



**Property in Care (PIC) ID:** PIC193

**Designations:** Scheduled Monument (SM90102)

**Taken into State care:** 1888 (Guardianship)

**Last reviewed:** 2003

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

# DRUMTRODDAN STANDING STONES



We continually revise our Statements of Significance, so they may vary in length, format and level of detail. While every effort is made to keep them up to date, they should not be considered a definitive or final assessment of our properties.



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Any enquiries regarding this document should be sent to us at:

Historic Environment Scotland

Longmore House

Salisbury Place

Edinburgh

EH9 1SH

+44 (0) 131 668 8600

[www.historicenvironment.scot](http://www.historicenvironment.scot)

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# DRUMTRODDAN STANDING STONES

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## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

- The Stones are located to the south of Drumtroddan Farm, off the B7085 south-west of Wigtown.
- This is a megalithic ('big stone') monument of the later Neolithic or Bronze Age.
- The stones are located within an elevated, hilltop location.
- The monument comprises an alignment of three tall standing stones, only one of which is still standing 3m in height. The other two lie horizontal on the ground.
- This forms part of an extensive prehistoric ritual landscape, featuring a possible fort and nearby cup marked stones.

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## CHARACTER OF THE MONUMENT

### Historical Overview

- This type of site is difficult to date, and very few sets of tall standing stones have been dated. It has been suggested that short alignment rows are later, although the tallness of this site may indicate an earlier date.
- The stones were probably erected in the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC.
- It is likely that this was a ceremonial site where observations of the sun and/or the moon were made, possibly in relation to other stones or timber posts, now lost, or in relation to natural landscape features.
- The significance of the monument to the people who built it is lost forever. The same applies to the significance of the location and the alignment, and the nature of the ceremonies that took place here.
- Came into care from Sir Herbert Maxwell in 1931 as part of a group that included the Drumtroddan and Big Balcraig cup and ring marked stones.

### Archaeological Overview

- This monument represents a clear indication of the existence of late Neolithic or Bronze Ages communities within this area.
- The surrounding prehistoric landscape is little understood, and much could be learnt regarding contemporary landuse and environment.
- Our ignorance is in part due to the lack of invasive archaeological investigation of the site; the visible parts of the monument tell only part of the story.
- Continuing archaeological study and the careful use of ethnographic parallels may help in future to gain a better understanding of such sites.

### Artistic/Architectural Overview

- The selection, transport and erection of the stones was done to a carefully planned and implemented design. This would have required a fair degree of technical and organisational skill on the part of the builders.
- The height of the stones is visually impressive.

### Social Overview

- Some individuals within modern society are devoted to investigating the 'precise' astronomical purpose of such monuments.

### Spiritual Overview

There is no evidence of the spiritual significance of this monument within modern society.

### Aesthetic Overview

The stones, within this bleak, windswept setting, provide a stark and evocative reminder of a fugitive and 'mysterious' past.

### What are the major gaps in understanding of the property?

- We have little understanding of the role of the sites within the cosmology of the builders, including the significance of the orientation of the stones in relation to past observations of heavenly bodies in the sky.
- We understand little of contemporary life within the surrounding landscape.

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## ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Key points

- This monument is a good example of a small megalithic stone alignment of the late Neolithic or Bronze Age.
- Such monuments have an uneven distribution, with concentrations in south-west Ireland and in the south-west and western seabords of Scotland.
- This is a highly visible legacy of these people to survive within the landscape.
- The stones should not be viewed in isolation but as part of the wider prehistoric landscape in the vicinity of Monreith House, which contains the Big Balcraig and Drumtroddan sites, along with other cup-and-ring marked stones.
- The stones have the potential to inform an understanding of the ceremonial life, world-view and belief-system of the people who built and used this place, and who farmed in the immediate vicinity.

### Associated Properties

Drumtroddan Cup and Ring Marked Rocks, Big Balcraig cup and ring marked rocks; Cairnholy; Torhouse; Stones of Stenness; Calanais.

Keywords Stone alignments; standing stones; prehistoric ceremonies; ritual landscapes.