

## Early Christian Carved Stone

(9th/10th century AD)

Built into the wall of an East Fife farm steading in 1816, this rare Early Christian carved stone appears to have escaped the notice of all except the successive occupiers of the farm who have lived there over the past two centuries. Indeed, it was only very recently that anyone stopped to enquire about this stone's distinctive appearance, and in doing so brought to the attention of archaeologists.

Although broken and considerably obscured by its re-use as a building block, there is no difficulty in identifying a cross shaft flanked by spiral decoration and topped with an encircled cross-of-arcs, the whole design being contained within a moulded frame. Of 9th or 10th century AD date, this stone would have originally served as a grave marker for some impor-



tant cleric and probably indicates the presence of an early church close by – probably on the site of the present-day Carnbee parish Church.

## Bronze Age Rock Art, Burntisland, Fife

(c. 4,000 years old)



Obscure and enigmatic, the purpose of this Bronze Age rock art is not known. Certainly, its widespread geographical distribution throughout Scotland suggests that it had a universal shared meaning, use or significance. Most probably, this distinctive art form had a religious significance although all we can really say for sure is that it is extremely rare in Fife and indeed, this is the first recorded example of a concentric ring mark recorded in the region.

Discovered on the Binn Hill, Burntisland, this summer, these cup marks, cup and ring marks and the concentric ring marks are more commonly found in Perthshire, the Highlands and Argyllshire. However, it may well be that this is not the first time these marks have been recognised since their creation some 4,000 years ago. Indeed, detailed survey of the rock outcrops in the immediate vicinity of this rock art has revealed a number of small Christian crosses. The style and form of these crosses suggests that they are medieval in date but their function is not at all clear. It is quite possible, however, that they were carved by Christians during the medieval period in an attempt to 'neutralise' the pagan influence of the ancient rock art.



(above) Cup and ring marks

(left) concentric ring mark

(below) Christian cross



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