

4: The Reformed Kirk

Ownership of the Land

1. The Pluscarden Charters

After the Reformation in 1560, the Church lands were gradually dispersed. These 16th century charters give details of transfer of land that originally belonged to Pluscarden Priory.

ELGNM: 2002.5 (.1,2,4,5,6)

The Churches

Although the Cathedral fell out of use at the Reformation, the churches continued as places of worship. The present St. Giles church in the middle of Elgin High Street was built in 1826 on the site of the medieval St Giles church which predated the Cathedral. The pulpit from St Giles was taken to Pluscarden Abbey but can now be seen in St. Columba's South Church, Moss Street, Elgin.

2. Rutherford chair, St Giles church

The back panel of this chair comes from the Rutherford pew in the medieval St Giles church; the back panel dates to 1671 and the rest of the chair was carved in 1826 (*see appendix for copy of a painting of the interior of old St Giles Church circa 1770*).

The inscriptions: 'RR' stands for Robert Rutherford and 'MT' for Marjorie Taylor. (A Robert Rutherford, Bailie of Elgin, was involved in a court case for refusal to sell taffeta to Inverness in 1672.)

FEAR GOD and ANTE OMNIA VENERARE NUMEN, or 'Before all, venerate His name'.

ELGNM: 1898.4

3. Pillar

Carved, oak pillar dated circa 1680, from old St Giles Church, High Street, Elgin.

ELGNM: 1967.131

4. Collection ladle

Collection ladle with sliding lid from Birnie Kirk (Church), used by the church until its donation to the Museum in 1892. The Kirk stands beside an Iron Age village and there is a Pictish stone at the entrance in the old curved Kirkyard wall. Birnie was the first site for the Bishopric in Moray. Inside are a Celtic bell and a Norman arch, all testifying to Birnie's long history as an important centre of religious power. The area has been the site of detailed excavation by Dr Fraser Hunter, National Museums Scotland, and post-excavation research is ongoing.

ELGNM: 1892.2

The Power of the Word

Printing came to Scotland in 1507. Print enabled ideas to spread rapidly, and pamphlets were important to the Reformers. Bibles were not generally available in English translation in Scotland until around 1570.

5. Breeches Bible, 1600

The Breeches Bible, also known as a "Black Letter" bible, was a variation of the Geneva Bible, and first appeared in 1579. In the Breeches Bible, Genesis Chapter III verse 7 reads: "Then the eis of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed figge tree leaves together, and made themselves breeches." In the King James or Authorised Version of 1611, "breeches" was changed to "aprons".

The Geneva Bible was the primary bible of 16th century Protestantism and the first mass-produced bible, directly accessible to the general public and complete with aids to study: the bible used by Shakespeare, Oliver Cromwell, and aboard the "Mayflower".

ELGNM: 1932.7

6. Other religious texts:

Authorised Edition of the Bible

The black leather-bound bible is the version authorised by James VI (and I) in 1611. The language is as much a part of the heritage of English language as the plays of Shakespeare. It continues to be used by many people today.

This copy was 1 of 1,000 issued in the Ruby type in 1950 by William Collins, Sons and Company Limited.

The Works of the most Reverend Dr John Tillotson (1630-1694)

One of 12 volumes, containing 254 sermons and discourses on several occasions. Tillotson was Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury from 1691 to his death, and also an elected Fellow of the Royal Society. Dated 1748, this collection of Tillotson's works was owned by a William Gordon.

Hymn book

A Collection of Hymns for the use of the Tabernacles in Scotland, printed and sold by J. Ritchie, 1802, Blackfriars Wynd, Elgin. Owned by David Allan, Elgin, 1812.

The author, Rev. James Alexander Haldane (1768-1851) from Dundee, originally sailed with the HEIC (Honourable East India Company) but studied the bible on the voyages and became an itinerant preacher in the Church of Scotland tradition. With his brother and others, he later founded an independent church movement.

ELGNM: Uncatalogued, 1988.3.7.2, 1988.3.7.3

Fight the Good Fight?

Defending one's faith was a bloody affair in the 16th and 17th centuries, although the Reformation was not as violent in Scotland as on the Continent and in England.

7. Nuremburg Maiden

A souvenir model, cast in 1907 by L. Ostermayr, of the Nuremburg Maiden, or Eiserne Jungfrau, a medieval torture device which was big enough to admit a man or a woman. The offender was placed inside the maiden's folding doors, the whole studded with sharp iron spikes, whereby the victim slowly bled to death.

ELGNM: 1939.3.32

8. Lead shot

From Dykeside, Birnie found by metal detectorist, Hamish Stuart.

ELGNM: 2000.52.1-6

9. Cannon Balls

Those cannon balls for which a provenance is known are from Rafford, Burghead and Elgin. They may relate to the time of the Covenanting Wars of the 17th century. Elgin was historically a Royal burgh but was a covenanting town in the 1640s. The whole period is one of changing allegiances: the “Great Montrose”, originally a covenanter, was a Royalist when he later swept through the province “with fire and sword”. In 1645-1646, Spynie Castle was under siege, and Elgin occupied and plundered by a succession of armies.

ELGNM: 1978.376, 1978.377, 1978.378, 1978.379, 1988.12

10. Left-hand dagger

Left-hand fighting dagger from Rothes, circa 1600. Claimed as Treasure Trove and purchased with assistance from the National Fund for Acquisitions.

ELGNM: 1998.26 (*TT13/98*)

The Covenanting Tradition

Much of Moray supported the Covenant; in particular, the Innes and Brodie families.

11. The Innes Memorial

The Innes memorial is a cast of the coat of arms of Robert Innes, 19th of that ilk, and his wife, Elizabeth Elphinstone. The original was erected in Elgin Cathedral, by his son, Robert, 20th of that ilk. (see *appendix*). Also known as the Learney Stone, and the cast donated by Thomas Innes, Esquire of Learney, Aberdeenshire in 1931.

ELGNM: 1931.24

12. Key to Laird's Toft

Charles II was forced to sign the Solemn League and Covenant when he landed at Garmouth in 1650, in a room on the upper floor of the Laird's Toft (*site of a house or buildings; a homestead, also ref. to land*) at Garmouth, which belonged to Robert Innes, 21st of that ilk. The main part of the Laird's toft was demolished but a plaque still commemorates this monumental event (see *appendix*).

ELGNM: 2006.25

The Power of the Kirk Session

13. Jougs

The jougs were attached to the village cross or the church wall. Those who misbehaved were sentenced to stand with the jougs round their necks. These jougs were found among old timbers in Rothes Church.

ELGNM: 1853.6

14. Church (or Communion) Tokens

Church tokens were distributed by the elders to those who were known to be worthy of admission to communion.

From the top left clockwise:

- Drainie, 1794
- Boharm, pre 1800
- Deskford, pre 1800
- Elgin Parish Church, 1839
- Free Church of Scotland, 1843
- Buckie, 1853
- Mortlach, pre 1888
- Mortlach
- Mortlach
- Boharm, 1830-1900
- Deskford , 1872
- Speymouth, 1830-1900
- St Andrews, Lhanbryde

ELGNM: 1957.6, 1915.9, 1930.9, 1968.17, 1967.127, 1962.3, 2000.38.2, 2000.38.4, 2000.38.5, 1915.7, 1930.8, 1915.10, 2003.2

In the Peephole

Margaret Brodie's Bible

When Charles II returned to Britain in 1660, he shunned the Covenanters. The persecution of the Covenanters in the 1680s, directed by Charles, is known as '*The Killing Times*'.

Lady Mary Brodie was tried in the courts at Elgin on 3rd February 1685. This leather-bound bible has that date inscribed inside, with the name *Margaret Brodie*. Margaret is thought to have been Lady Mary's daughter.

ELGNM: 2002.11

THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL COVENANT

In 1637, King Charles I and Archbishop Laud tried to bring the separate churches of England and Scotland closer together by the introduction of a new *Book of Canons* to replace John Knox's *Book of Discipline* as the authority for the organisation of the Kirk and also by the introduction of a modified form of the *Book of Common Prayer* into Scotland. There were no consultations, either in the Scottish Parliament or in an Assembly of the Kirk, and the proposals met with outrage from Scots anxious to preserve their national and religious identity. A movement against the Laudian reforms gained momentum across Scotland headed by Presbyterian noblemen and radical clergymen. A group of godly Edinburgh women organised a popular protest and, according to tradition, Jenny Geddes flung her prayer stool at the dean of the High Kirk of St Giles in Edinburgh on 23 July 1637 when he tried to read from the new prayer book for the first time. This was followed by a mass riot and an attempt to stone the Bishop of Edinburgh. Similar demonstrations occurred in all the churches of Edinburgh where the new liturgy was introduced.

During the following months, the protest grew into a campaign of petitions and supplications denouncing the Laudian prayer book and criticising the power of the bishops. Led by the lords Loudoun, Rothes, Balmerino and Lindsay, the supplicants organised four elected "Tables" or committees to represent the nobility, gentry, burgesses and clergy, and a fifth Table to act as an executive body. The clergyman Alexander Henderson and the lawyer Archibald Johnston of Wariston were given the task of drawing up a National Covenant to unite the supplicants and to clarify their aims. Based upon the Confession of Faith signed by James VI in 1581, the Covenant called for adherence to doctrines already enshrined by Acts of Parliament and for a rejection of untried "innovations" in religion. Although it emphasised Scotland's loyalty to the King, the Covenant also implied that any moves towards Catholicism would not be tolerated.

In February 1638, at a ceremony in Greyfriars Kirk in Edinburgh, large numbers of Scottish noblemen, gentry, clergy and burgesses signed the Covenant, committing themselves under God to preserving the purity of the Kirk. Copies were distributed throughout Scotland for signing on a wave of popular support. Those who hesitated were often intimidated into signing and clergymen who opposed it were deposed. By the end of May 1638, the only areas of Scotland where the Covenant had not been widely accepted were the remote western highlands and the counties of Aberdeen and Banff, where resistance to it was led by the Royalist Marquis of Huntly.

The Covenanter movement became the dominant political and religious force in Scotland following the Glasgow Assembly of 1638. The clash between the King and the Covenanters culminated in the Bishops' Wars of 1639 and 1640. In 1643, during the English Civil War, the objectives of the Covenant were incorporated into the Solemn League and Covenant which secured a military alliance between the English Parliament and the Scottish Covenanters against the Royalists. This alliance was instrumental in bringing about the defeat of the King's cause in the First Civil War.

Sources:

David Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution 1637-44* (Newton Abbott 1973)
C.V. Wedgwood, *The King's Peace* (London 1955)

Links:

Full text of the Scottish National Covenant [offsite]

David Plant, The Scottish National Covenant, British Civil Wars and Commonwealth website
<http://www.british-civil-wars.co.uk/glossary/scots-national-covenant.htm>

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Text updated: 14 December 2006