



# Friends of Kirkcaldy Old Kirk Newsletter

Kirkcaldy Old Kirk Trust

## OLD KIRK CALENDARS 2021

Still available £10 each

### Contact

01592 265499 or email

okheritage@blueyonder.co.uk for delivery

### Welcome to 2021!

Kirkcaldy Old Kirk entered the New Year of 2021 closed in lockdown like everywhere else, but still full of the light and hope of Christmas with the bright splendour of our Christmas Tree Festival still in the church.

Overleaf you can see some pictures of the Kirk with the trees. We know that the real-life experience was appreciated by those who came as "beautiful", "lovely", "very appropriate", "uplifting" and "a peaceful, lovely atmosphere"

Now you can carry the life of the Old Kirk and a reminder of its seasons throughout this year - and boost our funds - by purchasing one of the

remaining Old Kirk 2021 calendars. We've put some of the photos on it here for you to preview! Can you guess the month each photo appears?



### AGM 2020

Kirkcaldy Old Kirk Trust held its first AGM by Zoom on Sunday 27th December 2020 at 2pm.

Thank you to those of you who attended and those who sent their proxy vote.

The Annual Accounts are available to any Member who did not receive an online copy. Please contact

us via the details on the back page.

The reports covered to the end of March 2020, so we have not yet seen in them the very changed picture of life under lockdown!

However, we enter the New Year with the good news of more funding for



the Tower Restoration Project, and the hope of a starting date in better weather and with funding complete by April 2021. Still in lockdown? - who knows, but hopefully not!

## The Burgh School in Hill Street

Author Tom Binnie

Recently Kirkcaldy Civic Society were contacted by an Edinburgh author, Dr. Tom Binnie, looking for information about the Burgh School in the days of Adam Smith.

Dr. Binnie has written a fictional historical novel about Adam Smith's charismatic tutor at the Burgh School, David Miller. "To the Cry of the Sand'ling" is about the early days of David Miller, and Dr. Binnie is now writing a sequel in his retirement from academic life (physics and philosophy) in Edinburgh.

He says, "My desire in writing is to involve and entertain the reader, to delight and surprise, to find value in life, history and the nature of man...My aim is to achieve a well-paced, informed, involving and entertaining narrative."

Dr. Binnie enjoys the detailed research he undertakes for his historical fiction and the Civic Society were able to pass on the following information about the Burgh School, which may interest you too!

The Burgh School was established post-Reformation on 10th July 1582 by decision of the Town Council, meeting in the Tolbooth, as recorded in the

### Burgh Records.

The contract was made with the Minister Mr. David Spens, to "teche ane grammer scoill be hem self as principall" and to appoint someone to be a "Doctour" under him. He was to have 3s. for every "tounis bairne" in the quarter and "quhen the number of bairnis increassis so that mr. Davidis house will nocht easelie contene thame, the tounie to find him ane sufficient rowme houss meit for the purposis."

In 1665: "The Minister and magistrates, having visited and examined the Grammar School, order that it be examined in future four times a year, and that all private schools (except women's schools) be abolished." (Old Kirk Session records)

On 12th April 1725 the Town Council set up a Committee to provide materials, agree with workmen and do everything necessary towards building a new school in Hill Street.

In 1734 the Town Council proposed to pull down the Mercat Cross Adam Smith would pass every day on his way to the Burgh School and have a public well there with a lead pipe supplying water from the school well and the manse well to the site.

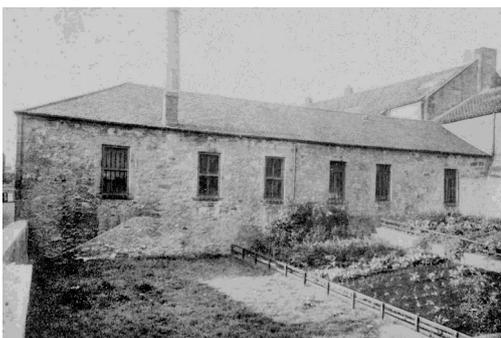
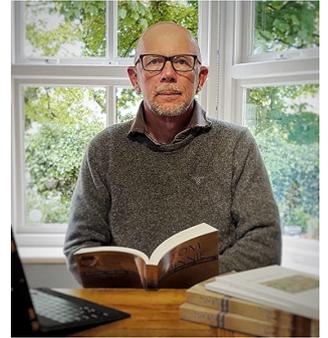
In 1742 there was representation to the Town Council from Mr.

Miller, school-master, complaining of the present decay of the public

school, which he judged in a great measure owing to the incapacity of Mr. Dorward, school doctour, and the tolerating private teachers. It was agreed to write to Mr. Dorward and "make him an offer of the continuance of his present sallary during his own life, on condition he presently make a demission" - a golden handshake of a pension! He went.

In 1747 there was a complaint about the teaching of music being neglected at the Burgh School by a Mr. Paterson, and if he did not do 3 days a week for half an hour, his salary was to be docked by a quarter. In 1748 however, he was dismissed for swearing!

The Old Statistical Account of 1796 reports 3 schoolmasters and 5 female teachers, and 250 young persons of both sexes at school in Kirkcaldy then. Two masters taught in separate rooms at the Burgh School, one Latin, French, Arithmetic & Book-keeping ; the other English and Writing. The former was also Session Clerk of the Old Kirk, which together made his annual income £60. School and Kirk continued to be closely involved in education for many years to come.



The old Burgh School in Hill Street. Pupils moved in 1834 to a new building in St. Brycedale Ave.



This sketch of the Old Kirk tower with spire (between 1755 and 1831) is the only picture we have of the spire. It was discovered in the fly-leaf of a Latin book of Horace's "Odes", purchased in Edinburgh for one of the daughters of Rev. Dr. John Campbell, Minister of the Old Kirk, in the early years of the 20th century. It has been sketched by a bored scholar at the Burgh School gazing out of the window across the road!

## Christian Aid Scottish Gathering - Feb 16th by Zoom

For some 50 years, Kirkcaldy Old Kirk has had a strong relationship with Christian Aid and the annual house-to-house collection of funds in the town during Christian Aid Week in May. Of course this was not possible in

2020 because of lockdown so Christian Aid too has migrated for the moment on to Zoom.

The invitation is now open to join Scottish supporters on Feb 16th in the virtual Annual Gathering, hearing

staff from Christian Aid Ethiopia talk about the impact of climate change, locusts, and conflict on vulnerable communities. Also finding out about new online ways of celebrating Christian Aid Week. Email [edinburgh@christian-aid.org](mailto:edinburgh@christian-aid.org) for details.

## Christmas Tree Festival - at night



The Light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never overcome it.



### ...and by day

The Christmas Tree Festival was launched at the 2020 Christmas Service. Usually this takes the form of Nine Lessons and Carols but on this occasion no singing was allowed because of Covid restrictions.

However, we were fortunate to have the services of Kryz Sokolowski at the organ and his fine rendering of the familiar carols was a glorious

compensation!

Thanks must go too to Colla voce and their teacher Rosemary Nairne for the beautiful recorded Christmas songs and to Isabel Coventry for her meditation in Scots from the lips of Elizabeth, cousin of Mary, Jesus' mother.



Christmas Service 2020—socially distanced!

"A bit of sparkle and light to bring the cheer and hope of Christmas to the town for 2021"

Our music groups have been sorely tried this past year since they were abruptly halted in their tracks by last March's lockdown. So it was lovely to see their decorated trees representing them in the life of the Old Kirk with the hope for the return of live music some time in 2021.



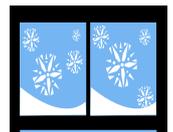
Thanks go to Kirkcaldy Orchestral

Society (and Langtoun Singers), Fife Opera, Kirkcaldy Gilbert & Sullivan Society and Kirkcaldy Music Society for impressive musical decorations!

Also represented were Kirkcaldy Civic Society, Peachy Keen (complete with screwdriver decorations!), the Auld Kirk Players, SM Electrical, Steven Macdonald Lighting (with a star as well!), the Macdonald Family and Fife College students from

the Start Here For Qualifications Course - as well as the Old Kirk Trust itself!

Thanks to David Potter of the Auld Kirk Players, Scrooge too made a mean appearance, which of course changed, to the delight of his audience, to a joyful celebration of Christmas due to the influence of ghostly apparitions!



We were gratified to receive the seal of approval from the visiting Environmental Health officer as well - "everything covered"

## Winners! Fife College Students : The Pom-Pom Tree



The winning tree

At the suggestion of David Macdonald, one of our Trustees, it was decided to ask visitors to vote for the best-dressed Christmas tree in their estimation.

The winner, with the highest number of votes was the Fife College tree, erected by the students

with their teacher Rosemary Richey, and decorated by brightly-coloured pom-poms they had made themselves.

The Old Kirk has sent a Certificate of Achievement to each student while we wait for them to be able to come in to claim their prize in due course.

Poignant were the messages and prayers which decorated the Memory Tree, holding in remembrance, with love and respect, someone missed because of distance or death. The Old Kirk was glad to provide the place for such a lovely memorial and hope it was of comfort.

Kirkcaldy Old Kirk Trust

maintaining Kirkcaldy's heritage for the community



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## Volunteer News

Aileen Aitken, our Volunteer Coordinator, is continuing to work at home compiling the Volunteer Handbook, ready for the day we can invite those interested to become Old Kirk volunteers, into the building! Aileen has plans for a **Heritage Hunters course**, to show folk how to uncover their stories of the past in order to pass them on. This is looking like at least partly online but we keep hoping maybe for the later sessions to be permitted at the Kirk.

Watch this space!



2021 means this is our **10th Anniversary** year! The Old Kirk Trust took possession of the Old Kirk building on 19th August 2011 and we hope to be able to have a celebration in the summer to which volunteers can join in.

Watch this space too!

## Malicious Mischief? Women's Suffrage in Scotland

Kirkcaldy Civic Society has been unable to host any face-to-face meetings this winter so far.

Now with a New Year there is a New Event - our scheduled January talk - on Zoom! But do not worry if you cannot access the talk live - we will record it for your later viewing.

On **Thursday January 21st at 7pm** Archivist Jocelyn Grant from the National Records of Scotland will provide an introduction to the **women's suffrage movement in Scotland**, looking primarily at the period before 1918.

Drawing on the archives of the National Records of Scotland, Jocelyn will show how this period is represented in criminal case files, government reports, diaries and newspapers.

In particular the talk will cover the difference between the suffragists, and the suffragettes; notable individuals involved in the

movement such as Lady Francis Balfour, Ethel Moorhead, Fanny Parker; and some of the actions which led to the eventual enfranchisement of some women in 1918.

Jocelyn is used to live talks and welcomes interaction with her audience so there will be time for questions and discussion with her audience at the end as usual—but you will have to supply your own coffee, tea and biscuits!

The next planned talks (by Zoom if necessary) for Spring 2021 are as follows:

**Thursday February 11th at 7.30pm : David Potter—  
"Kirkcaldy 100 Years Ago "**

**Thursday March 11th at 7.30pm: Sandy Thomson—  
"Fife's Mineral Railways"**

Hope to see you at one of these!



A Kirkcaldy Civic Society Zoom Talk

January 21st 2021

at 7pm (please note earlier start)

Join from 6.55pm at :

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86545276561?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86545276561?pwd=S2VrUnBDYtpNEcvU1N3aW5zREhLZz09)  
[pwd=S2VrUnBDYtpNEcvU1N3aW5zREhLZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86545276561?pwd=S2VrUnBDYtpNEcvU1N3aW5zREhLZz09)

Meeting ID: 865 4527 6561

Passcode: 743593



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