

Some new additions



Old Kinneil Kirk,
Bo'ness)



St Peter's Eps,
Linlithgow



Auld Kirk CoS, Ayr



Postcard of South Leith Parish
Church CoS, Leith

Welcome to the first POWiS newsletter of 2021. I'm delighted to report that in spite of the best efforts of COVID we have been busy reorganising and preparing for all the new challenges as we continue in our mission to record all of the places of worship in Scotland. Particularly exciting is the fact that we have managed to recruit some new volunteers who have already started filling in the blanks for the West Lothian and Falkirk areas. This is in addition to Ian, our Treasurer completing the places of worship for Ayrshire and now making a start on Glasgow, and Tom our Secretary continuing the work to bring the Edinburgh sites up to date. There remains so much to be done to make the database complete that we desperately need more volunteers to lighten the load. If you would be interested in doing some research, taking photos of churches and places of worship, helping out as part of the editorial team or assisting with some of the admin tasks we'd love to hear from you. Even if you are only interested in recording your own church or community, that's fine by us. Please get in touch at info@powis.scot *Frank Reynolds*, Chair, SCHR



Honorary President

At the delayed 2020 AGM in March of this year Edwina Proudfoot agreed to become the Honorary President of the POWiS project. Edwina is the founder of the *Places of Worship in Scotland* project and has been the driving force behind it for the past twenty or more years. Now retired from her active role Edwina maintains a keen interest in the project and continues to be a vital source of advice and good counsel for the team.

Cupar Office

In order to keep the running costs of the project at a minimum, the decision was made in early 2020 to vacate our office at Volunteer House in Cupar at the earliest opportunity. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, the earliest opportunity was in May of this year and we incurred the cost of an additional year's rent and utilities. We are grateful to Bruce Proudfoot whose incredibly generous support assisted the project through this very difficult time. So at the beginning of May a team of volunteers packed up all of the contents of the office and shipped them to a container storage facility in Falkirk. This location is much more convenient for the current team of volunteers and is a fraction of the cost of the office space. However, there is still the massive task of sorting the contents and digitising the archives but more of that later.



Tom Kelly, Ian Holland and Stephen Clancy up to their oxters in the container at Falkirk

If you use Facebook please check out our page by clicking [here](#), when you are there, please follow us and like!

Another Facebook site that is a delight for the discerning powisophile is the Scottish Abbeys and churches group to be found [here](#).



Sponsored by the National churches Trust the Explore Churches website is another fine site encouraging people to make the most of our UK-wide church heritage. <https://www.explorechurches.org/>

POWiS Website

The POWiS website, which hosts our database, has now been around for at least twenty years and in IT terms that's a long time. To put it in some perspective, if databases were for washing clothes, the world is now using front loading, energy efficient, digital, automatic washing machines controlled remotely by Alexa, and our present database is a twin tub at best and possibly even a communal Steamie with a mangle.

So our objective is to create a new database that will be, as far as possible, future proofed, be low cost and low maintenance. To this end we plan to use open source Mediawiki software as the platform for the database. This is the same software as Wikipedia so it will look similar to Wikipedia but will be fully controlled by the POWiS team. Only editors approved by us will be able to make changes to the site although we can make it available to the public as "read only".



We have already carried out some trial runs and the results are promising but we still need to overcome some access issues while ensuring it can do all we need it to do and still be user friendly.

The second part of the job is to create a new modern website that incorporates effective search functions including an interactive map. We have commissioned Stuart McMartin of Parthian Systems in Bo'ness to come up with some ideas.

Some of Stuart's previous work can be seen by following the links below;

Fortingall Graveyard <https://fortingall-graveyard.org.uk/>

Bo'ness War Memorial <https://bwm.scot/>



It is hoped that by the end of this year we should have the new systems in place and then at that would remain to be done is the small task of checking and transferring the

data to the new system.

POWiS Database

As well as the physical task of moving boxes of office equipment we have been busy organising our digital archive to prepare for the next chapter of the POWiS story. All of the digital data, photos, documents, scanned booklets etc has been collected from the various office PCs and the office network hard-drive and to make the archive as future proof as possible we plan to move all of our data onto SharePoint, Microsoft's cloud based platform. This will allow us to access and manage the data remotely, giving us a secure and backed up system without the need for a physical base. As we move to SharePoint we will be creating an inventory of the site so we can get an understanding of how

much work still has to be done and where we need to concentrate our efforts. Perhaps the greatest advantage of this system is that it will allow volunteers to help with the project from wherever they happen to be as long as they have an internet connection. As soon as we are happy that the new processes are effective and secure we will be looking for volunteers to assist in the digital transfer.



From the Treasurer

We're no skint yet, but it'll no tak lang!

Whilst every effort has been made to reduce our outgoings we will still have ongoing costs incurred by the maintenance of the database and upgrading the website etc. Our income is now solely made up from the membership fees which at best will cover less than half of our estimated annual costs. Our priority for 2022 will be to grow the membership and get our income to a level that will sustain the project for the future.

Ayrshire places of worship

Whilst assisting with the office flitting, grappling with the Royal Bank of Scotland and their tortuous process for changing bank signatories, responding to the routine and sometimes quite frankly bizarre email enquiries that come to us on a weekly basis, Ian Holland has also been exceptionally busy updating the website with information and photographs for the places of worship in Ayrshire. It would be foolhardy to suggest that Ayrshire is now complete but we are confident that the bulk of the places of worship have now been recorded and uploaded onto the website. Why not check them out at www.scottishchurches.org.uk

