

Friends of Kirkcaldy Old Kirk

775th Anniversary

Newsletter

Kirkcaldy Old Kirk Trust

Special points of interest:

- Join us for a unique historic occasion!
- Give thanks for over 775 years of Christian worship and service to the community in this place
- Service includes Auld Kirk Players in playlet written by Isabel Coventry

*The Trustees of
Kirkcaldy Old Kirk
have pleasure in inviting*

*The Friends of
Kirkcaldy Old Kirk,*

*to join them in celebration of its 775th Anniversary
at a Special Service of Thanksgiving
and Re-Dedication of the Restored Burne-Jones Window
on Sunday 22nd September 2019
at 3pm*

Refreshments will be served afterwards

Families, friends and visitors all welcome

The 1244 Consecration

In Spring 1244 Bishop David de Bernham, the Roman Catholic Bishop of the huge Diocese of St. Andrews, set out on his travels again, arriving at Kirkcaldy on 21st March to perform the consecration of the parish church here. Appointed in 1240 this Bishop made it his energetic duty to visit and consecrate no less than 134 of the parishes of his

large diocese in 9 years.

Depending on horsepower and covering an area extending from Arbroath in the north to the Borders in the south, de Bernham showed a conscientious zeal for this task, unmatched by any other bishops of his era.

The document in which de Bernham noted the churches he consecrated is his Pontifical, a book

containing the order of services which could only be conducted by a Bishop. The mention relating to Kirkcaldy is the earliest written record of Kirkcaldy Parish Church.

In a margin is a little sketch of the Bishop— is it an early selfie, or doodled when the artist should have been listening to the service!?

From this book we learn there were 12 crosses painted

outside on the church and 12 inside - consecration-crosses, which were blessed by the Bishop. Then he wrote with his staff across the floor of the

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7th Century to 16th Century

The Old Kirk is the “mother” church of all denominations in Kirkcaldy as the Gospel came first to this site, brought by Columba’s monks from Iona by the 7th century.

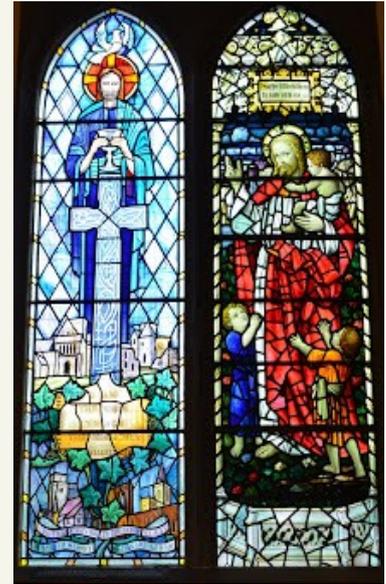
Look at Mrs. Sim’s memorial window on the left of this picture to see Iona and Inchcolm, “the island of Columba” in the Forth, in this 750th Anniversary gift from Mr. Sim, former Minister of the Old Kirk, and his wife.

We do not know when the first stone church was built but the old plan shows a church with “lafts” or

galleries for the different trades - shoemakers, weavers, sailors.

The oldest part of today’s church is the 15th century tower; with its thick walls and slit windows, it could be a refuge in times of danger but usually the bell’s ring would summon you to Mass rather than raise the alarm.

The bell is the oldest object in the church, first cast in 1553 : Dumnicker schoolchildren enjoyed ringing it last week on a school visit!



17th - 18th century

Julie Ford, Fife’s Depute Provost, will attend the 775th Anniversary Service in recognition of the close links of the Council with the Kirk in past years.

Having held out against having a Provost, Kirkcaldy finally elected one in the 17th century—one of the Quhyt, or Whyte family. He like 28 of his successors, is buried in the Old Kirk graveyard.

After every election, the Town Council would attend a service at the Old Kirk—the Kirkin’ o’ the Council. Special



hymnbooks and Bibles with the town crest on them were given out to them, and they sat in the most prominent pew in the gallery.

In 1613 George Gillespie was born in the Manse in a staunchly Presbyterian family. He grew up to be a fine and fiery orator and was an author of the Westminster Confession of Faith, still the Church of Scotland’s basis of faith and Presbyterian government.

When he died aged only 35 years, he was Moderator of the General Assembly and Minister of St. Giles.

Many Americans visit us, claiming descent from him.

18th Century

Adam Smith, the “Father of Economics” was born in Kirkcaldy and christened in the Old Kirk on 5th June 1723. He loved to be in his mother’s house on the High Street with its long “rigg” garden stretching down to the sea.

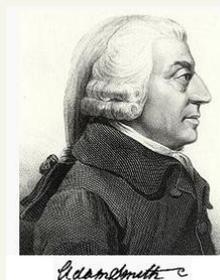
From his back windows he could watch the ships plying up and down the river to trade at the ports; out his

front windows was the bustling Lang Toun High Street with its market-place and route from the busy harbour to the ferry at Pettycur for Edinburgh.

No surprise then that his most famous work is “The Wealth of Nations” on trade and economics.



The Council’s pew in the 1807 church



In 1633 Alison Dick was held in the tower before she and her husband were executed for witchcraft, having confessed to “drowning sailors”.

Look out for the characters mentioned, who come alive for one night only—HALLOWE’EN!- and tell their story to those on the Civic Society GHOST WALK.

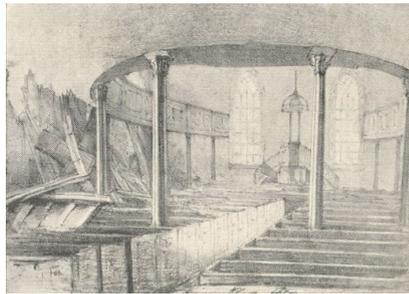
19th century

When half the roof fell off the church, people were afraid to return, so a new church had to be built on the same site next to the tower, in 1807.

The Heritors, local landowners responsible for the church building, sold the seats in the new building to help pay for it.

The builder, however, got into financial difficulties, which had serious consequences when the north gallery collapsed on the 15th June 1828 as folk rushed forward to see the famous preacher, Edward Irving, arrive.

Formerly a not-very-successful teacher in Kirkcaldy, Irving had made a name for himself



in London, founding a Pentecostal church there. He was back in Kirkcaldy for his wife's sister's wedding.

The disaster cost 2 lives killed by the falling gallery, but a further 27 in the stampede to get down the stairs.

It was a national disaster.

In 1843 the town was riven in two by the Disruption. All over Scotland Ministers and their flock left the Church of Scotland to set up the Free Church whose congregations would exercise the right to choose their own Minister.

In Kirkcaldy Provost Don Swan was forced to resign when the Old Kirk threatened to take him to court for ringing the town bell at the time of the FREE CHURCH service!

Loyal benefactors improved the Old Kirk with the Burne-Jones/William Morris windows installed in the 1880s, the new organ built by August Gern, and heating stoves installed in the alcoves.

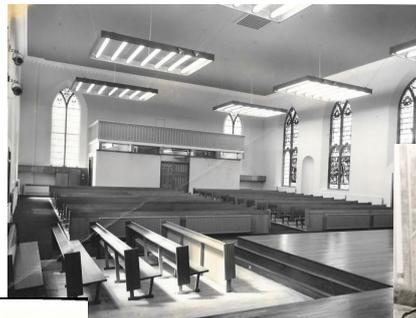


The newly-restored Burne-Jones window will

be re-dedicated at the 775th Anniversary service. Come and see its sparkling colours!

20th century

Two World Wars took the lives of many in the parish, who are commemorated in the entrance to the tower on the oak-panelled War Memorial, made by McIntosh, the famous Kirkcaldy furniture firm.



Fire! In 1986 vandals broke in and set fire to the Kirk. Although badly damaged, the roof was saved by the firemen.



By 1968 the church was riddled with woodworm and a new interior was designed by Wheeler & Sproson, Kirkcaldy architects.



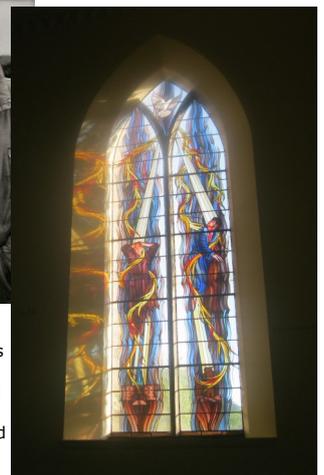
21st century

Kirkcaldy Old Kirk is full of voices and life again after a group of local people bought it from the Church of Scotland in 2011. The money came from John Sim, eldest son of the former Minister.

The Old Kirk is a popular music venue.



The "windows of fire" replaced those destroyed in the fire.



May Morning up the tower 2012

Still a church with 3 worship services on Sunday, the Old Kirk is also a community venue and a heritage centre.





Kirkcaldy Old Kirk
Trust

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maintaining Kirkcaldy's heritage for
the community

The next Organ Recital in the
775th Anniversary Series
is by Dr. John Willmetts
from Edinburgh on
SATURDAY 21st SEPTEMBER
at 12 noon

in Kirkcaldy Old Kirk,
followed by snack lunch.
Entry by donation
(£5 min. suggested)

Programme of Bach, Cesar Franck,
Vierne, Jongen and Mozart

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church the Greek alphabet-
from the left corner on the
east to the right corner on
the west, and the Latin
alphabet from the right
corner on the east to the
left corner on the west.

This writing of the alphabet
along two lines in the form
of a St. Andrew's cross is
perhaps, the Greek initial of
the word "Christ." : "taking
possession of the whole
space to be consecrated to
the name of Christ."

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 15th

7pm

Tickets at door—£8 (adult), £6
(concession), Children free

Baroque Serendipity!

Cromlit's Lilt

Baroque Serendipity

Handel

Concerto Grosso Op 6 no 4

Vivaldi

Concerto for four violins Op 3 no 7

Manfredini

Concerto Grosso Op 3 no 9

James Oswald

The Thistle. The Hepatica

Rameau

Entrée de Polymnie

Barsanti

Overture Op 4 no 2

G.H.Stölzel

Overture

The Old Kirk, Kirkcaldy.

Sunday 15th September 2019 7.00pm

Ticket available at the door. £8, £6 concessions. Children free.