



Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum

Scottish Pilgrimage Gathering 15th September 2017 – Summary Report

A total of 37 delegates representing Full and Associate members of the Forum, invited speakers and visitors met at Markinch, Fife for a busy, educational and informative Gathering. See list of attendees below.

A majority of delegates took part in the 3.5 mile morning walk along the route of the Fife Pilgrim Way in dry and sunny early autumn weather, starting in Riverside Park, Glenrothes and finishing with a tour of Markinch Parish Church. Our route took us through urban fringe parkland landscape via the newly created pilgrimage turf labyrinth in the Park modelled on the original at Chartres Cathedral, a very fine Neolithic stone circle and standing stones, and from there through the beautiful woodlands of Balbirnie House. The walk closed with a very interesting discussion of the key role played by Markinch in the Middle Ages as the seat of the powerful Macduff family and the way the Parish Church had evolved since the Reformation, reflecting the changing fortunes of the town. We are greatly indebted to **Bruce Manson** from the **Markinch Heritage Group** for bringing to life so much local history to enliven our walk.

An excellent light lunch was provided in the Community Hall next to the Church, where we then held our main meeting. The SPRF Chairman, **Rev Prof David Atkinson** warmly welcomed everyone to the afternoon session and introduced the speakers.

Chris Broome, CEO of Fife Coast & Countryside Trust, spoke about the creation of the Fife Pilgrim Way long distance route under phase 2 of the agreed £758,000 Heritage Lottery Funding project, and the essential process of engaging with local communities with a view to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the route. Chris emphasized the role of the FPW interpretation and business plans in identifying the key components of this strategy. **To access this presentation, go to the link on the Events page on www.sprf.org.uk**

A joint presentation on the re-use and interpretation of the mediaeval *hospitium* in Inverkeithing was given by **Lorraine Bell, Fife Historic Buildings Trust, Tom Morton of Arc Architects and Sandra Macrae of Campbell Macrae Associates and Fife Tourism Partnership**. Planning options are being considered for the reuse of this historic building, part of what was once Scotland's largest Friary, under the Conservation Area Regeneration / Townscape Heritage programme for Inverkeithing. One very practical option would be to use part of the building as a hostel for Fife Pilgrim Way walkers and cyclists, but this posed a series of questions about the potential market for such a facility in combination with usage for events. Feedback or comments on these points will be welcomed by Sandra. **To access this presentation, go to the link on the Events page on www.sprf.org.uk**

Bess Rhodes and Alan Miller of Smart History, University of St Andrews, gave a presentation entitled 'Virtual St Andrews – Re-imagining a Lost Heritage'. This covered current progress in digitally re-

constructing the pre-Reformation town of St Andrews, starting with the great mediaeval Cathedral whose destruction began in 1559, with research based on the survival of extensive written records of the town and its various ecclesiastical buildings. The re-construction of St Salvator's College is currently being digitized as a 'test case' project using a website and app to provide a 'window into the past' to inform and educate visitors and the local community alike. This project will be highly relevant to the 700th anniversary celebrations in 2018 of the consecration of St Andrews Cathedral and the future interpretation of the Fife Pilgrim Way. **To access this presentation, go to the link on the Events page on www.sprf.org.uk**

The final plenary session of the afternoon covered a number of points raised by all of the presentations, and closed with a warm expression of thanks from the Chairman to all the speakers for sharing some very interesting and relevant material, as well as to Douglas Galbraith and colleagues from Markinch Church who had helped to make the 2017 Pilgrimage Gathering such a success.

The afternoon programme closed with the 2017 SPRF Annual General Meeting, which is recorded separately. Tea was kindly provided in the Community Hall prior to departure.

Nick Cooke
Secretary

September 2017

Attendance List:

Full Members:

ACTS (Rev Douglas Galbraith)
ACTS - Scottish Churches Rural Group (Rev Prof David Atkinson; Harry Sprange)
Auchterderran Kinglassie Church (Rosemary Wallace)
Capella Nova (Alan Tavener)
Church of Scotland – Church & Society Council (Adrian Shaw; Marjorie Paton)
CLEAR Services (Nick Cooke)
Confraternity of St James (Ken Spittal)
Fife Coast & Countryside Trust (Chris Broome)
Forth Pilgrim (Roger Pickering)
Holy Socks (Margaret Wylie)
Markinch Heritage Group (Bruce Manson)
Orkney Pilgrimage SCIO (John Stockan)
Paisley Abbey (Sylvia Jenks, Sally Cook)
Sannox Christian Centre (John Jackson)
Scotland's Churches Trust (John Graham)
St Mirin's Pilgrims (Gerry & Pat Murdoch; Martin Bonner)
Walking Support (John Henderson)

Associate Members:

Very Rev Dr Ian Bradley
Dr Valentina Bold
Margaret Hadley
Sarah Kettles
Jimmy McGuinness
Calum McKellar

Visitors:

Neil Gaunt
Dawn Laing

Apologies:

Lord Wilson of Tillyorn (SPRF Patron)

Sarah Akehurst; Hazel Anderson; Dr Marion Bowman; Comrie Croft (Andrew Donaldson); Craig Lodge House of Prayer (Callum Macfarlane Barrow); Dunfermline Heritage Community Projects (Clive and Yvonne Willcocks; Ruth Forsythe; Glencruitten Cathedral of Trees (Rev Nicola Moll); Sr Margaret Minards; St Cuthbert's Coffee Stop (Margaret Pedersen); Way of St Andrews (Hugh Lockhart); Whithorn Trust (Julia Muir-Watt); David Pott; Rev Dr David Pickering; Rev John Woodside.



Testing the labyrinth in Riverside Park, Glenrothes



Neolithic standing stones near Balbirnie Park



The mediaeval tower of Markinch Parish Church



New SPRF banners in use.