

M176 Restoration of Brechin Cathedral

Introduction

The nave, choir and transepts of Brechin Cathedral were originally built in the first half of the 13th century. ¹ The choir was abandoned at the Reformation and fell into ruin, while the nave continued in use for reformed worship. In 1806–7, the transepts and N. porch were demolished and the aisles widened and raised in height, obscuring the clerestory. Inside, a flat ceiling was installed and galleries were introduced on all four sides. A movement for the reversal of these changes and the restoration of the cathedral to its original form was initiated in 1892, and John Honeyman was consulted. Plans were prepared, but work did not commence on site until 1900. The westernmost bays of the choir were reinstated, and the 19th-century aisles demolished and rebuilt along lines closer to the original medieval building. A new N.E. aisle, or transept, was added to increase seating capacity, along with a new N. porch.

In 1902 John Honeyman & Keppie designed a house in Brechin, The Mary Acre, for a member of the cathedral restoration committee, Alexander Philip.

Authorship: Honeyman was personally responsible for the cathedral restoration. He is named as architect in contemporary press reports, the cash book of John Honeyman & Keppie / Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh records the payment of his expenses for repeated trips to Brechin during the course of the work and there are letters from him to Alexander Philip, Honorary Secretary of the Executive Committee, throughout the course of the project. ²

Cost from job book: £12813 9s 8d

Status: Standing building

Current use: Cathedral (2014)

Listing category: A

Historic Scotland/HB Number: 22439

RCAHMS Site Number: NO56SE 12

Grid reference: NO 59625 60091

Chronology

1892

24 October: The *Dundee Courier* reports that a movement for the restoration of Brechin Cathedral is being organised, and that the building 'has already been examined by an architect'. ¹ Drawings are prepared at this time by John Honeyman. ²

1897

November: A donation of £1000 towards the cost of restoration has been received from J. A. Campbell, MP, of Stracathro (along with a second anonymous donation of the same amount), provided that plans prepared 'some years ago' for the late Rev. Alex Gardner are used. An illustration and description of Honeyman's proposed restoration is published. ³

1898

Fund-raising appeal launched. ⁴

31 January: Donations amounting to over £4000 have been received or promised. ⁵

March: Perspective drawing of Honeyman's design by Alexander McGibbon exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy (586). ⁶

1899

May 1899: drawings to be prepared for addition to accommodate c. 110 people. ⁷

10 October: £8700 has been subscribed to the restoration fund. The Presbytery of Brechin gives its formal approval to the scheme. ⁸

December: Principal tenders accepted. ⁹

1900

14 January: Final services held in the Cathedral prior to commencement of restoration. ¹⁰

25 January: Design for proposed N.E. aisle published in the *Dundee Courier*. ¹¹ This was not part of the original restoration scheme, and was commissioned from John Honeyman & Keppie on the recommendation of the Presbytery, in order that that the Cathedral should be able to seat 1000. ¹²

September: New aisles completed and partly roofed; memorial stone to be laid. ¹³

1901

October: drawing of seating plan prepared for reproduction. ¹⁴

November: Restoration complete. ¹⁵

1901-2

Stained glass windows by David Gauld and Henry Holiday installed in the chancel. ¹⁶

1902

4 July: Final payment on mason's contract. ¹⁷

21 August: Final payment on joiner's contract. ¹⁸

Description

People

Clients:

- Brechin Cathedral restoration committee

Contractors:

- William Kellock Brown
- George Cuthbert
- John Davidson
- Douglas, Hunter & Whitson
- Galbraith & Winton
- David Gauld
- James Grant
- Charles Grant
- John Grundy
- Hutcheson & Grant
- Jones & Willis
- William Meikle & Son
- The Metallic Art Co.
- J. C. Middleton
- John R. Miller
- James Milne & Son
- William Paterson & Sons
- J. H. White [& Son]
- James Young

Other:

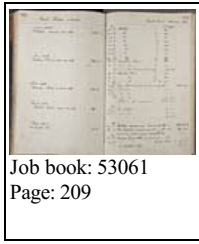
- Alexander McGibbon

Job Book

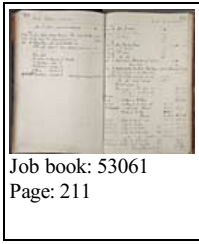
The job books of Honeyman & Keppie (later Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh) are now held by The Hunterian, University of Glasgow and include four volumes related to the Mackintosh period. The books were used by the firm to keep a project-by-project, day-by-day record of contractors, suppliers and expenditure. The name of a project and/or client is usually at the top of the left-hand page, followed by information about tradesmen who tendered. The name of the measurer (quantity surveyor) is usually at the top of the right-hand page, followed by information about payments to contractors and suppliers. All of the data for M176 is entered in the tables below.

Page numbering is not consistent in the job books. Sometimes a single number refers to a double-page spread and sometimes each page is individually numbered. Here, each image of a double-page spread is identified by the number given at the top of the left-hand page. (Images of all of the pages from the four job books can be found at [Browse Job Books, Visit Book and Cash Book.](#))

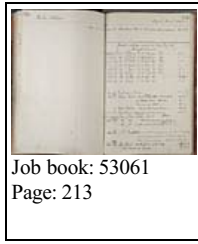
The following information about M176 has been extracted from the job books:



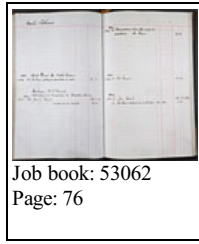
Job book: 53061
Page: 209



Job book: 53061
Page: 211



Job book: 53061
Page: 213



Job book: 53062
Page: 76

Client: Brechin Cathedral restoration committee

Measurer: Douglas, Hunter & Whitson

Tenders:

Contractor	Type	Address	Date	Value	Accepted
J. H. White [& Son]	mason	no data in job book	1899	£6643 7s 1d	yes (11 December 1899)
Hutcheson & Grant	joiner	no data in job book	1899	£2058 7s 11d	yes (December 1899)
John Davidson	slater	Brechin	1899	£346 17s 0d	yes (16 December 1899)
George Cuthbert	plumber	Brechin	1899	£208 0s 0d	yes (December 1899)
William Meikle & Son	glazier	no data in job book	no data in job book	£93 10s 0d	yes
John R. Miller	organ	no data in job book	no data in job book	£60 0s 0d ¹	yes
Jones & Willis	light fittings	no data in job book	15 August 1901	£44 5s 0d ²	yes
James Milne & Son	light fittings	no data in job book	14 September 1901	£77 3s 6d	yes
William Kellock Brown	sculpture	no data in job book	20 September 1901	£21 0s 0d ³	yes
John R. Miller	organ	no data in job book	17 October 1900	£400 0s 0d	yes
Alex Williamson	painter	Montrose Street, Brechin	1901	no data in job book	no
D. Hutcheon	painter	Swan Street, Brechin	1901	no data in job book	no
J. McIntosh	painter	Market Street, Brechin	1901	no data in job book	no
W. Bruce	painter	Southesk Street, Brechin	1901	no data in job book	no
J. C. Middleton	painter	Market Street, Brechin	28 September 1901	£20 19s 0d ⁴	yes

Payments (trades):

Name	Type	Payment out sum
J. H. White [& Son]	mason	First installment: 25 April 1900 Final installment: 4 July 1902 £6581 16s 3d ⁵
James Grant	joiner	First installment: 19 September 1900 Final installment: 21 August 1902 £2724 15s 5d ⁶
John Davidson	slater	First installment: 5 December 1900 Final installment: 29 March 1902 £299 19s 7d
George Cuthbert	plumber	First installment: 5 December 1900 Final installment: 10 July 1902 £235 3s 5d ⁷
William Meikle & Son	glazier	Payment date: 18 August [1902] £67 19s 11d
John R. Miller	organ	First installment: 28 March 1900 Final installment: 29 March 1902 £400 0s 0d ⁸

James Grant	joiner	Payment date: 17 December 1901 £134 10s 0d ⁹
James Grant	joiner	Payment date: 17 December 1901 £21 0s 0d ¹⁰
James Grant	joiner	Payment date: 17 December 1901 £27 0s 0d ¹¹
Jones & Willis	light fittings	Payment date: 17 December 1901 £44 13s 0d ¹²
James Grant	joiner	Payment date: 21 August [1901] £138 10s 0d ¹³
J. C. Middleton	painter	Payment date: 16 August 1902 £30 16s 0d ¹⁴
James Grant	joiner	Payment date: 29 September 1903 £67 3s 4d ¹⁵
James Grant	joiner	Payment date: 29 September 1903 £5 6s 8d ¹⁶
James Grant	joiner	Payment date: 12 August 1904 £12 14s 0d ¹⁷

Payments (suppliers):

Name	Service	Payment date	Payment sum
James Young	Carving	First installment: 18 December 1900 Final installment: 29 March 1902	£367 3s 6d
John Grundy	Heating	28 February 1901	£197 0s 0d
David Gauld	'Clark Memorial Window'		£120 0s 0d
David Gauld	'Shiress Will [Memorial Window]'	16 October 1902	£120 0s 0d
The Metallic Art Co.	Brass panel for Clark Memorial	26 November 1902	£5 18s 9d
The Metallic Art Co.	Brass panel for Shiress Will Memorial	26 November 1902	£3 6s 9d
William Paterson & Sons	'Hearse chain'	29 November 1902	£2 6s 6d
Charles Grant	Clerk of Works	First installment: 23 February 1900 Final installment: 27 September 1901	£961 14s 4d ¹⁸
Hutcheson & Grant	Work in connection with laying foundation stone	19 December [1900]	£22 8s 9d
Galbraith & Winton	no data in job book	26 November [1900]	£79 0s 0d

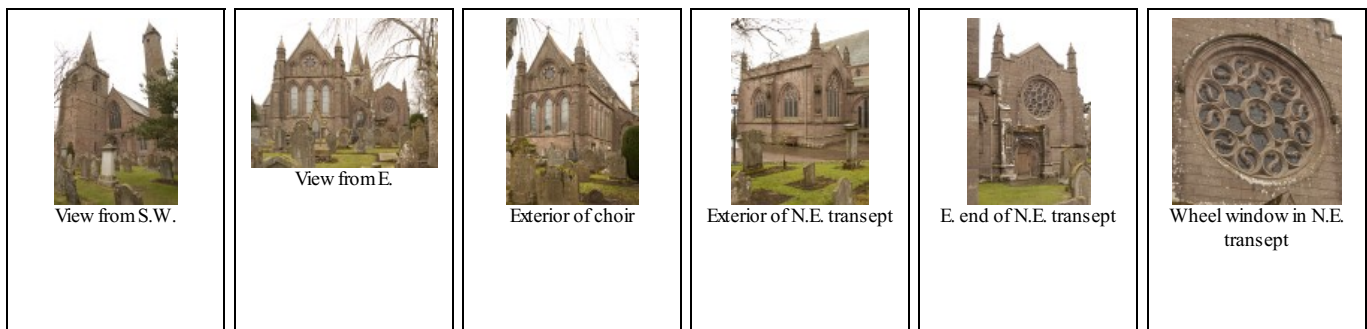
Measurer fee payment: First installment: 28 June 1900

Final installment: 18 August [1902]

£143 3s 6d ¹⁹

Documents

Images





Brechin Cathedral during restoration, 1901–2

Bibliography

Published

- John Gifford, *The Buildings of Scotland: Dundee and Angus*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012, pp. 357–65
- *British Architect*, 54, 28 September 1900, pp. 231–2; 56, 6 December 1901, pp. 410–11
- *Building Industries*, 10, 16 March 1900, p. 184
- *Building News*, 79, 6 July 1900, p. 9

Notes:

- 1: John Gifford, *The Buildings of Scotland: Dundee and Angus*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012, pp. 357–65.
- 2: Brechin Cathedral archive contains an important group of letters dated between December 1898 and September 1904 (signed by Honeyman or an employee on behalf of John Honeyman & Keppie), as well as estimates, receipts, measurements, press cuttings, and documents related to the fund-raising campaign, meetings of the Executive Committee, and building account. This material is currently (2014) uncatalogued.
- 3: *Dundee Courier*, 24 October 1892, p. 3.
- 4: *Dundee Courier*, 11 October 1899, p. 3.
- 5: *Dundee Courier*, 19 November 1897, p. 6.
- 6: Brechin Cathedral Archive: fund-raising leaflet.
- 7: *Dundee Courier*, 31 January 1898, p. 4.
- 8: *Glasgow Herald*, 12 March 1898, p. 4.
- 9: Brechin Cathedral Archive: John Honeyman to Alexander Philip, 16 May 1899.
- 10: *Dundee Courier*, 11 October 1899, p. 3.
- 11: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie / Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh job book, GLAHA 53061, p. 209.
- 12: *Dundee Courier*, 15 January 1899, p. 7.
- 13: *Dundee Courier*, 25 January 1900, p. 3.
- 14: *Dundee Courier*, 1 May 1900, p. 4.
- 15: *Scotsman*, 20 September 1900, p. 8.
- 16: Original untraced but copies of the lithograph produced from it in 1902 are held in Brechin Cathedral Archive. The drawing was dated October 1901. John Keppie referred to delays in arranging the printing in a letter of 16 July 1902 to Alexander Philip, coll. Brechin Cathedral Archive.
- 17: Brechin Cathedral Archive: John Honeyman to Alexander Philip, 16 October 1901, enclosing certificate confirming that the Cathedral is ready for occupation; *Scotsman*, 4 November 1901, p. 9; *British Architect*, 56, 6 December 1901, pp. 410–11.
- 18: Archie Milne, *The Stained Glass Windows of Brechin Cathedral & Stracathro Parish Church*, Brechin Cathedral, n.d., pp. 3, 5, 6, 14–29.
- 19: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie / Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh job book, GLAHA 53061, p. 209.
- 20: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie / Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh job book, GLAHA 53061, p. 209.

- 21:** For 'removal & reinstating organ'.
- 22:** For 'Electric standards in Choir' at £2 2s 6d each.
- 23:** For 'figures of St Matthew and St Paul for pulpit in bronze silverized', at £10 10s 0d each.
- 24:** 'Estimate for waxing pews'.
- 25:** '½ measurer's fee £96 10s 0d'.
- 26:** '½ measurer's fee £37 15s 0d'. Early payments were made to Hutcheson & Grant, before James Hutcheson retired from the firm.
- 27:** 'Amount of work at organ supply': £33 13s 0d; half measurer's fee: £3 13s 6d.
- 28:** Miller was paid £12 10s 0d 'extra for console'; this may have been in addition to the £400 he was paid 'as per estimate'.
- 29:** For 'Pulpit & back board'.
- 30:** For 'Kellock Brown Statuettes'
- 31:** For 'Communion table'.
- 32:** For 'lamp standards per est.'
- 33:** For 'organ case including waxing'.
- 34:** Comprises £1 6s 3d for 'numbering of pews'; £8 10s 9d for 'painting iron work &c.'; and £20 19s 0d for 'staining waxing pews'.
- 35:** For 'sarking on aisle roof'.
- 36:** For 'Slag wool at eaves'.
- 37:** For 'Fitting walnut panel boarding at wallheads'.
- 38:** Comprises monthly payments described as 'Grant's outlays', including £12 12s 0d each month for Clerk of Works.
- 39:** This represents half the measurers' full account of £286 7s 0d, the other half being paid by the contractors.

Mackintosh Architecture: Context, Making and Meaning

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