

Gleanings from the Records of the Yearly Meeting of Aberdeen, 1672 to 1786.

The following notes are taken principally from the early records of Aberdeen Monthly and Quarterly Meetings (i. 1672—x. 1786). There are a few extracts from those of the meeting at Lethenty (afterwards Kinmuck), 1679-1782.

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Friends bearing Testimony to Truth in and about Aberdⁿ being prospered by the Lord both as to their number and as to their growth in the Truth and finding a necessity to meet apart for business and for administering true and righteous judgment in all things amongst themselves whether in relation to God's worship or outward matters whatsoever that may occur, have by one consent and in one mind, finding the Lord with them in the thing, appointed this Book to be the public Register of what is done and to be condiscended upon at ther Monthly and Mid Monthly Meetings ; and do also rejoice that herein they are led into the footsteps of the flocks bearing the same testimony elsewhere in this land.

The names of such that at this present time bear this testimony *viz.* (to the Light of Christ as one universal saving sufficient principle in the hearts of all men to lead them guide them and order them in all things, but especially in these things wh: relate to the worship of God) in and about Aberdeen the 5 of 1st mo. 1672.

The Meeting of Aberdeen.	The Meeting of Ury.
Al. Skene	Eliz th Johnston
Tho ^s Merser	Elspet Goodall
John Skene	Isabell Harper
Andrew Galloway	Jean Williamson
Tho ^s Milne	Jean Mollison
Ochiltre Ferindale	Christian Skene
D. Falconer	Isobel Birnie
Geo. Keith	Julia Smith
John Cowie	Jean Gelle
And Jaffray	Jean Somerville
Barbara Forbes	Helen Skene
Anna Skene	Lillias Skene

At Aberdeen 5th of 1st mo. 1672 Friends at their Monthly Meeting the saide day (having resolved some time before *viz* at the last and former Meeting) to draw a general history of the rise and progress of Truth in and about Aberdeen and having provided a book for that end, found it expedient that Isabell Keillo wife of Alex^r Harper, Merchant in Aberdeen, Barbara Forbes and Elizth Johnstone her d^r who were of the first witnesses here, should take occasion to visit and confer with Al: Jaffray at Kingswells and that they with him draw and note what they know in this matter and deliver it to Al: Skene to be insert in the s^d book by him.¹

[Mid-Mo Meeting Aberdeen, 19. 1. 1672 The above appointment was duly attended to] and several papers there anent given in writt wh: are committed to Ro^t Barclay and W^m Gellie to reduce them to method and return it to Al: Skene to insert it in the book appointed for that end.

The s^d day Alex^r Skene and Thomas Mercer reports y^t according to what was comitted to them They haue taken a Meeting house fitt and convenient for freinds for the year following from Robert Bruce regent of the colledge at 43lb, 6s. 8d.

ffreindes haue some by wordes. and some by silence declared y^r Satisfaction in the matter of David ffalconars marriage so y^t hee may proceed in y^t mater as hee finds freedome.²

¹ This book is now in **D**. It is a volume of about 250 leaves, bound in calf with much blind-tooling, and once supplied with two clasps. It is entitled "A Breiff Historicall Account and Record of The first Rise and Progress of the Blessed Truth, Called in Derision Quakerism, in and about ABERDEEN, of the oppositions and persecutions attending the same: The remarkable hand of God against its Persecutors: and of His favours and Deliverances to The Frinds and followers Theirot." [ED.]

² David Falconar was married, at the house of the bride's father, to Margaret, second daughter of Gilbert Molleson, "late Bailie of Aberdeen." The bride's elder sister was the wife of Robert Barclay, the Apologist. David Falconar was the son of Sir John Falconer of Halkerton, Master of the Mint at Edinburgh in 1647, and was a connection of the ancestors of the Earl of Kintore and of the well-known Colin Falconer, Bishop of Moray. Sir John Falconer was superseded in his office of Master of the Mint during the Commonwealth, but was reinstated after the Restoration. He is mentioned as of the "Cunzie housse" in 1667, 1668 and 1679. *The Scots Peerage* gives the number of his children as ten and gives the names of nine of them, but the name of the one born about 1641 is blank; this may have been David, whose name does not appear

At Aberdeen the meeting of Friends 2. 2^d month 1672 The s^d day Robert Barclay showed that there was a part of the account of the rise and progress of Truth set down by him and W^m Gellie and it being a work that was like to draw longer than was expected (they should go on) and the Meeting did think fit that some 5 or 6 Fr^{ds} (with any other that thought fit upon advertisment to come) might hear it read before it was committed to be put upon record.

The mid-month Meeting 26th of 2^d month 1672. The s^d day Alex^r Somervaille mariner his wife did represent the case of her husband who being a friend desires to know the mind of Fr^{ds} whether it was safe or suitable for him to flee from the press to the war that is now denounced against the States of Holland by the King. Friends judge it safest (though all the rest of the seamen of the Town were fled) not to flee, but withall leaving him to his own freedom in case he found a true liberty so to do. Whereupon he found it rather his place to come in and run the hazard, being the only seaman in the whole town that compeared upon citation of the magistrates of the town for aught we know.

[Meeting at Aberdeen, 7. iii. 1672] The s^d day several Fr^{ds} being present that came from the South and West viz John Swinton elder, Alex^r Hamilton also Alex^r Jaffray having some measure of health came here from Kingswells, and Geo : Keith having presently returned from Ireland, and Fr^{ds} having understood that there was some difference anent that meeting wh : did meet some years past at Kinaber, and finding that Truth had got some entrie into the town of Montrose thought it fit that some from this meeting might go with John Swinton thither and consider what may be most convenient to advise our dear friends

in the list. (Dr. W. A. Macnaughton in litt. ; *Thomas Story*, pp. 61-64.) David Barclay, when a prisoner in Edinburgh Castle, appointed David Falconar his factor, an office he filled from 1661 to 1668—possibly longer. He was one of the leading Friends of Edinburgh from about 1674 to 1689. In the latter year he removed with his family to Kirkcounhill, and died at Kingswells near Aberdeen, 18. iv. 1713. The births of nine of his children, 1673 to 1688, are recorded ; five of them died in childhood. The eldest son, John, settled in London. There is an interesting notice of him in Russell's *Haigs of Bemersyde*, p. 278. His wife died at Springhall near Ury, 22. vii. 1697. She is described in the records as "wife to ancient David Falconar . . . an honest discreet faithful woman in the Truth to the end of her dayes."

in these bounds, what might be most agreeable to Truth and conducive to our Testimony in the fear of the Lord [Thomas Mercer, John Skene and Thomas Mill were appointed accordingly].

The s^d day the meeting finding that the magistrates of the town have put Alex^r Somerville mariner, our friend, in prison though he has given in a bill to the Council the last 4th day for his liberation that they have in plain terms denied to liberate him unless he give bond as the rest of the seamen have done and this having not only an appearance but plainly implying an engagement on him to answer them and list himself for the war, Friends thought fit to advise him not to give any engagement either by word or writ lest otherwise it might mar his peace and reflect on Truth.

Midmonth Meeting Aberdeen 21st of 3^d mo. 1672 . . .
Ja^s Urquhart being present was desired to intimate to the Meeting at Tillakerrie that they may keep a correspondence with us, and show us if the poor need any supply and what else they thought fit to crave our assistance.

[Aberdeen Monthly Meeting, 2. v. 1672] where were present of strangers (besides our own) Jo : Cox, Tho : Robinson, Esther Bidle and Marg^t Falsit in our new meeting house.

The s^d day Geo : Gray in Caskiben and William Stot in New place show that they had appointed the first day before the Monthly Meeting and first day before the Mid Mo Meeting should meet at John Glennie's house at the Mill of Colliehill, where there are a people that thirsts after the meetings of friends : but y^t cannot well digest silent meetings where no friends speaks ; and therefore desired Fr^{ds} to consider this if so be the Lord may be pleased to move some Fr^{ds} here to come thither.

[Aberdeen, 16. v. 1672] John Haydok and James Sykes 2 Lancast : Fr^{ds} being present the meeting continued from 10 forenoon to n^r 5 in the afternoon, no meeting ab^t affairs.

[Aberdeen M.M. 6. vi. 1672] This day David Rait came in unto our meeting, and railed and blasphemed and reviled the magistrates calling them graceless magistrates ; and that though they could raise a dead child

or two out of their graves they would not raise the living at their meetings: but (said he) dead magistrates have dead works; and he did all he could by reading a paper he had drawn up to interrupt testimonies and prayer by saying it was the Devil we were serving and that we spoke and prayed by; with many such like expressions.

[Aberdeen M.M. 3. x. 1672] John Swinton being present told friends That there was ane order given by the Kings Councill for releasing William Neper and other two frinds at Montrose who have been detained prisoners their these two months by gone for keeping meetings in that Town

And^w Galloway was desired to order the meeting house so with a Barras that Schollars might not Leap over the forms to disturb the meeting as they did most barbarously this day when John Swinton and Robert Barclay were declaring and praying.

[The following minute of Aberdeen M.M. 7. xi. 167 $\frac{2}{3}$ has this endorsement on the margin:—"Anent two professing Truth countenancing the debauched tyme called yule."]

The s^d day George Keith Jnform frinds of ane publick offence given by William Steiven Weaver and Elspit Spring his wife Jn going upon the 25 of the tenth month to his wifes mothers and remaining idle all that day and keeping it in feasting their. And when this was reproved by other sober frinds of the meeting of Tillakeirie they did not receive the reprooffe as was sutable to Truth, but rather seemed to Justifie their fault: Whereupon friends heir thought fitt that some weighty frinds might go to Tillakeirie the nixt first day and speak with these persons anent their Scandall.

[Aberdeen M.M. 4. xii. 167 $\frac{2}{3}$] The s^d day Georg Keith reported that he and Thomas Merser went to Tillakirie the 19th of the last month being the firstday of the week and their befor severall frinds of that meeting Did Lay befor William Steiven and Elspit Spring his wife their offence on the 25 of the 10 mo: Last: And did find the man sensible and Jngenuous in acknowledging his fault: But his wife was not so at first: Yet after-

wards being convinced by what was spoken to her did weep and professed her greiffe for her offence.

[Aberdeen M.M. 4. xii. 1672] The s^d day Friends being informed that Robert Bruce was not to set [*i.e.*, let] his house for a Meeting Ho: longer than the next term called Whitsunday and that Alex^r Skene was willing to give up his house for the public meeting, *viz.* his hall and his high chamber for Fr^{ds} to meet in ab^t affairs, Fr^{ds} were well satisfied therewith and desired Barbara Forbes and Elizth her d^r to speak with his wife anent what she w^d condescend to take for entertainment of Stranger Fr^{ds} for time to come; seeing they had lodged them hitherto, since her husband came to own Truth; and as for the Maill of thos rooms they w^d give no less than what they had given to Rob^t Bruce.

[Aberdeen M.M. 1. ii. 1673] Friends finding that our Monthly meetings are ordinarily troubled with the railings and blasphemies of David Rait, have judged it fit utterly to neglect him and answer him nothing at all, as being the most suitable way to be rid of him and to prevent the tumult that he with the scholars of the College do ordinarily make, as they have done this day and many days formerly; and lest anything he should say should seem to reflect on Truth at any time to do no more at most but to show the people that Fr^{ds} have abundantly answered the most important arguments and queries that the chiefest of the clergy, so called have proposed, and these silly cavills so often repeated by him are not worth noticing.

[Special meeting at Muchalls, 14. vi. 1673 held on account of an appearance of a breach and separation by Robert Burnet from the meeting at Urie. There were present John Fullerton elder, David and R. Barclay, Geo: Keith, Patrick Livingstone, Tho: Merser, Alexander Harper, John Cowie, John Skene, Andrew Galloway, Thomas Mill, Alexander Skene and his wife and Robert Burnet master of the house.] The s^d day Fr^{ds} heard all exceptions that were betwixt any person or parties that were dissatisfied at present, and after a plain reckoning to the praise of the Lord's free goodness and mercy to his poor people, all differences were taken away and removed

with much brokenness and tenderness of heart, in embracing each other. for wh : blessed opportunity Fr^{ds} publicly and jointly (in his own spirit and life) returned praises to the Lord.

[At Mid-Monthly Meeting at Aberdeen, 19. vi. 1673] present John Tyso shoemaker in London and Thomas Atkinson in Duchy of Gloucestershire, shopkeeper.

[Aberdeen M.M. 7. viii. 1673] It was thought fitt (to shun all Inconveniencies in tyme coming) That whatsoever persons have any purpose of Marriag on with another (after that their parents are satisfied) They bring it first befor a meeting of frinds, That they may do theirin as the Lord shall order them. And if any through hastiness shall first draw up any Contract or condiscend on any worldly particular relative to their Marriag befor the advise of frinds be sought and their answer received, Their marriag shall be stopped untill frinds be satisfied that it may be accomplished.

[Aberdeen M.M. 3. xii. 1673.] The wh : day Fr^{ds} thought it convenient that the monthly afternoon meeting for public affairs, be changed into a quarterly meeting, the 1st whereof is to be the next first third day of the 3^d mo : (being the 5th of s^d mo :) and that every distinct meeting choose some of the weightiest of their number to resort thither, to represent the case of each meeting (not excluding a monthly or mid-monthly meeting ab^t any urgent or casual business as need requires) Likewise it was thought expedient that there be a sixweeks meeting successively at each country meeting of as many fr^{ds} as are free to come, the first of which is to be at Bailliestown the next 1st day save one (being the 15 of the month) and so consequently a meeting every six weeks on a Firstday at such places in the country as Fr^{ds} shall think expedient : and for this effect it is recomended to John Cowie to acquaint every meeting of the aforsaid particulars.

To be continued.

Supplement No. 8, containing further Extracts from State Papers, is now ready for the printers.