

# Ayton Heritage scio

Newsletter 012. October 2023



**Welcome to newsletter 12.**

## Ivy Removal

Work on the preservation of St Dionysius progressed with ivy cutting in the early part of the year with most parts of the ruin tackled. This was done by Alan Hogarth with volunteers clearing the cuttings to a skip provided by Scottish Borders Council. The higher parts were reached by scaffolding and a cherry picker was required for the bell tower. Alan was busy with other work through the summer but we will have him back for one or two days to finish off the remainder of the ivy canopy. It is important to remove the thick leafy party of the ivy as this can cause wind loading on the stonework during stormy weather. However, we are careful not to remove any roots at this stage as they may be helping to bind some of the old structure in place.



Before



After

## Open Day and Church Fete

We held our open day in June when £416 was raised and several people visited the ruin for the first time. It was surprising to learn that many did not know of its existence until we revealed it from under the ivy mantle. We also had a stall at the Church Fete in August which was useful in raising the profile of Ayton Heritage.

## School Visit

In March we had a visit from some Ayton Primary School children. They were doing a project about old buildings in the village and were very interested in the ruin. I got lots of interesting questions.

## Information Boards

We are planning to erect two information boards to explain the history of St Dionysius to visitors. The first will be at the cemetery gates to highlight the presence of the ruin and the second will be down at the entrance to the nave and will have more detailed information. Consent is required from Scottish Borders Council before these can be erected and an application is in hand.



Ayton Primary School children visiting St Dionysius

## Revised survey

Before we started any work on St Dionysius, we had a conservation architect carry out a full survey of the ruin in 2021. This was limited because of the amount of ivy covering it. With the stonework now much more visible we decided to get the survey updated and unfortunately this has shown that there are several areas where there is loose stonework at high levels. With public safety in the cemetery being the responsibility of Scottish Borders Council we have reported this to them and it is most likely that there will be restricted access for the public until repair work is carried out.

Bill Black