

**A SHORT HISTORY
OF ST ANDREW'S SCOTTISH
EPISCOPAL CHURCH ALFORD**



JANUARY 2000

Price £1

WHAT IS THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH?

It is called "Scottish" because we trace our history back to the earliest known Christian communities in Scotland about 400AD.

It is called "Episcopal", which is a word meaning "bishop", because we have maintained to the present day the form of church order of bishops, priests and deacons which was used from the 400's until the late 1600's.

Thereafter the reformed Church broke in two. We are still separate from our sister church, The Church of Scotland although we are happily on friendly terms.

We are a Province of the world wide Anglican Communion, as are the Church of England, the Church of Ireland and the Church of Wales. However we do not have archbishops but instead one of our bishops is chosen as the Primus (first among equals).

We greatly value our heritage and seek to play our full part in the life of Christian witness in Scotland in Mission and Service to the Nation and to our local communities.

THE BUILDING OF ST ANDREW'S

According to the recent Schedule of Buildings compiled by the Scottish Episcopal Church, St Andrew's is as follows:-

"Granite Gothic style Church with square tower, topped with a spire which was added in 1930. It occupies a corner site together with a 1 ½ storey detached Rectory, now sold. Some work has been recently carried out to provide additional communal facilities. This extension has been sympathetically designed to match the existing."

THE HISTORY OF ST ANDREW'S FROM THE MINUTES BOOKS

The minutes books are two bound volumes of hand-written accounts of meetings held in the vestry of the Church from its earliest days. Some of the handwriting is quite difficult to read. The vestry is a small room at the side of the main church where the rector changes into his "vestments" and where the governing body of the church meets to discuss the running of the church.

The proposal to construct the present building was first made in January 1868 when an advertisement invited interested people to a meeting in the Station Hotel, Alford. Among those present were the Master of Forbes, Robert O Farquharson Esq of Haughton (Mr Farquharson, the Superior of Alford, gifted an acre of ground in the west end of the village), Henry Noltie of Gallowhill and Dr William Gaiden of Alford. The Master of Forbes was in the chair. They considered plans drawn up by Mr Matthews, Architect, of Aberdeen. A Building Committee of three of those present was formed as follows: Mr Farquharson (convenor and Treasurer), The Master of Forbes and Henry Noltie (Secretary). At the first meeting of this committee, tenders for the work were examined, coming to a total of £747-7s-6d. Subscriptions totalled £720, and so the Master of Forbes and Mr Farquharson agreed to guarantee a further subscription of £100, and the work was approved to be carried out by J & C Henry of Alford "without delay".

By 18th April 1868 they were ready to ask The Right Rev the Bishop of Aberdeen to attend the ceremony of laying the foundation stone, the subscribers all to be invited. The Master of Forbes was asked to lay the stone.

By June 1869 plans for the consecration of the church were being discussed. On 13th November 1869, the final accounts

were reviewed and the total cost was £1,162-4s-10d. This sum included the furnishings and communion plate etc. The cost was £10 more than subscriptions received, and Mr Farquharson made an additional contribution to make up the difference. Only the essentials were provided at this time. The tower, stained glass windows and other items were contributed later.

The first Rector was the Rev James Wiseman appointed in 1871 at a salary of £120. The Right Hon Lord Forbes guaranteed £21, Sir William Forbes, £10, Robert Farquharson Esq, £21 and James Forbes Leith Esq of Whitehaugh, £10. This was to make sure that Mr Wiseman got his salary. Other income was obtained by charging seat rents and from the offertory during services. It was decided to start a fund to build a parsonage. The cost was thought to be between £600 and £700. The fund started with subscriptions amounting to £110.

The vestry met twice a year with The Rev Wiseman in the chair and Mr Noltie as treasurer. Other Vestry members included Robert Farquharson of Haughton and The Right Hon the Lord Forbes. They discussed the building of the parsonage and the fact that the books would not balance. The original guarantors were asked if they would pay the short fall. They usually did agree and they were called on to pay up about every six months for quite a few years.

The church needed maintenance as early as 1872. Rain was coming in.

The Rev Wiseman resigned in 1874. He was followed by Mr Barnes, then Mr Edwards, then Mr Adkyn which takes us to 1881.

The parsonage was built in October 1877 and finally paid up in 1883.

After this uncertain start St Andrew's was fortunate to have as Rector The Rev James Petrie who stayed for 38 years from 1882 to 1919. He was followed by his son William who was Rector until his death in 1945. Finances became more secure and the guarantors were no longer called upon to balance the books. One additional source of income came from the Guild of St Margaret, a women's group in the church. Their annual sale of work raised money of the order of £200 at a time when the whole of the Rector's stipend amounted to £200. It must have been a great satisfaction to them to be able to contribute such a useful sum at a time when few women were earning a wage and donations to the church came from their husbands. The money was carefully allocated by the vestry, about £20 being returned to the Guild for materials for the next sale.

In May 1890 Robert Francis Ogilvie Farquharson Esq of Haughton died, to the great sadness of St Andrew's. The Brass plaque under the rose window at the west end was erected in 1891 in his memory by his widow. Mrs Farquharson left £5 invested in Consols when she died, to pay for the cleaning of the brass. It is unfortunate that it has become spoilt by rain water seeping in from the rose window above. The window has since been repaired but not all our efforts with much rubbing, brasso and wood ash can restore the plaque.

It was unanimously agreed that the following minute be engrossed in the minute book & that the Secretary send copies to Robert & Misses Farquharson of Haughton.

At a special meeting of the Vestry of St. Andrew's Church held on Friday 18th May 1890, it was resolved that the Vestry of St. Andrew's Church should desire to record their deep regret for the death of Robert Francis Sydney Farquharson Esq. of Haughton to express their grateful recognition of all that St. Andrew's Congregation owes to him, as the founder of their church, on its generous support for twenty years, and also to express their sincere sympathy & condolence with his widow & family in their bereavement.

James Petrie.

Correspondence between the Vestry and the Farquharsons.

The following letter was read to the Vestry & ordered to be engrossed in the minute book. Bournemouth May 28th 1890 Dear Sir, on behalf of myself & my sisters, I write to thank you for your letter from the Vestry of St. Andrew's Church & for their sympathy with us in our bereavement & expressing their appreciation of what our Father did for St. Andrew's Church & of the deep interest he took in all that concerned it & their regret at the loss sustained, will you ask them to accept the assurance of our sincere thanks & gratitude for their kind sympathy & their expressions of appreciation, I am yours very truly
Mrs. C. Farquharson.

The Abbey Hotel, Great Malvern July 28th Mrs. Farquharson of Haughton wishes to offer her best thanks to the members of the Vestry of St. Andrew's Church who have through Mrs. Alexander so kindly sent her a copy of their minute recording their appreciation of the life of Mr. Farquharson & of their sincere condolence with her in her bereavement. It is very gratifying to her widow to realize how much her husband was appreciated by the members of St. Andrew's Church, knowing so fully as she does how very dear the little Church and its welfare was to him.

Transcription of extract of Minute Book reproduced opposite:-

It was unanimously agreed that the following minute be engrossed in the minute book & that the secretary send copies to Mrs & the Misses Farquharson of Haughton.

At a special meeting of the Vestry of St Andrews Church Alford held on Friday 16th May 1890, it was resolved that the Vestry of St Andrews Church Alford, desire to record their deep regret for the death of Robert Francis Ogilvie Farquharson Esqr. of Haughton to mark their grateful recognition of all that St Andrews Congregation owes to him, as the founder of their church, and its generous supporter for twenty one years, and also to express their sincere sympathy & condolence with his widow and family in their bereavement.

James Petrie

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The Abbey Hotel, Great Malvern July 28th Mrs Farquharson of Haughton desires to offer her best thanks to the members of the Vestry of St Andrews Church who have through Mr Alexander so kindly sent her a copy of their minute recording their appreciation of the late Mr Farquharson & of their sincere condolence with her in her bereavement. It is very gratifying to his widow to realise how fully her husband was appreciated by the members of St Andrews Church, knowing so truly as she does how very dear the little Church and its welfare was to him.

In 1895 Mr Moir Byres of Tonley offered to give a stained glass window for the central light of the east end window. The vestry accepted the offer and expressed their warmest thanks.

In 1899 Mr Moir Byres asked permission to place two windows in the chancel, the one of St Peter and other of St Andrew. Miss Maria Ogilvie Farquharson (daughter of the late Robert Farquharson of Haughton) asked to be allowed to place a window of St Margaret in the chancel. She also gave windows in the nave on the organ side of the Virgin and Child and of St Joseph, in memory of her great aunt and in 1902 she gave the windows on the other side of the nave of "The Annunciation" dedicated "To The Glory of God".

In 1900 Mr Alexander Alexander the chemist in Alford gave a window in the vestry, the design of which is "Christ Bearing the Cross". This window is dedicated to The Rev Patrick Laing. We learn from an article on *Notable Scottish Churches in The Scottish Churchman* that he was priest of an Episcopal "Chapel" at Bandlely which is near Alford, Keig and Tough after 1715 at which time Alford Parish Church ceased to be Episcopal. There is mention of him in 1734 baptising the infant son of Patrick Byres of Tonley, "My Lord Forbes Godfather".

Mr Alexander also presented the "Altar desk" in memory of Mr Jaffray, the last Episcopal Alford Parish minister.

Miss Farquharson of Haughton died in 1908 leaving £300 to the church. George Moir Byres Esq of Tonley died in January 1909. The two side lights of the east window were installed in his memory.

In 1912 it was pointed out that the present harmonium was "quite done". This instrument was apparently provided as a necessity from the beginning. It was suggested that a proper organ be installed. (In the Minute for August 1979 it is reported

that the Vestry wished to sell a harmonium. Could this be the same one? It could not be sold and it was suggested that the case be made into a bookcase.)

In March 1913 the Vestry was asked to consider a new organ from E H Lawton, Pittodrie Organ Works, complete with an engine for blowing the necessary air by water power. The cost to be £215. This was authorised. Alford Special Water District agreed the use of public water for the blowing of the organ at a rent of 15/- per annum. There was at this time no electricity in Alford and the alternative to waterpower was someone, probably a small boy, to pump the air. The water-engine was located under the floor and the whole system caused endless trouble and expense to the church until it was finally taken out.

In 1922 Mrs Alexander gave the sanctuary lamp in memory of her husband. This is the lamp with red glass over the altar. At this time it would lit by a candle as there was no electricity in Alford.

In 1930 John Milne of Kingsford erected the porch and the spire in memory of his parents and brother. The Church had wished to have a porch for some time and the fund at this time stood at £150. This was made up to the necessary £500 by Mr Milne for the porch and spire as we know it. The clock and the bell were donated anonymously. The church with spire was now insured for £2400.

In 1932 Mr George Alexander, the chemist in Aboyne, donated the brass lectern in memory of his parents. His father was Alexander Alexander the chemist in Alford who had been a staunch member of St Andrew's and on the Vestry. He was Secretary and Treasurer from 1878 till 1891. The eagle is now at the back of the church as it has been superseded by a low

reading desk carrying a modern translation of the Bible. However the eagle is still much admired. It takes two people about two hours to clean it.

In 1937 The Grampian Electric Supply Company brought electricity to Alford.

In 1938 the Church was wired for electricity including power for the organ. You might think that now the problems with the organ would be at an end. However this was not the case. Damp in the church continued to be a problem to the organ. It was horribly cold and damp in the church during the winter months!

In 1946 the carved oak altar table was erected in memory of Canon William Petrie. He left money for a reredos to be erected in memory of his mother, the wife of The Rev James Petrie. This was finally installed but there was not enough money to insert tapestry and there were only curtains. Perhaps one day some people in church will do the necessary embroidery.

The Rev D O Noble was Rector from 1945 till 1950.

The Rev Chaplin from 1951 till 1957.

In 1954 Lord Forbes died. He had been secretary for 33 years. The new secretary was his son the new Lord Forbes.

In December 1954 the spire was hit by lightning and was damaged. The organ situated immediately below the spire was damaged by falling dust and debris.

Insurance covered repairs to the spire. The organ was overhauled, thoroughly cleaned and moved to a better site at the west end of the church (the opposite end to the altar). It was provided with a new motor for the bellows. This cost £383-12 which included £248-12 from the Insurance Company. However it continued to cause trouble and expense until it was finally

superseded by a computerised Allen Organ in 1993 at a cost of £15,333-75.

The Rev Mr Eric Kerrin was Rector from 1957 until 1970 when he resigned. He was the last Rector to inhabit the Rectory which was let, off and on, until it was finally sold in 1984. When the rectory was let it was necessary to convert part of the vestry to a toilet and to install a wash hand basin. St Andrew's may have had water to power the organ but was using the rectory facilities.

Canon Kerrin, father of Rev Eric Kerrin, offered to take on all the services until a new Rector could be found. He travelled from Kemnay. The Vestry were very pleased with this arrangement. In 1978 The Rev D W M Grant was appointed Rector to St Mary's Inverurie, St Andrew's Alford, St Anne's Kemnay and St Mary's Auchindoir. The church attendance in Alford was very low and the financial situation was poor. The congregation had to make do with one Sunday service at 2.30 in the afternoon. Under Mr Grant until 1989 and under Denis Bovey until 1994 the situation gradually improved and now under John Walker as Rector we have Anne James as resident Priest in Alford, living in our newly acquired St Andrew's House in Main Street. St Andrew's now is going on to do great things.

THE PETRIE MEMORIAL WINDOW

In March 1992 The Petrie Memorial Window was dedicated. The following account was available at this service.

Dr Adeline Petrie, who died in Aberdeen in 1989, left a bequest to install in St Andrew's Church, Alford, a stained glass window in memory of her father Richard, and two plaques in memory of her mother Edith and her sister, Dr Beryl Petrie.

The Petrie family have a long association with the Episcopal Church in Aberdeenshire. At the beginning of the 20th century the episcopalian incumbent at Alford was the Revd James Petrie, and simultaneously four of his sons were incumbents at Monymusk, Oldmeldrum, New Pitsligo and Strichen. A fifth son Richard became a doctor, and was in practice for many years at Stromness in Orkney.

Dr Adeline grew up in Stromness but her parents, who had themselves been married in St Andrew's, brought her to Alford to be baptized by her grandfather, and she came as a girl for her confirmation. Though she never lived in Alford, Dr Adeline retained a lifelong affection for the church there, and in the years of her retirement in Aberdeen she regularly sent gifts of money to provide flowers for beautifying the church.

Dr Petrie's trustees asked Andrew Lawson Johnston, the glass-engraver and artist from Strathdon, to submit some ideas for the window. He suggested that hand-engraving and stained glass be combined in the design, as far as is known this has not previously been done. Jane Bayliss, of the Jennifer-Jane Glass Studio in Fintray, near Aberdeen, was asked to interpret and produce the designs for the coloured part of the window.

The small circular light at the top of the window has a view of Stromness in the late 19th century engraved on it, surrounded by a circle of green stained glass.

The primary concept of the window was that it should in every way give glory to God. Thus the left and right arched windows both have scriptural texts running round them. On the left is Psalm 3.2, giving praise to God with hands raised in worship, and a collage of musical instruments in use in Old Testament times. This acknowledges the Christian commitment and the musical gifts of the Petrie family.

The text on the right-hand window from Matthew 4:22 concerns the Saviour's healing ministry, and ties in well with Dr Richard Petrie's lifetime of service as a doctor in Stromness. Here the hands are engraved in the action of laying-on for healing. The collage, however,

depicts not surgical instruments, but a salmon and angling gear, in acknowledgment of the good doctor's enjoyment of that sport.

At the top and the bottom of both windows are stained glass representations of four wildflowers that Dr Adeline loved: bluebell, dogrose, primrose and snowdrop. Running the length of each window, linking the two lots of flowers, a ribbon of stained glass swirls down bearing the names of the donor and her father.

Finally at the base on either side, separate and yet incorporating the flowers, are the two plaques commemorating the donor's mother and sister.

By combining hand-engraving to achieve quite deep cuts into the inner of the double-glazed windows, and the soft colours for the stained glass, two primary objectives of the commission have been secured:-

To follow the theme of the stained glass in the other (Victorian) windows in the church, and at the same time, to allow maximum light from outside into the church itself.

In 1990 David McLean of Littlewood died. He was very highly thought of in Alford as the Regional Councillor. David McLean Drive was named in his honour and he is also commemorated by a memorial plaque placed in St Andrew's by his widow, Mrs Deborah McLean. The plaque was dedicated during the Family Service on 20th December 1992 when the Mclean family could be present. After the service all were invited back to Littlewood for coffee, together with the residents of the Littlewood Estate and all living in David Mclean Drive.

The quotation on David's plaque:-"Lord, make us instruments of thy Peace", comes from the Prayer of St Francis and sums up, for his family and friends, the kind of man that David was.

RECENT IMPROVEMENTS TO THE BUILDING

The refurbishment of the vestry and the building of an extension to house a kitchen and toilets were proposed in 1997 and completed in 1998.

This short history was written

by Rosalind Prain

in January 2000

