



The Church of Scotland  
Church and Society Council

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# **Exploring One Scotland Many Cultures**

## **A Study Guide for Christians in Scotland**

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## INTRODUCTION

In May 2010 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland received the report *One Scotland Many Cultures*, which had been prepared by the Kirk's Church and Society Council.

You can read the full report online:

[http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/5891/One\\_Scotland\\_Many\\_Cultures\\_May\\_2011.pdf](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/5891/One_Scotland_Many_Cultures_May_2011.pdf)

Or ask for an e-mail or printed copy from:

[churchandsociety@cofscotland.org.uk](mailto:churchandsociety@cofscotland.org.uk) or: Church and Society, 121 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4YN.

This study guide has been produced to accompany the report and is designed to get Church congregations, small groups and individuals to engage with some of the issues to do with theology, hospitality, welcome and diversity in Scotland today.

There are four sessions which are primarily designed for small groups, though a group leader should feel free to adapt the ideas and prayers as they see fit to their context – from a regular house group to a one-off Lent course, or perhaps simply using some of the prayers during a regular worship service. Please use this resource flexibly.

Each session description is written for the group leader. They include the purpose for each session, a list of any materials or resources that are needed, and the main content of the sessions, which include prayers, activities, questions and Bible studies.

Thanks and acknowledgement to Churches Together in Britain and Ireland's Racial Justice Sunday resources for some of the ideas and prayers.  
<http://www.ctbi.org.uk/CBE/551>

We would be grateful for any feedback or comments on this study guide. Please share your thoughts to [churchandsociety@cofscotland.org.uk](mailto:churchandsociety@cofscotland.org.uk)

# **SESSION 1**

## **INTRODUCTION: KNOWING ME, KNOWING YOU**

### **Purpose of this session**

This first session is designed to get the group to know each other and to start to explore one of the key themes in the *One Scotland Many Cultures* report, which is the importance of churches to local communities.

### **List of materials that are required**

- Participants should be invited to bring something which can represent their culture, identity or background - how they got to be here. This could be an artefact, music, food, picture, a story or something else.
- A3 or flipchart paper and coloured pens for the map-making activity.
- Bibles
- A candle for the opening prayer

### **Checklist of any preparation that needs to take place**

In particular this session relates to the Introduction section of the report. As Group Leader you should read through this and think about the issues and any questions that you want to get your group to think about.

### **Opening Prayer**

Before the session starts, light a candle.

God our maker, throw your light into monochrome corners.  
Enlighten the eyes of our hearts.  
There is much beauty in the subtle difference.  
Open our ears to the stories others will share, and open our minds to  
the possibilities they present.  
God our maker, throw your light into monochrome corners and help us  
see.  
Amen

### **Activity – How do you do?**

Hopefully all the participants will have brought an object or something else to share with the group which can represent his or her culture, identity or how their family have come to live in their community. Each person should be allowed to speak for a couple of minutes, and you may want to allow questions.

## **Activity – Map Me!**

Split the participants up into groups, with two or three people in each group. Ask them to draw on the large paper a map of the local community in which you live, highlighting the cultures of people, where people naturally mix, and places where they don't mix.

If they are having trouble getting going you could suggest the following:

Why don't you start with the Church and the streets, shops and buildings round about.

Where cultures might mix:

In school

In the supermarket

The post office

Community centre

After the groups have had 10 minutes or so to work on their maps, ask each group to briefly present what they have done and to mention any interesting comments.

Keep the conversation going with these questions:

- Is your place of worship somewhere where cultures mix?
- How might the map look if you lived in a different part of the country – e.g. in the city, or in a rural area or island?
- Do members of your group relate better to particular places? Why? Are there any 'no-go' areas? Are there places that are friendly? Are there places where people keep to themselves?

## **Bible Study**

Ask someone to read John 4:1-42 (the Samaritan women at the well), Mark 7:24-30.

Old Testament laws included some requirements for purity and separation of Jewish people from the rest of the population. Jesus' encounter with these Gentile women confound him; but he comes to the realisation that God has a plan for all people, not just his own.

How does Jesus respond to different people?

How do we respond to different people?

The Old Testament also had laws that required aliens be cared for and given the same rights and protections as widows and orphans.

How do we and our society treat aliens and immigrants?

Who do we consider to be 'alien'?

What does Christ's encounter with the Gentile women in the stories suggest the Church needs to be doing today?

### **Closing Prayer**

Come back to the candle. Have the maps they've drawn on a table and have tea lights available. Before the closing prayer, ask them to reflect on a part of the community that came to their attention during the session. Invite them to light a candle for that place and place it on the map.

Close with the prayer.

God, redeemer, and sustainer of us all, open our eyes to the people around us, not only to those closest and most familiar to us, but also to the strangers. Help us to see beyond the things that divide us, looking for what unites us, and help us to understand that we all are your children.

God our maker, throw your light into monochrome corners.

Enlighten the eyes of our hearts.

There is much beauty in the subtle difference.

Open our ears to the stories others will share, and open our minds to the possibilities they present.

God our maker, throw your light into monochrome corners and help us see.

Amen.

### **Homework**

Ask the participants to talk to someone outside the group about what they have discussed during the session and what they think about the issues. Ask them to speak to a neighbour or friend and ask about his or her family story.

## **SESSION 2 WHERE SCOTLAND COMES FROM**

### **Purpose of this session**

This session is a thinking and talking session.

As group leader you might want to spend some time thinking about the issues yourself beforehand and so be able to respond with ideas if someone asks a question or to keep the conversation moving around the key issues raised in *One Scotland, Many Cultures*.

### **List of materials that are required**

- A candle and a map or globe for the opening prayer
- Paper and pens or pencils for the group
- A small prize for the quiz
- Bibles
- A copy of the extract from the report (included below), with the paper cut into different sections (one paragraph per slip of paper)

### **Checklist of any preparation that needs to take place**

Participants should be asked to bring along an object, picture, music or something else which helps to illustrate their or their family's journey about how they came to settle in the place they now live.

### **Opening Prayer**

Before the session starts, light a candle.

Display a map of the world or a globe and ask folk to reflect on:

Oceans, borders, walls, attitudes sometimes – things that divide...  
Fear, ignorance, tradition sometimes – things that divide...  
Love, compassion, empathy, a smile sometimes – things that unite...  
Justice, mercy, humility sometimes – things that unite...  
God who is our home, unite us in you.

God, our Father, we recognise that we come today from different situations, from different backgrounds and experiences. In the silence we lay our concerns and anxieties before you to let us focus on you.  
(Silence)

As we cast our burdens onto him whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light, we ask that your Spirit would come upon us; that we may glorify and worship you in our study, our discussion and our fellowship together.

Amen

### **Activity – Ice Breaker Quiz**

This activity is a simple quiz that is designed to get people talking and thinking about issues facing Scotland today. It is suggested that people work in pairs (this can be a really good way to mix up a group or get people to talk to someone else they don't know but might be too shy to talk to unprompted). You can give a small prize to the winning team.

What is the population of Scotland? (5.17m)

How many how many 'shires' can you name in Scotland (one point for each)

How many racist incidents were recorded by the Police in 2005/06? (6,438)

What percentage of Scotland's workforce work in the public sector (24%)

How many famous Scots can you name (one point for each)

How well do you know your Scottish words? (one point for each correct answer):

Stroupach – a drink of tea

Oxter – armpit

Kenspeckle – familiar / well-known / easily recognised

Linn – waterfall or pool

### **Scotland – from origins to present day**

Hand out the slips of paper to the group and get a different person to read the following extract from *One Scotland Many Cultures* in turn:

The idea of Scotland as a nation is an ancient and remarkably persistent one – from the first King of Scots Kenneth MacAlpine in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, through the wars of independence during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries to the union of the crowns in 1603 and the Treaty of Union with England in 1707, through incorporation into and participation in the British Empire and 19<sup>th</sup> century industrialisation, through two world wars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to the re-establishment of a devolved Scottish Parliament in 1999.

The territory of Scotland has, by comparison with most other European nations, largely retained its present boundaries since the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. The land border with England – Scotland's only land border - is one of the oldest extant borders in the world, having been defined in 1237 by the treaty of York. Perhaps the earliest defining statement of a Scottish sense of nationhood is contained in the Declaration of Arbroath of 1320.

Despite this long history, Scotland has never been ethnically or culturally homogeneous. Rather, Scotland has developed as a nation through a process of continuous migration and settlement. The very name 'Scotland' derives from the Scots people who ruled the kingdom of Dalriada in western Scotland in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, whose origins were in Ireland. Even in these early days, as Scotland emerged as a settled kingdom, added to the cultural mix were the Picts in the north and east, Angles in the south east, and Celtic-speaking Britons in the south west, not to mention the Norsemen whose legacy is still visible in Caithness and Sutherland, the Hebrides, Orkney and Shetland.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the beginning of large-scale immigration from Ireland, Italy and other countries. The response of the Church of Scotland to what was largely Roman Catholic immigration was lamentable as was illustrated as late as the 1920's in the bigoted position adopted by the General Assembly. While this has long since been repudiated there is a clear lesson that an easy trap to fall into is basing policies on 'fear of the other'.

The process of migration – immigration and emigration – has continued throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup>, with the arrival of new groups of immigrants from, for example, Pakistan and Hong Kong, and more recently from mainland China, central and eastern Europe, and indeed from all over the world, who have made Scotland their home, who have settled here, found work, established businesses, raised their families, and contribute to the growing richness and diversity of modern Scottish society. Adding to this diversity is the continuing circulation of population within Scotland and across the United Kingdom especially with England with whom there is considerable shared and often conflicting history.

If we are to engage effectively with the changing nature of Scottish society, it is clear that we first have to acknowledge this historical diversity, to realise that as a nation Scotland has always been influenced by successive waves of immigration, and that our most recent experiences are not a unique development. Acknowledging that history is the key to challenging what may be very strong ideas about what it means to be 'Scottish' based on assumptions about who the 'indigenous' Scots are.

## Questions

1. Go round the group, sharing how you have come to settle in your community and your family history. People may want to bring an object, picture or something else to illustrate this journey.
2. Have you experienced prejudice (either to yourself and/or others) of settling into a community where you traditionally 'wouldn't belong'?
3. What is your experience of the Church responding to the stranger? Is Scotland's sectarian divide part of your or your family's story?

4. In light of recent discussion on Scotland's constitutional position, what do you think about our history, current position and possible future?

### **Case Study: David, a church minister from India living in Scotland**

*Taken from CTBI's Racial Justice Sunday Resources for 2010*

It was summer 2005 that my wife and I came to Glasgow, Scotland. Coming from India, the sub-continent, we had a few cultural shocks in the first few months. Being a committed Christian, Church is part and parcel of my life. The Church we visited on the first Sunday of our arrival was a significant one. I say it because we were accepted by the congregation. The brothers and sisters in the assembly made us feel at home.

Naturally, when you are in a foreign land, everything is new to you like place, people and surroundings. You will feel isolated. In my case, it wasn't true because the Church played a vital role in giving us support. I have noticed and personally experienced the Churches not only preach love but reveal it in deeds. Christ's love is demonstrated in the action of churches. I can testify in volumes how the churches here are involved in helping people to provide food, clothing and shelter.

### **Bible Study**

Please ask someone to read from Exodus 22:21-30

You should then read the following:

The history of Israel, of God's chosen people is a story of transience. Joseph is sent into slavery in a strange land (Genesis 37-46). Moses flees to Midian and finds shelter in the house of a Priest (Exodus 2:15-22). Ruth accompanies Naomi to a foreign land and finds favour in the eyes of Boaz (Ruth 2). Mary and Joseph flee to Egypt with Jesus as a baby. In the New Testament, Jesus' ministry takes him to many different towns during three years of ministry.

In this passage and throughout the Bible we find God's concern for the wellbeing of migrants. The people of Israel are constantly instructed to remember the strangers among them and treat them with love, compassion and justice. God commands the Israelites not to ill-treat them (v.21) and not to take advantage of them (v.25). God is concerned and cares for powerless and vulnerable people. Strangers are to be cared for and they are to be treated as fellow citizens (v.29). In the New Testament, Jesus gives a new command to 'love your neighbour as yourself' (Matthew 22:39).

Questions:

1. If you have moved to a new area from where you were previously, how has the hospitality of the Church impacted on you?
2. What are the responsibilities of being a 'host' to the other in the passage? How does this transfer to the responsibilities of wider society for the vulnerable?
3. Often when we read such passages we realise how much we have to offer others, despite perhaps not having many material gifts ourselves. What do you feel that you can offer to the stranger in your own setting?

## **Closing Prayer**

*(Pieces of paper and pencils needed)*

Return to the map or globe. Share paper and pens/ pencils. Before the prayer, ask the group to write down something that has touched them during the session, such as a name, a place, a phrase or an idea. Then lead the prayer:

Oceans, borders, walls, attitudes sometimes – things that divide...  
Fear, ignorance, tradition sometimes – things that divide...  
Love, compassion, empathy, a smile sometimes – things that unite...  
Justice, mercy, humility sometimes – things that unite...  
God who is our home, as our time comes to a close, we reflect on what we have learned.

Invite the group to place their pieces of paper on the table with the candle.

God of justice and compassion, we remember that you have called us here to be salt and light. Send us out from this place, reflecting on what we have learned and what action we will take on your word.

Heavenly Father, as our time together comes to a close, we reflected on what we have learnt today. In the silence we will write down what has impacted on us today and one thing we will strive to do in the next week.

God of justice and compassion, we remember that you have called us here to be salt and light. Send us out from this place, reflected on what we have learned and what action we will take on your Word.

Amen.

## **Homework**

Ask the participants to read the section of *One Scotland Many Cultures* on 'Radical Hospitality' before the next session.

## **SESSION 3 RADICAL HOSPITALITY**

### **Purpose of this session**

This section is one that asks the participants not only to reflect, but also to act. Radical hospitality is about meeting people where they are and welcoming them. In order to do that, we sometimes have to move out of our own comfort zones to make space. In the stories you will be exploring, the main objective is to engage participants in modelling the behaviour of Jesus in the gospels and the foundational piece we have from Deuteronomy – these texts display important ways individual members and the church can welcome today. When Jesus stops, listens, touches and talks, healing comes about.

The report's section on radical hospitality is extensive, but in this part of the study guide, we will focus on how radical hospitality can be enacted locally.

### **List of materials that are required**

- Sheets of A5 paper
- Different coloured pens
- Bibles
- Flipchart and markers
- Action Cards for worship at the end (explanation below).
  - Take some card and write some actions on them for members of your group to take away at the end of the session. Here are some suggestions, but feel free to make up other ones to suit your group.
  - 1. Take a gift of welcome to a neighbour you do not know and introduce yourself.
  - 2. Invite a neighbour you do not know to dinner.
  - 3. Host a party for your block.
  - 4. Say or write a thank you to someone who does a service for you (postman, take-away delivery person, etc...)
  - 5. Make an intentional effort to welcome visitors who come to church.

### **Checklist of any preparation that needs to take place**

Before participants arrive, they should have read the section of the report entitled "Radical Hospitality."

## Opening Prayer

*There are several ways this prayer can be said. One voice can make the statements, while a second asks the question; three voices can speak the different sections, or the leader can read it alone.*

In the face of the stranger ...  
In the cry of a child ...  
In the dreams of an asylum seeker ...  
In the hopes of an economic migrant ...  
Jesus stands before us.

How will we know him if we never say hello?

In the house next door ...  
In the shop on the corner ...  
In the place dedicated to God that we walk past to get here ...  
In the High Street or the Community Hall or the intersections we navigate every day ...  
Our neighbours live and move and have their being.

How will we know them if we never say hello?

Radical hospitality ...  
Finding ways to welcome that are more than words ...  
Breaking down barriers and building bridges ...  
Loving our neighbours as we love ourselves ...  
That is what we are called to do.

How can we do that if we do not even say hello?  
God, your love has no bounds. Help us to live your way. Amen.

## Activity – Who is my neighbour?

Think back to the map you made in the first session. This week, you are challenged individually to draw a map of your neighbourhood's people. As you create your map, add as many details as you can about the families who live near you.

What are the names of the members of the family who live there?  
What do they do for a living?  
Do they have extended family?  
Where are they from originally?

Discuss your map with a partner/group.  
How well do you know your neighbours?  
Why do you know some better than others?

## **Bible Study**

*Depending on the size of your group, break into smaller groups of three or four and divide/ choose the stories for reflection.*

Text Choices:

Deuteronomy 24:17-22

John 4: 1-42

Mark 1:40-45

Luke 8:43- 48

Matthew 15:21-28

In small groups: First, read the story aloud.

Next, think about the call to radical hospitality and ask these questions within the group.

What does radical hospitality mean in this story?

How is it modelled?

What do you take from it that you can use today?

## **Follow-on Discussion in Plenary**

Have the small groups report briefly about their story, discussions, and answers. Write these on the flipchart.

Then write up this quote from the report: "As Christians, we are about breaking down the barriers that keep us apart and about building bridges that lead us to ways we can walk together."

Have the group reflect on things (traditions, norms, language) that might make people feel less welcome in church. How can we address these situations in our own setting? Come up with three things this group will strive to do from this point on.

## **Closing Prayer**

In this short act of worship, the participants will be asked to reflect on the call to see Christ in their midst, especially in the face of the stranger. They will then be invited to take a card. In the card, there will be a specific act of welcome that they are to complete during the next week.

In the face of the stranger ...  
In the cry of a child ...  
In the dreams of an asylum seeker ...  
In the hopes of an economic migrant ...  
Jesus stands before us.

How will we know him if we never say hello?

In the house next door ...  
In the shop on the corner ...  
In the place dedicated to God that we walk past to get here ...  
In the High Street or the Community Hall or the intersections we  
navigate every day ...  
Our neighbours live and move and have their being.

How will we know them if we never say hello?

Radical hospitality ...  
Finding ways to welcome that are more than words ...  
Breaking down barriers and building bridges ...  
Loving our neighbours as we love ourselves ...  
That is what we are called to do.

How can we do that if we do not even say hello?

Tonight, make a promise to begin where you are. On the table are cards. You are invited to take one and say the hello it asks you to say. It may be only a beginning, but God is all about beginnings. Go in peace.

## **Homework**

Participants should take away the card and complete the action that they have been given.

## **SESSION 4 CELEBRATING DIFFERENCE**

### **Purpose of this session**

This is the final session, so it is designed to sum up the main points of the report and in particular to encourage empathy – the ability to understand why other people think differently.

### **List of materials that are required**

- A copy of the reading 'The Story of the Rainbow' (included below).
- A way for everyone to read the opening prayer of affirmation, either on paper or on a projector.
- A Bible

### **Checklist of any preparation that needs to take place**

Participants should read the sections of the *One Scotland Many Cultures* report on 'Celebrating Difference' and the 'Conclusion' – perhaps have copies for people to read as they arrive.

You should have let people know beforehand that they will be invited to take their shoes off as part of the closing reflection; check that they are comfortable with this (and give them a chance to make sure they are not wearing holey socks!).

### **Opening prayer**

Let us affirm together:

- WE pledge to examine our own biases and positions of privilege through self reflection and earnestly work to resolve them.
- WE pledge to live by compassion and be consciously inclusive of all people.
- WE pledge to affirm the value of diversity.
- WE pledge to promote understanding, inclusion and mutual respect, and thus build community within all ethnicities and cultures.
- WE pledge to transform our institutions into authentically anti-racist and anti oppressive communities of action.
- WE pledge to advocate for justice, demand equal opportunity for all and so help create a beloved community for everyone to share.

God of all people,  
May the things we do, always include everyone  
For in the example of Jesus no one was excluded from his circle of life.  
Create in us renewed and reinvigorated hearts and minds  
That, rooted in your love, our lives may continue to bear fruit  
As we live these commitments  
In the name of Jesus, we pray.  
Amen

## Questions

Start the discussion by asking some questions:

1. How do you think your congregation can engage with the idea of embracing the diversity of its members and still remain a distinct and united faith community?
2. How can your congregation ensure that all its members are heard?
3. How can you, and your congregation, help celebrate the diversity of and in your local community?
4. What makes some groups powerful and others powerless?
5. Can belonging to a group be dangerous to those 'inside' or 'outside' the group?

## Reading (for 9 readers): The Story of the Rainbow (An Indian Legend)

*If you have fewer than nine people you can double up on parts. This story is taken from CTBI's Racial Justice resources for 2009*

**Narrator:** Once upon a time, all the best colours in the world started to quarrel; each claimed that she was the best, the most important, the most useful, the favourite.

**Green:** Clearly I am the most important. I am the sign of life and hope. I was chosen for grass, trees, leaves – without me all the animals would die. Look out over the countryside and you will see I am in the majority.

**Blue:** You only think about the earth, but think about the sky and the blue sea. It is water that is the basis of life and this is drawn up to the clouds from the blue sea. The sky gives space and peace. Without my peace you would all be nothing but busybodies.

**Yellow:** You are all so serious. I bring laughter and warmth into the world. The sun is yellow, the moon is yellow, the stars are yellow. Every time you look at a sunflower the whole world starts to smile. Without me there would be no fun.

**Orange:** I am the colour of health and strength. I carry all the most important vitamins. Think carrots and pumpkins and mangoes. I don't hang around all

the time, but when I fill the sky at sunrise and sunset, my beauty is so striking that no one gives another thought to you.

**Red:** I'm the ruler of you all, blood, life's blood. I am the colour of danger and bravery.

I am the colour of love – the red rose and the poppy.

**Purple:** I am the colour of royalty and power. Kings and chiefs have always chosen me for I am a sign of authority and richness.

**Indigo:** Think of me. I am the colour of silence. You hardly notice me, but without me you would all become meaningless. I represent thought and reflection, twilight and deep water. You need me for balance and contrast, for prayer and inner peace.

**Narrator:** And so the colours went on boasting, each convinced that they were the best. Their quarrelling became louder and louder. Suddenly there was a startling flash of lightening; thunder rolled and boomed. Rain started to pour down relentlessly. The colours all crouched down in fear, drawing close to one another for comfort.

**Rain:** You foolish colours, fighting among yourselves, each trying to dominate the rest. Do you not know that God made you all? He loves you all. He wants you all. Join hands with one another and come with me. He will stretch you across the sky in a great bow of colour, as a reminder that he loves you all, that you can live together in peace

A promise that he is with you.....

A sign of hope for tomorrow.

**Narrator:** And so whenever God has used good rain to wash the world, He puts the rainbow in the sky and when we see it let us remember to appreciate one another.

### **Bible Study – Babel and Pentecost**

Compare the story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) and Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13).

In Acts, the diversity of the people is confounded as everyone hears the message in his or her own language.

The traditional interpretation of the Babel story is that God scatters the people who dared to rival his magnificence by building an impossibly large tower. But recent scholars have suggested that the ambition to build a tower 'in the heavens' was not a literal ambition but a common metaphor of the day. It has been pointed out that the diversity of the peoples of the world is a cause for celebration; is it time we looked anew at the Babel story, and its outcome far from being a curse is a blessing.

## **Closing reflection: in each others' shoes**

Ask the participants to take their shoes off and leave the pairs in the middle of the room. Then, ask them to find someone else's shoes and to put them on. They then need to find that person and speak with them, thinking about what their perspective is – now that they are in someone else's shoes. In particular, encourage them to think about the issues raised in these study sessions. It might be helpful to remind them of the objects and stories that were shared at the first meeting.

Once everyone has had a chance to meet with the person whose shoes they are wearing, and the person wearing their shoes, gather everyone back together for a closing prayer:

Our God, father, mother, sister, brother, all our faces are seen across the world.

Across this land, help us to value and enjoy the diversity in your creation and in the human family. Help us to embrace one another and to allow your Spirit to transform and enrich us in these growing relationships. We pray for your grace to touch our lives in ways that bring us to life to work with you more effectively. Help each of us to know more clearly who we are and who you are, that all can be proud of being created in your image and trust your presence with us on our life journeys.

Amen.

## **Homework**

A couple of weeks after the final session, the Group Leader should get back in touch with participants and ask them how they found the sessions and what they felt was good or bad. Then this feedback should be sent on to the Church and Society Council at [churchandsociety@cofscotland.org.uk](mailto:churchandsociety@cofscotland.org.uk) or at 121 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4YN.