

The  
Norman  
Church  
at Minto

By George O. Wood

THE  
NORMAN CHURCH  
AT MINTO

(Extract from the 1987 Hawick Archaeological Society Transactions)

BY GEORGE O. WOOD



March 1988  
Printed by the "Hawick News", 24 High Street, Hawick  
and  
Published under the auspices of the Hawick Archaeological Society

# THE NORMAN CHURCH AT MINTO

The Site. Map Ref. 572203.

**T**HIS LIES IN THE POLICIES of Minto House, at a short distance from the remains of the mansion, but separated from it by the natural barrier of the 'Glen.' It is actually the old burial ground, with its area almost enclosed under the spreading branches of four massive and ancient yew trees. The focal point is a square stone-built enclosure containing a collection of old grave-stones, and leaved into one wall a set of 'Jougs.' Three groups of grave-stones lie outwith the enclosure, and these, with some exceptions, may be in their original positions. Though only a hundred yards, or so, from the main drive to the west, it is screened from it by a thick, overgrown yew hedge with only one narrow opening.

The earliest notice of a church at Minto is in Baiamond's Roll of 1275. In 1296 it is recorded that, 'William of Wodeburn, parson of the church of Myntowe' swore fealty to Edward 1st. In 1326, John Lindsay, Bishop of Glasgow, on two separate occasions, met the monks of Melrose in the church of 'Myntow' to adjust their mutual differences. In 1374 Edward 3rd sanctioned an exchange of the Churches of Yetham and Mynto between the parsons of the same. Patrick Mason and George Panton were parsons of Mynto respectively in the years 1488 and 1509. The list of ministers from that time is contained in 'Fasti Ecclesiasticae Scotiae.'

Further information regarding the churches which occupied the site is scarce, and in some cases contradictory. The Norman church was replaced by a Post-Reformation church, during the building of which, ornamental stonework from the former building was reused, but, with the sculpted faces turned in. This church seems to have required frequent repairs, in the Transactions for 1726 there is a detailed report of the materials used, and their cost for the year 1735. This includes the replacement of the bell, and the scrap value of the broken one. In 1767 the church was again the subject of extensive repairs and alterations. One end of this building, which contained a pointed arch, bore distinct traces of an older structure, and was probably a remnant of the Pre-Reformation Church. In 1831 this church, along with the old village, was demolished, and the present village, and church, designed by William Playfair, replaced the old buildings. The site of the old church was cleared and made into a rose garden, several of the grave-stones being moved into a square enclosure, while others appear to have been left, more or less, in situ. In different reports the enclosure is supposed to be the remains of the vestry, and again, a burial vault of the Minto family in earlier times.

## **The Field Section Project.**

In November 1983, when we inspected the site, it was badly overgrown with shrub growth of elder etc., rooting in the enclosure and in the walls. The grave-stones in the enclosure were being undermined by the burrowing action of rabbits and voles, with many collapsed and partially buried. Two of the outlying groups were completely hidden in undergrowth, and a tree had fallen across the enclosed chest tomb behind the enclosure, smashing the iron railings, and displacing the sides and top of the tomb. The project fell into two parts, first to clean up the site, replace the gravestones neatly in the enclosure, and record the inscriptions in the Transactions of the Society. The second was to find, if possible, the relationship of the enclosure to the early churches.

## **The Work Progress.**

With only three members in the Field team this was rather an ambitious project, but in the early stages we received some help, both in the heavy work, and in the technical problems, from outside sources. This help was much appreciated. In the remaining weeks of 1983, and through 1984 work was continued in clearing

the scrub, lowering the soil level in the enclosure, moving the gravestones in the enclosure into place with the use of block and tackle, and concreting them into their positions. When lowering the soil level in the enclosure an additional five old locally sculptured gravestones were found to add to the three which were visible on the surface. As this type of stone has its inscription on the reverse, they require fitting with a good base to allow them to be free standing. A number of worked stones were also found, some in the enclosure, and some from a nearby burn where they had been dumped at some earlier time. This latter find was accidental when looking for a supply of water for mixing concrete. From the enclosure came a section of sundial inscribed Minto, a small votive Roman Alter Piece, and an end part of a child's sarcophagus to match the part listed in the County Inventory.

A second section of sundial was among the finds from the burn side. To assess the value of these finds assistance was sought from the team excavating at Jedburgh Abbey under the Border Burghs Archaeological Project, and Dr Lewis and Mr and Mrs Haggerty visited the site. While the stones were being photographed Mr Haggerty identified one as probably being a Roman Altar. This was later confirmed by Dr L. Keppie of the Hunterian Museum as 'A Roman Votive Alter Piece, probably dedicated to Mars, the God of War, and dated to between 80 A.D. and 180 A.D.' The other stones, which were classified from the photographs, by Dr Fawcett, Edinburgh University, as having a strong medieval presence, and two, with especially good ornamentation, as being definitely late Romanesque/Norman Transitional period. (Late 12th, early 13th century).

With the gravestones in the enclosure safely in place, the enclosing wall patched up, and the top consolidated with concrete run between the stones, it was time to start recording the inscriptions.

## THE GRAVESTONES IN THE ENCLOSURE AND THEIR INSCRIPTIONS

Note:— The record is taken clockwise from the entrance to the enclosure.

(1) Part of a broken stone now built onto the wall at the left of the entrance. Height 60 cm; Width 62 cm; Depth 9 cm. Sandstone.

Here lyes George Smail  
Indweller in Birk-hill  
who died 25 Dec. 1767  
Aged 49 years.  
Also Isabel Smaill His  
daughter who died 8th  
1761 Aged 16 years  
Verses 25 & 26 For I Know  
redeemer liveth and that  
and at the latter day  
and though  
his

(2) Small rectangular tablet also mounted on wall. Height 33 cm; Width 54 cm; Depth 5 cm. Sandstone.

Here lies Dan  
Eliot late Tennant  
in Newbigin Who died  
November the 2nd 1702 &  
of his age 50 years.

(3) This stone has been broken laterally in half with the top half broken vertically in half also, the left half of this is also missing. All that remains of the inscription is recorded. Height 126 cm; Width 66 cm; Depth 11 cm. Red sandstone.

emery of  
he died at Minto  
aged 54 years  
later died at Ches  
1819 aged 22 years  
died at Chesters  
aged 26 years.

(4) The surface of this stone is starting to flake. Height 136 cm; Width 70 cm; Depth 13½ cm. Red sandstone. (See Plate 1).

In remembrance  
of Robert Smith late  
mason in Minto Craigh-  
end who died 26th Oct 1785  
aged 40 years.

(5) Height 124 cm; Width 70½ cm; Depth 14½ cm. Grey sandstone.

Here lies  
Robert Boa late mason in Min-  
to who died 1 Oct'r 1785 aged 72 ye-  
ars.

(6) The surface of this stone is starting to flake. Height 136 cm; Width 74 cm; Depth 14 cm. Red sandstone.

In Memory of  
Elizabeth Rutherford Spouse to  
Henry Hall late Tennant of Hiltons-  
hill who died 2nd Feb 1813 aged 84  
years. Also her grand-daughter  
Elizabeth, daughter to Daniel Crich-  
ton Gardener Minto who died 18th  
Apr 1823 in the 16th year of her age.

(7) Height 156 cm; Width 85 cm; Depth 10½ cm. Red sandstone. (See Plate 2).

IN MEMORY OF  
ELIZABETH SANDERSON  
spouse to JOHN FORSYTH  
Gardener at Teviotbank who died the  
25th May 1827 aged 50 years. Also  
ELIZABETH FORSYTH  
their daughter who died 12th March  
1827 aged 15 years. Also JOHN  
FORSYTH their Son who died in  
infancy.

(8) Height 152 cm; Width 76 cm; Depth 15 cm. Red sandstone. (See Plate 3).

To the memory of  
Walter Sharp  
Mason in Minto, who died 11th July  
1808 aged 42 years.  
He acted many years in the capacity  
of Gamekeeper at Minto  
and died regretted by his master as a  
faithful servant  
and respected by his equals as a good  
neighbour  
and a virtuous and honest man.

(9) This stone is badly eroded towards the top of the face with some of the inscription illegible. Height 163 cm; Width 88½ cm; Depth 10 cm. Red sandstone.

Erected  
in memory of  
... ..  
... ..  
William Turnbull son  
of George Turnbull tenant in Curling  
who died Jan 30th 1827 aged 24 years.  
Also CATHERINE who died in  
infancy

(10) This stone is badly eroded, the inscription barely legible. Height 119 cm; Width 67 cm; Depth 10 cm. Red sandstone.

In Memory of James Thom-  
son late of Craigend-bank  
who died July 3rd 1784 aged  
50 (59) years.

(11) The top part of this stone has started to flake in places. Height 139 cm. Width 89 cm. Depth 14½ cm. Red sandstone. (See Plate 4).

In Memory of  
Thomas Kennedy who died at Minto-  
Bankfoot 19th Oct 1786 aged 45 years.  
Also  
Jannet his Daughter died 27th July 1791 (7)  
aged 23 years. — William his son died  
29th Decr. 1798 aged 27 years. Also  
Mary Smail his Spouse who died 31st  
of Jan 1821 aged 82 years. Also  
Elizabeth Burnet Spouse to John  
Kennedy their son, Mason in Minto  
who died 29th Nov 1815 aged 27 years.

(12) The top edge of this stone was broken, and all the parts found have been replaced. The face is badly flaked with parts of the inscription missing. There is an additional inscription on the reverse face. Height 135 cm; Width 82 cm; Depth 15 cm. Red sandstone.

Erected  
IN MEMORY OF  
JOHN PATTERSON who died  
at Minto ... .. Octr 1825 aged  
... .. years. also  
GEORGE PATTERSON who died  
12th June 18..... aged 4 years.

On the reverse face.

IN MEMORY OF  
PHILIP PATTERSON who died  
11 June 18..... aged 4 years.

(13) Height 146 cm; Width 82½ cm; Depth 13 cm. Grey sandstone.

IN MEMORY OF  
William Houd late weaver in Hassen-  
dean who died the 28th day of Nov

1796 aged 66 years. Also Elizabeth  
Hope his wife who died the 19th  
day of May 1801 aged 71 years.

(14) This is a blank slab with only the letter 'B' inscribed on the centre of the top edge. Height 98 cm; Width 79 cm; Depth 9½ cm. Grey sandstone.

(15) This is the top part of a 'Portrait' stone, the rest is missing. A concrete base and some repair work was needed to allow it to be mounted on the wall end to the right of the entrance. The inscription is barely legible, but what remains is recorded. Height 38 cm; Width 51 cm; Depth 11 cm. Red sandstone.

In Memory of  
Jane Thomson daughter of David  
Thomson gardener in Minto

Note. — (From Session Records). David Thomson, gardener to Sir Gilbert Elliot was summoned to appear before the Session for being 'beastly drunk' at Denholm Fair.

The following eight stones have symbol sculpture on the face and the inscriptions on the back. They are therefore free standing in two rows with one stone offset to the right of the entrance.

#### Front row from Left to Right

(16) This is a 'Portrait with the Book of Life' stone, the inscription is badly eroded and illegible in places. One large flake carrying much of the inscription was replaced with an epoxy-resin adhesive and three brass screws into rawlplugs. Height 69 cm; Width 43 cm; Depth 11 cm. Red sandstone. (See Plate 5).

HERE LYES AGNAS  
MADER SPOUS TO WILL  
TURNBULL TENNANT IN  
ANCRUM BROOM DIED JUNE  
... .. 1751 AG'D 55  
ALSO ANDRE TURNBULL  
HIS SON DIED MAY 21  
1751 AG'D 21  
AND AGNAS TURNBULL  
THEIR DAUGHTER DIED  
FEB 27 1751 AG'D 25.

(17) This is a small stone decorated with the usual 'winged soul' beneath which is the hour glass and skull with crossed bones. The sides are formed by finely cut pillars with capitals. There is a small 'Angel of the resurrection with trumpet' on each side of the rounded top. It was in poor condition and required a new base. The inscription is so badly weathered as to be almost illegible. This stone is already listed in the Inventory of the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Roxburghshire. Height 58 cm; Width 41 cm; Depth 10 cm. Grey sandstone. (See Plate 6 and 6a).

HEAR LYES  
BESSEY TURNB  
UL SPOUSE TO JA  
MES SCOTT  
IN MINTO  
N  
OF- AL  
1698 & HIR AGE 45.  
IN MARCH THE 3

(18) The decoration on this stone is a 'Winged soul' above leaf fronds; below this are crossed straps suspended from ring bolts enclosing a skull above crossed bones. The top is formed by two scrolls on which an inscription was cut. Only parts of the inscription are legible, the 1st is from the reverse face, the 2nd is from the top scrolls. It was in two pieces when found, and the top has been re-attached with a mixture of fine cement and epoxy-resin. It also required a new base. Height 61 cm; Width 41 cm; Depth 10 cm. Grey sandstone. (See Plate 7).

HEAR  
 LYES ... .. ER  
 SOL ... DIUD ... SUN TO  
 ROBERT KERSOP ... IN  
 ... WHO DIED  
 IN JULY THE ...7 ... IN  
 THE 8th YEAR OF HIS AGE  
 HEAR LYS HIS 2 BRUTHERS.

On top of stone.

HER LYS J. K. MINTO WHO DIED  
 IN NV THE 1 ... 16 OF HIS AGE 66.

(19) The decoration of this stone consists of a 'Winged soul' over a panel with hour glass, skull and crossed bones. These are suspended on a cord which is carried through the top corners of the panel to form a loop motif down it's edges. The body of the stone was from the enclosure, the top, which was found at the burn side, was replaced with cement and epoxy-resin. The inscription is eroded with some parts illegible. Height 74 cm; Width 45 cm; Depth 10 cm. Grey sandstone. (See Plate 8).

Here lyes Robert  
 Ker herd in Mintocle-  
 uthead who died (on the)  
 17 day ... 1715 in the  
 ... year of his age.

Back row left to right.

(20) The decoration on this stone is the 'Winged soul' over a bar with Momento Mori. Beneath this is an hour glass above a skull and crossed bones. Though it required a new base it was otherwise in excellent condition. Height 73 cm; Width 60 cm; Depth 12 cm. Grey sandstone. (See Plate 9 and 9a).

Here lyes  
 John Henderson  
 late herd at Raper-  
 law who died on  
 the 9th of October  
 1724 his age 66.

(21) The decoration on this stone is the 'Winged soul' over a bar with Momento Mori. Beneath this is a skull above crossed bones. A strap holding an hour glass ring bolts at each edge of the stone. It required a new base but was otherwise in good condition. Height 73 cm; Width 56 cm; Depth 11 cm. Grey sandstone. (See Plate 10 and 10a).

Here lyes  
 John Turnbull tenant  
 in Rotten Row who died  
 June 10th 1729 aged 71  
 And Andrew Turnbull his Sone  
 who died Sepr 14th 1712 aged 25



And Margaret Scott Spouse to the  
said John Turnbull who died  
Aprile 17th 1732 aged 72.

(22) On this stone the top panel with the 'Winged soul' is decorated with scrolls and leaf ornament. Below this is an hour glass above a skull with the long bones placed one on each side. The condition is reasonable. Height 67 cm; Width 60 cm; Depth 11 cm. Grey sandstone. (See Plate 11 and 11a).

Here lyes Befey Scott  
Spous to John Minto Tennant  
in Minto Who died in July the  
5 day 1720 in the 55th year  
of her age.

Here lyes John Minto late Ten-  
nant in Minto who died on  
the 57 year of his age and  
was buried on the 27th day of  
December 1725.

(23) This is the stone offset to the right of the entrance. The decoration is an 'Angel of Death' with a skull in her left hand and a long bone in her right. Bottom centre is an hour glass. The inscription is eroded and in places illegible. Height 80 cm; Width 69 cm; Depth 9½ cm. Grey sandstone. (See Plate 12).

Here Lyes Margaret  
White Late Spouse  
to Walter Scott Ten-  
ant in Deanfoot who  
Died on the -day o- De-  
cember 173- in  
the 6(3) year of her age  
Alfo ... .. son of the  
said Walter Who died on  
the 27 day of October  
1737 in the 17th Year  
of his age.

The following six stones are without the enclosure, being grouped under the large yew tree which stands a short distance to the east.

(24) The left hand stone of the three still standing, it is leaning at an angle from the vertical and the inscription is very badly weathered with some parts illegible. Height 105 cm; Width 64 cm; Depth 10 cm. Red sandstone.

In Memery of  
John Scott ... .. at Minto  
... .. 17 ... aged  
... .. Jean Cranston  
his spouse who died 22nd ... .. 1788  
aged ... 3 years. Also George their son  
died at Jamaica in the west  
Indies ... ..  
much ... ..

In the old Minto village there was both a tavern and a shop, and it was at the latter the Kirk Session paid 1/6d sterling for pipes and tobacco 'used at Jean Scott's daughter's funeral. Possibly this is the same Jean, nee Cranston, whose name is on the stone.

(25) The largest of the three stones still standing. The condition is good with the exception of the top right part of the face which has flaked. Height 157 cm; Width 90 cm; Depth 15 cm. Red sandstone.

Erected  
to the memory of the  
Rev. Dr. William Burn who for  
54 years was the much respected  
Minister of this parish and who  
after practising more virtues  
and exhibiting fewer failings  
than most of mankind died or  
rather fell asleep on the 9th Decr  
1826 in the 82nd year of his age and  
57th of his ministry.

My much loved friend with whom I dwell below  
No more lament, no more indulge your woe:  
My toils are ended and my sufferings done:  
My course is finished and my crown is won.

Note. — Mr Burn was the author of the first Statistical Account of the Parish.

(26) The third stone still standing is a 'Portrait with the Book of Life' stone. The flat top is crowned by a 'Winged Soul' and a panel under the portrait bears a blacksmith's hammer, pincers, and a horseshoe. On the outer corners of the flat top a face is carved. The face of the stone is in good condition, but the inscription is eroded. Height 109 cm; Width 61 cm; Depth 12 cm. Red sandstone. (See Plate 13 and 13a).

Here lies william Dods  
late Tenant of ... .. who  
died upon the ... .. 1751 aged  
65 years. Also (He)len Dods his  
Spouse who (died) the ... .. of Octr  
1762 aged ... .. years also six  
of their children are buried here.

(27) This is the left one of the two stones which are lying flat against the tree. It is a table stone with bevelled edges, and at least one of it's supporting corner stones appears to be lying flat underneath it. With one end jammed against the stone in front of it and the other hard against the yew trunk it must be subject to a gradually increasing pressure, and there are some signs of faint fracture lines appearing. The inscription is badly weathered. Length 167 cm; Width 91½ cm; Depth 10 cm. Sandstone.

Here lyeth the pious and learned  
Master James Ainslie Who was  
Minister of the Gospel at Minto  
18 years and died the 10 Day of  
July 1702 and of his age 95  
years,  
... .. (2 lines now illegible  
... .. possibly latin.)  
... .. Claras—  
Here Lyes Barbara Ainslie Who was  
Spouse to John Ritchie Minister  
At Minto ... .. daughter to Mr.  
James Ainslie and who died 11 day of  
March 1718 and in the 45 year of  
her age.



**The Roman Votive Altar Piece, probably dedicated to Mars, the God of War and dated to between 80 A.D. and 180 A.D., found at Minto Old Churchyard**



Plate No. 1. Stone No. 4.

IN MEMORY OF  
ELIZABETH SANDERSON  
Spouse to JOHN FORSYTH  
Gardner at Teviotbank who died the  
25<sup>th</sup> May 1827 aged 50 years. Also  
ELIZABETH FORSYTH  
their daughter who died 12<sup>th</sup> March  
1827 aged 15 years. Also JOHN  
FORSYTH their son who died in  
Infancy.

Plate No. 2. Stone No. 7.

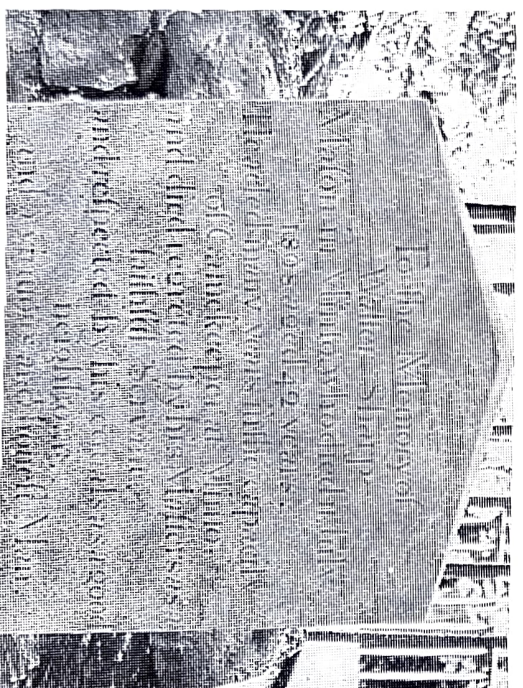


Plate No. 3. Stone No. 8.



Plate No. 4. Stone No. 11.



Plate No. 5. Stone No. 16.



Plate No. 6. Stone No. 17.



Plate No. 6a. Stone No. 17.



Plate No. 7. Stone No. 18.



Plate No. 8. Stone No. 19.



Plate No. 9. Stone No. 20.

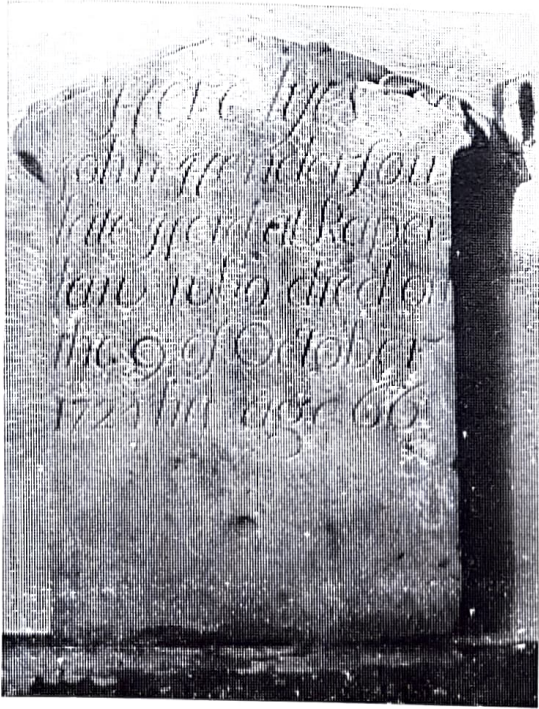


Plate No. 9a. Stone No. 20.



Plate No. 10. Stone No. 21.



Plate No. 10a. Stone No. 21.



Plate No. 11. Stone No. 22.

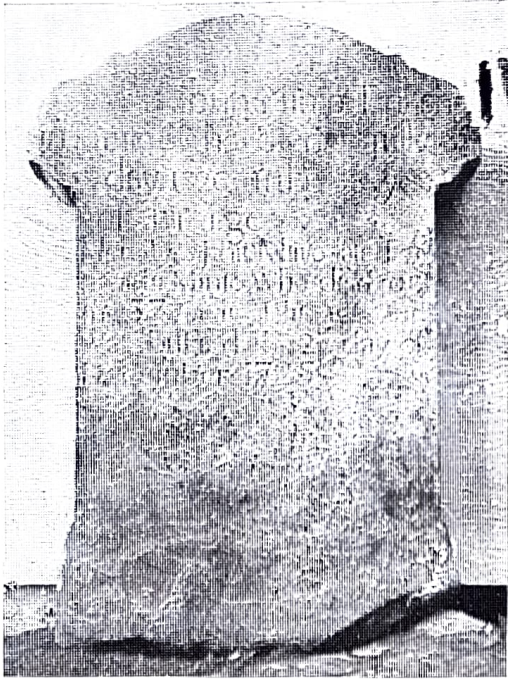


Plate No. 11a. Stone No. 22.



Plate No. 12. Stone No. 23.



Plate No. 13. Stone No. 26.



Plate No. 13a. Stone No. 26.



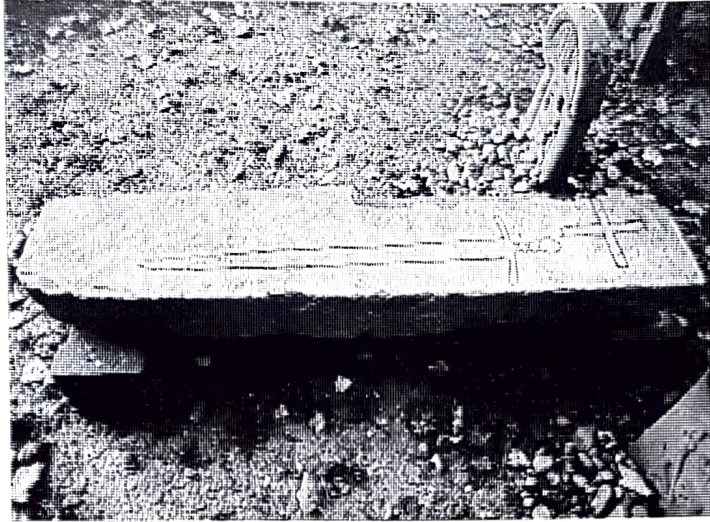
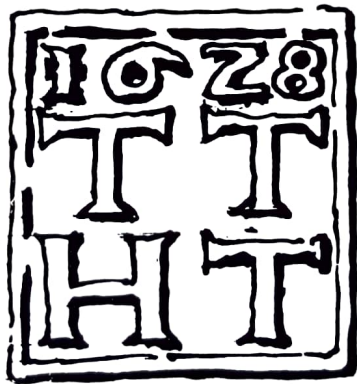
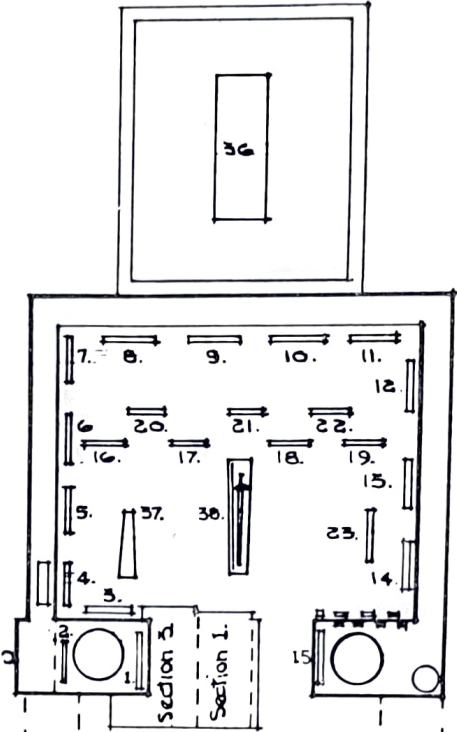
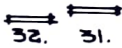
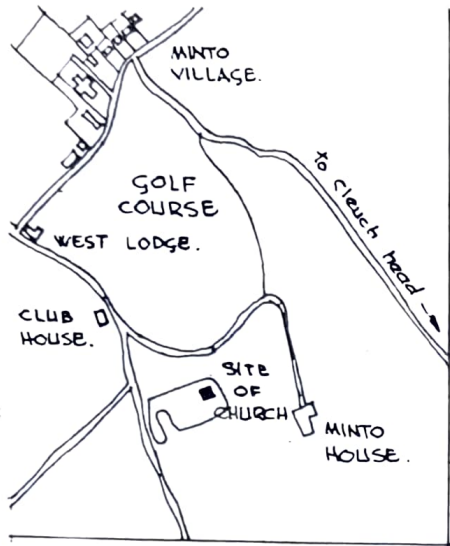


Plate No. 14. Stone No. 38.



See page 18.

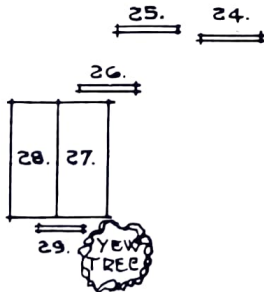


DATUM  
LINE.



Section 2.

Church Wall as Devined  
By Mr. Laing.



MINTO OLD CHURCH SITE.



Under this stone her body lyes  
Who's Lord ... .. the skies  
Virtus she had and Vice did hate  
While she lived in the mortal state.

Here lyeth

John Ritchie late Minister of  
the Gospel at Minto for the  
space of 40 years and died the  
27 day of Nov 1744 aged 75  
years.

In 1652 James Ainslie, Parson of the church of Minto, was taken to task for being a Free Mason. The matter came before the Presbytery of Kelso who decided, "That to their judgement there is neither sinne nor scandale in that word, because in the purest tymes of this Kirke Maisons haveing that word have been ministers, that Maisons and men haveing that word have been, and are daylie in our ordinances."

In a marginal note in the Session Records John Ritchie, his son-in-law, minister of the Parish for the first forty years of the 18th century is described as "The learned and laborious searcher for scandal."

(28) This is the right hand stone lying side by side with No. 27. It is almost flush with the ground. The inscription is in good condition. Length 170 cm. Width 92 cm; Depth 10 cm. Red sandstone.

HEIR LYETH Mr WILLIAM MAX-  
WEL PASTOR OF THIS PARISH  
27 YEARS WHO WENT HOME JAN  
8 1651 BEING THE FIFTIE YEAR OF  
HIS AGE LEAVING BEHIND HIM  
A WIFE AND 4 CHILDREN WH-  
O LAMENT HIS LOSE AND DESYR  
TO FOLLOW HIS VIRTVS  
ANNA INGLIS.

(29) This stone, the last of this group, stands behind the two flat stones and is wedged between a large branch and the roots of the yew tree. The inscription, which is to the back, is badly flaked and difficult to read. Height 66 cm; Width 70 cm; Depth 10½ cm. Sandstone.

In Memory of  
ANDREW McLEAN Overseer  
at Hassendeanburn who died in  
consequence of an accidental  
discharge of a gun by his com-  
panion on the ... .. 1815.

The remaining 7 stones lie to the south and west of the enclosure.

(30) This is a finely cut table stone supported on four square pillars. It lies close to the south wall, and though it seems in good condition the inscription has weathered, especially towards the bottom half where some parts are illegible. Length 188 cm; Width 79 cm; Depth 10½ cm. Red sandstone.

Here Lyes Thomas Turnbull  
of Know Who Departed  
this life in the 66 year of his age  
And in the year of God 1646

Here Lyes John Turnbull of Know  
Who Died in the 64 year of his  
age and in the year of God  
1676.

Here Lyes Thomas Turnbull of  
Know Who died in the 78 year  
of his age and was buried on  
the 6th of October 1730 also

... .. Mackie his Spouse who died  
in the 58 year of her age and in-  
terred the 4 of January 1716.

Here Lyes Antony Turnbull of  
Know Who Died the ... .. of Sepr  
17 ... .. aged 59 years ... ..

... .. his Spouse who died the  
... .. 1731 ... ..

Elizabeth Scott His Spouse ... ..

... .. aged

... ..

... .. Turnbull

... .. who died at Know  
on 7th of April 17(5 ...) aged 67 years.

The Know on this stone is the farm of Hassendean Knowetownhead, O.S. Map Ref. 544185, from the road junction here a small plaque in the steading wall is easily seen (see sketch). Under the date 1628 are the initials T.T. above H.T. This is the marriage plaque of Thomas Turnbull, (1580-1646), the first name on the gravestone, and being 'of Know' a land owner, and not a tenant. At the date on the plaque he would be 46, and his son, John, would be aged 16, so it may be assumed that this was a second marriage. In 1640, Thomas granted a charter of the lands of Know in favour of his son, John. John Turnbull of Know appears in the Session records of Hassendean Church after the Restoration.

Along with many others he was fined £1,000 (Scots) for his acquiescence in the so-called 'Usurpation of Cromwell.' In 1659 he resigned the lands of Knowe, to himself in life-rent, and to Thomas Turnbull, his eldest son, in fee. In 1665 an attempt was made to suppress the Parish of Hassendean, and the Archbishop of Glasgow appointed a committee to meet at Hassendean, and perambulate the bounds of the said Parish of Hassendean and Roberton and report, "Anent the most commodious place for the situation of the Kirk." With one side arguing for Roberton, and the other for Hassendean, John Turnbull of Knowe offered to prove that there were 592 communicants within 3½ miles of the Kirk of Hassendean as it stands. The Parish survived, but eventually at some time about 1690 the Kirk was suppressed and the Parish shared between Roberton, Wilton and Minto, with the lands of Knowe going to Minto. Thomas Turnbull who succeeded in 1676, was a known Covenanter, and had to flee the district. On his attempted return he was arrested and imprisoned at Jedburgh. He was transferred to Edinburgh, where along with several others from the Border area, some in their absence, he was tried for treason. The charges included, bearing arms against His Majesty's Forces in several of the skirmishes of that time, consorting with the murderers of Archbishop Sharp, and taking part in the storming of the Tower and the Castle of Hawick. The witnesses produced by the prosecution failed to testify against him, and he was

acquited. On the 4th day of April 1735 Anthony Turnbull of Know was one of the Heritors called to a meeting to discuss urgent repairs to the Kirk of Minto. While this is listed in the County Inventory as the oldest stone in the churchyard, and the inscription does start "Here Lyes" it seems most unlikely that the early generations would be buried there. The church of Hassendean stood only a quarter of a mile or so from the farm of Knowe and up to 1690 they would both worship, and be buried there. It is probable that burials, in family lairs would continue after that date. In the case of Thomas, 1646 and John 1676, there are no wives mentioned on the stone, and the inscriptions are almost identical, and appear to be cut by the same hand. However if there were Turnbull stones at Hassendean they would be lost in the great flood of 1796 when the whole graveyard was washed out, and even coffins were seen being carried down the river, and the church, or rather such ruin as remained of it, finished up on the opposite bank.

The next two stones (31 and 32) stand side by side, a little distance south of the above table stone, beside a rhododendron bush.

(31) This, the right hand stone, is a small square block in good condition. Height 65½ cm; Width 54½ cm; Depth 9 cm. Grey sandstone.

HERE LYES ZACCHEWS LA-  
WRIE LATE School MASTER  
IN MINTO WHO DIED IWLY 4th  
1744 AGED 53 YEARS. Also  
his Daughter Sarah Who  
Died June 7th 1735 aged 18  
Months.  
ALSO MARY LAWRIE HIS  
DAUGHTER WHO DIED  
MAY (19) 1764 AGED 36 YEARS  
9 MONTHS

Zachaeus Lawrie was brought in from Lessuden to replace Walter Turnbull as schoolmaster. Walter fell foul of the Session over his very noisy domestic disputes. He had a short temper and a strong vocabulary, and somewhere along the line his many duties; schoolmaster, precentor, Session clerk, beadle, bellman, and gravedigger, must have proved to much for his self control. It is not recorded that Zachaeus took on all these duties, but at the meeting of the Heritors in 1735 he is recorded as "Zachaeus Lawrie, schoolmaster of the said Parish, thair clerk."

(32) This, the left hand stone is also a small square stone in good condition. Height 64 cm; Width 50½ cm; Depth 11½ cm. Red sandstone.

Isabel Hill died 19  
October 1767 aged 57  
Helen Trotter her Da-  
ughter died 21 Februa-  
ry 1761 aged 25.  
The corruptable must put  
off incorruption and this  
mortal immortality  
Thanks be to God who giveth  
us the victory through our  
Lord Jesus Christ.

Stones Nos 33, 34, 35, are grouped round the large yew tree at the south-west corner of the enclosure.

(33) This is an obelisk resting on two square stepped slabs, it is in very good condition. Height 254 cm; Width 66 cm; (square side of obelisk above base). Red sandstone.

IN MEMORY  
OF  
JOHN BROKIE  
LATE TENANT  
IN  
HASSENDEAN BANK  
WHO DIED 25th DECr  
1818  
AGED 77 YEARS  
ALSO OF  
ISABEL BRACK  
HIS WIFE WHO  
DIED 9th DECr 1821  
AGED 70 YEARS.

(34) This is a flat slab lying flush with the ground behind the tree, it is broken into many pieces. Only the top line of the inscription can be read, and that with difficulty. The remainder has completely gone. Length 163 cm; Width 66 cm; Depth ?. Red sandstone.

Here lyes ... .. Stephen Oliver.

(35) This stone stands close behind No. 34, It's condition is good. Height 94 cm; Width 66 cm; Depth 12 cm. Grey sandstone.

In Memory of  
JOHN DODS Feuer in Den-  
holm who died 22nd October  
1796 aged 74 years also  
Margaret Mack his spouse  
died 11th Sept 1810  
aged 56 years.

(36) This is a chest tomb enclosed within it's own iron railings behind the west wall of the enclosure. A falling tree had smashed much of the ironwork and dislodged the side panels of the tomb. It has been restored as far as possible. Length 213 cm; Width 107 cm; Height 88 cm. above ground level. Sandstone.

In Memory of  
JAMES RUTHERFOORD late of this parish  
who died at DYKES on the 6th of Jan. 1783  
aged 74 years.  
And Elizabeth Spindie his spouse  
who died at Knowsouth the 22nd of May 1782  
aged 60 years.  
Also their second son James who died at  
Minto Aged about 1 year.  
And their third son Andrew who died at  
Wellrigg the 16th of June 1765 Aged 15 years.

This monument was erected in grateful remembrance by their eldest son John Rutherford.

Also the foresaid

John Rutherford Esq. Sail Manufacturer at Limehouse London who died 2nd Oct 1802 aged 56 years and was interred at Limehouse Church And Alison Rutherford their daughter who died at Dykes 16th August 1794 aged 39 years.

Also James Rutherford their grandson who died at Catshawhile 12th May 1814 aged 23 years.

Also Agnes Rutherford their daughter who died at West Nisbet the 24th Jany 1832 aged 77 years and 7 months.

Also John Rutherford their grandson who died at Jedburgh 26th Febry 1858 aged 65 years.

The end panels of this tomb also bear inscriptions, which are now almost illegible, but have already been recorded in, 'The Churches and Churchyards of Teviotdale.' by James Robson.

On the east panel:—

“The sweet remembrance of the just  
Shall flourish when they sleep in dust.”

On the west panel:—

“As surely as night succeeds the longest day  
So surely will death conclude the longest life;  
Work therefore, while it is day.”

The last two stones lie flat on supporting blocks in the front part of the enclosure.

(37) Length 110 cm; Width 42 cm tapering to 38 cm; Depth 18 cm. Red sandstone. This is a coped stone which was lying on the enclosure wall at the start of the project. It is badly eroded and the foot has been fractured. There is no trace of either decoration or inscription. While possibly a sarcophagus lid, it is more probably an early form of gravestone.

(38) Length 172 cm; Width 37 cm tapering to 27 cm; Depth 17½ cm. Red sandstone. This stone is decorated with an incised cross on the top left of its face, and beneath this and to its right a sword. Apart from a section 88 cm. long and 7 cm. by 7 cm. deep and wide chiselled out of the left side from the head, it is in excellent condition. It was found at a depth of 1 metre 20 cm. in section 3. (See Plate 14).

Stones Nos. 16, 31, and 32, all have an identical small scroll motif at the end of the inscriptions, probably identifying them as products of the same mason. Nos. 31, and 36, both have a word where a letter, or letters, had been omitted, and then added above the word.

Of the 36 stones bearing dateable inscriptions are recorded 76 deaths, 4 in the 17th, 50 in the 18th, and 22 in the 19th century. The earliest interment would be stone No. 38, with the cross and sword, (13th century), the latest on stone No. 36 in the enclosed Rutherford lair, was in 1858, some 25 years after the Church was demolished. In the seven centuries separating those two, many, many others must have found their last resting place in this quiet corner. Of those there is no record, “Their memory and their name is gone, Alike, unknowing, and unknown.”

## THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT

This part of the project was a limited exercise to find if there is a relationship between the enclosure and the former churches. While we were still working on the gravestones Robin Laing came down from Perth to visit the site and did a survey using his divining rods. Considering the alterations and renovations which must have taken place during the long and troubled years of its history, it was not surprising that this proved to be a complicated exercise. He traced the body of the 'church' as forming a rectangle with the enclosure, and extending some 9 metres east from it. He was also positive that some structure lay under the entrance.

The first section, 1 metre wide by 2 metres in length, was taken across the centre of the enclosure entrance. At a depth of 70 cms. the foundations of a wall were exposed. When cleared it was found to be 120 cms. wide, with two good faces, these consisted of flat, irregularly shaped sandstones skilfully fitted to each other; the outer face 43 cms. wide, the inner 28 cms. The centre core was an infill of mortar rubble. The line of the wall matched that of the enclosure. Work was stopped at a depth of 80 cms. and it was at this depth, against the front of the wall, were the only finds. These were 3 pieces of black glaze 'teapot' pottery and a small artifact in red sandstone. This was 90 mm. long with a base 35 mm. square, from which it tapered, with a slight curve, symmetrically to a point. It was very well made and bore no signs of wear.

### Easier Digging

In the area defined by Mr Laing as the body of the church, the line of what should be the south wall seemed to offer the easier digging, with maximum freedom from tree roots. Our second section, also 2 metres by 1 metre, was taken, at a distance of 4 metres from the enclosure, to bisect the line of this wall. The soil profile was the same as in section one, 40 to 45 cms. of disturbed soil above a strata of loose building stone and mortar. In this strata there was a substantial quantity of bone, mostly broken pieces. Also at a depth of 46 cms. embedded in the east side of the section was a skull, which was left in position. Another skull was also visible lying in an animal burrow exposed in the base of the south end, but lying some 15 cms. beyond the digging area. At this point we received word that a lady in the village had raised objections to our work, the 2 metre by 1 metre excavations, along with the skull and the quantity of bones giving the impression we were digging graves. To prevent further anxiety it was decided to abandon work on this section with the result inconclusive. The finds were, at 60 cms., a dressed stone, 34 cms. by 31 cms., by 15 cms. deep, with two chamfered edges forming a rightangle. This stone lay in a concentration of large stones running across the centre of the section in what would have been the line of the wall, but at this stage there was no sign of building. The second find was the base half of a small sandstone artifact, identical to that found in section one, but grey in colour. This was found in the rubble removed from the section.

Any thought of work in this area outwith the enclosure was abandoned as with some 700 years of burials on the top of burials we would inevitably find the same spread of bones. Instead a section of the same dimensions was taken across the south edge of the entrance to check how the wall in section one was joined with the wall of the enclosure. The profile here was the same as in the earlier sections. When we reached the wall it was butted onto that of the enclosure, and not so well built. We decided to follow it down, dismantling the front face and the core, but leaving the back face intact. At a depth of 1 metre a large flat stone was uncovered with a rectangular section, 9 cm. by 16 cm. cut out at the end, as though to hold a squared post. It was resting on another larger flat stone at a slight angle, and when this was cleared it was found to have an incised cross with what appeared to be the cross



guard of a sword hilt below and to its right. As this seemed to be quite an interesting find we reported it to the B.B.A.P. in Galashiels and Dr Piers Dixon came across to have a look. He thought we should carry on, extending the section as necessary, and keeping a photographic record of the various stages.

As the clearing continued we found that the slab with the posthole was also recessed at its other end, the distance between the recesses was 51 cm. and the post-holes were 9 cm. wide by 15 cm long. When this slab was removed it revealed the hilt of the sword and a section of the blade clearly incised on the slab below. To follow the blade down we had to dismantle the wall above it and eventually excavate the area of Section one, for the second time. The dimensions of the slab, when it was finally cleared, were, Length, 172 cm; Width at the head, 37 cm, tapering to 27 cm. at the foot, and  $17\frac{1}{2}$  cm. in Depth. A check had been cut into the stone, 7 cm. deep by 7 cm. wide, extending down the left side from the head for a distance of 88 cm. In the vertical face of the check are 5 niches whose centres are 17 cm. apart, as though at a time before the check was cut, the slab had been drilled to hold iron bars. The cross, on the top left of the face, is 24 cm. long with its cross bar  $22\frac{1}{2}$  cm. The sword, incised immediately below and to the right of the cross is 108 cm. long. The hilt is 13 cm. and the forward curved cross guard 21 cm. When in its position in the excavation the check in the slab would correspond to a similar check in the face of the enclosure wall.

#### **B.B.A.P. Assistance**

At this stage, with the slab exposed, and the section and surrounding area cleaned up, we again called on the B.B.A.P. for assistance, both in the classification of the slab, and in the problem of lifting it from the section. It was arranged that the B.B.A.P. would supply some man-power, and a date agreed for the operation. Dr Dixon provisionally dated the slab to the 13th or early 14th century and this was later confirmed, from photographs, by Dr I. Fisher of the Royal Commission, and by Mr P. Ryder, who is at present doing a survey of similar medieval grave-slabs in N.E. England. Their conclusion was that this was the work of a local mason with little experience in this type of work, and that it seems probable that the outline of the sword was traced round the actual weapon.

With the estimated weight of the slab in the region of 400 kgms. and the size and shape of the section presenting problems in the positioning of sheer-legs, we again called in the expertise of Will Howden, who had a quick inspection of the problems, and detailed the extra equipment required. Lord Minto was approached regarding the disposal of the slab, and he decided that it should remain at the enclosure. Under Mr Howden's supervision the work proceeded without a hitch, and the slab was lifted and placed in position, on two blocks, in the centre of the enclosure entrance.

The slab had been bedded down on a layer of fine soil levelling a line of large flat stones which extending some 20 cm. wider than the wall, formed the platform on which it had been built. A short extension of the section along the face of the enclosure wall showed the platform extending under it, and unlike the building above, not butted on to it. In this extension there was a considerable amount of building debris with some mason squared stones, also part of a nicely cut coped grave-stone 60 cm. in length, and a rectangular block of rust about 18 cm. by 14 cm., the size and shape of a rim-lock. The coped stone was placed on the south wall of the enclosure, the lock? was so badly eroded in the damp soil it was breaking up as it was touched.

To complete the work in the section a start was made to clear the narrow area in front of the platform, almost immediately a row of four skulls was exposed,

evenly spaced about a metre apart and almost touching the edge of the platform. One had been crushed, probably during the removal of the burial slab. As these were almost certainly burials in the body of the church, further work was abandoned and the section was filled in.

With the increased depth in this section the soil profile was finally, a 45 cm. layer of disturbed surface soil over a strata of building rubble of varying depth. Beneath this a 5 cm. band of red puddle lay over another 5 cm. band of black carbon and mortar sand. From this to the bottom of the section was a reddish gritty clay. Without an analysis it is not possible to say if the carbon strata was caused by the church being burnt out at some earlier time.

### Conclusions

From the evidence in Section 3, it would seem that the entrance wall of the enclosure is a remnant of the early church. The check in the burial slab corresponding to the check in the entrance wall, when added to the evidence of the slab recessed for standards and the lock, point to a doorway being cut through that wall at a time during or after the alterations at the Reformation. Mr A. Harvey, schoolmaster at Minto, was the author of a small pamphlet, 'Minto and Roundabout,' published in Minto in 1930. In it, referring to the old church, he states. "Nothing now remains but the vestry walls." At that date he had been schoolmaster for 40 years, that is from 1890, a date at which the older people in the district would remember the church before its demolition.

If the enclosure was the vestry a casual glance shows that the other walls are of inferior construction to the entrance wall, and are built onto it, not with it. The burial slab is contemporary with the earliest days of the Norman Church and would not have been used as a doorstep at that time, but there would be no compunction in its use for that purpose at, or after, the Reformation. It would seem that the enclosure is the remains of a vestry built onto the west gable of the early Church, with a doorway broken through the gable into the body of the Church at the same time.

In "Churches and Churchyards of Teviotdale," 1893 Mr Robson states,—“A number of sculptured stones are also neatly arranged along the line of the old foundations — fragments of the old Church which furnish additional evidence of its having been a place of elegant design.” — “The old churchyard surrounds the site of the old church, and about a score of the old stones are still standing, all more or less in a fair state of preservation.” The sculptured stones would be those rescued from 'Gibbie's Cleuch' where they had been dumped, while the bulk of the score of gravestones would seem to have been moved into the enclosure. This would represent a time of major alterations to the gardens, such as might occur at the 1914-18 war when food shortages were responsible for many ornamental gardens being dug out to make way for vegetables. Among the stones found during the clearing work was a section of arch, clean cut and unmarked by erosion. Mr Robson also states, “One end of this building, which contained a pointed arch, bore distinct traces of a much older structure, and was, in all probability, part of the pre-Reformation Church.” There was, however, no suggestion of an arch in the area of the excavation.

When Mr Laing surveyed the area, using his divining rods, he reckoned that the Church was an extension of the enclosure, forming a rectangle some  $15\frac{1}{2}$  by 7 metres. In a plan of "The Policy of Minto" as surveyed by Matthew Stobie in 1766, the Church is shown as a plain rectangle lying about 18 degrees south of an east/west axis. While this is in agreement with Mr Laing, the dimensions on the plan are approximately 45 feet by 15 feet against the 50 feet by 22 feet on the ground.

15 feet as the exterior width for a building of this type seems much too narrow, but with the enclosure governing the width Mr Laing's divining seems to be almost spot on.

This rectangle would obviously be the outline of the post-Reformation Church, which leaves it's relationship to the Norman Church a matter of conjecture. The line of skulls in Section 3, which are almost certainly burials, would point to the enclosure wall being common to both churches as it seems unlikely the Reformed Church would continue to use the interior for burials. The arch mentioned by Mr Robson would also suggest that the rebuilding might not have been so very extensive. It is even possible that it was confined to the removal of all the ornamental work which could be done safely, without weakening the stability of the building, which would account for the arch being left intact, and for the sculptured stones found, with their faces turned inward, at the final demolition.

On behalf of Peter Elliot, James Millar, and myself, I would extend our grateful thanks to Dr Dixon, Mr Lewis and the other members of the Scottish Development Department Archaeological Section, for their help and advice; to Dr Fawcett, Dr Keppie and Mr Fisher for identifying and classifying the finds; to Mr Laing for his work divining the site; to Mr Howden for his expert help in lifting and moving very heavy objects; to Mr Derek Lunn of Hawick Camera Club for his work on the photographic plates; and to all the others who gave assistance and encouragement in the project.

GEORGE O. WOOD,  
Field Secretary.

#### **Addendum**

At some time subsequent to the completion of the project an additional item, from an unknown source, has appeared on the enclosure wall. This is a fragment of another 'Cross and Sword' slab, roughly triangular in shape, it is 28 cm high by 31 cm across the base. It bears the clearly incised lines of a sword hilt, that is some 8 cm of the hilt, the complete forward curved cross guard and 7 cm of the blade. The only difference is a centre line incised down the blade to denote a thickening or strengthening of the sword in this area. It is decided that this stone should remain at the enclosure, and as it is sandstone and showing signs of fracturing along the line of the grain, it should be treated, and also concreted onto the wall for safe keeping.

G.O.W.