

Calton

The modern history of Calton predates Saint Mary's Church by about 150 years. Originally the area now called Calton was known as Blackfauld and from 1705 it was developed as a place for weavers to live. A certain John Walkinshaw (1671-1731) who was a Jacobite sympathiser, owned the land and the development of the weavers accommodation. His involvement in the 1715 Jacobite Rebellion ruined him and so Glasgow Town Council was able to acquire Blackfauld in 1723. It was they who called the area Calton and the name remained even when Glasgow sold Calton to the Orr Family in 1730. One of the streets bordering Saint Mary's is "Orr Street" originating from that family ownership of the lands around the church. Another street bordering the church is Forbes Street named after the first Parish Priest of Saint Mary's who died in 1872 after thirty years as Parish Priest and is buried in the chapel crypt. The street, formerly known as Rose Street, to the south side of the church, was renamed by Glasgow Corporation on 9th June, 1927.

Calton has had an industrial character for many years – pottery was a major local trade, indeed Saint Mary's is built on a clayfield and there were several brickworks in operation as the church was built. The locals were somewhat dismissive of the building commenting that it was certainly not built on rock! Handloom weaving was another significant industry and textiles brought prosperity to the area. The story of the Calton Weaver's strike in 1787 is one which lives on in the local memory and in the history of industrial relations. The weavers had become less financially secure as they had increasingly to rely on piecework but, during a demonstration, three of the weavers were shot and killed as a result of the military being called in to break the demonstration. The strike has since been celebrated as one of Glasgow's most dramatic early experiences of industrial militancy. The graves of the Calton Weavers are in the Arbercromby Street Cemetery a few hundred yards from Saint Mary's. The burial ground was created by the Calton Incorporation of Weavers in 1786 although the ground was not solely used by them. While the graveyard still exists, it no longer takes burials. The fact that Calton was very much on the outside of the city is emphasised by the fact that Bishop Scott had purchased several acres between Gallowgate and East Rose Street and Henrietta and Abercromby Street. There are still some remnants of this graveyard today and a large headstone is to be found in the vacant land just to the north of the church today marking the site of the graveyard. Most of the remains were removed from the cemetery at a later date to allow building. The graveyard was still in use in 1841 when the work began on the building of the new church of Saint Mary's which was completed in 1842.

In 1817 Calton became a self-governing burgh of barony with its own provost and council, though this was a somewhat short-lived status as the burgh was annexed to Glasgow in 1846, just four years after the opening of Saint Mary's.

The growth of the City

It is difficult for those who are used to Glasgow being a large metropolitan city to realise just how recent the development of that city has been. In 1770 Glasgow was but a small merchant town, fifty years later it was almost unrecognisable as a large industrial city. In 1750 the population of the City was less than 32,000 and by the time of the building of Saint Andrew's Cathedral in 1816, the population was heading towards 150,000. The speed of the growth was not recognised very quickly by the national authorities and it was only in 1832 that Glasgow was given its first Member of Parliament. This vast increase in population was fuelled by the arrival of up to 50,000 Irish Immigrants a year. Whilst the majority of these immigrants were Catholic, a significant minority

were Protestant, estimates suggest up to 25%. Many of the Protestant immigrants found employment in the weaving trade and so moved to Bridgeton and Calton. Of course the majority were Catholic and when added to the numbers of Catholics heading to the City as a result of the Highland clearances, the Catholic population literally exploded.

By 1792 there was a sufficient Catholic population in the city for the parish of Saint Andrew's to be founded, though it was only in 1816 that the church which was later to become the Cathedral was opened. In the first half of the nineteenth century in the wider area of what was to become, in 1878, the Archdiocese of Glasgow, parishes were founded at an amazing rate and it helps give an idea both of the increasing number of Catholics and the increasing number of priests to serve them: after St. Andrew's on Clyde Street 1792 came St Mirin, Paisley 1808 (to become a Cathedral in 1948); St Mary's, Greenock 1808; Saint Patrick's, Dumbarton 1830; St. Margaret, Airdrie 1836; Saint Mary's, Duntocher and Saint Fillan Houston both 1841; Saint John the Evangelist, Barrhead 1841; [Saint Mary's, Abercromby Street 1842]; Saint Mary's Hamilton 1843; St Patrick, Coatbridge 1845; St Alphonsus, Saint John the Evangelist, Portugal Street and also St. John the Baptist, Port Glasgow all 1846; St Athanasius Carlisle, 1849 and St. Joseph, North Woodside Road 1850. The pattern was to continue through into the twentieth century.

It was in 1887 that one of the more famed moments came in the history of Saint Mary's when a certain Brother Walfrid and a group of men of the parish founded a charity to assist with the care of the poor. The aim of the charity was, while raising funds, to provide also a social outlet for the men of the area and so it was that Celtic Football Club came into being in 1888. The club has moved on from the parish over the years, but are very much linked to the parish and a proud part of our history.

Saint Mary's Church

The Architects of Saint Mary's church were a famous London firm, Goldie and Childe, the same firm who were later responsible for Saint Mungo's in Townhead. The church was built in classic style as a matter of simple economy and the exterior of the church is almost unchanged from the day it opened on Monday 15th August 1842. The interior on the other hand has undergone significant change at various times in the past 162 years. The ceiling of the church was grand and ornate, but in 1865 it was noticed that the south wall of the church was several inches out of line and required repair. The repairs were being planned when without warning the entire ceiling of the church fell in during the night. The new ceiling was much less ornate and it was supported with pillars and a gallery was added, taking away the great unsupported expanse which had been so much a feature of the church. The organ seen in the church today was introduced to the church a few years after these alterations. Previously the liturgy had been served by an orchestra. Now the liturgy was served by the vast organ which can still be seen today and still functions, though it is in need of major repair. The organ is currently valued at £330,000.

In 1914 the new school building was completed on the site of the old school building and in 1919 was valued for the sake of the transfer to local authority control. The building was valued at cost of £23,399 2/11 (in 2002 this was the equivalent of £665,627). The transaction for the sale of the properties did not finalise until 1929 when the local authority paid £29,000 for the property, including the land and the playgrounds.

Renovation work—1926

In 1926-27 a significant renovation and redecoration of the Church took place. Over £1500 (£54,742 by current standards) was spent on this work for which the Main Contractors were S&J

Scott of West George Street. The whole of the inside was repainted except for the large panel behind the altar and those at the side altars. Mr Duffie of Dumbarton renovated these works of art. Astonishingly, the original decoration scheme for the church was still in existence and after consultation with the firm responsible, it was decided to repeat the original scheme. Canon Fitzgerald was to note: "The exterior of the church was completely overhauled and renewed. It was found that the roof was in a very poor condition and many of the stones at the front of the church...greatly decayed. These were taken out and replaced with new blocks of Northumberland stone.

"The steps leading to the church bore eloquent testimony to the piety of the faithful...these steps were removed and replaced with new ones. The porch was in a very unsightly condition. The stone flooring was entirely removed and replaced by more lasting viz. black and white marble tiles. Which in addition to being more durable (they are still there today) help considerably to brighten the church."

In 1927 the large crucifix seen at the Sacred Heart side of the church was placed there by Father Ignatius CP. The statue of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus was added in 1933.

The Sanctuary

The Sanctuary too has undergone renovation. Originally the wall behind the altar consisted of four large fluted Doric columns and these were taken down in the 1870s and replaced with the much lighter design which can be seen today. The painting of the Assumption which so dominates the church today is an addition from the 1950s. Prior to this there was a triptych with, from left to right, the Presentation in the Temple, the Crucifixion and the Assumption. A view of this can be seen in the front of this booklet. These huge oil paintings by an unnamed French artist were damaged by fire necessitating the new paintings which were commissioned by the famous architect Jack Coia, and painted by an artist by the name of Frank Duffy. It is unclear whether this is the same "Mr Duffie" who is listed as renovating the panels of the High altar and the side chapels in the 1927 renovation, but it would seem very coincidental were it not. The original Mr Duffie is listed as being from Dumbarton while Frank Duffy is listed as resident in Biggar. Frank died at Mass in Biggar, where he lived, on the Sunday after he finished the work in Saint Mary's. The gold lettering around the sanctuary was the work of a young woman by the name of Helen McGinn, later to become Lady Watson-Stewart. The style is that of Roman Trajan lettering—a style dictated to Helen by Coia. Helen McGinn lives (2005) in Wymms Bay and worked closely with Jack Coia over a number of years. She was responsible for lettering art-work in a number of churches around the Diocese including Saint Eunan's, Clydebank and Saint Charles Kelvinside. Kelvinside was her favourite project since in that one Jack Coia gave her a free hand and the etching in the glass of the baptistery and the foyer of the church show the artist at her finest. She was also responsible for the glass etching at 18 Park Circus which at the time was the Diocesan Curia. This work is preserved in the archives of the Diocese.

The rest of the sanctuary too has undergone change on a number of occasions; Canon Carmichael reconstructed the altar, altar steps and platform and a large opening was made in the roof to allow light to enter the sanctuary. That opening is in need of repair and has been impervious to light for some years now. The repair of this is a priority for the near future. Canon Dyer who became parish priest in 1896 also made changes to the sanctuary – it was he who had the marble lectern created in place of the moveable one which had been used before, the altar rails which are seen today were added at this time. The benches in the church were replaced also, this time in the more

modern style that gave a centre aisle down the church as it is seen today. Central heating was added by Canon Dyer and the windows, which had been wooden framed were now iron.

The 1926-27 redecoration took place some 80 years after the building of the church and now another 80 years later a similar task needs to be undertaken. It is unlikely that the decoration work will be completed for the sum of £1500 – the cost of the 1926 exercise!

Stained Glass

The stained glass in the church is also in need of conservation and the glass from the Sacred Heart and Lady Chapels underwent renovation in mid 2004. The stained glass was created by the world famous Mayer of Munich – this firm are also noted for having created the dramatic stained glass window at the back of Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome. They are a firm which has existed for centuries. The old Cathedral in Glasgow had some of the finest stained glass in the world – also made by Mayer. After the Reformation it was removed from the windows and stored in crates. It still, to this day, lies in crates in the old Cathedral, unused and unseen. In our Church the Joyful and the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary are depicted in the windows at the Sacred Heart side and the Lady Chapel side respectively. In the Sacred Heart Chapel there is also a window Depicting Saint Margaret Mary receiving her vision of the Sacred Heart.

The Lady Chapel and Sacred Heart altars are of a similar style though the side panels of the Lady Chapel are more decorative.

The Sacred Heart Chapel at the left side of the Church has, like the Lady Chapel, been recently renovated and the skylight, which had been blocked out for many years to prevent water ingress, has been completely repaired. Now, once again, the light shines into the chapel and makes it bright and welcoming.

The Crypt

Underneath the Sacred Heart Chapel is the crypt of Saint Mary's. Until Saint Andrew's Cathedral added a crypt in 1980 which renovated in 1999, Saint Mary's was the only church in the Archdiocese to have a crypt. Bishop Scott was the first burial in the crypt in 1846. In 1847 the crypt was opened no less than four or five times to receive the remains of assistant priests in the parish who had died in the fever epidemic of that year. There is a dispute about the date of Father McCabe's death – the date is recorded in the Scottish Catholic Directory as 17th February 1852; however parish records state that he died in 1847, as does his coffin. The parish Centenary History records the date of death as 1847. It is unclear which is correct. It seems unlikely that the official Catholic Directory would make a mistake since deaths are recorded each year in the following year's publication. How they could miss Father McCabe's death is unclear. His coffin however is marked that he died in 1847. His date of Ordination is however 18th December 1847, hence he would have been a priest for only a few days if he died in 1847. The parish records are of little assistance – Father McCabe's name never appears in the baptismal register – in whatever time he was here, he appears to never have celebrated a baptism! At the time baptisms were typically celebrated 3 times a week or more and 11 or 12 children at a time was not unusual. Father McCabe's Coffin also states that he was 34—and so if he had been born in 1818 he must indeed have died in 1852, not 1847. The facts of this will require further research.

Typhus was, somewhat unkindly, known as Irish Fever, and indeed several of the priests who died in Saint Mary's in the 1847 outbreak had come here from Ireland to serve the people of Glasgow. Typhus came, though this was not fully understood at the time, from a lack of sanitation and conditions were extreme at the time. Overcrowding into tiny flats without sanitation was trouble

waiting to flare up. The River Clyde was not only the source of drinking water, but it was also the bathing area and the sewer. 1848 saw a major cholera epidemic, but that left the clergy untouched this time, though the same cannot be said for the people.

There were Typhus epidemics (“Irish Fever”) in Glasgow in 1832, 1837, 1847 and 1851-52. Cholera epidemics took hold in 1832, 1848-49, and 1853-54 and a Relapsing Fever epidemic was recorded in 1843. All of these diseases are connected to poor sanitation and the City Fathers were moved to begin the Loch Katrine project to bring fresh drinking water to the city.

There is a complete listing of the burials in the crypt attached.

Sacristy Area –2003 Renovations (part 1)

Please take some time to see some of our treasures in the sacristy—this area of our church has been recently renovated thanks to Historic Scotland, Glasgow City Council, Scottish Churches Architectural Heritage Trust, the Archdiocese of Glasgow and the people of Saint Mary’s.

Main Church Area –2006 Renovations (part 1)

The church building continues to require renovation especially the roof and the outside walls. This work will make the church wind and water tight at which point the question of redecoration can be addressed. In September 2005 both Historic Scotland and the Lottery, through the Listed Places of Worship Scheme made an offer to Saint Mary’s to assist the costs of the work to re-roof the church. It is hoped that the work will begin in spring of 2006 and be completed before that winter. The costs associated with this are expected to be around £400,000.

Then the attention of the parish can move to the outside walls and their condition—another area needing significant works and expected to cost around half a million pounds.

There is plenty happening in Saint Mary’s for quite a while to come.

Thank you for coming today—we hope your visit was interesting and that our church and our history will remain in your thoughts.

Please visit again.