



Inveravon Pictish Symbol Stones

Inveravon Church Ballindalloch Banffshire

Pictish Stones: Conservation and Relocation





Inveravon Pictish Stones:

Site & Location Plans

The four Inveravon Class I Incised Pictish Symbol stones, dating from perhaps the 6th-7th Century AD, were set against the south wall of Inveravon Church. The Church is a Category B Listed Building dating from 1806 but sitting on and near the remains of earlier Churches: the earliest existing record of St Peters Church Inveravon dating back to 1108. Found below and adjacent to the present Church, they include representations of the 'Pictish Beast', the most iconic and enigmatic of all the Pictish Symbols. The stones are Statutory Monuments. There were problems with the stones being exposed to the freeze thaw cycle in this exposed Highland location. The mounting of the stones was also problematic causing damp ingress to the Church itself through the South Wall.

After consultations with Historic Scotland, Tomintoul Glenlivet & Inveravon Church developed proposals to conserve the Pictish Stones and relocate them in the 1876 North Porch (an early work by the Architect Alexander Marshall Mackenzie).

Groves-Raines Architects were appointed to obtain the necessary consents, tender the specialist stone conservation works and the main contractor works to alter the North Porch, provide access, sensor operated lighting and interpretation panels. Groves-Raines Architects also assisted with the identification of funding for the project and the various applications required. The works were completed in December 2011.

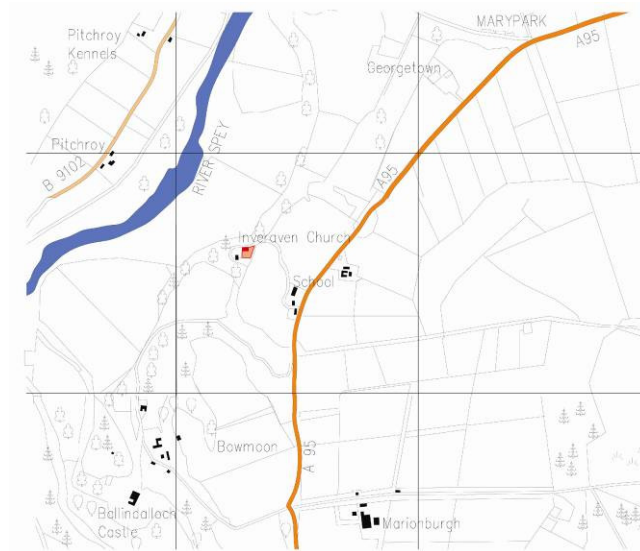
The North porch will be open daily during daylight hours. It is accessible to visitors directly from the access roadway. Information leaflets are in preparation and will be available at the site. The Church is also open daily.



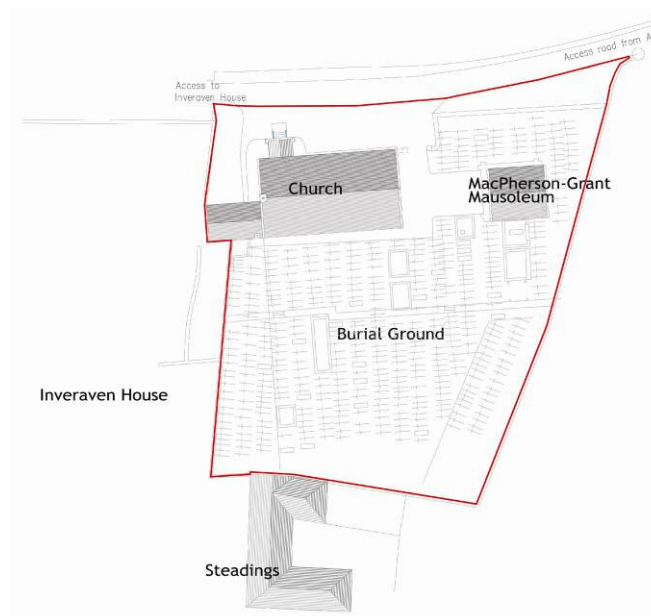


Inveravon Pictish Stones:

Site & Location Plans



Location Plan: Ballindalloch



Site Plan: Inveravon Church



Inveravon Church

Pictish Stones: prior to works 2010



Inveravon Symbol stones attached to south wall of Church 2010



Inveravon Church

Pictish Stones: relocation to North Porch 2011



Installation by Graciela Ainsworth Stone Conservation 2011



Inveravon Church

Pictish Stones: relocation to North Porch 2011



Interpretation boards, handrails & steps during construction by G&A Dufftown 2011



Inveravon Church

Pictish Stones: relocation to North Porch 2011



North porch and interpretation panel to Churchyard on completion 2011



Inveravon Pictish Stones

Photographs





Inveravon Pictish Stones

Photographs

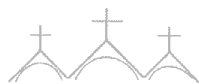




Inveravon Pictish Stones

Photographs





Inveravon Pictish Stones

Interpretive Panels

The Picts were native inhabitants of much of what we now call Scotland in the 1st millennium AD. Their lands stretched from Fife to Shetland, Buchan to the Hebrides.

In the year 397 a Roman commentator first referred to "wild natives" living beyond Hadrian's Wall as Picti, "the painted people". Perhaps they decorated their bodies with tattoos. This nickname seems to have stuck and by the time the Romans left Britain in 410, everyone knew these northern peoples as Picts.

Once considered by some scholars to be exotic and "different" from their contemporary neighbours, modern archaeological and historical research has helped us see the Picts as typical native inhabitants of post-Roman Britain with a distinctive art that flourished around 500 to 850.

The most tangible evidence of the Picts is their enigmatic symbol stones, created from the 6th century onwards.

We are still uncertain as to the meaning of Pictish symbols or why they were carved on stones erected in the landscape. However, many scholars now believe they acted as a form of writing, perhaps identifying particular individuals. Archaeological evidence points to some symbol stones being associated with burials, others with special places.

Around 40 motifs have been identified in the symbol repertoire. Usually occurring in pairs, sometimes with an additional mirror and comb, the symbols were initially incised on unshaped blocks of stone. Later, when the Picts were converted to Christianity they were carved in relief on shaped slabs along with ornate crosses, suggesting there was no conflict between their message and that of Christianity.

Most symbols are abstract, based on geometric shapes like the circle, crescent and rectangle. Some symbols, such as the mirror and comb represent identifiable objects. Others are of animals like the eagle, salmon or snake. A few are harder to identify such as the so-called Pictish beast.

For almost 500 years the Picts interacted with neighbouring Scots, Britons and Angles, sometimes invading them, at other times being invaded by them.

However relationships weren't solely defined by conflict and intermarriage between royal families meant that at times a king or queen of one people ruled over another. Christianity too became a common and unifying thread during the 600's and early 700's, bringing the Picts closer first to the Scots and then to the Angles.

During the early 800's invading Vikings seized most of the Scots' western lands as well as all of Shetland, Orkney, Caithness, Sutherland and the Western Isles from the Picts. In 850 the Picts and the Scots suffered major defeats at the hands of the Norse, leaving both kingdoms vulnerable.

In 844 a Scot called Cinaed mac Alpin seized power and became King of both Scots and Picts. Shortly after he moved his power base from Dal Riata to Scone near Perth, in the heart of Pictland.

Constant pressure from the Norse seems to have pushed the Picts and the Scots closer politically and in 889 their kingdoms were merged when Cinaed's grandson Domnall was crowned King of Alba. As the influence of the Scots continued to grow, the language and culture of the Picts diminished and eventually disappeared but the Picts themselves didn't. They simply adopted the language and ways of their new Gaelic kinsmen.

The presence of symbol stones at Inveravon is clear evidence of Pictish settlement in this area and indicates a possible Pictish cemetery on the site. Indeed, Inveravon is just one of a number of Pictish sites along the fertile valley of the Spey.

The earliest known Christian church at Inveravon dates from around 1108 and it seems that some of the symbol stones were used as building material in its construction. They remained built into the medieval church's walls until it was demolished around 1806 to make way for the present building. By that time there was a growing awareness of such antiquities and instead of being re-used or discarded, the symbol stones were set aside and eventually displayed against the south wall of the church.

Inveravon 1

This stone has a mirror and comb. The two main symbols are very large within the unusual mirror and the comb are small. The bold but unrefined carving could be the work of a less experienced sculptor. Alternatively it could be that this is a late example of a symbol stone, carved when the tradition is in decline.

Inveravon 2

This stone has a crescent and a triple disc and bar, again with a mirror and comb. The carving of these symbols is more refined and their size more typical (as is the form of the mirror). The triple disc and bar symbol may represent a cauldron viewed from above, the 2 smaller circles being handles from which it hangs on the bar.

Inveravon 3

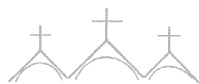
This stone has been cut down to form a building block but despite the fact that so little survives, the superior quality of the carving is obvious. The head of the Pictish beast is skilfully carved in sinuous curves. The Pictish beast would have been accompanied by another symbol, now completely lost. This small fragment represents Pictish carving at its best.

Inveravon 4

This stone has a crescent and a complete Pictish beast, thought by some to be an imaginary creature and by others to represent an elephant or maybe a dolphin. This stone was first recorded in 1964 when it was dug up in the graveyard. Its more weathered appearance may indicate that it wasn't protected from the elements by being built in the medieval church walls.

Drawings reproduced with kind permission of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.

Interpretation board: Pictish Stones: John Borland RCAHMS



Inveravon Pictish Stones

Interpretive Panels

Inveravon has been at the heart of a community as a place of worship and ritual for perhaps as many as fifteen centuries.

The earliest recorded church here was built around 1108 dedicated to St Peter, the nearby St Peter's Well being credited with many miraculous cures. However the presence of four Pictish symbol stones suggests this may have been a Pictish cemetery as early as the 6th or 7th century.

In the year 618 St Dunstan was sent from Iona by Abbot Fergus (St Columba's successor) to evangelise the Picts of the Spey Valley. He built his first church at Skirdurstan, as Charlestown of Aberlour was then known, and from there a network of early chapels spread along the Spey.

There is no historical or archaeological evidence to indicate there was an early chapel at Inveravon but nestling as it does between the Burn of Inveravon and the old course of the Spey and with its nearby well, the location is typical of an early Christian site. There is certainly a strong correlation between Pictish sculpture and Christianity along the Spey and its tributaries where ten other symbol stones have been found in association with chapel sites at Findlarig, Inverallan, Congash, Advie, Knockando, Arndilly, Mortlach and Bridgend of Livet.

Early Christian crosses from Inveravon (St Columba's successor) near Inveravon on Spey and Deuchar Cross, Bridgend of Livet.

Inveravon holds the biggest assemblage of Pictish symbol stones in the Spey Valley.

Up until the spring of 2011 this important collection was clamped to the church's south wall but following conservation they are now redisplayed in the Church's porch, preserving their link with this site but protecting them from the elements.

Photographs reproduced with kind permission of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.

Situated far below the main route along the Spey, on a road that now ends at the old manse, Inveravon Church may appear isolated to the modern visitor but that wasn't always the case.

For centuries the road ran right past the church, following the old course of the river. There was an inn for travellers close by and an area west of the burn still known as Kirkton alludes to a possible medieval settlement there. For more than a hundred years the first parish school was located in the churchyard but the opening of the turnpike road in 1792 was followed by the building of a new inn and a new school up the hill.

Inveravon Church by Ken Lupton

St Peter's Church stood at the centre of the parish for over 450 years.

Following the Reformation it was remodelled in 1568, the new building being described as having small windows and a roof of thatched heather. In 1633 the thatch was replaced with slates and in that year the first school, thought to have been built of turf and clay, was erected in the churchyard.

The present church dates from 1806 and is the work of an unknown architect. It originally had a door in each gable, a central pulpit and a gallery at each end but was remodelled in 1876 by Elgin architect Alexander Marshall Mackenzie, best known for Marischal College in Aberdeen. He added the vestry and porch and removed the west gallery, allowing the pulpit to be relocated there.

The fine Gothic mausoleum in the northeast corner of the graveyard dates from 1829 and was designed by another Elgin architect, William Robertson as the burial vault for the Macpherson-Grants of nearby Ballindalloch Castle. The adjacent manse dates from 1776 and was extended by Robertson in 1834.

Inveravon church has undergone many changes but it remains at the heart of the local community.

Interpretation board: Churchyard: John Borland RCAHMS



Inveravon Pictish Stones

Project Team

Client: Inveravon Glenlivet & Tomintoul Church of Scotland
The Rev. Sven Bjarnason
Patrick Wright, Property Convenor

Conservation Architect: Groves-Raines Architects Ltd.
Niall Braidwood, Project Architect

Conservator: Graciela Ainsworth Stone Conservation
Iain Fox, Project Administrator

Graphic Design: Interpretative Panels
John Borland, RCAHMS

Main Contractor: G&A Construction Dufftown
James MacKenzie, Contract Manager

Inveravon Glenlivet & Tomintoul Church of Scotland would like to thank:

Kenneth Lawson, Inveravon House
Colin Muir, Historic Scotland
Dr Alan Rutherford, Historic Scotland
Jonathon Swale, Scottish Natural Heritage Lerwick
Bruce Mann, Aberdeenshire Archaeology Service
Kenneth Kennedy, Moray Council
David Addison, The Moray Society

Please note that not all photographs in this report were taken after works completion.

Photographic Credits:

Inveravon Glenlivet & Tomintoul Church of Scotland
Groves-Raines Architects Ltd.



Inveravon Pictish Stones

Project Funding

Inveravon Glenlivet & Tomintoul Church of Scotland would like to thank the organisations below whose generous contribution to the funding of the work made this project possible:

Historic Scotland

The Wolfson Foundation

The Pilgrim Trust

The Manifold Trust

The Strathmartine Trust

The William & Jane Morris Fund: The Society of Antiquaries of London



Inveravon Pictish Stones

Conservators final report: Graciela Ainsworth Stone Conservation

