

CHAPTER EIGHT

IN MEMORIAM

It is appropriate to near the end of this short history of Kintore Kirk and Parish with a short chapter on those who have ended their lives in the Burgh or who are buried in the Churchyard.

Some of the oldest stones in the Churchyard, dating from the 17th and early 18th centuries are virtually impossible to read because of their weathered condition. Fortunately, in “**Epitaphs and Inscriptions**” published in 1907 by **John A. Henderson**, we find interesting information about some of the more notable graves and their inhabitants.

One of the families he highlights is the **Farquhar** family, several of whom were Baillies of the burgh. Alexander Farquhar (1725-1807) enjoyed a long fruitful life. He was married to Elizabeth Harvey (1724-1807) for 52 years. Sadly, however their three sons died before them, one in **Antigua** of fever, one in military action in **Grenada**, and one from consumption (tuberculosis). The Harvey and Farquhar families were generous benefactors of the church, and it is largely due to them that the current building was constructed. It is also likely that a great deal of their wealth came from slave plantations. Baillie Farquhar’s son-in-law, **Alexander Ross**, has a reasonably legible tombstone just inside the Churchyard gate. He was parish Schoolmaster for 41 years and died on 17th August, 1824 aged 83 years. Only two of his seven children outlived him, John (died 1837 aged 54) and Mary (died 1861 aged 65). It was she who left a legacy for the education of poor burgh children, (See Chapter Six). Two of his sons, Alexander and Robert died in Grenada. His wife, Elizabeth, died in 1845 aged 88 years.

One of the oldest stones mentioned by John Henderson is that of **Robert Lessel of Leylodge** who has already been mentioned as having the wealthiest farm in the parish on the 1696 list of Poleable persons. There are several gravestones to the **Fraser** family who were magistrates and provosts of the Burgh. One of them is mentioned in Chapter Five as being at the ceremonial opening of the iron bridge.

A simple granite obelisk marks the grave of **Reverend Robert Simpson**, contributor to the New Statistical Account. Despite being Free Church Minister, he is buried in the parish graveyard.

Another former minister interred in the Churchyard is the **Reverend William Ross** “for thirty years minister of this parish “ who died in 1873. There is also a plaque to Mr Ross inside the Church, on the North wall.

One very poignant epitaph in the Graveyard reads as follows.

“In Memory of
James Annand Paterson
Who Died 12 of October 1852
Aged 2 Years and 4 Months
This Lovely Bud so Young and Fair

Called Hence by Early Doom
Just Came to Shew how Sweet a Flower
In Paradise would Bloom”.

One of the very few legible ancient stones reads like this.

“Here lyes John Fowler
Sometime Farmer in Overmill of Kintore
who departed life
Novb 17 1748
Aged 58 As

Also six of his children
Viz Margrat, Jean,
Marj-ory, Christian,
Elizabeth and Janet Fowlers.”

This tombstone has at the top the **ancient symbols** traditionally associated with death – **the angel, the scythe, the serpent, the skull and the hourglass**. These can be seen on many of the gravestones, even those that have lost their lettering.

Another tragic family was that of **Arthur Clark** who died in 1822 aged 52 years. All his offspring died before they reached 30 and two of them, Elizabeth and Arthur died at seven and two respectively. Lack of vaccinations and antibiotics meant that even in a relatively healthy rural parish, infant and child mortality were harsh facts of life.

The Kirkyard also bears witness to the number of Kintore folk who emigrated to far-flung corners of the world.

“Erected
by
JOHN DUTHIE Iron Merchant
Wanganui New Zealand
In Memory of his Father
JOHN DUTHIE
Blacksmith Kintore
Who Died 6th March 1872
Aged 69 Years”

Several important local farmers are buried in the Churchyard, including the **Hendersons** of **Townhead** and the **Morrison**s of **Hallforest Castle Farm**. The latter were church elders for many years and one of the **stained glass windows** in the Church (north wall) was dedicated to their memory in 1957. The window on the opposite south wall, dating from 1964, is in memory of **Reverend J.G. Dawson Scott** of Hawthorne House, notable local historian, and his brother **William Dawson Scott**, a celebrated artist. Both had been active Ministers, the former at Edinburgh College, Foveran, Cowdenbeath, Dundee and Glasgow Cowcaddens, the latter mainly in Banffshire. The first stained glass window to be installed, the east window over the chancel (1956), is dedicated to the memory of **Isabel Barrack** of **Cairnhall**. The

Barracks were also notable members of the Church and elders of the Session. Mrs Barrack had served God faithfully as a member of the congregation and the Guild.

We still have copies of the original plans of the east window, sent to **Reverend McFadden** and his Session Clerk, **Charles Pirie** in 1954 by **A. Marshall Mackenzie & Son, Architects**.

“we now enclose a sketch plan showing the East Window divided into three lights with tracery carried out in wood to match that in the existing side windows. We estimate the approximate cost of this work, including scaffolding and taking out of existing window at say £100.

*As to the stained glass we would recommend that this be entrusted to **Mr William Wilson, R.S.A.** who is one of the foremost stained glass artists in the country, and recently carried out the East Window at St. Machar Cathedral. His charge for designing, carrying out the stained glass work and fixing complete would probably amount to about £900 - £1000.”*

Letter from 3 Bon-accord Square, dated 11th March, 1954.

Mr Wilson did indeed carry out the work of the window which has as its centrepiece Christ on the Cross.

The **Browns of Cottown** and **Ivybank** were also stalwarts of Church and Session and have a fine granite memorial in the Churchyard. One of their sons died in infancy but a daughter, Edna May, emigrated to Toronto where she died in 1951.

Provost Smith, builder of Smithfield, also lies in the Churchyard, along with his wife, Agnes Rough, her parents, and two of his daughters. He was Provost for eleven years and lived at **Lilybank**.

Underneath the wall of the 1984 Church Hall, lies the private burial ground of the **Forbes Mitchells, Lairds of Thainstone**. Sadly it is now in a state of considerable disrepair, but the memorial plaques are still relatively readable.

There are a number of **war graves** in the Kirkyard, as well as the impressive War Memorial Arch at the entrance to the Church. The fallen of World War One face the street and those of World War Two face the church itself. Individual graves include that of **Private A Fletcher of the Gordon Highlanders**, Kintore's local Regiment who died on 27th February 1915. We are not told where. Forty-three Gordon Highlanders are commemorated on Kintore's WWI Memorial, but there are also men from the Canadian, Australian, New Zealand and South African Forces, more evidence of the parish's strong links with the Empire. The family stone of the **Robertsons of Yewbank, Port Elphinstone** also commemorates their son, **John**, who was killed in action in June 1916 aged 25 years and buried in Hooze War Cemetery, Belgium.

So Kintore's Kirkyard is filled with the graves of many hardworking, worthy and honourable citizens. One less than honourable Kintore citizen who fell foul of Church and community was not allowed to rest in any graveyard. She was the notorious **Isobell Cockie**, Kintore's only recorded witch. She was accused of destroying sheep in the burgh by putting spells on them and was said to meet with her associates at

Castle Hill and by the **Lochburn**. She was also accused of conjuring up the Devil himself, turning milk sour and putting vicious spells on natives of the Burgh. She was said to have put a spell on a man called **Thomas Small** so that he went into

“ane extraordinair and maist vehement furie, madness, rage and wodness, quhar he ley bund hand and futt tenn dayis----- then ane half day rosin and brunt as in fornace, with ane terrible drowth, that nae drink mycht slokin him”

Alexander Watt “The early History of Kintore”, quoted from Records of the Burgh Magistrate, 1596.

She was also accused of making the schoolmaster’s horse drop dead beneath him and bewitching one of her neighbour’s cows so that it gave water and blood instead of milk.

From the more enlightened viewpoint of the 21st century it is easy to feel sorry for Isobell Cockie. She was probably just an odd or eccentric woman who did not get on with the locals or had had done something to offend her neighbours. In the late 16th century, however, when everyone genuinely feared the work of the Devil and few had any education, it was easy to be superstitious and blame any unexplained disaster on witchcraft. Isobell Cockie was taken to Aberdeen and **burnt at the stake** in **1596**. That was the punishment given to all convicted witches. So although she had lived next to the churchyard near Castle Hill, Isobell Cockie was not allowed the eternal peace of burial there.

Kintore’s Kirkyard has long been full and the cemetery is now about half a mile out of the village, near Cairnhall.