

# St. Joseph's & St. Patrick's

## *Wemyss Bay*



Centenary

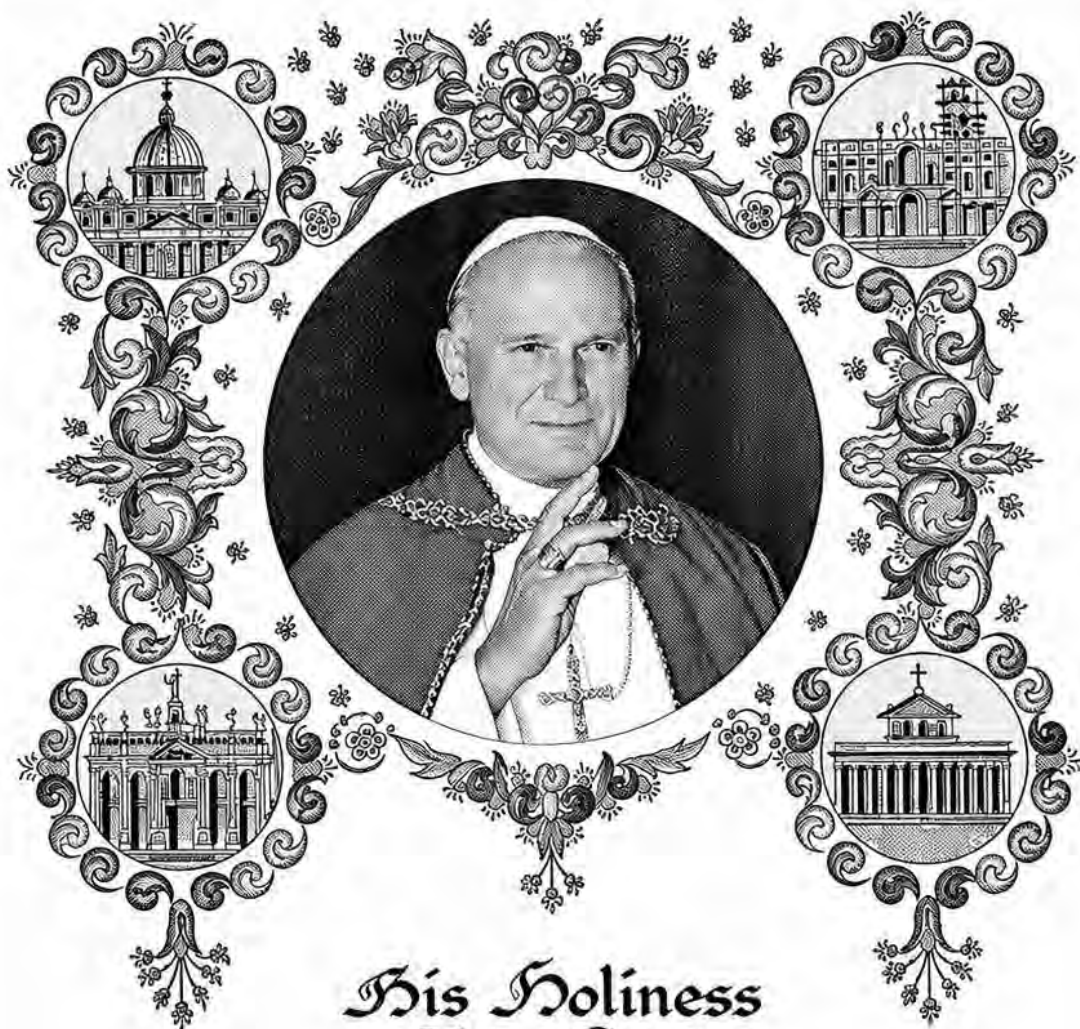
*23rd June 1901 - 2001*



St. Joseph



St. Patrick



**His Holiness  
John Paul II**

lovingly imparts his  
**Apostolic Blessing**  
on **The Parish Priest and the People**  
**of St. Joseph's and St. Patrick's**  
**Wemyss Bay**

on the occasion of the Centenary of their Church.  
1901 - June - 2001

Ex Auditū Vaticanā die 23 V. 2001

+ *Joannes Paulus*  
*Archiepiscopus*  
*Elemosynarius Apostolicus*

Papal Blessing



The Right Reverend  
John Aloysius Mone  
*Bishop of Paisley*

## To the Parish Community of St Joseph's and St Patrick's

My Dear People of God,

Congratulations to you and Canon Quinn as you celebrate the Centenary of your parish church. You will be aware that this church is of particular historical and architectural value and is admired not only by all who come to visit and pray here, but by so many who pass by.

Your church has an atmosphere which is quite unique and draws people from out with the parish boundaries who feel at home and welcome and make this church their faith centre.

I love coming here to celebrate Holy Mass which is now our sublime act of worship and the greatest prayer known to Christians. As you gather around me, I feel a sense of that welcome, a sense of community and care for one another.

This historic occasion gives me the opportunity to congratulate Canon Quinn for all he has achieved since coming here. I mention only two.

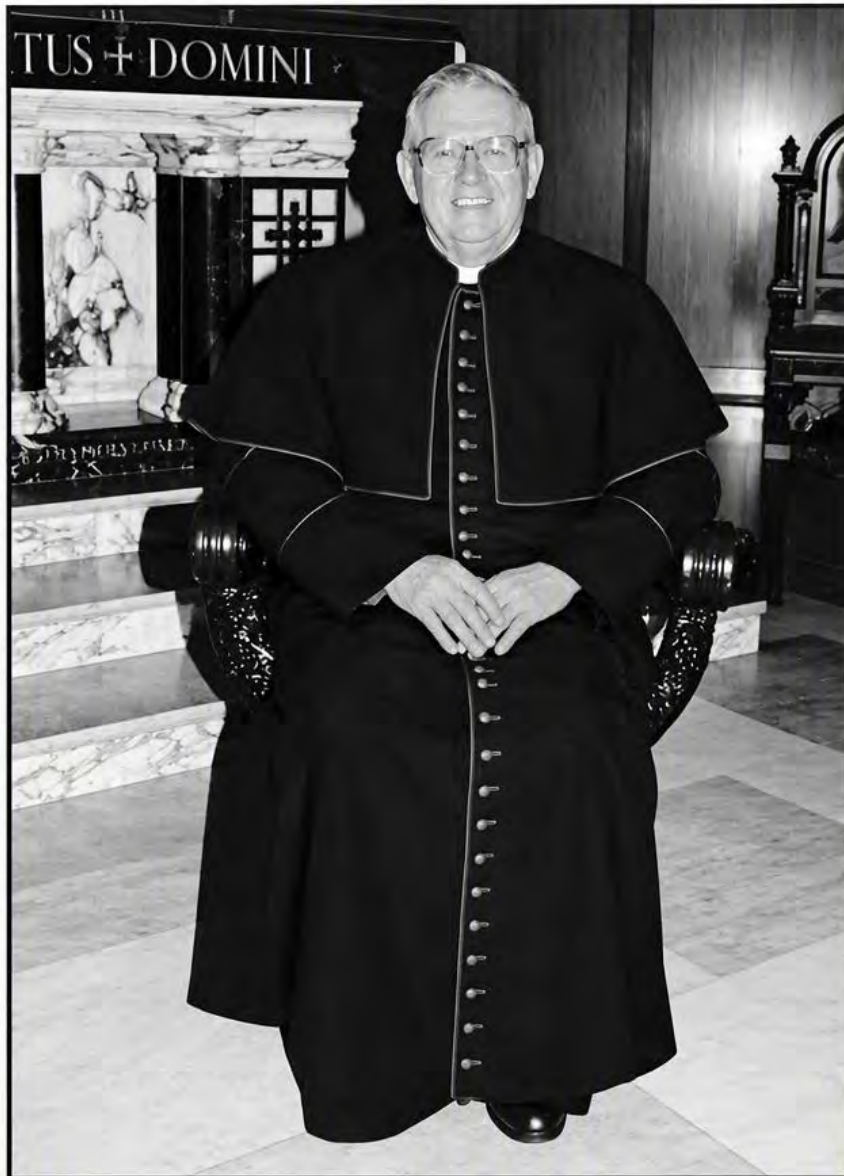
The hall, which he had the vision and courage to build has been a 'GOD-SEND' in helping you to grow as a true community. Then there is the new car park! He is continually telling us that anything that has come about, has only been possible because you have been behind him and given such outstanding support. Thank you for that.

Please continue to respond to his invitations to be a true Eucharistic Community growing in the love of God and in the love and care of one another.

I bless you and those who have gone before you in faith, priests and people and all who have brought us to this day.

With affection

+John



Canon Joseph Quinn  
*Parish Priest*

## Centenary Message

Dear Parishioners,

To have the opportunity of celebrating the centenary of our church is a privilege. It is an occasion when we express our humble gratitude to God for the many graces and blessings he has bestowed on generations of people who have worshipped here for the past hundred years. It is interesting to note that part of this area, Inverkip, was a Parish according to Papal Registers of the Pontificate of Honorius III (1216-1227). In 1869, a wooden hut was used as a chapel for worship in Inverkip Main Street. It was referred to as "The Holy Ground". It brought back memories to me of a similar place of worship in my native Co. Clare, when in 1852 the parishioners there had no site for a church, and the Parish Priest of the time, got a large bathing box built and mounted on wheels. For seven years men of the area took the bathing box to the sea shore and the Priest said mass in it surrounded by his flock. This lasted every Sunday for seven years and then the present church at Kilbaha was built with a special wing to house the bathing box known as " Little Ark". It is there to this day as a monument to the faith of these people.

Our great pleasure today is the presence of Bishop Mone, together with local Clergy and Ministers of The Church of Scotland to join with former parishioners, and Civic Dignatories on this historic occasion when the present Church was built to replace the wooden hut, moved here from Inverkip in 1887 and dedicated by the then Archbishop of Glasgow as a place of worship. This Church, beautiful as it is, is more than stone and mortar; it is an expression of our highest aspiration, "A living stone" (1 Peter 2,4) to our faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ and his promise of eternal life.

With the Apostolic Blessing, which we have received on this occasion from Our Holy Father Pope John Paul II and with the encouragement of our Bishop as expressed in his foreword to this history, may we ever remain loyal to the ideals to which this temple of God gives witness.

(Canon) Joseph Quinn  
*Parish Priest*

## St. Joseph's & St. Patrick's

### *Wemyss Bay*

Wemyss Bay became a parish in its own right on 17th September 1971, when Vincent Grace took up residence. The whole area was developing and new houses were appearing. Prior to this, it was a mission station existing at Inverkip from 1869 and transferred to Wemyss Bay in 1887, when a neat wooden chapel was formally opened on August 28th, that same year by Archbishop Charles Eyre of Glasgow.

On June 23rd, 1901 the present church of St Joseph and St Patrick, designed by Pugin and built at a cost of £1,200 to accommodate 200 parishioners, was formally dedicated. From its inception the mission of Wemyss Bay was served from Largs until the creation of Paisley diocese in 1947/1948 when it came under the control of St Ninian's, Gourock. In 1968, Hugh Gallagher was appointed priest-in-charge. On his transfer to St Columba's, Renfrew in 1969, Wemyss Bay reverted to St Andrew's, Larkfield.

On December 6th 1998, a new parish hall built by Canon Joseph Quinn was dedicated by Bishop John Mone. Over the years, there have been many new housing developments in Wemyss Bay, Inverkip and Skelmorlie with a huge increase in the Catholic population. St Joseph and St Patrick's Wemyss Bay is an ever developing community resulting in future plans being discussed to expand the church outward into the garden at the side.



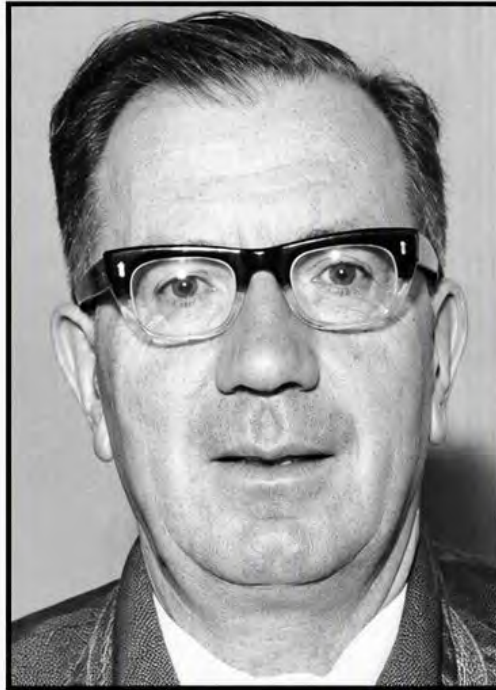


The Presbytery purchased from the Sisters of Mercy in 1978



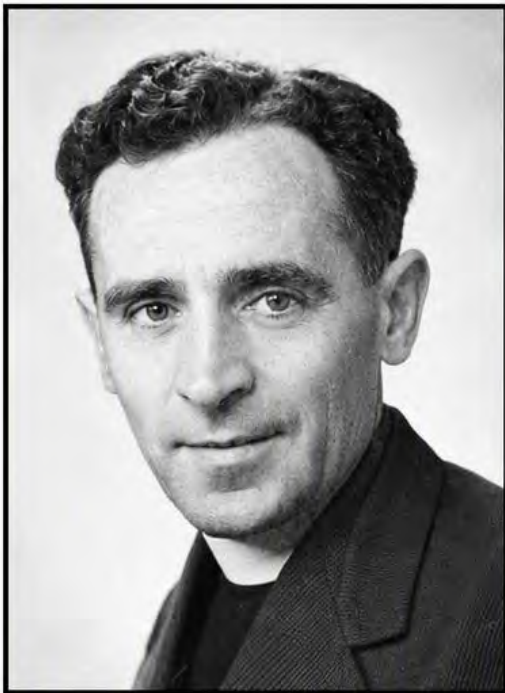
The Parish Hall opened on 6th December 1998

## Administrator

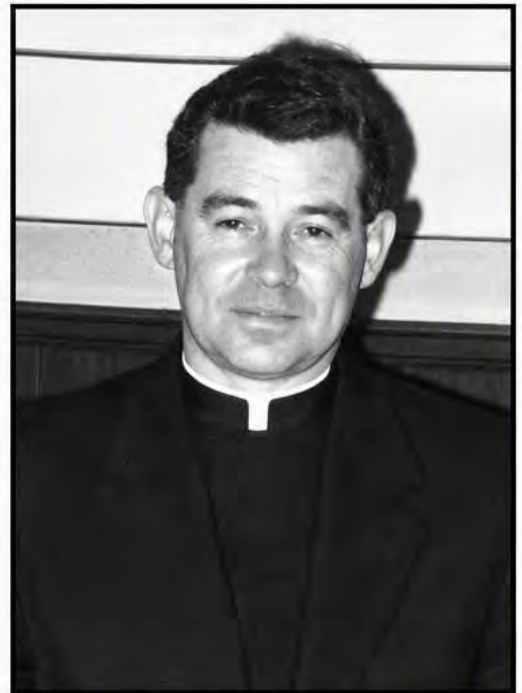


Hugh Gallagher  
1968 - 1969

## Pastors

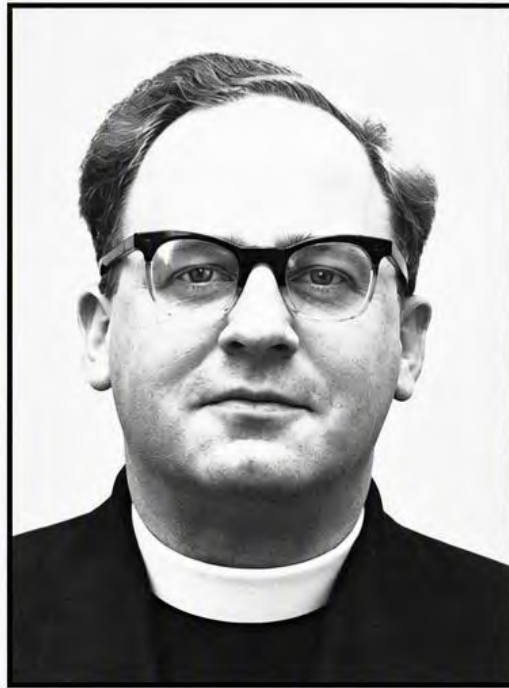


Vincent Grace  
1971 - 1975  
Died May 23rd, 1978

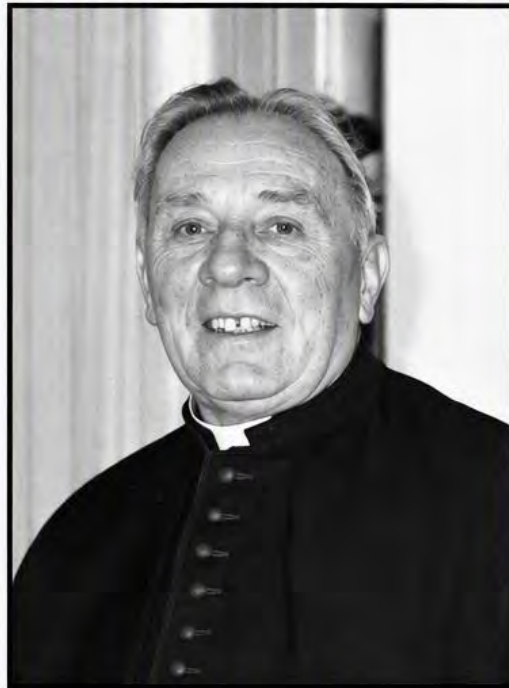


Thomas B O'Conner  
1975 - 1977  
Died June 20th, 1993

## Pastors



Patrick Woods  
1977 - 1990



Andrew Reid  
1990 - 1995

## Priests of the Parish

Father Ian Hughes, born Skelmorlie, Ayrshire in 1915, and was baptised John (Ian) James. After elementary school at the Convent of Notre Dame, Skelmorlie, he attended Mount St. Mary's, Sparkhill, near Sheffield. He entered the Salvatorians at Wylde Green, Birmingham in 1932. He studied at Klausheide, Padderborn, Germany and was ordained priest at Christleton Hall, Chester on 29th May 1938. He taught at the Salvatorian College in Harrow Weald until 1944 when he then went to Balbriggan, Co. Dublin to take charge of War Refugees. Between 1947 and 1959, Fr Ian was assistant priest at Wealdstone, Abotts Langley and Thornbury.



Ian Hughes  
1915 - 1990

In 1959, Fr Ian went to Tanzania as a Missionary and returned after an accident in 1966. Between 1967 and 1971, he was assistant priest at Ystradgynlais and then from 1972 until 1977, was assistant priest at Wealdstone and served as Mission Secretary. Sadly his health began to deteriorate as a result of his earlier accident in Tanzania. He had surgery on his knee, diabetes was discovered and his leg was amputated. Fr Ian spent several years in hospital and on convalescence after which he retired to Wealdstone where on 29th May 1988, he celebrated the Golden Jubilee of Priesthood. In 1990, he went to Ker Maria Convalescent home at Princes Risborough. A week prior to his death he was admitted to Stoke Manderville Hospital, Bucks where he died peacefully in his sleep on 16th February. He had a great love of the Missions, was a dedicated Missionary.

*May he rest in peace.*

## Priests of the Parish

Father Gerard W Hughes was born in Skelmorlie, Ayrshire, in 1924, and was educated at St Aloysius College, Glasgow, and at Mount St Mary's, near Sheffield, from 1931-1942. He entered the Jesuits in 1942. As a student he read Classics at Oxford, and studied Theology at Frankfurt / Main, choosing Germany as a place to study because of his interest in ecumenism.

After Ordination, he taught at Stonyhurst College in Lancs from 1960 - 1967, and was chaplain at Glasgow University from 1967 -1975. Following a period as co-instructor of Jesuits in their final year of training, he then set up and directed a Jesuit Centre of spirituality at St Beuno's, North Wales from 1978 - 1984.



Gerard Hughes  
b. 1924

Since 1985, he has been based in Birmingham, where he works on Spirituality with people of all Christian denominations. Fr Gerard has a particular interest in those who are active in some form of justice/peace work. He gives retreats in daily life and trains people in retreat-giving and prayer accompaniment.

Fr Gerard, is the renowned author of 'In Search of a Way' 'God of Surprises', 'Walk to Jerusalem', 'God, where are you?' all published by Darton, Longman & Todd. He is also the author of 'Oh God, Why?' (Bible Reading Fellowship) and 'God of Compassion' (Hodder and Stoughton).

## *Tales of the Oak*

# CHRISSWELL

*"peace has a bower by still Chrisswell  
But dark Dunrod conceals a witchcraft spell."*

### **The House of Chrisswell**

In its heyday, the palace of Chrisswell was said to rival Ardgowan in size and majesty, although today it is only remembered by a small farmhouse which stands on the hill above the IBM complex.

There is mention of a chapel at Chrisswell as early as the thirteenth century, in the reign of Robert III, though a sacred well, which remains a short distance from the farmhouse, may have been in existence long before this. The waters of the well or spring, known as Boag's well, is said to have healing properties, and from this chapel lands gained their original name of Chrystwall, or Christ's Well. In the year 1556, Sir Lawrence Galt, named as owner of the chapel grounds, deemed the lands to Sir James Lindsay, a chaplain, and his heirs; however, this right passed to the Stewart family in the late seventeenth century.

For as long as Chrisswell stood, stories of witches, ghosts and supernatural occurrences have attached themselves to the place.

### **The Prophet Peden**

In 1638 the Privy Council of the King, angry at the influence of Catholics over their monarch, drafted a petition demanding the removal of Bishops from the Council, a move which led to the drawing up of the National Covenant. This document forced a wedge between the Catholic and Protestant religions and caused much civil strife throughout the country. Most noted among the Covenanters was the Prophet Peden, who is said to have famously cursed Chrisswell in the seventeenth century, during the Scottish civil war.

Hunted by Catholics for much of his life, Peden often took refuge in the hills around Spango Glen. One night however, when the weather was particularly harsh, he sought admittance to Chrisswell Farm, at this time the house was occupied by one Monteith, a direct descendant of the Monteith who betrayed William Wallace, and a fierce opponent of the Covenanters. Peden was refused admittance and took out his wrath on the inhabitants, declaring that for their unkindness, the traffic of the world would one day pass through their midst and that the roof would be open to the winds of heaven. It is strange to note that with the construction of IBM factory and a well travelled dual carriageway passing through the former grounds of Chrisswell, it would appear as if some, if not all of Peden's prophecy has been fulfilled.



Crisswell Chapel

There was a chapel dedicated to the Holy Trinity in Inverkip parish. This is manifestly identical with the chapel of "Holy Trinity of Christelwell" or "Castelwell", also known as "Cristiswell" and "Chrystswell". It was under the patronage of Robert II of 1390-1406: "Charter for ane foundation of a chapel at Chrystswell". If the first part of the name refers to Christ, the Holy Trinity may have been a later dedication. This chapel and its lands are mentioned in documents of 1556 and 1675.

### **H Scott 1950; OPS 1851**

The ONB (not previously recorded) states that the road to Greenock was made about 1800, passing through the ruins of (alternatively named Christwell) chapel; in 1856 some remains of the chapel stood on each side of the road. Examination of 1st edition 25" plan shows that the building identified in 1856 as the chapel was orientated NW - SE and measured some 20m by 12m, the gables of the building are described in the field report forming part of the side walls of the 'chapel'.

### **Name book 1856; OS 25" map (1856)**

The remains of the 'chapel' consisted of two end walls and a small fragment of the west wall. They were approximately 1.0m thick, containing small, narrow, rectangular windows. The building measured 13.0m by 6.0m, the walls being of mortared rubble masonry. The remains visited by OS (JD) 21 July 1955..

Chrisswell chapel was surveyed by RCAHMS in 1980, prior to being demolished in 1980 to construct IBM. It is absolutely unbelievable that such history would be destroyed to make way for industry. There are those in our community who believe that the subsidence of the road and parts of the IBM site are due to some kind of supernatural influence . . . . . Spooky!

## St Joseph and St Patrick's Eldest Parishioner



Our most senior parishioner is Mrs Phyllis Thorne, pictured here with Canon Joseph Quinn and Bishop John Mone.

Phyllis has seen many changes in her 99 years but, for this grand old lady, this change was the icing on the cake! As eldest parishioner, Phyllis cut the ceremonial cake during the official opening of the Church Hall.

## Nan McLaughlin



Our family came to Inverkip in 1908. At that time we were the only Catholic family in the village. We all, five of us, attended Inverkip School so our parents gave us our Religious Instruction. In the evening after tea, when we saw father putting on the glasses and reaching for the Catechism we knew that serious work would now commence.

We walked to church every Sunday - hail, rain or shine. (No buses or cars then!)

The priest cycled from Largs where he had already offered an earlier Mass.

The Sisters of Mercy from Garnethill, occupied the Convent (now the Presbytery) during the summer. So, after school we walked there for further instruction. If it was dry we sat on the grass, if wet, we were allowed into the Summer House (where the garages now are).

The Sisters used to pray that some day every seat in the Church would be filled.

*That day has finally come!*

## St Joseph and St Patrick's Longest Serving Parishioner



If there is one person who knows everything about the parish it's Teresa Usher!

Teresa recounts: My parents came to Skelmorlie in 1903. I was born in 1912 and my Godfather was Mr Macauley, who negotiated the purchase of the land to build the church on from Lord Inverclyde. My parents ran the General Warehouse shop in Skelmorlie Castle Road, from 1903 and it remained in the family until 1979. The Post Office & newsagents came to the shop in 1921. This shop sold everything required for the home from furniture, clothes, wool etc. to foodstuffs.

In my young day, there was little traffic on the road, only the doctor (Dr Crow) had a car. Deliveries were made by Mr Kneebone, with his horse and cart from Wemyss Bay Station. We mainly walked to church (2 miles) - Hail, rain & shine, many times through quite deep snow. In those days, long before TV, time indoors was spent round the piano. My mother played and sang, our favourites from the operas - Ave Maria, Cavellena Rosticana etc. My mother was one time, (before 1912) an organist at St Joseph & St Patrick. Hence my great interest in music.

Outdoors we played rounders in the field behind the Community Centre or tennis, bouncing balls. Etc. One of our treats in summer was a stick of rhubarb in a 'poke' of sugar to dip it in - No tubes of Smarties then!

There were other shops in Skelmorlie, one of which was Litterick's - A China Shop, which had the Telephone Exchange in their front room.

There were no busses from Largs until 1924, before then you went to Largs by boat.

The Priest came up to say Mass from Largs by motorbike or boat.

All the children attended the local Skelmorlie Primary School, then, on to St Mary's in Greenock and myself to Notre Dame, Clarkhill in Dumbarton.

Teresa is now resident in Ardrossan, but is still a frequent visitor to the Parish, Theresa joins us today to celebrate our Centenary.

# Extract from The Catholic Directory for Scotland 1902

## PART V.

### I. EVENTS, 1901

#### *23rd June* - **Opening of new church at Wemyss Bay.**

This church is designed in the late decorated style, and consists of nave, chancel, and sacristy. The west gable is pierced with five-light window with cusped heads and rather perpendicular in treatment. On the Gospel side of this end is an entrance door leading into the inner porch. Besides the window at west end, the nave is lit by five three-light windows, and three two-light windows. The chancel is divided from nave by woodwork, forming an arch and is richly traceried in spandrels. On the Gospel side of this is the door to confessional, and on the other side, in a similar position, is a recess for a small side altar. The end wall of chancel is pierced with a rose window. The roof is formed of a couple of rafters; it is ceiled at the collars at height of seventeen feet from the floor. The total height of the church from the ground is twenty-six feet. It is sixty feet long and twenty-four feet wide, and will accommodate about 200. The cost has been put about £1200. It has been designed by Messrs. Pugin & Pugin, of London.

The opening ceremony of this beautiful little church took place on 23rd June, 1901. The blessing of the church began at 11.30am, and at the Solemn High Mass which followed immediately, Very Rev. Alex. Canon Taylor, M.R., was celebrant; Rev. Peter Murray, pastor of the mission, being deacon; and Rev. Alex. McCormick, sub-deacon. The Mass was the votive one of St. Joseph, because the church itself is dedicated to the Patron of the Universal Church. Owing to inclement weather not many had travelled from Glasgow, but Greenock, Largs, the two Skelmorlies, Inverkip and Gourock were all well represented. The preacher was the Very Rev. Ignatius Gartlan, S.J.

In the evening there was an outdoor procession of the Blessed Sacrament. Benediction was given in the open air amidst hundreds of devout worshippers. Rev. A McCormick preached, and then the proceedings of the day came to a happy termination.

## Newspaper Cuttings

### Catholic Directory of Scotland 1888 P112

Wemyss Bay (Renfrewshire), St Joseph and St Patrick, 1887. Sittings , 130. - Served from Largs, 7 1/2 miles distant. Mass on Sunday alternately at 9 and 11 1/2; Sunday School (under Sisters of Mercy) at 5; Devotions at 6.

The Station which had existed at Wemyss Bay, where a neat wooden Chapel was erected. Mass was said in it from the end of May, but the formal opening did not take place until 28th August, when Missa cantata was celebrated by the Vicar General and the sermon preached by His Grace the Archbishop.

Sunday Schools at Largs, Wemyss Bay, Millport and Skelmorlie. Catechetical Instructions occasionally given by the Clergymen, during the week, in each of these places.

Societies. - Holy Family, Mount Carmel.

### Glasgow Observer 1951

#### WEMYSS BAY CHURCH 'FLITTED' TWICE.

Parishioners may transfer from one Parish to another. A Parish may split into several parishes but surely Wemyss Bay Catholics can lay claim to the only church which twice "flitted" after it's flock.

The Golden Jubilee of the Solemn opening of the present church of St Joseph and St Patrick which took place earlier this year is expected to be celebrated within a few weeks time.

The Church built of Wemyss Bay stone was opened on 23rd June 1901. Before that Mass was offered in a wooden building which had been a non-catholic place of worship in Dunoon.

The wooden building was taken up and transported to a garden at Inverkip, which became known as "The Holy Land". When the lease of "The Holy Land" ran out in 1886, a house in Wemyss Bay was put up for sale and after this was bought and taken over, the wooden hut flitted again to the new site.

Before this wooden building was purchased, Mass was offered in the home of Mrs Shanken at Inverkip and still earlier in the open air.

**Glasgow Observer**  
Saturday, June 22 1901

**THE NEW CHURCH AT WEMYSS BAY  
TO BE OPENED ON SUNDAY.**

This beautiful building, standing at the head of the rising ground near Wemyss Bay Pier, will supply a want long felt by the Catholics of Inverkip and Upper and Lower Skelmorlie. Formerly the spiritual needs of the Catholics living in these parts were attended to by Canon Condon, and after him by Canon Taylor. Until the erection of the present new Church, a small wooden erection served as a place for Divine service. This same wooden erection, which will soon be no more, in days gone by was actually a protestant place of worship in Dunoon, where it was bought by the Catholics. The whole erection was transplanted to a garden at Inverkip, and for a long time the spot upon which the Catholics had anchored their Ark was known as "The Holy Land". Previous to the era of wood, Holy Mass was celebrated in the open air, and after that in the house of Mrs Shannon, of Inverkip.

About 1886 the lease of "The Holy Land" ran out and a house in Wemyss Bay was put up for sale. Rev. Wm. Gallagher, then in charge of the combined Missions in Largs and Wemyss Bay, through the instrumentality of Mr James McAuley, secured the property for the Archdiocese, and thither the wooden church was removed from Inverkip.

In May 1900, the building of the present new church was begun, and finished quite recently.

The opening function is announced for tomorrow (Sunday), 23rd June, service beginning at 11.30am. Train leaves St Enoch tomorrow at 7.50am for Greenock, returning from Greenock at 8pm.

## The Skelmorlie Reservoir Disaster

Most of our Community are unaware that the village of Skelmorlie suffered a tragic disaster in the first quarter of this century. It is now almost forgotten but if you look very carefully the traces remain of the event, which took place on 18th April 1925.

Skelmorlie reservoir, which belonged to Eglinton Estate, provided the water supply to the village. Built in 1861 by a local man known as Navvy Young who was an itinerant contractor, who had his own band of labourers. The reservoir had caused locals concern as it appeared that no-one was responsible for maintaining it since it's construction.

On the day that the disaster occurred there had been torrential rain and high winds when a reservoir embankment above the village suddenly gave way and millions of gallons of water flowed through the village causing a huge torrent of water to rampage homes, streets and gardens. Very quickly it was established that five people including four children had lost their lives. The carnage to the village was unimaginable. The Head Forester and Water Superintendent was Robert Donaldson of Eglinton Estate. He had carried out his routine inspection on the reservoir the previous evening, and again in the morning of the disaster at 8.30am. There was apparently nothing amiss but he did note that only 3 inches of the eighteen inch diameter overflow pipe were above the water level. The weather that day was extremely wet and very stormy with a very high wind from the north. There was a heavy spray deposited on the bank. Locals recall that the road was flooded and that the rain had not stopped. Many recount that the Easter Holiday had been ruined by the inclement weather, typical of this west coast.

Memories differ as to exactly when the disaster struck but it would appear that shortly after lunchtime, a family living about 50 yards below the reservoir heard a loud crack, and noted with alarm, that two fissures had suddenly appeared in the embankment, and that water had started to seep out. After only a few seconds, the embankment gave way along a thirty foot length under the tremendous pressure of the water resulting in the flood that suddenly torrented down the steep slope of the village. Several eye-witnesses testify that the water rushed in folds like the waves of a very angry sea. The wall of the water is described as being about thirty foot high and the noise that accompanied it was described as being like thunder. Captain Scott of Stroove House said he heard "a roar, just a roar, nothing else." Others said that it was like the noise of a great motor car.

All obstacles in the way of the great torrent were crushed and carried along with it into the waters of the Clyde below. Trees, garden walls, outbuildings, rocks, roadways were all torn up in the relentless force of the flood. Wrecked motor cars and the remains of their garages were also carried in the torrent. Within ten to fifteen minutes of the disaster, the reservoir had emptied.

At Birchburn Cottage, Mrs Dallas heard the noise of the first escape of water and rushed outside to see what was going on. She immediately recognised that the overflow from the reservoir had suddenly and dramatically increased. She gathered her children together outside and it was her intention give warning to the family at Taymouth House, which lay below her own home. She instructed her children to follow her through the flood but frozen with fear, they hesitated and at the moment of the great burst of water, she watched aghast and helpless as her children were swept away. Men waded into the water frantically searching for the children, but to no avail.

The cries from Mrs Dallas had alerted the occupants of Taymouth House. Jenny Adam was at a garage at the bottom of the garden along with her niece, nephew and maidservant. In all their distress, they decided to return to the house. Unfortunately, Ursula, the niece, slipped and fell and without thought for her own safety, Mrs Dallas, turned back to help her and in that split second, they were both caught up in the flood and were relentlessly swept away.

Patrick Adam was inside his house when the flood- waters struck, and managed to escape by climbing out of a window. He was met by Sandy Dallas, who was completely distraught and who told him that his three children were missing. Patrick struggled down through his own garden to try and find out what had become of his own wife and niece. Horror-stricken, he caught a brief sight of his wife in the torrent as she was swallowed up. He never saw his niece.

When the torrent had passed, the village was devastated. A great chasm could be seen where the reservoir embankment had collapsed , trees and shrubbery were strewn everywhere. At one place, just above strove House, a hole in the road measured twelve feet wide and forty feet deep. Birchburn Cottage was completely demolished. In a fifteen minute period, lives had been changed forever.

The reservoir had held five and a half million gallons of water. In less than fifteen minutes it was empty. As soon as the extent of the disaster was realised, offers of help came from all quarters. Many waded waist deep in muddy waters, in a desperate attempt to find anyone alive. But early optimism soon turned to sorrow, as the victims of the disaster were all found one by one. Those who died were Jenny Adam, Winifred Menhennet, Freddie Dallas (7), Alex Dallas (7) and Ursula Scott. It was a miracle there were not more life's lost. People came from far and wide to work at clearing the disaster area. They came by every possible mode of transport.

A Public Enquiry into the disaster was held at Kilmarnock on 15th June 1925. Mr Hogg, a Civil Engineer, said in his evidence "The proximate cause of the failure was the inadequacy of the overflow arrangements". This coupled with the torrential rain resulted in the disaster.

*Grateful thanks to Wilma Davidson for being the source of this information.*

## Groups of the Parish



The S.C.I.A.F. Group was formed in 1991, comprises representatives from the three villages and has a twofold purpose. Firstly to raise awareness and support Third World issues through fundraising. Secondly to bring the community together through the various social events organised, for example, dances, quiz nights and an annual fete.



### Features

GREENOCK TELEGRAPH, Tuesday, 20 August, 1996

Well-fed: Canon Joseph McHale enjoys a pancake on Traidcraft and S.C.I.A.F. Afternoon. Members of the committee are from left: Maureen Park, Jean Scott, Margaret Braw and Sonja Watson. A big everyone who enjoys a big event big and for the use off the hall. The proceeds for the day will be donated to overseas projects supported by Traidcraft and S.C.I.A.F.

On a more serious note, Traidcraft Evenings are organised annually to promote Fair Trading. During Lent one Sunday is set aside to focus on Third World issues through prayers at Mass and a Hunger Lunch.

On average the Group forwards between £1500 and £2000 annually to S.C.I.A.F. projects. The figure is in addition to any

money donated through S.C.I.A.F. Sunday collection and S.C.I.A.F. boxes.

## Groups of the Parish



Eucharistic Ministers



Altar Servers

## Groups of the Parish



Parent and Toddler Group



Over Sixty's Club: *Who would believe that these young things are over sixty?*

## Groups of the Parish



The Parish Council



**The RCIA Group** exists to help people who are considering entering the Catholic Church. In some cases this involves helping to prepare for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. The Group was instigated in 1988 by Fr Woods. So far five people have become Catholic. Some Members are trained Teachers, some have training as Catechists, but all bring their experience of living as Catholic laypeople.

## **Groups of the Parish**



**Our dedicated Sunday School Teachers!**



**Parish Music Group**

## Events in the Parish



Annual Garden Fete



SCIAF Annual Barbecue

## The Sisters of Mercy

Correspondence relating to the presence of the Sisters of Mercy in Wemyss Bay dates back to 1887.

- *Purp*  
13 April 1887

Dear Rev: Mother

I have not called on you because I am busy getting some little repairs done to the house staying here in some office for the taking down at Inverkip & rebuilding our little Chapel on the grounds we have at Burlington Villa Wemyss Bay.

I would be delighted to have you for a tenant of the house & grounds such I think it would be a great spiritual benefit for us both at Shelmurkie & Inverkip if you were amongst us.

If I can at all I will meet you on Friday at Wemyss Bay Station in the arrival of the 10-30 from Glasgow Bridge Street Station.

Should I be prevented by some unforeseen cause for seeing you on Friday, Mr Hughes or any of the children can bring you to the place but trusting I will be able to bring you myself believe me with much respect

Yours sincerely  
*M. Cunningham*

Lurg

22<sup>nd</sup> April 1887

Dear Rev Mother,

I duly received yours of the 20<sup>th</sup> inst. offering a yearly rent of £30 for Burlington Villa, Hornsey Bay. I think I have explained to you my reasons for estimating the rent at £35; but I am quite willing to agree to your terms by way, at least, as you put it, of a year's experiment.

Canon Cameron, who was still with me when your letter came, went with me yesterday to suggest to the tradesmen who are making some repairs, some arrangements which he thinks will make the house more convenient for you. As the Canon said he would call upon you on an early day, probably Sunday first & explain what we had agreed upon, I need not trouble you now with further details.

Eagerly hoping that this agreement may prove very much to our mutual satisfaction & with very sincere regards

I am

Yours truly

Wm. Gallagher

The Right Rev.  
Bishop Maguire D.D.  
160 Kenmore Street  
Garnethill

Telephone No 883

178 St Vincent Street.  
Glasgow 14<sup>th</sup> Jan'y 1901.

My Lord,

Arrestment. Stewart. Skelmorlie

We beg to acknowledge receipt  
of the Diocesan Secretary's letter of 12<sup>th</sup> inst.  
with execution of arrestment at the  
instance of W. Cameron against Hugh  
Stewart in the hands of Archbishop  
Eyre, and the matter has our attention.

Sisters of Mercy

We have also received the two  
half yearly Statements rendered by us  
at Martinmas 1898 & Martinmas 1900  
and we return them herewith along  
with a Statement shewing the causes  
of the decreased balance at the latter

date. The reason you will at once see is increased taxation all round, and a decrease of Income owing to raising of Income Tax deducted from the Ground Annual, and also the inclusion in the 1900 Statement of the Occupiers proportion of Burgh Rates (£6. 19. 1½) which was paid direct by the Reverend Mother in 1898. We trust the Statement along with this explanation will be satisfactory.

We are,

Yours faithfully,

J. and R. Stout  
P. Weir.

E.P.

The Right Revd. Mgr. John Ritchie,  
160 RENFREW STREET.

JOHN MCLACHLAN,  
WRITER.

TELEPHONE  
CENTRAL 3747.

*141 West George Street,  
Glasgow.* 5th May 1921.

Dear Right Revd. Sir,

Burlington Villa, Wemyss Bay

I have seen the Feu Contract of 1847, as engrossed in the Superiors' Chartulary, and I find that there are no restrictions as to height of buildings, that the buildings must be kept within the building line laid down, and that no buildings may be erected within 15 feet of the Western, that is the back, boundary - which 15 feet are to be left as a lane, but that lane has in all probability already been formed.

I return the Titles.

Yours faithfully,

*John McLauchlan.*

VICAR GENERAL & DIOCESAN SECRETARY.  
RIGHT REV. MGR. CANON J. RITCHIE.

TELEGRAMS: "ARCHDIOCESE, GLASGOW."  
TELEPHONE: DOUGLAS, 1680.

ARCHDIOCESE OF GLASGOW

160 RENFREW STREET

GLASGOW

2<sup>nd</sup> May 1921

Dear Rev Mother,

As regards Burlington Villa, I have written to McKearney of Largs for his observations. It is well to be sure that there are no restrictions against adding whether to the height or breadth of the building. I am bringing down all the Titles to Mr McLachlan. It may be necessary to examine the Titles of the other houses in the row. He would ask the other lawyers to look them up. The two Deeds which fully detail the restrictions are not in our bundle.

I should be grateful for £4000 temporary loan before the Term, say, on 14<sup>th</sup> inst. I would give you interest at the Bank rate, so that you would not lose: and you could withdraw later by instalments according as you need for the building of new school.

Yours in X to  
John Ritchie, V.G.

Receipts saved by the Sisters of Mercy

ARCHDIOCESE  
OF GLASGOW.

No. D 899

Glasgow, 11<sup>th</sup> Nov 1921

Received from Madame M. Brumfiel, Res Mother,  
the sum of four hundred & fifty Pounds  
Shillings and Pence, as the price duly  
paid over for purchase by the Community of Mercy,  
Glasgow, of Burlington Villa, Wemyss Bay.  
£450 - - -



*John Ritchie*  
Diocesan Treasurer.

Folio No. 54.

SECRETARY'S OFFICE,  
131 FINNART STREET,

Accounts for Gas are made up four times a year, viz. - 31st January, 30th April, 31st July, and 31st October; and punctuality in the settlement is particularly requested. If this be not complied with, the Directors may order the supply of Gas to be turned off until payment be made. They also reserve power to demand a Deposit or Security.

*Community of Mercy, Burlington Villa, Wemyss Bay, GREENOCK.*  
To The Skelmorlie and Wemyss Bay Gas and Electric Supply Co., Ltd.

| PERIOD.                                                       | STATES OF METR. | GAS CONSUMED IN CUBIC FEET. | PRICE PER 1000 CUB. FT. | AMOUNT DUE. |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| From 30 <sup>th</sup> July 1921                               | 201200          |                             |                         |             |
| To 31 <sup>st</sup> October 1921                              | 229700          | 28,500                      | 7/1                     | 10 1 11     |
| For 31 <sup>st</sup> December 1921                            |                 |                             |                         |             |
| Received Payment, By cheque                                   |                 |                             |                         |             |
| The Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay Gas and Electric Supply Co., Ltd. |                 |                             |                         | 10 1 11     |



*E. S. Napier*  
Collector.

N.B.—All Consumers are held to have agreed to the Rules and Regulations of the Company, as noted on the back.

VICAR GENERAL & DIOCESAN SECRETARY  
RIGHT REV. MGR. CANON J. RITCHIE.

TELEGRAMS: "ARCHDIOCESE, GLASGOW."  
TELEPHONE: DOUGLAS. 1680.

ARCHDIOCESE OF GLASGOW

160 RENFREW STREET

GLASGOW

30<sup>th</sup> May 1921

Dear Rev. Mother,

The Finance Board, who are the Diocesan Trustees, are willing to sell to you Burlington Villa for £450, reserving the ground on which the church stands, and on front and back of it, to the main road and lane. A condition would be that you give them the right of pre-emption in case you afterwards wished to sell it - i.e., you would give the Trustees the option of buying it back again. Another condition would be that you erect no buildings in proximity to the church - at least without their approval & consent.

Of course, as long as you are there, there will be no fencing off of the church ground, but everything as open as it is just now.

Yours in X<sup>ts</sup>  
John Ritchie, V.S.

# RULES AND REGULATIONS

OF THE

## Skelmorlie and Wemyss Bay Gas and Electric Supply Co., Ltd.

---

**The Directors request the special attention of all Consumers to the following Rules and Regulations, which all are held to agree to :—**

I.—All parties wanting Service Pipes taken into their houses to leave notice at the Gas Works. All the interior fittings, etc., to be at all times open for the Manager's examination, and kept in good condition, so as to prevent any escape of gas; and when any repairs are pointed out as needed, the supply will be stopped until this is done.

II.—All meters used to be such as are approved of by the Directors, subject to the inspection of the Manager. The Company's Officers to have access at all reasonable times to examine them, and fill them with water when required; and, when found faulty, to cause them to be repaired. No person will be allowed to remove or disconnect Meters without giving due intimation to the Manager.

III.—As an interruption to the action of the Meter may occur from various causes, the Company to have the right of charging Consumers with the same quantity of Gas as may have been used by them at the same period of the previous year, till the Meter is tested

IV.—When gas is used in Furnished Houses it is not the Sub-Tenant that is liable to the Company for payment of the Gas, but the party furnishing the house, who must see that the Gas used is paid for; and it is imperative that those shutting up their houses during the winter months settle their accounts for Gas, and have the state of the Meter taken before leaving; also when an inspection of the Meter is wanted by parties leaving houses, or otherwise, due notice to be given that the Manager may have sufficient time to do so.

V.—Those leaving their houses between Terms must give notice to the Manager, otherwise they will be held liable for the Gas consumed till such notice be given; and before any person use the Gas sufficient information should be given that the Manager may inspect the Meter, as the charge will be made for whatever quantity the Meter indicates. The Manager to have access at all times to the Meter, either for inspection or for other purposes connected with the Company.

CONVENT OF MERCY BURLINGTON VILLA  
FORBES PLACE WEMYSS BAY  
RECENT ALTERATIONS & ADDITIONS NOTE OF ACCOUNTS

| CONTRACTOR ETC                   | ORIGINAL ESTIMATE | MEASUREMENT | PAID TO ACCT. (OR SETTLED) | BALANCE     | NOTES                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BRICK WORK J. Gibson & Coy       | £ 1230 - -        | £ 1111 3 8  | £ 800 - -                  | £ 311 3 8 ✓ |                                                                                                                            |
| JOINER WORK M'Cluckie & Mitchell | 1144 12 -         | 1229 7 6    | 900 - -                    | 329 7 6 ✓   |                                                                                                                            |
| SLATER WORK Moodie & McMillan    | 259 4 3           | 254 7 8     | 257 7 8                    | - - -       |                                                                                                                            |
| PLUMBER WORK Brown & Young       | 660 - -           | 977 3 -     | 694 2 6                    | 283 - - ✓   | * In addition to fragments to Account (600) deduct also £94.2.6 out of McIndoes A/c £100.13.9 already paid. Total £644.2.6 |
| PLASTER WORK Dunbar Tannock      | 603 18 2          | 603 3 2     | 550 - -                    | 53 3 2 ✓    |                                                                                                                            |
| PLINTER WORK Alex. M'Kee         | 200 - -           | 245 14 1    | 190 - -                    | 55 14 1 ✓   |                                                                                                                            |
| IAS FITTING Brown & Young        | 60 - -            | - - -       | - - -                      | - - -       | £ 91. 16 6 } included in Plumber Measmt.                                                                                   |
| HEATING Do. Do.                  | 150 - -           | - - -       | - - -                      | - - -       | 119 16 }                                                                                                                   |
| MEASURER Andrew Stewart          | 150 - -           | 146 2 8     | 75 - -                     | 71 2 8 ✓    |                                                                                                                            |
| ARCHITECT W.R. Watson            | 225 - -           | 221 - -     | 150 - -                    | 71 - - ✓    | W.R. Watson 22.V.23 F.I.S.A.                                                                                               |
|                                  | £ 4682 14 5       | £ 4788 1 9  | £ 3613 10 2                | £ 1174 11 7 |                                                                                                                            |

Add M'Cluckie's Jobbing p 103  
A/c received later £1277 11 7  
M'Cluckie & Mitchell's Jobbing A/c £102  
not £103 as entered  
Total £1276 11 7

Ivy Cottage,  
INVERKIP.

October 1, 1942.

Sister Mary Francis,  
Convent of Mercy,  
Forbes Place,  
WEMYSS BAY.

Dear Sister Mary Francis,

I have your letter of 23rd September and am very grateful indeed to know that we can rely on your help in time of need. I have reported to the District Commissioner for Civil Defence that the Convent will be used, if necessary, as an Emergency Casualty Receiving Station, and he has noted it as such.

With renewed thanks for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully,



Chairman  
Inverkip & Wemyss Bay  
Invasion Committee.

Ivy Cottage,

INVERKIP.

October 27, 1942.

Sister-in-Charge,  
Convent of Mercy,  
Forbes Place,  
WEMYSS BAY.

Dear Sister Mary Francis,

I have your letter of 23rd inst. and am writing the Telephone Manager asking him to do what he can to hasten the installation of a telephone in the Convent in view of the possibility of it being required as a Casualty Receiving Station.

It is very difficult to get a telephone. I had to wait 4 months to get one for my Wardens Post in Inverkip where one would have thought priority would have applied.

I fear that in any emergency we will have to be prepared to work with messengers as telephones are very likely to go out of action as they did during the occurrences in May 1941.

Mr. Sloan, Redholm, would arrange for transmission of any messages.

Yours faithfully,



Chairman  
Inverkip & Wemyss Bay  
Invasion Committee.

POST



OFFICE

Telephone :  
Central 8961.

SCOTLAND WEST TELEPHONE AREA.

Telephone Manager :  
H. T. W. MILLAR,  
A.M.I.E.E.

TELEPHONE MANAGER'S OFFICE,  
250 ST. VINCENT STREET,

Your ref.: GLASGOW. C.2.

P.O. ref.: 227.C.

12 November, 1942.

Dear Madam,

Referring to your application for telephone service on the 24th June last, I am pleased to inform you that in the light of further information supplied by Mr. A. S. Fyfe, this service can be provided if taken at the Business Rate.

Perhaps you will therefore kindly sign the enclosed form if this meets with your requirements, and return as soon as possible, please.

Yours faithfully,

  
Sales Superintendent.

Sister M. F. Gordon-Smith,  
Convent of Mercy,  
Forbes Place,  
WEMYSS BAY,  
Renfrewshire.

POST



OFFICE

Telephone :  
Central 8961.

SCOTLAND WEST TELEPHONE AREA.

Telephone Manager :  
H. T. W. MILLAR,  
A.M.I.E.E.

TELEPHONE MANAGER'S OFFICE,  
250 ST. VINCENT STREET,  
GLASGOW. C.2.

Your ref.:  
P.O. ref.: 227.C.

12 November, 1942.

Dear Sir,

Referring to your letter of the 27th ultimo regarding the provision of telephone service at the Convent of Mercy, Forbes Place, Wemyss Bay, I am pleased to inform you that in the light of further information supplied by you, it has been found possible to provide this service, and an agreement for signature has been forwarded to the Sister in charge.

Yours faithfully,

  
Sales Superintendent.

A.S. Fyfe, Esq.,  
Ivy Cottage,  
INVERKIP,  
Greenock,  
Renfrewshire.

POST



OFFICE

SCOTLAND WEST TELEPHONE AREA.

H. T. W. MILLAR, A.M.I.E.E.

Telephone Manager.

250 St. Vincent Street,

Tel.: Central 8961.

Glasgow, C.2.

Your Ref. ....

P.O. Ref. A/N. ....

13921

14/11/42

New or Additional Service

Dear ~~Sir~~ /Madam,

I acknowledge with thanks the receipt of the agreement signed by you on the 13TH. NOVEMBER 1942 for the provision of TELEPHONE SERVICE at CONVENT OF MERCY WEMYSS BAY and I shall be obliged if you will kindly regard this letter as a formal acceptance of your agreement on behalf of the Postmaster General.

Every endeavour will be made to carry out the work as early as possible, but you will appreciate that the war has placed a serious strain on the Post Office, and I hope you will assist by refraining as far as possible from inquiring as to the progress of the work. If, however, such inquiry is necessary it should be made either in writing to the above address or by telephone to Central 8961, Extn. 249. In either case it will be of great assistance if you would quote the reference given above.

Yours faithfully,

H. T. W. MILLAR;

Telephone Manager.

AX 7022 (DM (c) 22W)

Sales (4607) Wt. 50422/3229 500 8/42 Gp. 62 A.L.

**Jno. Shaughnessy, Quigley & McColl** Solicitors & Notaries

---

JOHN G. QUIGLEY, M.A., LL.B.  
JAMES M. FARRELL, M.A. LL.B.  
HENRY J. TAYLOR, B.L.  
BRENDAN F. MIRNER, LL.B.  
CHARLES HENNESSY, LL.B.

**Ashfield House  
402 Sauchiehall Street  
Glasgow G2 3JJ**

Telephone 041-332 8351

---

OUR REF. BM/ES

YOUR REF.

DATE 20th January 1978

Rev. Mother Imelda,  
Convent of Mercy  
62 Hill Street,  
Glasgow.

Dear Rev. Mother,

We thank you for your letter of 16th inst. and note that the Bishop of Paisley has agreed to buy the Wemyss Bay property for £20,000. We shall await the offer from his solicitors.

In the meantime would you be good enough to return the title deeds which we sent to you some weeks ago.

We note that you wish the monies held by us to be transferred to your own bank. We are presently preparing a full cash statement to date and will let you have this within the next few days. Could you advise us the name of your Bank and the Branch and account number so that we can arrange for the transfer of the money as quickly as possible.

Yours faithfully,  
Jno. Shaughnessy Quigley & McColl,

*Brendan F. Mirner*  
Partner.



## DIOCESE OF PAISLEY

Telephone: KILMACOLM 2494.

BISHOP'S HOUSE,  
PORTERFIELD ROAD,  
KILMACOLM.  
PA13 4PD

*11. December. 1994.*

*Thank you, my dear Reverend Mother, for your letter of 1<sup>st</sup> December telling me of your decision to sell your Wemyss Bay property. It was very kind of you to give the Diocese first offer and I greatly appreciate your courtesy.*

*Obviously, it would be ever so much better to house the P.P. next to the church, so I am very interested in your offer. I shall, however, have to consult the other Diocesan Trustees - and this I shall do this week. I should be able to let you have a definite word long before the 15<sup>th</sup> January.*

*Blessings on you and all the Saints on the hill -  
and with kindest regards -*

*+ Stephen McGill -*



## The Skelmorlie Story

Archbishop Eyre who invited the Sisters of Notre Dame to Glasgow in 1894, had a country house in Skelmorlie called Lincluden. He gave the Sisters the use of this house during the summer holidays. When the Archbishop died in 1902, he left Lincluden to the Sisters of Notre Dame in his will.

Hundreds of Sisters spent some part of the school holidays in Skelmorlie from that time until the end of the 1960's. When the Second Vatican Council brought great changes in Religious Life in the 1970's, Sisters could go to their families or to other places on holiday, by this time the nature of the house in Skelmorlie changed completely. Now the house has become Notre Dame Apostolic Centre and is a Retreat Centre. There are now only two sisters resident at Lincluden, they are Sr. Magdalene and Sr. Anne.



Lincluden



Sister Anne &  
Sister Magdalene

## Confirmation May 2001



## First Holy Communions



## First Holy Communions



## First Holy Communions



## Statistics Since 1971

*When St Joseph & St Patrick's became a Parish*

- The first Baptism was of Catriona Margaret McColl on 26th March 1972.
- The total number of Baptism's to date since then are 261.
- The first Marriage took place on 6th July 1972 when.
  - Hugh O'Donnell married Margaret Macaskill.
- The total number of marriages since then are 51.



John Rogers and Julie Anne McCormick came all the way from Michigan USA to be married here in our Church, where Julia's grandmother was married many years ago. Former parishioner, Teresa Usher attended the grandmothers wedding and also attended the wedding of John and Julie Anne. Teresa was able to fill the family in on the Murray family of Skelmorlie, from whom the grandmother was descended.



The Kettle is always on and there's always a warm welcome!



This was Teresa's leaving Tea November 1996, after 84 years in the parish!

## St Fillan's Chapel

Ecclesiastical history is more often than not the history of a community, and Skelmorlie is no exception, particularly from 1850. However, the existence of St Fillan's Chapel and St Fillan's Well by Blackhouse (Manor Park Hotel) opens up a new and interesting source for the earlier period.

The site of the Chapel appears to have been between the road and the burn, just east of the entrance to the driveway; the well was situated somewhere near the walled garden behind the hotel. Chapelyard Farm and the now ruined St Phillanswell Farm only perpetuate the name and not the position, and that is really all that is known.

There were in fact two St Fillan's, and both were closely connected with Perthshire. The older was a leper who worked by Loch Earn; the other, and better known one was the son of St. Kentigern and Feredach of Munster. He became an Abbot near St. Andrew's, but retired and founded a church at Glendochart. He died in 777 at Strathfillan and is the more likely to have connections with Skelmorlie. Several churches in Renfrewshire, Ayrshire and Galloway were dedicated to him, notably at Kilallan or Kilillan near Houston, which claims evidence of his presence there. Whether St. Fillan was here at all, or whether a monk founded a chapel in his honour may never be known.

Boyd states that like so many other Scottish Churches it was sacked during the Reformation, but in the record of Paisley Abbey's possessions at the take-over in 1561, there is no mention of St Fillan's Chapel at Skelmorlie. Whether it was sacked or had already fallen into disuse is mere guesswork. There is no doubt that it existed, and it may well have been of considerable importance in the district somewhere between, say 750 and 1500A.D., probably before churches were established in Largs and Inverkip. Snoddy suggests that the common local name of 'Annet' is derived from the old Celtic word for 'Mother Church', implying a connection with the chapel. If so it would put in the earlier period and indicate a significant population in the 9th to 11th century period.

The evidence seems to support the theory that it was an early Celtic Church existing before the arrival of the Cluniac Monks, and the foundation of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1910, J.M. MacKinlay produced a work entitled *Ancient Church Dedications in Scotland*. He has much to say about St Fillan but merely mentions a chapel dedicated to him, 'and near it a spring bearing his name' at Blackhouse.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mr Tony Kearney, Scottish Catholic Observer

Staff Watt Library, Greenock

Sisters of Mercy, Glasgow

Sisters of Notre Dame, Skelmorlie

Very Rev. Bernard Canon Canning

Mr John Wilson for photography

Ms Wilma Davidson

Parishioners, present and former for photographs and information.

Centenary Committee

Mrs Jean Anne Mitchell for production of Centenary Booklet

Mr Michael Downie of Dittoprint for Printing

