

Landmarks

Dundurn Parish Church

There have been places of worship in the St Fillans area since the sixth century when Faolan, the Irish missionary, attempted to spread the Gospel among the native Picts from his fort on Dundurn hill.

The present church dates from 1879. In 1895, a separate parish called Dundurn was established and recognised by the Church of Scotland. It continues to exist as a separate entity, but since 1979 the congregation has been linked with that of Comrie and Strowan with whom they share the same minister.

The church is open to visitors all year round. Its beauty and simplicity is enhanced by the presence of five lovely stained glass windows depicting St Peter, St John, Martha, Mary and Jesus as "The Good Shepherd". The latter window is particularly beautiful and was installed in memory of Rev. Thomas Armstrong, first Minister of the new Parish and ordained in St Fillans in 1881.

Other interesting features include the stone font supported on an ironwork pedestal, believed to have been used for the sacrament of baptism in the pre-Reformation church of Dundurn. The chancel is adorned with fine oak panelling which, together with the pulpit and communion table, have intricate carved Celtic Knotwork reflecting the nature of the early church in the district.

The interior of the church was renovated in 2013 and its garden was redesigned in the form of a Celtic Cross in 2014.

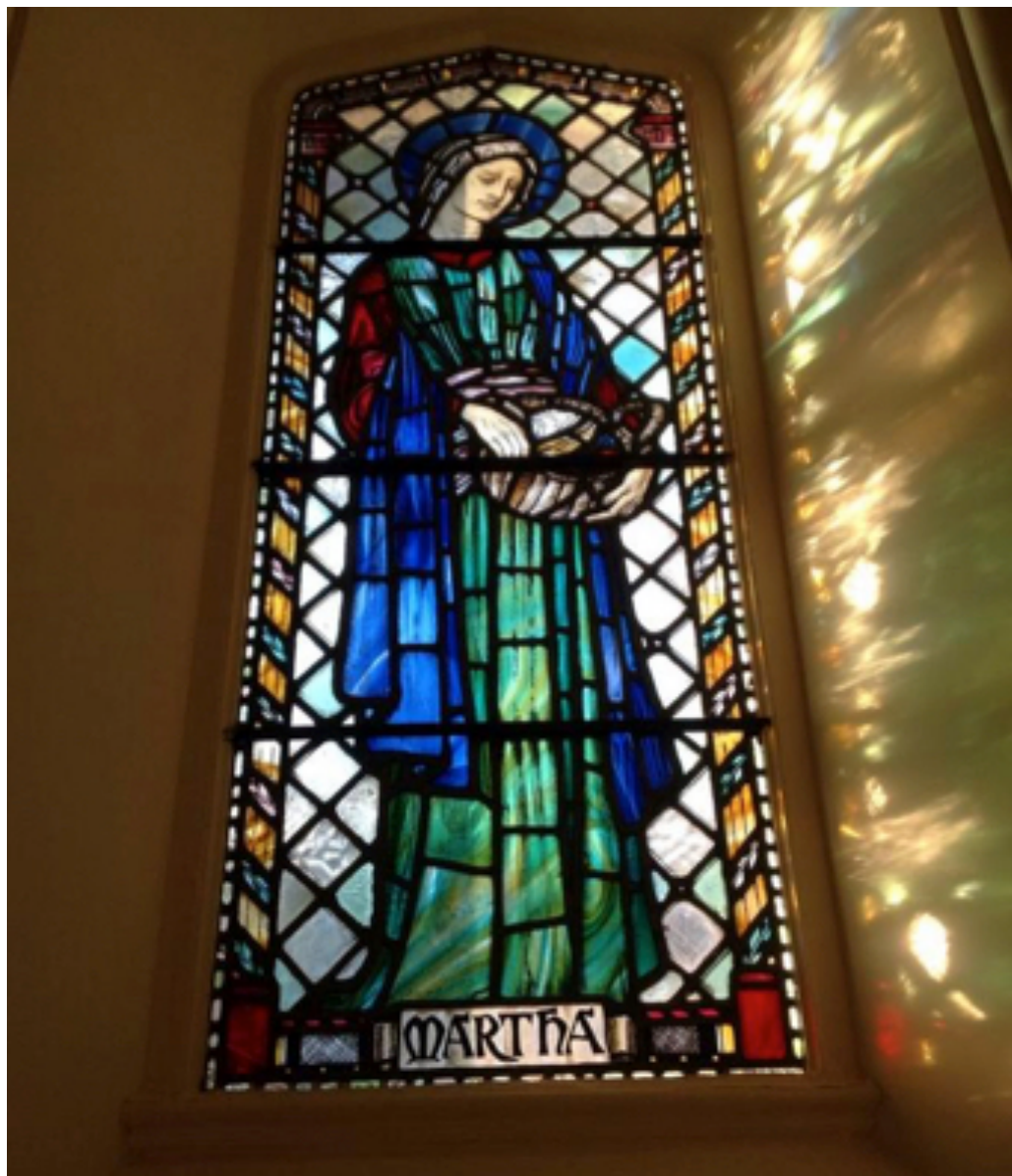
Other interesting features include the stone font supported on an ironwork pedestal, believed to have been used for the sacrament of baptism in the pre-Reformation church of Dundurn. The chancel is adorned with fine oak panelling which, together with the pulpit and communion table, have intricate carved Celtic Knotwork reflecting the nature of the early church in the district.

The interior of the church was renovated in 2013 and its garden was redesigned in the form of a Celtic Cross in 2014.

Worship takes place every Sunday in the church at 11:30 AM and all visitors are very welcome.



Dundurn Parish Church



Martha

Sandison Hall

The Sandison Hall has been an important part of St Fillans life for more than 100 years. It was built in 1894 to rehouse a library originally established in the village school, which at that time was in a barn on the site of the Four Seasons Hotel. Alexander Sandison had retired to live in St Fillans after making a small fortune from trading in the Far East. He was not only widely travelled but well-educated, and was eager to share his interests in the Arts and Books with his fellow villagers, so inaugurated one of Scotland early lending libraries. Up to three books could be borrowed free for a week by village residents. A charge of sixpence per week was levied on summer visitors.

On his death in 1889, Sandison bequeathed the whole library to be held in trust for the benefit of the village, together with a sum of money for its upkeep and, if necessary, to erect a new building to accommodate it. Five years later the Trustees decided the time was right for a more permanent legacy and the result was the Sandison Library Hall. In 1894 it was built and furnished for £168-11s-6d. The external cladding, still in evidence, was corrugated iron, very fashionable at the time.

Whilst retaining its main purpose as a library, the Hall soon became a venue for social functions such as dances and whist drives. More recently there has been a big increase in use by local clubs and societies.

In the 1920s, the Hall was greatly enhanced by the addition of a kitchen and toilets. After the Second World War there was further refurbishment. Electricity was installed and electric heaters replaced the old fashioned heating stoves. In recent years, many more changes have been carried out through special fund raising efforts and the generous support of the village community.

The Hall is now in almost daily use, particularly during the winter and a number of village organisations use it such as the Scottish Country Dancing Club and Tai Chi. It also plays host to numerous functions including Community Council and other Public Meetings, Burns Suppers, A.G.M.'s etc.

Whilst the Hall is still formally in the ownership of the Trustees, it is managed by a committee consisting of the Trustees and representatives of the clubs and societies who regularly use it. Hall membership is eligible to all residents of St Fillans and running costs are met by subscriptions and donations from

members, rent from users and a small but welcome grant from Perth and Kinross Council.

The Sandison Hall continues to provide a focal point for the many diverse social activities that make life in St Fillans today so enjoyable.



The Sandison Hall

St Fillans Power Station

This small, interesting hydro-electric power station is situated just behind the Four Seasons Hotel in a north westerly direction beside a private metalled road running parallel to the A85. Apart from the tail-race spilling out into the loch under the main road, the only visible evidence of hardware are banks of transformers crowned with brown insulators. Behind the big metal door, a 17MW turbine sits in an underground station, hewn out of solid rock. A harmonic hum comes from the transformers. In excess of 130,000 volts of electricity are transferred to the pylons running up the hillside. Built in 1957, it is part of the cascade development operating in tandem with Lednock station to the north and Dalchonzie, a few miles downstream to the southeast. Water

is fed to the Lednock Power Station through a tunnel from Lochan Breaclauch, east of Killin. From Loch Lednock a tunnel leads to a surge shaft above St Fillans. Water from this shaft travels to the St Fillans Power Station. Near the Loch Earn Brewery Hotel, the river is dammed with an adjacent fish ladder and above it, the entrance to another tunnel through the hills. This collects water from a tiny dam on the AlltGhoinean burn and proceeds to Dalchonzie Power Station.

Water is collected from 80 burns and runs through 34 miles of tunnels and aqueducts. In 2002, the station was refurbished when it became eligible for grants under the renewable energy subsidy programme.

It is operated from Perth where water levels are monitored and power is fed directly into the National Grid. It does not directly feed power to the village. It's available 24 hours a day if required and can start and stop production in five minutes.

It is environmentally friendly and does a great support job when the big power stations like Longannet are on shutdown.



Surge Shaft

The Glentarken Bridge

The communities of St. Fillans and Lochearnhead have been working together to develop the old Caledonian Railway path to provide a link between the two villages.

The major project was instigated in 2013 after the St. Fillans Paths Group had commissioned a survey of the route, funded by Paths for All. The report identified that the first priority would be to rebuild the old railway bridge over the Glentarken Burn to the west of St. Fillans. Funding was secured from LEADER – Rural Tayside Programme, Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park and Sustrans.

After lengthy planning, the actual construction of the bridge took just three days. It was pushed out on rollers over the gorge spanning over 100 feet, with a drop to the burn below of 130 feet.

Cameron McNeish officially opened Glentarken Bridge on 9th May, 2014. The event was attended by school children from Comrie and Strathyre primary schools, members of the local communities and walking enthusiasts.



Glentarken Bridge

Loch Earn

This beautiful expanse of freshwater stretches due west of St Fillans for nearly 7 miles to Lochearnhead at its western end. It is one of the deepest lochs in Scotland at 87m.

It is bounded on its northern shore by the busy A85 road and by the quiet, pretty, winding and wooded south shore road. To the south of the loch lies Ben Vorlich, a 985m steep sided pyramid shaped peak. From the top, there are spectacular views of Loch Earn and the surrounding National Park. Viewed from the A85, it bursts into view across the loch and dominates the landscape with the historic Ardvorlich House nestling at its base. On the northern side, more gentle wooded slopes spread towards Loch Tay, sheltering the lovely glens of Beich and Tarken. From St Fillans, the River Earn flows eastwards from the Loch through Strathearn and eventually joins the River Tay near the village of Bridge of Earn.

Loch Earn is unusual in that it has its own apparent 'tidal system', or [seiche](#), caused by the action of the prevailing wind blowing along the loch. The wind pressure on the surface results in an oscillation, such that the water level builds up at one end of the loch only to return to the other end about 16 hours later. The resulting currents can create complex turbulent patterns, as higher layers of warmer waters mix with the lower lying colder waters of the loch. Other fresh water lakes that experience this [seiche](#) effect include [Lake Geneva](#) and [Lake Garda](#).



Loch Earn

Loch Earn is stocked with brown trout each year and has always been popular with fishermen. The loch is also busy with other water sports users. Water skiers have been skimming its surface since the 1950s

A word of caution: bathing in the loch can be extremely dangerous. In many places the edge drops almost vertically to at least 15m and the water just below the surface can be very cold, even at the height of summer. There are safer areas at the St. Fillans end but advice should always be sought from those with local knowledge.

The Frog and the Crocodile

When you approach the village from the East you will pass two well-known local landmarks: the Crocodile Rock (also known as Craggan Croc) and the "blink-and-you'll-miss-it" Frog Stone.

The crocodile rock lies north of the A85 about half a mile from the 30mph sign. It sits high off the road on what was once the Lochearnhead to Comrie railway line embankment. The track is now a popular walking and cycle route. It was painted sometime in the early 1900s and is attributed to a member of the Gibson family, well known and respected in Strathearn.



The Crocodile

The Frog Stone lurks right at the roadside very near the 30mph sign, again on the north side of the road.



The Frog

The Fairy Stone

In November 2005, St Fillans made the national news. A developer, building houses at the east end of the village, not far from Dundurn, was persuaded to (literally) change his plans to avoid disturbing a large rock under which, according to local folklore based on the area's Pictish past, fairies are believed to live. In the end, the rock remained in place, becoming a feature within the housing development.

The Planning Department had no specific guidelines on fairies but a spokesman said: "Planning guidance states that local customs and beliefs must be taken into account when a developer applies for planning permission."



The Fairy Stone