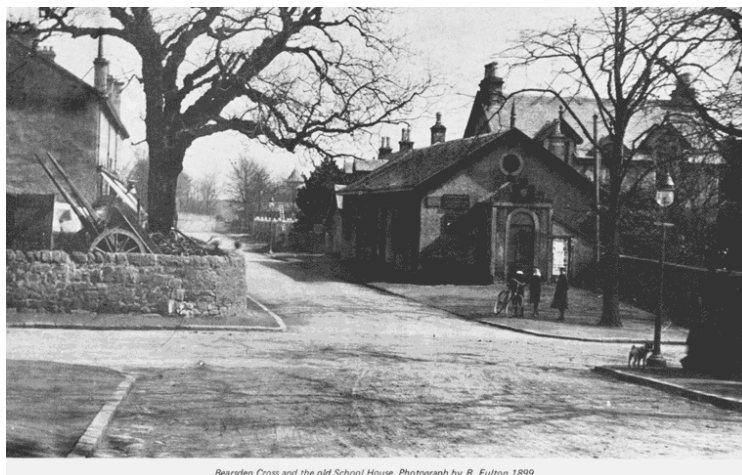


A Little History of Bearsden North Church



(photograph courtesy of East Dunbartonshire Council)

This is Bearsden Free Church as it was in 1899 and is a fine old sandstone building with red-tiled roof which dominates Bearsden Cross. It is built on the line of the historic Antonine Wall, which marks the limit of Roman ambitions in Great Britain. The scene is much the same today. The house behind the church is still there and became part of the church building, to which it became joined by a corridor in 1981. The cart marks Meldrum's Stables, which has been replaced by shops and is currently an estate agent's office. The photograph is dated officially as 1900, but it seems likely that it was taken on the same day in 1899 as the view from where the small boy in the kilt is standing of Bearsden Cross and Old School. Certainly the cart in Meldrum's Stables seems not to have moved between the exposures.



Bearsden Cross and the old School House, Photograph by R. Fulton 1899

The Old School House was the place of worship of our founder members between 1886 and 1889. The picture was taken ten years after the present North Church had been completed. The camera is looking eastwards from Thorn Road, outside the North Church, across Bearsden Cross to Roman Road, so called because it follows the line of the Antonine Wall. The Old School House is behind the group with the bicycle, and the tree beside them marks the spot now occupied by the War Memorial. The cart on the other side of Roman Road is in the premises of Meldrum's Stables, long since replaced by a terrace of shops. Just above the cart and the awnings to the left of the tree is the Chemist's sign. Further down Roman Road is the site of the Roman baths, which were built behind the Wall in 142 A.D. and excavated between 1973 and 1979. The main road from Glasgow to Drymen and Loch Lomond's East shore crosses from right to left. The dog under the gas lamp is on the Glasgow side. For more pictures and details see the Bearsden Burgh Council's 1971 publication entitled *A Guide to the Burgh*.

Even before 1973 it was becoming clear that the burgeoning population to the North of the town, attracted by new housing on the lands of the Bonnaughton and Baljaffray farms, required the services of a church and the North Church built a Church Hall at Baljaffray. In 1993 this was replaced with the much more ambitious Church Centre and services were held successfully in the two locations of Bearsden Cross and Baljaffray for 13 years.

In 2006, after some years of planning the Church Centre at Baljaffray was raised to be a congregation of the Church of Scotland in full status by a special service of Presbytery on 24th August and opened its doors the following Sunday. It is linked with the North Church until the formal union of Bearsden South and Bearsden North Churches established the new Bearsden Cross Parish Church at a special service of Presbytery in the North Church on 29th November. The first service of the Cross Church was held on Sunday 3rd December in the South Church where worship continues whilst the development plans for the North Church site are undertaken.

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