

THE EARLY CHURCHES OF FIFE : A GAZETTEER OF SITES

J. Alexandra Nickell

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The Early Churches of Fife:
A Gazetteer of Sites

J. Alexandra Nickell

MPhil
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Abstract

During the middle centuries of the first millennium AD, Christianity began to penetrate the north of Britain, and the establishment of the church within the community eventually brought a level of organization which would be vital to the development of subsequent society during the Middle Ages. In line with the fragmentary and culturally diverse nature of north Britain at this time, the experience of conversion and the arrival of Christianity differed from area to area, as well as reflecting some common trends. For the purposes of this dissertation, I have looked at the cultural trends which lay behind the form and distribution of Early Christian sites within Fife during the Pictish period, and the locations of the sites themselves.

In the introduction, I shall address the geography of Fife; the political and cultural background of the region; the form of the church and the significant events which occurred in it during this period; the factors, identified in other areas, that are most likely to have affected church settlement; and the features which may indicate the presence of an early church. In the body of the dissertation, I shall address each parish individually, providing an introductory discussion of the area and a gazetteer entry for each possible site identified, followed by an analysis of the findings. The conclusion will focus on an analysis of how the previously discussed factors relate to Fife.

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Geography

As a region, Fife is physically well-defined, and contained within a peninsula on the east coast of Scotland. It is bounded on the north by the Firth of Tay, on the east by the North Sea and on the south by the Firth of Forth. The boundary to the west is not so clearly defined and has changed several times in recent years, mostly because of local government changes. At present the regional boundary begins on the River Forth to the west of the Kincardine Bridge, and from there follows the boundary with Clackmannanshire and Perth and Kinross for just under 40km to the River Tay at Newburgh.¹ From west to east (Kincardine to Fife Ness), Fife is 72km long and from north to south (North Queensferry to Tayport) it is nearly 50km. Its estuaries and maritime coastline total c.185km and the area of the region is 1,312 sq km.

Unlike many other parts of Scotland, Fife has not been subject to major boundary changes, and the region as it stands today is largely the same as it was in mediaeval times, when it was a mediaeval sheriffdom. Fife or *Fib* was also one of the seven supposed kingdoms of the Picts, listed alongside the kinglists, suggesting that it has been seen as a defined area since the early Middle Ages at least.

The topography of Fife follows a basically straightforward pattern consisting of alternate upland and lowland zones with a predominantly WSW – ENE trend.² Approximately one third of Fife is over 100m in height,³ and there are two ranges of hill, again running from south-west to north-east, which are generally higher in the west, tapering off towards the east.

¹ Currently, the border runs along the west of Newburgh, Auchtermuchty, Strathmiglo, Falkland, Leslie, Kinglassie, Auchterderran, Ballingry, Beath, Dunfermline, Saline, Culross and Tulliallan, but until 1891 the parishes of Culross and Tulliallan formed part of a detached portion of Perthshire, Arngask (adjoining Strathmiglo, and now in Kinross) was in Fife, and Abernethy (adjoining Newburgh and Auchtermuchty) straddled the Fife/ Perthshire border.

² Details of Fife, <http://www.geo.ed.ac.uk/scotgaz/councils.councildetails15.html>, 20th June 2002

³ Taylor, S, Settlement names in Fife, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh University, 1995, 1

In the far north, the coastal plain along the Tay is a narrow, low strip (on Lower Old Red Sandstone) that is largely covered with raised beach deposits that form good agricultural land. This strip is defined by a line of volcanic hills which, although generally lower, are an extension of the Ochil Hills, the range which runs from near Stirling towards the Tay. Most of the hills within this part of the range are less than 180m high, but the highest points of the range are at Lumbennie Hill near Newburgh (260m) and Norman's Law in Dunbog parish (285m).

To the south of this section of the Ochils lies the Howe of Fife (howe meaning 'hollow') and Stratheden, the valley of the River Eden. While the edge of this basin generally has good soils, the central area is much less fertile, although this has been much improved by the drainage of waterlogged soils since the Georgian period.⁴

In the west of Fife, the Lomond, Cleish and Benarty Hills form the boundary with Perth and Kinross. This is the only major area of uncultivated upland in Fife.⁵ This range of hills runs through central Fife to St Andrews, is less continuous than the Ochils, and can be divided roughly into four sections. The most westerly section, the Saline and Cleish Hills (partly in Fife and partly in Kinross) contains Knock Hill in Dunfermline parish (364m). The next section, the single peak of Benarty (356m) is defined on the north by Loch Leven in Kinross, and to the east and west by two valleys. It was through these valleys that two of the most important landward routes in Fife passed, from at least Roman times, and probably earlier. Both routes led from the Forth crossing point at Queensferry towards Perth in the north.

The next part of the range contains the two highest points in Fife. West Lomond (Strathmiglo parish) (522m) and East Lomond (Falkland parish) (424m), and are, according to Proudfoot, "fragments of highland mountain in a lowland setting".⁶ The final group of hills, separated from the Lomonds by the

⁴ Gifford, J, *Fife*, 1988, 19

⁵ Details of Fife, <http://www.geo.ed.ac.uk/scotgaz/councils.councildetails15.html>, 20th June 2002

⁶ Proudfoot, E, 'Later Prehistory', *The Fife Book*, ed. D Omand, 2000, 26

Markinch Gap, through which another important trans-Fife route ran, forms the East Neuk plateau. This group has a general height of 150-200m, but includes Largo Law (Largo parish) (290m), Clatto Hill (Largo parish) (248m), Tarvit Hill (Cupar parish) (211m), Drumcarrow Craig (Cameron parish) (217m), and Kellie Law (Carnbee parish) (182m).⁷ The East Neuk coastal strip includes large areas of raised beaches that yield good agricultural soils.⁸

The south-western coastal strip of Fife slopes gently downwards from about 100m to the sea. The soils are chiefly clays and loams and are particularly high quality along the coast, where raised beach deposits again occur.⁹

Most of Fife's water courses drain into its two main rivers, the Eden and the Leven. The River Eden drains the low-lying land between the Ochils and the hills of central Fife, including the flat, formerly marshy area of the Howe of Fife, and flows eastwards into the North Sea. The Eden estuary, between Leuchars and St Andrews and St Leonards parish, is the largest inlet within Fife. The River Leven drains much of the land south of the Lomonds and flows eastwards from the south-eastern corner of Loch Leven in Kinross into the Forth at the burgh of Leven in Scoonie parish.

⁷ Taylor, Settlement names, 1995, 1

⁸ Details of Fife, <http://www.geo.ed.ac.uk/scotgaz/councils.councildetails15.html>, 20th June 2002

⁹ Details of Fife, <http://www.geo.ed.ac.uk/scotgaz/councils.councildetails15.html>, 20th June 2002

Society

The first Christian missions to Fife would have encountered a region where patterns of settlement had shown little change for many centuries. The land was good agriculturally, and is likely to have made Fife a particularly wealthy region, but the brief presence of the Romans appears to have at least partially affected this,¹ and the withdrawal of the Romans in the south may have affected the northern British economy generally.²

Fife is one of the seven mainland kingdoms of the Picts listed in the Pictish kinglist,³ and although the form in which this story occurs casts doubt on its credibility, it is likely, in the case of Fife anyway, to have reflected the situation around the fifth and sixth centuries. No king of Fife is ever recorded, but the geography of the area would make it a natural territorial unit.

Fife stood on the edge of Pictland, and if the earliest detected forms of Christianity are anything to go by, there were strong connections in the sixth century between Fife and the British kingdoms of northern Britain. It is almost certain that the Picts spoke a P-Celtic language, similar to that spoken by the neighbouring Gododdin (in Lothian) and the inhabitants of Strathclyde and the west (modern Wales and Cornwall), and if so, there are likely to have been cultural parallels. Fife may even have been closer culturally to the Gododdin at this time than to the Pictish, and distant, regions of the far north.

¹ See footnote 12

² Maxwell, G, 'Settlement in Southern Pictland: A New Overview', *The Picts: A New Look at Old Problems*, ed. A Small, Dundee, 1987, 42

³ The pseudo-history of Pictland which includes this forms the introduction to list version P (Anderson, M, *Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland*, 1980, 79

The fifth and sixth century Picts of Fife would probably not have been that far removed from the region's inhabitants in the later Iron Age, when there was a tribal society with an emphasis on warfare and fortification. This is demonstrated in Fife by the presence of numerous hillforts of a type seen elsewhere in Britain and Europe.⁴ Settlement was shared between these defended hilltop villages, and isolated farmsteads and scattered hamlets.⁵ Cropmarks have shown lowland settlements across Fife, but there is a particular concentration in the good agricultural areas of the central belt and the north east. Hillforts also mirror this distribution, with a chain of Iron Age hillforts in the Ochils, along the north coast. Little excavation has been carried out at these sites, and many have been assumed to be purely Iron Age on little evidence. There is no reason to suppose that these residences were abandoned at the end of the Iron Age; although environmental evidence has suggested that there was a break in activity around Abdie in the west between 40 and 640AD, the environmental record further east does not show the same results. If, as Whittington suggests, this lull in activity was the result of Roman activity during the Severan campaign, it appears likely that native fortified settlements would have become even more important. One Iron Age hillfort on East Lomond has been identified as being still inhabited around the fifth century. A carving of a bull, similar to those at Burghead in Moray, was found on a stone in the fort. Around thirty of these plaques are known from Burghead and have been taken as evidence of an early Pictish cult;⁶ the East Lomond example is the only one known in Fife and is of poorer quality than those from Burghead, but probably can be taken as evidence that this cult also existed in the south.

Because the Romans did not settle in north Britain the impact that they had on society and the environment has often been dismissed. The first Roman activity in the region of Fife came during the governorship of Julius Agricola (c.77-83AD). Although there was little apparent activity in the main body of Fife, a series of watchtowers, fortlets and garrison posts was built along the western edge, between the estuaries of the Forth and the Tay, which would have had the effect of cutting the people

⁴ *Fife's Early Archaeological Heritage: a Guide*, Fife Regional Council, 1989, 16

⁵ *ibid.*, 16

⁶ Foster, S. *Picts, Gaels and Scots*, 1997, 34

of Fife off from their land-bound neighbours. Although little is known of the Roman navy, it is apparent from campaigning records that a force of some size did travel up the east coast during the Agricola campaign, and thus Fife may at times have been effectively surrounded, and the coastal areas targeted for supplies for the campaigners.

By the end of the first century, the Romans had been pushed back south towards the Tyne-Solway isthmus, the site of the later Hadrian's Wall, and Fife was once again 'united' with the rest of the mainland. The next period of Roman activity was in the mid-second century, during the campaigns of Antoninus Pius. Under his leadership the turf barricade of the Antonine Wall was built across the Forth-Clyde isthmus. There was a chain of forts north of the Antonine Wall running from Camelon to Bertha, to the west of Perth, whose role may have been to deliberately cut off Fife from the rest of north Britain. The reasons behind this are unclear; perhaps this Roman defensive chain indicates that Fife was a protected region,⁷ or one that needed separating from its neighbours for reasons of peace.

A third occupation of northern Britain came under the emperor Septimius Severus in 208.

No Roman sites were known in Fife 35 years ago, but three have now been identified (Auchtermuchty, Edenwood (near Cupar) and Bonnytown (near St Andrews)). Their locations seem to indicate that these Romans penetrated Fife by the central E-W route with the Ochil Hills on the one side and the Lomond hills on the other, and from there travelled along Stratheden. It would not be unexpected if a camp or fort was uncovered around St Andrews Bay, and there may have been another chain of camps along the south coast, no trace of which has yet been found, despite antiquarian claims to the contrary.⁸

It is likely that the Fife camps were part of a joint military and naval exercise, and the garrison at Carpow (to the immediate west of Fife), may have supported a seaborne assault – while there was a land advance against the tribes of Strathearn, the Fife tribes may have been cut off and dealt with

⁷ Keppie, L, Scotland's Roman Remains, 1998, 14

separately. The size of the threat posed by these natives should not be underestimated as an operation of this scale would have involved the ferrying of almost 20000 armed men and would "constitute one of the major feats of the Roman army in Britain."⁹

The fort at Carpow would appear to have been occupied for several seasons,¹⁰ and would have been quite sizeable, supporting several thousand men. As well as being the hub of Roman military activity in the area with comings and goings by land and sea, a community may have grown up alongside the camp, with families and traders. We have little direct evidence of this happening here, but if the site is compared with others such as Corbridge or Carlisle, which had large and organized *vici* or external settlements, it seems likely that some sort of (?small) Romano-British settlement would have grown up here. How far the Roman influence would have spread into Fife is very uncertain, but a number of small Roman finds may suggest trade or the adoption of Roman goods as prestige items, possibly after the Roman withdrawal.¹¹

From the written accounts of the Roman campaigns (understandably biased towards the campaigners) and possibly the archaeological / environmental evidence, it appears that the Severan campaign, although short-lived, was probably brutal.¹² The effects of the other campaigns, however, are much harder to detect. Breeze suggests that the most significant result of the arrival of the Romans, would have been its effect upon the structure of society: "The local people were either defeated by the Roman army and incorporated into a foreign state, or were forced by a formidable foe beyond their borders.

⁸ *ibid.*, 159

⁹ Maxwell, G, *A Gathering of Eagles*, 1998

¹⁰ Breeze, D, *Roman Scotland*, 1996, 97

¹¹ *Atlas of Scottish History to 1707*, ed. P. McNeill and H. MacQueen, University of Edinburgh, 1996, 45

¹² A study of the pollen record from the Black Loch, a rock basin in the Ochil Hills near Lindores, shows that there was considerable agricultural activity in this area during the Iron Age, but that this declines severely in the period between 40 AD and 640 AD (Whittington, G, and Edwards, K, 'Palynology as a predictive tool in archaeology', *PSAS* 124 (1994), 63; Whittington, G, and Edwards, K, '*Ubi solitudinem faciunt pacem appellant: the Romans in Scotland, a Palaeoenvironmental Contribution*', *Britannia*, XXIV (1993), 17). As there is no evidence to suggest either climatic change or soil deterioration during this period, it is probable that it was the result of human factors (Whittington and Edwards, 'Romans in Scotland', 1993, 20). As this coincides with the Roman incursion and there were three camps within a 10km radius, Whittington believes that the change in land use is due to the natives leaving or being forced out of this area as a result of this (Whittington and Edwards, 'Palynology', 1994, 63).

Defeated leaders would have had to conform or be ousted. Ordinary people had new masters to whom they must give obedience – and pay taxes. Leaders and led were now all second-class citizens.”¹³

Following the Severan campaign, there appear to have been significant outbreaks of aggression shown by the Picts and the other native groups, suggesting that the late third and fourth centuries did mark a period of turbulence in the southern parts of the north of Britain.

One effect of the Roman campaigns may have been the unification of the previously numerous Iron Age tribes into several larger conglomerations. By the late third century when the Picts are first recorded, they must have been viewed, by the Romans at least, as a reasonably unified force, but the reality of this picture is hard to gauge and there may have been numerous groups with varying cultures for some centuries; according to Ritchie, 297AD should not be regarded as in any way a pivotal date, as the Picts assume historical reality in the mid-sixth century with the reign of Bridei mac Maelchon, and this date is very close to the emergence of an identifiable material culture.¹⁴

If Christianity came north of Hadrian's Wall with the Roman invaders, its presence has not yet been detected. Finds with obvious Christian links such as those found in the Traprain Law hoard may be indicative of trade or of plunder,¹⁵ or may be votive offerings;¹⁶ there is really no evidence that they represent a practicing Christian community. Within the Roman Empire, Christianity became a *religio licita* in 260, and became the 'first and principal concern' in March 313.¹⁷ This, linked with the known presence of Christianity in southern Britain, means that it is likely that amongst the soldiers who came north in the third campaign or who were sent in as a defensive force against uprisings in the fourth century, there would have been Christians (this is especially true of the army led against the

¹³ Breeze, *Roman Scotland*, 1996, 90

¹⁴ Ritchie, A, 'The Archaeology of the Picts: some current problems', ed. *Pictish Studies: Settlement, Burial and Art in Dark Age Northern Britain*, ed. J Friell and W Watson, BAR British Series, 125, 1984, 1. The most notable expression of Pictish culture is the symbol stones, but because these have no real parallels it is difficult to date the earliest examples. The sixth century, however, does not seem unreasonable.

¹⁵ Thomas, C, *Christianity in Roman Britain to AD500*, 1981, 279

¹⁶ Breeze, *Roman Scotland*, 114

¹⁷ Thomas, *Christianity*, 46-7

Picts by Constantine the Great c.312). The brief nature of all these Roman activities probably means that there was not enough peaceful and everyday contact with the civilian population for ideas such as those of religion to be passed on and established. The one place in the Fife area where this kind of contact may have been made was at Carpow, which does appear to have been inhabited for several seasons, but no indications of any Christian population, Roman or native has been found there at this time.

The Picts of Fife were presumably pagan, but there is little indication of the precise pagan practices that would have existed there, where they were practiced¹⁸ or how deeply rooted they were in society. It is more than likely that, as with other, better documented Celtic regions, the Picts religion involved a pantheon of gods, and a supernatural world where trees, hills, water, sun and animals held special meaning.¹⁹ Many pagan sites were taken over and adapted for Christian purposes: "Missionaries played upon the belief in an active spirit world...[and] did not deny that heathen deities existed: pagan gods were acknowledged as being both real and dangerous. Inevitably, therefore, monks and missionaries emerged as wonderworkers, for by challenging and vanquishing deities, and destroying their shrines, they were performing miracles. The Celtic attachment to particular landscape features, regarded as the abodes of deities, provided a lattice of points across the landscape, some of which... were redefined and incorporated within the new Christian geography."²⁰ An example of this occurs in a story in the *Vita Columbae*, in which Columba blessed a well that had been worshipped by pagans and sent away the demons, turning it into a holy well.²¹

¹⁸ Navitie in Ballingry parish and Eglisnamin (Hallow Hill) in St Andrews, both contain a place name element *G neimheadh*, meaning 'nemeton' and are likely to have been pre-Christian shrines or sacred areas. However, as the nature of most pagan religions was based in the natural world, it is frequently difficult or impossible to identify places of worship.

¹⁹ Foster, *Picts*, 1997, 71

²⁰ Morris, R, *Churches in the Landscape*, 1989, 51

²¹ Adamnan, *Vita Columbae*, II.11

It is difficult to know what situation the first Christians found themselves in, but if the description in the *Amra Choluim Chille* (written c.600) of Columba approaching “the fierce ones of the Tay”,²² is accepted, at least in spirit, it may suggest that Christianity was not initially welcomed. Too little dating evidence is available to indicate how quickly Christianity spread, and it is impossible, for this period in Fife at least, to accurately gauge how quickly or how fully it was accepted. The problems involved in identifying the earliest sites also means that it is difficult to detect if conversion followed a ‘stop / start’ pattern, rather than the church quickly establishing itself and gradually growing in area, numbers and status.

It is unlikely that Christianity was brought to Fife entirely through the work of missionaries. It was not an isolated region and there would have been contacts and trade with other parts of the British Isles and western Europe. The Gododdin region of Lothian is known from the eponymous poem to have been Christian by 600AD and it is likely to have been so significantly earlier. This poem also shows that Picts fought alongside these Christian Britons and it is likely that some may have become Christian too, during their time with the warband. Amongst the general population, it is likely the influence of the Gododdin Christians would have spread northwards into Fife.

The conversion of society was probably top-down; the *Amra Choluim Chille*, describes Columba turning the people of the Tay “to the will of the King”.²³ Other than this there are no descriptions of Christianity being accepted in southern Pictland and it does not show up in the archaeological record.

Over the course of a few centuries from Christianity’s arrival it became an established and central part of society. The period between the fifth and ninth centuries saw a move away from petty kingdoms to more centralized authority, and the establishment of formal regions and clientship.²⁴ The church, which brought with it literacy and administrative capabilities, fitted in well to this structure. Church

²² Section VIII, line 6 (Clancy, T, and Markus, G, *Iona: The Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery*, 1997, 113)

²³ Section VIII, line 5-6 (*ibid.*, 113)

²⁴ Foster, *Picts*, 1997, 33

leaders became major land holders and were almost the equivalent of secular potentates; often they came from the leading local families.²⁵

The Church

From the dates provided by several of the long cist cemeteries in Fife, it would appear that Christianity first arrived in the region in the sixth century, and the predominant influences seem to have come from the neighbouring British regions. The most significant indication of a shared culture, and one that can be regarded to an extent as Christian, are the long cist cemeteries, which are discussed in section 3.2. The 'eccles' or 'eglis' place name element also occurs on both sides of the Forth and is often taken to indicate some of the earliest Christian sites in both regions.²⁶

Inscribed stones occur regularly at Early Christian sites in British areas, and presumably acted as grave markers. The lack of these stones in Pictland is very noticeable because of the other shared features, and points to a difference in cultures; it is possible that some of the Class I and II Pictish stones, which have no real parallel elsewhere, were an equivalent,²⁷ but they appear to be part of a Pictish cultural tradition rather than any Christian one. Inscribed stones are known from the Carlisle region before the mid-fifth century,²⁸ from the Isle of Man,²⁹ Whithorn and Liddesdale by c.500,³⁰ and in Wales there

²⁵ *ibid.*, 71

²⁶ For discussion of this element, see Introduction *section 3.3*

²⁷ Class I stones occur much more frequently in the north of Pictland than the south (the area with most British contact), so the Class II stones (which incorporate symbols and Christian features, and have a more even distribution) may have marked an amalgamation of Pictish and Christian marker stone traditions, probably by the sixth or seventh centuries. Inscriptions in ogham have been recorded on some of these stones (e.g. 'Ethernan' is commemorated on the Class II stone found in the churchyard of Scoonie Old Parish church), but inscriptions in the Latin alphabet are rare.

²⁸ Thomas, C, 'Evidence from North Britain', 1968, 97

²⁹ A large number of inscribed stones, including ones with ogham inscriptions, have been found on the Isle of Man (Cubbon, A, 'The Early Church in the Isle of Man', *The Early Church in Western Britain and Ireland*, ed. SM Pearce, BAR British Series, 102, 1983, 259).

³⁰ Thomas, 'Evidence from North Britain', 1968, 97-102

are a large number of stones with both ogham and Latin alphabet inscriptions of varying lengths and content.³¹

According to Bede, when writing about the coming of Columba to Britain in 565, “the southern Picts, are said to have abandoned the errors of idolatry long before this date and accepted the true faith through the preaching of Bishop Ninian”. This claim has provoked much debate as to its validity, but the most likely interpretation may be that it was the result of later church practices: at the time Bede was writing, the abandonment of the See of Abercorn in 685 was still in living memory,³² and the idea that a saint identified with the now Northumbrian monastery of Whithorn had converted the region in the first place may have gone some way to improving the appearance of the situation.³³

It is probably unreasonable to ascribe the conversion of the southern Picts to Ninian or any particular saint, but as a British saint he is a representative figure for the type of Christianity which most likely penetrated Fife first. Bede describes Ninian as a bishop and it has been suggested that the early church in the north was diocesan. There was an Episcopal church in the north of Roman Britain by the fourth century: a Bishop of York is recorded in 314 and there is likely to have been a bishopric in the urban centre of Carlisle,³⁴ and the terms referring to priests, bishops and deacons appear on inscribed stones,³⁵ but within Pictland there is little or no evidence for this form of church, and it may reflect another cultural difference.

While the British church has been classed as episcopal, the traditional view of the Irish church is that it was monastic. While this is obviously partially true, it does not cover the whole situation. A tradition of eremitic monasticism had come to Ireland from the east, and sites such as Scelig Miheal

³¹ Davies, W, Wales in the Middle Ages, 1982, 186-7

³² See below

³³ Clancy, TO, 'The Real St Ninian', Innes Review, 52, no.1, 2001, 7

³⁴ Thomas, 'Evidence from North Britain', 1968, 97

³⁵ Clancy, T, and Crawford, B, 'The Formation of the Scottish Kingdom', The New Penguin History of Scotland, ed. R Houston and W Knox, 2001, 46

demonstrate that in some quarters it was embraced.³⁶ However, the church must also have played some pastoral role and it is apparent, in Ireland and Wales, that the distinction between “cloistered monks who lived enclosed lives according to a rule and secular clergy who provided pastoral care to the community” was blurred.³⁷ The major role of the early church was a missionary one, and clergy must have gone out amongst the community to preach. Some may even have lived amongst the populace,³⁸ but this is difficult to prove. Evidence from Ireland suggests that from the sixth to eighth century there were three basic elements within the church: purely monastic churches; foundations combining the religious life with pastoral care; and mother churches which were the centres of pastoral care.³⁹ At the most local level, ministry was provided through small churches with one priest,⁴⁰ but there are indications that pastoral care tended to apply to that part of the community which depended directly on the church.

The foundation legend of Abernethy⁴¹ suggests that there were active links between the Irish church and Ireland by the late sixth century, and although the legend itself is unlikely, the nature and the dating of the contact is not. Two Irish saints are connected with Fife at this date: the poem of c.600, the *Amra Choluim Chille*, which claims that Columba preached to the tribes of the Tay, is independent of both Bede and Adomnan but is not necessarily inconsistent with either,⁴² and Cainnech of Aghaboe is associated with Kilrymont (St Andrews).⁴³ Whether either of these accounts is true, the Irish church will more than likely have had connections with Fife with unnamed churchmen travelling between the two regions and spending time there, teaching or learning, or sharing ideas.

³⁶ It is very easy to over simplify the structure of the Irish church; “much of the evidence was.. subordinated to a monastic model, and the origins of this imagined peculiarity of Irish (or ‘Celtic’) churches were sought in the desert monasticism of Egypt (Sharpe, R, ‘Churches and Communities in Early Medieval Ireland: towards a pastoral model’, *Peritia*, 3, 1984, 19). This does not mean, however, that these were not substantial elements.

³⁷ Foster, *Picts*, 1997, 86. However, Sharpe suggests that in Ireland there is no evidence that pastoral care depended on monks, and notes that the Penitential of Uuiniu actually forbade monks to accept alms because they could not reciprocate with baptism (Sharpe, ‘Churches and Communities’, 1984, 19-20).

³⁸ Foster, *Picts*, 1997, 88

³⁹ Sharpe, ‘Churches and Communities’, 1984, 21

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 21

⁴¹ Anderson, *Kings and Kingship*, 1980, 95

⁴² Hughes, K, *Early Christianity in Pictland*, 1970, 14

⁴³ This tradition is late, however, resting on a twelfth century note in the Martyrology of Oengus.

References to the Columban church in Pictland are brief and tantalizing: Adomnan refers to monasteries founded there by Columba but does not number or list them;⁴⁴ Bede implies that Iona “was for a long time the principal monastery of... all the Picts.”⁴⁵ Hughes suggests that, based on literary and archaeological evidence, the seventh century Columban foundations of Pictland (other than Iona) were minor cells, established without royal patronage and exercising little influence on society,⁴⁶ but while this may be partly the case, that church must have become firmly enough established, in significant enough numbers, for the Annals of Ulster to record the expulsion of the Ionan *familia* in 717.⁴⁷

Large monasteries, of the type that is likely to have existed at St Andrews, often became major centres of population and in some areas might have been the nearest type of settlement to a town. Some became the centres of federations of monasteries and controlled other types of churches.⁴⁸ In Ireland, arguments between these large foundations over small churches were not unusual. Within Fife, the areas controlled by churches seem to have been quite clearly defined, although this may not have prevented some squabbles over territory. Abernethy controlled lands and chapels along the north coast of Fife as far as Balmerino;⁴⁹ Kilrymont is likely to have controlled at least some of the church sites within the east of Fife.⁵⁰ It is noticeable that in the first foundation legend of Kilrymont church, the

⁴⁴ Adomnan, *Vita Columbae*, II.46

⁴⁵ Bede, *HE*, III.3. The use of the past tense here suggests that by the time of writing in 731 this was no longer the case.

⁴⁶ Hughes, *Early Christianity*, 1970, 15

⁴⁷ See below. The presence of Columban churchmen in Pictland is likely to be confirmed by place names including the names of Columban churchmen (See Taylor, S, 'Seventh-century Iona abbots in Scottish place-names', *Innes Review*, 48, No.1, 1997 and Taylor, S, 'Columba east of Drumalban: some aspects of the cult of Columba in eastern Scotland', *Innes Review*, 51, No.2, 2000)

⁴⁸ Manning, C, *Early Irish Monasteries*, 1995, 13

⁴⁹ Abernethy's holdings are known from a twelfth century charter, *Arb. Lib. 1*, but are likely to have been under that church's control for several centuries before this.

⁵⁰ As Kilrenny and the Isle of May were probably closely linked, these churches, and others in the vicinity (possibly including Scoonie, where a stone commemorating Ethernan was found in the churchyard) may have formed their own small familia. The Isle of May may also have had links with Iona (Yeoman, P, 'Pilgrims to Ethernan: the Archaeology of an Early Saint of the Picts and Scots', *Conversion and Christianity in the North Sea World*, ed. B Crawford, 1998, 83)

king granted land stretching from Largo through Ceres to Naughton in Balmerino, the edge of Abernethy's territories.⁵¹

In the south, the picture is less clear, but Loch Leven, Dunfermline and Culross may all have held some sort of superior role. Place names are useful here; three clusters of 'pit' place names around St Andrews, Abernethy and Dunfermline are likely to indicate church land holdings,⁵² and there is a cluster of 'cill' names in east Fife that are most likely connected with Kilrymont. The form taken by these secondary chapels is uncertain. In some cases they may have been small monasteries either founded from the larger house, or brought under its control in a relationship of ecclesiastical clientship. Some chapels may have been hermitages or small eremitic sites, others may have been pastoral centres, tended by one or two clergy who preached and ministered to the local Christian population. As the church became more established within society, these large monasteries would have wielded more and more power and would probably have had close ties with the king.

The church in Pictland is also likely to have come under Northumbrian influence, e.g. the monastery at Tarbat on the Moray Firth is thought to have been built "under Northumbrian influence" in the early eighth century.⁵³ Relations between the Pictish and Northumbrian churches are reasonably well documented because of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* and other contemporary Northumbrian writings, and because of this it can be seen that they were closely tied to the politics of both regions.⁵⁴ At first, this church was predominantly Columban, but aspects of the Roman church were present in Deira from the 620s and became more and more firmly established within the Northumbrian church as a

⁵¹ Macquarrie, A, 'Early Christian Religious Houses in Scotland: foundation and function', *Pastoral Care Before the Parish*, ed. J. Blair and R. Sharpe, 1992, 118

⁵² Taylor, S, 'Some Early Scottish Place-Names and Queen Margaret', *Scottish Language* 13, 1994, 5

⁵³ M O H Carver (ed) 1999 Bulletin of the Tarbat Discovery Programme 5 (<http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/arch/staff/sites/tarbat>). The Northumbrian provenance has been suggested by the presence of rectangular buildings and a substantial collection of associated sculpture.

⁵⁴ See below

whole, until in 664 it won out over the Columban church at the Synod of Whitby.⁵⁵ The major legacy of the Northumbrian links with the Pictish church is the large body of carved stones, clearly indicating the integration of that region's artistic styles with those of the Picts.

The appearance of a Pictish bishop, Fergustus, at a council in Rome in 721, suggests that there was an established episcopal church in Pictland within 35 years of Trumwine's withdrawal from the See of Abercorn in 685, and Fergustus's presence in Rome may have come about as a result of the Pictish church's recent links with Northumbria.

Politics

A factor behind the success or failure of missions may be the political relationships between Pictland and the other northern kingdoms. From the late sixth century, Aedan mac Gabhrain (d.608) king of Dal Riata, actively tried to establish Scottish settlement in eastern Pictland, although the details of his campaigns are unclear. His defeat in a battle in Pictland around 598, and, later, the death of his grandson Domnall Brecc in battle c.642, put an end to Gaelic hopes of eastward expansion for well over a century. This may have affected the success of missions from the west, as they probably would have been perceived as being linked to the aggressors, especially if the church up to then had been subject to the much heavier influence of the British church, which was the product of a similar culture and linguistic group.

The attention of Dal Riata may have been replaced with that of the Strathclyde. Nectus nepos Uerb, who occurs in the Pictish kinglist between c.597 and 631, has been identified as Neithon son of Guithno whose name occurs in the genealogy of Strathclyde and who would have been king of that

⁵⁵ There are still likely to have been a lot of Columban elements within the church after this, and Bede probably overemphasized the rancour and division created by the Synod and present in its aftermath (Veitch, K, 'The Columban Church in Northern Britain 664-717: A Reassessment', *PSAS*, 127, 1997)

region in the first quarter of the seventh century.⁵⁶ This Strathclyde link did not die with Neithon; Nectū nepos Uerb was followed by three brothers, whose combined reign lasted from 631 to 653 and who have been identified as Neithon's grandsons.

While this was happening, there were major changes on the political landscape elsewhere. In 603, the Gaels of Dal Riata were defeated by the Northumbrians, under King Edwin, at the Battle of Degsastan, and the victors moved into the power vacuum that was left, capturing Din Eidyn in 638 and bringing Manau Gododdin under their control by the middle of the century.

When Edwin had become king of Northumbria, the family of his slain rival, Aethelfrid, were exiled from the kingdom. The eldest son, Eanfrid, came to Pictland, although it is unsure whereabouts. During his time in the north he converted to Christianity (indicating that, by the early seventh century, the religion was established amongst some of the aristocracy at least) and had a son by a Pictish woman. Eanfrid's brothers, Oswald and Oswiu, both went west to Dal Riata, where they too became Christian. Oswald probably spent some time on Iona, studying in the church and building relationships with the churchmen and nobility of the region. Oswiu also spent part of his time in exile in Ireland, and had a son, Aldfrid, with an Irish woman.

In 632 Edwin was killed and Eanfrid came out of exile to become king of Bernicia. Bede records little about him, except that he apostatized upon becoming king and was killed during peace negotiations with the Mercians shortly afterwards.⁵⁷ Oswald succeeded Eanfrid, and brought Christianity to Bernicia, where there had been "no Christian emblem, no church, and no altar" until this time.⁵⁸ He was also responsible for the founding of Lindesfarne, bringing churchmen from Iona to settle there and minister to the people.

⁵⁶ Smyth, AP, *Warlords and Holy Men*, 1984, 65

⁵⁷ Bede, *HE*, III.1

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, III.2

Oswald appears, like Edwin, to have been a successful expansionist, first reuniting the two Northumbrian kingdoms, and then, after dealing with the Mercian threat to his kingdom, turning his attention north. According to Bede, Oswald "brought under his sceptre all the peoples and provinces of Britain speaking the four languages, British, Pictish, Irish, and English",⁵⁹ and although this is unlikely, he probably did exert some form of overlordship in the north. Fife, being the southernmost region of Pictland, is likely to have been included. This means that, around 650, not only was there a Strathclyde influence on the region, but also a devoutly Christian, Northumbrian one. It is unclear what exactly this would have meant to the native kings and aristocracy, and the general population. Possibly those members of the ruling classes who had not yet become Christian were 'encouraged' to convert, and Columban churchmen may have come north or stopped in Fife as they traveled between Iona and Lindesfarne. The church may even have helped Oswald to gain a hold over the north, as he was both a Christian king and major patron, and, presumably, an 'adopted' Gael, with close ties to the Dal Riata ruling classes, who in turn presumably had close relations with the church.

When Oswald was killed in 642, Northumbrian supremacy in the north was lost. The new king Oswiu, like his brother before him, was forced to deal early on with threats on his kingdom from Mercia. After that kingdom's defeat at the Battle of Winwaed, Oswiu, too, turned his attention north, re-establishing supremacy during the 650s and 660s. This appears to have been partly aided by the Pictish king himself, as Eanfrid's son (and Oswiu's nephew) became king in 653. His reign was short-lived, but his successors Gartnait and Drest may have been puppet kings, as Bede states that Oswiu "to a large extent conquered and made tributary the Picts... in the northern parts of Britain."⁶⁰

The major ecclesiastical happening of this period was the Synod of Whitby in 664, portrayed by Bede as a confrontation between the misguided Columban clergy and the doctrinally-correct Romanists, but in reality a matter of politics. The consequences of the decision for the Roman party are unclear with

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, III.6

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, II.5

opinions divided between there having been a complete change and there having been very little difference. The Synod brings up many questions about the Pictish church during the mid seventh century; if there were a list of attendees at the Synod of Whitby, would there be Picts on it, how many would there have been, would they all have been on the same side, and what side would that have been?

It is not known if the Columban / Roman division was a problem in Pictland before the synod. Unlike Ireland, there are no records of Synods, factions or letters to the Pope. It is unclear if this means that the church was not far enough established or formalized for this or if the records have been lost. The lack of surviving native writing may be to blame here, but in sources from outside Pictland, there is no reference to the Picts in any of the correspondence over the Easter question. Was one Easter celebrated in Pictland or was there contradiction and division within the region?

Northumbrian overlordship under Oswiu and his successor Ecgfrid (who became king in 670) may not have been particularly benevolent, and presumably in an attempt to remove it, Drest was expelled in a Pictish rebellion c.671. The Northumbrian reaction was quick and brutal as Ecgfrid, led an army which "filled two rivers with the slain.. (and) ... reduced (the Picts) to slavery, a condition in which they remained until Ecgfrid himself was slain."⁶¹ Southern Pictland, including Fife, fell under Northumbrian dominion, and, as many of the Pictish nobility were killed during this battle, kingship appear to have gone to someone outside the region. It is uncertain if Bredei son of Bili, a grandson of Neithon of Strathclyde, was behind the revolt, or if he simply stepped into the void created by the battle, but he was to reign, under the yoke of the Northumbrians, for over ten years.

During this time there is the first mention of a bishop of the Picts, as Wilfrid, the Northumbrian bishop, styled himself "the Bishop of the Saxons in the south and of the British, Scots and Picts to the

⁶¹ Eddius, Life of St Wilfrid, Ch. 19

north.”⁶² It is uncertain how much of the Pictish church accepted this or if Wilfrid ever travelled north to perform Episcopal rites. Wilfrid’s role should probably be regarded as political rather than strictly ecclesiastical, and it is no indication that Pictland adopted ‘Roman’ practices after the Synod of Whitby. In 678 Wilfrid was driven out of his see, and Theodore, the Archbishop of York, embarked on a reorganization of the church in the north, creating a number of sees, including one at Aebbercurnig (Abercorn) in 681. This was nominally a bishopric of the Picts,⁶³ but it is noticeable that it was situated on the south side of the Forth where the Northumbrians were well established, rather than in the presumably more tempestuous north. It is interesting to note that despite Abercorn being the seat of a bishop it was also a monastery,⁶⁴ highlighting the fact that these two functions of the church were not mutually exclusive.

In 685, Northumbrian dominion over the Picts and their church, was ended as Ecgfrid “rashly led an army to ravage the province of the Picts”. The king was killed, and many of his army were “killed, enslaved or forced to flee from Pictish territory.”⁶⁵ The Picts “recovered their own lands that had been occupied by the English,”⁶⁶ and Trumwine withdrew with his people from Abercorn. As Abercorn did not lie within Pictish lands but was instead within Northumbrian territory, it is slightly unclear whether Trumwine abandoned his see out of fear for his personal safety, or because he no longer had any function to perform.

Aggression continued between the Picts and Northumbrians under the kingship of Oswiu’s son Eadfrid. The Picts once again defeated the English in 698,⁶⁷ but the situation was reversed in 711, when the Picts were massacred at the plain of Manaw.⁶⁸ It was at about this time that Nechtan son of

⁶² *ibid.*, Ch. 21

⁶³ Trumwine was to be “bishop of those Picts who were then subject to English rule” (Bede, *HE*, IV.13)

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, IV.26

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, IV.26

⁶⁶ Fife, with its fertile lands, would have been a valuable asset to the Northumbrians and Smyth believes that it was essentially over Fife that Ecgfrid lost his life (Smyth, *Warlords and Holy Men*, 1984, 40)

⁶⁷ Kirby, D, ‘Bede and the Pictish Church’, *Innes Review*, 24, 1973, 7

⁶⁸ Smyth, *Warlords and Holy Men*, 1984, 76

Derilei wrote to Ceolfrid, abbot of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow, requesting "a letter of guidance that would help him refute those who presume to keep Easter at the wrong time", details of the Petrine tonsure, and architects "to build a stone church for his people in the Roman style."⁶⁹

Several things can be inferred from this. Firstly, despite Pictish / Northumbrian aggressions, the king of the Picts was courting Northumbrian diplomacy. Secondly, despite Necthon himself being well informed about Roman practices and in favour of them, at least some of the Pictish church was still not celebrating the Roman Easter nearly fifty years after the Synod of Whitby, and did not sport the Petrine tonsure. Thirdly, stone churches were rare or non-existent in Pictland, or the region of Pictland where Necthon was based.

After receiving Ceolfrid's reply, Necthon decreed that all clergy of the kingdom would adopt the tonsure, and new Easter tables were sent out under a public order to all the provinces of the Picts, to be copied, learned and adopted. Bede also records that "all the ministers of the altar and monks adopted the circular tonsure."⁷⁰ This indicates that the church in early seventh century Pictland was made up of monastic and secular clergy, although nothing more can be inferred.

Necthon may have written the letter because he was disturbed by divisions between the Columban clergy, but a more apposite reason may have been the emergence of friendly links between Northumbria and Dal Riata, which threatened an alliance of two powers on the borders of Pictland. Conversion to Roman practices would also have brought Pictland in line with most of its neighbours, and prevented possible "ecclesiastical isolation and its corresponding undertones of political encirclement."⁷¹ By the 720s at the latest, Necthon had four rivals for his position, and his desire to resurrect good relations with Northumbria, and avoid isolation, may have been behind his actions.

⁶⁹ Bede, *HE*, V.21

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, V.21

⁷¹ Kirby, 'Bede and the Pictish Church', 1973, 18

In 717, the Annals of Ulster record that the Ionan *familia* were expelled across the mountains of Britain by Necthon. This may imply that the Columban church was exiled due to its non-compliance with the new church practices, and that this was “a clean sweep of the schismatical element,”⁷² and Kirby suggests that Necthon probably believed that he was preventing a significant and unstabilising division within the church,⁷³ but the exact reasons are difficult to ascertain. Whatever, the reason behind it, it is unlikely that all the Columban clergy left for good,⁷⁴ and it may not have been a particularly major turning point in the church’s history.

A political crisis erupted in 724 with a four way contest developing for Pictish kingship. This instability lasted for seven years but the victor was Unuist son of Uurguist, who had strong links to Dal Riata. This was the beginning of a new dynasty which only ended in 839 with the death of Uuen son of Unuist in battle at the hands of the Vikings.

As with the defeat in 672, much of the Pictish aristocracy appears to have been killed, and once more a void was left. Kingship logically fell to Dal Riata, but instead of a member of their ruling elite becoming king of the Picts, Cinead mac Alpin became instead king of the Picts and Scots, effectively uniting the two kingdoms and marking the beginning of the end for Pictland.

⁷² Hardinge, L, *The Celtic Church in Britain*, 1972, 27-8

⁷³ Kirby, ‘Bede and the Pictish Church’, 1973, 19-20

⁷⁴ Smyth, *Warlords and Holy Men*, 1984, 75

Gazetteer Criteria

- 1. Dedication and earliest recorded date of dedication**

- 2. Topography**
 - 2.1 Proximity to hills
 - 2.2 Proximity to water
 - 2.3 Proximity to settlement
 - 2.4 Island and coastal features
 - 2.5 Proximity to routeways

- 3. Nature of site**
 - 3.1 Type of site
 - 3.2 Long cist burials
 - 3.3 Place names
 - 3.4 Enclosures
 - 3.5 Wells
 - 3.6 Carved stones
 - 3.7 Other features

- 4. History and continuity of use**

- 5. Earliest references**

1. *Dedication*

Tracing the original dedications of early churches poses many problems for the historian. Except at major foundations, or ones that lasted well in the Middle Ages, early dedications are rarely recorded, although many must have existed. The lack of written sources from Pictland exacerbates the problem. In general, dedications have a much higher rate of survival in areas such as Ireland and England where they were recorded and passed from generation to generation.

Dedications can be embedded within place names, such as those with 'cill' and 'eglis' suffices, where the saint's name is often included as a specific. Unfortunately it is not always easy to recognize which particular saint it is (or if the specific actually refers to something else such as a topographical feature), as names can appear in hypocoristic or corrupted versions. One indication may be a strong local cult, but this must be treated carefully as it may have arisen as a result of a mistranslated name. Even if the name is identifiable, there are often several possible saints with the same name. Where several saints share an identical or similar common name, it can be hard to determine how many saints are actually celebrated, especially if the cults are local, rather than regional or national.

Some dedications are recorded in charters of the mediaeval period. For Fife the most comprehensive list of medieval dedications still in existence is *St And. Lib.* 348, which includes just five churches in the region. This list came about as the result of a comprehensive rededication of the churches of the diocese of St Andrews, carried out by Bishop David de Bernham in the 1240s. It is unclear why these particular churches' dedications were recorded in the *Liber* and others not, but they do include those three churches which had been in the possession of the Culdees of Loch Leven before being granted to St Andrews.

A full version of the list of rededicated churches exists, on the flyleaf of the *Pontificale Ecclesiae Sanctae Andreae*, now in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris. Some names of saints have apparently

been appended to the text in a later, but undated, hand.¹ In the nineteenth century, Wordsworth produced an edited version of the *Pontificale*, and copied the text and the list with its annotations. Presumably to make it as complete as possible, he added dedications to the list, gleaned from other, unnamed, sources, and with apparently varying degrees of authenticity. Wordsworth's list has been widely used by writers of later histories who did not question the dedications' authenticity, and many have come to be accepted as fact, making it harder to assess which are genuine and mediaeval or older, and which are late and spurious.

Some dedications have been recorded in charters, but this does not happen as a matter of course. It may perhaps have been used: to differentiate churches; to highlight a particular dedication linked with a grantor or the foundation to which the church was being granted; or to formalize a church's dedication to a saint already commemorated locally, for example, on whose saint's day the local fair was held or whose relic was in the possession of the church.

From the late Middle Ages onwards, the growth in antiquarian studies led to a boom in the study of place names. Many took the place names they knew at face value, and from them 'identified' saints, which were accepted by the local communities and sometimes attached to the parish church, perhaps in an attempt to give it status, or a 'history'. It is often very hard to determine exactly when a dedication was first associated with a church, as the church community was unlikely ever to describe it as new. Sometimes 'rededication' dates are given, but it is difficult to know if these are genuine rededications or assumed traditions.

Another problem with dedications is the changing of saints' names, either because they were originally recorded in hypocoristic or unusual form, or because the place name in which it has been embedded changes, both through changes in language in early times, and through later changes in dialect. On occasion, scribal error in transcribing names can also be blamed for this problem. These

¹ Presumably mediaeval.

developments can easily transform one dedication into another, or mask the identity of the saint. Again, because of the lack of early records, these can be hard to identify and correct, and often the earliest written record of a name comes, at best, in the eleventh or twelfth century, several hundred years after it was first used.

Some Saints Commemorated in Fife

Adamnanus (Edheunanus)

Said to have met St Serf on Inchkeith, and to have later granted him the island of Loch Leven.² The tradition was added to over time to suggest that Adamnanus was the abbot of Inchkeith, rather than “an abbot in Scotland”³ There is no evidence otherwise linking this saint with Fife or for a foundation on Inchkeith, and he may be the result of confusion between **Ethernan**,⁴ and Adamnan, abbot of Iona, or have been added to give the *Vita* more credibility.

Adrian (March 6th)

According to the Aberdeen Breviary, Adrian was a bishop from Hungary who came to Scotland and brought with him 6606 companions including **St Monan**. He preached the word of God to the Picts and settled on the Isle of May where he was martyred. Fordun gives the date of his martyrdom as 875.⁵

The identity of this saint has caused much debate. He is first recorded in the early fifteenth century by Wyntoun,⁶ and it is here that he is associated with the Isle of May and the East Neuk. Adrian is almost certainly the same saint as **Ethernan**, with the early name changed sometime in the thirteenth or fourteenth century to that of a more familiar saint.⁷ The story of Adrian, however, may have some roots in fact, that is, that there was a Viking raid on the island in the late ninth century in which churchmen were killed. Considering the position of the Isle of May and the record of Viking attacks

² ‘*Vita S. Servanus*’, in Skene, *Chronicles of the Picts and the Scots*, 416. Also Macquarrie, A, ‘*Vita Sancti Servani: The Life of St Serf*’, *Innes Review*, 44, No. 2, 1993, 140, 148

³ Macquarrie, ‘*Vita Sancti Servani*’, 148

⁴ See Kinghorn parish

⁵ Forbes, *Kalendars*, 266-8

⁶ Wyntoun, *Origynale Cronykil of Scotland*, bk 6, Ch 8

⁷ Peter Yeoman, pers. comm..

on other monastic islands, it would be very unlikely if this church remained unscathed throughout the period of raiding.

The name Adrian is also associated with Odran, a name borne by several saints in the British Isles. The best known of these was a kinsman and follower of St Columba, commemorated on Iona in the *Reilig Odhran*, Odran's cemetery.⁸

As well as the Isle of May, St Adrian is linked with sites at Flisk, Abdie, and Newburgh, under the name **Magridin** (Adrian with the honorific 'mo'). There seems to be no obvious reason to connect this group of dedications in the north with a saint of the East Neuk, and little can be said for certain about the saint or the authenticity of these dedications, as their origin is particularly uncertain. The earliest date for the **Magridin** dedications is also unclear, but despite the lack of early evidence, there does not appear to be any particular reason to immediately dismiss them as spurious. As they all occur within territory thought to be under the control of the early church of Abernethy,⁹ **Magridin** may have been a local saint particularly culted at that church, although no link is currently known in that particular parish.

Athernaisc

This saint is commemorated in Kettle¹⁰ and Leuchars, although the latter is probably erroneous.¹¹ A saint Itharnaisc or Iothernaisc was either buried or venerated at Clane, Co Kildare.¹² It is possible that the Fife saint is **Ethernan**, under a corrupted form of his name, as the name of Ethernan of Madderty

⁸ Watson, *CPNS*, 309

⁹ Flisk and Dron are both listed in the charter granting the church and belongings of Abernethy to Arbroath Abbey (*Arb. Lib.*, 1), and Abdie, including the modern parish of Newburgh, is listed as the easternmost holding in a land grant recorded in the *Chronicle of the Picts*. Although not obviously authentic, this does appear to be based in reality.

¹⁰ *St And Lib.*, 348

¹¹ See Kettle and Leuchars parishes

¹² Forbes, *Kalendars*, 334

(see below) was recorded as *Ethernan*, *Ithernanus* and *Ydarnascius* over a period of twenty years.¹³ This identification may also be strengthened by the fact that **Ethernan** is commemorated in Kettle's neighbouring parish of Scoonie.

Ayle (Aug 30th) (d. c.650)

This saint, who is commemorated at either (or both of) Balmerino and Anstruther Easter,¹⁴ is thought to be Agilus, who was consecrated at Luxeuil under Columbanus and Eustatius.¹⁵

Bonoc

Little is known about this saint. A fifteenth century manuscript lists a relic of the bishop Saint Bonoc being brought from Leuchars Parish Church to the altar of St Fergus in St Andrews, and a grant of James VI confirms a chapel of St Bonoc in Leuchars parish.¹⁶ Dove suggests that Bonoc may have been "the creation of some Fife cleric who also produced relics for him",¹⁷ but there is no real reason to dismiss the saint as spurious.

Cainnech (Oct 11) (d. 598)

This saint is linked with Aghaboe in Ireland and, in the notes of the Martyrology of Oengus, with a chapel or oratory at Kilrymont (St Andrews).¹⁸ He is also associated with Kennoway parish, the name of which supposedly contained his name.¹⁹

¹³ Watson, *CPNS*, 321. The names are recorded in *Chart. Inch.* between 1200 and 1220.

¹⁴ See Balmerino and Anstruther Easter parishes

¹⁵ Forbes, *Kalendars*, 272

¹⁶ See Leuchars parish

¹⁷ Dove, G, *Saints, Dedications and Cults in Medieval Fife*, unpublished MPhil thesis, University of St Andrews 1988, 171

¹⁸ Watson, *CPNS*, 276

¹⁹ *ibid.*, 277

Caranoc (May 16th)

Supposedly the successor of St Ninian as Bishop of Whithorn, this saint is sometimes associated with the baptism of St Patrick. In the Martyrology of Donegal, Caranoc is listed as a saint of the Bretons. He is also associated with Carannog, the founder of Llangrannog in Cardiganshire, whose saint's day is also 16th May.²⁰

This saint is associated, probably spuriously, with Carnock parish.

Drostan

This saint, who is commemorated at Markinch, is recorded in the Book of Deer as a companion of St Columba, who came from Iona to Aberdour in Buchan. The saint is not listed in the Irish Calendars.²¹

Duncan

This saint may be commemorated at Kilduncan and Kilconquhar, both in the east of Fife. There is only one saint of this name in the early Irish Calendars, Dunchad, abbot of Iona, a relative of Adomnan, who died in 717, and under whom Roman usages were introduced to Iona.

Ethernan (Dec 2nd)

A saint Ethernan is associated with churches at Madderty in Perthshire and Rathin in Buchan,²² but it is unclear if this is the same saint who is commemorated in several parishes along the east and south coast of Fife. The Annals of Ulster record the death of Itharnan, 'amongst the Picts' in 669.

²⁰ Forbes, Kalendars, 298

²¹ Watson, CPNS, 317

²² Watson, CPNS, 321

St Ethernan's cult has become tangled with that of the possibly mythical **Adrian**, who is also associated with the monastery on the Isle of May. Other possible Ethernan commemorations are recorded under the names of **Magridin** (a form of Adrian) and **Athernaisc**.

Fillan

Traditionally a sixth century saint from Ireland who settled in central Scotland, this saint is actually an amalgamation of several.²³ Many, if not all, the dedications to Fillan in Fife²⁴ were a result of Robert I's personal devotion to this saint,²⁵ and the only dedication which, if correct, could be firmly dated to the Early Christian period, is that recorded in the place name Lumphinnans.²⁶

Finan

There are nine saints named Finan commemorated in the Irish martyrologies. He is suggested as being the saint commemorated at Lumphinnans in Ballingry parish, but this is more likely to have been

Fillan.²⁷

Gabran

Possibly the saint recorded at Kilgour (Falkland).²⁸ There is one saint named Gabrein in the Irish martyrologies, who is commemorated on June 24th.²⁹

²³ Taylor, S, 'The Cult of St Fillan in Scotland', *The North Sea World in the Middle Ages*, ed. TR Liszka and LEM Walker, Dublin 2001, 179-80.

²⁴ Aberdour, Pittenweem, Forgan and Lumphinnans in Ballingry parish

²⁵ Taylor, 'St Fillan', 2001, 187

²⁶ See Ballingry parish and *section 3.3*.

²⁷ See Ballingry parish

²⁸ The second element of the name is more likely to refer to a local burn name. See Falkland parish.

²⁹ Redford, M, *Commemorations of Saints of the Celtic Church in Scotland*, unpublished MLitt. Thesis, Edinburgh University 1988, 304

Glascanius (Jan 30th)

Said to be the saint commemorated in Kinglassie, but this is spurious. His collect in the Aberdeen Breviary records him as a confessor and bishop, but nothing else is known about him,³⁰ and he may never actually have existed.

Irnie

Said to be the saint commemorated in Kilrenny, but this is spurious. Identified traditionally with St Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, or St Ninian.

Magridin

See **Adrian**

Memme

An unidentified saint, listed in the *St And. Lib.*, (as one of the saints associated with Scoonie Church) as "Memme virginis".³¹ She is sometimes identified with St Modwenna,³² but there is no evidence for this. A saint Mema is recorded on Jan 24th in the *Martyrology of Tallacht*.³³

³⁰ Forbes, *Kalendars*, 356

³¹ *St And. Lib.*, 348

³² For example in *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, ed. H Scott, Edinburgh 1925, V, 116

³³ Dove, *Saints, Dedications and Cults*, 1988, 150

Monan

Watson identifies this saint with Moinenn, a sixth-century Bishop of Clonfert, St Brendan's monastery.³⁴ Monan is also linked with the Rosemarkie area of Easter Ross, where there is a cluster of 'cill' names similar to that in east Fife. As one of the commemorations of Monan in east Fife is at a place with a 'cill' name, (Kilminning in Crail parish), it is possible that this is a saint who was connected to the activity of the Irish church in Pictland in the early eighth century.³⁵

Monan is associated with the mission of St Adrian to the East Neuk in Wyntoun, but this is most likely to be a conflation of traditions.

The cult of St Monan appears to have been promoted quite heavily in the fourteenth century by David II who refounded the chapel of St Monan.³⁶

Muireadhach

Possibly the saint recorded in the original parish name of Logie, *Logiemurdoch*. Muireadhach is commemorated at May 15th and August 12th in the Martyrologies of Donegal and Gorman.³⁷ Watson has suggested that Scottish dedications of Muireadhach refer to the Abbot of Iona who died 1011AU.³⁸

Regulus

Probably Riagal, whose name occurs in the latinised form of Regulus in *Ecclesreul*, the site of a

³⁴ Watson, *CPNS*, 294-5 and 328-9

³⁵ Taylor, S, Settlement names in Fife, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh University 1995, 13

³⁶ Simon Taylor, pers. comm.

³⁷ Redford, Commemorations, 308

³⁸ Watson, *CPNS*, 293

mediaeval chapel in the parish of St Cyrus, in former Kincardineshire.³⁹ This saint is probably Riagal of Bangor (Northern Ireland). A short poem on the battle of Dunnichen, (where the Picts defeated the Angles in 685), which is thought to be contemporary with the battle and written in Pictland, is attributed to him.⁴⁰ Riagal may well have been the important saint at Kilrymont / St Andrews before being eclipsed by Andrew in the eleventh century.⁴¹

Ronan (Feb 7th)

This saint is commemorated at Kilmoran in Cupar parish. There are twelve saints of this name listed in Gorman's Martyrology,⁴² and it is uncertain which, if any, is the Fife saint. A Scottish St Ronan was abbot of Kingarth in Bute, and appears to be commemorated at several sites in the west, but there is nothing to obviously connect him with the east.

Serf (July 1st)

Because of the surviving *Vitae*, a lot more is 'known' about Serf than many other saints, but the information is predominantly legendary and contradictory, and there is little that can be said conclusively about the saint. The problems created by the evidence have led to the assumption by some writers that there were two saints, who lived about a century and a half apart, but this 'split' is only necessary if the hagiographical devices, such as meetings with other (datable) saints, are accepted, and there is no reason to do this.

Associated in Fife with Culross and Dysart, Macquarrie suggests that Serf was responsible for a foundation at Culross (filling the vacuum left by the flight of the Anglian bishop Trumwine from

³⁹ Taylor, S, 'Placenames and the early church in Scotland', *Rec Scot Church Hist Soc*, 28, 1998, 6

⁴⁰ Cruikshank, G, *The Battle of Dunnichen*, 1991, 22

⁴¹ Taylor, 'Placenames in Scotland', 1998, 6

⁴² Watson, *CPNS*, 309

Abercorn, south of the Forth), and for reorganizing the church “along the lines of the Gaelic church.”⁴³ If this chronology is correct, it would place him at around the late-seventh or early-eighth century.

Taylor accepts this dating but suggests that Serf should be viewed as a Pict within a Pictish monastery,⁴⁴ which, coming at a time when the Irish Church was putting its mark on Fife (as can be seen by the coining of ‘*cill*’ names), may have been unusual.⁴⁵

⁴³ Macquarrie, A, *The Saints of Scotland*, 1993, 133

⁴⁴ Taylor, *Settlement names*, 1995, 12

⁴⁵ That is not to say that monasteries in Fife did not take on their own local character, but merely that they seem to have reflected outside influences, rather than a clearly defined ‘Pictish’ church.

2. Topography

2.1 Proximity to hills

This section covers the location of churches in relation to hills, and the siting of churches on hillocks.

There are several (occasionally contradictory) reasons why a church would have been sited on a hill, covering a variety of practical and spiritual reasons:

1. Churches near settlement ¹ - areas with good agricultural land and soil suitable for cultivation will have been chosen, and this will often have been on upland areas, low hill or hillsides.
2. Churches on marginal land ² - sites with poor land that could not be used more profitably for other purposes.³
3. Positioning a church on a hill may have made it highly visible, enforcing its presence, consciously and subconsciously, on the community and creating a sense of prestige.
4. Hills (especially hilltops) may have been suitably remote and 'set apart' from the secular world, functioning in a similar way to enclosures in separating the church from its surroundings.⁴

¹ In Hurley's study of church sites in the south west of Ireland, he concluded that, in upland regions, they tended to mirror the pattern of settlement sites (Hurley, V, 'The Early Church in the South West of Ireland: Settlement and Organisation', *The Early Church in Western Britain and Ireland*, ed. SM Pearce, BAR British Series, 102, 1983, 307)

² Poor quality settlement sites may have been used as they were waste or unused land, and, in the first phase of Christianity, acquiring sites could be difficult (Hurley, 'South West of Ireland', 1983, 307)

³ Thomas, C, 'Concluding Remarks', *The Early Church in Wales and the West*, ed. N Edwards and A Lane, 1992, 147. Upland sites in some regions may also represent peripheral settlement on the margins of society (Driscoll, S, *The Early Historic Landscape of Strathearn: The Archaeology of a Pictish Kingdom*, unpublished PhD, University of Glasgow, 1987, 205).

⁴ Morris, R, *Churches in the Landscape*, 1989, 111

5. Hills are a recurring motif in the Bible, and sites may have been chosen to emulate aspects of Scripture.⁵

There are two main reasons why the siting of a church on a hillock may be an indication that it had been an Early Christian foundation:

1. Continuous use (particularly burial activity) over a long period of time will often have raised the ground level of the church and churchyard significantly in comparison with surrounding areas.
2. Some churches have been sited on earlier ritual sites such as large barrows,⁶ either through a convenient continuity of use or an attempt to Christianize the site.

⁵ *ibid.*, 111

⁶ One example of this is the church of Sparsholt, Hampshire.

2.2 *proximity to water*

There are two groups of features that are relevant to the siting of churches:

1. Seas, rivers, and lochs - Coastal areas were desirable for churches and settlement, because of the pivotal role they played in trade and communication. The sea was the principal communication route between the British Isles and with Europe, and rivers provided the main arteries of internal trade and communication.¹
2. Small rivers, streams, burns and wells ²

Until modern times, travel was generally much easier over water than land, and as Fife is largely surrounded by water, it is probable that the first missions to Fife came across the sea. It is likely that the earliest Christian influences came from Lothian in the fifth or sixth century, leaving their mark on the archaeological and historical record in the form of long cist cemeteries and 'eglis' place names. From their distribution it appears that Christianity penetrated Fife from the coasts.³ There is less evidence for a connection with Angus, on the opposite side of the Tay, but the practice of carving symbols and crosses on stone, which is thought to have developed in the north, probably came south across the Tay.

If, as is likely, the Columban church was involved with Fife, the sea would have been a significant factor - it is important to remember that Iona was an island, and all transport to and from it was by water; with "the sea... a constant factor in the lives of all who were connected with (it)."⁴ The Forth was probably part of the route taken between Iona and Lindesfarne, and travellers between these two monasteries may have broken their journeys in Fife or Lothian.

¹ Hurley, 'South West of Ireland', 1983, 310

² Wells will be dealt with separately in *section 3.5*.

³ Foster, S, *Picts, Gaels and Scots*, 1996, 79

⁴ O'Loughlin, T, 'Living in the Ocean', *Studies in the Cult of St Columba*, ed. C Bourke, Dublin 1997, 11

Once the coast had been reached, the easiest way inland was to travel along rivers. The importance of rivers for the siting of churches is clearly visible in the distribution of early Christian sites in Ireland, such as Clonmacnoise, but was probably less important in a small peninsula like Fife. Fife's two main rivers were both navigable, although not for any great distance.

Hurley, in his paper on early church sites in the south-west of Ireland, noted that a significant number of sites were located on or near the sea coast, and some, particularly hermitages, were located in river valleys (most examples of the Disert name in this region are found in river valleys)⁵ probably because these areas were not utilized by secular settlements as they were unsuitable.⁶ In Wales, there was a similar situation with many early churches located close to the sea and other tidal waters.⁷

Coastal sites are not necessarily early, as the same factors would have made the sites attractive in both the Pictish period and the Middle Ages. Some coastal sites were also retreats for later inland monasteries.⁸

This element is included in the gazetteer criteria as it may be an indication that a church dates to the Early Christian period when taken alongside other factors, but on its own it should not be regarded as in any way conclusive.

Many early church sites are situated beside a stream or burn, and in some cases this forms part of the enclosure. As well as having a practical use in providing water for rites and the everyday use of the churchmen, they may be an indication of a pre-Christian ritual site. Although wells could often provide the water that was needed, running water in the form of a river or burn was also

⁵ Hurley, 'South West of Ireland', 1983, 307

⁶ *ibid.*, 307

⁷ Bowen, EG, The Settlements of the Celtic saints in Wales, 1956, 116

⁸ Morris, Churches, 1989, 119

important from a spiritual point of view.⁹ A probable example of this is Paulinus baptizing large numbers of people in the “nearby River Glen”.¹⁰

⁹ Baptism in the Bible occurs in running water and its presence is a motif repeated through the Scriptures (Morris, *Churches*, 1989, 111).

¹⁰ Bede, *HE*, II.14

2.3 *proximity to settlement sites*

The relationship between churches and settlement can be hard to determine because of the difficulty in identifying settlement sites. Not only do they leave little obvious trace on the landscape because of the comparatively transient nature of the timber structures involved,¹ but many sites could date from any time between the prehistoric period and the early Middle Ages.² The number of identified settlement sites has increased greatly due to aerial photography, but in most cases excavation would be required before any date could be put on the structures concerned.

In Fife there are two regions that are particularly rich in cropmarks, that is, the area around Leuchars parish and the parishes of Collessie, Kettle and Falkland. These are likely to have been amongst the most populated areas because of the high quality of the land, but may not represent Fife as a whole. Density of cropmarks may indicate a heavily settled area or a long continuity of use with multiple, successive buildings.

Stephen Driscoll, in his thesis on the Early Historic landscape of Strathearn, has studied the aerial photographic record for that area, and has categorized and assessed the cropmark evidence to determine the nature and spread of Pictish sites. Some caution must be exercised in applying his conclusions to Fife, but as Strathearn was a contiguous part of southern Pictland, and has a comparable land type to northern Fife, comparison is not unreasonable.

Sites have been placed into three categories

1. hillforts
2. enclosures
3. unenclosed settlements

Sections have also been included looking at the environmental and place name evidence.

¹ James, T, 'Air Photography of Ecclesiastical Sites in North Wales', *The Early Church in Wales and the West*, ed. N Edwards and A Lane, 1992, 62.

² Driscoll, *Strathearn*, 1987, 204

Hillforts

Driscoll divided these into classes, generally according to size, position and layout. From this he suggested that *Class III hillforts*,³ *Class V hillforts*,⁴ and *ringforts*⁵ were most likely to date to the Pictish period.

Within Fife, it is difficult to compare known hillfort sites with many of Driscoll's criteria as they are generally unexcavated, and in some cases, no longer extant, due, for example, to quarrying. The prime example of a Pictish hillfort in Fife is Clatchard Craig, which fortunately was fully excavated and recorded before being quarried away in the 1960s.⁶ Although this site appeared to be typically Iron Age at first, the discovery of early mediaeval finds such as brooch moulds and glass beads and C-14 dates from the ramparts, demonstrated that it was actually of late sixth or seventh century construction.⁷

The spatial relationship of hillfort and church is important, as, for most of the Pictish period, they will have been the centre of power in their immediate area. The first hillforts in North Britain date to the early Iron Age (around the sixth century BC) and they continued to be built or adapted for over 1000 years.⁸ Not only were they centres of power and society,⁹ but they were also symbolic

³ Class III comprises compact, multi-vallate forts with 3 or more ramparts. The forts occupied an area several times larger than the enclosure, with a proportionally small living space. They were generally situated near good land, either on hillocks with circular ramparts, or on cliffs or steep slopes with D-shaped ramparts (*ibid.*, 165)

⁴ Class V were large, higher-status forts with the internal space stratified into two or more distinct zones, and provision for a large number of separate activities or living spaces. (Driscoll, *ibid.*, 199)

⁵ Ringforts were circular, stone-walled enclosures, usually measuring 15-30m in diameter, with walls approximately 4m thick (*ibid.*, 172-3). These hillforts strongly resemble Irish cashels or ringforts, and are likely to have had some Irish influence behind them. In south west Ireland, the majority of ringforts are found on the shoulders of hills and ridges, on land suitable for cultivation with light ploughs (Hurley, 'South West of Ireland', 1983, 307)

⁶ Driscoll has classified Clatchard Craig as a Class III hillfort on grounds of form, but admits that it is not a typical site because of its clearly high status (Driscoll, *Strathearn*, 1987, 167)

⁷ Close-Brooks, J, 'Excavations at Clatchard Craig, Fife', *PSAS*, 116, 1986. This highlights the likelihood that other Pictish hillforts have been assumed to be Iron Age and overlooked.

⁸ Within those parts of Britain occupied by the Romans it is not unusual to find Iron Age hillforts reused and substantially rebuilt after the Roman period, in the late fourth, fifth and sixth centuries, apparently forming the equivalent of tribal capitals (Thomas, C, *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain*, 1971, 112).

⁹ When considering their role and importance, they should be seen as not just high status residences, but also as administrative centres, from where resources were administered, collected and exchanged (Foster, S, 'Before Alba: Pictish and Dal Riata Power Centres', *Scottish Power Centres: from Early Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*, ed. S Foster, A MacInnes, and R MacInnes, 1998, 3).

centres, possibly almost as important for the subsequent settlement and development of the area. As can be seen from Driscoll's classification system, not all hillforts will have held the same status, and thus their individual importance within the surrounding area will have varied. Status may be partly inferred from layout and structure, but the most reliable guide is likely to come from an analysis of finds, which is frequently impossible. Some hillforts may have been permanent residences, but where the ruler held extensive territory or overlordship, he may have had a number of forts to which he could travel to quell trouble,¹⁰ collect dues, or make his presence felt. Any pattern of temporary use may have affected a site's perceived status but is unlikely to show up on the archaeological record, especially if use was sporadic but repeated over a long period.

By the eighth century, another type of potential royal residence is the timber hall complex. They may leave very little trace on the archaeological record, but aerial photography over Kettle parish has identified an unusually large complex of at least five probable timber halls, situated about 100m from Lathrisk Old Parish Church. These buildings have been tentatively dated to the Pictish period, because of an annexe on some of the structures,¹¹ but no excavation has been carried out.

Hope-Taylor, in his work on Yeavinger, assigned each phase of building to a range of dates and a particular historical background. Phases IV and V, whose timber halls correspond most closely to the cropmarks at Lathrisk, are assigned to Oswald's reign and the period from c.650 to 685AD (i.e. the defeat of the Northumbrians by the Picts at Dunnichen).¹² These dates correspond to the period

¹⁰ Cottam, M, and Small, A, 'The Distribution of Settlement in Southern Pictland', *Medieval Archaeology*, 18, 1974, 50

¹¹ Maxwell, G, 'Settlement in Southern Pictland: A New Overview', *The Picts: A New Look at Old Problems*, ed. A Small, Dundee, 1987, 34.

¹² Hope-Taylor, B, *Yeavinger*, 1977, 276

Phase IV (*ibid.*, 177, 165, fig.78) – The halls are domestic buildings and the annexes may be private bed chambers (*ibid.*, 164). Style IV was a variant of the Yeavinger-style, possibly incorporating influences from Ireland or north Britain (*ibid.*, 239).

Phase V (*ibid.*, 167, fig. 79) – Succeeded Phase IV after the site was completely destroyed by fire. This phase featured fewer buildings (four halls with annexes), of lesser quality than their predecessors, suggesting that the site was losing status (*ibid.*, 239).

In both phases the halls were arranged to be shown off to anyone approaching along the valley, the normal route into the area (*ibid.*, 166). The Fife examples are similarly in a valley, on an important routeway.

There is little evidence for Irish timber building at this time, but Bede describes a timber church of the period, which Finan built on Lindesfarne, as 'in the Irish style' (Bede, *HE*, III.25). As Phase IV corresponds with the introduction of the Columban church into Northumbria, and Oswald grew up on Iona, it would not be surprising if Irish / Ionan building styles were incorporated into new royal residences. Possibly similar

when southern Pictland, including Fife, was under some form of Northumbrian domination and the Lathrisk complex may have been the residence of a representative of the Northumbrian king or a Pictish puppet king. If these are not 'native Pictish' buildings, this may explain why this apparently high-status Pictish site is so close to another, the hillfort at East Lomond, where a (?fifth century) carved stone depicting a bull was found. The use of largely unprotected timber buildings rather than stone defenses on a hilltop implies a certain confidence¹³ and may be an indication of the strength of Northumbria's hold on the region. It would be interesting to note if excavation detected that the site was destroyed c.685. Other similar timber halls have been found at Atcham (Shropshire), Sprouston (beside the River Tweed), and Doon Hill, above Dunbar.¹⁴

In Ireland, it has been noted that many royal centres and assembly places were situated near territorial boundaries and that churches followed the same pattern.¹⁵ This relationship may have come about for several reasons:

- A demonstration of the close relationship between church and ruler.¹⁶
- The church may have replaced an earlier pagan site that had been placed near a royal centre.

timber buildings were found during the 1959 excavations on Iona (Hope-Taylor, *Yeavinger*, 1977, 237; O'Sullivan, J, 'Iona: Archaeological Investigations, 1875-1996', *Spes Scotorum: Hope of Scots*, ed. D Broun and T Clancy, 1999, 227). The Fife halls may have resulted from a Columban connection, but a Northumbrian one seems more likely.

¹³ Hope-Taylor, *Yeavinger*, 1977, 276

¹⁴ Reynolds, N, 'Dark Age Timber Halls and the Background to Excavation at Balbridie', *Settlements in Scotland 1000BC - 1000AD*, Scottish Archaeological Forum, 10, 1978, 50-2

¹⁵ Edwards, N, *The Archaeology of Early Medieval Ireland*, London 1990, 105. There are problems with this statement, as although church and secular sites do seem to follow similar distribution patterns, the idea that they are on boundaries is difficult to test as many boundaries are unknown and are also likely to have been reasonably fluid (Hurley, 'South West of Ireland', 1983, 311)

¹⁶ It seems certain that the protection of the local leader or king would have been of great importance to the establishment of a church. A mission might have been able to enter an area without active support, but would probably have required some sort of diplomatic backing, either from its church of origin or that church's local ruler. Support from the ruler of the new area would not only have been important for the churchmen's own personal protection, but would probably have had a strong bearing on the success of the mission. If converts were to be won and a church was to be built, the churchmen would require land to settle and revenue to continue to live and work in the area. If support was granted, the church would probably be sited within the vicinity of the ruler's main residence - the actual proximity may have been dependent on the size of territory controlled. The amount of land controlled may also have been an important factor in how far a mission could spread within a single territory. In south west Ireland, the distribution of churches and hillforts (the primary secular settlement sites of that period in that region) generally correspond (Hurley, 'South West of Ireland', 1983, 307).

- Border areas may have been easier to settle in until the local populace fully accepted the church.
- Boundaries are usually on marginal land, which was not profitable for anything else.¹⁷

It is difficult to say whether any significant boundaries lay within Fife during the Pictish period and if so, where they were, but it is noticeable that many of the hillforts occur on or near parish boundaries.¹⁸

The majority of hillforts in Fife have been dated to the Iron Age without excavation and continued use (or origin) in the Pictish period may not have been recognized. It is impossible to categorically say (without further evaluation) which sites are relevant to this study and which are not; therefore, all possible sites are included, although the majority are unlikely to have existed past the Iron Age.

¹⁷ Thomas, C, 'Concluding remarks', 1992, 147.

¹⁸ See Map 1.

Enclosures

Enclosure is the standard category for large circular or rectangular cropmarks, with no obvious sub-divisions or internal buildings. Where these features are visible, the cropmark is classed as a 'settlement'.¹⁹ 'Enclosures' are often recorded in areas with generally poorer cropmarks, and it is likely that in many cases internal features have not shown up.

Palisades – These circular or oval enclosures vary greatly in size, and are difficult to date. The larger examples, when excavated, are often prehistoric, but the smallest examples, similar in size to ringforts, may be Pictish.²⁰ They would probably have contained one or two houses, outbuildings and a courtyard, and as many of these sites are shared with modern farms, are likely to be the Early Mediaeval equivalent.

Curvilinear Ditched Enclosures – These sites vary in size, but the smaller examples, of a similar size to ringforts and the smallest palisades, may be Pictish. They are found on good agricultural land,²¹ suggesting that this is another type of farm settlement. The similarity of these ditched enclosures to ringforts suggests some are ploughed out examples of those sites.²²

Rectangular Ditched Enclosures – Rectangular enclosures are likely to be either prehistoric or Early Mediaeval in date. In southern Britain, their reappearance is probably the result of Roman influence, and may pre-date the Anglo-Saxon takeover,²³ but in the north and west they are generally considered to be later, with round houses in Ireland until the tenth century. The appearance of rectangular structures in southern Pictland may stem from Northumbrian influences,²⁴ but this has not been conclusively proved, and identification of these sites as Pictish would require further investigation.

¹⁹ Driscoll, *Strathearn*, 1987, 219

²⁰ *ibid.*, 221

²¹ *ibid.*, 223

²² *ibid.*, 222

²³ *ibid.*, 227

²⁴ For example, the timber hall complex at Lathrisk (see above). If there was a similar building on Iona (see above), that church may have been a source of influence.

Complex Enclosures – These sites, which are generally assumed to represent farmsteads, fall into two categories:

- Groups of features closely scattered across the landscape,
- Concentrated collections of related features (e.g. yards, fields and pathways).²⁵

Complex enclosures may only differ from other enclosures because of the quality of the cropmarks, but are very useful, as despite totalling less than 5% of the total aerial photographic settlement record, they are the only site type to demonstrate the interrelation of features.²⁶ As this is a different class of cropmark rather than different type of site, it is likely that the Pictish examples will be those that follow the same pattern as the previously discussed site types.

Unenclosed Settlement

Timber Round Houses – These sites can frequently only be differentiated from barrows by the presence of post holes, are often classified simply as ring ditches, and may date from any time between the prehistoric and Early Mediaeval periods. The presence of a souterrain at the site indicates that it is one of the later examples, but there is much debate as to whether they are an Iron Age feature that did not survive past 200AD²⁷ or if they can be regarded as later Iron Age / Pictish.²⁸

The number of souterrains known in southern Pictland has increased greatly with the advent of systemized aerial photography.²⁹ Although they are predominantly a pre-Pictish feature, the deliberate back-filling of some examples c.200AD does suggest that settlement continued on these sites into the Pictish period.³⁰ In this way the suggestion that settlements with souterrains are

²⁵ Driscoll, *Strathearn*, 1987, 232

²⁶ *ibid.*, 234

²⁷ Ritchie, A, 'The Archaeology of the Picts: Some Current Problems', *Pictish Studies: Settlement, Burial and Art in Dark Age Northern Britain*, ed. J Friell and W Watson, BAR British Series, 125, 1984, 1

²⁸ Driscoll believes that their presence is a possible indication of a Pictish date, and if taken alongside a small-sized site with no more than two or three ring ditches, could suggest Pictish settlement (Driscoll, *Strathearn*, 1987, 239).

²⁹ Maxwell, 'Settlement in Southern Pictland', 1987, 39

³⁰ *ibid.*, 42. If the sites were being abandoned, it is likely that the souterrain would have been too, and the infill would have accumulated over time showing some signs of stratigraphy. However the infill on some of these sites would appear to be the result of one action.

Pictish is partially correct, but is too broad to be conclusive. As the aerial photographic record gives no indication if the souterrain was abandoned or deliberately blocked up, excavation would be needed to assess the site.

Cultivation Remains

There are two main types of field system visible from the cropmark record:

- rectilinear, divided by ditches or banks.
- strip or rig.

Both of these site types are extremely difficult to date, and although the former is generally considered to be earlier than the latter, either may be linked to Pictish settlement sites.³¹ Rigs were particularly suitable in areas with low quality, poorly drained soils and heavy rainfall,³² and thus appear much earlier in upland areas where drainage was a problem (e.g. at Cowden Hill, near the Loch of Lindores, there is a patch of rigs which dates to the Iron Age).³³

Environmental Evidence

One possible method of analyzing settlement patterns in Pictish Fife would be the analysis of the pollen record, but relatively little palaeo-palynological research has been published from Eastern Scotland, and the Fife region in particular.³⁴ Sites studied include Kilconquhar Loch (NO 488 026),³⁵ Black Loch (NO 261 149),³⁶ Pitbladdo (NO 361 175),³⁷ and Pickletillum (NO 453 235).³⁸

³¹ Driscoll, *Strathearn*, 1987, 44

³² Yeoman, P, 'Medieval Rural Settlement: the Invisible Centuries', *Scottish Archaeology: New Perceptions*, ed. WS Hanson and EA Slater, Aberdeen 1991, 119

³³ *ibid.*, 1991, 120

³⁴ Whittington, G, Edwards, K and Caseldine, CJ, 'Late- and post-glacial pollen-analytical and environmental data from a near-coastal site in north east Fife, Scotland', *Review of Palaeobotany and Palynology*, 68, 1991, 65; Whittington, G, Edwards, K, and Cundill, P, 'Late- and post-glacial vegetational change at Black Loch, Fife, eastern Scotland – a multiple core approach', *New Phytologist*, 118, 1991, 147

³⁵ A shallow depression on the coastal plain; maximum depth <1.5m; altitude 27m; catchment 2km²; size 0.38m². This site was a peat myre for much of its history, but was a loch by 1593 (Edwards, K, and Whittington, G, 'Palynological evidence for the growing of *cannabis sativa* L. (hemp) in medieval and historical Scotland', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers (New Series)*, 15, 1990, 61; Whittington, G, and Jarvis, J, 'Kilconquhar Loch, Fife: an historical and palynological investigation', *PSAS*, 116, 1996).

³⁶ Maximum depth 3m; altitude 90m; catchment 1.42km², size 0.15km² (Edwards and Whittington, 'Cannabis sativa L.', 1990, 62)

Partly because the spread of these is limited (they are all within north east Fife) and partly because of the nature of the evidence, the pollen record from these sites does not shed a great deal of light on the settlement patterns of the Picts. The site at Black Loch shows that there was a severe decline in agriculture in the area during the period 40AD to 640AD, possibly as a result of the Roman incursions during the Severan campaign,³⁹ with the trend being reversed after this date leading to a period of major agricultural development.⁴⁰ This dating corresponds with the chronology displayed at the Pictish hillfort of Clatchard Craig, where an Iron Age hillfort was reused from around the seventh century. The other three sites, however, simply show a continuation of human intervention in the landscape from the Bronze / Iron Age (when the land is cleared), and a marked increase in herbaceous taxa and cereal pollen at the expense of arboreal pollen.⁴¹

³⁷ A bog site; altitude 70m; area 2km x 200m (Donald, AP, 'A Pollen diagram from Pitbladdo, Fife', *Transactions of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh*, 43, 1981, 281)

³⁸ Whittington, Edwards and Caseldine, 'Near-coastal site', 1991, 65.

³⁹ Whittington, G, and Edwards, K, '*Ubi solitudinem faciunt pacem appellant*: the Romans in Scotland, a Palaeoenvironmental Contribution', *Britannia*, 24, 1993, 17; Whittington, G, and Edwards, K, 'Palynology as a predictive tool in archaeology', *PSAS*, 124, 1994, 63

⁴⁰ Whittington, G, Edwards, K, and Cundill, PR, *Palaeoenvironmental Investigations at Black Loch in the Ochil Hills of Fife, Scotland*, O'Dell Memorial Monograph, 22, University of Aberdeen, 1990, 45

⁴¹ Edwards and Whittington, '*Cannabis sativa* L.', 1990; Donald, 'Pitbladdo', 1981, 287; Whittington, Edwards and Caseldine, 'Near-coastal site', 1991, 81.

The evidence from Black Loch may mirror the souterrain situation. These stone structures would have been expensive to build and played a vital role in the late Iron Age economy.⁴² The fact that they are taken out of use would seem to suggest that there was a decline in the rural economy. Although at a local level it may be the result of a short but brutal Roman campaign, it may also stem from other economic factors. The Roman withdrawal from Britain by the fourth century may have meant a general downturn in the economy with neighbouring regions (and trading partners) affected.

Place Names

Pictish settlement is partly mirrored by the distribution of '*pit*' place names.⁴³ This element appears to be attached to settlements on good land, but as these are unlikely to have been settled for the first time in the Pictish period, the term must have had a more specific meaning, possibly involving administration.⁴⁴ Clusters of '*pit*' names in Fife occur near Abernethy,⁴⁵ St Andrews and Dunfermline and are presumably related to church land holdings and the provision of a significant revenue.⁴⁶ Aside from these three clusters, the bulk of '*pit*' names in Fife occur in the areas richest in cropmarks i.e. the area south and east of the Ochils in the north.⁴⁷

Apart from the very basic evidence they provide of Pictish settlement distribution, '*pit*' names may give some idea of what territory was controlled by the major foundations and, from this, which smaller churches were linked to these foundations.

⁴² Maxwell, 'Settlement in Southern Pictland', 1987, 42

⁴³ The element most basically refers to 'a share' or 'a portion' of land. Some caution must be exercised when looking at their distribution as in some cases they were substituted by 'bal' names (a G element)

⁴⁴ This is emphasized by the fact that the names appear (from their second elements) to be still coined after the Pictish period.

⁴⁵ Although Abernethy is now in Perthshire, the part of the parish where the church was located was within Fife until 1891, and many of the '*pit*' names occur in the surrounding Fife parishes.

⁴⁶ Taylor, S, 'Some Early Scottish Place-Names and Queen Margaret', *Scottish Language* 13, 1994, 3-4. Taylor believes that the Dunfermline cluster are related to the foundation on Loch Leven on the border of Fife, rather than a foundation in Dunfermline itself (*ibid.*, 7). Many '*pit*' names contain ecclesiastical second elements (Whittington, G, 'Placenames and the Settlement Pattern of Dark-Age Scotland', *PSAS*, 1975, 104)

⁴⁷ Whittington, 'Placenames', 1975, 101, fig. 1

Conclusions

The most likely Pictish settlement types, according to Driscoll's analysis, are hillforts with multiple, close-set ramparts, surrounding a compact site, situated at a relatively low altitude in a place of recognizable strategic importance,⁴⁸ small enclosed sites supporting one or two houses, and small unenclosed sites with souterrains. Looking at the archaeological record, the general pattern of settlement across Central and East Fife and surrounding regions appears to remain largely unchanged from the first millennium BC to the Pictish period proper,⁴⁹ and features nucleated, open villages of round timber houses, in groups varying from two or three houses to around thirty.⁵⁰ The internal diameter of these round houses is normally between 6 and 15 metres.⁵¹ One apparent development in the Pictish period is the more extensive use of upland areas, particularly between the Howe of Fife and the Tay.⁵²

Within Fife, there have been few specific settlement sites categorically identified as being Pictish, and so it is difficult to pinpoint their proximity to church sites. Two settlement sites which have been identified and excavated are at North Straiton, Logie parish (NO 420 234) and Easter Kinnear, Kilmany parish (NO 407 235) both in the north of Fife.⁵³

The cropmark record will obviously be weighted towards rural sites with good agricultural land. Because of this bias, the settlements detected tend to be small farms, which are spread out across the landscape in a very similar way to modern farms. It is uncertain what form settlement would have taken on poorer land (it is most likely to have been lower status, but it is uncertain how much there would have been), as these areas are more likely to have been developed in recent times. A significant proportion of the landscape of southern Fife has also changed due to quarrying, mining

⁴⁸ Driscoll, *Strathearn*, 1987, 172

⁴⁹ Watkins, T, 'Where were the Picts?', *Pictish Studies: Settlement, Burial and Art in Dark Age Northern Britain*, ed. J Friell and W Watson, BAR British Series, 125, 1984, 71

⁵⁰ Maxwell, 'Settlement in Southern Pictland', 1987, 35. Where several exist together it can be very unclear if they were contemporary or date to different periods (Driscoll, *Strathearn*, 1987, 237).

⁵¹ Maxwell, 'Settlement in Southern Pictland', 1987, 36

⁵² Whittington, Edwards, and Cundill, *Palaeoenvironmental Investigations*, 1990, 4

⁵³ Driscoll, S, 'A Pictish settlement in north-east Fife: the Scottish Field School of Archaeology at Easter Kinnear', *TAFAJ*, 3, 1997. See parish entries.

and industry, so it is difficult to suggest what settlement patterns there were there, and how they would have related to the church.

In conclusion, high status settlement sites have been included within the gazetteer, as have positively identified lower status sites. As a result of the sheer quantity of cropmark evidence, and difficulty in identifying Pictish sites from those of other periods, sites not positively identified have been omitted. Further analysis of the cropmark record with reference to earlier discoveries, along with the excavation of more sites, could shed a great deal more light on the nature of settlement and its relationship with the church, than is available at this time.

2.4 *island and coastal features*

Islands

Islands are associated with monasticism and were particularly suited to hermitages or smaller, 'eremitic type' monasteries, although they could also be used for larger foundations.¹ They appear to have been chosen for a variety of reasons:

- Reuse or 'Christianization' of pagan sites
- They were 'set apart' from the rest of society. Earthwork vallums can be seen at a number of island sites, but their very nature meant that they were 'enclosed' and set apart from the outside world. The 'remoteness' of islands should not be overstated, however, as in many cases they were viewed as an extension of coastal settlement.²
- The land may have been marginal to society, and was either unused land or was granted to the churchmen more readily.
- Emulating other island monasteries. According to Bede, Aidan, the churchman from Iona, requested Lindesfarne as his see.³

Small peninsulas, promontories and headlands may have been viewed in a similar way.⁴

In Ireland, a large number of 'holy islands' with monastic remains have been identified, both inland on lakes and along the coast.⁵ Within Fife, there is one positively identified island monastic site on the Isle of May, one possible site on Inchcolm island in the Firth of Forth, and one unlikely but traditional site on Inchkeith, also on the Forth. There are no large inland bodies of water in Fife, but the holy island of St Serf's, on Loch Leven, on the border of Fife and Kinross, was the site of an important Culdee foundation, possibly on the site of an Early Christian foundation.

¹ Morris, *Churches*, 1989, 107; Thomas, C, *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain*, 1971, 35

² Hurley, 'South West of Ireland', 1983, 310

³ Bede, *HE*, III.3

⁴ Morris, *Churches*, 1989, 110

⁵ Logan, P, *The Holy Wells of Ireland*, 1980, 60

Cliffs

Like islands, cliffs may be seen to provide some form of natural cut-off from the rest of the world.

In some cases, sites have been subject to a great deal of weathering and slippage, and so sites located directly on or in cliffs may have been partially destroyed. This is a particular problem for burial grounds, where land erosion uncovers and destroys burials. One site where this has proved a particular problem is at Kirkheugh in St Andrews, but a smaller site which demonstrates the problem clearly is at Anstruther Golf Course,⁶ where a possible long cist was uncovered through coastal erosion. Due to damage, the nature of the burial could not be assessed.⁷

Caves

Cave sites appear to have been used during the Early Christian period for a variety of reasons:

- They were often hidden and cut off from their surroundings, following the pattern of sites that were separated either physically or metaphorically from the outside world. One of the primary uses for these sites was as hermitages or retreats; the place name element '*disert*' meaning 'retreat or hermitage' is sometimes applied to cave sites.⁸
- They were often peripheral sites, and it may, therefore, have been easy for one or two churchmen to settle and worship in them.
- Some caves may have had a pagan tradition of use, which was adapted and 'Christianized' in the same way as wells, etc.
- There was a tradition of using caves as retreats or places of worship within the Christian church. Cave sites were commonly used for early monasteries in the near East, and during times of persecution in Europe, caves and catacombs were often regarded as the only safe places to meet.

⁶ Pittenweem parish (NO 50 SE 177) (NO 5565 0271)

⁷ Yeoman, P, 'East Braes, Pittenweem, human remains and possible cist', *D and E*, 1996, 50

Some caves may have been selected because of the presence of a well.⁹ In sea caves there may be a tidal well, either providing a small quantity of water for use in rites,¹⁰ or filling the cave entirely.¹¹

There are a number of cave sites along the coast of Fife that shows signs of having been used either for worship or in Christian ritual. The presence of crosses and apparently contemporary Pictish symbols dates this activity to the Early Christian period. In 1997 a programme was established at the University of St Andrews to study Fife's sea caves and to "construct a picture of the past use and present condition of these caves."¹² The first caves looked at were at Caipie, a site known to be historically and archaeologically important and also under threat from a variety of processes. The project looked at the recorded history of the caves and the features which were still visible or could be safely accessed, providing a useful assessment of this site; much more light could be shed on the caves of Fife through the continuation of this project.

A brief survey of caves and rock shelters was also carried out in 1979 identifying some previously unknown features including crosses.¹³

⁸ The former parish of Dysart is probably named after the cave traditionally believed to be St Serf's retreat, although it does not (now) show any signs of Early Christian activity.

⁹ In St Fillan's Cave at Pittenweem (NO 50 SW 6) (NO 5498 0252), there is a small water source known as St Fillan's Well (CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=34254>, 15th June 2002).

¹⁰ For example, there is a small spring well contained in the hollow of a rock at the cave of St Patrick at Assaroe Abbey, Co. Donegal. The cave shows signs of having been artificially adapted and there are stones in the form of an altar at the east end (Logan, *Holy Wells*, 1980, 59).

¹¹ At a cave in Chincough near Portrane, Co. Dublin, the cave fills at high tide, at which time votive offerings are left to be swept out to sea (Logan, *Holy Wells*, 1980, 58).

¹² Le Bon, E, and Darrington, G, *Archaeological Survey of the Caipie Caves Sites, Kilrenny, East Fife*, unpublished report, University of St Andrews, 1998, 5

¹³ Kenworthy, JB, 'Coastal Survey', *D and E*, 1980, 5

Burials have been recorded at both the Caiplic Caves and the Wemyss Caves, which are likely to have been connected to the Early Christian use of both these sites. It is unclear, however, whether these are burials of churchmen who worshiped there or if they were pilgrims. It has been suggested that some of the crosses incised in the cave walls at Caiplic were made by later pilgrims,¹⁴ and both St Fillan's Cave, Pittenweem and St Monan's Cave, St Monance are known to have been mediaeval pilgrimage sites, indicating their continued importance to Christians.

¹⁴ See Kilrenny parish

2.5 Proximity to route ways

This section includes both water and land routes.

The importance of the sea and rivers for transport and communication has been discussed above in *section 2.2*, but two important maritime route ways will be discussed here

The Firth of Forth (which continues into the Clyde, and would have provided a link to the west coast) was part of the route taken between Iona and Lindesfarne,¹ and travellers between these two monasteries would have required stopping off points, either along the coast or on the islands. This is likely to have brought with it both a direct Christian influence to Fife, but would also have brought news from the rest of the church, keeping Fife, if not at the centre of developments, up to date with the church as a whole.

The Tay is known to have been an important waterway during the Roman period, when the Roman navy brought supplies to the fort of Carpow (near Newburgh) from other coastal sites such as Cramond, in Edinburgh. The Tay continues into Perthshire, where there appears to have been an active church from the seventh century, and so would have been an important route from inland as well as from the sea.

Land-based routeways across Fife were also important. There were few natural routes across the peninsula and the sides of hills would have been easier to cross than the marshy, lower ground. Two land routes, however, which ran on either side of Benarty were important landward routes in Fife from at least Roman times. These routes led from the Forth crossing point at Queensferry towards Perth in the north.

¹ Yeoman, P, *Pilgrimage in Mediaeval Scotland*, 1999, 63

A good example of the importance of routeways for the siting and success of a church is Clonmacnoise, which although situated at the centre of Ireland, thrived because of its position at the intersection of several routes including the River Shannon and the Esker Riada, the principal overland route across the centre of Ireland.²

The proximity of a church to a routeway must be important for its assessment, but there are many other geographical features that would modify this. Many of these features may now be lost. This element may be important for assessing the penetration of Christianity into a region, either by water or land.

² Hughes, K, and Hamlin, A, The Modern Traveller to the Early Irish Church, 1977, 24-5

3. Nature of Site

3.1 Types of site

This section covers two types of site, chapels and monasteries.

Chapels

The first chapels were structures in rough wood, hewn timber or perhaps wattle.¹ As traces of so few exist in the archaeological record, the evidence for them is largely literary, with Early Irish sources regularly mentioning wooden chapels or monastic buildings.² Excavations at a number of sites across Ireland have shown that stone churches were often built directly on or close beside the site of previous wooden ones,³ much as later parish churches were rebuilt and enlarged on or near the same site.

Wooden chapels would probably have reflected the vernacular architecture rather than any externally influenced ecclesiastical style,⁴ and, as with most wooden structures, they would have been temporary, probably lasting only one or two generations. When rebuilding became necessary, sites may have been moved or even abandoned, particularly if there had been a shift in power or change in the pattern of settlement.⁵ It is impossible to say how many short-lived sites have been lost, either in terms of numbers or as a percentage of all contemporary churches.⁶

¹ Thomas, C, *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain*, 1971, 68

² E.g. Adamnan's statement that wood was brought specially to Iona to build the great hall (*Vita Columbae*, II.45).

³ Thomas, *Early Christian Archaeology*, 1971, 74. King Edwin, after his baptism in 627, replaced his wooden church with a stone one (Bede, *HE*, II.14)

⁴ Morris, R, *Churches in the Landscape*, 1989, 69. Where stone building was not the norm, few people if any would have had the necessary skill or knowledge to carry it out, so constructing chapels in timber, in the same way as other buildings would have appeared obvious. In archaeological terms, however, this poses the problem that the buildings may appear very similar to other sites, such as settlement.

⁵ *ibid.*, 75

⁶ Burials may be an indication of a lost church.

Where wooden chapels did not have associated burials identification can be difficult. Orientation may provide some clue, but not all early churches have an E-W alignment.⁷ Smith suggests that the only real proof would be an altar, a baptistery or a font, or another type of 'non-portable' artefact such as a stone cross.⁸

Examples of very small, single-chambered stone chapels are not rare in the British Isles in the seventh century, especially on outlying islands where suitable stone was easily available and wood was in short supply,⁹ but the general fashion for stone building does not appear to date before 700.¹⁰ Necthon's request to Ceolfrid, for architects to build "a stone church for the people in the Roman style",¹¹ suggests that stone churches were rare in Pictland, or southern Pictland at least, until after c.710.¹²

The evidence so far uncovered in Fife backs up this dating, but there is too little of it to be conclusive. Only one definite and one possible early Christian chapel site have been discovered in so far in Fife. On the Isle of May a building with an E-W alignment was found on the site of the thirteenth century church, and was the first of four successive probable churches on the site, with a date ranging from the eighth to mid-tenth centuries.¹³ The building was a drystone construction, approximately 6m square in plan, and set on an E-W alignment. At Hallow Hill, a set of postholes was uncovered which indicated a possibly bicameral building measuring approximately 3m x

⁷ E.g. The earliest chapel buildings at Whithorn have a SW-NE orientation (Smith, I, 'The origins and development of Christianity in north Britain and southern Pictland', *Church Archaeology: Research Directions for the Future*, ed. J Blair and C Pyrah, CBA Research Report 104, 1996, 25)

⁸ *ibid.*, 25

⁹ Thomas, *Early Christian Archaeology*, 1971, 75

¹⁰ Part of the impetus behind building in stone may have come from the threat of Viking raids (Manning, C, *Early Irish Monasteries*, 1995, 14)

¹¹ Bede, *HE*, V.21

¹² In areas where e.g. Roman forts could not be stripped for dressed stone, it may have become an asset that was controlled and dispensed by the local magnate (Smith, 'Origins and Development', 1996, 24)

¹³ Yeoman, P, 'Pilgrims to Ethernan: the Archaeology of an Early Saint of the Picts and Scots', *Conversion and Christianity in the North Sea World*, ed. B Crawford, 1998, 85. This church is apparently later than the long cist burials. There may have been a wooden chapel on this site or elsewhere on the island, which has been lost during the disturbance of rebuilding, but there is no evidence.

7m.¹⁴ The building appeared to date to the same period as the long cists beside it, and has been identified as the probable 'eglis' indicated by the original place name, Eglesnamin.¹⁵

Most of the chapel sites included in this gazetteer are or were later mediaeval buildings. Some are still extant; others have been identified from mediaeval charters or place names or are the subject of local traditions. Many of these sites will not pre-date the mediaeval period, and will have been built to serve groups of the population who were not in easy reach of the parish, private groups on estates, or possibly as 'overflow' churches, when the population became too large for the church. Others will have been the successors of much earlier foundations and where this is a possibility they have been included in the gazetteer. A significant proportion of these sites, however, have been classified as 'unlikely'.

Monasteries

Monasteries can be grouped approximately according to size, i.e. small, medium or large.

It can be difficult to differentiate archaeologically between a chapel site and a small monastery, and not enough is known about the church in Pictland to be able to tell if there were clear cut distinctions. Churchmen may have led an eremitic life, but in areas closer to settlements, they presumably carried out missionary work and provided some sort of pastoral care for the community. Small monasteries would have served one or two churchmen, and would probably have consisted of a couple of rudimentary dwellings and occasionally an oratory, surrounded by an enclosure.¹⁶ In some cases these may have grown into larger foundations as the Christian laity came to the sites to seek out holy men for spiritual guidance, teaching, intercession, or healing. As

¹⁴ Proudfoot, E, 'Excavations at the long cist cemetery on the Hallow Hill, St Andrews, Fife, 1975-7', *PSAS*, 126, 1996, 416-7

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 417

¹⁶ Smith, I, 'The origins and development of Christianity in north Britain and southern Pictland', *Church Archaeology: Research Directions for the Future*, ed. J Blair and C Pyrah, CBA Research Report 104, 1996, 24

sites attracted more people, the physical needs of the church would change, with perhaps more accommodation space and a larger church required.¹⁷

From an archaeological point of view these small monasteries are "notoriously difficult" to identify, because they so closely resemble other sites, such as small enclosed settlements.¹⁸

Graveyards can be a useful indication; they may have grown up around the sites as Christians wanted to be buried in places of holiness, especially if a particularly renowned holy man was buried there.¹⁹ The change from wooden to larger stone churches has also been associated with a change in the occupancy of the graveyard at several sites; burials of men, women and children suggest that a lay population was being tended to, and that a large church was required.²⁰

Looking at Irish sites, medium sized monasteries, which would have supported perhaps ten to twenty people, consisted of one or more chapels or oratories, and wooden domestic buildings sometimes arranged around an open court. Subsequent building or burial activity at these sites has obliterated many traces of the early habitations, and this has meant that the smaller stone-built monasteries in the south west have assumed a disproportionate importance in the analysis of sites.²¹

Examples in Fife may include Kilrenny and the Isle of May.²² If there were a monastery on Inchcolm, it would probably have been of this type.²³

Large monasteries, of the type that is likely to have existed at Kilrymont, often became major centres of population and could almost resemble small towns. These larger monasteries were often situated on good land or close to important routeways,²⁴ and would have attracted pilgrims and

¹⁷ Stone churches were often bigger than their wooden predecessors (Thomas, *Early Christian Archaeology*, 1971, 78)

¹⁸ Smith, 'Origins and Development', 1996, 24

¹⁹ Thomas, *Early Christian Archaeology*, 1971, 79

²⁰ *ibid.*, 80

²¹ Manning, C, *Early Irish Monasteries*, 1995, 7

²² See Kilrenny and Anstruther Wester parishes

²³ See Aberdour.

²⁴ Manning, *Early Irish Monasteries*, 1995, 14

probably provided hospitality to travellers. As these monasteries became more successful, and often wealthier, extra chapels were built, both to serve larger number of people and to display new relics that had been acquired.²⁵ As well as multiple chapels, these sites are likely to have featured extensive areas of domestic buildings, workshops (with evidence of the crafts and activities carried out there) and one or more cemeteries.

One Pictish monastery that has recently been extensively excavated is that at Tarbat, which was built on the site of a late Iron Age settlement of the 2nd – 6th century.²⁶ Features found included a curvilinear boundary ditch of uncertain date, which also focused as a water-collector.²⁷

Excavations on the site of the standing church (thought to have been a thirteenth century structure) uncovered eight previous phases of building (the earliest dating to the tenth to twelfth centuries), preceded by two phases of burials, including long cists (orientated NE-SW) and dug burials with head settings (orientated ENE-WSW).²⁸ A stone building of c.700-780,²⁹ tentatively identified from a fragment of walling incorporated into the later structure, may have been contemporary with this second group of burials, and would have lain over 2m below the present surface of the graveyard.³⁰ The monastery itself is thought to have been founded under Northumbrian influence in the early 8th century,³¹ and is described by Carver, thus:

"It has stone buildings, a stone church, produces sculpture and is most probably to be identified as a Pictish monastery. The church is on the hill, the residence is on the slope, and a farm is on the flat in the south field. The farm grows grain (querns), and has cattle (bones). There is extensive water management. One or more ditches collect water off the slope. A stream runs

²⁵ The dedication of the chapel may indicate what relics were held. Within the wider church, dedications may also indicate the presence of relics either at that church or at the leading church in the area, rather than being indicative of the church's founder.

²⁶ M O H Carver (ed) 1997 Bulletin of the Tarbat Discovery Programme 3 (<http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/arch/staff/sites/tarbat>)

²⁷ M O H Carver (ed) 1996 Bulletin of the Tarbat Discovery Programme 2 (<http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/arch/staff/sites/tarbat>). For a discussion of ecclesiastical enclosures, see introduction *section 3.4*

²⁸ Carver, 1997, Bulletin 3

²⁹ M O H Carver (ed) 2000 Bulletin of the Tarbat Discovery Programme 6 (<http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/arch/staff/sites/tarbat>)

³⁰ Carver, 1997, Bulletin 3. The building is likely to have been slightly subterranean, but the contemporary ground level was approximately 2m below the modern one.

³¹ M O H Carver (ed) 1999 Bulletin of the Tarbat Discovery Programme 5 (<http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/arch/staff/sites/tarbat>). There may have been a Columban foundation on the site before this, but apart from the cist burials, no indication of this has yet been found (Carver, 2000, Bulletin 6).

*through the enclosure so formed, perhaps to drive a mill. We could perhaps anticipate that there will be two main phases in this period. In the first, represented by the grave-markers, the establishment is a monastery in the sense of a religious community. In the second, [ninth to eleventh century]... it has become a secular (manorial) centre."*³²

Excavation is ongoing and it is hoped that future seasons will uncover more evidence of the workshop areas.³³

³² *ibid.*, 1999

³³ Carver, 2000, Bulletin 6

3.2 long cists

Long cist cemeteries are often seen as an indication of the earliest Christian communities, and may provide the only tangible evidence of their presence in an area, especially for the period before the existence of a building became integral to religious practice.¹ Long cist burials tend to occur mostly in British or P-Celtic areas,² although they also exist in Ireland³ and there are isolated long cist cemeteries in SW Scotland.⁴

Long cists consist of an extended burial, laid in a stone-lined cavity and frequently oriented E-W. It is this orientation, alongside the usual lack of grave goods and use of a stone 'coffin',⁵ which has led to them being thought of as Christian.⁶ None of these factors can be taken as certain indications of Christianity:

- The alignment may be coincidental where there is a small number of burials, or may be in response to a pagan ritual practice involving the solar arc⁷ or other seasonal factors.⁸
- The lack of grave goods may indicate a poor community, one without a strong related material culture, or less likely, the inclusion of items with poor preservation rates. The presence of grave goods equally does not mean the burial was not Christian (e.g. in

¹ Proudfoot, E, 'Excavations at the long cist cemetery on the Hallow Hill, St Andrews, Fife, 1975-7', *PSAS*, 126, 1996, 440. The influence of the Northumbrian church may have been partly responsible for the formalizing of the church / burial relationship, and may have prompted a move to new sites (*ibid.*, 444).

² In the Isle of Man they often have cap stones and are known as 'lintel graves' (Cubbon, A, 'The Early Church in the Isle of Man', *The Early Church in Western Britain and Ireland*, ed. SM Pearce, BAR British Series, 102, 1983, 269).

³ Close Brooks, J, 'Pictish and Other Burials', *Pictish Studies: Settlement, Burial and Art in Dark Age Northern Britain*, ed. J Friell and W Watson, BAR British Series, 125, 1984, 95

⁴ Meirion Jones, A, *Early Christianity, Conversion and Cemeteries: A Study of Long Cist Cemeteries and their use as a mortuary practice and symbol within southern Scotland*, unpublished BSc, University of Glasgow, 1991, 11

⁵ This 'coffin' was possibly intended to protect the body until the Day of Judgment (Smith, I, 'The origins and development of Christianity in north Britain and southern Pictland', *Church Archaeology: Research Directions for the Future*, ed. J Blair and C Pyrah, CBA Research Report 104, 1996, 28)

⁶ Proudfoot suggests that the arrangement of large numbers of burials in rows can also be taken as an indication of Christianity as no other social group in Scotland followed this practice (Proudfoot, 'Hallow Hill', 1996, 440).

⁷ This could explain the frequent variation by degrees of the E-W alignment (Meirion Jones, A, *Early Christianity*, 1991, 8)

⁸ It should also be noted that not all Christian burials are orientated E-W (Thomas, C, *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain*, 1971, 49).

Frankish culture, contemporary Christian burials contain grave goods, and only the inclusion of food and drink was considered unholy).⁹

- The stone 'coffins' may also be a straightforward development from stone-lined short cist burials, rather than an important innovation.

These arguments are included as a note of caution rather than a denial that long cists are Christian, but it is important to accept that the likelihood of all long cists being Christian is slim. Those in cemeteries or larger groups are probably the most likely, those found singly, less likely. Some of the 'long cists' listed in this gazetteer may not be actual long cists, as descriptions are frequently vague and unclear, but they are included on the grounds of completeness.¹⁰

At some sites where long cists represent only one phase of burial,¹¹ it is possible that some cemeteries contain both Christian and pre-Christian examples.¹² If cemeteries belonged to tribal, kin or family groups, it would be understandable if burials were made in the same place over time,¹³ and continuing to use a site may have been viewed as 'Christianizing' earlier burials, or legitimizing the ruling classes by burying them alongside earlier leaders or dynasties.¹⁴ There is literary evidence that points to pagans and Christians being buried in the same cemeteries,¹⁵ but it is unclear if they were contemporary or from different periods.

⁹ Meirion Jones, A, Early Christianity, 1991, 10

¹⁰ The distribution of these sites (Map p69) largely mirrors the distribution of long cist cemeteries (Proudfoot, 'Hallow Hill', 1996, 442), perhaps suggesting that they do share the same background. Single burials may also be all that is left of a larger site. Very large cemeteries are connected to important foundations; small ones, of six burials or less, may indicate "small, isolated Christian settlements or communities outwith formal religious organization" (*ibid.*, 446)

¹¹ The phenomenon of long cists being dug into earlier barrows is well documented (Davies, W, Wales in the Middle Ages, 1982, 190).

¹² Davies, Wales, 1982, 191

¹³ O'Brien, E, 'Pagan and Christian Burial in Ireland during the first Millennium AD: Continuity and Change', The Early Church in Wales and the West, ed. N Edwards and A Lane, 1992, 134. It is possible that particular burial rites became fashionable amongst groups or families, and non-Christians without traditional burial practices were buried in the same way as their Christian contemporaries.

¹⁴ Edwards, N, 'Introduction', The Early Church in Wales and the West, ed. N Edwards and A Lane, 1992, 6.

¹⁵ O'Brien, 'Pagan and Christian', 1992, 135

Many of the long cist cemeteries that have been excavated have fallen into Thomas's category of 'undeveloped cemeteries', that is, cemeteries without churches.¹⁶ He believes that many of these sites were abandoned for 'developed cemeteries', (ones with churches), but the difference between the two is not always easy to distinguish as a wooden church may not show up clearly in the archaeological record.¹⁷ The tradition that long cist cemeteries were abandoned and replaced by cemeteries with churches¹⁸ is also difficult to prove, as church sites with a long continuity of use are, firstly, unlikely to be fully excavated, and secondly, likely to have had earlier burials removed during the mediaeval or early modern period to make room for later ones.

Although long cists are regarded as being representative of the very earliest phases of Christianity, they are a rather more long-lived phenomenon. By the early 1980s, three Welsh long cist sites had been carbon dated, indicating that burials dated between the fifth and tenth centuries, but were concentrated in the seventh and eighth.¹⁹ In Lothian and Borders, some of the Christian long cist cemeteries date to the fifth century, but the practice continues into the ninth century.²⁰ In Fife and Angus, dates from the sixth to the ninth century are recorded.²¹

Square barrows have been perceived as being "the pagan equivalent in Pictish burial practice of the long cist cemeteries",²² but this is an oversimplification, as:

- not all long cists of the Pictish period are likely to be Christian.
- there are different types of square barrow, some of which may be Christian.²³

¹⁶ Thomas, C, 'The Evidence from North Britain', *Christianity in Britain 300-700* ed. M Barley and R Hanson, 1968, 107

¹⁷ At Hallow Hill a possible timber building has been suggested as being, alternatively, evidence of a pre-Christian *nemeton* or, more likely, the '*eglis*' around which the cemetery developed (Proudfoot, 'Hallow Hill', 1996, 440). This building, which occupies a prominent hilltop location, appears to date to one of the earliest phases, and is associated with the burials (*ibid.*, 440).

¹⁸ Henshall, A, 'The Long Cist Cemetery at Parkburn Sand Pit, Lasswade, Midlothian', *PSAS*, 89, 1956, 275

¹⁹ Davies, *Wales*, 1982, 188

²⁰ Close Brooks, 'Pictish and Other Burials', 1984, 95; Proudfoot, 'Hallow Hill', 1996, 444

²¹ Close Brooks, 'Pictish and Other Burials', 1984, 95

²² Smith, 'Origins and Development', 1996, 29

²³ Like long cists, square barrows contained an extended inhumation, a burial rite that began in the early part of the first millennium AD. The similarity of square barrows in North Britain to the square-ditched graves of the Arras culture in Yorkshire has been noted (Maxwell, G, 'Recent aerial survey in Scotland', *The Impact of Aerial Reconnaissance on Archaeology*, ed. GS Maxwell, CBA, 49, 1983, 33; Close Brooks, J, 'Pictish and Other Burials', 1984, 94). These burials, which occur from the first millennium BC, developed from having crouched or flexed inhumations orientated N-S to extended inhumations orientated E-W by

- long cists and square barrows occur in the same cemeteries,²⁴ while some square barrows contain long cist inhumations.²⁵

Rather than viewing the differences as religious, they should possibly be viewed instead as reflecting different cultural traditions along a roughly north / south divide.²⁶ In northern Britain, most square barrows occur north of the Forth,²⁷ while long cists occur predominantly around the Forth and the Tay;²⁸ within Fife, where the two overlap, the situation is mirrored, as the square barrows tend to be in the north while the majority of long cists are along the south and east coasts.²⁹ For the purposes of assessing Early Christian sites, long cists are undoubtedly the more important form of burial as they are more consistently Christian, but square barrows should not be regarded as necessarily indicating non-Christian areas, as not enough is yet known about them.

Thomas believes that the Picts probably followed traditional pagan burial practices, including cremation, as late as the sixth and seventh centuries,³⁰ and in the same way, some traditional burial practices, such as dug graves, are likely to have lasted into the Christian period.³¹ The presence or

approximately the first century AD, but the reasons behind this change are uncertain. Amongst the Arras group, several chariot burials have been uncovered, and the recent discovery of a chariot burial at Newbridge in Edinburgh may further suggest a link between these two regions and cultures, possibly the result of immigrants from Yorkshire settling in the lands around the Forth in the early first millennium AD (Close Brooks, 'Pictish and Other Burials', 1984, 94). One feature that may indicate if barrows are Early Medieval rather than Bronze or Iron Age, are 'interrupted corners', that is, gaps in the enclosure at each corner (Maxwell, G, 'Settlement in Southern Pictland: A New Overview', *The Picts: A New Look at Old Problems*, ed. A Small, 1987, 34).

²⁴ A notable site is Lundin Links on the southern Fife coast, where twelve cairns, both round and square, and five uncairned long cists were excavated in the 1960s. The original C-14 dates, which suggested a wide spread of dates starting in the Bronze Age seem unlikely (Close Brooks, 'Pictish and Other Burials', 1984, 105), with the second set, with from the fifth to seventh centuries AD, appearing much more likely.

²⁵ Barrows at Garbeg and Whitebridge, Inverness-shire (northern Pictland) were surrounded by an enclosure and covered crude long cists. An associated ?Class I fragment has led to the burials at Garbeg being dated to the seventh century (Close Brooks, 'Pictish and Other Burials', 1984, 106), but this is by no means secure. The presence of long cists rather than dug graves may suggest these are Christian burials, perhaps using a traditional square barrow form because they are the graves of important people (presumably secular rather than ecclesiastical) (Close Brooks, 'Pictish and Other Burials', 1984, 106; Edwards, 'Introduction', 1992, 140).

²⁶ The caveat that distribution maps show known sites rather than all sites should also be applied here.

²⁷ *Atlas of Scottish History to 1707*, ed. P McNeill and H MacQueen, University of Edinburgh, 1996, 49

²⁸ Proudfoot, 'Hallow Hill', 1996, 445

²⁹ The traditional view that long cists are largely coastal whereas square barrows spread further inland is basically accurate, but on closer examination it can be seen that many of the inland examples are situated near rivers, and this situation is applicable to Fife.

³⁰ Thomas, C, 'Concluding remarks', *The Early Church in Wales and the West*, ed. N Edwards and A Lane, 1992, 140.

³¹ Close Brooks, 'Pictish and Other Burials', 1984, 95. In some cases, dug graves may actually be all that is left of wooden coffin burials (Edwards, 'Introduction', 1992, 4).

distribution of these sites cannot easily be analysed - while long cists have a good survival rate, even where the burials are lost, the survival rate of both coffin and dug graves will generally be lower.³² Both Hallowhill and Kirkheugh had examples of this type of burial,³³ with Kirkheugh consisting of an extensive dug grave cemetery, with burials dating from the fifth to the twelfth centuries.³⁴ The extent of this cemetery is known, and therefore it is impossible to say if it was enclosed.³⁵ No contemporary building remains have been discovered, so it is uncertain if the burials were associated with a chapel.³⁶

Because long cist cemeteries are unlikely to have been excavated where they occur at later church sites, and associated chapels, which would probably have been wooden, will frequently not show up in the archaeological record, it is difficult to accurately assess and draw conclusions about the relationship between long cists and churches. The distribution map on the following page does not show any particular correlation, either positive or negative, between the two site types,³⁷ but the presence of apparently Christian long cists does indicate an Early Christian population in the area, and may increase the likelihood of any nearby church dating to at least the ninth century.

³² Edwards, 'Introduction', 1992, 6

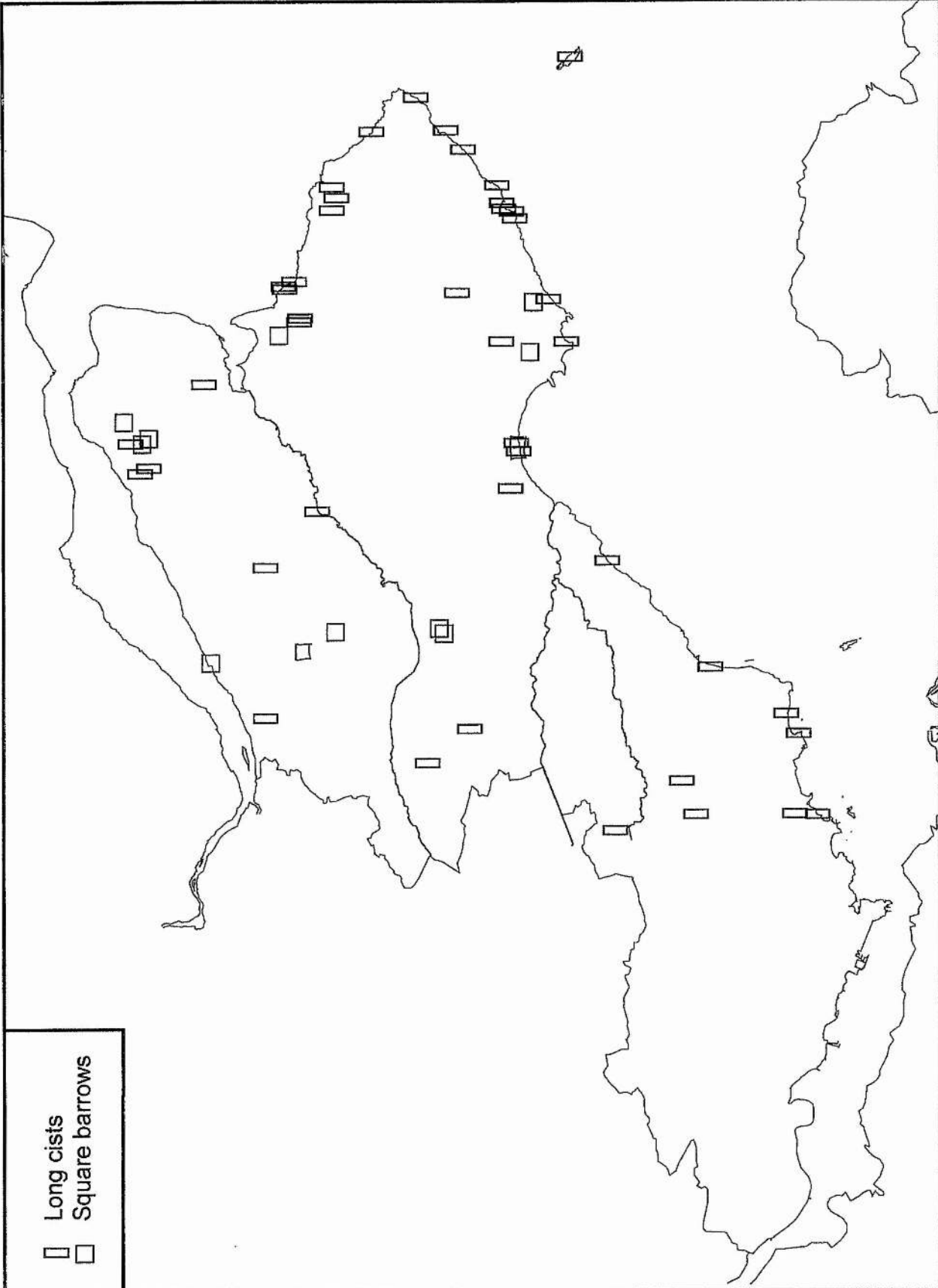
³³ The proportion of long cists to dug graves is much higher at Hallow Hill, probably indicating that that site may have been the earlier burial place for the majority of the local population (Proudfoot, 'Hallow Hill', 1996, 442)

³⁴ There were no grave goods and the burials were orientated approximately E-W, which alongside the spread of dates and the location of the burials beside a major church centre, almost certainly indicate this was a Christian cemetery (Wordsworth, J, and Clark, P, 'Kirkhill', *Excavations in St Andrews 1980-82*, ed M Rains and D Hall, TAFAL, 1997, 16). It should be noted however, that this is not the only Early Christian cemetery here, as a long cist cemetery was discovered 200m away in 1894. (CANMORE - http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details_gis?inumlink=34306, 20th June 2002)

³⁵ Wordsworth and Clark, 'Kirkhill', 1997, 17. Significant cliff erosion at the site is also likely to have removed sections of any enclosure.

³⁶ *ibid.*, 17

³⁷ The pattern shown elsewhere of one cemetery to one parish applies to an extent to Fife, but could not be described as conclusive.



3.3 *place name*

This section is designed to identify sites whose names contain the elements which identify early church sites (i.e. those listed in the place names section). Another group of place names which may be relevant to this study are those, such as 'Chapel Field', which identify possible sites, often now lost. Unfortunately, these names do not often refer to a small, specific areas and so it can be difficult to assess the topography of the site, as well as the nature of the site itself. Apparently ecclesiastical place names can also sometimes refer to church holdings, rather than church sites, so it is very easy to wrongly identify possible churches from a place name alone.

Place Name Elements in Fife which directly Relate to Early Church Sites

Annaid

Old Irish 'mother church', probably derived from Latin *antiquitas*, 'age, antiquity'¹

This element often occurs within names as Annat or Annet. Watson applies to Scotland the Irish meaning of the term, that is, a patron saint's church or a church that contains the relics of the founder.² However, MacDonald takes the view that the term referred to old church sites, abandoned and subsequently replaced on a different site, as the places which bore the name did not usually remain important church sites into the Middle Ages.³ Clancy has suggested that the term is a flexible one, referring to a church in a superior relationship to others, for example, possessing the relics of the patron saint, or providing pastoral care,⁴ or could indicate land held by the church or providing a church income, rather than being a physical church site.

¹ Taylor, S, 'Placenames and the early church in Scotland', *Rec Scot Church Hist Soc*, 28, 1998, 7

² Watson, *CPNS*, 250

³ MacDonald, A, 'Annat' in Scotland: A Provisional Review, *Scottish Studies* 17, 1973, 139

⁴ Clancy, T, 'Annat in Scotland and the origins of the parish', *Innes Review*, 46, 1995, 101

Taylor believes that in the east, the term probably dates to the period before Gaelic became the dominant language, that is, before the ninth century.

Apainn

G 'church land', from Middle Irish *apdaine* 'abbey lands'

This term would appear to often refer to lands held by early monasteries, rather than those of the later Middle Ages, and could cover the site of the monastery itself or detached lands within its possession. Barrow, however, has suggested that the term could also refer to an endowment of land to an old church, not necessarily involving any monastery.⁵

This element occurs in Abdie and Abden in Kinghorn parish

Both

Old Irish *both* 'hut, bothy, cabin'; Welsh *bod*, 'residence, dwelling'

Although found throughout Scotland in reference to dwelling places, in Pictland it appears in some cases to have had religious connotations, perhaps indicating a church.⁶

An example of this is Bath in the north of Culross parish,⁷ but Bothadlach (in Beath parish) is probably derived from the domestic meaning of the word, with its local tradition as a chapel site the result of an error.⁸

Cill

G *cill*, 'church', borrowed from Latin *cella*, 'room, shrine'⁹

⁵ Barrow, G, 'The Lost Galdhealtachd', *Gaelic and Scotland*, ed. W Gillies, 1989, 77

⁶ Taylor, S, *Settlement names in Fife*, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh University 1995, 440

⁷ *ibid.*, 441

This element occurs in Kilconquhar, Kilduncan (Kingsbarns parish), Kilgour (now Falkland), Kilmany, Kilmaron (Cupar parish), Kilminning (Crail parish), Kilrenny, Kinglassie, Kinglassie (St Andrews and St Leonards parish), Fettykil (now Leslie) and Methil (Wemyss parish).

Some apparent cill names are in fact derived from *coille* 'wood', *cinn* 'at the end (of)', 'at the head of', *cuil* 'corner, nook', *cul*, back, or Scots *kiln*, e.g. Kilburns (Balmerino parish), Kilmux (Scoonie parish)

Within east Fife there is a cluster of 'cill' placenames, with eleven currently recorded. Unlike 'eccles', which is *Brittonic*, 'cill' is Gaelic in origin, and probably points to a Scottish or Irish connection, perhaps radiating out of an important church centre, most probably Kilrymont, later St Andrews.¹⁰ The 'cill' names represent the period before the widespread Gaelicization of eastern Scotland and therefore would date to the period before c.800.¹¹ Taylor suggests that Dunchad, the abbot of Iona (d.717) under whom that monastery accepted Roman practices,¹² and who is commemorated in two Fife 'cill' names,¹³ may be the key to understanding the cluster of 'cill' names; this was a time when Pictland under Necthon son of Derilei was turning its back on the old Celtic church and embracing new practices, of whom Dunchad would be seen as an important figure. From this a date of c.700 is suggested for the majority of the names. Churches within the same period in west Fife may be identifiable by *both* place names.¹⁴

Another explanation, made by Smyth, is that the cluster of 'cill' names may have been coined at the time when Kilrymont was being promoted as a major church site, either under Oengus I (c.729-61) or, probably, Oengus II (820-34).¹⁵ However, as there is no similar cluster of *cill* names

⁸ See Beath parish

⁹ Taylor, S, 'Placenames', 1998, 3

¹⁰ Taylor, S, 'Place-names and the Early Church in eastern Scotland', *Scotland in Dark Age Britain*, ed. B Crawford, 1996, 98

¹¹ *ibid.*, 99

¹² *ibid.*, 100

¹³ Kilduncan and Kilconquhar

¹⁴ Taylor, 'Place-names', 1996, 98

¹⁵ Smyth, AP, *Warlords and Holy Men*, 1984, 186-7

around Dunkeld, the other 'royally-promoted' church of this period, this may be unlikely to be the case.

Diseart

G 'hermitage', from Latin *desertum* 'desert'¹⁶

This name, which literally means 'desert', came, within the early western church, to mean a place of retreat or a hermitage, echoing back to the desert retreats of the earliest Christians in the East. This name occurs at many sites in Ireland, often in connection with the name of a saint who was supposedly the hermit there. However, the element is much less common in Scotland, and generally occurs by itself, without a specific or a particular saint's name.¹⁷

In Fife, the element occurs in Dysart (Kirkcaldy and Dysart parish), presumably referring to the cave where St Serf is supposed to have gone, and where he had conversations with the Devil.

Egles

Br or P 'church', borrowed from Latin *ecclesia*¹⁸

The occurrence of '*egles*' place names is indicative of an early Christian meeting place or church, and may in some cases indicate a fifth-century foundation.¹⁹ Generally they have been taken to represent foundations or meeting places dating before 700, providing evidence of a 'sub-Roman' and British-influenced church in Pictland,²⁰ i.e. a church predating Nechtan's overtures to Northumbria, but this cannot be strictly true as Nechtan's own foundation, Egglepether, contains this element. In light of this, Barrow's assessment, that they could date from the fifth century to

¹⁶ Watson, *CPNS*, 256

¹⁷ *ibid.*, 256

¹⁸ Barrow, GWS, *Kingdom of the Scots*, 1973, 63

¹⁹ Smith, I, 'Origins and Development', 1996, 28

²⁰ Foster, S, *Picts, Gaels and Scots*, 1997, 79

c.800, seems more realistic.²¹ Proudfoot has suggested that 'egles' place names indicate Christian sites, possibly on the sites of pre-Christian activity, and taken alongside their apparent dating from the earliest phases of Christianity in this part of the British Isles, this may demonstrate that Christianity therefore fitted into the existing societal structure rather than making an immediate and society-changing impact.²²

In general, the geographical distribution of 'egles' place names does appear to correspond approximately to the pattern of long cist cemeteries,²³ and in Fife this is highlighted by the presence of a cemetery of this type at Eglesnamin (now Hallow Hill) in St Andrews and St Leonards parish. Another potential direct link can be seen at Inchmartin (Aberdour parish) where a possible long cist site exists at Inch Marton, presumably in the vicinity of what was once 'Eglismarten'. However, the nature and age of this burial is uncertain, and the site of 'Eglismarten' or Inchmartin (as it became)²⁴ has not been pinpointed, so further, presumably archaeological work would be needed before any direct connection could be proved.

It has been suggested that the 'egles' element of a place name and the specific element or dedication it was paired with may not necessarily be contemporary, with the dedication being added later,²⁵ but Taylor argues that while this may be the case in Strathclyde and Lothian, where the element occurs on its own as 'Eccles', it is less applicable in southern Pictland where it always occurs with a specific.²⁶

There are six 'egles' place names in Fife, all now obsolete; Ecclesmaline (Kinghorn parish), Eglismarten (Strathmiglo), Eglesnamin (Hallow Hill, St Andrews and St Leonards parish), Eglismarten (now Inchmartin, Aberdour or Dalgety parish), Dunnahaglis (Cults parish), and Pittenchagill (Markinch parish).

²¹ Barrow, GWS, 'The Childhood of Scottish Christianity: a Note on Some Place Name Evidence', *Scottish Studies* 27, 1983,

²² Proudfoot, 'Hallow Hill', *PSAS*, 1996, 446

²³ Foster, *Picts*, 79

²⁴ See Aberdour parish

²⁵ Barrow, 'Childhood', 1983, 7

²⁶ Taylor, 'Placenames', 1998, 5

Lann

G 'field, land, enclosure', cognate Welsh *llan*

This element often has a religious context, mirroring its Welsh cognate. Although its basic meaning is 'land, ground', (and this is generally what is meant when the element occurs in a secondary position within a name), as a first element, it appears to mirror its Welsh cognate '*llan*', meaning 'enclosure' or 'church', stemming from the enclosure often found around early graveyards. The distribution in Scotland of names with '*lann*' as the first element shows them generally confined to Pictish territory, which, coupled with their generally obscure second elements, points to the conclusion that most of these names were coined in the Pictish period, and that the use of the term to mean church is (within north Britain) a Pictish feature.²⁷ According to Taylor, "thus '*lann*' may well represent, along with '*egles*', another piece of evidence for a flourishing Pictish church with its own ecclesiastical vocabulary."²⁸

Thomas, looking at '*llan*' names in Cornwall and the west, has determined a chronology of the term, which he believes can be charted through the archaeology of the sites to which it was affixed. The earliest use appears to be from 'cleared space', then "'consecrated space' (= unenclosed cemetery), thence to 'sacred enclosure' (enclosed cemetery) and finally 'church and cemetery' or even 'church site' (developed enclosed cemetery)".²⁹ In Ireland, '*cill*' appears to have made a similar progress, but as the '*cill*' names in Fife appear to be a more homogenous unit, imposed over a short period of time, and marking an 'Irishcization' of the church, this is unlikely to be the case here.

²⁷ *ibid.*, 10

²⁸ *ibid.*, 10

²⁹ Thomas, *Early Christian Archaeology*, 1971, 87

There are several '*lann*' names in Fife, reflecting both the ecclesiastical and domestic use of the term; Lindores (Abdie parish), Lumphinnans (Ballingry parish), Conland (Kinghorn parish), Falkland, and probably Castlandhill (Inverkeithing parish).³⁰

Lios

Modern G 'garden'; Early Irish *les* 'the space about a dwelling-house or houses enclosed by a bank or rampart,'³¹

This element is not common in Scotland, but many of the places where it does occur were administrative centres, either secular or ecclesiastical, or both. This has led MacDonald to suggest that the element relates to Welsh '*llys*', meaning 'court, hall'.³² This explanation fits particularly well with Lathrisk (Kettle), where several possible timber halls were identified from aerial photographs, next to an early church site.

In Fife, the element also occurs in Lassodie (Beath) and Collessie.³³

³⁰ Taylor, *Settlement names*, 461

³¹ Sometimes used to mean the bank or rampart itself (MacDonald, A, *Caiseal, Cathair, Dun, Lios and Rath in Scotland: 3*, *Bulletin of the Ulster Place-Name Society*, 1987, 37).

³² *ibid.*, 51

3.4 *shape of enclosure*

The shape of a church enclosure can be important for its identification as an early site. Where the site is monastic, an enclosure can indicate a vallum, which were both protective and symbolic of the monastery's separation from the rest of the world. Some early monasteries have rectangular enclosures, possibly emulating the Eastern monasteries of the first centuries AD where this was the norm,¹ but possibly also the result of reusing earlier earthworks.² Later monasteries tended to build their own and generally opted for a more curvilinear form,³ as the result of a desire, from the seventh century, to organize and formalize the layout of the site, focusing on the concepts of holy space and sanctuary.⁴

At other non-monastic sites, a curvilinear enclosure can be an indication of church that developed in the seventh or eighth century from an enclosed burial ground.⁵ These burial grounds occur in British and Irish regions,⁶ and appear to be a development of earlier circular or curvilinear monuments such as henges and ring-ditches.⁷

It is regularly stated that enclosures consisted of earthen banks and ditches, but despite the huge number of Irish ringforts at which there is still a raised enclosure, they rarely exist at ecclesiastical sites.⁸ This seems to suggest that banks were not all that common in Ireland at least, and that

¹ Thomas, C, *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain*, 1971, 94

² At Iona, a rectangular enclosure, discernable in parts, would appear to be pre-Christian, at least in part (McCormick, F, 'Iona: the archaeology of the Early Monastery', *Studies in the Cult of Saint Columba*, ed. C Bourke, 1997, 49). It is very difficult to date any kind of enclosure without excavation (Edwards, N, 'Introduction', *The Early Church in Wales and the West*, ed. N Edwards and A Lane, 1992, 5)

³ Thomas, *Early Christian Archaeology*, 1971, 94

⁴ Edwards, N, *The Archaeology of Early Medieval Ireland*, 1990, 105-6. This movement also formalized and standardized the layout within the enclosure.

⁵ Thomas, *Early Christian Archaeology*, 1971, 111

⁶ Cubbon, A, 'The Early Church in the Isle of Man', *The Early Church in Western Britain and Ireland*, ed. SM Pearce, BAR British Series, 102, 1983, 269.

⁷ Thomas, *Early Christian Archaeology*, 1971, 109

⁸ McCormick, 'Iona', 1997, 51. Earthwork vallums have been uncovered at Kilmacoo, Co Cork or Kilpatrick, Co Westmeath.

ditches functioned adequately as both protection from outsiders and grazing animals,⁹ and as a means of separation. Some sites may also have used stone walls.¹⁰

Our knowledge of enclosures has been greatly enhanced by aerial photography, and boundaries can be preserved in ditches or earthworks, walls, roads or field boundaries.¹¹ However, they may have been lost through subsequent activity,¹² particularly the extension of churchyards to accommodate growing populations and more burials.¹³ It is also important to note that not all circular enclosures around churches are original features (e.g. at Moccas in Hereford, the round enclosure was added by Capability Brown in the eighteenth century).¹⁴

One way of assessing the shape of church enclosures from large-scale maps consists of lining up a rectangular overlay with the edges of a churchyard.¹⁵ A second overlay with vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines at 45° angles is then added, dividing the churchyard boundary into eight sections. Each section is scored '1' if it is curved, and the boundary graded according to its score:

| | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| largely curved | 5-8 |
| partially curved | 3-4 |
| non-curved | 0-2. ¹⁶ |

In Wales and the border counties, 800 (out of 1000 early sites surveyed) had enclosures, and around 300 of these were partially or largely curved, showing that although this is an important factor, the presence of a curvilinear enclosure will probably only occur at a minority of sites.¹⁷

⁹ Hurley, V, 'The Early Church in the South West of Ireland: Settlement and Organisation', *The Early Church in Western Britain and Ireland*, ed. SM Pearce, BAR British Series, 102, 1983, 320

¹⁰ The walls enclosing the three cashels of Nendrum monastery in Co. Down were rebuilt in the 1920s after HC Lawlor's excavations, but were constructed at least partially from stone found *in situ* (Lawlor, HC, *The Monastery of Saint Mochoal of Nendrum*, 1925)

¹¹ From aerial photographs the area surrounding Markinch church shows a distinctive curvilinear layout which would appear to have grown out of the church enclosure (RCAHMS photographic collection F 12840-12843)

¹² James, T, 'Air Photography of Ecclesiastical Sites in North Wales', *The Early Church in Wales and the West*, ed. N Edwards and A Lane, 1992, 62.

¹³ Brook, D, 'The Early Christian Church East and West of Offa's Dyke', *The Early Church in Wales and the West*, ed. N Edwards and A Lane, 1992, 79.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, 79.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 80. This method has been used on sites in central Wales and England.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, 80

¹⁷ *ibid.*, 81-2

The enclosures of some Fife churches can be seen clearly from the ground, but a comprehensive study of aerial photographs and old maps and a programme of fieldwalking could identify more.

3.5 *holy wells*

When looking at early church sites, wells are an important factor for several reasons, both practical and spiritual:

- They provided a ready source of water for church rites, and for the population who lived around the church.¹
- They were integral to many pre-Christian practices and may sometimes indicate where a pagan site has been adapted by the church.² By blessing the water and using it for baptism and other rituals, it was possible to 'Christianize' this pagan feature.
- Pagan beliefs that water from some wells could heal were adapted by the church, as rather than being an entirely pagan practice, the role of wells for healing was demonstrated in the Bible, e.g. when Jesus performed miracles at the Pool of Bethesda. This 'power to heal' could also attract pilgrims and converts to the site.
- Wells can sometimes record an early dedication, but they are also very prone to having spurious additions attached to them. For example, the association of Kinglassie Church with St Glascanius appears to have come about because of a local well known as St Glass's, a corruption of *G glais*, 'stream'.

As a natural feature, wells can take different formats, some more permanent than others. Sites classed as holy wells in Ireland have included springs, a deep pool in a stream, a waterfall, a collection of rainwater in a hollow stone or tree stump, a small lake, or a tidal pool.³

Because of their nature it is not unusual for holy wells to have disappeared or moved. While this was often explained away as a 'sign' while they were still venerated,⁴ today it means that many

¹ Logan, P, *The Holy Wells of Ireland*, 1980, 67

² More than any other type of feature, wells demonstrate the continuity of use between pagan and Christian times (Morris, R, *Churches in the Landscape*, 1989, 85). It may be possible at some sites to determine pre-Christian use from an analysis of items thrown into the well, and this practice sometimes continues into Christian times.

³ Logan, *Holy Wells*, 1980, 57

⁴ *ibid.*, 113

sites are unidentifiable. It is difficult to say how many wells were not recorded and have since disappeared, disguising any continuity from pre- or Early Christian times. The antiquity of wells is also difficult to prove,⁵ both physically and traditionally. There has been a tendency of giving saints' names to wells with no ecclesiastical connection and of inventing saints from other names (e.g. St Erat's Well in Inverkeithing may originally have been the Heriot Well). While it may be possible to identify examples like this where they have no obvious ecclesiastical connection, it is more difficult where the well is with or near a church.⁶

Wells beside or in the vicinity of churches are included in the gazetteer, but should only be taken alongside other factors in determining whether a site may or not be early.

⁵ Edwards, N, 'Introduction', The Early Church in Wales and the West, ed. N Edwards and A Lane, 1992, 8.

⁶ Some more obscure dedications may derive from the name of the pre-Christian god or spirit who guarded the well (Morris, Churches, 1989, 86)

3.6 carved stones

Class I

Decorated with Pictish symbols; no Christian elements

The meaning of the symbols on Class I stones is not known. The stones are thought to have been grave markers or boundary stones (sometimes found in connection with cairns or graves, or near long cist cemeteries),¹ and presumably are associated with the highest levels of Pictish society, who could afford to have them produced.

There do not appear to be any links between Class I stones and church sites, but there is a distribution correlation between the stones and hillforts,² providing indications of power centres active in the fifth or sixth century, the date to which the stones are usually assigned.³

The heaviest concentration of Class I stones is north of the Mounth, where Christianity penetrated later than the south. Six Class I stones are known in Fife, symbols also occur without Christian symbolism on the walls of several of the Wemyss Caves and on items from the Norrie's Law Treasure.

Class II

Decorated with both Pictish and Christian symbols

Henderson believes Class II stones come out of the 'Pictish-Northumbrian rapprochement' following Nechtan's reforms of the early eighth century.⁴ However, while some can be dated to

¹ Close-Brooks, J, 'Pictish and Other Burials', *Pictish Studies: Settlement, Burials and Art in Dark Age Northern Britain*, ed. J Friell and W Watson, BAR British Series, 125, 1984, 107

² Cottam, MB, and Small, A, 'The Distribution of Settlement in Southern Pictland,' *Medieval Archaeology*, 18, 1974, 49

³ Proudfoot, E, 'The Picts and the Early Medieval Period', *The Fife Book*, ed. D Omand, 2000, 49

⁴ Henderson, I, *The Picts*, 1967, 132

this period on artistic grounds, others may date slightly earlier than this, to the period when the Northumbrians began to penetrate Pictland, although they do not occur regularly in the area which came under control.⁵ There are four Class II stones in Fife, which with their dual symbolism, show a people coming under the influence of Christianity and accepting it, but still retaining some of their old traditions and culture. The Pictish symbols on these stones may now be appearing in a different context than those on the Class I stones.

Class III

Decorated with Christian emblems; no Pictish symbols

Class III stones at their most basic level (stones with plain incised or relief crosses) probably date from the earliest phases of Christianity. However, the more decorated type of stone, which are normally thought of as Class III, appear to date from the ninth century onwards. Numerous Class III stones exist in Fife, presumably now being produced on behalf of the church rather than secular leaders. Their existence is an indication that Christianity had become firmly embedded into the culture, and that churches were now at the heart of society, where once they would have been at the periphery.

Two of the most notable collections of Class III stones in Fife are at Abercrombie Old Parish Church (St Monance parish), where six fragments are built into the church walls, and St Andrews, where over thirty complete and fragmented stones have been uncovered, mostly from the Cathedral burial ground.

Ogham Stones

There is one ogham stone currently known in Fife, found in the churchyard of Scoonie Old Parish Church, but as ogham was usually added to the edge of stones, other inscriptions elsewhere could easily have been lost through weathering or the cutting down of stones for use in building. The

⁵ Hughes, K, Early Christianity in Pictland, 1970, 10

inscriptions found across Pictland vary quite widely in type and quality, and occur on all three classes of Pictish stone as well as otherwise undecorated stones and small objects.⁶ Smith has suggested that Iona disseminated this Irish style of writing across north Britain,⁷ but no ogham stone is known at a Columban site in either Ireland or Scotland, and it is more likely to have been the result of ongoing cultural contact with Ireland itself.⁸

Discussion

Many of the stones in Fife have been moved, and so, their distribution should be treated with caution in any assessment of church sites. Where stones are found in a close context to a church (e.g. buried in the churchyard; built into early fabric), they can be taken as a reasonably firm indication that that church was an early foundation. Where stones are merely associated with a church, more caution should be applied, as they may have been brought there from an entirely different site, possibly even outwith the parish. Free-standing crosses will often have been moved during field clearances or road building, or for aesthetic reasons, although those still standing in original socket stones, such as the Mugdrum Cross, Newburgh, are probably in their original position. These stones may have been boundary markers or could represent preaching stations.⁹

Many class II and III stones were destroyed at the Reformation, but as this seems to have happened in pockets rather than evenly across Pictland, it has affected the modern idea of their distribution.¹⁰

Although, the majority of cross slabs post-date the Pictish period, they are useful because they provide evidence of the church's existence in the period a century or more before the first written evidence. In many cases, the later stones will also follow an earlier tradition of carved stone production at the site.

⁶ Forsyth, K, *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland: An Edited Corpus*, PhD Harvard University, 1996, published UMI 1999, lxxv

⁷ Smyth, *Warlords and Holy Men*, 1984, 58, 79

⁸ Forsyth, *Ogham*, 1996, lxxiv-lxxv

⁹ Foster, S, *Picts, Gaels and Scots*, 1997, 88

¹⁰ Cottam, MB, and Small, A, 'The Distribution of Settlement in Southern Pictland', *Medieval Archaeology*, 18, 1974, 46

3.7 Other

This section is designed to include other features that do not occur regularly (within Fife at least) and which may indicate an Early Christian site. These features and their relevance are discussed, as they occur, in the gazetteer.

4. Tradition of use

Some sites may show a previous use as a pre-Christian ritual site, habitation or burial site.

Parish churches make up the majority of probable and possible Early Christian sites within Fife. In general, parish churches indicate the most successful early foundations, but whether this success was due to social, political, financial or religious reasons is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain, and is likely to have been different in each case; at the most basic level, however, where a church is able to establish itself by successfully serving a local community, and as families are buried in the church yard and important rites of passage performed in the church, it becomes part of the community.

Parish churches could be the successors of different types of church e.g. Kilrenny appears to have developed from an early monastery, Dunbog was a chapel held by the monastic or Culdee foundation at Abernethy, others were individual churches or subsidiary chapels. In some cases, the nature of the sites may have changed several times in the centuries before they are first recorded, as they attracted different types of churchmen or had to respond to different needs within the community.

Continuity within the local church may not translate as continuity of use at a site; where parish church sites were abandoned because of a shift in population, the new building will often have been viewed as the same church because it was served by the same clergy and followed the same local traditions. Where a church fell into a bad state of repair, a new church may have been built nearby. Again it will have been regarded as the same church, but may be some distance from the original building. Neither of these situations create particular problems for the assessment of church distribution when they happen in modern times and are well-documented, but it is more than likely that the same processes happened much earlier without leaving records, and may have produced multiple sites on the distribution record but a strong continuity of use within the church itself.

Pilgrimage is an important factor in continuity of use for all types of Early Christian site, but will in some cases have changed the nature of a site e.g. hermitage. In some cases, traditions of pilgrimage or ongoing local rituals may highlight the presence of an early site, but in others they may obscure the site's original form or purpose.

Old burial grounds are often only visible when there has not been much subsequent use on the site, but raised ground within a graveyard can often be an indication that it has been in use for many years. An old graveyard can often be an indication of a church that has disappeared, or has become disguised through its use as a burial enclosure

Private chapels tend to be a mediaeval feature, but some may be built on the site of an earlier chapel. Subsidiary chapels frequently occur in charters, and while some of these later became parish churches themselves, others remained as chapels of ease (serving outlying parts of the parish's community) or became private chapels.

Conclusions: Assessing Church Sites

In his study of church sites in the south west of Ireland, Hurley has pointed out the difficulty of dating an early church to anything more specific than the period between 500 and 1200 AD.¹ As churches can date to any point during a wide time frame it is impossible to say which sites are contemporary and what the distribution map would have looked like at any one time. It is also difficult to assess the pattern of change and development amongst these church sites as: some will have lasted for a short time; some will have transferred to more suitable sites;² some will have declined or grown in importance.³ It should also be borne in mind that not all areas⁴ or periods will follow the same development patterns.⁵

The majority of the factors behind these changes (especially the most important socio-economic ones) will generally not be visible in the archaeological record, and will often not occur in the written one.

Factors which may indicate an early church in the British Isles⁶ :

Location

- low-lying land; lower valley slopes; valley floors; near sea or tidal waters⁷
- shoulder of a low hill or ridge, often overlooking a river or stream; the sides of hills; coastal headlands; islands (coastal or lake); hilltops⁸
- valley bottom; valley head; valley side; spur; hilltop or plateau⁹

¹ Hurley, V, 'The Early Church in the South West of Ireland: Settlement and Organisation', *The Early Church in Western Britain and Ireland*, ed. SM Pearce, BAR British Series, 102, 1983, 306. The same problem is apparent with sites on the Isle of Man as, despite the brief hiatus in the development of the church caused by Viking settlement, early traditions continued until the twelve century (Cubbon, A, 'The Early Church in the Isle of Man', *The Early Church in Western Britain and Ireland*, ed. SM Pearce, BAR British Series, 102, 1983, 259).

² Hamlin, A, 'The Early Irish Church: Problems of Identification', *The Early Church in Wales and the West*, ed. N Edwards and A Lane, 1992, 140.

³ Hurley, 'South-West of Ireland', 1983, 306

⁴ Even within a relatively small region.

⁵ Hamlin, 'The Early Irish Church', 1992, 140

⁶ Those features which are footnoted have been used in other surveys

⁷ Edwards, 'Introduction', *The Early Church in Wales and the West*, ed. N Edwards and A Lane, 1992, 4; Bowen, EG, *The Settlements of the Celtic saints in Wales*, 1956, 116

⁸ Edwards, 'Introduction', 1992, 4; Hurley, 'South West of Ireland', 1983, 310

⁹ Preston-Jones, A, 'Decoding Cornish Churchyards', *The Early Church in Wales and the West*, ed. N Edwards and A Lane, 1992, 110.

Enclosure

- curvilinear graveyard¹⁰
- curvilinear enclosure detected from aerial photography or old maps¹¹

Stones

- Inscribed stones (in British regions)¹²
- Sculptured stones¹³

Finds

- Ornamental metalwork (either extant or referenced)¹⁴
- Illuminated manuscripts (either extant or referenced)¹⁵

Burials

- Long cist cemeteries; dug graves; burials in wooden coffins¹⁶

Wells

- Presence of a well near a site¹⁷

Written sources

- Domesday Book¹⁸
- Anglo-Saxon charters¹⁹
- Calendars and annals²⁰

Place names

- Names containing recognized ecclesiastical elements²¹

Dedications

- Dedications to early and local saints²²

¹⁰ Edwards, 'Introduction', 1992, 5

¹¹ *ibid.*, 5

¹² *ibid.*, 5; Preston-Jones, 'Decoding Cornish Churchyards', 1992, 107.

¹³ Preston-Jones, 'Decoding Cornish Churchyards', 1992, 107.

¹⁴ Edwards, 'Introduction', 1992, 5;

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 5

¹⁶ *ibid.*, 7

¹⁷ *ibid.*, 8

¹⁸ Preston-Jones, 'Decoding Cornish Churchyards', 1992, 107. This will only be relevant for southern and middle England, although the similar Boldon Book covers some of northern England.

¹⁹ Preston-Jones, 'Decoding Cornish Churchyards', 1992, 107. Relevant for English sites.

²⁰ Hamlin, 'Early Irish Church', 1992, 138. Pictland is particularly badly served for written sources, with the kinglists as the only accepted document which is likely to have had a Pictish provenance. It seems unlikely that if there were monasteries across Pictland, they did not possess active *scriptoria*, but it is difficult to explain why there should be such a comprehensive loss of documents if there had been. The lack of written texts is even more surprising considering the amount which was being produced in contemporary *scriptoria* in Ireland, where there was Bible study, the production of commentaries and exegesis, records of synods of the Irish and Roman parties, the drawing up of canons, (many of which survived outside Ireland), penitentials and monastic rules, hagiography, hymns, and letters.

The disruption caused by the Vikings has also been blamed for the loss of documents, but the same thing does not seem to have happened elsewhere. Laing suggests that, in England, Anglo-Saxon documents survived because of a 12th-century antiquarian interest, but that there was no such curiosity or desire for preservation in Scotland (Laing, L, *Celtic Britain*, 1979, 140). Destruction, however, is probably the main culprit, perhaps starting with the Vikings, continuing under Edward I, with the king taking documents south to London where they were lost (*ibid.*, 140), and culminating with the zealous Reformationists.

²¹ Preston-Jones, 'Decoding Cornish Churchyards', 1992, 108

²² *ibid.*, 109

The Assessment of Fife

From an initial assessment of the data collected under each of the topics listed in the introduction, a list of the most apparently important or relevant factors was made. These were:

| | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|
| 2.1 | upland valley |
| | steep slope |
| | hillside |
| | hilltop |
| | ridge |
| | mound |
| 2.2 | within 5km of sea |
| | within 2km of river |
| | beside loch |
| | beside burn |
| | 100m from burn |
| | 300m from burn |
| 2.3 | within 5km of power centre |
| | headland |
| 2.4 | island |
| | cliff |
| | cave |
| 2.5 | routeway |
| 3.2 | long cists or Early Christian burials |
| 3.3 | eglis |
| | cill |
| | lann |
| | annat |
| | both |
| | apainn |
| 3.4 | partially curvilinear enclosure |
| 3.5 | well |
| 3.6 | Class II or III stones |
| 5 | recorded in 11th cent |
| | recorded in 12th cent |
| | recorded in 13th cent |

Next, each of the sites was graded in terms of its likelihood of being an Early Christian foundation, using the categories 'definite', 'probable', 'possible' or 'unlikely'.²³ This was based partly on the number of positive features at each site and partly on the nature of the factors. For example, a site featuring a '*cill*' name and no others features was more likely to be assessed as 'possible' than, for instance, one that was sited on a hillside beside a well.

²³ Hamlin, 'The Early Irish Church', 1992. Hamlin used 'certain, probable, possible and doubtful' for categorising sites in Northern Ireland.

The evidence was broadly classed in terms of significance.

- The most significant factor would have been a proven reference to a site, written down in Early Christian times, but no examples of these exist for Fife.
- The most significant relevant factor was the discovery of datable ecclesiastical remains from the sixth to the ninth century. Only one site in Fife, the monastery on the Isle of May, fulfilled these criteria, and it was therefore the only site graded 'definite'. Because the St Andrews sites were included in a different format they have not been graded, but despite the lack of comprehensive excavation, the area in and around St Andrews Cathedral as a whole, could be categorized as a 'definite' site.
- The next most important factor is early place name elements.²⁴ All identifiable sites featuring these elements were graded 'probable', with only those where the site itself is uncertain, being graded 'possible'.
- Next are carved stones found in or around the church. Although these could have been moved from elsewhere in earlier times there is a strong possibility they have been found in context.
- After carved stones are the 'traditionally accepted factors', and those indicating some human intervention, i.e. wells, burials, curvilinear enclosures or an adjacent burn.
- The final group included all other listed factors. When taken alongside other factors, a church recorded in the eleventh century is slightly more likely to be graded 'probable' than one first recorded in the thirteenth, but it is extremely unlikely that those recorded earlier are consistently earlier foundations.

Conclusions: As can be seen from both the chart on the following page and the map of sites following this section, the most consistent features are a proximity to water, in the form of sea, rivers or burns. This is not unexpected as Fife is a peninsula, and a lot of its land is within 5km from the sea, but the distribution does seem quite closely tied to watercourses. Routeways are also

²⁴ Place names can almost be treated as documentary sources in some cases, as they are the result of a deliberate human move to categorize a site, rather than a possible coincidence of nature, and they are also broadly datable.

obviously important, although most of these are related to watercourses, and is therefore partially a duplication of the above.

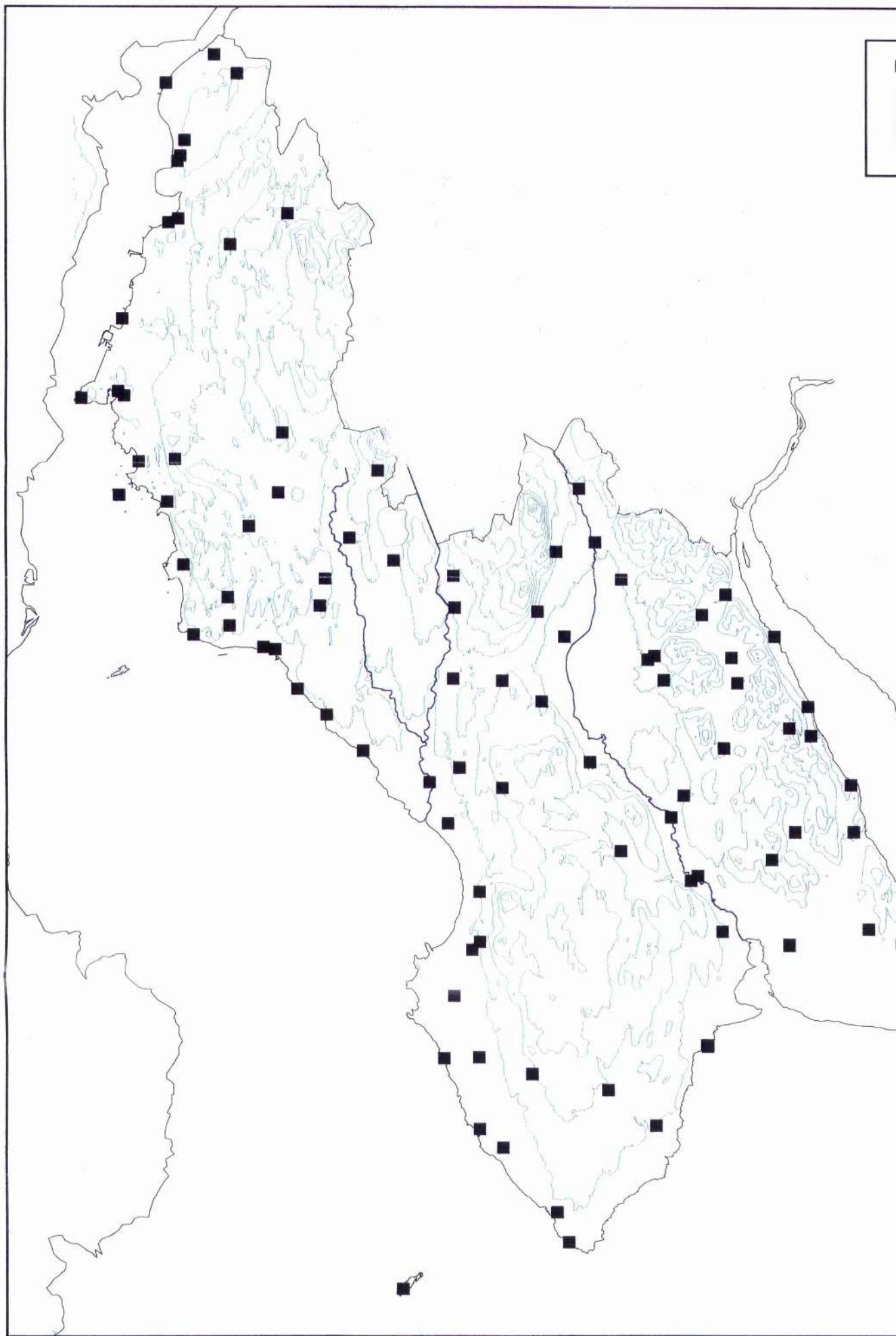
| | | definite | probable | possible | total |
|-----|---------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|-------|
| | numbers of sites | 1 | 29 | 54 | 84 |
| 2.1 | upland valley | | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| | steep slope | | 2 | | 2 |
| | hillside | | 1 | 6 | 7 |
| | hilltop | | | 1 | 1 |
| | ridge | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | mound | | 2 | 8 | 10 |
| 2.2 | within 5km of sea | 1 | 15 | 31 | 47 |
| | within 2km of river | | 6 | 7 | 13 |
| | beside loch | | 2 | | 2 |
| | beside burn | | 9 | 14 | 23 |
| | 100m from burn | | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| | 300m from burn | | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| 2.3 | within 5km of power centre | | 4 | 6 | 10 |
| | headland | | | 1 | 1 |
| 2.4 | island | 1 | 1 | | 2 |
| | cliff | | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| | cave | | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| 2.5 | routeway | 1 | 18 | 39 | 58 |
| 3.2 | long cists or Early Christian burials | 1 | 7 | 4 | 12 |
| 3.3 | eglis | | 3 | | 3 |
| | cill | | 8 | | 8 |
| | lann | | 2 | | 2 |
| | annat | | 1 | | 1 |
| | both | | | 1 | 1 |
| | apainn | | 1 | | 1 |
| 3.4 | partially curvilinear enclosure | | 4 | 7 | 11 |
| 3.5 | well | 1 | 7 | 6 | 14 |
| 3.6 | Class II or III stones | | 10 | 3 | 13 |
| 5 | recorded in 11th cent | | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| | recorded in 12th cent | | 7 | 19 | 26 |
| | recorded in 13th cent | | 8 | 17 | 25 |

More work would need to be done on sites to get a complete picture of church enclosures, but at least one eighth of sites features a partially curvilinear example; this is a smaller percentage of sites than that recorded in Wales by Brook.²⁵

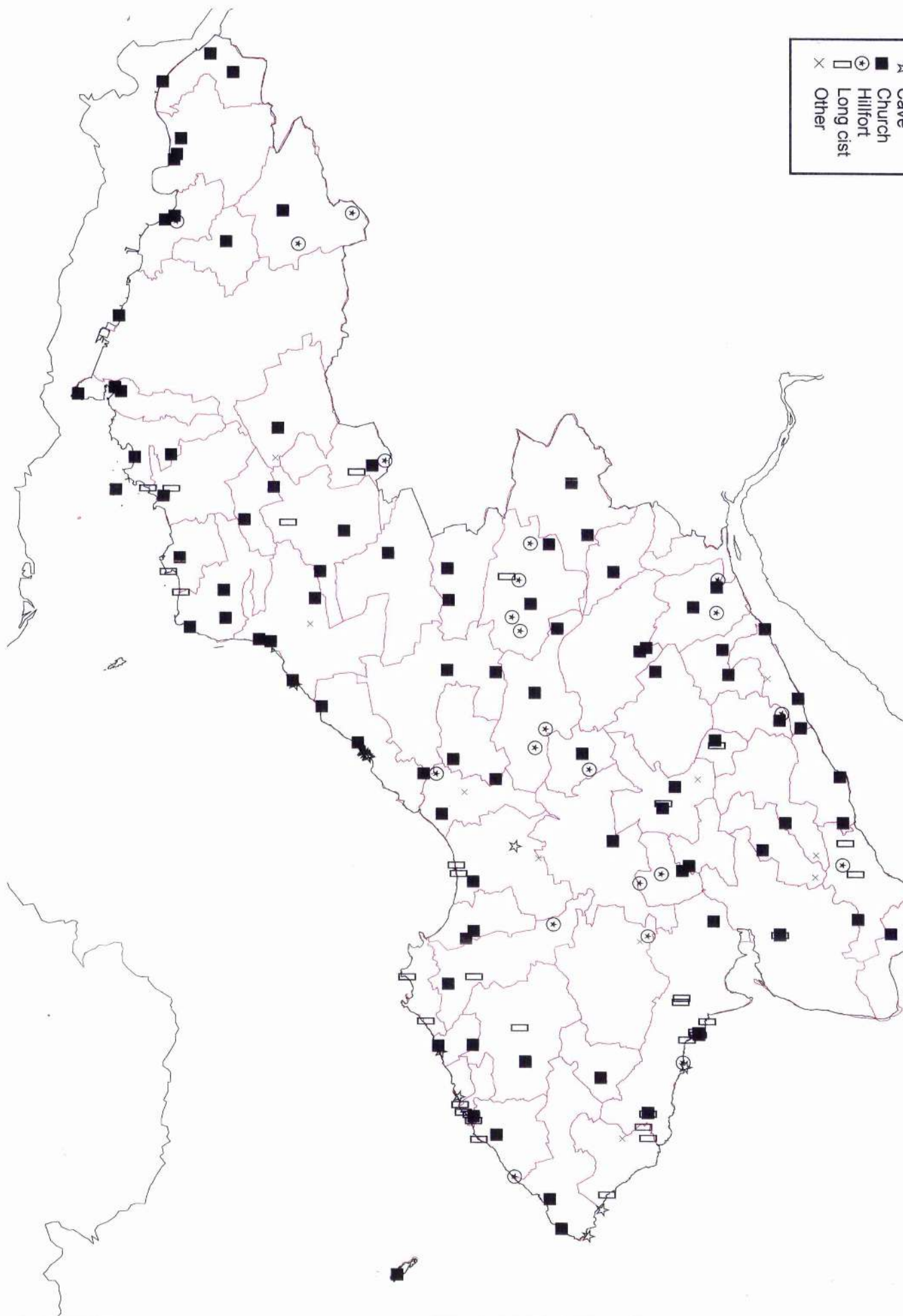
The evidence of the long cists is difficult to use in this analysis as it is unclear if they are related to the church sites, or represent another tradition.

²⁵ Brook, D, 'The Early Christian Church East and West of Offa's Dyke', *The Early Church in Wales and the West*, ed. N Edwards and A Lane, 1992, 81-2. See also *introduction section 3.4*.

A number of sites have wells; excavation could possibly indicate a pre-Christian, Early Christian or mediaeval period of use, through small finds.



■ Cave
⊕ Church
⊕ Hillfort
□ Long cist
× Other



Abbreviations

Arb. Lib. = Arbroath Liber

Chart. Inch. = Inchcolm Charters

Chart. Lind. = Lindores Charters

Lib. Bal = Balmerino Liber

Nor. Ber. Chrs = North Berwick Charters

Reg. Magni. Sig. Reg. Scot = *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scottorum*

St And. Lib. = St Andrews Liber

Bede, *HE* = Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*

D and E = Discovery and Excavation, Scotland

Forbes, *Kalendars* = Forbes, AP, *Kalendars of Scottish Saints*, Edinburgh 1872

NSA = New Statistical Account

OSA = Original Statistical Account

PESA = *Pontificale Ecclesiae Sanctae Andreae*

PSAS = Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland

RCAHMS (1933) = RCAHMS, *Inventory of Monuments*, vol. 11, Fife, 1933

Rec Scot Church Hist Soc = Records of the Scottish Church History Society

Skene, *Chronicles of the Picts and the Scots* = *Chronicles of the Picts. Chronicles of the Scots*, ed.

WF Skene, Edinburgh 1867

TAF AJ = Tayside and Fife Archaeological Journal

Watson, CPNS = Watson, WJ, *The Celtic Placenames of Scotland*, Edinburgh 1926

Wyntoun, *Origynale Cronykil of Scotland* = *The orygynale cronykil of Scotland by Andrew of Wyntoun*, ed. D Laing, 1872-1879

Br = Brittonic

G = Gaelic

P = Pictish

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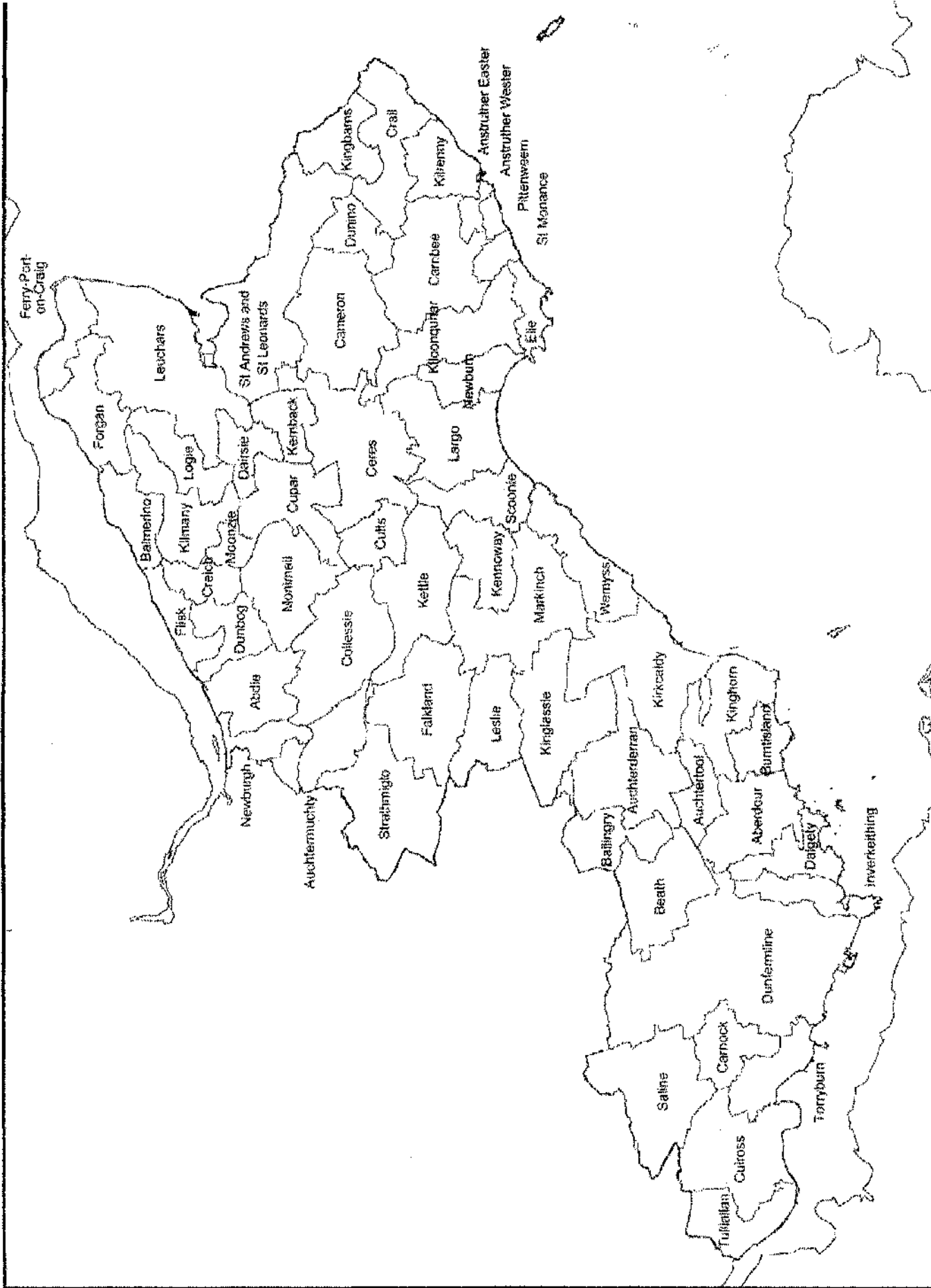
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Abdie

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

Abdie is situated on the north coast and is bounded on the west by the modern parish of Newburgh, which was part of Abdie until 1633. The parish boundary, as it stands today, was fixed at the end of the nineteenth century; before that there had been several disjointed portions of the parish in Dunbog.

Topography:

The parish is situated towards the eastern end of the Ochils range and is predominantly hilly. Major routeways across North Fife, run both north to south and east to west through the valleys of the Ochils.

Parish Name:

The name of the parish comes from *G apainn* (from Middle Irish *apdaine* or abbacy) meaning 'abbey or church land'.¹ Considering that linguistically this name almost certainly predates the foundation of Lindores Abbey,² and that there is no indication that the abbey directly succeeded an earlier foundation on or near its site, it seems likely that the church referred to is that of Abernethy, an Early Christian monastic site, a few kilometres to the west.

The derivation of the alternative parish name, Lindores, is uncertain, but it may come from *G lann + doras*. The first element is an Early Christian term meaning 'church' or 'enclosure', and the second element, 'door' or 'pass', probably referring to the well-used pass through the Ochils by which the parish church stands.³

¹ Watson, *CPNS*, 124

² Founded c.1191 by David, Earl of Huntingdon. Now in Newburgh parish (NO 21 NW 5.00) (NO 2438 1846).

³ Taylor, S, 'Place-names and the early church in Scotland', *Rec Scot Church Hist Soc* 28 (1998), 17

Early History:

Several kilometres to the west of the parish lay the Roman fort of Carpow,⁴ which, probably brought the area under a degree of Roman influence at the time of the Severan campaign in the early third century. Carpow is the largest and longest-inhabited Roman site currently known in or around Fife.

The Tay, on which Abdie is strategically sited, with good landing areas, is known to have been an important maritime route for the Roman navy, and throughout the Early Mediaeval period would have been a major thoroughfare for trade, human movement, and, probably, missionary activity.

Hillforts:

Because so many important routeways ran through or past the parish, defensive and fortified structures must often have been important. Several Iron Age forts⁵ exist in the area, such as Braeside Mains,⁶ Glenduckie⁷ and Norman's Law.⁸

Another site, on Mare's Craig (NO 248 177),⁹ was also once thought to have been a hillfort, but the fort-like features observed in the nineteenth century (NO 21 NW 35) were probably natural. Human activity of some type is indicated, however, by probable Early Christian long cist burials which were found at the site, and which will be discussed below.

Pictish Power Centres:

Some or all of the above mentioned fortifications may have been in use during the Pictish period, but

⁴ Abernethy parish (NO 21 NW 24) (NO 207 179)

⁵ Hillforts can date from the Prehistoric through to the Early Mediaeval period, but Iron Age examples are the easiest to identify and date.

⁶ Abdie parish (NO 21 NE 41) (NO 263 177) - CANMORE –
<http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=30053>, 29th May 2002

⁷ Flisk parish (NO 21 NE 5) (NO 2813 1931) - CANMORE –
<http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=30060>, 29th May 2002

⁸ Dunbog parish (NO 32 SW 22.00) (NO 3053 2019) - CANMORE –
<http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=31814>, 29th May 2002

⁹ Now also quarried away.

excavation of the hillfort on Clatchard Craig (NO 21 NW 10) (NO 2435 1780) showed it to have been both Iron Age and a high status Pictish site.¹⁰ This undoubted power centre must have played a role in local events, possibly including supporting and granting land to the church, although nothing obviously Christian was uncovered at the site.

Modern Churches:

The current parish church (NO 21 NE 56) (NO 2568 1667) was built in 1827.¹¹

¹⁰ Close-Brooks, J, 'Clatchard Craig, a Pictish Hillfort in Fife', *The Picts: A New Look at Old Problems*, ed. A Small, 1987, 27-8. The site was excavated in the 1950s and 1960s before it was quarried away.

¹¹ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=93936>, 29th May 2002

Abdie Old Parish Church

NMRS No NO 21 NE 8

Grid ref NO 2598 1634

1. St Magridin ¹²
 - 2.1 upland valley
 - 2.2 on the shore of Lindores Loch
beside the Priest's Burn
c.3km from Tay
 - 2.3 c.2km from Clatchard Craig
 - 2.5 on major inland routeway from inland Fife to the Tay
near major waterway
 - 3.3 Lindores (containing *lann* element) ¹³
Abdie (containing *apainn* element) ¹⁴
 - 3.6 Class I stone found on crest of Kaim Hill (NO 21 NE 10) (c. NO 2620 1698)
(approx. 500m from church) - now in mort building at church (NO 2595 1633)
 - 3.7 stone font ¹⁵
4. parish church until 1827
5. granted to Lindores Abbey, c.1195, *Chart. Lind.* no.i

¹² Probably a form of 'Adrian' (see introduction *section 1*)

¹³ See introduction *section 3.3*

¹⁴ See introduction *section 3.3*

¹⁵ This font is probably mediaeval, but is of plain design and may be earlier (NSA, 9, 51)

Assessment: Probable. The '*lann*' element in the parish name (Lindores) would suggest that there was an Early Christian foundation in this area, most probably on the site of this church. This site is also located beside a major routeway and beside water, but it is uncertain if the dedication is also an indication of an early site.

Mare's Craig ¹⁶

NMRS No NO 21 NW 17

Grid ref NO 248 177

- 2.1 on steep slope
- 2.2 c.1.5 km from Tay
burn at base of hill
c.400m from Clatchard Craig
- 2.5 beside routeway between inland Fife and Tay
near major waterway
- 3.1 ?chapel
- 3.2 probable long cists on site
- 3.7 iron bell ¹⁷
- 5. first recorded discovery of site in 1920s

¹⁶ This site was only recorded after it had been quarried away in the 1920s. The local quarry master reported that the possible remains of a building had been uncovered next to a group of apparent long cist burials and because of this context, it was believed that the building might have been a church (Close-Brooks, J, 'Excavations at Clatchard Craig, Fife', *PSAS*, 116, 1986, 179).

¹⁷ The argument that this was a Christian site is strengthened by the discovery of a 'Celtic' style iron bell, which was found at the site in 1926, alongside pieces of dressed stone and broken pieces of bone (NO 21 NE 17) (CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=30093>, 29th May 2002). The bell, which is now in Perth Museum, is the only one of its type known from Fife, and one of only ten in Scotland. It has been suggested by Bourke that the use of hand bells in Scotland can reasonably be attributed to the influence of the Irish church (and in Scotland, particularly to the Columban church) and that examples in Ireland can probably be dated from the seventh to the ninth century, a similar date being likely for the Scottish examples (Bourke, C, 'Handbells of the Early Scottish Church', *PSAS*, 113, 1983, 465-6).

The nature of the Mare's Craig site is unclear, and the bell may have come originally from elsewhere, possibly Abernethy, Perthshire, to whose territory Abdie once belonged and where there is an Irish style *cloightheach* or bell tower of possible late Pictish date. This style of bell is typical of the type found with or near many of the *cloightheach* in Ireland, and which is often associated with them. It is thought that monks rang these handbells from the top of the towers to signal times of office, etc.. The largest collection of Early Christian bells in Scotland is in Fortingall, Perthshire, where there are as yet no known round towers, but there is no reason why this bell should not have come from a more 'Irish' context than the others, as Abernethy had very strong links to Kildare. Because of its context, it has also been suggested that this bell may not have any direct ecclesiastical connections, but this is unlikely (Cormac Bourke, pers. comm.).

Assessment: Probable. The nature of this site is very difficult to determine, but there was almost certainly some form of Early Christian activity here, and the site may have been related to the hillfort at Clatchard Craig.

Chapel(s) of Dundemor¹⁸

NMRS No NO 21 NE 24

Grid ref NO 2 1

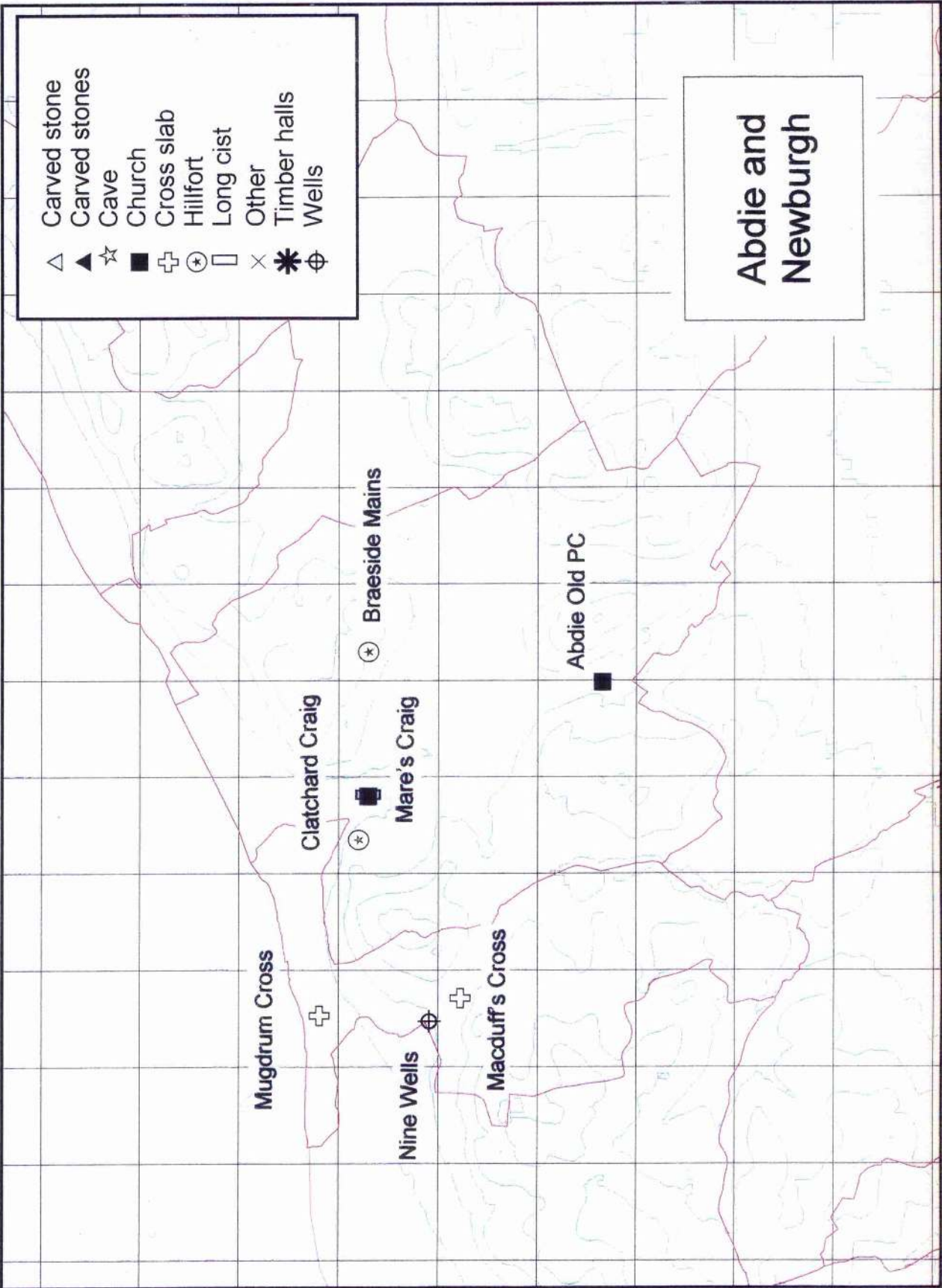
3.1 described as capella / capellas

5. recorded in papal bull of 1198, *Chart. Lind.* no.xciv

Assessment: **Unlikely.** The chapel or chapels of Dundemor are probably mediaeval rather than Early Christian.

¹⁸ This church or group of churches are most probably mediaeval secondary chapels (or chapels of ease) but may have their origins in the Pictish period. Recorded in *Chart. Lind.*, one chapel is listed in charters lxiii and lxiv, but the plural is given in xciv (It is not obviously a scribal error, but this may be the case).

If there was one chapel, it is most likely to have been the Chapel of Balmeadie (Dunbog parish) (NO 21 NE 22) (NO 2998 1838) (see separate entry), which is situated near Norman's Law, the 'Dun More' or large hill (Laing, A, *Lindores Abbey and its burgh of Newburgh*, 1876, 433). During the Middle Ages, this part of Dunbog was a detached portion of Abdie, making this identification even more likely. If, however, there was more than one chapel, as is suggested in the papal bull, other 'chapels of Dundemor' may be located within the modern parish of Abdie, and therefore a brief gazetteer entry is included here.



Aberdour

(Diocese of Dunkeld)

(Deanery of Fife and Strathearn)

Location:

The parish of Aberdour is on the southern coast of Fife and extends into the Firth of Forth, where it includes the island of Inchcolm.

Modern Churches:

The second parish church within Aberdour parish, at Crossgates, (NT 18 NE 87) (NT 1535 8872), was built in 1857 on a new site.¹

¹ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=92139>, 29th May 2002

St Fillan's Parish Church

NMRS No NT 18 NE 10.00

Grid ref NT 1932 8546

1. St Fillan – will, Sir James Douglas, 1390 (Morton Reg., ii,179)

- 2.2 c.300m from Forth
beside Dour Burn
- 2.5 on major waterway

- 3.4 built into bend of the Dour Burn
- 3.5 St Fillan's Well (NT 1937 8542)²
- 3.6 an Early Christian carved stone cross base with interlaced animal decoration (Class III)
discovered built in to one of the church walls.³ Original position unknown

4. parish church from 12th century to 1790
restored and re-dedicated, 1926

5. 1179, Chart. Inch. nos. 1 and 2

² When this well was recorded in 1474, it was called the 'Pilgrim's Well' and the association with St Fillan may be a late antiquarian tradition (Taylor, S, 'The Cult of St Fillan in Scotland', The North Sea World in the Middle Ages, ed. TR Liszka and LEM Walker, Dublin 2001, 203).

The well was reputed to help people with eye problems, and its water was bottled for distribution elsewhere (Morris, R and F, Scottish Healing Wells, 1982, 98).

³ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=50804>, 29th May 2002

Assessment: **Probable.** The presence of a cross slab, and the location of this church near the coast, beside a burn and next to a well suggests that this church may have been an Early Christian foundation.

Inchcolm ⁴

NMRS No NT 18 SE 7.01 (Hermit's Cell)

Grid ref NT 1467 8533

1. St Columba (from name of island) ⁵

2.2 in Forth

2.4 island

2.5 on major waterway

3.5 well (NT 18 SE 7.04) (NT 18 82)

2 cross slabs ⁶

3.7 cell ⁷

⁴ According to local tradition there may have been an early monastic site here. The medieval monastery was situated on the isthmus, and this could have been the site of an early foundation as well. The monastery may, however, have been situated on the higher area to the north, where aerial photography shows that the land had natural enclosures, resembling cashels. Without further archaeological investigation it is uncertain whether there are any traces of an Early Christian monastic settlement on Inchcolm.

Parallels have been drawn between Iona and Inchcolm, the 'Iona of the East'. The tradition linking Columba with the island dates back to at least the twelfth century and the foundation of the abbey. Alexander I, the founder, had a strong personal devotion to St Columba, (Ross, W, *Aberdour and Inchcolme*, 1885, 61), probably explaining either why Alexander chose to found a monastery here, or why it was given the Columban dedication.

Although there is no reason to link Inchcolm directly to Columba himself, there could have been a Columban connection. Inchcolm was on the route between Iona and Northumbria, and may have provided a stopping point for the churchmen or pilgrims making that journey. Rather than a full monastery, there may instead have been a 'hostel', with several monks permanently residing there.

During the Middle Ages, the Abbots of Dunkeld, (where some of Columba's relics were brought in the ninth century because of the Viking threat to Iona, making it the 'successor' of that house), were particularly involved with the abbey, and some were buried there. Inchcolm was in a detached portion of the Diocese of Dunkeld, but it is unclear if this was a reflection of an Early Medieval ecclesiastical link or the result of a later political one. (*Charters of the Abbey of Inchcolm*, xxii). The favour shown by these bishops of Dunkeld towards Inchcolm may have been because it was regarded as a shrine of St Columba (*ibid.*, xxiii).

⁵ 'Inchcolm' is a derivation of G *Innis C(h)oluim*, the 'island of Columba' (Simon Taylor, pers. comm.). The later mediaeval abbey was dedicated to St Columba apparently from its foundation (*Chart. Inch.* No. 1)

⁶ Fragments of one were found in the abbey ruins (Allen, JR and Anderson, J, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, Edinburgh 1903, part III, 366) (NT 18 SE 7.02)(NT 1897 8265) and another has been recently located, built into the abbey staircase (Simon Taylor, pers. comm.) (now on display in the Abbey Museum.) A mid-tenth century hogback was also found at the site.

4. mediaeval renovations to the cell suggest some (unidentified) use during this period used as morthouse in seventeenth century

5. first reference to a hermit's cell in *Scotichronicon* (c1440)

Assessment: Probable. The presence of carved stones suggests that there is quite likely to have been an Early Christian site on Inchcolm, but it is unclear whether it would have been a monastery, or a smaller foundation. It is unclear if the cell was an early building, but a solitary monk may have tended a chapel on the island after the monastery itself fell out of use, as is the case on the Isle of May. The hogback points to continued Christian use of the site before the founding of the priory in the twelfth century.

⁷ According to the *Scotichronicon*, Alexander I was sheltered in the cell by a hermit when he was shipwrecked in the Forth, and in gratitude to God founded a priory on the island (Bk V, Ch 37, *Scotichronicon* by Walter Bower in *Latin and English*, gen. ed. D Watt, III, ed. J and W MacQueen, 1995, 111). This is presumably the cell that can still be seen but it is not conclusive.

The cell, which has an E-W orientation, an approximately rectangular plan, and is entered through a lintelled passage, is of uncertain date, and major renovations in the Middle Ages and the seventeenth century will have changed some of its features. RCAHMS (1933) dates the cell to the sixteenth century, and claims it has been assumed to be earlier because it bears a "superficial resemblance to the covering of certain early chapels in Ireland", but others believe it is much earlier as it is similar to those found on Eileach-an-Naoimh (Paterson, JS, *Inchcolm Abbey*, 1929, 4), and the 'Culdee's Cell' on Iona (which has a similar lintelled passage) (Reid, A, *Inchcolm Abbey: A Notable Fifeshire Ruin*, 1901, 23) (Ritchie, however, suggests that the Iona cell may in fact be pre-Christian period (Ritchie, A, *Iona*, 1977, 44)).

Inchmartin (originally *Eglismarten*)

NMRS No n/a

Grid ref c.18 85

1. St Martin⁸

- 3.2 long cist at Inch Marton (NT 18 NE 9) (c.NT 188 859)⁹
- 3.3 Eglismarten (containing *egles* element)¹⁰

5. *Chart. Inch.* 32

Assessment: Probable. The existence of an Early Christian church at Inchmartin is suggested by the original form of the place name, Eglismarten. Neither 'Inchmartin' nor the site of the presumed church are located, but they are presumably in the vicinity of the Inch Marton Plantation (NT 188 859), near which a possible long cist burial was uncovered c.1824.

A possible candidate for this church lies outwith Aberdour in the parish of Dalgety. The *Fasti* states that there was a chapel of St Martin near Bouprie,¹¹ and this may be the (now lost) chapel of Chapel Farm (NT 18 NE 6) (NT 168 859), situated on the border between the two parishes.¹²

⁸ The name 'Martin' occurs in two of the six known '*egles*' names in Fife, (the other being an alternative name for Strathmiglo), probably indicating that a cult of St Martin may have been active, in west Fife at least, in the seventh or eighth centuries. Aberdour and Strathmiglo were both detached portions of the Diocese of Dunkeld, but it is unclear if this is related.

The cult of St Martin is often linked with that of St Ninian, and associated with early foundations. This early date is backed up here by the '*egles*' element, but there are no noted links with St Ninian in or around either Aberdour or Strathmiglo.

⁹ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=50846>, 29th May 2002

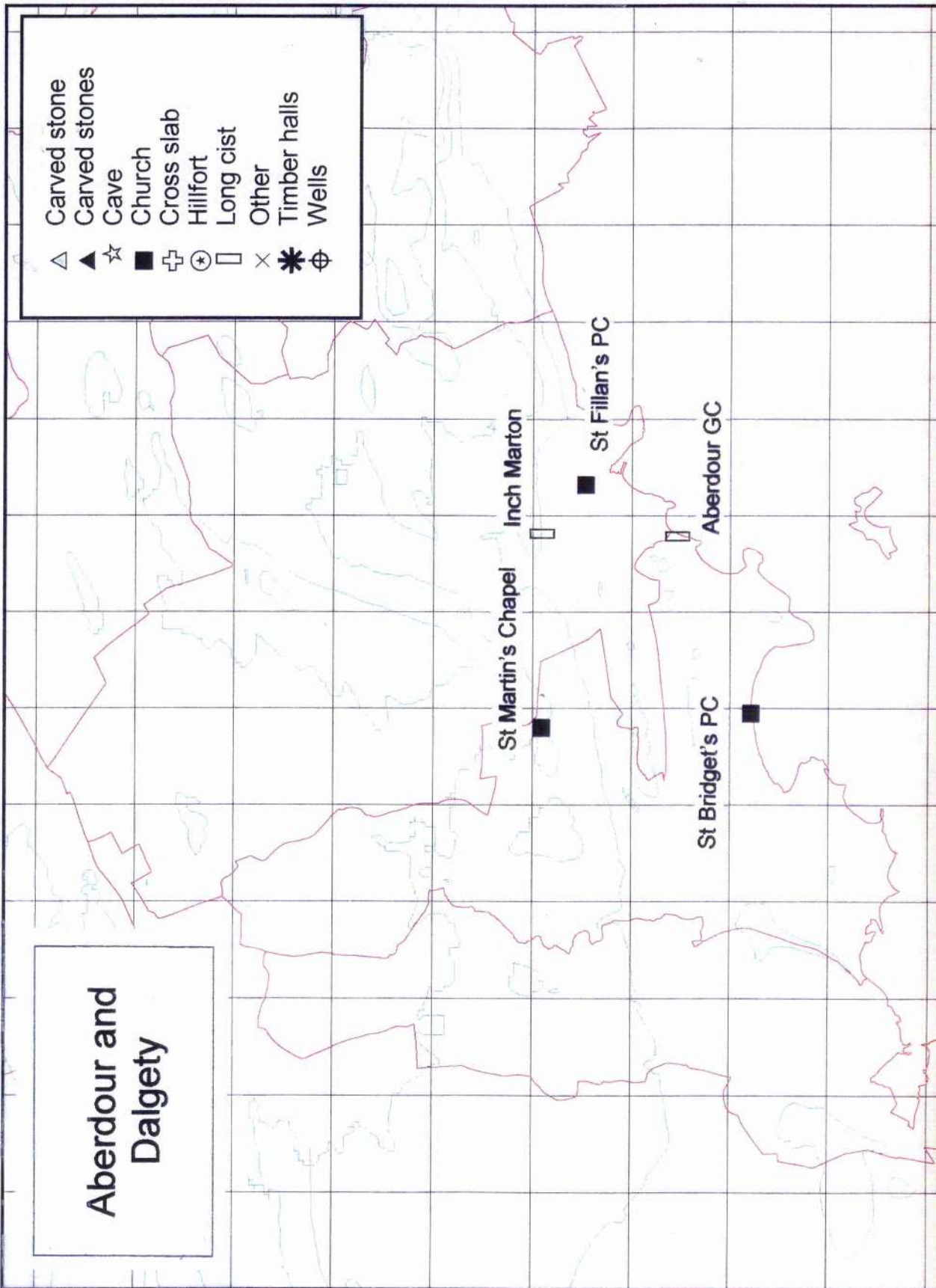
¹⁰ Taylor, S, 'Place-names and the early church in Scotland', *Rec Scot Church Hist Soc* 28 (1998), 16

¹¹ *Fasti Ecclesiae Scotticanae*, ed. H Scott, 1925, V, 404

¹² See Dalgety parish for this gazetteer entry.

Aberdour and Dalgety

- △ Carved stone
- ▲ Carved stones
- ☆ Cave
- Church
- ⊕ Cross slab
- ⊙ Hillfort
- Long cist
- × Other
- ✱ Timber halls
- ⊕ Wells



Anstruther Easter

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

The parish is situated on the eastern coast of Fife.

Ecclesiastical History:

Anstruther Easter was part of Kilrenny parish during the Middle Ages. It became a parish in its own right c.1634, when the current parish church (dedicated to St Adrian), was built.

Other Churches:

The parish church appears to have been founded, rather than promoted from a lesser role, in the seventeenth century, and there is no evidence of a previous church on the site. The one definitely mediaeval church site within the parish was St Ayle's Chapel (NO 50 SE 13) (NO 5686 0349), which stood near the site of the Scottish Fisheries Museum. A chapel dedicated to St Ayle, the *capella sancti Ali*, was granted to the priory of Balmerino in 1435, and as this priory already held land in the east of Anstruther, it is quite likely that these chapels were one and the same.¹ There is, however, no suggestion that this site was in use during the Early Christian period.

¹ *Lib. Bal.*, No. IV and No. 49. This identification is made by CANMORE (<http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=34064>, 29th May 2002) and Millar (*Fife: Pictorial and Historical*, 1895, 299). RCAHMS (1933), however, suggests that the chapel referred to stood within the parish of Balmerino and subsequently became the parish church (p38). See also Balmerino parish.

Long cist burials:

Two possible long cists have been uncovered within the parish, both in 1871, the first under the back premises of a house in Shore Street (c.NO 577 038) ² and the second in a garden on the west side of Rodger Street (c.NO 566 035).³ Their exact nature or age is unclear.

² Stevenson, S, Anstruther: A History, 1989, 4

³ *ibid.*, 4

Anstruther Wester

*(Diocese of St Andrews)*¹

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

The parish is situated on the east coast of Fife and includes the Isle of May.

Ecclesiastical History:

The mediaeval parish of Anstruther was made up of the modern parishes of Pittenweem and Anstruther Wester, with Anstruther Easter having been a part of Kilrenny parish.

Long Cist Burials:

Several sites on the mainland have been identified as having possible long cist burials, but their exact nature is unclear. Two possible long cists were uncovered in 1782 at Chesterhill (NO 50 SE 8) (NO 5624 0337),² and others have been found on several occasions near an area called 'Johnnie Doo's Pulpit' at Billowness (c.NO 561 029).³ A natural amphitheatre to the west of this was known locally as 'the grave of the Pecks (Picts)'.⁴

¹ As part of the mediaeval parish of Anstruther .

² CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=34193>, 29th May 2002

³ Stevenson, S, *Anstruther: A History*, 1989, 4

⁴ *ibid.*, 5

Old Parish Church

NMRS No NO 50 SE 20

Grid Ref NO 55 03⁵

1. St Adrian
St Nicholas⁶

- 2.2 beside harbour
beside Dreel Burn

- 2.4 beside natural harbour on major waterway

- 3.4 partially enclosed by Dreel Burn and harbour

- 3.7 stone coffin⁷

4. parish church from at least 1243
(current church built 16th century)
now used as hall

5. *ecclesia de Eynstrothir*, 1243 (Wordsworth, *PESA*, xv)

⁵ There is some question as to whether the pre-Reformation church was on the site of the current church (NO 50 SE 10)(NO 5643 0352). CANMORE (<http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=34072>, 29th May 2002) suggests that it is not conclusive, but that the balance of probability points to continuity of use. Cf Gifford, J, *Fife*, 1988, 69. The gazetteer criteria have been applied to the modern site.

⁶ Both dedications have been associated with the church but it is unclear how early they are, or if the dedication to St Adrian has come about because of confusion with Anstuther Easter. Wordsworth, in his edition of the *Pontificale Ecclesiae S. Andreae* (Edinburgh, 1885) states that the church was dedicated to St Adrian. Although he is not a reliable source, the same information comes from DC Baird in his undated notes to RCAHMS, thought to be taken from the original annotated version of the *Pontificale* in Paris (date of annotations uncertain). The church was dedicated to St Nicholas when it was taken out of use in the twentieth century.

⁷ A mediaeval stone coffin in the church grounds is reputedly the vessel which carried St Adrian's body miraculously over the sea from the Isle of May (Thirkell, A, *Auld Anster*, c.1977, 8), and, although there is no evidence for this tradition dating back as far as the Middle Ages, there is a chance that it could stem from the

Assessment: Possible. This site of the modern church is the most likely site for the medieval parish church. The location of the church beside the sea and the burn, the continuity of use at the site, and its recorded presence in the thirteenth century may indicate that this was an early foundation, but there are no other obvious indications.

presence of the saint's relics at the church or an early dedication to Adrian. The motif of stones floating across water and carrying saints is a common one in hagiography (Logan, P, *The Holy Wells of Ireland*, 1980, 18)

Isle of May ⁸

NRMS No NT 69 NE 1 (chapel)

Grid ref NT 6586 9902

1. St Ethernan - chapel or altar - (No 27 Carte Prioratus Insule de May c. 1280s) ⁹

St Adrian - tradition - Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland by Wyntoun c.1406

2.2 in Forth

c.200m from two natural harbours

2.3 probable settlement on island continuing through Pictish period

2.4 island

2.5 on major waterway

3.1 chapel and monastery ¹⁰

3.2 long cist cemetery ¹¹

⁸ Excavations by Peter Yeoman and Heather James during the 1990s revealed evidence of an Early Christian monastic site (Preliminary details of the report appear in Yeoman, P, 'Pilgrims to Ethernan: the Archaeology of an Early Saint of the Picts and Scots', Conversion and Christianity in the North Sea World, ed. B Crawford, 1998, 75-93).

⁹ St Ethernan is commemorated in several parishes in Fife, but it is likely that there were particularly strong links between the Isle of May and Kilrenny, the parish which bears Ethernan's name (see Kilrenny parish). Anstruther Easter (in the mediaeval parish of Kilrenny) would have been the obvious harbour to sail from to the May (it is still the harbour used today), and so would have been one of the main stopping points for monks traveling to that island by land. There do not appear to be any related church sites within Anstruther Easter, but traces of an Early Christian church or monastery have been uncovered at Kilrenny (NO 50 SE 3.00) (NO 5750 0485). The tradition of St Adrian's remains coming to rest on the mainland (see above) may also be a result of this close relationship from Early Christian times.

¹⁰ Beside the cemetery, a building with stone foundations was uncovered beneath the west end of the later church buildings. This structure may be contemporary with the earliest burials, as it is on the same alignment, and is possibly a monastic building. Another building with an E-W alignment was found on the site of the thirteenth century church, and was the first of four successive probable churches on the site, with a date ranging from the eighth to mid-tenth centuries. Of drystone construction, approximately 6m square in plan, and situated close to the southern end of the burial cairn, it seems likely that this would have been the main (or only) chapel site within the Pictish monastery.

¹¹ Firstly there was a large cemetery, of which the boundaries were dictated by the topography of the site. Within it there was a platform cairn with burials dating from the seventh to the twelfth centuries, and alongside that there was a long cist cemetery with burials dating from the fifth to the seventh century (C-14 dates from a sample of four burials). The bodies which were examined were predominantly male, which would be consistent

- 3.4 enclosure confined by outcropping bedrock and steep slopes ¹²
- 3.5 St Thaney's Well, near Maiden Rocks
- Pilgrim's Well at Pilgrim's Haven
- St John's Well, near priory
- St Adrian's Well at Alterstanes
- 3.7 may be oratories and domestic buildings connected to the Pictish monastery located on the site of the Second World War naval base (site not excavated)
4. possible burial place and site of religious activity from prehistoric times
- priory founded on site c.1145 ¹³
- after priory abandoned c.1318, chapel of St Adrian still tended as a focus of pilgrimage
- 'St Adrian's Chapel' (now ruined) is the only surviving ecclesiastical building - it is no longer in use
5. Foundation charter of Benedictine priory c1145 (No 1 Carte Prioratus Insule de May)

Assessment: Definite. This is one of the few firmly attested Early Christian sites in Fife. It is uncertain when or by whom this monastery was founded, or exactly what form it would have taken.

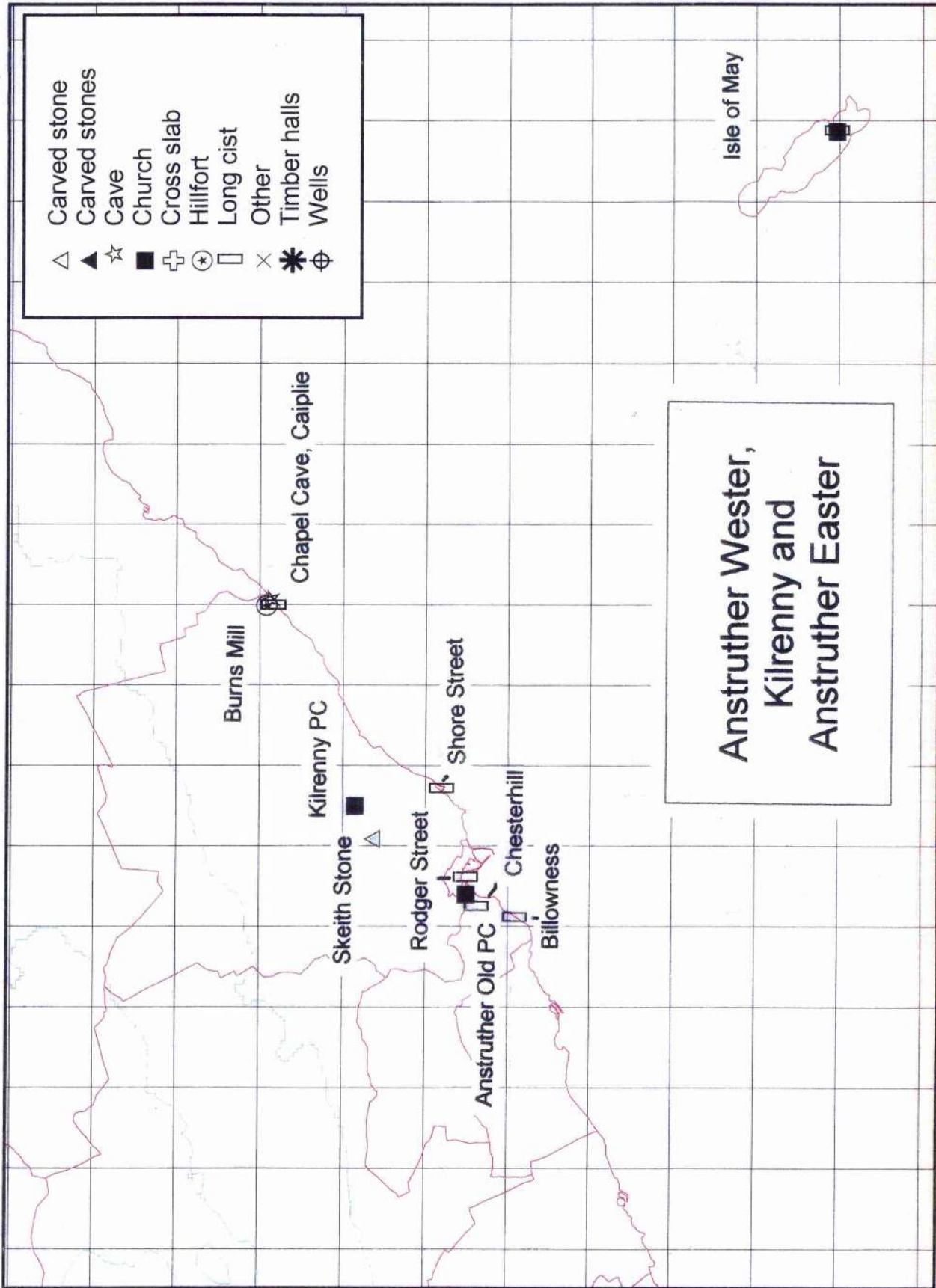
with an isolated monastic group. As well as these burials, one section of the cemetery contained the bodies of a group of chronically ill individuals of both genders, suggesting that the cults celebrated on the Isle of May were particularly significant for the sick, or that there was some type of monastic hospital on the island.

Looking at the wide spread of dates obtained from the burials, it seems probable that there was a Christian population on the island before the seventh century, the date of the supposed mission of St Ethernan.

¹² It is unclear if there was a vallum enclosing the monastery, as the geography of the surrounding area largely forms a natural boundary, making a manmade one unnecessary. The nature of the monastery and the island site may also have made such a construct unnecessary. The natural enclosure is approximately 170m N-S and 40m E-W, with the cemetery and chapel situated at the centre.

¹³ The Benedictine monastery on the Isle of May was founded c.1145 by David I, who brought a community of monks from Reading. As a result of repeated English incursions, the monastery was abandoned in the early fourteenth century and the monks removed to Pittenweem (It is unclear if this monastery had existed for any length of time before this or if it was founded for the purpose of housing the monks from May (see Pittenweem parish)). After this date, a chapel dedicated to St Adrian was tended by a solitary monk and was a popular destination for pilgrims, one of whom was James IV (Records of the Priory of the Isle of May, ed. J Stuart, 1868, xlii).

The burials suggest that it attracted a number of pilgrims, including lay men and women. Further excavation away from the burial area might uncover living quarters, elucidating the picture with regards to the size of the community and the activities carried out there.



Anstruther Wester,
Kilrenny and
Anstruther Easter

Auchterderran

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fothrif)

Location:

Auchterderran is in southern Fife.

Topography:

Extensive coalmining in the area has changed the landscape of the parish quite significantly since the Early Christian period.

Place Names:

It has been suggested that the place name 'Capeldrae' (NT 18 97) translates as 'chapel among thorns'¹, but this is very unlikely, and Taylor's suggestion that it is in fact derived from G *capull* + *treabh*, meaning 'work-horse farm',² seems much more probable.

Long Cist Burials:

Possible long cist burials were uncovered before 1855, close to the farm buildings at Powgild (NT 29 SW 2) (NT 2086 9273), but their age, nature and number is uncertain.³

Modern Churches:

The current parish church (NT 29 NW 6.00) (NT 2141 9600) was built in 1789 on the site of the old manse.⁴

¹ Henderson, E, *A Parish Alphabet*, 1990, 'Capeldrae'

² Taylor, S, *Settlement-names in Fife*, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh 1995, 99

³ RCAHMS (1933), 28; CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=52972>, 29th May 2002

⁴ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=52896>, 29th May 2002

Auchterderran Old Parish Church

NMRS No NT 29 NW 7

Grid ref NT 2143 9598

1. St Fothad⁵

- 2.2 beside burn
c.500m from River Ore

4. parish church from at least 1243 until 1789

5. granted to St Serf's Monastery, Loch Leven, c.1053x93, *St. And. Lib.* no.117

Assessment: Possible. This church is recorded in the eleventh century and is located beside a burn, but there are no other positive indications that there was an Early Christian foundation there.

⁵ This dedication almost certainly refers to Bishop Fothad II of St Andrews (c.1053x93), (Houston, A McN, *Auchterderran, Fife: A Parish History*, Paisley 1924, 38) and is therefore not an indication of an early foundation. The Bishop granted this church to Loch Leven Priory in the second half of the eleventh century (*St. And. Lib.* 117). The date of this dedication is uncertain, and may be either an old tradition, which has become confused over time or a relatively modern attempt to celebrate a named figure in the church's history.

Keir Brae Plantation⁶

NMRS No NT 29 SW 4

Grid ref NT 2388 9458

2.2 c.400m from burn (now culverted)

3.1 chapel

4. possibly in use as burial ground at uncertain date

Assessment: Unlikely. This is probably a later medieval chapel rather than an Early Christian foundation.

⁶ This site is historically undocumented (CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=52986>, 29th May 2002), but the presence of a chapel and gravestones was recorded in local oral tradition (CANMORE – *ibid.*), leading to an archaeological investigation. At the time of the first of the recent investigations (1954), there was a small, elevated rectangular grassy patch with no signs of building foundation or gravestones. After clearance several features were uncovered (Proudfoot, E and Hutchison, A, 'Keir's Brae, burying ground', *D and E*, 1989, 16), and further possible structural remains were indicated through geophysical surveying in the 1990s (CFA, 'Keir's Brae Old Burial Ground: resistivity survey: site of chapel', *D and E*, 1993, 28).

The site is included in the gazetteer as an Early Mediaeval date for its original foundation cannot be ruled out. (Where a chapel is recorded in the later mediaeval period it may be possible to ascertain a vague probable date of foundation and decide on that basis if inclusion is merited. However, the lack of any documentary evidence for this site means that this cannot be done here, although there is no positive evidence to support its inclusion.). It is more likely to be a mediaeval chapel of ease, a private chapel of the Lairds of Carden, or a Roman Catholic chapel, and date no earlier than the Middle Ages or the post-Reformation period.

Auchtermuchty

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fothrif)

Location:

Auchtermuchty is situated on the western edge of the Howe of Fife.

Topography:

The principal town of the parish, which shares its name, was situated at the point where the main routes connecting Kirkcaldy and Perth, and Stirling and St Andrews joined,¹ making it a busy trade centre throughout the Middle Ages, quite possibly continuing an earlier tradition.

Parish History:

A Roman marching camp has been uncovered at Auchtermuchty (NO 21 SW 17) (NO 2424 1185), but because of the transitory nature of the camp it is unlikely that the Roman presence lasted long enough for its influence to have affected this particular area any more than the rest of Fife.

¹ Simpson, AT, and Stevenson, S, *Historic Auchtermuchty*, 1981, 1

Auchtermuchty Parish Church

NMRS No NO 21 SW 1.00

Grid ref NO 2390 1170

1. St Serf²
 - 2.1 on mound
in valley between Ochils and Lomonds
 - 2.2 c.30m from burn
 - 2.5 beside crossing of two major routeways
 - 3.4 modern church enclosure has curvilinear form to west which may mirror earlier boundary.
4. parish church from at least 1245 until present day
current church built in 1780
5. *ecclesia de Uchmukedi*, 1245 (Wordsworth, *PESA*, xvii)

Assessment: Probable. The location of this church at an important 'crossroads', on a mound and near a burn, and the possible curvilinear enclosure, suggest that this was an Early Christian site. The dedication may also be early.

² The date of the dedication is uncertain, but the saint's name is linked with the burgh peat myre (*pait-myre*) by 1591 (RMS iii no. 168, quoted in Taylor, S, *Settlement-names in Fife*, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh 1995, 106) and the annual fair was held on St Serf's Day by 1517 (RMS v no. 1946, quoted in Taylor, *ibid.*, 106). In line with other Serf dedications in Fife, it is likely that this dedication does date to the Pictish or Early Historic period, and that this is an early foundation.

Auchtertool

(Diocese of Dunkeld)

(Deanery of Fife and Strathearn)

Location:

Auchtertool is situated in west Fife.

Place Names:

The name Pilkham (NT 18 89), has been claimed by Stevenson to be a version of 'Pitcolme', a name which indicates 'the site of an early ministry or outpost of the monastery of St Colme', i.e. Inchcolm.¹ According to Taylor, however, this appears to have arisen from a misreading of one of the early forms of the name, and neither the '*pit*' nor '*colm*' elements are actually present.²

¹ Stevenson, W, *The Kirk and Parish of Auchtertool*, 1908, 3-4

² Taylor, S, *Settlement-names in Fife*, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh 1995, 114-5

Auchtertool Parish Church

NMRS No NT 29 SW 6.00

Grid ref NT 2076 9018

2.1 on hill slope

2.2 on burn

c.700m from Dronachy Burn

3.5 well (NT 2077 9017) beside church³

4. parish church from at least late twelfth century to present day⁴

5. granted to Inchcolm (probably by Dunkeld) between c.1162x69 and 1179 (*Chart. Inch.* nos. 1 and 2)

Assessment: Possible. The location of the church on a hillside, beside a burn, and the presence of a holy well, suggest that this may have been an early site.

³ Morris, R and F, *Scottish Healing Wells*, 1982, 98

⁴ There was a local tradition that part of the eastern end of the current church was built 'in Celtic days', (Stevenson, *Auchtertool*, 1908, 7) but although parts of the church fabric may be early, they are unlikely to much pre-date the twelfth century, when the church was granted to Inchcolm.

St Finnan's Church ⁵

NMRS No NT 19 SE 5

Grid ref NT 1878 9188

1. St Finnan (Finan, Fillan) ⁶
- 2.1 supposed site was on mound (no longer extant) ⁷
- 2.2 c.200m from burn
c.1km from Loch Gelly
- 3.2 three long cists found before 1855 ⁸

Assessment: Possible. It is unclear if this was a church site, but there appears to have been an Early Christian presence in the area.

⁵ This possible early church site, at Colvin's Knowe, stands on the farm of Lochhead, which until 1646 was within the parish of Ballingry. Nothing is known for certain of the site, and the origin and likelihood of the tradition is unclear. Although no single piece of evidence points to this having been an Early Christian foundation (or indeed an ecclesiastical foundation at all), the presence of long cists and the supposed dedication to Finan / Fillan should not be ignored.

The dedication is almost certainly related to nearby Lumphinnans, or *G lann + fillan* (see Ballingry parish), a name which suggests a possible Early Christian connection. It is unclear, however, whether the sites were: (a) contemporary and connected, (b) the result of two separate dedications stemming from a local tradition, or if (c) the dedication, and identification, of this site is spurious and was simply adopted by antiquarians because of Lumphinnans.

⁶ The dedication to St Finnan has probably been taken directly from the name Lumphinnans (see above), which is likely to have been derived from Fillan (Taylor, S, 'The Cult of St Fillan in Scotland', *The North Sea World in the Middle Ages*, ed TR Liszka and LEM Walker, Dublin 2001, 191).

⁷ All that was visible at the site in modern times was a mound, which may in fact have been a pre-Christian tumulus. By the time of the RCAHMS survey (published in 1933), the mound was no longer extant (Stevenson, *Auchtertool*, 1908, 10). No record of the mound's dimensions exists.

⁸ Their age and nature, including the likelihood of them being Christian, is unknown.

Ballingry

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fothrif)

Location:

Ballingry is an inland parish on the western edge of Fife.

Ecclesiastical History:

Originally part of Auchterderran, Ballingry became a parish in its own right before 1424.¹ An alternative name, Inchgall, is recorded in 1604,² but appears to have been more usually used of the area in its secular capacity.³

Place Names:

Several potential early religious or ritual sites have been identified from place names in the parish. Navitie (NT 17 98), which occurs near the Iron Age hillfort of Dunmore (NT 19 NE 10) (NT 1719 9839), is thought to derive from *G neimheadh*, meaning a nemeton or church land,⁴ and if so, is likely to represent a pre-Christian, or less likely, Early Christian, shrine or sacred area.⁵

The place name Lumphinnans (NT 17 92), comes from the *G lann* (cognate with Welsh *llan* meaning 'enclosure' or 'church') and the saint's name Finan or Fillan (probably the latter)⁶. It is likely to have been a site of Early Christian activity,⁷ although it shows no signs of having survived into the Middle

¹ CSSR ii 69, cited in Taylor, S, *Settlement-names in Fife*, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh 1995, 116

² RMS vii no.1, cited in Taylor, *ibid.*, 116

³ Taylor, *ibid.*, 116

⁴ Taylor, S, 'Place-names and the early church in Scotland', *Rec Scot Church Hist Soc* 28 (1998), 12

⁵ Proudfoot, E, 'Excavations at the long cist cemetery on the Hallow Hill, St Andrews, Fife, 1975-7', *PSAS*, 1996, 396

⁶ The earliest form Lumfilan (1242 and 1245 *Pitfirrane Writs* nos. 1 and 2), suggests Fillan; some later forms have substituted 'n' for 'l', making it impossible to be certain – Taylor, S, 'The Cult of St Fillan in Scotland', *The North Sea World in the Middle Ages*, ed TR Liszka and LEM Walker, Dublin 2001, 191

⁷ This place name, if it has been interpreted correctly, is the only positive evidence for an Early Mediaeval cult of St Fillan in Fife – *ibid.*, 190

Ages.⁸ If there was a church of St Fillan connected to this site, it may be that identified in Auchtertool parish (NT 19 SE 5) (NT 1878 9188), or there may be an as yet unidentified church site within Lumphinnans itself. A firmly attested, but probably later, dedication to St Fillan in the general vicinity may be found at the parish church of Aberdour, 8km away.⁹

Hillforts:

There was a hillfort on Dunmore (NT 19 NE 10) (NT 1719 9839).

Other Churches:

The chapel from which Chapel Farm derives its name, the Chapel of Inchgall (NT 19 NE 4) (NT 1664 9617), is first recorded in 1511.¹⁰ It was probably a mediaeval subsidiary chapel, and there is nothing to suggest that it was an early foundation.

Long Cist Burials:

Possible long cist burials were uncovered before 1855 at Hynd's Farm (NT 19 NE 3) (NT 178 967), but their number, nature and exact location are unknown, and they are outwith any obvious Christian context.¹¹

⁸ The name appears to have lost any ecclesiastical association by the time it is first recorded, and the place does not appear to be a significant part of the local parochial structure – *ibid.*, 191

⁹ Other Fillan dedications in Fife include Forgan and a cave at Pittenweem (See introduction *section 1*)

¹⁰ *RMS*, iv, no. 3

¹¹ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=51038>, 29th May 2002

Ballingry Parish Church

NMRS No NT 19 NE 69

Grid ref NT 1748 9762

- 2.1 at base of hill
- 2.2 beside burn
 - c.2km from Loch Leven
 - c.2km from Loch Ore
- 2.3 1km from hillfort (Dunmore)

- 3.6 cross slab found in church walls during building work, 1966¹²

- 4. chapel c.1250
 - parish church from before 1424 until present day
 - current church erected 1831

- 5. probably chapel recorded with Auchterderran church, c.1250, *St And.Lib.* 33
 - attained parish status before 1424

Assessment: Possible. The presence of a cross slab and the church's location next to a burn suggest that this may be an early site, although its location at the base of a hill is not a common factor.

¹² Henderson, E, *A Parish Alphabet*, 1990, 'Cross-Slab'

Balmerino

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

Balmerino is situated on the north coast of Fife.

Ecclesiastical History:

From the early grants of land and property to the Balmerino Abbey,¹ it appears that the territory of Balmerino belonged originally to the Culdee church of Abernethy. Two chapels are mentioned, suggesting that these were the only early foundations within the area. One, at Cultra, is within the modern parish of Balmerino; the other, the Chapel of Naughton, may be in Forgan parish, but is more likely to be in Balmerino.

The location of the chapel of Cultra, first recorded in c.1173,² is uncertain, but it may have been on the site of the church at Kirkton (NO 32 SE 5.00) (NO 3603 2491),³ presumably the church recorded as the church of Balmerino in 1225.⁴ This identification is strengthened by the fact that Cultra was at one time the alternative name for the parish,⁵ and Balmerino church held parochial status until it passed to the abbey church around the time of the abbey's foundation.⁶ There is some uncertainty as to when

¹ Cistercian abbey (NO 32 SE 2.00) (NO 3580 2465), founded c.1227 by Alexander II and his mother Ermengarde.

² *Arb. Lib.* 1

³ Simon Taylor, *pers. comm.*

⁴ *Lib. Bal.* No.4

⁵ The name Cultra, meaning 'at the back of the shore', also describes the position of this church – Simon Taylor, *pers. comm.*

⁶ The church recorded in 1225 is probably the chapel recorded in the *St And. Lib.* taxation list alongside Flisk church (*St And. Lib.*, 33-4). This document was probably compiled c.1246x1255 (Donald Watt, *pers. comm.*) suggesting parochial status was transferred between these dates.

the abbey church in turn lost parochial status, but by the time of the Reformation, the title had passed (back?) to the church at Kirkton.⁷

The second chapel mentioned in the Abernethy grants stood within the estate of Naughton. This estate belonged to the parish of Forgan⁸ until 1650, when it was transferred to Balmerino. Some confusion has been created by the wording of the grant (1188x1202) which refers to "the church of Forgrund with the chapel of Naughton adjacent to the said church",⁹ but it is unlikely that the buildings were physically adjacent, and later references use the term, 'with'. The chapel of Naughton may have been at Kirkhills (NO 32 NE 6) (NO c.388 251) in the west of the old estate, where it could have served as a chapel of ease.

The statement in the *St Andrews Liber*,¹⁰ that Naughton was 'Hyhatnouhton Machehirb, now called Had Nachton' has given rise to a belief that a king Necthon had a stronghold here,¹¹ but no potential site has been identified. The name probably derives from *G ath*, 'ford' + personal name 'Necthon', which Taylor suggests is the ford over the Motray Water, later known as Sandford,¹² and within the lands of Naughton.

⁷ This church has also been identified as the St Ayle's Chapel which was the subject of a charter, granting some parochial rights, in 1435 (*Lib. Bal.* No.IV and No.49). This dedication, however, is not otherwise associated with the parish church, but is still linked today with a chapel beside the harbour in Anstruther Easter, where the monks of Balmerino held land and fishing rights. There has been much debate as to which chapel the charters referred to, and it is impossible to decide for certain on the available evidence (Millar, *Fife: Pictorial and Historical*, 1895, 299) believes it is the Anstruther chapel, RCAHMS (1933), concludes it is in Balmerino. (p38)). It may be that both these chapels belonged to Balmerino and shared the same dedication (unique to Scotland and probably referring to Agilus, a seventh-century Burgundian saint), as a result of a personal cult or one peculiar to Balmerino; indeed, both chapels have good claims to the tradition and no historian has as yet argued convincingly for one at the exclusion of the other.

⁸ The name Naughton appears to have been used interchangeably with Forgrund (Forgan) for that parish (Campbell, J, *Balmerino and its Abbey*, 1867, 20).

⁹ *St And. Lib.*, 250

¹⁰ *St And. Lib.*, 1ff

¹¹ Campbell, *Balmerino*, 1867, 32

¹² Taylor, S, 'The coming of the Augustinians to St Andrews and version B of the St Andrews foundation legend', *Kings, Clerics and Chronicles in Scotland, 500-1297*, ed S Taylor, Dublin 2000, 116

Sibbald is said to have identified Balmerino with another church mentioned in this legend, that of 'Doldancha, now Chrondrochedalvan', but this is due to a misreading of the text,¹³ and that church is in fact Kindrochet in Braemar, dedicated to St Andrew.

Wells:

There are six holy wells in the parish:

- (1) Prior Well (NO 356 236),
- (2) Tenacre Well (NO 343 233),¹⁴
- (3) St John's Well (NO 32 SE 3) (NO 3769 2434),
- (4) Monk's Well (NO 32 SE 2.03) (NO 3589 2474),
- (5) Lady Well (NO 32 SE 32) (NO 3764 2413), and
- (6) St Bride's Well (NO 32 SE 12) (NO 3769 2369),¹⁵ which recalls the parish's links with Abernethy, where there is a dedication to that saint.

Carved Stones:

Campbell records that "the head of an unusual type of cross was found recently at".¹⁶ This is the only record of the fragment, which is now lost, and its date, type and origin are uncertain.

Long Cist Burials:

A possible long cist was uncovered in 1839, near the road, 250 yards NE of the current parish church, but the exact site and nature of the burial is unknown.¹⁷

¹³ Forbes, *Kalendars*, 439

¹⁴ Morris, R and F, *Scottish Healing Wells*, 1982, 99

¹⁵ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=31738>, 29th May 2002

¹⁶ Campbell, *Balmerino*, 1867, 590. NMRS No. NO 32 SW 36 (NO 3360 2336)

¹⁷ *RCAHMS* (1933), 38

Modern Churches:

The two current parish churches at Balmerino (NO 32 SE 44) (NO 3687 2456) and Gauldry (NO 32 SE 64) (NO 3789 2391) are modern churches on new sites.

Balmerino Old Parish Church (Cultra Chapel?)

NMRS No NO 32 SE 5.00

Grid ref NO 3603 2491

1. ?St Ayle
 - 2.1 at base of hill
 - 2.2 c.200m from burn
c. 200m from coast
 - 2.5 on major waterway

4. parish church until c.1227
regains parochial status before Reformation
out of use, 1811

5. church of Balmerino, 1225. *Lib. Bal.* No.4
(chapel of St Ayle, 1435, *Lib. Bal.*, no.IV and no.49)

Cultra Chapel

NMRS No n/a

Grid ref unknown

- 3.1 chapel

4. part of Abernethy church holdings from unknown date

5. chapel of Coultra, c.1173, *Arb. Lib.*,1

Assessment: Possible. Cultra Chapel was probably on the site at Kirkton. Its connection to Abernethy suggests that it could be an early foundation, and it is close to the Tay, but there are no other apparent indications.

Naughton Chapel

NMRS No NO 32 NE 6

Grid ref NO c.388 251

- 2.1 on hill
- 2.2 c.800m from Firth of Tay
- 2.5 c.800m from major waterway

- 3.1 chapel

- 4. subsidiary chapel to Forgan

- 5. c.1173, *Arb. Lib.*, 1
1188x1202, *St And. Lib.*, 250

Assessment: Possible. This chapel's connection to Abernethy suggests that it could have been an early foundation, and it is located near the Tay, but because the site is unidentified, other topographical features cannot be considered.

Beath

(Diocese of Dunkeld)

(Deanery of Fife and Strathearn)

Location:

Beath is situated on the south-west border of Fife.

Topography:

In modern times the parish has been at the centre of the west Fife mining industry, and this widespread mining and quarrying, alongside the birth and growth of industrial settlements, has changed the archaeological landscape of Beath greatly since the Middle Ages.

Place Names:

The name Lassodie (NO 1150 9254) contains the '*lios*' element, which may indicate an Early Christian foundation.¹

Other Churches:

It has been suggested that there was a chapel at Bothadlach,² but this identification would appear to have come about because of an apparent error in two *Retours* entries, in which it has become confused with Egilsmalye, the church of St Malinus,³ now in Kinghorn parish. This name contains the *both* element,⁴ but it does not seem to have been used in the ecclesiastical sense.

¹ See introduction section 3.3

² Henderson, E, *A Parish Alphabet*, 1990, 'Bothadlach'

³ *Retours* i Fife no. 629 (1642), no. 1029 (1668), cited in Taylor, S, *Settlement-names in Fife*, unpublished PhD, Edinburgh 1995, 137-8

⁴ See introduction section 3.3

Beath Parish Church

NMRS No NT 19 SE 3

Grid ref NT 1524 9212

2.2 c.100m from burn

4. chapel of Dalgety Church
parish church from at least 1430⁵

5. c.1179, *Chart. Inch.*, no.ii

Assessment: Possible. This site is recorded in the twelfth century and has a long continuous tradition of use, but there are no other positive indications that it is an early site.

⁵ *Chart. Inch.* xlix

Burntisland

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fothrif)

Location:

Burntisland is situated on the south coast of Fife.

Ecclesiastical History:

The parish has also been known as Kinghorn Wester,¹ but there has been some debate as to whether Burntisland was the '*magna Kingorn*' or the '*parua Kingorn*'² rededicated by Bishop David de Bernham of St Andrews in the May of 1243.³ '*Parua Kingorn*', (which is usually assumed to be Burntisland because Kinghorn is the larger of the two parishes and has kept the name), has been associated with St Serf,⁴ but there is no other evidence to tie this saint's cult to Burntisland. It is difficult to know if the dedication was linked originally with '*parua Kingorn*' and thus applied to Burntisland, or *vice versa*, but the dedication to St Serf may be more fitting to Kinghorn parish, as it is closer to Dysart, a centre of the Serf cult, and is the parish containing Inchkeith, which features in the Serf legend.⁵

Long Cist Burials:

A cemetery of long cist burials was uncovered at Kingswood c.1948 (NT 28 NE 16) (NT 2503 8644), and was assessed as probably dating from the Pictish era. The burials, of which there were said to

¹ Blyth, J, *Burntisland: Early History and People*, 1948, 11

² 'Greater Kinghorn' and 'Lesser Kinghorn'

³ Young, A, *History of Burntisland*, Kirkcaldy 1824, 111-114

⁴ Wordsworth, *PESA*, xv.

⁵ MacGibbon and Ross (The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Scotland: from the earliest Christian times to the seventeenth century, Edinburgh 1896-7) also link '*parua Kingorn*' with St Adomnan, who St Serf is traditionally supposed to have met on Inchkeith, and this may provide further evidence that Burntisland was in fact '*magna Kingorn*'. Kinghorn parish church was dedicated to All Saints by 1290 (*Calendar of entries in the Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland: Papal Letters*, ed. W.H. Bliss *et al.*, 1893-, cited in Taylor, S, *Settlement-names in Fife*, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh 1995, 226), but this is unlikely by its nature to be an early dedication, and would not mean that there was not a previous dedication to St Serf.

have been at least four or five, have since been destroyed.⁶ Another apparent long cist cemetery was found on the Lammerlaws in the early nineteenth century,⁷ (NT 28 NW 74) (c.NT 238 857) but its age and nature is less certain.

Modern Churches:

The old parish church was situated inland, but as the pattern of settlement shifted towards the harbour (due to the fishing trade⁸ and the royal port chartered by James V) that site fell out of favour. The current parish church (NT 28 NW 25) (NT 2335 8570) was built in 1592 on a site more convenient to the population, but of no apparent ecclesiastical tradition.⁹

⁶ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=52737>, 29th May 2002; Stevenson, RBK, 'Long cist burials, particularly those at Galston (Lewis) and Gairloch (Wester Ross), with a symbol stone at Gairloch', *PSAS*, 1951-2, 111

⁷ Young, *History of Burntisland*, 1924, 17

⁸ Blyth, *Burntisland*, 1948, 23

⁹ *RCAHMS*, 1933, 38. This church is dedicated to St Columba, but there is no tradition for this dedication within the parish.

Burrtisland Parish Church

NMRS No NT 28 NW 5

Grid ref NT 2303 8637

1. ?St Serf

- 2.1 at base of hill
- 2.2 c.1km from Forth
- 2.5 c.1km from harbour on major waterway

4. parish church until 1592

5. 1160x62, *Dunf. Reg.* no.93

Assessment: Possible. The location of this church near the Forth and its existence in the twelfth century may indicate that this is an early foundation, and if the dedication to St Serf is genuine and early, it would be further evidence of this.

Cameron

(Diocese of St Andrews)

*(Deanery of Fife)*¹

Location:

Cameron lies to the south west of the parish of St Andrews and St Leonards, and is also bounded by the parishes of Ceres, Kilconquhar, Carnbee and Dunino.

Parish History:

Although there is no evidence for a Christian Pictish site in the parish, there is evidence for late Iron Age or early Pictish occupation, in the form of a broch on Drumcarrow Craig (NO 41 SE 4) (NO 4593 1321). Lowland brochs in general are uncommon, and this is the only known example in Fife. The traditional view of lowland brochs is that they were built in response to the Roman threat, but Macinnes has instead suggested that they should be viewed in the context of a local, native threat, and that finds of Roman pottery at sites other than Drumcarrow, may in fact indicate a "peaceful" and "mutually beneficial relationship" with the Romans.² If this were the case at Drumcarrow, it would shed some light on the relationship within a region whose response to the Romans is otherwise undocumented and uncertain.

Ecclesiastical History:

Originally part of the parish of St Andrews and St Leonards, Cameron became a parish in its own right in 1646.³ There are no records of any churches within the parish before the first parish church was built in 1645-6.

¹ As part of mediaeval parish of St Andrews and St Leonards

² Macinnes, L, 'Brochs and the Roman occupation of lowland Scotland', *PSAS*, 114, 1984, 244

³ *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, ed. H Scott, Edinburgh, 1925, 9, 186

Modern Churches:

The current parish church, built in 1808, stands on the site of the seventeenth-century building (NO 41 SE 13) (NO 4845 1163).

Hillfort:

There is a hillfort on the summit of Denork Craig (NO 41 SE 5) (NO 4561 1370). The date is uncertain, but it is assumed to have its origins in the Iron Age.⁴

⁴ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inurlink=33011>, 29th May 2002

Carnbee

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

Carnbee is an inland parish in south east Fife.

Parish Name:

The parish was known as Kellie until the thirteenth century, and this name was still occasionally used until the fifteenth century.¹ It is unclear as to why the name changed as there is no indication that the parish church changed during the Middle Ages or that there were significant boundary changes.

Other Churches:

The current parish church site is the only identified possible early church site within the parish, but there may have been a church further west at Kellie, the site of which is now lost.

Hillforts:

It has been suggested that there was a hillfort within the parish on Carnbee Law (NO 50 NW 12) (NO 522 067) (the second highest peak in the parish, the highest being the neighbouring Kellie Law), but RCAHMS has concluded that the fort-like features are probably natural.²

Long Cist Burials:

Possible long cists were found c.1850 at Gillings Hill (NO 50 NW 6) (c.NO 5110 0621), but their number, age and nature are unknown, and they are outwith any obvious Christian context.³

¹ Cowan, IB, *The Parishes of Medieval Scotland*, Edinburgh 1967, 28

² CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=34033>, 29th May 2002

³ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=34056>, 29th May 2002

Carnbee Parish Church

NMRS No NO 50 NW 8

Grid ref NO 5317 0654

2.2 on burn

c.5km from Forth

2.5 c.5km from major waterway

3.4 rectilinear enclosure⁴

4. parish church until present

rebuilt in 1793

5. 1157x1160, *RRS*, i no.157 (as possession of Dunfermline Abbey)

Assessment: Possible. The long tradition of use and existence of the church in the twelfth century are the only indications that this might be an early foundation.

⁴ Plan of graveyard - NMRS No. DC 42703, S Farrell 1999

Carnock

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fothrif)

Location:

Carnock is an inland parish in the west of Fife.

Parish Name:

It has been suggested that the parish name commemorates St Caranoc, a disciple and successor of St Ninian as Bishop of Whithorn.¹ The link between the saint's name and the place name is perhaps strengthened by the fact that the parish's fair-day (13th May) is only three days away from St Caranoc's feast day (16th May),² but this is far from conclusive. There is no evidence that the name of Caranoc was linked to the parish or the church during the Middle Ages,³ and if there was a Caranoc dedication in the parish, it is more likely to have come about as a result of a false etymology of the parish name than being the reason for it. It is more likely, however, that the name comes from *Gcearn* + a diminutive or locative ending, 'the little corner' or 'place at the corner', referring to the sharp bend in the Carnock Burn which forms part of the church enclosure.⁴

Modern Churches:

The two current parish churches, at Cairneyhill (NT 08 NE 307) (NT 0510 8637) and Carnock (built 1840) (NT 08 NW 17) (NT 0426 8903), are both modern foundations, and the sites have no apparent ecclesiastical history.

¹ Webster, JM, *History of Carnock*, 1938, 2

² Webster, *Carnock*, 1938, 3; Forbes, *Kalendars*, 1872, 298

³ There is no record of the dedication of this church during the Middle Ages, which means the absence of a 'Caranoc' dedication cannot be considered conclusive either way.

⁴ Taylor, S, *Settlement-names in Fife*, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh 1995, 145

Carnock Old Parish Church

NMRS No NT 08 NW 1

Grid ref NT 0412 8912

1. St Caranoc ⁵

- 2.2 beside burn
c.3.5km from Forth

- 2.5 c. 3.5km from major waterway

- 3.4 situated in bend of burn

- 3.5 fragment of carved stone found in churchyard ⁶

4. parish church until 1840

5. given to Hospital of Scotlandwell by David, Bishop of St Andrews in 1250

Assessment: Possible. The presence of a carved stone fragment and the location of this church beside a burn may indicate that this is an Early Christian foundation. If genuine, the dedication would add strength to this argument, but it is most likely to be spurious.

⁵ See parish introduction – Parish Name

⁶ In 1921, a fragment of an early Christian cross-slab with a Garden of Eden design, was found in the ruins of the church, where it has been used as a skewstone (CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=49429>, 29th May 2002), and it seems likely that it came from around the church site originally.

Ceres

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

The parish of Ceres lies within north east Fife.

Parish Name:

It has been suggested that the name of the parish commemorates St Cyrus, to whom the church was traditionally supposed to have been dedicated,¹ but there is no evidence for this, and it is more likely to be a topographical name. The dedication, if it existed, may have been a result of the place name, rather than *vice versa*.

Parish History:

There was a Roman temporary camp of the Severan period at Edenwood (NO 31 SE 39) (NO 3570 1170), but because of the transitory nature of the camp it is unlikely that the Roman presence lasted long enough for its influence to have affected this particular area any more than the rest of Fife.

Wells:

There is a well dedicated to St Anne to the south of Ceres village.²

¹ Walker, GW, 'Ceres', *Church and Parish*, ed. GW Walker, 1925, 34

² Morris, R and F, *Scottish Healing Wells*, 1982, 99

Ceres Parish Church

NMRS No NO 31 SE 32

Grid ref NO 3994 1166

1. ?St Cyrus

- 2.1 on small hill
- 2.2 c.100m from Craighall Burn

- 3.5 a twelfth-century metal cross was discovered during excavation³

4. parish church until present

5. 1224x1255, *St And. Lib.*, 34

Assessment: Possible. The location of this church on a mound and near a burn may indicate that it is an Early Christian site, but there are no other obvious indications.

³ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=31514>, 29th May 2002

Collessie

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

The parish of Collessie is in north Fife.

Carved Stones:

At Newton of Collessie there is a large Class I Pictish stone (NO 21 SE 18) (NO 2927 1324), featuring a single figure of a warrior and incised arch and 'beast' symbols, a unique combination in known Pictish art.¹ From the style of the figure this stone appears to be quite early, possibly dating to the fifth century. There is a square barrow and circular enclosure to the immediate north east of this stone.²

Place Name:

The name Kilwhiss (a settlement at c.NO 279 107) is not derived from G 'cill' or church.³

Modern Churches:

The *quoad sacra* parish church of Ladybank (NO 31 SW 62) (NO 3020 1018) is a modern foundation, built in 1882,⁴ to serve the newly established population of the village.

¹ Lines, M, 'Collessie Stone, Halhill Farm', *D and E*, 1993, 30

² Foster, S, *Picts, Gaels and Scots*, 1997, 76

³ Simon Taylor, pers. comm.

⁴ Millar, AH, *Fife: Historical and Pictorial*, Edinburgh 1885, 240

Collessie Parish Church

NMRS No NO 21 SE 8

Grid ref NO 2862 1321

1. St Andrew – c.1262, *Chart. Lind.*, no.xci

- 2.2 beside burn
- 2.4 situated within valley
- 2.5 on major routeway running north towards the Tay

- 3.5 Class I stone at NO 2927 1324 (unclear if this is in original position)

4. parish church until present

5. *eccl. de Callesyn*, 1243, (Wordsworth, *PESA*, xvi)
c.1262, granted to Lindores Abbey, *Chart. Lind.*, no.xci

Assessment: Possible. The location of this church on a burn and on a major routeway may indicate that it is early, but there are no other obvious indications.

Chapel ⁵

NMRS No NO 21 SE 18

Grid ref NO 2826 1356

1. St Thomas – *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, 1925, VIII, 439
 - 2.1 on hillock
 - 2.2 c.100m from burn
 - 2.4 situated within valley
 - 2.5 on major routeway running north towards the Tay

Assessment: Possible. If this church was on a hillock it may be an indication it was an Early Christian site, and its location on a major routeway would strengthen the argument, but other factors such as the dedication suggest that it is a later mediaeval chapel.

⁵ There is a local tradition that there was a chapel situated on a little hillock to the north west of the village. It is uncertain, however, which hillock this was as the one suggested by DC Baird to RCAHMS in 1952 (NO 2826 1355) is now thought to be a bell cairn (NO 21 SE 11), leaving another hillock (at NO 2840 1360) as the most likely candidate (CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=30158>, 29th May 2002.) According to the OS Name Book in 1854, the site, which consisted of the ruins of a small oblong building, was cleared for agricultural use. No burials were recorded at or near the site. The date of the chapel is unknown but was generally assumed to be mediaeval, although it is very close to the parish church for a chapel of ease. The presence of the hillock may indicate an early site.

Crail

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

Crail is the most easterly parish in Fife.

Topography:

Although the parish stretches c.9km inland, settlement in Crail is predominantly along the coastal strip. Early Christian activity also seems to have been entirely confined to this area, but this picture may, to an extent, reflect recent development work and archaeological investigation rather than the actual situation.

Long Cist Burials:

Possible long cists were found at Castle Haven at the end of the eighteenth century (NO 60 NW 16) (NO 6110 0685).¹

¹ QSA, 9, 454

Crail Parish Church

NMRS No NO 60 NW 2.00

Grid ref NO 6134 0797

- 1 St Maelrubha – spurious ²
St Mary
- 2.2 c.400m from coast
- 2.5 c.800m from harbour on major waterway
- 3.6 3 cross slabs (Class III) ³
- 4 parish church until present
5. *eccl de Karal*, 1243, (Wordsworth, *PESA*, xv)

Assessment: Probable. The location of this church near the coast and the presence of cross slabs suggest that this was an early foundation.

² The traditional dedication to St Maelrubha, an early 'Celtic' saint, would appear to be the result of the parish church and the later mediaeval chapel at the castle being confused (Simon Taylor, pers. comm.). It appears in the later annotated version of the *Pontificale Ecclesiae Sanctae Andreae*, (Wordsworth, *PESA*, xv) but there is no evidence for this dedication at the parish church in the early or later Middle Ages. The presence of an early 'Celtic' saint in the dedication of the castle chapel could, however, be an echo of an earlier dedication or cult within the parish.

³ One built into the wall at the entrance of the church; one found at 8 Marketgait (now in Crail Museum); one found on a mound near the farm of Sauchope (mound now destroyed) at NO 617 082 (NO 60 NW 3), and now in Victoria Gardens (NO 6104 0788)

Kilminning⁴

NMRS No NO 60 NW 8

Grid Ref NO 6311 0865

- 1 St Monan⁵

- 2.2 coastal site

- 2.4 at cliff edge at promontory headland

- 3.1 remains of building, possibly a chapel, uncovered in 1967 (site now levelled)
- 3.2 extensive terraced long cist cemetery⁶
- 3.3 Kilminning (contains 'cill' element)

- 4 may also be pre-Christian burial ground, as long cists have not been dated
no apparent subsequent religious use

Assessment: Probable. The presence of a long cist cemetery and the place name almost certainly indicate that this was an Early Christian site, but its nature is uncertain.

⁴ There are no known documentary sources relating to this site as a church (The name occurs in a list in RMS, ii, no.1444, but not as the site of a church), but the name and archaeological record would indicate that this was very likely to have been an Early Christian site.

⁵ The 'Minning' element would appear to be derived from the name of St Monan. This is the only known dedication to that saint within Fife outside of the eponymous parish, which is a short distance along the coast. The name 'Kilminning' survived in the name of a farmstead, which is no longer in existence

⁶ The site, consisting of a terraced long cist cemetery and building, was excavated in the 1960s (CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=35358>, 29th May 2002).

Constantine's Cave ⁷

NMRS No NO 61 SW 6

Grid Ref NO 6327 1009

- 2.4 coastal cave

- 3.2 long cists found nearby in early 19 / 20th century - location unknown (possibly on Balcomie Golf Course), age and nature unclear

- 3.6 several incised crosses on cave wall, alongside 'Pictish' animals

- 4 signs of Iron Age inhabitation (dated from finds of Roman and Romano-British pottery)

Assessment: Probable. The nature and role of this site is uncertain but the presence of incised crosses alongside recognizable Pictish symbols almost certainly suggests that it was used in the Early Christian period.

⁷ Various local traditions have linked the cave's name to both Constantine, King of Scots (d 874), who was supposedly put to death there by the Danes), and Constantine, King of Alba (903 - 943).

Creich

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

The parish of Creich is situated in north east Fife.

Hillforts:

Two possible hillforts have been identified on Greencraig, several hundred metres from the old parish church site. The first, at NO 323 214 (NO 32 SW 15) is doubtful, but the second, at NO 3224 2154 (NO 32 SW 3) is positively identified and may be Pictish.¹

Other Churches:

Tradition suggests that one of the farm buildings at Parbroath was at one time a chapel, and during the nineteenth century some cist burials (undated) were uncovered there (NO 31 NW 9) (NO 321 177).²

The NSA suggests that this may be the *capella* which is recorded in *St And. Lib.* taxation list,³ that belonged to the church of Creich,⁴ but it is more likely that Parbroath was a mediaeval private chapel associated with the nearby Castle. If, as is likely, the chapel at Parbroath is not the *cappella* listed in the *St And. Lib.*, this chapel site is as yet unidentified within the parish or the surrounding area.

Carved Stones:

In 1816 and 1817, two groups of stones (c.500m apart) were discovered south of Greencraig, near the manse, both consisting of two concentric rings and a central pillar.⁵ Also within the first (NO 32 SW

¹ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=31806>, 29th May 2002; CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=31823>, 29th May 2002

² CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=31476>, 29th May 2002

³ *St And. Lib.*, 34

⁴ NSA, 9, 645

⁵ The second set (NO 32 SW 26) has been moved to the garden of the manse (NO 3192 2102).

23) (NO 31 20), were two sculptured stones, one of which is now in NMS, the other having been returned to the landowner. Between the two circles were two other sculptured stones, on which were inscribed "hieroglyphics".⁶ This may indicate that they were Pictish carved stones (probably Class I) but as the stones are now lost this cannot be confirmed. The recorded layout of the stones would suggest that the rings were earlier, although it would not be unusual for them to have been reused for some purpose during the Pictish period. These stones may have been related to the hillfort as part of a power centre / ritual landscape.

Modern Churches:

The current parish church, in Luthrie, was built on a new site in the nineteenth century (NO 31 NW 27.00) (NO 3280 1997).

⁶ RCAHMS (1933), 68

Creich Old Parish Church

NMRS No NO 32 SW 1.00

Grid ref NO 3268 2138

1. St Serf ⁷

- 2.2 c.1.5km from Tay
- 2.3 c.300m from Greencraig hillfort
- 2.5 c.1.5km from major waterway

4. parish church until nineteenth century

5. c.1250, *St And. Lib.*, 34

Assessment: Possible. The dedication may indicate that this is an early foundation, and it is near the coast, but there are no other obvious indications.

⁷ The dedication to St Devenic, which was recorded by the RCAHMS and has since appeared in local guidebooks and other works, would appear to be the result of this church and the parish church of Creich in Sutherland being confused.

This dedication is geographically quite separate from the other clusters of Serf dedications in south west Fife and Clackmannanshire, and it may reflect a later diffusion of the cult.

Culross

(Diocese of Dunblane)

Location:

Culross is situated on the coast in the south west of Fife. The parish, alongside that of Tulliallan, has only been part of Fife since the late-nineteenth century, having been before that a detached part of Perthshire. Culross is separated from the parish of Torryburn by the Bluther Burn, which until 1891 marked the division between Perth and Fife.¹

Ecclesiastical History:

The parish is closely associated with SS Serf (or Servanus) and Kentigern (or Mungo). St Serf is supposed to have lived for a time in Culross and to have had a school there, attended by Kentigern, whose pregnant mother had been washed up nearby in her boat.² As with many other places, much of what is 'known' about early Culross is legend. This is largely due to the fact that in this case the historian has been forced to rely largely on hagiography, rather than annals or chronicles, and while the contradictions this brings have been explained away as being the result of there having been two SS Serf, living and working 150 years apart, it is hard to identify a central 'truth' or any basic facts on which to hang an hypothesis.³

Macquarrie, through his study and textual analysis of the various early writings about St Serf, has concluded that there was a late-sixth / early-seventh century saint of that name, whose primary church was Culross (with a *parochia* based in and around west Fife) and whose foundation perhaps filled the void in the church left by the flight of Trumwine, bishop of Abercorn, in 685.⁴ If Serf did found a monastery at this time, it is likely that he was a Pict within a Pictish monastery, with "the more Pictish

¹ Cunningham, AS, *Romantic Culross, Torryburn, Carnock, Cairneyhill, Saline and Pitfirrane*, 1902, 25

² Jocelyn of Furness, *Vita Kentigernae, Two Celtic saints : The life of St Ninian, by Ailred; and The life of St Kentigern, by Joceline*, 1989

³ Cf Macquarrie, A, *The Saints of Scotland*, 1997, 145-59

⁴ *ibid.*, 156-7

character of this *parochia*,.. scarcely surprising, since it lay in what must have been politically a highly sensitive region which had no doubt borne the brunt of the Anglian occupation."⁵ This is further suggested by the lack of 'cill' names within the parish or surrounding area.

Wells:

The Monk's Well (NS 98 NE 3.03) (NS 9819 8677)⁶ supplied the abbey.⁷

⁵ Taylor, S, Settlement names in Fife, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh University 1995, 12

⁶ Morris, R and F, Scottish Healing Wells, 1982, 100

⁷ Beveridge, D, Culross and Tulliallan, 1885, II, 286

Culross Monastery (on site of Cistercian Abbey)

NMRS No n/a

Grid ref NS 9888 8624

1. St Serf

2.1 on steeply sloping site

2.2 c.500m from Forth

2.5 c.500m from major waterway

3.6 3 cross-slab fragments found on site, 8th/9th century (NS 98 NE 3.02) (NS 9889 8625) ⁸

Assessment: Probable. The direct evidence for Culross having been an early foundation is not extensive, but is fairly conclusive. The presence of several carved stones would seem to indicate that this was a monastic church, and the siting of the later Cistercian abbey (NS 98 NE 3.00) (NS 9888 8624)⁹ on a heavily sloping site, maybe suggests that it was following a direct tradition, rather than selecting a new site.¹⁰ That the abbey saw itself as the successor of an early foundation may also be demonstrated by its joint dedication to the Virgin Mary and St Serf.

⁸ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=48042>, 29th May 2002

⁹ Founded c.1217 by Malcolm, Earl of Fife

¹⁰ Macquarrie, *Saints*, 1997, 151

Chapel Bath

NMRS No n/a

Grid ref NS c.972 909

2.2 c.500m from Bluther Burn

3.3 Chapel Bath (containing 'both' element)¹¹

Assessment: Possible. The place name suggests that there was an early foundation here, but, partly because the precise site is not known, there are no other obvious indications.

¹¹ The farm of Bath was known in the nineteenth century as Chapel Bath, (Taylor, *Settlement names*, 1995, 441) indicating that there may have been an early foundation on this site. For discussion of place name element, see introduction *section 3.3*.

West Kirk

NMRS No NS 98 NE 2

Grid ref NS 9796 8648

2.2 c.700m from Forth

2.5 c.700m from major waterway

4. date of foundation unknown¹²
parish church until 1633

5. no record of church until 1633 when it was stripped of parochial status¹³

Assessment: Possible. As so little is known about the history of this church, it is difficult to assess the likelihood of it having been an early foundation, but as it appears to have been the mediaeval parish church it must be regarded as a potential site.

¹² Architecturally, it has been suggested that the extant building dates to the twelfth century, (Beveridge, Culross and Tulliallan, 1885, II, 264; Cunningham, Romantic Culross, 1902, 25) but even if this were the case, this would not necessarily represent the first phase.

¹³ Beveridge, Culross and Tulliallan, 1885, II, 284

St Mungo's Chapel

NMRS No NS 98 NE 11

Grid ref NS 9921 8606

1. St Mungo (Kentigern)

- 2.2 c.300m from Forth
- 2.5 near major waterway

- 3.1 chapel

4. tradition (recorded in Aberdeen Breviary) of early chapel on site ¹⁴
current chapel founded 1503 by Robert Blackadder, Bishop of Glasgow

5. Aberdeen Breviary (late-15th/early-16th century)

Assessment: Possible. As the first reference to this chapel is almost contemporary with the building of Blackadder's chapel, the tradition that there was an earlier building is likely to be correct. It is impossible to say, however, whether this is an Early Christian foundation or a later chapel commemorating St Kentigern's birth, coming out of the same *milieu* as the 12th-century Lives of that saint.

¹⁴ "*In quo loco insignis capella in ejus honore usque in hodiernum diem dedicata est*" – Aber. Brev., 13th January. The chapel is supposed to mark the spot where Theneý landed in her boat and gave birth to St Kentigern.

Cults

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fothrif)

Location:

The parish of Cults is in central Fife.

Carved Stones:

A Class I carved stone was found at a farm on Walton Hill (NO 30 NE 1) (c.NO 363 096) but its authenticity is now doubted.¹

Hillforts:

There is a possible hill fort in Lady Mary's Wood ² (NO 31 SE 27) (NO 3563 1031), but the site has now largely been destroyed,³ preventing any further examination.

¹ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=31171>, 29th May 2002

² Porter, WH, 'Cults', *Church and Parish*, ed. GW Walker, 1925, 65

³ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=31508>, 29th May 2002

Cults Old Parish Church

NMRS No NO 30 NW 6

Grid ref NO c.30 09 (?NO 3469 0989) ⁴

- 2.2 c.500m from burn
c.1km from River Eden
- 2.5 c.1km from major inland waterway
- 4. parish church until 1793
- 5. *ecclesia de Cuilte*, 1243, (Wordsworth, *PESA*, xvi)

Assessment: Possible. There are few indications that this might have been an Early Christian foundation, apart from its location in a river valley and its status as parish church by the mid-thirteenth century.

⁴ It is uncertain if this church was on the site of the current parish church, built in 1793, (NO 30 NW 33.00) (NO 3469 0989). This church is not, however, situated in the main village of the parish, Pitlessie, but instead lies away from the majority of the population in Kirkton, suggesting that it was built on an older site.

Cupar

(Diocese of St Andrews)

*(Deanery of Fife)*¹

Location:

The parish of Cupar is in north east Fife.

Parish History:

During the Middle Ages, the burgh of Cupar was the seat of the sheriffdom of Fife, and was also an important centre of trade and industry. Sited on the crossing of the main roads between St Andrews, Falkland, Dundee and Edinburgh, Cupar was the main market town of Fife until modern times.

Ecclesiastical History:

The parish was formed when the mediaeval parishes of Cupar and Tarvit were joined in 1618.²

Burials:

According to the OSA, "there were lately found in the vicinity of the Castlehill, several stone coffins containing human skeletons.. [which].. were adorned with figures of warriors rudely sculptured, and covered with unknown characters"³ (NO 31 SE 3) (NO 376 146). From the description, these could have been Pictish burials, with sarcophagus-type coffins, such as that found at St Andrews,⁴ but unfortunately nothing more is known of them, and the coffins are now lost.

¹ Both the mediaeval parishes of Tarvit and Cupar, which make up modern Cupar, were within this deanery.

² NSA, 9, 1

³ OSA, 17, 158

⁴ See St Andrews parish

St Christopher's Church⁵

NMRS No NO 31 NE 2

Grid ref NO 3666 1527

1. St Christopher⁶
 - 2.1 site stands on 'marked earthwork'⁷
 - 2.2 c.300m from Lady Burn
 - c.2km from River Eden
 - 2.5 c.2km from major inland waterway
 - 3.4 possible oval enclosure around site⁸
4. parish church until 1415⁹
 - burial ground¹⁰
5. 1154x78, *St. And Lib.* 59

⁵ The church, was situated approximately one kilometre north west of the burgh, near where Kinloss House now stands. Its location outside the probable early centre of settlement (around the crossroads of Crossgate and Bonnygate) could be an indication that this was a site of some antiquity.

⁶ This is the only known dedication to St Christopher in Fife.

There appears to have been an associated dedication to the Virgin Mary, as evidenced by the Lady Burn, which runs past the site.

⁷ Hall, DW, and King, M, 'The former site of St Christopher's Parish Church, Cupar', *TAFAL* 5, 1999, 76

⁸ A possible oval enclosure was detected during a geophysical survey of the site, and a trench across one section uncovered a ditch approximately 0.8m in depth (*ibid.*, 81, illus. 5, 86).

⁹ The church is first recorded as a parish church in 1154x78, but it does not appear in Bishop David de Bernham's list of rededicated parish churches. This may suggest it was perhaps secondary in importance to Tarvit Parish Church, which was rededicated in 1245. In 1415, it was replaced by a new church within the centre of the burgh. This church, in Kirk Wynd (NO 31 SE 15) (NO 3732 1434), is not thought to have been erected on an old site, but instead on one more convenient to the population.

¹⁰ In 1912 a number of burials were uncovered during the erection of an agricultural pavilion (CANMORE). The site was excavated in the 1990s and a sample of the bones uncovered then were dated to c1000AD – c1400AD (Hall and King, 'St Christopher's', 85).

Assessment: Possible. The enclosure and earthwork, if genuine, may indicate that this is an early site, as would its position more than a kilometre away from the probable centre of settlement. It was also a parish church by 1154x78, possibly indicating a long ecclesiastical presence, corroborated by the presence of burials from at least c.1000. There is as yet no burial evidence to corroborate an earlier date, however, and the dedication is very unlikely to be Early Christian.

Tarvit Parish Church

NMRS No NO 31 SE 16

Grid ref NO 3796 1456

1. St Michael

- 2.1 ? situated on small hill ¹¹
- 2.2 beside River Eden
- 2.5 on major inland waterway

4. parish church until 1618 ¹²

5. *ecclesia de Tharvet*, 1245, rededicated by Bishop de Bernham, (Wordsworth, *PESA*, xviii)

Assessment: Possible. As this church was in existence by the thirteenth century and may have been situated on a hillock, next to a river, it has potential to be an early site. Too little is known, however, for certain about this church, its site and the associated burials for a definite conclusion to be made.

¹¹ This church "stood on an eminence a little to the south-east of the town", (Millar, AH, *Fife, Pictorial and Historical*, 1895, 128) perhaps suggesting an Early Christian origin, but the site has been subject to a great deal of disturbance since the church was taken out of use in 1618, and was at least partly destroyed during the building of the railway, making assessment of the site, and its 'eminence', impossible. Large quantities of bones were uncovered during the building of the railway (CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=31496>, 29th May 2002), but there is nothing to suggest that these were not the burials associated with the mediaeval church.

¹² Taken out of use when the parish of Tarvit was amalgamated with that of Cupar.

Kilmaron

NMRS No n/a

Grid ref NO c. 362 166¹³

1. St Ronan¹⁴
 - 2.1 on hillside
 - 2.2 c.500m from Lady Burn
c.2km from River Eden
 - 2.5 c.2km from major inland waterway
- 3.1 chapel
- 3.3 Kilmaron (contains 'cill' element)¹⁵

Assessment: Probable. The presence of the 'cill' element almost certainly suggests that there was an Early Christian church in the vicinity, but it is very unclear where exactly it stood. As much of the Kilmaron estate and surrounding lands have remained in agricultural use, the site may remain at least partially undisturbed, and future excavation could shed light on it.

¹³ The exact position of the chapel is unclear, although the ruins of a small, mediaeval chapel "situated near the eastern boundary of the lands of Kilmaron" (c.NO 362 166), were recorded by the minister of Cupar in the QSA, c.1790, as being present "not many years ago",¹³ and this may mark the site of the earlier foundation.

¹⁴ The saint commemorated in the name is Ronan, and this is the only known site in Fife that bears this dedication. It is uncertain exactly who this saint is, as 12 saints by this name are listed in the Irish Calendars.

¹⁵ As with other sites bearing the 'cill' prefix, it is likely that this church dates to c.700AD, and it is thought it may have been founded from the church at Kilrymont (St Andrews) (Taylor, S, 'Place-Names and the Early Church in Eastern Scotland', *Scotland in Dark Age Britain*, ed B. Crawford, 1996, 98).

Dairsie

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

The parish of Dairsie is in north east Fife.

Modern Churches:

The current parish church (NO 413 174) stands within the village of Dairsie, and is a modern foundation.

Dairsie Old Parish Church ¹

NMRS No NO 41 NW 11

Grid ref NO 4140 1609

1. ? St Mary ²
- 2.2 on River Eden
- 2.5 on inland waterway
- 3.4 rectilinear enclosure ³
4. parish church until nineteenth century
5. 1160x62, *St And. Lib.*, 55

Assessment: Possible. As this church is recorded by the twelfth century and is situated near a river, it is potentially an early site, although the dedication is unlikely to be early. The long period of use, from at least the twelfth century to the nineteenth (including the major rebuilding project undertaken by Archbishop Spottiswoode) is likely to have destroyed or obscured any early archaeology, and no obvious indications of an Early Christian origin are present.

¹ The current church on the site was built in 1609 by Archbishop Spottiswoode of St Andrews, but it is likely that the previous church also stood here.

² Spottiswoode's church was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, but it is unclear if this dedication was attached to the earlier church, (it occurs in Wordsworth's annotated version of the list of Bishop de Bernham's rededicated churches, but this is not a reliable source for dedications (Wordsworth, *PESA*, xvi)). No other dedication is linked with the site.

³ Plan of graveyard - NMRS No. DC 42702, S Farrell 1999. This enclosure, which looks modern, may date to the time of Spottiswoode's church, and have obliterated any earlier enclosure.

Dalgety

(Diocese of Dunkeld)

(Deanery of Fife and Strathearn)

Location:

Dalgety is situated on the south coast of Fife.

Long Cist Burials:

Several long cists were uncovered in 1949 on Aberdour Golf Course (NT 18 SE 6) (NT 1877 8453),¹ but the presence of a short cist alongside them, may suggest that these burials were pre-Christian.

Other Churches:

The chapel of St Thereot's, Fordell (NT 18 NW 5.00) (NT 1464 8534)² almost certainly originates as a later mediaeval private chapel. The identification of the saint is uncertain, but the *Fasti* suggests that it was actually St Ferreolus, the Martyr of Vienna (d. c.670).³ Neither Thereot or Ferreolus appear to be commemorated elsewhere in Scotland, and so are most probably the result of a later mediaeval personal cult rather than an indication of an early foundation. The lands of Fordell were granted to Inchcolm c 1220, and were afterwards known as "St Thereota's lands" probably because of the masses to be said for the donor, Richard de Camera, at the altar of that saint in the priory.⁴ St Thereot's well is nearby (NO 18 NW 5.01) (NO 1467 8533).

¹ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=50894>, 29th May 2002

² Earliest reference is in 1510, *Reg. Magni Sig. Reg. Scot.*, 1424-1513, no.3570

³ *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, ed. H. Scott, 1925, V, 21

⁴ Millar, AH, *Fife: Pictorial and Historical*, II, 1895, 183

Modern Churches:

The current parish church was built in 1830 within the modern settlement of Dalgety⁵, on a new site (NT 18 SE 15) (NT 1669 8454).

⁵ The old church, St Bridget's, was situated on the shore of Dalgety Bay. The old village of Dalgety, which was situated by this church, has entirely disappeared. (Millar, *Fife*, II, 1895, 175)

St Bridget's Kirk, Dalgety

NMRS No NT 18 SE 2.00

Grid Ref NT 1695 8378

1. St Bridget⁶
- 2.2 on shore of Dalgety Bay
- 2.5 on major waterway
4. parish church until 1830
5. 1165x78, *Chrs. Inch.*, no.2

Assessment: Possible. As this church is situated on the coast and recorded in the twelfth century it is potentially an Early Christian site. Although a Bridget dedication is frequently an indication of an early site it is unlikely to be one in this case, and there are no other positive indicating factors currently known.

⁶ This dedication probably results from the fact that the lands of Dalgety were held, from before the fifteenth century, by the Abernethie family (later Lords Saltoun) (Millar, *Fife*, II, 1895, 177) and Abernethy, where the family originated, had been a major centre of the Bridget cult. However, there is no indication that there was any ecclesiastical link between the church of Abernethy and Dalgety.

Chapel, Chapel Farm ⁷

NMRS No NT 18 NE 6

Grid Ref NT 168 859

1. ? St Martin

- 2.2 c.3km from Firth of Forth

- 2.5 c.3km from major waterway

Assessment: Possible. If this is the chapel of St Martin referred to as 'Eglismarten' in the Inchcolm Charters, then it is almost certainly an Early Christian foundation. This identification, however, is far from certain, and the position of the chapel within the farm is also unknown, making a site evaluation difficult. Aerial photography or excavation might shed some light on this site, particularly as it is on agricultural land.

⁷ The only indication that there was a chapel here comes from the name of the farm. There is traditionally supposed to be a chapel dedicated to St Martin at Bouprie (*Fasti Ecclesiae Scotticae*, ed. H. Scott, 1925, V, 404), presumably referring to the now unlocated 'Eglismarten', which is recorded in the Inchcolm Charters (*Inch. Chrs.* 32). The recorded later form of 'Eglismarten' is Inchmartin (Barrow, G, 'The Childhood of Scottish Christianity: a Note on Some Place-Name Evidence', *Scottish Studies*, 27, 1983, 13), and Inch Marton Plantation, where a single long cist was found c.1824 (NT 188 859) (NT 18 NE 9), (CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=50846>, 20th June 2002) stands on the border between Aberdour and Dalgety, about 2km from this site. The chapel referred to in the farm's name may be St Martin's, or another as yet unidentified one

Dunbog

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

The parish of Dunbog is in northern Fife.

Parish History:

The estate of Dunbog formed part of the Barony of Ballanbreich, and belonged to the family of Abernethy before the fourteenth century.¹ The land-holdings of this family were closely related to the landholdings of the Culdee church of Abernethy, and the chapel of Dunbog was one of those placed under the spiritual supervision of Arbroath Abbey, alongside other possessions of Abernethy.²

Hillforts:

On the northern extremity of the parish was the hillfort of Norman's Law, also known as Dunmore (NO 32 SW 22) (NO 3053 2019).³ The early phases of the hillfort date to the Iron Age, but a defensive enclosure surrounded by a thick stone wall and huts inside and outside the fortifications may date to the early Pictish period.⁴

Modern Churches:

The most recent parish church (now in residential use) (NO 21 NE 44) (NO 2878 1796) was built in 1803.

¹ Millar, AH, *Fife: Pictorial and Historical*, II, 1895, 337

² *Arb. Lib.*, 1

³ Dunmore was in a detached portion of Abdie parish until 1891

⁴ CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=31814>, 20th June 2002

Dunbog Old Parish Church ⁵

NMRS No n/a

Grid ref NO 2878 1796

- 2.2 beside burn
- 2.3 approx. 2km from Glenduckie hill fort
- 2.4 situated in valley

- 3.4 rectilinear enclosure ⁶

- 4. parish church from c.1200 until Reformation?

- 5. c.1173, *Arb. Lib.*, no.1

Assessment: Possible. As this chapel was amongst the possessions of Abenrethy listed in the twelfth century it may be an early foundation connected to that church. The only positive topographical indication, however, would appear to be its position beside a burn.

⁵ This church was granted, as a chapel of Abernethy, to Arbroath c.1173 (*Arb. Lib.*, no.1), and was granted parochial status by 1200 (*Arb. Lib.*, 147). It has been suggested by the OS Name Book that this was the site of the Preceptory of Gadvan, a cell of Balmerino Abbey, and that that church became the parish church at the Reformation (CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=30024>, 20th June 2002), but this is unlikely. The church was presumably at the centre of the graveyard where there are two burial vaults and a hollow depression.

⁶ Plan of graveyard - NMRS No. DC 42700, S Farrell 1999

Balmeadie Chapel ⁷

NMRS No NO 21 NE 22

Grid ref NO 2998 1838

- 2.1 at base of Norman's Law
 - 2.2 c.200m from burn
 - 2.3 c.2km from Norman's Law hillfort and possible Pictish settlement ⁸
5. recorded in papal bull of 1198, *Chart. Lind.* no.xciv

Assessment: Unlikely. Despite its proximity to the probable Pictish settlement on Norman's Law, this church is unlikely to have been early as it falls within the territory of Abernethy, but is not included amongst the list of its holdings in *Arb. Lib.* 1, being linked instead to Lindores Abbey.

⁷ The Balmeadie chapel on the Ayton estate was, until 1891, part of Abdie parish. The chapel (or chapels) of Dundemor is recorded in *Chart. Lind.*, and is currently unlocated, but Laing suggests that 'Dundemore' refers to this chapel which is situated near Norman's Law, the 'Dun More' or large hill (Laing, A, *Lindores Abbey and its burgh of Newburgh*, 1876, 433). During the Middle Ages, this part of Dunbog was a detached portion of the parish of Abdie or Lindores, making Laing's identification even more likely. If, however, there was more than one chapel, as is suggested in the papal bull, other 'chapels of Dundemor' may be located within the modern parish of Abdie.

⁸ See above

Dunfermline

(Diocese of St Andrews)

*(Deanery of Fothrif)*¹

(Diocese of Dunkeld)

*(Deanery of Fife and Strathearn)*²

Location:

Dunfermline is a coastal parish on the south west of Fife.

Ecclesiastical History:

The parish, which is the largest in Fife, is made up of the mediaeval parishes of Dunfermline and Rosyth. Both parishes have been subject to widespread settlement, drastically changing the landscape visible in the Early Historic period or Middle Ages.

Little is known of the ecclesiastical history of Dunfermline before the arrival of Queen Margaret in 1069, and her subsequent reforms have overshadowed any earlier activity. There appears to have been a Culdee church in Dunfermline (presumably the church where Margaret married Malcolm Canmore in 1070) but both the age of the foundation and the location of the site is very uncertain.³ Perhaps the most likely site for this church would have been on the land where the Abbey subsequently stood, but the building foundations uncovered underneath the nave (NT 08 NE 1.00) (NT 0898 8731) in 1916, are more likely to have come from Margaret's first church than an early foundation.⁴ There is a cluster of 'pit' names in the south of the parish, which may indicate an important early foundation,⁵ but, if it was, the lack of sculptured stones is unusual.

¹ Dunfermline parish (mediaeval)

² Rosyth parish (mediaeval)

³ Henderson, E, *The Annals of Dunfermline*, ed. R and A Moncrieff, 1999, <http://www.tulbol.demon.co.uk/dunfermline/annals1.htm>, 20th June 2002

⁴ Fawcett, R, *The Abbey and Palace of Dunfermline*, Historic Scotland, 1990, 4

Despite being the largest parish in Fife, there are only two possible early church sites in the area, and they are both in the south, leaving a significant gap in the distribution map. This may be the result of the later church under Margaret obliterating any traces of the earlier one, or a 'vacuum' caused by the presence of other particularly powerful churches in the vicinity, either at Dunfermline or, possibly, Loch Leven.

Place Names:

There are a significant number of '*pit*' names within the parish which may be connected to the landholdings of the Pictish / Culdee church.⁶ Two of these, Pitbauchlie and Pitliver, display a direct link with the church.⁷ The first contains *G bachall*, 'crozier', occurs elsewhere, and possibly refers to church land in general, land held by a bishop, or land held in respect of a pastoral staff.⁸ The second name, Pitliver, contains the G for 'book', referring to the Gospel. It is unlikely that names with these elements would have been coined during the time of Margaret, and therefore they point towards an earlier foundation of some wealth or importance in Dunfermline.

Other Churches:

Apart from the Culdee church, there are six other church sites within the parish, although five of these are most likely to be later mediaeval, rather than Early Christian, foundations.

(1) **St Ninian's Chapel** (NT 08 NE 15) (NT 0904 8751) (also known as St Ringaine's). Despite the dedication, it is unlikely that there was anything at this site before the chapel founded and erected in the late fifteenth century by John Cristison, the Vicar of Cleish.⁹

(2) **St Mary's Chapel** (NT 08 NE 29) (NT 0912 8688). Recorded in the fourteenth century.¹⁰

(3) **St Michael's Chapel at Bellshill**, (NT 08 NE 35) (NT 08 83). In existence before 1611.¹¹

(4) **St Catherine's Chapel** (NT 08 NE 8) (NT 0892 8736). First recorded in 1327.¹²

⁵ Similar clusters occur around Abernethy and St Andrews. Taylor suggest that these may in fact be related to the church at Loch Leven (Taylor, S, 'Some Early Scottish Place-Names and Queen Margaret', *Scottish Language* 13, 1994, 5)

⁶ A similar situation can be seen in Abernethy parish in Perthshire.

⁷ Taylor, 'Place-Names and Queen Margaret', 1994, 5

⁸ Watson, *CPNS*, 141

⁹ CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=49336>, 20th June 2002

¹⁰ *RMS*, I, no.944, 948

(5) **St Leonard's Chapel** (NT 08 NE 28) (NT 0976 8666). Founded c.1272.¹³ The dedication of this site suggests that this was the first foundation on this site. There was also a holy well here, dedicated to St Leonard.

Wells:

Including St Leonard's Well, there are three wells in the parish, the others being the Spa Well (NT 08 NE 5) (NT 0877 8727) and St Margaret's Well (NT 08 NE 32) (NT 0958 8852).¹⁴ As the cult of St Margaret was so important in this area, this well may have had a different earlier dedication, which was lost after the eleventh century.¹⁵

¹¹ CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=49358>, 20th June 2002

¹² Henderson, Dunfermline, <http://www.tulbol.demon.co.uk/dunfermline/annals1.htm>, 20th June 2002

¹³ Henderson, Dunfermline, <http://www.tulbol.demon.co.uk/dunfermline/annals1.htm>, 20th June 2002

¹⁴ CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=49515>, 20th June 2002

¹⁵ A change of dedication may also have happened at other sites and landmarks which currently commemorate Margaret, meaning that early dedications, and possible indications of locally supported cults, could have vanished.

Rosyth Old Parish Church

NMRS No NT 08 SE 5.00

Grid ref NT 0852 8284

1. St John the Apostle ¹⁶

- 2.2 beside Forth

- 2.5 beside harbour on major waterway

4. parish church until mid-seventeenth century

5. 1179, *Chart. Inch.*, no.2

Assessment: Possible. The location of this church beside the Forth and its presence in a twelfth century charter may suggest that this was an early site, but there are no other obvious indications.

¹⁶ *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, ed. H Scott, Edinburgh 1825, V, 42

Dunino

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

The parish of Dunino is in the east of Fife.

Dunino Den:

In Dunino Den, which runs alongside the church, a two metre high ring-headed cross is incised on a rock face (NO 51 SW 39) (NO 5403 1088).¹ There is some controversy over the age of this cross, as there are no references to it before the nineteenth century and it does not appear particularly weathered (except at the top).² The cross is of similar style to the free-standing crosses which occur on early sites such as Iona and so may date to this time, or to the Victorian 'Celtic' / antiquarian revivalist movement. As the Den has traditionally had strong pagan connections, the cross may have been carved at some point, either in the Early Christian period or in more recent times, to 'Christianize' the site.³ The siting of the church above the Den may also have been a result of this, or it may reflect a bringing together of the rituals of kingship and Christianity in the Early Historic period.

The practice of pre-Christian ritual within the Den may be demonstrated by a stone 'font' and another stone with a 'footprint'. Both are natural, but may have been altered and adapted for ritual use in the pre-Christian period.⁴ Similar 'footprints' can be seen across northern Europe in Iron Age and Early Historic sites,⁵ (including the Dalriadan power centre at Dunadd), where they are associated with inauguration ceremonies, and the site at Dunino may have been used in the same way.

¹ CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=34474>, 20th June 2002

² These may both be the result of the cross having been at least partly overgrown for some length of time

³ Batchelor, RA, *Origin of St Andrews*, 1997, 10

⁴ A natural feature resembling a symbolic shape would probably have been regarded as even more special than a manmade one.

⁵ Foster, S, *Picts, Gaels and Scots*, 1997, 38

If Dunino were an important pre-Christian ritual site, it would be not be unusual if it were adapted for use by early Christians, either as a deliberate move to overthrow the pagan past, or as a demonstration of continuity under the guidance of the local ruler, presumably when he accepted Christianity.

Other Churches:

It was suggested by the author of the NSA, and repeated in later accounts, that there was an ancient nunnery on Dunino Law of which the ruins were uncovered in 1815,⁶ but this is completely spurious, and is based on a misinterpretation of the name.⁷

⁶ NSA, 9, 366

⁷ Simon Taylor, pers. comm.

Dunino Parish Church

NMRS No NO 51 SW 8.00

Grid ref NO 5410 1093

- 2.2 beside Dunino Den, a gorge with a burn
- 2.3 Dunino Den may have been a royal site
- 3.4 rectilinear enclosure ⁸
- 3.6 two cross slab fragments ⁹
incised 'Celtic' cross in Den (NO 5403 1088) ¹⁰
- 3.7 beside possible pagan, ritual site
- 4. parish church until present
- 5. c.1250, *St And. Lib.*, 34

Assessment: Probable. The presence of cross slabs and the siting of this church beside Dunino Den, suggests that there was a long tradition of use at this site and a strong possibility that there was an Early Christian foundation here. Dunino Den is a particularly interesting site because of the possibility that this was a pre-Christian ritual site, with possible royal connections, and the incised cross beside the burn (if of genuine antiquity) may indicate a formal Christianization at an early date. It is difficult to know if archaeological investigation would shed much light on this, as

⁸ Plan of graveyard - NMRS No. DC 42699, S Farrell 1999

⁹ A fragment of Class III stone was found during the digging of a grave in the churchyard (NO 51 SW 8.01) (NO 5408 1090), and it is thought that more may remain buried. (Allen, JR and Anderson, J, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, Edinburgh 1903, part III, 365). There is also a cross slab in the churchyard which has no other contemporary decoration, and was adapted for a sundial in 1698 (according to the date added to it) (*ibid.*, part III, 374).

¹⁰ See parish introduction.

it is unclear what features should be looked for and where, but one possible indication of early ritual use might be a number of datable small finds deposited in the water.

Elie

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife) ¹

Location:

The parish of Elie is on the south coast of Fife and is bounded by Newburn, Kilconquhar and St Monance.

Ecclesiastical History:

Elie was originally part of Kilconquhar parish, becoming a parish in its own right in 1639.² The name may derive from *G eilean*, meaning 'island', possibly referring to the peninsula at Elie Ness.³

To the west of the town of Elie lies the burgh of Earlsferry. Despite the fact that the burgh is now almost a continuation of Elie, Earlsferry was originally part of the parish of Newburn.⁴

Other Churches:

The first parish church of Elie (NO 40 SE 27.00) (NO 4915 0010) was built c.1641,⁵ and was probably the first church here. A chapel is listed alongside Kilconquhar church in the *St And. Lib* taxation list c.1224x1255,⁶ but this is more likely to be St Monans.

The hospital at Earlsferry (NT 49 NE 3) (NT 4809 9939), which would appear to be the earliest religious foundation in that burgh, was founded by David, Earl of Fife, around 1150.⁷

¹ As part of Kilconquhar parish

² Millar, AH, *Fife: Pictorial and Historical*, II, 1895, 3

³ *ibid.*, 4

⁴ *ibid.*, 10

⁵ NSA, 9, 291

⁶ *St And. Lib.*, 33

⁷ Millar, *Fife*, II, 1895, 10

Long Cist Burials:

Early Christian activity in the parish may be represented by two sets of possible long cist burials. The first group, at Ardross, was first uncovered in 1760 when a small number of burials were found, arranged in a 'horseshoe' shape in a subterranean 'cave' (possibly a souterrain) (NO 50 SW 14) (NO 507 007). Other burials have subsequently been exposed in the neighbouring cliff edge,⁸ with one of the most recent being a child's burial in a long cist (NO 50 SW 56) (NO 507 006).⁹ Another group was found near Earlsferry House in 1857 (NT 49 NE 2) (NT 4810 9971 to 4805 9956).¹⁰ The age and nature of both these sets of burials is uncertain, however, and they cannot categorically be assigned to the Pictish/Early Christian period.

⁸ CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=34200>, 20th June 2002

⁹ Errington, E, Errington, J, and Proudfoot, E, 'Ardross (Elie p), cist, human remains', *D and E*, 1983, 8

¹⁰ CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=55097>, 20th June 2002

Falkland

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fothrif)

Location:

Falkland is on the western edge of Fife.

Parish Name:

The mediaeval parish was known as Kilgour, suggesting the presence of an early (c.700AD) church. Watson suggests that the second element of the name refers to St Gabran, who, according to the Martyrology of Donegal, was a bishop of the Britons in the late sixth or early seventh century.¹ There do not appear to be any particular local traditions involving either an early church here or this saint, but there is no reason to suggest that this is not an original 'cill' name. Taylor has suggested that the second element records a now obsolete name for the burn, which flows between the church and churchyard.²

Hillforts:

There are four possible hillforts in the parish. The first three, at Purin (NO 20 NE 26) (NO 266 058), Nether Drums (NO 20 NE 97) (NO 2742 0628), and 'Maiden Castle' (NO 20 NW 7) (NO 2220 0688), would appear to be either unfinished or to date to the Iron Age.³

The fourth hillfort, however, may have been a Pictish site of some note. Although this fort, on East Lomond (NO 20 NW 20.00) (NO 2440 0620), appears to have been built in the early Iron Age, finds made at the site indicate it was in use for some time after this. Most interestingly, amongst the finds, was a Class I stone with a bull carving (NO 20 NW 23) (NO 2440 0620) (now in the NMS), similar to those found at the Pictish power centre at Burghead.

¹ Watson, *CPNS*, 323

² Taylor, *Settlement names in Fife*, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh University 1995, 224

³ CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=55097>, 20th June 2002

Long Cist Burials:

Three possible long cists were discovered before 1854 near East Lomond hillfort (NO 20 NW 21) (NO 2411 0547), but their age and nature is uncertain. Others have been uncovered at Kilgour farm (NO 22 08),⁴ and although nothing is known of their age, number or nature, their location at this particular farm, near the presumed early church site, may indicate a link between the burials and the place name.

Carved Stones:

Two Class I stones were found at Westfield Farm Steading (NO 20 NW 13.00) (NO 2384 0732), and are currently on display at Falkland Palace. There is nothing to link these stones directly with the East Lomond hillfort, but they may be of a similar date and be related to the same cultural sphere.

At Balharvie Moss, on West Lomond, there is a boulder with an incised cross and fish on it (NO 20 NW 79) (NO 2137 0696).⁵ The cross is equal armed with a lightly cut circle, and probably dates to the Early Christian period.

Modern Churches:

The old parish church was taken out of use during the seventeenth century, when a church was built within the burgh of Falkland (NO 20 NE 152) (NO 252 074), presumably to be nearer the majority of the population.⁶ It is unlikely that there was a church within Falkland before this date.

There is a second parish church in the parish, at Freuchie (NO 20 NE 221) (NO 2836 0671).

Although there was a chapel here before Freuchie was created a *quoad sacra* parish in 1880,⁷ there is no suggestion that the church is on the site of an early foundation.

⁴ Russell, JK, 'Falkland', *Church and Parish*, ed GW Walker, 1925, 98

⁵ Yeoman, P, 'Balharvie Moss', *D and E*, 1992, 32

⁶ The parish name change can also presumably be dated to this time.

⁷ Mitchell, GW, 'Freuchie', *Church and Parish*, ed GW Walker, 1925, 108

Kilgour Old Parish Church

NMRS No NO 20 NW 10

Grid ref NO 2226 0795

1. ? Gabran⁸
 - 2.1 in valley
 - 2.2 beside burn
 - 2.3 c.3km from East Lomond hillfort
- 3.2 long cists on Kilgour Farm (NO 22 80)
- 3.3 Kilgour (contains 'cill' name)
4. parish church until seventeenth century
5. *ecclesia de Kilgoueryn*, 1243, Wordsworth, *PESA*, 1885, xvi

Assessment: Probable. Because of the presence of the 'cill' element it is extremely likely that there was an Early Christian foundation in this area, and it is most likely that it was on the site of this church, as it is sited beside a burn (whose name may be recorded in the parish name). It is unclear whether this church would have been connected in any way to the hillfort, as the 'cill' name may point to an origin of c.700, and the presence of the 'bull' carving may point to an earlier date for the fort's use or pre-Christian inhabitants.

⁸ See parish introduction -- Parish Name

St Mary's Chapel, Chapelyards ⁹

NMRS No NO 20 NE 12

Grid ref NO 2581 0687

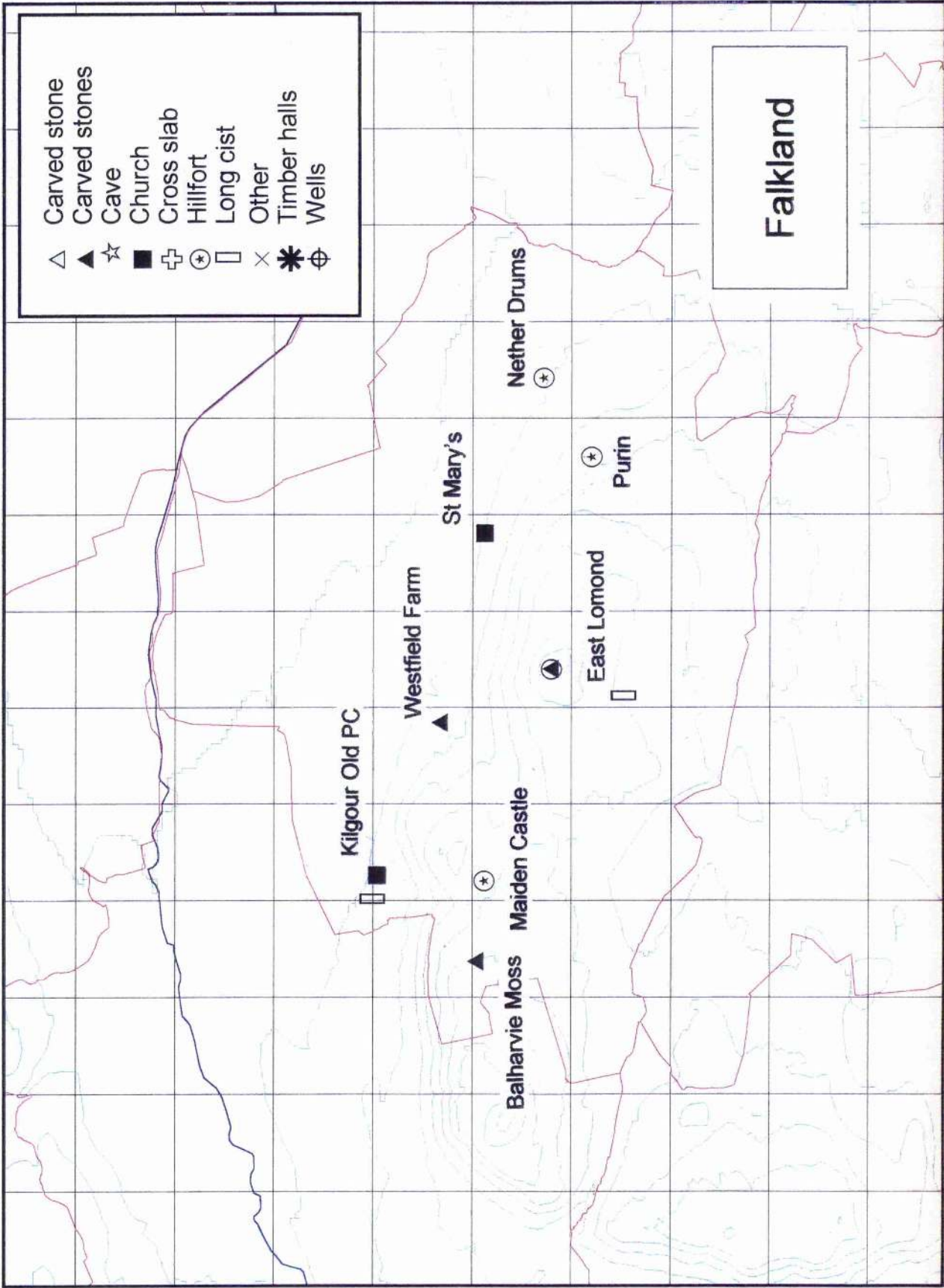
1. St Mary
 - 2.1 on slope of East Lomond
 - 2.2 beside burn
 - 2.3 c.2km from East Lomond hillfort

- 3.1 chapel
- 3.3 Chapelyard (probably modern, but reflects tradition)
- 3.5 associated well, Lady's Well (NO 20 NE 13) (NO 2574 0678)
St John's Well (NO 20 NE 16) (NO 2586 0673) ¹⁰

Assessment: **Unlikely.** Despite its location next to a burn and the presence of holy wells, it is most likely that this is a later mediaeval chapel, rather than one with Early Christian links.

⁹ This chapel is claimed by the NSA to have been a Templar property, but this, and the date of its foundation, is uncertain.

¹⁰ Morris, R and F, *Scottish Healing Wells*, 1982, 101-2



Ferry-Port-on-Craig

(Diocese of St Andrews)

*(Deanery of Fife)*¹

Location:

Ferry-Port-on-Craig is the most northerly parish in Fife.

Ecclesiastical History:

Originally part of Leuchars parish, Ferry-Port-on-Craig became a parish in its own right in the seventeenth century.²

Ecclesiastical History:

Little is known of the early history of the parish, or its church. The current parish church was built in 1825 in Tayport (NO 42 NE 106) (NO 4586 2858)³, but the location and origin of its predecessor is unknown. The parish church currently carries no dedication, but the charter making Ferry-Port-on-Craig a burgh of barony in 1598-9, states that the common fairs would be on "the day of St Fillan and the day of St Lawrence".⁴

¹ As part of Leuchars parish

² Millar, AH, *Fife: Pictorial and Historical*, II, 1895, 274

³ NSA, 9, 86

⁴ Millar, *Fife*, 273-4

Scotsraig⁵

NMRS No NO 42 NE 68

Grid ref NO 4543 2784

2.2 between two burns

c.2km from the Tay

2.5 c.2km from major waterway

c.2km from Tay crossing point

3.1 chapel

4. chapel in twelfth / thirteenth century⁶

Assessment: Possible. The location of this chapel between two burns and near the coast may indicate that it was an early foundation, but there are no other obvious indications.

⁵ A resistivity survey was carried out in 1991 to examine the area for evidence of multi-period use, and produced features and finds, which may be connected with the chapel (Wickham-Jones, CR and Coles, G, 'Scotsraig Burn', *D and E*, 1992, 33). Nothing was found which immediately identified the site as having been occupied in Pictish times, but subsequent dating may indicate this.

⁶ *ibid.*, 1992, 33

Flisk

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

Flisk is a long, predominantly coastal parish in the north of Fife.

Hillforts:

There is a hillfort on Glenduckie Hill (NO 21 NE 5) (NO 2813 1931), where fortifications and huts have been located. Glenduckie, unlike many of the surrounding sites, has been positively identified as having been in use during both the Iron Age and Pictish period,¹ but it does not appear to have been a high status site like Clatchard Craig.²

St Muggin's Seat:

St Magridin, to whom the Old Parish Church is dedicated, is also commemorated within the parish at St Muggin's Seat, a group of stones on Fliskmill Hill (NO 32 SW 34)(NO 302 207). The date of the tradition is uncertain, but the corruption of the name would suggest that Magridin has been linked with this site since at least the Middle Ages. The nature of the site is also uncertain; there may have been a spring or well here which has subsequently moved or dried up, or it may have been a (?prehistoric) group of stones 'reclaimed' for a later purpose.

Other Churches:

The place name Chapel Hill (NO 28 20), to the east of Ballinbreich Castle, may indicate that there was an Early Christian or later mediaeval foundation here.³

¹ CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=30060>, 20th June 2002

² See Abdie parish

³ NSA, 9, 601

Flisk Old Parish Church

NMRS No NO 32 SW 7

Grid ref NO 3138 2248

1. St Magridin or St Adrian
 - 2.1 on sloping site
 - 2.2 c.500m from Tay
 - 2.3 c.1km from Greencraig hillfort (Creich parish – NO 3224 2154)
 - 2.5 c.500m from major waterway
- 3.4 partially curvilinear enclosure ⁴
4. parish church until 1790 ⁵
5. c.1173, *Arb. Lib.*, 1

Assessment: Possible. This may have been an early Christian foundation under the control of the church at Abernethy, as it is included with that church's belongings in the transfer to Arbroath Abbey c.1173. It is uncertain if the dedication to St Magridin is an indication of an early site.

⁴ Northern edge is curvilinear. Plan of graveyard - NMRS No. DC 42713, S Farrell 1999

⁵ The current parish church (NO 32 SW 47) was built on the site in 1790, when the old church was demolished.

Chapel of Glenduckie ⁶

NMRS No NO 22 SE 10

Grid ref NO 272 205

- 2.1 on slope
- 2.2 c.200m from Tay
- 2.3 c.1.5km from Glenduckie hillfort
- 2.5 c.200m from major waterway

- 3.1 chapel
- 3.3 Chapel Hill

Assessment: **Unlikely.** It is most likely that this chapel was not an early foundation, and considering its position within the parish (and also in relation to the parish church), Millar's suggestion that it was probably a chapel of ease, built to serve the population in the more heavily settled western quarter of the parish,⁷ seems likely.

⁶ This chapel is recorded in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries (CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=30464>, 20th June 2002), but may be on the site of an earlier foundation.

⁷ Millar, AH, *Fife: Pictorial and Historical*, II, 1895, 325

Chapel, East Flisk Woods⁸

NMRS No NO 32 SW 4

Grid ref NO 3313 2263

- 2.1 on sloping site
 - 2.2 c.1km from Tay
 - 2.3 c.1.5km from Greencraig hillfort
 - 2.5 c.1km from major waterway
-
- 3.1 chapel⁹
 - 3.4 circular enclosure¹⁰

Assessment: Possible. The circular enclosure and position on the side of a hill may be an indication that this is an early site, and if this is the *capella* listed in the *St Andrews Liber.*, then that would strengthen the argument, but this identification is unlikely, and little is otherwise known about this site.

⁸ The NSA (9, 601) states that this may be the *capella* mentioned alongside Flisk church in the *St And. Lib.* taxation list (*St And. Lib.*, 34), but that entry is more likely to refer to Cultra chapel in Balmerino parish.

⁹ The ruins of a ?medieval building stand at this site.

¹⁰ CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=31835>, 20th June 2002. The date of the enclosure is uncertain.

Forgan

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

Forgan is on the north coast of Fife

Parish Name:

The parish has also been known as both Naughton, after the main estate of the parish, and St Fillans, after the dedication of the parish church,¹ although it is not certain at what date the latter name came into use.²

Hillforts:

There is a primarily Iron Age hillfort within the parish at Links Wood, (NO 42 NW 11) (NO 4132 2508)

Other Churches:

A chapel of St Thomas of Seamylnes near Newport (NO 42 NW 7) (NO 418 277), was built by the Lairds of Naughton,³

Place Names:

The settlement name St Fort has no ecclesiastical connection, but comes from Sandforde.⁴

Long Cist Burials:

Possible long cist burials have been found at Wormit (NO 32 NE 5) (NO 3995 2523),⁵ Castle Hill (NO 42 SW 18) (NO 403 247)⁶ and St Fort (NO 42 NW 16) (NO 418 258) in the eighteenth and

¹ Millar, AH, *Fife: Pictorial and Historical*, II, 1895, 279

² NSA, 9, 506

³ Millar, *Fife*, II, 1895, 285

⁴ Sandforde, 1364, *RMS* i no.186. The name first appears as Sanctfuirt in 1615, *RMS* vii no.1297

⁵ Campbell, J, *Balmerino and its Abbey*, 1899, 13

nineteenth centuries, but their age, number and nature is unknown. One of the St Fort cists was reputed to have had an illegible inscription on one of the stones,⁷ possibly suggesting an Early Christian date.

Modern Churches:

The old parish church remained in use until 1841, when a new church was built nearer the centre of the parish (NO 42 NW 70) (NO 4324 2610).⁸

There is also a *quoad sacra* parish church at Newport-on-Tay (NO 42 NW 102) (NO 4212 2793), built in 1870 on a new site.

⁶ Campbell, *Balmerino*, 1899, 13

⁷ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=33119>, 29th May 2002

⁸ Millar, *Fife*, II, 1895, 281.

Forgan Old Parish Church

NMRS No NO 42 NW 18.00

Grid ref NO 4457 2595

1. St Fillan⁹
- 2.2 on burn
c.3km from Tay
- 2.5 c.3km from major waterway
4. parish church until 1841¹⁰
5. c.1150, *St And. Lib.*, 57

Assessment: Possible. The arguments for this being an early site are that it is situated on a burn and listed by the twelfth century. The dedication to St Fillan, however, is unlikely to indicate this is an early foundation.

⁹ The dedication of the church to St Fillan is not recorded until the sixteenth century, (Taylor, S, 'The Cult of St Fillan in Scotland', *The North Sea World in the Middle Ages*, ed. TR Liszka and LEM Walker, Dublin 2001, 204) and therefore does not necessarily indicate an early foundation, as it might elsewhere (see introduction). There is no well associated with this church, as is often the case with mediaeval churches with this dedication.

¹⁰ The church does not occur on Bishop David de Bernham's list of rededicated churches, but in a charter of 1188x1202 it is listed with a secondary chapel.

Inverkeithing

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fothrif)

Location:

Inverkeithing is on the south coast of Fife.

Carved Stones:

The Duloch Cross Slab (a Class III stone) once stood beside a road in the north of the parish (NT 18 NW 11) (NT 1391 8572), but was removed and broken up in 1835. The original position of the stone is unknown. It is thought to have stood over two metres tall, with horsemen and animals on the reverse.¹

Wells:

There are five holy wells within the parish:

(1) St Erat's Well, in Heriot Street (NT18SW 6) (NT 131 829) ²;

(2) St John's Well near the junction of Chapel Place and Church Street (NT 18 SW 7) (NT 131 834);

(3) Our Lady's Well, in Weldean;

(4) St Mary's Well, Duloch (NT 18 NW 22) (c.NT 130 858);

(5) Priest's Well (NT 18 NW 23) (NT 141 868).³

¹ Allen, JR and Anderson, J, *The Early Christian monuments of Scotland*, Edinburgh 1903, part III, 367

² Local tradition records that St Erat, a follower of St Ninian, founded a church here in the fifth century (e.g. Overview of Inverkeithing - <http://www.geo.ed.ac.uk/scotgaz/towns/townfirst39.html>, 20th June 2002), but this saint is almost certainly spurious and the name a corruption of 'heriot'. First recorded in 1219, the well is referred to as St Erat's in a sasine of 1588 (CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inuinlink=50982>, 20th June 2002). It is also known as Eriot's or St Heriot's Well (CANMORE).

³ Morris, R and F, *Scottish Healing Wells*, 1982, 102-3

Inverkeithing Parish Church

NMRS No NT 18 SW 3.00

Grid ref NT 1305 8295

1. St Peter – 1428, *Chart. Inch.*, no xlviiii

- 2.2 c.300m from Forth
- 2.5 c.300m from major waterway and natural harbour

- 3.5 St Erat's Well (NO 131 829)
St John's Well (NO 131 834)

4. parish church until present

5. 1165x69, *Dunf. Reg.*, no.165

Assessment: Possible. This may be an early site as it has a long continuity of use, is first recorded in the twelfth century, is situated near the Firth of Forth and has two holy wells nearby. It is unlikely that any of the dedications attached to the church or the wells are early.

Inverkeithing Chapel⁴

NMRS No NT 18 SW 104

Grid ref NT c. 128 826

2.2 c.1km from Forth

2.5 c.1km from major waterway and natural harbour

3.1 chapel

5. 1152x59, *Dunf. Reg.*, no.92

Assessment: Possible. As this chapel was in existence before 1152x59, it may be an earlier foundation, but there is no other evidence for this.

⁴ This chapel was situated outside the burgh of Inverkeithing.

St James' Chapel, Ferryhills⁵

NMRS No NT 18 SW 22.00

Grid ref NT 1319 8046

1. St James

2.2 c.100m from Forth

2.4 headland site

2.5 on major waterway

3.1 chapel

5. granted to Dunfermline by William, Bishop of St Andrews, in 1323.

Assessment: **Unlikely.** This chapel is more likely to have been a medieval foundation than an Early Christian one, despite being situated on a headland.

⁵ Ferryhills was a detached part of Dunfermline parish, and was only united with Inverkeithing in 1855 (Millar, AH, *Fife: Pictorial and Historical*, 1885, II, 195).

Kemback

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

The parish of Kemback is in north east Fife.

Hillforts:

There are two possible hillforts within the parish, the first at Blebo Hole (NO 41 SW 11) (NO 4245 1324), which has been tentatively identified from crop marks,¹ and the second at Pitscottie (NO 41 SW 37) (NO 419 145).²

Other Churches:

In 1583, a larger parish church was built on land granted by Patrick Shevez, Laird of Kemback.³

The ruins can be seen in the graveyard (NO 41 NW 7.00) (NO 4172 1510).⁴

Modern Churches:

The present parish church was built in 1814, 200m from the post-Reformation church.

¹ CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=33018>, 20th June 2002

² CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=33046>, 20th June 2002

³ Milne, M, *A Short History of Kemback Parish*, 1996, published on internet (<http://www.atlanticnetworks.com/kemback.htm> - 20th June 2002)

⁴ *ibid.*

Kemback Parish Church ⁵

NMRS No n/a

Grid ref NO c. 417 157

2.2 c.300m from River Eden

c.300m from Ceres Burn

4. parish church until 1583

5. *ecclesia de Kenebach*, 1243, (Wordsworth, *PESA*, xvii)

Assessment: Possible. This may have been an Early Christian foundation as it was a parish church by 1243 and is situated in a river valley, but there is no other positive evidence.

⁵ This church stands in the grounds of what is now Kemback House, within a graveyard (Milne, M, *A Short History of Kemback Parish*, 1996, published on internet). In 1458, Bishop Kennedy gifted the church to the College of St Salvator's in St Andrews.

Kennoway

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

Kennoway is an inland parish in central Fife.

Parish Name:

Watson believes that the name commemorates St Cainnech,¹ who is linked to Kilrymont (St Andrews) in a note in the Martyrology of Oengus. If this is correct, it may indicate that there was an outlying chapel or cell of Kilrymont somewhere within the parish during the early mediaeval period.

Parish History:

Dalginch (NO 313 024) (formerly Markinch parish), was the judicial centre of Fife during the twelfth century, a role it may have held for some time before this.² Millar claims it as the Pictish capital of Fife,³ but the term 'capital' is anachronistic.

Modern Churches:

The present parish church (NO 30 SE 94) (NO 350 026) was erected in 1850 near the site of the old church and is dedicated to St Kenneth (Cainnech).

¹ Watson, *CPNS*, 277

² Taylor, S, *Settlement names in Fife*, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh University 1995, 281-2

³ Millar, AH, *Fife: Pictorial and Historical*, 1885, II, 64

Kennoway Old Parish Church

NMRS No NO 30 SE 5

Grid ref NO 3503 0233

- 2.2 beside burn
 c.4km from Forth

- 4. parish church until 1850

- 5. x1163, *St And. Lib.*, 60

Assessment: Possible. This may be an early site as it is first recorded in the twelfth century and it is situated beside a burn, but otherwise there are no positive indications. This may have been the site of a chapel or cell of St Cainnech, but the likelihood of this is difficult to assess from the available sources.

Chapel Brae, Whallyden ⁴

NMRS No NO 30 SE 6

Grid ref NO 3622 0482

2.2 c.4km from Forth

3.1 ?chapel

3.3 Chapel Brae

3.5 Brandy Well (NO 30 SE 9) (NO 3605 0453) ⁵

Assessment: Possible. There is no evidence, other than local tradition and the place name, that this is a church site of any date. The presence of a holy well nearby, presumably dedicated to St Brendan, may be an indication of an early site, as there are Early Christian wells dedicated to this saint in Ireland and one (also known as the Brandy or Brendi Well) in the parish of Abernethy (NO11NE 88) (c.NO 191 161).

⁴ This site is traditionally suggested to have been the site of St Cainnech's monastery. Foundations of a building, thought to be a mediaeval chapel, were removed from the site in 1814, but a recent geophysical survey and trial excavation (1995) have uncovered no evidence of a church site (CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=31367>, 20th June 2002).

⁵ Morris, R and F, Scottish Healing Wells, 1982, 103. The name Brandy is presumably a corruption of St Brendan.

Kettle

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fothrif)

Location:

The parish of Kettle is in central Fife.

Parish Name:

The old name of the parish was *Lathrisk*, but the name 'Kettle' appears to have been used from 1636, when the parish church was transferred to the village of Kettle, where more of the population was settled.¹ The name *Lathrisk* is derived from *G lios* + *G riasg* 'moor, fen, marsh'. In modern Gaelic '*lios*' means garden, but the original meaning was 'the space about a dwelling-house or houses enclosed by a bank or rampart'.² In Ireland, the name is used for both ecclesiastical and secular enclosures, but in this case it would seem most likely to refer to the timber hall complex (see below).

Hillforts:

There are two hillforts in the parish, Down Law fort, which is situated on the highest hill in the parish (NO 30 NW 21) (NO 3434 0715), and Bowden Hill fort, which had extensive views of the Strath of Eden (NO 30 NW 7) (NO 3323 0775). These are both thought to have been Iron Age, but they may have continued in use into the Pictish period.

Timber Hall Complex:

Aerial photography has recently shown up an unusually large complex of at least five apparent timber halls (NO 20 NE 35) (NO 271 085), situated about one hundred metres from the Old Parish Church.³ These buildings have been tentatively dated to the Pictish period,⁴ and have been

¹ NSA, 9, 102

² Taylor, S, *Settlement names in Fife*, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh University, 1995. It can also sometimes be used to mean the bank or rampart itself.

³ See introduction *section 3.2*

compared with high status Early Historic buildings, such as Yeavinger in Northumberland. The site's proximity to the church is interesting, and would appear to suggest a close relationship between the two, paralleled at the Yeavinger site.

Other Churches:

The chapel of Clatto (NO 30 NE 7) (NO 35 07) was founded c1250 by Duncan de Ramsay.⁵ This chapel may be the building marked on the OS map at Downfield NO 3424 0758 as a 'vault' (NO 30 SW 7).⁶

Modern Churches:

The site of the parish church built in 1636 (NO 30 NW 17) (NO 3108 0830) does not appear to have had any previous tradition of use. The current parish church was built on the same site in 1832.

⁴ Maxwell, GS, 'Settlement in Southern Pictland: A New Overview', The Picts: A New Look at Old Problems, ed. A Small, Dundee 1987, 34

⁵ St And. Lib., 336

⁶ Gordon, AG, 'Kettle', Church and Parish, ed. GW Walker, 1925, 114

Lathrisk Old Parish Church ⁷

NMRS No NO 20 NW 2

Grid ref NO 2727 0842

1. St John the Evangelist – 1243, *St And. Lib.*, 348 ⁸
St Atherniscus – 1243, *St And. Lib.*, 348 ⁹
- 2.2 c.500m from River Eden
- 2.3 c.100m from timber hall complex
4. parish church until 1636
5. (church of) *Losresc*, 1173x78, *St And. Lib.*, 254

Assessment: Probable. Although it is unlikely that the '*lios*' element in the parish name refers to an ecclesiastical enclosure, this is more than likely to be an early site. As this site is so close to the timber hall complex it is quite probably associated with it and may date to the seventh century at least.

⁷ The approximate site of this church was confirmed in 1994 by the discovery of mediaeval or post-mediaeval burials during a geophysical survey and evaluation trenching. The church building itself was not identified but the presence of demolition material, including internal plaster and tile, suggests that it was nearby (Fife SMR FF6552).

⁸ This joint dedication is one of the few that can be firmly attributed to Bishop David de Bernham's rededications.

⁹ St Atherniscus or Athernaïse is also now commemorated at Leuchars, but this may be the result of the early forms of the two parishes' names being confused (Simon Taylor, pers.comm.). This saint has been associated with Itharnaïsc, who is listed on 22nd December in the Martyrology of Oengus, but the name may instead be version of Ethernan, who is commemorated in several Fife parishes including neighbouring Scoonie.

Chapel Katel ¹⁰

NMRS No NO 30 NW 11

Grid ref NO 311 071

- 2.1 on sloped site
- 2.2 beside burn

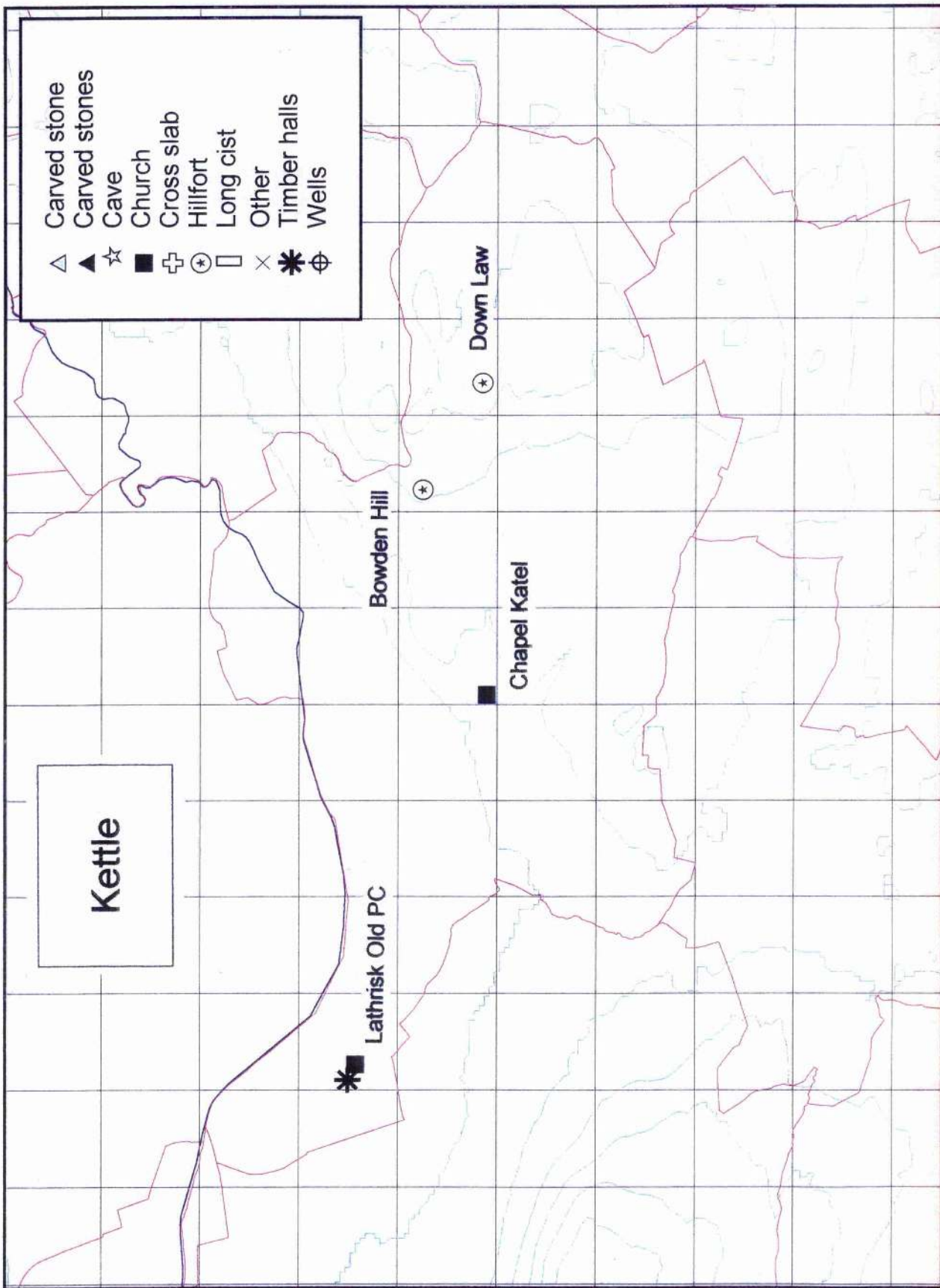
- 3.1 chapel

- 4. suppressed at Reformation

- 5. (chapel of) Catel, 1173x78, *St And. Lib.*, 81

Assessment: Possible. This chapel is potentially an Early Christian foundation as it is sited on a hillside, beside a burn and in a river valley and is recorded in the twelfth century.

¹⁰ This was a dependant chapel of the church of Lathrisk.



Kilconquhar

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

The parish of Kilconquhar is in east Fife.

Parish Name:

The derivation of the parish name has been a matter of some debate. The first suggestion is that it comes from *G cill + ceann + iuchair*, the 'church at the head of the lake', of which the elements are very close to the modern local pronunciation of the parish name as 'Kineuchar'.¹ The second, is that it is derived from *G cill +* the specific of St Conchobar,² a saint who does not occur in any of the Irish Calendars, but who is possibly the saint of *Cell Conchubair*, mentioned in the Book of Fermoy.³ Alternatively, Taylor suggests that 'Kilconquhar' contains the name Duncan, probably Dunchad, the abbot of Iona during the early-eighth century Roman reforms.⁴ This saint is also commemorated at Kilduncan in Kingsbarns parish.⁵

Other Churches:

There was a chapel at Rires (NO 40 SE 7) (NO 4671 1453), which was founded in 1390x1406 and dedicated to St Mary, but there is no suggestion that there was any previous history of ecclesiastical use at the site.⁶

Long Cist Burials:

A number of long cists were uncovered in 1870 at Balcarres (NO 40 SE 10) (NO 4806 0354), but

¹ NSA, 9, 315

² Millar, AH, *Fife: Pictorial and Historical*, II, 1985, 13

³ Watson, CPNS, 314

⁴ Taylor, S, 'Place-names and the Early Church in Eastern Scotland', *Scotland in Dark Age Britain*, ed B Crawford, 1996, 100

⁵ See Kingsbarns parish

⁶ CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=32618>, 20th June 2002

their age and nature is uncertain.⁷

Hillforts:

There is a possible hillfort on Dunnicher Law (NO 40 NW 40) (NO 449 082), which is of uncertain date.⁸

Modern Churches:

The present parish church (NO 40 SE 187.00) (NO 4853 0203) was built in 1820-1, close to the site of the older church.

There are two *quoad sacra* parish churches in the parish. The first, at Largoward, was built in 1835 (NO 40 NE 24) (NO 4694 0772), and the second is at Colinsburgh (NO 40 SE 139) (NO 4758 0342). Both were built to service the residents of their part of the parish and have no apparent previous ecclesiastical history.

⁷ CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=32540>, 20th June 2002

⁸ CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=134364>, 20th June 2002

Kilconquhar Old Parish Church⁹

NMRS No NO 40 SE 11

Grid ref NO 4856 0203

- 2.2 beside Kilconquhar Loch
c.2km from Forth
- 2.5 c.2km from major waterway
- 3.3 Kilconquhar (with 'cill' element)
- 4. parish church until 1820
- 5. 1202, *Nor. Ber. Cart.*, no. 6

Assessment: Probable. The 'cill' element in this parish name would suggest that there was an Early Christian foundation in the vicinity, most likely on the site of this church. The church is also sited beside a loch and recorded in the thirteenth century.

⁹ The old parish church is presumably on or near the site of the original Kilconquhar, or 'cill' church. In 1820 when the current church was being built, foundations were found fifteen feet below ground level, suggesting that there had been a long continuity of use at the site (Millar, *Fife*, II, 1985, 22).

Kilmany

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

Kilmany is situated in north east Fife.

Parish Name:

The name of the parish contains the 'cill' element, and the specific has been suggested as commemorating St Eithne, (nine of whom are listed in the Martyrology of Donegal) ¹ or the Irish saints Maine, Manna or Mannan.² There are, however, no traditions for any of the above saints being associated with the parish or Fife.

Pictish Settlement:

One of the few positively identified Pictish settlement sites lies within the parish at Easter Kinnear. The site, which includes ring-ditches, signs of timber buildings and enclosures (NO 42 SW 26) (NO 4072 2353), was excavated in the 1980s after having been identified from crop marks. Finds, such as a mica schist rotary quern and a whetstone, alongside an absence of pottery, suggested a date of the mid-first millennium AD; radiocarbon later confirmed a (calibrated) date of around the late sixth or early seventh century.³

¹ Redford, M, *Commemorations of Saints of the Celtic Church in Scotland*, unpublished MLitt. Thesis, Edinburgh University, 1988, 300 and Watson, *CPNS*, 284. This dedication is linguistically unlikely, however, as the medial 'th' would not have disappeared by the twelfth century, but does not occur in twelfth century forms of the name – Taylor, S, *Settlement names in Fife*, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh University 1995, 11.

² Simon Taylor, pers. comm.

³ See Driscoll, S, 'Easter Kinnear, settlement', *D and E*, 1989, 17-8, and Driscoll, S, 'A Pictish settlement in north-east Fife: the Scottish Field School of Archaeology at Easter Kinnear', *TAFAC*, 3, 1997, 74-118

Kilmany Parish Church

NMRS No NO 32 SE 66.00

Grid ref NO 3882 2178

- 2.2 c.100m from burn
- 2.3 Pictish settlement site at Wester Kinnear (NO 4072 2353)

- 3.3 Kilmany (containing 'cill' element)

- 4. parish church until present ⁴

- 5. recorded 1202 (Cowan, Medieval Parishes, 1967, 104)

Assessment: Probable. The 'cill' element in the parish name would suggest that there was an Early Christian foundation in the vicinity, most probably on the site of this church. There is no other evidence, however, to suggest that this was an early site.

⁴ The current church was built on the site in 1768.

Kilrenny

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

Kilrenny is on the east coast of Fife.

Ecclesiastical History:

The parish included Anstruther Easter until c.1646.

Parish Name:

The name of the parish suggests that there was an early foundation here, as it contains the 'cill' element, indicative of a church c.700. The specific of the name, however, has been subject to some debate. Watson suggests that it derives from G *raithneach*, bracken,¹ but it seems much more likely that it contains the name of a saint. The parish church tower has long been known as St Irnie's by the fishermen who used it as locating landmark,² and suggestions for the identity of this saint have included St Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons,³ and St Ninian, in its corrupted form of Ringan. Much more likely is the name of a locally culted saint, Ethernan, in a corrupted or hypocoristic form.⁴ Ethernan is connected with the nearby sites of the Isle of May and Scoonie.

Carved Stones:

Approximately 300m from the church, on the top of a low hill, stands the Skeith Stone, an Early Christian cross-slab (NO 50 SE 17) (NO 5708 0464). The stone has been moved and realigned during the twentieth century,⁵ but it does not appear to have been removed far from what was probably its original site. The cross is of an unusual design for Fife, with eight 'petals' within a

¹ Watson, *CPNS*, 519

² *OSA*, 1, 409

³ *ibid.*, 409

⁴ Taylor, S, 'Place-names and the Early Church in Eastern Scotland', *Scotland in Dark Age Britain*, ed. B Crawford, 1996, 99. One of the earliest form is Kilretheni (c.1250, *St And. Lib.*, 33), which does not make this unlikely

⁵ CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=34068>, 20th June 2002

circle, and a small chi-rho attached to one 'petal'.⁶ Similar designs are known in Ireland and on the west coast of Britain, and are thought, because of the chi-rho, other elements on the stones, and their contexts, to come from the earliest phases of Christianity, in the fifth century. It is unlikely that the Skeith Stone is this early, but instead is an indication of the spread of influence of the western church into Pictland in the seventh century.⁷ Because of its position, it is likely that the Skeith Stone was a boundary marker for the early church of Kilrenny.

Two fragments of an Early Christian cross-slab have been found in recent years in a dyke on Cornceres Farm (NO 50 NE 37) (NO 5795 0530). The slab, of which only the cross face survives, is decorated with an interlaced, encircled cross, and features the figure of a beast possibly attacking a man.⁸ The stone is thought to date to the eighth or ninth century.⁹

Hillforts:

A possible hillfort has been identified, from aerial photography and cropmarks, at Barns Mill, (NO 50 NE 11) (NO 5999 0592).¹⁰

Modern Churches:

The parish church in Cellardyke (NO 50 SE 227) (NO 573 037) is a modern foundation, built in 1882 on a new site.¹¹

⁶ Trench-Jellicoe, R, 'The Skeith Stone, Upper Kilrenny, Fife, in its context', *PSAS*, 128, 1998, 497-9

⁷ *ibid.*, 504

⁸ Proudfoot, E, 'Kilrenny: carved stone fragment', *D and E*, 1993, 31; Yeoman, P, 'Cornceres Farm, sculpted stone', *D and E*, 1998, 42

⁹ Trench-Jellicoe, 'Skeith Stone', 1998, 510

¹⁰ CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=34007>, 20th June 2002

¹¹ Gifford, J, *Fife*, 1988, 67

Kilrenny Parish Church

NMRS No NO 50 SE 3.00

Grid ref NO 5750 0485

1. St Ethernan

- 2.2 beside burn
c.1km from Firth of Forth

- 2.5 c.1km from major waterway

- 3.3 Kilrenny (contains 'cill' element) ¹²

- 3.4 bounded on west by curved road
bounded on east by burn
surrounded by curvilinear earthworks identified from aerial photographs ¹³

- 3.5 well in churchyard, known as St Irnie's Well (NO 50 SE 18) (NO 5760 0484) ¹⁴

- 3.6 Skeith Stone approx 300m away, presumably marking church boundary (NO 50 SE 17)
cross-slab fragments found out of context approx. 500m away (NO 50 NE 37)

4. thought to be monastic site from seventh century
parish church until present ¹⁵

¹² If an early seventh century date (see note 13) is accepted, this places the monastery almost a century before Taylor believes the 'cill' name was formed (Taylor, 'Place-names', 1996, 100). This may either suggest that the name was earlier, or, more likely, that it was a development of an earlier name and was coined in this form to refer to an already functioning foundation.

¹³ The churchyard is defined on the west by a curving roadway, which stops at the bridged burn that runs along the east side of the church. Aerial photographs, taken in 1967, have also shown curvilinear earthworks surrounding the church site, forming what Trench-Jellicoe has concluded was an early monastic precinct, in tripartite form (Trench-Jellicoe, 'Skeith Stone', 1998, 507). This layout, which can also be seen at Hoddom in Dumfriesshire, has been dated to the early seventh century, and considering the proposed dating of the Skeith Stone, this date does not seem unreasonable (Trench-Jellicoe, 'Skeith Stone', 1998, 508).

¹⁴ Morris, R and F, Scottish Healing Wells, 1982, 104

¹⁵ The old church was taken down in 1806 and the new church built on the same site in 1808 (CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=34136>, 20th June 2002).

5. granted to Dryburgh Abbey before 1177¹⁶

Assessment: Probable. This was almost certainly an Early Christian (possibly seventh century) monastery, located beside a burn, near the coast, with probable curvilinear enclosure, marker stone, and holy well. The fragments of cross-slab are presumably related to this site. The reference to Ethernan in the parish name suggests a link to the monastery on the Isle of May.

¹⁶ *Lib. Dry.*, 6 and 8

Chapel Cave, Caiplic ¹⁷

NMRS No NO 50 NE 6.00

Grid ref NO 599 058

- 2.2 beside Forth
- 2.4 cave
- 2.5 beside major waterway

- 3.1 ?chapel
- 3.2 human remains found at mouth of nearby cave ¹⁸
- 3.5 Hermit's Well (NO 50 NE 6.01) (NO 5994 0581)
- 3.6 cave walls incised with crosses and Pictish symbols ¹⁹
carved stone found (NO 50 NE 21) (NO 592 053) ²⁰

- 5. Wyntoun, *Origynale Cronykil of Scotland*, 1426

Assessment: Probable. This site is likely to have been used in Early Christian times, although some of the crosses may have been left by pilgrims in later medieval times. The cave may have

¹⁷ Chapel Cave is the largest of several caves at Caiplic, and has been artificially enlarged at some date. Two of the other caves have at least partially collapsed so other features may be lost or hidden (Le Bon, E, and Darrington, G, *Archaeological Survey of the Caiplic Caves Sites, Kilrenny, East Fife*, unpublished report, University of St Andrews, 1998).

Traditionally the Caiplic Caves have been associated with St Adrian and his fellow missionaries, who according to Wyntoun, "To gydder come to Caplawchy" (Wyntoun, *Origynale Cronykil of Scotland*, book vi, Ch viii). Even though this is probably historical license on behalf of the chronicler, the presence of the crosses indicates that the Chapel Cave was most likely an Early Christian chapel or hermitage (Wace, AJB and Jehu, 'Cave Excavations in East Fife', *PSAS*, 49, 1915, 242-4), and it may have had direct links with the churchmen of the nearby Isle of May, and therefore with the saint Ethernan / Adrian.

¹⁸ The remains of five uncoffined burials were uncovered in 1841, four of which were orientated E-W (Le Bon and Darrington, *Caiplic*, 1998, 10). They may be part of a larger group of burials (*ibid.*, 17). Although it seems likely from the description that the majority of the burials were Early Christian or mediaeval, one at least may have been more modern (*ibid.*, 11).

¹⁹ There are numerous small crosses of both Greek and Latin types, alongside several Pictish symbols. There are also six examples of outline crosses which are not seen elsewhere in Fife (*ibid.*, 19). It has been suggested that rather than these being Early Christian they were in fact carved by later pilgrims (*ibid.*, 22).

²⁰ This carved stone of uncertain date was found in the 1990s (CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=34025>, 20th June 2002).

served as a retreat, a hermitage or as a chapel. The burials may be related to an Early Christian phase of use.

Kinghorn

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fothrif)

Location:

Kinghorn is on the south coast of Fife.

Parish Name:

The parish was originally known as Kinghorn Easter and either '*parua Kingorn*' or '*magna Kingorn*'.¹

Other Churches:

There was a chapel of St Leonard near the parish church (NT 28 NE 7) (NO 2702 8716), whose tower was converted into the town house and jail around the time of the Reformation, and demolished in the mid-nineteenth century.

Place Names:

Within the east of the parish is the former estate of 'the Abthane in Kinghorn'² now called Abden. This name clearly derives from '*appain*', meaning 'abbey lands'. Linguistically, it is unlikely that the name refers to Holyrood Abbey, which held Kinghorn church from the twelfth century.³ As the land was held by the Bishops of St Andrews,⁴ it is possible that the abbey was Kilrymont.

Inchkeith:

The island of Inchkeith was annexed to Kinghorn shortly after the Reformation. There is a tradition that there was a monastery here (NT 28 SE 4) (NT 295 825), founded by St Adomnan in the late-seventh century and dedicated to St Columba. No traces of any foundation have been uncovered, making the tradition almost certainly spurious.

¹ See Burntisland parish

² *RMS* i app.2 no.1277

³ Taylor, S, *Settlement names in Fife*, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh University, 1995, 228

Inchkeith features in a Life of St Serf⁵ as the meeting place of SS Serf and Adomnan. Looking at Adomnan's name as it appears in the text, (*Edheunanus*),⁶ it is possible that this was actually Ethernan, the saint commemorated elsewhere on the Forth, at the Isle of May and Kilrenny. If he was the saint in the Life, his identity could have been changed either through ignorance or a deliberate action, as he, a local saint with a relatively small cult, would have been a much less significant figure to a mediaeval audience than Adomnan, both the author of the *Vita Columbae* and famous in his own right.

Modern Churches:

The current parish church, built in 1774 adjoining the old church, is dedicated to St Leonard (NT 28 NE 36.00) (NT 2717 8694).⁷

⁴ *RMS* i app.2 no.1277

⁵ Text preserved in *Chronicles of the Picts. Chronicles of the Scots*, ed. WF Skene, Edinburgh 1867, and Macquarrie, A, '*Vita Sancti Servani: The Life of St Serf*', *Innes Review* XLIV, No. 2, 1993.

⁶ 'Life of St Serf', *Chronicles of the Picts. Chronicles of the Scots*, 1867, 416

⁷ CANMORE - <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=52759>, 20th June 2002

Kinghorn Old Parish Church

NMRS No NT 28 NE 11

Grid ref NT 2718 8695

1. All Saints – 1290, *CPL* i p.512⁸
- 2.2 beside Forth
- 2.5 near harbour on major waterway
4. parish church until 1774
5. granted to Holyrood Abbey, 1165x78, *Holyrood Liber.* no.76

Assessment: Possible. This site may be an Early Christian foundation as it is situated on the coast, is first recorded in the twelfth century and has a long tradition of use. There are, however, no other positive indicating factors.

⁸ There may have been an earlier dedication to St Serf attached to the church (see Burntisland parish).

Tyrie Chapel⁹

NMRS No NT 28 NE 3

Grid ref NT 2664 8904

1. St Malinus or Maillidh¹⁰

- 2.2 c.50m from Tyrie Burn
c.1.5 km from Forth

- 2.5 c.1.5km from major waterway

- 3.1 chapel

- 3.3 *Ecclesmaline* (containing 'eglis' element)

5. Chart. Inch.33

Assessment: Probable. If, as seems likely, this is *Ecclesmaline*, it was almost certainly an Early Christian site.

⁹ The *NSA* describes a ruin, on the farm of Tyrie, which appeared to be that of a chapel with burial ground. The site was known locally as Egsmalee, which the *NSA* states (incorrectly) is a corruption of Eglise Marie (*NSA*, 9, 810). Instead, this chapel would appear to be '*Ecclesmaline*', which belonged to Inchcolm Abbey, and was originally in a detached portion of Aberdour.

¹⁰ The specific of this name, according to the *Inchcolm Charters*, refers to St Malinus, but Watson believes that the saint is Maillidh, who is not mentioned in the Calendars, but to whom there were apparent dedications across Scotland (Watson, *CPNS*, 290).¹⁰

North Glassmount¹¹

NMRS No NT 28 NW 19

Grid ref NT 2498 8895

2.2 c.3km from Forth

2.5 approx. 3km from major waterway

3.1 ?chapel

3.3 Chapel Field or Chapel Flat

Assessment: **Unlikely.** This site is very obscure and there is no real indication that there was an Early Christian foundation here

¹¹ According to the NSA, another possible chapel stood to the west of North Glassmount House, within a field known as Chapel Field (NSA, 9, 810). No trace of any building remains and there is no known historical evidence for one.

Kinglassie

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fothrif)

Location:

Kinglassie is on the western edge of Fife.

Parish Name:

The earliest form, *Kilglassin* (1127x59),¹ shows the name contains the 'cill' element, indicating there was an early foundation (c.700) here. The specific comes from the stream (*G glais* +locative ending) beside which the church stands²; the holy well known as St Glass's or St Findglassin's Well,³ was so named as the result of later confusion (*Findglassin*, *G find glaisen*, 'holy streamlet'). The suggestion that the specific referred to St Glascanius,⁴ appears to have been the result of the well's 'dedication'.

Carved Stones:

There is a free-standing Class II cross at Dogton, approximately 2km from the church (NT 29 NW 2) (NT 2361 9686).⁵ The cross is mutilated and weathered, and the arms are now missing, but it appears to be in its original position as it still stands in its base slab. It is 1.5m tall, and is sculpted on four sides. Henderson dates the cross to the later ninth century,⁶ meaning it is not contemporary with the 'cill' name, but illustrates a later phase of the church.

¹ *Dunf. Reg.*, no.92

² Watson, *CPNS*, 320

³ Morris, R and F, *Scottish Healing Wells*, 1982, 104

⁴ *Aberdeen Breviary*, 30th January

⁵ Allen, JR and Anderson, J, *The early Christian monuments of Scotland*, Edinburgh 1843, part III, 364-5

⁶ Henderson, I, *The Picts*, 1967, 108

Kinglassie Parish Church

NMRS No NT 29 NW 11

Grid ref NT 2277 9854

1. St Glass or Findglassin – spurious
 - 2.1 at base of hill
 - 2.2 on burn
c.3km from River Ore
 - 3.3 Kinglassie (containing 'cill' element)
 - 3.4 situated in bend of burn
 - 3.5 holy well beside church (NT 29 NW 4) (NT 2280 9880)
4. parish church until present ⁷
5. 1127x59, *Dunf. Reg.*, no 92

Assessment: Probable. The 'cill' element in the parish name suggests that there was an Early Christian foundation in the vicinity, most probably on the site of this church. The siting of this church in the bend of a burn, the presence of a holy well, and the reference to this church in the early twelfth century are likely to be further corroboration of this.

⁷ The church was substantially rebuilt in 1773-4

Kingsbarns

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)¹

Location:

Kingsbarns is situated on the north east coast of Fife.

Ecclesiastical History:

Kingsbarns was disjoined from Crail in 1631.² The current parish church dates from the disjunction and it is not thought that there was a church on the site before this date.

Place Names:

There was almost certainly an Early Christian foundation (c.700) at Kilduncan (NO 577 122), but the only piece of possible physical evidence is a carved stone found recently. The name, which contains the 'cill' element, is likely to commemorate Dunchad,³ who was abbot of Iona when Roman practices were introduced there in the early eighth century.⁴

Long Cist Burials:

There is a long cist cemetery at Old Haiks, Wormeston (NO 61 SW 2) (NO 6100 1130) where 30 long cists were uncovered in 1826, facing NE-SW and equally spaced in two rows.⁵ No building has as yet been uncovered with the burials.

¹ As part of the mediaeval parish of Crail

² *NSA*, 9, 92

³ Taylor, S, 'Place names and the Early Church in Eastern Scotland', *Scotland in Dark Age Britain*, ed. B Crawford, 1996, 100; Redford, M, *Commemorations of Saints of the Celtic Church in Scotland*, unpublished MLitt. thesis, Edinburgh University 1988. Other suggestions as to the identity of this saint have included Donnchu, an otherwise unknown saint (Watson, *CPNS*, 218), and Donnan, who was martyred on Eigg along with his followers (Redford, *Commemorations*, 1988, 60).

⁴ He may also be the saint commemorated at Kilconquhar, although his connections with East Fife are more likely to be political, and connected to church reforms, than ecclesiastical

⁵ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=35365>, 29th May 2002

Possible long cists have also been uncovered at Pitmilly Law (NO 51 SE 6) (NO 5761 1368) ⁶ and Gallows Law (NO 51 SE 7) (NO 5695 1342), where 'a good many' burials were found before 1867.⁷

Caves:

A rock shelter (NO 61 SW 7) (NO 6176 1093) was recorded during a coastal survey of 1979 as having carved crosses.⁸ The nature of this cave site is uncertain, and no specific tradition or saint appears to be associated with it.

Hillforts:

There was an Iron Age hill fort within the parish, near Randerston House (NO 61 SW 4) (NO 617 109), which was adapted for a later mediaeval fortification, and may also have been used during the Pictish period.⁹

Carved Stones:

A fragment of a tenth-century cross-slab has recently been discovered at Kilduncan. If it is connected with the likely but unidentified '*cill*' foundation, it would suggest that that foundation survived for several centuries.

⁶ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=34427>, 29th May 2002

⁷ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=34428>, 29th May 2002

⁸ Kenworthy, JB, 'Coastal Survey', *D and E*, 1980, 5

⁹ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=35367>, 29th May 2002

Kirkcaldy and Dysart

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

The modern parish of Kirkcaldy and Dysart is on the south coast of Fife. It is bounded on the west by Kinghorn and Auchtertool, on the north by Auchterderran and Kinglassie, and on the east by Markinch and Wemyss.

Ecclesiastical History:

The parish is made up of the former parishes of Kirkcaldy, Dysart and Abbotshall, adjoined in 1901. Abbotshall was originally disjoined from Kirkcaldy in 1650.

Dysart:

Ecclesiastical History:

In the early mediaeval period, Dysart seems to have been the superior parish; Kirkcaldy Church does not appear to have achieved full parochial status until 1220, and was until that time a dependent chapel of the parish church of Dysart.¹

Parish Name:

The name Dysart comes from G *diseart*, literally 'desert', but referring to a place of hermitage or retreat, much as the deserts had been to the Early Christians in the East. The place name could either have inspired the story of St Serf and the cave, or resulted from it. The link between Dysart and St Serf is first recorded in c.1200, when the saint's Life was written, but more than likely rests on a genuine association with the saint, whom Macquarrie has dated to c.700.²

Caves:

St Serf's Cave (NT 39 SW 22) (NT 3032 9299) does not show any traces of Christian activity, but may have had incised crosses and Pictish symbols which have since weathered away.³ It is more than likely that it was this cave that was behind the parish name.

Other Churches:

In the lower part of the town of Dysart, the remains of a small chapel were recorded in 1845, on the site of a smithy.⁴ The chapel was supposedly dedicated to St Dennis, and was traditionally associated with a priory of Black Friars. There is no indication that it was an early foundation.

¹ Taylor, S, *Settlement names in Fife*, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh University 1995, 255

² Macquarrie, A, *The Saints of Scotland*, 1997, 149

³ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=53994>, 29th May 2002

⁴ NSA, 9, 134

Kirkcaldy:

Parish Name:

The frequently discussed conjecture that Kirkcaldy was a Culdee centre has come from a misinterpretation of the name of the parish, which is first recorded in a confirmation charter to Dunfermline Abbey, c.1128 as *Schiram de Kircaladinit*.⁵ Rather than containing a 'cill' or 'kirk' element (the feature which most of the false etymologies are based on), the name is derived from Br or P *caer*, 'fort' and P *caled*, 'hard', suggesting a stone fort or one which was impregnable.⁶

⁵ *Dunf. Reg.*, no.1

⁶ Taylor, *Settlement names*, 1995, 260

Abbotshall:

Ecclesiastical History:

The parish of Abbotshall consisted of the estate which belonged to the monks of Dunfermline Abbey, and the name is supposed to have referred to the residence, which was built by one of the abbots near the site of the parish church.⁷

Other Churches:

The parish church (NT 29 SE 6.00) (NT 2738 9134) was built in 1788 on the site of a seventeenth-century church.⁸

A chapel dedicated to St Ninian in Abbotshall is recorded in 1563 and 1582. CANMORE suggests that it was in Broom Place at a site (now quarried) where short cists were uncovered (NT 29 SE) (NT 2536 9378),⁹ but a more likely site is at Chapel Farm (see below).

Well:

St Mary's Well at Pathhead (NT 29 SE 2) (NT 2840 9229) is of uncertain date.¹⁰

⁷ NSA, 9, 170

⁸ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=52953>, 29th May 2002

⁹ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=52900>, 29th May 2002

¹⁰ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=52911>, 29th May 2002

Dysart Old Parish Church

NMRS No NT 39 SW 2.00

Grid ref NT 3018 9313

1. St Serf

- 2.2 beside Forth
- 2.5 beside major waterway

- 3.7 c.200m from St Serf's Cave

4. parish church until 1802¹¹

5. 1220, *Dunf. Reg.*, no.111

Assessment: Possible. This may be an early foundation as it is situated next to the Firth of Forth and is recorded in the thirteenth century. There are no other obvious indications, however. This church may have been founded near St Serf's Cave as a celebration of his cult, but it is uncertain when this would have been. There is no reason to date this church to the supposed date of St Serf's missions i.e. the seventh or eighth centuries.

¹¹ The current parish church (NT 39 SW 15.00) was built on the same site in 1802.

Kirkcaldy Old Parish Church

NMRS No NT 29 SE 7

Grid ref NT 2804 9168

1. St Brice¹² or St Patrick¹³

- 2.2 c.300m from Forth
- 2.5 c.300m from major waterway

4. parish church until present

5. c.1130, *Dunf. Reg.*, No.29

Assessment: Possible. The dedication to St Brice, if genuine, may suggest that this is an early foundation. The church is situated beside the Firth of Forth and is recorded in the early twelfth century, but there are no other indications that it is an Early Christian site.

¹² It is currently dedicated to St Brice, but even though there are no mediaeval references to the dedication, "it is such an obscure and unusual dedication that it probably rests on a very old tradition" (Taylor, *Settlement names*, 256; Dove, G, 'Saints, Dedications and Cults in Medieval Fife', unpublished MPhil thesis, University of St Andrews, 1988, 140). St Brice was the successor of St Martin as bishop of Tours, and this dedication may have come out of the same *milieu* as the two, apparently early, dedications to St Martin in Fife, at Strathmiglo and 'Eglismarten' (See Strathmiglo, Aberdour and Dalgety parishes). The alternative form of the name, Brycedale, actually refers to an area of land, and the confusion probably results from a misreading of a land charter.

¹³ The tradition that Kirkcaldy Old Parish Church was dedicated to St Patrick is probably spurious, but may be the result of an addition to the flyleaf of the *Pontificale* in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, as it is recorded by both Wordsworth and Baird (Wordsworth, *PESA*, xviii; CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inuinlink=52957>, 29th May 2002).

Chapel, Chapel Farm ¹⁴

NMRS No NT 29 SE 280

Grid ref NT 2547 9427

1. ?St Ninian ¹⁵

- 2.2 c.4km from Forth
- 2.5 c.4km from major waterway

- 3.1 chapel
- 3.3 Chapel / Chapel Farm
- 3.5 well

5. first recorded in 1563

Assessment: **Unlikely.** This chapel is probably a later mediaeval foundation rather than an Early Christian one.

¹⁴ A building was marked at this site on the 1856 OS map, but nothing exists now except a well (CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=139480>, 29th May 2002).

¹⁵ Possibly the chapel dedicated to St Ninian that is recorded in 1563 and 1582.

Chapel, High Street ¹⁶

NMRS No NT 29 SE 13

Grid ref NT c.2791 9101

2.2 c.300m from Forth

2.5 c.300m from major waterway

3.1 ?chapel

3.2 possible cists and burials

Assessment: **Unlikely.** This chapel is probably a later mediaeval foundation rather than an Early Christian one, but the nature of the burials is uncertain and may be an indication that this is an earlier site.

¹⁶ Scattered finds of sculptured masonry and burials suggest that there was a mediaeval chapel at this site, but nothing is known of its history (NSA, vol. 9, 748).

Largo

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

Largo is on the southern coast of Fife.

Pictish Silver:

In the early nineteenth century, a quantity of silver objects were found in or near a cist at the base of Norrie's Law, an artificial mound (NO 40 NW 3) (NO 4095 0733). The collection was split up and many of the pieces were quickly lost, but those that survive range from the late Roman period to the seventh century.¹ Within the hoard was a mixture of items, some of which had ornamentation of a pagan Celtic type, while others were clearly Christian.² The date that the hoard was buried is uncertain but Graham-Campbell suggests that it was in the mid- to late-seventh century, and may have been in response to the Northumbrian conquest of Fife in 655 or the subsequent thirty-year period of occupation.³

Carved Stones:

A Class II cross-slab fragment (NO 40 SW 2) (NO 4234 0347) was found in the nineteenth century, when part of Norrie's Law was removed, and a second fragment was found a short distance away (NO 40 SW 207) (NO 4177 0340), covering a drain. The stone now stands at the church. On the obverse is a cross with two Pictish beasts, while the reverse shows men on horseback, a double-disc, a Z-rod and another beast.⁴

¹ Graham-Campbell, J, 'Norrie's Law, Fife: on the nature and dating of the silver hoard', *PSAS*, 121, 1991, 256

² Allen, JR and Anderson, J, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, part III, 368-9

³ Graham-Campbell, 'Norrie's Law', 256

⁴ Allen and Anderson, *Early Christian Monuments*, part III, 344-6

Long Cist Burials:

There was an extensive long cist cemetery at Lundin Links (NO 40 SW 13) (NO 4130 0250), which was excavated in the late 1960s.⁵ The burials had originally been uncovered in the 1850s, when 17 long cists, orientated E-W, and laid out in parallel rows, were recorded,⁶ but the later excavation found other Pictish burials in the form of round and square barrows. A sample of the burials have been dated to the fifth to seventh centuries.⁷

Other possible long cists were found while the foundations of the railway station were being dug in the nineteenth century (NO 40 SW 10) (NO 4181 0264), but their age, number and nature is uncertain.⁸

⁵ Maclagan-Wedderburn, LM, 'Lundin Links - Long Cist Cemetery', *D and E*, 1967

⁶ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=32691>, 29th May 2002

⁷ Close-Brooks, J, 'Pictish and Other Burials', *Pictish Studies: Settlement, Burial and Art in Dark Age Northern Britain*, ed. J Friell and W Watson, BAR British Series, 125, 1984, 106.

⁸ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=32657>, 29th May 2002

Largo Parish Church

NMRS No NO 40 SW 11

Grid ref NO 4236 0349

- 2.2 c.50m from Forth
- 2.5 beside major waterway

- 3.2 c.1km from long cist cemetery
c.200m from possible long cists
- 3.4 curvilinear enclosure⁹
- 3.7 Class II slab now in churchyard – original position unknown

- 4. parish church until present¹⁰

- 5. c.1160, *Nor. Ber. Chrs* nos. 7 and 8

Assessment: Possible. The presence of at least one long cist cemetery and a Class II cross slab shows that there was Early Christian activity in the parish, and as this church is situated beside the Firth of Forth and recorded in the twelfth century, it may be an early site. There are no other positive indications, however, and although the cross slab now stands in the churchyard, its original location is unknown.

⁹ Plan of graveyard - NMRS No. DC 42698, S Farrell 1999

¹⁰ The current parish church was built on the site in 1817.

Leslie

(Diocese of Dunkeld)

(Deanery of Fife and Strathearn)

Location:

Leslie is on the western edge of Fife.

Parish Name:

The parish was originally known as Fithkil or Fettykill, but the name was changed when the area came into the possession of the Leslies of Aberdeenshire, who gave their name to it.¹ The exact date of the name change is difficult to pinpoint, but it appears to have occurred some time during the late fourteenth or fifteenth century.²

The name 'Fithkill' comes from *G fiodh + cill*, meaning 'wooden church',³ with the 'cill' element indicating that there was a foundation somewhere in the parish in the seventh or eighth century. The name 'wooden church' could have been applied to most or all of the churches in Fife before Necthon's church reforms of the early eighth century,⁴ so it is possible that this name describes a church built or founded after the first stone churches, which was notable for keeping to the old traditions. The most likely location for this church is on the site of the old parish church, although there is no direct evidence for an early foundation there, and the name Fithkill is now lost.

Parish Fair:

According to a charter of 21st March 1457, the annual public fair was held on the feast of St Michael,⁵ but there is no indication that this dedication was attached to the parish or the church at any time.

¹ Millar, AH, *Fife: Pictorial and Historical*, II, 1895, 75

² *ibid.*, 79

³ Taylor, S, *Settlement names in Fife*, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh University 1995, 208

⁴ See introduction *section 3.1*

⁵ Millar, *Fife*, II, 1895, 79

Other Churches:

Within the old parish churchyard, stood St Mary's (NO 20 SE 39) (NO 255 020), probably a mediaeval chantry chapel.⁶

Modern Churches:

The current parish church, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, stands on a modern site (NO 20 SW 60) (NO 2468 0151).

⁶ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=29979>, 29th May 2002

Christ's Kirk on the Green

NMRS No NO 20 SE 14

Grid ref NO 255 020

1. Christ

- 2.2 beside burn
c.200m from River Leven

- 2.5 c.200m from major inland waterway

4. parish church until late-twentieth century⁷

5. 1239, *Chart. Inch.*, xviii

Assessment: Probable. The 'cill' element in the former parish name suggests that there was an Early Christian foundation in the vicinity, probably on the site of this church. Other possible indications that this is an early site are the burn that runs alongside the church and its proximity to the River Leven.

⁷ New church built on site c.1820 (NO 20 SE 54) and recently converted into housing.

Ingrie⁸

NMRS No NO 20 SW 60

Grid ref NO 237 020

2.2 beside burn

c.1km from River Leven

2.5 c.1km from major inland waterway

3.1 ?chapel

3.5 Cross of Ingrie (NO 20 SW 7) (date uncertain) stood at NO 2380 0206⁹

3.6 possible mediaeval font¹⁰

Assessment: **Unlikely.** This chapel was probably a later mediaeval foundation rather than an Early Christian one.

⁸ Popular tradition, according to the *NSA*, claims that the place name Ingrie was derived from *eglis-an-ri*, the 'King's Chapel' (*NSA*, 9, 111), but this is spurious, and the name is more likely to be derived from *G iongrach*, 'oozing', referring to boggy ground.

⁹ The cross was moved to the lawn of Strathendry House (NO 2269 0190) (CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=30015>, 29th May 2002)

¹⁰ There was supposed to have been a mediaeval baptismal font lying nearby in the mid-nineteenth century (*NSA*, 9, 111)

Leuchars

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

The parish of Leuchars is on the north east coast of Fife.

Other Churches:

There are two supposed chapel sites in the parish, which have been identified through very tenuous place name evidence. The first of these is in Tentsmuir (NO 42 SE 20) (c.NO 48 25), at a spot supposedly known as Kirkhill in the nineteenth century, but there is now no evidence for either this name or the existence of a church here.¹ The second, at Tammie Knowe at Earishall (NO 42 SE 9) (NO 464 211), was suggested to be a chapel from its name, which had been wrongly stated to be a modern form of *Tom-a-noamh*, or 'the holy hillock'.²

Wells:

The Lady's or St Mary's Well was in the centre of the village square (NO 456 217).³

¹ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=33199>, 29th May 2002

² CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=33237>, 29th May 2002

³ Morris R and F, *Scottish Healing Wells*, 1982, 104

Leuchars Parish Church

NMRS No NO 42 SE 1.00

Grid ref NO 4554 2139

1. St Athernaise ⁴
- 2.1 on ridge
- 2.2 c.2km from Eden estuary
- 2.5 c.2km from major inland waterway
- 3.2 c.100m from long cist cemetery (St Bonach's)
4. parish church until present
5. *eccl. de Locres*, 1243, (Wordsworth, *PESA*, xvii)

Assessment: Possible. The location of this church on a ridge may suggest that it was an Early Christian foundation, although it is unclear what relationship it would have had with the nearby long cists and possible chapel at St Bonach's.⁵ If there was a chapel at St Bonach's, the parish church is likely to be the later of the two foundations, but it is impossible to say by how long. There is little positive evidence to suggest that this was an early foundation.

⁴ The traditional dedication of the church to Athernaise or Ethernaisc may be through a confusion of the early forms of this parish name (e.g. *Lochris* - *St And. Lib.*, 33-4) and that of Lathrisk (Kettle), which was dedicated to Ethernaisc (*St And. Lib.*, 348) - Simon Taylor, pers. comm.

⁵ The parish church may be the direct successor of the cemetery's associated chapel, moved to a more suitable site when the current Romanesque church was built in the twelfth century.

St Bonach's Chapel

NMRS No NO 42 SE 2

Grid ref NO 4546 2138

1. St Bonoch ⁶
- 2.1 on ridge ⁷
- 2.2 c.2km from Eden estuary
- 2.5 c.2km from major inland waterway
- 3.1 chapel
- 3.2 long cist cemetery ⁸
4. chapel until after Reformation (OSA)

Assessment: Probable. The presence of a long cist cemetery suggests that this was almost certainly an Early Christian site, but it is unclear if there was a chapel here and, if so, whether it was contemporary with the burials or was a later mediaeval foundation. The dedication is too obscure to provide much dating evidence.

⁶ Local tradition refers to the site as the chapel of St Bonach (also given as Bennet (NSA, 9, 223) and Bernard (OSA, 18, 599)), said to be a possible Culdee foundation pre-dating the parish church. A chapel of St Bonach is recorded in the confirmation of a charter by James VI, (*Reg. Mag. Sig.*, book 36 no.72, cited in Forbes, AP, *Kalendars of Scottish Saints*, Edinburgh 1872, 283) and a crown charter of 1539 details a yearly market on St Bonoc's Day (Simon Taylor, pers. comm.). It may be that this is late evidence of an early cult, or may be the result of a later veneration of the saint attaching itself to a site and a tradition. Little is known about this saint, except that he may have been a bishop, and a relic of his was kept at the altar of St Fergus in St Andrews Parish Church (Forbes, *ibid.*, 283) (see introduction *section 1*). The name of this saint occurs, in corrupted form, in the modern street name, St Bunyan's Place.

⁷ The church was on the site of the parish school, on the same ridge as the parish church ('Leuchars burial ground', D and E, 1969).

⁸ In 1908, a large number of long cists (at least 35) were uncovered, and their E-W orientation suggests that they were Early Christian rather than pre-Christian (CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inurlink=33198>, 29th May 2002).

Logie

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

The parish of Logie is in the north of Fife.

Parish Name:

The name of the parish comes from *G logaigh*, 'place in the hollow',¹ which describes the location of Logie village rather than the parish itself. 'Logie' is a common element in parish names north of the Forth, and is often used in conjunction with a personal name; the alternative name for this parish is Logie Murdoch. It has been suggested that 'Murdoch' refers to Murtach de Gloucester who was given lands in the area by David II,² but as the name is recorded as *Lognymurthak* almost a century before this,³ it is more likely to be a commemoration of St Muireadhach.⁴ Several saints of this name are recorded in the Irish Martyrologies, but Watson suggests that Scottish dedications to this saint refer to the abbot of Iona who died 1011 AU.⁵

Pictish Settlement:

Pictish settlement in the parish is indicated at North Straiton by the presence of possible round houses (NO 42 SW 20) (centred NO 4205 2347 and NO 4200 2349), which are part of a landscape of features, including ring ditches.⁶

¹ Watson, *CPNS*, 147

² Morton, AA, 'Logie', *Church and Parish*, ed. GW Walker, 1925, 130

³ c.1250, *St And. Lib.*, 34

⁴ Redford, M, *Commemorations of Saints of the Celtic Church in Scotland*, unpublished MLitt thesis, Edinburgh University 1988, 308

⁵ Watson, *CPNS*, 293

⁶ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=33250>, 29th May 2002

Logie Parish Church

NMRS No NO 42 SW 13

Grid ref NO 4044 2040

1. St Moluag⁷ or St Muireadhach⁸
- 2.2 beside burn
- 2.3 possible Pictish settlement at North Straiton, centered NO c.420 234
- 3.4 partially curvilinear enclosure⁹
4. parish church from at least 1275 until 20th century
5. c.1250, *St And. Lib.*, 34

Assessment: Possible. Although there was Pictish settlement activity in this parish, there is no real indication (other than its position next to a burn) that this was an Early Christian foundation, and if the saint whose name has been identified in the parish name has been correctly identified, the church is unlikely to predate the eleventh century.

⁷ The church was traditionally dedicated to St Luag (Moluag), an early saint (d.592) who was associated with several sites across Scotland, including Lismore, (Watson, *CPNS*, 292-3) but bearing in mind the probable place name derivation, this dedication is probably modern.

⁸ If this is the saint commemorated in the original parish name then it is likely that the dedication was at one time attached to the church. However, there is no actual indication that this was the case.

⁹ Plan of graveyard - NMRS No. DC 42715, S Farrell 1999

Markinch

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fothrif)

Location:

Markinch is an inland parish in central Fife.

Ecclesiastical History:

Part of the mediaeval parish of Kirkforthar, including the church, was brought under Markinch in 1641.¹

Parish History:

Pre-Christian ritual activity within Markinch is demonstrated by the presence of the Neolithic and Bronze Age ritual complex at Balfarg and Balbirnie ((NO 20 SE 5) (NO 2816 0312) and (NO 20 SE 4) (NO 2850 0304)). Although these sites show a long continuity of use during prehistoric times, there is no apparent ritual use after that.

Place Names:

A probable early church site within the parish was at *Pittenchagill*, which contains the 'egles' element.² This site is unidentified.

Carved Stones:

An Early Christian church boundary or sanctuary marker, the Stob Cross (NO 20 SE 12) (NO 2960 0220), stands approximately 200m from the parish church. The stone is a mutilated rectangular slab over 2m high with plain crosses carved on the E and W faces. A possible parallel in Fife is the seventh-century Skeith stone in Kilrenny parish, although the Stob Cross is not so easily dated on stylistic grounds.

¹ Taylor, S, *Settlement names in Fife*, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh University 1995, 264

² Taylor, *Settlement names*, 281

Modern Churches:

There are three modern parish churches within Markinch, St Margaret's, Glenrothes (NO 20 SE 177) (NO 2856 0025), St Columba's, Glenrothes (NO 2960 0220), and Thornton (NT 29 NE 27) (NT 2911 9772), but these sites have no tradition of ecclesiastical use.

Markinch Parish Church³

NMRS No NO 20 SE 13

Grid ref NO 2974 0197

1. St Drostan – 1204 x c.1230, *St And. Lib.*, 245
St John the Baptist and St Modrust (Drostan) - *St And. Lib.*, 348
- 2.1 on mound
- 2.2 c.200m from burn
c.1km from River Leven
- 3.4 partially curvilinear enclosure surrounded by curvilinear settlement layout⁴
- 3.6 Stob Cross (NO 2960 0220)
4. parish church until present day
5. (church of) *Marckinch*, c.1028x55, *St And. Lib.*, 116

Assessment: Probable. The presence of the Stob Cross, the siting of the church on a mound and the dedication to Drostan almost certainly indicate that this church was an Early Christian foundation, possibly dating to the seventh or eighth century. If Markinch is one of the two churches responsible for the church at Methil being named 'middle church' around 700 AD (see

³ The church would appear to have become a Culdee foundation sometime between the ninth and eleventh centuries. The tower of Markinch Parish Church is thought to date from the late tenth to twelfth century, and is very similar to St Rule's Tower, St Andrews and several others in Perthshire, at churches known to have been centres of the Culdee church. These square towers may have been roughly contemporary to the Irish-style round towers, of which two are known in Scotland (at Abernethy and Brechin), but instead represent Anglian / Northumbrian influence (similar towers exist at sites in Northumbria such as Monkwearmouth).

⁴ See introduction section 3.4

Wemyss parish and map), then that would suggest that it is a seventh century foundation.⁵ This is also one of the few churches in Fife to be recorded in the eleventh century.

⁵ Taylor, S, Settlement names in Fife, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh University 1994, 297

Kirkforthar Parish Church

NMRS No NO 20 SE 8

Grid ref NO 2988 0482

1. Virgin Mary ⁶

- 2.1 situated on a flat-topped earthen mound, which may represent a burial ground.⁷

- 3.5 Lady's Well

4. became parish church between 1200 and 1250
parish dissolved and chapel suppressed 1641

5. ? (chapel of Fordin), *St And. Lib.*, 59, 81 and 152 ⁸
(church of) Forthar, c.1250, *St And. Lib.*, 33
(parish church of) Kirkforthir 1441 CSSR iv no 824

Assessment: Possible. If this church is sited on a burial mound, this may be an indication that this was an early foundation. There are no other positive indications, however, and the dedication is unlikely to be early.

⁶ This church was apparently dedicated to the Virgin Mary, as there is a Lady's Well (Morris, R and F, *Scottish Healing Wells*, 1982, 105) and a Lady Hill nearby (Taylor, *Settlement names*, 264).

⁷ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=29993>, 29th May 2002

⁸ Kirkforthar Church may be the chapel of *Fordin*, which is listed, alongside the chapel of Kettle, as a secondary church of the parish church of Lathrisk (Kettle parish) (Taylor, *Settlement names*, 264).

Monimail

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

The parish of Monimail is in north Fife.

Topography:

The village of Monimail, one of three in the parish, came into being because of its position on the crossing point of the old Stirling to St Andrews and Perth to St Andrews roads.¹

Modern Churches:

The modern parish church was built on a new site in 1796 (NO 31 SW 50) (NO 3022 1415).

¹ Pinfold, LK, Cupar: The Complete Illustrated Guide, 1983, 61

Monimail Old Parish Church ²

NMRS No NO 21 SE 19

Grid ref NO 2982 1413

1. St Cardan (spurious) ³

- 2.2 beside burn

- 3.5 well (NO 3121 1431)

4. parish church until 1796

5. Patent Rolls and Privy Seal Registers for 1298.

Assessment: Possible. Despite being situated next to a burn, there is no indication that this is an Early Christian foundation.

² It has been suggested that there was a Culdee foundation at Monimail, followed subsequently by an Augustinian house, (Pinfold, LK, *Cupar: The Complete Illustrated Guide*, 1983, 61) but there is no evidence for either of these. Monimail church was a mensal church of St Andrews.

³ The *Fasti* suggests that the dedication of the church was to a St Cardan, probably due to the presence of Cardan's Well nearby (NO 31 SW 4) (NO 3121 1431), but this is erroneous as the well is documented as having been named after a sixteenth century physician, who tended Archbishop Hamilton (CANMORE -- <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=30157>, 29th May 2002).

Moonzie

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

The parish of Moonzie is in the north of Fife.

Ecclesiastical History:

The parish was united with Cupar in 1564, but became a parish in its own right again in 1625.¹

Long Cist Burials:

Possible long cists were uncovered on the west side of the farm of Moonzie in the early nineteenth century (NO 31 NW 14) (NO 341 177).²

¹ NSA, 9, 796

² NSA, 9, 792

Moonzie Parish Church ³

NMRS No NO 31 NW 13.00

Grid ref NO 3386 1760

1. Holy Trinity ⁴
- 2.2 on hilltop
- 3.2 c.500m from possible long cists
- 3.4 rectilinear enclosure ⁵
4. parish church until present
5. c.1214,⁶ St And. Lib., 175-6

Assessment: Possible. This church is situated on top of a hill and is recorded in the thirteenth century, but there is no other evidence or indication that it is an early foundation.

³ It has been suggested by Sibbald that Moonzie was *Monedicta* or *Monichi*, the site of one of the wooden churches allegedly built by St Regulus (NSA, 9, 788). However, that church was actually *Eglis Monichti* in Monifieth parish in Angus, in the Diocese of St Andrews (Forbes, *Kalendars*, 440).

⁴ The church was taken over in the later Middle Ages by the Red Friars or Trinitarians, and the dedication to the Holy Trinity probably dates to this time.

⁵ Plan of graveyard - NMRS No. DC 42709, S Farrell 1999

⁶ Cowan, IB, Parishes of Medieval Scotland, 1967

Newburgh

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)¹

Location:

Newburgh is on the north coast of Fife on the border with Perthshire.

Ecclesiastical History:

The parish was disjoined from Abdie in 1633.²

Other Churches:

The earliest ecclesiastical foundation in the parish appears to have been Lindores Abbey (NO 21 NW 5.00) (NO 2348 1846), founded in c.1191. Newburgh Parish Church, St Katherine's, (NO 21 NW 53) (NO 2440 1833) stands on the site of a mediaeval chapel, presumably a chapel of ease for the western population of Abdie parish, serviced by the monks of Lindores. The chapel is not recorded in the *St And. Lib.* taxation list of c1250,³ and so is unlikely to be early.

Carved Stones:

There are several sites within the parish with Early Christian links. The first of these is the Mugdrum Cross (NO 21 NW 1) (NO 2253 1819), which is situated within the grounds of Mugdrum Estate, a kilometre west of the burgh. Although badly weathered and broken today, it seems likely that it was a high cross in the style of those found on Iona. The visible decoration would appear to consist mostly of secular hunting scenes.

The land on which the cross stands was within the territory of the church of Abernethy,⁴ and possibly represents a boundary or route marker for that church. It has been suggested that there

¹ As part of the mediaeval parish of Abdie

² Millar, AH, *Fife: Pictorial and Historical*, II, 1895, 359

³ *St And. Lib.*, 33-4

⁴ Millar, *Fife*, 363

was an oratory dedicated to St Adrian (NO 21 NW 78) (NO 225 181) on or near the site of the cross,⁵ but there is no evidence for this.

Another antiquity within the parish, which may have relevance to the Pictish church, is Macduff's Cross (NO 21 NW 9) (NO 2271 1678). Although the base, which is all that still survives, is extremely weathered, several post-mediaeval antiquarians have published details of an inscription, which they either saw themselves or had reported to them.⁶ Of the three versions that survive (two direct copies and one translation) there are few similarities, and the language in the two direct copies is Latinized but unidentifiable. The only common thread between the three versions is the mention of some recognizable form of the name Magridin. This saint is also commemorated in Abdie and Flisk, and in the later parish there was a group of stones dedicated to him ('St Muggin's Seat'). The later tradition associated with the Macduff Cross was that it was a sanctuary marker, but it may originally have been an Early Christian monument, possibly a boundary marker like the Mugdrum Cross.

Wells:

Within the parish are the Nine Wells, the site of a number of springs, which have become associated in legend with the Nine Maidens of Abernethy (NO 21 NW 3) (NO 2247 1709).⁷ There is also a Monk's Well at NO 2379 1793 (NO 21 NW 10) and St Andrew's Well at NO 242 185 (NO 21 NW 29).⁸

⁵ Butler, D, *The Parish and Church of Abernethy*, 1905, 234

⁶ Laing, A, *Lindores Abbey and its burgh of Newburgh*, 1876, 330-4

⁷ Morris, R and F, *Scottish Healing Wells*, 1982, 105-6

⁸ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=30086>, 29th May 2002

Newburn

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

Newburn is on the southern coast of Fife.

Parish Name:

It has been stated that the early name of the parish was Drumeldrie,¹ but the earliest references to the parish use forms of the name, Newburn, eg. *Nithbren*.² In these early forms, the 'nith' or 'nid' element is probably related to a tribal name 'Nith', and the area may be 'Niduari', (part of?) the lands of the Picts recorded in Bede's *Life of St Cuthbert*.³ Skene believed that these Picts were in Nithsdale in Dumfriesshire or Kirkcudbrightshire,⁴ but they are equally, if not more, likely to have been in Fife. Besides Newburn, the 'nith' element occurs in Arnydie (Ceres parish) and Nydie (St Andrews and St Leonards parish).⁵ According to the *Life*, Cuthbert travelled to the land of the Niduari "to settle some business or other",⁶ and if this were Newburn and surrounds, it seems likely that it would have involved the local church.

Modern Churches:

The most recent parish church was built in 1815, on a site of no apparent ecclesiastical tradition (NO 40 SW 33.00) (NO 4478 0335).⁷ In 1958, the parish churches of Newburn and Largo were united, and the church of Newburn is no longer in regular ecclesiastical use.

¹ NSA, 9, 124

² Wordsworth, PESA, xv

³ Bede, 'Life of Cuthbert', trans. JF Webb, *The Age of Bede*, 1988, Ch. 11. There is some debate as to whether the name refers to the place or the people – Watson, CPNS, 176-7

⁴ Skene, W, *Celtic Scotland*, 1886-90, I, 113, and II, 209

⁵ Simon Taylor, pers. comm.; Taylor, S, *Settlement names in Fife*, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh University 1995, 405; Duncan, AMM, *Scotland: Making of the Kingdom*, 1976, 78

⁶ Bede, 'Life of Cuthbert', 1988, 57

⁷ Millar, AH, *Fife: Pictorial and Historical*, II, 1895, 23

Newburn Old Parish Church ⁸

NMRS No NO 40 SE 1

Grid ref NO 4531 0352

2.2 c.2km from Forth

2.5 c.2km from major waterway

3.4 rectilinear enclosure ⁹

4. parish church until 1815

5. granted to Dunfermline by David I ¹⁰

Assessment: Possible. This church is recorded in the twelfth century and is near the sea, but otherwise there are no obvious indications that it is an early site.

⁸ There is no evidence for the suggestion that this was a Culdee foundation (Millar, *Fife*, II, 1895, 23)

⁹ Plan of graveyard - NMRS No. DC 42708, S Farrell 1999

¹⁰ Confirmed by Bishop Robert of St Andrews (1126-1158).

Balchristie ¹¹

NMRS No NO 40 SE 4

Grid ref NO 4578 0307

2.2 c.2km from Forth

2.5 c.2km from major waterway

3.1 ?chapel

3.3 Balchristie ¹²

5. grant of land to Loch Leven by Queen Margaret and Malcolm III

Assessment: **Unlikely.** There is no real evidence to point to there having been a church here, and the name is more likely to contain a personal name than a reference to an ecclesiastical foundation.

¹¹ There is an unlikely tradition that there was a Culdee foundation here, of which the supposed ruins were uncovered (NSA, 9, 125). This probably stems from the name 'Balchristie' (see note 12).

¹² This name may mean 'settlement of the Christians' (Millar, *Fife*, II, 1895, 24), but is quite possibly derived from *G bal* + personal name *Gillechrist*, in which it would not be unusual for the '*gille*' element to be dropped. (Taylor, S, 'Some Early Scottish Place-Names and Queen Margaret', *Scottish Language* 13, 1994, 13). The name would appear to predate the grant of the land, so is unlikely to be a response to it, as Millar supposed. (Millar, *Fife*, II, 1895, 23).

Pittenweem

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)¹

Location:

Pittenweem is on the south-eastern coast of Fife.

Parish Name:

The name comes from the P and G *'peit na huam(h)a'* or 'share of the cave'.²

Ecclesiastical History:

During the Middle Ages, Pittenweem was part of the old parish of Anstruther.

In the early fourteenth century, the Priory of the Isle of May was transferred to Pittenweem (NO 50 SW 5) (NO 5495 0257).³ It was sited over St Fillan's Cave (see below), and the monks built a stairway to the cave, leading from a vaulted cellar in the Priory Garden. The priory itself, though, seems to have kept closer links with St Adrian, the saint venerated on the May, than St Fillan. The current parish church (NO 50 SW 5.02) (NO 5491 0260) is on the site of the priory church and probably incorporates some of its fabric.

Other Churches:

There is a tradition that there was a monastery in the parish during the seventh century, of which St Fillan was the abbot and St Monan a monk who left to become a hermit in the neighbouring parish that

¹ As part of mediaeval parish of Anstruther

² Watson, *CPNS*, 412

³ The Priory may have had a chapel within the parish before this, but there is nothing to suggest it was an early foundation.

now bears his name. There is, however, no evidence that this is anything more than one of the more fanciful Fife legends.

Wells:

The Abbey Well (NO 50 SE 1) (NO 5520 0264) (possibly also known as St Mary Magdalene's) is now situated under a housing estate.⁴

Long Cist Burials:

A possible long cist may have been uncovered through coastal erosion on Anstruther Golf Course in 1995 (NO 50 SE 177) (NO 5565 0271).⁵ Due to damage, however, the nature of the burial could not be assessed and, to date, there has been no further investigation of the site in order to ascertain if this burial was part of a group or cemetery.

⁴ Morris, R and F, *Scottish Healing Wells*, 1982, 106

⁵ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=109510>, 29th May 2002

St Fillan's Cave ⁶

NMRS No NO 50 SW 6

Grid ref NO 5498 0252

1. St Fillan – Camerarius, *De Scotorum Fortitudine Doctrina et Pietate*, 1631, 76 ⁷

- 2.2 c.100m from Forth
- 2.4 cliff site
- 2.5 on major waterway

- 3.1 possibly served as chapel or meeting place
- 3.4 St Fillan's Well situated within inner section of the cave but has now largely dried up ⁸

4. pilgrimage site
fell into disrepair after the Reformation
restored and reconsecrated in 1935 ⁹

Assessment: Possible. There is no direct evidence that this cave was used in Early Christian times as a

⁶ This cave is presumably the site after which the parish is named. Although traditionally considered to have been a hermitage, a large natural shelter like this could easily have been an Early Christian meeting place. There are no traces of the Christian markings found at other cave sites in Fife, but these may simply have weathered away.

⁷ The attachment of the name of St Fillan to the cave may be late, being first recorded in the seventeenth century. It is quite likely to date to the early-fourteenth century, when the rights and revenues of the Priory of May / Pittenweem were transferred from Reading Priory in England to the Priory of St Andrews. This was at a time when the cult of St Fillan was gaining great popularity both in St Andrews, and within the Scottish church in general (Taylor, S, 'The Cult of St Fillan in Scotland', *The North Sea World in the Middle Ages*, ed. TR Liszka and LEM Walker, Dublin 2001, 190).

⁸ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=34254>, 29th May 2002; Morris R and F, *Scottish Healing Wells*, 1982, 106

⁹ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=34254>, 29th May 2002

chapel, retreat or hermitage, but the presence of a well within the cave could have marked it out as a suitable site for Christian ritual. The dedication to St Fillan may be a late addition to a holy site, or the whole thing the result of mediaeval invention.

St Andrews and St Leonards

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

The subject of the early church history of St Andrews and St Leonards would fill many volumes like this one, and so this is limited to a brief overview of the sites.¹

In 1862, Skene wrote that “although occupying the most prominent position in our ancient church hierarchy, and with a diocese extending from the borders of England to the River Dee, we know little as yet of the early history of St Andrews, except that it was a foundation of unknown antiquity, with a legendary history which derives its origin from Greece”.² Excavations of some of the surrounding burial sites, and analysis of the foundation legends, have helped shed some light on the situation, but much of the early history of the church in St Andrews remains an enigma.

The earlier name of St Andrews, Kilrymont, ‘the head of the king’s mount’ refers to a king but there is no evidence of a royal dwelling of the Pictish period.³ There are two versions of the St Andrews foundation legend, both based around the idea that Kilrymont was a royal foundation, and this is not unlikely.⁴

¹ For a more detailed study of the history of the parish, see: Anderson, MO, ‘The Celtic Church in Kinridding’, *Innes Review* 25, 1974 (reprinted in *The Mediaeval Church of St Andrews*, ed. D MacRoberts, Glasgow, 1976).

² Skene, W, ‘Notice of the Early Ecclesiastical Settlements at St Andrews’, *PSAS*, 4, 1862, 301

³ Anderson, M, ‘St Andrews before Alexander I’, *The Scottish Tradition*, ed. G Barrow, 1974, 1

⁴ Both legends exist in twelfth century versions. In the first, and shorter, version, Ungus son of Uргуист, has a vision of St Andrew while campaigning in Mercia, and after his victory promises to give one tenth of his land to God and the saint. At the same time, in Constantinople, St Regulus has a vision telling him to take the relics of St Andrew overseas. Regulus lands at *Cenn rig monaid* where Ungus meets him and gives over one third of his kingdom and the headship of all the churches of the Picts (Macquarrie, A, ‘Early Christian Religious Houses in Scotland: foundation and function’, *Pastoral Care Before the Parish*, ed. J. Blair and R. Sharpe, 1992, 118; see also Broun, D, ‘The Church of St Andrews and its foundation legend in the early twelfth century: recovering the full text of Version A of the foundation legend’, *Kings, Clerics and Chronicles in Scotland, 500-1297*, ed. S Taylor, 2000). In the second version, the king, Hungus son of Forso, is fighting Athelstan at Tyne (Macquarrie, ‘Early Christian Religious Houses’, 1992, 119; see also Taylor, S, ‘The coming of the Augustinians to St Andrews and version B of the St Andrews foundation legend’, *Kings, Clerics and Chronicles in Scotland, 500-1297*, ed. S Taylor, 2000)

Traditionally, the late-sixth century saint Cainnech of Aghaboe has been connected to the site, as his relics is recorded in the twelfth century notes of the Martyrology of Oengus. However, the Culdees held Cainnech in particular veneration c.800, so the relics may date to this time.⁵

The death of an abbot Tuathalan is recorded in the Irish annals in 747, indicating that the church was monastic before this date. The nature of the monastery here is uncertain. Amongst the cluster of 'cill' names around St Andrews, which may have been coined around the early eighth century, there appear to be two commemorating Dunchad, an abbot of Iona of that period. This is not evidence that Kilrymont was a Columban foundation, but does perhaps indicate a close relationship between the two churches. There is no actual physical evidence for monasticism at Kilrymont, except for that of the Culdees.⁶ The second foundation legend names seven chapels built at or soon after the foundation in addition to the basilica of St Andrew.⁷ Multiple chapels were not unusual at Irish foundations, but it is uncertain if the legend records the chapels because they existed or because the writer knew about the Irish example and assumed Kilrymont would have been the same.

The site or sites of the earliest church buildings are uncertain. Cemeteries dating from the fifth or sixth century have been found to the north east and south of the cathedral precinct, and more early burials may lie under the extensive cathedral graveyard. There is a tradition that there was an early foundation on the Lady Craig, a rocky coastal promontory to the north east of the precinct, but as it has largely eroded away, excavation will not prove or disprove this. Anderson suggests that there may have been a church to the south of the precinct (now within the lands of St Leonards School), on a site where a stone 'shrine' or hogback, dated to c.800, was found in 1895 with associated burials.⁸

⁵ Anderson, 'St Andrews before Alexander I', 1974,

⁶ *ibid.*, 3

⁷ Anderson, 'Celtic Church', 1976, 2

⁸ *ibid.*, 2

All the early burials and evidence for a church have fallen within an area of 10 acres, comparable to the areas enclosed by monastic *valla* at Iona and Clonmacnoise,⁹ and the layout of the cathedral precinct may preserve part of the outline of a rectilinear *vallum* similar to that at those sites.¹⁰ According to the second foundation legend, the church's boundary was marked by stone crosses, but there do not appear to be any left *in situ*.

Churches and Chapels

St Rule's Tower (NO 51 NW 2.05) (NO 5147 1664)

Probably dated to the 11th or 12th century, and situated in the Cathedral precinct. This church may have started life as a reliquary church, and was presumably the main church at the site, before the Cathedral was built.

St Magdalene's (NO 51 NW 19) (NO 5148 1662)

Part of a building column was found in the cathedral graveyard in 1911, approximately twenty metres from the east end of St Rule's, and was supposed to be a ruin of this church *in situ*.¹¹ This chapel was recorded in 1571.¹²

St Mary's (NO 51 NW 7) (NO 5156 1666)

The ruins of this church, probably built in the twelfth century, can still be seen on the Kirkheugh, on the site of the earlier Culdee church. The Kirkheugh is a headland on a cliff, situated to the east of the Cathedral precinct. It is said that the first church was built on the Lady Craig, a rock formation to the west of the church but was abandoned due to the encroaching sea.¹³ This site has now largely

⁹ *ibid*, 1976, 3

¹⁰ Smith, I, "The origins and development of Christianity in north Britain and southern Pictland", *Church Archaeology: Research Directions for the Future*, ed. J Blair and C Pyrah, CBA Research Report 104, 1996, 33

¹¹ CANMORE - http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details_gis?inumlink=34298

¹² CANMORE - http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details_gis?inumlink=34298

¹³ Wordsworth, J, and Clark, P, 'Kirkhill', *Excavations in St Andrews 1980-89*, ed M Rains and D Hall, TAFAL, 1997

disappeared, so it is impossible to assess the likelihood of this. There may have been a freshwater spring well at the bottom of the rock.¹⁴

St Michael's

One of the chapels listed in the second St Andrews foundation legend.¹⁵

Old Holy Trinity Parish Church (NO 51 NW 17) (NO 5147 1668)

The original parish church was within the cathedral precinct. Fragments of the St Andrews Sarcophagus were found nearby.

St Peter's Chapel

This chapel was recorded in 1212. Pieces of masonry and 5 or 6 long cist burials have been found in a garden in Gregory's Lane, next to the Cathedral precinct, and they are thought to relate to this chapel.¹⁶

Chapel, Nydie Mains (NO 41 NW 15) (NO 447 175)

The ruins of a building, presumably a chapel, were removed from Chapel Field around 1900. Nothing more is known about the site.

Pitmilly (NO 51 SE 16) (NO 5619 1368)

A possible long cist was found inside Boarhills church in 1867, towards the altar.¹⁷ The church that stands on the site today was built in the nineteenth century, but was on an earlier site.

¹⁴ Hay Fleming, D, *Handbook to St Andrews*, 1927, 85

¹⁵ Anderson, 'St Andrews before Alexander I', 1974, 3

¹⁶ Hay Fleming, *St Andrews*, 1927, 95

¹⁷ CANMORE - http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details_gis?inumlink=34381, 25th June 2002

Burials

Kirkheugh (NO 51 NW 38) (NO 515 166)

This site was excavated in 1980 when severe coastal erosion was going to force the council to consolidate the cliff, and destroy the archaeology of the site.¹⁸ Three hundred burials were found at this site, but this was thought to be only a small sample of what was present.¹⁹ Apart from one wooden coffin and three long cists, all the burials were simple inhumations. Some burials at the site dated to the middle of the first millennium BC, but the majority dated from the fifth to the twelfth century.²⁰ The burials were cut through by the twelfth century St Mary's Church, but may be related to its predecessor. No traces of a building were found with the burials.²¹

Canongate (NO 41 NE 23) (NO 4954 1559)

A single long cist was found c.1977.

St Leonard's School (NO 51 NW 22) (NO 5134 1653)

Around 1895, ten cists and thirty to sixty burials were found. Alongside the burials was a shrine shaped monument (a hogback) and a free standing cross.

St Nicholas's Farm (NO 51 NW 28) (NO 5180 1595)

This burial ground was assumed to be that of the plague hospital which was founded in the twelfth century. However, C-14 dates on some of the bones indicated a fifth- to seventh-century date, suggesting that this had been a burial ground in the Early Christian period.

A small boulder with an equal-armed cross was found near the site in the 1990s.²²

¹⁸ Wordsworth and Clark, 'Kirkhill', 1997

¹⁹ *ibid.*, 14

²⁰ *ibid.*, 13

²¹ *ibid.*, 16

²² CANMORE - http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details_gis?inumlink=101474

Step Rock (NO 51 NW 62) (NO 5070 1713)

Two burials without coffins (one male and one female) were found in c1981.²³

St Peter's Chapel

See above

Pitmilly

See above

Hallow Hill (NO 41 NE 8) (NO 4930 1565)

A hill site with a burn running along the bottom.

In 1861 an extensive long cist cemetery was located at this site by antiquarians who were attracted by its name of Haly Hill.²⁴ A limited excavation was carried out, in which twenty burials were located, and assumed to be a small sample of what was there.²⁵ Further excavations were carried out in the 1970s by Edwina Proudfoot, when part of the site was under threat of development from housing. During this excavation 145 burials were found, comprising 122 in long cists, 10 dug graves and 13 boulder edged graves.²⁶ The burials were generally orientated E-W, although some tended towards NE or SE.²⁷ A cobbled road was also uncovered running through the site.²⁸ The burial ground was unenclosed,²⁹ probably because of the topography of the site.

The site has been identified at Eglesnamin, a previously lost place name recorded in the land holdings of St Andrews Cathedral. The name contains the 'egles' element, and the specific is 'namin', referring

²³ CANMORE - http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details_gis?inumlink=34350

²⁴ Proudfoot, E, 'Excavations at the long cist cemetery on the Hallow Hill, St Andrews, Fife, 1975-7', *PSAS* 1996, 387

²⁵ *ibid.*, 388

²⁶ *ibid.*, 399

²⁷ *ibid.*, 408

²⁸ *ibid.*, 416

²⁹ *ibid.*, 415

either to a saint Naemhan, or, more likely, to a *nemeton* or holy place.³⁰ *Nemeton* (from G *neimheadh*) could also be translated as 'shrine', or be an indication of a pre-Christian site, used as a burial ground.

The '*egles*' element would seem to indicate that there was a church at this site, and though no actual buildings were uncovered, a group of postholes may point to a possibly bicameral wooden chapel,³¹ contemporary with the nearby burials.

The majority of the burials were dated from the sixth to the ninth century,³² and there do not appear to have been any after this date, suggesting that as the focus of the church moved east towards Kilrymont, Eglesnamin fell out of use.

Cave

Kinkell Cave (NO 51 NW 42) (NO 5320 1574)

This cave had incised crosses on the walls, but they have been weathered away and can no longer be seen. A carved stone with a human figure, possibly a monk, and crosses was found within the cave. There were signs it had been inhabited in the Roman period.³³

St Rule's Cave

Also known as Lady Buchan's Cave. This cave was artificially enlarged, probably in the seventeenth century, and despite the altar-like feature on the eastern side,³⁴ the tradition linking it with St Rule or the early church is probable spurious.

³⁰ Barrow, GWS, 'The Childhood of Scottish Christianity: a Note on Some Place Name Evidence', *Scottish Studies*, 27, 1983, 8

³¹ Proudfoot, 'Hallow Hill', 396

³² *ibid.*, 447

³³ CANMORE - http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details_gis?inumlink=34328

³⁴ Hay Fleming, *St Andrews*, 1927, 94-5

Fort

Promontory Fort near Kittock's Den (NO 51 NE 1) (NO 5320 1574)

An earthwork of uncertain date marks what appears to be a promontory fort.³⁵

Carved Stones

Sarcophagus

Pieces of a stone sarcophagus were found in St Andrews graveyard in 1833, and were brought together in 1922. The sarcophagus has been dated to around c.800, and is a major piece of Pictish sculpture, unique in Scotland.³⁶

A large collection of Early Christian carved stones have been found at St Andrews (NO 51 NW 23), many of them between St Rule's and the east end of the Cathedral. Most of the stones date from the ninth century or later and are in the Cathedral Museum.³⁷

Wells

There are numerous holy wells within the parish. The monk's well, in the modern extension to the Cathedral graveyard, is supposed to mark the site of the Early Christian community founded by St

³⁵ CANMORE - http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details_gis?inumlink=34284

³⁶ For an extensive discussion of the sarcophagus see Foster, S, ed., *St Andrews Sarcophagus*, 1998

³⁷ For a discussion of most of these stones, see Hay Fleming, D, *St Andrews Cathedral Museum*, 1931

Cainnech, and was possibly a site of some significance in pre-Christian times.³⁸ St Leonard's Well, Holly Well, Chapel Well and St Salvator's Well, plus three unnamed wells are also within the vicinity of the Cathedral precinct.³⁹ There is a Lady Well at Strathkinness (NO 463 160) and the St Andrews Wells are near Morton of Blebo (NO 437 146).⁴⁰

³⁸ Morris, R and F, Scottish Healing Wells, 1982, 107

³⁹ *ibid.*, 107

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 108

St Monance

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

St Monance is situated on the south east coast of Fife.

Parish Name:

The parish was known as Abercrombie until 1646 (the first record of the name is in 1174), but became known as 'Abercrombie with St Monance' after the annexation of the barony of St Monans from the parish of Kilconquhar.¹ Except for a short period in the nineteenth century, when the original name was revived, the parish has been known as St Monance since the late seventeenth century, when parish church status passed from Abercrombie to the church of the barony.

¹ NSA, 9, 337-8

St Monan's Cave ²

NMRS No NO 50 SW 11

Grid ref NO 5231 0147

1. St Monan ³
 - 2.2 on Forth coast
 - 2.4 cliff site
 - 2.5 on major waterway

 - 3.7 situated on mediaeval pilgrim route to St Andrews, possibly reflecting older pilgrimage route
4. traditionally hermitage
shrine and pilgrimage site

Assessment: Possible. There are no obvious indications that this site was used during the Early Christian period, but it may be one of the number of Fife sea caves which was used for Christian

² The main focus of St Monan's cult within the parish, the cave, or cell, is situated in the face of a perpendicular rock, a short distance from the parish church and is reached by a narrow, steep path. It shows no signs of Early Christian activity, such as the carved crosses which can be seen at Caiplie in Kilrenny parish, but these may have weathered away. There is little left of the cave today (Martin, P, *What to See in St Monans*, 1991, 1), and what is there has been partly reconstructed (CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=34197>, 29th May 2002).

³ According to local tradition, St Monan was a sixth- or seventh-century religious recluse from the monastery at Pittenweem, but this monastery would appear to be a figment of antiquarian imagination. Watson believes that St Monan is in fact Moinenn, an Irish saint, who was bishop of Brendan's monastery of Clonfert and died in AU 572 (Watson, *CPNS*, 328-9). It is unclear, however, why this saint should be venerated here and at another potentially very early site at Kilminning in Crail parish, and it seems more likely that this was a local saint with a local cult, who has become confused with the Irish one. It has also been suggested that the name, Monan, is a corruption of Ninian (Martin, *St Monans*, 1991, 1), but this is very unlikely. Another tradition links Monan to St Adrian and his mission to the Isle of May (*Orgyvnale Cronykil of Scotland* by Wyntoun c.1406), but it is very unclear whether Monan is linked to the East Neuk because he was involved with this mission, or if he has been linked to this tradition because he was an established east Fife saint.

purposes at this time. It is unclear when the dedication to St Monan was attached to this site, but if he is the saint recorded at Kilminning, he is connected, by the seventh or eighth century, with at least one site in Fife.

Abercrombie Old Parish Church ⁴

NMRS No NO 50 SW 1

Grid ref NO 5220 0346

2.2 on Dreel Burn

c.2km from Forth

2.5 c.2km from major waterway

3.6 six fragments of Class III stones built into church walls ⁵

4. parish church until seventeenth century

5. ? (church of Kellin and chapel of) *Abercrumbin*, 1157x60, *Dunf. Reg.*, no. 40

Assessment: Probable. The presence of a number of carved stones at this church, its situation on a burn and its record in a twelfth-century document, indicate that there was almost certainly an Early Christian foundation on the site.

⁴ As the parish of Abercrombie shared its name with another in west Fife (See Torryburn parish), the history of its mediaeval church is unclear, but it is likely to be the chapel listed alongside the church of Kellie (now Carnbee) from the mid-twelfth century.

⁵ Allen, JR and Anderson, J, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, 1903, part III, 347

St Monans Chapel

NMRS No NO 50 SW 18.00

Grid ref NO 522 014

1. St Monan
 - 2.2 situated on Forth
 - 2.4 cliff site
 - 2.5 situated on major waterway
 - 3.1 chapel
 - 3.7 situated on pilgrimage route
4. chapel 'refounded' c1369 ⁶
attained parish status late-17th century ⁷

Assessment: Possible. This chapel may have been built as a response to St Monan's Cave becoming a pilgrimage site, but it also may have been the original Christian site in the area, with the cave being adopted later as 'tangible' evidence of the saint's presence there. Indications that the chapel may have been on an Early Christian site are its location on a cliff on the Firth of Forth, its re-founding in the fourteenth century, and the local cult of St Monan that was thriving by that time.

⁶ The origin, and original dedication, of this church is uncertain, but it was re-founded as a 'chapel of St Monan' by King David II c.1369 (Watson, *CPNS*, 329). It may be the chapel listed alongside Kilconquhar church in *St And. Lib.* 33, 1223x1255.

⁷ The current parish church was built on the same site in 1826 (NO 50 SW 191.00) (CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=100620>, 29th May 2002).

Saline

(Diocese of Dunkeld)

(Deanery of Fife and Strathearn)

Location:

Saline is in the south west of Fife

Ecclesiastical History:

Before 1890, the parish was made up of two detached portions, one to the north of Carnock and one to the south west of that parish. In that year, however, the Boundary Commission gave the second of these to Torryburn parish and joined the northern detached portion of Torryburn to Saline.¹

Parish History:

There are two hill forts, one on Cult Hill (NT 09 NW 6) (NT 0246 9650), and another on Saline Hill, known as Easter Cairn (NT 09 SW 4) (NT 0428 9335). Both have been dated, through analysis of their surviving remains, to the Iron Age,² but they may have remained in use into the Pictish period.

Wells:

There is a holy well within the parish (NT 09 SW 32) (NT 0367 9288), which was reputed to have potent healing powers and attracted many visitors.³

¹ Millar, *Fife: Pictorial and Historical*, II, 1895, 241

² CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=49663>, 29th May 2002; CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=49705>, 29th May 2002

³ Morris, R and F, *Scottish Healing Wells*, 1982, 106

Saline Parish Church

NMRS No NT 09 SW 13.00

Grid ref NT 0228 9243

- 2.1 on slope of Saline Hill
- 2.2 c.100m from burn
- 2.3 c.2km from Saline Hill fort

4. parish church until present

5. 1236x49, granted as a common church of Dunkeld by Bishop Geoffrey⁴

Assessment: Possible. This church is situated on the side of a hill and is recorded in the thirteenth century, but there is little indication that this was an Early Christian foundation.

⁴ Cowan, IB, The Parishes of Medieval Scotland, Edinburgh 1967, 179

Scoonie

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fife)

Location:

Scoonie is on the central southern coast of Fife.

Place Names:

St Ethernan, whose name occurs on a carved stone found in Scoonie churchyard, may be commemorated in the place name Aithernie (NO 37 03), a barony near the boundary with Largo, which was granted to North Berwick in 1160.¹ There is, however, nothing obviously linking the saint to Aithernie and there is no suggestion that there is a chapel or Early Christian site within the area.

Carved Stones:

A Class II carved stone was found in Scoonie churchyard and is currently in the NMS, Edinburgh (NO 30 SE 15) (NO 3840 0167). On the obverse is a badly weathered cross, and on the reverse a hunting scene with Pictish beasts and an ogham inscription reading EDDARRNONN,² a form of the name Ethernan. The saint is not known to have been commemorated at the parish church, but one local tradition suggests that there was a cave or shelter connected to the saint in the parish.³

Hillforts:

A possible hillfort was uncovered at Mount Fleurie (NO 30 SE 17) (NO 3590 1237), but was destroyed by industrial development before it was dated.⁴

¹ Millar, AH, *Fife: Pictorial and Historical*, II, 1895, 47

² Allen, JR and Anderson, J, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, 1903, III, 347

³ Scoonie Kirk - <http://www.fife.50megs.com/scoonie-kirk.htm>, 29th May, 2002.

⁴ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=31330>, 29th May 2002

Long Cist Burials:

Possible long cists were recorded in the OSA⁵ (NO 30 SE 7) (NO 39 03), but their age, nature and exact position are unknown.

Modern Churches:

In 1775, the old parish church was replaced by a new church in Leven (NO 30 SE 72.00) (NO 383 009), nearer the majority of the population.⁶

⁵ OSA, 15, 115

⁶ Millar, Eife, II, 1895, 48

Scoonie Old Parish Church ⁷

NMRS No NO 30 SE 14.00

Grid ref NO 3833 0166

1. St Memme, 1243, *St And. Lib.*, 348 ⁸

- 2.2 on burn
c.1km from Forth

- 2.5 near major waterway

- 3.4 Holy or Eucharist Well in churchyard ⁹

- 3.6 Class II stone found in churchyard

4. parish church until 1775

5. c.1055, *St And. Lib.*, 43

⁷ Although the Class II stone and the dedication to St Memme can be taken as probable indicators that this was an early foundation, the strongest evidence comes from the derivation of the name Methil (Wemyss parish). This name, meaning 'middle church', contains the 'cill' element, suggesting that it dates to c.700 (see *introduction 3.3*). Taylor has suggested the church was thus named because it was situated between two earlier foundations, probably Scoonie and Markinch (Taylor, S, *Settlement names in Fife*, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh University 1994, 297). If this is the case, it would put the date of foundation for the other two churches back to at least the seventh century.

⁸ St Memme is not apparently recorded elsewhere, either as a dedication or in the genealogies of the saints. The *Fasti* suggests that the dedication was to Modwenna, a British saint (*Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae*, ed. H. Scott, Edinburgh 1925, 5, 116), but Memme is not a recognized form of this name (Robert Bartlett, pers. comm.), and there are no other indications of a Modwenna cult in the parish, in any parishes which are associated with it, or in Fife as a whole. The dedication to Memme is recorded at such an early date (1243 in *St And. Lib.*, 348) that it cannot be dismissed as an antiquarian invention. As many of the dedications to lesser known saints in this document belonged to churches which were granted to Loch Leven, it could be suggested that this house had an active policy of dedicating its secondary churches to local saints or saints that were venerated by the monks on the island. If so, Memme, could well have been a local saint or someone particularly venerated by the community or one of the brethren.

Assessment: Probable. The presence of the cross slab, the location of the church near the Firth of Forth, next to a burn and beside a holy well, and the dedication to Memme, almost certainly indicate that this church was an Early Christian foundation, possibly dating to the seventh or eighth century. If Scoonie is one of the two churches responsible for the church at Methil being named 'middle church' around 700 AD (see Wemyss parish and map), then that would suggest that it is a seventh century foundation.¹⁰ Scoonie is also one of the few churches in Fife to be recorded in the eleventh century.

⁹ Morris, R and F, *Scottish Holy Wells*, 1982, 104

¹⁰ Taylor, *Settlement names*, 1994, 297

Strathmiglo

(Diocese of Dunkeld)

(Deanery of Fife and Strathearn)

Location:

Strathmiglo is on the western edge of Fife.

Parish Name:

The mediaeval parish was also known as 'Ecclesmartin',¹ suggesting that there was a seventh- or eighth-century church somewhere within the parish, dedicated to St Martin. As the old parish church has traditionally been given that dedication, it is likely that Ecclesmartin was at or near this site. There are two Ecclesmartin place names in Fife, the other being at Inchmartin in Aberdour or Dalgety parish. Apart from the name, however, there are no obvious links between the two places.²

Carved Stones:

There is a Class I Pictish stone within the parish, currently erected outside the parish church (NO 21 SW 21) (NO 2167 1022). The original position is unknown as the stone was first recorded in 1968 in a gatepost (NO 209 101).³

¹ Taylor, S, *Settlement names in Fife*, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh University 1994, 323

² They may both have been stopping points on an old north-south routeway, and Strathmiglo lies on what would have been an important cross-roads in the early mediaeval period (Taylor, *ibid.*, 323). They are also both detached portions of the Diocese of Dunkeld.

³ Stevenson, RBK, 'Strathmiglo', *D and E*, 1969

Strathmiglo Old Parish Church

NMRS No NO 21 SW 8

Grid ref NO 2169 1020

1. St Martin

- 2.2 c.200m from River Eden
c.400m from Barroway Burn

- 2.5 situated at crossing of important north-south and west-east routeways

- 3.3 Eglismartin (containing 'egles' element)

- 3.6 Class I stone found nearby, but original site unknown

4. parish church until present ⁴
collegiate in sixteenth century

5. (church of) *Stradmigeloch*, 1173x78, *St And. Lib.*, 223

Assessment: Probable. The 'egles' element suggests that there was an Early Christian foundation in the vicinity, probably on the site of this church, which is recorded in the twelfth century. There are, however, no other positive indications.

⁴ Current church built on site in 1787

Gateside⁵

NMRS No NO 10 NE 8

Grid ref NO 1854 0926

1. St Mary⁶
 - 2.1 situated in valley between Lomonds and Ochils
 - 2.2 on River Eden
 - 2.5 situated on important west-east routeway
 - 3.1 chapel
 - 3.5 well (NO 1852 0918)⁷
4. chapel tended by monks of Balmerino
out of use by Reformation

Assessment: Unlikely. Despite this chapel's situation in the valley beside the River Eden, it is probably a later mediaeval foundation (founded from Balmerino Abbey) rather than an Early Christian one.

⁵ This chapel was tended by monks from Balmerino Abbey, and was probably founded from the Abbey, which held extensive lands in Strathmiglo parish. The dedication is also likely to date to this time, but it is still possible that this was an early site, perhaps with a different, now lost, dedication.

⁶ See note 5

⁷ Morris, R and F, *Scottish Healing Wells*, 1982, 102

Torryburn

(Diocese of St Andrews)

*(Deanery of Fothrif)*¹

(Diocese of St Andrews)

*(later Diocese of Dunkeld)*²

Location:

Torryburn is on the south west coast of Fife.

Ecclesiastical History:

The parish is made up of two mediaeval parishes, Torry and Abercrombie or Crombie, which were joined sometime before 1622 and were held by the same minister from at least as early as the Reformation.³ The two parishes do not appear to have had a close relationship during the Middle Ages; while Torry was in the Diocese of St Andrews and the Deanery of Fothrif, Abercrombie was moved from St Andrews to the Diocese of Dunkeld during the thirteenth century.⁴ In 1890, the Boundary Commission gave a detached portion of Torryburn to Saline parish, and a detached portion of Saline was given to Torryburn.⁵

The history of Abercrombie parish (it does not seem to have been known as Crombie until after 1546)⁶ has become confused with the parish of the same name in east Fife (now St Monance). A chapel of Abercrombie is recorded in c.1160 in a grant to Dunfermline Abbey,⁷ where it appears next to the

¹ The mediaeval parish of Torry

² The mediaeval parish of Abercrombie

³ Cunningham, AS, *Romantic Culross, Torryburn, Carnock, Cairneyhill, Saline and Pitfirrane*, Dunfermline 1902, 88

⁴ Taylor, S, *Settlement Names in Fife*, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh University 1994, 152

⁵ Millar, AH, *Fife: Pictorial and Historical*, II, 1885, 241

⁶ Taylor, *Settlement Names*, 1994, 159

⁷ *Dunf. Reg.*, no. 40

church of Kellie (now Carnbee) in the donation list. As the two also occur together in the taxation list for the Diocese of St Andrews / Deanery of Fife,⁸ it suggests (although it is not conclusive) that this was St Monance.

Hillforts:

There is one possible hillfort within the parish, at Tuilyies (NT 08 NW 45) (NT 0293 8625).

⁸ *St And. Lib.*, 33-4

Abercrombie Old Parish Church

NMRS No NT 08 NW 5

Grid ref NT 0282 8554

- 2.2 c.100m from Forth
- 2.4 on headland
- 2.5 situated on major waterway

- 4. parish church until c.1622⁹

Assessment: Possible. The location of this church on a headland in the Firth of Forth and its tradition of use are the only indications that this might have been an Early Christian foundation.

⁹ Torry Parish Church became the main church when the parishes were united, presumably because it was nearer the majority of the population.

Torry Old Parish Church

NMRS No n/a

Grid ref NT 0259 8611

- 2.2 on burn
c.300m from Forth
- 2.5 near major waterway
- 4. parish church until present ¹⁰
- 5. *ecclesia de Torry*, c. 1250, *St And. Lib.*, 33

Assessment: Possible. This church is situated beside a burn and is near the Firth of Forth, but there are no other indications that it is an Early Christian foundation.

¹⁰ The current parish church (NT 08 NW 6) (NT 0259 8611) was built on the site of the earlier church in 1800.

Tulliallan

(Diocese of Dunblane)

Location:

Tulliallan is on the extreme west of Fife.

Ecclesiastical History:

Tulliallan and Culross formed a detached portion of Perthshire until the 1890s, and were also both part of the diocese of Dunblane, the only parishes in Fife where this was the case. The mediaeval parish consisted of the estate of Tulliallan, but was enlarged in 1659 by the addition of parts of Culross.¹

Parish History:

A possible Roman fortlet has been identified from aerial photographs (NS 98 NW 16) (NS 930 872).² The date and nature of this fortlet are unclear, but could indicate a period of Roman occupation within the parish.

Modern Churches:

A new parish church was built in 1675 at NS 9338 8808 (NS 98 NW 7), and this was in turn replaced in 1835 by another church at NS 9325 8789.

¹ Millar, AH, *Fife: Pictorial and Historical*, II, 1885, 253

² CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=48072>, 29th May 2002

Tulliallan Old Parish Church

NMRS No NS 98 NW 2

Grid ref NS 9404 8952

- 2.1 on ridge
- 2.2 c.300m from Peppermill Dam
 - c.100m from burn
 - c.2km from River Forth
- 2.5 c.2km from major waterway

- 3.6 11th-century hog back, with possible incised cross, standing outside the church.³

- 4. parish church until 1675

Assessment: Possible. The hog back stone would suggest that there was a Christian presence here by the eleventh century. The church's location near a burn and on a ridge may indicate that it was an Early Christian foundation, but there are no other positive indications.

³ CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=48125>, 29th May 2002

Longannet Point ⁴

NMRS No NS 98 NW 15

Grid ref NS 947 854

2.2 on coast of Firth of Forth / River Forth

2.5 on major waterway

3.3 Longannet (containing '*lann*' and '*annaid*' elements) ⁵

Assessment: Probable. The proposed derivation of this place name would suggest that there was an Early Christian church in this area but it is unclear where exactly this would have been.

⁴ Although there are no records of a church or chapel here, and there are no physical remains, the name is thought to derive from G '*Lann na h-Annaide*', ⁴ with *lann* meaning 'church' or 'enclosure', and *annat*, also referring to an early church or church land (see introduction *section 3.3*).

⁵ See footnote 4

Chapel Hill ⁶

NMRS No NS 98 NW 6

Grid ref NS 9294 8820

- 2.1 on hill
- 2.2 c.500m from River Forth
- 2.5 near major waterway

- 3.1 chapel
- 3.3 Chapel Hill

Assessment: **Unlikely.** Too little is known about this site to assess its date of origin, except that it is mediaeval.

⁶ This site is apparently undocumented, but has been identified from both the place name, Chapel Hill, and the presence of building ruins ("The single cell building measures approximately 10m by 7m, with walls surviving no higher than 0.6m. Opposed entrances at west end, each with large single threshold stone, well worn. Altar base exposed at east end. The floor was sealed in places by possible collapsed wall plaster. There was evidence of the structure having been destroyed by fire." - Wolsey, B, 'Chapel Hill: chapel', *D and E*, 1991, 21). The chapel is locally supposed to have been pre-Reformation, but there is no dedication associated with it, and it is uncertain what role it would have played, as it is quite close to the mediaeval parish church.

Wemyss

(Diocese of St Andrews)

(Deanery of Fothrif)

Location:

Wemyss is on the south coast of Fife.

Ecclesiastical History:

The parish is made up of the mediaeval parishes of Wemyss and Methil, which were united in the 1630s.¹

Parish Name:

The name presumably derives from *G uaimh*, 'caves', referring to the row of caves along the coast.

Caves:

Several of the Wemyss caves show signs of Pictish activity, including religious practice. Carved Pictish symbols exist or have existed in Court Cave (NT 39 NW 3) (NT 3427 9694), Doo Cave (NT 39 NW 7) (NT 3433 9700), Sloping Cave (NT 39 NW 8) (NT 3461 9727) and Well Cave (NT 39 NW 10) (NT 3444 9714). In Jonathan's Cave (see separate entry), there are both Pictish symbols and several different styles of cross, thought to date from the Early Christian period.² It is possible that this cave was used as a chapel or religious meeting place during the Pictish period, or, less likely, that it was a retreat, although no saint is linked with it. The caves were probably also the site of pre-Christian ritual; the well in Well Cave was reputed to have healing powers, and was the focal point of an annual torchlit procession on the first Monday of the New Year, a tradition which is though locally to date

¹ Taylor, S, *Settlement names in Fife*, unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh University 1994, 297

² Allen, JR, and Anderson, J, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, 1903, part III, 370-3

back to pre-Christian times.³ The well later came to be dedicated to St Margaret.⁴

Modern Churches:

The current parish church at Methil was built on a new site in 1924, nearer the centre of the population (NT 39 NE 50) (NT 3698 9950).

Wemyss Parish Church, dedicated to St George (NT 39 NW 114) (NT 3366 9676), lies near the ruins of the old church.

³ Morris, R and F, Scottish Healing Wells, 1982, 101

⁴ *ibid.*, 101

Jonathan's Cave

NMRS No NT 39 NW 10

Grid ref NO 3456 9723

- 2.2 beside Forth
- 2.4 cave
- 2.5 on major waterway

- 3.1 possibly chapel or meeting place
- 3.2 burials at mouth of cave⁵
- 3.5 holy well in Well Cave (NT 344 971)
- 3.6 carvings of Pictish symbols and crosses on cave walls
neighbouring caves have carved Pictish symbols

- 4. local tradition of caves being used for pre-Christian ritual
said to have been inhabited in seventeenth century by 'Jonathan' and his family
Well Cave was focus of local custom until 19th century

Assessment: Probable. The combination of Pictish symbols and incised crosses suggest that this site was almost certainly used during the Early Christian period, although it is unclear exactly how it would have functioned. It is likely that the burials relate to the Christian use of the site.

⁵ Two burials were discovered near Jonathan's Cave (NT 39 NW 31.03) (NT 345 972) and (NT 39 NW 31.04) (NT 3451 9718), in the 1980s and 1990s (CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=53972>, 29th May 2002; CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=101012>, 29th May 2002). Neither were long cists, but one may have been deliberately placed on a pebble floor, perhaps suggesting some form of (?Christian) ritual burial. This burial was C-14 dated to the period from the late ninth- to mid-thirteenth century (CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=101012>, 29th May 2002).

Methil Old Parish Church

NMRS No NO 30 SE 11

Grid ref NO 3589 0060

2.2 on River Leven

c.2km from Forth

2.5 c.2km from major waterway

3.3 *Methkil* (containing 'cill' element)⁶

4. parish church until c.1924

5. *ecclesia de Methkil*, c.1250, *St And. Lib.*, 33

Assessment: Probable. The 'cill' element in this name would suggest that there was an early Christian foundation in this area, most probably on the site of this church.

⁶ The name 'Methil' is a 'cill' name, probably meaning 'middle church' (Taylor, *Settlement names*, 297). Taylor suggests that the church was thus named because it was situated between two earlier foundations, probably Scoonie and Markinch (*ibid.*, 297). If 'Methil' was one of those 'cill' names coined c.700 (and there is no reason to suggest it was not), then this puts the date of foundation for the other two churches back to at least the seventh century.

Wemyss Old Parish Church

NMRS No NT 39 NW 115

Grid ref NT 3403 9676

1. St Mary, c.1239, *Midl. Chrs. (Soutra)* no.14
- 2.2 beside Forth
- 2.4 cliff site
- 2.5 situated on major waterway
4. parish church ⁷
5. (Radulphus, rector of church of) Wemyss, x1214, *St And Lib.*, 381

Assessment: Possible. The location of this church on a cliff along the coast of the Firth of Forth, and its naming in a thirteenth century charter, may indicate that it was an early foundation, but there are no other obvious indications. The dedication probably does not date to the Early Christian period.

⁷ The current parish church lies nearby.

Chapel Garden⁸

NMRS No NT 39 SW 14

Grid ref NT 3190 9466

2.2 beside Firth of Forth

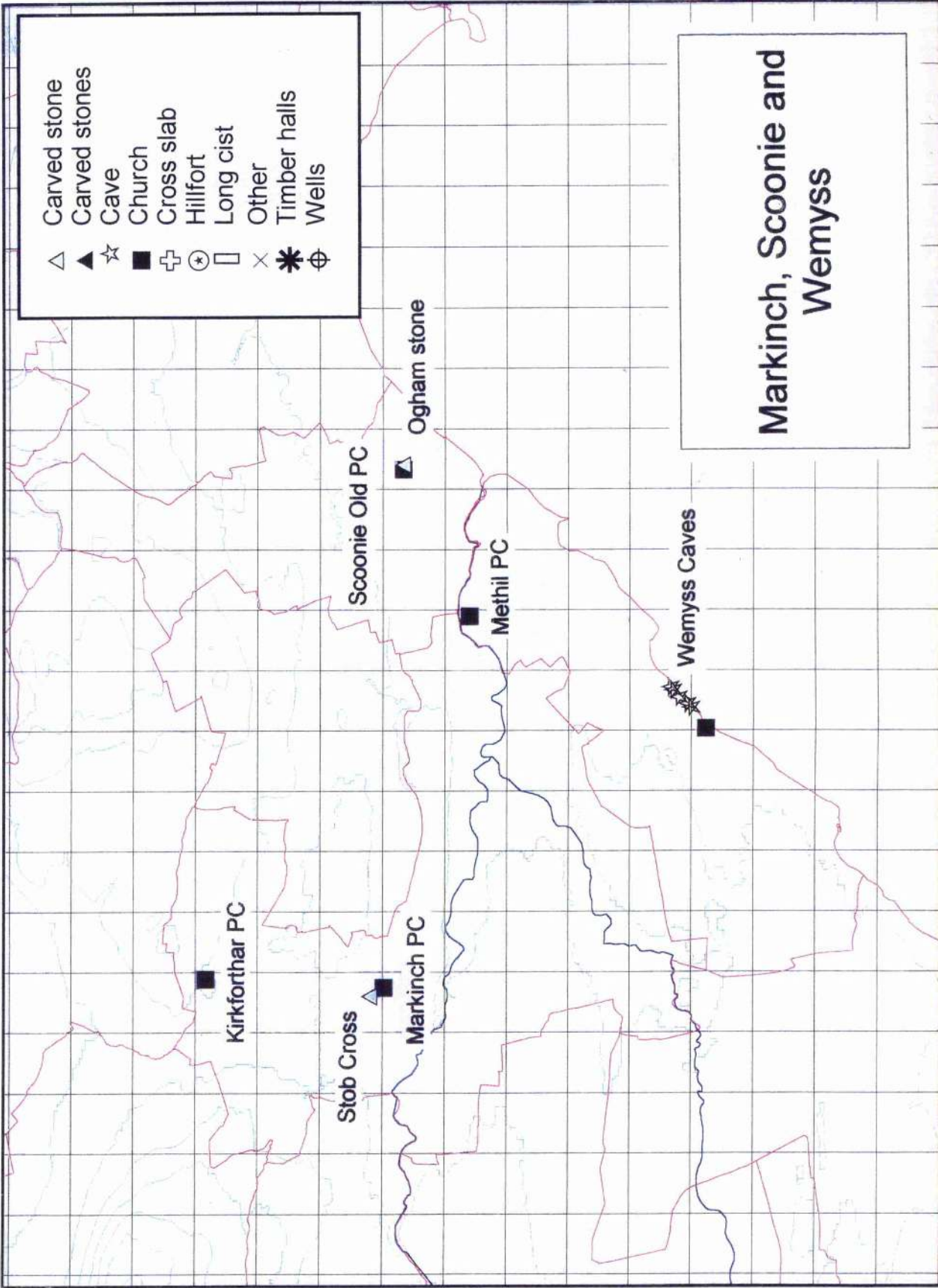
2.4 cliff site

3.1 ?chapel

3.3 Chapel Garden

Assessment: **Unlikely.** This is probably a later mediaeval foundation rather than an Early Christian one.

⁸ Today this is a burial enclosure, but there appear to be pieces of earlier masonry built into it that are thought to come from an old chapel (CANMORE – <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore/details?inumlink=53985>, 29th May 2002). The site is in the west of the policies of Wemyss Castle and stands near a sixteenth century house, suggesting that this may have been a private chapel, either for the castle and the people on its land, or for the house or an as yet unknown earlier house on the site. Otherwise little is known about the site (NSA, 9, 393).



Markinch, Scoonie and Wemyss