

Project number and title A5.4 Kinneil Estate Church

Project Overview: This project recorded and consolidated what remains of an important 12th – century church building in order to protect it for future generations. While Kinneil Kirk was built in the medieval period, it stands on the Roman Wall, boasts a collection of colliers’ gravestones, and was used as billets by Hanoverian cavalry in the 18th century. What remained of the building was saved as a seamark for ships in the River Forth and endured as a Romantic ruin in a designed landscape on the Kinneil Estate. As such, it is a unique structure with connections to various aspects of local natural and cultural heritage. By the early 21st century, however, the remains of the church were in a state of considerable disrepair.

Falkirk Community Trust (FCT) thus supported local community groups, individuals and organisations in taking action to record and safeguard this key built heritage site. Ivy was removed, stones from the remaining low-level walls were repositioned and consolidated with lime mortar, the west gable end was re-pointed, and the nave was excavated and recorded. Among the discoveries were two 13/14th century grave markers, one carved with a calvary cross and the other with a sword. There were also seven early 17th century stones, many depicting hammers and picks, the trade emblems of masons and colliers, which were previously unrecorded. Guided tours were given to over 100 visitors, the Edinburgh Archaeological Field Society and the Borders Group before several tons of topsoil was laid to protect the nave floor.

A small booklet on the history of the church was produced, as well as an in-depth article on the gravestones in the churchyard for local history publication, *Calatria*.

Project lead organisation and other organisations involved: Lead: Geoff Bailey, Falkirk Community Trust
Others: Historic Scotland, Friends of Kinneil, Mossley (Scotland) Ltd - stone conservation company

Project Location: Kinneil Church, Kinneil Estate, Bo’ness (Falkirk)
NS 9809 8058

Project dates May 2014 – March 2015

Project Outputs

| Measure | Target | Delivered |
|---|--------|-----------|
| <i>People trained in recording inscribed stones</i> | 10 | 11 |
| <i>Published account in Calatria and guide</i> | 1 | 1 |
| <i>Nodal point on footpath and trails</i> | 1 | 1 |
| <i>Safe and attractive monument</i> | 1 | 1 |

What difference has this project made to the built, cultural and natural heritage of the Inner Forth?

An important aspect of local built heritage has been consolidated, recorded and protected as a result of this project. Local community groups, individuals and organisations were given the necessary support to become actively involved, and the aesthetics of the site have been enhanced for visitors to Kinneil and walkers on the John Muir Way. Educational and intellectual access has been improved by the publications mentioned above and the guided walks.

What difference has this project made to people?

This project has played an important role in celebrating, protecting and improving access to important historical features, and helped improve physical and intellectual access to the area's important heritage. This was achieved by the engagement of local people through training and support and, in so doing, helped turn perceptions of the Inner Forth around and increase local pride in this part of the Kinneil Estate.

Positive feedback on the project has been provided by walkers on the John Muir trail. One volunteer said, 'I walk my dog here most days and I am pleased to put something back into the place', and a trainee stated of their experience, 'I've been shown practical ways of recording that up till now I hadn't thought of and actually doing it on a real site makes sense of it.'

Useful Links

<http://www.innerforthlandscape.co.uk/projects/conserving-restoring/kinneil-estate-church>

<http://www.falkirkcommunitytrust.org/heritage/archaeology/excavations.aspx>

Future Plans

Superficial maintenance in the form of grass cutting and litter picking will be undertaken by Falkirk Community Trust on behalf of Falkirk Council as part of the commitment to look after the park.

Additional interpretation will be incorporated into displays at Kinneil Museum nearby and maintained by FCT. Information booklets will continue to be on sale there and have been supplied to the Friends of Kinneil, who will also retain copies. The signage installed will be cleaned by FCT staff, who will also replace damaged boards.

Lessons Learned

This project was managed by Geoff Bailey, Keeper of History of Local Archaeology for Falkirk Community Trust.

He said, 'We got off to a really good start with good weather and an enthusiastic team. They worked well and enjoyed the archaeology, but were less fond of the landscaping work. Some of the initial impetus was lost due to other work commitments and in pinning contractors down to the work schedule (the latter due to a delay in the initial start date).'

Photographic Evidence

Site before work commenced (by Geoff Bailey)



Stone masons at work (by Geoff Bailey)



Volunteers recording site (by Geoff Bailey)



Protective turf over nave (by Geoff Bailey)



Funding Partners



Falkirk Council

