

Munkeby Abbey

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Munkeby Abbey church ruins

Munkeby Abbey was a Cistercian monastery near Okkenhaug in Levanger near Trondheim, Nord-Trøndelag, Norway.

History

It was founded sometime between 1150 and 1180, and was the most northerly Cistercian foundation in the world. Possibly, like Hovedøya Abbey and Lyse Abbey, Munkeby's foundation was carried out by English monks. In 1207 Tautra Abbey was founded, and either then or at some point in the 13th century the community and assets of Munkeby were transferred to the new foundation, of which Munkeby apparently then became a grange.

An attempt to re-establish it as an independent house in the 1470s failed. The church however continued in use as a parish church until 1587.

Local tradition had always maintained that the church at Okkenhaug had once belonged to a monastery; for centuries historians dismissed this, until in 1906 a letter dated 1475 from Pope Sixtus IV to abbot Stephen of Trugge was discovered in the Vatican archives referring to the request for the restoration of the site as a functioning monastery.^[*citation needed*]

It has sometimes been asserted that the church here was the same as that dedicated to the local Saint Brettiva in Skogn, but this has not found general acceptance.

Site

There are substantial remains of the simple church, built of stone, although it was used as a quarry, but the monastic buildings, built of wood, apparently succumbed to fire in 1567. The site was acquired by the Norwegian Department for the Preservation of Historical Monuments (*Fortidsminneforeningen*) in 1967. No full archaeological investigation of the site has been carried out, but many partial excavations have taken place, including test

excavations in 2000, none of which able to discover significant remains of the monastic buildings, although there is no doubt that they were located on the south side of the church.

New monastery

It was reported in 2007 that a new Cistercian monastery is planned near the old site.^[1] Roy Vega, a historian now living in Levanger, is local guide for the monastery, and for Tautra monastery as well.

Notes

1. "Trønderavisa" newspaper article "Planlegger kloster også i Munkeby" of 14 May 2007

Sources and external links

- Katolsk.no: Munkeby (Norwegian)
- Fortidsminneforeningen: Munkeby (Norwegian)
- Pictures of Munkeby 2006

References

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