

BUILDINGS AT RISK

Landmark chapel is hanging on thanks to huge support

In this, the latest Buildings at Risk article from members of the historical trusts and societies making up the Alliance for Building Conservation (ABC), Sarah L Christian of Ballaugh Heritage Trust takes a look at the story of the chapel and Sunday school at Barregarrow.

Now that Orrisdale Chapel is no longer functioning as a place of worship, I have lately been noticing the little chapels scattered around our countryside and reflecting on who built them and how and why some survive and some don't.

Many have been flattened or converted to dwellings but Barregarrow is still a lovely example of its type.

Barregarrow was a meeting place for Methodists since before the visit of John Wesley in June 1781. Wesley recorded in his journal "Monday 4th....We then rode through and over the mountains to Beergarrow where I enforced on an artless and loving congregation 'if any man thirst let him come unto me and drink'".

We know that a purpose-built chapel had been erected before 1817. A deed in the North Side Sales has John Corlett of Ballacorlett selling the land on which the chapel stood to Trustees for 'Two pounds British'.

Today this would be equivalent to £115. The land measures 'seventeen yards, one quarter....nine and a quarter yards or thereabout Manks measure or in other words the whole of the ground on which the Methodist Chapel or Preaching house is built'.

Also included was some vacant ground between the building and the roads of a just few yards but there was nothing included around the back - merely ladder access was allowed.

Trustees were the yeoman of Barregarrow: John Corjeage of Ballaoney, John Crellin of Ballaleigh, John Cain of Ballaskyr, William Corlett of Ballacorlett, Philip Quiggin of Shalghaige, John Corlett of Ballakilly-Clieu, and John Maxwell of the Village - seven men and five of them called John, so it's a good job that the Manx are good at devising nicknames!

By the 1870s the chapel was becoming dilapidated - there is a tale which illustrates this.

A local preacher, "in his fervour, heat and excitement" had made a big hole in the floor - he stove it in! The decision was made to demolish and rebuild.

Trustees set about fund-



A 2016 view of a large Christmas-time congregation gathered for a service in the chapel. Picture courtesy of Richard Mooney

raising, starting with a hundred pounds from "Thomas Cain, Esq., of Douglas, who is a native of Barregarrow, and received early religious impressions from a pious and Methodist ancestry, which have been the joy and happiness of his long, useful and successful life, determined that there should be a new chapel more worthy of the interesting associations of the place and more suitable for the Methodist people of the present and future generations, and started the subscription list with £100". Cain was reported to have been born at Ballaskyre.

The chapel was built by a Mr Callin, from Michael, and the Manx Museum Archives hold all manner of receipts relating to the work - even

receipts for cake purchased from Quayle's bakers in Kirk Michael in 1901. Building plans were drawn by George Kay (1853-1931) who was recently arrived in the island from Southport. Kay was an architect, surveyor and valuer.

He is credited with the development of Port Lewaigue estate in Maughold. He was responsible for laying out the Mooragh Park, and the Farrants and Drinkwater estates in Douglas. He designed the since demolished Albert Road School in Ramsey and the Creg Malin Hotel and Fenella Terrace in Peel. He designed the rebuild of the Palace Ballroom after it burned down in 1920 and a block of 10 boarding houses on Queen's Promenade, among other projects.

Newspaper reports on

the laying of the foundation stone for Barregarrow Chapel are enlightening but a letter to the editor of the *Mona's Herald* in April 1880, written by 'Jack Bobby Rob' in Manx dialect, is funny-

"They had a terble big day on Easter Monday there was the Rev Mr Butcher, and a few frens from Douglas includin Mr Caine, the Tannera hole crowd of them that was anxious to have a good strike at the bun loaf an jam. An, man alive, after we all went in how they did wire in !

"Thou see they wer'nt used to the mountain brezes like us up here an when they got a couple a doz in sniffs the could ate a house very near. It was a dhredfull loosin game to see so much good vittals out of sight an hearin for one bob'. There

is still a 'good feed' to be had at the chapel today.

There were a few Caine families in the area farming at Barregarrow Moor and Ballaskyr. They are buried in Kirk Michael Parish churchyard - in ground consecrated by the Manx Church, as Wesleyans were viewed as 'dissenters'. Marriages and baptisms also were formerly recorded by the established church in the village.

In the 1851 census, John Caine (b.1795) and his wife Charlotte nee Cannell lived at Barregarrow with their son Thomas, his wife Elizabeth, and three little children. Next door at Ballaskyr lived another John Caine (b. 1807), wife Eliza nee Radcliffe, two little children and John's in-laws. John Caine died at Ballaskyr

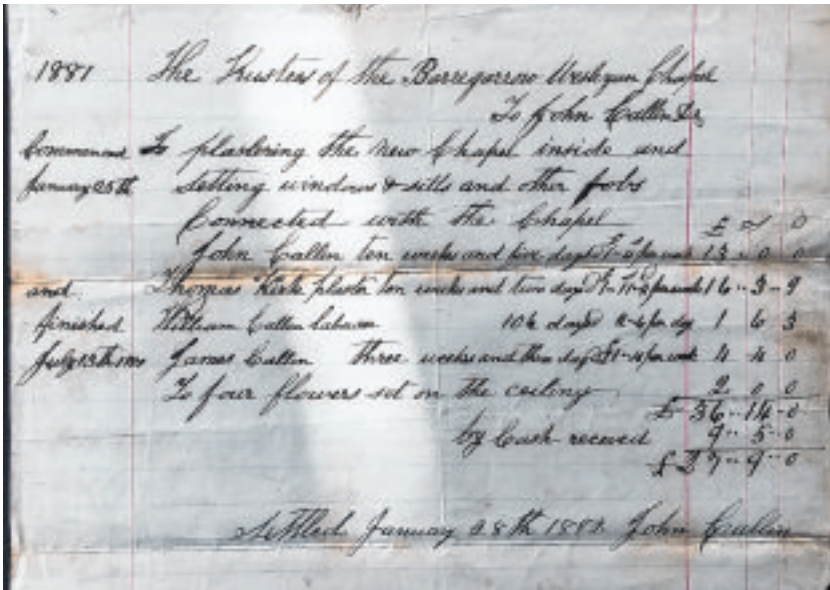
in 1890, aged 83. His widow Eliza died aged 76 in 1898. An ancestor, William Cain, who died aged 34, is buried with them, having been laid to rest before them in 1784 - plus eight of his children.

Thomas Caine, who started the fund for the new chapel, was born in 1820 and married Elizabeth. She died in 1870, aged 49, when they were farming Barregarrow Moor and she was buried in Kirk Michael. They had at least seven children living. By 1872 he had married again to Jane Margaret Callister - a minor. She had the permission of her father as she was under 21 and Thomas was 33 years her senior.

The happy couple moved



A section of an 1868 Ordnance Survey map showing the site of the Barregarrow Wesleyan Methodist chapel



An 1881 builders' bill relating to work done on the Wesleyan chapel. Picture: Sarah Christian

to Douglas and she was step-mother to his existing children and went on to have another four. Thomas worked as a gardener up to at least the age of 70 – he was full of vim and vigour!

The Barregarrow Sunday School had been housed in a converted cottage but by 1900 was deemed unsuitable.

The congregation had wanted to join the school to the chapel but for some reason were unable to do this, so a new one was built across the road.

Foundation stones were laid in memory of William Caine, John Quiggin, Thomas Caine, Samuel Kinvig and by Mr J.C. Caine – in memory of his parents. The carting and building stones were all supplied by volunteers and the

builders were Kelly Brothers and Community Service, the chapel of Kirk Michael – the mason being Mr G Crowe.

Inside the building is a decorative carved plank in the ceiling and an unusual duel-facing fireplace – presumably so designed as the building could be divided down the centre.

It is currently rented out as a private store and the tenant is currently doing works to remove ivy and tidy up around the back.

Over the last few years, the congregation have been working hard to keep their chapel open.

The annual O'ell Voirrey is a joy, and Christmas celebrations bring this small congregation together. After years of fundraising and assistance from those completing their

Community Service, the chapel is moving towards renovation. It is currently closed for replastering, but the weekly service continues in a nearby house.

Trapped on a tiny site with no toilet or grounds to speak of, the only use it has for non-attenders is as a great place to watch the races – the ladies run a fundraising sandwich stall across the road at Cronk Aashen Farm in TT week. They have a Facebook page to keep everyone up-to-date with their activities.

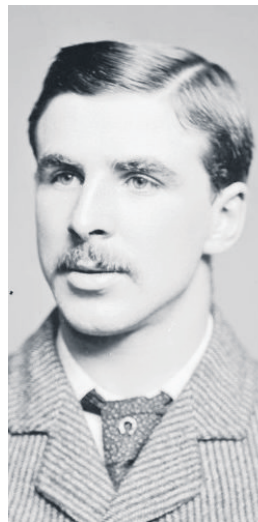
This landmark chapel, built by the efforts of Barregarrow families, is hanging on with a huge effort from the congregation – so spare a thought for them and all those Caines when you whizz past in your car.



The attractively painted exterior of the Barregarrow chapel as it looks today. Picture courtesy of Peter Killey, Manx Scenes



The exterior of the Sunday school building as it looks today. Picture courtesy of Peter Killey, Manx Scenes



George Kay (1853-1931), the architect, surveyor and valuer who, after having only recently arrived in the Isle of Man from Southport, drew up the plans for the chapel. Picture courtesy of Manx Museum iMuseum



The rear of the Barregarrow Sunday school building. Pictures: Sarah Christian