

Leuchars – Site Summaries



Leuchars Parish Church. (B. Rhodes)

Sacred Landscape Project

St Mary's College, University of St Andrews

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Leuchars – Places of Worship – Past and Present

Balmullo Anti-Burgher Church

Denomination: Anti-Burgher

Period: Early Modern

Current Place of Worship? No

During the eighteenth century there was an Anti-Burgher congregation in Balmullo. The Anti-Burghers were one of a number of Protestant dissenting groups in Fife at this time and arose from a split within the Secession Church in the 1740s (the Secession Church having previously split from the Church of Scotland in the 1730s). In the 1790s there were apparently 22 members of the Anti-Burgher Church living in the parish of Leuchars. Their meeting place is uncertain, as is much of the congregation's history.

Sources

Rev. Mr Kettle, 'Parish of Leuchars', *Old Statistical Account* (1796), vol. 18, p. 604.

Richard Smith, *Auld Licht, New Licht and Original Secessionists in Scotland and Ulster* (2006), p.117.



Balmullo and surroundings on the Roy Military Survey. (British Library / National Library of Scotland)

Balmullo Burgher Chapel

Denomination: Burgher

Period: Early Modern, Late Modern

Current Place of Worship? No

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there was a Burgher Chapel located on the north side of Balmullo, near what is now Smithy Lane. The Burghers arose from a split within the Secession Church in the 1740s (the Secession Church having previously split from the Church of Scotland in the 1730s). In the 1790s there were only 13 members of the Burgher Church living in the parish of Leuchars. However, by the 1840s the church apparently had 70 members. The New Statistical Account records that the members of the Burgher Chapel had built their minister “a small manse” and provided him with “two acres for a cow’s grass”. The Burgher Chapel is marked on the 1855 Ordnance Survey Map of Fife, but does not appear on late nineteenth-century OS Maps.

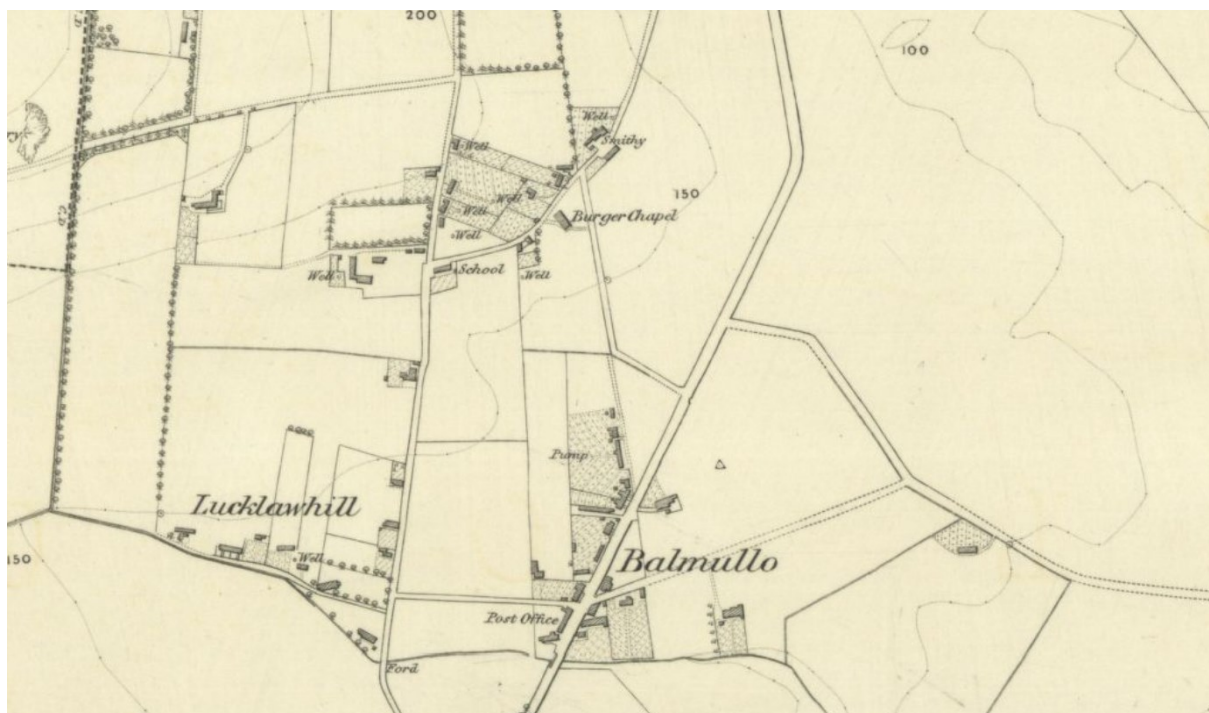
Sources

Rev. Mr Kettle, ‘Parish of Leuchars’, *Old Statistical Account* (1796), vol. 18, p. 604.

David Watson, ‘Parish of Leuchars’, *New Statistical Account* (1845), vol. 9, p. 228.

Ordnance Survey, Map of Fife, (1855), Sheet 6. National Library of Scotland:

<https://maps.nls.uk/view/74426823> [Accessed February 2024]



The Burgher Chapel to the north of Balmullo on the 1855 OS Map of Fife. (National Library of Scotland)

Drumoig Vicarsford Cemetery Chapel / Leng Memorial Chapel

Denomination: Non-Denominational

Period: Late Modern

Current Place of Worship? Yes

The chapel at Drumoig Vicarsford Cemetery is a remarkably fine Victorian Gothic structure, inspired by the design of Sainte-Chapelle in Paris. It was built in the late nineteenth century as a memorial to Lady Leng and is non-denominational. The building was designed by the local architect Major Thomas Martin Cappon, who also worked on several other Fife churches.

Sources

Historic Environment Scotland, Listed Building entry for 'Vicarsford Cemetery Chapel':

<https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/LB8863> [Accessed February 2024]



Vicarsford Cemetery Chapel. (B. Rhodes)

Guardbridge Parish Church

Denomination: United Presbyterian / Church of Scotland

Period: Late Modern

Current Place of Worship? No

For much of the nineteenth century there was no church in Guardbridge. However, in the 1880s the United Presbyterians established a church on the main road through the village, and the church is clearly marked on the 1896 Ordnance Survey Map of Fife. In 1899 the congregation had 91 members. The former church is now a private house.

Sources

Robert Small, *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church* (1904), p. 210.

Ordnance Survey, Map of Fife (1896), sheet VIII.NE. National Library of Scotland:

<https://maps.nls.uk/view/75530941> [Accessed February 2024]



Former Guardbridge Parish Church. (B. Rhodes)

Leuchars Free Church / Henderson Hall

Denomination: Free Church / United Free Church / Church of Scotland

Period: Late Modern

Current Place of Worship? No

A Free Church congregation was established in Leuchars in the 1840s, in the immediate aftermath of the Great Disruption. During the 1890s the church was substantially rebuilt. In 1900 the congregation joined the United Free Church. Following the union of the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church in 1929 Leuchars did not require two churches, so the old Free Church was converted into a hall. It is now known as Henderson Hall and is home to a Masonic Lodge.

Sources

Places of Worship Scotland, entry for 'Leuchars ex Free Church': <https://powis.scot/sites/leuchars-ex-free-church-now-henderson-hall-8132/> [Accessed February 2024].

University of St Andrews, Leuchars Free Church records, CH3/1209.



Former Leuchars Free Church, now Henderson Hall. (B. Rhodes)

Leuchars Parish Church / St Athernase

Denomination: Roman Catholic, Church of Scotland

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

Current Place of Worship? Yes

The first written records for Leuchars Parish Church date from the 1180s. However, there may have been Christian activity here at an earlier date. The eastern end of the church has a remarkably fine Romanesque apse and chancel, with elaborate external arcading. The church has remained in continuous use since the twelfth century. The octagonal bell tower was added in the eighteenth century, meanwhile most of the nave was rebuilt in the nineteenth century. Further work was carried out by Reginald Fairlie around the beginning of the First World War. Leuchars Parish Church has a number of memorials associated with the nearby RAF base. The parish of Leuchars is now united with Tayport, but as of 2023 remained a place of worship.

Sources

Corpus of Scottish Medieval Parish Churches, entry for 'Leuchars Parish Church': https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/corpusofscottishchurches/site.php?id=165157#TT_button [Accessed February 2024].

Leuchars and Tayport Church Website: <https://leucharsandtayportchurch.co.uk/> [Accessed February 2024].



St Athernase Church, Leuchars. (B. Rhodes)

Military Chapel Leuchars Station / St Peter's Station Church

Denomination: Non-Denominational

Period: Late Modern

Current Place of Worship? Uncertain

During the First World War the Royal Flying Corps established a presence at Leuchars. This subsequently became an RAF station. A military chapel dedicated to St Peter was established at the site. In 2015 the RAF handed over Leuchars to the army. It remains a military site.

Sources

Royal Air Force, 'Leuchars Station': <https://www.raf.mod.uk/our-organisation/stations/leuchars-station/#:~:text=History,through%20the%20First%20World%20War>. [Accessed February 2024].

Historic Environment Scotland, Canmore entry for 'Leuchars Airfield, Domestic Site, St Peter's Station Church, Astra Centre And General Buildings': <https://canmore.org.uk/site/202704/leuchars-airfield-domestic-site-st-peters-station-church-astra-centre-and-general-buildings> [Accessed February 2024].



Elizabeth II visits RAF Leuchars in 1957. Photo by George Cowie. (University of St Andrews Library)

St Bonach's Chapel

Denomination: Roman Catholic

Period: Early Medieval / High Medieval / Late Medieval

Current Place of Worship? No

It is thought that a medieval chapel, possibly dedicated to St Bonach, once stood not far from the current site of Leuchars Parish Church. The chapel may have survived into the sixteenth century. In 1908 a number of long cist burials were unearthed in the playground of the school at Leuchars – these were widely interpreted as relating to the old chapel of St Bonach.

Sources

Historic Environment Scotland, Canmore entry for '<http://canmore.org.uk/site/33198>' [Accessed February 2024].



Leuchars on the 1895 Ordnance Survey Map. (National Library of Scotland)

St Saviour's Episcopal Church, Guardbridge

Denomination: Free Church / United Free Church / Church of Scotland

Period: Late Modern

Current Place of Worship? No

St Saviour's Episcopal Church stood on the main road through Guardbridge. It was built around 1900 and was designed by C.F. Anderson. The church closed in 1999 and is now a private house.

Sources

Historic Environment Scotland, Canmore entry for 'Guardbridge, Main Street, St Saviour's Episcopal Church': <http://canmore.org.uk/site/99471> [Accessed February 2024].

Imperial War Museum, War Memorial entry, 'Guardbridge':

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/85453> [Accessed February 2024].



Former St Saviour's Episcopal Church. (B. Rhodes)