

REVEREND EDWARD SUGDEN - ARCHITECT

The Church was designed by the Rev. Edward Sugden who from 1887 had been the incumbent of St. Anne's, Coupar Angus. The Rev. Edward Sugden (1850-1901) was the second son of Dr. Sugden of Clifton, Bristol. From an early age he showed an aptitude for artistic and architectural work and qualified as an architect but then decided to enter Holy Orders and studied at Chichester Theological College completing the curriculum in the same year as his friend and fellow student, the Rev. Francis Burdon. Burdon moved to Dundee becoming the senior curate at St. Mary Magdalene's in Blinshall Street. From 1873 this church had a mission in Watson's Lane and Sugden was attracted to Burdon's work there and joined him and was ordained deacon in 1878 and priest in 1879 by Bishop Jermyn of Brechin, then Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

In 1881 the Watson's Lane mission developed into Holy Trinity Mission and the designing of this building was one of Sugden's first architectural efforts in connection with the church. Burdon was from 1878 supernumerary of the diocese but Sugden took on that responsibility in 1880 and then in 1882 Revd George Taylor Farquhar of St Ninians Cathedral was to write that: *'At Carnoustie the Nave of a small Church has been built but it is not a separate Incumbency but Mr. Sugden, an unmarried English Priest, is in charge of it and he is also a sort of Curate of S. Mary Magdalene's'*

In 1887 Sugden became the incumbent of St. Anne's, Coupar Angus and by this time was married. His contemporary the Rev. Farquhar was less than enthusiastic about his incumbency saying in 1884 that: *'Mr Sugden is a most excellent man - a thoroughly good soul - but that his congregations should only be about 2 dozen in the forenoon & 1 at night does not argue a successful ministry. He goes rather on the principle of letting the people come if they like: he holds the Church's Services & it is the people's duty to come'*.

In 1900 Sugden's health deteriorated and he was forced to resign Following his retirement Farquhar wrote: *'Mr. Carmichael, while speaking very nicely of Mr. Sugden, said he has been for the last 10 or 12 years a typical instance of the English failure. A good earnest man but, forgetting that there were no Churchmen to associate with, he gave out that he would*

not have dealings with Presbyterians and so they left him severely alone and his Church empty. However, the poor man has been long in bad health. I like him'.

Sugden retired to Kent where he died of consumption aged fifty-one on the 14th February 1901 at Beechview, Sevenoaks leaving a widow and two young children both born in Coupar Angus, Ethel, born in April 1888 and Harold in June 1891. On his death probate was granted to Elizabeth Mary Sugden inheriting an estate of £5,304.8.11d.

St. Michael & All Angels was the last design by Sugden, but was preceded by a number of churches, halls and parsonages. In this diocese he co-operated with the Rev. Bowstead in major upgrading at Kilmaveonaig and designed the choir stalls at St. Mary's, Birnam. A pulpit for St. Paul's, Kinross has been dismantled in recent times. In the Brechin diocese a particularly fine example of his impeccable good taste can be seen in the screen and reredos at All Saints, Glencarse. His designs were mostly inexpensive buildings of hammer-dressed masonry with timber-framed internal construction and tracery. In the year Ballintuim was built, there was concern at a Chapter meeting in Perth about the cost of the Pearson alterations and additions at the cathedral and Canon Hunter spoke up saying that they must economise. Farquhar's brother Willie joked that:

*A groined roof, for coal-hole shown,
Unnecessary expense puts on;
But Sugden to the rescue's flown
And such extravagance cut down.
Lo! Stately rise S. Ninian's walls
And not a whit worse are the coals!*

It was at Ballintuim that Farquhar was to see in the 20th century writing: *'I think I ought to chronicle how I spent the first day of the 1900s. I took the duty at S. Michael's, Ballintuim, for the first time yesterday and was delighted to have 40 present, (of whom 9 communicated) at the forenoon Service in so lone a place'.*

Extracts from:

- Lye, M. (2011) A Guide to Episcopal Churches in the Diocese of St. Andrews, Dunkeld & Dunblane.
- http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=203073