DINNA BRING NANE OF THAE SMELLS AND BELLS WITH YE!

Edward Luscombe

Edward Luscombe, former Bishop of Brechin and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church and a long-time member of the Church Service Society, has researched and written, latterly with Stuart Donald, Honorary Archivist and Keeper of the Library of the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney, some two dozen smaller books about congregations, clergy, and communities of the Episcopal Church from the Reformation to the present day. Embedded in these accounts there is much information about the history of liturgy in that Church. With the permission of the authors, Douglas Galbraith has extracted some of the principal references. Square brackets indicate material inserted to preserve the flow between extracts.

History

The Reformation for Scotland began in 1560 when the Old Church severed its links with the Papacy, and Roman Catholicism ceased to be the national faith. The following century saw the system of church government fluctuating between Episcopacy and Presbyterianism:

1592-1610 Presbytery
1610-1638 Episcopacy
1638-1661 Presbytery
1661-1688 Episcopacy

Episcopacy was in the ascendent in 1688, when King James VII fled the country and was replaced by William, Prince of Orange and his consort Mary, James' sister. James had become increasingly unpopular, partly because of the manner of his reign, but principally because he had embraced the Roman Catholic faith, and his subjects were afraid that he would try to force them to do the same. There was a nationwide cry of 'No Popery'. The bishops of the time had all sworn allegiance to James and were unwilling to foreswear that allegiance. The Presbyterians, on the other hand, were willing to support William. The outcome was the Revolution Settlement of 1689 which made Presbyterianism the national religion. This was despite the fact that a majority of the population was reputed to be Episcopalian, and this was particularly so in the north-east of the country [where] some Episcopal clergy remained in their livings for as long as thirty years. The consequences were disastrous for the Episcopal Church. All its endowments were appropriated. Nearly all the Episcopal clergy south of the River Forth were ejected from their livings, although in the northern half of the country some clergy continued in the parish churches until their death – in some cases as long as thirty years.

After 1689, the Presbyterian establishment used every means within its power to persuade the civil authorities to oust the Episcopal clergy and to ban the exercise of their ministry. A Toleration Act passed in 1712 did give some respite as long as they prayed for Queen Anne who had succeeded her father in 1702. This was to lead over the years to what became known as Qualified Congregations which were not subject to the jurisdiction of the Episcopal Church Bishop. The diastrous outcome to the 1715 Rising led to the introduction of increasingly severe legal restrictions on Episcopal congregations and their members – these were the Penal Laws. They remained on the Statute Book for almost the whole of the 18th century, intensifying after the '45 Rising, and then gradually falling into disuse.

There was a period of comparative calm between 1720 and 1745 as the civil authorities became more tolerant of the Episcopal Church. That calm was shattered in the latter year when Charles Edward Stuart, the 'Young Pretender' or the Chevalier, followed in his father's footsteps in another attempt to regain the throne. The Rising ended in disaster on the field of Culloden. Episcopalians had been much involved in the '45, as they had been in the '15. Further even more severe penal legislation was passed, with some priests imprisoned and banished. Troops of the victorious Duke of Cumberland's army on their way south burned and pillaged many of the churches.

Cumberland's third target was the Episcopal Church. The first step had been the destruction of the churches, chapels and meeeting houses. They were burnt, or gutted or permanently closed. More than 50 Episcopal buildings ceased to be places of worship after 1746. [List provided] … Not content with the destruction of Episcopal places of worship, the Government then introduced some draconian laws which made worship almost impossible. The clergy were already suffering from disabilities under the existing Penal Laws. Now, in 1746, came the Toleration Act, which provided that every Episcopal clergyman should register his Letters of Orders by 1st September, take an oath of allegiance to the king and abjuration of the Stuarts that that house had no claim to the throne. They were required to pray for King George by name. The penalties for infringement of the Act were 'For the first offence, imprisonment by the space of six months, and for the second or any subsequent offence, transportation to one of His Majesty's plantations for life.' Worse was to come. The Penal Act of 1748 was much more rigorous than any of the earlier ones. It decreed that in regard to every clergyman ordained by a bishop of the Scottish Episcopal Church – his Letters of Orders were null and void to all intents and purposes – he was prohibited from conducting public worship and even from acting as Chaplain to a private family. He was permitted to exercise the right (as of any other householder) to hold family worship in his house, but the number of fellow-worshippers was limited to four persons besides his own family. The miracle is that the Episcopal Church survived this persecution.

[An example]
In 1746 the church on the Rowan was burned down by a portion of the congregation themselves who had been induced to take this step by a promise made by Mr Scott, the then Presbyterian Minister, that if they did so no military would be sent into the country. In this they were deceived, for a party of soldiers went and resided there for a time. Mr Rose was then apprehended and put on board a frigate off Montrose where he was confined for some time. On his release he immediately resumed his duties, but … with great dread and fear. After the destruction of the church Mr Rose seems to have celebrated public worship, if such it could be called, in a house on the Milton, a small farm about a mile from Tarfside. Being confined to the two or three, he was in the way of standing in the door while officiating, and the people gathered about on the green. From this they were after a time driven out by the tenant of the farm, some influence having been used to preujudice him against them. They then used to assemble for public worship behind a portion of the wall of the old church on the Rowan. Some of the flock inserted their walking sticks in the wall, stretching over the one of their plaids, which formed the only protection their pastor had during the service.

[A famous occurrence]
In the winder of 1748-49, three local clergy, John Troup of Muchalls, John Petrie of Drumlithie, and Alexander Greig of Stonehaven were all convicted of breaching the Statutes and were sentenced to six months imprisonment in the

Tolbooth of Stonehaven which served as the local jail. It was this that gave rise to the well-known painting by W S Brownlow of women from Muchalls holding up their infant children in fishing creels to be baptised by their priest. Copies of that picture could be seen in almost every Episcopal church half a century ago.

Oppression of the Episcopal Church eased after 1760, but the damage had been done. The death of Charles Edward Stuart in 1788 paved the way for the Episcopalians to pray for the Hanoverian monarchy. The Penal Laws were repealed in 1792, although it was not until 1864 that the last of the disabilities was removed from the Statutes.

By the end of the 18^{th} century, the Episcopal Church, in Sir Walter Scott's words, 'had been reduced to the shadow of a shade'. From thirteen bishops and some 600 clergy, there were now four bishops, forty clergy and a comparative handful of the population.

[James Drummond became Bishop of Brechin in 1684 and remained so until 1695. At first he continued to minister in Muthil where he had been parish minister.] The practice of a bishop combining his office with that of an Incumbency was almost the norm. The Scottish post-Reformation bishops, unlike those in England, had little or nothing in the way of endowments to provide a stipend for these bishops. This situation continued well into the 19^{th} century. … Amongst his clergy, the bishop was *primus inter pares* – first among equals. The style of the Episcopal Church was very different from that of the present day. It is well described in *History of Brechin*, by David Black, Town Clerk of Brechin, published in 1839, referring particularly to the latter part of the 17^{th} century. 'The Episcopacy of that date was of a very moderate cast. It had its kirk sessions and its presbyteries; and there was scarcely any distinction in faith, worship or discipline. All moderate Presbyterians attended Episcopal worship and communion.' The bishop's authority was supreme over all affairs in the diocese, and he had an official position in secular affairs. In Brechin, the bishop was described as being 'Praepositor Brechinensis', that is, the Provost of Brechin, and he presided over meetings of the baillies and town councillors.

It may be wondered how it was possible for Episcopal clergy like James Drummond and William Dunbar to have continued ministering in parish churches, when these had been declared to be the property of the Presbyterian

National Church by the Act of Settlement of 1690. … It may have been a shortage of Presbyterian ministers, but more probably the unwillingness of congregations to accept their ministrations, that led to the situation where clergy like Drummond and Dunbar were ‘indulged’.

The earlier years of the 18th century were times of distressing disputes amongst the bishops which could easily have seen the Church being ‘by schisms rent assumder’. There were two principal areas of disagreement. The first was about the status of the bishops themselves; the other question was about worship. What eventually brought the two opposing sets of bishops to the Synod that produced the 1731 Concordat [see below] was the need to end twenty-five years of unseemly wrangling that had bedevilled the Church. This was known as the Battle of the Usages [see below]. The seeds of the battle had come originally from the English non-jurors. This was a body of nine bishops and some four hundred clergy who, like their Scottish counterparts, were unwilling to acknowledge William and Mary as their lawful Sovereigns and forswear their allegiance to the Stuarts. There was naturally considerable coming and going between them and the Scottish Church. It was in those two matters that Thomas Rattray’s scholarship and determination rescued the Church from itself. [Rattray had become bishop of Brechin in 1727.]

Liturgy

At [Bishop Drummond’s] ordination in 1656, he had committed himself to using, publicly or privately, the so-called Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer, often known as Matins and Evensong. These were the usual Sunday diet of public worship in almost every Episcopal church until the mid-20th century.

In 1731 a Concordat was agreed between the two existing sets of bishops, the diocesan and the ‘College Bishops’, effectively bishops at large, appointed by the exiled king James VII in order to preserve the Episcopal succession. As well as agreeing how bishops would be appointed in the future and what would be their dioceses, the first article was concerned with worship and with Prayer Books. Writing in 1740, [Thomas Rattray, Bishop of Brechin] left a vivid, if dispiriting, picture of what things were like for the first thirty years or so after the Revolution Settlement [1689]:

> Let us now look back to the state of this Church with regard to public worship which indeed, at the Revolution and for a long time after, was very lamentable and has scarcely deserved the name; for we had no such thing as any offices or liturgies used among us. The service began with a metrical psalm followed by extemporary prayer, during which most of the congregation sat irreverently upon their breech. At the end, they stood for the Doxology but did not at all wait for the Blessing. At the time it was a-pronouncing, they were running out of the church like so many sheep breaking out of a fold. Until the reign of Queen Anne there were few Prayer Books; the clergy relied on their memory or their powers of extemporisation even in the Communion Office. This was celebrated no more often in the Episcopal than in the Presbyterian Church, in many places only once a year, prceded by a sermon of preparation on the eve. There was no seemly ritual of priest at the altar and people going up reverently to kneel and receive the Sacrament. Tables were set out) as it had been a common meal, the Consecrated Elements handed from one to another, while the attending elders shoved the plates with the Consecreated Bread along the table for their greater convenience, (a sermon being preached the while). And the Elements had been consecrated, sometimes, by an extemporary prayer: How defective it must frequently have been may easily be judged, considerating that many of them had no notions of its being the Sacrifice of the Christian Church, only they repeated the Words of the History of the Institution. Enough bread was consecreated but only a little wine. When it was exhausted they had a little barrel or some other vessel at hand from which they filled more, and straightway used it without any consecration at all.

In 1662 the Church of England had produced a Book of Common Prayer which was to remain the Standard Service Book for the next three hundred years. The non-jurors found that the Order for Holy Communion in that book was defective in a number of ways. Thomas Rattray, quite independently of the non-jurors, had arrived at the same conclusion. … The Usages were the Invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the elements of bread and wine (the Epiclesis); an express Prayer of Oblation; the mixing of a little water with the wine at the Offertory; and the commemoration of the departed. In addition there were complaints about the forms of Christian Initiation – that Baptism should be by total immersion and Confirmation administered by the laying on of hands with the oil of chrism. And there was no provision for amounting the sick. … The outcome of the Concordat was, in effect, 'live and let live'.

A similar agreement came as to which order of Holy Communion should be used: 'That we shall only make use of the Scottish or English liturgy in the public church services.' There was no problem with finding copies of the English liturgy – the 1662 Prayer Books were readily available, and 19,000 copies of this had been given to the Scottish Church by well-wishers in 1707 at the time of Union of the Crowns. The Scottish liturgy presented far more difficulty.

There had been the Scottish Prayer Book of 1637, erroneously called 'Laud's Liturgy' – it had in fact been prepared by two Scottish bishops, Maxwell and Wedderburn. A very limited reprint of this was made in 1712, but never in sufficient numbers for congregational use. Then, in 1724, Bishop Gadderar of Aberdeen produced the first of 'the wee bookies' as the copies of the Communion Office alone were called. Gadderar's work was the 1637 Service with omissions, and some free pieces of translation, with alterations made in pen and ink. Eleven years later, two Edinburgh publishers printed Gadderar's book with its alterations, as a piece of private enterprise.

Rattray's most important work was *The Ancient Liturgy of the Church of Jerusalem*, published posthumously in 1744. Throughout his episcopate he had consistently commended the Liturgy of Saint James. Rattray's two liturgical heirs were Robert Forbes (Bishop of Ross and Argyll, 1762 to 1777) and William Falconer (Bishop of Moray, 1742 to 1777), who, between them, were responsible for the production of the Scottish Liturgy of 1764, the *textus receptus* until the 20th century. It incorporated most of Rattray's work. The ground had been well prepared. 'In this favourable appearance of returning serenity, it was thought proper to raise our Communion Office and bring it, now that there was no contention or difference about it, to as exact a conformity with the ancient standards of Eucharistic Service as it would bear.' So wrote Bishop John Skinner at the end of the 18th century.

[During the 1850s the bishops of Argyll and St Andrews made a bid towards standardising worship throughout the church. All were to use the Communion office from 1662. They claimed the Scottish Liturgy (1764) led to a confusion of tongues and hindered the mission of church. These proposals were strongly opposed. For example, the incumbent and people of Catterline, a fishing village on the Kincardineshire coast, sent a petition to the College of Bishops. A fair number of names were designated by a cross, indicating illiteracy. In 1863, the General Synod passed a Canon saying new congregations were to use the English office but others could continue as they were. It was repealed 50 yrs later.]

As well as its influence on succeeding generations, the 1764 Book was taken to America by Samuel Seabury, the first Bishop of the Americas, who promised carefully to consider it and, if he found it agreeable to ancient practice, to sanction and encourage its use in his own diocese of Connecticut. The seeds of Rattray's words have borne fruit across the Anglican Communion.

The Qualified Chapels in Scotland almost invariably used the 1662 Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England. … There was later incorporated into the Prayer Book the services for Ordination – the Forms and Manner of Making, Ordaining and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests and Deacons. Later, too, the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion were appended.

The first Prayer Book of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America was approved in October, 1789, six years after Samuel Seabury had returned from his consecration in Scotland, and it was first printed by Hall & Sellers, in Market Street, Philadelphia in 1790. The similarity to the English Prayer Book is immediately apparent. The principal – and most important – difference is that the American Prayer Book contains the Scottish Communion Office of 1764 in place of the English Service of Holy Communion. The other difference is that the so-called State Prayers have been suitably changed to refer to a Republic rather than a monarchy. The first standard edition, which contained a few minor changes, mostly typographical, was published a few years later, in 1793.

[Rattray's successor as Primus, Bishop John Skinner of Aberdeen, completed the process of stabilising the Church that Rattray had begun. The year 1811 saw the first General Synod of the Church to be convened since the Revolution. The Synod produced the Code of Canons, of particular significance being Canon XV which made the Scottish Order the primary or authorised service whilst the English one was secondary but permitted.]

[The Oxford Movement, fl. first half of the 19th century, aka as the Tractarians] Among their aims was an attempt to bring back church people to the Prayer Book, asserting that it was not only a manual of doctrine, but more importantly a book of praise and devotion. In other words, they were placing religion before theology. The sacraments were channels of God's grace. Christ was truly present in the Eucharist and Baptism was not just a pious and edifying ceremony. It followed that worship incorporating these sacramental acts from the Prayer Book should be done, in Saint Paul's words, 'decently and in order', rather than in the casual manner that had become the norm. It has to be said that the high doctrine of the Eucharist was intrinsically that of the Scottish Episcopal Church, as it had been of the 17th and 18th century divines of the Church of England. The Oxford Movement had an enormously beneficial effect upon worship, and, no less upon the pastoral work of the clergy. The Tractarians [another title by which the movement was known] had placed much emphasis upon the 'cure of souls' that was the responsibility of the clergy. There should be no more 'pluralities', and no more absentee incumbents paying a curate a pittance to do their work for them. In particular, ministry to the poor and under-privileged was stressed. Virtually every 'slum priest', like Stanton in London and Jellicoe in Portsmouth, Forbes in Dundee, or Comper in the Gallowgate, Aberdeen, were all from the same Tractarian background.

Some local references

For part of the 18th century the priest in charge of a congregation was commonly known as the Episcopal Minister at (place name). In the following hundred years, he was known as the Incumbent. It was only in 1890 that the name Rector became the official designation, although 'incumbent' and 'incumbency' still used.

Forfar

Rev George Skene was Episcopal Minister at Forfar 1754-1797. The services used were Holy Communion at Christmas and Easter (Yule and Pasch) and upon one other Sunday. Otherwise it was Morning and Evening Prayer. From 1764 a specifically Scottish liturgy was authorised, and from that time onwards the two authorised services were the 1764 Liturgy and the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England. The Canon Law of the Church made the Scottish service 'of primary authority' but the English office was formally recognised. The Scottish Office was invariably used. There were no eucharistic vestments and the surplice was never used. The normal robe for the officiating minister was a black gown.

One difference in the pattern of worship was the introduction of Evening Prayer every Sunday and this continued throughout Skene's time in Forfar. Surprisingly it was not carried on by his successor except at Christmas. The service was attended by some difficulty on dark winter nights. About 80 years late an elderly lady could recall hearing her parents speak about having to take candles to Chapel to lighten the darkness at evening services. The candles were set up at the end of each pew in the hope that they would give enough light for the worshippers.

It was to be another 70 years after Skene's death (1866) before regular Sunday Evensong was again introduced. This was during the Incumbency of the Rev William George Shaw. The *Scottish Standard Bearer* reports that on this occasions the Bishop of Dunkeld confirmed 26 persons of which 18 had formerly been Presbyterians. It noted that 82 persons had been confirmed in the church in the previous 20 months of which 48 were accessions from other Communions.

Rev Vincent Rorison (Incumbent of St John's Forfar 1874-1885) was much involved in the life of his Forfar community, and had a particular interest in education. On three occasions he was elected to serve on Forfar School Board. Along with the Parish Minister he was able to secure the restoration of religious intstruction in schools, which had been allowed to lapse. He was much before his time in ecumenical attitude too. Almost unthinkably at the time, he was invited to preach in parish churches, and although he was described as 'an incorrigible Episcopalian' he was welcomed as 'a man who is greater than denominationalism, a man who is a true Scottish Churchman in the sense that he embraces one Church and all the Churches of Scotland.'

Another change was in the pattern of worship. Forty years previously there were only three celebrations of Holy Communion in the year, but now there was a celebration every Sunday and on the Greater Festivals of the Christian year. On the first Sunday of the month, the English Office for Holy Communion was used, on all other Sundays and the Festivals it was the Scottish Liturgy. For the officiating clergy the black gown, once universally worn, was discarded.

Perth

One other matter worthy of note was the introduction of a Thanksgiving for the Harvest. This is generally attributed to the eccentric Vicar of Morwenstow in Cornwall, Robert Hawker, in 1843. The Perth congregation [Robert Lyon] anticipated this by exactly a century. In the autumn of 1743 they held a service of Thanksgiving for the Harvest with a proper collect, epistle and gospel, sanctioned by the Bishop, John Alexander, who had succeeded Thomas Rattray earlier that year.

Muchalls

It may seem strange in 2018 to read that in 1847 there was only one church in the Diocese of Brechin where the Holy Communion was celebrated more often than four times a year. That was at St Paul's Dundee where there was a monthly service. This infrequency of receiving the sacrament was a relic of the troubled days of the 17th and 18th centuries when the Penal Laws meant that some congregations were left without a celebration of the Holy Mysteries for years at a time.

It was the Rev George Ironside (1854-1861) who introduced a monthly Communion at Saint Ternan's [Muchalls]. … The numbers on Festivals have survived and these indicate that only a minority of members received Communion more than once a year. William Perry in his *Life of Bishop Forbes* recorded that Dean Hatt had complained to the Bishop that, do what he could, the fishermen at Muchalls were so conservative and obstinate that they could not be persuaded to come to Communion more than 4 times a year. … [Bishop] Forbes had urged the churches in the Diocese of Brechin to hold a monthly service of Holy Communion. His successor, Hugh Jermyn, wanted to see a weekly celebration.

Catterline

[The new chapel was consecrated in1848.] There was a celebration of Holy Communion once a month and on the great festivals. On other Sunday mornings, the principal service was Matins and a sermon. Evensong was held at six o'clock, and in the winter at three o'clock in the afternoon. … There was no candle on the altar – these had been forbidden by Bishop Forbes, although he did allow flowers to be placed on the altar for the great festivals. The congregation adhered rigidly to the Scottish Communion Office of 1764.

Arbroath
There was a curious twist to the accusation against Episcopal clergy that was most commonly used at the time, that they had failed to pray for 'Our Sovereign Lord King George'. In fact [the incumbent here] did pray for him but his congregation stood for the prayers. At the mention of the name George, they sat down to signify their dissent.

Dress
As for vestments, for more than a 100 years the normal robe for a priest or deacon was a black gown. Surplices began to be introduced in the first quarter of the 1800s. Even then the black gown was donned for the sermon. Bishops usually wore a cassock and chimere with a black scarf. The recumbent effigy of Bishop Forbes in the Cathedral in Dundee is an anachronism. Forbes never wore a cope and mitre. His successor, Hugh Jermyn, seldom wore anything else.

An interesting appendix [General Synod 1811, when the canon which made the 1764 Scottish service the primary or authorised service was added] to the Canons recommended that clergy should wear the surplice when reading prayers or administering the sacrament 'as white seems to be a much more proper dress for the ministers of the Prince of Peace than black'. At that time the black gown and bands were in common use throughout the church.

Catterline (chapel consecrated 1848) The priest wore a cassock and surplice.

[At St. John's, Forfar in the incumbency of Vincent Rorison 1874-1885] For Morning and Evening Prayer the priest wore a cassock, surplice, black scarf and academic hood. For the Eucharist the vestments were cassock, surplice, and a coloured stole, the colour varying with the liturgical seasons of the Christian year.

Music
Towards the end of the 17th century [at Forfar] a small book that contained 51 hymns was used, and once the Forfar chapel had been build, singing was aided by a precentor.

In worship, too, there were changes, mainly with the production of the Scottish

Liturgy of 1764, which became the only order of service for Holy Communion used in the church in Glenesk. For almost two centuries, it would appear that there were only four celebrations of the eucharist every year. Divine service was more akin to the presbyterianism, and the substance of the sermon was the same, composed of scripture readings, a selection of psalms and a sermon. The psalms were sung with the aid of a precentor.

An anecdote from the time of Alexander Davidson tells of a precentor named Crockett whose knowledge of psalm tunes was limited. Whenever Davidson announced a psalm tune with which Crockett was unfamiliar, the precentor would look over the church and say, I doot ye'll need to try that ane yersel, Mr. Davidson.' … In 1841, the Precentor was to be paid £1 a year, but was still expected to pay rent for a pew. … A motion was made by the Rev A Simpson that the altar was not canonical, that the seats on each side of the altar and the altar be repaired to fit the room … the Precentor's Desk should be removed and the Precentor sit in front of the gallery. …The celebrations were then only four in the year, and large numbers came forward. After the congregation left, the Church wardens came up to the altar giving in the names of any who wished to be communicated privately. The consecrated elements were set aside for the, the Church Wardens (reverently) consumed the rest. (This was after 1871.) …

[Rev Gilbert Rorison (1819-1869) became Incumbent of St Peter's, Peterhead, in 1845.] He was the author of the Trinity-tide hymn, 'Three in One and One in Three', which he described as 'an imitation and combination of two ancient Latin hymns'. … It is still sung at Glenalmond School annually at service commemorating Founders and Benefactors. In 1857 he published his own hymn book – *Hymns and Anthems Adapted to the Church Services Throughout the Christian Year* with a selection of metrical psalms, which ran to three editions.

The new Episcopal church (St John's, Forfar), of which [Vincent] Rorison was Rector was opened in 1881 and (according to the local newspaper) was the only church in Forfar where, as yet, religious service is accompanied by instrumental music (an organ), with the exception of a harmonium in the Independent Chapel. The organ was by Peter Conacher and is still in use. Morning and Evening Prayer were fully choral with a surpliced choir.