

# Report for the Conservation of the Cromarty East Church Funerary Hatchment

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## Report for the Conservation of the Cromarty East Church Funerary Hatchment

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This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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## Summary

The hatchment was removed from Cromarty East Church grounds March 2009. It was secured in to the plaster by historical iron nails, the nails were fixed only into the plaster and not the fabric of the building as a result the hatchment was easily removed with a small amount of pressure. Once removed the hatchment was stored at AOC prior to conservation.

## Features of interest

Prior to conservation polarised microscopy was used on the paint scheme to investigate the types of pigments present on the hatchment. This was to help choose a suitable consolidant for the pigments.

Paint scheme

- Red- Small amounts of vermilion and Iron oxide used as filler
- Black- Carbon based
- Gold- Gold leaf
- White- Chalk based

**Virtus Repulsae Nescia**” means “Courage Knows No Defeat”

## Condition summary

The hatchment was suffering from surface and environmental pollutants, water damage from the high humidity, flaking paint, cracking and multiple holes were observed on the canvas. The canvas has bowed due to its location in the church and the weight of the canvas. This has happened over time as the hatchment is traditionally used outside the church during the funeral or hanging in the family home before its hanging in the church.



*Figure 1: Funerary hatchment in-situ*

### **Conservation summary**

The hatchment has been cleaned with mineral solvents and the fragile pigments were consolidated with BEVA 371, this ensured the long-term aging stability of hatchment it also bound the pigments to the substrate fully also further strengthening the canvas back.

The weight of the pigments had begun to stretch the canvas, to correct the problem the hatchment was put under small weights while it was being solvent cleaned. This was effective in relaxing the canvas and the weights allowed the canvas to be moulded back into its original shape, 3mm netting was then used to help support the canvas in the frame, where the canvas has holes invisible nylon thread was secure the net to the canvas giving it further support. The canvas was not tightened back fully as this allow the hatchment to rest once re-hung without putting unneeded pressure on the canvas.



*Figure 2: Funerary hatchment front after*



*Figure 3: Funerary hatchment back after*

### **Handling and storage requirements**

Care should be taken when handling the hatchment.

When the humidity is above 54% RH, fungal activity can occur, which will cause considerable damage to wood. Dry wood can also be attacked by wood-boring insects; wood submerged in water may be attacked by numerous organisms.

Wood should be maintained in an environment that has low light levels, is as cool as possible, and has a very stable humidity and temperature. The humidity range to be aimed for is 50 – 55% RH; fluctuations must be minimal, to avoid the development or enlargement of cracks.

### **Health and safety considerations**

When re-hanging the hatchment, crews should be used instead of nails, this will allow the future removal of the hatchment for any future maintenance of the building.

### **Materials used**

"acetone"                      propanone

Beva 371                      blend of ethylene-vinyl acetate co-polymers, ketone Resin N  
(cyclohexanone) and paraffin dissolved in a toluene/white spirit mixture.

**Conservator: Pieta Greaves**

**Date: March 2010**





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