

Stirling Field & Archaeological Society

Summer Outings Programme 2026

Non-members are welcome. The Society exercises normal prudence in planning and conducting its outings and participants take part on the understanding that they do so at their own risk.

Meeting point: Castleview Park & Ride (free parking: FK9 4TW, M9 junction 10) for directions and any last-minute instructions.

Saturday All-Day Outings — 9.30am start

Please bring a packed lunch and wear appropriate clothing.

Saturday 18th April: Cairnpapple Hill & Torphichen Preceptory

Excavations in 1947–48 revealed the site of a large timber henge, Bronze Age tombs and Early Christian burials. The reconstructed cairn contains a description of the principal discoveries (HES: concession £6.80 on the day; £6.00 pre-booked online). On a clear day the views from the hill are spectacular and free. Torphichen Preceptory was built in the 1100s but much of the well preserved ruin dates to c.1400. It was the headquarters of the Knights Hospitaller of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem (HES: £1.50 on the day). The adjacent Torphichen Kirk can also be visited.

Leader: Robert Meikle (07833 711809)

Saturday 23rd May: Hunterian Museum, Glasgow

William Hunter (1718–1783) studied medicine at Glasgow University and, in London, became physician to Queen Charlotte. His vast collection of anatomical specimens, books, coins, and pictures was bequeathed to the University along with £8,000 to build a museum (High Street, opened 1807 – Scotland's oldest public museum). The present museum (opened 1870) includes subsequent acquisitions. Displays featuring the Antonine Wall and Roman settlement in Scotland, or the history of medicine in the west of Scotland and scientific innovation in Glasgow, are worth a visit.

Leader: Liz Patterson (01786 860650)

Saturday 20th – Sunday 28th June AND Saturday 18th – Sunday 26th July: Bannockburn House Dig

We shall continue exploring the area around a very early (16th century?) mine shaft and the environs of the house; principally at the N.E. corner where Roy's map c.1750 shows a now vanished range of buildings.

Leader: Paul Sorowka (01786 464578)

Saturday 22nd August: Linlithgow Palace, St Michael's Church & Museum

This historic town is home to the ruins of the 15th century palace where James V and Mary Queen of Scots were born; following a fire in 1764 it remains an impressive ruin in an attractive situation overlooking the loch. Nearby are thought to be the sites of an early manor of David I and a fortification built by Edward I during the War of Independence (HES: concession £9.00 on the day or £8.00 pre-booked online; includes a downloadable audio guide). We shall also visit St Michael's church and Linlithgow Museum, which tells the story of the town (Free admission 10.00am–4.00pm).

Leader: Robert Meikle (07833 711809)

Saturday 12th September: Paisley Abbey & Kilbarchan Weavers' Cottage

Founded c.1160, the Abbey was a centre of learning: William Wallace may have been educated there. It is the burial place of Marjory Bruce (daughter of King Robert I) and the wives of kings Robert II and Robert III. Much of the original building was destroyed by fire in 1307; after restoration the central tower collapsed in the mid-1500s on to the transepts and choir leaving only the nave – which became the parish church of Paisley after the Reformation. At Kilbarchan in the 18th century handloom weavers predominantly worked with linen, which power looms couldn't handle until the 1870s. Subsequently, weavers shifted to high-quality wool, making blankets, shawls and tartans. The Weaver's Cottage offers a glimpse of handloom weaving during the 18th and 19th centuries (NTS: £7.50 concession).

Leader: Paul Sorowka (01786 464578)

Tuesday Evening Outings — 6.30pm start

Please wear appropriate clothing.

Tuesday 14th April: Cramond — Fort on the River Almond

Aptly named on account of a Roman fort constructed c.140AD and in use to c.170, excavation has proved the location of the fort and its bath-house, as well as an industrial area and a harbour; it was extended c.208–14. The fort was a supply point for forts along the Antonine Wall. Remains of the barracks are displayed in parkland around the 15th century Cramond Kirk. The life-size Cramond Lioness, a Roman funerary monument now displayed in Edinburgh, was found in the Almond in 1997.

Leader: Liz Patterson (01786 860650)

Tuesday 12th May: Kincardine in Menteith Churches

Kincardine in Menteith Old Church was dedicated to St Lolan. A church, recorded here in the 12th century, may have replaced an even earlier Celtic church. It was the Parish church until the mid-17th century and contains burial vaults for the Drummonds of Blair and the Mushets. The site of a castle-motte is in an adjacent field. Some graveyard memorials have been removed to the newer 1816 church on the other side of the road, which is currently for sale but the exterior may be visited.

Leader: Paul Sorowka (01786 464578)

Tuesday 9th June: Samson's Stone, Dunmore Native Fort & Bochastle Roman Fort, Callander

Samson's Stone is a large glacial erratic boulder perched on a hill from which there are extensive views. It is close to the well-preserved multi-walled Dunmore Iron Age hill fort, our principal destination. If there is time we shall also visit Bochastle Roman Fort, beside the Leny.

Leader: Paul Sorowka (01786 464578)

Tuesday 14th July: Black Devon Nature Reserve

The site is a mosaic of wet grassland, reed beds and pools, created as part of the RSPB's Inner Forth conservation project. It is a haven for birds of all sorts during the summer months, whilst the pools are year-round habitats for frogs, newts, dragonflies and small fish. New areas have been introduced to boost biodiversity, which will be described by an RSPB guide. A nature trail through the site leads to a viewing mound for sweeping views over the site.

Leader: Paul Sorowka (01786 464578)

Tuesday 11th August: Tappoch Broch, Torwood, Larbert

The site, which was thought to be a burial mound, was excavated in 1864 but subsequent work, most recently by Dr Murray Cook in May 2025, confirms it to have been an example of a Lowland Broch. Walls are preserved to a reasonable height with an entry passage and wall chambers, incorporating cup marked rocks from an earlier age. There are signs of a ditch and embankments around the broch.

Leader: Robert Meikle (07833 711809)

Tuesday 8th September: Gillies Hill Early Bronze Age / Iron Age Fort

Excavation in 1984 identified the remains of three ramparts enclosing an Iron Age fort on the edge of a rocky crag just west of the quarry. Excavators also encountered pottery sherds from two Early Bronze Age beakers. The site is easily overlooked but the remnant of the outer rampart is visible, along with traces of the others.

Leader: Paul Sorowka (01786 464578)