



Kirk Michael Trust

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Community newsletter January/February 2017

Countdown to completion!

The winter weather is upon us but we now have a **virtually-completed roof and walls** to shelter our craftsmen while they undertake vital internal works such as installing metal internal roof straps. Our **roof lights** should finally be installed next week weather permitting. Final touches are being made to



the two **ball-shaped finials** (the octagonal shape on the right precedes the ball) which will top two of the high points, added to the **restored fleur-de-lys** discovered before the works. Stone conservator Derek Cunningham has been crafting two delicately curved ‘eyebrows’ for the Lady Ardoch mausoleum. Soon the flagstone floors inside the buildings will be completed too. Again the impact of the flooring is to make the spaces feel much larger still.



Another exciting development is the arrival of **power on site** this week. While no power tools have been used on the building itself (to avoid the risk of damage to the old fabric), once open, the nave and chancel will require a small amount of heating and sympathetic lighting of the internal monuments. SEE have been digging a fine trench along the very edge of the kirkyard wall. The cable will then pass under the wall into the old kirkyard, following a route designed to avoid burial sites. This excavation will be carefully monitored by archaeologists, as previously. **Interpretive material** is currently being developed for the site by Edinburgh-based Studio SP. The Trust hopes to see Kirkmichael open to the public in the late spring.



In **October and November**, some real treasures were discovered during archaeology works, including **coins** dating from the reign of Charles II and a delightful Beaker-period 3000-year-old flint **arrowhead**. Here are some pictures of just two of the tiny treasures found. These now go through a process of **Treasure Trove** and it is hoped that they will be allocated either to Cromarty Courthouse or to Groam House Museum, our two local registered museums. There are hopes for a spin-off project which will train the staff and pupils of **Resolis Primary School** in the curatorial skills required to display and conserve these items.

Members of the Trust met up with pupils, former pupils, staff and parents from Fortrose Academy in at **Fortrose Cathedral** in early November. This interesting guided tour led by Dr Jim Mackay led to the development of a short **walking tour of the early manses in Fortrose** associated with the Cathedral, including those of Kirkmichael and Cullicudden, both located off what is now Academy Street. This fascinating walking tour will be one of three trails available to download via the www.kirkmichael.info website before the end of January 2017, the others being **‘Hidden Black Isle’** and **‘Highland Worship’**.

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