



The Historic Churchyard Project is grateful to Betty Willsher who kindly gave her permission for the use her photographs and manuscripts. The project is run by the Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust (PKHT) and has been funded by PKHT, the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Gannochy Trust and Perth and Kinross Council.

Acknowledgements:

- Further information is available from: Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust website at: www.pkht.org.uk
- The Historic Churchyards -Defending the Dead: The Legacy of the Body Snatchers Mitchell, Monumental Inscriptions (pre-1855) in North Perthshire Willsher, B. Stones and Understanding Scottish Graveyards

the church

The first church on the site may have been built in timber, but none of it survives. The first recorded reference to a church can be found in an order from David II prohibiting fairs in churchyards in 1352. At this time the churchyard often functioned as the site of much business and trading of a materialistic and even sinful nature which King David and subsequent monarchs taxed. The church subsequently had the trading rights to hold a fair or market outside the gates. The Mercat Cross was erected by the Earl of Airlie in approximately its correct position, opposite the gate to the church.

“The Arches” are made up of a three-arch structure with broad octagonal columns in Romanesque style. It formed the North arcade separating the nave from the North aisle of the church and dates from around 1500. There would also have been a matching Southern aisle and the old church. The remaining wall blocks off the chancel arch between the nave and the sacristy, which would have been further East. There was a separate chapel to Saint Ninian after the Reformation (in 1560 when the church separated from Rome).



Two of the aumbries

Timothy Port Map c. 1580 (under license to the National Library of Scotland).



Pictish Slab Cross



Scotland in the 6th century. A chapel at the North end of the burial ground was dedicated to Saint Ninian and the last known record of it was in 1503. It is not known whether the standing structure to the East of the arches represents a part of that chapel or if it has disappeared. A church is indicated on the 1580 Timothy Port plan and the town grew up around it.

The East section is the oldest part of the church and is notable in having three “aumbries”, or cupboards, in which the vessels of the sacraments were kept. Aumbries are triangular, square and rectangular niches which once would have had doors.



Architectural skewputt and lintel dated 1629 outside the main entrance Alyth

Although generally thought to date from 1500, the architecture of the arcade is similar to the St Andrews Holy Trinity of around 1410. A partly blocked up round-headed opening at the East end was possibly the chancel arch of the original church or a more recent window.

By 1836 the new parish church had been built and the old church closed in 1839 and became a roofless ruin in its churchyard. The new parish church was designed in Romanesque style by Thomas Hamilton.



The commanding view South from the graveyard Alyth

Pictish Slab Cross



Alyth is a historic town with a fascinating story to tell. It is located at the head of a valley and is an ancient route way centred East-West along the foot of the Grampians and North-South between the Highlands and Tayside. The placename Alyth (also written Elich and Elycht) comes from the Gaelic ‘ailleach’ meaning rock place. The Picts lived in Alyth until the 10th century, and a Pictish cross slab was found at the old Manse (now Phillip House) opposite the churchyard (1887). The 7th century cross slab now stands in the porch of the church. Its front is carved with a cross, the inner angles with rope coils and the back with a double disc and Z-rod. The cross strongly supports the existence of an early church, as does its dedication of the church to St. Moluag. This saint (also known as Saint Moluag) was a contemporary of Saint Columba who arrived in

history of alyth

Alyth Arches



**alyth
the old arches
historic churchyard**



Alyth Church



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key to gravestones



The graveyard itself is Medieval, with its typical hilltop site and surrounding rounded boundary wall. There are some notable memorials and monuments which provide a tangible link to past events and people.

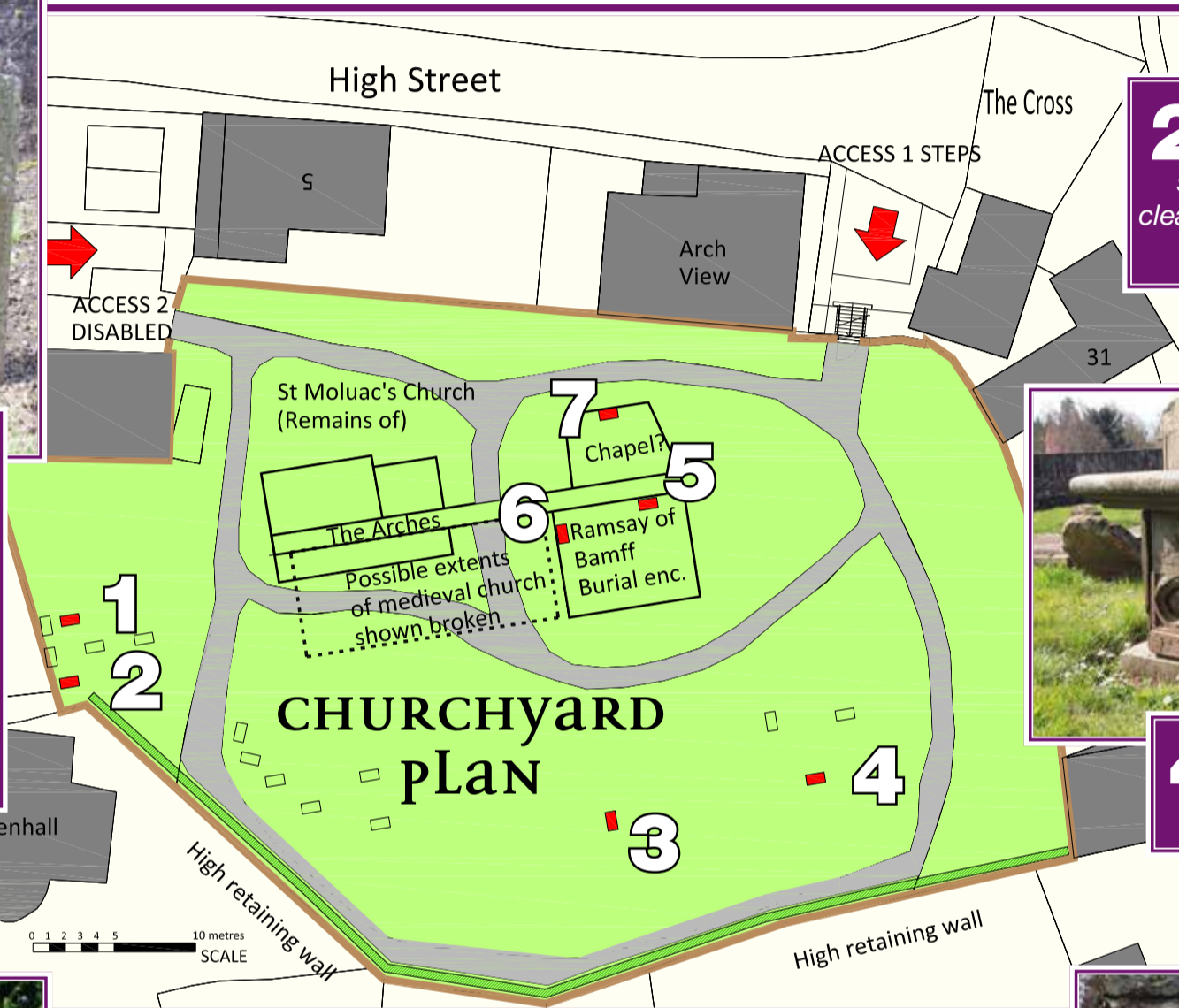
The Ramsays of Bamff are a land-owning family of long standing whose burial chapel lay in the south aisle, now an un-roofed burial enclosure. A member of that family was the last person in Scotland to die in a duelling accident. The notorious duellist James Macrae picked a fight with Sir George Ramsay of Bamff (5) over a dispute about a sedan chair. The duel took place on Mussleburgh links and Ramsay was killed. Macrae was prosecuted, but escaped to France.



2 David Henderson (1666) in Hooptoun, a table stone with a square and cleaver. It bears a goulsh face or skull-possible a soul.



1 James Wilson (1772), deeply carved with two winged souls, IW and MM. This is a stylish gravestone with a shield in the centre bearing a belt or horse-tack and symbols of death at the bottom (skull, crossed bones and hour-glass)



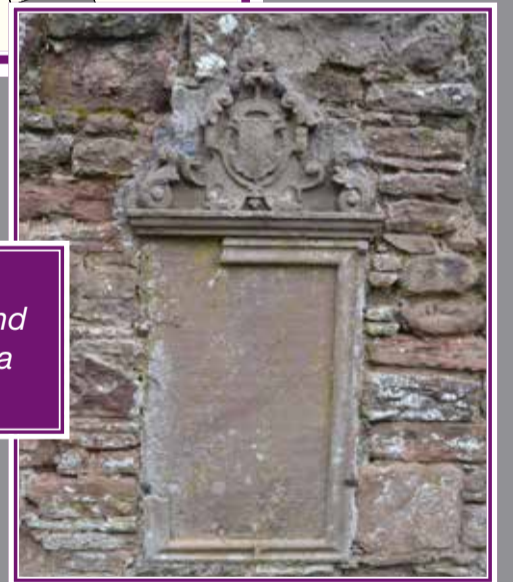
4 James Sandy (1819), an inventor, a carved cist tomb.



3 George Dick (1764) and other members of the Dick family.

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7 Mr. Thomas Lundie (1630) Minister here for 34 years and his wife Jane Blair, died of a fever 1636.



5 Sir George Ramsay of Bamff (1792), including Sir George who died in a duelling incident, triple marble memorial.



6 Professor William Ramsay of Bamff d. 1865 San Remo Italy (a marble wall plaque). The Ramsays of Bamff were a distinguished medical dynasty. Neish Ramsay was physician to King Alexander II of Scotland and was given the lands of Bamff in 1232.