

LANGHOLM OLD PARISH CHURCH

1846 - 1946

THE CENTENARY OF
THE CHURCH

ITS HISTORY AND ASSOCIATIONS

COMPILED

BY

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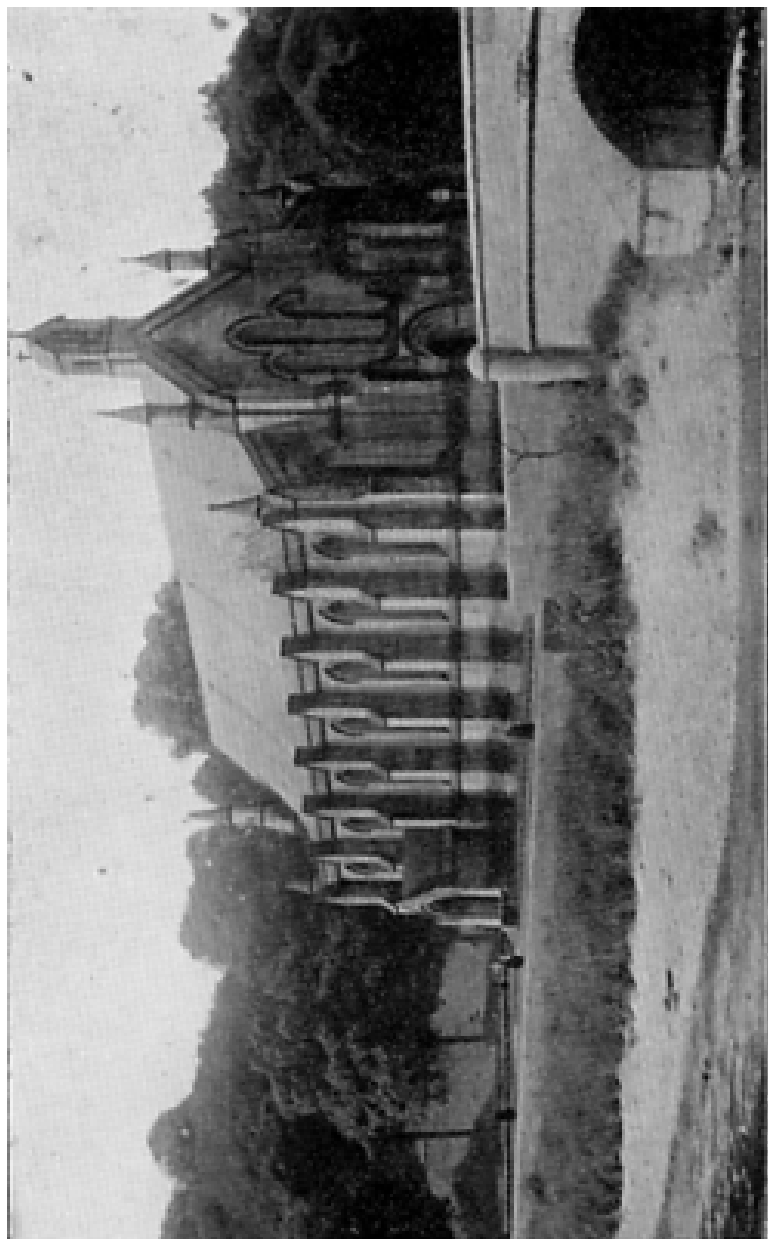
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ORIGINAL FOREWARD

The Minister and Session of the Church are greatly Indebted to Dr. Watt, one of the Session members, for compiling this record. The proceeds from the sale of the copies will be devoted to the Centenary Fund by which it is hoped further to equip and adorn the Church at an early date.

NEW FORWARD

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LANGHOLM OLD PARISH CHURCH

This year (1946) we celebrate the Centenary of the Langholm (Old) Parish Church, and at such a unique time in its history it is perhaps not unbefitting for us to recall to memory its long associations and traditions. Indeed one doubts whether there exists anywhere in the Scottish Borders a Parish and Auld Kirk whose annals tell a story, more romantic, more religious, more historic, or more compelling, than do those of the Parish and Auld Kirk of Langholm.

EARLY HISTORY.

Even before the coming of Christianity to the Scottish Borders, the people were being subjected to constant turmoil and fighting with little rest or peace, and this state of affairs continued until the 1745 rebellion. The first to make its appearance was the Roman invasion and this was followed by the Saxon and Danish invasions. These were followed by the Wars of Independence when Scotland struggled for national existence. We read that Eskdale men took part in the battles of Flodden in 1513 and the Solway Moss in 1542. These battles were the outcome of the disconcerting game which Scotland and England played, each conspiring one against the other, with the result that the whole Borderland became the seat of lawlessness and disorder, and so arose the Border Raiders whose activities led to still further impoverishment of the countryside. With so much lawlessness and unrest it is little wonder that the Church had its troubles too, and so during the latter part of the Seventeenth Century the Covenanters came into being. Lastly came the Jacobite rebellion in which Langholm took no part.

RELIGION.

In this area are to be found evidences of religious worship dating back to the year 1290 B.C. These remain to us in the Girdle Stones situated in Eskdalemuir. In those very early days, the inhabitants of the countryside were sun-worshippers, and it was here, at these stone circles, that the priests carried out their religious activities, and here, too, they greeted the rising sun with high festival and great ceremony. The Romans came over to Britain in 55 B.C., but it was not until the years 117-138 A.D. that they reached Scotland, and it was then that the Christian faith began slowly to influence the life of the people. This Christianity was not, however, an apostolic faith. Many of the pagan practices were incorporated in it, and in the Seventh Century ecclesiastic authorities were still denouncing these practices. Even as late as the Eleventh Century it was found necessary to restrain the people from worshipping the sun, moon, rivers and hills. But the real source of Scottish Christianity was the Irish Mission on Iona, established by St. Columba in the year 523, and this was a Church independent of both Rome and England.

EARLIEST CHURCH.

But St. Patrick was a native of Strathclyde and he had a greater influence in Dumfriesshire even than St. Columba himself. Many of our place names bear this out - such as Kirkpatrick-Fleming, Kirkpatrick-Juxta, etc. In the Thirteenth Century a fountain known as the Fountain of St. Patrick is mentioned in the neighbourhood of Staplegordon,

and to St. Bridget was dedicated what was probably the earliest church in Eskdale, viz., St. Bride's Chapel and St. Bride's Hill in Wauchope which existed not far from the present Schoolhouse. Later came St. Cuthbert, who made a great impression on the Church in Scotland. This is well exemplified by the dedication to his memory of the Over-Kirk of Ewes.

STAPLEGORDON.

Langholm was originally included in the ancient parish of "Staplegortoun." William de Cunnigburc, who possessed the manor of Staplegortoun in the Twelfth Century, granted to the Monks of Kelso the Church of Staplegortoun with all the lands belonging to it. This the Monks held till the Reformation, when not only Staplegortoun but several other churches of the Monks were transferred to the Earl of Roxburgh. Some time later the King bought the titles of the parish and in 1637 transferred them to the Bishop of Glasgow.

COLLATION ACT.

Then came the Restoration Act of 1662 and the Revolution in 1688. This was a nebulous night for Scotland when the minister's home "was the mountain and the wood." The efforts of Charles II to destroy the Presbyterian form of church government in Scotland and introduce Episcopacy in its place was met with the most determined resistance by the Border peoples. The Collation Act of 1662 required all Presbyterian Ministers to submit to re-ordination by a bishop. Rather than accept these conditions, between 300-400 ministers left their churches one dreary November day in 1662. Of the ten ministers then resident in Eskdale, no fewer than six remained staunch to their convictions and left their churches.

REV. ROB. LAW.

At that time the Rev. Robert Law was the incumbent of Staplegortoun. He remained true to his convictions and left the church. In 1674 he was a prisoner in Glasgow for preaching at conventicles and again in July of the same year he was brought before the Civil Court on a charge of preaching in private houses and was forced to enter security for 5000 merks. Fourteen years later, however, after the Revolution, he was finally restored to his church.

CIVIL HISTORY.

According to the Statistical Account of Dumfriesshire, Langholm was erected into a barony in the year 1610. The erection of New Langholm was begun in 1778. It states that the Castle of Langholm was merely a square tower or border house, which was formerly the property of the Armstrongs, a powerful body of freebooters in the district. It goes on to relate that near the old castle of Langholm, a place is pointed out

where several witches were burnt in 1635. It is told of the Eskdale witches that they had the power of transferring the labour of child-birth from the mother to the father.

BRANKS.

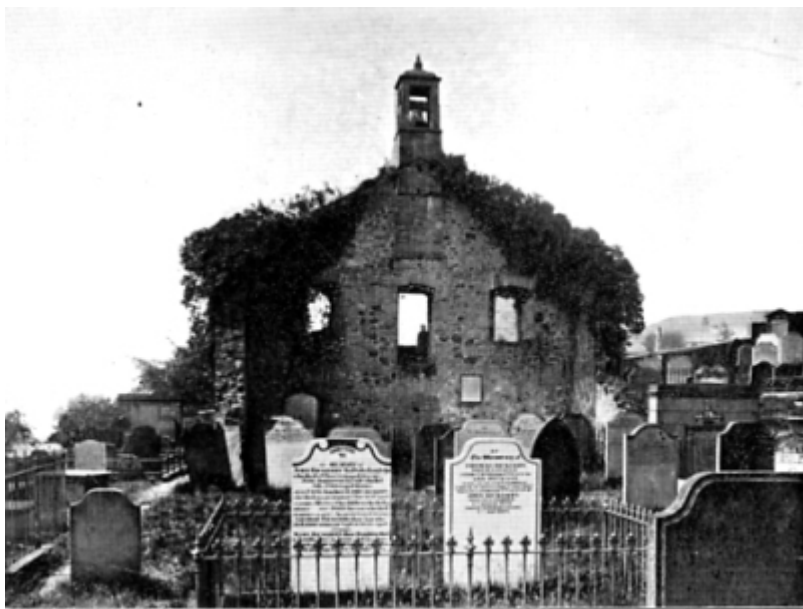
At this time, too, an instrument of punishment called the "Branks" was kept by the Chief Magistrate for restraining the tongue. The branks was in the form of a head piece that opens and encloses the head of the culprit, while an iron, sharp as a chisel, enters the mouth and subdues the more dreadful weapon within. When husbands unfortunately happened to have scolding wives, they subjected the heads of the offenders to this instrument and led them through the town exposed to the ridicule of the people.

PARISH OF LANGHOLM.

Langholm was erected into a parish in the year 1703 and became the seat of a Presbytery in 1743 by disjoining the five parishes of Eskdale from Middlebie and adding them to Castleton, which was formerly in the Presbytery of Jedburgh.

FIRST PARISH KIRK.

The first Parish Kirk was built in 1703 and since that time it has been rebuilt in 1747, 1779, and the present church in 1845-6.



RUINS OF 1779 CHURCH — THE "KIRK UP THE WYND"

1779 KIRK.

According to the Statistical Account of Scotland Vol. XIII., the 1779 Church, the ruins of which may still be seen, is commodious but not elegant. It stands east from the town, on the side of a hill, which in winter renders it not only cold but also when the frost sets in, of difficult access. According to "Langholm as it was," the accommodation in the Church was extremely primitive. For the most part the feet of the worshippers rested on the bare soil. People with means had boards laid down, whilst others provided themselves with plaited straw. Weeds of various kinds grew inside the Kirk. The gallery was approached by three stairways, all on the outside of the building. There was no vestibule, the door opening right into the building. This made the place draughty and cold. Whilst the congregation was assembling, the doors, even in winter, stood open. The Church could accommodate 800 sitters

PAROCHIAL REGISTERS.

The earliest register of marriages commenced in 1706 and of deaths 1704. Since then, they have been kept regularly, but the register of deaths is wholly wanting for one year.

SESSION RECORDS.

The Session Records have been kept since 1695 and continue to be kept now as then. They make extremely interesting reading and show that the Session took a deep

interest in the morals of the community. The Kirk Session helped the poor and it had a powerful say in the establishment of schools for the poor. But in those days the Session was not so broadminded as it is to-day, and many of its actions and recommendations were extremely bigoted and often highly amusing. Let me quote a few :

Dec. 17, 1722.—John Little, elder and heritor, desired liberty of the Session to put up a footgang before John Dixon's seat for the use of Archibald Graham, weaver in Langholm, his tenant, which the Session allowed to be done ; to be continued at their pleasure.

July 3, 1709.—The Session being informed that Mr J. J. and Mr J. B. did hold a penny bridal, contrary to the Acts, summoned them to appear and were rebuked.

May 13, 1716.—Margaret Glendinning duly cited and acknowledged that she was guilty of flyting and she being rebuked was admonished.

April 2, 1732.—"A woman had been appointed to sit in the place of repentance next Lord's Day with sack-gown on, but as there was no sackcloth ready the deacons were appointed to provide sackcloth on Fairday and employ a tailor to make a gown without fail." (Langholm as it was).

Oct. 13, 1723.—Being a complaint tabled that several people walk by the waterside after Divine Service is over, advertisement to be made from the pulpit that they will be taken notice of according to the Acts of Assembly if they continue in that practice.

Nov. 2, 1722.—"The officer reports S.S. came after Divine Service was begun, and that he hindered him to sit on the stool (of repentance), in which he was approven and appointed to intimate to S.S. that each day he appears in sackcloth, he is to stand at the Church door from the 2nd bell until worship is begun." It is interesting to note that on Sunday morning the kirk bell is still rung in this order :—

9 a.m., called the 1st bell.

10.30 a.m., called the 2nd bell or warning bell.

11.30 a.m. called the 3rd bell. Services begin at 11.45. (Langholm as it was).

The Church which was rebuilt in 1779-1780 had hardly been opened when trouble arose owing to the fact that the village of Langholm had greatly increased its population and the seating accommodation became a problem. This led to legal difficulties and some of the church members brought the matter before the Sheriff Court. The Sheriff's decision seriously affected the power of the Heritors and is of much interest. I therefore quote an extract from a Memorial to His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch.

EXTRACTS OF HERITORS.

"That the Kirk of Langholm having become ruinous, His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, who is proprietor of more than 9/10ths of the parish and the other small Heritors being sensible that the great increase of inhabitants in the village of Langholm demanded their attention, in considering a plan for rebuilding it, they therefore adopted a very much enlarged plan for the new building and accordingly agreed with undertakers for the sum of £500, who rebuilt the Kirk in the years 1779-1780.

"That after the Kirk was rebuilt and completely seated, at the expense of His Grace and the remaining Heritors, it was represented to some of the remaining Heritors by a great majority of the most respectable inhabitants of Langholm, that it was plain that the ordinary mode of dividing the areas of Kirks in County Parishes amongst the Heritors for the accommodation of their tenants in proportion of the valuation of their several properties in the Parish, would by no means apply to the present case, otherwise by far the greater part of the Parishioners must necessarily be excluded for want of room in the Kirk. Just 9/10ths of the village of Langholm being situated upon the property of the small Heritors, while the country part of the Parish, divided into large pasture farms and thinly populated, occupied more than 9/10ths of the whole valuation of the Parish, miserably reversing the proportion of the area to be allowed to the number of inhabitants residing upon the properties of the Heritors. It was likewise further represented that many of the inhabitants of Langholm having become pretty opulent by trades, it would be esteemed as a great favour and indulgence to them if they could be allowed seats in the Kirk fit to accommodate their families for paying rent, and they suggested the idea for letting the whole except the Patron and Heritors' seats, by roup, alleging that by this means the whole Parish would be accommodated better to suit their several inclinations and circumstances than by any other way of dividing the Kirk and with this remarkable advantage that it would produce a fund fit to be applied to any good purpose in the Parish. The Scheme appeared to the small Heritors to be very eligible ; it was put before His Grace, who was pleased to allow it to be put into execution. At the same time the rents obtained were to be applied towards the maintenance of the Poor of the Parish and to maintain a man to keep the Kirk clean. The seats were roup'd at Martinmas 1780 and again at Martinmas 1781, and it then appeared that the people were satisfied with their places, and the monies saved the inhabitants of the Parish more than one quarter's supply for the Poor each year and kept the Church in good order. Since, then, however, a few factious persons in the Parish refused payment and their share of the third year's rent, and, being supported and confirmed in this refusal by the Sheriff's decret, the plan must be given up to the no small mortification of the rest of the Parish (of the 36 names signing the Memorial to the Sheriff not more than 7 or 8 above the rank of common labourers) who are all willing and very able to pay for their seats and are most thankful to His Grace for affording them the opportunity to do so, unless the Process that has been commenced for the reduction of the Sheriff's decret be carried on to a conclusion. But it is particularly disgusting to observe that the person, a notorious smuggler, who puts himself at the head of the list, has possessed himself of one of the best seats in the Kirk solely by offering for it at the Roup and still holds possession without all pretence to any other title, to the exclusion of respectable tenants upon whom His Grace might think fit to bestow it if the Kirk were divided in the common way but who are more disposed to wish His Grace would enforce his most salutary and laudable appointment by reducing the Sheriff's Iniquitous Decreet. Except the Memorialists, all showed willingness to pay. The Memorialists seem ignorant that by express Statute Law it is not the Heritors that are appointed to build the Kirk in any Parish, but the Parish at large according to their several circumstances. And Heritors of late have only of their own accord generally agreed to charge themselves with building Kirks. It may be mentioned as a fact that instead of the case of the Memorialists being similar to those who had left

a Parish, it is notorious that all of them still hold possession of their several seats and continue to possess these particular seats by no other title whatever but that of their having offered the seat rent for them which they now refuse to pay."

PUBLIC HOUSES

At this time, the Church was much concerned at the number of public-houses and cheap dramshops, which had arisen far beyond the number required for the town, and the number of distilleries growing up in the county and makes reference to them in no uncertain terms:—"Of all the inventions of modern luxury none have contributed more to destroy that spirit of contentment and industry, that sobriety and decency of manners, which not twenty years ago, so peculiarly characterised the peasantry of Scotland, than the unlimited introduction of distilleries." Reference is also made about the Bounder on the Carlisle road between England and Scotland. "Let the distilleries then, those contaminating fountains, from whence such poisonous streams issue be, if not wholly, at least in a great measure prohibited ; annihilate unlicensed tippling-houses and dramshops, those haunts of vice, those seminaries of wickedness where the young of both sexes are seduced from the paths of innocence and virtue, and from whence they may too often date their dreadful doom, when, instead of "running the career of life" with credit to themselves and advantage to society, they are immolated on the altar of public justice. In reply to these remarks it may be said perhaps "that distilleries are a home market for barley, etc., and that they are very productive sources of revenue." "Perish for ever those gains and that revenue, however productive, which are levied from the ruins of the peace, of the prosperity and virtue of the Empire." This is supporting Government by administering what may ultimately subvert and operate the downfall of our venerable constitution. "In order to support Government, must what is leading fast to destroy the vitals of the constitution be tolerated? This is like a physician taking fees for administering poison. Dr. Sangrado's system of bleeding and warm water, in all cases, is not more absurd."

PART II - THE LAST 150 YEARS

THE DAWN OF THE 19TH CENTURY.

Fascinating and exciting as was the Church history up to the end of the Eighteenth Century, it was completely eclipsed by that of the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. To fully appreciate this, one must consider the National outlook during these years.

GENERAL ECCLESIASTICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

"The first secession of 1733 arose over the law of Patronage. It had a most complicated history of divisions and re-unions and by 1815 there were four active and growing stems from the original root popularly defined as the New Light Burghers, the Old Light Burghers, the New Light Anti-Burghers, and the Old Light Anti-Burghers. In 1820 the New Lights united to form the United Secession Church. The first secession had called itself the Associate Presbytery which tried to maintain and advance the principles of the Church of Scotland in its purest days. Dissatisfaction came to be expressed not merely with the existing state of the Church of Scotland under Moderate rule but with the very facts of its existence as an Establishment."

H. W. Meikle in "Scotland and the French Revolution" states that Patronage, that fans valorum of the Scottish Church, abolished at the Revolution Settlement, had been re-imposed in 1722 as a means of political control in the interests of the Jacobites.

PARTIES IN THE ASSEMBLY.

"Since the early part of the Eighteenth Century then, there had been two definite parties in the Church the Moderates and the Evangelicals. For a very considerable time the Moderates not only dominated the General Assembly but were all powerful with the great majority of Patrons in whose hands lay all the new appointments and it looked as if its opponents were doomed to extinction. But the real dividing line between the two as parties in the Assembly appeared in their attitudes to the exercise of Patronage. The Moderates supported the law of Patronage and the Evangelicals were supporters of popular rights and were determined that effect should be given to the desires of the people as to the appointment of their future pastor. This led to a period of unrest in the Church of Scotland which has been spoken of as the 'Ten Years' Conflict.' The Kirk presented to Parliament 'a Claim of Right' insisting that its historic spiritual freedom from the interference of the Civil Courts should be recognised by Parliament. This was refused and the die was cast. On the Assembly meeting in May 1843 the Kirk was rent in twain. More than 400 Ministers and Elders left the Church following Dr. Welsh and Dr. Chalmers. When Lord Jeffrey heard what had happened he exclaimed : 'I am proud of my country ; there is not another country on earth where such a deed could have been

done.' The Disruption was an accomplished fact, These ministers had relinquished livings and manses for the sake of a principle the Absolute Kingship of Christ as head of the Church when her faith was threatened."

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHANGES.

But about the time when our present Church was to be built great economic and social changes were taking place. "During the Eighteenth Century Scotland, although still a thinly populated country, had doubled its population. In 1801 the census was 1,600,000. The chief industry was farming which was very prosperous. But great changes were about to occur and in the immediate years to come there was a spectacular development of industry. In both the heavy industries and the lighter textiles the rate of growth was astonishing. At this time too our town participated in the rush, and rapidly increased in population. So much so that increased accommodation had to be found in our Church and so it became imperative for a new and larger building to be erected at an early date. Education, however, had not kept pace with the increased prosperity. There were Parish Schools, good and bad, and four Universities still largely tied to the methods of the earlier ages, but not unresponsive to the new demands These were almost entirely under the control of the Church. Under its care normal schools grew up for the training of teachers. In literature, Robert Burns had come like a sudden beam of light, and the continued brilliance of Sir Walter Scott had been keeping Scotland and its past in the forefront of the imaginations of Europe and was fostering the general romantic revival."

Such then is a brief outline of Church history and the economic and social changes that were taking place in our town at the dawn of the year 1845, when the foundation stone of this fine building was laid.

OTHER CHURCHES.

But in this survey of conditions prevalent in Langholm at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century we must consider for a moment the other churches existing in our town at that time. These were :

(1) The Townhead Church, which dates to the religious revival following the Secession of 1773 when the Rev. E. Erskine was thrown out of the Established Church for his views on the law of Patronage and his condemnation of a book called "The Morrow of Modern Divinity."

(2) The Relief Church, which originated in 1752 by a second protest against forcing a minister upon an unwilling congregation. This became known as the South Church

"In 1847, the year after our Church was opened, these two Churches, the Secession and the Relief, united and called themselves the United Presbyterian Church and in Langholm were known as the North and South U.P. Later they formed a union with the Free Church and were then called the United Free Church.

(3) The Free Church originated after the Disruption of 1843 over the law of Patronage. It united with the U.P. Churches to form the United Free Church and then in Langholm was called the Chalmers Church.

THE YEAR 1845.

It is extraordinary to find no mention in the Church Records of 1845 of the laying of the foundation stone of our fine Church. Indeed the first mention of the Church does not appear until May 17th, 1846, when the following statement occurs :—This day the New Parochial Church was opened, on which day the Rev. W. Berry Shaw, the present incumbent, along with the Minister of Kilmarnock, conducted the services of the day."

Our Church is a handsome edifice built in the early Gothic Style and occupies what is no doubt the finest site in the town—the Eldingholm. This site is of easy access and consists of flat ground lying at the junction of the River Wauchope with the River Esk. It is approached by a private bridge over the River Wauchope. To the West it is bounded by the Public Park which thus ensures that the site can never be built up.

INSTALLATION OF GAS.

Six years after the opening of the Kirk the Session took up a petition from the congregation for the lighting of the Church with gas. This was a great advance in these days and was of immense benefit to the congregation.

REV. J. BUCHANAN INDUCTED.

On July 6th, 1854, the Presbytery of Langholm ordained the Rev. J. W. MacTurk, B.A., to be assistant and successor to the Rev. W. Berry Shaw. He died on December 26th, 1878, and on June 5th, 1879, Rev. Jas. Buchanan, a young and vigorous minister, who was to be with us for over forty years, was inducted. One of his first activities was to throw all his vigour into getting together funds for the erection of a Mission Hall, the necessity for which had become evident to all in order that the Parochial work be carried on efficiently. Mr Maxwell of Broomholm very kindly offered a vacant site on his property at the lowest price consistent with the terms of his entail. The site was a very suitable one situated on the left bank of the River Esk immediately opposite the site of the Church itself and close to the Suspension Bridge. The Hall itself was opened on December 18th, 1881, and is a very superior and commodious building. The Moderator (Mr Buchanan) said that it was estimated that the amount subscribed, together with the grants from the Home Mission Fund (£354 15s 0d) and the Baird Trust (£400 0s 0d), together with the proceeds of a collection taken on the opening day (£120 6s 9d), would cover the entire cost. How useful the building has proved to be will be revealed in these annals. After the opening, a committee of the Sabbath School teachers, having received funds, purchased a harmonium for use in the Mission Hall.

PARLIAMENTARY CONTEST.

By 1885 there was great anxiety in the Church of Scotland as a whole over the question that was being put forward in various quarters concerning Disestablishment. This, it was very keenly felt, would be a great disaster if it passed through Parliament. As there was at this time a Parliamentary Contest taking place in the country, the Kirk Session were determined to obtain precise and definite answers from both the candidates, the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Dalkeith and Sir R. Jardine, Bart., of Castlemilk, to the following questions :—

(1) Will you vote against the resolution of which Dr. Cameron, M.P. for Glasgow, has given notice in reference to the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of Scotland?

(2) Will you vote against any similar resolution or any Bill which may be introduced into Parliament for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of Scotland?

The result of the plebiscite on the Church question in 1891 was that 61 per cent. of Parliamentary Voters signed and was a great victory for the Church of Scotland and for the Union of the Churches which was ultimately to come.

HEATING OF THE CHURCH.

In 1887 it was felt that something ought to be done about heating the Church. £63 10s 0d was collected and His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch subscribed £50 and Mr A. Scott of Erkinholme £20. A good system was soon installed.

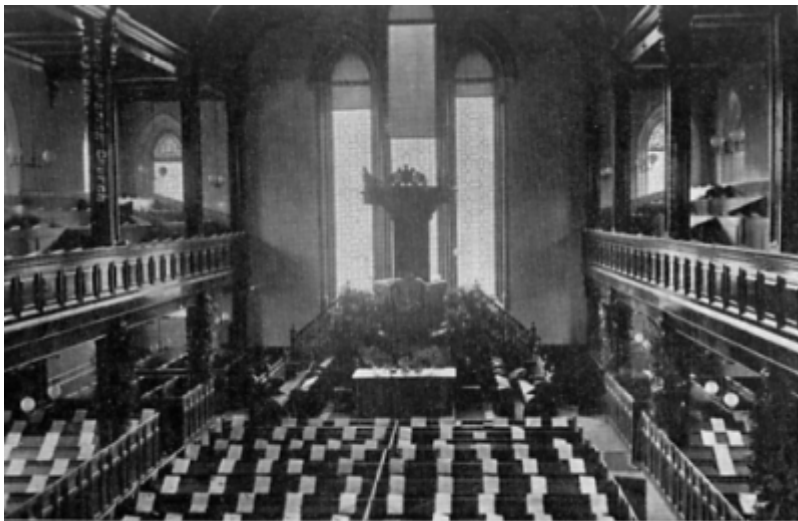
FAST DAYS.

A year later the Session had under consideration the question of Fast Days preparatory to the Communion. These had been carried out for hundreds of years. The Session came to the conclusion that these had ceased to serve the object for which they were initiated and decided to discontinue them.

THE PRECENTORS.

By 1892 a broader view on the form which religious worship should take had come about, and it was felt by all that the service should be brightened by the introduction of music. The day of the Precentors was over. But their passing produced a feeling of some degree of sadness when one recalled to memory the many amusing stories of their activities. In those early days "reading the line" was the general custom in congregational praise. At this time, too, there was no such thing as an organ or "Kist o' Whistles" in any Kirk in the land and choirs were the exception. No hymns were sung except with scorn, and repeating tunes were regarded as a frivolity demanding extermination. Later, however, the repeating tune was tolerated, in one instance of which the ladies had to sing by themselves a line as follows :—"Oh for a man, oh for a man, oh for a mansion in the skies." Soon hymns began to be introduced here and there

and choirs became the fashion. Thus far the precentor was a "sine qua non." With the introduction of choirs he became known as the choirmaster, but with the introduction of the organ he became extinct. A Precentor who saw the decline of his job remarked : "Organs nae doubt mak unto grand music, but oh! it's an' awfu' way o' spending the Sawbath."



INTERIOR: EARLY VIEW

ORGAN.

Notwithstanding remarks like these, funds were collected and, the Presbytery giving its approval, an organ was installed into the Church and by September 8th, 1893, the Clerk reported that Mr Metcalfe had accepted the appointment of Choirmaster and Organist. The organ proved a great boon and soon the organist had got together and trained a fine choir. Recitals were able to be given and special services became much more impressive. Up to the present date we have been most fortunate in having excellent organists and a most efficient choir.

DEATH OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

Queen Victoria died on January 22nd, 1901, and on the following Sunday a most impressive service was carried out in the Church. The entire front of the gallery and the pulpit having been draped in black and the congregation being in mourning, a special service was conducted by the Rev. James Buchanan and the "Dead March" in Saul was played at the close. Preaching from Phillipians iv. 8, Mr Buchanan said : "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any praise, think on these things." Mr Buchanan

said he had deliberately chosen these words because the Sovereign whose loss was that day the subject of universal mourning seemed to embody or incarnate those very graces and virtues. Had she put her final message to her people into words, she must inevitably have employed in effect just such words as these. At 1 p.m. on the day of the funeral a memorial service was conducted in the Parish Church, the Rev. J. Buchanan presided. The Revs. Mann, Orr, McQueen and Duke took part in the service. At the close, the great congregation stood while the organist, Mr Metcalfe, played the Dead March.

UNION OF U.P. AND FREE CHURCHES.

By 1900 the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church found that any little differences which they might have had in their faith and form of worship had disappeared and, as there was nothing now of moment to keep them apart, they therefore decided to unite as one body and the United Church was then called the United Free Church of Scotland.

COMMUNION TABLE.

By the end of 1906 the Moderator announced that he had received from the Treasurer of the Woman's Guild the sum of £150 from the proceeds of a sale of work for the purpose of providing a Communion Table and for making other necessary improvements in the Church. He also stated that he had been authorised by Mrs Alex. Scott of Erkinholme to intimate to the Kirk Session that it was her desire to present to the Kirk Session and congregation a suitable Communion Table as a memorial of her husband. Mrs Taylor, mother of the late Rev. T. S. Taylor, also offered to present to the congregation an elegant brass reading stand to be placed on the Communion Table and a set of richly bound volumes (Bible, Psalm Book and Hymnal) for use on Communion and other special occasions. These offers were cordially accepted.

OTHER CHURCHES AT THIS TIME.

At the time of the Union of the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church there were now two other Churches in Langholm. These were :—

(1) Langholm Congregational Church.—Its originator, the Rev. James Morison, D.D., was deposed by the Synod of the United Secession Church in 1841 because of the Atonement Controversy. It is situated in the Kirk Wynd and was opened for worship on November 27th, 1870, by the Rev. Dr. Morison, founder of the denomination.

(2) Episcopal Chapel.—This is a private chapel, belonging to His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, and is situated in the ground of Langholm Lodge. It was opened for worship according to the Order, Rites and Ceremonies of the Episcopal Church in Scotland on September 9th, 1883. Both these churches are to-day still carrying on their good work in Langholm and their ministers have from time to time taken part in conjoint services with our Church and have been helpful to us in many other ways.

DEATH OF KING EDWARD.

King Edward died on May 6th, 1910, and on May 20th, the day of the funeral, a United Memorial Service was held in the Parish Church when upwards of 1000 people were present and all the ministers of the town took part in it.

RE-SEATING OF THE CHURCH

At the end of 1912 it was felt that the seating arrangements of the Church should be entirely altered. A congregational meeting was held in the Buccleuch Hall when the following resolution was unanimously adopted : "That this meeting cordially approves of the scheme for altering and improving the seating accommodation of the Church and requests the Kirk Session to take the necessary steps to obtain funds." The Heritors consented to the scheme drawn up, which was carried out at an early date at a cost of £271 5s 0d.

1914 AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR.

During the year 1914 dark clouds were gathering over Great Britain and in the autumn the storm burst and Britain declared war on Germany. A few days before war was declared, General Sir Spencer Ewart sent for me and told me that war was inevitable and asked me to train as quickly as possible a V.A.D. team of the B.R.C. which Lady Ewart was starting. Lady Ewart wrote to the Kirk Session to obtain permission for the use of the Church Hall for the formation of a Hospital for injured soldiers under the auspices of the British Red Cross. This was granted. A hospital was quickly formed and it proved to be one of the first hospitals in Scotland to receive and treat injured soldiers. At the close of the war, Lady Ewart received a certificate testifying to the valuable work done by the local hospital for wounded soldiers and this certificate was hung in the Church Hall.

ROLL OF HONOUR.

At the end of the year 1914 the Kirk Session made a roll of honour containing the names of all those connected with the congregation who were giving their services during the war.

In 1918 the Moderator reported the receipt of an anonymous donation of £100 to a fund for the commemoration of men from the Parish Church who fell in the war, the memorial to take the form of a stained glass window in the Parish Church.

MEMORIAL SERVICE.

At the end of the war a memorial service for the Langholm men who had fallen in the war was held in the Parish Church on July 29th, 1919. All the ministers of the town were invited to take part as well as the members of the Town and Parish Councils.

ENTERTAINMENT.

On December 26th an entertainment which took the form of a Smoking Concert with electric pictures with supper and a service of fruit was held in the Buccleuch Hall. All ministers were invited. The Clerk reported a balance of £24 6s 7d, which was held for the purpose of providing a roll of honour for the Church. Further collections were taken for this purpose and on September 4th, 1921, the unveiling ceremony of this Langholm Parish Church War Memorial took place. The memorial consists of a polished brass plate on which the names are engraved and filled in, in black. The plate is mounted on a handsome oak surround on which are carved the dates 1914 and 1918. The following is the inscription "To the glory of God, and in grateful remembrance of the men from this congregation who laid down their lives in the Great War. Their name liveth for evermore." The memorial was unveiled by the Earl of Dalkeith who made a most impressive address in which, amongst other things, he said :—"This memorial will serve to remind all future generations of those men belonging to this Church who bravely fought and died for their country in its time of danger, and it will commemorate our feelings and help to console those who suffered the greatest loss."

DEATH OF REV. J. BUCHANAN.

The death of the Rev. J. Buchanan took place on 23rd October, 1921, and the Kirk Session recorded with deep regret "the loss which this Parish and the Church of Scotland have sustained by his death. They recall with gratitude his long ministry of over forty-two years during which he laboured cheerfully and faithfully in all the duties of his office with a success indicated, not only by an increase of 100 per cent. in membership, but by a marked stimulation of congregational life and activity. A new Church Hall, an organ, and improved seating in the Church are all material evidences of his initiative and energy, and are the outward memorial of a most successful ministry. . . He will live in the memories of the Langholm people as a distinguished preacher, a faithful pastor, and a Christian gentleman."

MEMORIAL TO MR BUCHANAN.

Subscriptions were obtained to erect a memorial to Mr Buchanan which was in the form of a wall tablet and was placed inside the Church on the gable wall under the gallery on the West side. It was dedicated by Dr. Cathels, Parish Minister of Hawick, and Moderator of the General Assembly, and was unveiled by Mrs A. Scott of Erkinholme on 16th December, 1923.

REV. MR LINDSAY.

The Rev. Wm. Lindsay was inducted in 1922.

TWO MODERN VIEWS.



FROM THE PARK, SHOWING HALL



FROM "ACROSS THE WATER"

STAINED GLASS WINDOW.

There was still another memorial to the memory of the men who had fallen in the Great War to be erected and that was the magnificent stained glass window on the South end of the Church. By the munificence of Mr and Mrs Arthur Bell of Hillside, who made a gift of £1000 for this purpose, things began to get going and several artists visited the Church and offered to submit designs and estimates. The offer of Messrs Morris & Co., Merton Abbey, was accepted at a cost of £1,200 exclusive of fitting and

protection. It was decided to carry out other alterations and improvements in the Church at the same time to enhance the appearance of the window, i.e., walls of the Church to be coloured a neutral grey or stone colour, book boards in front of the choir to be removed, that the ventilators be removed if possible or made inconspicuous, that umbrella stands be provided and stair carpets and pads be procured for the pulpit stairs. Mr P. Alison, Hawick, was chosen to supervise the fixing of the window and the necessary guards. Mrs Lindsay reported that the Junior Guild was prepared to re-upholster the pulpit and Miss Scott stated that the Woman's Guild had a sum of £490 at present available and that it was hoped to augment this sum by the proceeds of a forthcoming Sale of Work. The Moderator reported that the Rev. John White of the Barony and Moderator of the General Assembly had agreed to dedicate the stained glass window and this he did on 21st June, 1925. The total cost of the window and alterations and cleaning of the Church amounted to £1,649 16s 1d.

1925.

For some time now stirring events had been taking place in the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland and of the United Free Church. Both had come to see that their methods of Church government were the same. The Church of Scotland had given up its adherence to the law of Patronage and had taken up the view that the calling of a minister to a Church must be carried out by the members of the Church themselves, and not at the recommendation of the Heritors. The Church of Scotland had taken this matter to Parliament and the law of Patronage was revoked.

CHURCH UNION.

The United Free Church then felt that there was now no obstacle to prevent it approaching the Church of Scotland with a view to union. In November 1925 the Moderator at the Kirk Session meeting announced that he had received the General Assembly statement on Church Union in Scotland which had been circulated. This was held as read and allowed to lie on the table. The Moderator also reported that Mr Tweedie, the Presbytery's Architect, had visited Langholm and examined the church and manse and church hall in view of the report to be made to the Presbytery on the state of the buildings before the church and manse could be handed over by the Heritors, in terms of the Church of Scotland Act, 1925. The Union of the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church became an accomplished fact. Probably the greatest act in the furtherance of Christian life of the century had taken place. The Churches in Langholm were now renamed as follows :—Langholm Old Parish Church, Erskine Parish, and the Chalmers Parish.

HERITORS.

On 17th April, 1928, the transfer of Church and Manse from the Heritors to the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland had taken place and the General Trustees

then insured their buildings for £26,500, and so came to an end most of the activities of the Heritors.

UNION WITH THE CHALMERS CHURCH.

The Union of the Church of Scotland with the United Free Church made inevitable great changes throughout the whole of Scotland. Only a few of the Free Churches who had refused to join with the original U.F. Church still remained outside the Union and called themselves the Free Church of Scotland, and were popularly known as the "Wee Frees." As vacancies occurred in the U.F. Church where redundancies were evident, a union was sought for. This is exactly what took place in our own town of Langholm. When the Rev. D. Inglis, M.A., of the Chalmers Church, received and accepted a call to another church, the road lay open for seeking a union with either the Langholm Old Church or the Erskine Parish Church. A congregational meeting was called for this purpose and by a large majority it was decided to approach the Langholm Old Parish Church to effect, if possible, a union with it. The Convener of the Union and Readjustment of Agencies Committee of the Presbytery of Hawick brought the matter before the Kirk Session of the Langholm Old, who called a congregational meeting for the purpose of considering the proposal on 28th August, 1931. After full discussion it was agreed that the congregation enter into negotiations with the Chalmers Church with a view to an incorporating union. The Kirk Session of both Churches drew up a Basis of Union for submission to both congregations. This Basis of Union was agreed to. As the Chalmers Church possessed some considerable funds, the interest of which was being used for various church purposes, it was felt that the donors would like these still to be used in the same way and it was agreed that this should be done, and accordingly the following Draft Schedule was agreed to :—

CHALMERS TRUST.

"The property and funds of the Langholm Chalmers Congregation constituted into a Trust, to be known as the Chalmers Trust (or mortification) for the purposes set forth in the Schedule annexed hereto, shall become the property and funds of the United Congregation and shall be duly transferred."

JOINT SERVICE 13/12/1931.

At the close of the joint service on 13th December, 1931, on the motion of the Moderator, it was unanimously resolved that a record in the following terms be inserted in the minutes :—"The Union of the Langholm Old and Chalmers Church was duly consummated on Sunday last, 13th December. The Rev. W. Brown, of Dunbar, conducted the morning service in the Old Church, while, in the afternoon, the Rev. W. Lindsay, minister of the United congregation, assisted by Rev. W. Brown, conducted a communion service in Chalmers Church at which 153 members of the United congregation were present."

ELECTRICITY SCHEME.

With the coming of electricity to the town, the Kirk Session took estimates for its installation into the church. This amounted to £144. The work was proceeded with in the autumn of 1932 and it has proved to be a most useful adjunct to the church.

CHALMERS CHURCH COMMUNION TABLE.

The Chalmers Church at the time of union had a very fine Communion Table which had so far (1935) not been disposed of. The Kirk Session therefore had the table placed in the Vestibule of the Church.

SECOND WORLD WAR.

By the year 1938 dark clouds were appearing over world affairs and, although every means were tried to avert war, Germany, in the autumn of 1939, invaded Poland, and Great Britain and France declared war on Germany forthwith. The Government deemed it necessary to evacuate children from congested areas. Langholm in due course received its quota from Glasgow, and school accommodation had to be found for these children. The Kirk Session were approached by the Authorities with a request that the Mission Hall be used as a school and this request was granted in September, 1939. For such purposes it was used until April, 1942, when the children and their teachers returned to Glasgow.

In September, 1939, too, black-out restrictions were imposed by the Government and the Kirk Session had dark blinds fitted to all the windows of the church and hall. Later arrangements were made for fire watching. In 1941 volunteers for Church Canteen Workers were asked for as a large camp of soldiers had been established in the Lodge grounds. In 1942 a request came from the Padre of the 5th Northamptonshire Regiment for use of the Mission Hall as a reading and writing room, and this was agreed to. In November, 1942, however, the Woman's Guild opened the Mission Hall as a reading room for H.M. Forces.

LODGE CAMP.

In this connection one might mention that Langholm Lodge was for many years before the war the summer residence of their Graces the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch, and a large house party was always with them. From year to year many very distinguished guests were included in their party and it was not unusual for some of them to attend Divine Service at the Episcopal Chapel within the Lodge grounds or in our church. Some time after the onset of the present war the Lodge and its grounds were taken over by the military and they were transformed into a large military camp where final training was undertaken before the trainees were drafted overseas. Units from the R.A.S.C., R.A. Tank Corps, R.E., Cameronians, Northamptonshire Regiment, and many

others from every part of the country, both Episcopalians and Presbyterians, have been stationed here and have repeatedly used our church for worship and parade services, often numbering one thousand at a time. Many men from every part of the country and overseas, passing through the Langholm Camp on their way to active service abroad, must have had memories of Divine Service in our church.

DEATH OF REV. W. LINDSAY.

The Rev. Wm. Lindsay, M.A., died on 28th December, 1942, and the Kirk Session recorded "with the passing of Rev. W. Lindsay the Church of Scotland loses a minister whose work and worth had won acknowledgment over a wide area and Langholm Old Parish mourns a devoted and beloved pastor. The members of the Church and very many outwith the congregation and Parish have suffered a personal bereavement. His frank and friendly manner was the natural expression of a kindly, loyal and generous disposition. Mr Lindsay was a gifted and eloquent preacher. A scholarly and cultured mind, an easy and impressive delivery, and a sincere and understanding nature—each had a part in every discourse he delivered. And he was a pastor as well as a preacher. His memory will long be cherished and honoured in Langholm and the other parishes."

INSTALLATION OF MICROPHONE.

For a considerable time now there had been complaints that some of the members at the back of the church were having difficulty in hearing Divine Service and the Kirk Session agreed to have a microphone fitted. This has proved to be a great improvement.

INDUCTION OF REV. J. L. COTTER, B.D.

The Rev. James L. Cotter, B.D., minister of Troon Old Parish, was inducted on 28th May, 1943. Since his induction he has taken a very deep and vigorous interest in the young people of the church and soon he got together a Young Men's and Young Women's Fellowship and has given many lectures on various subjects to his class.

THE MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The Moderator of the General Assembly, on his tour, visited us in July, 1943. A United Service was held in the Church at 7.30 p.m. on 10th July, and a reception was held in the hall afterwards.

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS.

On 22nd February, 1945, the Moderator reported that in connection with the Centenary Celebrations the Guild had run a very successful Sale of Work. A

performance of Part I. of the Messiah, under the direction of Mr Mallinson, had been a signal achievement. The Fellowship also had a successful Social Evening. In the future it was proposed having the following events:—A Congregational Social, Part II. of the Messiah, a Children's Dramatic Entertainment, and a Garden Fete. He was also happy to announce the gift of a Baptismal Font, the donor wishing meantime to remain anonymous. £20 had also been donated to the Fund by Mrs Fleming, a daughter of the late Rev. James Buchanan.

REVISION OF COMMUNION ROLL.

On 29th January, the Kirk Session met to revise the Communion Roll and it was found that on 31st December, 1944, it disclosed 790 names.

SPECIAL VE SERVICE.

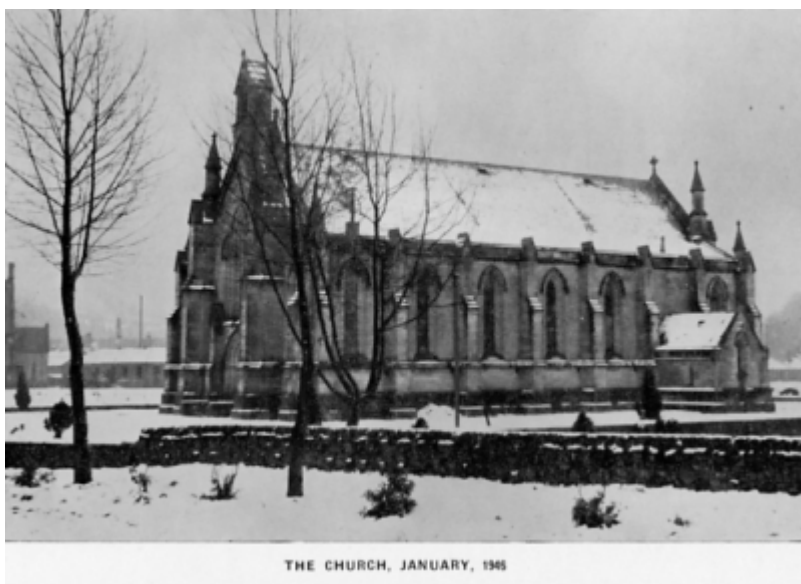
On Sunday, 13th May, 1945, a Special Service for a Day of Solemn Thanksgiving following Victory in Europe was held, the officiating ministers being Rev. J. L. Cotter, B.D., and Rev. Alexander Philip, C.F. The organist was Mr A. C. Mallinson, A.R.C.O., L.R.A.M., and the Bandmaster, Mr L. M. Dunn, A.R.C.M., the Regimental Band of the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) being present by kind permission of Lt.-Col. Brunker, C.O. 10th Cameronians. The Provost, Members of the Town Council, Parading Organisations and Military were present. The service was a most impressive one. The collection was handed over to the Church of Scotland Overseas Department. Later a letter of thanks for the sum of £25 4/- was received from Rev. Alex. King, Secretary of the Overseas Department. This collection was to be used in aid of the special fund for Christian Reconstruction in Europe.

SPECIAL VJ SERVICE.

Events in world history were now moving fast and before anyone could realise it, Japan had surrendered. A Service of Solemn Thanksgiving for Victory and Peace was held on Sunday, 19th August, 1945, the officiating ministers again being Mr Cotter, B.D., and Mr Alex. Philip, C.F. Scripture lessons were read by Provost John Ewart and Lt.-Col. K. E. M. Brunker, C.O. 10th Cameronians. The offering was handed over to the Thistle Foundation, which aims at establishing a Colony of Homes where seriously disabled ex-servicemen can live with their families while receiving treatment. The amount of the offering was £28 18s 8d.

DEDICATION OF FONT.

On Sunday morning, 18th November, 1945, a special service was held for the dedication of the beautiful Baptismal Font magnanimously gifted by the Misses Scott of Erkinholme. Rev J. L. Cotter, B.D., conducted the service and was assisted by Rev. J. A. G. Thomson, B.D., of Hawick Old Church.



THE MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH.

(1) The first minister of the present Church was Rev. Wm. Berry Shaw. He was presented by the 4th Duke of Buccleuch in 1812. Died 17th June, 1856. He preached the opening services in the Church in May, 1846. He wrote the Statistical Account of 1841. He was a personal friend of Dr. Chalmers, the great Disruptionist Leader.

(2) James Wilson Macturk, B.A., was inducted in 1854 on the recommendation of Venerable Principal Macfarlane of Glasgow, appointed on presentation by the Queen, Assistant and Successor to Rev. Wm. Berry Shaw. Succeeded 1856. Died 1878.

(3) James Buchanan, inducted to Langholm 5th June, 1879. Died 23rd October, 1921.

(4) Rev. William Lindsay, M.A., inducted to Langholm 1922. Died 28th December, 1942.

(5) Rev. J. L. Cotter, B.D., the present minister.

SESSION CLERKS.

1841—1858—George I. Todd.
1858-1860—Allan Smith.
1860-1879—William Greig Strachan.
1879-1908—Robert Howie.
1908-1913—John Macneill.
1913-1930—Robert Hamilton.
1930-1942—James Bell.
1942—J. Lauder Low.

ORGANIST AND CHOIR.

Our present Organist is Mr A. C. Mallinson, A.R.C.O., L.R.A.M., and he has under him a most efficient choir.

WOMAN'S GUILD.

The Church has all along been blest with a strong and very vigorous Woman's Guild. These women deserve the utmost praise for their faithful service, skill, and perseverance. They have from time to time, by their unfailing energies, been the means of raising very considerable sums of money and there is not the least shadow of doubt that without their kindly help, many of the improvements installed into the church could never have been realised. The church owes them a deep debt of gratitude.

CONCLUSION

When we recall to mind the last hundred years and all the stupendous events which have taken place during that time, both in Church and World History, and when we think of the new world we are about to enter, and we trust beautify, we feel sure that each one of us will wish to help in this effort to improve the dignity and charm of our fine Old Church.

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A NOTE ON THE LANGHOLM ARCHIVE GROUP

The Langholm Archive Group was formed in 2002 to look after the large picture collection of the late George Irving after his failing eyesight meant that he could no longer look after it himself. It is formed entirely of volunteers and has working premises at 93 High Street, Langholm.

As the group has developed, it now regularly receives interesting photographs from people in the town and scans these and makes them available for viewing on-line at the Group's website, which is at www.langholmarchive.com.

Members of the group are also compiling an index to local advertisements, articles and births, deaths and marriages in the Eskdale and Liddesdale Advertiser from its first publication in 1848 which can also be found on-line.

As well as these core activities, the group is from time to time offered items of local interest which can be scanned and put on-line. The booklet is one of these items and it appears on the group's website with several other interesting documents.

A portion of the proceeds from the sale of this booklet will go to support the work of the group which is a registered Scottish charity.

