
4 Archaeological Background

The Kilmartin Glen contains some of the most important archaeological monuments in Britain. The most prolific are prehistoric monuments: chambered cairns, round cairns, cists, standing stones and rock carvings, and many of them are scheduled ancient monuments (RCAHMS 1984, 13). From later periods, there are also a variety of Iron Age and Early Historic sites, the most important of which is Dunadd, the ancient capital of the Scots of *Dál Riata*. There is also an important collection of Early Christian and medieval inscribed stones as well as castles, tower houses and deserted farmsteads. Agricultural improvements and a diverse collection of early industrial monuments, most notably the Crinan Canal, attest to later activity.

Many of these sites are in view of Bruach an Druimein, and several other important archaeological sites have been discovered on the same terrace. In 1928, a Bronze Age cist cemetery and a medieval long-cist cemetery were excavated (Craw 1929), following earlier discoveries of a cist. In

1931, Craw also discovered a stone with an ogham inscription close to the long-cist cemetery (Craw 1932). The inscription has been recently discussed (by Forsyth 1996, 433–55). At the north-west end of this terrace is a single cist (Campbell & Sandeman 1962; RCAHMS 1988). In the middle of the terrace a group of Bronze Age cists, which were discovered during Cregeen's series of excavations, have been published separately (Cregeen & Harrington 1981).

During the early 1980s, archaeological investigation prior to quarrying at Upper Largie, 2km to the north-east of Bruach an Druimein, revealed several Bronze Age cists and burials (Mercer *et al* 1987). Further work in advance of expansion of the quarry during the 1990s revealed a complexity of prehistoric sites, including several more Bronze Age cists, a timber circle and pit alignments (Radley 1993; Terry 1997). Just over 1km to the south-east, on the opposite side of the entrance to the glen, lies a suite of terraces also densely occupied by prehistoric sites (Abernethy 1995; Abernethy 1998).