



K i r k m i c h a e l T r u s t

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Community newsletter March 2016

Centuries of change – and salvaging stones at risk

This artist's impression gives an idea of **the transformation which is to come** at Kirkmichael over the next 12 months - although the old burial ground is unlikely ever to look *that* manicured.



The first written records of Kirkmichael appear in 1429, when the Roman Catholic Church reigned supreme. **The Chapel of Saint Michael** was on one of the many **pilgrimage routes** which crossed the Highlands via land and ferry.

The old postcard below shows that the whole area between the sadly now-lost belfry gable on the left and the mausolea (family burial areas) on the right would have been **roofed and walled** at one time. **If you have other old photos or sketches of Kirkmichael, please get in touch.**

Once Kirkmichael fell into disrepair **thrifty locals will have reused its worked stone**, so **if your house or garden walls**

nearby have any unusual/carved stones, let us know.

Many of the tombstones we seek to celebrate may once have **marked the resting-places of important local men** within the kirk itself.

It is also possible that the **ornate (and highly localised) carving style fell from favour** after the Reformation and **some stones were removed from their original locations** as new enclosures were installed.

We also know from excavations at the East Church in Cromarty that in pre-Reformation times new graves were often placed on top of or even cut right across old ones. So we are well aware that **old burial grounds are seldom as straightforward as they first appear!**



In February our team:

advertised for a building contractor

discussed on-site activities with local schools

issued our first **press releases**

led a **guided tour** at Carn Mor Dun

produced a draft activity plan of open days /other events

got in touch with other heritage sites and organisations

We have selected **four fine representative carved stones** which may well once have been located closer to or within the kirk which are particularly **at risk from weathering, strimming or trampling** outside. They will be carefully conserved and cleaned then displayed, well lit, within the repaired buildings.

Our April newsletter will profile the project team. More information from **Verity Walker on 01381 620575**, email verity@interpretaction.com. For a full list of project funders, please visit our website and Facebook page (above).

