



Map of standing stones

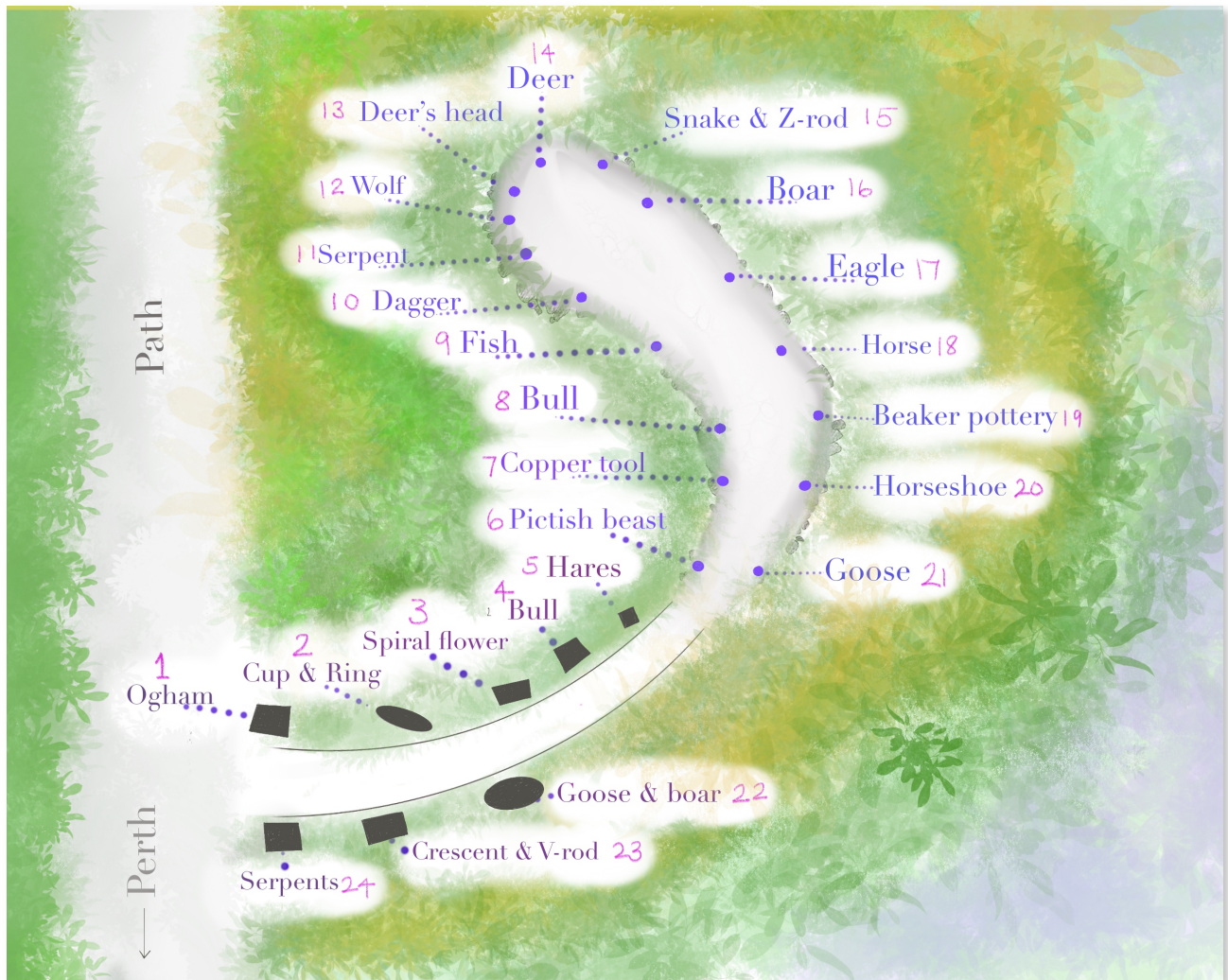
A Souterrain is an ancient chamber used for storing food, escaping from foes and for ceremonies. 'Souterrain' means 'underground'.

Perth's Souterrain was discovered in an ancient hill fort called Broxy Kennels during an archaeological dig in 2023. Each of the stones were carefully numbered so that the whole souterrain could be moved and rebuilt here in 2025. Some of these numbers are visible on the stones.

The stones of the souterrain date from the Iron Age although evidence of the earliest activity at Broxy Kennels dates even further back in time, to over four thousand years ago.

New sculptures are placed amongst the stones. Twelve of these are inspired by animals carved on Scotland's standing stones, as shown in the map above. They also include plants similar to botanical material found at the Broxy Kennels dig. Another four are inspired by implements such as the pommel of a dagger and a fragment of a hand-made pot.

Modern, engraved stones lead to the entrance of the souterrain. They were mostly engraved using hand-tools and were painted with colours from the iron-age such as ochre, madder and woad.



Map of the Souterrain

1. **Ogham** was an old written language used by the Picts made of simple marks and lines that could be inscribed on the edge of a rock. The stone says: 'Chamber hidden here'.

2. **Cup and ring** markings are found on carved stones all over the world. The oldest ones are in the Middle East and India.

3. The **spiral flower** is based on Pictish stones such as the Dunnichen stone, currently on display in Forfar.

4. The **bull** is based on a Burghead Bull, a group of around 30 carved stones from Burghead Fort in Moray.

5. The **hares** are inspired by ancient symbols found all over the world.

6. The **Pictish beast** is inspired by the Maiden Stone in Aberdeenshire, dating to around 700 A.D.

No-one knows what kind of animal it was but it looks something like a seahorse or a dolphin.

The beast is surrounded by rowan berries which were used in medicine in dyes. It was a tree of protection, sometimes called the tree of life.

7. The archaeological dig discovered modern agricultural implements including a **copper farm tool**. It is surrounded by blackberry leaves.

8. Some people think the Burghead **Bulls** were symbols of power while other people think they are about fertility. This bull is surrounded by hawthorn, associated with Beltane, a Gaelic festival in May marking the middle of spring and summer.

9. The Dunnicaer **Fish** is one of several carved stones found on a sea-stack near cliffs north of Dunnottar Castle in the 19th century. Some of the stones were thrown into the sea. Traces of willow were found in the Broxy Kennels dig, possibly used for roofs or baskets or as an ingredient in medicine. In Celtic mythology willow is associated with the moon.

10. One of the finds at the archaeological dig was the bronze pommel from a **dagger** dating from c. 1200-1600 A.D.

11. The **Serpent** Stone is in Aberlemno. Some people think the serpent is from an earlier stone that was re-cycled by the Picts. Other symbols on the stone include discs, Z-rod and cup-marks. In Celtic mythology, apple is associated with the cycle of life.

12. The Ardross **Wolf** was found during repairs to a garden wall in a farmhouse near Ardross in 1890. The stone, which is from the 6th century, is now in Inverness Museum. Alder wood was used, amongst other things, for tent-poles, shields and masts for boats.

13. The **Deer's Head** Stone, sometimes known as the Ardross Beast, was discovered in an old wall in Stittenham in 1891. It's now in the Inverness Museum. The spiral shape of ferns is associated with protection and is one of the world's most ancient plants.

14. The **Deer** Stone in Glen Domhain in Argyll is thought to mark the boundary between the old Gaelic kingdom of Dál Riata and the Pictish lands towards the east.

In the sculpture, the deer's antlers are in the shape of a crescent moon surrounded by birch-tree bark.

15. The carving on the Brandsbutt Stone dates to around A.D. 600, although the stone itself may originally have come from a prehistoric stone circle. Nobody knows the meaning of the **snake and z-rod**. It is surrounded by hawthorn and mushrooms.

16. The Knocknagel **Boar** is a large carved stone dating to around A.D. 600. It once stood in farm on the outskirts of Inverness but is now in the Highland Council's headquarters. Fossils of wild boar have been found all over Scotland, including in Perthshire, but they are thought to have become extinct in the late 16th or early 17th centuries. They feature in Scottish legends including the story of the wild boar of Lochinvar. Barley is an ancient crop used in beer, bread, medicine and rituals.

17. The Strathpeffer **Eagle** is a small carving on blue gneiss found on a hill near Strathpeffer. A tradition says it marked the site of a battle between Clan Munro and a branch of the Clan MacDonald in the 15th century. The place is also associated with the prophecies of the 16th century Brahan Seer who predicted that if the Stone fell three times the surrounding valley would be flooded and the stone used as an anchor. The eagle is surrounded by hazel leaves.

18. The Aberlemno **Horse** is on a standing stone showing a battle scene, possibly between Picts and Vikings. The spiral shape of ferns is associated with protection and ascent. Fern is one of the world's most ancient and abundant plants.

19. Evidence of the earliest activity at the Broxy Kennels site were fragments of **Beaker pottery** found in pits at the base of the southern side of the hill. The Beaker civilisation flourished from 2800 - 1800 BCE, often represented by pottery decorated by patterns made by finger-marks. The discovery suggests Broxy Kennels had ritual significance as the pottery was often associated with burials.

20. During the dig, an iron **horseshoe** was discovered from the 19th or 20th centuries.

21. The Easterton of Roseisle stone from Moray, featuring a **goose**, is on show in the National Museum of Scotland. The goose is surrounded by leaves from a rowan tree.

22. The **goose and boar** stone is based on the Easterton of Roseisle and the Knocknagel Boar stones.

23. The **crescent and V-rod** is found on several Pictish stones including the Brandsbutt, the Invereen and St Orland's Stone. Nobody has yet deciphered what the symbol means.

24. **Serpents** are found on Pictish sculpture such as the Aberlemno Stone and the Brandsbutt Stone.