



PAS Newsletter: normal service will be resumed in the New Year

When it became apparent that we would have to cancel all of our live events due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Committee decided to try and make up for this by increasing the frequency of the newsletter. Instead of quarterly issues, we would at least try and send them out bi-monthly. It has certainly kept me busy but I'm pleased to say we succeeded, with editions coming out in June, August, October and, if this edition is on time, December. Not only that, but each of these editions was a bumper issue with at least 16 pages.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the contributions from so many of you, the members. So I would like to say a huge "thank you" to everyone who contributed. And if you sent something in and it hasn't appeared yet, don't despair – I am still working my way through the articles.

Having now established an online presence for our autumn and coming spring lecture series, the newsletters will return to a quarterly regime in the New Year. However, even with a few articles still on file, the continued success of the *PAS Newsletter* totally depends on your support. So please keep the content coming in. *JB*

Autumn Lecture Series

Back in early March, before a formal lockdown was even announced and all such public gatherings prohibited, it became apparent to the PAS Committee that holding lectures was not going to be advisable, given the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. So regretfully we cancelled all three of our Spring 2020 talks scheduled for Brechin Town House Museum. Or rather, we postponed them, in the hope that things would be better come the autumn. All three speakers happily agreed to reset the date of their talks.

As spring passed into summer, it once again became apparent there would be no such improvement in the situation so we decided to do what many other societies were doing – move our events online. Once again, our speakers willingly agreed to the change of format. And by way of making up for the spring

cancellations, we added a fourth speaker to the autumn schedule.

A one-year licence was bought for Zoom – an easy-to-use software that allows us to bring together up to 100 participants in a virtual lecture room, and there listen to and see the slides of our speaker, and thereafter take part in a live Q&A session.

We've had a few wobbles but the system works and works well (I think). It may not have quite the atmosphere as an 'in the flesh' lecture but it's the next best thing and is certainly preferable to continual postponement. Indeed it has one great advantage over an actual lecture: those that live beyond travel distance of Brechin can participate. So members all over Scotland, from the Highlands to Galloway have logged on, as have members in England and Ireland too.

When it is deemed safe to come out of our bunkers, we will of course resume actual events but I think we might want to retain some sort of online capacity too, so that we can reach as many members as possible, at least some of the time. *JB*

18 September 2020 – Dr Juliette Mitchell

*Monumental Landscapes:
the early medieval barrow and cairn
cemeteries of northern and eastern Scotland*

For the first lecture of the 2020 autumn series, Dr Juliette Mitchell delivered the first ever PAS Zoom lecture, looking at *The early medieval barrow and cairn cemeteries of northern and eastern Scotland*. This was based on work carried out for her PhD thesis.

Changes are seen in funerary practices elsewhere in Britain in the early medieval period – also a time of social and political change. The Scottish burial record for this period is sparse compared with that for Anglo-Saxon England or Ireland, where large scale road building projects in recent years have led to an explosion in development-driven excavations across much of the country. However, we do have a large collection of aerial photographs, and these were gathered from the national records as well as local historic environment records to supply much of the data for Juliette's work.

The earliest excavations of barrow and cairn cemeteries were carried out in response to

coastal erosion at Ackergill (in 1905) and at Lundin Links (1960s). The cemeteries there contained circular and square barrows, often in linear arrangement and some with multiple chambers. They were not initially recognised as belonging to the early medieval period. In contrast to contemporary Anglo-Saxon and Irish practice, grave goods were extremely rare in these cemeteries.

While some sites, especially in the Islands, Caithness and Fife, have been exposed as a result of coastal erosion, some, such as Garbeg, were recorded as groups of low platform mounds. A very few have been uncovered in the course of excavations (such as at Rhynie) where there was no prior indication of their existence. Many more are known from cropmarks recorded on aerial reconnaissance photographs. These are mainly concentrated on the agricultural lands around the Moray Firth and in eastern Scotland, and on light, well drained soils. On clay soils, as across much of Aberdeenshire, the conditions for cropmark formation do not exist. There are therefore gaps in the distribution which may simply be a result of how we have been able to recognise such sites.

Other factors that affect cropmark formation include the weather – a hot dry summer is optimal for the purpose, while agricultural activity can lead both to the erasure of evidence (deep ploughing can destroy negative features) and the creation of marks that seem to mimic those caused by genuine barrows and cairns (for example, the marks left on grass by ring feeders used for cattle). Other issues include marks created by underlying geological features. These problems can to a certain extent be overcome, by comparing photographs of the same location taken over a period of years. Juliette was able to create a set of definite and probable sites, conceding that there may have been some genuine cemeteries among those she set aside as merely possible. The exceptional summer of 2018 allowed the detection of more barrows and cairns at a number of already known sites, and also sharpened definition of earlier cropmarks. The first set of questions she addressed was whether or not there were any obvious differences in funerary practice between the Northern Picts, the Southern Picts and the rest of Scotland (which in effect meant the Islands). Obviously, the spread of sites reflects in some degree those areas which are favourable for cropmark formation, but a few generalised observations were possible. On the basis of the

available data, there is a tendency for rather larger cemeteries, with more large barrows, to be found among the Northern Picts, while in the south the cemeteries (and the barrows) tend to be medium in size. The Island sites are generally smaller, mostly containing cairns revealed by erosion. Across Scotland, the smaller monuments tend to be cairns. These generalisations are not absolute: large cemeteries are known in the south.

The size of the large barrows at Tarradale and Pitgaveny suggests it was important that these were seen from a greater distance. It is possible that this reflects a statement about the importance of the dead buried there, or perhaps the power of those who created the monument, or the function of the barrows as marking significant sites. The upland sites of Croftgowan, Mains of Garten and Garbeg by contrast only include smaller barrows.

Linear and clustered groupings are seen in larger cemeteries both in northern and southern Pictland, as for example at Tarradale and Inverighty Cottage. It is tempting to see this as development of the cemetery over time. Was there a focus around which these possibly later groups were placed? Both sites have apparently less organised burials as well. At some sites, one or a very few barrows appear to have been enhanced at a later date, adding weight to the suggestion that there was an evolution of the cemeteries over time.

Excavations have been carried out at only a handful of sites. Very few grave goods of any description have been recovered; skeletal preservation is generally poor or non-existent. (The nature of the soil cover across most of Scotland is generally inimical to the survival of organic remains of any kind.) Very rarely is it possible to determine the gender or age, or to comment on the pathology of the recovered remains. Although the quantity of material is sparse, some work has begun on, for example, isotope analysis which may reveal something of the diet and origins of the individuals involved. It is hoped that a multi-disciplinary approach may be able to tease out much more information in future.

Our understanding of the chronology of barrow and cairn cemeteries depends to an extent on radio-carbon dating. This is not without its problems: often it has only been possible to obtain a date from a single individual from a given cemetery. In some cases, dates have been obtained from non-human remains or indeed

from other organic material. However, the dataset for C¹⁴ dates obtained from human remains from barrow cemeteries shows a broad spread from roughly the late 5th century through to the 7th. Most of the dates obtained at Redcastle fell within this broad range, but there were outliers. Re-examination of the evidence showed that these dates came from sparsely preserved material, and only one had yielded enough for a re-assay to be possible. In this case, the new dating gave a calibrated result in the range of AD425–585, rather than the much later date obtained initially. As well as raising questions over the reliability of the other outliers (from which there was insufficient material to retest) this pulls the use of Redcastle more in line with dates obtained elsewhere. Other dates from other sites are awaited (when normal working resumes after the Covid pandemic), but it does seem that this is a 5th to mid-7th century tradition.

This would fit with a suggestion that the departure of the Romans in the 5th century (or, at least, the lack of communication with the Roman world that brought valuable artefacts north) precipitated social and political change. It could be argued that the change in burial practice, commemorating leading individuals, was bound up with these broader changes. Barrow and cairn cemeteries may also have fallen out of use as a result of further social and political changes.

Juliette also examined the location of barrow and cairn cemeteries in relation to landscape features. This involved research into past landscapes. At Lendrick Lodge, for example, the *Old Statistical Account* described the area as uncultivated, low-lying undulating and boggy, but in the *New Statistical Account*, the local minister was able to report that it had been drained and brought under settled agriculture. The rich resources of the old bog land (water fowl, reeds for thatching and so on) had been lost. Using GIS to examine water run-off models, together with soil drainage data, it was possible to get some idea of how the local landscape may have looked when the cemeteries were in use.

Around 30% of known sites are close to beaches; a large number of inland sites are also located close to water. Often these are near possible fording points, such as at Fisherhills, by the North Esk between Montrose and St Cyrus. The ford here was on the later post road from

Montrose to Aberdeen and was recognised as potentially a dangerous crossing. Others which may have been close to crossings include Mains of Garten, across the river from a Pictish symbol stone. At Pitgaveny, large barrows are located on the higher ground perhaps marking the entrance to the former Loch Spynie, a sheltered sea loch and potential harbour. The cemeteries at Boysack Mills and Inverighty Cottage lie in proximity to the confluence of four rivers or burns.

The location and prominence of many of the barrow and cairn cemeteries in the landscape, highly visible and close to route ways or crossing points across rivers, raises interesting questions: were these territorial boundary markers, or were they markers of significant points on route ways through the landscape? The frequent proximity to rivers could be part of that pattern, not simply as marking fording points but perhaps places where a route by land met one where traffic was carried by water. Or were these seen as liminal places, boundaries where land met water, at the edge of the group's territory, an appropriate place for the living to meet the dead?

16 October 2020 – Dr Peter McNiven

Pictish in Gowrie: the evidence of Place Names
We are grateful to Mike Arrowsmith and Save the Wemyss Ancient Caves Society for hosting our October Zoom meeting, at which Peter McNiven spoke on *Pictish in Gowrie: the evidence of Place Names*.

The talk was based on three projects Peter had worked on in the area of Gowrie. The first was with Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust's Glenshee project, the second was with CATERAN's Commonwealth, a local initiative focussed on the area around the long distance walking path, The CATERAN Trail, while the third was with the Tay Landscape Partnership and covered the areas around eastern Strathearn, Perth, Scone, Kinnoull and the Carse of Gowrie.

In each case, he had studied place names with a view to what they could tell us about the landscape, farming practices, culture and society at the time when the names were coined. Unfortunately perhaps, from the point of view of PAS, he was able to find very few Pictish place names. Among the Gaelic names that are far more common, there are several that appear to be at least influenced by Pictish, and Peter acknowledged the work of Simon Taylor and others on this problem.

Peter briefly outlined current thinking on language development across the British Isles. Around AD 500, Q-Celtic Archaic Irish was spoken in Ireland, while from north to south of Britain, P-Celtic Pictish, Archaic Cumbric, Archaic Welsh and Archaic Cornish shared common roots. In part of south east Britain an early form of English had appeared. By around AD 800, Old Irish had taken root in the west of Scotland and was spreading across the country. Old Norse was spoken in the Isles. By AD 1000, Gaelic was widely spoken across Scotland, influenced in the west by Norse and the east by Pictish. We can see the evidence for this in the borrowing of Pictish words used in place name formation, words which find no place in Old Irish contexts. Examples include *dail*, *monadh*, *pett* (or *pit*) and so on. Other names suggest a Gaelic word which has been influenced by a possible Pictish cognate, such as *beinn*, *carn*, *r̥th* etc. which are used in Irish but apparently with different meanings.

Disappointingly, Peter uncovered no Pictish names in Glenshee. We might have hoped that there were some there, given that the project included the excavation of Pictish longhouses of the Pitcarmick type at Lair. However, the Gaelic and Scots names do contain a good deal of information about past agricultural practice and settlement patterns in the area.

The Cateran Trail is a circular walking route that runs for 64 miles, taking in Blairgowrie, Bridge of Cally, Kirkmichael, Spittal of Glenshee, Kirkton of Glenisla and Alyth. Only a handful of place names in the vicinity of the trail include Pictish borrowings: Forter, Doldy, Formal, Alyth, Rattray, Rochallie and the Keith. Rochallie may be a combination of two words with Pictish roots: *roth* and *cally*. The *roth* element seems to be cognate with the Scots Gaelic *ràth*, *cally* with SG *coille* or derived from **caled*, a Brittonic word conveying ‘hard,’ perhaps referring to the river punching its way through the landscape. It is also found in Caledonia – perhaps the implication is of hard or less marshy land. Forter, with a meaning of ‘upper land, or land not regularly under the plough’, is not found in Ireland. It may be a loan word from the Pictish equivalent of **uorthir*, becoming in Welsh *orthir*, meaning ‘uplands’. The element *for* in Formal is cognate with the Welsh *gor*, an intensifying prefix meaning ‘great, or projecting’, and is also found in Forgan, Fordel and Fordoun. It appears only once in Ireland. Alyth may include *a(i)l* – rock or cliff –

but the second element is still a problem. Rattray seems to combine Pictish **roth* and **trev*, meaning ‘big farm’.

Passing on to the Tay Landscapes Project, a few names south of the Earn and Tay stand out: Aberargie, ‘the settlement at the mouth of the Farg’ and Abernethy, ‘the settlement at the mouth of the Nethy burn’ contain the fairly frequent *aber* element. This occurs in over 60 place names, many of which became the sites of parish churches. Carpow, ‘the fort on the Pow burn’, is the site of a Roman fortress, the **caer* forming *car* being a Pictish loanword for ‘fort’, which also appears in Carey to the northwest of Abernethy. Not far away is Cordon, from the Pictish **carden*, a wood.

Across the river, Moncreiffe Hill with its ancient fort includes *monadh*, a borrowing of a Pictish word meaning ‘hill’ and *craobh*, the Gaelic ‘tree’ (which probably had a Pictish cognate). In this case, as the earliest mention of the name on record is in the Annals of Tigernach under AD 728, so that the coinage probably was Pictish.

Perth, from *pert*, a wood or copse, is Pictish or Brittonic. In a place otherwise devoid of trees, it tells us something about the landscape at the time the name was first given. (Bertha, as a name for the Roman fort at the mouth of the Almond, is a late medieval coining.) Elcho, on the other hand, is possibly a lost Pictish or Brittonic name containing the **al* element, meaning ‘rock or cliff’. The Gaelic cognate would have given us Alcho, as in Al Clut.

The north side of the Tay estuary has not been so well studied as Fife to the south, so that more Pictish or Pictish derived names may remain to be uncovered and recognised. Peter did, however, pick out a few: Errol, for example, appears to contain **ar*, a Pictish or Old Gaelic reflex of an early Celtic preposition **are*, ‘near, beside or on’, which also appears in, for example, Urquhart. Megginch is compounded of **mig*, ‘a bog or marsh’ and **inis*, ‘haugh, water-marsh or raised land in a bog’. These have Old Welsh cognates, not Old Gaelic. **Inis*, borrowed into Gaelic, gives the familiar *inch*.

Scone, (ScG *sgònn*) is another possible word derived from Pictish. It does not occur in Irish Gaelic and means something like ‘the place of the lump-like hill’.

Peter concluded by making the case for more in depth place name studies to expand our knowledge. He stressed the importance of hunting down the earliest records, taking us as

close as possible to the form in which the name was originally coined. This might lead to the uncovering of more Pictish borrowings, but would certainly give more material for studying place names for what they can tell us about the landscape, farming practices and culture of the period in which they were given.

As a footnote, Peter conceded that, as Cormac, the specific in Pitcarmick, is recorded as the name of one of St Columba's sixth-century companions on Iona, it may indeed be a name that dates back to the Pictish era. When RCAHMS first recorded longhouses of unknown date in the NE Perthshire landscape in the late 1980s, archaeologist Strat Halliday chose to name them Pitcarmick-type, believing them to be the remains of Pictish settlement. Subsequent excavation has confirmed this to be the case so his choice of name seems to have been a good one.

Sheila Hainey

A note on the Pictish symbol stone at Dunfallandy

In the legend of the 4th-century saint Triduana we have an indication that in trying to escape from the power which controlled Rescobie, by Forfar, she had to run as far as Dunfallandy near Pitlochry. The legend associates Triduana with St Rule. She is said to have settled at Rescobie where her beautiful eyes captivated a Pictish king – usually identified with Nechtan. She either plucked her eyes out or otherwise blinded herself and escaped, presumably to an area where she was safe from the king. When she reached sanctuary at Dunfallandy her sight was miraculously restored.

Dunfallandy has one of the only two symbol stones in Northern Perthshire. Is there any possible connection between the legend and the stone? My observations relate to the two seated figures at the top of one side of the Dunfallandy stone and the rider beneath them. Between the figures is a cross.

The Pictish Beast Symbol

I have used the terms left and right as they relate to the observer.

The seated figure at the left and the rider are accompanied by the same symbol - the Pictish Beast. This is an obviously aquatic animal which has been likened to the beaked whale and which may have some connection to the 'water-horse' of Celtic legend. Since the sea is to the east of

most of the 'Pictish' area the Beast means 'towards the east'.

The Beast in fact indicates survey lines running due east-west. In this case the northing of Dunfallandy on the current OS grid is 756.3k. This is identical to the northing of Inchbrayock, in the Montrose basin, at 756.7k. Note a difference of 4 in the last figure indicates a difference of only 400 metres.

If we conceive of a line running between these two points it passes over the hills from Pitlochry to Glen Isla where it is marked by a standing stone at Pitmudie, 756.5k. It runs on to Kirriemuir where an unmarked stone stands at the north-east corner of Caddam Wood, 756.3k north. The latter is close to a straight stretch of road known locally as 'the Roman road'. Triduana may have escaped along this route or by boat to the knoll at Cossans and on towards Blairgowrie.

Moving east Woodwrae is at 756.6k north and brings the line into the Aberlemno area. The Kingoldrum stone at 755.0k was not in its original position but may relate to the same line. Note I am not picking and choosing stones: there are no other stones along the northern border of Strathmore.

The Double-disc and z-rod Symbol

The right-hand seated figure at Dunfallandy has his/her position defined by two geometric symbols. The first is the Double disc and Z-rod which probably refers to the same provincial boundary as the same symbol to the north at Struan. The z-rod indicates the direction where the surveyor should look for a boundary at the level of a province, in this case north of Struan, the boundary between Fotla and Fortriu.

The Crescent and v-rod Symbol

The crescent and v-rod with an acute angle at Dunfallandy says that two local boundaries meet at this point. The acute angle tells the surveyors where to look for the next landmark. In this case one line leads to Struan and the other to Logierait. Possibly the most important point of the acute-angled v-rod is that it tells us that only two boundaries meet here.

The rider has the acute angled v-rod and the Beast. If the seated figure to the left refers to northern Perthshire, the rider may refer to Strathmore. The stone would then indicate a boundary running east-west along the northern edge of Strathmore.

The missing symbol

The space for a second symbol beside the left-hand figure's Beast suggests that either no other symbol was needed or that one has been removed. By analogy with the other two figures it seems that a crescent and v-rod might be expected.

The *Corpus Agrimensorum* is a collection of Roman documents on land-surveying which was available in the area in the form of two late-4th or 5th-century copies. It tells us that where three boundaries meet we should expect a carved symbol with an obtuse angle. There are three figures on the stone. It is therefore strange that while two of the three figures are marked by acute angled v-rods, the third figure has only the Beast, no v-rod. Its removal suggests that the nature of the boundary to which it referred may have changed. An obtuse angled rod would have indicated that three land-holdings meet at this point and there are three figures on the stone. It is possible that when the stone was erected there were three powerful land-holders in the area. When the political situation changed one of these three lost control of territory.

Since the direction of the line is known, the second symbol should have given either an indication of the next significant point on the boundary or the nature of the boundary at that point. The Beast would indicate that the next significant point was to the east. Removal may have been needed when the boundary which it marked was moved or when the nature of the referent became unacceptable. This may have been when a 'king' took back control of some territory or when a 'pagan' area was converted to Christianity. Triduana is said to have devoted herself to God; her oppressor is described as 'a prince of the country'.

The Boundaries

The stone at Alyth is at 748.8k north and the importance of the Alyth area has been emphasised by the discovery of the 'new stone' at Barmuckity which reads *'The boundary lies at the watershed due south over the mountains'*. Its easting at 324.5k is due north of Alyth, also 324.5k east. The boundary in question is between the northern province, Fortriu, based on the Spey catchment and a southern province based on the Isla. This may have been either Fotla or Circinn in the earlier terminology or 'Athol and Gowrie' or Angus in later times. In today's terms it lies between Perthshire and Angus to the south of the Mounth and Highland to the north. It seems

likely that the only rivers used as referents in this area were those listed by Bishop Andrew as reported in *De situ Albanie* - the Tay, the Isla and the Spey. In hilly areas it was not the rivers which formed the boundary; it was the watershed between them. So in this western area we should look for boundaries marked by river courses or watersheds involving the Tay, the Isla and the Spey.

Whether the symbols refer to political or religious land-holders it seems that some change in power structure in the area occurred after the erection of the stone. Was it also after the flight of St Triduana in the 4th century?

Helen Mulholland

Flora Davidson

(1924 – 2020)



Having recently marked her 96th birthday (*PAS Newsletter* 95), members will be saddened to learn of the death of Flora Davidson. Flora will be familiar to many of you who attended the Pictavia and Brechin Town House Museum lectures and also our PAS Conferences, as she was a faithful participant over many years. She will be sadly missed.



Flora's second book, co-written with her daughter Dr Elspeth Reid is still available.

A tribute to Ian G Scott (1926-2020)

It is hard to believe that Ian G Scott is no longer with us. A long-term member of the Pictish Arts Society, Ian and his wife Pauline were familiar and friendly figures at our conferences, most recently at Forfar in October 2019. They both trained at the Edinburgh College of Art in the School of Drawing, Painting, Design and Sculpture. There is a class photograph of 1949-50, including the young Ian and Pauline (née Kerr), and annotated by Ian, whose memory was quite phenomenal, on the Scottish Gallery website.¹ Ian was still drawing and working on various projects into his nineties, and his outstanding contribution to our understanding and appreciation of our cultural heritage was recognised when he was appointed Member of the British Empire.

Ian joined the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland in 1959 and was latterly Head of the Drawing Office until his retirement in 1989. His greatest contribution and the work for which he will always be remembered best was of course in recording the early medieval stones of Scotland, but just as fine are his drawings of prehistoric rock art in Argyll, archaeological measured site plans and maps. The RCAHMS Archive at Historic Environment Scotland preserves both the drawings that he created as a member of staff and the drawings of carved stones that he continued to produce in retirement, which form the Ian G Scott Collection of some one thousand drawings. Sometimes he would explain in print the ideas behind his work, as in his contribution



Ian and Pauline at Abercorn in 2018.

to Isabel Henderson's festschrift (published in 1997 by The Pinkfoot Press and supported by PAS): 'For some time I have wanted to explain why I draw carved stones in the way that I do and why I believe this process should be continued, despite the valuable contributions of photography and the amazing developments in computer technology'.² Fortunately, Ian was able to pass on his knowledge and especially his stippled modelling technique to John Borland during the time that they worked together.

He worked particularly closely with Isabel Henderson on the St Andrews Sarcophagus and on the Hilton of Cadboll cross-slab, and his understanding both of the practical aspects of carving in stone and of the intricacies of Insular art led to some remarkable discoveries. In the case of the Sarcophagus, Ian was able to show that some of the sculpture on the surviving side-panel stood free of the surface of the stone, and later he found similar instances where the use of near-horizontal drilling had led to sculptural elements being free of the background stone on the Jedburgh shrine-panel. The reconstruction drawings that he made of the lower part of the Hilton of Cadboll stone are testament to Ian's sensitive skills in extracting the maximum possible information even from small fragments.³ Those same skills had allowed him, together with his colleague Ian Fisher, to reconstruct the great high cross of St John at Iona Abbey in the 1970s.⁴

Many of us will have our own memories of Ian as a friend, his kindness, his charm and his slightly mischievous sense of humour, to lay alongside his unique achievements as an archaeological illustrator.

Anna Ritchie

1. <https://scottish-gallery.co.uk/news/2019/edinburgh-school-1949-1950-artists-identified>
2. Scott, I G 1997 'Illustrating Early Medieval carved stones', in Henry, D (ed) *The worm, the germ and the thorn: Pictish and related studies presented to Isabel Henderson*, 129-32. Balgavies, Angus: The Pinkfoot Press. See also the longer account in Scott, I G 1996 'Archaeological illustration: personal experience and the drawing of carved stones for publication', *Graphic Archaeology* 1996, 1-13 (= Journal of the Association of Archaeological Illustrators and Surveyors).
3. James, H F, Henderson, I, Foster, S M & Jones S 2008 *A fragmented masterpiece: recovering the biography of the Hilton of Cadboll Pictish cross-slab*. Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. See illus 4.4 on page 83.
4. RCAHMS 1982 *Argyll: an inventory of the monuments. Vol 4, Iona*. Edinburgh: HMSO. See pages 197-204.

The 'Rules' of Pictish Symbol Usage – the author responds

In *PAS Newsletter* 97 Graeme Cruickshank provided a detailed commentary and critique on my article, 'The Rules of Pictish Symbol Usage' (*PAS Newsletter* 96). I would like to thank him for his interest and hope this response will answer most of his questions and explain the nature and method of the research.









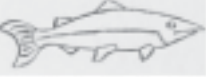





















While trying to interest PAS readers with the project's broad scope and main findings, the original article condensed a 15,000-word dissertation into a short newsletter article so it was inevitable that there would be gaps and questions. I am pleased to have the opportunity to answer them here and would be happy to correspond with members who would like to find out more. This response will address the broad questions that Cruickshank raised under a series of headings, rather than point by point.

 1. Disc	 2. Double-Disc Unconnected	 3. Double-Disc	 4. Triple Disc
 5. Double-Disc & Z-Rod	 6. Mirror-Case	 8. Crescent with V Rod	 9. Crescent
 10. Double-Crescent	 11. Bow and Arrow	 12. Arch	 13. Arch & V-Rod
 14. Ogee	 14.1. Ogee variant	 15. Triple Oval	 16. Triquetra
 17. Rectangle	 17.1 Bulbous Square	 17.2 Square-with-line or Placard	 18. L-Shape
 19. Step	 20. Step with curved ends	 21. Tuning Fork	 22. Notched Rectangle
 23. Notched Rect & Z-Rod	 23.1. Rectangle with Rod	 24.1 Mirror, 24.2 Comb	 25. Hammer
 26. Anvil	 27. Pincers	 28. Shears	 29. Crozier
 30. Centaur	 31. Pictish Beast	 32. Bull	 33. Bull's Head & Serpent
 34. Boar	 35. Lion	 35.1 Dog	 36. Horse

1a Pictish Designs

Which potential symbols were recorded and analysed?

Figures 1a and 1b show the Pictish designs which were treated as potential symbols. Rodded examples of serpent, crescent, arch and double-disc were treated as separate designs. Other variations were analysed as potential modifiers to the main designs. These included notches on double-discs and mirror-cases, the bar on the triple-disc (cauldron), and bulbous indents on arches and crescents. The modifiers were addressed in a separate chapter of the dissertation and not included in the *PAS Newsletter* 96 article.

37. Stag 	38. Wolf 	39.1 Deer-Head 	39.2 Dog Head 
39.3 Horse's Head 	39.4 Bull's Head 	40.1 Eagle 	40.2 Goose 
41. Salmon 	42. Sea-Horse 	43. Hippocampus 	44. Serpent 
45. Serpent & Z-Rod 	45.1 Serp & Straight Rod 	46 Flower (2, 1 & 3) 	47.1 BeastA 
47.2 BeastB Other quad- rured (example shown) 	48. Bear 	49. Sea Monster 	50. Sword 
51. Wheel 	52. Terret 	53. Zig-Zag 	54. Triskale in Circle 
55. 3 Small Discs 	56. Triangle 	57. Pentacle 	58. Semi-Circle 
59.1 Bird-Man 	59.2 Beast-Man Any beast-headed man that is not a centaur or bird-man	60.1 to 60.9 Nine different human representations not included in analysis	70.1 to 70.3 Three styles of Crosses not included in analysis
71. 'Scene'. Representation Scenes not included in analysis, e.g. hunting	72. Spiral 	Image Credits All images from Anderson & Allen ECMS pp.58-73 unless otherwise stated. Author (17.2, 47.2, 56, 59.1 & 72) Forsyth, 'Some Thoughts ...' (14.1, 17.1 & 40.2)	
Image Credits (continued) Lee, in Appendices to 'Pictish symbols revealed as a written language ...' (23.1, 39.1, 39.3, 39.4, 45.1, 46.1, 46.3, 47.1, 48, 51 to 55, 57, 58), HES Canmore (49 & 50 from https://canmore.org.uk/collection/952087 accessed 28 August 2019) HES Canmore (35.1 from https://canmore.org.uk/collection/1359433 accessed 28 August 2019)			

1b Pictish Designs (cont)

What controls were used to ensure the accuracy of the data and analysis?

As outlined in the original article, the condition of the artefact and the confidence level that the correct Pictish design had been identified were both recorded. Cruickshank dismisses this approach, 'making an assessment is equivalent to poking a stick into a hornets' nest', but it is of critical importance and can be done objectively. Many writers have listed the numbers of stones with single symbols on

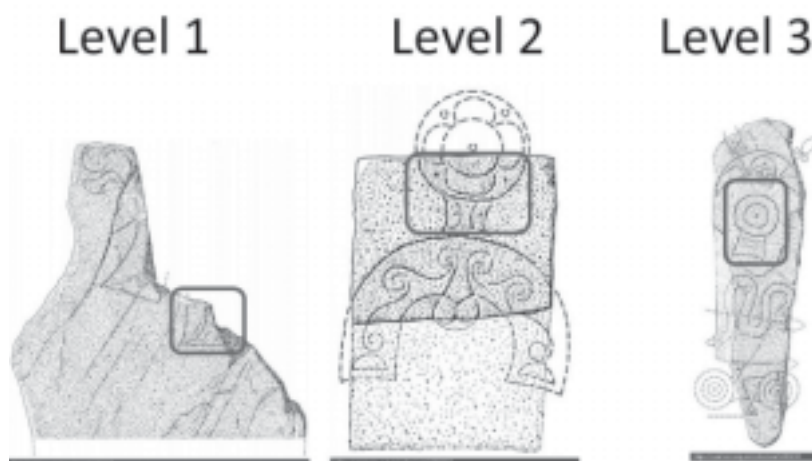
them without taking any account of whether they were dealing with fragments or complete artefacts, which tells us nothing about how symbols were used. The condition of each artefact was recorded as shown in figure 2.

Recorded	Description
Y	[Yes] complete or nearly complete
G	Good. Incomplete but at least two symbols are visible, or one symbol with a clear border that suggests it appeared singly.
F	Fragment which does not meet criteria for 'Good'
D	Doubtful provenance or the presence of symbols is dubious
L	Lost artefact so unverifiable. If there is photographic evidence of its existence, condition, and what it contained, it was recorded as Y or G.

2 Artefact Condition

Confidence	Description
1	Low to Medium level of confidence that the recorded design has a correct attribution
2	Medium to High level of confidence but another possible attribution could be made. Both designs were recorded with most likely one referred to as the Primary Attribution
3	High confidence level with no other likely attribution possible

3 Attribution Confidence



4 Attribution Confidence Example

The identification of designs is not easy because many are worn, and some are similar to others. If doubtful attributions are included in an analysis it leads to inaccurate results. The level of confidence in symbol/design attribution was recorded as shown in figure 3. Figure 4 shows an example of mirror-case confidence levels for Corrachree, Inverurie 2 and Inverurie 1, which were recorded as one, two and three respectively (left to right).

How were these controls used in the analysis?

The analyses of the artefacts and the Pictish designs they contain were undertaken in multiple stages which are summarised below.

1. Recording of Pictish design (potential symbol) data for each artefact
2. Build hypothesis (that there are three symbol types: pairing, auxiliary and lone)
3. Review data for each design to posit whether it is a pairing, auxiliary or lone symbol
4. Statistical analysis of each design to measure how well it conforms to type on Class I
5. Statistical analysis of each design to measure how well it conforms to type on Class II
6. Statistical analysis of each Class I artefact to measure how well it conforms to the 'rules'
7. Statistical analysis of each Class II artefact to measure how well it conforms to the 'rules'
8. Statistical analysis of portable artefacts to measure how they conform to the 'rules'
9. Statistical analysis of caves and living rock to measure how they conform to the 'rules'

Pictish Designs on Class-1			All Class-1 Artefacts						Complete Class-1 Artefacts					
ID	Short	Full Name	Occurs	Pair	Expl	?	Pair%	Fit%	Occurs	Pair	Expl	?	Pair%	Fit%
8	CrV	Crescent and V-Rod	70	59	7	4	84%	94%	38	36	0	2	95%	95%
5	DDZ	Double Disc and Z-Rod	34	30	3	1	88%	97%	16	16	0	0	100%	100%
31	PBeast	Pictish Beast	30	27	2	1	90%	97%	16	16	0	0	100%	100%
6	Mcase	Mirror Case	20	18	0	2	90%	90%	11	9	0	2	82%	82%
17	Rect	Rectangle	20	16	2	2	80%	90%	10	8	0	2	80%	80%
12	Arch	Arch	18	18	0	0	100%	100%	9	9	0	0	100%	100%
41	Salm	Salmon	15	13	2	0	87%	100%	9	9	0	0	100%	100%
23	NRectZ	Notched Rect & Z-Rod	12	11	1	0	92%	100%	7	7	0	0	100%	100%
40.1	Eagle	Eagle	12	12	0	0	100%	100%	8	8	0	0	100%	100%
4	TrD	Triple Disc	12	11	1	0	92%	100%	7	7	0	0	100%	100%
3	DD	Double Disc (joined)	7	6	1	0	86%	100%	4	4	0	0	100%	100%
45	SerZ	Serpent and Z-Rod	7	7	0	0	100%	100%	4	4	0	0	100%	100%
9	Cr	Crescent	6	4	2	0	67%	100%	2	2	0	0	100%	100%
21	TFrk	Tuning Fork	6	4	2	0	67%	100%	3	3	0	0	100%	100%
46	Flwr	Flower	6	5	0	1	83%	83%	4	3	0	1	75%	75%
22	NRect	Notched Rectangle	5	2	2	1	40%	80%	2	1	0	1	50%	50%
1	Disc	Disc	4	4	0	0	100%	100%	3	3	0	0	100%	100%
14	Ogee	Ogee	4	4	0	0	100%	100%	1	1	0	0	100%	100%
15	TrOv	Triple Oval	4	3	1	0	75%	100%	2	2	0	0	100%	100%
34	Boar	Boar	4	2	1	1	50%	75%	2	1	0	1	50%	50%
40.2	Goose	Goose	4	3	1	0	75%	100%	3	3	0	0	100%	100%
44	Ser	Serpent	4	4	0	0	100%	100%	4	4	0	0	100%	100%
10	DCr	Double Crescent	3	3	0	0	100%	100%	1	1	0	0	100%	100%
38	Wolf	Wolf	3	2	1	0	67%	100%	1	1	0	0	100%	100%
51	Wheel	Wheel	2	1	0	1	50%	50%	2	1	0	1	50%	50%
18	L-Shp	L-shape	2	2	0	0	100%	100%	2	2	0	0	100%	100%
39.1	H-Deer	Deer head	2	1	1	0	100%	100%	1	1	0	0	100%	100%
39.2	H-Dog	Dog Head	2	2	0	0	100%	100%	1	1	0	0	100%	100%
17.2	SqrL	Square with line below	2	2	0	0	100%	100%	2	2	0	0	100%	100%
56	Tri	Triangle	2	2	0	0	100%	100%	1	1	0	0	100%	100%
2	DDU	Double Disc unconnected	1	0	0	1	0%	0%	1	0	0	1	0%	0%
11	Bow	Bow and Arrow	1	1	0	0	100%	100%	1	1	0	0	100%	100%
14.1	Ogee2	Ogee variant	1	1	0	0	100%	100%	1	1	0	0	100%	100%
17.1	BSqr	Bulbous square	1	1	0	0	100%	100%	0	0	0	0	0%	0%
19	Step	Step	1	1	0	0	100%	100%	1	1	0	0	100%	100%
23.1	RectR	Rectangle with Rod	1	0	0	1	0%	0%	1	0	0	1	0%	0%
37	Stag	Stag	1	1	0	0	100%	100%	1	1	0	0	100%	100%
39.3	H-Hrse	Horse's Head	1	0	1	0	0%	100%	0	0	0	0	0%	0%
49	SeaM	Sea Monster	1	1	0	0	100%	100%	1	1	0	0	100%	100%
55	3SmD	Three small discs	1	1	0	0	100%	100%	0	0	0	0	0%	0%
58	SemiC	Semi-Circle	1	0	0	1	0%	0%	0	0	0	0	0%	0%
72	Spiral	Spiral	1	0	0	1	0%	0%	1	0	0	1	0%	0%
Total for all Pictish Designs on Class-1			334	285	31	18	85%	95%	184	171	0	13	93%	93%

5 Class I Pairing Designs Interim Results

In stage 1, data were recorded for all designs and artefacts, including condition and attribution-confidence levels. Only the design occurrences recorded at confidence levels of high (3) or medium primary attribution (2) were included in the data for stages 2, 3, 4 and 5. The statistical analyses in Stages 4 and 5 were done twice, once for complete artefacts (condition=Y) and then for all artefacts. The complete artefacts could be analysed with great confidence and robustness, provided there were sufficient examples to work with. For the more infrequent symbols, it was important to analyse all artefacts, including fragments, but to treat an artefact's fragmentary condition or dubious provenance as an allowable exception. The analyses of Class I, Class II and portable artefacts (stages 6, 7 and 8) were done in a similar way.

Figure 5 shows a sample of the data analysis after stage 4 (Class I), sorted by the total number of occurrences of each potential Pairing Symbol. The last column on the right (Fit%) shows how well

the design conformed to type on complete Class I artefacts. Note that this shows Class I only so is an interim result set.

How were exceptions handled?

The number of exceptions that were not explained by an artefact's condition is shown in the column headed with a '?'. Out of 184 potential Pairing Symbol occurrences on complete Class I artefacts, 171 were paired. Of the 13 unexplained exceptions, four were for designs which were rejected as symbols, so there were only nine examples of paired symbols not behaving as expected. Each of these exceptions was discussed individually in the dissertation. Exceptions were reviewed after every stage in the process. The original article in *PAS Newsletter* 96 discussed some exceptions: Newton 2, Kirriemuir 1 and Wester Denoon, where mirrors appear without Pairing Symbols. Another example of an exception is St Madoes (figure 6) which has three Pictish symbols in individual rectangular panels carved in relief, below a sequence of three horsemen. This triple syntax does not support the pairing hypothesis and it is tempting to think that each horseman is represented by a single symbol here. Nevertheless, it is possible that the symbol layout is shorthand for two pairs. The Pictish beast is below the other two and positioned centrally. A normal Pictish pair has one symbol above the other, so it may represent a crescent and V-rod paired with a Pictish beast and a rodDED double-disc paired with a Pictish beast.



6 *St Madoes*

How did the study identify the Auxiliary Symbols?

As discussed above, the Auxiliary Symbols were analysed in the same way as the Pairing Symbols. Cruickshank observes that their numbers, other than mirror and comb, are limited so there is considerably less evidence to work with. This is true. However, I disagree with his opinion that they 'do not sit especially happily together as a single grouping'. They have clear things in common that mark them out as a separate group. Their positioning on the artefacts is always subsidiary to a pair; they are smaller, sit below the pair, or are set off to the side. That was the sole deciding factor in grouping them together as Auxiliary Symbols. The observation that all had something else in common came later: they were all accurate representations of personal items or tools. This sets them apart from all the other Pictish Symbols, which is an important finding.

Cruickshank disagrees with the study's Auxiliary Symbols, except the mirror and comb. Rather than discuss each, this response will address the hammer and anvil as examples. He describes the hammer and anvil on the Abernethy stone as sitting either side of a broken sword (tuning fork) but neglects to mention that his broken sword sits above a crescent with V-rod, with which it is paired. The pair are more prominent than the Auxiliary hammer and anvil because of their size, decoration, and position. They are centre stage, large and more decoratively carved, with a typical pairing position of one above the other. The plain hammer and anvil are off to the side, smaller and undecorated. He then discusses the hammer, anvil, and pincers on Dunfallandy arguing that it is a 'Class II stone, where symbols are scattered in relation to other narrative elements, making their relationship much more uncertain and debatable'. I disagree with this assertion. One of the remarkable things about Class II is that Paired Symbols remain very prominent despite the accompanying narrative elements and Christian iconography, usually appearing towards the top or prominent in other ways. On the Dunfallandy stone each human figure is annotated with a Symbol Pair, although one symbol at the top left remains incomplete or erased. They are all in prominent positions and are carved in relief. Compare these to the Auxiliary hammer, anvil and pincers which are consigned to the foot of the stone and are incised rather than in relief. Cruickshank argues that this

and their clear incision makes them the focus of the composition, but I respectfully disagree. Note that while Auxiliary Symbols are subsidiary to the Pairing Symbols, that does not mean they are unimportant.

Before leaving Auxiliary Symbols, I must clarify my comment, ‘possibly also a sword on living rock’ might be considered an auxiliary. Cruickshank correctly identifies Anwoth as the living rock in question and that the article’s words might contradict the numbers in the table. The focus of the study was on the Class I and Class II steles because they are the most formal examples of the Pictish Symbol system. There are no other possible Auxiliary Symbols in that part of the corpus. Therefore, any argument for a potential contender must outweigh its absence on Class I and Class II. The composition of Anwoth could be interpreted as a pair with an Auxiliary sword or pin but that is insufficient evidence to call it a definite Auxiliary Symbol. The sword never appears on Class I or Class II artefacts, its location is outside Pictland, and there are other interpretations of the composition. Forysth and Thickpenney discuss various possibilities including the Norse legend of Sigurd slaying the dragon Fafnir.

Lone Symbol Questions

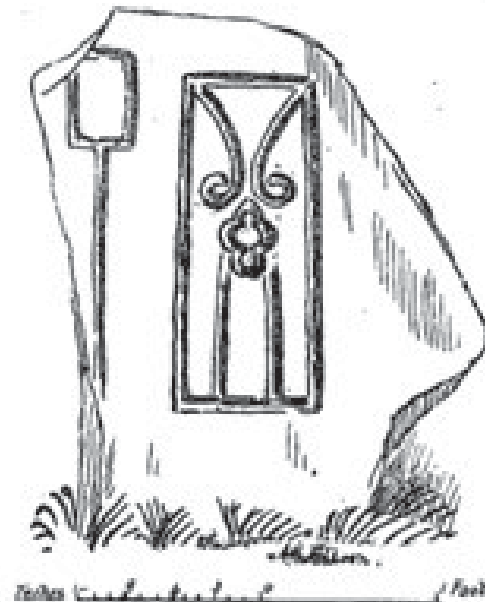
The artefacts with Lone Symbols also appear in small numbers, apart from the Burghead bulls. Of the bear, Cruickshank wrote, ‘not considered is another dubious but possible bear at Huntly’. This was considered by the study but not recorded as being present on the stone, even at a low confidence level. In his 1889 (*PSAS*) report of the find, Anderson says of Huntly 2, ‘There are faint traces of what may be the figure of an animal’. The accompanying drawing shows the faintest of lines, from which one cannot be certain that a design is present. In *ECMS* Allen reproduces the same drawing but makes no mention of the possibility of an animal symbol on the stone. No other later writer that I am aware of makes a confident assertion that there is an animal on this stone. All readily available photographs and sketches of the stone were consulted, and none shows any trace.

Cruickshank also adds the deer’s head at Dunachton, and the steers at Kinsgimills and Lochardil as candidate Lone Symbols. I would concur with the steers; they may represent a separate Lone Symbol. However, they were treated as bulls for the purposes of this study

because the differentiation was not considered significant. Like the bulls, they face right and appear near potential fort settings. The stone at Dunachton had been trimmed for use as a lintel on a later building, leaving the deer’s head uncharacteristically close to the top edge. It is more likely that this was originally paired with another symbol as it is on every appearance on a complete artefact (three Class II and one complete Class I occurrences).

The newly identified ‘Placard’ Symbol

The study identified a new symbol: the ‘placard’. This design was first recorded by Hutcheson in 1884 in *PSAS* (figure 7) but had never been accorded the status of a bona fide Pictish symbol. It has been disregarded by all scholars without reasoned explanation.



7 Cargill (Hutcheson in *PSAS*)

The placard appears on two Class I artefacts: Cargill (figures 7 and 9) and Pool (figure 8). On Cargill it appears to the left of a rectangle symbol, where Mack says it is a later addition but provides no justification for his view. It was discovered in a dyke by the local schoolmaster



8 Pool Showing Placard



9 Cargill Showing Placard

who reported it to Alexander Hutcheson who recorded both designs and made no distinction between them in his detailed description of the stone's incision techniques, which suggests that they are contemporary with each other. Similarly, *ECMS* makes no suggestion that it is anything but original. Modern day drawings by HES and photographs show both figures clearly. Although Mack describes Cargill as complete, the top of the placard had been chipped off before Hutcheson's 1884 drawing. If it was a later addition, it was done before the stone was reused and before it was damaged.

Cargill's lack of Pictish flair, scrolls and simplicity might make it questionable, but it is not unique. The same simple structure and style are evident at Pool, although the latter example has a curved line. Mack recorded a double-disc symbol on Pool in 1997 but later decided it was not a Pictish Symbol stone. This study argues that there are three Symbols: the double-disc, placard and what may be a comb. The stone was found reused as a paving stone during an archaeological investigation of a pre-Norse structure in 1985. Carbon-dating of the find layer showed it to be mid-sixth century, in keeping with it being a Pictish artefact. There is another detail that confirms that they are the same symbol. The photograph of the Pool symbol shows a short line to the right of the main line. Photographs of Cargill show short lines on either side of the main line, which appear intrinsic to the design. Identifying this design as a Pairing Symbol makes more sense of these otherwise

odd artefacts. Therefore, 'placard' is proposed as a Pictish Pairing Symbol of which there are two examples.

Cruickshank enjoys poking fun at the name placard, but the name itself is irrelevant to the study's findings. The study considered non-fauna Pairing Symbols as non-representational, so the name is purely descriptive. This is very much in keeping with how symbols have been named for 150 years. The design was originally recorded by the study as 'Square with Line' or SqrL for short. Descriptive though this is, it is a bit cumbersome and may be too restrictive, because there is another example that might be a placard or related design.



10 Invereen

On Invereen (figure 10) a circle and line accompanies a recognised symbol pair. Thomas, Mack and Fraser say it is a later addition. Clarke disagrees, saying that all three symbols were created using the same technique. Its simplicity is at odds with the other two symbols, yet it makes good use of the space. If it is a later addition, why was the crescent with V-rod not placed more centrally on the stone? It was recorded by this project as a possible mirror with a low confidence level, but it may be a placard-related symbol.

Although this article does not answer every question in Cruickshank's lengthy critique, I would be happy to answer the remaining ones via email, in person, or in a future article should the editor wish. In the meantime, I trust that this broad response answers the substantive points.

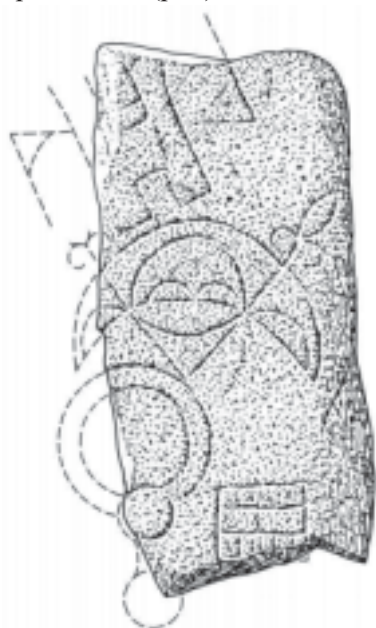
Hugh Levey

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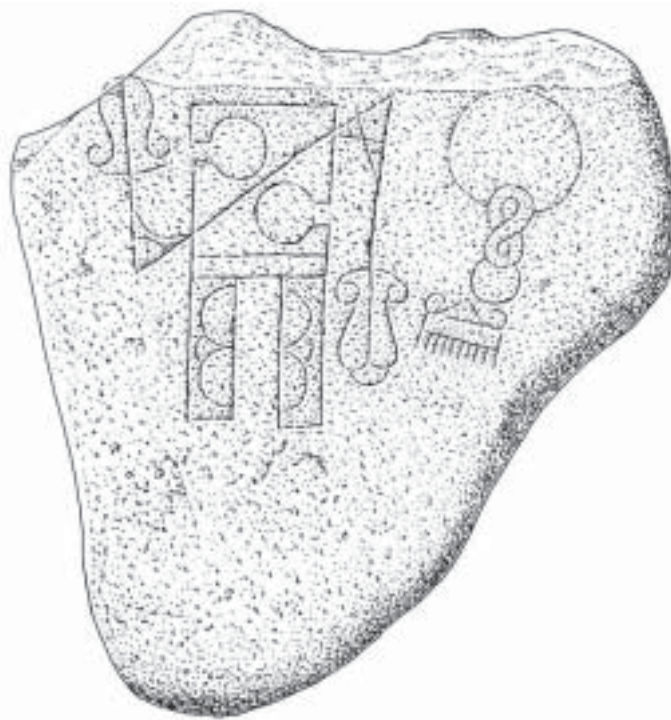
In Search of a Symbol System –a response

I am puzzled by a couple of things in Graeme Cruickshank's article 'In Search of a Symbol System' (*PAS Newsletter* 97), his response to Hugh Levey's article in the previous edition. In the part concerning single main/auxiliary symbols, Mr Cruickshank refers to Craigton 2. The RCAHMS catalogue *The Pictish Symbol Stones of Scotland* (I Fraser, ed, 2008) lists only one stone under this name (p96) with notched rectangle, crescent and V-rod and flower, not the notched rectangle and Z-rod, mirror and comb as described. Cruickshank's description does however match Clynemilton 2, a probably incomplete stone (p96).



Park House, drawn by John Borland, with conjectural reconstruction of notched rectangle and Z-rod. Scale 1:10 SC1081310 Copyright HES

He goes on to state that Kintradwell 3 has a crescent and V-rod plus a mirror and comb, as does Park in Aberdeenshire. If he is referring to Park House (p36), this stone clearly has two main symbols – the crescent and V-rod mentioned and above it, an incomplete symbol of notched flower or rectangle and V-rod. It should therefore not be considered among stones with a single main symbol. *Alan Briggs*



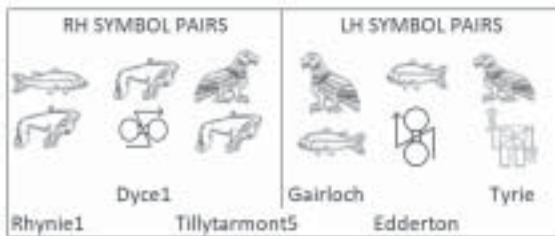
Clynemilton 2, drawn by John Borland, Scale 1:10 SC1359625 Copyright HES

The Face of the Symbols

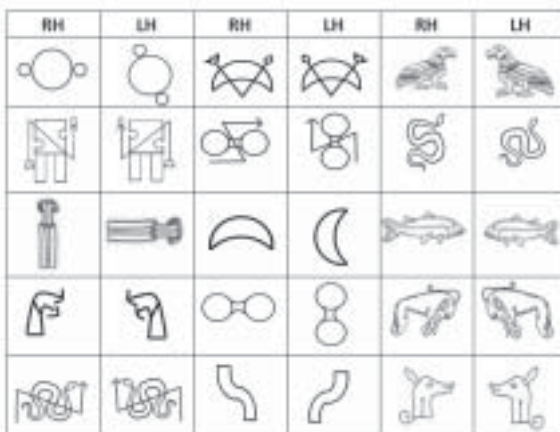
(Part 1)

Many symbols are seen to have left-facing and right-facing forms. Is there any significance to the use of a different ‘face’?

Identifying the direction animal symbols face is straightforward, but do the abstract symbols also have a corresponding right-hand (RH) and left-hand (LH) form? For abstract symbols the orientation can be determined by matching those that are paired with an animal symbol. They can then be cross-referenced with abstract symbols paired with each other. In this way, we can build up a list of what is considered RH or LH versions of each symbol.



This turns out to be possible using only Class I symbol stones, and by ignoring any symbol stone that has a question mark over it in regard to an accompanying mirror+comb, whether still visible or undiagnosed on fragments or eroded stones. To start with, I also ignored those pairs with a sole mirror, but later it became clear that this group also fitted into this scenario, so they could be added back in. The following are examples of symbols in their RH and LH forms.



Some abstract symbols merely mirror their forms left to right. But, rotating some of these abstract symbols on the horizontal plane through 180 degrees has no effect, for example, the cauldron symbol with its handles in the horizontal plane will appear the same. In this case, the left-hand version of the symbol is

created by turning the symbol through 90 degrees only, so that the symbol appears to be in the vertical plane – in the case of the cauldron symbol this will put the handles at the top and bottom instead of to each side.

Right-hand rodded symbols are those with the ‘leaf’ end of the V-rod or Z-rod opening to the upper right-hand corner. Their left-hand counterpart has the ‘leaf’ end opening to the upper left corner of the symbol. Sometimes, the body of the symbol is also turned 90 or 180 degrees, but the ‘face’ seems to be dictated primarily by the direction of the rod.

Of the Class I symbols that I have been able to define as either RH or LH, the overriding preference is for RH symbols, with a right to left ratio of 6.7:1. This preference however changes dramatically for Class II stones, with a ratio of only 1.26:1. There are only two symbols (in both Class I and Class II) which have more LH instances than RH, the snake and Z-rod with 2 RH and 14 LH, and the divided rectangle and Z-rod with 3 RH and 9 LH.

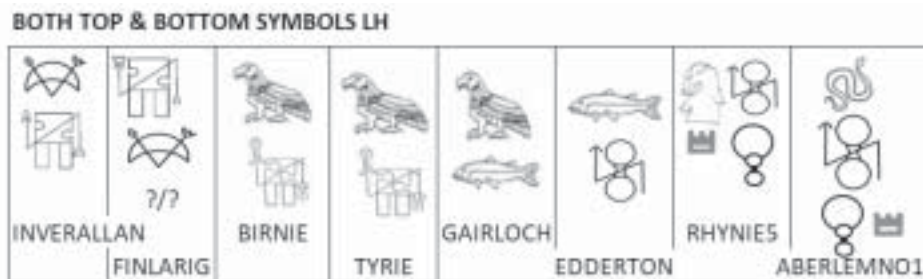
For many of the less frequent abstract symbols there is no example of a second face, but there seems no reason to presume these forms did not exist. Given the relatively high frequency of right-hand symbols, it is likely that most, if not all, of these less frequent abstract symbols are the right-hand form.

The fact that the symbols are predominantly right-hand suggests that the symbols are functioning within the cultural context which we would expect of the Picts as a Celtic language speaking group. In all Celtic languages there is an integral sense of sun-wise direction, to the right is the correct and good direction to move in accord with nature. The Irish word *deas* (Old Irish *dess*) means ‘right’, ‘good’ and ‘south’, ‘south’ being the direction of the sun, and ‘right’ the direction in which it moves. From this comes the word *deiseil* (Old Irish *dessel*), ‘southward’ or ‘sun-wise, the direction in which it is proper to circumambulate a sacred object such as a well, a tree, or a church.

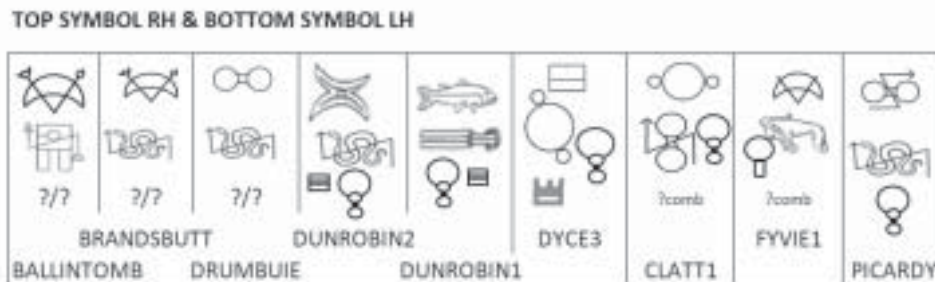
On the other hand, the word *tuath*, ‘left’ and ‘north’ has the opposite negative connotations. Which raises the question why a left-hand symbol would be chosen to begin with. Some external factor appears to be dictating the choice for each symbol stone. Once we know more about the rules governing the symbol stones, this hopefully will enable us to investigate further the significance of each choice.

The above process of identifying symbol faces is only possible because a symbol pair presents both symbols facing the same direction, providing there is no accompanying mirror+/-comb. This was evident on stones with two animal symbols to begin with, but turned out to be valid for all others as well. It is also valid for symbol pairs with a single mirror and no comb, but not always valid for symbol pairs accompanied by a mirror+comb.

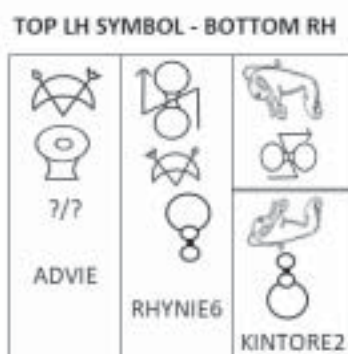
The general preference is for a symbol pair to have both symbols facing to the right, or both symbols facing to the left. That said though, there is only a handful of stones with both LH symbols.



There is however another group of symbol pairs that have a RH symbol over a LH symbol, and here we find these are accompanied by a mirror+/-comb. Which begins the discussion of what the function of the mirror/comb might be.



We do have examples of a symbol pair with a LH face over a RH face, but only on 3 stones out of the current total of just over 200. Each of these stones has a question mark over it.



It is unclear if Advie has a mirror/comb on the eroded part of the stone. Kintore2 is a stone that is weird and exceptional in more than one way – it holds one of only two Class I LH Pictish beasts, but the reverse has a RH beast and the only mirror above a symbol, both upside down. Rhynie 6 has a LH double-disc and Z-rod over a RH crescent and V-rod with a mirror underneath. To jump ahead for a moment, the single mirror normally

signifies that the symbols in the pair are in a reverse order to normal, meaning that in a sense the RH symbol is noted as above the LH through application of the mirror. This Rhynie6 setup of a mixed face pair with single mirror does not occur elsewhere in the body of Class I symbol pairs, so the question is whether on this one stone we have a rare but valid configuration.

So far then, here are the aspects of symbol face identified. We see many symbols having a RH and LH face which can be identified. The likelihood is that all symbols have a RH and LH face, although we do not have examples as yet. The RH face is preferred, at least on Class I stones. Symbols in a pair should be both RH or both LH. If, however, a mix of RH and LH symbols is needed on a stone, then the LH symbol will usually be placed in the lower position and the pair will be accompanied by a mirror+/-comb.

In Part 2, I will discuss the order of symbols and the use of the single mirror. In Part 3, the idea of dominance and the use of the mirror+comb.

Helen McKay

St. Andrew's Well and cross

At the October 2019 PAS Conference in Forfar, in my paper on the Pictish stones of Angus and Gowrie, I included a brief account of the discovery of this cross slab. This article provides more details.

During the early 1980s, Angus Museums, of which I was District Curator, started setting up an archaeological Sites and Monuments Record. Much of the early work was undertaken by Gillian Zealand, my Assistant Curator, with grateful assistance from Lis Thoms of Dundee Museum. Both Gillian and I had previously worked at Dundee Museum with Lis, and she had established a system covering much of Tayside and Fife.

The work gathered pace when John Sheriff joined us as Archaeologist. John took this to another level with both fieldwork and by adding sites on early maps, especially the John Ainslie map of Angus of 1794.

One such site was St. Andrew's Well in the parish of Lintrathen, just in the foothills of the glens. The Ordnance Survey Record Card (O.S.495) recorded the well at map reference NO 2786 6109, surveyed by 'NR' in 1927. The Old Name Book of 1862 described it as 'a fine spring built with stone, over it is a slab with a defaced figure carved on it – supposed to be a cross'.

It was visited again by 'JLD' (Anna Ritchie remembers a surveyor named Jim Davidson) on the 28th November 1957 and the description stood. However, on his next visit on the 22nd September the following year, JLD remarked 'This well, or spring no longer exists. A cavity in the short embankment by the streamside denotes its site. The sculptured slab was not seen.' (All that I can surmise is that between these dates the estate had destroyed the site.)

Worse was to follow on the next visit by 'NKB' on the 22nd November 1967 who recorded 'As described. Not known locally.'

It will come as no surprise that John Sheriff could add nothing in the 1980s, and when I visited the site shortly afterwards, looking for the cross slab, I had no luck either. And so, the story would have ended there, just another lost well and cross.

However, in 2019 a new group was formed, the Glenisla History Society. Meg Mearns and Wend Clark of the society approached me to assist with the research of some sites of interest, including wells, so how could I resist?

On the 26th of June we had an initial jaunt, which included the Lady Well at Glenisla Parish Church. This well had been infilled in 1842, but the spring had survived. The next site was more eventful, travelling deep into Glen Quharity in Wend's Landrover on a bumpy track to the old farmhouse of Longdrum. I was led to the steading, and as the door opened and my eyes adjusted to the light, there, lying on two old car tyres, was an incised cross slab!

I'm fairly sure that I uttered "Wow!!!" or something similar. Unlike in neighbouring Perthshire, such cross-incised stones are as rare as hen's teeth in Angus. Although they lack the sublime artistry of the Pictish cross slabs, they are markers of an early ecclesiastical world of which we have few records or artefacts. To say that I was delighted is an understatement.



1 *The cross slab in Longdrum Steading*

The cross-slab had been discovered by an estate worker earlier that year who found it in the sheep dip at Longdrum. It was moved to the steading, but locally there was no knowledge of how it had got there. There was only one contender for me – the lost St Andrew's cross from the other side of the glen.



2 Meg Mearns on the site of St Andrew's Well

We re-visited the well site on the 8th of July and were able to confirm that the well had indeed been infilled. Not only that but the whole site, on an embankment on the north edge of the field, now had tons of stones dumped on it. Despite this, I was still able to make out a cavity which may have held the spring.

On the First Edition O.S. map, there was a track going east from Leys in Blackwater glen to the well. The Old Name Book of 1862 had an apt description of the pass – ‘A narrow and precipitous defile between two hills, its sides are very steep’. I was very keen to follow the track, so we had another jaunt to walk from Leys in the west through the pass. This was a well-worn and doubtless ancient path, unsurprisingly Balloch being Gaelic meaning a pass. It did convince me that the well had been an important site of pilgrimage in times gone by.

However, to return to the stone itself: it is a slab of local sandstone, some 11cm thick, about 117cm in height and 34cm in width. An incised Greek cross is carved on the upper part of the slab, the cross being more or less equal-armed with barred terminals on each arm. The lower arm, however, has a line which continues beyond the bar, which gives the appearance of a shaft, which tapers to a point. A square hole looks to have been added later just below the centre of the cross.

If this line is contemporary, then crosses of this form are rare. I searched the literature for similar crosses in Scotland in vain, including Ian Fisher's magnificent *Early Medieval Sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands*. Early crosses are rare enough in Angus, and almost as rare are scriptural dedications to early medieval churches and wells. Until I saw this cross, I had discounted St. Andrew's Well as being early medieval, but this now had me thinking.

Mention St. Andrew's cross to most people and the saltire immediately comes to mind. Images in ecclesiastical art abound of the martyred apostle crucified on an X-shaped cross. However, most of these are of later medieval date, and I found Ursula Hall's 2006 *The Cross of St. Andrew* invaluable for my understanding, and my quest for something earlier. In her book she includes two illustrations of St. Andrew depicted with the kind of cross we had discovered.

A drawing of an 11th century door, now destroyed at San Paolo fuori le Mura, Rome, shows St. Andrew with such a cross, the 'shaft' being held in his hand. Furthermore, a wall painting from Sen d'Urgell, now in the Museum of Catalan Art in Barcelona, dating to the 12th century also has St. Andrew carrying a very similar cross.

If our cross is of this type then it is quite a rarity, and if the lower line is not contemporary carving, then the cross is still not the X-type cross normally associated with St. Andrew, especially in later times. This strongly supports the carving being early medieval in date.

The cross-slab was later moved from Longdrum for safekeeping, and as I understand it was reported to the Treasure Trove Unit. Whatever



3 C12th painting of St Andrew with his 'carrying' cross, now in the Museum of Catalan Art, Barcelona

the outcome, I do hope that it will be safeguarded as a beautiful and rare example of an early cross. The well itself must have been an important site of pilgrimage, not just on St. Andrew's Day, but perhaps visited as a healing well? It seems a shame that it is now covered with boulders. Standing on a nearby hillock, I tried to picture the well as it had been, tucked in a low embankment, issuing 'fine spring water'. With a little effort the stones could be removed and perhaps the well site marked in some way if it is beyond restoration. Could it once more be a place of pilgrimage?

I am extremely grateful to Meg Mearns and Wend Clark of the Glenisla History Society for all their enthusiasm and also to Wend Clark and Abe Hamilton for their kind hospitality on my visits. I must also thank Mr and Mrs Gifford of Kinnordy Estates for kindly permitting access. I am also grateful to John Borland for helpful comments.

Norman Atkinson



The Conan Stone – update

After undergoing very complex conservation, the Conan Stone has now been delivered to Dingwall Museum and is in the final stages of being displayed. At the moment the museum window is masked, but we are told that the stone will soon be visible from the street. The museum is scheduled to reopen in the spring of 2021 – all we need is something remotely resembling normality in the world so we can go and see it. Here's hoping ... *JB*



Forthcoming Events

Lecture will continue to be delivered online via Zoom until further notice. Details of how to access the lectures will be circulated by email to members prior to each lecture.

PAS Autumn Lecture Series 2020

Friday 18 December – Dr Alex Woolf

Rethinking the disappearance of the Picts: From Pictland to Alba 12 years on

PAS Spring Lecture Series 2021

Friday 19 February - Speaker to be confirmed

Friday 19 March - Dr Oisín Plumb

'Travels West over the Storm Swelled Sea': Picts in the Irish Church

Friday 16 April - Dr Benjamin Hudson

The intellectual background of the sculpted stones

Friday 21 May - Dr Anouk Busset

*Carved stones and places of devotion in early Christian north-western Europe:
Pictish perspectives*

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The deadline for receipt of material is **Saturday 20 February 2021**

Please email contributions to the editor: <johnborland60@aol.com>