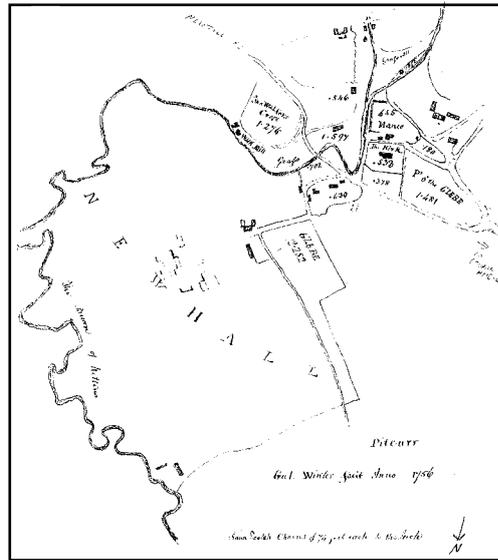


The Village of Kettins



A Short History

by

Peter H. Marsh

Preface

Help with the historical facts in this work has come from many sources, which include:-

Warden's, Angus and Forfarshire Land and People

Mr Christopher Dingwall of Ardler

City of Glasgow Libraries Department

Tayside Regional Council, Water Services Department

National Map Library of Scotland, Edinburgh

and many local people with verbal information, and I wish to thank all these for their help.

Editing by JD & DH Marsh

Layouts by JD Marsh

The pre-historical part of the work is purely fictional, to give the story a background, although in saying that, who could tell how true it is or not - no one will ever know.

P H Marsh

Kettins

December 1994

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Kettins Village

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Kettins Village

Part 1

Pre-History

The village was possibly founded about 2000 years Before Christ.

We know that after the Ice Age animals and humans moved northwards in search of food and shelter, the North Sea (as we know it today) was most likely rivers and lakes with plenty of land masses in between, enabling the migrants to travel with ease.

The early migrants arriving on the Scottish shores were called *Albannach*, later to be named by the Romans as *The Picts*, due to the body painting which they did very widely.

These Albannach settled, in their early days, along the shore line and river banks for ease of obtaining food (fish, shellfish and small mammals). Later, they moved into the tree line to obtain further food supplies such as deer and boar, along with nuts and berries. In so doing these people are known to us today as hunter-gatherers. Eventually movement would be made further inland, following rivers and streams to obtain more food and better shelter.

In the Tay basin they would be slightly restricted in their movement inland by the hills bounding the north and south banks of the Tay. We, being only interested in the north bank would follow them inland until they reached the *Sidlaws*. This barrier would be very big and would cause hardship. After many sorties they would possibly find a route over into Strathmore. Shall we assume that one party found a suitable path between the Ballo and Gask Hills and followed a stream down into Strathmore, eventually finding a clearing by the stream as it wriggled its way northwards. This clearing could have been a suitable place to make camp for the winter, food, water, fuel and shelter all being available in this clearing.

Years passed and the clearing got bigger as more kinsfolk arrived, shelters of a more permanent nature were built, the inhabitants were happy and *Kettins* came to life.

Village life grew and years passed, life began to assume a new entity, religion appeared, the God *Keth* came into the inhabitants lives. Where he came from is unknown but we know that he left his mark all over the North-East of Scotland in place names such as Keith, Caithness, Keillor, etc. The God had his devotees, called Shaman, who taught the people about the God. They were told that Keth lived at the top of the Southern Hills along with his acolytes or Sides - hence the current name of the hills *Sidlaws* (Side Hills).

How long this religion lasted is unknown, but it was eventually overtaken by Druidism which was a well known early religion over the whole of the British Isles. A Druid circle has been found, not far from the village, at Baldowrie, although there could have been a Druid meeting place in Kettins, but no site remains.

With the advent of Druidism it would be seen that there was a certain amount of trading going on between Kettins and other settlements. The village would of course be expanding and smaller hamlets would spring up at other suitable places as paths were made, woods cleared and crops began to be grown. But the essential part of life was still in the hunter-gatherer class.

Let us say then that time passed and the village became more solid, trees were felled and used to build better and safer shelters. It would take many, many years for the inhabitants to become really domesticated and settle down to a static life. Growing crops and tending sheep, pigs and cattle would help but it would only really change as trade grew and more travellers arrived.

Vendors would bring in trade goods such as iron, copper, silver and gold and in turn received pelts and furs, dried meat and fish and possibly carved wood. These vendors would not only bring goods but would also bring news from further afield. This news could have included news of wars, battles and not least religion.

We have spoken of the Druid faith, but we have no idea when it arrived and when it lost hold. It was, however, superseded by the early Christian faith of Celtic *Columban*. It would have taken the monks and teachers of this sect some time to arrive in Kettins, but when they did arrive it is certainly correct to say a monastery was built. The building was sited within the area of the north-east corner of the village. If you refer to the sketch map of 1756 AD (Appendix 1, page10) you will see the ruined buildings within the *Newhall Estate* to the north-east of the mansion house. We will deal with this later on.

The monks at the monastery would have had control over the whole of the community and would have dealt with all religious functions, as well as local law and advice on husbandry.

Part II

The beginnings of History

All the preceding script is gleaned from many sources, as no historical records are available.

The first real history is recorded during the years 1178 - 80 AD, when *Malcolm, Laird of Kettins* witnessed a land deed in Arbroath. Some time before this record, the Roman Catholic Church had stepped in to take over the monastery, giving rise again to a change in religion.

The next historical record of the village comes in the year 1249 AD when the *Church Building* was consecrated to *St. Bridget* or *Bride* by the Bishop of St. Andrews, *David de Burnham* and was valued at 55 Merks. It is assumed, therefore, that the church was separate from the monastery and could have been built on the same site as the existing church today.

It was also recorded that a well, belonging to the monastery, was leased to the *Cupar Abbey* (Cupar Angus Abbey) and this well, *Bride's Well*, is thought to be in the region of the *Stoney Cottages* on the eastern side of the Dundee - Cupar Angus Road. This well fed water down to the Abbey by an aqueduct and into ponds containing fish.

A further historical fact is that Kettins monastery/church was responsible for six outlying *Chaples* which were situated in the following hamlets - Pitcurr, South Coston, Peattie, Muryfolds, Denhead and South Kettins. Each of these sites, within or near the hamlets, would contain a small meeting house and a burial ground in an enclosed area.

In the year 1292 AD, *Hugh of Over* became *Laird of the Lands* and again in 1309 AD *Patrick of Ogilvy* became *Baron of Ketnes*. You will notice that the spelling of Kettins changes. During the years the spelling changed many times, as did the allegiance of the church. The monastery would slowly begin to lose its strength and the church, being Roman Catholic, was now controlled by outside influences. At various times Kettins Church paid dues to:- The Hospice of Berwick, Trinity Friars of Dundee, the Church of Peebles and the Resteneth Priory.

There is very little in the way of records of the actual village, only about the Church and the Lairds. To help a little in visualising the village we will take a look at the sketch map on page 10. It appears that this map, drawn by an unknown hand in 1756 AD was really for the benefit of the Laird of Newhall, since it shows only the Newhall estate and units belonging to it. The ruins of the monastery can be clearly seen, as can the mansion house and outhouses, cottages at the entrance to the estate, the Kirk, Manse (Manse) and a croft belonging to *Thos. Walker* along with his Mill. Cottages to the West of the Manse are no longer there, but the dried up well can still be seen.

The sketch map of 1819 AD (Appendix 2, page 11) is of the same estate some 63 years later and was drafted by one *Wm. Blackadder*, Surveyor who possibly came from Dundee to survey the estate for the purpose of selling it a few years later. It has now transpired that this survey and record was for the purpose of the "Sale of Newhall" to one William Shaw, who bought it in 1819 AD and sold it to the Hallyburtons in 1860 AD. The main features are still the mansion house and outhouses. The monastery ruins have gone, the stones possibly being used to build other outhouses. However, a path, which we assume was used by the monks to visit Coupar Abbey, is shown as Kirklands Road. Today it is called Trenchfield. A drive from the front of the house comes south to join the Newtyle Road. It can still be seen today but how it crossed the burn is not indicated on the map.

Part III

History

Recorded history shows that in 1658 AD there was still a chapel in the south side of the village. The lands called *Abden of Kettins* included the chapel, Over Coston and Greenbarns (South Corston and Greenburns) were transferred to one Alexander Campbell of Balgersho. There was also a transfer of *East Townend of Kettins and Pitdownie* in the Parish of Kettins to one George McKenzie in 1691 AD.

The village had expanded, but had not been completely built up, and covered the area to Pitcur, Leys, Corston, Balgersho, Gask, Peattie, Baldinnie and Fauldleys (Foldleys).

We now come to the earliest official map of Kettins - Ordnance Survey 25" County Series, Parish edition Forfarshire (Kettins) - (Appendix 3, page 12). It is dated 1860 and could have been prepared up to 20 years previously. The map shows that most of the "old" houses in the village were built at that time and that many buildings shown are not in existence today.

Starting at the west end of the village, the Crossroads, Beechwood Villa (Beechwood House), Beechwood Cottage, Peat's Croft, Joiner's Croft, Daisy Cottage, 2 cottages and a bothy (Rose Cottage and Verona), house, barns and a stable (Smithy Cottage) we arrive at the road junction with all the buildings on the north side of the road with none on the south side. Staying on the Newtyle Road, the next house on the north side is shown as Kettins Cottage (Hillview). On the South side are the old Newhall Cottages, built between 1756 and 1819 AD. Next comes the School Green (The Common) on the north side of which there are two more Newhall Cottages which are shown on the 1756 map. Newhall Mansion is shown, as is the wooded drive to the Newtyle Road.

Returning to the road junction and taking the School Road, at the Church Road is the Church Cottage, but the cottages west of it have gone, only the filled in well remains. Could one of these cottages have been the old Church Cottage? Pass on over the bridge and on the east side is the School (Schoolhouse and Cottage). On the west side the map shows the old market place with the Market Cross and the Old Inn. Round the corner we have Millhaugh Cottages (Millhaugh) and further along is the Old Mill (Millhaugh) with outbuildings etc. This has now disappeared with no trace at all.

Facing the Old Inn is a row of cottages, now Sunnybrae and outhouses. These extend down the School Road to show a path beside Ivy Cottage. At the end of this road on the north side is a Smithy (The Retreat) and on the south side, cottages at the bottom of Hallyburton North Drive no longer in existence. The two cottages on the North Side of the Newtyle Road are still there, as is the cottage on the south side further along. Knollhead Farm replaced the Walker Croft of 1756 AD.

Returning to the School Green (The Common) it is shown that Kettins Bridge and the field well were still as they are today, except that the well has now been concreted over and the pump removed. Still on the subject of water, there is only one

well shown on the 1860 AD map, but we have found that the village was well supplied with water earlier this century. A pump was situated at the junction of the Newtyle/School Roads (west end) in the field and had access through the dyke. This pump is still in working order. A well was still in existence opposite Church Cottage, another pump was sited on the base of the school outer wall. Again this has been closed and the pump removed.

A further item of interest on this map is numbered 146 and states *Pitcur Mortification*, which taken literally means this piece of land was cut off from Pitcur for some reason, possibly as a gift or bequest.

If you refer to the 1926 AD map (Appendix 4, page 14) drawn by one "Jas. Findlay, Arch', of Dundee, it will be seen that the Glebe still had a part on the Trenchfield Road Path. This could have been drawn for the purpose of the sale of the land to Hallyburton Estate, as later maps no longer show it as part of the Glebe.

Let us now come nearer to modern times. It is known that mains supply water was brought to the village at the end of the last century, This water was connected to the Coupar Angus mains water supply at the Crossroads. Some of this water came from Baldinnie Dam which is now filled in and the waterhouse derelict.

All the houses in the village were owned by Hallyburton Estate and it is supposed that each occupier had a tap to their house as they could afford it, but by the late 1950's there were still a few houses with no mains water supply. At the time of writing **all** houses are now connected to the water mains and have access to septic tank drains. The septic tanks in some cases have been replaced by the Bio Disk type of system.

In the early 1950's, electricity came to the village and as with the water each occupier took it on themselves when the supply was brought into their houses. (Many houses are now owned by their occupier, the estate having sold them).

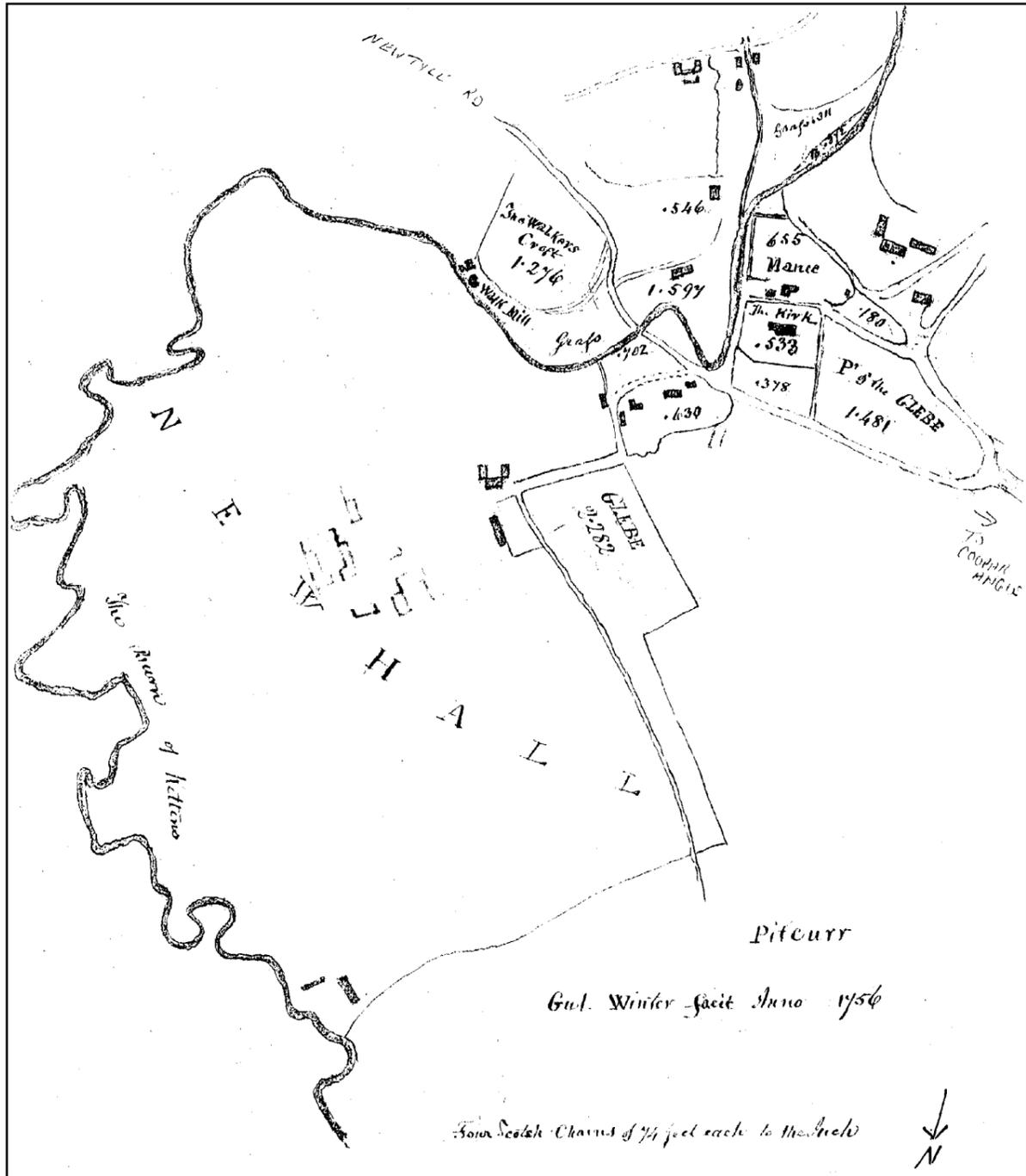
The Parish Committee obtained the first partial installation of street lights, two later schemes were introduced and today the lights extend to the Crossroads.

Let us now consider the housing situation at the end of the 1939 - 45 war. A shortage was felt all over the country and Kettins was no exception. The Angus County Council decided to build temporary houses on the school playing field (151 on the 1860 map). Four "Tarren" houses were built and agricultural workers were allocated these. They were supposed to last 15 - 20 years, but these have now been upgraded to permanent houses. Further houses were eventually built behind these four and the whole area is now a small housing estate.

Some time in the 1970's the whole village was declared to be a "Conservation Area" under local government control in the hope of preventing massive alterations and preserve the face of the village. However over the last few years there have been several houses built. Fortunately these do not detract from the overall look of the village.

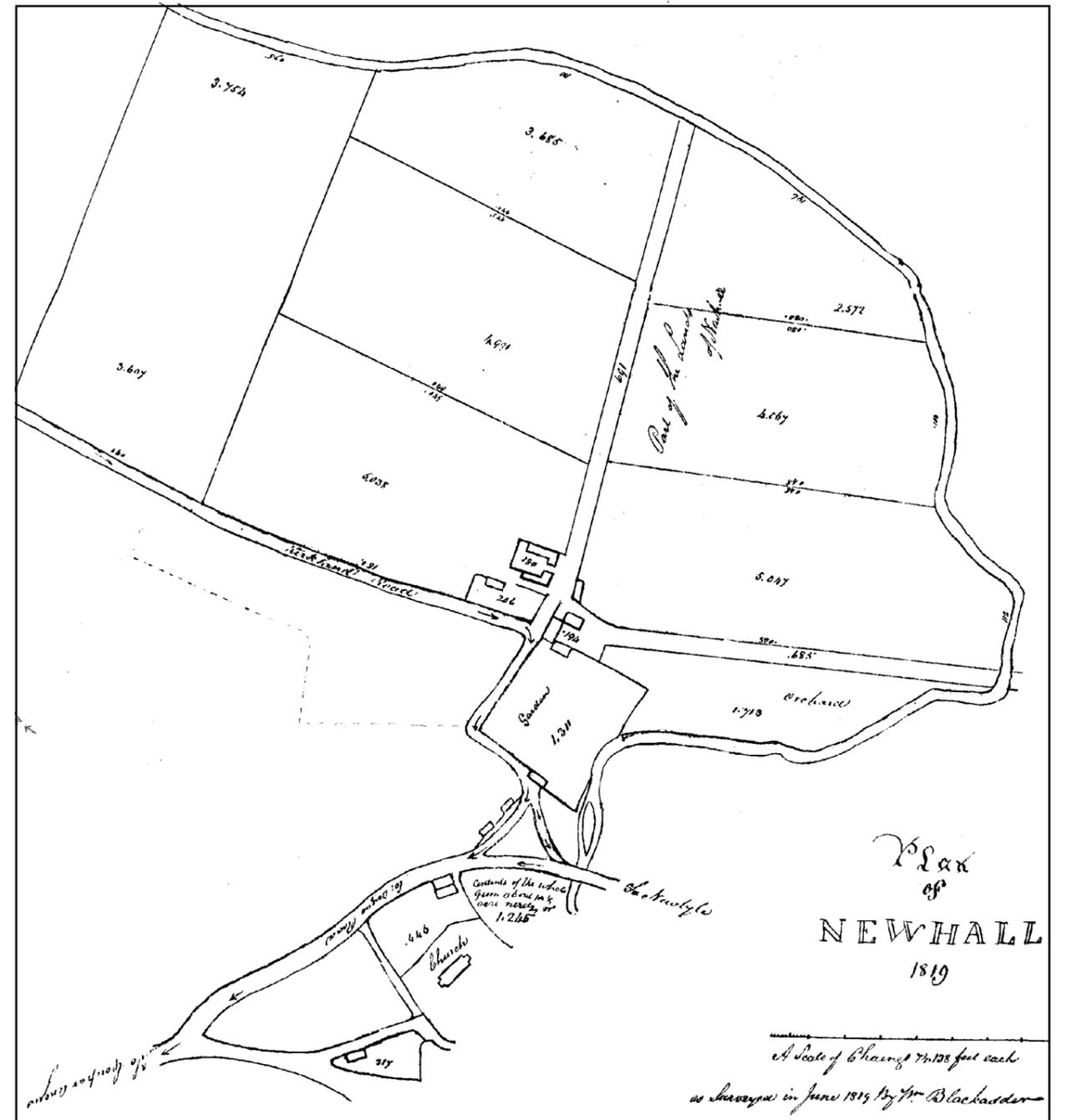
Appendix 1

1756 Sketch Map



Appendix 2

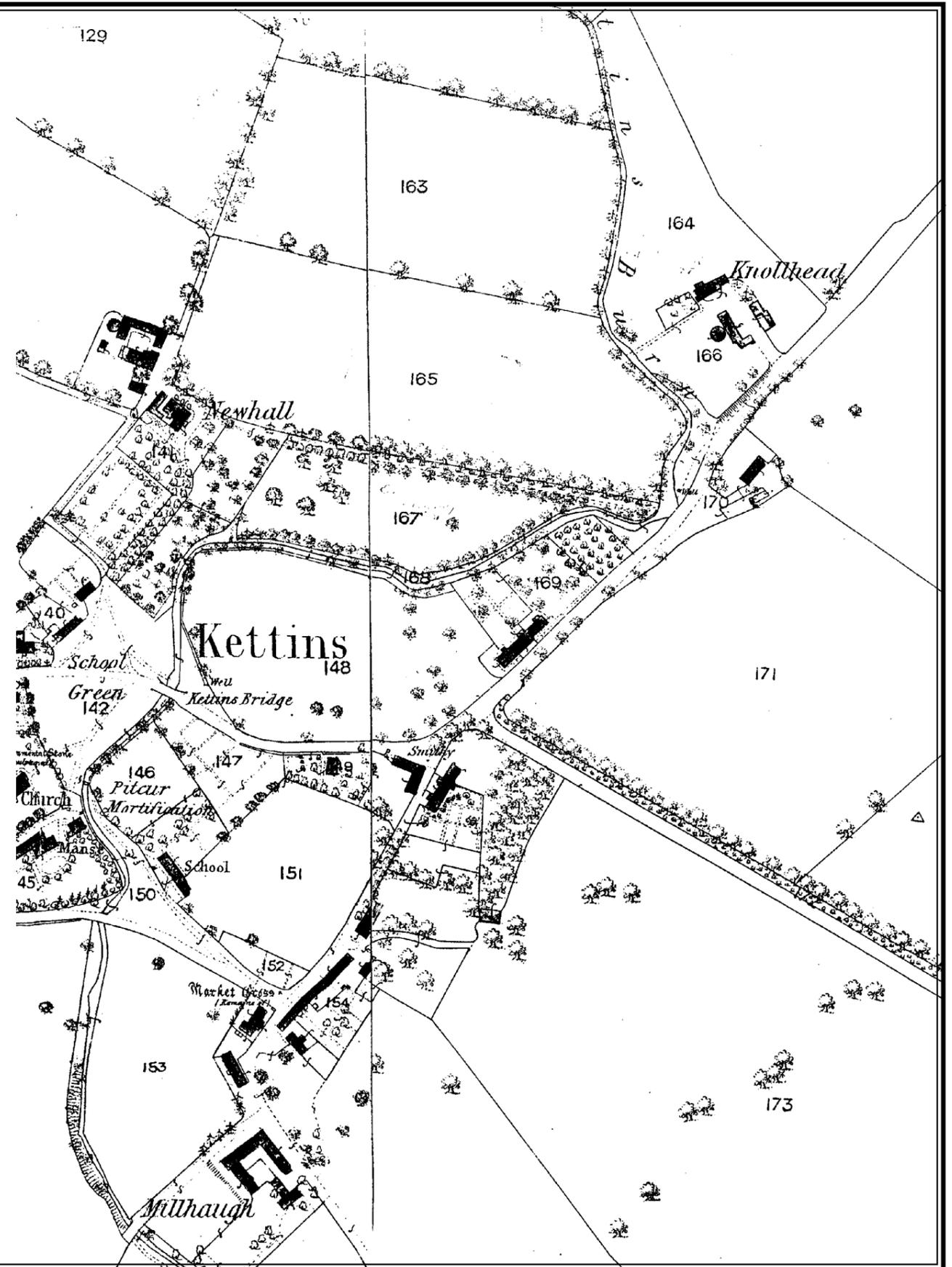
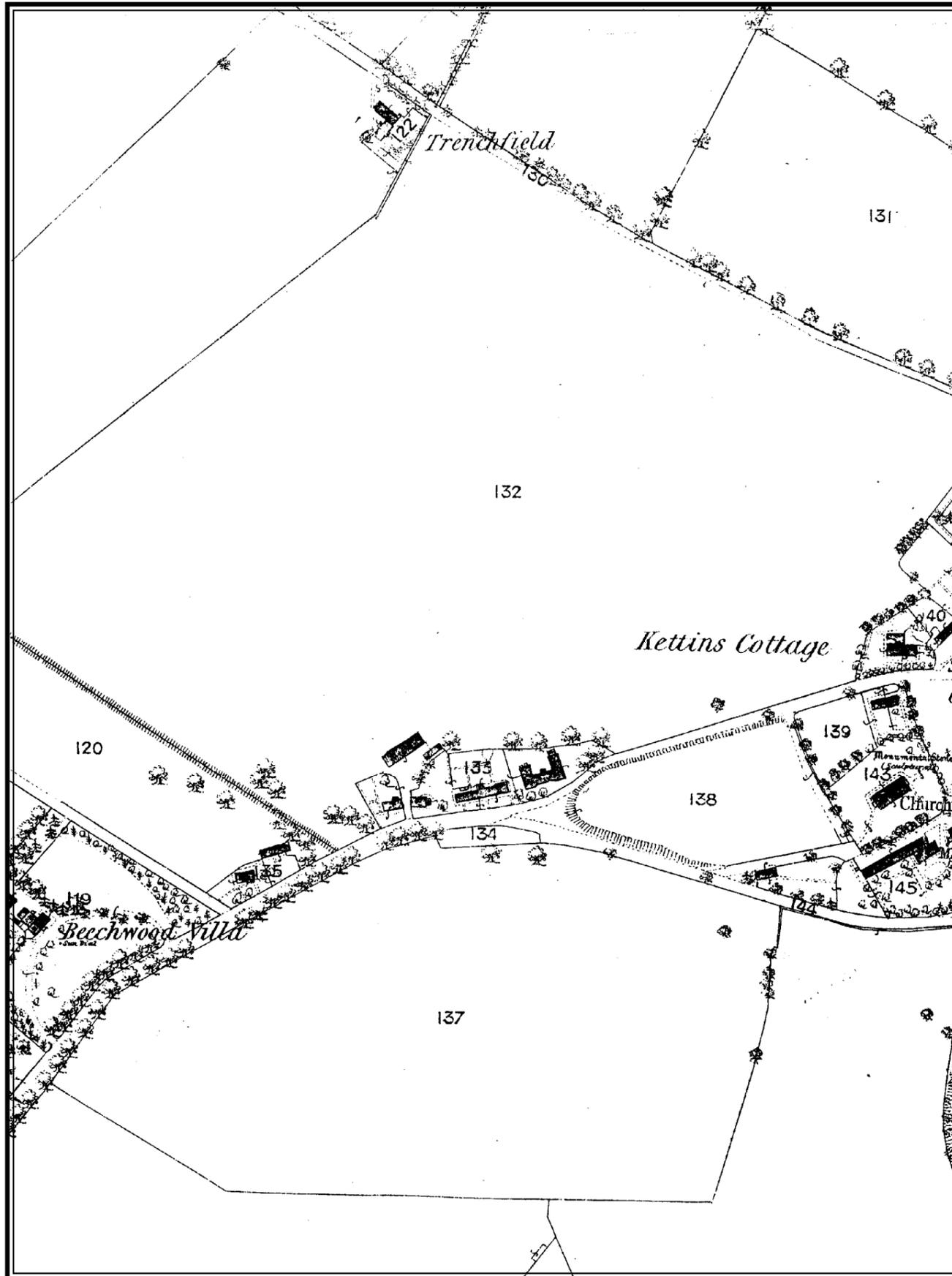
1819 Sketch Map



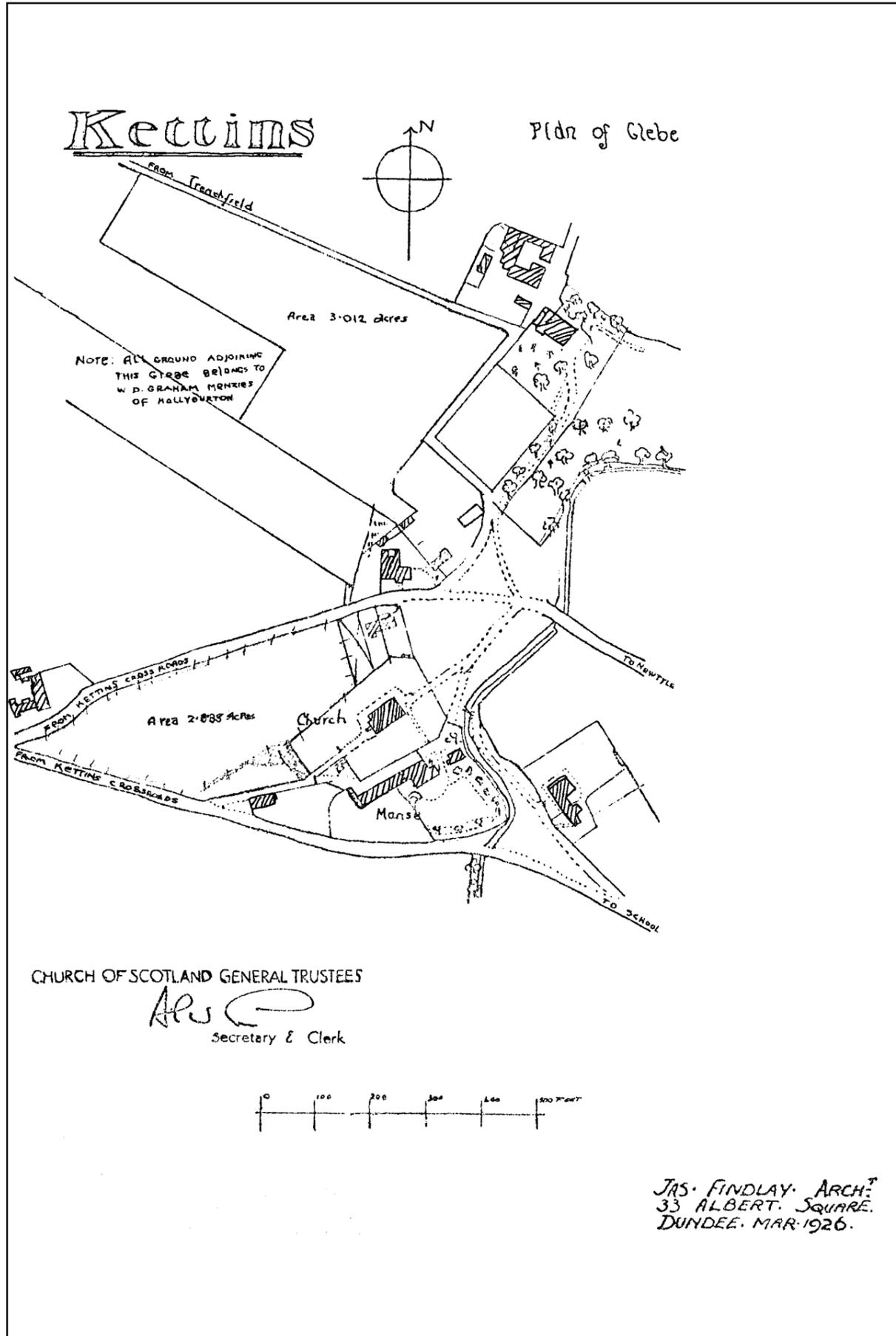
Appendix 3

Ordnance Survey 25" County Series, Parish Edition Forfarshire (Kettins).

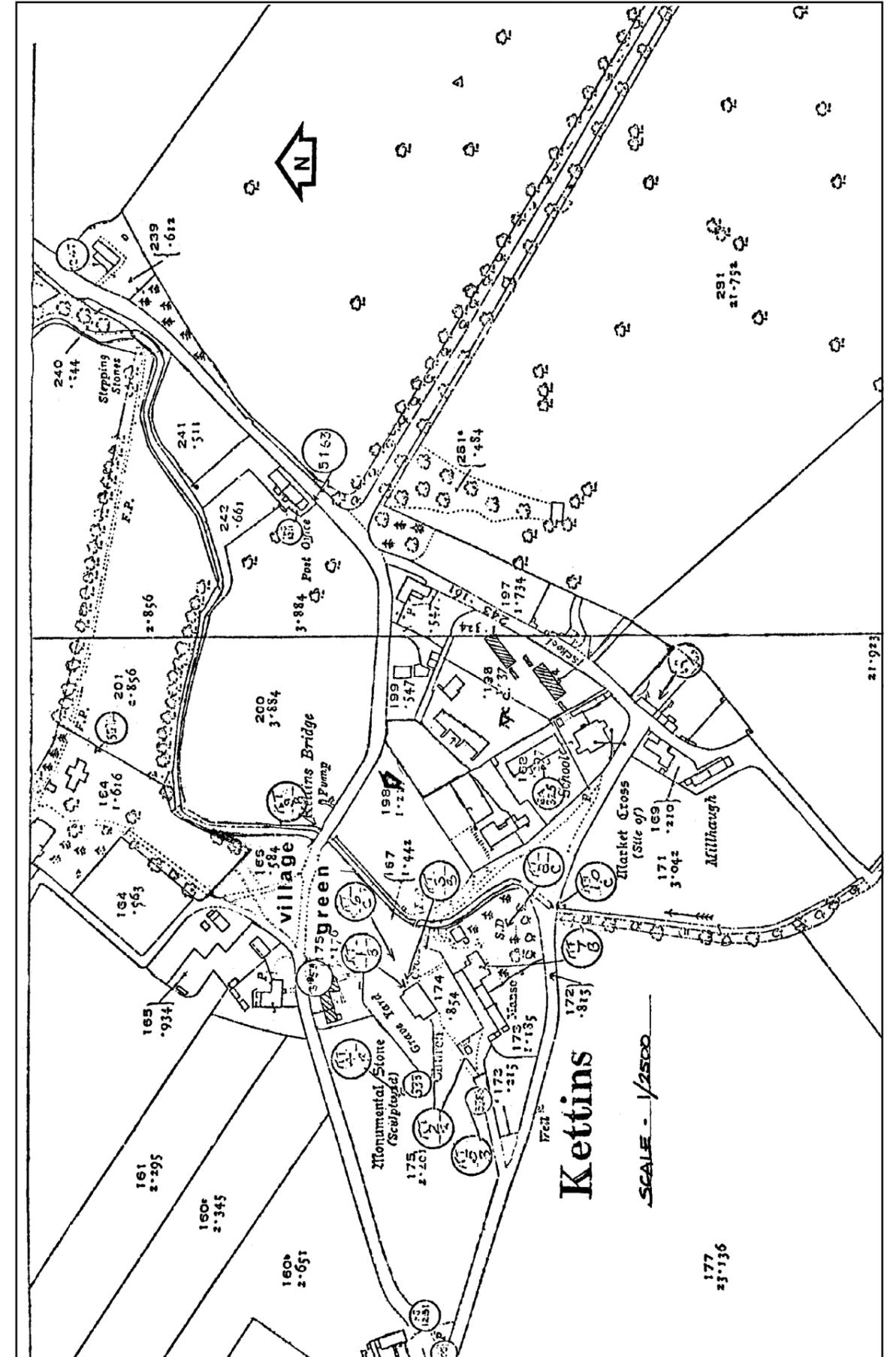
(Reproduced by permission of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland)



1926 Plan of Glebe



Extract from Ordnance Survey Map 1980's



The village welfare is now the concern of the Community Council which was set up by national government decree in the 1970's and the fate of the village of the future is left in their hands.