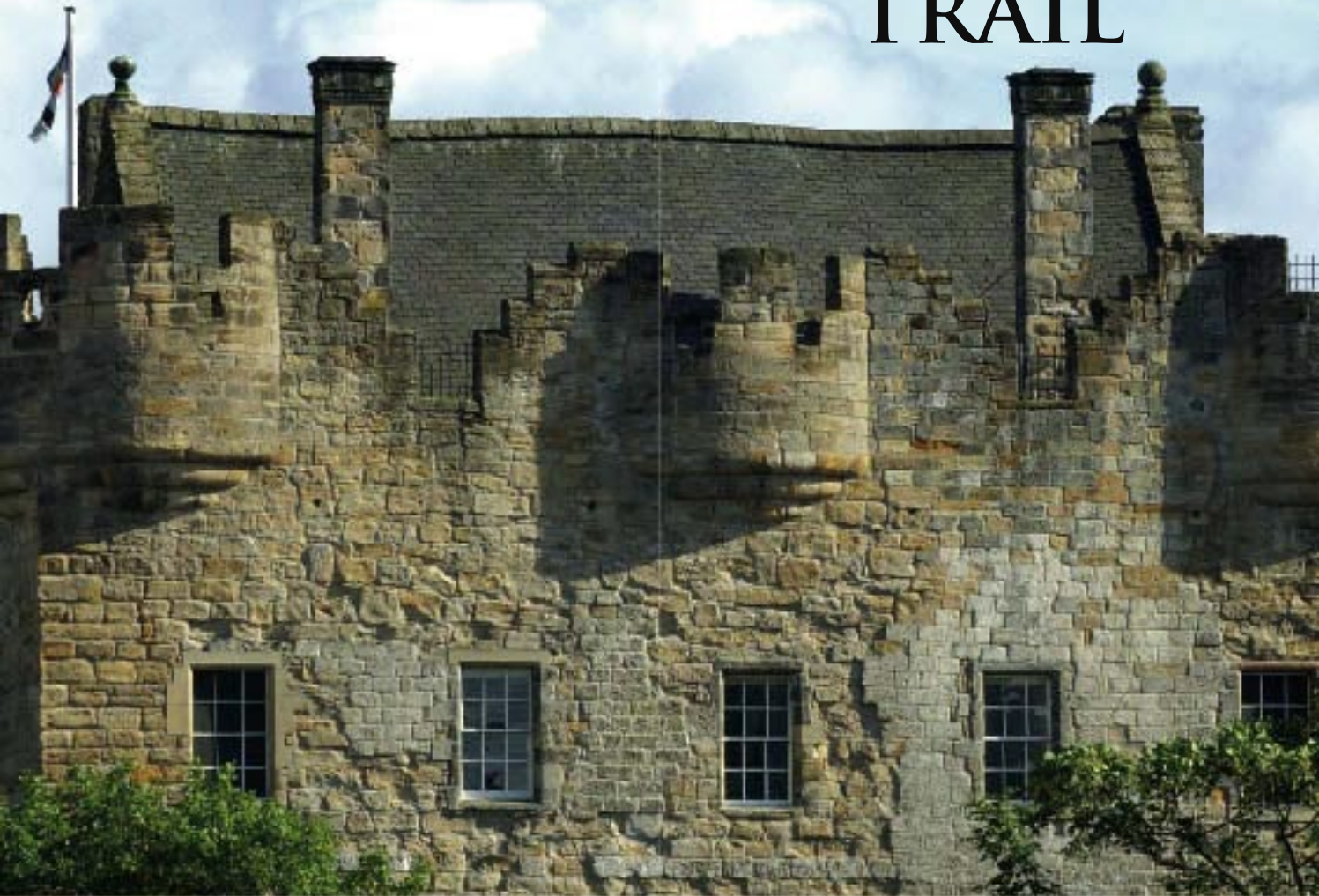


CLACKMANNANSHIRE



# TOWER TRAIL





There are four medieval towers and a manor house in Clackmannanshire. Why? These fine houses were built by aristocrats who needed to be near the royal court in Stirling, yet also able to retreat to their own homes. The towers, their locations and the way they evolved are all different and each has its own fascinating story - some have been attacked, most played host to royalty, one was at the centre of an amazing formal landscape and another even witnessed the 'knighting' of the poet Robert Burns!

The towers are not all open to visitors yet, but with this guide and the information panels at all five sites, you will be able, all year round, to find out about these impressive buildings and what makes them special. They show the changing fashions in tower building and are a great survival of the heritage of medieval Scotland, built by the families who shaped the later industrial development of the county. Go on the Tower Trail now!



### The Medieval Tower House

Why did people build tower houses? Many of the towers that we see today were built in the late 14th to 15th centuries, but had their origins in earlier timber towers. Apparently built for defence, by then Scotland was actually quite peaceful. Building in stone was expensive and time-consuming and a lord needed the money, a secure land-title and stable political conditions to make

it possible. The tower house was a way of showing off the status, wealth and style of its owner.

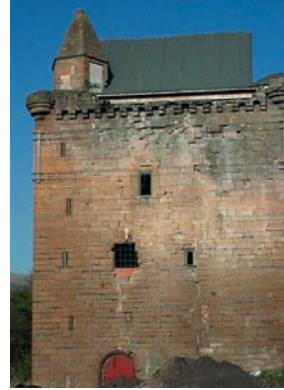
A tower generally had the following features: very thick walls, a strong door and iron yett (not always at ground level) - being able to defend the tower was still important; storage areas on the lower floors; a Great Hall; bedchambers and private rooms for the lord, his close family and servants on the upper floors. These rooms were comfortably and often lavishly furnished. A turnpike (spiral) stair at one corner gave access to all floors and the roof, where there was a parapet walk from which the tower could be guarded and defended if the need arose. Extra rooms - guardroom, wardrobes, private chapel, windows with bench seats,



toilets - were also built within the thick walls. Kitchens were rare in towers, as the cooking for the immediate family was done over the hall fire.

The tall tower house was intended to impress, but it was never big enough to accommodate a lord's extended household and fulfil his courtly obligations. The tower was only the centre of a complex of buildings, which often included a large, richly decorated hall to impress and entertain guests, a kitchen and additional accommodation. The way in which these places developed depended on the fortunes of the families who owned them.

By the later 16th century, however, towers were starting to go out of fashion. People began to build modern houses (like Menstrie Castle and Old Sauchie House) on a more horizontal rather than vertical plan. Centuries later, however, the old tower is often the only building to have survived.



# ALLOA TOWER

Alloa Tower is one of the largest and finest towers of its type in Scotland. It was home to the distinguished Erskine family, Earls of Mar, from the later 14th century until 1800.

David II granted the estate of Alloa to Sir Robert Erskine in 1363. Part of the tower may date from then, though it was built mainly in the 15th century.



*John Erskine  
(c1510-72), 1st Earl  
of Mar, Regent of  
Scotland*

© Earl of Mar & Kellie

The Erskines were loyal supporters and guardians of several Stuart monarchs, who spent part of their early lives in Alloa. As the family rose to prominence, their home grew larger: by 1693 it included a kitchen tower, brew house, mansion and other buildings.

John Erskine became 6th Earl of Mar in 1689. He was a Secretary of State for Scotland from 1705. He was also an architect and landscape designer: in 1702 he began to convert his ancestral home into an elegant modern house.

The 6th Earl believed that economic development was essential for cultural improvement: he started industries on his estate and created an ambitious and extensive formal landscape around his home, respecting the past while looking towards the future.

In 1715, the 6th Earl led the Jacobite Rising which supported the 'Old Pretender', the son of James II. He was attainted for High Treason, exiled and forfeited his lands and titles. His brother, Lord Grange, bought the estate back again for the family in 1724.



*John, 6th Earl of Mar  
(1675 – 1732) and his  
son, by Sir Godfrey  
Kneller*

© Earl of Mar & Kellie



*Parliament Walk leading to the entrance of  
Alloa Tower*

*The 'Great Stairs' designed by John, 6th Earl  
of Mar by 1710. The design was probably  
based on engravings of staircases designed  
by the Italian architect Vignola.*

© Clackmannanshire Council

The 6th Earl never saw his home again and by the late 18th century his remarkable landscape had disappeared.

In 1800 the mansion was destroyed by fire but the tower survived. By the 1980s it was derelict. Alloa Tower Building Preservation Trust, with the support of the Friends of Alloa Tower, restored it to its likely appearance in 1712. It was opened formally by Her Majesty the Queen in 1997. A fine collection of Erskine family portraits is displayed and a DVD presentation tells the story of the tower. Alloa Tower is owned by Clackmannanshire Heritage Trust and managed by the National Trust for Scotland.

## Opening times

30th March – 31st October Daily 1.00 – 5.00

For further information please contact the National Trust for Scotland (Tel: 01259 211701 or 0844 493 2139) or Clackmannanshire Council Museum and Heritage Service (Tel: 01259 216913) or look online at [www.clacksweb.org.uk](http://www.clacksweb.org.uk) and [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk).

# CASTLE CAMPBELL

Castle Campbell stands in a spectacular location above Dollar Glen. The castle as it now exists was built to show the wealth and power of the Campbell family of Argyll, who used it as their main lowland home until 1654.

The tower was probably built by the Stewart family, who from the later 14th century held the estate from the Bishop of Dunkeld. A family dispute led Walter Stewart to attack the tower, though he probably did not destroy it. The dispute was settled and Colin Campbell, 1st Earl of Argyll, who had married into the family, acquired the estate c1466. He repaired the tower and built a large hall for entertaining, with accommodation for his family and guests. By the time he died, in 1493, he had created an impressive home.



*The tower with an original entrance in the west wall, the new stair turret and the east range with ground floor loggia (open arcade) © Clackmannanshire Council*

In c1600 the 7th Earl added the east range and a new stair turret to connect it to the tower. The present defensive gateway and enclosure wall also date from this time.

John Knox and Mary Queen of Scots both visited Castle Campbell. By the 17th century the Campbells had committed themselves to Protestantism. The 8th Earl (1st Marquis) supported the Covenanters against Charles I and in 1645 the Marquis of Montrose, the royalist leader in Scotland, attacked Dollar, though not the castle.



*The ruined great hall with the tower and east range in the background © Clackmannanshire Council*

The 1st Marquis then changed sides twice, causing royalist supporters to attack the castle in July 1654, destroying the great hall and other buildings. In 1661, after the restoration of Charles II, the 1st Marquis was executed in Edinburgh.

After 1654, when visiting the Lowlands the Campbells used their house in Stirling, formerly owned by Sir William Alexander (Argyll's Lodging). They sold the estate in 1805 to Crawford Tait of Harviestoun. In 1950 J E Kerr of Harviestoun gave the glen and castle to the National Trust for Scotland. The Castle was placed in the guardianship of what is now Historic Scotland. It has been partly restored.



*The ribbed, barrel-vaulted ceiling in the third floor chamber of the tower, probably added c1600 Crown copyright: RCAHMS*

## Opening times

Summer (1st April – 30th September) Daily 9.30 – 5.30

Winter (1st October – 31st March) Saturday–Wednesday 9.30 – 4.30  
(closed Thursday and Friday)

For further information please contact Historic Scotland (Tel: 01259 742408 or 01786 450000) or Clackmannanshire Council Museum and Heritage Service (Tel: 01259 216913) or see [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk) and [www.clacksweb.org.uk](http://www.clacksweb.org.uk)

# CLACKMANNAN TOWER

Clackmannan Tower stands on King's Seat Hill, a dramatic site overlooking the Forth valley. There may have been a royal residence here in the reign of Malcolm IV (1053-65). In 1359 David II granted Clackmannan to his kinsman Sir Robert Bruce. The earliest part of the tower was probably built soon afterwards. The original entrance was at first floor level.



In the 15th century the building was raised to tower height and the taller south wing was constructed with a crenellated parapet walk supported on defensive machicolations. A turnpike stair and a new entrance at ground level were also added.

In the late 16th century a fashionable new mansion was built to the west and efforts were made to modernise the tower.

In the 18th century the Bruce family fortunes declined: Lady Catherine Bruce lived on in the decaying mansion, a remarkable old lady famed for her charm and hospitality. On 26th August 1787 she 'knighted' Robert Burns with the sword said to have belonged to King Robert Bruce. After her death, the tower and house

were abandoned and by 1841 the house had gone.

Clackmannan Tower has been in the guardianship of what is now Historic Scotland since the 1950s. Subsidence had caused major structural collapse in 1948. Historic Scotland has undertaken extensive repairs and is committed to increasing public access in the next few years.

## Opening times

At the moment the tower is only open to visitors by special arrangement and occasionally during Scottish Archaeology Month and Doors Open Days weekends in September. Please check local press and the relevant websites for details.

For further information please contact Historic Scotland (Tel: 01786 450000) or Clackmannanshire Council Museum and Heritage Service (Tel: 01259 216913) or see [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk) and [www.clacksweb.org.uk](http://www.clacksweb.org.uk)

# MENSTRIE CASTLE

Menstrie Castle was built c1560 as a manor house by the Alexander family. It was the birthplace of Sir William Alexander, who had an illustrious career during the reign of James VI and I, becoming Principal Secretary of State for Scotland in 1626.

In 1621 he began to establish a new colony called Nova Scotia, but the scheme failed and Sir William lost money. Nonetheless, he improved Menstrie Castle and his town house in Stirling (Argyll's Lodging) in 1633, when he was invested 1st Earl of Stirling and Viscount Canada. In 1640, however, he died a bankrupt in London.

The house was damaged during the Civil War. James Holburne acquired it in 1648 and his grandson sold it to Alexander Abercromby of Tullibody in 1719. Sir Ralph Abercromby, the famous military commander, was born there in 1734.

The Abercromby family sold the estate in 1924. By 1951 the house was neglected and derelict, but was saved from destruction by the famous Scots actor, broadcaster and conservationist Moultrie Kelsall.

The restoration was completed in 1964. Most of the Castle was converted into flats, but two ground-floor rooms were restored as a display area.

These are now owned by Clackmannanshire Council and managed by the National Trust for Scotland.



*Sir William Alexander  
(c1577-1640)*

*In the collection of  
Dr Crinan Alexander,  
on loan to the National  
Gallery of Scotland*



## Opening times

Easter Sunday & 1st May – 30th September Wednesday & Sunday 2.00 - 5.00

For further information please contact the National Trust for Scotland (Tel: 01259 211701 or 0844 493 2139) or Clackmannanshire Council Museum and Heritage Service (Tel: 01259 216913) or look online at [www.clacksweb.org.uk](http://www.clacksweb.org.uk) and [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk)

# SAUCHIE TOWER

In 1321 King Robert Bruce granted the lands of Sauchie to Henri de Annand, Sheriff of Clackmannan. Mary de Annand, his descendant, married Sir James Schaw of Greenock in 1431. He probably built Sauchie Tower soon afterwards. The Schaw family was very influential and in c1460 Sir James' son became Governor of Stirling Castle.

The tower complex included an outer wall on at least two sides, a cobbled courtyard and a large hall with kitchen and bread oven, contemporary with the tower or perhaps built c1460, as the family needed to entertain on a grander scale.

The west courtyard wall was partly remodelled c1490, to include gunholes and a corner tower. In 1631 this area was incorporated into a new house (Old Sauchie House) built by Alexander Schaw, who was knighted in 1633 by Charles I. This was the main family residence in the 17th century; the tower was probably still used for important events and storage.



The house had two storeys, with a main first floor entrance. Above this was a triangular pediment, carved with a panel bearing the Schaw arms, the initials 'AS' and the date 1631.

In c1710 the family moved to their large new mansion of Schawpark. Later on, a cottage was built against the south end of the old house. The house and cottage were occupied and the tower was used for dancing and singing classes, as well as theatrical performances, until the roof fell in c1858.

The *bartizans* (corner turrets) and gables collapsed c1890. Old Sauchie House was demolished in 1930 and the cottage soon afterwards.



*The remains of the medieval hall*



*Artist's impression of Sauchie Tower as it might have looked c1500  
Drawing by Dave Pollock, Archaeografix*

In the 1980s a private owner hoped to restore the ruined tower, but this did not happen. It is now owned by Clackmannanshire Heritage Trust, which has carried out repairs to prevent further deterioration; it has a new timber roof with a temporary felt covering.

The Friends of Sauchie Tower were established to support the restoration of the tower. In 2004 the group was awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund grant to carry out the project entitled *Sauchie Tower and its Environs*. The main aims of the project are to raise awareness of the tower and its environment; increase community knowledge and understanding of the area and encourage people to protect the tower, support its restoration and enjoy the restored site.

The main part of the project was an excavation by Addyman Associates, helped by many local volunteers; this has greatly increased our understanding of the site.

In the future we hope to complete the excavation, finish the restoration of Sauchie Tower and conserve Old Sauchie House and the surrounding landscape.

## Opening times

At the moment Sauchie Tower is only open for special guided tours during Scottish Archaeology Month and Doors Open Days each year in September. Please check local press and relevant websites for details.

For further information and to help us with this exciting project, please contact Clackmannanshire Council Museum and Heritage Service (Tel: 01259 216913)

If you would like to become a Friend of Sauchie Tower, please contact Richard Gibb, Membership Secretary, The Friends of Sauchie Tower (Tel: 01259 750077)

Text: Museum and Heritage Service,  
Clackmannanshire Council

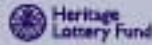
Design: Communications Unit, Clackmannanshire Council

Further reading

Tabraham, Chris *Scotland's Castles*, London, 2005

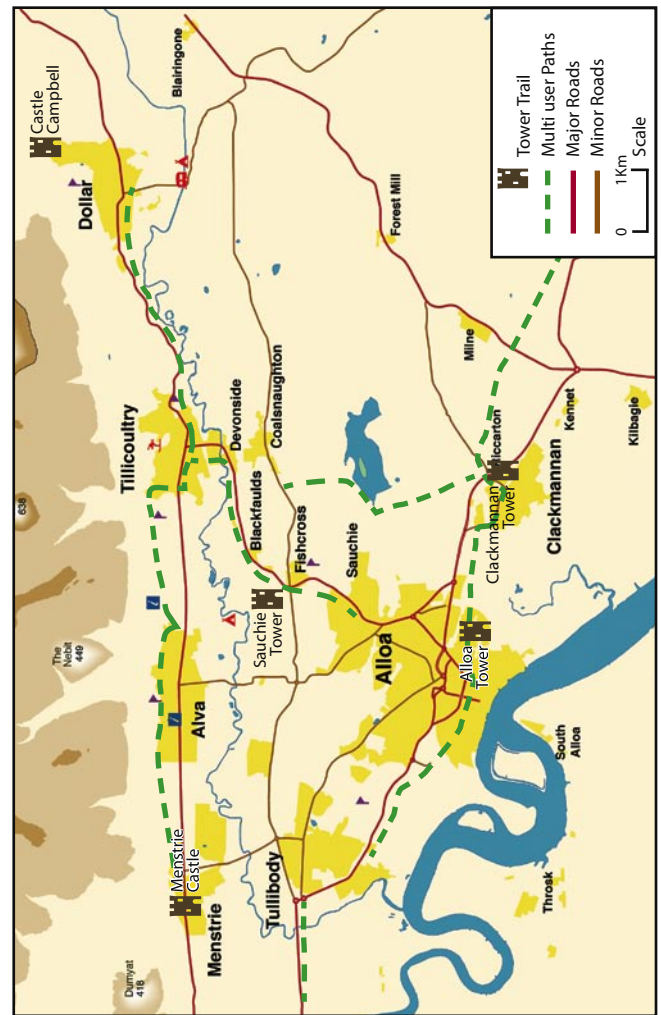
McKean, Charles *The Scottish Château*, Stroud, 2001

We are grateful to the following organisations which have supported the development of the Tower Trail.



PROJECT PART-FINANCED  
BY THE EUROPEAN UNION  
Europe and Scotland  
Making it work together

Tower Trail road signage supported by the European Regional Development Fund



Clackmannanshire is Scotland in miniature - magnificent scenery, a turbulent history and welcoming people.

Set in the very heart of Scotland, with the stunning Ochil Hills as its backdrop, Clackmannanshire has a lot to offer visitors and residents alike.

Tourists are increasingly finding out what the area has to offer. If you love the outdoors there is plenty to entertain walkers, from gentle strolls to steep slopes. And for cyclists we have some of the best marked routes in Scotland.

**CLACKMANNANSHIRE**

*more than you imagine*