

Stones in a Raised or Open Area

When reviewing the physical locations of Class 2 Stones 10 were found to be very visible being in a raised or open area. In the context of Pictish-Mithraism this could be significant linking what is represented by specific carvings (including the V-Rod & Crescent, Z-Rod & Double Disc and the Pictish Beast) with a skyward view. For Christianity many churches have a prominent geographic position - some perhaps inherited from the location of a Class 2 Stone.

Information below for these Stones is from webpage [Features of Class 2 Stones.](#)
Additional features are included to prompt considering any wider context.

Stone Name	← Physical Location →			Association with a Saint
	In raised or open area	By, in or near water	At/near a Church	
Aberlemno Roadside 2	Yes	Yes	Yes	–
Cossans	Yes	Yes	–	Orland
Fowlis Wester	Yes	Yes	–	–
Glamis, Hunter's Hill	Yes	–	–	–
Glenferness	Yes	Yes	–	–
Largo	Yes	–	–	–
Maiden Stone	Yes	–	–	–
Raasay	Yes	Yes	–	–
Shandwick	Yes	–	?	–
St. Vigean 1, 2, 4 & 6	Yes	Yes	Yes	Vigean

Of these 10 Stones in a raised or open area, 6 are by, in or near water of which 2 are at or near a church and 2 have an association with a Saint. Only 4 have being in a raised or open area as their only "feature". Aberlemno Roadside 2 has all 3 physical features and the St Vigean 1, 2, 4 & 6 location has all 3 physical features plus association with a Saint. So a first observation concerns these two locations with Stones "at or near a church" arguably strengthening the link between a Stone and Christian belief. The additional feature of "by, in or near water" is important for the practice of both Pictish-Mithraic and Christian beliefs.

Maybe the open area location for Aberlemno Roadside 2 has some relevance to the hunting scene (perhaps it occurred there or nearby). It is certainly widely visible giving it prominence and would have served a Pictish-Mithraic believer as an Open Air Mithraeum with the combination of Symbols and a complementary skyward view.

For St Vigean the prominence of the location is accentuated by a church built on a glacial mound - even before the church the location for Stones would have been impressive not least with Brothock Water at its base. Importance of the location is reinforced with a Saint association - Vigean (St Feichin of Irish origin who died in 664).

Although Cossans has an association with a Saint it is not known why it is named after St Orland (whoever he was?). This Stone is isolated in low lying fields so maybe not giving high visibility - it is near Dean Water (south), Loch of Forfar (north east) and several burns.

Fowlis Wester (allegedly from an open area at the mouth of the Sma' Glen), Glenferness (moved from a bend on the River Findhorn) and Raasay (found near to the Sound of Raasay) have water connections and prospectively were in open rather than more prominent locations.

This leaves 4 locations that have "in a raised or open area" as their only specific feature - Glamis Hunter's Hill (on a hillside) may well have been more open countryside when first erected, Largo was discovered during quarrying on Norrie's Law suggesting an open hillside position, Maiden Stone is also in an open hillside position and Shandwick is in a very visible position on a hillside. Each of these 4 Stones is basically isolated, not near a current church nor a water feature. What they have in common is basically being isolated, "not near a formal belief structure" nor near a water feature. In the author's analysis they each have complementary Pictish-Mithraic and Christian carvings making them strong contenders as "transition" Stones - isolated locations seemingly are not a barrier and may be a feature in themselves.