

# All Hallows Church, Inchinnan, Renfrewshire

## Research Agenda (v10)

### 1.0 Introduction

The site of the All Hallows church at Inchinnan (now demolished) is hugely significant in the development of early historic and medieval society in south-west Scotland. The site consists of a natural mound lying on the north bank of the Black Cart Water, near the junction with the White Cart Water, just before it reaches the Clyde. Its importance stems from the claim that it was the location of a 6<sup>th</sup> century chapel, established by St Conval who was also buried there, three 10<sup>th</sup>/early 12<sup>th</sup> century carved burial stones of the 'Govan school' associated with the rulers of the kingdom of Strathclyde and several other medieval gravestones associated with the Knights Templar. The medieval church remained a significant local ecclesiastical centre, being replaced by a new church in 1828 and another larger one in 1904. The last church was demolished in 1967. The significant gravestones and a possible shrine cover were moved to the new church in Inchinnan and the other 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century gravestones were laid flat or moved to the edge of the walled enclosure.

Inchinnan is now a grassed-over mound 3 - 4m high. Remnants of the 1904 church are still visible at the east end and the Blythswood mausoleum at the west end. This site is recognised to be of national importance and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The mound is surrounded by flatter ground, somewhat overgrown, which was occupied in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the Manse and Ferrycroft Farm. An area to the north of the Manse, called Lady Acre, and adjacent to it was another piece of ground which was occupied by a market garden in recent times. To the west is an area of pasture known as the Glebe. The ground in the vicinity of the mound is enclosed by a field boundary and shallow ditch which marks the edge of an old river course. Airport lights are located on the top of the mound and in an area to the north-east of it.

The Inchinnan Historical Interest Group and Northlight Heritage have formed a partnership which will delve into and disseminate the rich heritage of Inchinnan by examining the historical and archaeological background of the multi-period site of All Hallows. If Scheduled Monument Consent is granted, funding for the project will be sought from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Airport Authority, and other relevant and appropriate funders.

This document presents the **Research Agenda** for this site which is to be submitted to Historic Environment Scotland to accompany a **Scheduled Monument Consent Application** and **Methodology Statement**. This document discusses what is known, what is not known and what we would like to know about the site. Because it is recognised to be of national importance the general policy would be for minimal intervention in order to preserve the characteristics that made it of national importance. This principle could, however, be set aside if wider concerns are deemed to be of greater importance to the national interest. Justification for these interventions include

- Added public benefit
- Community engagement with heritage
- Increased community coherence

This project fits within two key headings of the ScARF medieval panel report (Hall & Price 2012). The first key heading is 'From North Britain to the Idea of Scotland' which encourages the exploration of state formation. The site of Inchinnan is the location of several carved gravestones of the Govan 'school' which is associated with the ruling elite of the kingdom of Strathclyde prior to its incorporation into the Scottish kingdom.

The second key heading 'Mentalities' encourages the holistic understanding of medieval belief. Exploration of this site associated with an Irish early-Christian saint, chapel, shrine and medieval church will help to define the local belief system, the importance of pilgrimage in society and the development of Christianity through the medieval period. These headings are explored further below.



*All Saints Church and burial ground as depicted on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map surveyed in 1857 (published 1864). The church depicted here was replaced by another larger church in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.*

## **2.0 What is known**

### **2.1 Inchinnan – Place name**

The place name Inchinnan has been spelled in various ways including 'Inchinar, Inchienun, Inchinnennern' and in the 13<sup>th</sup> century Bagimonts Roll as 'the Vicarage of Killinan' (McClelland 1904, 2). McClelland interpreted this as 'island of the rivers' which reflects the location of the site at the junction of the Black Cart and the White Cart Water. Flooding often turns the site of the church into a real 'island' with flood waters passing around the north side of the church. More recently, Driscoll *et al* (2005) have suggested that the original dedication was to St Finnian (Ninian/Uinniau) and therefore could represent a very early 5<sup>th</sup> century foundation (Driscoll 2005, 153; Clancy 2001, 18-19).

### 2.3 St Conval

The medieval church, however, was associated with St Conval (Convallus) who was a disciple of St Kentigern (Mungo) and became the first Archdeacon of Glasgow. The 14<sup>th</sup> century historian Fordun noted that Saint Convallus (renowned for miracles and virtues) was buried at 'Inchenane', (*Ref* Fordun book 3 chapter 29, p 115 (book 5 p 107). The philosopher and historian Hector Boece (1465-1536) claimed to have been on a pilgrimage and to have seen his relics (*Stewart's Version*, II, 294, quoted in Warrick 1899, 71). St Conval was said to have established a chapel at Inchinnan sometime between A.D. 593 and his assumed death in 612 (*History of the Church of Inchinnan*, unpublished mss). However, recent research has suggested that the evidence for St Conval is complex and that these statements relating to the early medieval period should not be taken at face value (pers. comm. Rachel Butter). We do know that prior to the Reformation the site was called 'the church of St Conval at Inchinnan' and was known as a place of refuge (*Second Statistical Account*, 1834-45, 129; McClelland 1905, 10 & 49).

The first edition map of Inchinnan depicts an oval shaped enclosure surrounding the church. This wall probably followed the line of the early-medieval boundary which would characteristically have been oval in shape. The current graveyard has been expanded in the past century as the new churches were built and the line of the oval-shaped enclosure survives only in the south-west corner.

Just east of the crossing of the White Cart Water are two large stones, called 'St Conval's stone' (now called Argyll's stone) and 'the chariot of St Conval' (NS46NE12). One was once the base of a cross which was said to have been erected to the memory of 'St Convallus near to the site of his cell' (*Second Statistical Account*, 1834-45, 128). It is very similar in shape to the base of the Barochan Cross as illustrated in a photograph in 1902, which was thought, in its original location, to mark the limit of a sanctuary (Driscoll et al 2005, 139-140). The original cross at Inchinnan is now lost. The other stone was reputed to have been used by St Conval to float across the Irish Sea (McClelland 1905, 43). These two stones were moved to their present location prior to 1836 and are now protected by iron railings.



*Photograph published 1905*



*Socketed cross-base & the 'Chariot' in 2015*

## 2.4 Gravestones



*Stones at All Hallows (published 1905)*



*Inchinnan stones at the All Hallows site in 1927 (BC Clayton)*

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century 13 old gravestones were recorded within the churchyard. Three of these are difficult to date but are thought to be early-10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> centuries (Radford 1967). Some others were said to have been taken away to a museum in Edinburgh, but have so far not been traced. These three Class III sculptured stones are now under cover at the new church.



*No 1 - a recumbent cross-slab 10<sup>th</sup>/early 12<sup>th</sup>*



*No 2 - shaft of a free-standing cross 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century*



*No 3 - Possible shrine cover with cross and animals, early 10<sup>th</sup> century*

*Photographs taken in 2015*

These stones belong to the Govan 'school', Govan being where there is a large collection of early historic sculpture of the 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, a sarcophagus of the 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> centuries and five 'hogbacks' dated to the 10<sup>th</sup> century (Dalglish & Driscoll 2009, 31-34; Driscoll, O'Grady & Forsyth 2005). The recumbent slabs at Govan are said to be evidence for a major church and high status cemetery, perhaps the burial place of secular lords and ecclesiastics, perhaps even with royal patronage from the kings of Strathclyde. The similarity of the recumbent slabs at Inchinnan to those at Govan and Dumbarton Castle, would suggest that all three sites are associated with graves of the ruling elite of the kingdom of Strathclyde before it was annexed by the Scots in the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Dalglish & Driscoll 2009, 32 & 49-50; Historic Environment Scotland 1993).

The presence of the shrine cover and recumbent cross-slab at Inchinnan are therefore of great significance as they suggest this was a high status cemetery site possibly with royal patronage. The later medieval church was dedicated to St Conval, an early Christian saint who was significant in the development of Glasgow Cathedral and a contemporary of St Kentigern.

That there is a potential for more carved stones to be found at Inchinnan is testified by the fact that as recently as 2010, a fragment of a carved stone was retrieved from the river bank about 450m to the west of the church site, on the north bank of the river (see below). This small fragment was found by chance and later identified by Prof Stephen Driscoll as part of the Govan School of sculpture and being of 10th- to 11th-century date. The stone has been allocated to Paisley Museum (Hunter 2010). It is interesting to note that the find location is in the vicinity of the ditch and hedge forming the outer enclosure around the church site. Perhaps this stone was part of a cross marking the limit of sanctuary around the Inchinnan church in the west, with a cross set into the Argyll stone marking the eastern boundary?



*Carved stone fragment found in Inchinnan in 2010 (RCAHMS)*

## **2.5 Medieval church**

The church was by tradition said to have been built at Inchinnan in the 1100s and in a charter dated A.D. 1170 it was specifically excluded from the churches in Strathgryffe given to the monastery of Paisley, as it had already been given by David I to the Knights Templars (FSA, 534; NSA 129). The Knights Templars also obtained other lands in Inchinnan including the lands of Greenend (House of Hill), (NSA 124; McClelland 1905, 31). When the Knights Templars were abolished in A.D. 1312 their lands were transferred to the Knights of St John of Jerusalem (NSA 129).

There is a short written description of the church and a single painting which reveal a fairly typical rectangular medieval church, 50 ft long, 18ft wide with very thick walls and an 'antique scarcement to throw off the rain'. The gables were stepped and there was a belfry, a porch and a tiled roof. The floors were of baked clay which were later replaced by timber. The east gable was said to be less well built than the rest of the building and may have been the result of a repair in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (McClelland 1905, 74-5).

The significant gravestones belonging to this period include some with knights swords (known locally as 'Templars stones') and others bearing crosses. These stones are on display at the All Hallows church.



*Medieval gravestones outside the new All Hallows church*

The interior of the church was used for burial in the medieval period as numerous skulls and other bones were found beneath the floor when building works were taking place in 1828. These may have been reburied in the graveyard. Human bones have also been found outside the graveyard in the manse lawn (McClelland 1905, 59 & 156), although there is no further information to suggest their date and the location of these graves is not now known.

Lady Acre (depicted on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map) was a piece of land held by the church for the support of 'Our Lady's Altar' dedicated to the virgin within the church (NSA 132).

A small font on display in the new Inchinnan Church probably belongs to the medieval period. It was found at a depth of 14ft in a trench being dug for a sewer from the river Gryffe to the India Tyre company about 1 mile from Inchinnan Church (Ludovic Mann, undated manuscript). Another potentially medieval artefact includes a cross-marked nodule of quartz which was found at the church site in 1976 and is now held in the Hunterian Museum. A green-glazed pottery disc bearing a Maltese cross, a pierced pewter disc with a lion and unicorn and a granite ball 75mm in diameter with an eye for a chain (found here in 1977) are in the possession of D A Cunningham (see Canmore NS46NE 11). It is interesting to note that the true Maltese cross with eight points dates to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, although similar crosses were associated with the Order of St John of Jerusalem.

## **2.7 Post-Reformation**

After the Reformation the medieval church continued as the parish church, although the altar of Our Lady was destroyed (McClelland 1905, 76). Patronage passed into secular hands, initially the Lennoxes, then the Duke of Montrose and in 1737 to the Campbells of Blythswood. As heritors, the Campbells of Blythswood were responsible for the construction of the two later churches (McBrier 2014). There may have been a building beside the church which acted as the manse by the early 18<sup>th</sup> as it was said to require repair in 1788 (FSA, 534). The manse was rebuilt in about 1820 (Holland 1999, 18).

By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were 'several frightful fissures' in the south wall of the medieval church which had begun to bulge. When the floors were lifted a great number of human bones were found and the area was described as being 'paved with skulls' (McClelland 1905, 59 & 74).

A comparison of Roy's Military map of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and the modern map reveals several changes in the landscape. These changes include the canalisation of the White Cart Water near its junction with the Black Cart Water. The road marked by Roy stretching from 'Inchinnan Kirk' to Causewayhead and on to the village of Inchinnan was also shifted further north. Roy's map depicts a cluster of buildings in the vicinity of the church including the manse, a farm and a small number of outhouse buildings which have all now gone which may have been the remains of a 'kirktoun.' There are also two buildings in the field to the east of the church which may relate to a farmstead or perhaps a distillery at Port Nauld of which there is no trace on the surface.

## 2.8 19<sup>th</sup> Century churches

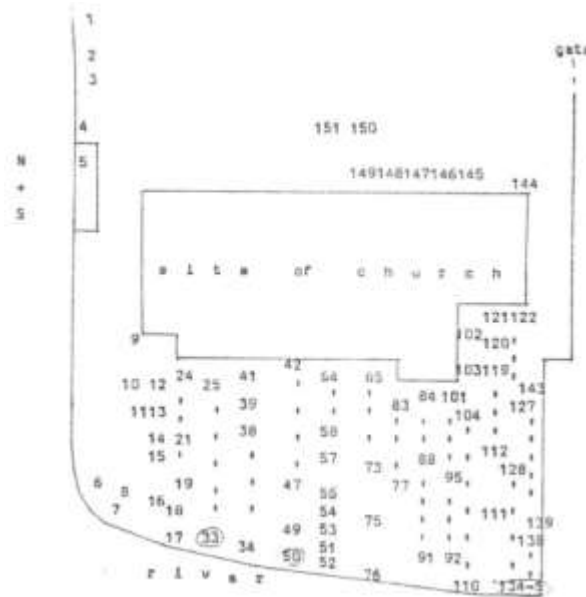
The old medieval church was demolished and a new church built in 1828. The new church was 50 ft long and 27 feet wide with a massive tower at the east end and a Blythwood family vault at the west end. A third church was built and consecrated in 1904. This third church measured 71 feet long and 29 feet wide (McClelland 1905, 77 & 80) and was built around earlier church which remained in use until the new church was ready.

The contemporary church yard was described as 'congested' and chaotic' (McClelland 1905, 156) and it is particularly significant to note that McClelland reported in 1905 that the churchyard was ...'in the early part of this century, partly filled up with earth and sand, and we have thus a graveyard above a graveyard (McClelland 1905, 156). This re-deposition of material will have sealed the earlier remains and may have protected them from later disturbance. From a photograph taken in 1927 (see page 4 above) it is possible to see that some order had been brought to the graveyard with the redisplay of the medieval stones on small plinths and the probable movement of other stones to the edge of the graveyard.

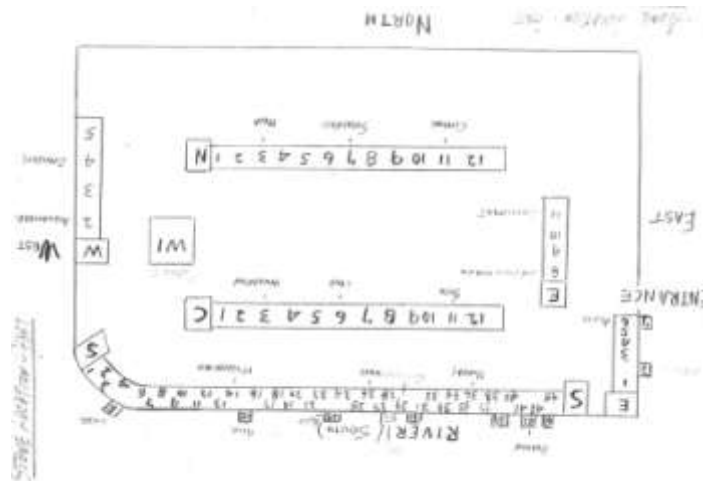
The Inchinnan burial records reveal two burial layouts, possibly relating to the pre and post-filling of the churchyard. Both plans are representative sketches and have different numbering systems making comparisons difficult, but the one with numerous gravestones laid around the edge of the graveyard is likely to be the later plan. The earlier plan shows the south side of the church to be densely packed with burials with only a few on the north side (see below). No paths are depicted in either drawings, but the curve of the south-western corner of the graveyard is clear. In 1977 the third parish church was demolished to make way for the runway to Glasgow Airport.



*25 inch OS first edition map of Inchinnan church (surveyed c1856)*



Densely packed graveyard to the south of the church



Graveyard re-ordered and stones laid around the southern edge of the graveyard

(NB: the drawing has been displayed upside down so that N is to the top).

## 2.9 Archaeological Watching brief

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd during works associated with the replacement of cables to the airport lights (Matthews 2010). Within the graveyard the cables were exposed by hand within a trench 0.4m deep. Topsoil and turf constituted the top 0.15m depth and the rest of the deposits consisted of backfill and made ground which contained only 20<sup>th</sup> century finds. Rathmell concluded that the new cables were being laid within the original backfilled cable trench so that no *in-situ* deposits were observed.

Outside the graveyard, trenches were dug 0.6m deep by machine around the east and southern sides of the graveyard wall. There were also two pits 0.8m deep to the north east of the graveyard. Within these trenches topsoil was 0.15m deep, sealing made ground and levelling to a depth of

about 0.55m, beneath which was natural clay. The made ground consisted of mixed layers of red blaes, tarmac, sandstone, modern brick and some disturbed natural brown silty clay which also contained brick. All the finds were 20<sup>th</sup> century in date.

To the south-west of the graveyard there was a steep and substantial build up of dark brown silty sand which probably relates to re-deposited river deposits said to have been dredged from the river and spread along the river edge similar to what occurred on the edge of the River Clyde itself (pers. comm. Bill McCallum). The edge of the graveyard had also been stabilised with concrete. Excavation of several pits 0.9m deep, for a fence line to the north east of the graveyard, also revealed similar deposits of topsoil, made ground and natural clay. Again no significant archaeological finds were made.

It was suggested that while there was an amount of brick and sandstone found on the site, it could not have constituted all of the demolition debris from the church, indicating that it has either been removed from the site or spread further afield. They also suggest that there had been an attempt at levelling and landscaping of the area to the north-east of the church as no significant archaeological deposits were found there. The area to the south-west of the graveyard has also been extensively disturbed with the insertion of airport lighting.

### 3.0 Research Questions

The research agenda for medieval Scotland, produced by the ScARF Medieval Panel (Hall & Price 2012) has highlighted two main themes which this project would explore.

#### **State Formation**

The first main theme is State formation and there are two main periods where Inchinnan would have been significant. The first period was when the separate British kingdoms of the North of Scotland (including Strathclyde) become incorporated into the Scottish kingdom or Alba which was a forerunner of the Scottish state. It is the presence of the 10<sup>th</sup>/early 12<sup>th</sup> century carved gravestones of the Govan 'school' with their association with the burial of the elite of the kingdom of Strathclyde that provide the material for this line of research. A comprehensive survey of the three Inchinnan 10<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century carved stones, including a survey of their geology, would contribute towards a regional survey of the Govan 'school' of which at present only the stones at Govan Old have attracted significant scholarly interest (eg Macquarrie 1990) although the remainder have been 'revisited' (Driscoll *et al* 2005). This study could contribute towards the creation of a regional research strategy for the Govan 'school', which could include who were the stones commissioned by, their date, their symbolism and whether the 'school' really exists as the result of a single workshop.

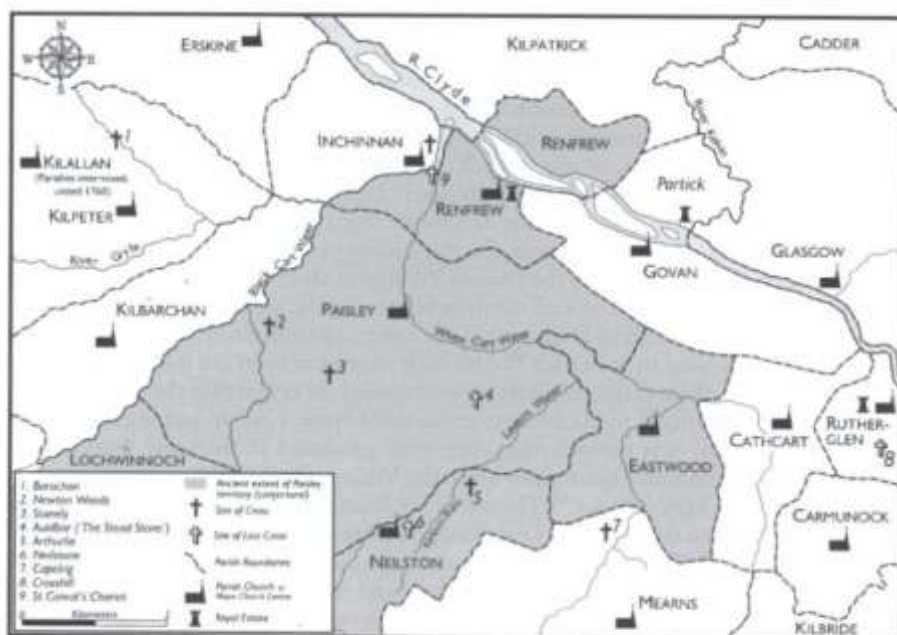


FIGURE 9.10 Map showing location of sculpture around Paisley. The parish boundaries are taken from *Origines Parochiales Scotiae* (Innes *et al* 1850–5), as is the ancient extent of Paisley. (Drawing by Lorraine McEwan, © University of Glasgow)

#### *Sculpture of the Govan 'school' (Driscoll *et al* 2005)*

The second period within the state formation would be the time of the Knights Templars who were a powerful pan-European organisation, which initially existed alongside the church. When they

became too rich and powerful in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century they were abolished. A comprehensive survey of the 'templars' graves associated with the medieval church would also contribute towards an understanding of the place the Knights Templars took in Scottish society at the time, who was buried at Inchinnan and what was the significance of the symbolism on the gravestones. The evidence indicates that significant numbers of burials were taking place within the church as well as in the graveyard during the medieval period. The survival of the bones beneath the medieval church floor was probably because of their burial within a dry space. From the experience of this author at other graveyards in southern Scotland (Houston & Killellan, Neilston, and Galston) it is thought likely that the survival of human remains will be variable, with medieval burials unlikely to survive when in wet, acid soil conditions. It is likely that human remains would be encountered during excavation in the graveyard (apart from beneath paths perhaps). It is not the intention of this project to disturb burials and so if any intact inhumations are detected these will be left undisturbed. If disarticulated bones are uncovered then these could be sampled to test for sex, age and date.

### **Mentalities**

The second heading 'Mentalities' can be divided into three aspects which this project would approach, the local belief system, the importance of pilgrimage in society and the development of Christianity through the medieval period. These aspects can be explored through an examination of the **physical evidence** at the site of the cult of St Conval which might include evidence for previous prehistoric activity that could provide a context for this choice of site in the early-medieval period.

The project would be looking for evidence for a **ritual enclosure** (an early oval-shaped enclosure marking an inner precinct) and evidence for an outer enclosure marking the edge of the sanctuary space. There may be evidence for activities taking place within the enclosures which could include a chapel and a shrine of the early saint, but may also include more complex or structured use of space, or for economic and technological function of the sites, including perhaps, metalworking, smithying or corn-drying.

There may be further evidence for the **medieval cult of saints** and pilgrimage in the form of paths, worn floors, pilgrims badges or other artefacts associated with miracle cures. Shrines 'containing the bones of saints played a crucial role in the forgiveness of sin, in the expiation of a crime (even manslaughter), and in the witnessing of vows and contracts' (Hall & Price 2012). The cult of saints also feeds back into the first theme of state formation as it has been said that 'the manifestation of saints' cults probably holds the key to recognising ancient polities (Driscoll, in Hall & Price 2012, 61).

In addition to the ScARF agenda, recent unpublished research by Dr Rachel Butter has explored the documentary evidence for **the cult of St Conval** (Convallus) in the lower Clyde valley, assembling stories about his life and sphere of influence. She has also looked into the origin of 'Inchinnan' probably a commemoration of Uinniau (Clancy) and has attempted to establish links between Uinniau and Conval and to the cult of Conal in Ireland which she suggests tentatively are all the same person (Butter undated).

Returning to the ScARF agenda, the structural evidence or material culture associated with the medieval stone-built parish church would help to explore the **development of Christianity** in south-west Scotland for over 1000 years. As well as the early-medieval remains, the medieval church may have housed a shrine or sarcophagus dedicated to St Conval and which held his bones. Only the cover of the shrine now remains. The use of the interior of the medieval church for burial was attested by the many bones found during later building works. There may also be further evidence for the selective destruction of monuments during the Reformation which would contribute to the biography of the site.

The ScARF research agenda has stated that 'early churches particularly where they are not overlain by medieval structures is a priority [for exploration] as there are almost no pre-12th century stone church buildings. An abandoned church, with documentary or carved stone evidence of early medieval origins would represent an ideal site' (Hall & Price 2012). While Inchinnan may not therefore be the 'ideal' as the stone church no longer survives intact, however it does possess carved stones and significant documentary evidence and therefore could be said to be a high priority.

Aims of this project

**1. To find evidence for St Conval & early European monasticism.**

Excavations at the church site would aim to answer the following questions.

- Is there any evidence for a shrine, chapel, monastery or oval-shaped enclosure at Inchinnan?
- Are there any remains of the original early-medieval ground level and deposits?

**2. To discover the significance of the 10<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> century carved stones**

- To undertake a comprehensive survey of the stones, including their geology

Excavations at the church site would aim to answer the following questions.

- Are there any further carved gravestones from the early-medieval buried on the site?
- What other activities were taking place on site at this period?

**3. To explore the significance of the Knights Templars in the Medieval Period.**

Excavations at the church site would aim to answer the following questions.

- Is there any evidence for the medieval church and graveyard?
- Did the burials beneath the church represent the members of the Templars and Knights of St John or a general population?
- Where were the medieval bones then re-buried?
- How does the site sit in the landscape in relation to pilgrims routes and local centres of power.

**4. To trace the later development of the church in the Post-Medieval and Modern Periods**

Excavations at the church site would aim to answer the following questions.

- Can the foundations of the modern churches be defined and how much have they disturbed the medieval deposits?
- How much did the location of the medieval church influence the location of the later churches.
- Can an examination of the environs of the church reveal anything about the post-medieval landscape?
- What does the material culture of the church tell us about the development of Christianity?

#### **4.0 Why these questions can't be answered through non-invasive techniques.**

It is hoped that the non-invasive technique of geophysics will go some way to show where the foundations of the second and third parish churches may be and also whether there are any other gravestones buried in the graveyard. However, this evidence would require 'ground truthing' to confirm the geophysical results and the geophysics is unlikely to be able to show the remains of the earlier churches and shrine which may be sealed by the later churches and perhaps by re-deposited material. The geophysical survey may indicate the possible route of the old road to Inchinnan, but it would require excavation of a small section of it to confirm that this was what was being detected and not some other field boundary or drainage ditch. Likewise there may be remains of the 18<sup>th</sup> century farmstead or distillery the details of which could only be retrieved through excavation.

#### **5.0 Why the case for minimal intervention should be set aside.**

This project has been initiated by members of the Inchinnan Historical Interest Group who feel that this project would bring many benefits to the community in that their heritage would be better understood, researched, recorded and explained. The people who volunteer on the project would develop transferrable skills, learn about their heritage, have an enjoyable experience and through volunteering their time have shown commitment which would assist with finding employment.

Although access to the site is by permission only from the Airport Authority, the community as a whole would be more aware of its heritage, this heritage would be more accessible in digital form and a range of people would have taken part in the project which would boost individual social skills and community cohesion. With an increased awareness of the sites that can be visited by tourists in the vicinity, including the new Inchinnan church, people would be keen to spend more time in the area and the local economy in the form of B&Bs, cafes, and shops would get a boost.

The Inchinnan Historical Interest Group are already working on an oral history with the farmers in the area and are keen to work with other groups, such as the local primary and secondary schools, the Renfrewshire Local History Forum, Young Farmers and the Inchinnan Community Association, which strengthens the intergenerational links in the community and boosts their awareness of the place they live and of the significance it has to the national story.

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