

Types of motifs and decoration

The following pages are taken from Betty Willsher, 'How to Record Scottish Graveyards', pp25-37. Also, see Frederick Burgess' 'English Churchyard Memorials' for a definitive guide to monuments from all periods.

Mortality Symbols

Death's Head: Representation of death to remind that everyone dies-memento mori.

Winged Skull: a carved skull with wings, mainly found on 17th century stones.

Skeleton: Death, when lying down, or the **King of Terrors** when standing with dart, spear, scythe or lance.

Angel of Death: a cherub with dart, hourglass or scales. May have wings.

Bones: crossed bones often accompany death's head. Many variations, including jaw bones, used in 18th century.

Father Time: bearded, robed figure standing or leaning with hourglass or scythe. Could be accompanied by King of Terrors.

Hour-glass: passing of time. When flaming, represents eternity.

Coffin: simple representation.

Weapons of death: scythe, dart, , bow and arrow, lance and axe.

Sexton's tools: spade, turf-cutter, pick.

Corpse: in winding sheet or coffin.

Death-bed scenes: simple depiction, often in bed.

Weepers: figures mourning.

Trees: with lopped branches or cut down signifies life cut short.

Snakes: with sting in tail, apple or tree represents the Fall of Man i.e. Sin and Death.

Green Man: human or cat-like face with foliage. Life from death or the corruptibility of the flesh.

Urn: usually used decoratively.

Immortality symbols

Winged Soul: a cherub head with wings, also known as cherub or soul effigy represents the soul leaving the body.

Angel of Resurrection: robed figures with trumpets. Can be simply winged souls with trumpets.

Resurrection scenes: naked body, corpse or skeleton, often shown emerging from grave.

The Glory of God: clouds, sunrays, sun, sunburst or trumpet.

Torches: a Greek emblem. When flaming and upright, represent eternal life, when pointing downwards and extinct, the end of earthly life.

Heart: Divine love. When flaming, the fire of divine love. When a single emblem, represents the soul; when between initials, signifies love. Heart pierced by dart represents the end of earthly life.

Crown: Crown of righteousness.

Palm fronds: victory over death

Bay leaves/laurel: victory over death.

Poppy heads: Sleep

Lily: Purity

Scallop Shell: Pilgrimage. Can be purely decorative.

Fir cones/pineapple/fruit/foilage/tulip/rose/thistle: ancient symbols of fertility. Can be purely decorative.

Rosette: with 5 or more petals is purely ornamental.

Scales: Judgement. Care must be taken to establish context, as can be symbol of a merchant.

Anchor: symbol of hope. Care must be taken to establish context, as can represent a mariner.

Dove: Holy Spirit.

Caduceus: wand entwined by two snakes. Symbol of College of Physicians.

Cornucopia: Horn of Plenty. Can be purely decorative.

Figures: in loose robes or togas represent allegorical figures of Faith, Hope, Charity, Patience, Liberty etc.

Hand: emerging from cloud or cuff is the Hand of God. Clasped hands represent reunion or farewell.

Snake: eating it's tail signifies eternal life.

Agnus Dei: a figure of a lamb bearing a cross or flag represents the Passion of Christ.

Phoenix: bird rising from ashes of funeral pyre signifies immortality.

Pelican: feeding young with blood from her breast is symbol of piety.

Tools of Trade

Hammermen: Incorporation for any trade using a hammer on metal. Royal crown and hammer.

Blacksmith: can use emblem of Hammermen or anvil, pincers, chisel, rasp, file and wire drawers.

Glover: Stretchers, buckle, shears, glove.

Weaver: also called websters/ wobsters /brabeners. Shuttle, frame, reed and rollers of loom and tenterhooks.

Mercer: dealer in wool. Woolsack or wool shears.

Dyesters: glove, tongs, press

Miller: sheaves of corn, mill rind (metal binding around outer edge of millstone), millstone etc.

Baker: loaves of bread, rolling pins or scuffle (long-handled tool used for cleaning ovens).

Shoemaker/Cordwainer: a crown, awl, lasts, knife, pliers.

Maltman: large grain shovel, tongs, mash oar.

Barber: razor, comb, wig stand, bleeding bowl.

Brewer: barrels, sheaf of corn.

Gamekeeper: guns, powder flask, fishing rod, dogs, birds.

Cooper: dividers and cooper's hammer (similar to claw hammer).

Soldier: weapons.

Tailor: pressing iron, goose (iron with curved handle), shears, bobbin, needle, thimble, rule.

Artist: palette, brushes.

Butcher: axe, cleaver, knife, sharpener on hook, animals.

Musician: musical instruments.

Wrights: dividers, square, hammer, axe, saw.

Schoolmaster: book, pen, ink stand, penknife, desk, globe.

Mason: 3 castles, trowel, dividers, square, mallet, wedge, level.

Gardener: spade, rake garden produce, pruning knife.

Slater: slater's knife (looks like a cleaver) slater's hammer (similar to ice pick).

Forester: trees, axe, pruning knife.

Mariner: ship, anchor, rope, compass, sextant, mermaid, cross staff.

Fowler: powder flask, gun and trap.

Fisherman: boats, fish, oars, nets.

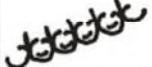
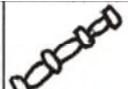
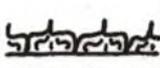
Groom: lamp, brush, fleams (similar to penknife with several blades, used to let blood).

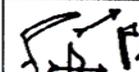
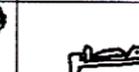
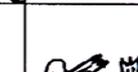
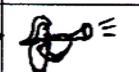
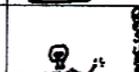
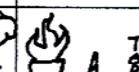
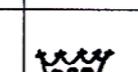
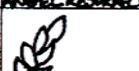
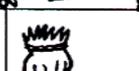
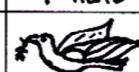
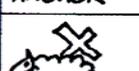
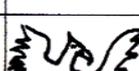
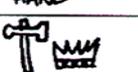
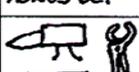
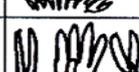
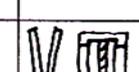
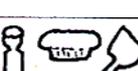
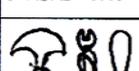
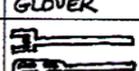
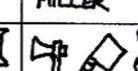
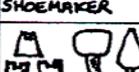
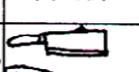
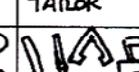
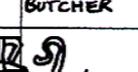
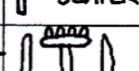
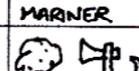
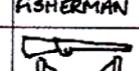
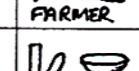
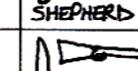
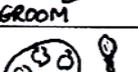
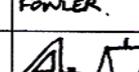
Farmer: plough, flail, yokes, harrow, sheaves of corn, horses, cows.

Minister: Bible.

Shepherd: crook, sheep, dog.

Merchant: scales, pen and book, compass, sextant, particularly for sea trades.
Goods traded.

 STRINGING	 BEADING	 FLEUR DE LYS	 TABLET LEAF	 TABLET FLOWER	 EGG & DART	 BEADS & REEL
 IVY	 VINE	 DAISY	 CHAIN	 ACANTHUS	 INCISED FOLIAGE	
 CIRCLE	 CHAMFERED	 DRAGOON	 MOULDING	 PASSION FLOWER	 TREFOIL	 QUATREFOIL
 RIBBON	 ROPE	 LILY OF THE VALLEY	 FERN	 SCROLL	 SNOWDROP	 SQUARE STRINGING
 MORNING GLORY	 KEY	 OAK	 SCALLOP	 TULIP	 LILY	 CORN
 COLUMN	 PILLAR					

 DEATH'S HEAD	 WINGED SKULL	 SKELETON	 ANGEL OF DEATH	 CROSSED BONES	 GRAVESTONE	 HOURGLASS
 COFFIN WITH SPIKES	 WEAPONS OF DEATH	 SEXTON'S TOOLS	 CORPSE	 DEATH BED	 WEEPER'S URN	 TREE CUT DOWN
 SNAKE	 GREEN MAN	 URN				
 WINGED SOUL	 ANGEL RESURRECTION	 SEXTON'S TOOLS	 GLORY OF GOD	 TOMBSTONE	 FLAMING HEART	 CROWN
 PALM	 BAY/LAUREL	 POPPY HEAD	 LILY	 SCALLOP SHELL	 FALCONE APPLE PINEAPPLE TULIP	 ROSETTE
 SCALES	 ANCHOR	 DOVE	 SNAKE	 CADUCEUS	 CORNUCOPIA	 FIGURES
 HAND	 AGNUS DEI	 EAGLE	 DOVE			
 HAMMERMEN	 BLACKSMITH	 GLOVER	 WEAVER	 MERCER	 DYESTER	 MILLER
 BAKER	 SHOEMAKER	 MALTMAN	 BREWER	 COOPER	 TAILOR	 BUTCHER
 WRIGHT	 MASON	 SLATER	 MARINER	 FISHERMAN	 FARMER	 SHEPHERD
 GROOM	 GAMEKEEPER	 GARDENER	 FORESTER	 FOWLER	 BARBER	 SOLDIER
 ARTIST	 MUSICIAN	 MINISTER	 SCHOOLMASTER	 MERCHANT		