



PRESS RELEASE: August 2016  
**REVEALING THE COCHNO STONE: 05.09.16 – 25.09.16**



*Image copyright: Historic Environment Scotland*

‘Revealing the Cochno Stone’ is a project to excavate, 3D scan and safely rebury the Cochno Stone, West Dunbartonshire, Scotland’s largest (8 x 13 m) and best example of Neolithic or Bronze Age (3000 to 2000 BC) cup and ring markings that was buried in 1965 to prevent its being further vandalised. The aim is to draw attention to one of the United Kingdom’s most important but most neglected prehistoric sites, with a view to gathering support for the production of a 1:1 facsimile, that would be made using a combination of the recorded digital data and historical sources.

The Cochno Stone has a multi-faceted biography: its importance as the most extensive and remarkable prehistoric rock-art panel in Britain, thought to be up to 5000 years old, its attention from archaeologist Ludovic Maclellan Mann (pictured above, highlighting the markings to illustrate his eccentric astronomical theories) as well as its more recent history, which tells a story that reflects the issues around the preservation of cultural heritage in the face of encroaching urbanisation.

The facsimile would reflect these various layers of history by including the pre-1965 graffiti as well as the prehistoric surface, with both accurately recorded using a variety of digital imaging techniques (Aerial Photography, Faro Laser Scanning and High Resolution Photogrammetry). It would also have a restoration (based on the extant documentation) of Mann’s paint markings. In doing this, the facsimile would attempt to explore how the modern



world relates to its ancient past and point out some of the ironies of the history of the stone, in that, what is in a sense Neolithic ‘graffiti’ was removed from the local community as a result of then contemporary ‘vandalism’, and that the chief photographs we have of the stone are of an ‘official’ visit that by today’s standards would be considered to have vandalised the stone. A trial excavation undertaken in September 2015 revealed that the stone is still in good condition, but that modern graffiti is probably extensive across the stone’s surface.



*Trial excavation in 2015 © University of Glasgow*



*Cup-and-ring marks revealed in 2015 © University of Glasgow*

This unique project is the result of the collaboration between the Factum Foundation for Digital Technology in Conservation and the University of Glasgow Archaeology Department and is working closely with West Dunbartonshire Council and Historic Environment Scotland, the bodies responsible for the protection of the site. The full excavation and recording, the first of its type attempted, will begin on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 2016 and is expected to take 3 weeks with a team from the Factum Foundation led by Ferdinand Saumarez Smith, with assistance from Richard Salmon Restoration Inc., NY and a team from the Scottish Ten, Historic Environment Scotland, undertaking the recording. On the



excavation will be a team of volunteers from the University of Glasgow Archaeology Department led by Dr Kenneth Brophy, with assistance from West Dunbartonshire Council. The projected dates for the Cochno Stone's full exposure are the 12<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> September, however, this is liable to change depending on excavation time. Regular updates on exact dates will be made on the projects Twitter feed, details below.

This work has been made possible by the generous support of Paula and James Crown. We would also like to make special thanks to Mrs. Elaine Marks, May Miles Thomas and Owen Thomas, Dr. John Raven, Donald Petrie and Robert Kelly.

Links:

'Revealing the Cochno Stone' Twitter Feed: (using #DigCochnoStone)  
<https://twitter.com/cochnostone?cn=bG9naW5fbm90aWZpY2F0aW9u&refsrc=email>

May Miles Thomas' film of the test excavation:  
<https://vimeo.com/144097948>

Factum Foundation 'Cochno Stone' project web page:  
<http://www.factumfoundation.org/pag/234/The-Cochno-Stone-Project>

Report on the trial excavation in 2015 on the Urban Prehistorian blog  
<https://theurbanprehistorian.wordpress.com/2015/09/27/the-cochno-stone-exposed/>

For more information and enquiries, please contact:

**Ferdinand Saumarez Smith**

ferdinand@factumfoundation.org  
+44 (0) 7896908838  
44 Lexington Street  
London W1F 0LP - United Kingdom

**Dr Kenneth Brophy**

Kenny.brophy@glasgow.ac.uk  
+44 (0) 7939660356  
R310 Level 3, Archaeology, Gregory Building  
Glasgow G12 8QQ - United Kingdom