

II.

COLINTON CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD. BY ALAN REID, F.S.A. Scot

The late minister of Colinton, the Reverend William Lockhart, D.D., laid his parish under many obligations. Not least among these were his care of the ecclesiastical properties, and his successful efforts to popularise the interesting history of his charge. In the year 1895 Dr Lockhart placed a large framed panel at the side of the main entrance to the church, and on this he had inscribed in gilt lettering a clear and concise account of the ancient foundation known as St Cuthbert's of Hailes. This inscription, whose scope and purpose might, with much advantage to local history, be imitated by the custodians of notable churches everywhere, reads as follows :—"St Cuthbert's Church and Parish of Halis, now Colinton, were founded by Prince Ethelred, third son of Malcolm III. and Queen Margaret, and brother of Edgar, Alex. I., and David I., Kings of Scotland, about the year 1095. The ancient Church, which probably took the place of an older Pictish, British, or Saxon foundation, and which was dedicated on the 27th Sepr. 1243, disappeared about the year 1560, or was probably destroyed during the Earl of Hertford's invasion in 1544-45, in the reign of Henry VIII. This Church is supposed to have stood near where Hailes House now is.¹ Another Church was placed here in the year 1636, in the reign of Charles I."

The present church is an unpretentious square structure, dating from 1771. Apart from its situation, its only picturesque feature is the graceful belfry, designed by David Bryce, the architect of considerable alterations made on the fabric in 1837. The building has accommodation for seven hundred worshippers, and is neat and comfortable in appearance. Dr Balfour notes, in the *Statistical Account* of 1845, that among the church properties are two silver cups of 1680, and two damask towels presented by David Pitcairn of Dreghorn in 1706. The arched entrance to the

¹ No record or other evidence of this improbability can be traced.

churchyard, with the quaint old vestry flanking the gateway, are pleasing details in the environment, the manse, beloved of Robert Louis Stevenson, and the Water of Leith completing a picture of exceptional charm. A curious relic of resurrectionist times lies near to the south-west entrance of the church. This is a large and massive coffin-cover of iron, so heavy that it could only be raised by mechanical means, under which the dead were kept till nature had decreed their safe and solemn burial.

As is inferable from the comparative nearness of this churchyard to a great city, the monumental sculpture is of excellent quality. Sacred and secular symbolism appear in striking variety, the sacred symbols following prevalent types, the secular emblems partaking largely of a pastoral character. Many of the designs are admirable, and much of the work is excellent. Perhaps it is on what may be termed the architectural side that these memorials are strongest, though they have many other merits, among which age is conspicuous.

The tombstone of a farmer named Ferguson, who died in 1771, rests against the east gable of the gatehouse or vestry. This finely hewn slab (fig. 1) has at one time been mural, though now it rests on a heavy moulded base of later date. The inscription is flanked by flat pilasters, which also support the cornice and pediment, under which are placed a skull with crossbones, and a *memento mori* scroll.

The pediment is of chaste design, and is beautifully worked. A couple of winged cherub-heads appear as supporters, the centre of the floriated panel bearing a striking emblem of the calling followed by the deceased. This is in the form of a man engaged in sowing, the figure being good in drawing and in character, though somewhat dilapidated and nearly featureless.

A few paces south-east of the "sower" stone is the memorial (fig. 2) of another farmer, James Brown, who died in 1743. The inscription reads from the east, and is placed within a richly floriated scroll, well carved and highly relieved. The wings of a cherub-head, set like a pendant to the floriation, are remarkable. Usually these appendages appear as if attached *behind* the figure, but here they are shown distinctly *in front*.

A skull and a *memento mori* scroll appear on the base of this graceful slab. The reverse side of this monument is also worthy of remark. Panelled pilasters support a convoluted pediment, which displays a shield bearing the family monogram, underneath being a spade crossed by a single bone. Many of the stones are thus elaborated, and it is difficult in some cases to say on which side the balance of merit lies.



Fig. 1. Sower and "Reaper."

Leaning against the south-east angle of the church, and in such a position that only a portion of its reverse side can be seen, is a stone that may be ranked as the gem of the collection. On the front the inscription appears on a draped ground, flanked by spirally fluted pillars that also support a richly foliated pediment, in the centre of which is a monogram shield. This remarkable pediment (fig. 3) is enriched by a variety of devices, prominent among which are a couple of trumpeting cherubs, a

resurrection symbol shown in Dr Christison's drawing on page 354, vol. xxxvi. of the Society's *Proceedings*. The grotesque head with protruding tongue, binding and crowning the ornamentation, is also noteworthy among the devices that distinguish this interesting stone.



Fig. 2. A remarkable Cherub.

The reverse side of the same memorial (fig. 4) is also elaborate, though not so finely chiselled. Emblematically it is imposing, and perhaps unique. The pediment bears no fewer than *three* skulls, two of which seem to be formed out of the cherubs that appear on the front. The *memento mori* scroll, with crossbones under, still further symbolise mortality,

immortality being indicated by a rather crude winged cherub-head. The inversion of the positions usually occupied by these diverse emblems may have no significance, but it is curious. Under the pediment is a much worn inscription, which, curiously also, reads *vertically*. This is incised on a scroll shield, surmounted by another winged cherub-head, and supported by a couple of very interesting figures of a somewhat

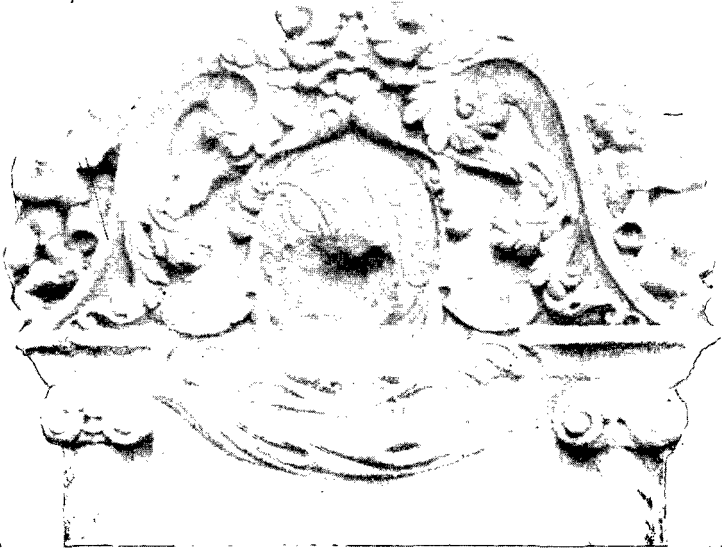


Fig. 3. The Gem of the Collection.

archaic type. That on the left represents a sower, the figure on the right depicting a reaper carrying in each hand a sheaf of corn. In point of style, as in costume, these figures are similar to those at Corstorphine, noted by Dr Christison, and pictured on page 357, vol. xxxvi. of the Society's *Proceedings*.

Within the inclosed burial-ground of the Rev. Lewis Balfour, D.D., who died minister of Colinton in 1860, is built the old tablestone memorial of the Rev. Walter Allan, minister also of Colinton, who died

in 1732. The tablet is attached to the east wall of the Grecian tomb of the celebrated James Gillespie of Spylaw. The emblematic ornaments are placed on the broad splays of the angles, and comprise an open book, a skull with scroll and legend, crossbones, and a winged cherub-head.

In addition to the Gillespie vault, that of Inglis of Redhall is worthy



Fig. 4. Sower and Reaper.

of notice ; and considerable interest attaches to the burial-place of the Pitcairns of Dreghorn, situated 9 feet eastwards of the church. The building, now roofless, but in good repair, is in itself remarkable, but interest centres in a series of three sculptured panels built into its southern gable. These are surmounted by a modern brass plate, which records the restoration of the tomb, made in 1864, under the supervision of Dr Thomas Murray, the "annalist" of the parish.

The upper panel shows a shield, richly scrolled, and bearing an elaborate monogram, and supported by two winged cherubs who hold a wreath over the device (fig. 5).

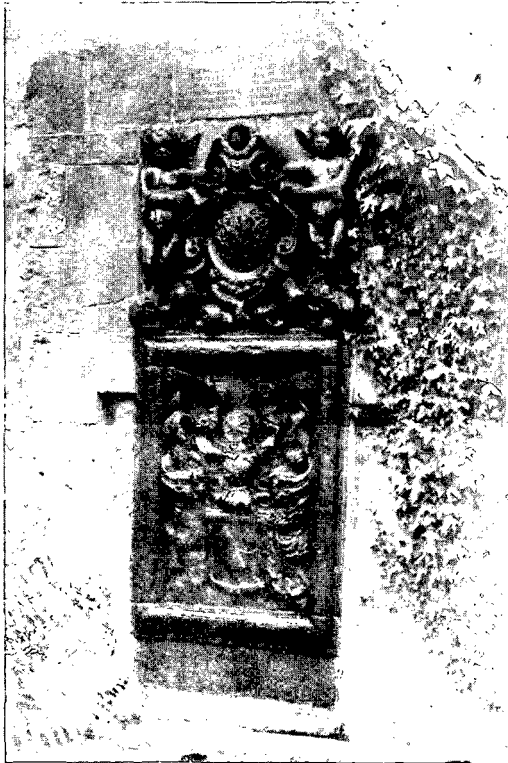


Fig. 5. The Pitcairn Tomb.

The middle panel shows the family arms, with the motto, SPES ———
ÆTERN, a central word or syllable being illegible. The lower panel, seen only within a stone-built recess under ground-level, is undecipherable, but the inscription appears in Montearth's *Theatre of Mortality*,

as follows :—"Here lies Mr David Pitcairn of Dreghorn, who departed this life 27th January 1709, and of his age the 60 year, leaving behind him Mary Anderson his wife, with five sons and seven daughters by her." This panel is flanked on the left by a winged sandglass with scroll, and on the right by a skull, crossbones, and scroll. These emblems are hewn in bold relief on the stones of the gable, and show that the ground has risen by several feet since the worthy Writer to the Signet was here laid to rest.

There are half-a-dozen tablestones of much interest. One to the memory of an old farming race, the Finnies of Swanston, lies over their graves, and in front of the modern granite pillar near the south-east angle of the church. The emblems are scrolls, knots, a bone, an hourglass, crossed scythe and dart, a nude weeping figure, and a winged cherub. Another (lying 12 yards north of the entrance, and 4 yards from the west wall) has a very striking appearance, being evidently much older than the others, but bearing no decipherable date.

The supporting figures, so prominent here, are very quaint specimens of old maidenhood. They are attenuated but far from graceful, and the disposal of their bodies, particularly of their feet, has given the sculptor much trouble. In their hands they hold open books; their heads rest on square pillows, and their faces are suggestive of the act of singing. In the centre of the upper portion of the slab appears a skull over crossbones, winged cherub-heads peeping from right and left under these more grisly emblems. A skull is placed at the foot, two small cherubs blowing trumpets acting as its supporters, winged sandglasses in turn supporting them. A coulter and spade, figured to right and left of skull at top, show the occupation of the farmer commemorated here.

The family of Burton, some of whom were famous as artists, are represented by no fewer than *three* closely graven monuments, of diverse periods and styles. The contrast between the modern granite pillar and the ancient tablestones lying beside it is striking and instructive in the extreme.

The oldest slab is literally crowded with symbolism. A winged

cherub-head appears at the top, two winged sandglasses, crossbones, and skulls at right and left, a *memento mori* scroll at the foot enclosing the significant shovel and spade of the farmer's calling.

The Denholme family, also of importance in the annals of the parish,



Fig. 8. The Denholm Stone.

are remembered in a full inscription appearing on a handsome upright stone bearing the date 1696. (This monument stands near the south-west angle of the church, and a little to the left of the main door.)

On the east side, or front, this elegant slab shows a panelled inscription, inclosed by a richly carved moulding, crowned by the

scroll-and-leaf pediment, repeated on the reverse. The usual emblems of mortality occupy a central position on the reverse side, which is shown in fig. 6.

Another elegant stone, situated 5 yards behind the last, dates from 1678. Conditions are here reversed, for the *east* side (fig. 7) shows the



Fig. 7. A stone of 1678.

skull and crossbone emblems, the *west* side bearing an inscription worthy of record in full :—

HEIR LYES JANE THOMSONE
 CLOSED WITHN DEATHS
 PERISONER THROV ADAM SIN
 BVT REST IN HOVP THAT
 SHE SHAL BE SET BY THE
 SECOND ADAM FRE

WHO WAS SPOVS TO GILBERT
 THOM
 WHO DEPARTED THS LIFE
 THE FRST OF FEBRVAR HER
 AGE 60 ANO DOM 1678.

The pediment moulding is finely cut, and a winged cherub-head of



Fig. 8. A medieval fragment.

pleasing expression fills the tympanum. Underneath appear the scroll, skull and crossbones, and the top edge shows that Gilbert Thom died in 1686. Under the inscription on the west face a coultter crossed by a spade is shown, a winged sandglass surmounting the quaint old legend.

In the statistical account of the parish Dr Balfour notes:—"Part of the cover of a stone coffin was lately taken out of the rubbish in

the floor of the church. It bears on it the rude outlines of a sword and mace, the latter consisting of a simple handle, and ending in four circles, meeting in a common centre."

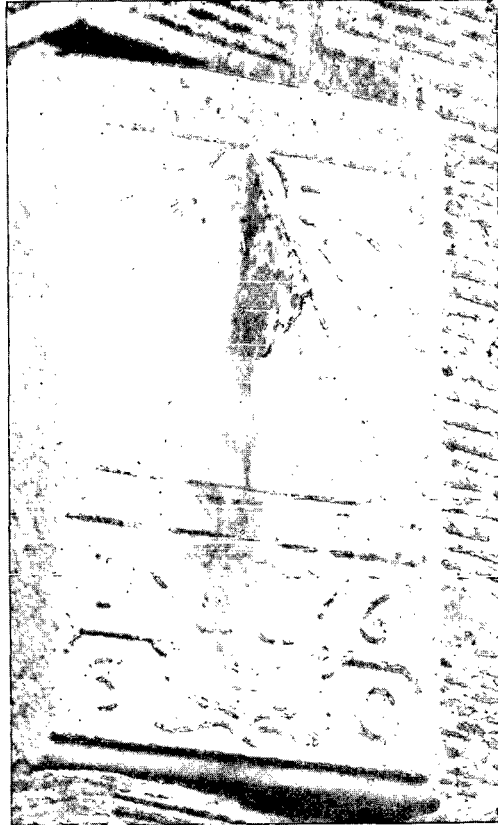


Fig. 9. The Sundial.

The interesting relic thus described (fig. 8) now stands beside the main entrance to the church, and on the opposite side of the doorway from the historic inscription written by Dr Lockhart. The fragment

measures 2 feet 11 inches in length and is 7 inches thick. At the widest or top portion it measures $18\frac{1}{2}$ inches, tapering to $15\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the foot. The "mace" is simply a cross with a quartet of penannular rings, the sword follows well-known lines, and the beaded



Fig. 10. Alexander Crae.

angle adds a touch of elegance to the whole. The so-called Templar Stone at Currie is of the same type, and others from Kilmadock and Kilmore are figured in Dr Christison's paper in vol. xxxvi. of the Society's *Proceedings*.

The sundial, of 1630 (fig. 9), is a delightful piece of work, dainty,
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chaste, and in good preservation. Along the top the name of "Sir James Foulles" is inscribed, his arms appearing in the centre of the lower portion, with the date letters on either side. This beautiful object is built into the south-west angle of the church, and completes a group of rarities at once interesting and valuable.

Among a number of smaller monuments, one dating from 1697 may be worthy of attention. It is of somewhat cruder type than the others,

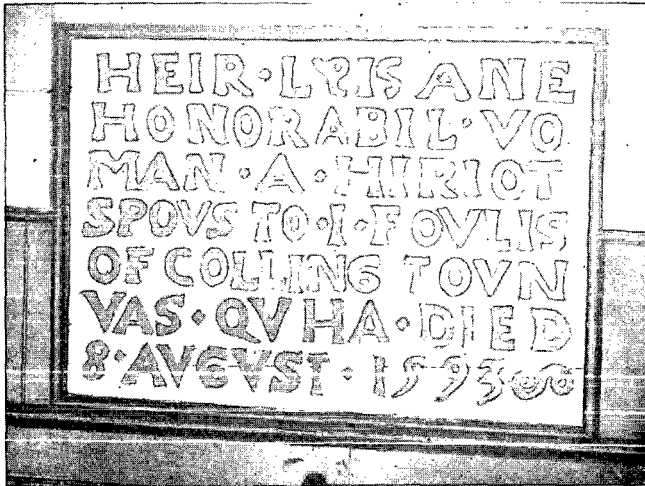


Fig. 11. The Foulis Tablet.

but shows distinction of style. On the west side (fig. 10) a cherub-head acts as keystone of the pediment scrolls; the inscription is incised on a shield, the lettering following the sweep of a draped ornament which connects the singular supporting pillars. It reads:—"Here Lyes Alexander Crae, Husband was to Jenit Belshes, who deceist May 6, 1697, his age 42 yeares." The grotesque face formed in the centre of the draped band is cleverly designed. The east side shows a *death-head* as keystone of the pediment—another example of the "double-faced" sculpture of this graveyard—and, underneath, the *memento mori*

scroll, a large skull and crossbones. This interesting slab stands 3 yards south of the "Denholme" stone, and near the south-west entrance to the church.

Within the church are a couple of marble tablets, commemorating Sir William Liston Foulis, 8th baronet of Colinton, who died in 1858, and Sir James Liston Foulis, 9th baronet of Colinton, who died in 1895. These tablets are placed on either side of the central south window, and act as supporters of another tablet (fig. 11) which at once arrests attention by its venerable and distinguished appearance. This fine memorial, dating from 1593, is the tribute of a famous statesman to his wife, Agnes Heriot of Lymphoy, "Ane Honorabil Voman," who died in the neighbouring castle, now a picturesque ruin on Colonel Trotter's property. The slab is placed between the window-sill and the pew-tops, and measures 2 feet 6 inches in length, with a breadth of 18½ inches. The raised lettering is sharply cut, clear and beautiful, despite its age, and of much interest as an exceptionally well-preserved specimen of sixteenth century influence. The word "V A S," or *was*, in the inscription follows common usage, as in the preceding case of Alexander Crae—"Husband *was* to Jenit Belshes."