

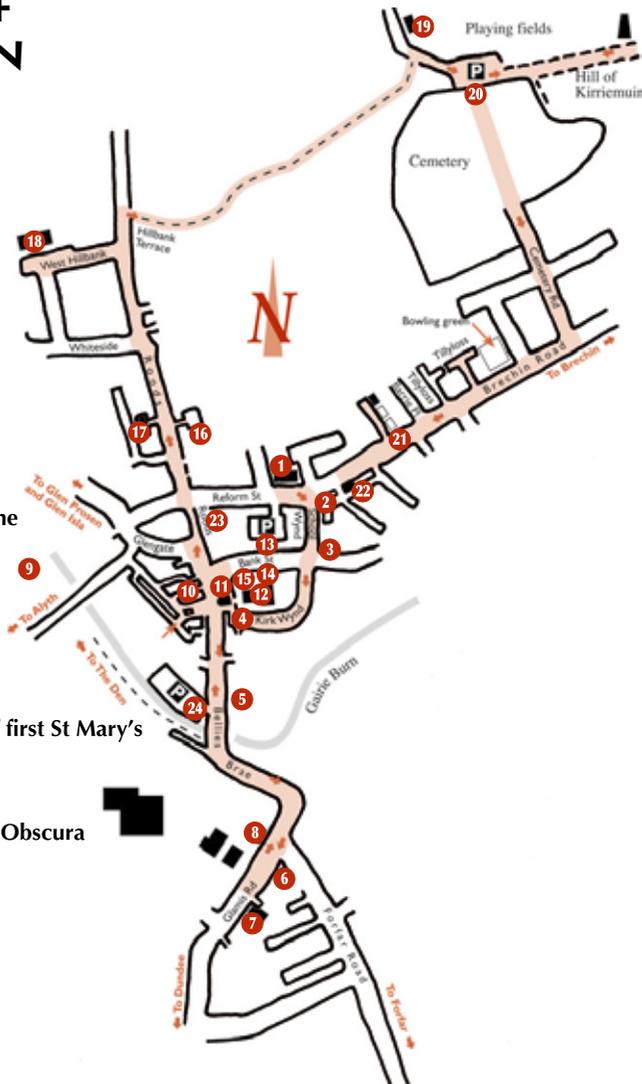
**WELCOME TO
ST MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
KIRRIEMUIR**



**A GUIDE TO
SIR NINIAN COMPER'S SPLENDID 1905 CHURCH**

THE LOCATION OF ST MARY'S WITHIN KIRRIEMUIR.

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This map is taken from "THE BURGH OF KIRRIEMUIR: ANGUS HERITAGE TRAIL" leaflet, published in 2009 by Angus Council.

With thanks to ANGUS ALIVE for permission to reproduce it here, and to use throughout the booklet the illustrations by Joseph Lee published in 1909 in "The Regality of Kirriemuir."

WELCOME

Dear Visitor,

A warm welcome to St Mary's! As Rector, it gives me so much pleasure to show people round our beautiful building. This guidebook has been specially commissioned as part of our grant-supported refurbishment of 2017 and I hope, if I am unable to join you on the day, that the booklet, a labour of love by local experts, will give you a good steer. I am grateful for their historical research and their written contributions to Sandra Affleck, Hugh



Farquharson and David Orr. Thanks are also due to Michael Visocchi for his exquisite photographs. St Mary's members, Katherine Cran, Joyce Hunter, Margaret Jack and Marjorie McKendrick, spent many hours searching for interesting stories in old minute books.

Vital repairs were conducted and I am pleased that, with the expertise of a dedicated team of specialists, our beautiful church has been preserved for future generations of Kirriemuir and the surrounding areas. The project was directed by Conservation Architect, Sonya Linskaill, and delivered by Builder, Ian Cumming of Ardle Construction.

Please take time to enjoy the grand design of Architect, Sir J. Ninian Comper, both inside and out, and marvel at his attention to detail! He has created a beautiful space for prayer, praise and fellowship and has provided appropriate structures for the preaching of God's word and for the celebration of the sacraments. Follow the page by page tour of Comper's stained glass windows including our additional window by William Wilson!

I hope that you have enjoyed a blessing in St Mary's and that you will come again soon. Please phone 01575 575515 to arrange your visit.
Very best wishes,

from Bob Harley, Rector.



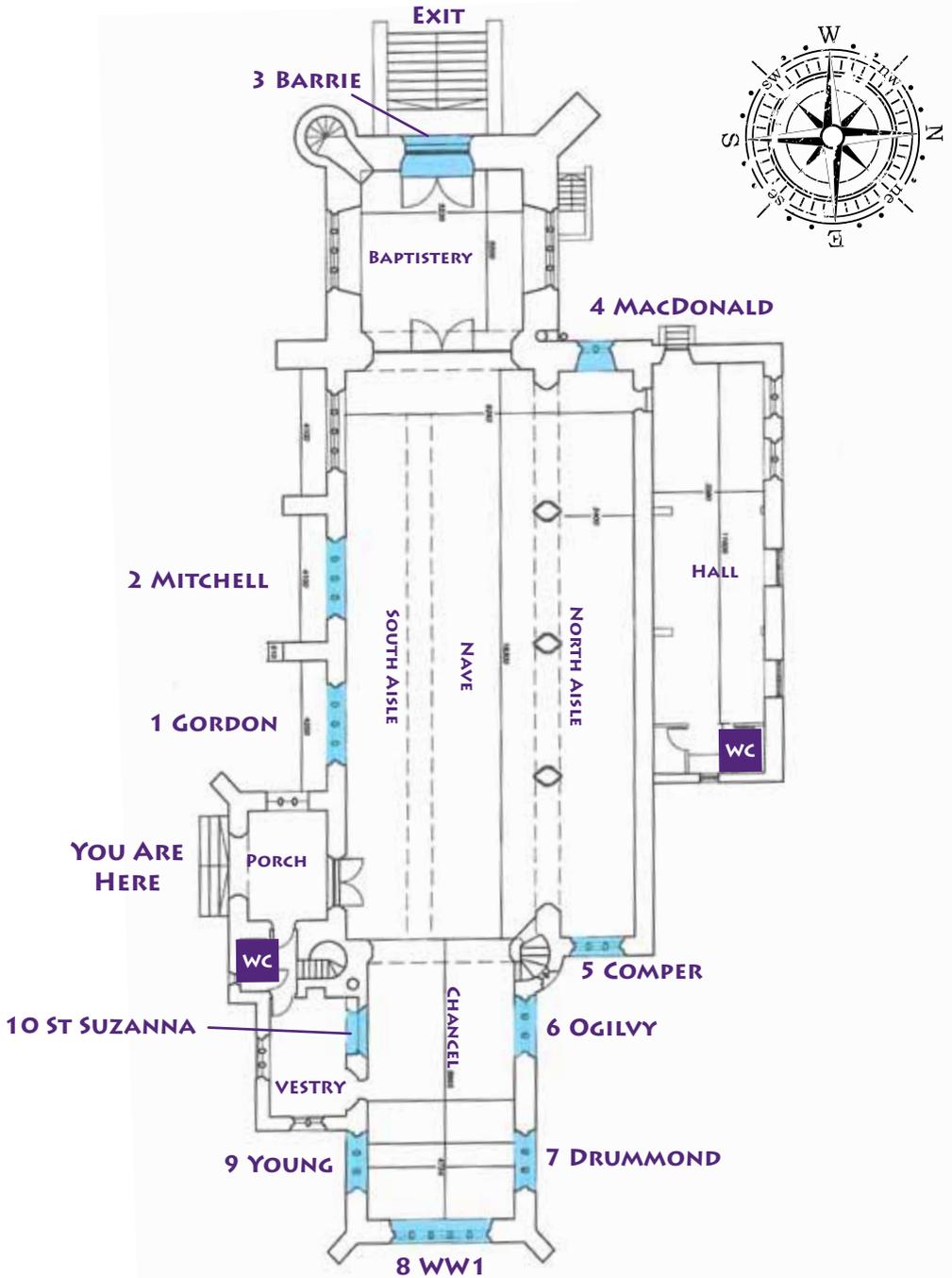
KIRRIEMUIR

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FIND YOUR WAY ROUND ST MARY'S.



LOOKING AROUND ST MARY'S CHURCH

As you step inside this glorious 1905 example of the work of Sir J. Ninian Comper (1864 – 1960) pause long enough to take in its entirety.

Magnificent pillars, arches, ceilings and windows, plus the general impression of a bijou cathedral, will take your breath away.

Then set off up the south aisle, on your left, to discover its fascinating details.

Firstly you will come across three PLAQUES:

MAJ. CHARLES HENRY LYELL 1875 – 1918

Major, The Hon, Royal Garrison Artillery, former M.P. and one-time PPS to Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, was badly wounded in 1916. He became Assistant Military Attaché in Washington but died there in 1918. He is buried in Arlington Cemetery. His family had owned the Kinnordy Estate on the outskirts of Kirriemuir since 1782. His father, Leonard, became 1st Baron Lyell in 1914.

www.wv1sacrifice.com

CHARLES ANTONY LYELL V.C. 1913 - 1943

Having succeeded, aged 13, to his grandfather Lord Leonard's title in 1926, Captain The Lord Lyell of 1st Battalion Scots Guards was killed in action in Tunisia and awarded a posthumous V.C. He is commemorated on the WWII Memorial in Kirriemuir's Hill Cemetery, and in the Kirriemuir Walk of Fame, just off the High Street. His widow devoted herself to many good causes, local, national and international, and ensured the maintenance of the estate until her death in 2012, aged 96.

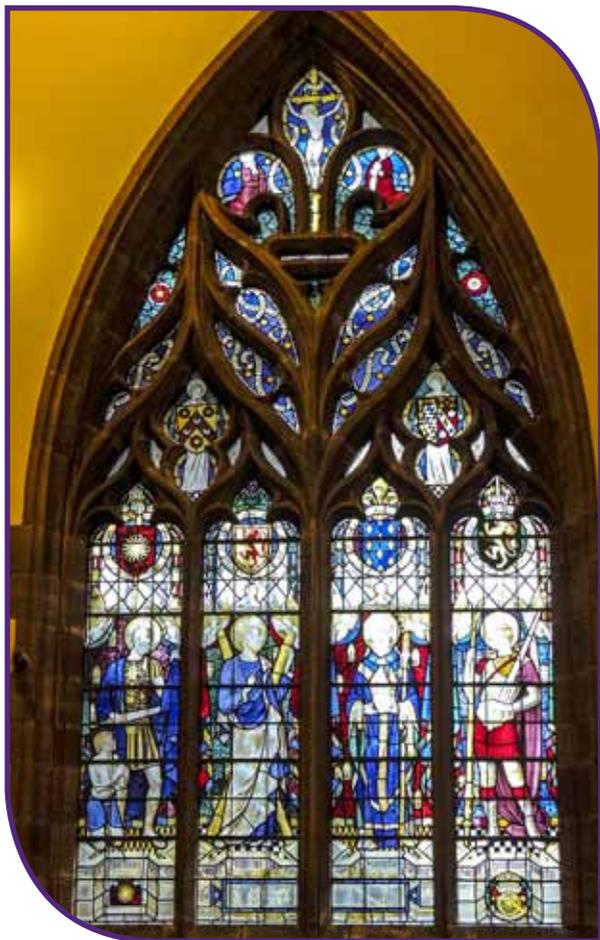
www.victoriacrossonline.co.uk

Their son, the third Baron, also Charles (1939-2017) succeeded him at the age of 4. He had a distinguished career in politics, never married, and died in 2017.

www.kinnordy.com

SIR CAMPBELL MUNRO 1823 – 1913

The second son of Major General Sir Thomas Munro, Sir Campbell became the 3rd Baronet of Lindertis in 1901. He served with the Grenadiers, loved the estate and spent much of his life there. He was succeeded by his son Hugh (1856-1919) who is famous for his 1891 catalogue of the mountains of 3000ft., now known as 'Munros.'



WINDOW 1 - THE GORDON WINDOW

The Gordon Window was designed by Sir J. Ninian Comper and installed in 1920 in memory of Captain Alexander McDougal Gordon, M.C., Royal Field Artillery, a young gunner killed in 1917 who rests at Vlamertynge in France.

Alexander was born in 1882 in Leeds to where his father John, born and educated in Kirriemuir, had moved and had served as Mayor of Leeds.

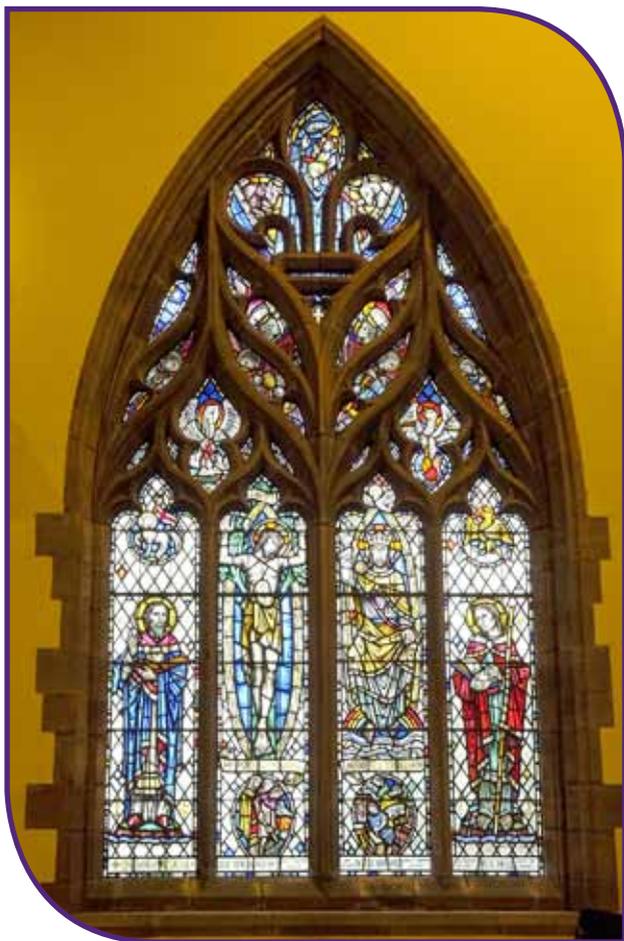
The four main lights depict:

St Martin in the act of dividing his legendary great blue coat with the beggar he found naked and half dead with cold at the gate of Amiens. St Martin became Patron Saint of soldiers and first Bishop of Tours.

St Andrew, Patron Saint of Scotland and Russia, with the cross now familiar with his name.

St Denis, Patron Saint of France, and first Bishop of Paris, whose relics were preserved at St Denis, the Westminster Abbey of France.

St Quintin, Patron Saint of Soldiers. Quintin was also a Roman Officer who became a Christian Missionary, and like St Denis was martyred for the faith.



WINDOW 2: THE MITCHELL WINDOW

Dedicated by the Bishop of the Diocese on 4th September 1966, this window is a tribute to their parents by the six children of Alexander Duncan Mitchell, who died on 15th August 1943, and his wife Betsy Ann Watt, who died on 27th May, 1954. Their plumbing business, A. D. Mitchell, opened in Reform Street, Kirriemuir, in 1921, and flourished across Scotland through three generations until 1992, latterly based on Tannage Brae.

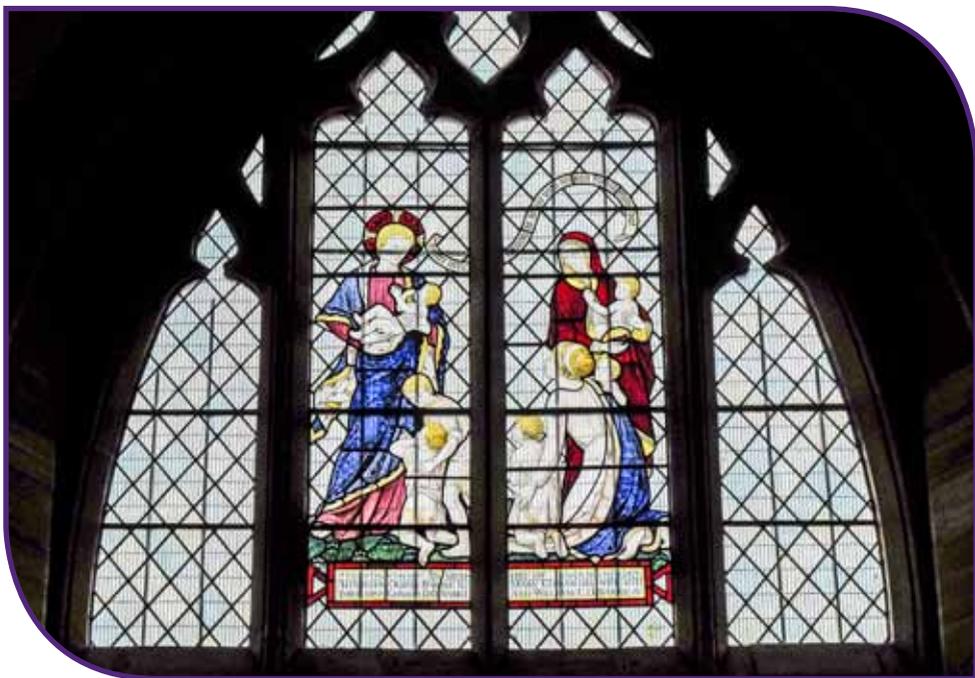
The window depicts Christ on the Cross in the centre and seated, saying "My peace I give to you - I make all things new." St John the Baptist is on the right. It was created by WILLIAM WILSON (1905 – 1972) O.B.E., R.S.A., and R.S.W., who, by the time of this commission, was losing his sight to diabetes.

He was a gifted artist, map-maker, print-maker and watercolourist who, over 25 years, produced more than 300 distinctive stained glass windows for churches, chapels and cathedrals across Britain.

www.fsaedinburgh.com

He included symbols of many building trades in this design. The altar rail beside the small altar was also gifted by the Mitchells.

Near this window is a plaque to **Dr. John Broom**, M.B., C.M., given by the local benefactor Joseph Alexander, to "for 25 years, an esteemed physician and citizen of the town, and a talented musician. He loved his music and his life was in harmony." He died aged 50 on 18th May, 1915.



WINDOW 3: THE WEST OR BARRIE WINDOW

As you enter The Baptistry, look up to see the West Window above the great doors which lead on to the west staircase. Its two main lights show children being brought to our Lord: "Suffer the little children to come unto me."

It is dedicated to Alexander Ogilvy Barrie (1842-1914) and Mary Cowan Barrie, his wife (1856-1928) and their sons, Charles David Ogilvy Barrie, Corporal London Scottish (19.3.1881-1.7.1916) and William Cowan Ogilvy Barrie, Lieutenant Black Watch (25.9.1882-14.10.1916.) Both of them were victims of the Battle of the Somme. Mrs Barrie gave a lifetime's service to the church.

The window, designed by Comper, was gifted in grateful memory of his brother's family by Sir J. M. Barrie in 1929.

Alexander, latterly a Chief Inspector of schools, had played a huge part in the education and welfare of Sir James in his formative years. That contribution was emulated by Barrie in his guardianships of the Llewellyn Davies boys.

Charles had married in 1908 and had three children. They and their progeny are the closest bloodline relatives of Sir James.

Designed from the outset by Comper to be as prominent a feature of the church as the altar, the raised FONT was given by Rev. John Thompson, Rosslyn, and is inscribed:

"A.D. 1905. John Thompson, priest and Hannah, his wife, dedicate this font to the glory of God, and in memory of three infant children."



WINDOW 4: THE MACDONALD WINDOW

Depicting the Baby Jesus with Joseph and Mary, this window was donated in 1945 to the memory of Flora Moir MacDonald, who died on 12th May, 1934, and Anna Martin Macdonald, the last Headmistress of St Mary's School before it closed in 1927, who died on 23rd March, 1945. They lived in Crawford House.**

Along the North Aisle, plaques commemorate:

Margaret Stewart, nee Eassie, who died on 11th April, 1930, aged 77, "a most faithful member and tireless worker in the life of St Mary's." Her husband, Charles, was a brother of Mr. G.L. Stewart, father of Redvers and grandfather of George and Brian (see WWII memorial.) Her niece, Bella, taught in St Mary's, then Reform Street schools.

** (according to Reminiscences of Col. J.J. Lamb, C.B.E. circa 1970)

Alastair FitzHugh Maclean, Captain 33rd Punjabis, killed on the Gallipoli Peninsula on 8th August 1915, in his 33rd year. "Greatly mourned by his wife, Anne Ogilvy, his father, Maj.- Gen. C.S. Maclean, C.B., C.I.E., and his brother, Kenneth Maclean, Capt. R.N." Two other decorated brothers had predeceased him, Hector a V.C., Donald a D.S.O.

www.blaigowrie-sacrifice.co.uk

John Edmond Drummond, Admiral, and County Commissioner for the Scouts of Angus 1920-26, donated in his memory by them. PRIUS MORI QUAM FIDEM FELLERE (Yield to death rather than betray trust) is the Drummond motto.



WINDOW 5 - THE COMPER WINDOW

The Comper Window above the Side Altar has, as centre, the lovely Madonna of the Doves with the Christ Child. The left light represents John Comper reciting the Scottish Office. The portrait is accurate even to his spectacles, and the inscription telling in its simplicity: "Pray for John Comper who, as schoolmaster here in 1849, was licensed to say the divine service and was ordained at Perth, December 12th, 1850. He fell asleep on July 27th, 1903, in the 51st year of his priesthood." The third light is St Ninian whose face was copied from that of Bishop Forbes. As usual St Ninian holds in his hand the "Candida Casa" or "White House", the first Christian Church to be built in Scotland.

This church, and this window, are the work of Rev. John's son, Ninian. (See p. 19)

Nearby, the plaque on the pulpit records that it was dedicated by his congregation to **Rev. James John Douglas**, Rector from 1851-1899. (One of his predecessors, Rev. John Buchan, also served for almost 50 years.)

The lectern beside it was gifted by the daughter of Alexander and Barbara Stewart in their memory in 1965.



WINDOW 6: THE OGILVY WINDOW

Dedicated to the memory of Anne Sarah Ogilvy of Balnaboth (13th July, 1842 – 8th June, 1932) and of Anne Forbes Maclean (30th December, 1883 – 13th February, 1937), the Ogilvy Window depicts three figures: Sarah, mother of Isaac; St Anne, mother of the Blessed Virgin, and St Elizabeth of Hungary, the mediaeval archetype of Lady or Loaf-giver.

The legend of St Anne, wife of Joachim of Nazareth, tells us of a couple, rich but deeply religious, who shared the great sorrow of childlessness. St Joachim departed to the fields to fast and pray for forty days, whilst St Anne mourned at home.

One day she put on her bridal attire and went to the garden to weep and pray. Suddenly an angel appeared to say that her prayer was granted, and she would become the mother of a child who would be blessed throughout the world. St Anne immediately vowed that this child, be it son or daughter, should be dedicated to the Lord.

The two Anne's were indefatigable in their efforts to aid and encourage the good works of St Mary's. Generations of Ogilvy-Macleans followed in their footsteps.



WINDOW 7: THE DRUMMOND WINDOW

Before studying the Drummond Window, note the **STONE WALL TABLET** commemorating five members of this congregation who lost their lives in WWII: Alex. Cunninghame; Harry Kennedy; Anthony, Lord Lyell; Neil Soutar and George Stewart. Their stories are told on page 16.

John Edmund Drummond was born on 5th July, 1873 and died at Eskhill on 15th November, 1926. This window was installed in 1928, dedicated to "a great gentleman and great Christian."

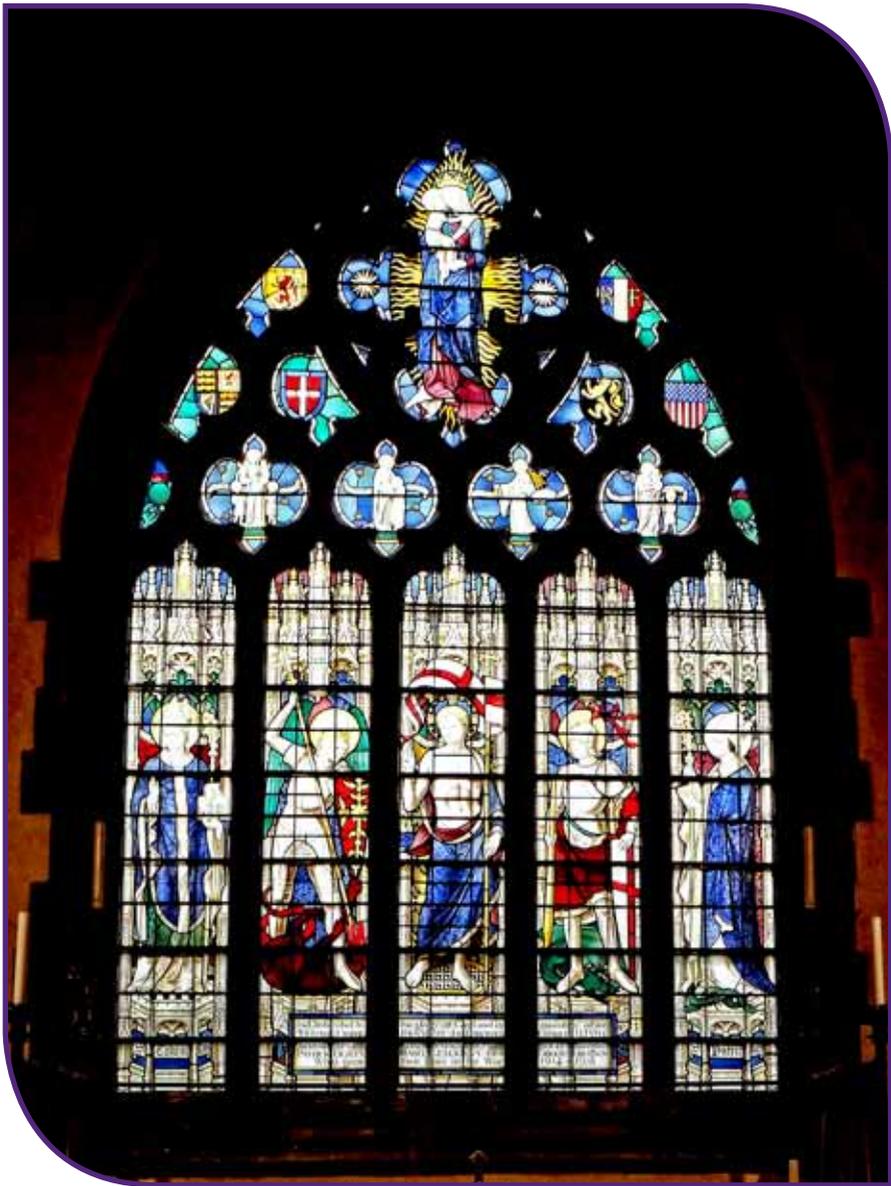
His naval career saw his rank rise from Captain to Vice-Admiral, as he served on ships such as Cambria, Aboukir, Illustrious and Europa.

www.dreadnoughtproject.org

The window features a galley showing St Margaret of Scotland standing amidships, with the mailed knight, St Stephen of Hungary, standing in the stern. At the prow is St John holding an eagle.

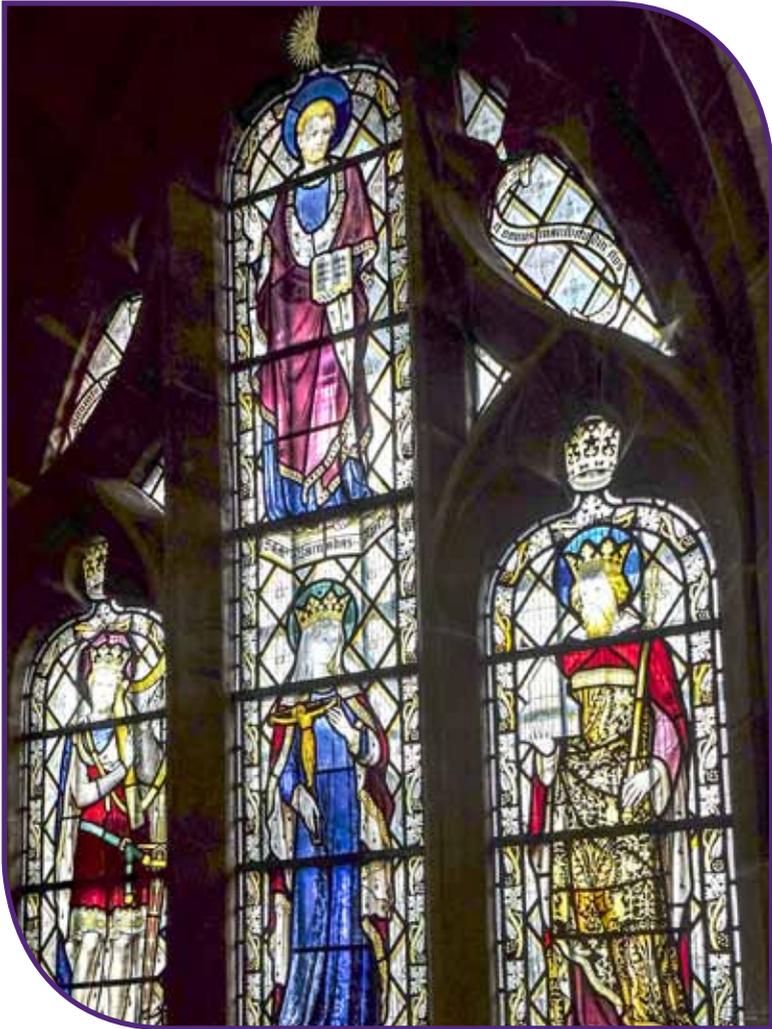
John was a favourite Drummond name, and a Drummond was credited with escorting St Margaret to Scotland.

The Drummond Coat of Arms is in the top light of the window.



WINDOW 8 - FIRST WORLD WAR MEMORIAL WINDOW

The East or WW1 Memorial Window was unveiled by Rear Admiral Drummond and dedicated by Canon J.A. Philip on August 31st 1924. It is a blaze of colour and inspiration. Below the Madonna and the blazons of the Allied Countries is the central figure of our Lord, with, on his left, St George victorious. The names of the members of this church who lost their lives in service are listed at the foot. Their service records, in brief, follow on page 13.



WINDOW 9: DAVID YOUNG WINDOW

"In memory of David Young, vestryman, who, with the land on which this church is built, gave freely of his substance and labour to God."

Mr Young, whose home was at Fairhill, Northmuir, was a fruit grower who for over 53 years was Senior Vestryman, and Honorary Secretary and Treasurer of St Mary's Church. His dream was also to erect a Rectory and a school in close proximity to the Church but this idea remained unfulfilled, probably because of the lack of funds and the disruption of WW1.

He died in December 1920, and is buried in the churchyard below the stained glass window, gifted by his daughter, and designed by Comper. It was unveiled by Mr. D. Macdonald of Crawford House and dedicated by Canon J.A. Philip (in the absence of the Bishop through illness) on August 31st 1924. Its central light depicts St Barnabas, with St Margaret of Scotland below.

David, King of Israel is to the left and David, King of Scotland to the right.



WINDOW 10: ST SUZANNA

The Holy Martyr Susanna the Virgin was raised in strict Christian piety and in her youth dedicated herself to God. She lost her life in Rome amid 3rd century persecution of Christians by the Roman Empire. This window was designed by Comper and dedicated on 2nd September, 1941, to "F.S.M."

ST MARY'S WORLD WAR 1 ROLL OF HONOUR

Those with an * are also commemorated on the Kirriemuir WW1 Memorial in The Hill Cemetery.

- * William Fyfe Crabbe, Pte 1st Batt. Scots Guards (15.9.1898- 26.5.1918)
- * Thomas Murray Fyfe, Pte Black Watch (6.10.1897 – 6.11.1917)
- * James Gardiner, Pte Black Watch (? .9.1897 – 27.11.1916)
- * Charles Henry Lyell, The Hon., Major Royal Garrison Artillery (18.5.1875 – 18.10.1918) See p. 3.
- Alastair FitzHugh MacLean, Capt. 33rd Punjabis (1882 – 1915) See p.7
- * Christopher Alfred Barclay Mitchell, Pte Black Watch (28.10.1895 – 6.12.1914)
- Hugh Thomas Munro, Sir, 4th Baronet of Lindertis, volunteering with Red Cross canteens in France (1856 – 19.3.1919.) He died in influenza epidemic. See p. 3.
- * Patrick Julian Harry Stanley Ogilvy, Capt The Hon. Irish Guards, M.C. (26.6.1896 – 9.10.1917) son of 6th Earl of Airlie and Mabell, Countess of Airlie.

Mabell Griselda Esther Sudley Ogilvy (22.1.1892 – 4.11.1918) sister of Patrick, tireless in many forms of war work to the detriment of her health.

Gordon Robertson, of whom, to date, sadly, we have been unable to glean any information.

With thanks to the ladies of Newburgh Heritage Trust and Margaret Thorburn, genealogist

TWO FINAL ITEMS OF INTEREST

On your left, a PLAQUE commemorates the ministry (1899-1928) of Canon J.A. Philip, during which period, sadly, he lost his infant son in 1905 and his wife in 1918.

He married Ethel Barrie (1879-1967) Sir J.M. Barrie's niece, in St Mary's on 17th May, 1921.

Lastly you see the CORNERSTONE laid by Rt. Hon. Countess of Airlie on 19th March, 1904.





WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL TABLET

ALEXANDER William Henry James Montgomery - **CUNNINGHAME, D.S.O**

Lt. Col Royal Scots Fusiliers
1905-1944



His marriage to Barbara Susanne Gray-Cheape of Carse Gray, Rescobie, had taken place in St Mary's in October 1934.

www.thepeerage.com; www.rememberthefallen.co.uk

HARRY MURRAY KENNEDY

Pilot Officer R.A.F. Volunteer Reserve

1921-1944

Killed on 8.1.44 when his plane, one engine out of action, crashed on landing back in England after a five-hour mission to make contact with the Belgian resistance. His parents were Harry and Isabella Kennedy of Kirriemuir. He is buried in Kirriemuir Cemetery.



www.scarletboy44.tumblr.com

Charles **ANTHONY, LORD LYELL, V.C.**

Capt. Scots Guards

1913-1943

Killed in action in Tunisia and buried there in Massicault Cemetery. (See p. 3)



NEIL Gilchrist **SOUTAR**

Able Seaman, Royal Navy

Drowned in action on 6th April, 1940, on operations with HMS Foxhound, Neil is said to have been the first Kirriemuir casualty of the war.



www.forces-war-records.co.uk; www.naval-history.net

GEORGE Redvers Hudson Banks **STEWART**

Lieutenant, Black Watch, 5th Battalion (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada

1921-1943

George and his younger brother Brian were graduates of Worcester College, Oxford, and both joined the Black Watch. Their parents were Redvers Buller Stewart, a Calcutta jute merchant, and Mabel Banks Sparks of Kirriemuir. They were cared for by their Kirriemuir aunts when their parents returned to India c. 1923. George was killed in action in Sicily on 23rd July, 1943, aged 22. Brian survived to have an illustrious career in the colonial, diplomatic and intelligence services, dying, aged 93, in Perthshire in 2015.



www.alchetron.com

HOW DID ST MARY'S COME TO BE? EPISCOPALIAN OR PRESBYTERIAN?

The first recorded priest of St Mary's, Kirriemuir, was John Kininmonth in 1598.

As noted local historian Alan Reid pointed out in "The Regality of Kirriemuir" (pub. 1909) this was followed by periodic alterations in State policy such that, broadly, from the Reformation to the Jacobite Rebellion, the Church in Scotland was alternatively Episcopalian and Presbyterian.

Between 1630 and 1713, Rev. Sylvester Lyon (1668-1713) served both Kirriemuir denominations, assisted by his son-in-law Rev. James Rait, who became a freelance Episcopalian minister from 1713. He removed one of the Parish Church's 1694 communion chalices to use on his itinerant work. He was Rector of St Mary's from 1713 to 1727 and the chalice remains in its possession.

The religious settlement imposed by King William of Orange in 1690 established Presbyterianism as the national form of church government. Episcopalian clergy were reluctant to abjure their oath of allegiance to King James VII so that, after the 1715 Rebellion, the government imposed severe restrictions on the practice of Episcopalianism, with penalties including transportation. These statutes were reinforced after the 1745 Rebellion and stayed in place till 1792.

During this period, St Mary's effectively went 'underground,' but its adherents were sustained by Rev. James Lyell (1756-1794.)

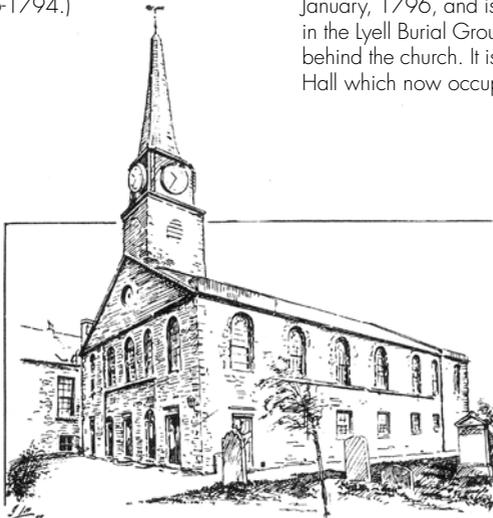
By the 1790's all hope of a Jacobite Restoration had been abandoned and the Episcopal clergy recognised the need to accept and pray for the Royal Family. Accordingly, in 1792, the penal statutes were repealed.

James Lyell's nephew, Charles, had meanwhile made his fortune from his career in the Royal Navy and bought the estate of Kinnordy within his uncle's parish. As a heritor, he was traditionally required, with others, to take responsibility for the building of a parish church, its upkeep and its minister's stipend. In 1785, he employed the famed architect, James Playfair, to design it. It opened in the centre of Kirriemuir in 1788, and Charles later donated its steeple.

It flourishes still, as the Glens and Kirriemuir Old Parish Church. In 1986, its minister, Rev. John Stevenson, brought their 1694 matching chalice to a joint Maundy Service, reuniting them after more than 250 years.

www.gkopc.co.uk

Charles Lyell further provided funds for the construction of an Episcopal Church as soon as it was lawful, the foundation being laid in 1795 on a site on the east side of the Roods. He died without seeing it, on 19th January, 1796, and is buried with his wife and family in the Lyell Burial Ground which he had had set aside behind the church. It is still visible behind the Masonic Hall which now occupies the former church site.



The Parish Church

THE FIRST ST MARY'S CHURCH, ROODS 1795 - 1902

The impressive frontage of that church was stone, Grecian in manner, with a fine steeple. The rest of it was built mostly of wood, and somewhat controversial, it seems.

It is an old-fashioned church," protests Rev. Farquhar by 1883, "with, right in front of the Altar, a huge pulpit with a desk for the clerk; above it, one from which to read prayers; and above that, a third for preaching from, and, above all that, a canopy!... Such architecture sends a chill to my very marrow."

Hardly surprising, therefore, that plans were already afoot to build a replacement on the site, when fate intervened...

On the 26 January 1902, shortly after the end of the 8.30 am Communion Service conducted by Rev. J.A. Phillips, the vergers noticed smoke and raised the alarm. The church ignited rapidly, fuelled by a fierce NW gale, and by 11 am had been completely burnt out. Very few of the furnishings survived but mercifully Sylvester Lyon's chalice and the crosses were among those which did.

Onlookers, including hastily summoned dignitaries as well as the valiant fire brigade, gazed as the bell fell from the spire and the organ was consumed.

The cause was reckoned to have been a flue catching some adjacent woodwork.

The stone frontage of the old church stood intact until 1911.



The fire was a terrible blow for the congregation but they immediately agreed a new church of their own must be built, and the Bishop approved the idea.

Until funds could be gathered in, the congregation used St Mary's School as their place of worship but they set about the necessary fundraising with a will and in 18 months had accumulated over £1500 towards the projected costs of over £3000. The services of the up and coming architect, J. Ninian Comper, son of the former schoolmaster, were secured.

The church's honorary secretary and treasurer, Mr David Young, provided a brand new site lying to the west of the Roods, and gifts of a new font, a new pulpit and half the cost of a new organ were promised.

In August 1903 a three-day bazaar, called "Venice in Thrums" was held in the Town Hall. It was also completely successful and raised the budgeted funds.

The same year the building began and in two years the church was opened.

THE COMPER CONNECTIONS

REV. JOHN COMPER came to Kirriemuir in 1848 to be the first schoolmaster of the newly founded Church School of St Mary's. His ambition was ultimately to become a priest. While catechist during the incumbency of Thomas Wildman, he enjoyed the company of the distinguished hymn-writer, the Rev. John Ellerton.

He left for Crieff in 1849, then was ordained at St Ninian's Cathedral, Perth, on December 11th 1850, the day after its consecration.

In 1861 John Comper was given the incumbency of St John's, Aberdeen, and a year later established St Margaret's Convent at the Spittal.

Eight years later he resigned from St John's, to establish St Margaret's mission in Aberdeen's Gallowgate.

In July 1903, while visiting Duthie Park in Aberdeen, he fetched some strawberries for his wife, but collapsed while offering one to a little child.

His son, Ninian, adopted a strawberry as his maker's mark in his glass windows in recognition of his father's ministry.

"A Life Less Ordinary" Canon Dr. A.E. Nimmo, B.D., M.Phil., Ph.D., F.S.A.Scot ©1903

J. NINIAN COMPER was born in Aberdeen on 10th June 1864. He began his schooling at Kingston College there, and then, aged ten, enrolled as a boarder at Trinity College, Glenalmond. Six years later he attended drawing classes at the Aberdeen School of Art.

At the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art in Oxford he met C. E. Kempe, a glass painter and church craftsman. In Kempe's drawing office he was introduced into valuable skills such as drawing and wall and glass-painting.

He was also enrolled at the South Kensington School of Art. In 1883 Comper entered the drawing office of George Frederick Bodley (1828-1907), the architect of St Salvador's, Dundee.

Four years later, he began to design independently and went into partnership with William Bucknall (1851-1944) with a drawing office in Westminster.

In 1890 he married Bucknall's sister, Grace. In 1891 his nephew, Arthur Bucknall was apprenticed to him and he managed the studio until 1952.

Comper's earliest work in Scotland was for alterations and additions to St Margaret's Church and Convent for his father, begun in 1889. St Mary's, Kirriemuir, begun in 1903, is one of his earliest church buildings.

Comper was knighted by George VI in 1950, and died after a long, distinguished career aged 96 in 1960. His work can be seen the length of Britain, from Shetland to Westminster Abbey, where his ashes are interred beneath windows he had designed. The Warrior's Chapel was also his work.

Dictionary of National Biography 1951-60, Oxford University Press©1971



SIR J. NINIAN COMPER EXPLAINS HIS DESIGN IN 1903

The design intent of the architect is known through statements issued at the time of the church's construction and dedication, and published in the booklet "Venice in Thrums" which accompanied the fund-raising bazaar held in 1903.

This was described in three factors: materials, architectural design, and method of worship. The following summarises his statements.

In order to give local character to a building, the first thing is to use local materials. This will be done as far as possible; but the red sandstone of Forfarshire has a tendency to flake, and the slates are difficult to procure and are very heavy. Dumfries stone is, therefore, to be used for all the moulded parts, and the slates must probably come from Ballachulish: but local colour is not sacrificed in the use of either.

The second point is even more obvious. The building ought to bear the stamp of a Christian church. Here in Scotland it should visibly express the claim which the Episcopal Church makes to be historical and national. So far as guidance in style has been sought at all, the neighbouring fragments and ruins of the latest Christian churches of the middle age have been used. Its details will tell its modern story.

The most conscious aim in planning the new Church is to emphasise the altar as the holy table, no less than the place of sacrifice. The altar and the steps leading to it will be wide and spacious, so that the table itself, as the most important part, will be visible. Both the table and the front of the altar will be flooded with light from the east window and from the two side windows.



The New Church as Comper intended

WAS COMPER'S VISION FULFILLED?

Like many buildings, the final design was not quite as Comper first envisaged, however the church we see today is almost unaltered since its completion.

It has an interesting composition of nave, chancel and vestry, with expressed round turrets which house internal stairs (to the pulpit and the organ loft), all dominated by its robust square west tower.

The tower was originally planned to have a steeple, but Church Minute Books suggest funds to complete the tower were still required in July 1904.

The final tower was built with a flat roof which provides fantastic views over the town and surrounding landscape. The large square openings below are for the belfry. On the ground level, large pointed arch windows light the Baptistry. Adjoining this, the impressive 4-bay nave is full of light below its barrel vaulted ceiling. The space is asymmetric with a lower arcaded aisle to the north side with a small side chapel, originally planned to be screened off for daily services.

A door leads to the original choir vestry, extended in 1964 as the church hall. Between the nave and chancel /choir stalls, Comper had wished to uphold the ancient precedent of a rood screen, and whilst provision for the screen was made (see the access door high up next to the organ), one was never fitted. A fine example of a Comper screen remains at St Margaret's, Braemar.

Leaving the church through the south entrance, a crow-stepped gable porch provides a vestibule and an independent door to the vestry, the small single storey block to the east

On the south elevation above the pointed archway and set within a shallow niche is a statue of the Virgin Mary, to whom the church is dedicated.

THE RECTORY

St Mary's Rectory, is a six-roomed red sandstone villa set in half an acre of garden ground at 128 Glengate, which lies to the west of the church and overlooks the town's verdant park, The Den, made famous by Sir J.M. Barrie.

According to the church records of 1849, the land for the site of the house and garden, at that time referred to as The Parsonage, was presented by Charles Lyell of Kinnordy. A sum of £471.10.0 which included £150 in the British Linen Bank was subscribed by the congregation towards the cost of the building, which was completed in 1851.



The Rectory

THE CHURCH ORGAN

The organ sits in the loft above the south entrance of St Mary's, in a case of various shades of fumed oak, which was designed by Comper after a 16th century organ front he had probably seen abroad.

The organ was made by C. & F. Hamilton, Edinburgh, opened on 1st November, 1906 and dedicated by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Richardson in 1908. The company had an excellent reputation as organ builders over four generations, from c. 1824 until 1933.

The organ has two manuals and pedal with 13 stops. A key or a pedal when depressed opens a valve or pallet under the pipes allowing wind to go from the wind chest into the pipes, so producing the sound. The keys can be quite a long distance from the pipes and the mechanism connecting the keys with the pallets, consisting of rods and levers, is called tracker action.

During the spring of 1938, at a cost of £150, the organ was thoroughly overhauled and the electric blower was fitted.

Regularly maintained and played by a succession of appreciative and gifted organists, this organ has endured in such condition that, in 2012, the British Institute of Organ Studies awarded it a Grade 1 certificate, their highest accolade, bestowed only upon "an organ of exceptional significance."

With thanks to Alan Buchan, of the Scottish Historic Organs Trust

One of those organists was the school's Headmaster, Mr. Henry E. Peacock, an articulate and cultured man of many talents, which he used to the benefit of the wider community as well as St Mary's.

It was he who, as Provost of Kirriemuir, presided over the grandest civic occasion ever seen in the town's history, the presentation to Sir J M Barrie of the Freedom of Kirriemuir on June 7th, 1930.

This honour has been bestowed on no other citizen since. The silver casket containing "The Burgess Ticket" which was handed over by Provost Peacock, saying that it also contained "the heart of Kirriemuir," is on display in the Kirriemuir Gateway to the Glens Museum.

It was bought at auction in 2013 by Angus Council, with funding assistance, for £7200.

www.britishpathe.com "Thrums re-visited 1930"

In 1936, Mr Peacock resigned as both Hon. Secretary and Treasurer of the church but also as organist a post he had held for many years.



THE BELLS OF ST MARY'S

Although a belfry was included in the design of the church, there were no bells in it until 1969 when a peel of 8 bells was bought from Newburgh Parish Church in Fife using money specifically bequeathed by Mr Joseph Alexander of Kirriemuir. Built in 1876, the Newburgh church was demolished in 1967, and a new home was sought for the bells.

The Glasgow Herald of 27th March 1922 tells their story:

"The War Memorial Peel of 8 Bells gifted to Newburgh Parish Church by Mr. T.S. Greig, Newburgh, were rung for the first time yesterday after the service conducted by the Rev. Dr John Smith, Partick, at which a mural tablet containing the names of 11 men of the parish who fell in (The Great) War was also unveiled."

A rare form of war memorial, the bells were manufactured by Gillett & Johnston of Surrey who have been manufacturing bells for clients worldwide since 1844.

The bells were dedicated by the Right Reverend Michael Hare Duke, Bishop of St Andrews, on 18 October 1970. They are now played from a small keyboard beside the organ.

The Newburgh parishioners were delighted to have their bells saved by placing them in a belfry which had lain empty for 65 years. Two ladies from Newburgh Heritage Trust visited St Mary's in 2016 to see their 'resting place' for themselves.

SANCTUS BELL

Believed to have been rescued from the old St Mary's, this was found by Lady Lyell in the late 1970's in Kinnordy House. Dated 1741 it is made of bell metal, a specific alloy which contains brass and tin. It may have hung in some even earlier chapel previously. It now hangs in the space created for it when the church was built. It was rung for the first time on the church's 75th anniversary, in 1980. During the restoration work in 2017, it was brought down and photographed, proof positive of its date.

The symbolism of all these bells is inescapable: the Newburgh bells linking two congregations who lost loved ones 100 years ago, and the Sanctus linking the Episcopalians of Kirriemuir over nearly 300 years.



WHAT MAKES THIS CHURCH SO SPECIAL?

Despite his prolific worldwide ecclesiastical involvement, the church is one of only four Sir J. Ninian Comper built in Scotland. The other Scottish examples are:

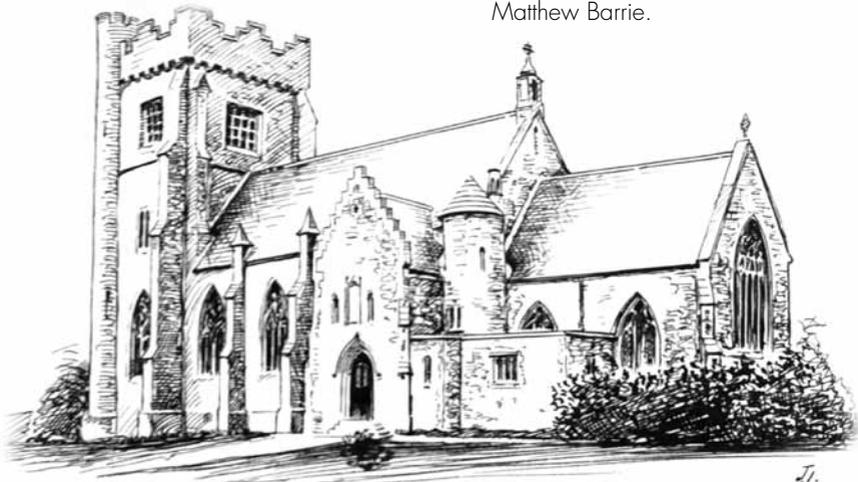
St Margaret's Convent Chapel, Aberdeen (1891): no longer a Place of Worship; on Buildings at Risk Register.

St Margaret's, Braemar (1895-1907): no longer a Place of Worship; on Buildings at Risk Register; acquired by Scottish Redundant Churches Trust.

St John the Baptist Rothiemurchus (1928-31): still in use as Place of Worship; a later work with his eldest son Sebastian Comper.

- St Mary's, Kirriemuir is, therefore, Comper's most significant work in Scotland still in use for its original purpose. It is largely unaltered, reflects the architect's design in every way, not least in terms of material, expression of national church identity, and liturgical use.

- It is the only complete example of his early work in Scotland. St Margaret's, Braemar, compares closely, but its north transept was not completed.
- In the book published in 2006 on Comper's work (Symondson & Bucknall) St Margaret's is listed as one of Compton's "masterpieces" and also categories St Mary's with three stars – defined as "very important buildings."
- St Mary's is Kirriemuir's only Category A listed building, i.e. it is of national importance.
- It is an ongoing place of worship for the Episcopal Church who have had a presence in Kirriemuir since the 16th century. The Scottish Episcopal Church is part of the worldwide Anglican Communion with some 70 million Christians in more than 160 countries.
- It features nine of Comper's magnificent stained glass windows.
- And it was the location in 1937 of the funeral of Kirriemuir's famous son, Sir James Matthew Barrie.



St Mary's as Joseph Lee drew it in 1909

THE FUNERAL OF SIR J. M. BARRIE

THURSDAY, 24TH JUNE 1937, at 2.30pm

"Never in the annals of Kirriemuir have funeral scenes of such an impressive character been witnessed as those of yesterday when all that was mortal of Sir J M Barrie was interred in the cemetery on The Hill," so says the Kirriemuir Free Press & Advertiser of June 25th 1937.

"Hundreds from far and near poured into the town, mourners including men who occupy 'the seats of the mighty,' and humbler folks who were friends of the Barries. St Mary's Episcopal Church was taxed to its utmost capacity, and many failed to gain admission."

St Mary's has long been thought to have been chosen because the wife of the former Rector, J. A. Philip, was Barrie's niece, Ethel. Barrie had also donated a window in memory of his brother's family.

But, when Barrie's wish to be buried back in Kirriemuir was made known to his family, his four nieces, themselves faithful members for many years, must have felt that St Mary's was the obvious and only choice for the service.

Ethel had married the widowed Rev. J.A. Philip in 1921.

The Kirriemuir Observer of Friday, July 2nd, 1937, tells us that "the service was brief but impressive.

The paraphrase 'O God of Bethel' was sung, then Rev H Rorison, current Rector of St Mary's, gave a reading beginning 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.'

Psalms 23, 'The Lord's My Shepherd,' was followed with prayers by Canon J.A. Philip, before the service concluded with Psalm 121, 'I to the hills will lift mine eyes.'

The coffin was borne to the hearse by representatives of Kirriemuir Cricket Club, the British Legion and the Merchants' Committee.

The cortege moved slowly past crowds lining Glengate, Bank Street and Schoolwynd, outside Sir James' Birthplace and up the Brechin Road. Schoolchildren from Kirriemuir and Forfar lined the drive up to the cemetery.

The pall-bearers were his great-nephews, Alexander Barrie and Barrie Smart, Hon. Bruce Ogilvy, Provost J. Joiner, John F Mills, Dr. A. K. Mill, Sir James Irvine and Sir David Percival Wilkie.

The simple graveside service was led by Canon Philip and Rev Reaper of the Barony Church.

*www.youtube.com
"Angus Lives: Sir J M
Barrie" 2010.*

*Picture taken from The
Glasgow Herald June
25th 1937*



ST MARY'S SCHOOL

Early church records indicate that the first Church School was held for a short time in the Town House of Kirriemuir. Vestry minutes of 1849 refer to rent of a schoolroom being paid, and of £3. 6s. 11d. being given to the Rev Thomas Wildman for fitting up the Schoolroom. In 1854, Rev. J.J. Douglas purchased land in St Mary's Close for an Episcopal School, directly across the Roods from the (first) church.

L-shaped, with crosses surmounting its two doorways, it featured arched and latticed Gothic-style windows on its west gable. Coal-burning stoves provided heat.

John Comper became its first schoolmaster in 1848.

After the fire in 1902, the schoolroom was used for Sunday Worship.

By 1905/06 financial difficulties gave rise to the suggestion of sacking the sewing teacher and replacing the male Headmaster (costing £140 per annum) with a less expensive female! Mrs Howe resigned as teacher in 1906 after 23 years' service.

Lack of resources caused the school to lose pupils and, as a result of the 1918 Education Act, the buildings and furniture were bought in 1920 by Forfarshire (Angus) Education Authority for £800.



**Former UP Church owned by
St Mary's 1918 -1927**

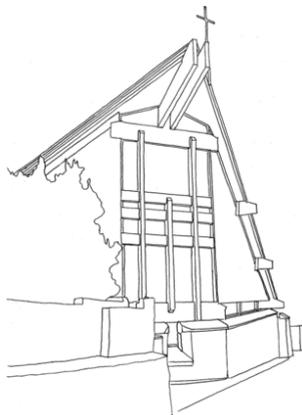
The church paid a similar sum later in the year to buy the former United Free (Presbyterian) Church in Bank Street to use as meeting rooms. (Building costs led to it being sold on in 1927 to Mr Joseph Franchi, who ran popular tearooms there for decades. Presently it is the offices of George Currie & Co., accountants.)

Mr H.E. Peacock retired after 36 years as Head, handing over to Miss A. Macdonald who served for 6 years before the school closed in 1927.

In 1969, the church sold ground at Kirktionhill for what is now Kirktion Court Sheltered Housing.

The former school premises were used commercially until demolished in 1986 to make way for the new Catholic Church of St Antony. In 1976 St Mary's broke new ecumenical ground by welcoming the Roman Catholic congregation to hold services in St Mary's. This continued happily for 11 years. They purchased the site of the former school and built their new chapel there.

St Antony's too won recognition for the calibre of its design by James F. Stephen of Glamis in the form of the Civic Design Award and RIBA Scottish Award, both in 1988. On its first anniversary, St Antony's presented St Mary's with a plate for Eucharist bread.



St Antony's

Picture from www.scotlandschurchestrust.org.uk

THE DEDICATION OF THE NEW CHURCH, 6TH JULY 1905

The Rt. Rev. George Howard Wilkinson, the Primus, Bishop of St Andrews, dedicated the new church on Thursday, 6th July, 1905, a long-awaited occasion.

Bishop Richardson, the Rector, and 15 clergy from distant charges were present. A procession of the choir and clergy sang the Psalm, "I was glad when they said unto me, we will go into the House of The Lord" outside the church, then "The earth is The Lord's" up to the chancel.

The special music was Maunder's setting of the Communion office, performed by a large choir under Mr. H. E. Peacock, who also presided at the organ. The Primus preached appropriately. The town and county were largely represented.

At the luncheon which followed, the Bishop complimented the Rector, architect and building committee. Mr. David Young's grant of the splendid site was 'feliculously referred to' (according to the Kirriemuir Free Press of 7th July!)

Note was also made that the contractors for the erection of the church were: builders - Messrs. Robertson & McPherson; joiner - Mr. Charles Ogilvy; slaters - Messrs. A. Stewart & Sons; plumber - Mrs. Adams; plasterer - Mr. John Thom; painters and glaziers - Messrs. Barrie & Guild. Some of these tradesmen left their traditional 'mark' upon their work, and these were discovered during renovations in 2005.

CONSECRATION 18TH AUGUST 1912

Rt. Rev. Charles Edward, Bishop of St Andrews, consecrated the church on 18th August 1912. Thereafter the clergy and members were able to move forward into their future, secure in the knowledge that the church was finally their own.

SOME OTHER SIGNIFICANT OCCASIONS IN THE CHURCH'S EARLY LIFE

- 1898: in the old church, Clementine Hozier, granddaughter of the 10th Earl of Airlie, was confirmed on October 9th. She became the wife of Winston Churchill in 1908.
- 1903: The bazaar "Venice in Thrums" raised funds for the new church.
- 1904: 19th March, The Rt. Hon. Countess of Airlie laid the cornerstone and Rt. Rev. Bishop Richardson blessed it.
- 1921: 17th May, Marriage of Ethel Barrie to Rev J.A Philip.
- 1928: visit by The Archbishop of Canterbury in September.



THE 2017 CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

The project to conserve Kirriemuir's only A-listed building cost around £250,000. The largest proportion of funding came from a joint grant of £191,200 awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Environment Scotland.

Other grants were gratefully received from the Dalrymple Donaldson Fund, Scottish Churches Trust, All Churches Trust and Alan Evans Memorial Trust.

A legacy from Miss Alison Prain – a local teacher who was a lifelong supporter of the Church and the community – and generous local fundraising combined to make the whole project possible.

The project involved urgent roof and masonry repairs as well as internal work to restore the building to its former glory as intended by architect Sir J. Ninian Comper. Roof work included new traditional lead sheet roofs over the west tower and vestry. Masonry work effected repair to the gable wall heads and stone turret roofs to prevent water ingress. Essential structural strengthening of the masonry walls that form the impressive west tower was

also carried out.

Local S4 pupils gained valuable experience in lime pointing and restoring the boundary walls.

Before work commenced, The Most Reverend David Chillingworth, Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, commented:

"I am delighted to hear the news of this grant which will help us to restore and sustain St Mary's. This is one of the most beautifully and architecturally significant churches in our diocese. The congregation and the wider church are determined to ensure that it continues to be at the heart of the community as a place of prayer – and of welcome and mission. We welcome this support which will help us to sustain it for the future."

Work was completed in September 2017, ensuring that the congregation of St Mary's will have a place of worship which is still splendid but also fit for the 21st century.

**Funding raised by
The National Lottery**

and awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund



LOTTERY FUNDED



**HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND**

**ÀRAINNEACHD
EACHDRAIDHEIL
ALBA**



KIRRIEMUIR

St Mary's Episcopal Church, West Hillbank, Kirriemuir, Angus
Correspondence: The Revd Canon Dr R.P. Harley
St Mary's Rectory, 128 Glengate, Kirriemuir, Angus DD8 4JG
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Registered Charity: SC005902

CLERGY OF ST MARY'S CHURCH

The notice board in the Baptistery listing the Rectors to date was donated by the sister of Rev. Harry Rorison in 1964.

JAMES KINNINMONTH	1598 - 1630
ALEXANDER KINNINMONTH	1630 - 1662
JOHN KEITH	1662 - 1669
SYLVESTER LYON	1669 - 1713
JAMES RAIT	1713 - 1727
WILLIAM GRAY	1727 - 1748
WILLIAM WALKER	1748 - 1755
JAMES LYALL	1756 - 1794
WILLIAM JOLLY	1794 - 1796
JOHN BUCHAN	1797 - 1848
THOMAS WILDMAN	1848 - 1851
JAMES J DOUGLAS	1851 - 1899
JOHN A PHILIP	1899 - 1928
HARRY C G RORISON	1928 - 1948
DAVID C REES	1948 - 1950
GEORGE E T BROOKS	1950 - 1955
JOHN W SYMON	1955 - 1965
WILLIAM MILNE	1965 - 1974
RANDALL MCALISTER	1974 - 1981
LAURENCE FROST	1981 - 1985
PETER BOYLAN	1985 - 1990
RICHARD THOMSON	1990 - 1994
DOROTHY MACLEAN	1986 - 2008
HAMISH PRIOR	1991 - 2000
IAIN TEMPLETON	1995 - 1999
ERIC RAMSAY	1994 - 2009
DR ROBERT HARLEY	2000 -

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