

# INFORMATION SHEET



30 November 2020

**Publisher:** Extremis Publishing Ltd.  
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**ISBN:** 978-1-9996962-5-2  
**RRP:** \$14.99 USD  
**Format:** Royal octavo paperback,  
234 x 156 mm  
**Extent:** 154 pages

**BIC Categories:**  
History: Earliest Times to Present Day (HBL), Social and Cultural History (HBTB), Archaeology (HD), Central Scotland (1DBKSC).

**Distributor:**  
Ingram Content Group Inc.  
One Ingram Blvd.  
La Vergne, TN 37086  
United States of America  
(T) (615) 793-5000  
(E) [inquiry@ingramcontent.com](mailto:inquiry@ingramcontent.com)

## The Anvil of Scottish History Stories of Stirling

Stirling was Scotland's ancient capital, and it remains its best preserved medieval city with its remarkable city walls and late medieval hospital, the oldest royal park, as well as one of the most striking Renaissance palaces in all of Europe. It is home to the world's oldest football and curling stone – and the home of tartan. Stirling was the grounds for the two most important battles in Scottish history as well as having fought Romans, Angles, Picts, Vikings, the English, other Scots, Oliver Cromwell, Jacobites and the Hanoverians, and it even played a key role in the preparations for D-Day. It is the place where our identity and indeed our very existence has been forged and repeatedly tested: the anvil of Scottish history.

This beautiful city sits at the lowest crossing point of the River Forth. This means that every army that ever invaded or resisted invasion had to cross the river at Stirling. So, for the last 2000 years, blood and treasure were lost and heroes and villains created in a perpetual struggle for the control of this key location. This means that almost every single aspect of Scotland's history either impacts, or is impacted by, this amazing place.

Take a fascinating journey through the centuries with Stirling's Burgh Archaeologist, Dr Murray Cook, as he considers the complex and lively history of this unique royal city. From prehistory to the Home Guard, he charts the changing face of Stirling over the course of millennia, detailing some extraordinary archaeological finds and many little-known historical facts. Prepare to discover Stirling's secrets and mysteries for yourself!

### Author Biography

Dr Murray Cook is Stirling Council's Archaeologist and is from Leith originally, though he also lived and went to school in Edinburgh. He lives in Stirling with a long-suffering wife, three teenage girls and two pesky but loveable cats. He has undertaken numerous excavations across the region and published over 40 books and articles. He won a Stirling's Provost Award in 2018 for his work for the Council, where he has helped raise over £300,000 to be spent on community archaeology and research and has even got invited to see the Queen at Holyrood Palace, along with a few hundred others! He has appeared on several TV programmes, and has sometime even been paid! He writes a regular column in the *Stirling Observer* and runs Stirling Archaeology, a Facebook page dedicated to Stirling's fantastic heritage!

Murray studied at Edinburgh University worked first for AOC Archaeology, rising from subcontractor to Commercial Director. His PhD, which has a rather long and boring title, was based on 10 years of research in Aberdeenshire on settlement patterns between 2000 BC and AD 1000.

He is an Honorary Research Fellow at Stirling University, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, runs an occasional course at Forth Valley College on Stirling and likes to do it in ditches (archaeology, that is!). He also co-runs regular training digs open to all under the name Rampart Scotland.



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An independent publishing house specialising in arts, media and culture non-fiction.

Suite 218, Castle House, 1 Baker Street, Stirling, FK8 1AL, United Kingdom

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