

# THE JOURNAL

OF THE

## FRIENDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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For Table of Contents see page two of cover.

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### Old Glasgow Meeting Houses

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THE first mention of a Meeting House at Glasgow occurs in the minutes of Edinburgh Quarterly Meeting, Third Month, 1691:—"It being signified to this meeting y<sup>t</sup> it would be of service to truth to have a meeting house taken in Glasgow friends here do unanimously Consent to itt & conclude to Contribut for y<sup>e</sup> rent of itt." The subject is next alluded to in Twelfth Month, 1695, when Glasgow Friends, having written to the Quarterly Meeting "Concerning the buying of ane meeting house there: It is the mind of this meeting that such at Glasgow as have money to advance doe purchase the house at the easiest rate and take the right in their own name and in case the houses fall waste and not make up the yearly rent of the mony so to be advanced in that case this meeting will take care to make up the same friends of the s<sup>d</sup> toun in the first place paying a sutable proportion thereof for the meeting room and what is behind to be made up as is above proposed."

A year later, Twelfth Month, 169<sup>6</sup>/<sub>7</sub>, Hew Wood, a worthy old Friend, a Minister, gardener to the Duke of Hamilton, suggested to the Quarterly Meeting that he and his fellow members at Hamilton should help Glasgow Friends to pay the interest of the money borrowed for the purchase of their meeting house, "w<sup>ch</sup> this meeting consents to." On referring to the minutes of Hamilton Monthly Meeting, we find that in the following Third Month two Friends from Glasgow were present, and represented the

great expense Friends there had incurred in repairing their Meeting House. The Monthly Meeting directed that the exact account of the outlay should be brought in to the next Monthly Meeting, "And then friends would take it into Consideration whether or no it shall be laid befor the nixt qwarterly meeting at edenburgh if so be a Course cannot be taken with it here amongst our selves in thire West pairts."

Accordingly, next month an account of "113<sup>libs</sup> 16<sup>sh</sup> 0<sup>d</sup>" was brought in, the amount which Friends of Glasgow had expended "in repairing their howse their which they have bought, wherin their is one Room dedicated for friends to meet in." It was then decided that Friends of Hamilton and Cummerhead would wait for a month and see how much Friends of Glasgow, Askein and Garshore were willing to contribute. In the Fifth Month it is frankly stated that Friends "not Haveing money at present," the business of Glasgow Meeting House is deferred, and it is not until the Eleventh Month that we find George Swan signing a receipt in the minute book for £47 . 7 Scots, the amount of the contribution by Friends of Hamilton.

We hear no more about the Meeting House for many years, but towards the end of 1728 we learn that Friends of Glasgow, having bought a new Meeting House, desired the advice of the Quarterly Meeting on the subject. The matter was referred to the next Quarterly Meeting, and meanwhile two Friends were appointed "to goe to Glasgow to take a view of the said house betwixt [now] and next Yearly Meeting." The report seems to have been satisfactory, as the Yearly Meeting, Third Month, 1729, agreed to allow John Purdon, a Friend of Glasgow, £60 sterling "for that lower part of the house which is now a danceing school and the closet or parlour adjoining thereto together with the equal half of the garden on the back side of the house." The Quarterly Meeting will make up the amount still needed by Glasgow Friends for the purchase of the house, "and if friends there shal conclude to take that half of the garden which is furthest distant from the house then the said John Purdon is to allow friends Jsh [?] & entry therto." He is also to give Friends the first offer of his part of the house and garden

in case he wishes to sell it ; and he and his heirs are to bind themselves to keep the roof and upper part of the house in good repair. For some reason this proposal did not satisfy Glasgow Friends, and their representatives at the next Quarterly Meeting “ gave in a paper giving ane acott of yr uneasines w<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> minute of y<sup>e</sup> Yearly Meeting relative to yr meeting house q<sup>b</sup> was read & after considering y<sup>e</sup> matter dewly this meeting still adheers to y<sup>e</sup> former minute.” Accordingly, at the Monthly Meeting at Glasgow in Third Month, 1730, it was “ Concluded that John Purdon Give ane disposition [of the house] to William Miller Juner at Ednburgh he recving from him the prise agraed theron.” George Purdon (the brother of John) is to receive a sum of 500 Merks left to Hamilton Meeting by Janet Hamilton, relict of Alexander Hamilton,<sup>1</sup> of Drumbony, “ and allso the severall superscriptons of friends at Glasgow and to marck what he recves and to be fwrth Coming to William Miler for the same in order to pay John Purdon for s<sup>d</sup> house ”<sup>2</sup>; George Swan and John Purdon are to give the trustees their bond for 500 merks and are to receive in exchange a disposition of the old Meeting House from the present

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Hamilton was one of the earliest native Ministers amongst Scottish Friends. In 1656 he was cited before the presbytery of Hamilton, threatened with “ Clubb Law,” and imprisoned. In the following year, having been seized as a vagabond at Kilmaires with other Friends of Glasfoord, he and they were imprisoned at Kilmarnock, and were afterwards passed on from constable to constable till they came to James Campbell of Cesnock, who, after examination and threatening, dismissed them. In 1673, he and eight other Friends, four of them women, were apprehended at a meeting in Linlithgow and carried off to prison. Next day they were examined before the Town Council, and sent back to prison ; and being again brought before the magistrates “ they were regwired either to goe willingly to Edinburgh and appear befor the Secreet cownsell . . . or they wowl send a partie to gward them hither. And wpon their condescendencie to goe willingly they dismissed them And they according to their conditione went to Edinburghe and attended the cowncell all the tyme appointed to them. In which tyme the[y] were neuer called nor charged with anything by the cownsell so they retwrned to Linlithgowe And signified to the provost their diligence according to aggreement And he haveing receaved sattisfacione therewith they departed thence.” Alexander Hamilton died in 1676, having bequeathed all his property to his wife, Janet. In 1683 the latter married James Gray of Hamilton, and died in 1706, leaving a bequest of 800 merks to Hamilton Meeting, which was payable on James Gray’s decease.

<sup>2</sup> In Third Month, 1730, six Friends of Edinburgh and Kelso had subscribed £11 sterling to assist Friends of Glasgow in the purchase and repair of their new Meeting House.

proprietors. It was "Concluded also that the five hundred mercks shall pay no Jntrest while the olde meting howse is unesold," or, as another minute adds, "while Eupham and Jane Weir is alive nor for six months after the decease of the longest liver of them two."

Three months later it was reported that the disposition of the new Meeting House and the garden had been granted to William Miller, Jun., and Charles Ormston, Jun., who are "to give a Back Bond to Geo: Purdon & Thomas Areskine Signifying that it is only disponed to them in trust": the business altogether seems somewhat complicated! In Twelfth Month 173<sup>2</sup> report was made that John Purdon was desirous to sell that part of the Meeting House which belonged to him, and the Quarterly Meeting gave its advice that "it will be best for Glasgow Friends to Buy his part if they can Conveniently do it, seeing they seem to alledge that it will be so considerable a Loss to the Light of the meeting house providing any other should buy it." It appears that 19s. 6d. was paid out of the Yearly Meeting funds in Second Month, 1734, "for infesting<sup>3</sup> W<sup>m</sup> Miller junior & Charles Ormston junior in the Meeting house of Glasgow and Seasing thereon." In the Third Month of that year a request came to the Yearly Meeting at Edinburgh from Glasgow Friends, that part of the interest of Elizabeth Dickson's legacy might be applied to the repair of the Meeting House. The Yearly Meeting, however, decided that, as they had already contributed towards the purchase of the said building, it was the business of Glasgow Friends to keep it in repair.

I have been unable to find anything more in the Monthly Meeting minutes regarding Glasgow Meeting House until 1791. At the Quarterly Meeting for Sixth Month, 1737, however, an epistle was read from Friends of Glasgow in which they mention "that their meetings on the First days in the Afternoon was some times frequented by sober people, who behav'd decently. Also

<sup>3</sup> Chambers, in his *Encyclopædia*, explains "Infestment" or "Sasine" as "a Scotch law-term used to denote the symbolical giving possession of land, which was the completion of the title, the mere conveyance not being enough. The instrument of Sasine was the notarial instrument embodying the fact of Infestment." Nowadays the process has been much simplified.

that they hop'd through divine Assistance to be mor in the way of their duty than heretofore."

From the cash accounts of the Yearly Meeting it would appear that the Meeting House was sold in 1751. In the Fifth Month of that year, one William Lumsden received £1 11s. 6d., "for writing the disposition to the Old Meeting house in Glasgow upon its sale," whilst "his servant" received three shillings, and six shillings was paid "for Extract of John Purdon's Disposition." In the following year £10 19s. 9d. was paid "to W<sup>m</sup> Lumsden for his pains & trouble in going to Glasgow [probably on business connected with the new Meeting House] and for Charges in the journey & Postage of letters."

Curiously enough there is no definite statement in the accounts of the purchase of the new Meeting House, but there is a record of its sale for £300, early in 1791. We learn from the minute of that date that in Ninth Month, 1751, Charles Ormston, merchant in Kelso, and William Miller, elder and younger, Seedsmen near the Abbey of Holyroodhouse, had been appointed trustees of the Meeting House; whilst in the cash accounts of Fourth Month, 1753, there is mention of £6 7s. 8d. having been paid by Edinburgh Monthly Meeting "to George Nisbet for a Gallery and other work to the Meeting house of Glasgow as p<sup>r</sup> discharg'd Acct."

So far as we can gather from the records it would appear that no Friends had been resident in Glasgow probably for some time before 1788.<sup>4</sup> In that year John Pemberton, writing to a Friend at Edinburgh, after visiting Friends in Scotland, says :

Dear G. Dillwyn to whom J wrote & mentioned the state of the meeting house at Glasgow [writes] "J mentioned to the meeting for Sufferings the circumstance of the meeting houses at Edinburgh and Glasgow, & thy proposal of having George Miller charged with the Care of them. The meeting proposed to take the subject up at a future siting & will probably write to G. Miller when they know from David Barclay who Corresponds with W<sup>m</sup> Miller what has been done on the Occasion. J also Comunicated the pleasing account of the little meeting at Glasgow. J have several times tho<sup>t</sup> & even before J saw the place that there was a seed in it which would be raised.

<sup>4</sup> There are no names of Glasgow or other West Country Friends in the list of members compiled by Edinburgh Monthly Meeting in 1787.

## 6 OLD GLASGOW MEETING HOUSES

The meeting here alluded to would seem to have been a little gathering of seekers after Truth, of whom it was reported to Edinburgh Monthly Meeting in Fifth Month, 1789, that there was "some appearance of convincement at Glasgow," and one John Kay ventured to make application for membership, but his reception was delayed—it would appear indefinitely. Three years later, in Eleventh Month, 1792, Mary Dudley, writing to George Miller after her return from a religious visit to Scotland, remarks :

Our kind Companion, J[ohn] W[itchell], may communicate various particulars of our journey since leaving Perth . . . and our little stop at Glasgow, with the few *there* who appear under convincement, with whom we had a sitting on first day Evening in a Room at the Inn, and were further relieved by another season with some of them the next morning, previous to our departure : there felt to us something worth visiting among these, though but so few in number, and [we] could not but regret they were without a suitable meeting place, but perhaps if they are preserved on the right foundation, even in this respect way may be made for them, and the sympathy of their friends excited towards them—two of them it is to be fear'd have sustained loss, for one however I sensibly felt and am solicitous he may be helped, from a belief that the visitation of heavenly regard is renewed towards him . . . I write thus freely to thee my dear friend respecting these people, because I wish them to be the objects of your care and sympathy.

The little gathering mentioned by Mary Dudley was no doubt the seed out of which there shortly grew up the revived Meeting at Glasgow—now by far the largest assembly of Friends in Scotland.

W. F. MILLER.

*Winscombe, Som.*

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Ellen Cockan, a well-known ministering Friend, once took a young woman to task for her gaiety in having a parasol. The ready rejoinder came : " Ellen Cockan, I bought it in thy shop."

Solomon Chapman, a Minister of the Society of Friends in the North of England, is described as being somewhat formal and sententious in speech. His directions to a servant in a house where he visited are recorded :—" Bring me two jugs of water in the morning—one, not warm, but hot ; another, not hot, but warm. Knock at the door, then open it, and proclaim the hour in an audible voice."

From THOMAS HENRY WEBB'S MS. *Collection of Quaker Stories.*