



A History of Forgue Kirk

IN MEMORY OF
EUAN RICHARDSON
OF THE OLD MANSE FORGUE
1933–2015

FOUNDER AND FIRST SECRETARY OF FRIENDS OF FORGUE KIRK 1997–2015

A History of Forgue Kirk



www.forguekirkfriends.org.uk

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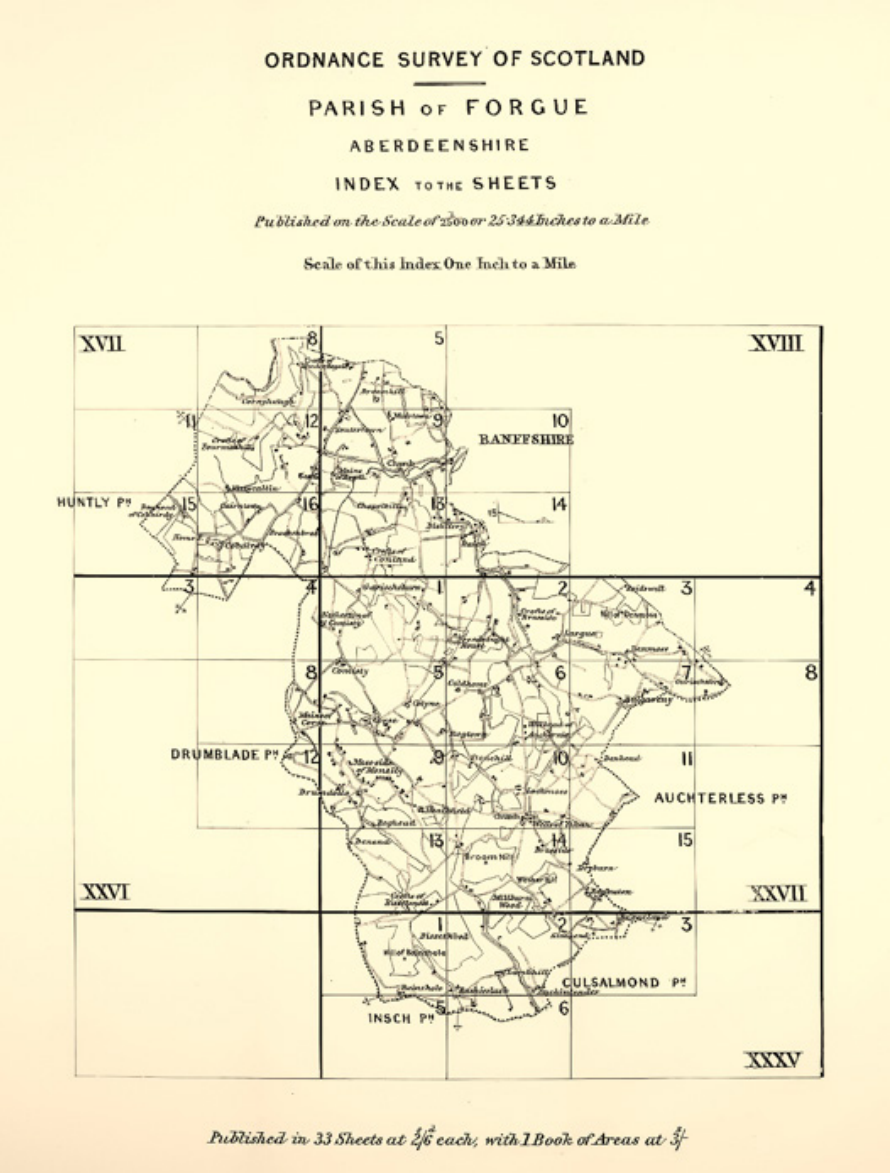
Preface

This booklet celebrates the re-opening of Forgue Kirk following its rebuilding which started in 1819 and finished in 1821. The aim is to provide a guide to the position of Forgue Kirk and Parish in the history of the Scottish church.

The information on church history is taken substantively from "A United Parish" a booklet by Margaret and Bill McKay published for the Millennium Celebrations at Auchaber Church supplemented by notes on the Kirk from various sources. It is not fully researched work. There can be few parishes of such size where so little of documentary or pictorial record survives. During most of its history the Parish Kirk was the seat of administration for public services, health and education in collaboration with the landowners and church heritors. Friends of Forgue Kirk a charity set up in 1998 has held events and circulated a newsletter since then. Originally circulated to the members of congregation of Forgue and Auchaber, it now has a wider audience. Forgue Kirk has an important history in the Church of Scotland. The Kirk building itself has a simple charm. Its most important features are the ceiling, painted in 1873-5 and the Conacher Organ installed in 1872.

The church is greatly changed from its 1821 opening but Forgue carries on and we hope it will continue to be used by local people.

Friends of Forgue Kirk



Parish of Forgue, 1872

The Beginnings and the Middle Ages 1

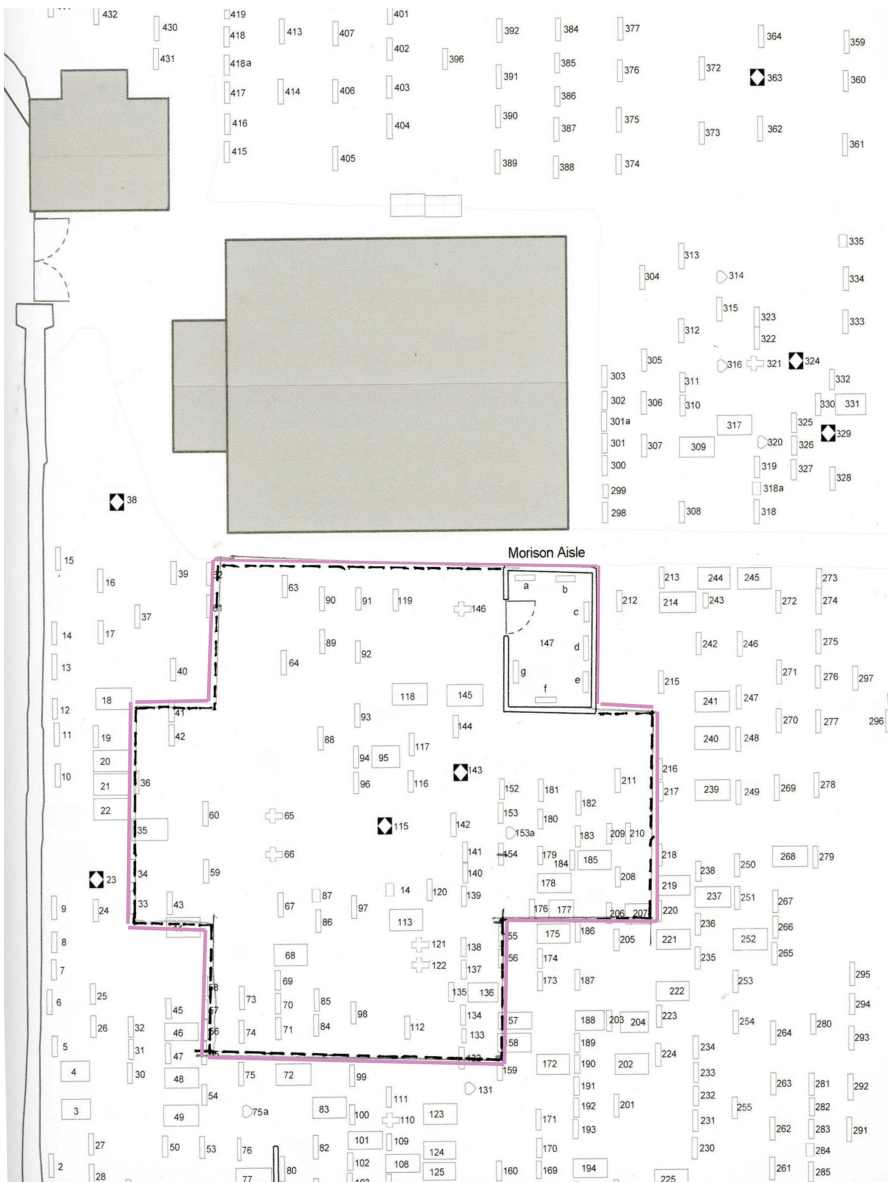
The history of Christianity in Scotland goes back to Saint Ninian in 400 CE. In the 5th Century Saint Columba established a monastery at Iona. It is not known when Forgue Kirk was first built.

One surviving stone indicates that it was a Romanesque style building of about 1050 CE like the church at Leuchars in Fife.

Like that building it would have had many alterations. The site of the medieval Kirk was recorded and was shown on ordnance survey maps until the Second World War. Rev Allardyce was interested in the old building. He collected two stones during the demolition. One is an arch member from a small window which has an 'M' carving.

The second is a window mullion section, on one side is a mason's carving of St. Christopher. Masons frequently carved their patron saint in concealed places on buildings. Rev Allardyce put these stones in his garden where they remain today.

The Celtic church grew independent of Rome spreading from Ireland until it accepted Roman practices in the mid-7th century. Saint Margaret (1045-1093), the half-Hungarian half-English new Queen of Scots married King Malcolm III, Malcolm Canmore, about 1070.



The site of the old Kirk before 1819

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the popes reinforced their power to appoint bishops. Rome insisted on a single set of church rules throughout Europe. The cosmopolitan Queen Margaret found the Church of Scotland out of touch with practice in the rest of Christian Europe. Clergy were often married, sons succeeded fathers in parish churches, confession and Communion were rarely celebrated and Sabbaths were not kept. These and other faults were reformed by the pious Queen. It was Saint Margaret and her royal sons who began the work of organising a system of parishes covering the entire country, with a Kirk at the heart of each. The First written mention of the parish church at Forgue is in 1257. The church is dedicated to Saint Margaret who was canonised in 1250, though whether the reference is to Saint Margaret of Scotland is not clear.

Her canonisation may have caused the church to displace an old-fashioned Pictish dedicatee. Forgue may be one of those parishes which existed well before we have evidence of it. Forgue was in the diocese of Aberdeen, Inverkeithny was in that of Moray.

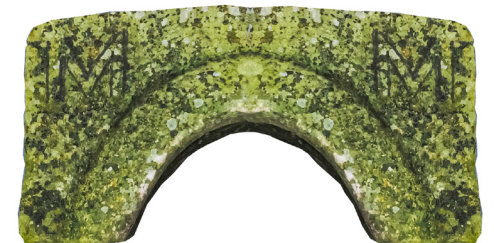
At this date Forgue Kirk was dependent for its income on the abbey of Arbroath. The arrangement started sometime in the early part of the thirteenth century. There is a Bull (a papal instruction) of Pope Alexander IV dated 1257 which confirmed an earlier grant of the church to Arbroath.

Confirmation was needed because on the previous occasion the laird, Sir William of what was then called Ferendracht, had forgotten to ask the permission of the bishop of Aberdeen.

The income of Duncan, the incumbent in 1257, was protected but as soon as he died (in 1268) the monks put in a chaplain. Some of the income due to the church certainly went to him, but he lost the



An arch segment with 'M' carved in Psammite stone.



This might be how the arch stones fitted together.



A socketed mullion section of window stone made of Old Red Sandstone from Turriff.



An image of St Christopher, patron saint of Stonemasons. Carving like this are common on medieval masonry.



Pictish stone - no one knows when this stone was placed beside the entrance to the church. The Bothy was once the Register House for births, marriages and deaths in Forgue until 1911. The stone may have been placed here as an antiquarian gesture. There are old stones beside the Duke of Gordon's statue in Huntly.

greater part of it. Forgue was now the monks' church, and they were specially permitted by a second papal bull to divert the rest of the revenue to Arbroath 'for the purpose of hospitality'.

Dependence on distant Arbroath was far from an ideal way of providing for the proper upkeep of the church building. By the early sixteenth century, the strain was beginning to show. In 1535, the abbey of Arbroath and Sir James Crichton of Frendraught did a deal. The abbey leased to the laird the annual income from the teinds (the sheaves which the local farmers were obliged annually to give to Arbroath as owners of Forgue church), in return, the laird paid the abbey £100 Scots.

The abbey converted into ready cash income which the monks might have had trouble collecting, and the parish gained because the laird agreed to mend the church roof.

It is difficult to put together lists of the names of the men who served as parish priests.

A few names however survive. Duncan, priest in 1257, has been mentioned. In 1371 the priest was called Christimus, and he was probably a university graduate. In 1535, William Christieson was described as "a perpetual vicar at the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the chancel at Forgue".

In the sixteenth century there were still too few parish churches. Their buildings and furnishings might be dilapidated. The 1535 deal at Forgue involved repair of the roof, but how long had it been leaking and did the laird ever do the work?

Mass was said, not sung, and the Latin used was unknown to the congregation. Sermons, in language which could be understood, were preached only once or twice a year. There would be no hymns or psalms for the congregation to sing. The service must have been incomprehensible and invisible action behind the roodscreen, mumbled, inaudible, mysterious.

The church reformed itself many times over this period. Waves of reformers – the friars are the best known – refreshed it throughout the Middle Ages. At parish level, if people could not read the Gospel or take part in public worship, they could nevertheless follow the church's teaching through the symbolism they found around them in the church and its worship.

There might be rough paintings and crucifixes on the walls of even the humblest churches.

The festivals of the Christian Year gave a pattern to the seasons and punctuated farming life – the offerings of candles at Candlemas and bread at Lammas, or the Easter palm procession and the Forgue fair on Palm Sunday.

In 1535, Sir James Crichton gave 24 marks annually for the support of the priest and the altar, fixed on rent payable from the lands of Bognie.

The laird may have stipulated in return for the endowment that the repose of his soul and the souls of his family and descendants should forever be prayed for. Such gifts were a common practice in the later fifteenth and early sixteenth century.

The Reformation

2

Less than a generation later before 1560 the nature of piety began to change as the Reformers abolished observances and festivals. Religious feeling became personal and more individual, not a matter of community observance.

The theology changed too, and the laird's pious gift of 1535 fell foul of the Reformers' equally pious horror of prayers for the dead. Forgue Kirk changed from Roman Catholic observance to Presbyterianism in 1560.

In August 1560 the Parliament of Scotland agreed to reform the religion of the country. The reformed faith was defined by the Scots Confession written by John Knox. The Reformation required the founding of schools and poor relief in every parish. In the Forgue area the lairds were mainly Episcopalians and, later, often Jacobite sympathisers.

The name of St Margaret passed to the Episcopal church as the new Scottish church did not recognise dedications to saints. The change to the reformed church was a slow process in Forgue.

At Forgue, the priest, Alexander Home, may have stayed in hope that the change to Presbyterianism would not be permanent.

The first certain Protestant in the parish church was Andrew Spens, a reader – perhaps a former priest, as many readers were – who did not arrive until 1574. He does not seem to have been a success. Not until 1590, again a whole generation after 1560, was the first ordained minister, Rev John Philip, inducted – and he only lasted a year before he was translated to Rothiemay. Things really only stabilised with the ministry of Rev James Hay, who served the parish between 1608 and the mid to late 1620s.

At national level there is no problem in putting a date to the Reformation: 1560. Carrying through the Reformation in the parishes often took more than a generation. Successive attempts by the Stuarts to impose Bishops on the emerging Presbyterian church in Scotland caused ministers to ignore political changes throughout the 1620-40s.

The Second Reformation

3

The crisis came to a head in the 1630s, when James VI's inept son Charles I fell out with his Scottish subjects. Like his father, he wanted an Episcopalian Church throughout Britain, controlled by himself. He intended to bring Scottish worship 'into line' with England.

Charles had also foolishly added to the number of his enemies by threatening to confiscate from the lairds the church lands they had acquired at the Reformation. In 1637 Charles I and Archbishop Laud imposed Bishops and a new prayer book on Scotland. This was the background to the National Covenant of 1638. Though it was Presbyterian in tone, many in Scotland who were far from fanatically religious signed it. The Covenant was a broad manifesto, bringing together for a while many different concerns. At the same time, though the King had grievously mishandled things, he still had plenty of supporters in Aberdeenshire. What had been a national protest became a revolution, as differences in the Covenanting party surfaced and the extremists took over the leadership. A long conflict broke out, and many localities suffered in the bishops' wars between 1639-1641. They included Fergie and Inverkeithny, as Presbyterian Turri skirmished with the royalist lairds round about. James Graham, marquess of Montrose was one of those who signed the National Covenant, and the next year he entered Turriff

with an army of Covenanters. The King's lieutenant in the north, the marquess of Huntly, put in an appearance in the town but found his men outnumbered and withdrew to Forglen without fighting. The fate of the Forgue area was closely entwined with the troubles of the Crichtons of Fren draught. It all began when in 1630 Crichton of Fren draught killed Gordon of Rothiemay in a scuffle by the Deveron. He wounded the son of Leslie of Pitcaple in a second brawl. When the Gordon marquess of Huntly tried to restore peace, there was a third row. To keep Crichton out of yet further trouble, Huntly sensibly sent him home to Fren draught, accompanied by his own brother, Lord Aboyne. There followed an event which shocked Scotland. Aboyne and his servants perished in a midnight fire which devastated the castle. One of Pitcaple's servants was found guilty and executed, but popular opinion blamed the Crichtons. Certainly, that was the view held by the Gordons, who proceeded to ravage Fren draught house and mains, and terrify the tenants.



The Kirk travelling safe (circa 1820). Forgue Kirk silver was stored in the British Linen Bank in Huntly, designed and built by Archibald Simpson in 1819.



The chalice on the right hand side is that donated by Crichton of Fren draught in 1643.

In 1638 Forgue Kirk and the Manse were burnt down by Covenanter, it was soon rebuilt by heritors. It is likely that a substantial ruin was rebuilt. It had a new Fren draught Pew for the laird and his family, parts of which survive in the Kirk and was replanned with a prominent pulpit. It stood where the south Kirkyard is now. Given the pattern of events in the civil war in the area, it was inevitable that Montrose would be drawn into this local falling-out. In his Covenanting period, he tried vainly to get Huntly to end the feud. When he appeared in Strathbogie for King Charles, the Crichtons opposed him. The Fren draught estate was ravaged in retaliation. Finally, when Montrose made his last desperate throw in 1650, Crichton of Fren draught – with appalling ill luck – chose to join him. He was in time only to offer Montrose his horse as the royalist army was conclusively routed at the Battle of Carbisdale. Montrose himself was later captured and taken to Edinburgh to be executed.

In 1644, the minister of Forgue became professor of Divinity at Aberdeen, as the devastation of the area by the rival armies was at its height.

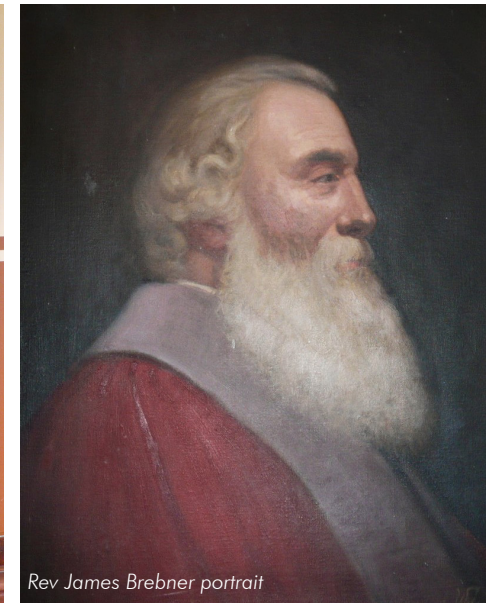
The Forgue elders could have afforded an assistant if they or their minister had really wanted one. The parish was not poor. A visitation in 1642 found the fabric in good order, doors and pulpits green in colour, windows well glassed. The laird of Fren draught was remarkably generous. He had rebuilt the church after its burning

in 1638. He had given – besides the cups – a pulpit cloth and a communion Table. Inverkeithny received cups as Forgue did, and also Aberchirder, and they were worth £80 – presumably sterling, a very large sum at that time.

The Return of the Bishops 4

In Forgue, Rev Alexander Garden (minister 1644-74) though ordained in days of Presbyterian supremacy, readily submitted to the bishop. He was succeeded in the parish by his son George. The ministers of Inverkeithny in 1660, Robert Irvine and his new assistant, Richard Maitland also conformed.

The Maitland family are an example of what are called 'Levitical' families in the Church of Scotland. These are generations of ministers who occupy the same parish one after another, as if the radical changes which affected the church nationally never happened.



Rev James Brebner portrait

Pieces of the Fren draught pew. When the church was demolished timber from this pew was used as a floor for the Manse Steading pigeon list. When the Steading was enlarged by Rev James Brebner parts of it was rescued and framed up.

Richard Maitland's son John was to succeed him in Inverkeithny. John became minister of Forgue. David was an episcopal minister in a meetinghouse in Forgue.

Networks were important in other ways. Successive ministers of Forgue from 1628 till almost the end of the century maintained a connection with King's College. Alexander Garden, the minister of Inverkeithny whose manse was destroyed by Montrose had a bursary for four years, funded jointly by the presbyteries of Strathbogie and Elgin, to study theology in Aberdeen. Care was taken to find parishes – like Forgue or Inverkeithny – for the brighter pupils in the divinity class. After a while in the parish they returned to Aberdeen, well set for a distinguished academic career.

Jacobite and Episcopalian **5**

Just how powerless those in control of the Church nationally might be when they wanted to make local changes is borne out by events in Forgue and Inverkeithny. Rev Patrick Harvey, who succeeded Rev George Garden in 1680 died in 1704.

There was a short vacancy until John Maitland, son of the minister of Inverkeithny was called from Inch in 1707. Though he was inducted by the presbytery, Maitland was at heart an Episcopalian. He solved his conscience under Queen Anne much as George Garden did. Anne was a Stuart, not the one he thought should be on the throne, but just about acceptable. Her successor in 1714, the Hanoverian George I, the 'wee, wee German lairdie', was not. Maitland refused to pray for him and was deposed by the General Assembly. So great was the support for episcopacy in the parish then that it was impossible for the representatives of the presbytery to gain access to the kirk or even the kirkyard to intimate the sentence. Support was found at all levels of society. The laird's wife got hold of the keys of the kirk and refused to allow the presbytery to arrange pulpit supply in the vacancy. The presbytery eventually took control by presenting a minister to the parish. The patron and the people were excluded. There was no other way an appointment of someone acceptable to the church authorities could be made.

The patron was the husband of the lady who hid the keys, and the people were openly hostile. The new minister was called Alexander Forbes (minister 1716-1748). In choosing him, the presbytery had completed the easy part of their task. They then had to face an induction at which there was sure to be violence. When the day came, neither the soldiers who had been promised nor the sheriff who said he would come actually turned up. The presbytery was chased ignominiously across the Forgue burn. The induction was adjourned to the more sympathetic atmosphere of Presbyterian Auchterless.

Even then, the disturbances did not come to an end. John Maitland refused to quit the Manse of Forgue for about a year. By the time he agreed to go, a chapel had been built at Pennyburn for him and for those who, like him, could not accept the return of presbytery. John Maitland's brother James, the minister of Inverkeithny, was also in trouble and for the same reason.

He was thrown out of Inverkeithny in 1715 for refusing to accept the authority of the General Assembly and the presbytery.

Like his brother John, he hung on in the manse, where he opened a meetinghouse for worship by those who agreed with his attachment to the bishops. In 1721, however, he left and joined John at the chapel at Pennyburn, along with a third brother, David. Although

he had demitted from Forgue well before the Revolution, the career of Rev George Garden, perhaps the most distinguished of all the ministers of Forgue, is of some interest.

He was a son of Rev Alexander Garden and a grandson of another Rev George Garden. He attended King's College Aberdeen where he was a friend of the future minister of Auchterless, Henry Scougal, son of the bishop of Aberdeen and the author of a work of spirituality *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*. The book was immensely popular in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and indeed is still in print today.



In the Morison Enclosure of Forgue Kirkyard. The headstone of Alexander Garden.

In 1677 George Garden was ordained to his father's charge at Forgue. In 1679, he was translated to St Machar's in Aberdeen, and then in 1683 to St Nicholas. He was therefore taking full advantage of the family and college networks which characterized the Church in the north-east under the bishops.

Garden was among those opposed to the return of presbytery in 1688-89. He did not however choose to leave the Church of Scotland, and he was not pushed out until 1692, when he was suspended for refusing to pray for King William and Queen Mary.

In 1701, he got into further trouble with the General Assembly for writing a scholarly treatise on the thoughts of a mystical Belgian lady. This time the fathers and brethren deposed him. But did he still consider himself under the Assembly's jurisdiction? Probably

not, since he continued to minister to a congregation of his former parishioners who were Episcopalians.

Dutch William was succeeded in 1701 by Anne, the daughter of James V and II, who had fled to France in 1688. Anne was a Stuart, and so during her reign Garden, like Maitland his successor in Forgue, managed to be an Episcopalian without being a Jacobite. It was not an easy balancing act, and he soon gave it up. In 1715, after Anne's death, he returned to the pulpit of St Nicholas, thanks to the Old Pretender, when Jacobite forces briefly occupied Aberdeen. When the rebellion collapsed Garden fled to the continent. But by 1720, he was back, a candidate for the bishopric of Aberdeen. He died in 1733.

TO BUILDERS.

ESTIMATES are Wanted, for a **PARISH CHURCH** at **FORGUE**, to be built in the course of the ensuing Season—Plans and Specifications of which, will be seen, by applying to the **Rev. Mr Allardyce, Forgue**, to whom, or to **Mr A. Simpson, Architect, Aberdeen**, application may be made for particulars: And a Meeting of the Heritors of the Parish is to be held at **Forgue**, upon **Thursday the 29th of January curt.** for the purpose of settling with Contractors.

Notice published in the Aberdeen Journal in 1818

The Calm before the Storm

6

In 1840 a dispute arose over the rights of Heritors – who paid for Kirk buildings – to appoint ministers. Congregations wished to appoint them and rejected Heritor's rights. In 1843 about the third of the ministers of the established Church of Scotland left the church and set up the Free Church of Scotland. This dispute started in the neighbouring parish of Marnoch in 1741. The Free Church and the Church of Scotland were reunited in 1929.

In the Forgue area, presbytery had got off to a faltering start after the Revolution of 1688. Its subsequent progress was silent, steady and successful. At Inverkeithny, an unbroken continuity of three generations of ministers loyal to presbytery, over no fewer than 137 years, laid the ghosts of episcopacy. William Milne became minister in 1721, his son John in 1767, and his grandson James in 1809: and James did not die till 1858. There was a similar continuity of Presbyterians at Forgue, though without the additional advantage of genealogy.

Rev Alexander Forbes, whose turbulent induction had had to be removed to the Presbyterian fastness of Auchterless, remained minister of Forgue for forty-two years, living in wealth and style, courtesy of a deceased Irish uncle until 1758.

At Forgue, the patron and the heritors do not seem to have been particularly oppressive. They paid for a new church in 1821 and a new manse in 1826.

This was during the Ministry of Alexander Allardyce (1802-1833). Maybe it was this 30-year ministry giving stability or the establishment of Episcopalian worship amongst the Lairds of Forgue Parish. Ann Allardyce, (1777-1857) was a noted poet and literary figure.



Forgue Kirk



Auchaber Free Church circa 1850

The much-rebuilt Medieval church was demolished and replaced with a fully Presbyterian galleried box designed by Archibald Simpson. He was a young man just returned from a tour of Europe and well connected to the ministers in our area. Rev James Cordiner, who had been minister since 1834 – when Alexander Allardyce had died of apoplexy in mid-sermon – stayed in the Auld Kirk.

Some of his congregation left Forgue in 1843 to found the Free Church at Auchaber.

Repairing the Altars

7

By 1900, after a prolonged effort at Church Extension, there were 400 ministers of parishes created by the subdivision of the large parishes. Ythan Wells was one of them and it was Rev John Abel, minister of Forgue, who was one of the moving spirits in creating the new parish. What the Auld Kirk had done was to find a way to give seats in the General Assembly to ministers in the same position as those whose imminent ejection from it had brought about the walk-out in 1843.

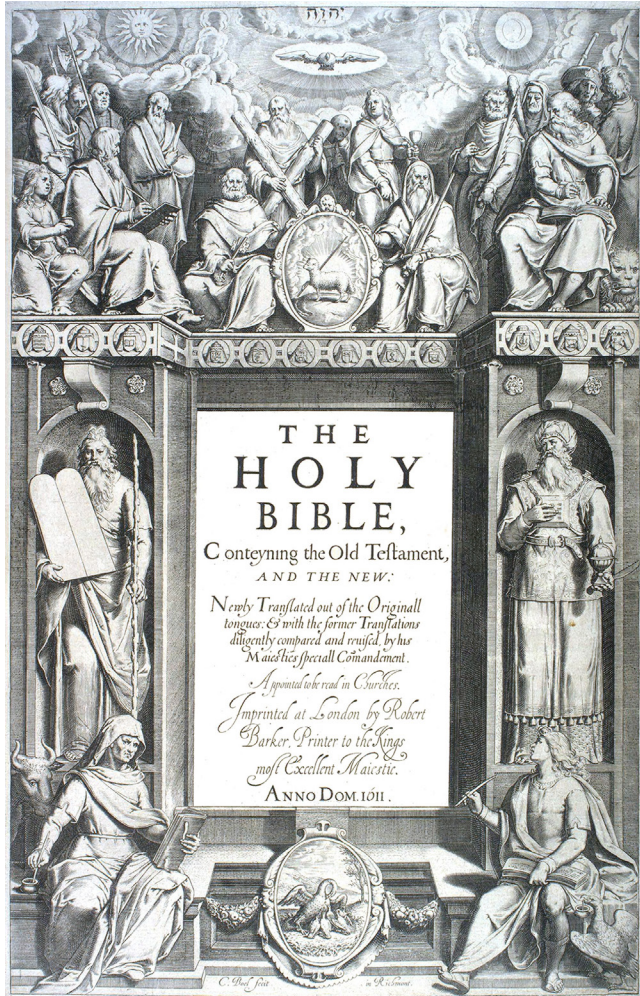
The ill-feeling between the Auld Kirk and the Free Kirk continued. The choice of a site for Ythan Wells parish church had a great deal to do with the fact that it lay between a large population in the south of Forgue parish and the Free Kirk at Auchaber. The choice of Auchaber as a site for their congregation might have had something to do with the fact that many people from the south had to walk a long way to Forgue. At Forgue, although the minister James Cordiner



Abigail Bainbridge repairing the cover of the bible in 2017

did not join the Free Church in 1843, it must have been feared that at the next vacancy, the relative loss of manpower in the Church of Scotland would make it difficult to find a successor.

Cordiner was a determined Church of Scotland minister. He donated an authorized version of the bible printed in 1616 which is still in the Kirk, in fact when James Cordiner died in 1849 the new minister, John Abel, was in place within months.



The title page of the Forgue Bible 1616

The Victorian Revolution

It was some of the Free Church Seceder's who first used hymns and also reintroduced the Lord's Prayer. It was later before the Church of Scotland acquired a hymn book. The Church of Scotland widely used paraphrases from the 1780's, but for many years they were not approved formally. The first Auld Kirk hymn collection, entitled The Scottish Hymnal, appeared in 1870, though hymns had been in use in parish churches a little before that.

By the end of the 1890s the main Presbyterian Churches all used the same Church Hymnary, and Metrical Psalter. Behind these authorized collections, we should not forget the legacy of the Moody and



Forgue Kirk 1923

Sankey Evangelical campaign in 1874 which was built around hymn singing. With hymns came brightening the church services.

In 1872 during James Brebner's ministry (1871-1916) the church was reordered and painted. The stencilled ceiling and walls were added, the Session House was extended and central heating

installed. Organs to accompany singing grew in popularity, there was an organ in Aberdeen in 1857, and in Old Greyfriars, Edinburgh in 1860. An organ was installed in Forgue in 1872, one of the earliest in the north, the gift of Mr. Scott, the owner of the Glendronach distillery.



The Conacher organ gifted by Mr Scott of the Glendronach distillery in 1972

The Episcopalians

Forgue and Inverkeithny lay in strongly Episcopalian country – the lairds of Fren draught and Auchintoul for example were one of the inner circles of Jacobite leaders in the rebellion of 1715.

At that time, there were six ministers owing nominal allegiance to the presbytery of Turriff. Two of them, closet Episcopalian, were deposed for refusing to pray for King George. All the five openly episcopal clergy within the bounds (who no longer acknowledged the presbytery anyway) favoured the Jacobites.

The eventual rout of the rebels served only to strengthen the Presbyterian cause. Nevertheless, the chapel founded by the three Maitland's at Pennyburn (near the Bognie Arms) after the removal of John and James from Forgue and Inverkeithny prospered.



Cottages at Pennyburn before World War I

When John Maitland died in 1740, he was succeeded by Rev Alexander Smith. Things must have been looking up for the Episcopalians, for in that year a new chapel was built on the ridge above the farm of Parkdargue to serve the Episcopalians of both Forgue and Inverkeithny.

Despite the loss of their buildings and the impact of the Laws of 1746 and 1748 against episcopal worship, the congregation in Forgue did not die. At some point after 1760 they even built their chapel. By and by, the penal laws fell into disuse.

During their time of trial, Episcopalian numbers remained remarkably high.

They were no longer the predominant group in the parish, thanks to Presbyterian revival, but in 1755 roughly one out of every eight adults in Forgue were an Episcopalian. There were only a few in



Forgue Kirk in 1900

Inverkeithny. A century later, the number in Forgue had dropped, though it was still significant.

To care for the spiritual needs of what, after the death of the Pretender, was a politically reliable congregation there were a series of priests, some remarkably long in office, which must have stabilized the situation as the congregation moved into the nineteenth century. A new chapel was built on the present site in 1795.

There were a series of rectors until the middle of last century, but by then the numbers had fallen away. Between 1956 when the last rector left and 1961, St Margaret's was served from Folla Rule and then, until its closure in 1969, from Insch. Now it is owned and maintained by the Morison family.



The Forgue War Memorial built in 1926 to the design of the Huntly mason. This records the names of Church of Scotland soldiers. Free Church of Scotland soldiers are recorded in Auchaber Church.

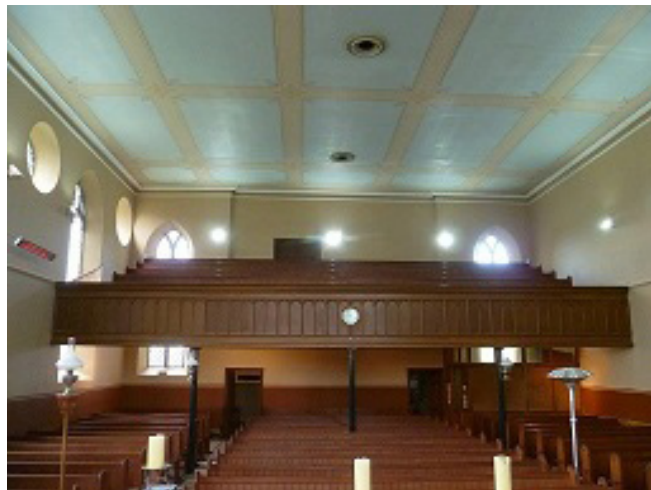
Looking Forward

10

Five years later, in 1953, the two ancient parishes of Forgue and Inverkeithny were united.

Since the national union of 1929, Forgue had been called Forgue Old, and the 1953 union was known as Forgue-Inverkeithny. Forgue-Inverkeithny was linked with Ythan Wells-Auchaber in 1982.

Finally, all four churches were made into a single charge named Auchaber United in 1992, and the following year they were formally linked with Auchterless. Forgue church building was sold in 1998 to the Friends of Forgue Kirk, a charity created to preserve the building and the organ in the interest of the local community. Inverkeithny, Clatt and Glass church buildings are in the care of similar charities.



Interior of Forgue Kirk with the gallery installed in 1926 showing the painted ceiling of 1873

List of Ministers

Since the Reformation, the ministers of Forgue Kirk have been as follows:

The Parish was founded before 1257. Until that date it was known as Frendraught, thereafter as Forgue. From 1929 until 1955, it was linked with Inverkeithny as Forgue-Inverkeithny.

Rev Alexander Home	c1561-c1563
Andrew Spens	1574-c1576
Rev John Philip	1590-1591
Rev John Horn	c1599-c1601
Rev William Reid	1605-1607
Rev James Hay	1608-c1623
Rev William Douglas	1627-1643
Rev Alexander Garden	1644-1674
Rev George Garden	1674-1679
Rev Patrick Harvey	1680-1704
Rev John Maitland	1707-1715
Rev Alexander Forbes	1716-1758
Rev George Abercrombie	1759-1772
Rev Alexander Wilson	1772-1779
Rev William Dingwall	1780-1801
Rev Alexander Allardyce	1802-1833
Rev James Cordiner	1834-1849
Rev John Abel	1849-1871
Rev James Brebner	1871-1916
Rev C W Scobie	1916-1927
Rev R T Monteith	1927-1955

Parish of Forgue-Inverkeithny

The parishes of Forgue and Inverkeithny were united in August 1955. In 1982, Forgue-Inverkeithny was linked with Ythan Wells and Auchaber.

Rev William Paterson	1956-1962
Rev David Beedie	1962-1981

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1. The material in connection with the parish of Forgue is drawn from Hew Scott, *Fnsti Ecdesinc Scoficmine* vols 6 and 8 to 11.
 2. Spens was a 'reader' and not an ordained minister. He was responsible for Drumblade and Culsalmond as well as Forgue.
 3. Harvie was an Episcopalian who refused to conform in 1689 but was not removed. He died in his charge in 1704.
 4. Maitland was deposed in 1715, as an Episcopalian and a Jacobite. See below under Episcopal Congregation (St Margaret's Forgue).

Kirk History Timeline

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|-----------|--|
| 1045-93 | Founded (maybe) by St Margaret of Scotland. During or after her death 16th November 1093. |
| 1257 | First mentioned – dedicated to St Margaret of Scotland known as Frendraught until this date – after as Forgue in the Diocese of Aberdeen. |
| 1200–50 | Under control of Arbroath Abbey, Bill of Alexander IV 1257. |
| 1257–68 | Duncan – Rector. |
| 1535 | Transferred from Arbroath Abbey to Sir James Crichton, The Tithes. He gave 24 Marks/annum for support of a priest and altar to Blessed Virgin from Bognie lands. |
| 1371 | Christimus – Rector. |
| 1535 | William Christieson – Rector. |
| 1542 | Mary, Queen of Scots (ascends aged 1 month). |
| 1560 | The Reformation in Scotland. |
| 1561-63 | Alexander Home – Minister. |
| 1574-76 | Andrew Spens – Minister. |
| 1590-91 | John Phillip – Minister. |
| 1599-1601 | John Horn – Minister. |
| 1608-23 | James Hay – Minister. |
| 1616 | Forgue Bible published. |
| 1630 | Crichton of Frendraught killed Gordon of Rothiemay. |
| 1627-43 | William Douglas – Minister – Professor of Divinity at Aberdeen University. |
| 1638 | Church rebuilt by Crichton – Presented the Silver Chalice. |

1643 Solemn League and Covenant between Covenanters and Parliament.

1642 Forgue Kirk and Manse burned down by James Graham Marquess of Montrose.

1644-74 Alexander Garden – Minister – buried in Morison enclosure.

1674-79 George Garden – Minister.

1680-1704 Patrick Harvey – Minister.

1707-15 John Maitland – Minister.

1715 First Jacobite rising.

1716-58 Alexander Forbes – Minister.

1759-72 George Abercrombie – Minister.

1745 Second Jacobite rising.

1772-79 Alexander Wilson – Minister.

1780-1801 William Dingwall – Minister.

1802-33 Alexander Allardyce – Minister.

1819-21 Old Kirk demolished.
New Kirk designed by Archibald Simpson.

1826 Manse – South extension built.

1834-49 James Cordiner – Minister – Donated the Forgue Bible.

1834 The Veto Act and The Great Disruption.
Split and founding of Free Church of Scotland.
Auchaber Free Kirk founded.

1847 Rev. Cordiner donates 1616 Bible.

1849-71 John Abel – Minister.

1871-1916 James Brebner – Minister.

1872 Reordering of Kirk – Organ donated by Mr Scott of Glendronach Distillery and Ceiling and walls painted.

1916-27 C W Scobie – Minister.

1927-1955 R T Montieth – Minister.

1926 Re-ordering – Re-siting of Organ.
Removal of South Gallery.
New pews installed.

1956-62 William Paterson – Minister.

1962-81 David Beedie – Minister.

1981-95 Forgue Kirk closed and disused.

1995 Forgue Kirk bought by Friends of Forgue Kirk – a charitable company.

1998-2002 Audrey Duffton – Chair of Friends of Forgue Kirk.

2002-2014 Eleanor Anderson – Chair.

2014-2017 Catriona McKay – Chair.

2017- Cryle Shand – Chairman.

DONORS OF FITTINGS IN THE KIRK

FONT

To the glory of God and in memory of William Cruikshank-Winton
gifted to Fergie Parish Church
By his sister Mrs George MacPherson formerly of Wellbog 1951

COMMUNION TABLE AND IT'S CHAIR

Gifted to God and this Church by John Shand 1900
In memory of his wife who died at Mill of Fergie
and is buried in this churchyard 1900

COLLECTION BOXES (2no)

Presented by W.M. Lamb in remembrance of his mother 1915

ORGAN

Gifted to God and this Church of Fergie by Walter Scott
Glendronach 1872
1911 This organ was renovated by William Bennet of Little Fergie
a thanks offering

CLOCK

1886 John Alexander Woodside of Fren draught
A thanks offering for many mercies.
And a memorial of his Baptism, the first administered in this church
on the 15th of March 1826

PULPIT 1893

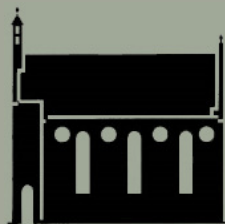
Gifted to the Church of Fergie
by John Alexander succeeding his father and grandfather in
Woodside of Fren draught
A thanks offering for many mercies and a memorial of his baptism
being the first administered in this Church 15th of March 1826

WALL MEMORIAL in oak

To the glory of God and in memory of Rev. R.T. Montieth BP
Minister of this Parish 1927-1954



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