

Appendix G

(Added 28th February 2007)

The following summarises the most recent correspondence received between 21st January and the 28th February 2008:

22nd January I received a very nice e-mail of support from Dr Simon Gilmour Director of the ‘Society of Antiquities of Scotland’ and it read:

Dear Mr Bruce

Just a short note to say congratulations on the effort you have put in on this, and the fantastic positive response that you have received to date from the various stakeholders. I am sorry that no word has been forthcoming direct on this matter from the Society, but you can be assured that we are supportive in this matter. I should perhaps note that Ian Shepherd is a Fellow and member of Council of the Society, and that I contacted him immediately on receiving your first report. He assured me then that he had indeed heard about the matter and would be taking it forward as well as he could considering the Council were not the owners. I am personally very pleased indeed that the actions of individuals can have the support you have garnered! Once again, many congratulations, and thank you for keeping the Society informed.

Yours sincerely
Simon

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6 February 2008 – Alex Salmond MSP letter to Chief Executive Aberdeenshire Council:



6 February 2008

The Scottish
Parliament

Alex Salmond MSP MP

Member of Scottish Parliament for Gordon

Alan Campbell
Chief Executive
Aberdeenshire Council
Woodhill House
Westburn Road
Aberdeen
AB16 5GB

Dear Alan,

St Medden's Kirk, Aberdeenshire

I recently met with a constituent, Stanley Bruce, to discuss St Medden's Kirk. Mr Bruce suggested the cemetery's potential as an historically important site, and talked about its current state of neglect. I understand that Mr Bruce has contacted Aberdeenshire Council in regard to this.

Mr Bruce is keen, and I would warmly support his intentions, that the cemetery is preserved and maintained. I am writing, in the first instance, to note my interest in St Medden's Kirk and I would be most grateful if you could inform me of the current position of Aberdeenshire Council in regard to the site.

I look forward to hearing your views on this issue, and will share your response with Mr Bruce.

Yours sincerely

ALEX SALMOND MSP MP

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7 February 2008 – Alex Salmond MSP letter to Chief Executive Historic Scotland:



The Scottish
Parliament

7 February, 2008

John Graham
Chief Executive
Historic Scotland
Longmore House
Salisbury Place
Edinburgh
EH9 1SH

Alex Salmond MSP MP
Member of Scottish Parliament for Gordon

Dear Mr Graham

St Medden's Kirk, Aberdeenshire

I recently met with a constituent, Stanley Bruce, to discuss St Medden's Kirk. Mr Bruce suggested the cemetery's potential as an historically significant site, and talked about its current state of neglect. I enclose a copy of Mr Bruce's own research on the site, which gives an insight into the history of the Kirk.

Mr Bruce is keen, and I would warmly support his commitment, that Historic Scotland considers conducting a survey on the cemetery in order to assess its historical importance and best means of managing the site. This is with a view to promoting better maintenance and preservation, and ideally bringing the cemetery into the care of Aberdeenshire Council.

I look forward to hearing your views on this, and will share your response with Mr Bruce.

Best wishes meantime

Yours sincerely

ALEX SALMOND MSP MP

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11 February 2008 – Chief Executive Aberdeenshire Council letter of reply to Alex Salmond MSP:

Aberdeenshire

COUNCIL



Chief Executive

Our Ref: 07113/CE/AGC/KAS/028.08
Your Ref:

Please ask for: Mr Campbell
Direct Dial: (01224) 665400
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11 February 2008

Alex Salmond MSP MP
Constituency Office
84 North Street
Inverurie
AB51 4QX

Dear Alex

St. Medden's Kirk, Aberdeenshire

Thank you for your letter of 6 February 2008, which is receiving attention.

Yours sincerely


Alan G Campbell
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Alan G Campbell, CBE

Chief Executive

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20th February received an e-mail via Alastair McIntyre at www.electricscotland.com which he had received from Barrie Leslie in Australia and it read:

Regarding John Seton of Disblair died 1583.

He is actually John Seaton (Seton) of Disblair of Fintray. I believe that he was of the Seton family of Meldrum and he is mentioned as a juror in the trial of the murder of William Mackintosh on August 2nd 1550.

I will go over my records to see if I can find any further details to his marriage.

The Leslie's and the Seton's got together on quite a few occasions in marriage, in fact my G G Great Grandmother was Jane Seton of the Barts of Pitmeddon family.

Regards.

Barrie Leslie.



View of St Medden's taken from the south side of the River Don.

22nd February 2008 Chief Executive Historic Scotland reply to ALEX Salmond

MSP:



Rt Hon Alex Salmond MSP MP
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Our ref: AMH/5314/1/1

22 February 2008

Dear First Minister,

Thank you for your letter of 7 February regarding the condition of St Meddan's kirkyard, Aberdeenshire. The ruined kirkyard is designated as a scheduled monument, in recognition of its national importance.

We monitor the condition of all scheduled monuments through our monument warden programme and are aware of the condition of this site. The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 does not, however, place any requirement on an owner to manage a site actively, although many owners choose to do so. This is one reason why we offer grants for management agreements, which support private owners in the long-term management and preservation of ancient monuments.

The kirkyard is currently in private ownership, but we understand that following Mr Bruce's enquiry Richard Leith, of Aberdeenshire Council, is liaising with the owner to explore the possibility of transferring ownership to the local authority.

In recent years we have been closely involved with, and have contributed grant aid to, Aberdeenshire Council's Historic Kirkyards Project. The project, which is managed by Richard Leith, is focussed on the conservation of nationally important historic kirkyards in the care of the council. If ownership of St Meddans is transferred to Aberdeenshire Council, it could be included in this scheme. While we cannot make a firm commitment to funding at this stage, we would view an application for grant aid sympathetically.

Yours sincerely,
John Graham
JOHN S GRAHAM



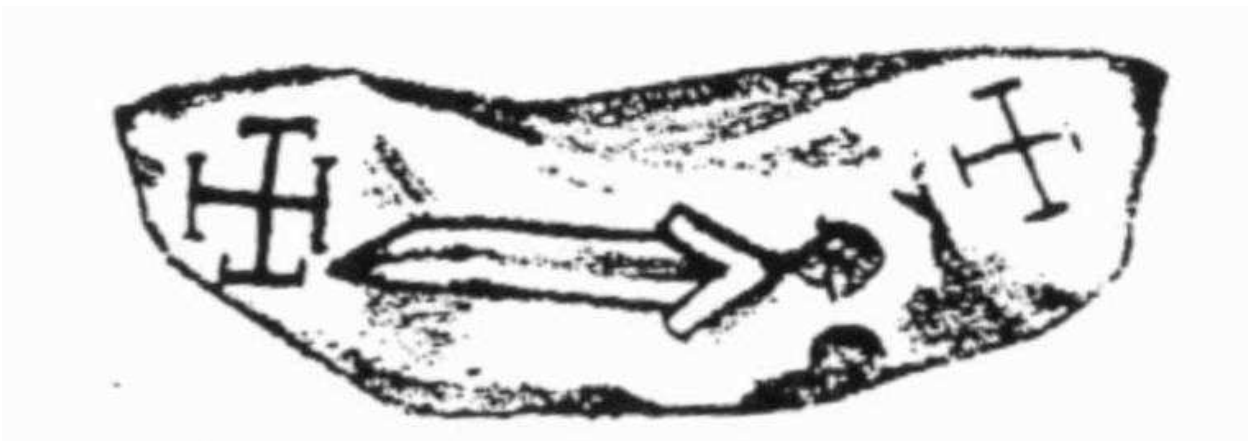
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

27th February 2008 – On the evening of the 26th February I had the pleasure of meeting Richard Leith of Aberdeenshire Council regarding another place dear to my heart ‘Tarlair outdoor pool’ near Macduff, we discussed St Medden’s and Richard mentioned that he had been interested in the railings around the cemetery. To be honest I hadn’t paid much attention to the railings on my earlier visits I decided to have another look and visited the Kirkyard 27th February 2008 (the next morning). I took some photos of the railings as shown below but more interestingly **I found one of the stones we thought was missing in the SW section of the cemetery** - see photo:



Stone with two Maltese crosses and a dagger.

This stone although badly weathered I believe to be the stone shown in this drawing:



Drawing from around 1900AD.

My next question is “So what is the other stone that is being returned to Aberdeenshire Council?” I look forward to seeing the stones returned now with even more interest.

I also discovered another stone to the south of the cemetery which could possibly be an ancient grave; at least worthy of further investigation (*And I must say I had another experience due to the unstable ground, I felt my foot slipping under the stone – but still no taker for my soul!*):



Recumbent stone lying to the south of the Kirk.

This headstone at the north-west section of the cemetery appears to be missing, could this be one of the stones to be returned?



28th February 2008 - St Medden's Kirkyard Railings.



Entrance Gate.



Close-up of the top of entrance gate.



*A section of railing on the south boundary wall.
(Nearby there were several other pieces lying around).*



Gate to West enclosure.



*Section of railing lying near the entrance gate.
(Note the arrowheads which differ from the other photo).*

28th February 2008 – For the genealogy fans below is an alphabetical list of family names that I could see on the headstones, this would in my opinion be 90% to 95% of the family names; there were some that I couldn't read:

| | | |
|-------------|---------------|----------|
| Adam | Fraser | Reith |
| Allan | Garden | Riddel |
| Alexander | Garioch | Ritchie |
| Bews | Geddes | Roger |
| Bisset | Gibb | Scott |
| Brodie | Gray | Sempill |
| Brown | Harrison | Smith |
| Burnett | Hutcheon | Spark |
| Burns | Knight | Steward |
| Clark | Law | Strachan |
| Cowie | Lindsay | Swanson |
| Crombie | MacQueen | Walker |
| Cruickshank | McDonald | Warrack |
| Donald | McGillivray | Watt |
| Donaldson | McIntosh | Wilson |
| Ewen | Mennie | |
| Findlay | Morrison | |
| Forbes | Murray | |

I also saw at this visit the remains of a hand-push lawnmower, which clearly hadn't been used for a long time.

