

Dunbog – Site Summaries



Dunbog on John Ainslie's map of Fife, 1775. (National Library of Scotland)

Sacred Landscape Project

St Mary's College, University of St Andrews

Research by Dr Bess Rhodes

February 2024

Dunbog – Places of Worship – Past and Present

Ayton Chapel, Dunbog

Denomination: Roman Catholic, Church of Scotland

Period: High Medieval, Late Medieval, Early Modern

Current Place of Worship? No

The origins of the ruined chapel at Ayton are unclear, although it has (probably incorrectly) sometimes been thought to be the same site as a chapel granted to Arbroath Abbey in the 1170s. A church is shown at Ayton on James Gordon's manuscript map of Fife (created in the 1640s) and on Joan Blaeu's map of Fife (published in the 1650s). The surviving ruins appear to be early modern and have a carved stone armorial panel with the date 1683. Ayton Chapel was already abandoned in the nineteenth century when it was depicted as a ruin by the Ordnance Survey. There was formerly a burial ground associated with the chapel.

Sources

Historic Environment Scotland, Canmore entry for 'Ayton, Chapel and Burial-ground'. Available at: <http://canmore.org.uk/site/30032>.

Joan Blaeu, 'The Sherifdome of Fife' (1654). NLS, EMW.X.015. Available at: <https://maps.nls.uk/atlas/blaeu/browse/92>.

James Gordon of Rothiemay, 'Fyfe Shire' (1642). NLS, Adv.MS.70.2.10 (Gordon 53). Available at: <https://maps.nls.uk/rec/52>.

Ordnance Survey Map of Fife (1855), sheet 5. Available at: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/74426822>



Joan Blaeu's map of Fife with detail of Ayton or 'Aitoune'. (Source: National Library of Scotland, <https://maps.nls.uk/atlas/blaeu/browse/92>)

Dunbog Old Parish Church, Dunbog

Denomination: Roman Catholic, Church of Scotland

Period: High Medieval, Late Medieval, Early Modern

Current Place of Worship? No

Today all that is visible of Dunbog's old parish church is a small abandoned graveyard near Dunbog House. There was a church on this site from at least the twelfth century through to the beginning of the nineteenth century. For much of the Middle Ages the church was appropriated to Arbroath Abbey (who benefited from much of the parish revenues and controlled the appointment of the vicar). Dunbog old parish church survived the Reformation and is clearly marked on John Ainslie's late eighteenth-century map of Fife. In the 1790s the church building was described as in 'pretty good order'. However, in 1803 the congregation moved to a newly built church located a little further away from Dunbog House.

Sources

J. Ainslie, 'County of Fife' (1775). NLS, EMS.s.382. Available at: <https://maps.nls.uk/joins/695.html>.

A. Cairns, 'Parish of Dunbog', *New Statistical Account* (1845), vol. 9, p. 216.

I. Cowan, *Parishes of Medieval Scotland* (1967), p. 51.

Dr Greenlaw, 'Parish of Dunbog', *Old Statistical Account* (1792), vol. 4, p. 234.

University of St Andrews, 'Dunbog Parish Church', *Corpus of Scottish Medieval Parish Churches*. Available at: <https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/corpusofscottishchurches/site.php?id=158522>



Dunbog Parish Church and Dunbog Place (later known as Dunbog House) on John Ainslie's late eighteenth-century map of Fife. (Source: National Library of Scotland, <https://maps.nls.uk/joins/695.html>)

Dunbog Parish Church, Dunbog

Denomination: Church of Scotland

Period: Late Modern

Current Place of Worship? No

Dunbog Parish Church was constructed around 1803. It had seating for 200 people, and in the 1840s had on average about 135 communicants. At this time the minister of Dunbog described the church as being 'in excellent repair'. Similarly the early nineteenth-century *Topographical Dictionary of Scotland* praised the parish church as being 'a neat and well-arranged edifice'. The church was enlarged in the 1850s. It also had a tower and spire added in the 1880s. Dunbog Parish Church ceased to serve a religious function in the 1980s and around the 1990s was converted into a dwelling.

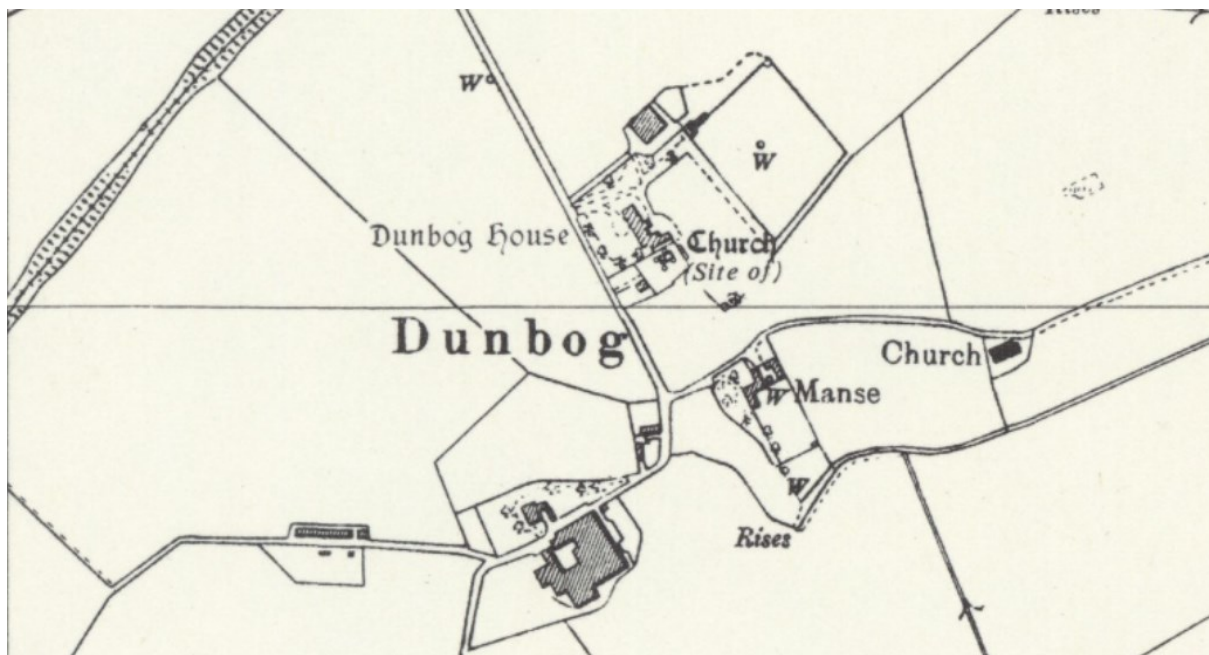
Sources

A. Cairns, 'Parish of Dunbog', *New Statistical Account* (1845), vol. 9, p. 216.

S. Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary of Scotland* (1846), vol. 1, p. 315.

Historic Environment Scotland, Canmore entry for 'Dunbog Parish Church'. Available at:

<http://canmore.org.uk/site/30056>.



Sites of the nineteenth-century parish church of Dunbog, and the older church in the grounds of Dunbog House which had preceded it – both shown on a 1950s National Grid map produced by the Ordnance Survey. (Source: National Library of Scotland, <https://maps.nls.uk/view/188140881>)