

## 16. The Cost of Dying

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We all know that the cost of a funeral is increasing, but how expensive was it over two centuries ago?

The lists of Funeral Charges for Edinburgh St Cuthbert's [the West Kirk] were well-publicised back in 1788, and it was also shown just what everyone received as their share of the fees. The Recorder [the Session Clerk], the Grave Digger and the Beadle all got a fee, and a proportion also went to the Poor's Fund. Of course, the Pauper's Burials are not included in this table, and generally the Parish paid a total of between 8d and 1/0d for each poor's burial.

How comparable this is with other parts of Scotland is not clear, as very few of these lists have survived.

#### Funeral Charges in 1788 Parish of St Cuthbert's Edinburgh

|  | Recorder | Grave<br>Digger | Beaddle | Poor | Total |
|--|----------|-----------------|---------|------|-------|
| Full spokes, turff & train                       | 1/0d     | 7d              | 1/3d    | 8d   | 3/6d  |
| Full spokes & turf, no train                     | 8d       | 7d              | 1/3d    | 8d   | 3/2d  |
| Full spokes without turf or train                | 4d       | 7d              | 1/3d    | 7d   | 2/9d  |
| Half spokes, turf & train                        | 1/0d     | 5d              | 11d     | 6d   | 2/10d |
| Half spokes & turf, no train                     | 8d       | 5d              | 11d     | 6d   | 2/6d  |
| Half spokes without turf or train                | 4d       | 5d              | 11d     | 6d   | 2/2d  |
| A child's corps in arms with a turf              | 6d       | 5d              | 7d      | 6d   | 2/0d  |
| A child's corps in arms, no turf                 | 3d       | 5d              | 7d      | 6d   | 1/9d  |
| A large turf                                     | 3/6d     | 2d              | 1/0d    | 2/0d | 6/8d  |
| A small turf                                     | 1/9d     | 1d              | 6d      | 1/0d | 3/4d  |
| A Hearse Burial                                  |          |                 |         |      | 2/6d  |
| A Coach Burial                                   |          |                 |         |      | 6d    |
| To the Sexton for all Children's Burials in arms |          |                 |         |      | 8d    |

"The Session appoints the Clerk to extract a copy of the above table and deliver it to Mr George Innes in order to have it painted in oil paint on two boards, one to be fixed up at the West Church [St Cuthbert's] and the other at the Chapel of Ease for the inspection of all concerned".

National Records of Scotland CH2/718/24/255