

CONFERENCE  
PROCEEDINGS

CONSERVATION  
OF HISTORIC  
GRAVEYARDS

TECHNICAL  
CONSERVATION,  
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TECHNICAL  
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*Kirkyard, Mercat Cross and watch-house, Dallas, Moray*

*front cover: Graveyard at St Michael's Chapel, Borve, Barra*

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*Wall Monument, Sacrament House, St Mary's Church, Auchindoir, Rhynie, Gordon*

## FOREWORD

Oh Death! how absolute thy sway!  
At thy command we must obey;  
In hardy strength 'tis vain to trust  
Even stone thou crumblest into dust.

Epitaph of George Cunningham (died 1755), Haddington, East Lothian  
From Betty Willsher, *Scottish Epitaphs* (1996)

The author of this epitaph understood that decay of his memorial was inevitable. But natural decay processes are only one of the threats currently facing gravestones and graveyards in Scotland – anecdotal evidence abounds for damage, both wilful and accidentally inflicted, or caused by neglect or over-zealous conservation or cleaning methods. It is clear that a response to these threats must be mobilised.

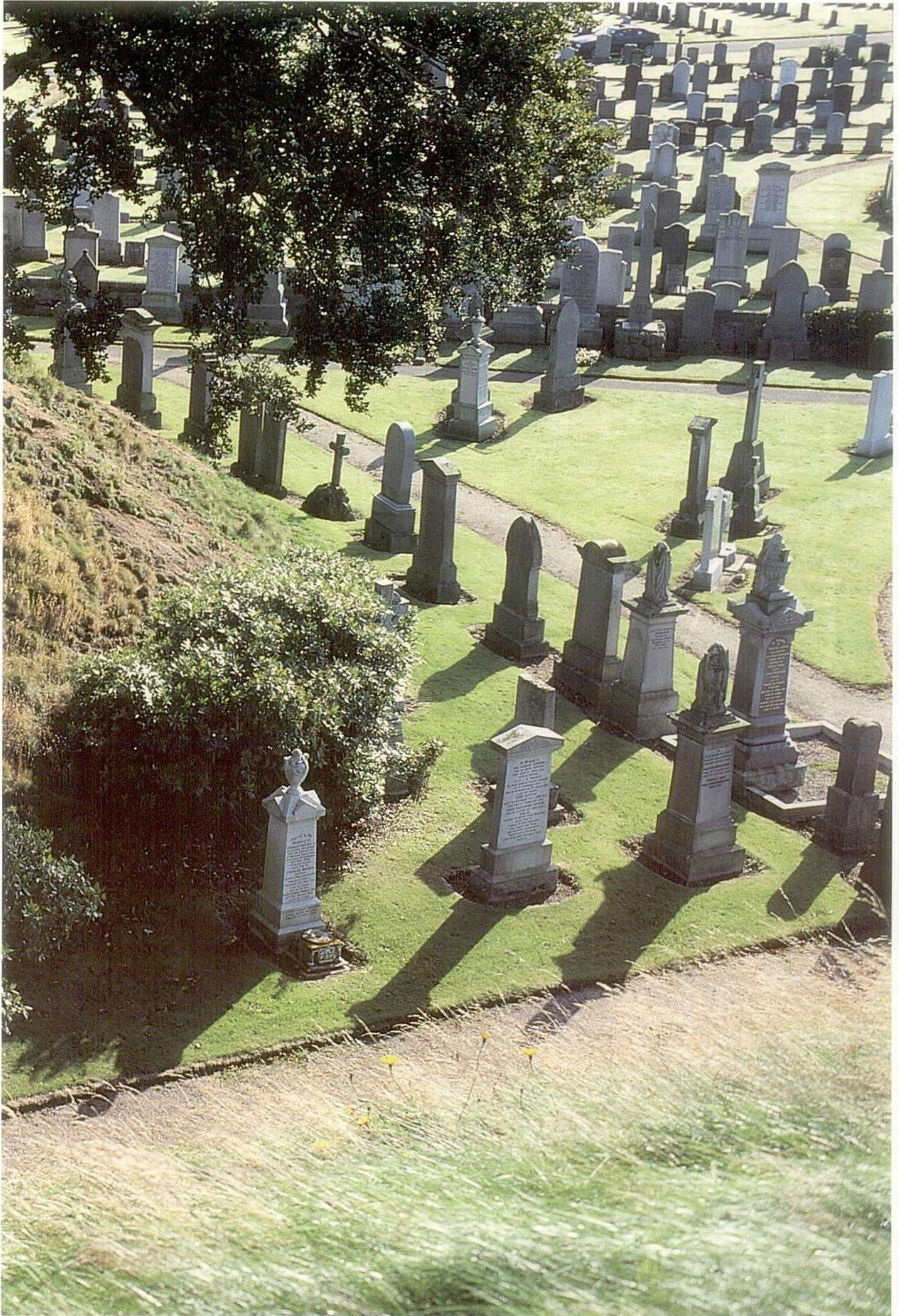
We have a head start thanks to the pioneering work of Betty Willsher, but this seminar to launch the new Historic Scotland Guide for Practitioners *Conservation of Historic Graveyards* offered us the opportunity to look strategically at what action is needed now to secure the future of Scotland's graveyards.

The event, held on 19 November 2001, was jointly-organised by TCRE Division of Historic Scotland and the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. The programme for the day included a review of developments in policy and of relevant legislation that affects owners and others with responsibility for gravestones and graveyards. An update on current thinking regarding record taking and keeping was provided, both from the perspectives of the national bodies with responsibility for this task but also from family history societies and others who regularly undertake graveyard recording work. A number of case studies, from both Scotland and abroad, demonstrated current best practice in recording, conservation work and management. The

conclusion of the day centred on the potential for integrating current initiatives.

Graveyards serve as valuable social history archives, geology textbooks, memorial design and lettering handbooks, nature reserves and areas for leisure. There are many individuals and groups passionately interested in them – but usually it is one aspect only, perhaps investigating family history, that provides the impetus to get involved. The broader context of graveyard conservation has received less attention to date, but this omission has been addressed by TCRE Group of Historic Scotland with the publication of the *Conservation of Historic Graveyards* Guide for Practitioners in February 2001. This guide provides a sure foundation for future work to develop appropriate graveyard management techniques. The document can also be a useful tool in establishing a more holistic approach to the recording, management and policy framework for graveyards. But we recognise that we must engage with others in order to progress this broader agenda.

**Ingval Maxwell**  
**Director TCRE**  
**Historic Scotland**  
**Edinburgh**  
**December 2002**



*The Bass and Little Bass are motte and bailey structures within Inverurie Cemetery in Gordon. Evidence from the site indicates that it has been occupied from Neolithic times*



# CARVED STONES POLICY – NEW DEVELOPMENTS

DR SALLY FOSTER, SENIOR INSPECTOR OF ANCIENT MONUMENTS,  
HISTORIC SCOTLAND

## Introduction

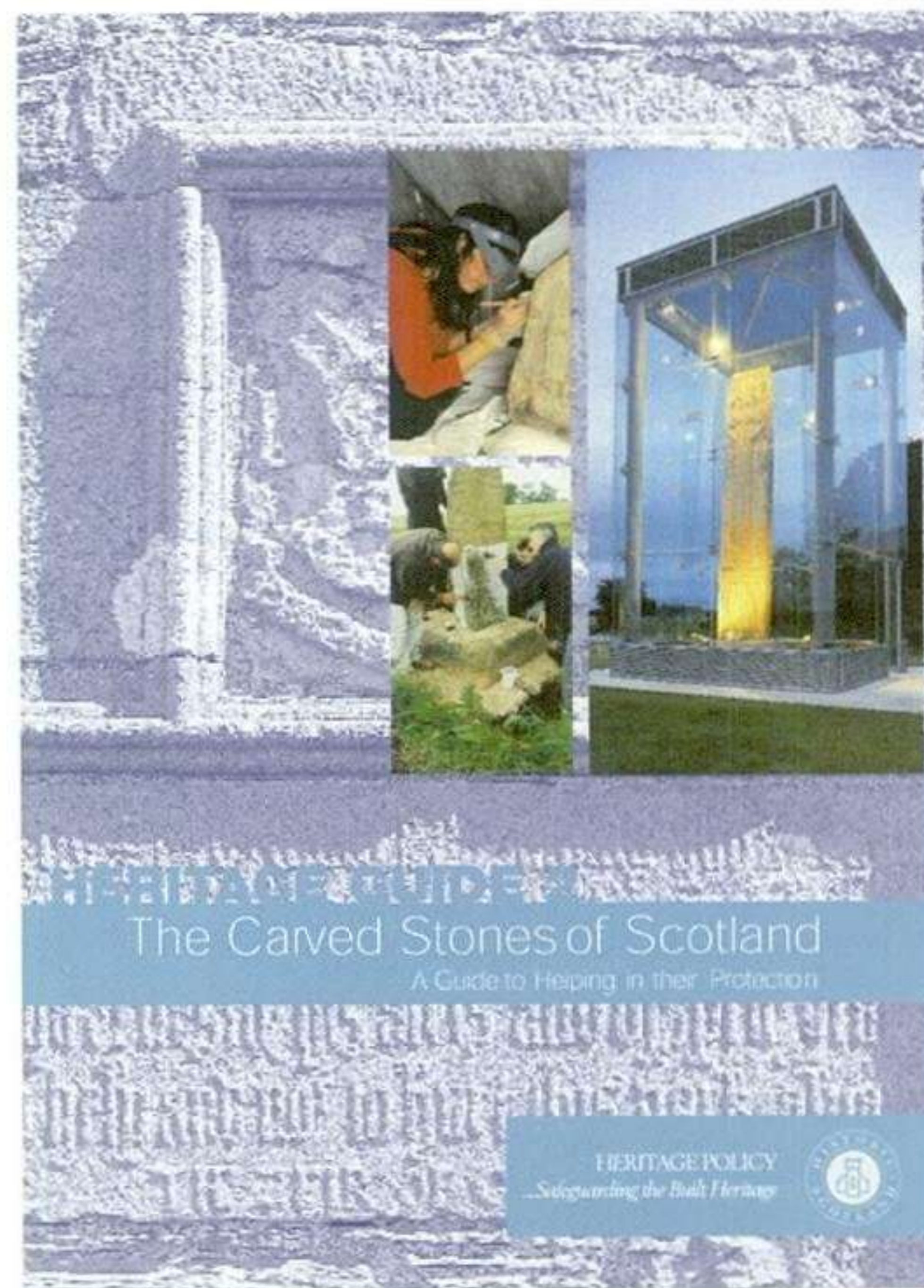
My aim in this short paper is to provide you with a brief history of Historic Scotland's interest in graveyards and gravestones from the perspective of our policy for carved stones. In doing so I will touch on some new developments and flag problematic or outstanding issues, many of which will subsequently be handled in more detail by fellow speakers.

Graveyards and gravestones are a highly significant cultural resource, as today's large audience testifies. As the government agency responsible for policy on the built heritage, technical advisors and guardians of many carved stones, Historic Scotland has long had a keen interest in their condition and management, particularly the fate of post-Reformation examples. We recognise the wide range of significances that can attach to such a resource. Not least of this is their social significance as genealogical and historical records for a broad cross-section of the past population, and their spiritual and symbolic relevance to modern communities.

In 1992 Historic Scotland first produced a formal policy statement on carved stones, published in the Proceedings from the Conferences of the Pictish Arts Society, 1992 (Appendix in Maxwell 1994). Its core principles were then widely disseminated through Historic Scotland's free leaflet, *The Carved Stones of Scotland, A guide to helping in their protection*. But in fact we have been operating to widely discussed principles since our first ancient monument legislation in 1882. We are now in the course of expanding our policy, for public consultation in due course.

To the best of my knowledge, Scotland is the only country in the British Isles to have a government policy specific to carved stones, although CADW is now considering it. I believe that we can attribute Scotland's stance, indeed lead in this field, to two factors. Firstly its wealth of carved stones of all periods, but particularly those of the early medieval period. These have been of interest to antiquarians and the wider public for many centuries. Secondly, the personal interests of General Pitt Rivers, the first Inspector of Ancient Monuments for the British Isles. He had a keen interest in early medieval sculpture, particularly that in Scotland. As a result a significant proportion of the first monuments to come into state care in 1882

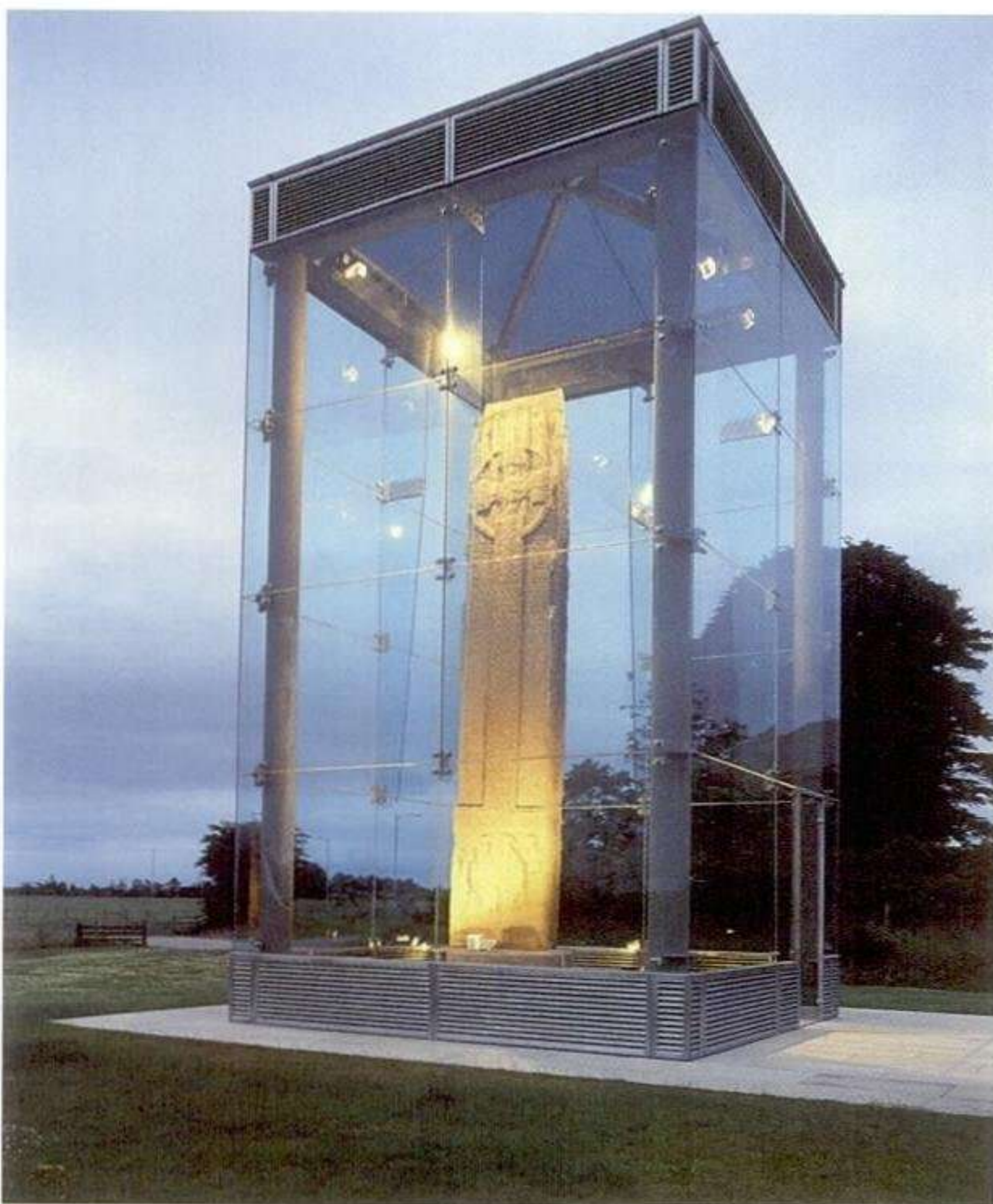
were early medieval carved sculptures, and the ideas that he developed for the protection of these and related monuments still underpins our present philosophy (Foster 2001).



*Illus 1 Heritage Guide 2: The Carved Stones of Scotland, A Guide to Helping in their Protection*

I should point out that until the publication whose launch we mark today, Historic Scotland's policies and much of our published guidance have tended to address the needs and interests of carved stones of all periods and types as a whole, rather than singling out, for example, the needs of gravestones alone. But this does not mean that we now anticipate producing a separate policy for graveyards and gravestones. As we will explore during the course of today, graveyards and the gravestones in them have a range of legal and management problems which are specific to them, and which demand the detailed treatment that Ingvál Maxwell, Ratish Nanda and Dennis Urquhart have afforded them in their splendid volume (2001). So why then does Historic Scotland propose retaining a single, all-embracing policy for prehistoric rock art, Roman and early medieval and medieval sculpture, in situ architectural sculpture, ex situ architectural sculpture

and gravestones? The reason is that a number of attributes are common to each. Firstly, and most obviously, is that these types of monuments are often prone to the same range of threats. Formed from stone which has been worked by human hands, to a greater or lesser degree, they share the same vulnerability to environmental erosion, and hence demand the same repertoire of specialised conservation. The fact that they are often ornate and beautiful monuments in their own right increases their past and present value in monetary as well as cultural terms. Many, particularly those that are already portable, are unfortunately vulnerable to theft. They can also be vulnerable to similar inappropriate human management practices. Secondly, such sculpture can have a schizophrenic identity – is it a monument or is it an artefact? This is a question of both personal perception and legal identity and it also raises issues of ownership. Carved stones can be both a monument in their own right and part of a larger monument – a gravestone and a part of a graveyard, a decorated archway and part of a church. Either way, the sculpture has a strong association with its place of use. But, once they become portable, the law regards them as artefacts, which will have implications for how/if they can be legally protected, who then owns them, where and how they are administered and by whom. The situation is complicated, but this distinction, its history and implications as related to early medieval sculpture, but of wider applicability, is explored in *Place, Space and Odyssey* (Foster 2001).



*Illus 2 Sueno's Stone, on the outskirts of Forres in Moray, now protected by a purpose-built glass shelter*

Ownership of carved stones on ecclesiastical sites is problematic. Gravestones belong to the descendants of the dead, but they can rarely be identified or traced. To complicate matters, some early sculptures have been re-appropriated for more recent gravemarkers and present day ownership claimed by the families on whose plots the stones now lie. Further ambiguities can arise if the ownership of a church, churchyard or burial ground is not known. The Church of Scotland Property and Endowment Act 1925 passed ownership and responsibility for parish burial grounds from the heritors of parishes to parish councils, a responsibility later transferred to the local authorities. Property rights and responsibilities for parish churches and churchyards passed to the Church of Scotland Trustees. Since these transactions did not necessarily involve formal legal conveyance, it is sometimes difficult to get anyone to accept responsibility for a site that may include material of interest to us. Without a recognised owner it can be difficult for anyone to take necessary remedial action.

### **The 1992 policy**

The 1992 policy, which was prepared by Historic Scotland and discussed and approved by the Ancient Monuments Board of Scotland, recommended a range of actions and precepts for the protection of all carved stones. Significant in the context of today, it accepted that the protection could be best achieved through co-operation with other appropriate bodies and it was not envisaged that all the actions should be undertaken by Historic Scotland. This remains our present philosophy.

By way of introduction to where we now stand, I will rehearse a few of the 1992 recommendations, particularly those relating to gravestones.

The first recommendation was the establishment of a national committee of officials of Historic Scotland, National Museums of Scotland, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Council for Scottish Archaeology and Association of Regional and Island Archaeologists to co-ordinate preservation and publication. A year later, in 1993, the National Committee on Carved Stones in Scotland was formed at the initiative of Historic Scotland (see Higgitt, this volume).

The policy emphasised that each case should be taken on its own merits, and that the primary aim should be to act in the best interests of the stone itself. In every case, the lowest form of intervention should be taken.

With regard to stones of all periods, the need for enhanced recording and monitoring was highlighted. It was recommended that measures should be taken to protect stones at risk, the aim being to concentrate on

those stones known to be at risk, otherwise the better preserved stones should have priority over poorly preserved stones, unless the latter are typologically important. In the case of post-Roman and medieval stones, there was a presumption in favour of retaining stones in situ where possible, particularly those stones believed not to have been removed from their original location. There was a presumption that where stones required to be removed, that they should normally stay locally. Regarding later stones, the policy was not particularly expansive - 'consideration should be given to the protection of other carved stones such as gravestones of the 17th to 19th centuries by putting them under protection from the elements and other threats' - but it did flag the need to consider revising the legislation to improve protection for carved stones, including such gravestones. The need for more education, training and research into carved stones in general were also highlighted.

### Developments since 1992

Since 1992 the National Committee on Carved Stones in Scotland has organised a conference on post-medieval gravestones in 1994 and in February 1999 a joint meeting of the Ancient Monuments Board and Historic Buildings Council convened to discuss specific issue of post-Reformation gravestones. It endorsed their significance, reviewed the current situation and made some suggestions for future action.

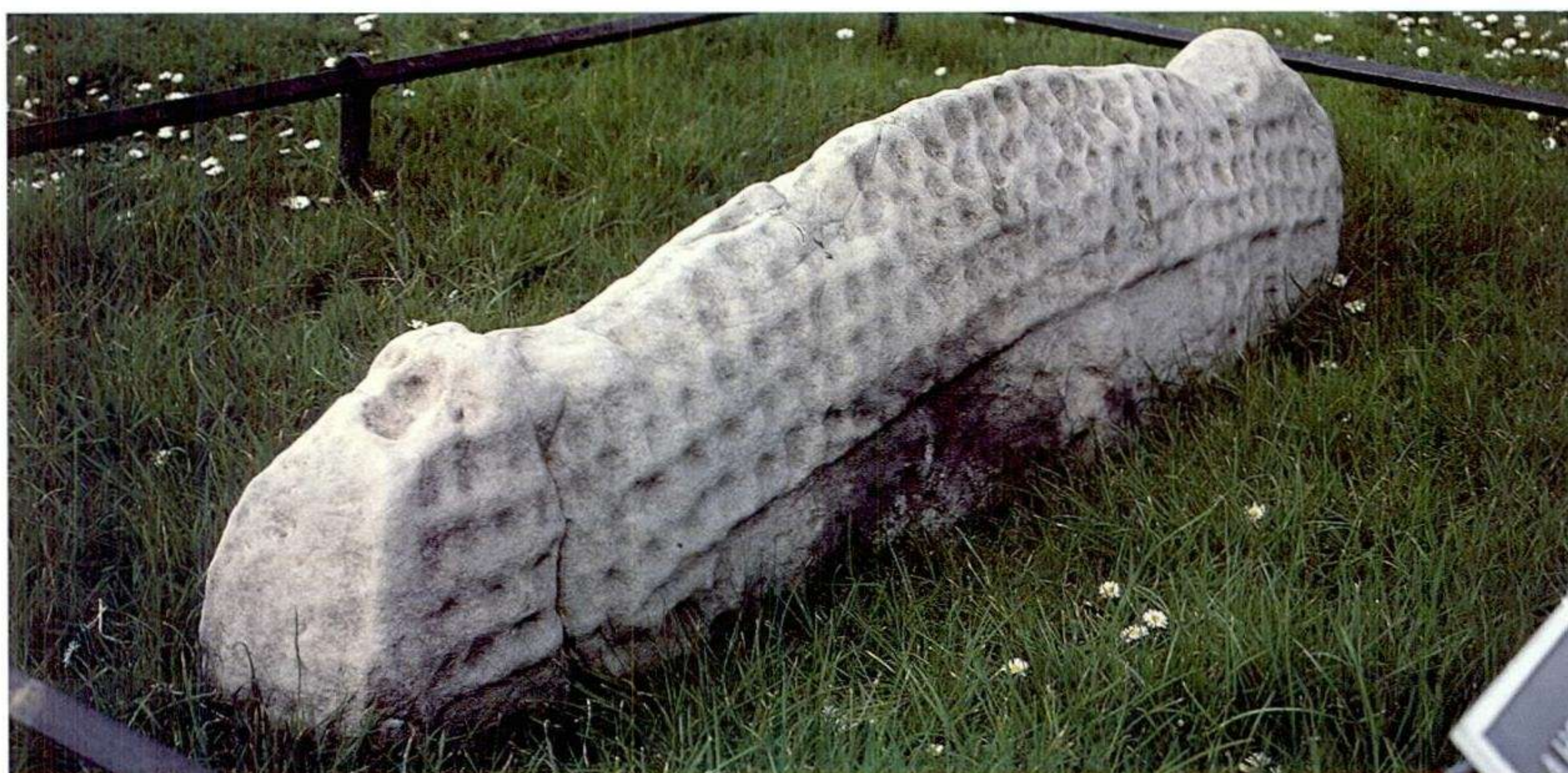
It was in the light of this high-level support of the need for co-ordination of efforts and interests that Historic Scotland has encouraged and sponsored the appointment of the Council for Scottish Archaeology's Carved Stones Advisor (Buckham, this volume). We

also recognised the need to review our wider policy for carved stones. In what remains of this talk I will flag up the general areas that this seeks to cover and the main issues of relevance to gravestones.

### The forthcoming policy

The aim is an expanded policy that will do a range of things:

- Continue to apply to all types of carved stones of cultural significance. In the case of gravestones, we feel that there should be no time bar. Memorials of late 19th and early 20th century are important manifestations of public taste and beliefs.
- Protect and best conserve what is significant for future generations.
- Understand the site and its cultural significance before making decisions regarding its future or any changes to its fabric.
- Care for the stone's setting. This will include, as far as possible and where appropriate, retention of the physical association of sculpture with its original site.
- Interpret the stone and its context in a manner appropriate for its cultural significance.
- Conform and contribute to current national and international best conservation and interpretation practice.
- Make use of existing expertise and further understanding of carved stones in general.
- Promote interest in carved stones by as wide an audience as possible, in order to further their protection, recording, conservation and management.



*Illus 3 One of the earliest of Scotland's hogback tombstones, on the island of Inchcolm in the Firth of Forth, which has now been removed to the visitor centre there*

- Distinguish what Historic Scotland can do at its own hand, and what it should encourage and facilitate others to do.

The likely objectives can be considered under a range of headings:

Firstly, legal protection. Here we will wish to ensure that statutory provisions are appropriate and fully utilised to protect and manage carved stones, where applicable. Revisions to legislation remain a consideration (see Mays, this volume). Related to legislation is the question of grant provision. Historic Scotland's consultation paper on Grants for the Repair of Historic Buildings sought comments on the possibility of grants being made available for the conservation of gravestones and memorials, and also in support of abandoned churches within graveyards.

Secondly, raising awareness of vulnerability of carved stones. By this I mean ensuring that all relevant parties are aware of the threats to carved stones and are encouraged to take measures to address this. The predominant threats are vulnerability to environmental erosion, inappropriate management practices and theft or vandalism.

Through its Monument Warden Programme, Historic Scotland can continue to make owners and occupiers of scheduled ancient monuments aware of the threats to carved stones, and the options for their improved protection and management. But we would also like to encourage all those with a moral and statutory responsibility, particularly local authorities, to develop their own policies for carved stones and to devote sufficient resources to fulfilling these. We regard the Conservation of Historic Graveyards Guide for Practitioners (Maxwell, Nanda and Urquhart 2001) and the CSA Carved Stone Advisor as key tools in achieving this ambition.

Thirdly, conservation strategies and practice, including intervention. Under this heading we wish to ensure that the highest standard of conservation strategies and practices are adopted, and that these are in the best interests of the carved stone. The aim of the conservation of carved stones is to retain their cultural significance, and must include provisions for their future needs, including security and maintenance.

The cultural significance of a stone is embodied in its fabric, design and its setting; in associated documents; in its use; in people's memories and associations with it. The Conservation Plan format, the recommended methodology which increasingly underpins the management of cultural sites, provides guidance on how conservation strategies should take into account all aspects of cultural significance (see for instance Historic Scotland n.d.; Heritage Lottery Fund 1998).

This is best understood through a methodical process of research. Such analysis needs to take into account the relationship of the stone to its surroundings, and whether or not it is still likely to be in situ. The archaeological and landscape value of gravestones within graveyards is extremely high, and a holistic approach to their management is essential. More explicit recognition of this is perhaps one of the sea changes of the last decade.

We continue to acknowledge the value of recording where continued preservation is no longer possible, or where loss is taking place through change or on-going decay. However, identifying priorities for such recording is recognised to be problematic, given the enormous scale of the resource.

In all the above, the Historic Scotland Guide for Practitioners is the key to advice when it comes to graveyards.

Our fourth objective relates to research and information, promoting understanding and enjoyment of carved stones by all, targeting provision to the needs and opportunities of the different audiences. We recognise the continuing need for us and others to advance knowledge of this subject.

Finally, we acknowledge that Historic Scotland must set an example of best practice by ensuring all our own work with carved stones follows best practice and sets an example for others to follow, not least for those graveyards in our own care.

### Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to emphasise once more that in all aspects of this Historic Scotland continues to seek to work in partnership with other bodies since we recognise that the responsibilities are shared and the enormous task can only begin to be achieved by our pulling together.

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# STATUTORY PROTECTION OF GRAVEYARDS

DR DEBORAH MAYS, HEAD OF LISTING, HISTORIC SCOTLAND

Scottish graveyards are important. They embody, if you'll excuse the pun, much that is of inestimable value to Scottish history and its built environment. The evolution of their type and layout informs archaeologists and historians about changing religious practices, while contributing critically to townscapes and rural landscape (Illus 1). The inscriptions and epitaphs on their stones document the lives of inhabitants and are crucial for all branches of genealogy and history, including medical and demographic. Much of the funerary art and associated buildings in graveyards is notable for the quality of design and finish. And the harbour their own ecosystem of wildlife (Illus 2). The case for protection of this fragile resource is arguably widely understood, but not widely achieved.

The Statutory protection of graveyards, that is the protection required by law, is carried out through two mechanisms at Historic Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Ministers, through Scheduling and Listing. A third, non-statutory and relatively new form of

protection, inclusion in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes, can be relevant to certain types of graveyard and will be explored by my colleague, Krystyna Campbell, in the following paper. The protection which the Scheduling and Listing designations afford, however, is not definitive and has its limitations. For instance, it may not be possible to use the legislation to protect all types of worthy monuments. Neither scheduling nor listing, for instance, extends to portable objects. With regard to the management of such sites, there are inevitable difficulties policing them, for example, protecting them from vandalism or theft. The legislation cannot necessarily require an owner or occupier to undertake management or revise bad management practices, and legislation cannot hold back natural processes: stone scaling or erosion, remove under-mining rabbits or tree-roots.

Though by definition reactive, the legislation can work effectively to ensure that the character of the graveyards is maintained through any formal change



*Illus 1 Kilkerran Churchyard, Campbeltown, a multi-period and extensive site*



*Illus 2 Burial enclosure in the Grange Cemetery, Edinburgh, with an exotic tree of life*

and by precluding inappropriate alteration. As with any form of legislation, it can only work effectively if all relevant parties know that a site is protected and understand their consequent responsibilities. This can be particularly problematic when it comes to a graveyard, since there is often uncertainty as to who owns it and the ecclesiastical structures within it, and individual gravestones will belong to the family of the dead, who can rarely be identified or traced.

Nonetheless, the Schedule and the lists provide an informative check in the planning process to allow time and careful thought to be applied to any proposals for change, to allow amenity bodies to comment and to ensure that, where necessary, appropriate alternatives are considered.

As a resource, the eligible subject matter is wide and varied, ranging chronologically from prehistoric burial mounds, through to early Christian crosses and burial grounds, from graveyards and to 19th and 20th century cemeteries. And the subject matter is hugely rich, the gravestones and wall monuments themselves being a major part of what is to be protected, but not the whole story. The protection covers enclosing walls, gates, gatepiers, lodges and watch towers, and buildings designed for the conduct of the funerary business. And then there is the commemorative display of the wealthier graves, the family vaults, mausolea, burial enclosures and catacombs.

### Scheduling

I shall start chronologically with Scheduling, a designation applied to nationally important subjects of all periods. The present legislation, the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, is a consolidation of earlier legislation dating back to 1882. The criteria used to determine national importance

include that the monument belongs to a group or subject of study which is archaeologically, historically or architecturally important; that it can be recognised as part of the national consciousness, or that it retains structural decorative or field characteristics of its kind to a marked degree. It may offer a significant archaeological resource within a group or subject of acknowledged importance. There are currently over 170 named burial grounds, churchyards, graveyards and cemeteries across Scotland on the Schedule (Illus 3). Historically these have usually been chosen for the archaeological potential of the church site rather than the intrinsic interest of any gravemarkers within them. It should also be noted that ecclesiastical sites in use cannot be scheduled, and that for practical reasons we seek to avoid scheduling 'active' graveyards.

Inspectors considering these early subjects weigh up key factors: the candidate's survival, its condition, its period, group value, rarity or situation, whether it be part of a multi-period site, its vulnerability, and any supporting evidence for documentary sources. We acknowledge that making such decision is particularly hard when it comes to more recent gravestones and graveyards, which are such a large resource.

Those which make the grade, and are scheduled, are subject to related controls. Any work to a scheduled monument requires prior written consent, Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC), from the Scottish Ministers obtained through Historic Scotland. Scheduling takes precedence over listing – there are exceptions where a heritage item can be both scheduled and listed. Planning authorities are required to consult



*Illus 3 Scheduled medieval grave slabs at Saddell Abbey, Argyll*

the Scottish Ministers, in practice Historic Scotland, in respect of proposed development which affects the setting of a scheduled ancient monument. A system of Class Consents exists to ease matters within the SMC system, that is a range of works which do not require referral to Ministers. Controls exist over the use of metal detectors in scheduled terrain.

### Listing

Like Scheduling, Listing is carried out on behalf of Scottish Ministers by a team at Historic Scotland which I lead, under the terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, again a consolidation of earlier legislation. A listed subject may be defined as one of 'special architectural or historic interest'. The administration of local and national conservation policies is based on these lists and permission is required to alter a listed subject in any way which would affect its character.

There are currently over 1,200 graveyards listed in Scotland. We do not as a rule describe the individual gravestones which make up a graveyard though larger, more architectural monuments may receive a separate listing. There is no need to describe each stone if the address and the name of the graveyard are clear. The Act explains the coverage of a listing: *'Any object or structure which is fixed to this listed subject or which falls within its curtilage, and although not fixed to it has formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948 is treated as part of the listing.'* We are, nonetheless, careful on resurvey to identify key components of a graveyard site and any major burial places therein, architecturally and historically, not least to give evidence in support of the evaluation and to prevent any possible confusion as to their location. It is not the role of either scheduling or listing to record the built heritage, however much it may create an initial inventory of sites and their principal contents.

The process of evaluation in listing is conducted against set criteria applied through the ongoing maintenance of the lists, and through the current resurvey of the existing lists, and every effort is made to apply these consistently. They comprise considerations of age, innovation, context, prominence, design and material quality, group value, townscape, streetscape, landscape, historic import, rarity, authorship, and status as the first or the last or as a watershed.

### Overview of Graveyards

The work for both statutory designations is done by fieldwork and research, the latter involving consultation with owners (where known) local historians and experts, local archives, church records,

town council minutes, national archives, alongside primary and secondary publications pertaining to the area or subject type, as necessary.

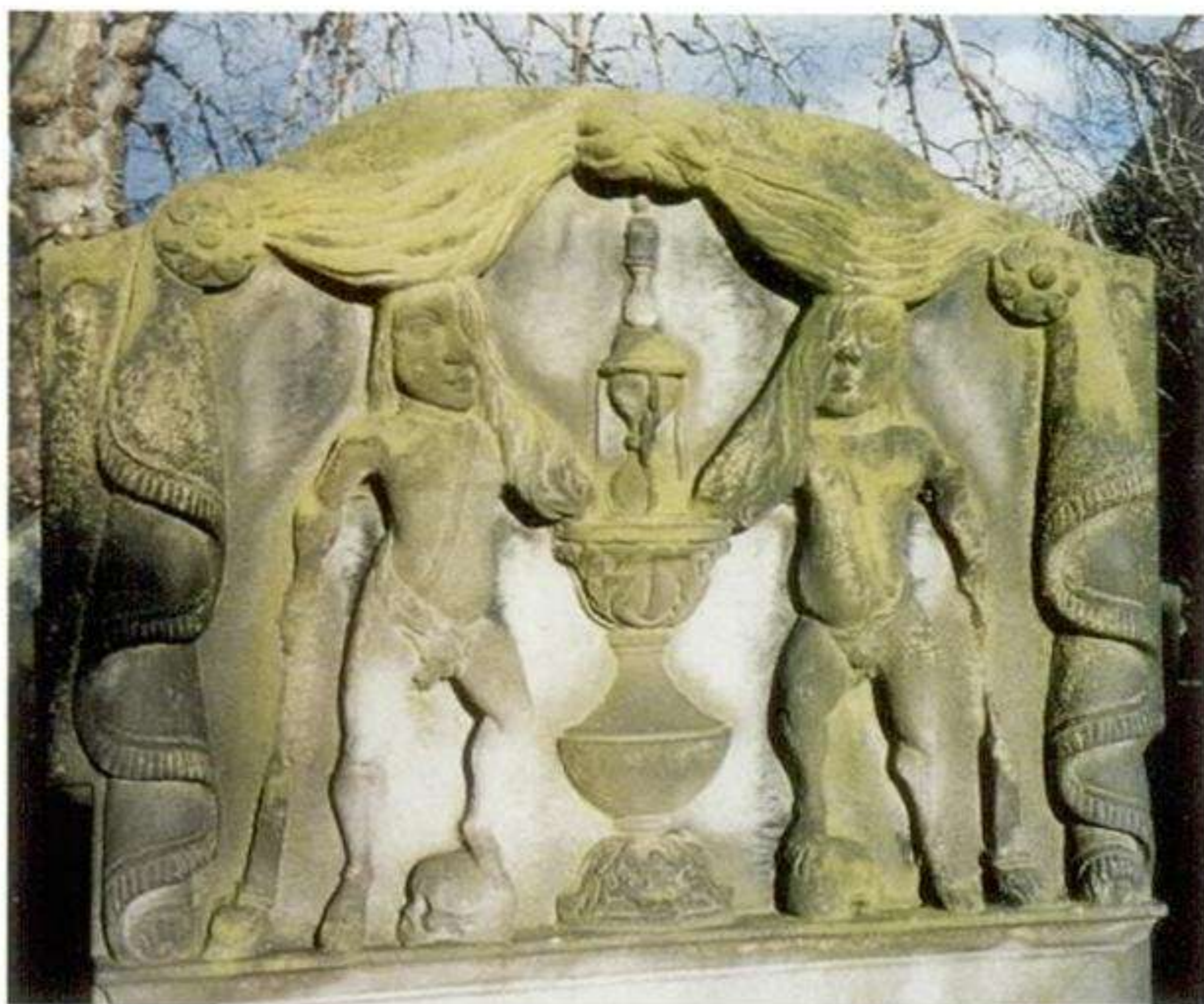
A brief and selective look at the chronological coverage of the protective designations in graveyards will enable me to touch on the evaluation process before concluding with a glance at the application of protection.

The historic origins of graveyards and their subsequent development is a significant factor in listing, the earlier examples often benefiting from the protection of both statutory designations and more likely to have been included in the original lists which operated informally to a 19th century cut-off date. The Cathedral Graveyard at St Andrews, for example, is a clear candidate with its pre-Reformation wall monuments. While the medieval cemetery enclosure around the ruinous chapel and the later churchyard at Benbecula Nunton on South Uist, appropriately and similarly bears both a Scheduling and a Listing to cover its interest. The Skelmorlie Aisle at Largs of 1636 (formerly the transept of an old church which was demolished in 1802) is protected by Scheduling and Listing, the latter extending to the fine dated gateway and boundary walls of the surrounding graveyard. In Stenton, East Lothian, the later 16th century tower and the sacristy of the old parish church are again both Scheduled and listed (Illus 4).



*Illus 4 Later 16th century tower of the Old Stenton Church, sited within the graveyard of the present church, and like many in such circumstances, given a new function as a dovecot*

Medieval stones and those up to 18th century often include symbolic *memento mori* and offer a visual database of the local trades, a hierarchy of the tradesmen, and an inventory of masonry skills of the local craftsman. A stone from St Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, for example, depicts Adam and Eve, symbolic of life (Illus 5), while John Swankie's stone in Arbroath, declares a pride in his given profession, evidencing a fisherman of some standing (Illus 6).



Illus 5 Adam and Eve on the stage of life and death, St Cuthbert's Churchyard, Edinburgh



Illus 6 John Swankie's crisply carved gravestone, Arbroath, proudly declaring his trade

The post Reformation period saw the arrival of the Scottish Renaissance and the arrival of a *classical* vocabulary and there are some outstanding examples of its use for grave furniture through its evolution into neo-classicism. Particularly good examples of Scottish Renaissance design can be found at the High Church in Inverness. The 'table-top' monuments adopted some of the vocabulary as did the scroll-headed stones (Illus 7). Pattern books often informed these early designs. The classical language would come to predominate, offering gravitas to the matter of death. From the late 18th century came the popularisation of free-standing mausolea, prompted by the values of the Enlightenment, developing on from family vaults and enclosures and much-favoured by the wealthy in the 19th century. The cube and dome formula flourished from around 1800, and a fine example of special interest in terms of design and of patronage is the Eaglescairn Mausoleum in Bolton (Illus 8), with further fine examples in Old Cathcart Graveyard, and Edinburgh's Greyfriars.



Illus 7 A richly carved table top gravestone in Tranent Parish Churchyard, East Lothian



Illus 8 The Eaglescairn Mausoleum, Bolton Churchyard, East Lothian, the private burial place of major local landlords



Grave robbers, Resurrectionists - or the threat of them from the early 19th century - have added further colour to sleepy graveyards, dictating changes and innovations. This aspect of the graveyard tapestry is of special interest in the assessment of cases for listing. The names of Burke & Hare in Edinburgh are well-known, but the problem was notable all over the mainland, especially in proximity to the major cities and remained so until surgeons were able legally to obtain cadavers for educational or scientific purposes. A caged grave and gravestone from Old Cathcart (Illus 9), illustrates the extreme measures taken on occasion by the wealthy. Church congregations and the wealthier parishes occasionally commissioned the building of a watch tower or watch house to provide a night-time guard on the yards. Some of these are finely designed and good examples can be found near the capital, as in the New Burial Ground, Dalkeith, at the Old Glencorse Kirk, and at St Cuthberts, Edinburgh. At St Michael's Church, Dumfries, the gatepiers were hollow, the niches to shelter the night watchmen. Mort-safes, that is iron grilles which could be secured over graves, were also employed and a number still survive. Mortuary houses or mort-houses were built to secure coffins for a prolonged period, until the corpses ceased to be fit for dissection.

While we are on the subject of ancillary structures, I can mention hearse houses, the garage for the church's ceremonial cart, which would appear to have been an East coast phenomenon, and their survival being of interest - as in East Lothian, at Yester (Illus 10) and at Bolton.



*Illus 9 An arbour-caged gravestone at Old Cathcart Churchyard*

The 19th century pre-occupation with death, the well-known Victorian necrophilia, grew out of the 18th century Enlightenment, the melancholy and fashion for mausolea and sepulchres, but also came in response to the real need to cope with a rapidly growing population. Often small churchyards had had to function as cemeteries for the new towns which had grown up around old village nuclei. In the 18th centuries overcrowding was tolerated but in the 19th

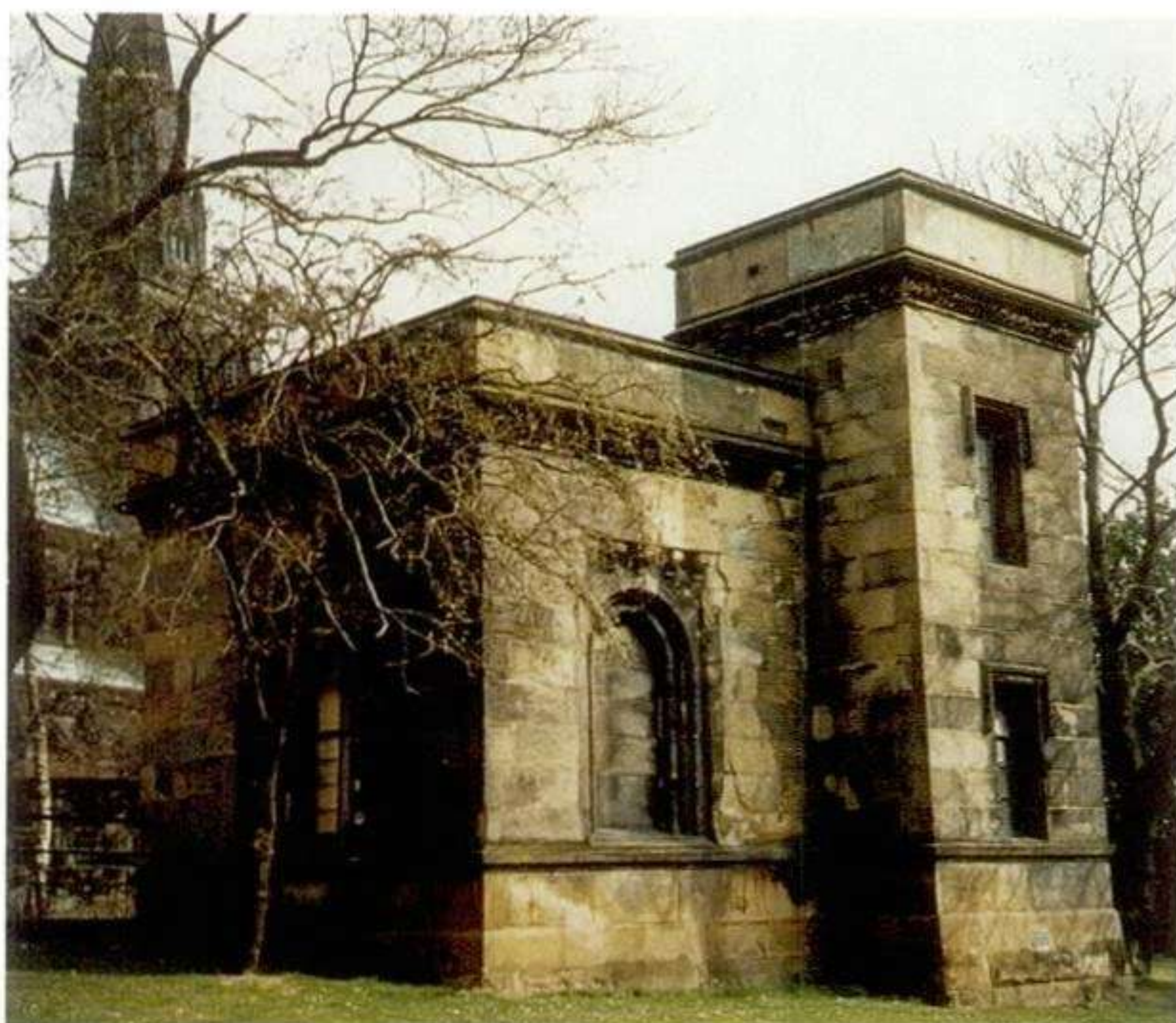


*Illus 10 Hearse House, Yester, East Lothian, providing shelter and security for the parish hearse*

century, alongside other health reforms, concerns grew over the hygienic implications of graveyards. The 19th century graveyard is the most frequent new candidate for listing in this field, dating to a period after the principal interest of the first lists.

From the 1830s, the Garden Cemetery Movement influenced thinking, promoting such as the landscaping of the grounds of Dean House, Edinburgh in 1845 by David Cousin, to serve as a cemetery incorporating sculptural features from an already romantic setting. From 1847 the Cemeteries Clauses Act allowed private companies to manage private cemeteries. The ethos of graveyards entered a new league.

The Burial Grounds (Scotland) Act of 1855 incorporated the Cemeteries Clauses Act and made the provision for sufficient burial spaces the responsibility of the municipality. Many existing graveyards were consequently extended and these and newly designated areas were, as funds allowed, landscaped into sublime arcadia for the dead and the mourners. In Portobello, demand eventually led to the creation of a new cemetery covering 4 acres, with lodge, at a cost of £11,000 in 1876, a considerable sum at the time, but necessary if the area was to be well-managed and secure against grave robbers. Lodges, iron railings, gates and high boundary walls and their maintenance were expensive, and it is easy to understand how an industry emerged from the requirements of the legislation. The lodge at most 19th century graveyards was to serve as the administrative centre, the home of the order book and register, as well as a guardhouse (Illus 11).



*Illus 11 A gatehouse at Glasgow Necropolis, an example of the multi-function lodges built in connection with the management of burial grounds from the mid 19th century*

The term 'Necropolis', a city of the dead, is appropriate for the urban burial grounds of the necromaniac Victorians, and interestingly it is one more favoured by the Glaswegians, one of whom, John Strang, was the

pioneering author of *Necropolis Glasguensis* of 1831. The first in the city was 'The' Necropolis', beside the crowded Cathedral Cemetery. It is particularly significant for its date, context, geography, layout, the quality of monuments and historic stature of many of its inmates. It was laid out as an ornamental cemetery by David Mylne on similar lines to Père-Lachaise, in Paris. It opened formally in May 1833 and was the first really large metropolitan cemetery in Scotland. It contains a major series of mausolea and monuments mostly classical in inspiration as to be expected from Presbyterian Glasgow, and its origins from 1825 around the statue of John Knox, free of the Papist allusions of the gothic.

In Edinburgh the scale of the change is also clear, with the advent of the Edinburgh Metropolitan Cemetery Company, which came into being before the Cemetery Act of 1847. It employed David Cousin to layout the lands which it acquired, these including Dalry, Newington Echobank, Warriston, and Pilrig Rosebank. But a rival company took land in the Grange, the Edinburgh Southern Cemetery Company and, typical of the emerging industry issued a prospectus for their new burying ground in 1847, outlining the benefits of the site. The scale of charges, from £2 to £12 per grave was designed to encourage "all classes of the community" to acquire their own private burial plot.

Occasionally, a mortuary chapel was provided if funds were available, such as at Vicarsford Cemetery in Leuchars, by T M Cappon in 1897, which stands as a significant local landmark. Amidst the landscaping and creation of catacombs and embanked mausolea, consideration was given to the prevailing concern of the black gases created as man decomposes – John Claudius Loudon, a leading and influential exponent of garden cemeteries – wrote with concerns of the danger of lead-lined coffins in enclosed spaces and the dangers of putrefaction, indeed, he wrote that 'explosions have been known to take place'. Vents were provided to minimise such dramatic occurrences from the various embanked mausolea and enclosures.

Towards the end of the 19th century, the concerns on the hygiene of burial and at the areas of land consumed for burial purposes, together with other philosophies, gave rise to an international movement for cremation. Loudon considered their ultimate arrival to be inevitable and despite considerable religious opposition the first Scottish Crematorium opened in 1893. This was in the grounds of the Western Necropolis, in Glasgow, designed by James Chalmers for the Scottish Burial Reform and Cremation Society, listed for its historic significance as much as for its architectural form.

In the 20th century, two World Wars saw the graves of many Scots to fall abroad, marked at home only by a

distinctive parish war memorial, invariably in or neighbouring the parish graveyard. The finer examples of these are listed, and undoubtedly all possess historic significance. In the Kilkerran Graveyard in Campbeltown, serried ranks of Commonwealth War Graves Commission gravestones cover a select area of high ground, together with this distinctive cross, and there are equivalents elsewhere.

While 19th century graveyards tended more often to be interdenominational, there are a few graveyards belonging solely to other Christian denominations and other religions. The Cameronian graveyard, for example, in Paisley or the Quaker graveyard in Aberdeen, or, close to the Historic Scotland Headquarters, the first Jewish Burial Ground in Scotland, nestling in Sciennes House Place, Newington.

The condition of gravestones is not an overwhelming concern in listing, but their material interest is significant. Rarer examples possess particular interest for their more exceptional materials, such as slate markers in the churchyard near the quarries at Ballachulish, which were clearly decay-resistant, or cast-iron markers across Scotland, which required maintenance to ward off corrosion (Illus 12).



*Illus 12 A cast-iron gravestone at Kilkerran Churchyard, Campbeltown, showing corrosion from exposure to the salty coastal air*

### Application of Statutory Protection

Churchyards have never been covered by the ecclesiastical exemption which has previously applied to churches and any plans for the removal of stones, or disturbance or dislocation to the existing stones that would affect their character would require listed building consent. This should be sought in the first place from the Local Authority. The opening of a new grave in a plotted area would not require consent, but the addition of a new mausoleum amidst an established burial ground may do so, as would the extension of a listed church into the kirkyard, or breaches in the boundary wall.

In 1925, the Church of Scotland handed over responsibility for the upkeep of its graveyards to the Local Authorities in a (Property and Endowments) Act, although lairs purchased in perpetuity remain in the ownership of the buried person's descendants. Similarly, most urban private cemeteries have now been transferred to the hands of the Local Authority, who consequently require Listed Building Consent from Scottish Ministers for any changes and apply for this purpose to Historic Scotland.

Detailed advice on specific cases can be found in the *Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas* which includes advice on the repair and conservation of mural monuments gravestones and statuary. Advice on Scheduling is contained in the leaflet *Scheduled Ancient Monuments*. Both documents indicate the possibility of overlapping designation and mutual interests. The TCRE Practitioners' Guide launched today offers invaluable practical guidance on the material conservation of graveyard structures' physical form.

### Conclusion

My intention has been to outline clearly the extent and limitations of the powers of the protective designations of scheduling, listing and inclusion in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. None can protect against the ravages of age, climate, vandalism or theft which are prime subject of today's conference, but they can contribute to the wider awareness of the subject and can ensure that necessary change is carefully considered through the planning process.

## THE ROLE OF THE GARDENS INVENTORY

KRYSTYNA CAMPBELL, LANDSCAPE HISTORIAN, HISTORIC SCOTLAND

This paper aims to :

- to summarise the role of the *Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes*
- to outline the importance of the cemetery as a designed landscape, using a specific example to illustrate that, in some cases, by concentrating on the funerary monuments an accompanying, more complex social and philosophical history may be easily overlooked. An 'iconography' may underpin a cemetery's layout and landscape.
- to stress the importance of some landscape management aspects of cemetery conservation, in particular the need to attend to details, other than those of the gravestones and funerary monuments themselves. These details are common to the management of other designed landscapes and it is only through good, informed management that the present generation will ensure the survival of designed landscapes for future generations.

### Background to the Inventory

The *Inventory* (full title, *Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland*) is jointly sponsored by Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Scotland. It corresponds broadly to a similar initiative in Wales, England and indeed in many European countries. The late 1970s and early 1980s saw the recognition that designed landscapes, consciously designed for beauty, amenity and architecturally often to complement a major building, were of value in their own right. The protection and conservation of these sites was aimed principally at securing their value for art history, social history, cultural, the natural heritage and habitat variety. In common with the 'Register' in England (The register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest) and in Wales (Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest), the *Inventory* seeks to identify designed landscapes that are of national importance.

The first published *Inventory*, a series of fairly detailed regional surveys across the country, included some 275 'outstanding' gardens and designed landscapes. From the start, it was recognised that the *Inventory* was not

fully comprehensive and in 1993 the sponsors initiated a project to extend it. This project has resulted to date in the total sites numbering 425, with inclusion of further sites including cemeteries and public parks which were less-well represented on the initial *Inventory*. Some areas like Banff & Buchan and the Borders are still to be covered and progress in publishing the results of this recent survey is slow, too slow, due to the limited resources available. Nevertheless *Supplementary Volume 1. Lothians* appeared in August 2001, and *Supplementary Volume 2. The Highlands & Islands* is to appear early in 2002. The initial *Inventory* included only one cemetery site, The Glasgow Necropolis, and the extension survey has now added the Dean Cemetery, Edinburgh and Tomnahurich Cemetery, Inverness.

The process of adding sites to the *Inventory*, in my view, needs to be reappraised as we are already aware of other sites which should be included, and I shall discuss one of these in particular - the Old Town Cemetery, Stirling. But bear in mind that these sites must be of national importance and it is vital that the 'Reasons for their Inclusion' should be appraised and clearly stated. This is being given prominence in the *Inventory* supplement. Thus Dean Cemetery is included as an important example of a mid-19th century cemetery, where the existing planting demonstrates picturesque theories of landscape design applied to 19th century burial grounds. The cemetery provides the setting for a number of significant funerary monuments. An 'Assessment of its Significance' rates it as an outstanding work of art, of outstanding value historically and architecturally; it has high nature conservation value and has some horticultural, scenic and archaeological value.

Tomnahurich Cemetery, Inverness is included on the *Supplementary Volume 2. The Highlands & Islands* (forthcoming). Tomnahurich Hill has long had a central place in social and cultural tradition. It is an imposing landmark, one of a series of hills to the south of Inverness which make up the Torvean landforms, designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest as an outstanding site for geomorphology. The Torvean esker itself is one of the largest in Britain and lies alongside flat topped kames and kame terraces. Tomnahurich is

part of this complex, it rises to 65m above the Inverness plain. It is a prominent and unchanging landmark in a city, currently seeing extensive growth and change. Its 19th century history and development as a major cemetery has undoubtedly destroyed any traces of early archaeological activity on site, but it is worth noting that the 'Hill of the Yew wood' (*Tom na h-Iubhraich*) is credited by the Uist Bard MacCodrum as being the resting place of Thomas Rhymer, so it has traditional folklore associations. More recently, in the Old Statistical Account it is described as a '*most remarkable hill, a beautiful, insulated mount, nearly resembling a ship with her keel uppermost. It was the site of an annual horse-fair, which took place around the hill*'.

It was developed in the mid-19th century as Inverness' extramural cemetery, its summit modelled into a flat oval-shaped plateau, serviced by a wide carriage drive. The hillside is laid out as a series of terraces with burial plots. These are also lined by Irish yew and broadleaf trees. There are extensive views over the city and out to the surrounding countryside.

#### Why include cemeteries?

The idea of the public park developed during the 19th century, as did the idea of cemeteries, as opposed to graveyards (burial grounds, often adjacent to churches, where the design of the whole ground was not the issue so much as the intention of securing prominent positions or plots). The 19th century cemetery tradition emerged as a result of religious reforms as well as concerns for public, municipal hygiene. The history of the 19th century cemetery and the garden cemetery movement has been widely written about and discussed, what is important in the context of this seminar is that 19th century cemeteries are often designed landscapes. Therefore in terms of the *Inventory* they may be included as examples of design history, if of **national** importance.

More recently, in the face of declining public services, the amenity value and conservation of public parks has become prominent, particularly so in larger urban centres. In many respects, the social role initially taken by the 19th century public park was mirrored by that of the 19th century municipal cemetery – both were encouraged as they had a practical role in terms of public health, hygiene and for their amenity value in offering open, green space and fresh air. In parallel to the mid 20th century decline of public parks there was, mainly in the larger British urban centres, a decline in the maintenance of cemeteries, corresponding with a rise in vandalism.

The conservation problem of these 19th century cemeteries alone is immense.

#### Are there any benefits to being included on the *Inventory*?

The *Inventory* is not a statutory designation but is recognised as an advisory document. It can only offer limited protection. This is mainly through the planning system and is confined to a requirement for local authority to consult Scottish Ministers, through Historic Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage, in respect of any proposal, which involves or may affect an *Inventory* site.

However, it is important that we draw attention to nationally and locally important designed landscapes. Through the process of evaluating a site, greater awareness may be inspired together with a greater understanding of the management needed to safeguard its more vulnerable elements.

#### The idea of the garden cemetery

Scotland was a major influence in the overall development and adoption of the garden cemetery in Britain. Loudon's ideas, expounded in his book *On the Laying Out, Planting and Management of Cemeteries* (1843), can be directly traced back through John Strang's *Necropolis Glasguensis* of 1831 to the initiative by the Merchants House, Glasgow to form a cemetery modelled on Père Lachaise, Paris. Père Lachaise, founded as the result of the banning of churchyard burials in Paris in 1804, was the most celebrated cemetery, widely used as a model by civic reformers.

The Necropolis, the first major new Scottish cemetery, was to be non-denominational and open to every faith. To give some quotes from Strang's work '*A garden cemetery, and monumental decoration afford the most convincing token of a nation's progress in civilization and the arts, which are its result.*' Strang's thought that '*a garden cemetery and monumental decoration, are not only beneficial to public morals, to the improvement of manners, but are likewise calculated to extend virtuous and generous feelings*' mirrors Loudon's writing some 12 years later:

*'Churchyards and cemeteries are scenes not only calculated to improve the morals and the taste, and by their botanical riches to cultivate the intellect, but they serve as historical records...'*

The idea of the 19th century garden cemetery went beyond the immediate function of hygienic disposal of the dead; it was essentially to offer a means of moral improvement and social benefit through education. It is highly significant that The Necropolis was set out on Fir Park, which by the early 19th century was laid out as a hilltop pleasure ground dominated by the John Knox Monument, designed by Thomas Hamilton in 1825.



*Illus 1 Mellors Garden, Rainow. Chapel in the garden, the Celestial City on Mount Sion*

### Landscapes designed to 'instruct' and celebrate

Some designed landscapes were laid out expressly to fulfil a didactic role. One such is Mellor's Garden, at Rainow, near Macclesfield. Albeit it is south of the Border, this garden amply illustrates a designed landscape laid out for distinctly didactic, religious motives. James Mellor lived at Hough-Hole from 1796, when aged one until his death in 1891. A Methodist who took over running the family mill in 1828, he became interested in the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772). The basis of his teachings is the science of correspondences, that is that everything in the natural world has a counterpart in the spiritual world, which in itself is a product of the Divine Mind. Swedenborg's teachings and philosophy inspired Mellor's garden. He laid out his two acres as a '*Garden of Correspondence relating to things of this World and Scriptural History*'. The garden is written up in *Garden History* Vol.15 No2.

A range of topographic features in the garden enabled him to represent the landscape charted by Bunyan in the *Pilgrim's Progress* with its Slough of Despond and Valley of the Shadow of Death. Major incidents in the story are represented by structures or at the junction of pathways. A steep grassy bank is the Delectable Mountain. From Bunyan's Mount Caution the pilgrims could see a graveyard where men, blinded by Giant Despair, stumbled amongst the tombstones, thus at

Mellor's Garden you can look over to the graveyard where Mellor and fellow family members, all Swedenborgians, are buried.

The journey ends at a private chapel where James Mellor would preach to visitors every Sunday. Deliberately raised and approached by a set of external spiral stairs, it represents the Celestial City standing on Mount Sion. Above the door is the inscription '*With all thy getting, get understanding*'. A reference to the end of Pilgrims Progress when a man called Ignorance reaches the gate of the city, knocks and awaits an answer, is refused admittance and is bound, thrown down into Hell. There are only three contemporary descriptions of the garden, which became a significant attraction to parties from Manchester and from abroad; over 500 people would attend on a Good Friday, and after Mellor gave up his commercial business he increasingly concentrated on developing the garden and guiding visitors around.

Current study of the Stirling Old Town Cemetery, by Fiona Robertson in association with John Harrison and Robin Kent is revealing a cemetery with a complex history. As with Mellor's Garden, the landscape incorporates a deeper meaning. The mid-19th century Valley Cemetery, laid out alongside the Kirkyard of Holy Rude Church with its gravestones dating back to the early 1600s and Lady Hill, a rocky knoll originally outside the Kirkyard, was laid out to instruct the visitor in the Presbyterian faith. Equally, it reinforced the history of Presbyterian reform and Stirling's central role in Scotland and the struggle for religious independence.

The Valley Cemetery, laid out between 1857-59, was established by prominent figures in Stirling's civic community, namely William Drummond, Baillie Rankin and Charles Rodgers. William Drummond and his half brother Peter ran the family seed business and together, in 1831, they established Drummond's Agricultural Museum. Peter founded the Stirling Tract Enterprise in 1848. The tracts, in the National Library numbering some 30 titles, were distinctly sabbatarian with titles such as, '*Post-office Sabbath Slavery*' (1849); '*Sabbath travellers and railway proprietors; their responsibility*'(1854).

The Valley Cemetery was laid out in 1857-9 to the north of the Kirkyard. It included the Lady Hill and incorporated a highly symbolic layout, celebrating presbyterian beliefs with conviction. It was followed in 1862-3 by the construction of the Drummond Ornamental Gardens, lying between the Castle Esplanade and the new cemeteries.

The Ornamental Gardens linked into the Valley Cemetery spatially but also in their inclusion of symbolism, all explained in a guide, the Valley Rock



*Illus 2 General view over Old Town Cemetery, from Holy Rude Kirk to Stirling Castle*

Fountain Guide (1869), written a year after William Drummond's death. Note that the developments here are almost contemporary with Mellor's Garden. Central to this exposition of presbyterianism is the figure of John Knox, his statue forming the central one in a triptych made-up of figures formative to the development of Presbyterianism in Scotland. To Knox's right stands Andrew Melville, international scholar and religious teacher, banished to exile in France by James VI, and to his left Alexander Henderson (d.1647), co-author of the National Covenant. It has been noted that a '*chief weapon of evangelicals everywhere was a strict version of its own past*' and monumental biographies of both Knox and Melville were reprinted in the 1840s along with the first full-scale edition of Knox's works (see Michael Lynch, *Scotland. A New History*, 1992). It is also relevant that John Knox preached at the Protestant coronation of the infant Roman-Catholic King James VI, which took place in Holy Rude Kirk.

This 'trinity' of statues stands on a Reformers' Mount above the Valley Rock Fountain, which issues from below their feet. The Valley Rock Fountain Guide, somewhat obscure to more modern, secular ears makes what are today appraised as some surprising claims. Thus the Ladies' Rock is claimed to be 'the central point of Scotland'. To the north of the Valley Cemetery a monumental pyramid, the Star Pyramid was built to the memory of the Covenanters. The Star Pyramid, identified as the Covenant or Salem Water sits on high ground at the north point of the cemetery and water was channelled from the Pithy Mary pool beside it, to issue out at the Valley Rock Fountain. Another statue

incorporated into the layout, in celebration of Stirling's pivotal role in religious dissent, was to James Guthrie of Holy Rude, who was executed for his faith in Edinburgh in 1661.



*Illus 3 Stirling Old Town Cemetery. Valley Cemetery. Statue to Ebenezer Erskine and the Star Pyramid beyond*

On his death in 1868, Drummond left £1,000 for the maintenance of the new cemetery. He is buried in a granite sarcophagus to the north of the Star Pyramid. Although the 19th century extension to the Old Town Cemetery was founded and funded by Stirling's evangelists, who donated their own funds, enthusiasm and hard work to its development, it did not exclude burials from other denominations.

In summary the Old Town Cemeteries in Stirling are an outstanding example of a designed landscape, a cemetery embodying and displaying ideals and celebrating Stirling, and Scotland's role in religious dissent. It is an example of a landscape where the thoughts and philosophy which formed it, which we are in the process of rediscovering, are an essential part of its structure, of our appreciation and of its cultural and national value. The importance of gardens like Mellors Garden and Stirling Cemetery go beyond that of an 'outstanding' or 'interesting' design laid out by a named designer.

#### The need for landscape management

Finally, some words on the management and maintenance of designed landscapes, with reference to cemeteries. Designed landscapes where integral to the cultural values of the site, need to be managed

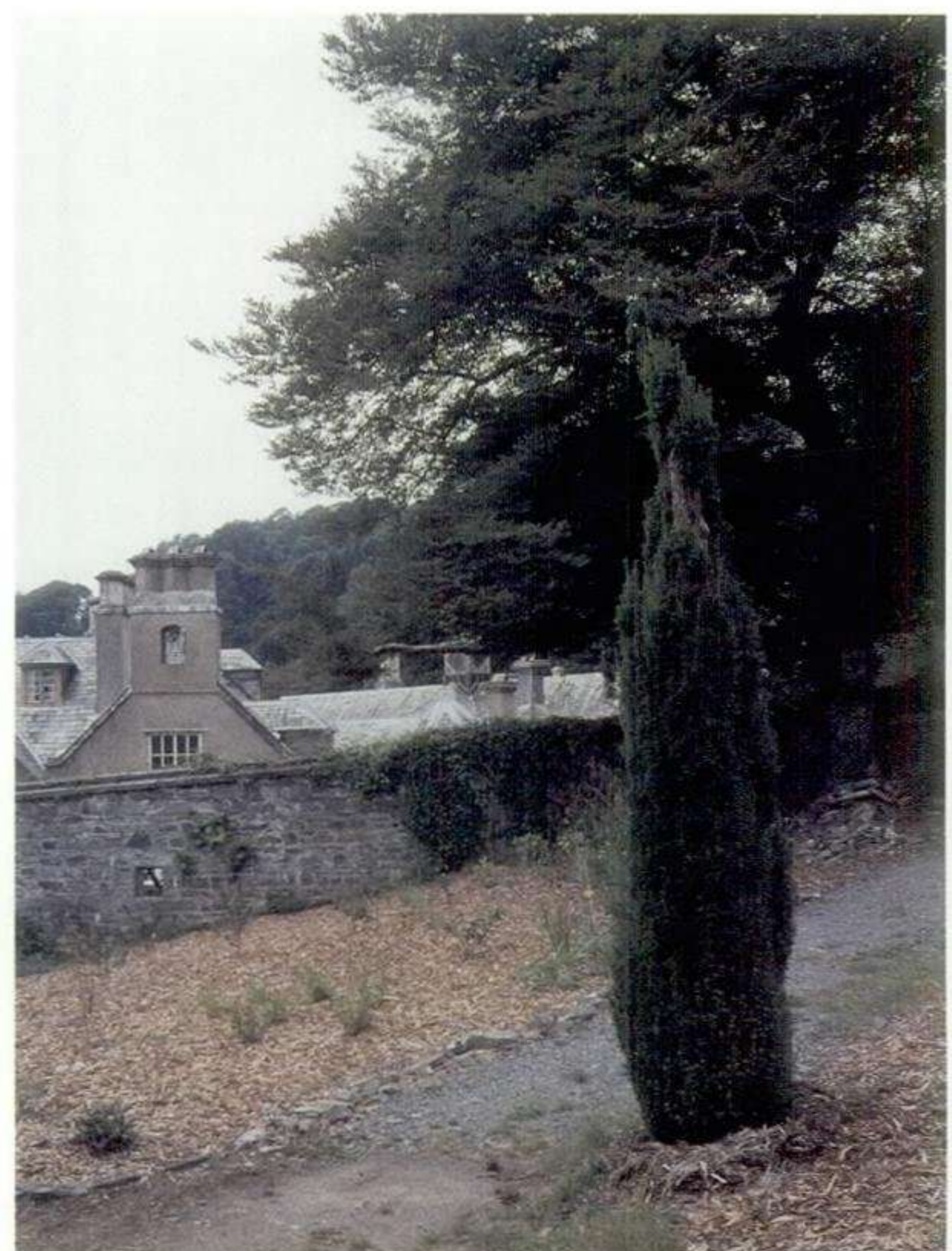
alongside the funerary monuments themselves. There are many common management problems relating to both cemeteries and other designed landscapes. One is the earth-lowering of grass levels though grass edging. This leads to impoverishment of soil and erosion of the design through cutting back the edges of paths.

A frequent problem is the effect of over-mature specimen trees on both the gravestones and the landscape design. It may not always be necessary to fell trees. Yew can be successfully regenerated, although it may not be possible if they are planted too near to monuments. The planting by gate-houses and lodges may be important in highlighting particular architectural features or a focus of the design. Frequently lodges have become obscured behind over-mature conifers and evergreen screens and the planting may need replacement.

Ideally, the preparation of a landscape management plan will assist in identifying the management and on-going maintenance tasks necessary for the conservation of a cemetery. By basing this on a thorough knowledge and appraisal of the history and design of a cemetery, we are more likely to be able to conserve these landscapes which still offer many of the qualities identified by Loudon and other protagonists of the garden cemetery movement.



*Illus 4 Stirling Old Town Cemetery. Mature Irish Yew adjacent to tombstones. Originally planted for effect but now engulfing the carved stones*



*Illus 5 Irish Yew. Over-mature specimens can be successfully regenerated, and there may be occasions where it is possible to do this, in preference to their removal*



# CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC GRAVEYARDS

DENNIS C M URQUHART, URQUHART CONSULTANCY SERVICES

## Introduction

*The Conservation of Historic Graveyards: Guide for Practitioners* is concerned with post-Reformation Scottish graveyards, because most gravestones and other memorials seen in Scottish graveyards today usually date from the seventeenth century onwards. These historic graveyards are of great value since much of Scotland's recent past is commemorated only on the memorials contained within them. They also contain important archaeological and historic features, not all of which may be visible. It is not intended to act as a guide to the routine maintenance of cemeteries.

Credit for this book must go to Ingval Maxwell. Ingval has had a long interest in this subject. It is through his desire to ensure that the unique nature of this resource is properly recognised that brought the book to fruition. He recognised the need to draw attention to its vulnerability to decay, deterioration and inadequate or ill-considered maintenance and repair. Over the past few years, Ingval has gathered a vast amount of information and photographs, a great deal of which has been included in the book. Credit must go also to our co-author, Ratish Nanda, who was responsible for much of the early work on the book.

There are many excellent publications on the social and historical aspects of graveyards and, indeed, reference to the Internet reveals a multitude of sites covering this topic although most are concerned with genealogy related issues. Perhaps not surprisingly, most of these are American sites. However, prior to the publication of this Guide, little information has been available which addresses the practical needs of caring for this marvellous resource that we have in Scotland. This is a resource that is continuously being degraded by a range of aggressive agencies such as the Scottish climate, environmental pollution and human factors.

What we have then is a significant cultural resource that is now at considerable risk.

Graveyards are an important cultural resource because:

- They document the lives of ordinary people and are usually the only surviving document to such lives.
- They are important for genealogical research by individuals, groups and local history societies.
- The gravestones and monuments are themselves an important cultural resource due to age, material, form, carved detail.



*Illus 1 A typical country graveyard. Cromarty East Parish Church, Category B listed*

- Graveyards contain many other elements of value, such as enclosures, entrances, morthouses, watch houses, ruins and often archaeological remains.
- They have value as an increasingly rare environmental resource as a green space and as a refuge for wildlife and plants.

The factors that contribute to the risk to our historic graveyards can be summarised as follows:

- The natural and induced decay and deterioration of the grave markers and monuments.
- A lack of appreciation of the extent of the risk and indeed the awareness of graveyards as an important part of our heritage.
- Inappropriate or inadequate maintenance and repair.
- Lack of funding for repair of gravestones and other elements. The fact that each lair and headstone is in private ownership will clearly contribute to the conservation problem we face.
- The number of graveyards at risk (and individual headstones and monuments). There are over 1,100 listed graveyards in Scotland.
- Vandalism.



*Illus 2 Sandstone wall monument at Cromarty East Church that is now in an advanced state of decay*

### Contents of the Guide

What the Guide aims to do therefore is to provide guidance on how best we can manage this resource. Whilst it is impossible to reverse or stop the natural processes of decay we can, at least, delay these processes by appropriate intervention or, sometimes, the most useful thing we can do is to 'do nothing' apart from ensuring that accurate records are maintained. It is important to appreciate that the provision of any form of protection to gravestones is complex. Often their quality means that they would benefit from a museum-type regime but, given the sheer number of memorials and monuments at risk, this level of care is impossible to achieve.

After the more general introduction, the Guide focuses on a number of discrete topics set out in nine chapters (including a check list of good practice) and a number of appendices.

The following text will try to give a 'flavour' of some of the important issues covered in the Guide.

### Legislation

Here advice is provided on the responsibilities of ownership and how to identify those gravestones that may be described as important. This list suggests that importance is defined when one or more of the following criteria apply:

- Is listed or scheduled;
- Commemorates a person of recognised importance;
- Is a prominent feature of the graveyard;
- Is unique to that graveyard e.g. in period, material, construction or design;
- Contains significant carved detail or lettering;
- Is one of an historic group of headstones;
- Records a significant local event or
- Is otherwise unusual or representative.

Also in this section is advice on issues relating to listing and scheduling, archaeological remains, ancient objects and war graves. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission is responsible for war graves of servicemen and women located in around 13,000 cemeteries in the UK.



*Illus 3 Commonwealth war graves in The Paye, Gaelic Chapel graveyard, Cromarty*

### ***Memorial types***

Here the full range of memorial types is described with a brief commentary on symbols, inscriptions and polychromy (painting of headstones). This section is more of a brief overview as much of this information can be found in other related publications.

### ***Materials and deterioration***

In this section there is explanation of the processes of decay and deterioration that affect all the materials likely to be found in Scottish graveyards. Most space is devoted to the deterioration of sandstone headstones as this is the dominant material used in 18th, 19th and early 20th century memorials. Illus 4 below shows damage to a sandstone gravestone by a combination of factors. Delamination of the face of the stone has been increased by the action of moss root penetration from the top of the stone. Moss roots can penetrate large distances in some sandstones when headstones are aligned with vertical bedding planes, the normal arrangement.

### ***Repair guidelines***

This is perhaps one of the most important sections in the book and comprehensive advice is offered on the recommended approach to the repair of gravestones. However, before any repair or other intervention work is undertaken, the book stresses the importance of the need for accurate records. The type of documentation required, including the preparation of conservation and management plans and the identification of gravestones at risk, is described.



*Illus 4 Moss roots contributing to the delamination of a sandstone headstone*

Practical information on a range of issues, from repairing broken headstones to maintenance and repair of ironwork, is provided. Illus 5 is an example of a situation where the poorly executed repair to a broken headstone has greatly increased the extent of the damage. In this example an appropriate repair would include the use of dowels and resin grouting. Practical information on such repairs is included in the book.



*Illus 5 A failed cement mortar repair has increased the damage to this headstone*

#### *Other elements*

As previously mentioned, we are not just concerned with gravemarkers but with the full range of structures and features that may be found in graveyards such as buildings (walls, gatehouses, morthouses and mausoleums), floodlighting and notices.

#### *Nature in the graveyard*

Many graveyards are important sites for flora and fauna. But there is a balance to be struck between an excessively overgrown site and one that is so 'pristine' that nature is inhibited. In a modern burial ground, relatives may be distressed to see grass uncut and untended plants and shrubs. However, the general rule is that for historic graveyards the strategy should be to provide the best natural habitats for indigenous flora and fauna by minimum and selective maintenance that also conserves the historic and cultural significance of the site.

Advice is provided on how best to deal with the important aspects of nature in the graveyard, for example trees, ivy lichens, mosses and burrowing animals.



*Illus 6 Morthouse, Udny, Aberdeenshire*

*Maintenance*

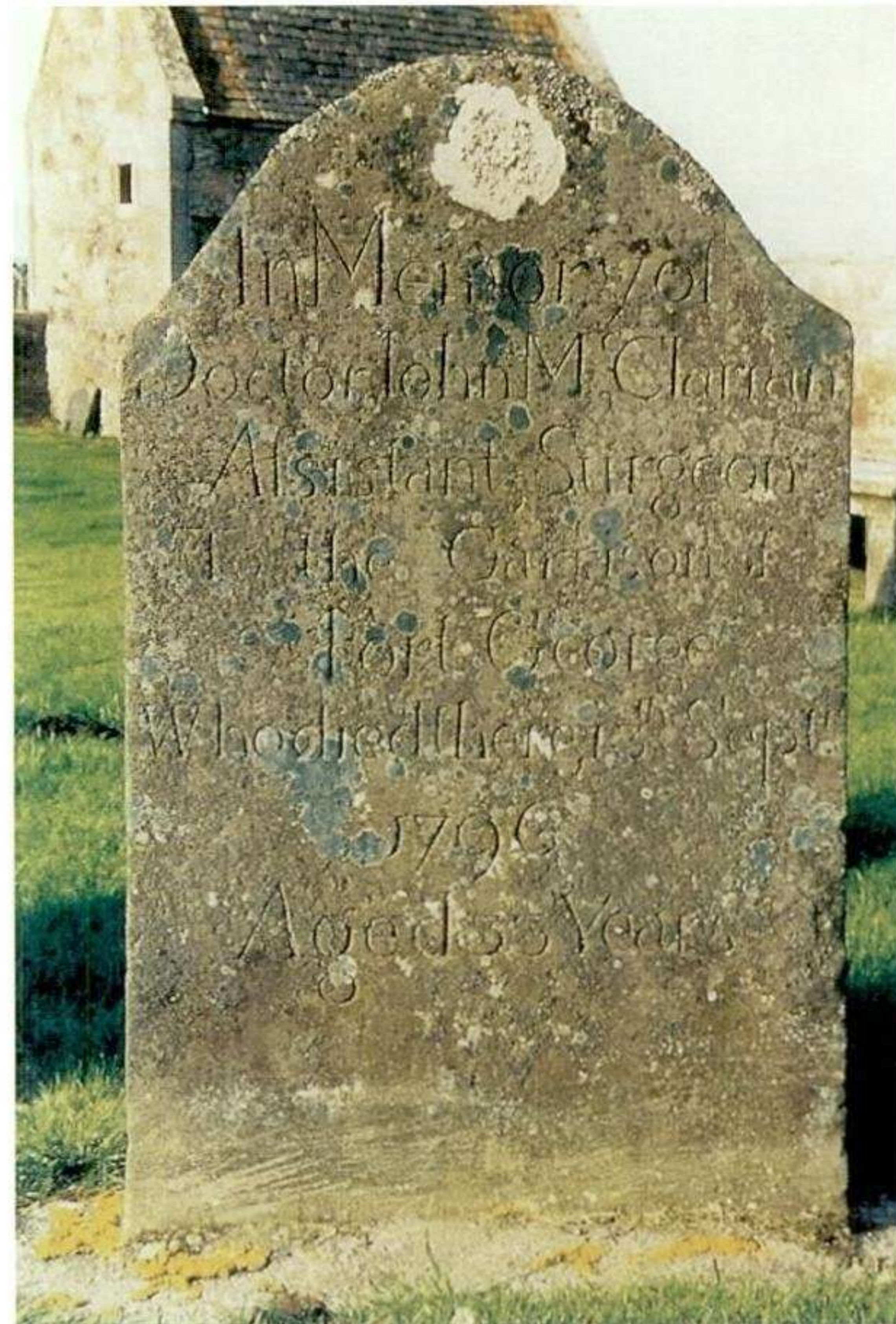
Whilst the book is not intended as a maintenance guide, there is guidance on the approach required to a range of maintenance issues that have the potential to damage the site (whether physically or to the character), such as grass cutting, paths and roads, vandalism, education and interpretation.

*Case studies*

Good practice is exemplified through descriptions contained in six case studies illustrating a range of problems. One example is shown in Illus 8.

*Appendices*

- a) Inventory of graveyards in Scotland with statutory protection.
- b) Conservation plan proforma.
- c) Assessment Methodology Handbook.
- d) Principal legislation.
- e) Useful addresses.



*Illus 7 Damage to the sandstone surface by the use of a grass-cutting strimmer. Note also the use of cement mortar around the base of the stone to prevent soil erosion. This has the potential to increase stone erosion through an increased uptake of damaging salts*



*Illus 8 The Annand Memorial, Ellon parish churchyard, Aberdeenshire*

## RECORD TAKING AND RECORD KEEPING FOR GRAVEYARDS

LESLEY M FERGUSON,

NATIONAL MONUMENTS RECORD OF SCOTLAND, RCAHMS

In 1902, David Christison concluded an article summarising his research into carvings and inscriptions on kirkyard monuments in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, with the following plea to others to record gravestones. He wrote:

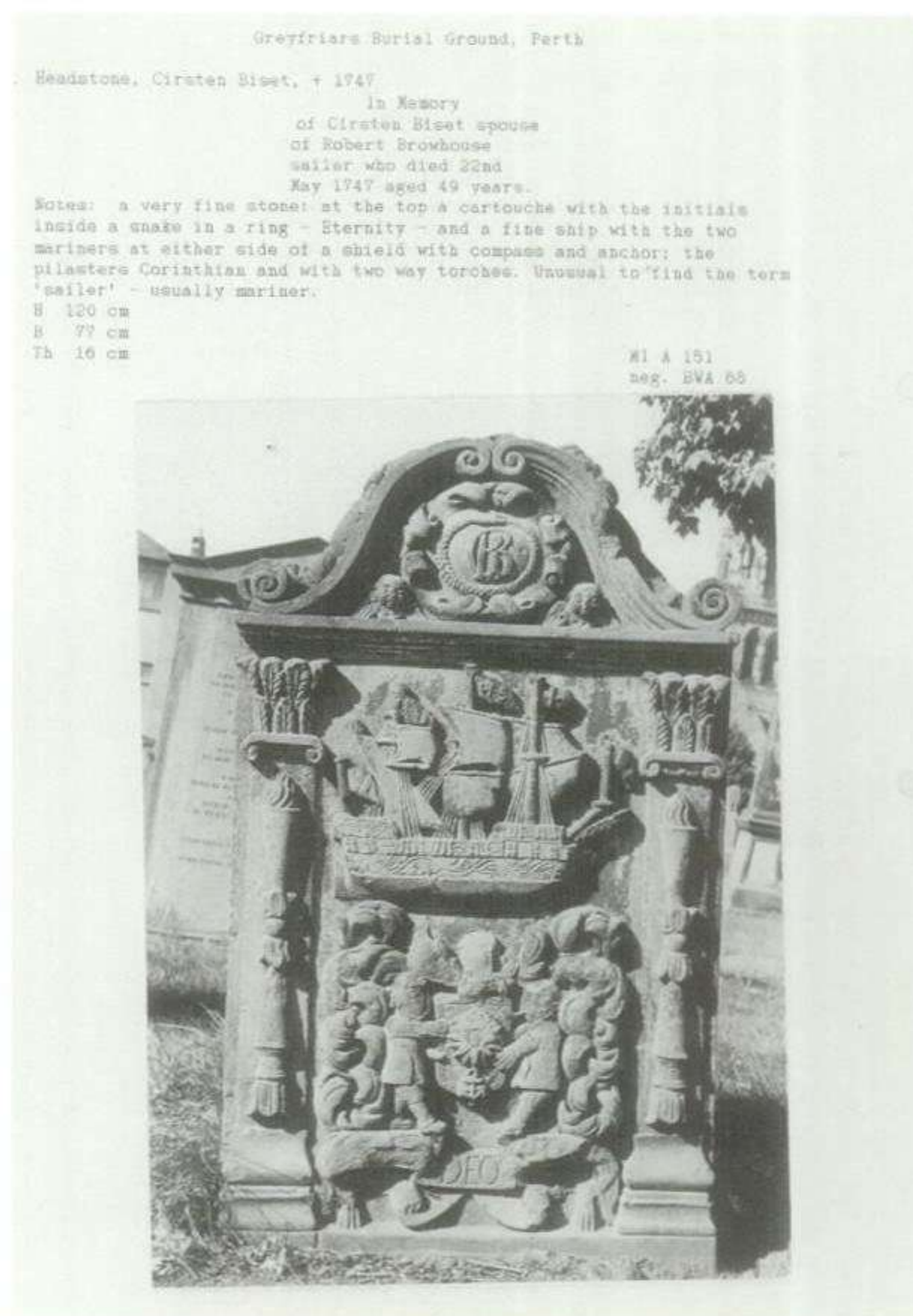
*In opening the first furrow in so large a field, may I suggest that other labourers should lay hand to the plough? An obvious mode of working would be for clergymen or others interested to write a brief history of their church, recording the tombstones, with illustrations, which in these days of universal photography, should rarely be difficult to obtain. And the time is now; for many of the older monuments, and even the most recent ones, are rapidly decaying, while the rough hand of the destroyer is by no means stayed.....this investigation may impress upon some of the authorities who control the churchyards, that, although they may have the right, they ought not to have the will to destroy, as useless rubbish, monuments which often speak so eloquently of the piety and family affections of our ancestors, humble though their rank may have been.*

Much has been achieved in the century since this 'battle cry' was written. In the fourteen years following the publication, articles appeared in every volume of the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* but in the years between and following the world wars, there was, understandably, less of an interest in recording gravestones, and it was not until the 1950s and 1960s that there was a revival of activity.

Several individuals and organisations have made significant contributions to our present day knowledge. John and Sheila Mitchell and the Scottish Genealogy Society are responsible for the introduction of large-scale systematic transcription of pre-1855 inscriptions. From the 1960s onwards many individuals recorded transcriptions and prepared sketch plans of graveyards, carefully marking the location of each transcribed stone. The inscriptions are documented in typescript reports and booklets, available through the Library and Family History Centre, in Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh. These represent an immense resource for anyone carrying out local or family history research.

In the 1970s, Betty Willsher and Doreen Hunter began exploring the graveyards in the Lowlands and, surprised at how little work had been done, began to

photographically record and compile descriptions, including the epitaphs. Mrs Willsher visited over 400 graveyards, photographing almost 2,500 of the pre-1855 stones in Scotland. She completed a record sheet for each stone giving details of the graveyard, stone date, the inscription as it appeared on each stone, measurements, and attached a photograph, together with a sketch drawing in some instances. The results of further research were also included, and references to volumes of the Scottish Genealogy Society *Monumental Inscriptions* added, as well as details of other publications.



*Illus 1 Betty Willsher record sheet for a stone in Greyfriars burial ground, Perth. (E13046 © RCAHMS)*

*How to Record Scottish Graveyards and Understanding Scottish Graveyards* by Betty Willsher, published by the Council for Scottish Archaeology, became standard reference works for anyone interested in Scotland's graveyard monuments, and Willsher wrote many more articles in magazines and journals.

Exhibitions in Edinburgh and St Andrews also brought the subject to the attention of a wide number of people. Betty Willsher travelled extensively talking to local history and archaeology societies inspiring others to make full recordings of their graveyards, and encouraging the use of a standard recording sheet.

This recording form was thereafter used and adapted by many others including more recently, Stuart Farrell, who has recorded, in detail, stones in over 100 graveyards in Fife, Highland, Moray and the Western Isles, amassing a wealth of record sheets and photographic records.

There are many more individuals and groups who have surveyed graveyard monuments, and today, as a result of all this work, there are collections of material and information on stones from almost 1,000 graveyards in the National Monuments Record of Scotland. With only a few exceptions, this extensive collection has largely been assembled by enthusiastic, dedicated, committed people, as a hobby. In the Betty Willsher collection alone, generously gifted to the NMRS in 1998, there are some 4,000 photographs and slides of pre-1855 stones in Scotland.

In addition to the photographic and manuscript material, there is a wealth of published information: numerous articles in journals, for example, the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*; *Calatria* (Journal of the Falkirk History Society) or the *Hawick Archaeological Society Journal*; books focussing on Scottish gravestones and graveyards, like Islay Donaldson's volumes on *East Lothian Gravestones* (1991) and *Midlothian Gravestones*

(1994), or 19th-century volumes on epitaphs and inscriptions; there are also books and pamphlets collected by Mrs Willsher on gravestones elsewhere in Britain and America, including a delightful volume of American epitaphs entitled *Sudden and Awful*. The epitaphs leave little to the imagination:

*O fatal gun, why was it him  
That you should kill so dead?  
Why didn't you go off just a little higher  
And fire above his head.*

Further material is held in the library of the Scottish Genealogy Society, as well as local archives and libraries around the country. Cumulatively, Scotland has a vast historical archive of graveyard monument information of immense value to researchers.

However, much remains to be done. There are still numerous churchyards which have not been recorded and there has been relatively little recording of post-1855 stones. Recent surveys have begun to look at later monuments, which are just as much threatened by erosion, vandalism and destruction.

The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) is responsible for making a record of the built heritage and, through the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS), curating a collection of drawings, photographs, manuscripts and information, and making this available to researchers.

From the earliest days of the Commission, significant individual gravestones have been recorded as part of the topographic surveys of archaeological sites,



*Illus 2 Minto House, Roxburghshire, graveyard. (D4439/CN © RCAHMS)*

monuments and buildings. The Commission has never undertaken the systematic survey of entire graveyards but staff do encourage and assist individuals and groups to carry out such work and deposit their results in the NMRS, where they can be made widely available.

Planning a survey is probably the most important part of any project and getting the methodology and practicalities established at the start, produces a more consistent and valuable product. Importantly, staff encourage individuals and groups to think beyond the end of a survey and to consider the long-term preservation of the results of their efforts. Recording graveyard monuments using traditional pencil and paper methods may seem slightly antiquated, particularly in these days of easier access to laptop computers, but it is reliable, is reasonably weather-proof (essential for Scotland), allows everyone to participate, allows for the inclusion of sketches and will last for decades. The information can be readily transferred from the paper record into a computer database to allow analysis or quicker searching mechanisms at a later date.

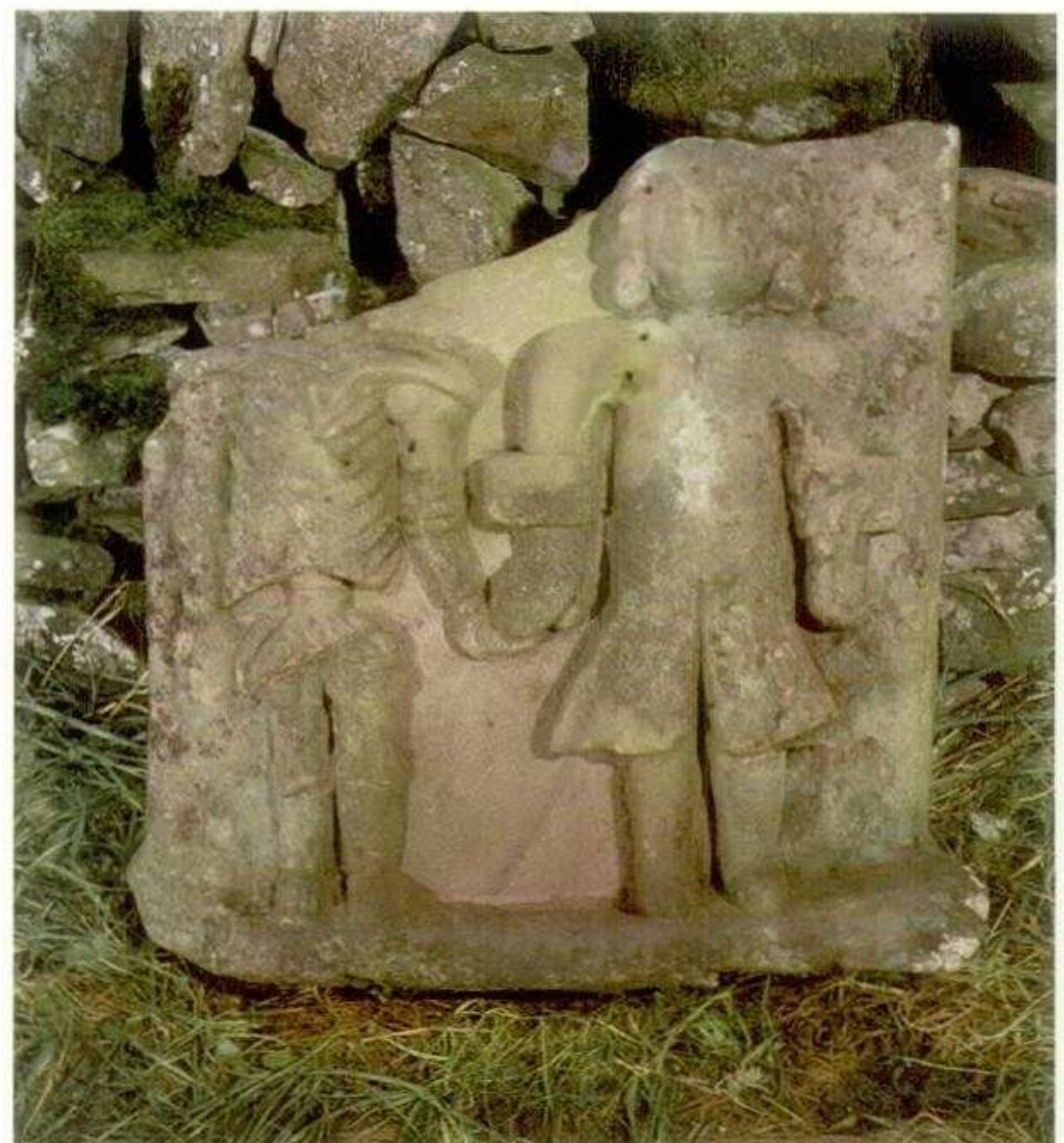
Similarly with photography. Traditional film, either black and white or colour, remains the best medium to use for recording graveyard monuments. In addition, digital photography allows for the transfer of images to a database or website but currently, there are still issues to be resolved regarding the long-term preservation of such images.

RCAHMS recommends standards for recording, ensuring that all essential information is gathered consistently (graveyard location, date of recording, inscription details, stone description, measurements etc.), and gives advice on the design of computer databases to hold the results of surveys. Researchers are encouraged to consult various publications, for example, the works of Betty Willsher or *Recording and Analysing Graveyards* by Harold Mytum, to get a fuller understanding of the work involved. Research in the archives of the NMRS may also reveal previous work or historic records which can help to put the monuments in their historical context, establish any changes that have taken place, the movement or damage to stones, and the loss of inscriptions through erosion.

Making the results of a survey accessible is also important. Publication is one option, depositing copies of the survey in the NMRS, in local history libraries, archives or sites and monuments records, allows others to benefit from the research and will mean that the results are available for the future, and, increasingly, the world wide web offers the opportunity to publicise surveys.



*Illus 3 Corrie Churchyard, Dumfriesshire, stone dated 1710. Recorded in 1912 by RCAHMS, it appears to be freestanding and in reasonable condition (DF137 © RCAHMS)*



*Illus 4 Corrie Churchyard, Dumfriesshire, stone dated 1710. Recorded again in 1993 by RCAHMS, the stone has been broken and this fragment used to repair the enclosing drystone wall. The top portion with the angel was elsewhere in the wall (C66746/CN © RCAHMS)*





*Illus 5 St Mary's Parish Church, Monymusk, Aberdeenshire. These early stones have been re-erected around the base of a tree in the graveyard (D41929/CN © RCAHMS)*

The work of a local group from East Lothian illustrates what can be achieved. Various enthusiasts assembled in the manse at Prestonkirk, East Linton in 1996 to begin planning a survey of the graveyard. The Minister had noted that many people visited the churchyard looking for their ancestors and the objective of the survey was to produce a handy guide to help them in their search. The group estimated that there were 3-400 stones to survey but many weekends and two years later they ended up with information on 743 stones. Their thorough survey of Prestonkirk burial ground has resulted in an extensive archive comprising record sheets detailing inscriptions, descriptions of each stone, measurements and information on the condition of the stones. In addition, a computer database and a booklet, published by the Scottish Genealogy Society, illustrated with sketches of the stones was produced, as well as an attractive and user-friendly web-site ([www.ejclark.fsnet.co.uk/survey](http://www.ejclark.fsnet.co.uk/survey)), which gives access to a searchable database of names and a plan of the graveyard.

The inclusion of a carved stone recording form and the assessment methodology handbook of carved stone decay in the Historic Scotland volume *Guide for Practitioners Conservation of Historic Graveyards* will provide a more comprehensive form on which groups or individuals can undertake survey work. As well as recording details of stones or other types of

graveyard monuments, there are sections requesting information on the condition of each monument, and an assessment of the environment of the site. The objective being to identify, quantify and propose solutions to the problems of decay and through analysis of the results, to identify particular monuments at risk.

The NMRS has several roles to play in terms of graveyard recording: providing encouragement and guidance to people surveying graveyards; preserving the results of surveys; and improving accessibility to this material for everyone.

Making all this information and archive material available to researchers is a challenge.

Some information is currently accessible through CANMORE, the NMRS database, available on the World Wide Web at [www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk) and some 170,000 searches have been made since its launch in 1998. CANMORE contains information about Scotland's archaeological sites, monuments, buildings and maritime heritage but computerization of catalogues is ongoing, and many graveyards are not yet in the system. There is currently no definitive list or database which indicates which graveyards have been surveyed and the level of recording undertaken but it is the intention to include this information in CANMORE.

The global market now means that researchers in the Falklands Islands, Canada or Australia, want to see photographs and manuscript details on the World Wide Web. Forthcoming developments on CANMORE, include providing access to computer databases compiled by other individuals or organizations, for example, the Imperial War Museum's inventory of war memorials, and the same mechanism could be used as successfully for surveys of graveyard monuments. We also aim to make digital images available on the World Wide Web and to introduce map-based searches. A properly planned graveyard, with individually geo-referenced gravestones, possibly resulting from the use of a global positioning system in the survey, is in effect a large-scale map and in the future, it should be possible to retrieve images of each stone, alongside the inscription and summary description. The technology exists to completely recreate a graveyard on a computer screen, and to effectively meander between stones, looking at the design and reading inscriptions.

The appointment of a Carved Stone Advisor within the Council for Scottish Archaeology, is a welcome development, which will help to stimulate and encourage more individuals and groups to undertake surveys of gravestones.

To return to the words of David Christison *And the time is now.*

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*Illus 6a Abercorn, West Lothian. Photographed by Betty Willsher in the 1970s. (A37015 © RCAHMS)*



*Illus 6b Abercorn, West Lothian. Photographed by RCAHMS in 1999, the stone has been mounted on a new base. (D46616/CN © RCAHMS)*

# THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETIES

ANGUS MITCHELL

I would like first to record warm congratulations to Historic Scotland on publishing this new Guide for Practitioners. While I remain uncertain whether Joe Public will be willing to meet the heavy cost of implementing all its recommendations, I certainly expect that it will help to raise public awareness of this neglected sector of our heritage. When I joined the Historic Buildings Council for Scotland some years ago, I expected to have an uphill task in persuading my colleagues of the importance of old graveyards; but that was no problem, because Ingvál Maxwell had got there first and had already shown the way.

While my main topic today is family history, I have also been asked to say something about the work of the Greyfriars Kirkyard Trust. I would like as well to raise some wider issues about graveyards – so I must get my skates on.

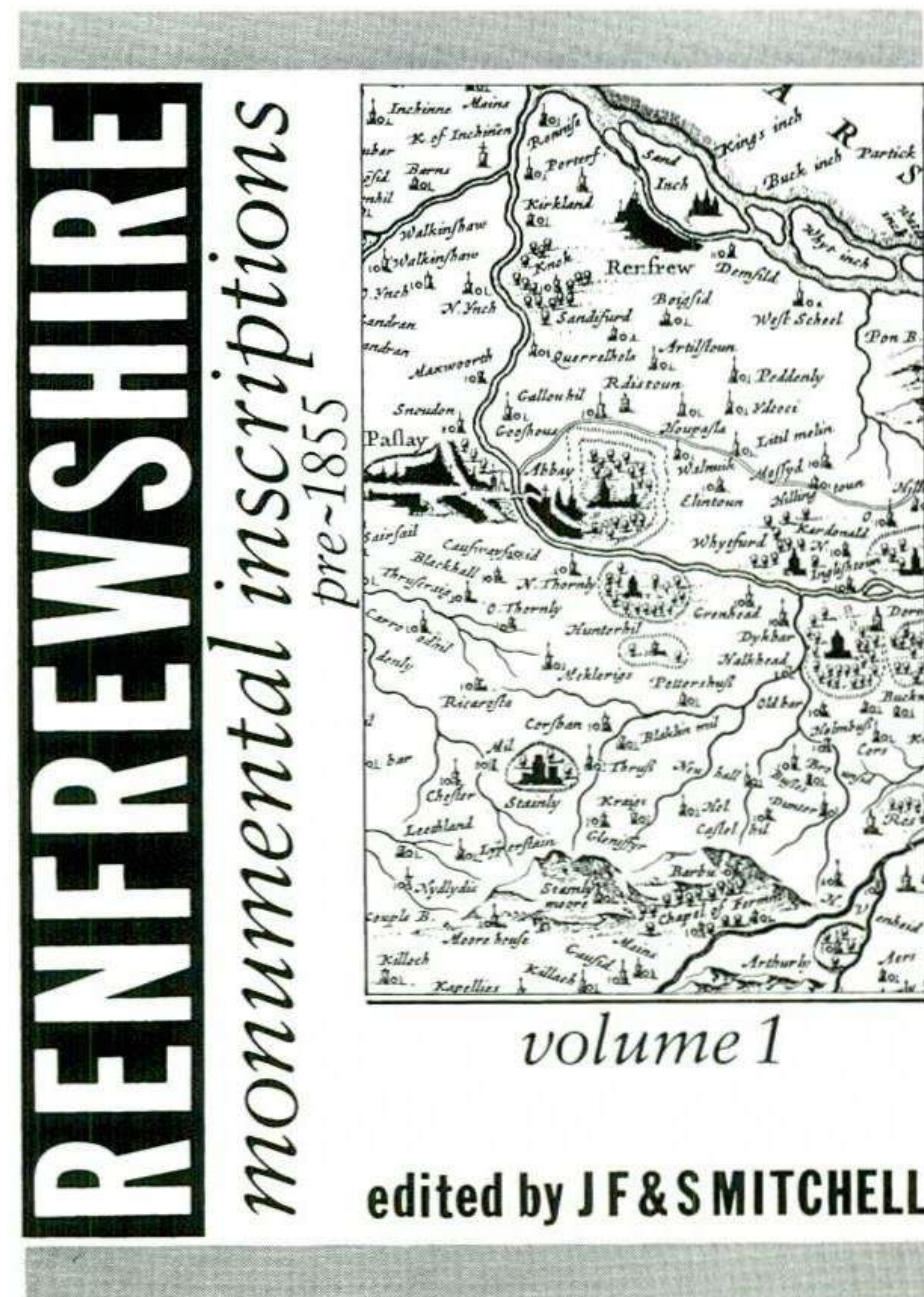
Anybody who starts to search for their family tree will soon discover that inscriptions on gravestones and church monuments are a valuable source of information about the lives of our ancestors, especially before registration of births, deaths and marriages became compulsory in Scotland in 1855; family historians usually describe them as “M.I.s”, an abbreviation for monumental inscriptions.

This is not simply a matter of listing names, dates and occupations to be studied in a public library; just imagine the emotions of visitors from Canada or New Zealand who are lucky enough to find a family gravestone with the names of ancestors whom they have heard about but never met. I am not sure why I enjoy taking my own grandchildren to see my grandparents’ grave in Cathcart; perhaps I just want them to remember me in the same way.

Because of the wealth of personal information to be found in old graveyards, and the growing interest in family history, people have been recording MIs for many years. A major contribution to this labour of love was made by my late parents, John and Sheila Mitchell, who spent over 30 years in systematically recording and publishing MIs across most of Central Scotland. Illus 1 shows one example of their work.

Other family historians and local history groups have followed their good example, so that the lists which have been published by the Scottish Genealogy Society and other bodies now cover over half of the

graveyards in Scotland. The Society’s library also contains an extensive collection of unpublished lists of MIs for other areas. By a happy coincidence the Society has just published a complete index of all these lists, at the bargain price of only £2.50; it lists around 1700 graveyards in Scotland, compared with the 1450 listed in Annex A of the guide published by Historic Scotland, which suggests that our intelligence network is better than theirs! The Historic Scotland Guide does not, for example, list the pre-Reformation graveyards at East, Mid and West Calder which I recorded earlier this year



Illus 1 Front cover of John and Sheila Mitchell’s list of MIs for Renfrewshire

I estimate that between 10 and 20% of the graveyards in Scotland have not so far been recorded, and the Society has been trying to stimulate more local groups in these areas to complete the work. If there is anybody here from Coll, Tiree or Easter Ross, for example, please come and see me after the seminar! Our first advice to any recorders of MIs is to read Betty

Willsher's excellent booklet "How to Record Scottish Graveyards", and it is good to see her here today. There is no financial problem, because the recording is nearly always done by unpaid volunteers. The main problem is to find people with enough time and enthusiasm; once they begin recording, they usually get addicted, like me! This is of course a race against time, because of the alarming scale of erosion documented by Historic Scotland in their admirable guide.

My parents thought it best to give highest priority to the recording of inscriptions before 1855, because they are often the only source of information available before the start of compulsory registration. Before 1855 the Old Parish Records were usually accurate for baptisms and marriages, at least for members of the Church of Scotland; but the surviving records were very patchy, and often did not record burials. Many societies, however, now record all inscriptions up to the present date, since these provide a more complete picture of local history. I would hope that the lists so far made for deaths before 1855 will gradually be extended up to the present date. Mass-produced 20th-century gravestones may be of little or no interest to living antiquarians – but who knows what our descendants will think about them in 200 years time?

Some groups go even further and make a complete archaeological record of the kind described in Betty Willsher's booklet – but that takes much more time and effort and yields information of limited value to family historians. A simple list of MIs may be of little interest to antiquarians, but it is a lot better than nothing at all. Where a list of MIs has already been made, it should provide a useful starting point for anybody who has the time to make a complete record as recommended by Betty Willsher.

While family historians have probably done more than any others to record old gravestones, we fully recognise that the other stakeholders with important interests in this field. I think it is a pity that there is no trade union to promote our common interests. If I were 10 years younger, I would try to start a new Society for the Protection of Old Graveyards in Scotland – SPOGS for short. One useful role for such a body might be to reconcile the conflicting interests of the various stakeholders, e.g. as regards the removal of moss or soil, which often prevents a gravestone from serving its original purpose – to send a message to the passer-by.

I would suggest that one issue which concerns us all is how to raise public awareness in this somewhat

neglected part of our national heritage. That certainly ought to be assisted by the Historic Scotland publication, which should be widely read not only in Scotland but in other countries too; it deserves a review, for example, in the quarterly magazine of the American Association of Graveyard Studies.

Since 1925 most of our graveyards have been owned and maintained by the local authorities, but there has been very little sign of local pride in the monuments – such as the signboards listing dead VIPs at the entrances to Greyfriars and the Old Calton in Edinburgh. How many graveyards in Scotland have an attractive brochure like the one produced by the Friends of the General Cemetery in Sheffield.

How many tourist guides think of including an old graveyard in their itinerary? How many schools have taken pupils on visits to graveyards to whet their interest in local history? Will the continental tradition of meeting at the family grave on All Saints Day ever be replicated here? I would like to follow the example of Perth in Western Australia, where an annual service to commemorate the lives of the early pioneers is enjoyed by many of their descendants.

I shall now put on my other hat as Secretary of the Greyfriars Kirkyard Trust in Edinburgh, which has been fortunate to get grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other bodies to carry out first a landscape survey and then a structural survey of the wonderful collection of old monuments there. One of the main achievements of this survey has been to make a priority list of the most important monuments needing urgent remedial work. The Trust has now begun to draw up a long-term Conservation Plan on the lines recommended by Historic Scotland and the Heritage Lottery Fund, and we hope to have this ready next year.

It is already clear from this survey at Greyfriars that over £40,000 will be needed for urgent repairs to a limited number of older monuments, while the cost of conservation for the whole graveyard will run into six figures over a period of years. Will public opinion favour spending of that order on the dead, when so much has to be done to help the living?

50 Years ago I suspect the answer to that question would have been in the negative, but now I am a bit more hopeful of obtaining the wider public support which is needed for this neglected sector of our heritage. If we cannot awaken more public interest in this field, I am afraid that the valuable recommendations now given to us by Historic Scotland will simply remain as pious hopes.

# THE MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES OF CARING FOR GRAVEYARDS: ISSUES OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

GEORGE BELL, ENVIRONMENT AND CONSUMER SERVICES DEPARTMENT,  
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

## Introduction

The management of headstones throughout the country is an area of cemetery management that has received little or no attention over the past decades.

Due to the lack of maintenance, many memorials have become unstable and may pose a danger to the public.

Sadly, it was not until a fatal accident occurred when a memorial fell on a child in 1995 that the extent of the problem was realised.

To date, the Health and Safety Executive is aware of a further nine accidents to members of the public in cemeteries, due to unstable memorial headstones, two of which have been fatal. The most recent was in July 2000. Most of these accidents have been to children and, consequently, some have led to high media interest and official correspondence.

Cemetery managers had always been under the assumption that the sole responsibility for the memorial headstone lay with the persons - or their successors - who had purchased the Exclusive Rights of Burial in a particular grave. In Scotland the Rights of Burial are issued in perpetuity.

However, in most of these cases, the Health and Safety Executive prosecuted each cemetery authority under the Health and Safety at Work Act as they failed in their duty of care.

These accidents and court judgements have serious implications for cemetery authorities. As a result, The Confederation of British Burial Authorities has recently published a report on the Management of Memorials in Cemeteries.



*Illus 1 Mortonhall Crematorium, Edinburgh*

## Background

In Scotland, local authorities are empowered by the Burial Ground Act 1855 to provide cemeteries for the disposal of the dead.

However, in Edinburgh, there is a unique situation where four private cemetery companies operate - some dating back to the 1840s. These companies operate to the same standards as local authorities and provide a high standard of service to their users.

The Church of Scotland (Property and Endowments) Act 1925 gave the Kirk Sessions the option to transfer the ownership and responsibilities of the churchyard from themselves to the local authorities. As a result of this, the vast majority of Kirk Sessions opted for the Council to take ownership and assume responsibilities for the churchyard.

Throughout the United Kingdom, it is estimated that there are over three thousand three hundred (3300) burial authorities.

The management of cemeteries and churchyards within the City of Edinburgh is the responsibility of the Director of Environmental and Consumer Services and is part of the Bereavement Services Division which includes crematorium, public mortuary facilities, and arranging public burial and cremation services requested under the Nation Assistance Act 1948 (Illus 1 to 4 show some of the facilities available).

The Council is responsible for 39 cemeteries and churchyards, and these include more than 165,000 graves and it is estimated that 70% of these graves are marked with a memorial headstone, representing



*Illus 2 Mortonhall Crematorium, Edinburgh*



*Illus 3 Autopsy Theatre, City Mortuary*

approximately 115,000 memorials. Some of these memorials date back to the mid-sixteenth century.

Illus 5 to 9 show examples of the type of memorials and graves to be found in Edinburgh's cemeteries.

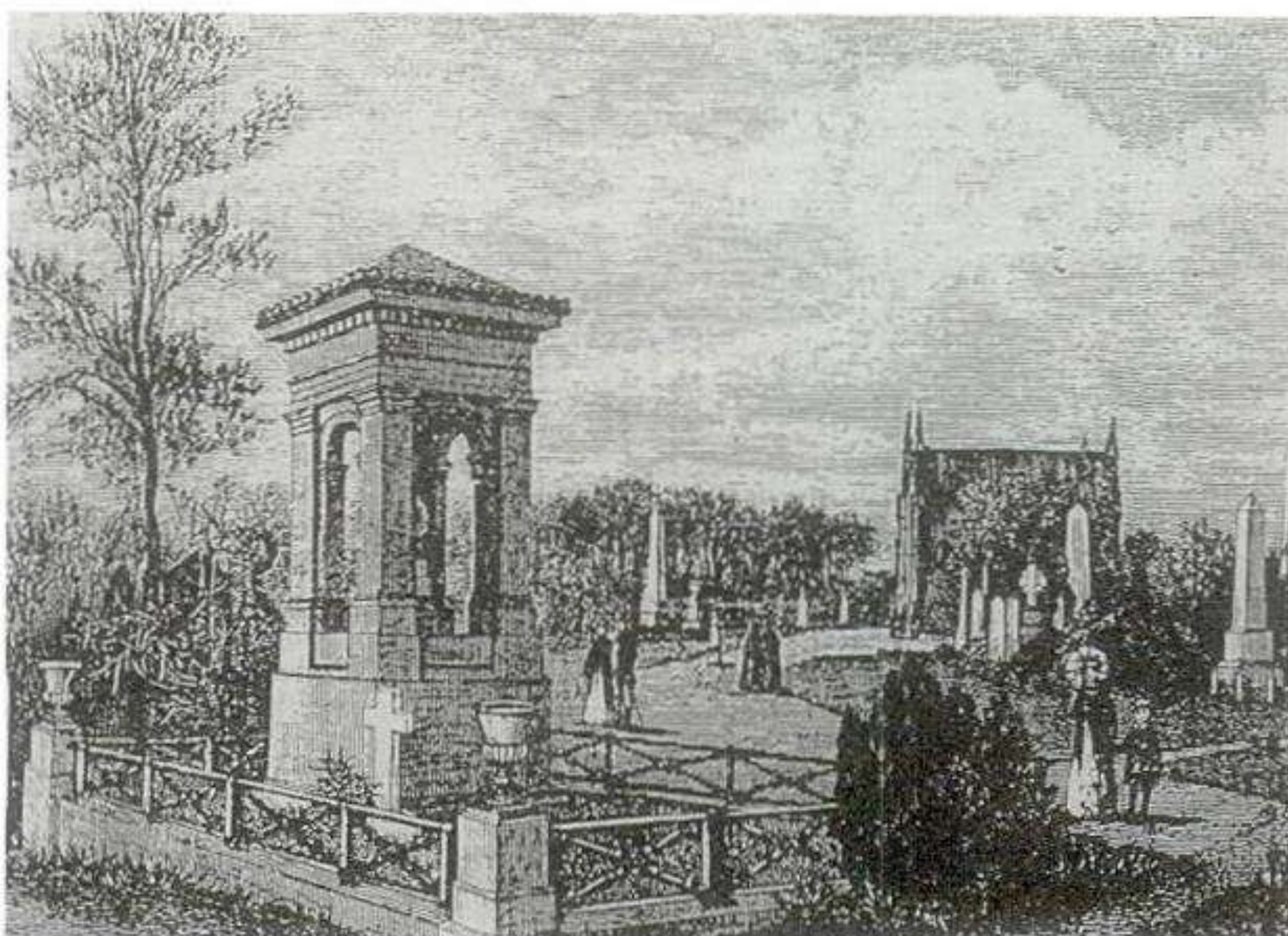
### Challenges Facing Cemetery Managers

#### *Management of Unstable Memorials*

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the management of memorials is an area of cemetery management that has received little or no attention over many years.

Burial authorities are required to control the risks associated with cemeteries for which they have responsibility. Whilst burial authorities have overall responsibilities for the safety of the cemetery, including the risks arising from unstable memorials, they do not own the memorials. The owners of the memorials are the grave owners - normally the family of the deceased. However in many cases, there may no longer be an identifiable owner.

As a result of these accidents, the majority of cemetery authorities throughout the United Kingdom are now undertaking inspections of every headstone within their cemeteries. You will appreciate the enormity of this task and it is estimated that it may take each



*Illus 5 Mausoleum - Greyfriars Kirkyard*



*Illus 4 Body storage, City Mortuary*

authority five years to complete.

Inspections are now being undertaken and a database of the information collated. Thereafter, it is the intention to inspect each memorial every five years.

If slight movement is detected, the memorial will be re-inspected annually.

#### *Use of Pesticides*

It has been practice over the past thirty year to apply pesticides around the base of headstones to control weeds. Unfortunately, this action erodes the soil base around the memorial and exposes the brick foundation, which supports the memorial, to weathering. Through time the foundation deteriorates, eventually making it unstable.

#### *Vandalism*

Sadly, from my experience, incidents of vandalism continue in cemeteries and churchyards, resulting mainly in headstones being pushed over with graffiti applied to memorials and boundary walls.

Such senseless acts of anti-social behaviour are estimated to cost this authority some £10,000 per annum. In one recent incident, 43 headstones were pushed over.



*Illus 6 Sandstone memorials at Greyfriars Kirkyard*



*Illus 7 Sandstone memorials for the War Graves Commission at Corstorphine Hill Cemetery*



*Illus 10 Leaning headstones at Rosebank Cemetery*



*Illus 8 Granite memorials at Corstorphine Hill Cemetery*



*Illus 11 Vandalised headstones at Warriston Cemetery*



*Illus 9 Granite memorials of the flat lawn type at Mortonhall*

### *Conservation*

Burial authorities have to be aware of any conservation orders, which may apply to their cemeteries. A conservation order may apply to structures within the cemetery, including memorials. Cemetery management could be in breach of the conservation order by laying flat an old memorial, without subsequently repairing it and returning it to its original condition.

In April 2001, the Select Committee on Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs published a report on cemeteries, in which it was recommended that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) needs to act with greater sensitivity towards the historical and cultural aspects of cemeteries.

HSE's view is that heritage and amenity considerations need not to be in conflict with health and safety. HSE has discussed issues relating to safety of listed structures and buildings with English Heritage, but there have not been any discussions on the issue of monumental safety. However, HSE has discussed the impact of conservation orders on memorials with individual local authorities, and has advised that if a listed memorial is unsafe then it must be securely cordoned off until it can be repaired safely. This may temporarily affect the overall aesthetics of the cemetery, but the risk of serious injury or death cannot be left unattended just because a conservation order exists.

However, in light of the Select Committee's report, the services sector will be liaising with English Heritage, Welsh Historic Monuments and Historic Scotland to ensure that a clearer understanding is established.

### *Grounds Maintenance*

Over the past twenty years I have had occasion to visit many cemeteries and churchyards throughout Scotland and have always been pleased to note that the standards of grounds maintenance have been raised to an acceptable level. To me this is proof that, even in a time when local authorities have experienced major financial cutbacks to their budgets, they are committed to providing the highest possible level of service.

### *Training*

The Institute of Burial and Cremation Administration which is the professional organisation that represents Bereavement Services Manager and their staff organises a number of courses for all levels of staff employed in the profession:

- Diploma of Institute of Burial and Cremation Administration
- Cemetery Operatives Training Course
- Crematorium Technicians Training Scheme
- The Institute also promotes the Charter for the Bereaved.

Currently, the National Association of Memorial Masons offers courses, designed for cemetery staff, on how to carry out surveys on headstone stability. I am pleased to report that the majority of Scottish Burial Authorities have supported this course.

Earlier this year, my colleagues in Argyll and Bute Council ran a very successful one-day seminar on the subject of memorial safety and demonstrated the methods being used to address the problem within their own local authority. Again, this was well attended by burial authorities from all over Scotland.

### *Way Forward*

In order for our nation's cemeteries and churchyards to survive, we must - through:

#### *Education*

Promote cemeteries and churchyards as a valuable community asset. Local schools should be invited to visit nearby cemeteries. This visit could be part of a school's education project and would ideally focus on memorial safety issues, the need for respect for cemeteries and the feelings of visiting bereaved relatives. Other topics that could be discussed in this project are the ecological value of a cemetery, such as a tree trail and also the historic and heritage value of a cemetery, i.e. types of memorial and famous persons buried.

#### *Working Together*

We must continue to work in partnership with all interested organisations to promote cemeteries and churchyards. Within The City of Edinburgh Council, for example, we work with the following: -

- Historic Scotland
- Edinburgh Cemeteries Support Group
- Greyfriars Kirkyard Trust
- Local History Societies
- Best Value Partnership
- Lothian Cemetery Forum
- Scottish Genealogical Society
- Various Kirk Sessions
- Lothian Cemetery Forum

#### *Best Value*

Through the Best Value process all burial authorities are currently addressing issues relating to cemeteries including the Management of Memorials and are using the recent Management of Memorials publication by The Confederation of British Burial Authorities as a benchmark.



## RECENT CASEWORK - THE CONSERVATION OF GRAVESTONES

STEPHEN GORDON, SENIOR CONSERVATOR,  
HISTORIC SCOTLAND CONSERVATION CENTRE

### Introduction

The following three recent case studies illustrate various approaches and degrees of conservation intervention to graveyard memorials.

The first case could be regarded as an ideal approach to dealing with a memorial at risk but for many reasons the approach taken in this instance would not prove a viable proposition in every situation. This project essentially involved dismantling a deteriorating memorial and in doing so removing it from a hostile environment - conserving it in studio conditions and subsequently rebuilding it in the relatively stable environment of a church.

The second case is perhaps more typical of the approach normally adopted – that is one of minimum treatment of the memorial insitu using sacrificial repairs designed to weather sympathetically with the stone and thereafter recommending a follow up maintenance regime in order to control the decay processes.



*Illus 1 Memorial to John Faichney prior to conservation*

The third and final case illustrates what can be done to conserve vulnerable recumbent grave slabs without resorting to the construction of an expensive or intrusive shelter or removing them from their original context to preserve them in another location.

### Case One

The first case involved the conservation of a graveyard memorial at Innerpefferay, Perthshire.

This eighteenth century memorial was reputedly carved by a mason called John Faichney for use as a family memorial.

It stands 2.4 metres in height by 1.3 metres in width and is made up of 13 component stones.

The main upper panel is thought to depict John Faichney and his wife. They are flanked by two further figures with large seedpods balanced on their heads. Surmounting the upper panel is a head. The main lower panel depicts two resurrection angels over the family arms. Below this are various symbols of mortality and an inscription. The two buttresses either side of this panel depict ten children and are also inscribed.

Historic Scotland's Conservation Centre was first requested to prepare a condition survey and conservation assessment of the memorial in 1994 following concerns over its condition.

The entire memorial is carved from a brown Perthshire sandstone although the surface was at the time of the first inspection coated with several layers of white paint. The condition survey identified several problems with the memorial – some due to natural decay phenomena but many due to earlier intervention to maintain the memorial.

The obvious problems were evidence of structural settlement and root damage from the trees behind but also evidence of blistering and exfoliation associated with the main lower panel and the supporting buttresses to either side. Several of the stones had fracture damage as a result of the settlement (these included the main lower panel and its moulded capping piece).

It was also apparent that the painted finish had been applied for among other reasons to mask evidence of earlier repairs based on cementitious mortars coupled

with small iron cramps set into the carved face of certain elements. The stone appeared to be in relatively good condition beneath the paint layers. Where the paint was found to be blistering and the surface of the stone exposed there was clear evidence of salt efflorescence and associated decay.

An inspection of the back of the memorial revealed the cause of the problems on the face.

At some point an attempt had been made to stabilise the settlement of the memorial by constructing a timber shutter at the rear and pouring in concrete increasing the depth of the memorial by up to half a metre.

Soluble salts migrating from the concrete were clearly being drawn out and drying to the carved face as damaging salt efflorescence. The lower stones of the memorial were most seriously effected.

The principal recommendations made in the report that followed the inspection were that the memorial had to be dismantled in order to remove the concrete – also that the paint would have to be stripped to properly assess the condition of the carved elements and to implement the necessary conservation treatment. As part of the report a recommendation was made that the memorial would be better protected in the future by placing it in the more stable environment within Innerpefferay Chapel.

Work to remove the memorial took place a year or so later. The vulnerable carved surfaces were protected for the work by applying acid free tissue overlaid with high density foam – the lower main panel was left exposed to allow the fracture across the middle to be constantly monitored during the work.

A diamond wheel was used to remove the bulk of the concrete thus reducing the amount of vibration that would have undoubtedly resulted from the use of hammers and chisels. As the concrete bridged at least six of the stones that made up the monument it was necessary to cut from the back into the joints that separated the stones. Crude reinforcing was encountered in the concrete.

The concrete was removed in controlled increments to a point where all the stones were dismantled except for the lower panel. The fracture on the face of this panel clearly extended right through the stone so ultimately it was removed from the boundary wall with 150mm of concrete still attached acting as a backing to support the fracture.

The main panel was very thin and was displaying evidence of delamination along its natural sedimentary bedding structure. As is commonly the case most descriptive sandstone panels associated with graveyard memorials are 'face' bedded in this way – that is to say against the inherent sedimentary bedding structure of the stone.

Treatment of the memorial took place in studios at the Conservation Centre at South Gyle, which provided an ideal environment in which to carry out the necessary works (Illus 2).

Various tests were carried out to determine the safest and most effective method of removing the paint layer. Ultimately a solvent-based stripper was used in combination with a micro steam cleaner and dental brushes.



*Illus 2 The memorial in the South Gyle Conservation Centre after conservation work was completed*

As the paint was removed it was discovered that the carved detail of the stone was not in quite such perfect condition as had been hoped, as there was evidence of hairline fractures, contour scaling and natural disaggregation. Some holding conservation to very friable areas was carried out prior to commencing the work to remove the paint.

The detail of the carving of the small figurines was much enhanced by the removal of the many layers of paint. The seedpods were removed from the head - these were attached using a ferrous pin and there was evidence of expansion fracturing in the stone as a result of ongoing corrosion of the fixing.

One of the seedpods was found to have iron cramp bridging a natural bedding fracture, a repair that had actually been quite neatly undertaken. The cramp formed part of earlier repairs that were carried out insitu.

The lower part of the memorial was built dry in the studio after conservation treatment. The concrete left attached to the back of the main panel was removed by cutting away small sections with a rotary diamond saw finishing with hand tools.

With the concrete removed it was necessary to form a new backing for the panel to bridge the fracture. Normally we might pin a fracture such as this however due to the highly defined bedding structure of this

relatively thin panel, this was not an option. Ultimately we chose to attach a 25mm thick piece of slate using polyester resin pads with acrylic resin at the interface with the back of the memorial panel. This method negated any need to drill into the stone.

Friable areas on the carved face of this panel and indeed the other stones were consolidated using acrylic resin - firstly in a fluid form with solvents for injection and gauged with micro-balloons to create a fine mortar for filling vulnerable fractures and exposed edges.

The ferrous fixings were removed all of which were attached as part of a strategy to address the earlier settlement of the memorial on its site at Innerpeffray. It was not necessary to replace all the fixings, but where it was, phosphor bronze was used.

As the stones were contaminated with salts from the concrete they were all passed through an immersion tank and flushed with de-ionised water until readings showed that the contamination had been sufficiently reduced.

During this time a suitable location was found for the conserved memorial in the chapel at Innerpeffray. The chapel suffers from problems of high humidity largely as a result of penetrating dampness – for this reason and also because the back of the memorial was not uniform, a decision was made to build it against a modern free-standing wall set out from the internal walls of the church. Building against the original fabric would also have proved very invasive, as new fixing points would have had to be established.

The architects drawing which was prepared for the reconstruction incorporates damp proof membranes at

critical points where there might be moisture transfer.

The upper part of the memorial was secured in place by steel supporting brackets. It should be pointed out that existing holes were utilised where the brackets interfaced with the stones, thus avoiding the need to redrill the stone. A non-hydraulic lime mortar was used to joint and bed the stones.

A side view of the monument illustrates the uneven nature of the back of the memorial and the complexities of redisplaying it in a sensitive manner.

Much more detail can be seen as a result of removing the paint layers and memorial is now preserved in a relatively stable environment.

We continue to monitor this site on a regular basis and the treatment has been successful in stabilising this impressive memorial.

### Case Two

The second project was carried out on a memorial in the town of Ellon in Aberdeenshire. It was undertaken by the Conservation Centre as a grant to owner's project for Gordon District Council.

Following the preparation of a conservation report a decision was made to conserve the memorial insitu using sacrificial repair mediums.

The Annand memorial was constructed at the beginning of the 17th century in the old churchyard of Ellon. It was built by Alexandre Annand, the last Laird of Auchterellon to commemorate various descendants of the Annand family.



*Illus 3 The memorial reconstructed in the Chapel at Innerpeffray*



*Illus 4a and 4b Detail of the Annand Memorial before (left) and after (right) conservation*

The monument is made up of around forty carved sandstone panels built against a granite rubble-supporting wall. The top of the monument is capped with concrete paving slabs.

The condition of the monument was very poor and a considerable loss of carved detail had already taken place although much of the detail remained legible. There were also corroding iron fixings set into some of the panels. Other elements of the carving were very friable and in some areas literally hanging off.

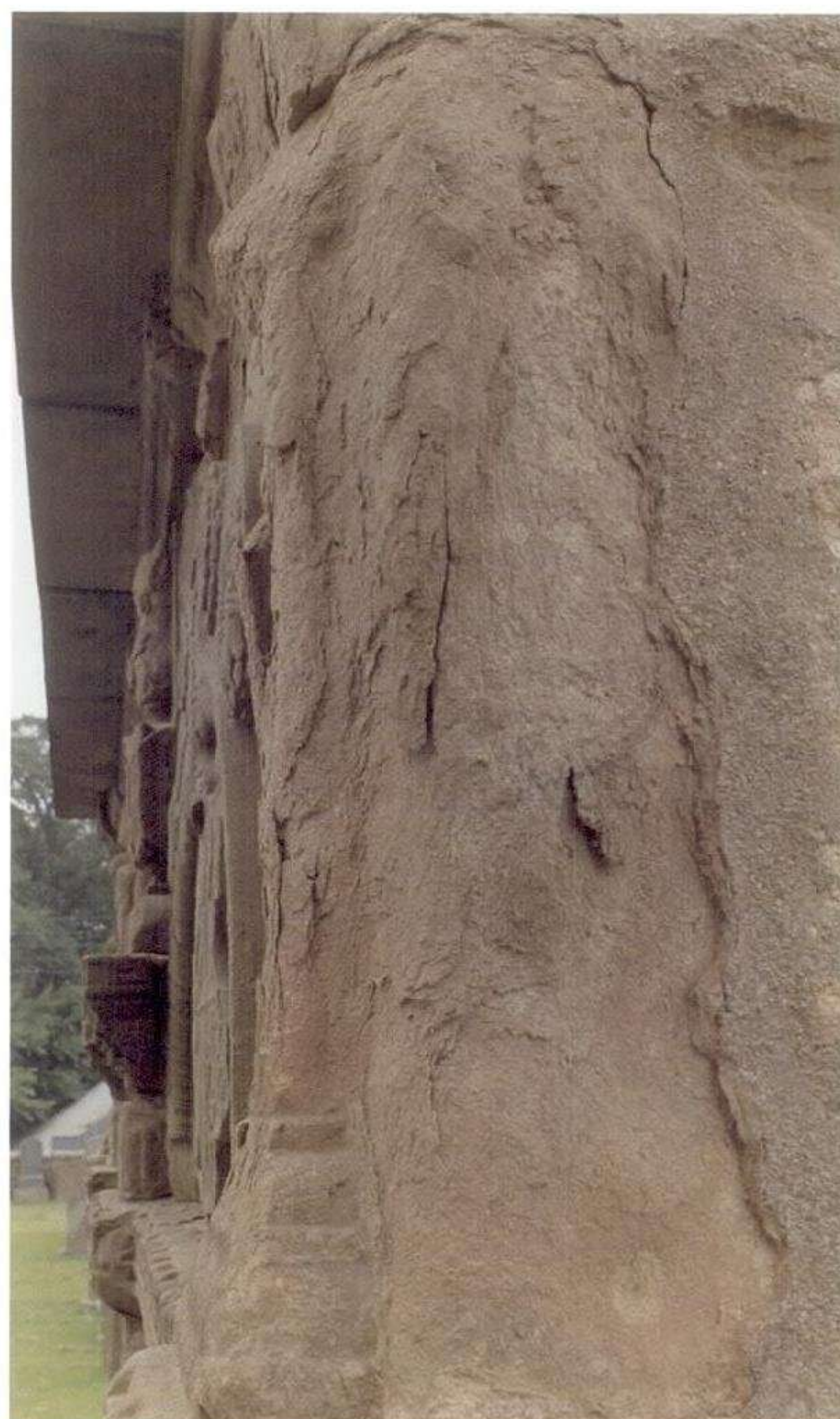
Following a detailed survey of the carving the most friable areas were faced with acid free tissue held to the stone with a cellulose based adhesive. This served to hold back friable areas whilst they were being consolidated. Injection of fluid resins took place through the tissue support after which it was removed with a solvent, in this case de-ionised water.

An acrylic resin was used for consolidating friable areas both as a fluid and as a mortar with micro balloons.

The advantages of using this particular method is that it can be removed at a later date through the application of an appropriate solvent if future intervention requires this.

The monument was repointed using a non-hydraulic lime mortar replacing a previously applied Portland cement mortar.

Follow up recommendations included setting up a maintenance programme and also inserting a lead DPM between the underside of the concrete coping and the memorial.



*Illus 5 Memorial before conservation*



*Illus 6 Memorial after conservation*

### Case Three

This final project I would like to present came about through an urgent need to address certain conservation problems associated with recumbent grave slabs predominantly in the Western Isles. This illustrates what can happen to these types of memorials over a considerable period of time. In situations such as this water ponding in the carving can occur and subsequent frost action can have a disastrous impact on the carved surface. Settlement of the memorial into the ground also takes place resulting in stress fractures and associated deterioration. Other damage can occur as a result of graveyard maintenance. Grass cutters and trimmers can have a serious impact on grave slabs.

In other situations, as at Kilmory, there are suitable buildings nearby - such as a derelict 13th century chapel, which have allowed interior displays to be created. This means that the stones remain in context with their surroundings with the added benefit of weather protection. This is in many ways the ideal solution but it is obviously not an option in every case for many reasons.

Another example can be seen at Ardchatten Priory although in this case a lean-to shelter was built with the frontage open to the elements. It is nonetheless quite effective in keeping off the worst of the weather.

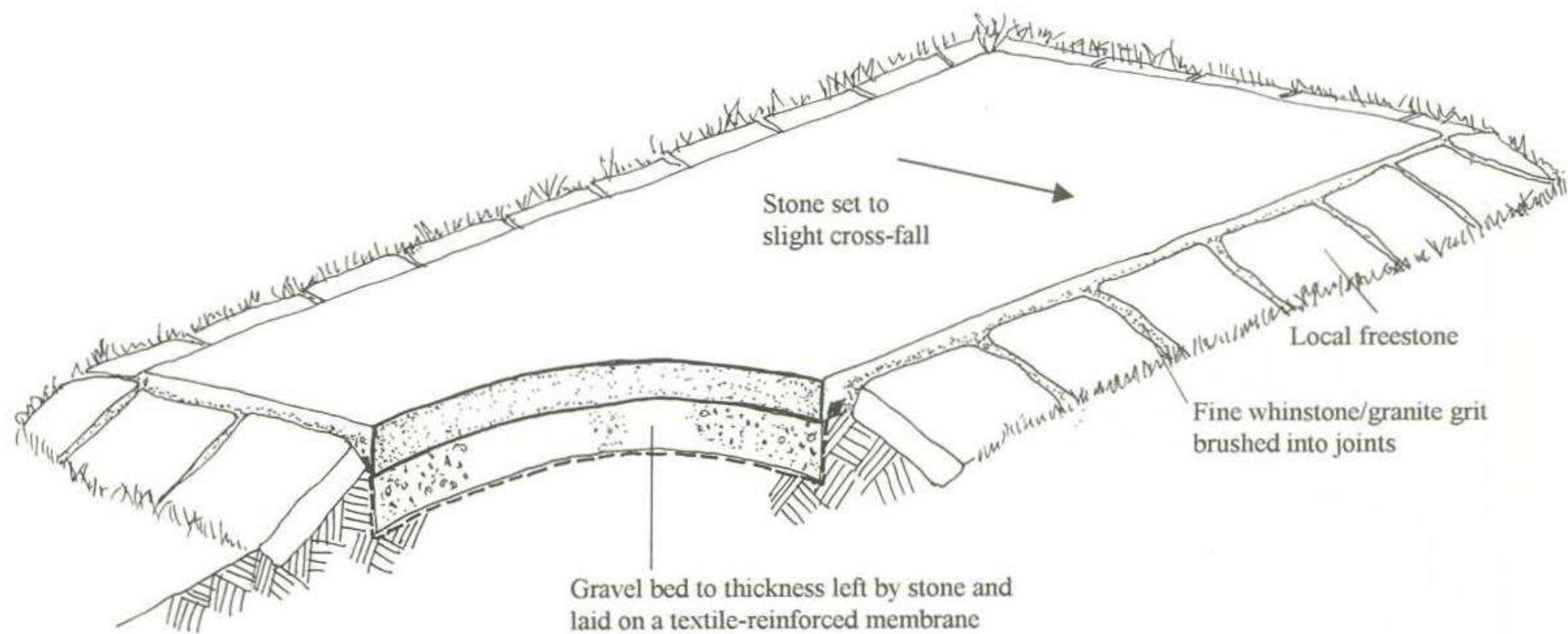
The other benefit of both these types of displays is that they allow interpretation boards to be placed next to the stones to make the displays more interesting to visitors.

Bearing in mind the difficulties of providing a shelter in every situation a scheme was developed by Historic Scotland to set up a pilot project to redisplay a dozen or so vulnerable West Highland graveslabs in five church yards around Islay.

Illus 7 illustrates the proposal for redisplaying the stones on their existing site. The stone is raised up on a washed gravel base over a fibre membrane. Small stones then ring the perimeter. A slight incline in the memorial allows better drainage of water from the surface. Whilst not as perfect a solution as a shelter, it is an improvement on the current situation. This display scheme virtually eliminates ground disturbance and allows the memorial to remain in its original location. The stones around the perimeter protect the edges from grass cutting machinery and also perhaps discourage the slabs from being walked over.

One of the major attractions of this scheme is that it can be carried out with a minimum of resources using locally sourced materials. The work can also be carried out by non-specialist operatives.

The pilot project was carried out with 'Scottish Conservation Projects' who managed a small team of



*Illus 7 Detail of bedding of the slabs*

volunteers on Islay. We came up with a method statement for the removal and resetting of the slabs and also for the preparation of the new base. As 'Scottish Conservation Projects' did not have the resources to provide specialist lifting equipment and was using volunteers of varying ages and ability we also had to devise a method for moving these substantial stones safely. The method adopted ultimately involved the use

of battons and padded rollers removing the need for any actual lifting. Nylon slings were used to pull the stones clear of the site whilst the preparatory work was being done.

These displays continue to perform well and ultimately with more resources could be extended to other vulnerable sites.



*Illus 8 Support and lifting of the graveslabs by volunteers*



*Illus 9 Volunteers complete the setting for the graveslab*

# NORTH BURIAL GROUND PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND, USA GRAVESTONE REPAIR PROJECT

ROBERT F MCMAHON, PROVIDENCE PARKS DEPARTMENT

## Background

Founded in 1636 by Roger Williams, the community of Providence, Rhode Island relied on family burial plots and a few church burying grounds until 1700 when the City's population growth required a public place for burying the community's dead. In response to this need, the North Burial Ground cemetery was established by city leaders for a "burying ground, military training, and other public purposes".

For almost a century and a half, North Burial Ground remained small, occupying 45 acres with only 14 acres used for burying. In response to the rural cemetery movement that took place in the 1830s and 1840s in America, in the 1850s Providence hired the firm of Atwater and Schubarth, a Providence surveying team, to design an expanded cemetery in a picturesque style with rolling topography, avenues, and extensive landscaping. The expanded cemetery design, relying heavily on the picturesque landscape design of Andrew Jackson Downing, became not only a peaceful final resting place for the dead, but a quiet and verdant environment for the living to escape the clamor and bustle of the city. By 1883, the cemetery had expanded to over 110 acres.

The North Burial Ground contains an eclectic collection of funerary sculpture spanning three centuries, ranging from simple direct burial markers in the "potter's field" free burial ground to the elaborate mausoleum structures of Providence's finest families. The cemetery's 105,000 gravestones represent a wide range of stones representing all periods of American gravestone styles and carvings. Slate and marble slabs are the predominant stones prior to 1880. Granite became the predominant stone after 1880 as nearby granite quarries opened in Westerly Rhode Island and in Quincy, Massachusetts. Sandstone and limestone gravestones are very rare in the cemetery, accounting for less than one per cent of the total. An examination of the 1900 Annual Report for the cemetery indicates that the cemetery overseers explicitly prohibited any markers made from "sandstone, limestone, or soapstone". It is not clear what 19th century experiences with these materials influenced cemetery management to ban these types of markers.

The gravestones, particularly the carvings on the stones, offer glimpses into the customs and culture of

the people who lived in Providence. Religious development, family and social structure, birth patterns, slave patterns, social and humanitarian attitudes - all can be gleaned from the North Burial Ground gravestones. The gravestones provide hundreds of stories about Providence history-stories about immigrant families who came to our city to make a better life, stories about families who lost a family member fighting for our country, stories about families who lost infant after infant to sickness and disease.

## Surveying Gravestone Problems

Operating primarily as an independent entity for most of its existence in Providence municipal government, the North Burial Ground's operations have recently been brought under day-to-day control of the Providence Parks Department. The Parks Department is faced with an enormous task of not only renovating the cemetery, which has fallen into disrepair, but also developing an entire new management system for operating and maintaining the cemetery. Of the many daunting tasks facing the Parks Department, one of the most critical and important areas of concern is the problem of gravestone repair. An initial survey by the Parks Department staff of the oldest section of the cemetery that includes about 20,000 gravestones revealed a need to repair 1,850 stones. See Illus 1 for a copy of the survey instrument used in the North Burial Ground.

The survey revealed a typical assortment of gravestone problems found in most old public cemeteries: tilting direct buried stones, stones with tilted bases, sunken stones with buried inscriptions, slate stones with various types of cracks and in various stages of delamination, stones with simple or complex fractures, stones with missing or chipped elements, and grave markers with soot or organic growth that threaten the integrity of the stone. Because of the relatively few sandstone markers in the North Burial Ground, very few problems of exfoliation were found. Most of the gravestone problems are a result of age and weather. The second most common cause of problems is careless grass-mowing operations. Finally, sporadic vandalism over a two decade period by neighborhood youth has also taken its toll on a couple of hundred grave markers.

**Survey and Treatment Record**

<p><b>MARKER</b></p> <p>LOCATION/ID:</p> <p>ORIENTATION:</p> <p>MARKER TYPE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Headstone (Rectangular, Arched, Arched w/Shoulders)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Footstone</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Perimeter Stone</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Monument</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other</li> </ul> <p>MARKER DIMENSIONS: H:    W:    D:</p> <p>BASE DIMENSIONS:    H:    W:    D:</p> <p>MATERIAL(S): Slate    Marble    Granite                            Zinc    Concrete    Other</p>	<p><b>CARVING</b></p> <p>CARVER:</p> <p>CARVING TYPE:</p> <p>CARVING CONDITON:          Clear    Worn    Illegible</p> <p>INSCRIPTIONS:          Front:</p> <p>Back:</p> <p>Foot:</p>
<p><b>MARKER CONDITIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Biological Growth:</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Staining/Surface Deposits:</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sugaring/Spalling:</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bedding Plane Cracking:</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other Cracks:</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fractured Elements:</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Losses:</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous Alignment:</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Foundation/Base:</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mower Scars:</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other:</li> </ul>	
<p><b>PREVIOUS REPAIRS</b></p>	<p><b>SITE IMPACTS ON MARKER</b></p> <p>Plants/Trees:</p> <p>Other:</p>
<p><b>SURVEY DATE:</b>                      <b>SURVEYED BY:</b></p>	
<p><b>PHOTOS:</b>    B&amp;W:                      Slides:</p>	

*Illus 1 North Burial Ground Gravestone Repair Project: Survey and Treatment Record Sheet*



**TREATMENT PERFORMED**

- Cleaning:
- Resetting slabs/direct burial:
- Resetting bases:
- Repairing bases:
- Resetting slabs to bases:
- Injecting cracks:
- Repairing simple fractures:
- Repairing complex fractures:
- Patching missing elements:
- Repairing delamination:
- Consolidation:
- Correcting previous repairs:
- Other:

**MATERIALS USED**

Cleaning:

Patching:

Injection:

Pigmentation:

Adhesives:

Base/foundation repair:

Pinning:

**TREATMENT DATE(S):**

**TREATMENT PERFORMED BY:**

**PHOTOS:**

ADDRESS:

B&W:

Slides:

PHONE/FAX/EMAIL:

*Illus 1 (continued)*

### **Developing a Process for Managing the Repairs**

We quickly learned that jumping from problem identification to repair is quite a leap. We discovered that there is no linear path in gravestone repair; rather, a complex set of decisions is required with cost and preservation issues looming at every turn. Frankly, the amount and diversity of gravestone repair problems overwhelmed us. With only limited funds each year available for repair, the task is daunting. Where to begin? We thought about attacking the problem on a geographic basis within the cemetery. We also considered doing all of the "easy repairs" first to make significant progress. Finally, after much consideration, we developed a process for determining repair priorities (see Illus 2). This approach enables us to develop a manageable schedule of priority repairs over time matching appropriate skills with required repairs.

The process for developing repair priorities is as good as the data collected in the survey. With good information, sorting of stone repairs can take place by types of repairs needed. Evaluating the information, however, requires the expertise of a stone conservator, particularly in determining the urgency of the repair. And assessing the significance of the stone and/or the inscription generally requires outside consultation with local historians and other local experts familiar with gravestone inscription lettering and design. For example, we have been made aware of a unique collection of grave markers in our cemetery of colonial era slaves. Normally, these slaves would have been buried in the free ground area, but reflecting the egalitarian roots of early Providence, they were buried in plots next to wealthy Providence families.

An important goal of the gravestone evaluation process is to match repair problems with appropriate repair skills. This is particularly important for us in Providence as we try to balance limited funding with the cost of hiring professional stone conservator. We have been fortunate in Providence to have an excellent conservation firm, ConservArt, Ltd. from nearby Connecticut, to work with us. Under supervision by a trained stone conservator, it is possible to use existing cemetery staff to handle certain types of gravestone repairs, namely re-setting tilting or buried stones and re-setting tilting bases. Volunteers are being trained to inject grout into cracks in slate markers to prevent seepage of rainwater into the stone.

### **Policies and Strategies for Selected Gravestone Repairs**

Policies and strategies to guide each type of gravestone repair problem facing us have been developed for the North Burial ground in conjunction with our stone

conservator. See Illus 3, 4, and 5 for case studies of typical repairs. Policies and strategies for some of the common repairs we face are briefly summarised below.

#### *Tilting Stones*

A few hundred North Burial Ground gravestones, mostly slate and marble slabs originally set without regard to adequate sub base material, are tilting at various degrees. Because any intervention in fixing a stone involves some degree of risk to the stone, we do not have a blanket fix-any-and-all-tilting-stones policy. Rather, we try to balance the risk of allowing the stone to remain in its tilting position with the potential risk of damage in re-setting the stone.

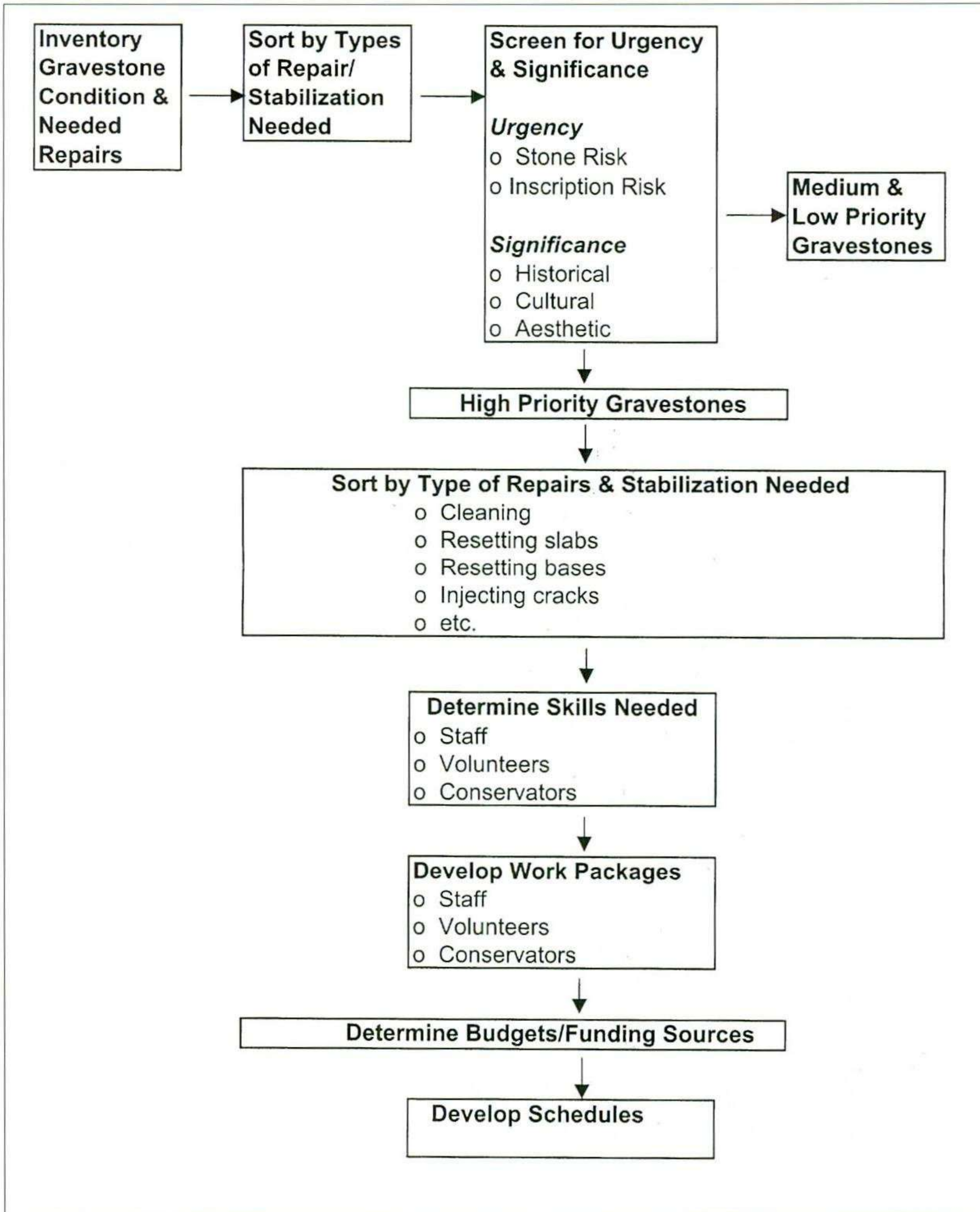
Generally, the following situations will compel us to re-set a tilting stone:

- the angle of tilt is so severe that the stone faces a high risk of toppling over;
- in marble stones, the tilting is stimulating inscription erosion at a greater rate than if the stone were completely plumb and vertical;
- the angle of tilt is so severe that the stone is extremely vulnerable to damage from grass cutting operations.

When re-setting marble and slate stones, the staff will over excavate the stone area and provide a base of 12-24" of pea stone gravel under the stone and 6" around the stone. This not only provides a more stable sub base, but also allows rainwater to drain away from the base of the stone, minimising capillary uptake of rainwater up through the stone.

#### *Cracked Slate Stones*

North Burial Ground has approximately 4,000 slate gravestones, ranging in size from 18" x 12" roughly hewn markers to 48" x 30" machine cut markers. The slate stones are the oldest stones in the cemetery and they depict some of the most exquisite incised inscriptions seen in Rhode Island graveyards. Because the natural bedding plane of slate stone is turned into a vertical position when used as a gravestone, the slate stones over time become susceptible to cracking and delamination from the effects of rainwater and the capillary uptake of ground water. Fortunately, less than 50 stones in our cemetery presently suffer from severe delamination. We have not yet begun any repairs of the delaminated slate stones. For the moderately delaminated stones, the repair will consist of ceramic pins drilled to re-connect the bedding planes and a cementitious grout. For the severely delaminated stones we have not yet determined a repair approach.

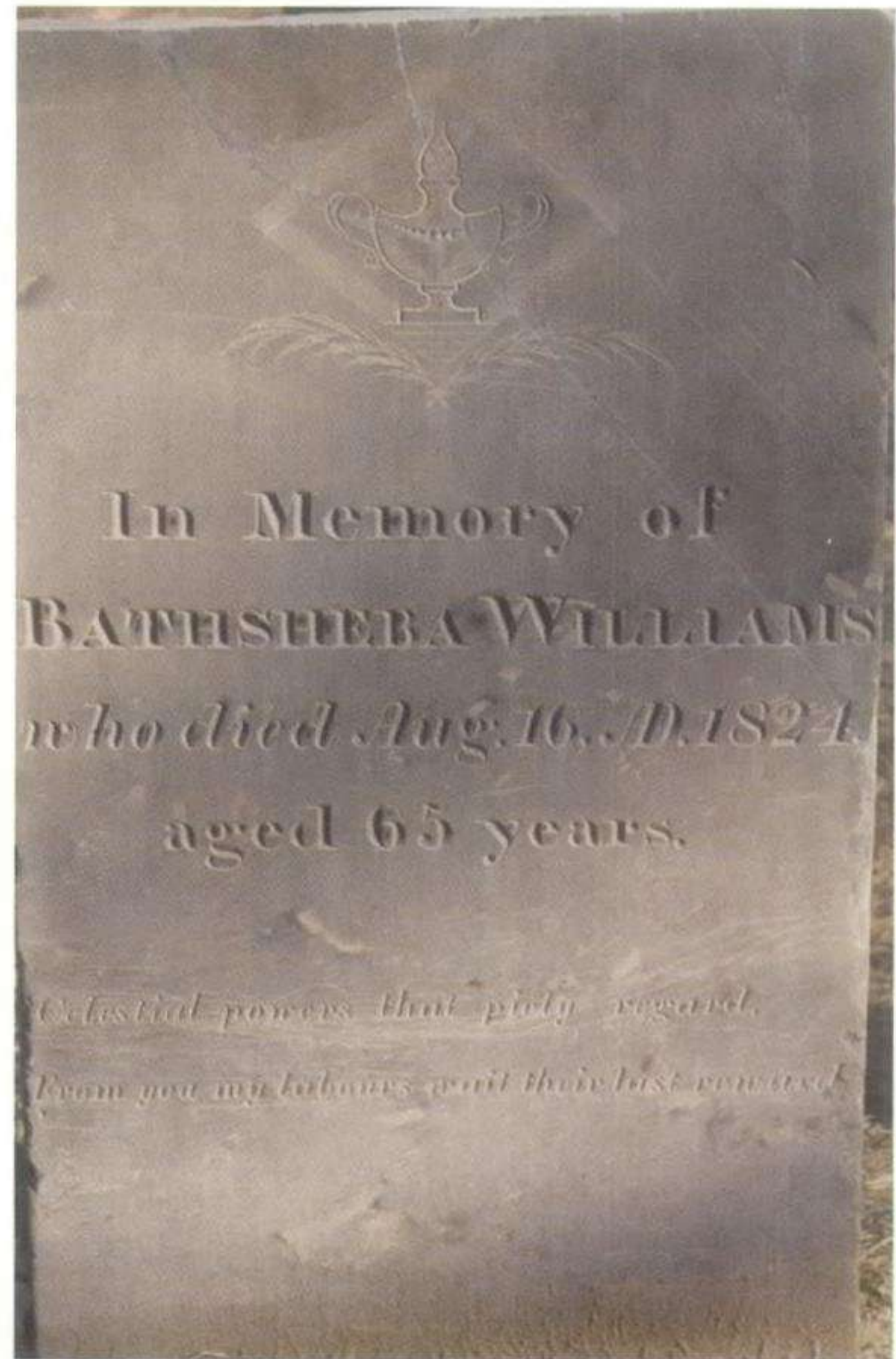


*Illus 2 Process for determining repair priorities*

**Problem:** Upper right hand portion of direct buried slate marker (30" x 18" x 1.5") representing about 20% of the stone has cracked on the diagonal and fallen off. The fracture is clean.

**Treatment:**

- Fracture cleaned with natural bristle brush and water.
- Jahn Restoration Adhesive applied to fracture area; given the relatively small size of the fragment relative to the rest of the stone, it was determined that pins were not required.
- Cleaned excess adhesive off of the stone face using sponge and water as soon as fragment aligned and plumb.
- Clamped the repaired fragment for 48 hours.

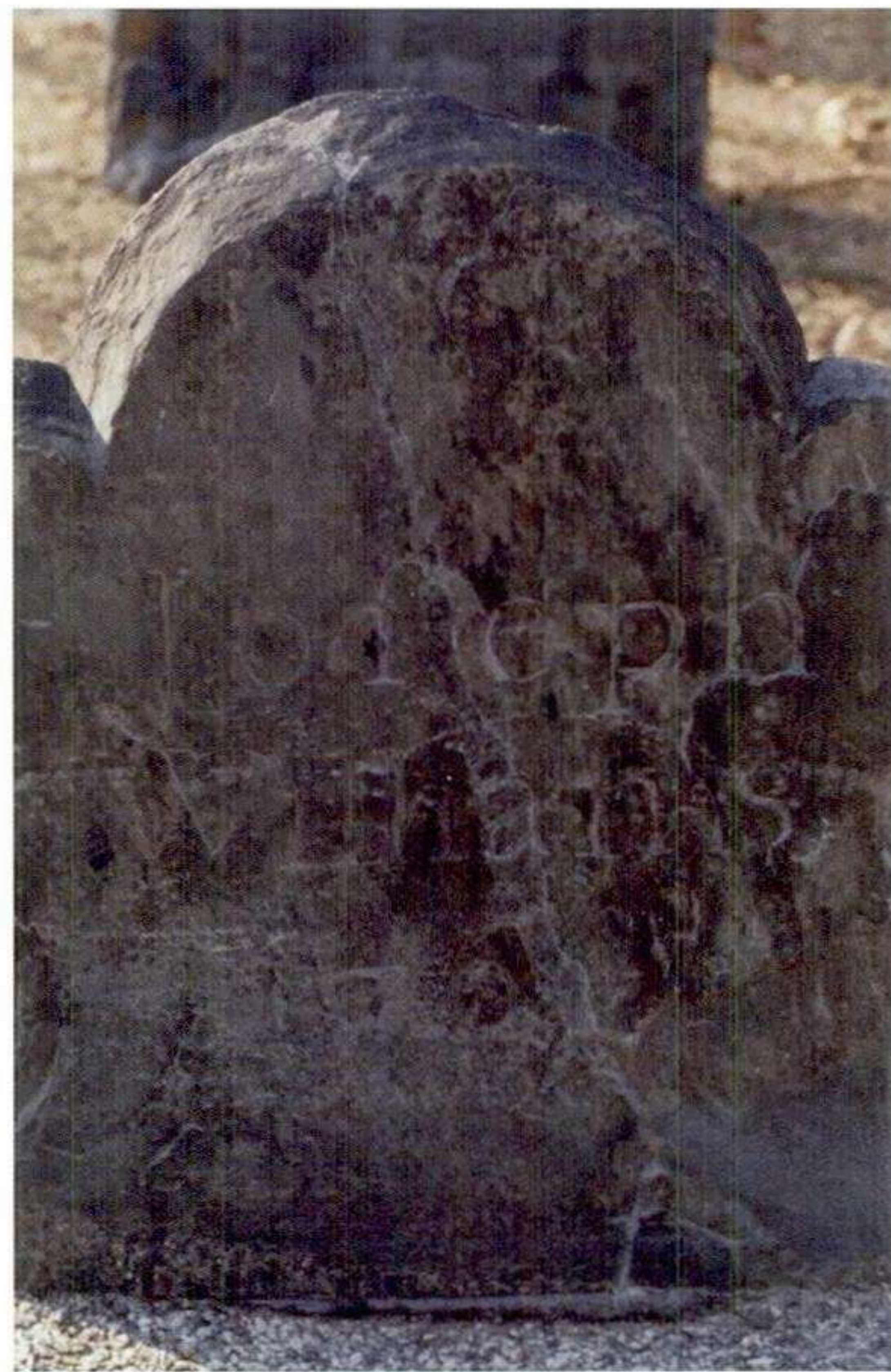


*Illus 3 Case study: repair of a simple slate marker fracture*

**Problems:** Tilting direct buried slate stone (approximately 18" x 15" x 2" ) with half buried inscription and a diagonal fracture running NW to SE; small portions of the stone surface area at the fracture line are missing; also a portion of the stone in the SE corner is missing.

**Treatment:**

- Stone carefully dug up; excavated an area 12" below base of stone and 6" around stone.
- Re-set stone over 12" sub base of pea stone; installed pea stone around all four sides of stone; installed stone dust finds in final 6" of area around the base of the stone.
- Re-attached fractured fragment to main stone using Jahn Restoration Adhesive; aligned fragment; cleaned adhesive overflow with sponge and water; installed 2 sets of clamps.
- Patched missing major fragment in SE corner using pigmented Jahn Patching Mortar.
- Applied pigmented Jahn crack injection grout to indented surface areas around fracture line; cleaned excess off of stone with sponge and water.

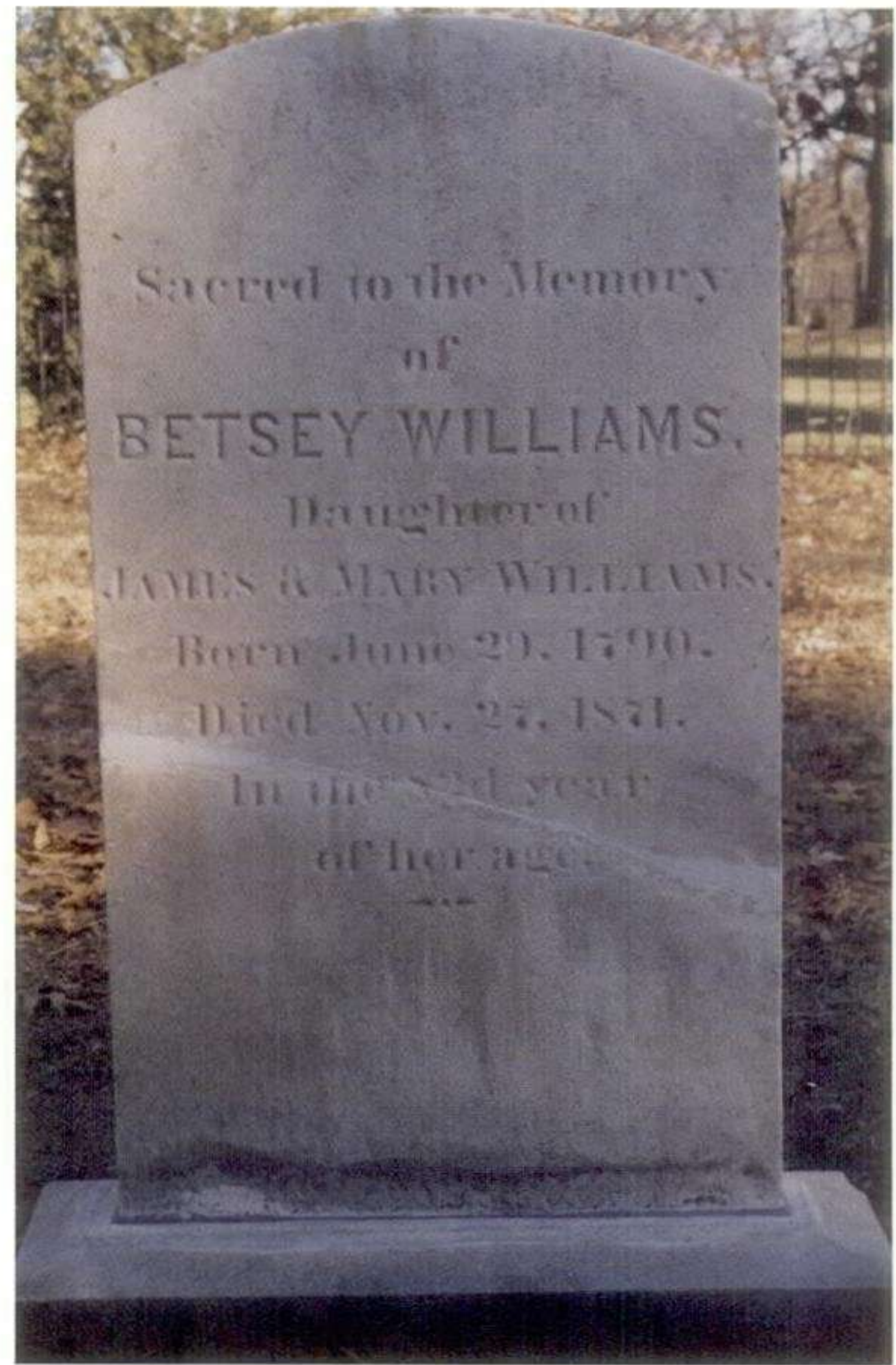


*Illus 4 Case study: repair of a sunken and fractured direct-burial slate marker*

**Problems:** Marble stone fractured diagonally across about 8" up from the base; upper portion of stone in storage; gravestone formerly direct burial; previous repair done several decades ago attached stone to granite base w/ 3/8" ferrous dowels and Portland concrete; expansion of dowels caused cracks in the bottom of stone; previous repair of fracture used ferrous pins and Portland cement; granite base improperly set on dirt has tilted with freeze/thaw cycle.

**Treatment:**

- Removed old ferrous pins and Portland concrete from the base.
- Removed bottom portion of stone and re-built it with Jahn patching mortar #120.
- Cleaned fracture line of old Portland concrete on upper and lower portions of stone.
- Re-set granite base over 12" of pea stone; drilled and cut out a 2" depth slot; drilled holes in slot for new stainless steel pins.
- Drilled holes in fracture line (upper and lower) for new pins.
- Re-attached lower stone into granite slot using lime putty and stainless steel pins.
- Re-attached upper stone to lower stone using Jahn adhesive and stainless steel pins.
- Cleaned excess adhesive off of marker surface with sponge and water.
- Tweaked alignment to attain a plumb stone.
- Applied several clamps
- Installed lead rope around joint of granite base and marble stone.



*Illus 5 Case study: repair of a fractured marble stone on tilted granite base*

A few hundred of our stones have an assortment of cracks that, if left untreated and open to water penetration, will eventually lead to severe cracks or delamination that may threaten the integrity of the stone. While these stones have been sorted through our process and rated moderate or low priority, we are putting together a programme to train volunteers to provide a preventative programme to inject existing cracks with a mineral based cementitious injection grout. We use the Jahn (a Netherlands firm) company's low viscosity injection products - Jahn M30, Jahn M40, and Jahn M50. The width of the cracks and voids dictates the selection of product used. The grout does not contain synthetic polymer bonding agents and is vapour permeable.



*Illus 6 Injecting cracks in stone*

We have found the crack injection process to be extremely time-consuming. Cracks are pre-wet first by injecting clean water with a syringe into the crack. The product is then injected into the crack until it flows out of the stone somewhere. Potters clay is used to dam up the sides of the stone to contain the grout and one works up the stone until all the cracks are filled. Any overflows are immediately cleaned up with sponge and water. Even stones with moderate cracking may take up to one to two hours to completely inject. Some of our stones have required several hours of treatment.

### *Fractured Stones*

The North Burial Ground has several hundred gravestones with an assortment of fractures to repair. Three examples are shown in the case studies in Illus 3, 4, and 5. The types of issues that we consider in each fracture repair are the following:

- When the fracture occurs where a previously applied repair with Portland cement was applied, the first task requires a thorough removal of this material. This chore is generally achieved by mechanical means and is laborious.
- Clean fractures with a precise fit of both fragments are rare but welcome; a simple cleaning of dirt and debris with water and a natural bristle brush are all that is generally required.
- One of the key decisions, of course, in repairing any fracture is whether to simply re-attach the fragments with adhesive or to also use pins. In our experience, this is a judgement call that depends on each stone. Factors affecting the decision include the location of the fracture on the stone, the size of the broken fragment in relation to the overall size of the stone, the thickness of the stone, the type of stone, and if the fracture is "clean".
- In Providence, we use Jahn Restoration Adhesive as our primary bonding adhesive for fracture repair. It is a mineral-based adhesive, is solvent free, is breathable allowing water vapors to pass through it, and it is frost resistant (an important consideration in the Providence climate). It cleans up easily with a sponge and water as long as it is done before the adhesive dries.
- In terms of pins, we primarily use stainless steel pins with the length and diameter depending on the repair. Our conservator is leery of nylon pins over the long term given the great thermal variations that Providence gravestones are subjected to.
- Some fractures do not, of course, have a clean break. In these cases we use a Jahn patching mortar, appropriate to whatever stone is being repaired, to fill in the gaps created by an irregular fracture. It is applied after the re-attachment and bracing is in place. Jahn has developed pigmented patching mortars that approximate the color of the stone to be repaired. In the case of slate stone repairs, we grind up slate finds with the patching mortar to achieve a closer color match.
- Often the fracture will obliterate a portion of the stone inscription. Our policy is to not attempt to re-carve the patched area with the missing inscription. It requires great will power to refrain from "filling in the missing blanks and complete the job", particularly when the lettering style is simple to duplicate.

### Lessons Learned So Far in the Providence Experience

The Parks Department has been actively involved in stone repair in the North Burial Ground for almost two years. During this time, we have achieved a modest amount of stone repair. More importantly, we have developed a solid framework for future repairs and have learned many lessons thus far. Some of these lessons are:

1. Protection - Protect what you have! It is cheaper and easier to prevent stone repair than to fix it. We have learned that lesson painfully. Twenty percent of our existing stone repairs were probably caused by grass mowing operations. It has required us to instill a new culture in our grass mowing operations to exercise caution over speed. It is difficult to achieve this cautionary approach consistently as the urge to "keep up with the grass" is often an overpowering one.

2. Planning - In a cemetery with lots of stones in need of repair, public pressure often stimulates the need to "just do it". It is difficult to sometimes resist this urge, but we have learned that good planning is critical if you want to achieve cost effective and mistake-free stone repair. In particular, you need to have solid assessments of the problem stones. You need to plan who will do what types of stone repair and you need detailed scopes of work for stone repair.

3. Policies - To avoid "making it up as you go along", you need to carefully consider and develop stone repair policies to guide gravestone repair before work begins. Re-carving missing inscriptions is a good example of the type of issue that needs to be guided by explicit policy and not by field decisions. More fundamentally, is the goal of the work to "repair" or to "restore"? The answer to this basic question has huge implications for your effort.

4. Perseverance - Stone conservation work is slow and tedious. And when the work is done on one stone, satisfaction is often limited if your eye is trained to see all of the remaining gravestone problems that still exist around you. There is no substitute, however, for stone repair work that is done right the first time.

5. Passion - It may be difficult to raise awareness about the importance of gravestone repair in the community. There are scores of competing interests for the limited funding that we have for stone repair for the North Burial Ground. You have to be passionate about the work and its importance. These old gravestones say a lot about our past generations - how they lived, how they struggled, and what they accomplished. How we act as custodians of these gravestones will say a lot about us.



# INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT: MOUNT AUBURN CEMETERY, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS, USA

ANGUS FRASER, PRESERVATION SERVICES MANAGER,  
MOUNT AUBURN CEMETERY

Founded in 1831, Mount Auburn is a private, non-profit cemetery occupying 174 acres in the cities of Cambridge and Watertown, Massachusetts. The Cemetery is located just north of the Charles River on a site that was, at the time of its founding, fairly remote from the fast expanding city center of early nineteenth century Boston. Mount Auburn was laid out as a rural cemetery on the model of Père Lachaise Cemetery on the outskirts of Paris and influenced by the designed landscapes of English country estates. From the outset Mount Auburn's landscape, with its winding paths and varying scenery, was designed to inspire contemplation of the sublime beauty of nature and our relationship to the natural world in life as well as death (see Illus 1). As an alternative to the crowded burial grounds of Boston, Mount Auburn was immediately popular. Great crowds came from the city to walk its paths and appreciate the gleaming white marble monuments with neoclassical detailing that were in great contrast to the carved slate tablets that were previously the norm in local graveyards. Within 15 years of Mount Auburn's founding, rural cemeteries were established near many major cities, and the way Americans commemorated their dead had changed forever.



*Illus 1 "Pilgrim Path," 1847 engraving by James Smillie, from Mount Auburn Illustrated. Classically inspired monuments on fenced lots juxtaposed with a wooded natural setting. Courtesy of Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Massachusetts*

Mount Auburn is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a Historic Landscape, significant for the layout of its grounds and its plant collections as well as the monuments marking the family burial lots of many significant figures of 19th and 20th century Boston. From the densely wooded landscape dotted with marble monuments in small clearings that

characterised the early years of the Cemetery's development, to the open, park-like design popular in the mid-twentieth century (see Illus 2), Mount Auburn's landscape is an invaluable record of changes in landscape design as well as changing tastes in funerary art. One can read this evolution when exploring the Cemetery grounds, and preserving this richly textured historical record for the benefit of future visitors has become an important aspect of the Cemetery's mission.

The materials of the monuments, headstones and other grave markers are similar to those found in rural and garden cemeteries throughout the eastern United States. The majority of the earliest monuments are of white marble, which was imported from Italy and quarried regionally in Vermont. Brownstone, a type of sandstone, was also quarried in New England along the Connecticut River valley, and was quite popular due to its ease of carving and usually uniform color. By the 1860s the technology for cutting and carving granite had improved, making it a logical choice for those seeking a stone with a reputation for durability in the harsh New England climate. Slate tablets, initially forbidden by the Cemetery due to their associations with the burial grounds, became popular during the Colonial Revival period in America near the turn of the century. The variety of materials and the range of symbolic motifs carved into the stones are inextricable elements of the landscape, revealing the relationship between the landscape and the social context in which it evolved.

In addition to thousands of historic monuments, there are several masonry structures on the site significant to the Cemetery's development. Buildings constructed in the nineteenth century include an imposing Egyptian Revival front gate (see Illus 3), two chapels and a granite tower atop the Cemetery's highest point, allowing fine views of the Boston skyline and the surrounding cities. Each of these buildings was conceived of as an integral part of the landscape and also represent changing architectural ideas and preferences.

Preserving the historic monuments and buildings that contribute to the character of this landscape has increasingly been a priority during the last ten years. Steps have been taken to develop a holistic approach that integrates the philosophy of preservation into the activities of all departments, from grounds



*Illus 2 Willow Pond Knoll. By the early twentieth century, cemeteries were becoming more like parks and monumentation was often de-emphasised. Courtesy of Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Massachusetts*

maintenance to repair and conservation of the built environment. Mount Auburn faces additional challenges as an active cemetery, and developing new interment space requires sensitive and careful design to blend with the historic character of older sections. Finding the proper balance between contemporary design and the historic patterns of development requires an awareness of the materials, scale and detailing of earlier monumentation.



*Illus 3 Front gate of Mount Auburn Cemetery, ca. 1863-1886. The imposing Egyptian Revival gate was constructed first in wood in 1832 and replaced in granite in 1843. Courtesy of Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Massachusetts*

### Master Plan

Preservation was a major focus during the two-year process of developing the Cemetery's master plan in the early 1990s. Proper planning was identified early on as essential for successfully integrating preservation into the long term goals of remaining an active

cemetery and continuing to maintain the kind of designed landscape envisioned by the founders a hundred and seventy years ago.

Several major components of the master plan contributed to the Cemetery's approach to preservation. The founding and subsequent development of the cemetery was documented in a Historic Landscape Report that summarised the context in which the Cemetery was founded and identified significant landscape features important to its development. The report contained a timeline that charted the development of the Cemetery's infrastructure and the construction and alterations to buildings and other structures.

A pilot study of twenty five of the Cemetery's most significant monuments accompanied the master plan. This study recorded the monuments through written description of the materials, design, and inscriptions and included a sketch drawing of the primary elevation. Biographical information was also included on the individual or family memorialised, and efforts were made to determine the stone's sculptor or carver. Finally, the overall condition of the monument was assessed and preliminary recommendations made regarding simple maintenance procedures as well as conservation treatments.

The pilot study also included recommendations for a more comprehensive approach to recording and preserving memorials in the historic core of the Cemetery. This area was deemed a priority because of the historic character of the landscape and the



*Illus 4 Monument to Amos Binney, by Thomas Crawford, from a stereo view c. 1870s. Courtesy of Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Massachusetts*



*Illus 5 Monument to Amos Binney as seen in 2000. Note erosion of sculpted features. Courtesy of Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Massachusetts*

deteriorated condition of the primarily marble monuments and headstones. These headstones, slowly eroding due to the deposition of acid rain and the harsh freeze and thaw cycles of New England winters, are slowly losing the finely carved surfaces common to large monuments marking family lots and smaller headstones marking individual graves. Polished white surfaces with crisp details have eroded into sugary stones with deteriorating or illegible inscriptions (see Illus 4 and 5). Recording these memorials and devising plans for their conservation was identified as major priority.

In order to document completely the structures set in the historic landscape, the report also included brief histories of each of the Cemetery's buildings and recommended further documentation and assessment of the historic chapels, front gate and tower. The loss of several smaller, yet significant, buildings in the last several decades due to deterioration as well as management decisions emphasised the need to plan for the preservation of these remaining buildings. A survey of the conditions of these buildings in 1996 identified necessary repairs and recommended regularly scheduled inspections and basic maintenance procedures. Finally, the master plan reiterated the Cemetery's commitment to preservation of the historic buildings and monuments as essential elements of the landscape and as cultural resources valuable to the community as a whole.

Implementation of many of the recommendations of the master plan has been slow, but in the ensuing decade preservation has become an important component of the operations of the cemetery as a whole. The complicated task of preserving the landscape has been approached with a spirit of cooperation and communication among the various departments.

#### **Cemetery Records and Archives**

The extensive records kept by Mount Auburn are invaluable resources for our preservation efforts as well as the research interests of scholars, genealogists, and the general public. Historic photos and maps, correspondence files, planting records and administrative files document the Cemetery's history from its founding. Archival storage of sensitive historic materials, primarily dating from the nineteenth century, has been underway for years and is made more accessible through careful cataloguing. Records discovered in these files have informed the planning and implementation of preservation related projects, and requests for information from outside sources are received and processed daily.

**MOUNT AUBURN CEMETERY MONUMENT AND MARKER SURVEY**

Date of Survey \_\_\_\_\_ Surveyor \_\_\_\_\_

Priority \_\_\_\_\_

Memorial buried (see lot card) \_\_\_\_\_

Memorial missing \_\_\_\_\_

**Information from Cemetery Records:**

Lot # \_\_\_\_\_  
Name(s) as recorded on marker \_\_\_\_\_

Reference # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Perpetual Care Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Image ID \_\_\_\_\_

Corresponding name(s) listed on Lot Card \_\_\_\_\_

Earliest Date of Interment \_\_\_\_\_

**Description:**

**Memorial function**

Central monument \_\_\_\_\_  
Grave marker \_\_\_\_\_

**Overall dimensions in inches**

Height (measured from ground) \_\_\_\_\_  
Width \_\_\_\_\_  
Depth \_\_\_\_\_

**Surface texture(s)**

Rough hewn \_\_\_\_\_  
Smooth \_\_\_\_\_  
Polished \_\_\_\_\_

**Orientation**



**Design elements: (check all that apply)**

Bench \_\_\_\_\_ Flush Marker \_\_\_\_\_ Monolithic tablet \_\_\_\_\_ Relief carving \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Boulder \_\_\_\_\_ Footstone \_\_\_\_\_ Horizontal \_\_\_\_\_ Sarcophagus \_\_\_\_\_ Tablet \_\_\_\_\_  
Canopy \_\_\_\_\_ Headstone \_\_\_\_\_ Vertical \_\_\_\_\_ Sculpture \_\_\_\_\_ Urn \_\_\_\_\_  
Column \_\_\_\_\_ Ledger Stone \_\_\_\_\_ Obelisk \_\_\_\_\_ Shaft \_\_\_\_\_  
Cross \_\_\_\_\_ Marker \_\_\_\_\_ Pedestal \_\_\_\_\_ Table \_\_\_\_\_

Describe \_\_\_\_\_

**Sketch stones**

Number of stones \_\_\_\_\_

**Carving/Inscribing**

Front \_\_\_\_\_ Top \_\_\_\_\_  
Back \_\_\_\_\_ Sides \_\_\_\_\_

**Inscribed text**

Front \_\_\_\_\_ Top \_\_\_\_\_  
Back \_\_\_\_\_ Sides \_\_\_\_\_

**Raised text**

Front \_\_\_\_\_ Top \_\_\_\_\_  
Back \_\_\_\_\_ Sides \_\_\_\_\_

Maker's mark \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTES:**

Mount Auburn Cemetery

Reference # \_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:**

**Primary material**

Bronze \_\_\_\_\_  
Granite \_\_\_\_\_  
Limestone \_\_\_\_\_  
Marble \_\_\_\_\_  
Puddingstone \_\_\_\_\_  
Rose quartz \_\_\_\_\_  
Sandstone \_\_\_\_\_  
Slate \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Not sure \_\_\_\_\_

**Base material (at foundation)**

No base \_\_\_\_\_  
Granite \_\_\_\_\_  
Limestone \_\_\_\_\_  
Marble \_\_\_\_\_  
Sandstone \_\_\_\_\_  
Slate \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Not sure \_\_\_\_\_

**Joint material**

Mortar \_\_\_\_\_  
Lead \_\_\_\_\_  
Caulk/sealant \_\_\_\_\_  
Not sure \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Metal elements**

Type of metal \_\_\_\_\_  
Plaque \_\_\_\_\_  
Urn \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Condition:**

**Overall cleanliness (please circle)**

1. Clean/no soiling
2. Limited light soiling, biological growth
3. Moderate soiling, biological growth
4. Dark soiling, biological growth
5. Heavy soiling and staining

Loose stones \_\_\_\_\_  
Memorial not plumb \_\_\_\_\_  
Memorial out of position \_\_\_\_\_  
Foundation visible \_\_\_\_\_  
Missing pieces \_\_\_\_\_  
Describe \_\_\_\_\_

**Evidence of vandalism**

Describe \_\_\_\_\_  
Evidence of past repairs \_\_\_\_\_  
Mortar patch \_\_\_\_\_  
Reattached pieces \_\_\_\_\_  
Rehoned surface \_\_\_\_\_  
Repointing \_\_\_\_\_

**Site conditions**

Close to road \_\_\_\_\_  
Encroaching plants \_\_\_\_\_  
Overhanging plants/trees \_\_\_\_\_  
Memorial sunken \_\_\_\_\_  
Displaced by roots \_\_\_\_\_

**Surface condition**

Chipped \_\_\_\_\_  
Small cracks \_\_\_\_\_  
Large cracks/fissures \_\_\_\_\_  
Blistering/flaking \_\_\_\_\_  
Delaminating \_\_\_\_\_  
Surface loss \_\_\_\_\_  
Spalling \_\_\_\_\_  
Sugaring \_\_\_\_\_  
Severely weathered/eroded \_\_\_\_\_  
Mower/trimmer damage \_\_\_\_\_

**Biological activity**

Algal growth \_\_\_\_\_  
Lichen \_\_\_\_\_  
Moss \_\_\_\_\_  
Staining \_\_\_\_\_  
Efflorescence \_\_\_\_\_  
Gypsum crust \_\_\_\_\_  
Metal staining \_\_\_\_\_  
Ferrous \_\_\_\_\_  
Bronze \_\_\_\_\_  
Soiling \_\_\_\_\_

**Joint condition**

All sound/good \_\_\_\_\_  
Limited cracking \_\_\_\_\_  
Some cracked/open \_\_\_\_\_  
Majority cracked/open \_\_\_\_\_  
No joint material \_\_\_\_\_

**Condition of text**

Clear and sharp \_\_\_\_\_  
Clear with slight deterioration \_\_\_\_\_  
Difficult to read \_\_\_\_\_  
Traces \_\_\_\_\_  
Illegible \_\_\_\_\_

**Bronze condition**

Little/no corrosion \_\_\_\_\_  
Green corrosion \_\_\_\_\_  
Significant pitting \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTES:**

Illus 6 and 7 Monument and marker survey form, pages 1 and 2. Courtesy of Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Massachusetts

### **Monuments, Mausolea and Memorials**

The first priority in our preservation programme has been to inventory and document the tens of thousands of monuments and headstones. The Cemetery has worked with preservation classes and student interns from nearby universities to create a survey form and database (see Illus 6 and 7). Interns continue to perform the fieldwork, starting in the earliest and most central section of the Cemetery. The slow process of recording each grave marker was begun only two years ago, and is expected to continue over the next several years.

Field work begins by gathering basic information from the cemetery records on who is buried in each lot, how many headstones should be there, and in some cases how the stones have been cared for over the years. This information is checked for accuracy in the field and discrepancies are recorded on the survey form. Information on the materials and design of the memorial is also collected, followed by its current condition. As much information as possible is collected using checkboxes and written lists of options in order to improve consistency, simplify data entry and to correspond with the database. Finally, the memorial is digitally photographed on all sides. In order to minimise the risk of losing electronic information due to accident or obsolescence of computer software, hard copies of the survey forms are filed, and black and white photographs are taken of many of the significant monuments and headstones.

The survey allows us not only to document each headstone, but also to catch loose, leaning, or severely deteriorated stones that may pose a threat to visitors or workers. Imminent safety concerns are addressed immediately, while other damaged stones are put on a list of priority repairs. This data on damaged stones can be sorted by area, material and condition, allowing us to plan and budget in advance for allocating in-house resources or for contracting with conservators.

#### ***Stone cleaning***

Our stone washing philosophy is dictated partially by the fundamentals of conservation and partially by the realities of our contractual obligations to lot owners. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Cemetery had begun selling "perpetual care" contracts in lieu of charging annually for cutting grass, caring for plantings and maintaining headstones and cast iron lot fences. These contracts generally specified periodic washing of headstones and repointing or resetting when necessary. For decades, stones covered under these contracts were washed on a 5-7 year cycle using a variety of aggressive cleaning methods. In the past ten years, the most fragile stones, often marble or brownstone, have been excluded from washing and the

cycle of cleaning has been slowed considerably. While the debate in the conservation community over whether and when to clean stone continues, lot owners have developed aesthetic expectations regarding the memorials to their ancestors and Mount Auburn has had to develop a sensitive approach to addressing numerous cleaning requests.

Our responsibilities to lot owners and for preserving these resources have necessitated educating the public and ourselves about appropriate methods for cleaning stone. Before responding to an owner's request, we discuss with them our approach and try to establish a realistic level of cleanliness for each stone. We start with the gentlest method available to achieve acceptable results, moving on to more aggressive methods only after determining the options and spot testing. In addition to satisfying the wishes of the lot owners and maintaining sensitivity to the long term effects on the resource, we have to balance concerns for the effects of cleaning materials on the environment, worker safety, and cost when addressing a high volume of cleaning requests.

#### ***Stone Repairs***

The Cemetery is also working hard to develop the in-house skills to address stone repairs in sensitive and appropriate ways. Staff training and consultation with conservators will ensure that we use techniques that are compatible with the materials and construction of each monument. The position of Conservation Technician was developed to carry out these masonry repairs and other maintenance procedures. With increased training in appropriate stone repair techniques, we are also better able to review proposals when contracting out conservation projects involving our most significant monuments and mausolea. We can proactively work with conservators to develop specifications that meet realistic goals and expectations for each project.

#### ***Monument-friendly horticultural practices***

Much of Mount Auburn's popularity among visitors results from the care with which it maintains its grounds. The Cemetery's horticultural collection attracts visitors from around the region and country, yet it requires intensive grounds maintenance throughout the year. In the past, care of the grounds has conflicted with preservation of the built environment. Granite curbs and lot enclosures made grass cutting difficult and inefficient, mowers and other landscape maintenance vehicles posed a threat to fragile headstones, and the use of fertilizers and chemicals contributed to stone deterioration. Great efforts have been made to institute creative horticultural practices that protect the memorials while achieving a high standard of care for the plant collections. In many

instances, an increased emphasis on environmentally friendly procedures has also benefited the monuments. All of these efforts play a preventative role in the preservation of the monuments and will, in the long run, contribute greatly to their protection.

### *Tree care*

Some of the larger oaks on the grounds predate the Cemetery's founding. These trees and others have historical associations of their own, and their continued care is a priority on many levels. Fortunately, yearly pruning benefits the monuments by eliminating the hazard of dead or dying branches, and periodic inspections help ensure that healthy trees will endure high winds and severe storms. In order to preserve significant monuments, the help of the tree crew has been enlisted to inspect and prune overhanging branches to allow more sunlight and air circulation around the stones.

### *Mowing*

The careless use of mowing equipment poses a much more serious threat to fragile grave marker than the natural slow deterioration of carved stone (see Illus 8). Mount Auburn has taken numerous steps to address this obvious threat, and in doing so has markedly reduced the number of headstones damaged by this regular activity. Mowers are provided with cushioned bumpers to prevent damage when contact does occur. In addition, each mower is painted so damage or scrapes on memorials can be traced back to the operator who is held responsible for infractions. Fortunately, our operators are extensively trained and highly skilled at maneuvering the modern mowing equipment, and in recent years damage has been a rarity.

Other approaches involve decreasing the number of times grass must be mowed in a season by experimenting with dwarf fescues and allowing some areas to grow taller before cutting. The longer grass actually creates a historic look closer to that seen in photos from the 19th century than what we are used to in our age of highly manicured turf. These landscape management decisions ultimately benefit preservation of the memorials by decreasing the amount of mower traffic over the course of a season.

Underground tombs, often in the shape of brick barrel vaults buried from one to six feet beneath the surface, have been identified, mapped and marked to prevent turf vehicles from running over them. Ground covers have been planted over many to mark their location, decrease landscape maintenance, and reduce erosion. In other locations, ground covers and ivy have been cut back from monuments to prevent damage from the

plant's growth and reduce moisture held against the monument. Other considerations often influence maintenance decisions, though, and climbing plants have been allowed to grow in some instances due to the original aesthetic intent of the designer or, in at least one case, due to the rarity of the plant species in the northeastern United States.

Despite the mulching of leaves and grass clippings,



*Illus 8 Mower damage. The careless operation of mowers poses a serious threat to grave markers. Courtesy of Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Massachusetts*

fertilizers are periodically used in some sections of the Cemetery. In order to reduce direct contact with the stones, the slow release pellets are blown off the memorials directly after they are spread. The use of pesticides and herbicides in the Cemetery is currently rare, and any products that are used are assessed and tested prior to application to determine potential effects on the memorials. Although work remains to be done in balancing some plant care procedures with sensitive management of the built resource, the spirit of cooperation has had a great impact in a relatively short period of time.

### **Cemetery Development**

The Cemetery has a history of reviewing the materials and design of headstones and monuments placed in family owned lots. This practice has continued, with current guidelines that identify historically sensitive areas where upright memorials are restricted, while in other historic areas memorials are reviewed to ensure that their size and scale are appropriate for their surroundings. These guidelines are intentionally flexible, but the need to limit the density of headstones in order to preserve the character of the landscape requires this type of review.

As an active cemetery, Mount Auburn relies on income from the sale of interment space to support its

operations. One area that the Cemetery has made significant progress in recent years is in the sensitive development of new burial space. Preserving the character of the oldest sections of the Cemetery has been a major concern in designing shared memorials sensitive to their historic settings, yet noticeably modern and expressive of current tastes and trends. The size, scale and materials of new monument proposals are assessed to ensure that they are consistent with their physical context. It is important, though, that the monuments for newly developed areas within or adjacent to older sections be contemporary in their design, rather than overtly derived from a particular historic style or type.

### **Interpretive Programmes**

Mount Auburn has devoted considerable effort to developing interpretive materials and programmes for the benefit of its thousands of visitors each year. In addition to family members of those buried at Mount Auburn and regular visitors from the Boston area, we receive school groups, senior clubs, garden clubs, bird-watching groups, and students of graveyard and cemetery history. Each individual or group may have a different focus for their visit, but some aspect of the Cemetery's history always informs their appreciation of the site. Staff or volunteer led walks, self-guided tours and interpretive displays all contribute to our educational programs.

Depending on the interests of visiting groups, prearranged tours are often lead by horticulture, interpretive or preservation department staff members. We have also developed a driving tour and two walking tours on cassettes that lead visitors through the landscape at their own pace. We are in the process of installing a limited number of interpretive signs with text and historic images to explain the Cemetery's founding and illustrate its evolution over the years. Finally, we have received a grant to design and install displays in a visitor center housed in one of the

nineteenth century chapels. These displays will more fully explain the historical and social context that gave rise to the rural cemetery movement in the early nineteenth century.

In order to reach out to visitors and encourage support of our ongoing preservation efforts, Mount Auburn established a non-profit Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery organization. This organization allows us to raise awareness of landscape preservation issues and to raise money for specific projects. In addition, the numerous public programmes on a variety of topics lead by staff members and volunteers are advertised in a seasonal newsletter distributed to the Friends membership. Programmes on the founding and development of the Cemetery, prominent historical figures buried here, and the evolution of tastes in funerary art all educate visitors and generate support for preservation of the landscape and its historical components.

### **Conclusion**

Mount Auburn staff members try to connect frequently with managers of other cemeteries, historic sites and public gardens in order to share our experiences in integrating preservation with other landscape management concerns. Participation in conferences and workshops provides us with opportunities to relate our successes and failures while learning from the approaches used by other organizations. As Historic Scotland and similar institutions in the United States raise awareness of the cultural value of our historic graveyards and cemeteries, we all benefit from the increased support for their preservation. By maintaining relationships with involved individuals and organizations, Mount Auburn hopes to contribute to this preservation effort while improving the stewardship of its historic landscape for the future benefit of the broader community.

## REMEMBERING THE DEAD AT TARBAT: CARING, RECORDING, COMMUNICATING

PROFESSOR MARTIN CARVER, DEPT OF ARCHAEOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Investigations at Portmahomack, Tarbat Ness, Easter Ross offer a sequence of 14 centuries of memorials. In a monastic cemetery beginning in the 6th century, graves were marked with a simple cross. In the mid 8th century we see a grand sarcophagus carved with animals in relief. In about 800, a monumental memorial cross slab was erected which combined monastic and secular themes and remembered the dead with a Latin inscription. Memorials are next adopted

in the 14-15th century, with recumbent slabs, and at the Reformation with cartouches in the church wall. The sequence continues in the graveyard with the great Dingwall Memorial (17th century) and numerous stone memorials of the 18-20th century.

The research programme at Tarbat is studying this varied rhythm of investment; conserving and recording the 400 carved stones and learning to communicate their messages to the visiting public.



*Illus 1 Graveyard at Tarbat*



## THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON CARVED STONES IN SCOTLAND

JOHN HIGGITT, CHAIRMAN, NCCSS

I am very pleased to have this opportunity to say a few words about the role of the National Committee on Carved Stones in Scotland. The NCCSS was set up in 1993 in response to a feeling that there was a pressing need to co-ordinate work on the preservation and publication of carved stones in Scotland. We have defined our principal aims as being "to draw attention to the threats to Scottish carved stones of all periods, to promote their understanding and appreciation, and to encourage a common approach to their recording and preservation." The committee consists of representatives of national organizations that have a responsibility for the preservation or recording of carved stones, a number of co-opted members, including Susan Buckham, the Carved Stones Adviser now working under the auspices of the Council for Scottish Archaeology, who is also speaking at today's seminar, and an independent chair. The organizations represented are the following:

- Association of Regional and Island Archaeologists
- Historic Scotland
- Council for Scottish Archaeology
- Institute of Historic Building Conservation (Scotland)
- National Museums of Scotland
- National Trust for Scotland
- Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, incorporating the National Monuments Record for Scotland
- Scottish Museums Council
- Society of Antiquaries of Scotland

We feel that it is very important that the NCCSS is an independent committee. The downside of this is that we receive no funding, which of course limits the amount of work that we can take on. We have, however, been greatly assisted throughout by various organizations and individuals and in particular by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, by Historic Scotland and by the National Museums of Scotland. We have recently, with the generous support of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, appointed two volunteer assistants.

In July 1994 we agreed a set of Principles of Recording and Preservation. These Principles, which were a preliminary attempt to agree principles of good practice, have formed the background to the policy and publications of the NCCSS.

Whilst the committee sees its principal roles as promoting co-ordinated approaches to the recording and preservation of carved stones and as helping to raise awareness of issues relating to carved stones, it also serves a very valuable and stimulating role in the exchange of information and ideas.

In trying to raise awareness of the issues, to promote good practice, and to seek practical solutions, the NCCSS has published two leaflets: *Carved Stones in Scotland: Threats and Protection* and *Protecting and Caring for Historic Carved Stones in Scotland*. In 1997 it also published, in association with Historic Scotland, an attractive and useful booklet by two of its members Tom E. Gray and Lesley M. Ferguson, *Photographing Carved Stones: a Practical Guide to Recording Scotland's Past* (Pinkfoot Press, Balgavies, Angus; ISBN 1 874012 14 8).

The NCCSS is concerned with the preservation and recording of carved stones of all periods but has had a special interest in the question of carved stones in historic graveyards. In 1995 it organized, in association with Historic Scotland and with the participation, help and advice of Betty Willsher, a very successful day seminar on post-Reformation graveyards in Scotland. It welcomes the publication of the Historic Scotland's Guide for Practitioners 2, *Conservation of Historic Graveyards*, and its promotion of research into the decay of carved stones through its Carved Stone Decay in Scotland recording forms.

Lack of funding and the limited time of members have limited the public role of the NCCSS but we are now preparing a web-site, with the help of the National Museums of Scotland and of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. The web-site is being designed by Craig Angus of the Department of Archaeology of the Museum of Scotland and shall be launched early in 2003. I am very grateful to Craig Angus for all the work that he has put into designing an attractively illustrated web-site. We would like the web-site to be a useful starting point for anyone looking for information or advice on the recording or the preservation of carved stones. The aim would not be to answer all possible questions but to guide users to where they can find the information that they want. It will be particularly important to provide information and links for organizations working on various aspects

of Scotland's carved stones. We hope too to give the site a more general interest by listing principal carved stones and collections and by suggesting further reading and web-sites. We are now in the final stages of preparation of the web-site and once it is launched we would be very grateful for suggestions on the contents, on useful links and for information on current projects concerned with historic graveyards for inclusion on the News page.

The National Committee on Carved Stones in Scotland may be contacted at the following address:

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## CARVED STONES ADVISER PROJECT: NEW INITIATIVES IN THE RECORDING AND CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC GRAVEYARDS

DR SUSAN BUCKHAM, CARVED STONES ADVISER, CSA

A Carved Stones Adviser was appointed at the Council for Scottish Archaeology (CSA) in 2001. The adviser's role is to promote good practice in graveyard recording and conservation and to gather information to assist the future management, survey and protection of the nation's burial grounds. Graveyards represent one facet of Scotland's rich heritage of carved stones. Since many common issues exist between the preservation of graveyard memorials and other types of stones, the adviser also has a more general remit to support the protection of all forms of carved stones. The post is funded by Historic Scotland, with advisory support provided by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS), the National Committee on Carved Stones in Scotland (NCCSS) and from 2002 onward, the Institute of Burial and Cremation Administration (IBCA).

Not least of all contributions to Scotland's graveyards has been made by the voluntary sector. Family History Societies, such as the Scottish Genealogy Society, have drawn attention to the historic value of gravestones through their widespread recording of memorial inscriptions. Equally, the pioneering work of Betty Willsher has led the way in creating a wider appreciation of the cultural and historical value of graveyards and the importance of capturing the fullest amount of information from gravestones using a detailed and comprehensive recording methodology. In 1985, the CSA collaborated with Betty Willsher to publish two key works *How to Record Scottish Graveyards* and *Understanding Scottish Graveyards*. RCAHMS has provided guidance and materials to many volunteer recorders and holds the primary archive for graveyard surveys, which are available for public consultation through the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS). Within the extensive collections of the NMRS, there is material for almost one thousand of Scotland's graveyards.



*Illus 1 Detail of a headstone in Warriston Cemetery, Edinburgh*

### Carved Stones Adviser Project Aims and Objectives

The appointment of a Carved Stones Adviser reflects a mounting appreciation of the value and vulnerability of one of Scotland's most tangible links to its past: its historic graveyards. The post is the first of its kind in the Britain, yet as with many 'new' initiatives, its emergence is the culmination of long-standing endeavours. It is worth briefly reviewing these efforts as they provide a key summary of the identities and priorities of the main parties with a vested interest in the nation's graveyards, and highlight the resources available to the Carved Stones Adviser Project.



*Illus 2 The inscription on this headstone has been completely lost as a result of delamination of the stone*

In 1999, the Technical, Conservation, Research and Education (TCRE) division of Historic Scotland commissioned the National Assessment of Gravestones and Graveyards. This project examined the ability for completed survey work to provide information on the condition and on the significance of the nation's burial grounds. The study concluded that desktop analysis could not be used to assess graveyard and gravestone condition and was of limited value in determining significance. This finding reflects the fact that surveyors rarely recorded information on condition, as well as problems arising from the lack of compatibility between different survey methods and archiving procedures.

Graveyard surveys are not presently consistently deposited within a single national archive and at a local level survey records may be housed in any number of different locations. More generally, anecdotal evidence suggests that many surveys are never published or made available for public consultation. The difficulty of locating completed survey work limits its use by others and increases the likelihood of work being duplicated. The absence of a commonly adopted system to record gravestones also inhibits the wider application of collected data. Total standardisation between recording approaches is difficult to achieve in practice due to the range of motives for undertaking survey work. The decision to partially survey gravestones, for example by only recording a memorial's inscription, does not in itself present the most significant problem. Instead, difficulties arise from the lack of any consistently adopted minimum standards to record individual aspects of gravestone data and the absence of an agreed terminology for describing gravestone features. This diversity of approach means that there is no common basis for existing survey information to be put together to study graveyards and their monuments at a regional or national level.

The work of national heritage bodies has established significant priorities for graveyard conservation and policy. In 1992, Historic Scotland produced a policy statement *Carved Stones: Historic Scotland's Policy*, which included a programme for action to protect all forms of carved stones, including gravestones. This statement emphasised the need to better appreciate which groups of stones are at greatest threat to ensure that resources available for conservation are most effectively targeted upon the basis of risk as well as cultural significance. In 1995, the NCCSS undertook a survey of local authorities and found an absence of specific policies relating to carved stones in local authority care. The study did show however that many councils were independently pursuing recording programmes or information gathering exercises for monuments in their own area. In 1994, TCRE

formulated a nation-wide survey project, Carved Stone Decay in Scotland, designed to gather information using volunteer surveyors on the current state of carved stones. This project provided local authorities and heritage bodies with the means to calculate the scale of the problems facing carved stones and to identify the main factors responsible for their deterioration.



*Illus 3 Controlling vegetation in graveyards is one of many maintenance tasks that will be organised by cemetery managers*

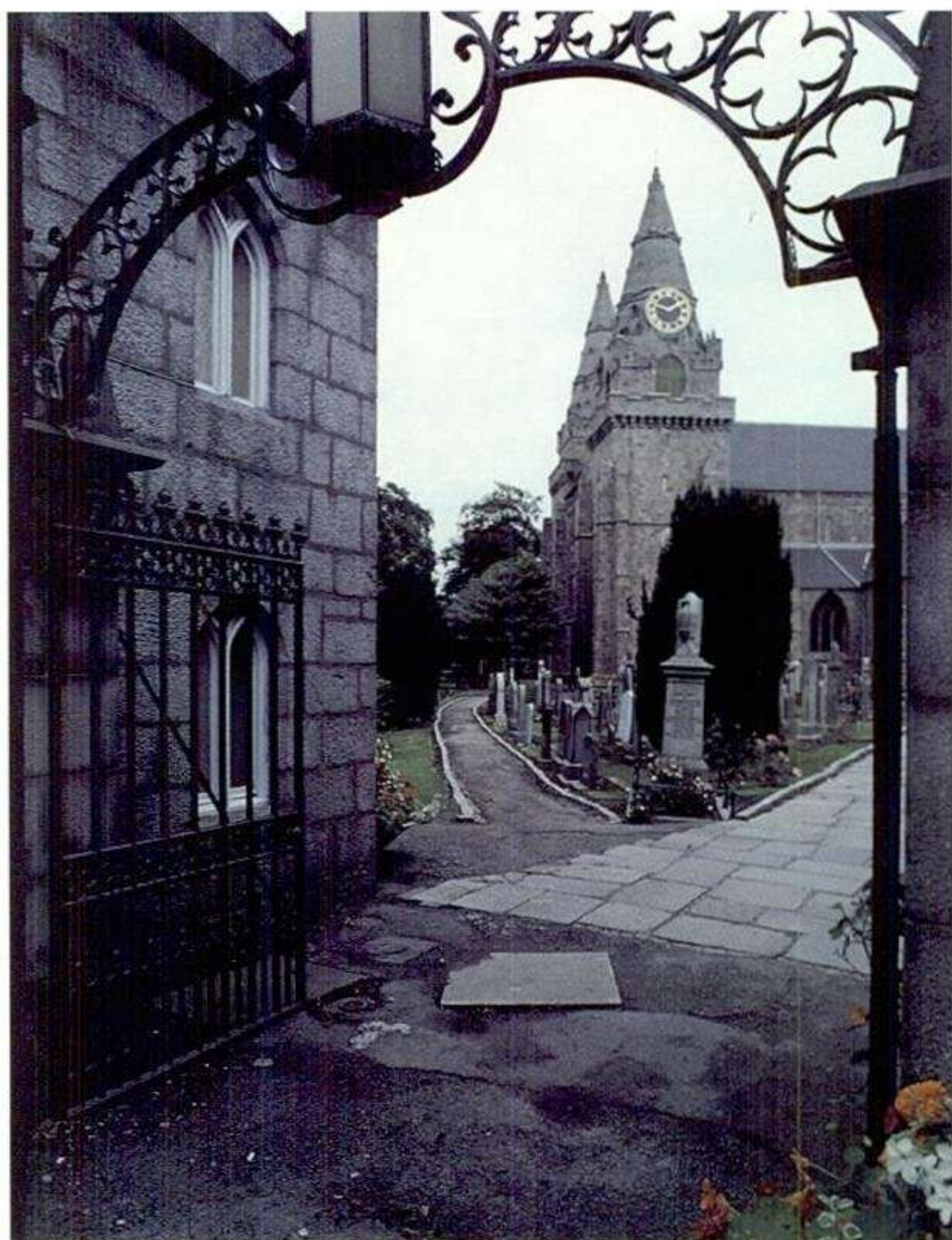
As well as being discussed under the broader remit of carved stones, specific consideration has been given to conservation of gravestones and their setting. In 1997, TCRE initiated a research programme for graveyard conservation, which was specifically designed to assist graveyard management. The detailed technical guidance developed was published as the Practitioners' Guide to the *Conservation of Historic Graveyards* in 2001.

On the 9th of February 1999, a joint meeting of the Ancient Monuments Board (AMB) and the Historic Buildings Council (HBC) convened to discuss issues relating to post-Reformation gravestones. Both bodies jointly endorsement the significance of post-Reformation gravestones as a facet of the historic environment and one of their recommendations for their future protection was the appointment of a Carved

Stones Adviser. In 2000, the AMB took the preservation and presentation of Christian monuments as its year's theme. The AMB welcomed the appointment of a Carved Stones Adviser and emphasised the strategic role of this post in advising local authorities to follow good practice in graveyard management. In their annual report the AMB also stated the importance of an integrated approach, involving local communities as well as local authorities and national agencies in the interpretation of Christian monuments.

Several priorities for graveyard recording and conservation were identified as a result of the efforts outlined above, which were used to inform the aims and objectives of the CSA Carved Stones Adviser Project. The key issues are:

- to collect data on current condition of graveyards and gravestones;
- to develop a better appreciation of what makes Scottish burial grounds of particular cultural significance;
- to provide information on conservation best practice to cemetery managers;
- to promote best practice guidelines in the recording of gravestones and graveyards to maximise the future application of data gathered and to avoid the duplication of efforts;
- a general need for the more efficient dissemination of information about graveyards.



*Illus 4 St Machar's Cathedral, Old Aberdeen*

The first task of Carved Stones Adviser Project was to examine how available resources could achieve the above aims, initiating strategic liaison to identify further concerns, and developing new strategies to address these issues. In addition to acting as a point of contact for general advice on graveyard recording and conservation, the project has concentrated upon four main initiatives:

- developing a strategy to liaise with cemetery managers;
- initiating a recording programme to gather information on gravestones as part of the Carved Stone Decay in Scotland Project ;
- to develop a second recording programme to recover information about graveyards;
- and, finally, to establish a website to disseminate guidance on good practice and to assist with strategic liaison.

#### **Strategic Liaison with Cemetery Managers**

Creating a dialogue with cemetery managers followed a twofold approach. Firstly, throughout 2002, important links were developed with the national bodies representing cemetery professionals. The IBCA accepted an invitation to sit on the Carved Stones Adviser Project's Steering Group. An article on the Carved Stones Adviser Project appeared in the summer edition of the Confederation of Burial Authorities (CBA) journal and a paper was presented at the Joint CBA and IBCA Annual Conference describing the work of the project in detail. Promotion of the Carved Stones Advisers Project was further enhanced by the presentation of a poster display at the Annual General Meeting of the Scottish and Northern Island Branch of the IBCA. Collaboration with these bodies also provided links into UK-wide graveyard management initiatives, such as the Burial and Cemeteries Advisory Group for England and Wales and their Memorial Safety Sub-group.

There are no official bodies representing non-commercial cemetery managers and owners. Strategies devised to raise awareness of the project among private owners, graveyard preservation trusts and 'friends of' societies included specialist mailings, public workshops and seminars, as well as the project's website on which a directory of work being completed in Scottish graveyards will be developed. An important role of the directory is to encourage groups who are completing similar types of projects to make contact with one another, so that over time local networks of expertise can be developed.

At the same time as working with their professional bodies, local authority cemetery managers were also approached on an individual basis. Feedback was

sought on the effectiveness of the Practitioners' Guide as a tool for cemetery managers to use to integrate conservation best practice within their graveyard maintenance regimes and repair programmes. Overall the response to the volume was positive, however, feedback did indicate that further guidance was needed with regard to funding opportunities, procedures for working in sites with statutory protection, and health and safety. Many managers also felt that information could be more effectively disseminated if it was available in a summarised format as well as in a single comprehensive volume. The Carved Stones Adviser Project website was developed in light of this feedback, and provides at-a-glance summaries of best practice, as well as detailed guidance notes on conservation methods. Together with the Scottish Civic Trust, the adviser is preparing a booklet detailing the main sources of funding for graveyards, which will be available in Autumn 2003. Historic Scotland has also responded to cemetery managers' needs by producing a suite of guidance leaflets (see contact details).



*Illus 5 The Plaiden Ell stone in the graveyard at Dornoch Cathedral, Sutherland*

In recognition of the urgency and scale of the problem posed by unstable memorials and the importance of ensuring that health and safety measures integrate conservation needs, Historic Scotland convened a meeting between representatives from the field of heritage management and cemetery professionals. The

creation of a Scottish Graveyard and Cemetery Liaison Group is important because it provides the only national forum where graveyard management and conservation needs can be discussed, priorities held in common identified, and good practice guidelines agreed. The group's first task is to develop guidance literature for memorial stability testing programmes, which both address health and safety requirements and the varying resources available to cemetery managers, as well as ensuring that the methods used to make gravestones safe do not detrimentally affect their long-term preservation. Membership and the role and remit of the Graveyard and Cemetery Liaison Group are set out in Appendix 1.

### **Gravestone Recording in conjunction with Historic Scotland's Carved Stone Decay in Scotland Project**

As already noted, TCRE launched the Carved Stone Decay in Scotland Project to use information collected by volunteers to identify, quantify and ultimately propose solutions to the problems of decay on all types of carved stones. To assist volunteers a *Carved Stone Decay Assessment Methodology Handbook* was produced in conjunction with the Building Research Establishment. The project is currently co-ordinated by the Carved Stone Adviser and has a special remit to record stones located within graveyards.

Gravestones provide a strong data set to initiate a study of carved stone decay. As a focus of past and present communities, graveyards tend to be easily accessible, they occur across the whole of Scotland and are found within a wide variety of landscapes, from the most remote rural and coastal situations to the busiest city centres. As a result, gravestones are subject to both moderate and extreme weathering conditions and to varying levels of disturbance from humans, animals, and plants. Crucially, in contrast to many other forms of carved stones, gravestones can usually be easily dated by their inscription and design, allowing decay processes to be studied over a known time frame. At the same time, however, memorials can be the most difficult types of carved stones to record. Gravestones may possess highly intricate carvings or complicated architectural forms and, in some cases being almost buildings in miniature form, their construction may be extremely complex and use a wide range of materials.

To assist volunteers undertaking memorial surveys, the Carved Stone Decay in Scotland recording methodology was enhanced by developing a set of recording forms to specifically capture information on gravestones. At the same time the recording of decay and its triggers was simplified and the project's sampling strategy was refined. These changes provide several benefits to recorders and researchers alike and allowed the recording expertise developed in the

*Assessment Methodology Handbook* to be combined with the most up-to-date research on gravestone condition, as set out in the Practitioners' Guide to the *Conservation of Historic Graveyards*.



Illus 6 Headstone at St Vigean's, Arbroath

The new gravestone recording forms recover the fullest range of information held by memorials. As well as describing condition, the forms capture details of situation, material, design, decoration, and inscription - categories which also define a memorial's cultural significance, as well as potentially affecting a stone's preservation. These changes have provided an opportunity for a more integrated and detailed assessment of a stone's condition. Changing levels of stone preservation can now be explored in relation to the influence of material type, memorial design, construction technique, and the effects of plants, animal activity, and human intervention. Collected information will also be valuable for exploring the cultural importance of individual stones and groups of memorials, and for creating a typology of memorial designs and a glossary of terms to describe gravestones. For volunteers, using a single form to record all information means that anyone recording gravestone for their own interests can participate in the project without the need to duplicate efforts or note down information twice. The new forms will also be adapted to develop preferred minimum standards for

recording gravestones. As a resource under threat, it is important that gravestones are preserved, at the very least by record. Encouraging a common approach, rather than the numerous conventions currently used by individual recording groups, would ensure that these paper records have the widest possible application in the future.

As the new forms are used to assess only one type of carved stone, it is possible to anticipate the range of characteristics shown by memorials that volunteers are most likely to encounter in the field. The majority of variables appear on the form as series of check boxes, which can be quickly ticked to show the relevant answer making the new system more efficient for recorders to use. As a result of this structure, we can be confident that different surveyors are using the same criteria to evaluate gravestones. The new layout is also more compatible for transferring the collected information into a database format.

The recording of decay and an interpretation of its underlying causes are likely to be the most unfamiliar and challenging aspects for volunteers to complete. As such, the project offers support with 'hands-on' training in the field and by providing *Field Guidance Notes*, which allow surveyors match what they see on the page to examples of decay in the field. The handbook uses photographs to show the appearance of different decay patterns, in both their earliest and more advanced stages, on a range of material types. The recording of decay has been simplified by grouping



Illus 7 Carved stone in Greyfriar's Graveyard, Edinburgh

individual patterns of decay into four categories on the basis of a common defining characteristics. Decay patterns associated with the loss of layers of stone are thus differentiated from those where material is lost through granular erosion, which are in turn distinguished from decay patterns where material is added to, rather than lost from, a memorial. A final category exists to record any evidence of decay that does not fall within the aforementioned groups. Again

a check box format is used so that recorders can quickly note the extent and severity of any visible decay and a photograph, rather than a sketch, provides an further record of condition. A series of detailed questions lead volunteers through an interpretation of the factors that may have contributed to a stone's decay.

A sampling strategy has been adopted to encourage a large number of gravestones to be recorded from a select number of case study sites. Graveyards are targeted within four geographic quadrants, NW, SW, NE and SE, so that the data sample will be representative of the prevailing climate and geological conditions across Scotland. The sampling strategy will enable decay mechanisms to be studied generally over a wide geographic area by comparing memorials from different quadrants but also enable a more detailed level of assessment by comparing memorials from the same site which will have undergone similar environmental and management conditions. After a successful first season working in the northeast and southeast of Scotland, the project will be targeting recording programmes in the northwest and southwest. This approach is proving beneficial for volunteers as it encourages the development of local survey networks and increases the possibility for sustainable bases of recording expertise to remain within the community outside the project's lifetime.

Through the recording programme it will be possible to investigate the environmental factors and management practices triggering stone deterioration. Preliminary findings will not only be fed back to archaeological and conservation bodies but also directly to cemetery managers. This information can ensure that the limited resources available for gravestone conservation are most appropriately targeted and enable cemetery managers to make informed choices when drawing up specifications for ground maintenance regimes and repair programmes. Memorial condition and stability are key issues for local authority cemetery managers: since 1997, six fatalities have in occurred graveyards across Britain as the result of unstable memorials. This situation reflects the importance for the project's recording methodology to investigate environmental mechanisms of decay in conjunction with triggers resulting from human intervention through general burial ground maintenance.

### Graveyard Recording

At the same time as collecting information on gravestones, it is equally important to determine the factors that make Scotland's graveyards significant as burial landscapes, as well as identifying any threats to their preservation. Although the gravestone recording programme will capture information on a large number of gravestones, it will only recover information for a

relatively small number of graveyards. No precedents exist for recording burial grounds as individual landscapes, so a separate programme was created to collect data upon a wider scale. Appendix 2 illustrates the pilot graveyard recording form that the project has developed. A fifty-two-page booklet *An Introduction to Graveyard Recording* accompanies this form. This handbook sets out the types of memorials and other features often found in graveyards, as well as providing guidance on how to fill out the form. A section on health and safety was specially written to help recorders follow current guidelines. The graveyard recording programme forms part of a wider initiative by the Carved Stones Adviser Project to develop a national inventory of burial grounds. Currently such a list does not exist but the creation of a Scottish graveyard inventory would provide an invaluable resource for groups and individuals engaged in recording, research, management and conservation in the future.

In addition to asking recorders to assess the condition of the graveyard, which includes any known conservation or recording work, a wide range of information is sought. Volunteer surveyors are asked to provide factual details about the graveyard, such as;

- **Name(s), address and a grid reference.** Since sites may often be known by more than one name, it is important to be able to discern which site is being recorded.
- **NMRS number.** The project is working with RCAHMS to ensure that NMRS has the fullest possible information on Scottish graveyards. In cases where a burial ground has not already been entered, information will be immediately forwarded to update the national record.
- **Any special designations the site may have.** This information can be used to enhance an understanding of which sites benefit from designated status and to assess how such status operates to protect graveyards.
- **Situation of the site.** Graveyards are found all over Scotland but their location may affect both their condition and how they are used. For example, a graveyard in a busy city centre may face a greater threat from vandalism, land development, and air pollution. At the same time however, their accessibility may also mean that an urban site is more easily maintained and promoted as a tourist attraction to visitors than a remote rural burial ground.
- **Land use immediately surrounding the site.** Information is held centrally for the pollution levels, driving rain, and the number of frost nights for a graveyard's general area. Local factors can affect these readings however, so the project is also



interested in examining the topography and land use immediately surrounding a site. For example, a graveyard located next to a busy main road is likely to be effected by higher levels of pollution from car exhausts. A valley setting may create its own microclimate, possibly acting as a wind tunnel or perhaps providing shelter to a burial ground. The project recognises that the variety of site locations can pose quite different problems for graveyards and their gravestones. As a result, there can be no single answer for how best to protect our burial grounds.

- **Site type.** Graveyards are a familiar part of Scotland's landscape, yet surprisingly little is known about the types of landscapes surviving today and how these evolved over time. A graveyard may or may not be associated with a religious building, such as a church, a chapel, a monastery or a cathedral. Before the advent of modern cemeteries in the early nineteenth-century, burial outside an ecclesiastical system was relatively unusual. Unfortunately at present the full set of circumstances within which this happened remains unclear. Examples of sites which do not belong to the church include private graveyards on family estates, early large-scale municipally-owned graveyards, such as Calton Old and New burial grounds in Edinburgh, and isolated burials resulting from extraordinary events, such as the Lonely Graves at Gilchriston, East Lothian, which lie in the middle of farmland and commemorate the deaths of two plague victims.
- **Site use.** Recording will help determine the extent to which the ability of a graveyard to receive burials may define its lifespan and condition. The project is also keen to learn what happens to a graveyard once any associated place of worship becomes abandoned, completely destroyed, or converted to a different use: for example, if a church is converted to an office or flats, does this throw a lifeline to any surrounding graveyard or ultimately spell its demise?
- **Details of site ownership and care.** This information will help identify the range of graveyard owners and managers operating outside a local authority system. In particular, data is sought on the extent of community involvement in caring for graveyards through, for example, preservation trusts, graveyard 'friends' groups and local societies (see Appendix 3), and the type of work undertaken, such as fundraising, promotion, and maintenance. Research will consider how the nature of ownership might affect the types of resources available for conservation and whether this contributes to the types of threats faced by graveyards.



*Illus 8 The Necropolis, Glasgow*

The next stage of recording considers the memorials and other features found in the graveyard. Examples of graveyard features include buildings, dykes, mortsafes, and mounds, or carved stones such as Pictish stones, churchyard crosses and hogback stones as well as any significant planting or landscaping of the graveyard. As graveyards have not previously been systematically recorded on a widespread basis before, it is often not possible to tell from existing NMRS and local authority Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) entries how many examples of features such as mortsafes survive, nor the range of designs they exist in. Similarly it is not usually possible from current records to gain an idea of how many gravestones are found in an individual graveyard, the range of dates they might cover, or indeed their range of designs and carvings. The new form provides an opportunity for such a summary and to identify any stones of particular importance due to their materials, carvings and designs, inscriptions or commemoration of significant people and events. The graveyard's cultural importance is considered in more depth when recorders are invited to describe the particular qualities that make the site they have looked at significant to them, as well the features that might make it important to others. Recorders are also asked to compare their site to others locally: perhaps it is representative of graveyards in the area or maybe it is unusual in some particular way?

If we are to suggest ways forward for graveyards we need to appreciate the current roles that graveyards may possess within a community, as well as gaining an understanding of what it is that the public value about their burial grounds. The survey considers the issue of access and whether the site is promoted to visitors in any way. This information would reflect whether the graveyard acts as a public open space: for example, a site in a city centre may attract office workers on a

sunny lunch time as a place to unwind, whilst less salubrious uses involving drugs, drink and crime are also common problems in city centre graveyards. It may be that a burial ground is listed on a heritage trail or has a web site on the Internet. Ultimately, it is members of the local community who are best placed to tell us if many tourists or family history researchers visit their graveyards.



*Illus 9 General view of the Cemetery, Hyndford Road, Lanark*

The results of volunteer surveys will be pooled together to build up a comprehensive picture of:

- the condition of the nation's graveyards to assist policy making and cemetery management.
- the significance of types of burial landscapes and the importance of each landscape type and of individual graveyards at a local, regional and national level.
- how easy it is for people to access information on graveyards, whether national collections of data can be made more accessible and if there are sources of information pertaining to graveyards that are not being used by heritage professionals.

From these results, heritage specialists and cemetery managers can ensure that public and community needs become fully integrated within graveyard conservation and management strategies.

#### **Carved Stones Adviser Website**

The website can be found at [www.scottishgraveyards.org.uk](http://www.scottishgraveyards.org.uk) and is an initial point of contact for advice on graveyards. The website provides at-a-glance summaries of how to complete recording and conservation work and includes a large number of detailed guidance notes and booklets which can be downloaded. All information contained on the website is also available in a hard-copy format. The purpose and organisation of the website can be summarised as follows:

- to provide general guidance on completing survey work, which endorses minimum recording standards and good practice guidelines to maximise the widest possible future application of survey work.
- to promote the Carved Stones Adviser Project recording initiatives and to show where work is being completed. Volunteers are provided with online support and materials, including copies of gravestone and graveyard recording forms, the *Introduction to Graveyard Recording* booklets and field guidance notes.
- to present guidelines on conservation good practice and includes information developed in conjunction with specialist bodies, such as Historic Scotland, Scottish Civic Trust, NCCSS, IBCA and the Graveyard and Cemetery Liaison Group.
- to publicise the work of the Graveyard and Cemetery Liaison Group, including details of membership, role and remit, and minutes of meetings.
- to collate and make publicly accessible a directory of work being completed in Scotland's graveyards. For example, a full description of the project to regenerate a disused graveyard at Clynekirkton (which is outlined in Appendix 3) will be available via the website. The directory will promote the conservation and recording work completed by local societies, academics, local authorities, heritage specialists, community groups and charitable organisations.
- to provide a notice board to advertise forthcoming events and publications and to offer individuals and groups with a forum to post queries and other relevant information. Together with the directory, the notice board aims to fulfil the need for groups working in graveyards to be able to share information and expertise. This was a key issue raised at the conference in 2001 to launch the Practitioners' Guide. If this electronic forum is successful, it is hoped to establish an Internet discussion list so that individuals and groups can communicate with one another directly.
- to set out links to other sources of information about graveyards

#### **Concluding Remarks**

To date, response to the project has confirmed that there is a widespread need for the structured dissemination of information on graveyards and the importance of assisting co-ordination between the many groups with a vested interest in their recording, management, and conservation. The research dimension of the project's recording initiatives will help to ensure that expertise in these areas is developed in the future. Specifically the results will:

- be used to develop risk assessment strategies, which

will allow cemetery managers, heritage professionals, and funding bodies to ensure that resources available for graveyard conservation are most effectively targeted on the basis of condition and cultural significance.

- determine the scale and nature of threats to graveyards so that solutions can be devised to tackle these issues.
- inform recording, management and conservation strategies, so that they can accommodate the needs of graveyard managers, conservationists, recorders and users.
- provide important points of reference, which can be monitored over time to allow future researchers to map changing levels of preservation and to assess the success of any conservation measures implemented.

The project has received an encouraging level of support and the adviser is collaborating on a wide-ranging series of projects involving professionals and volunteers in the fields of conservation, recording, and graveyard management. Consequently, an essential priority is now to explore how the project can continue the achievements made within its initial three-year pilot period.

Burial grounds represent important cultural landscapes, which are of interest to a large number of people, including architectural historians, genealogists, local historians, archaeologists, and ecologists. At the same time they operate within the public sector, as commercial ventures involved in the disposal of the dead and provide a special place for the bereaved to mourn and remember loved ones. Only by taking an integrated approach can we ensure that our graveyards are passed onto future generations. By bringing together the specialist and volunteer, cemetery managers and users, the Carved Stones Adviser Project hopes to take an important first step towards

understanding how to conserve a familiar, yet nonetheless invaluable, facet of our historic environment.

#### Contact Details

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Website: [www.scottishgraveyards.org.uk](http://www.scottishgraveyards.org.uk)

Graveyards and Gravestones Electronic Leaflets (1. *Working in a scheduled or listed graveyard or burial ground*, 2. *Good practice in maintaining a historic graveyard*, 3. *Looking after gravestones*, 4. *Health and safety in historic graveyards: guidance for visitors and owners*, 5. *Health and safety in historic graveyards: guidance for works teams and volunteer workers, including volunteer surveyors*, 6. *Short guide for cemetery managers: emergency measures for historic memorials*, 7. *Historic Scotland grants in relation to graveyards or burial grounds* and 8. *Abandoned structures within graveyards*) are available for downloading from the Historic Scotland website (see address at bottom of page).

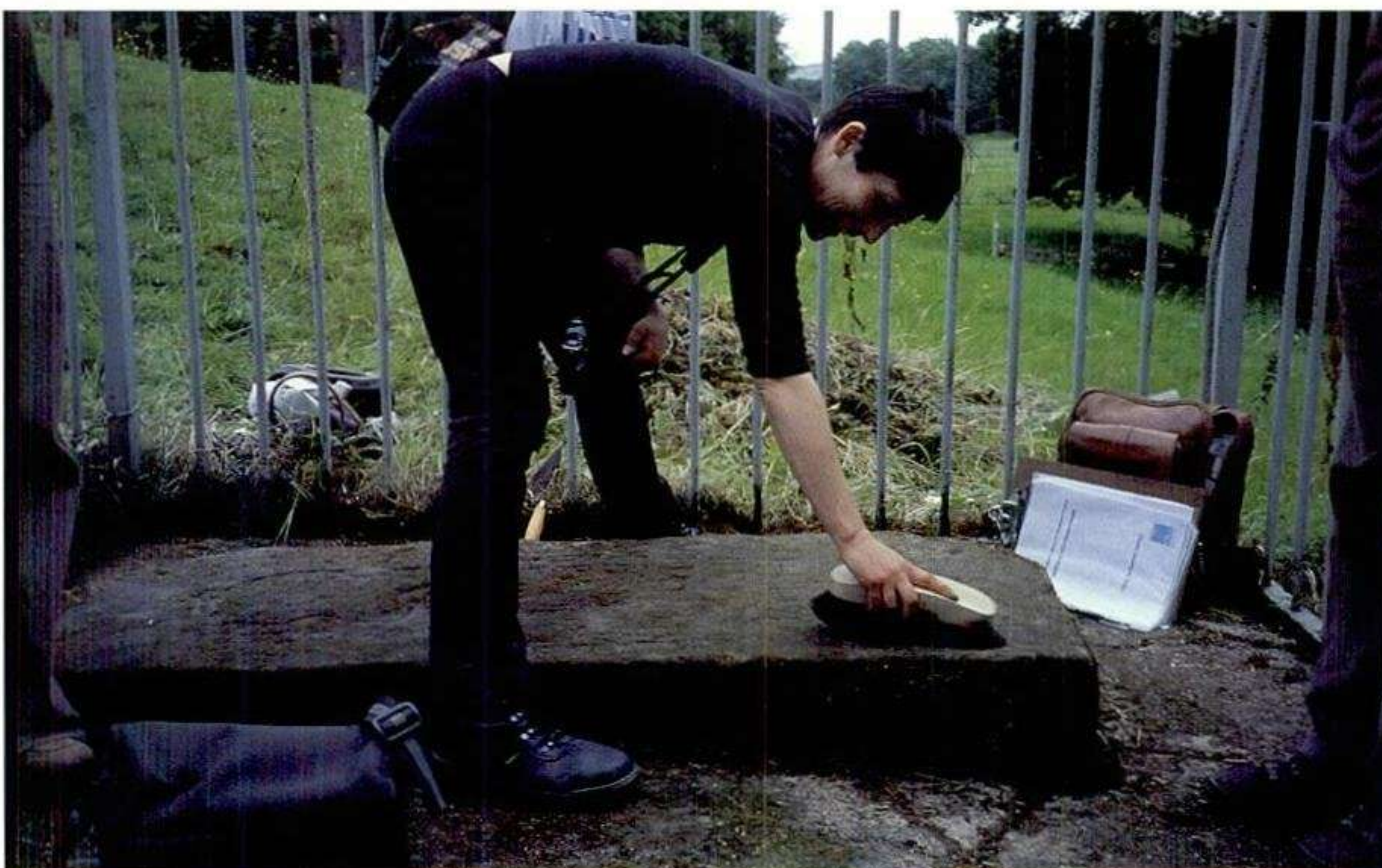
Copies of the *Heritage Guide 2 The Carved Stones of Scotland: A Guide to Helping in their Protection*, can be ordered free of charge and copies of the Guide for Practitioners *The Conservation of Historic Graveyards* can be purchased from:

Publications Department, Scottish Conservation Bureau, TCRE, Historic Scotland, Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh EH9 1SH

Tel: 0131 668 8638.

E-mail [hs.conservation.bureau@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:hs.conservation.bureau@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

Website [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk)



*Illus 10 Dr Susan Buckham at the Lonely Graves, Gilchriston, East Lothian*

## APPENDIX 1

# MEMBERSHIP AND ROLE AND REMIT OF THE GRAVEYARD AND CEMETERY LIAISON GROUP

**Role:** to identify and integrate the efforts of all relevant bodies who can influence practice in the management of burial grounds and cemeteries.

**Membership:**

- Church of Scotland
- Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)
- CSA Carved Stones Adviser
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- Historic Scotland Heritage Policy Group (HPG)
- Historic Scotland Technical Conservation, Research and Education Group (TCRE)
- Historic Scotland Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments (IAM)
- Historic Scotland Historic Buildings Inspectorate (HBI)
- Historic Scotland Health and Safety Adviser
- National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM)
- Institute of Burial and Cremation Administration (IBCA)
- Association of Regional and Island Archaeologists (ARIA)
- Institute of Historic Buildings Conservation (IHBC)
- Representative of private cemeteries
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Representative of council cemetery managers
- Cemetery Research Group, University of York

**Frequency of meetings:** the committee will meet every six months or more frequently if required by its work programme or the emergence of issues warranting consideration

**Remit:** to provide a forum:

- to discuss best practice in the management of historic burial grounds and cemeteries
- to agree best practice standards in the management of historic burial grounds and cemeteries
- to promote best practice in the management of historic burial grounds and cemeteries
- to co-ordinate implementation of best practice in the management of historic burial grounds and cemeteries.

Specific duties include:

- reviewing currently available data
- overseeing the preparation of guidance on best practice
- commenting on proposed briefs, draft guidance etc.
- the first focus will be on memorial stability programmes, in particular the preparation of guidance on emergency measures for cemetery managers and works teams, the agreement of standards of best practice for memorial stability programmes and the co-ordination of memorial stability programmes in Scotland.

## APPENDIX 2

# GRAVEYARD RECORDING FORM (PILOT)

CARVED STONES ADVISER PROJECT: GRAVEYARD RECORDING FORM (PILOT)	
FORM COMPILED BY (INCLUDE GROUP / SOCIETY IF APPLICABLE) .....	
DATE..... CONTACT DETAILS..... <i>Please tell us whether you live locally to the graveyard and if you have any connections to the graveyard</i>	
Part One: Graveyard Details:	
<b>1. GRAVEYARD NAME AND ADDRESS:</b>  PARISH ..... <i>Is the site known by any other names?</i> LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA ..... NATIONAL GRID REF: ..... GRID REF NOT KNOWN <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>2. SITE STATUS</b> <i>Please note the graveyard's</i> NMRS NUMBER ..... Not Known <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Is any part of the graveyard:</i> i) LISTED ? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/> ii) SCHEDULED ? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3. GRAVEYARD SITUATION</b> <i>Is the site...</i> in a major town or city? <input type="checkbox"/> in a village setting? <input type="checkbox"/> by a small settlement, farm, croft or house? <input type="checkbox"/> completely isolated from any settlement? <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>4. SURROUNDING LAND USE</b> <i>Tick all that apply (up to 100m)</i> Seaside <input type="checkbox"/> Road <input type="checkbox"/> Woodland <input type="checkbox"/> Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> Amenity <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh Water <input type="checkbox"/> Industry <input type="checkbox"/> Other Building <input type="checkbox"/> - please describe... Other Land Use <input type="checkbox"/> - please describe...
<b>5. SITE TYPE</b> <i>Please tick one box</i> Graveyard associated with a church <input type="checkbox"/> Graveyard associated with a monastic site / religious house <input type="checkbox"/> Graveyard associated with a chapel <input type="checkbox"/> Graveyard associated with a cathedral <input type="checkbox"/> Graveyard associated with an institution <input type="checkbox"/> Graveyard in a private estate <input type="checkbox"/> Early municipal burial ground <input type="checkbox"/> Public cemetery <input type="checkbox"/> Pet cemetery <input type="checkbox"/> Isolated burial <input type="checkbox"/> Covenanters' site <input type="checkbox"/> Site type unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> - please describe...	
<b>6. SITE USE</b> <i>Please tick the appropriate box to tell us how the graveyard is currently being used</i> In current use for burials <input type="checkbox"/> Closed for burials but maintained <input type="checkbox"/> Abandoned <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> - please describe...  <i>Please tick the appropriate box to show if</i> the graveyard immediately surrounds the place of worship <input type="checkbox"/> is a detached from an associated place of worship <input type="checkbox"/> has no associated place of worship <input type="checkbox"/> don't know if there is an associated place of worship <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Please note the present use and denomination if known of any associated place of worship...</i>	
<b>7. GRAVEYARD CARE &amp; OWNERSHIP</b> <i>Please tell us who owns the graveyard and who is responsible for maintaining the graveyard (note these may not be the same)</i> Owner: ..... Maintained By:..... Owner not known <input type="checkbox"/> Not known who maintains the site <input type="checkbox"/> Do any local groups have an interest in the graveyard, e.g. help with maintenance, raising funds for work etc? <div style="text-align: right;">Not known <input type="checkbox"/></div>	

**Part Two: Graveyard Description**

**8. GRAVEYARD FEATURES** *Please describe any features in the graveyard.*

**9. THE GRAVESTONES** *Please describe the types of gravestones and their carvings found in the graveyard*

*Please tell us how many gravestones are found in the graveyard ....., noting the date of earliest stone ....., the date of the most recent stone .....and when most stones appear to have been erected.....*

*Are any of the stones particularly significant?*

**Part Three: Graveyard Condition and Conservation**

**10. GRAVEYARD CONDITION** *Please tell us if you think that the graveyard is well looked after or if there are problems from grounds maintenance, grass cutting, vegetation, vandalism or decay and if any stones have been laid down flat. Please note roughly how many gravestones or how much of the graveyard is affected.*

11. CONSERVATION & FIELD RECORDING *Please tell us if you know of any conservation or recording work that has been completed at the site (e.g. memorial inscription surveys, nature conservation, isolated repairs or any major restoration of buildings, gravestones or walls etc.) - or whether in your opinion any such work is needed at the site.*

**Part Four: Points of Interest and Importance**

12. PLEASE NOTE FIRSTLY ANYTHING THAT YOU CONSIDER TO BE PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANT ABOUT THIS GRAVEYARD AND SECONDLY WHAT YOU THINK MIGHT MAKE IT IMPORTANT TO OTHERS

13. PLEASE TELL US IF THE SITE IS REPRESENTATIVE OF GRAVEYARDS IN THE AREA OR IF IT IS UNUSUAL IN SOME WAY TO OTHER GRAVEYARDS IN THE LOCALITY

Don't know about other graveyards in the area

**Part Five: Access and Visitors to the Graveyard**

14. PLEASE TELL US IF THE GRAVEYARD IS PRESENTED OR PROMOTED TO VISITORS IN ANY WAY

15. PLEASE TELL US ABOUT ACCESS TO THE SITE AND - IF KNOWN - WHAT TYPE OF VISITORS THE SITE RECEIVES

16. PLEASE TELL US WHAT FACILITIES EXIST FOR VISITORS AT THE SITE?

17. PLEASE TELL US ANY OTHER INFORMATION YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT THE GRAVEYARD (Continue overleaf if necessary)

Please return completed forms to S. Buckham, Carved Stones Adviser, Council for Scottish Archaeology, c/o National Museums of Scotland, Chambers Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1JF

**Please use this part of the form for any additional information**

Please return completed forms to S. Buckham, Carved Stones Adviser, Council for Scottish Archaeology, c/o National Museums of Scotland, Chambers Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1JF



## APPENDIX 3

# THE CLYNEKIRKTON PROJECT; REGENERATION OF A LOCAL DISUSED GRAVEYARD.

J. E. AITKEN (1) & N. G. LINDSAY (2)

1. Archaeology Unit, Highland Council, Planning Service, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX.

2. Sunnybrae, West Clyne, Brora, Sutherland, KW9 6NH.

Clynekirkton Graveyard, near Brora in Sutherland, probably established in the early Christian period, has been largely out of use since being superseded by Clyne (New) Graveyard in 1895. The Highland Council has maintained Clynekirkton since they became its owners in 1921. The old parish church on the same site was replaced by a new church within the village in 1906 and now stands as an unroofed shell in the enclosed graveyard. An adjacent, scheduled, circular bell-tower, dating from the 17th Century, stands on a prominent mound on private ground across a public road.

Over the years, with a declining maintenance programme, all three distinct sites had become somewhat neglected and had been overtaken and subsumed by a thick woody growth of vegetation. The local community's heritage group decided to take independent action to clear the sites of the choking vegetation, which, by 2002, had taken a firm stranglehold, especially within the graveyard.

After in depth consultation with all interested public and private parties, including Historic Scotland and the Council for Scottish Archaeology, in the Spring of 2002, volunteers drawn from Clyne Heritage Society tackled Stage 1 of the Clynekirkton Project: the vegetation clearance. A carefully planned programme of work was prepared in advance, and strict guidelines were adhered to for work in these sensitive locations.



*Illus 11 Aerial photograph of Clynekirkton site from north.*



*Illus 12 Northeast corner of graveyard, prior to the removal of the vegetation. Note the choking, all-consuming nature of the ivy, and the regenerated shoots of ash and sycamore from cut stumps.*

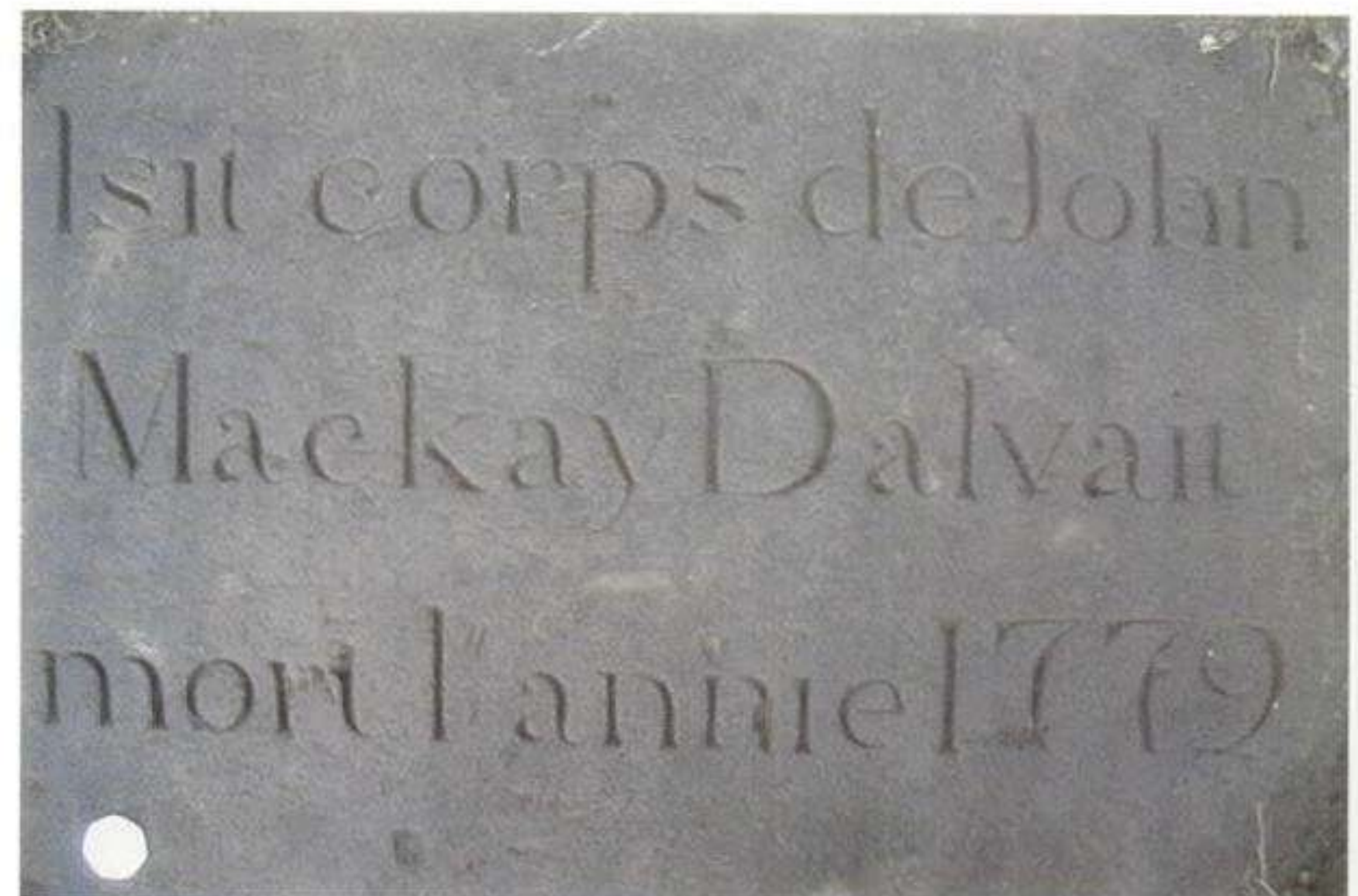


*Illus 13 Northeast corner of graveyard, after to the removal of the vegetation. Note the bare earth, where ivy formerly grew, which was later re-seeded, and the ivy still attached to the upper parts of the yew trees in the background, which has since been removed.*

The wider community was kept informed of progress with regular reports and articles in the local press, and several talks and lectures were given by the organisers subsequent to the completion of Stage 1.

During Stage 1, several new and important discoveries, both from the site itself and stories and research about the site were made. The most noteworthy of the discoveries was a flatstone with an inscription written in French, which appears, from subsequent research, to be unique, certainly in Highland graveyards. Other discoveries included a watch house and other 'new' gravestones with inscriptions and carvings, and a carved stone built into the internal fabric of the church remains. The community at large also added to the project. A photograph of the graveyard taken in around

1908 showing the now-demolished north wing came to light, and stories rich in oral tradition were added to the folklore of the site.



*Illus 15 The most exciting discovery which came to light during the vegetation clearance stage of the project. A flatstone with a French inscription, which translated means 'Here is the body of John MacKay Dalvau died in the year 1779. This gravestone is unique in Highland graveyards and its full significance still remains to be discovered.*



*Illus 14 A volunteer with safety gear including goggles and steel toe-capped boots carries more ivy from the graveyard.*

A rare insight into the past condition of the graveyard, prior to Highland Council ownership, was indicated in a photograph taken at the beginning of the last century, which came to light during the project. It showed that the graveyard was completely overgrown with vegetation, such as wild grasses and hogweed, which was left to grow wild, as high as the headstones, and filled the entire graveyard. It was also observed that the no ivy or ash was present. This reflection on the past lack of maintenance in the graveyard, demonstrates how its appearance has changed over the last century. The implementation of the Highland

Council's more structured maintenance methods over the last 80 years has given the graveyard a more landscaped look. Latterly, this maintenance level has reduced substantially as budgets have inevitably been tightened and disused graveyards, like Clynekirkton, become less of a priority, and this had culminated in the graveyard's appearance prior to the current clearance work.

The project has helped to highlight the need to protect this site and establish a management plan for future conservation work at the graveyard. Clynekirkton Graveyard has been added to the list of Scheduled Ancient Monuments by Historic Scotland. A second, less-intensive, follow-up vegetation clearance programme is scheduled for spring 2003, and grants have been awarded for work which has already begun to stabilise the bell-tower mound. Plans for interpretation of the site are also underway for the summer of 2003.

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North of Scotland Archaeological Society

Cunninghams of Brora

Brighter Brora

Finally, we would like to thank all the volunteers who religiously turned up each weekend, and whose efforts have helped to give Clynekirkton Graveyard an optimistic future.



Illus 16 Clynekirkton graveyard c1908. Note the 'wild' appearance of vegetation in graveyard and belfry on north gable, which was demolished in 1921.

