This is a reprint of the Second Edition booklet which was printed in 1988, itself expanded and extended from John Hay's first edition of 1967. I used OCR software (Optical Character Recognition) to reproduce it in more or less the original layout, but the transfer to modern computer systems has meant that the page numbers don't quite match the original. However, this won't spoil your reading enjoyment.

The 'Contents' page has been renumbered accordingly.

To allow continuity of reading, I have moved the photographs that were in the middle of the booklet to the end.

My former teachers Mr Hay and Miss Wilson, when writing their Forewords would, I hope, have been pleased to know that a scanned copy in PDF form would be available for download on this website all these years later, if they knew what the words 'download', or 'website' meant at the time, of course!

I am grateful to the Kirk Session of Kilwinning Abbey Church for permission to reproduce this out-of-print booklet on our website.

Andy Baird,
Chair, Kilwinning Heritage, 2012

Also available for download from the KH website:

Kilwinning Abbey, the Church of Saint Winning, by Rev. William Lee Ker, 1900. (Also available in print form via Amazon)
Kilwinning Abbey, by John Ness, 1967.
The Life and Recollections of Dr Duguid, edited by John Service, 1887.
Ayrshire, Its History and Historic families, Vol 1, by William Robertson, 1908.
Ayrshire, Its History and Historic families, Vol 2, by William Robertson, 1908.
Historical Tales and Legends of Ayrshire, by William Robertson, 1889.
Archaeological and Historical Collections of Ayr and Wigton Vol 1, 1878 (Galloway's articles on Kilwinning Abbey architecture)

WINNING PARISH KIL



A SHORT HISTORY

by

JOHN HAY, M.A., B.A.
Second Edition by ISABEL J. T. WILSON, M.A.

It is a great privilege for me as the minister of the Abbey Church to write this short preface to the second edition of the History of Kilwinning Parish which is published as part of the celebrations to mark the 800th anniversary of the founding of the Abbey.

In the twenty years since the original edition many changes have taken place in the parish and district and some of these changes are recorded in this new version. Miss Isabel Wilson, who also worked on the first edition, kindly undertook to update and edit this one. She brought to the task a lifetime's experience of and interest in, the history of the area and especially the Abbey.

She has taken account of modern scholarship regarding the founding of the Abbey and has, at the other end of the time span, incorporated the significant events of the last twenty years.

We are very grateful indeed for her careful and imaginative work and our thanks must also go to the many members of the Abbey who freely gave of their time to assist her.

Our thanks are also due to Irvine Development Corporation and the Royal Bank of Scotland plc, both of whom made generous financial contributions to the printing and production costs associated with the publication.

We are confident that this edition will be widely used and accepted for many years to come as the most informative account of the life of this Parish and District.

W. Buchan

Abbey Manse,
Dalry Road,
Kilwinning.

Front cover shows the seal of the monastery of Kilwinning.

A Short History

of

Kilwinning Parish

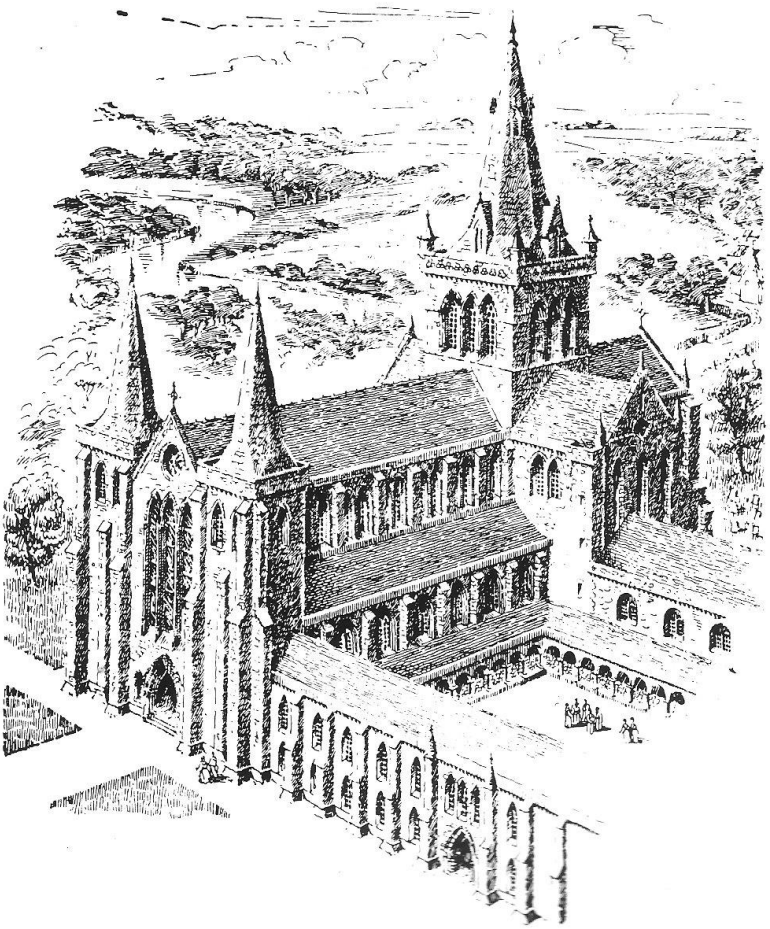
by

JOHN HAY M.A., B.A.

Second Edition by

ISABEL J. T. WILSON M.A.

Published by the Kirk Session of Kilwinning Abbey Church, 1988



An imaginative reconstruction showing how the Abbey might have looked at the height of its power.

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FOREWORD

I regard it as a privilege to be allowed to assist the Minister and my fellow elders of the Session of the Abbey Church in the compilation of this brief history of the Abbey of Kilwinning and the Abbey Church. In undertaking this pleasant task I have been encouraged by the hope that the booklet may be acceptable and useful, not only to the congregation of the Parish Church itself, but also to many other Kilwinning people and visitors who are interested in the shrine of St. Winning and the story of the parish. It should be made clear that, in a historical outline as slender as this, there is room for neither profundity nor absolute definition. In any case the documentary material for the history of the Abbey has largely been lost and the Session records of the Abbey Church are not complete, so that too lengthy comment is likely to be more speculative than accurate. However, for those who wish to delve further into detail, one may recommend "The Abbey of Kilwinning" by the Rev. William Lee Ker, M.A., a former Minister of the Parish. It is most unfortunate that the book and its companion volume "Kilwinning", by the same author, are now out of print and copies are difficult to obtain.

It will be obvious, also, that this is by no means a comprehensive chronicle of Kilwinning. It is concerned with the parish as an ecclesiastical and educational unit and merely glances at the social and economic history of the period. I must earnestly hope that the publication of this booklet will encourage other students of Kilwinning history to devote time to a complete study of the history of the town, as distinct from the parish, and also to place on record, before it is too late to do so, what is known of the many places of antiquarian interest in the district.

It may be regarded as not inappropriate that the present headmaster should act as a recorder of the past events of the parish, because for over 300 years the parish schoolmaster was not only appointed by the church authorities, but was expected to act as session clerk. The histories of parish church and parish school are inseparably entwined and I make no apology for including in these pages an account of the story of Kilwinning School in the past 400 years. The quatercentenary of the parish ministry is a milestone at which we may pause to take stock of what is behind us. A Kilwinning minister is first mentioned in 1567 and since that time the Protestant faith has been preached on a spot which had previously a long and memorable history as a great Catholic Abbey. Abbey and Church, Abbot and Minister, bestride the history of Kilwinning and it will be a sad day when the inhabitants of this place cease to have any interest in the unique quality of their heritage. For centuries the sacred towers have dominated town and parish. We earnestly trust that, for many centuries to come, whatever changes new planning or new towns may create in this area, the walls of the Abbey and the Abbey church will still stand securely above the Garnock river and that, even more, the spirit of great Abbots and distinguished ministers will continue to inspire Kilwinning. It is surely more than respect for the past which has prompted both Town and School to adopt a motto associated with the Abbey, "Sine te Domine Cuncta nil" and we do well to remember, in times of material change and progress, that nothing lasts without the Lord.

John Hay,
October, 1967. Schoolhouse, Kilwinning.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It has been specially gratifying to me that so many people have been willing to help in my researches and I gladly acknowledge my very great indebtedness to some in particular. Mr. Lavalette, minister of the Abbey Church, Mr. T. Roughead, Session Clerk, and Mr. A. Brodie, Treasurer, have most generously given me of their time, as well as every opportunity to examine all the available Session records and correspondence and to inspect the church silver and other properties. I am very much indebted to Miss Isabel J. T. Wilson, M.A., who is a professional historian with a special knowledge of local history, for the preparation of the Chapter on "The Medieval Abbey of Kilwinning" and the list of Abbots. Mr. Murray Crawford, Ardrossan, a member of a very old Kilwinning family, has carefully preserved the papers of his ancestor, Baron Bailie Robert Crawford, Clerk to the Kilwinning Heritors from 1799 to 1818 and these and many other documents of the Crawford family I have been allowed to use freely. I have been greatly indebted for books and information to Miss Cunningham, County Librarian, and also to Mr. Robert McKie, B.Sc., Mr. Peter Johnson, Mr. James Jack, M.A. and Mrs. J. Edgar. Miss M. Jack, D.A., was responsible for the pen drawing of the Abbot's seal on the cover and I am also most grateful to her for the sketch plan of the Abbey. I must include in these acknowledgements my indebtedness to Miss Helen McCulloch for her faithful copying and typing of all my notes.

The photographic plates are all, with a single exception, the work of my very good friend, Mr. William J. Longridge, who spent many hours in all kinds of weather to make these illustrations possible. I must add my thanks to Mr. Comyn Webster, Editor of "The Scottish Field", for permission to reproduce the photograph of The Kilwinning Silver Arrow.

J.H.
October, 1967.

In preparing a new edition of Kilwinning Parish I have been grateful for help from a number of sources.

I am indebted to Professor Ian B. Cowan and Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society for permission to use the list of abbots and commendators in Professor Cowan's Ayrshire Abbeys published by the Society and to Dr. Margaret H. B. Sanderson and the same Society for permission to reprint the Cunninghame Teind List for Kilwinning Parish from Dr. Sanderson`s The People of Seventeenth Century Ayrshire also published by the Society.

Mr. John Happs, Deputy Rector of Kilwinning Academy, and Mr. James McCutcheon, Rector of St. Michael's Academy, have answered my questions with great patience and much useful detail. It is a pleasure to include among the illustrations the evocative reconstruction of the Abbey drawn by Mr. John Geddes, who has kindly allowed it to be reproduced here. I have been much encouraged by the interest in the new edition shown by Mr. William Buchan, minister of the Abbey Church, and by Mr. John Hay, author of the first edition.

My greatest debt however is to two members of the Kirk Session of the Abbey Church, Mr. David Conn, Session Clerk, and Mr. Peter Johnson. They have compiled the list of elders of the Abbey Church and tirelessly provided information on the recent history of the congregation and without Mr. Johnson's unstinted help this edition would never have taken shape or appeared in print.

I.J.T.W.
May, 1988.

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN KILWINNING

North Ayrshire has a history of Christianity stretching right back to the very beginning of missionary enterprise in Scotland. It may be that, even as early as the Roman period, the work of St. Ninian possibly extended into this area. That is conjecture, but certain it is that the Celtic Christians of the period of St. Columba and St. Mungo found here, in this part of Strathclyde, a fertile field for the propagation of the faith. Kilmarnock, Kilbride, Kilbirnie, are all, like Kilwinning, verbal evidence of the existence of 'Kils' or cells of the Culdee or Celtic Church. The evidence of place-names is supplemented by much traditional legend, though there is a sad lack of contemporary record. Much later Camerarius, in his early 16th century history, refers to a monastery in Kilwinning, which was *'in good repute in Cunningham'* by A.D. 640. There is other evidence to support the view that Celtic Christianity established itself in Kilwinning at a period contemporary with Columba. What is not certain is whether the original missionary cell was set up by Saint Winning or by some holy man, now forgotten, who came to Segdoune, as the original settlement by the Garnock seems to have been called, and there planted the Cross. It is pointless and profitless to debate this here, as documentary evidence is insufficient to indicate any absolute certainty. The most likely theory is that the Celtic Church, in the generation of St. Columba, was established, across the river from the later Abbey, in Segdoune or Corsehill (The Hill of the Cross). For over a century the ways of Iona were the ways of Segdoune, until in time the influence of the Pope and of the Roman form of worship spread into Scotland.

It was in all probability during the period of the struggling Celtic Church, and before the coming of the habits and doctrines of Rome, that the patron saint of the Abbey town, Saint Winning, first came to the place associated with his name. A chapter could be written about the endless conjecture concerning his name, his origin, the place and the influence of his cell. Was he Irish or Scots, or even Welsh? Was he called Winning, or Winin, or Wynnyng, or even Finnan? The spelling of the name matters little. It seems sensible to use Winning, the form that later generations have accepted for the place of his ministry, Kilwinning. As for his origin, it may very well have been Ireland, as Timothy Pont (who visited Kilwinning Abbey about 1608) assures us. This particular tradition has it that he was the St. Winning (or St. Finnan of Moville) who actually taught St. Columba in Ireland before the latter came to Iona. Could it be that Columba, the saint, who brought Celtic Christianity to Scotland in 563, owed his missionary inspiration to the patron saint of Kilwinning? It is a most interesting thought. Those who favour

this theory would have us also believe that the Irish St. Winning died and was buried in Kilwinning in 579.

A second and more probable theory is that the holy St. Winning was a Scottish monk who landed on the banks of Garnock in 715. The Saint's day is known to be 21st January (and it is significant that this was traditionally the date of St. Winning's fair in Kilwinning). He is said to have built a holy place here, preached and converted, and after a life of great piety, died in Kilwinning. (As in the case of so many other early medieval saints this death did not end his miraculous powers and many tales are told of marvellous cures and healing at the Shrine of the holy St. Winning.) During the period of his missionary enterprise in this place, in the fashion of the times he would build a wooden church, rude and simple, attended by faithful monks who lived in thatched cells, precariously defending the faith with the utmost piety in a dark age. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary it is highly probable that this little band of brothers built their mission on the site of the later Abbey, very likely on the spot occupied today by the Abbey Church. Why? Because it is an obvious building site, above a bridge-point on the river, suitable for a fortified mission station and commanding a view of the surrounding country. Both the town name and later tradition support this view and it is therefore logical to conclude that this hallowed spot has a continuous history of church building and Christian worship extending over nearly 1300 years. This is a remarkable record and one which the present congregation of worshippers may regard with both pride and humility.

Apart from the place name, the only lasting relic of the early church was St. Winning's Well, reputed to run blood when the danger of war was near. This holy well was known to many of the older historians and was visited and respected until last century, when the coming of the railways and the construction engineer removed for ever the last natural link with our founder saint.

After the death of St. Winning the pall of the Dark Ages settled on our local history. In common with the rest of Scotland and North England, the Celtic or Irish Christianity of early Kilwinning preserved practices different from Rome and refused to recognise the power of the Pope. Is it too far fetched to recognise in these independent-minded ancestors the seed of some at least of the later Protestants and Covenanters?

But Rome was strong, and after the English Church at Whitby in 664 preferred to go the Roman way, it was only a matter of time before recognition of Rome took hold in Scotland. This was undoubtedly a step forward, because the Celtic Church retained much that was tribal and insular and was ill-organised, whereas the Roman Church was continental and thought of Christendom as one great united commonwealth of believers, with a common doctrine and scholars' language and the privilege of access to a great wealth of ideas and scholarship. This had the effect of binding England and Scotland, however precariously, to the Continent and of allowing them to share in the great movements and changes soon to take place. A great renewal of faith began in Western Europe in the early 10th century with the appearance of the first regular order of monks at the Abbey of Cluny and the life of the entire Church was invigorated. Scotland became a united country under King Duncan in 1034, and the reign of his grandson Malcolm III sees Scotland in contact with, and benefiting from, the church revolution

in Europe. English culture had come to Scotland with Queen Margaret, Malcolm's saintly Queen, who became the first great reformer of the Scottish Church. Margaret found the church and the people in her adopted country shockingly rude and backward and out of touch with new ideas. Enthusiastically, she began a process of Anglicising Scottish society and of modernising the church. She did not live to complete the task, but she inspired her sons, Alexander and David, to continue her work. It was in David's long reign (1124-53) that the influence of St. Margaret and of the Norman Conquest combined to open a fresh chapter in the history of Scottish Christianity and of Kilwinning in particular.

J.H.

THE MEDIEVAL ABBEY OF KILWINNING

It is not possible to say exactly when the Abbey of Kilwinning was founded. There is no good evidence for a date in the first half of the 12th century and the first certain reference to its existence is as late as 1201, when Nigel, abbot of Kilwinning, attended a council of churchmen at Perth. A case can be made however for a date in the late 1180's or early 1190's. Timothy Pont, who visited Kilwinning between forty and fifty years after the Reformation, quoted documents showing that Richard de Morville and his wife endowed the abbey with large areas of land around Kilwinning and Beith. These grants presumably formed part of the abbey's foundation charter and would not be made later than 1189 when Richard died. Although Pont's account of the abbey's foundation contains some errors, his quotations make good sense and are probably reliable. He does say however, in a different context, that the abbey was founded in 1191, but without indicating the source of this date. Earlier, in 1184, an English chronicler mentioned 'the church of St. Vinin', i.e. St. Winning. It is unlikely that he would have referred to the abbey as simply 'the church' so his phrase suggests that the abbey did not then exist. A foundation date within the period 1185-91 therefore seems probable. Most other evidence points to a date somewhere in the second half of the century but does not allow us to be more specific.

Pont was no doubt correct in stating that a member of the de Morville family was responsible for the foundation of the abbey, for they were the principal family in the area. David I, who reigned from 1124 to 1153, gave the district of Cunningham to his friend Hugh de Morville, making him responsible for the peace and security of what became North Ayrshire, and the responsibility passed to his son and grandson Richard and William. Until the death of William in 1196 the family were virtually rulers of Cunningham. But it was not only their wealth and social position which made them the natural founders of an abbey on their lands. They were in Cunningham for political reasons and the Abbey had a political value. The district was being initiated into the new system of firm government which the Scottish kings copied from the Norman kings of England and the great buildings of the Abbey were a reminder to the district of the power of the king and his chief advisers and of their civilised progressive outlook. Also, in the second half of the 12th century, Cunningham, with Kyle and Renfrew, formed a base from which to control the almost independent district of Galloway and the

Norse possessions in Argyll. The monks themselves probably took no part in this, but the men on their great estates could be regarded as politically reliable and therefore of special value at this time.

The foundation of an abbey however was above all a matter of great spiritual significance. In the 12th century whether a man became a monk or not, he believed that the life of a monk was the best possible life on earth and those who took the habit of a monk cut themselves off from the world with resolution and gave themselves up to the service of God devotedly and even passionately. The monks of Kilwinning were members of a branch of the Benedictines, that is, they lived according to the rules which St. Benedict had laid down in the 6th century. This obliged them to spend a considerable part of each day in prayer and worship and to occupy the rest of their time in useful labour. The Kilwinning monks were also known as Tironensians, that is, they had adopted the ideals of the Abbey of Tiron, near Chartres, in France, where early in the 12th century a reaction had set in against the laxity, real or supposed, which had crept into the observance of the rule. A fresh emphasis was put on austerity and handicrafts, but in spite of the rigour of its way of life, or perhaps because of it, the Tironensian Order was popular in Scotland and the monasteries of Kelso, Arbroath and Lindores belonged to it, as well as Kilwinning.

The Abbey was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and to St. Winning. We do not know where the first Kilwinning monks came from or how many there were but they were probably brought from Kelso, the oldest Tironensian monastery in Scotland. Normally the monks never left the Abbey precincts, although the abbot, as a great landowner and one of the few educated men in medieval Scotland, was sometimes obliged to attend parliament or otherwise assist the king, besides taking his share of responsibility for the affairs of the church as a whole. The main part of a monk's duty was the service and worship of God and for that purpose he attended eight services daily. One of these services was at midnight when the monks rose from bed and in many abbeys went down a staircase which led from their dormitory straight into the church. It may be that the staircase still partly visible at the west end of the transept gable in Kilwinning was used in this way. At other times we may picture the monks carving stone or wood for their church, working in metal and leather and copying manuscripts. An abbey was supposed to be a centre of learning and while there is no certain evidence of an Abbey school here, at least occasional incorporations of Kilwinning monks in the University of Glasgow at its foundation in 1451 and later show that a few monks reached a very high standard of education. All monks, too, were expected to assist the poor and the monks of Kilwinning presumably did so by giving alms at the gate of their western boundary wall, which thus came to be known as Almswall, beside the present Almswall Road.

The 12th and 13th centuries in Scotland saw not only the foundation of many monasteries but also the organisation of parish churches to ensure constant spiritual help for the community around each church. There is no evidence for any parish church in Kilwinning while the abbey existed and it is probable that the nave, the western part of the abbey church was used as the parish church from its foundation, with one of the monks acting as the community's parish priest. This was certainly the arrangement in the 16th century.

The monastery also provided clergy for some other parishes. At first, this may have been a way of ensuring that a parish priest was available for parish duties. The monastery was however entitled to receive the teinds, that is, payments in money or kind due to the priest from the parishioners, and this brought it considerable wealth. Rents from the abbey's estates were another source of income. Thanks to pious benefactors the abbey possessed all the parish of Kilwinning, except Eglinton and Montgreenan estates, part of the parish of Beith and a few small pieces of land elsewhere. Thus, like other abbeys in Scotland, it acquired corporate wealth from its rents and teinds even though the individual monks had no personal possessions. When the abbey was founded the land nearest it was probably cultivated but it is likely that much of its land was not then used for agriculture. According to Pont, Richard de Morville's grant included 'the forest of Kilwinning' that is, a carefully supervised area kept for hunting, not thick woodland but a mixture of trees, shrubby thickets and grass. It contained deer and rabbits and the monks were allowed to keep pigs in it. By the 16th century however the abbey's Kilwinning lands were mainly farms on which crops were grown, though very probably as part of mixed farming. We do not know how or when the transformation was achieved, but we can picture the labour involved, with the help of some local names. 'Monkredding' means 'land belonging to the monks cleared for agriculture', cleared, that is, of trees, brambles, boulders and other obstacles to ploughing. The farms of 'Dubbs' and 'Bog' suggest that poor land was taken into cultivation, probably because at some period the population increased. The monks supervised work on their estates but the actual labour of reclaiming land for agriculture would be done by their tenants, or in early times perhaps by their serfs. Certainly in the 16th century the monks were not themselves farmers, but lived off their rents of meal, barley, cheese and hens. They had other sources of food too. The Garnock was an obvious one and the Abbey had its own cruives or fish-traps in the river. Meat was not plentiful in medieval Scotland, particularly in winter and early spring, and like other estate-owners the monks may have eked out the supply with doves from their dovecot, whose site may have given Dovecot Lane its name. A garden supplying a few vegetables and herbs was common in a monastery; in 1536 a gardener was mentioned as one of the 'necessary servants' of Kilwinning Abbey; it is unlikely that the Garden Square which now contains the telephone exchange and Erskine Church Hall was the site of it; there were apparently two gardens and a bean-yard, stretching from about the present Abbey Church Hall to the river.

There was coal on the Abbey lands and it is probable that it was used by the monks and their tenants, for in the 16th century we find the farm name Mossculloch, sometimes written as Monscolheugh. By then wood was scarce and the Abbey's trees were strictly protected, to be used for building and repairing only, not for fuel. These trees formed the Inner Wood and Outer Wood, stretching roughly from Kilwinning Academy northwards to the Garnock; the western boundary was formed by the land of Woodside farm and the name is perpetuated in the Wood farm and much more recently in Innerwood Road. The track used by the monks to attend to their woodlands and bring back timber was of course the Woodwynd. Stone for building and repairing was plentiful; it was expressly stated in 1559 that the monks had the right to quarry stone on the land of Goldcraigs to repair the monastery, although the farm was let, and as there are several quarries there and a little further up the Auchentiber road, we may suppose that the original building stone of the Abbey was found in that area.

It was not only the main buildings of the monastery which had to be looked after. With such an extensive district to control, it was convenient to have a separate administrative centre to deal with the north-western part of the Abbey lands and this was at Monkcastle, where the old tower was used for collecting rents, arranging leases, etc. Then, like other landowners, the monks had their own mills to which tenants were compelled to take their corn for grinding. The Abbey had three in the parish of Kilwinning; the mill of Kilwinning, beside the bridge over the Garnock at the end of the dam, Craigmill near Dalry which served the Monkcastle area and the Sevenacres Mill for the northeast of the estate, then as now commonly pronounced "Snaker". There were times, too, when the Abbot or other official had business in the only real town in the area, Irvine. Therefore it was convenient to have a house in Irvine and the monastery had one at the Cross. Lastly there was the bridge over the Garnock. In 1439 the Abbot of Kilwinning obtained permission from the Pope to collect money to build a bridge over the river "since every year many of the faithful of both sexes were imperilled" when crossing by ford. The bridge was built fairly soon after and by the middle of the following century the name "Bridgend" was well established for the land at each end of the bridge, though it only survives now for its east end.

Since the monks were not supposed to leave the enclosed area round their church, it may well be asked how all this estate management was carried on. Probably the monks themselves administered their lands at first, when the inhabitants may have been less numerous and the organisation less complex, but it is certain that in the 16th century some of the day-to-day running of the estate was done by the Abbey tenants. They were in some cases still liable for carting stone, timber etc, and some of the more important tenants carried out administrative duties. Above all the Earl of Eglinton had come to have a considerable part in running the estates. He was the principal finance officer and estate factor and he was responsible for keeping law and order on behalf of the abbot, using one of the Abbey towers as a prison for law- breakers. We must not exaggerate monastic isolation however. At no time was the Abbey completely out of touch with the rest of the world, even if the monks remained within its precinct walls, others entered through its gates. Several kings stayed at the Abbey with their retinues, and since their visits were also occasions for transacting royal business, nobles and officials from elsewhere were sometimes present. Then there were political upheavals so great that no one, however unworldly, could escape their effects. Such were the Wars of Independence. Like many Scottish landowners the Abbot of Kilwinning submitted to Edward I in 1296 after Edward’s triumphant march through Scotland. Later, however, he seems to have become one of Bruce’s supporters in company with many Scottish churchmen. But it is unfortunately true that little is known of the part played by the Abbey in the great affairs of state before 1500. After that date we at last hear more of it, only to find that its life and its value to others have changed. The monks continued their daily services but their life was no longer entirely communual; each had his own chamber and yard. There were servants to do their cooking and various other household duties. In 1544 there were seventeen monks but by 1557 when the Church of Scotland was trying to reform itself the number had nonetheless dropped to thirteen. To many in the outside world the ideal life was no longer that of a monk and to some the Abbey was only a landed estate, a prize to be fought for or schemed for because of the wealth and authority its possession could give.

The first instance of this new outlook, as far as Kilwinning was concerned, was the appointment of John Forman as abbot in 1512. The abbot at that time, William Bunche, who had been in office for nearly forty years, decided to resign and the post was given to Forman, then Precentor at Glasgow Cathedral, largely because his uncle, Andrew Forman, a leading churchman and diplomat, was on friendly terms with the King and the Pope. It was a splendid piece of preferment for a comparatively minor clergyman and no doubt his new wealth and influence would have been at his uncle's disposal in that ecclesiastic's schemes to rise still higher in the church, but unfortunately Bunche withdrew his resignation, apparently because he did not wish Forman to succeed him. Andrew Forman, however, had in his younger days been a protégé of the Earl of Angus, and Angus's son-in-law was the Earl of Glencairn, whose principal estate of Kilmaurs was less than ten miles from Kilwinning. At this time the Earl of Glencairn and the Earl of Eglinton were on bad terms as each strove to increase his lands, his followers and his power in North Ayrshire. No doubt Glencairn hoped to replace Eglinton in the Abbey's administration and obtain support from its tenants. In 1513 Angus and Glencairn appeared at the Abbey with some sixty armed men and Glencairn tried with a certain amount of physical violence to force Bunche to agree to John Forman's installation. He refused, but the ceremony took place in spite of him and after an appeal to the Pope he disappears from the story. According to an English chronicler he was killed at Flodden that same year, but he seems to have died a few weeks before the battle.

The affair might have been just excusable if it had produced a good abbot. In fact Forman had difficulty in securing acceptance and was never able to gain possession of the monastic revenues, but during his struggle to keep the office of abbot a highly unmonastic incident occurred. In 1514 he was accused of abducting a certain Sybil Galloway without the consent of her relatives. He did not deny the charge, though he claimed there were mitigating circumstances, none of which would make it fit conduct for the head of a monastery. Fortunately his term of office was brief. During the quarrel over his appointment, William Bunche had offered to resign in favour of James Beaton, archbishop of Glasgow, and in 1513 Beaton was already contesting Forman's right to the abbacy. By 1516 Forman had abandoned the struggle and Beaton was admitted to office. Like Forman, he and his successors were not abbots in the sense of being heads of a spiritual community; the truth was, they were not expected to act in that capacity. They were administrators of a great estate and were usually termed commendators, not abbots. All were politicians or political hangers-on as well as churchmen, Beaton's successors being first his nephew and then three members or relatives of the Hamilton family, then greedy for land and the wealth and power which went with it. As a result, Abbey revenues were diverted from ecclesiastical use to the furtherance of political ambitions.

Similar conditions, however, prevailed in most Scottish abbeys by the 16th century, and while the state of the monasteries was not the only cause of the Scottish Reformation, it played a part through the contrast between their professed poverty and their actual wealth and through their failure to provide spiritual leadership while exacting all due payments. Although the Scottish Church began its own reformation before the country became Protestant, it was too late to save the monasteries. During 1559 there were sporadic outbreaks of image-breaking and other attacks on churches, and it was reported in September of that year that an attack had been made on the monastery of Kilwinning during which

'ymages, ydolls and Popish stuff' had been burned. In 1560 all religious observances contrary to the new Protestant Confession of Faith were forbidden in Scotland and that probably meant the end of the Abbey as a religious institution of the old kind. Finally in 1561 the Earls of Arran, Argyll and Glencairn *'cast doun'* the Abbey of Kilwinning. Whether this entailed actual destruction is doubtful; perhaps they only made sure Mass could no longer be said. They certainly did not reduce the fabric to its present state, for the Abbey seems to have continued to be the parish church for more than two hundred years after that time; but since monastic revenue was no longer available, repairs could not be financed sufficiently to prevent its decay and collapse. The monks' living quarters were probably used as a stone quarry long before the church became ruinous but the building of the new parish church, the present Abbey Church, released vast amounts of good usable stone in the decaying old church, the removal of which for building work and even for garden ornaments led to the abbey's present dilapidated state.

There remained the Abbey estates, still in the hands of the last pre-Reformation Commendator, Gavin Hamilton. Like the rest of the big ecclesiastical estates in Scotland they were not destined to return to the Church. In 1562 it was decided that a third of the revenues of church estates should be made available to the government for the use of the new Protestant Scottish church, but the remaining two-thirds was left in the hands of commendators and other possessors. The system continued for many years after Gavin Hamilton's death, though as that event almost coincided with the temporary fall from power of the Hamilton family, the office of Commendator of Kilwinning passed into the grasp of others. Eventually in 1592 the Abbey estates were declared to be no longer church land and when in 1603 they were granted to the one obvious recipient, the Earl of Eglinton, to be merged with his other properties, we may feel that the medieval Abbey had indeed come to an end.

I.J.T.W.

THE ABBEY CHURCH AND ITS MINISTERS SINCE THE REFORMATION

The events of 1559 and 1560, and the Protestant rebellion against the old faith, were *"the end of an auld sang"* for Kilwinning and its Abbey. The influence of John Knox and the alliance of the Scottish people with the 'Lords of the Congregation' proved too much for the Catholic court and a French army. Furthermore, the glory of the monastic ideal had faded and change was both necessary and inevitable. In Kilwinning's monastery lands, as elsewhere, political intrigue, ignorance and neglect, the feuds of great families, love of power and wealth, had spread like a dry rot of corruption, sadly diminishing the strength and moral fibre of a once great religious institution, The great days of Rome and of powerful Abbots were over.

In their place, at first tentatively and then with growing influence, there came the Protestant Church and the parish minister. The beginnings were difficult. The great surge of faith which inspired Knox's followers to free themselves from *"the bondage and tyranny of strangers"* (the French) and to win military victory, was followed by an aftermath very far short of the hopes of the Reformers. Knox's ideas for building God's house on earth were never

carried out. The plan to dedicate the great wealth of the Roman Church, and its tithes, to the work of the reformed Church was too much for the greed of nobles and politicians. The infant Protestant Church was born without either establishment or endowment. All over Scotland greedy landowners clutched at the fabric of the church and tore it apart. The vast incomes that Knox had planned to devote to the encouragement of education, poor relief and ministers' stipends, were quickly seized by the state, or filled the purses of the secular lords. The dream of a harmonious union of Church and State was shattered and it is not surprising that Andrew Melville, who succeeded Knox as the driving force of the Scottish Reformation, finally set himself against State and Bishops and inspired the creation of the Church courts that are known today, Kirk Sessions, presbytery, synod and General Assembly, with a Kirk owning allegiance not to the State but to God alone. In Melville's own words spoken to King James VI in 1596, *"there are twa Kings and twa Kingdoms in Scotland and one of them is Christ Jesus the King, and his Kingdom is the Kirk"*, it is not difficult to see how this state of affairs, brought about by the failure to realise the vision of John Knox, quickly hardened into a set position where the Scottish Kirk was drawn up in uncompromising opposition against the 17th century claim of the Stuart Kings to Divine Right. It is equally easy to appreciate that, given the temper of those times, the Protestant Scots would fight to the death to defend the freedom to sign the National Covenant. For the next 50 years, beginning with the Bishops' Wars and the signing of the Solemn League and Covenant in 1643, we have in Southern Scotland a sorry tale of religious bitterness and bloodshed, illuminated only by the incredible heroism of many of the martyred Covenanters.

This brief glance at the religious history of Scotland in the century after the Reformation has, I hope, emphasised that the downfall of the Catholic power had done nothing to bring settled peace and had multiplied a host of problems. What had happened meanwhile in Kilwinning?

In the first place the revenues of the Abbey were already being dispersed by the Abbots years before the Reformation, along with gifts of land and property. The two great families of influence in North Ayrshire, the Montgomeries and the Cunninghames, had their share of the spoils of the Monastery and by 1603 the fifth Earl of Eglinton purchased all that remained of the Abbey revenues. The Abbots of Kilwinning after 1603, of whom the most prominent was John Spottiswoode, Archbishop of St. Andrews, were Abbots in little more than name.

And what of the fabric of Kilwinning Abbey itself? Opinions differ as to how much damage was done by the Reformers and their followers in 1560 and 1561, but it is safe to assume that Kilwinning shared the common fate of the great Scottish churches. Lee Ker, in his book "The Abbey of Kilwinning", inclines to agree with Timothy Pont that the completion of the destruction took place in 1591 and submits an interesting theory that the first Presbyterian Church was probably built in the next year, 1592, out of the ruined Abbey. He suggests that the stone set in the staircase wall of the former Eglinton loft in the present day church, dated 1592 and carrying the arms of the Eglinton and Campbell of Loudoun families (for Robert Montgomerie, son of the Earl and Jean Campbell, his wife) very probably commemorates the building of a first church of the Reformed faith. If this is so, and it may very well be true, it is most likely that between 1561 and 1591 the Protestants of Kilwinning used some undamaged

part of the chancel or nave of the Catholic Abbey itself for worship. Unfortunately, the complete disappearance of the Abbey records, and the almost unforgivable failure to preserve intact the later Kirk Session minutes and accounts, make a great deal of this history either conjecture or a matter of reporting at third hand.

The year 1967 was the 400th anniversary of the first mention of a Protestant minister of Kilwinning and the beginning of a long tradition of notable parish ministers. We first read in 1567 of a certain William Kilpatrick, "*minister of Kilwinning*", as a witness in a document of that year concerning a transaction in Crossraguel Abbey, Maybole, though he may be the same William Kilpatrick who is listed as a Kilwinning monk 7 years previously. The first parish minister must have contrasted strangely with his predecessors, the wealthy and worldly ruling Abbots. The National Settlement of 1561 had allowed the former possessors of the Catholic Church property to retain two-thirds of all the Church revenues, and the Crown (Queen Mary) and the Protestant clergy were to share the remaining one-third. In the view of John Knox, who was bitterly disappointed, the scheme gave two thirds to the Devil and one third to God and the Devil. However debatable that may be, what is certain is that from their paltry share of these Thirds, as they were called, the Protestant ministers were never likely to be adequately provided. Their power would not be founded on wealth: it might be on faith and personality. There was, indeed, at least one compensating virtue in this comparative poverty. Like the early monks and friars, the parish minister was close to the people - there was no barrier of rank or property - and the survival and growth of the Reformed church would depend on the support and liberality of the ordinary folk of the parish congregations.

By the year 1567, in all the Scottish parishes numbering nearly 1000, only 257 ministers had been ordained, supported by about 600 poorly paid Exhorters and Readers, who acted as assistants in the work of the parishes. William Kilpatrick, as the first Protestant minister of Kilwinning and later combining this with the care of the parishes of Beith and Dunlop, had the assistance of one Reader. Kilpatrick's salary was at first £80 and then £100 per annum and that of his Reader £20. Thus, modestly provided with the world's goods, but no doubt fortified by abundant faith, did the first minister face the formidable task of sustaining the Protestant religion in the heart of a once great Catholic sanctuary.

Kilpatrick ministered for 10 years and was succeeded in 1578 by Alexander Wreitton, who is reputed to have been the owner of the house on the Abbey Green - now, unfortunately, taken down - whose lintel bore the date 1598 and the inscription:

"Sine te Deus Cuncta Nil. God is the Builder Praisit Be He."

It is pleasant to record that this celebrated stone has been preserved, especially as the quotation has inspired the mottoes of Kilwinning Burgh and School. When Wreitton died in 1605 there was a malicious whisper in the nearby parish of Dundonald that he had been *"eardit* (buried) *with his mouth doun that all ye ill micht go to hell",* the inference being that his words in this life had caused much mischief. In days when local horizons were very near, local interests limited and scandal something greatly to be savoured, such a tale would gain ready belief. However, the scandalmongers were publicly sought out and the Dundonald Kirk Session, having examined the evidence, found one Simon Muir of Hillhouse guilty of slander.

The good name of the minister of Kilwinning was completely vindicated. Wreitton was followed by Mr. David Barclay, who was minister from 1606 to 1614 and supported Andrew Melville in his struggle to prevent James VI giving Bishops too much power in the Scottish Kirk.

From 1614 to 1629, for the remainder of James's reign and the beginning of that of Charles I, the minister was John Glasford, a scholar and a St. Andrews graduate. After an interval of two years, Kilwinning welcomed as parish minister Robert Baillie, a young man of 29 who was to become a great figure in the history of not only Kilwinning but of the nation. This Glasgow graduate, who had become tutor to the Eglinton family, was an Episcopalian by upbringing, but the aggressive policy of Charles in trying to force the English Book of Common Prayer into the Scottish Kirk turned Baillie into a champion of the Scottish Presbyterian ways and a doughty fighter for Kirk and Covenant. He took a leading part in the critical events of the year 1638 which led to the signing of the National Covenant and the Bishops' War, going so far as to accompany General Leslie's Army as a chaplain, under the Earl of Eglinton. His letters and journals are among the best known contemporary records of this great period of Scottish history, letters that reveal a man of courage and principle, capable also of the most tender affection, as this extract, written to his wife in 1640 clearly shows:

> *"My Heart, draw near to God; neglect not thy prayers, morning and evening, with thy servants, as God will help thee; read and pray beside that in private. Put Rob to the school; teach him and Harrie some beginnings of God's fear; have a care of my little Lillie; I pray thee to write me how thou and they are. Thy owne Ro. Baillie."*

Robert Baillie in 1642 became Professor of Divinity and in 1649 Principal of the University of Glasgow.

The Rev. James Fergusson, M.A., who was presented by the Earl of Eglinton and ordained in 1643, came of the family of the Fergussons of Kilkerran, an Ayrshire family with a long tradition of service and loyalty to the Church of Scotland. Fergusson was a great scholar and writer, of such eminence and reputation that he was offered in turn a Bishopric and a Professorship of Divinity, both of which offices he declined to accept. He published several books of Biblical exposition before his death in 1667.

The next twenty years were those of sternest persecution of the Covenanters, and the ministers who stuck to extreme Presbyterian principles were sorely tried. Before the end of Mr. Fergusson's incumbency in Kilwinning, over 300 Scottish clergymen had left their charges, because with the coming of Charles II to the throne, monarchy and Episcopacy had returned to Scotland together and these "outlawed" ministers who would not submit to bishops had to give up their livings and preach to their followers at field services or "conventicles". To enforce the laws of Charles II and later of James II, the 'redcoats' under General Dalziel and afterwards under Graham of Claverhouse marched up and down the land, seeking out all those who still supported the Covenant and the Presbyterian Church.

One of those most loyal to Kirk and Covenant was Ralph Rodger, M.A., minister of the High Church in Glasgow. In 1662 he left his pulpit rather than submit to the yoke of the

bishops, and for seven years was forbidden to preach. In 1669, however, he was the first minister to obtain an indulgence from the Privy Council and was admitted to the charge in Kilwinning vacant since the death of James Fergusson. He remained stubbornly a sympathiser with the Covenanting cause, was fined, had his indulgence removed and was finally imprisoned in 1684.

These were years of a religious fanaticism that produced shootings, tortures and imprisonments of godly men by other professing Christians. Severe persecution revealed heroic qualities in the most ordinary people, though equally it produced the most sadistic and bloodthirsty, and the extreme Covenanters were no better than their oppressors in a common lack of moderation and charity. In 1687 the Archbishop of Glasgow used his influence to have Robert Bell, son of the Glasgow Provost, accepted as minister of Kilwinning, but a "bishop's man" was not apparently to the taste of the congregation and he lasted as preacher only one day. In March, 1688, George Meldrum, M.A., formerly minister of Aberdeen, took up the charge in Kilwinning, where he laboured for four years, much respected for his qualities of character and scholarship. He was invited to accept a Professorship in Glasgow University, but finally yielded to the invitation to become minister to the Tron Parish Church in Edinburgh, in February 1692.

The surviving Church records of this period, and for over a century later, indicate that a great deal of the session's business was taken up with the chastisement of the sinners of the congregation. Month after month these stern Calvinistic elders brought to the ministers reports of those who had trespassed, and insisted both on confession and on a public profession of guilt and repentance. No doubt vigilance was necessary and public denunciation a salutary method of reproof, but it is disturbing to discover that the session records of the late 17th and 18th centuries are in very large measure monotonous accounts of discipline for sinful excess and much more concerned with the purity of the body than with the salvation of the soul. One has a suspicion that George Meldrum may have been attracted to a Professorship in Glasgow partly because of this constant censorious aspect of his duty as a country parish minister. But it is doubtful if he found things any different in his new charge in the capital city of Edinburgh!

There was certainly considerable difficulty in finding a suitable successor to the eminent Mr. Meldrum, and unanimous calls in 1692 to John Munro and in 1693 to John Stirling, minister of Inchinnan, were declined.

The minutes of the session continue until May 21st 1694, with brief accounts of the summoning and discipline of those guilty of the sins of the flesh, and then cease altogether until they resume with this heading:

> *'1696. The register of the meetings and Discipline of the Session of Kilwinning since Mr. George Chalmers was ordained there - the 2nd day of Sept., 1696.'*

George Chalmers came from the Presbytery of Stirling and Dunblane and remained in Kilwinning until his appointment in 1717 as Principal of King's College, Aberdeen. During his ministry the session became very concerned with their obligation to assist the poor of the

parish, a duty that was to become increasingly heavy as the 18th century progressed. From 1697 onwards it became obligatory for all parishioners to help in poor relief, instead of, as formerly, leaving this support to the few who were charitably minded. On 29th November, 1697, the heritors and session met and the clerk notes:

> *"The minister reporting that my Lord Montgomerie had offered four pecks of meall per week as his proportion, it was agreed upon that the heritors present should now likeways condescend upon theirs and accordingly each of them being interrogated did offer as follows viz. Fergushill, one peck per week; Montgreenan, two pecks; . . . ye minister, a peck."*

With this example, others were persuaded to do likewise, with the result that the 43 poor people to be supported by the parish were each given one peck of meal per week. Heritors and session had now to keep a wary eye on both the beggars from outside who came in to share the allowance, and on the Kilwinning tenantry who defaulted and had to be summoned to account for their omissions. By May 15th 1698, the Session Clerk, John McLean, Schoolmaster, is able to write in the Session records; *"Reported that the poor were generally supplied".* One must add that the poor were not always to be so readily supplied, because until the 19th century, the session became more and more committed to the task of poor relief, giving regular monthly pensions, looking after pauper children, licensing beggars - a tremendous task that for three centuries was done by conscientious elders voluntarily, with care and devotion and without thought of any reward.

In 1698 George Chalmers moved into a new manse in the Main Street directly across from the Abbey Church gate. Stretching behind the manse to the north lay the minister's glebe, about four acres of ground and bounded on the east by the Woodwynd. It may have been that the new manse was just one sign of the great respect in which the Kilwinning congregation held their minister, because the records of the time show the great affection with which he was regarded. His call to be Principal of King's College was a great honour, but it was a sad blow to his parishioners. When he preached his last sermon in Kilwinning in February, 1718,

> *"the said Reverend, Learned and Worthy Pastor parted with his session with hearts full of sorrow and expressions of mutual affection".*

After a lengthy vacancy, due to the difficulty of finding a man acceptable both to the patron, the 9th Earl of Eglinton, and to the congregation, the Rev. Alexander Fergusson, M.A., son of the Sheriff-Depute of Ayrshire, was appointed in 1721. He was to be minister of the parish for nearly half a century and became known throughout Scotland for his vigorous part in the great national debate about Church unity and secession. His first domestic task was to set about the improvement of the church which was in a grievous state of disrepair, the fabric requiring constant attention and expense. These accounts paid during his ministry testify to the variety of this recurring expenditure;

"July 14, 1763, To James Jack for finding and stopping the hole at which the night hawk gott into the Kirk, 12S Scots". "Apr. 6, 1764 To Wm. Frew, Smith and Hugh Coulter, joiner, for taking down some big stones in danger of falling and putting them in the Kirk."

Mr. Fergusson did succeed in persuading patron and session to put table pews into the church, the area of which was previously littered with stools and chairs in the vacant spaces between burial stones and tombs. By 1723 the erection of pews in the ground area was completed and in the first book of seat rents (1723-1773) which is still in existence, we find such items as these:

'Account of the Rent of the New Seats in the Church of Kilwin from Whitsunday 1723 to Whitsunday 1724 and the Payment made thereof.

East End. £3/0/0 James Gemmill and partner.
West End. £1/4/0 David Dunlop, Weaver. £1/6/8 John Miller.
Middle Row. £1/4/0 Robert Burns in Bridgend.
East Row. £1/4/0 Margaret Weir in Dykehead.
West Row. £1/4/0 Robert Walker in Monkcurr.'

The total seat rents in that year were £53/2/8 in Scots money and it is remarkable that 30 years later in 1752, the total was exactly the same. It appears from the rolls that the pews were rented as follows: 10 in the East End, 8 in the West End and 5 each in the East, Middle and West Rows.

Another most interesting manuscript of this period still in the Session's possession is the Stent Book for the Upkeep of the Poor 1729-1736. It is headed thus:

"Account of the Stent for Subsisting the Poor in the parish of Kilwinning Laid on by the Heritors with the Minister and Kirk Session of the said parish upon themselves and tenants and upon others who have little or no valuation, from the first of October, 1729 to the first of October, 1730 at the rate of Eight pennies Scots on each pound of valuation paid. . . The proprietor paying the one half and the Tennant the other, or the Tennant paying the whole and getting the half thereof allowed in the first end of their Rent".

The Earl of Eglinton paid as stent £18/19/8 for the Barony of Eglinton and £7/11/0 for the Lordship of Kilwinning. The total amount for the first year was £269/15/4.

Elders' and Deacons' districts are obviously not a 20th century invention. In a Session minute of Wednesday, May 17th 1721, we read:

"*After Sermon the Session Convened and Constituted. . . Thereafter a scheme dividing the parish in Eighteen Districts according to the Number of the Elders and Deacons, mentioning to each their particular Quarter or District was given in and to each their*

particular Quarter or District was given in and read; and after some amendment thereof was approven ."

An entry of a few months later - Thursday Oct 25th, 1722 - illustrates the continuing zealous concern for the morals of the parishioners;

"Reported that last Sabbath after Sermon Margaret Rankin, Spouse to James Murray, Tailor in Mureside of Eglintoun, and Janet Eadie, Spouse to Thomas Reid, Coallier, in their way home were observed to stagger upon the Road, and the Latter falling and vomiting gave occasion to think they were Drunk. The Session appointed Robert Weir to speak to them thereanent and Enquire into the Truth of the alleadged Scandal and Report the same at the next dyet of Session".

Busy men indeed were those public guardians, the elected elders of Kilwinning who served Mr. Fergusson 250 years ago!

The Rev. Alexander Fergusson and the town of Kilwinning became household names all over Scotland in 1755 when the worthy but fiery minister, who loved a legal argument, charged with libel before the Court of Session, James Leitch, the Baron Bailie of Kilwinning. This was the sequel to years of antagonism in which Leitch had taken every opportunity to insult the minister. The minister's integrity was upheld by the Lords of Session, while Leitch was cashiered and forced to pay damages to the amount of £40/10/0 sterling.

But Fergusson's greatest challenge as parish minister was the effect locally of the Secession which was creating a serious rift in the fabric of the Scottish Church. This began with the secession of the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine in 1733 and gradually the movement spread over the land. By 1738 the dissenting ideas were being preached in Kilmaurs and some of the Kilwinning congregation were quite prepared to walk the long miles there on a Sunday morning. All Mr. Fergusson's indignation and reproaches were in vain. The number of those who favoured the new evangelical ways still grew and in 1759 the dissenters built their own meeting house, the church in the Green, or Greenside Church. This only served to encourage Mr. Fergusson to continue as the champion and national pamphleteer of the Kirk and tract after tract was produced, bitterly flaying the rebels. He was a furious fighter for what he saw to be the right and, until the year of his death, he busied himself with ceaseless argument, by epistles, by debate in Presbytery and Synod, and by articles in journals like the Scots Magazine. The fearless old warrior finally succumbed to the effect of long infirmity and the storms of controversy and contention and died in February 1770, when over 80 years of age. Only weeks before, the Presbytery of Irvine had dismissed the charge against him of "New Light" heresy.

We are particularly interested in his successor because it was during this ministry that the present Abbey Church building was erected. Thomas Pollock was of a Maybole family and in Sept 1770 became ordained minister in Kilwinning at the age of 27. Almost immediately he, with his session and heritors, became involved in negotiations for the building of a new church and also a new manse. The church they carefully planned was the present building, completed in 1774 and standing on the site of the original 16th century church. The erection of the new edifice entailed further destruction of the remaining walls and arches of the old

Abbey - five of the latter were taken down - and the use of many of the facing stones of the old church to build the new. In other words, the outside walls of the church we see today largely came from the older church, which in turn had undoubtedly used the materials from the ruin of the medieval abbey. It is not, therefore, an exaggeration to claim that much of the stone fabric of the Abbey Church has been used on the site continuously for over 700 years! The building cost £546/19/1 Scots and was completed a year after the new manse in the Howgate which, with the re-use of some building material from the old manse, cost £272/10/10 Scots. The shifting of the manse from Main Street to Howgate was regarded as a warrant for making a new glebe. From original plans and papers dated 1772, still in the possession of the Crawford family and kindly lent to the present writer by Mr. Murray Crawford, it appears that the new glebe was larger than the old. The original sketch is subscribed as follows:

> *"We, Hugh Coulter, wryter in Kilwinning, and John Bone there, Having measured the Old Glebe, Manse, office, houses, Close and Yeard of Kilwinning, the extent thereof being in whole Four acres, one rood and nine falls and a half, And we being ordered by James Reid, oversman, in the submission anent exchanging the said old Glebe for ground in Byrelone Crofts pertaining to the Earl of Eglintoune, conform to Quantity and Quality to lay off the said Byrelone Crofts Five acres, three roods and twenty five falls of Ground. Which we accordingly have done as appears by the above Sketch. Which is attested by us at Kilwinning the 12th day of March 1772*." (Signed) Hugh Coulter. John Bone.

Twenty years after the new glebe has been surveyed, and by this time comfortably settled in his new Howgate manse, the Rev. Thomas Pollock composed an article on the Parish of Kilwinning, to be included in the first Statistical Account of Scotland. This parish review is most interesting and comprehensive and gives a vivid picture of 18th century life in Ayrshire. At one point he compares "the manner of living" in Kilwinning in 1742 with that of 1792, the year in which he is writing. This excerpt is most informative:

> *"In 1742 the men wore strong Coarse cloth; the greater part, if not the whole, of which was spun in their own families and woven and dressed in the parish. Knit woollen stockings were then only beginning to be used by a few of the men. Plaiding hose were still the general wear. There were no hats; bonnets were universally in use. The wives of some of the more wealthy and substantial farmers, and tradesmen, had silk plaids but by far the greater part of the married women, red or striped worsted ones. Young women wore woollen cloaks, with hoods of the same kind of cloth. The cloth was of home manufacture. They had no buckles in their shoes; these were tied with a piece of red or blue tape. The women in general and particularly the younger part of them, seldom put on shoes and stockings, excepting to the church or to a fair or market. Their head- dress was extremely plain and simple. They lived chiefly on oatmeal and milk, or butter and skimmed milk cheese. Butcher meat was seldom used by the farmers, except in seed-time and harvest; and very little of it, at any time, by tradesmen and day-labourers. About the beginning of November, a few small Highland cows were brought from the island of Arran and Bute and sold at from 13s 4d to 20s. One of these was divided among three or more families. Such farmers as*

were reckoned in very opulent circumstances sometimes killed a cow in November, which had given milk till the beginning of August. There were only 4 tea kettles in the parish in 1742. There was not one in it before 1709."

Speaking of the year 1792, Mr. Pollock continues;

"It is to be observed that, notwithstanding the very great rise of rents and of servants' wages, the farmers live much more comfortably and make a more decent and respectable appearance than they did 50 years ago. Their rents are more regularly and punctually paid and there are fewer bankruptcies, or failures among them. There is, however, a still greater and more striking difference in the dress and manner of living of the tradesmen, than of the farmers. A good deal of English broad-cloth is worn by the men, and both mistresses and servant-maids, (for in point of dress there is little difference between them), have their silk coats and bonnets, their muslin and calico gowns, their ribbons and flounced petticoats and cotton and thread stockings. Tradesmen do not live nearly so much on oatmeal as they did in 1742. There is scarcely one of their families in which tea, with wheaten bread, is not used for breakfast; and very few that do not drink it in the afternoon. Farmers, tradesmen and day-labourers live a good deal on butcher meat, with potatoes. In 1792, upwards of 200 fatted cows were made use of besides veal, lamb and pork."

The latest population count in Kilwinning was 2,360 - 1,100 in the country part and 1,260 in the town. The chief town occupation was weaving, but there was no lack of variety, as the table of occupations includes 13 keepers of public houses, 14 shipmasters and seamen and 12 soldiers in the army!

Very much of the documents of this period still in the possession of the Kirk Session are concerned with legal advice and litigation in connection with the farm of Woodgreen, which had been left to them in 1741 to assist the poor by the owner, David Muir, Chamberlain to Alexander, 9th Earl of Eglinton, but with the proviso that his widow would retain life possession. The widow then proceeded to lease the farm on a 76 years' lease at a very low rental to Robert Barr and John Burns, and the Kirk Session saw little prospect of much income. In consequence, they took legal advice and in 1783 petitioned the Court of Session through the eminent lawyer, Ilay Campbell, on the grounds that the defenders were paying uneconomic rents and making large profits at the expense of the parish poor, against the spirit of David Muir's original mortification. The long 12-page petition went so far as to suggest that the previous minister, Mr. Fergusson, had some private interest in favouring Burns and Barr. The arguments were in vain and the lease continued for 76 years.

The improvement of the Parish Church continued under the next minister, the Rev. William Ritchie, D.D., formerly in Tarbolton, who was admitted in November 1798, and called to St. Andrew's Church, Glasgow, in 1802. (He has the distinction of being the only minister in office in Kilwinning who ever became Moderator of the General Assembly.) He is remembered for his success, during his very short Kilwinning ministry, in persuading heritors and Kirk Session to install seats in the church. This was not his only successful suggestion. Dr. Ritchie was obviously a man of action who believed in getting things done.

A minute of the heritors of 21st January 1799, reads as follows;

> *"The Heritors of the Parish of Kilwinning have resolved to make some repairs in the Manse and Offices To Seat the Church Conform to a Plan; Build a New Schoolhouse and dwellinghouse for the Schoolmaster and Inclose the Churchyard with a stone wall."*

In August, 1800, the heritors continued this activity by ordering,

> *"the Subcommittee to Contract with a Road maker, for forming and making the Road from the front gate up to the west end of the Church and also round the Church . . . and to form and make that road from the end of the Church to the New Schoolhouse".* (This schoolhouse was very near the site of the present Church Hall.)

Dr. Ritchie's may have been one of the shortest parish ministries in Kilwinning, but the legacy of work and improvement for which he was responsible is a large and permanent one.

When Dr. Steven became minister of Kilwinning in 1803 he had already become well known, not only for his preaching, but particularly for the satirical reference to him by Burns in the poem, "The Calf". Young James Steven, while an assistant in Ardrossan, had preached in Mauchline on the text, "And they shall go forth and grow up as Calves in the Stall". Burns heard the sermon and proceeded to make fun of the young minister, call him "an unco' calf". Many writers sprang to the defence of Dr. Steven, but it is unlikely that the reverend Doctor was ever allowed to forget the incident entirely.

These were the years of the Napoleonic Wars, and the victory in 1815 brought only an aftermath of suffering and unemployment. It became impossible to give adequate parish relief to the increasing numbers of poor, and emergency measures were necessary. At a meeting of the heritors in 1816, it was decided that a part solution would be found by paying those who were unemployed to do road building, and footpaths (alongside the main road) were constructed to Irvine and to Dalry.

Despite the difficulties and financial stringency of the time Dr. Steven and the heritors had to face the problem of the ruinous condition of the one remaining Abbey tower or steeple. It was ivy-covered and cracked and by the early part of the 19th Century liable to fall at any time, particularly after it was struck by lightning in 1813. On 2nd August, 1814, just as workmen were arriving to repair it, the tower crashed to the ground in a cloud of dust. The remnant was blown up and immediately the heritors agreed to build a new steeple. All the documents relevant to the contract, and the subscription list, are still in existence and we must admire the speed with which they approached their task. By September 1814, the builder, John Connell of Dalgarven, was chosen and on 21st December 1814, the foundation stone of the new tower was laid. On 12th November 1816, the work was completed and Kilwinning gained a new landmark, which has lent dignity and distinction to the parish ever since. The total cost was £1,590/11/10. Lord Eglinton had previously in 1813, purchased a small bell to replace the existing cracked larger bell, but it is the latter which is still used in the belfry and

which has a fascinating history dating probably back to Abbey times. It has undergone several recastings, by the Earl of Eglinton in 1629 and by the 12th Earl in Dr. Steven's ministry in 1816. It was necessary also to refound it and enlarge it in 1859. Nevertheless, it is reasonably certain that substantially the same bell which called the monks to prayer still calls the faithful to divine service.

Dr. Steven, who had come to Kilwinning from Crown Court Church in London, was widely admired as a preacher and capable at all times of "filling the Kirk" with an admiring congregation. He preached his last sermon as vigorously as usual on Sunday, 15th February 1824, but died of apoplexy on returning home to the manse.

The parish which Dr. Steven knew was a very different place from today, though it had not radically changed in quality and content from the parish described to us by the Rev. Mr. Pollock in 1794. George Robertson, in his "Description of Cunningham", printed in Irvine in 1820, lists the occupations in Kilwinning as follows;

> *"Weavers 420: Tailors 11: Shoemakers 15: Wrights 25: Masons 20: Flesher 1: Bakers 4: Tanners 4: Smiths 9: Millers 2: Writers 2: Surgeons 2: 'Coaliers' 45: Girls flowering muslin, more than 500."*

The Parish popular was then 3260, 1934 in the town and 1326 in the country parts.

The minister of the parish church presented to the congregation in May 1824 was the Rev. George Colville. His seven years of ministry seem to have been comparatively tranquil and undistinguished, and in 1831, he was transferred to the parish of Beith. From the Session minutes it would appear that, apart from the perennial problem of seeking out and rebuking those guilty of immorality, much of the elders' time in those years was taken up with the harassing responsibility of managing two farms. In addition to Woodgreen, the farm of Redwells passed into the possession of the Church and the heritors in 1709, and in 1727 it was agreed with Lord Eglinton that it should help to provide for the poor. It was more often a liability than an asset, as this extract from the minute of March 30th 1827, illustrates:

> *"The Session, having had much difficulty in obtaining regular and timely payments of the rents of Woodgreen and Redwells Farms, has resolved henceforth that the tenants shall be obliged to pay in terms of the Tacks and in presence of the Kirk Session met for that purpose".*

It must have come as a considerable relief to the Kilwinning elders when the Poor Law of 1845 took away from the church the burden of the poor and they were able to dispose of Redwells and Woodgreen.

On entering the Abbey Church from the main door at the back of the centre aisle, one's attention is immediately attracted to a marble bust placed to the left of the entrance. The bust is of Dr. Archibald B. Campbell and, if it is, as we are assured by those who knew him a true likeness, he was a man of distinguished appearance, with fine features and a noble beard-fringed head. Dr. Campbell came to Kilwinning from Portpatrick in July 1831, and for the

remainder of his professional life ministered in the Abbey Church. He was a scholar interested in the larger affairs of the national church, taking a leading part in a period which saw the Disruption of 1843 and a nation torn by ecclesiastical dispute and secession. It is possibly not a coincidence, therefore, that this highly regarded minister was in 1844 honoured by St. Andrews University with the degree of Doctor of Divinity. His scholarship is reflected also in his Account of the Parish of Kilwinning, in the New Statistical Account, which he wrote in 1842. He records that the population has remarkably increased and has now become 5,251 in 1842, an increase of 2,000 in 30 years! He puts this down to the building of the Glasgow, Ayr and Kilmarnock Railway, bringing in hundreds of labourers, and the extension of the local collieries. Dr. Campbell describes also the Eglinton Tournament of August 1839, which he personally attended. He was a man of many parts, just as successful in dealing with a cholera outbreak in 1832 among his parishioners in Doura, as he was in encouraging his Kirk to adopt choir singing instead of the Precentor. He was responsible for other church improvements, such as gas lighting, and in 1856 he persuaded the Session to install ordinary pews in place of the old table seats. His active life as the leader of a thriving parish came to an end when an assistant and successor was appointed in 1864. Dr. Campbell lived on in retirement for fifteen years.

The successor appointed was the Rev. John Sime, who ministered from 1864 to 1866 before being translated to Dundonald. We know very little about Mr. Sime, but in the Parish history of Dundonald, Dr. Gillespie records that Sime was a friend of Thomas Carlyle and that when Carlyle delivered his Rectorial address to the students of Edinburgh, the minister was present. Carlyle saw him and addressed him thus; *"Eh man, have you come all the way from Kilwinning tae hear ma babblement?"*

It is probable that the Rev. William Lee Ker, M.A., last of the ministers to be presented to the parish by an Earl of Eglinton and who was admitted in 1866, is best known of all the recent Abbey Church ministers, by the fact that his books on "Kilwinning" and "Kilwinning Abbey" have become well known standard works. These books are much above the level of the average local history and are the result of honest research and much loving interest in his subject. They remain indispensable for the student of Kilwinning's story, and treasured possessions of those fortunate enough to possess copies. The community owes Lee Ker a great debt for reviving interest in a neglected heritage. His finest memorial would be a continuing effort to preserve what little is left of the glory of the past and to try to ensure that the setting is worthy of it.

Mr. Lee Ker was naturally concerned about Church improvement and he quickly initiated some beneficial changes, including a new pulpit in 1867, and in 1873, an extension to the ground area of ninety more places at the back facing the pulpit, by using a former passage and part of the old session-house. More important was his success in persuading the congregation to accept organ music and the singing of hymns. This was a revolutionary proposal in 1876, but the congregation almost unanimously stood by their progressive minister. Lady Eglinton gifted a harmonium costing £70. It must have made a stirring and joyful noise, because the congregation was persuaded to stand while singing - a daring innovation indeed! The Kirk Session and heritors saw an opportunity when the new Public School was built in Dalry Road, to acquire in 1877 part of the old School buildings near the church (in what is now Vaults Lane) for a Mission Hall. For £100 the Session in 1886 installed hot air heating

instead of gas, as formerly. But unquestionably, Lee Ker was most proud of his new manse, which was a spacious and dignified residence on a site of 1½ acres (now owned by Mr. J. Cole-Hamilton) in Dalry Road, above where it joins Old Woodwynd. It was completed in 1888 at a cost of £2,255/12/6.

Lady Eglinton's harmonium was succeeded, in turn, by an American organ presented by her in 1887, and then finally, by a pipe organ, purchased by the congregation for £750 from the proceeds of a successful Bazaar held in 1896. William Lee Ker, after a fruitful and honoured ministry, died in May, 1902, having set the pattern for his parish for the twentieth century. He left a church which, in physical structure and organisation, has not radically altered since his day, and the fact that the methods he pioneered still keep a congregation in good heart are proof that he laboured well. In January 1903, the Abbey Church welcomed the Rev. Archibald Hunter, M.A., B.D., who was born in Lamlash and educated there and in Glasgow University. Archibald Hunter was in the grand tradition of the West Highland lad o' pairts, who have for generations given a distinctive character to the University of Glasgow. With sacrifice and dedication he studied for the ministry and he retained throughout his whole life a sturdy independence, a moral integrity and a high regard for scholarship and study. (It must have been a great joy to him that his son, Archibald McBride Hunter, followed his example by proceeding to Glasgow University, where he was a brilliant student, graduating in Divinity and eventually becoming Professor of New Testament Exegesis in the University of Aberdeen.)

Archibald Hunter's ministry was not only in a new century; it was in a new age for the Scottish Church. The years of his incumbency spanned the Edwardian period, the First World War, the inter-war generation of depression and unemployment, and the coming of the Second World War. The changes in the church were as remarkable as the developments in affairs of state. Gone was the period of patronage, when Lord Eglinton had the sole right to 'present' a minister to the Church of Kilwinning. The power of the heritors was also to pass away. The Church of Scotland (Property and Endowment) Act 1925 changed the old ways of taking teinds and managing church revenue, and placed financial responsibility in the hands of a new body called the General Trustees of the Church. This disestablishment paved the way for the great union of the Church of Scotland with the United Free Church in 1929. These were indeed momentous days and while the following excerpts from the contemporary Session records may be of interest, some may besides illustrate the changes that came to the Abbey Church in the forty years of Mr. Hunter's long and notable ministry.

16th April, 1903. "A design by Messrs. Stephen Adam & Son for the Memorial window to the late Rev. Mr. Ker entitled 'Paul at Athens' was submitted and approved."

4th August, 1911. "Owing to the Mission Hall being now dismantled, it was considered necessary to make arrangements for getting the use of a hall for the Mission Sabbath School and other meetings."

9th October, 1912. "The Church Hall being now completed it was resolved to appoint a Committee to be known as the Hall Committee."

29th January, 1914. Abstract of Accounts for Year ending 31st December 1913. Total cost of Church Hall £2,419/1/10.

17th April, 1914. "Mrs. Rowan who, along with her sister, Miss Conn, subscribed £800 towards the building of the Hall, desired that it be known as the 'Memorial Hall' and this was unanimously agreed to."

14th April, 1916. "It was resolved to insure the Church Hall against damage by Aircraft for £2,000."

19th October, 1917. "Mr. Jack reported that the Moderator and he had visited the Church Hall presently occupied by the Military and that everything appeared to be in good order."

18th April, 1919. "Memorial to Fallen Soldiers. It was unanimously resolved to erect a memorial in the form of an Ionian or Celtic Cross in close proximity to the Church."

13th April, 1923. "A letter was read from the Heritors' Clerk stating that their Committee consented to the introduction of Electric lighting to the Church." (Estimated cost £193/8/9.)

18th August, 1924. "It was resolved to acquire two new Communion cups in order to accelerate the service and it was remitted to Mr. Torry to purchase these."

17th October, 1924. "Mr. John Watson presented to the Session on behalf of the Church two solid silver Communion cups inscribed as from him and his wife in memory of both their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Watson and Mr. and Mrs. Boyd."

5th July, 1926. "Electric lighting of Hall. Offer for Electric Light installation in the Hall. Gregor Watson, Saltcoats £36/15/0."

27th July, 1927. "The question of introducing the Individual Cup at Communion Services was again brought up and as a majority in a plebiscite of the congregation had declared themselves in favour of this method, the Kirk Session decided that the Individual Cup should be introduced for those who desired their use, but that the cost should be defrayed by those who had voted for them."

31st January, 1928. "The Kirk Session were unanimously of the opinion that as the Tower was a public building erected by public subscription, they instructed the Clerk to write to the Town Council and Parish Council, suggesting that those bodies should jointly take over the control and maintenance of the Tower."

2nd April, 1928. "The right of the session to have access to the Tower to ring the Bells (at their own expense for the cost of ringing) on all occasions of public worship on weekdays and Sundays should be strictly reserved."

15th December, 1930. "The Clerk intimated that he had received from Mr. Gilbert Christie, Session Clerk, Mansefield Church, two Blue Print Copies of Plans showing the division of the

town and Parish of Kilwinning as arranged to be allocated to Abbey, Erskine and Mansefield Church."

20th April, 1933. "The Moderator and Session viewed with favour the proposal to convey to Kilwinning Town Council the Church Tower and Clock under reservations stated."

1st February, 1941. "It was resolved that three stirrup pumps and nine pails should be purchased without delay. (Fire Protection Order, 1941.)"

9th February, 1941. "It was resolved that an attempt should be made to form groups of fire watchers and that the congregation should be invited to co-operate."

26th September, 1943. "Intimation was given that the Rev. Archibald Hunter, B.D., Minister of Abbey Church, Kilwinning, proposed to submit to the Presbytery of Ardrossan Schedule of Application for Colleague and Successor. The Session further resolved to put on record their high appreciation of the long, faithful, devoted and honourable service which, in the past, Mr. Hunter had given to the Church and Parish of Kilwinning."

At a congregational meeting in Abbey Church on 29th September 1944, the report of the Vacancy Committee was heard and the Rev. Wilbur Lavalette was duly elected minister in succession to Mr. Hunter. It will be the task of a future historian to assess the importance of the past 23 years in the long story of Kilwinning parish.

It is, however, permissible to record that Abbey Church and its Church Hall are, more than ever, religious and social centres of the life of Kilwinning and that the present minister and the members of his family are in no small degree responsible for this healthy state of affairs. Mr. Lavalette would, I am certain, agree that his sympathy with youth and youth activities, and the encouragement of their development has been an abiding interest. As a result, Boys' Brigade , Youth Club, Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, Youth Fellowship, Junior Agricultural Club, the pupils of Kilwinning High School, have all frequent direct or indirect association with the Church, to the mutual benefit of Youth and Congregation alike.

The Abbey Church at the latest return has 1,540 communicants on the roll and is in good heart. Organisations include a Woman's Guild of 110 members, a Sunday School of 357 and a Boys' Brigade Bible Class of 75. The praise is led by a choir trained by the Organist and Choir Master, Mr. James Breckenridge. The Church Treasurer is Mr. Andrew Brodie and the Session Clerk, Mr. Thomas Roughead. The Church has, at present, only one Sabbath diet of worship, at 11 a.m., but the Sunday evenings for the greater part of the year, are devoted to Youth Fellowship activities. There are two Communion Sundays each year, in April and October.

These bare statistics for a large congregation may seem to mirror a church and a society having nothing in common with the little Protestant flock of 1567 who found a shepherd in William Kilpatrick within the walls of the ruined Abbey of Kilwinning. But the thread of the parish story has been spun without break, no matter how much the pattern has altered, the faith is a common faith, and the long and honourable history of this parish is one

of which we may all be proud. It would be worse than folly if we shamefully neglect it, and it behoves us in the future to prove worthy of it.

J.H.

Twenty-one years after Mr. Hay completed the above history of the Abbey Church, there can be little doubt that he was right to emphasise Mr. Lavalette's work among children and young people as an outstanding characteristic of his ministry, but it is not the whole story. His term of office was along one. When he was inducted in 1944 the Second World War which enlarged everyone's horizons was still in progress, and when he resigned from the charge thirty years later at the end of 1974, Kilwinning had become part of the new town of Irvine and was experiencing a great influx of population from elsewhere. Not surprisingly we can now see that during his ministry, developments took place which reflected the needs and values of a changing community.

The most striking changes concerned the membership and duties of the Kirk Session. In the early part of this century, as in most Scottish parish churches, the elders were a small group, exclusively male, drawn from the better-off in money or in land and from the better educated, those in short who were felt to be the natural leaders in the community. The Kirk Session rarely exceeded twenty and of these only some seven or eight played an active part in church affairs. This was still true in 1945, but by 1965 there were sixty elders, drawn from a much wider cross-section of the community. Part of the increase was due to an increase in membership of the church, but there is no doubt that many of the congregation approved of the change. In 1952, for instance, when six new elders were required, the congregation was asked to submit nominations. Three hundred did so and their lists contained a total of fifty names, not all of the kind previously thought suitable. At the same time a greater proportion of the elders began to attend Session meetings regularly and to accept responsibility for various aspects of church work.

A still greater change was yet to come. In 1945, on instructions from the presbytery, the Abbey Church in common with the rest of the Church of Scotland was asked to consider admitting women to eldership. The Session voted against the proposal by 11 to 1, and at a congregational meeting, only 4 members supported the idea while 279 opposed it. Clearly it was not just a question of male intransigence; nearly all the women who voted were against the proposal. For some years the matter was dropped but in the 1960's discussions on sex equality became common in Britain, especially among younger people, and the General Assembly at last decided that women were eligible to become elders. In 1970 the Abbey Church required eight new elders and in calling for nominations, Mr. Lavalette reminded the congregation that the names of women could now be put forward for consideration by the Session. A majority of the Session declared themselves willing to accept women as colleagues and on 21st February 1971, Mrs. Mary Milne and Mrs. Christine Welch were ordained as the first women elders in the Abbey Church. Opinion had changed so much since 1945 that the Abbey congregation was among the first in the Church of Scotland to have women in the Kirk Session.

A few changes were also made to church services. The time of the principal service was moved from noon to 11 a.m., and in summer a 9.30 a.m. service was introduced so that families might come to church before setting off to spend the day in the leisure pursuits which had become usual on Sundays in the 1960's. The form of service however, was little altered, and the communion service above all preserved the formality of old. Communion was celebrated only twice a year. Elders wore formal morning dress with white ties, which in 1945 was still proper wear at a number of other events and was felt to add dignity to the service. The elders did not distribute the bread and wine. These elements were prepared and placed in each individual container in the pews before the service. Thus no unnecessary movement disturbed the solemnity of the occasion. Yet even here change was found to be necessary. In 1970 some elders pointed out *'the difficulty now being experienced in obtaining the type of linen collar and white tie at present worn at Communion',* and the Session decided to adopt a morning suit with ordinary white linen collar and a black tie as Communion wear.

The membership of the Abbey Church increased very considerably during Mr. Lavalette's ministry. New members were welcomed, sometimes as many as 100 in one year, but at the same time there was less insistence on the need to attend communion services as a condition of membership. Before Mr. Lavalette's induction those who had not attended at least one communion in three years were removed from the roll of members almost immediately. Now there was a more relaxed attitude, a readiness to hope for improvement. The growth in numbers however led to a problem. Before 1956 members had their specific seats in the church for which they paid seat rents. Where were so many new members to be fitted in? In 1954 an appeal was made for those not using their seats to relinquish them to waiting applicants but even this was not enough, and in 1956 it was decided to abolish seat rents so that seats might be found more readily.

By 1970 a very different kind of change was also appearing in church life. This was a lessening of the dislike and suspicion which had existed between some Protestants and Roman Catholics in Scotland. Many church members on both sides were prepared to stress the common basis of their faith and explore the possibility of some form of worship they could share. A notable occasion took place in the Abbey Church on 17th December 1972. At a joint choral service the collection was taken half-way through the service by representatives of Mansefield, Erksine, the Congregational Church and St. Winin's, as well as the Abbey, and the proceeds went to the Sisters of the Misericorde in Ardrossan. It was undoubtedly a forerunner of the ecumenical services which the Kilwinning Council of Churches has organised since its inception in 1976.

The last great occasion before Mr. Lavalette's retiral was the celebration of the bicentenary of the building of the present Abbey Church. A week of varied activities included a fete and special church services. Six months later, at the end of 1974, he retired. In the following November the congregation was saddened to hear of his death and as a mark of their respect for him a memorial fund was set up which is used to further the charitable work of the church.

On 24th March 1975, the Abbey congregation elected the Rev. Ian J. M. Reid, O.B.E., B.A., J.P., as their next minister. Mr. Reid had been leader of the Iona Community for the

previous seven years and he was preached in by the Very Rev. Lord MacLeod of Fuinary, his predecessor at Iona and an ex-Moderator of the Church of Scotland. Coming to Kilwinning when the town was rapidly changing its character, he may well have been the right man in the right place at the right time, for his ministry was marked by greater contact with the work and debates going on within the Church of Scotland far beyond the local area. Visits were organised to Iona, the Scottish Churches House at Dunblane, to Carberry Towers and so on for rededication, renewal of spirit, discussion and training. At the same time there was an emphasis on the idea of the congregation as a friendly community bound together by their Christian ideals and this unity was expressed symbolically in alterations to the form of the communion service. The bread and wine for the congregation were now placed on the communion table and distributed by the elders, while in each pew members handed the plates of bread and trays of individual cups to each other.

The same spirit of Christian unity ensured that good relations continued with the Congregational and Roman Catholic churches in the town as well as with the Church of Scotland ones.

There was emphasis too on the importance of communion and on the celebration of the great festivals of the Church, Christmas, Easter and Whitsunday. A Christmas communion service was held on the Sunday nearest to Christmas but in addition a family service was begun on Christmas Day itself. Easter and Whitsunday were also celebrated with communion, and services were introduced on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, the Thursday one also being a communion service.

A few other innovations were made to services, the chief one being in 1981 when the Kirk Session voted to discontinue their formal dress at all communion services, deciding that it would be sufficient for men to wear a dark lounge suit and women a dark dress. In 1978 the elders agreed to participate in the conduct of worship by occasionally reading the lesson, and in 1984 a particularly interesting reading took place when Mrs. Fiona Frew read the New Testament lesson in Scots, perhaps the first use of Scots in a formal part of an Abbey Church service for at least two centuries.

More worldly matters had to be dealt with in 1979, when a survey of the exterior walls of the Abbey Church showed that expensive repairs were needed. Money had already been spent on rewiring the church and it was decided to phase the repairs to the walls over two years and finance them by a special appeal also lasting two years. The congregation's response was remarkable and the success of the appeal owed much to the efforts of the special Appeals Committee under its convener Reginald Welch, and to the work and expertise of Mrs. Rosemary Reid, the wife of the minister. In the first three months of the appeal over £10,000 was collected and when it ended in December 1981, over £35,000 had been raised. This would have been just enough to cover the original estimate but unfortunately the estimate proved too low. To some extent this was due to inflation, but additional work was found to be necessary: repairs to storm damage on the roof, renewal of window frames, gutters and leads in stained glass windows and external painting. It was then decided to add internal redecoration to Phase 2 of the work, bringing the estimated cost for Phase 2 to £30,000. At this point there was further bad news. The Historic Buildings Council had given a grant for over

half of the cost of Phase 1 but they had no money available for Phase 2. Also the organ needed repairs. Yet somehow, with the help of thrift shops, fetes, jumble sales, coffee mornings, etc., money continued to be raised and at last on 24th November 1982, the congregation was able to hold a service of Thanksgiving and Rededication on completion of the main restoration work. It was however only a breathing space. As early as 1980 doubts had been expressed about the condition of the boiler for the church's heating system, and in 1983 attention turned to the problem of finding a more efficient and if possible more economical system. It proved to be a slow business and the installation itself was a considerable upheaval, but in June 1985 the new heating was not only installed but at last pronounced to be working satisfactorily.

By this time dampness had appeared in some parts of the church under the new redecoration. Its cure had to be followed by further redecoration which was not completed until October 1987. Between November 1986 and March 1987 extensive repairs and redecoration were carried out in the manse while it was unoccupied. The church hall needed a new heating system and its guttering had to be replaced. It says much for the congregation's spirit that, inspired by their minister's faith, they never despaired, however impossible the task appeared.

As in most Church of Scotland churches in recent years, all this went on against a background of falling membership. The effort outlined above however suggests that if members were fewer they were more involved in the work of the church. Other statistics bear this out. Collections on Sundays have risen and the number who worship regularly is actually greater than it was when the membership was higher.

There has been little reference in this account to any Abbey Church schemes aimed directly at the thousands of newcomers to Kilwinning and it may be as well to explain why. There are of course many among the incomers who have been welcomed as members of the Abbey congregation, but by an unhappy chance it has been impossible for the Abbey Church to take the initiative in the areas where most new houses have been built. In 1929 because of the great national union of churches in Scotland, Mansefield and Erskine Churches became part of the Church of Scotland, on the same footing as the Abbey Church. In the following year a scheme was drawn up which divided the former parish of Kilwinning into three 'parishes', giving each of the three churches responsibility for carrying on church work in one of these areas. There was no question of directing members to any particular church, but there was general agreement that each church would carry out development work, such as an additional Sunday School in a school hall in its own area. As it happened, the biggest housing estates built as part of the New Town plan, Pennyburn and Whitehurst Park, were not in the Abbey Church's area and the Abbey congregation has therefore not been involved in new approaches in these districts.

Mr. Reid retired on 3rd November, 1986, and as both he and Mrs. Reid had taken part in a good deal of voluntary work outside the church, their departure was regretted by an exceptionally large number in the community. On 4th March 1987, the Abbey Church welcomed its new minister, the Rev. William Buchan, B.D., Dip. Theol. Inheriting as he did many of the church's financial problems, it is fortunate that he has shown a willingness to involve himself in the temporal aspects of his charge and a talent for suggesting improvements

in the seemingly endless task of fundraising. In recent years vandalism has added to the church's difficulties and has necessitated liaison with the police, the District Council which owns the churchyard, and the Scottish Development Department which cares for the remains of the medieval abbey. Despite these worries the congregation has given enthusiastic support to the proposal to commemorate the foundation of the medieval abbey. Mr. Buchan has taken a leading part in organising suitable events and in encouraging others to participate, and its success, which already seems assured, will be due in no small measure not only to his executive ability but also to his appreciation of Kilwinning's history and the part played in it by successive Abbey congregations.

I.J.T.W.

THE PARISH SCHOOL

Few schools are known to have existed in Ayrshire before the Reformation, but it is almost certain that Kilwinning Abbey maintained one of them. What is more, the reputation of the Abbey learning was known far beyond Ayrshire. When Glasgow University was founded in 1451 three monks from Kilwinning were invited to join the original staff. These notable scholars were the Abbot himself, William Boyd, with John Spark and Robert White. Nine years later they were joined by William Dunlop and in 1467 by James Spark. Charles Stuyle joined the staff of Glasgow University from Kilwinning Abbey in 1519. One can readily believe also that such an excellent centre of learning as Kilwinning had close ties with Universities in England and the Continent, where no doubt some of the more able monks migrated for further study, but this medieval education was for the few and not for the many. It was intended for the cleric only and largely concerned with theology, law, Latin grammar and philosophy. Very occasionally the benefits of monastic learning might be extended to the sons of landowners and freemen. Gradually, however, this concession was extended, and it is probable that by the beginning of the 16th Century the Monastery contained the germ of a parish school.

The real beginnings of education for the ordinary folk of the parish may, therefore, precede the Reformation, but it is more likely that they had to await the coming of John Knox.

Knox's dream was to educate everyone in Scotland to be able to read the Bible and this led to the great scheme of national education in his "First Book of Discipline". In brief, it recommended a school in every parish for all children regardless of rank and station, with the hope that the more gifted would proceed to grammar school and university. It was a grand national plan, nobly conceived and practical in detail. Among its recommendations was one that the new office of reader should combine teaching with church assistance. There may have been a parish schoolmaster in Kilwinning who carried over from the Catholic period into the time of Knox, but assuredly the reader appointed to help William Kilpatrick about 1574 would be expected, among his many other duties, to teach the bairns in Beith and Dunlop, if not in Kilwinning. There were at this time only 42 readers to support the education in Ayrshire and in

few of the parishes would schools exist. The reader's teaching, in any case, was only part-time and there would seem little sense in building a school.

Gradually, however, during the late 16th and 17th centuries, the whole-time schoolmaster emerged in Ayrshire and the entire conception of education changed radically. Instead of teaching in Latin only, the teaching of the native language and grammar took equal place and the reformers' dream to have every child able to read led to the enrolment of girls in school as well as boys. But with limited capital and lack of teachers the progress of education was hardly spectacular. When the National Covenant was signed in Ayrshire in 1638 fewer than a quarter were able to sign for themselves. In addition, the religious and civil struggles which occupied so much of the l7th century tended naturally to retard the peaceful progress of school learning.

What were the typical Ayrshire parish Schoolmaster's duties 300 and more years ago? We can tell very clearly from the evidence of a remarkable document among the records of Dundonald Kirk Session. In 1640 they wished to appoint a schoolmaster and the minister drew up a very comprehensive list of duties. This comprehensive statement by the Rev. Robert Ramsay (a close friend of Baillie, the Kilwinning minister) gives a very clear picture of what was required of the village dominie, as these few excerpts from the Dundonald articles demonstrate:

(a) "The master shall attend at all times when the children are in school and not suffer himself to be withdrawn by drinking, playing or any other avocation."

(b) "Let the children in the months of October, November, December, January, February meet in the morning at the sun rising and be dismissed at the sun setting at night, except some younger ones or those who are furthest from school .... All the rest of the Year let the hour of gathering in the morning be seven o'clock and the hour of skailing six."

(c) "Let the master pray gravely and religiously every morning .... and so at even before he dismisses them."

(d) "It must be carefully attended that the scholars be present at the sermons on the Lord's Day . . . hearkening modestly and reverently, and have a readiness what they have observed to say on Monday morning ...."

(e) "Those who learn Latin must have a pense [a prescribed portion] of the whilk they have learned before, to say every morning ...."

(f) "For the children's better profiting let those that are further advanced in reading Scottish, whether print or writ, each of them have the charge of a young scholar ... it being always provided that the older scholar his furthering of the younger hinder not himself in his learning."

(g) "Let a special care be had of the children's writing."

(h) "As the master would be careful and conscientious to teach his scholars good learning, so would he also learn them good manners."

(i) "And because many .... are unable to abide continual bensell [application] of learning, let them have .... some recreation on the ordinary days, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday .... and let the master see that they play not at any unlawful or obscene pastime, or such as may readily defile or rent their clothes or hurt their bodies."

(j) "And finally as without discipline no company can be kept in order, so least of all unbridled youth, therefore it shall be necessary that there be in the school a Common Censor who shall remark of faults and delate them to the master of whom account shall be taken once a week .... And according to the quality of the faults the master shall inflict punishment, striking some on the loof [palm] with a birch wand, belt or pair of tawse, others on the hips, as their faults deserve .... And let the wise master rather by a grave austere and authoritative countenance and carriage repress insolence and gain every one to their duty than by strokes; yet not neglecting the rod where it is needful."

Much may have changed in schools and education since 1640, but if this remarkable document mirrors the typical parish schoolmaster of the time, the basic devotion to duty and much of the philosophy of a demanding profession have changed only in degree. There was obviously greater emphasis on religious teaching and example and the minister and Kirk Session saw to it that the master was as zealous in leading the worship of his flock as he was painstaking in their teaching.

In 1646 an 'Act for Founding of Schools in every Parish' required that parishes hitherto neglecting this duty should undertake to do so forthwith, appointing a Schoolmaster and founding a school. Kilwinning, of course, had its Schoolmaster, but what kind of school building it possessed we do not know. A Kirk Session minute of 1656 records that,

> *"Likewise it was ordained that all possible haste should be used for the putting up of the School chamber and that the monies owing by Smithstone should be brought in for this object".*

This may mean that they had neglected to found a proper School building according to the terms of the Act passed 10 years before, or is it simply that, as in our own day, money for schools seems always to be too little too late?

Whatever their difficulties, the parish schools of Ayrshire in the 17th century obviously produced outstanding scholars and the Irvine/Kilwinning area is particularly distinguished. John Strang of Irvine was Principal of Glasgow University from 1626 to 1651 and was succeeded by Ramsay, the Dundonald scholar and minister. Then in 1660 the great Robert Baillie of Kilwinning continued this remarkable Ayrshire tradition when he, in turn, was appointed Principal in Glasgow. The respect felt in University circles for the scholarship of North Ayrshire was amply demonstrated in 1645 when the plague struck Glasgow. The University forsook the city for 2 years and it is not surprising to learn that they set up their temporary abode in a large barn in Irvine!

After 1660 things became as difficult for the Protestant schoolmaster as for the Covenanting minister. By law no supporter of the Covenant could teach in a public school and many schoolmasters had to give up their positions. Schools lay empty and the fabric of Ayrshire education, built up with long striving, was sorely torn. Many of the Ayrshire masters suffered grievously and George Martin of Dailly was seized as a Covenanter in 1679, flung into prison and in 1683 hanged in the Grassmarket in Edinburgh. The coming of William of Orange in 1689 mercifully ended “the killing times" and the Protestant schoolmaster was no longer a rebel in hiding. Slowly the schools of North Ayrshire began to re-open and commenced the difficult task of putting together the broken pieces of a wrecked educational system.

Kilwinning was probably more fortunate than most. The heritors tried to maintain some continuity in the harsh times of Charles II and James II, and in 1680 they met to,

> *".... make choice of Mr. Wm. Kid to be the schoolmaster of the said parish of Kilwinning, authorising him to take up the public school thereof"*.

In 1688 the schoolmaster and session clerk was Mr. Arthur Birnie. The first mention of a new appointment after the Revolution of 1689 in succession to Birnie is in 1696, when Mr. John McLean, Schoolmaster of Largs, was appointed to Kilwinning as schoolmaster, Precentor and session clerk, a formidable list of duties! And all this for a salary of probably about £10 a year, and at a time when qualified teachers were desperately few after thirty years of chaos and persecution.

It took a long time, in point of fact the best part of a century, for normal parish schooling to be restored, and when the Statistical Account of Scotland was published in 1791-9 most Ayrshire parishes once again had their schools. These schools came under the "management" of the parish minister, who filled vacancies in the staff in consultation with the Session and the heritors, besides regularly examining the scholars. The schoolmasters themselves, after having duly satisfied these local employers, had to be licensed by the presbyteries. Kirk and School were fast bound together and the Bible and the Catechism had a vital role to play in 18th century education.

We do not know exactly the proportion of girls to boys in schools at that time, but the girls were certainly fewer in number. Many of the gentry still sent their sons to the local school, but by the end of the century the custom was growing of paying for a private tutor.

The basic subjects of the parish school curriculum were reading, writing, arithmetic and religion, with the Bible as the main textbook. This meant that the average parish school gave only a rudimentary elementary education. Kilwinning school was however, more ambitious, and by the late 18th century had some pretension to grammar school status, as it professed Latin, Greek and French besides English. Outside Ayr, Kilmarnock and Irvine, this was attempted only in Ardrossan, Stewarton and Galston, besides Kilwinning. Before the end of the century other subjects in addition to languages began to be considered and in Kilwinning mathematics was introduced and taught in combination with the classics.

Writing about the year 1792 the parish minister, the Rev. Thomas Pollock, states that,

> *"the salary of the parish Schoolmaster is £9/9/0. This, with the school fees and other emoluments, makes the office of schoolmaster worth about £25 a year . . . English, Writing, Arithmetic and bookkeeping, with the Latin, Greek and French languages are taught in the parish school. There are also 2 other schools in the town and 2 in the country part of the parish, intended chiefly for teaching English and writing".*

The further comments of Mr. Pollock about education in Kilwinning are concerned solely with indignant protest at the gross underpayment of schoolmasters. Those who feel that to some degree this old injustice has carried on into the 20th Century will be interested in these sentiments of the Kilwinning minister in 1792.

> *"A common tradesman, or day labourer, if sober and industrious, will earn a great deal more than the generality of schoolmasters can possibly do. Is it to be imagined that a man having anything like a liberal education and, in other respects, of an unblemished character, will engage in an office, the duties of which are so extremely laborious, for the miserably narrow, scanty pittance at present annexed to it? Should trade and commerce make the same rapid and extensive progress, which of late they have done, parish schools, it is to be feared, will be filled with persons wretchedly ignorant, or of grossly indecent and immoral lives. The consequences of this, to the rising generation, are too painful to be dwelt upon."*

We may be permitted to comment that the Rev. Mr. Pollock's indignation is a righteous one and the point he makes not without significance even in our own day.

During the early part of the 19th century Scottish education was still controlled by the Church of Scotland, but their very difficult task of finding adequate staff for the parish schools was eased by the Education Act of 1803, which raised teachers' salaries to a minimum of 300 and a maximum of 400 merks - the first official rise in salary since 1696! This Act also provided for proper schools and a schoolhouse for the master, who continued to be certificated by the Church Authorities. There was still some uncertainty about the qualifications of the teachers of the small private or 'adventure' schools found in every parish at a distance from the burgh school. They very often confined themselves to basic reading and writing, and married or single women were in charge as frequently as men.

Kilwinning heritors had anticipated the Education Act of 1803 by building a new school and schoolhouse in 1800. (This school later became the Parish Church Mission Hall.) In 1804 they appointed Mr. James Ramsay, Glasgow, student in Divinity, as Schoolmaster,

> *"…. qualified to teach the English, Latin and French languages according to the most approved method, with writing, arithmetic and book-keeping"*, at a salary of 400 marks Scots (the maximum salary by law and worth £34/4/4½d).

In 1820, George Robertson, in his "Description of Cunninghame", included a Survey of North Ayrshire Education calling it the 'State of Education'. In this he informs us that

Kilwinning had 7 schools, with a total of 325 pupils. Of that total, 196 could read only, 115 could read and write, and 42 could read, write and count. Latin was professed by 4 pupils and Mathematics and French by 6. It should be remembered, of course, that the more fees were paid, the more additional subjects were taken.

In April 1842, the Rev. Archibald Blair Campbell completed his report on the Parish of Kilwinning for the New Statistical Account. In a brief reference to Education he remarks:

> *"There are 8 schools in the parish, but only one of them is a parochial school. The others are all unendowed and are supported almost entirely by school fees".*

He also adds,

> *"The average attendance in all the schools put together is about 550 and there are few in the parish who have not received instruction in reading and writing and the other elements of a common education".*

A greater incentive to good teaching and good school conditions had come since 1839, when the first state grants to schools began. Schools were grant-aided only if they were able to satisfy the newly appointed Government inspectors, who demanded definite standards. It was the beginning of the end of education for the people by the officials of the Church of Scotland. They had done their work since the Reformation, often in the most adverse circumstances, remarkably well, but times were changing, and the task of national education was now too great to be undertaken by the Church authorities. The Church of Scotland monopoly was finally broken b the Disruption of the Scottish Churches in 1843, after which Free Church Schools appeared in Ayrshire as well as the Parish School. The Education Commission Report of 1866 states that there were 121 schools in Ayrshire administered by the Churches, 92 by the Church of Scotland and 29 by the Free Church.

In 1845, Mr. James Ramsay, headmaster for 41 years, died and was succeeded as Schoolmaster of Kilwinning by Mr. Andrew McConnell, who, in his capacity also a Session Clerk, has left us in the Session records most beautiful examples of his elegant penmanship. Unfortunately one reads in a Session minute of 9th December, 1849, that,

> *"The Session, taking into consideration the continued neglect of duty on the part of Mr. McConnell, resolve to remove him from office of Session Clerk"*.

It may be charitable to conclude that he was overburdened by the business of school!

When Mr. John Copland was appointed parish schoolmaster in Kilwinning (1853) the greatest changes in Scottish education were still to come. Kilwinning children still paid fees for instruction. e.g. 3/- per quarter for English, with 6d extra for writing and 6d extra for Arithmetic. The ambitious pupil paid 5/- per quarter for Latin and 7/6d if taken with French! The parish minister, who was then Dr. Campbell, and the heritors, were still the chief administrators of local education, zealously guarding the reputation and guiding the policy of

Kilwinning schools. This close-knit connection of the parish school and the parish church finally came to an end in 1872, when the Education Act of that year placed education in the hands of the Scottish Education Department and parish school boards were set up, with powers to appoint teachers and to maintain school buildings. Attendance at elementary school was now compulsory, and one of the board's tasks was to see that this was enforced. The parish schools were taken over and practically all the one-teacher private schools in a few years disappeared, as they were unable to compete with the state public schools. There was a great variation in the quality of the local school boards, but the members of the first Kilwinning Public School board did their work well. At a time when schools, almost without exception, were housed in one large room or hall, they planned a Public School with separate rooms of a size adequate for each class, so that pupils could be graded and not herded together as formerly. This first Kilwinning Public School, begun in 1875, was an exceptional piece of school architecture in its day, and was so well built and maintained that it still houses in Dalry Road the main body of secondary pupils in the year 1967! When it was completed in 1876, its cost, with the schoolhouse adjoining, was just over £8,000. It is a sobering thought that the new High School to replace it in the near future will probably not be constructed for a sum much less than £1,000,000!

Mr. John Copland, Headmaster, notes in his Log Books of 1876,

> *"Removed to new school buildings on Monday, 9th October. 1st class (Standard V and VI) in charge of Mr. Gray; 2nd class (S IV) in charge of Mr. McMorland; 3rd class (S III) in charge of Mr. Harwood; 4th and 5th classes (S III) in charge of pupil-teachers Hunter and Auchinachie; 6th class (S I) in charge of pupil-teachers Fulton and Manson and the Infant Department in charge of Miss Sinclair and Miss Auchinachie (pupil teacher). 422 pupils have been enrolled during the week"*.

In addition to the staff mentioned above, the pupils were taught sewing by Mrs. Boyd and music by Mr. Brotherton.

John Copland's life as a dominie was a busy and painstaking one. Apart from teaching and dictating the school methods, he had to instruct pupil teachers and collect fees, conduct evening classes and still satisfy the Government Inspector on his annual visit. This he did most satisfactorily. The Inspector's Report for 1878 includes these findings:

> *"As a whole the school continues to be very efficiently and successfully taught . . . . The scholars presented in specific subjects make a very fair appearance. The organisation of the school is excellent and the discipline very good".*

The interests of the school at this time, the humanity of its headmaster and the ways in which the programme anticipated some later experiments and developments are illustrated in these excerpts from the School log-book:

February 14th, 1879. "The four monitors are doing particularly well. They will begin their apprenticeships as P.T.'s on 1st April at salaries of £10, £12, £14 and £16 in the respective years which they have to serve".

September 3rd, 1880. "Mr. C. A. Blanchard, Sub Principal of Wheaton College, Ill., U.S.A., who is on an Educational tour in Europe, visited this school for the purpose of ascertaining the system of Scotch elementary education. He remained 3½ hours."

May 26th, 1882. "This being "Flitting" week, the attendance has been unusually bad. Mr. Bone (assistant) wants life, spirit, cheerfulness. The cold, listless way in which he goes about the work of his class will never secure the sympathy of children and more mental and physical activity is necessary to get over the work of the class satisfactorily. His shortcomings may be caused by indifferent health and temporary want of vital power. I don't know. If he does not improve he will be offered another class and lighter work after the vacation."

December 11th, 1885. "Free dinners are now provided daily (in the winter) to between 60 and 70 poor children attending school. They are paid for by voluntary subscription."

May 18th, 1888. "Upwards of 50 children sent home for their fees. A few returned and paid a part. Others were afraid of being sent home and did not come. The attendance is exceedingly bad."

June 27th, 1888. "Picnic at Ardeer Links, 531 children present. Each received 2d worth of bread and 1d worth of milk. Most of the children paid their railway ticket, 1½d. The rest of expenses were paid by subscription."

October 4th, 1889. "On Saturday, the 21st ult., S VI and VII had an excursion to Lamlash under the charge of Mr. Dunlop. All were highly pleased with the day's outing."

On May 8th 1891, Mr. Copland, in the last entry of his logbook, writes: *"Mr. Blair, my successor, takes charge of the school on Monday, 11th inst.".* John Copland had been head of the parish school for 38 years and well deserved his retirement. At the time when he left the profession there were over 600 children being taught in the school building and the subjects professed were English, Geography, Latin, French, History, Mathematics, Needlework, Singing, Cookery, Drawing and Agriculture, at elementary school level.

Mr. William Blair set about his new duties vigorously and was soon earning good reports from the Government Inspector. On 14th June, 1893, the Secretary of the School Board, after the Annual Inspection, wrote to the Headmaster in the following terms;

> *"The Board feel it is due to Mr. Blair and the Teachers to express their gratification with the Inspectors' Report which has now been read to them, as being in their opinion of the highest character which any school could secure".* Praise indeed!

In February 1894, the School Board agreed to supply school books free of charge, but on the 24th April of the same year, the School received this rather sad postscript from the School Board: *"As free books are now given, the Board have resolved to give no prizes".* (They had by custom always given about £8 annually for the purchase of prizes.)

The building which had provided ideal accommodation in 1876 was being gravely overcrowded and in March 1895, the Inspectors' Report noted that *"classes of70-80 are too heavy a strain for women teachers".* By this time the roll was steadily increasing and by 1898, it was 838. This meant that each room of the school housed upwards of 80 pupils and probably in the lower standards over 100. Mr. Copland`s Lamlash trip had become an annual event and the Log Book of 3rd June 1895 is as follows:

> *"The Senior Scholars had their annual excursion to Lamlash on Saturday. Return fares 8d and 1/3d. Number present 130".*

The pupil-teacher system was to continue for some time yet and an interesting sidelight on one aspect of their training (still common practice in some Colleges of Education today) is shown in Mr. Blair`s entry of 24th March 1899;

> *"Miss Clark gave an object lesson on Salt. The other P.T.`s listened. They criticised it afterwards, each one giving his or her opinion on it".*

On 28th September 1900, Mr. Blair received the following information from the Clerk to the School Board*:*

> *"I am directed to state that my Lords have approved provisionally under Article 21 the present arrangement for the instruction of pupils beyond the Merit Certificate".*

This was a straw in the wind, and the beginning of the present century was to see the most important development in the long history of Kilwinning Parish School, the transformation from an elementary public school to a Higher Grade School, providing three years of secondary education beyond the elementary stage. This new status was officially recognised by the Scottish Education Department in 1908, when H.M. Chief Inspector A. R. Andrew formally opened the new building called the Higher Grade School, behind the original main building. The additional accommodation included a workshop, a science laboratory, an Art Room, a cookery room and a general class room. It then housed 101 pupils, separate from the general school. The teachers at this time, concerned entirely with Higher Grade work, were Robert Conn, William B. Waddell, Anne T. Smith and George M. Boyle, with assistance from Maggie Marshall and Jas. P. Horn. Later, Christina Sharpe was appointed to teach cookery.

Mr. Blair was succeeded in August 1910 by Mr. Alexander Auchinachie, M.A. The numbers on the roll were then; Infants 275: Mixed School 667: Higher Grade 120: a total of 1062 pupils. Despite what would seem a full time occupation of administering this large school, Mr. Auchinachie informs us in a note of 29th August 1910*.*

> *"Am engaged in teaching 10 hours per week."*

Part of his responsibility was concerned with preparing the Mixed School Classes for the Qualifying Examination, and the Secondary pupils for the Intermediate Certificate. Doubtless, much of his worry was the impossibility of accommodating adequately over 1000 pupils and in October 1919, the Log Book records,

"Dr. Third, Director of Studies for the Ayr Education Authority, visited the school today to enquire into the overcrowding in the Infant Department and Qualifying Classes".

In April 1928, Mr. Robert Conn, M.A., who had previously served a long apprenticeship as pupil-teacher and assistant in Kilwinning before proceeding to West Kilbride as Headmaster, was appointed in place of Mr. Auchinachie. By this date the pattern of the Secondary School had become clearly defined, with a firm line drawn between the Secondary Course and the (non academic) Advanced Division. In 1928 the teachers engaged in the work of the Advanced Division were: Mr. Adams (Maths), Mr. Turnbull (Science), Mr. Allan (Woodwork and Tech. Drawing), Miss Ferguson (English, Singing and Needlework), Miss Kerr (History, Geography and English), Miss Andrew (English and Maths), Miss Gray (English and Maths), Miss Ledingham (Art), Miss Guy (Cookery), and Miss Campbell (Phys. Exercises). The Secondary course classes were taught by Mr. Borland (English), Mr. Adams, Mr. Eaton (Maths), Mr. Turnbull (Science), Miss Anne Smith (French), Miss Ledingham (Art), Miss Campbell (Physical Exercises), Miss Guy (Cookery), Miss Ferguson (Singing), Mr. Allan (Woodwork) and Mr. Conn (Latin).

The overcrowding noted in 1919 was eased by the provision of temporary wooden huts, but not until session 1934-35 does the school report welcome with approval the new building in which the infant classes are housed! This, when completed, was the present Primary building, the third permanent stone building of the school and sited across the main Dalry Road from the old building and the Higher Grade Annexe.

Mr. Conn was able to lead the school successfully through the difficulties and frustrations of the Second World War period. The years 1939 to 1945 presented a medley of new problems, such as billeting of evacuees from Glasgow and Clydebank, '"blackout", sand-bagging of buildings, netting of window surfaces, lack of fuel and bewildering changes of staff. It must have been with some relief, as well as a great deal of satisfaction, that Robert Conn ended his long acquaintanceship with Kilwinning School when he officiated as Head for the last time on 29th March, 1945.

Mr. George D. Montgomerie, M.A., F.E.l.S., came to Kilwinning after experience on the English staff of Ayr Academy and as Headmaster in Troon Public School. During his tenure of office in Kilwinning the school leaving age was raised to 15, on 1st April 1947, and extra accommodation was again essential. In 1947, 4 hutted classrooms and 1 large technical room were erected on the Primary side of the School and a double hutted classroom for Science and Domestic Science was erected behind the main building. Under the same scheme, a dining hall was built on the Primary Side. These new, though temporary, erections gave much needed relief and, after a lapse of 20 years were still in everyday use.

During the term of the next Headmaster, Mr. Robert Munro, B.Sc., (1950-1960) the school roll steadily rose to be the highest of any similar type school in the county. From a total of 1166 in August 1950, it became 1242 in August 1952. By 1953 some Primary classes had to be housed in the Welfare Hall, with considerable inconvenience to staff and pupils.

The congestion was relieved only when, in April 1959, the new Primary School was opened in Corsehill.

When the present writer was, in 1960, promoted from the post of Principal Teacher of History in Kilmarnock Academy to Headmaster of Kilwinning, it was a school now to be called Kilwinning High School. The County Council had decided to enlarge the function of certain Junior Secondary Schools to enable them to cater for students up to a Fourth Year of Secondary education, at which point they would be entered for a Fourth Year Certificate with examinations at Ordinary level for the Scottish Certificate of Education. This transition has successfully been made and the number of Fourth Year Candidates has steadily increased until by 1967 a total of 46 candidates were presented for the Certificate. All were successful in obtaining passes.

During this transition period, two members of staff retired who had made their mark on the school after a remarkably long association. In 1963, Mr. Andrew Borland, M.A. retired after 43 years as a most able and scholarly Principal Teacher of English. It is questionable if any other Ayrshire teacher has served so long in such a capacity in one school. Miss Mary Kerr's association was even longer. Her school education and her entire professional career were spent in the same building. When she retired in 1965 she had been in turn pupil, certificated teacher in primary and in secondary school, and finally the first Lady Superintendent of Kilwinning School. For the onerous duties of this new office, with its responsibility for the care and conduct of senior girls, she was singularly endowed. Her knowledge of family background and of the school over at least two generations, her pride in local tradition, her dignity and high sense of justice, were qualities which made her an ideal Woman Adviser.

The school at present (September, l967) has a total roll of 1048 pupils, of whom 552 are primary. Of this number, 159 are infants under the guidance of the Infant Mistress, Miss Martha Corson M.A. There is a staff of 41 full-time and 9 part-time teachers. On the Secondary side, the Headmaster is assisted by Mr. James Robertson, M.A., who acts as Depute Head of the School, and by Miss Jenny Kerr M.A., Lady Superintendent; in addition, there are 8 members of staff officially recognised as Principal Teachers of Subjects and 3 Special Assistants. The post of Depute Head of the Primary School is held by Mrs. G. Brown.

The curriculum has greatly altered since the days of John Copland's first Public School. The senior pupils about the age of 14 to 16 must all in common profess English, Arithmetic, Music, Religious Instruction, Physical Education, but in addition, they may freely choose 5 or 6 of the following subjects; History, Geography, Art, French, Latin, Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Mathematics, Applied Mechanics, Technical Drawing, Woodwork or Metalwork, Homecraft, Shorthand and Typewriting, Principles of Accounts. The official games are football, hockey and netball, but coaching is also given in badminton, tennis, rugby and archery. A chess team plays in the Ayrshire Senior Schools' League and a vigorous Literary and Debating Society now holds interdebates with Irvine Royal Academy and Stevenston High School. In recent years an excellent School Magazine has made for itself a much more than local reputation. When one considers that the present day school also produces plays and concerts, gives tuition in brass instruments and violin, promotes foreign holidays, organises factory tours and cultural visits to opera and symphony concerts, etc., it may seem that this

busy world in miniature is very far removed from John Knox's parish school. But is this really so? It is surely reasonable to claim that the long tradition which started 400 years ago continues, constantly changing but still unbroken.

J.H.

Soon after Mr. Hay's account of Kilwinning High School was written a major reorganisation took place, in which the secondary department was closed and arrangements were made for Kilwinning pupils to attend secondary schools in Irvine. In 1969 fifth year pupils who had previously gone to Irvine Royal Academy went to the newly opened Ravenspark Academy together with those entering first year and this continued to be the main secondary school for Kilwinning pupils until 1977, except for those who had to be accommodated in Greenwood Academy in Dreghorn when the increasing population of the whole new town area made Irvine schools overcrowded. Kilwinning pupils entering second, third and fourth years however, with the secondary staff of the High School, moved to Irvine Royal Academy (its pupils and staff having been transferred to Ravenspark Academy). There they were joined by the pupils and staff of the secondary department of Dreghorn School and a first year drawn from Dreghorn and part of Irvine. Mr. Hay became rector of Irvine Royal Academy and for five years a diminishing number of Kilwinning pupils worked their way through the school.

The effect of these changes was to sever any links with the idea of a parish school catering for the whole Kilwinning area. The primary department of the High School had for some years taken pupils from only part of Kilwinning. It now became a separate primary school but to ease its shortage of classrooms it took over the former secondary buildings. Even this visible reminder of the Public School however soon disappeared. In 1971 a disastrous fire made the main building of the old school unusable and at the same time recalled to its many former pupils in the town a vast assortment of memories and emotions connected with the ruined building.

In 1977 however, the increasing difficulties of finding places in existing secondary schools and of transporting hundreds of pupils to Irvine and Dreghorn, together with pressure from local councillors and parents, at last procured a new secondary school, Kilwinning Academy, built on the site of the old Public School. Beginning with first year pupils and a few second year ones it grew to its present state as a comprehensive six-year school of about 1250 pupils, drawing pupils from five primary schools, Abbey, Blacklands, Corsehill, Pennyburn and Whitehurst Park, as well as a number from outside the Kilwinning area whose parents choose to send them here.

From 1965, Roman Catholic pupils in Kilwinning have also been able to attend a comprehensive six-year school, St. Michael's Academy, which was moved from outdated and makeshift premises in Irvine and took pupils who previously travelled either to Irvine or to St. Peter's in Ardrossan. It also has pupils from a much wider area; at present it caters for the whole of Irvine New Town and the Garnock Valley. In Kilwinning it draws pupils from two

primary schools, St. Winning's and St. Luke's. As a result almost all Kilwinning pupils now have facilities for education in their home area.

It is not possible to give details of the many subjects taught or the teaching methods used, but changes abound. Older people may wonder at or even view with suspicion, schools where senior pupils run their own common-room and only attend classes at certain hours of the day; where trips abroad are sometimes combined with winter-sports or a tour by a school team; where pupils go to work in local offices and factories or run their own small business as a preparation for leaving school; where girls do woodwork and boys learn to cook; where of course there is no belt and in some classes pupils are actually encouraged to talk. Yet pupils still go on to university, win national cookery competitions, are chosen for international sports teams (even in later life for a British Olympic team) and have successes in art and music. Previously unheard-of demands are met. For instance, excellent work has been done in Kilwinning Academy in devising courses for immigrant children who speak little or no English, while in St. Michael's Academy there is specialised pioneering work in Higher Computing Studies. In other ways too all local schools meet the needs of the community. Senior citizens are entertained or given Christmas parcels and work is undertaken for a variety of good causes. But perhaps the most remarkable change of all has been the entry of adults into ordinary school classes and the growth of subjects of special interest or use of them. Particularly noticeable is the number of women who enrol and this is due in part to the fact that in both academies, a crèche is available for children under school age. In turn the crèche gives school pupils the opportunity of practical work as part of child-care courses. The old parish school has gone but its ideal of offering education to the whole community is very much alive.

I.J.T.W.

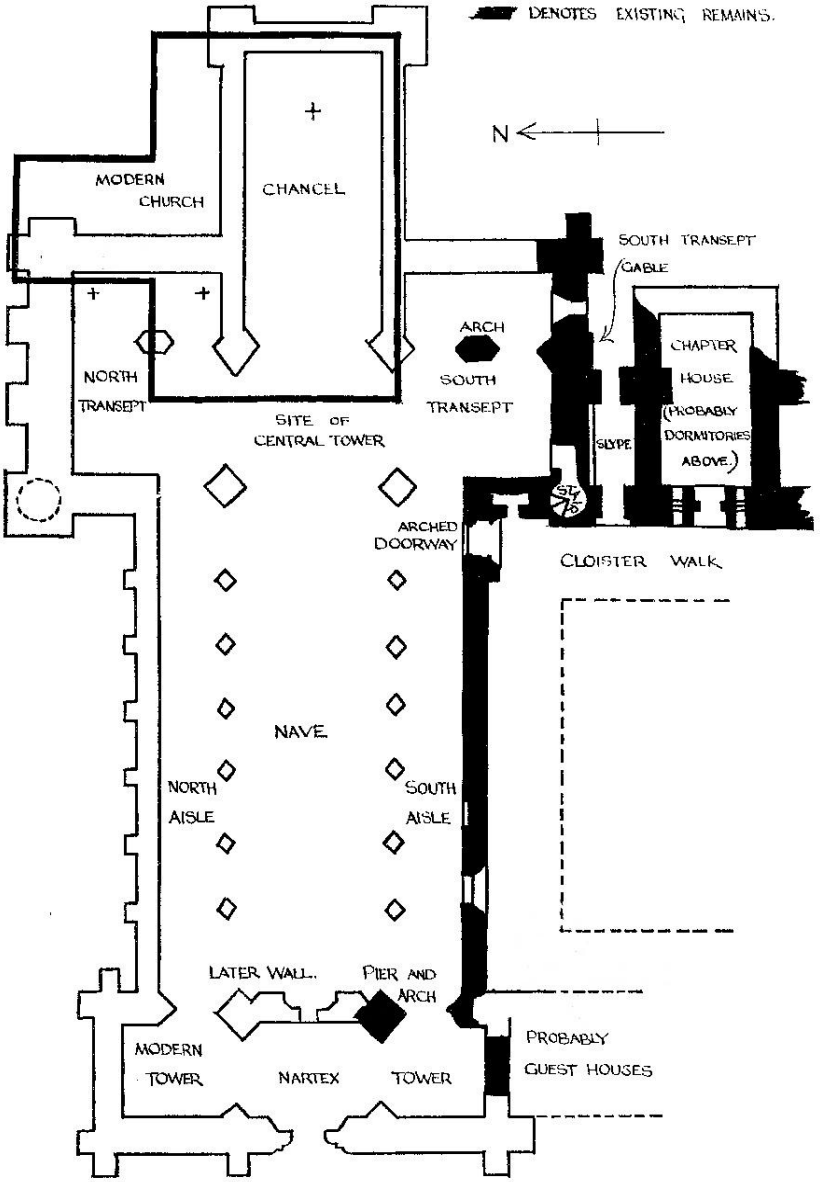
THE ABBEY RUINS

Anyone who has the slightest interest in the history of Kilwinning Parish, or the scantiest knowledge of what has happened locally in the past six or seven hundred years, will regret possibly more than anything else both the almost total ruin of a great Abbey and also the consequent neglect of what remained. That it was a great and noble edifice there is no doubt. Whether with continued and increased activity on the part of the Ministry of Public Building and Works it will be possible to lay bare the outline and the extent of the original monastic buildings, time alone will tell, but the present activities and clearance are most welcome. Something has certainly been done in recent years to remove the clutter of private dwellings which had been allowed to spread to the very walls of the Abbey, and to take away some of the soil and debris which has for centuries covered the original level of nave and cloisters alike. One hopes that complete clearance and restoration will reveal at least the foundations of what was once a mighty monument to the faith of the Middle Ages, and that Christians of all denominations may readily take pleasure in green lawns and hallowed stones set out in surroundings, worthy of the Abbey's fame and antiquity.

One can appreciate the ruins only with reference to the plans of the original but anonymous master-masons. The Abbey was certainly one of the finest of Scotland's ecclesiastical buildings and unusual in its design. Its nave and transepts, nearly 100 feet across from transept to transept, were broader than Paisley Abbey or Glasgow Cathedral - broader even than our largest medieval church building, the Cathedral of St. Andrews. It was not especially long, being about 225 feet, of which almost exactly half was taken up by the nave. The Abbey was cross shaped, with the head of the cross, or chancel, lying, in conventional manner, to the east. What makes it unique among Scottish Abbeys is that it had twin towers at the western end which did not rise in the normal fashion, from the mass of the terminal building, but rose alongside the church, as independent units, opening into the Church by great arches twenty feet high, In consequence of this structural abnormality, amounting almost to weakness, the towers had to be built on massive piers (see illustration) which are larger than the piers supporting the main tower of Westminster Abbey. One of those towers. that to the south-west corner, was destroyed very early in its history. The other remained until 1814, though standing as a gaunt ruin since 1809, when it was struck by lightning. It appears to have been roofed differently at different periods. A very excellent engraving in the Edinburgh Magazine of 1802 shows a well proportioned tapering spire on top of the tower, probably added by the Earl of Eglinton's orders just over ten years before.

The most prominent feature of the early Abbey would be the central tower over the crossing between nave and transepts. Only traces of foundation remain today, but this tower must have been very large, considering that the western towers were certainly well over 100 feet in height, if not "*seven score feet*" as Timothy Pont reckoned in 1608. The transepts, north and south, were about 90 feet high. They had aisles to the east, where they joined the small chancel, on the approximate foundations of the present church. When serious damage took place to the west of the Abbey (probably about 13th and 14th centuries), the west front was brought back about thirty feet and a new west gable built, reducing the nave to 110 feet in length. The south aisle of the nave opened out to the cloisters. They were probably enclosed on the east by the Chapter House, library and dormitories, on the south by the refectory and kitchens, and on the west by guestrooms. Beyond, to the west, would be the Abbey Green and the Almswall, which would be part of one side of a complete walled square enclosing the Abbey. To the southeast and east of this enclosure were the dovecot and the mill by the river.

And of all this elaborate construction, how much remains on the original site today? It must sadly be admitted that above ground there is very little indeed, particularly when one realises that the tower, the most conspicuous landmark in Kilwinning parish, is not a relic of the Abbey. (It was constructed by local builders and masons in 1815-16 for the sum of £1,590, which was almost entirely raised by local voluntary subscription.) Indeed, the only considerable ruin left is the celebrated gable of the south transept. This is an excellent example of 13th century architecture, standing up still strong and dramatic and sometimes seeming even higher than its ninety feet. It has three tall lancet windows, stepped at the base to differing heights, surmounted by a circular rose window, above which, below the peak of the arch, is a small narrow rounded window. The south transept gable is even today a spectacular piece of masonry and by far the best remaining evidence of the height and majesty of the original complete conception.



PLAN of KILWINNING ABBEY

Drawn by Miss M Jack D.A. 1967

Running west from the gable is the ruined south wall of the nave. At the junction of nave and south transept is the beautiful arched doorway (see photograph) leading in to the cloisters. This is probably the most beautiful relic of the old Abbey, unusually fine, since doorways of this quality were normally built only for the great west doors of medieval churches. It is excellent in its proportion, with an arch of four orders and considerable variety in detail. The columns carrying the arches have different capitals, the most noteworthy being that nearest on the left as one enters from the south. One can still make out the detail of two human figures, said to be a representation of Adam and Eve.

South of the gable and divided from it by a passage or slype, are the remains of the chapter house, which is about 38 feet in length and about 20 feet in breadth. The doorway and two windows, of the same style as the gable, are still nearly complete.

The arch of the south transept aisle, on the church side of the gable, is also complete and is a very fine example of the pointed Early English style. It invites comparison with the tower arch at the south-west end of the nave, which also stands unbroken. The tower arch is almost 20 feet high and, with the base of the ruined massive pier adjoining, is all that remains of the original south-west tower.

Apart from the transept gable the largest piece of masonry still standing is the west gable which runs from the tower-arch to the base of the modern tower. This is not the original western terminal of the abbey, which must have been demolished in the troubled days of the Wars of independence. The later gable is not in keeping with the elegance of much of the earlier building. It is probably of 14th Century origin, very plain, built as much for defence as for the worship of God. Its main features are a window, narrow, pointed and 16 feet in height, and a doorway about 7 feet high and 4½ feet across. Both are plain and unadorned and out of key with similar features in the rest of the Abbey. This is almost certain proof of hurried construction in a warring period, because the west gable and its great door and windows are so often the chief glory of the medieval abbey.

Other details remain to interest the observant and enquiring visitor. A closer look at the transept gable will reveal in front the mark - between the front and second windows - made by a lower gable of what was almost certainly a two-storey building. It is likely that the rooms upstairs, above the chapter house, were the monks' dormitories. Behind the transept gable, at the west end, can be seen the remains of a narrow stairway, spiralling upwards, its stone treads worn by generations of monks.

Much more architectural detail may be observed, but there are no visible remains of the north wall of the nave, the north transept, or the chancel. Nevertheless the present excavations by the Ministry of Works in the area of the nave, the cloisters and the area west of the chapter-house are laying bare old foundations and one hopes that, within two or three years, a new and more complete chapter may be written on the ruins of the Abbey of Kilwinning.

J.H.

THE PRESENT CHURCH BUILDING

It is a great pity that the Parish Church of Kilwinning was not created out of a repaired or restored nave or chancel of the old Abbey, as happened in some other places in Scotland. This did not take place in Kilwinning very probably for two main reasons. In the first place, the damage done to the fabric in the late 16th century was excessive. If this came from the fact that the Abbey had been denounced as a nest of Popery, the Protestant Reformers certainly made a savage job of harrying the nest. In the second place, no great pious benefactor came forward with unlimited generosity to finance such a restoration.

In consequence, the heritors or local land owners had to provide a new church and their means, as much as their artistic ideas, were circumscribed. Nevertheless, by the middle of the 18th century, the economy of Scotland was beginning to revive, and in this countryside the revolution in farming and improved ideas, bringing better yield and profits, had been supported by the Earl of Eglinton and other enlightened local lairds. So it is that in Ayrshire, as in other parts of Scotland, many church buildings originate in the latter half of the 18th century. They tend to be simple and compact and generally shorter and wider than the earlier churches. To this period belongs the present Abbey Church building completed in 1774. The inclination at this time to depart from the long, narrow, medieval church pattern, may account for the fact that the Kilwinning parish church was not built exactly on the old nave or the old chancel. The medieval foundation of the chancel is partly used for the south and east walls of the present church, but that may be only because they were similarly used for the first Protestant kirk. This is almost certainly the case, because the builders of the 18th century church were contracted to set up the new building *"where the old church formerly stood".*

An extract from the original contract is now in the hands of Mr. Murray Crawford, and this very interesting document is our best source of authentic information. John Garland, 'mason in Kilwinning', and John Armour, 'wright in Kilwinning', agreed to the following dimensions, work and materials:

> *"The fabrick to be Seventy feet long by Forty Six feet wide within the walls: the walls to be three and a half thick and twenty-six feet high from the threshold of the Doors of good and sufficient work, to preserve the same figure of Ashlar on the Outside of the walls, as was in the walls of the Old Church .... The laigh Windows in the Gavells and the Door all to be Squared and all of the other Windows to be Gothick and all of them Arched outside and inside of Free Stone; the whole windows to be made of Good Red Firr and the best Bristol Crown Glass .... The largest windows to be five feet wide by Eighteen feet high; the low windows in the two Gavells to be four feet wide by seven feet high and the upper windows in the two Gavells to be four feet wide and ten feet high and the round windows in the two Gavells to be seven feet Diameter each with Good window shutters of a proper size for the whole windows .... and the said John Garland and John Armour hereby Bind and Oblige them to have the said Church and all the rest of the work completed betwixt and the first day of July, 1774 .... the Heritors of the said Parish to make payment to the said John Garland and John Armour of the sum of Five Hundred Forty-six pounds nineteen shilling and one penny Sterling".*

It must be said at once that the church externally is uninteresting and plain almost to the point of being drab. It is a squat T shape, the small stem off the main rectangle being occupied by Lord Eglinton's gallery and its outside staircase. Internally, the walls and windows remain structurally unaltered, but the pews, the pulpit, the organ and most of the furnishings are of later date. The church is extremely compact and every seat close enough to the pulpit to ensure that the minister is easily seen and heard. The pews are closely ranked so that, though the church area is small, about 800 of a congregation can be accommodated. This is partly due to the fact that a spacious gallery occupies three sides of the building.

The decoration is plain. Apart from a simple cornice at the ceiling edge of the wall and some fluting and ornamented capitals on the slender pillars, the appearance is generally unpretentious. The Eglinton gallery, or laird's loft, facing the pulpit, is a typical, but unambitious example of its kind. It lacks the splendid ornament, coats of arms and carved woodwork of the earlier Garnock loft in Kilbirnie, or the impressive decoration of the lofts of the Trades, the Merchants and the Sailors, in the Parish Kirk of Ayr. Recently, such character as the Eglinton gallery possessed has been diminished by the filling in of the door leading to the retiring room and the outside stairway, leaving the loft merely a functional part of the general gallery.

The majority of the windows have been filled with stained glass within the last 100 years and it is regrettable that the larger windows were designed in the later Victorian period, before the rediscovery of the old secrets produced the more brilliant glass of the present day. As a result, the small modern windows are generally of better quality.

The two large windows on either side of the pulpit were designed in 1890, that on the left being presented by Archibald, 14th Earl of Eglinton, in memory of Sophia, Countess of Eglinton, and that on the right being given by Miss Conn and Mrs. Rowan to commemorate their parents. The large ground floor windows beside these are in memory of Thomas Borland and family, of Seven Acre Mains (1940), and of James Gaul and his wife Tainsh Bogie, d. 1849. In an alcove to the right of the pulpit is a window (see photograph) in memory of the Rev. Archibald Hunter, B.D. This is an excellent window, commissioned in 1951, and designed by Gordon Webster, one of the outstanding stained glass artists of the present time. Also in the alcove near the entrance door facing the pulpit is a small window of simple but bright design, presented by the daughters of Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Maxwell, in memory of their parents and of Dr. David P. Gage.

There are four stained glass windows upstairs. The round window on the right depicting 'Paul at Athens', is a memorial to the Rev. William Lee Ker and designed in 1903. A similar window opposite was the gift in 1890 of the Rev. and Mrs. Lee Ker, in memory of their children, Nettie and Alice. Above the pulpit the upper half of the large window to the left was gifted in 1903 by the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. James Hendrie, in their parents' memory. The corresponding window on the right, designed in 1912, was commissioned by Mr. & Mrs. Gilbert Stewart in memory of their son Alexander, who died aged 10. A feature of this window is that the boy's face can be seen within the halo in the centre.

J.H.

THE COMMUNION SILVER

As the photograph in this booklet illustrates the Abbey Church silver makes a beautiful display on the communion table. The pieces, though of very different periods, have been made to a· consistent and very pleasing design, the goblets being particularly finely wrought and perfectly balanced. Indeed, it almost makes one regret that the individual cup was superseded the common cup in communion practice, as the opportunity to handle and use vessels of such quality becomes increasingly rare. Nevertheless, ministers and supporting elders still regularly partake of the elements of bread and wine from these valued and sacred cups and salvers. The silver may be divided into two groups, an earlier and a later. The earlier, or historic, group consists of two pairs of hand beaten silver goblets of considerable antiquarian value. The smaller pair, perfectly matched, are inscribed as follows:

> *"Communion Cups for the Perochiners of Kilionning Anno 1677. Be Wise as Serpents Harmless as Doves. Matthew 10.16".*

The larger pair, most exquisite goblets, are very interesting, partly because they are undated and this leaves room for a little conjecture and speculation as to exact origin. There is no doubt that they are valuable. They are both inscribed thus;

> *"The Communione Cup at Kilwinning Given for that Use by Major Hugh Buntein of Kilbrid".*

We know that Major Buntein had property in the parish of Kilwinning and we know also that he acquired the whole Barony of Kilbride (i.e. West Kilbride) from the Boyds of Kilmarnock in 1670 and sold it to William Baillie in 1710. This would place the goblets within those years, which confirms the evidence of the marks on the silver. These marks would indicate that the date was about 1700 and that the silversmith was probably one of the Luke Brothers of Glasgow, whose work is now highly prized.

The rest of the silver is modern and made within the last 70 years. Two silver goblets, similar in appearance to the 1677 pair, were presented to the Church in 1924 by Mr. and Mrs. John Boyd, as a memorial to their parents. There are three pairs of silver bread salvers. The largest pair was presented in April 1898, by Peter Wylie, Corsehill, in memory of his wife. Ten years later a smaller pair was added, the donor being George Jack, in memory of his wife and her sister. In October 1924, the Misses Lillias and Elizabeth Howie added to the communion plate two silver salvers inscribed to the memory of their father and mother.

The six silver goblets and six salvers are, for communion purposes, supplemented by a pair of old pewter serving tankards, also to be seen in the photograph.

J.H.

ARCHERY

Few places have a longer association than the town of Kilwinning, with the sport and practice of archery, a practice which, by custom, has been linked in some of its aspects with the grounds and steeple of the Abbey.

Before the invention of gunpowder and the common use of firearms, King and Parliament regularly enforced by statute the practice in Scotland of shooting with bow and arrow. In every parish the young men turned out for archery practice and these "wapenschaws" or exhibitions of arms were in many places held "every Sunday after divine service". As the use of archery in war declined, "wapenschaws" of firearms took the place of statutory archery practice, but in Kilwinning a Company of Archers persisted and the sport has continued, with few interruptions, until the present day. This Company was constituted possibly as early as 1488, that is, during the period when the monastery was still active and the archers annually met to shoot at a mark placed on the Abbey Steeple. This custom may very well have started about the 13th century shortly after the building of the Abbey. The mark, fixed at the end of a pole 120 feet up on the steeple, was a wooden model of the heraldic bird called the papingo (a parrot or popinjay). The first archer to shoot down the mark became the Year's Captain of the Papingo. We are informed that, from 1488 to 1688, the prize presented to him was a multi-coloured sash or 'benn', which the Captain wore and retained, donating another to his successor. In 1688 a piece of plate was presented instead and this continued until 1724 when a certain David Mure presented the celebrated Kilwinning Silver Arrow. In the years following, on this arrow were hung the inscribed silver medals of the successful Captains of the Company of Archers, until 116 medals in all commemorated those who had been successful in the attempt to "ding doon the Papingo". The medals had become too heavy and too many to be borne by the original silver arrow and, in 1795, the ° present prize was created, with a silver bow and crossed bolts supporting David Mure's arrow. It makes a unique and most beautiful trophy, a true masterpiece of the silversmith's craft. Despite the attractiveness of the Kilwinning Arrow, it became more and more difficult to stimulate interest in the annual shoot of the Ancient Society of Kilwinning Archers, and after 1871, no further meeting was held last century. The trophy in time found its way to the Kelvingrove Museum and then to the custody of the Royal Company of Archers in Edinburgh.

After the Second World War, interest in the Kilwinning papingo was rekindled by a few enthusiasts in the district, and the reward of their perseverance came in 1951, when a detachment of the Royal Company, the Queen's Bodyguard for Scotland, with proper decorum paraded in Kilwinning to return (in the presence of Provost and magistrates and the Earl of Eglinton) the historic trophy to the custody of the reconstituted Society and the town of Kilwinning. This was a fine gesture on the part of the Royal Company and it is to be hoped that local competition in archery will long continue after a restart under such distinguished auspices.

With this recent revival in archery, came a revival in the sport of the Papingo, (now held on the first Saturday of July) with rules more or less identical with ancient practice. The bowman stands with one foot on the bottom step of the tower, aiming at the papingo over 100 feet above him. There is some break with tradition in the fact that the successful archer at

the Papingo no longer claims the Kilwinning Arrow, which is now the reward for shooting at the Butts during the afternoon previous to the Papingo.

Times may change; the modern archer's white shirt, green slacks and Stewarton Bonnet may contrast strangely with *"the double-breasted green longcoat, lined with white silk",* worn by the Kilwinning Society archers at the Eglinton Tournament. Nevertheless, it is pleasing that an ancient and traditional Kilwinning sport, associated with a priceless trophy, still flourishes.

J.H.

FREEMASONRY

If the name of Kilwinning is recognised at all nationally and internationally, it is almost certainly because of its historic connection with the origins and the development of the Masonic craft. No history of this parish would be complete without at least a brief acknowledgement of the part Kilwinning and its Abbey have played in this world-wide order, particularly as the Mother Lodge has for generations been sited at the gate of the Parish Church.

As this booklet is concerned largely with the Church in Kilwinning and its ministers, it may be of interest to laymen and freemasons alike to read the following extract (on Freemasonry) from Dr. Campbell's contribution in 1842 to the New Statistical Account.

> *"The art of executing very large and magnificent buildings in timber frame-work was carried to high perfection in the northern countries of Europe during the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries. Owing, however, to the perishable nature of the materials and to accidents by fire, these buildings were frequently either destroyed, or reduced to a state of extreme decay; so that the ruinous state of the ecclesiastical edifices in the northern parts of Europe became a serious subject of inquiry at Rome and measures were taken to obviate the grievance. The Pope created several corporations of Roman and Italian architects and artisans, with high and exclusive privileges, especially with a power of settling the rates and prices of their labour by their own authority and without being controlled by the municipal laws of the country where they worked. To the various northern countries, where the churches had fallen into a state of decay, were these artists deputed. In consequence of the exclusive privileges conferred upon them, they assumed to themselves the name of Free Masons and under this title became famous throughout Europe.*
>
> *These corporations, from their first origin, possessed the power of taking apprentices and admitting into their body such masons as they approved of in the countries where their works were carried on. A party of these foreign artisans, aided by such workmen as they found in Scotland qualified to join them, are said to have constructed the monastery of Kilwinning. The architect or master mason, who superintended and carried on the work, was chosen master mason of the meetings of*

the brethren all over Scotland. He gave rules for their conduct at these meetings and decided finally in appeals from all the other lodges in the Kingdom. From this period, down to the fifteenth century, little is known of the history of masonry. It is acknowledged that Kilwinning continued to be the headquarters of the order.

In the notes to a French poem, La Maconnerie, published at Paris in 1820, p. 151, it is said that "Jacques Lord Stewart recus dans la loge de Kilwin en Ecosse, en 1286, les Comtes de Glocester et Ulster, l'un Anglois, l'autre Irlandois". [James Lord Stewart received into the Kilwinning Lodge, in 1286, the Counts of Gloucester and Ulster, one English, the other Irish].

King James I of Scotland, eminently distinguished for his knowledge and taste in polite literature and in the fine arts, not long after his return from England, patronised the mother lodge of Kilwinning and presided as grand master, till he settled an annual salary, to be paid by every master mason in Scotland to a grand master, chosen by the brethren and approved by the Crown. It was required that this grand master should be nobly born, or a clergyman of high rank and character. He had his deputies in the different counties and town of Scotland. Every new brother paid him a fee at entrance. He was empowered to regulate and determine such matters in dispute, between the founders and builders of churches and monasteries, as it would have been improper to bring before a court of law. King James II conferred the office of grand master on William Sinclair, Earl of Orkney and Baron of Roslin. By another deed of the same King, this office was made hereditary in this very ancient and illustrious family. Earl William and his successors, Barons of Roslin, held their head courts, or, in the style of masonry, assembled their grand lodges at Kilwinning. The mother lodge continued in possession of the highest authority and granted charters of erection to other lodges, till the year 1736, when the Lord of Roslin, hereditary grand master, assembled thirty-two lodges in Edinburgh and resigned all right or title which he possessed, or his successors might claim, to preside over the Masonic order throughout Scotland. His resignation being accepted, the Grand Lodge of Scotland was constituted, consisting of representatives from other lodges throughout the kingdom, in whom was vested the right of legislating and of granting the new charters, or confirming old ones, for the whole order, for which purposes a general meeting is held and office-bearers are elected annually. This usurpation was resisted for a time by the Kilwinning brethren, who continued to hold independent meetings and to grant charters as formerly, till the year 1807, when the dispute was amicably settled and the mother lodge relinquished her ancient privileges, joining the general association, along with the lodges which held of her."

J.H.

ABBOTS AND COMMENDATORS OF KILWINNING

This list contains the names of those who can be shown to have held office. Dates before 1443 are the earliest and latest known for each abbot and do not necessarily show the length of his term of office. After 1443 the dates show when each term of office began and ended. In medieval times the year began on 25th March but dates are given here as if the year began on 1st January. Some dates are known only approximately and are shown in the form '1296 x 1305` which means 'not earlier than 1296 but not later than 1305'. More details about most of the abbots and commendators can be found in Ian B. Cowan's *Ayrshire Abbeys*, published by Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, from which this list has been compiled.

Nigel 1201, 1210
John 1214, 1226
Bernard 1296
Roger 1296 x 1305
Adam 1312, 1327
William de Deyn 1344
John of Dalgarno 1344,1346
Robert 1360, 1367 x 1370
John 1384
Roger 1400
Bryce Mackmakyn 1407
Adam Spark 1407, 1439
William Boyd 1443-1474
William Bunche 1474-1513
John Forman 1512-1513
James Beaton 1513-1526
George Beaton 1526-1527
Alexander Hamilton 1527-1545
Henry Sinclair 1545-1550
Gavin Hamilton 1550-1571
Alexander Cunningham 1571-1591
William Melville 1591-1592

After 1592 the abbey lands ceased to be church lands and Melville was no longer called Commendator. He sold the lands to Hugh, 5th Earl of Eglinton, shortly before 5th January, 1603. The title of abbot or Commendator remained in existence and was held in 1615 by John Spottiswoode, archbishop of Glasgow.

MINISTERS OF THE PARISH OF KILWINNING, 1563-1988

* 1563 - William Kilpatrick
1578 - Alexander Wreittoun
1605 - David Barclay
1614 - John Glasford
1631 - Robert Baillie, M.A. (later Professor of Divinity and Principal of Glasgow University)
1643 - James Fergusson, M.A.
1669 - Ralph Rodger (or Rogers) M.A.
1687 - Robert Bell
1688 - George Meldrum, M.A.
1696 - George Chalmers (later Principal of King's College, Aberdeen)
1721 - Alexander Fergusson, M.A.
1770 - Thomas Pollock
1798 - William Ritchie, D.D. (Moderator of the General Assembly)

1803 - James Steven, D.D.
1824 - George Colville
1831 - Archibald Blair Campbell, D.D.
1864 - John Sime, assistant minister not parish minister, Dr. Campbell being still alive.
1866 - William Lee Ker, M.A., assistant minister until Dr. Campbell's death in 1879, parish minister thereafter.
1903 - Archibald Hunter, M.A., B.D.
1944 - Wilbur C. Lavalette, B.Th.
1975 - lan J. M. Reid, O.B.E., B.A., J.P.
1987 - William Buchan, B.D., Dip. Theol.

* It is now known that William Kilpatrick was minister at Kilwinning by 1563. See M.H.B. Sanderson's article *'Kilwinning at the Time of the Reformation and its first Minister, William Kilpatrick'* in Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Collections. Vol. X, 1972.

THE CUNNINGHAME TEIND LISTS OF 1559-60, KILWINNING PARISH

This list gives the names of tenants who had not paid their teinds for the year 1559-60 and the names of the farms they occupied. It is reproduced here so that readers may see how far back local farm names and personal names go. The wider significance of the teind lists is discussed in M.H.B. Sanderson's *The People of Sixteenth Century Ayrshire* published by Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, from which this list is taken by kind permission of the author.

AUCHENTIBER OVER - John Dean, Andrew and Niven Dean, John and Thomas Neilson.
AUCHENTIBER MIDDLE - John Hamilton.
AUCHENTIBER NETHER - James Hamilton, Archibald Bar and Marion Cunningham, John Roger, David Murchland, Andrew Murchland.
CLONBEITH - James Cunningham, John Dyet, Thomas Black.
AUCHENMADE - Andrew Gemmill, William White, James White, Stephen Garven, John Mure, Edward Mure, Matthew Banks, Katherine Steven, John Lyn.
GOOSELOAN - John Adam, David Smallie, John Dunlop.
MONKREDDING - Adam Smallie, John and Matthew Niven, John Adamson, Giles Jamieson.
HULLERHILL - Cuthbert Rankin, Archibald Lyle, John Dyet.
SEVENACRES - Patrick Montgomery, James Hamilton.
GOLDCRAIG - William and John Morris, John Mure.
ARDOCH - Andrew and John Hamilton.
CASSILAND - Thomas Reid.
GAITMURELAND - William Roger.
BANNOCH - Michael Niven and Patrick Mathie.
MOSSCULLOCH (Monkscoalheuch) - Thomas Watt.
POTTERTOUN-REID - Thomas Reid.
BRIDGEND-EASTER - John Blair, William Salmond, Archibald Lyn, Patrick Ormiston, Winning Rankin, William Gray, Archibald Lochrig, Alexander Mason.

CORSHILL - Alexander Mason, Alexander Tarbart, Alexander Cooper, John Tarbart, John Docheon, John Galt, William Salmond, Thomas Weir, John Burn, Mirabelle Montgomery and Thomas Adamson, Margaret Hart, Patrick Morris, Thomas Brown, Gilbert Morris, James Galt, John Montfode, Archibald Lockrig, John Frew, John Brown.

BROTHERWELL - John Mulling.

WEIRSTON - James Weir, John and Thomas Weir.

BRIDGEND-LUGDOUR - Robert Kidd, Ninian Kidd.

LADYHAUGH - Robert Hunter, John Steel, Janet Stevenson, Bartholemew Kidd.

MONCUR OVER - Thomas Stevenson, Robert Miller, John Stevenson, Peter Henry.

MONCUR NETHER - Alexander Mitchell, Robert Rankin, Widow Armour, Katherine Mure.

BENSLIE - Isobel Hessilhead and Alexander Hunter, her son, Archibald Ridden, John Fletcher, Robert Roger.

AUCHENWINSEY - Robert Gray, Janet Steel, Luke Roger, Widow Gray.

MILLBURN - Andrew Gardner, Edward Gardner, Robert Smith, John Watt, Adam Hall, Archibald Hall.

NEWTON-GARDNER - Margaret White and John Gardner, Janet Frew and Robert Mure.

NEWTON-SPEIR - William Speir, David Bogart and Robert Hunter, John Hunter.

NEWTONHILL - Thomas Sparling, John Galston, James Paton, Matthew Marshall, Widow Gardner, John Stevenson.

FERGUSHlLL - Robert Fergushill of that ilk, William Dickie, John Cochrane, David Blair, Hugh Garven, William Garven, John Medder, Patrick Garven.

BURROWLAND - John and William Bryden, John Glasgow, John Young.

BLACKSTOCK - Robert Dickie.

MAINS OF MONTGREENAN - John Thomson and Robert Porter.

POTTERTOUN - David and John Cumming, William Fergushill, John Roger, John Hay, Robert Dyet, Janet Rankin, widow of late Robert Dyet, Janet Steel, widow of late John Smith, Robert Gibson.

DOURA (East) - Robert Steel, Cuthbert Steel, Robert Dyet, John Dyet and Janet Rankin, Marion Holmes and Robert Thomson, William Holmes, John Thomson, Archibald Gobson, John Miller, John Dyet (2).

LONGFORD - George Dunlop.

BYREHILL - Thomas White, James and Hobbie (Robert) Dyet.

TODHOLES - Robert Young, John Young.

DUBBS - John Park.

DALGAW - William Morris, Widow Mason, Hugh Edward.

BOG - Patrick Hamilton, John Martin.

MYRESIDE - John Gray, Alexander Montgomery.

DOURA-DOCHEON (West) - John Docheon.

DARNBOG - Finlay Brown.

WHITHIRST-MONTGOMERY - John Park, John Henderson.

WHITHIRST NETHER - John Henry, William Henderson, John Ewen, Archibald Bar, Bessie Russell, John Watt, John Braidshaw.

BIRKLANDS - William Blair, Bessie Watt, John Watt, tailor.

AUCHENKIST NETHER - John Watt, eld. and John Watt, jr.

AUCHENKIST OVER - Laurence Pitcon, Alan Pitcon, Robert Kidd.

ASHINYARDS (now Ashgrove) - John Russell, eld. and John Russell, jr., John Logan, Janet Dunlop.
SMITHSTON-WATT - Thomas White and James Wylie, Thomas Crichton, John Watt and Marion Dunlop, James Wylie.
SMITHSTON-GARVEN - Archibald Dunlop of Auchenkist, Pater Skeoch, Hugh Boyd, Adam Dunlop.
SMITHSTON-MONTGOMERY - Elizabeth Colqhoun.
MONKCASTLE - Bessie Hunter, Katherine Blair, Patrick and John Jack, John Wilson and
Matthew Stewart, Malie Raeside, Robert Hill, John Roger, John Weir, John Neilson, William Roger.
DALGARVEN - John Chalmers, Alan Miller, John Docheon, John Russell and David Mure, John Glasgow and Agnes Wilson, John Wilson, tailor, John Boyd, John Montgomery, Janet Miller, Robert Braidshaw.
GROATHOLM (inc. walk mill) - William Walker.
WOODEND - Peter Pitcon.
WOODSJDE - James Hamilton, John Watt, Alexander Boyd.
OVERMAINS - James Hamilton, Thomas Shakeshaw, John Watt, Alexander Boyd, Alan Galt, James Garland, William Barr, Patie Patrick, Adam McGie, John Braidshaw, Peter Brown, Gessy Speir, John Wilson, tailor.
NETHERMAINS - John Wright, John Young, John Ritchie, Robert Young, John Lowry, George Dunlop, Hugh Martin, Janet Bunch and William Miller, Robert Kidd, John Donald, William Salmond and Robert Kidd (2)$ Ninian Kidd, Hugh Garven, John Dean, Matthew Stevenson and Andrew Niven, Mirabelle Montgomery, Alexander Cooper, Alexander Brown, Lowrie Smith, Janet Walker, Janet Burn.
BRIDGEND WESTER - Alexander Cooper.
KILRIG - Robert Young ‘at the cross`, Janet Burn.
MEIKLEWARD - James Hamilton.
BYREFLAT - Mirabelle Montgomery.
INNERMAINS - Alexander Rankin, John Wright.
BARNYARD - John Gray.
CRAIGMILL - Andrew Miller.

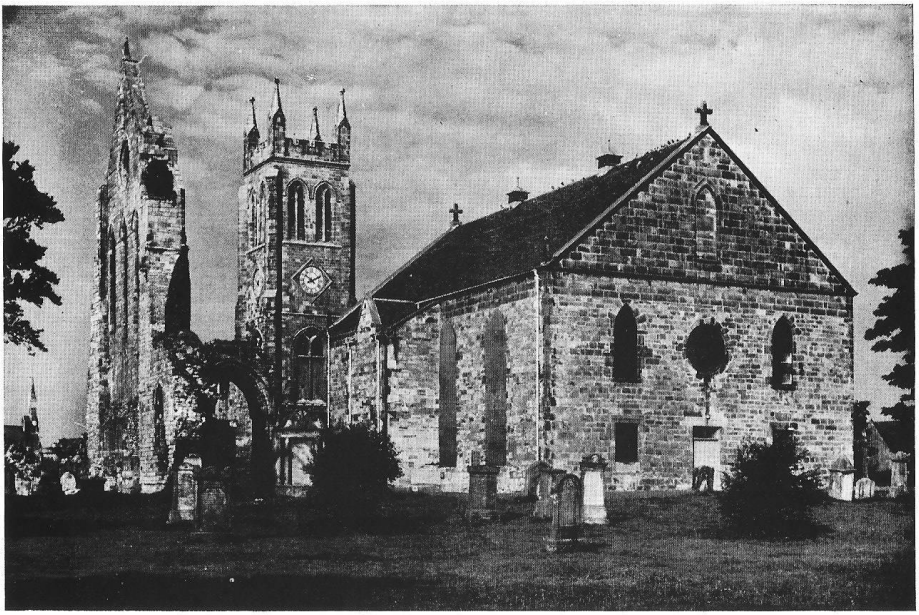
ELDERS OF THE ABBEY CHURCH, 1888-1988

This is a list of all those who are known to have been ordained as elders in the Abbey Church or admitted to its Kirk Session from 1888 onwards. The dates are those of ordination or admission.

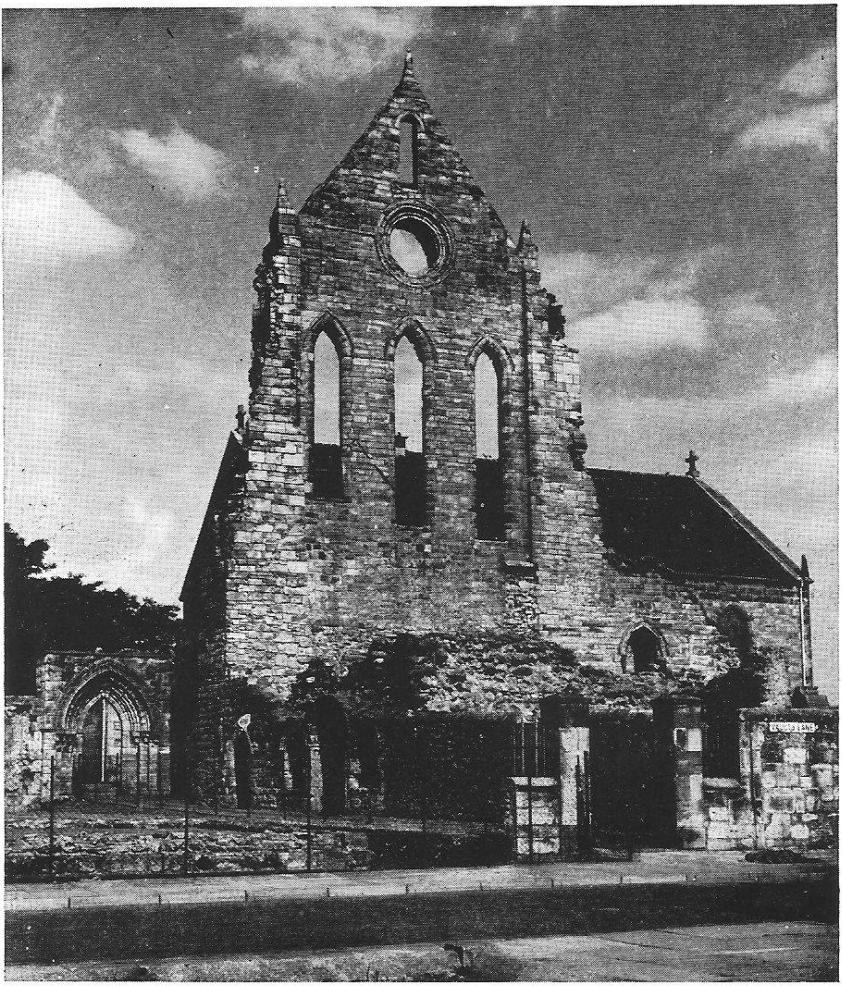
Samuel Gaul	1888	John McQueen	1888
Archibald Gray	"	James Miller	”
Robert Howie	“	William Scott	”
George Jack	"	Andrew Spier	“
John Lamont	"	james Nisbet	1890

William Boyd	1900	Campbell Ballantyne	1953
Robert King	1904	John Cornelius	"
James Harvie	"	James Kirkwood	"
David Russell	"	John Lamont	"
Robert Brotherton	"	John Parker	"
Wm. J. Torry	"	James Partridge	1956
Wm. Donald	"	Samuel Scott	"
William Lamont	1907	William Simpson	"
William Culley	"	John Tudhope	"
William Ferguson	"	Thomas Watt	"
John Goldie	"	Robert Walker	1960
John Reid	"	James Sloan	"
John Kerr	"	Thomas Meikle	"
Alexander Bone	1919	William Lamont	"
James Gaul	"	William Thomson	"
Robert Howie	"	John Walker	"
John King	"	William Caulfield	"
Daniel Lamont	"	Thomas Roughead	"
William Steel	"	William Hill	"
Alexander Swanson	"	Andrew Stevenson	"
John Watson	"	Andrew McKee	"
Robert Clement	1931	Robert McKee	"
Robert Conn	"	John Hay	1961
Robert Dunlop	"	Alexander Ritchie	"
John Harvie	"	Andrew Brodie	1963
William Kerr	"	James Ferguson	"
Robert Lamont	"	William Gilmour	"
William Reid	"	Hugh Henry	"
William Smith	"	John McDonald	"
James Watson	"	Steven Parker	"
John Parker	"	William Reid	"
Alexander Grigor	1945	Thomas Smith	"
William Graham	"	Robert Watson	"
John Kerr	"	Robert Wood	"
Carrick McDonald	"	Geoffrey Athey	1966
John Paterson	"	Ian Baird	"
Francis Ferguson	"	Campbell Banks	"
Alexander Watson	1948	John Bell	"
Laurence Glass	1952	John Dunlop	"
James Burns	"	John Cochrane	"
Charles Ferns	"	James Friels	"
John Fulton	"	Peter Johnson	"
David Paterson	"	Ronald Lavalette	"
William Petrie	"	Andrew Martin	"
Henry Travers	"	Zachariah Moore	"
William Allison	1953	John Morrison	"

Reginald Welch	1966
Rev. John Taylor	1970
George Duncan	1971
Roy Lauchlan	"
Robert Marwick	"
Mary Milne	"
Frederick Sanderson	"
Gordon Stewart	"
David Waddell	"
Christine Welch	"
Alexander Thomson	1972
Alexander McMartin	"
William Baird	1973
Alexander Bayne	"
John Clark	"
John Cook	"
James Gibson	"
Ronald Graham	”
Gabriel Haddow	"
John McCallum	"
James Muir	"
Nan Pollock	”
Emily Sloan	"
James Tannock	"
George Reid	1974
Robert Lynch	1976
Mary Grigor	"
Meg Kelly	"
Robert Smallman	"
John Calder	"
Derek Mathieson	"
Mima Fishleigh	"
Agnes Mackie	"
George Welsh	"
William Meney	1976
David Conn	1978
Gordon McConnell	“
Brian Brown	"
John Boyd	"
Victor Gilchrist	"
Archibald Gray	"
Robert McCracken	"
Fiona Frew	”
Elizabeth Gillies	"
Linda Conn	1979
Nina Craig	"
William Murray	"
Richard Fowler	1980
George Graham	"
John Kilpatrick	"
William McLaughlan	"
Thomas Renwick	1982
Robert Meechan	"
James Paterson	"
Alistair Millar	"
William Ferguson	1984
Alexander Nelson	"
David Rae	"
William Brownlie	"
David Kerr	1985
David Wilson	"
John Littlejohn	"
Barry McNair	"
Alexander Montgomery	“
John Alexander	"
Thomas Adrain	1986
William Craig	"
Margery Aitken	"



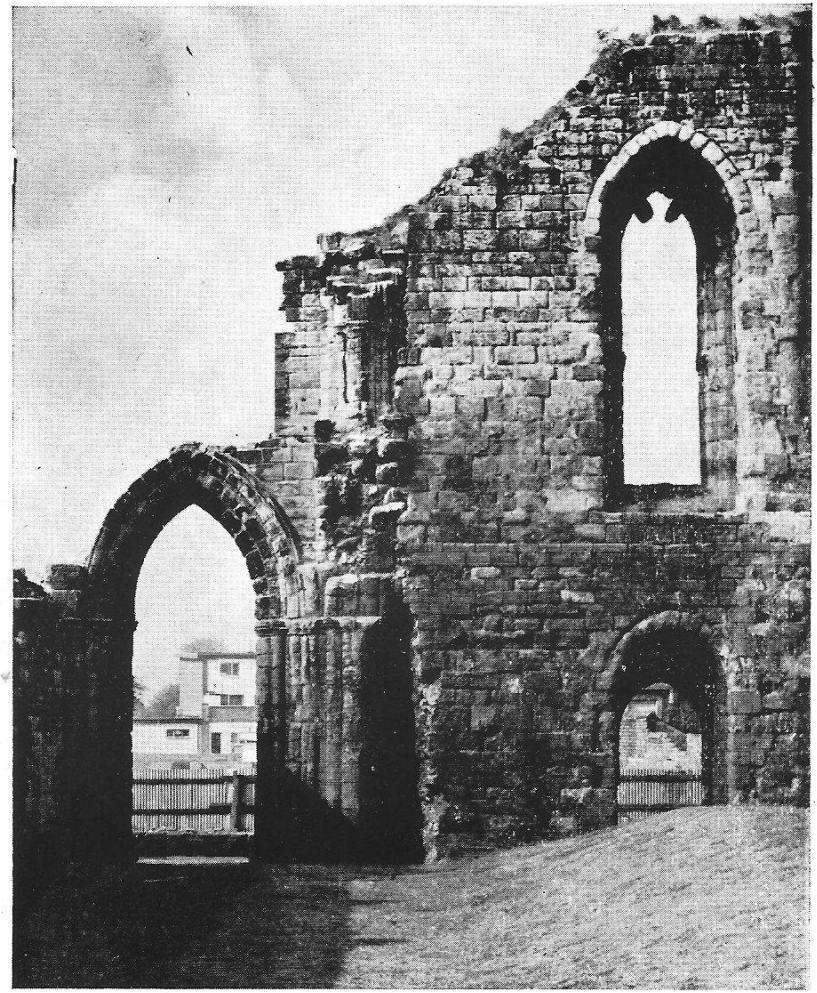
Abbey, Tower and Church



Abbey Gable.



Arch—South Transept Aisle.



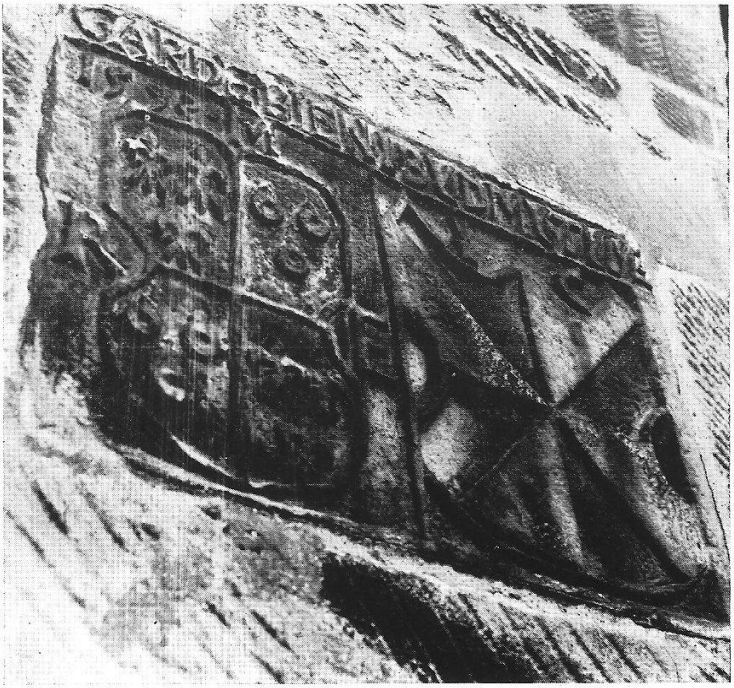
West Gable—on Left Great Aisle-Arch and Pier of former South-West Tower



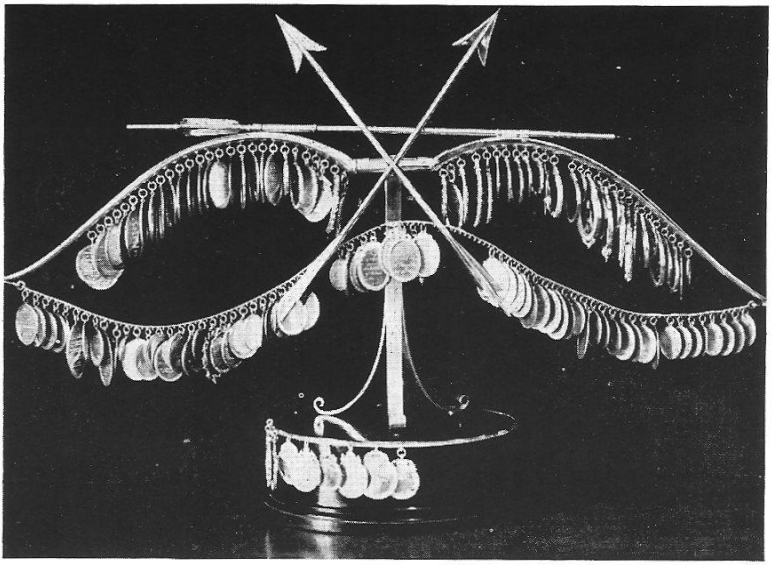
Arched Entrance Into Abbey Nave from Cloisters.



The Communion Silver.
(In Front are the Four 17th Century Goblets).



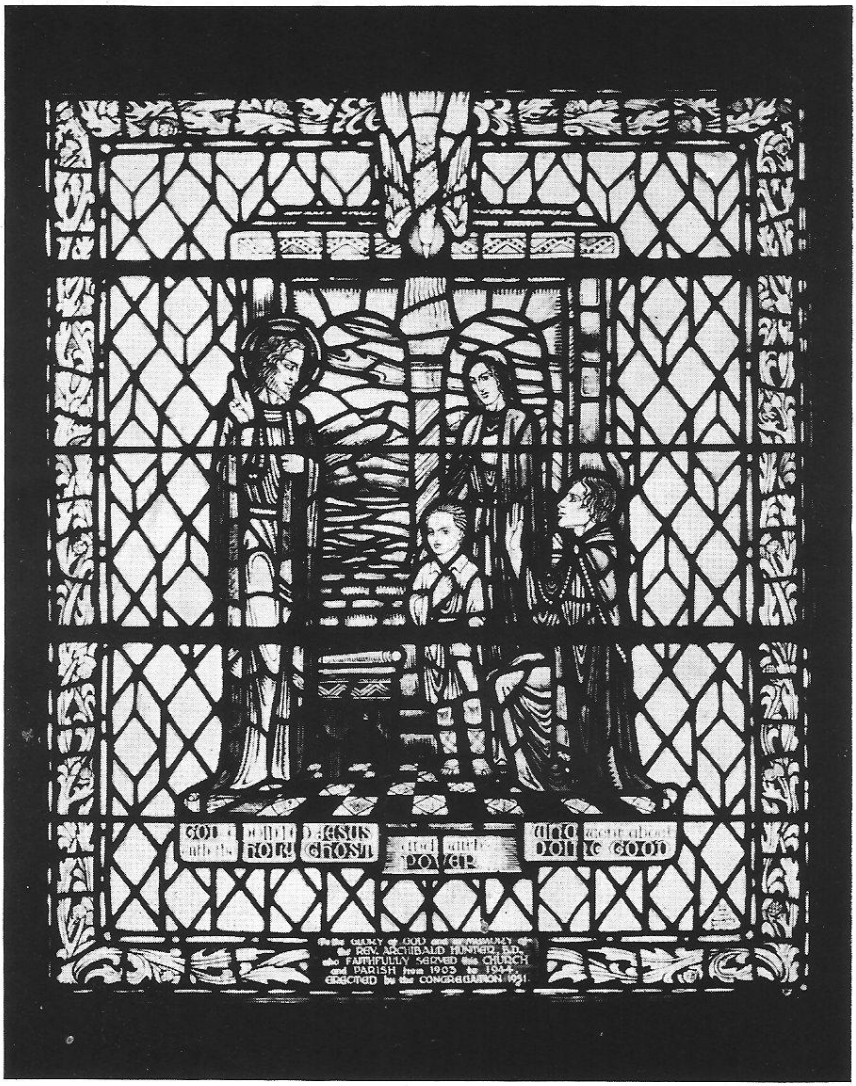
Inscribed Stone—1592.
(In Church Wall Beside Eglinton Stairway).



The Kilwinning Silver Arrow.



Eglinton Gallery.



Memorial Window—Rev. Archibald Hunter, B.D.
(Designed by Gordon Webster).