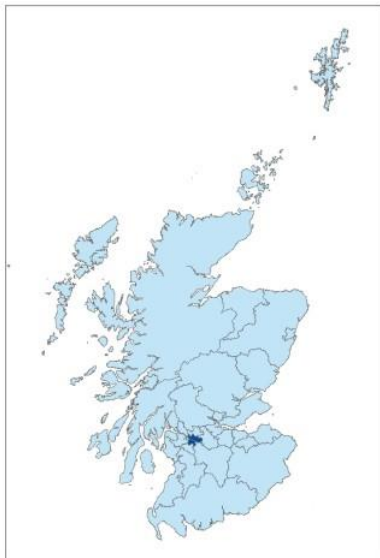


MARTIN CONLON (RCAHMS) – GLASGOW

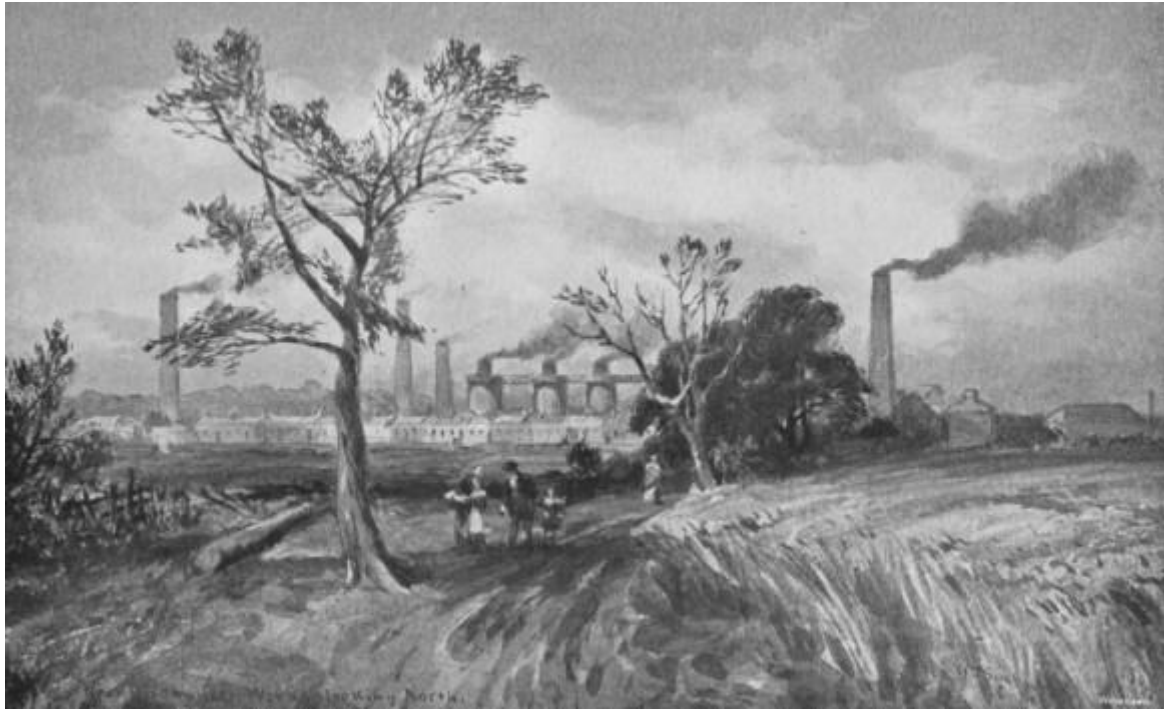
[July 26, 2013](#) [Historic Environment Scotland](#) [Day of Archaeology 2013](#), [Historical Archaeology](#), [Industrial #myarchaeology](#), [Glasgow](#), [Govan](#), [Headland Archaeology](#), [Hutchestown](#), [Iron works](#), [Martin Conlon](#), [RCAHMS](#), [Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland](#), [Scotland](#), [Scottish Archaeology](#)



Glasgow. 'Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2011'

I'm Martin Conlon, Education Trainee at RCAHMS. The archaeological site that I've chosen to write about is that of the [Govan Iron Works in Glasgow](#). The site is one of many surveyed as a result of the construction of the extension to the M74. The extension passed over a dense locality of hidden industrial gems, each site a memory of our relatively recent past. With the large-scale of the motorway development, it was important that archaeologists took advantage of the opportunities to survey and record key areas prior to them being potentially lost. It was also crucial that no archaeological remains were damaged or removed without proper records being made.

The excavations by HAPCA (a joint venture between Headland Archaeology Ltd and Pro-Construct Archaeology) uncovered the foundations of the old premises of Caledonian Pottery in Rutherglen, established around 1800 and closing in the mid 1870s, including remains of kilns (ovens used to dry and harden pottery). Also unearthed were signs of the massive urban development that took place in the area several hundred years ago, with the foundations of early tenements found just off Pollokshaws Road, amongst a dense network of remains of 19th century tenements, pubs, churches and shops.



Digital image of watercolour dating from 1899, inscribed "Dixon's Ironworks". Copyright RCAHMS (DP009088)

Located on Cathcart Road, the Iron Works was the first of its scale to spring up in Glasgow, founded in 1837 by William Dixon. The Iron Works was known as 'Dixon's Blazes' for the propensity of the blast furnaces to illuminate Glasgow's smoggy industrial skyline. Drawn by William Simpson in the late 1890s, the illustration above shows the Iron Works from the South, with a row of single-storey houses in front known as 'Collier's Raw'. The last working blast furnace ceased operation in 1958 and the site has since been re-developed.

Around 15 boxes of photographs, drawings and notes of the M74 project have now reached RCAHMS where they have been catalogued and housed as part of our collections. Using other material held at RCAHMS, like the RAF National Survey (Air Photographs 1944-1950) image below, the site's history can be very clearly understood. The M74 collection is an important reminder of the importance of post-medieval archaeology and the idea that archaeological investigation is not strictly confined to our ancient history.



Martin looking through the collection. Copyright RCAHMS



RAF National Survey (Air Photographs), 1944-1950 Scanned Image of RAF oblique aerial view showing part of the Hutchestown district with the Govan Ironworks (Dixon's Blazes) Copyright RCAHMS (SCI024381)

This is what I've chosen for Day of Archaeology, but why not tell us your favourite archaeological sites in Scotland on Twitter using [#MyArchaeology](https://twitter.com/MyArchaeology).