

*Galloway News March 25<sup>th</sup> 1933*

## **HISTORIC CHURCH CEREMONY AT CARSPHAIRN**

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### **Restoration of Worship and Dedication of Chancel**

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Impressive Service Conducted by Moderator of General Assembly

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Auspicious Opening of New Era

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Carsphairn is richly endowed when Spring casts her spell over the majestic hills and sweeping valley which beautify its romantic setting, and it can be seen in many arresting moods. There was special occasion in the delightful sunshine of Wednesday afternoon for visitors from many parts to find inspiration in the charm of its surroundings and the warm hospitality and spiritual diligence of its people, when the historic event of re-opening and re-dedicating the beautiful little, sanctuary, reconstructed and modernised, was honoured by the presence of the Moderator of the General Assembly, the Right Rev. Professor Hugh R. Mackintosh, D.D.

The impressive service, consecrating the restoration of worship, was also taken part in by the Rev. W. R. Henderson, Auchencairn, Moderator of the Synod of Dumfries; the Rev. A. H. Christie, Rerrick, Moderator of the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright; and the Rev. W. R. Sievewright, minister of the parish. There was a very large congregation, taxing the accommodation to the utmost capacity.

The scheme of reconstruction which has so pleasingly transformed the old building, originally a "barn", and the spirit of harmony and unity that has been fostered in the congregation since the union was carried through some time ago, bear striking testimony to the highly fruitful and successful ministry of the Rev. Mr Sievewright, who assumed the charge eight years ago, and warm tributes were paid to his achievements.

Interest was added to the proceedings by the unveiling and dedicating of memorial tablets, gifted by the Rev. George F. A. MacNaughton, minister of the parish from 1890 to 1925. These were to the Rev. John Semple, first minister of the parish (1646-1677); Mr John Loudon McAdam, of roadmaking fame, who lived in the district; and Mrs MacNaughton, wife of the former minister.

Following the Church ceremony the large company were entertained in the Lagwyne Hall by the Woman's Guild, when opportunity was taken to congratulate the minister and congregation on the consummation of their labour.

## **The Reconstruction Scheme**

A very striking and pleasing change has been effected under the reconstruction scheme. Prior to operations the roof and ceiling were in a dangerous condition, the interior of the church damp, dingy and badly ventilated. A gallery which had not been used for many years encumbered one end of the church and generally the building was ripe for repair.

The centre portion of the ceiling has been cut out and raised from 14 to 20 feet, the cut sides being supported with steel beams carried on cast iron pillars dividing the church longitudinally into three bays. These operations have resulted in a permanent repair and strengthening of the roof. The old windows have been built up, and new windows filled in with stone tracery have been put into the side walls.

At the west end, the old porch and gallery staircase has been replaced with a new and extended entrance porch and provision made for housing the heating boiler. At the east end, a new chancel and vestry have been built, beyond a fine chancel arch formed in the old gable of the church within which are three steps of stone up to the chancel. The chancel roof is arched, the lower part of the walls panelled in oak and the floor laid with terra cotta tiles. The walls of the church, vestry and porch are wood lined about 4 feet high and plastered above. The ceiling is panelled in plaster work.

The old enclosed communion table has been retained down the centre of the church and new seats of pine stained and varnished are ranged down both sides of the walls. A fine carved oak pulpit is placed at the side of the chancel arch and an organ and choir seats have been installed at the opposite side of the arch.

Inlet ventilation is provided through gratings and ducts through the walls at the window sills and outlet ventilation through the roof by a concealed ventilator.

A feature of the interior of the church is the scheme of decoration, which is extremely pleasing and affective. The church arch is painted and lined to represent stone work, the wood of seats &c. is dark stained, the walls are yellow and green and the ceiling cream and green in panels.

Handsome gifts from anonymous donors include the Communion Table, Lectern, Chancel Chairs and Praise Boards. The old harmonium has been replaced by a miniature pipe organ.

The architect was Mr J. M. Bowie of Messrs Barbour and Bowie, Dumfries, and the contractors were Messrs J. Gibson, Dalmellington (joiner work); J. Hislop, Dalmellington (builder); J. Kerr, Maybole (plaster work); J. Dickson, Dalry (painter work).