

St Andrews excavations uncover valuable archaeology

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Credit: University of St Andrews

Work to lay four miles of pipeline between St Andrews and Guardbridge earlier this year uncovered a hoard of Neolithic pottery and flint tools which had lain buried for over 4000 years.

The surprise find at Kincapple, three miles west of St Andrews, was made as engineers laid pipework to connect St Andrews University's award-winning Green Energy Centre at Eden Campus in Guardbridge with the main university estate at North Haugh in St Andrews.

Around 30 pieces of "grooved-ware" pottery were excavated from a pit during archaeological monitoring of pipeline works in March this year.

He said: "These finds provide yet another piece in the jigsaw to help us reconstruct the mundane – as well as the more interesting – aspects of how societies interacted and travelled in Ancient Britain.

"The artefacts provide more evidence of long-distance trade, contacts and especially ideas across the country."

ARCHAS Ltd were tasked by Fife Council Archaeology Service with monitoring the works to minimise potential damage to the historic environment and to ensure that any finds or features were properly identified and recorded.

Various features were discovered including pits and sections of ditch which were identified, excavated and recorded. Within one large pit, more than 30 pieces of distinctive pottery identified by specialists as "grooved-ware" were recovered.

Grooved-ware is associated with the Late Neolithic period in Britain and has been found across Britain from Orkney to the south of England. This type of pottery is very distinctive, being highly-decorated with linear incisions, pinched decoration and decorative panels and is often associated with ritual deposition or offerings.

In addition to the pottery, numerous flint tools and blades were recovered. Initial analysis of this flint, by archaeologist Dr Torben Ballin of the University of Bradford, identifies it as of great interest, having originated either from the famous flint mines at Grimes Graves in Norfolk or from Yorkshire. The [flint tools](#), mainly scrapers and blades, are unusually large and particularly finely crafted. This combination of fine [pottery](#) and flint strongly suggests a ritual deposition rather than domestic refuse.

Further study and analysis, including radiocarbon dating, will now be

carried out to help create a picture of the beliefs and behaviour of the people who lived in this era.

Provided by University of St Andrews

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