



Freemasonry in Kelso from earliest times

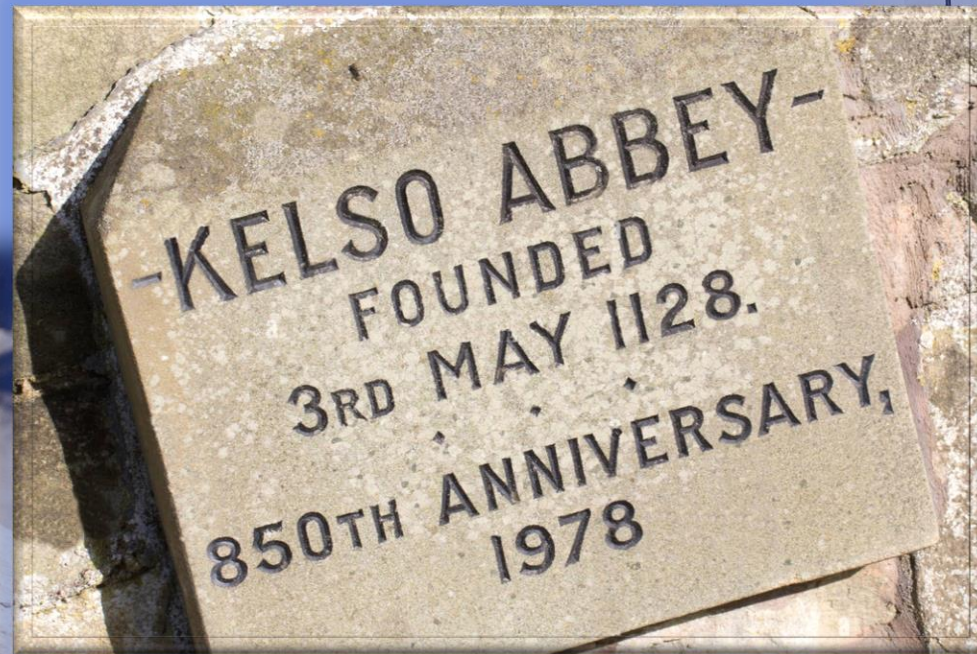
This presentation traces the beginnings of Freemasonry from the founding of Kelso Abbey in 1128 to our present day Masonic Lodge

Our ancient Brethren were workers in stone, these were the skilled stonemasons who built Kelso Abbey. They formed themselves into Trades Guilds to protect the skills of their trade.

Each stonemason would have created a Mark which was chiselled on the finished stone.



Lodge Kelso & Tweed 58 - Our link to the Past





Kelso Abbey Today



It is not clear exactly when Freemasonry began but it is widely accepted to have originated from the stonemason trade guilds of the Middle Ages, referred to as 'incorporated Trades' or 'Crafts'.



Saint John the Evangelist.



Kelso Abbey was dedicated the Virgin Mary and St. John the Evangelist.

St. John the Evangelist is also the patron Saint of Stonemasons, and the first records of the Kelso Lodge state they met "under the protection of Holy St. John"

At one period in time the Lodge's title was styled "Lodge St. John No. 58"

Many Lodges in the Scottish Borders still have the title "St. John"



Stonemason at work with his Maul & Chisel



Mauls in use today



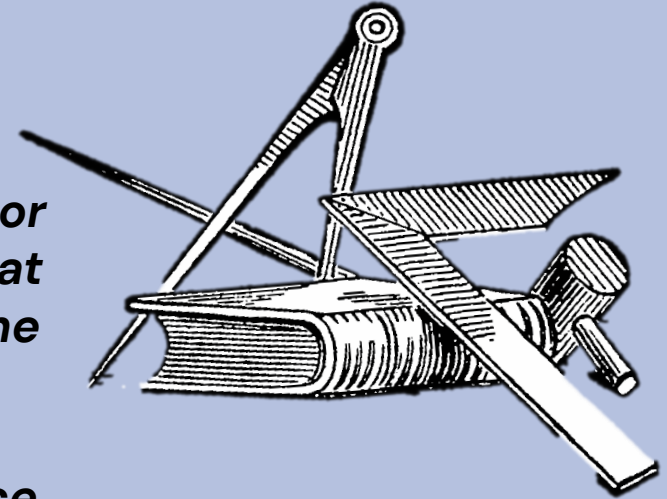
Stonemason and his Lodge

These Operative Masons formed themselves into Lodges to protect the secrets of their trade and to ensure no unskilled workmen would be employed.

One of the most impressive elements of the construction of the great Abbeys, is that they were “designed” and set out using only three tools, a straight edge, compasses and a square, “The Tools of the Craft”.

All of these practices could be taught without the need for specialised mathematical knowledge. It would appear that these geometric “secrets” were handed down through the generations by word of mouth, experience and practice.

Each qualified craftsman served his time as an apprentice and was awarded a Mark which he chiselled on the finished stone.

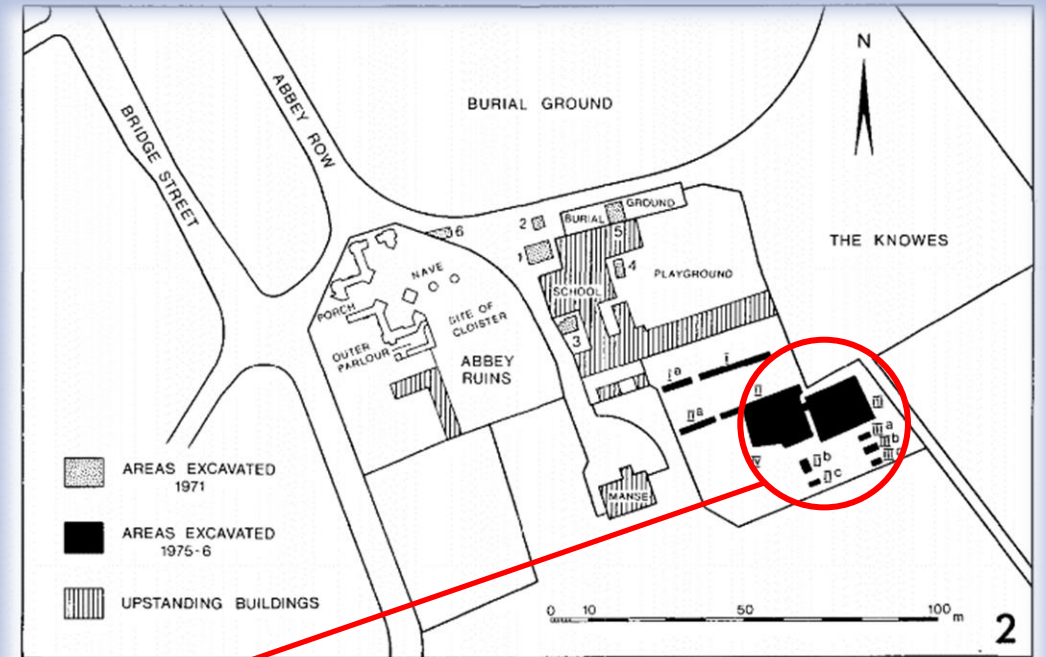




The Society of Antiquaries Scotland



Excavation of Kelso Abbey in 1975



ILLUS 4 Kelso Abbey: location plan showing abbey ruins and areas excavated in 1971 and 1975-6

***Site of Construction Yard
& Mason's Lodge***



Kelso Abbey circa 13th Century

KELSO ABBEY



*The Infirmary -
Site of Mason's
Lodge*

This artist's reconstruction uses evidence from other abbeys, historical records and archaeological excavations to show how Kelso Abbey may have looked.

You are here

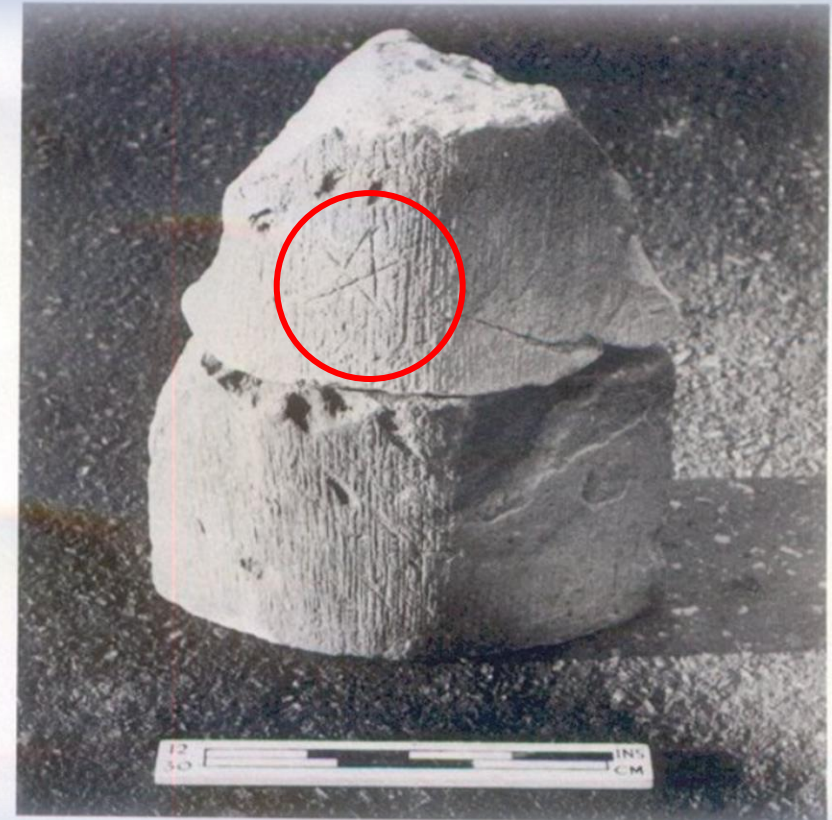
- 1 Abbey Church
- 2 Cloister
- 3 Chapter House
- 4 Refectory (dining room)
- 5 Infirmary
- 6 West Tower



A Stonemason's Mark

Stones from the Excavation Pit - Circa 12th Century

***The hearth of the
Mason's Lodge
had been formed
with five
sandstone blocks***

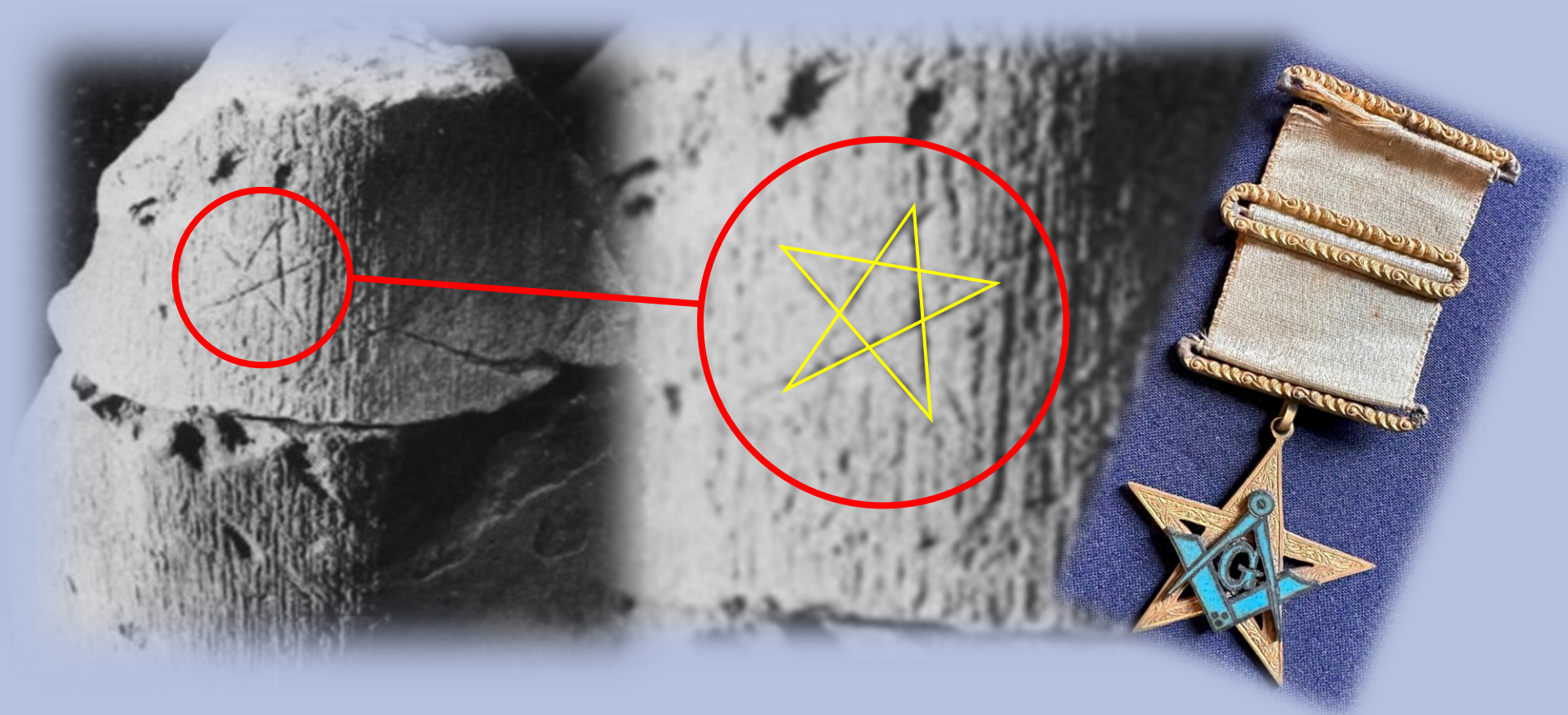


***One bearing a Mason's Mark. A vertical and diagonal tooling on face
with incised mason's mark in the form of a pentagram***



A Mason's Mark from the Excavation

Stones from the Excavation Pit - Circa 12th Century





17th Century Operative Masons at Work



*17th century stonemason
at work dressing a stone*



Our First Minute 27 of December 1701

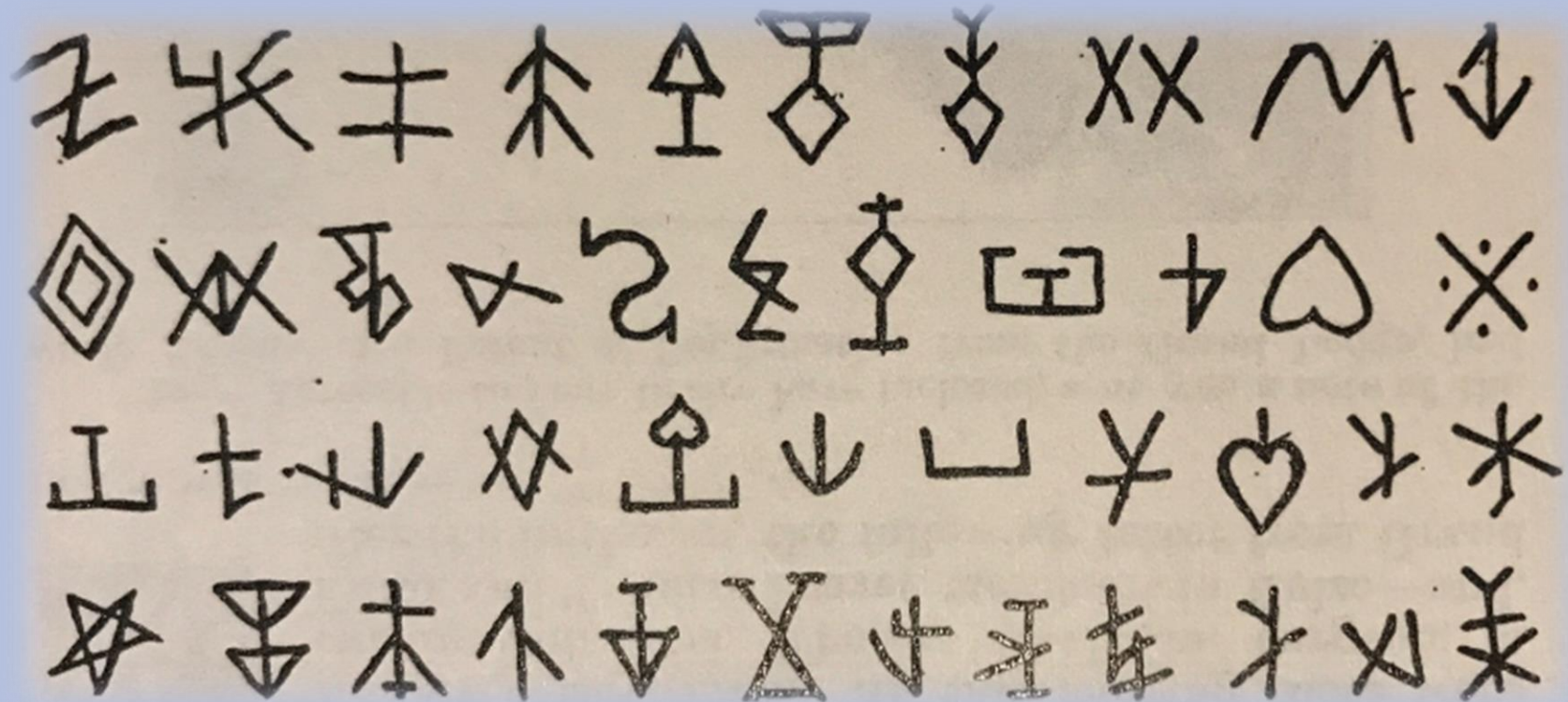
Kelso 27 of December 1701
The whilk day the company of masons of the honourable Lodg
of Kelso under the protection of saint John having met there
and considered all former sederents and that the master and wardin
and treasurer with the ofiser wer only to continou to this day after
matur deliberation put it to the vot ~~to~~ ^{to} continou the first ofisers or
not elect nou and it was carried to continou,

“The whilk day the companie of the honourable Lodg of Kelso, under the protection of Saint John, having met there and considered all former sederents, and that the Master and Wardin and Treasurer, with the ofiser wer only to continou to this day. After matur deliberation, put it to the vot, continou the first ofisers, or elect nou, and it was carried to continou.”

This minute refers to meetings prior to 1701



Mason's Marks from our Minute Book



These Mason's Marks are from the first minute book from 1705 to 1740



17th Century – the beginnings of Freemasonry

As the need for skilled masons declined Mason's Lodges started admitting Speculative Masons or Non-operative Masons.

These new members were the landed gentry of the time and we see the formation of Freemasonry as we know today.



The Lodge has become a society for benevolence and spiritual enlightenment and no longer a Trades Guild. They were the shakers and movers of society, the people who had power or influence.

Today members come from all walks of life. We encourage our younger masons to become good citizens, serving our community and promoting the well-being of our members



Early 17th Century Trade Guilds in Kelso

***Tailors, Skinners, Weavers, Shoemakers,
Fleshers, Hammermen, Glovers***

Like the early Stonemasons, these Guilds were very restrictive as to who entered their trade. One such society was the Whipmens who were farm servants, ploughmen and carters.

Alistair Moffat in his book “Kelsae” noted that the Whipmen were considered to be at the other end of the social scale to the Masons and by all accounts an undisciplined rabble of men.

There was one account referring to a series of grim rituals involving a cat and a goose. Perhaps we’ll invite The Kelso Laddie to enlighten the Lodge brethren on that particular bit of ritual



The Masons' Goat





An 18th Century Speculative Masons' Lodge

Members of the Lodge of Kelso No. 58

George Faa (Yetholm), our first Master in 1701

Sir John Pringle of Stitchill

The Laird of Stodrig

The Honourable Mr Ker of Grien

The Laird of Clifton

William Bennet Laird of of Grubit

Mr William Ker

The Laird of Thirlestone

Dr Brown

Mr Ker Bamff Myln

Laird of Greenhead

Laird of Chirrietrees

The Duke of Roxburghe

James Dickson of Ednam House

Sir Alexander Don

Walter Scott of Harden

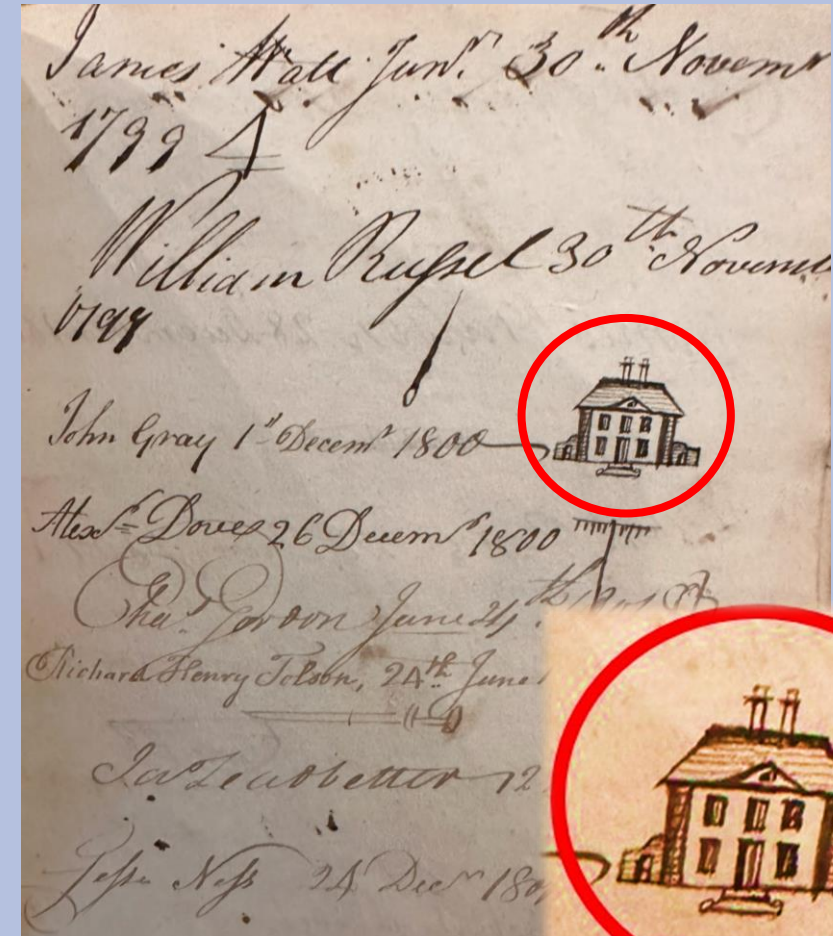
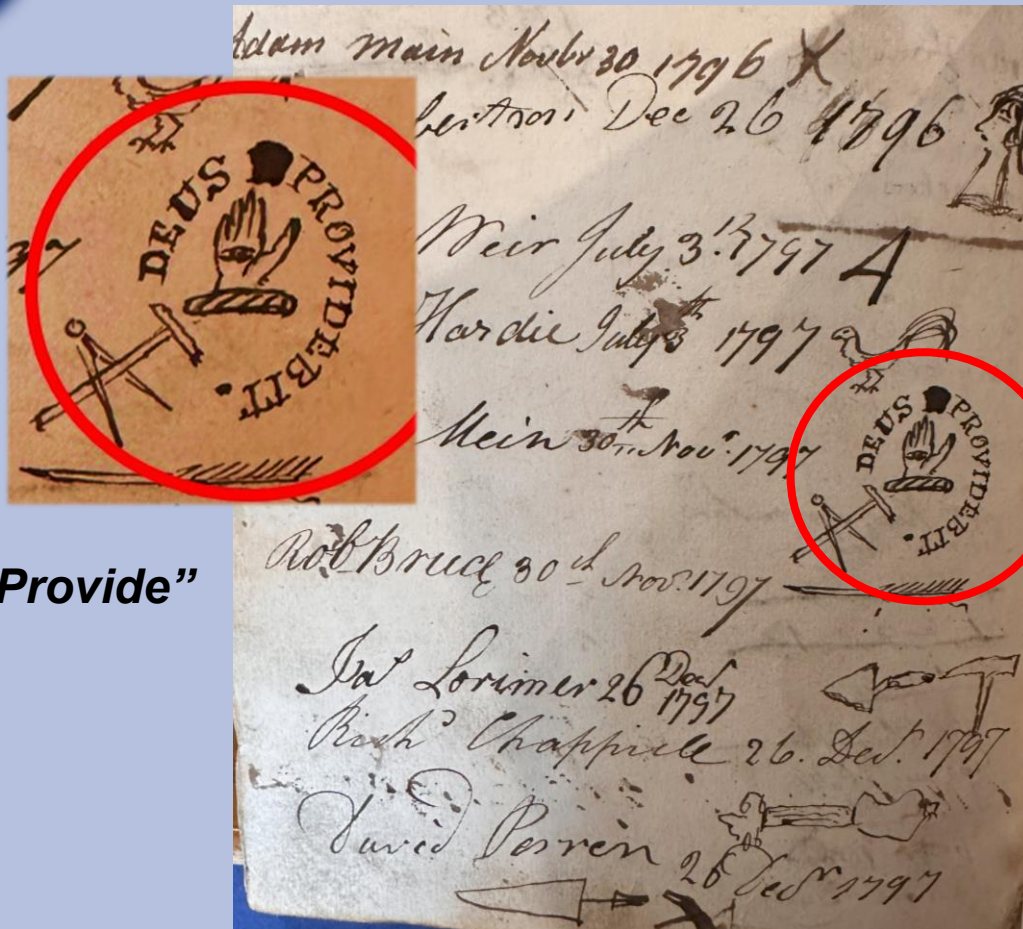
Andrew Edmonston of Ednam

Roxburghe 11 of Aug
Thomas De la Hunt

**His Grace William,
Duke of Roxburghe,
Kelso 58, 11th August 1804**



Later Mason's Marks from the Minute Book

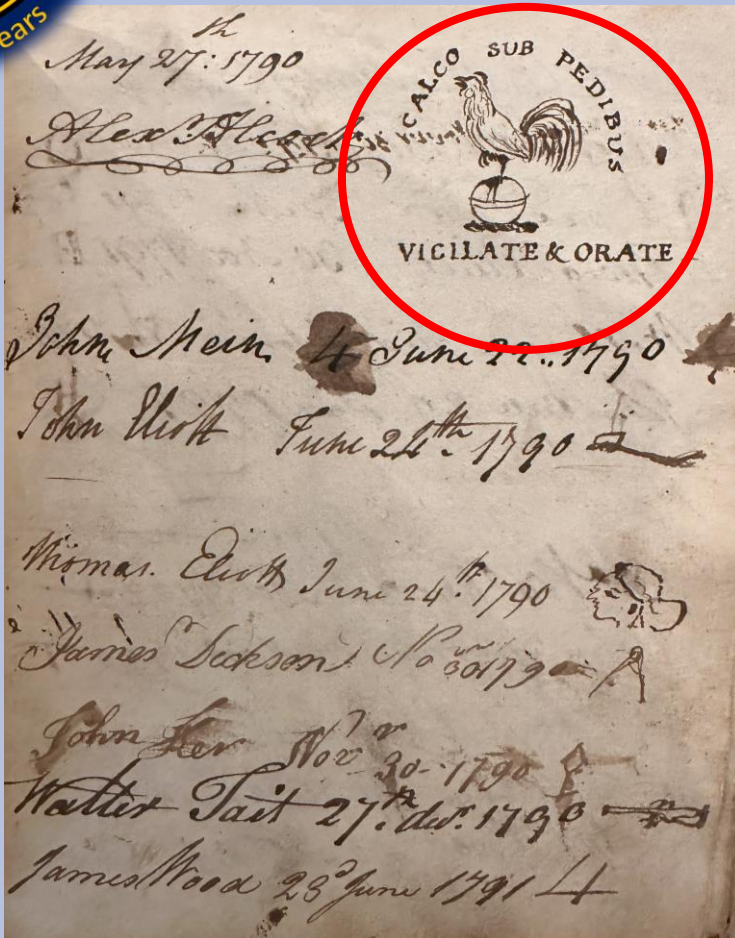


"God will Provide"

Speculative Masons Marks late 18th Century

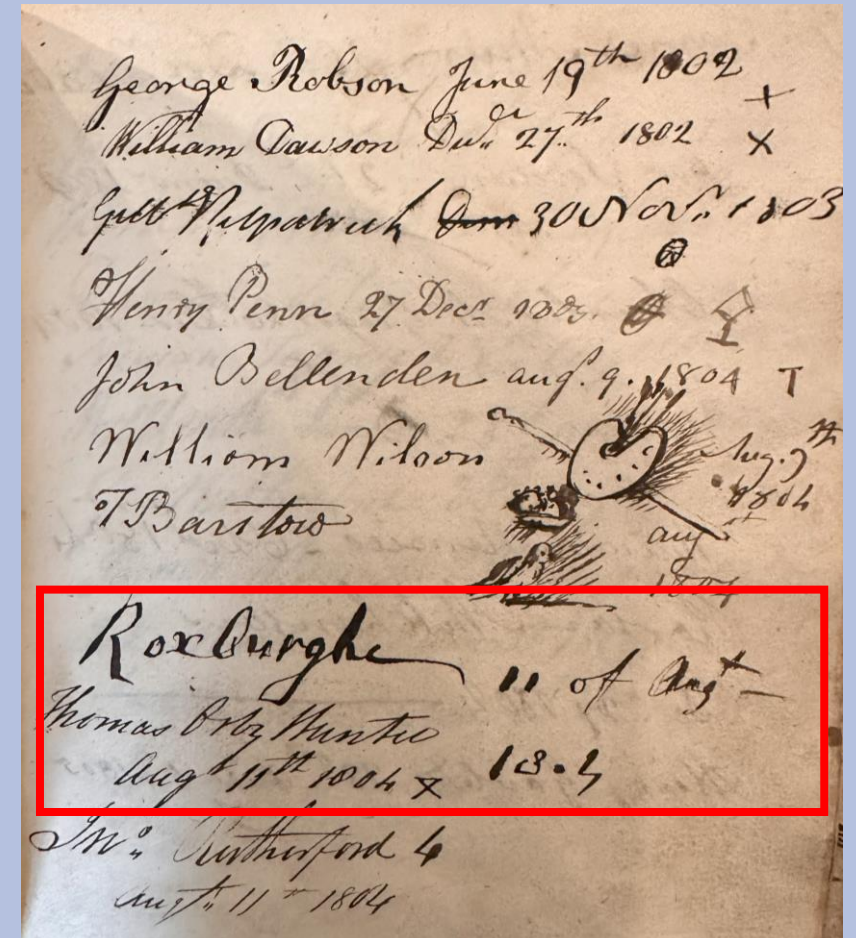


Later Mason's Marks from the Minute Book



“I trample it
under my feet”

“Watch & Pray”

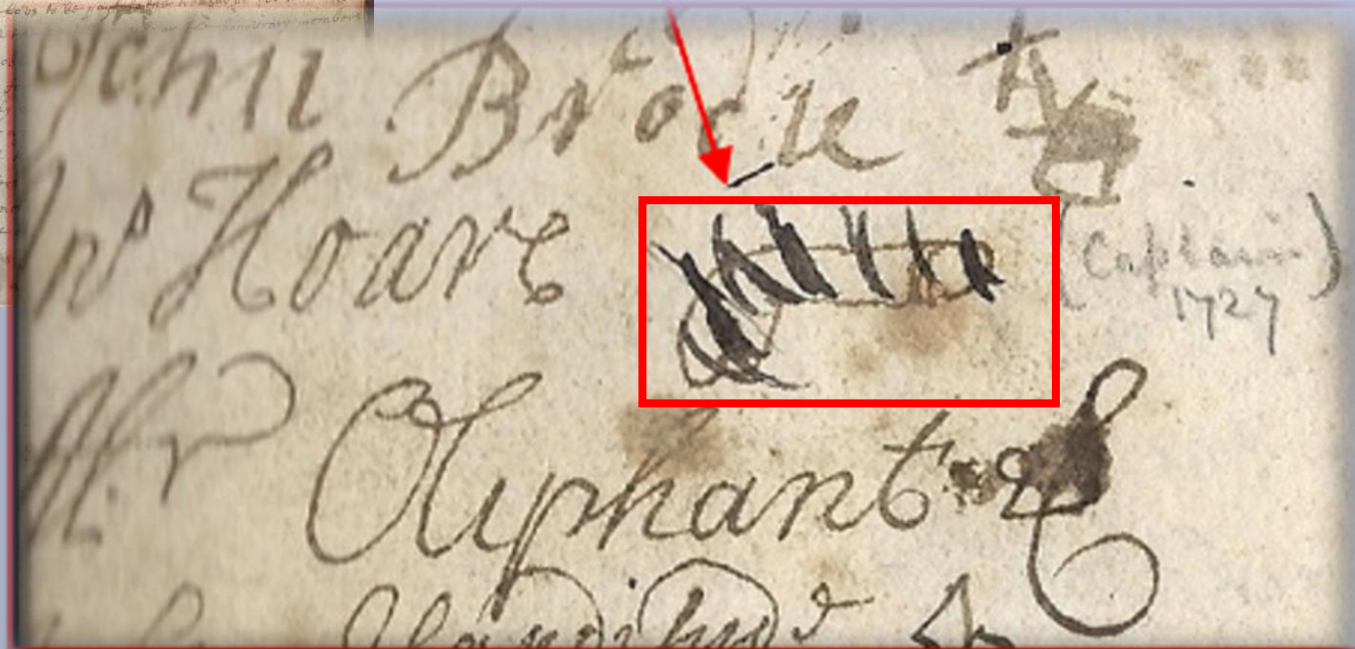
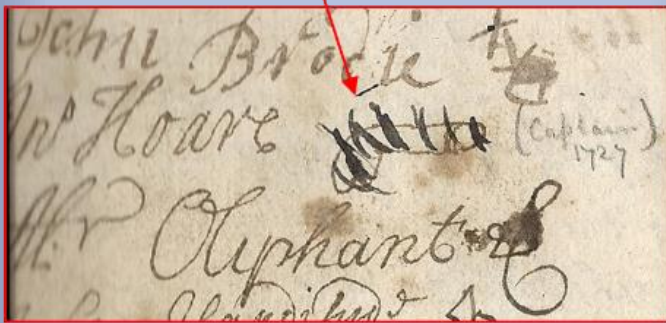
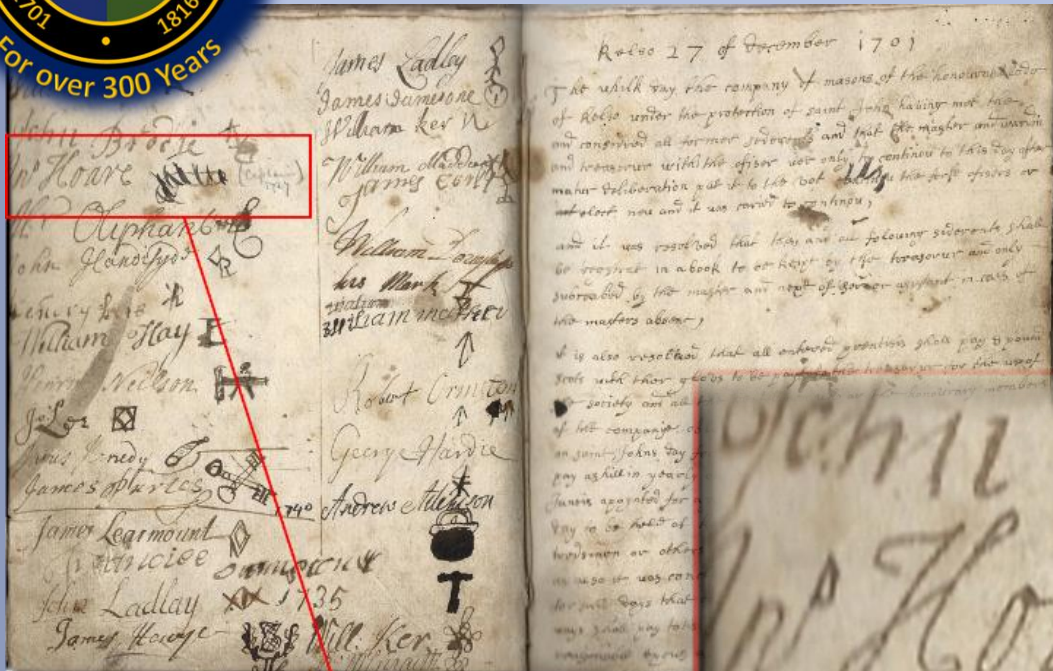


The Duke of Roxburghe



Later Mason's Marks from the Minute Book

**Not sure what kind of employment
this Brother Hoare was engaged in!
But it seems someone objected**





An 18th Century Speculative Masons' Lodge



The inauguration of Robert Burns as Poet Laureate in Lodge Canongate Kilwinning No 2 Edinburgh 1787

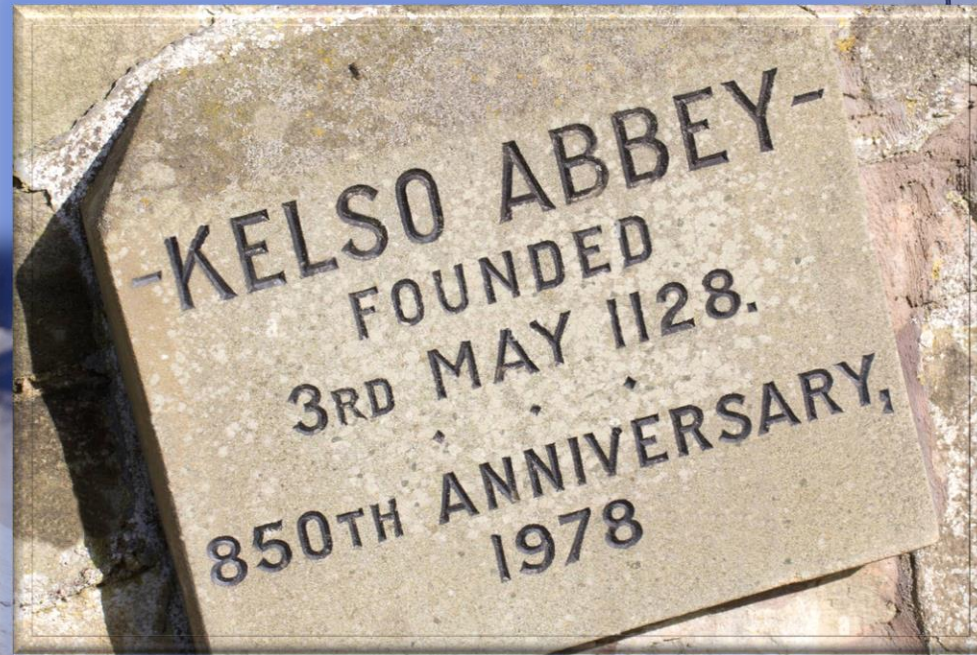


Kelso Abbey Today





Lodge Kelso & Tweed 58 - Our link to the Past





The Whipmens Society

**Wishing the Kelso Laddie
“Safe oot, Safe in”**



“Dae Richt Fear Nocht”



Lodge Kelso & Tweed No.58





Lodge Kelso & Tweed No. 58

Ukraine Appeal £50,000
Prostate Scotland £1.25M
Scottish Constitution
Freemasonry Supports £3.5M



THE GRAND LODGE
OF ANTIENT FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS
OF SCOTLAND



Prostate Scotland, Texas Scramble £2,200
Borders Youth Support Scheme £1,500
BGH 2000 Goodie Bags £2,000

Kelso Ladies Poppy Appeal £500
Kelso High School Prom £300
Dnipro Orphans - £150
Kelso Civic Week £150





The laying of the Foundation Stone of the Old Kelso Bridge

The Lodge of Kelso No. 58 - 17th June 1754





The laying of the Foundation Stone of the Old Kelso Bridge

The Lodge of Kelso No. 58 - 17th June 1754

Before the mid-eighteenth century the only means of crossing the River Tweed at Kelso was by ferry. Not only was this dangerous during bad weather, but it also limited the volume of traffic coming into the town from the south.

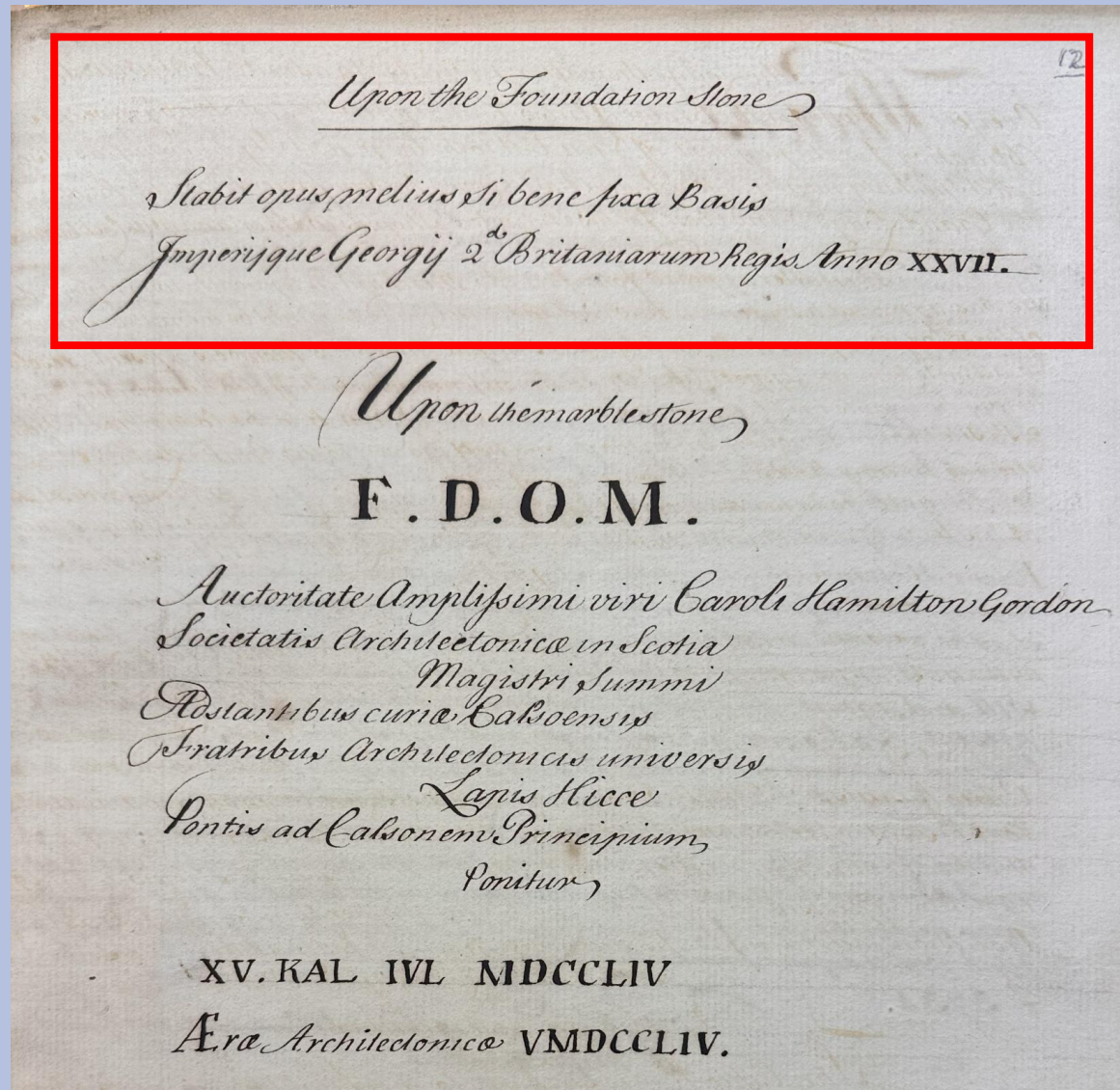
In 1752 a public subscription, supplemented by generous donations from the local Masonic Lodge, paid for the building of a six-arched bridge at a cost of £3,000.

Accounts of the time record that the laying of the foundation stone of the bridge in 1754 was largely arranged by members of the Masonic Lodge. Every working mason in Kelso volunteered a day's labour on the bridge, and when the bridge opened they paraded through the town with a band, and even had special medals struck to commemorate the day.

Unfortunately no money had been set aside for maintenance of the new bridge, and no tolls were charged to help pay for this. In 1756 the middle arch collapsed killing six people. A collection to pay for its repair was organised by the church, with Kelso divided into districts to raise money. The bridge remained in use until it was swept away by a flood in 1797.



Inscribed on the Foundation Stone of the Old Kelso Bridge



17th June 1754

From the minute book:

"Stabit opus melius si bene fixa basis"

**"Imperiique Georgii 2d Britanniarum
Regis Anno XXVII"**

**"The work will stand better if the
foundation is laid securely"**

**"In the 27th year of the reign
of George II, King of Britain"**



The laying of the Foundation Stone of the Old Kelso Bridge

The foundation stone was exposed by Dr Derek Robeson in the summer of 2022



17th June 1754 ***"Stabit opus melius si bene fixa basis"***
"Imperiique Georgii 2d Britanniarum Regis Anno XXVII"



The laying of the Foundation Stone of the Old Kelso Bridge

ORDER OF PROCESSION.

- 1) When the Trades received orders from the Depute Grand Master they marched from the Churchyard to the Market Place with their proper colours and different Bands of Music, and drew up on the Parade where they waited for further orders - which being given they marched off accordingly in decent order towards the foundation of the Bridge.
- 2) Then followed some operative masons employ'd at the work, not of any regular Lodge, two abreast headed by a foreman with mallet in his hand.
- 3) The Two officers of the Lodge to clear the way.
- 4) A Party of the Military with screw'd Bayanots and the Drums baiting the Grenadiers March.
- 5) The Brethren of the different Lodges who had Deputations from their respective Lodges with the other visiting Brethren according to the Roll they stand in the Grand Lodge, three in a rank.
- 6) Three Stewards of the Lodge of Kelso.
- 7) The brethren of the Lodge of Kelso-three in a rank according to their Juniority.
- 8) The two Wardens of the Lodge.



The laying of the Foundation Stone of the Old Kelso Bridge

- 9) The gentlemen masons not deputed by Lodge.
 - 10) The Golden Compasses carried by an operative.
 - 11) The Secretary carrying the Grand Masters Deputation in Green Purse and the Treasurer carrying the medals in a Purse.
 - 12) A Steward.
 - 13) The Golden Square, Level, and Plumb, by three operatives.
 - 14). The whole Band of Musick.
 - 15) The Golden Mallet, carried by the master builders, preceded by their stewards.
 - 16) The Substitute supported by the Old Master and Deputy Master.
 - 17) The Gentlemen of the Committee.
 - 18). A Body of Operatives.
- In this manner they proceeded to the place where the foundation Stone was to be laid



Lodge Kelso & Tweed 58

*For more of our history visit us on
www.kat58.co.uk*