

A Knight's Burial

What?

This carving in stone shows a knight in armour lying on his back, with his hands held in a prayer position above his chest. His feet rest on a little dog and on either side of his head is a crested shield showing a lion rampant.

How?

The image is carved into a single slab of stone using a technique called incision. This means that the detail of the picture is below the surface of the stone. The result is a shallow carving with thin, clear lines.

Where?

The stone is set into the floor of the Chapel, just off the north aisle beside the altar. You can see that the right hand side of the carving is less clear. This is because, over the centuries, people walking along the north aisle have worn it away with their feet.

Who, when and why?

It is thought to represent and mark the grave of Alexander Sutherland of Dunbeath. He was father-in-law to William Sinclair, 11th Baron of Rosslyn, who founded the Chapel in 1446. In his will, Sutherland asked to "be gravyt" (ie buried) inside the Chapel. It was very common for wealthier people to be buried under the floor of a church in medieval times.

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