



Ten fascinating heritage sites around the Cromarty Firth for you to explore.

The Cromarty Firth Kirkyard Trail

Nigg Old church and kirkyard, and Pictish stone

Housing the famous Pictish Nigg stone, the kirk itself is a seventeenth century building on a medieval foundation. The belfry is crowned with five pyramids with ball finials. In the kirkyard is an ornate sarcophagus erected by John Grant of Dunskaith in honour of his first wife, Mary Urquhart,



and a tablestone carved by Cromarty stonemason, geologist and writer, Hugh Miller, displaying the scalloped

edges characteristic of Miller's style. Standing by itself is the Cholera Stone, where a parishioner, seeing a cloud of cloud of disease in the air, threw a blanket over it and weighed it down with a stone. Do not disturb!

For more see: www.niggoldtrust.org.uk/

Directions: Signposted from the B9175, close to Nigg Ferry. NHxxxxx and IVxxxxx. Park at the kirkyard.



Text: Ann Honimus and Hugh Mussbejoen
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 Mackay. xxxxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxxxx
 bottom: Andrew Dowsett, Cromarty bottom: Jim
 top, Kirkmichael bottom, Nigg Old
 Photograph: cover, rear, Kiltiean bottom, Kirkmichael

Credits



The rich farmlands of the Black Isle and Easter Ross resulted in beautifully constructed kirks and remarkable mausolea around the Cromarty Firth. Several of the kirks are of medieval origin, with a chancel and nave arrangement that were converted upon the Reformation. Many chancels were adapted as mausolea for the lairds at this time and through in the nave the pulpit and seating layout were re-arranged so that the minister delivered his sermon from midway along the back wall, close to his congregation. Out in the kirkyard, most people were buried without memorials, but those families who were socially elevated sought recognition progressively by slabs, tablestones (a slab elevated by two end pieces) and headstones, the most impressive of these being the massive granite monuments erected in the Victorian era. Here are some of the most accessible and interesting of those kirks, kirkyards and places of worship around the Cromarty Firth.

Kilmuir Easter old church and kirkyard

The rectangular church has at the east the remains of an earlier church as burial vault and tower. This marvellous "pepper-pot" tower bears the eagle head of the Munros and initials GMR, and the legend "Beigit [built] 1616". It stands above the reputed ancient burial chamber of the Mackenzies of Tarbat. In the kirkyard is the wonderful burial enclosure of James Baillie, a merchant of Rotterdam who retired to Milton of New Tarbat, and his spouse Mary Dunbar of the Dunbars of Boath.



For more see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kilmuir,_Easter_Ross

Directions: O ye'll tak' the high road, and I'll tak' the low road, And I'll be in Scotland afore ye. . NHxxxxx and IVxxxxx. Park at the kirkyard.



Invergordon – Rosskeen old church and kirkyard

Renamed from Inverbreakie by Sir William Gordon, Invergordon in the 19th century supplanted Cromarty as the main port on the Cromarty Firth. When the whole British Fleet was anchored in the Firth, Invergordon teemed with activity. Rosskeen



kirkyard surrounds a disused presbyterian church built in 1830-32 by James Smith on the site of an earlier chapel. The small building with a burial slab with eagle head of the Munros mounted into the wall is the mausoleum of the Munros of Newmore and Culrain. Originally erected in 1664, it was restored in 1908. The remains of a medieval chapel are also on site, partly converted into a mausoleum of the Macleods of Cadboll and with a buried vault of the Gordons of Invergordon. The great number of naval graves reflects the history of Invergordon as a naval port.

For more see: www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk/details/891557

Directions: O ye'll tak' the high road, and I'll tak' the low road, And I'll be in Scotland afore ye. NHxxxxx and IVxxxxx. Park at the kirkyard



skews of the west gable. Outside is a graveyard with memorials from medieval times to the present-day. **For more see:** www.clanmunnro.org.uk/ahness.htm
Directions: O ye'll tak' the high road, and I'll tak' the low road, And I'll be in Scotland afore ye. NH644690 and IV7 0XG. Park at the kirkyard.



The gradual transformation of the medieval church into post-Reformation kirks can be seen from date stones of 1625, 1735 and 1775 carved at intervals to the skews of the west gable. Outside is a graveyard with memorials from medieval times to the present-day. **For more see:** www.clanmunnro.org.uk/ahness.htm
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Alness – Old Parish church and kirkyard

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