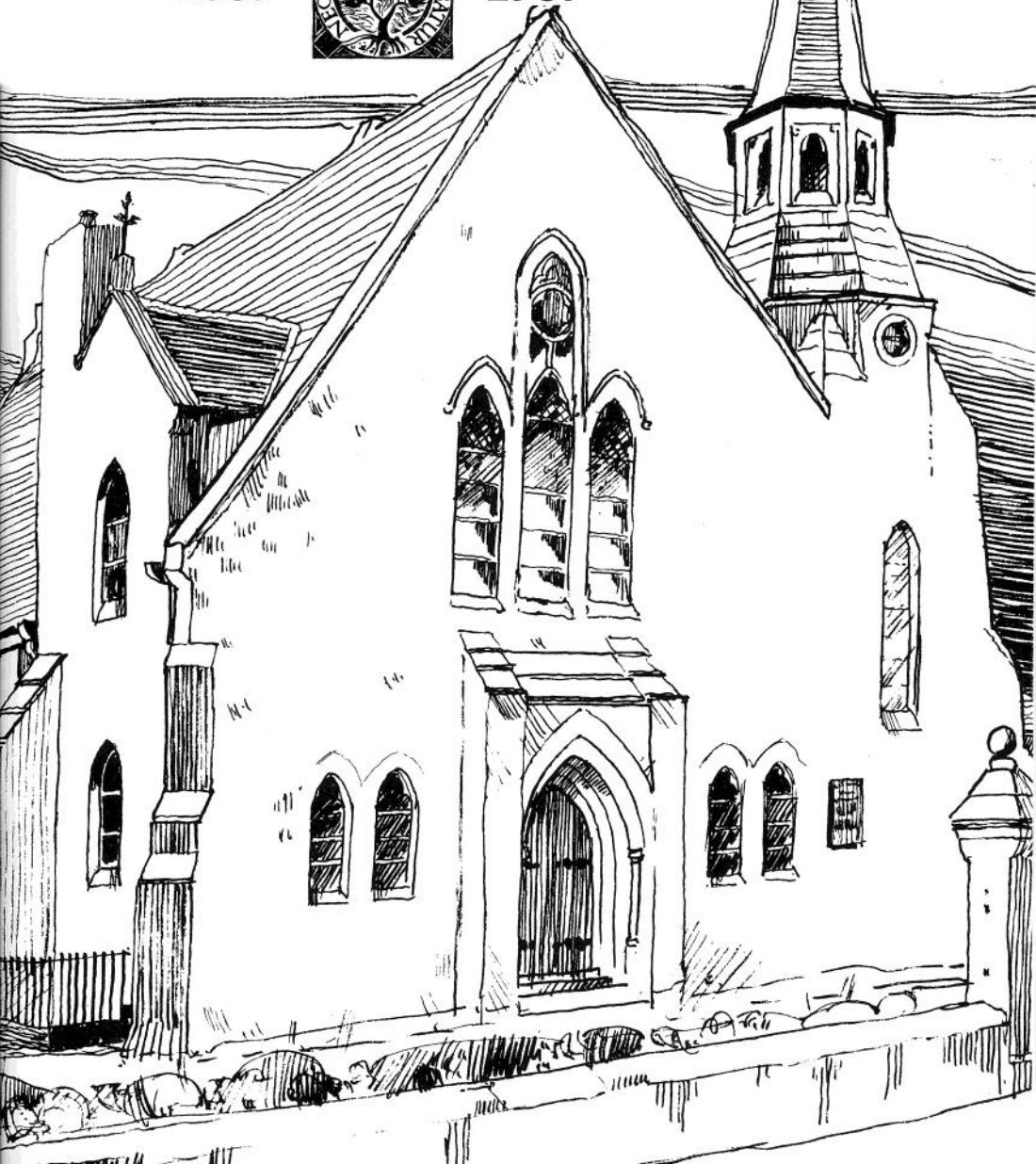


LIVINGSTONE CHURCH STEVENSTON Centenary

1887



1987



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INTRODUCTION

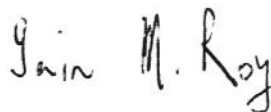
It has been said that if you want something done, do not give it to a committee to do. We have proved the error of that observation in publication of this Centenary Booklet. The text has been the product of a committee, consisting of Anne Cochrane, Marion Howie, David Frew, Robert Erskine and myself. Alex Perrie has been largely responsible for securing the aid of our advertisers without whose support publication would not have been possible. We would like to thank them for this generous support and encouragement.

Bill Howie, Marion's husband, has been our very able photographer; Sandy Murphy, brought up in the High Kirk, formerly a teacher of Art, and now a professional artist, has been responsible for our frontispiece.

The Kestrel Press has given us every assistance to produce a booklet worthy of the occasion.

I am particularly grateful to my two predecessors for kindly agreeing to place on record some reminiscences of their time in Livingstone.

It only remains for you to read this story, to learn from it, and to continue making it with God's help.

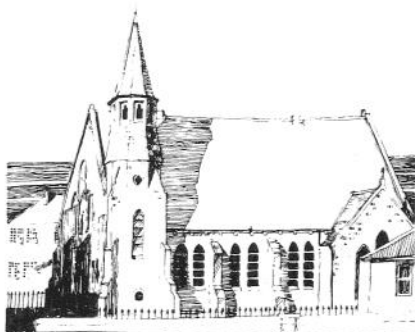
A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Iain M. Roy". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. The first name "Iain" is written in a larger, more prominent script, followed by "M." and then "Roy".

IAIN. M. ROY.



Church Interior — Worshipping

Our Church



In the year 1843 the Rev. Dr. Landsborough, minister of Stevenston Parish Church (the High Kirk), walked out of the General Assembly Hall of the Church of Scotland, along with a great number of other ministers and elders, to found the Free Church of Scotland. The event became known as "The Disruption" and was to lead eventually to an entirely new relationship between Church and State in Scotland. Livingstone Church has its roots in this action of Dr. Landsborough and others.

At first, the new Free Church minister and his new members could not secure a site in Stevenston for a Church. A site was found, however, in Saltcoats and a Church built — later to be called Landsborough Church and used by the Church of Scotland, but now demolished.

The First Buildings

With one third of the members of this new congregation coming from Stevenston, it was not long before there was a fresh move to establish a congregation in that community itself. Patrick Warner, a local landowner, gave the site, the people gave the money, and the first Church was built and opened for worship by February 1845. It was until a few years ago, still the building of the Free Church of Scotland. It is now part of the business premises of Messrs. James Frew Ltd., members of a family long associated with our Church, and through whose generosity a plaque has been placed on the building to commemorate its place in the history of our congregation. Soon afterwards a manse was built, for the new minister, at a cost of £500.

A New Church

It would seem to us a big enough task to build one Church. But, only thirty-eight years later, in 1883, the congregation, under the ministry of Mr. Joseph Forrest, embarked on a plan to erect a new Church. Mr. Forrest himself, though by that time no longer the minister of the Church, gave an interesting account of why they embarked on this project, in an address on the evening of the opening of the new Church. Three things he said motivated them. They were cold in Winter, stifled in Summer, and needed more room for their work, especially among the young in Sunday School

and Band of Hope. He and his office-bearers had raised monies and promises amounting to £800 by 1885, when he was called to Douglas, Isle of Man. In addition, they had the promise of some special grants, from the Free Church and from Trusts, towards the estimated £2,000 to erect the new building.

It was left, however, to John Livingstone, his successor, to complete the work. The minute of the Deacon's Court of 26th April 1886 records the decision very simply:

"It was agree to proceed with the erection of a new Church".

Patrick Warner again provided the site and also gave a subscription towards the new building. The architect was a Mr. Petrie of Glasgow, who supervised the erection of the present Church and Lesser Hall at an entire cost of £1,800 not including the £200 worth of ironwork gifted by the Kerrs of Ardeer Foundry. (Only a little of this ironwork now remains on either side of our building, together with the two iron pillars at our front gate). The stone of the building came from the local Stevenston Quarry of Messrs. Woodburn and Douglas, apart from the granite columns at the front door which came from Peterhead.

The Workmen

It seems right to name the tradesmen involved, because a hundred years later we can still testify that they built well and were workmen who had no need to be ashamed.

<i>Mason</i>	Messrs. John Young of Stevenston
<i>Joiner</i>	Mr. William Young of Stevenston
<i>Slater</i>	Messrs. Kier of Irvine
<i>Plumber/Heating Engineer/Gas Fitter</i>	Mr. Thomas Hall of Irvine
<i>Plasterer</i>	Mr. David Stobie of Irvine
<i>Upholsterer</i>	Mr. Cunningham of Glasgow

All the workmen were chosen as the result of tenders secured by advertisement in "The Adrossan and Saltcoats Herald", "The Ayrshire Daily News", and "The Kilmarnock Standard".

Laying the Foundation

On Saturday 4th September 1886, Mrs. Mure-Macredie of Perceton House (now the Irvine Development Corporation H.Q.) accompanied by her daughters, the Misses Mure, laid the Foundation Stone above what was to be the front entrance of the new Church. In a cavity in the stone was placed in a bottle — the then coins of the realm from one farthing to half-sovereign, copies of "The Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald", "Ayrshire Weekly News", "Glasgow Daily Herald", "Glasgow Daily Mail", and "The Scotsman", a

copy of the authorised version of the Bible, the "Free Church Monthly Record" and "Children's Record", a list of the names of the minister and office-bearers, architect and tradesmen, the names of Mrs. Macredie and her daughters, and of the ministers present.

The Opening

On Thursday, the 7th July 1887, at noon, the Church was opened and dedicated to the glory of God by the Rev. Alexander Whyte of Free St. George's, Edinburgh. In the evening there was a thanksgiving meeting conducted by the Rev. Joseph Forrest, the former minister, whose interest in the work had continued, even to the extent of a tangible gift.

The opening services on Sunday, the 10th July 1887 were packed. Three services were held in the morning, afternoon and evening, and the offerings for the day amounted to £103 10s. 2¾d., huge for those days when £20 was a reasonable monthly income for our congregation which then had about 200 members.

It would be easy to paint too rosy a picture of the financial situation. In fact, they had several hundreds of pounds of debt. They overcame it with the retrospective help of the Ferguson Bequest who gave £150, and who subsequently, a hundred years later were to give £1,010 to renovate the building.

There was also the great personal generosity of Mr. J. W. Boyd, a member of the Church, who purchased for £160 the former Church building, which the congregation had decided to sell to raise money, and who gave it back to them to be used as their Church hall. This it remained, renamed "The Woodside Hall", until our congregation became part of the United Free Church of Scotland. After a legal wrangle involving all former Free Church congregations we, in common with others, had to give up part of our premises to the continuing Free Church. Our congregation, then, gave up its hall in 1904.

It was the loss of the original Church which led to the building of our new hall in 1912, making this the 75th anniversary of that building. The architect was Mr. Hugh Thomson, an uncle of our former treasurer, Dick Thomson.

What strikes you reading through the minutes of these past events is the generosity of our forefathers. On the evening, for instance, when Mr. Boyd made his generous offer to purchase the old Church, Mr. Kerr of the iron foundry offered £115 in loan over two years. The remaining members of the Deacons' Court, consisting of two weavers, a mining overseer, a farmer, a chemist, a miner, two moulders, a gardener, and the inevitable dynamite worker, gave that night, or promised to give, £52, and to undertake house-to-house collections to clear the debt, especially money borrowed from the Bank of Scotland under the agency of Mr. James Campbell. Yet, at their next meeting, these same office-bearers, beset as they were with debt,

arranged to have two collection boxes placed in the front vestibule of the Church for "The Poor" and for "Foreign Missions". They had their priorities right as we have tried to have ours right also by meeting our wider commitments during the raising of money for our present renovation.

The Changing Scene

No buildings as old as ours could remain unchanged. By and large, however, these changes have taken place within. We started off, for instance, with a precentor leading worship. In 1898 it was decided to introduce instrumental music and an organ was purchased. It was 1944 before a pipe organ was installed. Originally presented to the Highlander's Memorial Church in Glasgow by Sir Harry Lauder, the famous Scots comedian, in memory of his son, John, killed in the First World War, it was purchased by our congregation in 1943. Mr. Archibald our present organist, and the members of the choir were the inspiration of this move. The dedication took place on Sunday 9th July 1944 at a special afternoon service. Meg Faulds, one of our members was one of the two soloists on that occasion. The choir under Mr. Archibald presented a number of pieces. The special guest organist was Purcell J. Mansefield who incidentally later taught our minister, Mr. Roy, music in Camphill School in Paisley.

Few visiting our Church could fail to notice the fine stained glass windows presented by Mr. James Morrison, the first Provost of Stevenston, and for so many years our Session Clerk. These windows were installed in our Jubilee Year, 1937, and dedicated at the morning service on July 4th, a memorial to Mr. Morrison's wife and daughter.



Church Interior



Our Communion Table as a War Memorial



Our Communion Ware

Over the years Mr. Morrison gave many other gifts including our communion table, which is a memorial to those who died in the First World War (a wall plaque commemorates those who were killed in the Second World War), the communion lectern, and some communion ware.

One work which lightened the interior of our Church was the stripping of varnish from the Church pews. This was a difficult job carried out by voluntary labour under the direction of Mr. David McAuslan.

Many items of Church furnishing have come to us gradually over the years from other sources. The choir chairs were gifted by the Girl Guides in memory of Miss Grace Boyd. The Guides and Youth Fellowship carpeted the choir area which previously was covered in lino. All the Youth organisations raised the money to furnish our Session Room as it is today. The skilled workers of the Co-operative Furniture Factory in Beith carried out the work to David Frew's design.

This latter work was carried out at the time of major hall renovation in 1962-63. This transformed our halls from their Victorian state to the bright modern halls we have today. A new floor was laid, the premises rewired, sound-proofing introduced between the Large and Lesser Halls, kitchen and toilets brought up-to-date, bright decor devised by Bill Kerr and executed by David and Frank McAuslan. Dick Maxwell, the joiner, made our present Church lectern from material used to renovate the hall floors. From the old hall forms of pitch pine he also made the furniture for the vestry and the kitchen.



Session Room



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Centenary Renovation

Our present renovation of the Church and Halls has been blessed by the skills of able workmen, some of them our members, all of them now our friends. We record here for others after us to know the nature of the work done — the cleaning and refurbishment of the Church stonework, the re-roofing of the Church, the installation of new unbreakable(!) windows in the Church, the copper on our Church spire renewed, fresh gutters and down-pipes provided, rewiring and repainting of Church and Halls, and the provision of extensive new storage accommodation. The total cost was £50,000, a figure which puts no price tag on the work of Community Industry and voluntary labour.

This major work of renovation was carried out with dedication and enthusiasm by:

<i>Slater</i>	R. & A. Auld, Stevenston
<i>Plumber</i>	Archibald & Godfree, Ardrossan
<i>Joiner/Glazier</i>	A. W. Blair, Stevenston
<i>Stonework</i>	Hunter & Clark, Glasgow
<i>Painting</i>	Community Industry, Kilmarnock

who were the main contractors working under the supervision of Honeyman, Jack, & Robertson of Glasgow, our architects.

Through the generous assistance of I.C.I. our Church bell was also renovated and re-hung. It was then that we discovered that it had served in another Church before ours, for the inscription ran thus:

Presented to Free Anderston Church
by R. B. Stewart, Esq.
David Burgess, Founder, Glasgow 1849
No. 266

In 1930 there was a suggestion that a sound system for the deaf be installed. The matter was deferred until the deaf specifically asked for one! Fifty-six years later they did and an induction loop system was installed by Alex Woodside and George Oberst. The ways of the Church are sometimes slow!

Continuing Witness

There is more. Much has had to be omitted and many have gone unmentioned. What it all speaks of is a dedicated people who over these 100 years have loved their building not for itself but as the place where God could be worshipped, His Word heard, His sacraments reveal Him, and the fellowship honour Him. We thank God for the inheritance of His House and for the love and fellowship which over the years succeeding generations have experienced within it.



Church Hall before renovation



Church Hall after renovation — 1962-63

Our Organisations

The stranger visiting Livingstone Church halls on any night of the week, and on several mornings and afternoons as well, would be sure to find some group or other holding a meeting. He or she might well think that this was a sign of the times — a busy church with busy people. But well-used halls and well-attended meetings are not a phenomenon of the 70's or 80's but rather just a sign of the continuation of the commitment to the organisational life of the church by our congregation since its inception.

Earliest Years

In its earliest years the organisational life of our church centred on its Sunday School and Bible Class. This year, the centenary year of our building, sees an even older birthday, the 140th of our Sunday School. In 1845, the session decided to inaugurate Sabbath School work and, as far as is known, it commenced immediately. In 1847 Mr. Matthew Cunningham was appointed superintendent — a position which he held for 50 years — creating a precedent for long service in this organisation. Mr. James Morrison was subsequently Sunday School Superintendent for a like number of years. When the new church building was opened in 1887, the original church building, renamed the Woodside Hall, became the meeting-place of the Sunday School which continued to meet there until 1904 when the Woodside Hall reverted to the Free Church. The need for new additional accommodation was realised immediately, but it was not until 1912 that a large hall adjoining the church was ready for use. We have yet another anniversary — our halls are 75 years old this year.



Sunday School — Class I



Sunday School — Class II



Beginners Sunday School

In the 50th anniversary booklet of our congregation, the author of the Sunday School report states that "all departments are flourishing under the able direction of a dedicated teaching staff". 50 years on that statement still is valid. The Sunday School may have seen changes in venue, time, techniques and activities — but throughout its long life, the commitment of the congregation to the support and encouragement of the young people and their leaders in the Sunday School has been total.

New Ways

"Modern life with its feverish rush, its many attractions and allurements, challenges the Church to greater efforts and changed methods. The ice rinks, the cinemas, the countless diversions of modern life — how is the Church to respond?"

This statement is not taken from the Session Minutes when the Saturday Club was introduced in the late 70's, but was written in 1947 by the then Minister the Rev. J. Mackay Nimmo, as a foreword to a new magazine produced by the young people of the Church — "The Living Stone". The magazine goes on to report on the various activities offered and no apologies are necessary for quoting at length from that particular magazine:

"We have in all, five meetings in the week. On Wednesday we meet for badminton, table tennis, darts and many other similar games, and there is always sure to be a group discussing some problem, or another group clustered around the piano. Not forgetting to mention the little cup of tea we enjoy on a Wednesday. I pass on to Saturday, when we have two meetings of the club. The first is in the afternoon and is mainly devoted to badminton, which, being still in its infancy(!) requires as much practice as it receives. On Saturday night our main theme is dancing. At the end of each evening we proceed to the church where we have a short service, which is taken by some of the club members."

"Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose". In 1987 our Church is still very concerned to provide for its young people. The Saturday Club regularly attracts many of our own young people and their friends to participate in various activities. The Venturers and Quest Club on Sunday evenings seek to encourage the spiritual development of the young people as well as providing an opportunity for meeting socially. Livingstone Church has a history of being forward-looking and, as we progress towards our next Centenary, the various challenges which face it will no doubt be met with the same vision which has carried it this far.

The Uniformed Organisations

We have also a long history of involvement with uniformed organisations. In 1987 we have Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Venture Scouts, Junior Brigade, Senior Brigade, Brownies and Guides all meeting in our halls. The longest association has been with the Cubs, who were registered as meeting in Livingstone on 26th July 1926. A Scout troop was formed later at the beginning of the Rev. Roy Stark's ministry. Subsequently, however, both Scouts and Cubs left the church halls to meet in independent premises in Boglemart Street. It was therefore, with pleasure, the congregation welcomed their return to our buildings in 1985 when their tenure of these premises was threatened, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Taylor, two of our members being involved as leaders.



Cubs



Scouts

The Girl Guides were registered on 27th January 1927, and this year, therefore, is their Diamond Jubilee. Mrs. G. W. Taylor, the wife of a previous minister, was instrumental in establishing the company. In its 60 years, 1st Stevenston Guides, as the company was called, has had only five Guiders — Mrs. Taylor from 1927 until she left Stevenston in 1933, Miss Jennie Kerr 1933-1936, Miss Peggy Fisher 1936-1938, Miss Isobel Scott 1938-1942, Miss Martha Kerr 1942-1971 and Mrs. Marion Howie 1971 till — well, who knows? 1972 saw the birth of a daughter company — the 1st A. Its first leader was Mrs. Margaret Carey (nee Kerr) and the Guider at present is Mrs. Margo Roy, (daughter-in-law of the present minister). The two companies have continued to work in tandem to offer opportunities to the girls of the congregation and the town.



Guide's 50th Birthday Party

The establishing of a Brownie Pack and a Ranger Unit soon after the Guide Company extended the work of the movement to the younger and the older girls. At the moment we have no Ranger Unit, but the Brownies are still flourishing under the leadership of Miss Ann Breen and Mrs. Nancy Burns.



Brownies

The youngest of our uniformed organisations is strangely enough, the Boys Brigade. It was founded in 1946 with Mr. Caulfield as Captain. Very soon thereafter, Mr. Jim Bennett took over this position which he held until 1969. At about the same time, Life Boys were formed under the leadership of Mrs. Nimmo, the minister's wife, and Mr. Hugh Mullen. The Junior B.B. (or Life Boys) ceased for a short time in the 1960's, but were revived by Frank and Nancy Morgan, one of whose Lieutenants, Jim Clark, is now Officer-in-Charge of the Junior Section. From 1969 the Boys Brigade has been led by Mr. Jeffrey Stevenson. Throughout the years of its existence the Boys Brigade in Livingstone has continued to fulfil the aim of William Smith, the founder, — "to seek to promote the advancement of God's Kingdom among boys".



Junior B.B.



Company Section B.B.

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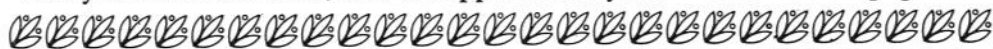
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DOWN MEMORY LANE

Can you name the event, and the approximate year? — Answers on page 48.





5.



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8

LIVINGSTONE CHURCH STEVENSTON

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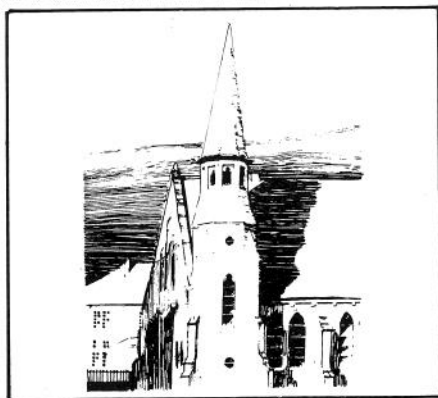
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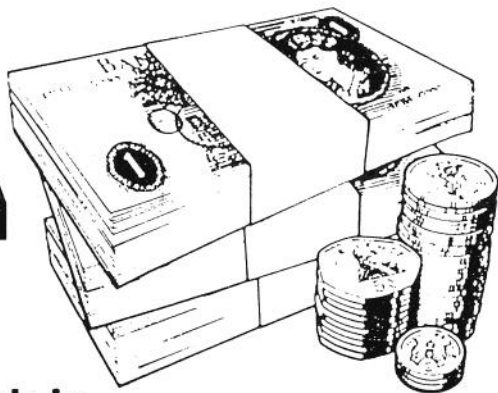
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Women's Work

It would be quite wrong, however, to imagine that the organisational life of our congregation has focused only on our young people.

Very early in the life of our new Church building, during the ministry of the Rev. John Livingstone, the women of the Church were organised in a Dorcas Society (Acts 9, vv, 36-41). The Dorcas Society continued till the end of the ministry of the Rev. Matthew Miller, when it became known as "The Women's Work Party". In 1933 the Work Party became affiliated to the Church of Scotland Woman's Guild and a branch of the Guild was formed under the Presidency of Mrs. Stark, the minister's wife. The Woman's Guild has continued to flourish and in 1983 celebrated its 50th birthday with a party at which many of its highlights were remembered.



Woman's Guild (photo by kind permission of The Ardrossan & Saltcoats Herald)

The Guild's junior offspring, the Young Mother's Group, was established at the beginning of Mr. Bisset's ministry by the then Guild President, Mrs. Jean Thomson and Mrs. Peggy Kerr. With that foundation, and the work of Louisa Auld, at one time president of both organisations, and other successors in office, the relationship between Guild and Group has always been harmonious and good.

Together these two organisations play an invaluable role in the Church, fostering the spiritual development of their members and contributing to the material well-being of the Church. The Guild takes an active interest in the wider work of the Church through its practical support of the work of the Assembly committees. Many of the present members also give service to patients and visitors in our Ayrshire hospital canteens.

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Flexibility

Organisations, of course, come and go in the life of any Church, perhaps necessarily so if the needs of different times are to be met. In the 1920's a group of people came together to form the Christian Endeavour under the leadership of Billy Auld, Miss Ferguson, (a full-time worker known as the Bible Woman) and later Miss Annie Cruikshanks. Although the group is no longer in existence in Stevenston, the Christian Endeavour continues in Saltcoats. Many of our older members hold fond memories of the warmth of that past fellowship. Although the Wednesday morning service inaugurated in 1984 is not an organisation as such, much of that fellowship and friendship experienced by C.E. members is to be found there. It is well supported by an average of 50 people — young and old, men and women — who come together to worship, particularly remembering in prayer the sick of the congregation by name.

In the ministry of Mr. Nimmo, the Men's Association was started to provide a more informal opportunity for the men of the Congregation to meet and for many years it contributed a great deal by its fellowship. In more recent times that fellowship has been continued jointly through the High Kirk Men's Guild as something of an ecumenical endeavour.

The 60's saw the start of the Livingstone Church Opera Group; originally called the Opera Group because of its performances of Gilbert and Sullivan comic operas, its repertoire now extends to plays, musicals, and pantomimes, involving both young and old alike, creating a very broad fellowship of age. It would be impractical to list here all their productions, but it is worth recording that almost all of the large sums of money raised by the Group have gone to charity, especially to Christian Aid, showing yet again in another way, a congregation whose concern for others is indeed real.



Opera Group (photo by kind permission of The Ardrossan & Saltcoats Herald)

The Choir

No mention of the organisations of our Church could be complete without mention of the Church Choir. Mr. William Archibald this year celebrates 50 years as an organist, 47 of these years in Livingstone. Under his leadership the young used to perform their "kinderspiels" and the older members some memorable performances of the Messiah. The regular support of the Choir continues to enhance our public worship Sunday by Sunday.

PAST MINISTERS OF THE CONGREGATION

Rev. JAMES WHITE, 1847-1866

Prior to the Disruption of 1843, Mr. White had been pastor to a congregation in Hull. On a number of occasions Mr. White took the services at Stevenston, on a pulpit-supply basis, and liking him greatly the congregation sought opinions of him from other sources. After receiving good reports, and having personal experience of the gentleman, the congregation decided to present him with a unanimous call to the charge at Stevenston. The Free Church in Stevenston prospered under the leadership of Mr. White, and the people of the town were inspired by his labours to a new sense of spiritual freedom. After 19 years service, failing health compelled Mr. White to petition the Presbytery and the General Assembly for a grant to enable him to have the use of an assistant. The Assembly, in its wisdom, refused the petition on the grounds that the Stevenston charge did not merit such assistance. Nevertheless, because of Mr. White's poor health, the Assembly made a grant available to allow him to retire from his duties. Thus ended the ministry of the first incumbent of the Free Church pulpit in Stevenston. His name, however, is still remembered by present members through the James White Bequest Fund; his bequest to us for the charitable use of our minister.

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Rev. JAMES TREADWELL, M.A., 1867-1876

On 28th February 1867, James Treadwell of Almorat Harrow, Australia was ordained to the Holy Ministry and inducted to the pastoral charge of the Stevenston congregation by the Moderator of the Presbytery, the



Rev. R. McIndoe of Galston. After the service of induction, a dinner to welcome the new minister was held in the Masons Arms Inn, where the health and happiness of the Rev. Treadwell was toasted — surely an enlightened event for that period! The following Sunday, the minister was introduced to the congregation at the forenoon service by the Rev. William Buchan, with Mr. Treadwell preaching at the afternoon service. The day was completed with a further service in the evening and it is interesting to note the collection for that day's services amounted to almost £104; a substantial amount at that time. After ministering to a thriving congregation for nine

years, James Treadwell was appointed by the Colonial Committee of the Free Church to a charge in New Zealand and thus resigned his charge in Stevenston. He left the town with a high reputation both as a minister and a scholar.

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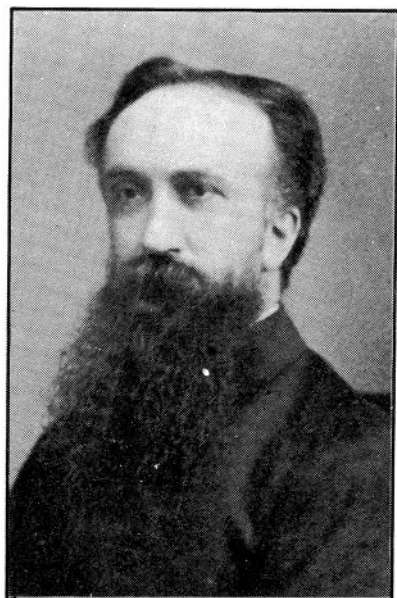
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Rev. JOSEPH FORREST, M.A., 1876-1885

A unanimous call was sent from the congregation to a young probationer from Aberdeen, Joseph Forrest. Mr. Forrest accepted that call and was ordained and inducted in the presence of a large



congregation by the Rev. Alexander Davidson of Kilbirnie, and charges of exhortation and encouragement were addressed to the new minister and the congregation by the Rev. Dr. Easton of Darvel. Joseph Forrest was an evangelical preacher, a good pastor, and though stern in appearance was gentle in nature. Because of his involvement with the entire community as well as his own congregation, he was often referred to as "the Parish Minister" — a considerable compliment to a minister of the Free Church! His nine years of ministry saw a further strengthening and consolidation of the congregation. During it he formed a strong Band of

Hope which became an integral part of the congregation's life. In 1885, Mr. Forrest became the second minister to accept a call to an overseas charge — although this time only to St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Douglas, Isle of Man!

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Rev. JOHN LIVINGSTONE, 1885-1900

In the autumn of 1885, there was ordained and inducted to the charge of the Free Church in Stevenston, the young man whose name was subsequently to be given to our congregation. (Now, you did not think too

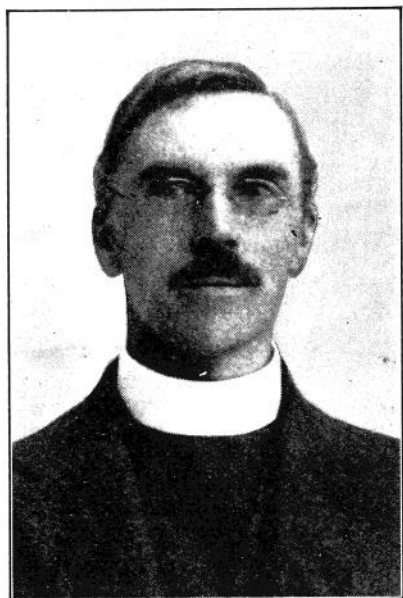


that it was David Livingstone?) A native of Johnstone, he studied at Glasgow University and New College, Edinburgh, and in the spring of 1885 was appointed assistant to the minister of the McCheyne Memorial church in Dundee. His reputation as a preacher and pastor soon spread, and various congregations competed for his services. Fortunately for the people of Stevenston, Livingstone elected to accept their call. Shortly after settling in Stevenston, the new minister was married to Miss Garrow of Aberlour, whom he had met amidst stirring revival scenes on Speyside. The new Mrs. Livingstone was a committed Christian and was able to assist her husband fully in all his work.

Livingstone inherited a growing congregation, with a Church building that no longer met its needs. Following up the able work of his predecessor, Livingstone fully supported by the people of the congregation, soon brought to fruition the vision of a new Church. Livingstone's youth and vigour were applied throughout the entire community, and his evangelical fervour ensured that the word of Christ was heard throughout the town. The congregation, in particular, prospered and grew under his leadership. Every seat in the Church was let, and indeed the Church became self-supporting financially and also aid-giving. Such were the demands that Livingstone placed upon himself that he required a period of rest from full duty, and various missionary assistants were seconded to the Church. In 1900, he received a call from the Gallowgate Free Church in Aberdeen, and after long and careful consideration, decided to accept that call, feeling that a change would be beneficial both to his congregation in Stevenston and to his own health. Livingstone's fifteen years in Stevenston were a watershed in the history of the congregation, and the significance of his work in the community cannot be overstated. It is very understandable, therefore, that in 1929 the congregation decided that their Church should be named "Livingstone Church" — testimony to a man who had given so much of himself to the preaching of the Word, and to the erection of their Church building.

Rev. MATTHEW MILLER, 1901-1922

Born and brought up in Larkhall, Lanarkshire, Matthew Miller came to Stevenston originally as a probationer, and was inducted as the first minister of what was now the Stevenston United Free Church



(following on the Union in 1900 between the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church of Scotland). Mr. Miller maintained the tradition of evangelical preaching in Stevenston and the Church continued to flourish although he had to face the difficulty of losing about forty members of the congregation, who had seceded during the Free Church crisis. It was during his ministry that our present Large Hall was built in 1912. During the Great War, 1914-1918, Mr. Miller served the Forces through the Y.M.C.A. in England and in 1921 after serious health problems, decided to accept a call to warmer

climes and moved to a Presbyterian Church in Auckland, New Zealand.

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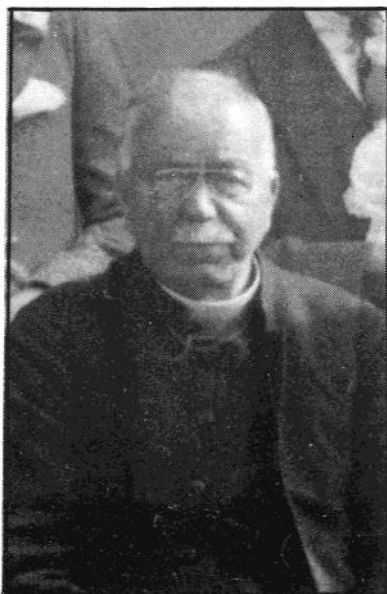
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Rev. GEORGE W. TAYLOR, M.A., 1922-1933

Unusually for this congregation, the minister appointed in 1922 was a man of considerable experience, having served as an assistant in Galashiels, minister at Carlops and Clydebank and for the ten years prior



to arriving in Stevenston, minister of the South Leith United Free Church. Mr. Taylor was again a preacher of the evangelical message, which seems to have been a prerequisite for our pulpit. He was also a man who took a great interest in the affairs of his time, presenting, with great eloquence and clarity, arguments in the General Assembly and the Courts of the Church as well as contributing articles of interest to the Press. During his ministry in Stevenston, the great Scottish Church Union took place in 1929, bringing our congregation into the Church of Scotland. George Taylor's contribution to Livingstone Church may not seem quite so

spectacular as some before him, but it was important that our congregation received the experience and maturity of such a man during a time of consolidation and restructuring both for the congregation itself and the Church at large in Scotland.

A. R. TAYLOR, F.S.A.O.

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Rev. A. ROY STARK, 1933-1945

Like the first minister of the congregation, Roy Stark had a connection with the City of Hull where he studied chemistry and subsequently became a chemist in a large North of England works. He later turned his



attention to the ministry in the Presbyterian Church of England. After completing his education at Cambridge, he received a call to his first charge in Northumberland. Being so close to the Border, it was almost inevitable that he should receive a call from Scotland, and he moved to the United Free Church in Eyemouth. Mr. Stark then received a call from our congregation, and was inducted to the charge of Livingstone Church in October, 1933.

Mr. Stark had to minister in difficult times. Those were still times of economic depression, only ended by the further crisis of World War II. That in turn brought difficulties with premises commandeered and used for the support of the military, men and women of the congregation on active service, and problems of blackout, air-raids and rations. Yet it was in the midst of war that our Church was enhanced by our present organ. Clearly Mr. Stark and the congregation maintained their vision as well as their witness in very difficult times. It was also in 1937, during his ministry, that the Jubilee of our building was celebrated and the previous history of our congregation published. In 1946 Mr. Stark was called to Almondbank in Perthshire, subsequently ministering in a country charge near Haddington. His funeral was attended in Whittinghame Kirk by our present minister and several of our present office-bearers.

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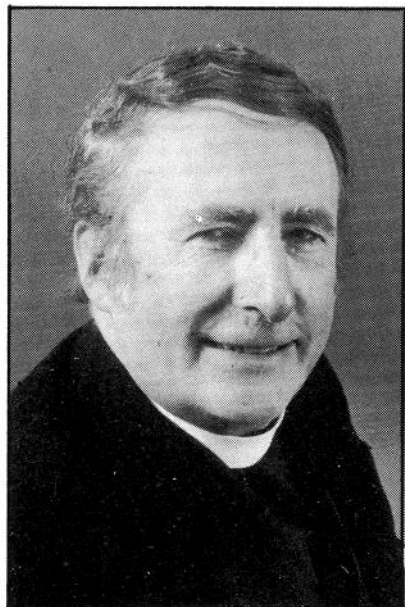
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GREETINGS FROM OUR FORMER MINISTERS

Rev. J. MACKAY NIMMO, M.A., 1946-1953

I have been asked to write a word for this booklet, and am conscious as I do that our time in Stevenston — some seven years in all — was relatively short. Nevertheless, although it was a chuckie which we



brought to the cairn, it had its place in the overall pattern. The doctrine that "God is working his purpose out as year succeeds to year" is most congenial to the Scottish mind, and Jean and I were proud and happy to have our place, however modest, in God's plan for Livingstone.

In our days the Manse was often more like a railway station than a house. Always there were people young and old, going in and coming out, sometimes in joy, sometimes in sadness — always in friendship. The liveliness and growth that are the true signs of corporate life were everywhere in evidence in the agencies and organisations of the congregation. The Boys' Brigade, the Life Boys, the Youth Club, the Carollers — I still have their recordings — the Dance Club, the Drama Club, the Discussion Group, the Men's Club — were all new, and attracted considerable numbers of people. I remember Jean had 80 boys in the Life Boy Group. The Woman's Guild was a vibrant body that seemed to radiate warmth, vitality and interest throughout the whole Church. Their music and drama too, made their witness effective and memorable.

The Church Services were well attended, and indeed, when we had joint Evening Services with the High Kirk and Ardeer Church, the Churches were literally packed to the door.

However, it must be acknowledged that I was of the ilk that sees the Gospel not as the simple Gospel, but as a social Gospel, that thinks,

speaks and acts in the belief that the Church should be politically involved at a national and a local level. I was, too, in these days, a devotee of the higher criticism, and much that I had to preach was of a disturbing — not to say — an explosive nature.

During our seven years, I served as a County Councillor, a District Councillor and a local Councillor. I was Secretary of the Burgh Status Committee, and when Stevenston achieved the status of a Burgh, I was the first Housing Convenor of the new Burgh.

The process of pouring new wine into old bottles is notoriously difficult, and it would be idle to deny — if a mixed metaphor may be allowed — that I stepped on a few corns. Indeed I think that even after some 35 years, the shock waves, though gone, may not be forgotten!

Be that as it may, my final remembrances are of kindness and tolerance, the generosity and humanity of the Stevenston folk. My Session Clerk, James Morrison, was typical. I remember him with gratitude. "Minister", he once said to me, "Ministers are like bakers, they are born, not made". On another occasion, he told me that he had said to the Vacancy Committee, that, since I had been Assistant in Glasgow Cathedral, I would be adequate, surely, for Livingstone!

I remember him — his generosity and his kindness, and perhaps particularly, because I was not maybe the easiest person to deal with, his tolerance — with gratitude.

I remember too, my life-long friend Glen Bowie who has recently retired as a Senior Chaplain to the Royal Air Force. He was a product of our Sunday School and our Youth Club and a tremendous support to me in all the years that I was in Stevenston.

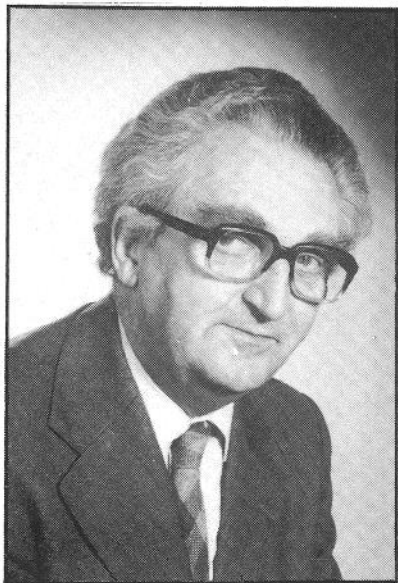
These two men I take as types of all that was sweetly memorable of our time in Stevenston.

"Be kind to the young man", wrote St. Paul, and in Stevenston I came to appreciate what kindness to a young man could really mean.

I have now been some forty-three years a Minister, and some thirty of these in St. Columba's Parish Church, Dundee. I was for some years also, before coming to Dundee, Minister in Govan. But there is no love like your first love, and Jean and I will not forget our joy in living in our first real house — Livingstone Manse — and our delight in the involvement, we experienced at every turn, with the good folk of "Stinson".

Rev. PETER T. BISSET, M.A., B.D., 1953-1960

Livingstone Church inevitably figures in my memory. It was my first charge. It was where our married life began. Our children's early days were spent at 32 High Road — which became Livingstone Manse at the beginning of my ministry. (The previous Manse is now Greystones Hotel).



I still remember the preacher at my Induction Service who, giving the charges, suggested to the congregation that they had neither a good nor a bad minister, but whatever he would be might depend very largely upon them! It was a blow to my pride — but a wise word! We look back warmly to these days and remember gratefully the support and encouragement given.

The memory of James Morrison is intertwined with the memories of that time. He was 94 when we arrived in Stevenston, Session Clerk of the congregation and recently appointed Provost of the new Burgh. It was accordingly my privilege to share in the

inaugural celebrations and to have the "Kirking" of the new Council.

1953-1960, the period of my ministry were exciting days. The "Tell Scotland" movement was bringing a new vigour to the Church's life and its culmination in the All Scotland Crusade saw the Kirk in New Street filling up with crowded evening services. Even though evening services did not remain thronged, and even though nationally the tide during these years seemed to be turning against the Kirk, Livingstone Church in my memory, forged steadily forward with a vigour which does not appear to have declined with the passing years.

Memories of people are many and precious. Thoughts of them still bring enrichment. Livingstone Church made us as a family part of a wider family and enabled a very young minister to go forward in the way of his calling.

Ministry followed in Rutherford Church, Glasgow from 1960-1968 where I found myself meeting the needs and challenges of a city parish, until in 1968 I was called to the High Kirk of Bathgate where for six years I found myself not only pastor of a very large congregation, but minister to a community.

Beyond Bathgate I looked forward to ministry in some quieter sphere — but it was not to be! In 1974 I was asked by the Home Mission Committee to take up the appointment as Warden of St. Ninian's, Crieff. It was not an easy call to answer, nor was it an easy assignment to undertake, but God has

blessed the work of St. Ninian's over the past twelve years with a significant expansion of its training programme at Crieff and throughout Scotland.

Within the wider councils of the church I have been called to serve as Convenor of the General Assembly's Committee on Moral Welfare, and Vice-Convenor of its Committee on Social Responsibility.

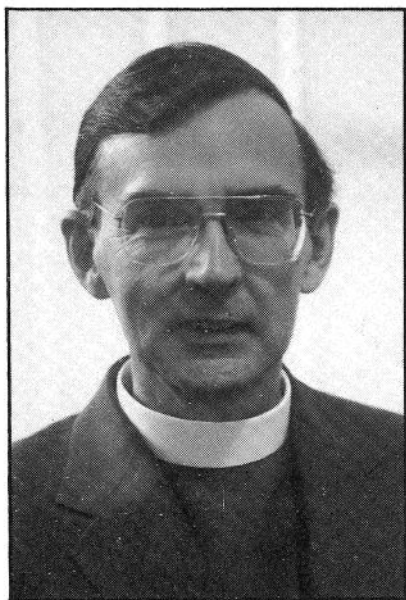
With a special interest in Church Growth, I have contributed to the Bible Society report "Prospects for Scotland", and to a book published by MARC Europe "Ten Growing Churches". Handsel Press in association with the British Church Growth Association have recently published "The Kirk and Her Scotland".

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The Last Word

It will hardly surprise many that Iain Roy has the last word! Some might even say "Has he not always?"

I have taken it to myself because it might well have been invidious for



someone else to write the history of my ministry. To write history there has to be the lapse of some years to provide perspective. Anyone else who could have written it, would have suffered from the same handicap I have — of being directly involved in it. Really it must be left to some future writer to get the latter ministries into their true place in the history of Livingstone and Stevenston. The one thing which needed to be avoided at all costs, was any kind of fulsome adulation of a present ministry.

In 1960 when I came to Livingstone, there was already an active, good-attending congregation with successful organisations and a good track record in finance. There were, however, dull

halls, dreadful brown lino in the choir area, and a coal-fired hall boiler giving the assiduous Joe McPhee far too much work. We could have tackled these things piece-meal. Instead we made one big effort and created in a short space of time — two years — a brigher, more modern, and more convenient environment.

It was well we did this because there also emerged in the 60's an opportunity for growth in the congregation. Many new houses were being built in Stevenston, both public and private sector. A great many new people therefore were coming to live in the community, especially from Glasgow overspill and from key-workers at Hunterston and their families being housed in our midst. Parish mission gave a warm invitation to them to come and many responded.

Their coming raised a problem — the more long-established members did not always know the new members. We remedied this by a series (in various years) of what were called "Getting to Know You" socials. At these, by judicious mixing, fellowship was established and much friendship initiated.

At the same time, in our community, as in many others, new and better relationships were growing between the churches. The previous two ministries had laid the foundation for that. But a particularly productive Kirk Weekend, the brain-child of the Rev. John Miller Scott of the High Kirk, now

of Jerusalem, furthered this process. It was from this that the Christian Aid efforts in Stevenston stemmed, a practical job of work which brought us all closer together. Gradually, St. John's Church joined the Church of Scotland charges in the work and from that co-operation there eventually sprang the joint services for worship we know today — the Christian Unity service in February, the Good Friday meditation, and the Peace Service at Hogmanay. It is, therefore, true to say that in these years there has been a much better understanding between all the Churches in Stevenston. Competition has become frowned upon and co-operation and mutual respect become the basic ingredients of our worshipping and witnessing life. While no joint worship exists between the Brethren Halls and the Churches, there is joint service of the community, especially in Afton and Caley Courts and many deep personal friendships between us.

Every ministry has certain themes running through it. One which has been in mine since the beginning, has been our prayers for the sick by name. This was first initiated at the close of our evening service. Since the replacement of that service by our mid-week service, these prayers have become a focal point of that worship. The practical results of that have been considerable. Firstly, many individual kindnesses have been done by those who prayed to those for whom they prayed. But secondly, and more importantly, there has arisen a recognition of the need for lay participation in the pastoral function. During my recent illness and in my holiday times the work of visiting the sick has been carried on by spontaneous lay activity, adding to the existing trend in the Church for even greater lay participation. Our recent House Group ventures have also been proof of that. The material work done by volunteers in our Centenary renovation, proof yet again of the same.

In more recent times, our community, in common with many others, has suffered from the contraction of industry and the impact of growing unemployment. It has made growth of numbers difficult since so many of our young people have had to leave Stevenston to find work. What can the Church do in such a situation? It can groan — even moan. Or it can be faithful, sensible, committed. It is more difficult to be the Church and the minister in the holding situation than the expanding situation. Nevertheless, in the long run, who is to say which is the more important work? The Acts of the Apostles is often seen as the book of the New Testament which records the growth of the Church, and it does, but sometimes in the midst of that growth we are aware of the difficult times and the holding operations without which there would have been no future, no fresh growth. To mark time is sometimes to make opportunity.

An essential part, therefore, of our Centenary celebrations this year, more important than the physical restoration of our buildings, is the Centenary Mission which will take place in the Autumn. This will remind the Parish

and the Community why we exist. It is, with our neighbours, to proclaim the love of God, to serve them and to show forth His Spirit to the World, and to bring into the Fellowship of the Faith all who, hearing His warm invitation are ready to respond.

One thing has blessed my ministry, as all our past ministries, — the work of faithful dedicated people. In twenty-seven years of ministry I have had one organist — Bill Archibald; three Church Officer families — the McPhees, the Humes, and the Browns; two Session Clerks — Willie Wilson and John Sanderson; three Clerks to the Deacons' Court — John Gillan, Bob Gray, and Alex Milligan; two Treasurers — Dick Thomson and Frank Morgan. This continuity of personnel in these positions has reflected the harmonious relationships which exist and are so important to the life of any congregation.

I am sure that this and many other features of our life today are products of our past. We have had a good inheritance. The work of Christ is always a continuing work. We have our place in it NOW. The task is to respond in faith and love TODAY. In this way we preserve the past, justify the present, and ensure the future of the Christian community in Stevenston and Livingstone's part within it.

John M. Roy

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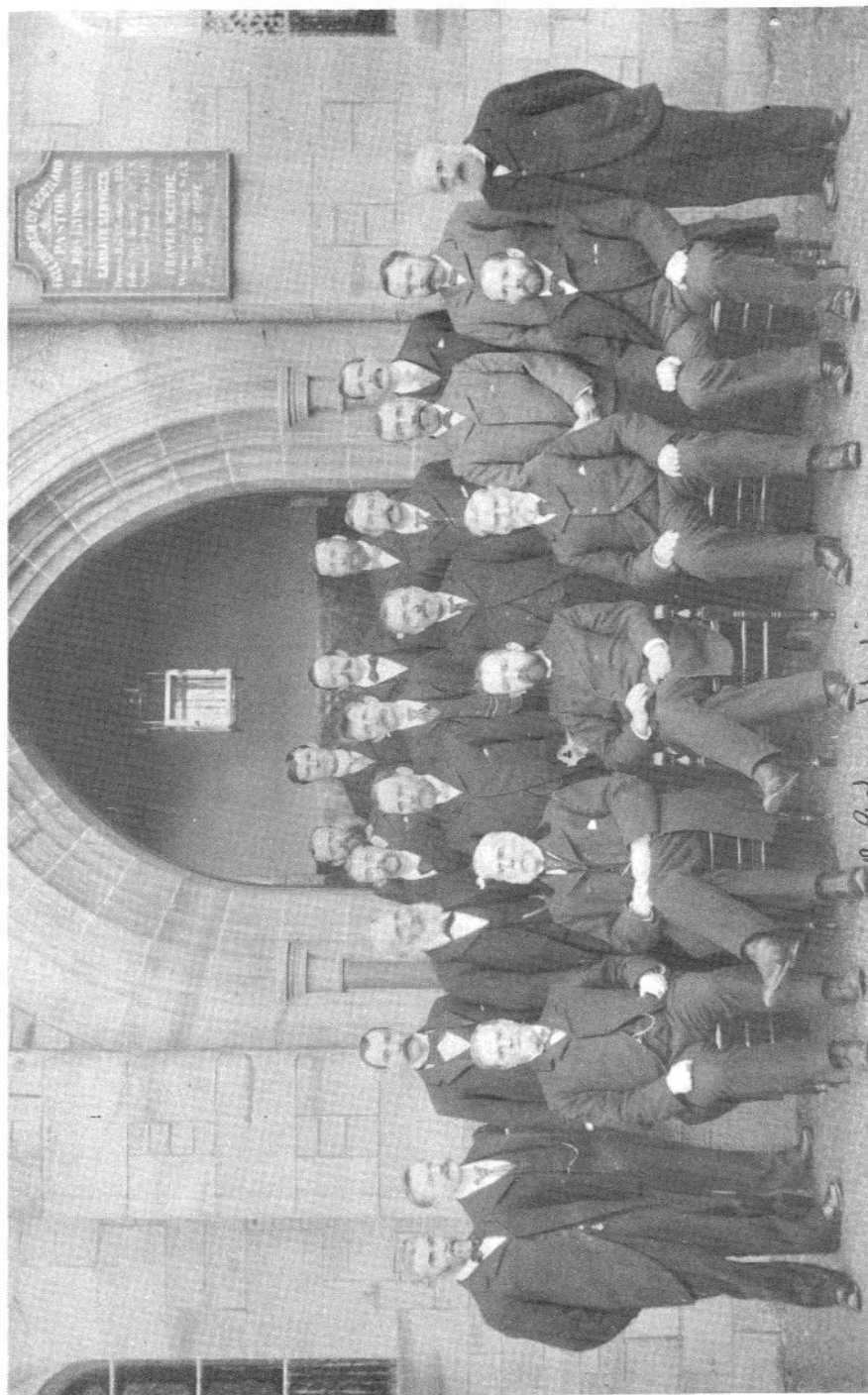
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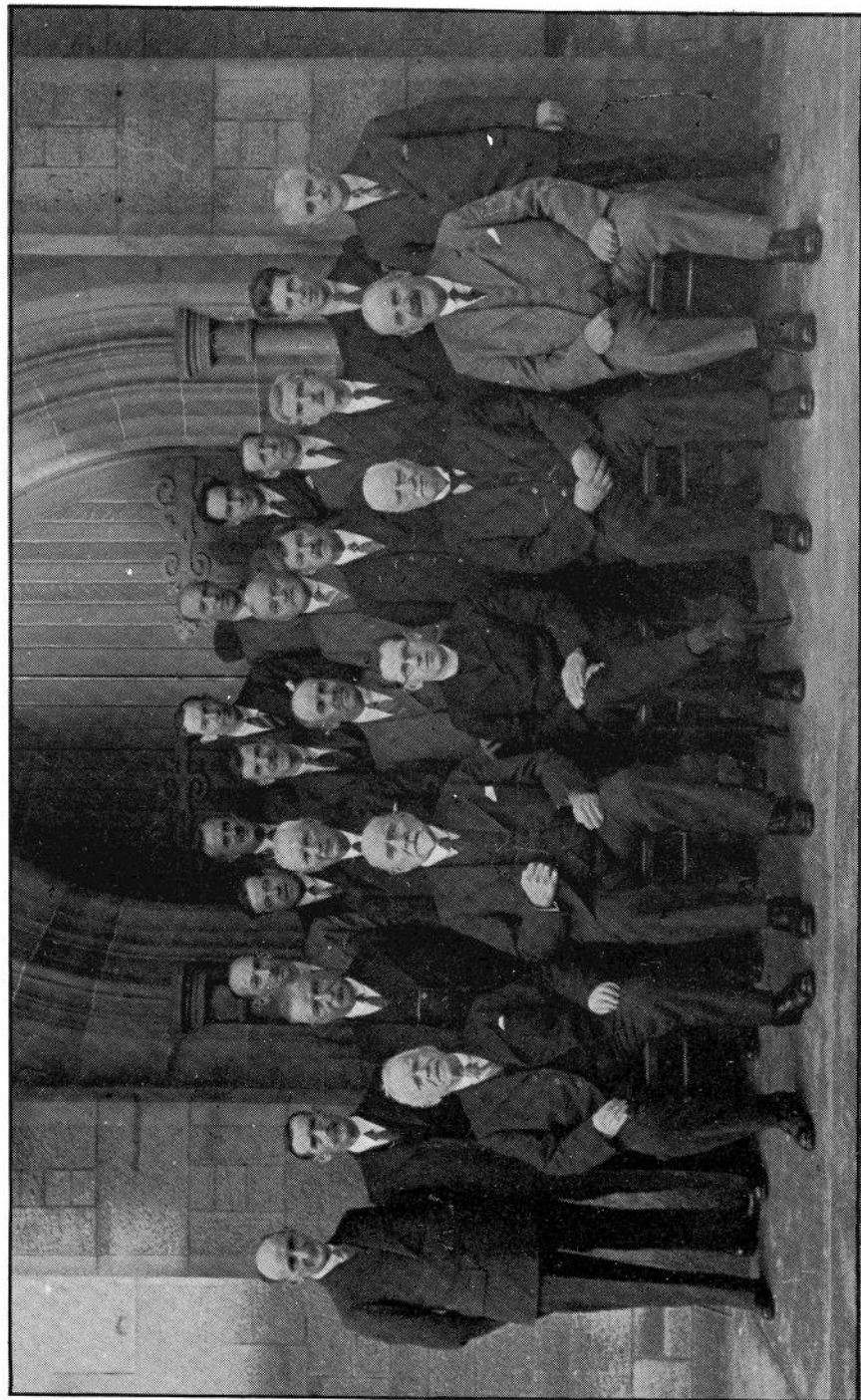
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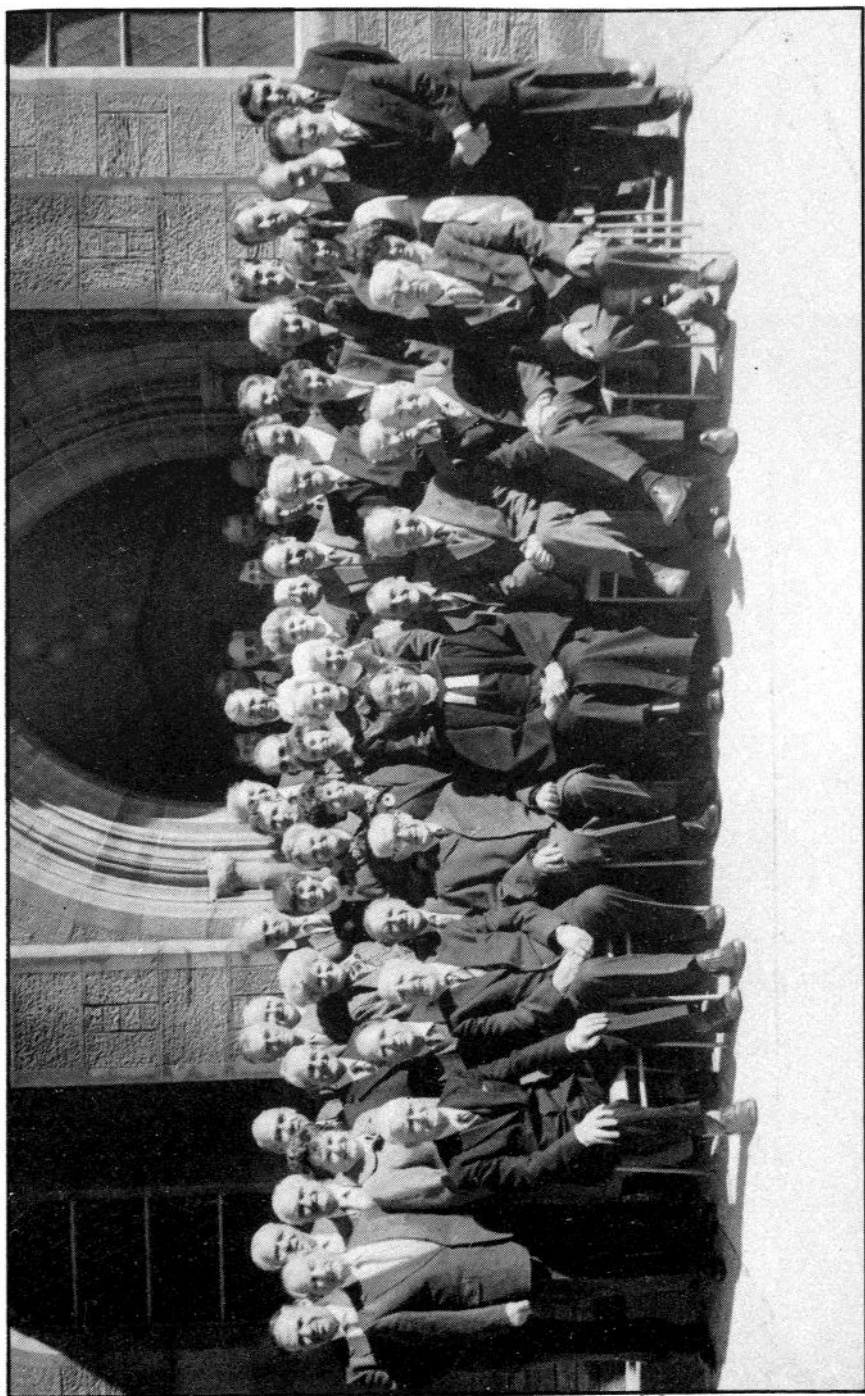
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1937 — Office-Bearers in our Jubilee Year



1987 — Office-Bearers in our Centenary Year

Answers to Down Memory Lane

-
1. Choir — Messiah in the 70's
 2. Senior B.B. Camp in the 60's
 3. Junior B.B. Football in the 70's
 4. Guild Trip In the 50's
 5. Sunday School Trip (Largs) in the 60's
 6. Getting-to-Know-You Socials in the 60's
 7. Summer Church School in the 60's
 8. Choir Trip in the 30's
 9. Church and Industry in the late 70's
 10. Junior Choir in the 40's
 11. Getting-to-Know-You Socials in the 60's
 12. Sunday School Xmas Party in the 80's
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