



Introduction

The Database covers the part of the graveyard that was laid out to the south and east of the church when the new Abbey Church was built in 1818 at the east end of the twelfth century nave. This 'New Ground' was opened for burials in 1823 and was heavily used until the Halbeath Road Cemetery was opened in 1863. In the four years leading up to the opening of the Cemetery sales of lairs (called 'rooms') in the churchyard had averaged about 20 a year. They remained fairly steady until 1866 when they dropped to 7 and thereafter did not rise above 4 a year, some years seeing no sales at all. There was a brief revival in 1900 when 60 lairs were opened up in area J but after that no more lairs were sold in this graveyard.

For the purposes of surveying the graveyard each area of burials was given a letter of the alphabet (F – M) and the Database has been divided into sections that correspond with the survey areas. Each section starts with a plan of the graveyard showing the area that section covers and a grid that details the rows and lair numbers in the area. Each grave plot described in the database is headed with its lair number or numbers in bold type. All the gravestone inscriptions have been reproduced in full and in some cases extra information about the individuals concerned has been added. Not all grave plots were marked with a stone and in these cases the name of the lair owner has been given.

The Database itself is supported by two files that will help searchers to find individual graves.

1. An alphabetical list of all the main **surnames** (usually of husband and wife) found on the Abbey gravestones. The first page of this file contains a plan showing the locations of the Graveyard Survey areas and a key to each area showing the layout of the rows and lair numbers in each area. Each surname in the list is followed by the letter of the area and the number of the row in which it is to be found. Use this information to find individual lairs in the Database.
2. An alphabetical list of all the **owners of lairs** in the graveyard. This list is more comprehensive than the list of names on gravestones because not everyone had a stone on their grave plot. An additional feature of the list is that it often includes the trade and address of the lair owner. The lair number in the final column can be used to find the grave plot in the Database and the positions of unmarked plots on the ground in relation to adjoining marked plots.

A similar database for the graveyard to the north of the church – the 'Old Ground' that was the original burying ground of the burgh from the 12th century onwards, is in preparation.