

## Impact case study (REF3b)

<b>Institution:</b> University of Glasgow
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 17B - Geography, Environmental Studies and Archaeology: Archaeology
<b>Title of case study:</b> <b>Conservation of pre-medieval sculptures on 6<sup>th</sup> century Christian site and regeneration of the surrounding area</b>
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)

Stephen Driscoll's archaeological research has driven conservation and regeneration campaigns in the Glasgow area of Govan, raising public awareness of Govan's important cultural heritage resources and its status as one of the earliest sites of Christian worship in Northern Britain. His work has been instrumental in achieving Scheduled Ancient Monument status for Govan Old Churchyard, has influenced urban regeneration efforts – in particular the formal establishment of the Govan Conservation Area by Glasgow City Council – and has helped to establish a sustainable future for Govan Old Church as a museum housing significant early medieval sculpture.

<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)
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Between 1994 and 1996, Stephen Driscoll, Professor of Historical Archaeology at the University of Glasgow (1991-present), undertook three excavations in and around the grounds of Govan Old Church, producing the first radiocarbon dates of the site and establishing the extent and character of the archaeological deposits in the heart of Govan. His research showed that Christian activity had begun by the 6th century and uncovered an internationally important collection of Early Medieval sculpture – some 41 monuments dating from the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, including five 'hogback' style sculptured stones, an Anglo-Scandinavian style of tombstone thought to have originated in Yorkshire. Not only is this collection of sculptured stones the largest in Scotland but there are only four other sites in the UK with five surviving hogbacks. Driscoll's excavations also revealed aspects of the Early Medieval topography: in particular, dating a forgotten 9<sup>th</sup>-10th century road established a connection with the site where an open air court of justice was held in ancient times, known as the Doomsterhill. Together these discoveries allowed the Govan area – and Partick on the opposite bank of the Clyde – to be recognised as principal royal seats of the lost British Kingdom of Strathclyde. (2003, 2004).

In 2007, in response to a proposal to redevelop the Water Row area of Govan, Driscoll led an extensive examination of the heart of Govan on behalf of Glasgow City Council. In addition to improving knowledge of the late 1<sup>st</sup> century Doomsterhill site, these excavations exposed key industrial features relating to the Govan shipyards, an earlier textile dye works and a ferry slipway; they also exposed a sequence of later medieval and early modern domestic buildings.

Taken together, these excavations established the cultural significance of the archaeological resources in central Govan.

Between 2007 and 2009, Driscoll was commissioned by Historic Scotland to evaluate the archaeological and architectural heritage of Govan as part of the government's Burgh Survey programme. This study produced the first comprehensive mapping of Govan's physical cultural heritage assets. The Geographical Information System built for the study was adopted by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (2008) for use in evaluating planning applications. The narrative account, resource evaluation and recommendations were published as Historic Govan (2009) accompanied by a suite of historical maps. Although part of a series aimed primarily at planners,

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Driscoll and his team varied the format to make it more attractive to a popular audience. The original print run of 700 sold out within a year; a second print run of 500 copies sold out in 2010.

In his research Driscoll has sought to situate the Early Medieval sculpture within its wider cultural and historical contexts. One study has explored the so-called Govan School of sculpture which reflects the cultural and political domination of the central Clyde valley by the kings of Strathclyde (2005). Another examines the Norse influences in the Viking Age component of the Govan sculpture (2011). Current research includes the survey and study of the early modern monuments in the churchyard and their relationship to the Early Medieval sculpture which was reused in post-medieval times. This information is designed to contribute to the conservation management plan for the churchyard. Another strand being explored is the relationship between the ministry of Govan and the restoration of Iona Abbey and the creation of the Iona Community, which is an important chapter in the Govan story that has the potential to contribute significantly to the tourist interest in Govan.

<b>3. References to the research</b> (indicative maximum of six references)
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| 2003 | Driscoll, S. T., 'Govan: an early medieval royal centre on the Clyde', in <i>The Stone of Destiny Artefact and Icon</i> , R. Welander, D. Breeze and T. O. Clancy (eds) Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Monograph 22, 77- 83. (ISBN 0903903229). [ <a href="#">PDF link</a> ]                                |
| 2004 | Driscoll, S. T., The Archaeological Context of Assembly in Early Medieval Scotland - Scone and its Comparanda, in <a href="#">Assembly Places and Practices in Medieval Europe</a> , A. Pantos and S. Semple (eds) Dublin: Four Courts Press, 73-94. (ISBN 1-85182-665-3). [available from HEI]                            |
| 2005 | Driscoll, S. T., Grady, O. O., Forsyth, K. The Govan School revisited; searching for meaning in the early medieval sculpture of Strathclyde, in <i>Able Minds and Practiced Hands</i> , S. Foster and M. Cross (eds) Leeds: Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph, 135-58. (ISBN 9781904350743). [available from HEI] |
| 2009 | Dalglish, C., Driscoll, S.T., Maver, I., and Shearer, I. <i>Historic Govan: Archaeology and Development</i> , York: Council for British Archaeology & Historic Scotland. (ISBN 9781902771625 / 1902771621). [available from HEI]   |
| 2011 | Driscoll, S. T., Owen, O., Norse Influence at Govan on the Firth of Clyde, Scotland, in <a href="#">Viking Settlements &amp; Viking Society</a> , S. Sigmundsson (ed.). Reykjavik: Proceedings of the Sixteenth Viking Congress, 333-46. (ISBN 9789979549239). [available from HEI]  |

<b>4. Details of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 750 words)
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**Contribution to improved social, cultural and environmental sustainability**

Historically, Govan Old Church served as the spiritual and social cornerstone of the area, but, over time, the shrinking congregation has diminished its strength. In 2007, a parish reorganisation resulted in making Govan Old Church redundant as an active place of worship. During the 1960s and 1970s, shipbuilding – the main employer in Govan – went into a near terminal decline. Today only one shipyard is still active, large areas of central Govan are derelict, unemployment levels exceed 50% and the population has declined significantly. In 1912 Govan was until an independent burgh with an estimated population of 100,000; it is now one of the most deprived districts in the city of Glasgow with a population estimated at 66,100 in 2008 (Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics).

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As a result of his extensive research in the area, in 2005, Driscoll was approached by Govan Workspace Ltd, a not-for-profit community-based regeneration group, to contribute to its proposed Conservation Plan for Govan. This plan led directly to the formulation of the Govan Conservation Area Proposal – that led, in 2008, to the area being given conservation area status by Glasgow City Council. The group assembled by Govan Workspace was formalised into the Govan Heritage Advisory Group, which includes Driscoll. This group actively promotes urban regeneration initiatives in the area, chiefly through the adaptive reuse of historic buildings.

**Enhancements to heritage preservation, conservation and presentation**

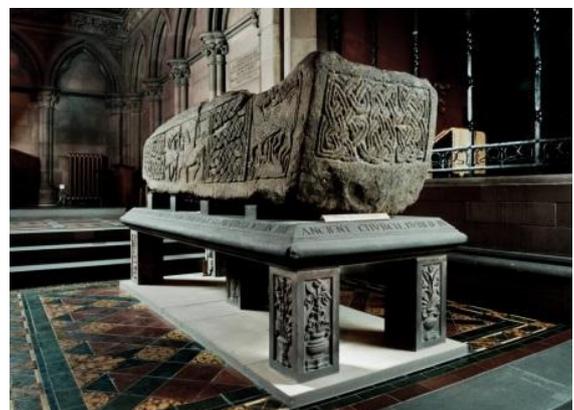
The most significant contribution made by Driscoll concerns Govan Old Church, which was made redundant by the Church of Scotland in 2007. This development caused considerable concern to those interested in the future of Govan because it was the oldest and most distinguished element of the historic fabric of the area. The church itself is A-listed and, as a consequence of the University of Glasgow excavations, the churchyard was designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument in 2003.

Driscoll subsequently contributed to the Govan Workspace Options Appraisal (2008-10), which sought to identify a sustainable future for the church and its collection of medieval sculpture. The proposal was to transform the church into a museum/cultural resource centre capable of providing impetus to the regeneration of Govan. The first stage aimed at improved access and interpretative resources to make the church site attractive to tourists; the second stage included a major refurbishment to combine commercial rental space (in the basement of the old church) with state-of-the-art displays in the main body of the church.



**Figure 1: Hogbacks display**

Funding for the first phase (£120,000) was secured in 2011 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Scotland, the Church of Scotland and other sponsors. Driscoll has applied his expertise to interpret the history and meaning behind the sculptures and was a primary contributor to the new display, known as the Govan Stones project (<http://www.thegovanstones.org.uk>), installed and launched in 2012. Prior to Driscoll’s research and the collaboration with Govan Workspace, there was little public awareness of the importance of the stones and the church and the stones were poorly displayed, with limited access. This initial phase of work is addressing these issues. As well as managing the displays and information in the new museum, Driscoll has contributed to a display in Glasgow’s Riverside Museum which draws



**Figure 2: The unique Govan sarcophagus**

particular attention to Govan Old Church, which sits just across the river. As part of the groundwork to establish the viability of Govan Old Church as a tourist attraction, the Govan Heritage Advisory Group successfully lobbied for the reinstatement of the Govan ferry to link Govan with the newly reopened and heavily visited Riverside Museum. The Govan Stones project is now fully open to the public, with free admission for the first three years. It has a schools outreach programme and is a venue for events as part of its income generation strategy – the Jimmy Reid Foundation hosted Scotland’s First Minister Alex Salmond, in January 2013, in the first of series of public talks which will be held in the Govan Old Church space. Govan Workspace has reported early progress in the drive to increase the number of visitors to Govan Old and the Govan Stones, with an increase of

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146% between 2010 and 2011, largely owing to extended opening hours. Visitor numbers between 2012 and 2013 more than doubled, with 2,477 visitors in 2012 and 5,379 in between January and September 2013. The Managing Director of Govan Workspace stated:

Professor Driscoll has played a leading role as part of a local group which has been drawing attention to Govan's special heritage and the potential contribution it could make to local regeneration. His professional input – in particular his knowledge of the history of the Govan Burgh and his archaeological expertise on the Govan Stones – helped bring early credibility to the work and has been instrumental in the success of various funding applications.

The activity associated with the regeneration of the church building prompted Glasgow City Council Land and Environmental Services in 2012 to initiate a £200,000 conservation programme for the churchyard, the first phase of which is the development of a conservation management plan, to which Professor Driscoll is contributing. The conservation and regeneration work on Govan Old Church has contributed significantly to the aims of the Govan regeneration initiative (Central Govan Action Plan) and also forms part of Glasgow's ambitious Clyde Waterfront regeneration programme.

Over the course of the Glasgow involvement in the Govan Old Church site, significant effort has been devoted to publicising and interpreting the discoveries at Govan. Much of this has been accomplished through local media, but there are two noteworthy TV events. During the initial archaeological dig, an entire episode of Channel 4's *Time Team* programme was dedicated to Govan. Although this occurred prior to the eligibility timeframe for impact, it did encourage Glasgow City Council to fund an additional season of excavation. Most recently, in May 2012, Govan featured prominently in the opening episode ('Britannia') of *The Great British Story* series presented by Michael Woods for BBC 2, which aired to an estimated 1.66million. The site has also been written up in a 2011 book by Nick Mayhew-Smith entitled *Britain's Holiest Places*, which was featured on Radio 4's *Excess Baggage* programme and BBC Two's *Countryfile* show.

<h3>5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)</h3>
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#### Evidencing the importance of the Glasgow University research in the campaign to gain conservation area status for Govan:

Corroborative statement from Govan Workspace (2013) [available from HEI]

[Govan Workspace Annual Report 2012](#), referencing archaeological research findings and Prof Stephen Driscoll in reports of the successful funding for Govan Stones project

[Govan Conservation Area Appraisal 2008](#) (Glasgow City Council)

[Govan Workspace Annual Report 2005](#), citing the research findings as one of the main reasons for a conservation plan

#### Evidencing links of Govan Old Church to wider Govan and Clydeside regeneration:

[Press information Riverside Museum opening 2011](#)

#### Evidencing increased recognition of historical significance of Govan Old Church site:

'[Britannia](#)' episode of *The Great British Story*, BBC2 (2012)

[Excerpt from \*Britain's Holiest Places\*](#), by Nick Mayhew-Smith (2011)

'Govan's Rich History Revealed': Historic Scotland press release on [Launch of Historic Govan book](#) by Scottish Culture Minister Fiona Hyslop (2010)