

4 Gatehouse

In the 18th century, Edinburgh University started to train medical students in dissection instead of sending them off to Holland. Corpses were required for this purpose, but the belief about bodily resurrection was so strong that no one wanted to donate their body for teaching purposes. This gave rise to the Resurrectionists – those who stole freshly buried bodies and sold them to the medical school. People at the school's back door received the bodies, asked no questions and paid £10 to £12 per corpse – the equivalent of an annual salary for a labourer.

By the 1820s, the fear of the body snatchers was great, and in 1824 a gatehouse – a hexagonal tower designed by Robert Brown – was erected at the Kirk entrance. This provided a lookout post to protect new graves for the first three weeks after each burial. The watch was provided by paid help or by a rota among the elders. Fresh corpses commanded the highest price. After three weeks, the corpse was considered not worth stealing, so the watch was no longer needed.

A young woman Annie Stewart (aged 18) was buried late one afternoon in a shallow grave, and her coffin dug up a few hours later by two snatchers, one the notorious John Samuel. They were to pay a high price for their attempted crime.



Grave robbers at work



When they prised open the coffin lid, young Annie was revived by the cold night air and sat up screaming. This apparent resurrection caused extreme terror in the would-be snatchers.

They fled in different directions – one ran to the loch and swam away, never to be caught, but John Samuel went towards the city centre and was captured in a wild and mad condition. He was later tried and hanged. Young Annie was more fortunate: the commotion attracted the attention of the minister and beadle, who carried her to the manse where she was cared for. She went on to make a full recovery, and was later married in the Kirk. After her baby boy was baptised there, the family emigrated to Maxton, North Carolina.

Soon a change in the law required that the bodies of all who died in prison would be given to the medical school, ending the market for corpses. By the 1840s the gatehouse had become a meeting room for the Kirk elders and an office or vestry for the minister.



5 Graveyard entrance

As you face the gateway into the graveyard, to the right the jougs (a hinged iron collar) hang from the wall, with the loupin-on stane (literally 'leaping on stone') nearby: see below. At least 11 old parish churches in Scotland still have jougs, but Duddingston is unusual in that it also retains its mounting steps as well as its watchtower. This unique collection shows us clearly how a kirkyard entry would have appeared over 200 years ago.

The loupin-on stane dates from the 17th century and is Grade B-listed in its own right. The four stone steps lead to a platform from which parishioners could easily mount and dismount their horses – while also helping gentlewomen to safeguard their modesty. During services horses were often stabled at the Sheep Heid in the area now occupied by its car park.

Jougs were an instrument of punishment and humiliation. They were sometimes

set up at the mercat cross, but more often at the parish church. Two halves of an iron collar were attached to a wall by means of a short chain. An offender's neck was placed in the collar and secured by a padlock. The jougs fulfilled much the same function as wooden stocks, but needed much less space.

In each parish the Kirk Session had the power to inflict punishments for a wide range of offences such as drunkenness, profanity, disrespect of the Sabbath and sexual irregularities. Before the Sunday service culprits had to endure the jougs and afterwards, dressed in sackcloth, they stood at the kirk door. During the service, they had to sit on a Stool of Repentance in front of the congregation.

Often the punishment was repeated over a number of Sundays. In 1660 Susan Douglas and David Howeyson, adulterers, were made to appear at Duddingston no less than 17 times. The same form of punishment was used in the Netherlands by the strictly Calvinist Dutch Reformed Church.



Inset: The jougs. Below: Loupin-on stane



6 Graveyard

The graveyard is a fascinating and tranquil place to explore. There are nearly 120 memorials of various kinds, yet the great majority of graves are now unmarked. The poor were interred in shallow graves marked with simple wooden crosses – none of which survive. The resting places of the rich range from elaborate stone tablets with extensive inscriptions to large vaults guarded by iron gates, padlocks and mortsafes – to protect themselves from the Resurrectionists. Their graves were also much deeper: deep graves cost more to dig, but were safer from grave robbers. The graveyard reminds us of how unequally wealth was shared.

Many of the elaborate tombs bear long inscriptions, some still legible. John Thomson's extensively inscribed tomb is in the north-west corner: see page 14. A more surprising inclusion near the western wall is the ivy-clad arched gravestone for the Rev Mackintosh MacKay. By the time of his death in 1873, he had served as a minister for 48 years. However his burial in Duddingston demonstrates tolerance from the Church of Scotland; while a minister in Dunoon, MacKay had walked



Rev Mackintosh MacKay gravestone

out of the General Assembly to help form the Free Church at the time of the Disruption in 1843. Although the churches were reunited much later (1929), relations were strained during the 19th century.

Strongly protected vaults of the wealthy





It is easy to overlook the simplest of all gravestones: deeply shaded under a tree near the west wall stands a Celtic cross bearing the simple inscription 'Wee Jim' – with no date and no surname. The story, passed on for generations through the women of the Kirk, was of a poor young woman who worked in the notorious flax industry at Portobello. Unmarried and having given birth to a son, she would have been shunned by the majority.

Depending on her income for survival, and having nobody else to look after the child, she had no option but to take her young son to work. In that harsh, damp environment, the child caught pneumonia and died. Her fellow workers collected enough money to finance a small gravestone. The stonemason

had to be paid for each letter engraved, hence the concise six-letter inscription: 'Wee Jim'.

Compare the simplicity of Wee Jim's grave with the ornate and extensive carvings in the memorial on the south wall of the Kirk shown opposite. It is inscribed to David Scot, Margaret Gourley and their eight children. Ionic columns support a curved pediment above, with decorations of elaborate scrolls, statues, a memento mori skull and an angel. The date is given as 'the 20 of Aperil [sic] 1693'.

Opposite the Kirk door are two other interesting graves. Alexander Hay was one of three brothers killed in the Great War. He and his brothers William Mackie and John Douglas Hay are commemorated in the War Memorial inscription beside the Kirk entrance and in a stained glass window inside. Behind it on the graveyard wall there are three round metal discs known as Dead Men's Pennies – struck in a London foundry for every soldier killed in the war.



*Above: Wee Jim's grave
Below: The Hay brothers' Pennies*



To the left stands an obelisk with an unusual marble relief depicting a shipwreck in stormy seas. This celebrates the life of one John Haldane who by 1779 had become a captain for the East

India Company. Haldane had been brought up by his grandfather Patrick, Laird of Gleneagles, to whom the obelisk is dedicated.

Haldane and 48 others died in the sinking of the Nancy off the Scilly Isles in 1784. The small tender boat in the foreground shows a figure of a woman with a baby, a reference to John Haldane's mistress, a 23-year old famous opera singer called Ann Cargill, who drowned in the same shipwreck. Her body was later found ashore, still holding the baby in her arms.

Edinburgh has many splendid graveyards. Some are much larger, such as Greyfriars, with over 700 memorials. Others house more famous people, such as Adam Smith (Canongate) and David Hume (Old Calton). However Duddingston's enjoys a uniquely rural setting in the lee of Arthur's Seat, and its memorials convey a peaceful sense of continuity.

*Above: The Scot/Gourley memorial
Below : Marble relief on the obelisk*



7 Manse and garden

The present manse (minister's house) dates from 1805. Its predecessor was a much smaller building, located on the south side of the boundary wall of the manse garden just east of the church. It was built about 1740 and had two lower rooms and two upper rooms. The Rev William Bennet, an experimental horticulturist, built a glass structure and heightened the wall to make the chimney from the manse heat it, which allowed him to grow yams and pineapples. Evidence of the fireplace and some windows and a door still can be seen in this wall today.

His nephew and successor, also called the Rev William Bennet, ran a private boarding school in the manse. It cost sixpence per term with one penny extra for additions to the curriculum such as Latin.



The current manse is a Georgian 15-roomed building, extended by the Rev John Thomson's second wife, Frances. In 1821 she created a music room at its eastern end, without having asked the Presbytery for permission, perhaps because she planned to use it also for dancing. The stonework shown below makes the extension obvious.

Frances was an accomplished pianist, and her husband John Thomson a skilful violinist and flautist. They may have been preparing for the royal visit of George IV to Edinburgh in August 1822 – the first reigning monarch to visit Scotland for 150 years. Alas the King never visited the manse, but her husband was much involved in the royal visit.

The manse from the south



This resulted from his friendship with Sir Walter Scott, who stage-managed the entire visit. Scott and Thomson were close friends (see page 13) and they frequented each other's houses. In front of the manse with its views of the loch, Walter Scott sat and wrote some of his novel *Heart of Midlothian*: a rockery marks the very spot. Scott had also encouraged another friend, J M W Turner, to visit Edinburgh at the same time, and the result was many drawings in two Turner sketchbooks.

The manse garden features magnificent mature trees, some planted in the 19th century. Notable among these is the Waterloo walnut tree, perhaps planted at John Thomson's behest to celebrate the defeat of Napoleon in 1815. Black walnut is a rare species in Scotland and this magnificent specimen is probably the largest, and one of the most mature, in the country.



*Upper: The rockery, manse garden
Lower: The Waterloo walnut tree*