

THE EAST TAIERI CHURCH

Stained Glass

Commemorating the founding of the Parish in 1854



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Stained glass windows

The present century has seen the installation of a dozen stained glass windows in East Taieri Church. These commemorate the pioneers, fallen servicemen of both wars, and some ministers and lay people. All but one of the windows, are the work of John Brock, a mastercraftsman, who came to Dunedin from England in 1914. Before his death in 1973, he had designed more than 300 windows throughout N.Z. The most recent window in East Taieri Church, in memory of the Rev. Jack Mathews, is in a more modern style, executed by Paul Hutchins, from a design by Beverley Shore Bennett.

Stained-glass windows in churches in Europe date back almost 1000 years. Some of the finest belong to the 13th and 14th centuries. There have been changes in modes of execution and in structure as well as in their function and symbolism. In earlier times their religious significance was predominant but this function was later accompanied by an increasing accent on embellishment and decoration. In the East Taieri windows we see both these emphases at work. On the one hand Bible scenes and truths are portrayed in colourful pictorial form, manifestations of God through art; on the other hand, there is an undoubted adornment and beautification of the place of worship through the skilled use of colour in the windows, specially apparent when there is a background of sunlight outside. All this offers a striking and enriching contrast to the stark somewhat barren interiors of many Otago churches of the pioneering era. The East Taieri windows have also a special and obvious historical significance through their commemoration of varying groups and individuals who are an important part of the parish's history. The "pioneers" window is probably the best example.

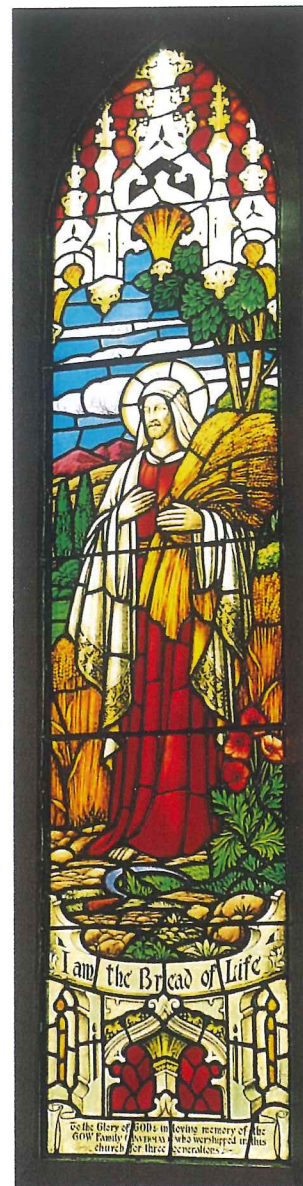
The "stained glass" of East Taieri church, dedicated to the Glory of God, is truly a great artistic, religious, and historical treasure which ministers and officebearers hold in trust for future generations.

The Stained glass windows commemorate

Anti-clockwise from inside doors

- Plate 1. The Gow family of Invermay - Worshippers for 3 generations
- Plate 2. Rev. J.C. Mathews - Minister 1953 - 1976
- Plate 3. William & Margaret Shand and their son James, of "Keith Hall"
- Plate 4. The Soldiers of East Taieri who died in the War 1914-1918. 14 names
- Plate 5. Rev. W.W. Brown - Minister 1919-1920
- Plate 6. Rev. A.W. Kinmont - Minister 1903-1918
- Plate 7. David Lyall Christie 1893-1916; and William Lindsay Christie 1870-1913 - Officebearers
- Plate 8. William Kirkland Snr. - Officebearer 1870-1919
- Plate 9. Very Rev. Professor John Collie - Esteemed friend of the congregation, 1931-1947
- Plate 10. The Servicemen of East Taieri who died in the war 1939-1945. 7 names
- Plate 11. The Pioneers
- Plate 12. William Cuthbert Todd - Officebearer for 52 years, and his wife Helen

Plate 1



I am the bread of life

Plate 2



*For unto us a child is born,
unto us a son is given*

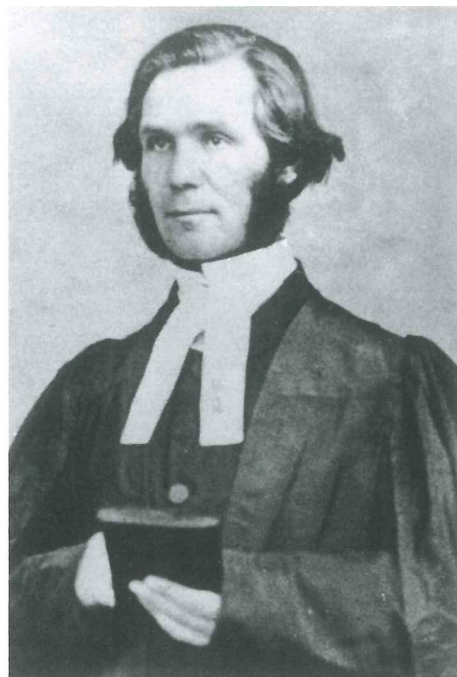
Plate 3



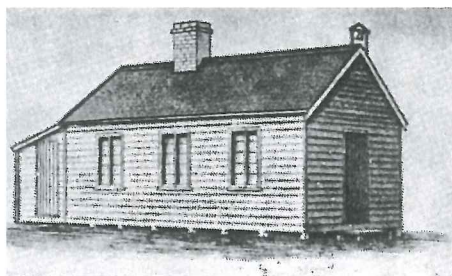
*The sower sows the
word*



Only be faithful till death, and I will give you a crown of life.



*Rev. William Will
Minister 1854-1899*



*Original School and Church
Erected 1853*

THE EAST TAIERI PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Scottish background

From the beginning of the 19th century, increasing population, harsh living and working conditions, unemployment and social inequalities, all combined to boost a rising tide of emigration from Scotland to new lands of opportunity opening up overseas. The new warmly evangelical and highly motivated Free Church of Scotland, conscious of the hardships suffered by many of its people, gave early support in 1843 to the idea of a Scottish colony in New Zealand, organized on enlightened principles and which would include a strong emphasis on religion and education. The Rev. Thomas Burns, nephew of the renowned poet Robert Burns, was appointed by the Free Church as minister of the proposed settlement. After several years of hard and often uphill preparatory work by Burns, Captain Cargill and a Lay Association of the Free Church, the first two emigrant ships were dispatched to Otago where the N.Z. Company had already purchased land from the Maori people and carried out an extensive survey. The first two ships - the John Wickliffe and the Philip Laing arrived early in 1848.

East Taieri becomes part of the Church of Otago

For the first six years, the Church of Otago - known later as First Church - embraced the whole of the Free Church settlement with the Rev. Thomas Burns who had arrived on the Philip Laing, as its minister. At first his work was largely confined to Dunedin, but as the settlers moved - slowly at first - into the rural areas including Taieri, his parish area expanded in size. In 1850 and 1851 his Church of Otago was divided into a number of districts, one of which embraced Taieri, Waihola and Tokomairiro, with one elder Francis McDiarmid of West Taieri and one deacon William Jaffray of Saddle Hill. In 1851-2 Mr Burns made 3 pastoral visitations to the rural districts, including East Taieri, visiting every home and recording details of all their occupants.

The first known services he conducted here were in 1852 in the home of John Allan of "Bellfield" just a little to the south west of the present East Taieri township. During the same year, the Church of Otago took the first steps to build a combined school and preaching station at East Taieri. Local settlers helped to meet the cost. On the 27th November 1853, an historic day, Mr Burns opened "the very neat and tasteful school-house" as a preaching station, near where the present church gates stand. For the first decade, this combined building was also the community centre for East Taieri, where many meetings relating to the advancement of the district were held.

East Taieri becomes the second Presbyterian parish in Otago

Early in 1854 two young Free Church Ministers from Scotland joined Rev. Thomas Burns. One was the Rev. William Will aged 29. Assigned to East Taieri he was introduced to his future congregation on Sunday 19th February 1854 by Mr Burns. The latter preached in the morning and Mr Will in the afternoon. There was no manse, and he and his wife, the former Louisa Wishart, boarded for 18 months with the Cullens, a pioneer settler family who lived along the Main South Road about 2 miles south of East Taieri. Mr Will's parish was a large one embracing the whole of the Taieri and extending

from Green Island to below Waihola, but in little more than a decade with increasing population, it had contracted down to its present size, because of the formation of other parishes within its boundaries. At first Mr Will had to do his journeyings on foot, not easy with extensive swamp areas and at times flooded streams. But his work eased greatly when he got a horse.

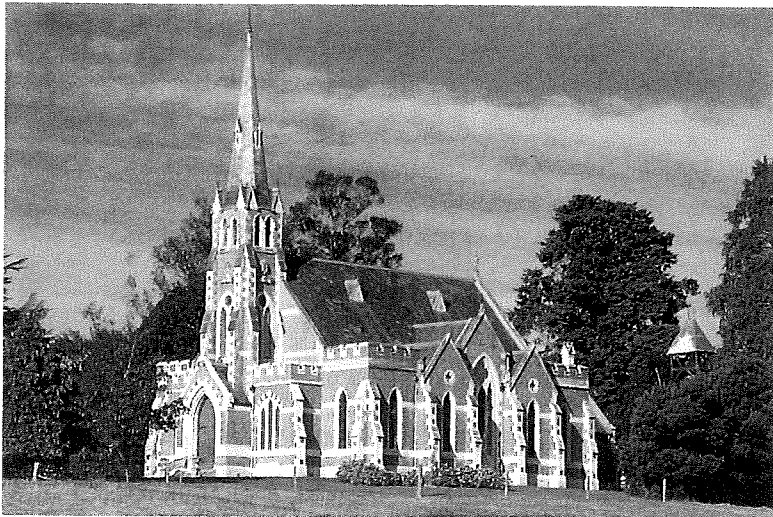
1870 A new Church is built at East Taieri

The original Church and school building of 1853, in spite of enlargements, proved inadequate for the increasing number of settlers, and it was decided to build a new church. The design of R.A. Lawson, one of Dunedin's leading architects, was chosen from the eleven submitted. Some alleged faulty finishing work led to the Deacons court withholding payment of the claim for extras. A law suit that followed went against the congregation, who with legal costs soon had a debt of over £800. Various other imperfections in the structure were later to cost considerable amounts to correct.

In spite of all these problems, the new church on the hill was an impressive one. Its commanding position and attractive design have evoked the admiration not only of generations of Taieri people but also of numerous passers by on the Southern railway and the Main South road.

Impact of the Rev. William Will

Mr Will's ministry of 45 years in one parish - probably the longest in Otago's history - had a profound moral and spiritual influence on the pioneer settlers and their families. Strict Sunday observance and regular church attendance were part of the pattern of life. Most of the early congregations were farming folk and the labourers and domestic servants they employed. No fewer than five of Mr Will's officebearers were members



*The impressive structure as designed by R.A. Lawson
Built 1870*

of the Otago Provincial Council which between 1853 and 1876 was the principal instrument of government in the province.

The evil of drink early impressed itself on Mr Will's mind and he was a staunch advocate of the Temperance movement. For most of his ministry, the exercise of discipline was a feature of church life, and those accused of moral or behavioural lapses were brought before the session. This practice died out in the 1890's. In 1892/1893 the congregation was sharply divided on the subject of using instrumental music - more especially in the form of an organ - in services of worship. Its introduction was finally carried by a large majority but there were one or two who never came to church again.

Throughout his long ministry Mr Will wielded great influence as a leader in the wider church. In the Jubilee year of the Province of Otago, 1898, he was elected Moderator of the Otago Synod for the second time.

The changing order

Through the 140 years of the church's history, there have been successive improvements and additions to the parish buildings and facilities, in keeping with changing needs. In 1897-98, largely as the result of a request from the Christian Endeavour Society (one of the first in N.Z.) for additional room for their meetings, the Vestry was enlarged by a 10 foot extension. In 1911 when Bible Class work was on the increase the corner hall was built, later called Kinmont Hall, in honour of the Rev. A.W. Kinmont, minister from 1903 to 1918. In the mid 1920's new gate pillars and an adjoining concrete wall were erected at the entrance to the church grounds and over many years, appropriate trees, shrubs and flowers have been planted and cared for, greatly enhancing and beautifying the church surroundings. Little wonder that East Taieri Church is a popular venue for weddings. The baby-boom of the post-World War 2 years posed another challenge for additional and more up-to-date facilities for Sunday School and Youth work and in 1964 the Centennial Wing was added to Kinmont Hall.

More recently in 1991 in keeping with modern requirements, a fellowship and administrative extension has been made to the church itself. The Architect, Mr McCoy in an imaginative and effective way has sought to design facilities which blend in and harmonize externally with the R.A. Lawson 1870 church features. These recent developments have helped to free up the buildings at Kinmont Hall for use by Unemployment Training Groups. It must not be forgotten however, that East Taieri Church is first and foremost a place of worship and fellowship. Due to growing numbers of worshippers there are now days, three Sunday services. A contemporary worship service which also caters for families, a traditional service with the organ and hymns, and a modern evening service with music, dance and drama which appeals to many young people and students as well as adults. Forms of worship vary in accordance with the needs of the different kinds of congregation.

A noteworthy feature of recent decades has been the growing involvement of women in the administration of the Church. It began in 1958 with Molly Burn and Mary Kirk being ordained as deacons and Essie Ralston following on as an elder at Allanton in 1963. They were the vanguard. Today, in 1994 there are 15 women serving on session or board of managers alongside 24 men. There is also a greater involvement of lay-people - women as well as men - in speaking roles in services of worship.

Social concern and action. The challenge of unemployment

Twice this century East Taieri Church has wrestled with problems relating to unemployment. During the depression of the early 1930's, the minister, the Rev. A.C. Watson with the support of his office bearers, carried out relief work among unemployed men at Deep Stream camp. Of this work Mr Watson wrote: "Here some 80 men were put into tents in the depth of winter and set to work on an ordinary public works job on the steep road at a very nominal wage. Some of the men received only 5 shillings a week. . . . For a good many months I made regular weekly visits to the camp. The work grew very rapidly and fortunately many people came to my assistance. Practically every Sunday night, there was a concert in the mess tent followed by a short service. I think we had almost 100% attendance. I also organized relief for the men as many of them arrived in the camp with no working clothes and some with tennis shoes only".

Large quantities of clothing, books, magazines and other goods were obtained from the Dunedin Relief Committee as well as from the parish and great car loads were taken up to the camp, various members from East Taieri assisting. One such occasion was Christmas 1931 when two local men and their wives drove up with a "Christmas treat" for the men. Because of his work at Deep Stream, Mr Watson was asked to join the Mayor of Dunedin's Special Committee for the relief of the unemployed.

Dramatic increases in unemployment in the 1980's and early 1990's have led minister and officebearers again to try to grapple with this problem. The emphasis this time round is less on relief and more on job training and job creation. By 1990 three Access Schemes were up and running based mainly in the Centennial Wing. Courses of life skills, conservation, and automotive repairs employed government paid tutors but were strongly backed by a number of volunteers from the church offering their skills and support. At the same time, every effort was made to address some of the basic needs of the young people by improving their self-esteem and self-discipline, and helping them in their relationships. More recently TOPS schemes have replaced Access schemes, focussed on training, personal disciplines, vocational knowledge and getting people into employment.

Today, 1994, a work trust is being set up (The Saddle Hill Foundation Trust) to create work and employment opportunities through varying projects.

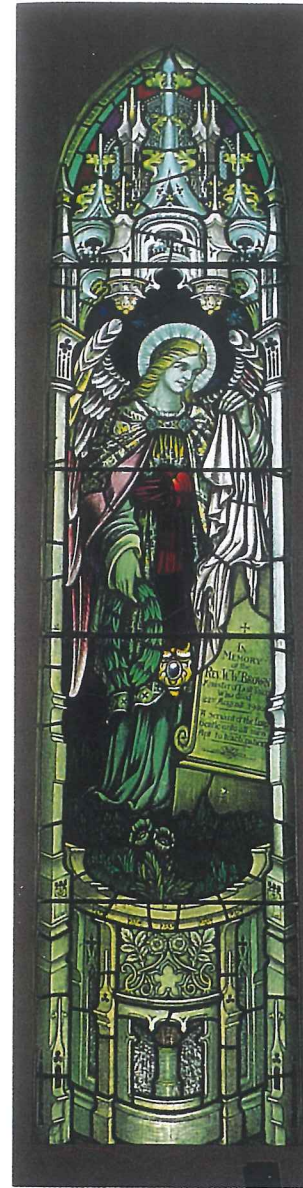
Other expressions of social concern have been the encouragement and support given to anti-addiction work in recent years and families opening their homes to needy children.

An Important Acknowledgement

Many men and women not commemorated by separate memorials either in stained glass or in items of church furniture, made notable and meaningful contributions in quiet and inconspicuous ways to the life of the community, the church and their families in days gone by. It is fitting that their work and influence be acknowledged.

Unsung heroes and heroines indeed.

Plate 5



*The servant of the Lord
must be kind, a good
teacher, tolerant and gentle*

Plate 6



*This cup is the new
covenant sealed by my
blood.*

Plate 7



*I am the resurrection
and I am life.*

Plate 8



Let the children come to me

Plate 9



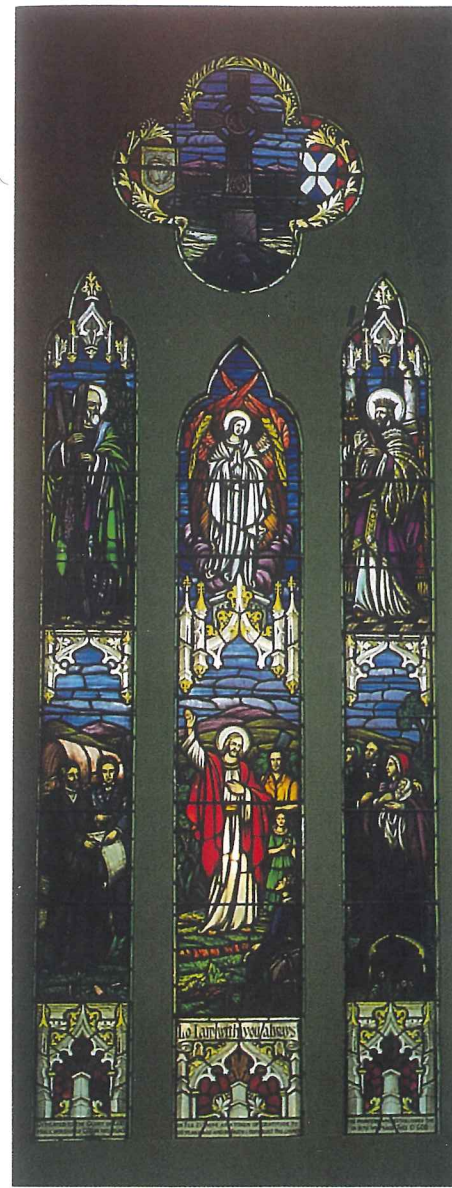
I am the light of the world.

Plate 10



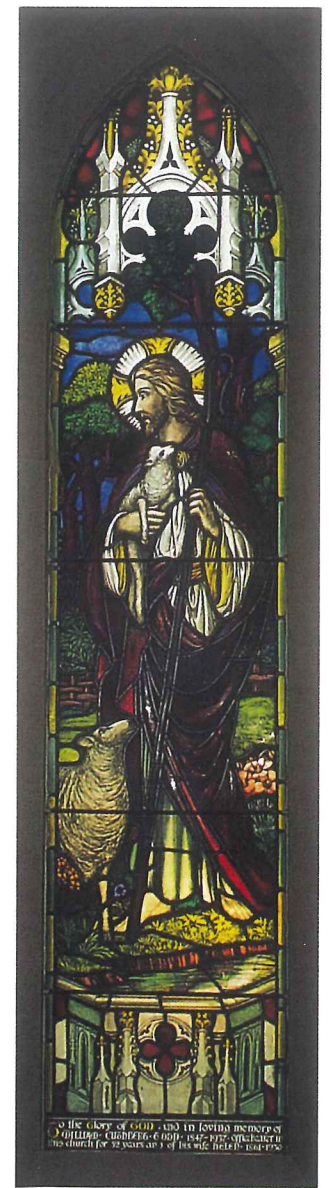
Put on all the whole armour which God provides

Plate 11



Look to the rock from which you were hewn, to the quarry from which you were dug.

Plate 12



I am the Good Shepherd.