

## Sacred Landscape Project

### Inverkeithing and North Queensferry

Fig 1. North Queensferry.  
Ordnance Survey 1" Coloured Sheet 32 (1865).<sup>1</sup>



Fig 2. Coat of Arms North Queensferry Community Council.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> 'Ordnance Survey One-inch to the mile maps of Scotland, 1st Edition, 1856-1891 - Sheet 32', *National Library of Scotland. Map Home*, Accessed 4 March, 2021, <https://maps.nls.uk/view/216384233>.

<sup>2</sup> 'While North Queensferry does not have its own formal heraldry, the community council uses the same emblem as the burgh of Queensferry (south), 'Queensferry' *Heraldry of the World*, Accessed 20 February, 2021, <https://www.heraldry-wiki.com/heraldrywiki/wiki/Queensferry>.

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## Key

For the purposes of this report periods have been broken down as follows: 1. Early Medieval (500-1000). 2. High Medieval (1000-1300). 3. Late Medieval (1300-1560). 4. Reformation and Early Modern (1560-1800). 5. Late Modern (1800-2021).

Historical References are presented in the following format;

*4 Dec 1516*

*Letters of safe conduct made with the consent of the Regent (James Hamilton, earl of Arran, regent for James V), for all people of both sexes of the kingdoms of England, Spain and the Isle of Man, of all ranks, coming to the kingdom of the Scots by land and sea, on foot or horse to the church of Candida Casa (Whithorn) in honour of St Ninian confessor on pilgrimage.<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup> Matthew Livingstone, eds, *Registrum Secreti Sigilli Regum Scotorum* (Edinburgh: HMGRH, 1908-1982), i, no. 2844.

St Ninian was the most popular Scottish saint in the later Middle Ages. As the safe conducts issued by James I and the regency council of James V quoted above show, pilgrims were travelling to his shrine from England, the Isle of Man, and Spain in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

*Italicised text* = translated or transcribed primary source information from Latin or Middle Scots. The original language is kept where translation or modern spelling is unnecessary.

Standard text = Dr Tom Turpie's explanatory comments or added information.

Bibliographic details for each reference can be found in the accompanying footnote.

All photographs by T Turpie unless otherwise indicated.

### **Abbreviations**

*ER*- Stuart John et al, eds. *Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, Edinburgh: Scottish Record Office, 1878-1908,  
*NSA*- *New Statistical Account of Scotland* (Edinburgh and London, 1834-45)

*OSA*- *Statistical Account of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1791-9),

*RMS*- John M. Thomson et al eds, *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum* (Edinburgh: Scottish Record Office, 1882-1914),

*TA*- Thomas Dickson, ed, *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland* (Edinburgh, Scottish Record Office, 1877-1916),

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## **Introduction**

North Queensferry is a coastal settlement that has been at the hub of religious, economic, and political transport routes for over a millennium. The importance of its maritime and sacred past is marked on its coats of arms. The arms of Queensferry (Fig 2), used by the communities on both sides of the Forth, depict their founder, St (Queen) Margaret, standing on a galley. The sacred past of nearby Inverkeithing can, by tradition, be traced to the fifth century, but is firmly supported by documentary evidence only from the eleventh century. It was in the late eleventh century that St Margaret is reputed to have founded the ferry crossing that led to the establishment of North Queensferry. Throughout the Middle Ages it was a location on the pilgrim road to St Andrews and Dunfermline, possessing a chapel catering to the needs of pilgrims. North Queensferry became a distinct parish with its own church in the nineteenth century, although the former pilgrim chapel found a new role as a sailor's graveyard in the eighteenth century. In the present century, the sacred heritage of the town has led to its inclusion as stopping places for modern day 'pilgrims' on the Fife Pilgrim Way- the new long distance walking route opened in 2019.

## **Religious sites and the landscape of Inverkeithing and North Queensferry**

There is a direct connection between North Queensferry's religious history and the landscape. While a small community may have already existed on the peninsula by the eleventh century, the location of the northern ferry terminus and a chapel to serve pilgrims, constituted the core purpose of the community's existence throughout the Middle Ages. The ferry survived the end of the pilgrim traffic and remained the focus of the settlement until the nineteenth century when it was superseded by the rail and road bridges. The maritime connection with the chapel was renewed when the North Queensferry Sailors' Society reused the site in the eighteenth century. The inclusion of North Queensferry on the Fife Pilgrim Way (2019) has led to the improvement of walking and cycling paths around the town, and has the potential to bring further alterations to the landscape should the scheme be a success.

## 1. Early Christianity (c500-c1000AD)

### Site of Interest

None

### Nature of the Site

The northern terminus of the ferry founded by Queen Margaret first appears in the documentary record in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The exact location of that terminus is a matter of debate, as twelfth century records often called it the passage of Inverkeithing, although it is possible that the term referred to North Queensferry.<sup>4</sup> Local tradition records that Christianity was brought to the area in around 500AD by a holy man called St Erat. He was believed to have founded a church on the site of the later medieval parish church at Inverkeithing.<sup>5</sup> It is also possible that by the year 1000 that North Queensferry was already connected to the pilgrim road which led to the shrine of St Andrew in eastern Fife. The earliest long-distance pilgrims to the shrine are recorded in the tenth century, around a century before Queen Margaret (d. 1093) founded the Queensferry crossing. No written evidence, and very little archaeological evidence survives, however, to support the saintly tradition, or the presence of pilgrims until the eleventh century.

## 2. High Medieval Christianity (1000-1300)

### Sites of Interest

#### **Chapel of St James**

### Introduction/Nature of the Site

North Queensferry housed a fishing community by the high Middle Ages, but its economic role was focused in the main around its position as the north terminus of the ferry crossing founded by St Margaret (d.1093) in the late eleventh century. It was a key station on probably the most important and well used of the routes by which pilgrims approached St Andrews. Most pilgrims from the south would have taken the ferry across the Forth and then stopped to give thanks for safe passage at the chapel dedicated to St James in North Queensferry. That process would have taken some time, as such, it is likely that many of the pilgrims would have spent the night two miles further along the coast road at Inverkeithing, before travelling either north west towards Dunfermline or north east towards St Andrews the following morning.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> E. Patricia Dennison & Russel Coleman, *Historic North Queensferry and peninsula* (East Linton, 2000), pp. 14-15.

<sup>5</sup> This tradition seems to have developed in the late nineteenth century as the story of Erat does not feature in the Statistical Accounts of 1794 or 1834, or any other early histories of the burgh. Some of the earliest discussion is in James Wilkie, *Bygone Fife. From Culross to St Andrews. Traditions, Legends, Folklore and Local History of "The Kingdom"* (Edinburgh, 1931), p. 38-39, William Stephen, *The Story of Inverkeithing and Rosyth* (Edinburgh, 1938), pp. 13-14.

<sup>6</sup> There the road headed north past Scotlandwell, crossing a bridge there over the river Leven and then on St Andrews through Markinch, Kennoway and Ceres, Peter Yeoman, *Pilgrimage in Medieval Scotland* (London, 1999), pp. 58-59

North Queensferry was part of the parish of Dunfermline, and its population may have used the chapel of St James, although it did not have parochial status.

*c.1107*

Turgot in his *Vita St Margaretae* noted that;

*And since the church of St Andrews is frequented by the religious devotion of visitors from the peoples around about, she (Margaret) had built dwellings on either shore of the sea that separates Lothian and Scotland; so that pilgrims and poor might turn aside there to rest, after the labour of the journey; and might find there ready everything that necessity might require for the restoration of the body. She appointed attendants for this purpose alone, to have always ready all that was needed for guests, and to wait upon them with great care. She provided them also ships, to carry them across, both going and returning, without ever demanding any price for the passage from those who were taken over.<sup>7</sup>*

### **I. North Queensferry. Chapel of St James**

The chapel of St James first enters the documentary record in the early fourteenth century. That it was already an established foundation is suggested by the use of *of old* in the charter by which Robert I (1306-1329) granted the chapel with the teinds of offerings and all other pertinent to Dunfermline.<sup>8</sup> The Mowbrays, who had been the barons of Inverkeithing since late twelfth century, were the patrons of the chapel in 1320. They either were the founders, or inherited it from the previous baron, Waltheof. It can probably therefore be traced to the later twelfth century-probably soon after the crossing began to have its north terminus on the peninsula at North Queensferry.

*1320x1322*

*Charter to Dunfermline abbey by Robert I of half the Queensferry held by the late Roger de Mowbray with the chapel on the north side of the ferry. The abbey must find two chaplains for the chapel, and repair, preserve and plenish it.<sup>9</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> Catherine Keene, *St Margaret, Queen of the Scots. A life in perspective* (Basingstoke, 2013), Appendix 1, 202.

<sup>8</sup> Simon Taylor & Gilbert Markus, *The Place-Names of Fife. Volume One. West Fife between Leven and Forth* (Donington, 2006), p. 371.

<sup>9</sup> A. A. M Duncan, eds, *Regesta Regum Scottorum V: The Acts of Robert I, 1306-29* (Edinburgh, 1986), no. 413.

### 3. Late Medieval Christianity (1300-1560)

#### Sites of Interest

#### NQ: Chapel of St James

#### Introduction/Nature of the Site

North Queensferry continued to be an important stop on the pilgrim way to St Andrews and Dunfermline in the late Middle Ages, although the peak in pilgrimage to these sites had likely passed. The settlement remained a part of the parish of Dunfermline, and its population may have used the chapel of St James, although it did not have parochial status.

#### I. North Queensferry. Chapel of St James

Fig 3. Chapel of St James (Turpie)



The chapel of St James first enters the documentary record in the early fourteenth century when Robert I (1306-1329) granted Dunfermline Abbey half of the queen's ferry held by the late Roger de Mowbray (d.1320), along with the chapel on the north side of the ferry, and an annual rent from Inverkeithing, with the proviso that the abbey provided two chaplains for the chapel and repair and preserve it. The charter hints that the chapel had been damaged or neglected during the

Wars of Independence. It was first recorded as the *chapel of St James* in 1323. By the late Middle Ages, the Apostle James was recognised as the patron saint of pilgrims as a result of the popularity of his shrine at Compostela in Galicia (Spain). Other dedications to James could be found on the Fife Pilgrim Way at Kinghorn Easter, Dysart, Crail and St Andrews. In 1479 a new chaplainry was founded in the chapel by Henry Crichton, Abbot of Dunfermline. The new chaplain, David Story, received a salary of 10 marks per year, a cut of the takings at the altar, and lived in the manse with a garden and pasturage for one horse. It was still in existence by the early sixteenth century when James IV (1488-1513) made an offering there.

1320x1322

*Charter to Dunfermline abbey by Robert I of half the Queensferry held by the late Roger de Mowbray with the chapel on the north side of the ferry. The abbey must find two chaplains for the chapel, and repair, preserve and plenish it.*<sup>10</sup>

1 Apr 1322

<sup>10</sup> Duncan. *Acts of Robert I*, no. 413.

*Letter patent to the provost and bailies of Inverkeithing to pay to Dunfermline abbey an annual of five merks which the king granted along with half the Queensferry passage to support two chaplains saying masses in the chapel of North Queensferry.*<sup>11</sup>

30 Nov 1323

Confirmation by William Lamberton, bishop of St Andrews, of the grant to Dunfermline by Robert I. He identifies it as *the chapel of St James*.<sup>12</sup>

1479 *New Chaplainry*

*Henry, Lord Abbot of Dunfermline, this year, granted the office of a chaplainry, newly founded by him, in St. James's Chapel, North Queensferry, to David Story, with a stipend of 10 merks yearly, to be paid from the coffers of Dunfermline Abbey, together with a garden, and two acres of ground and pasturage for one horse ; also all offerings at the altar of the chapel, except the oblations of the pix and those of lights, which are to be reserved for lighting the chapel ; likewise 20 shillings for supporting the ornaments and vestments of said altar ; but an account is to be rendered to the Abbot how the sum is applied. The chaplain, in consideration of these things must perform a daily mass for the souls named in the Charter of Infeudation; also, he shall continually reside at, and dwell in the manse of the chapel; and, if he undertakes any other cure, or resides elsewhere, by which the service may be neglected, the chaplainry shall be declared vacant, and fall into the Abbot's hands.*<sup>13</sup>

24 Nov 1504

*To the Kingis (James IV), offerand in Sanct James chapel of the North Ferye.*<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Duncan, *Acts of Robert I*, no. 206.

<sup>12</sup> Cosmo, Innes, ed, *Registrum de Dunfermelyn* (Bannatyne Club, 1842), no. 367.

<sup>13</sup> Innes, ed, *Registrum de Dunfermelyn*, no. 462, translated in Ebenezer Henderson, ed, *The annals of Dunfermline and vicinity, from the earliest authentic period to the present time, A.D. 1069-1878; interspersed with explanatory notes, memorabilia, and numerous illustrative engravings* (Glasgow, 1879), pp. 165-166.

<sup>14</sup> *TA*, ii, p. 267.



## 4. Reformation and Early Modern Period (1560-1800)

### Sites of Interest

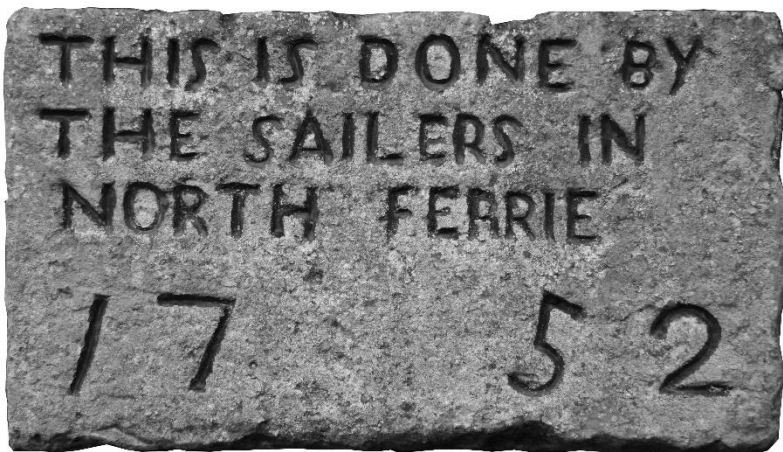
NQ: Chapel of St James

### Introduction/Nature of the Site

The people of North Queensferry lacked their own place of worship following the suppression of the chapel of St James c.1560 and worshipped at St Peter's in Inverkeithing from the early seventeenth century. The chapel, however, took on a new role as a graveyard in the eighteenth century.

### I. North Queensferry. Chapel of St James

Fig 4. Datestone at the Chapel of St James.<sup>15</sup>



On 25 December 1547, the English garrison of Inchcolm landed at North Queensferry and 'burned the town', probably damaging the chapel. In 1651 the town was again badly damaged, this time by Oliver Cromwell's troops shortly after the battle of Inverkeithing (20 July), and the chapel was said to have been left in ruins.<sup>16</sup> In between 1547 and 1651 the income associated with the chapel had been used to fund studentships and the site was no longer in ecclesiastical use.

At some point in the early eighteenth century, the interior of the chapel was used as a cemetery by mariners from the North Queensferry Sailors' Society. In 1752 the Sailors' Society built a wall around the site with the datestone in Fig 8 placed by the gate. They were a burial club whose members' entry fees paid for their funerals and the upkeep of the cemetery.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> 'St James Chapel', *North Queensferry Heritage Society*, Accessed 26 February, <https://www.nqht.org/st-james-chapel/>

<sup>16</sup> Dennison & Coleman, *Historic North Queensferry*, p. 18-20 & 69.

<sup>17</sup> NQHT, 'St James Chapel', and

## 5. Late Modern (1800-2021). Religion in modern North Queensferry

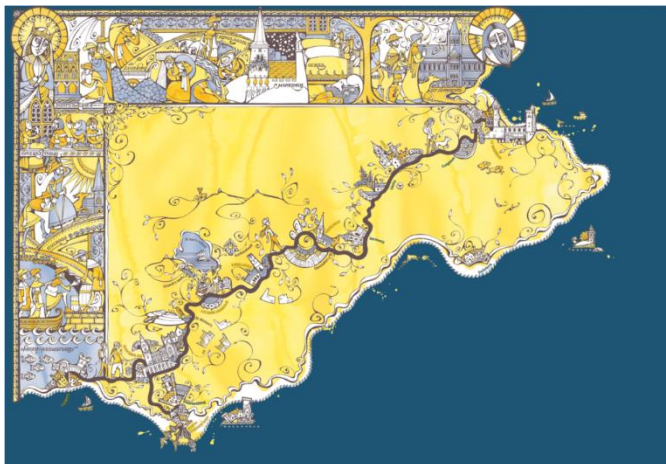
### Sites of Interest

#### **Meeting House, Parish Church, Chapel of St James**

### Introduction/Nature of the Site

North Queensferry saw rapid economic and social change in the late eighteenth century. With a population that fluctuated from 350-600 in the modern period, North Queensferry remained an important transport hub until the opening of the Forth Bridge in 1890. It has since developed into a small dormitory community linked to Edinburgh and the rest of Fife by rail and road. Until the 1850s, the villagers of North Queensferry would have travelled to the churches in Inverkeithing or in South Queensferry. This changed in 1855 when a Meeting House was opened, followed in 1878 by the Free Church, which moved to its present site in 1963.

Fig 5. Map of the Fife Pilgrim Way.<sup>18</sup>



The sacred heritage of North Queensferry led to its inclusion as a key stopping place for modern day ‘pilgrims’ on the Fife Pilgrim Way in 2019. The Fife Pilgrim Way is a new long-distance walking route that uses the southern pilgrim roads to St Andrews as its inspiration.

### **I. North Queensferry. Chapel of St James**

The Sailor’s Society was dissolved towards the end of the eighteenth century, but was reformed in 1818.<sup>19</sup> Although the society still used the graveyard in 1857, it seems to have been abandoned by 1887, and certainly by 1921.

*1857 Barbieri’s Descriptive and Historical Gazetteer of the Counties of Fife, Kinross and Clackmannan*

*The ruins of an ancient church are still visible, and its church yard is still in use.<sup>20</sup>*

<sup>18</sup> Ian Bradley, *Fife Pilgrim Way. In the footsteps of Monks, Miners and Martyrs* (Birlinn, Edinburgh, 2019), p. 9-10.

<sup>19</sup> ‘The Church’, *North Queensferry Heritage Trust*, Accessed 25 February, 2021, <https://www.nqht.org/church/>.

<sup>20</sup> M. Barbieri, *A Descriptive and historical gazetteer of the counties of Fife, Kinross and Clackmannan* (Edinburgh, 1857), p. 196.

1887 Beveridge, E, *Between Ochils and Forth*

*The only monument of antiquity of which the village can boast is the gable of an ancient chapel, with its little burying-ground, which is completely surrounded with houses, and almost totally concealed from ordinary observation. Few, indeed, are aware of its existence beyond those living in the immediate neighbourhood.*<sup>21</sup>

1921 William Stephen

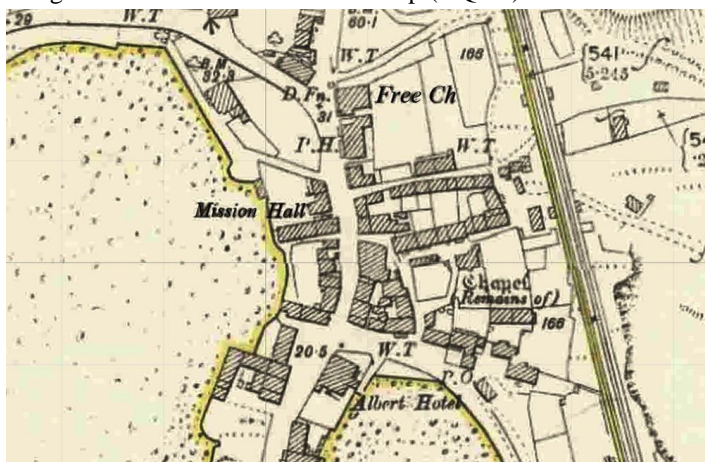
*The Chapel of St James the Apostle is situated near the centre of the village of North Queensferry, within a small graveyard. It is mentioned in a charter of the early 14th century.*<sup>22</sup>

2000 Dennison and Coleman

*Only a small portion of what was a considerably larger establishment now survives: the associated manse and garden, which stood to the north of the chapel, and related offices have now disappeared beneath more modern developments. The rubble-built west gable and mullioned window give some clues to its original structure; and a blocked entrance may be seen in the north wall.*<sup>23</sup>

## II. North Queensferry. Meeting House

Fig 6. Mission Hall on 1896 OS map (NQHT).<sup>24</sup>



In 1855 Robert Robertson, a local linen merchant, purchased a former inn and converted it into a Meeting House for the villagers of North Queensferry. The name evolved from Meeting House to Preaching Station, eventually becoming the Mission Hall. It described itself as *un-denominational* and was served by a series of preachers, paid for by Mr Robertson, including Mr Hughson of the Scottish Coastal

Mission

1859 Dunfermline Press

*There is only one place of worship in the village. As yet no special edifice has been constructed for this purpose, the present meeting-house, indeed, having formerly answered the purpose of an inn. The church here is un-denominational. Preaching is very ably supplied by Mr Howat, who, we may be allowed to judge, is quite a favourite with his by no means indiscriminating*

<sup>21</sup> Erskine Beveridge, *Between Ochils and Forth* (Edinburgh, 1887), p. 28.

<sup>22</sup> William Stephen, *History of Inverkeithing and Rosyth* (Aberdeen, 1921), p. 263-265.

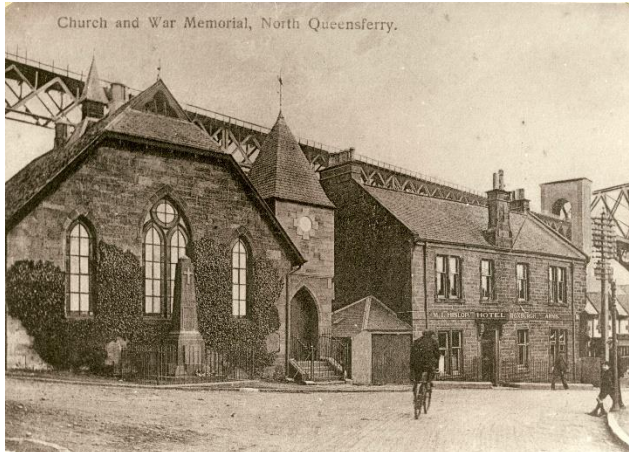
<sup>23</sup> Dennison & Coleman, *Historic North Queensferry*, p. 69.

<sup>24</sup> *North Queensferry Heritage Trust*, 'The Church'.

charge. This preaching station is under the patronage and support of Provost Robertson. Before he provided this accommodation, the people were under the necessity of crossing the ferry, and going to Inverkeithing every Sunday for public worship. Now, however, while the meeting place affords seating for a congregation of about 200, scarcely one individual prefers going to other side, and few seek to go to the church in Inverkeithing.<sup>25</sup>

### III. North Queensferry. Parish Church

Fig 7. North Queensferry Free Church (NQHT)



Inverkeithing (1958), and currently, since the union of St John's and St Peter's in 2006, with what is known as Inverkeithing Parish Church.

Stimulated by the construction of a new railway line in 1876, along with plans for the Forth Bridge, the Free Church was finally opened in North Queensferry in 1878. The congregation joined the United Free Church in 1900, and the Church of Scotland in 1929, but by 1962 the church was believed to be beyond repair and was demolished. By 1963 a new church was open and in use. By that time, the charge was already shared with St John's in

Fig 8. The New Free Church.<sup>26</sup>



*Dunfermline Press*

*Saturday July 20 1878 – Opening of the new Free Church at North Queensferry. The want of a place of worship has long been felt in Queensferry, and to those who had the wish to be regular attenders on the services of the sanctuary, the want was deeply felt. Inverkeithing, where the nearest place of worship is, is two miles from it, and on any stormy or wet day, to go that*

*distance to church was out of the question.*

*The Church, which in every way harmonises with the locality in which it is located, is in design a simple adaptation of the Gothic style of architecture, and is situated at the entrance to the village on a commanding site overlooking the sea.<sup>27</sup>*

<sup>25</sup> North Queensferry Heritage Trust, 'The Church'.

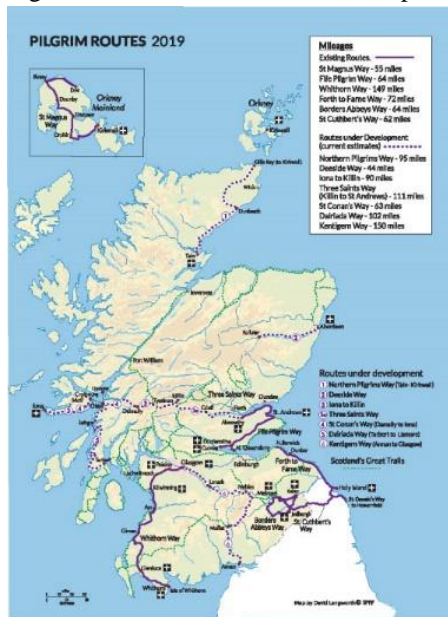
<sup>26</sup> North Queensferry Heritage Trust, 'The Church'.

<sup>27</sup> North Queensferry Heritage Trust, 'The Church'.

## Epilogue. The Sacred Landscape in the twenty-first century and the Fife Pilgrim Way

In modern day North Queensferry one church remains in use- Church of Scotland, although the charge has been shared with Inverkeithing Parish Church since 2006.

Fig 9. Established and Under Development Pilgrim Routes in Scotland



In 1987 the Camino de Santiago de Compostela was designated a Cultural Route by the European Council, a decision that reflected a resurgence in the popularity of the journey to the shrine of St James at Santiago. This modern rebranding of medieval pilgrim routes has seen a much greater focus on the journey rather than the ultimate destination, the shrine itself, tapping into a broader trend in the popularity of long-distance walking routes in northern Europe and elsewhere. This development, dubbed 'Caminoization', has led faith organisations, hiking groups, and government organisations, particularly those involved in tourism and healthy living initiatives, to consider the possibilities of the medieval pilgrim routes in their backyards.<sup>28</sup> The first attempt to introduce this 'new pilgrimage' to Scotland was the St Cuthbert Way (1996), linking Melrose and Lindisfarne, and the Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum (founded in 2012), and has since established four further routes, with several under development.<sup>29</sup>

It was within this context that the development of a long-distance walking trail, using the pilgrim routes to the shrines of St Andrew and Margaret (Dunfermline) as its inspiration, was first mooted in the early 2010s. After a successful Heritage Lottery Fund application in 2016-2017, the Fife Coast and Countryside Trust developed the 64-mile trail which they named the Fife Pilgrim Way. Opened in 2019, it is divided into nine sections of 8-10 miles, and follows the southern route to St Andrew and Dunfermline, beginning either in Culross or North Queensferry. Modern day pilgrims who chose the second option, begin at the old ferry terminal in North Queensferry, pass by the ruins of the chapel of St James before heading up the peninsula and around the bay to Inverkeithing.<sup>30</sup> After a gap of more than 450 years, pilgrims (whether for spiritual reasons or simply to enjoy the walk and views), are once again found on the streets of North Queensferry.

<sup>28</sup> Marion Bowman, "'Rehabilitating" Pilgrimage in Scotland: Heritage, Protestant Pilgrimage, and Caledonian Caminos', *Numen* 67 (2020) 453–482, at 453-454.

<sup>29</sup> 'Pilgrim Walking Routes', *Scottish Pilgrim Route Forum*, accessed 3 March, 2021, <https://www.sprf.org.uk/routes.html>

<sup>30</sup> 'North Queensferry to Dunfermline', *Fife Coast and Countryside Trust*, Accessed 3 March 2021, <https://fifecoastandcounsidetrust.co.uk/walks/fife-pilgrim-way/north-queensferry-to-dunfermline/>

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