



Argyll Stones



Often referred to collectively as the Argyll Stones, one of these stones is actually known as St Conval's Chariot and, whilst both are said to be to the memory of St Conval, the two stones have distinct stories attached to them.

According to tradition, in sixth century Ireland St Conval was resting on one of the stones. He had just decided to found a new church when this weighty stone floated out to sea. Both stone and saint were carried up the Firth of Clyde before coming ashore at Renfrew. St Conval then went on to found his church across the River Cart at Inchinnan. Legend says that the stone that had borne St Conval safely from Ireland later became the base that held a cross at this church. Travellers and sick people were said to make pilgrimages to this stone to drink the rainwater that gathered in its hollow, believing it to have healing properties.



The second stone is thought to be a pediment of the cross. It became known as the Argyll Stone because supposedly in 1685 Archibald Campbell, the 9th Earl of Argyll, who had led the failed uprising against the then king, was fleeing capture when he paused at this stone and cross. While resting, Campbell was caught by two militiamen. He was taken first to Glasgow then to Edinburgh where, at the Mercat Cross on 30 June 1685, he was beheaded. Legend says the stone was stained with the Earl's blood for many years after his death.

Both stones were moved to their present location some time before 1836 when the land now occupied by the Normandy Hotel formed part of Blythswood Estate. The historical significance of these two boulders and their surrounding gothic-styled railings is recognised by Historic Scotland by their category B listing.

What happened to the rest of the cross remains a mystery.

Sources and further information:

- Dunn J A, "History of Renfrew", Town Council of Renfrew, 1971
- Renfrewshire Council: "Out There – 10 Walks around Renfrewshire"
- www.canmore.rcahms.gov.uk

