

The Church of St. Paul/Church of All Saints, Moyglare – historical connections near and far

On yet another trip to another graveyard during lockdown I made a visit to the Church of St. Paul now called the Church of All Saints, Moyglare. Situated in the Barony of Deece Upper, in the civil parish and townland of Moyglare, the Church of Ireland church and graveyard are tucked away in a little enclave just off the Moyglare Road at Anne's Bridge. So, what was the story behind this building and graveyard and who were the people involved?

According to the Archaeological Inventory of County Meath (1987), records show that there has been a church on the site since the 1300s when it was listed for taxation purposes. There are various descriptions of the state of repair of the church from 1600s and that the chancel was in ruins since 1641, a significant year in Irish history. The Church of St. Paul is given c.1870 for the building of present church. However, records in the Irish Architectural Archive and newspaper reports put it at 1866. The Graveyard pre-dates the 1866 church and is a community, multi-denominational burial ground.

Edward McAllister (1836-1866), architect was the person responsible for the design of the Church of St. Paul. He also designed the Geraldine Hall in 1860, a former Church of Ireland School (present day Scouts Hall) which was commissioned by the Duke of Leinster. A proposal dated March 1860 described the project as "Tudor Gothic school house "to be erected" for the Duke of Leinster".

The suggestion of building a new Church at Moyglare also came from the Duke of Leinster. The Church was built by H. Sharpe from Kells at a cost of £1,600 and was project managed by the vicar "who was under no restriction as to costs"... ensuring "the design being met in the most liberal spirit". A report from the Leinster Express noted that George Woods, father of Hans Hamilton Woods immediately responded to the Duke's suggestion and gave £1000 towards its construction. Hans Hamilton Woods (1814-1879) and other Ecclesiastical Commissioners raised the balance.

Edward McAllister had just taken on the project of The Church of St. Paul in 1864 and had the plans drawn up before his untimely death. The Church is described as Early English in style with nave, chancel, robing room to the South and Tower and Spire to the north in white limestone. The windows of the east end are lancet shaped, containing figures of St. Paul (to whom the church is dedicated) with St. Peter and James the Less on either side. The four windows on the West represent the four evangelists over which there is a rose window described as "exquisite in proportion and in the richness of the glass".

These were designed by William Wailes of Newcastle-on-Tyne and were presented by the Misses Woods of Milverton Hall and their father George Woods. The floors of the chancel, aisles, steps, and porch were done in encaustic tiles by Mawe "of most beautiful design". The company was established in 1850 by the Maw brothers, they moved to Shropshire in 1852 and by 1860 encaustic tiles (mock mediaeval) became the height of fashion and the company was the first to use six and more colours. In 1862 a patent mosaic tile was introduced and by the end of the century it was the largest tile factory in the world. They supplied the Royal Family, Alexander II of Russia, Dukes, Earls, hospitals, schools, public buildings, warships, and cathedrals. The Church of St. Paul was in good company.

Consecration of the Church took place on 16 May 1866 by the Lord Bishop of Kilmore, acting for the Bishop of Meath who due to bad health was unable to attend. The Lord Bishop was accompanied by Rev. Robert Staveley, Chaplain and Secretary to the Bishop of Meath. A large body of clergymen and gentlemen from the surrounding area attended the ceremony – Rev. George Blacker Maynooth, Rev. Robert Pakenham Celbridge, Rev. James Hamilton of Ballymacoll, Dunboyne, Mr. Hand Hamilton Woods D.L. Whitestown House, Misses Maunsell, Oakly Park and Mrs Cannon, Moyglare House – to mention a few. After the ceremony all adjourned to the vicarage, where they were received by Mrs. Maunsell and enjoyed an elegant *dejeuner*.

Edward McAllister (1836-1864) was the only son of James, of Dublin and his wife Emilia Chamney. His father later married Christiana (née Hozier) on 17 February 1862. He, like his father appears to have worked for the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. It is recorded that Edward had "already exhibited proofs of considerable ability in his profession". He was admitted as a fellow of the Royal Irish Academy of Architects on 28 June 1864 at the age of 28. Unfortunately, his life was cut short in the same year when he drowned while bathing at Clontarf. He lived at 17 Charlemont Place, Dublin from 1853 until his death. The Leinster Express reported the "lamented the loss" of Edward McAllister and noted "but now that his design has been executed, it can be seen how thoroughly he was imbued with a love of the beautiful, and how completely he realised it in this church."

William Wailes (1808/9-1881) a stained-glass artist and supplier from Newcastle supplied stained glass to Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic churches. He was commended in the newspaper report of the consecration ceremony "Dublin in indebted (to Wailes) for the south transept windows of St. Patrick's Cathedral, and is executed in his best style. Incidentally Wailes also supplied the stained glass for the Church of St. Patrick in Celbridge in 1858.

The Board of Ecclesiastical Commissioners was an agency of Dublin Castle Administration which oversaw the funding, building and repairs to churches of the Church of Ireland. After the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, responsibility of historic monuments was transferred to the Board of Public Works with remaining functions being taken on by the Land Commission.

Myth and Memory: The History and Story of the Graveyards of Maynooth notes that the names of over 80 headstones in the cemetery have been transcribed and noted in that publication.



References:

- Archaeological Inventory Co. Meath (1987)
- Myth and Memory: The History and Story of the Graveyards of Maynooth. Maynooth Local History and Civic Forum, 2002.
- Leinster Express 26/5/1866
- https://www.dia.ie/architects/view/3715/MCALLISTER-EDWARD#tab_works
- <https://www.dia.ie/architects/view/5463/WAILES-WILLIAM%2A%23>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecclesiastical_Commissioners_of_Ireland
- <http://www.mawscraftcentre.co.uk/history.php>

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