, whether this has happened in the fairly recent past as a result of coastal erosion, or whether it has survived in this environment for a significant part of its history. The inter-tidal location results in the vessel being exposed for a few hours every day, however, and the extreme fluctuations in conditions that will occur on a daily and annual basis must bring the long term preservation of the vessel *in situ* into question.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT.

Errol 1
c. NO 26 22
NO22SE 5
Found 1869, no surviving remains.

Errol 2
c. NO 26 22
NO22SE 4
Found 1895 by fishermen at Haddiebank. Oak; 9m long and 1.5m wide. On display at Dundee Museum. The vessel was allowed to dry naturally which has resulted in splitting and there are numerous depressions presumably made during recovery operations. C14 dates of 485 +/- 40 (Q-3121) and 430 +/- 45 (Q-3141) which is calibrated to c. 599 and 548 AD.

Friarton
NO 1175 2192
NO12SW 24
Geikie in 1878 recorded the remains of a logboat found "some yaesr before" during clay-digging at the Friarton brick-works. The vessel was largely damaged before examination, although it was identified as "Scotch fir" and

much charring was noted. Geikie noted that the boat was “resting on its bottom” on the upper surface of the peat and sand layers that underlie the deep brickearth deposit of the “second alluvial terrace” of the Tay. It has been suggested on this basis that the boat can be dated to the later 8th millennium bp. This is questionable given the early nature of the account.

Lindores 1-2

NO 24 19

NO12SW 62 and NO21NW 6

Around 1816 two logboats were found “opposite Lindores Abbey” – both were cut up to serve as building lintels. Probably the same two log boats mentioned in 1881 and in numerous other articles.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE.

The last, and only surviving, log boat to be recovered from the Tay Estuary is the 9m long Errol 2 vessel, found in 1895, dated to the 6th century AD, and now displayed in Dundee Museum. The importance of the recently discovered Carpow vessel, irrespective of date, is threefold:

1. *The first log boat from the estuary to be recovered using archaeology.*
2. *Only the second, out of a possible total of six vessels, to be available for detailed study.*
3. *The boat, being in a water-logged condition will be much better preserved than the Errol 2 vessel, which was allowed to dry naturally.*



Carpow Boat: Field work objectives.

- 1 Three slot trenches to establish length of the vessel.
2. Scale drawing of the vessel, including a min. of four sections
3. Full photographic record (b/w and colour slide – copies for SMR).
4. DSR on findings (copy to NMRS).
5. Sand-bagging of vessel for interim protection.