

CHAPTER SEVEN

FROM AMALGAMATION TO WAR

The newly amalgamated Church entered the 1930s in hopeful mood, under the leadership of the Reverend Frank Robertson and Session Clerk James Coutts. The Session continued to meet at regular two monthly intervals, and concentrated on matters such as elders' duties, communicants new and transferred, services and choir matters. In 1932 members of the congregation still sat in allocated "sittings" and the Session had a number of detailed deliberations as to how to end the congestion that was beginning to occur in the most popular pews. It seems to have been a highly contentious issue with pride and position at stake.

In April of the same year the Session was sad to hear of the death of **Reverend Barr of Kinellar** who had acted as Interim Moderator in Kintore on many occasions.

In 1933 there were sixteen elders and the Clerk and in October of that year no fewer than 21 Young Communicants. These came from farms and from within the burgh itself. One even came from as far afield as Aberdeen. More typical in size was the Young Communicants class of April the following year which consisted of

"Margaret Helen Benzie, Ivy Cottage

William Allan, Wardes

James Duncan Johnston, Leylodge

George Francis Ross, Wellneuk

Alfred Nicol Smith, Ratchhill

William Robert Souter, Heathbank"

Kintore Session Records, 25 April 1934.

Three of these came from homes in the burgh and three from outlying farms.

In 1936 the Church held a memorial service for the late **King George V**, and this is virtually the only reference to the national stage in the Session Records of the 1930s.

On 23 August 1937, the Session members were shocked to hear of the sudden death of their Clerk, Mr Coutts, on the previous day. Tribute was paid to his great contribution to church life. He had come to Kintore from Echt to be Clerk to the Parish Council and Inspector of Poor. He had also been Church Treasurer for a while. His place was to be taken by **Mr Charles Pirie**, who was to combine the role with that of Treasurer. The Kirk also lost another elder that month, **Mr John Geddes**.

In 1939 the Session does not appear to have met between April and October and so there is no actual reference to the outbreak of World War Two. Parish life seemed to continue much as before. The first mention of war comes in December 1939.

"The session agreed to the arrangements made by the Woman's Guild whereby gifts were to be sent to the men of the congregation and parish serving with the Forces."

Kintore Session Records, 18 December 1939.

It was decided to invest some of the Church Funds in Defence Bonds to help the war effort and

“It was also agreed that the ordinary evening services be held only when there was a full moon on account of black-out difficulties.”

Kintore Session Records, 18 December 1939.

A year later the Minister intimated that

“He would like to hold a special communion service for the benefit of the soldiers.”

Kintore Session Records, 16 December 1940.

Other aspects of parish life such as admission of Young Communicants and Choir Practice continued without interruption.

In April 1942 Reverend Robertson was taken ill and it was agreed that other ministers would come to take services in Kintore provided they were held in the afternoon. The question of paying for pulpit supply, i.e. relief ministers, became quite controversial with several parishioners objecting to it, and they also objected to paying for a “hire” (of a taxi?) when the Interim Moderator attended Kintore. But **Interim Moderator Reverend Johnston** said that

“he was only allowed eight gallons of petrol for three months and he regretted he could not improve matters. If the Session could think of a member of Presbytery better placed for petrol than he was he would be most happy to stand down.”

Kintore Session Records, 20 July 1942.

So rationing was affecting even God’s work by this stage of the war! The Session assured Mr Johnston that they appreciated his difficult position and that they did not want to lose his services because they were very much appreciated. In October of the same year Mr Robertson announced his wish to retire and applied for an annuity from the Aged and Infirm Ministers’ Fund. The issue of pulpit supply therefore resolved itself.

The electoral register for the appointment of a new minister numbered 793, the vacancy committee numbered 19 and agreed to use secret ballot for the selection of the successful candidate. In May 1943 **Reverend Roderick Boyd** presided over his first Session meeting as Moderator.

The end of the war was not reported in the Session Records, although we know from local residents that Reverend Boyd preached a very fine sermon to celebrate the historic occasion. In October 1945 the Session was preoccupied by the question of whether women should be allowed to become elders.

“Mr John Rennie proposed and Mr J R Craig seconded that they be not admitted. Former Head Teacher Mr Taylor proposed and Mr Wm Robertson seconded that they be admitted. On a vote being taken 13 voted for Mr Rennie’s motion and 2 for Mr Taylor’s.”

Kintore Session Records, 8 October 1945.

Women had to wait 35 years for representation on Kintore Church session.

In April 1946 it was agreed that a plaque be erected in the Church Hall to commemorate the role the **Ladies' Canteen Committee** had played in serving the troops during the war years. The hall had been requisitioned as a canteen for the Forces. The plaque was for many years on the wall in the corridor outside the Hall kitchen.

In the same month the Kirk lost the services of yet another organist when **Miss McCombie** resigned following a rather contentious interview with Reverend Boyd, the contents of which are regrettably not recorded in the minutes! So once again an advertisement had to be placed for the post of organist. The post was to be taken up by **Mr Alfred Cowie** who became the longest serving organist in Kintore's history, filling the post until 1980. And that in spite of problems with the organ which had to be stripped and cleaned in 1947!

Mr Boyd was soon himself to leave Kintore.

“Reverend Johnston, Keithhall, conducted the service in the Church today and read the Presbytery Edict announcing the call from College Church, Edinburgh to the Reverend R.M. Boyd.”

Kintore Session Records, 22 June 1947.

Mr Boyd was replaced by the **Reverend John McFadden** early in 1948 after a vote of 228 for and two against, a somewhat low turn-out. This election was after the original nominee, Reverend G.P Robertson had declined the charge. Despite the uncertain start, things worked out well for Kintore. Reverend McFadden proved to be a long serving and effective minister, steering the parish through some interesting times, and along the way writing the **Third Statistical Account** of Kintore which has proved a very valuable historical source.

Around the same time the **Glebe** was decommissioned by the Army, whose leaders had to pay considerable compensation (£484) for damage inflicted by parading troops.

In September 1948 a Mrs Dundas presented a **baptismal font** to the Kirk in memory of her late husband John. It was engraved by Messrs Ogilvie of Aberdeen. In the same month Session discussed a proposal to set up a Boy Scout Troop and Wolf Cub Pack in the village and Mr Craig, Fabric Convener, was asked to carry out the erection of a Church Notice Board. The notice board was followed by a **Praise Board** beside the organ in 1954.

In the following year the Session recorded the news that former minister of Kintore, the **Reverend John Maclagan** (he who had served his country in World War One) had been awarded the degree of **Doctor of Divinity** from **Edinburgh University**. The Clerk was instructed to write to him with congratulations.

In February 1950 the Kirk Treasurer, **Mr Davidson**, presented a **Pulpit Bible and Psalter** to the Church in memory of his late mother. The gift was accepted with gratitude as a fitting memorial for one who had greatly loved the Church. At the same

meeting, Reverend McFadden announced that he and his wife would like to donate a pulpit fall to mark two happy years in Kintore.

The Session also had to deal with the more basic and prosaic issues of life. In July 1950 they formed a special sub-committee to decide whether the Town Council should be granted the power to build a **public toilet** on ground adjoining the manse garden. After a month's deliberations and a viewing of the plans the committee led by Mr J Craig recommended that permission be granted by the Church Trustees. The toilet was a feature on Northern Road for many years until it became rather dilapidated and was replaced by an automatic "loo". That too has been recently removed, and Kintore is now completely lacking in public convenience!

The Session made a further rare reference to national affairs in February 1952 when it paid tribute to the recently deceased **King George VI**, noting

"his inspiring leadership of the nation during the dark years of war, his courage in years of illness, his shining example in family life and his loyalty to and love for the Church of Scotland"

Kintore Session Records, 10 February 1952.

The death of George VI ushered the country and Kintore parish into the modern Elizabethan age.