



STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

ST COLMON CHURCH
COLMONELL



Three light window at the west end of the church by Louis Davis, 1909-10. The Sacraments, Praise with the Ascent of the Blessed to Heaven, Accompanied by Banners of Music and All the Works of the Lord. Donated by Robert Finnie McEwen of Bardrochat.

The church contains outstanding Arts and Crafts stained glass, by both Louis Davis and Douglas Strachan. The glory of the church is the three light window in the west wall, The Benedicite, by Louis Davis, considered the last of the Pre-Raphaelites. Its theme is Praise, and shows all the works of the Lord.

The window was exhibited at Leighton House in London to great acclaim, before its installation at Colmonell in 1910. The architect Robert Lorimer, who designed many elements of the church's interior — including the pulpit, linenfold panels and the fine organ case — suggested that the window was possibly “the finest example of stained glass, ancient or modern, that had ever been produced”.

The design, glorious in its use of “Davis blue”, has a great sense of poetry and energy in the ascending figures, with spiralling banners of music increasing the sense of movement.

The central light: At the top are the gates of heaven, towards which, men, women, children, kings, apostles, martyrs, and saints, are pressing forward in a great procession. The four ascending figures are St



Stephen with his stone, St Cecilia, a small organ in her arms, St Hubert holding the couples for his hounds, and St Andrew the Apostle with cross on girdle.

Below them ride the Crusaders, led by St Louis King of France. The standard above his head displays the Rood “in a glory”, the sign of one greater than the King. Following St Louis is Robert Bruce, Earl of Carrick. Last of all come the children bearing palms, like the children who acclaimed Christ on his entry into Jerusalem.



The left and right-hand lights of the triptych form a counterpoint to each other.

In the left hand light the same elements that are seen on the right are shown, but in their spiritual significance - the Sacraments being represented by angels. At the top shines the Paschal candle. Then “the rushing mighty wind” and the “cloven tongues of fire” which correspond to the tempests and storms. Below, an angel holds a chalice, representing the bread and wine of Communion, corresponding to the wheat and grapes opposite. Lastly, an angel stands at a font, representing Baptism.



Detail of the lower panel, left-hand light.

The main part of the right hand window represents the homage paid to the Creator by all His works, “Benedicite Omnia Opera” (O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord, praise Him and magnify Him forever”).

At the top are the sun, the moon, the stars and comets. Further down are winds and storms, rain and snow followed by the birds of the air. Still lower, a figure bearing “the kindly fruits of the earth”, is set in a landscape, lovely as it is familiar – Craigneil, Knockdolian, and the hanging woods and fair holms of the Stinchar valley.

At the bottom, and representing water, stands the figure of a girl with an ark in her arms, surrounded by “a pure river...clear as crystal”. So are portrayed the natural elements of the universe - fire, air, earth, and water.

The Benedicite is based on the words of Psalm 148.



Detail of the right-hand light.





Detail of lower panel, right hand light of the three lancet window.
Louis Davis.

The lower panel of the right-hand light of the three lancet window depicts the shepherd of Auchencleary, near Bardrochat — John Young, drawn from life. Also two boys singing, the sons of the donor, and St Ninian. The shepherd's dog, "Masha", is unusual in that dogs are seldom depicted in stained glass.



Detail, right hand light of the three lancet window.



Among the earliest windows by Louis Davis at Colmonell are the two small slab glass windows in the front porch.



The Nativity window. This was the first of the large Louis Davis windows to be erected in the church.

Joseph, with Mary holding the infant Jesus, two angels kneeling in adoration. The dove of the Holy Spirit sitting on the stable roof with two cherubim. Above, two angels holding the star which shines down on the scene below.

“Gloria in Excelsis Deo et Terra Pax”.

Lower panel: a water feature - “Fons Vitae” - the Water of Life.

In memory of William McConnel and his wife Margaret, it was completed in 1902.



North wall, furthest west.

War Memorial Window
by Louis Davis.
Showing a young
warrior receiving the crown of life.

Memorial to family and friends of the McConnells of Knockdolian who lost their lives in World War 1. Allegorical depictions of Flanders poppies, rivers of blood, battlefield, and the crown of life.

“Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of Life”.

Inscribed below: A list of names — In memory of our kindred and guests whose lives were accepted in the Great War. 1920.



Photograph of Thomas Cowell at Messrs James Powell & Sons workshops, painting the war memorial window for Colmonell church. 1919. Courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum.



South wall, second from west.

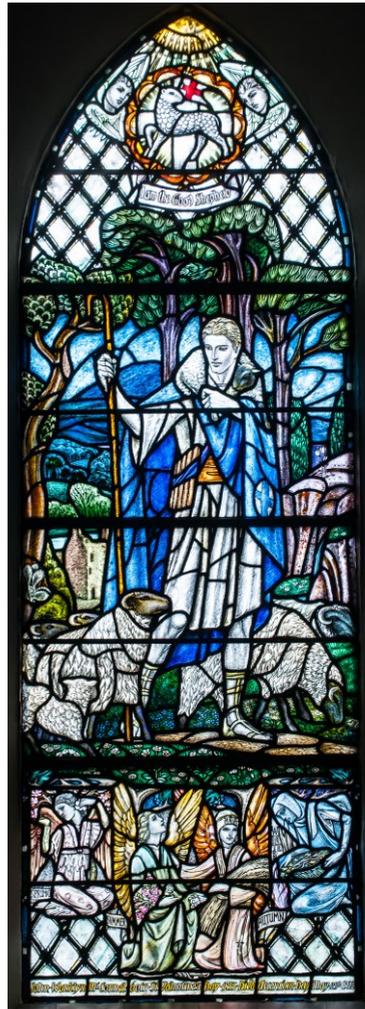
The Good Shepherd by Douglas Strachan 1925. The shepherd, without halo, carrying a lamb across his shoulders. In the background can be seen the River Stinchar, Knockdolian Castle, and Knockdolian Hill.

Lower panel: Four angels representing the four seasons.

Douglas Strachan (1875-1950) is considered the most significant Scottish designer of stained glass windows of the 20th century. His largest commission was to design the windows for the Scottish National War Memorial in Edinburgh Castle (in the late 1920's).

This window is typical of Strachan, whose figures of Jesus and of the apostles were rarely shown with haloes or beatific faces.

St Colmon is fortunate to have this excellent example of his work — which some consider the finest window in the church.



North wall, second from west.



Autumn.

In memory of John Wanklyn McConnell of Knockdolian. Born on St Valentine's Day 1855, died Ascension Day 1922



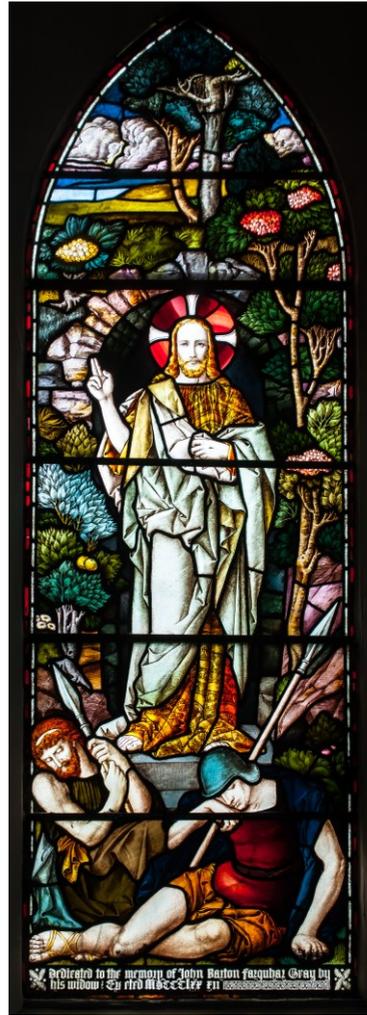
South wall, second window.

Lazarus - the promise.

Resurrection scene. Martha kneeling before Christ. "Thy brother shall rise again".

In memory of Francis Henry Colvin, who died 17th June 1895. Dedicated by his sister.

Studio: Ballantine and Gardiner.



South wall, furthest west.

The Resurrection.

Christ standing, the sepulchre behind him and the two guards lying "as dead men" at his feet.

In memory of John Barton Farquhar Gray. Erected by his widow.

S t Colmonella.

The saint dressed in a monk's habit, standing in a rural setting depicting local scenes, including an angler fishing on the Stinchar. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help". In memory of James and Beatrice Mitchell, of Dalreoch and Craig. Also her brother Col. Kenneth Fleming.

James Humphries Hogan, Studio of James Powell and Sons, makers of glass since the 17th century. Stained glass production commenced in 1844. Their glassworks were situated in the Whitefriars district of London, so their windows were signed with a small monk.



Detail of the white friar in the window's lower right hand corner.



Detail from the Resurrection Window.



South wall, furthest east.

Lower panel: heraldic crest "Favente Deo Supero" (I overcome by the Grace of God).



North wall, furthest east.

In memory of Maj. Gen. Douglas Fitzgerald McConnell OBE, DFO 1893-1961 and his wife, Ruth Garnet Botfield 1897-1980. Donated by their daughter Diana, Duchess of Wellington. Designed by her daughter in law the Marchioness of Douro. Knockdolian 1993.

Studio Maria McClafferty.

The tree of Life.

Inspired by the poem “Dream of the Rood”, depicting a tree in the shape of a cross, a thorn entwined about its trunk, and a red rose, a symbol of martyrdom at the crossing. Details of the poem’s symbolism and scenes of the Stinchar valley feature in the design, including Knockdolian Hill, and also, in the background, Ailsa Craig.

The church is fortunate to have three examples of fine modern glass—The Tree of Life window, and the two Millennium windows in the Organ Gallery.

Millennium Windows. The heads of both windows are by Louis Davis, in plain uncoloured glass - his first commission within the church. Left hand - Praise depicted as incense rising. “Omnis spiritus etc.” (Let every spirit praise the Lord). Right hand - Grace depicted as falling rose petals.

The new Millennium images were installed over the clear glass in the lower section of the windows.



The Millennium Windows have three main themes: to reflect the origins of Christianity and the early church in south west Scotland, to show the significance of Celtic culture and traditions within the local environment and community, and to create an impression of the Christian spirit in our lives.

Layered above the earlier diamond paned windows, the Celtic crosses symbolise the early saints. Images of the local landscape depict the four seasons, with the analogy of

wheat also used as a symbol of the sacrament of Communion. The third layer illustrates the Wind of the Spirit through our lives, the spirit flowing upwards, constant through past and present, with hope and inspiration into the future.

Inscribed at the top of each panel with their year of induction, are the names of all the ministers who have served at Colmonell Church from 1434 to the year 2000.

Presented by Robert and Sarah Drummond of Straid 2001. Studio Catriona McKinnon, Glasgow.

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RTS AND CRAFTS STAINED GLASS.

Stained glass had been revived in the Victorian period but had fairly soon fallen into commercialism, the use of formulaic designs, and copying.

Inspired by John Ruskin and William Morris, a great change came about at the end of the nineteenth century with the Arts and Crafts Movement, which reinvented stained glass as a modern, expressive art form. Churches and patrons commissioned artists to undertake new works, who, as well as designing, were involved in the whole craft of making the window. They brought a new awareness of colour, using new types of glass, such as thick slab glass - textured, and with very dense rich colours which had never been used before. The unevenness of slab glass allows light to enter the building in a 'burst' rather than a 'stream'.

This new approach was pioneered by Christopher Whall (1849-1924). His charismatic teaching educated a generation of talented pupils who produced intensely colourful and

inventive stained glass, using dramatic, lyrical, and often powerfully moving design and symbolism. Dispensing with complicated ornament they concentrated instead on naturalistic figure drawing, rich and pure colours, and bold leading patterns. An important aspect was that any window, coloured or otherwise, should admit light.

Foremost among this new generation were Louis Davis and Douglas Strachan.



Detail of the lower panel of The Good Shepherd window. Douglas Strachan.

Louis Davis 1860-1941
Born in Abingdon, Oxfordshire, Davis first became known as a talented watercolourist. Later, as a pupil and friend of Whall, he rose to prominence as a distinguished glass artist. When referring to the splendidly translucent, glowing colours of his work, the author Nickolaus Pevsner identified him as "the last of the Pre-



Detail of the right-hand light of the three light window. Louis Davis.

Raphaelites” — he knew Burne Jones, Morris, Rosetti and others.

Davis is renowned for his six great choir windows in Dunblane Cathedral, as well as in churches throughout Britain.

In 1915 he suffered the symptoms of a stroke, after he & his wife had been overcome by fumes from a gas fire at their home. His individual production of fresh work slowed, and Thomas Cowell, principal glass painter for James Powell & Sons, came to play a significant role in translating Davis’s designs into stained glass.

Douglas Strachan
1875-1950

Born in Aberdeen and schooled at Robert Gordon’s, Strachan (pronounced Strawn) studied art at Gray’s School of Art. Having spent time apprenticed to a lithographer, he then studied at the Life School of the Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh in 1894-5.

After working in England Strachan returned to Aberdeen as a mural and portrait painter, eventually receiving commissions for stained glass.



By the 1920’s Strachan had gained an international reputation for his four huge windows of 1911-13 at the Peace Palace in The Hague. Other major projects undertaken were at St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh, Paisley Abbey, and the Memorial Chapel, University of Glasgow.

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Detail, Good Shepherd window. Douglas Strachan

St Colmon Church, Colmonell, South Ayrshire.

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