

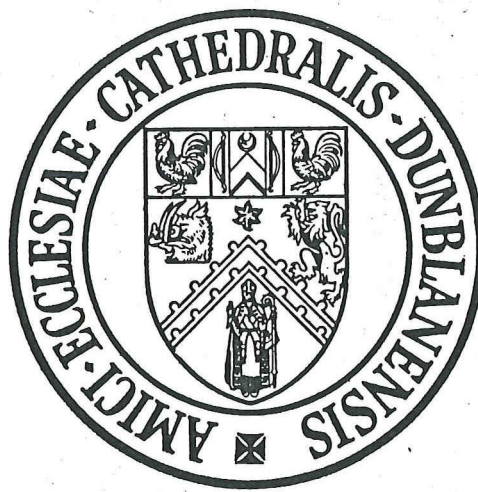
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# The Society of Friends of Dunblane Cathedral

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Part I



**THE COMMUNION PLATE AND OTHER SILVER  
OF  
DUNBLANE CATHEDRAL**

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In the archives of the Vatican is a document dated 6th September, 1419, which records that the Church of Dunblane had been of old most sumptuous in its buildings, its glass windows, its ornaments and vestments, its many jewels and relics. Of all this treasure, so far as is known, nothing remains. For this irreparable loss the Roman Catholic Clergy of that period bear heavy responsibility as do also the later Reformers.

In 1560, the year of the Reformation in Scotland, the Cathedral was devastated and despoiled by the incursion of a band of some three hundred burgesses from St. John's Town of Perth, intent, as they declared, on purifying the Kirk and setting forward the Reformation. "They cast down the images, destroyed the Altars and bore the treasures and relics to the banks of the Allan and cast them into the waters" — so the story runs. Further spoilation and vandalism followed over the years until, as is recorded, "the Cathedral was unfit for anything but a quarry, its treasures disappeared including the mikill candlesticks of silver, the Quire dismantled and the Great Altar ruined". Little other than the fabric remained and certainly no Sacrament vessels descended to the Reformed Church, which at the first, deprived of any such, had perforce to use at the Communion "any cups they could lay their hands on even from a tavern or ale-house".

The Synod of Dunblane in 1666, at which time Bishop Leighton was Moderator, recommended that "convenient utensils be provided in every kirk for the administration of the Holy Sacraments", but it was not till twenty-one years later that such provision in the Cathedral is first recorded. Minute of Kirk Session — "27th March, 1687. In the presence of the Bishop and Dean this day George Robertson, Church Thesaurer, in the name of John Graham, Comisar Clarke, presented two silver cups consisting each of them of a choppin and upwards and ilk ane of them of 17/20 ounces weight, bearing his name and Arms and ye inscription for the Kirk of Dunblane which the said John doted and bestowed upon the said kirk for the use of the Communion Tables and are appointed to be kept by the Church Thesaurer\* with this proviso that they be at the said John Graham's command when he pleases to call for them. The Session ordains a Letter of thanks to be wrytten to him". In all likelihood the proviso was introduced so that the donor, as Commissary Clerk, upon whom rested the obligation to offer hospitality to visiting dignitaries both of Church and of State, on such occasion could suitably furnish his table. A Minute of Session in 1700 records the withdrawal of the proviso at the instance of the donor and the gift is made outright.

The cups, of chalice form without handles, with shallow bowl and tapered stalk or stem with knop and domed circular base are of hand-hammered silver and were made in 1686 in Edinburgh by James Penman. The Assay-Master was John Borthwick. On the outer side of the bowl is engraved the armorial achievement of the donor, Argent on a chief sable, three escallops Or, a mullet of the Second and having on either side of the Arms the initials I G and round the rim of the lip the inscription — EX DONO IOHANNIS GRAHAME CLERICI PRO ECCLESIA DUMBLANEN — The gift of John Grahame, Clerk, for the Church of Dunblane.

Fifteen years later two further cups were added to which the following Minutes of Kirk Session relate. "1 Februe 1702. The Session considering the need they have of four cups at the celebration of the Lord's Supper in this congregation. They appoint the Thesaurer to cause make two cups of the same form and size and weight with those which John Grahame in Dunblane gifted to the Session for the foregoing. 8 March 1702. The Thesaurer reports that according to the Session appointment he hath caused make two silver cups for the use of the Lord's Supper in this congregation of the same size and weight with those which John Grahame gifted to the Session each of them weighing eighteen ounces, the silver and workmanship whereof comes to one hundred and fourtie four pound Scots, which summe the Session appoints to be taken out of the box because the Thesaurer hath not so much in his hand at the time. The Session considering that they have also need of Flagons at the celebration of the Lord's Supper do appoint the Thesaurer to buy two, each of them containing three chopins or thereby. 19 April 1702. The Thesaurer reports that he had bought two flagons as he was appointed the price of which is eleven pound two shill and they appoint him to pay the carrier two pound seven shills six pennies for carrying the money for the cups and flagons and bringing them furth from Edinbr". Of these flagons there is, alas, no trace today; and the time of their disappearance, their fate and their whereabouts are unknown. The cups were made in Edinburgh in 1702 by Mungo Yourstone and the Assay Master was James Penman, who made the 1686 cups. Each bears the inscription — HIC CALIX EMPTUS FUIT A CONSISTORIO DUMBLANENSI IN USAM CANNAE DOMINICAE. 1702 — This cup was bought by the Kirk Session of Dunblane for use at the Lord's supper, 1702.

Amongst the early examples of Communion Plate, the four cups above dealt with are illustrated and described in "Old Scottish Communion Plate", by the Reverend Thomas Burns, FRSE, FSA, Scot., Minister of Lady Glenorchy's Parish, Edinburgh. The book was published by R. & R. Clark, Edinburgh in 1892.

The state of the congregation in the next one hundred to one hundred and fifty years reflected the unsettled times in both national and church history in Scotland and the number of communicating members was small. At the Disruption in 1843 many were disjoined or left and it was only some twenty years later that many of them returned and others came to swell the

numbers. The Quire, where worship had been conducted for nearly two hundred years (the Nave having been roofless since the middle of the 17th century) was no longer adequate to accommodate the membership and the fabric was in a parlous state of disrepair. The Kirk Session made appropriate representations to the Heritors which in due course, through the vision, inspiration and zeal of the Minister, Dr Alexander Ritchie, the staunch support and guidance of Dr J. W. Barty, Clerk of Session, and by the abundant generosity of Mrs. Wallace of Glassingall, led in 1889 to 1893 to the restoration of the whole Cathedral.

Membership and adherence quickly mounted and further provision of Communion Silver was clearly necessary and desirable. In 1896 the need was generously met. Four additional cups, two large patens and two flagons were added. The cups were gifted severally by Elizabeth Gentle or Paterson and Margaret Montgomerie Paterson of Holmehill; Keturah Jane Gerard (Mrs McQueen of Duthieston); Mrs Archibald Russell of Auchinraith, whose husband was tenant of Kilbryde Castle for some years; and by some elders of Kirk Session. One of the patens was given by Mr Montgomerie Paterson, the other, to commemorate the restoration, was provided by the congregation. The two flagons were gifted, one by Anne Moubray Boyd, wife of Dr J. W. Barty, Clerk of Session, the other by General Archibald Stirling of Keir and his brother Sir John Stirling Maxwell of Pollok. All of these pieces are so inscribed and the Session, in thanking the donors, assured them that their generous gifts had provided Communion Plate amply sufficient for the needs of the congregation and worthy of the Cathedral.

The membership however continued to increase and in 1930 additional plate was required and eight further cups and two smaller patens for broken bread were presented anonymously. When in 1938, the aisles and the quire-stalls were occupied at the Celebration, more vessels were needed; and four cups and two small patens (all gifted anonymously) and a third flagon, presented by the Society of Friends of the Cathedral, were added. The 1896 pieces and all since provided are of hand hammered silver and were made by Hamilton & Inches, Gold and Silversmiths, Edinburgh, the cups being immaculate copies of those given in 1687 by John Grahame.

The furnishing of the Table is enhanced by a silver table lectern with rectangular pierced panel on a tapered stem with circular base, made by Hamilton & Inches, Edinburgh, in 1948. It is the gift of Mrs Bowman Dunn in memory of her husband and inscribed: To the Glory of God, in thankful remembrance of Bowman Dunn, Ruling Elder, Dunblane Cathedral, 1918-1935.

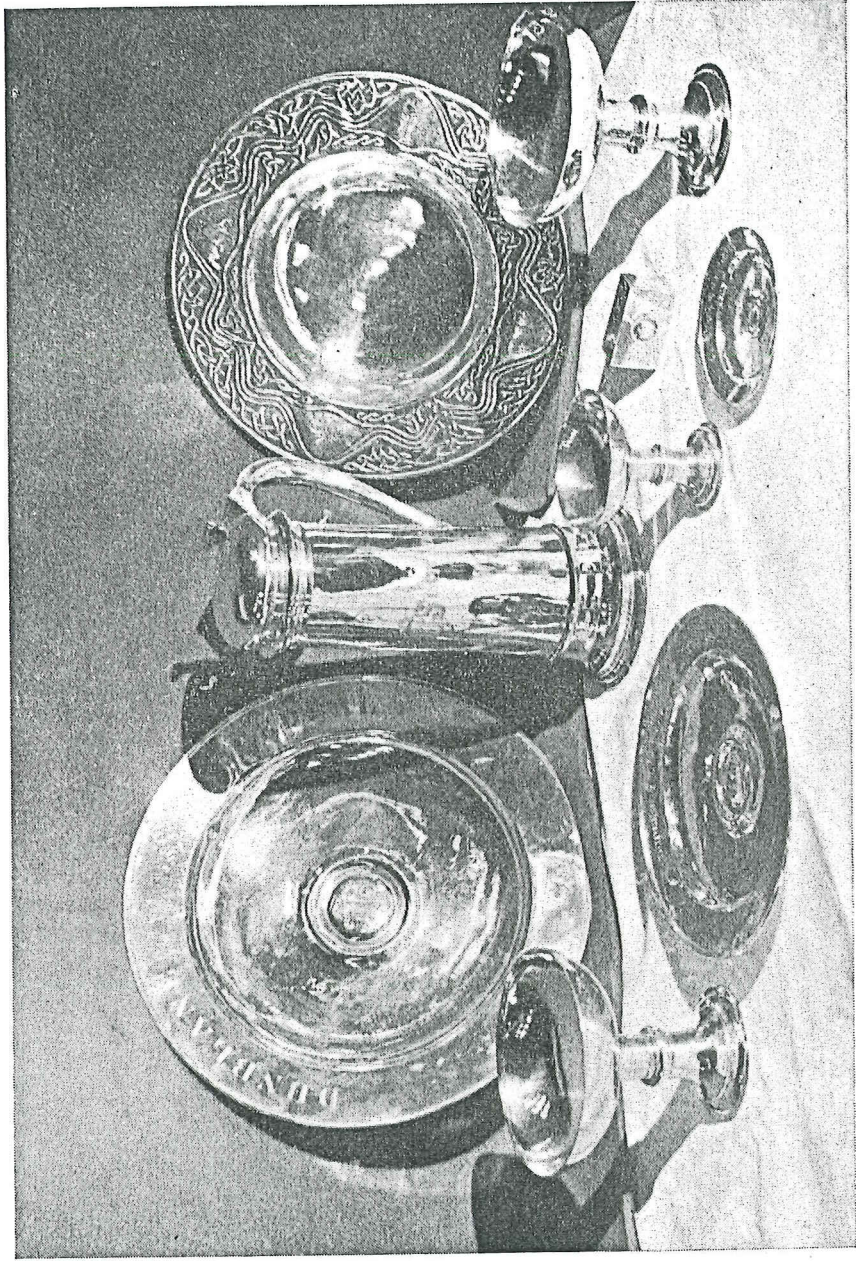
A portable Communion set, comprising a small silver cup, a miniature copy of the larger cups, a little silver paten, a silver box for bread, two crystal flagons and a fine linen-lawn table covering, all in a fitted leather case, was presented in 1932 by the parents and children of a family in the congregation. The silver articles are hand-wrought by Miss Kirkwood, of Edinburgh.

The other silver of the Cathedral consists of a Baptismal Basin and a Sanctuary lamp. The Baptismal Basin, designed and made by Miss Kirkwood in 1940 is the gift of Mrs Marjorie Cockburn, wife of John Marshall Cockburn, Dr J. Hutchison Cockburn's brother. It is a beautiful work in hammered silver: four symbols occupy the main points of the compass — the Fish symbolising our Lord; the Dove as the emblem of the Holy Spirit; the Burning Bush standing for the Church of Scotland, and the Lily for the Purity and Innocence of Children. The symbols merge into a wavy design of lines which symbolise water, and the vacant spaces are filled in with an intricate Celtic pattern. The Sanctuary lamp, of delicate silver filigree, over the font at the south west corner of the Nave, was given for the Cathedral to Dr Cockburn by the Metropolitan Panteleimon of the Greek Orthodox Church in thanksgiving for help afforded to the Eastern European Churches, at the close of the 1939/45 War, by the World Council of Churches through its department of Reconstruction and Inter-Church Aid, of which Dr Cockburn was at the time Director. It came from the Church of the Reception of the Infant Jesus in Edhessa and is inscribed — EDHESSA; 1817; CHAGIZIANA [the then Warden of the Church]; NICHOLAS [the Silversmith].

While that which is signified is always greater than its symbol, and while the Sacraments are but means whereby we are brought into the nearer Presence of our Living Lord and His Love, yet it is right that seemly vessels should be provided and maintained for such high and holy occasions. Ours is a rare privilege to be inheritors and trustees of these treasures offered to the praise and Glory of God, as has here been told, by many thankful people over so long a period of time.

\*The Treasurer has long been relieved of this responsibility. The Communion Plate and Cathedral Silver are lodged in a strong room within twenty miles of Dunblane.





Photograph by]

COMMUNION PLATE OF DUNBLANE CATHEDRAL

[Mr. Herbert Gallagher