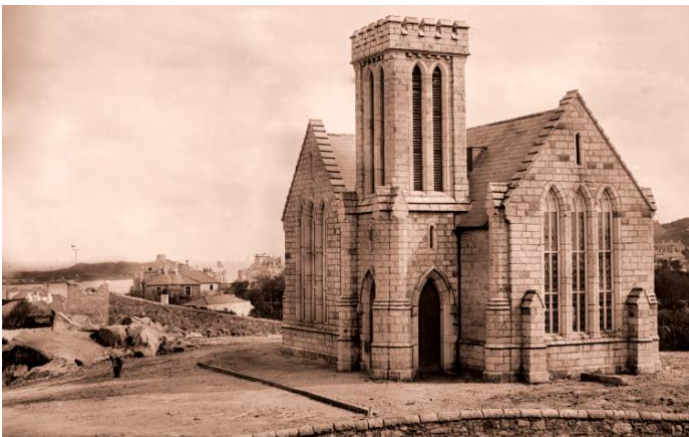


# History of St. Patrick's Church, Rectory, School & Hall, Dalkey

The church dominates the granite outcrop above Bullock Harbour, a great landmark in the surrounding area. In 1836 there was a need to build a church for the growing population of Dalkey, Bullock and Sandycove. Initially known as Dalkey Episcopal Chapel of Ease, within the Parish of Monkstown, it later became Dalkey Episcopal Church.

Numerous sites were examined, and finally the present site was chosen, offered free by the Ballast Board of Dublin Port (now Dublin Port Company) on land where they quarried stone to be shipped from Bullock Harbour. Access was from the private Ballast Office Road (now Harbour Road). The consent of the Archbishop of Dublin for the building of the church was then obtained. In 1839 Jacob Owen won the design competition for a plan with 500 seats on the ground floor and 168 in the gallery, estimated cost £1600. After some further delay the building of the church by a Mr. Hickey began, with the Foundation Stone laid on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1840. Meanwhile, services were held in a temporary church on Mr. Porter's land.



Lawrence Stereo Collection c.1865 © National Library of Ireland

The church was completed in 1843 and the sermon at the opening service was preached by Richard Whately, Archbishop of Dublin, on Sunday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, of that year. Only the west (rear) and north transept galleries were included in the original, but it was always planned to increase the seating capacity later. This occurred in 1853, when it was decided to develop further, and plans by Joseph Welland, Architect to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, were accepted at an estimated cost of £315. This added a south transept gallery and access stairway, a small organ loft on the north side wall adjoining an enlarged west gallery, a new central three-decker pulpit, reader's desk and Holy Table behind a curved communion rail, and a robing room on the ground where the chancel now stands.

The church was consecrated in 1868, and dedicated to St. Patrick, and Parish status was assigned and mapped.

In 1879 several structural additions were made to the church. At that time there was no chancel, and there was an old-fashioned three-decker wooden pulpit and straight-back box pews. The alterations comprised the addition of the present chancel, vestry room, organ chamber, new pews and the redecoration of the entire church. These were to the design of Edward Carson, Architect, father of Sir Edward Carson. This work was completed in about ten months, during which the church was closed, re-opening on Sunday, December 14, 1879.



The only music supplied previously was from an old organ built into one of the side walls in the west gallery. This instrument possessed twelve hymn and psalm tunes arranged on cylinders, which were reverently ground out Sunday after Sunday for some years. Mr. Charles Leslie, one of the best friends the Parish ever had, tired of listening to this primitive form of music, and presented an organ. This was replaced in the year 1885 by a new organ purchased from Foster and Andrews of Hull, which is still in use in the church. The smaller bell which rings immediately before the service had been given by Mr. Charles Leslie when the Church was built. The great bell was presented by the congregation to mark the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897.

In 1870 the same Charles Leslie presented the church with the very attractive cut stone Sexton's Lodge and School House, built at his sole expense of over £1,000, to the design of Edward H. Carson. Mr. Leslie died in 1879, and a tablet was erected to his memory, which

stands over the present reading desk. The beautiful pulpit and reading desk of caenstone and polished marble were erected in grateful memory of what he had done for the Parish - the pulpit by the parishioners and the prayer desk by the members of his family.



From *The Irish Builder* Sep 1<sup>st</sup> 1870, courtesy of Irish Architectural Archive

Charles Leslie had always hoped that a larger Parochial Hall would be built, and around 1883 a major extension was added to the School building which is still the fabric of the present main hall. It had a separate external entrance porch which was removed in the 1964 development. This added a new entrance foyer, smaller upstairs hall, office, kitchen, toilets and central heating. In 1999 the whole complex was totally upgraded and extended, and a new school building added, with an upper level covered link to the Church. The architect was David Jordan, and his modern design harmonises well with the older buildings on the site.



The Northover Bequest was a major source of finance for this project, which enables the Parish to offer facilities to a wide spectrum of community organisations, and provides a very real and concrete link between the church itself and the school and parish buildings and activities. The character of the Northover

Hall owes much to the original roof timbers of both school structures which are still in place, despite several temporary interventions with sliding partitions and even a suspended ceiling for some 35 years!

In the early 1890's the very attractive pink and green tinted glazing appears to have been installed in those tall lancet windows which did not already have stained glass.

In 1920 the chancel was furnished with the War Memorial which consisted of the entire caenstone and marble arcading and the marble memorial panel, based on the existing pulpit and prayer desk design. This was funded by parishioners' subscriptions.

In 1955/56 wet and dry rot were detected throughout the church and the roof, windows and three galleries were removed. Only the west (rear) gallery was replaced, but re-inforced to accommodate all the Castle Park boarding pupils at Sunday Morning Service. The robed boys' choir from the school sat at the front of the church. The pulpit was moved aside closer to the organ to improve the sight lines, and the prayer desk was turned sideways as it had originally faced the congregation.

Following some years' work to eliminate damp in the church due to problems with roof flashings and gutters, a major refurbishment of the tower took place with the fitting of new cedar louvres to the belfry. The West window was reframed in teak to replace rotten softwood. Then in 2010 it was felt that the building was dry and could be totally redecorated and recarpeted. Services were moved to the Northover Hall for two months and the work was completed in September.

Originally the church was under the management of Trustees, who appointed the Incumbent and had charge of church endowments. At a meeting of the Trustees on 22nd October 1909, the Bishop of Clogher, Maurice Day, proposed a resolution, which passed unanimously, "That the time has now arrived when the Dalkey Church Fund should be transferred to the Representative Church Body in accordance with the Act of Parliament enabling them to do so." The Select Vestry agreed, and the Dalkey Church Trust and property were handed over to the R.C.B.. Under the Diocesan Scheme the R.C.B. now holds the endowment Fund in trust for Dalkey Parish. The church, school, rectory and land are vested in the R.C.B., and the election of future Incumbents will rest in accordance with the Statutes of the Church of Ireland.

On the walls of the church are many memorials to those who worshipped in St. Patrick's. In addition to the one

mentioned before to Charles Leslie, there is another to the Rev. W.H. Kerr, who was rector of the Parish for thirty-seven years, and one to Ivaniona, wife of Capt. Leslie Peacocke. The Peacocke's were great supporters of the church in early days, and the east window was erected to the memory of the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Goodricke Peacocke. William Edward Porter, one of the founders and first trustees of the church, has a tablet erected to his memory, and beside it on the South wall is one to the memory of Harry Blake Knox, son of another of the original founders and trustees, Capt. Francis Blake Knox.

There are also tablets to two families who worshipped in the church for over forty years - Dr. Richard St. John Chinnery Lyon and his wife, and also Thomas Tighe Mecredy and his wife. There is also a tablet to the memory of the Hayes family of San Elmo, Dalkey, and one to Mary Webster, the faithful matron for many years to the boys of Castle Park School. The only other stained glass window, in addition to the one already mentioned, is erected to the memory of Mr. John Chancellor in the year 1890.

The very handsome brass eagle lectern was given by the Rev. Dr. Lucas, who was Assistant Curate for many years in the Parish, and Mrs. Lucas, in the memory of their daughter, Marion Moussin Lucas, who died when she was only twenty one years old. The beautiful stone arcading around the East End was placed there as a War Memorial to those who fell in the Great War, 1914 to 1918. The Font was moved to the new Baptistry created in 1993 in memory of Harry and Nancy Read. The handsome brass ewer for use at baptisms was presented by Mrs. L'Estrange in memory of her husband, Edmund L'Estrange, a good friend to the church and a faithful Hon. Secretary to the Select Vestry for many years. The beautiful altar and pulpit frontals were gifts of Miss Bell, who formerly resided at Prince Patrick, Dalkey, Mrs. Powell and Mrs. Barlee.

The Credence Table was presented by Mrs. King-Walker, of Bray, on which stands the handsome brass alms dish presented by Mr. S.A. Quan-Smith on the Coronation of His Majesty King George V, June 22, 1911. Another Parochial Nominator and Synodsman, Lieut-Col. Siberry, presented the brass lining for the Font. Over the years the church has continued to be beautified by gifts presented by faithful and devoted friends.

## The Rectory

Sometimes referred to as the Parsonage, or Vicarage, the Rectory was built in 1866, with the advantage of the newly arrived piped water from the Vartry, thanks to the Dublin County Authorities. The site, a disused quarry which had provided the stone for building the

Church, measures 0.876 acres and is called the Glebe land. (The site of the Church ground measures 1.057 acres). The house is beautifully situated to take advantage of the sun, it faces south-west and has a nice aspect, even in these days with all the surrounding houses and trees.

The design of the Rectory is 'Russian Villa' style, quite popular at that particular period. There are several examples of this design to be seen on the Rathgar Road, and Leinster Road in Dublin. Originally, the house had large 'double-winged' granite steps leading to the entrance door on the upper floor, now a veranda incorporating the roof of a modern enclosed porch. The reception rooms had been on the upper storey with the better views, and the original bathroom was underneath the entrance steps. In the 1910's the steps were removed and a front door inserted downstairs. Some of the long granite slabs can still be seen in the garden. The two rather attractive marble fireplaces were relocated to the two ground-level rooms at the front of the house, to replace the upstairs drawing room and dining room. An extension was built on to the rear NW corner to accommodate a new bathroom on the upper storey. The room on the NE corner at ground level would have been a servant's room and is now the Rector's study.

When the house was built (at the same period as "Breffni" high on the slope to the south) there was no sewage system in that part of Dalkey, so the Rectory would have had a septic tank possibly in the SE area of the site. It was probably at the time of these major changes to the house that the Urban District Council laid sewage pipes in the area to run down through the quarry to an outlet at Bullock.



In 1955 a new enclosed porch was built after removing what remained of a granite slab at the upper storey level. Much internal work was done, particularly to the kitchen. The huge old Maguire and Gatchell range was pulled out (Mr. Maguire was a Select Vestry member for years and lived in Tower Hill Lodge). A 24" x 24"

air vent trench was inserted around the base of the building to eliminate damp, and the creeper was removed. Some later changes were made, notably the installation of oil fired central heating and the removal of the two marble fireplaces, later regretted by some.



In its time the lawn had been both a tennis and croquet court. In the late 1950's and early 1960's the ladies of the Parish had weekly Friday morning markets to raise money for the Rectory repairs and later the School building fund, and one side benefit was to provide rose bushes for the Rectory gardens. Four hundred rose bushes was the final count when Rev J.D.Murray left the Rectory for Milltown Parish! John Challendar, Alf Curtain, Hughie Ross and a boy worked hard in the garden in that period. His successor could not cope with such a burden and the bulk of the roses had to go. Fortunately, most of them flourished in parishioners' gardens, so the story had a happy ending.

## St. Patrick's School

The Parish School opened in 1870, housed with the Sexton's Lodge in a building provided in 1868 as a generous free gift to the Church by Charles Leslie J.P. The work of architect Edward H. Carson FRIAI at a cost of over £1,000, it was highly regarded for the superior standard of its design and construction. The granite was quarried on the site. The building comprised the Lodge and the stage area behind the bay window of the present hall. That original hall served as classroom, Sunday school and Parish meeting room. The front room in the Lodge was also used as a library. Around 1883 the hall was extended to take in the area occupied by the present main hall, with an external entrance porch at the front.

Initially it was a local Church School supported by parochial subscription. The school was first registered with the Commissioners of National Education on 1st December 1894 as a National School (Roll No. 14647) with 30 pupils (12 boys and 18 girls).

The school began as a one-teacher school and remained so until the 1950's. From the 1920's to the 1950's there was one large classroom taking in the present hall plus the stage area. Heating came from an upright coal stove half way along the long wall of the room. There were outside toilets in the area now

occupied by the passageway and cloakroom. Mrs. Armstrong was the teacher who was later succeeded by Miss Florrie Armstrong. In 1953 the Dalkey Youth Club financed the installation of a new maple floor.



Increased numbers led to further development in 1964. A new entrance hallway with kitchen and toilets was added with a parish room and office upstairs. The original windows were enlarged, and folding partitions installed to divide the classrooms. A prefab added in 1971 at the Church Road end, was seriously damaged by fire in 1977. During rebuilding Loreto Abbey very kindly offered the necessary facilities to continue the education of the displaced infants and junior classes.



A completely new modern four teacher school was built as part of the major development of the present Northover Hall complex. This was opened by the Archbishop of Dublin and the Minister for Education and Science on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1999. The architect was David Jordan.

*With acknowledgment to the late Harry Latham, parishioner and local historian, whose publication for the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of St. Patrick's in 1993 has been of invaluable assistance in the production of this updated information.*

*Brian Meyer, January 2024*