



The Memorial Chapel

of the

University of Glasgow

Common worship has been part of the life of the College and University of Glasgow from its inception. Before the Reformation its members were closely associated with the Cathedral and with the Dominican friary (Blackfriars), which adjoined the College in the High Street. In 1572, after the dissolution of the friary, the Blackfriars' Church became the property of the College and was thereafter used as the College Church. In 1635 it was handed over to the city council, however, the College continued to attend services in it and contributed to the cost of rebuilding it after it had been completely destroyed by lightning in 1670.

In 1764 services were instituted in the College Hall, but they were suspended in 1848 and the College attended services in the parish church of St Paul. Students who were not dissenters, and whose parents or guardians did not desire their presence at some other place of worship, were all required to attend. After the migration of the University from the High Street to Gilmorehill in 1870, services were once again held on campus. Initially the Hunterian Museum and later the Bute Hall were the places of worship, until the Memorial Chapel was completed in 1929.

The Chapel Building

Originally the west quadrangle at Gilmorehill opened on to Professors' Square, but with the construction of the new arts buildings and the University Chapel, it was closed off. Ian Bowman recalled how the scaffolding that surrounded the ongoing building works became an irresistible attraction for the children of the Square, who were thus enabled to acquire 'a minute knowledge of the upper reaches of the building.'

Once completed, the effect from the outside was dramatic: the Chapel majestically bisected the new west façade. The architect Sir John J. Burnet R.A., R.S.A. (1857-1938), was commissioned to design the new buildings in the spring of 1914, but the outbreak of the First World War prevented any further progress until 1919. It was then decided that the Chapel would be a memorial to the 755 members of the University who had fallen in the conflict, with the funds being raised by donations and public subscription. The builders, Bruce & Hay, began construction work in 1923, but strikes and bad weather delayed completion until early 1929. Finally, at a service held on October 4 1929, the University of Glasgow Memorial Chapel was dedicated to the memory of those who died in the Great War.

Described as being one of Burnet's 'greatest Glasgow Buildings of the period' the Chapel is an original treatment of medieval motifs with proportions inspired by French models. Its detail is largely based on thirteenth-century English gothic, but in its more robust character shows the influence of the gothic architecture of Scotland. This is particularly evident in the treatment of the external buttresses.

The interior is divided into a series of bays by shafts rising from carved corbels at the triforium and supporting the trusses of the open timber roof from which hammer beams carry suspended lanterns. There are clerestory windows above the triforium passage, tall lancets in the east and west walls with a rose window surmounting the western gable. On the outside the Chapel is crowned by a fleche (small steeple) complete with winged medieval-style gargoyles, rising from the roof above the crossing.

The function of the Chapel is revealed in the carving above the west window of the exterior. St Mungo, patron saint of Glasgow, is depicted within the seal of the University, thereby defining the building's identity. Around the figure are the words *Versitatis Glasgvensis Sigillvm Commvne* (The Seal of the Community of the University of Glasgow). Below the window is a carving of the Pelican feeding her young, while a medieval symbol of Christ's sacrifice, in this case set above the Memorial Stone, it refers to patriotic sacrifice.

Writing in 1979 Allan Galloway commented:

One has to... savour the achievement of Sir John Burnet in designing a Chapel which marries so harmoniously with... [the main Gilbert Scott Building]. The spirit of the twentieth century is very different from that of the nineteenth. Pomp gives way to a more formal dignity, arrogance to a more penitent piety and a quieter hopefulness. The Chapel commemorates the death of a generation. With them died the age which created the splendid edifice on Gilmorehill.... For this reason the Chapel must be seen as more than a memorial to our past. It is built upon the Glory of God, who bids us to hope in the future. Sacrifice which is not set in the context of hope becomes mere mind-numbing suffering and atrocity. So the Chapel borrows from the medieval church the symbolism of hope in its soaring height and its gothic proportions. Yet it is no more an imitation of gothic conventions. It is... an original and personal treatment of medieval motifs. It also has its elements of baroque playfulness, for example in the angels who blow long trumpets from which issue not sound but light!

Chapel Decoration

Sir John Burnet commissioned the sculptor Archibald Dawson A.R.S.A. (1892-1938) to undertake the impressive Chapel carvings. Dawson was reportedly 'steeped in the traditions of Classical and Medieval sculpture to which he added an individuality and at times a puckish sense of humour,' which is perhaps best illustrated in the Chapel by the repeated motif of the pipe-smoking monkey.

It was significant for this commission that Dawson himself had fought in France with the 9th Battalion Highland Light Infantry – the Glasgow Highlanders. To him a memorial to men who had died was no formal, empty gesture, and Dawson paid his own tribute to the men who did not come back, with the Chapel carvings reportedly being some of his finest work. In the Chapel, Italian woodcarvers worked with Dawson and his assistant, Andrew Willison, on the mouldings and tracery of the choir stalls. Dawson treated them as though they were his pupils encouraging them to go beyond simply working to a plan and to put their undoubted creative skill to work. They responded with delight to this unaccustomed freedom and some of the loveliest figures are theirs.

The generous provision of decorative carving on the exterior of the Chapel and West Range stands in sharp contrast to the comparative dearth of sculpture on the rest of the main building, and suggests that Burnet was deliberately compensating for Gilbert Scott's apparent prudence in this aspect of his design. In Dawson 'he found a sculptor entirely in sympathy with the spirit of the project, and whose

ability to move freely between medieval naturalism and a more modish Art Deco idiom was well suited to the self-consciously anachronistic historicism of the structure.' Dawson's distinctive humour, and the astonishing fertility of his imagination, was given full rein in this commission.

The interior is very chaste, with every aspect skilfully integrated. The tall single space is divided according to function with the centre part arranged in the collegiate manner with opposing choir stalls. The figures in low relief on the tympana above the entrance doors conform to medieval practice. Over the North door, facing the entrance normally used, is St. Christopher. Over the South door is the national saint, St. Andrew, with his nets. The statue below the East window represents St. Kentigern, the sixth-century evangelist of Strathclyde, better known in his city of Glasgow as St. Mungo. Behind the communion table are the royal arms as borne in Scotland.

In the tracery of the canopy of the stalls on the North side are carved the Phoenix rising from the flames, symbol of immortality, and the Burning Bush, the emblem of the Church of Scotland: corresponding to these on the South side are the Pelican, symbol of self-sacrifice, and the arms of the City of Glasgow.

The panels of the back rows of stalls display symbols of Christ – the monograms HIS and XP; the lamp - the light in Darkness; the king - the King of Glory; the sun - the Light of the World; and the ear of wheat - the Bread of Life. The Coats of Arms are those of the various Chancellors of the University, and on the middle row of stalls are Gothic Grotesques.

The figures at the sides of the Principal's stall on the North side are St. Matthew and St. Mark: their traditional symbols, the man and the lion, appear on the back of the stall. Corresponding to them on the Chancellor's stall on the South side are, St. Luke and St. John with their symbols, the ox and the eagle. Above the Chancellor's stall is an effigy of Bishop Turnbull, Bishop of Glasgow, founder and first Chancellor of the University, and above that of the Principal's stall stands St. Columba. The smaller identical figure on the canopies of both stalls is that of St. Michael, the soldier's saint, killing the dragon.

The carvings on the pulpit are thought to be the work of Walter Gilbert (1871-1946) and represent four Scottish saints, St. Margaret, St. Columba, St. Bride, and St. Oran. Above and below them appear symbols associated with them, the book, the dove, the lamp, and the Celtic cell. The figure on the newel post of the pulpit stairs is the Sower, sowing the seed of the Word. The two figures on the organ case are those of St. Francis and St. Cecilia, patron saints of music. While the carved hammer-beams, which carry the lights represent the ten virgins of the parable.

Initially two pieces of embroidery added colour to the east end of the chapel and were the work of Mrs Kerr and Mrs Bryce, the wives of two former professors. The theme of the banner was Remembrance: hope triumphing in sorrow is symbolised by the rays of the sun rising behind a field of poppies. In 1965 the University Court commissioned the Department of Embroidery and Weaving in the Glasgow School of Art to design and make four pulpit falls for the Chapel. They are used in the Chapel throughout the year, each in its proper season – the purple in Advent and Lent; the white at Christmas and Epiphany, Easter and Trinity; the green in the season between Epiphany and Lent, and Whitsuntide; and the red at Pentecost and Kingdome tide, between Whitsuntide and Advent.

In October 1984 it was decided to create new covers for the 40 stall cushions in the Chapel, and a corresponding number of volunteers stepped forward to create the new designs. Unity was achieved both by the standardised border pattern and by the use of only eight colours throughout, which were taken from the stained glass of the 'Philosophy' window in the South Wall of the Chapel. The subjects

represented in the centre panels were the choice of the volunteers, being their own subject of study or that of other members of their families.

Roll of Honour

In March 1922 the University of Glasgow issued a Roll of Honour to commemorate those who had died in the First World War. Principal Donald MacAlister stated in the preface:

It is with mingled feelings that the University issues this record of its members' service and sacrifice during the Great War. Proud it must be that so many answered at once to the high call of national duty. But it must also grieve for the loss of the unreturning brave, who yielded up their young lives that our Country might live....

When at length peace was declared, the University felt that among its first duties was that of raising an abiding memorial to those of its members who had fallen in the defence of their Country's cause. After due deliberation it was agreed, with the consent of all, that their memory, and our gratitude for their devotion, should be associated with our place of corporate worship.... The necessary funds were within a few months subscribed, and before long there will rise in the West Quadrangle the walls of our Memorial Chapel, bearing for remembrance the 742 names of "Our Glorious Dead."

Once the Chapel had been completed a Ceremony of Dedication was held on October 4 1929. As the Last Post sounded from the Stone of Remembrance, the vice-Chancellor unveiled the Memorial Tablets, which bore the names of the 755 who did not return.

To the unfading memory of the brave men and women who in the Great War gave their lives for us and for the freedom of the world, we dedicate this Memorial Chapel, and we pray that their names recorded here may ever be an incentive to faithful and unselfish service for all who look upon them.

One of the first Glasgow University men to enlist was Francis John MacCunn. In 1914 he was working as an assistant in the Department of History, having just completed his book *The Contemporary English View of Napoleon*. A Captain in the Officer's Training Corps, his enthusiasm to join up is probably not surprising. MacCunn began his service with the Sixth Battalion Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders as a lieutenant and was soon put in command of a platoon of University men. On September 9 1915, MacCunn celebrated his 27th birthday. A letter home cheerfully reports that 'really the perils of trench warfare are very much exaggerated.' In reality, however, the allies were preparing for a massive offensive to begin on September 25.

The Battle of Loos was not a success and has been described as being a pyrrhic victory. Francis MacCunn had bid a 'provisional goodbye' to his family in a letter written the day before the battle commenced. He was posted as missing, presumed dead, on September 26, one year to the day of having joined the army.

Less typical of those recorded is Elizabeth Ness MacBean Ross, who although not to be numbered among those who fell in battle also gave her life. Born in 1878 she went down to Glasgow to study medicine at Queen Margaret College at the age of 18, graduating with an MB ChB in 1901. After initially working in London, she went on to obtain a post in Persia as an assistant to a Medical Practitioner, before setting up her own practice. Ross was an unconventional person who was also highly resourceful, and she was to have many adventures. At the beginning of the war, at the invitation of the Russian government, she volunteered to serve in Serbia. She worked in shocking conditions at the fever hospital in Kragujevac. Working intensely, she contracted and succumbed to an attack of typhus fever, dying on her 37th birthday, February 14 1915.

In 1952 a second Roll of Honour was issued recording those who died in service in the War of 1939-1945. Their names were also written upon the walls of the Chapel on six tablets attached to the North and South walls either side of the Chancel. Principal Hector Hetherington wrote: 'Day by day they come to the remembrance of those who worship there: and what they wrought for us is the very foundation of our lives.' Nearly 450 students, graduates and members of staff were killed, while the figures were much lower than in the First World War, the losses were felt just as keenly.

The Second World War tablets are linked to the panels that commemorate the Fallen in WWI, by the simple inscription of the dates '1939-1945' cut into the wall and decorated by a carved thistle. The Tablets are of Roman Stone, the names incised in Roman character. H. Tyson Smith, F.R.B.S., of Liverpool, executed the work, while the architects were T. Harold Hughes and D. S. R. Waugh of Glasgow. The Tablets were dedicated on April 11 1948, at a service held in the Bute Hall. The act of dedication took place thereafter in the Chapel in the presence of relatives of the dead, the Principal, members of the University Court and the Senate, and representatives of undergraduate organisations and the three Armed Services.

Chapel Windows

In 1962 the Principal Sir Hector Hetherington stated:

On the fabric of this Chapel, no names are written save those of the sons and daughters of the university who died in our wars. It was built as their abiding memorial in this hallowed centre of our common life. But there are others who in their day were close to the heart of the University, and who have helped us by their works of peace. Of them also, memorials are here in the furnishings and adornments of the Chapel.

Funding for the Rose Window in the West wall, for example, was donated by the then Chancellor of the University, Sir Donald MacAlister (1854-1934), as a memorial to Earl Archibald Philip Primrose who had been both Rector and Chancellor to the University. As Principal of the University from 1907 to 1929, MacAlister had presided over a period of spectacular growth, with the Chapel being one of several important new buildings completed during his time in office.

For the 50th Jubilee of the Chapel it was decided to commission stained glass for two lancet openings in the South wall. In order to raise the required £3,000 however, an appeal was launched aimed primarily at attracting small donations of the many rather than large donations of the few. A special appeal went out to all those for whom the Chapel was associated with some special moment in their lives, including those who had been married there.

The majority of the stained glass windows in the Chapel were designed and made by Douglas Strachan, Hon. R.S.A. (1875-1950), who described his work in the Chapel as an attempt to figure the whole of human life as a spiritual enterprise. He further stated that:

the window [when] studied would give up its utmost detail to the spectator: while at times when his interest is otherwise engaged, the entire stained glass scheme should simply play its part in the serene dignity of the building as a setting for the occasion whatever it may be.

The West window portrays the daily occupations of men, illustrated from the history of Glasgow. The four lancet windows display four Scottish saints, St. Andrew, St. Columba, St. Mungo, and St. Ninian: above them are the building of the Old College, craftsmen from seven of the old town Guilds at work, and the building of Glasgow Cathedral; below them are Glasgow Fair, the meeting of St. Mungo and

St. Columba on the banks of the Molendinar, the coming of St. Mungo to Glasgow, and the historic General Assembly of 1638, held in Glasgow Cathedral.

The eight lights of the rose window display the symbols of the four cardinal virtues of civic life and the coats of arms of the University and its three founders – James II, King of Scots, who requested that the University be established, Pope Nicholas V, whose bull erected it as a *studium generale*, and Bishop William Turnbull, to whose zeal for learning its creation was due. The window in the choir gallery displays the tree of knowledge reaching out to the four quarters of the earth and beneath it the figure of Alma Mater.

With the outbreak of hostilities in 1939 there was concern for the stained glass windows that had been completed and installed, most notably those in the West wall:

The windows are pretty well protected by the range of buildings round them. Unless a bomb were to drop bang in the middle of the Professors' Quadrangle I do not think they would suffer hurt, and if that were to happen, the whole Chapel would go. It is a bad business.

Despite such initial thoughts they were eventually removed to Edinburgh, along with the windows of the National Memorial.

The windows on the North and South walls symbolise the efforts of humankind to understand the universe in the several domains of academic study. The four lancet windows on the North wall represent: Theology, Law, Medicine, and Applied Science. The windows on the South wall represent: Science, Philosophy, History, and Literature. Strachan designed and made those on the North wall, and left designs for the History and Literature lights on the South wall. These were later executed by his pupil, Gordon Webster, in the 1950s. However, Strachan left no designs for the designated subjects of the remaining two lights, Philosophy and Science. These windows are the work of Keith New, A.R.C.A., who designed and built them in 1966. While the approach to their subjects is quite different from that of the existing glass in the nave, both of these lights, sharing a similar style in their strong linear movement and vertical emphasis, have forms which fill the whole windows, and are thus brought into balance with it. New stated: 'I would like to feel these windows express a certain kind of controlled energy – worldly physical, as well as the mentally creative.'

To celebrate the Chapel's Jubilee in 1979 the windows in the two lancet openings in the South wall were installed. These windows were designed and made by the artist, Alan Younger. In them he further developed the symbolic significance of the number twelve as depicted in the signs of the zodiac in the windows on the North and South walls.

The East windows, the Benedicite Window, were designed and made by Lawrence Lee, A.R.C.A., in 1962. They do not represent a literal reading of the theme of the Benedicite but rather point to the fact that since this is a Chapel in a University, they should direct our imagination to the concept that all knowledge comes from God and should lead back to Him.

Chapel Music

With the inauguration of the Memorial Chapel, Archibald M. Henderson (1879-1957), organist and choirmaster to the University, formed the University Chapel Choir. The choir quickly gained a high reputation, and Henschel and Rachmaninov were among those who composed works for their performance. Henderson took a great delight in playing the organ at marriage services in the chapel, and he officiated at no fewer than 1,600 of them. Frederick Rimmer, C.B.E. (1914-1998), the Gardiner Professor of Music and Director of Scottish Opera, succeeded Henderson, and established Glasgow University Chapel Choir in its present form.

In 2014, Dr Kathryn Cooper, Director of Chapel Music, directs the choir. They are accompanied by the University Organist, the renowned British recitalist Dr Kevin Bowyer. Glasgow University Chapel Choir comprises between 28 and 32 auditioned singers, a combination of volunteers, choral exhibitioners and professional lay clerks. Membership of the choir is open to University staff and students, past and present.

The principal function of the Choir is to sing at the main University Service on Sunday mornings during term-time, at which it sings a wide repertoire, from Gregorian Chants to contemporary music. As well as singing in the University, the Chapel Choir gives regular radio broadcasts and concerts, has made several commercial recordings, and from the 1960s onwards has undertaken both national and international tours.

The Chapel's organ retains the case, the console and much of the pipe work of the instrument built by Henry Willis & Sons in 1928, but is otherwise almost entirely new. The original organ was the gift of Lord Maclay in memory of his two eldest sons, Ebenezer and William, both of whom died in the Great War. It was designed by the University's organist, A. M. Henderson, in consultation with Henry Willis, one of Britain's most distinguished organ builders. In 1977 it was overhauled and some tonal modifications were carried out by Henry Willis & Sons, under the supervision of Dr Stuart Campbell, Organist to the University.

The old College Church Bell, also referred to as 'George Duncan's Bell,' was hung in the central fleche, or small steeple, of the Memorial Chapel in 1928.

In 1643 George Duncan of Barrowfield presented the Burgh Council a sum of 600 merks to be spent on a bell to be hung in the steeple of Blackfriars Kirk.

The medieval church was destroyed by lightning in 1670. In October of that year a very severe thunderstorm had struck the Kirk, the lightning had "tired" the slates off the roof, split the gables and set the Kirk on fire. When Blackfriars was rebuilt, the bell was recast in the Netherlands, and the date of the recasting was substituted for the original date in the inscription. Thus the bell, which weighs 564 lbs, bears the inscription around the crown:

*GEORGIUS DONCANUS DE BURROFEILD:
ALMAE MATRI GLASGVAE DICAVIT ANNO 1708.*

While on the side of the bell are the arms of George Duncan and the motto: "God loves a cheerful giver."

When Blackfriars and the old College were demolished, and a new Blackfriars Church was built in Dennistoun, the bell was hung there. It was used until 1885, when the parish replaced it with a new one. In 1906 they handed the old bell over to Major John Garroay, a descendant of George Duncan, who later presented it to the University.

Chapel Worship

The first University Chaplain, William Wight, was appointed in 1765, and the office was held sporadically until the mid-nineteenth century. With the building of the Memorial Chapel and after a period of over 80 years the office of University Chaplain was once again revived in 1930 with the appointment of Archibald Craig (1888-1985).

Glasgow University Magazine stated in 1931:

It was the cives [citizens] of our University who, through their elected representatives, desired a padre, and their desires went before the august powers of our academic foundation, and were granted. The padre, therefore, was the creation not of the Senate, not even of the reverend body which with bated breath of airy indifference is named the Faculty of Theology, but of the Students' Representative Council.

Like many, Archie Craig's higher education had been interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War. He initially served in the Royal Scots. However, in 1917 he was moved to the Intelligence Corps, and with his knowledge of German played a significant enough role in gathering information to earn the Military Cross. Though his war experiences convinced him that it was impossible to be anything other than a pacifist, he never lost his sense of esteem for the essential virtues of the good soldier. This would have served him well in his role, especially when conducting the Armistice Day Services in the Memorial Chapel.

In 1939 Fraser McLuskey (1914-2005) succeeded Archie Craig as Chaplain. However, by 1942 came the conviction that he should offer himself for military chaplaincy, thus opening the door to an outstanding period of service. McLuskey volunteered for parachute training and was appointed Chaplain to the 1st SAS Regiment, traveling with them to Belgium, Holland, Germany and Norway. He parachuted into occupied France with his squadron in 1944, armed only with a large number of bibles. McLuskey spent a period of 3 months with the SAS behind German lines while the allied invasion forces breached the walls of Europe. He was later awarded the Military Cross for his courage and determination in carrying out his duties there. The citation attests to his bravery, steadiness and cheerfulness in all situations, and complete disregard for personal safety, which served as an inspiration to the whole Squadron.

With the appointment of a University Chaplain in 1930 daily morning services were established. The focus today is on Inter Faith and the University Chaplaincy supports local faith and belief communities and is a member of Interfaith Scotland.