

## A GUIDE TO DENHOLM CHURCH

### A Short History

Denholm Church was built as a Free Church at the time of the Disruption of the Church from the State, when approximately one third of the Established Church in Scotland broke away to form the Free Church. It is difficult today to comprehend "the depth of feeling, sacrifice and strong determination" of Church people at that time, when the root problem - the question of patronage and State interference in the Church - became such a bitter issue.

After the formation of an Association in the Autumn of 1843, the people of Denholm decided to build their own Church. This was accomplished by the givings of the Village people when a Building Fund was instituted. Some of the stones used were collected by the Village women from the river, and the rough dressed stonework can be seen in a section of the North wall, near the entrance to the Church Hall.

The Church was opened on 13th June 1845 and the First Communion was observed on 13th July of that year. The presiding minister was Rev. A. H. Cowan, who had been ordained in 1844.

The Free Church and other seceding bodies became the United Free Church in 1900. Denholm Church remained thus until 1929, when unification of the Established Church and the United Free Church took place, then becoming the Church of Scotland.

In 1963 Bedrule Church was linked with Denholm and a further linkage of Minto Church took place in 1975. The Linked Charge is now known as **BEDRULE** with **DENHOLM** with **MINTO**, under the Presbytery of Jedburgh.

The original Manse was built between 1848 and 1849 at a cost of £451:12s.5d. Standing at the entrance to the village from Hawick, it is now a private house. The present Manse, acquired in 1975, is on the left of Leyden's Cottage, the last remaining thatched house in the village.

### The Gallery

There is a note in the Deacon's Court minutes from the period 1846-47 that the Gallery of the Church was used as a school. Old accounts show charges submitted to the Treasurer in respect of alterations and the provision of desks and forms made by two of the local joiners. These accounts were dated late 1845 and 1846.

A teacher was engaged by the Minister and was responsible to him. Records indicate that the teacher's salary came from three sources: the parents of the pupils, an evening collection and a grant from the Committee of the Free Church Council on Education. In 1851 a teacher resigned and it was suggested that the annual salary of £19.10s. was inadequate.

At the same time considerable damage was being caused to the Church, so it was agreed that the school be discontinued. It was possible for the children to continue their education at the Parish School, which was at the time situated approximately where the Leyden Monument now stands on the Village Green. New seating and refurbishment of the Gallery was completed in 1901.

### The Interior

At the end of the last century, Mr Alexander Furness, an architect and Elder of the Church, was instrumental in the redesigning of the interior. The Pulpit was widened across the East end and the Choir Stalls were railed off, as in the photograph of the time which can be seen on the South wall near the Pulpit.

The arched alcoves were windows of coloured glass until that time.

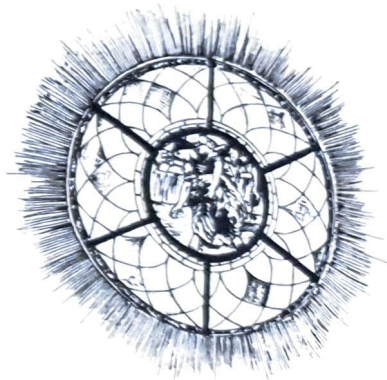
New windows were fitted to the Church in 1948-49. The removal of the old pews, the reorganisation of the chancel area and the complete removal and replacement of the floor was carried out in 1956-57 following the discovery of dry rot.

New pews were obtained from St Andrew's Church, Edinburgh, and a new Pulpit from the Gaelic Church, Inveraray, both Churches having been closed. Services were held in the Public Hall for the duration of the alterations.

An electric Tubular Heating system was installed in both Church and Hall in July 1963.

In 1979, on the advice of the Church of Scotland's Artistic Matters Advisory Committee, it was agreed to fit oak panelling round the organ to match up with a new Communion Table, which had been acquired from the Bow Church in Fife. The existing Pulpit, was moved two feet towards the South wall.

In addition the front pew was removed to increase the size of the Chancel Area, which was fitted with a new carpet. At the same time the whole of the interior was redecorated in Autumn colours.



The Circular Stained Glass Window, depicting Ruth of the Old Testament

## Special Features

Around the Church Interior are a number of individual features:

On the West wall a **MEMORIAL PLAQUE** commemorating 40 years of service to Denholm Church by Rev. James McClymont - the Church's longest serving Minister, whose youngest son Rev. A. W. McClymont conducted a Centenary Service in April 1944.

A **MEMORIAL WINDOW** in the North Wall to Rev. John Smith whose ministry extended for 36 years until his death in 1928.

The **CIRCULAR STAINED GLASS WINDOW** depicting Ruth of the Old Testament, gifted by a former Minister, Rev. J. W. Ross in memory of his wife whose name was Ruth.

The **BAPTISMAL FONT** gifted by Mr and Mrs J. B. Scott of now Denholm Lodge, in memory of their only son Peter Brydon Scott, Lieutenant R.A., who lost his life while serving with the Gurkha Rifles in Burma in the Second World War.

The **LECTERN** gifted by the family of Rev. John Smith in memory of their mother Agnes Hume. At the dedication service, the lessons were read by their son Rev. Dr Neil Smith of Crossford.

The Service of **INDIVIDUAL COMMUNION CUPS** was gifted by Mr John Wood of Galashiels in memory of his two sons.

In recent years the Church has received many gifts from the Woman's Guild, the Sunday School and individual members.

Among the items received are the **PULPIT FALL** and **READING LAMP, PEW CUSHIONS** and **COVERS**, the **LECTERN BIBLE, HYMN BOOKS**, and the **SOUND ENHANCEMENT SYSTEM**. The very fine **COMMUNION TABLE CLOTH** was crocheted by Mrs I. Armstrong, Ashloaning.

## The Organ

Music has always played a prominent part in Church worship, perhaps more adventurously in the old U.F. Church than in the Established Church. Following in this tradition, here in Denholm from the days of the Precentor, through Harmonium, and Organ installed in 1899, an Electric Organ (1963), to the present Pipe Organ, the singing in the Church has been a noteworthy feature. It has always been possible to sustain a choir to lead the praise and on occasion to contribute an anthem or two.

The present Organ, dedicated in 1977, was built by Mr B.A. Wilson of Lanton (ex-Headmaster of Drumlanrig School, Hawick). The instrument took one year to install. Incorporating parts of a former pipe organ from the Baptist Church in Hawick, it has about two miles of wiring in its circuitry. Several members of the congregation assisted in the construction. The organ was first played at a morning service by Mrs Dodd, wife of the late Rev. Harry Dodd who was then Interim Moderator of Denholm Church.

## The Hall and Exterior

The Pitt Memorial Hall at the Rear of the Church was erected in 1892 in memory of Rev. Thomas Pitt, who died that year in the service of the Church here in Denholm.

In 1951 the length of the Hall was reduced to provide room for a kitchen alongside the washroom and toilet which had been installed in 1927.

In 1936 a fence and gate were removed from the front of the Church and a new Oak Door was set into a porch so that it opened outwards without encroaching on the building line.

**WE HOPE you have enjoyed your visit to DENHOLM CHURCH.**

# Denholm Parish Church



*A Short History & Guide*