

ST. NINIAN'S SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH, TROON



THIS CHURCH IS DEDICATED TO ST. NINIAN

The forerunner of the Celtic church in the British Isles was Ninian. He was born of noble parents on the banks of the Solway Firth in about 360AD. As a young man he undertook a pilgrimage to Rome, where the Pope made him a bishop. On his way home he was said to have visited Martin of Tours, and was so impressed by the monastic principle of monks setting themselves apart to pray that on returning to Scotland, Ninian established a monastery and school at Whithorn in Galloway. Ninian's monastery at Whithorn became affectionately known as "Candida Casa" or the White House. Its fame spread rapidly, drawing people from all over the Celtic world.

A catechism supposedly written by Ninian claimed that the fruit of study was "to perceive the eternal word of God reflected in every plant and insect, every bird and animal and every and woman"

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

At the beginning of the 20th century the pastoral care of Episcopalians in Troon was assigned by the Bishop of the Diocese to the Rector of Holy Trinity, Ayr. For two years services were held in Troon for two months during the summer, but these were discontinued mainly owing to the fact that no really suitable place for public worship was available. In an extract from Holy Trinity Church Magazine, dated December 1911, we read. . . "Troon has been growing rapidly . . . and the need of supplying Troon with an Episcopal Church has been increasingly forced upon the attention of the Rector of Holy Trinity, Ayr". Events began to move swiftly. All Episcopalians resident in Troon were invited to a meeting on Thursday January 11th, 1912 in the Unionist Hall, Templehill chaired by the Rev. J. V. Hammond, Rector of Holy Trinity, Ayr. It was reported to the thirty-nine people present that the Duke of Portland was willing to give a site for both a Church and a Rectory. He gave £250 to start the Building Fund and also promised to give £50 a year for five years towards the stipend of the Priest-in-Charge.

Great enthusiasm was shown and a Building Committee was formed, the Vice-Convener being Mrs A. Walker (later Lady Walker). After many meetings and much discussion about plans, it was decided to proceed with the building of a Church according to the plans submitted by Mr. James A. Morris, the nave to be built first, leaving the chancel to be built at a later date when funds permitted. The church is in long luminous Arts & Crafts style, in Morris' favoured Mauchline stone.

The foundation stone was laid by the Hon. Mrs. Campbell, the wife of the Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway, on Thursday, 7th November, 1912 the Service being conducted by the Bishop. The building of the nave was completed early in 1913 and the Benediction Service took place on Trinity Sunday, 18th May, 1913.

The Rev. William Samuel was appointed Curate-in-Charge.

In 1914 St. Ninian's was made an Independent Mission and 30th November 1919 agreement was given in favour of the charge being raised to Incumbency and Rev. Samuel was appointed as the first Rector.



Mr Harold Ross Coubrough was appointed Hon. Secretary and Treasurer and remained in office until his death in 1936. The first window in the chancel is dedicated to his memory and also the altar was a gift from the congregation in his memory.

The debt on the Nave was secured in 1915 and in 1919 consideration was given to completing the Church. In February 1920, plans were passed for the chancel and organ chamber.

The chancel was opened in November 1921 at a Dedication Service conducted by the Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway. The cost of the chancel and vestries

amounted to £8,794, while the organ involved an additional expenditure of nearly £5,000.

The great climax to twenty years of planning came on 20th September 1931, when the church of St. Ninian's, Troon was duly consecrated by the Right Reverend J. R. Darbyshire, Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway.

On Monday, 19th December 1927, the Bishop of the Diocese, the Right Reverend E. T. S. Reid, dedicated the Church Hall which was the handsome gift of Mrs Mabel Townsend, in memory of her two sons who were killed in the Great War. The architect of the Hall was Mr. J R. Johnstone F.A. Arch (Scot), whose son, Mr. Ronnie Johnstone was, for many years, a vestryman and Property Convener of the church until his death in 2002. The architect, Mr. John Rutherford Johnstone, 1880-1961, specialised, like so many other Ayrshire architects of this period, in big harled villas. His houses are distinguished by a slight free-style tinge, perhaps best expressed in a fondness for heavily battered walls.



The Rev William Samuel resigned, owing to ill health, in 1945 and died in 1948. He had been in charge of the congregation for over 30 years and it is due to his faithful perseverance and strenuous energies that the Episcopalians in Troon have such a lovely church in which to worship. His ashes are buried in the sanctuary of the church.

From 1945 the Rector's at St. Ninian's have been:

Rev. Esmonde T. Lang 1945 - 1957

Rev. James McGill 1957 - 1983

Rev. Tim D. Morris 1983 - 1985

Rev. Canon Jack A. Trimble 1986 - 1998

Rev. David S. Mungavin 1999 - 2009

Rev. Canon Tom C. O. Montgomery 2010 -

A detail on the choir stalls is shown right, the stalls being given by the congregation in memory of those who fell in the Great War.

The pulpit was presented in memory of Frank Abbott by his daughter.

The Reredos was presented in memory of Lt.-Col. John Robert Balfour, TD by his wife.



The church is now a "B" listed building. It contains some very fine woodwork; including several examples of the Yorkshire carver John Thompson of Kilburn whose 'signature' is a carved mouse. Also of interest are the windows at the east and west ends, all very fine examples of stained glass. The organ is one of the best instruments in Ayrshire, originally built by Binns in 1921 and was completely rebuilt in 1987.

In 2001 extensive repair work was carried out to the stonework, and the church, hall and lych-gate were completely re-roofed. The supervising architects, for this mammoth task, were W.I. Munro of Kilmarnock. The cost of these works, which amounted to £100,000, was fully paid for by the congregation.

In 2006 the Hall was completely renovated, including the removal of the stage to make a new entrance.

The font (right) was given by J. Harling Turner, Agent to the Duke of Portland, in memory of his parents Frederick John and Charlotte Eliza Turner, his brother Frederick Herbert and sister Charlotte Maria.

Memorial stone to



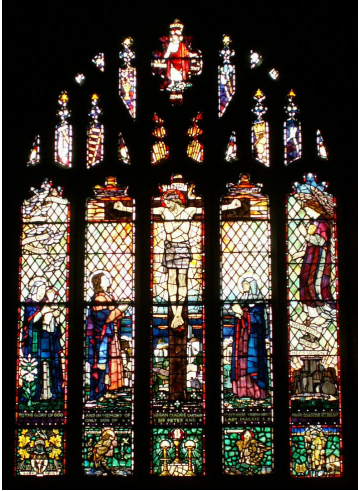
Rev. William Samuel, first Rector of the Church, is situated to the left of the altar.

The altar was dedicated to the memory of Harold Ross Coubrough.

The pulpit was dedicated to the memory of Frank Abbott by his daughter.



STAINED GLASS WINDOWS



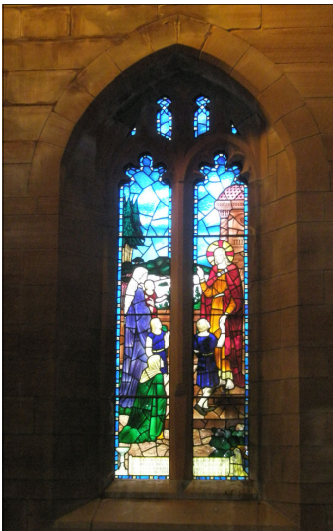
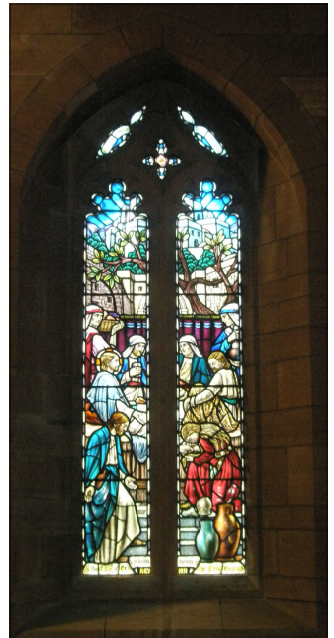
The East Window (left) was given by Sir Peter and Lady Mackie in memory of their son, Logan Mackie, Captain in the 1st Ayrshire Yeomanry, killed in Palestine, 27th December 1917. The window is by Guthrie & Wells.

The West Window (below left) was given by the Walker family in memory of Sir Alexander and Lady Walker. Sir Alexander being the grandson of Johnnie Walker. This is the work of William Wilson (1905 - 1972).

The middle window in the Chancel (below right) was given in memory of Lucy Mabel Townsend who gifted the Church Hall in memory of her two sons killed in the Great War, thought to be the work of Douglas Strachan.

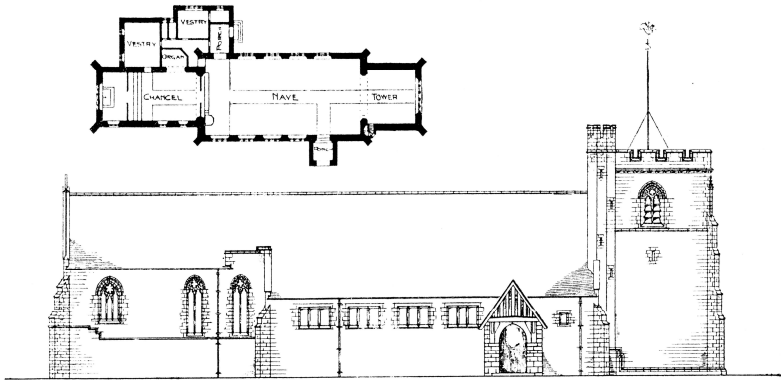


The final window in the



The first window in the Chancel (left) is in memory of Harold Ross Coubrough who was Hon. Secretary and Treasurer from 1913 - 1936. This window is the work of George Cooper Abbs.

chancel is in memory of Percy George Symington killed in the Battle of the Somme on 1st July 1916. The window is by Guthrie & Wells in 1920.



S. NINIANS EPISCOPAL CHURCH, TROON.

THE above Sketch, kindly prepared by Mr J. A. Morris, the architect, indicates the general lines upon which it is proposed that the Church of S. NINIAN, TROON, may be eventually completed, with Chancel and Tower. Meantime, only the Nave has been built at cost of £1700, and a portion of the interior has been screened off to serve as a temporary Chancel, but the Chancel arch has been completely formed, so that whenever the permanent Chancel may be built, no unnecessary expense will be involved, nor inconvenience to the worshippers.

Towards the cost of the Nave nearly £1200 has already been raised, and it is not intended that the Chancel shall be added until the debt on the Nave has been entirely liquidated, until the demand for greater accommodation has become imperative, and until a substantial proportion of the sum requisite to build the Chancel is in hand.

The Church, as depicted above, has accommodation for 250 in the Nave, 70 in the West Tower, and, if necessary at a later date, accommodation for another 75 can be secured by the addition of a North Transept.

The design is based on a study of the 14th and 15th century village churches, and while the Nave appears presently somewhat broad in proportion to its length, it must be remembered that it is intended to be the middle portion of the Church between the Chancel and the West Tower, each of which will open from it by lofty arches, and give a total length of about 118 feet. The Nave roof is of the hammer beam type, of Kauri pine, and the rafters are of a large size, following therein the generous use of wood, distinctive of Medieval Churches. The walls within and without are of dressed red sandstone, and the roof is of red tiles with a sandstone ridge. Simplicity is the basis of the design, and the long unbroken ridge line of the roof together with the higher Eaves of the Chancel will continue and impart sufficient individuality to the Church, without destroying the quiet unobtrusiveness of the building. A gabled north porch of wood and plaster leads directly from an oak Lych-gate of similar design, which, with an oak fence along Bentinck Drive, is the generous gift of His Grace, the Duke of Portland.

J. VAVASOUR HAMMOND,
Rector of Holy Trinity, Ayr.

15th May, 1913.

ROBERT THOMPSON - THE MOUSEMAN

A notable feature of St Ninian's is the fine carved oak from the workshop of Robert Thompson of Kilburn, Yorkshire. Born in 1876, the son of a village joiner and wheel-wright, he was trained by his father to make farmhouse furniture, gates and even coffins, but he found his inspiration in the 15th century oak choir stalls of Ripon Cathedral. In 1919 his career in church carving began when he was asked to make a large oak cross for the Benedictine Abbey at Ampleforth. He became known as Robert Thompson, the Mouseman of Kilburn, North Yorkshire.

The story behind the name 'Mouseman' as told by Robert Thompson to his grandson, is that he was carving a beam on a church roof when another carver, Charlie Baker, murmured something about them being poor as church mice and on the spur of the moment he carved one. Afterwards he decided to adopt the mouse as a trade mark, because he thought how a mouse manages to scrape and chew away the hardest wood with its chisel-like teeth and works quietly, with nobody taking any notice. He thought that was maybe like his workshop hidden away in the Hambleton Hills. It was what you might call industry in quiet places, so he put the mouse on all his work. After 1930 he omitted the front legs to make them less prone to damage.



There are ten mice in total to be found in



St. Ninian's. The first ones that can be seen as you enter the Church are on either side of the main door, which was given in memory of Gavin & Eliza Anderson by their son.

The Welcome Desk is the newest piece of Mouse Thompson furniture and is in memory of Rev James McGill, Rector of St. Ninian's from 1957-1983, who died on St. Ninian's Day, 16th September 1990.

The Children's Altar and two oak chairs were presented to the Church by Mrs. Davis of Symington in memory of her husband John L. Davies. The table is now situated beside the main door and the chairs are to be found beneath the pulpit. All three items have a mouse carved on them. On the left side of the chancel stands



the Bishop's chair. There is a mouse carved at the base of the chair on the left hand side. The Prie-dieu, which is situated to the side of the Bishop's chair, is another piece of Mouse Thompson furniture.



There is a mouse a further on the Communion wafer box which was given in memory of Robert Thomson Neilson, 1878 - 1945, David Robert Neilson, 1919-1944, who served as a Flight Lieutenant in the RAF and was killed in action in Italy and Margaret Jane Neilson 1921 - 1954.

The final mouse is to be found on the gavel used at meetings of the Fellowship.