

ICE NEWS

HISTORIC WORKS

Paxton launches Telford exhibition in Aberdeen

Spreading the gospel of Thomas Telford is an important pastime for Roland Paxton, vice chairman of the ICE's Panel for Historic Engineering Works (PHEW) and professor at the School of the Built Environment, Heriot-Watt University.

Paxton's latest address, "Telford - Colossus of Roads" coincided with a major exhibition of Telford's work at the Aberdeen Maritime Museum. Telford was responsible for improving Aberdeen harbour, which included an extension of the pier.

Among the exhibits on show is "the innovative double-crane running on rails which enabled both sides of the North Pier, with its diagonal masonry courses, to be constructed at the same time," said Paxton.

In his talk, Paxton described a recently discovered letter, dated 1815, in which Telford explained some of the difficulties he en-

countered in completing the seaward end of the Aberdeen North Pier, in deep water.

"These had possibly resulted in a shortening of the intended pier in the work as successfully completed in 1816 and which is still in service. This is another example of Telford's bold approach to en-

gineering design generally, which was often at the limits of contemporary practicability," he said.

Paxton had been instrumental in organising events for the 250-year celebrations of Thomas Telford's birth.

Paxton said that the Aberdeen exhibition, curated by museum

Lecture chairman Jamie Christie points out to Roland Paxton (left) a feature of the north pier



director John Edwards, with Aberdeen Association secretary Andy Martin and Aberdeenshire Bridge Engineer Donald Macpherson, "includes original Telford drawings of Aberdeen Harbour and an iron turn-bridge, instruments and displays relating to other harbours and bridges."