

ANGUS *Heritage*

Historic Kirkyard Trails

Walk in the steps of your ancestors



Historic Kirkyard Trails

Scottish kirkyards are a unique part of our heritage as the last resting places of our ancestors.

They tell us about the life and death of individuals, their beliefs and even their artistic sensibilities through the choice of epitaphs and symbols. Gravestones are documents carved in stone, containing a wealth of genealogical information in names, dates, places and relationships.

Angus is home to many old parish kirkyards set in delightful rural scenery. Lochlee is a beautiful example, lying at the foot of a loch on the edge of a National Park. Others are located in the centre of the burghs they have served for generations.

Gravestones from the Victorian and Georgian eras are the most numerous, with some surviving 17th century flatstones and table stones. All gravestones are in a steady state of decline and erosion as the kirkyards are exposed to the rigors of the Scottish weather. The result is continuous deterioration with many covered in lichen, while the faces of others have sheared off through frost action.

If you are interested in finding out more about the people of Angus, the historic kirkyards of Angus have been grouped together into seven trails for you to choose from. To follow each trail thoroughly will take more than one day so why not enjoy a short break and discover the many other attractions on offer in Angus.

There has never been a better time to enjoy the delights of an historic kirkyard, and to walk in the steps of your ancestors.

Gravestone Symbols

There are many interesting symbols to look out for as you walk round the different kirkyards.

Symbols of mortality

- King of terrors
- Father time
- Corpse
- Death head
- Hour glass
- Bones
- Coffin
- Weapons of death
- Sexton's tools
- Deid bell
- Mortcloth

Symbols of immortality

- Winged soul
- Angels
- Glory
- Crown
- Torches
- Trees, plants and flowers
- Angel of the resurrection

Trade symbols

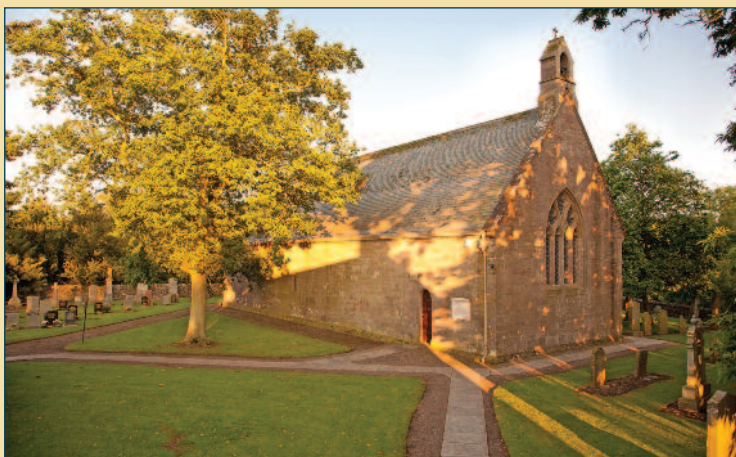
- Hammermen - crown and anvil
- Weavers - handlooms and items of loom equipment
- Bakers - bakers peels and loaves
- Shoemakers - shaping knife
- Tailors - goose and scissors
- Mariners - ships
- Farmers - ploughs and agricultural equipment
- Brewers/maltmen - wheat sheaves
- Merchants - weighing scales and the number four
- Gardeners - large shears and flower pots

Biblical

- Adam and Eve
- Abraham sacrificing Isaac

Sidlaw Kirkyards

- Liff
- Fowlis Easter
- Lundie
- Newtyle
- Aucherhouse
- Tealing
- Murroes

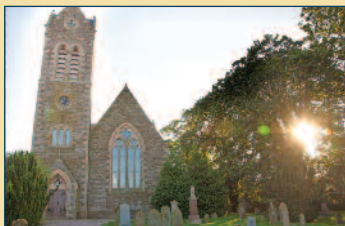


Fowlis Easter Church

The Sidlaw area of Angus is to the north of Dundee. Liff Church was built in 1839 and the churchyard enjoys a lovely rural atmosphere.

Fowlis Easter kirkyard retains a market cross while the church has rare Pre-Reformation painted wall scenes, a rood screen and a decorated aumbry. Lundie kirkyard is a short drive from Fowlis Easter and is set in an idyllic rural location. The kirkyard houses a unique Biblical stone showing Abraham sacrificing Isaac on the stone of John Ritchie. The family burial ground of the Duncan's of Camperdown occupies the area at the end of the church.

Newtyle Church was built in 1870 and is the third one on the site. Many of the gravestones were re-used as pavements in the 1960s.



Newtyle Church



David Ritchie, Lundie

Aucherhouse kirkyard has panoramic views of the Sidlaw Hills and Kinpurnie Hill. The church was re-built in 1775 and features an interesting bell tower accessed from an outside stair. Earlier gothic stonework has been re-used in the kirkyard gates. There are a number of good stones within the churchyard, with many stacked along the wall. These include a well carved pair of Resurrection angels waking a skeleton on Judgement Day.

A short drive away is Tealing. The 1808 church, now closed, incorporates earlier carved stones in its walls. At Murroes Church, the north aisle of the medieval church was retained in the new church of 1843 as a burial vault.

2

- Monifieth
- Kirkton of Monikie
- Barry
- Panbride
- Carmyllie



Monikie Church

Monifieth kirkyard is centrally located and features the gravestone of the Low family who created the foundry, the basis of wealth and jobs.

Kirkton of Monikie contains some rare examples of stones showing men at work at their handlooms, counting money in their shop or working at a forge. Look out for the recurrent use of a flaming heart symbol, the favourite symbol of a local mason. Monikie also has a mort house which was used to confound the plans of early 19th century body snatchers.

Barry kirkyard contains the remains of Thomas Louson, the man who legend tells us founded Carnoustie in 1790 after a particularly good dream.

Panbride kirkyard, with great views over the sea, contains a number of large stones showing full length people. The War Memorial is also in the kirkyard.

Barry and Panbride both have versions of a stone designed for young girls shown standing under a crown of righteousness.

A short drive away is Carmyllie. The kirkyard has a number of trade stones featuring the emblems of shoemakers, weavers, gardeners and a tailor.

3

- Forfar
- Restenneth Priory
- Rescobie
- Dunnichen
- Kirkden
- Guthrie
- Aberlemno



Rescobie Church

Forfar kirkyard is built into a steep hill with a good number of 17th century flatstones still visible. One of these stones commemorates Bailie George Wood who features in the story of the Forfar witches.

The ruins of Restenneth Priory house a little known royal burial where Prince John, the infant son of Robert the Bruce, was buried before the high altar, a flatstone of a priest and a crude gravestone incised with the date 1585.

Rescobie Church is set on the banks of a loch and the impressive wall monument mounted into the church wall is well worth a look.

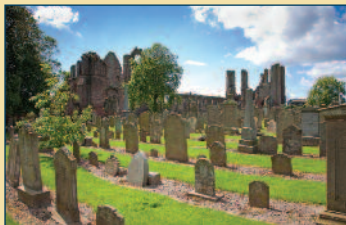
Dunnichen has many stones of note including a number of agricultural scenes, whilst Kirkden Church is now a ruin. The church bell of 1676 has been set in the wall.

Guthrie church has a medieval aisle, now entirely separate from the main church. Look out for the particularly voluptuous winged soul.

Aberlemno kirkyard contains a spectacular Pictish stone with three more nearby, in addition to an impressive array of flatstones propped up against a wall. Look closely for the John Dalgettie's stone of 1697 which shows a crude King of Terrors pursuing a victim with death's dart.

4

- Arbirlot
- Arbroath Abbey
- St Vigeans
- Inverkeilor
- Lunan



Arbroath Abbey

Arbirlot Church is set by the Elliot Water in a pleasant rural setting. Many of the Webster family of linen manufacturers are buried here.

Arbroath Abbey contains over 1,400 gravestones and is the final resting place of its founder King William the Lion.

St Vigeans kirkyard sits on an unusual cone shaped hill. One delightful

gravestone features crossed fish which depicts God in His Glory. Many Pictish stones found on the site are on display in the adjacent museum.

Inverkeilor kirkyard has suffered from exposure to the elements but many interesting stones can still be viewed. Some are built into the church walls and there are impressive burial plots of local landowners such as the Raitt's of Anniston. There is also a delightful Victorian glass dome covering an arrangement of marble flowers and birds.

Lunan Church was erected in 1844 and is now a privately owned house, however a church has occupied the site since the 13th century.

5

- Montrose
- Rossie Island
- Maryton
- Farnell
- Dun

James Watson, Montrose



The kirkyard of Montrose Parish Church is now bisected by a Georgian path. Many of the once splendid wall memorials of the town's elite have been severely eroded. However, a coped stone showing Father Time with his scythe and a cast iron marker erected by a plumber are amongst the many stones still visible.

Rossie Island kirkyard, an island until the Inch burn was filled in during the early 1970s, once served the village of Ferryden. The kirkyard contains many stones bearing ship emblems. In the centre is the ruin of the old chapel which served the community for generations.

Maryton kirkyard enjoys superb views over Montrose Basin. One stone of note belonged to a gardener as shown by the shears, while there are also some nice examples of winged souls. Access to the Churchyard is through the drive of the private house.

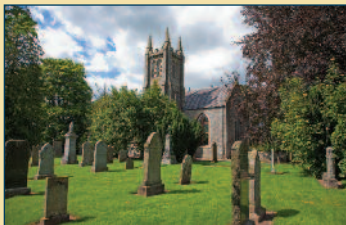
Farnell kirkyard features some stones with well carved trade symbols. The church is a beautiful Gothic example of early 19th century architecture.

The ruined old parish church of Dun has a number of very old 17th century table tombs with interesting motifs.



House of Dun

- Brechin Cathedral
- Pert
- Stracathro
- Menmuir
- Tannadice
- Oathlaw
- Edzell



Oathlaw Church

Brechin Cathedral is the mother church of Angus with a Celtic Round Tower dating back to the 11th century. A large stone to the left of the Channonry Wynd gate commemorates the victims of the 17th century plague. The densely crowded gravestones indicate the number of burials and feature a wide variety of trade symbols and winged souls.

Pert has arguably the finest single gravestone in the Buchanan Stone (in the railed enclosure) featuring a unique ring of life, and the rare Adam and Eve stones, all carved by the same mason.

Stracathro kirkyard was the site of the resignation of the crown of Scotland by John Balliol to Edward of England. It also houses an Adam and Eve gravestone.

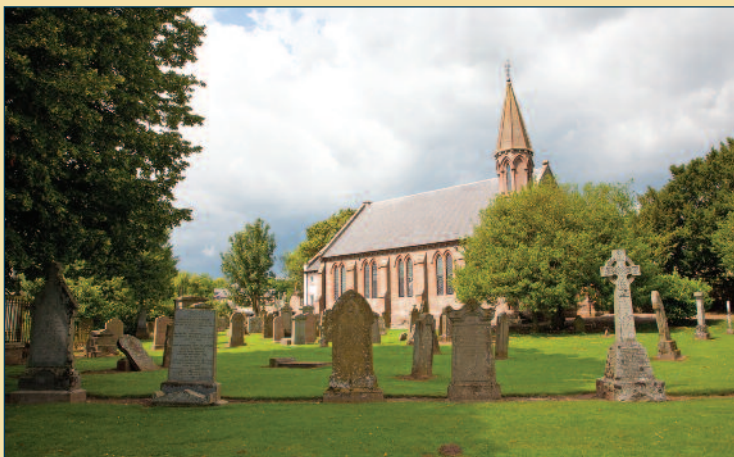
Menmuir is a pretty kirkyard with a variety of nice winged souls and an unusual stone of man chewing on a chain, while Tannadice has a small number of old stones, set by the river.

Oathlaw kirkyard is accessed by a rough track and on the side wall is a Pre-Reformation graveslab of Richard de Brechin, a priest.

All that remains of the ancient church of Edzell is the aisle now known as the Lindsay Vault, adjacent to Edzell Castle. In 1818 the walls of the old church were dismantled to provide stones for the new church in the village of Edzell.



Buchanan stone, Pert



Tannadice Church

- Eassie
- Glamis
- Kirriemuir
- Cortachy
- Airlie



J. M. Barrie's grave, Kirriemuir



Farquharson, Glamis

A Pictish stone discovered in the nearby burn is on display in a specially designed case within the walls of the ruined Eassie Church.

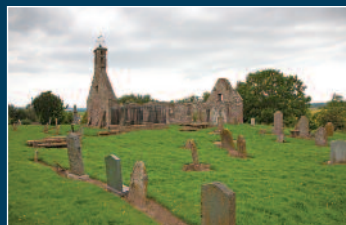
Glamis kirkyard contains many fine stones including a superb Masonic gravestone, some flatstones and the burial site of Margaret Bridie of whom legend has named as the inventor of the bridie.

Only a small number of stones survive in the old kirkyard of Kirriemuir. The Stormonth's of Lednathie memorial is a fine example of a landed family grand memorial. Note how some of the houses are built right up against such memorials. The most famous burial site in Angus is that of J. M. Barrie, the creator of Peter Pan, who is

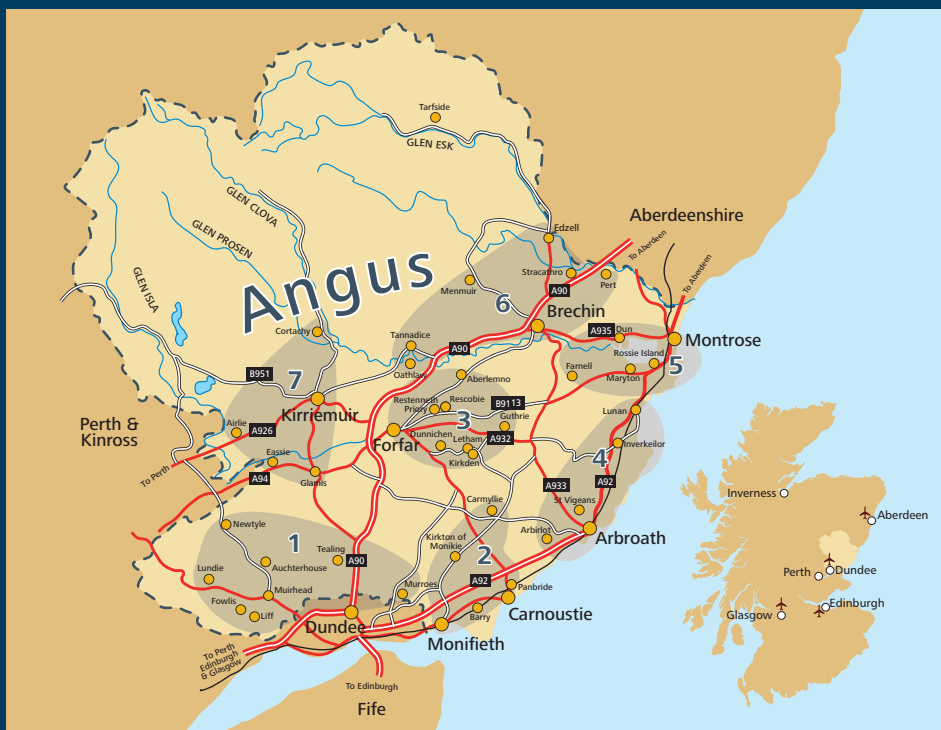
buried in the New Cemetery on the Hill. His grave is signposted.

Cortachy kirkyard is set by the river, adjacent to the castle gates. The church is locked but details of how to obtain the key are on the notice board at the entrance. The private gate to the estate features a modern Pictish design. A short drive from the parish church is Piper's Hillock, a Victorian cemetery, set on a natural hill with fine views over the countryside. It is situated on the road to Glen Clova and is sign posted.

Airlie Church sits on a hill beside a river walk. Note the carved figure on the wall of the church which emerges from the harling. The enclosed burial grounds of a number of ministers are of interest. On the outside is a very early stone from 1609 for the Malcolm family.



Eassie Church



Access - Most kirkyards have a limited amount of public car parking available, either on the roadside or in a dedicated car park. Some kirkyards may require a short walk from the car park.

Further information is available on www.angusheritage.com

Sources for the study of gravestones

Pre-1855 Gravestone Inscriptions of Angus edited by Alison Mitchell (3 volumes) is the best source for many pre-1860 gravestones. Future editions will be linked to photographs of gravestones.

Post 1855 death certificates are available through Scotland's People (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk) and the Old Parish Registers (available in Angus libraries, Angus Archives or at www.familysearch.org.uk) but many gravestones contain information about people not recorded elsewhere. This is particularly true of the 18th century stones.

www.deceasedonline.com will help you to find a specific grave within Angus from the early 19th century onwards. This is especially useful for the larger town cemeteries.

In addition, Angus Archives holds collections of gravestones images which can be purchased for the standard charge. Contact 01307 468644 or email angus.archives@angus.gov.uk for more information.



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