

# THE BURNETT BANNER

**Burnett Newsletter**  
**(including House of Burnett News)**

**Edition No 37**  
**March 2017**

## BURNETT GATHERING *Monday 31st July - Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> August*

The forthcoming Gathering has attracted more Burnetts than there has been at any Gathering since the first in 1992. Because of the interest, we are taking two coaches for each of the tours to Culloden and St Andrews.

Extra to the original programme will be Archaeological Walkabouts in the vicinity of the Castle where there is a wealth of such interest including the recently discovered foundations of early buildings in the area. These walks will be with the Senior Archaeologist of the National Trust for Scotland, David Rhodes.

Full details of all events and activities will be forwarded in advance to those who plan to come to the Gathering.



### THE BURNETTS AND ST NICHOLAS KIRK, ABERDEEN

Many Burnetts who have been to Crathes and Aberdeen, will be familiar with St Nicholas Kirk in Aberdeen. I am very grateful to Charles Burnett for the article on *Pages 7-11*



### HOLYROOD POLITICAL DRAMA AND SUSPENSE



*Alexander supporting #EarthHour,  
highlighting the threat of climate change*

*See Page 14 for more details*



## BURNETT CONNECTIONS

When Fiona and I became engaged in 1971, we received a letter from a Marjorie Roberts together with a silver salver engraved with a Burnett coat of arms. When she died, she left me the following painting which I had thought was of one of her ancestors, Sir Admiral



James Alexander Gordon. I have now recently discovered that it is of Sir William Burnett, M.D. K.C.B. F.R.S., an eminent physician.

*See Pages 12-14*

NOTE FROM THE  
HOUSE OF BURNETT SECRETARY

As I am writing this note, they say it is meteorological Spring but we got 7 + inches of snow. We are getting geared up for Scottish Games and Festivals. I will be at the Loch Norman Games in Huntersville NC. On 7, 8 and 9 April. On June 2, 3 and 4 I will be at the Glasgow KY. Games. If you happen to be in the area of these games or games elsewhere look for a Burnett Tent. I know I would enjoy your company.

We continue to look for articles and Pictures for the Burnett Banner. If you have anything you think would be off interest to the Family please submit it.

I am pleased to have learned of the large number of Family members who will be attending the Gathering in July. I assure you we will have a great time. I am looking forward to meeting everyone.

I hope everyone came out unscathed with all this crazy weather we have been having.

I am still getting emails which fail and letters which get returned. Please let me know if you move or change you email address. It is time consuming and costly.

As always if anyone has any concerns, questions, problems or suggestions please contact me.

*Leland L. Burnett*  
*burnett@dcwis.com*

[illegible]

JOHN BURNETT

We have recognised in the Family Room at Crathes Castle, John Burnett's contribution to the good name of Burnett and the House of Burnett. We hope that we shall see many of his family in Scotland before long and we are very pleased that Britton is coming to the Gathering.



holiday in November. Thank you Britton for this.

*James C A Burnett of Leys*

## HOUSE OF BURNETT LIEUTENANTS

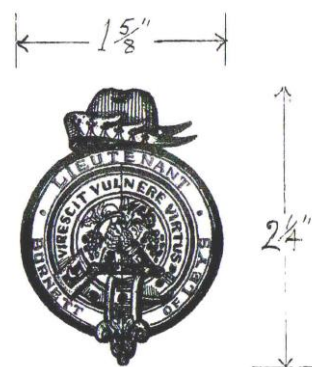
As I wrote in the December edition of the Banner, John Burnett's role as Tosheador is to be replaced by Burnett Lieutenants.

I am very pleased to announce that Jacky Daugherty and Jim Burnette have agreed to take on the responsibilities of Lieutenants.

As previously described, the duties of the Burnett Lieutenants can be

- To represent the Chief of the Name at all public gatherings of the House of Burnett in their area.
- To welcome new Members of the House and to present them formally with Certificates of Membership.
- To disseminate information and decisions from the Chief of the Name to Members in their area.
- To act as a conduit for Members to contact the Chief of the Name with any problems, enquiries, or suggestions.

I am very grateful to Jacky and Jim to take on this role and to Burnetts who contribute in similar ways. Their presence will be recognised at Highland Games by the flying of the Pinsel as shown here. Each will also wear a handmade sterling silver badge which is in the process of being made and will shortly be available. Consequently, a photograph of one is not available but, for this notice to be more complete, herewith the next best image.



*James C A Burnett of Leys*

[illegible]



## QUEEN MARY HIGHLAND GAMES LONG BEACH HARBOR



*Cathy and Rich West*



## PHOENIX SCOTTISH GAMES



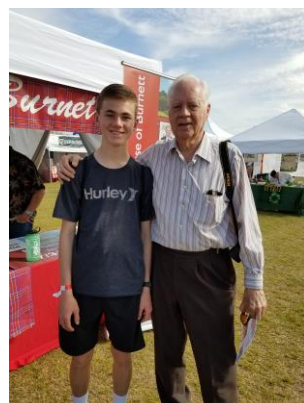
*Bonny Burnett Puckett, her husband Ryan, (in black kilt) who is a Games Athlete, her brother Joe Burnett and her two children Alyssa and Samantha, with two huge dogs.*



*Gloria Burnett Aronoff, her son, Adam Aronoff and his children, Alex and Mila*



*John and Katie Burnett*



*Richard Burnett and his grandson, Grant Burnett Hall.*



*Malcolm Dewar*

## JULIAN AND VIVIAN BURNETT

We always like to hear from Burnetts and to receive photographs. Herewith Julian and Vivian Burnett at a Robert Burns Dinner in January



*James C A Burnett of Leys*

Sadly, due to our tour timeline we did not have an opportunity to revisit the Burnett Tent.

The next day we spent touring the Crathes Gardens and Crathes Castle. We thoroughly enjoyed these tours. Especially the family room on the upper floor of the Castle with the portraits and documents. I have been doing my families genealogy for about 25 years. My 3rd great-grandmother was Sarah Alice Burnett (married name Faulkner). Her brother was John Franklin Burnett, a Christian Minister in Dayton Ohio and author of seven booklets on "The Origins and Principles of the Christians" which was published into a book in the early 1920's. One of Sarah Alice Burnett Faulkner's granddaughters gave me his book prior to her death this year.



Our tour timeline constraints unfortunately kept our visit short. I would love to be able to attend the Burnett Gathering and learn more of my heritage and ancestors. One can only hope. But though our visit was short, I can say that I felt the connection to the area and the Burnett's.

Thanks to everyone at the Castle and Gardens that made us feel so welcome and made our visit such a pleasure. And a special thanks to Alexander for spending some time with us at the games on Saturday.

## VISITORS TO CRATHES

We always like to hear from Burnetts who visit Crathes and of their experience here. We have seldom if ever found anyone to be disappointed. I am grateful to Barbara Fowler from Ohio with daughters Pam Gibson, and Cheryl Earle (North Carolina) for the following report of their visit during the time of the Aboyne Games last year

### ABOYNE HIGHLAND GAMES & CRATHES CASTLE

In August 2016 I (we) had the privilege of being able to visit Scotland (and Ireland) for the first time – a lifetime dream. Needless to say I was thrilled. Accompanying me were my daughters Pam and Cheryl. When planning the trip there were two stops and one event that were high on our list, the Aboyne Games and meeting James Burnett, and visiting Crathes Castle.



The first thing at the Highland Games was finding the Burnett tent and meeting James Burnett. Unfortunately he had stepped away but we did meet Alexander and had a nice visit with him. Then we spent the afternoon watching the games.

## BURNETTE BROOCH

I was recently asked if I knew anything about this brooch. The question came from somebody to whom it was given by an Eric Burnette and was interested to discover its provenance. The only information she had is that it came from a Burnett castle. If any reader can help, it would be much appreciated.





## CEMENT & BURNETT

My wife, Fiona, sleeps for much of the time at night with ear plugs listening to the radio. She says it helps her to sleep when she wakes at four o'clock in the morning. One would think that any radio programme on statistical information relating to the use of concrete in China would be enough to outlast the slumber imposed upon Rip Van Winkle by Washington Irving.

Not so. Because the programme featured none other than our friend, Hendrik Van Oss. Hendrik's mother was a Burnett and many of his cousins have visited or stayed with us at Crathes over the years. Hendrik's last visit was in 2014.

Hendrik is with the National Minerals Information Center within the U.S. Geological Survey. His group, originally with the now-extinct U.S. Bureau of Mines, monitors the mining industry of the USA and the world. It covers, as he sometimes describe them, all of the ugly grey powders for construction: cement, iron and steel slags, and coal combustion by-products.



These feed the concrete industry and while these materials have all the sex-appeal of a worn-out flip-flop, (Hendrik's description), they are not without importance. Quite a change from his own mining industry background in gold exploration.

Hendrik has produced some terrifying statistics. U.S. cement production 1900-2000, was just 4,283 million metric tonnes. China now produces annually something more like 2.4 billion metric tons per year. The cement industry is one of the biggest unit emitters of carbon dioxide. Because of China's enormous output of cement, the overall world cement industry is (excepting the fossil-fuel-burning power plants) the biggest industrial emitter of carbon dioxide in the world.

Not all Burnett material - but we should be grateful to Hendrik for all his work and making us wise to these facts.

**James C A Burnett of Leys**

## "SYBIL" LADY BURNETT, WIFE OF SIR JAMES BURNETT OF LEYS & FRANCIS CROZIER

I made the mistake of not asking my grandmother or her sister, Elizabeth Carr, much about their ancestry or to how they were related to the Irish Arctic and Antarctic explorer, Francis Crozier as we were led to believe that they were. Whilst one takes no credit to being associated with celebrities, it can be of interest to understand the connection. Eileen Bailey has been undertaking some research during which she discovered something unknown to me, which was that my grandmother's name was Isabella and not Sybil which more usually comes from the Greek word meaning a prophetess.

Francis Crozier was second in command in a four-year voyage to explore the Antarctic continent in 1839. He discovered large parts of the Antarctica continent including the Ross Sea and Ross Island, Mount Erebus and the Ross Ice Shelf. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1843. His principal claim to fame was that he was with Sir John Franklin in 1845 on the Northwest Passage expedition. After Franklin's death, he took command of the expedition, and his fate and that of the other expedition members remained a mystery, until a note from him was found 1859 during another expedition. The note said that the ships, stuck in ice, had been abandoned and John Franklin, and 9 officers 15 crewmen had died. Crozier's fate was unknown.



My grandmother was born Sybil Aird Crozier-Smith. She was the younger daughter of William Crozier-Smith, a farmer and a corn merchant of St. Boswells in the Scottish Borders and his wife, Mary Ashe (Minnie) Crozier whom I just remember and was known as Bem. She died in 1951. William Smith's mother was Isabella Aird after whom it is suggested that Sybil was named. It would appear that, for some reason, William and Mary Smith included the surname Crozier and were known as Mrs & Mrs Crozier-Smith



In the press report of my grandmother's wedding in St Paul's Church, Knightsbridge, she is referred to as Miss Isabella Aird (Sybil) Smith. Of interest is that she was given away by her uncle Colonel H. Crozier of Stramore, Gilford, Co. Down.

There is a record of the burial site of Rev. William Crozier, 1797 -1873 at the Manse, Newry. He and his wife are buried at Old Magheradrool Church Cemetery, Ballynahinch, Co. Down. They were the grandparents of Mary Ashe Crozier Smith. Accompanying notes state that he was a second cousin of Francis R.M. Crozier. Eileen Bailey found a newspaper advertisement of Sept 1866 offering Stramore House, Offices & Gardens to let. The proprietor was Rev. William Crozier, whose son, Rev John Armstrong Crozier, was Mary Ashe's father.

They may even be another connection as Francis's



Monument to Captain Crozier in his hometown of Banbridge, Co. Down, Ireland

ancestors were, as almost certainly were the Burnetts, of Norman descent and came to England with William the Conqueror in 1066. A certain William was in the service of the Church as the crozier carrier for King William's half-brother Bishop Odo hence the surname Crozier. Before this date surnames did not exist. He was the founder of the family.

In Banbridge, Co Down, there is a monument to Francis Crozier with polar bears at the foot. He was not as close a relation as we may have thought, but a connection nevertheless.

*James C A Burnett of Leys*



THE MISSING CONKERS

Visitor to Crathes may notice that several Horse Chestnut (Conker) trees in the vicinity of the Castle have



sadly been felled. This is due to a harmful species of honey fungus called Armillaria. The fungus appears as black bootlaces or 'rhizomorphs', thick travelling fungal structures (left) which can be seen where the bark has fallen off the tree trunk. The National Trust Ranger, Toni Watt, describes this as strangely beautiful in their own right

forming a geometric pattern all the way up the trunk, but it does result in the roots rotting and consequently the trees have to be felled.

Visitors may have noticed the removal of the abundant common Rhodendron or rhododendron ponticum in the vicinity of the castle. Whilst providing both beauty and

shelter, they are prone to harbouring a number of diseases which affect other plants and shrubs. Such diseases may be unwittingly brought by visitors and so the rhododendron has to go.

Trees have long been an important part of the Crathes landscape. It was

the storm of 1953 that devastated the woodlands, most of which were felled by the wind overnight. Those around the Castle were least affected due to



the fact that, by growing alone, they were stronger than those which grew in relative shelter. During 2015, Chris Wardle, the Head Gardener at Crathes, set out a project to assess the tree collection at Crathes. The result of this is confirmation that Crathes has 3 British Champions; (Betula dahurica, the Dahurian Birch, Eleutherococcus trifolius and Zelkova x verschaffeltii) and 16 Scottish Champions.

Behind the fallen trees in this photograph is the horse chestnut tree in front of the Castle. I know that it has yet to achieve a very great age, as I remember well when it was planted to replace a huge tree which we spent much time climbing.

"Man stole the fruit, but I must climb the Tree,  
The Tree of Life, for all but only me."

*James C A Burnett of Leys*



BURNETT'S CASK

Something to whet the appetite of those on the Gathering tour of the local distillery. A friend and Burnett kinsman has a cousin who is a keen whisky collector and a few years ago made the investment for his family - and may even a bottle out of it every now and again! The rest left to age.



*James C A Burnett of Leys*



## THE BURNETTS AND ST NICHOLAS' KIRK By Charles Burnett, former Ross Herald



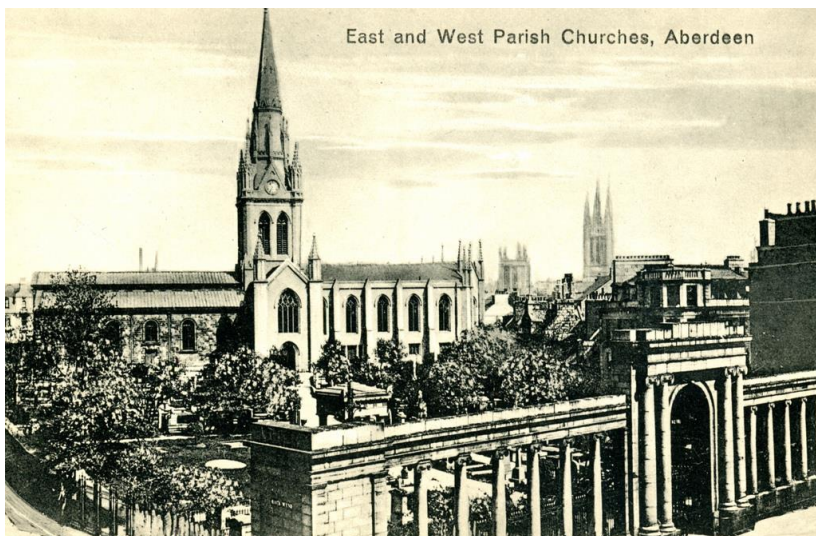
Robert Burnet of Aberdeen



Arms of St Nicholas Kirk

### **"The Mither Kirk o' Aiberdean"**

The ancient parish church of Aberdeen, located in the heart of the Royal Burgh and City dates from 1157. The Kirk was enlarged in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and dedicated by Bishop Elphinstone in 1498. Along with St Mary's Dundee, St Nicholas was one of the two largest parish churches in Scotland. At the Reformation the canny Aberdonians removed the treasures of the Kirk before the bully-boys of John Knox arrived from Edinburgh to demolish and destroy anything reminiscent of Popery. After the Reformation the church was divided in two, the former choir and sanctuary became the East Kirk and the nave became the West Kirk. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century the medieval nave was in a very poor condition. It was demolished and replaced in 1755 with a new building, the West Church, erected to plans by the Aberdeen-born architect James Gibbs, more famous for St Martin's-in-the-Fields Church, Trafalgar Square, London. The medieval choir and sanctuary had very rich internal decoration consisting of a large amount of carved woodwork including heraldic panels, along with floor tombs. The East Kirk was rebuilt with granite in a Gothic style in 1837 by the Aberdeen architect Archibald Simpson who fortunately arranged for woodwork, heraldic panels and floor tombs to be preserved and moved down into the Vault below the East Kirk. This was called Our Lady of Pity's Vault during the medieval period and is now known as St Mary's Chapel. Sadly, in 1874 a fire destroyed the East Kirk and the old central tower, and a new East Church was rebuilt to the previous designs of Archibald Simpson along with a new granite tower and spire designed by the City Architect, William Smith.



A postcard produced about 1910 showing the Mither Kirk, Gibbs addition to the left, new granite steeple by Smith and the East Kirk designed by Archibald Simpson with the Kirkyard in front. The huge granite screen and gateway were also designed by Simpson to provide continuity along the main thoroughfare of Union Street.

The one substantial remaining medieval portion of the Kirk is the Chapel of St Mary which survives under the east end of the Church. This contains tombstones of interest to all Burnetts. The West Church also contains Burnett heraldry and here follows a complete list of all Burnett material in the Mither Kirk: From the material still surviving it would appear Aberdeen Burnetts worshipped in the East Kirk after the Reformation up until the start of the eighteenth century. Thereafter they became members of the Scottish Episcopal Church and one Episcopalian family, the Burnetts of Campfield, certainly supported the Jacobite Cause.





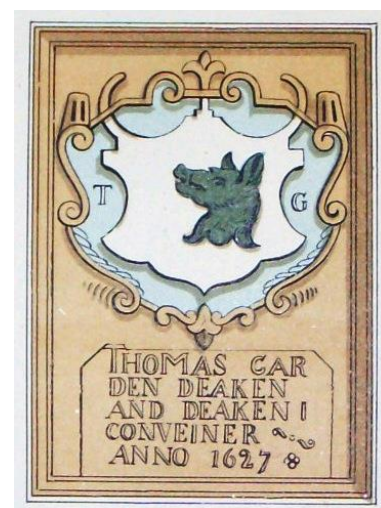
A Victorian cupboard in the West Church made up with earlier panels from the East Kirk. At the top, the carved painted Arms and name of John Gordon; underneath the date 1706 alongside a panel bearing the carved and painted Arms of Burnett of Dalladies, a cadet of Leys, within a bordure checky for difference - it should be a bordure counter-compony. Above is a crest of five holly leaves and the motto NEC FLUCTU NEC FLATU which translates as *NEITHER WIND NOR WAVE*.

This would be an appropriate motto for a Burnett in Aberdeen who was a merchant who shipped goods from the Burgh across the North Sea. John Burnett of Dalladies recorded these Arms on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1676 in the Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland, held in Lyon Office, Edinburgh.

Many of the heraldic panels in the East Kirk were painted.



Left, a close-up of the Dalladies Arms showing the painted achievement against an uncoloured background. Right, the painted shield of Thomas Garden who was Deacon, and then Deacon Convenor of the Incorporated Trades in 1627. As the Burnett example the shield and immediate background only are painted.





This picture shows a much-worn tombstone in the West Church, which was once in the St Nicholas Kirkyard. The drawing alongside gives much more detail and indicates the stone commemorates George Aedie, merchant burgess in Aberdeen, who died in 1657 and his wife Jeals Burnet who died in 1663. Jeals is not a common first name. The Aedie Arms consisted of three cross crosslets fitched.

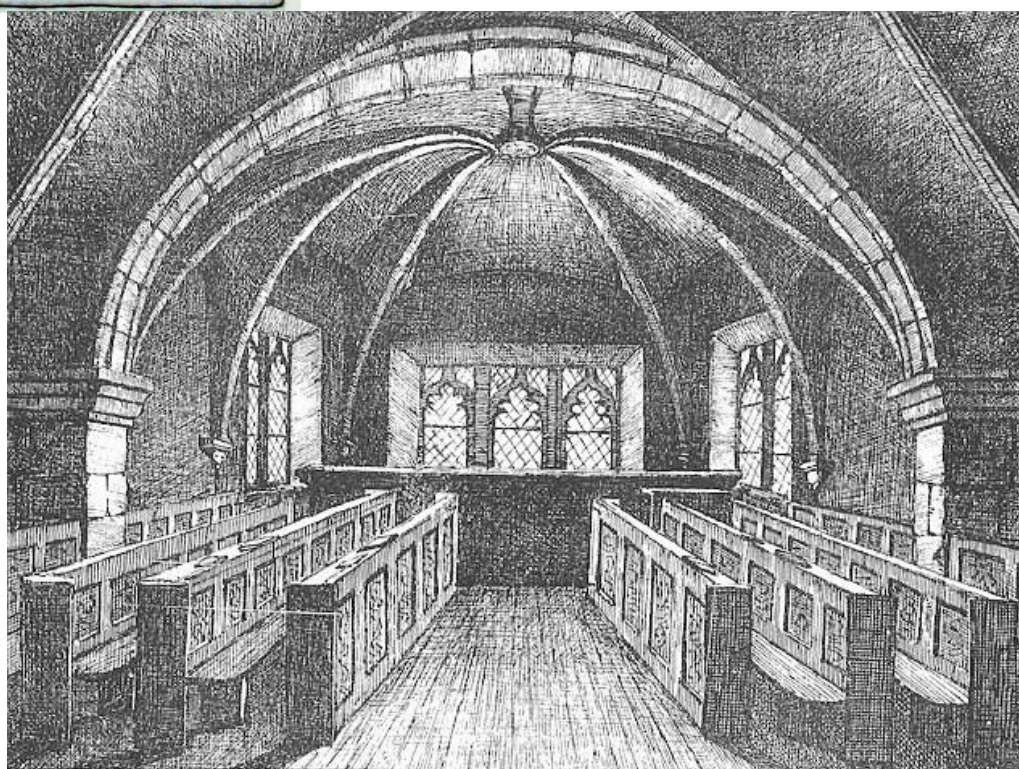


Tombstone commemorating John Burnet of Elrick, Bailie in Aberdeen, who died in 1666, and his wife Marjorie Howison who died in 1663, which has another impaled shield below. This is in memory of another John, or James, Burnet who was married to an unknown lady with the initials M I.

Both Burnett Arms have no differences of any kind. By this period sons of the Burnett laird of Leys would have borne mullets, crescents or bordures of difference to show their relationship to the head of the family.

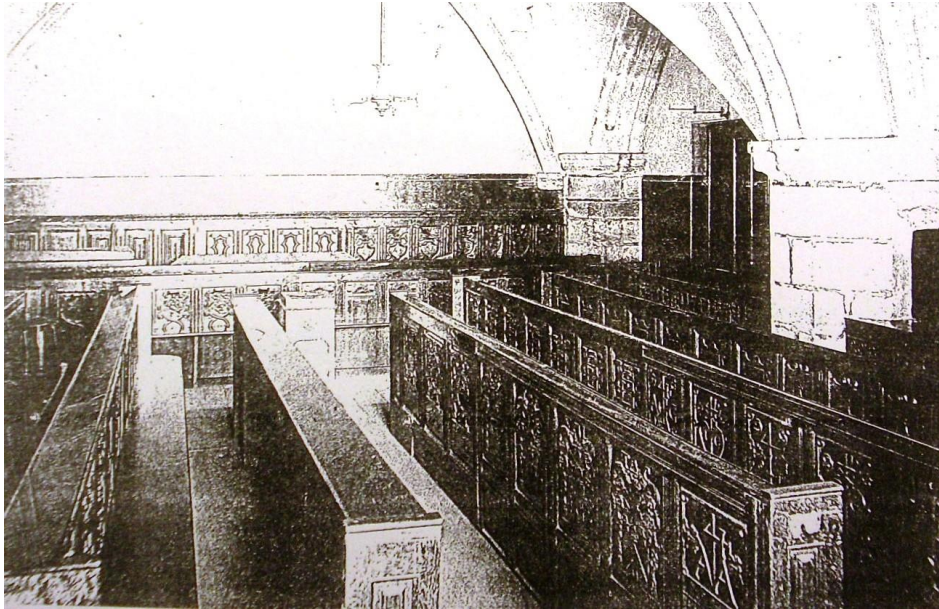
Note how Robert Burnet of Aberdeen used a small Azure billet to indicate he was of the Burnett of Leys line.

The stone is in the burial plot belonging to the Burnetts of Elrick which is situated beside the west wall of the Kirkyard



This is an old engraving of St Mary's Chapel beneath the East Kirk which shows the roof vaulting and pillars. At the time it contained wooden seating with incorporated carved panels in front of each pew. These came from the East Kirk above after it was remodelled in 1834. The view looks east towards Correction Wynd.



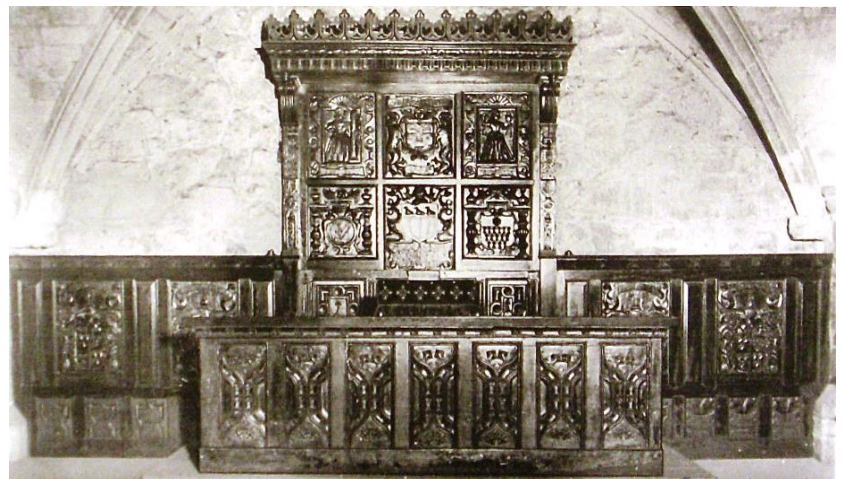


Photograph of the carved stalls taken about 1890 before Dr William Kelly prepared a scheme to restore the Chapel. Also removed down to the Chapel from the East Kirk were three grave slabs which commemorate members of the Burnett family. These were set into the floor of the Chapel along with other memorial slabs to other Aberdeen families.



In 1898, Dr William Kelly, the Aberdeen architect, restored the Chapel and designed new furnishings including the altar and the font. On the front of the altar are the Arms of Lady Elizabeth Gordon on the left, and the Arms of Sir John Gordon on the right. These were designed by the Aberdeen enamellist, Dr Cromar Watt. The old pews were dismantled and all the carved panels preserved as wall covers.

The earliest woodwork was carved by John Fendour in 1507 for the choir of the East Kirk. He had earlier undertaken the carving of the choir stalls for King's College Chapel in Old Aberdeen. The woodwork was turned into a stall for the Town Council of Aberdeen after the Reformation.







A very interesting floor panel which commemorates two Burnett brothers and a married son. The inscription reads: HEIR LYES THOMAS AND ANDROV BURNET BROTHERS BURGESSSES OF ABD QUHO DEPAIRED THIS LYF 13 SEPTR 1644, ALEXANDER BURNET BAILLIE OF ABD SON TO THOMAS DYED 29 APRIL 1685 SICKLYKE AGNES MOIR HIS SPOUS DYED THE 18<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1688.

The brothers died in a battle between citizens and the army of the Marquess of Montrose when he sacked the city in 1644, 118 Aberdeen citizens were killed. The brothers use the undifferenced Burnett of Leys Arms.

Tombstone which commemorates a Burnett wife. The inscription states;

HEIR RESTS THE BODIE OF MARGERIE BURNET THE LOVING WYF OF ALEXANDER TOASCH DEPARTED MAI 9<sup>th</sup> 1663 AND OF HER AGE THE 24<sup>th</sup> YEIR.

There is an impaled coat of Arms on the dexter for Toasch [Tosh] and sinister for Burnett. The Burnett Arms carry an annulet on the central holly leaf as a mark of difference showing Margerie to have been a sister of Duncan Burnett, 5<sup>th</sup> son of Leys.

Alexander Toasch went on to record his Arms between 1672 and 1677 on page 431 of the 1<sup>st</sup> Volume of the Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland. He is described as 'merchant in Aberdeen'.



Tombstone for Robert Burnet who died in 1674. He was married to a Margaret, or Mary, Gray.

The inscription is very badly worn and is incomplete. Robert Burnett's Arms carry a central billet for difference. His son, also Robert, who was the Procurator Fiscal in Aberdeen, recorded these Arms in the Public Register, Volume 1, page 256, between 1676 and 1693.



St Nicholas' commemorates nine Burnets, two are wives; two are landowners: Burnet of Elrick and Burnet of Dalladies; two are Baillies, John Burnet of Elrick and Alexander Burnet who died in 1685 and two were Burgesses of Aberdeen. Burgesses were freemen of the Burgh who were usually merchants or business men. They did not work physically with their hands like craftsmen or agricultural labourers.

Baillies were, and still are, officials in the local government of a burgh equivalent to aldermen in English boroughs. They assist the provost [or mayor in England] in ceremonial duties.

The spelling of the surname Burnet remained with one 't' until the beginning of the eighteenth century in north-east Scotland. Thereafter Burnett with two 'ts' became more common. The Burnet spelling is still found in central and south-east Scotland.

The Burnetts remembered in St Nicholas' indicate the contribution the wider family of the name made to the life of the Royal Burgh of Aberdeen.

## THE CAMERA DOESN'T LIE

Most of the Burnetts who are coming to the Gathering wish to enjoy the Ghostly Tour of the Castle. There are those who do not believe that there really is a Green Lady. Surely they are in a minority. On the other hand, it is not unreasonable to cast such a doubt in the absence of evidence that is not anecdotal.

The doubters need wait no longer. What more proof can they seek after seeing this photograph taken by a visitor to the Castle last year. They say that the camera cannot lie.



*The Editor*

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### BURNETT, GORDON, KEY AND HORNBLOWER

*Continued from Page 1*

Marjorie Gordon Roberts who died in North Berwick in 1974, aged 82 was married to Bertram S. Roberts, retired solicitor, who died in North Berwick in 1965. They married in 1918 in Great Ouseburn, Yorkshire. Her parents were Arthur David Burnett, a Clergyman, and his wife, Edith.

Arthur David Burnett, born in 1859 was the son of Reverend William Burnett, son of Sir William Burnett an eminent physician. William was a graduate of Trinity College, became the Rector of Tangmere 1847-58 and then Vicar of Boxgrove, Kent, and he married Maria Rosara Gordon (right), a daughter of Admiral Sir James Alexander Gordon.



So Marjorie Gordon Burnett (Roberts) was a great grand-daughter of Sir William Burnett, Physician and also of Admiral Sir James Alexander Gordon. Both were men of considerable distinction.

Sir William Burnett (below), KCB, FRS (1779 –1861) served as Physician-General of the Royal Navy. He was born in Montrose and attended Montrose Grammar School and was appointed surgeon's mate on board the Edgar soon after his arrival at Edinburgh to pursue his medical studies. Later he served as assistant-surgeon in the Goliath under Sir John Jervis, and was present at St. Vincent and the siege of Cadiz. He also served with distinction at battles of the Nile and Trafalgar.



Between 1805 and 1810 he was in charge of the hospitals for prisoners of war at Portsmouth and Forton. His diligence in his most arduous hospital duties recommended him in 1810 for the office of Physician and Inspector of Hospitals to the Mediterranean Fleet. His health deteriorated and he returned to England but in March 1814 he was able to undertake the medical charge of the Russian fleet in the Medway, which was suffering severely from fever. He combined with this the charge of the prisoners of war at Chatham, among whom a virulent fever was raging. On the completion of this service Burnett settled at Chichester as a physician until 1822, when Lord Melville offered him a seat at the Victualling Board.

He became Physician-General of the Royal Navy and introduced valuable reforms, including requiring regular classified returns of diseases from naval medical officers, urging the erection of, and largely planned, the Melville Hospital at Chatham for naval patients, and introducing more humane treatment of naval lunatics at Haslar. All the codes of instructions to naval medical officers of hospitals and ships were revised and greatly improved by him.

He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1833, knighted on 1831 and appointed physician-in-ordinary to King William IV 1835. Soon afterwards he was created a Knight Commander of the Royal Guelphic Order, promoted to Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath by Queen Victoria in 1850 and retired in 1855.

During his career he earned the reputation of being a 'hard-working, unimaginative and somewhat harsh man'. However, he was at the same time very humane in both his work and writings. His reputation was eroded in later life by his determined promotion of his Zinc Solution.



In 1841, the Naval Medical Corps testified their high regard for the benefits he had conferred on the service by presenting him with the full-length portrait by Sir Martin Archer Shee and a service of plate. However, the Naval Medical officers of the day were greatly upset when they were required to contribute from their pay towards the cost of the painting. Burnett Bay in the Northwest Territories was named after Sir William.

Admiral of the Fleet, Sir James Alexander Gordon (below right) (1782–1869) was eldest son of Charles Gordon of Wardhouse, Aberdeenshire.

His wife was a daughter of Major James Mercer, of Auchnacant, Aberdeenshire. Gordon entered the Royal Navy in 1793. In rapid but continuous succession, he then served in many different ships, including the *Révolutionnaire* frigate in the action off L'Orient, 1795 and the *Goliath* in the battles of Cape St. Vincent and the Nile.



His very distinguished career included the capture or destruction of a Spanish convoy and gunboats off Rota in 1808. He took a prominent part in the action off Lissa in 1811 for which he received the gold medal, and later in the capture of the *Pomone* when he lost a leg, shot off at the knee. Captain Maxwell of the *Alceste*, acknowledging the principal share of the *Active* in the capture, sent the French captain's sword to Gordon as his by rights.

As he recovered from his wound, Gordon was sent to England for the re-establishment of his health, and in 1812 was appointed to the *Seahorse*, in which, towards the end of the following year, he joined Sir Alexander Cochrane in the Chesapeake.

In August 1814, he was senior officer and in command of the squadron which forced its way up the Potomac, reduced Fort Washington and its supporting batteries, captured the city of Alexandria, and brought down twenty-one of the enemy's ships, with their cargoes on board. The loss sustained in this expedition was but small, but the labour was excessive, and it is recorded that during the twenty-three days, the hammocks were down for only two nights.

The fire of his ships, directed against Fort McHenry, Baltimore, in 1814 was the inspiration for the National Anthem. A storm flag was flown over Fort McHenry during the bombardment and was replaced early on the morning of September 14, 1814 with a larger garrison flag. The larger flag signalled the American victory over the British. The sight of the ensign inspired Francis Scott

Key to write the poem *Defence of Fort M'Henry* which was later set to the tune *To Anacreon in Heaven* and became the *Star Spangled Banner*.

Mention here of Francis Scott Key (below) justifies a brief digression. He was born in Maryland in 1779, studied law at Annapolis and was a poet. He married Mary Tayloe Lloyd, a daughter of Colonel Edward Lloyd IV of Wye (Maryland) who, though educated at Eton and Cambridge, was prominent in the American revolution and for a while was President of the State of Maryland. In 1783, Colonel Lloyd is listed as possessing 500 ounces of plate, a schooner and a barge, 261 slaves, 11,884 acres of land etc.



Key was active in the anti-slavery movement and freed all his own slaves, (though none of them left him!). He was on the British flagship negotiating for the liberation of a prisoner when the bombardment of Fort McHenry occurred. His silver tea service came down to some of my Cumine cousins of whom one, Heather Cumyn, gave it to the museum in Annapolis. Francis Scott Key had a daughter, Maria Lloyd Key; a grand-daughter, Anna Key Steele; a great-grandson, Henry Steele Bartow and a great-great grand-daughter, Anne Cumyn. This information comes from her son, Peter, whose son, James Comyn, is my godson. The family own the Rattray Estate in Aberdeenshire. My Burnett great-grandmother was a Cumine of Rattray.

Returning to Admiral Gordon, he had a full share in the unsuccessful expedition against New Orleans after which he returned to England. In 1815 he had been nominated a KCB and appointed to the command of the *Madagascar* and later the *Meander*, in which he narrowly escaped being wrecked on a shoal off Orfordness, over which the ship was forced in a gale of wind. For many hours she was in the greatest danger, and her ultimate safety was attributed mainly to Gordon's coolness, energy, and skill. He was immediately afterwards appointed to his old ship, the *Active*, and commanded her for the next two years on the North American and Mediterranean stations. His appointments included superintendent of Plymouth Hospital and of Chatham dockyard, where he continued till his promotion to flag-rank. In 1840, he was appointed Lieutenant-Governor and later Governor of Greenwich Hospital. He held the office for the remainder of his life, attained the rank of vice-admiral in 1848, of admiral in 1854, was nominated a G.C.B, promoted to be Admiral of the Fleet and died in 1869. Exceptionally, he was buried, (under a handsome granite tombstone), in the officers' enclosure of its old

burial ground, adjacent to the National Maritime Museum, although other burials there had ceased in 1857.

In his half-length portrait he is wearing Rear-Admiral's full-dress uniform together with his collar and star as a Knight Commander of the Bath and the Lissa medal..

Ever since C.S. Forester's fictional hero Horatio Hornblower (right) began to delight and enthral readers, there has been speculation as to whether his adventures were based on the career of a real naval officer. The general conclusion was that Hornblower was a composite character. However, a researcher discovered from Forester's *Naval War of 1812* that the author had been deliberately reticent regarding a Captain James Alexander Gordon, RN, who had led his squadron up the Potomac.



Further inspection of naval records revealed a startling number of parallels between the careers of Gordon and Hornblower and too many to be a matter of simple coincidence. Forester was aware of Gordon when the first of his books were written, and when he decided to expand the series of the Hornblower cycle, he chose Gordon's career as the framework on which his hero's life would be based. As a professional author, it was neither surprising that he should conceal the fact, nor that he should choose Gordon as his model. Gordon had entered the Royal Navy as a semi-literate eleven-year-old and rose to become Admiral of the Fleet. He took part in major sea battles, frigate actions, single-ship duels and operations far behind enemy lines.

Readers of the above may be impressed by both the content and the connections. Not only can I lay little claim to the content but, because of the indeterminate relationship of Sir William Burnett, I am unable to claim relationship to any of the principals – other than maybe ***Hornblower !***



***James C.A. Burnett of Leys***

## HOLYROOD POLITICAL DRAMA AND SUSPENSE

There has been not much original political news over recent months, just seemingly a repeat of the same endless constitution debates – with the United Kingdom leaving the European Union, and / or whether, in light of this, there is sufficient cause and mandate for a renewed referendum on Scotland leaving the United Kingdom. No doubt partly as a consequence of this, there has been no new substantive Holyrood legislation for the Scottish Parliament to debate in the over a year – despite education and other matters deserving more detailed attention. Controversial Business Rates revaluations have seen many businesses hit hard, particularly in the North-East, which continues to feel the sharp effects of the Oil downturn.

The Prime Minister has stated that “Now is not the time for a referendum.” The First Minister has just written a letter formally requesting one before Britain leaves the European Union. Watch this space, as they say....



*Alexander speaking during the two-day Holyrood debate over Article 30 in which the Scottish Government asked for another referendum. The debate was sadly then suspended following the tragic events at Westminster, the mother of Parliaments. Alexander noted the collapse in oil revenues would have been "disastrous" for an independent Scotland in 2014.*



*Alexander raising his voice against Cybersex Trafficking*