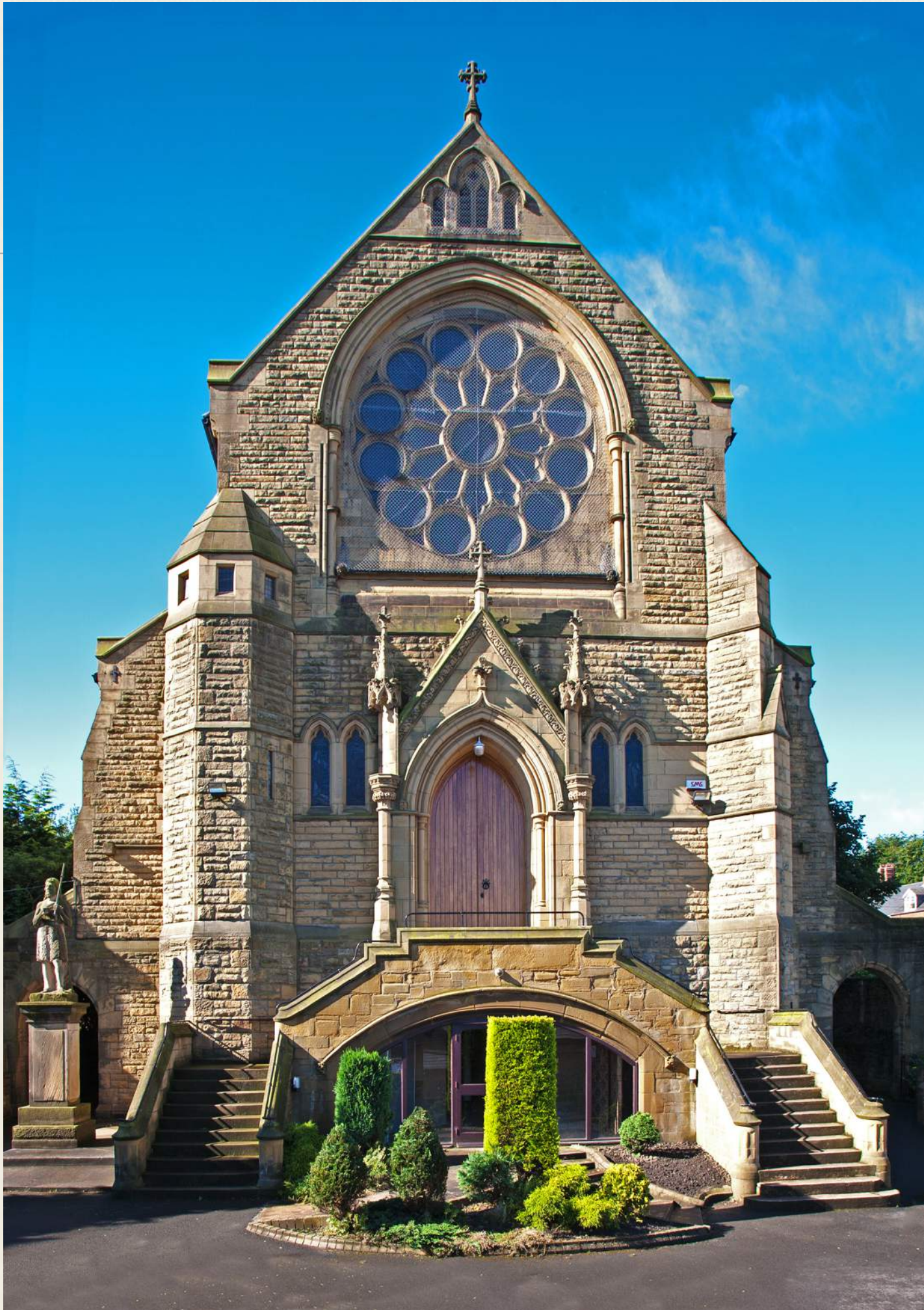


The History of St. Patrick's RC Church, Felling 1895 - 2014



Tom R Sterling

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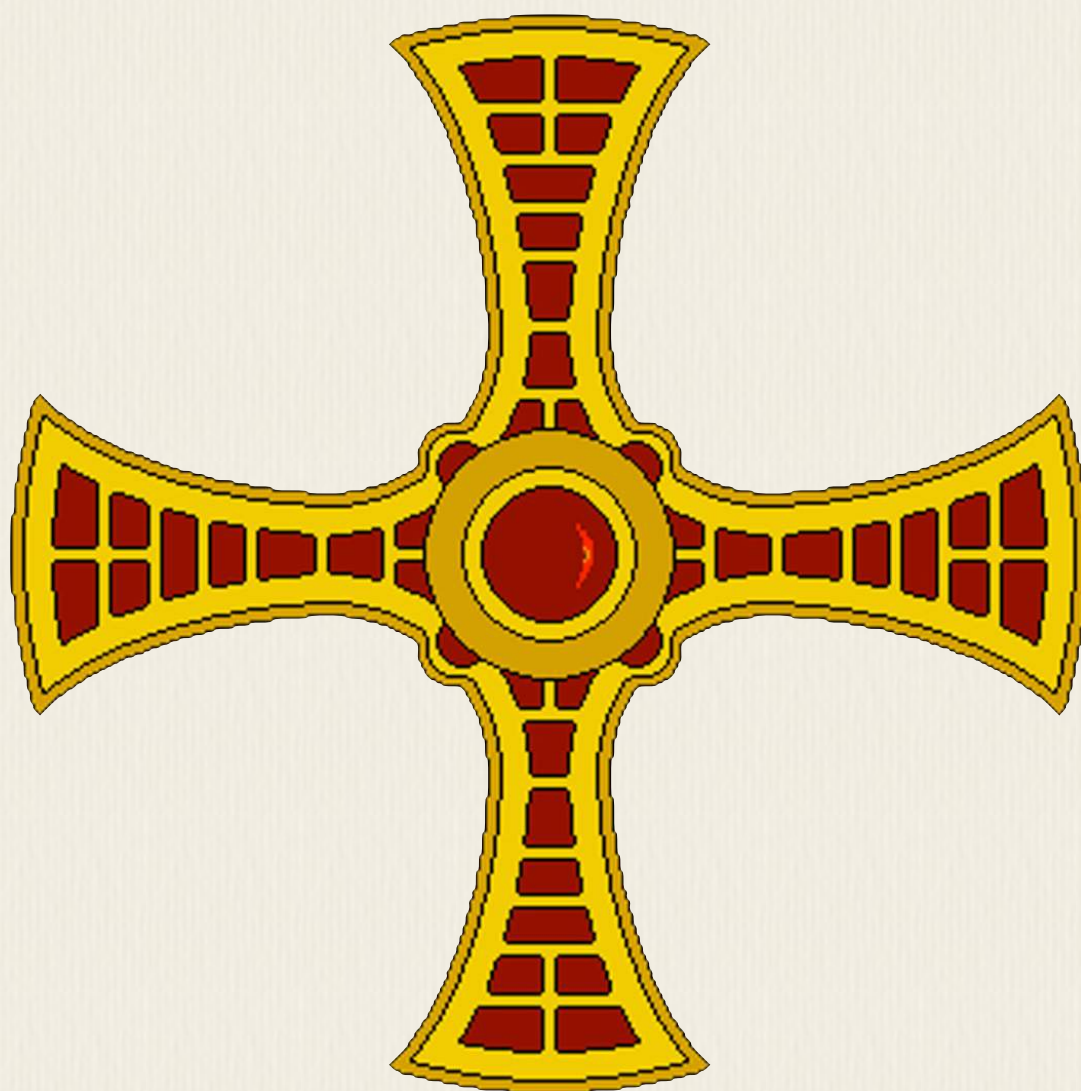


High Street
Felling
Gateshead
Tyne & Wear
NE10 9LT

www.stpatricks-felling.co.uk

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Acknowledgements

I would like to pay tribute to the late Peter Haywood and to the members of the Centenary committee who assisted in the compilation of A History of St. Patrick's Church, Felling 1895 - 1995, which is copied in its entirety in Chapter 1.

To Anne Bradley for providing the information for Chapter 2 by researching 19 years of newsletters 1995 – 2014, to Norman Dunn for providing some of the historical images from his web site www.gatesheadeast.co.uk, to Fr. Ian Patterson for his assistance and to all the parishioners of St. Patrick's Church for the historical images and memorabilia.

Tom R. Sterling

Introduction

The elegant stone staircase, built in the Romanesque style, which leads to the processional entrance at the front of St. Patrick's Church suffered damage caused by the passage of time. Severe water ingress led to structural damage rendering the staircase unsafe to use. Following an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, a grant of almost £90,000 was obtained to assist in restoring it back to its original beauty. Part of the condition of the grant was that a record should be produced of the history of St. Patrick's Church and make it widely accessible. The resultant book and our web site, whilst attempting to convey the magnificence of the Church, also extends a warm welcome to anyone who would like to visit or attend any of the services held in the Church.

To mark the Centenary in 1995 a booklet was produced entitled "A History of St. Patrick's Church, Felling 1895 – 1995" which is reproduced in its entirety in Chapter I with additional photographs to enhance the text.

The History of St. Patrick's RC Church, Felling 1895 – 2014 includes an interactive enlargement feature, which can be accessed by touching the photographic image.

Please feel free to visit St. Patrick's Church to see and enjoy the grandeur of the building and the many unique treasures contained within.

Parish Mission Statement

St. Patrick's Felling

(St. Patrick's and St. Alban's)

Parish Profile 2006

We, the people of St. Patrick's Church, Felling see ourselves as a parish family that extends an open and warm welcome to everyone.

We aim to provide a secure, stimulating and loving Christian environment in which we invite others to join with us in our growing awareness of God's love and compassion for us and for everybody.

By our Catholic way of life, rooted in prayer and worship, we strive to encourage respect for moral values, the dignity of the individual and an understanding of the difficulties which modern society imposes on all and particularly on young people.

We value the work of our schools, which enables children to grow in God's love, developing a lively faith and learning to value and respect themselves and everyone in the community.

Together with the other churches in the area, we continue to address the spiritual and social needs of our neighbourhood.

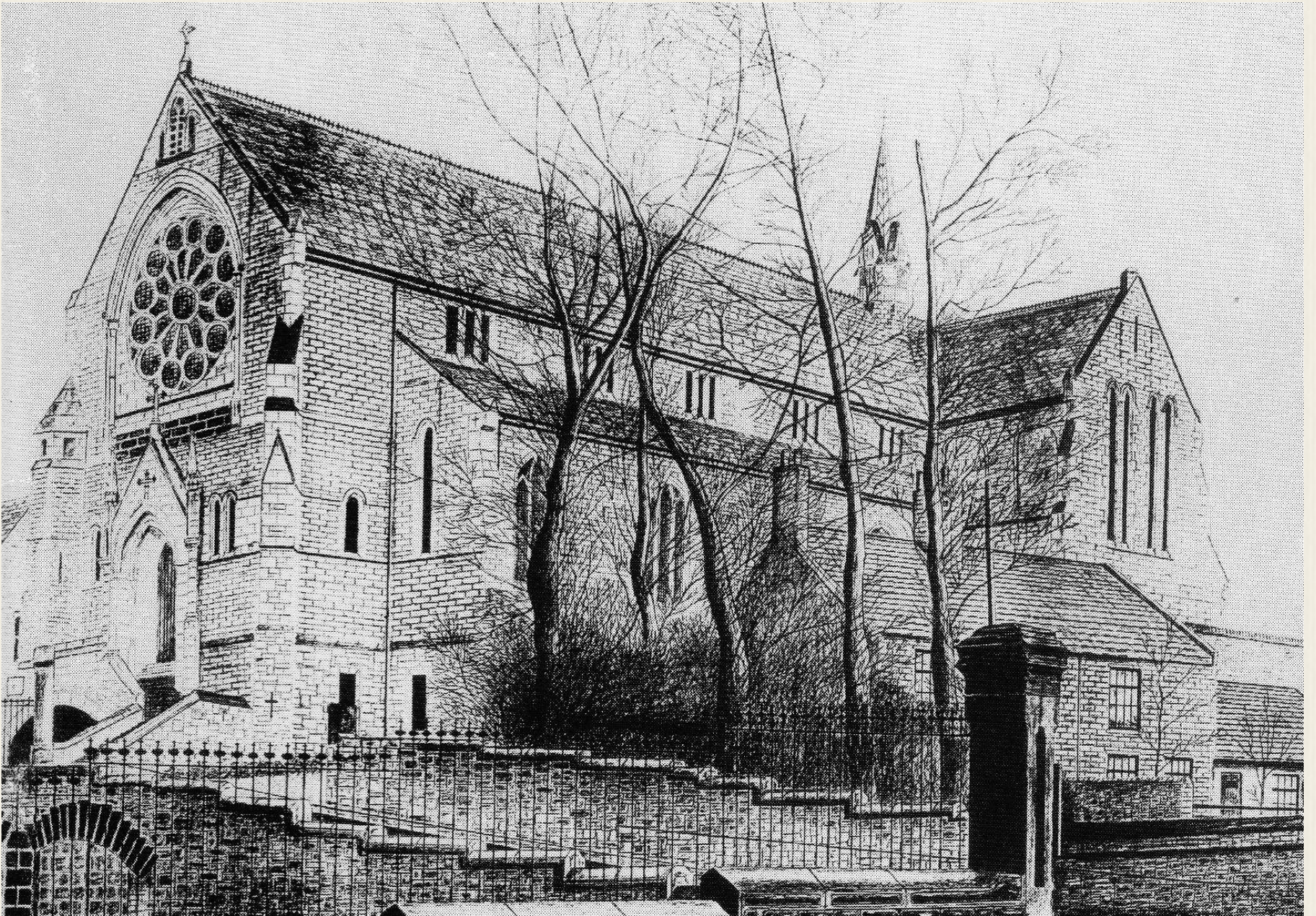
The parish community of St. Patrick's extends to all, the hand of Christian friendship and endeavours to continue to strengthen the bond of love and friendship in our neighbourhood in the hope that everyone may find their fulfilment.

Chapter I

History 1895 - 1995



A History of St. Patrick's Church FELLING



1895 - 1995

Celebrations touch the lives of us all

It may be the joyful celebration of a new birth or the annual reminder of our own. Others celebrate a formal exchange of love in marriage whilst we all have to cope with the more solemn celebration of the loss of a loved one in death.

There will be occasions when we choose to celebrate alone, or with family and friends in the intimacy of our homes, whilst other occasions demand a more public celebration in a building worthy of the occasion.

The value or worth of any building is more often than not determined by its use. St. Patrick's Church is no different. Built in the Romanesque style, its proportions are worthy of many a cathedral, but its true value lies in the lives of the community for which it was built. So the celebration of the centenary of St. Patrick's Church, Felling is a celebration of the life of a "community of faith" which has worshipped here over the years and continues to do so today.

The generosity of so many people one hundred years ago, working closely with their priest, led to the building of the church. If their efforts are to be truly celebrated we, the present community of faith, must be as generous with our time and talents using them to address the needs of the church and the community of today.

As we reflect on the past in the light of the present moment, let us look to the future with the spirit of faith, hope and love which inspired our ancestors to "dig every sod, shape every block and fix every stone".

Father Ian Patterson

March 1995

THE RECUSANT BRANDLINGS

The Brandling family came to prominence in the North as merchant adventurers in the early years of the sixteenth century. Sir Robert Brandling was mayor and then member of Parliament for Newcastle between 1547 and 1563. His business success enabled him to buy monastic property and land at Jesmond, and in 1552 he purchased estates at Gosforth and Felling.



At this time Brandling appears to have conformed to the Church of England and supported the Reformation in Northumberland and Durham although he was criticised on a number of occasions for his Catholic sympathies and his somewhat wild life-style.

Robert Brandling died in 1568 and his will included the following provision:

“And alsoe where I have a suite of vestments of cremsyn velvet ymbrodered with twoe good coopes, I will these have my armes and my wyves sett in them and gevyn to Saincte Nicholas churche, with alsoe a suyte of black velvet for preiste deacon and subdeacon, and one coape of the same with deademens bodyes and hedds, also a suyte of blewe velvet ymbrodered. Also I have a suite off blewe velvet and twoe coopes, which shalbe geyven to the church of Alhallowes, my armes and wyves to be sett in them, provided alwaies that those vestments shall not be geyven except the old accustomed service be used according to the Catholik usadge of the shurche....”

Sir Robert's nephew Richard Brandling also pursued a turbulent career. Between 1587 and 1590 he was a pirate, an occupation which enabled him to convey priests around the area. Elizabethan England was a dangerous time for Catholic priests and the authorities persecuted those who followed the old religion. John Ingram, a seminary priest, was hung, drawn and quartered outside St. Edmund's Chapel, Gateshead in July 1594.

Richard Brandling later retired from the sea, married Elizabeth Byrde and settled at Wardley. In 1596 and 1597 they were both convicted of recusancy at Wardley in the parish of Jarrow.

Charles Brandling inherited the family estates in the mid seventeenth century. He served as Colonel Brandling in the Royalist army at Newcastle and then at Newark. Although an Anglican, Charles married the Catholic Ann Widdrington who gave him five children all raised as Catholics at their estate in Alnwick Abbey.

Ralph Brandling, inherited the family estates in 1682. He settled at Felling which had extensive coal reserves and sold the family seat at Alnwick Abbey. He was educated as a

lawyer and was one of the men chosen by James II to make up the new corporation of Newcastle. However when William came to the throne after the 1688 Revolution the papist Brandling was seen as a threat to the new king. It was said that he had at least three hundred horses in his possession supposedly employed in his collieries. However the suspicions about Brandling's Jacobite cavalry were investigated and proved to be unfounded.

Ralph married Ann Legh heiress of Middleton Hall in Yorkshire and they set up home here at the beginning of the new century. In 1717, when Ralph had to register his estates as a Catholic to pay extra taxes, he listed four estates: coal mines at Jesmond, a small property in Newcastle and the two large estates at Felling and Middleton. He failed to register the largest estate, that of Gosforth, until 1746. The Brandling's family chapel at Middleton became the centre for Catholicism in the area served by a number of visiting priests. One of these, Thomas Worthington, provincial of the English Dominicans settled at the Brandling home saying Mass and administering sacraments to the local inhabitants.

Since there were no children of this marriage Ralph's estates were inherited by his nephew also named Ralph. The younger Ralph was born in Woodhorne in Northumberland and moved to Morpeth after his marriage to Eleanor Ogle. Neither Ralph nor his wife were brought up as Catholics although in 1735 he converted to the Roman Church followed later by his wife. His uncle and aunt now welcomed them at Middleton and they were received into the Rosary Confraternity in March 1736. Shortly after this Ralph and Eleanor moved to Felling Hall which had been virtually abandoned by his uncle forty years earlier. Here they kept a private chapel served at first by Robert Pius Bruce who was succeeded by Edward Antoninus Hatton in 1748. Ralph Brandling did not live to enjoy the wealth of his uncle and died two weeks after him in July 1749. Mr Hatton was soon replaced, not by a regular chaplain, but by a Jesuit supply priest, Thomas Leckonby, Thomas Waterton and John Darell. The fourth of the Jesuits to supply Felling in 1750 was the superior of the Durham District, Father John Walshe, S.J., from Stella Hall in Durham.

In 1746 the Jacobites were defeated at Culloden by the Duke of Cumberland's forces. In January of this year Cumberland marched through Gateshead and a riotous mob burnt down Gateshead House, home of the Catholic Riddle family. John Walshe, the Riddle family chaplain, escaped from the house to take refuge at Felling Hall.

John Walshe was succeeded by the Benedictine Dom Anthony Raffa who served the mission at Birtley and said Mass while staying at Felling Hall. Mrs. Brandling periodically visited Middleton where her former chaplain, Edward Hatton had joined old Mr. Worthington.

A letter, apparently written by Hatton in February 1756, has survived which describes the occasion when Eleanor Brandling sent her brother to dismantle the Middleton chapel.

“Mrs. Brandling, of Felling, sent positive orders to Mrs. Humble and Mrs. Betty Rawson to strip the chapel of all its furniture, and send it into the north. Accordingly, on Wednesday, December 10, 1755, after they had packed the vestments, they proceeded sacrilegiously to plunder the tabernacle, and having taken out the Chalice, ciborium &c., they attempted to take down the picture you mentioned, when behold the prodigy! a bloody sweat broke out, and ran trickling down the picture in great drops, as big as peas (as my informants expressed themselves). This happened between 9 and 10 O’clock in the morning. In the afternoon of the same day I was sent for, being informed (by a letter from Mr Humble) that Mr Ralph Ogle had express orders from his sister Mrs Brandling to lodge in the late Mr Worthington’s room: that he had demanded the key in a very insolent manner, and was not to be denied. Upon my arrival at Middleton, Mrs Humble told me what had happened to the picture, when going up to it I perceived upon it one single drop of blood, I think I may justly call it, since to me it seemed to have the colour and consistency of blood. This astonished me very much. But as we were all very busily employed the whole afternoon in removing the books, &c, out of the late Mr Worthington’s room, no further notice was taken of the picture for that day. The Wednesday following December 17, they ventured to take it down in order to pack it up and prepare it for a journey into the north in compliance with Mrs. Brandling’s orders, but as soon as it was taken down three drops of blood appeared again upon its surface.... Sunday December 27....A third bloody eruption was perceived to occur”.

The Brandling estates and business interests were supervised by Eleanor’s son Charles who obtained the first Railway Act of Parliament to build a railway at Middleton colliery. When he came of age in 1754 he registered his estates as a Catholic. The wealth which he accumulated through his railway and colliery interests helped him build a new mansion at Gosforth in 1760 where he settled with his wife Elizabeth Thompson. Eleanor continued to live at Felling although at some stage she had the Felling chapel dismantled and sold.

A curious relic of the chapel has survived in the shape of the Felling Vestment which is now in the care of the librarian at Stoneyhurst. When Hilda Brandling died in 1967, a box was sent to Francis Onslow, her step-niece. It contained a stole, a maniple and a chasuble, to which was pinned a scrap of paper which reads.

“Brandling Felling vestment. Drab velvet bought by my grandmother Dunn from Daddy Walsh who was smoked out of Gateshead by the Dk of Cumberland’s troops he got this with others from Felling Hall when the chapel there was broken up. SC”

The chasuble is of tawny velvet and narrow Roman cut. It has the cross on the back and the pillar on the front, both being made of ancient cope orphreys, considered by experts of the Victoria & Albert Museum to be 15th century in date. The vertical panels portray saints, male and female alternately, identifiable by their symbols. Fourteen small pieces of ecclesiastical embroidery, each having the monogram of the Holy Name over a five petalled rose, are applied on to the velvet in a symmetrical pattern, eight on the back and six on the front. The orphreys, thought to be from medieval copes, may possibly have been taken from the copes known to have been in the possession of the Brandling family in the 16th century.

About the year 1771 Charles Brandling of Gosforth Hall renounced the Roman Catholic religion and became a Protestant of the Church of England. He became High Sheriff of Northumberland in 1781 and was MP for Newcastle from 1784 to 1797. Eleanor Brandling died in 1776 and is buried at Jarrow.

Charles Brandling had four sons, the second of whom, the Rev. Ralph Henry Brandling, sold the Gosforth House and the other Brandling estates in Northumberland and Yorkshire in 1852. Henry Charles Brandling, nephew of Ralph Henry, was born at Low Gosforth House in 1823. He became a Catholic and had nine children, of whom Hilda Mary Brandling was the last survivor.

Northern Catholic History, No 8, Autumn 1978, *The Felling Mass Vestment* by Francis Agnes Onslow.

Recusant History, A Journal of Research in Post-Reformation Catholic History in The British Isles. Volume 10, No.1, January 1969, *The Recusancy of the Brandlings* by Edward Walsh and Ann Forster.

Catholic Tyneside by Rev.W.V. Smith

THE ERRINGTONS: An early Felling Catholic family

In the middle of the eighteenth century hundreds of Catholics continued to follow the 'old religion' in the villages along the banks of the Tyne. Geraghty writes that St. John's school was built in "a field in High Street, reputed to be part of the Brandling Estate; for it was at one time attached to the farm of Robert Errington, woodman to the Brandlings". Like many of the Brandlings, the Erringtons were Catholics and glimpses of life in the late eighteenth century Felling can be read about in Anthony Errington's autobiography which was published in 1988.

Anthony Errington, born in 1778 at Felling, spent most of his life working as a colliery waggon-way and waggon wright following the trade of Robert his father. Working class autobiographies of this era are rare since very few were educated so we are fortunate that he bothered putting pen to paper. So why did he decide to record his life history?

"The reason for my wrighting the particulars of my life are to inform my family and the world.... That there is a Just God to judge me in life and death, that I may meet the Just in that blessed manshon of Bliss wheare the Just rain for all Eternety with their God, through the redempshion of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ..."

He writes about his love and respect for his parents..

"When my farther and her married, they set up the first house at High Felling, in the Chepelry of Hueth in the Parish of Jarrow, County of Durham. And they Dwelled and Brought up 4 Suns and 5 Doughters. My sister Isable Died of the Warter in the Brain at 11 years of age. She was called after my mother, Isabella Errington – maiden name being Carr. And she was a very very industrious dutiful mother amongst her family.

My farther, the very patron of Industry and honesty, was beloved by all, all ways ready to do good to any one, he loved to be in Sochiel Company, and all ways endeavored to restore peace when any friction took plase."

Robert Errington worked for the Brandlings at Felling colliery and was present at the opening ceremonies of four of the Felling pits.

"He wrought at waggons and waggon way all day, and 3 and 4 night a week he was down the pit, Erning to get mony to bring up his famely. And he gave us all a Education so as to make us fit for business. And his law was to us all to be

honest, to be Charatable, to shun bad Company, and to keep the Comandments in a Christin life. And to love each other was the Charge from our parents. May the Blesing of Blesings be with them Boath now and for Ever in the Name of Jesus Christ our Saviour our redeamer.”

“I was put to Skool to Mrs Throben at High Felling. And having a small stoppage in my speech which made me Lisp, I oft got the Lether strap over me. One morning in the Spring, Mathew Belly and I played (truant), and went to his farher, wheare he was ploughing near Friers Goose wood, and we was burd nesting... The morning following, mistress asked wheare wee had been, and not giving a Setisfactory answer, we was sentenced to be hugged. That was, a Stronger boy took Each arm over his Shoulder and leaning forward, breaches being Opened, we got the Cat of 9 tails over us severly. And wee durst go no more bird nesting.”

In the 1780s the nearest Roman Catholic chapels were in Newcastle, one in a court off Newgate Street and another at the foot of Westgate Street. One Sunday on his way to church Anthony was side-tracked by meeting his double.

“..going along the Sandhill, I saw a man standing on the flag stones, the Very Picture of my Self, being in One uniform of Dress, Complexion, and hair alike. He Looked and I Looked, and said, ‘I think I have found my Shaddow’.”

Anthony tells of how they decided to play a trick on the other boys parents by impersonating him at dinner.

“I sat down and got 2 bites when the Mother said, ‘Wheare was thou, Tom, I did not see thee’. Being Eating I did not Answer, when the Sister said, ‘Mother, that is not Our Tom!’ The Mother and Farther said, who was it then, she was wrong, upon this the real Tom Entered. They boath dropd Knife and Fork. Tom said, ‘I have sent my Shaddow to Diner’. Tom sat near me and it was hard to tell which of us was ther own.”

Anthony met Ann Hindmarsh at the toll-gate keepers house at Felling gate.

“Ann Hindmarsh was housekeeper to Mr Sill, Squire Ellisons Stewart. I got aquented with her and in the proses of time I Married her and we set up house at High Felling where My first born Sun was born. 12 months after, we Shifted to Low Felling. The Cause was one for us boath. I had bean down Hollihill pit at Night and I got home at 2 Oclock AM. Ann Opened door for me and as the fire was dull I lit the Candle to get Supper. Ann related to Me that she had seen a Spirit Dresed in Blue Silk. I told her not to menchon it to the nibours. After washing I went to

Lock the door. On turning round, I saw the figure of a tall slender Woman dressed in skie Blue Silk which walked into the Corner and Disappeared. I kept this to my Self thinking Ann would not dare to Stop at night when I was at work. There was One Emty house at Low Felling which I applied for, and we got shifted the next day.”

Anthony tells other stories of encounters with visions of spirits although the accuracy of these tales need to be tempered with his enjoyment of social company ale-houses.

He was respected among Protestants in the locality for his abilities to charm milk into butter a skill performed with the “Sign of the Cross”.

Anthony lived to see a Catholic church built at Felling Shore. He died on 31 January 1848 aged 69 no doubt receiving the last rites from Fr John Kelly. In 1851 Anthony’s widow and daughter lived in a house two tenements up from the Beeswing public house opposite the site of a new church which would be built nearly half a century later.

“Coals on Rails: The Autobiography of Anthony Errington from 1778 to 1825” by P.E.H. Hair.

A HISTORY OF ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH

By John Geraghty

The earliest historical record of the Parish of Heworth, the ecclesiastical title of the present township of Felling, is found in a legal document of the year 1214 setting forth the tithes and dues to be paid by his chapel and lands of Heworth to its feudal chief, the Prior of the Monastery of Durham. Later records show the Prior was no absentee landlord; at regular intervals he made his visitation, summoning his tenants to the Manor of Felling, the Manor of Wardley, and the domain of Heworth to meet him in Halmote; adjusting their rents when a Scottish raid or a devastating plague had depleted their resources; letting his quarries and mills; punishing malefactors; even lecturing his subjects on sanitation, as when he upbraided them in the year of the 'black death' for polluting the water of their burn which was required for baking and brewing.

The suppression of the monasteries transferred the feudal rights of the Prior of the Dean and Chapter of Durham Cathedral, but much of the land seems then, or later, to have been alienated to secular owners. The series of penal laws enacted from the reign of Elizabeth to George III, was well calculated to destroy every vestige of Catholicity in England. Catholic priests were deprived of their benefices, and the laity fined and imprisoned for maintaining the supremacy of the Pope. Catholic colleges were suppressed, and the presence of a foreign trained priest was high treason, and subjected to him to the penalty of being hanged, drawn and quartered; conscientious Catholics, unable to deny the doctrine of Transubstantiation were excluded from the professions, from administrative posts, civil or military, and from Corporations and Parliament; and, most execrable perversions of filial duty, the renegade son was rewarded with the estates of the father whom he denounced. Notwithstanding persecution, the smouldering embers of faith were zealously guarded in the bosoms of Catholic families, whose hidden chambers provided a refuge for the itinerant priest, bringing the consolations of religion to a devoted band, gathered in some obscure rendezvous at a secret bidding. That the Catholics of this district were not entirely denied the ministrations of the priest, is suggested by the legend that a monk was hanged on the old mulberry tree that stood in the grounds of Felling Hall, the home of the Brandlings, and by the inclusion of a chasuble, a stole, and a maniple in the sale of the effects of the Brandling family in the same hall, on October 4th, 1809.

The relaxed administration of the penal laws in the eighteenth century enabled Catholics to assemble for public worship in inconspicuous places like the humble chapels in Bell's Court and Zion Court, in Newcastle. By taking the oath of allegiance prescribed in the Relief Act of 1778, Catholics were freed from the oppressive severities of the penal code. Father James Worswick built the old chapel of St. Andrew's in 1798; ten years later Bishop William Gibson founded Ushaw College, destined in its first century to furnish a thousand priests to

the English Mission; and almost a hundred years ago O'Connell's electrifying victory over Vesey Fitzgerald, at Clare, compelled Wellington and Pitt to pass the Catholic Emancipation Act, which restored to Catholics the rights and liberties of citizenship.

At that period Felling Catholics were obliged to resort to St. Andrew's, or to St. Cuthbert's, North Shields, founded in 1821, for these were the only Catholic churches on the banks of the lower Tyne. In the whole county of Durham there were but fourteen chapels, each with a single priest; in Northumberland, twenty chapels and nineteen priests; and many of these were the private chapels of old English Catholic families who had loyally and staunchly preserved the faith until it should burgeon anew in the Patrimony of St. Cuthbert. No longer forced to shun the public gaze in obscure alleys, but free to associate openly in the service of God, Catholic worshippers rapidly increased in numbers, until in 1840, when a census was taken of Felling, it was found that four hundred Catholics were living there, a remarkable number, unless neighbouring districts were included in the poll.



St. Patrick's Church, Felling Shore

St. Andrew's was overcrowded, and so, through the zeal and generosity of the Rev. William Riddell, curate with the Rev. James Worswick, a church was built at Felling Shore, on a site granted a 999 years' lease, at a nominal rent, by William Caley, Esq. of Saltwell. Old St. Patrick's was opened on January 25th 1842, in the presence of a crowded congregation gathered from Newcastle, Gateshead, and the neighbourhood, despite the inclement weather. At 11 am the officiating clergy, among whom were the Revs. Joseph Brown, George Lowe, John Eyre and William Riddell, entered the main door, and advanced up the Church to the Altar, followed by a procession of the Guild of St. Joseph and Mary in their gowns, collars and other insignia. An impressive sermon was preached by Rev. William Riddell, and the Newcastle Catholic Choir rendered selections from the Masses of Mozart and Haydn. A collection at the close amounted to the sum of £23. 18s. 4. ½d.

During the next two years the Mission was served from St. Andrew's by the Rev. William Riddell, grandson of Thomas Riddell who was imprisoned in Lancaster Gaol for his part in Derwentwater's rebellion, and son of Ralph Riddell, the owner and trainer of the famous "Dr. Syntax". This reverend gentleman left Felling in 1843 to take charge of St. Mary's, was appointed Bishop of Longo by Pope Gregory XVI, and succeeded Dr. Mostyn as Vicar Apostolic of the Northern District in 1847. In that year, during the terrible epidemic of typhus which assailed Newcastle, Bishop Riddell lost two of his curates, and ministered single-handed among the poor in the lanes and by-ways of the city, fell victim to the fever, and died on 2nd November. After the Requiem Mass, which was celebrated by Bishop Wiseman, he was interred in a catacomb at St. Mary's, Newcastle. His immediate successor is not known, but this Mission continued to be served from St. Andrew's until 1845, when the first resident priest, the Rev. A. McDermot, took up his abode in a house in Gosforth Street. In 1847 he departed to Berwick, where he died in 1855. He was succeeded by the Rev. John Kelly, who was born in Co. Kilkenny, in 1804, and, according to his memorial card passed the whole thirty-five years of his priesthood in Felling, his first and only mission. His vocation came late in life, for after completing his religious studies at Ushaw College, he was ordained at the mature age of 43. He had been brought up to the joiner's trade, and a well equipped workshop in his Presbytery testified to his proficiency.

An extensive haugh fringing a tidal river, situated in the cradle of the engineering trade, and surrounded by coal mines offering abundant supplies of cheap fuel for the expanding chemical factories, Felling Shore was ideally placed in an era of industrial development. Its rapidly increasing population was steadily augmented by the exodus of younger sons, driven from Irish homesteads by famine, adventure, poverty and ambition, to bear the torch of faith across the English-speaking world; for one current in that vast flood was directed to the banks of the Tyne; and so Father Kelly soon found that his little Gothic church was inadequate to house his growing flock. In 1853 he almost doubled its seating capacity, by extending its length and erecting a gallery. To provide for the education of the children, ever an imperious anxiety to a parish priest, he determined to build a school, and for this purpose secured a field in High Street, reputed to be part of the Brandling Estate; for it was at one time attached to the farm of Robert Errington, woodman to the Brandlings, and in its north-west corner behind the old police station was situated the Brandling well.

The nature of the difficulties which faced the amateur architect, for Father John drew up his own plans, may be imagined by a survey of the present levels. The triangular patch on the main road, next to Dr. Millar's house is many feet below the Infant's school yard, while the eaves of the school are not much above the level of the Church floor. His task was further complicated by an old water course, called the Dene, which traversed the corner of the site. The Catholic men of Felling, working one shift in the factory or mine, and another under Father John's zealous supervision, were gradually reducing chaos to order, when their

labours were interrupted by an event which introduced the name of Felling into Parliamentary debates.



Original St. John's School behind Felling Lodge with St. Patrick's Presbytery on the Left

On Christmas Day 1859, a silver watch, stolen in a drunken spree, was handed to Father Kelly in the confessional. Finding the owner of the watch out when he called at his home, Father John offered the watch to his father, and on the latter's refusal to accept it, declared his intention of handing it over to the police. Inspector Rogers, doubtlessly informed by the aggrieved family, called on Father Kelly, who, unsolicited, handed him the watch, and to the trial at the Durham Assizes in the following March, Father John Kelly was summoned as a witness. Called upon to take the oath, he objected to the form because he could not swear to speak the "whole" truth. The Judge pointed out a witness was not obliged to answer

every question, but only those which might be legitimately put to him. After some demur Father Kelly ultimately took the oath in the usual form and acknowledged to the prosecuting counsel that he had received a watch on Christmas Day. To the next question “From whom did you receive the watch?” the witness replied, “I received it in connection with the confessional.” The Judge insistently repeated the question, and the witness answered, “The reply to that question would implicate the person who gave it to me; therefore, I cannot answer it”. The Judge remonstrated with the witness, who replied, “If I answered that question I should be suspended for life. I should be violating the laws of the Church, and the natural law”. To the Judge’s final demand, Father Kelly’s reply was, “I really cannot, my lord, whatever may be the consequences”. “Then”, said his lordship, Mr. Justice Hill, “I adjudge you to be guilty of contempt of court, and order you committed to gaol”. Father John Kelly was taken into custody, as a misdemeanant of the first division, on Monday afternoon, and was released, by order of the Judge, on Wednesday morning, at 10 o’clock, after the question had been raised in the House of Commons.

This public vindication of the inviolable secrecy of the confessional is of historic importance to Catholics. The detention of their priest in an English prison for defending his religion, outraged the most sacred instincts of his congregation, and in a most eloquent address, delivered by John Terence McShane, they expressed their abhorrence of his treatment, and demonstrated their loyalty and devotion. They also presented to him a most appropriate gift of a gold watch, on which was graven this inscription: “Presented to the Rev. John Kelly, by his parishioners, to commemorate his incarceration of forty hours in Durham gaol, for not revealing the secrets of the confessional”, first name on the list of signatories to the address is William Crooks whose initials will be found on the baptismal font in the present church, and the last is James Hanlan, familiarly called the “Doctor”, from his skills in rendering first aid in the factory. This sobriquet gives point to the following story. One day an unusually large stone was being moved into position by the honorary builders, Hanlan among the rest, when Father Kelly begged them to be careful. A wit in the working party rejoined, “Sure it’s all right, boys. Haven’t we got the priest and the doctor with us?” The Catholic Directory records that building was in progress during the years 1862 and 1863, and the diary of William McCorry states that Felling St. John’s School was opened on January 17th, 1864. At first, the upper storey was used, but, as numbers increased, the whole building was employed for teaching. Three or four years later, the upper part was screened off at the west end and used as a chapel for weekday Mass. The first Headmistress seems to have been Miss Boyle; the first school tea-party was held at Easter, and the first school trip was to Tynemouth sands in Cunningham’s tug boat, ‘Percy’, specially licensed and adapted for the jaunt. At that period the Presbytery was already standing in its present position, and William McCorry’s record that Father Kelly shifted to Chapel House on October 24th, 1853, presumably refers to St. Patrick’s Presbytery.



Fr. John Kelly



Fr Thomas Carroll

Having accomplished part of his design, Father John Kelly planned the construction of a new church on the higher level of his field. The first sod was opened on Thursday, April 18th, 1872, and after twelve months' Herculean labour, the foundation stone of the present church was laid on St. Patrick's Day in pouring rain. The sons and daughters of the men who dug every sod shaped every block, and fixed every stone, can imagine the emotions with which their fathers assembled on their national holy day, to place their golden offerings on this solid emblem of their high hopes. The curious observer who examines the recess beneath the left hand steps leading to the main door of the church will find this stone plainly indicated by a deeply indented Maltese Cross.



Foundation Stone

A remarkable illustration of the steady nerve and vigour of this priest of sixty-eight years, is given by Mr. John Oxberry who remembers when a boy at Newcastle Grammar School, with what pride he learnt that the Felling priest, Father John Kelly had been chosen to climb the new spire of St. Mary's Cathedral, to bless the steeple.

The difficulties of the site enhanced the cost, and hampered the work, which steadily progressed until a disastrous fire in the early part of 1877 caused its abandonment for fifteen years. About three o'clock in the morning of Thursday, January 11th, Father Kelly was aroused by a crackling noise, and proceeding to the rear of the premises, discovered the place to be filled with dense smoke. He wakened the inmates by ringing a hand bell. His curate, the Rev. Thomas Carroll, his nephew, Dr. Dunphey his housekeeper, Miss Maynard and two servants were residing in the Presbytery, which was a commodious house of thirteen rooms. The flames spread with such rapidity that the servants were obliged to escape through a window on the second storey, with the timely assistance of Andy Connor, the first man on the scene, while the others made their exit through the door in various stages of disattire.

Willing helpers procured hose pipes from the chemical works and the Local Board, but there was considerable difficulty in locating the water plugs, and it was five o'clock before two powerful jets were directed upon the flames. At nine o'clock the fire was extinguished, and nothing remained but a ruined skeleton. Some pictures, a piano, and a few damaged books were saved. Dr. Dunphey's valuable library, two gold watches, and a considerable sum of money were lost. The charred ruins became a Tom Tiddler's ground for unscrupulous treasure seekers, and the rumour runs that many a tarnished sovereign changed hands in the local haunts of refreshment. On the morning after the fire, smoke was discovered in St. John's School, where the smouldering books had been deposited for safety, but the fire was suppressed with little loss. There was an unhappy sequel, Dr. Dunphey, already a prey to consumption, caught a severe cold through his strenuous exertions to save the Blessed Sacrament, and only lingered three months.

The strain and anxiety told upon Father Kelly, and he withdrew from active service in 1881, although he continued to live in retirement in the Presbytery. Two years later he died, on July 5th. His Requiem was celebrated on 9th, and his body was conveyed to Moincoin, in Co. Waterford, and laid to rest in the burial place of his ancestors.

On the retirement of Father Kelly in 1881, Father Thomas Carroll, who had been his curate since 1874, was appointed in his stead. He was born in 1844 and educated abroad at Bruges. Biographical details are meagre, but the constant interest he displayed when the conversation among old friends turned on Waterford Market, suggests that he came from the south of Ireland. During his later years he never enjoyed robust health, and died on January 1st, 1892, at the early age of forty-seven. He lies buried at Ashburton Cemetery.

The Rev. John Murphy, who succeeded Father Carroll, arrived in Felling on January 7th, 1892. Educated in France, at the Benedictine College of St. Edmund Douai, and at the English College in Rome, he was ordained in 1889, after taking his Doctorate in Divinity at the Gregorian University. He had been Curate at St. Mary's Cathedral for three years when he

was appointed Rector of Felling. Before the passing of the Education Act, of 1902, all the expenses of maintaining a Catholic school had to be provided by the Catholic managers, who received “grants in aid” from the Board of Education. Dr. Murphy found that the Board was pressing, under threat of diminished grant, for improved accommodation and equipment in the schools, and moreover, there was not sufficient room for all the Catholic scholars who sought admission. After negotiations with the trustees of Jabez Balfour, he secured the site and building in Brewery Lane, formerly known as Lee’s School, at a cost of £1,250, which was increased to £3,000 by repairs, extension, walls, furnishing, asphaltting, and the installation of a modern heating apparatus.



St. John's School (formerly Lee's School)

The owners of Lee's Factory erected this building to serve as an institute for their workmen, and a school for their workers' children. There was a reading room and library attached, and at the foot of the lane leading towards St. Patrick's, Felling Shore, was a small plunge bath and a warm bath for the workmen to use if they wished; hence the title, Bath Lane. When the school was opened in 1845, the ideals of the promoters were expressed in a circular:

“The education of his children is the first and most important duty of the father of a family. Upon his attention to this, will, in a great measure, depend their future welfare, whether they grow up useful and happy members of society, and a blessing to their parents, or whether, on the contrary, they may lead a life of indifference to their social duties...”

The Scriptures were to be used, but there was to be no denominational teaching; as a future condition of employment, workmen must send their children to some school, the school fee was one penny per week, but books were provided free of charge.

Mr. John Oxberry, who supplies the above information, says that many a Felling boy and girl received here a good grounding in the rudiments of learning.

When Lee's Factory closed down in the eighties, the building passed into the hands of Jabez Balfour, whose trustees sold it to the Rev. Murphy in 1892.

The new school, having a seating capacity of over six hundred, was opened after the Whitsun holidays, in 1893.

Now that he had resolved his educational problem, Dr. Murphy decided to resume progress on the scheme of building a new church which had been in abeyance for fifteen years.

Plans were drawn up by Mr. Chas. Walker, of Newcastle, utilising the old foundations, but on a more extensive scale, and were executed by Messrs. Howe, of West Hartlepool; and on St. Patrick's Day 1895, the Church of St. Patrick was opened by Bishop Wilkinson*. A solemn opening ceremony was performed on the following Thursday, by Dr. Whiteside, Bishop of Liverpool, in the presence of more than fifty priests. The Choir, assisted by Mr. Rogers' orchestra sang Father Turner's Mass of St. Cecilia in B Flat, and Father Donnelly, the famous Jesuit preacher, delivered a most eloquent sermon, taking his text from Psalm 92 – “The Lord had rejoiced, He is clothed with beauty.”

**The first opening was sparsely attended because an admission fee of five shillings (about £27 in today's money) was asked. Many parishioners could not afford this and others who could afford it chose to boycott the ceremony on principle. Accordingly a second opening was organised, admission free, this time celebrated by the Bishop of Liverpool.*

St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, the glory of Felling, and the admiration of the visitor, is a basilica of the Romanesque style. The nave, flanked by aisles, is crossed T-wise by a transept, and the whole is cruciform in shape. On the southern side of the transept there are three apsidal projections. The central apse, facing the nave, contains the high altar and

reredos, and is lit by five lofty trefoiled windows, and crowned by a hemispherical timbered vault. Five pillars of masonry from which spring pointed arches, form a lofty arcade between nave and aisles, and support the clerestory, which rises to a barrelled vault of ribbed timber, The porch is formed by the northern projection of the nave, and is completely covered by an organ gallery, receiving light from a mullioned window almost the full width of the nave. Arranged in members of three, the clustered windows of the aisles, aided by the clerestory lights beneath the roof, dispel the encircling gloom. Clarity and serenity are the dominant impressions of the noble edifice, fit chamber for the contemplation of sublime truth.

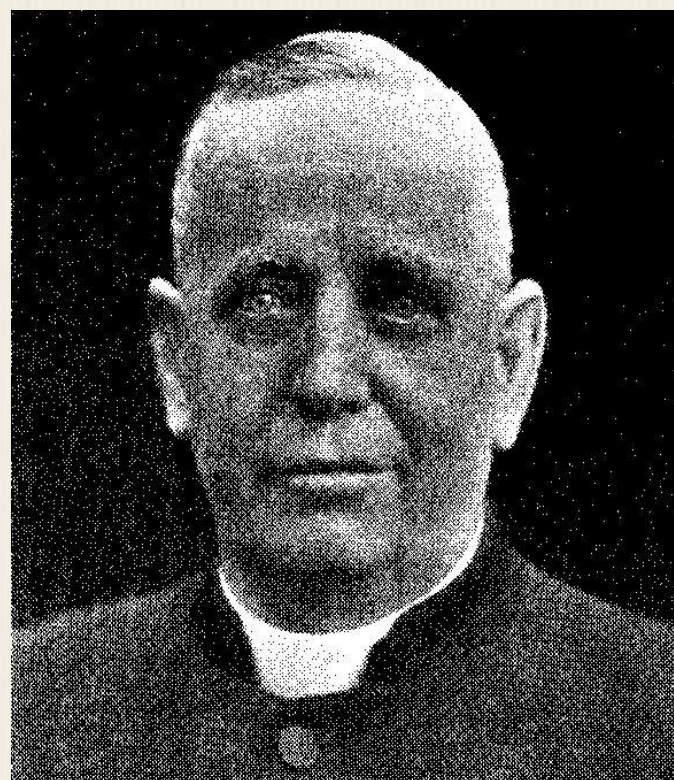
The original estimate was £11,000, but this was greatly enhanced by alterations and additions to the plans, and the final cost was £13,500**. The furnishing of the sanctuary and the installation of a private system of electric lighting entailed a further charge of £1,000. To commemorate Father John Kelly, the parishioners subscribed £180 for stained glass windows behind the high altar, depicting St. Patrick receiving his mission to the Irish nation from Pope St. Celestine, and the fulfilment thereof. During the remainder of Dr. Murphy's pastorate many valuable private gifts were presented to the church. Two beautiful alabaster altars were erected in the side chapels facing the aisles, and it was further adorned by a set of stations, and a polished alabaster pulpit on a base of Frosterley marble.

*** At today's values (2014) this figure would be £1.5M*

Dr. Murphy continued the tradition of public service, created by his predecessors, who served many years on the Heworth School Board, and gained the reputation of an expert by his mastery of the Education Acts and official Code of Regulations. In 1905, he was transferred to Wigton, and was succeeded by the Rev. Fr. E. Costello.



Fr. John Murphy



Fr. Edward Costello

Born at Shildon, near Bishop Auckland, in the year 1860. Father Edward Costello was ordained in 1890, on October 28th, after the usual course of studies at St. Cuthbert's College, Ushaw, of which he has ever remained a devoted alumnus. His first experience of missionary work was gained at St. Benet's Monks, Wearmouth, and he was parish priest at Sacriston, when the Bishop placed him in charge of Felling. When the Rev. George Lowe, O.S.B., who assisted at the opening of old St. Patrick's was once presenting prizes in a northern seminary, he advised the pupils not to bother about "ologies" but to study the Penny Catechism and the pence table. Had the Ushaw authorities followed the reverend gentlemen's advice, and inaugurated commercial studies, assuredly would Father Costello have graduated with high honours in the school of Finance and Economy. When Father Costello came to Felling he was faced with the burden of a debt of over £11,000. Furthermore, the Felling Education Committee, who were now responsible for the maintenance of the Catholic schools under the Education Act of 1902, insisted on repairs to the fabric and the exterior, which cost £250. Nor is this an isolated expense. During his regime not less than £1,200 has been expended on the schools, asphaltting yards, providing conveniences, building exterior safety staircases, and general repairs.

Father Costello has devoted great attention to the decoration of the Sanctuary. In 1912 statues were placed in the niches of the reredos, and marble panels were inserted in the frames between them, and the outer walls of the apse. In 1922 two additional memorial niches with statues and a brass gate in the communion rails completed his scheme at a total cost of £1,400. A brass tablet, on which were engraved the names of 157 men who perished in the war, was erected at the northern end of the western aisle, and a private memorial stained glass window in the eastern aisle. These memorials, public and private, were solemnly blessed on October 28th, 1922, by Father Costello, and Canon Knuckey of Carlisle, preached an impressive sermon, taking as his text King David's words – "Shall I drink the blood of these men?" and drawing the lesson that the sacrifice of penance is the living's highest tribute to the dead.

The High altar and its Reredos occupy the central apse. The reredos contains six niches surmounted by decorated Gothic spires to correspond with the spired canopy over the Tabernacle. The whole was executed in Caen stone and alabaster, by Milburn of York, from a design by Chas. Walker, architect, of Newcastle and cost £680. In 1912 statues, at a cost of £30 each, were placed in the niches, and taken in order from the left side they represent:

St. Andrew, presented by Dr. D. McF. Millar
St Agatha, presented by Patrick Bennett, Esq.
St. Cuthbert, presented by Rev. Fr. Leeming
St. Monica, the mother of St. Augustine, presented by Patrick Bennett, Esq.
St. Walburga, presented by Patrick Bennett, Esq.
St. Joseph, presented by Joseph Byers, Esq.



St. Andrew



St. Agatha



St. Cuthbert



St. Monica



St. Walburga



St. Joseph



Sacred Heart



Our Lady

At the same time the outer walls of the apse and intervals between the niches were covered with marble panels, the whole cost of completing the altar being £305. 15s. 0d.

In 1923 a niche was erected at each side of the apsidal opening, the left niche is a memorial to Captain H.White, who was killed in action, and was presented by Mrs.White and family. Its cost £300, and contains a marble statue of the Sacred Heart, presented at a cost of £125 by Mrs. Heenan and family. The right niche, costing £337, forms part of the War Memorial, and contains a marble statue of Our Lady, presented at a cost of £125 by Thomas Gilroy, Esq. The Altar rails in the transept are of Caen stone with marble mountains, and were originally gapped. The brass gates cost £184 and form part of the War Memorial. All these memorials were erected on October 28th, 1923.



Altar Rails

The stained glass window of three panels in the apse was executed by Atkinson Bros.; it represents St. Patrick receiving his mission to the Irish from Pope St. Celestine, and fulfilment thereof. It was presented by the parishioners as a memorial to Father John Kelly, and cost £180.



St. Patrick receiving his mission from Pope St. Celestine

The smaller apse on the right contains an alabaster altar to the Sacred Heart presented by Miss Mary Bennett to commemorate her parents and opened on Easter Sunday, 1898. It was executed by Emley and Son, at a cost of £320, including the overglazing and decoration of the Chapel.

The Chapel on the left contains an alabaster altar to Our Lady, presented by John White, Esq. and opened by the Rev. Dr. Larkin, O.S.B., on October 7th, 1900. It is by Emley and Son, and cost £330.



Our Lady Chapel



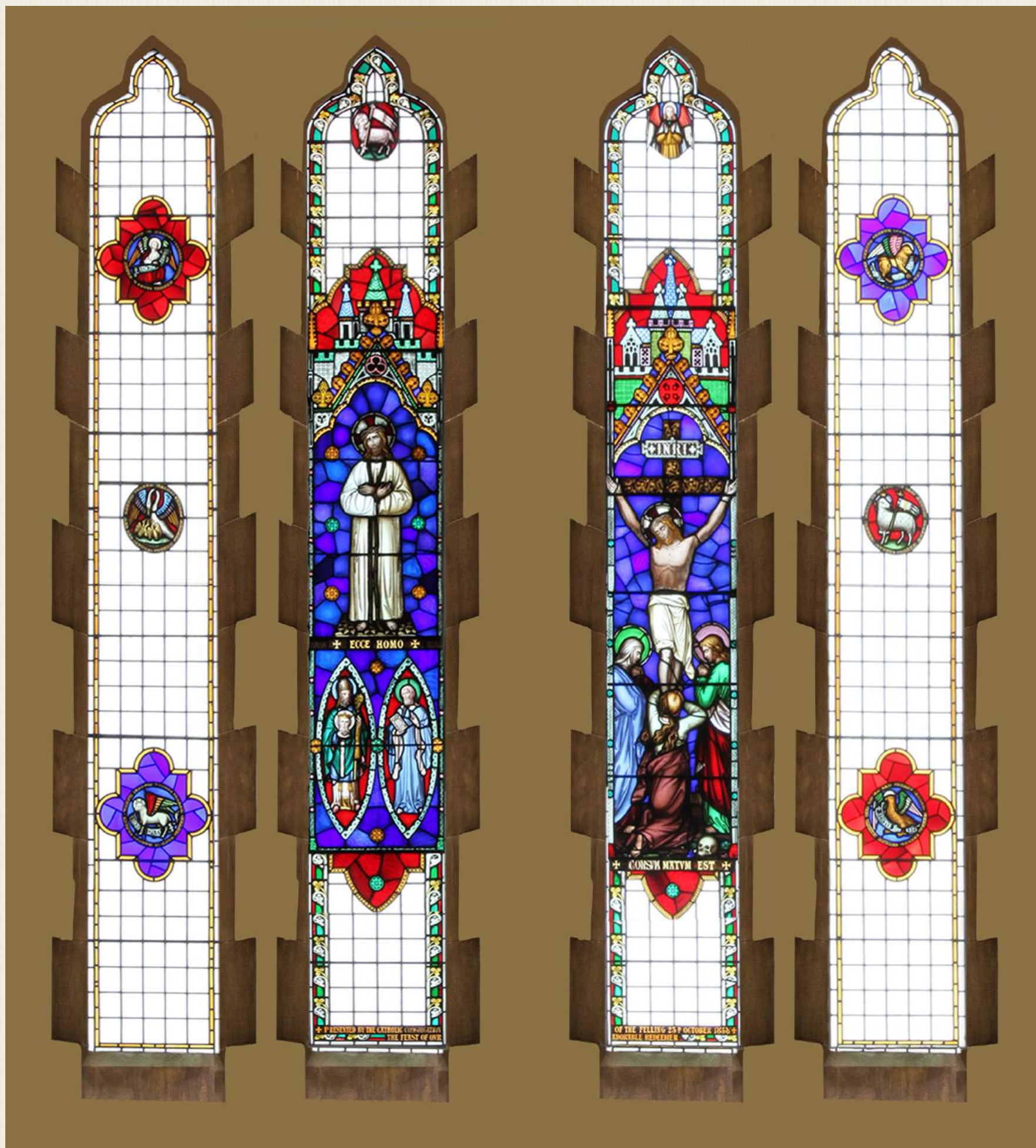
Sacred Heart Chapel

The Statue of St. Patrick, standing in front of this altar, was presented by the Felling members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and cost £25.



St. Patrick

The stained glass windows in the western transept were originally presented by the parishioners to old St. Patrick's Felling Shore, and after its sale to Messrs. Bowes and Partners, they were offered to Father Costello by C.B. Palmer, Esq.



Presented by the Catholic Congregation of the Felling
23rd October 1858 The Feast of our Adorable Redeemer

The Pulpit was a gift of James McGuinness, Esq., and was erected to commemorate his parents. From a base of Frosterley marble a panelled alabaster column arches outwards to the floor of the pulpit, which is encircled by a design of grapes and vine leaves. The pulpit proper is octagonal, each face having a double panel decorated in its upper half with conventional tracery. It was executed by Emley and Son, at a cost of £155, and opened on January 16th, 1898, by Canon Dunn.



Pulpit

The Stations were executed by Meyer, of Munich, at a cost of £155, and were the gift of Edward Gilmore, Esq. They were erected and solemnly blessed by the Rev. Dr. Murphy on March 9th, 1900.



Jesus is taken down from the cross



Jesus is laid in the sepulchre



Jesus is condemned to death



Jesus is laden with his cross



Jesus dies upon the cross



Jesus falls the first time



Jesus is nailed to the cross



Jesus meets his Mother



Jesus is stripped of his garments



Jesus is aided by Simon



Jesus falls a third time



Jesus consoles the women



Jesus falls a second time



Sr. Veronica wipes our Lord's face

Stations of the Cross

On the wall at the north end of the western aisle is a Brass Memorial Tablet, on which is graven the names of one hundred and fifty-seven of the immortal dead, sons of this parish who made the supreme sacrifice in the Great War. It was erected by the parishioners, and was unveiled by Captain F. Garvey, with military honours, and solemnly blessed by Father Costello, on October 28th, 1923.



War Memorial Tablet

On the same day a memorial window of stained glass in the eastern aisle was solemnly opened to commemorate James McGuinness and his son, James Stewart McGuinness, who was killed in action in France. It was presented by Mrs. McGuinness. The central panel depicts Our Lady and Infant Jesus over the Annunciation, and St. James and St. Joseph are shown in the side panels.



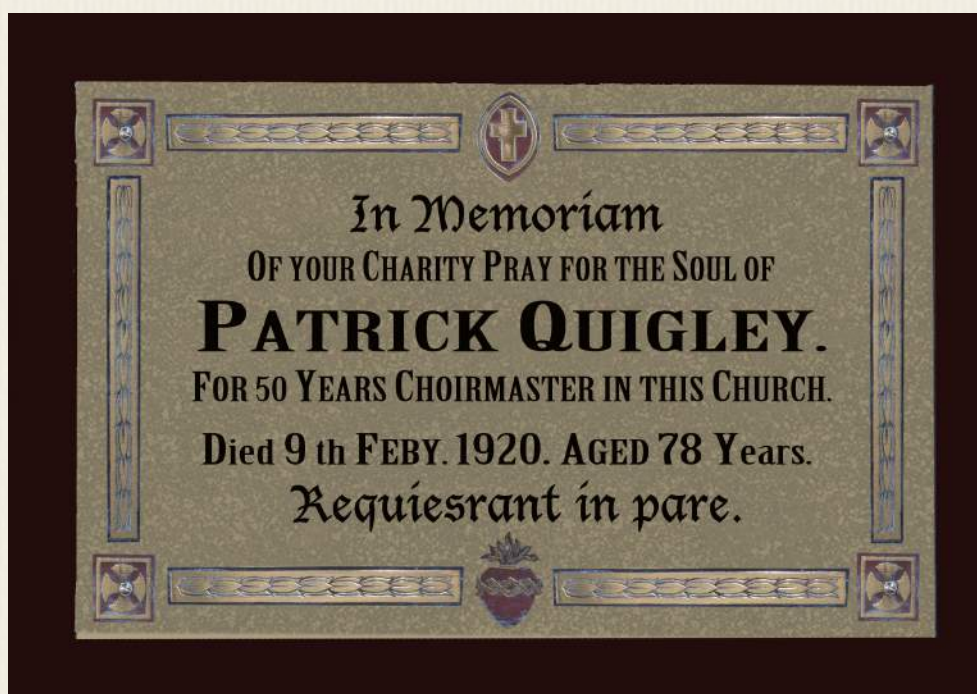
Pray for the repose of the Souls of James McGuinness who died 18th June 1907 and his Son James Stewart who fell in France 8th August 1918 aged 30

In the gallery over the porch is the organ, which was removed from St. Patrick's Felling Shore, and rebuilt at a cost of £180, when the new Church was completed.



Organ

Beneath this gallery, on the Gospel side, is a brass tablet to the memory of Patrick Quigley, choir master for fifty years.



Patrick Quigley Memorial

A large crucifix, fixed to the pillar opposite the pulpit, is the war memorial presented by St. John's Infants' School.



Presented by the Children of St. John's Infants' School as a Memorial to the Soldiers and Sailors who made the Supreme Sacrifice in the Great War 1914 - 1918

The baptismal font was presented to St. Patrick's, Felling Shore, in 1860 by William Crooks, Esq., and was transferred.

The marble holy water stoups at the bottom of the nave were the gifts of Patrick Bennett, Esq., and cost £22.



Baptismal Font



Holy Water Stoup

In 1908 the whole of the porch was enclosed by a screen, at a cost of £85.

In December 1921, a crib group, comprising Our Lady, St. Joseph and Bambino, in carved wood, was presented by the members of the Third Order of St. Francis, and cost £84. 10s. 0d.

St. Patrick's, Felling Shore, measured eighty-eight feet in length, and thirty-four in width, and was twenty feet high. St. Patrick's Felling is one hundred and thirty-four feet long, and fifty-four feet wide.

Seventy Years On

The history of St. Patrick's Church was written for a souvenir booklet to commemorate the foundation of St. Alban's School in April 1927. The school, needed to serve the communities of Bill Quay, Pelaw and Wardley, was completed in 1929. Sunday Mass was said there by Father Costello, Father Leavy and Father Connell in preparation for the establishment of a new parish which took place in 1935 when Pelaw was separated from Felling. The chapel of the convent of Marie Repartrice at Jesmond was dismantled and rebuilt at Pelaw and Father Joseph McCleary was appointed St. Alban's first parish priest. At the time of the 'Festival of Faith' in 1991 certain Press photographs were on show. These had details of when Bishop Joseph Thorman laid the foundation stone at the new school in 1927. There were shown three altar servers for their respective duties of carrying the Bishop's crozier, mitre and gown. The three servers, Gerard Nesbitt, Henry Olsen and Brian Bennett were raised to the priesthood. Father Nesbitt was at the English College, Rome. Fathers Olsen and Bennett at Ushaw. Father Nesbitt was killed in action and Father Bennett died in October 1964 but Father Olsen happily is still with us. He was a professor at Ushaw and after a period as vice-president of the College went to take charge of St. Joseph's at Birtley and is now in retirement.

His next project was to increase the Catholic education provision at Felling. The parish required a new Senior School and in 1936 the school opened at Willow Grove and at the same time St. John's was reconstructed as a Junior and Infant School. For almost sixty years Willow Grove school was the most modern in the district hosting a variety of social and public meetings in its spacious school hall. Fr. Costello's abilities in financial matters were highly regarded throughout the district and between the wars he was co-opted to Felling Education Committee.

He was responsible for decorative improvements to St. Patrick's and despite much building work made progress in reducing the large parish debt. Parish priest through two World Wars, Edward Costello died in 1946 in the fifty-sixth year of his priesthood. At Heworth cemetery hundreds of his flock lined the streets to pay their respects to a beloved Parish Priest of St. Patrick's for 41 years. The Requiem Mass before burial was attended by Bishop McCormack and celebrated by Canon Peter Corcoran, a former curate at St. Patrick's, in the presence of 150 priests and a full congregation.

The war claimed the lives of many Felling parishioners including army chaplain Father Gerard Nesbitt a Padre who was regarded as a father and friend to all the men in the Battalion whether Catholic or not. He served with the Battalion (which incorporated French Troops) from 1941 and went through the whole of the Middle East Campaign. He died as the

Battalion advanced during the Normandy break through on July 5th, 1944 when a shell burst while he was in the act of burying the dead. Earlier that year he was mentioned in dispatches for distinguished service. He was posthumously awarded the French 'Croix de Guerre'.

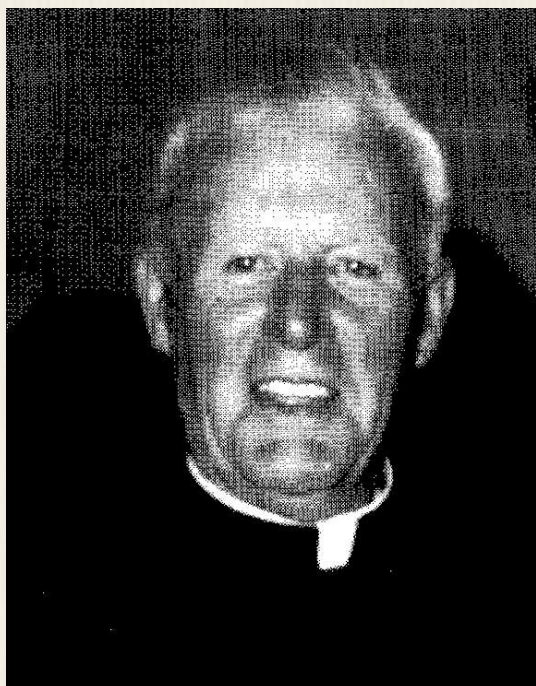


Fr. Gerard Nesbitt

Father Bernard Stronge moved to Felling to succeed Father Costello as parish Priest. Father Stronge, born near Lough Derg, on the borders of Tipperary and Galway, was ordained in Kilkenny in 1928. In the August of that year he took up his first post as curate of St. Joseph's Gateshead. His duties took him to the crowded slum tenements which spilled down to the river around Bottle Bank under the recently opened Tyne Bridge.

Shortly after moving to Felling Fr. Stronge welcomed Bishop Joseph McCormack to concelebrate Mass for the consecration of the church on 24th May 1950. In these post-war years Father Stronge had the support of three curates Fathers Gerard White, Edward Hodgson and William McKenna.

During the 1950s large housing developments shifted Felling's population across the district. As the Leam Lane Estate developed new churches were planned for the community. In the interim Masses were said at Fr. John Daly's house in Grassbanks and every Sunday at the Black Bull public house at Wardley before St. Augustine's was built. Father Stronge was once approached by a person who felt that the Black Bull was not an appropriate place for the celebration of Mass. His reply was: "If the inn-keeper at Bethlehem had been as hospitable as the landlord of the Black Bull there would have been no need for our Lord to have been born in a stable." He was also responsible for the building of St. Augustine's Junior and Mixed Infant School in 1961. Mass was said here until St. Augustine's church opened the following year.



Fr. Bernard Stronge



Fr. Ben Carey

On Sunday 16th February 1964 Tyne Tees Television televised a sung High Mass for the first Sunday in Lent. The Mass was celebrated by Fr. Ernest Donnelly, Fr. James Kennedy and Fr. Bernard Stronge. Fr. Christopher from the Passionist Order preached the sermon. This year also saw the introduction of the New Rite of the Low Mass in English.

Fr. Stronge's work extended beyond the parish when he periodically visited his native Ireland encouraging a large number of young priests to work in the diocese. He was as he puts it "a kind of recruiting sergeant". More locally he was Diocesan Youth representative visiting and supporting parishes in youth development work.

In June 1978, the year of his Golden Jubilee, Father Stronge was made a Freeman of the Borough of Gateshead in recognition of his work for youth in the area over many years. He was proudly associated with the Knights of St. Columba, the Legion of Mary and the brothers of St. Vincent de Paul. In his younger days he found relaxation in playing golf and was four times club champion at Heworth. Now in his ninety-first year he lives at High Heworth after retiring from St. Patrick's in 1985.

Father Stronge was succeeded at St. Patrick's by Father Ben Carey who began his ministry at St. Wilfrid's Gateshead. He trained and was ordained at Wexford in June 1952 before crossing the sea to England. He served at St. Aloysius, Hebburn and St. Cuthbert's, North Shields before moving to St. Aidan's, Ashington where he was parish priest for fifteen years. He returned to Tyneside to renew old friendships and endeared himself to the congregation with his love, compassion, and gentle but infectious sense of humour. Many will remember when he introduced his assistant Fr. William Jack's to St. Patrick's saying they could be known as "Bill and Ben".

Fr. Carey set about refurbishing the church culminating in the creation of a new parish centre in the crypt of the church and a new central heating system for the church. In 1991 he helped to organise a “Festival of Faith” where many denominational groups in Felling celebrated through rallies, meetings and services their Christian faith.

He worked tirelessly for the parish but the heavy workload in the end began to affect his health. When Bishop Ambrose arrived in the diocese he offered to lighten Fr. Carey’s load by offering him a smaller parish at the Holy Name in Jesmond. However twelve months later he was called to more important duties. On the evening of Christmas day 1993 he died suddenly.



Fr. Ian Patterson & Fr. John White

In December 1992 St. Patrick’s was fortunate to welcome two priests, Father Ian Patterson, parish priest and Father John White (retired) who had both previously served at the Holy Name Jesmond for many years. Fr. Patterson was ordained in his home parish of Our Lady, Star of the Sea, Horden, County Durham. He has served at Corpus Christi, Gateshead, St Bede’s, Denton Burn, and from 1976 until 1992 was diocesan secretary. Fr. White was born in Bensham and has served in the following parishes – St. Collumba’s, Wallsend, Holy Rosary, Gateshead, St. Joseph’s, Sunderland, St. Joseph’s, Coundon, St. Cuthbert’s, North Shields, and St. Mary’s, Alnwick before moving to Jesmond.

The story of St. Patrick’s will continue into the future and no doubt the new millennium will see changes and set challenges as the community of St. Patrick’s follows the example of its ancestors in the worship of Jesus Christ.

Clergy who have served St. Patrick's Felling since 1900

J. Mc Enaney	00/00/0000	to	00/12/1917
E. Costello	14/04/1905	to	22/03/1946
P. Corcoran	31/09/1906	to	17/05/1913
J. Leary	00/00/1919	to	00/00/1932
O. Moody	12/04/1926	to	25/03/1927
R. Gibbons	25/03/1927	to	10/08/1935
J. Fitzgerald	27/08/1932	to	04/06/1940
P. Kerwick	10/08/1935	to	11/06/1938
D. Keane	07/09/1935	to	23/05/1937
L. Thompson	28/08/1937	to	00/00/1942
M. Cassidy	00/06/1940	to	00/10/1940
E.V. Marron	25/08/1942	to	25/09/1944
H. Mackin	00/00/1942	to	09/10/1946
W. McKenna	15/09/1945	to	28/04/1957
J. Carroll	05/05/1945	to	15/09/1945
B. Stronge (retired)	06/05/1946	to	12/07/1985
T. Towers	14/09/1946	to	18/10/1947
E. Hodgson	11/01/1947	to	12/05/1951
G. White	18/10/1947	to	12/09/1949
J. O'Neill	17/09/1949	to	04/12/1951
E. Wilkinson	19/08/1950	to	25/01/1951
J. McLoughlin	19/05/1951	to	00/00/1954
J. F. Brady	04/09/1954	to	15/10/1960
J. Daly	11/08/1956	to	23/01/1969
P. Harrison	28/04/1957	to	17/10/1959
J. Burke	17/10/1959	to	30/07/1962
E. Donnelly	15/10/1960	to	26/07/1969
P. Kennedy	17/08/1962	to	14/05/1966
D. Condon	14/05/1966	to	01/06/1968
J. Marron	27/08/1966	to	23/01/1969
J. Cooney	20/07/1968	to	27/11/1970
H. Ryan	28/11/1970	to	00/08/1973
G. Brydon	00/10/1973	to	00/06/1974
M. Purtill	20/07/1974	to	30/04/1976
J. Keane	24/04/1976	to	07/11/1981

M. R. Marr	07/11/1981	to	00/08/1987
B. Carey	13/09/1985	to	11/12/1992
Fr. Dixon	00/08/1985	to	00/10/1985
W.A. Jacks	22/08/1987	to	15/01/1993
I. Patterson	11/12/1992	to	date
J.White (retired)	11/12/1992	to	date

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people who have helped me compile this history. Fr. Patterson, Fr. White, Dr. M. Cosgrave, Desmond Bennett, Maurice Brown and Mrs Cassidy who have given me advice about the text, Allan Lavin and Miss E. Knight who provided illustrations, Rosemary Bickerton who typed the text and the late Danny McKie who drew my attention to the Brandling connection. I would like to express my gratitude to all members of the centenary committees for their assistance in this project.

Peter Haywood

Chapter 2

History 1995 - 2014



Centenary

To prepare for the Centenary, a number of special events and projects were planned. These included purchasing new altar linen at a cost of £800 paid for by donations, installation of a new microphone system at a cost of £1,683, flower festival workshops, banners of Northern Saints produced by pupils of St. John the Baptist School and a Centenary Songs of Praise with other Christian Churches in Felling.



Altar Linen

To celebrate the Centenary one of St. Patrick's parishioners, John (Mick) Appleby, composed the following poem:

*This is the Year, A very special year for our congregation
St. Patrick's is one hundred years old
Come join the celebration*

*The walls have been washed, and those high windows too,
And the statues and stations are looking like new
The Sanctuary's been cleaned and they've polished the brasses,
Hats off to the lads and those lovely lasses.*

*On the 17th we're in for a treat, but get in soon if you want a seat.
Ambrose is coming to celebrate.
Refreshments are free, don't bring any bait.*

*The music, the singing, plus the floral display,
Will certainly make this a memorable day.
So let your voices ring out on Friday at seven.
I'm sure they'll be heard by the angels in Heaven!*

*We've had dances and quizzes, yes, lots of fund-raising.
Plus some generous donations, its truly amazing.
And the Youth of the parish are playing their part
Three cheers for them to give them some heart.*

*There are lots of mementoes in the Repository store.
Rosaries, candles, diaries and things,
Centenary pens, and lovely key rings.
So why not drop in, browse a while,
They'll surely greet you with a smile.*

*St. John's are helping along the way.
I know it will be a marvellous display.*

*Oh that Banner, so tall, so grand,
St. Patrick himself must have lent a hand!*

*Our beautiful centre won't hold all,
So please join the rest in Holly Hill Hall.
But wherever you be, have no fear,
You'll remember this evening for many a year.*

*I've oft heard said, that St. Paddy's has ghosts
Fear not, come worship the Lord God of Hosts*

*For this magnificent Church has stood the test,
Built by our ancestors, now at rest.
One hundred years old on St. Patrick's Day
Bless the good folk of Felling, O, Lord We Pray.*

The Centenary Mass was celebrated on the feast of St. Patrick, 17th March 1995, with refreshments afterwards in the Parish Centre and Holly Hill Sports and Social Club.

To commemorate the centenary four chalices were presented to the church, two from the staff and children of St. John the Baptist School, one from the Catholic Women's Guild and one from the Centenary Fund.



Chalices

Amongst other events planned in the centenary year were:

A flower festival entitled "A Bloomin Hundred" and a photographic history with memorabilia, which jointly raised £1,500.

Golf Competition which raised £600.

Concert by Felling Male Voice Choir, which raised £510.



Flower Festival

It was unfortunate that in the Centenary Year, Fr. Bernard Stronge, who was parish priest at St. Patrick's for 39 years, died in retirement at his home in Felling on 15th November 1995. His Requiem Mass was celebrated by Bishop Ambrose Griffiths before burial at Heworth Cemetery.

With major renovations under consideration within the religious environment, academic life was also under scrutiny by Ofsted with the first inspection of St. John the Baptist School. The resulting grading being "GOOD".



St. John the Baptist School

In April 1996 the Centenary Fund totalled £8,500 and a meeting was held to discuss options for spending the fund with the aim of promoting lasting spiritual and social benefits for the parish. Suggestions included improved access, new crib, stained glass window, new lighting and complete re-ordering of the church without affecting the High Altar.

The decision was taken to refurbish the Church and a working group was established to consider all options, and visits were arranged to other re-ordered Churches in the diocese.



View of Altar from Organ Loft

Preparing for the Millennium

There was a growing awareness of the numbers of elderly and housebound parishioners and the need to help them attend Mass. Access to the church, from the southern aspect was improved by the demolition of a garage and the lowering of a boundary wall at a cost of £6,335.

As the new millennium approached a number of initiatives were planned and attended by young and old within the parish.

Pupils at St John the Baptist School became involved in Jubilee 2000 to cancel third world debt.

Approximately forty parishioners attended an Ecumenical celebration at Sunderland FC Football Club.

Grand Parish Dinner and Dance.

Prayer and Praise Service for all Christian churches in Felling held at St. Patrick's Church.

St. Patrick's parishioner Jim Angus was ordained to the priesthood on 25th June 2000 at St. Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle. The ordination was celebrated by Bishop Ambrose Griffiths. Fr.Angus' first Mass was celebrated at St. Patrick's the following day.



Bishop Ambrose Griffiths and Fr. Jim Angus

In September 2000, Fr. Terence Kerr, Parish Priest, of St. Alban's, Pelaw, was forced to retire because of ill health. Although living at St. Alban's Presbytery he could no longer contribute to the spiritual welfare of his congregation. Once again after a separation of 65 years, St. Patrick's and St. Alban's became a shared parish, with Fr. Ian Patterson, supported by Fr. John White undertaking responsibility for both churches.



St. Alban's Church, Pelaw

In October 2000 Fr. Patterson celebrated a special Mass in St. Alban's Church for the "future well-being of the new joint parish and held an open meeting to listen to the hopes and aspirations of the parishioners". A further meeting was arranged in St. Patrick's to discuss effects of the shared parish situation and the need to change Mass times in both parishes.

On 5th July 2001 Fr. Ian Patterson celebrated his Silver Jubilee of ordination to the priesthood with Mass in St. Patrick's and refreshments in the Parish Centre and church grounds. The celebration was attended by Bishop Lindsay who had ordained Fr. Patterson to the priesthood at Our Lady Star of the Sea, Horden, County Durham.



Fr. Ian Patterson

The site of the old St. John's School adjacent to St. Patrick's Church, which had for many years been used as the parish hall, was sold to a developer who eventually built six 3-storey town houses.



St. John's School

Mark Millward, a former Anglican priest and an Ushaw College student, was seconded to St. Patrick's to continue his studies and to assist Fr. Patterson. Bishop Kevin Dunn celebrated Fr. Mark's ordination at St. Mary's Cathedral on 4th June 2005 and his first Mass was celebrated at St. Patrick's the following day. Fr. Millward is currently serving the Washington Cluster of Parishes.



Fr. Mark Millward

In 2005 “The Year of the Eucharist”, the major refurbishment of St. Patrick’s was given the official go-ahead by Bishop Kevin Dunn. Three groups were set up, a Funding Group, Social and Fundraising Group and Publicity Group. The refurbishment was estimated to cost £350,000 and early in the project it was decided to sub-contract as much work as possible to local companies and contractors.

A new organisation, “Friends of St Patrick’s”, was established to strengthen bids for grants. Unfortunately the refurbishment project was not eligible for a Heritage Lottery Grant as the proposal was improvement and not preservation. The Grants and Funding Group approached organisations and received numerous grants including the following:

£200 from Mary Webb Trust

£1,000 from Alan Evan’s Memorial Trust towards repositioning the altar rails

£5,000 from Gateshead Community Chest Fund towards creating disabled access

£1,000 from Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation

£1,000 from Joicey Trust

£2,000 from Northumbria Historic Churches towards cost of rewiring and lighting

£100 from the family of Fr. M Cassidy who was curate at St. Patrick’s in 1940

£500 from Society of Antiquaries to restore the baptismal font

£250 from St. Augustine’s Church, Leam Lane

£500 from Nicholas Coote Charitable Trust

£4,000 from Maurice and Hilda Laign Charitable Trust

£3,000 from Garfield Weston Foundation

£1,000 from Watson Funeral Service

£15,000 from Delacour Will Trust

£3,000 from Historic Churches Preservation Trust

On 22nd July 2005, Fr. John White celebrated the 60th anniversary of his ordination with Mass in St. Patrick’s Church.

During the church refurbishment, Sunday Mass continued to be celebrated in St. Patrick’s Church, with parishioners cleaning the church each weekend, with weekday Masses being said in St. John the Baptist School Hall. However, as the work progressed, for safety reasons the church was closed and Sunday Mass was also said in the school hall. Funerals were held at St. Alban’s Church, Pelaw during the re-ordering of the church.

The refurbishment work progressed with:

Removal of the confessional box.

The supply and installation of a new lift in the under-croft and new internal stairs to the church.

Creation of a dais to make an extended sanctuary

A new altar and lectern were created by separating the existing pulpit and using the top

as the new lectern and the base as the new altar.

Repositioning of the altar rails.

Redecoration was carried out by W D Davidson and Sons of Felling.

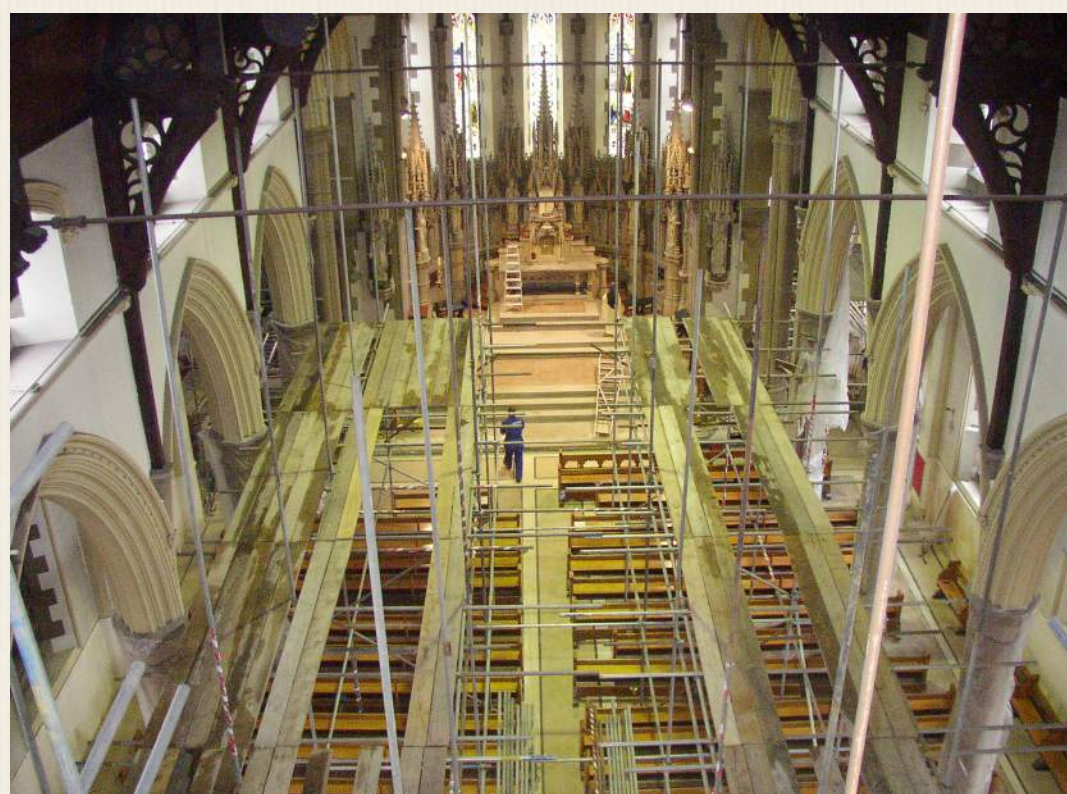
Repositioning the baptismal font from the back of the church and siting it on the sanctuary.

Installation of loft supports for the winch gear of the new lighting chandeliers.

Complete electrical rewiring.

New access on the west side of the church.

New flooring around the aisles of the church.



Interior of St. Patrick's Church during refurbishment

St. Patrick's should be back "home" by Easter

By Anne Bradley

THE PARISH church of St. Patrick's Felling has closed its doors to parishioners for the first time in more than 110 years. But thankfully, within two months it will re-open following extensive refurbishment, which will renew this splendid historic church. The work, which began towards the end of 2005, has not interrupted the celebration of Sunday Mass thanks to a team of parishioners who have turned out each Friday evening to clean the church. However, as the project nears its final stages, it has become necessary to say Mass in the parish school hall as scaffolding now fills the entire church nave. It was always the intention of parish priest Fr. Ian Patterson and the parishioners to preserve the magnificent interior features.

In 1895 the parish raised £13,500 to build St. Patrick's and it will take £350,000 to modernise and re-order the church.

Today's parishioners know they have many years of fundraising ahead, but believe they can match the generosity and zeal of their forefathers. It is an added bonus that the project has provided work for several local contractors at a time when the High Street area of Felling is in real need of rejuvenation. Project architect, Kevin Doonan of Hexham, has family connections with the parish, main contractor, Able Construction Northern, has its offices just a stone's throw from the church on Sunderland Road, Felling. The original wiring of the church, which cost the parish £1,000 back in the 1890's is being painstakingly replaced by Hepple Engineering of Heaton under the

watchful eye of Armstrong Reade, electrical consultants of Pelaw.

But perhaps the most valued items, the Frosterley marble pulpit, the communion rails of Caen stone and the baptismal font, which once stood in the original church on Felling Shore, have been entrusted to the Dunston-based firm Morris Marblework. It will be their task to transform the pulpit, originally presented to the church by parishioners and Felling businessman James McGuinness in remembrance of his parents and costing £155, into the base of a resplendent new altar and lectern. The altar rails are to be shortened and repositioned nearer the tabernacle, while retaining the brass gates, which are part of the memorial to the 157 men of the parish who gave their lives during the Great War.

Following restoration the baptismal font presented in 1860 by William Crooks and transferred to the present church in 1895 will be positioned prominently on the re-order altar. The parishioners will return to the church newly decorated by the Felling based firm W D Davison and Sons, in time for the Easter celebrations. It is hoped that those who found access difficult or impossible will be able to join them entering by the new porch and door at ground level on Church Street, or by the newly installed Stannah lift at the High Street entrance. Awaiting them they will find a church which combines design features befitting the 21st Century and lovingly restored elements of the past. St. Patrick's will lose none of the beauty which has endeared it to many down the years.

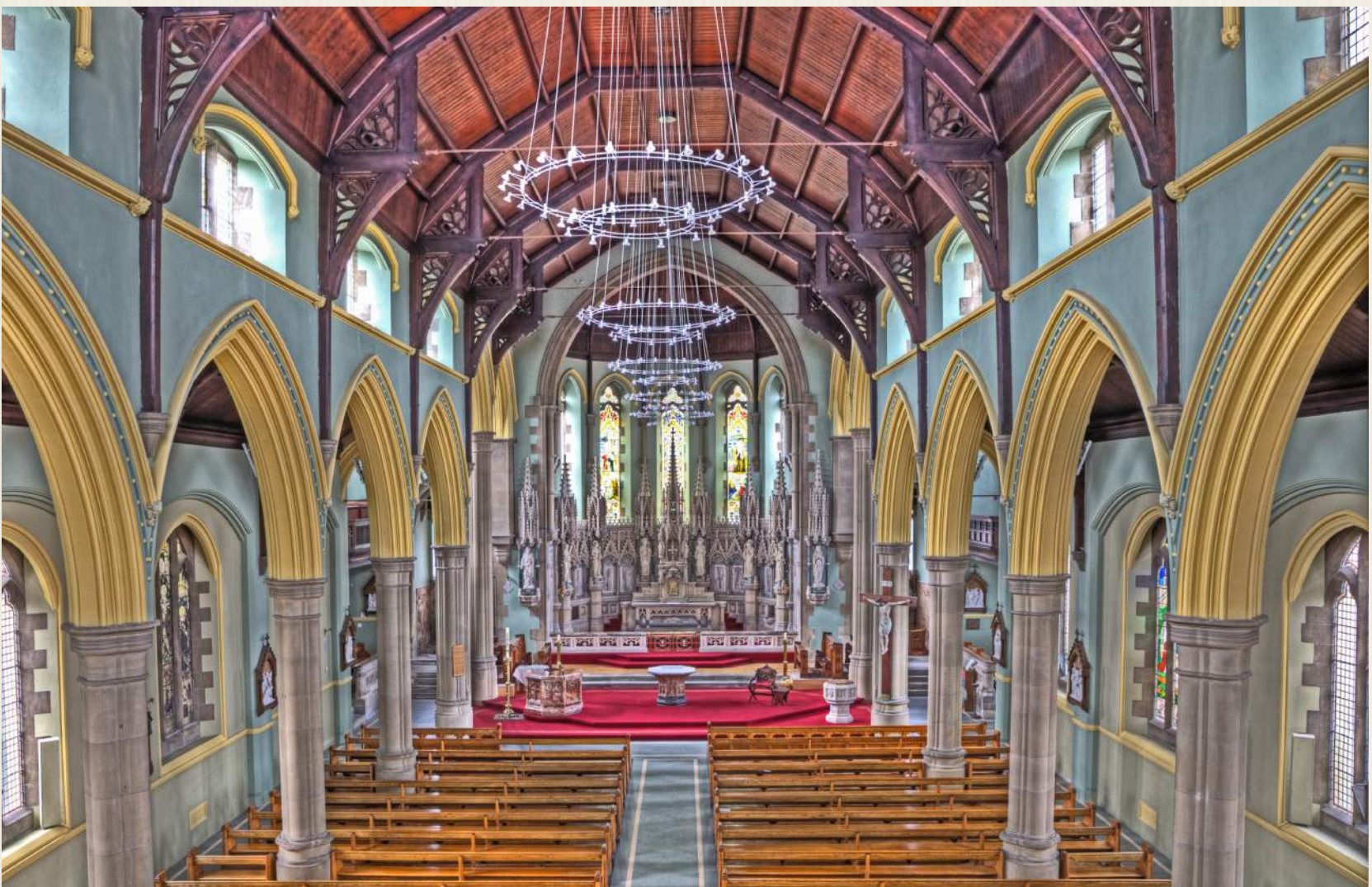
Extract from Northern Cross April 2006

Completion of the main body of work was set for Holy Thursday Mass on 14th April 2006 with any minor work to be completed after the Easter Celebrations.

The final cost of the refurbishment was £327,794. Most of the parish savings with the Diocese were used on the project, with the remaining costs covered by a loan from the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.

On Wednesday 7th June 2006 other Christian churches in Felling were invited to a Service of Thanksgiving with the homily given by Rev. Caroline Worsfold, Chaplain to St. Benedict's Hospice, Sunderland.

A Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated by Bishop Kevin Dunn on 9th July 2006.



Refurbished Interior

In September 2006 St. Patrick's Church was opened as part of the Heritage Open Days scheme, this has since become an annual event.

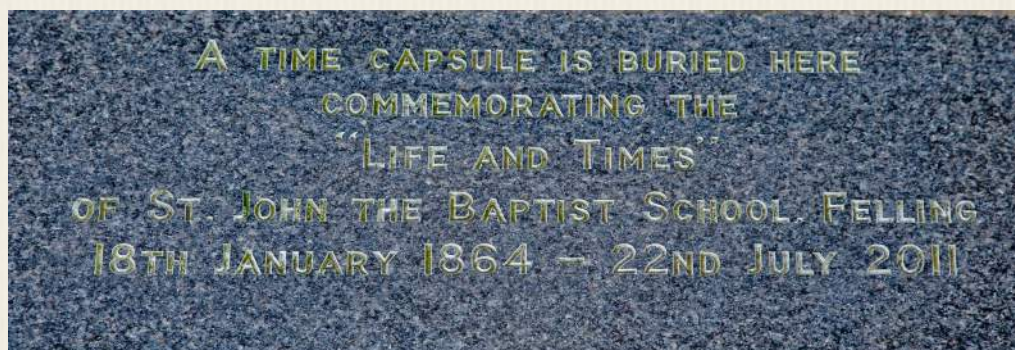
Fr. John White died peacefully at home in St. Patrick's Presbytery on Friday 27th October 2006, aged 86, his Requiem Mass was celebrated on Friday 3rd November, before burial in his family grave at Earsdon, North Tyneside. In Fr. White's will £54,109 was bequeathed to the refurbishment fund.

The 2008 annual financial report for St. Patrick's recorded the generosity of anonymous individuals who had made donations towards the Refurbishment Fund, enabling the parish to make large repayments to the Diocese with the outstanding debt being reduced to £48,291.

In November 2009 Gateshead Education Authority looked at the viability of schools within the borough and in particular St. John the Baptist School, due to the relatively small number of children within the school. Meetings were held with parents, parishioners, staff and governors to plan a joint response to ensure the school's future. After a number of consultations in June 2010, Gateshead Council announced its decision to close the school with effect from 31st August 2011.

Before the end of the school year the pupils of St. John the Baptist School prepared a time capsule, which was buried under the statue of St. John the Baptist at the front of St. Patrick's Church, the contents included:

- School polo shirt
- Medal celebrating the life of St. John the Baptist School
- School register
- Local newspaper
- Hand bell
- Photographs of the school
- Class photographs
- Children's letters
- Children's paintings
- CD of the children singing
- Church newsletter



Time Capsule Dedication



St. John the Baptist

Most of the pupils who attended St. John the Baptist School were transferred to St. Alban's, Pelaw.

The school building was sold to the Gateshead Jewish Community Council to be used as a girls' secondary school.

In 2014 St. Patrick's once again opened its doors as part of the Heritage Open Day with a theme of remembering the sacrifice some of the parishioners made during the First World War. All of the memorials were enhanced by adornment with floral tributes.

St. Patrick's parishioners remember war dead with flowers

By Anne Bradley

Felling would have been a relatively small town in 1914 and so it is hard to imagine the sadness when more than 150 men from the parish of St. Patrick's lost their lives in the various battles of World War One. It is also amazing to think that at a time when most people were facing financial hardship with the loss of so many bread-winners, the parish community could raise hundreds of pounds to ensure that fitting memorials were erected in the church to become a permanent reminder to their sacrifice.

When St. Patrick's opens its doors for the Heritage Open Days on Thursday, September

11th, the present-day parishioners will have their brave forefathers very much in mind. Each of the war memorials – and there are several in the church including communion rail gates, a memorial window, an impressive crucifix and a brass plaque to record the names of the fallen – will be adorned with beautiful, symbolic and evocative flower displays recalling the sacrifice made by the men of St. Patrick's a century ago.

We invite people from across the diocese to visit the church between 11am and 3pm to commemorate their sacrifice and ensure "we never forget".

Extract from Northern Cross September 2014



Heritage Open Day Memorials - September 2014

Historic Importance of the Main Staircase

Due to adverse weather and 118 years of wear and tear the main steps leading up to the front entrance of the church had deteriorated to such an extent that surface repairs were attempted 25 years ago with a limited degree of success. In 2012 a grant application was submitted to English Heritage to affect major renovation work to the steps but this was unsuccessful.

In 2013 under the supervision of Kevin Doonan (architect) a complete technical evaluation of the steps was undertaken, the result of which determined that the stonework had deteriorated to the extent that the steps were deemed to be unsafe and were closed to public access. The inspection also revealed that there was no effective means of preventing water and damp penetration through the stonework and damaging the under-croft entrance to the church and the parish centre.

With the report an application was made to the Heritage Lottery Fund and in September 2013 St. Patrick's was awarded a confirmed grant of almost £90,000 to refurbish the steps to the church's main entrance.



Heritage Lottery Logo

The money raised through the National Lottery Fund (HLF) aims to make a lasting difference for heritage, people and communities across the UK and help build a resilient heritage economy. HLF has supported almost 35,000 projects with more than £5.3bn across the UK.

The repairs are to be carried out by Heritage Consolidation Ltd, of Brampton under the supervision of Kevin Doonan Architects Ltd, Hexham. This will involve partially dismantling the existing stone steps to replace defective stonework, rebuilding so that they are structurally sound and incorporate measures to ensure that water penetration is controlled to prevent future damage to the steps and the interior of the Parish Centre. The new construction will also incorporate thermal insulation to provide a dry and warm entrance space to the Parish Centre.

The investigative work started on 12th March 2014 and the main refurbishment is scheduled to be completed by May 2015. This work will restore the historic fabric of the building and enhance the spiritual experience of those who enter St Patrick's Church by the processional entrance.



August 2012



March 2014



Undercroft August 2012

The following photographs illustrate the importance of the main staircase in celebrations.



Peter & Ellen Wilkin - April 1942



Clifford & Margaret Fothergill - July 1948



Joseph & Brenda Roof - 1956



Ann Saville - October 1983



First Holy Communicants - May 1980



St. John the Baptist School Children awaiting burial of the Time Capsule - July 2011



Lucy McGinley's Maids of Honour - 2010



Paul & Lucy Robson - August 2010



Claire Robinson - September 2006



Michael & Claire Neil - 2006

Chapter 3

Consecration of St. Patrick's Church - 24th May 1950



Bishop Consecrates Felling Roman Catholic Church

RELICS OF CHRISTIAN MARTYRS

St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, Felling, was consecrated by the Lord Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, the Rt. Rev. J. McCormack, in a ceremony which lasted nearly four hours on Wednesday of last week.

All the seating accommodation was occupied and many people were standing in the church during the ceremony.

Taking part were eight Felling-born priests, as well as a large number of other clergymen from Durham and Tyneside parishes.

The Bishop opened the ceremony by going round the church building, sprinkling the walls on the outside with holy water.

SYMBOLIC CROSS

Shortly afterwards the Bishop traced with his crozier the letters of the Greek and Latin alphabets in little heaps of ashes which had been sprinkled on the floor of the church. In two lines – one of 24 heaps for the Greek alphabet, and the other of 23, for the Latin they took the shape of a Greek cross. This symbolised the two languages of the church – Greek in the past and Latin at the present time – by which the people came to the knowledge of Christianity.

Then followed the consecration of the altar and the inside walls of the church by the sprinkling of Gregorian water.

A very impressive part of the ceremony was the carrying of the relics. This was done in memory of the early days of the Church when during the persecution of Christians, they were forced to say Mass in Catacombs.

A slab was placed over the grave of one of the early Christian martyrs on which mass was

being celebrated by the people in the Catacombs. It is now part of the ceremony of all Roman Catholic church consecrations for the relics of some of the Christian martyrs to be carried in procession on the shoulders of four priests, led by the bishop and clergy.

SILVER CASKET

The relics, in a silver casket, are deposited in a sepulchre, or grave, already prepared in the stone of the altar. This cavity is then hermetically sealed with a stone inscribed with names of the martyrs in question. On the altar Mass is henceforward celebrated every morning.

Carrying the relics in the solemn procession were four Felling-born priests the Rev. Frs. B. Bennett, of Seaham Harbour; N. Olsen (Ushaw College); O. Mundy (North Shields); and F. Garvey (Dunston).

Another ceremony performed by the Bishop was the anointing of twelve beautifully carved marble crosses on the walls of the church. Each action during the consecration ceremony was accompanied by the appropriate chanting of psalms and canticles by the choir and cantors.

Attending the Bishop during the consecration were the Rev. Fr. J. Walsh, who spent 16 years at Dunston and is now the parish priest of Willington, and the Rev. Fr. E. Hodgson, one of the curates of St. Patrick's Church, who was born in Gateshead.

Masters of ceremonies were the Rev. Frs. W. Malone, of Ushaw College, Durham, and L. Doyle, parish priest of Ponteland. The other two cantors were the Rev. Frs. J. Watson, of

Shildon, and T. Scriven of South Moor.

OTHER CLERGY

Other clergy present at the consecration were the Rev. Fr. B.A. Stronge, the parish priest of St. Patrick's, who was a curate in Gateshead from 1928 to 1946 before he came to Felling; the Rev. Fr. W. McKenna; a curate of St. Patrick's; the Very Rev. Canon E. Wilkinson, and the Rev. Frs. J. Farrow (St. Joseph's, Gateshead); A. Mc Shane (Langley Moor), H. Mackin (Whickham); O. Curry (St. Bede's, Jarrow); and P. Cronin (the Bishop's secretary).

Mass was celebrated by the Rev. Fr. J. O'Neill, one of the curates of Felling.

In his address the Bishop congratulated the people on having one of the noblest Roman Catholic churches in the diocese. Each stone had been blessed to make up the edifice of the Church, from which they who were the "living stones" could draw the sources of grace and strength and build within themselves a spiritual edifice.

H I G H M A S S

To commemorate the consecration a "Day of Thanksgiving" was held at the church on Sunday.

The morning solemn high Mass was celebrated by the Rev. Fr. E. Hodgson. The deacon of the Mass was Rev. Fr. J. O'Neill, and he was assisted by the sub-deacon, the Rev. Fr. W. McKenna. Mr. P. Tierney, of Felling, was the master of ceremonies.

A special preacher was the Rev. Fr. J. Leavy, parish priest of Penshaw, who also gave benediction, assisted by the Rev. Frs. B.A. Stronge, deacon and J. O'Neill sub-deacon.

Opened in 1895

The foundation stone of the present church was laid on St. Patrick's Day, 1873, when Father John Kelly was parish priest.

Unfortunately, a disastrous fire in 1877 caused the abandonment of the work on the site for 15 years. The strain and anxiety told on Father Kelly who withdrew from active service in 1881.

The Rev. John Murphy arrived in Felling on January 7, 1892. Educated in France, at the Benedictine College of St. Edmund, Douai, and at the English College in Rome, he was ordained in 1889, after taking his doctorate in Divinity at the Gregorian University.

Dr. Murphy decided to resume progress on the scheme of building a new church which had been in abeyance for 15 years. Plans were drawn up by Mr. Charles Walker, of Newcastle, utilising the old foundations, but on a more extensive scale. Work was carried out by Messrs. Howe, of West Hartlepool, and on St. Patrick's Day, 1895, the Church of St. Patrick was opened by Bishop Wilkinson.

A solemn opening ceremony was performed on the following Thursday by Dr. Whiteside, Bishop of Liverpool, in the presence of more than 50 priests.

This lofty and beautifully designed church is a basilica of the Romanesque style. The nave flanked by aisles, is crossed T-wise by a transept, and the whole is cruciform in shape. On the southern side of the transept there are three apsidal projections. The central apse, facing the nave, contains the high altar and reredos, and is lighted by five lofty trefoiled windows crowned by a hemi-spherical vault.

The porch is formed by the northern projection of the nave, and is completely

covered by an organ gallery, receiving light from a mullioned window almost the full width of the nave.

Clarity and serenity are the dominant impressions of the edifice.

The original estimate was £11,000 but this was greatly increased by alterations and additions to the plans and the final cost was £13,500. The furnishing of the sanctuary and the installation of a private system of electric

lighting entailed a further £1,000.

The church could not be consecrated until it had been freed from debt by the voluntary subscriptions of the parishioners.

To commemorate Father Kelly, the parishioners subscribed £180 for the stained glass windows behind the high altar, depicting St. Patrick receiving his mission to the Irish nation from Pope St. Celestine and its fulfilment.

Extract from Gateshead Post 2 June 1950



Fr. B. Stronge awaiting arrival of the Dignitaries



Fr. B. Stronge welcomes Bishop J. McCormack to St. Patrick's



Congregation awaiting entry into Church



Carrying of the Relics in Solemn Procession



Sealing of the Relics of the Martyrs in the Sepulchre in the Altar



Bishop J. McCormack leaving Church by east staircase

Chapter 4

Parish Handbook



Handbook for the shared Parishes of

St. Alban's, Pelaw

&

St. Patrick's, Felling



Mass Times (correct January 2015)

St. Alban's Church – Saturday (& Holy Day vigil) 6.30pm
St. Patrick's Church – Sunday 10.05am, Holy Day 10.00am

Contact details

St. Patrick's Presbytery, 9 High St, Felling, NE10 9LT
0191 495 2277

Welcome to our Shared Parish

Since October 2000 St. Alban's parish at Pelaw and St. Patrick's parish in "the Felling" have shared a priest and are shared parishes. Currently our priest resides at St. Patrick's Presbytery in Felling.

The parishes have worked hard over the years to share their many and varied resources and continue to work together to ensure the growth of God's kingdom in our neighbourhood.

The closure of St. John the Baptist Primary School in Felling in 2011, means that our shared parish primary school and nursery is now located in St. Alban's Primary School, Rothbury Avenue, Pelaw.

On completing their primary education our children are in the fortunate position of having the choice of two secondary schools in which to continue their Catholic education, namely Cardinal Hume School in Gateshead and St. Joseph's School in Hebburn.

This handbook provides you with current information about the Sacramental life of the church and the various activities which take place in our parishes all of which you are welcome to attend.

Sacraments

The Sacraments are an integral part of the life of the Catholic Church. They involve making a commitment to God and the Church. Before receiving any of the Sacraments, it is the duty of the Church to ensure that the candidates receive adequate preparation to ensure that they have a full understanding of what they are receiving and are able to make the commitment the Church asks of them.

The Sacrament of Baptism

Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as children of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in the Church's mission.

A child should be baptised in the parish in which his/her parents live and the church they regularly attend. Parents who live outside St. Patrick's or St. Alban's parishes and who wish to have their child baptised in either church must be regular practising members of St. Patrick's or St. Alban's parish community.

A preparation course, spread over a period of three weeks, is provided for parents who wish to have their children baptised. No dates for the baptism can be considered until the preparation is completed and parents feel able to make the commitment the church asks of them.

How many Godparents should there be?

Church law says: “One sponsor (that is, godparent), male or female, is sufficient, but there may be two, one of each sex” (Canon 873). The godparents should be confirmed practising Catholics in good standing with the Church.



The Sacrament of Marriage

If you are planning to get married in our Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle, you are required by the Church to set aside some time to prepare for the important step you are about to take. To allow for this, a minimum of six months notice of your wedding is required. Our parishes offer a Marriage Preparation Course for you which provides an opportunity to discover a little more about the Sacrament of Marriage and the commitment the Church asks of you in marriage. It is a one day course, usually held on a Saturday from about 09.00 to 13.30. It is led by catechists who have been specifically prepared by the Church for this work.



Who can marry in St. Patrick's or St. Alban's Churches?

Both parties must be free to marry and one must be a baptised Catholic, the Catholic party must either live in the parish of St. Patrick's or St. Alban's or attend Mass regularly in either Church.

To avoid disappointment and unnecessary expense, it is inadvisable to book venues in connection with your wedding before ascertaining whether the church and the priest/ deacon are available on the date you hope to marry.

The Sacrament of Confirmation

Young people who are in Year 9 or above are invited to take part in a Deanery Confirmation Programme, led by a team of suitably prepared catechists. Information as to when the programme begins is made available through the parish newsletter.

The Sacrament of the Sick

This Sacrament is for parishioners who are unwell, preparing to undergo surgery or are suffering from frailty of their years. Please request this Sacrament by contacting the priest.

The Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist

The parish continues to develop the preparation offered to those wishing to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist and to their parents in line with the new guidelines provided by Bishop Seamus.

Children who attend a Catholic school are taught the nature of the Sacraments each year in the Religious curriculum according to their level of understanding. There are two special modules on Reconciliation and Holy Communion in Year 4, after which parents may consider if they wish their child to proceed with the celebration of these two Sacraments.

The Church also expects parents to give their children every opportunity to regularly attend the celebration of Mass in the years leading up to celebrating Reconciliation and Holy Communion, so that they have a living awareness of what we believe and celebrate in these Sacraments. When parents feel their child has an adequate understanding of these Sacraments and a living experience of celebration, they are invited to approach the priest who will outline the final stages of the preparation. We are currently planning ways in which we can offer more support for parents so that they can assist the children in their preparation at home.

For those interested in knowing more about the Catholic Faith

A preparation course is provided, shared with all the Catholic churches in our deanery, for adults who would like to know more about what Catholics believe with a view to perhaps becoming a Catholic. It is a twelve month course meeting once a week excluding school holidays. It is a rolling programme which enables enquirers to join at any time. For more information please speak to the priest.

The pastoral care of the housebound

This is a responsibility we all share within our parishes on a day to day basis as committed Christians. For those who cannot get to Church and wish to receive Holy Communion, a dedicated team of Eucharistic Ministers will visit on request. Visits are also made by members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Legion of Mary.

Mass Intentions

Masses can be requested for any intentions you may have. Envelopes containing an offering should be clearly marked with the intention for which the Mass is requested and left in the Sacristy or given to the priest.

Parish Activities

Adult Activities

To **contact groups** please leave a message including your details in the box at the back of church which is labelled for this use. Alternatively you may email parishhandbook@hotmail.co.uk. Your enquiry will be forwarded to the relevant group. Please note this is only for activity information and is NOT for correspondence. To contact the Parish Priest use the information on the front of the handbook.

Card Crafters

Who: Anyone interested in making cards in a friendly and social group.
What: Paper and needle craft card making, with all equipment provided at cost price.
When/Where: Once every two weeks on a Wednesday evening in St. Patrick's Parish Centre 7-9pm.

Catholic Women's Guild

Who: Women only at regular meetings, but all parishioners welcome to attend advertised social events (see newsletter).
What: Fundraising for the parish through social activities e.g. Bingo and raffles, a yearly bus trip, Easter and Christmas meals, prayers for and visits to the sick of the parish.
When/Where: Regular meetings on Tuesday evening at Walker View, Felling and events as advertised throughout the year.

Church Cleaning

Who: Anyone able to use a vacuum cleaner, duster or broom.
What: Making the Church spick and span for the week to come.
When/Where: Thursdays after morning Mass for about 1hr in St. Patrick's Church or Wednesday after morning Mass in St. Alban's Church

Church Openers

Who: Any volunteers.
What: To open up the Church and prepare the altar/gifts.
When/Where: Half an hour before weekday or weekend Masses.



Children's Liturgy Leaders

Who: A minimum of 2 adults are required each week to lead the session (books and training available).
What: Reading of the Gospel, prayers and discussion on the week's theme.
When/Where: During weekend Mass in the Parish Centre (St. Patrick's) or in the Parish Room (St. Alban's).

Eucharistic Ministers

Who: Parishioners who feel called to this ministry are asked to approach the priest.
What: A Diocesan training course is provided periodically for this important ministry.
When/Where: Rota for weekend Masses.

Fairtrade Table

Who: Please support this by making purchases.
What: Items are guaranteed to have been bought at a fair price from the growers are for sale to us.
When/Where: Anytime on the table at the back of St. Patrick's Church.

Flower Arranging

Who: Anyone prepared to arrange flowers.
What: Preparing flower arrangements for celebrations e.g. Easter, weddings.
When/Where: As necessary in Church.

Ministry of Welcome

Who: Volunteers of all ages always required.
What: Saying hello and giving out books as people arrive.
When/Where: For 15min before the Vigil and Sunday Masses.

Music Group

Who: Anyone who can play an instrument or sing.
What: Provides music for 10.05 Mass on Sundays in St. Patrick's.
When/Where: Practises from 9.30am on Sunday before Mass.



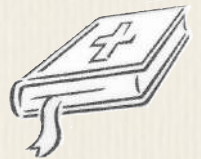
We always require more musicians in both churches!!

Parish Working Party

Who: Volunteers representative of the parish make up. If you would like to be a member, please contact the priest.
What: Discuss the spiritual, social and financial needs of the parish.
When/Where: Twice yearly meetings.

Readers

Who: If you would like to read, please contact the priest.
What: Support will be provided for this important ministry.
When/Where: Rota for weekend Masses.



Refreshments

Who: Any volunteers (more always needed!).
What: Providing tea and coffee for parishioners.
When/Where: In the Parish Centre/Parish Room after weekend Mass on a rota basis.



Repository

Who: Any volunteers.
What: Assist with sales and keeping the repository well stocked.
When/Where: Open for sales at Mass times. Stocked as necessary.

St. Vincent de Paul Society

Who: Open to all.
What: Members follow Christ through service to those in need in the community.
When/Where: Meeting once every two weeks after the Vigil Mass on Saturday evening in St. Alban's Parish Room, works of service carried out as needed.

Support the Missions - Mission boxes

Who: Anyone wishing to donate money.
What: Red mission boxes are taken home for you to add to at your convenience over time.

The Legion of Mary

Who: Any adults welcome.
What: Taking the love of Our Lady as inspiration, members visit those in need in the community during the week. Meetings involve prayer, spiritual reading and reporting back on the work done during the previous week.
When/Where: Meetings every Tuesday at 1.30pm for one hour, work in the community as needed.

Third World Group

Who: People interested in fund raising for third world projects.
What: A group that raises thousands of pounds to support our brothers and sisters overseas.
When/Where: The group runs from St. Patrick's Church. Look out for events publicised in the newsletter or contact the group for more details regarding membership.

200 Club

Who: Anyone who pays the £1 per week subscription.
What: A fundraising raffle with weekly cash prizes.
When/Where: Draws made in the Parish Centre after Sunday Mass (St. Patrick's) and before the Vigil Mass (St. Alban's). Subscriptions can be paid at the table at the back of Church before and after weekend Masses.

Children's Activities

Children's Liturgy

Who: Children of primary school age.
What: Reading of the Gospel, prayers and discussion on the week's theme.
When/Where: During the weekend Masses for about 20mins in St. Patrick's Parish Centre and St. Alban's Parish Room.

Parent and Toddler Group

Who: Children aged 0-5 and their parents/carers.
What: A social occasion for children, parents and carers with toys, play, songs, refreshments and a raffle.
When/Where: Mondays & Wednesdays 1-3pm, St. Patrick's Parish Centre.



Serving

Who: Anyone willing to make the commitment to this important role .
What: Serving on the altar during Mass.
When/Where: During weekend Masses and on Holy Days.

Trips, Pilgrimages and Social Evenings

These are arranged on an ad hoc basis throughout the year. Everyone is always very welcome. Please see the newsletter for details of upcoming events

Other Information

Newsletter

This is an important part of keeping abreast of what is going on in our shared parish. They are distributed through school and both Churches. Any items to be included should be left at the presbytery.

Gift Aid

Financial support by parishioners is always required and often very generous. An extra way for tax payers to donate is by gift aiding their weekly offering so that the Church can reclaim from the Inland Revenue the tax that has already been paid on their offering.

Safeguarding

The Diocese has a comprehensive safeguarding policy in work with the vulnerable. A nominated person in each parish takes on this important duty.

Links

(Activities linked to our shared parish, but not directly run by the parishes).

Felling Irish Association

Who: Anyone interested in Irish history or customs.
What: Social events with an Irish flavour to raise money for local charities/good causes.
When/where: Irish nights are often at the Holly Hill Social Club and Ceilidh Dancing lessons are held in St. Patrick's Parish Centre.
email: felling-irish-association@hotmail.co.uk
web site: www.fellingirishassociation.webs.com



Diocesan Website

web site: www.rcdhn.org.uk

St. Alban's School

web site: www.stalbansgateshead.org

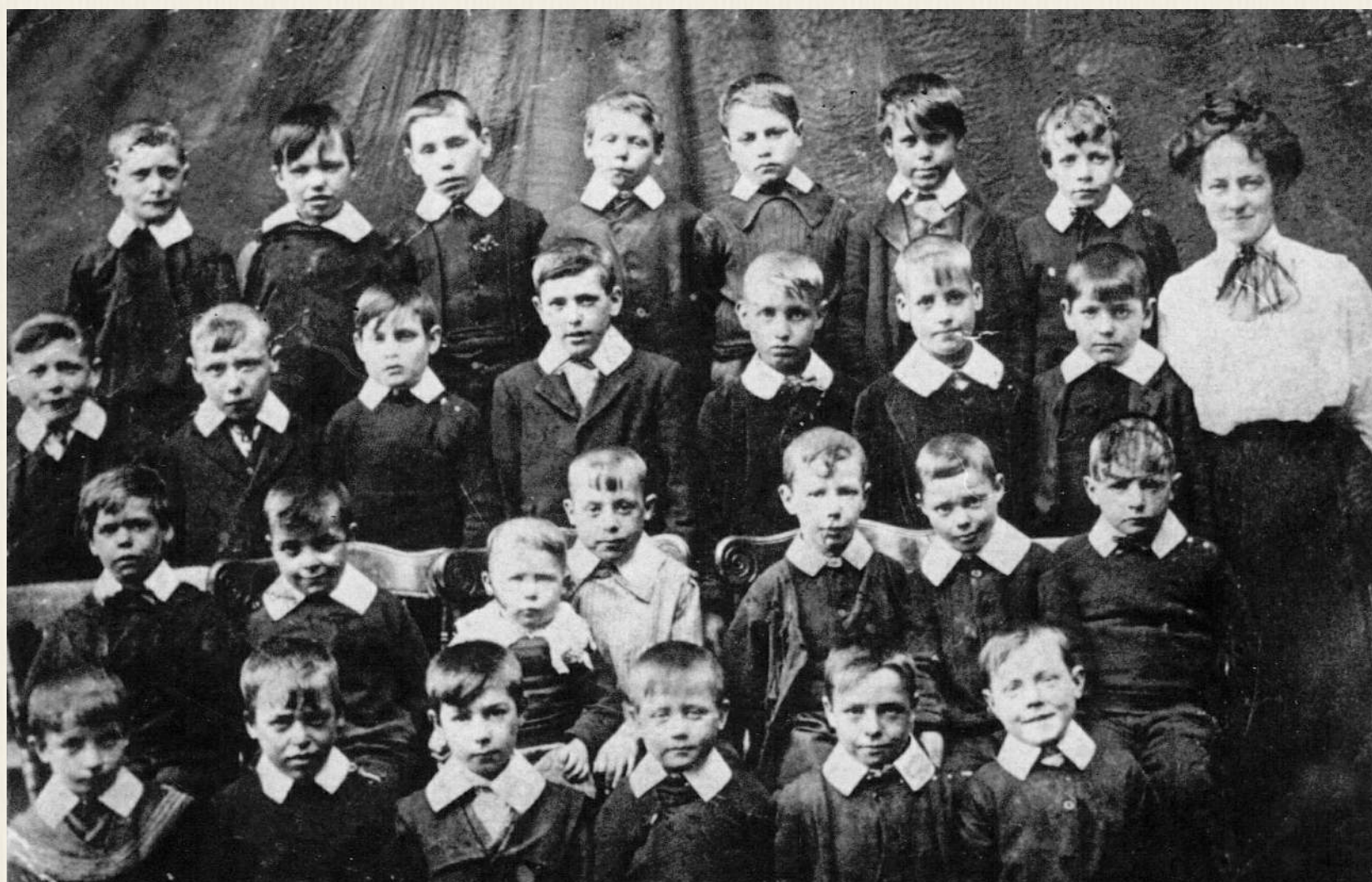
Chapter 5

Photographic Gallery and Memorabilia





St. Patrick's Boys Brigade - 1906



St. John's School - 1910



St. John's School - 1922



St. John's School - Circa 1950



St. John's School - Circa 1950



Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Silver Jubilee Celebrations

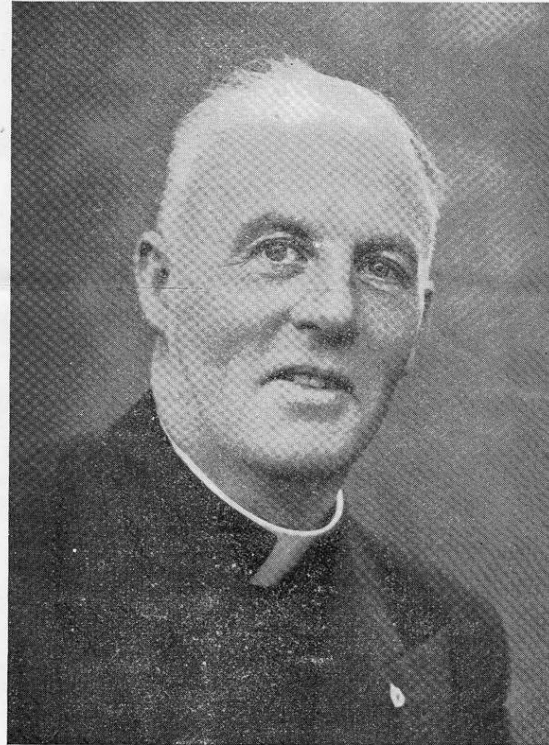
Souvenir Programme

"Tu es sacerdos secundum ordinem Melchisedech"

Presentation and Concert

to mark

The Silver Jubilee of Reverend Father B. A. Stronge



(SEE PAGE FOUR)

Concert and Testimonial

1. CHORALE
'Passing By'
'The Holy City'
'Bless This House' St. Patrick's Choir
2. ENSEMBLE
'Musical Appreciation' St. John's Infants
3. DANCE
'Four Hand Reel' Children of Mary
4. SONG
'The Wild Colonial Boy' Youth Club (Girls)
5. SOLO (Tenor)
'The Garden of your Heart'
'O Sole Mio' Michael O'Brien
6. DANCES
'Tershillin Reel'
'Black Nag'
'Dashing White Sergeant' St. John's Juniors
7. PIANOFORTE SOLO
'Selection' Donald Clarke
8. SOLO (Soprano)
'Selected Arias' Mrs. M. Clarke
9. DANCE
'Selected' St. John's Senior Girls
followed by 'Pianoforte Solo' Yolando Bennett
10. DANCING
'Irish Jigs and Reels' Collins Sisters and Troupe
11. SKETCH
'The Psychologist' Youth Club (Boys)
12. SOLO (Baritone)
'Down the Vale'
'O Steer my Barge' Edward Kennedy
13. INTERLUDE
'Lighter Vein' Teddy McConnell
14. FINALE
'Ecce Sacerdos Magnus' (Behold a Great Priest)
'Hallelujah Chorus' St. Patrick's Choir
Faith of our Fathers Audience

Ius Deo Semper

The Silver Jubilee of Reverend Father B. A. Stronge

TO-DAY WE OFFER our congratulations to our Parish Priest on the 25th anniversary of his ordination and pray God's blessing on his work and future in this Parish.

Born in County Galway, he was educated at Gorbally Park College, whence he graduated with University Certificate to St. Kieran's College. There at the age of 24 he was raised to the Priesthood and very soon began his priestly duties at St. Joseph's Gateshead. After almost 18 years continuous service there, he was appointed Parish Priest of St. Patrick's, Felling, in May 1946. In shouldering the onerous duties of such a large parish, Fr. Stronge has brought the same zest, enthusiasm and ability to the task, as he did in his earlier days, when he gained championships over 100 yards, 440 yards and 1 mile. Though champion too at handball, and a sound golfer, the "priest" is still the dominant element, as his magnificent efforts for the parish in these last seven years bear eloquent testimony.

So we offer our gifts in token of our deep regard and affection and wish him every blessing in God's name.

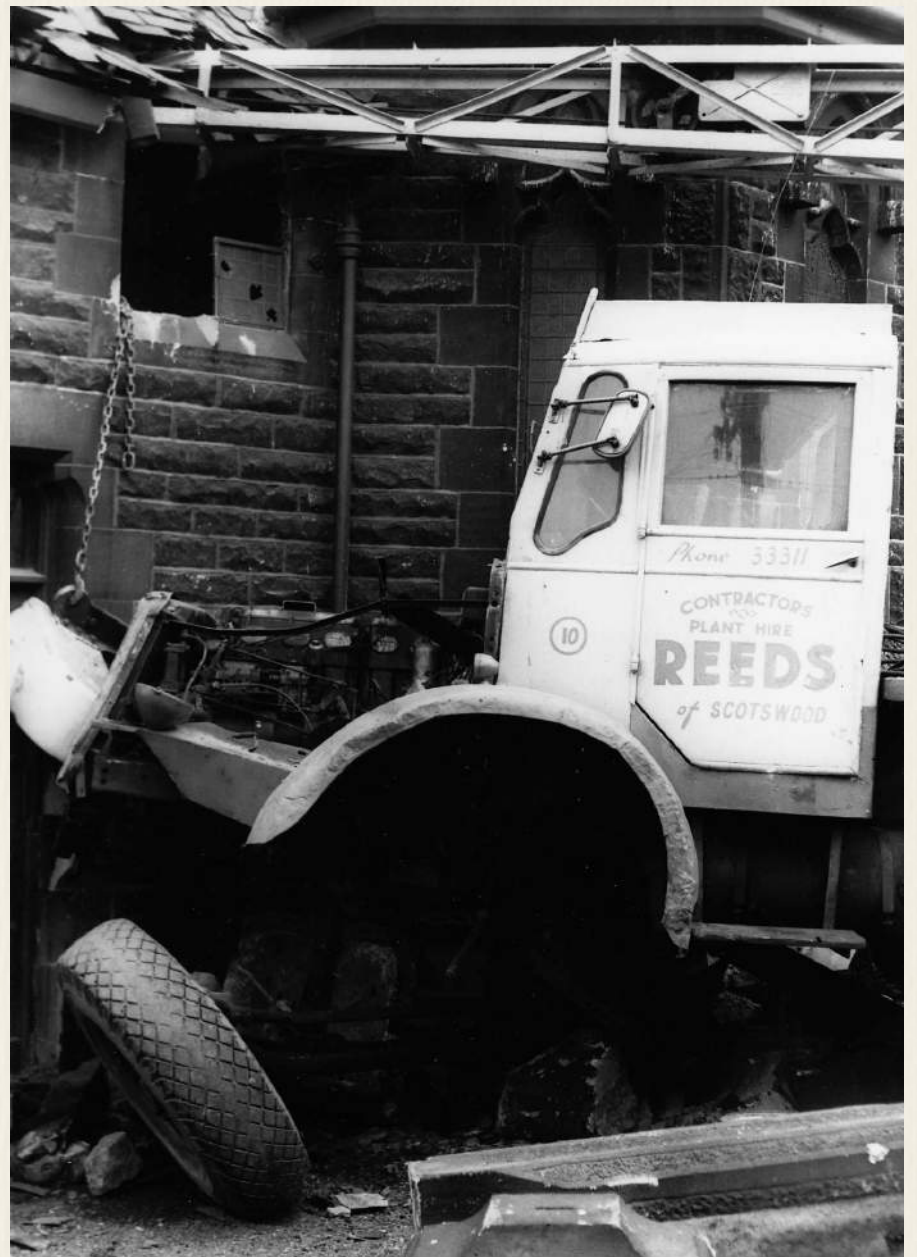
Fr. Stronge's Silver Jubilee Celebrations - 1953



St. John the Baptist School Football Team - 1958-59



Priests & Altar Boys - 1964



Runaway crane embedded in St. Patrick's Church - 1967



GATESHEAD BOROUGH COUNCIL

ADMISSION

as

HONORARY FREEMEN OF THE BOROUGH

of

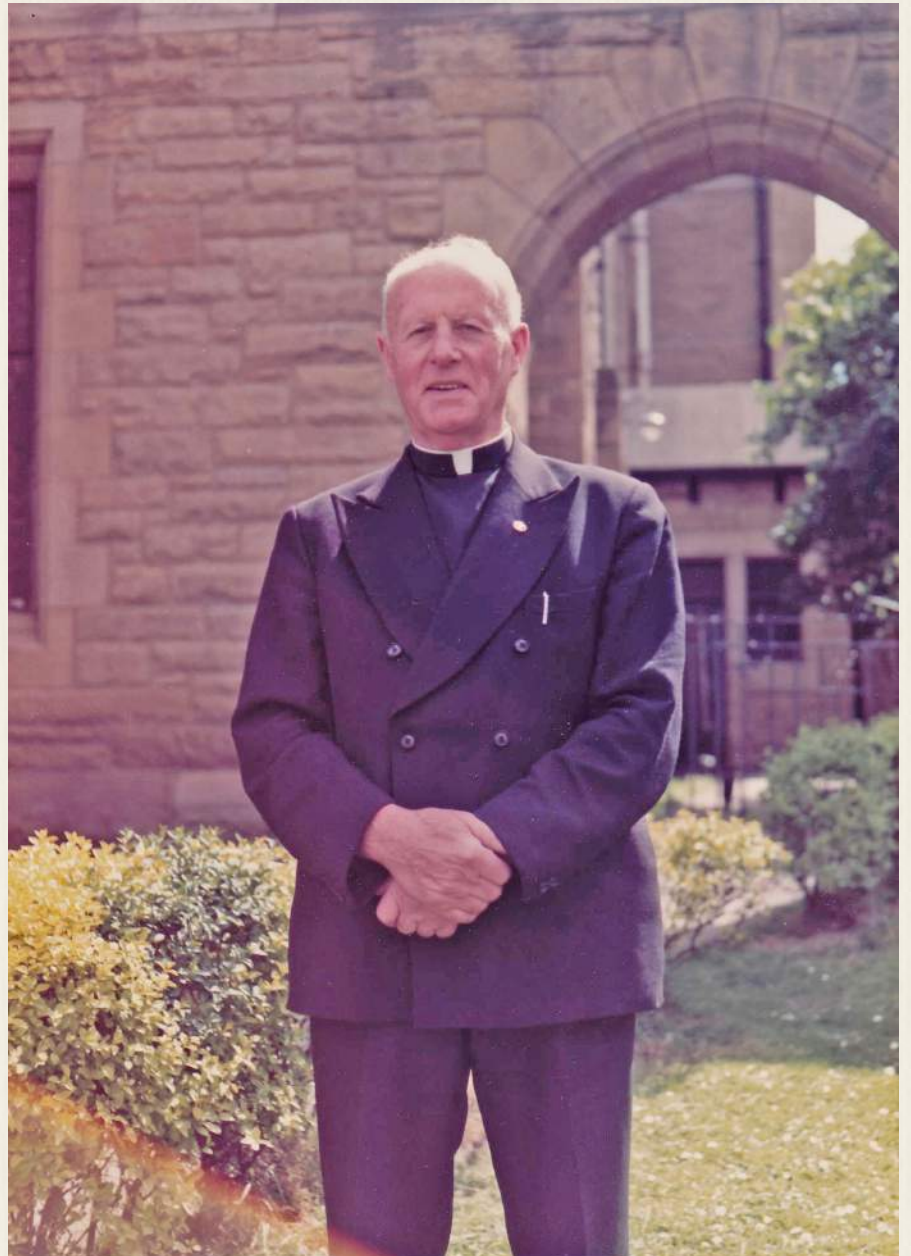
SISTER WINIFRED LAVER, B.E.M.

REVEREND FATHER BERNARD ALOYSIUS
STRONGE

30th JUNE, 1978

TECHNICAL COLLEGE,
GATESHEAD

W. MILES, M.A., LL.B.
Chief Executive



Freeman of Gateshead

Fr. Bernard Stronge

Gateshead Borough Council's recognition of Fr. Bernard Stronge - June 1978



Fr. Ben Carey



Fr. Ben Carey and Fr. Michael Marr with First Holy Communicants - 1980



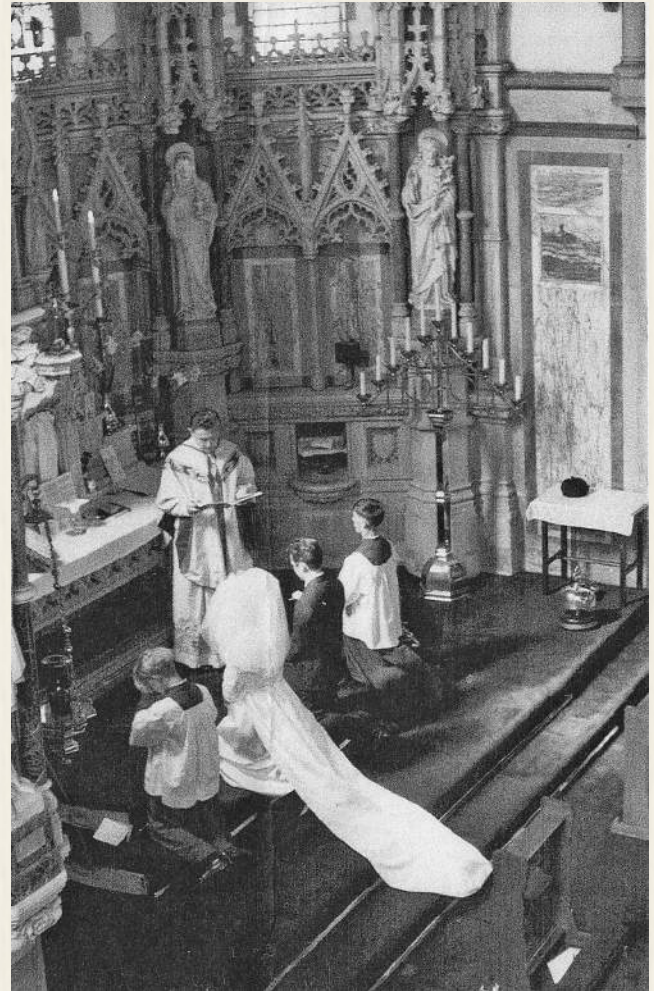
Centenary recognition in Felling Park - 1995



Fr. White's 80th birthday celebrations



Leslie & Kathleen Duffy,
Fr. Stronge presiding - September 1950



Alfred & Maureen Lowes,
Fr. Donnelly presiding - August 1964



Paul & Margaret Hughes,
Fr. Stronge presiding - September 1961



Roger & Anne Potter,
Fr. Patterson presiding - July 1997



Michael & Sarah Barr, Fr. Patterson presiding - December 2013

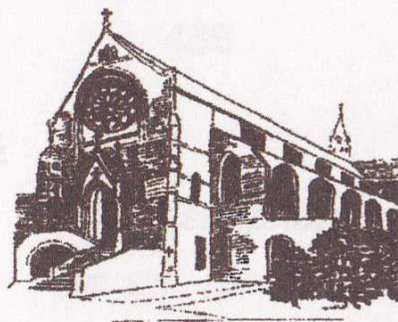


Fr. G. White, Fr. Stronge, Fr. Hodgson & Fr. McKenna



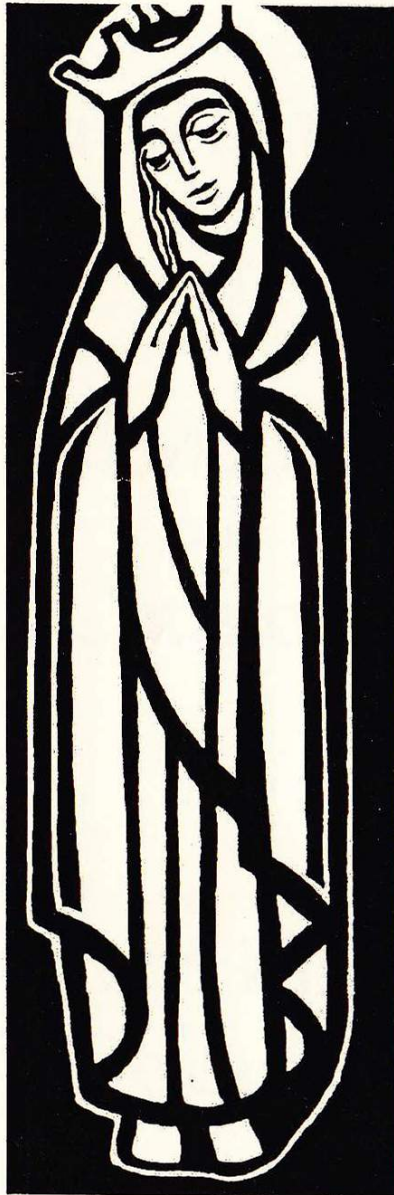
Welcome
to this special occasion in the life
of our parish and community
as we celebrate

The First Mass
of
the Reverend Jim Angus
(ordained priest on 25th June, 2000)



Monday, 26th June, 2000

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle



ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Fr. Mark Millward's Ordination



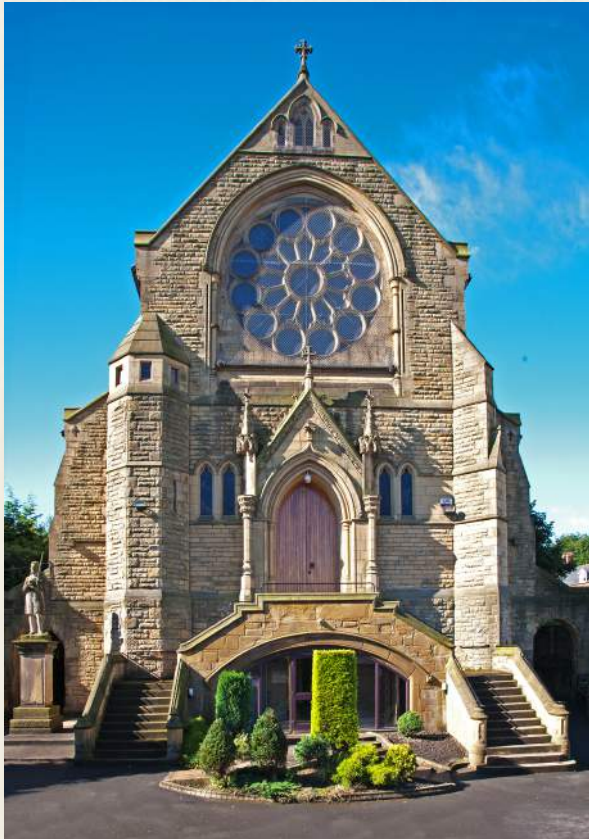
Fr. Ian Patterson's Silver Jubilee floral display



Medal to commemorate the closure of St. John the Baptist School - 2011



Parish Centre entrance



North elevation



Spire



South elevation



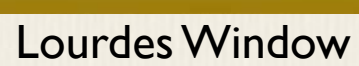
West elevation



East elevation



External Crucifix





St. Theresa



Lectern & Paschal Candle



New Altar



View of Church from Altar



View of refurbished Sanctuary from above the sacristy



View of refurbished Sanctuary



Heritage Open Day War Memorial - September 2014



Nativity