



Area : Buchan

Parish : Crimmond

Kirkyard : St. Mary's Kirk, Rattray.

N.G.R. : NK 085 575

S.A.M. : Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Listing Category : Kirk and Yard Cat. B.

Boundary wall and gate piers : The boundary walls and gate piers are in good order complete with horse hooks and wall steps.

The old Kirk : Reputedly built in the 13th - century, the kirk was mentioned in 1214/33 when it served as the private chapel to the nearby castle. The old kirk is comprised of a rectangular plan with slate and sandstone rubble walls. The W. gable contains a single lancet opening with the E. gable containing a remarkable set of three stepped lancet windows. The lancet openings are formed by cut red sandstone voussoirs showing excellent early masonry skills. The entire structure needs re-pointing throughout though the full extent of which will not be ascertained until all of the ivy is removed from the walls. The E. gable is in the most serious condition needing urgent remedial work with the entire gable appearing to lean to the E.. Movement has occurred in recent times as some of the keystones have moved from the sockets formed when the structure was last repointed. The kirk must have been an awe-inspiring sight when in use.

Tombstones : There are approximately 7 recumbent tombstones, of which 3 are significantly decorated, with a few 19th - century upright stones.

The aisle of the old kirk has been used since the 19th - century as the burial ground of the Cumine family of Rattray and is enclosed by rusting iron railings.

Conservation Digest : Urgent details.

The consolidation of the remains of the kirk is of primary importance, the details of which are listed above. Perhaps due to the wild and exposed location the grass cuttings do not get time to settle on the recumbent stones.

Interpretative Potential : Medium.

The kirk exhibits the good early use of the lancet window in a place that still appears to be visually remote. Important historical and archaeological links to sites within the vicinity can be made at St. Mary's. There is also the potential of Sea Town at the end of the road.

Access Issues : The old kirk is located at the side of a road with ample space for parking cars.

Date of Visit : 29/06/98.