



"Ardens sed Virens" - "burning but flourishing"

Derrymore

"Daire " (Derry)	means an oak grove or wood
"Mor" (More)	big or great

A church was established in the townland of Derrymore in 1825 on the Bolea Road Limavady by Rev. David Lynch (1826-1850), a native of Ireland and licensed by the Presbytery of Glasgow. The congregation of Original Seceders (United Presbyterian Church of Scotland) was a united charge known as Myroe and Bolay. They were Covenanters and the congregation came from far and wide to worship, from Myroe in the Northwest, Largantea in the Northeast, Ballyavelin in the Southeast and White Hill in the Southwest, a radius of over 4 miles, no mean feat in the 1800s, as the only form of transport was by horse & cart or by foot on unmade roads. The first church building was on the opposite side of the Bolea Road to the present one, now the church car park. The Church measured 60 feet by 24 feet and 12 feet high with a slate roof and could accommodate 320 people, cost £250 to build and a school was built beside it.

When Myroe newly built church opened on 18th September 1836 that left Rev. Lynch with just one charge, though the link remained for some years with the Rev. Robert Kennedy (Myroe 1853-1906) performing marriages in Derrymore. In 1837 another division took place within the congregation. The larger part, known as Derrymore, joined the Newtownlimavady Presbytery and the Synod of Ulster on 5th January 1838, which became the General Assembly of the Irish Presbyterian Church in 1840. The Derrybeg congregation, as it became known, united with Broadlane (Reformed Presbyterian Church under the ministry of Rev. James Kennedy). Their church was built in the townland of Derrybeg and the stone gate posts are the only remaining sign today. The original church was auctioned in 1882, bought by the Caskie family, dismantled and re-erected as a farm building at their Drummond farm, where it is still standing .



Site of Derrybeg Church



Stone Gate Posts



The re-erected Derrybeg Church

Synod of Ulster, the supreme court of mainstream Irish Presbyterianism until its union with the Secession Synod in 1840 to form the General Assembly. The synod grew out of the original Presbytery of Ulster, which subdivided during the 1650s. Following the Restoration Presbyterian church courts were suppressed, but after 1690 the synod met openly and its published records are in print. Subscription controversies divided the synod in the 18th century, enabling Scottish Seceders and Covenanters to establish congregations, presbyteries, and synods. The restoration of obligatory subscription in 1836 opened the way for the union of 1840.

The Rev. David Lynch lived on a farm at Drumalief and kept good accounts with comments on harvests and weather conditions, records preserved to this day. He was still in charge of Derrymore when he died on the 9th Dec. 1850 aged 63, and is buried in the old Drumchose Church graveyard at Drenagh. His wife Janet (nee McQueen) continued to live on their farm at Drumalief, continuing to take an interest in the congregation, contributing to the stipend, paying £6 annually. Just prior to her death, she donated £100 to the church for the Manse Building Fund. She died 19th May 1865, aged 67 and was buried beside her husband at Drenagh.



Rev. William Jamison



Drumachose Old Church Bldg. c1300



Rev. William Colvin B.A., LL.D

The congregation called Rev. William Jamison (1851-1873), from the Presbytery of Dromore. He was ordained in Derrymore on 25th November 1851 and the congregation grew under his Ministries with a stipend of £30 plus marriage licence fees of £5. In 1859 the congregation applied for and was granted funds to build a Manse which was completed c1866. When the Rev. Jamison died unexpectedly on the 24th May 1873, at a comparatively early age, he left a legacy of £100 to Derrymore. The next minister to be called was the Rev. William Colvin (1873-1881) who had been brought up in Bushmills Co. Antrim. He stayed only a short time, being called to Gortnessy and when he left was owed a sum of money from Derrymore congregation. However, he later relinquished his claim. He died in 1926 aged 82. During Rev Colvin's ministry the spelling of the churches' name changed from Derrymore to Derramore but reverted to Derrymore again during Rev Dr Orr's tenure.



Old Manse



Session Book 1896

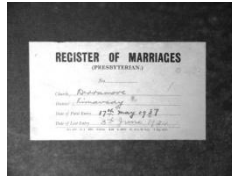


Dr. John Orr B.A., L.L.D.,

The congregation wished to call Rev. Dr. John Orr B.A., L.L.D., (1881-1938) from Mosside but first had to find a stipend of £40 and a free manse before the Route Presbytery would allow the call. Rev. Dr. John Orr was ordained and installed in 1881 and served Derrymore until his death in 1938 a total of 57 years. As a bachelor he first lived with the Caskie family at Mullane and then in the manse where his sisters joined him. During Rev. Dr. Orr's ministry the congregation voted at a meeting to build a new church, to be built on the opposite side of the Bolea Road from the original church and below the church manse, as the original church had fallen into a poor state of repair. The new church was contracted by local builders Hugh McLaughlin & Sons of Drummond, and the Church was dedicated and opened on 19th July 1896. By the visitation in 1902 there were 5 elders and about 70 families and the church was reported to be in excellent repair. In 1904 the grounds that the church and manse stood on were purchased for the sum of £78 and paid for by a loan. A lecture hall was built some time after the new church, to the rear of it, an adjoining graveyard was laid out in 1906 and a caretaker's house was built on the site of the old church which is now the church car park. The Presbytery, in its 1902 visitation called the church Derramore and for a time after that the Register of Marriages were spelt in this way with 'a', instead of 'y'



Rev Dr John Orr Plaque



Register of Marriages 1937-54



New Church Erected 1896

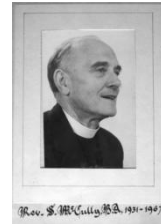
When Drumachose Presbyterian Church (Est.1655) in Church Street, Newtownlimavady became vacant in Sept. 1924 the Union Committee decided that Drumachose and Derrymore should be united from 1stJan.1925. Rev Dr. Orr tendered his resignation, still residing free of rent and rates in the Derrymore manse and although retired continued to visit the congregation until his death on 21st.Jan 1938 aged 85. He is remembered for his long service to Derrymore, 57 years and for his very long sermons that required a break in the middle of them. The Rev. John Henry Carson M.A (later D.D.) (1925-1931) was installed as the first minister of the joint charges on 24th Feb 1925 and he served as minister until his resignation in March, 1931. At the time of the union the services in Derrymore were held at 1.30 pm with Sunday school at 12.20 pm, though this was later found to be inconvenient during the next ministry and so the time was changed to 10.30 am, with Sunday school at 9.30am, preceding the Drumachose service. During his 6 years as minister of Derrymore over 30 children were baptised.



Rev. John Henry Carson M.A



Derrymore Church School House



Rev.Samuel McCully B.A.

The Rev.Samuel McCully B.A. (1931-1967) was the next minister to be installed in Drumachose and Derrymore on 18th June 1931 and served as minister and senior minister until 1967, a total of 36 years. Many changes took place during this period. In 1933 the church was gifted an organ, the hall was enlarged and a toilet installed in 1953. Electricity was installed in the church and hall in 1955, and the old underfloor heating stoves replaced by overhead electric heaters in 1957. Heating in the hall was subsequently changed from stoves to overhead electric heaters in 1962

The Rev. McCully retired in Feb. 1962 and the Rev. Samuel Wilson B.A.,B.D.,M.Th. (1962-1970) was installed in the united charge on 2nd Aug 1962. Mrs Wilson taught in Bolea School and trained children for various functions in the church. The choir box was removed in 1964 and the floor raised using timber from the sexton's house as it was now vacant since the retirement of Mrs Robinson. The exterior of the church was re-plastered with roughcast in 1966. The old Derrymore manse, which had been leased since the death of Rev. Dr. Orr, had now fallen into a poor state of repair, was sold in 1964 and the caretaker's house was demolished to make a car park in 1970. Rev. Wilson resigned on 1st Sept 1970 when called by 2nd.Comber, a sad loss to the congregation of Derrymore as he and his wife were very popular.



Rev. Samuel Wilson B.A.,B.D.,M.Th.

Rev. S. McCully Plaque

Rev. James Ronald Savage B.A.,B.D.,M.Th

The Rev. James Ronald Savage B.A.,B.D.,M.Th (1971-1976) was installed 26th Feb 1971 and during this time the church suffered a decline in the number of subscribing families and faced closure but for the persistence of the Kirk Session and in particular, the Clerk of Session, Robert Glen Caskie. In 1973, Killybready School, long associated with Derrymore closed and was sold in 1974 as was the Old Derrymore school house. The Rev. Savage resigned on 13th Nov 1976 when called to serve as minster of Stormont Presbyterian church.



Rev. David Stanley Irwin B.A., B.D

Rev. David Stanley Irwin B.A., B.D was installed on 5th May 1977. During Rev. Irwin's tenure the number of subscribing families increased to over 100 and he performed 115 baptisms and 27 marriages during his ministry.

During the 1980's, the congregation voted to permanently change the spelling of the church name from Derrymore to Derramore thus ending the confusion about the name used in both the Register of Marriages and Minute Books down the years.

The church windows were replaced in 1982, the heating was upgraded to an oil fired central heating system and the hall extensively renovated 1987/88. There was a well attended Youth Club and P.W.A and in 1988 a Bowling Club was formed. Foyle Presbytery Visitation, 5th Dec. 1995, found church and buildings in very good order, with 98 contributors, an increase from 61 in 1979, a committee of 10 and all other aspects in order. Two stained glass windows were donated and installed at the front of the church, either side of the pulpit in May 1996, the present church building centenary year. In that year a special service was held in May with the Moderator in the pulpit, centenary gifts were presented to the church and in September a congregational meal was served in the church hall. In June 2000 Robert Glen Caskie retired from the post of Clerk of Session, a position which he had held since 1954, a total of 46 years. The congregation marked the occasion with a presentation and refreshments in the hall. In 2001 a new organ was installed. The old Killybready school house was sold in 2005. Rev. David Stanley Irwin retired in August 2006 after 29 years as minister and friend to the congregation becoming Minister Emeritus. A congregational meal was held in the hall at which gifts were presented to Rev. Irwin and his wife Gwen.



[New Windows](#)

The Rev. Stephen A McCracken B.D., Dip.Min. M.Phil was installed on 29th November 2007. The total number of subscribing families is now 119 with 241 communicant members out of a congregation of 299. A parcel of land, behind the Church Hall, donated by the Douglas family Derrybeg, was laid out as an extension to the church graveyard and dedicated in 2011 and a rear car-park provided. 2011 will see the original Bangor Blue slates on the church roof being totally replaced for the first time since the church was built 115 years ago.

Church services are well attended with a large number of children attending Sunday school, Children's Church and there is an active P.W. and Bowling club. The church continues to grow under the ministry of Rev.McCracken and the congregation look forward to the next milestone in 2025, the bicentenary of the founding of Derramore Congregation.