The Pictish Period 300 AD – 900 AD

The origins of the Picts can be found in the tribal history of the Hebrides. Their society was hierarchical, with a warrior elite and a lesser farming class. They lived in Scotland, north of the Forth and Clyde rivers, between the 4th and 9th centuries AD, with a particularly strong presence in what is now Aberdeenshire. This can be seen in the frequent occurrence of place names beginning “Pit,” thought to indicate the site of a Pictish settlement, as well as the evidence from the archaeological record such as Pictish Stones and inscriptions.

They acquired the name Pict, or Picts, meaning “Painted People,” from the Romans – indeed, most of what is known of the Picts is derived from historical writings from outside of Scotland as they left no written records of their own.

The Picts are remembered for their elaborate and ornate artistry, which takes a variety of form; first known are the long-since destroyed Symbol Stones, decorated with geometric, animal, and later, in the period, Christian motifs. These same symbols are also present on carved wood, and are reputed on decorative metal and bone work.

Selected Reading
J. FRAGN The Pictish Symbol Stones of Scotland (2008) BCA-MS

When exploring Aberdeenshire, please follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code:

Respect the interests of others
Respect the needs of other people enjoying or working in the outdoors and follow any reasonable advice from land managers.

Care for the environment
Take your rubbish home and consider picking up other litter as well. Don’t disturb or damage wildlife or historic places. Keep your dog on a short lead or under close control where needed.

Take responsibility for your own actions
The outdoors is a great place to enjoy but it’s also a working environment and natural hazards exist. Make sure you are aware of this.

"www.outdoorsaccess.scotland.com"

Useful Links
For more information on these, and other sites to visit in the area, the following websites provide a useful introduction:
www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/heritage
www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/brochtrails
www.visitscotland.com/aberdeenshire

Pictish Stone Trail
A guide to ten of the best Pictish Symbol Stones in Aberdeenshire