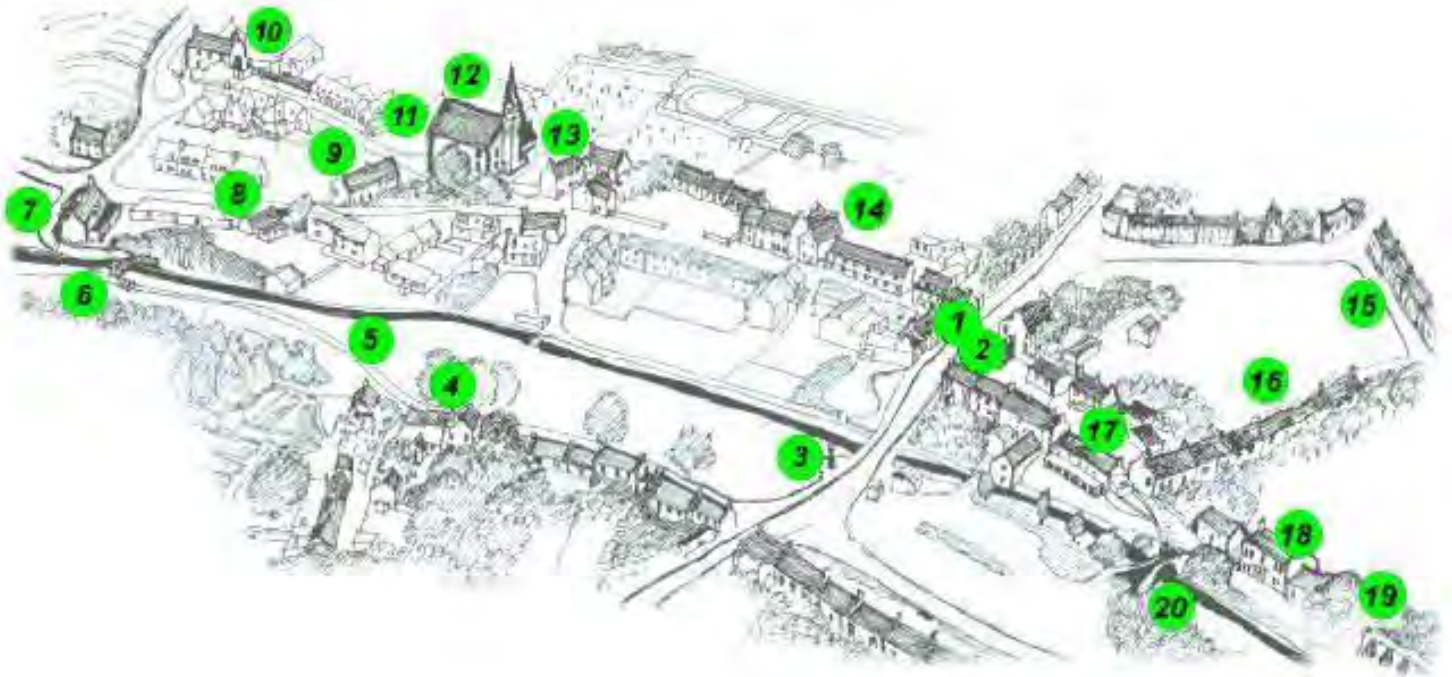


## Ceres Village Heritage Trail

This guided tour of Ceres highlights some of the features of the village and shows how it owes its existence to the surrounding countryside and to the industry of its people.

The walk is an easy route of about 3/4 mile taking some 45 minutes and begins at the provost at the Cross, where The Ceres Inn itself is located, a great place to start and end.



- 1) **The Cross and The Ceres Inn** - You are standing at the 'Cross', a crossroads which was from early times, the hub of trade where many old tracks converged. At one corner is the Ceres Inn (formally Volunteers' Arms) while behind you is the 'Provost of Ceres'.



- 2) **The Provost** - Opposite the Ceres Inn surveying the passing scene from his niche in the wall is the Toby-Jug figure of the Rev. Thomas Buchanan, Minister of Ceres 1578-99, known as "the Provost of Ceres". This squat, grinning little figure has a colourful history and has done a great deal of travelling in his time. The

statue was the work of a local stonemason called John Howie, born in 1820 and brought up in Saughtree Cottage in Ceres.

The statue is reputed to be a likeness of the Rev Thomas Buchanan, a man of great learning and a nephew of George Buchanan, the famous historian. He was minister of the village Kirk and the last Provost of Ceres, being presented to the post in 1578 by King James the Sixth. The statue's original resting place was in the gardens of Kirklands, the old church manse that once occupied what is now the church car park, where he was placed in 1837 by his first owner the Rev Joseph Crichton, minister of Ceres for almost 60 years. Howie apparently also carved the surround for his statue, placing the figure in a niche above a large panel which is said to depict a cavalry skirmish at the Battle of Bannockburn with a carved head on each side.

Almost forgotten, the statue remained in his niche in the Kirklands wall, undisturbed for almost a century, until he was pushed into sudden notoriety in 1933 when he was sold by Mr Ogilvie the postmaster, owner of Kirklands, to a Mrs Lindsay of Cupar. Such was the indignation caused by the loss of the figure to the village, that the people of Ceres insisted he be brought back as soon as possible.

The statue returned safely, was to be moved to a more prominent position in the village, and to this end an appeal was launched under the chairmanship of Rev Simpson. There was no lack of response from Ceres people both abroad and at home, and the sum of £54 7s was soon raised. This money was used to erect the figure into his present home. He was officially unveiled at 1 pm on the Saturday of the Ceres Games in June 1939 by Mr James Henderson Stewart, MP for East Fife.



- 3) **The Bannockburn Memorial** - Having walked down the main St Andrews to Kirckaldy road which dates from 1807 and over the bridge built on the site of an old ford in 1881 you arrive at the Bannockburn Memorial. This memorial is built in granite to the memory of the part played by the folk in Ceres on Midsummer's day 1314 under the earl Marshall of Scotland, from nearby Stuthers Castle, who is said to have trained his men on the green of the Bow Butts. The expanse of green adjacent to the memorial is the site of the annual Ceres Highland Games.

It is said that Sir Robert Keith, Great Marischal of Scotland, instructed the men of Ceres in the use of the bow, prior to the battle of Bannockburn in 1314. This instruction apparently took place upon the village green now known as the Bow Butts. It is upon this green that the annual village games are held in celebration of the victorious return to Ceres of the men who fought at Bannockburn. So far as is known, with the exception of the war years, games have been held in some form here each year since the battle. The games were originally held on the 24th of June each year, the anniversary of the battle, but it has recently become more convenient to hold them on the last Saturday of June.



- 4) **Croft House** - Across the green you come across a range of mixed houses ending in the 'Croft House'. The present house, extensively remodelled in 1910 with Jacobean-style gables, conceals an earlier 18th century house which became the manse of the Rev. David Anderson, UP church minister.



- 5) **The Burn by Baltilly** - Walking down the path off the green by the burn and on your left are the walls of 'Baltilly', a late 18th century small mansion with Georgian Features. An early owner was Oliver Gourlay, one of whose sons Robert is highly regarded in Canada as a founder of Canadian democracy.



- 6) **Spout Well** - At the iron bridge over the burn is the 'Spout Well', one of many wells and springs which met the daily needs of the people. when the Rev. Anderson first came to Ceres in 1840, the incumbent parish minister advised: "Young man, if you want to live long in Ceres, drink daily at the spout well." Both men lived to be 90.



- 7) **Meldrums Hotel** - Having crossed the iron bridge and made for the main road, you will see a small house, once the East Lodge of Baltilly, on the left. On the right the Meldrums Hotel, a hostelry since mid 19th century. Looking left up the main road are the 'suburbs' of Ceres; Saughtree, Newtown, Gladney and Bridgend with their mixtures of 16th to 20th century buildings, part domestic and part industrial. Looking to the right, the road climbs back up to the Cross.



- 8) **Masonic Insignia** - John Howie, the grandfather of the John Howie who carved the Provost, also a stonemason, lived in the house that still stands behind what is now the art gallery. It is interesting in that the frontage is adorned with unusual carved panels above the front door. The stone cottage that runs parallel to the main road towards the Meldrums Hotel was originally a workshop used by the Howies, and was still being used by Robert Howie, plumber and cycle repairer, in the 1920's. A little further to the north of the village, along the main road, stand Saughtree Cottages, once the home of John Howie (1820-1890). On the roof of one of the cottages can be seen two more of his carvings. One is of a left-handed piper and the other a carved stone head. In the grounds of a modern bungalow across the road, is a carved panel let into the wall, which is said to commemorate three village girls who were lost in a flood.



- 9) **Kimberly** - Opposite the cottage is Kimberly, a two storeyed house whose 'top end' has housed a school and also parish council rooms, with the parish poor house opposite.



- 10) **Kirklands** - The house named Kirklands indicates the approaches to the village kirk.



- 11) **Mansfield** - To the north side of the Parish Church, on land that is now the car park, stood Kirklands House with its beautiful gardens and orchard.

The property once included, in Roman Catholic times, a brewery as well as other buildings connected to the church and the manse itself.

An old account of Kirklands states that the grounds were endowed at one time with a mineral spring that possessed 'valuable medicinal qualities and was highly impregnated with carbonic gas which acted as a grateful stimulant',

In 1788 a new manse was built, still on Kirk Brae, but slightly to the north of the original. Mansfield, as it is still known, was erected at a total cost of £329 Sterling, and described soon after as 'A fine dwelling house and gardens, with stables and outhouses for the minister'. In 1837 the old manse was purchased by the Rev Joseph Crichton. In the garden, he and his wife originally positioned the little statue of the Provost.

Kirklands is now long gone, and Mansfield was sold into private ownership after the amalgamation of the churches in Ceres. The only reminder of the old Kirklands is the nearby two-storey house that bears its name.



12) **The Kirk** - On high ground in the centre of the village stands Ceres Parish Church.

The present Kirk and its ancient Churchyard occupy a site that has been a place of Christian worship and burial for over 1000 years. The date of the original foundation of the Church is not recorded. Prior to 1273 Ceres came under the influence of the Culdees who had a Bishop in St Andrews. Subsequently the Church was handed over to the Roman Catholic Church and in 1306 became a charge in conjunction with the Provostry of St Mary's (later known as Kirkheuch), in the City of St Andrews.

Although Ceres Church was appointed its first Protestant Minister (Patrick Constance or Constan) after the reformation in 1560 the Parish didn't receive independence from Kirkheuch until six years later. In the 1790's, the Minister of the time, Robert Arnot, wrote of the Church as, "Being of very old fabric, to which great additions have been made at different times. At some remote period, an aisle has been conjoined to it on the east end by the family of Crawford, and still continues to be their exclusive property. An aisle has also been conjoined on the south that is the exclusive property of the Hon. John Hope of Craighall. This, before the Reformation was a Chapel dedicated to St Ninian. In the year 1722, on account of the increased population of the Parish, a large aisle was added by the heritors on the north side of the Church. The whole will contain some 800 hearers and is far too small a place of worship for the Parish."

It would appear that Rev Arnot's fears as to the inadequate capacity of the building didn't go unheard. In 1806 the present building was inaugurated under the Ministry of the Rev Joseph Crichton whose initials can be seen carved into the lintel above the front doors. The tower was added in about 1870, it is said, in the honour of a local man, Joseph Spindle, A feature of the present building is the ability of the Sacrament of Holy Communion to be administered in the fashion of the early Reformed Church, at Long Tables and with the Common Cup. The Church is seated for 1100 but can actually hold 1300. In the time of Joseph Crichton the average number of Communicants was 1000.



13) **The Session House** - Coming down the brae from the church, you pass the two storey Session House 1863 which has retained the wide archway of the earlier hearse house.



14) **Plum Tree Cottage** - A wander up Main Street still reveals shops and houses although less so than it as 50 years ago when Ceres was a self-sufficient village with many 'wee shops' providing most things from fancy buttons and mutton pies to car hires. Old buildings still exist such as Plum Tree Cottage, a rebuilt 18th century home, at one time a draper's shop. In the last 40 years, however, modern houses have replaced the old although the line and spirit of the original have been retained. The shops on the left were for many years a grocer's shop. In the lane, at the rear, you can see a hand pump dated 1850 and relics of the bottle house for beer and whisky.



15) **The Castle** - To get here you will have walked up Anstruther Road which has a range of early 19th century houses, ending in a food store with doocot and finial in its gable. Stopping here the road to the left, School Hill, is a continuation of the old 'Bishops Road' to St Andrews.

Facing you, the range of mainly 18th century buildings is known as 'The Castle'. A house further up is called 'Chemise', probably the Norman French 'Chef maison', the chief house has led to speculation about an early castle in the vicinity. Still further up, an overgrown track leads to the site of Craighall Castle, the home of the Hopes, one time Lairds of Ceres. Anstruther Road leads on to Peat Inn and the 'rigging' of Fife, source of much of the locally-used coal.

16) **Castlegate** - This little lane is called 'Castlegate', "the way to the Castle" also known as the Gollop. A row of re-conditioned croft and cotter houses and weavers' sheds leads to the Dairy, reputedly the oldest surviving (late 16th century) building in Ceres. Opposite, grazing ground is now a play area and you can see a small, walled toft with beebole recess.



17) **The Fife Folk Museum** - Once the vibrant heart of a busy community, this is the High Street. In it, the Fife Folk Museum is housed in a row of weavers' cottages and part of a 17th century Tolbooth & Weighhouse, with an extension opposite in an old bothy site. A swing plough and two cheese presses are displayed in front of the extension. Notice the 'Jougs' hanging by the side of the main door and the stone pediment above the door with its carved weigh-beam, bale of cloth and round weights, and the inscription "God Bless The Just". The tolbooth with its gaol was erected in 1673 by Sir Thomas Hope of Craighall as the meeting place of the Baron's Court. It was also used as a public weigh house. The house next door was originally an ale-house since the 17th century and occupied part of the original tolbooth of which it was once an integral part. Kirkphon, a weaver's cottage next to the house, with its lintel and partially concealed skew-put, preserves the spirit of an earlier age.



18) **St John's Lodge** - A walk down the lane to the left of the Folk Museum brings you first to St John's Lodge overlooking the Auld Brig.

Its restoration was the first major project of the Central and North Fife Preservation Society. The lodge forms part of the Ceres conservation area, which stretches from here to the Meldrums Hotel, taking in the main part of the village and several other buildings of special historic interest.

The building was formerly the home of the Masonic Lodge of Ceres St John's, and in the 1840's the associated friendly society numbered approximately 80 members. The lodge had fallen into a sad state of disrepair and by the 1960's was in use partly as a hen house but otherwise uninhabitable. In 1964 restoration work was carried



out under the 'Little Houses Scheme', during which a stone bearing the date 1724 was apparently found. Despite this find, the building is thought to be of later origin, probably about 1765.

Funds for the restoration work were provided by the National Trust for Scotland and the Historic Buildings Council and after a short period on public display, the property was sold as a private dwelling.



19) **The Arcaded Vaults** - Standing at St John's Lodge, a glimpse can be seen of the arcaded vaults in the grounds of the lodge. They may have been storage for an orchard which occupied the site, but their proximity to the Masonic Lodge also suggests they were the work of apprentice masons.



20) **The Bishop's Bridge** - Finally you cross the Bishop's Bridge.

Dating back to the 17th century, the Auld Brig spans the burn in the most picturesque part of the village and links the visitors car park to the top end of High Street and the Fife Folk Museum.

On the 3rd of May, 1679, Archbishop James Sharp, Archbishop of St Andrews, crossed the bridge on his last fateful journey. The Archbishop, accompanied by his daughter Isabel, had travelled from Edinburgh by boat to Largo. The party stayed the night at Kennoway before continuing its journey by coach along the old Waterless Way (now called Woodburn Road) down the hill and into Ceres. He crossed the bridge and paused for a while to smoke a pipe with the minister at a house on the corner of High Street before continuing on his way.

A group of Covenanters, led by Hackston of Rathilait and Balfour of Kinloch were searching the area on horseback, their intention was to confront Carmichael, a drunken magistrate who had been appointed Sheriff Depute of Fife, and who had earned the Covenanters hatred by his energy in enforcing the laws against them. Carmichael however had received prior warning of the planned attack and wisely elected to remain in his headquarters in Cupar.

At about mid-day, as the Covenanters were about to abandon their search, a farm boy came running from Baldinnie with the news that the Archbishop himself, the very man who was in their opinion the greatest enemy of the Church of Scotland, was approaching. Unable to believe their good fortune they galloped away to meet the coach. Sharp's party had reached the crest of Magus Mulr and St Andrews and its bay could be seen spread out before them. Journeys end was near, as they entered what is now known as Bishops Wood. A pistol shot rang out

shattering the window of the coach. The attackers rode in and dragged the wounded clergyman from his seat and, despite his cries for mercy, savagely murdered him.

All this time Hackston sat motionless on his horse in the shadow of the trees, watching. After searching the coach the murderers road off, stopping on the way to give thanks to God for "The evil deed that they had been permitted to perpetrate'.

Of the Covenantars who participated in the murder only two were put to death for their crime. Balfour and several others escaped to Holland after the Battle of Bothwell Bridge, but Hackaton was captured and hanged in Edinburgh.

The Bishops Bridge as it is now often referred to, was restored to its present condition by Fife Regional Council with the help of the Historic Buildings Council. Work on the project was completed in 1969.



© 1314 -2019 Ceres Highland Games.