

4. AN ENGRAVED FREESTONE PANEL BEARING A COAT OF ARMS,  
FOUND AT THE CASTLE OF ROTHIE MAY, BANFFSHIRE (Pl. XLIII, 2).

This panel, now in the possession of Mr Alexander Gordon Duncan, Tomlin House, Tomlin Road, Felixstowe, was discovered by accident between the flooring joists in the SE. corner of the great hall of the Castle. It should be explained that a wooden floor had been laid on top of the original floor of rammed clay by the 2nd Earl of Fife, who carried out extensive alterations to the Castle about 1780. The Castle is now ruinous, and the wooden floor was taken up by the present proprietor of the estate recently.

The panel measures approximately 15 by 12 ins. and is of grey freestone approximately 4 ins. thick. The arms were identified from the Balbithan MS. as being those of John Gordon, last Gordon laird of Rothiemay, and his wife Elizabeth Barclay, heiress of Towie. John Gordon bought back the lands of Rothiemay in 1683 from Charles Murray, a merchant burghess of Edinburgh. His zeal for the Royalist cause had impoverished James Gordon, father of John Gordon, to such an extent that he was forced to part with the estate. Sir Thomas Innes, Bart., of Learney, Lord Lyon King of Arms, confirms this identification, and states that the arms are Gordon of Rothiemay impaling Barclay of Towie Barclay. The Gordon of Rothiemay arms, azure a saltire between three boars' heads couped or, are recorded in the Lyon Register. Barclay of Towie bears azure a chevron or, between three crosses patty argent. The respective mottoes are "ABSIT FRAUS" and "EITHER DOE OR DIE", appearing on the panel.

John Gordon and Elizabeth Barclay had two daughters and one son. One of the daughters, Anne, died unmarried "of a decay"; the second daughter, Beattie, took the name of Barclay and married Sir George Innes, 2nd baronet of Coxton. Their son was Sir Alexander Innes (afterwards Barclay), 3rd baronet of Towie-Barclay. John Gordon's son was a mental defective and was induced to dispoise the lands of Towie to his brother-in-law, Sir George Innes. The estate of Rothiemay passed by sale in 1712 to Archibald Ogilvie, Advocate, for £101,751 Scots.

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