

Forgan – Site Summaries



Wormit Parish Church. (B. Rhodes)

Sacred Landscape Project

St Mary's College, University of St Andrews

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Forgan – Places of Worship – Past and Present

Chapel of Naughton

Denomination: Roman Catholic

Period: High Medieval, Late Medieval

Current Place of Worship? No

A chapel was recorded at Naughton in the twelfth century. It was linked to the medieval parish of Forgan. Both Forgan and the Chapel of Naughton were appropriated to St Andrews Cathedral. The site of the chapel is uncertain, but it may have been on or near Peacehill – which was historically known as Kirkhill. The chapel does not appear to have survived the Reformation, and may have been abandoned some time before the sixteenth century

Sources

Historic Environment Scotland, Canmore entry for ‘Peacehill, Chapel of Naughton’:

<http://canmore.org.uk/site/31706> [Accessed February 2024].

University of Glasgow, ‘Naughton’, *Fife Place-Names Data*: <https://fife-placenames.glasgow.ac.uk/placename/?id=2527> [Accessed February 2024].



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

Forgan Old Parish Church / St Fillan's Church

Denomination: Roman Catholic, Church of Scotland

Period: High Medieval, Late Medieval, Early Modern, Late Modern

Current Place of Worship? No

There is a church recorded at Forgan in the twelfth century. The old parish church at Forgan was appropriated to St Andrews Cathedral Priory for much of the Middle Ages. The church survived the Reformation, and for part of the 1560s had a canon of St Andrews Cathedral as reader. In the 1628 the St Andrews graduate Henry Scrimgeour was appointed minister of Forgan. He was a supporter of Charles I's changes to the Church of Scotland and fiercely resisted the National Covenant. Scrimgeour was removed from his position as minister in 1639, having apparently declared that the supporters of the Covenant were "taking the crown off the King's head". The church underwent a major renovation in the 1770s, and new pews were installed at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In the 1830s the medieval parish church was described as being "situated in a most beautiful and sequestered spot". Ominously, it was also noted at this time that the location was "very inconvenient for the population in general". In the early 1840s the parishioners of Forgan moved to a new parish church, closer to the main settlements near the Tay. The old church was abandoned and gradually fell into ruins.

Sources

Corpus of Scottish Medieval Parish Churches, entry for 'Forgan / Forgrund Parish Church': https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/corpusofscottishchurches/site.php?id=158590#TT_button [Accessed February 2024].

Hew Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae: The Succession of Ministers in Scotland from the Reformation* (1925), p. 203.

Charles Nairn, 'Parish of Forgan' in the *New Statistical Account* (1845), vol. 9, p. 515.



Forgan Old Parish Church. (Source: B. Rhodes)

Forgan Parish Church

Denomination: Church of Scotland

Period: Late Modern

Current Place of Worship? No

In the 1840s the minister of Forgan, Charles Nairn, supported the construction of a new parish church, located on the main road between Leuchars and Newport. The move was made partly in order to bring the church closer to the main centres of population in the parish, and also to allow for the construction of a larger building. The new Forgan Parish Church was designed by the architect David Bryce and could seat 600 people. At the end of the nineteenth century stained glass windows made by Morris and Co., after a design by Edward Burne-Jones, were installed in the church – the windows depict Faith and Hope. Forgan Parish Church remained a place of worship until 1981. It is now a private residence.

Sources

A.P. Bogie, *History of the Church in Forgan Parish* (Tayport, 1974).

Historic Environment Scotland, Listed Building Designation for 'Forgan Parish Kirk':

<https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/LB10800> [Accessed February 2024].

Newport-on-Tay History Website: <https://www.newportontayhistory.org.uk/people/forgan-church-2> [Accessed February 2024].

William Waters, Burne-Jones Catalogue Raisonne: <https://www.eb-j.org/browse-artwork-detail/MjM1NjE=> [Accessed February 2024].



Forgan Parish Church and its location near the road and the local smithy. Ordnance Survey Map of Fife, 1855. (Source: National Library of Scotland)

Newport-on-Tay Congregational Church

Denomination: Congregational

Period: Late Modern

Current Place of Worship? No

A Congregational church was established in Newport-on-Tay in 1801. In the 1860s a substantial Gothic style church was built for the congregation at the foot of Kilburn. It was designed by the architect David Mackenzie. Newport-on-Tay Congregational Church closed in 1986. The building was demolished in 1991.

Sources

Historic Environment Scotland, Canmore entry for 'Newport-on-tay, Kilburn Congregational Church': <http://canmore.org.uk/site/33184> [Accessed February 2024].

Newport-on-Tay History Website: <https://www.newportontayhistory.org.uk/subject/congregational-church> [Accessed February 2024].



Newport-on-Tay Congregational Church by James Valentine, 1878. (Source: University of St Andrews)

Newport-on-Tay Parish Church / St Thomas Church

Denomination: Church of Scotland

Period: Late Modern

Current Place of Worship? Yes

During the nineteenth century the population of Newport-on-Tay grew significantly. In the 1860s a campaign developed for a parish church in Newport, rather than local residents having to walk out to Forgan Parish Church. Work began on a parish church in Newport in 1870. The new Gothic style building was designed by the Dundee architects Johnston and Baxter. The church was dedicated to St Thomas in recognition of the medieval chapel of that name which had existed in the Newport area. As of 2024, Newport-on-Tay Parish Church remains a place of worship.

Sources

Historic Environment Scotland, Canmore entry for 'Newport-on-tay, Blyth Street, Parish Church Of St Thomas': <http://canmore.org.uk/site/100950> [Accessed February 2024].

Newport-on-Tay History Website: https://www.newportontayhistory.org.uk/catalogue_item/history-of-st-thomas-church [Accessed February 2024].

Newport-on-Tay Church of Scotland Website: <http://www.notchurch.co.uk/> [Accessed February 2024].



Newport-on-Tay Parish Church. (B. Rhodes)

St Fillan's Roman Catholic Church, Newport-on-Tay

Denomination: Roman Catholic

Period: Late Modern

Current Place of Worship? Yes

St Fillan's Roman Catholic Church in Newport-on-Tay is a rare surviving example of a so-called 'tin tabernacle' – in other words a church built out of corrugated iron. Tin churches were popular in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as they could be constructed relatively quickly and cheaply. Many tin churches were later replaced by grander structures. St Fillan's was built in 1886. It has undergone relatively limited alterations. As of the early 2020s weekly services were still held at St Fillan's.

Sources

Dunkeld Diocese, Webpage for St Fillan's: <https://www.dunkelddiocese.co.uk/st-fillans-newport-on-tay/> [Accessed February 2024].

Newport-on-Tay History Website: <https://www.newportontayhistory.org.uk/subject/st-fillans-rc-church> [Accessed February 2024].



St Fillan's Roman Catholic Church. (B. Rhodes)

St Mary's Episcopal Church, Newport-on-Tay

Denomination: Episcopal

Period: Late Modern

Current Place of Worship? Yes

St Mary's Church was built in the 1880s by Newport's growing Episcopalian community. The building was designed in a Gothic style by Major Thomas Cappon. The original interior was relatively plain, but became increasingly decorated over the course of the twentieth century – largely as a result of the generosity of several local donors. As of 2024, St Mary's remains a place of worship.

Sources

Historic Environment Scotland, Canmore entry for 'Newport-on-tay, High Street, St Mary's Episcopal Church': <http://canmore.org.uk/site/33147> [Accessed February 2024].

Newport-on-Tay History Website: <https://www.newportontayhistory.org.uk/subject/st-marys-church> [Accessed February 2024].

St Mary's Scottish Episcopal Church Website: <https://stmaryschurchnewportontay.org/> [Accessed February 2024].



St Mary's Episcopal Church. (B. Rhodes)

St Thomas of Seamylnes

Denomination: Roman Catholic

Period: Late Medieval

Current Place of Worship? No

During the late Middle Ages the Chapel of St Thomas of Seamylnes was located near the coast in the Newport-on-Tay area. In the 1440s the local ferry across the Tay paid the chapel of St Thomas an annual rent of ten merks. The exact site of the chapel is uncertain, but it has been suggested that it stood near the present day pier at Newport. The chapel does not appear to have survived the Reformation.

Sources

Historic Environment Scotland, Canmore entry for 'Newport-on-tay': <http://canmore.org.uk/site/33178> [Accessed February 2024].

The Newport, Wormit & Forgan Archive Website: <https://www.newportarchive.co.uk/Texts/forrest.php> [Accessed February 2024].



The pier at Newport-on-Tay. The Chapel of St Thomas of Seamylnes may have been nearby. (B. Rhodes)

Trinity United Free Church, Newport-on-Tay

Denomination: United Presbyterian Church / United Free Church

Period: Late Modern

Current Place of Worship? No

Trinity Church was established in the 1880s for the Newport-on-Tay United Presbyterian congregation. The church building was designed by the architects C. and L. Ower. Following the amalgamation of the United Presbyterians with the Free Church in 1900, it became known as Trinity United Free Church. Trinity Church closed in 2016. It has since been converted into flats.

Sources

Historic Environment Scotland, Canmore entry for 'Newport-on-tay, High Street, Trinity United Free Church': <http://canmore.org.uk/site/33148> [Accessed February 2024].

Newport-on-Tay History Website: <https://www.newportontayhistory.org.uk/subject/trinity-church> [Accessed February 2024].



The former Trinity Church. (B. Rhodes)

Wormit Old Parish Church / Wormit West Church / West Hall

Denomination: Church of Scotland

Period: Late Modern

Current Place of Worship? No

West Hall in Wormit was built in the 1890s as a mission hall for the Church of Scotland. The building was designed by Major Thomas Cappon, who also created the plans for St Mary's Episcopal Church in Newport-on-Tay. In 1911 West Hall became Wormit Parish Church – a role it lost again in the early 1930s. Following the union of the Church of Scotland with the United Free Church in 1929, Wormit did not require two churches and the building returned to being a hall. As of 2023, West Hall was home to a playgroup.

Sources

Fife Council Website: <https://www.fife.gov.uk/facilities/playgroup/wormit-playgroup-in-partnership-with-fife-council> [Accessed February 2024].

Historic Environment Scotland, Canmore entry for 'Wormit, Bay Road, Established Church Hall': <http://canmore.org.uk/site/100952> [Accessed February 2024].

Newport-on-Tay History Website: <https://www.newportontayhistory.org.uk/people/wormit-church> [Accessed February 2024].



Wormit West Hall. (B. Rhodes)

Wormit Parish Church / Wormit East Church

Denomination: United Free Church / Church of Scotland

Period: Late Modern

Current Place of Worship? Yes

Wormit East Church officially opened in 1901, although there had been a Free Church congregation worshipping on the site for a few years before the current building was constructed. In the early 1930s, in the aftermath of the union between the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church, Wormit East Church became the village's parish church. The parish of Wormit has since been united with that of Balmerino. However, as of 2024 Wormit Parish Church remains a place of worship.

Sources

Newport-on-Tay History Website: <https://www.newportontayhistory.org.uk/people/wormit-church> [Accessed February 2024].

Wormit Parish Church Website: <https://www.wormitparishchurch.org.uk/> [Accessed February 2024].



Wormit Parish Church. (B. Rhodes)