



Maggie Wall

A little under a mile west of Dunning, a gap in the stone wall and some steps give access to one of Scotland's spookier monuments, the memorial to Maggie Wall, who, it says, was burned here in 1657 as a witch.

King James VI launched a witch hunt that was to last for over a century, until 1722. During that time some 1500 people, mostly women, were executed as witches in Scotland. Maggie Wall was presumably one of them. Or perhaps not... The odd thing is that no-one has ever been able to find out anything about Maggie Wall, and there are a number of issues about the monument itself which are very mysterious.

Although detailed records were kept of most witch trials, nothing has ever turned up mentioning Maggie Wall. Records show that six alleged witches were executed near Dunning in 1663 and that an alleged warlock, Johnnie Gothrie, was tried here in 1657. But of the elusive Maggie Wall, nothing at all is known.

Then you have to ask who built such an imposing monument here and also when, and why. No-one seems to know, though it has been suggested it was erected not long after the event it commemorates by the local landowner, Lord Rollo. Presumably the local landowner must at least have given permission for its erection. Building it would have taken some effort and cost. The monument is made of large stones, and the upper parts are held together by iron bars sunk into the stones. The presence of a cross on top of the memorial seems especially incongruous given the stated reason for Maggie Wall's execution.



Two further mysteries surrounding the memorial have a continuing resonance. The painted lettering is said to be reapplied periodically to ensure it remains fresh and legible. No-one seems to know who does the repainting. And the significance, if any, of a number of children's fluffy toys wedged in place on the memorial is also unclear.