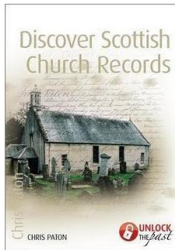


The Godly Commonwealth (Chris Paton)**Ottawa 16 SEP 2012**

The history and records of the Church of Scotland are more fully explored in my book *Discover Scottish Church Records*, published by Unlock the Past, available from www.gould.com.au/Discover-Scottish-Church-Records-p/utp0281.htm.

Summary of main events in the development of the Kirk:

- Pre-1560 Scotland is Roman Catholic
- 1560 Scottish Reformation – John Knox & the Godly Commonwealth – mass abolished, parishes strengthened, a degree of democracy introduced
- 1567 Catholic Mary Queen of Scots deposed; James VI takes the throne
- 1572 Concordat of Leith – agreement to appoint Protestant bishops (superintendents) – church becomes episcopal
- 1578 Andrew Melville’s new order
- 1592 Crown finally agrees to the Kirk’s presbyterian structure & suspends bishops
- 1603 The Union of the Crowns: James VI of Scotland becomes James I of England
Presbyterian Scotland v Anglican England
- 1610 Crown imposes bishops as permanent heads of synods & presbyteries, and gives Church more money
- 1618 The Five Articles of Perth – James VI means business!
- 1625 Charles I takes throne of Britain (2 kingdoms)
- 1636 Deliberate attempt to introduce Anglican mass and new common prayer book to Scotland
- 1638 The National Covenant – The Covenanters. Presbyterianism comes back into ascendancy – bishops abolished – Bishops’ Wars
- 1642 Civil War in Britain
- 1649 Charles I executed
Charles II declared king in Scotland – forced to agree to maintain Presbyterianism
- 1651 Crowned at Scone; defeated at Worcester; exiled to Europe
- 1658 Death of Cromwell; fall of Commonwealth; Charles crowned at Westminster 1661
- Reintroduces episcopacy to Scotland
 - Covenanters, Conventicles & Killing Times
- 1685 James VII & II, a Roman Catholic, crowned
- 1688 Male heir – deposed over fears of Roman Catholicism being reintroduced to Britain
William of Orange invited to become William III of Britain and Ireland – “The Glorious Revolution”
- Presbyterianism secured in Scotland
 - Jacobitism

Following the Glorious Revolution of 1690, the following is the state of play with the main churches:

- The Church of Scotland state church, now fully Presbyterian
- The Episcopal Church mainly in the Highlands
- Roman Catholicism small pockets in Highlands & Islands
- Cameronians small faction in the Lowlands

Patronage

The Monarch is no longer in charge of the Kirk – but landowners own the land on which the buildings stand, and they now want a say. They begin to assert rights to influence the choices of ministers in churches on their property

- 1712 Patronage Act – heritors given right to choose ministers
 1733 Ebenezer Erskine forms the Associate Presbytery with congregations from Stirling, Kinclaven, Perth and Abernethy. *Formally ejected from Church of Scotland in 1740*
 1761 Thomas Gillespie forms the Relief Church (*relief from patronage and tyranny of church courts*)

There then follows various schisms and mergers within the churches (see chart at <http://website.lineone.net/~davghalgh/churchhistory.html>).

Take for example the **Associate Presbytery**:

- 1747 Splits into 2 factions over the Burgher Oath: Burghers and Anti-Burghers
 1798 Burghers split – New Licht Burghers and Auld Licht Burghers
 1806 Anti-Burghers split – New Licht Anti-Burghers and Auld Licht Anti-Burghers
 1820 New Licht factions merge to form United Associate Church

Continued struggles within the Church of Scotland:

- 1834 General Assembly's Veto Act
 1838 rejected by Court of Session
 March 1843 House of Commons declined to abolish patronage
 May 18 1843 Thomas Chalmers led 451 clergymen from the General Assembly in Edinburgh to form the **Free Church of Scotland**
 Duplicated parish structure of established Kirk – weakened both churches

But:

- 1845-52 The Great Famine (An Gorta Mór)
 Thousands of destitute Irish folk, mainly from the north, flock to Scotland. The country's west is overwhelmed – dramatic re-establishment of Roman Catholicism.
 1854 Registration (Scotland) Act <http://tinyurl.com/48b8kxp>
 1855 Civil registration commences in Scotland.

Researching Church records – strategy:1) Were they Church of Scotland?

Check OPRs (*old parish registers* or *old parochial records*) 1553-1854

- www.familysearch.org (index only – important to check original image)
- www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk (digitised register images)

Also additional records sets held at ScotlandsPeople Centre:

www.scotlandspeoplehub.gov.uk/research/miscellaneous-records.html

www.scotlandspeoplehub.gov.uk/pdf/bdm-transcripts.pdf

www.scotlandspeoplehub.gov.uk/pdf/Death%20and%20burial%20records.pdf

www.scotlandspeoplehub.gov.uk/pdf/list-of-oprs-appendix1.pdf

...and of course on microfilms available via FamilySearch

2) Were they Roman Catholic?

If so, check ScotlandsPeople for records.

- Births & Baptisms 1703-1992
- Banns & Marriages 1736-1934
- Deaths & Burials 1742-1955; other events – 1742-1909

3) Why are they still missing?

- The entry may not have been registered – Stamp Act 1783-1794; 19th century apathy and parochial breakdown.
- They may not have been baptised at birth.
- The records may not have survived – check ScotlandsPeople for surviving register coverage at www.scotlandspeoplehub.gov.uk/research/list-of-oprs.html
- They were not Church of Scotland or Roman Catholic

4) Were they Dissenters?

- Some dissenting ceremonies recorded by Church of Scotland ministers, so may be in ScotlandsPeople OPR records
- Several registers have been indexed by the Mormons on FamilySearch within IGI and BIVRI (now ‘Historical Records’ database) Check coverage via <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~hughwallis/IGIBatchNumbers.htm> and <http://genoot.com/downloads/BVRI2/>
- Some records indexed on FreeREG www.freereg.org.uk and in Ancestry’s **UK Parish Records Collection**

5) What religious denominations were in the parish?

Statistical Accounts of Scotland 1790s and 1830s/40s

<http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/sas/sas.asp?action=public&passback=>

Topographical Dictionary of Scotland 1846

www.british-history.ac.uk/source.aspx?pubid=308

Street directories

www.nls.uk/family-history/directories/post-office (and Internet Archive at www.archive.org, which has more than 840 volumes, over a hundred more than NLS)

Catalogue searches:

National Records of Scotland www.nas.gov.uk/onlinecatalogue

Most nonconformist records indexed under CH3

National Register of Archives for Scotland www.nas.gov.uk/onlineregister

Scottish Archive Network www.scan.org.uk

6) Were they irregularly married?

Check www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/files2/family-records/irregular-border-and-scottish-runaway-marriages.pdf and

www.scotlandspeoplehub.gov.uk/pdf/Irregular%20Border%20marriages.pdf.

Gretna marriages:

www.ancestry.co.uk

www.achievements.co.uk/services/gretna/index.php

Other Kirk records

- Records for kirk administered poor relief, church business, discipline, loans etc. Catalogued on NRS website under CH2. (Some photographed by LDS Church).
- Also: heritors (under HR), records of presbyteries and synods (abolished 1993, in CH2), and General Assembly (CH1).

Ministers' biographical details

- Church of Scotland – *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae* (Ancestry, www.archive.org)
- *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church 1733-1900*,
- Reverend Robert Small (1904). Available via www.archive.org
- *Fasti of the United Free Church of Scotland 1920-1929*, Reverend John Alexander Laws, 1956, Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh
- *Scottish Episcopal Clergy 1689-2000*, David M. Bertie, 2000, T. and T. Clark

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Chris Paton BA (Hons), HND, PgDip (Genealogical Studies)

www.ScotlandsGreatestStory.co.uk

Scotland's Greatest Story family history research

www.BritishGENES.blogspot.com

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