Pictish Heritage Tourism in Scotland

University of the Highlands and Islands
Perth College

Institute for Northern Studies

Report written by Dr Alex Sanmark (Institute for Northern Studies, University of the Highlands and Islands) and Dr Steven Timoney (Perth College, University of the Highlands and Islands)

December 2020

University of the
Highlands and Islands
Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean

Cover image: Pictish stone sculpture at Aberlemno. Photograph: Alex Sanmark

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1. Introduction

This report is a scoping study investigating the current Pictish heritage tourism offer in Scotland and identifying opportunities for development of the offer. This was a collaborative project, produced jointly by Dr Alex Sanmark, Institute for Northern Studies and Dr Steven Timoney, Perth College, both University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI). The report outlines the results of the research and the key findings, covering an appraisal of the existing offer, and identifying opportunities for new developments in the Pictish heritage tourism offer. It provides valuable data that will allow third sector organisations and SMEs to identify opportunities to develop new products and tourism offers that incorporate Pictish heritage for a variety of audiences.

2. Aims

The main aims of the project were to:

- define the current Pictish heritage tourism offer in Scotland, including national and regional organisations and SMEs
- identify undeveloped/underdeveloped Pictish heritage sites
- propose opportunities to develop the Pictish heritage tourism offer
- distribute the findings of the research to interested stakeholders
- identify opportunities to work with stakeholders to develop new tourism offers based on the results of this research

3. Research design

A review of existing Pictish heritage sites, visitor facilities and infrastructure was undertaken to identify the current provision, and any potential opportunities for development in the future. This involved:

- A web search using keyword terms to identify organisations and sites which form part of the current offer
- The creation of a longlist of Pictish heritage sites and resources to ascertain the current offer
- A keyword search of the Historic Environment Records (HER) for Scotland, in particular Canmore, the catalogue of archaeological sites managed by Historic Environment Scotland to identify any sites with potential for future development
- a desk-based assessment to identify the location and scale of undeveloped Pictish heritage sites, and identify any opportunities for development of new tourism offers
- A review of recent research publications for Pictish heritage sites not included in the HERs
- A review of toponymic data related to Pictish place-names to identify additional resources to support new developments

4. Methods

4.1. Current provision

A longlist of national, regional and local organisations involved in the promotion of heritage to the public was created. National organisations, including Historic Environment Scotland, Forest and Land Scotland, and the National Museums of Scotland, were identified as providing visitor experiences that included elements of Pictish heritage.

At a regional/local level, an initial list of 56 organisations was created. An initial check of organisation websites to assess the focus of their visitor offer reduced the longlist to 16 local museums, museum services, and heritage centres who were identified as having elements of Pictish heritage within their exhibitions.

4.2. Undeveloped resources

For this element of the project, a longlist of all certain Pictish heritage sites included in Historic Environment Records (HER), and recent research, was compiled. A search of the term 'Pictish' in HERs resulted in 617 hits. Not all of these refer to Pictish sites, but some simply refer to (possible) Pictish elements at the sites. This search moreover does not include all possible Pictish sites, as the Pictish period forms part of the 'early medieval' period, also named the 'early historic' period, and some sites are dated in the HERs using these two terms. These are often multi period sites, that may have Pictish remains, although they (for various reasons, such as issues with dating) are not specifically named as such. Searches for these terms resulted in 2824 and 1753 hits respectively. There is naturally a degree overlap between the three search categories (Pictish, 'early medieval' and 'early historic'). For this report, the longlist of heritage sites is mainly based on the 617 'Pictish' sites, but key sites identified from the other two categories have also been included.

It is also important to note that the search term 'Picts' results in 33 hits in the HER search. The sites included here are all from other time periods, mostly the Neolithic and Bronze age, but have at some point been seen as Pictish, above all in folklore. These sites are therefore not evaluated as part of this report but have been included in the discussion about folklore below. Some of the search hits moreover refer to artefacts, a few of which have been lost, and the remainder now in museum collections. The most significant of these artefacts are already on display and form part of standard exhibitions (see current provision below) and have therefore also been excluded from this study. Examples of Pictish sculpture have however been included when these are found outdoors or in local churches, village halls (rather than in museum collections). There are also Pictish rock carvings which still can be seen, some located in caves. Sculpture fragments, even those not in museums, have not been included, however, as they are unlikely to be of great interest to most tourists. Also excluded are Pictish symbol stones located in private grounds and gardens, or for which the location is unknown or uncertain.

Finally, place-names deriving from the Pictish language have been included in this study, as they are an important resource that is not fully used within the current tourism offering. No overarching survey comparable to the HER search was conducted as there are too many place-names indicating Pictish settlement, but they are found in all areas of Scotland where there are Pictish archaeological remains.

5. The Picts – a brief overview

The Picts were a people of Scotland in the late 3rd to 10th centuries AD, whose cultural range extended over most of the Highlands and Islands, excluding Argyll and Mull (which were part of the Gaelic kingdom of the Scots). Their heartland was the territory between Inverness and Perth, with the North Western Highlands, Orkney and Shetland forming a "Pictish Periphery". The Periphery was culturally and politically closely aligned with the core, but with distinct regional differences and a high degree of autonomy.

The Picts appear in written sources from the late 3rd century. Their name, derived from the Latin word *picti*, was first recorded in a Roman letter from AD 297. *Picti* is translated as the 'painted' or 'tattooed' people and was intended to distinguish those living north of the Roman border from the Romanised Britons further south. This well-known letter, together with other mostly external written sources, created an awareness of the Picts as a strong presence in early medieval Scotland. The difficulty of identifying and understanding Pictish archaeological remains however meant that early research was dominated by rather basic questions. Without satisfactory answers, the Picts came to be viewed as 'enigmatic' and 'mysterious'. These ideas have now been abandoned by scholars but have left a lasting impression in the popular sphere. This mind set can be illustrated by recent newspaper headlines, such as 'A glimpse of the mysterious Picts' (The Scotsman, October 27, 2018), 'Mysterious "Pictish" stone discovered' (Press and Journal, February 26, 2019) and 'Dark Ages Fort Built by Mysterious "Painted People" Found in Scotland' (LiveScience July 31, 2017). This situation has not been helpful in terms of promotion of the Picts and Pictish heritage, as the Picts have therefore been perceived as difficult to understand and with few material remains. In current academic research, with the arrival of new theoretical approaches, the Picts are no longer viewed as problematic, but are now on a par with any other historic people. Advances in research have created a huge body of knowledge in recent years. In this report the most important types of evidence (archaeological remains, written sources, place-names and folklore) are highlighted and evaluated in terms of their potential for tourism provision.

6. Current provision

The following section reviews the current provision of Pictish visitor sites or elements of Pictish culture presented and interpreted for visitors.

6.1. National organisations

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) is the public body 'established to investigate, care for and promote Scotland's historic environment' (Historic Environment Scotland 2019). Amongst the 300+ Properties in Care (PICs) managed by HES, a number are Pictish or multi-phase sites. These include the Meigle Sculptured Stone Museum which houses 26 carves stones dating from the late 700s to late 900s, and is described as one of the most important collections of early medieval sculpture in Western Europe. To the east, on the outskirts of Arbroath, is St Vigeans Stones and Museum, a collection of 38 Pictish stones found in the village, reflecting the importance of the site as a Christian

centre. Numerous individual standing stones can be found in situ across the east and north of Scotland, including the [Maiden Stone,](#) Aberdeenshire (fig.1) and [Sueno's Stone,](#) Moray.

Fig. 1 Maiden Stone. Photograph: Steven Timoney

Other sites in the care of HES include [Burghead Well](#), within the town of Burghead on the north east coast. Originally located within a Pictish fort (of which little remains on the ground today), the description of the site reaffirms the 'mysterious Picts' narrative:

> *"Enter the darkened chamber of one of Scotland's most mysterious sites. No-one knows who made Burghead Well, when they made it, or what it was for."*
> *(Historic Environment Scotland 2020)*

In the Northern Isles, key locations include the multiphase sites of Jarlshof in Shetland (fig. 2), and the Brough of Birsay in Orkney. [Jarlshof](#) is located at the southern tip of the Shetland mainland, very close to Sumburgh Airport, and shows evidence for human habitation and activity spanning over four thousand years, from the Neolithic to the Middle Ages, including a phase of use during the Pictish period. The [Brough of Birsay](#) is a high-status settlement spanning hundreds of years and various cultural changes (including Pictish and Norse phases). Archaeological evidence from the site suggests it was a centre of Pictish power.

Fig. 2 Jarlshof. Photograph: Pigalle CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

The National Museum of Scotland (NMS) in Edinburgh has a section of the Early People gallery which focuses on the Pictish period in Scotland. The displays incorporate a wide range of artefacts from across Scotland, including highlights such as the Norrie's Law hoard, a major collection of Pictish silver discovered in Fife in the 19th century, and the St Ninian's Isle treasure, discovered during excavations on the island in 1958. Near to the entrance to the gallery stands the main portion of the Hilton of Cadboll Stone, a late-8th / early-9th century Pictish stone originally located at Hilton of Cadboll in Easter Ross.

Fig. 3 Dun da Lamh hillfort. Photograph by Neillwphoto CC BY-SA 2.0

Forestry and Land Scotland care for a number of Pictish sites across the estate, including the hillforts at Craig Phadrig, and Dun da Lamh (fig. 3).

The National Trust for Scotland owns Pabbay Island, a small island on the southern end of the Outer Herbrides, which is home to the Pabbay Pictish stone, one of only two to have been discovered in the Western Isles.

6.2. Regional museums

A number of regional museums and heritage centres incorporate Pictish artefacts into their exhibitions, and some of these are highlighted in this section. Shetland Museum includes a display of Pictish culture including the Monk Stone, with Orkney Museum also containing a display of Pictish carved stones.

On the mainland, Pictish artefacts are on display at Timespan in Helmsdale, with Dunrobin Castle Museum in Golspie holding a collection of more than 20 Pictish stones. Further south in the Highlands, the Tarbat Discovery Centre is home to a display of artefacts recovered as part of the Tarbat Discovery Programme which ran from 1994 until 2007. The site, Portmahomack, was recognised as an important religious centre in the Pictish period, often described as the 'Iona of the East' (Carver 2004). The Centre has a range of Pictish artefacts on display. Groam House Museum in Rosemarkie on the Black Isle presents a range of Pictish sculpture associated with the site of an early Christian centre from the AD700s to 900s, including the Rosemarkie cross-slab.

A range of Pictish sculpture and metalwork is cared for by Inverness Museum, , including the Ardross wolf. The museum is also the recommended starting point for the Pictish Trail (see below). Elgin Museum includes a display of Pictish artefacts including the Burghead Bulls, a series of carved stones depicting bulls, and the Dandaleith Stone, discovered in 2013 during ploughing.

In the Angus region, the museums in Montrose, Brechin, Forfar and Kirriemuir all include Pictish stones in their collections. The Pictish Room in Aberlemno Village Hall is run by volunteers, and open once a month between April and October. It houses a collection of replica Pictish stones alongside interpretation panels focusing on the Pictish heritage of the Angus area.

The McManus, Dundee's Art Gallery and Museum includes a display of Pictish symbol stones as part of the 'Landscapes and Lives' gallery. Perth Museum and Art Gallery contains a number of important Pictish stones, with the Gellyburn cross-slab, the Inchyra stone and the St Madoes cross-slab on display. On the east coast of Fife, Wemyss Caves contain several Pictish carvings.

6.3. Pictish trails

There are currently three Pictish trails developed to lead visitors around a series of Pictish sites: the first in Highland region; a second in Angus; and a third in Aberdeenshire

Highland Council's long-existing Pictish Trail, leads visitors on a tour of museums and Pictish stones in the landscape. Starting in Inverness, the trail leads visitors to 13 sites, ending at Dunrobin Castle Museum in Golspie. The site is marked by brown tourist signs and has an accompanying guide that can be downloaded as a pdf from the Council website.

Regional Tourism body Visit Angus promotes the Angus Pictish Trail, promoting visits to 10 Pictish sites in the area, including the Aberlemno Sculptured Stones and St Vigean's Museum. It also

encourages visits to the site of the [Battle of Dunnichen](#), fought between the Picts and the Angles in AD685. The site is marked today by a cairn, constructed in 1985 to commemorate the 1300th anniversary of the battle.

Aberdeenshire Council has recently developed a [Pictish Stone Trail](#) leaflet, described as "a guide to ten of the best Pictish Symbol Stones in Aberdeenshire." The trail includes the Rhynie stones and Kintore Churchyard.

6.4. Tours and itineraries

There are a range of tour companies offering tours and itineraries for visitors that incorporate visits to Pictish heritage sites within wider tours of Scotland's cultural and natural heritage. Others offer bespoke activities associated with Pictish culture and traditions. A sample of these is highlighted below.

Invergordon Tours offer the [Pictish Tour](#) which takes visitors from Invergordon to a number of sites in Easter Ross and the Cromarty Firth.

The Hebridean Explorer offers a [Highland Pictish Tour](#) from Inverness, taking visitors through parts of Moray and Easter Ross to visit a range of Pictish sites.

Brightwater Holidays offer an '[In the Footsteps of the Picts](#)' tour, starting in Edinburgh at the National Museum of Scotland and travelling to Perthshire, Angus and Fife. Andante Travel, part of the same group, offers the '[Discover the Picts – Warriors, Monks and Artists](#)' tour, starting in Edinburgh and visiting similar sites to the 'Footsteps' tour, but extending up to the Moray Firth.

Roaming Scotland offers the '[Picts and Angus Glens Tour and Walk](#)', taking visitors to Meigle Museum, Glen Isla and Glen Prosen, and the Brown and White Caterthuns hillforts.

[Sail Scotland](#), the national marketing organisation for sailing and marine tourism, promotes 'The Pictish Trail', a series of six Pictish carved stones close to the waterways around the Moray, Cromarty and Dornoch Firths. They encourage sailing visitors to "prepare yourself to delve into the secrets and shadows of the Dark Ages and set off on a literal #LegendarySailing adventure on the trail of Scotland's lost people!"

7. Potential resources for development

This section provides a review of existing resources which are currently undeveloped, focusing on archaeological remains, folklore, and place-names.

In terms of archaeological evidence, the Pictish heritage is rich, but as will be discussed below, apart from the stone sculpture, only a small number of sites have remains visible today. Some of the most well-known heritage sites that form part of the current tourism offer have already been discussed above. The remaining sites can be subdivided into five major categories:

1) sculpture
2) settlements,
3) churches and monasteries,
4) burials,
5) hillforts.

A review of all longlisted sites was carried out and the ones deemed to have some degree of potential to attract visitors were kept (see 4.2). In this way, the search results were narrowed down to 142 heritage sites for further evaluation (see Appendix I).

7.1. Pictish sculpture

Pictish sculpture constates a significant legacy. The Picts shared in the insular art style, which was common, with local variations, to early medieval Britain and Ireland. The art style appears in manuscripts, artefacts (metalwork in particular) and sculpture. Pictish stones have been classified into three groups (Class 1-3):

Class I: These are erratic boulders or roughly prepared slabs of stone, decorated with groups of incised or pecked symbols, such as animals and various objects, but no crosses (fig. 4). They are seen as the earliest stones, dating from up to the late seventh century.

Fig. 4 Glamis Class I symbol stone. Photograph: Tour Scotland Photographs CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Class II: These stones are seen to represent the next chronological phase, the coming of Christianity. Class II stones are more carefully finished slabs onto which symbols and a cross have been carved on one or both sides (fig. 5). Usually, the cross is on one side and the symbols are on the other.

Fig. 5 Aberlemno cross-slab. Photograph: Alex Sanmark

Class III: This is a more disparate group, which is given a rather late date, overlapping in time with Class II. Class III stones are carefully shaped pieces where elaborate crosses are the main features (fig. 6). Some of them also have figural embossed scenes. Date: the late eighth and the ninth centuries.

Fig. 6 Kinord Class III symbol stone. Photography: Anne Burgess CC BY-SA 2.0

In this report 82 sites with Pictish stone sculpture with potential for the tourism offer have been identified. The condition of the sculptures varies, and some are so weathered that the carvings can be hard to distinguish. Some of the most striking and well-known examples are often held in museum collections, but there are a surprisingly large number that are still found close to their original position. In addition to the sites and museums mentioned above, there are some sites that are particularly worthy of being including in the tourism offer, such as the five stones found at Dyce, Saint Fergus' Church in Aberdeenshire (see fig. 7), and the collection of stones at Inveravon parish church in Banffshire (see fig. 8), Rhynie/Huntly in Aberdeenshire, the sculptured Cross in St Columba's Graveyard, 'Sueno's Stone' in Forres, Moray, Dupplin Cross in St Serf's Church, Dunning, Perthsire and the cross-slab at Dunfallandy in Perthshire. As mentioned, a number of these sites have several stones, and at times also other archaeological remains, which adds to their potential for development. A particularly common location is in and around churches, some of which also have their roots in the Pictish period. In addition, Pictish carvings are found at a few cave sites, such as East Wemyss, and Chapel Cave, Caiplie, both in Fife and Covesea in Moray.
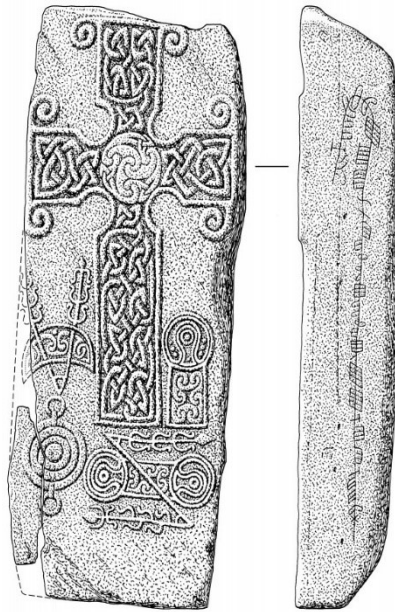
Fig. 7. Scanned ink drawing of a Class II Pictish cross-slab with an ogham inscription. Dyce, Saint Fergus' Church, Aberdeenshire, RCAHMS 2/2004 © RCAHMS

Fig. 8. One of the Class I stones at Inveravon Church, Banffshire. Photograph: Alex Sanmark

7.2. Pictish settlement

Enough archaeological evidence now exists to show that the Picts in the Northern Isles were relatively prosperous farmers. They lived in dispersed farms, with houses often built of stone with flagged floors that were divided into cellular rooms. There are also examples of larger settlements with several groups of houses, but few of these have been excavated. In this report, seven settlement sites, apart from the ones mentioned above, have been selected as having potential for

further development in terms of tourism offer. The reason for this low number is that the Pictish settlements tend to leave few visible remains on the surface, and unless excavated and reconstructed.

In Shetland, a striking multiperiod site from the Iron Age to the Norse period with visible remains is [Old Scatness](#), very close to Jarlshof mentioned above. It was inhabited during the Pictish period and must have been of a high status. Another settlement site with reconstructed buildings is [Bostadh, Great Bernera](#) in Lewis, excavated in 1996. At the site, evidence of both Pictish and Norse dwellings were found. The Pictish remains were unusually well preserved and five so-called *jelly baby* houses were uncovered. These are houses of rather sophisticated design, as a figure of eight, hence the nickname. There is an interpretation panel on site. The house remains have been covered with sand to preserve them, but there is a reconstructed jelly baby house. Another striking Pictish settlement site is found at the Brough of Deerness on the Orkney Mainland. This is a sea stack, accessible via steps carved into the rock surface, and therefore only suitable for certain groups of visitors. Here, excavations have revealed Pictish buildings, as well as a later Norse settlement. In Perthshire, buildings known as [Pitcarmick](#)-type houses have been assigned to the Pictish period. These were longhouses with rounded corners excavated in Pitcarmick North.

7.3. Churches and monasteries

The Picts most likely started turning to Christianity from the time of St Ninian in the 5th century and St Columba a century later. By c. AD 700, the Pictish kingdom had their own monasteries and churches. the large majority of these early sites have been lost or have no visible remains and therefore only four sites with potential for inclusion in tourism activities have been included in this project (Appendix I):

- St Ninian's Isle, Shetland
- Hilton of Cadboll, Easter Ross, Pictish chapel remains in present church
- Abernethy, Perthshire
- Dunkeld Cathedral, Perthshire

Many early Christian site are also strongly suspected to have been preceded by pagan sacred places. This applies to both St Ninian's Chapel and Dunkeld cathedral, although such notions are hard to prove.

One of the sites with the greatest potential is St Ninian's Isle in Shetland (Fig. 9). There was a Pictish period chapel there and a [famous Pictish treasure](#) consisting of 28 Pictish silver objects were found under a cross-marked slab close to the altar. These objects are held by the National Museum of Scotland but, but there are replicas in the Shetland Museum. The has been subject to two excavations revealing several burials, both adults and children, as well as corner-posts from stone shrines and carved crosses. The chapel remains visible today is not the earliest chapel on the site, as a later church was constructed by the Vikings. The chapel is in a particularly striking part of Shetland, on the small isle, connected to the Mainland via a tombolo (Fig. 9), which adds further to the appeal of the site.

Fig. 9. View over St Ninian's Isle from the Shetland Mainland. Photograph: Andrew Jennings.

Another religious site of interest is Dunkeld Cathedral (Fig. 10), which was preceded by a Pictish monastery. The early Pictish church is now gone, but the many carved stones demonstrate its existence. These include the 'Apostles Stone', dating to the 800s. A few hundred meters north of the church is hillfort, found on the summit of King's Seat, a key geographical feature in the landscape, located on a bend on the in the River Tay. The fort's defences consist of a central citadel occupying the summit of the hill and a series of ramparts enclosing lower terraces. These sites could work well together as part of a heritage trail.

Fig. 10. Dunkeld Cathedral. Photograph: Alex Sanmark

Abernethy church is said to be founded in the Pictish period and may have been monastic as well as parochial. The present church incorporates numerous blocks of masonry from an earlier building. The monastery was situated on the north side of the churchyard and part of its walls were still standing c. 1780, although nothing now remains. In the churchyard stands a round tower, probably dating from the 11th century. Its purpose is unclear, although it is an Irish type, with only one other

example in Scotland. There is moreover a Pictish symbol stones built into the cemetery wall and other Pictish stones are found in the nearby museum.

Another way of tracing Pictish Christian sites is via the *papar* place-names (e.g. Pabbay discussed above), as is set in the section on place-names below.

Burials

Only a small number of burials have been definitively identified as Pictish. The problem is that between circa 1000 BC and the Middle Ages, there was no strong tradition of burying the dead with grave goods. The only way of dating a grave without artefacts or a typical grave structure precisely is by scientific dating methods, such as C-14 dating of the skeleton. Many of the burials in question were excavated a long time ago, before these methods had been developed and have therefore not been sampled. Future dating is often impossible as many of the skeletons have now been lost. In addition, many sites have no visible remains and therefore ten Pictish burial sites have been selected for potential for tourism development of some kind (see Appendix I). These sites may not all be striking enough to merit a visit on their own but have the potential to be included in heritage or nature trails. Many of them are moreover found in striking natural settings.

One such site is Ackergill in Caithness, a site where long cists burials have been excavated. The bodies were covered by cairns of various forms and shapes (square, circular etc) and often had a stone kerb. Some of these can be seen today and there are also World War 2 defence works at the site, which may add to the potential of including this site in a heritage trail. Another burial site with potential for inclusion in the tourism offering is Laig on the Isle of Eigg (Fig. 11). Here there are several small square cairns grouped into two main clusters. These are situated on grass-grown storm beaches that rise in a series of terraces from the shore at the south end of the Bay of Laig.

Fig 11. Laig, Eigg. View of the square burial cairns. Photograph: G F Geddes, 11/7/2019 © G F Geddes. Canmore.

Hillforts

Many hillforts were in use in the Pictish period, most of which were originally constructed in the Iron Age, but with defences and buildings added by the Picts. In this report 35 hillforts have been selected as a starting point. The nature, condition and visibility of the archaeological remains vary between sites, but many have interpretation panels explaining the history of the fort. In addition, the hillforts are found at striking locations with panoramic views, which in their own can make them worthwhile visiting. One drawback is that these sites are not suitable for everyone as the walk to the top can be rather lengthy and demanding. Two sites that can be recommended for inclusion into tourism offerings are East Lomond Hill in Fife and Tap o'Noth in Aberdeenshire (Fig. 12). East Lomond Hill is easier to access than Tap o'Noth, which requires at least a 40-minute walk, with some rather steep although both have wide-ranging views from the top.

Tap o'Noth is a particularly interesting site, as it was only recent excavations that clearly showed that this site was extensively used by the Picts. Indeed, this site was linked to several other Pictish high status/royal sites in the immediate vicinity, such as Rhynie where an elite settlement has been excavated. In the area, there are also a number of Pictish stones that are easily accessible.

Fig. 12. View from inside the Iron Age/Pictish fort at the top of Tap o'Noth. Photograph: Alex Sanmark.

7.4. Place-names

Place-names represent another useful source in the study of past societies and landscapes. The Picts have left many place-names across Scotland north of Forth, apart from in Orkney and Shetland, where the Pictish language and culture seem to have died out when the Norse settled. These names are not always easy to interpret and we need to use the oldest recorded versions of every name in order to reconstruct its origin and meaning. For this, we need to rely on the work of place-name

experts, but once the names are analysed, they can be used for interpretation of heritage sites and the wider landscape. Below follows a list of generic place-name that gives a good indication of key place-names and their meaning:

ABER – 'river mouth' [vis. Gaelic inbhir both from Celtic root *ber 'carry' *ad-ber & *endo-ber]
North of Forth: Aberdeen, Applecross, Arbroath, Aberdour, Abernethy
South of Forth: Abercorn, Aberlady

CARDEN – 'thicket' [modern Welsh cardden]
North of Forth: Fettercairn, Kincardine, Pluscarden
South of Forth: so far none

PERT – 'wood, copse' [modern Welsh perth 'bush']
North of Forth: Perth, Logie Pert,
South of Forth: Larbert

LANERC – 'glade' [modern Welsh llanerch]
North of Forth: Lanrick, Lendrick
South of Forth: Lanark, Barlanark

PIT – Place-names used to be seen as the Pictish place-name par excellence. It has now been shown that some were coined by Pictish speakers, but most were coined by Gaelic-speakers and therefore are not really Pictish place-names at all. There are around 300 such examples, such as Pitcaple, Pitcarmick, Pitcorthie, Pitlochry, Pitmurchie, and Pitenweem.

PAPAR - The *papar* place-names is another valuable source for tracing Pictish Christian sites. The Vikings named the Celtic priests in Scotland *papar*, which may be derived from an Irish word for hermit or priest. There are at least 27 such names in northern and western Scotland (Fig. 13). Many of these sites also have archaeological evidence of Pictish Christianity, such as Papil in Shetland which may have been an important monastic community. This is where the famous Papil stone, depicting four monks (Fig. 14), has been found. This can now be seen in the Shetland Museum. The Papar Project website provides a highly useful overview of all these sites, both in terms of written and archaeological evidence.
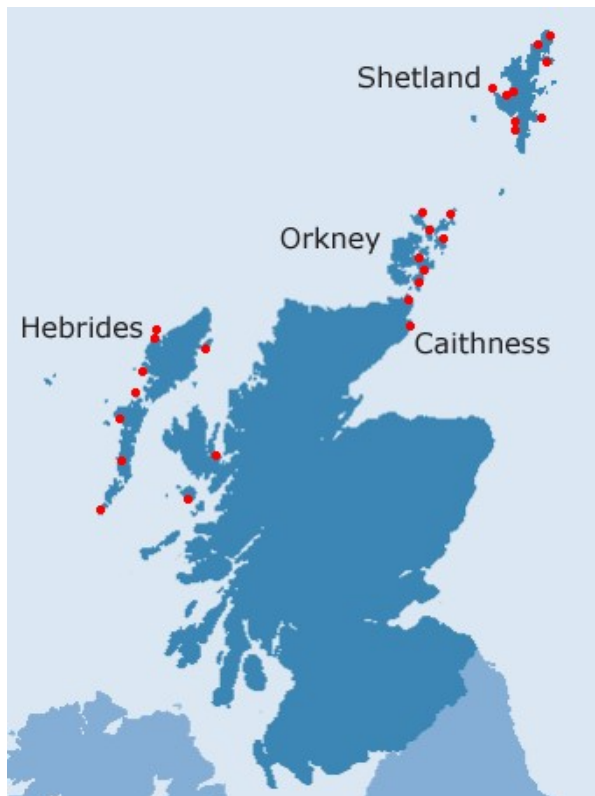
Fig. 13. Map of *papar* names in north and west Scotland. Source: The Papar Project

Fig. 14. The Papil Stone, Burray Shetland. This stone was found in the churchyard of Papil Kirk, where it had been reused as a grave cover. Source: Canmore. © HES: Early photographs of sculptured stones.

Written sources

There are few written sources that can provide insight into the Pictish period in Scotland. Most of these are external, i.e., not written by the Picts themselves. There is in fact only one surviving written source that can be said to be Pictish. This is the so-called Pictish king-list, which provides the names and reigns of more than 60 kings, of which about half can be also found in other written sources and can in this way be historically verified, at least to some extent.

One important reason for the lack of written sources is not that the Picts did not produce any, but that they have not survived. It is extremely likely that the Picts, after they became Christian, produced more texts than they have usually been credited with. Excavations of the Pictish monastery at Portmahomack in Easter Ross for example suggests that the monks were producing a significant number of manuscripts.

Written sources from Ireland also provide some information about the Picts. One of the most important ones is *The Life of St Columba*, written in the late 7th century by Adomnán, abbot of the monastery Iona. This source contains several miracle stories and it is important to bear in mind that Adomnán wrote for pious Christians and monks with the aim of demonstrating that Columba was a saint. Despite this, it does contain much interesting information about the Picts. Another well-known source is the *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, written by Bede, an Anglo-Saxon monk

based in Northumbria. This work was finished around AD 731. Although Bede was concerned with the English, his history still concerns many political and religious events that had an impact on the Picts.

7.5. Folklore

Folklore is another form of heritage showing the legacy of the Picts. Folkloristics involve the study of tradition (as opposed to the dissemination of formal written knowledge), which can survive for a very long time and therefore often contain practices and tales that go back to the Early Middle Ages. The Picts occur relatively frequently in Scottish folklore and many archaeological sites have (erroneously) been seen as Pictish, for example the term 'Pict's houses' or 'hooses' are often found on older maps often referring to broch sites, where Picts were believed to have lived. Interestingly, it is now known that this is where their predecessors lived, as many of the brochs are surrounded by Pictish settlements. Other, similar, examples include 'Pict's Well', the name of an undated well on Hoy in Orkney and 'Pict's Knowe', which refers to a Neolithic-Bronze Age henge monument at Berriedale Water in Kirkcudbrightshire.

Already in the Late Middle Ages, the Picts seem to have moved into the realm of folklore. In the text called *Historia Norwegiae* ('History of Norway'), written in the 13th century suggests that knowledge about them was more or less non-existent. Part of the text reads:

> *The Picts, who were only a little bigger than pygmies, worked great marvels in city-building each evening and morning, but at noontide they were utterly bereft of their strength and hid for fear in little subterranean dwellings.*

8. Opportunities

The existing Pictish heritage tourism offer reflects the development of many of the key archaeological sites and artefacts that exist in Scotland. The wider resource does, however, present a variety of opportunities for development of resources which are currently undeveloped or under-developed. In the previous section, examples of potential sites for development, such as Pictish sculpture, burials, settlements, churches, and hill forts have been provided. The recent excavations at Rhynie and Tap o'Noth, as well as a range of other hillforts show the resource is constantly changing, as new sites are discovered, and more information about existing sites is uncovered. These all provide opportunities to engage the public and develop new sites and activities for tourism.

8.1. UHI Expertise

Dr Alex Sanmark is an expert in medieval Scotland, and Dr Steven Timoney has expertise in planning, developing, and delivering heritage interpretation and tourism projects. As such, they are well-placed to support new developments in Pictish heritage tourism.

8.2. Developing existing sites

A number of sites have been identified as having great potential for future development, including the area around Rhynie, Huntly and Tap o'Noth which is one of the most promising. Within an area of a few kilometres, a striking hillfort and a number of symbol stones are found. The excavations at Rhynie, although without visible remains, provides further context. The many parish churches with collections of Pictish sculpture could also be considered for increased tourism activities, for example Inveravon and Saint Fergus' Church in Dyce. The presence of the extant churches, often with medieval origins, as well as other remains from various periods of history can together tell interesting stories of the past.

8.3. Easing tourism pressures – developing new sites

It is widely recognised that heritage sites have a carrying capacity in terms of the number of visitors they can support while avoiding damage to the resource. As tourism numbers increase, so the risks of long-term damage to many of these iconic heritage sites increases. The opportunities to develop new heritage provision will help to address some of the issues associated with the rapid increasing in visitor numbers to some areas of Scotland in recent years, provides opportunities to reduce impact and load at honeypot sites by diversifying the offer, and providing the potential to take visitors away from pressure sites.

8.4. Expanding knowledge

Most of the existing undeveloped Pictish heritage sites are dispersed, and many of these sites are not easily recognisable, tangible remains on the ground. Many of these sites, above all the hillforts but also for example burial sites, can only be reached on foot, sometimes involving considerable effort. There is, despite this, the opportunity to develop interpretive provision in the form of heritage trails using interpretation panels, alongside developing app-based content, to lead visitors through the landscape. Information could also be developed for tour guides to enable the development of new tour offers taking in new parts of the Scottish landscape. In this way, a stronger story concerning life in the Pictish era could be conveyed. For this purpose, all the different types of evidence could be used in conjunction, i.e. archaeology, place-names, written sources as well as folklore. Outdoor heritage trails are likely to be popular over the next few years as Covid-19 restrictions may continue to limit opening hours of heritage venues. At time of writing there is also an expected increase in domestic tourism as lockdown measures ease, but overseas travel continues to be restricted. Increased visitor numbers will also see an increase in a segment of visitors who are looking for alternative, unique, and authentic experiences, away from the more popular heritage sites.

8.5. Engaging with opportunities – Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters and Scotland's Stories

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, VisitScotland's planned theme for 2020 of Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters (YCW) has been moved to 2021. It will involve "a programme of activity designed to support the nation's tourism and events sectors [...] to spotlight, celebrate and promote opportunities to

experience and enjoy Scotland's unrivalled Coasts and Waters, encouraging responsible engagement and participation from the people of Scotland and our visitors" (VisitScotland 2019). Given the nature of the Pictish heritage across a large part of Scotland, with sites near to rivers, on islands and the mainland coast, there will be opportunities to tie in events and activities with the national programme. Although the YCW events fund is now closed, there will still be opportunities to develop events and activities that can be listed on the main VisitScotland webpages, alongside wider promotion through the use, for example of the hashtag #ycw2020 on social media platforms. VisitScotland has produced an industry guide to support organisations and businesses in making the most out of the event.

In 2022, the theme will be 'Scotland's Stories', and given the central role the Picts played in the formation of Scotland, there is clear potential to develop events and activities linking in with this theme.

8.6. Exploring further projects

Contact has been made with various stakeholders, such as self-employed tourist guides, tourist guide trainers as well as heritage consultancy firms. We have made them aware that our report is now finished and that it will be available from the UHI website in due course. As part of the conversation, we asked for feedback and explored opportunities for further collaboration. The response was overwhelmingly positive, especially from stakeholders based in the north of Scotland.

Examples of responses received:

What an excellent idea, anything that can give a guide an extra edge in this competitive market is great!

There is currently a gap in provision in the tourism product for a comprehensive Pictish guide to the Highlands and Islands. Although there is a wealth of resources available, collating this information and pinpointing particular areas takes a considerable amount of time and effort. This work on Pictish sites will collate this information and become an invaluable resource to add to the arsenal of the tourism professional.

In addition, interest has been expressed for future collaboration and funding opportunities are currently being explored. The initial responses give a real sense of what is needed. We can support individual guides/small operators to develop focused activities relating to the Picts, providing a broad overview that sets the Pictish context, then developing specific narratives in relation to sites on the ground, depending on where guides/operators are located, and the area they wish to take people.

9. Summary

As this report has shown, the main, tangible, and iconic Pictish heritage sites and artefacts have been developed for tourism. There are, however, a number of sites on the ground, such as settlements, hillforts, symbol stones and burial sites, which could provide the focus for new visitor activities and attractions. Alongside this, Pictish cultural heritage in the form of folklore and place-names present opportunities to add value to existing provision, and develop new offers, helping to inform new narratives and stories, to enhance the current offer.

 Continuing research, discoveries and excavations also reflect the potential for new developments over time, presenting opportunities to develop new offers including heritage trails and guided tours. The wider benefit of expanding the tourism offer to reduce the impact on the most popular sites is clear, while also presenting new opportunities to engage visitors with a key part of Scotland's cultural heritage, pivotal to the formation of Scotland.

10. References

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Appendix I – Pictish archaeological remains

A. Sculpture (located outdoors, in churches, village halls etc.)

1. Loch Kinord, Aberdeenshire
2. Skinnet 2 (St Thomas), Caithness
3. St Columba's Graveyard, Isle of Canna
4. Raasay 2, Skye & Lochalsh
5. Keillor, Perthshire
6. Inveravon Parish Church, Aberdeenshire
7. Struan, Struan Church, Perthshire
8. Knockando, Moray
9. Clach Chairidh, Ross & Cromarty
10. Strathpeffer, Ross and Cromarty
11. Clynekirkton Parish Church, Sutherland
12. Trusty's Hill, Anwoth, Kirkcudbrightshire
13. East Wemyss, Caves
14. Caiplie, Chapel Cave, Fife
15. Keillor, Perthshire
16. Strathmiglo, Fife
17. Abernethy, Perthshire
18. Newton of Collessie, Fife
19. Logierait 1, Perthshire
20. Pabbay, Barra
21. Dingwall Churchyard, Ross and Cromarty
22. Strath, Gairloch, Ross and Cromarty
23. Forres 1, Sueno's Stone, Moray
24. Hillhead Of Clatt, Salmon Stone, Leith hall gardens
25. Parc-an-caipel, Congash, Inverness-shire
26. Rosskeen, Ross and Cromarty
27. Dyce, Saint Fergus' Church, Aberdeenshire
28. Kettins Churchyard
29. Cossans, Angus
30. Dunadd, Argyll
31. Largo church, Fife
32. Auquhollie, Kincardineshire
33. Alyth (St Moluag), Perthshire
34. Peterhead (Blackford), Perthshire
35. Tyrie (St Andrew), Aberdeenshire
36. Logierait 2, Perthshire
37. Bruceton, Perthshire
38. Tullich carved stones, St Nathalan's Kirk, Aberdeenshire
39. Alyth, Manse, Perthshire
40. Westfield, Falkland, Fife
41. Finlarig, Moray

42. Lethendy, Tower of Lethendy, Perthshire
43. St Serf's Church, Dunning, Perthshire
44. Fyvie church, Aberdeenshire
45. Myreton Farm, Insch, Aberdeenshire
46. Broomend of Crichie, Kintore, Aberdeenshire
47. Kintore, Aberdeenshire
48. Craigmyle, Aberdeenshire
49. Clach Ard, Tote, Skye & Lochalsh
50. Birnie (St Brendan), Moray
51. Rhynie, Aberdeenshire
52. Ardlair, Aberdeenshire
53. Tillypronie, Aberdeenshire
54. Migvie church (St Finan), Aberdeenshire
55. Upper Manbean, Moray
56. Tobar na Maor, Skye & Lochalsh
57. Abdie Churchyard, Fife
58. Maiden Stone, Chapel Of Garioch, Aberdeenshire
59. Dunfallandy, Perthshire
60. Bourtie Parish Church, Aberdeenshire
61. Brandsbutt, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire
62. Monymusk Church, Aberdeenshire
63. Nether Corskie, Aberdeenshire
64. Inverallan church, Moray
65. Covesea, Moray
66. Rhynie 8, Barflat, Aberdeenshire
67. Huntly, Aberdeenshire
68. Raasay 1, Skye & Lochalsh
69. Elgin cathedral, Moray
70. Mortlach church, Battle Stone, Moray
71. Glamis, Hunter's Hill, Glamis, Angus
72. Eassie ruined church (St Brandon), Angus
73. Newton of Lewesk, Aberdeenshire
74. Tillytarmont, Aberdeenshire
75. Aboyne Aberdeenshire
76. Inverurie church, Aberdeenshire
77. Fowlis Wester church (St Beanus), Perthshire
78. Aberlemno stones, Angus
79. Rossie Church, Perthshire
80. Knocknagael, Inverness-shire
81. Shandwick, Ross and Cromarty
82. Brodie, Rodney's Stone, Moray

B. Settlements
1. The Howe, Orkney
2. Buckquoy. Orkney
3. Seavar howe, Orkney
4. Bostadh, Great Bernera
5. Brough of Deerness, Orkney

C. Churches and monasteries

1. St Ninian's Isle, Shetland
2. Hilton of Cadboll, Easter Ross, Pictish chapel remains in present church
3. Abernethy, Perthshire
4. Dunkeld Cathedral, Perthshire

D. Burials

1. Pityoulish, Inverness-shire
2. Hermisgarth, Sanday, Orkney
3. Newark, Orkney
4. Pabbay, Barra
5. Lundin Links, Fife
6. Forteviot, Perthsire
7. Garbeg, Inverness-shire
8. Ackergill Links, Caithness
9. Laig, Eigg

E. Hillforts

1. Trusty's Hill, Anwoth, Kirkcudbrightshire
2. Tap O'Noth Aberdeenshire
3. East Lomond Hill, Fife
4. Burghead Moray
5. Portknockie, Green Castle, Moray
6. Barflat, Aberdeenshire
7. Mither Tap of Bennachie, Aberdeenshire
8. Maiden Castle, Aberdeenshire
9. Barra Hill, Aberdeenshire
10. Cairnmore, Aberdeenshire
11. Cullykhan, Aberdeenshire
12. Dundarg Castle, Aberdeenshire
13. Dunnicaer, Aberdeenshire
14. Dunnottar Castle, Aberdeenshire
15. Loch Kinord, Aberdeenshire
16. Finavon, Angus

17. West Mains of Ethie, Angus
18. Whiting Ness, Angus
19. Carnac, Moredun, Perth & Kinross
20. North Mains, Strathallan Perth & Kinross
21. Castle Craig, Perth & Kinross
22. Kay Craig, Perth & Kinross
23. Dundurn, Perth & Kinross
24. Clatchard Craig, Fife
25. Mote Hill, Stirling
26. Abbey Craig, Stirling
27. Lower Greenyards, Stirling
28. Broxmouth, East Lothian
29. Sheriffside, East Lothian
30. Dunbar, Castle Park, East Lothian
31. Auldhame, East Lothian
32. Edinburgh Castle, City of Edinburgh
33. Arthur's Seat, City of Edinburgh
34. St Abb's Head, Scottish Borders
35. King's seat, Dunkeld, Perthshire