

## Historical Notes...

**1516** St Mary's or Durn Aisle was founded by Sir William Ogilvie of Strathern and Durn for masses to be said for the King (James V) his family and himself. This is the earliest reference to building associated with the kirk. Following the founding of the first school of Fordyce towards the end of the 16th century, by Thomas Menzies who built Fordyce Castle, this aisle was used by scholars during public worship.

At the time of the reformation in 1560 Fordyce parish included Cullen, Ordiqhill and Deskford. These became parishes in their own right about 1618.

**1566** Mary Beaton, one of the four Maries associated with Mary, Queen of Scots, married Alexander Ogilvie of Boyne (Boyne Castle near Portsoy). Upon her death she was laid to rest in this kirkyard, probably within the Findlater and Boyne tomb.

**1630** Lord Deskford requested permission to construct improved accommodation within the kirk for himself and his family. As he was a principal heritor of the kirk this request was readily agreed. This accommodation, a loft, was located along the south side of the kirk near to the Findlater and Boyne tomb.

**1659** Kirk bell purchased for £145.10s (Scots).

**1680** The Session papers record the following, 'Act of His Majesty's secret Counsell read, appointing a voluntr contributone to be gathered throughout all this Kingdome towards the building ane harbour at Portsoy in the Paroshe of Fordyce'.

**1692** Portsoy's old harbour was constructed.

**1718** witnessed the building of a new manse at a cost of £586 Scots. The former manse (now Fordyce House) incorporates this early structure as its centrepiece

**1843 (June)** Kirk session minutes records 'Messers James Lawtie, John Lorimer, William Cumming and John Cumming, Elders, intimate to the Session that they have withdrawn from the communion of the Established Kirk'. This refers to the 'Disruption' in 1843 when parishioners broke away from the established kirk to form the Free Kirk of Scotland. In Fordyce a Free Kirk was built in 1843 – closed in 1934, became the village hall and is today the Fordyce Community Hall.

*"Fordyce...a sheer delight to discover, concealed as it is from the passing eye by hills and rolling countryside - a singularly unspoiled and secluded mid 18th century community"*

Charles McKean, Banff and Buchan Illustrated Architectural Guide



## Aberdeenshire's HISTORIC KIRKYARDS



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## Aberdeenshire's HISTORIC KIRKYARDS



## Fordyce Old Kirk & Kirkyard



# Historic Kirkyards Aberdeenshire's Historic Kirkyards

## *The Auld Kirk of Fordyce*

On a Sabbath morning in the spring of 1804 communion was taken for the last time in this 'House of God' and in so doing a thousand years of worship on this site from early Christian to Presbyterian ended.

Incomplete as our knowledge is, there is a belief Christianity was introduced into these parts in the 6th century by a native Pictish 'Saint' Talarican or Tarquin whose name is associated with this site.

By the dawn of the 12th century, and following the establishing of parishes under a new feudal system, churches were being established all along the north coast of the Moray Firth.

These parishes and their churches have existed till today largely unaltered.

The earliest recorded reference to this kirk is in a charter dated 1272, in the time of Alexander III, when a vicar is appointed to the church of Fordyce.

A further early charter dated 1351 confirms Fordyce as a common church belonging to the Cathedral of Aberdeen. As a result of this connection, Bishop Elphinstone who founded Aberdeen University applied for and was granted a charter dated 10<sup>th</sup> May 1499 to erect Fordyce to Burgh of Barony status. This charter, the oldest charter document relating to Fordyce, entitled the Burgh to hold markets and fairs. On 10<sup>th</sup> May 1999 Fordyce celebrated its 500<sup>th</sup> 'birthday'. Representatives from the Roman Catholic, Episcopalian and Presbyterian churches were present to mark this historic occasion.



## *Kirkyard*

Both picturesque and atmospheric, this Kirkyard contains a wealth of monuments and gravemarkers spanning some 400 years – early 16th to early 20th centuries. The tower and belfry, as existing, are dated 1661 but are the result of alterations to heighten an earlier entrance porch on two occasions. The upper floor has been used as both a prison and session house. The room on this floor now contains a series of panels, providing an interesting insight to the village and those associated with it.

The medieval chancel contained the elaborate canopied tombs of the Ogilvies of Findlater and Boyne. The tomb with the recumbent effigy in armour is to James Ogilvie of Boyne and his son, dated 1510.

Adjoining these enclosures is the roofed Abercromby Aisle. Constructed in 1679, this aisle contains the fine marble memorial to General James Abercromby of Glassaugh who was associated with the fateful Battle of Ticonderoga in the Seven Years War in North America.

The enclosure in the far corner nearest to the former manse contains a memorial to the Rev. A. Humphrey who was the last Minister in the Kirk here and the first in the new Kirk.



*The Findlater and Boyne tomb*

**This enclosure was restored and the Findlater and Boyne tomb cleaned and repaired under the Aberdeenshire Historic Kirkyard project in 2006.**