

# SCT

**Sustaining  
Scotland's  
Places of Worship**



Newsletter December 2021:

**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from SCT!**

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.....”and it’s goodbye from me.....”

That really gives a clue to my age and a hint to my piece today. SCT has been my life, and my child, since 2010 but now it’s time to stand back.

But, with your patience, let me start before the beginning, so to speak.

I have been involved with the conservation of amazing buildings for almost 30 years. The first thing to mention is that many buildings are amazing, not just the ones the media can focus on or cost millions to be amazing, but those built with love, care and devotion. I cut my teeth as Rosslyn Chapel’s first Director. I was invited to start the Chapel Trust and oversee its first two conservation projects and a new Visitor Centre - and to have the pleasure of meeting Tom Hanks when filming “The Da Vinci Code”, . . . an absolute gentleman. I’ve been involved at Penicuik House since 2007, and In 2008 Florence McKenzie invited me to take over SCAHT – Scottish Churches Architectural Heritage Trust – a charity concerned with supporting church fabric maintenance. Scotland, for all its magnificence and greatness, is fairly small and the groups in any one niche area all know each other. Apart from it’s cumbersome name SCAHT worked

in only one area, so, after brief coffee table discussions SCAHT merged in 2010 with Scotland’s Churches Scheme to form SCT - whose remit was to “sustain Scotland’s Places of Worship” through supporting fabric repair and encouraging footfall. This double-edged approach has been so successful. In the years since SCT was launched it has not just raised and given away over £800,000 but also has attracted a wonderful array of volunteers. These volunteers deserve more thanks than I can offer here, they bring enthusiasm and a range of professional skills and experience that you just can’t buy. They help with committee work, offering advice, and contributing to the running of the Trust. SCT has continued with the aims and objectives set out in it’s constitution and approved of by the Charity governing body OSCR, and I truly hope this determination to sustain Scotland’s Places of Worship does not become diluted – SCT’s efforts have been monumental and the need for SCT is not diminished at a time when the future of some Places of Worship is under threat – this is exactly the time to move the game up a step! SCT has embarked on Church Recording, picking up when others have moved away from the field. SCT encourages the playing of church organs and growing the skills to do this. SCT may be small but it ‘owns’ the territory it works in, has enormous ‘street cred’ and the unwavering support of its volunteers – I wish it well and hope that my

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successor enjoys the launch pad that will take SCT into the future.

As for me I don't think there is ever a good time to reflect and look back too much - and I'm honoured that I've been invited to head up a new Trust which will conserve and make useful three Heritage buildings within Kolkata's Botanic Gardens in India. These buildings have strong Scottish links and once the buildings are conserved the Roxburgh Trust will move to grow the social, educational and scientific work of the Gardens. If anyone has links or interest in Kolkata or the Gardens ..... just be in touch!

But now it really is....."and it's goodbye from him."

Stuart



SCT are pleased to welcome Dr DJ Johnston-Smith as the new Director of SCT, from 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022. DJ comes to us via the Cockburn Association, has

multiple interests and a wealth of experience in history, archaeology and ethnography among others. He is keen to write a piece of introduction to himself in another newsletter in the new year.



Scotland's Pilgrim Journeys bring together the travels of Scotland's Celtic Saints and Medieval traditions of pilgrimage with modern faith journeys. Click the photo above to explore more.



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There is a UK wide shortage of organists and SCT offers grants to encourage tuition and concerts. Contact us for more information.



Find your church on our website and check whether the details are up to date. The profile is an excellent way of publicising and helping people find your church. Effectively this is your own mini web page. See a sample entry: <https://scotlandschurchestrust.org.uk/church/bridge-family-church/>

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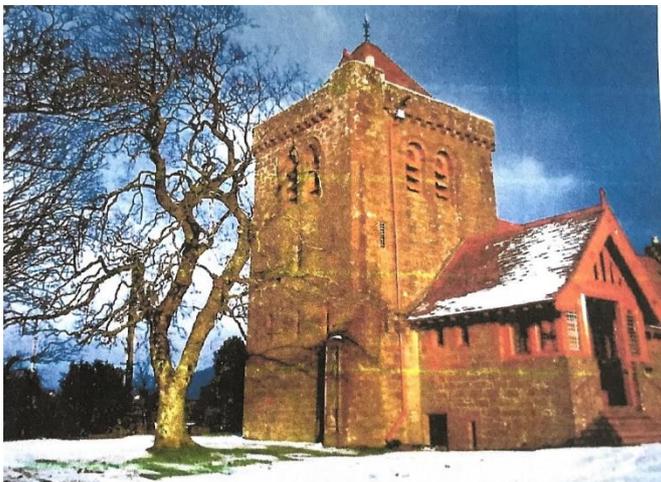
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SCT would like to wish all its supporters a very happy Christmas and best wishes for the coming New Year.

Thank you to those that sent photographs of their churches in the snow.



Clockwise from top left: [St John's Greenock](#), [St Mary's Dalmahoy](#), [Rosslyn Chapel](#), [St Molio's Isle of Arran](#).  
Click text above to visit their profiles.



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