

## **ACCORD collaboration with the Kirkcudbright History Society: Summary Statement of Social Value**

Co-Authored by the Kirkcudbright History Society and the ACCORD project.  
This document is deposited as part of the full ACCORD project archive held by the  
Archaeology Data Service <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/>

### **Introduction**

The ACCORD team worked with The Kirkcudbright History Society on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of October 2014. Together in the Kirkcudbright Kirkyard we modelled three grave monuments using photogrammetry and recorded the inscriptions on two of these using the technique of Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI). The three grave monuments included one dedicated to the traveller Billy Marshall who died in 1792; an 18<sup>th</sup> Century gravestone with one face completely occupied by raised lettering; and an ornate tablestone grave dedicated to Samuel Herries who died in 1793.

This document provides information about the context of this work. There is a brief discussion of the historical value of the monuments, with reference to wider sources. The main focus of this document is to describe the social value of the monuments for the Kirkcudbright History Society and other participants in this project. Social value refers to a collective attachment to place that embodies meanings and values that are important to a community or communities. Social value refers to a collective attachment to place that embodies meanings and values that are important to a community or communities (Jones and Leech 2015: paras 1.5 and 1.6; see also Johnston 1994 and Byrne et al. 2003). The role of 3D recording and modelling in expressing the value of the monuments, and in creating value, is also summarised. Quotes and opinions in this document were expressed during focus groups held at the beginning and end of the co-production process.

### **The Kirkcudbright History Society**

The ACCORD collaboration with this group emerged from discussions with Professor Richard Jones, based at the University of Glasgow and David Devereux, a current committee member of the Kirkcudbright History Society. Both have previously worked on community heritage projects in Dumfries and Galloway. The Kirkcudbright History Society was primarily set-up in 2001 as a lecture society, meeting monthly from October to March, and run entirely by a volunteer committee. It is one of the youngest societies in Dumfries and Galloway. It currently has around 80 members who pay a yearly subscription of £12 or life membership for £80. The aims of the society are to encourage and conduct research into local history topics, arrange and organise lectures on local history themes, organise outings to places of interest, publish or assist in the publication of notes, papers, transcripts and web pages (relating to local history), liaise with holders of source material, and arrange local history exhibitions.

They have their own website at <http://www.kirkcudbrighthistorysociety.org.uk/>, mainly used for posting news items and notifications of upcoming talks and events. The group are increasingly becoming interested in conducting their own research projects in the local area. Additionally, the society have also been involved in the 'Britain From Above' project (<http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/>) and 'Scotland's Rural Past' (<http://www.scotlandsruralpast.org.uk/>), both set-up by various national heritage public and governmental bodies, and have assisted on projects with academics and museum professionals. At the time of the ACCORD collaboration, the Society's activities were focused on the Kirkcudbright Kirkyard following an incident of vandalism in the Kirkyard in 2010 (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-21876999>). The society had received Heritage Lottery Funding to promote

local awareness of the historical importance of the site. This included improving access and interpretation through guided tours and interpretation panels.

Five members of the Kirkcudbright History Society (one of whom is also a member of the local camera club) and a member of the Wigtownshire Antiquarians, took part in this ACCORD project. Three of these have professional backgrounds in archaeology and heritage, including one archaeologist and two former curators (one worked at the Stewartry Museum in Kirkcudbright, the other at Stranraer Museum). The others have professional backgrounds in architecture and surveying, education and accounting. The profile of the group who participated in this ACCORD project is therefore predominantly middle-class, retired professionals with a high level of education and cultural capital.

All those who took part in this ACCORD project lived locally and all except one shared interests in history, particularly centred on Kirkcudbright's shipping and artistic heritage. For those with roots in Glasgow, exploring Kirkcudbright's particular relationship with the big city was a prime interest. The newest member of the Society, and archaeologist by background, had only moved to Kirkcudbright recently and did not express a geographical or period-specific interest. One participant, the member of the local camera club, expressed that his primary interest was to find out more about the technologies of photogrammetry and RTI, whereas for the majority of the group interest in the technology was a secondary factor. Those with professional heritage, educational or architectural backgrounds, expressed their relationship to the local heritage in terms of professional objectivity. They also voiced a desire to learn new analytical techniques to aid their research and develop their intellectual interests. However, during the first focus group, it also became clear that they also shared an emotive and aesthetic appreciation of their local heritage, especially in relation to Kirkcudbright Kirkyard. One participant highlighted the role that heritage plays in his own identity and sense of self; "as I get older, I get more and more interested in history".

### **Significance and Social Value**

**Wider Landscape and Historical Setting.** Kirkcudbright is a historic harbour town located by the Solway Firth in the south-west of Scotland. The foundations of the town can be traced back to at least the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. The town developed in large part because of its prime harbour and defensive siting on the River Dee inlet of the Solway Firth. Its rich shipping and merchant history is reflected in the 694 entries on Canmore (at time of writing). From the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, its status as an attractive holidaying town grew, often referred to as 'The Artists' Town', attracting many well-known Scottish artists to visit and work here (some who ended up staying), including Francis Cadell and E.A. Hornell of the group of artists known as the 'Glasgow Boys'. Many members expressed an interest in this later history from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century onwards.

Nevertheless, very quickly it was decided that Kirkcudbright Kirkyard specifically would be the focus for the ACCORD 3D recording and modelling. The Kirkyard encompasses many aspects of Kirkcudbright's heritage that are valued by the group. The vandalism that took place in 2010, and the subsequent HLF project led by the Society, had further reinforced that value, as well as created forms of attachment and custodianship.

**Kirkcudbright Kirkyard (NX 69073 51128).** The Kirkyard sits on a hill to the North-East overlooking the modern town with views out to the Solway Firth. It has its own Canmore entry (ID 64069) and is recognised as a site of regional and national significance, although it is not listed in Historic Scotland's Gardens and Landscape Inventory. The site has Early Medieval foundations and is known as 'St Cuthbert's Church and graveyard', although there is no extant church building. It is thought

that St Cuthbert's remains were evacuated from Lindisfarne to here because of the threat of Viking raids in the late 7<sup>th</sup> Century. A passage in Reginald's 12<sup>th</sup> century 'Life of St Cuthbert' describes Aelred of Rievaulx's visit to the site in 1164 and a miracle taking place here. Some early medieval architectural fragments and an 8<sup>th</sup> century early medieval cross have been found in this locality (Canmore ID 64125). The earliest known formal Christian burials date to the early 17<sup>th</sup> Century and the graveyard continues in use today. Additionally, a Viking period grave was found in the Kirkyard (Canmore ID 64074), which contained the remains of a double-edged iron sword with a wooden scabbard, a penannular bronze brooch, and a small bead, possibly of jet. These finds are in Kirkcudbright Museum. Included in the graveyard are many individuals who were important to the story of Kirkcudbright; artists, merchants, travellers and covenanters. The site includes casualties of World War 1 and 2, and is still used as a burial ground for the local community. Some of the characters are famous across the globe. Billy Marshall is a noted favourite; a traveller who is believed to have lived to 120 years of age, dying in 1792. He is rumoured to have fathered over 17 children, been involved in revolts, murders, and smuggling, but still very much thought of as a "loveable rogue". Billy Marshall's refurbished headstone is still a revered monument and site of pilgrimage, and people leave a coin on the top of the headstone as a sign of respect and for good-luck. More information on particular headstones and selected individuals whose headstones were recorded as part of ACCORD are given below.

The social values associated with the Kirkyard are articulated by David Devereux in an article published on the Kirkcudbright History Society website shortly after the vandalism, which took place in 2010 (<http://www.kirkcudbrighthistorysociety.org.uk/features.asp>):

*"Vandalism draws attention to social value of our cemeteries and Kirkyards. The recent incident of vandalism in Kirkcudbright cemetery or St.Cuthbert's churchyard and the damage to a considerable number of gravestones has drawn attention to the social value of our local cemeteries and churchyards, not only for their personal importance as resting places for loved ones, but also as oases of quiet and calm, havens for wildlife and sites of historic interest."*

Two of the ACCORD participants voiced a strong sense of professional responsibility for communicating the historical and contemporary importance of the site. They also expressed feelings of custodianship. One Society member who participated in ACCORD also had a personal attachment to the site, having lived in the adjacent old kirk house all her life. The Kirkyard is therefore part of her early memories, as well as her sense of belonging and identity. This member of the group had a particularly strong sense of proprietorship in relation to the site.

All those participating in the ACCORD project also recognised the site as an important part of Kirkcudbright's communal heritage and unique character. The stories of the people interred in the Kirkyard, the site's "tranquil" and "peaceful" atmosphere, and its position overlooking the town, make it a special place. The site is seen as a microcosm of Kirkcudbright's rich, illustrious and layered past, which still has a strong contemporary relevance for its unique character as an historical harbour town. For the majority in the group these characteristics instilled a strong sense of pride. Some members of the group also felt affinity with the fascinating characters, the merchants and travellers, throughout the ages who have ended up in the Kirkyard. For them, finding out more about these characters and recording their headstones was a personal endeavour, contributing to their sense of identity and belonging even though they did not have any direct genealogical links to the individuals concerned.

### **The Monuments Recorded as Part of ACCORD**

This section outlines the significance and value in relation to the selected monuments recorded at Kirkcudbright Kirkyard as part of ACCORD. None of the headstones in the Kirkyard have their own entries on Canmore, despite their unusual character and compositions. These monuments are regarded to be important and significant to the local community of Kirkcudbright, and perhaps further afield though the Society want to seek confirmation on this.

**Billy Marshall Headstone, 1672- 1792.** Billy Marshall is famously referred to as ‘The King of the Gypsies’ or ‘King of the Randies’. His headstone is regarded as a monument of local importance, which is also popular with visitors and a site of pilgrimage for Travellers. It is well maintained, having been recently refurbished. Coins are left by visitors on the top of the headstone as a mark of respect and for good luck.

There are many rumours surrounding Billy Marshall; that he lived to the age of 120, fathered 17 children, was involved in revolts, murders, smuggling, and riots against landowners who took away land from the people. He was said to have had a career as a boxer, while he joined and deserted the army numerous times.

His headstone reads:

The Remains of William Marshall,  
*Tinker*, who died  
28<sup>th</sup> November 1792,  
*at the advanced age of*  
120 Years.

The group chose to record this monument, as it is the most popular headstone in the Kirkyard, “the one that excites people!” There was a sense of fun in making a photogrammetric record of Billy Marshall’s headstone. It was also thought that creating a virtual 3D record of it might promote the monument, making it more widely accessible.

**Samuel Herries Tablestone, 1713- 1793.** This is one of the most elaborate monuments in the Kirkyard in the form of a red sandstone slab with incised writing upon four elaborately carved red sandstone pedestals. Samuel Herries was a successful merchant. Every side of the cuboid pillars have raised carvings showing depictions of exotic plants and people probably of African descent, with elaborate hairstyles or head-dresses. It is not certain whether this refers to a trade in slavery, or if this is referring to scenes which Samuel Herries saw on his travels as a merchant and that these individuals are depicted as elites.

The characterful naïve carvings were attractive to all in the group, and thought to be very unusual. Additionally, there is not much information available on Samuel Herries. This monument was chosen to be recorded using photogrammetry in order to capture a permanent record of its aesthetic and unique qualities, and also to create a record which could be used to communicate this monument to experts in these monuments types. RTI was used to decipher the abraded writing on the slab.

The gravestone reads:

In Memory  
Of  
Samuel Herries late  
Merchant in Kirkcudbright  
Who died January 13<sup>th</sup> 1793

Aged 80 years.

**18<sup>TH</sup> Century Lettered Headstone.** This was felt to be one of the most attractive headstones in the Kirkyard, and rather different in style to the others. It has raised lettering covering the whole surface of the upright headstone. It has been carved in a naïve style which likely dates to the late medieval period. The group had no further information on this headstone, and were keen to decipher the text. We used the technique of photogrammetry in order to do this, whilst at the same time it was thought that this would make an attractive model which would capture its aesthetic qualities.

The headstone could only be partially deciphered and reads:

HERE LYES RO  
BERT McKLININ (?)  
MERCHANT OF ??  
RCES OF KIRCUD  
BRIGHT ???  
DEPARTED THI  
S LIFE FEB OF  
AD 1711 (?) AND OF  
HIS AGE ???  
YEARS

### **The impact of 3D modelling and recording**

Individuals in the group had not been exposed to the techniques of RTI and photogrammetry prior to their engagement with ACCORD. They were aware of 3D reconstructions as presented on popular television programmes and in exhibitions. One individual described herself as a “techno-phobe”, having been trained in the “pre-digital” age, although she was keen to update her skills. In contrast, the member of a photography club was clearly excited about the application of photography based techniques for 3D modelling. In general the others in the group expressed a primary interest in the heritage and monuments in the local area, rather than the technologies themselves.

The potential of 3D records for research, display and engagement was immediately recognised by the group, in particular for museum contexts. One of the individuals who had a professional background as a curator described how the results provided an “enhanced way of presenting history and archaeology”.

The technologies also transformed peoples’ previous relationships with the monuments recorded. For example, it was clear that issues of accuracy of detail, scale and capturing authenticity were of prime concern for the group in relation to their analytical and intellectual approach to recording. Additionally, it was felt an accurate model captured the authenticity, or even added to the authenticity, of the original monument; it was voiced that the results almost add a sense of “veracity” and “reality”. One member even described RTI as “another science”, while another said that the techniques allow you “to discover more than you can see”. However, not all agreed and one member expressed that he felt the digital results to be a dilution of the original monument; in particular the “toy affect” of the model of the tablestone was noted. Nevertheless, all agreed that the results “introduce a wow factor” into experiencing their heritage and animate the monuments to “bring them alive”, also with an element of “fun”, showing that the results also had an emotive quality for the group, enhancing their own personal and immersive experience with the monuments.

The group feel confident in using the techniques in their future work. In early 2015 the local Stewartry Museum has been in contact about including interactive 3D photogrammetric models in their updated displays, working together with members who took part in this ACCORD project.

**References:**

**Byrne, D., Brayshaw, H. and Ireland, T.** (2003) Social Significance: a discussion paper. Hurstville: New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service (2nd Edition).

**Johnston, C.** (1994) What is Social Value? A discussion paper. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

**Jones, S. and Leech, S.** (2015) Valuing the Historic Environment: a Critical Review of Existing approaches to Social Value. London: AHRC.

**Websites:**

<http://www.kirkcudbrighthistorysociety.org.uk/>, accessed 4<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

<http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/>, accessed 4<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

<http://www.scotlandsruralpast.org.uk/>, accessed 4<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-21876999> BBC News article 'Kirkcudbright vandalised gravestone repairs complete', 21<sup>st</sup> March 2013.