

Review of the year 2016

CRICHTON
COLLEGIATE
CHURCH

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Her Majesty the Queen's 90th Birthday

On Sunday 12th June, following a garden Reception, Friends, guests and local dignitaries filled the church for a Midlothian Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving to mark the occasion of Her Majesty the Queen's 90th Birthday. This formed part of a series of celebratory events held across the United Kingdom. The hymns, readings and prayers together with six anthems, performed by singers from the internationally renowned Dunedin Consort, were drawn predominantly from the 1953 Coronation. The Very Reverend John Chalmers D.D., a former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and an Honorary Chaplain to the Queen, led the service assisted by Father Jock Dalrymple and Reverend Alan Cobain. The Lord-Lieutenant of Midlothian, Sir Robert Clerk Bt. O.B.E., was in attendance. Our thanks to Peter Smaill and Andrew Barr and to all those who helped in the planning and preparation of what was indeed a memorable occasion.



Concerts

The concert season began on a warm summer's evening in June with the first visit to Crichton of the Glasgow Chamber Choir. Founded in 1999, they are now widely regarded as one of the finest amateur choirs in Scotland. The audience was treated to a splendid performance. Under their director Michael Bawtree and organist David Gerrard they performed works by Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Buxtehude.

In August, the Edinburgh International Festival came to Crichton with Songlines, a celebration of singing event, held simultaneously at a number of venues across the city. Soprano Emma Morwood and pianist Ingrid Sawers led this short concert. In September, Anne Lewis and Bill Taylor gave us a delightful concert of Scottish songs and airs for Voice and Harp. Anne is a mezzo soprano with long experience in performing, recording and teaching. Bill is a world authority on the ancient harp music of Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The Roxburgh Quartet drew the season to a close with a concert of works by Grieg and Mozart which, as ever, was beautifully presented in their relaxed and unaffected style.



Church Bell Update...

An expert from John Taylor & Co. carried out an inspection of the bell. Tests confirmed the presence of hairline cracks in the casting which explains its current poor tone. To rectify this, the bell will require removal and specialist repair at their bell foundry in Loughborough. The Trustees are currently exploring a number of options on how to fund this work.

Services

There were six services during the year. These were Easter Communion, Ascension Day Eucharist, Tyne Valley Parish United Service, Harvest Celebration, Armistice Day Service and Carols at Crichton. The year proved to be exceptionally popular for weddings, with a total of fourteen taking place from January to November. There was also one christening.



Organised by Revd. Robert Simpson, members of Tyne Valley Parish undertook a summer pilgrimage walk. Setting off from Borthwick Church, Crichton provided a welcome resting place, where the walkers were treated to a musical interlude from Lorna Barron and friends, followed by a picnic lunch in the graveyard. They continued on their way following the Tynewater to Ford and finishing at Cranstoun Church for a service and well-earned cup of tea.



At the end of the year we learnt that Revd. Alan Cobain was leaving the Tyne Valley Parish after four years. He is returning to the Army as a Chaplain with the 1st Battalion the Yorkshire Regiment. We wish him well and are very grateful for the support he has given to the Trust.

The Friends

We thank Paddy Scott and the Friends' Committee for all the hard work that goes into organising the summer Sunday Opening rota and their fund raising events. These included the Pathhead Choir Summer Concert which is always enjoyed by the local community and the Friends' Garden Party at Oxenfoord Castle, generously hosted by Michael and Harriet Dalrymple. Although the weather could have been kinder, it was a tremendous afternoon and visitors were able to enjoy the gardens and stalls before the rain meant the tea had to move inside. The funds raised are a significant and much needed contribution to the work of the Trust.

Our beadle, Graham Meikle, has generously gifted a new rug which has been placed in front of the communion table.

In June the funeral of Alastair Brown, a well-known farmer within the local community, was held in the church.

A Pipe Dream Come True...

One of the visitors during the year was Douglas Watt, who was able to fulfil a lifelong ambition to play the Joseph Brook organ. He was a child when last in the church. His mother, Jessie Robertson, had been the church organist at the beginning of the twentieth century. At ninety-two years of age Douglas is still a regular organist at his local church in Hatfield, but it was a very special moment for him and his family when he was able to place his fingers on the very same keys which his mother had played over one hundred years before.



Of Historical Interest...

Two pewter offertory plates, inscribed in memory of the Rev. John Kellock-Cunninghame have returned to the church and are back in regular use. Mr Kellock-Cunninghame was the minister at Crichton from 1801 until his death at the age of ninety in 1839 after having served a total of sixty four years in the ministry. His fine memorial stone can be seen on the external west wall of the north transept.

www.crichtonchurch.com

Information regarding upcoming events is available on the website and sent out via email. Please keep us up to date with your contact details.

And finally...

Perhaps the most unexpected visit of the year was that of Dr Brian Coppins and two colleagues, who were discovered closely examining the gravestones one fine July morning. It turned out that Brian is one of the leading lichenologists in the country and had thought that the gravestones and stonework of the church would offer fertile ground for lichen investigation. The results far exceeded their expectation of finding around fifty species, with a final tally for the day of one hundred and sixty different species identified, which included one previously unrecorded in this part of the world!

My personal thanks to everyone for their support and encouragement.

Henry Duncan, Chairman • February 2017