

A BRIEF HISTORY

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY ROOD, CARNOUSTIE

**The Church of the Holy Rood, Carnoustie
A Scottish Episcopal Church**

Part of the World-Wide Anglican Communion



THE EARLY CHURCH

The Burgh of Carnoustie is situated in the Civic Parishes of Barry and Panbride. Prior to the Reformation, the church at Barry belonged to the Abbey of Balmerino Fife. The church at Panbride, dedicated to Saint Bride, belonged to the Abbey of Arbroath, Forfarshire, now Angus. In 1791 the Statistical Account for Scotland, listed a total of seven Episcopalians in the two parishes.

The joint Dundee and Arbroath railway arrived in Carnoustie before the middle of the 19th century and the village became a holiday destination. A number of these summer visitors were Episcopalians. From as early as 1836, Missionary services for these summer visitors were held in various local halls, during the months of July and August.

Eventually, this worship was held in what was known as the Mission Rooms, in Maule Street. Prior to this, the Mission Rooms had been a school. Services of this nature continued until 1876, at which time the 19 permanent Episcopalian residents of Carnoustie held a meeting. Those present decided to form themselves into a Congregation and requested Bishop Jermyn to provide Clergy, thus ensuring that services continued throughout the year in Carnoustie. In February 1876, these services began in the Mission Rooms and were conducted by various Clergymen from Dundee, one of whom was the Reverend Roger Rowson who met and married, in 1858,

Helen Guthrie, the daughter and heiress of Charles Guthrie, from whom she inherited the Estate of Taybank in Dundee. On the death of a maternal aunt, she also inherited Carnoustie House and the Kinloch Estate, in Carnoustie, from which time, their names were combined to become Lingard-Guthrie.

In 1864 the Reverend Roger R. Lingard was appointed to minister to the small Congregation, and is the first name to be inscribed on the List of Incumbents to the Church of the Holy Rood.

To follow Lingard-Guthrie, the Reverend Gilbert S. Moor was appointed Priest-in-charge to a Congregation of between 30 and 40 residents.

The Mission continued to flourish but the Mission Rooms became far too small for the Congregation, which grew to about 180 people. A Building Committee was appointed, with the aim of raising funds for a new Church. The Reverend Lingard-Guthrie and his wife contributed £800 towards the cost and an additional £400 raised by the Congregation and friends.

The Building Committee asked Mr Alexander Ross, the architect of Saint Andrew's Cathedral in Inverness and many other churches, to prepare plans for a modest structure in Carnoustie. Although on a much smaller scale compared to Saint Andrew's, one can sense the same atmosphere of peace and dignity.

THE CHURCH BUILDING

Mr. Ross adopted the early Scottish Gothic style for the Church, which was to be built on land donated by Mrs Lingard-Guthrie, a greenfield site which was less than 100 yards east of the Mission Rooms and on the same side of Maule Street. Then, on August 4th, 1880, in the presence of the Bishop, Dean and clergy of Brechin, Mrs Lingard-Guthrie laid the foundation stone for the new Church

The Church is early French in design, simple yet not severe, with bold mouldings. The Nave is entered through a large and roomy porch. There are pillars with Corinthian capitals at the entrance and the tympanum above is carved. The 74 foot high round bell tower is similar to that of Brechin Cathedral and the traceried window area at the top, houses the bells. A single bell hung there until 1914, at which time Mr. James Grey, one of the founder members of the Congregation, gifted a set of eight tubular bells, which were installed. Mr. Grey was a lawyer by profession and the French Consular Agent in Dundee who, after he retired, translated books into French to keep his brain active. The first Service of the Church, was held in his dining room, at Taymouth Villa. The original bell was sent to Saint Barnabas Mission in West Pondoland, South Africa, which is a region on the African coast of the Indian Ocean, located in Eastern Cape Province, South Africa.

The Nave is 74 x 24 foot wide with a bold chancel arch leading to the 25 x 24 foot chancel containing the organ and the choir stalls.

The outer walls of the Church are built with stone, obtained locally from Carmyllie and Fife, whilst the interior walls are of Arbroath red sandstone, relieved with white freestone dressings. The roof and woodwork are of pitch pine and the choir stalls are of oak.

Natural light floods into the Church through a triple light-traceried window in the West end, double lancet windows in the North and South walls and a triple lancet in the East gable of the chancel. Through time, most of these windows have been replaced by stained glass, as memorial windows.

In January 1881, the charge of the Congregation was undertaken by the Reverend A.M. Sugden and on the 30th June 1881, the new Church was dedicated to the Holy Rood and consecrated by the Bishop of Brechin.

It was during the tenure of the Reverend H.J.W. Head, 1888-1896, that funds were raised for the building of the Rectory in 1888 and for the addition of the chancel in 1893. The following year the Congregation filled the Church, as the Bishop of Brechin consecrated the chancel. A foundation stone inscribed "HJWH 1894" can be seen on the outside at the South East corner of the Church. In 1898 the Church was raised from the status

of Mission, to that of Incumbency. It was completed in 1911, when the vestry room was added and the pipe organ was installed and fitted by J.R. Miller of Dundee.

The Church Hall was the final addition to the church buildings, being built in 1914. Originally, the Church was lit by gas, but gas was replaced by electricity in 1948.



Laying the Foundation Stone, 4th August 1880

THE INTERNAL ASPECTS

As is the case with many 19th century churches, the stained glass windows are a major attraction and the Church of the Holy Rood is no exception.

- The triple lancet window above the altar is dedicated to Carlos Monk Lingard-Guthrie, a member of the family who contributed most handsomely to the cost of building the church.
- The reredos was painted by a local artist, J Torrington-Bell, 1898 – 1970, using local residents as models and the Angus Glens as a background.
- The window dedicated to the memory of Harriet Anna Harley, contradicts all mother-in-law jokes, since she was the mother-in-law of The Reverend H.J.W. Head.
- The window dedicated to the memory of James Yeaman-Gray, (1844-1935), is a Sir Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898) design and faces the memorial windows to his father, James M. Gray and mother, Margaret. James M. Gray was a founder member of the original Church Mission and a life-long member of the congregation.
- A window on the south side of the Church is in memory of a member of the congregation who died in the Piper Alpha oil rig disaster in July 1988.
- The West gable window was paid for by donations from the congregation, to mark the 50th

anniversary of the Church in 1925. It is adapted from the “Star of Bethlehem” by Sir Edward Burne-Jones.

- Other windows are in memory of past members of the Congregation, both young and old.

Here in the Church of the Holy Rood, one can see the different styles of stained glass, from the late 19th to the late 20th century. They illustrate more than 100 years of stained glass design.

The front side candlesticks, the baptismal water jug at the font, the Episcopal chair, the tabernacle, the lectern, the prayer desk and the chalice, all bear their individual inscriptions of dedication. The ornate lectern is dated 1894, the year in which the completed Church was consecrated. Two plaques, one bronze and ornate, the other of plain wood, were placed in the Church in remembrance of those members of the congregation who died in the Great War and the Second World War. The Great War tablet, lists the names of those who made the supreme sacrifice but it does not include the names of the two members of the Congregation who were awarded the Victoria Cross, George Mackenzie Samson VC and Charles Edward Jarvis VC both of whom survived the Great War.

Electricity was installed in 1948 and the pews were removed and replaced by comfortable chairs in 2016. In 2021, plans are being drawn up to build a kitchen and

toilets at the back of the Church, to facilitate a wider use, both by the Church and the local community.

The Church of the Holy Rood is a beautiful building but its true beauty can only be appreciated from the inside.





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