

The Legend of The Gouk Stane

The Gouk Stane stands close to the colony trail near to the Stack Yard.

'Gouk' or 'Gowk' is the Scots word for the Cuckoo but can also be used to mean 'fool' or 'simpleton' (*Dictionary of the Scots Language*).

There are stones known as 'The Gouk Stane' at several locations across Scotland. We may never know for sure how the Bennachie Gouk Stane got its name, and whether the reference is to a cuckoo or a fool, but local legend has it that when the Gouk or Cuckoo returns to Bennachie from spending the winter in Africa in March or April each year, the Gouk Stane is the first place on which it comes to rest. Others say that the stone was the cuckoo's favourite place to perch after the colonists had left.



The inscription on the nearby stone wall 'The Calling Of The Gouk is the other side of Spring' along with a carving of a crack on an egg-shaped stone seems to confirm that the gouk was a cuckoo rather than a fool!



The carving of the cracked egg can easily be seen



The lettering on the stones is more difficult to make out but can be read with care.



The carvings are by North-East artist & sculptor Mary Bourne. They were commissioned by Buchan Forest District, Forestry Commission Scotland in 1998 to interpret The Gouk Stane through art.



Some versions of the legend of Jock O'Bennachie have it that the large stone was thrown down the hill by the mythical giant.

Has anyone heard other explanations for how the Gouk Stane got its name?