

Help needed to Rescue the Newman Memorial in the Fifehead Magdalen Church

Background: The little church in the village of Fifehead Magdalene in north Dorset is famous among Newmans for the memorials in the tiny chapel built onto its northern wall.

According to John Hutchin's History of Dorset¹ the church dates back to 1495, being “a small building of a chancel, body, north chapel and tower of two stages, with embattled parapet, on the south side of the nave, through the base of which is the principal entrance. ... On the north side of the chancel is a small chapel built by Richard Newman, afterwards Sir Richard, in 1693 which contains the following inscription on a black stone against the west wall:

Richard Newman of Evercreech Park, com. Somerset, aged 32 years,
lies in the vault underneath in the second leaden coffin north,
and removed from the chancell [sic] in October M.D.CXCIII (1693);
leaveing [sic] one sonne Richard, Anne and Barbara now living.”

The chapel contains several other Newman memorials, including one magnificent one mounted on its north wall dedicated to the memories of Sir Richard Newman, his wife Frances, his son Samwell and his sisters, Frances, Barbara and Elizabeth (photo right).

Other wall memorials are dedicated to Thomas Newman (d.1649) and Richard Newman (d.1664).

For further information and illustrations, see <http://www.newman-family-tree.net/fifehead.htm>.

Restoration Fund

Whilst fundraising has been successful to the extent of restoring the church roof, further funds are still required to repair cracks in the walls of the Newman chapel that threaten the stability of the Sir Richard's memorial (visible in the photo above) which are estimated will cost in the region of £10,000.

The church committee is therefore appealing for further funds, and given the importance of the chapel and memorials to the Newman family, they are hopeful that Newmans from around the world will contribute to help secure these magnificent artefacts for future generations of Newmans to visit and enjoy.



Donations

Donations can be sent to Rosemary Redwood at Three Farthings, Fifehead Magdalen, Gillingham, Dorset, SP8 5RR (please make cheques payable to “Fifehead Magdalen Church Roof Fund”).

¹ John Hutchin's History of Dorset, Third Edition 1870, page 58