

# Trinity Chapel The Green Aberdeen



Dr William Guild



A view of the Trinity Hall site

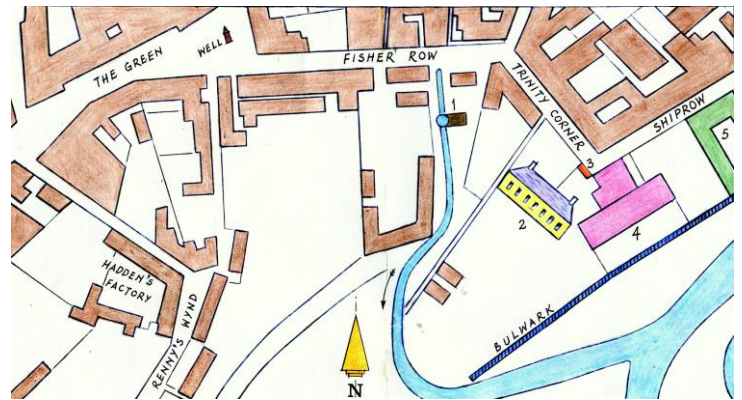
**T**rinity Chapel in the Green was the ancient chapel of the Monastery of the Trinity Friars. Sacked at the Reformation, it was gifted along with the other buildings in the year 1631, by Dr William Guild to the Incorporated Trades of Aberdeen. The chapel was long used by the Episcopalian craftsmen as a place of worship, some of the trades reserving seats and creating 'lofts' until its demolition. In 1686 a portion of the congregation of St Nicholas Church were evicted and removed to this chapel led by Dr Andrew Burnett. He probably officiated as the minister until after the suppression of the *Jacobite Rising* of 1715, when, in order to avoid arrest he went 'underground' and afterwards officiated at a private Episcopal meeting house.



Doorway to trades Hall

Dr Burnett's disappearing act was due to the fact that he had protested before the Presbytery of Aberdeen against a call that had been given by the Magistrates to Mr Colin Campbell (father of the Principal of Marischal College, George Campbell) to be one of the ministers of St Nicholas Church, in 1703; he asserted that '*the principal and most numerous part of the people*' were in favour of '*his*' installation; on the other hand, Presbytery decreed that he had not taken the oaths in time, and had set up preaching in Trinity Chapel. The Presbytery disregarded his protest, and proceeded to institute Mr Campbell. In the same records of Presbytery (in which details of these proceedings are given) Trinity Chapel is mentioned as the '*Episcopal meeting-house of this place, of which Dr Burnett was the minister.*' When another vacancy occurred in the Church of St Nicholas in 1711, as the Revd Thomas Blackwell had been appointed to a Professorship at Marischal College, of which he later became Principal, the Trades of Aberdeen petitioned the Magistrates for Dr Burnett's restoration to St Nicholas, proposing, if the authorities refused, to enter him by force. The Lord Justice Clerk, Sir Adam Cockburn of Ormiston and Sir David Dalrymple, the Lord Advocate, intervened, which put an end to their intentions. Dr Burnett's name appears in a list given

by an Aberdeen correspondent, in a letter to Robert Wodrow, dated 20th November 1717 of the clergy officiating in the '*five private Episcopal Meetinghouses in this town;*' after this date his history disappears from the records. In order to comply with the law, clergy were expected to take an Oath of Allegiance to King George. Many refused; Dr Burnett being one of the dissenters. Congregations were legally obliged to employ '*qualified*' clergymen; that is clergy who had taken Holy Orders in either England or Ireland, or a clergyman who had taken the Oath of Allegiance. In so doing these churches and chapels were outwith the jurisdiction of a diocesan bishop.



Part of a plan by Surveyor Alexander Milne dated 1789 1 Malt Mill, Barn and Bridge; 2 Trinity Hospital; 3 Trades Hall Gateway; 4 Trinity Chapel; 5 Fish Market

In 1766 the Revd George Farquhar, was Minister of Trinity Chapel. During that year he was succeeded by the Revd William Blake a '*qualified clergyman*' of a congregation at Ellon, which had been set up there in opposition to the ministry of the Revd John Skinner (later Bishop of Aberdeen and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church) at that time in charge of a congregation in Ellon.

Trinity Chapel was let at a rental of from £5 to £7 a year. In a statement drawn up in 1791 it was stated that the congregation belonging to Trinity Qualified Chapel had, in consequence of the political contentions which prevailed in Scotland in the last century, been reduced to the precarious state of possessing a place of worship of which the clergyman was taxman. He farmed the pews to harvest his stipend. In order to place the congregation upon an independent and permanent footing they decided to remove to a chapel of their own building in Netherkirkgate, within the shadow of the ancient Church of St Nicholas from which it had originated a century before but now in a different guise. Not long after their removal from Trinity Chapel, the old building was demolished, and the ground cleared for other purposes.

*Stuart Donald*

Research from Bain (1887) History of Incorporated Trades of Aberdeen; Records of Presbytery of Aberdeen 1703; Robert Wodrow's Correspondence is published by the Spalding Club; Map coloured by John A. Souter Contact us : [archives@aberdeen.anglican.org](mailto:archives@aberdeen.anglican.org)