

Rock Art Field Recording and Data Upload

These Guidance Notes are designed for Community Teams that participated in the Scotland’s Rock Art Project (ScRAP) who wish to continue with fieldwork and data upload after ScRAP has finished, but they are also relevant to anyone wishing to record rock art and share their records on Canmore.

This guidance is based on the rock art recording methods used during ScRAP. If you are not familiar with the methods we used, or have not done fieldwork for some time, we recommend that you read our more detailed guidance on the ScRAP website: <https://www.rockart.scot/resources/guidance1/>.

You may find it helpful to use the revised rock art recording form we have produced as a field aid for structuring your recording.

Please note that you can upload as much or as little data as you wish (anything from a single photo or 3D snapshot to a full, detailed record). Everything you submit will be a valuable addition.

Thank you!

The ScRAP Team

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Rock Art Field Recording: Summary Guidance Notes

These Summary Guidance Notes outline what information to record about rock art for uploading to Canmore. The data you upload will become publicly accessible on Canmore for others to study, learn from, and enjoy, as well as being important for future management and protection of rock art. The Guidance Notes are designed for recording rock art, but apply equally to other archaeological sites and monuments.

About uploading your data to Canmore

There are several routes for uploading data and images to Canmore:

- **MyCanmore:** for anyone to add information and images to existing Canmore records. This information is not validated and does not go into the Canmore archive, but is displayed publicly on Canmore. You can register to upload data via MyCanmore here: <https://canmore.org.uk/contributions>
- **Scotland's Past:** for trained and approved users to add information and images to existing Canmore records. This information is validated by HES staff and goes directly into the Canmore archive. Approved users please see our guidance for using the Scotland's Past form.
- **Discovery and Excavation in Scotland (DES):** for anyone to report new discoveries. These will be published in the DES journal each year and added to Canmore annually. Images uploaded to DES are currently not displayed on Canmore, but this system is undergoing review and may change. You can register to upload data to DES here: <https://des.rcahms.gov.uk/>

About the information you record

Whatever route you chose for uploading your data, it is important to try and gather consistent, detailed information in the field so that this can be used in many different ways, now and in the future. **The more detail you can include, the more valuable your records will be.**

The majority of information you upload to Canmore will be included in your location and panel notes rather than in separate boxes (as used in the ScRAP recording and upload forms), so please aim to include all details like panel measurements, slope, rock type and so on in your description.

You can find more detailed guidance on certain aspects of the recording (e.g. classification, period, taking grid references etc) in our original notes on **Using the ScRAP Recording Form:**

<https://www.rockart.scot/index.cfm/resources/guidance1/using-the-scrap-recording-form/>.

Description: We suggest approaching your description as if you were using the ScRAP recording form, starting with the location notes to describe the physical and archaeological context of the panel, then focusing in on the panel itself, and finally describing the motifs.

Your completed description should aim to flow in sentences, rather than a series of short notes. An example is given at the end of these Guidance Notes.

Images: Context/panel photos and digitised sketches should ideally all be uploaded as JPGs, and captioned appropriately (e.g. Panel to the N, Panel in context with scale). If possible, include the panel name and number e.g. Laggan Hill 1 to the N).

3D material: You can include a url link to your 3D model in Sketchfab in your description, and upload 3D model screen shots (if uploading via Scotland's Past, please consult the guidance for this). **Please do not upload 3D models and photogrammetry photos.** If you want to deposit 3D data with HES, please contact the Digital Archives team on digital.archives@hes.scot.

Field Recording

Preparing for recording

1. Where possible, out of courtesy request permission from the landowner/farmer
2. Do a risk assessment, make a brief note of what you decide.
3. Date your notebook and/or recording form, note weather.
4. Name and number the panel. If a new panel, name after nearest named feature on OS 1:25,000 map.
5. Record the grid reference using a GPS or mobile phone. If it is more than 20m from the existing grid reference, add the new grid reference to your Location Notes.
6. Make a few notes on the condition of the panel as you find it - vegetation cover etc.
7. Put rucksacks and gear out of the photo area.
8. Take a few photos of the panel as you find it, record numbers of all photos as you proceed.
9. Carefully roll back or cut turf as necessary. Keep any turf removal to a minimum, and do not remove turf if the panel is a Scheduled Monument. Place cut turves out of photo area.
10. Clean the panel gently with wooden or plastic implements and soft brushes, only remove vegetation that comes away easily. **Never** remove lichen. Cut back any overhanging bushes and move them out of photo area. Dry the motifs if needed.

Photographing

1. Ideally, please take photos in the landscape (rather than portrait) format, as this avoid any complications with how they are displayed in Canmore.
2. Take photos of the panel to the N, S, E, W remembering to include N arrow and scale in each photo, and to keep rucksacks, people, body parts etc. out of the shots.
3. Take one or two photos perpendicular to the carved surface(s) with N arrow and scale.
4. Take best panel photo (filling the frame) and best context photo with and without scale and N arrow.
5. Take additional close-up photos of motif details etc. if needed.
6. Take the series of overlapping photos for photogrammetry, if doing 3D modelling.
7. Come back in better lighting conditions if necessary for 'gallery' photos, and any other photos.

Recording the Location

1. Survey area of approximately 200 by 200m around the panel.
2. Draw your location plan to scale if possible even if approximate. Show panel(s) position(s) with a circled X. If more than one panel within the surveyed areas, make one good plan to cover all the panels in the area and name and number them on your plan. Show the important permanent landscape features on your plan and annotate freely. Show N, add scale and date..
3. Draft or bullet point location notes, including information about the physical setting, and archaeological and modern features as below:

Location Notes

Aim for a clear, succinct description of the panel's location. Start with the physical setting, then describe the archaeology. Please use N, S, E, W rather than north, south etc, and m or cm rather than metre or centimetre etc.

Physical context:

- **The nature of the terrain around the panel** e.g. flat, sloping, undulating.
- **Is the panel on the top, bottom or side of a hill**
- **The aspect / orientation of the ground on which the panel is located** e.g. 'The panel is situated on the S facing slope of a hill.'

- **Current land use and vegetation** e.g. moorland, improved pasture, bog/marsh, rough grazing, arable, wood/forest, urban/garden, military, routeway, conservation area, other (specify other)
- **If in wood/forest, is it** e.g. ploughed, mounded, new plantation, mature or recently felled
- **Views or outlook** e.g. 'There are extensive views S over Strath Spey towards the Cairngorms.'
- **Proximity to other features including water sources, roads, gates, fences, or rights of way, with names where known or noted on the OS map** e.g. 'The panel lies about 500m due W of the small Laggan Burn.'
- **Other features that may help locate the site again** e.g. 'The panel is 10m E of a large 3m high domed rock outcrop.'

Archaeological context:

- **History of the panel** e.g. where it was moved from, where to, and how it was moved.
- **Direction and distance to other rock art panels** with their Canmore IDs where possible.
- **Archaeological sites/features within about 200m of the panel or visible from the panel, and relevant details of these** e.g. burial mound/cairn, standing stone, stone circle, burnt mound, field system, settlement, dun, hillfort, hut circle, enclosure, clearance cairn, other (specify other). Include relevant Canmore IDs for these sites in your notes if possible.
- **Approximate distance and direction to specific archaeological features** e.g. 'The panel lies about 120m SW of Glenvoidean chambered cairn (Canmore 39897).'
- **Any other relevant information** about the archaeology and/or how to access the panel.

Recording the Panel

1. Take measurements of panel.
2. Record the angle of slope and the aspect of the carved surface(s).
3. Draw the carved surface(s), and whole panel if practical, to scale. Remember to label drawing with N, panel name, scale, date and initials. Draw the longest profile to scale.
4. Draft or bullet point panel notes, including information about the shape, size, height and geology of the rock/stone, the orientation, slope and surface features, and the motifs as below:

Panel Notes

Aim to include a detailed description of the panel, the carved surface(s), and the motifs, including the following. As with the location notes, aim for a clear, succinct description of the panel and its features

Panel:

- **Specify whether the panel is:**
 - **In the landscape** e.g. boulder/slab, outcrop, cliff/shelter, other (specify other)
 - **In a structure** e.g. burial monument, standing stone/stone circle, other (specify other)
 - **If in a museum**, state which museum and the collection /accession number if known
- **Approximate size and shape of the panel**
- **Dimensions** (length, width, maximum and minimum height) and/or visibility above surrounding vegetation.
- **Slope and aspect of the carved surface(s)**
- **Panel geology (rock type)** e.g. 'This is a roughly circular area of schist bedrock measuring 2.5 x 1.8m, flush with the ground, and sloping gently (about 5 degrees) to the S.'
- **Compactness, grain size and visible character of the rock** e.g. hardness, grain size (fine, medium, coarse, very coarse), any mineral inclusions (such as quartz nodules or seams), or striking features like colour banding, glittery surface

- **Rock surface features** e.g. rough, smooth, pitted, cracks/fissures, bedding planes, weathering channels, natural hollows

Motifs:

- **Number and type of motifs visible, and their relative position on the rock surface.** Avoid using subjective terms like 'large'; use 'larger' or 'deeper' when a motif is noticeably different from the other motifs on that rock surface
- **Any obvious patterns or arrangements suggested by the carvings**
- **Presence of visible tool marks and/or random pecking**
- **Is the rock art possible, probable or definite**
- **Other comments or observations** e.g. on condition of the carvings and/or the rock surface; if you removed turf and vegetation; specific threats to the panel (water, vegetation, animal, human); if the panel is at serious risk of being damaged or destroyed.

Finishing

1. Reinstall turf and moss cover carefully. Pin turves with bits of stick or weigh down as necessary. Close all field gates etc when leaving the site.
2. Double check you have all the information and photos you need before leaving.
3. Write up your location and panel notes as soon as you can while they are fresh in your mind. If necessary, save them as a Word document for uploading to Canmore/DES later.

Example of a description for Laggan Hill 1, Highland*

Site Name: Laggan Hill 1

Classification: Cup Marked Stone (Neolithic) - (Bronze Age)

Canmore ID: 285787

NGR NH 99860 25856

Date Fieldwork Started: 02/04/2019

Compiled by: NOSAS

The panel is located on a gentle S facing slope with extensive views over Strath Spey towards Aviemore and the Cairngorms, in rough pasture about 200m due W of the small Laggan Burn and 10m to the E of a large rock outcrop. The panel forms part of a small cluster of carved rocks, and more dispersed carved stones, comprising Laggan Hill 2 (Canmore ID 12376; approximately 2m to the NW) and Laggan Hill 4 (Canmore ID 12377; approximately 8m to the SSE). It lies about 180m to the N of a Bronze Age burial cairn, 8.5m diameter (Canmore ID 8972), and about 35m to the S of two smaller cairns (Canmore ID 7826 and 9832), each with a diameter of 3m. A rough trackway lies 200m to the SE of the panel, running in a NE-SW direction. Locally, this is thought to date back to at least the 17th century.

This is a small, roughly rectangular schist slab, measuring approximately 2.0 x 2.5m with its long axis orientated SE. The panel is low-lying, rising to a maximum of 0.5m above the present ground surface but now largely hidden by bracken. Its smooth, flat surface slopes gently to the S, with two natural channels running N-S across the surface. A possible groove runs parallel to these natural channels, but is heavily eroded and may be natural. There are 2 cups each with a single ring and 1 larger cupmark, all located on the NW corner of the panel. A possible groove connects the larger cup with one of the cup and ring motifs. Peck marks are visible in the larger cup, but all other motifs are heavily eroded. Turf cover over the lower part of the rock may be obscuring further carvings.

* Please note that this description is different from the notes for this panel in Canmore