

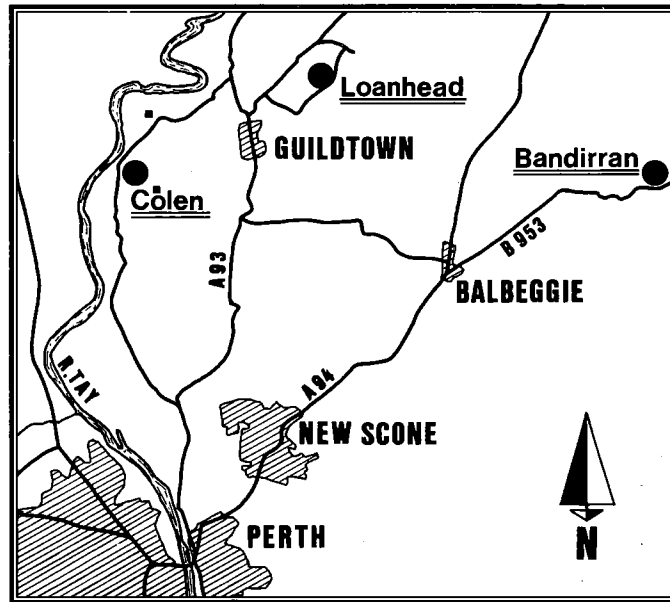
## FURTHER READING:

- Burl, A., 1976 *The Stone Circles of the British Isles* (London and New Haven, Yale University Press)
- Thom, A., Thom, A.S. & Burl, A., 1980 *Megalithic Rings*, British Archaeological Reports, 81, pp.345-5 (Oxford)
- Coutts, H., 1970 *Ancient Monuments of Tayside*, p.18 (Dundee)
- RCAHMS, 1994 *South-East Perth: An Archaeological Landscape* (HMSO)
- Barnatt, J., 1989 *Stone Circles of Britain*, British Archaeological Report, 215 (Oxford)
- Skene, J., 1832 *Drawings of Ancient Sculptured Monuments of Scotland*
- Scott, A., 1911 *St. Martins and Cambusmichael: A Parochial Retrospect*, pp.38-9 (Perth)
- Stewart, M.E.C., 1965 'Excavation of a circle of standing stones at Sandy Road, Scone, Perthshire', *Transactions of the Proceedings of the Perthshire Society for Natural Sciences*, 2. pp.20-1
- Stewart, M.E.C., 1967 'The Excavation of a Setting of Standing Stones at Lundin Farm near Aberfeldy, Perthshire', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 98, p.142

## ADOPT-A-MONUMENT

These stone circles have been adopted by the Perthshire Society for Natural Science Archaeological Section with the generous agreement of the landowners. Under the guidance of the Council for Scottish Archaeology, this group will endeavour to maintain and interpret these ancient and important monuments so that many more generations may learn about them and re-discover their past in the prehistoric landscape.

## SITE LOCATION MAP:



*This project has been made possible by the generous financial support of the Mac Robertson Trust, Historic Scotland, and the Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust*



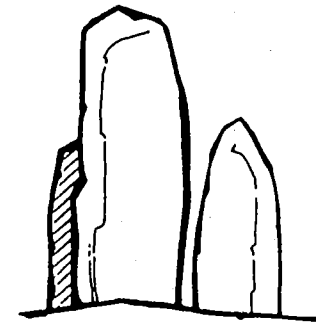
## THE COUNCIL FOR SCOTTISH ARCHAEOLOGY

For further information on the CSA's Adopt-A-Monument Scheme, or on any other aspect of Scotland's archaeology, Contact: Council for Scottish Archaeology, York Buildings, Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 1JD.

## South-East Perthshire

# STONE CIRCLE

## Trail



A Guide  
to  
Three  
Ancient Monuments

## WHAT ARE STONE CIRCLES?

Stone circles are monuments which were set up in prehistoric times as shrines to ancient gods, ritual meeting-places of the living and burial places for the dead. They were re-used and added to over many centuries just as churches have been in more recent times.

## WHEN WERE THEY BUILT?

Most of the stone circles found in Scotland were constructed between 5000 and 3000 years ago. Some began as timber circles, later to be replaced by stones.

## WHO BUILT THEM?

The people who built stone circles included the descendants of the first farmers in Scotland of about 7000 years ago and incomers from the Continent, in particular those people who introduced the rite of burying the dead with a BEAKER about 4000 years ago.

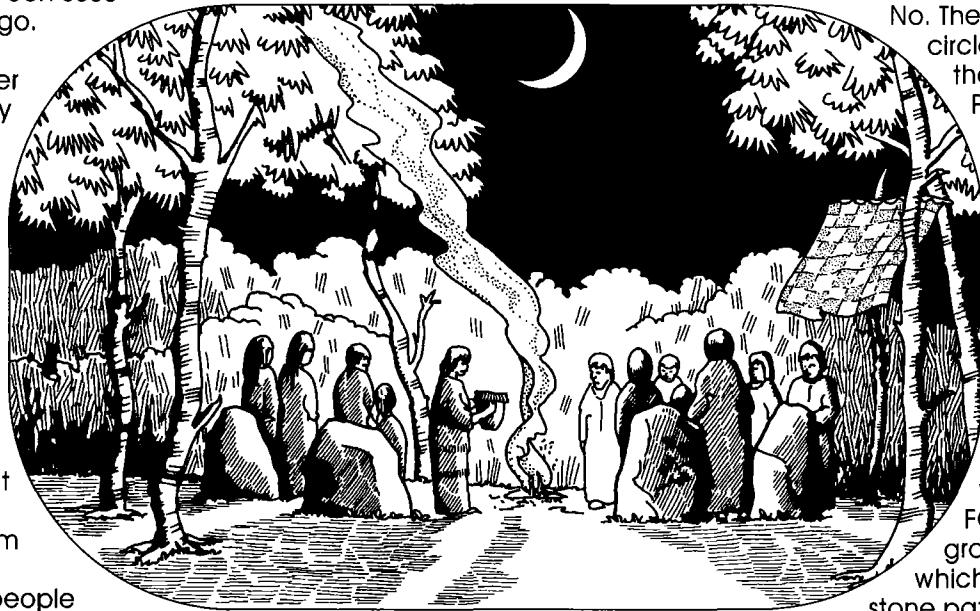
## WHAT RITUALS WERE PERFORMED HERE?

Stone circles probably began as centres of religious activity. Quartz was sometimes scattered on the ground and fires were lit in and around the circles. Later, burial ceremonies took place, with cremated bone from funeral pyres being buried in pits or with pottery vessels such as beakers and urns.

## WHO ORGANISED THEIR CONSTRUCTION?

Although stones were found locally wherever possible, the movement of such large stones must have required the effort of numerous people and probably the direction of the chieftain of the local community. Perhaps the cremation burials excavated at stone circles were those of members of the chief family of the area.

## ARE ALL STONE CIRCLES THE SAME?



No. The ten surviving circles in the area, to the north-west of Perth, vary between 6m and 8.8m in diameter and have between seven and eleven stones. They represent one of the densest concentrations of stone circles found in Britain. Perthshire is also well known for its **FOUR POSTERS** — groups of uprights which follow a four-stone pattern.

## HOW OLD ARE THE CARVINGS?

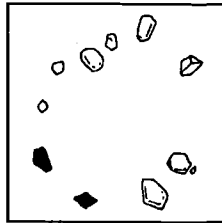
The cup-markings on the three stones at COLEN are about 4000 years old. They are found on monuments and rocks in many places in Scotland and may reflect common religious beliefs shared by many communities at this time.

## WHERE DID THE PEOPLE LIVE?

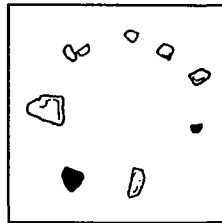
We cannot tell yet where the people lived, because their timber roundhouses have not survived in the same way as their stone circles. However, we are now beginning to detect prehistoric houses and settlements as cropmarks in fields seen from the air, and may soon be able to answer such questions.

## DO THE CIRCLES FOLLOW A PATTERN?

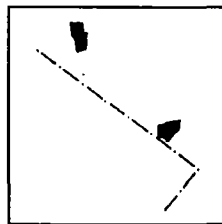
**BANDIRAN** stone circle has ten stones and is said to have once had a central stone. At least four of the stones must have stood 1.5m high, the two largest being on the south-west side, but now fallen.



**COLEN** has eight stones - its three largest stones on the south-west side bear cup-markings and probably stood 1m high.



The two stones at **LOANHEAD** are both over 1.5m high. Perhaps they have survived as the largest stones on the south-western arc of a damaged stone circle.



The evidence suggests that here, and at other stone circles, an astronomical alignment to the south-western horizon was important to the original builders.