



Tordarroch, Strathnairn. NH 679334. Lat. 57° 22' N. Long. 4° 11' W.

This ring cairn is located some 7km to the south of Inverness in Strath Nairn near the village of Farr. Unlike most of the kerbstones, only one the ten circle stones of the ring cairn have fallen and they show the usual grading in height towards the southwest. Directly in line with the tallest circle stone and the cairn's centre, is a fallen kerbstone with some cupmarks, many of which have been ground into veins of quartz. As the cupmarked kerbstone has fallen outward, this means when it was upright, the cupmarks would have been hidden by the cairn material. A sightline through the fallen cupmarked kerbstone to the standing stone marked where the midsummer full moon would have set every 19 years.

In 1998 I found a large cup surrounded by a single ring on the outside of the next kerbstone to the west that was in line with where the midwinter sun set 4000 years ago. At midwinter as the sun moved across the sky the shadow of the standing stone will cross the cup and ringmarked kerbstone and when it eventually comes in line with fallen cupmarked kerb the shadow would be projected into the middle of the ring. On the 25 / 8 / 04 the moon was observed and photographed as it set next to the left side of the standing stone. Before this occurred, I saw the stone's faint shadow move across the cup and ring mark as the moon set behind the stone. I then realised from this kerbstone the standing stone marked where the extreme southern moon would set in two years time during the major standstill in 2006.

About 300m to the northwest, lying on the top of a knoll is a large cupmarked rock. From the circle the boulder is in the direction of the setting midsummer sunset. The cupmarks on this boulder, which could be lying on the remains of a small kerb cairn, are also carved into quartz veins. If ring cairns were used for cremation of the dead it seems obvious from the alignments to the southern moon and the winter solstice and the cupmarked kerbstones strongly suggests that the symbols represent that the sun and moon were involved in some way with the rituals for the spirits of the dead.



Some of the cupmarks of the fallen cupmarked kerbstone have been deliberately cut into veins of white quartz. From the centre of the circle the midsummer full moon would have set in line with the fallen cupmarked kerbstone and the standing stone about two or three years before and after the major standstill. Azi.202°. Alt.3°. Decl.-27°. The kerbstone to the right has a cup and ring mark on its outward side. The rock outcrop on the local horizon in line with the stone has been examined for carvings, but it is not cupmarked.

This picture was taken over 5 minutes and shows the top edge of the 8th day old southern moon setting to the left side of the stone at the base of the slope of the hill in the above picture on the 25 / 8 / 04 at about 11:00pm. The moon's declination that night was -28 ° 45'.





The cup and ring mark on the outer side of the kerbstone to the west of the fallen cupmarked stone has another plain cupmark to its upper left. From the centre of the circle this stone is in line with the midwinter sunset.

The picture of the midwinter sun setting on the horizon in line with the cup and ring marked kerbstone was taken about 2:30pm on the 12 / 12 / 99, Azi.212°. Alt.4°. Decl. +23° 18'. 4000 years ago during the Bronze Age, the sun would have set in the dip on the horizon marked by the second leg of the pylon.





Similar to the ring cairn at Gask, at midwinter the shadow of tallest stone will cross the cup and ring marked kerbstone about 1:00pm. The fallen cupmarked kerbstone is to the right.

This picture was taken on the 25 / 8 / 04 from the cup and ring marked kerbstone and shows the moon reappearing from behind the stone after its shadow had crossed the cup and ring mark. The moon finally set some 45 minutes later at the left side of the hill to the right of the picture. While watching this I realised as the left side of the standing stone marked where the extreme southern moon would have set, this symbol had been deliberately placed here to mark both the solar and lunar extremes and could have been used to give the living access to the dead, Azi. 190° . Alt. $2^{\circ} 30'$. Decl. -29° .





The cupmarked boulder lies just below the white house to the right of the pylon in the centre of the picture and from the circle is in line with where the midsummer sun set 4500 years, Azi.316°. Alt.2°. Decl. +24° 30'.

This picture of the midsummer sunset was taken on the 29th of June 2003, about 10 minutes before the sun set due to the advancing cloud. 4000 years ago the sun would have set further along the horizon towards the centre of the picture.





Showing the large cupmarked stone on top of a small hill 300m to the northwest of the circle and the setting midsummer sun on the 29 / 6 / 03. Just like those on the fallen kerbstone of the circle, some cupmarks have been carved into quartz veins. As white quartz is found in burials and was also used to cover the cairns it seems to be linked with the dead. The top of the picture below is to the north.





A short distance to the west of the cupmark stone is a large recumbent stone, which has a single cupmark next to a shallow basin that fills with water. Next to this there is another large stone, which from its narrow base and height, might be a standing stone. From the cupmarks on the hill both stones point roughly towards where the sun and moon can set around the time of equinoxes, Azi.256°. Alt.2° 45'. Decl. -6°.

