

Several other memorials dedicated to members of the Wemyss family, the Hopes of Luffness and former ministers of the church may be seen within the church. The finely carved Communion Table, with set of chairs, was donated in memory of Mr A. Stevenson of Luffness, a previous Elder of the church. The christening font and pulpit within the chancel are of Caen stone. The organ with its Gothic case sits in the north transept.

A replica of a fragment of an 8th century Anglian cross shaft, found in the wall of the former manse garden is on display in the chancel. The original cross fragment is on display in the National Museum of Scotland.



THE 2016 RESTORATION

Given that it has stood for over 500 years, it is no surprise that the church tower was in need of restoration. Thanks to grants and donations, most notably from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Environment Scotland, work to stabilise the stonework was carried out in 2016. In addition, general lime mortar repointing was carried out across the building and stones eroded by wind and rain were replaced. The entire roof was re-lined and retiled and an impressive new weather vane, gifted through generous donations, resplendent in black and gold above the tower, completed the project.

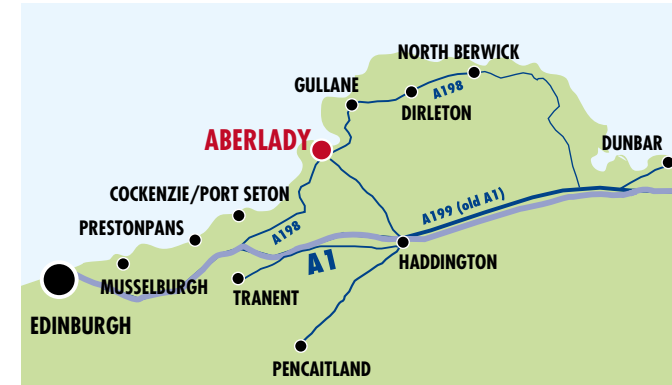
As a result, we are confident that the church will continue to be enjoyed by worshippers and visitors for many, many years.



A reconstruction of the 8thC Anglian cross was erected by the community in the memorial garden to the west of the churchyard in 2011.



An 18thC mounting block – the Loupin'-on-Stane – for visitors arriving and departing the church by horse or carriage is situated outside and to the west of the churchyard gates.



Opening Hours: Daily April to Mid-September, 10am to 4pm
 Guided tours by arrangement
 Sunday Services: generally 11:15am (or see website)
 Minister: Reverend Brian Hilsley LLB BD

For further information, including weddings, musical concerts and other events please contact the Church Secretary
 e. Sec@agpc.org.uk • t. 01875 870777
 w. www.aberlady-gullaneparishchurches.org.uk
 @AberladyParishChurch

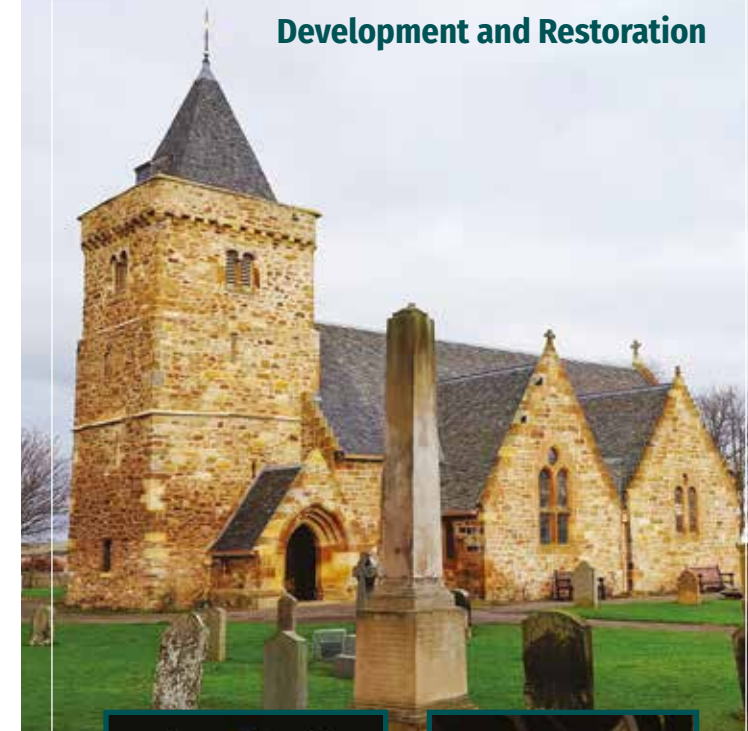


PocketSights
 Download the mobile app to take a self-guided tour on your GPS-enabled mobile device.



Aberlady Parish Church

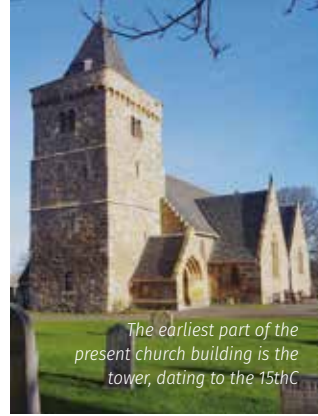
Development and Restoration



Welcome to our Church

THE TOWER

Although Aberlady has been a place of Christian worship since at least the 8th century, the earliest visible remains of our church date to around 1452 when the archives of the diocese of Dunkeld suggest the rubble-built square tower was built. It has four floors. The ground floor serves as the vestry. The first floor boasts a magnificent vaulted ceiling, while the floor above was adapted as a dovecot sometime after the original defensive arrow slits were used as flight windows. The upper floor of the tower is the bell chamber. The first floor is connected to the floors above by a spiral stone staircase.



The earliest part of the present church building is the tower, dating to the 15thC



ST MARY'S CHAPEL

A chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary – St Mary's Chapel – is said to have stood on the site of the present Luffness burial ground in the north-west corner of the old extent of the churchyard. An entry for 1620 in the Register of the Great Seal of Scotland makes reference to such a chapel within the cemetery of Aberlady, although the chapel may have been a ruin by that time. The early chapel site has never been properly assessed, although several old stone coffins, including one made of solid stone and chiselled to the shape of a body and head, were discovered thirty metres west of its supposed site.



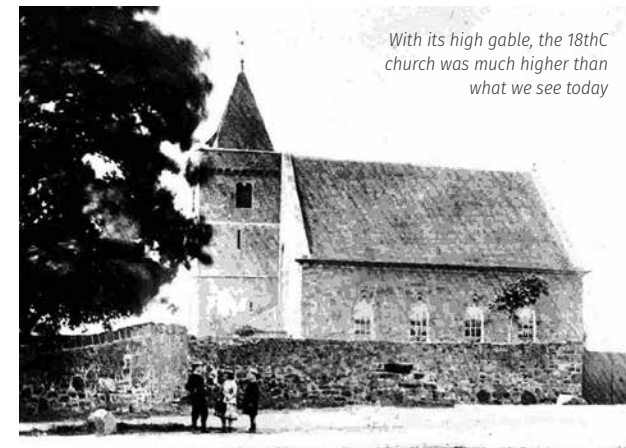
Luffness Burial Ground, the site of St Mary's Chapel

THE 1509 CHURCH

In 1509, more than fifty years after the tower's construction, a church was built onto its east side. This was followed by a chancel and, later, the Ballencrieff Aisle was added to the north side of the church. The Gosford Aisle was added to the immediate west of the Ballencrieff Aisle in the 17th century. This church, apparently long and low in design and later described as 'a disgrace to the parish' underwent a reconstruction in 1773.

THE 1773 CHURCH

Both the Ballencrieff and Gosford aisles were incorporated with the tower into this rebuild, known as the 'square kirk' because of its shape.



With its high gable, the 18thC church was much higher than what we see today



Sketches of the interior of the pre-1887 church, looking south



A grave stone on a fragment of wall from a previous church is situated outside the south-east corner of the present church

THE 1887 CHURCH

In 1886, the 10th Earl of Wemyss commissioned London architect William Young (who also designed the Earl's residence of Gosford House) to create a new design for the church. All of the new building work carried out in 1773 was demolished. The new church - that which we see today - opened for worship on 2 June 1887.

The lower roof greatly enhances the 15th century tower. New transepts built into the south elevation complement the 'Ballencrieff' and 'Gosford' aisles and create a cruciform church. Twin porches were added to the north and south sides of the tower and a vestry (no longer used as such) was added to the east of the chancel. The aisles are finished with thistle and cross finials, and the two eastmost of the aisles with crows-stepped skewes.

The fine craftsmanship of the open timber roof, pointed arch arcades and crocketed capitals opening into the aisles and transepts, set the internal design. The stain glass windows in the chancel and south aisles are by Edward Frampton of



London whilst those in the north aisles were designed by James Ballantine of Edinburgh. The most significant window is the centre piece of the chancel window which Frampton copied from Sandro Botticelli's painting of the 'Virgin Adoring the Sleeping Christ' (images on cover page).



The chancel window is also notable for inclusion of the opening musical notes of Handel's 'Messiah'.



The second is an effigy of Louisa Bingham, Countess of Wemyss and March, wife of the 9th Earl. Carved by John Rhind, it was exhibited in the Edinburgh Exhibition prior to being installed in the chancel in 1887. It was moved in 1960 to its present position in the south aisle.

The oldest of the two marble monuments in the church is a memorial to Lady Elibank (died 1762) and attributed to the Italian sculptor Antonio Canova.