

Newburn– Site Summaries



Newburn Old Parish Church. (B. Rhodes)

Sacred Landscape Project

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Newburn – Places of Worship – Past and Present

Culdee Chapel - Possible, Balchrystie

Denomination: Roman Catholic

Period: Early Medieval

Current Place of Worship? No

It has been suggested that there was a Culdee chapel at Balchrystie. The *Old Statistical Account* (compiled in the 1790s), claims that there were Culdees here in the time of Malcolm Canmore (r. 1058-1093). During the mid-eighteenth century the “foundation-stones of an old edifice” were dug up near Wester Balchrystie. These were interpreted by contemporaries as relating to the Culdees. Late twentieth century visits by the Ordnance Survey failed to find evidence above ground of any early medieval remains.

Sources

Thomas Lawrie, ‘Parish of Newburn’, in the *Old Statistical Account* (1795), vol. 16, pp. 130-137.

Historic Environment Scotland, Canmore entry for ‘Balchrystie’:

<http://canmore.org.uk/site/32585> [Accessed 20 February 2024].



Balchrystie and its surroundings on the eighteenth-century Roy Military Survey. (Source: British Library / National Library of Scotland).

Newburn Parish Church

Denomination: Church of Scotland

Period: Late Modern

Current Place of Worship? No

Newburn Parish Church was built around 1815, replacing a nearby medieval church. It was designed by the Largo architect Alexander Leslie. The *New Statistical Account* (for which information was gathered in the 1830s) describes Newburn as “commodious and conveniently situated” with “very ample provision for the accommodation of the parishioners”. In 1958 the parishes of Newburn and Largo joined together, and the church at Newburn closed. The Church of Scotland sold Newburn Parish Church in 1965. The building is now a private house.

Sources

Thomas Laurie, ‘Parish of Newburn’, in the *New Statistical Account* (1845), vol. 9, p. 126.

Historic Environment Scotland, Listed Building entry for ‘Kirk House (Former Parish Kirk)’:
<https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/LB15507> [Accessed 21 February 2024].



The converted parish church at Newburn. (Source: B. Rhodes)

Newburn Old Parish Church

Denomination: Roman Catholic, Church of Scotland

Period: Medieval, Early Modern, Late Modern

Current Place of Worship? No

There appears to have been a church at Newburn as early as the twelfth century, and perhaps some time before that. For much of the Middle Ages the parsonage of Newburn was appropriated by the Abbey of Dunfermline. Following the Reformation the church at Newburn remained in use, although by the early seventeenth-century the building was in poor repair. The appointment of George Hamilton as minister in 1628 appears to have triggered a phase of rebuilding. In 1629 the parish sent to Flanders for a new bell, and major renovation work was undertaken during the 1630s and 1640s. In 1793 Thomas Laurie became minister of Newburn – a charge he held until the 1840s. During Laurie’s time as minister a new parish church was built a few fields away and the medieval building was abandoned, gradually descending into ruins.

Sources

Thomas Laurie, ‘Parish of Newburn’, in the *New Statistical Account* (1845), vol. 9, p. 126.

Hew Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae: The Succession of Ministers in Scotland from the Reformation* (1925), pp. 223-225.

University of St Andrews, ‘Newburn Parish Church’, *Corpus of Scottish Medieval Parish Churches*. Available at: <https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/corpusofscottishchurches/site.php?id=158804>



The ruins of Newburn Old Parish Church. (Source: B. Rhodes)