Discover historic King's Cave, evidence of sea-level change, dramatic igneous intrusions, and the prints of the mysterious ‘hand-beast’ — which walked here over 200 million years ago.

Walk 5
King's Cave & Drumadoon

Distance: 8 km / 5 miles
Approximate time: 3.5 hours
Start: King's Cave Car Park
Terrain: Surfaced paths and grassy paths, which may be wet in places
Route description: Follow waymarked route, initially north, into woodland. Continue along path to reach the shore. Follow coastal path towards The Doon and look out for Geopark marker posts. Return via the signposted to the car park to the south of King's Cave.

For information on our interpretation centres, guided walks and other events please visit: www.ArranGeopark.co.uk

Arran Geopark is a project of the Arran Access Trust
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King's Cave and Drumadoon

This walk takes you through the spectacular and varied geology of the King's Cave coastline. See igneous intrusions, evidence for sea-level change, and find the footprints of the mysterious ‘hand beast’.

1. An Cumnann dyke
   The rock you’re now standing on is one of ‘Judd’s dykes’ – a series of magmatic intrusions described by J.W. Judd in 1893. It is an igneous rock known as a ‘porphyry’, meaning it contains large crystals in a fine-grained matrix. This intrusion is connected to the main Drumadoon sill.

2. King's Cave
   King’s Cave is one of several large caves eroded into the New Red Sandstone along this coast. They were worn away by the sea at a time when ice covered much of Scotland. After the glaciers melted and the weight of the ice was lifted, Arran began to rise relative to the sea, leaving a feature known as a ‘raised shoreline’. There are carvings on the walls of the cave that date to the Iron Age and early Christian times. Look for crosses, deer, and a group of snakes.

3. Chirotherium footprint
   At the end of this path you will find a small vertical rock face with several footprints. These belong to a large reptile that lived at the time of the earliest dinosaurs. The name Chirotherium means ‘hand beast’, because the prints look like giant hands – although the digit that points to the side is not its thumb but its outside toe.

4. Drumadoon Sill
   The spectacular cliffs of the Doon are made up of igneous rock like you saw at An Cumnann. The magma was intruded as a sill, meaning that it squeezed its way horizontally between layers of sedimentary rocks. As you walk along the shore below the sill, you get a closer view of the large blocks that have fallen from the cliffs. You should be able to identify quartz and feldspar again. Look for blobs of orange material in the rock, this is a different magma that mixed with the porphyry while both were still molten.

The Drumadoon sill was formed from molten rock that squeezed its way between layers of sedimentary rock. This magma slowly cooled and formed the rock that you can see in the cliffs today.