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## Irvine Old Parish Church - the stained glass windows

*(a walk round tour prepared by I J Dickson, 1996)*

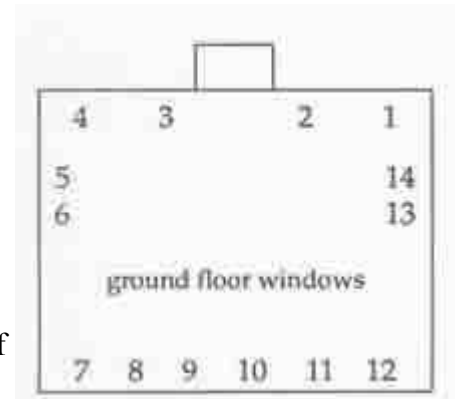
Windows which are not described contain simple but effective leaded lights. Although of a similar period to the stained glass windows, they are made up of repeat patterns of less expensive machine-made glass.

### 1 The Good Samaritan

This window is in memory of Matthew Wright, JP (1809-1890), timber merchant; its text is "Go and do thou likewise." (Luke 10, 37).

### 2 Moses

One of a pair of high windows, dated "AD 1891", by W & J J Kier, Glasgow, it depicts (above) Moses with the Commandments and (below) the imposing figures of Joshua and Samuel. "Fear God and keep His Commandments." In memory of Thomas Campbell of Annfield (1791-1866), Provost of Irvine 1850-64, it has a typically Victorian profusion of fruits (above) and flowers (below).



### 3 The Sermon on the Mount

This second large window bears the text "Blessed are the pure in heart" and in its lower half portrays Saints John and Peter. It is in memory of Archibald William Montgomerie, 13th Earl of Eglinton and Winton (1812-61). He hosted the Eglinton Tournament of 1839.

### 4 Jairus' daughter (Mark ch.6)

In the foreground, Christ visits the house of Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, and raises his 12 year old daughter from the plague; our eye then travels back to the landscape beyond. The window is in memory of Marion Dunlop Rowatt (d. 1889) and Janet Millar (d. 1900). The words "Talitha Cumi" are Hebrew meaning "Damsel, I say unto thee, arise."

### 5 Christ & His Disciples

A 1905 window in memory of Margaret Richmond Campbell (1834-1904), wife of Alexander Gilmour (window 6). It shows Christ and eleven disciples, and bears the text "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

### 6 The Shepherds

The four shepherds, with Bethlehem in the distance, say to each other: "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem" (Luke 2, 15). This is in memory of Alexander Gilmour of Annfield (1828-1902).

### 7 Christ at the closed door

The story is from Rev. 3,20: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." The figure of Christ, with His bright lantern, is copied from the once enormously popular 1853 Holman Hunt painting "The Light of the World", reproduced in thousands of prints and over a hundred stained glass windows; this artist has added eye-catching purple thistles, and a border of red roses. It is in memory of James Armour of Mayfield (1843-1909), JP, Provost of Irvine 1891-94.

### 11 Fishers of Men

Christ says to Simon and Andrew: "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men" (Mark 1,17), against a background of boats and hills, as well as doves and a cockerel against a rising sun. It is in memory of "Loving Parents, Andrew Muirhead Stewart, and his wife Agnes Orr".

### 13 The Woman of Samaria

With the text "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst", is the story from John 4, 14 of Christ addressing the woman at the well. The window is in memory of Captain John Boyd, his wife Elizabeth Shields, and their children John, William, Elizabeth, Janet and Mary-Ann, and dedicated by Jeanie Boyd in Oct. 1904.

### 14 The Woman of Capernaum

A woman who was a sinner washes Christ's feet with tears, wipes them with her hair, and anoints them with ointment. He told Simon (Luke 7, 47): "Her sins, which were many, are all forgiven her." The window is in memory of William Breckenridge (b. 1838) of Riversleigh, timber merchant, JP, Provost of Irvine 1894-98, and nephew of Matthew Wright (window 1, to left)

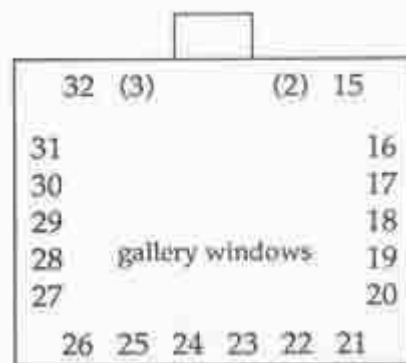
**If visiting the church, you now take the stairs on your right, and, reaching the gallery, start at the furthest window to your right, on the north wall. Windows 2 and 3 go the full height of the church.**

### 15 Boaz and Ruth

A window in memory of William Henderson of Williamfield (d. 1880, aged 53); one of a pair with window 32, both erected by Esther Henderson, his widow. Boaz (Ruth 2, 8) said to Ruth: "Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean another field, neither go from hence." The scene is set in golden cornfields.

### 16 The Robert Burns Window

Donated by Irvine Burns Club, to commemorate the bicentenary of the poet's death, in the building where he worshipped while in Irvine. [Also featured on an Irvine Burns Club [page](#).]



The following description was prepared by the artist, Susan Bradbury:

Finding comfort in the Bible at a time of crisis, **Robert Burns wrote a verse paraphrase of the 1st Psalm**, which describes the righteous man as "like a tree planted by the rivers of water". The stone at lower left bears the first three verses of his paraphrase (which we also print further down this page).

The setting is **the Scottish landscape** - the tree growing beside a stream, "clear as crystal" (Rev. 22, 1); the image of "a falling crystal stream" is one to which the poet frequently returned.

The artist **Susan Bradbury**, FMGP. first came to Ayrshire as Irvine New Town artist in 1981, and works, both on new commissions such as for the Ayrshire Hospice and RAF Lossiemouth, and on restoring old stained glass, from the Stained Glass Partnership in a converted church in Kilmaurs. She was delighted to be invited to create this window for the Parish Church of the town which was so important at the start of her career.

Susan chose **the colours of autumn** - green, gold and brown - the warm golden-orange of a bracken-covered hillside, the grey-gold mixes of lichens on stonework. The gold links visually to the golden cornfields in the neighbouring Ruth and Boaz window to the left. The blue sky creates a positive sunny atmosphere, and provides a link with the Trades window to the right. The sparkle in the stream is achieved by differing textures of clear glass, and the sunlight through the leaves by differing degrees of acid-etching of the top green layer of the special

glass used here.

**The stream and tree** are also the River of Life and the Tree of Life of Rev. 22 (1-2, 14,17); it "bare twelve manner of fruits"; the artist has chosen grapes, a pomegranate, fig, orange, lemon, olive, date, apple, pear, cherries, plums and hazelnuts. "The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" makes us recall Burns' expression of brotherhood in " A man's a man for a' that".

Burns twice referred to **Rev. 7, 15-17**, which promises a much better life in the hereafter. The Lamb at the throne of God will lead those that serve God "unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes". The 22-year old Robert told his father how these verses inspired him, and, nine years later, in a letter to Peter Hill, his Edinburgh agent and friend, he wrote that, if he could, he would "wipe away all tears from all eyes". These verses are on the stone at lower right, and are printed at the foot of this page.

**The stone tablets**, with their balancing Old and New Testament texts, could be the golden gates of the entrance to heaven (Rev. 22,14: "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gates to the city"); they could also be standing stones forming an invitation to walk righteously by a crystal stream.

**This window thus combines rich visual images of the natural world with symbolic links to beautiful passages of Scripture and to the life and works of Robert Burns.**

### 17 The Burgh Window

The central figure of St Inan, the Celtic saint whom tradition most closely associates with Irvine, is surmounted by a scene of the harbour, and flanked by the insignia of the seven trades, the Hammermen (smiths), Weavers, Tailors, Cordiners (leather workers), Skinners, Wrights and Squaremen, and Coopers, and the insignia of the Carters. The text is "I am among you as he that serveth". Below is the Burgh Coat of Arms, flanked by its dates 1372 and 1975, Alpha & Omega, and words of gratitude for "Fellowship between Church and Burgh for Six Centuries". The window was designed by John Blyth of Glenrothes and glazed by W Blair.

### 21-26 The Six Acts of Mercy

These Kier windows were donated by Mrs Henderson of Williamfield, as were 15 & 32. They illustrate Matthew 25, 35-36.

21 "I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat." (Spelling as on the window)

22 "I was thirsty; and ye gave Me drink."

23 "I was a stranger, and ye took Me in."

24 "Naked, and ye clothed Me."

25 "I was sick, and ye visited Me."

26 "I was in prison, and ye came unto Me."

### 30 Faith, Hope, Love

The scene showing Christ with children and two doves bears the message "Me ye have not always" and the text "Faith - Hope - Love - the Greatest of these is Love". It was donated "in Loving Memory of my Father and Mother, Brothers and Sister" by Jane J Dickie. Today's children may like to find the butterflies and the other wee creatures in the borders.

### 31 The Nativity

The Magi render homage. This window is to the memory of James Johnston Kier, artist in stained glass, erected by his widow in 1907. The text comes from Matthew 2, 2: "They presented unto him Gifts".

### 32 "Suffer Little Children"

The text "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God" (Luke 18, 16) poignantly adorns this W & J J Kier window dedicated by Esther Henderson in

memory of her children: James, died aged 23; William, aged 15 months, Clara aged 2 yrs 8 mths, and Earnest William aged 1 yr 10 mths.

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**Burns window: text on left: Burns' Paraphrase of Psalm 1**

The man, in life wherever plac'd,  
Hath happiness in store,  
Who walks not in the wicked's way  
Nor learns their guilty lore!

Nor from the seat of scornful pride  
Casts forth his eyes abroad,  
But with humility and awe  
Still walks before his God!

That man shall flourish like the trees,  
Which by the streamlets grow:  
The fruitful top is spread on high,  
And firm the root below.

**Burns window: text on right: Revelation 7, 15-17**

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For the lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.