



Cromarty East Church Newsletter



Issue 8: Summer 2010

Edited by Caroline Vawdrey

Revealed!

Birch: a tree of elegant and delicate beauty: a tree that brings grace to the Highland landscape in all seasons – you'd be hard put to think of a more appropriate lime harl and wash colour for the church.

Now that the scaffolding is down you can stand back and absorb the detail of the church in its setting. The birch limewash gives the church a freshness, yet respects its more than 500 years of history and the warm hue of the sandstone gravestones that surround it.

The Scottish Redundant Churches Trust Director Victoria Collison-Owen is delighted to see the church reach this stage: *"After many years of hard work by the Cromarty community and the project team it is impossible not to feel emotional at the sight of the church looking so beautiful."*

soft brushing walls

The church is continuing to slowly dry out, which is good news – but it also means that salts are being released from the interior walls of the church, and that means salt 'blooms' forming on the paint and plaster work. To keep this to a minimum the walls are being brushed down once or twice a week – a process that might have to continue for several years as the church gradually dries being damp for many years.



medieval conservation

Salts have also been a feature of Karolina Kubisz's work on the medieval gravestone. Thanks to funding support from BBC Restoration, the gravestone is undergoing conservation work and will be displayed in the church.



Karolina spent three weeks applying thin poultice layers to draw out the salts that have accumulated through years of dampness, and has then injected resin to stabilise the layers.

Finally she applied a very subtle slither of lime mortar by finger tip to redefine the edges of the carvings – work done with the sensitivity and skill that Karolina has in abundance.

friends please ...

As work on the church moves into its final stages and we're starting to look forward to the church being open to the public again, we're looking for people, 'Friends', who are interested in getting involved in some way.

Being a Friend means that you can choose what you'd like to do – perhaps becoming a key holder or helping to plan events, maybe keeping an eye on the building, dusting the pews or putting in some flowers. It is all very informal – no constitution or committee positions – so no chance of being knobbed for anything you don't want to do!

We'll be meeting together in September, but in the meantime if you'd like to find out more get in touch with David or Caroline.



Kirkyard Tours return by popular demand! On Wednesday evenings throughout August at 19.00

Meet ...

the joiners - Graham and Krysztof

Accuracy, patience and a willingness to measure and re-measure are all part of what it takes to be a

good joiner. And there's a few extras too when it comes to working in an historic church, including an ability to accept the quirky and not-so-level. Above all you need to have a respect for the old that means that there's no wholesale removal of damaged wood, but instead a patch and repair approach that seamlessly joins the old with the new.

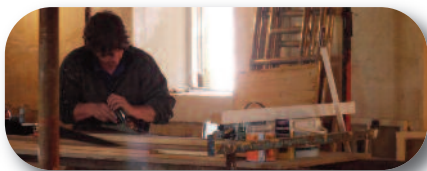


All these skills have been fully used by Graham and Krysztof (working for Richard Mackenzie of Tain) as they mend window frames, put back floors, pews and panelling and (nerve racking to watch) the large south facing windows.



For both of them this conservation work is a rarity, but it is a challenge they've both taken in their stride. When asked how they've enjoyed it there is a smile.

Graham loves to work in old buildings, and hopes that they will always be part of his joinery career. As he and Krysztof enjoy working together it looks likely to be a pleasure they are sharing.



British Festival of Archaeology open day - Aug 1



Come along to the East Church at 11.00 or 14.00 for a talk by David Alston and archaeologist John Wood. Learn more about the excavation, the finds and what they tell us about the place of the church in Cromarty over many centuries.

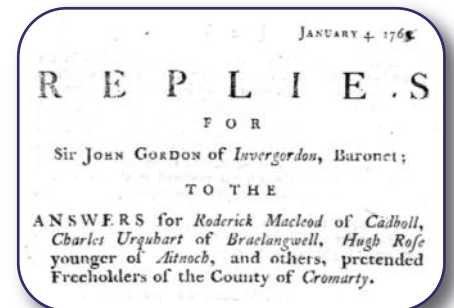
You can find out more about the events that are happening all over Britain from <http://festival.britarch.ac.uk/>

Adjourned to the Church for conveniency

Cromarty was the 'head burgh' of the tiny county of Cromarty and the main

landowners met in the town, once or twice a year, to run the affairs of

the county and, when required, to elect their own Member of Parliament. Before the Courthouse was built in 1772, they met in a room in a house by the old 'court hill' off Gordons Lane, in the Fishertown.



Sometimes the cramped room was not big enough:

'At Cromarty the twenty second day of May one thousand seven hundred and sixty five years, the Commissioners mett in the usual court place, when they adjourned to the Church for conveniency ...'

Their stormiest meetings were in the run up to the 1768 election. Only fourteen people were entitled to vote and every vote mattered. The result was challenged by the loser, Sir John Gordon of Invergordon, and the dispute led to one of the most expensive court cases in eighteenth-century Scotland. The result: Sir John remained the loser and Sir William Pulteney was elected MP.

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