THE

CHURCHES AND CHURCHYARDS

OF

BERWICKSHIRE.

BY

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Duns.

No existing records give us any information as to when the original church of Duns was erected. That a church did exist here in early times—probably about the middle of the twelfth century—is certain; beyond this we know nothing.

Mention is made of the church in the year 1296 when Henry de Lematon, rector of Duns, took the oath of allegiance to Edward I. at Berwick.

In the reign of David II. (1329-1370), Patrick, Earl of Dunbar, when he founded the collegiate church of Dunbar, annexed to it the church of Duns as one of its prebends.*

It is probable that the old church was repaired in the year 1572, as that date was carved in front of the burgess loft in the old building. Not a vestige, however, of this original structure remains, the last of it having been removed in 1874.

After the Reformation the chancel seems to have been converted into a burial-aisle by the Wedderburn family, the north and south transepts being simultaneously appropriated for the same purpose by the proprietors of Duns Castle and Manderston respectively. The two transepts, with the nave, which had been repaired and fitted up for Presby-

terian worship, were wholly demolished in the operations of 1790; but the Wedderburn aisle remained until 1874, when, as already stated, it was removed, at the instigation of the minister of the parish, in the course of some improvements which were being carried out on the churchyard. A stone coffin, found in excavating a grave within the church in 1736, was removed in 1790 to the manse, where it was utilised for many years as a watering trough, and finally destroyed by the minister about 1830. Such was the manner in which the antiquities of the parish were dealt with by those who might have been expected to take the chief interest in their preservation.†

Near the farm steadings of Chapel, and a little to the south of it, about three miles north-west of Duns, stood at one time a chapel, which was dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene.† The last vestige of this structure was dug up and removed in 1808. The building was rectangular in form, and exceedingly plain, possessing no features of architectural interest. A graveyard surrounded the chapel, and a number of old tombstones lay scattered about at the period above mentioned, but these have also entirely disappeared.

In the Papal Taxation Roll of Churches and Monasteries in Scotland, drawn up in the early part of the reign of Edward I., mention is made of a hospital called "Bona Hospitalis de Duns," the value of which is returned at LXVIII. Nothing is known

* Chalmers' Caledonia.
† Retours, Berwickshire.
of either its site or history. The chapel above described may have been connected with it; but this is a pure conjecture, deriving, however, some probability from the fact that St. Mary Magdalene, to whom the chapel was dedicated, was the patron saint of numerous hospitals throughout the country.*

In the churchyard, on the site of the chancel of the old church, is the private burial-ground of the Homes of Wedderburn. The first of that family was buried here in 1470. In the year 1608 an aisle was erected upon it; on the lintel of its front entrance is the inscription:—

"Death cannot sinder S. G. H. D. I. H. 1608.

(These initials signify—Sir George Home. Dame Isabell Home.)

"Home of Wedderburn Burying ground. Formerly covered by a vault. The old stones, Here preserved, were over the entrance door, Having been erected by Sir George Home in 1608. Repaired MDCCCLXIII.*"

A small, peculiarly-shaped stone with the death’s head in the centre is inscribed:—

"Here lyes the Race of Ancrum. William Ancrum merchant Duns died 1691 Memento mort."*

Another small stone has these beautiful lines:—

"Here lies the only comfort of my life,
The best of husbands to a wife.
Great was my loss for his eternal gain,
And hope in Christ that we shall meet again."

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* Mr. Ferguson.—Hist. Ber. Nat. Club, 1800. Coldingham Letters, etc. The hospital is also mentioned in Bayamond’s Roll.

DUNS.

In the following there is sound logic as well as good gospel truth:—

"Beneath this stone three infants lie,
Say, are they lost or saved?
If death’s by sin, they sinned, for they are here;
If heaven’s by works, in heaven they can’t appear.
Revere the sacred page, the knot’s untied—
They died, for Adam sinned; they live, for Jesus died."

The present church is a handsome modern structure with an elegant tower, in the front of which there is an inscription as follows:—

"Erected 1790. Destroyed by fire 1879. Restored 1880."

The following is a list of the ministers that have been in Duns since 1568:—

John Young—1568 to 1569.
James Bennet—1581 to 1582.
Patrick Gaittis—1582 to 1584. After interval of suspension continued to 1611.
James Gaittis—1607 to 1608.
John Weens, M.A.—1613 to 1636.
Andrew Rollo, M.A.—1637 to 1649.
Andrew Fairfull, M.A.—1652 to 1661.
Andrew Collace, M.A.—1663 to 1664.
William Gray—1666 to 1689.
Alexander Colden, M.A.—1693 to 1700.
Laurence Johnstone, M.A.—1703 to 1730.
Roger Moidle, M.A.—1739 to 1748.
Adam Dickson, M.A.—1750 to 1769.
Robert Bowmaker—1769 to 1797.
George Cunningham—1797 to 1847.
Henry Scott Riddell—1843 to 1862.
John Macleod—1862 to 1875.
Robert Stewart, D.B.—1875 to 1877.
William Menzies—1878 to 1881.
William David Herald, M.A.—1882.

The Free Church here was built in 1838 (as a
quoad sacra church). The building is in the Gothic style, with a solid square tower. The present minister is John Miller, M.A., settled in 1868.

The South United Presbyterian Church was built in 1851, on the site of an older one erected in 1752. It is in the Gothic style, but exceedingly plain. The present minister is James Eason, M.A., settled in 1895.

The East United Presbyterian Church is a plain square structure of the meeting-house type, seated for about 500 persons. The congregation (Antiburgher) was founded in 1743. The present minister is Alexander John Blair Paterson, M.A., settled as colleague and successor to Rev. Dr. Ritchie in 1891.

Christ Church (Scotch Episcopal) is a neat edifice in the Norman style. In 1852 the Episcopal form of worship was resumed in the town. Two years later Christ Church was consecrated by the Bishop of Edinburgh. The present rector is James Beale, settled in 1878.

Earlston.

The church of Earlston dates from the beginning of the twelfth century, and was at first a chapel dependent on Ederham (Edrom). In the reign of David I. (1124–1153) Walter de Lindsay granted the "Church of Erself" to the monks of Kelso, who, in 1171, exchanged it with the monks of Coldingham for the church of Gordon.*

It seems that in early times a hospital existed here, but only very slight reference is made to it in old records, from which we may infer that it was not of much importance, and it is doubtful if it survived till the Reformation.

The ancient church was demolished and another erected close to its site about the year 1736. This latter has, in its turn, given place to the present handsome church, erected in 1890. Built into its south wall is an old stone, inscribed thus:

"AULD RYMRS:
RACE:
LYEES: IN: THIS:
PLACE:"

Tradition says the stone was transferred from the old church (i.e., the building which existed previous to that of 1736). In 1782 the ancient inscription was defaced by some senseless fellow in a drunken

* Chalmers' Caledonia.