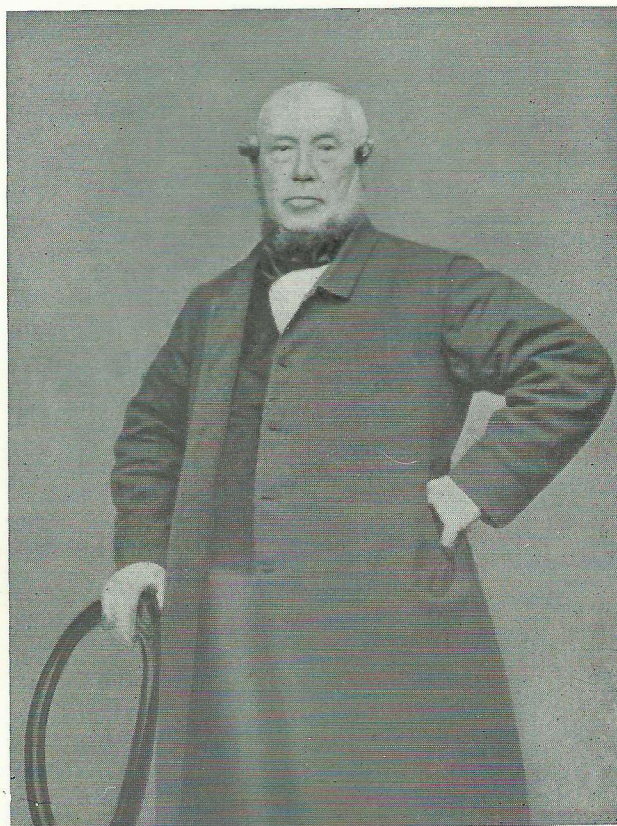


Parish of Kirk Christ Rushen



WILLIAM MILNER

St. Catherine's Church

PORT ERIN

1880 — 1980



Vicar: Rev. Donald Andrew

Churchwarden: Mr. L. E. Davis

Sidesmen:

Mr. W. E. Bailey	Mrs. R. M. Davis	Mr. A. W. L. Tayler
Miss B. M. Bland	Mr. L. J. Kewley	Mr. A. C. Wilkinson
Mr. J. R. Bowring	Mr. S. H. Mills	Mr. L. Woodhouse

Hon. Secretary: Mrs. J. E. Corlett

Hon. Treasurer: Mr. W. E. Bailey

Organist: Mrs. J. E. Corlett

Sunday School:

Miss B. M. Bland, Mrs. S. F. Bowring, Miss A. Jenkins

SERVICES AT ST. CATHERINE'S

	<i>8.00 a.m.</i>	<i>11.00 a.m.</i>	<i>6.30 p.m.</i>
1st Sunday	—	Holy Communion	Evening Prayer
2nd Sunday	Holy Communion	Family Service	Evening Prayer
3rd Sunday	—	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion
4th Sunday	Holy Communion	Morning Prayer	Evening Prayer
5th Sunday	—	Morning Prayer and Holy Communion	Evening Prayer

FOREWORD BY THE VICAR

A Centenary is always something to celebrate ! It is certainly an important occasion in the life of any church. There are a number of events to mark this special year, and these will be announced in due course.

We are grateful to God for all who have given of their time and their energies to His service in the life of St. Catherine's over the years. Many can recall blessings from the past which they associate with St. Catherine's, and the church has a special place in the people's hearts.

Here you will read something of the history of the church and its past. We are grateful to Mr. John Bowring, in association with Mr. J. R. Bruce, for producing the content of this Centenary brochure.

And the next hundred years ? Well, although we value our church building we recognize that in the end the Church is the people of God. Except men and women are born again into the Kingdom of God there can be no Church. So we pray that in the coming days, through our Lord Jesus Christ, His Kingdom may be extended to the praise of His Holy Name in this place.

THE BACKGROUND YEARS

Over a hundred years ago, Port Erin was a small fishing village, comprising the houses and cottages on Shore Road, and a few scattered dwellings at Bradda, Spaldrick, and the Truggan. The Promenade, as we know it today with its rows of large hotels and boarding-houses, did not exist, but one large house, "The Rest" (later known as York House) stood out prominently on the edge of the green and gorse-grown brooughs. It was here that Mr. William Milner sought rest and refreshment in the leisure hours of a busy life, spent in the building up of a great industrial concern now known as the Milner-Chatway Safe Co. Mr. Milner was not content, however, with idle repose, but spent much of his time in the company of the fisher-folk and cottagers, whose interests and troubles became his continual concern.

Gradually, Mr. Milner's good deeds became known even outside his adopted village, and a group of friends and well-wishers decided that a permanent and worthy memorial should perpetuate his name. So, in 1871, a Tower was erected, by public subscription, on the crest of Bradda Head, inscribed, "In grateful acknowledgement of his many charities to the poor of Port Erin, and of his never-tiring efforts for the benefit of the Manx fishermen."

William Milner died three years later, in September, 1874, but it was characteristic of the man that he left provision in his will for the continuation of his charities, and for the building of a church, where his beloved villagers might worship, without the long and often miry walk across the Rowany to the Parish Church.

It was Mr. Milner's wish that the church should be erected in memory of his wife, Jane, who had predeceased him by only a few weeks, and dedicated to St. Catherine. The dedication was a happy idea of the founder's, since that Saint's name had been attached to the first Christian Church in the district — Keeill Catreeney — at a time, possibly in the 7th century, when the Faith was being disseminated in the Island by missionaries from the Celtic Church in Ireland.

KEEILL CATREENEY. The exact site of this early church is not known with certainty, but to judge from other examples, we may be sure that it was not very far distant from a well, which the Celtic priest who served the church, used both to satisfy his own needs and to baptise those who accepted the Christian Faith.

The well — Chibbyr Catreeney — and its traditions have survived the centuries. Until about seventy years ago, a handsome pump-standard surmounted the well, at the southern end of St. Catherine's Terrace, on Shore Road. Now the well has been covered in, but its surplus water still flows along a culvert and over the beach. This spot is marked by the stone, which William Milner had set up at the well, and on which is carved the inscription, "St. Catherine's Well — Keep me clear."

ST. CATHERINE

St. Catherine of Alexandria, to whom our church is dedicated, was a very popular saint in the British Isles in the early days of the Christian Church, and many foundations were dedicated to her. Very little is known with certainty about her life, and, in fact, there is no mention of her in any authentic document until several centuries after she is supposed to have lived. Her legend states that she was a Christian virgin at Alexandria in the beginning of the 4th century, remarkable for her learning as for her piety. During the persecution of Diocletian, she was brought before the Assistant Emperor Maxentius, who ordered her to dispute in his presence with fifty pagan philosophers. This she did, putting them all to silence, and converting them. Enraged at this, the Emperor ordered her to be tortured on a wheel, and then beheaded. After her death, angels carried her body to Mount Sinai and buried it where the famous convent now stands.

From that time onwards, the wheel has been regarded as her special symbol and a wheel-window forms a prominent feature in the west gable of our church today.

THE CHURCH

THE SITE. The land adjoining Mr. Milner's residence, part of which he bequeathed for the erection thereon of a church and school, was known as the "Magher Logh," and extended from the house, eastwards, as far as what is now the Station Hotel, and northwards to the Eagle Hotel. The exact position of the church was left for his executors to settle, and while it was at first thought that the site on Station Road, now occupied by shops, would be most suitable, the present site, facing the sea, was adopted at the instance of the then Vicar, the Rev. E. W. Kissack, B.A., and this can now be seen as a wise choice.

The original intention was for a church and school, but the Chancery Court agreed that a school was not required. Consequently the church was built centrally upon the plot.

LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION STONE AND THE CONSECRATION. The Foundation Stone of the new church was laid by the Lord Bishop (The Right Rev. Rowley Hill, D.D.) on Thursday, 12th December, 1878, in the presence of a large gathering of residents and school-children. The special service was conducted by the Vicar of Rushen, the Rev. E. W. Kissack, and the Curate, the Rev. H. R. Finnis. The Bishop, after declaring the stone well and truly laid, gave an appropriate address.

The Consecration Ceremony took place on Tuesday afternoon, 3rd August, 1880. The Lord Bishop, the Vicar and a number of other Island clergy and church dignitaries were present. The day was fine and the church was well filled.

A service of Evening Prayer was read with the Bishop signing the Instrument of Consecration and preaching the sermon. At the close of the service an offertory of £8 was taken, which was devoted towards the cost of "a beautiful little organ" which had been placed in the church.

THE FABRIC. The church was designed by Mr. Jas. Cowle, Architect, of Douglas, and the building work carried out by Messrs. R. Moore and Jas. Costain, of Port Erin. The foundation stone was laid on 12th December, 1878, and the church was completed in March, 1880, five months before the actual consecration.

As originally planned and built, the church was just over 70 feet in length, and intended to seat 200 persons. The architectural style, based on 13th century Gothic, was simple and devoid of any ornament, but well suited to the rough rubble building material and to the windswept site. The church consisted of a chancel, with vestry on the south side, and a nave of six bays, with an annexe, or portico, at the west end. The roof, which is of open timber construction, and steeply pitched, has framed principals of arched form, corresponding to the chancel arch, which rest upon corbels. The considerable outward thrust, inseparable from this form of roof, is taken by substantial buttresses between the window-openings.

In 1894, the need for increased seating accommodation during the summer months, when the congregation was greatly swelled by visitors, called for extension and completion of the building, along lines originally contemplated. The portico and western gable were removed, the nave extended westwards by three bays (about 25 feet), and a small but well-proportioned tower added at the south-west. The entrance to the church is through the base of the tower—originally by way of a door in its east face, but afterwards altered to its present more convenient position on the south. The wheel-window from the original west gable of the church was rebuilt in its present position, and the church was redecorated throughout.

During the alterations, the foundation stone was removed and reset at the base of the eastern jamb of the inner door. It is now covered in by masonry and plaster. The additions to the church were dedicated by the Lord Bishop (Right Rev. Norman D. J. Straton) on Wednesday, 1st August, 1894.

The contractors for the work of enlargement, the cost of which amounted to £355, were Messrs. W. E. and H. Collister, of Port St. Mary. The work was most carefully carried out so that it is practically impossible to detect, either inside or outside the building, the junction of the old and new materials.

The total (internal) length of the enlarged church is 92ft. 3in., of which the chancel accounts for 23ft. 7in. and the nave 68ft. 8in. The width of the chancel is 19ft. 4in. and of the nave 23ft. 6in. The seating accommodation is for about 270 persons.

This is the church as we see it today. Such work as has been done since 1894, has been in the nature of repairs and redecoration to preserve and protect the fabric of the building.

St. Catherine's Hall, which adjoins the church, was built and opened in 1902 on a site purchased from Mr. George L. Trustrum. It fulfilled, and continues to fulfil, a long-felt need for a suitable hall for Sunday School and social purposes.

FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

St. Catherine's is fortunate in possessing, for a church of its size, some excellent furnishings of fine craftsmanship.

The CARVED OAK-WORK of the chancel, including the Holy Table, reredos and panelling, were all the generous gift of Mr. Geo. L. Trustrum and form a dignified unity. In keeping with these, the congregation added, by subscription, a pulpit, prayer desk and lectern. All the woodwork was carried out on the Island, the reredos by Mr. Ambrose Kelly of Peel and the other items by Mr. J. D. Kelly of Kelly Bros., Kirk Michael.

The ORGAN was dedicated by the Lord Bishop at a Special Service and Recital on 5th March, 1913. It was built by Mr. M. Morgan of Douglas at a cost of about £520, the money having been raised over a number of years.

A former organist, Mr. Arthur Cregeen, A.I.S.C., selected the instrument and set a high standard of musical tradition. Mr. Cregeen resigned in 1920, after 29 years of service at St. Catherine's and at the Parish Church, and was succeeded by Mr. J. Wilfred Hughes. Mr. Hughes died in 1955 and after a short interregnum was succeeded by the present organist Mrs. J. E. Corlett (formerly Gilrea).

The PULPIT of oak dates from 1906 and is the third to occupy the position. It replaced one of pitchpine, given by a Clerk of the Rolls, Alf. W. Adams, Esq., in memory of his wife.

The FONT is a plain granite basin, supported upon an octagonal limestone pedestal. It was originally the ancient font of the Parish Church and had been consigned to the graveyard. In 1896 it was unearthed and perhaps mistakenly sent to a Castletown stonemason to be dressed and adapted to its new position in St. Catherine's. It was thus deprived of both its historic interest and rugged charm.

WINDOWS. The church possesses but one stained-glass window. This is one of the four small lancets, intended for the four Evangelists, in the west gable, below the wheel-window. It depicts St. Matthew, and was inserted by a few friends at the time of the extension of the church in 1894.

BELLS. There are two bells in the tower. The smaller one has long been disused. The larger, which is fixed, and rung by a moveable hammer, was for many years the fog-bell at the Chicken Rock lighthouse. It was superseded by an explosive signal in 1909 and deposited with the Vicar by the Northern Lights Commissioners.

LIST OF BEQUESTS

Church and Site. — The late Mr. Wm. Milner, of Port Erin, in his will, proven in 1875, bequeathed a plot of land and £1,000 for the erection thereon of a Church.

Endowment. — In the same will, Mr. Milner left certain property (St. Catherine's Terrace), the income therefrom to be divided — £25 per annum towards the stipend of the curate at Port Erin, and the remainder to the poor.

One Hundred Pounds was bequeathed to St. Catherine's Church by Mrs. Clugston, of Port Erin. She was the oldest parishioner, and a faithful churchwoman. Born in 1801, she died in her 96th year, and was buried on Wednesday, 19th August, 1896.

LIST OF GIFTS

CHANCEL

Holy Table. — The gift of Mr. G. L. Trustrum.

Reredos. — The gift of Mr. G. L. Trustrum. Dedicated 19th April, 1896.

Oak Panelling. — The gift of Mr. G. L. Trustrum.

Choir Stalls. — The gift of Mr. G. L. Trustrum, in memory of his parents, and little girl. Dedicated 15th August, 1910.

Altar Rail. — The gift of Miss Chadwick. Dedicated 1946.

COMMUNION PLATE, &c.

Chalice, Silver. — The gift of Mrs. Pilkington, in memory of her husband, J. A. Pilkington. Dedicated 23rd October, 1910.

Paten, Silver. — The gift of Miss Handley, in memory of her brothers, J. and H. Handley. Dedicated 23rd October, 1910.

Credence Paten, Silver. — The gift of Mr. J. V. Jackson, in memory of his wife, Miriam. Dedicated 23rd October, 1910.

Wine Cruet, Glass, silver-mounted. — The gift of A.B.H. — a thank-offering. Dedicated 16th July, 1911.

Water Cruet, Glass. — The gift of Miss Chadwick, 1929.

Alms Dish, Brass. — The gift of Mr. John Clague, July, 1898.

Two Collecting Plates, Brass. — The gift of Mr. T. Guest, 1914.

Box for Eucharist Bread. — The gift of Mrs. J. R. Bruce, July, 1957.

Silver-mounted Glass Cruet. — The gift of a few communicants, September, 1948.

ORNAMENTS, &c.

Frontal and Superfrontal. — The gift of Rev. F. and Mrs. Barton Horspool—an Ordination Thankoffering, 1910.

Pulpit Frontal. — The gift of Miss Trustrum, 1910.

Chalice Veil, and Bands for Choir Books. — The gift of Miss D. Chadwick, 1910.

Four Burses, and Chalice Veil. — The gifts of Mr. and Mrs. Myers, Mrs. Pilkington, and Mrs. Hind, November, 1929.

Communion and Clergy Kneelers. — The gift of Mr. Kennaugh, 1910.

Book Markers. — The gift of Mr. L. J. Kewley.

Pulpit Falls, White and Violet Falls. — The gift of Mr. J. R. Bruce, in memory of his mother, Mrs. M. Bruce, April, 1956.

Altar Frontal. — The gift of Mr. J. R. Bruce, in memory of his wife, Laura.

FITTINGS, &c.

Book Rest on Holy Table. — The gift of Mr. James Mylrea and Rev. T. J. Pearce, July, 1898. (A second book rest was added, July, 1911.)

Book Rest on Pulpit. — The gift of Mr. Thomas Clague, July, 1898.

Pair of Vases, Brass. — The gift of Rev. R. Ferguson — an Ordination Thankoffering, 1910.

Prayer Book for Prayer Desk. — The gift of Miss Trustrum, August, 1908.

Pair of Carved Oak Panels. — The gift of the Misses Barnes.

Litany Desk. — The gift of Mrs. Swain.

Prayer Books for Desk. — The gift of Mrs. M. Bruce, in memory of her husband, J. Bruce, October, 1944.

Litany Book. — The gift of Mrs. Winifred Garrett, in memory of her husband.

Brass Ewer for Font. — The gift of Mrs. Jackson, in memory of her husband, T. J. Jackson, 1932.

Two Altar Flower Vases. — Anonymous gift, 1951.



