

May 2023

The North chimney is now done

Before



After



May 2023

**May 2023**

In a significant milestone, the North chimney has now been done. Old stones have been reused as far as possible and it now looks like it did when first erected. This was a major enterprise, as some of the wall below had to be rebuilt as well. The apex of the old Dean's House, mentioned in our last issue, can be clearly seen at the base of the chimney ( ← above) .There will be some small (old reclaimed) chimney pots placed on top of the three flues and on the other chimney, but we are awaiting Council approval as to their appropriateness.



*Photos: Tom Astbury*

### **What's next?**

Work now moves to the South gable, where the chimney will be rebuilt, an existing thick mortar layer which was put there when the crow steps were removed will be carefully taken off and crow steps reinstated. The South chimney is of a different nature to the North, it was simply rebuilt in ashlar stone, probably in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. As with much of the other stonework, already recycled from other buildings in 1685/6, the stones are now in quite poor condition and we are talking to Historic Environment Scotland and the Council about how best to repair them and retain their historic character. Once the South end is restored, next comes the roof!

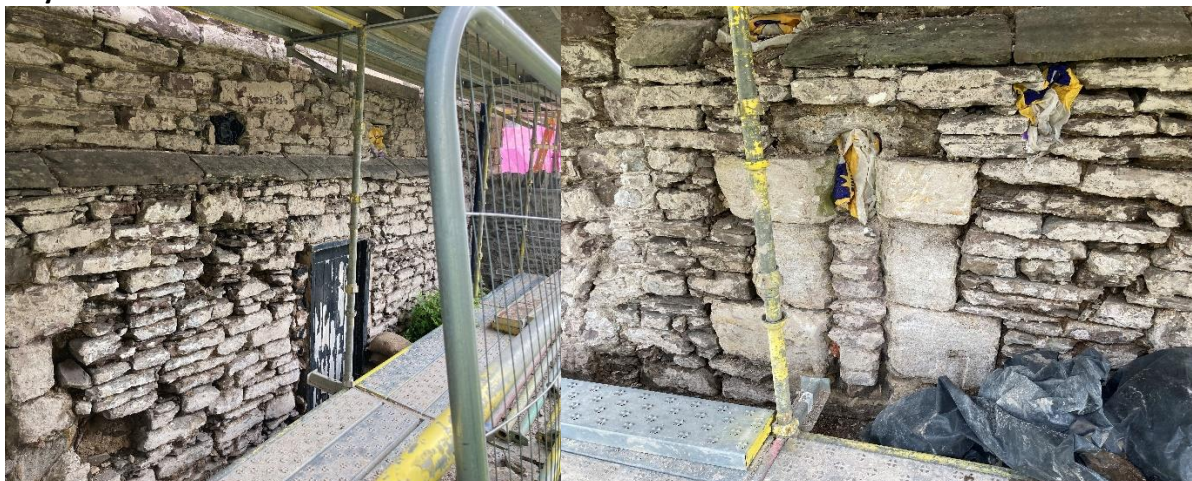
The overall condition of the stonework, which we could only find out when the harling was removed, is not good and will require a lot of repair and particularly deep repointing. This will inevitably extend the programme of works into the late Autumn and increase our costs considerably.

### **The West wall facing the Manse garden**

In a previous issue we referred to the 'Blast Wall', wrongly thought to have been a WW2 air raid protection measure, which turned out to be much older. Despite having removed the surface some time ago, the wall is still very wet. It has however revealed a number of interesting surprises: three former windows to the Undercroft on the West side, and under the old metal ventilation grilles, some modern trunking and machinery we think is connected to the storage heaters in the Library room windows! We have no records of former works, so it's all guesswork!



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**We don't know why the window opening on the right was so narrow!**



**Mysterious metal bits under the floor!**

**Free event**

**The 'Story of the Restoration' Event Exhibition in the Cathedral Halls Thursday 1 June  
from 6 pm and speakers from 7pm in the Cathedral itself**

If you haven't already, get your tickets online at Eventbrite or in person from Meldrum's Newsagents in the High St. We have had huge interest and it promises to be very interesting!

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-leighton-library-the-story-of-the-restoration-so-far-tickets-609733829297>

We will be distributing an invitation to join the Friends of the Leighton Library with a monthly donation at that event. Please do consider supporting this wonderful treasure.