



Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum

Meeting held on 24th April 2014 at St Mungo's Museum of Religious Life & Art, Glasgow

Summary Report

A total of 38 people, representing 16 Full and 8 Associate members of the Forum, guest speakers, and external participants, met at St Mungo's Museum of Religious Life & Art next door to Glasgow Cathedral. See full attendance list below.

A total of 15 apologies were received. See list below.

The Chairman, Rev Prof David Atkinson warmly welcomed everyone to the meeting and said the prime purpose of Forum meetings was to encourage discussion and information sharing among members.

The morning session consisted of the following presentations:

'From Paisley to Glasgow' – Nick Cooke, SPRF Secretary

Nick summarized key SPRF developments over the previous 12 months including the 100% growth in the SPRF membership network and increasing activity in terms of website visitors, Management Committee business and media profile. Current development of pilgrim walking routes was focused strongly on the Fife, Iona to St Andrews, and Glasgow to Whithorn Pilgrim Ways, the first two of these now being proposed for inclusion in the National Footpath / Cycleway Network under the National Planning Framework 3 document awaiting Scottish Government approval (see below). Nick said that addressing the challenge of SPRF's long term financial sustainability meant securing external funding for output related projects that benefited all Forum members, e.g. (1) a future pilgrim routes accreditation scheme and (2) 'roadshow' information resources, and this was a key driver behind the need for SPRF to seek SCIO legal status. He hoped the increasing level of contact with MSPs and the Scottish Government would help the process of identifying support from a 'lead' Minister and key public agencies,. The second Scottish Pilgrimage Gathering to be held in Dumfermline on 3rd October would provide a good platform for advertising these links to a wider audience.

'St Mungo and Glasgow's Pilgrimage Heritage – Catherine McMaster

Catherine's excellent illustrated talk traced the evolution of Glasgow as a medieval 'pilgrim city' from St Mungo's missionary work in the 6th century to Bishop Jocelyn's charter 600 years later, and the role of the 'Vita Kentigerni' in promoting Glasgow as a multi-cultural centre of learning. The subsequent Benedictine and Franciscan monastic connections, and the royal patronage of James III's

consort Queen Margaret both helped to sustain this. Despite the major impact of the Reformation of 1560 on religious life, modern day parallels with Bishop Jocelyn's vision of a 'city of God' alongside its civic counterpart could be drawn from the city's current relationship with the Cathedral. This was exemplified through the recent success of the Glasgow Churches Together initiative; the creation of a St Mungo's Heritage Trail; the Festival of St Mungo events; and the annual Molendinar Awards scheme for schools and Lecture sponsored by Joe Logan Architect and Property Developer and run by the Friends of Glasgow Cathedral. Catherine said that with the future support of the City Council, the mingling of these traditions under the banner of 'Make Glasgow Flourish' could once again see Glasgow reposition itself as a modern day pilgrimage destination.

Pilgrim Route Development Work:

- **Glasgow – Whithorn Pilgrim Way – Sylvia Jenks and James and Susi Cormack Brown**

Sylvia's presentation covered the development of the very successful 'Paisley 850' pilgrimage walks between Paisley Abbey and Whithorn Priory in 2013, illustrated by photos of many of the historic churches, abbeys and other places of interest visited along the route. The use of existing core paths was key to the process of organising each walk and the end result was that, even though ground conditions may not be ideal in all sections, a mapped route now exists for anybody to use and this can be developed further. Sylvia confirmed that the arrival of a group of pilgrims at Glasgow Cathedral later in the afternoon (see below) would complete the 'Paisley 850' walks along the entire Pilgrim Way route.

James' interest in the Pilgrim Way was based on his recent work in securing recognition for a network of 'St Ninian Ways' as a European Cultural Route, which was recently endorsed by the Scottish Government in the course of a debate held in the Scottish Parliament on 18th February. The inclusion of the Glasgow – Whithorn Pilgrim Way in the wider 'St Ninian Ways' network was very relevant to the ECR criteria of offering visitors a 'transformational' experience that would have a positive economic impact on local communities and underline the wider sustainable development of this area of south west Scotland. It was important to recognize the strong European connections of St Ninian, closely allied to the international scale of medieval pilgrimage and the historic migration of Scots to locations in Denmark, Poland, France and Austria which still bore the evidence of their activities. All of this provided a platform for developing Whithorn's connections with other ECR projects across Europe over the next 4 years.

Susi provided additional information on the Parliamentary debate held on 18th February, which she and James had attended. Strong cross-party backing for the ECR proposal made by Aileen McLeod MSP was very evident, and in the course of giving the Scottish Government's commitment to the proposal, Fiona Hyslop MSP as Minister for Culture had made specific reference to the Scottish Pilgrimage Gathering 2013. Susi stressed that the development of Whithorn itself as a pilgrimage destination would have a major economic impact on local infrastructure and faith tourism resources along the entire 140 mile Pilgrim Way from Glasgow, and this now required meaningful national and local government investment. Susi and James are planning workshops led by experienced spiritual accompaniers for churches interested in helping to make the pilgrim's journey memorable and meaningful; and recently attended the Ayrshire Tourism Gathering to begin raising awareness of the

kind of accommodation needed by walking pilgrims. A key challenge was to find a unifying and memorable brand name for the Pilgrim Way, and Susi invited Forum members to take part in a brain storm session on this in the afternoon.

- **Iona – St Andrews Pilgrim Way - John Henderson and Geoff Hardman Carter**

John gave an update on a number of encouraging projects in the past 12 months in support of the establishment of a recognized Iona – St Andrews Pilgrim Way. These included the publication of a new socio-economic report by Scottish Natural Heritage, produced by Vyv Wood-Gee, on a new footpath across the Ross of Mull, and a parallel feasibility study led by Argyll & Bute Council with SNH on a new Oban – Tyndrum LDR footpath. Further east, the recent launch of a Three Saints Way footpath between Killin and St Andrews was being led by a local working group with a strong focus on a new LDR going via Strathearn supported by local communities and forming part of the Pilgrim Way. John said that at present people could only walk along parts of the entire coast to coast route and it remained a key SPRF priority to make this feasible along its entire distance. One of the challenges would be to measure the number of people using all or parts of this route. The Pilgrim Way was now in a list of 'priority' LDRs included in a proposed National Cycle and Path Network put forward by SNH under the draft National Planning Framework 3 review now awaiting Scottish Government approval.

Supporting John's comments on the Lochearnhead – Crieff section, Geoff then spoke about the development of the disused railway line between Lochearnhead and St Fillans as a viable walking route (with a further section from St Fillan's to Dalhousie) and the rebuilding of the Glentarken Bridge to overcome a significant physical barrier in achieving this objective. Following the success of the Lochearnhead Path Group in securing LEADER and other funding to finance the necessary engineering work, a formal opening of the new bridge is now scheduled for 9th May, and this event represents significant progress in terms of the longer term Pilgrim Way project.

- **Fife Pilgrim Way - Simon Hill, Neil Ramsay and Clive Willcocks**

Simon gave a very useful update on the current development of the Fife Pilgrim Way walking route as a multi-purpose amenity running from Culross and North Queensferry via Dunfermline to St Andrews, which FCCT supported as part of its 10 year ambition for a network of LDR trails across Fife. A feasibility study funded by CSGN and project managed by Scotways with SPRF and FCCT as partners had now been completed, and Simon identified four key strategic issues - route development, route maintenance, costs, and funding – which this study had highlighted. Local landowners along 95% of the proposed 109 km route had now confirmed their support, and historical authenticity has been a strong factor in route selection. A maintenance 'philosophy' based on offering a good visitor experience to all users of the route would in turn lead to more income generation for local communities; regular path upgrading on a low maintenance basis was therefore important, but at present some 25km of the route had no such provision. Capital costs of new works were approx £300K and maintenance overheads of £40K/annum for these sections, plus future provision for dedicated staffing of some £80K/annum. Analysis of potential funding was being approached on a 'piece by piece' basis, pairing up fundable projects with suitable funders. Overall, the big challenge was keeping annual maintenance costs to a sustainable level, and this would require a creative

approach combining (a) the input of local partnerships driven by financial self-interest and (b) involvement of local volunteers representing wider community 'ownership'. Fife Tourism Partnership's support would be critical to this approach, and it was vital to explore this further once all landowner consents were in place. Despite uncertainties surrounded funding availability, a timescale of 18 months was realistic to achieve the end result.

Two further presentations illustrated the role of the Pilgrim Way in local infrastructure development.

Neil provided information on plans by SCART to upgrade and convert the Culross Abbey Church manse into a multi-purpose 'hostel hub', which included the findings of a new feasibility study recently commissioned from a specialist consultancy using a Big Lottery 'Investing in Ideas' grant. The study showed a potentially very positive economic impact from this project, on which the local community had been extensively consulted at various levels. The purchase of the manse building was estimated at £500K, with conversion costs of £250K, and SCART would initiate a dialogue with the Big Lottery on further funding.

Clive then gave a brief summary of a 'speculative' project to conserve and convert part of the ruined St Catherine's Chapel, situated close to Dunfermline Abbey, as a new visitor centre catering in particular for users of the Fife Pilgrim Way as they came through the town. A similar venture now existed at the new Rosslyn Chapel visitor centre, and DHCP was investigating the use of the 'Adopt a Monument' funding approach as well as talking to Fife Council and the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust.

Summary of morning presentations

The Chairman said that from all of these presentations, he was conscious of how much pilgrim route activity was now physically happening on the ground in different areas, and that the Forum enabled new linkages with landowners, ordinary people, public agencies and others to support these activities within a national framework. Given the potential impact of the faith tourism market, David said there was a real need for SPRF to progress working links with the Scottish Government and to promote more investment in pilgrim walking routes and their interpretation.

SPRF Special General Meeting

A separate Minute of the proceedings of the SGM has been circulated to all Forum members and will be posted on the members section of the SPRF website.

Lunch

A soup and sandwich lunch was provided by the Museum catering team and enjoyed by all. A number of members brought leaflets and other information which was made available.

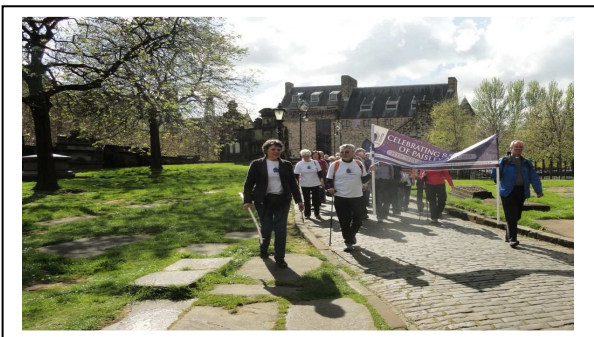
The afternoon session began with the following short presentation:

- **'An Inter-faith Pilgrimage of Scotland in 2014' – Stephen Kelly**

Stephen described plans by the One Ness Dream choir to undertake a 7 day pilgrimage in September 2014 to sacred sites across Scotland spanning the Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist, Sikh and New Age faiths. The aim of One Ness Dream was to offer all the pilgrims a transcendental experience inspired by the songs of the Indian Master Sri Chinmoy. This was a useful reminder that SPRF should appreciate that many other faiths than Christianity had a place in Scotland's religious heritage.

- **Tour of Glasgow Cathedral**

Everyone then walked across the precinct outside for a one hour tour of the Cathedral building led by the Friends of the Cathedral guides, which was much appreciated. This coincided with the planned arrival of a group of 36 pilgrims led by Rev Alan Birss who had walked from Paisley Abbey via Old Govan Church to mark the completion of the 'Paisley 850' pilgrimage (see above). A group photograph was taken of SPRF members and the pilgrims in the Cathedral grounds. See below:



(photo Nick Cooke)



(photo Nick Cooke)



(photo Nick Cooke)

- **Open Session**

The final plenary session took place in the Museum meeting room, when different aspects of the development of the Glasgow- Whithorn Pilgrim Way were discussed with some of the Paisley walkers. A brainstorming session on the name of the Pilgrim Way route was led by Susi Cormack Brown (see above). The open discussion identified a wide range of potential stakeholders, e.g local Councils, schools, churches and voluntary organisations like DofE who should be actively involved in the process of encouraging more people to start using the route that had now been established by the 'Paisley 850' walks.

The meeting closed with tea and biscuits.

Attendance List:

16 Full Members:

ACTS (Shona Paterson)
ACTS - Scottish Churches Rural Group (Harry Sprange))
Ayrshire Pilgrims Trail (James and Susi Cormack Brown)
Dunfermline Heritage Community Projects (Clive and Yvonne Willcocks)
Forth Pilgrim (Roger Pickering)
Friends of Glasgow Cathedral (Alison Gifford and Leslie Macintyre)
Frontier Holidays (Florence Boyle)
Holy Socks (Margaret Wyllie)
Iona Community (Rev Peter Macdonald)
Luss Parish Church (Robbie Lennox)
Paisley Abbey (Sylvia Jenks and Sally Cook)
St Aidan's Church, Morebattle (Rev Richard Pedersen)
Save Culross Abbey Regeneration Trust (Rev Jayne Scott)
Scotland's Churches Trust (Brian Fraser and John Graham)
Scottish Episcopal Church - Home Mission Committee (Margaret Pedersen)
Walking Support (John Henderson) **(Treasurer)**

8 Associate Members:

Rev Prof David Atkinson **(Chairman)**
Rev Dr Ian Bradley
Geoff Hardman Carter (with son, Samuel)
Andy Hunter
David Langworth
Rev David Pickering
Neil Ramsay
Rev Dane Sherrard

In Attendance:

Nick Cooke – CLEAR Services **(Secretary)**

External Speakers:

Catherine McMaster - independent heritage consultant and former Baillie, Glasgow City Council
Simon Hill - countryside ranger, Fife Coast & Countryside Trust
Stephen Kelly – Glasgow Life

Other Participants:

Adrian Cox – Historic Scotland
Dr Valentina Bold – Solway Centre, University of Glasgow
Gordon Wyllie - independent
Janine Fitzpatrick - independent

Apologies:

Church of Scotland – Church & Society Council (Adrian Shaw); Comrie Croft (Andrew Donaldson); Craig Lodge Trust (Calum Macfarlane Barrow); Sannox Christian Centre (David Potts); Scotways (George Macquarrie); St Ternan’s Episcopal Church, Banchory (Rev Lisa Eunson); Whitekirk & Tynningham Parish Church (Rev Joanne Evans- Boiten); Way of St Andrews (Hugh Lockhart).

Associates: Peter Joynson; Rev Lorna Murray; Rev Andrew Patterson; Ken Spittal; Sandy Thomson; Rev John Woodside.

External: Paths for All (John Duffy).

Nick Cooke, CLEAR Services
Secretary

May 2014