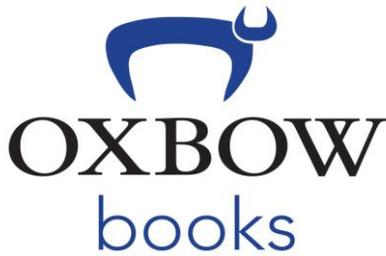




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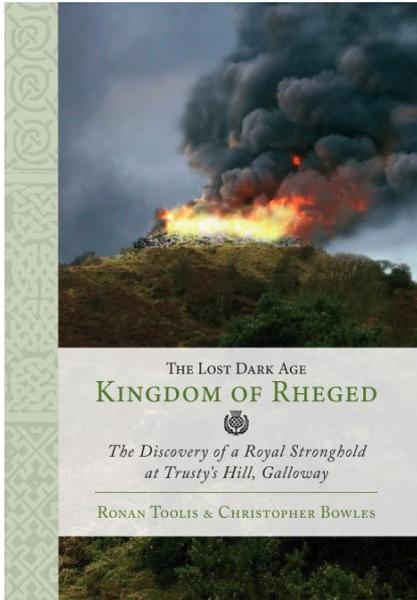
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## **The Lost Dark Age Kingdom of Rheged**

the Discovery of a Royal Stronghold at Trusty's Hill, Galloway

By *Ronan Toolis and Christopher Bowles*

### **Key Features:**

- **Presents new archaeological evidence for the presence of a royal stronghold as the heart of the hieerto 'lost' Dark Age kingdom of Rheged, that was pre-eminent amongst the kingdoms of the north in the late sixth century AD**
- **Describes results of major excavation of a fortified citadel in SW Scotland**
- **Examines unusual inscribed stone with major implications for understanding the the foundations for the early medieval kingdoms of mainland UK**

Trusty's Hill is an early medieval fort at Gatehouse of Fleet, Dumfries and Galloway. The hillfort comprises a fortified citadel defined by a vitrified rampart around its summit, with a number of enclosures looping out along lower-lying terraces and crags. The approach to its summit is flanked on one side by a circular rock-cut basin and on the other side by Pictish Symbols carved on to the face of a natural outcrop of bedrock. This Pictish inscribed stone is unique in Dumfries and Galloway, and southern Scotland, and has long puzzled scholars as to why the symbols were carved so far from Pictland and even if they are genuine.

The Galloway Picts Project, launched in 2012, aimed to recover evidence for the archaeological context of the inscribed stone, but far from validating the existence of Picts in this southerly region of Scotland, the archaeological context instead suggests that the carvings relate to a royal stronghold and place of inauguration for the local Britons of Galloway around AD 600. Examined in the context of contemporary sites across southern Scotland and northern England, the archaeological evidence from Galloway suggests that this region may have been the heart of the lost Dark Age kingdom of Rheged, a kingdom that was in the late sixth century pre-eminent amongst the kingdoms of the north. The new archaeological evidence from Trusty's Hill enhances our perception of power, politics, economy and culture at a time when the foundations for the kingdoms of Scotland, England and Wales were being laid.

### **About the Author:**

*Ronan Toolis* is a Director of GUARD Archaeology Ltd, specialising in the management of archaeology and cultural heritage. He has over 20 years experience working on and leading a wide range of rural and urban archaeological projects in Scotland, UK and Germany including significant involvement in archaeological assessments, fieldwork and post-excavation analysis.

*Christopher Bowles* is the Archaeology Officer for the Scottish Borders Council where he is responsible for providing archaeological mitigation advice on planning issues for the protection and management of the region's heritage, management of the local Historic Environment Record and all aspects of public engagement on heritage matters.

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Vikings and the Danelaw. James Graham-Campbell. Richard Hall.Â While solid Victorian citizens from all over the British Isles and Empire responded to the romance of the Vikings, those born, bred or based in the Danelaw areas of eastern England felt a particular legitimacy for their old northern enthusiams. A close personal association with regions in which Vikings had roamed and ruled became for many a source of pride, and for a few a source of formidable intellectual energy.