

Castel Statue-Menhir

Early Guernsey Monument

1 Granite menhir or standing stone

This granite menhir or standing stone is a granite slab that has been shaped by carving and smoothing it into a stylised female figure. The entire surface of the stone has been dressed. The head and body are marked by shoulders and a crown, and in relief are a necklace and breasts. On the flat back, and towards the base, some form of belt or girdle has been carved. The function of standing stones is unknown but archaeologists believe that they are markers of special or sacred spaces. It is likely that many were destroyed over the centuries as land use changed. The menhir was discovered under the chancel steps of the Castel parish church in 1878. It's original position is unknown but it may have stood near other prehistoric monuments and then have been deliberately concealed in the church. Often the parish churches were built on much earlier sites.

It is the finest statue-menhir of its type and one of the best preserved. It is unknown when the damage to the right breast occurred but it may have been a Christian act against pagan idols. The menhir is 2m overall in height with 1.65m visible. Such figures are generally known to belong to the Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age c 2500-1800 BC.

Artist's impression of the menhir being erected
Illustration by Brian Byron



The flat stone at the base of the statue-menhir is the Fief seat of the Cour de Fief Lihou.

one other statue-menhir can be found in Guernsey



La Gran'mère du Chimquière

Welcome

The interpretation of this scheduled **Ancient Monument** has been provided by the Culture & Leisure Department. If you have any comments about it please telephone us on 01481 726518 or write to us at Guernsey Museum & Art Gallery, Candie Gardens, St Peter Port, GY1 1UG

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