

Kirk of Leean



The Kirk of Leean (ON *hlíd*, slope) is the name given to a short cist cemetery discovered in 1906 to the south west of the loch of Kirbister, between the loch and the junction where the Germiston Road meets the Orphir Road. Described as an 'ancient graveyard' there was a folk memory of an ancient chapel having once stood on the site. Orphir antiquarian Storer Clouston records the discovery of a double footprint stone from the site that was said to have been from the chancel of the kirk where the clergyman stood. Unfortunately, the stone was later broken up and there is no known image. The description given, however suggests the stone could have been an inauguration stone, similar to the Ladykirk (Magnus) Stone from Burwick and the lost single-footprint stone from Tankerness in the East Mainland of Orkney.

The tunship in which the site is located is called Kirbister, the name indicating a connection in some way to the church, Old Norse *kirkju-bolstaðr*, church farm.

Whilst the evidence for the chapel is slight, the tradition of the footprint stone is distinctive and gives authenticity to the account.