

Dendrochronologist makes a return visit to Wardlaw



Dr Coralie Mills, a Dendrochronologist and environmental archaeologist from the University of St Andrews, made a return visit to Wardlaw Mausoleum this week. We knew from her last visit that the roof timbers did not have sufficient tree rings to allow them to be dated. The



pine hatch to the crypt did offer the possibility of dating as the 4 boards forming the top layer of the hatch have a good number of visible rings. She did further sanding of the ends of the boards and took detailed photographs of the rings. These will be examined back in her lab and will hopefully provide dating evidence of when the timbers forming the hatch were cut down. It is believed that the boards date from the second phase of work to the building in 1722 and we look forward to her findings.



Dr Mills also examined 3 sections of coffin board found in the mausoleum during the restoration in 1998 and now in the care of the architect, Fred Geddes. All 3 boards have intricate brass studwork that appears to secure the remains of a leather covering to the timber. One is a half width of a full-length board that may have been the lid of a coffin. Another is a side board with one complete carrying handle. The studs appear to be the same and it may therefore belong to the same coffin. The third piece may have formed half of the lid to a coffin and has different studs to the other 2 pieces. They were found in the mausoleum by the contractor and it is assumed that the remaining parts of the coffins, and contents, had decayed over the centuries. Dr Mills has taken a small section of one of the 3 pieces and will try and find out more about the timber and its date in her lab in St Andrews.





She also had a second look at a cruck-framed cottage in the village, this time from the inside. It has 2 complete cruck frames supporting the roof, resting on pad stones at the base of the drystone dyke walls. The roof would originally have been thatched but was reroofed with corrugated iron at some point in the past. This may have helped preserve it from weathering and decay. It is a fascinating building that merits further investigation on a future visit.

You can find out more about the Scottish Pine Dendro Project here st-andrews.ac.uk/~rjsw/ScottishPine/ and about Dr Mills' work more generally at dendrochronicle.co.uk. If you would like to know more about Wardlaw Mausoleum or to arrange a visit contact Erik Lundberg, Kirkhill & Bunchrew Community Trust on 01463 831742, wardlawmausoleum@gmail.com. The mausoleum project now has a presence on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr and You Tube. There is also information on the village website kirkhillandbunchrew.org.uk.

Erik Lundberg

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