

April 2020

“Stay safe, stay well”

by **Stuart Beattie**

I'm sure all of you are making, or have made, plans to stay safe. We very much value the help and support we get from you all, and once we move to a clearer time in our lives we will need you all and more; so stay well, be safe and please be in touch so we know this.

For a small Scottish Charity, Scotland's Churches Trust punches well above its weight! There are a few reasons for this; - our relationship with our Church Members - of all or no domination - our interaction with them in offering grants, advice and support to help them not only sustain their buildings but to make these buildings an essential part of their vibrant communities. Our ability to do this at all, let alone as effectively

as we do, is entirely the result of the strength of our Volunteer Group. Volunteers are the core strength of many charities and good causes, and SCT is lucky enough to have volunteers who bring skills, experience and dedication to the task. Our volunteers not only do a sterling job but also increasingly contribute to the strategy and running of SCT. I cannot praise them or their contributions enough... or suggest where we may be without them. For example, they help with strategic planning for SCT's major events: The Heart & Soul event in Princes Street Gardens, our Annual Marion Fraser Lecture and the Annual Organ Recital. Our Patron's Gathering could not be managed without

their support in planning and help on the day. Our latest project aimed at "recording" Scotland's Churches looks to make a note of the contents, fixed or otherwise, in Churches that inform who the Scots are through the history and cultural items in Places of Worship. Not only are Volunteers carrying out the recording, but one volunteer is bringing her skill and experience of a career in Library management to effectively manage the collection and loading of information onto the Canmore web site for the public benefit.

I hope our volunteers get pleasure from their volunteering, and I try hard not to abuse their generosity... and I do know we could not do what we do without them!

Dates for the Diary

Whilst the relentless progress of Covid-19 and Government guidelines now make our events history we've left them in to show what is the norm, and what you can expect once restrictions are lifted. We aim to make the events fun and informative, and the venues are always worth the journey. We look forward to seeing many of you once we are able to reschedule.

Heart and Soul

The theme for 2020 is, "Jesus said, Follow me, and I will make you fish for people". Volunteers will be required on the day mainly to engage with people passing or calling to share our story.

Marion Fraser Lecture

This year's lecture "Signs of Faith - Ecclesiastical Heraldry and The Lyon Court Public Registers" will be given by The Lord Lyon of Scotland, Dr. Joseph Morrow CBE, QC.

Organ Recital

Details to follow.

The Gathering

Details to follow.



Meet the Volunteer Ian Lees

A long held interest in Church architecture, interiors and stained glass became Ian Lees retirement hobby of photographing churches and kirks. It has now evolved into him becoming SCT's volunteer photographer and photo-

archivist or 'The Window Detective'. "My activities as a volunteer for SCT continues to provide me with great opportunities to meet and communicate with a growing group of people who kindly and freely give me their support."



Photography by Ian Lees

NEXT PAGE

CASE STUDY

Yetholm Kirk

The complete restoration of Yetholm Kirk in the Scottish Borders was a project of length and cost that no-one could have anticipated when in the winter of 1991/92 water was noticed spouting forth from the rear gable. The rubble infill behind the impervious whinstone walls was retaining water and a thaw was pushing it out through great gaps in the masonry. A rather unique solution was found in the use of stainless steel hollow perforated tubes that were placed in the wall as it was rebuilt stone by stone one miserable winter. Nearly two decades later walls have been dismantled and rebuilt, coping renewed and substantial sums contributed to a wind and waterproof exterior smart in the new pointing. This left the windows – a substantial problem was being noticed over the years of renovation. The tall leaded plain and stained glass east windows were collapsing in on themselves, the tracery and the mullions on the chancel rose window were rapidly deteriorating and it seemed that applied secondary glazing was cooking the west windows which were beginning to show signs of deterioration.

“SCT helped close the funding gap and allowed the congregation to complete this third phase of work without debt.”



It was on this third phase of renovation that Scottish Churches Architectural Trust, as it was then, responded to an appeal with a grant of £4000. Damaged tracery was replaced with matching stone a task which included the replacement of previous repairs using a reconstituted stone. The windows were removed

and taken to Albion Glass in Cumbria who had a working table long enough for the windows. The church had to leave at various times during the works. The grant from what is now SCT helped close the funding gap and allowed the congregation to complete this third phase of work without debt. The result of all this work was a handsome restoration of a very striking building. The Architect was Cameron's of Galashiels, the masonry by John Laidlaw and Sons or Ballantynes of Kelso and the glazier Albion

Glass of Brampton. Acutely aware of the resources expended on their building the congregation next embarked upon an internal project and now have a building capable of serving 7 days a week in a flexible well-equipped centre. It more than meets the Church of Scotland's quest for modernised relevant buildings for the 21st Century. It is also offered as a Hub on St Cuthbert's way.

NEXT PAGE

Church Recording is Rewarding

by Lesley Cumming

Little did I know when I expressed an interest in SCT's proposed Church Recording Project what a fascinating activity it would turn out to be.

We assembled first at Heriot Church in the Borders for a training day. I have been visiting churches for many years but we were taught to really look at the detail of each fixture and fitting and then describe it in words. How do you work out the apparatus at the back of the organ – Oh I see – it's a working hand pump and there's an electrical motor for the bellows which also have weights for wind control. We learnt another important lesson – always check if the church to be visited has a kitchen with a kettle! It was a cold and wet day and flasks of coffee would have been a boon.

This project has Historic Environment Scotland funding and a requirement that our reports will be deposited on the HES Canmore website. I am a retired librarian used to dealing with databases so off I went for a discussion with the Accessions Programme Manager for HES's Archives. This was very interesting and a chance to have a look round the HES Library as well.

Adam (my other half) and I had an interesting trip over to Fife for a reccé



Dysart St Clair, Kirkcaldy

“Dysart St Clair is a thriving, bustling church and different groups were using the church hall while we were there.”



Viewforth, Kirkcaldy

of the first two churches on the list – Dysart St Clair and Viewforth, Kirkcaldy. We needed to see how much work would be entailed and how many volunteers we would need. To our astonishment we

found that Dysart St Clair has murals by Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Who knew? In fact the current congregation didn't know until a few years ago as the murals had been painted over.

Then came the day appointed for the full church recording exercise in these two Fife churches. Paper, pencils, measuring tapes, magnifying glasses, torches, not forgetting the M&S sandwiches, chocolate biscuits, coffee and milk were all unpacked and six volunteers set to work.

I found it a very emotional day. Hard to explain but the former worshippers of these churches really came alive through the inscriptions on many of the furnishings. The War Memorials were especially moving. Dysart St Clair is a thriving, bustling church and different groups were using the church hall while we were there. The contrast with Kirkcaldy Viewforth, which is to be closed, was hard to take. It was also a sad reflection of our times that the local Food Bank had outgrown the room it used in Dysart St Clair and hoped to take over the whole of the Viewforth Church Hall.

I've been writing up the results of these first two church recording exercises for SCT and imagining that in 30 or 40 years' time someone might be using this information to find out more about an ancestor or to gain an appreciation of the part churches play in their local community.

NEXT PAGE

At the heart of it

by Robin McHaffie

We are hoping this bulletin can become a regular forum for us as volunteers of SCT. A few years ago, I was asked if I would join a little sub committee and I was glad to say yes as Adam Cumming's group is much more about doing things than meetings. I think I was asked because of a background in projects and eventing. Since then I have been helping with our activities mainly on the catering or stewarding side of things. This rather suits me as my vision of Ministry was greatly fed by the Diaconate in its early days. The root of that is serving – at tables. This Event group does meet, when necessity calls and it was at a recent meeting that Daddy Committee sent down to Daughter

committee some concerns that recent events could have been better supported and could we reflect on how they are publicised? At some point in this discussion, when questioning who might help with marketing, I volunteered that prior to Ministry I was paid as a Sales Promotions Manager and had studied marketing. I did add it was 40 years ago. There followed a silence with all looking at me till the Director said 'well could you take a lead then! What I offered to do was to write down some thoughts which resulted in a paper submitted to the Public Relations Committee. Part of that submission was to point to the importance of our strong volunteer base – a group of people who give time to and value SCT. After receiving that report

we have taken a step back and reflected on a few things that can strengthen the image and promotion of the Trust. At the heart of this it is believed that our volunteer members are the task force best equipped to ensure the effective communications of our story, our activities, our desire to recruit member churches and to secure funding for the administration and grants of the church. I am a recent volunteer and I

think the answers as to how we can best do this lies within your wealth of experience. Enclosed with this mailing to our volunteers is a precis of the role of a volunteer and a questionnaire that I will collate and feed back. This should give us a feel of where we are as a volunteer base and where we could go. I know the Trust is hoping that we can build upon our strengths and take our work to a new level.

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We're still here!

We wish all our friends and supporters the very best during these difficult times, unprecedented in over 70 years.

The SCT office may have moved but we're still contactable and happy to hear from you. If you're a Place of Worship planning maintenance work and want to be ready once

restrictions are lifted, but need advice – do please ask. If you have problems because on-going work has had to stop please tell us about it, and if you're planning some celebration once we move back to normality we want to hear about it and can help promote it. Until then, stay well and watch out for any vulnerable friends.”



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THANK YOU