

# **From the Archivist 3**

## **The Story of the Episcopal Church**

### **The Seventeenth Century**

In 1633 Charles I decided to create the Diocese of Edinburgh. Prior to that the Lothians had been part of the Diocese of St Andrew's. St Giles became a cathedral and the king ordered the partitions, which divided the building into three separate churches, to be removed. Without our modern sound systems it would have been extremely difficult for a preacher to project his voice over such distances in a long sermon. Opposition to the king's changes (the introduction of a new Scottish prayer book) led to the famous 1637 Riot and the drawing up of the National Covenant which was signed at Greyfriars. Supporters of this Covenant are not to be confused with the later Covenanters. Since Charles had neither the soldiers nor the money to fight a war with the Scots the supporters of the National Covenant (Presbyterians) took control of Scotland. William Ogston, vicar of Colinton, was removed because he would not sign the Covenant.

After the failure of an 'Engagement' between a group of leading Presbyterians led by the Duke of Hamilton, a more extreme party took over. These were known as the Whigamores. They purged moderate Presbyterians from all official posts. However, their short reign ended when the English army under Cromwell won the battle of Dunbar in 1650. Scotland was now ruled by religious groups known in England as the Independent and in Scotland as the Sects. (Some of these sects were later to form the Baptist and Congregationalist Churches.) Both the Presbyterians and the Episcopalians preferred well-structured services and a proper form of church government. With the English army in charge and soldiers billeted in the city there was little either side could do.

1660 saw the Restoration of Charles II and the Episcopal Church was established as the national Church. Dissension was not tolerated. Secret meetings (called Conventicles) by followers of the Presbyterians were sought out. Anyone found worshipping would face arrest and imprisonment. The bishopric of Edinburgh was restored and St Giles once again became a cathedral.