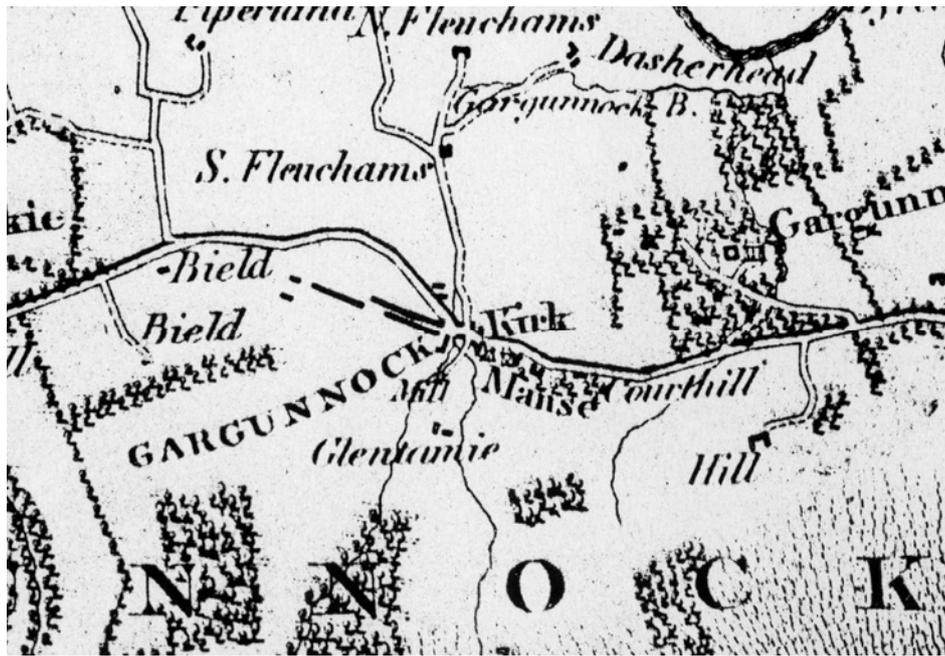


# A Short History of Gargunnock Parish Church

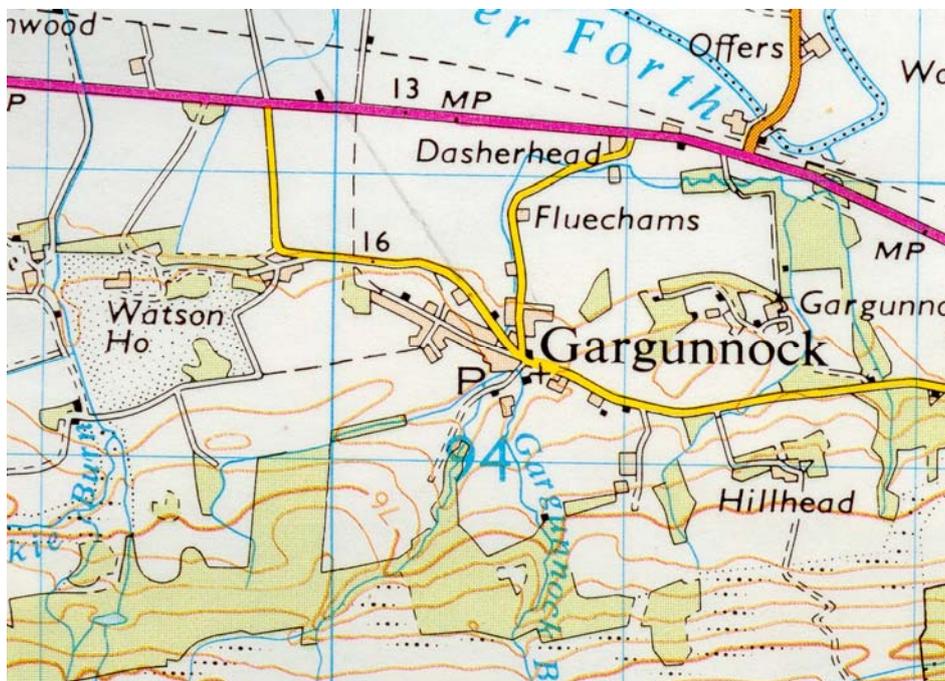


from c1500

**Rev J Horton McNeill**, minister here from 1927 to 1934 presented a paper to the local Natural History and Archaeological Society in 1930 entitled "Glimpses of Church Life in Old Days" That paper forms the basis of this booklet.



**An extract from the John Grassom Map of 1817**

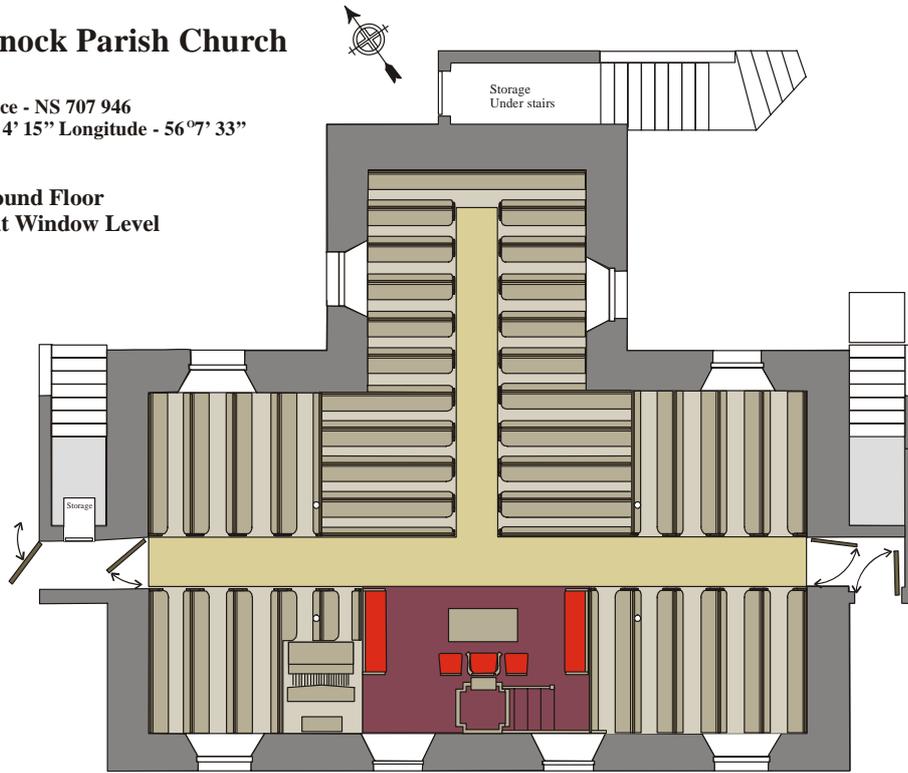


**Gargunnoch 2004**

# Gargunnoch Parish Church

Map Reference - NS 707 946  
 Latitude - 4° 4' 15" Longitude - 56°7' 33"

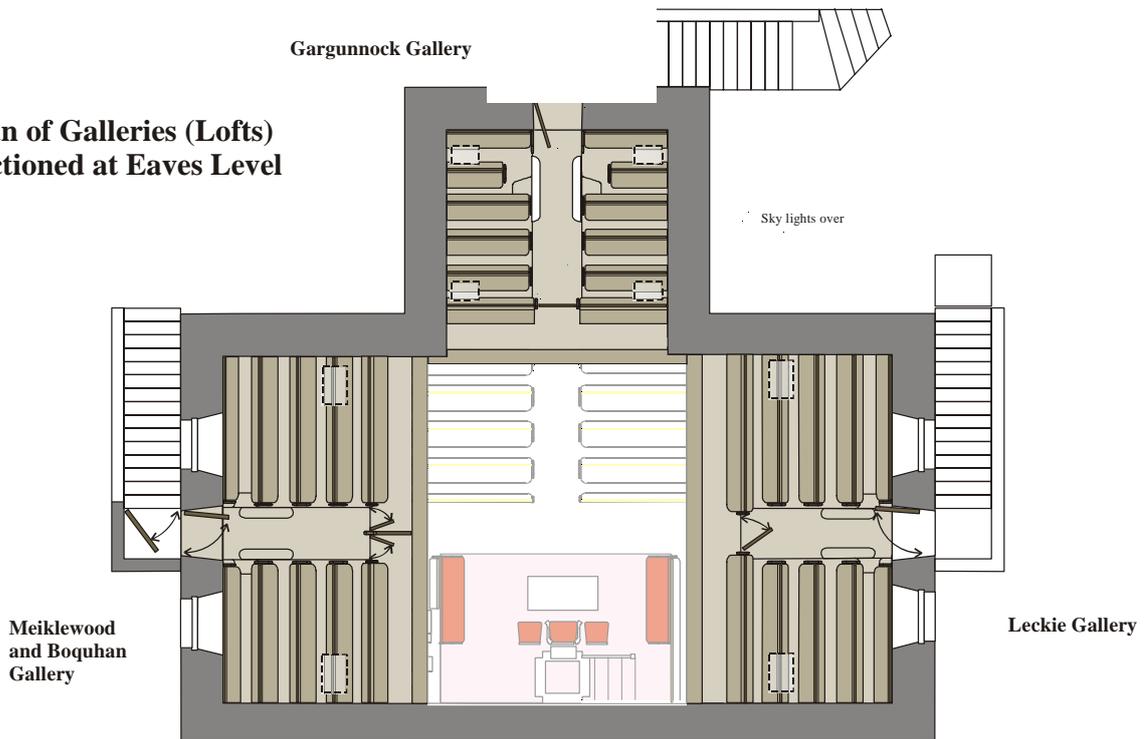
## Plan of Ground Floor Sectioned at Window Level



Scale 1:100

John McLennan - April 2007

## Plan of Galleries (Lofts) Sectioned at Eaves Level



The galleries (or lofts) are normally ascribed to the estates within the Parish of Gargunnoch. In modern times the eastern (right) one is the Leckie gallery, the northern (top) one is the Gargunnoch gallery but the western (left) one is less certain. Its front row, where the Lairds and their families would sit, is, unlike the other two, split by a small partition and double doors. This would suggest that it was shared, perhaps by Meiklewood and Boquhan. Touch also had strong connections at one time with the church here. This split-use might only have appeared at the time of the internal renovation of the church in 1892 to reflect the evolved usage but session minutes at the time do not confirm this, (a not unusual situation.)

## Origins of the Church in Gargunnoch

The origins of the church in Gargunnoch are lost in the mists of time but certainly go back to at least the year **1500**.



Before the Reformation, Gargunnoch came under the Augustinian Canons Regular of Cambuskenneth Abbey to whom the revenues of the Parish went. Although the priest was appointed and provided for by the Abbot of Cambuskenneth his responsibility for spiritual matters was to the Bishop of St Andrews.

This ancient connection is commemorated in the carvings on the haffit ends of the Elders' Benches which sit on the raised portion around the pulpit on either side of the Communion Table. The one on the easternmost bench (nearest the main door) is a copy of the monogram on the reputed keystone of Cambuskeneth Abbey. The intertwining letters **MSMC** represent **Monasterium S. Marie de Cambuskennet**. The other depicts St Andrew extended on his cross of crucifixion, the symbol of the See of St Andrews.

At the time of the Reformation, King James 6<sup>th</sup>, by decree of 10th April 1615, conceded the revenues of Cambuskenneth to the Earl of Mar with the provision that the minister of Gargunnoch should receive 2 chalders (300 Kg) of corn, 1 chalder (150 Kg) barley and 200 merks (£40) with manse and glebe (land surrounding the manse and across the road from the church, now developed for housing). He also received the vicar's tithes of the lands of Gargunnoch, Leckie, Boquhan, Culbeg and Culmore. The vicar's tithes were 10% of the yield of milk, butter, eggs, cheese and wool and of the sheep, cattle horses and pigs. This might suggest that he was fairly well provided for!

Eighteen years later the lands south of the river Forth were transferred to the Bishop of Edinburgh with his cathedral at St Giles.

### **Replacement of the old Kirk**

According to the old session minutes, in **1626** the pre-Reformation...

*"...House of God was thought altogether ruinous and because also of a motion that was made about six years before that time of a voluntary contribution granted by the Gentlemen and Heritors for building the said Kirk..."*

...it was replaced by a new building. At that time the responsibility for providing and maintaining a church building fell on the various Heritors of the Parish who had promised to contribute to the cost as follows;

<b>The Laird of Gargunnoch</b>	<b>300 merks</b>
<b>The Laird of Leckie</b>	<b>300 merks</b>
<b>The Laird of Boquhan</b>	<b>300 merks</b>
<b>The Laird of Culbeg</b>	<b>100 merks</b>
<b>The Laird of Culmore</b>	<b>100 merks</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1100 merks</b>

## Vandalism



The minutes say nothing of the actual work of building or who did it but no sooner was the work complete on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1628 and the windows newly glazed than....

*“it was found that bairns had broken them afore time by casting of stones to the great loss both of the Parochine and box of the Kirk, therefore it was statute, that whatsoever person should be and tried to break any part or parts of the said glafs, they should pay two shillings for every losen(sic) thereof and if it shall be found that any servant or bairn, shall be breakers who have not silver, themselves to pay them, then in that case the master, parents or friends in what company they remain, for the time, shall be obliged to pay the foresaid sum for reparing of the said glafs again.”*

It seems that nothing ever changes. If you look closely at the stonework surrounding the windows of the church today you can see the cleeks that once supported external shutters on all windows. Was that their response to this unfortunate experience and when were the shutters considered to be no longer necessary?

## An Overspend

On 5<sup>th</sup> April 1629 most of the work was complete and the Session met and considered what to do about an overspend of 200 merks. There was still outstanding work to be done.

*“...the Kirk was to be apparelled within with a loft and common forms as likewise the Kirkyard dyke was to be bigged, all glk(which) wad draw to one great sum.”*

But how were they to obtain this money? One way open to them was by appointing “Stentmasters” to collect the sum from the Parish, a procedure available to them by statute. However, after discussion they thought they might do better by asking for voluntary contributions rather than by demanding them. The minister, Rev. William Justice, was given the task, with such elders as he might think appropriate, of persuading the Heritors and others throughout the parish to give freely.

## Be sure your Sins will find you out!

Alas, it would appear that his powers of persuasion were not up to it as in 1631 a Presbytery visitation discovered that all was not well with the accounts.....

*“The poor’s money and penalties is found employed in the payment of ye annual rent of 250 merks as yet is adebted resting and owing for the building of the Kirk and Kirkyard dyke.”*

This time the session was ordered to stent the parish for the outstanding sum forthwith!

*“So the poor’s silver may not be misemployed “*

But there was also praise for the Session as the visiting brethren...

*“Commends them for their zeal kythed in the new building of their Church and Kirkyard dyke, and especially the Gentlemen for their*

*liberality in that effect, and therefore ratify the appointment made betwixt the minister and Gentlemen concerning a particular place to be allowed to every one of them for their seat and burial within the said Kirk, and ordains the particular designation to be insert and registrated in, not only the Session books of Gargunnoch Kirk but also in the Presbytery books to stand a constant ground of the Gentlemen's right forever."*



This arrangement can still be seen today in the fact that the gallery's have, at their foremost end, waist high doors reserving access to the front seats reserved for the Heritors and Gentlemen. It's interesting to find from measurement that the backs of these pews are not nearly as upright, and hence slightly more comfortable during long sermons, than those behind for the ordinary worshippers!

for the Meiklewood, Gargunnoch and Boquhan estates. At the south-eastern corner of the Kirkyard is a smaller enclosure for ministers, adjacent to the gate leading to what was once the manse garden.

Out in the Kirkyard specially constructed enclosures reserve space

On the south, manse side of that gate, visible only to the minister as he passed through to preach his sermon, the lintel is carved with the words ***Hac itur ad Astra*** "**This is the way to Heaven**" (*This is thought to be a quotation from Virgil's Aeneid. IX. 641, part of the congratulatory address to Julius by Apollo after Julius has slain Numanus 'surnamed Remulus.' Virgil, however, wrote Sic, not Hac*)

Out in the Kirkyard specially constructed enclosures reserve space for the Meiklewood, Gargunnoch and Boquhan estates. At the south-eastern corner of the Kirkyard is a smaller enclosure for ministers, adjacent to the gate leading to what was once the manse garden.

The loft incorporated in the rebuilding of **1626** was enlarged in **1644**, and in **1660**, because the church was "throng", an east loft was built to accommodate the Lairds of Leckie and Boquhan



The ministers enclosure has two wall plaques and names are carved on lintel and supports

It is not clear how these lofts were accessed initially but certainly the first mention of an externally accessed loft seems to be in **1701** when...

*"Boquhan informing the Session that he desired to build a loft and a stair, and strike out a door thereto, and desires the Session to approve the same, the which they do providing it be always in his own room."*

Thus the church took its present shape with the Laird of Meiklewood occupying the west loft and the Laird of Gargunnoch having already built his seat to the north.

## Schooling

Provision of schooling for the children of the Parish was the responsibility of the Church and the Session decided on a permanent appointment to the post.

*....The sum of fourscore merks and a new suit of cloathes a year of yearly salary for a Schoolmaster and Precenter in this congregation to be paid by equal proportions at Whitsunday & Martinmas .*

Unfortunately they did not quite get around to paying the Schoolmaster, Alexander Ronald, for a couple of years and he, understandably, became a bit unhappy with the situation.

There was also discontent about the school being held in the church, which was a long walk for those in the western parts of the parish. This placed the Session in an awkward position, as they knew that if they altered things to please those complaining, they would displease others, including the Schoolmaster, who was already none too happy with them.

In January 1654 a meeting of heritors, elders and others with an interest in the subject decided that to satisfy those who were complaining, a new school should be built in the middle of the parish at “*Trotting Foord*”. Whether this was done or not is uncertain but a further reference to it in **1657** says the school was to be removed to the Burn of Leckie. Perhaps even this decision was not followed through because it is known that the last house at the top of the village, now called Carseview, became the school. Perhaps that was the final compromise.

## Sins of the Flesh and Others.

In reading through the old Session minutes, especially in the **1600/1700s** it is easy to come to the conclusion that they had a fixation with certain types of sins; Adultery, Fornication and “Pre-nuptial Fornication” feature almost to the exclusion of all else in their regular meetings. Pre-nuptial Fornication is where a marriage had taken place, but offspring made an untimely appearance much less than 9 months later!

The explanation, of course, is that the church was responsible for the distribution of money to the poor of the Parish so it was very much in its interest to “hold court” to determine the parentage of any illegitimate children so that the father could be officially recognised and made to face up to his responsibilities, financial or otherwise. In this sense the church was a bit like the modern day Child Support Agency. Punishments were meted out to those who were deemed to merit them. Appearance before the congregation to confess sins was a regular one but once that was done they were forgiven and welcomed back into the fold once more.

The Gentlemen and Heritors were subject to these same punishments, one even becoming an Elder afterwards! No doubt he was deemed to have had hands-on experience in the field!

## Other Developments

In **1702**, soon after the Rev. John Warden came to the Parish, it was decided the bell was too small to be heard at any distance so a new one was ordered from Edinburgh and a belfry, strong enough to support it, was built on the North gable. Examination of the stonework there reveals wear, which suggests the bell-ringer originally stood outside to perform his duties. When that practice changed is not certain, perhaps in **1892** when the

present bell replaced it. It is now rung from within the protection of the Gargunnoch gallery.

Up to at least the **1960s** the bell was rung, not only at midday, the hour of service at that time, but also at 0930am and 1030am. This may have been a relic of the medieval hours of prayer.



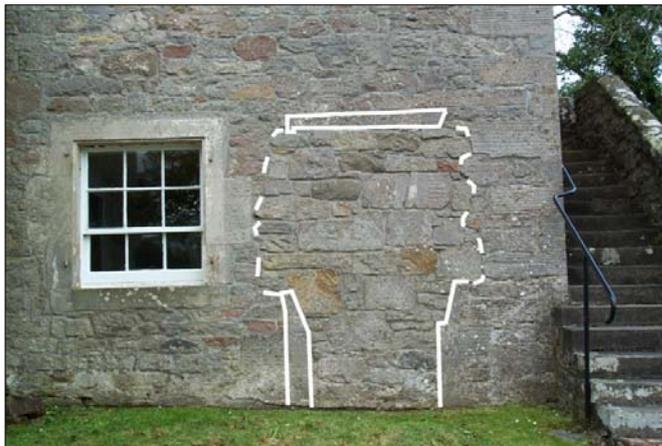
**Archie Young  
1914 – 2004  
Church Officer from  
the early 1970s to the  
late 1990s**



**The “new” bell,  
cast in Edinburgh  
in 1702 remains in  
the possession of  
the church**

### **Another reconstruction**

In **1774**, we’re told, another reconstruction took place and the cross and crescent from the previous church were re-used on the new one on the east and west gables respectively. The significance of the crescent is uncertain but it has been suggested they might represent a perceived supremacy of Christianity over the Islam faith.



**Was there once a door here?  
Or a lintel there?**



What changes were made to the external or internal appearance of the church during this last reconstruction one wonders? The Session minutes of the time are silent on the matter so we can only guess. It’s interesting to note, however, that the two windows in the belfry wing are not directly opposite each other as might be expected, the one on the eastern side being slightly further south. Examination of the external stonework on that side suggests that there might have been a door between that window and the steps up to the Gargunnoch gallery. There is what looks like a lintel and there are two vertical stones about a door’s width apart down at ground level although they have a strange shape at their topmost ends. On the vertical stone at the left hand side of this “doorway” is carved the familiar arrow and groove of an Ordnance Benchmark with a value of 94.8 feet (28.89 metres) above sea level, which probably means that the minister in his pulpit today is standing not far away from the 100 ft level! Something to muse on during long services!

Above the door at the top of the stairs into the east, Leckie and Boquhan gallery there seems to be an older, roughly-carved lintel. Did this serve an old window in this gable end,

converted to a door when the external stone stairs were built? The date 1774 is carved on the lower, newer one which is similar in style to all the other lintels, door and window surrounds, so perhaps doors and windows were improved during the **1774** renovation? We'll probably never know for sure.

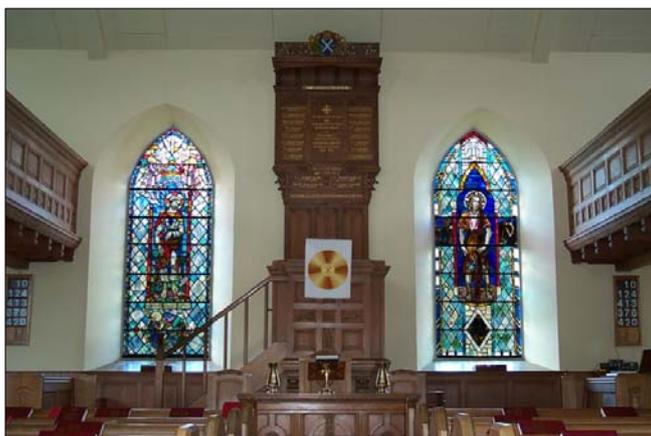
## Internal Renovations

There are no records of how the church looked inside prior to **1891** when an internal renovation took place resulting in the church looking much as it does today except for the colour of the woodwork and the look of the ceiling.

The Rev. Robert Stevenson had only been in post for three years so perhaps the “new broom” was in action and making his mark during his “honeymoon period.” In the Parish Magazine for November **1890** he comments that the condition of the church had for some time been a matter for complaint but the responsibility for the largest part of the expense of remedying that had to be a matter for the congregation as the Heritors were only responsible for the fabric of the building. From the church supplement.....

*“Only one word of personal appeal to readers of this supplement may be issued now. One great difficulty in our way in considering what should be done has been the thorny question of proper accommodation. I have myself a fairly strong opinion as to the amount of seat-space that is advisable; but I am bound to admit that the facts seem sometimes against me. On many winter Sundays the church is far from full; and though this is the case in most country parishes, it leads to the conclusion we have room to spare. If I am wrong in my opinion that this is really not the case, I am willing to be convinced of it; nothing is more dreary to a minister than a church too large for his flock. But my present view is we need all our pews and sittings..... will those readers of this Supplement who agree with me do what they can this winter to make their opinion visible?.....”*

In August **1891** the work was in hand and a relieved minister acknowledged “*the generous response to the appeal for funds which so lightened the burden of anxiety*” A special insertion in the minutes of 30<sup>th</sup> December **1891** describes the work. It took all of four months, during which time the aisles were excavated to a depth of 15” and re-laid with bottoming and topped off with red and black tiles (now hidden beneath carpets except at the entrance lobby). All the galleries were dismantled and rebuilt and although not specifically mentioned, presumably the downstairs pews were also renewed. The pulpit was exchanged for one of more modern design and comfort.



A number of gifts were received. The Baptismal Font, still in use today, came from the family of the previous minister, Rev. John Stark (here **1844-1888**). Made from oak, it is designed in the Italian Renaissance style. The silver basin is enclosed in an octagon, richly moulded and carved and having the text, “*Suffer the Little Children to Come Unto Me*” round the edge. The octagon is

supported on four trusses enriched with acanthus foliage. These trusses spring from a pillar, which in turn rises from a moulded base.



A new bell, also still in use today, was donated by Mr John Mitchell of Gargunnoch and the Communion Table from Mrs Whitelaw, late tenant of Leckie, but at that time residing in Bridge of Allan (said to have been the grandmother of “Willie” Whitelaw the 20<sup>th</sup> century politician). The cost of the renovation works was £380 (£100 from the Heritors, £250 from the Parish, £25 from other friends). The architect was Mr John Honeyman, Glasgow and the contractor for the bulk of



the work was Mr Robert McLaren, Wright, of Gargunnoch and himself an elder in the Church at that time.

Special mention was made of the debt owed to the Rev. Henry W. Hunter M.A. of the United Free Church of Kippen and office bearers of the United Free Church in Gargunnoch for permission to use their church building in Station Road during the period of the alterations. Rev Stevenson remarked on the degree of harmony and co-operation between the two churches in the village at that time and says he would “*do a great deal to see the three disunited bodies as one.*” The Free Church had been formed in **1843** when a number of ministers left the Church of Scotland.

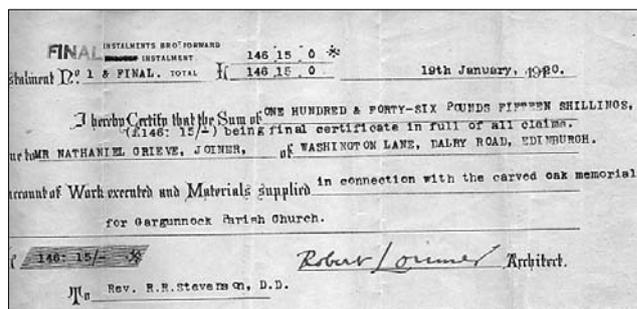
This is in marked contrast to the bile expressed in an unsigned poem about the United Free Church in Gargunnoch written locally only ten years prior to this which relates that....

....“This house from the road by a stream is divided,  
But a bridge lets the sinner more easily bestride it.  
From the top of this bridge he the money box spies,  
And this might well be termed the Bridge of Sighs,  
For the sinner must pay every time that he enters,  
If he’d dare but to hope in this House of Dissenters.  
Now, this neat little moneybox, too, has its story,  
The which to relate we’d be only too sorry,  
But this little fact we unwillingly mention  
Will help you to guess the pious intention;  
It is ten inches deep from the mouth of the hopper  
Would take long-fingered elders to fish out a copper.”

The opening service was performed in front of a large congregation by the Rev. Doctor John McLeod of Govan Parish and the Rev. Stevenson’s first sermon from the new pulpit that evening was from 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel XXIV 24 “Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing”

## War Memorials

Thirty years later, after the First World War a memorial to the fallen was erected on the wall behind the pulpit. Designed by Sir Robert Lorimer and erected by Nathaniel Grieve, Joiner, it cost £146-15/-. Immediately behind the minister in his pulpit is a linen-fold panel and that part of the memorial above it was raised to ceiling height to allow for the insertion of a Second World War Memorial panel.



## Stained Glass Windows



Curiously, there were no stained glass windows in the church until **1956** when Archibald McLaren, an elder and local businessman, donated the one to the right of the pulpit. His branch of the McLaren family had been in the parish since at least the **1780s** and most were Carpenters and Wrights. They had a sawmill in Manse Brae next to the house known as Viewfield until **1914** when it burnt down but was rebuilt in **1920s** in its present location at Gargunock Station. The window commemorates his parents John and Robina McLaren and also his younger brother Robert who died in **1943**.



Designed by Douglas Hamilton, FSA the theme is that of Christ the Carpenter. The sawmill employed Joiners, Cartwrights, Wheelwrights and others and produced a wide variety of items used locally, including coffins. Archie performed undertaker's duties at one time officiating in his distinctive lum-hat.

The window to the left of the pulpit has a farming theme showing Christ the Sower and illustrating the text "The Seed is the Word of God". At the foot are shown the thorns and stony ground of the parable. At the top are the Angel Reapers, the Dove of the Spirit and the Rainbow of Divine Promise. In the background, behind the Sower, the signs of the zodiac symbolise the seasons. In the panel below, David the Shepherd and Psalmist, is set against a quiet background of hills and streams, suggestive of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm.



The designer of this window, Mr William Wilson, OBE, RSA was reputed to be one of the finest stained glass designers of the day. It was donated by the Mitchell family in memory of their parents Mr and Mrs Robert Mitchell in **1968**.

## Other Gifts to the Church

**Vestry** (Extended in 2002 to become the new Session House, the Ross Anderson Room ) – Mr J. Ross Anderson, Boquhan 1960s

**Table desk** for vestry – Mr William Baker, cabinet maker. 1960s

**Oak Doors** – Jane D. McLaren, Viewfield 1960s

**Table Lectern** - The Girls Association 1936

**Brass flower vases** on Communion Table – Major and Mrs McCauley of Gartur House, Cambusbarron.

**Centre light** – Hugh Brown, Blacksmith at Burnton

**Elders benches**

**Minister's chair and one on either side**

**Kneeling stool** – Elspeth Abell

**Pulpit Falls** – Variously donated by the Birrell family, Miss McLaren and Mrs Rutherford.

**Various hymn books** – As inscribed within.



**The centre light made by Hugh Brown, blacksmith at Burnton**

## Most Recent Renovation

The last renovation was carried out in the early **1960s** and at this time a false ceiling was installed causing a degree of controversy with older members. The roof was renewed and the yellowish rendering which covered the external walls, (see old painting of church from west) was removed to expose the natural stonework. Towards the end of the works a private donation from Mr and Mrs John Mitchell of Dasherhead, paid for the removal of the dark brown varnish with which the wood had been finished in **1891**, giving a much lighter, newer and airier feel to the church. James Harvey and Bob Beck, two joiners employed by the same local firm that carried out the 1892 renovation, carried out the varnish removal.

## Music

At one time a Precentor led the praise by singing each line prior to the congregation doing so. Eventually a harmonium was introduced but it was not well received in some quarters as this poem from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century illustrates.

*ON A NEW MODE OF WORSHIP INTRODUCED TO GARGUNNOCK  
PARISH KIRK, AND ALSO THE HYMNAL AND A HARMONIUM*

**Air – “The Auld House”**

**“No man having drunk old wine straightway desireth new, for he saith,  
“The old is better” (Luke V, 39)**

O the Auld Kirk, the Auld Kirk, what though void of pomp within  
True hearts doth worship there, and hearts unstained with sin;  
The worshippers who worshipped there, and sleep without its walls,  
How many humorous anecdotes their memory recalls?

O the auld Herds, the Auld Herds, who watched this old sheepfold,  
How many knotty gospel truths did they to their flocks unfold;  
And its Precentors with their tongues, and flocks with one accord,  
No other instruments did seek to praise the mighty Lord.

O the Auld Kirk, the Auld Kirk, what though your end were near,  
No Kirk erected in your stead to me would be so dear;  
And mode of worshipping therein, though it forsaken be,  
No other mode of worshipping can be so dear to me.

**Alexander Connal, Gargunnoch c1880s**

Oil lamps lit the church until **1938**, just before the Second World War, when electricity arrived in the village and, on 28<sup>th</sup> January **1940**, a new electric organ replaced the harmonium, which had given sterling service for more than 60 years.

Morning Service that day was at 12 o'clock and was followed by the "Dedication and Opening of the Organ." A short recital was then given by a gentleman with the title Purcell J. Mansefield Hon. R.C.M., F.R.C.O., A.R.C.M., L. Mus.T.C.L., the Organist and choirmaster of Pollockshields (St Kentigern's) Parish Church, Glasgow. This organ was in use for almost 44 years before being replaced by the modern electronic one still in use today.



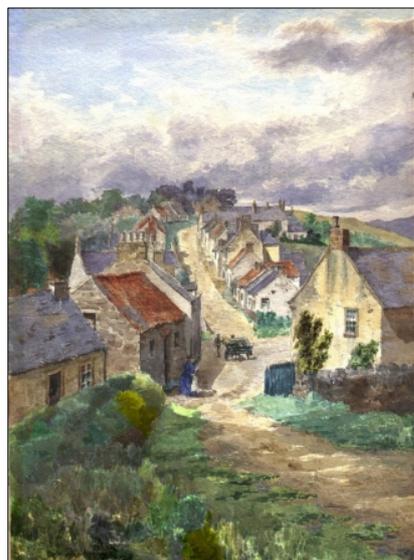
The present Organist and Elder, Mrs Johan Mailer, has served in the post since **1972** and is herself a native of the village.

### Choir

Choirs have always been a feature of this church as with others. Nowadays the choir tends to use the front westernmost pews facing the minister although at one time they may have occupied pews where the present-day organ now sits.

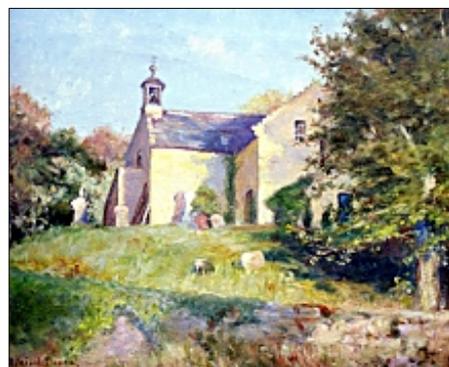
### Paintings and Drawings

There are three paintings or sketches linked to the church that have remained in its possession.



The first, a watercolour, showing the view down Manse Brae from the Session House is dated **c1860**.

The second, an oil on canvas shows the church from the west, still wearing its yellow rendering.



The third and fourth are sketches of the church done in **1910** by the well known etcher and artist Muirhead Bone who was staying at the manse at the time.

One shows the view of the church from the manse study window and the other is a sketch of the Belfry wing showing the old McNair flat gravestone in the foreground.





Muirhead Bone later became the first officially appointed government war artist and examples of his work are held in most of the National Art Galleries throughout the world.

## Communion Silver

There are some interesting items used in the celebration of Communion through the years. All have been donated at various times by local Heritors and are inscribed accordingly.

The oldest cups are kept in secure storage and belong to the period when many churches after the Restoration commissioned Sacramental vessels to be made to replace earlier ones lost in the troubled times of struggle between

Roman Catholicism and Episcopacy and Episcopacy and Presbyterianism. They fortunately also survived the uprisings of **1715** and **1745**. The two oldest ones, are inscribed thus;

**EX DONO MAGISTRI ADAMI CAMPBELL DE GARGUNNOCK IN USUM ECCLESIAE ANNO DOM 1702** (Approximately “Given by Adam Campbell of Gargunnoch for the use of the church in the year 1702”)



**EX DON(SIC)O. NE GULIELMI CUNNINGHAM DE BALQUHAN IN USAM ECCLESIAE GARGUNNOCK: ANNO DOM 1702.**

(Approximately “Given by Adam Cunningham of Boquhan for the use of the church in the year 1702”)

The cups are stamped as follows;



Maker – George Scott the younger.



Assay Office  
Edinburgh



Assaymaster –  
James Penman

There is also a date stamp in the form of a gothic letter W confirming the period **1701-1702**.

The marks show that the cups were made by George Scott the younger who was admitted a freeman of the Incorporation of the Goldsmiths of Edinburgh in 1697; they were tested for quality of silver by James Penman who was Assay master 1697-1708 in Edinburgh.

At Communion the common cup is used by the Duty Elders and those members of the congregation who wish to use this form of communion. Individual glasses are also available.

## Old Collection Plates

Caroline Penney, leader of the area Church Recorders was able to supply the following interesting information about two old pewter plates in the Session House. One has a mark on the underside showing a three-masted ship. This is apparently the work of a well known maker, Stephen Maxwell, who produced many such items in the mid to late **1700s**. The double mark of a three-masted sailing ship has the name "S.MAXWELL" beneath. On the left hand side, ascending, lies the vertical text "SUCCES?" and on the other side lies vertical text descending, "TES" or "IES". It is thought likely that the first word is "SUCCESS" and the second could be the ending of either "STATES" or "COLONIES" as part of one of two alternative phrases used by Maxwell, "SUCCESS TO OUR COLONIES" before the American Revolution (**1775-84**) or "SUCCESS TO THE UNITED STATES" afterwards. Maxwell was obviously an astute businessman! The other has an almost indecipherable mark, which has still to be identified.



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The origin of this old collection plate is unknown. It appears to be of lacquered brass and has the initials ...C.H.T.B and E.G.V.M below the figures of two men dressed in 16<sup>th</sup> century style. It might be Dutch in origin. Until very recently it sat on a bracket outside the Session House at the entrance to the Kirkyard to receive the offerings. Signs of wear have caused it to be brought inside and assigned a lighter role. A modern one dedicated to the memory of Mr Tim Brown is now used.



## Wood Carvings

There are many fine carvings on the pulpit, chairs and haffit ends of the Elder's benches, dating from the **1892** renovation of the church interior.



## Ministers of the Parish

1615 – 1651      **WILLIAM JUSTICE**

1652 – 1662      **ARCHIBALD MUSCHET**

1663 – 1665      **ROBERT BENNETT M.A.**

Presented by David, Lord Cardross. Transferred to Kirkintilloch in May 1665

1666 – 1689      **JOHN EDMONSTONE M.A.**

Born 1630, son of James Edmonstone, minister of St Ninians. Educated at University of St Andrews. Licensed by Stirling Presbytery on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1657 and by George, Bishop of Edinburgh, 20<sup>th</sup> August 1663.

On 10th February 1676 the Privy Council ordered the Heritors of the parish to pay him 6000 merks on account of a riot against himself and his family!

Deprived by the Privy Council, 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 1689, for not reading the Proclamation of the Estates, etc. and for his immoderate drinking and other scandalous practices. Died March 1693.

Married (1) Margaret Duncan with whom he had issue – Robert (1665) and John (1668)

(2) Isabel Murray with whom he also had issue – Catherine (1674), Patrick (1674), James (1677), John (1679), and one more son (1680)

-----  
**GEORGE BARCLAY**

Was arrested in 1679 after a keen search and confined in the guard-house at Edinburgh, but escaping by leaping from a window, made his way through England to Holland. He was named in a list of fugitives on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1684 but returned with the Earl of Argyle in 1685. Was engaged in preaching at conventicles in Galloway and Ayrshire and was present at a meeting of ministers in Edinburgh on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1687.

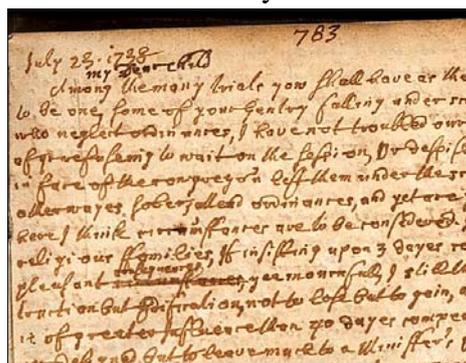
Became minister of a meetinghouse in this parish in 1688. Transferred to Uphall on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1690

1692 – 1696      **ROBERT CAMPBELL**

Admitted between 2<sup>nd</sup> April and 11<sup>th</sup> October 1692. Transferred to Old Luce before 21<sup>st</sup> April 1696

1698 – 1751      **JOHN WARDEN**

Born 1671, son of a Falkirk merchant who had been a zealous persecutor of the Covenanters. Licensed by Presbytery of Linlithgow on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1697; called 27<sup>th</sup> February and ordained 12<sup>th</sup> May 1698. Died 13<sup>th</sup> June 1751.



Summoned before the Committee of Purity of Doctrine at Edinburgh in April 1720, but nothing was found against him except some press errors in his recently published *Essay on the Lord's Supper*. He tried unsuccessfully to act as mediator between the champions for the Marrow and their opponents. He refused to take the Oath of Abjuration. Married 29<sup>th</sup> December 1699 and had

issue. John, minister of Cannongate, Edinburgh, Liliast (married 6<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1724 to James, son of Patrick McDowell, merchant of Edinburgh)

#### Publications

- *A Practical Essay on the Lords Supper - Edinburgh 1715 (copy held here, 2003)*
- *The Widows Mite (Edinburgh 1721)*
- *An Assistant in Examining the Heart*
- *A Practical Essay on the Sacrament of Baptism - Edinburgh 1724. (copy held here 2003)*
- Four Letters (Woodrow's *Correspondence*, ii. 400, 686, iii. 155)

The ninth and only surviving diary of John Warden, covering the period July 23<sup>rd</sup> 1738 to 9<sup>th</sup> May 1745, was presented to the Kirk Session in the 1920s by one of his descendants.

Warden also wrote up the Session minutes during his 53 years as minister here. It's unfortunate that he did not entrust this task to his Session Clerk as did the other ministers here. His writing is extremely difficult to read and his spelling and punctuation are not as we would expect in modern times. The habit of the time of using the letter "f" in place of the letter "s" as in "*houfe*" for "house" or the first "s" of a pair, as in "*sefsion*" for "session" doesn't help.

**1753 – 1756**

#### **WILLIAM WARDEN**

Nephew of John Warden. Licensed by Presbytery of Linlithgow 26<sup>th</sup> January 1726, called 16<sup>th</sup> June and ordained (assistant and successor) on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1743. Died unmarried 17<sup>th</sup> February 1756

**1758 – 1773**

#### **DAVID THOMSON**

Transferred and admitted from the Scots Church in Amsterdam. Presented by Sir James Campbell of Ardkinglass in December 1757. Admitted 11<sup>th</sup> May 1758. Transferred to St. Ninians, 29<sup>th</sup> June 1773 against the wishes of the congregation where he was met by a large crowd of parishioners vehemently opposed to having been given no input to his selection.

**1774 – 1787**

#### **WILLIAM MARTIN**

Presented Nov. 1773, ordained 6<sup>th</sup> April 1774. Transferred to New Greyfriars, Edinburgh on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1787

**1787 – 1804**

#### **JAMES ROBERTSON**

Presented by Sir James Campbell of Ardkinglass Bart., in March and admitted on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1787. Transferred to South Leith on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1804.

**1805 – 1809**

#### **GEORGE CHRISTISON**

Son of John Christison, shepherd at Redpath, Berwickshire. Educated at Edinburgh University. Licensed by Presbytery of Kirkcaldy on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1796. Became morning lecturer in Edinburgh. Resigned March 1801 and presented by James Eidingtoun and Mrs Anne Eidingtoun of Gargunnoch in January and ordained 18<sup>th</sup> April 1805.

Married Martha Johnstone who died 16<sup>th</sup> November 1846 and had issue – John (15<sup>th</sup> September 1801), Helen (4<sup>th</sup> March 1803), Alexander (19<sup>th</sup> March 1805) and Mary (1807)

Died 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1809. His name is carved on the lintel of the Ministers Enclosure in the south-east corner of the churchyard

**1810 – 1826**



**ALEXANDER DAVIDSON**

Presented by James Eidington of Gargunnoch on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1809 and ordained on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1810. Transferred to Slamannan on 5<sup>th</sup> September 1826.

Papers relating to his presentation were gifted to the Kirk Session by Mr Peter Forbes of Tullibody. Later in the nineteenth century this power of the heritors to choose a minister for the parish were abolished in favour of the congregations performing this role.

**1827 – 1830**

**ROBERT BUCHANAN**

Presented by James Eidington of Gargunnoch on November 1826, ordained on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1827. Transferred to Saltoun on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1830

**1830 – 1843**

**JAMES LAURIE**

Born 1778. Licensed by the Presbytery of Zetland on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1809 and ordained by the Presbytery of Edinburgh, minister of the Presbyterian Congregation at Tweedmouth in June 1814. Presented by Sir Francis Walker Drummond of Hawthornden, Bart., in June and admitted 26<sup>th</sup> August 1830. Died 9<sup>th</sup> February 1843.

He married on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1814, Eleanora, daughter of William Forbes Hog, Dublin. She survived him and married again.

Publications

*Two Discourses Preached at Gargunnoch* (Edinburgh, 1843)

*New Statistical Account – An Account of the Parish*, 1840

**JOHN STARK**

Born in London on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1811, son of Mathew S., and Jane Cranmer. Educated at Glasgow University and licensed by the Presbytery of Hamilton on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1836. Assistant at Blackburn, Livingstone and Albion churches, Glasgow. Presented by Thomas Richardson W.S. and ordained 8<sup>th</sup> February 1844.

He died at Gargunnoch Railway Station on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1888, shortly after purchasing a ticket.

Married Isabella, daughter of Andrew Chrystal, distiller at Dasherhead, Gargunnoch and had issue –



**1844 – 1888**

Matthew Cranmer (20<sup>th</sup> December 1846), Andrew Chrystal (1<sup>st</sup> June 1849), Jane (23<sup>rd</sup> October 1851), John (20<sup>th</sup> August 1855)

1888 – 1927



**ROBERT STEVENSON –**

**The first Minister to be Elected by the People of Gargunnoch**

A direct descendant of Andrew Simson, minister of Dunbar in 1564, Robert Stevenson was born in Alloa on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1861, son of John Stevenson and Jeannie Miller. Educated at Dunfermline High School and St. Andrews University he gained a B.A. at Cambridge University then B.D. at Edinburgh. Licensed by the presbytery of Dunfermline in 1887 he was assistant at Galasheils. Ordained 5<sup>th</sup> September 1888. Awarded D.D. at St Andrews in 1917, he was Baird Lecturer in 1920.

Married 6<sup>th</sup> July 1909, Agnes Jeannie, daughter of James Dodds, D.D., minister of Corstorphine.

Died 1947

Publications:

*Exposition of the Pilgrim's Progress* (Guild Text Book Series – London 1907)

*In Trust with the Gospel* - a Synod Sermon (Stirling 1912)

*Scottish Outposts* (Edinburgh 1914)

*The Christian Vindication of Patriotism* (Baird Lecture – Edinburgh 1922)

Stevenson was an extremely gifted scholar who, perhaps surprisingly, chose to remain here, in his first charge, for his entire ministerial career. Three years after his arrival the internal renovation of the church that gave it its present day appearance took place.

Obviously a man of considerable means he did not hesitate to use them in the extension of the manse into a commodious residence, the donation of a sum to augment the stipend and in a remarkable gesture in 1910, he personally financed the installation of Gargunnoch's first piped water supply (and its first three years' maintenance) after the local council had declined to do so on the grounds that there were not enough people in the Parish to make the scheme financially viable. Such a scheme at today's values would no doubt cost a six figure sum! Until then water was drawn from the burn or wells. To mark the opening of the scheme a drinking fountain, situated in the Square, was dedicated to the memory of his mother. He is still fondly remembered by at least one of the current older residents in the village, Miss Sylvia Miller and also by Miss Gertrude Jean Travis in Middlesborough.

1927 – 1933

**J. H. HORTON MCNEILL**

Graduated MA BD at Glasgow University and gained the Black Fellowship as most distinguished student of the year. Assistant at St Andrews Church, Buenos Aires for three years he then went to India to become chaplain on the Indian Ecclesiastical Establishment attached to Scottish and Highland Regiments. Saw active service in the North West Frontier of India in 1908 and in France and Mesopotamia during the first World War, being twice mentioned in dispatches. Concluded his Indian service as Presidency Senior Chaplain of the church of Scotland in Madras. Two further years were spent in Geneva before spending a year as locum tenens in the second charge of Brechin Cathedral. His final charge was Gargunnoch.

1934 – 1970

**WILLIAM TURNER**

Licensed by the Presbytery of Glasgow in April 1930 and became assistant in Pollokshields, Glasgow. Inducted at Gargunnoch in 1934 and retired in



1970.

He was the last minister to occupy the old manse beside the church. During his tenure of office the old United Free Kirk in Station Road was converted to a church hall with the encouragement and financial assistance of Dr Stevenson. Mr Turner was author of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Statistical Account for Gargunnoch Parish.

Mr Turner lived to the age of 95 and remained in the village until October 1999 when he moved to a retirement home in Ayrshire. He died on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2001.

**1971 – 1981**

**R. LINDSAY MUIRHEAD**



Called to the ministry later in life after working in industry and fighting in Burma during the war. Served for ten years in each of three parishes; Gartcosh, Gairbraid then Gargunnoch during the last ten years of his working life. Hard working and energetic he piloted the sale of the Glebe for housing, against some local opposition. Retired to Callander in 1981.

**1982 – 2000**

**CATHERINE HEPBURN**



A “daughter of the manse” she was born in Malawi, where her parents worked, and graduated in Scotland BA, BD.

She was ordained and introduced at Gargunnoch on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1982 and on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1984 she was inducted to the new charge of “Gargunnoch linked with Kincardine-in-Menteith.” A regular radio broadcaster of religious programmes she transferred to West Mearns, Kincardineshire, on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2000.

**2001 to present**

**RICHARD CAMPBELL**



Born in 1945 as peace returned to the City of Glasgow as the second of a family of five sons, three of them ordained ministers, the church and Sunday School always played a vital part in home life.

After almost thirty years working in a scientific and hospital environment, I left in the late eighties to study Theology at Glasgow. I was also accepted as a candidate for the Ministry of the Free Church of Scotland and ordained in 1993 to my first charge at St Ninians, Stirling.

Wishing to develop a wider Ministry I returned to the Church of Scotland where, at the age of twenty one, I had been ordained an Elder. In my second charge at New Cathcart, Glasgow this was realised, but I felt called to a more rural setting and returned in December 2001 to the newly triple - linked charges of Gargunnoch, Kincardine in Menteith (Blairdrummond) and Kilmadock Parish Church, Doune.

That the three centres of worship are used every Sunday is due to the help of a Pastoral Assistant and willing office-bearers from the three congregations.

## The Old Graveyard



In a wee sacred spot where memories twine,  
Sae simple in structure, yet hallowed divine,  
There stands in a' beauty sae peacefu' and still,  
The auld Kirk o' hame, the Kirk on the Hill.

For mony lang years we ha'e been truly blest,  
Sae should in return gie o' oor best,  
An' into oor hearts God's Word oft instil,  
Tae worship in truth, in the Kirk on the hill.

The trees rich in age mak' lovely surround,  
For nature unspoiled at her best there is found,  
In that part of God's acre, where sleepin' sae still,  
Are the loved anes, around the Kirk on the hill.

In speech ha'e we heard the auld folk often say  
"I'll sune be makin' ma wey up the brae",  
Tae rest wi' the lave, abidin' His will,  
Beside the Kirk in Gargunnoch that stands on the hill

### *Mr Rough's Poem - Late 19<sup>th</sup> early 20<sup>th</sup> century*

The Kirkyard wasn't always the size it is today and the Presbytery visitors in **1631**, saw fit to instruct the minister to do something about it.

*The common place of burials is not found sufficient nor spacious enough and therefore the Minister with the moderator and Gentlemen concurring with them are appointed to deal with my Lord of Mar that his Lordship might be pleased to grant ane eik of an old wife's house and yard after her decease which lies in the very bosom of the said Kirkyard for supplement of their burial"*



Thus the yard took on the form with which we are now familiar. However, in 2001 some human remains were found by fencers during post-hole excavations in the grounds of the old Manse adjacent to the Kirkyard dyke so perhaps the original boundaries were slightly different or the burials were of suicide victims.

There are few burials in the old yard now. Most are in the new one, constructed in the 1960s and lying at a lower level to the west, beside the Rest Garden on the site of houses demolished in the early '60s at the end of the old Duke Street.

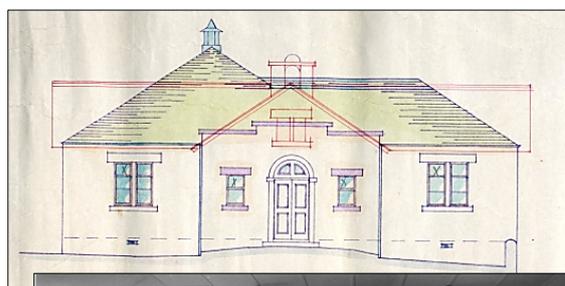
There are 228 gravestones here with 725 names or initials thereon. The earliest are dated 1706. All of the inscriptions have been recorded and a plan of the gravestone locations

prepared so that those with an interest in genealogy might more easily find the last resting place of their ancestors. See separate document for details.

## The Old Church Hall

The United Free Church was a red sandstone building in Station Road to the west of the burn on the outskirts of the village.

It was transferred to the Church of Scotland in the 1930s then converted into a hall for the Church of Scotland on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1939, largely with the encouragement and partial funding of Rev. Robert Stevenson who had retired 12 years previously but maintained a close interest in Parish affairs.



Prior to this time the school was the only building, apart from the church, which could be used for public meetings but once this hall was available many of the village organisations made use of its facilities.



There was a strict “no alcohol” rule in its conditions of use but stories still circulate of ways in which this was circumvented during dances. It is said that one hall-keeper would “take care” of any bottles found on the premises (usually in the gents toilets) but would then become progressively jollier as the evening wore on!



The last event to be held there was the Gargunock Flower show in August 2001.

From the 1980s onwards its condition gradually deteriorated and it was sold in 2001, part of the proceeds being used to convert the vestry at the church to a small meeting place for Session and Sunday School use. The hall has now been converted into a private house.



## **The Church Today**

Gargunock has been linked with Kincardine in Menteith (Blairdrummond) for some time and with the arrival of the Rev Richard Campbell was additionally linked with Kilmadock (Doune).

There are c200 members on the roll of communicants in Gargunock, 16 of whom are Elders.

The three churches have separate services during the winter but have joint services during the summer months on a rota basis.

## **Genealogy**

Today, Computers and the Internet have greatly increased the numbers of people researching their ancestry and travellers from home and abroad regularly visit the graveyard looking for signs of their ancestors. Gargunock is lucky in having extensive archival material. That has afforded the opportunity to scan, photocopy, photograph and transcribe it before transfer to Stirling Council's Archives at Springkerse. There, of course, it is available to all for study, but can only be copied at great expense.

Much of the material is invaluable for genealogical research and the work of creating searchable databases continues, covering items such as;

Monumental Inscriptions

Lair Records

Church Supplements, 1888 to 1990s

Marriage Proclamation Records 1884 to 1977

For further information on the progress of the above contact;

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