

### III.

#### RECENT DISCOVERIES IN TRANENT CHURCHYARD.

By ALAN REID, F.S.A. Scot.

(With photographs by Mr Jas. Moffat.)

During the summer of 1911, the remains of the old church, and the churchyard of Tranent, were the subjects of careful investigation, made by the Rev. A. M. Hewat, B.D., minister of the parish. The accretions of many years have been removed from several portions of the ancient foundations, making it possible to study several valuable features of the older architecture, and adding greatly to the interest of the composite fabric. A number of monuments, long hidden under the turf, have been brought to view; and a judicious scheme of order and repair has considerably enhanced the appearance and amenity of the churchyard.

Prominent among the discoveries lately made is the south-east doorway of the ancient church. As has already been said, the modern edifice was reared largely on the foundations of the earlier building, several courses of which appear over the present level of the burying-ground. The removal of a strong growth of ivy, made during a search for the Rev. Robert Balcanquhal's tombstone, revealed the moulded jambs of the Priest's Door; and by digging down through

three feet of soil, the sill of the doorway (with a step of later insertion) and the stops of the jamb mouldings were exposed, as in the drawing shown in fig. 1.

Mr Watson remarks: "From the position and size of the doorway shown in the drawing, it could only have been the priest's entrance to the chancel; and the mouldings here, as in other portions of the

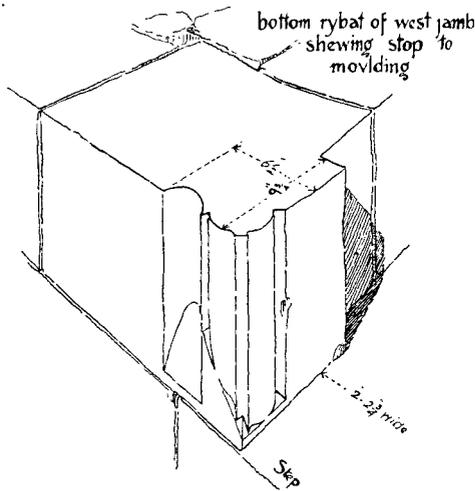


Fig. 1. Moulded Rybat of South-east Doorway. (From a drawing by Mr John Watson, F.S.A. Scot.)

fabric, indicate a date late in the fifteenth century, say 1470-1480. The opening is only 2 feet  $3\frac{3}{4}$  inches wide. Four courses of the jambs on each side remain. Doubtless the doorway originally would have an arch enriched with the same mouldings as on the jambs."

Mr Hewat had the outer section of the filling-in masonry removed, and the south-east doorway remains exposed to view. The old north-west doorway, with its plain, broadly chamfered jambs, has been similarly treated, as has a portion of one of the pointed arches which

opened from the north aisle into the nave. The restoration of the built-up window of the remaining north aisle, shown in fig. 2 of the earlier paper, is also contemplated. From the splay on the pendentive between the double-arched lintel it seems clear that the fragmentary mullions built in the masonry had no connection with the window, which originally was a shaftless opening.

Of much importance among the recent discoveries is the large flat tombstone commemorating Alexander Craufurd, vicar of Tranent. This foot-worn slab, with others in the churchyard, had formed part of the flooring of the pre-Reformation church, and had been placed outside, presumably, when the present structure was erected. The memorial is of reddish sandstone, and is 8 feet long, 4 feet and  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch broad, and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches thick. An excellently wrought inscription, in Gothic characters and within beaded lines, had run round the entire margin, the shorter letters measuring  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches, and the longer letters 4 inches over. Unfortunately, the slab is mutilated, and the upper portion, which contained the date, is entirely gone. The remanent text reads, "Alexander : Craufurd : Quondam : Vicarius : De : Tranent : Qui : Obiit : Die : Mensis : Decrb : An." Dr Hay Fleming notes, however, that an Alexander Craufurd, who died before the 10th of May 1490, was clerk of the Chapel Royal, and there need be little doubt regarding the identity of the clerk and vicar or the chronology of this interesting fifteenth-century tombstone.

The chief subject of the symbolic devices is a finely incised cross, which rises from a calvary of four steps, and reaches to the marginal lettering at the top and sides of the slab. The limbs terminate in a *fleur-de-lis* ornament, that to the right alone being perfect, and as represented among the rubbings shown in fig. 2.

On the left side of the cross a singularly graceful chalice is incised. The vessel, rounded in stalk and bowl, rises from a square base whose drawing, evidently, had caused the sculptor considerable trouble. Several fifteenth-century tombstones in

England repeat the pattern of this chalice, whose outlines are also represented in fig. 2.

On the right side of the cross is graven an armorial shield, bearing the Crawford fess ermine and the initials A. C. with a mullet between.

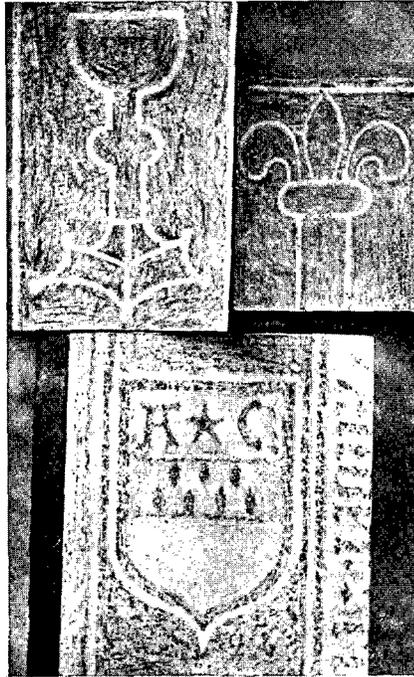


Fig. 2. Chalice, Cross Terminal, and Shield, from Alexander Craufurd's Tombstone. (Photographed by Mr D. Kay, from rubbings.)

This shield also appears in fig. 2. It has a relieved and slightly rounded border, all the markings, initials, etc., being in low relief. The size of the shield is 16 inches by 12 inches ; the cross rises to a height of 5 feet 6 inches ; and the chalice measures 20 inches over all.

The plain, flat tombstone of Mr George Balcanquhal was brought

to light at the same time, and almost at the same spot. It is remarkable only for its Latin epitaph, which is worthy of reproduction. "Hic jacet Georgius Balcanquhall in artibus magister M<sup>r</sup>i Roberti Balcanquhall hujus parochiae pastoris vigilantissimi filius natu tertius qui dum in viris erat vitae integritate morum probitate animi candore paucis fuit secundus vitam hanc terrenam et caducam cum celesti et aeterna commutavit Novembris 8 An dom 1658 aetatis suae 39."

Mr Hewat has supplied the following translation of Balcanquhal's epitaph:—"Here lies George Balcanquhal, Master of Arts, the third son of Mr Robert Balcanquhal the most faithful minister of this parish, who as long as he lived was second to few in the integrity of his life, the uprightness of his character, and the purity of his soul. He exchanged this earthly and fleeting life for a life that is heavenly and everlasting, on the 8th day of November, in the year of our Lord, 1658, aged 39." The Rev. Robert Balcanquhal's memorial is now visible in the wall of the church beside the priest's doorway, but its decorations and obituary are entirely destroyed.

Several slabs of later date, and rich in symbolic devices, have also been uncovered. One of these is shown in figs. 3 and 4. Evidently this finely decorated monument had originally been set on pillars; and its emblematic designs show that it commemorates a seafaring person. Over the cross-bones and skull, seen on the lower splay, a coil of rope and an open book—a ship's log, presumably—furnish a suggestion which is strongly supported by the anchor attached to the rope, and visible over the memento mori riband and the resurrection angel facing the skull. Initials occupy the centre of the stone; the side splays bearing an hour-glass, crossed spade and shovel, and two curious, globular objects, with knotted ropes at one end, bearing some resemblance to the cork "fenders" used in guarding the sides of a ship from injury against a pier.

The artistic and elaborate sculpture relieved on the upper splay is shown in fig. 4. Here two cherubs support a scroll ornament,

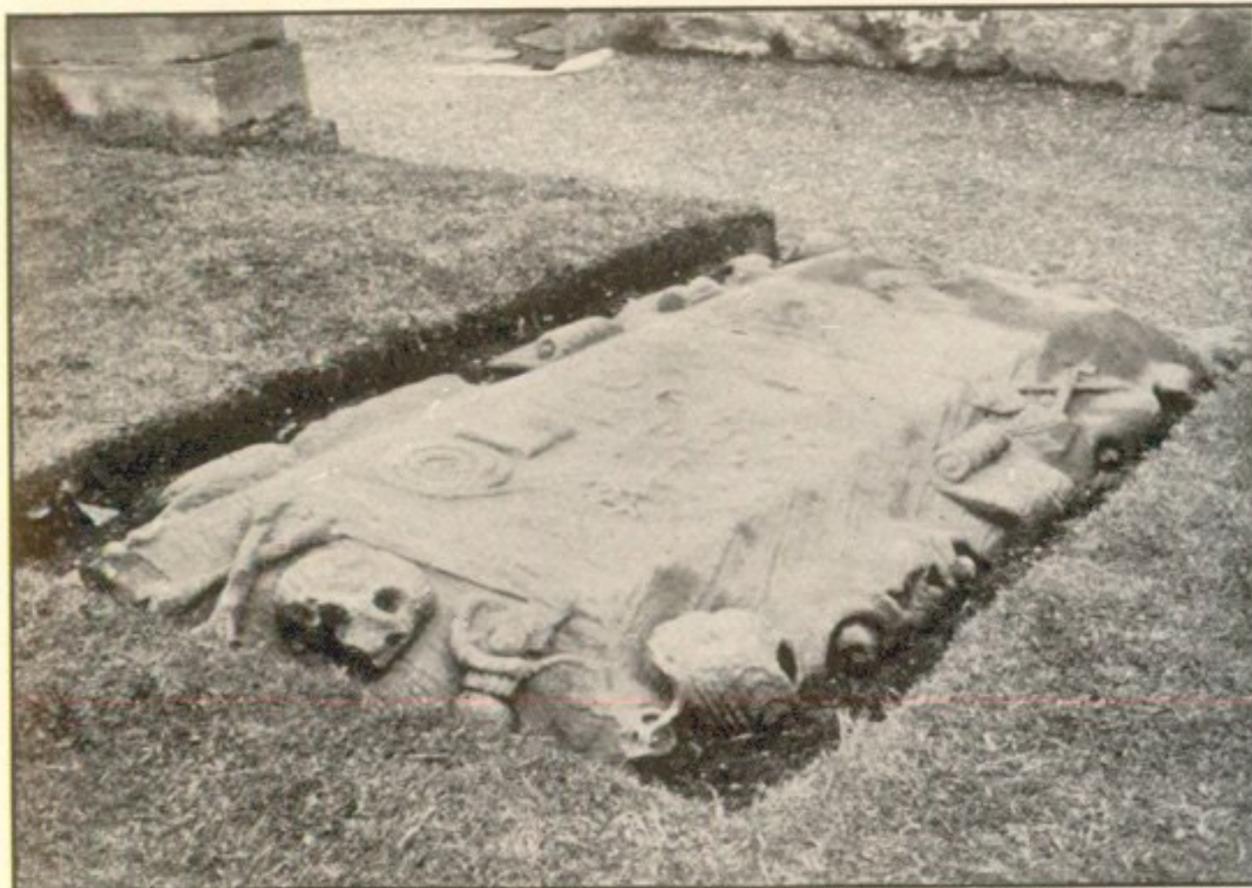


Fig. 3. A Sailor's Memorial. East End.



Fig. 4. The Sailor's Memorial. West End.

through which an anchor is driven, the arm and ring of the anchor alone appearing. The device is obscure in meaning, unless regarded as a reading of Hope as the Anchor of the Soul. In all probability a Scripture reference, explanatory of the subject, was originally graven on the weather-worn scroll.

Another large slab, with broadly splayed sides and ends, commemorates the family of Allan (fig. 5). On the splay not shown in the



Fig. 5. The "Passing" or "Dead" Bell.

illustration, a coffin, a blazing torch, and a shovel are boldly relieved ; these emblems being varied on the splay represented in fig. 5 by an hour-glass, a spade, and a hand grasping a bell. The latter symbol is excellently depicted. The hand emerges from a conventional arrangement of clouds, and the bell is interesting as a representation of the "dead," or "passing" bell, so often referred to in our older parish records. A skull, cross-bones, and the "memento mori" scroll appear at one end of the slab, an ornamental panel occupying the other.

As was remarked and shown in the first paper, Tranent churchyard contains several excellent representations of the butcher's trade emblems. Along the south side of a very effective flat slab, lately uncovered, and set in a wealth of Jacobean scroll-work, the axe,



Fig. 6. Butcher's Axe and Cleaver.

cleaver, and sharpening steel of the flesher are prominent; the ordinary emblems of mortality appearing on other portions of the splays. Fig. 6 shows still another of these ubiquitous trade sculptures, which Mr Hewat has recovered, and raised to as much dignity as its mutilated proportions allow. The axe and cleaver are crossed in a circular panel, under which appears a winged cherub-head; spiral pillars with

Ionic capitals flanking the draped obituary panel. Monogram initials appear on the reverse; the side pilasters showing in small sunk panels very dainty "stars," formed of cross-bones, darts, spades, and shovels, the arrangement being unique.

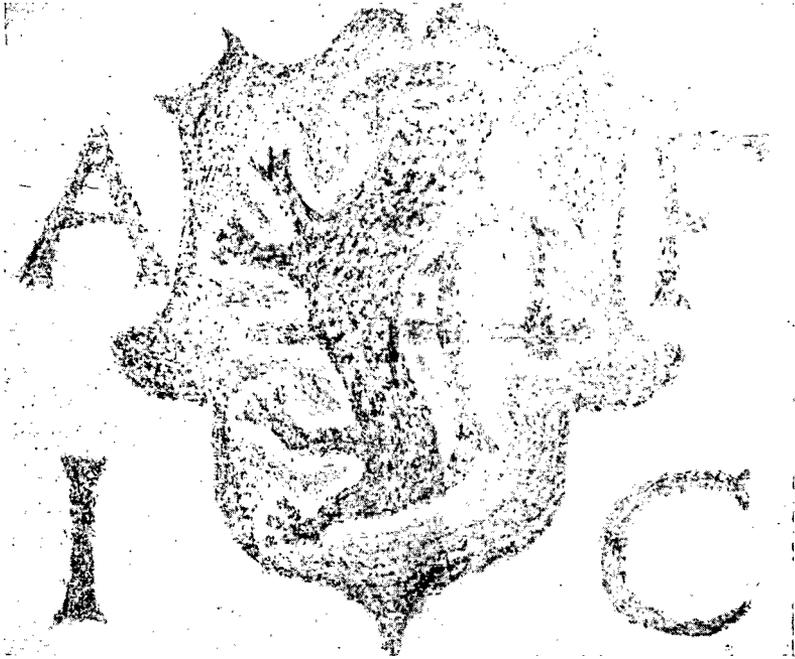


Fig. 7. Heraldic Lion and Baton. (Photographed by Mr D. Kay, from a rubbing.)

In the lower portion of the graveyard, known as the Heugh, and near the vault where generations of the Cadell family repose within the old workings of the Tranent coalfield, lies the slab whose only ornament is shown in fig. 7. Graven on a shield, whose outlines are very elaborate if not particularly correct or chaste, appears, as described by Mr W. Rae Macdonald, "a lion rampant, surmounting a baton."

This device has also been termed "a lion rampant, with a sword driven through its body," but the Lyon Office has not been able to identify such a symbol. Regarding the lion as that of the Fergusons, and the "sword" as the baton, which it undoubtedly is, the reading is easy; but the local records bear no trace of the identity of the A F and I C commemorated by the memorial. The shield, lion, and initials are relieved by the sinking of the background for  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch, the designs thus raised being rounded and finished with some elaboration. The shield measures 18 inches in height by 15 inches in breadth, the measurement in the local history being "about 15 by 12 inches."

A sunken and almost hidden flat stone, lying near the priest's doorway and in front of the Rev. Robert Balcanquhal's mutilated memorial, also engaged Mr Hewat's earnest attention. It was soon proved by digging that a work of unusual proportions and merit lay hidden here, and its thorough exposure and re-erection revealed the magnificent tombstone shown in figs. 8 and 9. A family of Scotts are commemorated here. Their memorial measures 6 feet 7 inches by 3 feet 8 inches, and stands 3 feet 8 inches high. It is not so massive, nor so excellent artistically, as the pillared "through-stone" shown in figs. 4 to 8 of the earlier paper, but is nearly as interesting, and almost as picturesque. The corner supports show remarkably pretty cherubs on all the sides that meet the eye. From the west, and as seen in fig. 8, there appear a sitting cherub holding an hour-glass, a cherub sitting pensively with a skull, a winged cherub wheeling a globe with his hands, and a winged cherub sitting on clouds and holding a palm branch—the latter cherub being more obvious in fig. 9. Over the two western pillars is a beautiful, winged cherub-head, which leads most artistically to the rich foliaceous and symbolic ornamentation covering the upper surface of the moulded slab.

Fig. 9 gives an admirable general representation of this handsome eighteenth-century tombstone, and shows the leading features of its elaborate ornaments and symbolism. The pillar cherub nearest the



Fig. 8. The Scott Memorial from the West. (The Priest's Door appears in the left foreground.)

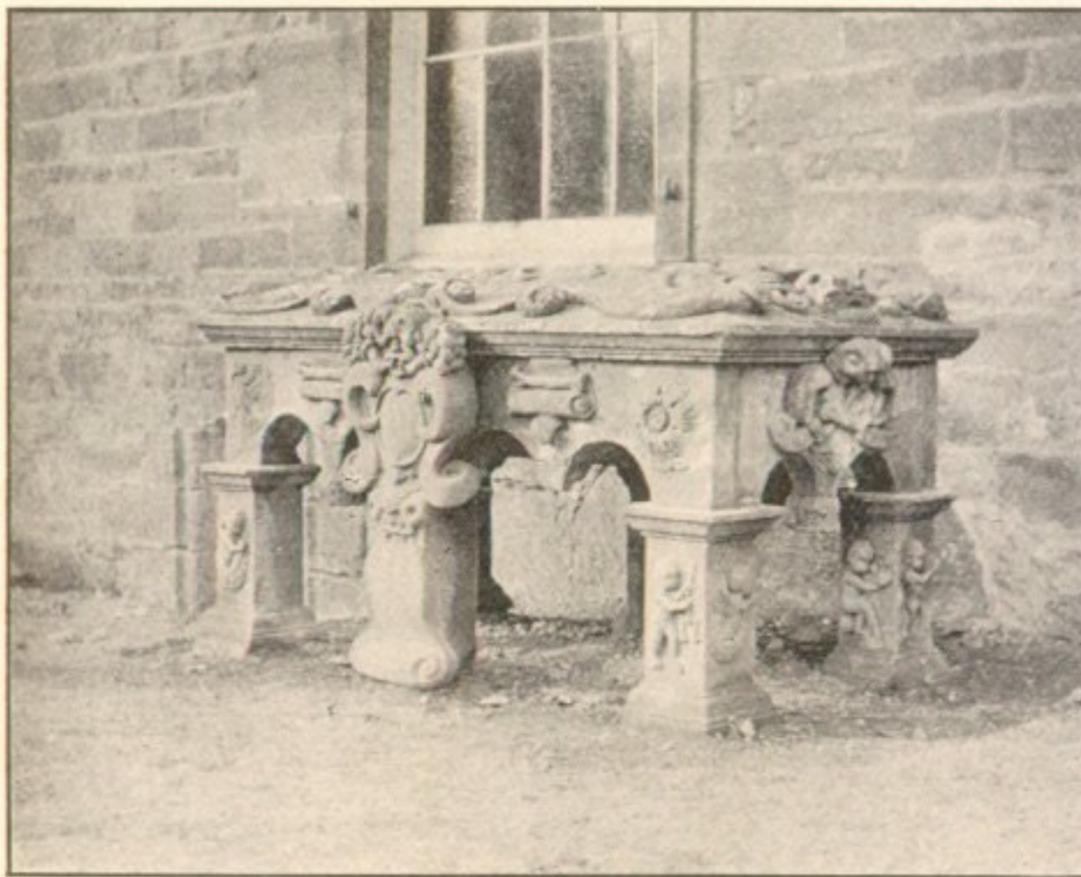


Fig. 9. The Scott Memorial from the South-east.

observer holds the sword and scales of Justice, and is flanked by a brother issuing from clouds and blowing a trumpet. Their neighbours are seen sitting blowing bubbles, and holding up a sphere for inspection; the complete cherubic display speaking eloquently of life and its issues in their varied manifestations. The mortal emblems—cross-bones and skull—appear on the east end, and are repeated as skulls and single bones on both sides of the monument. The elaborate central side supports are complete, and are crowned by grotesque heads, from whose mouths issue cornucopiæ that rest on large scrolls flanking worn oval panels, in their turn supported by grotesques which show the great tusks characteristic of their loftier neighbours. It is noteworthy that the skull on the eastern end of the slab is distinctly and purposely *split*, a deeply hewn slit halving it between front and back, and from ear to ear. This detail also is unique, and could scarcely be surpassed in its gruesome emphasis of the fact of Death.