

# Galston Parish Church

**We**, in the Church of Scotland, say 'Welcome' to all. There has been a Church on this site from the early 12th Century. The first Church would probably have been a small, low building, served by a vicar from the Abbey of Faile. Little is recorded of this period, but what is known is that the area was sparsely populated and the surrounding land was boggy with the loan of a poor quality.

The Church of Galston was dedicated to St. Peter and a St. Peter's Fair was held on 29 June each year. From ancient records we learn the Church of Galston was granted to the convent of Red Friars which was founded at Faile in 1252. It continued to belong to the Red Friars until the Reformation. Galston had a vicar who was paid in food (180 bushels) and all the rest of the revenues went to the Abbot at Faile.

In 1471 a chapel was founded in Cessnock Castle with a private chaplain under the patronage of Campbell of Cessnock.

Campbell of Cessnock and Lockhart of Barr were two of 20 Lollards or 'singers of sacred reforming songs' who for various heresies were called before King James IV in 1494. They were the early reformers. As the years passed the families of Campbell and Lockhart continued as Reformers. In 1545 George Wishart preached in Barr Castle and in 1556 we also find that John Knox was brought to the district by Lockhart. The Parish Church, of course, would be closed to these two reformers at that time!

The Reformed Kirk Session was formed in 1563.

The next Century saw the advent of the Covenanters, some of whose graves are in the Kirkyard (Covenanters' Corner) and the names of the men who signed the Solemn League and Covenant are recorded in the Minutes of the Kirk Session.

During the 18th Century, as the town grew and the land being limed, drained and fertilised, the Church also became a bigger building, with a gallery and spire being added - but it still had an earthen floor and no seating. This was also a period of great social as well as religious reform, and it is interesting to note the power of the Kirk Session in those days.

For example: The appointment of the schoolmaster had to be approved by the Kirk Session; it is also recorded that a woman of the Parish was to receive the sum of 5/- (25p) to be paid in instalments; and a man of the Parish had to appear before the Kirk Session to answer to the charge of "being inquired as to why he did not present his child for Baptism" and on giving no satisfactory answer the Kirk Session "did appoint him to be present on the next Lord's Day and be rebuked for his contempt of the Ordinances." This serves to remind us of the important part the Church had on community life.

The Present Church building was completed in 1809 and, apart from the Chancel, which was added in 1909, is still the original building.

A frame containing a hand written double page of the outgoings for the first

building in 1809 hangs in the corridor leading from the entrance at the south porch. It was compiled by James Jardine, schoolmaster and records the names of the various trades people and the amounts they were paid. The total of just over £3000 is shown, double underlined - how much would it cost today?

The original bell, which bears the inscription, '*Peter van der Jhein made me in the year 1569,*' was removed to Cessnock Castle and was replaced by the second bell which bears the inscription '*John Meikle of Edinburgh made me in the year 1696*' and this bell sits in the vestibule of the Church. The present bell, erected in 1885 at a cost of £200, is inscribed '*Erected at Galston Parish Church, AD 1885, by voluntary contribution. Rev. J. Brown BD, Minister.*' A small hand bell dated 1722, which was used for funerals, sits in the Session House. The sexton could charge 2d per mile for ringing the funeral bell.

Galston Parish Church has been served by some very important and prominent Ministers in its long history. Their portraits hang in the Session House.

The only available suitable space for an extension to the Church in the form of a Hall was on the south side entering via the corridor leading to the Session House. On completion in 1967 it was decided to name it in honour of James Allan Hogg, minister of Galston Parish, later Galston Old Parish, from 1887 until 1951, although he had been actively retired since 1931. The Hogg Hall was extended westwards in 1987 and again in 2004 when it was re-dedicated.



**For** a more comprehensive history of Galston Parish Church you may wish to seek out these publications: HISTORY OF GALSTON PARISH CHURCH by Rev. James Allan Hogg which covers the history until 1909 and includes *Three Centuries of Clerical Life in Galston* by Rev. John Brown. GROWING TOGETHER IN FAITH is a history of Galston Parish Church from 1909-2009 and was written by Irene Hopkins. Irene also wrote AN HISTORICAL SYNOPSIS, a booklet printed for the Millenium celebrations, taking us on a walk around the Church and telling us about the various furnishings and plaques which can be found. This SYNOPSIS has been updated and re-printed, again as a booklet, and also appears on [www.kirknews.org.uk](http://www.kirknews.org.uk).

## The Kirkyard

**Have** a look at the Kirkyard and its graves. Those that can still be read are most interesting and none more so than the two at the south side door to the Covenanters. But the names you would read as you wander round include the names like John Hendrie; his parents; the Hutchesons; the Fairlies; Rev. George Smith; Andrew Blair, Longhouse; the Campbells.

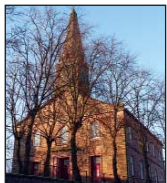
Notice where some of them died: Cartwright in Canada; Interlaken, Switzerland; Peringapatatu, India; Hastings, Canada; Toronto, Canada; Buffalo, USA; Staffordshire - all this before 1900 - and we thought it was our generation who invented travel.

Notice the grave of Andrew Blair, Longhouse, late Baron Baillie of Galston 1823 . . . left his whole fortune to found a free school in the village. This is the building in Polwarth Street, inscribed Blair School.

Look at the occupations - farmer, banker, merchant, clock and watchmaker, student of divinity, soldier, minister of religion, gardener, parochial schoolmaster, tailor, master mariner, paper maker, in fact a whole spectrum of society and all connected to our church, otherwise they would not have been interred here. Unfortunately, most of the stones are now illegible but a survey of the kirkyard was done in 1985 and is part of a booklet covering all graveyards in the old Kilmarnock and Loudoun district which can be seen in the reference section of the Dick Institute in Kilmarnock and in the Burns Monument Centre in the Kay Park. See also, in a corner on the north-west side of the church, a Yew Tree planted by Loudoun Rotary Club in June 2002 to mark 750 years of Christian worship on this site in the Parish of Galston.

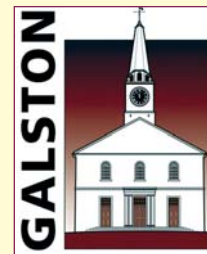


*The Yew Tree planted in 2002 to mark 750 years of Christian worship on this site*



Galston Parish Church of Scotland (Charity No. SC010370)  
Information Leaflet - *Our Heritage* - GALSTON'S PARISH CHURCH  
[www.kirknews.org.uk](http://www.kirknews.org.uk) - email: [kirknews@btinternet.com](mailto:kirknews@btinternet.com)

## OUR HERITAGE



PARISH CHURCH  
of Scotland  
Charity No. 010370

## Galston's Parish Church

*A short history of  
the Parish Church*

