

Cromarty East Church Newsletter



Issue 7: Spring 2010 Edited by Caroline Vawdrey



Thanks and good luck



This picture of Andrew Newcombe (*right*) talking to Scottish Redundant Churches Trust trustees typifies the approach that made it such a pleasure for everyone on the East Church project team to work with him.

Now heading off to start up his own building conservation business, Andy has been the lynchpin of work on the church from the beginning, when the discovery of a wealth of archaeology under the church floor must have presented a nightmare for work schedules. Andrew and Laing Traditional Masonry took it all in their stride, and it is this approach that has enabled the East Church has to be open so much to the public, including several visits by Cromarty Primary School. Enjoyable for all concerned, but the work for Andrew and his team shouldn't be underestimated.

The departure of one Andrew sees the



arrival of another to take his place. Andrew Beattie is the new site manager, and he's going to be busy as the spring workplan kicks into action.

Good luck to them both

'Restoration' Conservation

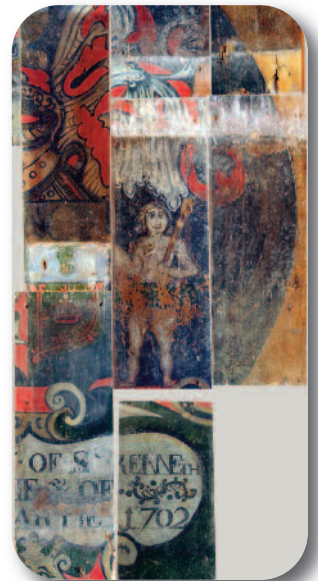
Conservation work at the East Church has received a welcome boost, with the award of funding from BBC's Restoration. Thanks to all the generous voting by viewers of the 2006 BBC Two series *Restoration Village*, overall winner Chedham's Yard in Warwickshire received £250,000 for its restoration leaving more than £200,000 of surplus funding to be shared between four of the finalists.

Restoration has given £54k to the East Church to fund the conservation, display and interpretation of the Medieval grave slab and decorative painted features within the church.

Victoria Collison-Owen, Director of SRCT, commented: "We have tremendous community support in Cromarty and it is good to see all their hard work and voting throughout the Restoration series pay off with funding towards the conservation of these unique features in the church."

Conservation work can now begin on the rare 1702 wooden heraldic panels bearing the arms of Sir Kenneth McKenzie of Cromartie and his wife, Anna Campbell, and the Medieval grave slab found during earlier work on the church.

On completion both the stone and heraldic panels will be displayed within the church, giving visitors a link to over seven hundred years of history.



From Medieval gravestone to modern spectacles

Open day Sunday 1 August at 11.00

The East Church will be taking part in the British Festival of Archaeology this summer. On Sunday 1 August there will be a guided tour of the church followed by a closer look at some of the archaeological finds now on display in the Cromarty Courthouse museum.

Led by Dr David Alston and archaeologist John Wood the tour will give a fascinating insight into what the finds can tell us about the role of the church in Cromarty and how it reflects the community life of the town.



Meet ...

Mark Stevens the glass restorer



Working from his base at Evanton, just over the firth from Cromarty, Mark Stevens of Northern Light Stained Glass has been conserving the East Church window panes.

Over the years cracks had inevitably appeared, but Mark's skill has meant these have been repaired and the historic glass saved.

The technique may sound straight forward - glue them together - but when you consider the need to flex 1mm thick glass and produce a pristine mend with no glue showing, you begin to understand the skill of his work.

Some of the windows required putty repairs, which Mark shaped to form a chute to allow water run off, reducing the risk of future frost damage.

An interesting find was the window pane shown below, with the signature *D Gair* inscribed from the outside. Signatures are surprisingly common on glass, and are usually that of the proud tradesman who worked on the window.



Mark's pleasure in working with glass is obvious, as he says:

"I glean satisfaction from seeing a badly broken window returned to its full integrity. To see the old glass once more make the sunlight dance."

To find out more about Mark's work take a look at his website: www.spanglefish.com/markstevens

Child mortality: learning from gravestone inscriptions



The Cromarty History Society was recently treated to an evening of presentations by members of the East Church kirkyard group.

Susan Florence and Lindsay Hemy (pictured above with history society chairman Sandy Thomson) gave a fascinating presentation on their research into child mortality in Cromarty at the start of the 20th Century through the study of two gravestones of the Hogg family, which lie close to the church gate.

Child death was higher in the Fishertown, where causes of death included diphtheria, TB, and gastro-enteritis. The devastating effect that these diseases could have is shown on the gravestone erected by James and Christina Hogg, which commemorates the 6 of their 10 children who died at a year or under.

The graveyard inscription survey can be downloaded from the East Church website.

Cromarty is open for summer



Cromarty Courthouse Museum has opened for the season with exhibitions that include a display of East Church artefacts. From 1 May, there will also be a new exhibition celebrating the life of Black Isle author, Jane Duncan. Opening times are Sun to Thurs 11.00 - 4.00.



The Hugh Miller museum and cottage are open from 1 May Sun - Weds 1.00 - 5.00. The museum has redesigned the garden at the cottage to complement the fossil sculpture garden at the museum.

To keep up-to-date with what's happening at the East Church

- * Check out our website at www.eastchurchcromarty.co.uk
- * Look for updates in the window of the house next to the church
- * Contact the community and education officers - Caroline and David on **01381 600243** or by emailing info@eastchurchcromarty.co.uk

