

Church History

The Parish of Blackford was formerly the Parish of Strageath. At the time of the Reformation the new Presbyterian church was built at Blackford, being the centre of population of the Parish. Its first minister, Alex Gall, was inducted in 1574. An Act of Parliament in 1617 officially recognised the relocation of the church from its medieval site at Strageath to Blackford. Now the Old Parish Church, it is located on the hill to the north of the village.

The old cemetery around the ruined Old Parish Church contains several tombstones dating to the 17th century. Of special interest is the Lych Gate, used to rest coffins briefly, prior to the burial ceremony commencing within the cemetery. The church was burned in the middle of the 18th century and subsequently rebuilt, but in 1858 it was no longer big enough for the size of the congregation. The bell from the Old Parish Church is preserved and in the safekeeping of the Church of Scotland and it is thought that it may have come from the Abbey of Strageath, as an inscription on it is pre-Reformation. The Old Parish Church survives as an unroofed ruin, with the bellcote of the church restored in 2007.

The present Blackford Parish Church was built in its place, opening in 1859. There are several beautiful stained glass windows in the church that depict biblical themes, as well as a memorial to a trooper, George Ramsay McGibbon, the son of the minister at the time, who died while serving in the Boer War.

St. Andrew's United Free Church was founded as a result of the Disruption in 1843, which started in Auchterarder and quickly spread to Blackford. A number of merchants and villagers met for worship in a stackyard at the west end of the village. In the summer of 1843, after worshipping in the open air without rain for thirteen consecutive Sundays, they concluded that the Lord was with them and they decided to build a church. The foundation stone was laid on the first week in March 1844 and it was completed for Christmas of that year.

The Free Church had its own school which opened in 1847. Located on the opposite side of Moray Street, it is now a private residence – Ogilvie House. The St. Andrew's Church steeple was struck by lightning in April 1914 and the top half of the steeple demolished. It was quickly repaired and re-opened for worship shortly after the start of the Great War in August 1914. The Free Church was united with the Parish Church in 1950. The first minister of the united charge was the Reverend George Bell, who later became the minister to Her Majesty the Queen Mother in Caithness.

The original Parish Church manse is located ½ mile outside the village and is now a private residence – Brookfield. The St. Andrew's United Free Church manse was used by the Parish Church in 1950 after the Free Church was united with the Parish Church. In 1984, the churches of Ardoch and Blackford were linked and this manse was no longer required.

Church Chronology

8 th Century	Parish of Strageath founded by St. Fergus
1574	Blackford Old Parish Church founded
1617	Parish name changed to Blackford by Act of Parliament
1738	Old Parish Church destroyed by fire
1739	Old Parish Church rebuilt
1843	The Disruption started in Auchterarder
1844	St. Andrew's United Free Church built in Blackford
1845	First minister, Reverend Andrew Donald, inducted to St. Andrew's United Free Church
1847	St. Andrew's United Free Church school opened
1858	Decision to relocate Old Parish Church into Blackford village
1859	Blackford Parish Church opened
1914	St. Andrew's United Free Church steeple struck by lightning
1950	St. Andrew's United Free Church closed and united with Blackford Parish Church
1950	Parish Church manse sold and St. Andrew's United Free Church manse then used as manse
1984	The churches of Blackford and Ardoch Parishes linked
2009	Blackford Parish Church celebrated its 150th anniversary

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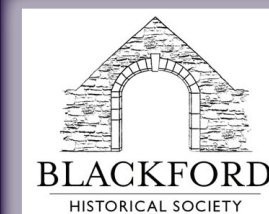
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Church Trail



Church Trail — — —

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Public Footpath to
Gleneagles

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