

The New Churchyard 1807-1925

This is the story of the New Churchyard (south and east of the church) up to 1925, when it was handed over to the care of the Parish Council. The story begins in January 1807, when the Heritors (local landowners who were responsible for any large expenditure on church property) noted that the Old Churchyard, north of the church, was nearly full and a new burial ground was needed. They decided to take measures to have the part of the Bowling Green and the barnyard situated immediately south of the parish church and the ruins of the monks' church, added to the parish burying ground. A committee was formed to put their resolution into effect and another committee to have all the rubbish and 'nuisances' removed from the ground.

The Bowling Green comprised an area of ground to the south and east of the parish church and the ruins. The area immediately south of the church was sometimes called the Frater Green, as the ruins of the Abbey Fraternity lay on its south side. It was one of the few places in Dunfermline that was flat enough to be used for bowling and tradition had it that it had been laid out for James VI to use on visits to the Palace. It had always been private land, part of the Regality of Dunfermline, and after the Court had departed to London in 1603 it came into the hands of the Lord of the Regality, the Earl of Dunfermline, and in 1652 to the Marquis of Tweeddale (a fact that was to cause a problem for the Heritors over two centuries later when the current Marquis suddenly demanded 40 years arrears of feu duties, amounting to £60). Whether or not Royalty or the Lords of the Regality had ever played bowls on it, by 1807 it had for many years been used solely as a field for grazing animals, currently by Mr Fernie the minister.



A section of a plan made in 1771 showing the parish church, the remains of the monks' church, and the Bowling Green. The Fraternity ruins have been drawn diagonally in the bottom left-hand corner. The Old Churchyard is also shown, with the thorn tree in its centre.

For many years the increasingly dilapidated state of the parish church had been causing concern and plans had been made to have it thoroughly repaired but by October 1807 the decision had been taken to build a new church instead. The site had not yet been finally decided and at the time there was a suggestion that it should be built on the site of the Frater Hall. However, ten years later, when the Bowling Green or Frater Green was again discussed, the decision had been taken to demolish the ruins of the monks' church and build the new church onto the east end of the parish church. At that time the Bowling Green belonged to John Sutherland of North Fod and by November 1817 negotiations were under way to buy it from him. However before the purchase could be concluded John Sutherland was overwhelmed by financial difficulties and in spite of advertising all his properties, including the Frater Green for, sale in June 1820, (see the advertisement from the *Caledonian Mercury* below) on the following 18 October he was declared bankrupt by the Lord Ordinary and his estate sequestered and put in the hands of a body of Trustees appointed from among his creditors.

TO BE SOLD BY PUBLIC ROUP,
 Within the Royal Exchange Coffehouse, on Wednesday
 the 21st day of June, at two o'clock,

THE LANDS and SUBJECTS after descri-
 bed, lying in the burgh of DUNFERMLINE, in the
 Lots following, viz.—

Lot 1st, All and whole that old TENEMENT of LAND
 and LODGING, lying on the south side of the Maygate
 Street of Dunfermline, with the PIECE of GROUND be-
 hind the same, bounded by the church-yard dike on the south,
 as at present possessed by Mr James Russell and John Wall.
 Upset price L.500 sterling.

Lot 2d, All and whole that DWELLING-HOUSE imme-
 diately contiguous to the former, lying also on the south side
 of the Maygate Street of Dunfermline, and consisting of the
 eastmost part of the above mentioned old tenement, and the
 addition made thereto by William Black and David Ward-
 law, with the large YARD or GARDEN contiguous thereto,
 called the FRIARS' GARDEN, all at present in the occupa-
 tion of Mr John Sutherland. Upset price L.1200.

Lot 3d, All and whole that TENEMENT of LAND and
 Pertinents, lately possessed by Dr Wemyss, and now by Mr
 John Sutherland, with the Office-houses behind the same,
 and the YARD adjacent thereto, lying on the north side of
 the Maygate Street of Dunfermline. Upset price L. 500.

Lot 4th, All and whole the GREEN, commonly called the
 FRATER GREEN and FRATER HALL, with the Stable,
 Barn, and Shed, at the west end thereof, lying on the south
 side of the Friars' Garden, and at present possessed by Mr
 Sutherland. Upset price L.400.

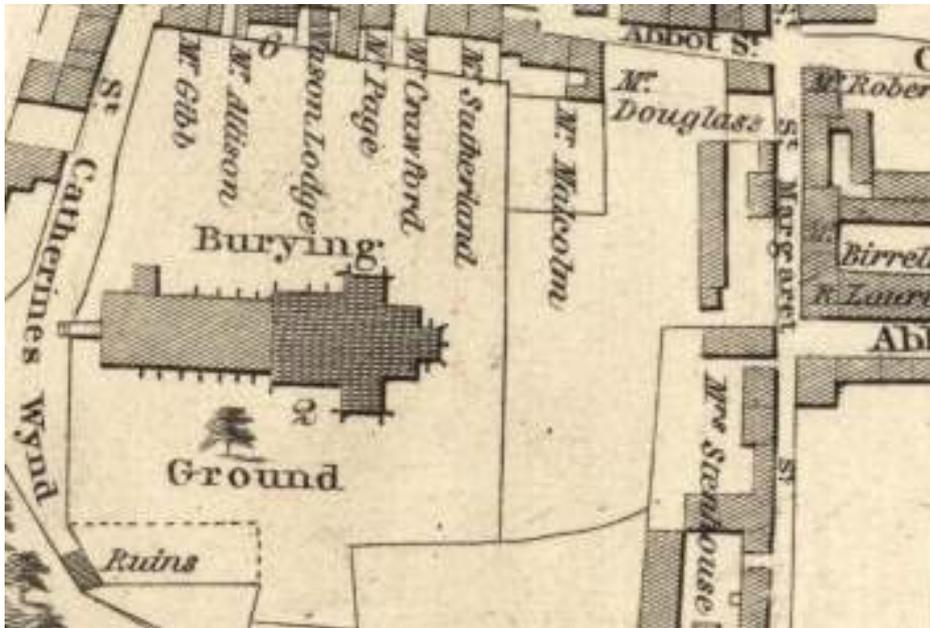
Lot 5th, The YARD, or GARDEN, situated on the south
 side of Frater Green, as also possessed by Mr Sutherland.
 Upset price L.150 sterling.

Lot 6th, The TOWN and LANDS of NORTHFOD, being
 one fourth part thereof, with the bail houses, biggings, yards,
 tofts, crofts, mosses, muirs, parts, pendicles, and universal
 pertinents, as presently possessed by the said John Sutherland,
 lying within the parish of Dunfermline, and sheriffdom of Fife.
 Upset price L.4000.

For farther particulars apply to J. F. Gordon, Esq. W. S.
 9, Heriot Row, and Mr David Black, writer, Dunfermline.

The Town Clerk David Black of Bandrum, who was also clerk to the Heritors, bought Lots 1 and 2 (note that they were not referred to as 'Abbot House' but were still simply known as the Lodging) so he now owned the Friars' Garden, at the rear of the eastern half of the Lodging (now the Abbot House car park). When the Heritors renewed negotiations with Sutherland's Trustee for the purchase of the Bowling Green it was intended that Black would buy from them the section eastward of a line from the present eastern wall of the Old Churchyard and extending down to the southern wall of the present churchyard. On 27 December 1821 (by which time the new church had been finished and opened for worship) the deal was concluded

and the Heritors and Black agreed to build a mutual wall between the new burying ground and Black's extended garden, using stone from the demolition of the 'stable, barn and shed' mentioned in the *Mercury* advertisement. However, the agreement with David Black had not been concluded by the time he died in 1823 so the whole area remained in the sole possession of the heritors.



**The New Church and Churchyard from Wood's 1823 plan of Dunfermline
At the time of the survey David Black's house had been acquired by Mr Malcolm, but
Wood included the line of the proposed dividing wall between his ground
and the New Churchyard**

In 1823 a plan of the grave plots was drawn up and the sale of lairs commenced. Burials must have begun shortly afterwards because in September 1825 some parishioners petitioned the Heritors for permission to erect a watch-house in the graveyard for the men who kept guard at night to prevent body-snatching from the graves. Alexander Stewart, whose *Reminiscences of Dunfermline* was published in 1880, was a boy at the time and remembered the watch patrols :

I remember seeing small parties of volunteer watchers taking their turn in going to the Dunfermline Churchyard for the purpose of keeping watch there during the long, cold nights of winter. When they sallied out on these expeditions they were well muffled up, had large woollen "comforters" round their necks and extra clothing on. They carried good strong "rungs" in their hands, also a lantern or two and an old flint gun or "Brown Bess" among them. They were looked on with much interest when they left their own warm firesides and ventured upon those nocturnal watchings. They took with them a good supply of bread and cheese and the unfailing bottle of mountain dew to cheer them and keep their courage up during their long vigils. They sat in a sort of watch-house by the Fraters Hall, had a good blazing fire and, after all, had a very pleasant time of it. They would go out in pairs and make their rounds during the eerie hours of midnight, gun in hand and at full-cock, to see if any body-snatchers were plying their ghostly vocation.



**This lamp is said to have been used by the
graveyard watchers.
(Picture courtesy of Fife Museums Service)**

The patrols came to an end in 1832 when Parliament passed the Anatomy Act, allowing licensed Schools of Anatomy to dissect the corpses of prisoners or inmates of Poor Houses whose bodies had not been claimed by relatives, instead of having officially to rely on a very limited supply of hanged criminals whose dissection had been ordered by the Courts.



The New Abbey Church and Churchyard
The style of the women's clothes dates this drawing to around 1830.

The Cholera Outbreak and Pauper Burials

1832 was a momentous year in another way for Dunfermline and many other places in Scotland – it was the year of the great Cholera outbreak. As early as February, on hearing that cholera had reached Newcastle from the Continent, the town's authorities ordered a general cleansing of 'nuisances', as it was then thought that cholera was spread through bad air from middens and cesspits. These precautions were pointless as cholera is a water-borne disease and the first victim, a Baldridgeburn weaver named Mercer died on Sunday 2 September. The epidemic was short-lived but virulent and by the time it was declared officially over on 17 November there had been 349 cases and 158 deaths. While it raged 'the dead-cart collected the coffins at the doors of the deceased and drove them to the churchyard where they were interred. Few of the relations followed the cart for fear of infection'. At the height of the epidemic there were between 15 and 24 funerals in a day.

The corpses of people who had family plots in the graveyard would have been buried in them but inevitably the majority of the victims were poor people and they were buried in trenches in the West Plot (marked **A** on the plan on next page) the current pauper burial place, (known officially as the 'Free' or 'Strangers' plot). A plaque on this plot commemorates the cholera burials but it implies that the entire area was used during the epidemic and this was manifestly not the case. A lair plan of the graveyard made in 1855 shows that there was space for 273 burials in the West Plot, so even if all 158 bodies had been buried there singly they would still only have taken up a little more than half the space. As the cholera victims were crammed into pits it is unlikely that they occupied more than a quarter of the plot, if that. The part where they were buried was not used again but the rest of the plot was in use until 1849, by which time it had become so overcrowded that the Heritors gave the Superintendant permission to bury the poor in the Centre Plot (marked **B** on the plan).

Layout of the New Churchyard

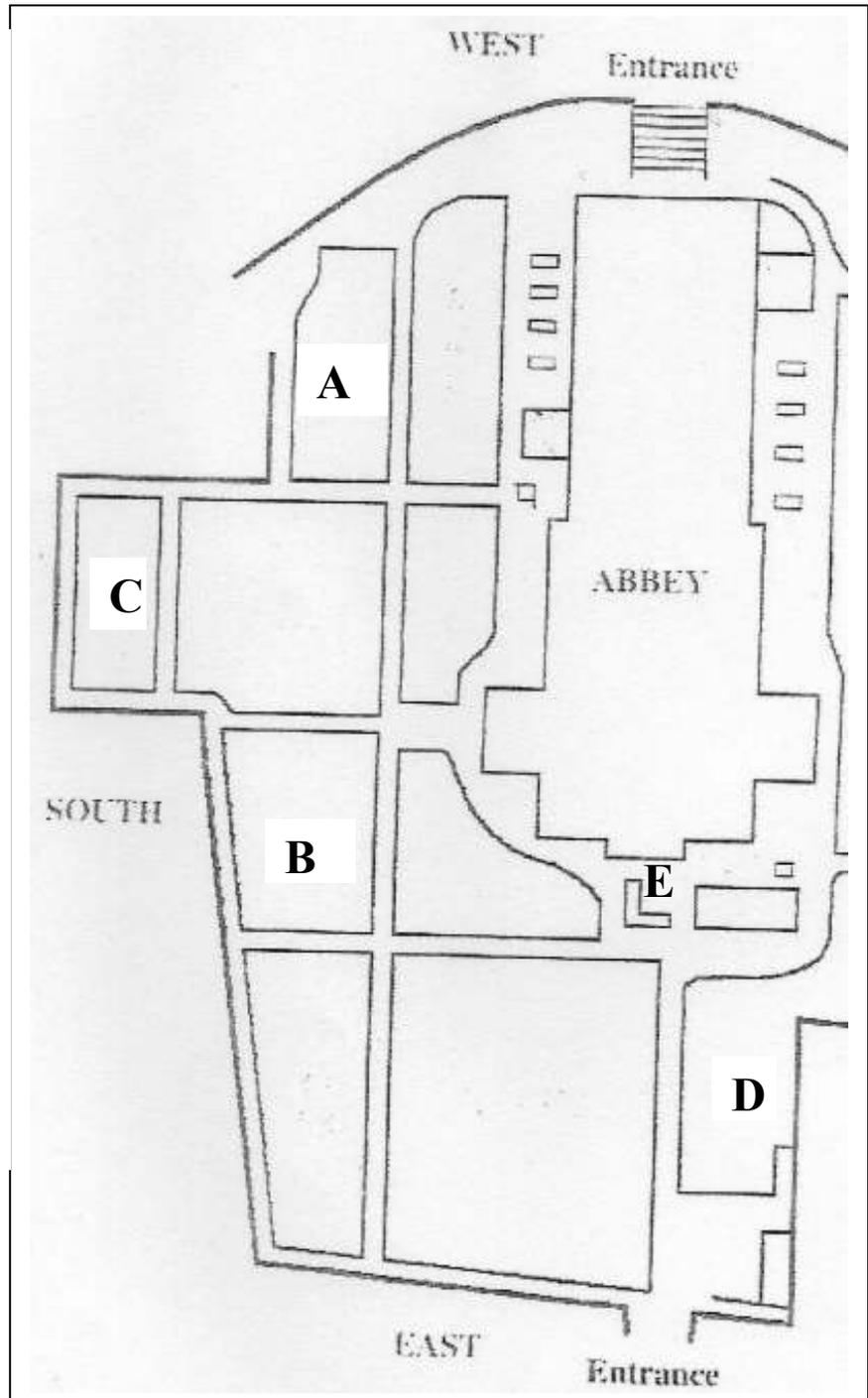
A
Pauper burials, 'West Plot'.
Also used in 1832 to bury
about 150 cholera victims in
trenches.

B
Pauper burials, 'Centre Plot'.
Also probably the former
monks' graveyard.

C
The Outshot. Site of the
Russian Gun 1857-84. Some
pauper burials also here.
Plots sold to local dignitaries
after the removal of the Gun.

E
St Margaret's shrine

D
This area is sometimes
erroneously pointed out as
the site of pauper burials but
the Heritors' minutes record
that it was in fact never used
as it was too wet.



A plaque on the Centre Plot states that it is the probable site of the former monks' graveyard but, like the cholera plaque, it does not tell the whole story. Monks were certainly buried in the vicinity because twelve stone coffins were found when the walk on the west side of the plot was dug up to make a drain in the nineteenth century. It is also in the traditional location, behind the dormitory building. However, the burial records show conclusively that this plot was also a 'Free' area, where the poor were buried. In fact in spite of the practice of burying several bodies in one grave, by 1859 the Centre Plot was so full that some paupers had to be buried in the Outshot.

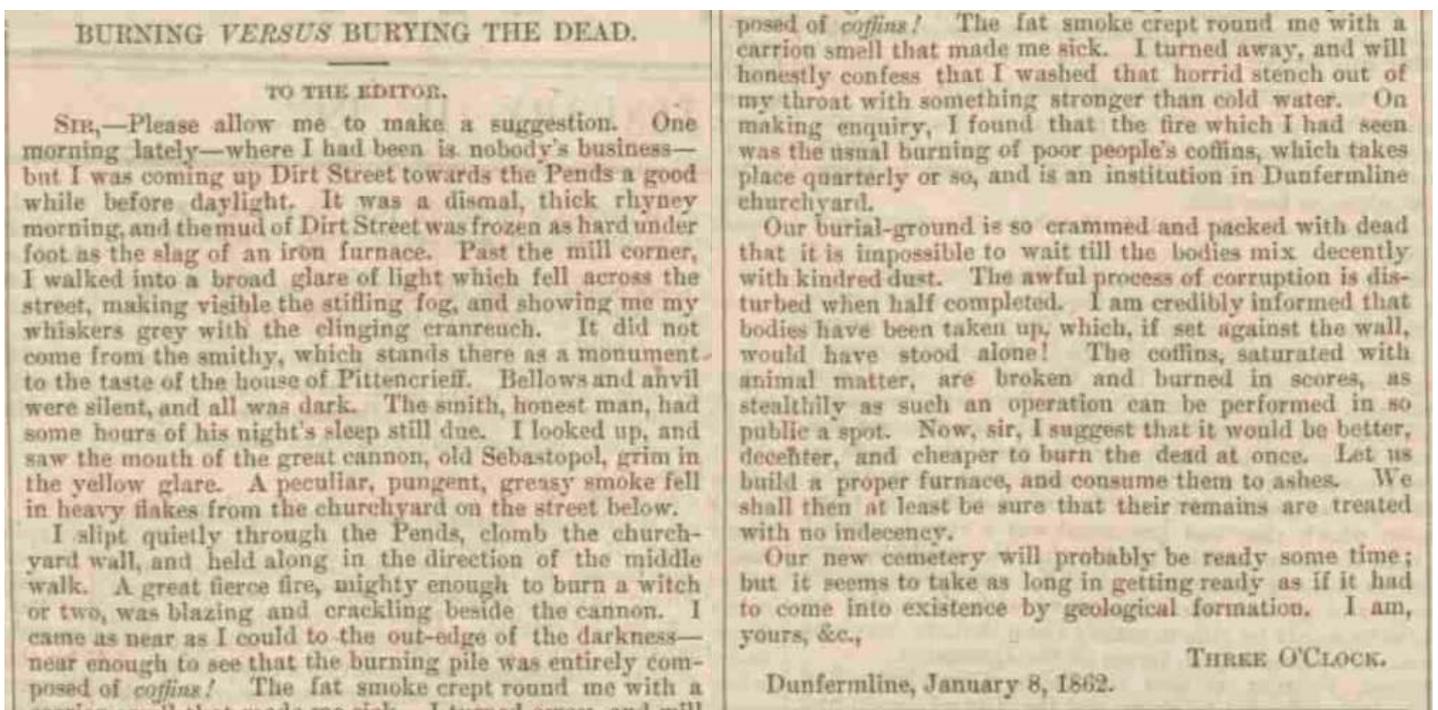
The problem of overcrowding was belatedly recognised in 1857 and the Parochial Board, which had hitherto dealt only with the support of the poor, was given the task of buying land and establishing a new burying ground at a distance from the town centre. *The Dunfermline*

Saturday Press of 18 August 1860 carried an article entitled ‘What About Our New Cemetery?’, which included a complaint about the state of the Centre Plot in the graveyard.

It is now some 15 months since the Parochial Board Committee recommended the upper half of the Easter Town Green as a suitable site for a new burying ground. It was approved by the Board and the inhabitants thought there would be little difficulty in securing it on reasonable terms. It seems we are no nearer a settlement of this important sanitary measure...the condition of the present burying ground brooks no delay. It has been so far fortunate that during the present summer we have had comparatively little hot weather; but during the little we have had it was impossible to step into the Abbey Churchyard without feeling the air laden with the odour of the dead. For almost the whole summer the corner of the graveyard in the immediate vicinity of that trophy of the Crimean War, Government was so gracious as (to) furnish to our good town, the ground has been almost always open; or if not exactly open, at least very imperfectly closed.

The place appears the burial mound of the very poor – misery has marked it as her own. Thither the children of the work-house are borne; and with that wretched economy that distinguishes our Scottish Poor Law Boards, are seemingly grudging a decent covering of mother earth. It seems not to occur to those in the management of these pauper interments that though this ignominious treatment of poverty can do the dead no injury, it may to the living much harm. From this quarter it is that those noxious gases arise which, when the south-western breeze blows fresh, become so distinctly perceptible. If it be pleaded that in the present state of the old burying ground the crowding together of the nameless dead is inevitable. We have to ask, “Why inevitable”?

As well as the expedient of multiple pauper burials in one grave, the churchyard Superintendant had another method of dealing with overcrowding, as this letter to the editor of *The Dunfermline Saturday Press* of 11 January 1862 explains:

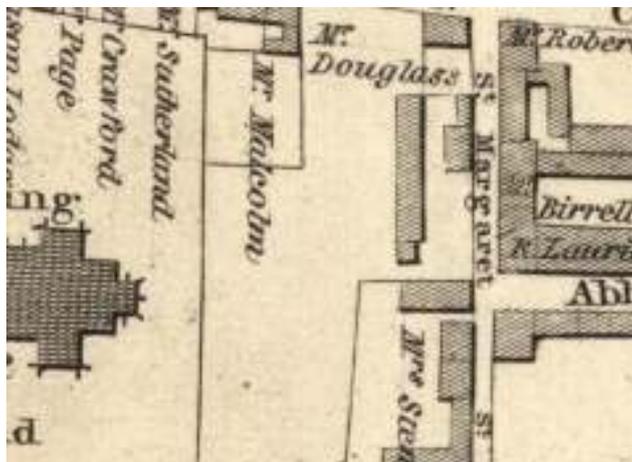


The problem was only solved when the Halbeath Road Cemetery finally opened in 1863 – not a moment too soon!

The Development of the New Churchyard

We now look back to 1837, when the new churchyard was well-established and the Heritors turned their attention to ways in which it might be improved. The eastern entrance from the St

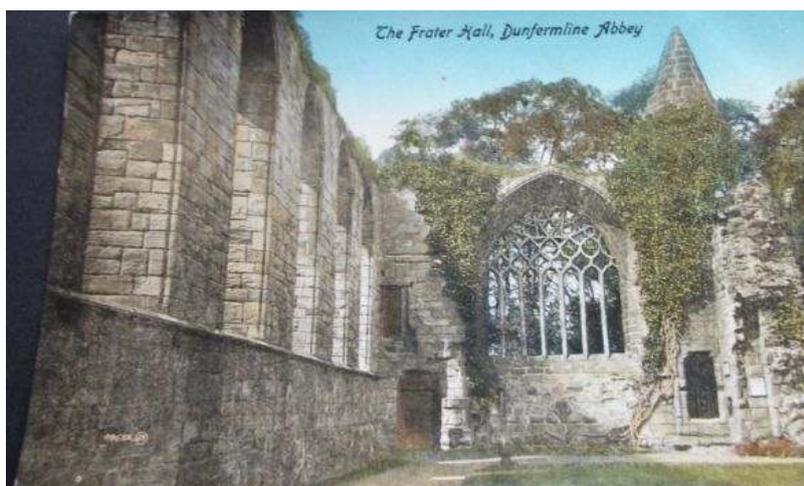
Margaret St was a mere alleyway and in May a committee was formed to negotiate a price with the owners of the buildings in the vicinity so that they could be bought and demolished and the access improved. A sum of £180 was fixed on and by the following March had been raised by subscription. In May the Heritors approved a plan of the proposed new entrance and appointed a committee to complete the purchase and demolition of the buildings and erect a temporary gate.



The Eastern Entrance before Improvement

Thus the situation remained until July 1840, when the linen manufacturer George Birrell applied to the Heritors to sell him a strip of land on the south side of the eastern entrance, where he was building a substantial villa¹. He offered £50, which the Heritors accepted and used in 1843 to have an iron gate with stone piers erected at the entrance. At the same time the old gateway at the northwest entrance to the Old Churchyard was replaced by one on a similar pattern to the eastern gate and a wicket gate for pedestrians added as a side entry, the main gates only being opened to admit funeral hearses.

Both gates were finally finished in 1844 and while the work was in progress the southern wall of the churchyard was repaired and heightened in places. The Heritors also came to a compromise with the owners of some of the adjacent properties, who had gates in their garden walls giving access to the churchyard. Attempts to persuade them to shut up the gates failed and finally they agreed to pay 2/6d (12½ p) a year for access 'for the purpose of going to church or of walking in the grounds'.



This 20th century postcard shows level to which the Frater was emptied in 1850
(see next page)

¹ George Birrell's business failed in 1850 and his creditors sold the villa to a Mr Christie, whose widow sold it in 1869 to the Free Abbey Congregation for a manse. In 1895 the congregation sold it to David Mullan, a member of the family of local pawnbrokers. For some years at the end of the last century it housed the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Although the weaving trade in the town was generally prosperous, it was at the mercy of fluctuating demand for linen and there were several episodes of unemployment among the weavers. At these times public-spirited officials did their best to provide work for the out of work and in 1850 a number were employed to clear out the west end tower of the Fraternity, which had been used for years by the grave diggers as a rubbish dump. Enormous quantities of soil, bones and coffin wood were removed and the churchyard superintendant was subsequently instructed not to allow rubbish to be deposited around the Fraternity. It may be that the loss of this resource led to the alternative of burning superfluous coffins and bodies.

The Plan of the Graveyard

In 1854 the Kirk Session employed an Edinburgh surveyor, John Anderson, to make a plan of the Old Churchyard, marking and numbering every lair. The Heritors were so impressed with this plan that in May 1855 they decided to employ Mr Anderson, who was still in Dunfermline putting the finishing touches to it, to make a similar plan of the New Churchyard, to replace the one made in 1823 which was 'inaccurate in several particulars'. The estimated cost of the new plan was £7. By May 1856 it was finished and the Heritors agreed to pay Mr Anderson £10 over and above the original estimate because of the difficulties he had encountered in the work. However, the plan of the Old Churchyard was not yet completed and the extra payment was conditional on it being finished. Both plans were duly completed but at some time within the next six months John Anderson died and at their AGM on 26 December the Heritors instructed their treasurer to pay his mother the 24s that they still owed him. The plan of the New Churchyard is now held by Dunfermline Local History Library and the plan of the Old Churchyard by the National Records of Scotland in Edinburgh.

Rules and Regulations

The owners of graveyards in general did not like upstanding gravestones, which they thought made the place look untidy and Dunfermline was no exception in ruling that all large gravestones must be laid flat. Grieving relatives, however, much preferred a more prominent memorial of their departed loved ones and there was great consternation among the Heritors in the spring of 1856 when the family of the late William Purves placed an upright monument on his grave. The Heritors reacted to this contravention of rule 9 of the graveyard regulations by appointing a committee to revise the entire list:

1 The Superintendent is to keep the North and East gates unlocked at the following times:

1 May to 1 September from 7.00am to 8.00pm.

1 September to 1 November 8.00am to 6.00pm.

1 November to 1 March 8.00am to 4.00pm

1 March to 1 May 8.00am to 6.00pm

On Sundays throughout the year all gates are to be unlocked from 8.00am to 4.00pm

2 The West gate may be opened for funerals and all other parochial purposes but must be locked at all other times. No person is to have a duplicate key without getting special permission from management committee of the Heritors.

3 The Superintendent or his deputy, for whom he was to be responsible, must remain within the gates during the respective hours at the various periods above mentioned, and at all times show due courtesy and civility to all persons visiting the grounds and must point out to parties the graves of their relatives or friends without asking any gratuity for doing so.

4 He is to keep the burying ground and walks in a proper state and good and tidy order and prevent all nuisances of any kind within the gates.

5 No-one is to bring dogs or smoke within the gates. The Superintendent is to 'check all unseemly conduct and dismiss loungers and idlers or any disorderly person or persons from the grounds.'

6 Sales of rooms in new burying ground are to 'be made in regular order and succession in accordance with the plan thereof and no new plot of ground shall be broken in upon until the others already commenced are exhausted'. In future grave rooms are only to be sold to

parishioners and no more than three to one buyer without authorisation of the managing committee. All grave rooms are to be subject to churchyard regulations.

7 The ground set aside for the interment of the poor of the parish is to be used in regular succession and two rows or lengths of the said ground must be kept for the interment of children under 5 years of age, in order that two graves may always be put in one length.

8 The Superintendent is to keep a correct register of the names of all persons interred in new burying ground and the number of rooms according to the plan, so that he can inform relatives and friends of these points.

9 All gravestones within the gates, excepting those round the walls, are to be laid flat on the ground and where enclosures of rooms are erected none are to be allowed to stand more than ten inches above the ground and all gravestones or enclosures are to have the number of the lair engraved on them in accordance with the plan of the burying ground.

10 To avoid the frequent inconvenience of several funerals happening at the same time arising from the practice which at present prevails of relatives fixing the hour and issuing funeral letters before giving notice to the superintendent of the interment parties are recommended to inform the superintendent at least 24 hours before the proposed time of interment.

11 Parishioners are to avoid having interments on Sundays after the bells for public worship have begun to ring, either for morning or afternoon service.

Gravestones

Despite the prohibition on upright monuments it was not long before they began to appear in the churchyard, but this time with the sanction of the Heritors. In October 1860 the widow of Robert Douglas of 'Craigdhu' in Abbey Park Place asked the Management Committee to allow her to place a monument over her husband's grave. They agreed as long as it was no more than three feet high. Robert Douglas owned four lairs, numbers 284-7 and a monument still stands on his grave, although not the original one which has been replaced with a pedestal some two metres high on which stands a coffin-shaped slab bearing the inscription 'Robert Douglas of Abbey Park died 25th July 1858 aged 80 years'. The pedestal on which this remnant of the original monument stands bears a marble insert which commemorates his parents and siblings. A second marble insert has fallen out of its mount.



The rather blurry picture above shows Robert Douglas' distinctive memorial stone on its original base. Below is the stone as it appears today after 150 years of weathering.

For nearly twenty years applications to erect headstones were dealt with by the Managing Committee but at their AGM in 1878 the Heritors decided to appoint a committee of three members specifically to deal with such matters. Permission was always granted but on condition that the stone was securely fixed to a suitable foundation and that it would not

encroach on the adjoining grave plots. A later version of the Rules and Regulations amended the clause about gravestones to allow for them to be erected with permission.

In only one case was consent withheld. In 1895 one Betsy McOuan died and in her will stipulated that a monument be erected to the memory of her father Robert McOuan. She included a description of the kind of monument she required and after her death a plan was drawn up by an Edinburgh architect, HJ Blanc. In March her executors' solicitor submitted the plan and application to the tombstones committee. Their minutes do not describe the plan but their reaction suggests that it was outrageously ostentatious. The grave plot lay just north of the west entrance to the old church and the opinion of the committee was that 'the proposed memorial would encroach on the adjoining grave-rooms and would be entirely out of keeping with the other monuments in the churchyard and greatly in excess of what is reasonably necessary in the circumstances of the case'. In May the committee met with the architect and solicitor to consider a revised plan for a monument that would not encroach on the adjoining plots. The committee was still not satisfied and demanded a modified design that might cover the whole grave plot but would not be higher than 5 feet 6 inches (165 cm). In October a compromise was reached and they approved a design in grey or red granite 10 feet (300cm) high and 3 feet (90cm) square at the base. This obelisk of polished granite now stands on the spot.

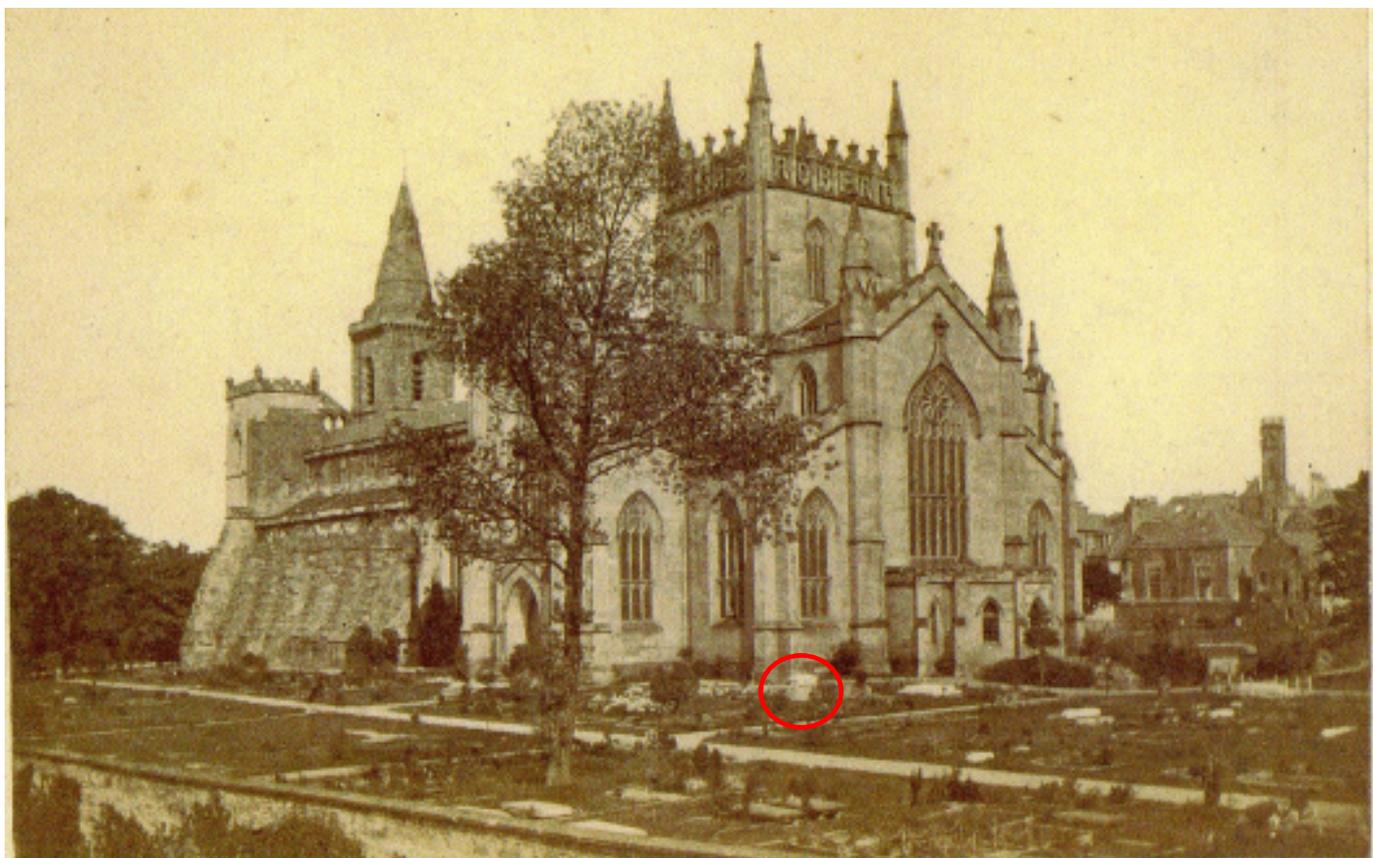


Another Rule Amended

In May 1861 the Heritors' clerk received an indignant letter from the Rev Mr James Mackenzie, minister of the Free Abbey Church and occupant of the Free Abbey manse at the east gate. Mr Mackenzie attended a meeting of the managing committee on 21 May and complained that the superintendant had ordered his maidservant who was pushing his baby in a perambulator, out of the churchyard. The superintendant explained that for the past three years he had allowed the minister's servant to bring a perambulator into the churchyard but 'of late these and other descriptions of vehicles for children came into the grounds and that to such an extent as to create a nuisance' and the only way he could stop it was to deny admission to all of them.

The committee discussed whether the clause in the regulations relating to Idlers and Loungers justified the superintendant in dismissing servants with children in perambulators. Because of its importance and the diversity of opinion among those present, it was remitted to a General Meeting of the Heritors. This was to be held as soon as possible and the clerk was instructed to convene it. Unfortunately it appears that this meeting was not minuted, but it seems to have decided that perambulator pushers were indeed Idlers and Loungers and when the Regulations were again revised in 1884 the relevant clause was amended:

No inebriated or disorderly person will be allowed to enter the Grounds and Loungers and Idlers will be dismissed. No person in charge of a Perambulator and no children without attendants will be admitted. The use of the Grounds by visitors for picnics and by people for taking meals is prohibited. No person will be allowed to smoke within the gates. No dogs will be admitted.



The Churchyard in the 1860s

The gravestones are laid flat, in accordance with the Rules and Regulations, except for the monument to Robert Douglas, circled in red .

More Improvements

In the days before municipal dustcarts the disposal of rubbish of all kinds was a continual problem and an article about the state of the churchyard in *The Dunfermline Saturday Press* of 18 August 1860 complained, among other things, about a large stack of old coffins that was heaped up against the church in the Old Churchyard. In October the managing committee of the Heritors resolved that:

the space between the buttresses on the south side of the old church, which is at present used as a convenience and in a filthy condition (should be) properly enclosed with a wooden fence having a door on the west side and to be solely used by the superintendant for the purpose of storing old wood etc'.

Robert Walls, a local wright who did a lot of work in and around the church, was employed to build the enclosure for 30s (£1.50) and give it a coat of black paint. The superintendant seems to have initially ignored this new facility but in September 1861 he was instructed to remove the pile of old coffins from the Old Churchyard and put them in the new enclosure.

The Heritors had tried to solve the problem of the churchyard being used as a 'convenience' in 1859 by providing a urinal at the north end of the Fraternity, but this led to so many complaints from the public that it was 'unseemly and likely to prove a nuisance' that it was removed within a few months. The drinking fountain that had been installed at the same time, however, was a success and remained in place for many years. Initially it was only available to the public on a Sunday, but before very long the decision was taken to have it open every day of the week.

In 1862 they turned their attention to the deplorable habit of people using the Old Churchyard as a shortcut between the north and east gates. They decided that the solution would be to erect a fence to stop them, but no final decision was made until the AGM in June 1866. The managing committee was instructed to arrange the erection of a cast-iron fence between the northeast corner of the church and the south end of the wall of the Old Churchyard, with a gate

in it for access by funerals and relatives. Some alterations to the original scheme had to be made after objections by James Hunt of Pittencrieff and the Kirk Session, but the fence was finally in place by the middle of 1867 and can be seen on the photograph below.



The Cast-iron Fence

Access to the Churchyard

The Heritors were always keen to ensure that access to the churchyard was limited to people who would treat it with due respect and the provision of suitable gates and the rules about opening times were important to them. In spite of the presence of the superintendant, whose conditions of employment required him or his deputy to be on the site at all times, there were instances of vandalism in the churchyard. In June 1867 *The Dunfermline Saturday Press* took published a severe comment.

The habit of breaking, spoiling and perpetrating all sorts of mischief in public places has long been a disgrace to Scotland. Abroad the people are allowed free entrance into such places as the Tuilleries Gardens and they never break a bud or touch a flower. In Scotland, and notably in Dunfermline, it is shamefully otherwise. Women come down from the High Street and steal the flowers in the Abbey Grounds in open day. Nursemaids break off branches to please their children. Boys and lads cut young trees for wands and switch the tops off young spruces. Flowers are torn up by the roots.

Nothing apparently will correct this vile habit except a few smart lessons from the law. When a few cases have been fined or imprisoned mischievous lads and foolish girls will, perhaps, begin to hold their fingers. We are very glad to see that one lad was brought up before the magistrates this week and fined 5s (25p) for cutting off the top of a young lime tree in the avenue. Of course he is still liable, besides the fine, to pay for the damage done. After this warning others will not get off so lightly.

Some visitors did not cause actual damage but were a nuisance in other ways. In the same month as the item deploring vandalism a letter to *The Dunfermline Saturday Press* enquired:

By what right does the Superintendant of the Abbey Grounds take upon him to lock the gates for two hours in the course of each day? The public are entitled to free entrance at this season of the year from eight o'clock in the morning to eight o'clock in the evening. At the breakfast and dinner hours a number of the girls in the neighbouring factory naturally wish to breathe a little fresh air in the Grounds. Perhaps they romp a little. The Superintendant ought, of course, to be on the spot to see all right; but it is more convenient for him to lock the gates against the girls and the public than to be at his post to check any possible disorder. These poor girls have as much right to the Grounds as the best in the

town and the Superintendant certainly takes a great liberty when he presumes to lock them out.

I am &c One of the Locked Out

The matter was raised at the next meeting of the Town Council and the clerk explained that the Superintendant had complained to the Heritors that the mill girls who ate their meals in the churchyard left fragments lying about and this was why the gates were locked at those times.

Four-legged visitors were not welcome either and the gates were also intended to exclude stray dogs. The main north and east gates were only opened for funerals and each had a wicket with a self-closing gate for pedestrians. The west gate had no wicket and this caused problems for the Heritors. It too was supposed only to be opened for funerals but it also provided a convenient access for visitors to the Palace and the old church. The beadles, whose job it was to show people around the church, often left the gate open for the convenience of the tourists, whose numbers increased as the growth of the railway system provided better access to the town. In 1880 the Heritors went to the length of requesting the magistrates to have a policemen patrol the grounds on occasion in order to enforce the locking of the west gate.

Five years later the subject came up again, this time in the form of a letter from George Robertson, the official custodian of the Palace ruins and the old church. He complained that the public, and especially visitors to the town, were inconvenienced by the west gate of the Abbey Grounds being kept closed during the day. In the days before his appointment it had been unbarred during the day to allow persons to cross over to the Palace and to prevent children from opening it a strong latch had been placed on it too high for them to reach. A raised causeway had recently been installed across the muddy street to for the convenience of visitors and he hoped that instructions would be given that the gate was to be unbarred.

For the sake of the uninformed the clerk reminded the meeting of the rule about the opening of the gate and referred to the decision taken in 1880. The meeting decided to postpone consideration of the matter as they did not have sufficient evidence that the public were inconvenienced. There the matter rested until 1898. By this time the entire steps and gate had been entirely re-modelled into their present form, in accordance with plans drawn up by the architect Rowand Anderson. The Heritors finally agreed to have the central section of the gate left unlocked during the same times as the north and east gates, with a notice fixed on it asking people to shut it after them.



This photograph, taken at an unknown date from the southeast corner of the graveyard, shows the proliferation of upright monuments since the 1860s

The Toolhouse

The year 1895 saw the foundation of the Dunfermline Museum and Archaeological Society. As well as hosting regular lectures on antiquarian topics the Society appointed a Committee to find a suitable location for a museum and have it made suitable for the purpose. The Museum Committee decided on the tower above the Pends as the ideal place, but there was a problem. The churchyard superintendant and the gravediggers had for years used the tower rooms to store their tools and equipment. In July 1896 the Committee discussed the matter with the Heritors, who agreed to vacate the rooms if the Society provided alternative accommodation on a suitable site. This proved to be in the northeast corner of the churchyard, where the ground was too wet for burials, and the small building still stands there today. The accommodation included a WC but although the building was intended to house the superintendant's office, it was unheated until a small gas fire was installed in 1912. (This building has sometimes been incorrectly labelled as either a gatehouse, a mortuary chapel or a morthouse.)

As Andrew Carnegie was paying for the Museum he also paid for the toolhouse, which was designed by the local architect John Houston, with modifications by the Heritors which they thought made it more in keeping with the style of the Abbey church. The local author Daniel Thomson noted in his scrapbook in November 1896 that the toolhouse was being built and that an interesting discovery had been made with digging the foundations. Near the eastern corner of the north wall the labourers uncovered a circular well or cesspit about 3 feet (90cm) in diameter, with a culvert entering it from the north and another leaving it at the south. Both well and culverts were built of the same stone as the palace and the old church. It was capped with a large stone and the wall built over it. The museum was opened by Andrew Carnegie himself in August 1897.



The Toolhouse

More Burial Plots

The opening of the Cemetery in 1863 did not affect the sale of lairs in the New Churchyard for a couple of years, it remaining steady at an average of about 20 a year in the eastern section of the graveyard. In 1866 however the sales suddenly plummeted, to seven in that year and three in 1867. Thereafter they averaged about two a year with several years seeing none at all. There was slight rise to five in 1878, when the Heritors initiated a sales drive, and again in 1886 to seven, when Barbara Drysdale bought three and Adam Hogg bought two, but the last sales in the general area of the churchyard comprised two in 1898.

There was, however, one area still unused and in March 1900 Sir Arthur Halket of Pitfirrane was granted four lairs by the Heritors, in the Outshot, where the Russian Gun had stood until it was removed to the Public Park in 1884 (see separate article). The price was £2 per lair (almost double the 1 guinea charged for lairs elsewhere in the churchyard). Similar applications by prestigious townfolk followed and in 1901 the architect Andrew Scobie added a plan of 60 numbered lairs in the Outshot to the 1855 plan of the churchyard. The fate of the former pauper burials in that area is not recorded but it is more than likely that they were quietly dug up and disposed of.

The Twentieth Century

The clear-out of the Fraternity in 1850 had only removed the soil and rubbish down to the level of the doorways in the western end and in 1911 the Board of Works carried out a partial clearance of the rest on behalf of the Carnegie Trust. More might have been done but the World War of 1914-18 intervened. During 1923 and 1924 the building was completely cleared by the Board, partly to give work to some of the many unemployed, leaving it empty as it is today. Unfortunately this work does not seem to have been carried out as an archaeological excavation and no record remains of features or finds from it.



The Fraternity Clearance of 1923

In 1925 the passing of the Church of Scotland (Property And Endowments) Act transferred the responsibility for the maintenance of burial grounds to local authorities and over the next two years the Heritors were in negotiations with the Parish Council concerning the handover of the ground and buildings to them. Once that process was completed the body of Heritors was extinguished.