The Ways To Whithorn: In The Footsteps of Pilgrims Past and Present

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The Whithorn Pilgrimage

- April 2014
- The Whithorn Trust
- University of Glasgow Solway Centre
- Third Sector Internships Scotland

- 3 months research
- Previous research, OS maps, interviews

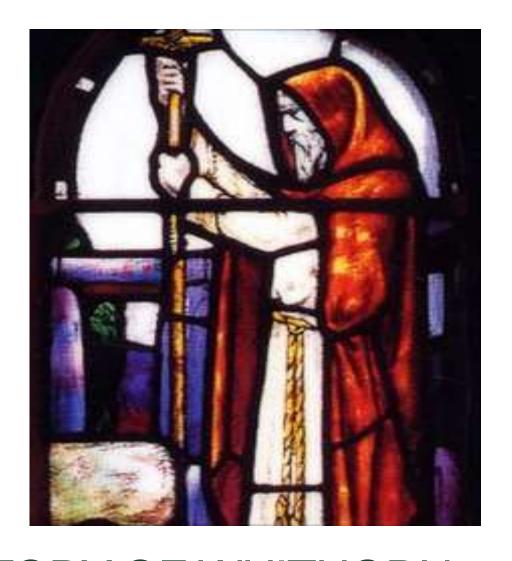
Overview

History of Whithorn Pilgrimage

Searching for Pilgrim Spots

The Pilgrimage Today

Potential of the Routes



HISTORY OF WHITHORN PILGRIMAGE

St Ninian

5th century

 Buried in the crypt at Whithorn: site became a pilgrimage centre

Healing saint- leprosy

Lots of legends about his miracles

The Medieval Pilgrimage Experience

- Not an easy endeavour: great distance, could be barefoot
- James I in 1427 granted safe conduct to pilgrims outside Scotland so long as they were clearly marked
- Signes- badges
- Dangerous roads: safer to travel in groups
- Industry: Booths lined the streets of Whithorn selling goods; inns, abbeys and chapels dotted along the routes for hospitality

Famous Pilgrims

- Alcuin: made an offering on behalf on Charlemagne
- David II- Arrow wound legend
- Robert the Bruce- ill and desperate
- James IV- frequent pilgrim, track routes through his Treasurer Accounts

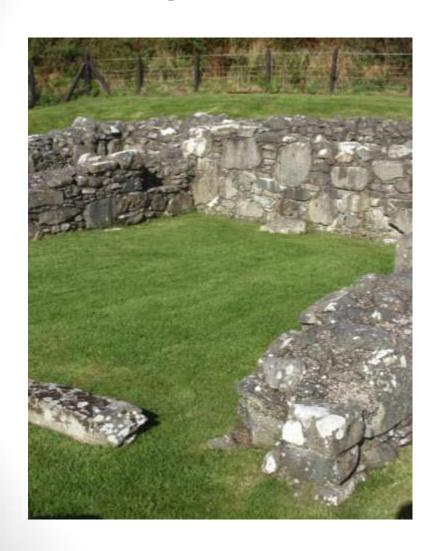


SEARCHING FOR PILGRIM SPOTS

Pilgrim Spots

- Chapels
- Abbeys
- Holy Wells
- Other Markers- e.g. Laggangairn Stones
- Many marked on OS maps- but can be hard to find!

Chapels





Holy Wells





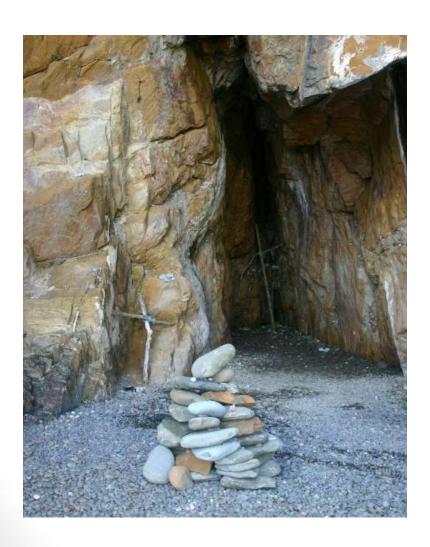


THE PILGRIMAGE TODAY

The Modern Pilgrim

- Walking groups organised through churches e.g. Paisley Abbey, Diocese of Galloway
- Mapping their own route- trying to stay true to ancient paths as much as possible
- Travelling with a group, 'merging': very much a communal activity
- Many different motivations: spiritual aspect still very important, but walking enthusiasts and history fans also come along

Pilgrim Traffic



- Difficult to assess exact numbers of pilgrims
- Pilgrim spots could be a pilgrimage in themselves- e.g. St Medan's cave, St Queran's well.



POTENTIAL OF THE ROUTES

Aspects of the Pilgrimage

- Map reading: an excellent way of getting to grips with Ordnance Survey and route planning
- All-Ability Walking
- Oral Tradition & Legends
- "Walking in the Footsteps of History"- James IV

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Thank you!

