

Fourth
Edition



UNDERSTANDING SCOTTISH GRAVEYARDS

Betty Willsher

Revised and expanded by

Susan Buckham

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Maps were made in QGIS using the following datasets:

Pre-1975 Ordnance Survey Historic Boundary Line shapefiles (<https://osdatahub.os.uk/data/downloads/open/BoundaryLine>)

OpenRoads shapefiles, filtered for motorways and A roads (Ordnance Survey: <https://osdatahub.os.uk/data/downloads/open/OpenRoads>). Boundary-LinesTM and OpenRoads both licenced under Open Government Licence v3.0 (<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/>)

Shire lines for Morayshire and Nairn, re-drawn according to 1950 boundary lines shown on Scotland Boundaries Viewer (National Library of Scotland, <https://maps.nls.uk/geo/boundaries/#zoom=9.7&lat=55.60919&lon=-2.44557&b=1&o=100&dates=1950&point=0,0>)

Water data: HydroATLAS Project (RiverATLAS and LakeATLAS, CC-BY 4.0): <https://www.hydrosheds.org/hydroatlas>
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Site location data from trove.scot.

Preface to the 2005 Edition of Understanding Scottish Graveyards

The writer on Scottish historical subjects has a meagre store of original sources on which to draw, but in many fields he or she is likely to be faced with a bewildering array of information and opinion in numerous secondary sources. Any statement may be second- or even third-hand. Therefore it is surprising that for the original edition of this book, which has a historical slant and is on a subject with a wealth of material – the graveyards themselves – there was comparatively little serious, relevant literature. At the beginning of the 20th century David Christison, then secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, opened up the subject of churchyards and monuments in the Lowlands of Scotland. There followed a series of articles by Alan Reid and others. However, interest dwindled after some years only to be rekindled in the mid-1960s by Angus Graham and John di Folco.

From the mid-1960s onwards there has been a more general understanding of the importance of this subject and its fascination, although it was not until 1982 that a full survey appeared to have been made of any Scottish graveyard; nor, up to that point, was there any published research on the identity of the masons who made the thousands of carved monuments.

Thus the major first-hand source drawn on for the original book was the material amassed by Doreen Hunter and myself during visits to graveyards in all parts of the Scottish Lowlands over the years. We were first motivated by curiosity and the satisfaction of discovery, and then, in hope of getting others to share this pleasurable pursuit, we wrote *Stones*,¹ which was published in 1978. Subsequently we continued to make further records, and were much encouraged by the assistance given by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. Growing awareness of the large amount of recording to be done, together with real concern over the loss of graveyards and of monuments, made the writing of the original book something of a mission.

That the book was written and published at all was entirely due to Edwina Proudfoot, Chair of the Council for British Archaeology Scotland² (as the Council for Scottish Archaeology was then known). It was she who saw the need for such a book, who commissioned me to write it, who worked out the format, found a publisher (W & R Chambers 1985), and edited the first edition. (A second edition was published by Canongate Press in 1995)³.

¹ Betty Willsher and Doreen Hunter, *Stones: A Guide to Some Remarkable Eighteenth-Century Gravestones* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1978).

² The Council for Scottish Archaeology is now called Archaeology Scotland.

³ A third edition was published by the National Museums of Scotland and Archaeology Scotland in 2005.

Edwina Proudfoot initiated the campaign, presently co-ordinated by the CSA's Carved Stones Adviser Project, to interest Scots in recording, researching and conserving our heritage before it is too late.⁴

Acknowledgements are due to the following, for whose help with the original book I am indebted and am most grateful: the aforementioned Edwina Proudfoot; Dorothy Black; Anne Seaton; Doreen Hunter; Penelope Walker; and John di Folco. Robert Rodger was responsible for drawing the illustrations; and I am grateful to Pamela Burgess for allowing me to quote from Frederick Burgess's *English Churchyard Memorials*.⁵

Betty Willsher OBE
1915 - 2012

⁴ The campaign baton passed from Edwina Proudfoot and Archaeology Scotland's Carved Stones Adviser onto Archaeology Scotland's Adopt-A-Monument and Treasured Remains Projects.

⁵ Frederick Burgess, *English Churchyard Memorials* (London: Lutterworth, 1963).

Foreword to the 4th Edition

Archaeology Scotland is delighted to be involved once again with the republication of *Understanding Scottish Graveyards*. This much-loved classic is now in its 4th edition and has been enjoyed by generations of armchair enthusiasts, local community researchers, students and heritage specialists alike.

The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland directly supported Betty's fieldwork in the 1980s and 1990s and holds her archive of work. It is fitting to note that its successor body, Historic Environment Scotland (HES), continues to curate her archive of field notes and photography and has grant-aided this publication. Access to Betty Willsher's archive is freely available via HES Archives in the public searchroom and through trove.scot, a platform that brings together HES's unique and diverse collections in one convenient place.

It is no small testament to Betty Willsher's expertise and accessible communication of ideas that her book remains the seminal work on Scottish historic gravestones. We recognise that *Understanding Scottish Graveyards*, first published in 1985, bears historical importance as a document in its own right. With this in mind, we have sought a light touch approach to updating the text of the 3rd edition published in 2005. Remarkably, Betty Willsher wrote *Understanding Scottish Graveyards* at a time when fieldwork, research and publication were pre-digital. This 4th edition is created very firmly in the digital era. The open access e-book format aims to ensure that this work remains accessible for future generations. Throughout the text there are links to online information held by HES on trove.scot. This website launched in early 2025 and showcases a growing collection of records relating to Scotland's past and ways to get involved. Further information from the Betty Willsher collection can be found in HES Archives.

The 4th edition is an expanded as well as an updated version of *Understanding Scottish Graveyards*. For the first time it provides regional summaries of the carved symbols that Betty Willsher encountered through her astonishing survey of over 664 sites across Lowland Scotland. This regional guide has been written by Dr Susan Buckham using Betty Willsher's field notes and photographs. It is our hope that this new edition will inspire recorders to survey the areas Betty Willsher did not visit while returning to those sites she did record to help us better understand how well our historic gravestones are surviving.

No one person possesses the ability to see and record everything. However, every cause begins with a single champion, someone who inspires others to join them and helps to shape and direct their work. It is our sincere desire that Betty Willsher's legacy will endure by bringing new generations to visit, record and support Scotland's historic graveyards. We know that since Betty Willsher produced her records and books many gravestones and carvings have been lost to the hands of time, the elements, public indifference and cemetery management practices. But, if we act now, together and armed with new technology to record, research and

share information, we might collaborate to better understand Scottish graveyards. Only through a shared understanding of this rich and varied resource will we be best placed to enjoy, value and protect the treasures within our graveyards for the future.

We are aware that the long-term lack of regular gravestone maintenance and the effects of climate change mean many historic graveyards and their memorials are at an increased level of risk. Gravestones are heritable property and thus the responsibility of families to maintain. However, few owners of historic gravestones are traceable today or even aware of their duty to maintain family memorials. Furthermore, no organisation is responsible for maintaining and repairing the stones; the graveyard manager's duty is only to ensure the health and safety of visitors. Warmer, wetter conditions accelerate stone decay and encourage the growth of woody-stemmed plants. On historic monuments and walls, these plants trigger structural movement and instability, which, combined with stone decay, ultimately results in the loss of the historic fabric. Crucially, as many graveyards are under-recorded and under-documented, we face losing this heritage entirely.

Dr Susan Buckham was Archaeology Scotland's Carved Stones Adviser from 2001 until 2006. In this role she worked collaboratively with community groups, local authority cemetery managers and heritage professionals across Scotland to create comprehensive best practice guidance for graveyard recording, research and conservation. Archaeology Scotland provides support to community groups working with historic graveyards through their Adopt-a-Monument Project, and a wealth of graveyard information and guidance is available on the Archaeology Scotland website <https://www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/projects/scottish-graveyards/>.

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Chapter 1.

The Graveyards

There is a strange fascination about graveyards; many people are drawn to them and enjoy visiting them. It is not an entirely morbid pastime. Maybe an inner sadness or a melancholy stirring seeks an impersonal focus; perhaps there is a need at times to step back into the past, sense the flow of time, and wonder at being alive. But there is more to it than that. We savour the peace of the city graveyard, an oasis, a green, hallowed and historic place; we seek out beautiful country churchyards, some still the haunts of wild creatures. We marvel at the variety of monuments and puzzle over the significance of the carvings. Quaint homespun epitaphs and charming folk art are endearing and amusing. Each stone page tells its own story and kindles the imagination.

As we move among the rows of stones, we may pause to decipher an epitaph, perhaps in a strange mixture of Scots and Latin:

*HEIR LYIS ANE HONEST MAN ANDRO MILLAR SOMETYM OF KINTRAE QVHA
DECESSIT TERTIO MARTIJ ANNO 1683 AETATIS SVAE 86 ZEIRIS.*

(Spynie, Moray)

We accept the challenge and read out ‘who died on the third of March in the year 1683 aged 86 years’. On another occasion we gaze at effigies of mourning parents who lost five children, ‘the last two inter’d in the same cheist’ (Upper Largo, Fife 1766), and admire the fortitude and faith that was no doubt helped by the symbolic figure of an angel of the Resurrection that dominates the stone.

We are inspired by eulogies to eminent and good men, and equally by tributes to worthy souls. An epitaph to a gamekeeper at Kells, Dumfries and Galloway (1777), ends:

*Yet blest thou art
For in thy station weel thou
playd’st thy part*

Another, at Kinnell, Angus (1720), to a gardener, tells us:

*The truth of all if you will ken
He still was loved of honest men.*

One aim of this book is to encourage more people to enjoy and take an interest in local graveyards, as well as to understand and appreciate the value of the monuments; another is to show the value of conservation. There is need, too, to record graveyards, and a manual, *How to Record Scottish Graveyards* (referred to as the

'Recording Manual' throughout this text), was written to accompany this book. In this you will find suggestions for practical work, in the hope that an increasing number of volunteers will undertake surveys.¹

Most of the material about monuments in this book is drawn from the graveyards of Lowland Scotland; in the post-Reformation period, which is our chief concern, the carvings in the Highlands and Islands tend to be restricted to initials and dates. Yet there is no clear demarcation line. For example, in a churchyard in a Highland glen an eighteenth-century headstone may have a carving of a sheep cut on it, while south of Stirling there are graveyards with plain stones bearing only initials and dates.



Figure 1. Pictish stone, Benvie Churchyard, Angus. 1410243.

No attempt has been made to compare regional variations in the styles of monuments; adequate comparison and study will have to wait until many more surveys have been completed from all over Scotland.

This is not a definitive account of graveyards, but it describes their main features² and points out certain gaps in our knowledge of them. The book provides a brief account of the history of graveyards and their monuments, describes the art, and discusses the potential for many possible areas of research. It also gives an introduction to the relevant literature. The descriptions of monuments are intended both as a guide to the visitor and as an aid to the more serious student.

The earliest recognisable monuments to the dead in Scotland are the standing stones and cairns of the Neolithic and Bronze Ages, but there are many burials, such as those in cists, over which no visible monument was raised; these are usually discovered by chance.

¹ Betty Willsher's *How to Record Scottish Graveyards: A Companion to Understanding Scottish Graveyards* was published in Edinburgh by Archaeology Scotland in 1985. Since then there have been significant advances in digital methods to photograph, survey and manage graveyard data. A wealth of free guidance on traditional and digital graveyard recording methods can be found on Archaeology Scotland's website <https://www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/projects/scottish-graveyards/>.

² In addition to the church and gravestones, the graveyard visitor may encounter a wide range of interesting and historic features. Examples of Built Heritage Features Found in Graveyards (p.245) provides a short description of various built features to be found within Scotland's historic graveyards.



Figure 2. Midmar Churchyard, Aberdeenshire. 1447242.

The Catstane (Midlothian) marks an early Christian grave with a Latin inscription that tells us it was erected by Victor to commemorate his son Vetta. This stone is associated with a cemetery of long cists thought to be early Christian. At other sites, such as Iona in Argyll and Bute, some early graves are marked with a simple cross, while stones such as the Pictish stone in the churchyard at Benvie, Angus (Figure 1), may be burial monuments. However, such isolated survivors are not the concern of this book, which is mainly about graveyards around the parish churches or around the ruins of the old church, burial grounds, and the more recent cemeteries. Relatively few early burial markers are known and not many pre-Reformation outdoor monuments survive. Sixteenth-century stones were not very common, but more stones were erected throughout the 17th century.

The history of long-abandoned graveyards, like the one at St Ninian's Point, Bute, may go back to prehistoric times, but most early burials in cists or under cairns are nowhere near today's graveyards. Sometimes it seems as if there may be continuity. At Midmar in Aberdeenshire, for example, an extension brought a circle of standing stones within the post-Reformation graveyard (Figure 2).

Initially amazing, such a site may be seen to reflect well the traditional association between ceremonies of worship, burial of the dead and erection of monuments, an association reaching back from today to the Bronze Age. Pictish stones are to be found in graveyards in the east of Scotland, while round towers of Irish origin associated with the Celtic churches of Pictland rise high over the

churchyards at Brechin and Abernethy. We should pay particular attention to the high mounds on which some Norman and medieval churches have been built, for they may indicate sites of considerable antiquity. Circular churchyard walls may also point to similar sites. Centuries of burials in other old churchyards have resulted in the ground around the church being raised several feet. There is likely to be a noticeable drop outside the churchyard wall, and another around the church itself in those cases where the rising turf has been cleared away from the walls to stop them becoming damp.

When did the practice of burial around the church begin? Archaeological evidence from sites such as Whithorn, Dumfries and Galloway, suggests an early date, and Frederick Burgess in *English Churchyard Memorials* (1963),³ referring to England, writes that this practice was confirmed as established by 752 AD with about thirty feet round the church being set aside for that purpose – ‘God’s Acre’. In 1229, it was specified that walls or fences should be made to enclose this piece of ground.

In Scotland lands were granted to Saxon and Norman nobles by Alexander I and David I; these new landowners built chapels and churches on their lands, and gifted them to religious bodies for the purpose of saying masses for their households and servants. So the practice of burial around these various chapels and churches within the parishes came into use in Scotland. Within the parish of Brechin is the ancient burial ground of Magdalene Chapel, used until 1885, though there is now no trace of the medieval chapel. There is also the burial ground around Brechin Cathedral itself, where King David founded the cathedral in the 12th century on the site of the earlier Celtic church or monastery. In the 16th century it was adapted for use as a parish church.

Gradually, in each parish, the church and churchyard of the most important landowner became the place where the parishioners had the right to be buried; outsiders had to obtain the consent of the heritors, who themselves had the privilege of choice of burial place. In the larger burghs the churchyards came under the authority of the burgh council. With the Reformation came an edict forbidding burial within the church building, a right traditionally assumed by the aristocracy, the professional classes, the Guildry, and those who could afford to pay for the privilege. Such was the subsequent congestion in the churchyards of the largest burghs that grounds which had previously been the sites and gardens of monasteries were made available by royal edict as places for outside burial for all. The lands of the Greyfriars at Perth, Dundee and Edinburgh were all designated for that purpose.

The graveyard was not always the quiet and hallowed place it is today. In 1457 an Act of the Scottish Parliament decreed that in every parish a *wappenschaw* (the display of weapons for inspection) be held four times a year in the churchyard, and also that provision be made in every churchyard for weekly arrow practice

³ Frederick Burgess, *English Churchyard Memorials* (London: Lutterworth, 1963): 22-23.

on Sundays. Until the late 16th century the graveyards were virtually empty of monuments, as people of high rank were buried and commemorated inside the churches. At Crail, Fife, a stone which is part of the fabric of the church tower bears marks made by the sharpening of arrowheads. While in the course of time bow butts were set up in other areas of towns, archery practice continued in some churchyards into the 18th century; occasionally one finds a headstone which is pitted with scars that are evidence either of wild shooting or of the stone being used as a target: a possible example is the James Baxter monument at Liberton, Edinburgh.

There is little trace left of the fairs and the markets which were held regularly in churchyards, except, perhaps, some visible damage to monuments. But at Dallas, Moray, a twelve-foot-high cross stands in the churchyard. It is believed that it was erected by Robert Reid, priest there and later Bishop of Orkney. Around this cross Sunday markets were held, until a 1692 law made them illegal. It was the holding of a market on the Sabbath rather than the holding of it in the churchyard that was considered wrong, and in some places weekday trading continued well into the 18th century. In medieval times houses were erected with doors opening on to the churchyard, an asset for those selling refreshments and goods. The row of houses that forms the side of the churchyard at Kirriemuir may be one example of houses that were built following this tradition. The erection of monuments in the 17th century must have interfered with the facilities offered by the churchyard as a public open space, central and convenient for many purposes (even the bleaching of linen and drying of hides).

As public open spaces, some churchyards and burial grounds became the regular meeting places of the trade incorporations. In 1564 Queen Mary gave the gardens of the Greyfriars Monastery to the town of Dundee for use as a place of burial. Before long it became known as the Howff, a word which describes a meeting place. The Trade Guilds met in the Greyfriars Church until it was destroyed; in 1576 the Bakers began to hold their meetings in the new Burial Ground. The Weavers met along the north wall where, until recently, a stone inscribed 'This is the Brabeners Head Room' marked the place. In January 1581 the agreement which formed 'The Nine Trades of Dundee into One' was signed in the Howff, and it was there that the Convention met until 24 September 1778, the day when they assembled for the last time and marched with their various flags to the new Trades Hall.

But the churchyard could also be the stage for more sombre dramas. An old rhyme about the church at Greenlaw runs:

*Here stands the gospel and the law,
With Hell's hole atween the twa.*

A tower was built there to look like a church tower, but to serve as a jail. At the foot is a gate with gridirons, and the narrow windows are barred. In 1712 the church beside the tower was lengthened so that it joined up with the jail; and to the west, now removed, stood the courthouse. The last public execution by hanging took

place there on 2 April 1834, and the Irishman found guilty of assault and robbery was buried inside the jail. Similarly, at Pittenweem Old Parish Church, Fife, the foot of the tower was once the town jail, and it remains little altered since the time of the frenzied witch hunts, when seven witches are said to have lain in this small dungeon. Jougs (iron neck-rings) are found attached to the walls of many churches, while at Abernethy, Perth and Kinross, they are fastened to the foot of the Round Tower, a grim reminder of the severity of the punishments meted out to sinners by the Kirk Sessions. The pillar and the stool of repentance may also be found as part of old church furniture.

The Covenanters' prison at Greyfriars Kirkyard, Edinburgh, is well known. The north wall of the aisle was part of the celebrated Flodden Wall, built around the city between 1513 and 1515; the south wall was part of the Third City Wall. In 1679 this vacant space was known as the Inner Greyfriars Yard, and there, towards the end of June, 1100 Covenanter prisoners were confined after the Battle of Bothwell Brig, and remained until the autumn of that year. Many died a slow death through exposure and want. In the early 18th century a part of this enclosure was added to the graveyard, and many eminent citizens of Edinburgh were subsequently buried in this aisle.

Other churchyards were affected by warfare: St Mary's, Leith, was used by Oliver Cromwell's troops as a depot for stones. In 1656 General Monck took away the burial grounds at St Nicholas Chapel, and later a burial ground to replace it was set up in Coburg Street. At Perth, Cromwell's troops took 200-300 monuments from the Greyfriars Burial Ground to use in the building of a fort on the South Inch; one slab dated 1580 remains. There are many tales of troubled times during which much of the history of both churches and churchyards was made.

It seems somewhat ironic, then, that from ancient times the church and churchyard were places of sanctuary. In Edinburgh, in the roadway of Horse Wynd at the east end of the Canongate, the letter 'S' is inserted at intervals into the causeway to indicate the boundary of the sanctuary afforded by the Abbey of the Holy Rood. Here the malefactors of the Middle Ages found safe asylum, as did the debtors of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. In a somewhat different way the Regalia of Scotland found sanctuary when, after being smuggled out of Dunottar Castle by the courageous Mrs Grainger, they were buried under the pulpit of the church at Kinneff. At Polwarth Church, in the Scottish Borders, one can see the vault in which Sir Patrick Hume for a whole month lay concealed from the soldiers of Charles II; his twelve-year-old daughter, risking her life, brought him sustenance every night. In this case a claim for sanctuary would doubtless have been unsuccessful.

On a happier note again, many churchyards have been the playgrounds of children. Hugh Miller in *My Schools and Schoolmasters* (1854)⁴ recalls how the boys played leapfrog over the tombstones in the graveyard by the school. It took more than two centuries to implement John Knox's ambitious scheme for the setting up

⁴ Hugh Miller, *My Schools and Schoolmasters* (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1854).

of a school in every parish. Initially many schools were started in churches, and when schools were built it was often in the vicinity of the church. In a plan for a parish school at Dundonald, South Ayrshire, 1640, it was recommended that to give the scholars relief from the ‘continuall bensell [buffeting] of learning they have some recreation in the afternoon – so let a convenient place be choissen nearby the schoole, but not at all the churchyard, quhilk is Dormitorium Sanctorum’.

Anne Gordon, in *Death is for the Living* (1984),⁵ gave a full and fascinating account of the customs associated with death and funerals in post-Reformation Scotland. Her descriptions of the Walking Funerals, Great Funerals and Town Funerals stir the imagination, and alert us to the meaningfulness of all sorts of relics of the past which may be found in museums, graveyards and churches. ‘Lychgates’ are far less common in Scottish churchyards than in English ones, but a few ‘lickerstones’ survive. One can be seen near Mawhill, Kinross. This large flat stone, raised on stone supports, was one of many on which the coffin was placed, so that the bearers on a walking funeral might change places with fresh bearers, and also take some liquid refreshment. Up to the time of the Disruption in 1843 there were often noisy and unseemly scenes in graveyards. Food and drink were served over several hours before the funeral procession began; in the churchyard whisky was dispensed, often lavishly. Not only the poor of the parish but also stranger poor and all manner of beggars gathered at the funeral, as they customarily received dole (gifts of coins).

In some parishes relics of these old-style funerals can still be found: a mort-cloth, the hand-spokes, the bier, or the common coffin, all described by Anne Gordon, and all part of the property of the kirk. In some church records there are references to the purchase and hiring out of a horse-drawn hearse, and the building of a hearse house. The funeral used to be a celebration of death for the whole neighbourhood to enjoy. When the Laird of the Mackintosh clan died in 1731 at Dalcross Castle, Petty, Highland, he lay for exactly two months and two days, during which time open house was kept for all comers. Great expense was incurred over this long period, because the heir was abroad, and the funeral could not properly take place without him there. The mourners numbered 4000, of which 3000 were armed, and the line extended from Dalcross Castle the four miles to Petty Church. Little remains to remind one of the days when this was a well-populated busy parish, but at the doors to the vault of the Mackintosh family stand two huge sculptures of cats bearing the crest of the clan, a reminder of the Mackintosh family’s importance.

Evidence of the arrangements for the payment of the minister’s stipend in bygone days may be seen at Foulden, Scottish Borders, where the old barn for storing his grain stands on one side of the churchyard. Like the lairds and the farmers, ministers kept bees. There are sets of bee-boles in the garden walls of many manse; these recesses held old-style straw beehives, the ruskies. At West Linton, Scottish Borders, bee-boles are actually set in the churchyard wall, but this part of the wall was once in the manse garden. The right of the minister to graze

⁵ Anne Gordon, *Death is for the Living* (Edinburgh: Paul Harris, 1984).

his horse, or his cow, in the churchyard must have proved an embarrassment once parishioners were paying good money to have family monuments erected. But it was not only the animals of the minister that did damage. From the late 16th and throughout the 17th century, Kirk Sessions wrestled with the financial burden of erecting and keeping in order the churchyard dykes to keep out stray animals and ensure that graves were not disturbed or memorials harmed.

These kirkyard dykes are of interest. In 1649 masons were working on the building of stone dykes about the churchyard at Largo, Fife. The expense of 50 pounds was paid by John Wood, who also paid for the erection of a school and for the building of a 'Hospitall' near the church, for 'honest people that decayed in their substance'. At Auchterhouse, Angus, the gateway leading to the manse is embellished with carved fragments from the medieval church. At Kirkmichael, Moray, the stone altar screen from the old church is built into the kirkyard dyke. At Collesie, Fife, on the outside of the south wall of the churchyard, a rhyming message is inscribed, allegedly for the benefit of pilgrims passing by.

The most prestigious place for burial, once burial inside churches had been forbidden by the Reformers, was in an aisle or vault built on to the church and entered from the churchyard.⁶ From early in the 17th century the walls were used for the erection of handsome tombs, enclosures and vaults, such as the fine collection at Greyfriars, Edinburgh. After a visit in 1635, Sir William Brereton wrote: 'which custom, if they continue, in the revolution of a short time the whole wall will be most gracefully adorned with tombs, which are most stately ornaments'.⁷

Occasionally an aisle to a family is all that remains of an earlier church: for example, the Hays of Rannas Aisle at Rathven, Moray, which dates from about 1612. The Victorians were quick to seize on a situation which apparently brought with it some prestige, and went in for burial and the raising of monuments within the ruins of a church.

Provision was made for the burial of the poor, and also for the stranger poor, but the latter were usually buried on the north side of the churchyard. Unbaptised children were also buried on the north side, and so it was an area which, until the 19th century, rated low, and is void of early monuments.

In Scotland the bubonic plague struck intermittently from the 14th to the 18th centuries, typhus took a heavy toll in 1640 and again in 1694-1707, smallpox from 1610 to the beginning of the 18th century, and cholera epidemics raged in 1832-1849. In 1500 the Black Death so decimated the population in Cumbernauld that the surviving inhabitants had great difficulty in transporting bodies for burial at the parish cemetery at St Ninian's, Kirkintilloch. They made a successful application to

⁶ Andrew Spicer provides a detailed discussion on the introduction of burial aisles in his "'Defyle not Christ's Kirk with Your Carrion': Burial and the Development of Burial Aisles in Post-Reformation Scotland", in B. Gordon and P. Marshall (eds) *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 149-169.

⁷ Sir William Brereton, *Travels in Holland, the United Provinces, England, Scotland, and Ireland, 1634-1635*, ed. Edward Hawkins (London: Printed for the Chetham Society, 1844): 109-110.

the See of Glasgow to have a burial ground established at the Chapel of Cumbernauld, and it was here that the parish church was erected in 1650.

You may find a memorial to plague victims in a churchyard. At St Michael's, Dumfries, one was erected in 1832 to 420 victims of cholera who had been buried, uncoffined, in a common pit. At such times it was necessary for the authorities to take over, and it was not possible to observe the usual customs of death and burial. At Brechin Cathedral there is a stone in the west wall of the churchyard, a replica of the original one which is now inside the cathedral, a memorial to 400 citizens who died of the plague in 1647.

Some church bells have had a long life: examples of ancient ones are the Ronnel bell at Birnie Church, Moray, and the eighth-century bell in Innerwick Church, Glenlyon, Perth and Kinross, which may have been the bell of Adamnan. Bells that hang in towers or belfries vary in age. The one at Yester, Gifford, East Lothian, has been in use since 1492. Inside the church at Alves, Moray, are preserved the big bell and the handbell, both the work of Michael Burgerhuys of Holland, dating from 1630. Many of the old church bells of eastern Scotland were made in Holland. At funerals the big bell was tolled on payment of a fee; at funerals of poor persons the handbell was tied to a tree and sounded at intervals. This 'deid bell' or 'mort bell' was also used to cry the news of a death and the bidding to the funeral. At smaller churches where there is no bell-tower but a belfry, perhaps of the birdcage type, there is often a groove worn in the stone where the rope has rubbed against it while the bell-puller was at work. At Ewes, Dumfries and Galloway, the church bell still hangs in the fork of a tree, placed there when the old church was demolished. Church bells were rung to warn of invasion, for mourning, for summons to Service, and sometimes as the tellers of time. At Largo, Fife, the custom on Sundays was to toll the bell for 'Rising' at seven in the morning, as a warning to 'Get Ready' at ten o'clock, and for the start of Service at eleven. Many churches have a sundial built into the fabric. At Crail, Fife, the shaft of a very old sundial may be seen. In the records made by the church officer of the late 18th century, entries of the sites of burials are described by distance and direction from this 'dial post'.

Sometimes an old font, or broken parts of a font, may be found. At Elie, Fife, a font is placed prominently in the churchyard, and used as a memorial (1882). In the churchyard at Rescobie, Angus, is a huge recumbent stone, in which there is a hollow which looks like a font. It seems that this stone was removed from the adjacent site, where St Troddan's Fair was held annually. Participants in the fair paid their dues in grain, and this basin-like hollow was the measure. These dues went to the laird.

The importance of the status of the laird is made evident by the flight of stone steps leading to his family loft in the church. Thus he had his own entrance, and in some places the comfort of a fire, with space, warmth and privacy for taking food between the morning and afternoon services. At Abdie, Fife, there was stabling, accommodation and a coachhouse for the Balfours of Denmiln, and other gentry of the parish who came for the long day of worship.

While the history of the church may be well known, the story of the graveyard has often been neglected. In each churchyard may be found reflections of dramas from the past. For instance, evidence of the strange and macabre story of the body snatchers, who stole newly buried bodies to sell to medical schools for use in anatomy classes, is to be found in some churchyards. The eight-foot-high wall of St Cuthbert's Churchyard, Edinburgh, was raised to that height in 1738 to prevent entry in the dark of night. In many places societies were formed whose members took turns to act as guards on night duty; at St Serf's graveyard, Kinross, there is a watchtower with windows on all sides. Other such societies invested in mort-safes: at Logierait there are three which are of varying sizes, the smallest designed to protect the coffin of a child. These were clamped to the coffin and buried with it; when the body had decomposed, the mort-safe was recovered for further use. A heavier type can still be seen at Colinton Churchyard, Edinburgh (Figure 3). The building of mort-houses, which were mortuaries where the coffined body lay until such time as it was of no use for dissection, began in most places as a consequence of the panic in 1828-1829 when the revelations concerning Burke and Hare shocked the nation.

Many of the early tombs and effigies of eminent churchmen and noblemen in the abbeys, cathedrals and churches were broken up in warfare and as a result of the Reformation, but enough survive to show us what we have lost. At Arbuthnott, Aberdeenshire, for example, in the Lady Chapel within the pre-Reformation church, is the thirteenth-century recumbent effigy of Hugo le Blond, now resting over a sixteenth-century heraldic tomb. Another, at Glenbervie, a tomb to the Douglas family in the medieval church ruin, has a Latin inscription tracing the family back to the founder who died in AD 730.

In *Scotland's Story in her Monuments* (1982)⁸ David Graham-Campbell provides drawings and photographs of many of the prestigious tombs still to be found in churches. Such monuments, inside or outside the church, together with the ruins of the medieval church and fragments of stones built into church or dyke walls, as well as the gravestones themselves and survivals of the kind described above, reflect the history of the precinct and what went on around it in the past.

If asked to name memorials that are a valuable part of Scotland's heritage, you might think first of the most notable monuments: those to kings and chiefs on Iona (rare as royal tombs are), Pictish standing stones, West Highland medieval slabs, and the tombs of prestigious families. But we are beginning to grasp the significance of what has been left to us in the great collection of post-Reformation monuments in churchyards and burial grounds. One of the outcomes of the Reformation was the response to the decree in which it was ordained that burials should no longer take place within the churches. This custom had a certain prestige and was a useful source of income to the church, so it was some time before burials within churches ceased. By the end of the first quarter of the 17th century, monuments of the

⁸ David Graham-Campbell, *Scotland's Story in her Monuments* (London: Robert Hale, 1982).



Figure 3. Mort-safe in Colinton Churchyard, Edinburgh. [1464586](#).

same designs as had previously been raised inside the churches to commemorate nobility and the upper classes were being erected in the churchyards and burial grounds. In *An Theater of Mortality* (1704)⁹ Robert Monteith recorded inscriptions from burial grounds in Edinburgh: one from a monument dated 1596, and some early seventeenth-century examples from a group of handsome mural tombs at Greyfriars. In his subsequent volume of inscriptions from monuments in other Scottish towns, *An Theater Of Mortality, or, A Further Collection of Funeral-Inscriptions over Scotland* (1713),¹⁰ there are a few entries from the late 16th century and many from the early 17th century; obviously, there had already been the great loss of the first post-Reformation graveyard slabs. The survival of sixteenth-century stones, like those in the Boswell family crypt at Kinghorn, Fife, seems to be comparatively rare. Other monuments may be found in private chapels and burial places set up by the landed gentry in their own grounds.

These earlier monuments had been raised to noble or wealthy families, but the Reformation brought innovation, a certain sense of democracy in death. That every one was equal in the sight of God meant they had a right to be buried in their

⁹ Robert Monteith, *An Theater of Mortality, or, The Illustrious Inscriptions Extant upon the Several Monuments, Erected over the Dead Bodies...Suburbs* (Edinburgh: Heirs and Successors of Andrew Anderson, 1704).

¹⁰ Robert Monteith, *An Theater of Mortality, or, A Further Collection of Funeral-Inscriptions over Scotland... Elsewhere* (Edinburgh: Heirs and Successors of Andrew Anderson, 1713).

own acquired plots (or lairs) in the churchyard. Once the ordinary family began to acquire lairs in the churchyard, marked by head- and foot-stones, the idea took hold that the head-marker might be carved and used as a memorial. Thus the local mason branched out into a new line of business, and in every town and village the demand for individually styled slabs and headstones grew. As a result we have inherited a vast number of historical documents in stone.

Some memorials were plain and crude, carved only with initials and dates, but as the 17th century advanced local masons were fashioning more and more monuments with carved symbols, producing a unique memorial to suit each customer. The symbolic carvings of eighteenth-century masons show thousands of permutations, presenting the symbols of mortality and immortality as well as the symbols of trade. There are noteworthy regional differences in style and subject matter; also, in the course of time, there were changes that can be seen to reflect the trends of fashion, and the deeper pulse of religious philosophy.

With the coming of the 19th century there was a sudden and almost complete departure from the traditions that had held sway previously. No longer were the symbols of mortality and immortality *de rigueur*; in varying rates, perhaps governed by distance from centres of fashion, the trade symbols ceased to be used. The development of mechanical means of cutting stone resulted in the establishment of firms of monumental masons; design books were published, and no longer was every memorial unique. The Victorians developed a host of styles, and to show their erudition and their prosperity they turned to Greek, Egyptian and Gothic models; we find variations of the ancient sarcophagus, of the medieval coped stone, towering obelisks, and crosses of all sizes. Initially the main material was sandstone, but by 1840 white marble was being imported from Italy and was much favoured well into the 20th century; many of these marble monuments are now in a fragile state. Mechanical cutting allowed the use of granite of various sorts. In an unpublished thesis, Alexander Welsh (1979) describes the Victorian monuments at the Glasgow Necropolis: 'The elegance, opulence, pathos and vulgarity of the monuments and mausolea also gives an insight to the trends and sensibilities of the Victorians and their society'.¹¹

Glasgow Necropolis was opened for burials in 1833. It was developed as 'a resting place for the high classes' by the Merchant House of Glasgow, who owned ground beside Glasgow Cathedral. The income from its use as a cemetery benefited various 'charitable institutions'. In other cities and large towns, sooner or later, the need to provide additional burial space led to the establishment of private and municipal cemeteries. The term 'cemetery' is used for a park for the burials of people of all denominations, and so it is somewhat different from an extension to a churchyard.¹²

¹¹ Alexander Welsh, *The Glasgow Necropolis*. Dissertation presented to the Mackintosh School of Architecture, Glasgow School of Art, 1979: 30.

¹² For detailed discussions on different types of burial sites see Susan Buckham, "'Not Architects of Decay": The Influence of Graveyard Management on Scottish Burial Landscapes' in Susan Buckham, Peter C. Jupp and Julie Rugg (eds) *Death in Modern Scotland, 1855-1955: Beliefs, Attitudes and Practices* (Oxford, Peter Lang, 2016), 215-240. Christopher Dingwall outlines the establishment of cemeteries in Dundee



Figure 4. *The Edith Thomson Memorial, Strathmiglo, Fife 1924.* 2228340.

The Western Cemetery at Arbroath, opened in 1867, provides a good example of a Victorian cemetery: beautifully laid out with trees and shrubs, it contains many monuments of interest, in particular the Patrick Allan-Fraser Memorial Chapel, with towers, clocks and sundials, set in a fantastic mixture of architectural styles. The emphasis in the 19th century was on the form of the monument and the material used. Some work was undertaken by eminent sculptors, and the skyline of a cemetery in the sunset may be a breathtaking sight, with three-dimensional crosses, obelisks, figures of angels, mourners, maidens and even animals.

The 20th century brought a reaction against Victorian styles of monumental art. For example, there are two memorials designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh at the Necropolis, Glasgow. An unsigned monument to Edith Thomson in Strathmiglo Churchyard, Fife, has a beautifully carved angel (Figure 4).

Machinery introduced in the 1950s produced small, stereotyped headstones and the importation of about 95 per cent of materials means a sad loss of the use of native granites, but is an economic necessity. Polished black granite headstones with gold lettering and a narrow range of decorations (crosses, flowers, leaves and church windows) stand in prim rows, but occasionally one finds a hand-cut memorial of

and Angus in his 'Landscaping for the Dead: The Garden Cemetery Movement in Dundee and Angus', also in Buckingham, Jupp and Rugg (eds) *Death in Modern Scotland*, 195-214.

Scottish stone, a work of art among the mass production. Few modern sculptors are cutting monuments; perhaps the most eminent has been Hew Lorimer (1907-1993), whose work is shown in Figure 5.

Previously the importance of the carvings on the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century stones may have been overlooked and neglected, but the epitaphs have not. Robert Monteith's two volumes of monumental inscriptions were followed by Charles Rogers's *Monuments and Monumental Inscriptions* (1872).¹³ In 1875 and 1879 two large collections appeared, the first and second volumes of *Epitaphs and Inscriptions from Burial Grounds and Old Buildings in the North-East of Scotland* by Andrew Jervise, which were limited editions, but copies are held in some libraries.¹⁴ They make fascinating reading. Jervise, like most scholars of his generation who studied this subject, was particularly interested in the history and genealogy of the upper classes, and those who had found fame locally or farther afield. He took little notice of the carvings on the eighteenth-century stones unless they were heraldic. From such beginnings, the interest and drive have been from the genealogists. A massive amount of work has been done, much of it by Sheila and John Fowler Mitchell and Alison Mitchell, and it is still in progress.¹⁵

The *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* (1901) contains the first of a series of articles by Christison, Reid and others. The symbolic nature of carvings on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century monuments in the Scottish Lowlands was brought to the notice of historians, and the folk-art nature of the carvings revealed.



Figure 5. Memorial by Hew Lorimer 1948, Aberlady Parish Churchyard. ©Susan Buckham

¹³ Charles Rogers's *Monuments and Monumental Inscriptions*. 2 vols. (London: Griffen and Co., 1872).

¹⁴ Andrew Jervise, *Epitaphs and Inscriptions from Burial Grounds and Old Buildings in the North-East of Scotland with Historical, Biographical, Genealogical, and Antiquarian Notes, also, An Appendix of Illustrative Papers*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas 1875-1879). This has now become available online, see the entry in the Bibliography.

¹⁵ Over the last 70 years genealogy enthusiasts have recorded memorial inscriptions (MI) in many of Scotland's graveyards. This work was pioneered by Sheila and John Fowler Mitchell and Alison Mitchell of the Scottish Genealogy Society, their efforts serving as a model and as inspiration for many. Since 1985 the number of published MIs and indeed the number of Scottish family history societies has seen a significant increase. For more information about the Scottish Genealogy Society's collection of published and unpublished MIs, contact the Scottish Genealogy Society Library and Resource Centre, 15 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh, Scotland, EH1 2JL or visit their website: <http://www.scotsgenealogy.com>. The website of The Scottish Association of Family History Societies at <http://www.safhs.org.uk> provides details of the many other family history groups involved with recording and publishing MIs across Scotland.

The burst of interest died down after 1914 and the subject was not reopened until Angus Graham (1957, 1960) and John di Folco (1966, 1969) contributed articles to the *Proceedings* on their researches, the latter having recorded carved monuments up to 1707 in the Laich of Moray and Fife.¹⁶

In the 1970s an illustrated survey of pre-1707 monuments in Angus, excluding Dundee, was compiled by Flora Davidson (1977),¹⁷ and in 1978 a study of eighteenth-century Scottish gravestones, *Stones* by Betty Willsher and Doreen Hunter,¹⁸ intended for general readership, was published.¹⁹ The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (now part of Historic Environment Scotland) has also been recording early monuments, included in their *Inventories*, published on a county basis. The National Record of the Historic Environment managed by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) holds many other as yet unpublished records, available for consultation.

The work of recording churchyards continues to be of urgent necessity because the stones in them are disappearing rapidly, from a variety of causes. Graveyard vandalism, occurring through Europe and America, presents a serious problem. In Scotland the monuments are subject to attack, not only in cities and towns, but also in small country places. At Blairgowrie in Perth and Kinross, for example, almost every stone that was not smashed by vandals has been placed flat into the ground, including a carved cross, because the local authority deemed it useless to re-erect the vandalised monuments. One way to prevent this sort of thing happening is to encourage people to recognise the worth of the stones, and be proud of their graveyards.

Stones that have become worn or broken have been cleared out of graveyards over the centuries, and some post-Reformation monuments have been built into churchyard walls, or into the mort-house as at Eyemouth, Scottish Borders. Whenever space was needed for erecting new monuments, it seems that clearances were made and the stones reused. At Meigle, St Vigeans and St Andrews, for example, early Christian stones were actually used as building stones in the medieval church (although they are now in museums). Later, in houses in St Andrews, entire stones

¹⁶ Details of all these articles and selected others from the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (PSAS)* are listed in Further Reading, section b (p.248).

¹⁷ Flora Davidson, *An Inventory of the Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus* (Arbroath: Privately published by the author, 1977).

¹⁸ Betty Willsher and Doreen Hunter, *Stones: A Guide to Some Remarkable Eighteenth-Century Gravestones* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1978).

¹⁹ The Bibliography in this edition of *Understanding Scottish Graveyards* includes the limited work completed since 1985 that deals with Scottish gravestones and graveyards. The most comprehensive of these efforts are the works of Professor Sarah Tarlow, who completed her PhD researching gravestones in Orkney, and the mother and daughter team of Flora Davidson and Elspeth Reid who in 2017 published *The Post-Reformation Gravestones of Angus: Scottish Social History in Stone, 1560-1715* (Angus: Forest Lodge and The Strathmartine Trust), an expanded and updated version of Davidson's 1977 work *An Inventory of Seventeenth-Century Tombstones in Angus*, and her 1999 work, *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones in Angus and the Mearns: An Inventory*. A further valuable bibliography for Scottish gravestones and graveyards is contained within 'Future Thinking on Carved Stones in Scotland', Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (ScARF): https://scarf.scot/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2016/08/fr10_6.pdf.

were used, some with carved faces down, as paving in kitchens and yards, others for building purposes. In 1894 at Greyfriars, Perth, William Sievwright did an incomplete survey on memorials; some 70 years later, when the Mitchells surveyed this burial ground and recorded inscriptions on 1200 stones, they listed 570 from Sievwright's 1894 survey that could not be found. Davidson (1999)²⁰ reported that none of the monuments in Angus listed in Monteith's 1713 volume²¹ has survived.

Over the years there has been much 'tidying' and replacement of stones. The fact that there are very few eighteenth-century headstones at St Andrews Cathedral Burial Ground or Greyfriars, Edinburgh, but many nineteenth-century monuments, suggests that the Victorians readily replaced what they probably considered crude stones by their more grandiose monuments. This would account for the small representation of eighteenth-century headstones in several city yards, where there was pressure on space. But some Victorians appreciated earlier carved stones; they took them over and revised them, obliterating the inscriptions and inserting their own. It was an act of violation, but it may have reprieved some of the old stones.

Local authorities are now responsible for graveyards, and local authority workers under the Department of Parks and Recreation keep the grass well cut, though mechanical mowers cause damage to many stones.²² Many of the yards are much tidier than they used to be, but there exists the danger of over-tidying, and the inability to recognise that all stones are of value. In some country churchyards displaced stones have stood against the walls for decades. However, a large collection from Ceres in Fife, which had been covered by a curtain of brambles and was inaccessible for recording, suddenly vanished, while at Markinch, Fife, there was a growing pile of stones moved from their original positions to a corner of the cemetery. The next likely step in this vandalism by local authorities is that in the name of 'tidying up' the stones will be carted away. This has happened to many stones, some in fine condition and handsomely carved, simply because they became loose.

The local authority's cemeteries manager is authorised to fell gravestones when they constitute a danger to maintenance staff and the public.²³ One cemetery manager stated that staff replace or bury such stones; one wonders whether markers should be erected to show this new type of burial place! In contrast, at

²⁰ Davidson, *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns: 1*.

²¹ Monteith, *An Theater Of Mortality, or, A Further Collection*.

²² The Church of Scotland (Property and Endowments) Act 1925 transferred responsibility for most Church of Scotland graveyards over to local authorities. As a result the vast majority of graveyards in Scotland are owned and maintained by local government. Today, graveyard management often falls across two or more council departments, such as Bereavement Services, Landscape Services, Environmental Services or Parks and Recreational Services. The precise titles and combinations of these may vary from one local authority to another.

²³ The problem of memorial instability is now an important issue owing to several deaths and serious injuries caused by the collapse of unsafe gravestones. In 2019 the Scottish Government published 'Burial ground memorial safety: Local authority guidance' available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/burial-ground-memorial-safety-guidance-scotlands-local-authorities/>.

Logierait, Perth and Kinross, an Adam and Eve headstone, broken accidentally, was mended, cleaned and reset, and it is a fine example of restoration.²⁴

Although the local authorities are responsible for graveyards, they have no responsibility for any monument, no matter how old and historically important it may be; that responsibility rests with the owner of the lair and his successor. Since a vast number of Scots have emigrated in the last three centuries – and it is their descendants who are among the most ardent visitors to our churchyards – it is unlikely that there are many seventeenth-, eighteenth- or even nineteenth-century monuments that have local claimants to care for them. This is a problem and contributes to neglect and eventual loss. A council planning department may legally turn a graveyard into a park, removing any monuments, save those officially regarded as historic, provided it advertises locally its intention, and there are no objections within a month from families owning monuments.²⁵ This was done at Falkirk in 1962, following a report from the Conveners of Health and Town Planning. All but five of the many stones were broken up and removed to Camelon for road-bottoming. Although some of the notable stones had been recorded previously, an adequate survey was not carried out before the ground was bulldozed.

It is not the only place in Scotland where there has been such loss: in Newburgh, Fife, the stones were broken up; in Dundee the Constitution Road graveyard was replaced by a car park; the sale of private cemeteries in Edinburgh as building ground posed a threat which has been only partially averted. As in England, where graveyards and cemeteries have been lost already, speculators continue to show interest in replacing cemeteries in Scotland by housing and other development.

In Scotland most of the old monuments are of sandstone, which is susceptible to weathering damage at varying rates. The type of sandstone used in parts of East Lothian has eroded, and often it is impossible now to decipher the inscriptions. The hard sandstone of Carmyllie, Angus, has suffered from the frost-thaw cycle, and carvings in deep relief are now lifting from the surface of the stone face. Other problems, such as pollution from petrol fumes and acid rain, are recognised as very real threats, and their effects are beginning to be assessed.²⁶ White marble monuments have suffered serious damage. The chemicals in bird droppings deface the stone surface, and ivy tears it away. Some forms of lichen, which grow most

²⁴ In 2001, to assist local authorities and other graveyard owners with the care and repair of gravestones and their graveyard setting, Historic Scotland's Technical Conservation Research and Education Group (now Historic Environment Scotland Conservation) published I. Maxwell, R. Nanda and D. Urquhart, *Conservation of Historic Graveyards*, in their series of guides for practitioners.

²⁵ The Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016 sets out the legal framework for the notification of extinguishment of a right of burial.

²⁶ In 1999 Historic Scotland's Technical Conservation Research and Education Group (now Historic Environment Scotland Conservation) published T. Yates and R. Butlin, *Carved Stone Decay in Scotland Assessment Methodology Handbook*, to aid with the collection of information on the threats to carved stones from all periods. In 2001, Archaeology Scotland's Carved Stones Adviser Project adapted this methodology for use by community groups to record detailed information about gravestone condition. This guidance is available online at <https://www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/6Decay.pdf>

prolifically in areas where there is least pollution, do little harm, and may even protect the stone from weathering.²⁷ Frost heave in winter and the change in level due to fresh burials, as well as sinking as coffins decay, all loosen monuments.

Graveyards face an emergency situation, although perhaps it is less obvious than that in towns where old buildings may be at risk from development, or on farms where deep ploughing may cause damage to below-ground monuments. Nonetheless, the heritage of graveyard monuments, and even the old graveyards themselves, is under threat, and we are losing that which we should treasure. The recording of graveyards all over the country should be undertaken now, while there are still stones to record. Local authorities have little money to spend on resetting loose stones, or repairing valuable old ones; the drive to prevent loss must depend on the attitude and efforts of local people who care. We may be able to stem the tide of destruction, but only to a small extent. It is important, therefore, to set about the task of accurate and methodical recording of what there is immediately. The work of recording can be done by individuals, by a local history, archaeology, or field study society, by members of the Women's Rural Institute, or by students. As already noted (see pages 1-2), directions for recording a graveyard have been compiled, and are published in the Recording Manual. Although the procedures are slanted towards practical group work, there is no reason why an enthusiastic person who prefers, or has, to work alone, cannot make an important contribution. An example of the achievement of one American enthusiast in Cromwell, Connecticut, comes from the *Newsletter of the Association for Gravestone Studies* (Winter 1982/1983):²⁸

Elizabeth Maselli singlehandedly restored the town's old (established 1712/13) burying ground. Completing this work in time for a rededication ceremony in 1976, Maselli, an eighty-four year old widow, not only mapped the yard pinpointing 995 graves, photographed most of the headstones, and made rubbings of about twenty, she also got money ... to mark the graves of Revolutionary and Civil War veterans whose headstones had disappeared. The town now maintains the graveyard; it also allows Mrs Maselli \$1000 from the town's annual revenue-sharing funds for major repairs and improvements.

Not many can achieve so much, but even the smallest efforts are worthwhile. Apart from the need to record, there is a need to excite people's imagination, to encourage them to take a greater interest in the graveyards for their own sake. We should be able to explain something of this heritage to visitors and to tourists, insofar as it differs from the situation in other countries. In Scotland there is a little-acknowledged and largely unrecorded historical treasure, accessible to, and belonging to, each Scottish community. Once its worth is recognised, surely we can show enough concern to combat indifference, ignorance and vandalism, and take positive action by making records, by conservation and by preservation.

²⁷ Stone conservators tend to remain more cautious about any potential beneficial effects of lichen colonising stonework. Certainly, there are many instances where lichen growth does not appear to be detrimental to a stone's condition and lichens may bear significant ecological and cultural interest.

²⁸ *Newsletter of the Association for Gravestone Studies* 7.1 (Winter 1982/1983): 3.

Chapter 2.

Types of Monuments, Symbols and Incriptions

After the Reformation, the monuments that were first erected outside the churches were of the same designs as those that had been raised inside the churches. Recumbent slabs appeared, so did mural tombs, which were placed against the exterior walls of the church and round the churchyard walls. Soon came the chest tomb, the sarcophagus and later the tablestone, which was a variation of the slab. The headstone was a new development, and although Angus Graham (1963)¹ propounded the theory that it evolved from the mural monument, it shows only some features of this type of monument.

The main types of monument, described below in roughly chronological order, may be found in the church, churchyard or burial ground; those which are pre-1560 are listed first. They may have been moved from some other adjacent place. Those erected after the Reformation rightfully belong to the yard.

Many descriptions are accompanied by illustrative examples, and technical terms are explained in the Glossary (see page 238).

PRE-REFORMATION MONUMENTS

BRONZE AGE CISTS

STONE COFFINS AND COFFIN SLABS

SCULPTURED PICTISH STONES

(see Figure 1 which shows a Pictish stone in Benvie Churchyard, Angus)

CELTIC CROSSES

(Figure 6 shows a twentieth-century copy)

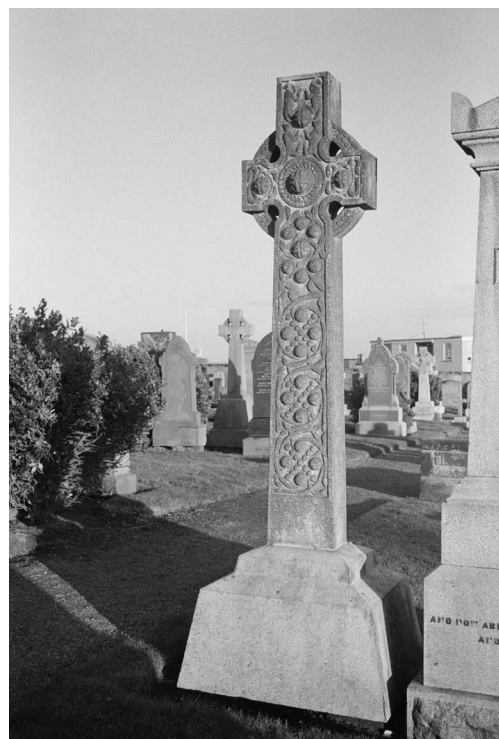


Figure 6. Celtic cross revival, St Andrews Cathedral, Fife. 1530555.

¹ Angus Graham, 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian', PSAS 94 (1963): 211-271.

CARVED SLABS

(Figure 7)



Figure 7. Late medieval slabs, Kilmory, Knapdale, Argyll and Bute. 751862.

MEDIEVAL TOMBS WITH EFFIGIES

INCISED EFFIGIAL SLABS

CALVARY CROSS SLABS

HOGBACKS

Described by Burgess (*English Churchyard Memorials*, 1963)² as having a characteristic

² Frederick Burgess, *English Churchyard Memorials* (London: Lutterworth, 1963): 86-87. Burgess's account of hogbacks is greatly at odds with how researchers would describe these Viking age monuments today. Much debate exists over what influenced their varied designs and form (hogbacks were so named by antiquarians as their bowed backs recalled the shape of a pig). There is still much to learn about these enigmatic carved stones and about who created them and why. For more information see James T. Lang, 'Hogback Monuments in Scotland', *PSAS* 105 (1975): 206-235 and Victoria Thompson Whitworth, 'Uncanny Monsters and Telling Absences: Ways of Reading the Meikle Recumbents', in C. Thickpenny, K. Forsyth, J. Geddes and K. Matthis

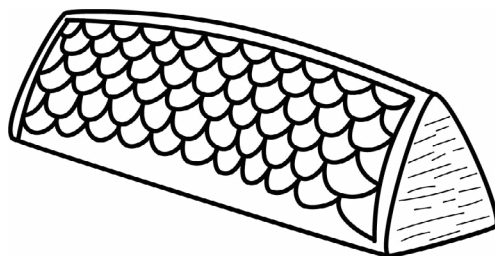


Figure 8. Hogback. © Carmen Moran

curved silhouette and a decoration of plaitwork and running spirals. They originated in a version of the Scandinavian house tomb and developed from bauta stones (small segmental-arched boulders common in Viking times) and can be recognised by their distinctive shape and panels of plait-marking, representing shingles (Figure 8).

SARCOPHAGUS

Memorial of classical type, in various forms, e.g., altar-shape or casket, usually ornately carved (Figure 9 shows a pre-Victorian revival).

POST-REFORMATION GRAVEYARD MONUMENTS

DISCOID

This is properly a medieval monument, and is a small circular or octagonal head mounted on a short shaft (Figure 10). Two noted at St Kentigern's, Lanark, were dated 1652 and 1678, and some examples are nineteenth-century.

FLAT STONES

These stones, also described as recumbent slabs, ledgers, or, in Scotland, thruch or throwch stanes, were in use in medieval times. These were popular in the 16th and 17th centuries, and were still being erected

(eds), *Peopling Insular Art: Practice, Performance, Perception: Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference on Insular Art, Glasgow* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2020): 161-166.



Figure 9. Pre-Victorian revival of the sarcophagus, Greyfriars Burial Ground, Perth 1835. [948305](#).

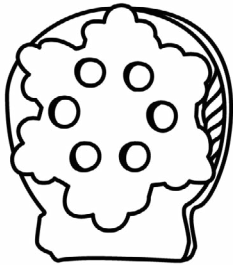


Figure 10. Discoid.
© Carmen Moran

in the 18th century. Burgess (1963)³ states that they were originally mounted on small stands, but there is little evidence of this in Scotland. Many must be under the turf, and so may be well preserved. Some are skilfully and elaborately carved, the earlier ones with

³ Burgess, *English Churchyard Memorials*: 128.



Figure 11. Detail of flat stone, Kirkmichael, Gordonstoun, Moray 1629. [2227111](#).

heraldic devices and symbols of mortality. They may have cut-off corners, shaped heads, or be narrow and tapering. There is often a marginal inscription, as well as a central one. Occasionally recumbent slabs, or broken parts of slabs, have been re-erected in vertical positions, like headstones. The inscription on a headstone reads like a page of a book, distinguishing it from a recumbent slab (Figure 11).

COPED STONE

A variation of a slab. In Fife and just north of the Tay, a group of seventeenth-century ridged flat stones bear carvings and inscriptions of superior workmanship. The coped stone has a narrow raised central panel with sloping sides giving the mason five surfaces for infilling giving the carvings (Figure 12). In the 19th century ridged and gabled monuments, variations of the medieval coped stone, were made in



Figure 12. Coped stone, the Howff, Dundee 1645. 948377.

marble and granite. Originally coped stones were mounted on pedestals.

CHEST TOMB

Derived from the medieval tomb base. The top, sides and end panels of eighteenth-century chest tombs usually bear carvings and inscriptions. It became fashionable to work the transverse ends in the form of consoles or pilasters, giving the illusion of corner supports with intervening panels, but chest tombs should be distinguished from those tablestones where infilling panels have been placed between the pedestals (Figure 13).

COFFIN-SHAPED TOMB

This resembles a chest tomb, but is made in the form of a coffin and is entirely enclosed. They are rarely found in Scotland, but are common in England (Figure 14).

PEDESTAL TOMB

A tall tomb which may be square, polygonal or circular in section, topped by a finial. It can also be a chest tomb supporting such features as a pyramid, obelisk, etc. This type of monument was developed in the 19th century, the pedestal being surmounted by urns, draped urns, crosses, or figures of maidens in chitons, mourning widows, the Virtues (Hope, Charity), or angels. The monument may be free-standing or placed against a wall for support (Figure 15).

TABLESTONE

A slab which is placed on pedestals or flat supports. This was a popular monument from about 1643 and in the 18th and 19th centuries, the earlier ones being ornamented with carved symbols while those of the 19th century are often plain, apart from lengthy inscriptions. The pedestals, sometimes four



Figure 13. Chest tomb, the Howff, Dundee 1811. 948378.

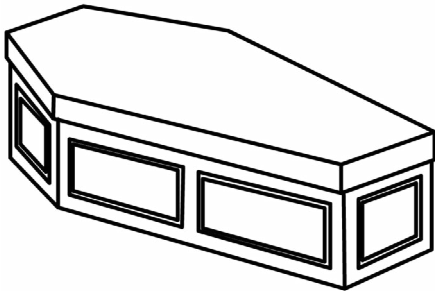


Figure 14. Coffin-shaped tomb.
© Carmen Moran

in number, sometimes six, are wrought in various shapes, and may be decorated (Figure 16).

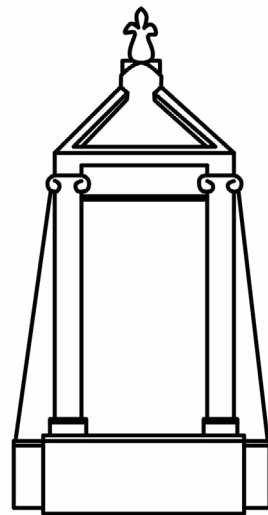


Figure 15. Pedestal tomb.
© Carmen Moran



Figure 16. Tablestone, Kirkcudbright, Dumfries and Galloway 1793. 1530923.

OBELISK

A tapering shaft of stone, square in section, with a pyramidal top, which was erected to people of some importance (Figure 17). Towards the end of the 18th century it assumed greater proportions, and in Victorian times it outrivalled other monuments in height.

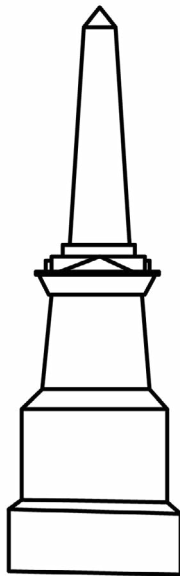


Figure 17. Obelisk.
© Carmen Moran

HEADSTONE

Burgess (1963)⁴ states that it was customary to use both headstones (Figure 18) and footstones in association with coffin slabs and ledgers. The function of these was presumably as markers.

The Roman stele has been considered as a possible prototype of the upright inscribed

monument which came into use in Scottish graveyards about 1620. However, it remains to be proven that the stele was an influence, any more than the Pictish stone might have been. There were few stelae to have acted as prototypes, and Pictish stones had a limited distribution, whereas headstones seem to have been introduced at the same time all over Lowland Scotland.

The use of the headstone as a memorial could have originated from the idea of enlarging and inscribing one of those pairs of stones which marked the extent of the lair.

Early headstones are small (c. 60cm by 40cm, or less) and crudely carved with name, date and death's head. Most footstones have disappeared, either in the 19th century when rails or borders were put round graves, or later, removed by maintenance staff to facilitate mechanical grass-cutting.

The headstone became popular in the 18th century, but interestingly was introduced at a later date in the north. In Moray, Aberdeenshire, and north of the Caledonian Canal, the slab and tablestone were preferred

⁴ Burgess, *English Churchyard Memorials*: 91,118.

until the end of the 18th century. The height of most eighteenth-century headstones varies between 60cm and 100cm, but in the 19th century they were made in a great variety of sizes and mounted on pedestals; some dwarf the early carved stones. Most seventeenth- and eighteenth-century headstones are made of sandstone, with a wide range in the rates of weathering. The headstone withstands rain because of its vertical position, but when left collapsed on the ground deteriorates fast. In Argyll slate was used, brought by ship from Wales. In Edinburgh and Prestonpans a rare type of local freestone has endured well; at Kilsyth a blue-grey basalt was used by eighteenth-century masons, and at St Adrians, West Wemyss, Fife, a headstone made of parrot (or cannel) coal is to be found. It would be interesting to compare the durability of the various types of granites used once mechanical cutting was introduced.

The faces of the headstones are usually oriented east and west. The deceased was placed below the east face of the stone, with the feet extended to the east, so that, when the trumpets sound on the Day of Judgement, he or she would rise facing the east. Few post-Reformation burials were made to the north of the church until the 19th century, as there was a superstition that the north harboured evil spirits.

A small minority of eighteenth-century headstones were in two pieces; the main stone was fitted into a contemporary stone base by mortar and clamps. But generally the stone was cut in one piece with a tongue-shaped base, to anchor it into the ground (Figure 18). This tongue has been the means of keeping many old stones *in situ* for up to 300 years. The nineteenth-century headstone mounted on a pedestal is in two parts; it is an easy prey to vandals when the setting becomes loosened, and many have been pushed over or have toppled in gales. Nineteenth-century

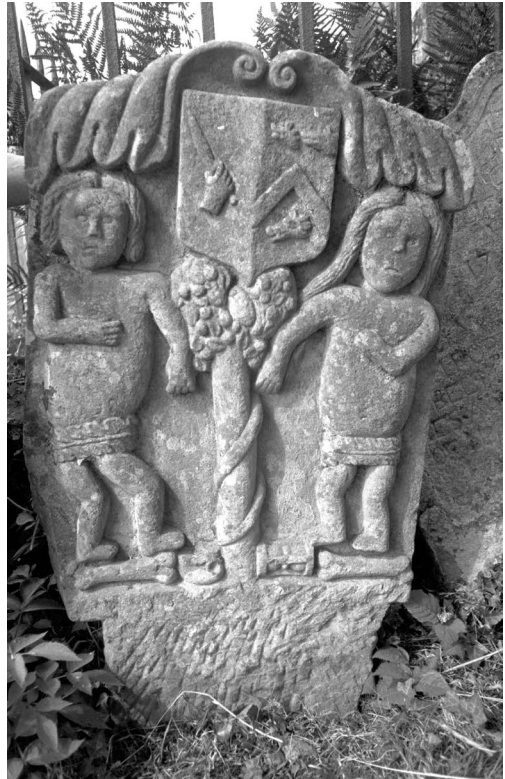


Figure 18. Adam and Eve headstone, Kells, Dumfries and Galloway 1706. 803637.

headstones are distinguished by their larger size, by the variety of materials used, by the more stereotyped and plainer shapes, and also by the fact that many are surmounted by a cross or an urn.

MURAL MONUMENT

In the 17th and 18th centuries the mural monument followed the designs used inside the churches; often they are elaborate and of great size and elegance. Fine examples may be seen at Greyfriars in Edinburgh, St Andrews Cathedral, Crail, and many other places. They exhibit the fashionable architectural features of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, and take pride of place on the outside walls of the church or the surrounding churchyard walls (Figure 19).



Figure 19. Mural monument, Kingsbarns, Fife 1685. Photograph © Iain Miller, used by kind permission.

MURAL TABLET

This is relatively plain, bearing an inscription and a minimum of ornament. It is built into or fixed on the outside wall of the church, or built into the churchyard wall.

GRAVE BOARD

This is also called a bed board. It is a long wooden rail supported by two head posts, running the length of the grave, fairly low to the ground, and inscribed as a memorial. Although common in England from as early as 1758, there is no record of one in Scotland. Anne Gordon in *Death is for the Living*⁵ refers to a wooden cross at Laggan, Highland, and a wooden memorial plaque in St Magnus Cathedral, Orkney; it seems possible, therefore, that there were wooden grave boards. At Kirkcaldy Old Parish Church,

Fife, however, what can only be described as stone grave boards of nineteenth-century date mark family lairs and are inscribed as memorials.

CAST-IRON GRAVE MARKERS

An early nineteenth-century innovation, they are the same shapes as the contemporary headstone, but usually of more modest dimensions (58cm x 41cm to 112cm x 100cm). These products of the new skill of making cast-iron mass-produced goods were made in a mould, with raised designs and lettering, and a range of ornamental top shapes, sometimes with openwork patterns. They are often in a poor state of preservation now, and because of rusting it is sometimes difficult to decipher the inscription. As they seem to have been comparatively easily uprooted, they are now rare.

BROKEN COLUMN

A nineteenth-century monumental sculpture (Figure 20). Mounted on a pedestal, a round column terminates in jagged pieces. Presumably they symbolise the Day of Resurrection, as does the imagery of the carvings of broken towers on eighteenth-century stones.

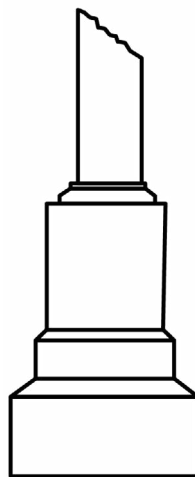


Figure 20. Broken column. © Carmen Moran

⁵ Anne Gordon, *Death is for the Living* (Edinburgh: Paul Harris 1984): 102.

THE CROSS

Until the 19th century, monuments were not made in the form of crosses, and the cross was rarely used as a symbolic carving, being considered a Papist symbol. But in the 19th and 20th centuries the cross was used as a form of monument, and as a decorative element on monuments. Examples include small crosses in white marble marking the graves of children; high crosses in medieval style, mounted on long shafts; and crosses of the Celtic type in sandstone or granite (Figure 6).

RUSTICATED MONUMENTS

Rustication is a method of treating the surface of the stone, producing an effect like a rocky surface, or like wood in the shape of logs; it was popular in the Victorian era. The stones may be embellished with doves, crosses, anchors, ivy or flowers (Figure 21).



Figure 21. Rusticated monument, Irvine, North Ayrshire 1881. 948259.

IMMORTELLE

A nineteenth-century china replica of flowers, doves and foliage, with a glass bowl inverted over it as a cover. It was laid on the surface of the ground over the grave. Most have been broken and removed, and so these memorials are rarities. Two survive at Logierait, Perth and Kinross.

After 1918 the trend was towards small uniform headstones, and gradually cemeteries filled with rows and rows of them. There is interest in the variety and sources of the materials used, the types of lettering and in the cutting methods used, e.g., the gold on black granite fashionable today. While the range of ornamental designs is narrow in comparison with carvings on eighteenth-century headstones, it might nevertheless be worthwhile making a study of changing materials and designs in the last 100 years and the reasons for such changes.⁶

CARVINGS ON THE STONES

The seventeenth-century recumbent slabs were inscribed in low or high relief, both marginally and in the centre of the face. Many were also decorated with symbols of mortality and immortality, and with heraldic devices. The symbols often derive from the classical world; the imagery is fully described by Burgess (1963).⁷ The more immediate sources were the tombs of the wealthy, the symbol books, and perhaps paintings. Towards the end of the 17th century, carvings on monuments became more varied, with

⁶ In Sarah Tarlow, *Bereavement and Commemoration: An Archaeology of Mortality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), Tarlow examines how shifting social conditions and relationships influenced the practices and traditions relating to memorial inscriptions, gravestone designs and burial from 1560 until the Second World War.

⁷ Burgess, *English Churchyard Memorials*: 154-206.

symbols of trade more prominently displayed. The gradual move to a less harsh philosophy is reflected in the symbolism of the carvings which show Immortality triumphing over Death.

With an increase in prosperity in the early 18th century, tradesmen and tenant farmers were able to commission masons for family monuments. This led to a customer-mason agreement whereby individually styled stones were cut and carved. Many permutations were used, with quaint ingenuity and varying degrees of success; there are scarcely two identically carved stones. What remains today is one of the greatest collections of folk-art sculpture. It is strongly Scottish, reflecting the religious philosophy and social history of the country.

Were the symbols meaningful and were the epitaphs read? Some people may have had little education, but they were certainly well grounded in the scriptures and the catechisms. Village schools had been set up from the time of the Reformation, so there were many people from humble homes who could read and were well versed in the scriptures. The epitaph below, recorded in Monteith,⁸ indicates how widespread classical knowledge must have been, and that even the most abstruse and ancient symbolism was expected to be intelligible to the ordinary man:

*Hout Atropos, hard-hearted Hag
To cut the Sheugh o' Jamie Craig
For had he liv'd a wheen mae Years
He had been o'r teugh for all your Sheirs.
(Haddington, East Lothian)*

⁸ Robert Monteith, *An Theater Of Mortality, or, A Further Collection of Funeral-Inscriptions over Scotland...Elsewhere* (Edinburgh: Heirs and Successors of Andrew Anderson, 1713): 145.

SYMBOLS OF MORTALITY

DEATH'S HEAD

On medieval monuments the skull was used to represent death: a reminder that death comes to everyone, as indicated by the words which later accompanied it, *Memento Mori*, 'Remember that you must die'. On seventeenth-century monuments the death's head was usually portrayed either in partial profile or facing front and gnawing on a femur (Figure 22), or as a full round face carved above or on crossed bones. The eighteenth-century masons carved the skull in many ways: with or without a bottom jaw, full face, three-quarters or half profile; noses triangular, U-shaped, heart-shaped; eye sockets deep or shallow, large or small. Each mason found his own versions, varying them from stone to stone.

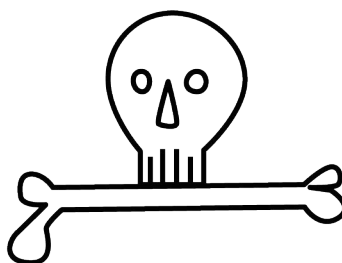


Figure 22. Seventeenth-century death's head.

© Carmen Moran

WINGED SKULL

Carved full face, with wings outspread on either side of the head, it may be found on some seventeenth-century stones, but is very rare on later examples (Figure 23).



Figure 23. Winged skull.

© Carmen Moran

SKELETON

Sometimes appears lying down, or on a bed, or in a hammock-like object; here it represents the passive figure of death, which comes to all. When portrayed standing (with the weapons of Death, the dart, spear, scythe or lance) it is the personification of death, the King of Terrors, an ever-present menace. Anatomical details are carved according to the mason's skill and knowledge (Figure 16).

ANGEL OF DEATH

This is rare and is shown as a putto, with dart and/or hourglass, and/or scales. It may have wings.

BONES

In the 17th century the death's head was often accompanied by crossed bones, usually femurs, or else a single bone. However, by the 18th century there were many more

variations, including such items as jawbones. The bones were sometimes shown in trophies or suspended on ribbons (Figure 16).

HOURLASS

This indicates the passing of time, and is portrayed either in a vertical or a horizontal position (Figure 11). It is usually carved realistically (well known to all who watched it during the long sermons); its plump shape lent itself to carving in high relief. Occasionally it is incised and geometric in design. Sometimes a flaming hourglass was carved to represent Eternity.

FATHER TIME

The figure of Father Time, bearded and robed, with scythe and hourglass, was portrayed standing, stalking (Figure 24), or seated with elbow on hourglass. In some scenes he is shown together with the skeleton, the King of Terrors, the two ready for action.



Figure 24. *Father Time, detail, the Howff, Dundee 1645.* 948452.

COFFIN

The shape is realistic and is normally recognisable. In the 17th century the device used was crossed coffins, but in the 18th century one coffin was often placed in a row of symbols, or occasionally appeared as sole symbol. The spokes of the coffin (Figure 25) may be shown. Spokes were poles that were used to help carry a coffin.

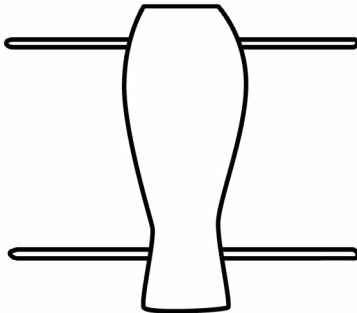


Figure 25. Coffin with spokes.
© Carmen Moran

WEAPONS OF DEATH

The scythe, the dart (Figure 26), bow and arrow, lance and axe.

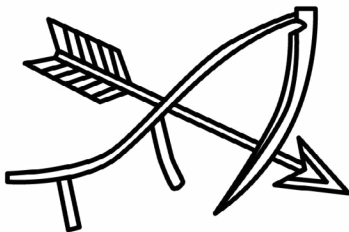


Figure 26. Scythe and dart.
© Carmen Moran

SEXTON'S TOOLS

The spade and the turf cutter; the latter has a triangular blade. Very often the two tools are crossed (Figure 27); the pick is a less common symbol.

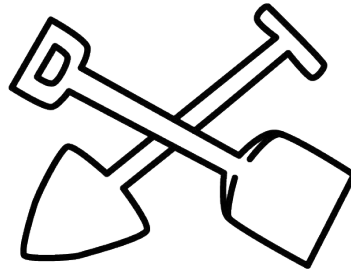


Figure 27. Sexton's tools. © Carmen Moran

DEID BELL

The deid bell was rung to give notice of funerals, and at the funeral itself. Depicted as a small handbell, it was a favourite symbol north of the River Tay (Figure 28).

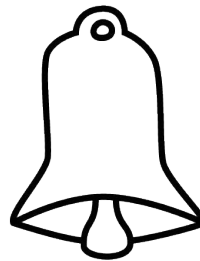


Figure 28. Deid bell. © Carmen Moran

CORPSE

The corpse appears in a winding sheet or lying in a coffin (Figure 29).



Figure 29. Corpse in winding sheet.
© Carmen Moran

DEATHBED SCENES

Deathbed scenes are usually simple, the deceased shown in a box-like bed, sometimes with curtains (Figure 30).



Figure 30. Deathbed scene, Strathmiglo, Fife 1715. 585908.

DEATH MASK

Faces that resemble a cast taken from the face of a person after death rather than a portrait from life.

WEEPERS

Weepers are often carved in full relief on the top slopes of the headstones, and in the form of putti. The Victorian concept is of standing or seated figures, often life size, described by Burgess (1963)⁹ as ‘in the charade of mourners’ (Figure 9).

TREES

Trees with lopped branches signify life cut short.

SNAKES

Snakes with a sting in tail or mouth, with apples, or with a tree, are abbreviations of the scene of the Fall of Man, signifying sin and death.

⁹ Burgess, *English Churchyard Memorials*: 186.

URN

Popularised by the neo-classical revival, the urn became the prime symbol in the 19th century. Burgess (1963)¹⁰ states that it is not intended to represent an ossuary, and is a decorative feature rather than a symbol. Three-dimensional carvings of the urn make top pieces to headstones and pedestal tombs.

GREEN MAN

Carved on eighteenth-century headstones in many Lowland areas, Green Men¹¹ are described by Kathleen Basford in *The Green Man*¹² as having a human or cat-like face; his eyes may be large, glaring and unfocused, the forehead creased; he may have ugly teeth or fangs, and the tongue may be stuck out in a rude manner. Greenery sprouts from cheeks, forehead, nose or mouth.

Originating in the pagan leaf mask, this symbol was used by the Romans in the 2nd and 3rd centuries, and then revived in France, becoming a popular carving in churches and cathedrals in France, Germany and England from the 12th century and throughout the Middle Ages. Fine examples exist at Rosslyn Chapel, Midlothian, and Auchtermuchty, Fife, 1756 (Figure 31).

Basford states that the Green Man was used on Christian tombs long after it ceased to be

¹⁰ Burgess, *English Churchyard Memorials*: 175.

¹¹ In her 1992 study of Green Men, Betty Willsher initially grouped these carvings into 11 different types of design. Significantly, Willsher found that none of these groups appeared to be localised in a specific area. However, after further research, Willsher suggested that Green Man carvings might be more usefully described using the term ‘foliate heads’ because of the considerable divergence of opinion on their meanings and on the origin of the Green Man symbol. This guide, for ease of reference, continues to use the familiar term ‘Green Man’. For more details see Betty Willsher, ‘The Green Man as an Emblem on Scottish Tombstones’, *Markers: The Annual Journal of the Association for Gravestone Studies* 9 (1992): 58-77.

¹² Kathleen Basford, *The Green Man* (Ipswich: D.S. Brewer, 1978).



Figure 31. *The Green Man, Auchtermuchty, Fife 1756. 2227754.*

used as an ornament in church architecture. She considers that on monuments it may be a symbol of life springing out of death or a symbol of the corruptibility of man's flesh referring to the text beginning 'All flesh is as grass and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass' (1 Peter 1:24). This is often inscribed on memorials in Scotland and variations can be found:

*All flesh doth flourish as a flour
And in short tym it is cut down
As dayly comes to pass,
The paths of death we all must tread,
Our Lord hath gone before,
And by his death prepar'd us life,
That lasteth evermore.*
(*Inverarity, Angus 1741*)

SYMBOLS OF IMMORTALITY

WINGED SOUL

This is referred to in the monumental-mason trade and by many others as the cherub. Burgess (1963)¹³ recognises it as the symbol of the soul, and in the USA it is sometimes described as the soul effigy.

¹³ Burgess, *English Churchyard Memorials*: 173.



Figure 32. *Headstone, Errol, Perth and Kinross 1754. 803399.*

There is little doubt that in Scotland the cherub was intended to represent the soul leaving the body at the time of death and ascending to wait until the Day of Judgement, when the body would rise to join it. In the case of the elect, the soul was received straight into Heaven.

This tenet of faith was familiar to all; each household received a copy of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, and parishioners in the 18th century were examined on their knowledge of this and of the catechisms.

The depiction of the soul on the memorial was intended to be sexless and anonymous. While some carvings may look like human faces, they were not meant to; expressions vary from lugubrious to cheerful, from innocent to old and inscrutable. Occasionally one finds a pretty English-type cherub and, in Angus, and Perth and Kinross, pairs of plump, baby-faced souls (Figure 32).



Figure 33. *Angels of Resurrection, detail, Liff Church, Angus 1741. 948320.*

The wings take all sorts of forms; the usual one is bird-like with long wing feathers and short breast feathers. In some cases they are like foliage, or they may be stylised. The tips may be swept up, level with the top of the head, or pointing downwards; sometimes the tips are crossed above or below the head.

The disembodied face may have a neck or spring from a feathery bib; the breast may be heart-shaped, or there may be merely a frill. Hairstyles vary between the short or long bob, curls, long straight tresses, and may even take the form of short or full periwigs.

The winged soul fits well into the tympanum of the headstone, but sometimes each of a pair of souls is tilted with one wing upwards to fit the space.

ANGELS OF THE RESURRECTION

These figures, clad in loose robes, are shown standing with trumpets in hands or blowing the trumpets (Figure 33), or flying through the air, feet bare, knees bent. Alternatively, they may resemble winged souls, but,

inasmuch as they bear or blow trumpets, they are to be seen as angels of the Resurrection.

RESURRECTION SCENES

These naked human figures represent the day when the bodies shall rise from the graves for the Judgement. Folk carvings of this scene show cheerful faces, full of hope. Another form shows a skeleton or a corpse emerging from a coffin or the grave, with angels trumpeting (Figure 34).

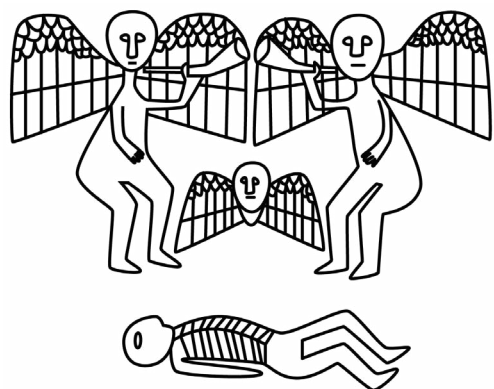


Figure 34. *Resurrection scene. © Carmen Moran*



Figure 35. *Glory of God, detail, St Vigean, Angus 1744.* [2226367](#).

THE GLORY OF GOD OR THE RADIANCE

Depicted by clouds, sun, sunrays, trumpets, and more simply by a sunburst (Figure 35).

TORCHES

These symbols are taken from the Greek symbol and are depicted (as seen in Figure 32) usually in a pair; when upward and flaming, they represent eternal life, and when downward and extinguished, the end of earthly life. As such a pair they make a useful design for the edges of a face of the headstone. On seventeenth-century monuments they often appear crossed, to balance crossed bones and crossed coffins. In the 17th century, torches were carried at funerals held at night.

HEART

The heart was used in symbol books to signify Divine Love, and, when flaming, the fire of

Divine Love. On post-Reformation monuments all over the Scottish Lowlands, if it appears as a single symbol, the heart is a symbol for the soul (and so for Resurrection). However, if it is carved between the initials of husband and wife (as it frequently is), it has the same connotation as on marriage lintels, signifying love for each other. A heart pierced by darts may stand for the death of life on earth.

The following symbols are carved realistically and are easily recognisable:

THE CROWN

This represents the Crown of Righteousness (see Figure 32).

HAND(S)

Portrayed with a pointing finger to indicate the inscription. A hand with the cuff of the robes showing, emerging from the

clouds, may be the Hand of God. Two hands upraised, palms facing outwards, are praying hands. Two hands clasped in a handshake (nineteenth-century) is a sign of farewell, perhaps reunion.

SCALES

Scales refer to the weighing of the soul on the Day of Judgement. They should not be confused with scales used as the symbol of a merchant; while they are represented in the same way, the significance may be taken from the context.

SCALLOP SHELL

This object was carried by pilgrims to the shrine of St James of Compostela, but may be purely decorative when carved on monuments; nevertheless, it sometimes takes a prominence which seems significant, and it was a common practice over the centuries to place shells on graves.

ANCHOR

An anchor is the message of hope, but is also used as the symbol of a mariner or fisherman.

DOVE

This bird, representing the Holy Spirit, became a very popular symbol in the 19th century, and was carved on earlier stones as a symbol.

FRUIT, FOLIAGE AND FLOWERS

Palm Fronds signifying victory over death were a popular symbol, carved either as a pair with stems crossed (see Figure 32), or forming a cartouche. **Bay Leaves** and **Laurels** have the same significance as palm fronds. **Poppyheads** represent sleep. A **Lily** represents purity. **Fir-cones** were ancient symbols of fertility, but may be ornamental, as are the **Pineapple** and other fruit, foliage and flowers; the **Tulip**, the **Rose** and the **Thistle** were also favourites.

ROSETTE

A rosette with five or more petals was a very popular ornament (see Figure 32).

CORNUCOPIA

Known as the horn of plenty, this embellishes many eighteenth-century stones, particularly south of the Forth, and is more likely to be a decorative than a symbolic feature.

The following are rare symbols:

THE CADUCEUS

A wand entwined with two snakes, carried by Mercury and surmounted by a dove, is familiar as the symbol of the College of Physicians (Figure 36).



Figure 36. *The Caduceus.*
© Carmen Moran

FIGURES OF FAITH, HOPE, CHARITY, PATIENCE, LIBERTY AND OTHER PERSONIFIED VIRTUES

Features of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century grand tombs; used again in Victorian times. Burgess (1963)¹⁴ gives the source as Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* (1603).

¹⁴ Burgess, *English Churchyard Memorials*: 190.

SNAKE

Also known as the Ouroboros, the snake portrayed with its tail in its mouth so that it makes a ring is an ancient symbol of eternity and thus an symbol of immortality (Figure 37).



Figure 37. Snake. © Carmen Moran

AGNUS DEI

A figure of the Lamb bearing a cross or flag, representing the Passion of Christ (Figure 38).



Figure 38. Agnus Dei. © Carmen Moran

PHOENIX

The mythical bird, said to arise from the ashes of its own funeral pyre (Figure 39).



Figure 39. Phoenix. © Carmen Moran

PELICAN

A mother bird feeding her young with her own blood is a symbol of piety.

CARVINGS OF SYMBOLIC SCENES

There are few symbolic scenes carved on seventeenth-century slabs apart from those taken from the seventeenth-century emblem books written by Francis Quarles (published in separately in 1635 and 1638 and then together in 1639).¹⁵ Quarles's scenes may be found on monuments at Holy Rude, Stirling, Arbroath Abbey, St Andrews Cathedral Museum, and at the Howff, Dundee. See Appendix, section c (p.243). On late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century headstones three main subjects were taken from the Bible, and are as follows:

¹⁵ Francis Quarles, *Emblemes Divine and Moral: Together with Hieroglyphickes of the Life of Man* (London: I.D. for F. Eglesfeild, 1639).

ADAM AND EVE

A list of the Adam and Eve stones which have so far been recorded is given in Appendix, section a (p.240). Adam and Eve are shown either in the Garden of Eden, or in the scene of the Fall of Man (the Temptation), or in the scene of the Expulsion. Only two portrayals are identical: those showing the Fall at Greyfriars, Perth and at Kinfauns, Perth and Kinross. The reason that these stones are important is discussed in Chapter 3; in England it seems that the subject is found on only a few stones, carved small on the tympanum. In Nova Scotia three have been listed; they appear to have been cut by a Scottish mason who emigrated. Figure 18 shows a displaced Adam and Eve headstone in Kells Churchyard, Dumfries and Galloway.¹⁶

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

The scene of Abraham sacrificing Isaac appears on stones at Lundie and Dun, Angus, and in Perth and Kinross at Methven (two), Logierait, Cargill and St Mary's, Grandtully (Figure 40). One which Christison describes (1902)¹⁷ at Blairgowrie, Perth and Kinross, is lost. The scene points to the sacrifice of the Crucifixion and the testing of faith. A list of Abraham and Isaac stones is given in Appendix, section b (p.242).

THE SOWER AND THE REAPER

This is a favourite subject in East Lothian and Midlothian, especially on memorials to farmers (Figure 41).



Figure 40. Abraham and Isaac, St Mary's, Grandtully, Perth and Kinross 1784. [1214462](#).

SYMBOLS OF TRADE

The next set of symbols comprises the tools of trade, carved on late seventeenth-century slabs and headstones, and very popular as a device in the 18th century.

Tools of trade as symbols occur in the catacombs in Rome; they first appear in Scotland in the 17th century. On medieval monuments a representation of a pair of shears is sometimes seen; it is more likely to be a symbol of the shears with which Atropos cut the thread of life than the tool of a trade. By the beginning of the 17th century the trade incorporations were strong, having broken the monopoly of the merchants in local government. Pride in one's craft was shown by the use of the Incorporation's arms, painted on the loft in the church, depicted on banners at the places of meeting, and carried in the annual processions. It is understandable that they should have become a prominent feature on monuments. Once the power of

¹⁶ A detailed consideration of Adam and Eve stones is set out by Betty Willsher in her 'Adam and Eve Scenes on Kirkyard Monuments in the Scottish Lowlands', *PSAS* 122 (1993): 413-4.

¹⁷ D. Christison, 'The Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands, Particularly in Perth, Fife, Angus, Mearns and Lothian', *PSAS* 36 (1902): 280-457.



Figure 41. *The Sower and the Reaper, detail, Pencaitland, East Lothian 1742. 2224355.*

the trade incorporations waned, the practice of carving symbols of trade on memorials was gradually discontinued. Some of the tools depicted are not used today, but examples may be found in folk museums. The range of tools for each trade is given below; the list may not be comprehensive, as happily new examples are still being discovered.

THE HAMMERMEN

This Incorporation was granted the use of a royal crown on its coat of arms; any craft whose work involved the use of a hammer on metal qualified for membership. The Incorporation therefore embraced a wide range of crafts: Armourers, Pewterers, Glovers, Saddlers, Hookmakers, Watchmakers, Glaziers, Cutlers, Goldsmiths, Silversmiths, Coppersmiths, Blacksmiths, Tinsmiths, Gunsmiths and Girdlemakers. However, the crafts belonging to the Incorporation of Hammermen varied not only from place to place but from time to time; a craft might opt to form its own incorporation, for example, the Goldsmiths at Edinburgh or the Glovers at Perth. At Selkirk the Masons belonged to the Incorporation

of Hammermen, but this seems unusual; in other small places the Masons joined with the Wrights. Many trades were content to use the general badge of the Hammermen – the royal crown and the hammer – on their monuments. However, memorials to blacksmiths usually display the specialised tools as well as the crown and hammer and the anvil: these are the pincers, chisel, rasp, file and wiredrawing tool for making nails (Figure 42), horseshoes and bellows.

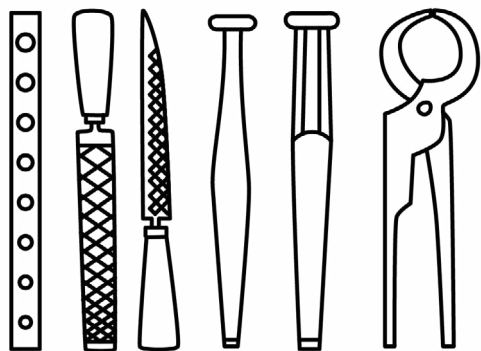


Figure 42. *The Blacksmiths: wiredrawing tool; rasps; chisels; pincers. © Carmen Moran*

THE GLOVERS

Gloves, shears, buckles and objects called stretchers (shown in Figure 43).

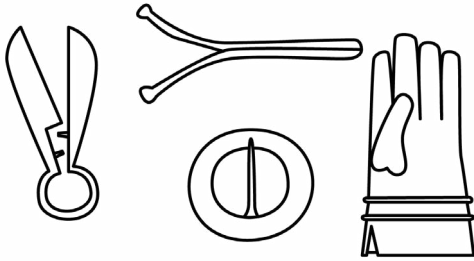


Figure 43. *The Glovers: shears; stretchers; buckle; glove. © Carmen Moran*

THE WEAVERS

Also known as the Websters or Wobsters or as the Brabeners. The most commonly found of their symbols (Figure 44) are the shuttle and the frame, reed and rollers of the loom. Occasionally one finds representations of the scutching-tool, like a one-handed rolling-pin (used for beating the cloth), the creel and the knife. The shuttlecock was used to keep

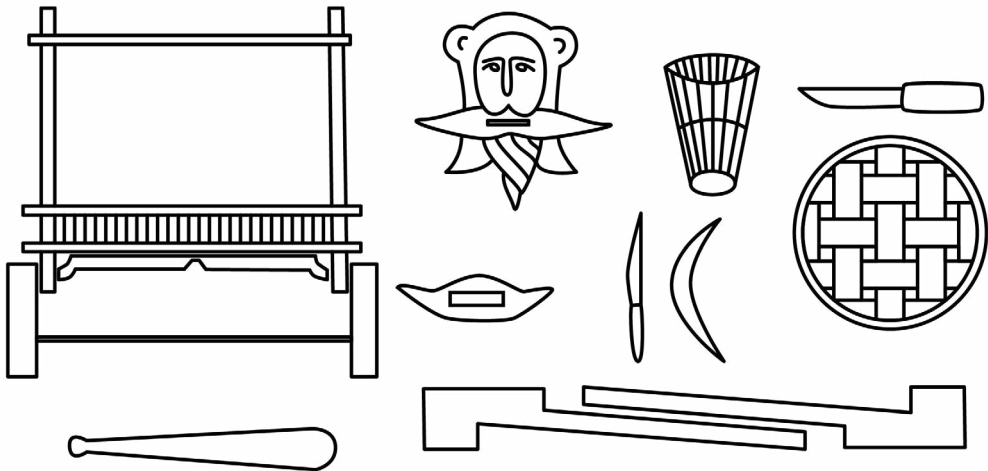


Figure 44. *The Weavers: loom (showing frame, reed and rollers); leopard holding shuttle; shuttlecock; knife; shuttle; knife and creel; wob or web; scutching tool; stretchers. © Carmen Moran*

the warp threads apart. An additional local symbol is found in the Perth and Kinross area: the head of a leopard holding a shuttle between its teeth. The wob or web of cloth is a rare symbol, but the stretchers (known as tenterhooks), which kept the weaving at a uniform width, often appear on stones, and can be seen on the Cocks family slab (see Figure 33).

THE WAULKMILLERS

Woolsack, large wool-shears, mill rind, machinery and fulling-pot. The waulkmill cloth was fullled, i.e., cleansed and thickened by beating and washing (Figure 45).

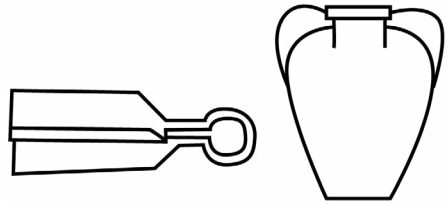


Figure 45. *The Waulkmillers: shears and fulling-pot. © Carmen Moran*

THE DYESTERS

Glove, tongs, press (Figure 46).

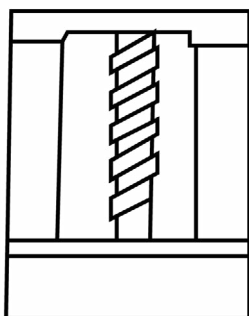


Figure 46. The Dyesters: press. © Carmen Moran

THE COLLIERS OR COALMASTERS

Compasses, picks, plumbline.

THE MILLERS

Represented by sheaves of corn, machinery, and invariably the mill rind (a metal piece which supports the upper millstone) shown singly or as two crossed rinds called the mouline (Figure 47); occasionally scales, millstones and grindstones, picks and brush.

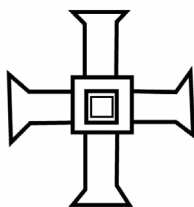


Figure 47. The Millers: mouline. © Carmen Moran

THE BAKERS

Peels (Figure 48) with loaves of bread; scuffle, which is the long-handled tool with a cloth on the end used to clean out the oven; rolling-pins.

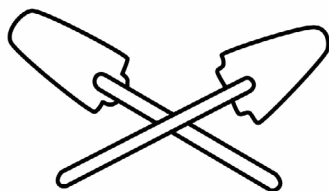


Figure 48. The Bakers: peels. © Carmen Moran

THE SHOEMAKERS OR CORDINERS

A cordiner's knife, nippers, sole-cutter, awl (Figure 49), a crown, straight knife, pliers, lasts.

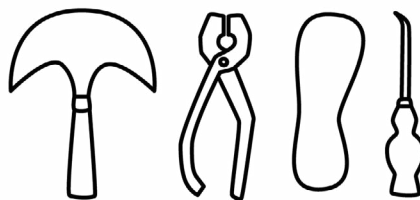


Figure 49. The Shoemakers: cordiner's knife; nippers; sole-cutter; awl. © Carmen Moran

THE MALTMEN

The maltman's large grain shovel, tongs for handling peat, etc, slatted shovel (the mash-oar) for stirring the mash, and the fire-hook or weedock used to push broom peat and wood into the fire (Figure 50).

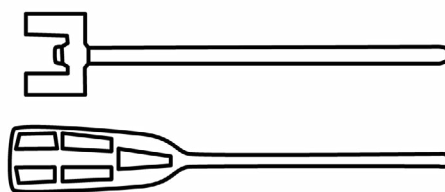


Figure 50. The Maltmen: fire-hook and mash-oar. © Carmen Moran

THE BREWERS

Barrels of ale; the garbe (a sheaf of corn).

THE COOPERS

Dividers; hammer (Figure 51).

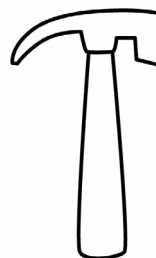


Figure 51. The Coopers: hammer. © Carmen Moran

THE TAILORS

A goose, which has a curved handle, pressing-iron with straight handle, pressing-board, shears, bobbin, needle, pin, thimble, rule (Figure 52).

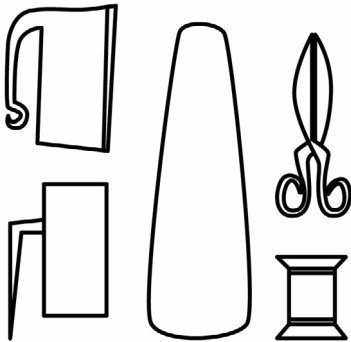


Figure 52. The Tailors: goose; pressing-iron; pressing-board; shears; bobbin. © Carmen Moran

THE FLESHERS OR BUTCHERS

Axe, cleaver, knife, sharpener on hook, animals (Figure 53).

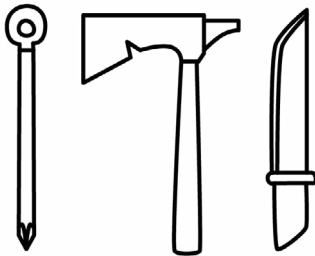


Figure 53. The Fleshers: sharpener; axe; knife.
© Carmen Moran



Figure 54. Headstone to a wright, Dunnichen, Angus 1782. 2225684.

THE WRIGHTS

Dividers, square, hammer, axe, saw (Figure 54). Shipwright (Figure 11).

THE MASONS

The three castles (in Figure 55); the trowel, dividers, square, mell (a mallet), wedge, level (in Figure 56).



Figure 55. Headstone to a mason, detail, Ruthven, Angus 1823. 799410.

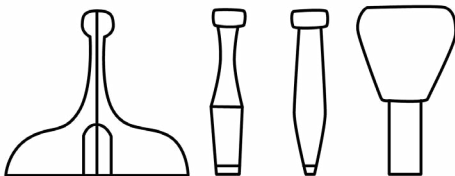


Figure 56. The Masons: level; wedges; mell.

© Carmen Moran

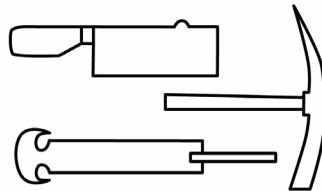


Figure 57. The Slaters: slater's knife; hammer;

draw knife. © Carmen Moran

THE SLATERS

Slater's hammer, slater's knife, draw-knife (Figure 57).

THE MARINERS

Ships of many types, anchors, rope, compass, sextant, cross-staff, (Figure 58) also mermaids.

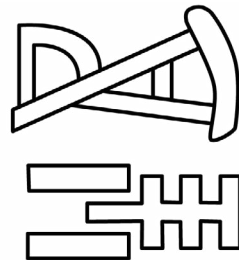


Figure 58. The Mariners: sextant and cross-staff.

© Carmen Moran

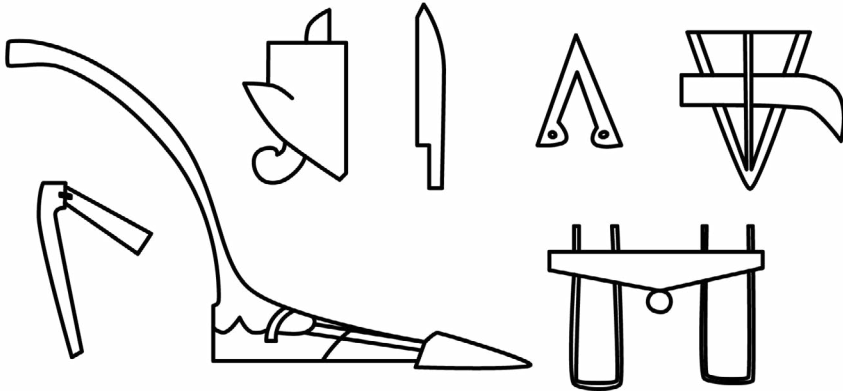


Figure 59. *The Farmers: flail; caschrom; three types of socks; coulter; swingletrees.* © Carmen Moran

THE FISHERMEN

Boats, fish, oars, nets. ‘Lax fisher’, sometimes found in inscriptions, is the name for a salmon fisher.

THE FARMERS

Usual symbols are the sock and coulter of the plough, which were vital metal parts of the old wooden plough, carved together or separately (regional variations exist). Ploughs are also common; ploughing scenes are mainly found in Ayrshire. Other symbols representing farmers are the flail, caschrom (foot plough), swingletrees, yokes, harrows, sheaves of corn and occasionally horses or cows. (Figure 59). The butterchurn and the cheese press are rare symbols.

SHEPHERDS

Crook, sheep and dogs.

GAMEKEEPERS

Guns and powder flask, fishing rods, dogs, birds.

GARDENERS

Spade, rake, sneading knife (for pruning bushes and trees), measure-reel, flags, garden produce (vegetables and flowers), trees.

FORESTERS

Trees, sometimes lopped, axe and sneading knife.

GROOMS

Lamp, brush, the fleam (an instrument for bloodletting, Figure 60).

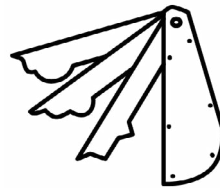


Figure 60. *The Grooms: fleam.* © Carmen Moran

FOWLERS

Powder flask, gun and trap.

THE BARBERS

Razors, combs, wigstands, bleeding bowl.

THE MERCHANTS

Scales (Figure 61), pen and book; compass, sextant, etc. were used to indicate sea trade; also the particular articles in which they traded.

Most common is the merchant’s ‘4’ sign: this was the mark of the Arms of the Stirling Guildry and seems to have spread out from that region in the 18th century as a symbol for merchants. It may be shown in the reverse



Figure 61. The Merchant Headstone, Monikie, Angus 1756. 948327.

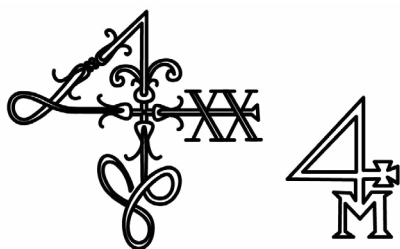


Figure 62. Merchants' signs. © Carmen Moran

position; it may have crosses on the end of the arm or at the bottom of the vertical stroke; the letter 'M' is sometimes added. This sign was used to mark bales of merchandise in medieval times and may have originated from the banner of the Agnus Dei; perhaps this is suggested by its shape (Figure 62).

On memorials to professional men, the following symbols have been found:

MINISTERS

The Bible.

SCHOOLMASTERS

Books, pen, ink-stands, penknife, desk, globe.

MUSICIANS

Musical instruments.

ARTISTS

Brushes, palette.

DOCTORS, PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS

Only one known example of the symbols depicting a surgeon's tools has been found, which appears at Greyfriars Kirkyard, Edinburgh.

SOLDIERS

Weapons of various sorts.

PORTRAITS

An important section of carvings which has not yet been mentioned is the personal portrait. On many stones the tradesman himself was depicted at work: the weaver at his loom, farmer and goadsman ploughing, tailor with goose, blacksmith and apprentice at the anvil, hammers in hand. Alternatively, the mason may have carved a full-figure portrait of the deceased or of man and wife, of mother and daughter or of all the children of a family. It is possible that this practice developed from the tradition of effigies on grand tombs. In the Scottish Borders the profile study to the waist was favoured, often with book in hand. The entire face of a headstone may carry a portrait of a full figure in high relief (Figure 63) or there may be a small profile, like a shadow portrait, tucked into the top space of the tympanum.



Figure 63. Headstone, Castleton, Scottish Borders c.1750. **948319**.

METHODS OF PRESENTATION

The masons followed current trends in art styles and adapted them. The new styles seem to have been introduced in the larger centres first, and moved into the rural and more remote areas at varying rates. The carvings on headstones of the 18th century in the Lowlands were more ornate, varied and numerous than those on the monuments north of the Angus and Perth and Kinross borders and in the Highlands. In many Lowland regions the carvings and inscriptions on both east and west faces are unique, a feature of Scottish headstones only. Some styles seem to have been copied from the great Renaissance mural monuments, but the general influence of Baroque art is also clear. The pediment was often used to present the winged soul, death's head, angel or a portrait; the inscription was cut on the central face and framed by pilasters of the Corinthian, Doric or Ionic types. However, there are so many individual and bastardised renderings that they elude classification. Columns in full relief, or demi-columns, may take the place of pilasters or lesenes. On some stones there are termin caryatids, i.e., female busts or three-quarter figures used as supports. A pair of torches, up and down at either side of a stone face, makes a frame. Another Scottish practice was to inscribe the initials of the Christian names of those who had died down the left-hand side of the face, and the surname initials down the other (see Figure 54). Foliage in high relief may frame a lunette or form a cartouche. Each stone is a work of art, finely balanced and strong in meaning. Symbols are often displayed on ribbons, with tassels at the end, either horizontally or vertically. In the Scottish Borders (and elsewhere) skull and bones may stick out from a draped pall. Again, tools of trade or symbols of mortality

are shown in trophies, i.e., bound together in a bundle by a ribbon. Swags and festoons of fruits and flowers decorate stones, a popular feature in East Lothian, and large leafy designs may frame carvings or inscription, or even make the shape of the stone.

SHAPES OF HEADSTONES

The top shape of the headstone varies greatly. Rodger (1983)¹⁸ suggests that certain styles may be related to chronological period. Only when many more complete surveys of graveyards have been completed will it be possible to discover whether the styles are regional, or merely a very local mason tradition. Early seventeenth-century headstones had square or rounded tops, but those of the 18th century took a great variety of shapes. Masons used the round top with shoulders, the inverted (or the double inverted) ogival shape, by using a pair of ogees, the 'S' shape, or volutes, which are spiraliform scrolls; souls or skulls sometimes make the top shape. In parts of Clackmannanshire and Stirling stones of a double width are shaped like the heads of double beds. Some masons preferred a triangular pediment, with finials of carved orbs, or pineapples. In the 19th century the urn and the cross were often used as finials.

BORDER DESIGNS

Some of these designs are traditional: interlace; the egg and dart; bead and reel; the vine pattern; Jacobean strapwork; scalloped bordering; beaded moulding; twining stem, leaf and flower. In some churchyards examination of several slabs with similar leafy

border patterns reveals such a complexity in the designs that it is hard to describe the differences, but each is different. There are geometric designs, such as variations of the bell pattern and of spiral patterns. But what is striking is that the inspiration of each mason has been at work; study the borders on the stone cut by the mason at Kirkton of Monikie (see Figure 61), and you can only marvel at the complexity and ingenuity.

LETTERING

On monuments of the 16th and 17th centuries the inscriptions are often in Latin, or a mixture of Latin and Scots. The lettering is in Roman capitals and is raised, sometimes in high relief (Figure 64).

There is usually a stop after each word in the form of a dot or a lozenge. Before 1616 the inscriptions were carved marginally, around the edge of the stone; then horizontal inscriptions were cut on the centre face. Often both forms are found on one slab. The letter 'W' appeared as overlapping 'V's; the 'J' as 'I'; 'U' as 'V'; there were commonly ligatures,

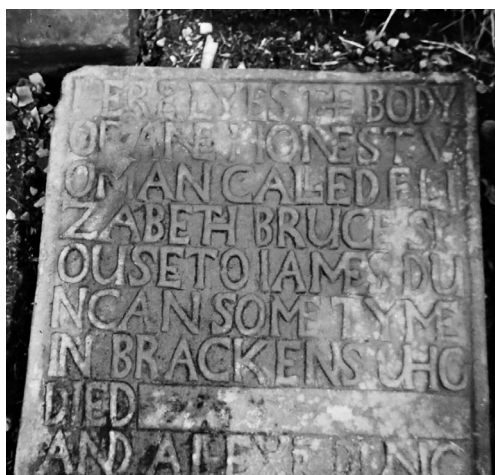


Figure 64. Seventeenth-century lettering, flat stone, Turriff, Aberdeenshire. 2227956.

¹⁸ Robin H. Rodger, 'Carved Headstones of Eighteenth-Century Scotland'. Dissertation, Dept of Art History, University of St Andrews (1983).

i.e., the binding of the two uprights of letters (Figure 64); e.g., the word 'THE' often appears as 'TE'. Occasionally 'LL' at the end of a word is cut as 'L'.

These practices died out at the beginning of the 18th century, but the overlapping 'V' form of 'W' is found as late as 1750. The eighteenth-century cutter incised the inscriptions, often in italic script, with a mixture of upper- and lower-case letters (see Figure 61). The letters were not always correctly carved. There seems, for example, to have been a widespread practice of cutting 'N' in the form 'N'.

Words were often carried on to the next line without reference to syllables. As the lettering is a good way of grouping stones which may be the work of the same mason it is important to note features which deviate from the norm. Two letters given curving shapes are 'd' and 'h', thus 'd,h'.

Another which is given a curving shape is 'g', written in various squiggles, and 'w' in lower case often appears as 'v' (Figure 64).

About the middle of the 18th century cursive or copybook writing was introduced; some letters have loops instead of single up-and-down strokes, and to a greater or lesser degree the letters are joined (Figure 65).

Sometimes the writing is sloped. In the last quarter of the 18th century many different styles were used. Writing masters in the towns and the printing of books of calligraphy gave new scope for the exercise of individuality in inscriptions on stones. A flourish, called a striking, consisting of the continuation of the end of a letter in an ornamental manner, became much used, as did the serif (the fine stroke at the top or bottom of a letter). Towards the end of the 18th century the words 'Erected' or 'In Memory of' appeared in Gothic lettering. At the beginning of the 19th century the era of

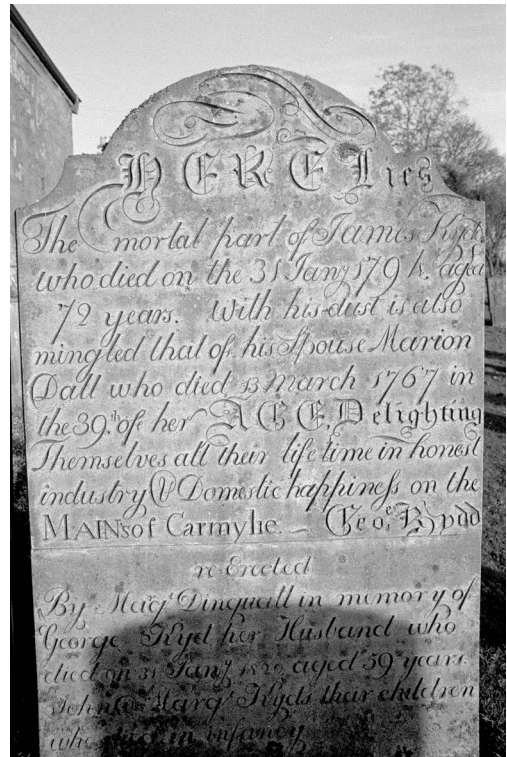


Figure 65. Copperplate inscription, headstone detail, Carmyllie, Angus 1810. [948328](#).

the writing manual was superseded by that of the type book. Typefounders' catalogues and specimen sheets became available, and were followed by lithographed books of 'historic ornament'. All sorts of new forms were tried out, such as Egyptian, Tuscan, Gothic and Latin, in a series of types in which the proportions of letters were altered (Figure 66). Burgess (1963) writes:¹⁹

An ebullient creation of type forms is a phenomenon of the Victorian era, and now purist reaction to many of its excesses has developed more sense of proportion, it has become possible to give it serious study.

¹⁹ Burgess, *English Churchyard Memorials*: 214.

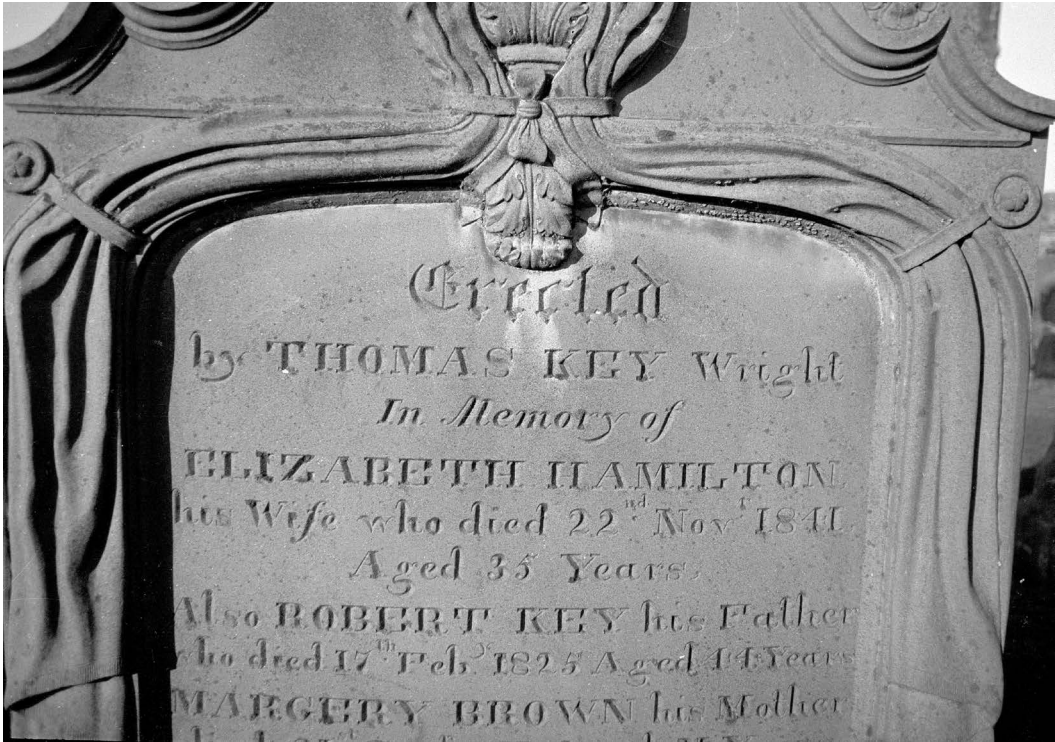


Figure 66. Nineteenth-century mixed inscription, St Andrews Cathedral Burial Ground, Fife 1841. 948318.

To emphasise the names in an inscription, masons made use of strong block letters of the 'slab-serif', and to make shadowing effects letters were cut back into the stone face (Figure 66). An amazing range of lettering styles may be found in a single inscription.²⁰

HERALDIC AND PSEUDO-HERALDIC DEVICES

This subject is a specialised one but is of interest to genealogists, archaeologists and historians, as well as to individuals. The influences of heraldic devices may be seen

on stones where the shield is carved with the mantling and helm, but lacking arms; initials or tools were placed in the shield (see Figure 32). Some masons carved supporters. In the Girvan area, centaur-like creatures are depicted on eighteenth-century stones, and must surely have had a local source of inspiration. Traces of coloured paint have been found on seventeenth-century stones, and it seems that in both the 17th and 18th centuries carvings of all sorts were painted. The masons took great trouble to carve the heraldic devices correctly. Those interested in the heraldry on gravestones could read *Scots Heraldry* by Sir Thomas Innes of Learney (1934).²¹

²⁰ An overview of Scottish lettering styles is set out by George Thomson in 'Research in Inscriptional Palaeography (RIP): Scottish Tombstone Lettering 1241-1855: Methodology and Preliminary Analysis', *PSAS* 131 (2002): 349-373. See the Bibliography for details of Thomson's extensive lettering-related research.

²¹ Sir Thomas Innes of Learney, *Scots Heraldry: A Practical Handbook on the Historical Principles and Modern Application of the Art and Science* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1934).

EPITAPHS

Epitaphs, as opposed to informative inscriptions, have long been a subject of interest, but in recent years have not been given the attention they deserve. That may be partly because books of humorous epitaphs are popular while serious epitaphs are regarded as morbid and depressing or dismissed as doggerel (which they sometimes are). It is doubtful whether some of the funny ones quoted in modern collections ever appeared on Scottish monuments. In Presbyterian Scotland, death was too serious a subject for such treatment, although it was treated less seriously in England. Andrew Jervise notes this comment from the minutes of the Kirk Session at Brechin in 1619:²²

The Session considering that monie abuses are admittat in making epitaphs be zoung men in this citie affixing on burial stanes anie thing they ples, partlie rediculous and partlie ontrew, ordain that no epitaph shall be put on any monuments without the approval of the session.

Humour is, however, to be found, but it is usually unintentional.

Using the books by Monteith (1704 and 1713), Rogers (1872), Jervise (1875 and 1879)²³ and others, it would be interesting to trace the

sources of some of the better known epitaphs. Some of the earlier ones were of literary merit. By the 18th century the standard had dropped and the variety increased; it is obvious that many were purpose-written by the local schoolmaster, minister, tutor, or someone with rhyming skills. Some epitaphs are eulogies, some are messages of grief or of comfort; some refer to the trade of the deceased. Usually the religious philosophy of the day is expressed in the lines, and the significance of the carvings may be made explicit. Sometimes a local or national event is described. In fact, as the following quotations show, epitaphs may be of interest to the historian. The first is from an unpublished work by James Thomson ('The Book of the Howff', which he compiled in 1843)²⁴ and is a reminder of the body-snatchers; the second, of a local disaster, and of a family of national fame.

*Here lies Nothing.
The Impious Resurrectionist
At night dared to invade
This quiet spot, and upon it
Successful inroads made
And when to Relatives the fact
Distinctly did appear
The stone was placed to tell the world
There's nothing resting here
(Stone 938, the Howff, Dundee)*

*Above two centuries ago, John Mylne, Master Mason of James VI, rebuilt the ancient bridge over the Tay opposite the High street which a dreadful inundation swept away 14 10 1621. Robert Mylne erected this in 1774 to perpetuate his ancestors.
(Greyfriars Burial Ground, Perth)*

²² Willsher does not record where she found Jervise's note of the 1619 Kirk Session at Brechin.

²³ Robert Monteith, *An Theater of Mortality, or, The Illustrious Inscriptions Extant upon the Several Monuments, Erected over the Dead Bodies...Suburbs* (Edinburgh: Heirs and Successors of Andrew Anderson, 1704); Monteith, *An Theater Of Mortality, or, A Further Collection* (1713); Charles Rogers, *Monuments and Monumental Inscriptions in Scotland*, 2 vols (London: Griffen and Co., 1872); Andrew Jervise, *Epitaphs and Inscriptions from Burial Grounds and Old Buildings in the North-East of Scotland with Historical, Biographical, Genealogical, and Antiquarian Notes, also, An Appendix of Illustrative Papers*, 2 vols, (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1875-1879).

²⁴ James Thomson, 'The Book of the Howff', unpublished manuscript (1843), held in Dundee Public Library.

Some epitaphs are common to Scotland and England. The following example is to be seen at Elgin, Moray, on a glover's stone of 1687, and a more Anglicised version on a memorial at Stanwick, Northamptonshire.

*This warld is a citie
Full of streets
Death Ye mercat
That a' men meets
If life were a thing
that monie cold buy
The puir cold not live
And ye rich wold not die.*

Others were in use in the 16th century and continued to be cut on stones in the 18th century. The first example is from Monteith (1704):²⁵

*Ah me! I gravel am and dust
A painted piece of living clay
Man be not proud of thy short day
originally St Cuthbert's, Edinburgh 1594)*

*Stay passenger, consider well
For Thou ere long with me must dwell,
For you and I are clay and dust,
And to the grave descend all must.
O painted piece of living clay,
Man be not proud of Thy short day.
(Fowlis Easter, Angus 1712)*

*A useful study might be made of the epitaphs which endured (including those of the 19th century), and of the geographical spread of the most popular. Only a suggestion can be given of possibly the most common in the Lowlands on eighteenth-century stones; the following appear, with variations, in many regions:
See passenger as you pass by
As ye are now so once was I*

*As I am now so must you be
Remember man that thou must die.
(St Fillans, Forgan, Fife 1793)*

*O fatil death, o crule death
What meaneth the to rage,
For to cut of young tender plants
And pass by cricket age
(Kettins, Perth and Kinross 1667)*

*Tho Boreas blasts and Neptun's wave
Have tossed me to and froe
Yet by the order of God's decree
I harbour here below
Where now I ride at anchor sure
With many of our fleet
Waiting on day to sett sail
My Admiral Christ to meet
(Inverkeillor, Angus 1739)*

*For neither airt though fine, nor skill ere
can
Exime us from the common lot of man.
Since it is so that all we hence must pass
And die like to the flowers, and to the grass.
(Kinnell, Angus 1731)*

*If doctors drogs or medsons
Or ought from death could save
Shour this woman had not gone
So shoon down to the grave
(Meigle, Perth and Kinross 1775)*

*Here lyes a hermless bab,
Who only came and cryed
In baptism was washed,
And in three months old he dyed
(Monifieth, Angus 1734)*

Variations on this theme are the likening of babes to roses or flowers, and their death to a way to Heaven. The blacksmith's epitaph, found also in England, begins:

*My sledge and hammer lie declined
My bellows now have lost their wind
(Botriphnie, Moray 1835)*

²⁵ Monteith, *An Theater of Mortality* (1704): 76.

Most people have their favourite epitaphs and there must be many fine ones that are not recorded. Epitaphs are a medium of communication between the past and present, and arouse feelings of empathy, pity, tenderness, grief, admiration, curiosity and amusement. It is moving to read an epitaph that commemorates a hero or heroine. It may be equally moving to decipher an inscription that evokes the

character of a seemingly ordinary person – but, on reflection, not ordinary, because the life of each one of us is unique. It is strange to think that, because these stone pages still remain to be read by the living, those who died long ago are not forgotten. Inscriptions are indeed a subject to be taken seriously; they offer far more than the simple genealogical information for which they are usually studied.²⁶

²⁶ Betty Willsher considers the character of epitaphs at length in her book, *Epitaphs and Images from Scottish Graveyards* (Edinburgh: Canongate Press, 1996), also known by the title as it appears on the cover: *Scottish Epitaphs*.

Chapter 3.

Recording and Studying Graveyards

The graveyard offers a widely useful collection of information about the community of the parish, presented on the monuments within the church and churchyard. Normally the stone bears the date when it was made (or its date can be assessed), the age and sex and, frequently, the occupation of the deceased person, with further information about family members. The inscriptions and carvings provide material for a wide field of research. Many people admit to deriving a melancholy pleasure from prowling round a graveyard, but possibly few realise that a graveyard survey is a valuable research tool.

HOW TO CARRY OUT A GRAVEYARD SURVEY

What does the surveying of a graveyard entail? First of all, in Scotland, permission to carry out a survey must be obtained from the owner of the graveyard.¹ You should check if any statutory protections or special designations apply to the graveyard and whether your survey methods mean that permission must also be gained from the relevant regulatory bodies.² The Minister and the Kirk Session, where applicable, should be informed of the recording plans and encouraged to participate. The Recording Manual contains full details of methods, so only a summary is given here.³ A standardised procedure is advocated. Some people may

¹ If you are unsure who owns a graveyard, contact your Local Authority Cemetery Manager in the first instance. The Church of Scotland (Property and Endowments) Act 1925 transferred responsibility for most Church of Scotland graveyards over to local authorities. As a result, the vast majority of graveyards in Scotland are owned and maintained by local authorities. However, a number of graveyards remain in the hands of religious institutions, national heritage bodies, private trusts, private commercial ventures or private individuals. The person or people undertaking graveyard maintenance may, in some circumstances, not be the actual owners of a graveyard.

² A graveyard or burial ground may be covered by a range of cultural and natural heritage designations. For example, all or part of a site may be a scheduled monument, listed building, conservation area, World Heritage Site or a historic garden or landscape. If a graveyard, any of its gravestones, or other features are listed or scheduled, then this will determine the type of recording you may complete and whom you need to contact for advice and permission to record. Historic Scotland have produced a free electronic leaflet, 'Working in a scheduled or listed graveyard or burial ground', which can be downloaded from: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationid=e3b90bb8-af68-42da-b949-a58e00c70ad3> or from the document list at <https://www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/projects/scottish-graveyards/>. Contact your local authority planning department to find out whether your graveyard is affected by the following designations: listed buildings, conservation area, World Heritage Site or local designated historic garden or landscape. Contact Historic Environment Scotland to find out if your graveyard is a scheduled monument or a national designated historic garden or landscape. Contact NatureScot to find out whether any natural heritage designations affect your graveyard.

³ Betty Willsher published what she called her Recording Manual, *How to Record Scottish Graveyards: A Companion to Understanding Scottish Graveyards* (Edinburgh: Council for British Archaeology Scotland) in 1985 in conjunction with Archaeology Scotland (formerly the Council for Scottish Archaeology). The Recording Manual still contains much valuable advice but the methods recommended do not take into account the significant technological developments which have occurred over the last 40 years. More up-to-date guidance on gravestone and graveyard recording is freely available from <https://www>.

think that it is necessary to record only old stones of particular value and appeal, but this provides a mere fraction of the information needed for the procedure of recording to be of real value.

It is necessary to plan well ahead, with the intention of recording in summer. The person who inaugurates the project should find out what previous surveys have been made, and what records about the church and churchyard are available. A prepared outline of this information will encourage potential helpers.

A meeting may then be called with a guest speaker who is an enthusiast on the subject; the objectives would be to arouse interest, to explain what the work entails, and to discover the particular skills and interests of the volunteers. It is essential to find a photographer who can be available at the right time of day and has suitable technical knowledge. A count of the stones must be made, with notes made of those that are carved or inscribed on more than one face. Volunteers can then discuss and assess the extent of the survey.

It is advisable that a total survey of the churchyard be made since what may seem of little interest today will make the history of tomorrow as values change and stones decay or are destroyed. A complete record is needed for whatever branch of research is to be carried out.

Before the survey is started much useful preparatory reading can be done.⁴ The main library for the district may house many local records and copies of old newspapers.⁵ Memorial inscription transcripts are of great value, both in the help given in deciphering inscriptions and in the references to relevant sasines, testaments, etc., for each parish.⁶ Some libraries have the volumes dealing with their area. Information regarding the allotment of lairs and of burials may be held by the Kirk Session. The Statistical Accounts of the parish may prove useful as well. A few examples of the many books written about churches is given in the bibliography, and these should be sufficient to help an enthusiastic recorder at first. All these

[archaeologyscotland.org.uk/projects/scottish-graveyards/](https://www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/projects/scottish-graveyards/). A further significant change since 1985 is the greater awareness of the need to take health and safety precautions and to make risk assessments to ensure safe working when carrying out graveyard surveys. Health and safety training is an important element of recording work that should be broached with all volunteers at the earliest possible stage. Since 2000 there has been an increasing appreciation of the risks posed to all graveyard and cemetery users by the presence of unstable gravestones. The Health and Safety Executive is aware of several serious accidents, including fatalities, across the United Kingdom due to falling memorials, and as a result local authorities are undertaking memorial stability testing programmes to identify and make safe dangerous gravestones. Historic Environment Scotland has produced a free electronic leaflet 'Health and safety in historic graveyards: Guidance for works teams and volunteer workers, including volunteer surveyors', which can be downloaded from: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationid=da85d7c6-77a9-4d79-891e-a58e00db622f> or from the document list at <https://www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/projects/scottish-graveyards/>.

⁴ For guidance on how to use documentary sources to investigate graveyards see Gareth Wells and Bruce Bishop, *Researching Your Graveyard* (Edinburgh: Historic Scotland TCRE Group in conjunction with Archaeology Scotland Carved Stones Adviser Project, 2005), a free reference report available at <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationid=be86eae2-3d51-4433-8fab-a59800bb903a> or from the document list at <https://www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/projects/scottish-graveyards/>.

⁵ Many libraries offer their members free access to online newspaper databases and genealogical research websites.

⁶ See Chapter 1 footnote 15.

books contain further and more detailed bibliographies for anyone who wants to research a topic more fully.⁷ In the absence of a comprehensive Scottish volume for general background reading, Frederick Burgess's *English Churchyard Memorials* (1963) is recommended.⁸ It provides a history of monumental art, details of the imagery of the symbols, and contains extensive study of English mason work and monuments.

The Recording Manual was written not only to help anyone wishing to carry out a survey, but to encourage enough standardisation to enable comparative work to be done. A form should be filled in for each inscribed and carved face on every stone.⁹ The importance of photography is stressed because clear photographs of all inscribed and carved faces provide a useful basis for analytical studies in several disciplines, as well as providing a clear visual record, especially valuable in view of the current fast deterioration and loss of stones.

Making a plan of the graveyard before any recording begins is perhaps the most demanding job. Whichever method is used this should result in an accurate plan, marked with all buildings, monuments, paths, bushes, trees, walls and other features.

Cleaning gravestones must be undertaken with great care. Guidance on the appropriate methods and the hazards of doing this controversial job should be carefully studied beforehand. Scientists make a special plea that wholesale cleaning is not undertaken, as the lichens that grow on the stones are of much interest.¹⁰

Each stone should be given a unique reference number before the recording work begins. The job of the recorder is to copy out the inscriptions in exactly the form they appear, including misspellings and other mistakes, and with the identical line-breaks. This is done on the form already referred to above.

When the information on all the stones has been recorded and photographed, the record should be duplicated, and a summary prepared, to make the survey available for others to use. Normally, one set of records remains at the church, one in the library archives department, and a third should be lodged in the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE) managed by Historic Environment Scotland.

⁷ A further valuable bibliography for Scottish gravestones and graveyards is contained within 'Future Thinking on Carved Stones in Scotland', Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (ScARF): https://scarf.scot/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2016/08/fr10_6.pdf.

⁸ Frederick Burgess, *English Churchyard Memorials* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1963). Excellent introductions to Scottish gravestones written since 1985 include Sarah Tarlow's national overview of commemoration trends, *Bereavement and Commemoration: An Archaeology of Mortality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), and Flora Davidson and Elspeth Reid's regional survey of Angus gravestones, *The Post-Reformation Gravestones of Angus: Scottish Social History in Stone, 1560-1715* (Angus: Forest Lodge and The Strathmartine Trust, 2017).

⁹ A selection of gravestone and graveyard recording forms, recording manuals and guidance notes is freely available from <https://www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/projects/scottish-graveyards/>.

¹⁰ A wide range of information about caring for gravestones, including cleaning stonework, is freely available from <https://www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/projects/scottish-graveyards/>. For information about graveyard lichens contact the British Lichen Society and the Scottish Churchyard Lichens Group <https://britishlichensociety.org.uk>.

THE VALUE OF GRAVESTONE SURVEYS

To whom will the information from an accumulating number of such surveys be of interest? What use might be made of it? Locally, the population should have the record as part of its heritage, to be added to existing archives. In addition many specialists make use of such records. Local historians, for instance, may wish to write a book on the parish; a large part of its history is held in the story of the church, the churchyard and the monuments.

A good example of how history and genealogy interrelate is *The Monikie Story* (1982) by W.D. Chisholm, which gives an account of families whose memorials are in Monikie Churchyard.¹¹ A genealogist can find much of value in a graveyard, because few of the old Parochial Registers give adequate records of deaths. Some inscriptions may provide missing links – for instance, where there is a gap in the registers, or where people have moved from the parish or emigrated, or where foreigners have died in Scotland. For example, at Crail, Fife, a headstone commemorates a Dutch sailor who was drowned when a trading ship was wrecked.¹² Some stones, or sets of stones, record generations of a family while others commemorate local characters or those who found fame.

Information of interest to several disciplines may be extracted from the record. For example, in the Recording Manual a table has been drawn up for analysing the trades and occupations of those who lived in the parish; thus, from the returns from graveyard surveys, one might study changes in occupation over the centuries. Other aspects to consider might be the records of infant mortality, ages at death generally, sizes of families and indications of social distinctions. Changes in customs and religious philosophy are also reflected in the carvings and inscriptions.

Whatever branch of research is undertaken, a variety of resources is available. A list of useful reference books is given in Further Reading, section c (p.252). Copies of old Parochial Registers for the parish may be held at local libraries or in the archives department of the central library of the region, or the nearest university library. In many districts work has been done which is relevant; for instance, under the former Manpower Services Commission monumental inscriptions from all the Moray graveyards were recorded, and are filed under surnames and areas in a card index to name-references in old copies of local newspapers. The National Records of Scotland holds church records, and indexes of testaments and sasines.

Each survey will add to the pool of information which, when it is eventually analysed, may be used by archaeologists who are interested in the physical remains

¹¹ W. Douglas Chisholm, *The Monikie Story* (Dundee: Published by the author, 1982). Other strong examples of local histories developed from gravestone recording and research include Gullane and Dirleton History Society, *Life and Death in Dirleton Parish: A Social History Derived From Kirkyard Memorials*, (Dirleton, 2009); the Kirkmichael Trust's work at Kirkmichael Church, Resolis in the Black Isle available at <https://www.kirkmichael.info/>; and Dunfermline Heritage Community Project's research on the Dunfermline Abbey Churchyards available at <http://www.dunfermlineheritage.org/graveyard-history.html>.

¹² Headstone 13 in Erskine Beveridge, *The Churchyard Memorials of Crail: Containing a Full Description of the Epitaphs Anterior to 1800, together with Some Account of the Other Antiquities of the Burgh* (Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable, 1893): 240.

of the church and churchyard, by demographers studying the population of the local community or a wider area and by artists, teachers and others who find topics of interest in this material.

THE APPLICATION OF GRAVEYARD AND GRAVESTONE SURVEY DATA

A survey may be made of the site to locate changes in boundaries and buildings, changes that might reflect intensity or antiquity of use or even areas allocated to particular communities. By plotting the type and position of the monuments it may be possible to show relationships between the type of monument and social status. The layout may be examined to find out how this relates to lair allotment. At St Mary's, Leith, for example, the ground was allotted on the same plan as the lofts in the kirk, each trade incorporation being given a certain area. At the Howff, Dundee, there was a special place for the Brabeners (Weavers). At Careston, Angus, space was reserved for each farm in the parish.

Materials used for stones could be plotted on a time scale, and the source of stone investigated as a means of finding out more about local trading patterns and discovering when and from where foreign stone was imported. Drawing on data from all sources, a plan of the churchyard may be made showing its development, using a different coding for monuments in each period of fifty years. The incidence of memorial survival by date can be shown by making a histogram with the number of stones on the vertical axis, and dates along the horizontal axis. In places where there have been earlier surveys of monuments, and where burial records exist, the percentage of those families commemorated by memorials may be worked out for the period. Examples of such tables are given in the Recording Manual.

However, it must be stressed that gravestones do not provide complete records. The loss of a large proportion of monuments, and the probability that until the mid 19th century the majority of those who died did not have a memorial stone, must be taken into account. In order to show the dangers when drawing conclusions from an analysis of data from gravestones, an example is taken from the Recording Manual. A life-expectancy table was made from information on monuments at Glamis, Angus, and the results are discussed.

A CASE STUDY: LIFE EXPECTANCY AS INDICATED BY THE MEMORIALS AT GLAMIS

COMMENTS ON THE LIFE-EXPECTANCY TABLE AND FIGURES 67 AND 68

Table Showing Life Expectancy as indicated by inscriptions, Glamis Churchyard, Angus 1700-1899

Age at death	1700-49	1750-99	1800-49	1850-99
0-4	23	20	48	28
5-14	-	3	23	7
15-24	4	5	21	20
25-34	2	5	21	25
35-44	5	3	20	18
45-54	2	7	20	13
55-64	2	7	14	20
65-74	1	6	17	23
75-84	-	2	9	30
85-94	-	3	5	10
95-105	1	-	-	2*
Total	40	61	198	196

* These two people were both 100 years old.

The figures used in the Table Showing Life Expectancy have been taken from the Scottish Genealogy Society's records of *Pre-1855 Gravestone Inscriptions in Angus*, vol. 1.¹³ It should be appreciated that there are no sources used in this analysis other than this book. As post-1855 inscriptions are also given, because they relate to families whose names are already recorded, it seemed suitable material to illustrate the point here. It was considered impossible to analyse the life expectancy from deaths recorded in the 18th century, as the records were insufficient in number. The numbers in the first 50 years of the 19th century (Figure 67) are almost equal to those in the years 1850-1899 (Figure 68). No entry was made of deaths which occurred abroad. Such a limited example is not a proper basis for analysis, but it will serve as an example for comments. Conclusions cannot be drawn from these tables for the reasons listed here:

¹³ Alison Mitchell, *Pre-1855 Gravestone Inscriptions in Angus*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Scottish Genealogy Society, 1979).

1. The memorials represent only those families who had enough money to pay for stones; they were probably better fed and better housed than other families who were too poor to afford them, factors which would affect life expectancy.
2. As it seemed important to show the incidence of infant mortality, the division 0-4 was made, which was out of line with the other age ranges. It is certain that the number of deaths of children aged 0-4 constituted a far greater proportion than is indicated in the table.
3. A far more reliable method of calculating life expectancy would be to use the figures from Old Parochial Registers where deaths and ages have been recorded, and sometimes the cause of death given. Arbroath Register has detailed lists of deaths for 1825-1854. Old Luce Parish, Dumfries and Galloway, has a full register of deaths (1732-1820) with separate entries for deaths of children. Many old parochial records have registers of deaths in the first half of the 19th century; from 1855 it was compulsory to register deaths, so accurate figures are available.
4. A country parish might have very different life-expectancy figures from those in a city parish. It is very important not to generalise from such specific examples as those given here; nevertheless, it could be that the difference in the shapes of the two histograms might be reflected in parallel histograms made for other country parishes.
5. Loss of stones by damage or removal affects the information available about the population. In fact the figures at Glamis show this problem clearly.

A graveyard survey provides limited information that may be used to supplement other records, or it may become part of a wider research programme, but what is just as important is that it provides a great deal of local and general interest about the area in the past.

THE VALUE OF GRAVESTONE SURVEYS TO ART HISTORIANS

There is much to interest art historians, who might like to make a study of the types of monuments used over the centuries, especially as fashions at any given period vary from region to region. Eventually it should be possible to assess the rise and fall in popularity of the types of monuments and to compare the results for different regions. In his study of pre-1707 monuments in the Laich of Moray (1966) John di Folco dated the earliest headstone as 1690, and found that this type of stone did not widely replace the tablestone until the beginning of the 18th century.¹⁴ He found that in this region trade insignia were not common in the 16th and 17th centuries. In the north and northwest of Scotland most of the stones are plain, with only dates and initials cut on them.

¹⁴ John di Folco, 'Kirkyards in the Laich of Moray: An Illustrated Survey', *PSAS* 99 (1968): 215. Examples of earlier headstones in Scotland are to be found at Dunning, Perthshire, dating to 1623 and 1624. See also Angus Graham's discussion on the introduction of headstones in Scotland: 'Headstones in Post-Reformation Scotland', *PSAS* 91 (1960): 1-9.

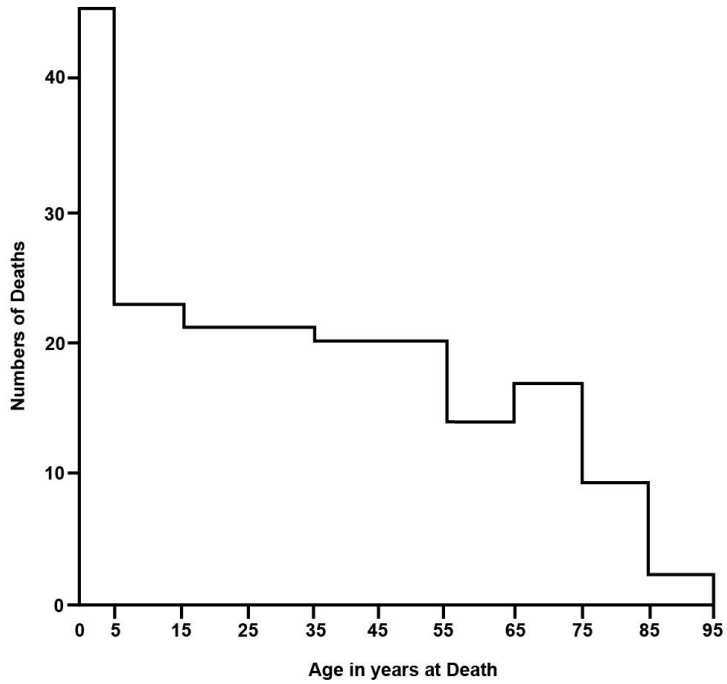


Figure 67. Histogram of life-expectancy from monumental inscriptions, 1800-1849, Glamis Churchyard, Angus.

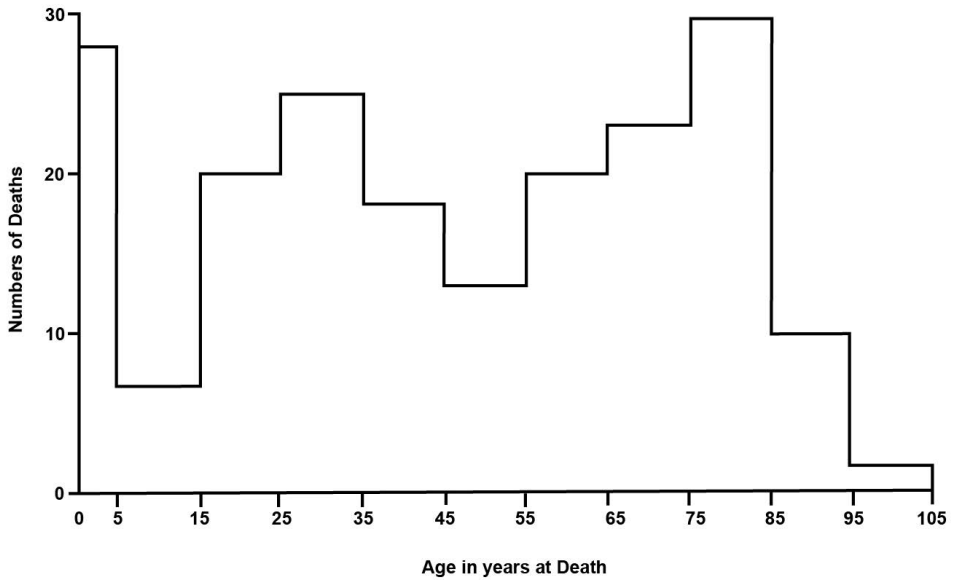


Figure 68. Histogram of life-expectancy from monumental inscriptions, 1850-1899, Glamis Churchyard, Angus.

Classification of folk art is difficult because of the imaginativeness of interpretation by individual masons – its very charm and strength. The relationship between the symbols of death and those of immortality may be indicated by their relative positions on the stone. For instance, in Angus and in Perth and Kinross in the 18th century, the death symbols are usually at the bottom of the face, and the winged soul or angel of the Resurrection at the top. The sole use of one or other, considered with an accompanying epitaph, may be meaningful.

Carvings of symbolic scenes are a special feature of Scottish eighteenth-century stones. It seems that the range of carvings of Adam and Eve dates from late 17th century to the end of the 18th century, and that the geographical spread is wide. There are certain features which are found on almost all the representations, whether of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, of the Fall or of the Expulsion. Adam is depicted with Eve on his left. Usually the figures are shown wearing fig-leaf bands or aprons, introduced for delicacy's sake but, strictly speaking, an anachronism in scenes of the Fall, for Adam and Eve were then still naked. It is possible that some local sources may be found to account for the high incidence of this scene. By the 18th century many medieval churches were replaced by new buildings and few wall paintings in the old churches remained. Other possible sources might therefore be illustrated books used for teaching the scriptures: Rodger (1983)¹⁵ suggests woodcuts used on funeral broadsheets. The scene could have been on pottery or carved on wooden pew-ends as well as on furniture. A cupboard at Rosslyn Chapel has a depiction of the scene. The scene of the Fall of Man inscribed on the banner of the Gardeners at Montrose is said to have been painted on the loft of the Tailors at Crail Church, and appears on a fifteenth-century bronze alms-dish in the church at Fowlis Easter, Angus. See Appendix, section a (p.240) for a list of Adam and Eve stones.

Depictions of Abraham and Isaac are localised and for these a single source may more easily be found. See Appendix, section b (p.242) for a list of the stones.

At present analyses of symbolic scenes may be for interest only, but they will be invaluable as the records become fuller. More recent work for example has identified several new carvings influenced by the published work of Francis Quarles (1639).¹⁶ See Appendix, section c (p.243) for a list of these carvings.

¹⁵ Robin H. Rodger, *Carved Headstones of Eighteenth-Century Scotland*. Dissertation, Dept of Art History, University of St Andrews (1983).

¹⁶ Frances Quarles, *Emblemes Divine and Moral: Together with Hieroglyphickes of the Life of Man* (London: I.D. for F. Eglesfeild, 1639).



Figure 69. Monument to the Second Duke of Queensberry, Durisdeer Church, Dumfries & Galloway 1711. **1157367**.

TRACING THE WORK OF INDIVIDUAL MASONS

Perhaps the most fruitful and one of the most interesting lines of research is the tracing of the masons. Since the 1920s much work has been done on this aspect of gravestone study in the United States, with enormous success.¹⁷ It is now possible to make tours of cemeteries in New England, for instance, and follow the development of the work of named cutters of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Most of them were local men; a very small proportion of the earlier stones are signed. The research has been done by matching the stones, and from archival material. Some masons were emigrants from Scotland. But virtually nothing has been done in this area of research in Scotland. Even in the case of prestigious sixteenth- and seventeenth-century monuments the guidebooks tend to be vague. The Queensberry monument at Durisdeer is certainly firmly assigned to the Dutchman, Van Nost¹⁸ (Figure 69); but the Skelmorlie Aisle, of the 1630s, may have been designed abroad but executed by local craftsmen.¹⁹ The tomb of George, Earl of Dunbar, in Dunbar Parish Church is considered by Colin McWilliam (*Lothian*,

¹⁷ In the United States of America interest in churchyard memorials was first aroused in 1927 by Harriette Forbes's book, *Gravestones of Early New England and the Men Who Made Them 1653-1860* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1927). By June 1976 there was sufficient interest and information to hold the Dublin Seminar, attended by 116 scholars, curators, preservationists and dedicated enthusiasts from as far away as California, Georgia and Nova Scotia. The purpose was 'to give visibility and inter-disciplinary focus to the study of Puritan gravestone symbols and art work'. This was a field limited in the past to genealogists and antiquarians, but which now increasingly attracts the attention of anthropologists, archaeologists and art and social historians. One of the outcomes of this meeting was the appointment of a committee to form the Association for Gravestone Studies. The success of this Association is indicated by the steadily increasing membership, the successful annual conferences, the flood of articles and books on all aspects of the subject, and the regular newsletters to members four times a year.

¹⁸ See for example John R. Hume, *Dumfries and Galloway: An Illustrated Architectural Guide* (Edinburgh: RIAS, 2000): 54.

¹⁹ Historic Environment Scotland, *Statement of Significance: Skelmorlie Aisle* (Edinburgh: Historic Environment Scotland, 2024): 28, available via <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationid=3d7a72ab-8016-47e1-b289-a7ca00df2f5a>.

Except Edinburgh, 1978)²⁰ to be English work. Flora Davidson and Elspeth Reid's *The Post-Reformation Gravestones of Angus* (2017)²¹ may be a useful start for a search into the identity of the cutters in Angus, where some of the workmanship on the seventeenth-century slabs is of a high quality.

The thousands of carved eighteenth-century stones present an almost untapped source of folk art. It is clear that the work was for the most part done by local men and not by full-time specialists in monumental sculpture. Some of the stones may have been cut by men of a different craft, for example wrights, but the term 'masons' is used for convenience. It was not the practice of the cutter to identify himself by name or by mason mark, though one recorder found a mason's mark on the headstone to John Leyburn at Mochrum, Dumfries and Galloway, 1739, in the form of 'Å4'. He advises other recorders to look at the bottom right-hand side of stone faces. However, many of these stones have sunk; others resting against walls are too heavy to move, and therefore it is not possible to examine the hidden faces. Practice carvings are sometimes found at the base of the stone, the part which was previously under the ground. The calligraphy, and the individuality of the carvings, sometimes quite skilled, sometimes crude, suggest that very rarely did a family go far from its own parish to find a stone cutter.

In attempting to group the stones which might be the work of a particular mason or of that mason and his apprentice, there are some useful pointers. The mason tended to use the same range of symbols, although he varied the arrangement. His designs show distinctive features, for example, the feathering of the winged souls, or the noses of the skulls, but again with small variations. The lettering may reveal some distinctive clues, but inscriptions cut by an apprentice, or cut at a later date, must be noted. They may represent additions or the revision of a family stone by a descendant. Occasionally a mason used a favourite device on a number of stones as, for example, the flaming heart used within the diamond border by the Monikie mason (see Figure 61); and in the Stracathro area of Angus where a cutter favoured a plant emerging from a plant pot and running up the panel in a leaf and stem design. When a particular group of stones in an area has been linked, the discovery of a monument to a local mason (or to one of his family) would be extremely valuable. At Pert, Angus, the Adam and Eve headstone is erected to the daughter of the mason, John Annandale, and other stones cut by him are identifiable.

Another useful line of research might be to identify the influences that inspired the designs of monuments: the Baroque and its later phase, the Rococo; the classical revival; the work of, say, Sir William Bruce at Holyrood; or of the Adam family, and

²⁰ Colin McWilliam, *Lothian, Except Edinburgh* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978): 181. The 2024 revision of this work identified that the Flemish sculptor Maximilian Colt, who settled and worked in England, created the monument of George Home, the Earl of Dunbar. Jane Geddes, Ian Gow, Aonghus MacKechnie, Chris Tabraham and Colin McWilliam, *Lothian*, Pevsner Architectural Guides: The Buildings of Scotland (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2024): 305.

²¹ Flora Davidson and Elspeth Reid, *The Post-Reformation Gravestones of Angus: Scottish Social History in Stone, 1560-1715* (Angus: Forest Lodge and The Strathmartine Trust, 2017).

of those architects who designed local buildings.²² Those who are interested might list decorative features such as symbols, border patterns and heraldic devices which may have been models for cutters of monuments. These designs may appear on furniture, pottery, metalwork, pew-ends, fireplaces, decorated or painted ceilings, door lintels, on dress materials, tapestries, in book illustrations or chapbooks, as well as on older monuments in cathedrals, abbeys, churches and/or churchyards in the region.

VICTORIAN GRAVESTONE DESIGN

Recognition of the worth of the best of Victorian monumental work has recently been shown in the founding of societies to care for private London cemeteries. The Friends of Highgate Cemetery was founded in 1975; in 1976 Pinewood Ltd bought the land and encouraged the Friends in their efforts to combat the enormous damage done by years of neglect and by vandalism. Research on the monuments and masons has been undertaken, and the growing interest of the public is shown by the numbers who take the guided tours on every day of the week. In 1981 Hugh Meller, the Historic Buildings Representative of the National Trust, brought out *London Cemeteries: An Illustrated Guide and Gazetteer*.²³ This book makes one look with new eyes on nineteenth-century monuments, as does Alexander Welsh's 'The Glasgow Necropolis' (1979).²⁴ This gives the fascinating history of the Necropolis from the time it was first thought of by the Merchant House of Glasgow, as well as an appraisal of the more prestigious monuments. Welsh writes that the Necropolis 'is in places more akin to a graveyard for late lamented architectural styles than a cemetery for the deceased inhabitants of the city'. He ascribes its pre-eminence as a cemetery to the 'combination of substantial investment, strict control, and a willingness to solicit and apply expert advice'. It is interesting that each of the pedestal monuments erected from 1833 until the advent of granite (brought by rail from Aberdeen in the 1860s) was unique; i.e., no two were alike. This was because they were cut from sandstone by hand in the tradition, if not the styles, of the previous century. Welsh describes the succession of styles that predominated – Neo-classical, Egyptian, Romanesque, Baroque, Elizabethan and Tudor – and contrasts the styles of monuments cut in sandstone and in granite. Huge cast-iron monuments by George Smith & Co. appeared in 1870 (Figure 70). Recently

²² Examples of research on the architects, builders and design influences for high status Scottish graveyard monuments include Aonghus MacKechnie, 'Skelmorlie Aisle, Largs: Its Symbolism, Form and Functions', *Innes Review* 71.2 (2020): 202-236; Aonghus MacKechnie, 'Durrissdeer Church', *PSAS* 115 (1987): 429-442; Cristina González-Longo, 'James Smith and Rome', *Architectural Heritage* 23.1 (2012): 75-96; Cristina González-Longo, 'Robert Mylne and the First Baroque Mural Monument in Greyfriars Kirkyard, 1675', in Peter C. Jupp and Hilary J. Grainger (eds) *Death in Scotland: Chapters from the Twelfth Century to the Twenty-First* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2019): 147-169.

²³ Hugh Meller, *London Cemeteries: An Illustrated Guide and Gazetteer* (Amersham: Avebury Publishing, 1981).

²⁴ Alexander Welsh, 'The Glasgow Necropolis'. Dissertation presented to the Mackintosh School of Architecture, Glasgow School of Art (1979): 30, 37 and 64.



Figure 70. Early monuments, the Necropolis, Glasgow. 1004165.

bronze tablets from these handsome memorials have been stolen and there is other evidence of vandalism.

Such was the interest in this great cemetery that in 1878, in one month, 12,400 citizens and 1333 visitors came to view it. One reason for such interest was that outstanding architects and sculptors of the age had designed and executed monuments there. Their names were inscribed on the grand tombs and so it became a practice for nineteenth-century masons to sign their work. At the Necropolis there are several costly tombs designed by John Bryce, as well as work by the eminent sculptor, Mossman. Other examples of acknowledged work are John Rhind's late nineteenth-century effigy of the Duchess of Wemyss in the church at Aberlady, East Lothian, and Thomas Hamilton's Gibsone Mausoleum in the Old Pentland Burial Ground, Loanhead.

THE FUTURE OF OUR HISTORIC GRAVEYARDS

Now that the local authorities have the responsibility of keeping churchyards in order and of dealing with dangerous monuments, perhaps there is a feeling that, beyond maintaining an interest in the upkeep of one's family grave, there is nothing to be done, or nothing that can be done, to protect the churchyard, especially as

the Church may no longer be interested. But the enthusiasm that can be generated among the local population by a group recording a local churchyard is surprising; what belongs to the community is again recognised as its own, and the care, the conservation and even the restoration of the monuments may become not only a concern but an actuality.²⁵

The greatest need at the present is to make surveys and to protect vulnerable stones and it is hoped that before most of the old stones are lost, records will be made in all regions, even if research has to wait. An increasing number of people are taking digital photographs of the monuments, including making three-dimensional digital models.²⁶

The use of digital technology and IT enables research workers to bring a new dimension to the understanding of folk culture and social history once data from surveys all over the country are assembled. Comparative analysis is critical to develop our understanding of commemorative practices as part of life in the past. The extensive research on the identity of and the work of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century cutters in America is a good indication of what might be done in Scotland. Many years ago Edwin Dethlefsen, former Professor of Anthropology at the College of William and Mary, Virginia, recognised the potential of data from gravestones. With his colleague James Deetz, Dethlefsen made an initial study from a photographic collection into the incidence of death's heads, cherubs and willow trees, analysing by decade their relative popularity through the times represented by the cemetery.²⁷ He presented the results in graph form, showing each design during each ten-year period. This showed the date of the initial appearance of the design, its maximum popularity, and its disappearance. The result presented the well-known battleship-shaped curve, 'the mainstay of seriation methods'. It showed that cherubs replaced death's heads over the entire area, but that this occurred progressively earlier in time with distance from certain centres of Puritanism. There were various interpretative aspects, an important one being that Dethlefsen and Deetz were able to show that the replacement of one motif by another was a function of changes in religious values, combined with significant shifts in views regarding death. The death's head represents death, but the cherub is the immortal component in man. This provides an exciting parallel with the situation in Scotland: a shift in emphasis from a preoccupation with the inevitability of death to a stress

²⁵ The number of communities across Scotland becoming involved with caring for their local graveyard is growing at an encouraging rate. Examples include Logie Old Kirkyard Trust, Stirling; Kirkmichael Trust, Black Isle; Friends of Glasgow Necropolis; Dundee Howff Conservation Group and the Friends of Warriston Cemetery, Edinburgh.

²⁶ Technological advances in recording since 1985 include pioneering work with 3-D laser scanning, which can record gravestones to an extremely high degree of detail and uncover information that simply is not visible to the naked eye. More widely available technology includes digital photography and survey techniques such as photogrammetry, Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) and Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR). For free guidance on using RTI to record gravestones and graveyards see <https://www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/RTI-Guide-Gravestones-Clara-Molina-Sanchez.pdf>.

²⁷ Edwin S. Dethlefsen and James Deetz, 'Death's Heads, Cherubs and Willow Trees: Experimental Archaeology in Colonial Cemeteries', *American Antiquity* 31.4 (April 1966): 502-510.

on the hopefulness of resurrection after death. This is shown by the prominence of symbols of mortality on seventeenth-century monuments. Flora Davidson found very few angels of the Resurrection on pre-1707 slabs in Angus.²⁸ In the 18th century the winged soul and the angel came to take pride of place, and the death symbols were usually carved at the bottom of the headstones. Epitaphs emphasise this change in philosophy. The warning ‘*Memento Mori*’ of the 17th century gives way to ‘The trumpet shall sound and the Dead shall arise’ of the 18th century.

This book has attempted to show that the recording of graveyards is of value to archaeologists and demographers, historians and art historians, as well as being of interest to any Scots who care for their neighbourhood, its past and its future. The effects of weathering and of wilful and accidental damage may be seen in many of the illustrations in the present volume. Figure 71 shows the pediment of the handsome mural tomb of Thomas Bannatyne erected in 1635; this finely carved piece lay on the grass near the tomb for several years.²⁹

Scenes such as that in Figure 72 may be found in many graveyards. There are thousands of monuments of all ages under threat. The peril of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century monuments is particularly disquieting, but as a reminder of the wide range of interesting monuments that deserve to be properly looked after, Figure 73 shows the two medieval stones at Fowlis Easter, Figure 74 an example of Victorian sculpture at Ayton, Scottish Borders, and Figure 6 a typical twentieth-century cross.

Although some emphasis has been placed on the need to record graveyards, the interest alone of those who cannot, or do not wish to, take part in practical work is of great importance. Their concern will spread; it will help to combat vandalism, and will show the local authorities that the community places a just value on the churchyard and its monuments. Recently there has been a heartening growth of



Figure 71. Collapsed top part of mural tomb of Thomas Bannatyne, Greyfriars, Edinburgh 1635. 1232750.

²⁸ Flora Davidson, *An Inventory of the Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus* (Arbroath: Privately published by the author, 1977): 3.

²⁹ On 24 April 2004 the Greyfriars Kirkyard Trust celebrated the completion of repair work on the Thomas Bannatyne Monument, and the carved pediment proudly surmounts this newly conserved mural tomb. In July 2022, Edinburgh World Heritage, the City of Edinburgh Council and the Friends of Greyfriars Kirkyard commissioned AOC Archaeology Group to laser scan this and five other mural monuments at Greyfriars Kirkyard. The scans will be used to create 3-D digital models for research, preservation by record- and condition-monitoring purposes.



Figure 72. Fragments of stones, Falkland, Fife. [2227895](#).



Figure 73. Medieval stones in Fowlis Easter Graveyard, Angus. Photograph © Iain Miller, used by kind permission.



Figure 74. Undated memorial, Ayton, Scottish Borders. [948326](#).

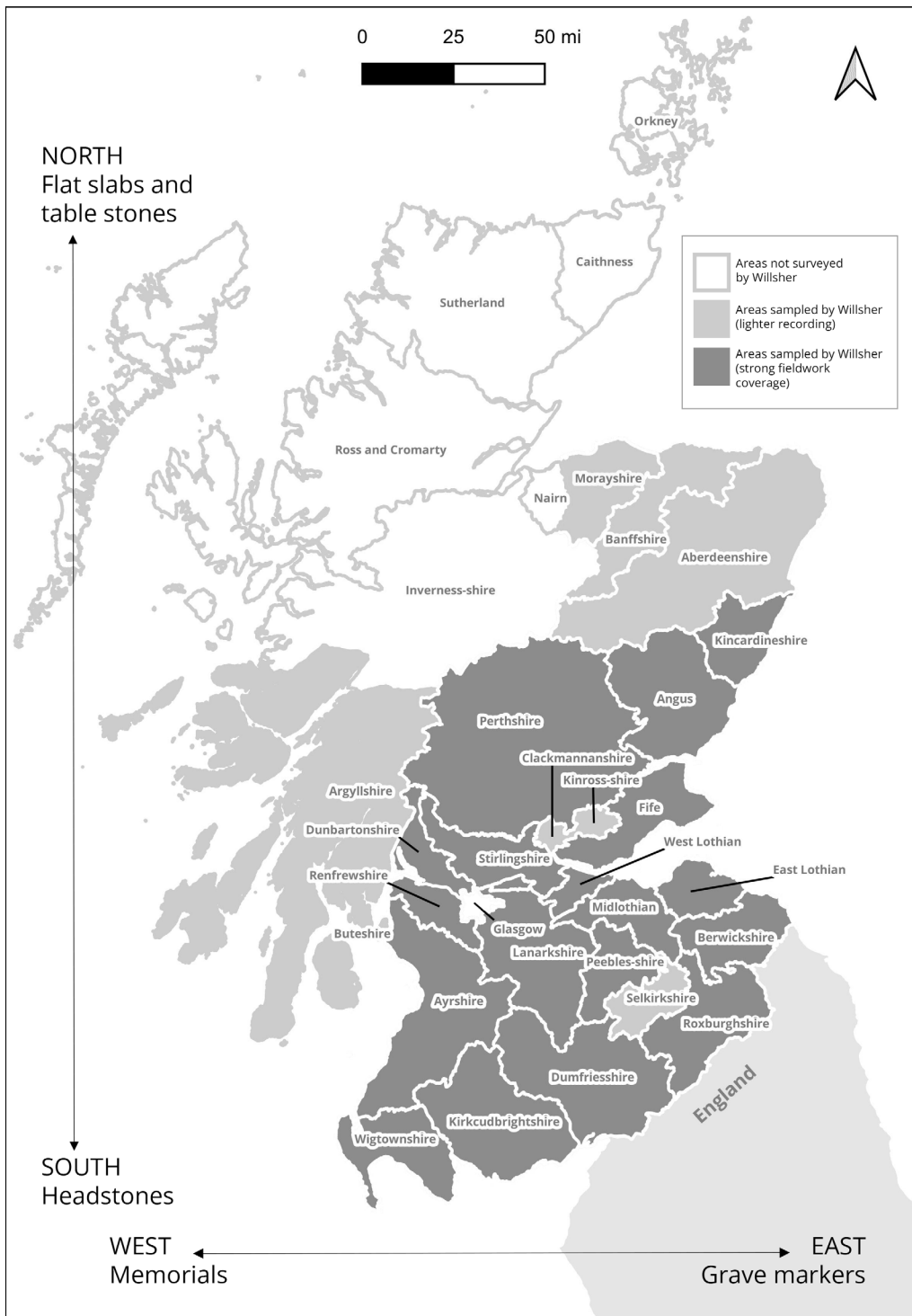
interest. Graveyards have become a productive source for school projects, proving to have multi-disciplinary possibilities. A few surveys have been completed and more are being planned. Of those known to the writer there is one for the Parish Church, Markinch, and one for Skelmorlie Aisle, Largs. An ambitious scheme was carried out in Cunninghame District based in Irvine. There a team of young people funded by the former Manpower Services recorded all the graveyards and cemeteries in the district. The Scottish Urban Archaeological Trust recorded the monuments at Greyfriars Burial Ground, Perth, and a survey of Brechin Cathedral Churchyard was made.

Some enthusiasts are asking whether the best of the old stones ought to be taken into museums, or whether special shelters might be erected; others would like to see modern methods of preservation used.³⁰ But conservation must come before preservation, and what happens to each churchyard depends on local concern. There is also a longstanding tradition of collaborative working by local groups and national or regional organisations.³¹ If we do not record and conserve while we can, we fail as guardians of our heritage.

³⁰ Ingal Maxwell, Ratish Nanda and Dennis Urquhart, *The Conservation of Historic Graveyards* (Edinburgh: Historic Scotland TCRC, 2001), Historic Environment Scotland's Practitioners' Guide 2, sets out advice for best practice in graveyard conservation. Further information and advice is available free of charge from <https://www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/projects/scottish-graveyards/>.

³¹ Case studies of collaborative working between local community groups and regional or national heritage organisations are contained within 'Future Thinking on Carved Stones in Scotland', Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (SCARF): <https://scarf.scot/thematic/future-thinking-on-carved-stones-in-scotland-2/future-thinking-on-carved-stones-in-scotland-case-studies/>.

The Regional Guide



Distribution map of the Scottish Counties pre-1975 showing the areas sampled by Willsher

Introduction to the Guide to Scottish Gravestone Symbols by Region

This guide enables graveyard visitors and researchers to recognise different symbols from the 17th and 18th centuries and to understand how representative, or unusual, these may be across Scotland. It is significant that almost no two gravestones of this date are identical. During this period stonemasons drew on common themes and motifs to create uniquely personal designs. The guide adds to the lists of symbols provided in Chapter 2 to give a fuller picture of the range of carvings to be found on Scottish gravestones. This includes, for example, more unusual trade emblems such as those associated with the flax-dresser, glazier, ropemaker, spooner, quaichmaker, bone-setter, candlemaker and eel-fisher. It also draws out the stylistic variations created through regional carving styles and highlights the many ways in which stonemasons could tailor common motifs to create their own particular designs. A carver's interpretation of traditional symbols can be subtle. For example, a winged soul may feature a range of different hairstyles, facial expressions, wing forms or body shapes. The aforementioned characteristics combine to produce a fantastically varied and rich source of vernacular art.

How This Guide Has Been Created

This guide offers a snapshot of current knowledge of eighteenth-century gravestones based on Betty Willsher's field notes and photographs.¹ Remarkably, Willsher visited over 664 graveyards in 29 different counties, mainly within the Lowlands and the northeast of Scotland. Her information is held in the Historic Environment Scotland Archives and is available online at <https://www.trove.scot/archive/1348117>.

At each graveyard Willsher photographed or sketched any carvings she considered of interest as well as capturing examples that were either representative or unusual for the area. Her fieldwork also included stones showing a high quality of workmanship which impressed her or where there was a particular local history interest. For some areas Willsher created a short summary of the regional trends she observed during her fieldwork. Inevitably the information presented in this guide for each region varies. Fife, for example, has received greater examination in part because the region draws a wealth of influences from its neighbouring counties. Equally, Fife contains many localised variations as well as marked trends appearing from east to west of the county.

¹ The symbol guide also includes information from gravestone surveys and research published by other authors. It has been compiled as a desk-top survey, rather than from revisiting the graveyards surveyed by Betty Willsher.

Several areas were omitted from Willsher's field surveys, either because they lacked significant collections of eighteenth-century carved stones (notably Renfrewshire and the west of Scotland) or because they were simply too distant (notably the Highlands and Argyllshire).² Willsher drew on published family history surveys to identify sites to visit where there were significant numbers of eighteenth-century gravestones. Accordingly, she visited some regions extensively while others were more lightly sampled (see map on p.70). The extent of Willsher's fieldwork is noted for each of the areas in this guide.

How To Use This Field Guide

Willsher identified regional gravestone carving styles that broadly correspond to Scotland's pre-1975 counties. For that reason, this field guide is divided into 16 regions, which are organised by the old counties (see the list below and map on p.70 rather than the current local authority areas). Where areas have marked characteristics in common, these have been grouped together.

Field Guide Regions:

Aberdeenshire
 Angus
 Argyllshire and Bute
 Ayrshire
 Banffshire and Morayshire
 Clackmannanshire and Kinross-shire
 East Lothian
 Fife
 Kincardineshire
 Lanarkshire
 Midlothian
 Perthshire
 Scottish Borders (Berwickshire, Peeblesshire, Roxburghshire and Selkirkshire)
 Southwest Scotland (Dumfriesshire, Kirkcudbrightshire and Wigtownshire)
 Stirlingshire and Dunbartonshire
 West Lothian

Each of the 16 regions includes a summary of carvings to look out for by type (mortality, immortality and trade symbols, and examples of symbolic scenes and other carvings). Selected illustrations are complemented by numerous links to photographs held in [trove.scot](https://www.trove.scot), a platform from Historic Environment Scotland.³

² The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (now part of Historic Environment Scotland) provided grants to support Betty Willsher's fieldwork, however these did not include overnight expenses.

³ Historic Environment Scotland assigns a unique ID number to each collection item (e.g., photographs, drawings, plans, etc.) This ID number is a shortcut to access online records when added to the end of the following URL <https://www.trove.scot/archive/<insert collection number>>.

Each region includes a gazetteer of graveyards to visit. Here researchers will find links to the site record held in [trove.scot](https://www.trove.scot) that contains locational information and other graveyard details.⁴ Different gravestone carvings can be compared using this guide's index and hyperlinks, facilitating the study of symbol variation between different stones and places.

Our aim is that this guide will serve as a tool to aid the recognition of regional and national trends and, we hope, to stimulate new recording work and research into eighteenth-century gravestones across Scotland. Willsher's fieldwork took place throughout the 1980s and 1990s and, since then, there may well have been movement or loss of gravestones or changes to the graveyard setting. Future fieldworkers can continue to enhance Willsher's dataset by contacting the [trove.scot](https://www.trove.scot) team via the website.

A National Overview of Eighteenth-Century Gravestone Carvings

In the 18th century each Scottish region possessed its own distinctive carving style, featuring particular types of symbols and designs. There was also a striking difference regarding when headstones first appeared in different areas (see map on p.70). Headstones occur in the north and west of Scotland at a much later date than in Lowland areas. Over the course of the 18th century headstones became extremely popular in southern and central Scotland and were often carved on multiple faces. Yet moving northwards from Angus, eastern Perthshire and Kincardineshire, areas where sandstone was not readily available, their numbers fall dramatically. Here the seventeenth-century tradition of erecting flat slabs, tablestones and, for the more prestigious, mural monuments persisted into the 18th century. In these cases horizontal forms often bore only inscriptions, rather than carved decoration.⁵ Similarly, in west Stirlingshire, Renfrewshire and Dunbartonshire, the fashion for erecting headstones appeared at a much later date than in areas to the east through to Clackmannanshire or to the south through to Ayrshire. No doubt several factors influenced why some areas of Scotland have fewer seventeenth- and eighteenth-century carvings. These include the unsuitability of local stone (in the Highlands, for example, economy of carving was indubitably due to the hardness of the stone), the prevalence of horizontal forms, economics, and lack of craft skills. Another relevant factor is that the tradition in some regions was for stones to be 'grave markers' as opposed to 'memorials'.

In the Borders, East and West Lothian and the eastern counties, and in the north of Scotland, gravestones were used as memorials. In this tradition, a stone would be erected when the first member of a family died and other names would subsequently be added. Where it was not feasible to erect a gravestone straight away, one would be

⁴ On [trove.scot](https://www.trove.scot) individual sites are detailed with a unique number. Site entries include information on location and many give descriptive text, bibliographic references and catalogue details for collection records. The site ID becomes a shortcut to the record when added to <https://www.trove.scot/place/<insert site ID>>.

⁵ See John Di Folco, 'Kirkyards in the Laich of Moray: An Illustrated Survey', *PSAS* 99 (1966): 211-254; and Betty Willsher, 'Scottish Churchyard Memorials in the Eighteenth Century', *The Local Historian* 23.2 (May 1993): 66-84.

erected as soon as possible. This could even be years later, for example in the case of deceased parents. Memorials may provide more comprehensive information about family members than grave markers and usually included more than just the name and date of death. Often, memorials state the trade of the father, as head of the family, the place of residence and an epitaph. They also tend to have more ornate carvings than grave markers, with headstones often decorated on both faces.

Grave markers were used in Central Scotland, Stirlingshire,⁶ Clackmannan, Kinross-shire and west Fife. In this tradition, once a couple were settled and could afford it, they bought a family lair in the churchyard. A stone was used to mark ownership of their burial plot but the names of subsequent burials were not regularly added to this. A grave marker may have been set up when a lair was acquired or at the time of a family death. Often they are inscribed with the phrase 'This is the property of [family names]'. In some cases, the stone also stated the number of lairs (sometimes called rooms, breadths or breeds) which the family plot comprised. Grave markers typically offer little information. Usually, a couple's initials and date are inscribed; sometimes there are two names and a date, or sometimes just the date or only the names. Grave markers may be sparsely carved, if decorated at all. Trade emblems, followed by skulls, bones and hourglasses, tend to be the most common designs on markers, with winged souls hardly ever used.⁷ Most graveyards in Central Scotland contain a mix of grave markers and memorials. As one travels from west to east, the ratio of memorials to markers steadily increases, as does the incidence of decorative carvings, even on grave markers.

Significant regional variations exist within the wide range of Scottish gravestone symbols. In particular, mortality and immortality symbols can differ substantially in their appearance and relative popularity in different areas. By contrast, the design of trade symbols is generally more consistent. However, their frequency of use and the arrangement of symbols within a stone's overall design can also differ from region to region. This variability of appearance was shaped by local attitudes, beliefs and practices. Stonemasons drew inspiration from a pool of commonly understood subject matter, themes and general designs. Yet each mason would adapt this material to his own particular style and ability. Most gravestones were supplied locally, which helped to create distinctive regional variations. A popular mason might supply gravestones across several adjacent parishes and they could also inspire the work of other masons. For this reason, we often find that adjoining parishes in a neighbouring county often share similarities in their carved features.

The 'when' is a vital question to answer to help us better understand the regional and national use of gravestone symbols. Unfortunately, this is an area where little

⁶ In 'Scottish Churchyard Memorials in the Eighteenth Century' Willsher highlights exceptions to this general rule as observed at Holy Rude Stirling and in a few parishes in Stirlingshire bordering other counties.

⁷ Betty Willsher, 'Scottish Churchyard Memorials in the Eighteenth Century': 75.

research has been carried out and published.⁸ We know that some symbols were more common in the 17th than in the 18th century (for example winged skulls or skulls gnawing on bones). However, at present, we lack the comparative studies and chronologies for a more detailed examination of how gravestone designs have changed in style and popularity over time and place. It is hoped that this guide can inspire and inform local gravestone research to start filling these most basic gaps in our knowledge. This is critical to effectively direct the limited resources available to record and protect the most significant and at risk gravestones. We must ensure that such a ubiquitous yet culturally rich facet of Scotland's heritage is better understood before it is too late.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks are given to the community gravestone researchers who assisted the creation of the regional symbol guide by checking hyperlinks, providing photographs and sharing their knowledge of specific gravestones. Several volunteers noted how badly the gravestones had deteriorated since the time of Betty Willsher's fieldwork. They join Archaeology Scotland and Historic Environment Scotland in calling for fellow researchers to retrace and expand on Willsher's work so together we can build a better understanding of how our gravestones are faring to help protect them for future generations to enjoy.

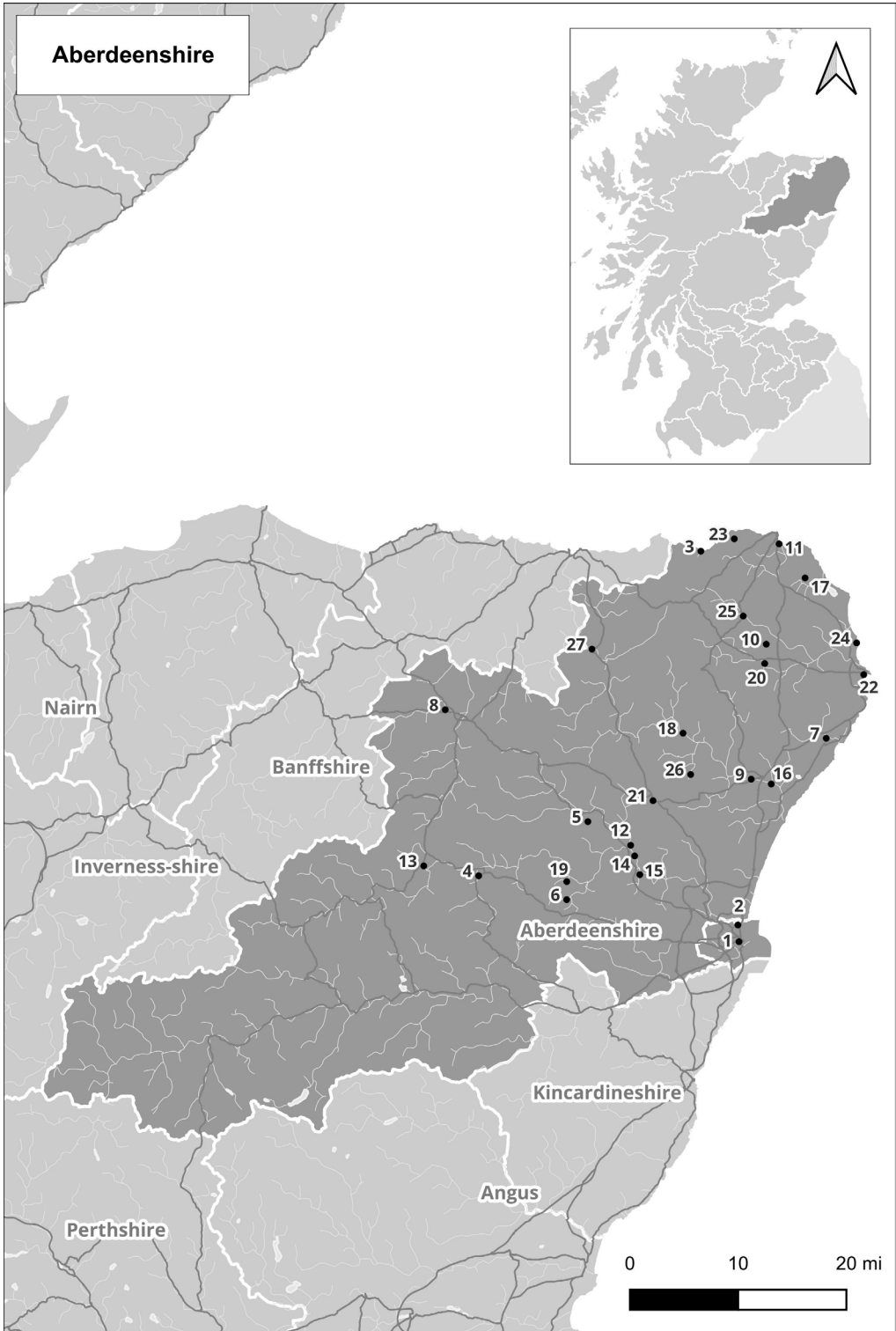
Susan Conaghan
Audrey Dakin
Iain Miller

Mark Hatton
Elizabeth Lockhart

Andrew Medley
Natalie Theresa

Anne Muir
Gareth Wells

⁸ Some limited chronologies of gravestone designs have been created in the past by Elspeth Reid and Flora Davidson, Sarah Tarlow and Angus Graham. See Flora Davidson and Elspeth Reid, *The Post-Reformation Gravestones of Angus: Scottish Social History in Stone 1560-1715* (Angus: Forest Lodge and The Strathmartine Trust, 2017); Sarah Tarlow, *Bereavement and Commemoration: An Archaeology of Mortality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999); and Angus Graham, 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian', *PSAS* 94 (1960): 211-271.



Aberdeenshire¹

Sites to Visit with Interesting Carvings

1. Aberdeen, Church of St Nicholas [174790](#)
2. Aberdeen, St Machar's Cathedral [20216](#)
3. Aberdour, St Drostan's Church [19961](#)
4. Alford West, Parish Churchyard [17520](#)
5. Chapel of Garioch, Parish Churchyard [19027](#)
6. Cluny, Old Churchyard [135634](#)
7. Cruden, Parish Churchyard [20877](#)
8. Dunbennan, Old Parish Churchyard [17885](#)
9. Ellon, Parish Churchyard [20482](#)
10. Fetterangus, Parish Churchyard [20737](#)
11. Fraserburgh, Philorth Churchyard within Kirkton Cemetery [21117](#)
12. Inverurie, Old Churchyard [18885](#)
13. Kildrummy, Parish Churchyard [239774](#)
14. Kinkell, St Michael's Churchyard [18573](#)
15. Kintore, Parish Churchyard [252676](#)
16. Logie Buchan, Old Parish Churchyard [274523](#)
17. Lonmay, Old Parish Churchyard [21128](#)
18. Methlick, Old Parish Churchyard of St Deavanach [19770](#)
19. Monymusk, St Mary's Parish Churchyard [18048](#)
20. Old Deer, Old Parish Churchyard [20560](#)
21. Old Meldrum, Meldrum Parish Churchyard [112857](#)
22. Peterhead, St Peter's Kirkyard [270352](#)
23. Pitsligo, Peathill Old Kirkyard [20792](#)
24. St Fergus, St Fergus Kirkyard [21344](#)
25. Strichen, Old Parish Churchyard [245034](#)
26. Tarves, Old Parish Churchyard [19831](#)
27. Turriff, St Congan's Old Parish Churchyard [19148](#)

¹ Willsher's Aberdeenshire field notes are available online [464240](#).

Overview²

Gravestones in the northeast of Scotland tend to be very plain. The earliest known headstone was found at Kildrummy and dates to 1711.³ Aberdeenshire has relatively few pre-nineteenth-century carved headstones, one of which can be seen at Dunbennan (Figure 75). In common with elsewhere in the northeast, flat, plainish slabs and tablestones predominate.⁴

Nonetheless, what Aberdeenshire lacks in the overall number of its carved stones is more than compensated for in the rich variety of motifs used, as a stone at Logie Buchan exemplifies (Figure 76).

St Peter's, Peterhead is remarkable because it does have hundreds of stones surviving which date from the 18th century, an unusually large percentage of which are decorated. An interesting feature of St Peter's recumbent stones, unusual elsewhere in Aberdeenshire, is that the dimensions of the burial plot are incised on the side face.⁵

Occasionally Aberdeenshire gravestones may display architecturally influenced ornamentation, such as borders of Jacobean scrollwork seen, for example, at Cruden [2227935](#), or the use of scrolls as at Dunbennan (see Figure 75). St Fergus contains several upright early seventeenth-century stones decorated with many fine architectural details that are without precedent in Scottish domestic architecture.⁶ Heraldic carvings are also popular in Aberdeenshire and, along with inscriptions, have provided the focus for several early gravestone surveys.⁷ There are a number of larger monuments at Tarves [1486947](#), St Nicholas in Aberdeen [1468236](#), Alford West [1440910](#) and Ellon [2055186](#).

² Willsher made a partial survey of this area, visiting 17 burial sites in total. To give a sense of regional trends, this summary lists examples of symbols recorded in Willsher's field notes and in other regional surveys. The other surveys consulted were Nigel McDowell, A Survey Report: The Historic Kirkyards of Aberdeenshire, Aberdeenshire Council, unpublished report (1998) and Andrew Jervise, *Epitaphs and Inscriptions from Burial Grounds and Old Buildings in the North East of Scotland: With Historical, Biographical, Genealogical, and Antiquarian Notes, also, An Appendix of Illustrative Papers*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1875-1879).

³ Angus Graham, 'Headstones in Post-Reformation Scotland', *PSAS* 91 (1960): 3.

⁴ Graham, 'Headstones in Post-Reformation Scotland': 1-9; see also F.C. Eeles, 'Ecclesiastical Remains at Cruden and St Fergus, Aberdeenshire', *PSAS* 47 (1913): 470-488.

⁵ McDowell, A Survey Report: 39.

⁶ McDowell, A Survey Report: 41.

⁷ John A. Henderson, *Aberdeenshire Epitaphs and Inscriptions: With Historical, Biographical, Genealogical, and Antiquarian Notes* (Aberdeen: Printed for the Subscribers, 1907) and Jervise, *Epitaphs and Inscriptions from Burial Grounds and Old Buildings in the North-East of Scotland*.



Figure 75. This eighteenth-century headstone from Dunbennan is one of relatively few carved examples within the region. A winged soul is carved beneath two scrolls and above the mortality symbols of an hourglass, a skull and crossbones, a pair of coffins and two deid bells. [2227937](#).



Figure 76. Richly carved with symbols, this flat slab from Logie Buchan is representative of eighteenth-century Aberdeenshire gravestone carvings. Depicted on two rows are the symbols of a deid bell, two angels of the Resurrection (one with a trumpet), a central monogram, an hourglass, an open Bible, crossed gravedigger's tools, a skull with teeth and a coffin. [2227946](#).

Symbols to Look Out For

Mortality

There is a wide range of death symbols like those seen at Logie Buchan (see Figure 76) including **skulls** which may be plain, winged, or depicted gnawing on bones⁸ as at Tarves [1486949](#), crossed or single **bones**, and a selection of **skeletons** such as those at Alford West [1440910](#), Fetterangus, Fraserburgh and Chapel of Garioch.⁹ Other popular symbols are the **weapons of Death** as at Kildrummy, these may take the form of a scythe, a bow and arrow, a dart or axe; a **gravedigger's tools** like those recorded at Methlick [2227947](#); **coffins** as at St Nicholas in Aberdeen [1468237](#); **deid bells** as found at Cruden [2227935](#) and also Dunbennan (Figure 75), symbols which may occasionally be carved in pairs; and **hourglasses**, for example at Pitsligo [1301430](#), which may infrequently be winged. At Kintore there is a rare example of a **winged skull** [1423091](#), unusually depicted alongside a **second skull** (also shown in Figure 78). At Strichen, Willsher observed four gravestones dating between 1727 and 1733, each

⁸ Douglas Simpson suggests in 'The Tolquhon Aisle, and Other Monuments in Tarves Kirkyard; With Some Further Notes on Tolquhon', *PSAS* 80 (1948): 117-126, that Tarves Castle, built in 1596, has the earliest example of a skull gnawing a bone, a motif that subsequently grew in popularity throughout the region.

⁹ Henderson, *Aberdeenshire Epitaphs and Inscriptions*: 233, 261, 278.

with a carved coffin with vertical rather than horizontal spokes (the poles for carrying the coffin).¹⁰ This anomaly prompted Willsher to question whether this was a very rare example of a stonemason's mark.

Immortality

Symbols found include **winged souls** as seen at Dunbennan (see Figure 75), **open books** as at Strichen **2227950**, Kildrummy and Logie Buchan (see Figure 76), **hearts, palm fronds, fruit, foliage and flowers**.¹¹ There are several **angels of the Resurrection**, for example at Fetterangus,¹² Lonmay,¹³ and Logie Buchan (see Figure 76). A pair of kilted angels appears on a table tomb at Pitsligo¹⁴ in a scene which also includes a **Crown of Righteousness**. At Old Deer a Resurrection angel is accompanied by **sword and scales**.¹⁵ An impressively



Figure 77. This recumbent slab at Kildrummy depicts a husband and wife as two naked Resurrection figures. They hold between them what appear to be three deid bells, although Willsher suggests that these may be the points of a crown, which would be more fitting for a Resurrection symbol. **2234571**.

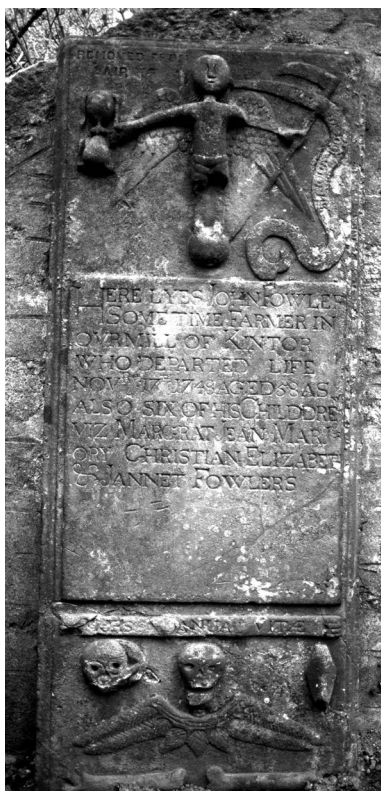


Figure 78. This recumbent slab at Kintore is a rare example of a winged Father Time. He stands on a globe to signify his authority over the mortal world and holds an hourglass in one hand and his scythe in the other. This stone is highly unusual as it depicts two skulls, one of which is winged, but also because it bears an inscription, added at a later date, noting that it was removed from a lair. **1423091**.

¹⁰ Betty Willsher and Doreen Hunter, *Stones: A Guide to Some Remarkable Eighteenth-Century Gravestones* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1978): 37.

¹¹ These symbols are noted as found on gravestones in the Aberdeenshire area in a leaflet published by Aberdeenshire Council, *An Introduction to Aberdeenshire's Historic Kirkyards* (Aberdeen: Aberdeenshire Council, c. 2000).

¹² McDowell, *A Survey Report*: 36.

¹³ Henderson, *Aberdeenshire Epitaphs and Inscriptions*: 66

¹⁴ Aberdeenshire Council, *Aberdeenshire's Historic Kirkyards: Pitsligo Parish Kirkyard* (Aberdeen: Aberdeenshire Council, n.d.), leaflet available online at <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/3984/pitsligoleaflet.pdf>.

¹⁵ McDowell, *A Survey Report*: 37.

large Resurrection angel survives on a mural monument in the church wall at Alford West **1440910**. Meanwhile at Tarves a headstone bears a trumpeting angel with a ribbon flowing from its instrument down to a coffin and hourglass. **Resurrection figures** may also appear on gravestones, holding objects such as deid bells as at Kildrummy (Figure 77) or Father Time's scythe and hourglass, also seen at Kildrummy **223570**.

Trade

Trade symbols appear more frequently in Aberdeenshire from the start of the 18th century¹⁶ and include symbols for **fleshers** (axe, cleaver and knife), **mariners** (anchor, sextant and rope) and **stonemasons** (dividers and square as found at Tarves). It is thought that open books became popular on the gravestones of **clergymen**, replacing the pre-Reformation use of the carved chalice.¹⁷

Symbolic Scenes and Other Carvings

Personified Figures

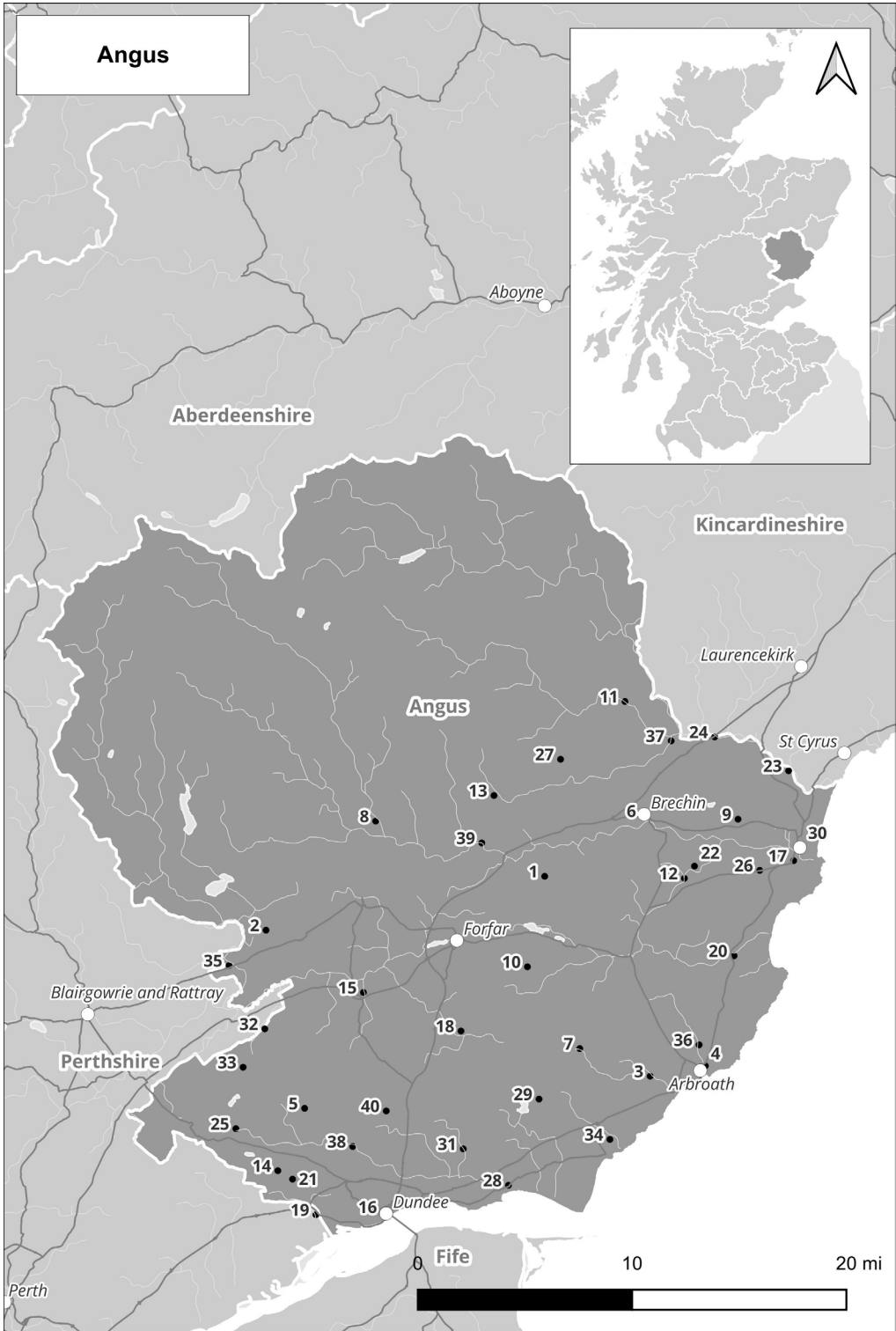
Father Time is depicted on a recumbent slab which has since been propped upright at Kintore **1423091** (also seen in Figure 78). He is standing on a globe with an hourglass and scythe, his wings are behind and beneath his arms and there is an inscription on a scroll to his side. This composition recalls the Resurrection figure at Kildrummy described above.

Portraits

Carved portraits are rarely found on Aberdeenshire headstones so the small full-length girl depicted at Tarves **2227954** is highly unusual. Several examples of portraiture are known on mural monuments including the standing effigies at Alford West **1440910** and the two small figures of a husband **1486945** and wife **1486946** on the corbels of the Tolquhon monument at Tarves **1486947**.

¹⁶ Aberdeenshire Council, *An Introduction to Aberdeenshire's Historic Kirkyards*.

¹⁷ Jervise, *Epitaphs and Inscriptions from Burial Grounds and Old Buildings in the North-East of Scotland*: xviii.



Angus¹

Sites to Visit with Interesting Carvings

1. Aberlemno Parish Church [265674](#)
2. Airlie Parish Church [32369](#)
3. Arbirlot Parish Church [35633](#)
4. Arbroath Abbey [35546](#)
5. Auchterhouse, Parish Church of St Mary [31891](#)
6. Brechin Cathedral Churchyard [193362](#)
7. Carmyllie Parish Churchyard [194253](#)
8. Cortachy, Old Parish Churchyard [32185](#)
9. Dun, Old Parish Churchyard [268559](#)
10. Dunnichen Parish Churchyard [193882](#)
11. Edzell, Old Parish Churchyard [223710](#)
12. Farnell Parish Church [35735](#)
13. Fern, Old Parish Church [33905](#)
14. Fowlis Easter Parish Churchyard [32054](#)
15. Glamis, Old Parish Churchyard [222882](#)
16. Howff Burial Ground, Dundee [33479](#)
17. Inchbraoch, Rossie Island, Braoch Road, Churchyard [36229](#)
18. Inverarity Churchyard [33617](#)
19. Invergowrie, St Peter's Church [31926](#)
20. Inverkeilor Parish Church [35385](#)
21. Kinnaird Castle Burial Ground [227372](#)
22. Liff Old Parish Church [31999](#)
23. Logie Montrose, also known as Church of Logie Churchyard [251816](#)
24. Logie-Pert, also known as Pert Old Parish Churchyard [251817](#)
25. Lundie Parish Churchyard [30543](#)
26. Maryton Parish Church [35668](#)
27. Menmuir Parish Church [251932](#)
28. Monifieth, St Regulus's Churchyard [33407](#)
29. Monikie Parish Churchyard [34560](#)
30. Montrose, Old Parish Churchyard [252409](#)
31. Murroes Parish Churchyard [186630](#)
32. Nevay, Old Parish Churchyard [32154](#)
33. Newtyle Parish Churchyard [30818](#)
34. Panbride Parish Churchyard [80351](#)
35. Ruthven, Old Parish Churchyard [30720](#)
36. St Vigeans Parish Churchyard [35559](#)
37. Stracathro Parish Churchyard [222309](#)
38. Strathmartine, Old Parish Churchyard [224149](#)
39. Tannadice, Old Parish Churchyard [33706](#)
40. Tealing Parish Churchyard [33389](#)

¹ Willsher's Angus field notes are available online in three files at [463976](#), [464021](#) and [464037](#).

Overview²

Nicknamed ‘coffin country’ by Willsher and Hunter,³ Angus possesses one of the most interesting and distinctive collections of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century gravestones. Headstones appeared in Angus in around 1689, the first examples being small, plain and inscribed simply with dates and initials.⁴ Willsher found that many churchyards contained up to 20 gravestones with eighteenth-century carvings and an astonishing 380 gravestones have been recorded which date between 1560 and 1715.⁵ Indeed, Angus has such a large number of gravestones that in some cases it has been possible to group similar carvings together to identify work by the same stonemason.⁶

The range of symbols used within this region is greater than that found in any other area of Scotland. Most Angus headstones are carved on both faces and some are also decorated on their hoods and shoulders as examples at the Howff in Dundee (Figure 79) and at Carmyllie (Figure 81) show. Typically, a headstone’s east face bears the inscription but this will also often include additional carved motifs as at Panbride [799426](#) and the Howff (Figure 79).

A fine collection of coped stones survives at the Howff [948377](#) and a detail of the carving on one of these can be seen in Figure 84 (see also Figures 12 and 24). The coped stone is an uncommon form only occasionally found elsewhere in Scotland.

Dominant characteristics of Angus gravestones include the use of shields, profuse and varied mantling (both of which appear on a stone at St Vigeans [799395](#)), crests as seen at Fowlis Wester [1094931](#) and other heraldic motifs like those on a stone at at Dunnichen (Figure 80).

Other stylistic traits include the use of carved borders, seen at Fowlis Easter [794992](#). The most popular designs tend to be variations on the classical ‘egg and dart’ pattern which occur at Tealing [789813](#), Carmyllie (Figure 81) and Dunnichen (Figure 80) but, at Monikie, an unusual pattern uses a hand motif repeated around the whole of an inner border, whilst an outer border consists of diamonds alternately filled with tiny inscribed flaming hearts (Figure 61). Many headstones are decorated with columns as at Murroes [799488](#) and pilasters seen at Glamis [795018](#) and the Howff (Figure 79). Another distinctive Angus (and Perthshire) tradition is listing family initials down the face of the stone as at Liff [799296](#) and, very occasionally, across the face as they appear at Farnell [2239449](#). This information is given in addition to a full inscription as at Dunnichen (Figure 80) and appears to have been a pre-Reformation practice that endured to become a widespread custom.⁷ There are some stylistic variations within the region. Most notably, carvings of flowers in pots being used for borders, as seen at Maryton [799339](#), are popular in north Angus (and in Kincardineshire) but not in east Angus.

² Willsher surveyed 63 sites across Angus to give a representative sample of both the typical and also the more unusual carvings to be found within this region.

³ Betty Willsher and Doreen Hunter, *Stones: A Guide to Some Remarkable Eighteenth-Century Gravestones* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1978): 7.

⁴ Flora Davidson and Elspeth Reid, *The Post-Reformation Gravestones of Angus: Scottish Social History in Stone 1560-1715* (Angus: Forest Lodge, 2017): 19.

⁵ Davidson and Reid, *The Post-Reformation Gravestones of Angus*: 12.

⁶ Betty Willsher identified a group of gravestones sharing the same style of carving in and around St Vigeans and so concluded that the same mason had created selected stones at St Vigeans, Arbroath Abbey, Arbirlot, Panbride, Farnell, Barry, Kirkden, Kinnell, Dunnichen, Guthrie and Inverkeilor. Similarly, Davidson and Reid (*The Post-Reformation Gravestones of Angus*: 38) identified a shared hand in a ‘Montrose Group’ of stones. See also Neil Foston, ‘Stylistic Evidence for the Work of Four Eighteenth-Century Gravestone Masons in Angus’, an unpublished paper in Angus Archives.

⁷ Davidson and Reid, *The Post-Reformation Gravestones of Angus*: 27.



Figure 79. The Howff at Dundee contains one of the best collections of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century gravestones in Scotland. This elaborately carved headstone is topped by putti clasping bay leaves above a panel containing the tools of a stonemason set within restrained mantling. Columns and flaming torches frame the inscription panel. 2225677.



Figure 80. The Angus custom of carving initials on the side panels is not as common elsewhere in Scotland. This example from Dunnichen is especially unusual since the second letter of each Christian name is also included. Note the triple winged souls and the 'egg and dart' border, which are both common Angus styles. 2225684.

Symbols to Look Out For

Mortality

Angus has a very broad selection of death symbols, the most popular being **skulls** as at Fowlis Wester 1686891, **bones** as found at Brechin 1651966, the **dart crossed with scythe** seen at Tannadice 799531, a **coffin**, as at Monikie 799494, which may in some instances have spokes (carrying poles),⁸ and an **hourglass**, usually upright as at Tealing 789813, but sometimes horizontal like one found at Brechin 1651965. Less prolific are **corpses in a winding sheet** or **shroud** (see Edzell 794946, Maryton 2239417, Tealing 2226385 where the corpse is shown within a coffin, and Monifieth where corpses are depicted below a crown 1232411), and **skeletons** like one seen at Murroes 799491. Skeletons are sometimes armed in the guise of the King of Terrors as at Aberlemno 794622. Less commonly found are **death masks**, of which an example occurs at Maryton 799339, or **deathbed scenes** like the one at Newtyle 789782 where a dying husband is comforted by his wife or mother while another figure, a minister perhaps, points to a book. Although the **deid bell**, one of which can be seen at Maryton 2239447, was very popular on eighteenth-century gravestones in the north east, it is much less common further south and appears in Angus only on seventeenth-century stones.

⁸ Davidson and Reid, *The Post-Reformation Gravestones of Angus*: 44.

Mortality symbols in Angus are usually laid out in a horizontal row along the bottom of a stone as at St Fergus Kirk, Glamis [795030](#) and Carmyllie (Figure 81), although the earliest post-Reformation grave slabs, when decorated, had their carvings at their tops. Decoration usually took the form of a bulging **skull** or two, often depicted **gnawing on a long bone** within a medallion.⁹ Subsequently, the skull moved down the slab towards the base alongside a *Memento Mori* banner as at Aberlemno [1522401](#).¹⁰ Several eighteenth-century headstones at Maryton are unusual as they give prominence to symbols of death in their top parts [2239447](#).



Figure 81. This portrait at Carmyllie depicts a mother and baby between two angels of the Resurrection, who clasp the woman's hand and arm. Mortality symbols are seen along the base. Note the heart in the panel between the initials, the surrounding mantling and the egg and dart border, which are all popular types of Angus carvings. [794858](#).



Figure 82. This headstone at Inverarity bears the smallest and most precise of all the hammermen's tools, the rarely found instruments which belong to a watchmaker. Here we see the hammer, tweezers, wrench, pliers and vice. The date in the inscription is unusually expressed and its precise manner is apt for a watchmaker: 'the twentieth day of January one 1000 seven hundred and seventy two years, aged twenty one year two months and two weeks'. [789850](#).

⁹ See, for example, the description of early grave slabs at Airlie and Arbirlot in Davidson and Reid, *The Post-Reformation Gravestones of Angus*: 60-72.

¹⁰ Davidson and Reid, *The Post-Reformation Gravestones of Angus*: 39.

Immortality

Popular symbols include **single** or **twin souls** like a pair on a stone at Lundie [1232748](#), or occasionally **three souls** as at Dunnichen (see Figure 80) and Logie-Pert [1232498](#). Showing multiple souls was the local custom for a design rather than being intended to represent two or more people. Sometimes the souls' faces are carved with such detail that they appear to be a portrait of the deceased, like one at St Vigeans [799395](#). Occasionally souls may be shown with a **halo** as at Glamis [795018](#) or with the **radiance of Heaven** seen at Monikie [2236203](#), which may appear in various styles, for example a design on a stone at Monifieth [1232406](#). There is a unique example of a soul with a heart-shaped face at Arbroath [225589](#). Also popular are pairs of flaming **torches** such as those at Lundie [1232748](#) and at the Howff (see Figure 79), and **hearts** seen for example at Aberlemno [794774](#) and Liff [799296](#). Hearts may be placed at the breast of winged souls as at Farnell [2239449](#), or flaming like one at St Vigeans [799388](#), or in an entwined design like that at Airlie [2225563](#). Other frequently used symbols include **stars** seen at Monifieth [1232409](#), **palm fronds** at Monikie [799494](#) and **roses**, one of which appears at St Vigeans [799435](#), which are sometimes depicted with the **thistle** as at Glamis [795030](#) and Aberlemno [1522402](#). **Potted roses** like the pair on a stone at Stracathro [799441](#) are more common in north Angus.

Also encountered are **angels of the Resurrection**, for example at Inverarity [795314](#), with **crowns** or **trumpets** at the Howff [2225666](#) and [2225675](#), Newtyle [2226322](#), Tealing [799451](#), Maryton [799285](#) and Fowlis Easter [1530572](#). At Logie-Pert [789628](#), Ruthven [799413](#) and Strathmartine [799404](#) the angels sound their trumpets at the King of Terrors. Resurrection angels also form part of larger **Resurrection scenes** at Menmuir [2226253](#), Murroes [2226304](#), Auchterhouse [2225600](#) and Fern [2225732](#), and are depicted holding the hands of a mother with babe in arms at Carmyllie (shown in Figure 81). Unique and enigmatic carvings include a representation of the **wheel of life** at Logie-Pert [1232492](#)¹¹ and two crossed ladders alongside what appears to be a cleaver and another very worn object at Strathmartine [799405](#), which may be linked to the Instruments of the Passion, be a reference to Jacob's Ladder or be linked in some way to weaving, which was the deceased's trade.

Trade

Angus has a wealth of trade symbols, with tools often displayed in shields surrounded by mantling as on a stone at the Howff (see Figure 79). Trades depicted, with examples of where to spot them, include: a **baker** at Arbroath Abbey [2225578](#), **maltmen** at Arbroath Abbey [2225575](#) and [2225576](#); a **pickieman** (or miller's assistant) at Monifieth [1232407](#) and Aberlemno [794778](#); a **miller** at Inverarity [795314](#) and Strathmartine [799403](#); a **weaver** at Nevay [1338684](#), Panbride (see Figure 85), Liff [948320](#) and at Farnell [2225727](#), where the trade is denoted by a unique carving of a loom flanked by bobbins; a **blacksmith** at Invergowrie [2226131](#); a **wright** at Logie Montrose [2226216](#), a **stonemason** at Ruthven [799410](#), the Howff (see Figure 79) and at Glamis, where the trade is shown by three castles [795018](#); a **shoemaker** at Arbroath Abbey [2225577](#), Ruthven [2226346](#) and Liff [799301](#); a **tailor** at Monikie [2236215](#) and on a stone at Invergowrie with the tailor's goose inverted, to signify this tool's disuse [2226134](#); a **merchant** at Arbroath Abbey [2225581](#) and Aberlemno [794774](#); a **farmer** at Glamis [795076](#), with this trade shown by spades at Fowlis Wester [1686890](#), by

¹¹ A drawing of the wheel of life carving is found in D. Christison, 'The Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands, Particularly in Perth, Fife, Angus, Mearns, and Lothian', *PSAS* 36 (1902): 312, where it is described as follows: 'The passing of Time, and the changes it brings to man, are typified by a wheel, on the four sides of the square axle-cover of which stand four figures'.

tools including a cheese press at Tannadice **799429** and, at Lundie **2236504**, denoted by a cow and a calf or possibly a bull with a dog;¹² and a **gardener** at Brechin **794846** and on a gravestone with potted topiary-style finials at Cortachy **794859**. In coastal parishes carvings include those for **shipwrights** such as the ship and shipwright's tools at Inchbraoch **795242**, the rowing boat, anchor and fish for a **fishermen** at St Vigeans **799392**, and vessels ranging from a rowing boat at Inchbraoch **795258** to large craft like the gaff-rigged ship at the same location **795233**. There are several less commonly seen professions including a **teacher**, with examples at Auchterhouse **225598** (using the symbol of a globe) and at Tannadice **799433**, a **groom** at Panbride **799444**, a **flax dresser** seen at the Howff,¹³ a **dyster** (or litster) with three woolsacks at Arbroath **2225589**, a **servitor** depicted by a hand clutching a bunch of keys at Kinnaird Castle **2226159** and a **watchmaker** found at Inverarity (Figure 82).

Occasionally two trades might be denoted together, for example the **cooper** and **weaver** at St Vigeans **799395**. There are several examples of carvings of **trade figures at work** including a weaver at Monikie **789798**, a blacksmith also at Monikie **2226285**, a groom at Lundie **789766**, a sailor at Inchbraoch **795258** and a merchant at Monikie **789825**.

Symbolic Scenes and Other Carvings

Biblical Scenes

Angus has depictions of **Abraham and Isaac** and also of **Adam and Eve**, with both appearing on a single chest tomb at Dun¹⁴ along with a harpist, identified by Willsher as King David **2225638**. This monument is particularly remarkable since its carving style appears to be inspired by Pictish sculpture **2225639**. Adam and Eve carvings are also found on another table tomb at Dun **2225640**, at Lundie **789619**, Logie-Pert **1232491** (where three examples were recorded but one carving has since been lost), Farnell **2254110**, Stracathro¹⁵ and Tannadice **2226382**. There is a further Abraham and Isaac scene at Lundie (Figure 83).

Quarles Emblems

Willsher identified two Angus gravestones with carvings based on the work by Francis Quarles, *Emblemes Divine and Moral*,¹⁶ the first being a large coped stone known as the 'Vichtane Stone' at the Howff in Dundee. The Vichtane stone has four different Quarles scenes (Books 3.XV **948452**, 4.XI **2225667**, 4.XIII **2225670** and 5.XII **2225668**) which depict the personified figures of **Father Time** **948452**, **Cupid** and **Anima**.¹⁷ The second carving

¹² This headstone at Lundie is carved with a scene that has been interpreted as either a cow and calf or a dog attacking a bull, in the 'sport' of bull-baiting. The only known parallel is a similar scene on a stone in Monifieth Churchyard **799255**, also in Angus.

¹³ Nancy Davey, *The Howff: A Guide To An Old Graveyard*, revised edition (Dundee: City of Dundee District Council, 1993): 13.

¹⁴ Described in Willsher, 'Adam and Eve Scenes on Kirkyard Monuments in the Scottish Lowlands', *PSAS* 122 (1993): 420. Selected parts of the chest tomb at Dun were photographed by Betty Willsher and rubbings of selected carvings are published in Davidson and Reid, *The Post-Reformation Gravestones of Angus*: 103-104.

¹⁵ The inscription on this stone is transcribed by Willsher in a page of her notes available at Trove **2226354** and illustrated in Willsher, 'Adam and Eve Scenes on Kirkyard Monuments in the Scottish Lowlands': 422.

¹⁶ Francis Quarles, *Emblemes Divine and Moral: Together with Hieroglyphickes of the Life of Man* (London: I.D. for F. Eglesfeild, 1639).

¹⁷ Michael Bath, *Emblems in Scotland: Motifs and Meanings*, *SCROLL: Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature* 28 (Leiden: Brill, 2018): 248.



Figure 83. This Abraham and Isaac scene from Lundie is the best preserved of all the known examples. This dramatic scene appears below the inscription 'AND ABRAHAM STRETCHED FORTH HIS HAND & TOOK THE KNIFE TO SLAY HIS SON & HE LOOKED & BEHOLD BEHIND HIM A RAM CAUGHT IN A THICKET'. The ram and the thicket are located to the right of the central figure of Abraham. The father appears to be shielding his son Isaac's eyes from the blade of his knife as Isaac lies on top of a brick-built altar. The Angel of the Lord appears on the headstone's hood. 2226241.

appears on a collapsed table stone at Arbroath and represents the opening illustration from Book 2 1522574.¹⁸ Another Quarles-inspired carving appears at Arbroath. This one is based on *Heiroglyphickes* VI and is illustrated and described by Davidson and Reid.¹⁹

Personified Figures

Willsher identified four further coped stones in the Howff with carvings of the personified figures of **Justice**, **Peace** (Figure 84), **Righteousness**, **Fortitude**, **Charity**, **Faith**, **Hope**, **Youth** and **Old Age** (depicted as **Father Time**).

In Montrose Museum there is a fragment from a headstone depicting a woman (Charity) suckling a babe in arms while two other children cling to her legs. **Green Man** carvings are found across Angus, including at Tealing 799454, Lundie 789766, Brechin 794846, Menmuir 2226255, Glamis 2226086 and Nevay 2226318. A carving of snakes sprouting greenery is an unusual design found at Inverarity, which is akin to the symbolism of the Green Man 2226128. Davidson and Reid note a badly damaged coped stone at Montrose with carvings of Father Time and an unidentified figure with sword.²⁰

¹⁸ Bath, *Emblems in Scotland*: 295.

¹⁹ Davidson and Reid, *The Post-Reformation Gravestones of Angus*: 75.

²⁰ Davidson and Reid, *The Post-Reformation Gravestones of Angus*: 192.

Portraits

There are good collections of portraits at St Vigeans, the Howff, Monikie, and Panbride. Children are a popular subject and are depicted either on their own like the little girl at Monikie [789804](#) or as part of a family group, which may include either one parent such as the mother at Tealing [789813](#) or both parents as seen on a stone at Monikie [789808](#). There is an unusual portrait of a boy at Panbride [789819](#) who is holding a palm leaf and flower, standing below a Crown of Righteousness, with rosettes and long ribbons around his arms. The ribbons may be a metaphor for earthly bonds that will be cut so that he may enjoy the heavenly afterlife. Adults, who include the tradesmen described above, are depicted slightly less frequently than children. Both adults (for example at Panbride [799444](#)) and children (as at St Vigeans [799385](#)) can be depicted with Bibles. A fine example of an adult portrait is the gentleman in coat and breeches with tricorn hat, sword and musket at Inverkeilor [795274](#). Married couples may also be depicted together as at Panbride (Figure 85). Two caryatids on a baker's gravestone at Montrose each have distinctive features, leading Willsher to suggest that they might be portraits of the baker and his wife [272229](#).



Figure 84. This detail from a coping stone in the Howff, Dundee shows Peace with a dove perched on her right hand and a ploughshare in her left hand. This site has a wealth of allegorical carvings, many appearing on coping tombs. [2225661](#).



Figure 85. This headstone at Panbride is by the Monikie mason and commemorates the deaths of two small children. The portraits of the grieving parents show each of them holding a rose to symbolise Paradise. In between them, below a flaming heart, is a weaver's loom and shuttle. 789822.



Argyllshire and Buteshire¹

Sites to Visit with Interesting Carvings

1. Bute, Rothesay, St Mary's Church [40373](#)
2. Dalavich Kirkyard [23161](#)
3. Inveraray, Kilmalieu Burial Ground [23608](#)
4. Kilchattan, Old Parish Church [22552](#)
5. Kilchenzie, Old Parish Churchyard [38402](#)
6. Kilchousland, Old Parish Churchyard [38784](#)
7. Kilkerran Churchyard [38713](#)
8. Killean, St John's Churchyard [38555](#)
9. Kilmichael Glassary Parish Churchyard [39547](#)
10. Kilmun, St Munn's Churchyard [154526](#)
11. Lochgoilhead, Church of The Three Holy Brethren [23614](#)
12. Skipness, Kilbrannan Chapel [39799](#)
13. Strachur, Kilmaglash Parish Church [23376](#)

¹ Willsher's Argyllshire and Bute field notes are available online at [463403](#).

Overview²

Headstones were not widely used in significant numbers within Argyllshire before the 19th century,³ although several good examples bearing eighteenth-century carvings can be found (see Figures 86 to 89). Prior to the 19th century, flat slabs, table tombs and mural monuments proved to be the most popular gravestone forms.

Although shields appear on many stones these rarely contain trade symbols or the initials of the deceased. Instead they usually display heraldry as can be seen at Kilkerran **1601870**, a practice also found in Ayrshire, or inscriptions, of which an example is seen at Kilchousland (Figure 86).

Based on Willsher's field survey, tools of trade appear much less frequently in Argyllshire than in other areas of Scotland with collections of pre-nineteenth-century gravestones.

Architecturally influenced design elements used on headstones include columns, like a pair seen at Kilkerran **1601869**, pilasters, and rounded, arch-shaped panels which frame inscriptions, as at Kilchousland **2223098** and Lochgoilhead **801827**, or carved symbols as seen at Kilmalieu **2223116**. Also employed are heraldic devices as at Kilmun **801726** and on two stones at Kilkerran **1601867** and **1601870**, and helms and mantling as seen at Kilchousland (see Figure 86) and Kilmun **801724**. More unusual elements include caryatids or mermaids, as found on the mural monument at Kilkerran **724591** (see also Dalavich **2601272**).

Symbols to Look Out For

Mortality

Skulls are among the most common death symbols, as seen at Kilbrannan **359234** and Kilkerran **724589**, often with teeth clearly depicted as at Kilkerran **1601869**. Also popular are **crossed bones** as recorded at Kilmalieu **2223116** and **hourglasses** like that found at Kilmalieu **2223118**. More uncommon symbols include the **swag filled with bones** seen at Kilkerran **724591** and the **bat-winged skull** found at Kilmalieu **801705** that was carved in 1765, which is an unusually late date. At Kilkerran a **skeleton**, in the guise of the **King of Terrors**, is armed with a dart **2223108**. The King of Terrors also appears at Kilmalieu (Figure 87) and Kilchattan **1545728**.

Immortality

The most common motif is the **winged soul** like one seen at Kilmalieu **801701**, often shown with wings rising upwards as at Kilchousland (see Figure 86). Sometimes two or three souls are placed together as at Kilkerran **724589** and Kilchousland **2223098**. Less common symbols include the **book** of which an example can be seen at Kilkerran **724591**, **rosettes** as at Lochgoilhead **2223132** and the **urn with eternal flame** **801705** as seen at Kilmalieu. Other symbols occasionally found include the **angel of the Resurrection with trumpet** as

² Willsher made a partial survey of this region, visiting nine burial sites in total. To give a sense of regional styles this summary lists examples of carvings recorded in Willsher's field notes and also carvings documented by digital images available at <https://www.trove.scot>.

³ For example, Willsher encountered very few headstones in Rothesay and in her field notes she questions whether this was due to a lack of survival or simply because older gravestone forms continued to be preferred.



Figure 86. The plough scene at the foot of this stone from Kilchousland shows the farmer at work with his team. The inscription is set within a large shield and surrounded by leafy, scrolling mantling. At the top of the headstone is a soul with upright wings. 724597.



Figure 87. This carving of the King of Terrors striking a pose with his dart appears on a headstone at Kilmalieu. The skeleton is depicted with a deid bell at his head and the tools of a gravedigger at his feet. 2223118.

at Kilkerran 2223105, which also appears at Kilmun 801726 alongside the inscription 'Free For A Blast'. Two **Resurrection figures** (or possibly caryatids), with their feet wrapped in a shroud, appear at Kilchousland 801695 next to **palm fronds**, either side of a central **Tree of Life**. A much later Victorian funerary symbol of the **clasped hands** appears at Rothesay, on Bute 1466365.

Trade

Ploughing scenes are popular, with examples at Kilbrannan 359234 and at Kilchousland Figure 86, 2524683 and 1601872. At Killean one plough scene includes a farmer in a cloth cap and breeches alongside an area of ridge and furrow 801618. At Lochgoilhead 1266015 there appears to be a carving of a bull, although the carving is too damaged to state this with certainty. The tool symbols of **plough, sock and coulter** can also be spotted in this region. A **gardener's** tools, seen for example at Kilmalieu 801701, are also often depicted with trees as on a stone at Kilkerran (Figure 88) and also Kilmun 801724.

Other trades represented by carvings of the relevant tools include those of the **miller** seen at Kilmun 801730 and Lochgoilhead 2223132, the **hammerman** as at Kilmun 801730, the **tailor** whose tools are seen on stones at Kilbrannan 359234 and Kilkerran 801631, the **shoemaker** as at Kilkerran 1601871 and the **shepherd**, shown by a sheep and a crook at Lochgoilhead

801827. The **stonemason's** stone at Strachur **2223135** displays his tools alongside multiple **Freemasonry** symbols.

Willsher found that several carvings indicated links with other regions. For example, the two farming plough scenes at Kilchousland mentioned above are similar to those found in Ayrshire. A **merchant's sign** and **scales**, similar to the design originating within Stirlingshire, appear at Kilchousland **2223100** and Kilmalieu **2223110**, and are the most westerly examples which Willsher identified. Two seventeenth-century examples can be seen at Kilmalieu **2523093** and **2523092**. The region's coastal nature is reflected in a number of **boat** carvings, including one at Kilkerran **724589** and two examples, each showing a boat with a compass and square, at Killean **801616** and **801624**.



Figure 88. Trees are often portrayed on the gravestones of gardeners, like this one at Kilkerran. As this tree lacks leaves, one interpretation is that the tree is dead, symbolising the end of the gardener's life. However, the spread of the branches could denote an espalier, a tree skilfully grown against a wall or a frame. **801637**.



Figure 89. On this headstone from Kilchousland Adam and Eve stand naked on either side of the Tree of Life. This is the only example of a Fall of Man scene which includes an elaborate tent-like structure, which may represent the Tabernacle. **801636**.

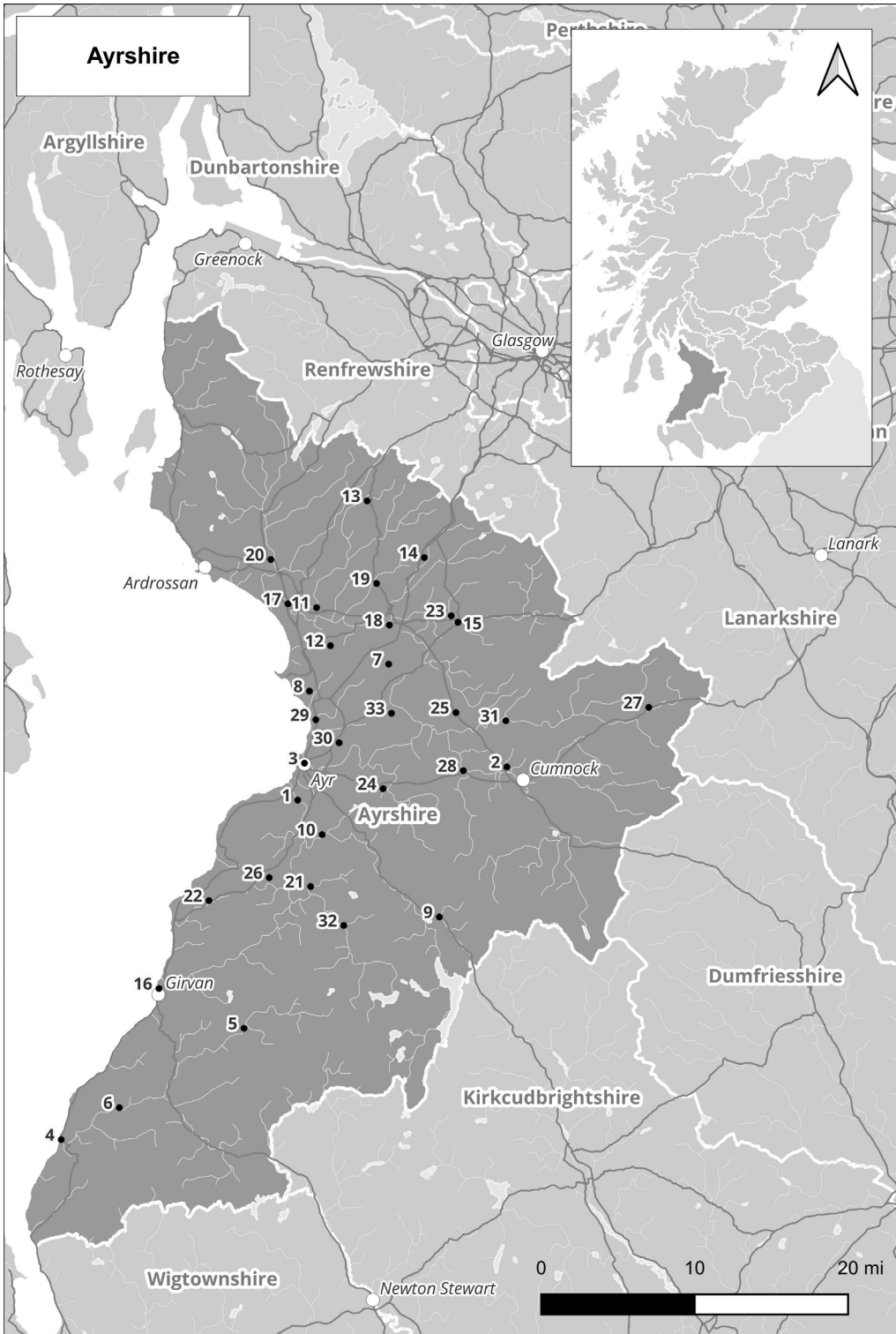
Symbolic Scenes and Other Carvings

Biblical Scenes

In the **Adam and Eve** scene at Kilchousland (Figure 89) the figures are depicted as if climbing in the boughs of trees, perhaps representing their freedom in Paradise. Above them is an unusual tent-like structure recalling the Tabernacle.

Personified Figures

Three **Green Man** motifs appear on a single stone at Kilmun [2223125](#). Willsher notes in passing the figure of **Father Time** standing on a globe, symbolising his authority over the mortal world, at Rothesay [2223140](#).



Ayrshire¹

Sites to Visit with Interesting Carvings

1. Alloway, Auld Kirkyard [41599](#)
2. Auchinleck, Old Parish Churchyard [43576](#)
3. Ayr, Auld Kirkyard [41840](#)
4. Ballantrae, Old Parish Kirkyard [60958](#)
5. Barr, Old Parish Churchyard [62636](#)
6. Colmonell Parish Churchyard [61974](#)
7. Craigie Parish Churchyard [42863](#)
8. Crosbie Chapel Churchyard, Troon [265181](#)
9. Dalmellington, Old Kirkyard [42575](#)
10. Dalrymple Parish Churchyard [169341](#)
11. Dreghorn and Perceton, Old Parish Church [41905](#)
12. Dundonald Parish Churchyard [265255](#)
13. Dunlop Churchyard [202035](#)
14. Fenwick Parish Churchyard [42923](#)
15. Galston Parish Churchyard [43713](#)
16. Girvan, Old Parish Churchyard [62076](#)
17. Irvine, Old Parish Churchyard [266543](#)
18. Kilmarnock, Riccarton Parish Churchyard [203739](#)
19. Kilmaurs Parish Churchyard [42972](#)
20. Kilwinning Abbey Churchyard [206656](#)
21. Kirkmichael Parish Churchyard [229437](#)
22. Kirkoswald, Old Parish Churchyard [40844](#)
23. Loudon Kirkyard [42772](#)
24. Low Coylton, Old Parish Churchyard [42663](#)
25. Mauchline, Old Churchyard [42706](#)
26. Maybole, St Cuthbert's Churchyard [41537](#)
27. Muirkirk Parish Church [45533](#)
28. Ochiltree Parish Churchyard [205090](#)
29. Prestwick, Old Parish Churchyard [41702](#)
30. St Quivox Parish Churchyard [206450](#)
31. Sorn Parish Churchyard [205171](#)
32. Straiton Parish Churchyard [265466](#)
33. Tarbolton, Old Parish Churchyard [268573](#)

¹ Willsher's Ayrshire field notes are available online at [463937](#).

Overview²

By the close of the 17th century headstones were popular across this region. Stones tend to be heavily carved on both faces in a distinctive Ayrshire style.³ Large **foliated S scrolls** adorn hundreds of headstones and are a characteristic element of designs as at Kirkmichael **1232415** and Kirkoswald (Figure 90).

A further striking feature is the use of mythical creatures as seen at Tarbolton (see Figure 91), such as **centaurs**, **mermaids**, **chimeras** (also described as similar to Nineviteish bulls),⁴ and **avian** or **dragon-like beasts** as at Crosbie Old Churchyard **588768**. These animals do not appear to be linked to heraldic achievements.⁵ Willsher identified the prototype for these carvings as a 1691 gravestone⁶ at Girvan **1465826** which is decorated with centaurs. Other Girvan examples include **2224857** and **2224859**. Girvan-influenced carvings are also found at Alloway **2224779**, Barr (1731) **789884** (1731), Colmonell (1734) **2224818**, St John's Town of Dalry⁷ (n.d.) **2224831**, Irvine (n.d.) **2224867**, Kirkmichael (1729) **2224891**, Kirkoswald (1718) **224902**, Kirkoswald (1775) **2224897**, Kirkoswald (1778) **1533978**, Straiton (1715) **2224954** and Tarbolton (1799), also shown in Figure 91. Occasionally real-life animals also appear in Ayrshire carvings, among them the swans used on a stone at St Quivox **589213** and rabbits at Tarbolton **1466378**.

Symbols to Look Out For

Mortality

The skull, crossbones and hourglass are the most popular death symbols, all seen on a stone at Kirkoswald (see Figure 90). **Skulls** and **crossbones** decorate most stones. Skulls are often large, hideous, lacking a lower jaw and sometimes shown in profile as at Kirkmichael (see Figure 96). Rare forms include **winged skulls**⁸ as at Kilwinning **1466230** or **skulls sprouting greenery** which may be seen at Kirkmichael **1232414** and Riccarton⁹ **1466357** and which Willsher suggests may symbolise the concept of life out of death. **Hourglasses** are usually upright as seen at Kirkmichael **1232414** and occasionally winged as at Dundonald **1465821** and Tarbolton (see Figure 91), or superimposed onto crossbones like one at Dalrymple **588772**. **Death masks**, of which an example can be seen at Kirkmichael **1232415**, may appear as blank-faced or as portraits as at Barr **2224807** and Maybole **2224917**, but sometimes

² Willsher surveyed 40 Ayrshire graveyards, giving a representative sample of both the typical and the more unusual carvings within the region.

³ James Morris notes how the style of post-Reformation headstones at Girvan Churchyard was less architectural and elegant, particularly when depicting people, than stones of a similar period within the Lothian area. He suggests that Ayrshire's geography meant that it was less accessible to external influences and provided the climate for this region to forge its own 'indigenous' style. James Morris, 'Notice of an Undescribed Slab Sculptured with Celtic Ornament, and Some Churchyard Monuments at Girvan, Ayrshire,' *PSAS* 47 (1913): 180-182.

⁴ Morris, 'Notice of an Undescribed Slab': 185.

⁵ Willsher noted in her field notes that the fabulous beasts were not part of the heraldry of Clan Kennedy or the Dukes of Eglinton, although some stones were carved with dolphins, which do appear in the Kennedy arms.

⁶ Willsher queried whether the prototype of the Girvan style was actually carved on a headstone, suggesting instead that it was on a piece of stone from a larger monument.

⁷ St John's Town of Dalry Parish Churchyard **209953** was located within the former county of Kirkcudbrightshire, not Ayrshire, but the mentioned gravestone is linked to the Ayrshire carving tradition.

⁸ Morris, 'Notice of an Undescribed Slab': 183.

⁹ Betty Willsher, 'Adam and Eve Scenes on Kirkyard Monuments in the Scottish Lowlands', *PSAS* 122 (1993): 447.



Figure 90. Large leafy scrolls are a characteristic of the Ayrshire carving style. This stone at Kirkoswald shows a merchant's inkpot, quill and book alongside two mermaid figures, which Willsheer thought could denote that his merchandise was imported from overseas. [2224897](#).



Figure 91. Lavishly carved with fantastic beasts, the 'Girvan' carving style is unique to Ayrshire. This headstone from Tarbolton is one of a wider group sharing similar details. As their production dates span almost a century it is likely that a series of masons developed this style, rather than a single carver. Note the prominent mill-rind, which is another characteristic of Ayrshire gravestones. [2224964](#).

they have necks, giving the impression that the body is buried within the gravestone, as at Kirkoswald [1533977](#). James Morris describes an example at Girvan.¹⁰ **Skeletons** can be spotted in parts of southern Ayrshire at Maybole [2224913](#), [2224918](#) and [2224914](#), and at Kirkoswald [1466234](#) and Mauchline [1466242](#), and are found in Resurrection scenes, for example at Colmonell [2224820](#). Less common death symbols include a **gravedigger's tools** as at Dundonald [1465820](#), the **weapons of Death** which appear at Kilwinning Abbey [1466230](#), **deid bells** as seen at Fenwick [588771](#). Fringed drapery representing the **mortcloth**, which appears on the same stone at Fenwick [588771](#), is also seen at Alloway (see Figure 94). **Swags** filled with bones as on a stone at Tarbolton [1466377](#). At Muirkirk the swag contains a rare **snake** carving [2224926](#).

Immortality

Winged souls are typically neat and attractive, as at Dundonald [1465822](#). One variation, rare in the rest of Scotland,¹¹ has wings that rise to meet over the soul's head, see examples at Dreghorn [2224841](#), Irvine [2224869](#) and Dundonald [1465820](#). **Resurrection figures**, some naked, appear at Alloway, Dundonald [2224840](#), Colmonell [2224818](#), Fenwick [2224849](#) and [2224847](#), and Kilmaurs. Figures may arise from the earth like the one seen at Irvine [2224865](#), from a swag as at Ayr [1465383](#) and Maybole [2224918](#), or instead recline on a couch carved on a headstone's hood, as in an example at Girvan which James Morris describes.¹² **Angels of the Resurrection** may be shown with trumpets and scrolls as at Alloway [2224783](#), Ayr [1465383](#), Kilmaurs [2224878](#), Fenwick [2224851](#), Kirkmichael [590286](#) and Sorn [1466375](#). At Fenwick, an angel holds a deid bell [588771](#). Angels also appear in larger **Resurrection scenes** such as one at at Colmonell where two angels flank a skeleton, one bearing a trumpet and the other holding the Book of Judgment [2224820](#).¹³ The angels with scales found at Colmonell [2224818](#) recall the Quarles emblem scene at Alloway¹⁴ (see Figure 94). Occasionally angels, as at Sorn [1466375](#), and souls, for example at Ochiltree [2224933](#), are depicted below **heavenly clouds**. Other popular symbols include the **heart** seen at Dalmellington [2224827](#) and the **book** at Kirkmichael (see Figure 92). The book may represent the Bible, as on Covenanter gravestones at Loudon [588782](#) and Galston [588769](#), while at Girvan [1465828](#) the book held between the seated figures of husband and wife may be the Book of Life.¹⁵ Willsher notes a general absence of other immortality symbols such as flaming torches. At Loudon there is a nineteenth-century **willow tree** carving [1110631](#), which is a highly unusual motif in Scotland.

Trade

A wide range of different trades is represented, either by carvings of tools or by scenes of working life, or sometimes by both. Trades include those of the **millwright** with examples at Tarbolton [1466381](#), Auchinleck [2224793](#), Ballantrae [2224802](#) and Irvine [2224863](#), the **waulkmiller** as at Kirkmichael (see Figure 92), the **tailor** at Loudoun [2224910](#), the **gardener** at Dundonald [1465818](#) and St Quivox [588779](#), the **shepherd** at Sorn [1451457](#), the **sailor**

¹⁰ Morris, 'Notice of an Undescribed Slab': 194, figure 17.

¹¹ Souls with wings meeting over their heads also appear occasionally within Wigtownshire.

¹² Morris in his 'Notice of an Undescribed Slab': 183 gives a full description and photo.

¹³ The Girvan headstone with a Resurrection figure carved on its hood is illustrated and described in D. Christison, 'Additional Notes on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands', *PSAS* 39 (1905): 88 and in Morris, 'Notice of an Undescribed Slab': 185.

¹⁴ Betty Willsher and Doreen Hunter, *Stones: A Guide to Some Remarkable Eighteenth-Century Gravestones* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1978): 43.

¹⁵ The Girvan headstone with Resurrection figures seated on foliate stools is illustrated and described in Morris, 'Notice of an Undescribed Slab': 186-187. Similar foliate stools can be seen at Alloway and Colmonell.

at Ballantrae **2224800**, the **stonemason** who appears at Colmonell **588774**, the **maltman** seen at Irvine **2224864** and the **blacksmith** with examples at Alloway **1464868**, Auchinleck **2224791**, Dundonald **1465821**, Muirkirk **436102** and St Quivox **1139514**.¹⁶ There are portraits of a **minister** in the pulpit at Barr **2224813** and an example wearing bands and holding an open Bible at Kilwinning **2224879**.¹⁷ Ayrshire trade symbols are not generally placed within shields, which are typically used for heraldic devices as at Dundonald **1465822**. There are the odd exceptions such as at Colmonell **2224817** where a **blacksmith's** tools are depicted next to those of a **stonemason**, with the latter displayed within a shield. Several characteristics are particular to Ayrshire. **Mill-rinds**, for example, are unusually prominent, and may be seen at Kirkoswald **1533977**, Kirkmichael **590286** and Tarbolton (see Figure 91). Many working scenes are depicted below a mill-rind even where the craft would not typically include this symbol, such as on the **dyster's** gravestone at Alloway. Ayrshire **farmers** are usually represented by **ploughing scenes** of the farmer, goadman and plough team like those at Crosbie **588768**, Riccarton **1466358**, Alloway **2224783**, Dalrymple **588772**, Dundonald **1465819**, Straiton, Prestwick, Kirkmichael (Figure 92), Colmonell **2224819**, Kilwinning **2224879** and Loudon,¹⁸ unlike in other regions where farming tools are more common.

Another Ayrshire tradition uses mill machinery on the gravestones of **millers**, for example at Straiton **2224954**, whereas in other areas of Scotland the mill-rind and millstone prevail. The preferred symbol for Ayrshire **merchants** is a set of scales rather than a '4' symbol, but carvings may also include other tools and, where overseas travel was involved, mermaids¹⁹ as seen on a stone at Kirkoswald (see Figure 90).

Symbolic Scenes and Other Carvings

Biblical Scenes

Ayrshire has nine documented examples of **Adam and Eve** carvings (at Craigie, Colmonell, Dundonald, Dunlop, two at Riccarton of which Willsher found one **2224940**,²⁰ St Quivox **1139519**,²¹ Straiton **2224953**²² and Tarbolton). Each of the nine designs is unique and appears to be the creative invention of different stonemasons. Willsher notes that four stones documented in 1905 could not be located during her field survey (Craigie, Dunlop,²³ Riccarton **2224939** and Tarbolton). An additional stone at Barr **2224807** depicts an apple tree and serpent, without any accompanying figures.²⁴ It is possible that the two figures shown on a stone at Muirkirk represent the biblical figures of the **Sower and Reaper** (Figure 93).

¹⁶ The blacksmith's stone at St Quivox includes the oddly shaped shovel found on several blacksmiths' gravestones within Clackmannanshire and Kinross-shire.

¹⁷ The carving of a minister on a headstone at Kilwinning is drawn and described in Christison, 'Additional Notes': 106.

¹⁸ The plough scenes at Kilwinning and Loudon are described in Christison, 'Additional Notes': 105-106.

¹⁹ Willsher and Hunter, *Stones*: 108.

²⁰ The Adam and Eve carvings at Riccarton are described and illustrated in Christison, 'Additional Notes': 85.

²¹ Described by Christison, 'Additional Notes': 84.

²² There are four early headstones at Kells in Kirkcudbright with similar depictions of the Fall of Man by the same mason as the one responsible for the stone at Straiton, Willsher, 'Adam and Eve Scenes on Kirkyard Monuments': 440.

²³ Christison noted that no information was provided to document this stone at the time of his 1904 survey, see Christison, 'Additional Notes': 88.

²⁴ The stone at Barr with a snake and apple carving is described by Willsher in her field notes but is not included in her inventory of Adam and Eve stones, 'Adam and Eve Scenes on Kirkyard Monuments'.



Figure 92. This headstone from Kirkmichael depicts two working scenes. At the bottom a ploughman and goadman appear alongside their beasts in a ploughing scene. Above this a waulkmiller, hourglass in hand, and an assistant stand alongside the mill machinery and shears and fulling pot, the tools of their trade. A Bible appears at the top of the stone in between two chimeras with what appear to be Death's darts at the end of their tails. [1441192](#).



Figure 93. This carving at Muirkirk appears to show the figures of the Sower and Reaper, a farming and biblical allegory, beneath a cat-like Green Man. An alternative local tradition holds that the figures are portraits of two siblings killed by a wildcat. [588776](#).

Quarles Emblems

Two scenes appear on a headstone at Alloway (Figure 94). The uppermost scene depicts the image from *Emblemes* Book 1.IV and shows the figures of **Divine Love**, **Cupid** and **Anima** weighing worldly treasure in a pair of scales.²⁵ The second scene is from *Hieroglyphickes* VI. It depicts the winged figure of **Father Time** holding an hourglass and encouraging Death, shown as the **King of Terrors** armed with a dart, to snuff out the candle of life. The same scene is carved on another headstone at Alloway by the same stonemason [2224781](#).

At Girvan [1465827](#), a carving of a skirted figure emerging from a tent-like entrance is a simplified representation of *Emblemes* Book 4.XI showing Anima emerging from a canopied bed.²⁶ At Ayr Auld Kirk a worn carving of *Emblemes* 3.X depicts three figures at a heavenly tribunal [2224799](#). Astonishingly the same scene is reproduced nearby on an 1876 headstone [2224798](#).

²⁵ Michael Bath discusses at length the collection of Scottish gravestones with carvings based on Quarles emblems. See Michael Bath, *Emblems in Scotland: Motifs and Meanings*, SCROLL: Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature 28 (Leiden: Brill, 2018): 287.

²⁶ As Michael Bath points in his *Emblems in Scotland*: 286, the Girvan example based on Quarles's *Emblemes* 4.II is difficult to identify not only because it is a simplified design but also because it lacks an accompanying moralising text.

Personified Figures

Green Man motifs of various forms are found at Ayr Auld Kirk (Figure 95), Riccarton [2224940](#), Fenwick [2224853](#) and Kilmaurs [2224878](#), and peeping over a cartouche at Girvan.²⁷

It is possible that the cat's head shown on the Muirkirk stone (see Figure 93) is a feline-style Green Man. The figure of **Justice**, carved in an eighteenth-century style, is located at Ayr but the headstone was clearly produced during the 19th century [1464870](#). The **King of Terrors** appears in emblem scenes at Alloway (see Figure 94).



Figure 94. This headstone at Alloway has two emblem scenes from Quarles. The upper one is based on Psalm 62:11, 'to be laid in the balance, it is altogether lighter than vanitae', and shows three cupids and a pair of scales. The lower scene shows the figures of Death and Father Time about to snuff out a lighted candle, to illustrate one of the decreasing stages of mortal life. [2224786](#).

²⁷ Illustrated in Morris, 'Notice of an Undescribed Slab': 184, figure 8.

Portraits

Depictions range from scenes of tradesmen at work, and even a soldier firing at an unarmed Covenanter at Galston [2224855](#), to full-sized sculpture such as the statue of William Adair at Ayr Auld Kirkyard [1650749](#). Smaller full-length portraits include the carving of Thomas McKerral and his horse on a headstone at Kirkmichael (Figure 96).

Family groups were also popular and include a group of six boys and three girls at Straiton [588780](#) and parents alongside their son at Girvan.²⁸ Some portraits of heads are within cartouches as at Sorn [1110677](#). Sometimes it can be difficult to tell whether carvings are intended as portraits or figures in Resurrection scenes. Examples include the couple at Girvan shown holding a book described previously [1465828](#) and a figure in a strange cap or crude crown at Alloway [2224779](#) who holds up leafy fronds.



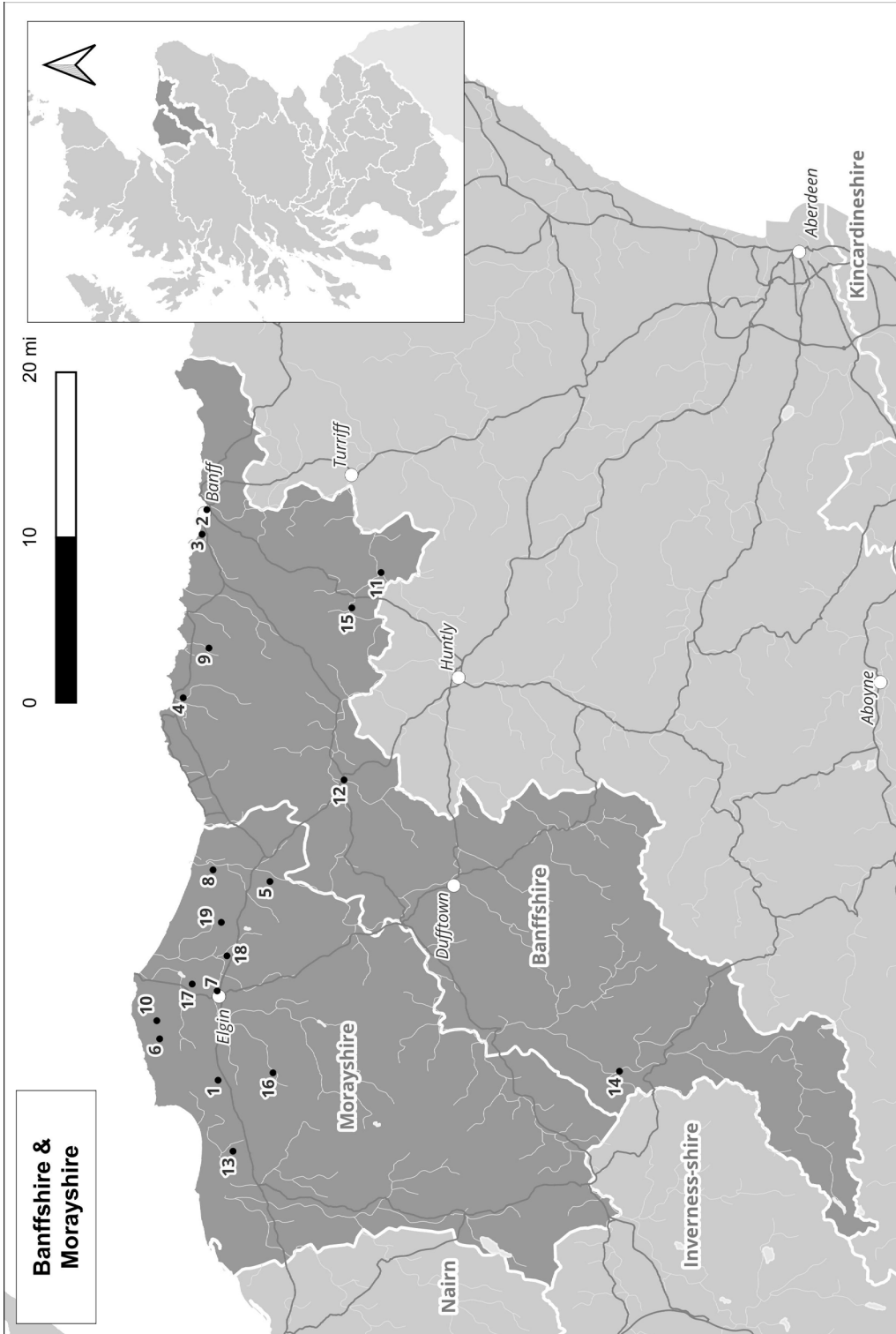
Figure 95. A tusked animal-style green man stares out from the top of this headstone at Ayr Old Kirk, with the greenery emerging from its mouth forming two volutes. Two stern portraits or masks are carved on the upper flanks either side of a circular heraldic cartouche. [1464869](#).



Figure 96. This unusually scaled portrait of a man on his horse is found at Kirkmichael. The figure in a long coat is armed with a sword and gun. The pair of large foliated 'S' scrolls is a characteristic element of Ayrshire gravestone designs. [588775](#).

²⁸ The parent and child portrait at Girvan is described in Morris, 'Notice of an Undescribed Slab': 183.





Banffshire and Morayshire¹

Sites to Visit with Interesting Carvings

1. Alves, Old Parish Churchyard **16275**
2. Banff, St Mary's Churchyard **18476**
3. Boyndie, Old Parish Churchyard **18448**
4. Cullen, Collegiate Churchyard **17965**
5. Dipple, Old Parish Churchyard **16909**
6. Duffus, Old Parish Church (St Peter's Kirk) **16123**
7. Elgin, Cathedral Burial Ground **16584**
8. Essil, St Peter's Churchyard **239159**
9. Fordyce, Old Parish Churchyard **17970**
10. Gordonstoun, Michael Kirkyard **16119**
11. Inverkeithny Parish Churchyard **18331**
12. Keith, Old Parish Churchyard **17378**
13. Kinloss, Abbey Burial Ground **15888**
14. Kirkmichael Parish Churchyard **224015**
15. Marnoch, Old Parish Churchyard **17817**
16. Pluscarden, Priory Burial Ground **16094**
17. Spynie, Holy Trinity Churchyard **16521**
18. St Andrews-Lhanbryd Parish Churchyard **16554**
19. Urquhart, Old Parish Churchyard **16583**

¹ Willsher's Banffshire and Morayshire field notes are available online at [464120](#).

Overview²

The majority of this region's seventeenth- and eighteenth-century gravestones are flat slabs as found at Kinloss **1858028**, or table tombs as seen at Duffus **1351648**. Occasionally mural monuments also occur, as at Keith **1858077**. Compared to the nearby counties of Aberdeenshire and Kincardineshire, there are fewer pre-nineteenth-century headstones in Banffshire and Morayshire. However, we know of at least one headstone dating to 1690.³

Gravestones in northeast Scotland tend to be quite plain. However, notable exceptions appear across western Banffshire and along coastal Morayshire. St Peter's Kirk, Duffus contains one of this region's largest collections of gravestone carvings (see Figure 97). Where ornamentation appears on early eighteenth-century headstones in Banffshire and Morayshire, it is generally more austere and of lower quality than the carvings on recumbent stones or mural monuments. Particularly good examples of carved headstones survive at Boyndie (see Figure 99) and St Mary's, Banff (Figures 98 and 100). Typical carvings depict a skull and bones surrounded by a variety of other symbols, as at Duffus (Figure 97).

Elaborately carved borders, such as those seen on slabs at Kinloss Abbey **1133623** and Duffus Old Parish Churchyard **1857979**, are uncommon. Willsher's field notes highlight several cases where death symbols are found at the top of stones, in the 'old style', rather than at the bottom, which she felt would not typically happen in areas further south. Sometimes, when mortality symbols weren't used on a table tomb's horizontally placed top face, they were carved on the supporting panels or legs,⁴ and may have since disappeared.

Symbols to Look Out For

Mortality

This region features a fine variety of flat slabs with symbols of death, with good collections at Spynie **1856945**, Kinloss Abbey **1858025**, Gordonstoun **1857038**, Elgin **1857369** and Duffus **801679**. **Skulls** occur, for example at Dipple **1857483**, and **bones** at Essil **1857129**. At Duffus two thighbones act as rollers for a *Memento Mori* scroll,⁵ which is also seen at Elgin **2227101**. Other popular motifs include **deid bells** as at Elgin **2227097**, sometimes appearing in pairs (as shown in Figure 97 at Duffus), a **gravedigger's tools** seen at Kirkmichael **2227111** and Keith **1858080**, **hourglasses** such as the one at Urqhart **1856815** (only occasionally winged, as found at Elgin **2027686**) and **coffins**, usually depicted without spokes, although examples do occur at Banff **1879344** and **1879347**. Less commonly found are **torches**, which can be seen on the aforementioned monument at Banff **2227062**, **scythes** at Marnoch **1301483**,

² Willsher made a partial survey of this area, visiting 15 burial sites in total. To give a sense of the regional trends this summary lists examples of symbols recorded in Willsher's field notes and in other regional surveys. The other surveys consulted were William Cramond, *The Annals of Banff*, vol. 2 (Aberdeen: Printed for the New Spalding Club, 1893); John Di Folco, 'Kirkyards in the Laich of Moray: An Illustrated Survey', *PSAS* 99 (1968): 211-254; W. Rae Macdonald, 'Notes on the Heraldry of Elgin and its Neighbourhood, Including the Cathedral, Bishop's House, Greyfriars [...] and Banff', *PSAS* 34 (1900): 344-429; Nigel McDowell, A Survey Report: The Historic Kirkyards of Aberdeenshire, unpublished report (Aberdeen: Aberdeenshire Council, 1998); J. Watson and W. Watson, *Morayshire Described: Being a Guide to Visitors, Containing Notices of Ecclesiastical and Military Antiquities, Topographical Descriptions of the Principal Country Residences, Towns and Villages and Genealogical Notes of the Leading Families in the County* (Elgin: Russell and Watson, 1868).

³ Di Folco, 'Kirkyards in the Laich of Moray': 215.

⁴ Di Folco, 'Kirkyards in the Laich of Moray': 216.

⁵ Di Folco, 'Kirkyards in the Laich of Moray': 213-214.

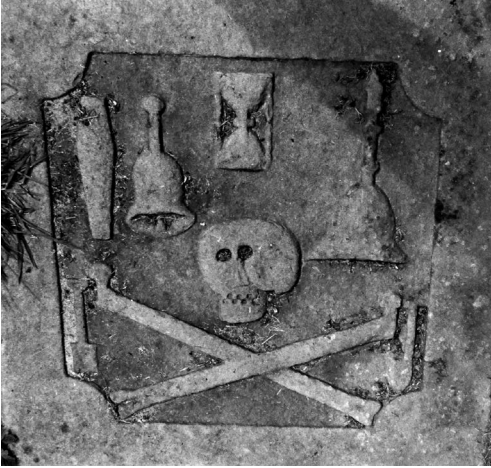


Figure 97. This table tomb at St Peter's Kirk, Duffus, has the typical Banffshire and Morayshire carving of the skull and crossbones, surrounded by other common mortality symbols from this region. In this case these are the gravedigger's tools, an hourglass, coffins and two deid bells. 2227087.

skeletons at Elgin 1423079, Cullen 1857306, Keith 1858077 and Marnoch 1301483, **funerary drapes** at Banff 801754, **tassels** also at Banff 801743 and **swags** with bones found at Banff 801752. A very rare **Angel of Death** can be seen clasping a thighbone on a headstone at Boyndie 801777.

Immortality

As well as **winged souls** like the one at Elgin 1857336, other popular motifs include **books** as at Urquhart 801644 and Keith 1858077 and also **roses** and **rosettes**, for example at St Andrews-Lhanbryd 2227113. **Hearts**, seen on stones at Duffus 2227090 and Elgin 2227094, are less frequently used. Several fine examples of **angels of the Resurrection** exist, as on a stone seen at Banff (Figure 98). Examples with **trumpets** are found at Duffus 1168927, Elgin 2027763 and 2227098, Banff 1879357, 801755 and 801751, and at Urquhart 801644. At Boyndie two angels hold a **basket of wheat** and **scales** (see Figure

99). Meanwhile at Boyndie 801778, Banff 801769 and Inverkeithny⁶ trumpeting angels are embellished with a **swirling ribbon**. At Cullen 1857309 a large angel of the Resurrection blasts over a prone skeleton with a bugle amid a swirling ribbon carved with text. **Deathbed scenes** are depicted at Boyndie 801775 and twice at Banff 1879360 and 801755. All three scenes are nearly identical in composition, depicting two angels of the Resurrection flanking a **four-poster bed**, which is particularly clear in a closer view of one of the examples at Banff (Figure 98). Each angel stands on a **globe**, a symbol of their power over the earthly world. On each of these three headstones one angel holds a trumpet to call the dead to rise while the other clutches an hourglass, illustrating the brevity of life. At Banff the angels also wield **palm fronds**, symbolising victory over death.

Trade

Carvings of tools appear on some stones but are not usually placed within shields in the manner found in Angus and Perthshire. Exceptions to this include the baker's peels with tiny loaves and a scuffle (for cleaning an oven), which are set in a shield-shaped panel at Boyndie (Figure 99).

Commonly represented trades include the **hammermen** as at Kinloss 1858022, seen also at Duffus 1857954 and Elgin 1857372, and the **wrights**, as found on stones at Elgin 1857339 and Keith 2227938. Examples of symbols relating to **fishing** and **shipbuilding**, including ships, anchors, rudders, adzes and axes, can be seen on gravestones at Gordonstoun 1423085, Duffus 1857973 and Fordyce 2227077. At Banff there is a rich collection of trade symbols including carvings of tools used by a **shoemaker** such as 1879364 and 1879359, by the **hammermen** seen at 1879345 and 1879365, by a **stonemason** 801743 (see also Duffus 1857954), by a **cooper** 801765 (see also Gordonstoun 1857024 and Elgin 2227091), and by a

⁶ McDowell, A Survey Report: 17

gardener 801747. Also at Banff is a carving for a **naval captain 801691**, whose ship has its cannons firing and masts falling beside a trident, the symbol of Neptune, god of the sea, and an anchor.⁷ Spynie offers another good collection with trade carvings for a **shoemaker 801641** (see also Elgin **1857331**), a **weaver 1856962**, a **stonemason 2227120**, and a **farmer and miller** on the same stone **2227117**. Across the region there are also examples of trades which are locally less common, including a **pickman** at Cullen **1857307**, a **glover** at Elgin **1857376**, a **tailor** at Gordonstoun **1857023** and a **bootmaker** at Alves **2227080**. Occasionally, two trades may be depicted including the farmer and miller noted above at Spynie, and a **waulkmiller** and **farmer** at Kirkmichael **789861**.

Symbolic Scenes and Other Carvings

Personified Figures

A winged **Father Time**, holding his scythe and hourglass, appears on a headstone at Banff (Figure 100).

Carvings showing a **Green Man** appear multiple times at a small number of locations, for example on four tablestones at Kinloss Abbey, including **1423089** and **2227109**. Meanwhile at Banff, an end panel of a tablestone shows two Green Man motifs holding a carved swag of bones in their lion-like mouths **801752**.

Portraits

There is a full-length portrait of a man on a headstone at Boyndie **801773**. The man is finely dressed in a long buttoned coat with his hair curled, and holding a Bible. This carving is particularly unusual since there are so few portraits within the region and most are found on larger monuments like the one at Marnoch **1301481**.



Figure 98. Deathbed scenes, like this example from Banff, are relatively uncommon in Scotland. In this region, however, there are at least three different examples, including another deathbed scene at Banff and one at Boyndie. **801692**.

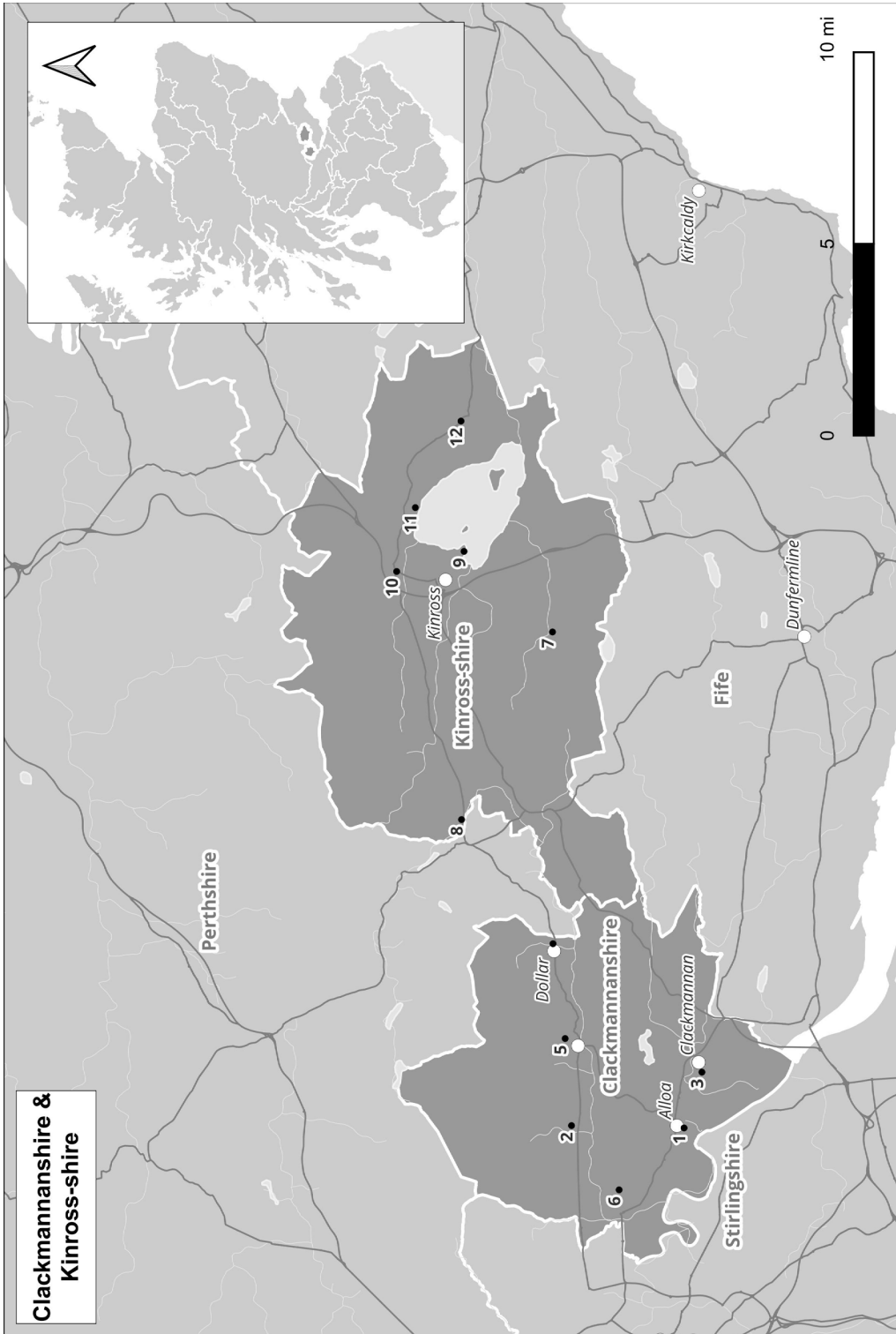
⁷ As it is not common for military personnel to have trade symbols in the 18th century, this monument may date to the 19th century.



Figure 99. This headstone from Boyndie commemorates a baker, whose tools are carved within the central shield. Two angels of the Resurrection hold a basket filled with wheat in one hand and scales in the other, signalling the deceased's trade. These motifs also act as a metaphor for the 'reaping' and 'weighing in judgement' of mortal life. **801779.**



Figure 100. This headstone at Banff displays a winged Father Time holding a scythe and hourglass. This is another relatively uncommon symbol in Scotland. Photograph © Natalie Theresa, used by kind permission.



Clackmannanshire¹ and Kinross-shire²

Sites to Visit with Interesting Carvings

Clackmannanshire

1. Alloa, Old Parish Churchyard [47223](#)
2. Alva, St Serf's Parish Church, Churchyard [138987](#)
3. Clackmannan Parish Churchyard [48312](#)
4. Dollar, Old Parish Churchyard [48248](#)
5. Tillicoultry, Old Churchyard [48298](#)
6. Tullibody Churchyard [47057](#)

Kinross-shire

7. Cleish Parish Churchyard [268462](#)
8. Fossoway Churchyard [26531](#)
9. Kinross, Old Parish Churchyard [27880](#)
10. Milnathort Parish Churchyard [167805](#)
11. Orwell, Old Parish Churchyard [27911](#)
12. Portmoak Parish Churchyard [240845](#)

¹ Willsher's Clackmannanshire field notes are available at Trove [463483](#).

² Willsher's Kinross-shire field notes are available at Trove [463511](#).

Overview³

Clackmannanshire and Kinross-shire⁴ contain a high proportion of grave markers (Figure 101) in comparison to the number of memorials (see Figure 102). Other regions of central Scotland share this tradition.⁵ Betty Willsher found the number of grave markers increased markedly as one moved eastwards into Clackmannanshire. In the main, Clackmannanshire and Kinross-shire memorials are more likely to commemorate individuals and families of higher social standing, than those commemorated by grave markers.⁶

Willsher also noted a departure from the usual commemoration practice at Clackmannan and Alloa, where the majority of headstones took a distinctive form. In these cases, the stones were approximately half a metre high and two metres in breadth, a form she termed 'double bedders'. These plain stones were inscribed only with initials or names, with dates and with the size of the plot (e.g., three lairs).⁷

A headstone's main face was often divided into two or three panels as at Tillicoultry [1219844](#), Alloa (see Figure 101) and Clackmannan (see Figure 103), all in Clackmannanshire. Masons often varied the shapes of the headstone tops. Many Kinross-shire headstones have architectural elements in their design, such as various styles of scrolls as at Milnathort [1571440](#) or columns also seen at Milnathort [1571442](#), at Kinross (see Figure 102), and, in Clackmannanshire, at Alloa (see Figure 101) and Clackmannan (see Figure 103). Sometimes headstones were embellished with mantling as seen at Alva [1409560](#), with the crossed palm design at Kinross (Figure 102) being an example of an unusual style of mantling. The headstones tend not to include epitaphs.

This region also contains a small number of more monumental types of gravestone, including an effigy slab at Alva [1409551](#), a coped stone at Clackmannan [1532171](#), a chest tomb at Portmoak [2223932](#), a table tomb at Kinross [1654185](#) and the mural monument to George Abercrombie at Tullibody [1422229](#). The twisted pilasters on the Moodie mural monument at Clackmannan [2223514](#) are particularly notable, as this style is not commonly found within Scotland.

³ Willsher made a partial survey of this area, visiting 15 burial sites in total. To give a sense of regional trends this summary lists examples of symbols recorded in Willsher's field notes and visible in the digital photographs made available through Trove <https://www.trove.scot>.

⁴ Because of the close similarities in carving traditions between Clackmannanshire and Kinross-shire, Willsher chose to discuss these two regions together.

⁵ As previously discussed on pages 73-4, a grave marker tends to include the barest amount of textual information or decorative carvings whereas a memorial gives full details of each of the deceased and is more likely to be embellished with decorative carvings.

⁶ Willsher counted 153 seventeenth- and eighteenth-century grave markers as opposed to 10 memorials in Alloa, 66 to 0 in Alva, 35 to 2 in Dollar, 18 to 0 in Tillicoultry, 115 to 5 in Tullibody, 4 to 10 in Kinross, 16 to 4 in Fossoway, 21 to 35 in Kinross Kirkgate, 35 to 21 in Milnathort, and 12 to 30 in Portmoak. Willsher noted that her calculations, which used published gravestone transcription surveys completed by family history societies, exclude undated stones. Her relevant notes can be seen at [2223477](#).

⁷ Betty Willsher and Doreen Hunter, *Stones: A Guide To Some Remarkable Eighteenth-Century Gravestones* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1978): 6. 'Double bedders' are a phenomenon of central Scotland and are used to mark out the extent of a lair.



Figure 101. This grave marker from Alloa depicts one example of the many different styles of winged souls found within this region. The other carvings are the maltman's tools of sieve, brush and shovel; and the common mortality symbols of the skull, crossed bones and hourglass. 2223483.



Figure 102. This headstone from Kinross follows the memorial, rather than the grave marker, tradition. It has an unusual style of mantling, which uses palm fronds. The inscription panel is carved to resemble a scroll supported by two bone rollers. The shield contains the tools of a wright. 2223907.

Symbols to Look Out For

Mortality

As shown in Figures 101 and 103 popular death symbols include the **skull**, the **crossbones**, an **hourglass** which is often placed vertically as at Clackmannan 1532169 and, on occasion, horizontally as at Dollar 1522078, and a **gravedigger's tools**, for example at Cleish 2223904 and also at Kinross 2223909. In parts of Clackmannanshire an **inverted heart**, as in two examples at Clackmannan 1409663 and Figure 103, or a **heart pierced by a dart** like that Alva 1530779, were used as symbols of death. Willsher remarks upon how unusual this custom was since hearts more generally served as the main symbol of immortality both in this region and elsewhere in Scotland.⁸

Less common death symbols include **winged skulls**, seen at Clackmannan 1532171 and Tullibody 1422229; **skulls depicted horizontally**, including one at Alva 1530777 or carved on a headstone's shoulders as at Cleish 2223904; and **winged hourglasses**, seen at Tullibody 1422229 and Portmoak 2223937. Other less commonly seen motifs include bones used as **scroll rollers** as at Kinross (see Figure 102), a **death mask** found at Alva 1530779, a **coffin** as seen at Kinross 1859041, a **skeleton** found on the mural monument at Tullibody 1422229, and a **corpse**, of which Dollar has a very worn example with crossed arms 2223522.

⁸ Willsher and Hunter, *Stones*: 44.

Immortality

There is a variety of **winged souls**. Some are relatively simple winged heads like the one at Dollar [1522081](#). Other souls have elaborately curled hair, for example at Portmoak [2223930](#) and Orwell [2223923](#), or a more ‘angelic’ appearance and ‘bee-shaped’ bodies, as at Tillicoultry [1219845](#) and Clackmannan [1532170](#). At Alloa [2223490](#) one winged soul is carved with different feather patterns on each wing and on its breast. At Dollar several souls are depicted with necks as seen on these stones [1522079](#), [1522082](#) and [1522081](#), and there is another example at Fossoway [2223915](#). Willsher found that winged souls were not as popular in Clackmannanshire as in areas where grave markers were more common. **Rosettes** as at Dollar [1522082](#) and **roses** like the one at Alva [2223495](#) were also a popular choice of decoration. Around Dollar the **heart** could be used to indicate marital love as it does on these examples [2223517](#), [1522080](#) and [1409666](#). However, when it is the only symbol in a prominent position the heart represents the soul.⁹ This practice prevailed in communities as far west as Logie in Stirlingshire. At Alva there is a **pair of conjoined hearts** [1530780](#) which Willsher describes as unique.



Figure 103. This headstone from Clackmannan illustrates several of the region’s carving styles, notably the three-panelled body, the elaborately shaped head and the heavenly radiance above an inverted heart. Also depicted are the typical death symbols for the area and the farmer’s trade symbols of sock, coulter and harrow. [2223509](#).

A broader range of immortality symbols is found on Kinross-shire gravestones including crossed **palm fronds** as at Kinross (see Figure 102), the **book** recorded by Willsher at Fossoway [2223918](#), a rarely found **pine cone** at Milnathort [1571440](#) and the **heavenly radiance** seen in two instances at Milnathort [1571439](#) and [1571442](#) and also at Orwell [2223922](#). The heavenly radiance also appears in examples at Clackmannan [1409664](#) and [1532180](#). Carvings of **angels of the Resurrection** can be seen at Alva [1530774](#), Milnathort [1571441](#), Fossoway [2223918](#) Orwell [2223925](#) and Clackmannan [2223514](#). On a coped tomb at Clackmannan [2223515](#) are four figures, all without wings, two with trumpets and two with bows and arrows (possibly representing Angels of Death). Similarly depicted without wings is an angel with a trumpet at Milnathort [1571441](#) and at Tullibody on the Haig monument [2223527](#). At Dollar there is a **Resurrection scene** showing a recumbent figure below a crown [2223522](#).

⁹ Willsher describes one headstone at Dollar which was decorated with a prominently carved heart in Willsher and Hunter, *Stones*: 44.

Trade

Tools are frequently displayed without shields. Within the select number of sites visited by Betty Willsher a broad range of trades is represented. These include the **shoemakers** as at Kinross 2223911, Alloa 2223484 and Alva 2223502; the **weavers** with examples at Kinross 2223911 and Alva 1530775; the **fleshers** as at Portmoak 2223935; the **maltmen** seen in two examples at Alloa (Figure 101) and 2223488 and described by Willsher at Clackmannan 2223507; the **coopers** as at Orwell and Kinross 2223910; the **wrights** whose tools may be seen at Fossoway 2223918; the **millers and millwrights** as at Alloa 2223486; the **merchants**, seen in three examples all at Alva 1530779, 1409560 and 2223501; and the **gardeners**, found on stones at Kinross 2223911 and Alva 1530777. **Farmers** are usually depicted by a sock and coulter, for example at Tillicoultry 1219844, and often also by a harrow as at Clackmannan (Figure 103) with further examples at Clackmannan 1532170, Tullibody 2223529, Tillicoultry 1219844 and Dollar 1522080. **Stonemasons** are symbolised by a mell, square and chisel at Dollar 2223522, by a set-square and dividers at Portmoak 2223935 and Fossoway 2223914, and by three castles, as in two examples at Alva 1530778 and 2239618. **Hammermen** are well represented as at Orwell 2223928, and occasionally their depiction includes a strangely shaped tool, resembling a twisted shovel, which is a farrier's buttress,¹⁰ seen at Clackmannan 1532177 and also Tullibody 2223530. At Alva, a hammerman's stone also includes pit-winding gear (Figure 104).



Figure 104. The unusual scroll-shaped pediment on this stone from Alloa illustrates the influence of architectural detailing on many of this region's headstones. The body is decorated with the hammerman's crown and hammer and a rare depiction of pit-winding gear and a hand lowering a weight. 2223489.

¹⁰ The farrier's buttress for trimming hooves is also depicted on a stone found at Newlands, Peeblesshire 2226512, Temple, Midlothian 1552883 and New Kilpatrick, Dunbartonshire 2225503.

Mariners are depicted by a compass and weight as at Alva [2223484](#) and by an anchor and weight in an example at Clackmannan [2223507](#). Less commonly seen trades include a **dyster** at Alva [1530780](#), a **glover** at Clackmannan [1532178](#), a **shepherd** whose crook appears at Portmoak [2223935](#), and a compass for a **coal master** at Dollar [2223522](#). A rare headstone to a **barber**¹¹ can be seen at Alloa [1409550](#) complete with bleeding bowl, combs and razors.

Symbolic Scenes and Other Carvings

Biblical Scenes

A fragment of what appears to be an Adam and Eve carving was found at Fossoway [2223919](#).¹² Two large naked figures which are carved in relief on a slab at Alva may also be an Adam and Eve carving [1409551](#), however, as there is no tree or serpent, this design may instead depict a Resurrection scene.

Personified Figures

Green Man carvings are found at Alva, where greenery and snakes sprout from the Green Man's mouth [1409561](#), and a small Green Man can be spied at the top of the cartouche on the Moodie Monument at Clackmannan [2223513](#).

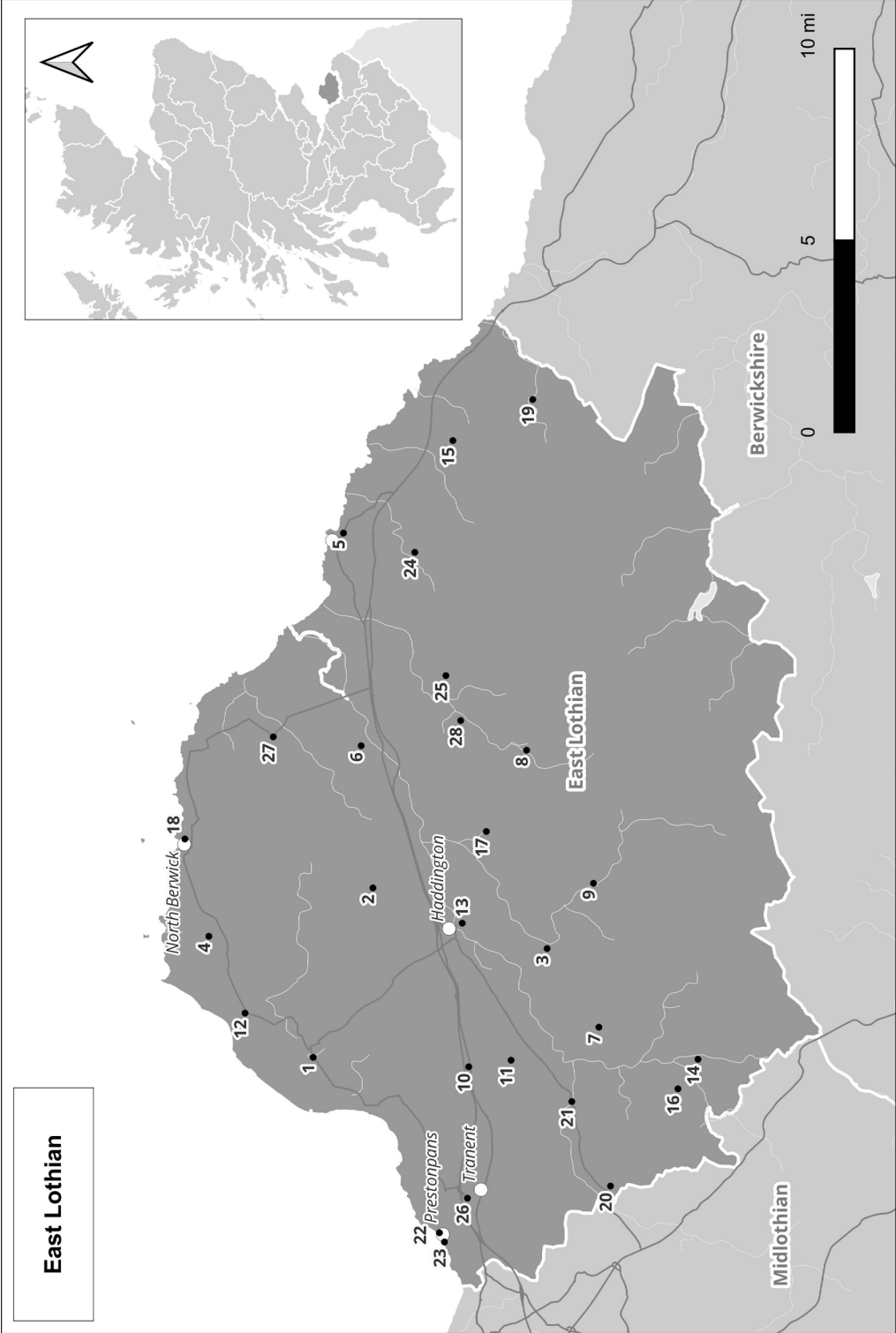
Portraits

This region contains only a few examples of portraiture. The full-length portrait of a woman in a long dress at Fossoway [2223913](#) is highly unusual and is carved in a style reminiscent of stones in the Scottish Borders. More common are facial portraits, such as the male head wearing a long wig at Tullibody [1422229](#) and the male face at the top of a headstone at Portmoak [2223929](#). A male figure dressed in a bonnet appears at Alloa [1947652](#).

¹¹ The only other known examples of a barber's trade symbols are at Greyfriars, Perth and at Dunblane, see D. Christison, 'The Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands, Particularly in Perth, Fife, Angus, Mearns and Lothian', *PSAS* 36 (1902): 393, figure 112.

¹² This Adam and Eve fragment was brought to Willsher's attention by Nial Robertson, who sent a photograph and description of the carving to her. These are in Willsher's field notes.





East Lothian¹

Sites to Visit with Interesting Carvings

1. Aberlady Parish Churchyard **54874**
2. Athelstaneford Parish Churchyard **56291**
3. Bolton Parish Churchyard **261789**
4. Dirleton Parish Churchyard **56790**
5. Dunbar Parish Churchyard **57621**
6. East Linton, Prestonkirk Parish Churchyard **209968**
7. East Saltoun Parish Churchyard **54681**
8. Garvald and Bara Parish Churchyard **56478**
9. Gifford, Yester Parish Churchyard **56132**
10. Gladsmuir, Old Parish Churchyard (1695) **54958**
11. Glasdmuir Parish Churchyard (c.1650-1695) **54970**
12. Gullane, St Andrew's Churchyard **55081**
13. Haddington, St Mary's Parish Churchyard **289016**
14. Humbie Parish Churchyard **210400**
15. Innerwick Parish Churchyard **210443**
16. Keith Marischal Churchyard **54817**
17. Morham Parish Churchyard **56423**
18. North Berwick, Old Parish Churchyard **56598**
19. Oldhamstocks Parish Churchyard **271333**
20. Ormiston, West Byres Old Churchyard **54764**
21. Pencaitland, Parish Churchyard **54706**
22. Prestonpans Parish Churchyard **53658**
23. Prestonpans, Old West Churchyard **53659**
24. Spott Parish Churchyard **57610**
25. Stenton Parish Churchyard **210639**
26. Tranent Parish Churchyard **55019**
27. Whitekirk, St Mary's Parish Churchyard **56675**
28. Whittingehame Parish Churchyard **211284**

¹ Willsher's East Lothian field notes are available online **463755**.

Overview²

Nicknamed ‘Palm-frond-land’ by Willsher and Hunter after the frequently seen motif, as at Tranent **2235147**,³ this region contains a rich collection of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century gravestones. Several previous studies have helped to characterise this region’s ornate gravestone forms and carving styles.⁴

East Lothian contains numerous mural monuments, the majority of which date to the 18th century, like one seen at North Berwick **2235136** (although seventeenth-century examples can be found at Humbie, Dunbar, Tranent and Keith Marischal).⁵ Reredos monuments are also popular, as at Gladsmuir **1554862**. The region is renowned for its large tablestones, elaborately carved on all faces including on the end panels and supports, as exemplified by the Seton tablestone at Tranent (Figure 105). The finest examples are found at Tranent **1464453** and Pencaitland **1941059**.

The earliest headstones with legible dates are found at Prestonpans (1633, 1634) and Tranent (1635). Headstones gradually increased in number from the end of the 17th century.⁶

The majority of gravestones are heavily adorned with Renaissance-style ornamentation, with abundant winged souls, putti, flowers, cornucopias and garlands as seen at Tranent (Figure 106).

Elaborate detailing includes barley-twist-style columns and abundant Green Man motifs and mermaid caryatids, both of which appear on a stone at Dirleton **2235103**. Many headstone designs employ classical pilasters placed on either side of a central panel, supporting a pediment above, as seen at Pencaitland **1941074**. Sometimes side panels are decorated with carvings of ribbons tying trade or mortality symbols or flowers together as at Tranent (see Figure 106). Headstones usually use cartouches, like one seen at Prestonpans West **2077790**, rather than shields. The region also has examples of plainer headstone designs like a group seen at Spott **1645481**.

² Willsher surveyed 25 sites across East Lothian to give a representative sample of both the typical and the more unusual carvings to be found within this region. She noted that such was the richness of the carved stones in this area that her sample could not do the region full justice.

³ Betty Willsher and Doreen Hunter, *Stones: A Guide to Some Remarkable Eighteenth-Century Gravestones* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1978): 7.

⁴ Islay Donaldson, *East Lothian Gravestones* (Haddington: East Lothian District Council, 1991); Angus Graham, ‘Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian’, *PSAS* 94 (1963): 211-271; Alan Reid, ‘Recent Discoveries in Tranent Churchyard’, *PSAS* 46 (1912): 139-150; Alan Reid, ‘Tranent Churchyard’, *PSAS* 45 (1911): 117-152; Alan Reid, ‘The Churchyards of Prestonpans’, *PSAS* 42 (1908): 18-39.

⁵ Graham, ‘Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian’: 214.

⁶ Graham, in ‘Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian’: 216, found 40 headstones dating between 1691 and 1707.



Figure 105. This table tomb at Tranent is to the farmer William Seton and is the finest of the elaborately carved, supersized table tombs for which East Lothian is famous. Below the beautiful winged soul is, on the support to the left, a seated Father Time with an hourglass. On the opposite support a carved putto plays with the globe of the world. [2235149](#).



Figure 106. Tranent has the finest collection of carved gravestones in the region, and this headstone is representative of the East Lothian style. Richly adorned with abundant carved fruit, flowers, putti, drapes, skulls and a cartouche, it was produced by the mason William Fender for his wife, Margaret Robertson. The stone's reverse face has a carving of the mason's compass and the motif of three castles. Fender was responsible for several other local gravestones. [2224401](#).

Symbols to Look Out For

Mortality

Most stones have a **skull** as at Humbie (see Figure 107), frequently accompanied by crossed or single **bones**⁷ (which can also be used on their own). In some cases headstones are only decorated with mortality symbols as one at Dirleton [1644425](#). It is notable that on many headstones the skull is placed at the head as shown in examples at Innerwick [1644719](#), Pencaitland [1941071](#) Gullane [1009091](#) and Morham [1644951](#). Variety in placement includes oddly orientated skulls as at Innerwick [1644720](#), multiple instances appearing together as seen at Wittingehame [1645433](#), and skulls carved in relief on a headstone's shoulders as can be seen at East Saltoun [1644597](#). Other popular mortality symbols include a **gravedigger's**

⁷ Graham observed in 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian': 220 that virtually all seventeenth-century gravestones bear skulls and crossbones, with the tools of a gravedigger being only slightly less popular.

tools (often crossed) as seen at Pencaitland 1941074, the **hourglass** (which may be vertical, horizontal like one seen at Spott 565018, or winged as at East Saltoun 1644597), **arrows** seen at Pencaitland 565028, **scythes**, for example at Prestonpans 1164673, **sickles** which appear at Dirleton 2235104, the **coffin** as seen at Spott 1645480 and **death masks** of which an example can be seen at Dunbar 564907. There is an abundance of **funerary drapes** as at Athelstaneford 1644316 and Tranent (see Figure 106), and **swags** and **tassels**, which can be seen at Stenton 564982. **Ribbons** may be used in side panels to tie mortality symbols together as at Gladsmuir Old 1554862 and Bolton 1644509. Unusually, at Oldhamstocks the ribbons are held within the mouths of two human faces 1645025. More unusual symbols include the very rare **flaming hourglass** at Dirleton 2235104,⁸ but also the **deid bell**,⁹ **scales**,¹⁰ and the **winged skull** which can be seen at Pencaitland 1244408.¹¹ **Deathbed** scenes include a finely carved **corpse** at Tranent¹² and a figure in repose, attended by a girl and putti with an anchor, at Prestonpans West 2077804. A small **Angel of Death**, armed with a dagger and holding scales, is carved on a table tomb leg at Tranent 1464453.

Immortality

Various designs of **winged souls**, are found such as the one at East Linton 1644789. Willsher describes East Lothian souls as having more beautiful faces than those elsewhere. Examples can be seen at Aberlady 1464432 and Tranent (see Figure 105). Unusual forms include those where the wings meet above the head, as seen at Garvald 1464439; soul carvings that project from the sides of the stone as at Dunbar 564904; forms with an ornithologically influenced wing design, as seen at Prestonpans West 2077785;¹³ and those depicted as males wearing ringlets and collars as found at Dunbar 1508092. One early style that features wings which fit closely under the chin can be found at Prestonpans, Tranent, Garvald, Saltoun and Dirleton.¹⁴ The wing arrangement of the two souls on the shoulders of a headstone at East Saltoun (see Figure 108) is distinctive, with one wing against the stone pointing upwards and the outer wing downwards. The work of the same cutter can be seen at Pencaitland 2082326 and at Ormiston 2224345. **Classical putti** abound and are often used as supporters. They may be shown with skulls as at Pencaitland 1244414; with bugles, also at Pencaitland 1941073; with palm fronds as at North Berwick 2224335; with corn as at Stenton 1645508 and with other devices. There is an abundance of **foliage** as at Pencaitland 1941056, **fruits** found at Tranent 1464459, **flowers** seen at Bolton 564900,¹⁵ **garlands** as at Aberlady 564916 and **cornucopiae** as at Humbie 1644864 and Tranent (see Figure 106). The cornucopiae are often springing from the mouths of Green Men, as in another example from Tranent 1464459. Popular forms include **evergreen branches** of palm, bay or laurel as seen at Musselburgh 1464702 and Bolton 1644507, **bellflowers** as at East Saltoun 564901, and **roses** which occur

⁸ Flaming hourglasses are rare, other examples can be found at St Andrews Cathedral Museum, East Saltoun and Ormiston, see Willsher and Hunter, *Stones*: 32.

⁹ A deid bell at Aberlady is illustrated in Graham, 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian': plate 16, figure 4.

¹⁰ On pre-1707 gravestones both deid bells and scales are quite rare, with three examples recorded of each (two deid bells at Aberlady and one at Tranent, and scales at Innerwick, Keith and Prestonpans), see Graham, 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian': 220.

¹¹ A winged skull appears on a memorial at Tranent, see Reid, 'Tranent Churchyard': 130-131, figure 13.

¹² Reid, 'Tranent Churchyard': 127, figure 10.

¹³ The accurately represented bird-like form of the soul's wing is noted as unusual by Reid, 'The Churchyards of Prestonpans': 31.

¹⁴ Placing the wing closely below the chin on some souls is noted as a design trait in Graham, 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian': 223.

¹⁵ The frequency of fruit and flowers is such that it might be taken as a secondary local motif, see Donaldson, *East Lothian Gravestones*, 55.

at Prestonpans West **2077807** and Humbie (see Figure 107). Other common symbols include **stars** like those at Dunbar **564904**, **heavenly clouds**¹⁶ as at Dunbar **1464436**, **books** as in an example at Gladsmuir **1464441**, **wreaths** as seen at Gullane **1009137**¹⁷ and the **eternal circle** seen at Tranent.¹⁸ Less common are **angels of the Resurrection** (depicted singly **1464436** or in pairs **564907**, as illustrated by these two examples from Dunbar) and **Resurrection scenes**, such as the weathered example depicting three figures at Innerwick **1644720**.

Trade

A list of East Lothian symbols published by Angus Graham in 1963¹⁹ included most of the following trades: the **hammermen** with a crown and hammer alone²⁰ or alongside pincers or horseshoes to signify a **blacksmith** (as at Humbie **564914** and Gladsmuir **1554866**); the **stonemasons**, represented by a square and compass, a mell and a chisel (as at Stenton **1645507**, Prestonpans West **2077807**, Spott and Pencaitland)²¹ are also sometimes shown heraldically by three castles²² (for example at Prestonpans West **2077785** and Tranent **2235147**); and the **wrights**, denoted by a square and compass alongside an axe, saw or plane (for example at Oldhamstocks **1645025**, Gullane **1009127** and Pencaitland **565023**) or, more unusually, by a plane and tree.²³ The **mariner's** motifs of an anchor **2077787** (often with compass, sextant, cross-staff and sounding-lead **2077778**) and ships **2077792** were, surprisingly, found only at Prestonpans.²⁴ Other trades whose symbols appear on East Lothian stones include the **merchants** as seen at Innerwick **1644720**; the **slaters** as at Bolton **564900**; the **butchers**²⁵ with axe, cleaver and callipers on a chain seen at Tranent **1464459**; the **bakers** (at North Berwick²⁶ and Tranent²⁷); the **gardeners**,²⁸ the **brewers**,²⁹ the **maltmen** as at Humbie **1644863**;³⁰ the **weavers**, for example at Whittingehame **1645434**; the **tailors**³¹

¹⁶ Graham, 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian': 220.

¹⁷ Wreaths at Tranent are illustrated in Reid, 'Tranent Churchyard': 145, figure 28 and 148, figure 31.

¹⁸ The eternal circle at Tranent is illustrated in Reid, 'Tranent Churchyard': 137, figure 19.

¹⁹ Graham cites several different examples of headstones in his list of trade carvings included in 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian': 267-270. Graham's list doesn't include the spooner or quackmaker carvings noted at the end of the Trade section.

²⁰ A crown above a hand holding a hammer is illustrated in Graham, 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian': plate 16, figure 3.

²¹ Donaldson includes a photograph of a headstone with a mason's mell, chisel, square and compass at Spott in *East Lothian Gravestones*: 34, plate 3. Graham notes a gravestone with a mason's square and compass at Pencaitland in his 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian': 269.

²² A symbol of three castles without a compass may represent the Prestonpans arms, see Reid, 'The Churchyards of Prestonpans': 31.

²³ A headstone at Stenton to a wright called Wood includes the carving of a tree next to a carpenter's plane and set-square and compass, which Graham concludes is a play upon the wright's name in his 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian': 257.

²⁴ Graham cites eight different examples of headstones with either an anchor, a ship or other maritime carvings found at Prestonpans Parish Churchyard and Prestonpans Old West Churchyard, in 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian': 269.

²⁵ A butcher's symbol is illustrated in Reid, 'Tranent Churchyard': 135, figure 17.

²⁶ A baker's symbol at North Berwick is illustrated in Graham, 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian': plate 19, figure 1.

²⁷ A baker's symbol at Tranent is illustrated in Reid, 'Tranent Churchyard': 137, figure 20.

²⁸ Graham records a gardener's gravestone with a spade, rake, reel and line at Haddington and a possible gardener's stone at Pencaitland showing a man picking fruit from trees, in 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian': 268-269.

²⁹ Graham notes a stone at Prestonpans which has a broom and two shovels commemorating a brewer and maltster in 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian': 268-269.

³⁰ Graham records another maltster stone with a broom and shovel at Prestonpans in 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian': 269.

³¹ A tailor's symbol is illustrated in Reid, 'Tranent Churchyard': 138, figure 21, and one from Whittingehame appears in Donaldson, *East Lothian Gravestones*: 35.

as illustrated on a headstone at Pencaitland [2224363](#) and one at Humbie (Figure 107); the **shoemakers**;³² and a **miller**.³³

Martial trophies (drum, cannons, gun, pistol, pennon, Lochaber axe, swords and spear as at Prestonpans [1164673](#) or spears, swords and muskets as at Dunbar [1508092](#)) are found on selected **soldiers'** monuments. Within East Lothian, **farmers** are usually depicted by figures sowing grain or carrying sheaves³⁴ as at Pencaitland [2224355](#) and East Saltoun (Figure 108), although as discussed below, Sower and Harvester figures can also have a Biblical meaning. At Gifford an ox yoke may also have been used to denote a farmer.³⁵ Several stones



Figure 107. This tailor's headstone at Humbie has an unusual geometric design around a central rose, which is carved in shallow relief. Two weepers appear on the hood. A pressing board can be seen on the left-hand panel and on the right is a pair of tailor's shears. The stone is also decorated with a winged hourglass and potted plant. Partially buried at the base is a skull and what appears to be a shock of corn. [2224324](#).



Figure 108. This headstone in East Saltoun Churchyard has a portrait of a sower, and most probably depicts a local farmer. The wing arrangement of the two souls on the headstone's shoulders is distinctive and the work of the same cutter can be seen at Pencaitland and at Ormiston. [2224289](#).

³² Graham notes a cordiner's knife at Pencaitland and a shoemaker and tanner at Tranent in 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian': 268, 270. A photograph of the Tranent carving appears in Donaldson, *East Lothian Gravestones*: 33.

³³ A miller's stone at Prestonkirk is illustrated in Donaldson, *East Lothian Gravestones*: 39, and Graham also notes a carving of a mill-rind with two picks at Dunbar in his 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian': 267.

³⁴ Graham, 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian': 221.

³⁵ Graham records another maltster stone with a broom and shovel at Prestonpans in his 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian': 269.

for **shepherds** bear crooks like the one seen at Bolton **564900**. There are a few working scenes or portraits such as the mason at Bolton **1644507** or the farmer at Tranent.³⁶ **Rarely depicted** trades include the **quarryman** whose pick, hammer, wedges and crowbar are seen at Pencaitland **1645201**, the **glazier**,³⁷ the **spooner**,³⁸ and the **quaichmaker**.³⁹

Symbolic Scenes and Other Carvings

Biblical Scenes

The Sower and the Harvester is one of East Lothian's most popular motifs and carvings are found at most sites.⁴⁰ Inspired by biblical parables, these are also a graphic allusion to farming life.⁴¹ While popular with farmers in East Lothian the link to farming communities isn't straightforward, given an absence of use within other farming regions such as Angus or Perthshire.⁴² The most magnificent example is on a table tomb frieze at Tranent (Figure 109). As well as naked figures, as seen at Aberlady **564916** and Gladsmuir **2224299**, clothed examples of sowers and harvesters are also found in two examples at East Saltoun, **564901** and the one shown in Figure 108, Pencaitland **1244413** and Humbie **1464442**.

Personified Figures

The **Green Man** is common,⁴³ with Tranent in particular abounding with this motif; examples include **565029** and **1464456**. One style, particular to East Lothian, depicts Green Men set between volutes as at North Berwick **564984** and Dirleton **2235104** or integrating volutes into their design as at Aberlady **564916**. Many different styles of the Green Man are found, most closely associated with cornucopiae or greenery, for example at Stenton **1464450**. **Father Time** appears alongside a skeleton and two putti holding a horn and scales on a mural monument at Keith Marischal **1136524**⁴⁴ and on the Seton table tomb at Tranent (see Figure 105).

³⁶ A farmer's portrait is illustrated in Reid, 'Tranent Churchyard': 144, figure 27.

³⁷ A glazier's symbols are illustrated in Graham, 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian': plate 17, figure 3.

³⁸ A spooner's gravestone is noted by Donaldson, *East Lothian Gravestones*: 39.

³⁹ A quaichmaker's symbols are illustrated in Reid, 'Tranent Churchyard': 133, figure 15.

⁴⁰ The ubiquity of sower and harvester (or reaper) carvings which appear in the form of naked putti or rustic youths clothed in breeches and coat is noted in Donaldson, *East Lothian Gravestones*: 9, 19-25.

⁴¹ Donaldson suggests that the technological and theoretical advances in agriculture during these times meant that the symbolic depictions of farm workers bore little resemblance to contemporary life and as such can be understood as folk memories of the 'olden days', see Donaldson, *East Lothian Gravestones*: 24.

⁴² The other regions in this guide with sower and harvester carvings are Ayrshire, Midlothian, Roxburghshire, Stirlingshire and West Lothian.

⁴³ Willsher's field notes record that her survey of 25 East Lothian graveyards found Green Man motifs on at least 42 different stones.

⁴⁴ The identification of this carving as Father Time was first made in Colin McWilliam, *Lothian, Except Edinburgh* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978): 269.



Figure 109. The Seton table tomb at Tranent, also seen in Figure 105, is famous for its richly carved Renaissance-style frieze which depicts agriculture through the seasons, first the sowing and then the harvesting of the wheat, which is then baked into bread and eaten. This subject also signifies the Biblical parable of the Sower and the Harvester. On the northwest side two putti are depicted in the guise of sowers and a further two represent harvesters. The southeast side, shown here, also depicts four figures, this time they enjoy the fruits of the harvest. The two figures to the left relax under the sun beside stalks of wheat, with the standing putto offering a pear to his seated companion. The two putti to the right celebrate the bread baked from the harvest. The first figure holds a long loaf as the second eats away hungrily. [1464454](#).

Portraits

Portraits are not as common as in some regions.⁴⁵ Posed examples include a man holding a skull [564983](#) at Stenton, with an almost identical monument at Garvald (Figure 110) and at Gladsmuir there is a miniature version [1554862](#).

A prone youth studies a book at Tranent (Figure 111). A young woman is depicted at Garvald with clasped hands [1464437](#) and another is shown at East Linton with long flowing locks.⁴⁶

Family groups include several 'mother and children' scenes at Aberlady [1765613](#), Tranent [1464458](#)⁴⁷ and at Prestonpans West, where there are carvings of mothers with one [2077784](#), two [2077802](#)⁴⁸ and four children (Figure 112).

⁴⁵ Willsher records in her field notes that, in comparison with Angus and Roxburghshire, portraits are not such an extensive feature in East Lothian. Portraits, including tradesmen with their tools, have been observed on at least 14 gravestones, Graham, 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian': 220.

⁴⁶ The carving of a young women with flowing locks is noted in Graham, 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian': 249.

⁴⁷ The family portrait (note that the two end carvings are posts, not people) is illustrated in Reid, 'Tranent Churchyard': 151, figure 34.

⁴⁸ It is suggested that the carving of a woman holding a child under each arm appears to be more tragic than sentimental, see Reid, 'The Churchyards of Prestonpans': 33-34.



Figure 110. This half-length portrait of an elegant, finely dressed young gentleman is found at Garvald. The subject gazes with peaceful contemplation at a skull, which is turned out to face the gravestone's viewer. Similar portraits occur at Stenton and Gladsmuir. [564912](#).



Figure 111. The soul forms the shape of the top of this headstone at Tranent. The figure of a reclining boy, with a book in hand, lies in the folds of a swag which is draped between two columns. The folds of the drape form the face of a Green Man. [1464455](#).



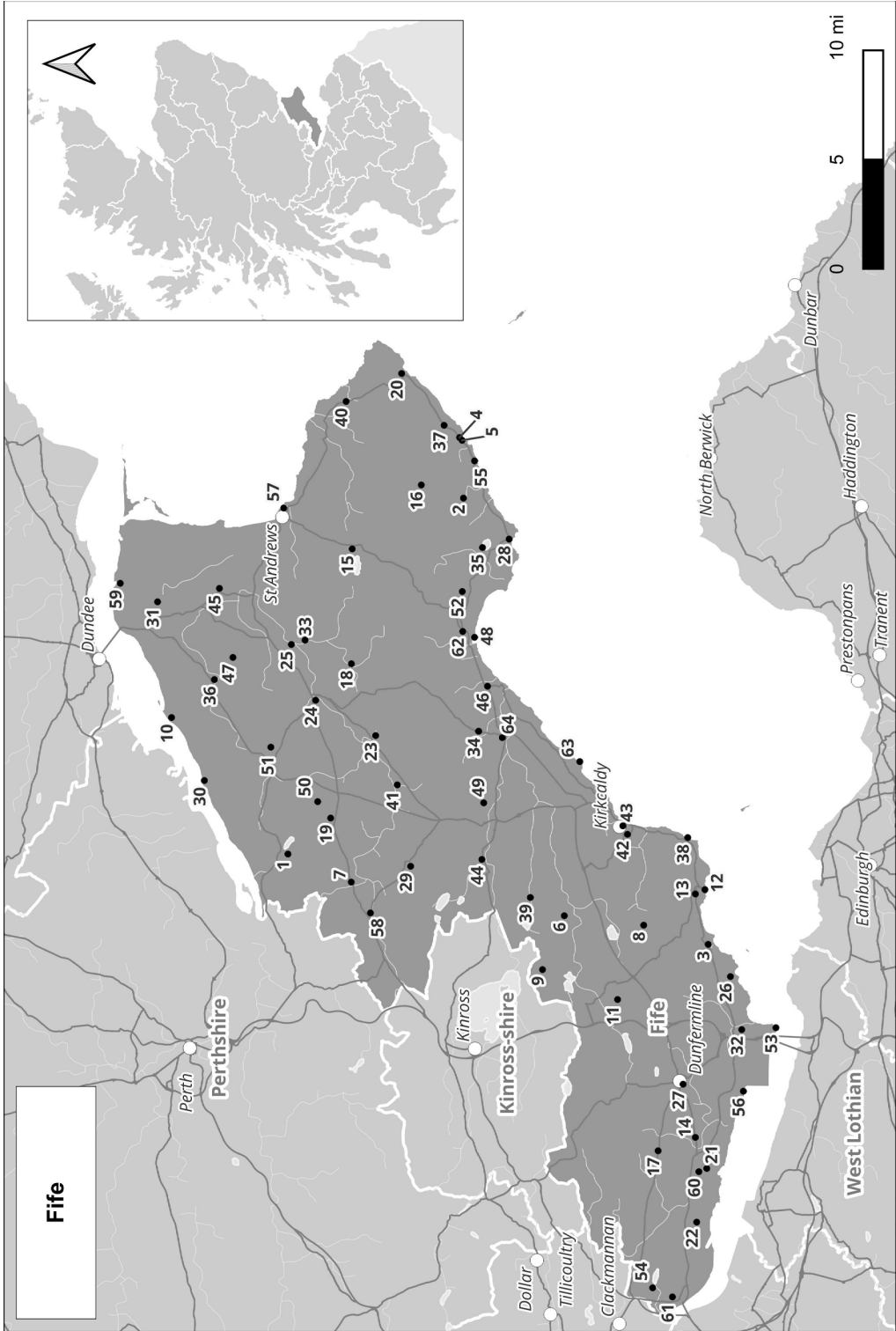
Figure 112. This portrait at Prestonpans West depicts a mother with her four children, her arms clasped tenderly around the two closest offspring. The same mason carved a second mother and child scene also found at the same site. 2077795.

At Tranent one headstone⁴⁹ portrays a man in a skullcap and bands on one side, and on the reverse his four children are depicted as cherubs.⁵⁰ Other portraits include the life-size medallions at Tranent (see Figure 109), pairs of faces (either looking straight forward⁵¹ or in profile as at Pencaitland **1318336**) and an unusual Egyptian-style head at Dirleton **1644426**. In some cases it is uncertain whether figures are portraits. At Pencaitland, for example, a table tomb is decorated with three male figures **1941058**, one with sword, one with union flag and one with a scythe **1941057**, but the meaning of these is unclear. At Bolton, a clothed female figure clasps a skull and bone **564899**.

⁴⁹ Illustrated in Reid, 'Tranent Churchyard': 148, figure 31.

⁵⁰ Illustrated in Reid, 'Tranent Churchyard': 149, figure 32.

⁵¹ Illustrated in Reid, 'The Churchyards of Prestonpans': 27, figure 7.



Fife¹

Sites to Visit with Interesting Carvings

1. Abdie, Old Parish Kirk **30063**
2. Abercrombie Churchyard **34195**
3. Aberdour, St Fillan's Churchyard **92633**
4. Anstruther Easter, St Adrian's Parish Churchyard **94140**
5. Anstruther Wester Parish Churchyard **34061**
6. Auchterderran, St Fothad's Parish Churchyard **52897**
7. Auchtermuchty Parish Churchyard **96855**
8. Auchtertool Parish Churchyard **92637**
9. Ballingry Parish Churchyard **153429**
10. Balmerino, Old Parish Churchyard **98930**
11. Beath Parish Churchyard **104862**
12. Burntisland Parish Churchyard **107013**
13. Burntisland, St Serf's Parish Churchyard **52826**
14. Cairneyhill Churchyard **153437**
15. Cameron Kirk, Churchyard **32961**
16. Carnbee Parish Churchyard **251055**
17. Carnock, Old Parish Churchyard **49429**
18. Ceres Parish Churchyard **97948**
19. Collessie Parish Churchyard **30215**
20. Crail Parish Churchyard **99054**
21. Crombie, Old Parish Churchyard **49467**
22. Culross Abbey Churchyard **99588**
23. Cults Parish Churchyard **98923**
24. Cupar, Old and St Michael of Tarvit Parish Churchyard **31538**
25. Dairsie, Old Churchyard **32904**
26. Dalgety Bay, St Bridget's Churchyard **50883**
27. Dunfermline Abbey Churchyard **108576**
28. Elie Parish Churchyard **251533**
29. Falkland, High Street Graveyard **99314**
30. Flisk Parish Churchyard **31843**
31. Forgan, St Fillan's Churchyard **104819**
32. Inverkeithing, St Peter's Parish Churchyard **50949**
33. Kemback, Old Parish Churchyard **104847**
34. Kennoway, Old Parish Churchyard **121364**
35. Kilconquhar Parish Churchyard **100396**
36. Kilmany Parish Churchyard **100433**
37. Kilrenny Parish Churchyard **101402**
38. Kinghorn, St Leonard's Parish Churchyard **119040**
39. Kinglassie Churchyard **118658**
40. Kingsbarns Parish Churchyard **101406**
41. Kingskettle, Old Parish Churchyard **31223**
42. Kirkcaldy, Abbotshall Parish Churchyard **94466**
43. Kirkcaldy, Old Parish Churchyard **121439**

¹ Willsher's Fife field notes are available online in two Trove files at [464168](#) and [464299](#).

44. Leslie, Christ's Kirk on the Green Churchyard **252499**
45. Leuchars, St Athernase Parish Churchyard **33187**
46. Leven, Old Scoonie Parish Churchyard **119172**
47. Logie Parish Churchyard **252620**
48. Lower Largo, St David's Parish Churchyard **32811**
49. Markinch, St Drostan's Parish Churchyard **252766**
50. Monimail, Old Parish Churchyard **30157**
51. Moonzie Parish Kirk Churchyard **31435**
52. Newburn, Old Parish Churchyard **32539**
53. North Queensferry, St James' Chapel Churchyard **50941**
54. Overton Chapel Burial Ground (also known as Keith of Tulliallan Mausoleum Churchyard) **109125**
55. Pittenweem Parish Churchyard **117683**
56. Rosyth Churchyard **101216**
57. St Andrews Cathedral Churchyard **103341**
58. Strathmiglo Parish Churchyard **100821**
59. Tayport Parish Churchyard (Ferryport-on-Craig) **118972**
60. Torryburn Parish Churchyard **49468**
61. Tulliallan, Old Parish Churchyard **107853**
62. Upper Largo, Largo Parish Churchyard **32669**
63. West Wemyss, St Adrian's Churchyard **92367**
64. Windygates Parish Churchyard **117595**

Overview²

Fife possesses a rich variety of monument types, most notably mural monuments but also flat ledgers and table tombs (see Figures 113 and 114) (good collections exist at Elie, Pittenweem, Kemback and Anstruther Wester).³ The finest early mural monuments are found at St Andrews Cathedral (see also Bishop Sharp's tomb inside the Holy Trinity Parish Church, St Andrews **1108102**), at Crail, including the exceptional Lumsden tomb **1111080**, and at Dunfermline Abbey, within which William Shaw's monument is located **1814335**. High quality late-seventeenth- and eighteenth-century classical mural monuments occur at Cupar, Ceres,⁴ Falkland, Collessie, Kingskettle, and Strathmiglo. There is also an important collection of recumbent stones in St Andrews Cathedral Museum (see Figure 115). A large number of nineteenth-century double bedders⁵ occur at Dunfermline Abbey and Kirkcaldy Old Parish Churchyard. Several areas continued to favour slabs, tablestones and mural monuments throughout the 17th and 18th centuries.⁶ Willsher found that headstones were

² Willsher surveyed 69 sites across Fife to give a representative sample of both the typical and the more unusual carvings to be found within this region.

³ In addition to Willsher's work, Fife gravestones have been studied in several earlier surveys including D. Christison, 'The Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands, Particularly in Perth, Fife, Angus, Mearns and Lothian', *PSAS* 36 (1902): 280-457; Alan Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of St Andrews', *PSAS* 45 (1911): 488-550; David Hay Fleming, *St Andrews Cathedral Museum* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1931); Sir George MacDonald, 'Post-Reformation Tombstones in the Cathedral Churchyard, St Andrews', *PSAS* 70 (1936): 40-119; John Di Folco, 'Graveyard Monuments in East, North and Central Fife', *PSAS* 102 (1973): 205-236.

⁴ See Christison, 'The Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 330-331.

⁵ 'Double bedders' is the term for low upright gravestones which are erected across two graves.

⁶ This trend was also noted by Christison in 'The Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 326, and by Di Folco, 'Graveyard Monuments in East, North and Central Fife': 205-236.

not a popular choice until after 1800 and she noticed, in particular, a paucity of eighteenth-century carved headstones in the coastal churchyards of the East Neuk (see Figure 116). However, some of Fife's more remote areas do possess good collections of headstones (see Figure 117). The best examples are to be found at Tulliallan, at Forgan and at Culross Abbey, where Willsher counted over 75 headstones, many bearing the sock and coulter, as this one at Culross [1853936](#).

Many early headstones are not ornately carved, tending to be thick and heavy, often with domed tops. However, numerous more elaborate designs are also found. These either have elaborately shaped heads and flanks as seen at Falkland [1855592](#) and Auchtermuchty [1855181](#), or include varied architectural features.⁷ Such architectural elements include **pilasters** as at Tayport (see Figure 118), Strathmiglo [1855739](#), Aberdour [1853476](#), Cameron [1855523](#), Culross Abbey [1853944](#) and Kilconquhar [1855685](#), and the frequent use of **scrolls** as in two examples at Cults [1855141](#) and [1855139](#), at Culross Wester [1853579](#), Aberdour [1853480](#), Collessie [1921733](#) and Kingskettle [1568420](#). More elaborate features include **caryatids** of the type seen at Falkland [1232418](#) and Cults [588740](#), and **weepers** such as those found on the hood of a stone from Cameron [1855514](#). Unusual positioning of **volutes** is visible at Ballingry [1921963](#) and at Tayport [1855422](#). Double-panelled headstones are found in parts of west Fife and can be seen in two examples at Culross Abbey [1853940](#) and [1853955](#), and two at Overton [1686924](#) and [1686921](#). An unusual quadrant panel occurs at Ballingry [1921725](#).

Willsher highlighted differences in commemorative practices between west and east Fife. Further east the percentage of gravestones being used as memorials was greater. However, further west there was a greater number of gravestones being used as grave markers, for example at Culross Abbey [1853952](#) and Abercrombie [1855580](#). Willsher observed that several Fife headstones recall designs found elsewhere. Examples include a Balmerino stone [1855093](#) resembling an Angus style of mantling, while the leafy tops at Overton [1686920](#), Tulliallan [1853564](#) and Abercrombie [1855579](#) reflect West Lothian designs. The carving of **leaves** springing from volutes at Falkland [1855590](#) is a design more common to Ayrshire and West Lothian than to Fife. In southeast and west Fife, the fashion for **three-dimensional skulls** on either the shoulder of the headstone hood or on the shoulders themselves, as at Burntisland [1854951](#) Cupar [1568392](#) and Dalgety [1853902](#), is a feature appearing across the Forth, especially in the areas around Abercorn and Dalmeny and in north Midlothian. At Aberdour [1853483](#) Willsher noted two headstones with shoulder skulls in an identical design, which is highly unusual as most seventeenth-century designs tend to be unique.

Symbols to Look Out For

Mortality

Skulls, hourglasses and bones are the most common motifs, appearing in many forms, both individually and together with other symbols (see Figures 113, 117 and 119). Occasionally these are placed uppermost on stones, see Newburn [1459750](#), two examples at St Monance [1566715](#) and [1855664](#), at Kilconquhar [1855692](#) and at Auchtertool [1854963](#). **Skulls** frequently occur with **crossed bones** as observed at Auchtertool [2002720](#), Kirkcaldy Abbotshall [1854738](#) and Logie [1459744](#). The crossed bones at Kingsbarns are notable for their odd angles [1855559](#). Less commonly, skulls appear with long bones as at Beath [1854910](#), Forgan [1524365](#) and Auchtertool [1854966](#). A unique design of a **hand clasping**

⁷ Di Folco, 'Graveyard Monuments in East, North and Central Fife': 209.

a **bone** appears at Dalgety Bay **1853901**. Examples of seventeenth-century-style skulls with horizontal or cross bones encircled by an inscription band can be seen at Kingskettle **1636260**, Balmerino **1855095**, Newburn **1459749** and Anstruther Wester **1855409**.⁸ An unusually late (1814) skull gnawing a bone is found at Pittenweem **1530560**. Versions of skulls include primitive designs with few features as at Beath **1854907**, a skull with teeth at Forgan **1855487**, a pair in profile at Ballingry **1921724** and a necked version at Crail **1855116**. More detailed toothed versions occur, for example at Culross Abbey **1853935**, Culross Wester **1853581** and Kinglassie **1854894**. A characteristic feature found in Fife is three-dimensional skulls carved on headstone shoulders or hoods, as spotted at Burntisland **1854938** and **1571458** and at Tulliallan **1853560**. At Beath **spades** as well as skulls occur on hoods and shoulders of stones **1854906**, while in an example at Largo the skull is carved on a headstone's flanks **1855679**. One unusual type of skull includes vertebrae,⁹ as spotted in two examples at Forgan **1855486** and **1855618**. At Kingsbarns a long-necked skull shares wings with an hourglass **1568408**. Another uncommon design, appearing at Tulliallan **1853560**, shows skulls entwined with foliage, a design that recalls the motif of the Green Man. Skulls are only occasionally depicted as **winged**, see Aberdour **585682**, Anstruther Easter **1568410**, Abercrombie **1855584** and an unusual late example at Dunfermline **2227868**. Other popular symbols include the **hourglass**, **coffins** and a **gravedigger's tools**. Usually the hourglass is vertical, as at Dalgety Bay **1531945** and Carnock **1853539**, but it can also be horizontal, such as the examples found at Leuchars **1855018** Cameron **1855520** and Carnock **1853540**. Winged hourglasses appear at Falkland **1855720**, Kilrenny **1855542**, Dalgety Bay **1853891**, Scoonie **2235098** and Elie (see Figure 113). A rare flaming example is noted at St Andrews by Reid.¹⁰ Occasionally, the hourglass may appear as the uppermost symbol as observed at Torryburn **1853986** and Tulliallan **1853566**, while at Aberdour an hourglass surmounts crossed bones at the top of a headstone **1853477**. More unusually, a gravedigger's tools may appear without any other symbol, a typical example may be found at Forgan **1855620**. Crossed coffins occur, both with and without spokes, with notable examples at Crail **1111081**, St Andrews Cathedral **1459782** and Cupar **1855257**, where the coffins are shown with crossed bones and a chain. The **deid bell** appears in two instances at Falkland **1855590** and **588742** and also at Kemback **1855247**. Meanwhile, at Auchtermuchty a small figure holds a bell, as described by Di Folco.¹¹ A coped stone at St Andrews depicts a hand holding the deid bell below a skeleton.¹² Recumbent **skeletons** like the one seen at Elie (Figure 113) are also found on a coped slab at Scoonie **2235098**, and on mural monuments at Burntisland **1686885**, Crail **388557**, St Andrews Cathedral **1459821** (where it lies in a **swag**), at Collessie **1921734** where there is also a small upright skeleton **1635928**, and at Overton (see Figure 114). At Flisk a skeleton holds an hourglass and cartouche on a coped tomb.¹³

Another motif is the **death mask** as seen at Kennoway **1459726** and Falkland **1855588**. **Death's weapons**, as seen at Overton (Figure 114), include a dart piercing a skull with an hourglass and crossed bones at Kingsbarns **1855555** and are shown impaling an hourglass at Dairsie **1855769**.

⁸ See also a line drawing of the Anstruther stone in Christison, 'The Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 325, figure 41.

⁹ Di Folco, in 'Graveyard Monuments in East, North and Central Fife': 227, offers an alternative interpretation of the skulls with vertebrae, suggesting that these were instead elongated jaws.

¹⁰ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of St Andrews': 519-520.

¹¹ Di Folco, 'Graveyard Monuments in East, North and Central Fife': 216.

¹² Fleming, *St Andrews Cathedral Museum*: figure 94.

¹³ Di Folco, 'Graveyard Monuments in East, North and Central Fife': 225-226, 207, figure 1.



Figure 113. This former top of a table tomb at Elie has since been built into the church wall. The dramatic carving depicts a very large skeleton, pierced by Death's dart, which emerges from a coffin. Its feet peep out of the bottom of the coffin and above the skeleton's head is a winged hourglass. **1530557**.



Figure 114. Four winged souls surround a circular medallion, delineated by a tasselled cord, on this table tomb at Overton. The central scene depicts the skeletal figure of Death grimly piercing a heart with his dart. Additional mortality symbols include crossed bones and Death's scythe, which is combined with either a trumpet or possibly an extinguished torch. A Bible appears at the bottom. **1686917**.

Pierced hearts appear in two examples at Culross Wester **1853570** and **1853580**. A scythe is crossed by an extinguished torch or sceptre at Falkland **1855589**¹⁴ and examples of **extinguished torches** occur at Aberdour **585682**. At Dunino **1855749** a **drape** with tassels appears with no other death symbols, which is unusual for Fife at this date (1720). A fine billowy **funeral pall** is used as the inscription panel at Forgan **1524364**. Rare **deathbed scenes** appear at Strathmiglo **585908**, St Andrews Cathedral (Figure 115) and Kingsbarns (see Figure 117).

¹⁴ See also Di Folco, 'Graveyard Monuments in East, North and Central Fife': 225.



Figure 115. This symbolic scene appears on a flat slab in St Andrews Cathedral Museum and is of great interest. It shows the deceased, John Vennison, on his deathbed with a pillow and a quilt. The King of Terrors appears beside his bed and they wrestle over a book. The skeleton points a huge dart at his victim, while the deceased's loyal dog barks at his feet. The carving displays two different trade symbols. The tools of the fletcher appear top right and an ox yoke lies below. These denote that Vennison was a farmer as well as a butcher. **2228308**.

Immortality

Winged souls are common and tend not to be 'cherubic', see Kilconquhar **1855690**, Ballingry **1568375** and Balmerino **588737**, this last being described by Willsher and Hunter as having the face of a middle-aged Scottish man.¹⁵ Cherubic souls are occasionally seen, those at Logie **1855074**, Cameron **1855512**, and Kilconquhar **1855688** being notable examples. In some areas souls continue in use well into the 19th century before generally disappearing, for example on the stone dated 1832 at Scoonie (Figure 116) and on others at Crail **1568417**, Forgan **1855414** and Carnbee **1855526**. At Cupar a very late instance of a soul appears on a stone dated 1867 **1855167**.

At Forgan winged souls develop into a classical style **1855485** and the soul motif is replaced by a classical face and drapes at Tayport **1855421**. Stones with multiple souls include examples at Dalgety Bay **1531947** and Overton (see Figure 114). On a stone at Cults the soul

¹⁵ Betty Willsher and Doreen Hunter, *Stones: A Guide to Some Remarkable Eighteenth-Century Gravestones* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1978): 45.

forms the top profile of the headstone, with cut-outs to emphasise its form **1855142**. At Monimail, Lothian-style shoulder carvings include a winged soul on one side and a man or woman in a cap on the other **1855195**. A soul with unusually prominent curls appears at Dalgety Bay **1853899**. An extraordinary soul, depicted from the waist up and in eighteenth-century dress, is found at St Andrews **1459766**. A primitive winged soul design with oddly shaped wings and a halo effect appears twice at Kilmany **1855505** and **1855510**. Wings in a sunburst form occur on a soul at Kinglassie **1854884**. At Tulliallan **585988** there is a soul with leaf-like wings and at St Andrews Cathedral **1459778** one soul's wings transform into foliate volutes. At Scoonie **1568310** the wing design gives the effect of the soul being in flight. At Cameron **1855515** the feathers on the soul are unusual for being carved in high relief. Other distinctive wing forms occur at Burntisland **1571458**, Kingsbarns **1855559**, Auchtermuchty **1855186** and on two stones at Leuchars **1855011** and **1855033**. A soul with a foliage bib was spotted at Falkland **1855597** and at Overton there is a soul with a bird-like body (see Figure 123). Unusually long necked souls appear at Kinghorn **1686887**, Cupar **1855257**, Leuchars **1855018**, Beath **1854905** and Carnbee **1855528**. At Falkland a soul is sounding a trumpet **1855589**. Other unusual examples include an eighteenth-century soul at St Andrews Cathedral appearing above a skull and crossbones **1530556**, while at Cupar **1110300** the upper portion of a winged soul is set unusually on an hourglass. **Angels of the Resurrection**



Figure 116. This stylised winged soul appears at Scoonie on a headstone dated 1832. This is a remarkably late example of this symbol, which was typically on the wane by the early 19th century. A small female portrait appears below. **1568311**.

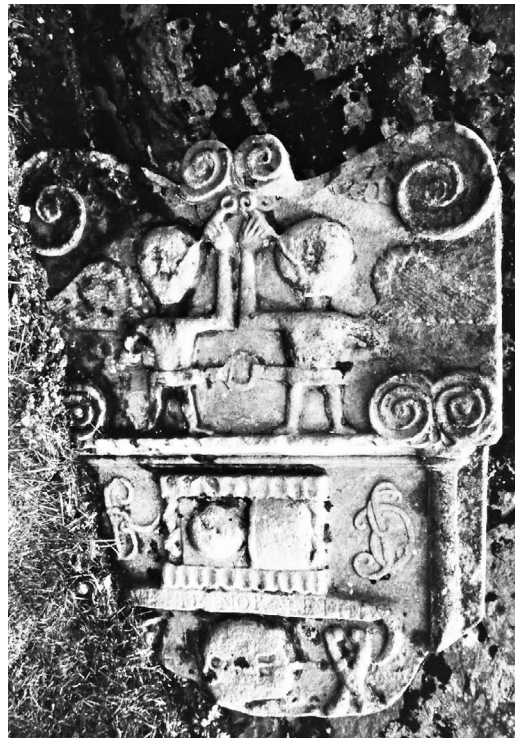


Figure 117. Above this rare deathbed scene at Kingsbarns are two angels of the Resurrection. The angels are yoked together with a strap and buckle. The meaning of this highly unusual arrangement is unclear. Below are carvings of a skull and of crossbones. On the headstone's reverse are the brush, shovel and weedock of a maltman. **2228210**.

appear at Strathmiglo **1855729**, Balmerino **1855093** and **1855096**, Upper Largo **789844**, Kilmany **1855498**, Culross Abbey **1853944**, Tulliallan **1853560** and at Rosyth **1853919** and **1853924**. At Falkland **1855586** two angels are depicted with trumpets and a crown. At Cupar **1855259** the angels are notable for their dress. At Burntisland **1686885** a pair of angels with trumpets stand above **long-stemmed roses**. At Ceres **1571445** two angels of the Resurrection are yoked together, recalling the pair at Kingsbarns which are joined together with a buckle and strap (Figure 117).

Pairs of **Resurrection figures** are found at Monimail **1571437**, St Andrews Cathedral¹⁶ **1765610** and Kingskettle **1459729**, where, in another example, the figures spring from capitals holding a swag **1568394**. Unusually, at Auchtermuchty **1232517**, the two figures are alongside a **book**, an **inverted crown**¹⁷ and a **trumpet**. At Kennoway **1568313** a sole Resurrection figure has unusually placed arms and hands with the palms facing outward. Meanwhile, at Kilmany **1855502**, a pair of Resurrection figures oddly share a single arm. **Putti** appear in several sites including Kilmany **1855499**, Newburn **1855107** and three examples at Falkland **1855720**, **1855719** and **1855595**. Other symbols include the **crown** as seen at Ceres **1855148**, Inverkeithing **1853971** and possibly at Forgan (see Figure 120); the **book** which appears at Overton (see Figure 114), Dalgety Bay **1853903** and Kemback **1855250**; the **scallop shell** seen at Dunino **1855749**, Ballingry **1921724**, Burntisland **1854934**, Falkland **1232420** and Kinglassie **1854900**; the **star** with examples at Falkland **1855585**, Culross Wester **1853581**, Aberdour **585676** and Kinglassie **1854881**; **rosettes** found at Dunino **1855758**, Dalgety Bay **1853893** and St Andrews Cathedral **1459779**; and **flaming torches** which appear at Abdie **1855049**, Balmerino **1855093** and Crail **739317**. Also popular is the **heart** denoting marital or divine love, with examples appearing at Flisk **1855473**, Strathmiglo **585908** (with a rose), Culross Abbey **1853955**, Kilrenny **1855548**, Overton **1686922** and two at Tulliallan, **585987** and **1853556**. Occasionally a heart forms the shape of the top of a stone as at Overton (see Figure 119) and Tulliallan **1853554**. Less common symbols include the **sun radiance** as observed at Strathmiglo **397885** and the **flaming urn** which can be seen at Dairsie **1855770**. **Flowers** of varying types appear across the region including at Auchtermuchty **1855184**, Newburn **1459750**, Tayport **1855418**, and Strathmiglo **1855741**. Notable examples include rose and thistles designs at Forgan **1855482**



Figure 118. Floral decoration dominates this headstone at Tayport, with a possibly unique winged rose taking the more usual position of the soul ascending to heaven. The use of the thistle became more popular on headstones during the 19th century. Previously thistles had tended to appear on higher-status seventeenth- and eighteenth-century mural monuments. **1855427**.

¹⁶ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of St Andrews': 499-500, suggested that the pair of Resurrection figures at St Andrews were Adam and Eve; however, Willsher was not convinced of this and does not include this carving in her list of Adam and Eve stones in Willsher, 'Adam and Eve Scenes on Kirkyard Monuments in the Scottish Lowlands', *PSAS* 122 (1993): 413-451.

¹⁷ Willsher and Hunter offer an alternative to the interpretation in Willsher's field notes by suggesting that the crown at Auchtermuchty was a carving of a bell inscribed with Death's dart and pierced hearts. See Willsher and Hunter, *Stones*: 49.



Figure 119. The skull on crossbones was common in the 17th century but it was less widely used in the 18th century. This example at Overton appears next to the trade symbols of a farmer's sock and coultler and a miller's mill-rind, and next to a second mortality symbol of a horizontal hourglass. 1686919.

and two at Tayport, 1855431 and 1855423, where there is also a rare **winged rose** (Figure 118). **Foliage** is widely used, for example at Kennoway 1568312, Leuchars 1855008, Tayport 1855422, St Monance 1855661, Cults 1765612, Cameron 1855524, Kingsbarns 1530696 and Dairsie 1855769. Carvings of **fruit** include grapes at Kemback 1855248 and **cornucopiae** at Kennoway 1568315 and Tulliallan 1853560.

Trade

Tools are not usually displayed within shields and continue in use well into the 19th century. Sometimes more than one trade may be depicted. Examples of multiple trades occur on the Vennison slab at St Andrews Cathedral (see Figure 115) and also include a baker and maltman at Anstruther Easter 1568412, a slater and farmer at Culross Abbey 1853941, a ship with a sock and coultler at Culross

Wester 1853578, a sock and coultler with a mill-rind at Overton (Figure 119) and the same combination as at Overton but with an additional fork at Kingsbarns 1855554. The mill-rind pierced by a rapier¹⁸ found at Tulliallan 1853547 possibly indicates the compatible occupations of miller and blade sharpener.

A wide variety of trades was spotted within Fife. Rarer examples include a **gunmaker** at East Wemyss 1854835, a **chandler** at Kirkcaldy Mid Street 1568364, an **eel-fisher** represented by a snaggle and glove at Kirkcaldy Abbotshall 585775 and a **ropemaker** at Tulliallan 585988. A **professional figure** is represented by a hand holding a scroll and quill at Abdie 1855045, while the A-frame, trestle, hod and shovel of a **labourer** appear at St Andrews Cathedral 1459774.¹⁹ More usual trades include **bakers**, with notable examples of their symbols appearing at Kirkcaldy Abbotshall, 1854781 and 1854751, and at Culross Abbey 1853943 where one stone bears a baker's girdle 1853569. Rinds for a **miller** occur at Rosyth 1853919, Forgan 1855619 and at Cults on a stone described by Di Folco.²⁰ At Tayport mill gear drums are also shown 1855419. The tools of a **flesher** were spotted at Inverkeithing 1853970, Culross Abbey 1853946, Balmerino 1686888 and Tulliallan 1853550. Tools of the **maltman** are recorded at Kirkcaldy Mid Street 1568365, Aberdour 1853484 and 1853482, St Andrews Cathedral 1459820, Culross Wester 1853577, Crombie 1568386, Strathmiglo 1855741, Tulliallan 1853558 and 1853560, Auchtertool 1568385 and Anstruther Easter 1568412. **Brewer's** symbols may be seen at Falkland (on the stone's hood) 1855593, Auchtermuchty 1855188,

¹⁸ The Kincardine-on-Forth Local History Society's website <https://kincardinehistory.com> offers an alternative explanation of the meaning of the mill-rind pierced by rapier symbol. The sword was also the insignia of an officer so it is quite possible that, in this case, the miller was also an officer in the local militia. Other military carvings within the region include the targes, helmets, sword, pike, bow and arrows on a mural monument at Crail 1855128 and a shield with a trophy of weapons and the flags of Saint Andrew and Saint George on an 1805 stone at Tulliallan 1853561. Willsher noted that she had never previously seen the same combination of motifs as spotted at Tulliallan.

¹⁹ For further information about this stone see Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of St Andrews': 502.

²⁰ Di Folco, 'Graveyard Monuments in East, North and Central Fife': 219.

and on stones described by Di Folco at Cupar²¹ and Newburn.²² The tools of a **hammerman** are represented at West Wemyss **1854826**, Kinglassie **1854890**, Rosyth **1853922**, Dalgety Bay **1853897**, Culross Wester **1853581**, Culross Abbey **1853937** and **1853945**, Kilconquhar **1855691**, Overton **1686921**, Tulliallan **1853564**, Crombie **1853976**, Burntisland **1854935**, Ballingry **1921963** and on a stone at Leuchars described by Di Folco.²³ At Ceres a carving illustrates a hammerman at work **1855152**. The symbols of a **blacksmith** occur at Auchtermuchty **1855187**, Aberdour **1853479**, Falkland **1855596**, Tulliallan **1853565** and Strathmiglo **1855729**. At Tayport an unusual depiction of horseshoes includes the hoof frogs **1855429**. The tools of a **wright** appear at Ceres **1459707**, Balmerino **1855093**, Cupar **1855262**, Dairsie **1855779**, Falkland **1855588** and **1855587**, Tayport **1855428** and Cults.²⁴ **Stonemasons** are represented by a square and compass at Aberdour **1858860** and **1853478**, East Wemyss **1854832**, Tulliallan **1853551**, Inverkeithing **1853528**, Culross Abbey **1853954**, Carnock **1853533**, Forgan **1855483** and **1855482** and Kingskettle **1855624**. At Beath a mason is represented by three castles **1854906** and at Tulliallan the mason is depicted at work with an apprentice **1853549**. Stonemasons' tools appear in association with Freemasons' symbols at Auchtertool **1854965** and Anstruther Easter **585672**. **Weavers'** tools of shuttles, heckling brush, stretchers and looms appear at Kinglassie **1854887**, Culross Abbey **1853938** and **1853948**, Forgan **1855484**, **1855617** and **1855622**, Tayport **1855437** and **1855423**. A leopard with a shuttle in its mouth, a motif found on the coat of arms of the Weavers' Company, occurs at Kennoway **1568312** and Falkland **1855591**. At Torryburn **1459756** a **tailor** is illustrated with his apprentice. A tailor's tools are found at Forgan (Figure 120), Tulliallan **1853546**, Overton **1686922**, Beath **1854907**, and on stones described by Di Folco at St Monans²⁵ and Leuchars.²⁶ At Kilconquhar **1855689** there is an example where the tools appear alongside the '4' symbol of a **merchant**. More '4' symbols denoting merchants are found at West Wemyss **1854827**, Culross Wester **1853568**, Craig **739320** and Burntisland **1854938**.



Figure 120. Shears, a smoothing iron and a bodkin illustrate the tailor's trade on this headstone at Forgan. Above there is a cut-out section at what appears to be the base of a crown or what might be a collection of thimbles. **585722**.

²¹ Di Folco, 'Graveyard Monuments in East, North and Central Fife': 220.

²² Di Folco, 'Graveyard Monuments in East, North and Central Fife': 235.

²³ Di Folco, 'Graveyard Monuments in East, North and Central Fife': 232.

²⁴ Di Folco, 'Graveyard Monuments in East, North and Central Fife': 219.

²⁵ Di Folco, 'Graveyard Monuments in East, North and Central Fife': 234.

²⁶ Di Folco, 'Graveyard Monuments in East, North and Central Fife': 232.

The knife and crown of a **cordiner** appear at Falkland **1232420**, Culross Abbey **1853939**, Leuchars **1855035**, Tulliallan **1853551**, Strathmiglo²⁷ and Anstruther Easter.²⁸ The sock and coulter of a **farmer** appear together at Rosyth **1853925**, Culross Wester **1853571**, Culross Abbey **1853963** and Overton (see Figure 123) and are shown separately at Ballingry **1921722** and at Torryburn **1853987** and **1853982**. Other farmers' carvings include a plough and yoke at Kinghorn **1686887**, a plough (on a nineteenth-century stone) at East Wemyss **1854834** and a late design (with a date of 1819) comprising a harrow, plough, sickle, scythe, hayfork and rake at Kilrenny **1855541**. Unusually, a horse is depicted alongside other farming equipment at Collesie **1571438**, and at Abdie **1855049** an ox yoke appears above a sock and coulter. A rare butter-churn carving with a sheaf of corn was spotted at Auchtermuchty **1855186**. Crooks for a **shepherd** are recorded on a nineteenth-century stone at Cameron **1855519**. The symbols of a **gardener** appear at Kirkcaldy Abbotshall **1854752**, Rosyth (1812) **1853931**, Culross Abbey **1853947** and Forgan (1839) **1524366**. Carvings at Tulliallan include a scene where a **forester** is shown felling a tree **585986** and an example with a branch pruner, a rake, a spade and a brush appearing with a tree of life which has a snake coiled around the trunk **585730**. A variety of **maritime and fishing** carvings are found at Aberdour **1853470** and **585676**, Balmerino **1855085**, Burntisland **1854931**, Crail **1855126**, Culross Abbey **1853942**, Anstruther Easter **1855570**, East Wemyss **1854836** and **1854837**, Forgan **1524364** and **1855342**, Kilrenny **1855540**, Kirkcaldy Old Parish Churchyard **1854989** and **1854990**, Markinch **1854853**, Pittenweem **1855218**, Tayport **1855421** and **1855424**, Torryburn **1853983** and Tulliallan **1853554**, **1853552**, **1853553**, **1853542**, **1853543**, **1853562**, **1853563**, **585987** and **1853544**. Other Fife symbols include those denoting **slaters** at Culross Abbey **1853950** and **1853949**; the symbols of a **waulkmiller** represented by the shears with creels, square and dividers as observed at Kinglassie **1530700** and **1854891**; and those of a **collier** at Tulliallan **1853545**.

Symbolic Scenes and Other Carvings

Quarles Emblems

The coped tomb to Judith Nairn within St Andrews Cathedral Museum (Figure 121) displays four different Quarles scenes **2228316**.²⁹ The Nairn stone carvings include a woman representing **Anima** (the Soul) rising from a canopied bed, above which **Divine Love**, shown as a head crowned with a radiance, peers unseen over the canopy (*Emblemes* 4.XI) **2228317**. This carving differs from the carving of the Quarles scene on the Vichtane Stone at the Howff in Dundee (see the section on Angus, p82) by omitting a fleeing figure with a torch. The second Nairn scene (see Figure 121, upper) shows Anima kneeling before a curtain behind which stands the figure of Divine Love (*Emblemes* 5.XII) **1459819**. The third scene depicts **Father Time** (*Emblemes* 3.XV) **2228314**. The fourth carving (see Figure 121, lower) is of a running figure, representing Divine Love, pulling along the prostrate figure of the soul behind him with a rope (*Emblemes* 4.VIII) **2228318**.

²⁷ Di Folco, 'Graveyard Monuments in East, North and Central Fife': 236.

²⁸ Christison, 'The Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 324, figure 40e.

²⁹ A full description of the Judith Nairn stone and its carvings at St Andrews Cathedral Museum is given in Michael Bath, *Emblems in Scotland: Motifs and Meanings*, SCROLL: Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature 28 (Leiden: Brill, 2018): 248.

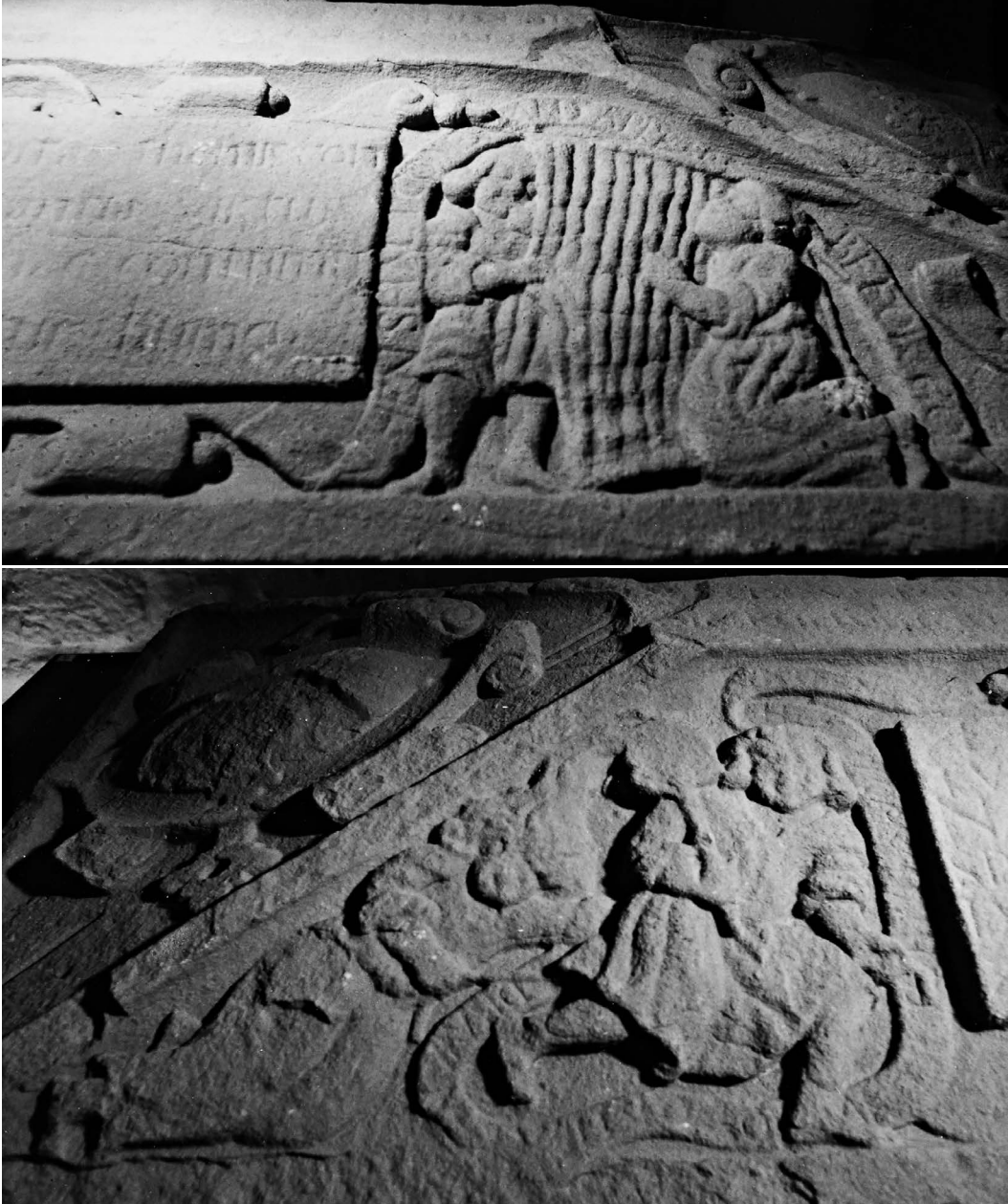


Figure 121. These details are on the coped tomb to Judith Nairn found in St Andrews Cathedral Museum. This stone has the best preserved of all the known Quarles carvings. The Nairn carvings were created one year after the Vichtane stone in Dundee [948452](#). Both the Nairn and Vichtane stones share three Quarles scenes, suggesting the work of a single carver. Professor Michael Bath suggests that this carver could be the descendant of John Service, the Stirling mason who created his own gravestone with Quarles carvings [1523502](#). Above, the upper scene depicts Emblemes 5.XII and is accompanied by the text ‘When shall I come and appeare before God’. This image is also found at Scone, Perthshire (Figure 148). The lower scene depicts Emblemes 4.VIII. The large figure at the front holds a burning censer. Professor Bath reveals the carving’s meaning to be a moral lesson: that only through Divine Love, rather than any strength of its own, might the human soul run a virtuous race. [2228318](#).



Figure 122. This leafy, animal-like Green Man is one of four examples found on this stone in the museum at St Andrews Cathedral. The skillful design means that the central face can be viewed either upwards or downwards and still appear as a Green Man. [1459824](#).

Personified Figures

A remarkable carving at St Andrews Cathedral depicts the successive stages of life, death and immortality [1459764](#). The figures below the main panel are **Father Time**,³⁰ with scythe and hourglass, and **Justice** with her sword and scales. A skeleton on a bier lies at the base of the rocky winding route leading pilgrims up to heaven, signified by clouds, with trumpets, cherubs, palms and the sun. Willsher observes that Justice was a popular carving on seventeenth-century tombs, making this observation in her notes ([2228312](#)) attached to an image of a stone at St Andrews also documented by MacDonald.³¹ Reid describes an image of another example at St Andrews showing Justice,³² who appears again on the stone to Elspeth Donaldson, alongside the figure of **Fortune**.³³ At Newburn there is a late (1826) allegorical figure of **Faith** or possibly a sea goddess [1855105](#). The **King of Terrors** (seen on the Vennison stone in Figure 115) is another popular figure at St Andrews Cathedral.³⁴ Appearing on Helen Law's stone there, Death strikes his dart into the shield-like body of the

³⁰ For other depictions of Father Time at St Andrews see MacDonald, 'Post-Reformation Tombstones in the Cathedral Churchyard, St Andrews': 68 and 71, and Fleming, *St Andrews Cathedral Museum*: figures 94 and 100.

³¹ MacDonald describes three figurative carvings of Justice at St Andrews in his 'Post-Reformation Tombstones in the Cathedral Churchyard, St Andrews': 77, 99 and 110.

³² Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of St Andrews': 497 and figure 7.

³³ MacDonald, 'Post-Reformation Tombstones in the Cathedral Churchyard, St Andrews': 77 and Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of St Andrews': figure 36.

³⁴ MacDonald, 'Post-Reformation Tombstones in the Cathedral Churchyard, St Andrews': 64 and 68.

deceased **2228309**.³⁵ At Overton the upper half of a skeleton wields his dart to pierce a heart and holds an hourglass **1686918**. Willsher queried whether the rectangular area shown in this skeleton's chest was intended to denote that the soul had left the body. In the same churchyard at Overton, a skeleton with an unusual shield-shaped body also wields his dart to pierce a heart and holds an hourglass **1686924**. His form recalls the female figure on Helen Law's stone at St Andrews. A similar form is shared by a figure which melds into a shield at Ceres **1571445**. A most striking **Green Man** appears at Auchtermuchty **1855183** and another is seen at St Andrews Cathedral (Figure 122). An unusual lion-like Green Man peers out from a swag at Kingskettle **1568394**. Other instances of the Green Man motif occur at St Andrews **1459825**, Dunfermline **2227868**, Kilconquhar **2228200**, two at Falkland **1855719** and **588742**, at Kennoway **1568316** and at Torryburn **1853991** and **1459757**.

Portraits

Attempts at **portraiture** are not widespread in Fife. However, notable examples include a pair of grieving parents at Upper Largo **789844**, and also husband-and-wife portraits at Kingskettle **1568418**, Monimail **2228260** and one described by MacDonald at St Andrews Cathedral.³⁶ Several simple carved faces appear across the region, examples being visible at Overton (Figure 123), Tulliallan **1853560**, Strathmiglo **397885**, Culross Abbey **1853942**, Cults **1765612**, Tayport **1855418** and **1855417**, Carnbee **1855534**, Forgan **1855617** and Burntisland **1854937**.

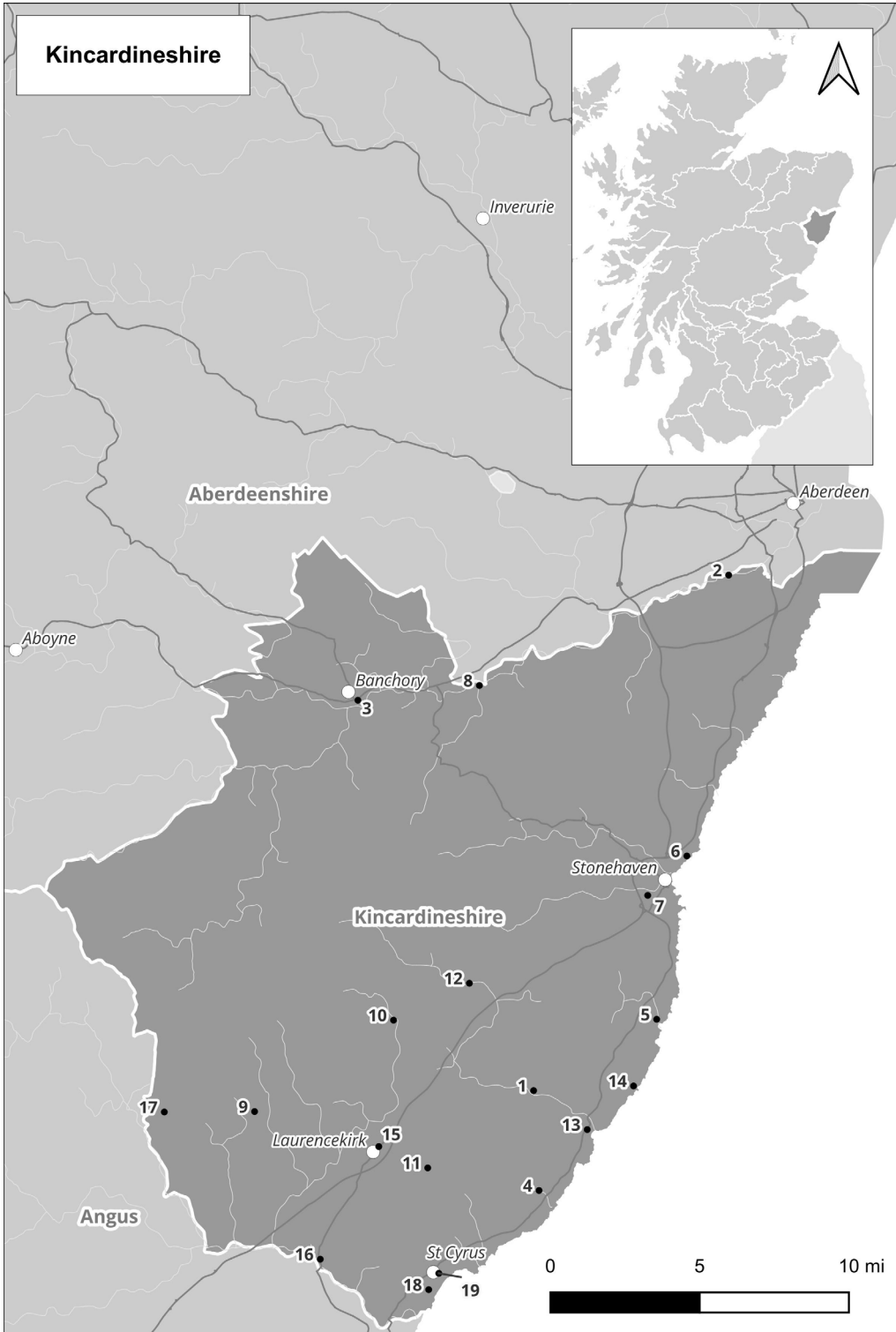
At Cupar the faces of Covenanters Laurence Hay and Andrew Pitilloch are depicted alongside the hand of David Hackston of Rathillet **1855159**. At Beath a bust of a divinity student sits upon a stack of books **1854908**. A minister with a book, standing on a Borders-style ledge, appears at Auchtertool **1568384**, and a small female figure stands on a ledge at Scoonie (see Figure 116). At Burntisland **1854945** there is a small nineteenth-century figure pushing a barrow. The inscription reveals that he was of 'weak' mind although his stone celebrates the respect held for him locally for his 'public usefulness'. At Kirkcaldy Abbotshall a unique early nineteenth-century stonemason's portrait is set in Heaven's grotto next to his tools and beside a dove on a pedestal **1854782**. A table tomb effigy of a minister survives at Auchtertool **1459705**, while a more basic effigy was noted at Pittenweem **1855209**.

³⁵ Illustrated and described in Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of St Andrews': 519-520 and figure 27.

³⁶ MacDonald, 'Post-Reformation Tombstones in the Cathedral Churchyard, St Andrews': 65, figure 4.



Figure 123. An unusual bird-like soul fills the top part of this stone to a seven-year-old child at Overton. The portrait heads may represent the parents, with a female figure on the right wearing a linen cap or mutch. The portraits recall the carving on the Faichney mural monument at Innerpeffray in Perthshire [1232502](#). An unusual horizontal skull lies below the soul above a sock and coulters. [1686915](#).



Kincardineshire¹

Sites to Visit with Interesting Carvings

1. Arbuthnott Parish Churchyard **36838**
2. Banchory Devenick Parish Churchyard **20284**
3. Banchory Ternan, Old Church and Graveyard **36675**
4. Benholm Parish Church **36750**
5. Catterline, Old Burial Ground **36763**
6. Cowie, St Mary's Churchyard **36901**
7. Dunnottar, Churchyard with Marischal Aisle **242043**
8. Durris, St Comgall's Churchyard **242079**
9. Fettercairn Parish Churchyard **265458**
10. Fordoun Parish Churchyard (now known as Auchenblae Church) **168406**
11. Garvock Parish Churchyard **36521**
12. Glenbervie, St Michael's Churchyard **36583**
13. Inverbervie (sometimes Bervie), Old Parish Churchyard **36837**
14. Kinneff, Old Parish Churchyard **36823**
15. Laurencekirk Parish Churchyard **36525**
16. Marykirk, Aberluthnott Parish Churchyard **268560**
17. Newdosk Parish Churchyard **36132**
18. St Cyrus Parish Churchyard Nether or Lower **36352**
19. St Cyrus, Old Parish Churchyard Upper **244705**

¹ Willsher's Kincardineshire field notes are available online **464052**.

Overview²

Most of the early gravestones in Kincardineshire are table tombs or flat slabs such as the one seen at Marykirk (see Figure 124) and another at Inverbervie (see Figure 125). There are also examples of more unusual forms such as the coffin-shaped slab at Benholm [2226720](#), the coped example at Catterline³ and the chest tombs found at Inverbervie [1640126](#), St Cyrus Lower [2226813](#) and Glenbervie.⁴ Headstones, of which examples may be seen at St Cyrus Lower (see Figure 126) and Arbuthnott (see Figure 127), do not appear in this region until the end of 17th century.⁵ Although Kincardineshire, also named the Mearns,⁶ has fewer eighteenth-century examples than Angus, it possesses far more headstones than are found in neighbouring Aberdeenshire. Early headstones can be found at Garvock,⁷ Dunnottar [2226745](#) and Inverbervie [2226729](#).⁸

The regional carving style and choice of symbols is distinctive. Indeed, Betty Willsher nicknamed Kincardineshire ‘heart territory’,⁹ but gravestones here share characteristics with many north Angus stones. The styles of mantling, which can be seen at Newdosk [1423092](#) and [1423094](#), Inverbervie (see Figure 125) and Arbuthnott (see Figure 127) are diverse, with other good examples at Fordoun [2226766](#), [2226764](#) and [2226769](#) and Glenbervie [2226776](#), [2226778](#) and [2226781](#). Pots of flowers used as borders, such as on stones at Newdosk [1423092](#) and Fettercairn [2226758](#), appear across Kincardineshire, as well as in north Angus. In the Mearns area several early seventeenth-century gravestones have arch-shaped panels set between columns, as at St Cyrus Lower [2226813](#).¹⁰ There is occasional employment of scroll decoration on headstones, as seen at Fettercairn [2226752](#) and Glenbervie [2226780](#), and of borders consisting of Jacobean strapwork with roses on flat slabs, as at Dunnottar [2226744](#). Weepers may also occasionally be used, as seen on the stone at Newdosk [1423094](#). The shield is a popular element of Kincardineshire gravestone designs, as seen for example at Garvock [2226770](#) and Arbuthnott [2226705](#), but only sometimes does the shield include trade symbols, as at Newdosk [1423094](#), a trait which is common in Angus.¹¹

² Willsher surveyed 20 sites across Kincardineshire to give a representative sample of both the typical and also the more unusual carvings to be found in this region.

³ Illustrated and described in Flora Davidson, *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns: An Inventory* (Angus: Angus District Council Libraries and Museums, 1999): 15.

⁴ Davidson states that chest tombs are found in the burial aisles of the Mearns in *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 1. A burial aisle is a projecting wing or chapel within a church used exclusively by one family for burial. The Glenbervie example, which had been reset with parts from another monument, is described and partly drawn by Davidson in *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 26-27.

⁵ Davidson, *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 1.

⁶ In her survey Davidson uses this term specifically to refer to Kincardineshire south of the Mounth. See Davidson, *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 1.

⁷ Davidson found a headstone to John Robretson (*sic*) dated 1678 with a carving of a skull and crossbones, near the west dyke at Garvock. See Davidson, *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 24.

⁸ Willsher recorded a headstone of 1689 at Dunnottar. Davidson found two headstones at Garvock dating to 1678 and 1680, both with mortality symbols, and two headstones at Inverbervie (referred to by Davidson as Bervie), one dating to 1703 with a winged soul and a second with a winged soul, crossed bones, skull, hourglass and coffin, dating to 1719. See Davidson, *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 13 and 24.

⁹ Betty Willsher and Doreen Hunter, *Stones: A Guide to Some Remarkable Eighteenth-Century Gravestones* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1978): 7.

¹⁰ Davidson, *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 2.

¹¹ Flora Davidson’s 1999 survey found far fewer trade symbols in the Mearns area in comparison with the number found on gravestones in Angus. See Davidson, *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 2.

Symbols to Look Out For

Mortality

Mortality symbols are usually found at the bottom of stones.¹² The most popular are the **skull**, as found at Dunnottar [2226745](#) and Garvock [2226773](#); **bones**, as seen at Inverbervie [2226729](#) and Fettercairn [2226752](#); the **hourglass**, either upright as it appears at Laurencekirk [2226796](#) and Banchory Ternan [2226711](#), or horizontal as at Kinneff [2226788](#); the **coffin**, as at Benholm [2226720](#); the **deid bell** on a slab at Marykirk (see Figure 124); and also the **gravedigger's tools**, as seen at Dunnottar [2226740](#) and also found on the recumbent slab at Marykirk (see Figure 124). **Skulls** may be depicted facing forward as at Marykirk [2226804](#), or side-on like one at Kinneff [2226790](#), and shown with or without a nose or teeth; a skull at Kinneff has both [2226788](#). There is an unusual smiling skull at Garvock [1423083](#). Rarer motifs include the **winged skull**, seen at Garvock [2226772](#) and Benholm [2226724](#), two skulls with **crossbones** placed side by side at Glenbervie [2226774](#) and a 'trophy' of mortality symbols set within an oval frame at Marykirk (Figure 124).



Figure 124. A trophy of death symbols appears within a circular panel on this recumbent slab at Marykirk. Carved around the panel are a deid bell, an hourglass and a blacksmith's tools (hammer, pincers, hammerman's crown, horseshoe and anvil). At the top and the bottom of the design are souls sprouting wings from the sides of their heads. [2226802](#).

Skeletons occasionally appear unarmed, as on the upper part of the Douglas tomb at Glenbervie,¹³ or with weapons, as seen on a carved stone fragment within the burial aisle at Marykirk.¹⁴ They can be found within larger scenes personified as 'Death on the attack,' as at St Cyrus Lower [2226814](#) and at Benholm [2226721](#). Sometimes, the **weapons of Death** appear without a skeleton as at Benholm [2226713](#).

Immortality

Winged souls appear in most graveyards in many different styles (see for example at Fordoun [2226763](#), [2226766](#), [2226767](#) and [2226769](#)) but there are three common Kincardineshire types which are illustrated in Figures 124 to 127. The first type has a heart at its breast from which the soul's wings sprout and the face has a small strip of hair or short wig, and examples occur at Benholm [2226716](#), Inverbervie (Figure 125) Fordoun [2226768](#) (the stone on the right) and St Cyrus Lower (Figure 126).

¹² Lesley Miller, *Historic Kirkyards in Kincardine and Deeside* (Stonehaven: Kincardine and Deeside District Council, 1996): 3.

¹³ Davidson illustrates and describes the recumbent skeleton, surrounded by an inscription, lying between two stocky curly-haired angels blowing the last trump. This is dated 1680. See Davidson, *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 26-28.

¹⁴ Davidson illustrates and describes the skeleton with spear and dart bestriding an hourglass above the text *fugit hora* in *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 41.



Figure 125. Plumes of mantling flank the central shield on this recumbent slab at Inverbervie in a design which is typical of the Kincardineshire area. Note the heart at the breast of the winged soul and its thin strip of hair. [2226728](#).



Figure 126. This popular type of Kincardineshire soul has a small strip of hair or wig and a heart sprouting wings. This headstone is found at St Cyrus Lower. [2226820](#).

A second type of winged soul has wings that sprout like ears from the soul's head, as seen in examples at Marykirk (see Figure 124) and Garvock [2226770](#). A particular variety of this type of soul has a double cravat, giving a neck resembling stacked plant pots, as on the stone featuring three winged souls at Arbuthnott (Figure 127, foreground) and on examples that can be seen at Fordoun [2226768](#) (the stone on the left), Glenbervie [2226778](#) and Kinneff [2226790](#). The third type of winged soul has a plump, cherubic face and elaborate hair as at Arbuthnott (Figure 127, the stone at the rear), Durris [2226746](#), Glenbervie [2226780](#) and Garvock [2226771](#). Souls like this often appear on round-headed stones like one at Newdosk [1423092](#), and examples are found at Fettercairn [2226754](#), [2226755](#) and [2226757](#) and at Fordoun [2226764](#). Occasionally it may be unclear whether a soul or simply a face above mantling is being depicted, as on two stones at Glenbervie [1423084](#) and [2226781](#). It is possible that these carvings are deviations from the first type of winged soul described above.

Another very popular symbol is the **heart** which can be seen at Arbuthnott [2226703](#), Inverbervie [2226726](#), Garvock [2226770](#) and Glenbervie [2226780](#). Less common immortality symbols include the **scallop shell** of which an example occurs at Benholm [2226715](#); **roses**, as at Marykirk [2226808](#); **clapsed hands**, as seen on the Forbes monument at Marykirk;¹⁵ **hands** emerging from **heavenly clouds** holding the **Crown of Righteousness** as at Dunnottar;¹⁶ **cornucopiae** and **flaming torches**, both seen on a stone at Newdosk [1423092](#); and **fruit and vines**, which appear on the Forbes tomb at Marykirk [2226803](#). **Angels of the Resurrection**

¹⁵ The carving, which is on the lower part of the Forbes monument, is illustrated by a sketch in Davidson, *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 40.

¹⁶ The carving, which is on a broken slab, is illustrated by a sketch in Davidson, *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 19.



Figure 127. Kincardineshire souls are often carved in distinctive styles. In the foreground of this image of two examples from Arbuthnott, on the shorter stone the souls each have a double cravat and wings sprouting almost like ears. At the rear the taller headstone has a soul carved with a plump, cherubic face and elaborate hair. [2226700](#).

with **trumpets** appear on a recumbent slab at Inverbervie¹⁷ where they are wearing breeches, and on mural monuments at Marykirk (including the Forbes tomb [2226805](#)) and at Glenbervie (the Douglas aisle),¹⁸ where the angels, one of whom is labelled Gabriel, and a skeleton are accompanied by the inscription 'hear awake arise dead and com [sic] to judgement.' At Banchory Devenick an angel holds a ribbon which flows between two rosettes, a skull and a bone [2226707](#).

Trade

A wealth of trade symbols has been spotted in this region. These include the tools of the **baker**, whose broom, rolling pin, girdle or bannock and peel are found at St Cyrus Upper;¹⁹ the **shoemaker** seen at Cowie [2226737](#); the **weaver**, represented by the heddle and shuttle and knotted thread²⁰ seen at Kinneff [2226794](#); the **miller** seen at St Cyrus Lower;²¹ the **quarryman**, also at St Cyrus Lower [2226818](#); the **stonemason** whose set-square, mell and chisel appear on a stone at St Cyrus Lower [2226810](#),²² while at Cowie these tools appear with symbols of Freemasonry [2226735](#). The **slater**, whose tools including a trowel are seen at Dunnottar [2226741](#); the **blacksmith**, whose hammer and crown are found at Glenbervie [2226783](#) and Fordoun [2226764](#) and who may also be represented by the horseshoe, an anvil, a double-headed axe and pincers as at Marykirk (Figure 124); the **merchant**, for whom a '4' sign is carved at Banchory Ternan [2226710](#) and Dunnottar [2226742](#); the **farmer**, whose sock and coulter are seen at Fettercain [2226757](#); the **gardener**, shown by a rake and spade at St Cyrus Upper [2226823](#) and Fettercain [2226754](#); and the **gunsmith**, represented by a pistol and bullet with a hammerman's crown, pincers and hammer at Garvock.²³ A particularly rare example of a trade is the **bonesetter** scene at St Cyrus Lower [2226811](#) (see the details [2226812](#)). The stone shows the deceased Mr Webster, who was also a farmer, as shown by the plough symbol, in the act of setting a broken arm. **Maritime** and **fishing carvings** appear in the seaside parishes of Cowie [2226736](#) and [2226738](#), Kinneff [2226792](#), Banchory-Devenick [2226706](#) and Dunnottar.²⁴ Interestingly, the **ship** carving at Arbuthnott [2226704](#) and the **anchor** at Benholm [2226719](#) do not denote the trade of the deceased but that of the person who commissioned the gravestones.

¹⁷ This carving is found on a tapering flat slab with a rounded asymmetrical head bearing the date of 1656. The design, which also includes a skull and crossbones, a coffin with spokes and a deid bell, is illustrated by a sketch in Davidson, *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 13.

¹⁸ This carving is described and partially illustrated in Davidson, *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 26-27.

¹⁹ This carving on a tapering slab dated 1703 is described in Davidson, *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 49.

²⁰ In her field notes Willsher suggests the knotted thread could also symbolise the thread of life.

²¹ A possible millstone carving is described in Davidson, *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 48.

²² Davidson describes and illustrates a slab dated 1642 leaning against the wall of the church with the set-square, pincers, ruler, mell, double headed axe and chisel. See Davidson, *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 21.

²³ Davidson describes and illustrates this carving, which appears on a tapering narrow slab with convex surface dated 1643, in *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 24.

²⁴ Davidson describes and illustrates a carving of a six-oared boat and anchor on a mural panel dated 1676, which appears on a tapering narrow slab with a convex surface dated 1643, in *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 19.

Symbolic Scenes and Other Carvings

Biblical Scenes

There is a depiction of **Adam and Eve** at Fettercairn [2226756](#).²⁵ Eve holds an apple and the scene is accompanied by the inscription ‘Adam and Eve by eating the forbidden tree brought all mankind to sin and misery’. Both Adam and Eve stand naked on either side of a tree around which the snake is coiled. This stone is the most northerly example of this type of carving and its design is very similar to the Prestack stone at Logie-Pert in Angus [2226225](#).

Personified Figures

Carvings include representations of **Death**, shown as a skeleton with a long dart attacking a husband and wife on the Keith mural monument at Benholm [1477650](#). This influenced a similar scene on the Straton chest tomb at St Cyrus Lower [2226814](#). A **Green Man** motif appears on a headstone at Newdosk [1423094](#) and also on the Forbes tomb at Marykirk.²⁶

Portraits

Several examples of portraiture appear across Kincardineshire. These include a portrait of the face of the **bonesetter** described above. It is also possible that the figures depicted watching his work are portraits of his wife and children: two figures are child-sized, with one gripping the knees of an adult while the other holds up its arms in ‘the attitude of wonder’.²⁷ At St Cyrus Lower there is a full-length portrait of a man wearing a hat and breeches, holding a bell in his left hand and a staff in his right,²⁸ leading Willsher to suggest in her field notes that the figure is a **bell ringer** [2226813](#). On the same chest tomb are full-length portraits of a man and a woman being skewered by Death’s lance [2226814](#) (also seen at Benholm [2226721](#), described above). A very worn carving at Inverbervie appears to show a full-length portrait of a woman surrounded by 16 skulls representing her children.²⁹

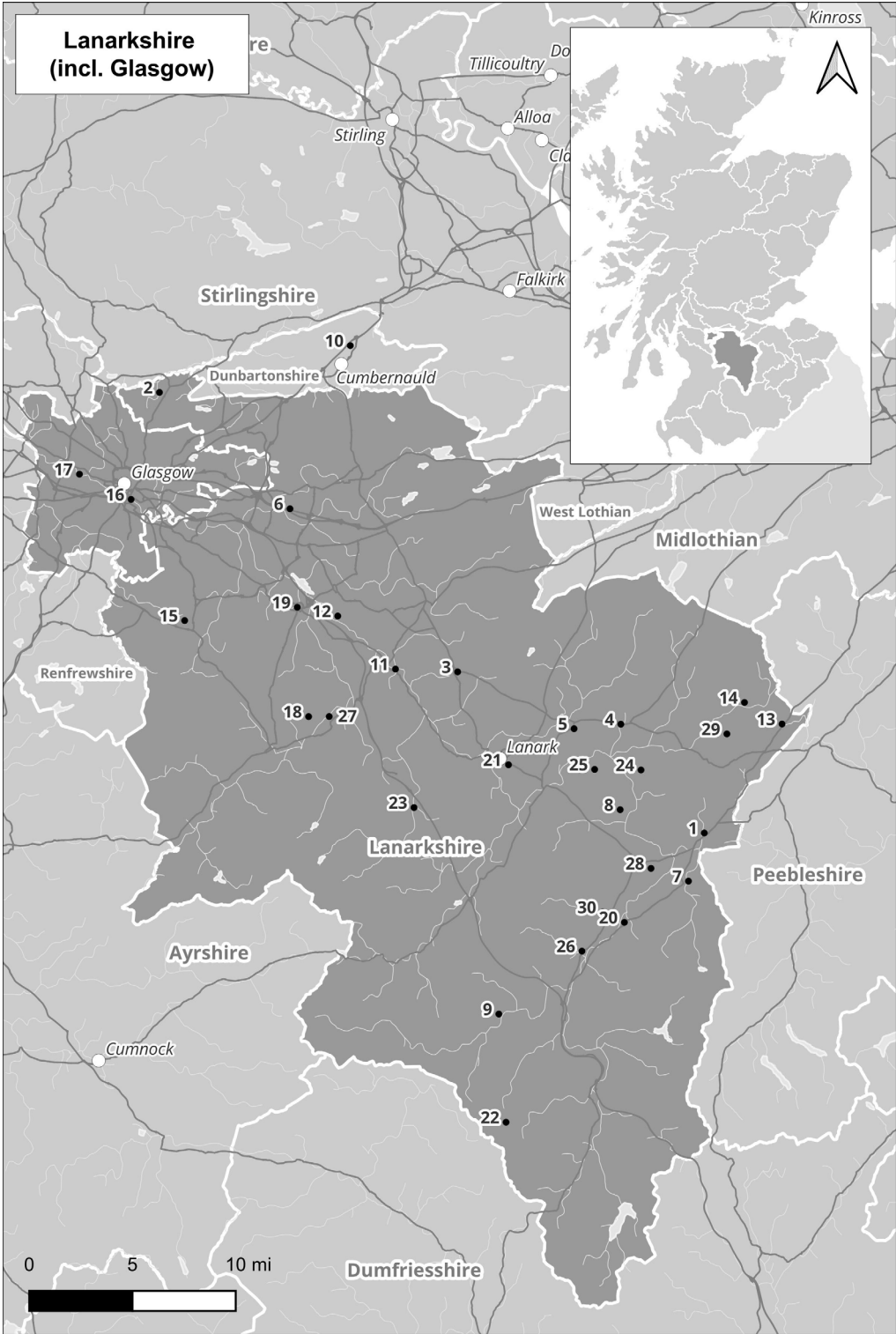
²⁵ An illustration of the Adam and Eve stone appears in D. Christison, ‘The Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands, particularly in Perth, Fife, Angus, Mearns and Lothian’, *PSAS* 36 (1902): 341, figure 55.

²⁶ Davidson describes and illustrates the Forbes monument, which appears to have a Green Man at the bottom of the inscription panel, in *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 40. This carving is masked by vegetation in Betty Willsher’s photographs.

²⁷ Andrew Jervise, *Epitaphs and Inscriptions From Burial Grounds and Old Buildings in the North-East of Scotland with Historical, Biographical, Genealogical, and Antiquarian Notes, also, an Appendix of Illustrative Papers* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas 1875): 38.

²⁸ An illustration of the bellman appears in Davidson, *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 48.

²⁹ Described and illustrated in Davidson, *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns*: 12.



Lanarkshire¹

Sites to Visit with Interesting Carvings

1. Biggar Churchyard [198973](#)
2. Cadder Churchyard [205463](#)
3. Carluke, St Luke's Churchyard [199584](#)
4. Carnwath, St Mary's Churchyard [47620](#)
5. Carstairs Churchyard [199972](#)
6. Coatbridge, Old Monkland Churchyard [45803](#)
7. Coulter Parish Churchyard [200592](#)
8. Covington Churchyard [264355](#)
9. Crawfordjohn Parish Churchyard [200545](#)
10. Cumbernauld, Old Parish Churchyard [206732](#)
11. Dalsersf Parish Churchyard [45700](#)
12. Dalziel, St Patrick's Churchyard [45718](#)
13. Dolphinton Parish Churchyard [200691](#)
14. Dunsyre Parish Churchyard [264460](#)
15. East Kilbride, Old Parish Churchyard [268290](#)
16. Glasgow, Gorbals Burial Ground [299023](#)
17. Glasgow, Govan Old Parish Churchyard [44077](#)
18. Glassford, Old Churchyard [45594](#)
19. Hamilton Parish Churchyard [220654](#)
20. Lamington, St Ninian's Churchyard [264670](#)
21. Lanark, St Kentigern's Churchyard [46576](#)
22. Leadhills Cemetery [200577](#)
23. Lesmahagow Parish Churchyard [264765](#)
24. Libberton Parish Churchyard [264775](#)
25. Pettinain Churchyard [47649](#)
26. Robertson Parish Churchyard [264819](#)
27. Stonehouse, St Ninian's Churchyard [45596](#)
28. Symington Parish Churchyard [200746](#)
29. Walston Parish Churchyard [264818](#)
30. Wiston Parish Churchyard [264820](#)

¹ Willsher's Lanarkshire field notes are available online [463393](#).

Overview²

Lanarkshire gravestones tend to be less elaborate than those found in eastern counties and they share many similarities with Peeblesshire stones.³ Good collections of carvings are found at Stonehouse, Lesmahagow, Glassford and Cumbernauld. Distinctive Lanarkshire traits include the prominence of mortality symbols, which persisted well into the 18th century. A fairly limited repertoire of death motifs was used. The swag filled with femurs and skulls, poking up in a most gruesome way, was more popular here than elsewhere in Scotland and can be seen in an example at Walston (see Figure 128). Trade symbols are not nearly as prevalent as in other counties save for Peeblesshire, and Lanarkshire examples are not set within shields or cartouches. Instead, tools are carved in various arrangements at the centre of stones, as seen at Leadhills (see Figure 131), and occasionally in a trophy-style design or shown with a figure or grasped in a hand.

Many Lanarkshire graveyards follow the memorial style rather than the grave-marker tradition. Some headstones have pilasters and may occasionally include striking geometric borders, as seen at Cadder [801075](#). There are several handsome mural monuments at Lanark [1272292](#), Glassford [2222287](#), Hamilton [1465852](#) and Lesmahagow [801062](#). Table tombs were also popular and two examples can be seen at Coulter in Figures 129 and 130, and a good collection survives at Biggar [1648910](#). Govan is notable for having several nineteenth-century 'double bedders' [1465847](#), the low, broad gravestones which are placed across two lairs.

Symbols to Look Out For

Mortality

Most popular and prominent is the **skull**, and the **skull and crossbones** as seen at Symington [801030](#) and Cumbernauld [800676](#). There are relatively few additional mortality symbols. Skulls may appear at the top of stones, as at Dolphinton [800914](#), Walston [800991](#) and Lamington [801145](#). At Cumbernauld [800674](#) one unusual skull appears to be attached to rosettes (the same stone is also shown in Figure 133). Some designs are crudely carved with cut-out triangles for noses, as seen at Pettinain [801013](#). Other versions of skulls gnaw on bones as one on a stone at East Kilbride [801117](#), or appear on the headstone's hood as at Libberton [801038](#). **Winged skulls** are unusually late, appearing at Dalserf (1739) [2222265](#), Libberton (1741) [801035](#), Lamington (1776) [801148](#), Robertson (1765) [801021](#) and Lanark (no date) [801177](#). **Hourglasses** are also a favoured symbol, appearing upright as at Libberton [801033](#), horizontally as at Robertson [801019](#) or, more occasionally, winged as at Lanark [1272288](#). The **swag** with bones is prominently displayed with various combinations of femurs and skulls poking out. Early eighteenth-century instances include examples at Robertson [801021](#), Lamington [801168](#), Lanark (with a snake) [801181](#), Carluke [800912](#), Walston (Figure 128) and at Lesmahagow [801058](#), where the swag hangs between two pilasters.

² Willsher surveyed 34 burial grounds across Lanarkshire to give a representative sample of both the typical and also the more unusual carvings to be found within this region. However, with the exception of Govan, her survey excluded all of the Glasgow area. Willsher elected to include Cumbernauld in her Lanarkshire survey as, although this town was located within east Dunbartonshire, it is very close to the north boundary of Lanarkshire and shares stylistic similarities with this county.

³ The paucity of published studies of Lanarkshire gravestones means that Willsher's field notes provide the prime resource for this region.



Figure 128. A carved swag filled with skulls is a characteristic Lanarkshire motif. This example is at Walston. 801006.

A small number of **deid bells** are found, including examples at Carstairs 800934 and Lesmahagow 801055, and a prominent design at Symington seems to be a deid bell that resembles a flower 801025. **Skeletons** feature on stones at Biggar 2222219, Robertson 801018, Carluke 1465788 and Lamington, where the skeleton rests an elbow on an hourglass 1466236. **Coffins** appear at Walston 801002, Crawfordjohn 800927 and in another example at Walston 801003, where a portrait of the deceased's head rises from a large coffin. A **gravedigger's tools** are found at Lamington 801145, Govan 1465841 and Robertson 801018. The **death mask** is recorded at Walston 801002 and Govan,⁴ where a **mortcloth and tassels** also appear 1465844. **Snakes** feature at Covington 1465795, Biggar 2222218, Lamington (see Figure 132) and Lesmahagow 2222314.

Immortality

Winged souls are often carved in a primitive style like one seen at Covington 1465794 and they appear in many forms. One popular style has wide and shallow wings, which are carved without being separated by a bib, see for example Robertson 801019, Carstairs 1465791, Libberton 801033 and Lesmahagow 801058. Less common forms include unusually elaborate

⁴ The unusual feature of a death mask appears at Govan Churchyard on a stone which dates to around 1733. The death mask is flanked by roses to represent Paradise and there are, in a vertical line, a shell (the symbol whose source was the badge of pilgrims to the shrine of St James of Compostela), an hourglass, and a skull and crossed bones. This stone is discussed by Willsher in her 1992 Govan Old Parish Church Graveyard lecture, which is published online http://www.govanold.org.uk/reports/1992_graveyard.html.



Figure 129. This table tomb at Coulter has two unusual carvings. The end panel shown here depicts a flying angel and the second panel which can be seen on trove [222250](#) shows two clasped hands.



Figure 130. This table tomb end panel at Coulter is another example of a less common symbol. In this case a finger points to a ring of eternity. [222252](#).

bewigged souls at Pettinain **801008** and Coulter **222253**, a soul depicted in flight, with hair streaming upwards, at Carstairs **1465790**, and a soul at East Kilbride with hands emerging from the wings to hold a crown and a book **801117**. At Lanark a soul is carved on top of crossbones with a skull forming its bib **801181**. A curious early soul (1664) at Lesmahagow has a long neck rising from a large box-like shape and its arm-like wings point downwards **801048**. At Covington the box-like structure contains an hourglass **1465795**, and one Govan mason, working around 1730, also carved souls with long necks rising from a box-like shape **1465843**. A large winged soul forms the top of a mural monument at Lanark and this angelic figure resembles a bust-like portrait **1272293**. A soul creates the curving shape of the top of a headstone at Carnwath **800932** and at Glassford a soul appears at the base of the stone **1465840**. The **heart**, of which an example can be seen at Stonehouse **801136**, is also a popular symbol, and it is often prominently placed, as at Lesmahagow **801050**. Hearts may sometimes be inverted, as at Robertson **801019**, occasionally paired as at Walston **801002** and may sometimes appear in the bosom of a soul or in a rudimentary head portrait, as is seen at Dolphinton **800919**. Other symbols include the **book** as found at Glassford **1465840** and Cumbernauld **800674**, **rosettes** which occur at Lesmahagow **801048**, the **shell** as seen at Govan **1465842** and the **star**, which can be seen at Carluke **1465788** and Pettinain **801013**. There are relatively few **angels of the Resurrection** but examples occur at Carluke **1465788** and Coulter (Figure 129).

A handful of **Resurrection scenes** have been identified, an example being at East Kilbride **801117**. There two figures in a swag hold the cords of drapes which are parted to show a winged soul holding a crown and an open book. Other rare symbols include the **Tree of Life** at Glassford **1465840**, the **ringed snake** at Lamington **801148**, the clasped hands at Coulter (see Figure 129) and a finger pointing to the ring of eternity, also at Coulter (Figure 130).



Figure 131. The tools depicted here at Leadhills belong to a lead miner. It is very unusual to find this trade represented on gravestones. **2222306**.

Trade

Lanarkshire examples include the tools of a **hammerman** at Govan **1465844**, of **stonemasons** at Lesmahagow **801050** and Covington **800924**, of **millers** at Symington **801028** and Lamington **801145**, possibly those of a **maltman** at Libberton **801033** and of a **shoemaker** at Cadder **2222221**. A **dyster's** press and shears are found at Govan **1465849** and the hand of a **tailor** wields an iron above a pair of shears at Lesmahagow **1466239**. **Wrights** are denoted in two examples at Stonehouse by a pick, an axe, a saw and compasses on one stone **801138** and by an axe and an auger on the other **801140**. A **miner's** pick, hammer and wedge appear at Gorbals, Glasgow **1143904** and a rare example of a stone carved with the tools of a lead miner is found at Leadhills (Figure 131). At Carnwath a **merchant's** scales occur alongside an unusual carving of a roll of meat **800932**.

Symbolic Scenes and Other Carvings

Biblical Scenes

There are two **Adam and Eve** scenes in Lanarkshire. In the example at Biggar, the serpent offers the apple to Eve and skulls are shown in the tree over the heads of Adam and Eve **800933**. In the Hamilton example the tree depicted is a palm tree **801143**. An unusual carving at Crawfordjohn shows a female between two apple trees, which has been interpreted as a unique depiction of Eve **800930** (although an alternative reading is that the portrait shows a female in Paradise). Snakes with apples also appear at Lesmahagow **2222314**, at Lamington (Figure 132) and at Biggar **2222218**.

An **Abraham and Isaac** scene at Wiston **801016** is notable as a distant outlier of similar carvings in Angus and Perthshire. This carving depicts Abraham with knife in hand, a ram to his left and his son Isaac lying upon the altar. The winged soul above might also represent the angel who stops Abraham from slaying his son.

Personified Figures

Green Man motifs include an example of the 'peeper' type⁵ at Carnwath **2222241**, where the Green Man is shown positioned in the bosom of a soul and has a protruding tongue. There is an unusual, skull-like Green Man at Symington **2222350**.

Portraits

Portraits appear across Lanarkshire but are mainly primitive and clumsily executed. One exception is a full-length, high-relief carving of a male in a hat and cloak, found at Walston **800997**, which is of higher quality and may be the work of the cutter of the West Linton portrait stones in Peeblesshire, pictured in Figure 162 in the Scottish Borders section on page 203. Another Walston portrait depicts a man in a full-skirted coat, a cravat and a waistcoat **800991**. There is also a third man depicted at Walston **801000**. Other male figures appear at Dunsyre **2222280** and **2222283**, Symington **801024**, Kirk O'Shotts **2222333** and Lanark **2222305**. At Cumbernauld a small female figure stands next to an open book (Figure 133).

At Libberton a female figure stands within an arched panel below a face with an inverted heart for its breast **801038**, while at Dolphinton a male face appears above a heart **2222274**. At Govan the portrait of a head is set within a stylised, body-shaped panel **1465841**. A similar format of portrait appears at Dalsersf **2222267**. Hamilton is notable for the portraits of four severed heads on the Covenanters' memorial **801111**.

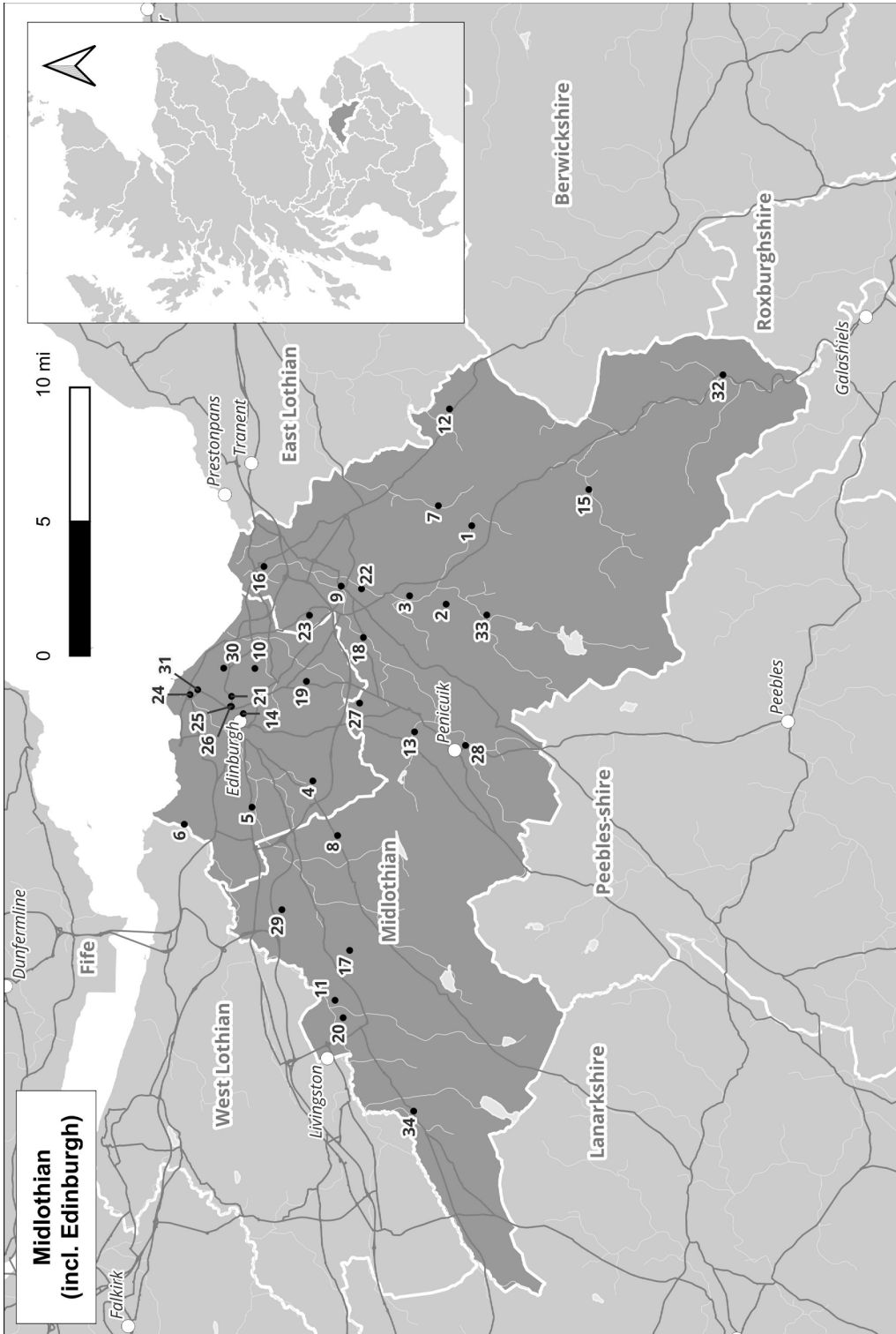
⁵ For a discussion of different styles of the Green Man motif see Betty Willsher, 'The Green Man as an Emblem on Scottish Tombstones', *Markers: The Annual Journal of the Association for Gravestone Studies* 9 (1992): 58-77.



Figure 132. Found at St Ninian's Churchyard in Lamington, this apple-and-snake carving recalls the Fall of Man. [2222299](#).



Figure 133. This headstone at Cumbernauld is of interest for both the unusual placement of a small female portrait inside a house-shaped panel and for the carved skull which appears to be attached to rosettes. [800674](#).



Midlothian¹

Sites to Visit with Interesting Carvings

1. Borthwick Churchyard [53242](#)
2. Carrington, Old Parish Churchyard [53639](#)
3. Cockpen, Old Parish Churchyard [53629](#)
4. Colinton Parish Church, Edinburgh [51762](#)
5. Corstorphine Parish Churchyard, Edinburgh [275170](#)
6. Cramond Parish Churchyard, Edinburgh [50397](#)
7. Crichton Parish Churchyard [53593](#)
8. Currie, Old Parish Churchyard [50274](#)
9. Dalkeith, St Nicholas Churchyard [53417](#)
10. Duddingston Parish Churchyard, Edinburgh [52220](#)
11. East Calder, St Cuthbert's Churchyard [49063](#)
12. Fala Churchyard [212391](#)
13. Glencorse, Old Parish Churchyard [51868](#)
14. Greyfriars Kirkyard, Edinburgh [52398](#)
15. Heriot Churchyard [101359](#)
16. Inveresk Parish Churchyard [53821](#)
17. Kirknewton, Old Parish Churchyard [50341](#)
18. Lasswade, Old Parish Churchyard [53450](#)
19. Liberton Parish Churchyard, Edinburgh [275021](#)
20. Mid Calder Parish Churchyard [49058](#)
21. New Calton Burial Ground, Edinburgh [87708](#)
22. Newbattle Parish Churchyard [53426](#)
23. Newton Parish Churchyard [212635](#)
24. North Leith Burial Ground, Edinburgh [52011](#)
25. Old Calton Burial Ground, Edinburgh, Main Site [117126](#)
26. Old Calton Burial Ground, Edinburgh, North Site [275162](#)
27. Old Pentland Burial Ground [51681](#)
28. Penicuik, St Kentigern's Churchyard [51652](#)
29. Ratho Parish Churchyard [50724](#)
30. Restalrig Parish Churchyard, Edinburgh [52103](#)
31. South Leith Parish Churchyard, Edinburgh [254437](#)
32. Stow, Old Parish Churchyard [54523](#)
33. Temple, Old Parish Churchyard [53261](#)
34. West Calder, Old Parish Churchyard [49099](#)

¹ Willsher's Midlothian field notes are available online [463029](#).

Overview²

Midlothian's gravestones are exemplified by the high-quality monuments within the graveyards of Edinburgh and by the notable instances of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century folk art found in more rural areas.³ The mural monuments along the east **1932886** and west **1932853** walls at Greyfriars Kirkyard, Edinburgh,⁴ such as the one commemorating John Byres (Figure 134), proved highly influential across the wider Lothian area.

As well as at Greyfriars, fine collections of mural monuments survive at Newton, Dalkeith, Newbattle⁵ and Glencorse.⁶ Ornately carved table tombs can be observed at Dalkeith, Cockpen, Fala, Newton, Newbattle⁷ and Carrington.⁸ Pedestal tombs with urns, a form rarely found in mid-eighteenth-century Scotland, appear at Inveresk and Crichton.⁹ A unique coffin-shaped low tomb survives at Ratho **587510**, where there is a full-sized carving of the deceased hidden out of view on the underside.

Distinctive Midlothian characteristics include the depiction of various symbols suspended on **ribbons** running down the edges of gravestones, as on the stone at Old Calton (Figure 135), along with a wealth of classical detailing.

Classical detailing includes features such as **pilasters**, **caryatids**, **swags**, **putti** and **urns**. Particularly fine caryatids are found at Greyfriars **2221162**, winged versions with exposed breasts appear at Carrington¹⁰ and Cramond **2221101** and examples at Newbattle have lower halves depicted as claw-like animal paws.¹¹ Swags typically take the form of curtains framing inscriptions, while inscription panels sometimes resemble a loose drape, hanging in waves. **Cartouches**, one of which can be seen at Colinton **560099**, appear more often than shields. The **barley-twist column**, seen at Greyfriars **1506797** and Heriot **1552897**, is a Peeblesshire feature which is also found across the Midlothian area, for example at Glencorse.¹² Also

² Willsher surveyed 36 sites across Midlothian to give a representative sample of both the typical and the more unusual carvings to be found within this region. Her survey of Edinburgh included several seventeenth- and eighteenth-century mural monuments at Greyfriars Kirkyard, as well as gravestones from selected city-centre sites and more outlying areas.

³ Several studies have helped to characterise Midlothian gravestones including Islay Donaldson, *Midlothian Gravestones* (Bonnyrigg: Midlothian District Library Service, 1994); J.C. Carrick, 'Churchyard Monuments at Newbattle', *PSAS* 37 (1903): 258-270; D. Christison, 'Additional Notes on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands', *PSAS* 39 (1905): 55-116; Alan Reid, 'Glencorse Old Church and Churchyard', *PSAS* 38 (1904): 305-323; Alan Reid, 'Colinton Church and Churchyard', *PSAS* 39 (1905): 133-147; Alan Reid, 'Notes on the Churchyards of Currie, Kirknewton, and the Calders', *PSAS* 40 (1906): 217-245; Alan Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Lasswade and Pentland', *PSAS* 41 (1907): 91-99; Alan Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn, Bowden and Carrington', *PSAS* 44 (1910): 33-76; Alan Reid, 'Monumental Remains in Pitlochry District, and Churchyard Memorials at Moulin, Temple, and Clerkington', *PSAS* 46 (1912): 389-423; Charlotte Golledge, *Greyfriars Graveyard* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2018).

⁴ In 2022, 3D digital models were created for seven mural monuments at Greyfriars Kirkyard, see event record **1161663**, which can be viewed on Sketchfab <https://skfb.ly/oyA9U>.

⁵ Carrick, 'Churchyard Monuments at Newbattle'.

⁶ Reid, 'Glencorse Old Church and Churchyard'.

⁷ Carrick, 'Churchyard Monuments at Newbattle'.

⁸ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn, Bowden and Carrington'.

⁹ Willsher reports that Frederick Burgess had noted how in England by the mid-18th century the pedestal monuments with urns had proved to be highly popular, yet this monument type was rarely found in Scotland. See Betty Willsher and Doreen Hunter, *Stones: A Guide to Some Remarkable Eighteenth-Century Gravestones* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1978): 5.

¹⁰ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn, Bowden and Carrington': 71.

¹¹ Photograph in Donaldson, *Midlothian Gravestones*: 42, plate 12.

¹² Reid, 'Glencorse Old Church and Churchyard': 321, figure 14.

popular are **skulls** and **souls** carved on the shoulders or hoods of headstones, such as those at New Calton **2235137** and Kirknewton **1040293**, two seen at North Leith **1464708** and **617567** and an example at Colinton.¹³

Midlothian gravestones follow the monument style rather than the grave-marker tradition. The earliest legible date that Willsher found was one of 1618, noted on a flat slab at Glencorse, also mentioned by Reid.¹⁴ Other particularly early stones include a mural monument dated 1606 in Greyfriars Kirkyard, a 'mini-mural monument' dated 1607 at Newbattle,¹⁵ a headstone with barley-twist columns dated 1624 at Old Pentland¹⁶ and a headstone of 1632, which was later reset into the churchyard wall at Newbattle.¹⁷



Figure 134. Lavishly carved and built on an imposing scale, this mural monument to John Byres of Coates is found on the west wall of Greyfriars Kirkyard, Edinburgh. It is an excellent example of the very high quality of seventeenth-century work for which this site is famous. This tomb is particularly notable for carvings of a skull with stalks of wheat, a winged skull surmounted by an hourglass and a highly unusual fallen tower. Photograph © Ursula Wells, used by kind permission.



Figure 135. Captain John Gray erected this stone to his parents at Old Calton Burial Ground, Edinburgh. It is topped by a three-decker ship of the line, a symbol which represents Gray's own profession. On the reverse are the tools of his father who was a shipwright. **2221124.**

¹³ Reid, 'Colinton Church and Churchyard': 138, figure 4.

¹⁴ Reid, 'Glencorse Old Church and Churchyard': 316.

¹⁵ Donaldson, *Midlothian Gravestones*: 45.

¹⁶ Donaldson, *Midlothian Gravestones*: 7.

¹⁷ Carrick, 'Churchyard Monuments at Newbattle': 261-264.

Symbols to Look Out For

Mortality

Favoured mortality symbols are **skulls**, **bones**, **hourglasses**, **Death's weapons**, a **gravedigger's tools**, which Carrick reports at Newbattle,¹⁸ **coffins** as seen at East Calder **560136** and **swags and drapes** which can be seen at Lasswade **548909**. Bones appear singly as on a tomb at Stow **1552923** and crossed as at Old Calton (see Figure 135). At Inveresk, a hand clasps an animal's jaw bone, a seemingly unique design of uncertain meaning **2224418**. There is a wide variety of skulls with examples at Inveresk **1596020** and Newbattle **564996**.¹⁹ Early skulls found at Greyfriars include designs with wings **1506799**, some topped with tools **560268** and **560058**, and others sprouting ears of corn, as on the memorial to John Byres (see Figure 134). A rare three-dimensional skull tops one headstone at Newbattle **2264840**. A skull is used in an unusual trophy design alongside an hourglass and the **weapons of Death** at Lasswade **548912**. Other carvings of Death's weapons appear at Newton²⁰ and Glencorse.²¹ The rare device of a **scythe** crossed with a **sceptre**, encircled by a **ringed serpent**, was spotted by Willsher at Inveresk.²² Death's weapons, suspended on ribbons, are displayed at Temple (Figure 136), New Calton **2221122** and Old Calton (see Figure 135).



Figure 136. This image shows the reverse face of the stone at Temple shown in Figure 142. At the top is one of the most beautiful souls in the region and Death's weapons and crossbones are displayed on ribbons hung along the two edges of the stone, a stylistic device which is characteristic of this region. **549697**.

The **hourglass**, seen in a vertical position at Greyfriars **2221170** and Temple **2264869**, may also be horizontal as at Lasswade **548912** and Fala,²³ and it is occasionally winged as at Glencorse **2264815**, Crichton²⁴ and Inveresk²⁵ or, more rarely, flaming as at Duddingston.²⁶ Occasionally hourglasses appear as the main symbol at the tops of stones, as observed at

¹⁸ See Carrick, 'Churchyard Monuments at Newbattle': figures 2 and 5.

¹⁹ Further Newbattle examples are illustrated in Carrick, 'Churchyard Monuments at Newbattle': figures 1, 4 and 6.

²⁰ Photograph in Donaldson, *Midlothian Gravestones*: 33, plate 8.

²¹ Reid, 'Glencorse Old Church and Churchyard': figure 13.

²² Willsher and Hunter, *Stones*: figure 36a.

²³ Photograph in Donaldson, *Midlothian Gravestones*: 36, plate 2.

²⁴ Willsher's field notes (**2221105**) describe a winged hourglass above a skull on an 1706 headstone. This is not illustrated but is listed as stone number 5 recorded at Crichton.

²⁵ A winged hourglass at Inveresk is noted in Willsher and Hunter, *Stones*: 33.

²⁶ Flaming hourglasses on a mural monument at Duddingston are noted in Willsher's field notes **2221114**.

Temple.²⁷ Examples of **skeletons** include carvings at Greyfriars **2221149** and **2221171**, Inveresk **1596015**, Dalkeith **2221119**, Penicuik **2264843** and Currie **2221107**. A large shrouded **corpse** which is depicted as a skeleton appears at Greyfriars **1098005**. **Extinguished torches** are seen at Newbattle.²⁸ **Deid bells** are infrequently used; however, an example at Greyfriars also includes the arm which is ringing the bell **560268**.

Immortality

Winged souls display huge variety in their wing shape (New Calton **2235137**) and hairstyle (North Leith **617562**). Some possess flowing locks as shown in these examples at North Leith **1464708** and Colinton **1464587** and one impressive soul, carved in the round, appears at Corstorphine wearing a periwig **2221142**. At East Calder a soul's wings take the form of acanthus leaves **560136**. Designs at Glencorse, noted by Reid, display wings rising up tightly over the head and facial greenery reminiscent of a Green Man.²⁹ Occasionally depicted in pairs as on a stone at Glencorse recorded by Reid,³⁰ there are multiple examples of souls with drapes as at North Leith **617559** and Lasswade (Figure 138). A primitive soul wearing a crown appears at Old Calton, **2221125**. Particularly beautiful examples occur at Inveresk



Figure 137. The winged soul on this headstone at Crichton blasts into the ear of a nearby skull with a serpent-like trumpet. **2221104**.

1464702 and Temple (see Figure 136), while Donaldson suggests that the finest examples are at Penicuik.³¹ **Herald angels** are a popular choice at Greyfriars **1333986**, Duddingston **1225140** and Penicuik **2264844**.³² At Crichton an angel trumpets into the ear of a skull (Figure 137) and a rare cut-out design survives at Corstorphine **1464590**.

A particularly fine and varied collection of **putti** adorn the monuments at Greyfriars **1333971**, **1333950** and **1232750**. Putti-like supporters with trumpets appear at Colinton³³ and at Newbattle.³⁴ A pair of putti with palm fronds and Bibles were spotted at Inveresk **1464702** and putti are depicted with a crown at Dalkeith **2221118**, a **wreath** at Colinton³⁵ and an inscription scroll at Carrington **2221079**.³⁶ A

²⁷ Fieldwork carried out by Susan Buckham in March 2018 found a headstone with an upper panel containing an upright hourglass and the date of 1691. A skull and crossbones appear in the central panel. For more details see the event record **1145116**. A similar hourglass appears at Crichton.

²⁸ Donaldson, *Midlothian Gravestones*: 42, plate 11.

²⁹ Reid, 'Glencorse Old Church and Churchyard': figures 8 and 12.

³⁰ Reid, 'Glencorse Old Church and Churchyard': figure 6.

³¹ Donaldson, *Midlothian Gravestones*: 9.

³² Donaldson suggests that herald angels are less common in Midlothian than in Fife and Perthshire. See Donaldson, *Midlothian Gravestones*: 21. Her study did not include the City of Edinburgh.

³³ Reid, 'Colinton Church and Churchyard': figure 3.

³⁴ Carrick, 'Churchyard Monuments at Newbattle': figure 1.

³⁵ Reid, 'Colinton Church and Churchyard': figure 5.

³⁶ Reid also records an inscription scroll at Carrington. Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn, Bowden and Carrington': 66-67 and figure 1.

Figure 138. The two large putti on this headstone from Lasswade appear to be pulling a mortcloth out from behind a winged soul. No less intriguing is the scene of three small figures above this. Willsher identifies the central figure as Father Time who, she suggests, sits between two naked Resurrection figures, one of whom holds a torch and the other a skull. Islay Donaldson offers an alternative interpretation, suggesting that the central figure with the scythe is Atropos, who sits between Clotho and Lachesis to represent the three Fates. In this interpretation Clotho draws from her distaff the thread of life, which Lachesis then spins to determine its length. Finally, Atropos prepares to sever this thread of life with her scythe. 1464705.



Resurrection scene at Newbattle shows a figure holding a rose, a pine cone and a book 2264839. At Kirknewton a fully naked Resurrection figure holds a flower 680478. At Lasswade two Resurrection figures hold a drape from which a soul emerges (Figure 138).

Other popular immortality symbols include the **book** of which examples occur at Borthwick 549700 and at Inveresk, where it is held open by two hands 1596020, the **scallop shell** noted at Greyfriars 560164 and Heriot 1552885, and **rosettes**, which can be seen at Glencorse,³⁷ Old Calton 1333962 and Greyfriars 560268. Many Midlothian stones are richly adorned with **foliage and flowers** and examples appear at Old Pentland 2264852 and Currie 2221106 and also two at Colinton 2221134 and 1464588. Designs may appear as **garlands** like those at Old Calton 1232730 and Liberton 1023894 or in the form of **cornucopiae**, as at Cramond 2221097. Less commonly observed symbols include **flaming torches** as seen at Greyfriars 1097953 and at Glencorse 1553172 (also mentioned by Reid)³⁸ and the **flaming urns** at Corstorphine (Figure 139) and Temple (see Figure 142).

³⁷ Reid, 'Glencorse Old Church and Churchyard': figure 11.

³⁸ Reid, 'Glencorse Old Church and Churchyard': 318.



Figure 139. This winged Father Time on a headstone at Corstorphine holds his hourglass aloft and clutches a scythe. This is one of several examples at this site of flaming urns, a motif which was relatively uncommon in Scotland during the 18th century. Photograph © Ursula Wells, used by kind permission.

Trade³⁹

Multiple trades are represented across the region. Stones to **millers** appear at East Calder **560136** and Glencorse where, most unusually, the design uses two millstones rather than one.⁴⁰ Designs for **millwrights** at Kirknewton include one stone carved with a hammer, axe and mill-rind and another with a mill-rind, corn shovel, pick and a portrait.⁴¹ At East Calder the millwright himself is portrayed next to a mill-rind and book **560136**. The **wright's** tools occur at Old Pentland, Borthwick, Penicuik,⁴² Cockpen **2590147**, Lasswade,⁴³ Corstorphine **2221142**, New Calton **2235137**, Glencorse,⁴⁴ Mid Calder,⁴⁵ Carrington⁴⁶ and Temple.⁴⁷ **Stonemasons** have been identified at Temple⁴⁸ and at Old Calton **1232730** in Edinburgh. **Hammermen** appear at Currie,⁴⁹ Crichton (Willsher's field notes describe a 1688 headstone to William Affleck carved with pincers and hammer), Restalrig **1464712**, Newbattle **564996**, on another Newbattle stone recorded by Carrick⁵⁰ and at Carrington.⁵¹ At Kirknewton Reid records a rare vice which accompanies an anvil, crown and hammer,⁵² and also a hammer with a horseshoe, which denotes a **blacksmith**.⁵³ A stone at Temple depicts an unusual tool which appears to be a farrier's buttress alongside a pair of compasses, a hammer and

³⁹ Islay Donaldson notes that the stones of Midlothian tradesmen tend to be smaller than those of merchants or farmers since the tradesmen rarely achieved comparable wealth. The stonemasons used the banner of incorporated trades as a design source. See Donaldson, *Midlothian Gravestones*: 45.

⁴⁰ Reid, 'Glencorse Old Church and Churchyard': figure 16.

⁴¹ Reid shows illustrations of stones bearing designs for millers. See Reid, 'Notes on the Churchyards of Currie, Kirknewton, and the Calders': figures 15 and 16.

⁴² Wright carvings at Old Pentland, Borthwick and Penicuik are illustrated in Donaldson, *Midlothian Gravestones*: 52-53 and 10, plate 10.

⁴³ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Lasswade and Pentland': 89

⁴⁴ See also Reid, 'Glencorse Old Church and Churchyard': figure 16.

⁴⁵ Reid, 'Notes on the Churchyards of Currie, Kirknewton, and the Calders': figure 19.

⁴⁶ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn, Bowden and Carrington': figure 4.

⁴⁷ Reid, 'Monumental Remains in Pitlochry District': figure 22.

⁴⁸ Donaldson, *Midlothian Gravestones*: 46, sketch C.

⁴⁹ Reid, 'Notes on the Churchyards of Currie, Kirknewton, and the Calders': 226.

⁵⁰ Carrick, 'Churchyard Monuments at Newbattle': figure 9.

⁵¹ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn, Bowden and Carrington': figure 3.

⁵² Reid, 'Notes on the Churchyards of Currie, Kirknewton, and the Calders': figures 13 and 14.

⁵³ Reid, 'Notes on the Churchyards of Currie, Kirknewton, and the Calders': figure 17.

a small anvil **1552883**.⁵⁴ Unusually, a hammerman's crown⁵⁵ at Lasswade **548907** is carved with foliage growing out of it. Other trades occurring in Midlothian include: a **shoemaker** and **brewer** at Newbattle;⁵⁶ **stigmen** carrying a cask at Liberton;⁵⁷ **tailors** at Carrington,⁵⁸ Lasswade⁵⁹ and Crichton;⁶⁰ a **weaver** in Newbattle;⁶¹ a **merchant** at Newbattle⁶² and **mariners** at North Leith **617567**, Old Calton **2221124** and Carrington.⁶³ Carvings for **miners** include a collier's picks, shovel and wedge at Newbattle **564985**, also described and illustrated by Carrick,⁶⁴ a compass, picks, a wedge, a hammer and a spade at Temple **1552884** and a pick at Old Pentland, recorded by Reid.⁶⁵ Meanwhile, at Lasswade two mining surveyors are portrayed at work (Figure 140), a scene also described by Reid.⁶⁶



Figure 140. John Ross, Overseer of Mellvillmour Coal, erected this headstone at Lasswade. The carved scene depicts two men at work surveying a mine with a measuring wheel. Alongside are their tools of a wedge, picks, shovel and wrench. **1464703**.

⁵⁴ Farriers' buttresses have been recorded at Newland's Churchyard, Peeblesshire **2221957**, Clackmannan Parish Church, Clackmannanshire **1532177**, Tullibody, Clackmannanshire **2223530** and New Kilpatrick, Dunbartonshire **2225503**. Reid offers an alternative interpretation of this tool as a boring brace, see Reid, 'Monumental Remains in Pitlochry District': 413-414, figure 21.

⁵⁵ The Lasswade hammerman's stone is cited by Islay Donaldson as an example of how Midlothian hammermen habitually included crosses above their crowns. See Donaldson, *Midlothian Gravestones*: 47.

⁵⁶ Carrick, 'Churchyard Monuments at Newbattle': figure 4 and figure 9.

⁵⁷ Christison, 'Additional Notes on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': figure 59.

⁵⁸ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn, Bowden and Carrington': 71.

⁵⁹ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Lasswade and Pentland': figure 5.

⁶⁰ Donaldson, *Midlothian Gravestones*: 46, plate 2.

⁶¹ Carrick, 'Churchyard Monuments at Newbattle': figure 3.

⁶² Carrick, 'Churchyard Monuments at Newbattle': figure 7.

⁶³ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn, Bowden and Carrington': 67, figure 1.

⁶⁴ Carrick, 'Churchyard Monuments at Newbattle': 269, figure 8.

⁶⁵ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Lasswade and Pentland': 95.

⁶⁶ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Lasswade and Pentland': 86-87.

A **gardener's** symbols occur at Glencorse,⁶⁷ Lasswade⁶⁸ and Temple.⁶⁹ South Leith churchyard contains stones to a **flesher** 2221190, a **cooper** 2221182 (a trade incorporation's stone), the sheaf of a **miller** or a **brewer** 2221185 and a **carter** 2221183. Related to this last is the coachmen's stone at Canongate Kirkyard 2221128, which is also a trade incorporation's stone. A trade incorporation was a body which set rules to ensure that the work carried out by their members, who were often craftsmen who practised the same trade, was of good quality and earned a fair price. They might also support members who fell on hard times. Another good collection of trade symbols can be found at Old Calton Burial Ground, which was established by the Incorporated Trades of Calton in 1718. **Farming** symbols include carvings of the coulter, scythe, spade, harrow and plough, as seen at Fala⁷⁰ and Carrington.⁷¹ A sheep's head, a plough and a harrow appear on a pedestal monument at Crichton.⁷² At Liberton a rare and finely carved scene shows tenants in the fields with a plough and herdsman at work (Figure 141). Below this carving is a large recumbent effigy of the farmer resting his head on a pillow of wheat.

At Clerkington a **tenant farmer** is denoted by a rare collection of a measure, a sack and a riddle, noted by Reid.⁷³ Equally rare is a depiction of **surgical instruments** tied in a ribbon at Greyfriars 1131008.

Symbolic Scenes and Other Carvings

Biblical Scenes

The **Sower and Harvester** is the most popular biblical carving, with examples at Liberton (see Figure 141), Cockpen 2590163 and 2264848, Inveresk 2224415, Cramond 2221100, Corstorphine 1464591, Newbattle⁷⁴ and Colinton.⁷⁵ The **fallen tower**, an extremely rare symbol which is likely to be a reference to the destruction of the Tower of Babel,⁷⁶ is found on the seventeenth-century mural monument to John Byres of Coates at Greyfriars Kirkyard (see Figure 134) and on the eighteenth-century table tomb at Liberton seen in Figure 141, where the tower appears on one of the supports 1023899.

⁶⁷ Reid, 'Glencorse Old Church and Churchyard': figure 15.

⁶⁸ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Lasswade and Pentland': figure 9. Willsher's field notes record that she was unable to find the Lasswade gardener's stone during her survey.

⁶⁹ Reid, 'Monumental Remains in Pitlochry District': 415.

⁷⁰ Donaldson, *Midlothian Gravestones*: 36, plate 3.

⁷¹ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn, Bowden and Carrington': 74, figure 9.

⁷² Donaldson, *Midlothian Gravestones*: 36, plate 3; 54-55 plates 2, 4 and 5.

⁷³ Reid, 'Monumental Remains in Pitlochry District': 421-422, figure 26.

⁷⁴ Carrick, 'Churchyard Monuments at Newbattle': figure 7.

⁷⁵ Reid, 'Colinton Church and Churchyard': figures 1 and 4.

⁷⁶ Charlotte Golledge suggests that the fallen tower symbol references Genesis 11: 1-9 and can best be understood as a Resurrection symbol. See Golledge, *Greyfriars Graveyard*: 32-33.

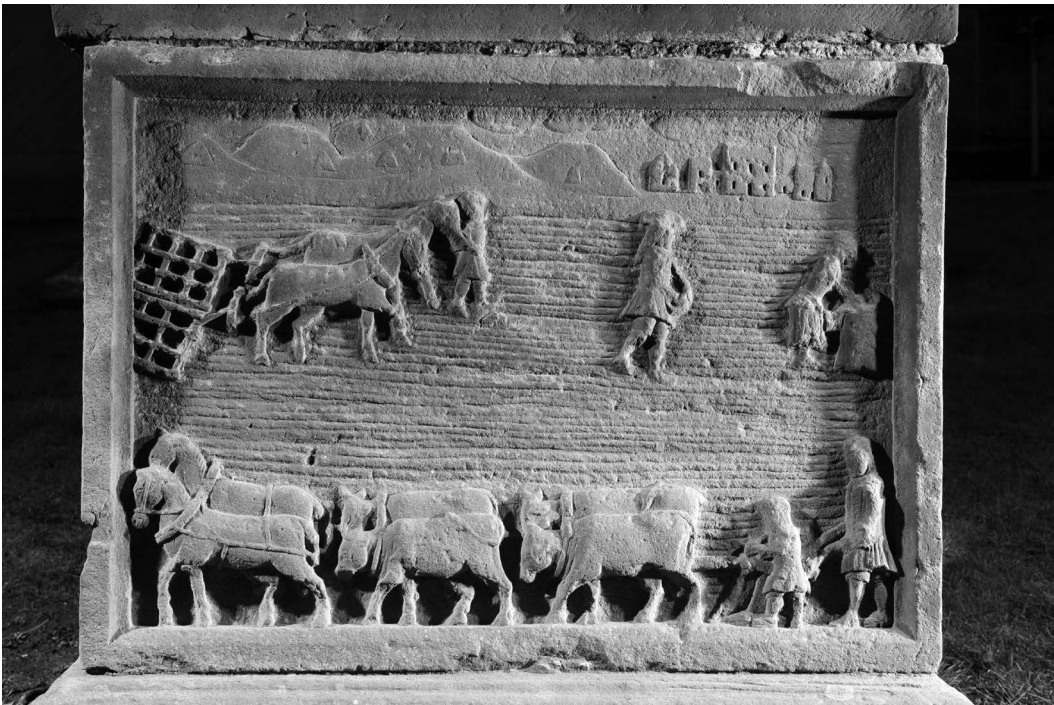


Figure 141. This elaborately carved table tomb at Liberton features several figurative scenes alongside an effigy of the deceased. The full-length figure, now sadly missing his head, holds a skull and rests his feet on a sheaf of wheat. At one end a carved panel illustrates farmhands ploughing the fields with teams of oxen, shown in the second image. Other fine detailing on the tomb's legs include a harvester figure holding sheaves of wheat and a weeping widow holding a book. A highly unusual scene shows a skeleton clutching a skull alongside an illustration of the thread of life with a weight and dart. [1023882](#) and [1023897](#).

Quarles Emblems

A carving of **Anima** (representing the human soul), sitting at a desk below two angels holding a crown, appears at Greyfriars Kirkyard.⁷⁷ This design, which is also found at Bo'ness Church Wynd **2238422** in West Lothian and on the Service Stone at Holy Rude, Stirling (see page 226), is based on Quarles's concluding emblem at the end of Book 5, entitled 'The Farewell'.

Personified Figures

The earliest examples of the **Green Man** motif carved on Scottish gravestones are found at Greyfriars in Edinburgh, for example **1464608** and **1333980**. This symbol appears prominently on the Milne monument **1111407**, which displays four different examples **685196**, **1464609**, **1464610** and **1130822**. Subsequently, the use of the Green Man motif spread across the wider Lothians and Lowland Scotland. Midlothian sites (often with multiple examples) include Old Calton **2221124**, Inveresk **2224416**, North Leith **1464709**, Newbattle **2264837**, Cockpen **2264848**, Old Pentland **2264851**, South Leith **2221188**, Cramond **2221097**, Carrington **2221082**, Corstorphine **1464591**, Dalkeith **2221119**, Glencorse **2264813**⁷⁸ and Colinton.⁷⁹ **The King of Terrors** appears at Greyfriars, armed with a scythe alongside a book **1131008**, see also **2221159**. At Liberton **1023883**, on the tomb seen in Figure 141, the skeleton stands on a skull, primed to sever the thread of life above a seated figure. **Father Time** is well represented within Greyfriars, for example on the Foulis monument **1258408** and, in one carving, he appears next to an **Angel of Death 560114**. Father Time can also be seen at Corstorphine (see Figure 139), Dalkeith **2221119**, Old Calton **1333959** and Lasswade **548906**, also seen in Figure 138.⁸⁰ Figures representing the **Cardinal Virtues**⁸¹ of Prudence, Temperance, Justice and Fortitude adorn the Little family's tomb in Greyfriars **2221174**. Two figures representing **Youth** and **Age** appear on a table tomb at Carrington.⁸² Several other female figures are found across Midlothian, such as the pair holding books at Old Calton **2155026**, a scene which may well be allegorical; however, the meaning remains lost in the mists of time.

Portraits

Surprisingly little portraiture exists within Edinburgh, the effigy of a farmer at Liberton being a notable exception (see Figure 141). Few eighteenth-century or earlier portraits occur at Greyfriars Kirkyard. Those present include medallion portraits of a husband and wife on the George Foulis of Ravelston monument **1258408**, the cloaked statue of John Bayne

⁷⁷ This carving, located on Dr Michael Young's Monument, Greyfriars Kirkyard, is available to view as a 3D digital model on Sketchfab <https://skfb.ly/oAFzv>. For more details see event record **1161663**. A description of the mural monument belonging to Dr Michael Young and Thomas Kincaid of Auchinreoch at Greyfriars Kirkyard with the (unattributed) Quarles carving is contained in the RCAHMS Inventory of 1951 <https://trove.scot/archive/1471339>.

⁷⁸ Reid, 'Glencorse Old Church and Churchyard': 332, figure 16.

⁷⁹ Reid, 'Colinton Church and Churchyard': 145, figure 10.

⁸⁰ Islay Donaldson offers a possible alternative interpretation of the Father Time scene at Lasswade. In Donaldson's interpretation the central figure with the scythe is Atropos and on either side sit Clotho and Lachesis, so together the three figures represent the three Fates. However, Willsher explains in her field notes that she believes that this is more likely to be a Resurrection scene with the central figure of Father Time since the figures to the left and right are both naked. See Donaldson, *Midlothian Gravestones*: 64.

⁸¹ Charlotte Gollidge describes the four figures on the Little tomb and how they correspond to the depiction of specific allegorical figures. See Gollidge, *Greyfriars Graveyard*: 36-37.

⁸² Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn, Bowden and Carrington': 72 and figure 5.



Figure 142. This stone at Temple is one of Midlothian's finest portraits. It commemorates John Craig, a local tenant farmer and his two sons. Beneath a fringe of leafy mantling the figure of John stands with two young children who cling to the skirts of his coat. 1552882.

1932852, an effigy in the Little enclosure 1333966 and the lower part of a deathbed scene in John Naysmith of Posso's tomb 560058. Portraiture appears in some rural locations, the finest being that of tenant farmer John Craig and his two sons at Temple (Figure 142).⁸³

Other examples, albeit of less highly skilled work, include a female figure next to a skeleton at Currie 2221107 and a man with his dog and a pair of boots at Fala 2264808. Other male portraits are found at Dalkeith,⁸⁴ at Heriot 1552886 and one at Carrington 1457102 which is executed in the Roxburghshire waist-up, recessed style and shows a school master holding an open book. A classroom scene with the teacher, two children, a desk and a stack of books was noted at Newton 664934. Portraits of ministers appear at Cockpen⁸⁵ and Inveresk 1596020. There are also several examples of reclining figures reading, including stones at Newbattle⁸⁶ and at Dalkeith 2221116 and 2221117. Portrait heads also appear across the region, including examples at Corstorphine 1464591, Colinton⁸⁷ and Newbattle, where Carrick records a man with a club,⁸⁸ and 564996, also illustrated and described by Carrick.⁸⁹

⁸³ Islay Donaldson suggests that the same carver produced both the portrait of the tenant farmer and family at Temple and the mother and children scenes at Prestonpans, East Lothian. See Donaldson, *Midlothian Gravestones*: 27-28.

⁸⁴ A sketch of the upper half of a male figure is given in Donaldson, *Midlothian Gravestones*: 24.

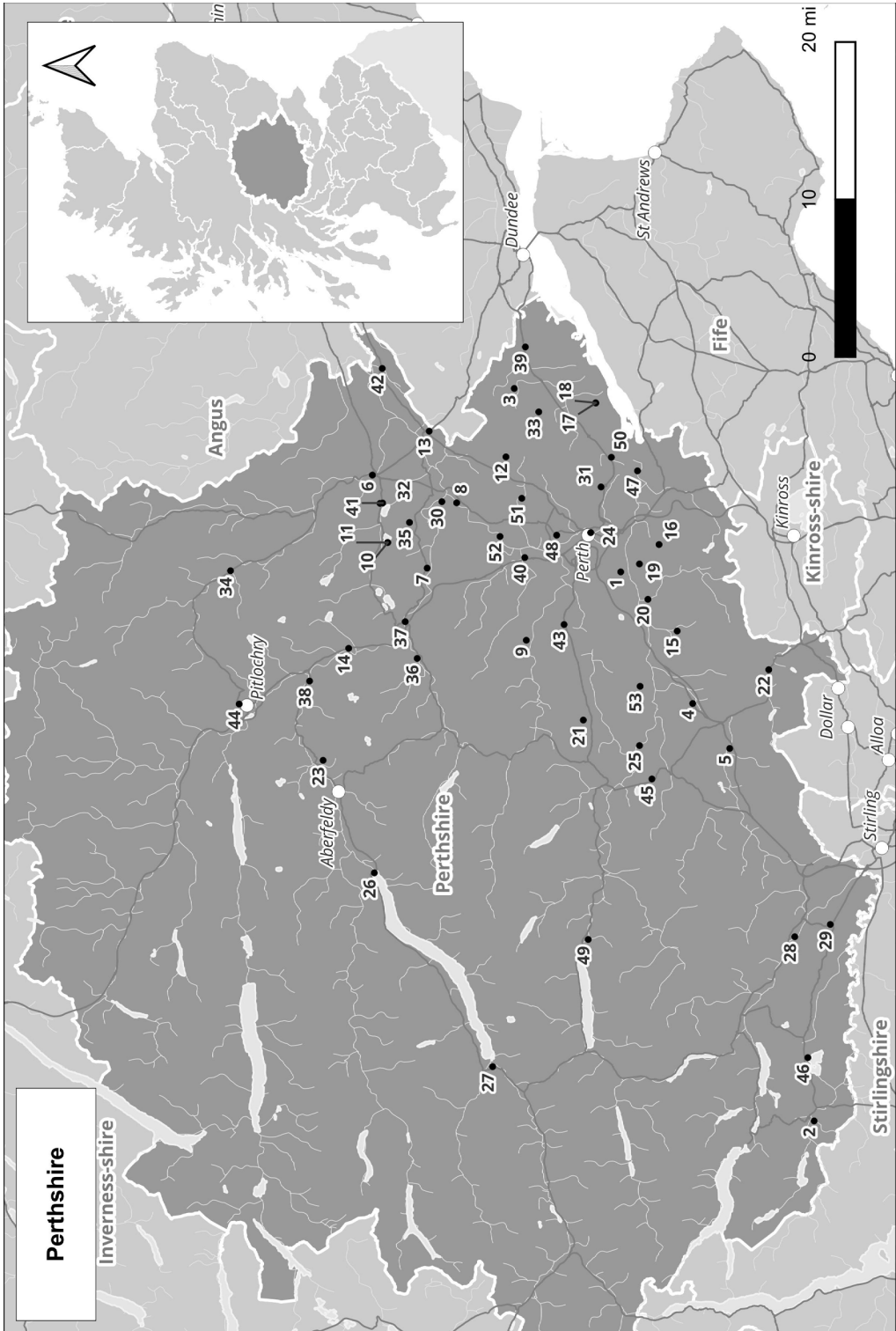
⁸⁵ Donaldson, *Midlothian Gravestones*: 26, plate 6

⁸⁶ Carrick, 'Churchyard Monuments at Newbattle': figure 1.

⁸⁷ Reid, 'Colinton Church and Churchyard': figure 10.

⁸⁸ Carrick, 'Churchyard Monuments at Newbattle': 265-266 and figure 6.

⁸⁹ Carrick, 'Churchyard Monuments at Newbattle': 269-270 and figure 9.



Perthshire¹

Sites to Visit with Interesting Carvings

1. Aberdalgie Parish Churchyard **88214**
2. Aberfoyle Parish Churchyard **24073**
3. Abernyte Parish Churchyard **30652**
4. Auchterarder Parish Churchyard **26106**
5. Blackford Parish Churchyard **161726**
6. Blairgowrie, Old Parish Churchyard **225341**
7. Caputh, Mute Hill, Old Parish Church **27116**
8. Cargill, Old Parish Churchyard **28554**
9. Chapelhill (also called Logiealmond), Old Parish Churchyard **26809**
10. Clunie, Old Parish Churchyard **28964**
11. Clunie Parish Churchyard **28961**
12. Collace, Old Parish Churchyard **239677**
13. Coupar Angus Abbey Churchyard **30556**
14. Dowally, St Anne's Churchyard **27111**
15. Dunning, St Serf's Churchyard **26683**
16. Ecclesmagirdle Chapel Burial Ground **28021**
17. Errol, Old Parish Churchyard **30475**
18. Errol Parish Churchyard **166443**
19. Forgandenny Parish Churchyard **268514**
20. Forteviot Parish Churchyard **79662**
21. Fowls Wester Parish Churchyard **26195**
22. Glendevon Parish Churchyard **153433**
23. Grandtully, St Mary's Churchyard **25724**
24. Greyfriars Burial Ground, Perth **28331**
25. Innerpefferay Chapel Burial Ground **26043**
26. Kenmore Churchyard **167365**
27. Killin Parish Churchyard **24206**
28. Kilmadock, St Aedh's Old Churchyard **24741**
29. Kincardine Parish Church **46107**
30. Kinclaven Churchyard **167444**
31. Kinfauns Parish Churchyard **79023**
32. Kinloch Churchyard **167466**
33. Kinnaird Parish Churchyard **72092**
34. Kirkmichael and Straloch, Old Parish Churchyard **27584**
35. Kirkton of Lethendy, Old Parish Churchyard **28960**
36. Lagganallachie Burial Ground **26246**
37. Little Dunkeld Parish Churchyard **27180**
38. Logierait Parish Churchyard **167681**
39. Longforgan Parish Churchyard **31733**
40. Luncarty, Old Parish Churchyard **27027**
41. Marlee House Mausoleum **226605**
42. Meigle Parish Churchyard **30878**
43. Methven Parish Churchyard **167784**
44. Moulin Churchyard **227249**

¹ Willsher's Perthshire field notes are available online in three files at [464342](#), [464310](#) and [464118](#).

45. Muthill, Old Parish Churchyard **25308**
46. Port of Menteith Parish Churchyard **138024**
47. Rhynd, Old Parish Churchyard **27929**
48. Scone, Old Parish Churchyard **28178**
49. St Fillan's (also called Dundurn) Burial Ground **24872**
50. St Madoes Parish Churchyard **28242**
51. St Martins Parish Churchyard **28622**
52. Stanley, Cambusmichael Churchyard **28641**
53. Trinity Gask Parish Church **268504**

Overview²

Nicknamed the 'Adam and Eve Kingdom'³ by Willsher and Hunter after the frequently encountered examples of that biblical scene, such as at Cargill (see Figure 147), Perthshire has one of the most interesting and distinctive collections of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century gravestones in Scotland. Previous surveys indicate that a good number of stones survive within the region. A flat slab of 1580⁴ was recorded at Greyfriars in Perth and at Dunning there are two early headstones of 1623 **803378** and 1624 **1605942**.⁵ Willsher noted particularly good collections of carvings at Logierait **167681**, Moulin **227249**, Killin **24206**, Kenmore **167365** and Innerpefferay **26043**.

Willsher identified several localised trends across the county. In east Perthshire gravestones share many similarities with those in Angus, being ornately carved using a wide range of motifs, symbolic scenes and decoration. By contrast, gravestones in west Perthshire are generally more plain, with fewer headstones and a greater number of flat slabs and tablestones. In southwest Perthshire Willsher saw a gradual change going westward from Forteviot and Dunning as plainer slabs became more common, particularly west of Crieff and Comrie. While Willsher did find examples of symbolic carvings, these were fewer in number than examples with heraldic designs. Around Blair Atholl Willsher found barely any carved stones at all. Possible reasons for the differences between east and west Perthshire gravestones may include freestone being in short supply in the west, the comparative lack of property and also local fashions and tastes.

As in Angus, many stones across Perthshire display family initials inscribed down the face of the stone and read horizontally, as in an example at Collace (see Figure 151). Heraldic and architectural styles influence many designs, such as examples with heraldry at Greyfriars **1232384** and at Scone **1544218**, and examples with the use of supporters at Kirkmichael **2234931**, with carved borders as seen at Fowlis Wester **2226077** and with columns which appear at Kenmore **803432** and Kincardine (Figure 143). The popularity of heraldic designs includes the unique carving of a knight on horseback at Greyfriars **1232402**.

² Willsher surveyed 92 sites across Perthshire to give a representative sample of both the typical and the more unusual carvings to be found within this region.

³ Betty Willsher and Doreen Hunter, *Stones: A Guide to Some Remarkable Eighteenth-Century Gravestones* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1978): 7.

⁴ Illustrated in D. Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands, Particularly in Perth, Fife, Angus, Mearns and Lothian', *PSAS* 36 (1902): 285, figure 3.

⁵ Illustrated in Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 439, figure 170.



Figure 143. This stone at Kincardine is one of a small number of stones with portraits of parents and children. Often children were not given their own stone at the time of their death but were commemorated on a family's stone after an adult member had died. Each of the children is naked, with the exception of the girl. Willsher's field notes mention that this stone was known locally as the 'Crookit Family' since each child appears to have an abnormality. But Willsher suggests that this might actually be due to a lack of skill by the carver or because the stone has become damaged. A similar family group, more proficiently depicted, is on the Faichney family mural monument (1232734) at Innerpeffray. 2228602.

Symbols to Look Out For

Mortality

A wide variety of mortality symbols occur, particularly across east Perthshire, including the **hourglass** as seen at Killin [803209](#) (usually shown upright); **bones** like those at St Madoes [1654974](#) (which can be both crossed and single); the **gravedigger's tools** which are often crossed and which can be seen at Meigle [589788](#); the **deid bell** seen at Killin [803208](#); **Death's dart**, of which a pair appear on a stone at Caputh [1544225](#), and **Death's scythe**, seen at Errol [803399](#); **coffins** at Collace [1544978](#); doused **torches** at Kirkmichael [2234931](#); **corpses** as at Inchtute [1552869](#) and **weepers** like those seen at Abernyte [589787](#). **Skulls** are varied and distinctive styles occur. They include examples with a beard and moustache at Blackford [803303](#), or with teeth resembling two rows on a chessboard, seen on a stone at Glendevon [1654076](#). Skulls can be found that have bottom jaws, as seen at Blackford [803303](#). A particular feature on some skulls is rimmed eye sockets as at Greyfriars [589753](#), giving the appearance of spectacles (see Figure 146).⁶ A striking carving of this type is at Errol, where a ribbon winds through the eye sockets of a skull tying together various symbols

⁶ Following correspondence with the Royal Society of Optometrists, Willsher established that glasses of this type post-date these carvings.

of mortality **803399**. **Skeletons**, such as one at Coupar Angus **1571443**, include two examples at Meigle. On one of these a reclining skeleton is blasted by angels with their trumpets **589789** while on the other the skeleton is upright, holding Death's dart and an hourglass **589788**. The use of **drapery**, often depicted as fringed, represents the **mortcloth** and can be seen at Kenmore **803432** and Scone **1544216**. Rare symbols include **vertebrae** as at Longforgan (Figure 144), **death masks** also at Longforgan **1544960** and an **urn** at Killin **803209**. Only once, at Ecclesmagirdle, are the gravedigger's tools used as the sole mortality symbol, which is extremely rare.⁷

Immortality

Various **winged souls**, such as at Inchtute **1552871**, include two examples at Longforgan, one wearing a cap **1568225** and the other a distinctive expression **1544960**. Other common symbols include **greenery** which may be seen at Clunie **2234656**; **palm fronds** which are found at Coupar Angus **803157** and which may sometimes be crossed like those at Errol **803399** or used as mantling as at Kenmore **388067**; **rosettes** seen at Kenmore **388067** and St Fillan's Chapel (Dundurn) **1568370**; **flaming torches** noted at Greyfriars **1232388** and sometimes

seen in pairs as at Errol **803399**; **scallop shells** seen at Collace **1544978**; **scales** found at Coupar Angus **1571443**; a **Crown of Righteousness** like that at Errol **803399**; **plants in pots** which may be seen at Kenmore **803424**; and open **books** as at Scone **1531976** and Kincardine (see Figure 143). Also popular are **Resurrection scenes** as at Kinclaven **2235091**, many with pairs of **angels** as at Logierait **589739** and angels who often hold **trumpets** like those at Greyfriars **1232399**. Other good examples are found at Coupar Angus **398235**, Meigle **589789** and Greyfriars **1232400**. At Forteviot, a naked husband and wife clutch onto an angel's trumpet **1654009**. At Kinclaven **2235091** an angel sounds the last trump over two coffins containing corpses. Less common symbols include the **clashed hands** at Stanley **1568397**, a **pierced heart** at Killin **1531970**, a **bow and arrow**,⁸ a **serpent** with its tail in its mouth at Greyfriars **1232388**, **heavenly radiance** at Trinity Gask **2227473** and the **Tree of Life**, seen in one example at Caputh **1544222** and seen sprouting from a millstone at Abernyste **803280**. At Longforgan, an unusual carving of a **sun** takes the place of a winged soul and has eyes like roses **1568233**.



Figure 144. The collection of mortality symbols at the foot of this headstone from Longforgan are shown as if suspended from a pair of rings. The mortality symbols, most unusually, include a row of vertebrae. In the central shield is a weaver's shuttle and loom. **1544961**.

⁷ Willsher and Hunter, *Stones*: 40.

⁸ Bows and arrows were noted at Aberfoyle in Willsher and Hunter, *Stones*: 44.

Trade

A wide variety of trade symbols appears across Perthshire. During the 18th century these were usually displayed within shields, sometimes with heraldic embellishments. Earlier examples may be displayed without these framing devices, as at Kilmadock **1686895**.⁹

This region is particularly rich in **farming** symbols.¹⁰ The most popular is the **sock and coulter** as at Rhynd **2227420**,¹¹ which may sometimes be found alongside a stook of **corn** or very occasionally a **flail**, for example at Muthill **1681301**. At St Martins **2227431** the sock and coulter appears alongside a blacksmith's tools to show that the deceased also owned some land.¹² Other popular agricultural symbols include **owsen bows** as at Longforgan **1544960**,¹³ a **sickle** as seen at Kirkton of Lethendy **1523873**, **swingletrees** and depictions of an **entire plough** of which examples are seen at Forgandenny **803413**, Forteviot **1654008** and at Scone **1544216**, where the horse is also included. There is a rare example at Aberdalgie of the **caschrom** **1653617**¹⁴ alongside an agricultural **spade** (see also spades at Fowlis Wester **1686890**).¹⁵ At Muthill there is an unusual combination of corn sheaf, **harrow**, flail, sock and coulter and **scythe** **1681313**. Estate workers include a **fowler** at Kenmore **589733**, and a **gamekeeper** with his boat, fishing rod and gun dog at Luncarty **1523879**. Other common trades include **hammermen**,¹⁶ occasionally shown by a hand clasping a hammer, seen at Kenmore **803426** and Greyfriars **1232398**;¹⁷ **shoemakers** whose symbols appear at Errol (Figure 145);¹⁸ and **stonemasons** depicted by their tools as at Longforgan **1568225**, Collace **1544978** and Errol **2235014** or, more occasionally, by three castles, as at Greyfriars, Perth **2227377**.

Also represented frequently are **weavers**, whose symbols appear at Longforgan (see Figure 144) and Dunning **803367**, and who are sometimes represented with a carved wob as at Forteviot **1681300**;¹⁹ **wrights** seen at Coupar Angus **803344** and Muthill **1681312**; **tailors** whose tools appear at Kinclaven **2228615** and also at Forgandenny **2234663** where they include pins and needles and a measure; and **merchants** represented by the '4' symbol at Coupar Angus **589711**, scales at Glendevon **1686904** and sugar cones at Kilmadock **1686896**.

⁹ Illustrated in Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 298-301, figures 16-20.

¹⁰ Illustrated in Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 296, figure 14 and 407-413, figures 128-130.

¹¹ Willsher's field notes record that in the Forgandenny, Dunning and Muthill areas the sock and coulter tend to be shown as separated rather than fitted together.

¹² Willsher and Hunter, *Stones*: 67.

¹³ These yokes for oxen occur fairly frequently in East Perthshire and West Angus, see Willsher and Hunter, *Stones*: 94.

¹⁴ A caschrom is a foot plough, a long wooden spade tipped with iron, which was used by the poorest farmers.

¹⁵ At Kilmadock and in the surrounding area the spade was used on several stones as the main or sole tool, possibly indicating the former prevalence of spade husbandry in the district, see Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 297, figure 15.

¹⁶ An early example of a smith's symbol, dated 1673, was found at Blackford, see Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 382, figure 98.

¹⁷ Illustrated in Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 377, figures 91b and 91c.

¹⁸ Symbols for shoemakers include an unusual boot last on a stone at Dunblane, illustrated in Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 386, figure 103b.

¹⁹ Illustrated in Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 392, figure 111c.

Sailors²⁰ are denoted by ships at Greyfriars **1232388**²¹ and at Collace **1544979**. **Fishermen** appear at Kinfauns **553361** and other examples include stones with boats and fish at Rhynd **1232739**,²² a boat with net and floats at Stanley **2227442** and tools for net menders at St Madoes **1654973**.

Greyfriars Burial Ground in Perth **28331** contains a particularly fine and diverse collection of trade carvings. It includes many typical designs such as those for a hammerman **1232387**, a merchant **589755**, a **maltman** **1232396** and a **flesher** (see Figure 146) but also several unusual examples including symbols representing a **candlemaker** **589755**, a **dyster's** press²³



Figure 145. A fine array of a shoemaker's tools at Errol, including a bodkin and half-moon-shaped knife for cutting leather, is placed beneath the incorporation's crown. The trio of mortality symbols is bound together with the Memento Mori banner, which weaves its way into the eye sockets of the skull. **1232511**.



Figure 146. The tools of a flesher, a sharpening steel, an axe and a knife, fill a heraldic-style shield enclosed by leafy mantling on this headstone at Greyfriars Perth. The row of mortality symbols below features a skull with heavily rimmed eye sockets, creating the appearance of spectacles. **589753**.

²⁰ The symbols of the sailor on several stones are illustrated in Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 419-421, figures 137-142.

²¹ In her field notes Willsher remarks on how unusual it is to find the term 'sailor' used instead of the more common 'mariner'.

²² Willsher, Betty and Hunter, *Stones*: figure 85.

²³ A hand with what appears to be nail marks appears over the dyster's press, possibly indicating religious symbolism, see Willsher and Hunter, *Stones*: figure 72.

2227393 and an inverted tailor's goose (see Figure 149).²⁴ Also at Greyfriars, one particularly fine **glover** carving includes shears, gloves, stretchers, buckle, a pair of breeches and morris-dancing bells **589756**.²⁵ Other rare symbols found in this region include those of a **barber** at Greyfriars **789874**²⁶ and a **weaver's** knot at Stanley **1568398**. Perthshire also contains numerous scenes of tradesmen at work. By far the most impressive, if rather graphic, are two stones to fleshers at Abernethy **1686914** and **589787** with another at Greyfriars (Figure 146).

Also at Abernethy a scene involving **millers** depicts two figures in different hats, possibly denoting the master and his apprentice **803280**. At Rhynd, two **blacksmiths** appear similarly distinguished by the master holding the sled hammer and the apprentice a fore hammer **789854**.²⁷ Other examples of tradesmen at work include a **carter** with his horse and cart at Greyfriars **589758**, a **weaver** at the loom at Kirkton of Lethendy **1523872**, a **fisherman** **1523880** and a **gamekeeper** **1523879**, both at Luncarty, and **stonemasons** at Stanley **1568396** and Caputh **1544224**. At Scone, the child of a **wright** is depicted with his father's tools **1531974**. At Methven **789623** a stonemason in his apron sits at the top of the stone, between the symbols of Freemasonry and an Adam and Eve scene, with his tools lying at a distance below.

Symbolic Scenes and Other Carvings

Biblical Scenes

There are 19 **Adam and Eve** stones in Perthshire and these constitute by far the largest regional collection. Carvings are found at Caputh **1544222**, Cargill **803308** (also seen in Figure 147), Clunie **1686906**, Chapelhill (Logiealmond)²⁸ **2235010**, Collace **2266387**,²⁹ Dowally **1568404**, St Fillan's Chapel (Dundurn)³⁰ **1568370**, two examples at Little Dunkeld **789639** and **1265776**, Kinfauns **1544220**, Lagganallachie **803497**, four examples at Logierait **2234926**, **1012467**, **1012468** and **589739**, Methven **789623**, Greyfriars **1232385**, St Madoes **1654973**, and St Martins **789828**. Only the Little Dunkeld stone, dated 1762, shows the act of expulsion, with Adam raising his hand in farewell **1265776**. Most designs depict the Tree of Life, the serpent and figures. The designs at Kinfauns **1544220** and Greyfriars **1232385** (and possibly at Clunie **1686906**) are identical, showing the Tree of Life springing from the globe decorated with gardeners' tools. The stone at St Fillan's is distinctive as, on its west face, Adam and Eve hold hands in the Garden of Eden **1568370**, while carved on the east face is the Tree of Life **1568369**. In an unusual detail an angel peeps out of the tree at St Madoes **1654973**.

²⁴ In her field notes Willsher suggests that the iron was inverted to indicate that it can no longer be used by the deceased.

²⁵ For Willsher's description of this stone in her field notes see **2227382**, **2227383** and **2227381**. Another example of a glover's stone at Greyfriars is **2227385**.

²⁶ The barber's symbols at Greyfriars (a periwig on a stand decorated with a face, combs and razors) and at Dunblane (a basin, razor and comb) are illustrated in Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 393, figure 112. The only other known barber carving is at Alloa, Clackmannanshire.

²⁷ A miniature version of this metalworking scene is carved in a shield on a headstone at Kirkton of Lethendy, see Willsher and Hunter, *Stones*: 67.

²⁸ Chapelhill is called Logiealmond in Willsher, 'Adam and Eve Scenes on Kirkyard Monuments in the Scottish Lowlands': 425, figure 13.

²⁹ Described in Betty Willsher, 'Adam and Eve Scenes on Kirkyard Monuments in the Scottish Lowlands', *PSAS* 122 (1993): 425.

³⁰ St Fillan's Chapel is called Dundurn in Willsher, 'Adam and Eve Scenes on Kirkyard Monuments in the Scottish Lowlands': 425.



Figure 147. These three carvings set within rounded arches make up the long side-panel of a table tomb at Cargill. The left-hand panel shows the young Isaac bound upon the altar, about to be sacrificed by his father, Abraham. Depicted separately in the central arch is the ram that will take Isaac's place as a sacrifice. The story affirms the belief in submitting wholly to God's will. The third panel is a very worn Fall of Man scene. Adam and Eve, with traces of their aprons just visible, stand below an apple tree as the serpent presents the apple to Eve. **803308**.

Perthshire also has the largest collection of **Abraham and Isaac** depictions, appearing on eight stones. These are found at Blairgowrie,³¹ two examples at Cargill **2266370** and Figure 147, Grandtully **948286**, two examples at Logierait³² **2228676** (one being only a stone fragment **2228670**) and two examples at Methven³³ **2227321** and **2227326**.

Quarles Emblems

Four scenes from Quarles's *Emblemes* are found on the coped stone to Gilbert Coupar³⁴ at Scone. These carvings show **Anima** carried by **Cupid** with the anchor of **Hope** (*Emblemes* 4.XIII) **2227460**, Father Time (*Emblemes* 3.XV) **2227457**, Anima pulling back the curtain to reveal Cupid (*Emblemes* 5.XII) (Figure 148) and **Divinus**, his face in his hands, with Anima (*Emblemes* 3.VII) **2227458**.

³¹ Illustrated in Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 351, figure 68.

³² The 1774 Logierait stone (**2228676**) is illustrated in Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 349, figure 66.

³³ The 1769 Methven stone is illustrated in Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 350, figure 67. Photographs of both Methven Abraham and Isaac stones are included in Willsher's field notes.

³⁴ A full description is given in Michael Bath, *Emblems in Scotland: Motifs and Meanings*, SCROLL: Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature 28 (Leiden: Brill, 2018): 260-261.



Figure 148. This coped stone at Scone depicts a scene from Quarles's *Emblemes Book 5.XII* and shows Anima (the human soul) attempting to draw back the curtain behind which Cupid (Divine Love) is hiding. The same design is carved on the coped stone to Judith Nairn at St Andrews and the Vichtane coped stone at the Howff, Dundee. 2227459.

Personified Figures

There are several coped stones dating to the 1640s at Scone with allegorical carvings of **Justice** 2227456, **Charity** 2227455, **Hope** and **Youth** 2227462, which also include **Death** depicted as a skeleton with his dart 2227454.³⁵ The unique **Faith, Hope and Charity** headstone at Greyfriars 1232404 dates to the early 1650s (Figure 149).

Green Man motifs are found throughout Perthshire on headstones (see Aberfoyle 803180, Kinclaven 2235092 and Scone 1531975) and on monuments, particularly on the end supports of table tombs, as at Port of Menteith 1410310. The **King of Terrors** appears on several stones, for example at Errol (Figure 150), and is armed with a long spade at Aberfoyle 803183 in a design inspired by Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*.³⁶ At Meigle 589788, two **angels of the Resurrection** blast at the skeleton as they sound the Last Trump.

Father Time, offering a less menacing reminder that life is finite, is also well represented, with examples at Errol 2266453 where he faces the King of Terrors (see Figure 150), Collace (see Figure 151), Scone 2227453, St Madoes 1654973, Kinnaird 803162 and Stanley 1568396.

³⁵ Noted in Bath, *Emblems in Scotland*: 260.

³⁶ Willsher's field notes recall a similar King of Terrors carving in Holy Rude, Stirling, inspired by Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia* (Roma: 1603), available at <https://archive.org/stream/iconologiaouerod00ripa/ref=ol>.



Figure 149. This headstone at Greyfriars Burial Ground is unique. It is remarkable for bearing religious symbolism of a kind which is not found elsewhere in post-Reformation Scotland due to the prevailing Puritan conventions. Under the scene captioned 'Faith' a figure next to a cross holds up a chalice and propels a small figure forwards. The scene of Charity in the centre comprises a figure standing before a pulpit with two ecclesiastical arches. This figure's raised hand holds a chalice on which a bird, possibly representing the Holy Spirit, is perched. By the same figure's right shoulder two birds peck at an inverted heart. Carved above is a saintly horned head and deathbed bust. Above the word 'Hope' is a larger bust and a hand holding the Crown of Everlasting Life. Below this is a cockerel, part human in form, and anchors, both of which are eighteenth-century emblems of hope, although the cockerel is very rarely found. **1232404.**



Figure 150. On this elaborately carved coped stone at Errol the King of Terrors, holding a dart and a scythe and standing above an hourglass and the tools of a gravedigger, faces Father Time (who is out of shot to the left).³⁷ **2235019.**

³⁷ The figure of Father Time on the Errol coped stone is described in Willsher and Hunter, *Stones*: 20.

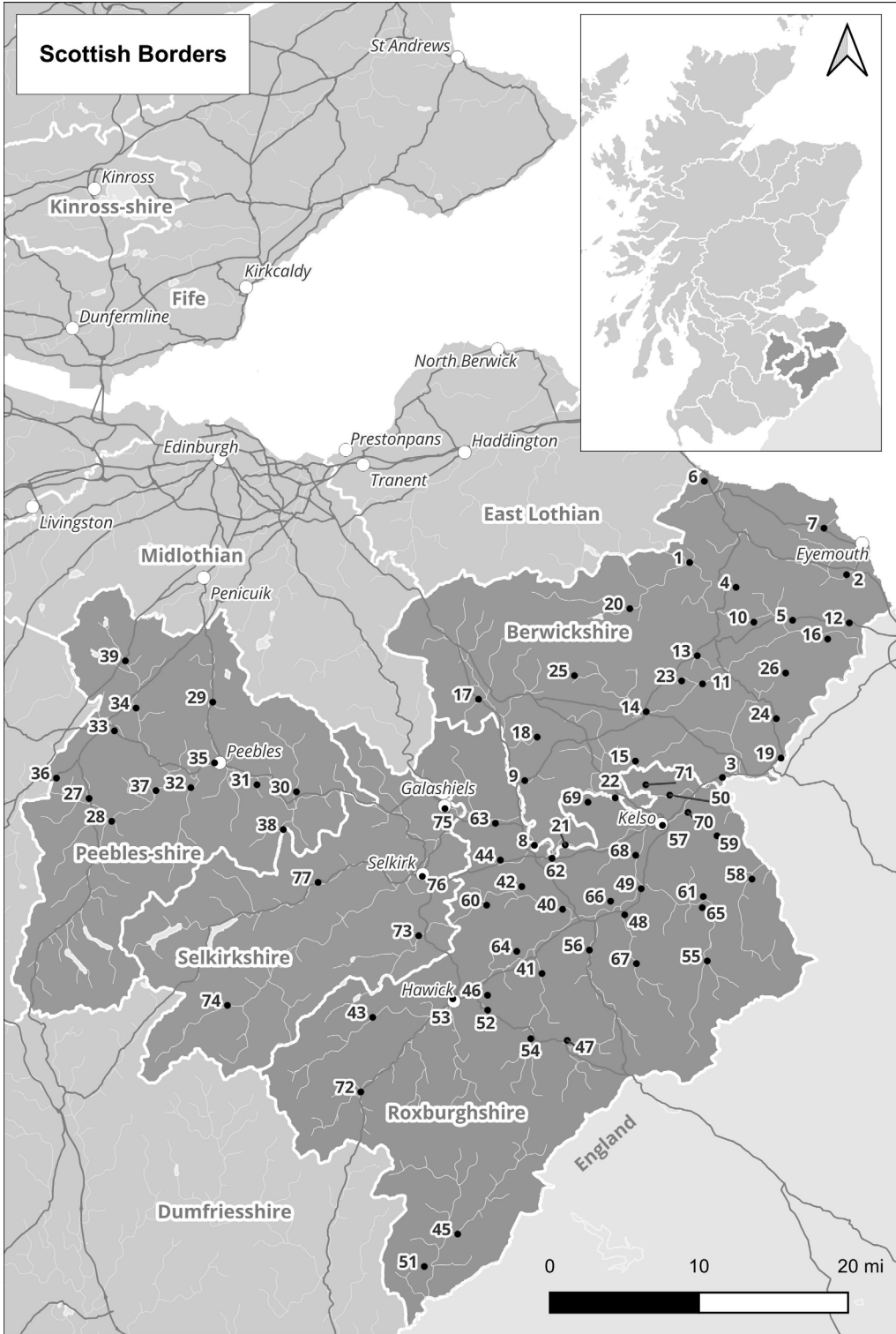


Figure 151. At the top of this headstone from Collace is a bearded Father Time, lounging against a skull-topped hourglass. To the right is a panel with an axe and dividers, the tools of the wright. Below is the full-length portrait of the deceased in a tam o' shanter, carrying a harness jauntily over one shoulder. [1544981](#).

Portraits

There are relatively few large portraits, in contrast to the number of working scenes, in Perthshire. The figure in bonnet, breeches and frockcoat, carrying a horse harness at Collace (Figure 151) and the bust of a man in a wig and cravat at Scone [1544217](#) are therefore notable.

There are several depictions of family groups. These include a husband and wife [803302](#) and a group of three sisters [803304](#), both at Blackford, and two families with ten children at Innerpeffray [1232734](#) and at Kincardine (see Figure 143). There is an unusual portrait of a face set between the branches of two bay trees at Kenmore [589732](#).



Scottish Borders: Berwickshire, Selkirkshire,¹ Peeblesshire² and Roxburghshire³

Sites to Visit with Interesting Carvings

Berwickshire

1. Abbey St Bathans Churchyard **118905**
2. Ayton, Old Parish Churchyard **60273**
3. Birgham Burial Ground **94676**
4. Bonkyl and Preston Parish Churchyard **218979**
5. Chirnside, Old Churchyard **59653**
6. Cockburnspath Parish Churchyard **96377**
7. Coldingham Churchyard **263027**
8. Dryburgh Abbey Churchyard **104329**
9. Earlstoun Parish Churchyard **104325**
10. Edrom Parish Churchyard **96763**
11. Fogo Parish Churchyard **96799**
12. Foulden Parish Churchyard **60041**
13. Gavinton Parish Churchyard **96248**
14. Greenlaw Parish Churchyard **219854**
15. Hume, Old Parish Churchyard **58559**
16. Hutton Churchyard **60101**
17. Lauder, St Mary's Parish Churchyard **104828**
18. Legerwood Parish Churchyard **55925**
19. Lennel, Old Parish Churchyard **96861**
20. Longformacus Parish Churchyard **57407**
21. Mertoun, Old Churchyard **263354**
22. Nenthorn, Old Churchyard **98526**
23. Polwarth Churchyard **58498**
24. Simprim, Old Parish Churchyard **59553**
25. Westruther, Old Parish Churchyard **57448**
26. Whitsome, Old Parish Churchyard **59732**

Peeblesshire

27. Broughton, Old Parish Churchyard **49876**
28. Drumelzier Parish Church Graveyard **101329**
29. Eddleston Parish Churchyard **101334**
30. Innerleithen Parish Churchyard **53167**
31. Kirkburn, Our Lady's Churchyard **51276**
32. Kirkton Manor Parish Churchyard **263301**
33. Kirkurd, Old Churchyard **50132**
34. Newlands, Old Kirkyard **231363**

¹ Willsher's Berwickshire and Selkirkshire field notes are available online **463470**.

² Willsher's Peeblesshire field notes are available online **463259**.

³ Willsher's Roxburghshire field notes are available online **463866**.

35. Peebles, St Andrew's Churchyard **98236**
36. Skirling Parish Churchyard **99104**
37. Stobo Parish Churchyard **49854**
38. Traquair Parish Churchyard **99142**
39. West Linton, St Andrew's Parish Churchyard **98070**

Roxburghshire

40. Ancrum, Old Ancrum Churchyard **96330**
41. Bedrule Churchyard **96382**
42. Birselees Churchyard **55411**
43. Borthwick Wa'as Burial Ground **54199**
44. Bowden Churchyard **104335**
45. Castleton, St Martin's Churchyard **67932**
46. Cavers House, St Cuthbert's Church **96398**
47. Chesters Churchyard **56937**
48. Crailing House Burial Ground **57040**
49. Eckford Parish Churchyard **261974**
50. Ednam Churchyard **96374**
51. Ettleton Churchyard **67873**
52. Hawick, Kirkton Churchyard **96792**
53. Hawick, Wilton Churchyard **55293**
54. Hobkirk Churchyard **55311**
55. Hownam Churchyard **57933**
56. Jedburgh Abbey Churchyard **57020**
57. Kelso, Old Parish Churchyard **58466**
58. Kirk Yetholm Parish Churchyard **96928**
59. Lempitlaw Churchyard **58388**
60. Lilliesleaf Parish Churchyard **101364**
61. Linton Churchyard **58182**
62. Maxton Churchyard **104345**
63. Melrose Abbey Churchyard **168646**
64. Minto House Burial Ground **55472**
65. Morebattle, St Lawrence Churchyard **58217**
66. Nisbet, Old Churchyard **56961**
67. Oxnam Parish Churchyard **58028**
68. Roxburgh Parish Church **262033**
69. Smailholm Churchyard **99274**
70. Sprouston Parish Churchyard **99353**
71. Stichill Parish Churchyard **99347**
72. Teviothead, Old Graveyard **54087**

Selkirkshire

73. Ashkirk Parish Churchyard **101362**
74. Ettrick Parish Churchyard **101331**
75. Galashiels, Gala Burial Aisle **54349**
76. Selkirk, Old Parish Churchyard **54210**
77. Yarrow Parish Churchyard **231888**

Overview⁴

Border gravestones follow the memorial rather than the grave-marker tradition. Willsher and Hunter describe this region as ‘Portrait-with-book-shire’ and dubbed Peeblesshire in particular the ‘Realm of full figures’.⁵ The four Border counties share many common characteristics, although some differences can be discerned in both the quantity and quality of their carvings. For example, Roxburghshire far exceeds Berwickshire in regard to its abundance of fine carvings, many by superior cutters. No other region of Scotland has such a splendid collection of portraits as Roxburghshire, where skulls and cherubs are also noted for their fine execution.⁶ Here, symbols are sometimes suspended on ribbons, as found in Midlothian.

Berwickshire and Peeblesshire tend towards comparatively plain, yet still striking, assemblages of headstones, tablestones⁷ and mural monuments. While some stones possess elaborate designs, these generally use a fairly narrow range of symbols. Both Peeblesshire and Selkirkshire contain multiple instances of high-quality carvings, with an outstanding example at Stobo, Peeblesshire **801871**. This stone is part of a unique design consisting of a tablestone incorporating a headstone at one end.

Willsher noted the Berwickshire trend whereby eighteenth-century carving styles endured into the 19th century as at Gavinton **2223331** and Greenlaw **2223335**. Alan Reid noted a similar trend within Peeblesshire.⁸ The use of twisted pilasters is a feature throughout the Borders and may be observed at Kirkurd, Peeblesshire **801941** and Crailing, Roxburghshire **1273484**.

Symbols to Look Out For

Mortality

The most popular symbols are **skulls and bones**, which can display some regional preferences. Within Berwickshire, for example, crossed bones like those at Drybugh **1813451** or pairs of horizontal femurs as at Lauder **459799** are favoured, with single bones, as at Westruther **2223385**, less frequently used. Berwickshire skulls tend to be carved separately from bones and may occur alongside a broad range of other types of death motif as at Foulden (Figure 152). A skull appears with the **gravedigger’s tools** on another stone at Foulden **1356737**.

⁴ Willsher surveyed 35 sites across Berwickshire, 16 in Peeblesshire, 36 in Roxburghshire and six in Selkirkshire to give a representative sample of both the typical and also the more unusual carvings to be found within these regions.

⁵ Betty Willsher and Doreen Hunter, *Stones: A Guide To Some Remarkable Eighteenth-Century Gravestones* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1978): 7.

⁶ Alan Reid notes the high quality of work on the primary mortality and immortality symbols of skulls and winged souls at Bowden, Nisbet and Crailing. He concludes that this shows how, in the first half of the 18th century, Bowden and other Border parishes could command the services of ‘a designer and artificer whose equal would have been very difficult to find’. See Alan Reid, ‘The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn, Bowden and Carrington’, *PSAS* 44 (1910): 56.

⁷ When Alan Reid surveyed St Andrew’s Churchyard, Peebles, he found over 20 tablestones on their original supports, some of which were elaborately ornamented. See Alan Reid, ‘Churchyard Memorials of Peebles, Stobo, Lyne, West Linton and Newlands’, *PSAS* 47 (1913): 134.

⁸ In common with Willsher’s observation of the Berwickshire trend whereby eighteenth-century carving styles endured into the 19th century, Alan Reid found a comparable ‘artistic and symbolic degeneracy’ within Peeblesshire. See Reid, ‘Churchyard Memorials of Peebles’: 132.



Figure 152. This headstone at Foulton, Berwickshire, is of an unusually complex design with its elaborate headshape, geometric border and pilasters. Below the winged soul are carvings of a skull, an hourglass, a coffin and a death mask. 2223324.



Figure 153. The hands carved on this headstone at Peebles reach towards a lightly incised hourglass. Willsher suggests that this unusual motif may signify a husband and wife. Skulls similar to the one seen here are found on several nearby headstones, yet each design is subtly different. 2221977.

In Roxburghshire, skull and crossbones are most popular, as seen in examples at Ancrum 1535182 and Hownam 1532236. At Castleton, Roxburghshire 1354722 crossed bones appear on their own below a winged soul. Roxburghshire skulls and crossed bones are often accompanied by a **horizontal hourglass** as seen in two examples at Bedrule 600053 and 600125. A similar trend also appears in Selkirkshire as at Ashkirk (see Figure 157). Twin sets of crossed bones and skulls suspended on ribbons can be spotted at Roxburgh 1535218, and this is also a wider feature within Roxburghshire. Across Peeblesshire skulls and crossbones are also preferred, as at West Linton 801849, Kirkurd 801934 and Peebles (Figure 153), and they often appear with an **upright hourglass** as in two more examples from Peebles 801894 and 801895.

Scottish Border skulls are portrayed in a wide variety of designs, including an early example at Lennel, Berwickshire 1540369. Several examples of Peeblesshire skulls have teeth but no bottom jaw as at Drumelzier 801957 and Peebles (see Figure 153). A more basic skull appears alongside upright femur bones at Galashiels, Selkirkshire 1552924. At Lilliesleaf, Roxburghshire is a skull with a pronounced zygomatic or cheekbone area 1356464. An example with an unusual neck rises up from a **swag** at Bowden, Roxburghshire 548925. Meanwhile at Crailing, Roxburghshire a skull rests on a tasselled cord 1356675. Skulls with unusual bindings around the head occur at Linton, Roxburghshire 1544214 and at Chesters, Roxburghshire where a hand reaches down from clouds towards it 1544102. **Winged skulls** are found in Roxburghshire at Crailing 2224473, Bowden 548913, Chesters (see Figure 160),



Figure 154. The finely carved Angel of Death on the left is from Morebattle, Roxburghshire. The figure's identity is denoted by the skull and bone which it clutches, and the design also reflects this region's characteristic style of portraiture. 2224535. The example on the right is an Angel of Death carving on a headstone at Melrose. Photograph © Mark Hatton, used by kind permission.



Figure 155. Snakes, like this example at Skirling, Peeblesshire, are relatively uncommon on Scottish gravestones. The motif of a serpent coiling over bones is also found in the Falkirk area. 2221992.

Nisbet 1356122 and Eckford 1544208. Examples of the **winged hourglass** within Peeblesshire include West Linton 801847, Newlands and at Manor and Peebles.⁹ Other motifs include the **coffin** as seen in two examples at Foulden, Berwickshire 1356720 and on the stone in Figure 152, at Bedrule, Roxburghshire 607651 and Galashiels, Selkirkshire 1552924. **Skeletons** include an example lying in an opened sarcophagus at Peebles 801901. Another Roxburghshire motif is the **pierced heart** which appears above a portrait of a couple at Castleton 570611. The swag is a popular device, see for example Teviothead, Roxburghshire 570590 and West Linton, Peeblesshire.¹⁰ At Lilliesleaf, Roxburghshire the drape is held by a winged soul 1356462 and one appears from a deid bell at Foulden 1356686 and Longformacus 1356562, both in Berwickshire. **Deid bells** are also found at Bedrule 600119 and Crailing 664931. **Angels of Death** are relatively unusual within Scotland, yet there are several Roxburghshire examples, notably at Bowden 548916, Cavers 1536075,

Melrose and Morebattle (Figure 154). Another less skilled example occurs at Minto, where the angel is robed and appears with a femur, skull and hourglass 600032.

The **snake** (Figure 155) is a rare symbol within the Borders, but an example of a serpent encircling an urn is found at Lauder, Berwickshire 2238438.

⁹ The Newlands example of a winged hourglass is illustrated in Reid, 'Churchyard Memorials of Peebles': [169] figure 33, and the Manor example is cited in Willsher and Hunter, *Stones*: 33.

¹⁰ Reid, 'Churchyard Memorials of Peebles': 164, figure 28.

Immortality

Winged souls are plentiful, many bearing beautiful expressions such as those found at Legerwood, Berwickshire [1356774](#) (see also Figure 156), Eddleston [801953](#) and Kirkurd [801924](#), both in Peeblesshire, and Ancrum [1535183](#) and Castleton [1354717](#) in Roxburghshire. Examples of folk art styles include bewigged souls at Peebles [801891](#), a rather primitive soul at Kirkurd, Peeblesshire [801945](#) and also at Ashkirk, Selkirkshire (see Figure 157). Souls depicted in the **clouds** are common in Roxburghshire as at Roxburgh [1535218](#) and in some parts of Berwickshire, for example Earlston [1356676](#). In Berwickshire souls are often depicted with **hearts** as at Westruther [2223385](#), Simprim [2223379](#) and Nenthorn (Figure 156) where the heart is inverted.

Winged souls often form the top shape of headstones in Berwickshire, see two examples at Dryburgh [1531902](#) and [1531903](#) and another at Foulden [1536024](#), and in Roxburghshire as at Chesters (see Figure 160). More unusual winged soul designs include an example at Peebles with tiny roses for nipples [801900](#) and at Sprouston, Roxburghshire, where two souls share one set of wings [1536013](#). At Westruther, Berwickshire [2223385](#) a feathered breast evolves into wings resembling drapes hung on a pole. Meanwhile at Lauder, Berwickshire, wings are carved such that they meet above the soul's head, an unusual design feature within eastern Scotland [459799](#).

Angels of the Resurrection are relatively uncommon across the Borders, but in Peeblesshire examples include pairs of angels with trumpets spouting banners at Peebles [801901](#) and Innerleithen.¹¹ Roxburghshire examples of **angels with trumpets** emerging from **clouds** can be seen at Bedrule [600119](#) and Teviothead [570590](#). A pair of angels with trumpets, bearing a crown between them, sits atop a mural monument at Crailing [1273484](#), also in Roxburghshire. The **Crown of Righteousness** appears at Ashkirk, Selkirkshire (Figure 157), Etleton, Roxburghshire [2224491](#) and at Simprim, Berwickshire [2223379](#).

Crossed **trumpets** are found at Eddleston [801955](#) and Stobo [801869](#), both in Peeblesshire. **Resurrection figures**, distinguished from portraits by the inclusion of other symbols, can be seen at Earlston, Berwickshire [1356676](#) and Newlands, Peeblesshire [801906](#). **Hearts**, including pierced or inverted versions, are a popular motif across the region (Figure 156). An unusual heart-shaped panel is found at Sprouston, Roxburghshire [1536013](#). Hearts may appear alongside a range of other motifs such as the one beside a gardener's tools at Traquair, Peeblesshire [801886](#), and also alongside portraits, as for example at Bonkyl and Preston, Berwickshire [1536059](#) and Castleton, Roxburghshire [570611](#). Another popular symbol is the **rosette**, see for example West Linton, Peeblesshire [801847](#) and Eckford, Roxburghshire [1544208](#). Carvings of **flowers**, which may be seen at Peebles [801892](#), and of **foliage** as at Hownam, Roxburghshire [1532233](#) and Yarrow, Selkirkshire [1531898](#), tend to be more popular, albeit on a less common scale than in neighbouring areas. More unusually, two **roses** are incorporated into a carved tree at Innerleithen, Peeblesshire [801932](#). The **tree** is an uncommon symbol in the Borders but an example can be seen at Kirk Yetholm, Roxburghshire [2224572](#).

¹¹ The example at Innerleithen is described and illustrated by D. Christison, 'The Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands, Particularly in Perth, Fife, Angus, Mearns and Lothian', *PSAS* 36 (1902): 353-354, figure 71.



Figure 156. This headstone at Nenthorn Old Churchyard, Berwickshire, is unusual for the placement of three symbols of immortality: the star, an inverted heart and a rose, which all appear above the winged soul. 2223367.



Figure 157. The Crown of Righteousness sits above a winged soul on this stone at Ashkirk, Selkirkshire. On the panel below is a primitive skull and crossbones above a horizontal hourglass. 2223396.

Trade

These are not a strong feature of this area and, where used, trade symbols do not appear in shields. In Peeblesshire tools are carved well into the 19th century, as for example at Broughton 801959 where, on a stone dated 1837, a **millers** rind appears above a clenched fist, millstones, a hand hammer and a pick. Similarly, at Roxburgh Parish Church there is a nineteenth-century full-length portrait of a local **beggar** (in this case a bedesman) and his dog 1535220. Peeblesshire examples also include a compass-like device above a trophy of **miners** tools at West Linton 2222028,¹² a **gardener's** crossed spade and rake at Traquair 801886 and a **masons** set-square and dividers at Peebles 801892 and at Kirkurd 801943. At Stobo 1603687 a **tenant farmer** is depicted wearing a crown and holding a flintlock rifle, while the symbols of a **merchant** are shown next to portraits at West Linton (see Figure 162). Other examples of trade symbols in Peeblesshire include a worn depiction of a **slaters** tools at West Linton¹³ and, at Newlands there is a **tailors** goose and scissors, a **coopers** adze and anvil and a **blacksmith's** tongs and farrier's buttress, a tool shaped like a twisted shovel 2221957.¹⁴ Trades depicted in Roxburghshire include the crown and hammer of a **hammerman** at Kirkton 1536083 and a blacksmith's crown, hammer and pincers at Crailing

¹² Another image of this stone appears in Reid, 'Churchyard Memorials of Peebles': [162] figure 26.

¹³ Willsher and Hunter, *Stones*: 86.

¹⁴ The farrier's buttress tool is occasionally depicted on gravestones, see also New Kilpatrick, Dunbartonshire 2225503, Clackmannan, Clackmannanshire 1532177, Tullibody, Clackmannanshire 2223530 and Temple, Midlothian 1552883. See Reid, 'Churchyard Memorials of Peebles': 167-168.

570554, see also Minto 2224533 and Chesters (see Figure 160). A merchant's scales appear at Crailing 2224472, a **weaver's** shuttle at Lilliesleaf 1356464, a miller's rind at Ettleton 570552 and the tools of the **dyster** at Kelso 570617. The portrait of a **shepherd** with his crook can be seen at Castleton 570611. Throughout Selkirkshire notable examples of trades include a **wright** at Ashkirk (Figure 158), a tailor at Selkirk 2223410, and it is possible that the crowned male head at Galashiels is a representation of a hammerman 1552924.

Berwickshire presents only a small number of trade symbols. Willsher identified the blacksmith's anvil, hammer and pincers, seen at Cockburnspath 2223300 and Fogo 2223321, as being the most frequently found. Other symbols include a merchant's scales noted at Dryburgh Abbey and seen at Earlston 2223309, a shepherd's crook found at Abbey St Bathans 2223287, a **baker's** peels seen at Earlston 2223312, a tailor's goose and shears at Edrom 2223316 and a weaver's shuttle at Ayton 2223289. At Longformacus, a hand emerges from clouds to hold a miller's rind 1356544. Willsher questioned whether the design of knots observed on stones at Lennel 2223357, Simprim 2223379 and Nenthorn (see Figure 156) could be connected to weaving.



Figure 158. The trade symbols of the wright's axe and saw appear next to a skull and crossed bones on this headstone at Ashkirk, Selkirkshire. 2223393.

Symbolic Scenes and Other Carvings

Biblical Scenes

Adam and Eve scenes are found at Dryburgh Abbey, Berwickshire 1531901, Lyne, Peeblesshire 1356480 and at Bowden, Roxburghshire.¹⁵ **Reaper and Sower** figures have also been recorded at Bowden.¹⁶

Personified Figures

Examples of the **Green Man** motif are numerous, and these appear in a variety of forms across the Borders. Berwickshire examples include carvings at Chirnside 2223296, Nenthorn 2223368, Polwarth 2223374, Legerwood 2223356, Lennel 2223358 and Edrom 1356680. Peeblesshire examples include carvings at Eddleston 801955 and Stobo 1603685, and at Peebles several Green Men appear in a carving with the East Lothian-style volutes 801901. Roxburghshire examples often appear with drapes, as at Bowden 548918 and Hownam 1532234, and at Crailing two lion-like Green Men are holding a cord in their mouths 1356675. The Green Man may hold ribbon-entwined mortality symbols from his

¹⁵ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn': 63-64, figure 11.

¹⁶ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn': 61, figure 9.



Figure 159. This headstone from Borthwick, Roxburghshire shows the King of Terrors carrying his weapons in a sling. Willsher noted that the sling detail has not been seen anywhere else. 2223405.

mouth as at Chesters, Roxburghshire 1544102. An impressively large **King of Terrors** is found at Crailing, Roxburghshire 664931. The King of Terrors is also found at Stobo, Peebleshire,¹⁷ Lilliesleaf, Roxburghshire 1356463, Borthwick, Roxburghshire (Figure 159) and Peebles.¹⁸ The scene at Peebles is particularly dramatic, depicting a youth with the world at his feet, pointing to a seated woman cradling a child, as the King of Terrors approaches with his scythe ready for action.

There is a carving of **Father Time**, winged and holding his hourglass and scythe, at Hutton, Berwickshire 1356770 .

Portraits

Full- and half-length portraits are found throughout the Borders. Many figures are depicted with Bibles. A particularly fine and varied range occurs in Roxburghshire. These include statues of two standing male figures on a mural monument at Crailing 1273484, medallion-style portraits at Ancrum 1535182 and low-relief busts at Oxnam 1535144, Hownam 1532235 and Eckford 1544210. Occasionally, Roxburghshire portraits depict figures as angels as at Teviothead 1536086. A distinctive style of Roxburghshire portraiture comprises half-length figures shown side-on, often set within archways as at Chesters (Figure 160).

Examples of this style occur at Ancrum 1535181, Birselees 1629163, two at Bowden 548922 and 1354711, Castleton 570614, Lilliesleaf 1356460, Linton 1270509, Melrose Abbey 1531943, Minto 570555, Stichill 1356386 and three at Ednam 600121, 1536017 and 600092. Half-length Roxburghshire-style portraits are also found in both Berwickshire (see Mertoun 2223364, Hutton 2223344, Dryburgh 1531902, Legerwood 1356774 and three at Foulden 1536025, 1356722 and 1536024) and Selkirkshire (see Selkirk 2223412 and Yarrow 1531898). A distinctive Berwickshire-style portrait comprises small full-length figures standing on ledges as at Abbey St Bathans (Figure 161) and at Edrom 2223315, Foulden 1536068 and Hutton 1356769. At Crailing in Roxburghshire a figure is similarly positioned but on an hourglass, rather than on a ledge.

Large full-length portraits, often facing forwards, are also popular across the whole of the Borders. Roxburghshire examples can be seen at Teviothead 1536085 and 1536087, Lilliesleaf 1356461, Ettleton 1356683 and 1356682, Birselees 1629163 and Hawick 1291553. There is a fine collection at Castleton which includes individuals 1354724, a group scene

¹⁷ Reid, 'Churchyard Memorials of Peebles': 149, figure 17.

¹⁸ Reid, 'Churchyard Memorials of Peebles': 144, figure 13.



Figure 160. This group of headstones is at Chesters, Roxburghshire. To the far left is a rare finely carved winged skull. On the central stone is a blacksmith's anvil and a horseshoe, next to a single femur bone. On the far right a smartly dressed man reading a book is carved in high relief. This design is typical of the Roxburghshire style of recessed portraits. [2224555](#).



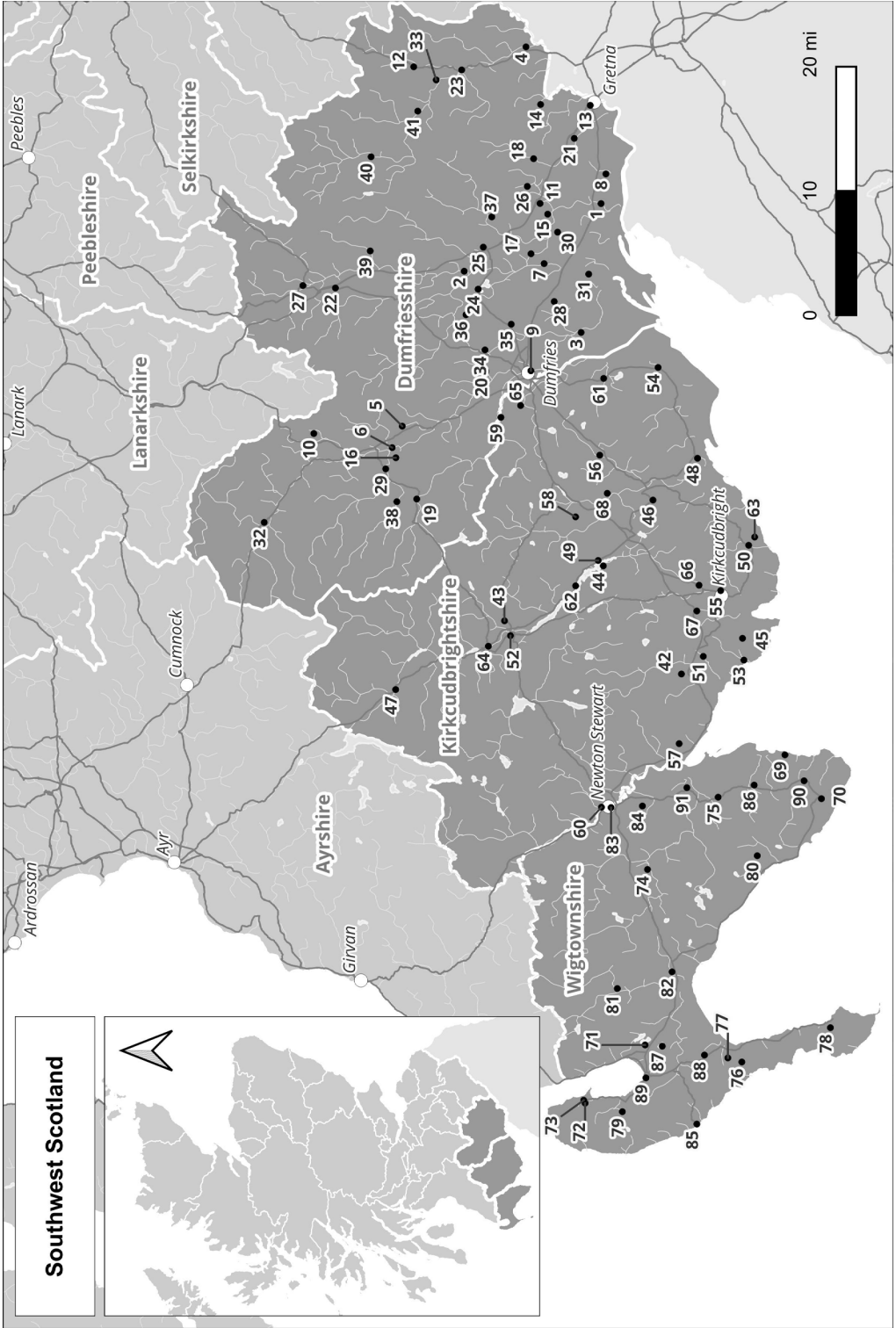
Figure 161. This portrait is found on a headstone at Abbey St Bathans, Berwickshire. The man holds a book and has a crook at his side. He stands on a ledge, which is a typical Berwickshire style. [2239896](#).



Figure 162. These finely dressed figures of a boy and his father, seen at West Linton, are good examples of the high-quality portraits found within Peebleshire. Above the boy, to the left, is a very faint set of scales and a '4' symbol, both of which represent a merchant. 2222026.

of a father and two children 1354719, and several married couples 570612, 1354720 and 570611. At Crailing, also in Roxburghshire, a man is depicted with his dog 1273482. Berwickshire examples can be seen at Coldingham 964199, Whitsome 1462244 and Gavinton 2223332. At Hutton in Berwickshire a man with folded arms is touching a coffin and crossed bones 1630186. In Peebleshire carvings of well-dressed men are found at Kirkurd 801927, Peebles 801890, West Linton 801854 and on the stone pictured in Figure 162. At Stobo a man on one stone holds a ribbon 801879, while another has a rifle 1603687. At Kirkurd a portrait of a woman shows her holding two long bones 801924.

Carved effigies also adorn table tombs. At Peebles a carving depicts a married couple 801899 and at West Linton, Peebleshire, two brothers are shown with a baby in a coffin at their feet 801845. Examples of figurative scenes on the panels of table tombs include two men and a woman at Galashiels, Selkirkshire 1356685, and a seated figure with a Bible and an hourglass at Bedrule, Roxburghshire 600117.



Southwest Scotland: Dumfriesshire,¹ Kirkcudbrightshire² and Wigtownshire³

Sites to Visit with Interesting Carvings

Dumfriesshire

1. Annan, Old Parish Churchyard **66537**
2. Applegarth Parish Churchyard **66883**
3. Caerlaverock Parish Churchyard **66095**
4. Canonbie Parish Churchyard **67527**
5. Closeburn Churchyard **66021**
6. Dalgarnock Graveyard **65295**
7. Dalton, Old Parish Churchyard **78911**
8. Dornock Parish Churchyard **94924**
9. Dumfries, St Michael's Churchyard **65541**
10. Durisdeer Parish Churchyard **120894**
11. Ecclefechan, St Fechan's Churchyard **66673**
12. Ewes Parish Churchyard **92178**
13. Gretna Green Parish Churchyard **67448**
14. Half Morton Parish Churchyard **215316**
15. Hoddum Parish Churchyard **66681**
16. Keir, Old Churchyard **65242**
17. Kirkbank, Old St Mungo's Parish Churchyard **66665**
18. Kirkconnel, Old Parish Churchyard **67053**
19. Kirkland, Glencairn Old Parish Churchyard **65312**
20. Kirkmahoe, Old Churchyard **65891**
21. Kirkpatrick-Fleming Churchyard **97996**
22. Kirkpatrick-Juxta, St Patrick's Churchyard **48426**
23. Langholm, Old Parish Churchyard **67683**
24. Lochmaben, St Mary Magdalen's Churchyard **66309**
25. Lockerbie, Dryfesdale Parish Churchyard **66884**
26. Middlebie Churchyard **67070**
27. Moffat, Old Parish Churchyard **48329**
28. Mouswald Parish Churchyard **90142**
29. Penpont Churchyard **65335**
30. Repentance (also known as Trailtrow Chapel) Burial Ground **66674**
31. Ruthwell Churchyard **66587**
32. Sanquhar, St Bride's Churchyard **45493**
33. Staplegordon, Old Parish Churchyard **67584**

¹ Willsher surveyed 44 sites across Dumfriesshire, to summarise regional trends. She noted that some old graveyards were hard to find and may have been missed. Willsher's Dumfriesshire field notes are available online [464105](#).

² Willsher surveyed 24 burial grounds in Kirkcudbrightshire and, although it is a relatively limited survey, it provides an overview of the main regional trends. Willsher's Kirkcudbrightshire field notes are available online [463510](#).

³ Willsher surveyed 23 sites in Wigtownshire to give an indication of regional trends. Willsher's Wigtownshire field notes are available online [463237](#).

34. Tinwald Parish Churchyard **76181**
35. Torthorwald Churchyard **66153**
36. Trailflat, Old Churchyard **66323**
37. Tundergarth Churchyard **123116**
38. Tynron Parish Churchyard **65326**
39. Wamphray Churchyard **66905**
40. Watcarrick Burial Ground **67233**
41. Westerkirk Parish Churchyard **92163**

Kirkcudbrightshire

42. Anwoth, Old Churchyard **63661**
43. Balmaclellan Churchyard **64195**
44. Balmaghie Parish Churchyard **64591**
45. Borgue Parish Churchyard **63946**
46. Buittle Parish Churchyard **64876**
47. Carsphairn Parish Churchyard **209090**
48. Colvend Parish Churchyard **64898**
49. Crossmichael Parish Churchyard **64618**
50. Dundrennan Abbey Burial Ground **64408**
51. Girthon, Old Parish Churchyard **64150**
52. Kells Churchyard **211170**
53. Kirkandrews, Old Churchyard **63963**
54. Kirkbean Parish Churchyard **65362**
55. Kirkcudbright, St Cuthbert's Churchyard **64069**
56. Kirkgunzeon Churchyard **64938**
57. Kirkmabreck Churchyard **63325**
58. Kirkpatrick Durham Parish Churchyard **213011**
59. Kirkpatrick Irongray Parish Churchyard **65669**
60. Minnigaff, Old Parish Churchyard **63495**
61. New Abbey, Sweetheart Abbey Burial Ground **213911**
62. Parton Parish Churchyard **241751**
63. Rerrick, Old Churchyard **64388**
64. St John's Town of Dalry Parish Churchyard **209953**
65. Terregles Churchyard **65676**
66. Tongland Abbey Burial Ground **64048**
67. Twynholm Parish Churchyard **64130**
68. Urr Parish Churchyard **209944**

Wigtownshire

69. Cruggleton, Old Parish Churchyard **63259**
70. Glasserton Parish Churchyard **63101**
71. Inch, Old Parish Churchyard **61732**
72. Kirkcolm Parish Churchyard **216471**
73. Kirkcolm, St Columba's Old Parish Churchyard **60720**
74. Kirkcowan, Old Parish Churchyard **62992**
75. Kirkinner, St Kennera Churchyard **63383**
76. Kirkmadrine Churchyard **60441**
77. Kirkmagill Burial Ground **60605**
78. Kirkmaiden, Old Parish Churchyard **60976**

79. Leswalt, Old Parish Churchyard **60841**
80. Mochrum Parish Churchyard **216950**
81. New Luce Parish Churchyard **61647**
82. Old Luce Burial Ground **61165**
83. Penninghame Burial Ground **63482**
84. Penninghame, Old Parish Churchyard **63566**
85. Portpatrick, Old Parish Church **60334**
86. Sorbie, Old Parish Churchyard **63241**
87. Souleseat Abbey Burial Ground **61217**
88. Stoneykirk, Old Parish Churchyard **60600**
89. Stranraer, Old Parish Churchyard **216362**
90. Whithorn Parish Churchyard **63275**
91. Wigtown Parish Churchyard **63338**

Overview

Willsher identified many stylistic similarities among the areas of Kirkcudbrightshire, Dumfriesshire and Wigtownshire but also occasional differences in their carving and commemoration practices. Around Dumfries many of the eighteenth-century gravestones and table tombs are rather plain, while in the west of the county there are some fascinating and quite primitive carvings. Among Dumfriesshire's most pronounced characteristic practices is the use of heraldic shields. Good examples of this can be seen on three stones at Hoddom **1422604**, **1422607** and **1422605**, two at Kirkpatrick-Fleming **1930973** and **1930984**, and at Middlebie **1423018**, Moffat **1723471** and Tundergarth **382706**. Mantling is not so prolific and varied as it is in Angus and Perthshire; however, Dumfriesshire designs are nevertheless very striking. Shields are also popular in Kirkcudbrightshire where an example is seen at Kirkpatrick Durham (Figure 163) and they often have stiff, leaf-like mantling.

In Wigtownshire the date when stones were erected is not usually given and, where more than one person is commemorated, it is often hard to tell whether a second name was added later or is part of the original inscription. Willsher identified a large group of stones with a distinctive style of carving akin to a gravestone erected by John Leyburn of Mochrum to his father, also called John Leyburn (Figure 164).⁴ Very unusually the same design as the John Leyburn headstone is also found on another stone in the same churchyard at Mochrum **1532389**. Even more unusually a third very similar design appears at Penninghame Old, Wigtownshire **2221748**.

⁴ Willsher identified a large group of stones of a similar carving style, which she considered to be the work of a Wigtownshire mason called John Leyburn. Willsher came to this conclusion because she transcribed an inscription as 'erected by the John Leyburn mason'. However, fieldwork by Mark Hatton recently found that this inscription reads 'erected by John Leyburn his son'. Using the memorial to Leyburn senior as a starting point, the stones that Willsher observed as sharing similar carving techniques and styles are found at several sites in Wigtownshire (Mochrum, Kirkcowan, Kirkmaiden, Penninghame Old and Sorbie) and in Kirkcudbrightshire (St John's Town of Dalry, Kells, Borgue, Anwoth and Minnigaff). Willsher suggests that there might be many further examples of comparable work not yet identified. Her list included the following stones at Mochrum: Leyburn (1737) and Janet Fullerton (1743); at St John's Town of Dalry: James Douglas (1747), James and John Chapman (1766), Alex McMichael (1762) and Janet Forgeson (1751); at Kirkcowan: William Douglas (1757); at Kirkmadrine: unknown (1760) and Isobel Clunie (1769); at Kirkmaiden: Elizabeth McKittrick (1751); at Penninghame Old: Alex McClelland (1768); at Sorbie: William Ure (1737); at Anwoth: the McNish children (1763) and William Gourlay (1751); at Borgue: the McKissock children (1765); at Kirkcudbright: David Deangles (1749); at Buittle: Mary Laurs (1749); at Minnigaff: Ben Tait (1762). Willsher also found some deviation within this distinctive carving style at Kirkandrews (McMonies children), Kirkcowan (John McTaggart) and at Penninghame Old (William Douglas).



Figure 163. Heraldic shields are very popular in southwest Scotland. This example from Kirkpatrick Durham, Kirkcudbrightshire is of particular interest for the unusual carved face below the inscription 'Fear God'. Although the face resembles a Green Man it is more likely to be part of the Heron family's heraldic achievements. [2223823](#).



Figure 164. This gravestone at Mochrum, Wigtownshire is inscribed 'Erected by John Leyburn his son' and is dedicated to his father, also called John Leyburn. The influence of this distinctive style of carving can be seen across Wigtownshire and Kirkcudbrightshire. The large central gowned figure, holding a book and wearing a crown, portrays John Leyburn senior. There are winged souls on either side of his head and he stands on a coffin above a skull and crossbones. To the right is the loinclothed figure of Father Time, who stands on a Green Man. To the left is a skeleton. [1532390](#).

Symbols to Look Out For

Mortality

Symbols typically include the skull, crossed bones, and hourglass, with Dumfriesshire tending to have the smallest range. The plainness of the stones there is illustrated by an image Willsher took at Kirkpatrick-Fleming [2226923](#). Wigtownshire **skulls** may be carved either in profile or facing forwards and usually lack a lower jaw, like one at Kirkcowan (Figure 165).

Pairs of skulls appear at New Luce [589779](#) and at Penninghame Old [589783](#) where they have heart-shaped noses, small teeth, rimmed eyes and two bands by the ears. Skulls like those on the John Leyburn stone at Mochrum (see Figure 164) are highly distinctive:



Figure 165. This headstone from Kirkcowan, Wigtownshire is adorned with a variety of mortality symbols. These include two death masks, a winged hourglass, a coffin and a skull and crossbones. The winged soul is unique for wearing a flat bonnet. 2221692.

shown in three-quarter profile, they have small, close-set eyes, a triangular nose and a wide lower indentation. Another Wigtownshire example is at Kirkmadrine 2221710. Other notable skull designs include one with extraordinarily large eye sockets at Old Luce, Wigtownshire 1532406, one suspended from a ring at St Cuthbert's, Kirkcudbrightshire 1530923 and a skull and crossbones wearing a crown at Keir, Dumfriesshire 2226909. A very late winged skull is found at St Michael's in Dumfries 1168144. At Kirkcowan, Wigtownshire, a skull is unusually placed alongside two upright hourglasses at the top of a headstone, while a winged soul is carved at the base 2221694. Hourglasses may appear either horizontally or upright as found at Inch, Wigtownshire 1422608 and Anwoth, Kirkcudbrightshire 803826. A winged, horizontal example appears at Kirkcowan, Wigtownshire (see Figure 165). Most unusually, a horizontal hourglass rests on the head of a winged soul at Leswalt, Wigtownshire 1532404. This is a placement usually associated with seventeenth-century skulls. The hourglasses found in the style of the Leyburn stone at Mochrum, Wigtownshire (see Figure 164) are equally distinctive, being winged, horizontal and with dents round the frames. Leyburn-style hourglasses occur at Kirkmadrine, Wigtownshire 588765, Kirkmaiden, Wigtownshire 588762 and on two examples at St John's Town of Dalry, Kirkcudbrightshire 1422552 and 803736. Coffins appear to be more popular in Wigtownshire, seen in an example at Kirkcowan (see Figure 165), and in Kirkcudbrightshire as at St Cuthbert's 1530924 and Urr 803787. At Borgue, Kirkcudbrightshire, coffins are depicted with nails

carved into their lids (see also Half Morton, Dumfriesshire 2236231). The **gravedigger's tools** tend to occur less frequently but can be observed at Penpont, Dumfriesshire 1423022, St Cuthbert's, Kirkcudbrightshire 1230379 and at St John's Town of Dalry, Kirkcudbrightshire 803736. **Skeletons** are select in number. One appears on the Leyburn stone (see Figure 164) and another at Kirkcowan, Wigtownshire 2221704. Other notable examples include a skeleton standing on a winged soul at St Cuthbert's, Kirkcudbrightshire 1530923 and two late seventeenth-century slabs at Colvend, Kirkcudbrightshire, where on the first the skeleton is shown holding an open book and on the second the skeleton is holding a deid bell and hourglass.⁵ A rare shrouded **corpse** is depicted in a coffin surrounded by foliage at Kirkcowan, Wigtownshire 1423016. **Death masks**, a pair of which appear on a stone at Kirkcowan (see Figure 165), include a rarely depicted version with two masks on stands at Kirkpatrick-Fleming, Dumfriesshire 2226924. A lichen-obscured **swag** with skull, carved in the Lanarkshire tradition, appears at Minnigaff, Kirkcudbrightshire 803810. Also in Minnigaff, a **mortcloth** is used as a shield for trade symbols 803800. A **drape** suspended

⁵ Willsher's field note refers to the RCAHMS Inventory descriptions on page 74-75 for these two stones at Colvend (163-164 in the digital PDF which is available <https://www.trouve.scot/archive/1471207>).

from rings is found at Inch, Wigtownshire [794645](#) and above a large **flaming urn** at Urr, Kirkcudbrightshire [1422368](#). A partially buried flaming urn or possible torch appears at Dalgarnock, Dumfriesshire [1422371](#).

Immortality

Winged souls are popular, varying in style according to the mason. Usually souls appear at the head of the stone, sometimes forming the hood shape. One of the best soul designs in all of Scotland is at Penninghame Old, Wigtownshire (Figure 166).

Dumfriesshire souls tend to have plump, attractive, round faces as seen at Penpont [1423022](#). A particularly beautiful example, supported by pilasters, appears at Kirkbank in St Mungo's [1423055](#). The souls in the style of the Wigtownshire stone to John Leyburn (see Figure 164) are highly characteristic (for example, one Kirkmaiden soul [588761](#) can be closely compared to another mason's work at Kirkmaiden [588763](#)). In the Leyburn style the cheekbones are high and the chin pronounced, the eyes are wide-set, the forehead broad and the mouth appears small and determined looking. The wings rise upwards and have two layers of feathers with a row of bib feathers in the centre. Willsher found Leyburn-style souls at several sites in Wigtownshire (see her field notes [2221658](#)) including at Kirkmadrine [588765](#) and Penninghame Old [589782](#), and also at Minnigaff, Kirkcudbrightshire [803807](#). Other unusual designs include a soul in a flat cap at Kirkcowan, Wigtownshire [2221692](#) and another surrounded by greenery at St John's Town of Dalry, Kirkcudbrightshire, with foliage resembling a second set of wings [1532395](#). Souls with scroll-like hair appear at Tongland, Kirkcudbrightshire [803780](#) and Minnigaff, Kirkcudbrightshire [803795](#). An unusual waist-up carving of a soul wearing a crown appears at Inch, Wigtownshire [1422608](#), with a similar one at Penninghame Old, Wigtownshire [1422987](#). To the east, in Dumfriesshire, distinctive examples include a soul with an arm at Applegarth [1422359](#), designs with multiple souls at St Michael's in Dumfries [1422567](#) and [1168144](#), a pair of souls which appear tied together at Middlebie [382700](#) and, at Ruthwell, one soul which has a skull and bones nestled under its wings [1168258](#). A characteristic Dumfriesshire design includes the long-necked soul seen, for example, at Kirkpatrick-Juxta [2226927](#), Durisdeer [2226880](#) and Gretna [2226898](#), all in Dumfriesshire. A crowned soul with wings that curve to form a heart shape is seen at Inch, Wigtownshire [1422609](#). An unusual soul, found at Buittle, Kirkcudbrightshire, has a serpent at her bosom [2223741](#). A painted soul was spotted at Dundrennan, Kirkcudbrightshire [1422568](#). Distinctive wing forms can be seen at Urr, Kirkcudbrightshire [803787](#), Kirkcowan, Wigtownshire [591242](#), and Leswalt, Wigtownshire [1532404](#). At Watcarrick, Dumfriesshire one soul of early date possesses thin, angular wings [1423052](#). A soul with distinctively pointed feathers is found at Parton, Kirkcudbrightshire [1203797](#).

A rare **angel**, in all probability a portrait, wearing a crown and eighteenth-century dress, clutches greenery in one hand and a dagger in the other at Closeburn, Dumfriesshire [1422366](#). Numerous **putti** adorn stones at St Michael's in Dumfries [1168144](#). There are several Resurrection figures and scenes to be found across the region. **Resurrection figures** include Dumfriesshire examples at Langholm [2226930](#), Closeburn [2226855](#), Dalgarnock (see Figure 169) and Applegarth [1422359](#). Kirkcudbrightshire figures include examples at St Cuthbert's in Kirkcudbright [1530866](#), at St John's Town of Dalry [1422552](#) and at Borgue, where three males in loin cloths stand on a coffin, a heart and a skull [803888](#). At Inch, Wigtownshire, a robed figure with a trumpet and a book stands on a short ledge [1422608](#). The most significant **Resurrection scene** in Wigtownshire is carved on the stone to John Leyburn at Mochrum (see Figure 164), but see also another at Mochrum [1532389](#) and one at

Penninghame Old **2221748**. Another important Resurrection scene appears at Soulseat, also in Wigtownshire (Figure 167).

Further immortality symbols include the **book**, with Dumfriesshire examples including two at Dalgarnock **1422564** and **1422371** and one at Kirkpatrick-Fleming **1930981**. In Kirkcudbrightshire **Bibles** may be depicted on lecterns as at Carsphairn **2223751**, while a carving at St Cuthbert's in Kirkcudbright shows a hand holding a book **1530922**. **Hearts** include examples in Dumfriesshire at Dalgarnock **1422565** and St Mungo's in Kirkbank **1222376**. The region is characterised by the widespread use of **foliage and flowers**. Wigtownshire examples include designs at Stoneykirk **1423044** and **589785**, at Inch **794664** and **794645**, at Penninghame Old both the stone to James Heron (see Figure 166) and **1634411**, at Old Luce **1532405** and at Kirkcowan **591242**. Such carvings are also common in Kirkcudbrightshire as at Parton **1203797** and two at St Cuthbert's in Kirkcudbright **1530923** and **1530866**, where carvings can be spotted on the internal faces of legs of table tombs. An example at Ruthwell, Dumfriesshire, has rich foliate carvings including a thistle and a pineapple finial, and a possible **Tree of Life** within the pilasters **1168258**. **Foliage scrolls**



Figure 166. Willsher describes the Heron Stone at Penninghame, Wigtownshire as one of the most beautiful in Scotland. Its design, which resembles fine plasterwork, comprises a ring of winged souls. A most beautiful large soul appears at the top and a smaller example lies at the base, bringing the total number of souls to six. It seems to be the only work by this mason in the area, prompting Willsher to wonder whether the carver was actually based somewhere else in Scotland. **589780**.



Figure 167. This elaborate Resurrection scene is from Soulseat, Wigtownshire. The upper carving shows two figures either side of a central skull and crossbones. The left-hand figure is naked and sits above a post, with one hand reaching up to touch the bones. A robed figure on the right wears a flat hat and holds a worn object in its right hand. At the very top is a canopy (or possibly a very worn soul) and at the headstone's base are two mermaids below an hourglass. **2221766**.

in the Ayrshire tradition appear across the region. Examples of this design are visible at Inch [2221676](#) and Souleseat [1423041](#) in Wigtownshire as well as Carsphairn [803664](#) and Minnigaff [803810](#) in Kirkcudbrightshire. An unusual Dumfriesshire example at Dalgarnock has leaves on an S scroll that resemble scales [1422563](#). Also striking is the use of foliage, flowers and fruits in Dumfriesshire as the lower half of **caryatids**. Designs of this type appear at Closeburn [1422367](#), Penpont [1423023](#), and two at Dalgarnock [1422371](#) and [1422566](#). **Vine patterns**, seen for example at Caerlaverock, Dumfriesshire (Figure 168), are also characteristic of the region, proving particularly popular in Dumfriesshire, where designs sometimes cover an entire face. Superior vine carvings are also visible at Minnigaff, Kirkcudbrightshire [803795](#) and in three examples at Kirkmaiden, Wigtownshire [588763](#), [588762](#) and [588761](#).

Trade

Although less prominent than in some regions (notably Angus and Perthshire) a range of trades is represented across the southwest of Scotland. **Hammermen** are depicted by a hand holding a hammer under a crown in Dumfriesshire at Glencairn [2226895](#), Tynron [2226970](#) and Torthorwald [1423047](#), and in Kirkcudbrightshire at St Cuthbert's in Kirkcudbright [1530924](#), Balmaclellan [1522681](#) and Crossmichael [2223765](#).

The hammerman's crown appears in Wigtownshire at Kirkmaiden [588764](#), where it is placed over a helmet and surrounded by mantling, and also at Stoneykirk [589785](#) and Sorbie [2221756](#). At Minnigaff, Kirkcudbrightshire, the **blacksmith's** files, rasps, hammers, pliers and chisels hang on tasselled cords beneath the hammerman's crown and hammer [803800](#). A hammer and pincers appear on a stone at Terregles, Kirkcudbrightshire,⁶ while at Kirkpatrick-Juxta, Dumfriesshire, a portrait shows a blacksmith at work holding a hammer and horseshoe [2226927](#). A **wright's** symbols appear at Glencairn [2226896](#), Lockerbie [2226933](#) and Dalgarnock [1422563](#) in Dumfriesshire. A **stonemason's** symbols of a set-square and dividers can be seen at Kirkmadrine, Wigtownshire [588765](#) and are shown beside a hammer and trowel set in a shield at St John's Town of Dalry, Kirkcudbrightshire [803736](#) and [1422552](#). A portrait of a mason dressed in a frockcoat and with his plumbline appears Tundergarth, Dumfriesshire [382712](#). Meanwhile at Durisdeer, Dumfriesshire, a mason is portrayed wearing an apron and holding a mell in one hand with a chisel in the other [2226881](#). In Dumfriesshire, a **tailor's** upright goose and shears, together with a frill of material, appear at Dalgarnock (Figure 169) and an upright goose and shears were spotted at Kirkpatrick-Fleming [1930975](#).



Figure 168. The use of vines, often embellished with leaves, grapes, and roses, is characteristic of southwest Scotland and is particularly popular in Dumfriesshire. This stone is from Caerlaverock, Dumfriesshire. [2226843](#).

⁶ Willsher visited this site as part of her Dumfriesshire survey, see [2226960](#), and her notes are archived with her Dumfriesshire field records at [464105](#).



Figure 169. This headstone at Dalgarnock, Dumfriesshire, shows the naked figure of a tailor who is about to experience the Resurrection, standing on an hourglass, with the tools he used in life to the left. The tailor's goose is next to an open pair of shears and the unusual detail of a frill of material, which looks like an inverted crown. [1422370](#).



Figure 170. This headstone from Kells, Kirkcudbrightshire, demonstrates the characteristic use of foliage found in the region. Here it forms the central cartouche, which contains a merchant's '4' and holds a 'peeper' style Green Man. [2223801](#).

A **shoemaker's** knife appears at Moffat, Dumfriesshire [2226943](#). At Kells, Kirkcudbrightshire, there is a **merchant's** '4' symbol (Figure 170) and also the portrait of a merchant which forms part of a scene with Father Time [803748](#).

Meanwhile, at Buittle, Kirkcudbrightshire, a merchant is commemorated by a trading ship at sea [803642](#). At Soulseat, Wigtownshire, a ship and potted flowers possibly commemorate a **gardener** and/or a **mariner** [1423041](#). A gardener's tools appear on a stone at Girthon, Kirkcudbrightshire [2223785](#). At Kells, Kirkcudbrightshire there is a fine stone commemorating a **gamekeeper**, showing his fishing rods, hound, birding rifle and powder flask [803741](#).⁷ A ploughing scene for a **farmer** appears at Old Luce, Wigtownshire [1532406](#). An unusual composition of a chair and key, denoting the office a baillie, factor or chamberlain, is found at Ewes, Dumfriesshire [2226887](#).

⁷ Christison notes that the local minister was the author of the epitaph on the gamekeeper's gravestone at Kells as he had won a competition to compose the inscription for this stone. See D. Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands, Particularly in Perth, Fife, Angus, Mearns and Lothian', *PSAS* 36 (1902): 406.

Symbolic Scenes and Other Carvings

Biblical Scenes

There is a total of eight **Adam and Eve** scenes in the region; four in Dumfriesshire⁸ and four in Kirkcudbrightshire. The Dumfriesshire carvings are found at St Mungo's in Kirkbank (Figure 171), Tundergarth **382706**, Kirkconnel⁹ and Repentance, also known as Trailtrow Chapel.¹⁰

All four Kirkcudbrightshire Adam and Eve stones are found at Kells (**803750**, **2223795**, **2223793** and **1232499**).¹¹ Willsher observed how well this group illustrates the Scottish custom of giving each family a stone which differed from the others, even for the same theme and by the same mason. One of the Kells carvings has a tree but no figures (although Adam and Eve may now be below ground as the headstone has sunk) **2223793**. The design of the Kells stone to the McNaughton children **1232499** bears a striking resemblance to a carving at Straiton, Ayrshire **2224953**. A **Tree of Life** scene at Hoddom, Dumfriesshire, depicts two male figures grasping the tree alongside the motto 'Hold it Fast' **2226907**.¹²

Quarles Emblems

Wigtownshire possesses three stones with Quarles designs:¹³ two are at Souleseat Abbey and the third is at Old Inch. The earliest Souleseat carving is on a headstone dated 1701 and depicts a scene from *Emblemes* 1.IV **1423042**. In this scene **Cupid** and **Anima** (the soul) weigh worldly treasures as the



Figure 171. This headstone from St Mungo's at Kirkbank, Dumfriesshire is decorated with portraits of a husband, wife and their child above an Adam and Eve scene. The Fall of Man scene here is very similar to the Adam and Eve carving found at Kirkconnel. The small tree has a coiled snake at its base. Eve leans out to Adam with an apple in her hand as the serpent seems to deliver a second apple into Eve's other hand. **1423054**.

⁸ Willsher notes a further Dumfriesshire Adam and Eve carving, which no longer survives, at Lockerbie, but doesn't state where this information came from. See Betty Willsher, 'Adam and Eve Scenes on Kirkyard Monuments in the Scottish Lowlands', *PSAS* 122 (1993): 450. The stone doesn't appear within Willsher's Lockerbie field notes and photographs.

⁹ Illustrated in Willsher, 'Adam and Eve Scenes on Kirkyard Monuments in the Scottish Lowlands': figure 40.

¹⁰ Illustrated in Willsher, 'Adam and Eve Scenes on Kirkyard Monuments in the Scottish Lowlands': figure 41, and in Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 347, figure 64.

¹¹ Christison noted a further Kirkcudbrightshire example of an Adam and Eve carving at Dalbeattie. Willsher, however, was unable to locate it. See Willsher, 'Adam and Eve Scenes on Kirkyard Monuments in the Scottish Lowlands': 419.

¹² See also Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': figure 65.

¹³ Two of the Wigtownshire Quarles emblem carvings are discussed at length by Professor Michael Bath. These are the 1701 headstone to Robert Campbell at Souleseat Abbey and the 1748 headstone to John Drymen at Old Inch. See Michael Bath, *Emblems in Scotland: Motifs and Meanings*, *SCROLL: Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature* 28 (Leiden: Brill, 2018): 286-290.



Figure 172. This Quarles emblem design is at Inch, Wigtownshire. This carving shows Amor Divinus putting his hands over his face as Anima (the soul) tries to pull them away. The same design appears on a coped tomb of 1647 (2227458) at Old Scone in Perthshire. 794659.

larger figure of **Divine Love** holds their scales. The same scene is depicted at Alloway, Ayrshire 1423040 and may be the work of the same mason. The second Souleseat stone has a design based on *Emblemes* 5.I 2221766. The third design is at Inch on a headstone dated 1748 and is based on *Emblemes* 3.VII (Figure 172).

Personified Figures

Father Time is depicted at Kells, Kirkcudbrightshire, tipping down a merchant's scales used to weigh the soul 803748. This figure also appears in several Resurrection scenes such as on the Leyburn stone at Mochrum, Wigtownshire (see Figure 164) and at Kirkcowan, Wigtownshire 2221704. Willsher spotted examples of the **Green Man** motif of the 'peeper' type set within the bosom of caryatids in Dumfriesshire at Closeburn 1422367 and 2226854, Dalgarnock 2226862 and 2226865 and Penpont 1423023. Rare examples at Durisdeer, Dumfriesshire include a Green Man in the soul's bosom 1532392 and a portrait where the figure stands on a Green Man over crossed bones in place of a skull (see Figure 173). A Green Man appears on the Leyburn stone at Mochrum in Wigtownshire (see Figure 164). Meanwhile in Kirkcudbrightshire, the Green Man motif appears on stones at Kells (see Figure 170) and Buittle. Further west, in Wigtownshire, Green Man carvings are found at Kirkcowan 1423016 and Kirkinner 2221706 .

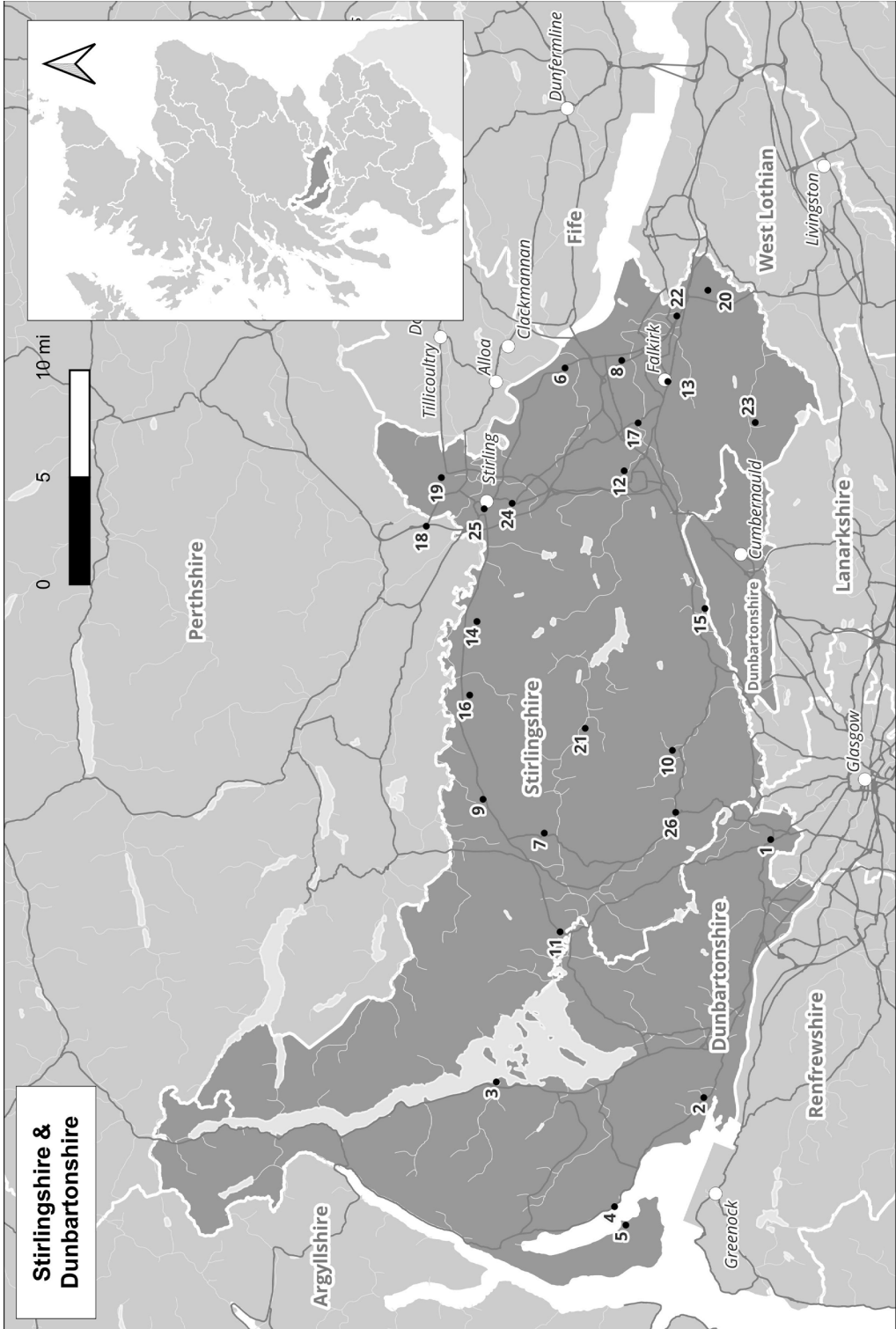


Figure 173. Portraits are a popular feature within Dumfriesshire. This example from Durisdeer is one of several carved figures found at the site. This carving is unique, however, because instead of standing on a skull the woman is depicted upon a Green Man above crossed bones. She wears a rose to symbolise Paradise and stands between two pillars surmounted by the mortality symbols of a skull and hourglass. [2226878](#).

Portraits

Portraits appear most numerous in Dumfriesshire (see, for one example, the headstone at St Mungo's at Kirkbank in Figure 171). Several ornate table tombs have full-length examples, most notably in the Thornhill area. At Dalgarnock a schoolmaster, shown standing on a ledge, appears next to a book and with one foot touching a skull [1422562](#). At the same site a man with clasped hands stands on a foliage plinth [1422371](#). At Ewes there is an unusual portrait of a male head with a crown [2226892](#). Two male portrait heads appear on a stone at St Mungo's in Kirkbank [1423055](#) where there is also a family scene of parents with their son [382616](#). At Applegarth two male figures hold hands and palm leaves [382609](#). Meanwhile, another stone at Applegarth shows a female holding a book and an hourglass, standing next to a skull and crossed bones [382612](#). At Wamphray [2226975](#) a small male figure holds a book and stands on a skull in place of a ledge. On another stone in the same churchyard a woman holds an hourglass and, more unusually, two crossed bones [2226972](#). There are portraits of a mother and daughter at Lockerbie [2226934](#) and female portraits at Moffat [2226944](#), Durisdeer (Figure 173), Staplegordon [2226956](#), and Kirkmichael [2226917](#).

Portraits in Kirkcudbrightshire include a full-length figure of a woman carved on the end panel of a table tomb at Kirkbean [1423013](#). At St Cuthbert's in Kirkcudbright three small faces are carved on leg supports of table tombs [1530923](#) and [803764](#). At Kirkpatrick Irongray Willsher spotted a 1707 table tomb to Bessie Edgar with a female figure in a dress with a pleated bodice and belt, holding a book, and she also recorded a carving of a family group there. In Wigtownshire Willsher identified a portrait of a woman in eighteenth-century dress with two small children on a headstone propped against a wall at Inch and a full-length male figure with a book at Stoneykirk [1423044](#).



Stirlingshire¹ and Dunbartonshire²

Sites to Visit with Interesting Carvings

Dunbartonshire

1. Bearsden, New Kilpatrick Parish Churchyard **196893**
2. Cardross, Old Parish Churchyard **42386**
3. Luss, St Kessog's Churchyard **42529**
4. Rhu Parish Churchyard **75376**
5. Rosneath, St Modan's Parish Churchyard **41452**

Stirlingshire

6. Airth Parish Church and Churchyard **46844**
7. Balfron Parish Churchyard **44586**
8. Bothkennar Parish Churchyard **143757**
9. Buchlyvie Churchyard **44649**
10. Campsie, St Machan's Churchyard **45185**
11. Drymen Parish Churchyard **43419**
12. Dunipace Churchyard **141861**
13. Falkirk, Old Parish Churchyard **221658**
14. Gargunnoch Churchyard **46289**
15. Kilsyth, Old Parish Churchyard **45889**
16. Kippen, Old Parish Churchyard **45376**
17. Larbert, Old Churchyard **46916**
18. Lecropt Churchyard **45992**
19. Logie, Old Churchyard **47164**
20. Muiravonside Parish Churchyard **221115**
21. Old Fintry Parish Churchyard **45302**
22. Polmont, Old Churchyard **47909**
23. Slamannan Parish Churchyard **221382**
24. St Ninians, Old Parish Churchyard **46228**
25. Stirling, Holy Rude Churchyard **74540**
26. Strathblane Parish Churchyard **44440**

¹ Willsher's Stirlingshire field notes are available online **463159**.

² Willsher's Dunbartonshire field notes are available online **463945**.

Overview³

In west Stirlingshire and Dunbartonshire there are relatively few carved headstones dating to the 18th century. In these areas, as in Renfrewshire and the Highlands, headstones arrived much later and the preference for slabs, tablestones and, for the more prestigious people, mural monuments persisted. Most seventeenth- and eighteenth-century stones across Stirlingshire and Dunbartonshire are markers, rather than memorials, and these tend to be less elaborately carved. Logie Old Churchyard, near Stirling, is remarkable for having no less than 100 headstones, all erected before 1700. Many appear as pairs of stones; however, most have a minimum of carvings and information. Holy Rude in Stirling, Polmont, Muiravonside and Slamannan are notable as Stirlingshire sites possessing good collections of carvings. Occasionally it is possible to spot local styles or work carried out by the same hand. Examples include the introduction of scroll-topped headstones at Holy Rude in Stirling (1523508, 1422217, 1523510, 1523511, 1417761 and 1417746) or at Kilsyth, Stirlingshire where the same mason carved distinctive trumpets, see for example 2221423. At Muiravonside, Stirlingshire carvings, such as 1395047, fall into the Torphichen⁴ and West Lothian tradition not that of Stirlingshire. Unlike the usual practice in many Stirlingshire graveyards, the winged soul appears at Muiravonside on several eighteenth-century gravestones, for example 1395048.

Symbols to Look Out For

Mortality

Preferred symbols include various designs of **skulls** of which an example can be seen at Logie Old, Stirlingshire 1410302 and **bones** which can be seen at Larbert, Stirlingshire 1410149. These designs include skulls on the shoulders of gravestones, in the West Lothian tradition, at Muiravonside, Stirlingshire 1395044 and skulls used as the uppermost emblem, also at Muiravonside 1410311, where another skull appears next to two **jaw bones** 1395047. A distinctive skull with hollowed eyes and draped with a **swag** appears at Rosneath, Dunbartonshire 2225529. The swag also appears at Holy Rude in Stirling 1523501. Unusual skulls with necks were spotted at Logie Old 1410296. **Rib bones** tied with a ribbon form part of the column of mortality symbols at Polmont, Stirlingshire 1410312, which also includes the scythe, dart and torch and gravedigger's tools. Examples of the **scythe and torch** emblem appear at Holy Rude in Stirling 1523514 and Logie Old, Stirlingshire 1410297. Several stones at Logie Old Churchyard are distinctive for bearing carvings of **hearts with bow and arrow** including 1410300 and 1410295. This combination of symbols is also found in the adjoining Clackmannanshire area. **Hourglasses** are also popular in upright form as at Slamannan, Stirlingshire 1024991, horizontally placed as at Muiravonside, Stirlingshire 1395044 and occasionally in winged form, as seen in two examples at Holy Rude in Stirling 1523508 and 1417746. Distinctive carvings include **skeletons**, of which a shrouded pair appears at Rhu, Dunbartonshire 1466354, but also see the examples at Rosneath, Dunbartonshire, shown in Figures 174 and 175.

³ Willsher surveyed 25 sites across Stirlingshire to give a representative sample of both the typical and also the more unusual carvings to be found within this region. She noted that, such was the richness of the carved stones in this area, her sample could not do the region full justice. Willsher made a partial survey of Dunbartonshire, visiting seven burial sites in total. To give a sense of regional styles this summary includes examples of carvings recorded in Willsher's field notes and documented in digital images available on <https://trove.org.uk/>.

⁴ See the West Lothian section of this guide for further information on the stones at Torphichen.



Figure 174. On this headstone from Rosneath, Dunbartonshire a reclining Resurrection figure awakes below a winged soul and two skeletons who are holding a saltire between them. The same hand carved the stone seen in Figure 175. 2225521.



Figure 175. This stone, like that in Figure 174, is found at Rosneath, Dunbartonshire. This headstone depicts a skeleton, a Resurrection figure, a coffin and a saltire. Below the Resurrection scene are carvings of a merchant's scales and a very rare example of a falling tower. Willsher notes that the same carver was responsible for the Matthew White stone at Rhu, Dunbartonshire. 2225519.

The pedestal base of the John Service stone at Holy Rude in Stirling (see Figures 179 and 180 for the east and west faces) is highly unusual. It is carved as though it is covered by a **mortcloth**. At the southern end of the base the cloth is drawn back to reveal a skull 2221524 and at the northern end there is a carving of a pair of feet, while hands are carved on each side, all giving the impression that the deceased was entombed within the stone.

Snakes are noted at Polmont, Stirlingshire, with forms including one with a fan tail 2221475 and an example where they emerge from the mouth of a Green Man 1417737. Snakes with crossed bones are found at Slamannan, Stirlingshire 2221506 and Muiravonside, Stirlingshire 1395047 and 1410311. At Balfron, Stirlingshire a pair of snakes, representing death, is carved with the snakes holding an egg between them that denotes the seed of life 1409563.

Immortality

The most popular immortality symbol is the **winged soul**, seen in this example at Logie Old, Stirlingshire [1410301](#); however, in comparison with the number of skulls (representing mortality) these are few in number. Soul designs vary. One such example is at Holy Rude in Stirling [1523508](#). Some examples bear sad expressions like one at Logie Old, Stirlingshire [1410309](#), others are periwigged, with stylised sycamore seed-shaped wings, as at Cardross, Dunbartonshire [800645](#) and Rhu, Dunbartonshire [1567935](#). In some cases soul faces appear to portray the deceased as at Balfron, Stirlingshire [1409563](#) and Luss, Dunbartonshire [800647](#). Some souls are used to form the upper shape of headstones as at Slamannan, Stirlingshire [1024999](#), while others sit on the headstones's shoulders as at Holy Rude in Stirling [1523507](#). **Wreaths** are a distinctive feature in Stirlingshire, appearing at several sites; notable examples include those at Muiravonside (Figure 177; [11395046](#), [1410311](#) and [1395045](#)) and Polmont (Figure 178; [1417726](#)). Another distinctive emblem that is relatively uncommon elsewhere is the **trumpet** which appears on several stones carved by same mason at Kilsyth, Stirlingshire [2221426](#), [2221425](#), [2221423](#) and [2221422](#). Examples of serpent-style trumpets appear at Muiravonside, Stirlingshire [1395045](#) and [1395046](#). **Resurrection figures** at Muiravonside, Stirlingshire include examples holding sticks [1395047](#), wreaths [1410311](#), serpent-style trumpets [1395045](#) or placed above pillars [1395046](#), which can also be seen at Slamannan, Stirlingshire [1024998](#). At Luss, Dunbartonshire a reclining Resurrection figure holds an hourglass [800647](#) and a similar scene is found at Rosneath, Dunbartonshire (see Figure 174). At Kilsyth, Stirlingshire heads representing Resurrection figures appear from **coffins** and are evidently the work of a particular carver [2221425](#) and [2221426](#). There are relatively few **angels of the Resurrection** but examples include Killearn, Stirlingshire (Figure 176) and Luss, Dunbartonshire [800646](#).

Less commonly found symbols include **ringed snakes** as at Holy Rude in Stirling [1523497](#), **pelicans**, which appear carved as scroll ends at Holy Rude in Stirling [1417761](#), the scallop **shell** seen at Duniplace, Stirlingshire [2221402](#) and a quartered **globe** that appears at New Kilpatrick, Dunbartonshire [1568224](#) and which features in a 'trophy' of symbols. The **Hand of God** is a unusual device and an example at Holy Rude in Stirling holds a swag [1523501](#).

Foliage and flowers are popular, for example at Polmont, Stirlingshire [1417726](#), and include tied boughs at Slamannan, Stirlingshire [1024998](#) with two more examples at Logie Old, Stirlingshire [1410297](#) and [1410300](#). **Cornucopiae** of different forms are also seen, such as on two stones at Holy Rude in Stirling [1523513](#) and [1417746](#). Greenery is often used in borders as at Muiravonside, Stirlingshire [1395048](#), and Holy Rude in Stirling [1523508](#) and occasionally in



Figure 176. This is one of four iron panels which form the base of a large, unique, cast-iron column and urn monument at Killearn, Stirlingshire. The Victorian design is probably based on one in an eighteenth-century emblem book. It depicts two Resurrection angels holding a crown and palm fronds. At their feet three souls sit in clouds. [2221418](#).

bold geometric patterns as at Dunipace, Stirlingshire [2221402](#) and Bothkennar, Stirlingshire [2221387](#). **Rosettes** are also popular, examples being found at Polmont, Stirlingshire [1410312](#) and [1417724](#), Slamannan, Stirlingshire [1024999](#), Holy Rude in Stirling [1523511](#) and New Kilpatrick, Dunbartonshire [1567932](#).

Trade

There is a particularly good collection of trade symbols at Holy Rude in Stirling. Motifs tend not to be displayed in shields, although there are occasional exceptions, as an example at Polmont, Stirlingshire [1410313](#) shows. Symbols for **stonemasons** include the square and compass at Holy Rude in Stirling [1417742](#) and stone-working tool kits seen in Stirlingshire at Airth [548930](#), Logie Old [1410302](#), Kippen,⁵ and Holy Rude in Stirling, where a full set of tools is displayed on the Service stone (see Figure 179). Willsher found the symbols of three castles and set-square and compasses at Muiravonside, Stirlingshire [1395046](#) and Polmont, Stirlingshire [1410313](#). **Hammermen** carvings include an unusual example at Drymen, Stirlingshire, where the hammer surmounts the crown [1409668](#) (typically the crown is above the hammer). At Slamannan, Stirlingshire a carved shield contains three crowns above hammers [1024997](#) while at Kilsyth, Stirlingshire, a hammer is depicted with an anvil and tongs [1466229](#). **Blacksmiths** may be denoted by the addition of a farrier's buttress⁶ as at New Kilpatrick, Dunbartonshire [2225503](#), or with horseshoes as at Polmont, Stirlingshire [2221464](#). The Polmont headstone has a figure carved on its flank, possibly representing the Deacon of the Incorporation of Hammermen in his official robes [2221463](#). A **shoemaker's** symbols appear in Logie Old, Stirlingshire [1410295](#), Luss, Dunbartonshire [800646](#) and Rosneath, Dunbartonshire [2225523](#), where the crown and cordiner's knife appear beside a riding boot and a shoe. A goose and scissors denoting a **tailor** was found at Rosneath, Dunbartonshire [2225529](#). A stone to a **weaver** appears at Kilsyth, Stirlingshire [2221426](#). **Maltmen** carvings can be seen at Holy Rude in Stirling [1523505](#) and [1523513](#), the latter is accompanied by the '4' symbol of a **merchant**. Examples of the '4' symbol are also found at Kilsyth, Stirlingshire [2221426](#) and at Holy Rude in Stirling [1523514](#), [1523513](#) and [1417780](#). Willsher described how Christison traced the use of this symbol to denote merchants and notes that it was adopted as the arms of the Stirling Guildry.⁷ Tools for a **gardener** are depicted at Holy Rude in Stirling [1523497](#) and [1523498](#) as well as upon Adam and Eve stones at Polmont, Stirlingshire [664937](#) and [1417724](#). Along the Forth in Stirlingshire memorials to **mariners** often include a ship, as at Larbert [1410147](#), Kilsyth [1466228](#) and Bothkennar.⁸ **Farmers** use the sock and coulter in one piece as their emblem, as found at Logie Old, Stirlingshire [1410301](#) and [1410309](#).⁹ At New Kilpatrick, Dunbartonshire there is a carving of a shield containing a wheatsheaf, farmer's tools and the sock and coulter [1466106](#). The shield lies between two small portraits of a farmer holding a scythe and his wife who holds a butter churn, an item that is rarely

⁵ D. Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands, Particularly in Perth, Fife, Angus, Mearns and Lothian', *PSAS* 36 (1902): 391, figure 110.

⁶ The farrier's buttress tool is occasionally depicted on gravestones, see also Newlands, Peeblesshire [2221957](#), Clackmannan, Clackmannanshire [1532177](#), Tullibody, Clackmannanshire [2223530](#) and Temple, Midlothian [1552883](#).

⁷ For a discussion of the use of the '4' symbol to denote merchants see also Betty Willsher and Doreen Hunter, *Stones: A Guide To Some Remarkable Eighteenth-Century Gravestones* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1978): 107-108.

⁸ The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, *Stirlingshire: An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments*, 2 vols, [Edinburgh: H.M.S.O.] 1963: plate 48.

⁹ Thomas Wallace identified a 1691 headstone at Logie where two coulters were carved. Described and illustrated in Thomas Wallace, 'Notes from the old Churchyards of Logie, Lecropt, Dunblane and Moy', *PSAS* 46 (1912): 436-437, figure 1.



Figure 177. Two strange souls or portraits are carved on either side of a central wreath on this headstone at Muiravonside, Stirlingshire. Below them a quarryman is at work, striking at a stone face which has wedges sticking out. His pick is shown nearby. 2221459.



Figure 178. This headstone at Polmont, Stirlingshire is later than other stones in this style. The double rings, greenery and volutes with springs at the top typify the Polmont style. A small face sits in between the figures of a Sower and Reaper where one might have found a Green Man. 2221476.

depicted. At Rhu, Dunbartonshire a scene illustrates three cattle standing around a manger.¹⁰ Other trade scenes include a **gamekeeper** with his dog, which is below a square and compass at Old Fintry, Stirlingshire 1530792 and a **quarryman** alongside his pickaxe and wedges at Muiravonside, Stirlingshire (Figure 177).

Symbolic Scenes and Other Carvings

Biblical Scenes

From a total of five **Adam and Eve** stones found in Stirlingshire, the one known to have been at Falkirk and recorded by Christison¹¹ has since become lost (but a sketch can be seen at 1463000). Two Adam and Eve carvings are found at Polmont 1417724 and 664937 and the latter is possibly by the same carver as the Falkirk stone, although there is an unusually long gap between the dates.¹² The two carvings at Campsie both depict Adam and Eve.¹³ On the first stone they wear leaf aprons and stand beside a book 2221394, the second example, however, is partly buried so the full design is not known 2221395. Willsher spotted two

¹⁰ Illustrated in Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 413, figure 133.

¹¹ The lost Falkirk Adam and Eve stone is illustrated in Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 342, figure 57.

¹² Betty Willsher, 'Adam and Eve Scenes on Kirkyard Monuments in the Scottish Lowlands', *PSAS* 122 (1993): 433.

¹³ The stones are described in Willsher, 'Adam and Eve Scenes on Kirkyard Monuments in the Scottish Lowlands': 435.

examples of **Sower and Harvester** carvings in Stirlingshire, one at Muiravonside [2221456](#) and one at Polmont (Figure 178).

Quarles Emblems

The John Service headstone¹⁴ at Holy Rude in Stirling bears three different scenes from Quarles's *Emblemes*. On the east face (Figure 179) there is a carving of **Anima** (representing the human soul) sitting at a desk reading, which is based on Quarles's concluding emblem at the end of Book 5 and is titled 'The Farewell'.¹⁵ It includes a quote from Revelation 2.1: 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life'.

The west face (Figure 180) of the Service stone includes two different carvings of Quarles emblems. The first is from *Emblemes* 3. XIII and shows Anima and **Cupid** (representing divine love) next to a sundial. The text 'Are not my days few? Cease then and let me alone, that I may bewaile myself a little' is from Job 10:20. The second carving is taken from the frontispiece illustration to *Emblemes* 3 and shows Anima releasing arrows of lamentation from her breast, which fly up to divine clouds containing the eyes and ears of God. The accompanying text 'Lord all my desire is before Thee, And my groaning is not hid from Thee' is taken from Psalms 38:9.

A carving at Muiravonside, Stirlingshire [1395044](#) also seems to be inspired by Quarles, in this case *Emblemes* 5.IX. This emblem depicts a winged figure bound to a sphere, representing earthly life, and references Philippians 1:23, 'I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ' (although the quote does not appear on the gravestone).

Personified Figures

Of the several examples of the **Green Man** motif found at Polmont, Stirlingshire, the finest example has horns of plenty emerging from the mouth that transform into snakes [1417737](#). Stirling's Holy Rude Churchyard has another good collection of foliate heads including [1417746](#) and [1417742](#). An example at Airth, Stirlingshire, was lost in 1990 with the destruction of the Logan mural monument (of which a sketch can be seen at [2221377](#)). The Logan monument also included a carving of **Father Time**. A carving of the **King of Terrors** at Holy Rude in Stirling shows the skeleton attacking a young boy who in one hand holds an ear of corn and in the other a sickle [1523506](#).

¹⁴ The Service stone is illustrated and described at length in Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 367-368, figures 85-86; Michael Bath and Betty Willsher, 'Emblems from Quarles on Scottish Gravestones', in Alison Adams and Laurence Grove (eds) *Emblems and Art History: Nine Essays* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 1996): 169; Michael Bath, *Emblems in Scotland: Motifs and Meaning*, SCROLL: Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature 28 (Leiden: Brill, 2018): 260-261; and John G. Harrison, *One Grand Whole: Gravestones and Monuments in Stirling's Old Town Cemeteries* (Stirling: Stirling Local History Society and the Friends of Holy Rude Church, 2013): 14-15.

¹⁵ The Quarles design appearing as the concluding emblem of Book 5 of Francis Quarles, *Emblemes Divine and Moral: Together with Hieroglyphickes of the Life of Man* (London: I.D. for F. Eglesfeild, 1639), titled 'The Farewell', is also found at Greyfriars Kirkyard, Edinburgh on the mural monument to Dr Michael Young and Thomas Kincaid of Auchinreoch (see a description at <https://www.trove.scot/archive/1471339> page 216), and also at Bo'ness, Church Wynd, West Lothian [2238422](#).



Figure 179. East face of the Service stone, Holy Rude Churchyard, Stirling. This stone, known as the 'Service Stone', is one of the most important seventeenth-century headstones in Scotland. Its design incorporates three different details from Quarles emblems which, together with the carved base, illustrate the transition from an earthly, moral life into the heavenly afterlife. The scene above reproduces the concluding illustration from Quarles's *Emblemes* 5. It shows the central figure, Anima, seated at a desk reading a book below two angels holding a crown. [1523501](#).

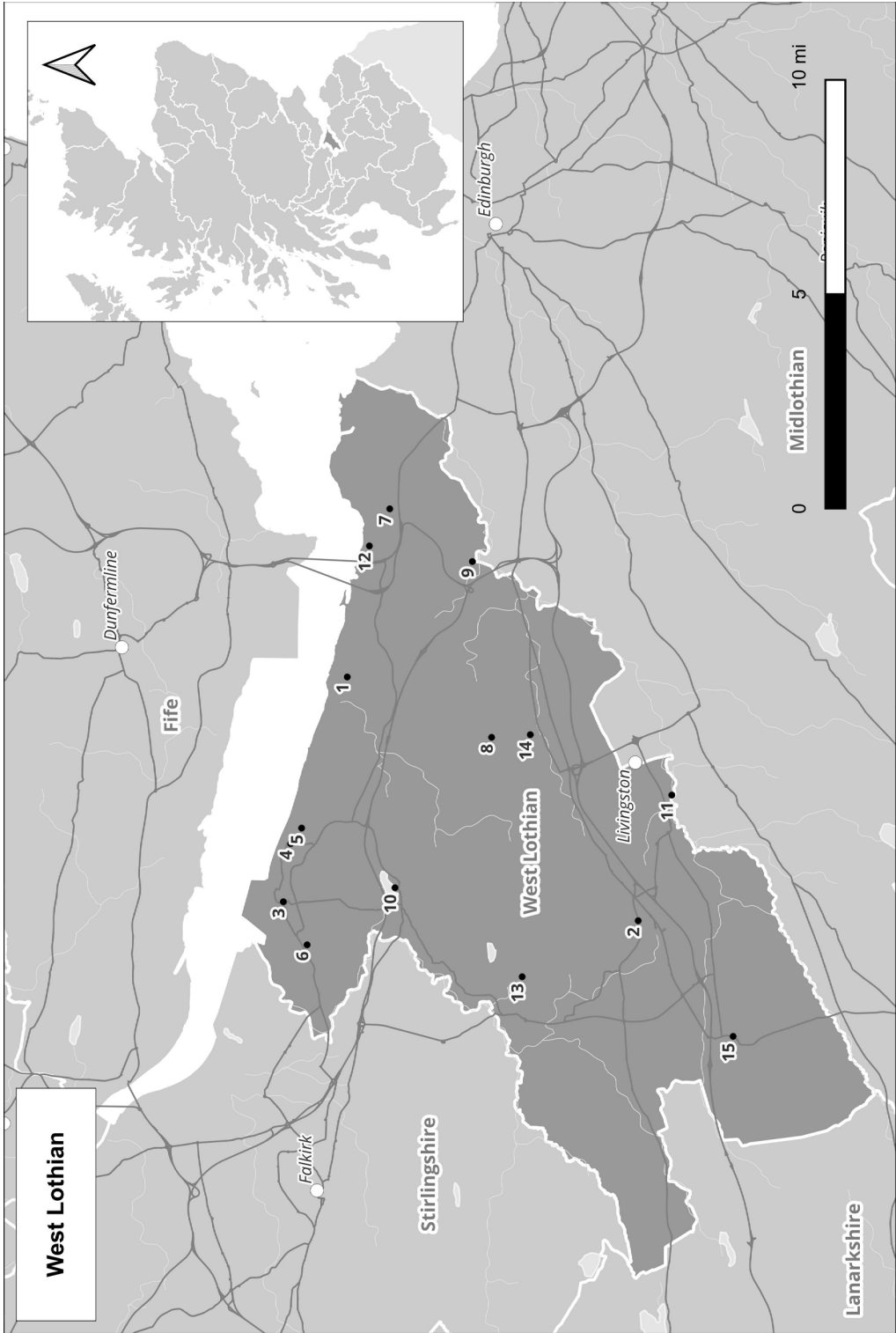


Figure 180: West face of the Service stone, Holy Rude Churchyard, Stirling. This depicts two different Quarles scenes. To the left two figures, Anima (the human soul) and Cupid (divine love) point to a sundial. To the right Anima pulls open her robe to release arrows of lamentation that rise to the heavenly radiance above. [1417776](#).

Portraits

Portrait carvings tend to be few in number and are rudimentary in execution. Examples include a mother and child at Luss, Dunbartonshire [800648](#), three female figures with hands on hips at Rhu, Dunbartonshire [1466355](#) and a man reading a book at Old Fintry, Stirlingshire [2221410](#). Some Resurrection figures appear to portray the deceased, as at Slamannan, Stirlingshire [1024998](#). At Kilsyth, Stirlingshire similar figures include a girl holding a flower under an arch [2221424](#) and a person standing on an hourglass while two of Death's darts point at the figure [2221427](#). There are several carved faces across Stirlingshire including portraits at Muiravonside [1395048](#) and Bothkennar [2221387](#) and on headstone hoods at Larbert [1410147](#) and at Logie Old [1410308](#) and [1410304](#). Several small facial portraits can be spotted at Polmont, Stirlingshire (see Figure 178) and at Drymen, Stirlingshire [1409668](#). An unusual full-length figure is portrayed without a face at Buchlyvie, Stirlingshire [2236498](#).





West Lothian¹

Sites to Visit with Interesting Carvings

1. Abercorn Parish Churchyard [251978](#)
2. Bathgate, Kirkton, Old Parish Churchyard [47770](#)
3. Bo'ness, Church Wynd, Upper and Lower Churchyards [48149](#)
4. Bo'ness, Carriden Old Churchyard [49598](#)
5. Bo'ness, Carriden House, Burial Ground [49558](#)
6. Bo'ness, Kinneil, Old Kinneil Kirk [48184](#)
7. Dalmeny Parish Churchyard [145101](#)
8. Ecclesmachan Parish Churchyard [49272](#)
9. Kirkliston Parish Churchyard [50729](#)
10. Linlithgow, St Michael's Churchyard [49181](#)
11. Livingston Parish Churchyard [251657](#)
12. South Queensferry, The Vennel, Churchyard [50640](#)
13. Torphichen Parish Churchyard [47978](#)
14. Uphall Churchyard [49292](#)
15. Whitburn Parish Churchyard [275460](#)

¹ Willsher's West Lothian field notes are available online [463840](#).

Overview²

West Lothian is rich in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century carved stones in the monument tradition. Abercorn in particular has a varied collection of stones, many being quite old, and Torphichen contains one of the quaintest collections of folk art in Scotland. Several earlier surveys have helped to describe this region's carving traditions.³ Distinctive features include headstones frequently carved on both sides and the use of grim, forbidding, lifelike skulls on the shoulders, seen at Ecclesmachan [549686](#), Whitburn [549690](#), Uphall [555362](#), Livingston [1465305](#), Bo'ness Church Wynd [548946](#) and Abercorn [555396](#) and [2225098](#). This feature appears across the Forth in west Fife and the north part of the mid-Lothian areas. The region contains several headstones where the pediment is 'cut-out', with open carved scrollwork, as two examples at Bo'ness Church Wynd [2238424](#) and [2238425](#) show. Reid describes further instances at Abercorn and Dalmeny.⁴ There are good examples of mural monuments and headstones with classical detailing including one at Whitburn [1647948](#); with Baroque elements such as **caryatids** which can be seen at Whitburn [1465382](#) and Bo'ness Church Wynd [2238423](#); and with **barley-twist pilasters** as seen at Bo'ness Church Wynd [2238418](#). **Wreaths** can be seen at Torphichen [549682](#) and may be employed around inscription panels, for example at Ecclesmachan [549685](#). **Leafy decoration** is also popular for borders as seen at Uphall [1465371](#) and for general decoration as noted at Abercorn [1465292](#).

Symbols to Look Out For

Mortality

Distinctive **skull** designs include three-dimensional shoulder designs as seen at Ecclesmachan [549684](#) (see also the examples given in the Overview above) and skulls seemingly wearing spectacles at Kirkliston [1465301](#) and Abercorn [1508109](#). However, these carvings predated the invention of such spectacles; they represent the way in which masons depicted the bones of the skull, as seen in the detail at Kirkliston [1465302](#). Two oddly orientated skulls appear on a headstone at Torphichen (Figure 181). There is also a rare small **winged skull** at Carriden Old [1409566](#) and a rudimentary grinning version at Torphichen [549682](#).

Bones include crossbones as at Carriden House [979535](#) and single bones placed in an upright position like those at Torphichen [549683](#). More occasionally they may be crossed with a **spade** as in an example at Bo'ness Church Wynd [548941](#), or suspended from ribbons as can be seen at Whitburn [549690](#). There is an unusual depiction of **jawbones** at Torphichen [549683](#). The **hourglass**, examples of which can be seen at Carriden House [979542](#) and Torphichen (see Figure 181), may be horizontal as at Abercorn [1508109](#) or, occasionally, winged like one at Bo'ness Church Wynd [2238418](#). An unusual hourglass design at Abercorn depicts a horizontal hourglass atop a long shaft [1508108](#). Among the many depictions of skulls and hourglasses at Abercorn, such as [679832](#) and [1508109](#), is one style where the glass sits on

² Willsher surveyed 16 sites across West Lothian to give some indication of both the typical and also the more unusual carvings to be found within this region.

³ Several studies of West Lothian gravestone carvings have been completed including: D. Christison, 'The Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands, Particularly in Perth, Fife, Angus, Mearns and Lothian', *PSAS* 36 (1902): 280-457; Alan Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn, Bowden and Carrington', *PSAS* 44 (1910): 33-76; Alan Reid, 'Sculptured Sarcophagus and Churchyard Memorials at Dalmeny: With Notes on the Churchyards of Edzell, Lethnot, and Stracathro' *PSAS* 49 (1915) 285-303.

⁴ Reid, 'Sculptured Sarcophagus and Churchyard Memorials at Dalmeny': 293, figure 8.



Figure 181. This stone at Torphichen is richly adorned with two wreaths, rosettes, greenery, a pair of hourglasses and two skulls. It also includes an unusual carving of what appears to be two serpents with flattened out tails. Similarly shaped carvings are found in Stirlingshire at Muiravonside, Polmont and Stirling. This motif could be a serpent, a bell or a type of eighteenth-century trumpet called a serpent. If it represents a trumpet then this would be an immortality symbol and would represent the sounding of the last trump. 2225193.

frond and a Bible, and stands on a skull and hourglass. The strange wing position suggests that the angel is flying. Trumpeting **angels of the Resurrection** occur across the region with examples at Bo'ness Church Wynd 2238420, South Queensferry, and Abercorn (Figure 182).⁶

Resurrection figures include carvings at Torphichen 549682, Linlithgow 1051896 and at Abercorn 679826, where, most unusually, the figure is horizontal rather than standing. As the Abercorn figure is depicted below a rose and greenery, Willsher recognised the Resurrection connection and Reid concluded that the mason deviated from the norm of an upright figure due to a lack of space.⁷ Other popular symbols include **fruit**, as for example at Bo'ness Church Wynd 2238423 and Carriden Old 1409566, **flowers** as at Torphichen 549681 and Carriden House 979546 and **rosettes** which can be seen at Abercorn 548894 and at Kirkliston 555408

top of the skull.⁵ The more unusual symbol of the **snake** appears coiled round bones at Uphall 2225209, Carriden Old 1409568 and Torphichen 549683. Also at Torphichen is a serpentine, bell-like motif (see Figure 181) which might be a depiction of a snake with a fanned-out tail or of a bell or a variety of trumpet called a serpent. Other mortality symbols which occur less frequently include inverted and flaming **torches** on the flanks of a headstone at Bo'ness Church Wynd 2225142, a **coffin** at Ecclesmachan 2225165 and **gravediggers' tools** at Linlithgow 2225181.

Immortality

Among the many lovely **winged soul** designs like this example at Whitburn 1647946, one distinctive West Lothian style uses leafy, rather than feathered, wings, as can be seen at Uphill 1465371, Kirkliston 1465300 and Ecclesmachan 549685. Other unusual wing designs include a soul with wings in separate sections at Kirkliston 1465301 and a pair of souls each with just a single wing at Torphichen 549683. At Abercorn, one winged soul design is depicted as smiling on one stone 1465291 and frowning on another 1465292. Souls may on occasion be carved in pairs as at Ecclesmachan 2225165, Bo'ness Church Wynd 2238423 and Linlithgow 1051896. In this region there are several putti and **winged angels**. One angel, at Bo'ness Church Wynd 2225131, holds a palm

⁵ Christison, 'The Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 370, and figures and 46 e and 46f, 47 and 51.

⁶ See also Christison, 'The Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': Figures 51 and 70; and Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn, Bowden and Carrington': figures 7 and 8.

⁷ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn, Bowden and Carrington': 44-45.

and 1465300. **Shells** can be seen at Carriden House 979534, Livingston 1465305 and Whitburn 1647950. At Abercorn a hand holds an open **book** 1508109, while at South Queensferry a naked putto at the top of a small mural monument holds a **heart** in either hand 2225192. Foliage **wreaths**, which are characteristic of this region and recall the ring of eternity and renewal of life, can be seen at Torphichen (see Figure 181 and Figure 183).

Trade

The collection of trade symbols at Abercorn is more impressive than at many other graveyards closer to towns⁸ and includes a rare example of a **baker's** rolling pin⁹ and a peel



Figure 182. Two angels of the Resurrection run to meet one another on this stone at Abercorn. Both formerly held torches or trumpets, but these have now mostly eroded away. Each figure places a foot on a shuttle, a piece of symbolism recalling Job 7:6 'My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle'. Willsher suggests that the foliage between the angels is a Tree of Life. It is unusual for an inscription to run across the two side panels as seen here. 2225112.



Figure 183. The design of this stone at Torphichen is strongly reminiscent of Stirlingshire carvings. The bound wreaths and small faces are similar to examples found at Polmont, Stirlingshire, while the figures on the lower flanks recall carvings at Muiravonside, Stirlingshire. 2225194.

⁸ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn, Bowden and Carrington': 46.

⁹ A number of authors have noted that the Abercorn carving is the only example of a rolling pin on a baker's gravestone they have seen, see Betty Willsher and Doreen Hunter, *Stones: A Guide to Some Remarkable Eighteenth-Century Gravestones* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1978): 75; Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn, Bowden, and Carrington': 50; Christison, 'Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 394 and figure 461. Indeed, Christison noted that this might seem an unusual absence for such an essential and commonplace trade, but it might be explained by the infrequency of bakers within rural areas during the 17th and 18th centuries, when oatmeal was

with three baps **679833**. Other symbols seen there include a **miller's** millstone and rind,¹⁰ a **gardener's** rake and turf cutter **549718**, a **tailor's** goose and shears **679832**, a **forester's** axe, knife and spade beside trees **679825** and a **weaver's** stretcher and shuttle.¹¹ Other weavers' stones include one with a loom at Uphall **555385** and one with a shuttle and reed at Dalmeny.¹² The **wrights'** stones at Abercorn include carvings of a square and compass, a handsaw and square, and a square and axe.¹³ There is also an incised axe or adze at Carriden House **979545**. The symbols of **hammermen** at Abercorn¹⁴ include one with a horseshoe and anvil as well as the hammer and crown to denote a **blacksmith 555359**. Other stones to hammermen are found at Carriden House **979542**, Kirkliston **555408**, Bo'ness Kinneil¹⁵ and Dalmeny,¹⁶ where Christison noted that he found the oldest dated example, inscribed 1682.¹⁷ Also spotted at Abercorn are crossed shovels denoting a **maltster**.¹⁸ A malt shovel is also found at Bo'ness Kinneil¹⁹ and at Bo'ness Church Wynd **2225132**, where the shovel is accompanied by a rare bushel measure. At Dalmeny two **brewer's men**, known as 'Sting and Ling', are depicted carrying a barrel **789846**. The sextant recorded at Abercorn **1465292** is one of several **mariner**-related stones in the region, with other examples at Bo'ness Church Wynd **2238425**, Bo'ness Kinneil **1595929**, Dalmeny **1232744** and South Queensferry.²⁰ Willsher's field notes include a fine carving at Bo'ness Church Wynd of an eighteenth-century merchant ship **2225138** and the '4' symbol of a **merchant 2225141**. Other West Lothian trade symbols include a plough, a spade and a shovel at the foot of a stone to a **farmer** at Ecclesmachan **549687** and a **collier's** pick and hammer at Bo'ness Kinneil.²¹ At Dalmeny, on a stone to Robert Ramsay, there is a **stonemason's** mell and chisel below a large eagle, a nod to the Ramsey family crest **789787**.

Symbolic Scenes and Other Carvings

Biblical Scenes

The only Lothian example of an **Adam and Eve** carving is at Uphall **2092781** and is notable for its extraordinary fruit-laden tree.²² Rather than Adam and Eve scenes, within the Lothians the **Sower and Harvester** proved to be the more popular biblical carving. West Lothian examples include stones at Livingston **1465305** and harvester-style portraits at Whitburn **2225211** and Livingston (Figure 184).

the staple food, see Christison, 'Additional Notes on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands', *PSAS* 39 (1905): 98. However, Flora Davidson noted that another example of a baker's rolling pin is found on a baker's stone at St Cyrus Upper, see Flora Davidson, *Seventeenth-Century Tombstones of Angus and the Mearns: An Inventory* (Angus: Angus District Council Libraries and Museums, 1999): 48.

¹⁰ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn, Bowden and Carrington': 47.

¹¹ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn, Bowden and Carrington': 47.

¹² Reid, 'Sculptured Sarcophagus and Churchyard Memorials at Dalmeny': figure 5.

¹³ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn, Bowden and Carrington': 47, figures 11 and 14.

¹⁴ Reid, 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn, Bowden and Carrington': figure 16.

¹⁵ Thomas James Salmon, *Borrowstounness and District: Historical Sketches of Kinneil, Carriden, and Bo'ness, c. 1550-1850* (Edinburgh: William Hodge and Company, 1913): 88

¹⁶ Reid, 'Sculptured Sarcophagus and Churchyard Memorials at Dalmeny': figure 8.

¹⁷ Christison, 'The Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 383.

¹⁸ Christison, 'The Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': figure 46c.

¹⁹ Salmon, *Borrowstounness and District*: 106

²⁰ Christison, 'The Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': figure 90a.

²¹ Salmon, *Borrowstounness and District*: 88, 106.

²² Christison, 'The Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': 343 and figure 59.



Figure 184. This unique scene at Livingston recalls a Resurrection scene since the large Harvester figure is depicted naked, save for a loincloth. The figure holds two sheaves of corn and on either side are the heads of giant birds, perhaps doves, with sprigs of greenery in their beaks. [2225188](#).

The rare **menorah** at Torphichen [1029461](#) is the only example of this multi-branched candelabrum found by Willsher. The use of **jawbones** at Torphichen may reference the biblical episode of Samson wielding the jawbone of an ass [549683](#).

Quarles Emblems

A headstone at Bo'ness Church Wynd [2238422](#) is carved with a scene from the concluding emblem of Quarles's *Emblemes* 5. It is accompanied by an epigram entitled 'The Farewell', which quotes Revelation 2.1: 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life'. The image depicts a pair of angels of the Resurrection and a crown above a figure sitting at a desk. This design is also used at Holy Rude Churchyard in Stirling [1523501](#) and Greyfriars Kirkyard in Edinburgh.²³ A second headstone at Bo'ness Church Wynd bears a carving of a winged figure bound to a sphere, representing earthly life, inspired by *Emblemes* 5.IX.²⁴ A similar design can be found at Muiravonside, Stirlingshire [1395044](#).

²³ This carving, located on Dr Michael Young's Monument, Greyfriars Kirkyard, is available to view as a 3D digital model on Sketchfab <https://skfb.ly/oAFzv>. For more details see the event record at www.trove.scot/activities/1161663.

²⁴ Mark Hatton has uploaded a photograph of this stone onto the Public Contributions section for the site record for Bo'ness Church Wynd Churchyard [48149](#).

Personified Figures

The **Green Man** motif is found across West Lothian. Notable examples across the area include Bathgate **1465294**, Carriden Old **2238413**, Carriden House **979543**, Ecclesmachan **549686**, Linlithgow **1465304** and South Queensferry **2225189**. There are several Green Men at Abercorn, including a pair of winged, three-dimensional examples on the shoulders of a headstone **1465293**. At Livingston one prominently placed Green Man is almost like a portrait **1465305**. A rare example of an **Angel of Death** **695912** can be observed at Abercorn, holding an hourglass and what appears to be a sword,²⁵ while at Dalmeny **2225158**²⁶ and South Queensferry **2225189** there are pairs of winged angels with a dart and an hourglass.

Portraits

There are full-length carvings of a man in a bonnet and coat at Uphall **555362** and of couples at Bathgate **1465295** and Linlithgow **1051896**. At Carriden Old there is a portrait of man sitting at a table **2225148**. Also at Carriden Old is a scene with a tenant farmer sitting and reading a book or ledger **548899** in a style similar to carvings found at Chesters, Scottish Borders. A most unusual scene is depicted in two panels on a headstone at Bo'ness Church Wynd **548945**. In the left-hand panel a small figure kneels as in prayer under the sun and holds a sprig of greenery while in the right-hand panel a figure stands under the moon holding a flower and wreath. There are also several head portraits, with the face of a weaver portrayed at Uphall **555385** and two crudely carved examples on a stone at Torphichen **549681**.

²⁵ Willsher and Hunter, *Stones*: 23.

²⁶ Christison, 'The Carvings and Inscriptions on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands': figure 78b.

Afterword

As Betty Willsher's older daughter, I admired her energy and perseverance in recording gravestones throughout Scotland. For her and her friend Doreen Hunter it was an enjoyable and rewarding project, which started when they were curious about the symbols on Scottish gravestones and found that little had been published about them.

After Betty's death in 2012 her cupboards still contained many photos and records which I took to the National Record of the Historic Environment to add to the records already donated. Betty had told me that she wanted to have a winged cherub at the top her gravestone, like the one on a 1784 stone at Monifieth, Angus. So the beautiful stone carved by her niece, Lois Anderson, followed this instruction and included part of a poem by Norman MacCaig which we thought appropriate for Betty's work in recording graveyards.

One of Betty's other interests in retirement was researching and writing books on her Scottish family's history. She loved her nearest and wider family members, and was devastated when my younger sister died in 1995, aged 54. However, Betty had great pleasure in seeing the younger generations growing up.

Penelope Walker, May 2023.



Betty Willsher recording gravestones



Betty's Willsher's gravestone



Betty Willsher with her grandchildren

Glossary

acanthus: plant with fleshy leaves, decoration of the Corinthian capital.

cable moulding: Norman moulding which imitates a twisted cord.

capital: the head or top part of a column.

cartouche: a panel or tablet with curved and scrolled surround.

caryatid: sculptured female figure in the form of support or column.

caryatids, termin: female busts or demi- or three-quarter figures.

centaur: a fabulous creature with the head, trunk, and arms of a man joined to the body and legs of a horse.

console: a variety of bracket or corbel; a ledge which projects.

cornucopia: a receptacle shaped like a goat's horn, overflowing with flowers and fruit.

demi-columns: columns which are half sunk into a wall or face.

festoons: carved garlands of flowers and fruit suspended at both ends.

finial: top of a gable or pinnacle, newel, roof, etc.

lesene: pilaster strip with no base or capital.

ligature: the joining of two letters.

lunette: a crescent-shaped or semi-circular space.

mantling: decoration about a coat of arms, taking the form of plumes, foliage or drapery.

obelisk: pillar of square section tapering at the top and ending pyramidally.

ogee: a moulding consisting of a continuous double curve, convex above and concave below; the adjective is **ogival**.

pediment: triangular feature in classical architecture which resembles the Gothic gable; term is commonly applied to the top-piece of a monument.

pilaster: a column of rectangular section engaged in a wall face.

putto: representation of a child, nude or in swaddling bands, used in Italian art from the 15th to the 17th century.

riband: a strip resembling a ribbon.

sarcophagus: an ornate stone coffin of the classical type in the form of a couch, an altar, a truncated pyramid on lion's feet, a casket.

serif: one of the fine cross-strokes at the top and bottom of a letter; **sans serif:** plain lettering with no cross-strokes/

GLOSSARY

serifs, slab: square serifs of almost the same thickness as the strokes in which they are placed.

stele: an upright rectangular gravestone, associated with the Romans.

swag: a drop type of decoration composed of ribbons, fruit and flowers, or drapery; it is fixed at either end and hanging down in the middle.

trophy: a cluster of emblems bound together with ribands or festoons.

tympanum: triangular panel between sloping and horizontal cornices of the classical pediment.

volute: a spiral or scroll to be seen on Ionic and Corinthian and composite columns; a spiraliform scroll.

Appendix: Adam and Eve Stones,¹ Abraham and Isaac Stones and Quarles Stones

All known stones are recorded here, but it may be possible that others will be found during surveys. N.D. denotes no date decipherable; an asterisk [*] indicates that the stone is no longer to be found.

The regional areas given here are the pre-1975 counties, not the current local authority areas which Willsher used in the 2005 edition.

(A) ADAM AND EVE STONES

ANGUS

Dun	Chest tomb panel	1696
	Tablestone panel	1699
Farnell	*Headstone	1730
Lundie	Headstone	1759
Pert	Headstone	1742
	Headstone	1743-1754
	*Headstone	N.D.
Stracathro	Headstone	1730
Tannadice	Tablestone panel	1715

ARGYLLSHIRE

Kilchousland	Headstone	1720
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AYRSHIRE

Colmonell	Headstone	1758
Craigie	*Headstone	N.D.
Dundonald	Headstone	N.D.
Dunlop	*Headstone	N.D.
Riccarton	*Headstone	N.D.
	Headstone	N.D.
St Quivox	Headstone	1766-1784
Straiton	Tablestone panel	1696
Tarbolton	*Headstone	N.D.

BERWICKSHIRE

Dryburgh	Headstone	1745
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¹ The list of Adam and Eve stones compiled by Betty Willsher in 1985 has been updated using her research on Adam and Eve carvings for her 1993 article, 'Adam and Eve Scenes on Kirkyard Monuments in the Scottish Lowlands', *PSAS* 122 (1993): 413-451 and her field notes.

CLACKMANNANSHIRE AND KINROSS-SHIRE

Fossoway	*Headstone	N.D.
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DUMFRIESSHIRE

Kirkconnel	Tablestone support	1768
Repentance	Headstone	1739-1768
St Mungo	Headstone	1737
Tundergarth	Headstone	1711

KINCARDINESHIRE

Fettercairn	Headstone	1737
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KIRKUDBRIGHTSHIRE

Kells	Headstone	1702
	Headstone	1706
	Headstone	1707
	Headstone	1718

LANARKSHIRE

Biggar	Headstone	1713
Hamilton	Headstone	1717

PEEBLESSHIRE

Lyne	Headstone	1712
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PERTHSHIRE

Caputh	Headstone	1809
Cargill	Tablestone	N.D.
Chapelhill (Logiealmond)	Headstone	1764
Clunie	Headstone	1741
Collace	Tablestone Panel	1742
Dowally	Headstone	1782
Kinfauns	Headstone	1782
Lagganallachy	Headstone	1764
Little Dunkeld	Headstone	1744
	Headstone	1762
	Headstone	1769
	Headstone	1781
Logierait	Headstone	1784
	Headstone	1784
	Headstone	1784
	Headstone	1748
Methven	Headstone	1748
Perth, Greyfriars	Headstone	1782
St Fillans (Dundurn)	Headstone	1729
St Madoes	Headstone	1745
St Martins	Headstone	1750

UNDERSTANDING SCOTTISH GRAVEYARDS

ROXBURGHSHIRE

Bowden *Tablestone Panel N.D.

STIRLINGSHIRE

Campsie Headstone 1799
 Headstone 1799
 Falkirk *Headstone 1750
 Polmont Headstone 1754
 Headstone 1796

WEST LOTHIAN

Uphall Tablestone Panel 1733

(B) ABRAHAM AND ISAAC STONES

ANGUS

Dun Chest tomb panel 1696
 Lundie Headstone 1759

LANARKSHIRE

Wiston Headstone 1735

PERTSHIRE

Blairgowrie *Headstone 1769
 Cargill Tablestone panel N.D.
 Headstone 1770
 St Mary's, Grandtully Headstone 1784
 Logierait Headstone 1774
 Headstone N.D.
 Methven Headstone 1769
 Headstone N.D.

(c) Carvings of Emblems from the Works of Francis Quarles²**ANGUS**

Arbroath Abbey	Tablestone (PW and IG) Flat slab	Emblemes Book 2 opening illustration Hieroglyphickes VI
Dundee, Howff	Coped stone (Vichtane)	Emblemes Book 3.XV Emblemes Book 4.XI Emblemes Book 4.XIII Emblemes Book 5.XII

AYRSHIRE

Alloway, Auld Kirk	Headstone	Hieroglyphickes VI Emblemes Book 1.IV
	Headstone (Meler)	Hieroglyphickes VI
Ayr, Auld Kirk	Headstone	Emblemes Book 3.X
	Headstone (Wood, 1876)	Emblemes Book 3.X
Girvan	Headstone (McCrakes)	Emblemes Book 4.XI

FIFE

St Andrews	Coped tomb (Nairn)	Emblemes Book 3.XV Emblemes Book 4.XI Emblemes Book 4.VIII Emblemes Book 5.XII
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MIDLOTHIAN

Edinburgh, Greyfriars	Mural monument (Young and Kincaid)	Emblemes Book 5 concluding emblem
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PERTHSHIRE

Scone, Old Church	Coped stone (Coupar)	Emblemes Book 3.VII Emblemes Book 3.XV Emblemes Book 4.XIII Emblemes Book 5.XII
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² The poet Francis Quarles (1592-1644) published *Emblemes* in 1635 followed by *Hieroglyphikes* in 1638 and these were then published together in 1639 as *Emblemes Divine and Moral: Together with Hieroglyphickes of Man* (London: I.D. for F. Eglesfeild, 1639). Images from these influenced the carvings on several Scottish tombstones. For more information see Michael Bath, *Emblems in Scotland: Motifs and Meanings*, SCROLL: Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature 28 (Leiden: Brill, 2018): 234-300 and Michael Bath and Betty Willsher, 'Emblems from Quarles on Scottish Gravestones', in A. Adams and L. Grove (eds) *Emblems and Art History: Nine Essays* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 1996): 169-201.

UNDERSTANDING SCOTTISH GRAVEYARDS

STIRLINGSHIRE

Stirling, Holy Rude	Headstone (Service)	Emblemes Book 3 opening emblem Emblemes Book 3.XIII Emblemes Book 5 concluding emblem
Muiravonside	Headstone (Calder)	Emblemes Book 5.IX

WESTLOTHIAN

Bo'ness, Church Wynd	Headstone (Stephens)	Emblemes Book 5 concluding emblem
	Headstone	Emblemes Book 5.IX

WIGTOWNSHIRE

Soulseat Abbey	Headstone (Campbell)	Emblemes Book 1.IV
	Headstone	Emblemes Book 5.I
Inch, Old Churchyard	Headstone (Drymen)	Emblemes Book 3.VII

Examples of Built Heritage Features Found in Graveyards

bee-bole: rectangular recess in a wall used to house bee hives.

bell tower: a free-standing tower, currently either with or without bells, which is often all that remains of a former church.

boundary walls: the enclosure of the graveyard using stone, metal railings, embankments or vegetation. Many boundary walls act as retaining walls as the ground level on one side is higher than that on the other.

burial aisle: a projecting wing or chapel within a church used exclusively by one family for burial.

burial enclosure: a burial lair or group of lairs enclosed by a wall, fence or hedge. This enclosure is unroofed and occasionally may adjoin the church.

burial vault: an underground room for interment.

catacombs: a structure, usually underground, containing a series of burial vaults, found in some nineteenth-century cemeteries.

charter bole: a rectangular recess used to house charter documents defining ownership of adjoining properties.

church hall: a freestanding building that acts as a recreational and meeting place for the church congregation.

church ruin/tower ruin: roofless remains of former church and/or tower sometimes redeployed as a burial aisle or enclosure.

churchyard cross/cross base: a pre-Reformation stone cross that was erected in the churchyard to denote consecrated ground or a preaching station. In some cases the cross may also have acted as a memorial to a specific individual.

crematorium: a building where corpses are cremated.

detached tower: a tower that stands alone from the rest of the church.

dovecot/doocot: building or enclosure for nesting pigeons or doves for farming purposes. Usually square, circular or rectangular in shape, they may occasionally still be lined with nesting boxes and have a central access pole known as a potence.

font: a structure resembling a stone bowl designed to hold the holy water used at the sacrament of baptism.

gatehouse: a building located at the entrance to a burial ground. In nineteenth-century cemeteries this was often used as an administrative centre.

gateways: gateways are often highly ornamental and were sometimes erected to lairds, ministers or as war memorials. Churchyards usually have more than one entrance, one of which may have been reserved for the minister or laird. Nineteenth-century cemeteries are especially notable for grand and dramatic entrance gates, which were often decorated with symbolism relating to death.

hearse house: a building to house the vehicle used to convey a coffin at a funeral.

hermitage/cell: a small basic room, often partially underground, used for solitary meditation.

holy well: a natural spring attributed with healing or other holy properties.

jail house/lock up: a building or tower used to detain parish miscreants. The jail may have also had an associated courthouse.

jougs: an iron neck ring used to punish parish miscreants in conjunction with stocks/pillory/whipping post.

lychgate: a structure, usually of timber with a roof and open sides, acting as the main entrance gate to a churchyard. Originally the gate provided shelter for shrouded bodies before burial and later provided a resting place for the coffin whilst the funerary party awaited the priest.

mausoleum: buildings used by a laird and other well-to-do members of society for private family burials. Mausoleums are freestanding structures erected over burial vaults within which the coffins were placed. When such structures are attached to churches they are termed burial aisles.

mercat cross: stone cross marking a market place.

mort-house: buildings erected for the temporary security of the dead during body snatching times, sometimes taking the form of a partially subterranean vault.

mort-safe: iron, or iron and stone, cage-like structure placed over a coffin or grave to prevent access to the corpse by body snatchers. Occasionally mort-safes take the form of an iron coffin-shaped chest, within which a coffin may be placed.

mound: many burial grounds are built on naturally occurring mounds. Occasionally these mounds may be man-made and archaeological features in their own right.

mounting steps: steps placed at the entrance to the church path in order that visitors could mount and dismount their horses more easily.

offertory house: small sentry-box-like structure erected at churchyard gate to receive church collection.

sanctuary cross/marker: markers denoting the extent or central point of a protected area used as a place of refuge.

schoolhouse: building used to educate the children of a parish.

session house: a free-standing building, which was the meeting place of the kirk session, sometimes doubling as a gatehouse or as a church hall.

standing stone/stone circle: a prehistoric site composed of large vertical or horizontal stones.

sundial: a device to show the time by the shadow of a pointer in sunlight.

war memorial: monument or structure dedicated to the fallen parishioners or townsmen of war, predominantly the First and Second World Wars.

watch-tower/house: a building at the entrance to a graveyard with a window looking onto the burial ground. Here people undertaking watching duty would sit to guard recently buried corpses from body snatchers.

The above information was produced by the Carved Stones Adviser Project, and first appeared in the Carved Stones Adviser Project, *An Introduction to Graveyard Recording* (Edinburgh: Archaeology Scotland, 2002). It is reproduced here with permission from the Archaeology Scotland and Historic Environment Scotland.

Further Reading

(A) SOURCES AND RESOURCES: A GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

For those wishing to follow up what has only been touched on earlier, this introduction to the bibliography acts as a guide to further reading, since one of the difficulties is to know where to start.

Although this book is concerned with Scotland, it is to a book about English churchyards that we turn for a detailed and well-researched introduction to the history and carvings on English tombstones, the imagery and symbols and the identity of the masons: *English Churchyard Memorials* by Frederick Burgess.¹ David Graham-Campbell discusses the evolution of culture from prehistoric times to today in *Scotland's Story in her Monuments*,² and Anne Gordon, in *Death is for the Living*,³ expands on some of the topics mentioned in the present work, although her book is primarily a study of funeral customs in post-Reformation Scotland. *Stones*, by Betty Willsher and Doreen Hunter,⁴ deals with the eighteenth-century carved gravestones of the Scottish Lowlands. It contains illustrations and information on the origin and significance of emblems, including trade emblems and how they reflect the social history of the times. K.A. Lindley, in *Graves and Graveyards*,⁵ gives a helpful introduction by an art and graphic design teacher.

There are no regional archaeological studies of graveyards in Scotland, although there are a few general books on specific graveyards, such as the *Guide to Remarkable Monuments in the Howff, Dundee* by A.C. Lamb,⁶ and Nancy Davey's *The Howff, a Guide to the Old Graveyard*,⁷ and there are some other unpublished studies, such as J. Morrison, 'The Monumental Sculpture of Montrose Kirkyard as an Expression of Folk Art'.⁸

Most studies are concerned with the iconography, genealogy,⁹ inscriptions, or epitaphs in one or more graveyards, and rarely consider graveyards as a

¹ Frederick Burgess, *English Churchyard Memorials* (London: Lutterworth, 1963).

² David Graham-Campbell, *Scotland's Story in her Monuments* (London: Robert Hale, 1982).

³ Anne Gordon, *Death is for the Living* (Edinburgh: Paul Harris, 1984).

⁴ Betty Willsher and Doreen Hunter, *Stones: A Guide to Some Remarkable Eighteenth-Century Gravestones* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1978).

⁵ K.A. Lindley, *Graves and Graveyards* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972).

⁶ A.C. Lamb, *Guide to Remarkable Monuments in the Howff, Dundee* (Dundee: John Leng and Co., 1892).

⁷ Nancy Davey, *The Howff: A Guide to the Old Graveyard*, rev. edn (Dundee: City of Dundee District Council, Museum and Art Galleries Department, 1993).

⁸ J. Morrison, *Monumental Sculpture of Montrose Kirkyard as an Expression of Folk Art* (unpublished MS 1982). Since 1985, a number of studies of individual graveyards have been completed and several are detailed in the bibliography. Regional graveyard studies remain scarcer, although Flora Davidson and Elspeth Reid's 2017 comprehensive survey of post-Reformation gravestones of Angus is an exemplar of this type of research. Flora Davidson and Elspeth Reid, *The Post-Reformation Gravestones of Angus: Scottish Social History in Stone, 1560-1715* (Angus: Forest Lodge and The Strathmartine Trust, 2017). See also G.A.C. Binnie, *The Churches and Graveyards of Berwickshire* (Berwick-upon-Tweed: G.A.C. Binnie, 1995) and G.A.C. Binnie, *The Churches and Graveyards of Roxburgh* (Kelso: G.A.C. Binnie, 2001).

⁹ As already discussed in chapter 1 footnote 15, genealogy enthusiasts like Sheila and John Fowler Mitchell have undertaken memorial inscription surveys (MIs) of many of Scotland's graveyards over the last 50 years. To find out about the Scottish Genealogy Society's holdings of published and unpublished

whole, with all their monuments in relation to one another and the church. It should be appreciated too that much local information is available, although it is scattered through many sources: in local church and parish histories, unpublished manuscripts, parish records, as well as the primary record, the churchyard itself.

These are all historical sources and differ from the archaeological record or survey in being selective, emphasising one facet of the study, whereas the archaeological survey includes as much as possible of the surviving physical remains as well as any documentary information which may be available. The Markinch and the Skelmorlie Aisle surveys have produced detailed written, drawn and photographic records that show clearly what can be done, and how valuable it is to do this work. The Markinch records are available for consultation locally through the church, and the Largs record from the Largs Historical Society at its museum. The Cunninghame District survey includes thousands of individual monuments as well as plans of each graveyard. It is available for consultation through the Irvine District Council.

The *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* contains many articles on churches, graveyards and monuments of all periods and from many parts of Scotland. Several of these have been referred to in the text, and a selection of such articles is given in Further Reading section b. Most are well-illustrated, and provide a valuable guide to the range of monuments. These papers are good records of the many types of memorials, including some which have been lost. Many of the papers were written because it seemed important to make records while it was still possible; it is as important today as it was then. The *Proceedings* are available in most reference libraries for readers who wish to follow up a topic or find out what has been done in a particular area, using the papers listed here as a starting-point.¹⁰

To assist those who wish to make an archaeological study of church and churchyard, Richard Morris's *The Church in British Archaeology*,¹¹ and Jeremy Jones's *How to Record Graveyards*¹² are particularly useful, as well as the companion to the present volume, the 'Recording Manual' by Betty Willsher, *How to Record Scottish Graveyards*.¹³

The bibliography and the various volumes listed in this Further Reading appendix cover a wide range of graveyard studies. This is not an exhaustive list, but provides a selection of books concerned with relevant material, in which readers will find more detailed bibliographies to assist them as their interests develop.

MIs, contact the Scottish Genealogy Society Library and Resource Centre, 15 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh, Scotland, EH1 2JL, or visit their website at: <http://www.scotsgenealogy.com>. The Scottish Association of Family History Societies' website <http://www.safhs.org.uk> provides details of the many other family history groups involved with recording and publishing MIs across Scotland.

¹⁰ The Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland are available in a digital format and individual articles can be downloaded free of charge from the server of the Archaeology Data Service: <https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/psas/volumes.cfm>.

¹¹ Richard Morris, *The Church in British Archaeology*, Council for British Archaeology Research Report 47 (London: Council for British Archaeology, 1983).

¹² Jeremy Jones, *How to Record Graveyards* (London: Council for British Archaeology; Rescue, 1976). In 2000 the Council for British Archaeology published a second recording manual, Harold Mytum, *Recording and Analysing Graveyards*, Practical Handbooks in Archaeology 15 (York: Council for British Archaeology with English Heritage, 2000).

¹³ Betty Willsher, *How to Record Scottish Graveyards: A Companion to Understanding Scottish Graveyards* (Edinburgh: Council for British Archaeology Scotland, 1985).

(B) SELECTED ARTICLES ON CHURCHYARDS AND GRAVESTONES IN THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF SCOTLAND (PSAS)

This list contains the major articles on churchyards and the monuments within them, but there are more articles, particularly in the earlier volumes, in which single stones or fragments of stones are discussed; some of these articles discuss sites that may be the remains of early Christian churches.

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- Brown, Ian Gordon. 'David Hume's Tomb: A Roman Mausoleum by Robert Adam'. *PSAS* 121 (1991): 391-422.
- Burnett, Charles J. 'Funeral Heraldry in Scotland with Particular Reference to Hatchments'. *PSAS* 116 (1986): 473-559.
- Carrick, J.C. 'Churchyard Monuments at Newbattle'. *PSAS* 37 (1902): 258-270.
- Christison, D. 'Additional Notes on the Kirkyard Monuments of the Scottish Lowlands'. *PSAS* 39 (1904): 55-116.
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- Eeles, F.C. 'Undescribed Sculptured Stones and Crosses at Old Luce, Farnell, Edzell, Lochlee and Kirkmichael (Banffshire) with some late Medieval Monuments at Parton (Kirkcudbrightshire), Maryton and Wick'. *PSAS* 44 (1909): 354-372.
- Graham, Angus. 'Graveyard Monuments in East Lothian'. *PSAS* 94 (1960): 211-271.
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FURTHER READING

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- Reid, Alan. 'The Churches and Churchyard Memorials of St Helens on the Lea and Cockburnspath'. *PSAS* 48 (1913): 210-229.
- Reid, Alan. 'The Churchyard Memorials of Abercorn, Bowden and Carrington'. *PSAS* 44 (1909): 33-76.
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- Thomson, G. 'Scottish External Funerary Metal Plates'. *PSAS* 138 (2008): 293-308.
- Wallace, Thomas. 'Notes from the Old Churchyards of Logie, Lecropt, Dunblane and Moy, with a Note on an Impression of Human Feet Cut in Stone'. *PSAS* 46 (1911): 436-442.
- Willsher, Betty. 'Adam and Eve Scenes on Kirkyard Monuments in the Scottish Lowlands'. *PSAS* 122 (1992): 413-451.

(C) USEFUL REFERENCE BOOKS¹⁴

Council for British Archaeology. *The Archaeology of Churches: A Report from the Churches Committee of the Council for British Archaeology Presented to the Conference on the Archaeology of Churches Held at Norwich, 13-15 April 1973*. London: Council for British Archaeology, 1973.

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Reports of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, by county, from 1909 to date.

Scott, Hew: *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae: The Succession of Ministers in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation*, vols 1-8. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1915-1950.

Statistical Account of Scotland, drawn up by Sir John Sinclair. 21 vols. Edinburgh: William Creech, 1791-1799. [The Old Statistical Account of Scotland].

Small, Robert: *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church 1733-1900*. 2 vols. Edinburgh: D.M. Small, 1904.

(D) DIGITAL RESOURCES

trove.scot is a platform which brings together Historic Environment Scotland's wealth of unique and diverse collections in one convenient place. It combines information from previous websites including Canmore – where Betty Willsher's work was previously available.

Canmore was the website of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS), which became part of Historic Environment Scotland in 2015. From 1908, RCAHMS was responsible for recording, interpreting and collecting information about the built and historic environment. Initially, RCAHMS recorded all buildings and monuments of note until the year 1707. This was later updated to 1805. The findings were published in a series of inventories, which cover approximately half of Scotland.

<https://www.trove.scot/archive/1180780>

¹⁴ Researchers may find it helpful to look at information dealing with churches, other local heritage sites and local history since these may contain details about churchyards and give a historical context to understand graveyards.

FURTHER READING

A wealth of resources can be downloaded for free from Archaeology Scotland's website <https://www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/projects/scottish-graveyards/> including:

- An introduction to graveyard recording
- Gravestone recording form
- Gravestone with condition survey
- Graveyard recording form
- Graveyard recording form, part 1
- Graveyard recording form, parts 2 and 3
- Graveyard recording form, part 4
- Graveyard recording form, part 5
- Recording buried tombstones

Further information on gravestone research and other sources of information for graveyards can also be found within *Future Thinking on Carved Stones in Scotland: A Research Framework* (2016) by Sally Foster, Katherine Forsyth, Susan Buckham and Stuart Jeffrey

<https://scarf.scot/thematic/future-thinking-on-carved-stones-in-scotland>

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