

**The Illustrious Life of the Very Reverend Dr. George Buist (1779-1860) of St. Andrews**  
**By His Fourth Great Nephew, Michael T. Tracy**



*Fig.1. Reverend Dr. George Buist taken in 1855, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections Department, Photograph ID ms37103-6-13v, Special Permission for the Use of This Photograph Granted by the Head of Special Collections*

“We have today to record the death, at St. Andrews, under peculiarly melancholy circumstances, of the venerable second minister of the Established Church there, the Reverend George Buist, D.D., at the advanced age of eighty-four [sic] years... Dr. Buist was one of the oldest ordained ministers of the Church of Scotland... held the rank of Moderator of the Assembly of the Church. He was an attentive minister, sincere in the performance of his duties, a thorough business man and his loss will be greatly felt...”<sup>1</sup> Thus ran the front page of the *Dundee Advertiser Newspaper* of Friday, 20 April 1860 giving a small glimpse of the accomplished life of the Very Reverend Dr. George Buist. Newspapers across Scotland published his obituary and his funeral which was largely attended was equally covered as well. The Reverend Dr. George Buist of St. Andrews was born at the farm of Orkie in Kettle Parish, the fourth child of George Buist (1750-1797), a tenant farmer and proprietor, and Margaret Low (1752-1781). He attended the United College from 1794-97 studying Latin and Greek and made rapid progress in his various studies.<sup>2</sup> In his father’s Trust and Disposition of 1796, George received 600 pounds sterling plus 10 pounds sterling a year while at college for defraying the expense of completing his college education.<sup>3</sup> As a youth and well into old age, George Buist was universally regarded with affection for a quality of an unassuming kindness of disposition and temper, which made it impossible for him to initiate or to be irritated.<sup>4</sup> He was ordained to his first charge as minister of Falkland in September of 1802 where he was esteemed as a preacher and was indefatigable in the discharge of his parochial duties. Thence he translated in 1809 but was not admitted until 1813 to the second charge of St.

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<sup>1</sup> *Dundee Advertiser Newspaper*, 20 April 1860, p. 2

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, James Maitland. *The Matriculation Roll of the University of St. Andrews, 1747-1897*. Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1905, p. 43

<sup>3</sup> Trust Disposition and Deed Settlement of George Buist, 6 December 1796, Register of Deeds, Burgh of Falkland, 1738-1798, University of St. Andrews Special Collections, Call Number B25/4/1, p. 417

<sup>4</sup> Conolly, M.F. *Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Men of Fife*. Edinburgh: Inglis & Jack, 1857, p. 99

Andrews city and parish in which he laboured for the next 47 years. A year later the University of St. Andrews conferred the degree of Doctor of Divinity on the Reverend Buist.<sup>5</sup> In 1817 he was appointed by the Crown, Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Languages at St. Mary's College, and in 1823 was promoted from the Hebrew Chair to that of Ecclesiastical History which he held this post until his death.<sup>6</sup> Buist was present on Thursday, 18 May 1843 when 121 ministers and 73 elders led by Dr. David Welsh left the Church of Scotland General Assembly at the Church of St. Andrew in Edinburgh and subsequently formed the Free Church of Scotland which was known as "The Disruption of 1843." Five years later Dr. Buist was raised to the highest honour in which the Established Church of Scotland could bestow, unanimously electing him Moderator of the General Assembly. When Reverend Buist was 26 years old he married Margaret Fernie, the daughter of William Fernie, Esq., of Tillywhandland, Angus. They had seven children and by 1818 resided at Lawpark near St. Andrews. Most of his children and wife would pre-decease him with the exception of his daughter Jean (Jane) Buist. His wide knowledge and inquiring mind led him to become one of the original founding members of the Literary and Philosophical Society of St. Andrews and further was largely responsible for establishing the University museum.<sup>7</sup> Buist, as a further testament to his academic stature, was accorded the honour of writing the New Statistical Account entry for the Parish of St. Andrews (1837-38).<sup>8</sup> In 1857 he authored one publication entitled *Expository Lectures on Chaps XV.-XIX. of the Acts of the Apostles*, which he privately gave to many of his parishioners as a memorial for his ministry.<sup>9</sup> This then is the narrative of the life and times of the Reverend Dr. George Buist.

### Early years

George Buist was born on Saturday, 20 March 1779 at Orkie farm in Kettle Parish, Fifeshire, Scotland.<sup>10</sup> He was the fourth child of George Buist (1750-1797), a tenant farmer and proprietor, and Margaret Low (1752-1781). Orkie farm was located nearly a quarter of a mile east-northeast of the village of Freuchie and was described seventy-four years later, as a "farm steading with cottages occupied by servants, but no farmhouse... the property of Woods Endowed School, Drumeldrie near Largo."<sup>11</sup>

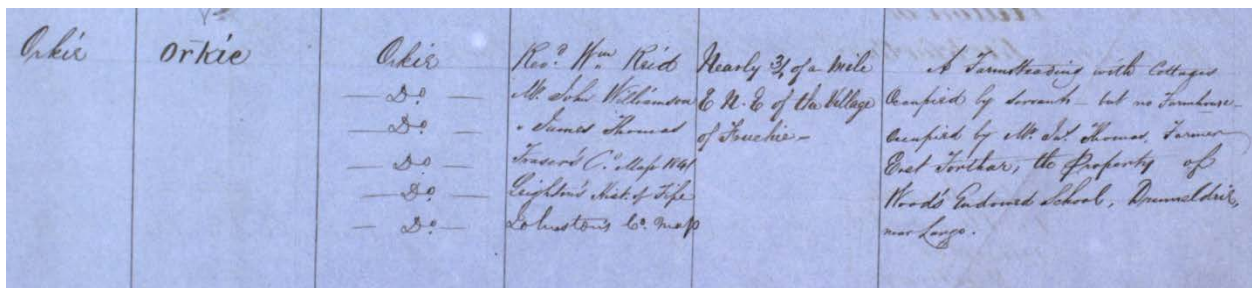


Fig.2. Ordnance Survey Name Book for Orkie, Kettle Parish, Fife, Photograph Courtesy of ScotlandsPlaces.gov.uk

<sup>5</sup> *The Scots Magazine*, Volume LXXVI. Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Company, 1814, p. 478

<sup>6</sup> Conolly, M.F. *Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Men of Fife*. Edinburgh: Inglis & Jack, 1857, p. 99

<sup>7</sup> *Biography of the Literary and Philosophical Society of St. Andrews*. National Archives of Scotland. Accessed at: [www.nas.gov.uk/online-catalogue/personcode/STA\\_81](http://www.nas.gov.uk/online-catalogue/personcode/STA_81)

<sup>8</sup> Statistical Accounts of Scotland 1791-1845. *St. Andrews, County of Fife, NSA, Volume IX*, 1845, p.p. 449-497

<sup>9</sup> Conolly, M.F. *Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Men of Fife*. Edinburgh: Inglis & Jack, 1857, p. 100

<sup>10</sup> Baptismal Record of George Buist, 20 March 1779, Kettle Parish Records, Old Parish Records 435/0020 0295

<sup>11</sup> Ordnance Survey Name Books, *Fife and Kinross-shire OS Name Books, 1853-1855*, Volume 15, OS1/13/15/63



Fig.3. Ordnance Survey Map showing Orkie, Kettle Parish, Fife, Photograph Courtesy of the National Library of Scotland

He was baptized on Thursday, 26 March 1779 at Kettle Parish Church in Kingskettle.<sup>12</sup>

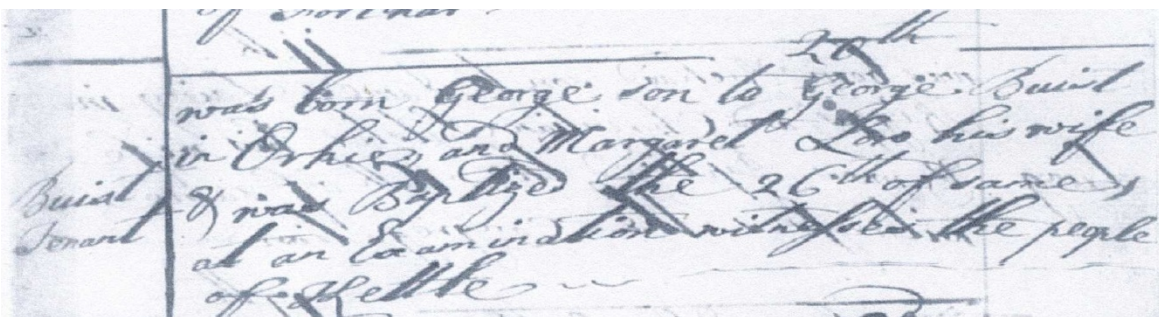


Fig.4. Baptismal Record of George Buist, 26 March 1779, Kettle Parish Records, Crown Copyright

<sup>12</sup> Baptismal Record of George Buist, 20 March 1779, Kettle Parish Records, Old Parish Records 435/0020 0295



*Fig.5. Kettle Parish Church, Kingskettle, Kettle Parish, Fife, Photograph Courtesy of Michael T. Tracy © 2010 Michael T. Tracy*

George lost his mother by the age of 2 and was most likely raised by his step-mother, Christian Ballingall (1756-1834), while at Orkie. Little else is known of the child's early youth.

### **Educational years**

George Buist attended the United College from 1794-97 studying Latin and Greek languages.<sup>13</sup> The United College was founded in 1747 by the amalgamation of the colleges of St. Salvator and St. Leonard under common management and teaching methods were transformed with the ending of the medieval regenerating system and the confirmation of the practice of professors becoming specialists in a particular subject or group of subjects.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Anderson, James Maitland. *The Matriculation Roll of the University of St. Andrews, 1747-1897*. Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1905, p. 43

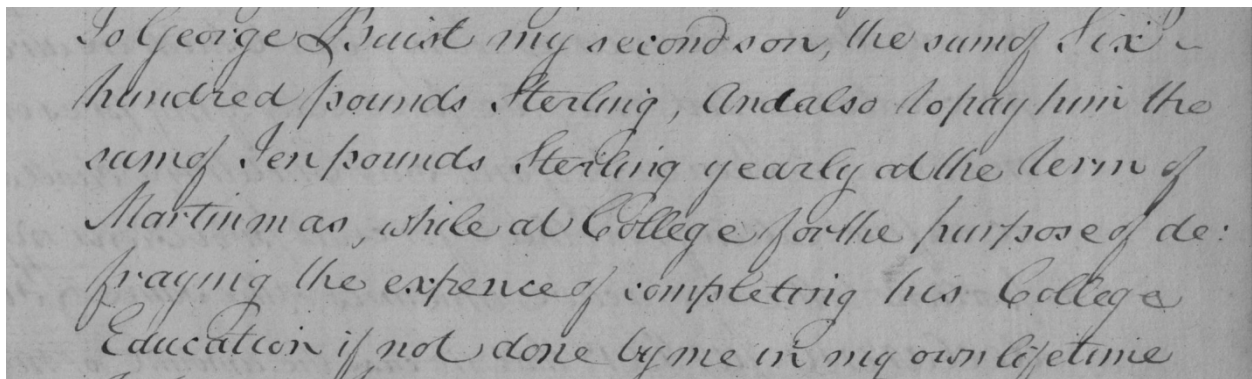
<sup>14</sup> United College of St. Salvator and St. Leonard. Accessed at: [www.st-andrews.ac.uk](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk)





*Fig.6. North and West Wings of United College, taken in 1846, St. Andrews, Fife, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections Department, Photograph ID ALB-66-4, Special Permission for the Use of This Photograph Granted by the Head of Special Collections*

He made rapid progress in his various studies and was universally regarded with affection for a quality of an unassuming kindness of disposition and temper, which made it impossible for him to irritate or to be irritated.<sup>15</sup> In his father's Trust and Disposition of 1796 shortly before his death, he instructed that his son shall receive 600 pounds sterling plus 10 pounds sterling a year while at college for defraying the expense of completing his college education.<sup>16</sup> His father, George Buist, died on Tuesday, 24 January 1797 at Orkie.<sup>17</sup>



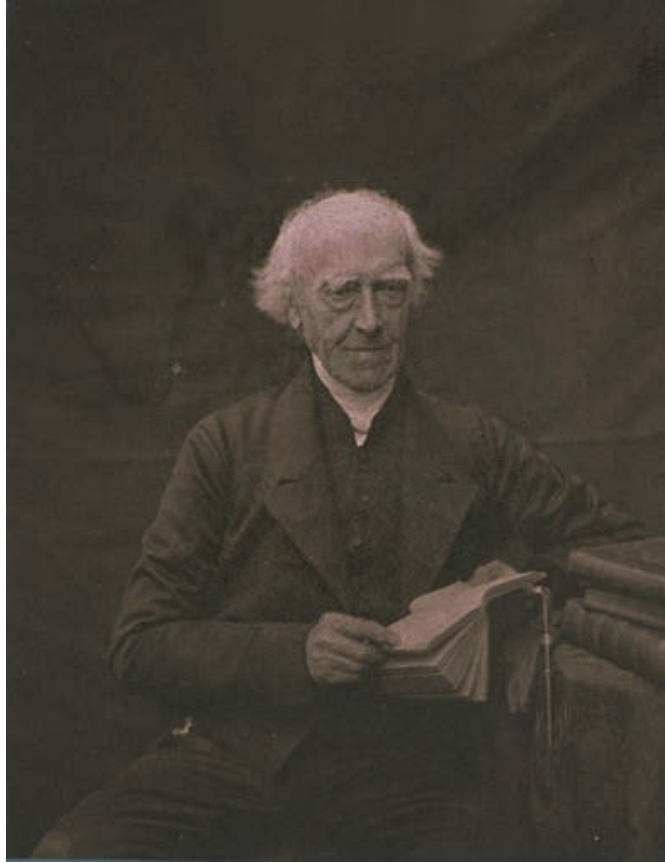
*Fig.7. Trust Disposition and Deed Settlement of George Buist, 6 December 1796, Page 417, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections, Call Number B25/4/1, Special Permission for the Use of This Photograph Granted by the Head of Special Collections*

<sup>15</sup> Conolly, M.F. *Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Men of Fife*. Edinburgh: Inglis & Jack, 1857, p. 99

<sup>16</sup> Trust Disposition and Deed Settlement of George Buist, 6 December 1796, Register of Deeds, Burgh of Falkland, 1738-1798, University of St. Andrews Special Collections, Call Number B25/4/1, p. 417

<sup>17</sup> Death Record of George Buist, 24 January 1797, Kettle Parish Records, Old Parish Records 435/0050 0323

After completing a course of philosophy at the University of St. Andrews he became licensed as a preacher by the Presbytery of Cupar in 1801.<sup>18</sup> While studying Buist was a contemporary of John Lee who would later become the Principal of the University of Edinburgh from 1840 until his death in 1859; the two remained close friends for the rest of their lives.<sup>19</sup>



*Fig.8. Principal John Lee taken in circa 1850 by Thomas Rodger, Public Domain Photograph*

Before settling down in ministerial life, George Buist travelled on the continent, taking advantage of a short peace in 1801-02.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Conolly, M.F. *Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Men of Fife*. Edinburgh: Inglis & Jack, 1857, p. 99

<sup>19</sup> Conolly, M.F. *Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Men of Fife*. Edinburgh: Inglis & Jack, 1857, p. 99

<sup>20</sup> Conolly, M.F. *Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Men of Fife*. Edinburgh: Inglis & Jack, 1857, p. 99

## Minister of Falkland

After his short vacation, George Buist was ordained to his first charge as minister of Falkland on Tuesday, 28 September 1802.<sup>21</sup> Here he began his ministerial duties and quickly was considered an esteemed preacher and was indefatigable in the discharge of parochial responsibilities.



Fig.9. Falkland Parish Church, Falkland, Fife, Photograph Courtesy of Michael T. Tracy © 2010 Michael T. Tracy



Fig.10. Ordnance Survey Map showing Falkland Parish Church, Falkland, Photograph Courtesy of the National Library of Scotland

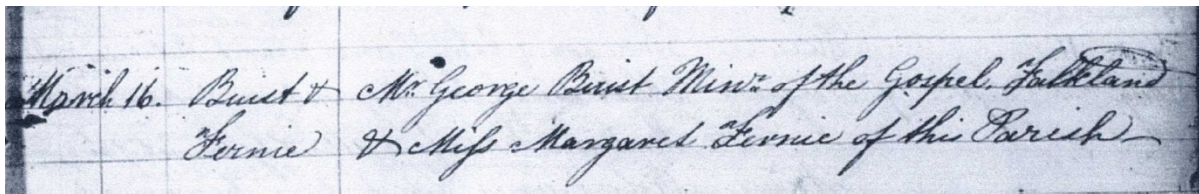
<sup>21</sup> Conolly, M.F. *Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Men of Fife*. Edinburgh: Inglis & Jack, 1857, p. 99



Buist was the minister of Falkland for the next 11 years and after his marriage to Margaret Fernie in 1805, the couple continued to reside at Falkland. Their first three children were also born here.

### **Marriage and Family life**

Given the necessity of securing a stable financial future prior to marriage, it may be surmised that George's ordination at Falkland was a necessary precursor to his marriage to Margaret Fernie. Margaret was the only daughter and heiress of the lands of Tillywhandland, Kirton of Aberlemno and Henwellburn in Angus which had been owned by her deceased father, William Fernie, Esq. In any case, George Buist and Margaret Fernie were married on Saturday, 16 March 1805 in Balmerino Parish, Fifeshire.<sup>22</sup> There is a simple entry in the Balmerino church records which reads "March 16 [1805], Mr. George Buist, Minister of the Gospel, Falkland and Miss Margaret Fernie of this parish."<sup>23</sup>



*Fig.11. Marriage Record of George Buist, 16 March 1805, Balmerino Parish Records, Crown Copyright*



*Fig.12. Balmerino Parish Church, Photograph Courtesy of Michael T. Tracy © 2010 Michael T. Tracy*

<sup>22</sup> Marriage Record of George Buist, 16 March 1805, Balmerino Parish Records, Old Parish Records 409/0020 0054

<sup>23</sup> Marriage Record of George Buist, 16 March 1805, Balmerino Parish Records, Old Parish Records 409/0020 0054





*Fig.13. Balmerino Parish Church Cross, Photograph Courtesy of Michael T. Tracy © 2010 Michael T. Tracy*

After their marriage, the couple returned to Falkland where George resumed his ministry. Their first three children were born at Falkland. They were:

George born on Sunday, 2 August 1807<sup>24</sup> and died on Friday, 29 July 1842 at the age of 34 while serving with the 10<sup>th</sup> Light Calvary of the Bengal Army in Jalalabad, Afghanistan;<sup>25</sup>

Jean born on Friday, 10 March 1809<sup>26</sup> and died on Tuesday, 4 February 1817;<sup>27</sup>

William Fernie born on Thursday, 22 November 1810<sup>28</sup> and died on Sunday, 8 December 1816.<sup>29</sup>

There is mention of George Buist, minister of Falkland as having examined the Falkland School scholars and recommended the schoolmaster, Mr. Brown for an excellent job in his teaching abilities.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Baptismal Record of George Buist, 23 August 1807, Falkland Parish Records, Old Parish Records 428/0020 0270

<sup>25</sup> *London Morning Post Newspaper*, 8 October 1842, p. 4

<sup>26</sup> Baptismal Record of Jean Buist, 9 April 1809, Falkland Parish Records, Old Parish Records 428/0020 0278

<sup>27</sup> Death Record of Jean Buist, 4 February 1817, St. Andrews and St. Leonards Parish Records 453/0170 0428

<sup>28</sup> Baptismal Record of William Fernie Buist, 14 December 1810, Falkland Parish Records, Old Parish Records 428/0020 0286

<sup>29</sup> Death Record of William Fernie Buist, 8 December 1816, St. Andrews and St. Leonards Parish Records, Old Parish Records 453/0170 0427

<sup>30</sup> *Edinburgh Advertiser Newspaper*, 20 September 1811, p. 186

## The Second Charge – St. Andrews

In 1809 George Buist was translated to the second charge of St. Andrews, however, it was not until Friday, 1 September 1813 that he was actually admitted. In 1809 he was elected by a majority of the Town Council to be a minister of the second charge of St. Andrews, but owing to a local dispute as to the actual election he stayed as minister of Falkland for the next four years.<sup>31</sup> At any rate, he arrived in St. Andrews with his family in August of 1813 and began his long ministry at the Town Church formerly Holy Trinity Church which is located on the north side of South Street. Buist was replaced in Falkland by the Reverend William Thomson.<sup>32</sup> It was here that George Buist laboured in the ministry for the long period of 47 years and where he had the greatest impact on the daily lives of the parishioners.



*Fig.14. Holy Trinity Church, St. Andrews, Photograph Courtesy of S.K. Photography*

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<sup>31</sup> Conolly, M.F. *Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Men of Fife*. Edinburgh: Inglis & Jack, 1857, p. 99

<sup>32</sup> *Edinburgh Advertiser Newspaper*, 10 December 1813, p. 876



*Fig.15. Holy Trinity Church, St. Andrews, Photograph Courtesy of Michael T. Tracy © 2010 Michael T. Tracy*

The church has a long history dating back to 1234 when it was first dedicated. During Buist's time there it was known as the Town Church and was listed in the Ordnance Survey Name Book of 1853-55 which is reproduced below.<sup>33</sup> Buist shared the ministerial duties with Reverend Dr. Robert Haldane (1772-1854), who was the Principal of St. Mary's College, with Haldane preaching on Sunday morning and Buist preaching in the afternoons.

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<sup>33</sup> Ordnance Survey Name Books, *Fife and Kinross-shire OS Name Books 1853-1855, Volume 101, OS1/13/101/38*



30 Parish of St. Andrews Sheet 1. June 7. No. 21.

List of Names to be corrected if necessary	Orthography as recommended to be used in the new Plans	Other modes of Spelling the same Name	Authority for these other modes of Spelling when known	Situation	Descriptive Remarks, or other General Observations which may be considered of Interest
Town Church (Rush)	Town Church Formerly Trinity Church (12th Century)	Town Church St. Andrew's Trinity or Parochial Church Parish Church ecclesie parochialis sancti limitatis Town Church	John Ramsay St. Andrews George Ropack Canon of St. Andrews Stat. Act. 1746 map of St. Andrews 1743 Tollerton's Gazetteer 1747 Bridg's eye view of St. Andrews about 1730 Schalders Brit. of Trip. p. 352 Sighton's Hist. vol. 3 p. 33	North side of South Street.	This Church is of a very plain style of architecture, but very large and was rebuilt in 1798 on the site of the old Parish Church said to be erected by Bishop Turgot so long ago as the year 1112. It is attended by two Ministers B. Robt. Haldane as first and the Rev. J. Buist, It is seated for about 2200 persons, comprising about 1000 Communicants, there is a Monument to the Memory of Archbishop Sharp who was Murdered in 1679 on Mogues Hill in the south wing of the The first Minster serves on an average about £700 yearly & the 2 <sup>d</sup> about 300

18000 9-50

Fig.16. Ordnance Survey Name Book for Town Church, St. Andrews, Fife, Photograph Courtesy of ScotlandsPlaces.gov.uk

Also during this time, Buist worked on obtaining his Doctorate of Divinity which he received from the University of St. Andrews in April of 1818.<sup>34</sup> Reverend Dr. Buist is listed in the 1825 Pigot and Company's National Commercial Directory which is reproduced below.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Anderson, James Maitland. *The Matriculation Roll of the University of St. Andrews, 1747-1897*. Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1905, p. 61

<sup>35</sup> *Pigot and Company's National Commercial Directory*. London: J. Pigot, 1825, p. 370



<p><b>UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREW'S,</b> FOUNDED IN 1411. Lord Viscount Melville, Chancellor Francis Nicol, D. D. Rector</p> <p><b>UNITED COLLEGE OF ST. SALVATOR AND ST. LEONARD.</b> Francis Nicol, D. D. Principal; Patron, the Crown Greek, Andrew Alexander, A. M. Logic, James Hunter, D. D. Moral Philosophy, Thos. Chalmers, D.D. } United Natural Philosophy, Thos. Jackson, LL.D. } College</p>	<p>Humanity, John Hunter, L. L. D.; Duchess of Portland Civil History, William Ferrie; Earl of Cassillis Mathematics, Thomas Duncan; Crown Medicine, Robert Briggs, M.D.; University Teacher of French, Mons. Messieux</p> <p><b>ST. MARY'S COLLEGE.</b> Rev. Dr. Haldane, Principal Divinity..... Vacant Church History,.. George Buist, D.D. Oriental Languages, J. Baird</p>
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**RESIDENT GENTRY.**

<p>Alexander Professor Andrew, South st Arnot William, esq. South st Balfour Mr. Robt. East Bridge Barron Mrs. South st Bayne Mr. John, South st Bertram Mrs. St. Leonard's Berwick Mr. George, South st Binney Alex. esq. South st Briggs Robt. M.D. South st Brown Miss Jane, North st Buchan Mr. John, South st Buddo David, M.D. Kirk Wynd Buist Rev. George, D.D. South st</p>	<p>Frazer Miss F. E. Market st Gibson Mr. Henry, sen. West port Gillespie Captain Laurence, Market st Glass Col. Andrew, Abbey Park Glass David, esq. (of <i>Snyddy Green</i>) South st Glass Peter, esq. Eastburn Wynd Grace Charles, Market st Gray Rev. Grant, Market st Gunn Mr. John, Market st Haddow Miss Janet, South st Haldane Principal Robert, D. D. South st</p>	<p>Lutch Mr. David, South st Lothian Rev. Wm. Market st Maron Captain Thos. North st Meldrum Mrs. David, South st Melville Thos. M.D. South st Methven Mrs. Market st Miller Mr. Thomas, R.N. South st Mitchell Mr. George, South st Morris Major, South st Mowats Misses, North st Mudie Colonel Andrew, Priors Cottage Mudie Dr. Peter, Market st Nicoll Principal Francis, South st</p>
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Fig.17. 1825 Pigot and Company's National Commercial Directory listing Reverend Dr. George Buist (Left-hand side) Page 370

**A Professor of Hebrew at St. Mary's College**

The University of St. Andrews is Scotland's oldest university which was founded in 1410 and is considered one of the finest universities in Britain. St. Mary's College, is the home of the teaching of divinity in the university and was founded in 1539 and equally has had a long history. In a letter written to Robert Haldane on Monday, 24 March 1817, Robert Saunders Dundas, 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Melville, then Chancellor of the University of St. Andrews recommended George Buist for the chair of Hebrew at St. Mary's College.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Letter of Robert Saunders Dundas, 24 March 1817, University of St. Andrews Special Collections, Call Number msDA816.D8/ms4553

Private

4553

Ministry  
24<sup>th</sup> March 1817.

Dear Sir,

I have to return you many thanks for your communications respecting the vacant Professorship at St Andrews. - After consulting with the Chief Baron who was in London some days ago, as to the pretensions of the several Candidates, we were both of opinion, on the whole, that it ought to be conferred on Dr Buis; and I have accordingly intimated to him that I have recommended him

Fig.18. Letter of Robert Saunders Dundas, 24 March 1817, Page 1, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections Department, Call Number msDA816.D8/ms4553, Special Permission for the Use of This Photograph Granted by the Head of Special Collections

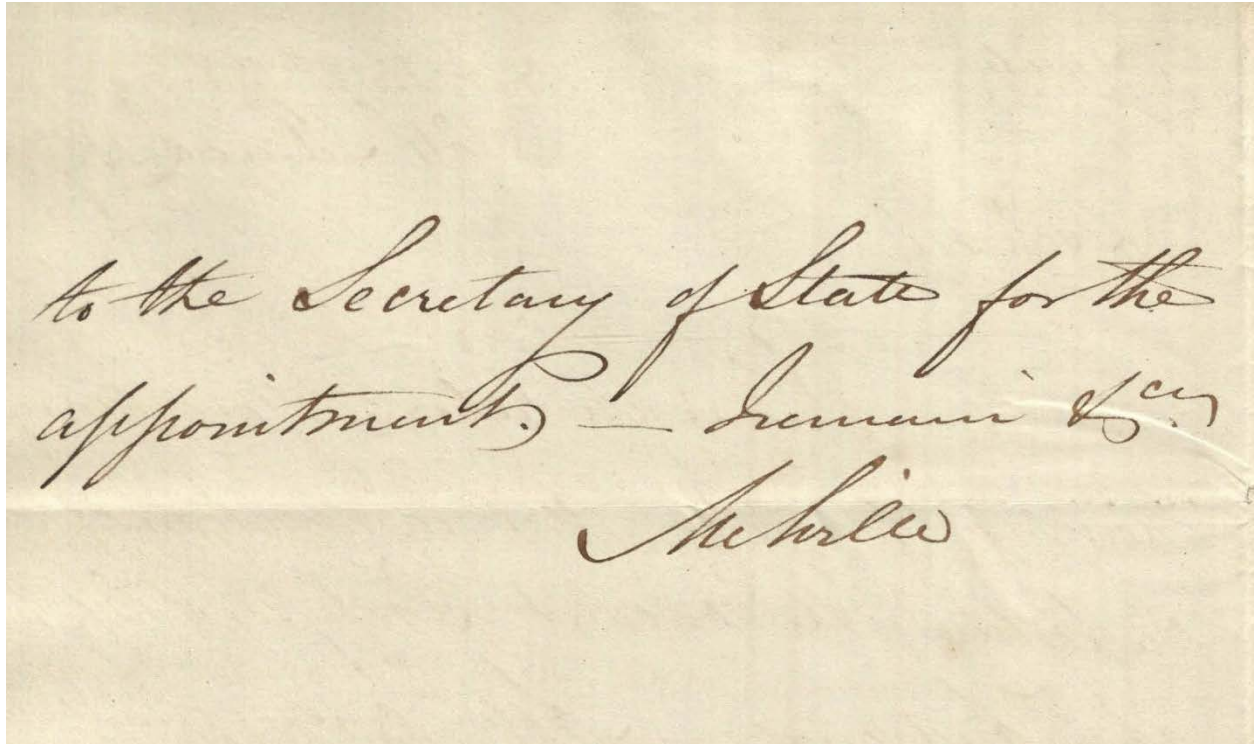


Fig.19. Letter of Robert Saunders Dundas, 24 March 1817, Page 2, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections Department, Call Number msDA816.D8/ms4553, Special Permission for the Use of This Photograph Granted by the Head of Special Collections

According to the *Edinburgh Advertiser Newspaper* "Rev. Dr. Buist, one of the ministers of the city of St. Andrews having been presented by the Crown to the vacant Professorship of Hebrew in that university, was admitted to that office on the 25<sup>th</sup> ult."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Edinburgh Advertiser Newspaper*, 1 July 1817, p. 2





*Fig.20. St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, Photograph Courtesy of Michael T. Tracy © 2010 Michael T. Tracy*

### **A Professor of Ecclesiastical History at St. Mary's College**

On Monday, 20 December 1819 writing from St. Andrews, Buist describes his sadness at the death of his colleague, Principal George Hill (1739-1810), who, in association with his university appointment, was a minister of the first charge of St. Andrews. He too was a distinguished churchman who had been Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and Dean of the Chapel Royal and Dean of the Order of the Thistle. In his letter to Lord Melville, Chancellor of the University, George Buist recommends himself for the vacancy "I have used the freedom to trouble your Lordship with the following representation. There have been two ministers connected with St. Andrews for two hundred years. I have looked into the records which go back to 1638, and from them it appears, that the Crown has been in the uniform practice when a vacancy occurred in the 1<sup>st</sup> charge, to present the minister who occupied the 2<sup>nd</sup> charge. I feel grateful my Lord, for your Lordship's kindness in recommending me, on a former occasion, to an office which I have endeavored to discharge with credit to the University."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Letter of George Buist, 20 December 1819, University of St. Andrews Special Collections, Call Number msDA816.D8/ms4595



A. E. H

4595

St Andrews 20 Decr 1819

My Lord

The Death of my revered Colleague  
Principal Hill, having occasioned a vacancy  
in the office of First Minister of this parish,  
I have used the freedom to trouble your  
Lordship with the following Representation.  
There have been two Ministers connected with  
St Andrews for above two hundred years. I have  
looked into the Records which go back to  
1638, and from them it appears, that the Crown  
has been in the uniform practice, when a  
vacancy occurred in the 1<sup>st</sup> Charge, to present  
the Minister who occupied the 2<sup>d</sup>. The following  
are the Dates & the names of the presenters.

Mr Andrew Honeyman in 1662  
Dr William Moore in 1680  
Mr Alex<sup>r</sup> Shields in 1698  
Mr William Hardie in 1712  
Mr John Mc Cormick in 1738  
Mr John Hill — in 1753.

Fig.21. Letter of George Buist, 20 December 1819, Page 1, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections Department, Call Number msDA816.D8/ms4595, Special Permission for the Use of This Photograph Granted by the Head of Special Collections



Dr James Gillespie in 1765  
Dr John Adamson in 1779  
Dr George Hill in 1809

I flatter myself with the idea that the Secretary of State will on a proper representation of the matter judge it expedient to continue a practice which has been so long established. I feel very grateful my Lord, for your Lordships kindness in recommending me, on a former occasion, to an office which I have endeavoured to discharge with credit to the University; and I have ventured a second time to solicit your Lordships interposition in my behalf. I would feel myself I confess in rather an unpleasant predicament were the determination of the Crown to leave me in a less favourable state than my predecessors, when similarly situated.

I have only to add my Lord that although Rectors of the parish and members of the Town Council have voluntarily <sup>offered</sup> to support what they regard as my just claims, if I thought fit

Fig.22. Letter of George Buist, 20 December 1819, Page 2, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections Department, Call Number msDA816.D8/ms4595, Special Permission for the Use of This Photograph Granted by the Head of Special Collections



to canvass, I have altogether declined such  
a course of procedure. I hope that my claim  
as I have already represented it will appear  
to your Lordship in a favourable Light.  
and that you will have the goodness to  
recommend it to the Secretary of State,  
to adhere to the practice which has now  
been established for about two Centuries.

I have the Honour to be

My Lord

Your Lordships most Obed<sup>t</sup>  
and obliged Serv<sup>t</sup>

He was lately appointed a J<sup>r</sup>: Buis<sup>t</sup>.  
Professor in addition to his living.

The right of presentation of the second  
Minister belonged till very lately to the Bishop  
of St Andrews, who have sold it. Their usual  
practice heretofore had probably been to recommend  
the second Minister to the first charge, (in the  
The Rt Honable. gift of the Crown) & then to  
Lord Melville appoint another protest to  
the second, or to appoint to the  
latter the person suggested by the Crown in exchange.

Fig.23. Letter of George Buist, 20 December 1819, Page 3, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections Department, Call Number msDA816.D8/ms4595, Special Permission for the Use of This Photograph Granted by the Head of Special Collections

Similarly, in a letter to Lord Melville dated on Wednesday, 1 August 1821, he makes his intentions known of his interest in the upcoming vacancy of the Chair of Ecclesiastical History to succeed Dr. John Lee at St. Mary's College in St. Andrews.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Letter of George Buist, 1 August 1821, University of St. Andrews Special Collections, Call Number msDA816.D8/ms4641



W. M. will be in Scotland  
St Andrews 1<sup>st</sup> Aug. 1821

My Lord I am not a man I doubt that my  
request will be My Colleague Dr Lee, who of late has  
been somewhat undetermined with regard to his  
measures, now speaks with confidence of his removal  
to the vacant Charge of Canonry, to which he has  
been presented, in a few months. And as it is probable  
that your Lordship may ere long be induced to  
make the necessary arrangements, for filling up his  
Chair in St Marys. I have again used the freedom  
to state, that within these thirty years, the Crown  
the Patron of the whole of the Professorships in  
St Marys College, has promoted three of my  
predecessors Professors of Hebrew, to the Divinity  
and Ecclesiastical History Chairs: and that if it  
shall be agreeable to Your Lordship, to sanction  
the idea which has been suggested, of advancing  
me to be Dr Lees Successor, it shall be my earnest  
endeavour to discharge the Duties of the Office  
with Credit to myself, to the University, and to  
Your Lordships Recommendation.

I am My Lord  
Your Lordships Most Obed Servt  
Geo. Buist

Fig.24. Letter of George Buist, 1 August 1821, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections Department, Call Number msDA816.D8/ms4641, Special Permission for the Use of This Photograph Granted by the Head of Special Collections

It was not until Tuesday, 21 October 1823 that Buist received the appointment of Professor of Ecclesiastical History and according to the *British Press Newspaper* “the inauguration of Dr. George Buist, the newly appointed Professor of Church History in St. Andrews, took place in the Hall of St. Mary’s on Tuesday.”<sup>40</sup>

**Lawpark, St. Andrews**

On Wednesday, 1 July 1818 George and Margaret Buist purchased the estate known as Lawpark.<sup>41</sup> The property was described as being a “good dwelling house two stories high and slated with a good garden and the property of the Reverend Dr. Buist, Professor of Church History, St. Andrews.”<sup>42</sup>

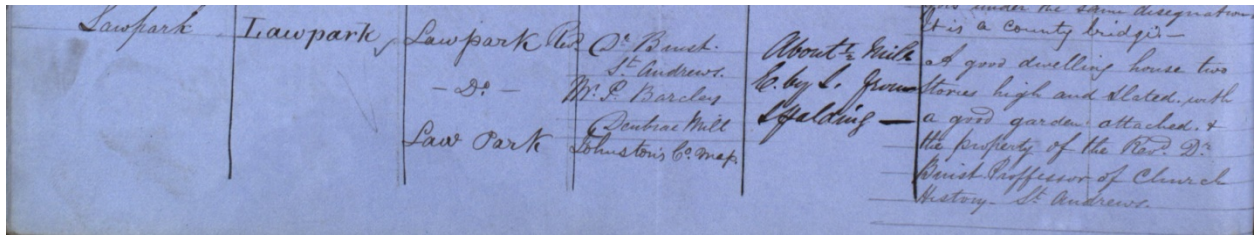


Fig.25. Ordnance Survey Name Book for Lawpark, St. Andrews, Fifeshire, Photograph Courtesy of ScotlandsPlaces.gov.uk



Fig.26. Ordnance Survey Map showing Lawpark, St. Andrews, Photograph Courtesy of the National Library of Scotland

<sup>40</sup> *British Press Newspaper*, 25 October 1823, p. 2

<sup>41</sup> Sasine of George and Margaret Buist, 1 July 1818, P.R. 105.251

<sup>42</sup> Ordnance Survey Name Books, *Fife and Kinross-shire OS Name Books 1853-1855, Volume 60, OS1/13/60/20*





*Fig.27. Lawpark, St. Andrews, Photograph Courtesy of Michael T. Tracy © 2010 Michael T. Tracy*

Lawpark dates back to at least 1754 and it was here that Reverend Dr. Buist and his family raised their family and entertained guests and members of the clergy. They had four more children who were all born at Lawpark. They were:

William Fernie born on Tuesday, 4 August 1818<sup>43</sup> and died on Monday, 9 April 1860;<sup>44</sup>  
 Henry born on Thursday, 12 January 1820<sup>45</sup> and died on Friday, 17 April 1840;<sup>46</sup>  
 Jean (Jane) born on Thursday, 10 January 1822<sup>47</sup> and died on Friday, 29 April 1881;<sup>48</sup>  
 Margaret born on Sunday, 3 April 1825<sup>49</sup> and died on Wednesday, 8 March 1826.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Baptismal Record of William Fernie Buist, 23 August 1818, St. Andrews and St. Leonards Parish Records, Old Parish Records 453/0040 0116

<sup>44</sup> Death Record of William Fernie Buist, 9 April 1860, St. Andrews and St. Leonards Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 453/0000 0042

<sup>45</sup> Baptismal Record of Henry Buist, 20 January 1820, St. Andrews and St. Leonards Parish Records, Old Parish Records 453/0040 0125

<sup>46</sup> Death Record of Henry Buist, 17 April 1840, England and Wales Death Index, 1837-1915. Ancestry.com. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2006

<sup>47</sup> Baptismal Record of Jean Buist, 10 January 1822, St. Andrews and St. Leonards Parish Records, Old Parish Records 453/0190 0020

<sup>48</sup> Death Record of Jane Buist, 29 April 1881, Edinburgh St. Andrews Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 685/02 0299

<sup>49</sup> Baptismal Record of Margaret Buist, 3 April 1825, St. Andrews and St. Leonards Parish Records, Old Parish Records 453/0190 0042

<sup>50</sup> Death Record of Margaret Buist, 8 March 1826, St. Andrews and St. Leonards Parish Records, Old Parish Records 453/0210 0027



Lawpark had a large garden and stabling for horses situated on one acre of land. According to the 1855 Scotland Valuation Roll for Lawpark, George Buist is shown as the proprietor and the yearly rent or value of the property is valued at 35 pounds.<sup>51</sup>

VALUATION				ROLL.		
County of Fife.				St. Andrews Parish.		
				For the Year 1855-56.		
Number.	DESCRIPTION AND SITUATION OF SUBJECT.	PROPRIETOR.	TENANT.	OCCUPIER.	YEARLY RENT OR VALUE.	
					As Estimated by Assessor.	As Adjusted on Application or Appeal.
37	Municipal Quarry	James H. Ragg Esquire of Fife	John Kennedy St. Andrews	Wm. Forward	£4331	19
38	Barren & Briny acres	William Arnold Esq of Cairns St. Andrews	Andrew Anderson Cairns Hill	said John Kennedy	50	30
39	Two Fields at Denhead	Mrs. E. M. Ritchie, M.L. Cairns	James Mitchell his Denhead	said Andrew Anderson	295	295
40	House & yard Denhead	Do.	Do.	Mrs. Mitchell Denhead	25	25
41	House & yard	Do.	Do.	said J. E. M. Ritchie	57	57
42	House garden & lawn	Rev. Dr. Buist St. Andrews	Do.	Do.	35	35

Fig.28. 1855 Scotland Valuation Roll for Lawpark, St. Andrews Parish, Fife listing Reverend Dr. George Buist (Last Entry)

After George Buist's death, his daughter, Jane, continued to reside at Lawpark until Monday, 23 March 1874 when she and her nephews, George William Mason Buist (1830-1880) and William Fernie Buist (1835-1900) deeded the property to James Buist (1795-1880), the brother of the Reverend Dr. George Buist.<sup>52</sup>



Fig.29. Lawpark, St. Andrews, Photograph Courtesy of Michael T. Tracy © 2010 Michael T. Tracy

<sup>51</sup> 1855 Scotland Valuation Roll for Lawpark, St. Andrews, Fife, Scotland VR101/1/192

<sup>52</sup> Disposition by the Trustees of the Late Rev. Dr. George Buist to James Buist, 23 March 1874, Folio 3, p.p. 2-8

## The Lands of Tillywhandland, Kirton of Aberlemno and Henwellburn

Since their marriage in 1805, George and Margaret Buist owned various lands of Tillywhandland, Kirton of Aberlemno and Henwellburn in Angus. Tillywhandland is described as being “a good farm steading”<sup>53</sup> and Henwellburn is described as a “little village or hamlet to the west of the church.”<sup>54</sup> These lands were held by George and Margaret Buist until 1845 when they were sold off.



Fig.30. Ordnance Survey Map showing Tillywhandland, Aberlemno Parish, Angus, Photograph Courtesy of the National Library of Scotland

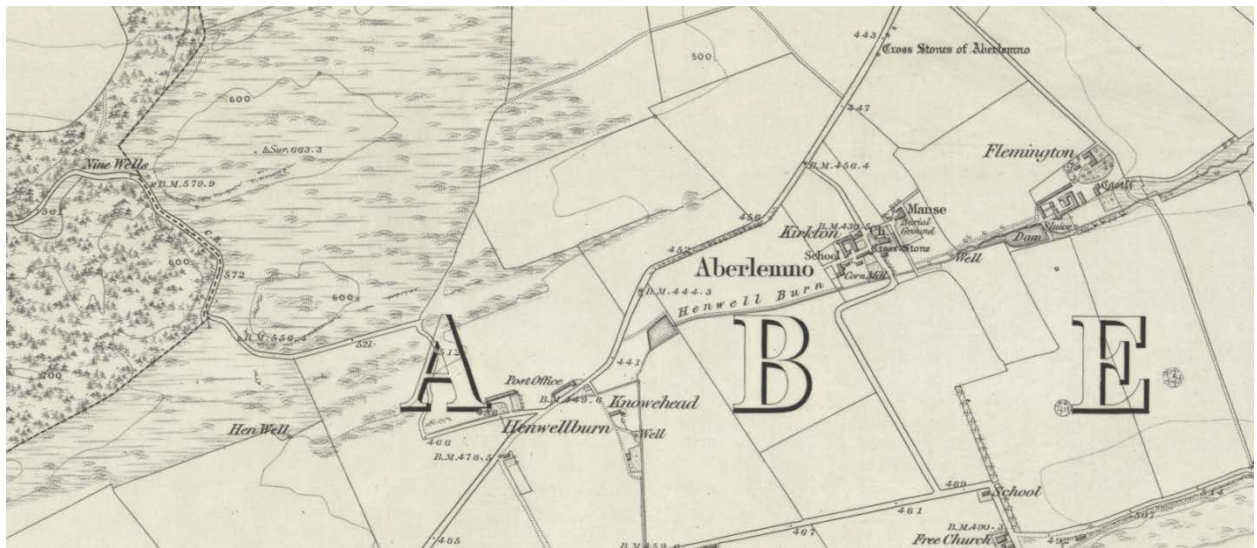


Fig.31. Ordnance Survey Map showing Henwellburn and Kirton of Aberlemno Parish, Angus, Photograph Courtesy of the National Library of Scotland

<sup>53</sup> Ordnance Survey Name Book, Forfarshire (Angus) OS Name Books 1857-1861, Volume 1, OS1/14/1/44

<sup>54</sup> Ordnance Survey Name Book, Forfarshire (Angus) OS Name Books 1857-1861, Volume 1, OS1/14/1/27

## **Further Appointments**

Although a full-time minister and a professor twice over, he was appointed in 1833 to the public office of Land Tax Commissioner for Fife, and as such was responsible for the assessment and collection of the land tax within the county. In 1838 he was appointed to the important position of Rector of St. Andrews University. His wide knowledge and inquiring mind led him to become one of the original founding members of the St. Andrews Literary and Philosophical Society. On Monday, 16 April 1838 a group of distinguished gentlemen met at the St. Andrews University library to discuss a proposal that a Literary and Philosophical Society should be formed.<sup>55</sup> The meeting resolved to establish the Society and furthermore, these gentlemen were anxious to receive the names of others who were “disposed to countenance” of such an institution. Besides the general research, the Society would especially have in view the establishment of a museum in the university.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Minutes of the Literary and Philosophical Society of St. Andrews, 16 April 1838, University of St. Andrews Special Collections Department, Call Number UY8525/1 & 2

<sup>56</sup> Biography of Literary and Philosophical Society of St. Andrews, National Archives of Scotland, Person Code STA 81, Source ID 5303



1838

A General Meeting of the Subscribers to  
the Proposal of forming a Literary &  
Philosophical Society in St. Andrews  
was held in the University Library  
on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> April at one o'clock  
Present

The Rev<sup>d</sup> Principal Haldane  
Principal Sir David Brewster.  
Professor Duncan  
J<sup>r</sup> Adam Anderson  
J<sup>r</sup> Thomas Gellie  
J<sup>r</sup> James Hunter  
J<sup>r</sup> George Jook  
J<sup>r</sup> George Beist  
Provost Patrick Wallace  
Mayor H. L. Clayfair  
J<sup>r</sup> Robert Dain  
J<sup>r</sup> Patrick Mudie  
Mr John Adamson  
Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr G. S. Lyon  
William Arnott Esq.  
Benj<sup>r</sup> Broughton Esq.  
Rev<sup>d</sup> Will<sup>m</sup> Lothian  
Rev<sup>d</sup> Thomas Withen

The Rev<sup>d</sup> J<sup>r</sup> Haldane in the Chair  
The meeting resolved to form them-  
selves into a Literary & Philosophical  
Society and the following Gentlemen  
were elected Office Bearers for the  
ensuing year -

President. The R<sup>t</sup> Hon Lord W. Douglas  
Vice Presidents { Sir David Brewster K.H. &  
Rev<sup>d</sup> J<sup>r</sup> Haldane  
Rev<sup>d</sup> J<sup>r</sup> Jook -

Council

Fig.32. Minutes written by Dr. P. Mudie, First Secretary of the Literary and Philosophical Society of St. Andrews, 16 April 1838, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections Department, Call Number UY8525/1 & 2



As a further testament to his academic stature, he was accorded the honour of writing the New Statistical Account entry for the Parish of St. Andrews (1837-38).<sup>57</sup>



*Fig.33. Group of four men (Left to Right) J.D. Forbes, Rev. William Brown, Hugh Lyon Playfair and Dr. George Buist, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections Department, Photograph ID ms38081-1-A, Special Permission for the Use of This Photograph Granted by the Head of Special Collections*

### **The Disruption of 1843 and Moderator of the General Assembly**

On Thursday, 18 May 1843 Reverend Dr. Buist was present when 121 ministers and 73 elders led by Dr. David Welsh left the Church of Scotland General Assembly at the Church of St. Andrew in Edinburgh and subsequently formed the Free Church of Scotland. This became known as “The Disruption of 1843.” The disagreement that resulted in this schism centred on the appointment of ministers. The Reverend Dr. George Buist was most likely present when the dissenters walked out of the General Assembly and he vehemently stayed with the Established Church of Scotland.

In 1848 Reverend Dr. George Buist was raised to the highest honour in which the Established Church of Scotland could bestow, unanimously electing him Moderator of the General Assembly. The Moderator chairs the General Assembly and is an honorary position and the term of office runs for one year. Buist’s dignified manner was admirably suited for that high office. He was listed in the *British Almanac* for 1849.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Statistical Accounts of Scotland 1791-1845, *St. Andrews, County of Fife, NSA, Volume IX, 1845*, p.p. 449-497

<sup>58</sup> *The British Almanac*. London: Charles Knight, 1849, p. 57

## CHURCH.

The CHURCH OF SCOTLAND is governed by one General Assembly, 16 Synods, and 83 Presbyteries.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.**—Lord Belhaven, *High Commissioner*; Geo. Buist, D.D., *Moderator*; Robert Bell, *Procurator and Cashier for the Church*.

*Agent in Edinburgh, William Young.*  
*Agent in London, John Spottiswoode.*

Fig.34. The British Almanac of 1849 showing the Reverend Dr. George Buist as Moderator, Page 57



Fig.35. Reverend Dr. George Buist taken in 1855, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections Department, Photograph IS ALB-1-87, Special Permission for the Use of This Photograph Granted by the Head of Special Collections



## The Census Records

According to the 1841 Scotland Census for St. Andrews, St. Andrews and St. Leonards Parish, Fifeshire, George Buist is listed as being 60 years of age, a minister and his wife, Margaret, is 55 years of age with the following child, Jane, age 15; and grandchild, George, age 10.<sup>59</sup>

Sample	George Buist	60	Minister	Y
	Margaret Do	55		Y
	Jane Do	15		Y
	George Do	10		no ✓
	Christian Todd	75	Independent	Y
	Catherine Broad	15	F 5 1	Y
	Ann Harvey	20	F 5 1	no ✓
	John Hay	13	M 5 1	Y

Fig.36. 1841 Scotland Census for St. Andrews, St. Andrews and St. Leonards Parish, Fife listing Reverend Dr. George Buist and Family

The 1851 Scotland Census showed George Buist being 72 years of age, a minister, with his wife, Margaret being 67 years of age and their daughter, Jane, is 29 years old.<sup>60</sup>

110	George Buist	Head	Mar	72	One of the ministers of the Parish of St. Andrews & Professor of Sacred Theology in the same Parish	Fifeshire Kettle
	Margaret Fernie	Wife	Mar	67		Do Balmains
	Jane Buist	Daughter	Un	29	Minister's Daughter	Do St. Andrews
	Christian Todd	Wife	Un	88	Farmer's Daughter	Do Largo
	Hannah Manzie	servant	Un	26	House-servant	Do St. Andrews
	Margaret Allison	servant	Un	21	Do Do	Do Do
	Elizabeth H. Smith	servant	Un	21	Nurse to an Invalid	Do Ferryportcraig

Fig.37. 1851 Scotland Census for St. Andrews, St. Andrews and St. Leonards Parish, Fife listing Reverend Dr. George Buist and Family

In addition to the census records the Reverend Dr. Buist was listed as first registering to vote in September of 1839.<sup>61</sup>



Fig.38. Fife, Scotland Voters List for 1839 showing the Reverend Dr. George Buist

<sup>59</sup> 1841 Scotland Census for St. Andrews, St. Andrews and St. Leonards Parish, Fife, Scotland; Enumeration District 15, Page 7

<sup>60</sup> 1851 Scotland Census for St. Andrews, St. Andrews and St. Leonards Parish, Fife, Scotland; Enumeration District 18, Page 25

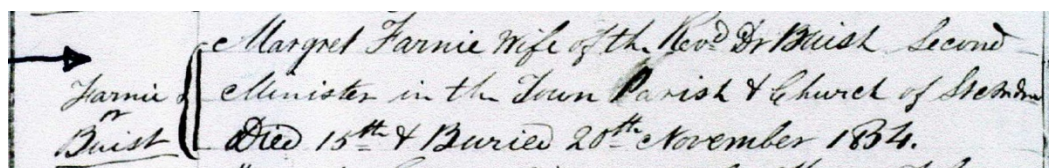
<sup>61</sup> Fife, Scotland, Voters Lists, 1832-1894. Ancestry.com. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010



*Fig.39. Reverend Dr. George Buist taken in 1850, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections Department, Photograph ID ALB-3-21, Special Permission for the Use of This Photograph Granted by the Head of Special Collections*

### **Death of Margaret Buist**

Margaret Buist, his wife, died on Wednesday, 15 November 1854 at the age of 68 at Lawpark.<sup>62</sup> She was buried on Monday, 20 November 1854 in the Buist family lair in the burial ground at St. Andrews Cathedral in St. Andrews.<sup>63</sup>



*Fig.40. Death Record of Margaret Buist, 15 November 1854, St. Andrews and St. Leonards Parish Records, Crown Copyright*

George and Margaret Buist were married for 49 years at the time of her death and he continued to reside at Lawpark with his daughter, Jane, who now managed with the household's organization and operation. Reverend Dr. Buist continued his rigorous schedule of teaching, lecturing and parochial visitations.

<sup>62</sup> Death Record of Margaret Buist, 15 November 1854, St. Andrews and St. Leonards Parish Records, Old Parish Records 453/0210 0220

<sup>63</sup> Death Record of Margaret Buist, 15 November 1854, St. Andrews and St. Leonards Parish Records, Old Parish Records 453/0210 0220

## George Buist's Personality

But what of the man himself? George was clearly a man of high integrity. Despite his two professional chairs, very few of his sermons or for that matter his lectures have survived. The only book he wrote was entitled *Expository Lectures on Chaps XV.-XIX. of the Acts of the Apostles* which was published in 1857<sup>64</sup> which contained a few of his lectures, which he privately gave to many of his parishioners as a memorial of his ministry.<sup>65</sup> A picture, therefore, comes largely from his surviving letters and contemporary newspaper accounts. Buist was clearly ambitious as previously noted in his letter of Monday, 20 December 1819 to Lord Melville, Chancellor of the University in which he recommends the vacancy as Professor of Ecclesiastical History.<sup>66</sup>

Reverend Dr. Buist was also involved in the campaign to restore the Parliamentary constituency of the ancient Scottish Universities. In a letter dated Saturday, 5 March 1831, Reverend Dr. Buist wrote "My Lord, one of the members of our academical body (Dr. Cook) has this morning had a confidential letter from Edinburgh from one of the members of the Royal Commission in which it is stated that several individuals connected with the houses of parliament had had communication with His Majesty's government relative to the propriety of giving a representative in parliament to the Scottish Universities. Lord Grey, it is stated and some of the other members of the Cabinet are not unfriendly to the measure, though there is [a] reason to apprehend that it will meet with opposition elsewhere..."<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Buist, George. *Expository Lectures on Chaps XV.-XIX. of the Acts of the Apostles*. Edinburgh: Paton & Richie, 1857

<sup>65</sup> Conolly, M.F. *Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Men of Fife*. Edinburgh: Inglis & Jack, 1857, p. 100

<sup>66</sup> Letter of George Buist, 20 December 1819, University of St. Andrews Special Collections, Call Number msDA816.D8/ms4595

<sup>67</sup> Letter of George Buist, 5 March 1831, University of St. Andrews Special Collections, Call Number msDA816.D8/ms4685



4685

St Andrews 5 March 1831.

My Lord

One of the Members of our Academical Body (Dr Cook) has this Morning had a Confidential Letter from Edinburgh from one of the Members of the Royal Commission in which it is stated that several Individuals connected with the House of Parliament have had communications with his Majesty's Government relative to the propriety of giving a representation in Parliament to the Scottish Universities. Lord Grey it is stated and some of the other Members of the Cabinet are not unfavourable to the Measure, though there is reason to apprehend that it will meet with opposition elsewhere. Our University is urged without delay to petition both Houses on the Subject. The Senatus Academicus has had no Meeting today, but the Substance of the Letter has been communicated to several of my colleagues, and as we have a Meeting on Monday, for the purpose of electing a Rector in my stead, I have no doubt that the Matter will then become the Subject of discussion. In

Fig.41. Letter of George Buist, 5 March 1831, Page 1, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections Department, Call Number msDA816.D8/ms4685, Special Permission for the Use of This Photograph Granted by the Head of Special Collections

4685

J. Andrews 5 March 1831.

My Lord

One of the Members of our Academical Body (Dr Cook) has this morning had a Confidential Letter from Edinburgh from one of the Members of the Royal Commission in which it is stated that several individuals connected with the houses of parliament have had communications with his Majesty's government relative to the propriety of giving a representative in parliament to the Scottish Universities. Lord Grey it is stated and some of the other Members of the Cabinet are not unopposed to the Measure, though there is reason to apprehend that it will meet with opposition elsewhere. Our University is urged without delay to petition both houses on the subject. The Senatus Academicus has had no meeting today, but the substance of the Letter has been communicated to several of my colleagues, and as we have a meeting on Monday, for the purpose of electing a Rector in my stead, I have no doubt that the matter will then become the subject of discussion. In

Fig.42. Letter of George Buist, 5 March 1831, Page 2, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections Department, Call Number msDA816.D8/ms4685, Special Permission for the Use of This Photograph Granted by the Head of Special Collections

The Parliamentary seat was restored in 1868 with the Universities of St. Andrews and Edinburgh jointly electing one Westminster Member of Parliament.

As the Chair of Divinity and Ecclesiastical History, Buist often wrote to Lord Melville. In one such letter dated Friday, 20 November 1835 he informs Lord Melville of Professor of Divinity and Biblical Criticism John Mitchell's delicate state of health and that he employed the sub-librarian, James McBean to read his lectures to the students during last year (1834) and the same arrangement was made for this year.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Letter of George Buist, 20 November 1835, University of St. Andrews Special Collections, Call Number msDA816.D8/ms4723



(Copy)

4723

St. Andrews 20<sup>th</sup> Nov<sup>r</sup>  
1835 -

My Lord,

I have your Lordship's favour of the 18<sup>th</sup>  
And in reply I have to state that Dr. Mitchell has  
for some years been in a delicate state of health  
and last year he was so feeble that he was unable  
to undertake in person the duties of his Chair. He  
employed a young Man therefore who has for some  
years acted as Sub-Librarian and who is a Licen-  
tiate of the Church, to read to the Students his Lectures  
on Divinity. Two or three weeks ago having felt himself  
still unable for his duties, Dr. Mitchell made an  
agreement with the same young man to read his  
Lectures during the Session which is about to commence  
and it is understood that this arrangement will go  
on unless another person be appointed to the vacant  
Chair. It is not the wish of the Senatus Academicus,

Fig.43. Letter (Copy) of George Buist, 20 November 1835, Page 1, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections Department, Call Number msDA816.D8/ms4723, Special Permission for the Use of This Photograph Granted by the Head of Special Collections

that there should be any delay in the appointment  
of a successor to Dr. Mitchell, provided the govern-  
ment could be prevailed on to arrange matters  
as that he should distinctly understand that he  
will have no voice in the Emoluments, prior the  
term of Whitsunday next. Although a successor  
were to be appointed immediately, the time for  
making the necessary preparation would be so  
short, that he could not be expected to do much  
duty during the absence.

I have the honor to be, my Lord  
yours Obedt. & M<sup>th</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>.  
(Signed) Geo: Buist.

Fig.44. Letter (Copy) of George Buist, 20 November 1835, Page 2, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections Department, Call Number msDA816.D8/ms4723, Special Permission for the Use of This Photograph Granted by the Head of Special Collections

In another letter to Lord Melville dated Monday, 12 March 1838 he requested transmission to the Treasury of the Petition of the Senate of the University of St. Andrews requesting the renewal of leases of certain enclosures and tithes which form one of the chief sources of support for the University Library.<sup>69</sup>

St Andrews 12 March 1838  
My Lord

By the direction of the Senatus Academicus I send to Your Lordship a Petition Addressed by them to the Lords of the Treasury, Requesting a Renewal of the Leases of certain Enclosures and Tithes, which they and their predecessors have enjoyed between 70 and 80 Years, and which have during that period formed one the chief sources of the Support of the University Library - And I have to Request of Your Lordship to send it to the Treasury, through such a Channel, and with such a Recommendation, as you may judge to be most likely to secure the Object which the Senatus has in View.

I have the honor to be

My Lord

Your Lordship's Most Obedient  
and Humble Servant

J. B. Buist.

The Right Honorable  
Viscount Melville

Fig.45. Letter of George Buist, 12 March 1838, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections Department, Call Number msDA816.D8/ms4739, Special Permission for the Use of This Photograph Granted by the Head of Special Collections

<sup>69</sup> Letter of George Buist, 12 March 1838, University of St. Andrews Special Collections, Call Number msDA816.D8/ms4739



Reverend Dr. Buist's worth can also be seen away from his writing desk in his out of doors work, especially in his parochial visitations. In the last year of his ministry he continued his wonted visitations, and in the week before his death, he had been attending a school examination, and a funeral in the country.<sup>70</sup> The *Fife Herald Newspaper* noted that "Day after day, the patriarchal old man would trudge many a weary mile through the countryside, would devote many an hour to desolate houses and the careworn poor."<sup>71</sup> Service to those less fortunate in the community was Dr. Buist's real vocation and call throughout his ministry. He was referred to as kind, hospitable and refined with great knowledge. However, his parochial visitations were a part of the essence of the man himself.



*Fig.46. Reverend Dr. George Buist taken in 1860, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections Department, Photograph ID ALB-6-32-4, Special Permission for the Use of This Photograph Granted by the Head of Special Collections*

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<sup>70</sup> Conolly, M.F. *Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Men of Fife*. Edinburgh: Inglis & Jack, 1857, p. 100

<sup>71</sup> *Fife Herald Newspaper*, 9 April 1860, p. 2



*Fig.47. St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, Photograph Courtesy of Michael T. Tracy © 2010 Michael T. Tracy*

### **The Residence on South Street, St. Andrews**

In order to be closer to St. Mary's College, the Reverend Dr. George Buist and his wife purchased a small residence located on South Street in St. Andrews on Wednesday, 21 April 1830.<sup>72</sup> The residence was located on the south side of South Street and it was where the Reverend Dr. Buist did most of his work.



*Fig.49. South side of South Street in St. Andrews, Photograph Courtesy of Michael T. Tracy © 2010 Michael T. Tracy*

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<sup>72</sup> Sasine of George and Margaret Buist, 21 April 1830, P.R. 326.135

The property was listed in the 1855 Scotland Valuation Roll showing Reverend Dr. Buist as the proprietor and occupier and the property was valued at 40 pounds.<sup>73</sup> The residence was sold shortly after the death of the Reverend Dr. Buist.

66	House	Do	John Gourlay	Thomas Anderson	Thomas Anderson	12 1/2	Unoccupied
67	Do	Do	2 Wallace			16 "	Do
68	House No.	South Street	Rev. Dr. Buist			14 "	
69	House No.	Do	Do			14 "	Shop B.C.

*Fig.49. 1855 Scotland Valuation Roll for Residence on South Street, St. Andrews, Fife listing the Reverend Dr. George Buist (Last Entry)*

### **The Will of the Reverend Dr. George Buist**

On the same day that he purchased the residence on South Street in St. Andrews, the Reverend Dr. George Buist made out his Last Will and Testament.<sup>74</sup> Additionally, there were two codicils executed by him, the first dated Monday, 21 September 1846 and the second dated Friday, 24 October 1856.<sup>75</sup> In his Last Will and Testament he specified that the dwelling-house lying on the south side of South Street and Lawpark Cottage situated to the west of St. Andrews are to be given to his wife and children; all household furniture including silver plates, table linens, wines and spirits are to be given to his wife; his insurance policies are to be equally divided among his children with the exception of 400 pounds made to his eldest son, George, of the 10<sup>th</sup> Bengal Native Cavalry.<sup>76</sup> In his first codicil made to his will, Buist substitutes the sons of his eldest son, George, and furthermore that he has advanced considerable sums of money to his son, William Fernie Buist, to enable him to enter the business of a working coal and iron store and wanted these sums of money to be deducted from his share.<sup>77</sup> In the second codicil made to his will, George Buist wanted his two grandsons to receive 400 pounds that were originally owned by their father; to his surviving children: William Fernie is to receive 1,400 pounds and his daughter, Jane is to receive 2,400 pounds and his two grandsons are to each to be given an additional 1,200 pounds; part of the furniture in the house on South Street belongs to his son, William Fernie Buist who brought it with him from Airdrie and it will be restored to him; further the pictures, manuscripts and silver plates will be equally divided between his son, William Fernie Buist and daughter, Jane Buist; the piano will go to his daughter, Jane, and further all his printed books are to be sold with the proceeds going to his son and daughter.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>73</sup> 1855 Scotland Valuation Roll for Residence on South Street, St. Andrews, Fife, Scotland VR77/1/42

<sup>74</sup> Last Will and Testament of George Buist, 21 April 1830, Cupar Sheriff Court SC20/50/31

<sup>75</sup> Last Will and Testament of George Buist, 21 April 1830, Cupar Sheriff Court SC20/50/31

<sup>76</sup> Last Will and Testament of George Buist, 21 April 1830, Cupar Sheriff Court SC20/50/31

<sup>77</sup> Last Will and Testament of George Buist, 21 April 1830, Cupar Sheriff Court SC20/50/31

<sup>78</sup> Last Will and Testament of George Buist, 21 April 1830, Cupar Sheriff Court SC20/50/31



## The Later years

Reverend Dr. George Buist continued his parochial visitations, writing, lecturing and teaching at St. Mary's College. His last surviving son, William, was by then an invalid and suffering from the protracted and sapping pain of the tie, commonly known as pulmonary phthisis or tuberculosis.<sup>79</sup> Caring for him had taken its toll on his father's health and added to the fact of Buist's rigorous daily schedule. Buist would continue with his work and ministerial duties and would not rest even at his age.

## The Death of the Reverend Dr. George Buist

On Monday, 9 April 1860 his son, William Fernie Buist died at the age of 41 at Lawpark.<sup>80</sup> On the same day, the Reverend Dr. George Buist was himself ailing as his infirmity in old age and bouts of influenza had also taken its toll. The *Fife Herald Newspaper* in its Thursday, 19 April 1860 edition reported the following "When [Dr. Buist] heard of his favourite son's death, this old Doctor said 'Do not bury him on Friday, the day proposed, but put it off till Monday; that I may be able to be there by that time.' So the funeral was delayed, that the father might follow his son's bier. Meanwhile, the frail system of Dr. Buist was shaken rudely by the death of his son, weakness supervened, [and] then he rapidly broke up."<sup>81</sup> The Reverend Dr. Buist passed away 'under peculiarly melancholy circumstances'<sup>82</sup> on Wednesday, 11 April 1860 just two days after his son's death at Lawpark, St. Andrews at the age of 81."<sup>83</sup> The cause of death was listed as influenza.<sup>84</sup> The *Fife Herald Newspaper* went on to say further "then people recollected his own words, that he 'might be able to follow his son to the grave.' A tinge of prophecy was cast over these words of the moribund, for now, he was to accompany that son to his final resting place."<sup>85</sup>

While these two newspapers reported on his death, many others did the same in announcing their own tributes across Scotland. The account in the *East Fife Record Newspaper* was as follows "[Death] of one of the oldest ordained ministers of the Church of Scotland, Reverend Dr. George Buist at 88 [sic] and a former Moderator of the Assembly."<sup>86</sup> On Thursday, 9 April 1860 the *Fifeshire Journal Newspaper* reported "Death of the Reverend Dr. George Buist, who combined high offices in the Church, which he served for over 50 [sic] years and the University. He was elected Moderator of the General Assembly and was also a Professor of Ecclesiastical History at St. Mary's College."<sup>87</sup> The *Dundee Advertiser Newspaper* published the following account of the beloved and esteemed minister's death which is reproduced below.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Death Record of William Fernie Buist, 9 April 1860, St. Andrews and St. Leonards Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 453/0000 0042

<sup>80</sup> Death Record of William Fernie Buist, 9 April 1860, St. Andrews and St. Leonards Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 453/0000 0042

<sup>81</sup> *Fife Herald Newspaper*, 19 April 1860, p. 2

<sup>82</sup> *Fife Herald Newspaper*, 19 April 1860, p. 2

<sup>83</sup> Death Record of George Buist, 11 April 1860, St. Andrews and St. Leonards Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 453/0000 0042

<sup>84</sup> Death Record of George Buist, 11 April 1860, St. Andrews and St. Leonards Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 453/0000 0042

<sup>85</sup> *Fife Herald Newspaper*, 19 April 1860, p. 2

<sup>86</sup> *East Fife Record Newspaper*, 14 April 1860, p. 2

<sup>87</sup> *Fifeshire Journal Newspaper*, 19 April 1860, p. 1

<sup>88</sup> *Dundee Advertiser Newspaper*, 11 April 1860, p. 2

DEATH OF DR BUIST OF ST ANDREWS.—We have to-day to record the death, at St Andrews, under peculiarly melancholy circumstances, of the venerable second minister of the Established Church there, the Rev. George Buist, D.D., at the advanced age of eighty-four years. His only surviving son, Mr William F. Buist, died two days previously, having expired on Monday last, and it is probable that both father and son will be interred on the same day. Dr Buist was one of the oldest ordained ministers of the Church of Scotland, having been ordained in the 1802, and he has therefore been in orders for a period of fifty-eight years; and, as a proof of the high rank he held in the church, it may be mentioned that in the year 1848 he held the honourable position of Moderator of the Assembly of the Church. He was an attentive minister, sincere in the performance of his duties, and a thorough business man, and his loss will be greatly felt by his parishioners, as almost the whole of the onerous duties attending the ministry of the Old Kirk congregation were performed, and that most attentively, by the venerable Doctor.—(Dundee Advertiser.)

Fig.50. Obituary Notice of the Reverend Dr. George Buist, Dundee Advertiser Newspaper, 11 April 1860

Virtually all of the newspapers in Scotland published this obituary notice in their columns. This one is from the *Fife Herald Newspaper* and is reproduced below.<sup>89</sup>

**Deaths.**  
**At Lawpark, St Andrews, on the 11th inst., the Rev. Dr Buist.**

Fig.51. Obituary Notice of the Reverend Dr. George Buist, Fife Herald Newspaper, 19 April 1860

		1860	11	George Buist	Edinburgh, found father	Public Ground	See Burial	11th
	Buist,	April	81	years (and Proprietor)	Religion of Father Roman	St Andrews	Grandson	April 11th
	George	to Seventh		(Deceased)	off 1/2 inch of the day	St Andrews		at
	Dr. G.	St. Leonards			standing as certified	St Andrews		St Andrews
	Minister of the	Law Park		Margaret Buist	Rev. Archibald	By		John Farley
	Established	Parish of		(Deceased)	who saw deceased	St Andrews		Registrar
	Church of Scotland	St Andrews			April 11th			
	(Dundee)				St Andrews			

Fig.52. Death Record of the Reverend George Buist, 11 April 1860, St. Andrews and St. Leonards Parish Records, Crown Copyright

<sup>89</sup> *Fife Herald Newspaper*, 19 April 1860, p. 2

The Reverend Dr. George Buist was buried next to his wife in the burial ground at St. Andrews Cathedral to the south-west of the central tower. The Buist family gravestone still stands presently and reads in part “Sacred to the Memory of the Reverend George Buist, D.D., [Doctor of Divinity] who was for 47 years one of the Ministers of St. Andrews and for 43 years one of the Professors of St. Mary’s College, he died 11 April 1860 aged 81 years.”



*Fig.53. Grave of the Reverend Dr. George Buist and Family, St. Andrews Cathedral Burial Ground, St. Andrews, Fife, Photograph Courtesy of Dr. Iain Macintyre*



The *Fife Herald Newspaper* in its Thursday, 19 April 1860 edition remembered the Reverend Dr. Buist in these words which are most fitting of his life and career “Who will not, in time to come, recall the well-known figure of Dr. Buist, passing by the grey houses of the ancient? That patriarchal figure, clad invariably with black, with a white neckcloth, with staff or umbrella, and black cotton gloves, the white-haired head bent very much, the step decided, as if pressing on to some errand of piety; such a figure of an old man who will long dwell in the mind of St. Andrews.”<sup>90</sup>



*Fig.54. Reverend Dr. George Buist taken in 1860, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections Department, Photograph ID ALB-7-14-3, Special Permission for the Use of This Photograph Granted by the Head of Special Collections*

He was born at the farm of Orkie in Kettle Parish, Fifeshire and after his childhood pursued his various studies at the United College in St. Andrews. He was later ordained to his first charge as minister of Falkland before being translated to the second charge of St. Andrews city and parish in which he laboured for the next 47 years of his life. Having achieved his Doctorate of Divinity Degree from the University of St. Andrews he was well prepared for his appointment as Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Languages at St. Mary’s College where he spent 43 years lecturing and teaching. The Reverend Dr. George Buist had an inquiring mind which led him to become one of the original founding members of the Literary and Philosophical Society of St. Andrews and further was largely responsible for establishing the University museum.

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<sup>90</sup> *Fife Herald Newspaper*, 19 April 1860, p. 2

Reverend Dr. Buist was married to the daughter of William Fernie, Esq., of Tillywhandland, and they had seven children all of whom, with the exception of his daughter, as also his wife, predeceased him. However, the long ministry of the Reverend Dr. George Buist will be noted as “the poor looked to him as their friend and counsellor; all classes respected him as one whom with singleness of mind, devoted himself to the duties of his calling; and, amid all the asperities and divisions of these latter times, Dr. Buist was never known to use an angry word or to have lost a friend.”<sup>91</sup> What a vivid pen portrait of a man who cared about others was devoted to his faith and church and was an intellectual religious giant of his times serving the St. Andrews community. The Reverend Dr. George Buist is warmly commemorated here in grateful esteem and recognition by his fourth great-nephew, Michael T. Tracy. This work is dedicated to the Memory of the Reverend Dr. George Buist.

*Memoratus in aeternum* (Forever Remembered)

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<sup>91</sup> Conolly, M.F. *Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Men of Fife*. Edinburgh: Inglis & Jack, 1857, p. 100