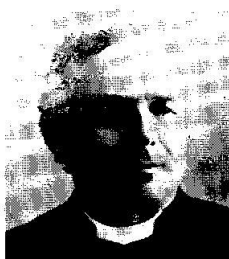


THE MINISTERS OF MANNOFIELD

In its hundred years, Mannofield has had only seven ministers, each of them making his own contribution to the story of its development.



Rev. William Forbes — the first minister was a son of the North-east, born in Macduff in 1841. His university training was done in the newly created University of Aberdeen and he graduated M.A. in 1863. He then went south to London where he taught in school before returning to Aberdeen in 1868 to be licensed by the Presbytery of Aberdeen. After a time as assistant in the West Parish Church of Aberdeen, he became missionary at the recently established Chapel of Ease at Craigiebuckler. He was accorded ministerial status there in 1877 and remained until 1881 when he came to Mannofield. There he remained for the rest of his active ministry until he resigned in 1906.

In the pamphlet which celebrated the 50th anniversary of the church, the author remarked on how highly thought of the bachelor minister had been, remarking that "many still remember him and he was greatly respected". Now fifty years later, one of the few who still can remember him is that stalwart member of the congregation, Miss Nellie Crighton, who was actually christened by Mr. Forbes and who remembers acting as a carrier of books for her father from the minister.

Mr. Forbes left Aberdeen and died in Cathcart in December 1921.



Rev. William Phin Gillieson — When Mr. Forbes retired after a ministry of a quarter of a century in the area, he was succeeded by quite a different gentleman, William Phin Gillieson, a young bachelor and son of the manse from Olgie in Caithness. A graduate in Arts and Divinity of Edinburgh, he had already displayed his great energy and commitment there while he was an assistant at St. Giles. His special interest there had been in youth work.

In his short ministry at Mannofield, Phin Gillieson continued to show his great enthusiasm and energy and this, combined with the growing population in the area, led to a great surge of interest in the church. Almost all the seats in the church were now let and this was the main index of an active and vigorous district church. The membership increased by 200 within a year and a half. The church itself was extended by the addition of the large hall. There had been a tiny hall before, but now the path lay open for the considerable development of church activities. Many of the organisations associated with Mannofield originated at this time: Boys' Brigade, Woman's Guild, Girls' Guildry, Sunday School and Bible Class.

After only three years, Mr. Phin Gillieson left Aberdeen to take over the second charge in Ayr. He served as a chaplain in H.M. Forces from 1915 to 1918 and was awarded the Military Cross. He remained at Ayr for the rest of his life, being translated to the first charge in 1926. His death occurred in 1942.



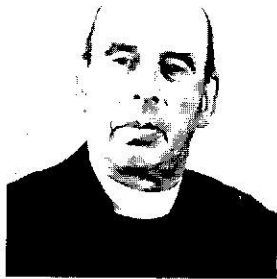
Rev. W. Walker Reid — For its next minister, Mannofield called another bachelor from the North. A graduate of both Aberdeen and Edinburgh, Mr. Reid remained for only five years. While in Aberdeen he interested himself in education and was a member of the Aberdeen School Board. Mr. Reid left Aberdeen in 1915 for the first charge at Dumbarton and he remained there until his death in 1946.

Mr. Reid was, of course, minister during the early stages of the Great War, at a time when society was changing more rapidly than for a long time. Miss Crighton's memory of him is of him being startled by the high jinks and swirling skirts of the young ladies of the Bible Class at their annual party.



Rev. John Aulay Steele — To succeed Mr. Reid the church turned to a man of quite different type in John Aulay Steele. Born in Dunbartonshire at Renton, he had been brought up in India where he became a graduate of Bombay, before he returned to add an Arts degree from Glasgow to his qualifications. Licensed by Glasgow Presbytery, he served for a year at Keith before setting off on his travels again, to Buenos Aires for four years. Then he came back to the north in 1915. He remained 11 years at Mannofield, an easy-going incumbent, contributing articles to various religious periodicals. In his time, the small hall was enlarged and improved.

But again Mr. Aulay Steele was off on his travels, first to St. Vincent's in Glasgow and subsequently to St. Columba's, Lerwick in 1934 and to Cleish in Angus in 1945. He retired from Cleish in 1957 and died in 1964



Rev. James F. Kellas — Mr. Aulay Steele was succeeded by yet another young bachelor in Rev. James F. Kellas, who remained as minister for 33 years. A son of the manse from Strichen, he studied in Aberdeen and New York. After short spells as assistant at St. Bernard's, Edinburgh and then in his first charge at Forteviot in 1925, he came to Mannofield in 1926.

The church was still then just on the very edge of the city, just within the parliamentary boundary. Its communications with the city were much easier through the Corporation and Suburban Tramways which used the same route down Great Western Road, but with the latter having its lines continued out to Bieldside. Buses were beginning to explore the areas the tramways left untouched.

But Mr. Kellas came to a parish which was still almost a rural area, outside Great Western Road and the housing on its south side like Hammerfield and Duthie Terrace. Names like Braeside, Beech-hill and Airyhall were still only names of isolated houses and no more, when Mr. Kellas came.

It was during his stay that the great expansion of housing began which reached a climax in the period after the Second World War. The parish and its neighbourhood were transformed into a more populous area than Mr. Gordon or Mr. Couper could ever have imagined in their wildest dreams. Mannofield and the neighbouring Craigiebuckler thus became urban churches with large congregations whose needs made demands on all the facilities available.

Mr. Kellas brought great vigour and enterprise to the church. His preaching, his interest in music, his willingness to involve the church in the discussing of the controversies of the time, all contributed to making Mannofield a great attraction, not only to the people within the parish, but also to people from all over the town who would journey to the church to hear the local choirs like that of Hall Russell's, and similar such events. Yet a reading of the church records suggests that this was a period of restraint with no extension of existing facilities. Perhaps this is not so surprising when one remembers the economic background of depression which generally existed through the thirties up to the period of the Second World War.

Having survived the various hazards and restrictions of the war, the church found itself faced with the new burst of housing expansion on the western outskirts of Aberdeen, to cope with the post-war demand for new houses. This posed new problems and the church was, as has happened before, almost swamped with the challenges of the new situation. In the austerities of the period, no immediate expansion was possible but as the fifties came to an end and with projects for improving the existing facilities of the church very much in the air, Mr. Kellas decided to move to Durriss in 1959.

There he remained until he retired from the ministry to return to live in the parish he had served as minister for so long. He died in 1977 as a much revered and respected member of his former congregation, remembered with affection still by his many friends in the district.



Rev. James F. Falconer — After the usual period of a "vacancy", the call was given to the Reverend Mr. James F. Falconer, who came originally from the Wishaw area. After his early education at Dalziel High School, like most of his generation, he was caught up in the hostilities of the 2nd World War. From 1940 to 1947, he served in the R.A.F. as a navigator. In the later stages of the war he had the misfortune to be shot down near Paris, suffering serious injuries before being taken prisoner by the Germans.

After being released from captivity and completing his spell of service, Mr. Falconer proceeded to Glasgow University and Trinity College where he trained

for the ministry. His first post was as Assistant in Cambuslang Old from 1949 to 1952, and then he took up his first independent charge at Saltcoats South Beach where he stayed until 1959, when he came north to replace Mr. Kellas.

During his stay at Mannofield, one of his closest associates was Mr. R. M. Bruce who served as Session Clerk. Mr. Bruce remembers the period as one of great change and development and he emphasises how many of the schemes were initiated by Mr. Falconer.

One of the main changes, and perhaps the fundamental one, involved the Kirk Session. It is now clear that Mannofield had relied on a very small and very loyal band of office-bearers for years to keep it going and Mr. Falconer's first task was to increase the size of the Session to give a much broader base on which to work.

Much needed restoration and extension of the fabric of the church was now carried out, especially in the area of the halls. A new vestry was built and the old kitchen and toilet accommodation were replaced. Fired by Mr. Falconer's infectious enthusiasm, other undertakings were begun and the whole interior lay-out of the church itself, involving the re-siting of the organ, was completed in 1969. The purchase of the present manse in Forest Avenue was effected in 1970.

However, lest it be thought that material concerns absorbed all Mr. Falconer's attention, many will remember with gratitude his devoted ministering to the sick in his hospital visiting. Thorngrove Home was taken under the wing of the church, and monthly services there were firmly established. The long links with Holburn West were maintained and strengthened between Mr. Grant and Mr. Falconer. To foster the growth of community feeling within the congregation, the monthly magazine became a regular means of communication and information among its members.

Mr. Bruce remembers Mr. Falconer as a quiet, sensitive and almost shy man, on whom the burdens of pain, suffering and death, which are the lot of the parish minister, weighed heavily because of his own nature and experiences.

Ill-health dogged him during his last few years at Mannofield, but he bore his lot so patiently that few realised how much he suffered. With the load of parish and congregational responsibility becoming still heavier, Mr. Falconer decided to leave his Mannofield charge and move to the smaller rural parish of Bedrule and Denholm in the Borders.

To the great regret of his many friends at Mannofield, Mr. Falconer was forced to retire from active ministry shortly after his move south and he returned north to live in retirement at Rothes, still remembered with affection and gratitude for his great contribution to our development as a parish, and also for his many kindnesses, at a more personal level, to members of the congregation.



Rev. John F. Anderson — The present minister is a Glasgow man, educated at Rutherglen Academy and Glasgow University from which he graduated M.A. in 1962 and B.D. in 1965. Licensed by Glasgow Presbytery in the Cathedral of that city, Mr. Anderson served first as an assistant in Stonelaw Church, Rutherglen for two years before taking up his first independent charge at St. Andrew's Church, Bo'ness in 1966. When he took up this charge he was the youngest parish minister in Scotland.

Since coming to Aberdeen he has deeply interested himself in all aspects of parish life. Very close to his heart is the welfare of the Boys' Brigade and Life Boys, or Junior Brigade as they are now known, and in this he continues a family commitment which stretches back for two generations. But no organisation appeals

in vain for his help and advice, and young and old enjoy his keen interest in them as individuals and in their varied organisations.

It is in no small measure due to Mr. Anderson's energy and enthusiasm that the church is in its present healthy state, sound financially, and actively committed to many enterprises.

Under his inspiration and leadership, the church can look forward with confidence to its start on another century of Parish development.

SESSION CLERKS

1882 - 1901 William Gordon	1941 - 1948 George W. L. Parkinson	1958 - 1964 George S. Brebner
1901 - 1902 Alex. K. Darg	1948 - 1954 B. D. Burnett	1965 - 1976 Robert M. Bruce
1902 - 1938 William McHattie	1954 - 1956 Robert Taylor	1976 - J. Nicol Geddes
1938 - 1941 Andrew A. Lumsden	1956 - 1958 John J. Cassie	