

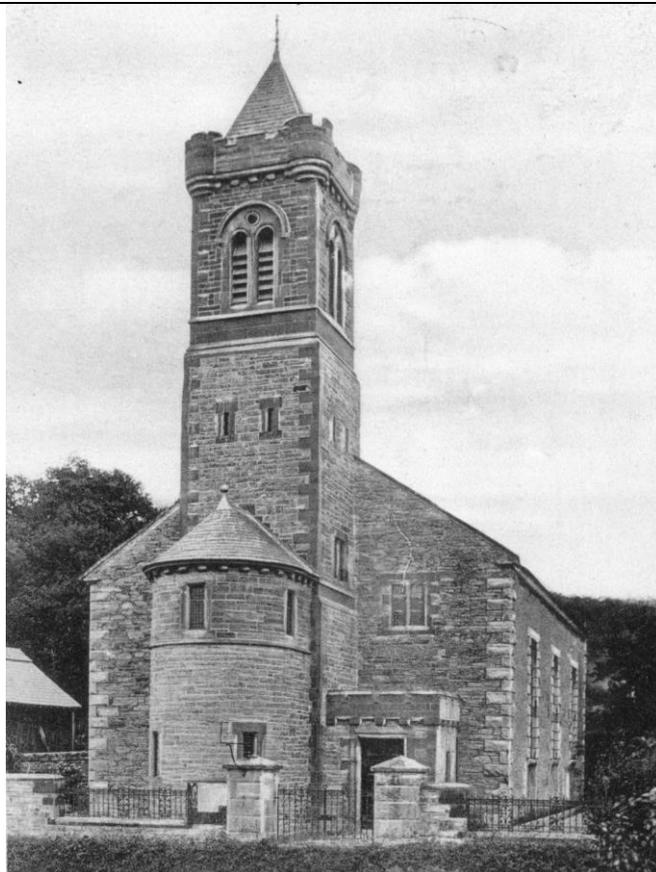
Places of Worship in and around Gatehouse

Gatehouse evolved as a planned town in the latter half of the 18th century. It is situated across the join of the parishes of Girthon and Anwoth which are divided by the river Fleet. Before Gatehouse existed, each parish was served by its own church, which, following the Reformation in the 16th century, conformed to the established Church of Scotland. This document contains very brief notes about the different church organisations applicable to Gatehouse, Anwoth and Girthon.

The Established Church of Scotland

Girthon Kirk

Just off the Sandgreen Road at the Clachan of Girthon, c.2 miles SE of Gatehouse. Built c.1620. Used originally as a Roman Catholic Church but from c.1690 as a Presbyterian church - the Church of Scotland, - until 1818 when a new larger church opened in Gatehouse. The old Manse next to the kirkyard became a farmhouse and a new manse was built at Bush. (Disdow road end).



Girthon Parish Church

By 1800 the population of Gatehouse was about 2700 and the old Girthon Kirk was too small and too far away from the town, so Girthon Parish Church was opened in the town in 1817 and the tower containing the bell was added c.1895. It was paid for by Alexander Murray (of Cally), who was the sole heritor. (In Scotland, a heritor is a landowner who is compelled to provide for the upkeep of the local parish church.) In 1975 Girthon & Anwoth Parishes Churches united. In 1990 the enlarged parish became known as Anwoth & Girthon with Borgue. In 2005 the church became known as Gatehouse of Fleet Parish Church. In 201? the church became linked with Borgue Church. ???????????

Twynholm ?

Anwoth Old Kirk

Located at the Clachan of Anwoth, about 1½ miles NW of Gatehouse.

Built c.1626. Used as an RC church until c.1690 when it became Church of Scotland. By the early 19th century it was obvious that this church was too small for the congregation and it was in a bad state of repair. The manse at this time was called Bush O' Biold, the site of which is shown on the 1854 O.S. map.. It was demolished in 1826 and it is understood that some of the stones were used in the building of the new parish church.



Anwoth Parish Church

There were 7 heritors involved in the decision to build a new church at Anwoth so it took many years before, in 1826, a decision was made to build a new church near to the Clachan, along with a new manse.

After Anwoth Parish combined with Girthon in 1975, the church building remained unused until it was sold in 2002.

Railway Chapel at Dromore

Gatehouse Railway Station (also called Dromore Station) was situated close to the northern junction of Anwoth and Kirkmabreck parishes and was a long way from either parish church.

The G&SWR (Glasgow & South Western Railway) company donated a third-class corridor carriage to the Station in 1939 to be used as a place of worship and also as a community hall. The ministers from Anwoth and Kirkmabreck as well as elders (e.g. Dr James Russell, Gatehouse School headmaster) took turns to officiate.

This carriage was replaced by a Royal coach donated by L.M.S. (London Midland Scottish) in 1965. [Click here to read more about the Railway Chapel.](#)



Other Church Groups

United Secessional Church

Following the formation of the Church of Scotland in 1690, there were various splits within the Presbyterian movement. In 1733 the Secessional Church had seceded from the established Church of Scotland.

In 1829, a half acre field between Rusco Street (now Dromore Road) and the River Fleet was purchased from Alexander Murray in order to build a church there. This was completed in 1840 and was known as the 'Wee Kirk'. The windows contained features of Martin Luther and John Knox. Fleetbank, the house opposite, was rented as a manse.

In 1847 the United Secessional Church joined with the Relief Church to form the United Presbyterian Church.

Free Church of Scotland

The 'Great Disruption' of the Established Church of Scotland took place in 1843, as a result of which the Free Church of Scotland was formed.

The then Girthon minister (Rev. Robert Jeffrey) and others, left to establish a Free Church in Gatehouse. The first services of the Free Church were held in the Masonic Hall, above the Masonic Arms Inn.

In 1844 they built a new church on the Girthon side of the Fleet Bridge. A tower was added later to house a bell that came from the cotton mill, where it had been used to call workers until a fire destroyed the mill in 1850. The church has an unusual north/south elevation.

In 1900 the Free Church of Scotland amalgamated with the United Presbyterian Church, to form the United Free Church of Scotland. Some of the congregation returned to Anwoth or Girthon parish churches (Church of Scotland).

In 1929 the United Presbyterian Church reunited with the Church of Scotland, although the reunion in Gatehouse did not take place until the death of Rev. R. B. McGlashan, in 1932. The church closed and most of the members joined Girthon Church although some chose to attend Anwoth.

The old church building was then used from 1935 as a church hall by Girthon Church and is known as the **Rutherford Hall**. A new Girthon Church Hall was built next to Girthon Church in 1997, after which the Rutherford Hall was sold, and has been converted into flats plus a shop and cafe.



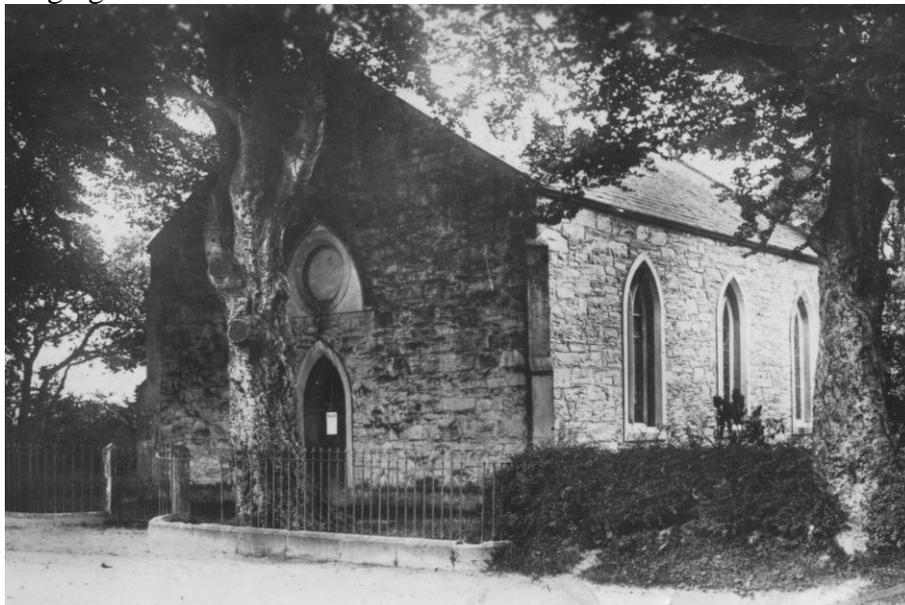
The Rutherford Hall

Episcopal Church

In 1909 the old United Free Church building on the Anwoth side of the river (the 'Wee Kirk') was rented by the Episcopal Church, the Cally Chapel having closed in 1904.

It has been noted that it is unusual for an Episcopal Church to have windows showing Martin Luther and John Knox, but this building is still used by the Episcopal Church.

Victoria Cottage in Hannay Street was rented as a manse. Rev Alfred Wild died in 1917 and was the last resident Episcopalian vicar in Gatehouse. The vicar from Greyfriars in Kirkcudbright now ministers to the congregation here.



Old postcard of the Episcopal Church

Gatehouse Congregational Church

This appears to have existed in the early 19th century but the only record is a gravestone in Girthon Kirkyard of Rev. Archibald Miller, pastor of Congregational Church Gatehouse who died in 1836 after 29 years of service.

Academy Chapel

The Academy Chapel was an Episcopal Church built by James Murray of Cally c.1790 for the English workers at the cotton mills, the Cally Estate workers, and for the pupils at his academy at Cushatwood. When the academy closed in 1820, so did the chapel. After the chapel closed it was converted into a house – Cross Cottage. It is situated just off the Cally Palace driveway, next to the Cricket Ground.



Cross Cottage (ex Academy Chapel)

Cally Chapel

Over half a century after the Academy Chapel was closed an Episcopal Chapel attached to Cally House was consecrated in September 1877. It could hold a congregation of 60 to 100 and was designed in 'High Episcopalian style'. It was used mainly by the Murray family from Cally House, and later tenants of the Cally House and their friends although some Cally Estate workers were christened and married there.

The priest lived at Cushat Wood (the site of the old Cally Academy).

The Chapel closed in 1904 when the Episcopal congregation moved to the 'Wee Kirk' on Dromore Road.

During World War II, when the Cally House was used as a school for evacuees from Glasgow, the old Cally Chapel was used as the school chapel.

It was dismantled in 1954 and converted into bedrooms etc for the Cally Palace Hotel. It was finally demolished in 1990.



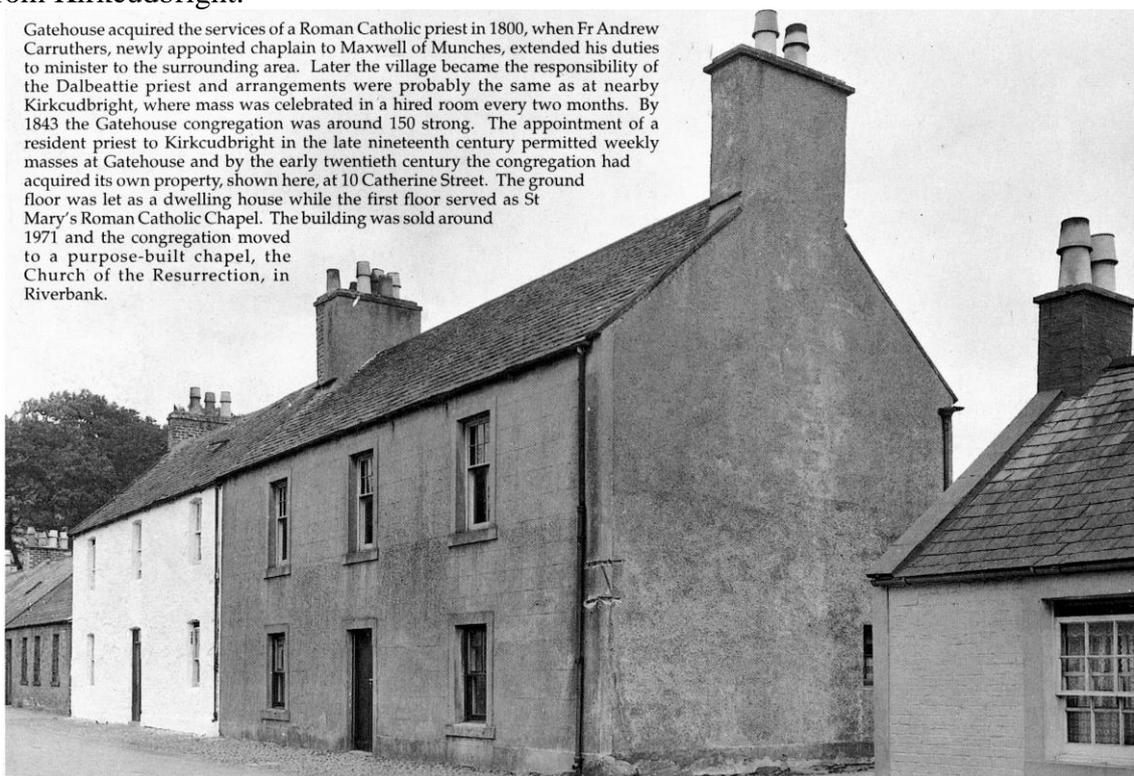
The white annex on the far right is the Cally Chapel – now demolished,

St Mary's Roman Catholic Chapel

There were many Catholic residents in Gatehouse, many having come from Alexander Murray's Irish estate around 1820. At first they were served by travelling priests from Urr (Dalbeattie), Kirkcudbright and Castle Douglas.

In 1850, 10 Catherine Street was purchased and the top flat converted into a chapel. It was accessed by a stone staircase from Old Ford Road. There was no resident priest and the services were taken by the priest from Kirkcudbright.

Gatehouse acquired the services of a Roman Catholic priest in 1800, when Fr Andrew Carruthers, newly appointed chaplain to Maxwell of Munches, extended his duties to minister to the surrounding area. Later the village became the responsibility of the Dalbeattie priest and arrangements were probably the same as at nearby Kirkcudbright, where mass was celebrated in a hired room every two months. By 1843 the Gatehouse congregation was around 150 strong. The appointment of a resident priest to Kirkcudbright in the late nineteenth century permitted weekly masses at Gatehouse and by the early twentieth century the congregation had acquired its own property, shown here, at 10 Catherine Street. The ground floor was let as a dwelling house while the first floor served as St Mary's Roman Catholic Chapel. The building was sold around 1971 and the congregation moved to a purpose-built chapel, the Church of the Resurrection, in Riverbank.



Church of the Resurrection (Roman Catholic)

The chapel in Catherine Street was too small for the RC congregation. A new church was built at Riverbank in the 1960's and blessed in 1971. The priest was still based in Kirkcudbright. This church closed for regular services in 2015, leaving Gatehouse with no Catholic Chapel regularly in use. The final service was held on 31st November 2020.

Other Old Church Buildings near Gatehouse

Cardoness Chapel

Built c.1720 on the Cardoness Estate. Rebuilt in 1786. Used for private prayer and contemplation. From time to time Ecumenical services are held there and it is also used for private weddings.

Kirkandrews

The old church at Kirkandrews was medieval in origin. It closed c.1657 when parishioners moved to Bogue.

James Brown of Knockbren had a new chapel built in 1906, which is now used for special services, weddings etc. It now comes under the control of the Parish of Girthon & Anwoth linked with Bogue.

Kirkdale Church (NX512 541)

This church was used by the McCulloch family of Barholm from the 14th century. Kirkdale Parish was united with Kirkmabreck (Creetown) in 1618, and the congregation has met at Creetown ever since. The Kirkdale churchyard is still the main burial place of the Hannay Family, who own Kirkdale House.

Kirkmabreck Old Church (NX493 565)

Near Carslith. The church was abandoned in 1637 after the town of Creetown developed and a new church was built there.

Gatehouse of Fleet

Showing Places of Worship (Past and Present)

B796 to Creetown (11 miles) via Dromore (Gatehouse Station) 5 miles

Anwoth New and Old Churches and graveyards are at the Clachan of Anwoth about 1m along the Old Military Road

Girthon Parish
east of River Fleet

Anwoth Parish
west of River Fleet

- C1 = Gatehouse Parish Church (ex Girthon Church)
- C2 = St Mary's Episcopal Church
- C3 = Catholic Church of the Resurrection
- C4 = Rutherford Hall (ex Free Church of Scotland)
- C5 = 10b Catherine St. (ex Catholic Chapel of St. Mary)
- C6 = Cross Cottage (ex Episcopal Church)
- C7 = Cally Chapel (ex Episcopal Church in Cally Hotel)

Girthon Old Kirk and graveyard is at the Clachan of Girthon, on the Sandgreen Road off the A75.

