



Area : Banff and Buchan

Parish : Banff

Kirkyard : St. Mary's Kirk.

N.G.R. : NJ 688 643

S.A.M. : Scheduled Monument.

Listing Category : Kirk and Yard Cat. B.

Boundary wall and gate piers : To the r.h.s. of the gateway, the wall has developed a large crack running the entire height of the wall which will need to be rebuilt very soon. The gates themselves are rusting badly and in a dangerous state. The iron railings are in good order though they are in need of being repainted and a section to the r.h.s. of the gateway replaced.

The old Kirk : The old kirk of Banff was erected in 1471 and demolished in 1797, the partially reconstructed 16th - century "Banff Aisle" is all that remains. The roof of this structure is in dire need of being cleared of weeds and re-pointed, and the two crowsteps that have recently fallen put back. One of the mullions from the stone mullioned window is lying on the ground in front of the aisle and must be restored to its original position before it is lost. Internally the aisle is now the enclosure of the Ogilvy family with stones dated 1558 and 1580, all suffering badly from the effects of spray paint and vandalism.

Tombstones : There are approximately 220 table-top and recumbent tombstones of which 48 are significantly decorated, with many hundreds of upright stones dating from the 16th - to the 19th - century. There are amongst others, a fine recumbent figure tomb, an exceptionally well-executed pyramidal tomb with a white statuary

marble tablet carved in relief, and a superb 1692 Renaissance memorial complete with Corinthian columns and trumpeting angels, though the relief lettering is badly eroded.

Conservation Digest : Urgent.

The old kirk is in need of urgent and sympathetic repairs to all of the above noted flaws, not least of all the complete removal of ivy from the S. flank of the aisle. The majority of the monuments need surface joints re-pointed to ensure a good and continuing state of repair and preservation. The problem of vandalism needs to be monitored.

Interpretative Potential : Very high.

St. Mary's is located in the centre of Banff and has the potential to be the exemplary historical and architectural feature of this beautiful town. If care and attention are taken with regard to the urgent condition of many of the monuments, St. Mary's could be an exemplary historical Scottish kirkyard.

Access Issues : St. Mary's is well located in the centre of Banff with ample parking for cars.

Date of Visit : 19/08/98.