

EARLY MASONS AND CARPENTERS IN SCOTLAND

By James Moir Webster



Compiled by Sheila Pitcairn & edited by W. T. Johnston

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JAMES MOIR WEBSTER

FROM

**NOTES HE LEFT WHILE WORKING ON HIS
DUNFERMLINE ABBEY**

Published in 1948

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Honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity [D.D.], Aberdeen University. (1950)

Minister, North parish, Dunfermline. (20.11.1902)

Chaplain to Volunteer Force during First World War.

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Joint Clerk. (1919)

Minister, Carnock. (5.2.1920; demitted 26.8.1945)

Moderator. (1945)

Throughout his life Dr Webster evinced the greatest interest in the historical background of Dunfermline and the immediate surrounding neighbourhood. His literary works included "History of the Parish of Carnock" and more recently, "Dunfermline Abbey." In a tribute to Dr Webster's authorship of the latter work the minister of the Abbey, the Rev. Robert Dollar, B.D., said, shortly after its publication: "He has brought all previous histories of the church up to date—and corrected a great many previous misconceptions." Dr Webster was also responsible for an introduction and notes, in conjunction with Mr A. A. M. Duncan, M.A. (Hons.), lecturer in History, Queen's University, Belfast, to a transcript of the Regality of Dunfermline Court Book, 1531-1538, which was published by the Carnegie Dunfermline Trustees in February 1953. He was also a frequent and informative contributor to *The Dunfermline Press* on a variety of topics related to the history of the burgh and its environs.

In November 1952 his jubilee as an ordained minister of the Church of Scotland was marked when he was the guest of honour at a Presbytery lunch where he was made the recipient of a gift subscribed to by fellow Presbyters. When he received his Doctorate degree from Aberdeen University in 1950 members of the Presbytery and friends in the parishes of Carnock and Dunfermline North presented him with a D.D. hood and cap to mark the honour conferred upon him.



EARLY MASONS AND CARPENTERS IN SCOTLAND

The publication by Batsford (at 75/.) of Mr. John J. Harvey's monumental work on ENGLISH MEDIAEVAL ARCHITECTS cannot fail to deepen in the minds of those interested in early Scottish architecture a sense of the material differences between the two countries in this respect. England has such a wealth of historic buildings and in this publication there is such a mass of authentic information concerning them. Scotland, on the other hand, has comparatively few historic buildings and so many of the sources from which information concerning them might have been derived have, in the course of the troubled history, been irretrievably lost.

As it happens, before we go very far, we have to reckon with a very curious situation.

It is a well known historic fact that, for a time, certain lands in the north of England belonged to the King of Scotland.

In his "Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland" Mr. Bain refers to several craftsmen apparently resident on these lands: -

"John the Carpenter, in lands granted to the King of Scots" and "William the Carpenter, in lands constituting the 'Liberty' of the King of Scots." (Bain, i. p. 221, ann. 1233/4)

He also mentions Thomas 'le charpentre' (i. 278 ann. 1241) and Eluald, the mason, (i. p. 376, ann. 1255).

John the Carpenter, here referred to, who repaired a gate at the King's Castle of Bamburgh and a bridge at Newcastle on Tyne in the year 1233, would seem to be identical with John the Carpenter on page 148 of Mr. Harvey's book who "had been ordered to build a barn..... at Bamburgh Castle". But none of the others are referred to.

It is a curious situation – craftsmen, presumably of English birth and living in England, but subjects of the King of Scots.

Though confining himself to Britain south of the Border, Mr. Harvey occasionally encountered evidence of masons north of it and inclines to think that the earliest of these is Gregory the Mason, who, in 1224, was in charge of the first work at Elgin Cathedral. This is interesting – particularly in view of the fact that Dr. Cramond, the historian of Elgin, was clearly unaware of it.

But there is at least one earlier date.

On 19 Oct., 1488, one gathers from the Register of the Great Seal, the king confirmed four charters granted by his predecessors and, amongst the witnesses to one of these, recorded at Brechin in the year 1153, was Gulielmus Carpentarius.

Mr. Harvey mentions more than one of this name in England, but all of later date.

The monastic chartulary of Dunfermline has two entries for the 13th century worth looking into. The first (Reg. 98) makes mention of a Magister William of Karamund (Cramond), mason.

The entry is undated, but, from what is known of the witnesses, may be attributed to the first half of the 13th century.

The other (Reg.199) consists of a long entry, a translation which has kindly been supplied by Mr. M'Innes of the Scottish Record Office, the substance of which is that John Cras, son of Richard Cras of Kaldestanis, for certain considerations, quit-claimed all right and title to the lands of Garvock, near Dunfermline, including the land of Robert the Carpenter.

This clause is in the highest degree suggestive.

When Malcolm Canmore hired Aelric, the Saxon Master-mason, to build for him a church to replace the little Celtic one in which Princess Margaret and he had been married, he gave him (Dunf. Abbey, p. 216, and E.M.A. p.16) for his services the lands of Ledmacduuegil which afterwards came to be known as Masterton (the place where the Master-mason lived). It is known that for many years there was on the lands of Garvock a chapel dedicated to St. John the Baptist, with a Chapel-Well in the immediate neighbourhood. Does it seem unreasonable to suggest the possibility that Robert the Carpenter may have acquired his portion of these lands in payment for his services as architect of the chapel? There was nothing more common in the Scotland of these days than meeting a financial obligation by a gift of land.

The entry in the chartulary, as so often happens, is undated and one can only infer its date from what is known of those who witnessed it. One of these is Robert of Rosyth, who is mentioned in an Inchcolm writ of 1233 and in another of 1252, so that one cannot be far wrong in assuming it to have been recorded about the middle of the 13th century.

This suggests another possibility.

From the chartulary of Dunfermline we learn (Reg.127) that there was a hospital (for lepers) at Dunfermline as early as 1227 and as this hospital is known to have been dependent on the revenues of the Chapel of St. Leonard, one would infer that the chapel must have been of more or less the same age as the hospital.

Is it unreasonable to suggest the possibility that Robert the Carpenter may have been the architect of both chapels? There is nothing whatever to indicate that he was other than a Scottish craftsman and the known dates are not inconsistent with the possibility.

By the year 1264 the first volume of The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland become available and the story of Scottish Architecture can be followed with somewhat more confidence and precision.

Under the date 1264-66, we find reference to a Master-mason of the name of Richard, who receives from the King's Treasurer xx marks for work at the Castle of Aberdeen. (E.R. i. 12); and is mentioned for work at the Castles of Stirling (E.R. i. 40); and Edinburgh. (E.R. i. 42)

In a list of the garrison of Stirling Castle, probably at its surrender to the Scots in the end of 1299 (Bain ii. p.285) we find the following: - John Sampson, constable, and his 4 servants..... Master John the engineer and his four companions; John the smith and his groom; Richard the mason and 2 companions – the whole, combatant and non-combatant, amounting to about 90.

It seems highly unlikely that Richard the mason here mentioned can have been the Richard of the Exchequer Rolls. Can it, by any possibility, have been Richard the mason of Salisbury Cathedral (E.M.A. p.225)?

Another Scottish Master-mason for this period was PETER, who received £20 for work at the Castle of Dumfries (E.R. i. 27)

At this stage it may be well to note that in repairs carried out at Kettenis (Kathenes) in 1264-66 provision is made for the carriage of timber, the double roofing of boards, the planks for the wall and the carpenters' wages, but no reference is made to stones or mason; whereas the extensive additions made to the Castle of Stirling are described in a precept of the Regents as new stonework, as if the employment of stone in building were exceptional. (E.R. i.47.48)

Both Richard, the Master-mason, and a certain Alexander, carpenter of Stirling, were engaged on this work. (E.R. i. 48)

Before the century came to an end the very life of the nation was threatened by more than one visit of Edward I of England, claiming overlordship and backing his claim by forces that were irresistible.

A feature of these forces was the siege-artillery that accompanied them, under the direction of trained masons and carpenters.

Of these two were, for a time, quartered in Dunfermline – both styled

Master Carpenters: -

1) Houghton, Thomas de..... Carpenter.

Master-Carpenter and Engineer in the (English) service.....

In September 1298 he sent engines from Carlisle to Ayr by sea, for use in the Scottish campaign, and in Feb. 1300 he was with the army at Edinburgh Castle. In 1302 he was one of two master-carpenters (with Adam de Glashan) in charge of works at the building of Linlithgow Peel, and was taking 12d. a day. From Nov. 1303 to Feb. 1303/4 he was the senior of seven master-carpenters directing works at the siege of Stirling. He was at Westminster in March 1305, but on 3 Sept. 1306 he was sent from Newbrough-in-Tyndale to the siege of Kildrummy in March – which shortly capitulated. (E.M.A. p.139)

2) Bedford, Robert de (Fl. 1303-1304) Carpenter (? Bedford, Lancs.)

Master-carpenter paid at 12d a day in 1303-1304, while with the infantry of Edward I's army in Scotland.

Bedford was in care of the making of houses in St. Andrews Castle and works in Dunfermline. (E.M.A. p. 27)

What these “works” were is not indicated, but from the Dunfermline Burgh Records (Beveridge, xxiii. n.) we learn that, on the orders of Edward I, a house was to be built “extra magnam portam abbacie de Dunfermelyn” and forty men employed in making an entrenchment round the town.

There is nothing to indicate what was the nature or purpose of the house – possibly a guard-room or barrack. All that one can say is that nobody was so likely to have built it as one or other of his own architects stationed in Dunfermline at the time.

The supply of tools and material for the siege-artillery must have been attended with some difficulty – hence, no doubt, the following visit to Glasgow.

“1301, Sept. – Dec.

Account of the purchase of iron and coal and tools made of the K's iron at Glasgow, anno. xxix.

To a marshal for a great hammer and an iron, 7d. ; William of Morpeth for an anvil and an iron bought from him at sight of the marshal. Sir John de Banstede, and others, 5s.; for a great hammer and chisel bought at Glasgow, 12d.; 3 pieces of iron from divers persons, 6d.; an axe, 5d.; other small pieces, 6d.; a ploughshare, 5d.; another iron, 3d.; a pair of

`verterell' 2d.; and other small pieces of iron, 6. 1/2d.; carriage of a stone to grind the tools, 3 bars of iron 3d. Item, iron (calibe) 1d; 2 `piks' to make 2 great hammers, bought by Master Henry of Gateshead, 4d. ; iron bought by Barneby, 1d.; an axe 4d.; a great hammer 5d.; for iron (calibe) 1d. ; total, 12s. 2½. For a little anvil for 4 pairs of chisels and a hammer for large and small nails, a `mattock' and nails and a long and broad `benda' of iron and a cauldron, bought by Master Henry of Gateshead, smith, 4s. 6d.; for a coffer to put the K's `utensil' into henceforth, which Master Hugh the carpenter broke at Bothwell, 6d.; a lock for said coffer 2d.; at Dunipace for iron 1d.; a long iron from the mill, bought by Master Henry, 4d.; for hire of shovels twice while the K. was at Dunipace, to stow the iron in the ships, by Henry the smith and G. de Wyndsor, 4d.; iron bought by Henry at sight of Sir John de Kingestone at Bothwell, 14d.; iron bought at Dunipace from Henry the Ferrier, 10d.; Walter the Ferrier for iron 5d.; coal twice bought at Dunipas, 6d.; iron bought there, 3d.; coal there 6d.; iron 6d.; coal 4d.; iron in particles, 4d.; iron 1d.; iron 6d.; iron by Master Henry, 4d.; breakfast for those who went from Bothwell to Glasgow to seek iron and coal for the K's use, 12d.; for a `beche' bought to make the road for the `berefroy' 2d.; at Dunipace, 10th October, for coal 4d.; (remainder much defaced) a vessel for the masons to hold water while they hastened the K's chamber at Linlithgow, 4d.; Henry the smith for 8 seams of coal at Linlithgow, first week of December..... 3 seams coal for the smith 20th December, 12d. Total, 10s.7d."

(Bain ii. pp. 323/4—quoting Exchequer, Q.R. Miscellanea (Army), No.26)

A somewhat similar account is available concerning tools for the siege of Stirling Castle :-

“1303-4

March 2 – May 15.

Indenture on 2nd March, 32nd year, that Richard de Wardington received in Edinburgh castle from Henry of Kerwardyn valet of Master Walter of Hereford, mason, 100 `pickes' except 2, 155 `ameraxes' and `stonax', 10 malles, 6 gavelokes, 200 `cheseles' and `pounzons', 80 `coignes', and 100 `trouelles'.

Similar attesting that said Richard delivered to William de Montacute 2 `pikes'..... `stonhaxes'. Also to sir Peter de Colyngbourne by Adam of Umbersand's hands on 6th April, 12 mason's `hatches'; also to Master Giles the mason, 4 chesilles (?) and mal.

Similar, that on 15th May (same year) said Richard delivered to Henry of Kerwardyn 103 `pickes', 136 stonaxes and ameraxes, 7 malles, 5

gavelocs, 200 cheselles and pounzons except two. 50 coignes and 100 trouelles.”

Bain ii. p. 399 – quoting as above No.29.

To judge by the following, Edward’s commanders were not over-scrupulous as to where they found the needed supplies :-

“To the Abbot of Dunfermline (compensation for lead taken for the siege of Stirling(?))” (Bain, ii.p.442)

Two often the march of Edward’s armies through the country is recorded as if it was a “walk-over”. This is not borne out by the following extract from Bain :-

“They also account for the wages of 16 men-at-arms appointed to escort the said James de Dalileye and John de Westone for more safely forwarding the K’s business; inasmuch as during the war and the impending siege of Stirling Castle, while the men of the parts beyond the Mountains, and in Galloway and Carrick, had not yet come fully to the K’s peace, without such safe escort they could noways have done the work – from 1st May till 25th December, 239 days, at 12d. each per diem, £191:4s..

Also to 20 foot escorting them from Aberdeen to Banff in May 20s. And expenses of 20 foot escorting said James and John from Banff to Elgin.....

And expenses of divers men, both men-at-arms and foot, of Sir Reginald le Cheen escorting them from Elgyn to Inverness, and there staying with them on account of the ‘imminent peril’ of enemies; and escorting them back to Elgin, 60s.

Also the expense of 20 foot watching nightly while said James and John were in the town of Elgin, through fear of some enemies who had not yet come to the K’s peace, for 14 days in June, 26s. 8d.

Also expenses of 20 foot along with Sir Reginald de Cheen’s men, escorting said James and John from Elgin to the town of Banff, 20s.

Also for 20 foot and 5 men-at-arms escorting them, besides the Thane of Collie (Cowie) and his men, from Aberdeen to the town of Kincardine, 20s.

Also for 10 foot from the town of Glasgow to Dumbarton and staying four days to watch at night, and escorting said James and John from said town of Bonbreton to the town of Renfrew along with Sir John Walleys and Robert Boyd with 10 of their men-at-arms, 40s.

Also the expenses of said Sir John Walleys and five of his men-at-arms, and 20 foot, escorting said James and John from Renfrew to Ayr, 40s. Also the expenses of said Sir John Walleys and 10 men-at-arms, 20 foot, and other men of the country, escorting James and John from the town of Are to the town of Wygetone in Galloway, 60s. And of 20 foot from Wygetone to the town of Kirkcudbright, 10s. And of 20 foot from Kirkcudbright to the town of Dumfries, and staying for 7 days in the month of December, watching nightly, 40s.”

With the triumphant victory of Bannockburn the invasion of Scotland by English armies came to a sudden end; and we are free to resume consideration of the progress of Scottish craftsmen.

In the year 1326 we find reference to work done by Adam, son of Adam, son of Alan, for work at Tarbert and for work the year before at Ruglen (Rutherglen).

That same year Robert the Mason found it necessary, in the absence of the King, to increase the width of the Castle walls at Tarbert beyond what had been provided for, and is paid accordingly.

Another mason of the name of John is paid for work on a new Peel at Tarbert (West).

In his “Ancient Church of Scotland” Walcott writes : -

Friar Peel at Tarbert (West).

“It was a commonly received story that Magnus Bardfoot of Norway, when the Hebrides were ceded him by treaty in 1098, sailed round each island to complete his right to its possessions, and that in order to include Kintyre among the numbers he caused himself to be drawn in a galley along the isthmus of Tarbert with his hand on the tiller.

With the view of impressing the Highlanders with the completeness of his possession, King Robert, on paying a visit to the islands after his brother’s departure for Ireland, followed King Magnus’s precedent in circumnavigating Kintyre; and some years afterwards he proceeded to erect on the east side of the isthmus a strong fortress, whose ruin is still a conspicuous object to the traveller.

The account rendered by John de Lany, constable of Tarbert Castle, of the expenses of the works which were in progress during the years 1325 and 1326, is of high interest, from the minute details into which it enters of the mode of building, and also from its glimpses of rural life.

The largest payment made was to Robert the mason, who, over and above the £282:15s. and chalder of oatmeal and of barley stipulated for, got of the king's grace an additional £5: 6: 8d. in consideration of the walls having been constructed of an extra thickness. £50 were paid for the burning of 660 chalders of lime; and the wages of the men who transported it, partly by sea and partly by land, from the kiln to the castle, varied from 13d. to 16d. a week. Neil the smith was employed at a salary of £12 a year. Patrick the smith had a supply of sixteen chalders of coals, costing 21s. 4d., for working 78 stones of iron, for which he was paid 19s. 6d. John the carpenter was paid the rate of 3d. a day, and a boll of meal and codrus of cheese in the month; Donald the blocker at the rate of 15d. a day; and Neil the plumber, whose wages were 8d. a day, had a work-shop built for him, which cost 2s. 4d. The erection of a goldsmith's workshop cost 2s. 6d.

The further details refer, *inter alia*, to the plastering and roofing of the castle, fitting up of its hall and wine-cellar, making a moat about it, also a mill, mill-dam, kiln, bake-house and brew-house, with vat and sink, building barges for the transport of sand and lime, making canvas sacks to hold lime, and constructing a 'pele' at West Tarbert and a road from East to West Tarbert." (E.R. i. lxxi - lxxiii.)

In 1329 payments are made to various masons, carpenters and other craftsmen engaged "circa facturam de Tornbery", when it is recorded that gifts made by the late king (Robert the Bruce) will now cease. Suardus, the Carpenter, is also referred to (131) who, that same year, receives remission of his contribution "pro pace".

Easily the most interesting reference to a craftsman about this time is to be found under date 1342 :-

"And to Friar John, the Carpenter, of the Order of Minorites, for his skill and labour in the service of the King £13:6:8, and for his own annual fee, in accordance with a charter granted him by the King, £6: 13:4." (E.R. i. 510)

This is the only reference that has been encountered so far to a craftsman who was a member of a religious Order.

"It is now certain that most mediaeval architects were master craftsmen of the building trades; men who had graduated after practical training as masons, carpenters, or carvers; many, if not most of these masters were literate, and they were often artists and geometricians of distinction for their time.

A very small number of secular clerics and members of monastic Orders can be shown to have had technical knowledge and to have acted

in an architectural capacity, but there is no foundation whatever for the ascription of architectural design in general to monks or to clerks in Orders.”

In 1329 payments are made . . .

“Friar John Carpenter was an eminent engineer and fortified Dumbarton Castle in the reign of David II who gave him a pension of £20 a year.”

There are more reliable historians than Walcott, but the story may be true; though there is no reference to John in the Exchequer Rolls except as a carpenter. The Friars Minor of Haddington received from the Exchequer in 1362 for the construction of their own church the sum of £6: 13:4. (E.R. ii.116)

“In Scotland as in England the fourteenth was on the whole the greatest church-building century; and if there was a pause during the troubled time that succeeded Robert Bruce’s death, it seems to have been in the years that followed David’s return from captivity that the nave of Glasgow, the tower of Brechin, and portions of Melrose, Kelso, and Pluscardine Abbeys were built.

Generally speaking, it is only in connection with such incidents as a gift to the Minorite Friars of Haddington towards the fabric of their church that there is any allusion in the rolls to the church building of the time. One exception, however, there is in the church of St. Monans in Fife, which was built and endowed by David II and regarding which we have some interesting particulars.

St. Monan is understood to have been one of a company of Hungarian missionaries to the Picts in the end of the eighth century, who suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Danes in the island of May. His remains were brought to Inverey on the mainland, which had been one of the scenes of his labours, and a little chapel which was erected over them acquired a reputation for its cures.

According to Bower, David was wounded at the battle of Durham with an arrow. The barb remained in the wound, the skill of the leeches of the day being unavailing to extract it; and it remained unremoved till the King made a pilgrimage to this shrine, when it miraculously leaped out and the scar closed.

If this story be credited, it follows that the arrow had lain festering in the wound for five years and a half, as the King when made prisoner was immediately taken to the Tower of London, and that length of time elapsed before he obtained his first enlargement from captivity.

But whatever the moving cause may have been, David, in or before 1362, resolved to replace the humble shrine alluded to with a stately church.

Sir William of Dishington, the steward of his household, whose lands of Ardross lay adjacent, was made master of the works, and between 1362 and 1370 sums were paid to Dishington for the fabric of St. Monans amounting to £613: 7s besides £6: 13:4 for the carpenter work of the church.

The ship of John Scot, a burghess of Inverness, was hired by Dishington in 1366 and 1369 to convey timber from that port for the building, at an expense on the one occasion of £20, on the other of £10; and in Scot's account as custumar of that burgh there is a further allowance to him of £7:17:8d. in consideration of the detention of his ship.

In the years 1364 and 1366, while the building was in progress, we find payments to at least three chaplains celebrating at S. Monans, of whom two had £10 and the third 20 marks yearly.

This beautiful church, of which no more than the transept, chancel and central tower seems ever to have been built, is still one of the most conspicuous and interesting objects on the coast of Fife.” (E.R. ii cv – cvii.)

“But the principal evidences of building activity which appear in the accounts are connected with Edinburgh Castle.

In the uncertain state of the relations with England arising from Edward's refusal to agree to a permanent peace, the garrisoning of the royal castles and putting them in a proper state of defence was the subject of repeated and anxious deliberation in Parliament, and the accounts show large sums expended in repairing and provisioning the principal fortresses.

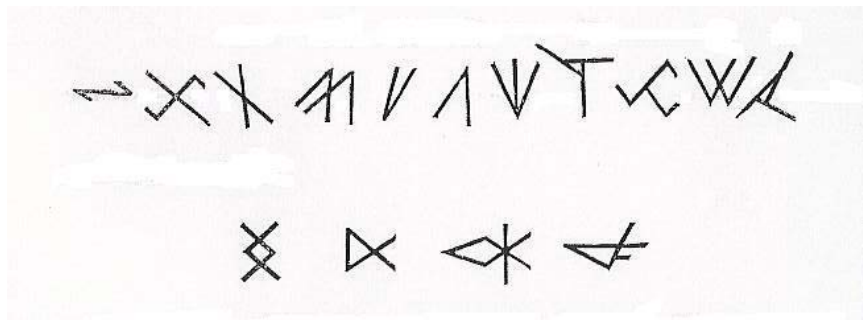
But Edinburgh Castle had in the latter part of David's reign come to be not only one of the great strongholds of Scotland, but the principal residence of royalty; and that king planned and undertook extensive additions to it, which were completed in the succeeding reign.” (E.R. ii. cvii)



In, or shortly before, 1366, David built a new chapel within the Castle dedicated to St. Mary, perhaps forming part of the structure connected with the tower which appears in the view of 1575.

There was already in the castle an ancient chapel dedicated to St. Margaret, which, though placed on the highest spot of the castle rock, has survived alike the struggles of the 14th century and the sieges that were so fatal to the later buildings.

Its architectural details, more especially the zigzag and other mouldings of the chancel arch, point it out to be about coeval with the earliest parts of Holyrood Chapel, which was begun in 1128; and if not, as Barbour evidently believed it to be, Queen Margaret's oratory, it must have been built in memory of Malcolm's saintly Queen not long after her death. (E.R. ii, cviii)



ADDITIONAL NOTES - ON EARLY SCOTTISH BUILDERS

Page 2, Master Gregory, the Mason

“Yet when Master Gregory the mason, and Master Richard the Glazier, and many other master of the craft, had lavished all the gifts of his art upon its (Elgin Cathedral) adornment, much remained for after-ages to do.”

(Rampini’s History (Moray and Nairn) Blackwood and Sons P.61)

Page 4.

.....Edinburgh. (E.R. i.42)

On 28 Aug., 1296, Radulphus Carpentarius

Took the oath of allegiance to Edward I at Berwick.

(Historical Documents, Scotland ii.71)

Page 2 All of later date.

“An architectural Society was founded by Bishop Jocelin to restore Glasgow Cathedral after it had been burned down in the reign of William the Lion, c.1190.”

(Innes, Sketches of early Scottish history p.298)

Page 2

“Kirkwall Cathedral, built in the 12th century by Earl Ronald, was the special care of his father, Kolr, who is stated by Sir Henry Dryden to have had ‘the peculiar management of the plans and buildings’.

An inscription on the cathedral of Iona states that ‘Donaldu O’Brolochan fecit hoc opus’ and it is recorded that a prior of that name died in 1202 and that the Pope confirmed the erection of the monastery in 1203.” (M & R v. 520)
(M. & R. v.520)

Page 2. – Building of a bridge –

“From the twelfth century, the building of bridges was almost as pious an undertaking as the erection of churches and chapels, and indulgences were often granted for that public service.

(Statutes of the Scottish Church p.cix)

* *

“Of the building of churches :-

We further ordain (xiii century) that, in accordance with the means of the parishioners, churches shall be built of stone.....” (Statutes 10)

“Magistri fabricae –

Master of work, or of works was a term from the beginning appropriated to the official in charge of buildings.

TABLE OF MONEY VALUES

Scots v. English

As Scots moneys are frequently referred to in these notes, it is well to remember – particularly in comparing terms of employment in the two countries – that, though, before the Union of the Crowns, Scots values were but a twelfth of the corresponding English designations, it was not always so.

“Till 1355, Scottish pounds, shillings and pennies were of the same value as the English moneys, and the debasement and shrinkage in value of the Scottish coinage was a very gradual process during almost the whole period to which most of these notes refer.

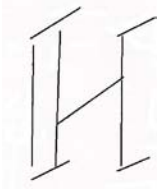
According to Cochran-Patrick’s Records of the Coinage of Scotland (1876: Introduction, p. lxxvi.), the comparative values of English to Scots money were :-

Till 1355 (rather, perhaps, till 1368	equal.
About 1390.....	1 to 2.
“ 1451	1 to 2. 1/2
“ 1456	1 to 3.
“ 1467	1 to 3. ½
“ 1475 (gold).....	1 to 4.
“ 1544	1 to 4.
“ 1560	1 to 5.
“ 1565	1 to 6.
“ 1579	1 to 8.
“ 1597	1 to 10.
“ 1601	1 to 12.”

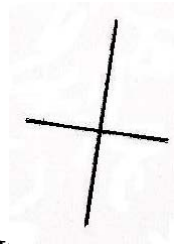
(Statutes of the Scottish Church 1225 – 1559).

It would be of interest, for instance, to know how the wages of Scottish craftsmen compared with those of England.

I seem to have lost all reference to two Dunfermline masons of early date referred to in Bain’s Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland. Have you, by any chance, a reference to them?



NOTES ON EARLY MASONS etc.



The “Liberty” of the kings of Scotland in England.

David I married a wealthy English lady and, in virtue of this marriage, became Earl of Huntingdon.

1233/4 – “In land granted to the King of Scotland 10 L. in Tindhalle and in the emendation of the King’s house in the castles of Bamburgh and Newcastle 10 L. and to John the Carpenter for his liberation 4 L. and in repairing the gate to the King’s Castle of Bamburgh 78 L. 9s. and 11d. by the king’s writ And other necessities provided against the arrival of the King of Scotland towards these parts. 100L.” (Bain i. p.221)

“William the Carpenter in the King of Scotland’s `Liberty’ ann.1268.
(Bain, i. p.502)

“1330 – Thomas of Patynham paid for repairing walls at Berwick cs.
1331 - “ “ “ paid £11 and 3d.”
(E.R. i. 320 and 398)

“Wages of ordinary labourers, journeymen, artificers, carters and sailors were 1/. A day – of highly skilled workmen from 3/ to 5/.

Quarrymen, masons, carpenters and smiths, if employed on special service, frequently received 9/ to 10/ per week.

Workmen had two weeks of holiday at Yule and nine other holidays during the winter half-year from Septr. To March.”

(Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer, i. pp. cclxx-iii. Ann. 1473: and i. cclxxiv, ann. 1498.)

Holidays at Yule would, one imagines, be pretty general in pre-Reformation days. The figures are given for the close of the 15th century; and are probably higher than they would have been in the 13th.

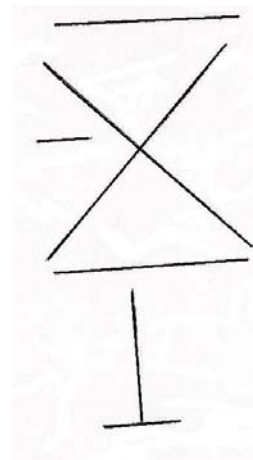
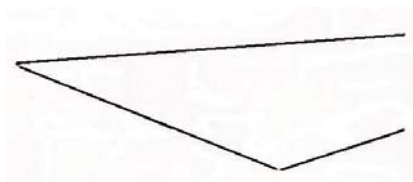
Because of the marriage of David I above referred to, he would, as Earl of Huntingdon, be a feudal vassal of the English crown.

Three general conclusions reached by Professor Coulton in his “Scottish Abbeys and Social Life” (p.189): -

1) The earliest Celtic settlements were very likely often built by the monks themselves in that mixture of timber and wattle which was spoken of as “Scottish Work” (*opus scoticum*).

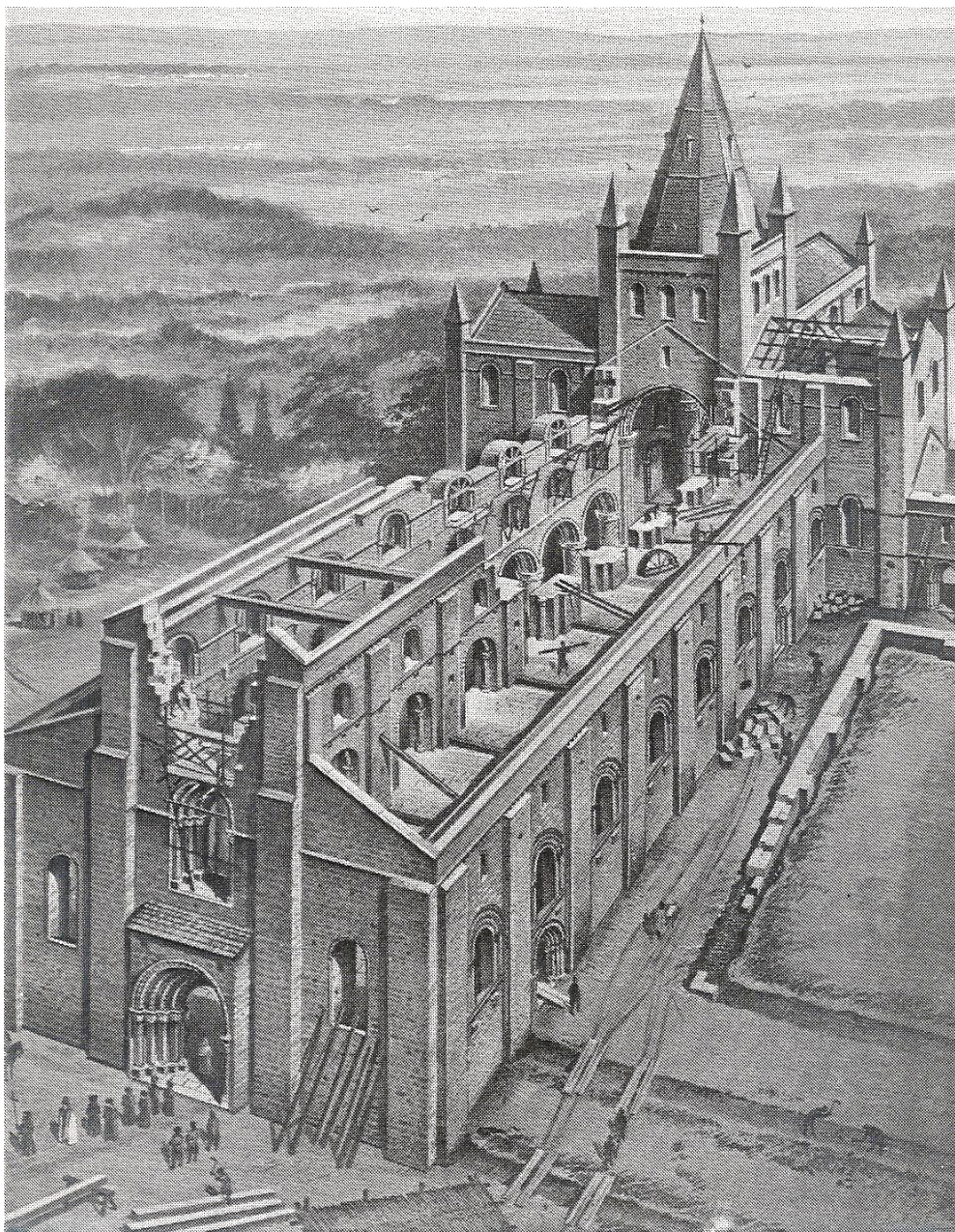
2) The term “fecit” has constantly been misunderstood. It is nearly always used in the sense of “ordered and paid for”.

3) Much confusion has come in through the term “magister operis”. It is generally recognised now that this official was neither handiworkman nor architect, but paymaster and superintendent. Chaucer, for example, filled this office at more than one of the royal works.



Some Mason's Marks Dunfermline.

DUNFERMLINE ABBEY



An artist's impression of the construction of Dunfermline Abbey,
From Moffat, William "A History of Scotland".

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