

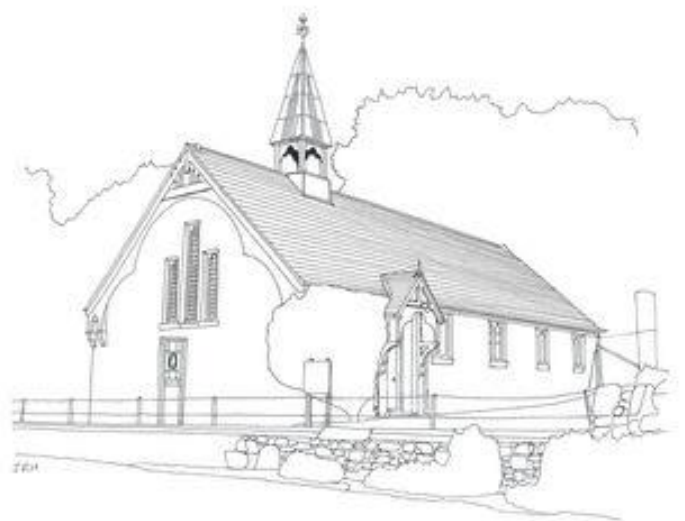
## CHURCH BEGINNINGS

The number of Episcopalians permanently resident in the district was hardly sufficient of itself to provide a regular church attendance throughout the whole year, but during the summer months, when reinforced by shooting tenants and their guests, there was usually a sufficient number of Episcopalians to suggest the necessity of a permanent place of worship. For some years, services were held in private houses, frequently at Merklands and regularly at Blackcraig.

In 1897 The Bishop of St Andrews convened a meeting at Merklands to consider the possibility of erecting a church in the district. Invitations were sent to property owners and residents in the neighbourhood and Revd F W Davies Rector at Blairgowrie, the Parish and Free Church Ministers in Kirkmichael. It was definitely decided that a church should be built, and after some debate about where it should be built, Ballintuim was chosen as being central within the district and without an existing church.

Pending the erection of the church, a shed behind the shop in Ballintuim was fitted out for services, although uncomfortable it proved more convenient holding services there than in private houses. On the 29th September 1898 the foundation stone was laid on land gifted by the MacDonalds of Ballintuim House. The stone for the church was given by Merklands and Balmyle, taken from the derelict crofts of Salamanca, Waterloo and Inkerman. The cost of the building was between four hundred and five hundred pounds. The church was built by a firm in Alyth and the architect was Rev. Sugden the then incumbent at St Anne's Coupar Angus. Over the years the furnishings have been provided by members of the congregation.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1899 the church was opened for services and on 13th August 1899 it was dedicated by Bishop Wilkinson, Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane who went on to become Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church.



## CHAPLAINS AND PARSONAGE

This was the fourth church to open in the episcopate of the Rt. Rev. George Howard Wilkinson. As one of the Diocese's mission churches, initially, the titles, insurance and investment certificates were kept by the Diocesan Registrar, and the responsibility for the appointment of chaplains to officiate during the summer months when the church was open rested with the Bishop. Now the church is managed by a committee with local trustees, and clergy invited to take weekly services in return for subsidised holiday accommodation. Many return year after year.



*The Red House*

Until 1914 there was no fixed residence for the chaplains who frequently had to be lodged at some distance from the church. It was often difficult to secure suitable lodgings. For some time, rooms in the Red House had been secured for the use of visiting chaplains, so when it came on the market it was purchased and adapted for use as a parsonage at a cost of £700, money bequeathed by Mrs. Wedderburn Oglivie. The congregation raised over £100 to decorate and furnish it. A housekeeper occupied half of the house and attended to the needs of the chaplains and their families when in residence. In 1983 it was found the church could not afford to maintain the house and the housekeeper, so it was sold and a cottage rented locally for the summer months. In 1996 land adjacent to the Church was offered by Mr Robert Constable on which to build a parsonage with money invested from the sale of The Red House and through the generosity of members of the congregation, who continue to donate funds for replacement items and also carry out general maintenance to both the Church and the parsonage. In May 1997, The Birks was completed and is occupied by the visiting clergy during

the summer season.

There have been many organists throughout the hundred years among them were the three sisters from Lagan-dhu, Susan, Anna and Cecile Constable who between them played for fifty years, bicycling to the services during the wars.



*The Constable Sisters*