

## St Marnock's Church Fowlis Easter

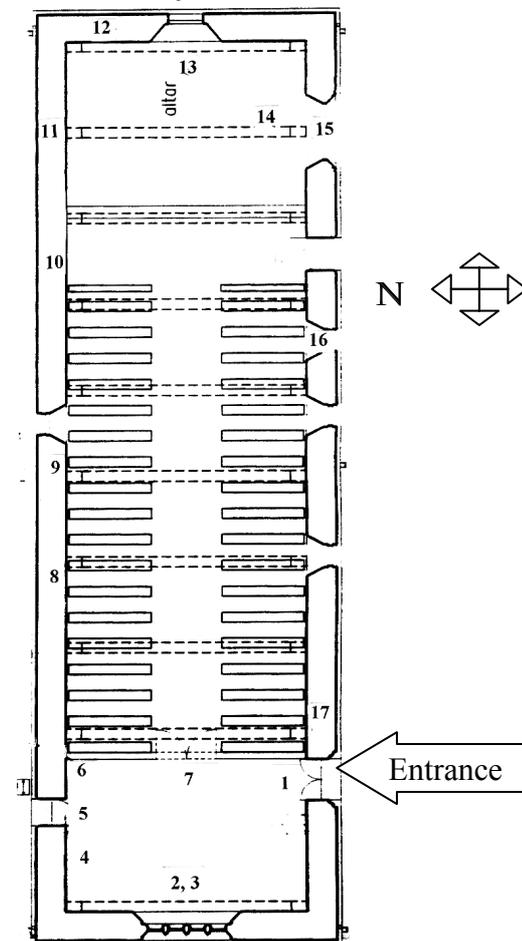
A HOUSE OF PRAYER has stood upon this spot for more than eight centuries, from about 1150, when King David I of Scotland gave the lands of Foules to William Maule for military services.



- 1170 Charter granted by William Maule to Thomas, his nephew, confirming the latter as Parson of Foules.
- 1177 Charter granted by William Maule to the Prior and Canons of St. Andrews, conveying the Chapel, with certain lands, to them.
- 1190 The lands came into the hands of the Mortimer family by marriage with the Maules.
- 1242 The Church of Foules dedicated to its patron saint, St. Marnan, by David de Bernham, Bishop of St. Andrews.
- 1377 The lands became the property of the Gray family through the marriage of Sir Andrew Gray with Janet Mortimer.
- 1453 The Church, as it now stands, was built by Sir Andrew, the second of that name, and first Lord Gray of Foulis. About this time also it was made a Collegiate Church for a Provost and several Prebends.
- 1497 King James IV visited Fowlis; "paid the harpar there XIII. S."
- 1541 Patrick, 4th Lord Gray: some of the paintings and probably the inscriptions were done during his lifetime.
- 1558 Instrument of Investiture of a Prebendary of Foulis, extant.
- 1612 Order of the Synod of Fife to destroy the "paintrie on the ruid laft."
- 1618 Fowlis and Lundie Parishes were united under one minister.

1669 The lands were acquired by the Murrays of Ochertyre

## Plan of St Marnock's Church



## Points of Interest within the Church

1. **Main Door** on south of building with mouldings over the door, showing the arms of Gray and Wemyss above a helmet with swans and lions.
2. **The Baptismal Font** (damaged) octagonal in shape, with sculptured panels, which may be named, thus:-(1) Baptism of Christ; (2) Arrest in the Garden; (3) Ecce Homo; (4) The Scourging; (5) Christ bearing the Cross; (6) the Crucifixion; (7) The Resurrection; (8) Christ calling the souls of the Fathers out of Limbo.  
**The Fine 15<sup>th</sup> Century Gothic Window** in the west gable above the font.
3. **The pew allocations:** dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

#### 4. Oak Ladle

A very old Oak Ladle for taking up the "collection."

Nearby is an old painting on copper of a dove of peace.

#### 5. The Door in the North Wall

Was probably the women's entrance, with "stoup" for holy water on right side, ornamented with fleur-de-lis and quartre-foils. There is a similar "stoup" without ornament on the left-hand side (17) of the south door.

#### 6. The Alms Dish

Of bronze, German work, date 1487, embossed with scene of the Garden of Eden (crude figures). Emblematic flowers in foreground and at the back a peculiar turret with a pathway leading to the earth. The inscription, in German, reads - "I bide the time in quietness."

**The Jougs**, a neck collar once used to punish minor offenders, hanging on the wall to the right of the north door.

#### 7. Oak Doors

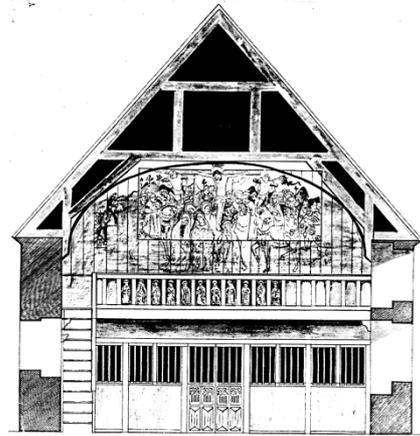
The 15th century oak doors, which were part of the rood-screen, showing pinnacles with carved crockets above, and below, two sets of panels, the one with pointed arches and tracery, the other showing the "linen" pattern.

- #### 8. The Panel Painting of the Crucifixion.
- This unique picture is 500 years old; it is painted in so-called tempera on oak boards; it measures 13 ft. 3 ins. by 5 ft. 3 ins. (Notice that there are many horses in the picture, and over twenty figures.) The arms of the two thieves are bound over their crosses. Figures at the foot of the cross, St. John, the favourite disciple; Mary Cleophas; the Virgin Mary; Salome; and Mary Magdalene, with hands clasped. Then the centurion is seen pointing upwards to the scroll, which bears the words, "Truly this was the Son of God"; near him is the High Priest, **with scroll and to his left is a figure dressed in ermine and wearing a crown with a sceptre in his hand, probably King Herod,**

although there is no scriptural authority for including him at the crucifixion. Behind the last is a clown or jester in fool's cap. On the right of the cross is blind Longinus thrusting his spear, which is guided by two soldiers, into the Saviour's side (note that it is always the right side that is pierced). Above, the "souls" of the two thieves are seen issuing from their mouths. Behind are the trees and hills around Jerusalem. The painting, probably done about 1480, shows the influence of Bohemian and Cologne schools. It was shown at an exhibition of Mediaeval Art in London in 1923.

The five panels opposite appear to be parts of the Crucifixion painting that shows signs of having been reduced in size. The central figure suggests the patron who commissioned the painting, presumably Lord Gray.

- #### 9. The Rood Loft
- (rood means cross). Opposite one another on the north and south walls will be seen the corbels that supported



(Illustration from Apted and Robertson in Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot. XCV 1961-62, published 1964. Plate XLIX)

the gallery or loft which crossed from one side to the other. The third stone projecting from the north wall was probably the top step of the stair leading up to the loft. This loft accommodated the musicians. The screen, whose doors we have already seen (7), are shown in the space below

while above the loft was the painting of the Crucifixion and other pictures.

**10. Another Panel Painting** may have been the original altarpiece. It shows the figure of Christ with St Catherine to left, and to right John the Baptist pointing to the Lamb in his hand, with the Virgin holding the Child in her arms. Below can be partially seen the lowering into the tomb, with Mary the Mother, Mary Magdalene and the Apostles looking on. The centre of the painting may have been obliterated or damaged in some manner

**11. The Organ** is a Walker organ installed in November 2004.

**12. Aumbry** to the left of where the altar stood is the aumbry, or sacrament-house, where the sacred vessels were kept. This is one of the finest of its kind in the country. It shows Christ holding the globe and cross; on right, an angel bearing the cross; on left, another angel with the "pillar of scourging"; above is the angel of the Annunciation with scroll opening out towards the Virgin, behind whom is a closed book, and between, a pot of lilies, the symbol of purity. There was probably a piscina on the other side of the altar which has been built up.

### **13. Panel of Saints and Apostles**

These probably decorated the balcony of the rood-loft From the left, the figures are: (1) St. Catherine, with sword and wheel; (2) St. Matthias, with spear and book; (3) St. Thomas, with carpenter's square and book; (4) St. Simon, with book and saw; (5) St. John, Evangelist, with poisoned chalice and dragon emerging from it; (6) Christ, with hand raised in benediction and open book, His foot rests on an orb; (7) St. Peter, with book and key; (8) St.

Anthony, as a hermit with staff and book, and a collared pig at his feet; (9) St. James, the Less, with fuller's club and book; (10) St. Paul (uncertain); (11) St. Ninian, as a Bishop, with pastoral staff, right hand raised in benediction, with manacles from right wrist. The flag at the bottom of this panel shows the Gray arms.

**The Round Window** in the east gable, with stained glass, shows the arms of the Grays, with motto, "Anchor Fast."

**14 and 15. The Pulpit** dating from the Victorian times and **The Memorial Window to The Grays:** The large stained glass window was erected in 1867 to the memory of John, the XVI Lord Gray.

**16. Another Memorial window** from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

**17** Portions of panels: these date from the same period as the other board paintings on display.

### **Other points of interest**

**The Timber Roof** was constructed in 1889 during a general refurbishment of the church.

**The Bell**, in the small belfry above the west window, bears the date 1508, and the inscription eris ihs maria "Jesus, Mary be your speed."

### **Stone Cross and Coffin Slab**

In the middle of the churchyard stands a roughly hewn stone cross. Like the market crosses, these marked the gathering point for meetings and processions connected with the Church and also marked the stance for markets and fairs that were often held after the service. The coffin-slab has probably nothing to do with the cross, though the former is standing at the foot of the grave. It is ornamented with a sword and hunting horn in raised characters and

probably marks the grave of a forest ranger or keeper, dating about the 16th century.

**The Masons' Marks** are still visible on many of the stones on the outside. It was by this mark that the masons were paid for their work.

**The Session House**, in the grounds of the church to the northwest, was originally built in 1841 for the visiting minister (there was and is no manse). It had two rooms upstairs and a coach house and stable on the ground floor. It has been refurbished and is now used as a small meeting place.

