

The final rebuilding of the church took place in 1795 and it was further improved in 1835 to seat 300. Alas!, just seven years later at the Disruption of 1843 the Church was almost deserted by the people, in favour of the Free Church. From that point on the Church was looked after by the Kilmory minister, very often assisted, again by a number of missionaries and assistants. Gradually as the century drew to a close the Established Church began to recover its former position in the North end of the island, so much so, that the Church, which was again falling in to disrepair, was refurbished by the Duke of Hamilton, who, in 1895, granted 0.99 of an acre surrounding it, for a graveyard - "God's own acre". Only on the 8th June 1918 Lochranza St Bride's Church became a ministerial charge of the Church of Scotland in its own right.



The Circular Window

In 1931, the late Miss Edith Kerr, of The Anchorage, gave the circular stained glass window, in memory of the Rev. John Colville.. The window depicts the ship of the Gospel, sailing through the troubled seas of life, braving the elements. The thunder clouds and lightning are symbolic of the perils which beset its passage, but in the background is seen the lighthouse, high on the hill as a guide to its ultimate goal, the city of light and the harbour with its calm waters.

The Lych Gate was also given by Miss Kerr in memory of the Rev. John Colville.

St Bride's Church

Lochranza

Isle of Arran

Pre -1560 - 2016



Minister - Rev. Angus Adamson B.D.

Parish Assistant - Mrs. Jean Hunter B.D.

Session Clerk - Mr Peter Emsley

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The Stained Glass Panels

In November 1977 The Free Church in Lochranza (now Castlekirk B & B) closed upon expiry of the feu charter and the then Interim Moderator of the congregation was anxious that the exceptionally beautiful stained glass window, incorporated in the building, should be preserved in the Parish Church to remain on view there.

In due course, the window was set in two separate panels, lit from behind, as they are today. At that time, the history of the original window was largely unknown by the congregation and visitors. The amount of interest and the many ideas propounded, resulted in the following "official" history being placed on record.

(sic) The window was the gift of a lady, Mrs Kerr, in commemoration of the good deeds of her husband, who, in his time had been a man of wide sympathies, which found expression in the many deeds of unostentatious benevolence.

The dominant idea of the picture is found in the words "In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me", which words are to be found in the parable of the Talents (Matthew C25/V40)

The chief figure to the spectator's right, the "faithful servant", holds the scroll of authority and is handing over the keys of trust. Behind him are a woman and child, representing the poor. The picture thus visualises, in a reverent spirit, an incident of the parable, and may be looked upon as adequately commemorating the kindly deeds of a warm-hearted man.

The stained glass, as it is today, was executed in 1917 by Messrs. J & W Guthrie and Andrew Wells Ltd., a well known Glass staining firm in Glasgow, from a design by James Gordon Guthrie, one of the foremost designers of decorative Glass-staining work in America, at the time.

St Brides Church - Lochranza

A Brief History

Strong historical evidence exists to illustrate that there has been a church on this site since medieval times and certainly since before the dawn of the Reformation in Scotland in 1560. Originally known as St James's, this name did not survive the anti-catholic feelings of the seventeenth century. It finally became known as St Bride's Church only in 1929 when the established Church of Scotland united with the U.F.Church. The former U.F.Church in the village (now part of The Field Studies Centre.) then became known as "Lochranza East & Pirmill". It was then that the headstone, with the skull and crossbones, was removed from the interior and mounted into the exterior wall, on the north side of the building.

In that same year The Reverent John Colville, minister of the Church, realised his dream and by raising an endowment fund, enabled Lochranza Chapel to become a "Quad Sacra" thereafter known as St. Bride's Church.

The names of Priests who served here, prior to the break with Rome, are unknown but from 1560, records of the reformed clergy, responsible for maintaining the ordinances of religion, are more readily available. At the Reformation, Arran was divided into two parishes Kilmory and Kilbride, the boundary between them leaving Lochranza village and the south-side of the loch in Kilmory, whilst Newton Shore and the north-side of the loch was in Kilbride. Any worship that might have been conducted in the church would therefore have been the responsibility of the Kilmory minister in whose bounds the church lay.

By the mid of 17th Century the existing structure was quoted as being "in no fit state for worship" and a decision was made by the Synod of Argyll, in 1642 *that there be a third kirk builded and erected in the said yle (Arran), situated at the head of Lochransay.* Unfortunately, due to the violent upheavals of this Civil War period none of this proposal came about at that time. However, records show that in 1654, a "Chapel of Ease" was built on the site:- *A thatched building with an earthen floor.* It was within the walls of this chapel that the dead were buried. This building fell in to disrepair and it was not until 1712, thanks to the generosity of The Good Dutchess Anne, the chapel was rebuilt.

The Duchess also provided a stipend for a catechist at Lochranza and the farm of Colliemore at a nominal rent. This licentiate of the church acted as assistant to both the parish ministers of Arran, taking charge of the northern extremities of both parishes, from the Iorsa water in the west to Corrie in the east. In the course of his duties he was responsible for the conduct of worship and assisting in the celebration of the sacraments.

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