



HISTORIC  
ENVIRONMENT  
SCOTLAND

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ALBA

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

# ABERDOUR CASTLE



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Cover image: View of the east and central range from the terraced gardens at Aberdour Castle. © Eilidh Greig.

# HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

## ABERDOUR CASTLE

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# I. SUMMARY

## 1.1 Introduction

Aberdour Castle consists of a complex of ranges dating from the 12th to the 17th century of which the 17th century gallery range is roofed. The rest of the castle is a consolidated ruin though in many areas is complete to near wall-head. The property in care includes a dovecot, a walled garden and to the south an impressive series of terraces dating from the 16th century (restored 1980s). An area of ground below the terraces was recently laid out as an orchard while the area bounding the Dour Burn is woodland.

The site is staffed and is open throughout the year. It attracted over 12,000 visitors in 2015 and has excellent public transport links, Aberdour railway station being in easy walking distance. There is a parking area, café, toilets and shop/reception.

## 1.2 Statement of Significance

Aberdour Castle presents a narrative of evolving architectural idioms and cultural influences which tell the story of how prominent Scottish families lived their lives, expressed their status, and adapted their inheritance from the 12th century to the 18th century. The early castle structure is particularly important as the best preserved and most easily interpreted example of 12th century secular stone architecture in Scotland. Although much of the castle fell into ruin after 1700, this has had the benefit of preserving an unparalleled sequence of medieval and renaissance architectural phases without significant later modification.

The following bullet points summarise only the key aspects of importance of Aberdour Castle:

- The surviving portions of the early tower<sup>1</sup> (including slit windows and tracery fragments) present the clearest example of a twelfth-century secular building known in Scotland. The building date is generally accepted as the later 12th century.<sup>2</sup> The plan can be relatively easily reconstructed and is the only known Scottish example of classic Norman tower architecture, characterised by slightly projecting corner sections – the pilaster buttresses at north-east and south-east corners.

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<sup>1</sup> Note the term “tower” is used throughout to identify the earliest structure at Aberdour. It has previously been referred to as “tower”, “hall” or “keep”.

<sup>2</sup>On stylistic grounds and balance of probability from documentary sources, which, as expected, do not provide a definitive date, see discussion at 2.1 and 2.4, also in relation to St Fillans Church

- In this context, the close association of the castle and nearby St Fillan's church (not in State Care) which shares similarly early fabric adds to the significance of both structures. They have a closely associated history which also interweaves with that of Inchcolm Abbey.
- In the 14th-15th centuries, the castle was adapted and enlarged to suit changing aristocratic tastes. Understanding these alterations is hindered by later architectural changes, especially the collapse of much of the tower-house, which impacts upon the completeness of the ensemble.
- The renaissance phase of Aberdour's development is associated with 4th earl of Morton (Regent Morton), probably the single most important figure closely associated with the place. The survival and restoration of his terraced gardens is particularly important allowing visitors a sense of the scale and ambition of Scots nobility at this time.
- The 17th century saw the ancestral pile self-consciously updated into a modern mansion with the showpiece additions of a long gallery and walled garden. There is a fair amount of documentation for this and later periods which enhances understanding and allows some colourful detail to emerge.
- Although the castle itself was the scene of no particularly significant historical events, it was home to some important figures in Scottish history, such as Robert the Bruce's nephew the Earl of Moray, and the sixteenth-century Regent Morton.
- Many visitors value Aberdour for the tranquillity and beauty of the castle and its setting, particularly the gardens. The dramatic appearance of the surviving (and fallen) fragments of the old tower impress with their scale and the relationship to the church adds to the sense of antiquity. Because of its good public transport links and facilities, Aberdour is particularly valuable to HES for the opportunity it offers to host school groups.

A fuller assessment of the wider heritage values of the site is given in the following paragraphs and appendices

## 2. ASSESSMENT OF VALUES

### 2.1 Background

The architectural core of Aberdour Castle consists of a compact tower with distinctive twelfth-century architectural features of a type that is very rare in Scotland. It was built as the centre of the barony of Aberdour, and is

traditionally attributed to the first known baron, Sir William de Mortimer, one of the many immigrant knights of Norman-French ancestry who arrived in Scotland in the twelfth century; he acquired Aberdour as a barony in the 1150s or 1160s and is remembered in local folklore for his quarrel with the monks of **Inchcolm Abbey**. By the 1180s, the barony had passed to Robert of London, the illegitimate son of the Scottish king, William the Lion, and from the 1230s, it was in the hands of Sir Richard Siward, an Anglo-Welsh knight renowned as one of the best soldiers of his day, who used it as a refuge from his private war against corrupt English government officials.

The assertion that Mortimer built the tower is plausible, but based principally on early oral traditions, and in the absence of unambiguous evidence, it is possible that Robert of London or Sir Richard Siward might equally have been responsible. Alternatively, the tower may have even been built before 1150, presumably as a local royal residence for King David I or Malcolm IV.

In 1304, Aberdour was visited by King Edward I of England, who was in Fife on a military campaign against the Scots. After the English were driven out in the Wars of Independence, the castle was acquired by Sir Thomas Randolph, Earl of Moray (died 1332), a nephew of King Robert the Bruce who served as one of his most successful generals, famed for his role at Bannockburn and for feats such as the storming of Edinburgh Castle. From his sons, Aberdour passed to another leading Scottish general, Sir William Douglas, the “Knight of Liddisdale” (died 1353), who in turn gave the barony to his nephew James. In this period, the interior plan of the tower was reorganised, and it was structurally strengthened with stone vaults and heavy beams, adapting it into an early version of the classic Scottish tower house. It is conventionally asserted that the upper storey was added at this point, chiefly because of the different character of the masonry. However, this is no longer regarded as certain evidence of different build dates.<sup>3</sup>

The descendants of James Douglas intermarried with the royal family and were ennobled as Earls of Morton in the 1450s. They gradually enlarged the tower into a mansion and were also responsible for establishing its well-preserved setting of walled and terraced gardens. The most famous member of the family was the 4th Earl, known as Regent Morton. He was a distant cousin of the original line and gained the title after marrying the 3rd Earl’s daughter Margaret, though he was considered something of an interloper in a period of disputed dynastic succession. He governed Scotland as Regent in the 1570s, before being overthrown and executed on his own guillotine (the “Maiden”, still preserved in the Museum of Scotland). He was also an enthusiast for French architecture and landscape gardening and made major improvements to the castle and its formal grounds. By

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<sup>3</sup> Piers Dixon, personal comment, notes Roxburgh castle on its Teviotside wall, as an example of different masonry styles used in a single build phase.



1600, the barony of Aberdour had reverted to a branch of the Morton dynasty closer to the original line, who used the castle as their main residence, and modernised and enlarged the building and its grounds.

The development of Aberdour Castle was abruptly stopped when the staterooms in the south wing were gutted by a fire in 1710, but the earls improvised an apartment in an undamaged part of the building until they could move into a new mansion in the 1730s (adjacent Aberdour House). They then leased the castle to various occupiers; Aberdour Castle remained a gentleman's residence until at least 1791, but the main tower was roofless by 1804, and structural collapses in 1844 and 1919 reduced it to a ruin, prompting the surrender of the building into state care to ensure the maintenance of the site. The extent of clearing, consolidation and rebuilding of fallen masonry during the early period of Ministry of Works activity means that care must be taken in discussing areas of the castle as "strictly" original or unaltered.

## 2.2 Evidential values

Thanks to the lack of major architectural modernisation after 1710, Aberdour Castle is one of the most complete and unaltered examples of a medieval nobleman's seat in Scotland, and the buildings, although partially ruinous, contain a clearly intelligible and unusually complete sequence of building phases spanning the period c. 1150-1650. The extensive grounds also present a comparatively broad-ranging set of features, incorporating a twelfth-century parish church, terraced south garden and dovecot probably of the late sixteenth-century, and a seventeenth-century walled garden to the east.

An extensive archaeological investigation was carried out in 1979-1980 in the terraced garden to the south. Within the castle itself, the advent of state care in the 1930s led to the clearance of rubble and overgrowth and consolidation and display of the upstanding walls, involving extensive and poorly-recorded reinstatement of collapsed masonry; this has significantly disturbed the archaeological record in some important areas of the site such as the central tower and perhaps the adjacent service courtyard and brewhouse/bakehouse range, while the northern perimeter has been affected by a Victorian railway cutting, but nonetheless, the potential for further exploration and discovery remains high.

The castle itself would benefit from a straightforward standing building survey, to better understand the successive modifications of the structure, particularly in the south range where the phasing of the basement and first floor is very unclear, and the upper storey does not seem to have ever been surveyed in detail. It is also suitable for the application of more sophisticated methodologies such as the promising technique of carbon-dating mortar in wall cores to refine its buildings chronology, a technique



which would be particularly usefully in the basement of the central tower, in order to distinguish original twelfth-century masonry from work that was consolidated and re-set during twentieth-century restoration. Detailed study of surviving architectural details also offers the opportunity to clarify and enhance our understanding of the tower, notably the twelfth-century window embrasure concealed by later masonry infill in the upstanding section of the south wall and the fragmentary upper window jambs in the collapsed corner fragment.

In the grounds, while the physical layout has been fully restored, sophisticated dating techniques would also offer advantages. Techniques such as the gathering of historical pollen samples produced disappointing results in the terraced garden but could be tested elsewhere in the grounds to confirm historical planting patterns, and an exploration of the origins of extant landscaping features such as the wooded riverbank encircling the castle (documented as mature woodland since the 1670s). Both castle and grounds also invite the investigation of absent architectural features which can be identified from documents and old maps, such as the “woman house” (weaving workshop and maids’ quarters) formerly located in one of the castle’s courtyards, the approach road leading to the village, the mill pond which was originally located at the focus of the terraced garden beyond the orchard, and the mill on the riverbank below the dovecot.

The setting extends beyond the castle and its grounds into the wider landscape of the old barony of Aberdour, which encompasses the church and village, a medieval brewery and a later laird’s tower at Hillside, and the entire surrounding landscape: the territory of the barony would respond to various forms of survey and archaeological excavation, assisted by an unusually complete body of early baronial documents.

## 2.3 Historical values

As already mentioned, Aberdour is a building with an innate ability to demonstrate the architectural history of Scotland in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The overall effect of the sequence of building phases which follow one upon another, with their relationships still clearly visible in the fabric of the building, is to provide one of the best examples of the complete narrative of medieval architecture in Scotland - beginning with the compact keep at the core of the building, progressing upwards through the upper part of the tower, then laterally into the lodging range, and outwards through the long gallery; the ruined outbuildings, the remains of the precinct walls, and the surrounding formal gardens, add further layers to the story.

Each of these layers of architecture also displays its own internal narrative. The keep is uniquely representative in Scotland of a particular style of twelfth-century secular architecture demonstrated by its pilaster

buttresses, basement slits and double-lancet window. The roofless rooms of the lodging display the adoption of Renaissance planning, with one of the earliest uses of formal corridors in the British Isles, and quirky details such as a place for a working cannon in the entrance lobby. The long gallery and the adjacent chamber, probably a best guest bedroom, help modern visitors to imagine how the Earls of Morton would have received their precursors in the seventeenth century. The buildings also reveal the inner workings of the castle itself and life “below stairs”, with the kitchen and storage vaults in the basements, the stable discreetly tucked beneath the long gallery, and a separate outbuilding which provided special facilities for brewing beer and for baking - probably oatcakes rather than white bread.

The historical value of Aberdour Castle is thus primarily as a microcosm of the history of architecture and domestic life in Scotland, but it also involves a series of historical vignettes which tie it into the larger history of Scotland and the wider medieval world. The Mortimer knight who arrived from the south to seek his fortune in the service of the Scottish king represented a movement of men and ideas out of France which had an impact as far afield as Morocco and Armenia, but in seeking to build himself a feudal seat at Aberdour, he left a local folk memory which remembered his quarrel with the monks of Inchcolm, and inspired a modern historical novel (*Mortimer's Deep* by Simon Taylor, also Scotland's leading place-name scholar). Robert of London, the royal bastard, was a prominent and ambiguous figure at the court of his father King William the Lion. Sir Richard Siward was a renowned soldier, skilled and proud and lucky, whose strong character emerges from the annals of the thirteenth century, and is complimented by the complex question of his identity. His ancestry was Norman-French, he was probably born and bred in Wales, but he pursued a knight's career in England, and ultimately raised his son at Aberdour as a Scotsman.

During the Wars of Independence, Edward I of England visited Aberdour on one of his campaigns against the Scots, but the castle then became the home of two of the most prominent Scottish commanders in the successful war to drive out the English, the 1st Earl of Moray and the Knight of Liddisdale. In the late sixteenth century, Aberdour also played a notable role in the history of the Reformation and the associated attempts to give Scotland a pro-English political orientation: in 1560, we find the commanders of the “Lords of the Congregation” basing themselves here during the Siege of Leith, and in 1567, it was the site of a meeting which laid the groundwork for the deposition of Mary Queen of Scots, leading eventually to the new baron of Aberdour, the 4th Earl of Morton, governing Scotland as regent in the 1570s.

In its fully-developed seventeenth-century form, the castle reflects the self-presentation of the Scottish élite after the Union of the Crowns in 1603, adopting new architectural forms which were particularly fashionable

around the royal court in London, such as the walled garden and long gallery, but using a vernacular Scottish building style. The 17th century work integrated comfortably with the existing buildings and grounds, so that the nobility could proclaim themselves as inheritors, custodians and continuators of a glorious medieval past that was fully compatible with their new British identity. Its idyllic setting also concealed the fact that the family's lifestyle was now funded by West Lothian collieries, an Orkney fishing fleet, and loans from London bankers.

The dramatic fire of 1710 and the continued use of the habitable parts of the castle as a residence until the 1790s bring the story of Aberdour forward into the period where medieval castle architecture was rediscovered and rehabilitated in the eighteenth century.

The castle also has tangential associative values with the educational and intellectual underpinnings of the British Empire. James Douglas, 14th earl of Morton (1702-1768) was a member, later President, of the Royal Society, and a member of the Board of Longitude. He was also involved in gathering funding for James Cook's expedition to monitor the transit of Venus from Tahiti in 1769. This helped pave the way for the settler-colonisation of Australia and New Zealand.<sup>4</sup>

## 2.4 Architectural and artistic values

As already noted, Aberdour Castle embodies a clear sequence of architectural phases, from twelfth-century tower through late medieval fortalice and renaissance lodging to Jacobean mansion. This section offers a more detailed survey of the upstanding buildings and their architectural sequence and significance.

### 12th century Tower

The tower at the core of the building is one of very few secular buildings surviving from the earliest phase of feudal architecture in Scotland (the short list of potential counterparts includes one much-altered tower in **Hailes Castle** in Lothian, battlemented walling built into a later great hall at Craigie Castle in Ayrshire, and confused foundations in Roxburgh Castle, not one of which retains a single feature of definitively twelfth-century style; defensive ramparts at sites such as Castle Sween, Castle Roy, Kincardine Castle, and Kinclaven, by their very nature, offer even less in the way of stylistic features and secure dating evidence). Aberdour is thus the only clear Scottish example of the classic style of twelfth-century "Norman" tower architecture, characterised by slightly projecting corner sections known as "pilaster buttresses". Although now much ruined, the south-west corner survives in part to its original height and combined with the unique

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<sup>4</sup> [Surveying and Analysing Connections between Properties in Care and the British Empire, c.1600-1997 \(historicenvironment.scot\)](#), 67

survival of the original plate-tracery head of a characteristically Norman twin lancet window, allows both the scholar and the average visitor to envisage the building in its original form. The groundplan is trapezoidal with a relatively simple original layout (originally perhaps just two floors tall).

The basement, now vaulted and subdivided, was a single large space (although a row of two or more timber or stone arches across the middle to subdivide the space and add structural support is not impossible). It was probably used as a storeroom, roofed by the timber beams of the floor above, lit by three tall round-headed slit windows along the south wall and accessed by a doorway near the south-eastern corner whose bar-hole is still visible internally. Adjacent to the door, a spiral staircase in the pilaster buttress provided access to a first-floor hall, in which we can visualise the spiral stair itself, and the twin-lancet window in the centre of the south wall. Internal fittings would include at least one hearth (perhaps at the eastern end of the north wall, where it seems a flue was later trunked up from below), and possibly additional windows and smaller “intra-mural” chambers in the wall thickness, and even an arched partition dividing it into two separate areas with two parallel roof-ridges. Some sort of recess for a chimney or cupboard on the north side is visible in a watercolour view of the castle from the 1830s, one of a series of old paintings and photographs predating the structural collapses of 1844 and 1919 which provide important guidance to the layout of the upper floors.

Above the hall, the spiral stair clearly led up to a higher level, but the original phase of masonry (characterised by squarish ashlar) stops about the level of the hall roof. Above this there is a clearly marked switch to different walling facing – characterised by longer oblong ashlar. Opinions differ as to what these upper levels of oblong ashlar represent. M.R. Apter envisaged that an original upper floor was demolished and replaced in the 14th century. More recent reconstructions have assumed a rather squat 12th century hall with only a simple set of battlements around the hall roof. Both these interpretations assume the heightening of the tower to present wall-head to be a secondary phase of construction dating to the 14th century. However, the change in masonry need not necessarily indicate a long pause in construction, and it is possible that the entire tower is of twelfth-century date and that the 14th century work consisted of very thorough internal alterations.

The upper floor had a large arched window located centrally in its western wall (the south jamb of which survives in the fallen section of tower in front of the south wall); a smaller rectangular window looked south before the masonry fell in 1919. Above this floor there was a garret chamber in the roof space - an old painting depicts the west gable with a rectangular window and adjacent aumbry cupboard. From the upstanding structure and the collapsed fragment resting in front of it, it is clear that the top of the tower was surmounted externally by a wall-walk around the roof, and had a small

projecting turret above the entrance, known as a brattice (its “machicolations”, projecting supports for the turret, with openings between them through which things such as boiling oil, stones and javelins could be dropped down onto attackers, are still well-preserved)

It is likely that the tower was associated with other early castle buildings, but no evidence for these has been identified, making it hard to assess the original purpose of the tower - was it a compact residential structure, a great hall located amid now-vanished buildings constructed in more perishable materials, or simply an architectural and defensive statement adjacent to an entirely vanished residence?

### **14th century Tower-House**

As discussed above, it is not certain that the upper levels of the tower represent a significantly later build to the lower floors. However, the internal arrangement of the tower was certainly very radically changed in the 14th century. At this stage therefore it is appropriate to refer to the tower as the *tower-house* to differentiate from the earlier 12th-century tower.

This building project involved an internal reorganisation of the ground floor, creating the current basement arrangements. At least some of the slit-windows were blocked, and a solid north-south cross-wall was inserted, while the floor level was lowered slightly to accommodate the extra headroom needed for the vault. The area on the eastern side of this partition was spilt horizontally into two floors, each containing a vaulted cellar prefaced by an access corridor: the lower chamber was probably for storage, but the upper space, now more ruinous, was evidently a kitchen. It has a hearth across its northern end (masonry consolidation has made the evidence for this less visible, but it is still possible to observe a gap between the springing of the vault and the line of the north wall) and a wall cupboard for storage.

The western half of the tower-house contains a single large vaulted cellar, although, probably as a secondary addition, this space was divided vertically by a mezzanine floor accessed from a second door on the upper corridor. Note that this room has undergone significant twentieth-century consolidation: the upper part of the south wall has been built up and refaced, and the vault, although it remained largely intact prior to restoration, appears to have been entirely reconstructed. As well as providing more sophisticated storage and service facilities, these vaulted basements also provided stronger architectural support for the weight of the upper section of the tower-house.

The basic masonry of the hall was probably largely unchanged (if it was subdivided by an arcade this was now removed), and two important changes to its architecture may date from this period. The central double-lancet in the south wall was blocked up, reducing its arched head to a detail on the external wall, and a larger window was inserted to its west,

with a rectangular external opening and a round-arched internal embrasure, which would have given further emphasis to the axial arrangement of the hall in this period by illuminating the “upper” end of the hall where the lord’s table was located, in contrast to the “low” end where the entrance from the staircase was located. The south wall contains slots for heavy ceiling beams which would have added to the strengthening of the building provided by the vaults. These massive braced beams (similar in concept to those used in the hall at **Threave Castle** and the surviving roof of Duke Humphrey’s library in Oxford) would have also emphasised the east-west orientation of the hall and contrasted with the much lighter rafters of the more private upper storey above.

The embrasure visible in the north wall of the hall in a painting of the 1830s may have been the fireplace, positioned directly opposite the new window and adding warmth as well as light to the “high” end of the space, although the lower end of the hall was more subtly heated by the kitchen flue in its north wall.

It is very uncertain when the tower-house fell out of use. It was evidently still in occupation as an integral part of the castle in the seventeenth century, and it is not described as being damaged in the fire of 1710. Documents referred to by Apted (1966) indicate that iron grilles were removed from the windows in the 1720s, and although he interpreted this as demolition work, it may alternatively have been a project of modernisation designed to make the building more habitable (the documents have not been located in this survey). However, it seems that the apartment which was used by the 12th Earl in this period was located in the south-east gallery range rather than the tower-house, and it was certainly ruinous and unroofed by the start of the nineteenth century, although it remained largely intact until 1844.

### **15th century, first central range (rebuilt 16th century)**

The castle was extended southwards from the ancestral tower in the late medieval period, probably in the fifteenth century, though this phase of construction is not well understood, as it has been masked by later reworking. The main spiral stair and the adjacent walling appear to belong to this phase, suggesting a unique “reverse Z-plan” with two high-status ranges linked by a central stair turret. The old tower-house itself was modified because the original door was now blocked by the stair tower: a new doorway opened directly from the spiral stair into the hall, and a separate basement entrance was created at the southern end of the eastern wall. A very tentative reconstruction of the new range might posit a single large great hall set over the vaulted service basement which is still extant; this contains a service corridor leading to a new kitchen, an adjacent vaulted cellar which may have been a storage room or else the “buttery” where wine and beer barrels (“butts”) were kept, and a smaller space which can probably be identified from seventeenth-century

inventories as the pantry, in which the tableware and serving goblets were stored.

### **16th century lodging (central) range**

The 15th century range was rebuilt in its present form as Lodgings in the 16th century. Externally, the east gable was given a distinctly renaissance character, with two superimposed windows surrounded by attenuated Tuscan pilasters. These find close parallels in pilasters flanking the Portcullis Gate at **Edinburgh Castle**, also built by Regent Morton in the 1570s, and also similar in style to work in his Border retreat at Drochil Castle, Peeblesshire. Internally, the gunloop defending the west side implies that a small cannon was positioned just inside the formal entrance to the building, beneath the rising stair - it would have been the first thing which greeted visitors when they walked in through the main door, a striking “conversation piece” and a statement of the Earl of Morton’s princely power and sophistication.

The reworked sixteenth-century lodging to the south of the main staircase conforms to the conventional layout of this period, in which the first and second floors share the same floorplan, forming two superimposed apartments containing matching suites of rooms for the lord and lady of the castle (compare **Edinburgh Castle**, **Crichton Castle**, **Huntly Castle**, etc.); however, the details of the layout, combined with the 1647 inventory, suggests that the two floors actually served significantly different roles: the lower chambers were public spaces, used in practice as a dining room and an audience chamber, entered separately from the corridor off the spiral stair, and it was the dining room, rather than the entrance stair which was the real hub of access in the private areas of the castle, providing a spiral stair down to the terraced garden, and a more formal stairway to the upper floor, which functioned as the real private apartment; the timberwork which formed most of this upper stair is long gone, but masonry elements and wall-raggles outline its shape, revealing it as a very early example of a “scale and plat” staircase with straight flights and flat landings, anticipating the grand entrance stairs of **Crichton Castle** and seventeenth century buildings such as Holyrood Palace.

The upper apartment consists of a more conventional linear sequence of spaces, progressing from the staircase through private chamber, corridor or “transe”, bedchamber and closet. The use of corridors within the apartments is derived from French exemplars, but very innovative in sixteenth-century British Isles, where access normally progressed by staircases or else directly from room to room, and passageways were conventionally restricted to service spaces, or else formed separate gallery ranges linking distinct buildings and locations. There are Scottish precedents in the galleries which flank ranges in the royal palaces at Linlithgow and Falkland, both probably predating 1540, but the purpose of these spaces is primarily to bypass staterooms rather than access them. The proper introduction of the high-status internal corridor in Scottish



architecture can be confidently linked with the Regent Morton, as it also features in his unfinished Border retreat at Drochil. Surprisingly, the corridor is generally said to have been introduced to England only in 1597, though it is unclear how accurate these statements are. It might be expected that a second entrance to the upper apartment would have been provided near the top of the main spiral staircase, but this cannot be confirmed from the level of inspection that was possible in preparing this report.

There is evidence for reworking of the service spaces in the basement, with repositioned doors and an oven built into the hearth. A date of 1674 has been asserted for the oven inserted in the hearth, presumably on the basis of archival documents, though the corroborating evidence has not been located: whatever its date, this oven might have been intended for more sophisticated fare such as pies, rather than the straightforward production of loaves or oatcakes.

### **17th century East range**

The gallery or east range was built in the seventeenth century, providing a spacious and fashionable addition to the apartments. The initials WEM (for William, Earl of Morton, died 1648) are carved into an elaborate aediculed window high in the east gable. The range comprised a long rectangular main block with two small turret-like additions projecting on the north side and a larger wing at the southwest corner. It is by far the best-preserved part of the castle, although its roof pitch and probably the window heights have been altered.

### **Gallery**

It was designed to embody the history of the dynasty by pairing ancestral portraits on the walls with meaningful vistas through the windows (in this case, the view looked across the immediate setting of the Regent Morton's terraced gardens towards the distant horizon of Lothian, the location of the family's earliest ancestral territory and the coal mines which paid for the refurbishment of the castle).

In practice, the Gallery was a flexible apartment, its underlying purpose being to provide a space in which the lord could take private walks without being subject to the vagaries of the weather, but also used for private meetings with important guests (by moving about the spacious floor, you reassured them that eavesdropping was impossible), and doubling as a function suite (the Jacobean gallery at Culross Abbey House was used as a banqueting hall). Judging by the inventory from the 1640s and the layout of other Jacobean mansions such as Culross Abbey House, the room located in the tower at the south-eastern corner may well have been a guest bedroom.

## **Stables**

The lower floor below the gallery contained the stables, positioned within the formal and high-status area of the castle. This is somewhat unusual as stables were conventionally sited at some distance from the castle.

However, the early years of the 17th century saw a vogue for haute-ecole or manege riding as an aristocratic pursuit and there are examples of stables included within the formal house setting, for instance the most elaborate example at Bolsover (1630s) is across the court from the long gallery. There is some documentary evidence to suggest that William Earl Morton (and more particularly his son Robert) may have had an interest in this particular fashion.<sup>5</sup>

There is evidence of a loft above the stalls (which may or may not be original) which probably combined hay storage and a bunkroom for the stable lads who usually formed the largest element in a Scottish noble household, doubling as a mounted escort. The misaligned footings beneath the western part of its courtyard wall suggest that it replaced an older range on a similar alignment, perhaps an earlier stable block (see below).

## **East range: alterations and unresolved issues**

There are two main uncertainties concerning the gallery range. The first is the fact that the western end of the northern wall is built on a footing on a slightly different alignment, which suggests that it superseded some sort of earlier structure in the same position. The second and perhaps more significant puzzle concerns the original design of the roofline: the current roof appears to be of mid-to-late eighteenth century date (a date in the 1750s is asserted in a Victorian source though primary documentation has not been discovered), and it is clear from the design of the gable and the raggle in the wall of the south lodging that the original roof was higher and more steeply pitched. Replacing it almost certainly involved alterations to the wallhead, as the internal faces of the walls would have originally risen higher to support the more steeply-pitched rafters, and it is likely that at the same time adjustments were made to the windows: their lintels may have originally risen higher, possibly topped by triangular pediments as in the Jacobean long galleries at Hamilton Palace (now demolished) at Scone Palace (subsequently refaced). The catslide dormer at the south-east tower was introduced by the Ministry of Works and represents a re-creation of an approximation of the earlier form of the gallery range windows.

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<sup>5</sup> There is some archival evidence that William Earl of Morton (the treasurer earl) had a special interest in horses, and paid for his son Robert to learn manege riding in Paris (information courtesy of Michael Pearce; Morton letters, NLS Mss. 78, 83, 84) Conceivably he may have been inclined to build prestige stables, novel in design and situation, perhaps akin to William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, who wrote a treatise on equitation and built stables and riding schools at Bolsover and Welbeck. See also Addyman and Worsley: William Cavendish's Architecture for the Art of Horsemanship. Architectural History vol 45, 2002, which reconstructs the stable at Bolsover.

Another hint of possible changes is found in the awkward way which the roof covers the turret in the centre of the north facade, creating a nondescript alcove.<sup>6</sup>

After the fire of 1710, the gallery range remained intact, and the stack of three chambers in the south-east tower seem to have been adapted into an apartment for the Earl. This was presumably also the location of the apartment which continued to be occupied by a gentleman-tenant until the 1790s, and it later became a cottage for the gardener and custodian in the twentieth century. Although there are a number of original features, such as fireplaces and a rare seventeenth-century painted ceiling on the middle floor, it should be noted that extensive renovations were made to fit up this wing for the custodian after the building was taken into state care, reinstating the roof and the eastern dormer head, also inserting windows and a fireplace in the ground-floor room – the small window beside the staircase door appears to be the only original feature on this level.

### **Service (west) range 16th century and later**

The western brewhouse/bakehouse range is very ruinous, but its ground floor layout remains intelligible, consisting of four rooms running approximately north to south. The plan of the building and the surviving features of the individual rooms suggest a reconstruction of their roles. The bakehouse at the northern end is readily identifiable from its huge hearth with two large bread ovens, intended primarily for baking batches of loaves or (more conventionally in Scotland) oatcakes; other large-volume cooking, such as porridge and broth (in a cauldron on the hearth) and pies (in the ovens) might also be produced here rather than in the main kitchen hearth, which may not have gained an oven until the 1670s. The other three rooms were all probably part of the brewhouse.

The first room was probably for “mashing”, in which a cauldron of boiling water would be poured into a barrel of malted barley to produce the “wort”, the liquid which would eventually become the beer. The wort would be steeped, returned to the cauldron for boiling, then moved back to the barrel again and cooled down (the water would perhaps be heated on the bakehouse hearth, but the boiling of the wort would evidently take place on the fire whose flue survives within this room). It would then be transferred to the second room, where it would be dosed with yeast to encourage fermentation - the hole low down in the wall between the two rooms, coupled with a documentary reference to a “tunnel” as part of the brewing equipment, suggest that a quantity of the liquid was run off from the barrel into a pipe passing through the wall. It would have emptied into the broad, shallow stone trough set into the floor in the second room, which seems to be a “wort stone”, designed to encourage the process with

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<sup>6</sup> This may simply have been a cupboard, but it is also possible to envisage an ornate rectangular bay window, similar in concept to the ones in the long gallery at Hardwick Hall in England.

natural yeast from the air in a quantity of beer run off from the barrel. Some of this might then be added back into the first barrel to kickstart the rest, but the inventory suggests that the ale was eventually moved to a new barrel, probably in the middle room, to ferment and develop its alcohol content. Finally, the ale would be left in an old wine barrel in the southernmost room, the furthest from the heat of the hearth, to complete the fermentation process.

Large-scale brewing was probably only moved into the castle at a relatively late date in the Middle Ages, as the barony originally had a separate brewery at Hillside, documented in 1377 and still remembered in documents of the seventeenth century. All the relevant processes could in principle have been performed in the kitchen in the south range, and the decision to build such a relatively large and sophisticated structure, coupled with the earlier documentation showing a dedicated brewery elsewhere in the barony from at least the fourteenth century, hints at large-scale output, perhaps partially for commercial purposes; the best parallel is perhaps at Holyrood Abbey, where documents show that the “mashing” was done in the big monastic kitchen, and the fermentation process took place in a separate “gyle house” (gyle is an older word for wort). The upper floor of the range is harder to interpret, but the plain rear elevation facing the modern approach road is by far the best-preserved section of the outer walls of the castle.

### **Courtyard walls and forecourt**

The castle was surrounded by a precinct wall, the consolidated foundations of which remain visible, with a gateway, adjacent lodge, and a corner turret. From about 1450, such turrets housed cannons positioned to shoot along the faces of the adjacent walls, to hit attacking soldiers in the flank, and additional guns might have also fired frontally through gunloops in the ramparts themselves. The wall is usually thought of as enclosing a single large courtyard in front of the castle, and for the seventeenth century period this is evidently correct, but stumps of walling at the corner of the south range, coupled with a flagstone platform around the nearby wellhead, hint that there were originally two enclosures. A compact formal paved inner courtyard immediately to the east of the tower, containing the castle well, separated by an inner (and perhaps older) rampart from a second outer court beyond it, was presumably for service buildings. These wall stumps have apparently been used as decorative buttresses in later phases of the castle’s history, but their masonry has been cut back and modified in ways which suggest that this was not their original configuration.

To the east of the house, beyond the wall-line of the courtyard precinct, there is a forecourt now used as a car park and access space, and perhaps originally containing outbuildings. This was originally entered through a large seventeenth-century archway on its northern side, accessed by a lane from the village street of Easter Aberdour; the railway cutting removed the

line of access, and the archway was relocated to the modern entrance drive on the west.

## **Gardens**

The architecture of the garden setting is a very important part of the site and can be subdivided into several components.

### **Terraced gardens**

The most prominent garden feature of the site is the terraced garden to the south of the castle, the architectural layout of which has been restored based on archaeological investigation. The intimate relationship between house and garden and their combined role in displaying status and regulating social hierarchies is particularly apparent at Aberdour. In Regent Morton's Lodging a spiral stair leads directly from the upper terrace to the dining room, the central space of the private apartment in terms of access. Similarly, in the 17th century east range a stair leads between the garden and the long gallery (a space designed to receive important visitors and hold large banquets) and also functions as private access for what appears to be the best guest room.

There are four L-shaped terraces, running along the south of the castle and then turning at the eastern end to stretch away at right angles. At the far end of the terraces, a dovecot of the early "beehive" type provides a visual focus. Steps in the angle of the terraces, originally balustraded, lead down to an ornamental orchard in their centre, the only part of the planting that has been restored.

A stream encloses the site on the other two sides, now with tree-lined banks along its length, but old maps show that the original visual focus of the layout was a mill pond, located in the space beyond the orchard, and an otherwise unrewarding pollen analysis during restoration indicates the presence of ornamental water lilies on its surface. Its practical purpose was concealed as the mill it served was tucked away out of sight, on the lower ground below the dovecot (the dovecot of course also had a practical purpose, providing pigeon meat for the household, and perhaps saltpetre from droppings for use in making gunpowder). A date for this layout in the time of the Regent Morton has been inferred from archaeological evidence, and is accepted by Brown (2012). Garden terraces and formal dovecots are generally regarded as innovations of the Renaissance, and the cultivation of formal gardens is known to have been a pastime of the Regent.

### **Walled garden**

Beyond the forecourt is the walled garden, containing an inscription suggesting it was built by the 7th Earl in the 1630s (although the planting is modern, and the central sundial was brought from another HES property). The north wall of the enclosure is off-square and appears to have been realigned in the nineteenth century to accommodate the railway line. The modern-looking building which impinges in the south-west corner of the

garden, now serving as the vestry of the parish church, accessed from the churchyard on the far side of the garden wall, probably stands on the site of a south-western summerhouse documented in the late seventeenth century, and may contain early fabric. The enclosure to the east of the churchyard, separated from the walled garden by a lane and now containing a modern bungalow, is documented as the vegetable garden.

### **South-eastern summerhouse**

Formerly a two-storey summerhouse, now ruinous, at the south-east corner of the walled garden, adjacent to which are the remains of a bridge across the lane providing access to the vegetable garden (originally timber-built, but now surviving as a stone arch). Both features are paralleled in a largely lost arrangement at Holyrood Palace, perhaps dating there from the late sixteenth century, where a timber bridge carrying a covered gallery led directly out of the north side of the royal lodgings in the palace, across a lane and into a walled garden, in the far corner of which lay the summerhouse now known as “Queen Mary’s Bath House”. Another obvious parallel is at **Edzell Castle**, where a nobleman’s seat is adorned by a walled garden of 1604, with a summerhouse and (ruinous) bath house at two corners.

The south-eastern summerhouse is sometimes said to date from 1675, but this date is simply based on the earliest reference to a summerhouse in the garden, and it is not clear which of the two documented structures is meant. At that date, its furnishings were three chairs, a carpet, two prayer cushions and a Bible, a combination which suggests that it may have acted as a drawing room for the Earl and his family between the two services which were typically held on Sundays in seventeenth-century Scotland - the south-western summerhouse is located adjacent to the entrance to the churchyard, while the building now used as the vestry provides more direct access towards the laird’s loft at the west end of the church. For comparison, in the next parish over, Dalgety Bay, the Earl of Dunfermline had built a miniature tower house directly onto the back of his laird’s loft.

### **Parish Church (not in State Care)**

The wider environs include the parish church and churchyard, accessed by the lane between the two walled gardens. They were legally incorporated into the barony to a certain extent when the Earls of Morton acquired the patronage of the parish after the Reformation. The church would have obviously acted as a religious focus for the spiritual life of the castle’s inhabitants from a much earlier date, and although not in HES guardianship, its development as part of the architectural landscape of the castle and its grounds is therefore summarised here for completeness.

The current church, apparently not the first on the site, was built in the twelfth century, on a rather grand scale for a local parish. If the suggestion that the castle was originally a residence of King David I is correct, the church was likely built to allow several of Inchcolm’s Augustinian canons to

perform the daily liturgical cycle in Latin for the royal court, a religious rite which the king was greatly fond of and sometimes even participated in himself. At a date a little after 1250, this practice changed, and a single canon was assigned to the parish as vicar. It has been suggested that the dedication of the church to St Fillan may represent the influence of the Earls of Moray, lords of the barony of Aberdour from 1325 to 1342, while a relationship with their Douglas successors was affirmed in 1390 when Sir James Douglas, founder of the Morton line, bequeathed a valuable set of vestments (prayer robes) for the vicar. The arcaded south aisle and the projecting porch were added around the fifteenth century - the aisle contained a chapel at its east end dedicated to St James, patron saint of all but one of the Douglas lords of the barony between 1351 and 1581, a link which strongly suggests that they had sponsored the construction of the aisle.

In the 1550s, the succession of canons who served as vicars were superseded by non-monastic priests, perhaps reflecting the 4th Earl of Morton's reformist sensibilities and anticipating the formal change to Protestant clergy after 1560 and the subordination of the parish minister to the baron's patronage. The 4th Earl of Morton was evidently responsible for reconstructing the east end of the church, with a belfry dated 1588, below which are a large window and a now-blocked doorway, originally accessed by a forestair: these provided light and access for a raised private balcony with seating for the earl and his family, to emphasise their aristocratic status while they were in church (a "gallery" or "laird's loft", now replaced by an organ loft).

It should be noted that Aberdour church served a parish that was larger than the barony of Aberdour, including the adjacent burgh and the estates of Inchcolm Abbey. The north aisle of the church reflects this wider context, as it was added in 1608 by the Phin or Fynie family of Whitehill, former tenant-lairds of Inchcolm Abbey. The Reformation had required them to reorient their religious focus from their own private chapel to the parish church, and it is a reminder (and perhaps a deliberate statement) that the Earl of Morton did not hold absolute control over the church.

## **2.5 Landscape and aesthetic values**

Aberdour is a very pleasant and rewarding site, which benefits particularly from the relative preservation of the terraced gardens. The cluster of comparatively modestly-sized buildings suggests a comfortable lordly residence rather than a fortress. The loss of most of the lofty bulk of the tower helps reinforce this impression.

The varied nature of the buildings – some roofed and others not, some vaulted and others mere fragments – gives the impression of a larger and more complex place than it was in reality.



The excavation and reconstruction of the terraced garden gives the visitor some sense of the broader scale of the 16th-century castle, but the incomplete planting and the absence of the focal mill pond prevents a fuller appreciation of the important role such pleasure-grounds played in castle life in the later middle ages.

There is often a genuine sense of tranquility about Aberdour, and a sense of aesthetic completeness which is further enhanced by the diverse yet interlocking nature of the several components of the site - the ruined and roofed parts of the castle, the terraced garden, the walled garden, and the ancient churchyard.

The pretty village of Aberdour is a perfect setting for the castle and gardens. There is little to disturb the tranquillity of the site, other than the proximity of the railway line immediately to the north, which is well-screened by a stone wall.

Regarding views, the castle can best be appreciated from the terraced garden to the south. The best views out from the castle are also southward, over the terraced garden towards the River Forth and Lothian.

## **2.6 Natural heritage values**

To be added following further research.

## **2.7 Contemporary/use values**

Aberdour Castle is an attractive site with its extensive gardens and attractive sea views against the backdrop of the well-preserved south facade, opening the private pleasure grounds of the Earls of Morton to the modern public.

As well as serving as a tourist attraction, and thereby drawing a level of extra revenue into the local economy, the castle remains a natural focal point for the local community, and has a vibrant Friends society. It is used for activities, including events during Aberdour Festival Week and Village in Bloom. Its position close to the Fife Coastal Path, means that many walkers encounter the castle and gardens by this route.

The presence of the parish church, effectively located within the grounds, enhances the castle's social role and adds a spiritual dimension to the site. The development of the long gallery as a wedding venue has extended a similar role to the castle itself.

## **Educational resource**

The castle is an important and well-used educational resource and is a key site within the HES Central Region Learning programme. As well as the intrinsic interest and varied learning themes the site offers its ease of

access, proximity to public transport and the on-site facilities offered (toilets, indoor spaces, bus parking and grassy outdoor spaces) make it a great asset for school groups. The site is popular with early years groups and nurseries, partly because it is easily accessible, but also the open spaces in which children can run off energy/play with lots of places to explore.

Schools programme activities included (2015) *Entertaining the Earl* and *Medieval Construction Science Show* and currently (2016) *How to Build a Castle* and *Tales from the Castle Kitchen*. It is also a venue for family activity days/events such as the Big Draw, where HES has delivered art/drawing focussed activities in October for the last few years, and the Fife Challenge where craft activities are offered. A *Medieval Castle Life* handling boxes is on site which is available for all types of learning groups to use on a self-led basis.

The local school, Aberdour Primary School, has a strong relationship with the castle which it sees as a fantastic resource – one which they would like to make more of. Recently a class project about Mary Queen of Scots was filmed at the castle.

Key themes at Aberdour for education include: the development of castle design/architecture that can be clearly seen at Aberdour, from early hall house to 16th/17th century residence is a real benefit for classes studying castles as a topic. The painted ceiling room is a bonus as it is a feature seen at only a few other sites, as is the doocot. Aberdour also allows learners to find out that castles were not just about wars/fighting/places of defence but also homes/places of relaxation/entertaining, as illustrated by the 4th Earl of Morton's ownership of the castle.

### 3. MAJOR GAPS IN UNDERSTANDING

Many of the undernoted issues could be addressed in a standing building survey:

- Was there any settlement on the site before the twelfth century?
- Is it possible to establish a precise date for the hall-keep and for its heightening into a tower-house? Would mortar sampling help here?
- What was the original date of the south range, and what was its internal layout before the Regent Morton reorganised it as a Renaissance lodging? A fifteenth-century great hall over a service basement seems like a credible suggestion, but a survey of the stonework would be necessary to know whether this can be asserted with any degree of confidence.

- What was the layout of the courtyards and outbuildings? Was there a dividing wall separating an inner court around the tower from an outer courtyard in front?
- What is the exact date of the terraced garden and the dovecot?
- Is it possible to interpret more definitively the alteration sequence of the east range, particularly the stables and gallery element?
- Is there potential for dendrochronology to help establish better understanding of the east range?

## 4. ASSOCIATED PROPERTIES

- Other relevant sites locally: **Inchcolm Abbey**; St Fillan's Church.
- Other properties of the earls of Morton: Drochil Castle; **Lochleven Castle**.
- Other architecturally linked sites: **Edinburgh Castle (St Margaret's Chapel and Portcullis Gate)**; **Edzell Castle**; **Cubbie Roo's Castle**; **Hailes Castle**; **Crichton Castle**.

## 5. KEYWORDS

castle, dovecot, garden, keep, tower, Douglas, Morton, gallery, stables, painted ceilings

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I: IMAGES OF ABERDOUR

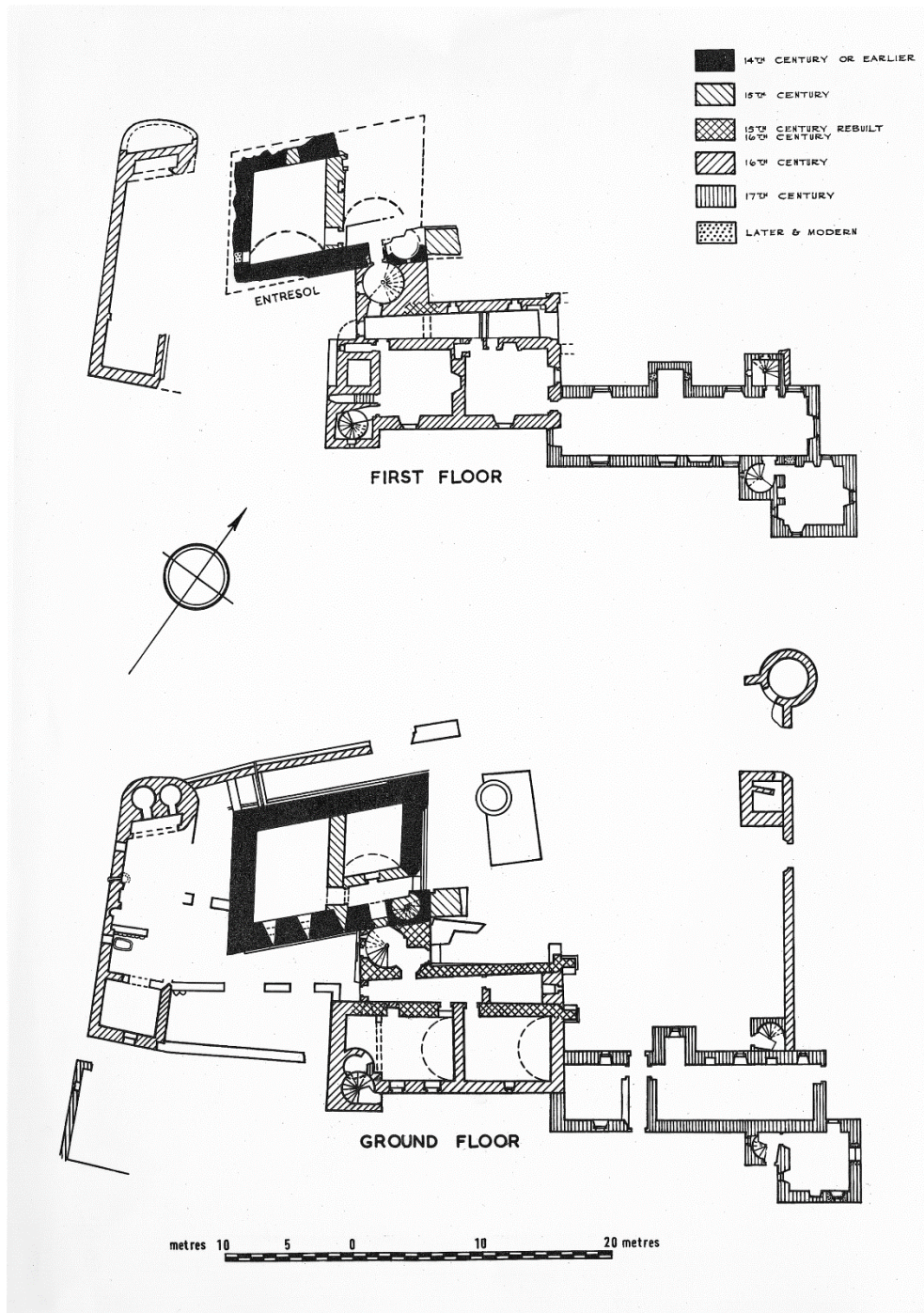


Figure 1: Ground floor and first floor plan © Crown Copyright HES.





Figure 2: South elevation © Crown Copyright HES



Figure 3: North elevation © Crown Copyright HES.





Figure 4: Base of the old tower, south elevation. © Crown Copyright HES.



Figure 5: East range, north elevation © Crown Copyright HES.





Figure 6: Gallery, interior © Crown Copyright HES.

## APPENDIX 2: TIMELINE

- **8th/9th century** - a fragment of enamelled metalwork found that occupation in the area of the castle
- **877** - Aberdour is one of the possible locations for a battle in this year between the Scots and Vikings, though the inconsistency of the sources makes certainty impossible. One possible hint that the battle did happen at Aberdour occurs in 1304, when King Edward I of England visited on 12th March - 11th March is St Constantine's Day, and would be used to commemorate (among others) King Constantine mac Aeda, martyred as the result of the battle; it has been suggested that the current dedication of Aberdour parish church to St Fillan represents Randolph family influence later in the fourteenth century.
- **c. 1120** - following received wisdom, a number of sources, including the current guidebook, assert that the Norman-French Vipont or Vieuxpont family were already lords of Aberdour at around this date, and that the barony passed by marriage to the Mortimer family in 1126. There is no credible evidence for this assertion - the date is very early for Norman settlers, other sources suggest that the land remained royal until the 1150s, and the claim is probably based on a

misdating of a late medieval document that had nothing to do with Aberdour.

- **c. 1120** King Alexander I (reigned 1107-1124) grants Aberdour Church to the monastery of Inchcolm. It is unlikely that the existing church was built before Inchcolm acquired the patronage, but the document does suggest that a church already existed on the site adjacent to the castle, and the current building was probably erected in the twelfth century; his brother King David (1124-1153) reaffirms the grant, and develops Inchcolm as a second headquarters for the bishopric of Dunkeld, with a modern religious community of Augustinian canons complimenting the traditional fraternity of Céli Dé (“Culdees”) at the distant cathedral. Something similar happened in the diocese of Glasgow, where the cathedral was complemented by a new abbey at Kelso, adjacent to which the king built a new castle with a Norman keep at Roxburgh. Given the lack of absolutely secure dating evidence, it is possible that it is in fact King David who is responsible for building the tower at Aberdour, and that along with the adjacent church, it originated as part of a Scottish royal residence of the second quarter of the twelfth century.
- **1150s** - At a date after 1153 but no later than the 1160s, Aberdour ceases to be a royal estate, and becomes a feudal barony for the knight Sir William Mortimer, who is traditionally identified as the builder of the castle; he attempts unsuccessfully to gain control of the parish church from Inchcolm Abbey (aiming to replace the Augustinian canons, performing their monastic liturgy in what is practically his back garden, with a personal priest of his own). A dramatic scene is recorded when Sir William arrives with his men and some royal officials to physically install his candidate as parson, finding their way blocked at the door by the entire religious community of Inchcolm, the canons in their black-and-white monastic habits with their processional cross and reliquary, who declare themselves under the protection of the Pope. An altercation ensues in which the knight and his men force the canons aside, and physically take control of the church. Pope Celestine III does indeed intervene personally, issuing a document affirming Inchcolm’s control of the parish, though by this time Sir William has repented and is already trying to make peace with the religious community; local tradition says that he hopes to be laid to rest on the island, but the canons instead bury him at sea in the channel now known as Mortimer’s Deep.
- **1180s** - Aberdour passes to Robert of London, illegitimate son of King William the Lion, either by grant from his father, or else by inheritance from the Mortimers through his mother’s family (the Londons and the Mortimers both belonged to a tight-knit community

of knights settled in south-east Wales, making a genealogical relationship credible).

- **1230s** - Aberdour passes to Sir Richard Siward, an Anglo-Welsh knight renowned for his fighting skill, who uses the castle a bolt-hole to take a rest from his private war against a corrupt English government; like the Mortimers and Londons, he belongs to the military élite of south-east Wales (he seems to have been a close military comrade of Sir William Mortimer's nephew), and it is once again unclear if he had inherited Aberdour through the female line, or simply been given the vacant barony by King Alexander II; his son, another Sir Richard Siward, is raised as a Scotsman, and becomes thoroughly naturalised; he takes the English side during the Wars of Independence, but this is apparently under compulsion, as his son was being held hostage.
- **1304** - King Edward I of England, campaigning against the Scots, visits Aberdour, and may spend the night of 12th March in the castle; while he is here, a messenger brings him news of a successful skirmish at Happlew near Peebles, where English knights have "discomfited" the Scottish patriots.
- **1325** - King Robert I grants Aberdour to his nephew Sir Thomas Randolph, 1st Earl of Moray (this is evidently a complex transaction; although the main source asserts that the barony had been confiscated due to the Siward family siding with the English, other documents show that there was an agreement of some sort with the Siward heiress, whose heirs were able to retain Kellie Castle).
- **1342** - John Randolph, 3rd earl of Moray, transfers Aberdour to Sir William Douglas, the "Knight of Liddesdale", another prominent Scottish general in the ongoing Wars of Independence.
- **1351** - Sir William Douglas grants Aberdour to his nephew and nearest male relative James Douglas, later 1st lord of Dalkeith and ancestor of the Earls of Morton (the documents may be designed to circumvent any uncertainty about James's legitimacy, as his father seems to have originally been a clergyman, Master John Douglas, Archdeacon of Lothian, before turning to a military career as Sir John Douglas, Captain of Loch Leven Castle, and getting dispensation to marry the mother of his children). Sir William retains the castle for his own use until his murder in 1353, at which point his nephew gains control; James Douglas marries in 1372 to Agnes Dunbar, the former mistress of King David II and niece of the 3rd earl of Moray, and then in 1378 to Egidia Stewart, twice-widowed sister of King Robert II.
- **1386** - James Douglas, 2nd lord of Dalkeith marries Elizabeth Stewart, great-niece of his stepmother Princess Egidia, granddaughter of king Robert II, daughter of the future King Robert III, and elder half-sister

of the future King James I. Simultaneously, the barony of Aberdour and his other estates are united into a single large lordship called the Regality of Dalkeith, with rights of government far more extensive than a normal barony - an honour traditionally associated with royal marriages.

- **1458** - James Douglas, 4th lord of Dalkeith, becomes 1st Earl of Morton, in anticipation of his marriage to his cousin Princess Joanna, daughter of the late King James I and sister of King James II.
- **1507** - James Douglas, 3rd Earl of Morton, marries Catherine Stewart, an illegitimate daughter of King James IV.
- **1540** - the start of a very complex sequence of attempts to divert the Morton inheritance away from the rightful heirs of the 3rd Earl of Morton, who has no sons to inherit his title and lordship. Under the terms of a 1507 charter, Aberdour Castle and its grounds should have passed to his eldest daughter, the Countess of Arran (later Duchess of Châtellerauld), while other parts of the Regality of Dalkeith may have been due to pass to the earl's brother Richard Douglas, Master of Morton. However, as part of his hostile policy to the Douglas family, King James V sets out to strip them of their inheritance: under pressure from the king, the 3rd Earl effectively adopts a distant cousin as his heir; this is Sir Robert Douglas of Lochleven, descended from a brother of the 1st lord of Dalkeith, who is the only prominent member of the Douglas family exempt from royal hostility, as he is the husband of the king's sometime mistress Dame Margaret Erskine; in 1541, King James compels Sir Robert in turn to surrender his claim to the bulk of the Morton inheritance to the king, although he continues to be recognised as heir to Aberdour; but with James V dying in 1542, the entire series of transactions is declared void by the courts in 1543; to achieve this reversal, however, the 3rd Earl has made a new arrangement with Sir George Douglas of Pittendreich, who is perhaps the most skilful Scottish political intriguer and "fixer" of his generation, and also the brother and heir-presumptive of the 6th Earl of Angus, paramount chief of clan Douglas and premier peer of Scotland; under this agreement, Sir George's second son James will marry the 3rd Earl's third daughter Elizabeth, and they will become the heirs to the earldom of Morton and to Aberdour Castle, superseding all the other claimants; this arrangement is objected to by Sir Robert Douglas and Lady Lochleven.
- **1550** - James Douglas, son-in-law of the 3rd Earl, notionally becomes 4th Earl of Morton under the terms of the 1543 agreement, but it is not entirely clear who retains practical control of Aberdour.
- **1560** - during the siege of Leith, the Earl of Arran and the Lord James, the two foremost leaders of the Protestant, pro-English faction known as the "Lords of the Congregation", decamp across

the Forth and use Aberdour Castle as their headquarters; Arran's mother the Duchess of Châtellerauld is the eldest daughter of the 3rd Earl of Morton and rightful heiress of Aberdour under the 1507 charter, while the Lord James (the future Regent Moray) is the son of King James V by Lady Lochleven, who has a claim to Aberdour under the 1540-1541 agreements. This suggests that either the Duchess of Châtellerauld or Lady Lochleven may have retained control of Aberdour Castle up to this point.

- **1564** - the rights of James Douglas as 4th Earl of Morton and lord of the Regality of Dalkeith and barony of Aberdour are upheld by a new royal charter. A skilled intriguer like his father, he is involved in David Riccio's murder in the Palace of Holyroodhouse in 1566, and flees to England for a while, but after his return he becomes a major player in Scottish politics, hosting a meeting at Aberdour Castle in 1567 which lays the groundwork for the deposition of Mary Queen of Scots. In 1573, after a series of deaths and assassinations eliminate all his leading allies, he becomes Regent of Scotland; a known aficionado of French architecture and landscape gardening, he makes substantial changes to the castle's accommodation, and probably adds the terraced garden to its south.
- **1576** - with Morton now in control of Scotland as regent, the Privy Council meets in Aberdour Castle.
- **1580** - King James VI visits Aberdour on 4-6 August; a formal reconciliation is planned between Morton and his rival the Earl of Lennox, centred on a pageant in which Lennox, the Lord High Admiral, will arrive by sea with a flotilla, while James VI watches from another vessel; but both Morton and Lennox are stricken by food poisoning after a banquet at another nobleman's house, so Lennox deputises a kinsman of his French wife to act for him. Mutual suspicion makes things worse: there are rumours that Morton has arranged to have James VI ambushed and kidnapped by a squadron of English warships; Morton responds by insisting that Lennox's flotilla should not include any large vessels or heavy guns, lest they be mistaken for English interlopers; nonetheless, the flotilla includes a "good crayer" with cannons on its deck (a small seagoing vessel, probably not much more than fifty feet long, but rigged much like a larger ship, with three masts and no oars); this vessel stands aloof from the pageant, as the direction of the wind prevents it from approaching (from which it can be inferred that the rest of the flotilla were equipped with oars).
- **1581** - Regent Morton is convicted of treason and executed on his own beheading machine (the guillotine-like "Maiden" now in the Museum of Scotland). With the Duchess of Châtellerauld's descendants disinherited at this point in history, the earldom is

granted to Lord Maxwell, son and heir of the 3rd Earl's second daughter, who styles himself 5th Earl of Morton, but Aberdour Castle is separated and transferred to the French-born royal favourite Esmé Stuart, 1st Duke of Lennox. This can be taken as a sort of back-handed complement by the highly cultured Lennox to the quality of Morton's architectural taste and landscape gardening.

- **1586** - Aberdour Castle is restored to the Douglasses in the person of the Regent Morton's nephew, the 8th Earl of Angus; he too now claims to be 5th Earl of Morton.
- **1588** - Aberdour Castle unexpectedly passes to Sir William Douglas of Loch Leven, the son of Sir Robert and Lady Lochleven, who is a closer cousin of the first three earls; he also gains the disputed earldom and is normally counted as the 6th Earl of Morton, though some sources style him as 5th Earl or 7th Earl; the subsequent earls of Morton all descend from him. Lord Maxwell is compensated by having his title changed to Earl of Nithsdale; the Duchess of Châtellerauld's heirs had been rehabilitated in 1585, but did not press their claim.
- **1630s** - Sir William Douglas, 7th Earl of Morton, builds the gallery range and creates the walled garden to the east of the castle; a prominent member of the court of King James VI and I and King Charles I in London, and also sometimes a soldier, he combines both roles by becoming Captain of the Yeomen of the Guard. Although immensely wealthy, he also contracted huge debts, being compelled to sell his West Lothian coal mines, and gaining Orkney and Shetland and their rich fisheries by royal favour instead.
- **1691** - the 11th Earl of Morton buys a collection of plants for his gardens at Aberdour from James Sutherland, Scotland's leading plant expert (Professor of Botany at Edinburgh and keeper of what is now the Royal Botanical Garden); they include fruit trees, roses, and shrubs, many of them of North American origin. A full list and discussion is in Robertson (2000).
- **1710** - with the 11th Earl absent in the Northern Isles, Aberdour Castle is rented to or commandeered by a group of army officers overseeing counter-insurgency patrols against Jacobite activity; their servants over-stoke a hearth and another fire breaks out, gutting the staterooms of the lodging. This event has previously been misdated to 1715, and is often said to have ruined the entire castle except the gallery. However documents indicate that only the lodging was affected, making it possible that the great tower also remained intact. A fuller account of this incident is given at Appendix 3.
- **1720s** - the 12th Earl occupies the e range, with his private chamber on the top floor commanding the best views. The family also acquires

the adjacent mansion house of Cuttlehill just to the west (now Aberdour House), and moves there in 1730s, adding a new Palladian *corps de logis*. The roofed section of the castle is used for various roles - part is let to a gentleman tenant until the 1790s, while the great hall is said to be used as a cavalry barracks, school room, and masonic lodge. The south-east tower eventually becomes the gardener's cottage.

- **1720** - the parish church holds its annual outdoor communion service on the "castle green" - presumably either the bowling green in the walled garden or the wide uppermost terrace between the gallery and the dovecot; the kirk elders take the collection at the Castle gateway, and the event is furnished with tables and wine-glasses, and a "tent" (either a marquee or a sort of pulpit with a canopy).
- **1731** - Lord Aberdour considers fitting up the south-east tower as an apartment a while the newly-acquired Aberdour House is undergoing renovation, but eventually decides to stay with his in-laws.
- **1758** - according to a Victorian source, the current gallery roof was installed in this year.
- **1759** - Lord Aberdour, later the 15th Earl of Morton, raises a cavalry regiment, the 17th Light Dragoons. This is a highly irregular corps, consisting of around 100 men rather than the regulation 600, and one of the officers, Lieutenant the Hon. Thomas Maitland, is apparently granted his commission several months before his birth. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the unit is rapidly disbanded in 1763. Victorian sources state that part of the regiment is barracked in the long gallery with its horses in the stable, and record a tale remembered in the village. One of the soldiers boldly invites himself into the kitchen of a local farmer's wife, and steals the "sowans" she is preparing (a sort of sour porridge made largely from material extracted from husks) - she shoves him out the door with her wet hands, and visits Lord Aberdour, persuading him to parade his men. She is then able to identify the culprit by having them turn round to reveal the meal-stained handprints on his back. After the regiment is disbanded, Lord Aberdour settles a number of the soldiers in the village.
- **1790** - St Fillan's church is abandoned by the parish congregation, which moves to a new church.
- **1791** - Colonel Robert Watson of Muirhouse, the last gentleman-tenant to live in the castle, passes away.
- **1798** - the current bridge over the Dour Burn, providing direct access to the castle from the burgh to the west, is built by James Burn of Haddington.



- **1804** - a watercolour by the antiquary James Skene suggests that the tower is now roofless and part of the eastern gable has collapsed. This is confirmed by subsequent depictions in 1815 and 1836.
- **1844** - the north and west walls of the tower dramatically collapse in a thunderstorm, leaving only the south wall intact.
- **1890** - the coming of the railway results in the down-taking and re-siting of the 16th-century outer (north) entrance to the west side of the castle, and the realignment of the north wall of the walled garden.
- **1919** - after displaying increasingly large structural cracks for several decades, a large part of the south front of the tower house collapses, prompting the start of a move to take the castle into state care. The 19th Earl of Morton opposes the move, arguing that as the damage is ultimately due to the actions of incompetent government employees in 1710, the government should instead pay him damages to rebuild the castle (the 19th Earl was very much a throwback; embodying several of his family's historical interests, he had led what was practically a pirate expedition to seize the northerly island of Spitsbergen and mine coal there, selling his claim to Norway in 1932).
- **1925-6** - St Fillan's Church is restored for parochial worship by William Williamson.
- **1939** - after long negotiations prompted by the collapse of the south front of the tower in 1919, Aberdour Castle is taken into state care. Reconstructing part of the tower is considered, but in the event, the authorities simply consolidate the upstanding masonry and the largest dramatically fallen fragment and clear out the surrounding rubble.
- **1977/80** - the terraced garden is excavated and reconstructed.

## APPENDIX 3: THE FIRE OF 1710

Research in the preparation of the Statement of Significance by Arkady Hodge has uncovered the detail of the fire which badly damaged the central range of Aberdour Castle while the officers of the Inniskilling Dragoon's were resident there in 1710. The research was undertaken because while received wisdom was that a fire had "gutted" the castle in 1680, other documentary and physical evidence did not support this. The resultant research identified a number of individuals and incidents which added vivid (and more accurate) colour to the story of the castle.

## Introduction

The fire which gutted the staterooms of Aberdour Castle a little over three hundred years ago is one of most dramatic and significant moments in the history of the building, transforming it from a nobleman's mansion into a romantic and roofless ruin. In preparing the latest revision of the HES statement of significance for the site, it has become apparent that the accepted narrative of the event is inaccurate in a number of respects. This annexe presents a transcription of four documents which serve as the primary sources documenting the incident, in order to present a more accurate picture of what exactly happened, and when.

Local tradition remembered, correctly, that the fire had broken out in a bedroom in the castle when it was being used as accommodation by military officers deployed to suppress the activity of Jacobite rebels, but the precise date and context of the event were not remembered, and have not been accurately reported in published sources on the history of the castle. The Victorian parish minister and local historian, Rev. William Ross, LL.D (1822-1985), dated the event to 1715, when a civil war was fought between government forces and a nationwide Jacobite uprising (Ross 1885, p. 352). In the 1960s, M.R. Apted, author of the HMSO guidebook, recognised that this date was not tenable, as the incident is referred to in older documents from the reign of Queen Anne (1702-1714) but in searching for a date, he surmised that the incident had happened in the previous period of active civil war in 1688-1691, and cited a number of references to rebuilding work which appeared to support this date (Apted 1966, p. 21). On closer inspection, though, these references do not prove anything - the selected repairs which he cites appear to have been simply part of the ongoing maintenance and modification of the buildings, and the proposal to replace the castle with a Palladian mansion designed by the leading Scottish architect James Smith was a project which did not presuppose any damage or dilapidation to the existing buildings, merely indicating that the 10th Earl felt that they were too old-fashioned.

The only item of evidence which might support a fire at Aberdour in the late seventeenth century is a payment cited by Apted, for a messenger travelling to Edinburgh "anent the Earl's replenishing after the great burning" on 6th February 1700 - this payment has not been located among the muniments, but it perhaps belongs to February 1711, as the documentation transcribed below shows without doubt that the famous incident took place on the night of 3rd-4th September 1710.

There are four sources which combine to illustrate the event, all of which are transcribed below. The first two documents are letters written in the immediate aftermath of the incident, to inform the 11th Earl, who was then resident in London. The first of these, **Document 1**, was written on Tuesday 5th September 1710 by the earl's brother and heir-presumptive, who seems to have acted as his agent in Scotland; he is normally described as "Mr.

Robert Douglas”, a style which at this date in Scotland was usually an honorific for a university graduate, and it seems plausible that he was a lawyer by profession, though as the son of an earl and heir-presumptive to his elder brother, he would more formally be entitled the Hon. Robert Douglas, Master of Morton, and would later succeed as 12th Earl in 1715.

The second letter, **Document 2**, is dated a fortnight after the first on 19th September 1710, and provides further details. Unsigned and unaddressed, it may simply be a working draft, or else the first half of a longer document; it is also attributed to “Mr. Robert Douglas” in the modern index of the muniments, but while the hand is certainly similar, some of the phrasing and sentiment recalls the first letter, and it is evidently written by a business agent of the Earl based in Edinburgh, some uncertainty about this attribution remains: in the first letter, the Master of Morton hesitantly reminds his brother that the presence of the officers was authorised “it seems by your lordship’s allowance”, but the writer of the second document makes bold to remind the Earl that “your brother and I were both against” allowing them to stay; the reference to a brother might at a push be an allusion to their younger brother, Colonel George Douglas, M.P., but combined with such a varying attitude to the earl’s involvement in the quartering of the soldiers, it raises some doubts. If it is not by the same hand, it is perhaps the work of the lawyer-laird and man of business George Robertson of Newbigging, who the Master of Morton had dispatched to Aberdour on Monday 4th September 1710, to take charge there. The similarities in phrasing would thus be explained by the details in the Master’s account being based on a letter rapidly sent back to him by Newbigging.

The third text, **Document 3**, is an incomplete letter written by the 11th Earl himself, expressing his reaction to the fire: undated, unsigned, and unaddressed, beginning abruptly and breaking off mid-sentence, it appears to be the middle section of a longer text, and the fact that it remains among the Morton papers suggests that it is either a draft copy, or else a passage that was removed from the letter which it originally formed a part of, and never sent to its intended recipient. Nonetheless, we can set it in its broad context: it was evidently written during the 11th Earl’s sojourn in the Northern Isles c. 1712-1714, and addressed to a politically influential Scottish nobleman, perhaps a figure such as the Earl of Mar or Duke of Hamilton; as well as providing additional details about the fire at Aberdour castle, it places the incident in the wider context of the 11th Earl’s career, conveying his sense that the financial remuneration he had anticipated for his diligent loyalty to the government of Queen Anne had not been forthcoming, and that instead he was left out of pocket and practically homeless - Aberdour had been gutted by fire, the partial recovery of the seigneurial rights in Orkney and Shetland which his ancestors had enjoyed between 1643 and 1663 had not brought any profit and the lordly palaces in the islands had all run to ruin in the meantime, and far from the promised recompense for his

political lobbying on behalf of the Act of Union, he politely insinuates that he had actually been swindled to the tune of £5,000.

Finally, the collection of texts is rounded out by **Document 4**, an inventory of 1730, revealing the extent to which the castle remained habitable and furnished after the destruction of its principal residential range. This text is rather more straightforward: it was written on 10th June 1730, and probably represents a stocktaking after Colonel George Douglas, younger brother of the 11th and 12th Earl, succeeded in turn as the 13th Earl (22nd January 1730). The text as it survives is a transcript made for the new earl's own archives, while the original document drawn up while going around the castle was passed to his son and heir Lord Aberdour and is now apparently lost. The text is a straightforward inventory of a series of rooms in the castle, and is paired with a similar and rather more substantial inventory of the family's new residence at nearby Cuttlehill (not transcribed here); there are a number of questions of identification, relating to which rooms in the castle are indicated as being furnished, and thus about the extent to which the buildings stood intact at this date, but this can be best discussed by being placed in the wider context of the fire of 1710 and its aftermath.

In the seventeenth century, the government adopted a policy of deploying troops in small garrisons across Scotland in order to deter rebellion and unrest; since 1689, their main cause of concern had been the Jacobites - people who regarded the exiled James VII and his son the Chevalier de St George as their rightful kings, and hoped to restore them to the throne, by armed revolt if necessary. As part of this pattern of political tension and military patrols, government soldiers were lodged in the town of Aberdour from at least 1702 (cf. NAS E100/27/152 and E100/27/158). At this date, the soldiers based here were drawn from a Scottish unit, Hyndford's Dragoons, but after the Union of the Parliaments in 1707, a unified British Army was formed, which made it easier to rotate politically unreliable Scottish regiments overseas, and to replace them on garrison duty with English and Irish soldiers whose loyalty would not be affected by local ties. As a result, Hyndford's Dragoons went to Ireland, and from around 1709, the garrison at Aberdour was provided by a detachment of an Irish mounted regiment, known to history the "Inniskilling Dragoons", although this name does not seem to have been in use at the time - instead, the regiment was formerly known as Echlin's Dragoons, after its commanding officer, or less formally as the "Black Dragoons" after the colour of its horses. Like many regimental commanders of this period, General Robert Echlin was an absentee, performing high-level military and political duties elsewhere, and when the Black Dragoons marched to Scotland in 1709, the position of lieutenant-colonel or deputy commander was also vacant, so the senior officer actually serving with the regiment seems to have been Major William Butler, an illegitimate son of General Echlin's great patron the 2nd Duke of Ormonde.

The ordinary soldiers of the detachment are likely to have been quartered in the houses of Aberdour town, but a party of the officers lodged in Aberdour Castle. **Document 3** states that the officers in residence were the regiment's major - presumably the Major Butler mentioned above - and two of the captains who commanded its component companies: this concentration of officers suggests that Aberdour Castle was probably acting as the principal headquarters of the regiment.

In early 1710, however, a more senior officer, Lieutenant-Colonel John Upton, was assigned to the vacant position of deputy commander. The heir-presumptive of a prominent "planter" family in County Antrim, he was recovering after suffering some form of temporary blindness on campaign in Spain (the official source does not make it clear whether this was due to injury, disease, or shell shock), and Aberdour was probably seen as a relatively benign posting for him. **Document 2** shows that by the time of the fire he was also in residence at Aberdour Castle, having evidently assumed *de facto* command of the regiment from Major Butler.

The presence of these officers at Aberdour Castle seems to have been somewhat controversial - in **Document 1**, the Master of Morton expresses uncertainty if they had proper permission from his brother the 11th Earl to lodge at the castle, and although **Document 2** indicates that the Earl *had* allowed them to reside there, it also makes clear that this was done against the advice of one of his brothers, and also of the author of the text. Given the ostentatious display of loyalty to the government which characterises the 11th Earl's account of himself in **Document 3**, it is possible that his willingness to accommodate the officers was something of a calculated move aimed at securing political favour, or a reluctant concession to pressure from the government. It is also possible that extra officers had added themselves to the bivouac, including Colonel Upton, who is not mentioned by the Earl as one of the three men who he had allowed to stay - a close reading of the narrative, discussed in more detail below, suggests that he may in fact have taken over the Earl's own room without permission.

The incident began on Saturday 2nd September 1710, when the officers' servants washed down the staterooms, and then lit the fires to dry them out; the flue from the hearth in "the room above the dining room" backed onto a walk-in closet, into which flames or sparks were apparently spread by a fissure in the thickness of the wall, causing timberwork in the closet to catch alight. From there, the flames spread to the roof and throughout the building, burning out the floors and furnishings of the main apartment. There is some uncertainty about the exact location of the fire - the dining room has usually been identified as the western room on the first floor of the south range, in which case the closet in question was the one on the opposite side of the wall - the *en suite* privy of the upper eastern room; but **Document 1** describes the door leading from the gallery into the south range as "the doorway to the dining room", which would imply that it was

in fact the lower *eastern* room; the room above this has its fireplace situated in its north wall, and the “closet” behind is the small study opening off the room itself. This identification gains further circumstantial support from the statement that the fire broke out “in the room” itself. This can, furthermore, be identified as the Earl’s own room, as it is the only one which has the dedicated corridor assigned to “my Lord’s charmer” in a 1647 inventory (NAS GD150/2834/2). Whatever the details, the fire smouldered and took hold in the early morning, when it was observed by the townsfolk, who rushed to the castle in an attempt to save the situation.

We learn from **Document 1** that Colonel Upton was sleeping in the bedroom directly above the dining room - and thus, if the interpretation outlined above is correct, he was in the room where the fire broke out, which was also the Earl’s own bedroom; he was saved by his manservant, who “broke into” the room and woke him up (an ambiguous phrase, but on balance, I suspect it does mean forcing down a locked door as in the modern idiom; the alternative, simply hurrying in abruptly, would be more conventionally described as “breaking in upon” someone); the servant then bundled the colonel out of the building dressed only in his shirt. In fact, it seems that the officers were quite literally left with little more than the shirts on their backs, as their goods were pillaged by the “mob” of townsfolk who now burst into the castle.

In contrast with the way they seem to have helped themselves to the officers’ goods, the same “mob” made a genuine and largely successful effort to save their laird’s most valuable belongings. The Earl of Morton’s massive charter chest was saved from his bedchamber, as were the bulk of the papers from his archive in the adjacent study, and these were faithfully collected together the next morning by the estate factor - they comprise arguably the most complete early aristocratic archive in Scotland, with a particularly important series of medieval papers. This act of salvage is particularly impressive if, as inferred above, these rooms were the very seat of the fire, with the villagers literally pulling out the papers from among the flames beneath a burning roof. The gallery in the east range was also saved, by building up the connecting doorway with stones - another action that can be attributed to the quick thinking and loyal courage of the people of Aberdour. The implied contrast between the loyal way in which the Earl’s muniments were salvaged and then gathered back together and the simple theft of the officers’ goods suggests that the Black Dragoons were not popular in the village, and the way in which the theft is treated as a *fait accompli* in the letters hints that, behind their polite words, the Earl’s brother and his men of business were not particularly disposed to help the soldiers either.

The writer of **Document 2** does seem at pains to emphasise that the damage was accidental, remarking that the officers were “sober kind of men”. The description of the damage done contains a detail which does raise a question about this assertion, however, as all three letters show that

the family pictures in the gallery were badly damaged: “broken or destroyed” according to **Document 1**, and “all torn and broken in pieces” in **Document 2**, while in **Document 3** the Earl bemoans that he “lost most of [his] old fine valuable pictures” - it is hard to see how torn canvas and broken panels and picture frames could be caused by a fire, which raises doubts about the assertion that the officers were not the carousing sort, and even invites the possibility that the fire was an act of arson to disguise the damage which they had done to their borrowed quarters; the Earl’s brother and other agents would thus naturally have a motive to conceal their own failure to keep better watch on the activities of the unwonted tenants - though alternatively, of course, the damage to the pictures may have been done as the townsfolk pulled them off the wall and piled them out of danger in some disorder.

The extent of the fire is another problem which requires some consideration. It is clear from **Document 1** that “the whole apartments betwixt the gallery and the Castle” was gutted, that is the south lodging which contained the four main residential chambers of Aberdour Castle, a Renaissance range constructed by the Regent Morton in the 1570s, and one of the first Scottish houses to feature formal corridors and a “scale and plat” staircase with straight flights and an interconnecting landing. The floors, roofing, timberwork and furniture were burnt out, reducing it to the ruined state it retains today. The gallery range was certainly saved from significant damage, a point made clear is in both **Document 1** and **Document 2** - both Ross and Aped believed that the roof was burnt and needed to be renewed, but the explicit statement that “the gallery was saved” shows that this is incorrect, and there is no need to use the fire to account directly for the modernised roofline which the building has acquired - we know from another source that the range was roofed in 1748 (*Philosophical Transactions*, vol. 45, No. 490, p. 584 [[royalsocietypublishing.org](http://royalsocietypublishing.org)], accessed 18 Oct 2016)), and Ross states in a matter-of-fact way that it was renewed in 1758 (Ross 1885, p. 26).

The focus in the text on damage to the apartments “betwixt the gallery and the Castle” also suggests that the great keep was not directly affected by the fire either, and certainly the strong vaults of its lower floors would be largely invulnerable, while the stone-built spiral staircase separating the keep and the south lodging may have acted as a firebreak: a wide, stone-flagged turnpike stair had few if any wooden fixtures to catch light, and the height of a half-turn around the axis meant that the doorways of the two opposing buildings were offset by several feet, all of which might have prevented the flames from spreading here. This possibility needs to be borne in mind when we come to consider the next problem, the level of occupation which continued in the castle after 1710.

The inventory of 1730, **Document 4**, reveals that Aberdour Castle remained in use as a residence for the Earl of Morton. This includes the gallery, reasonably well-equipped as a reception room, a kitchen furnished with a

full suite of cooking utensils, and three superimposed bedrooms in what must be a tower, with the Earl's own chamber uppermost - equipped with his bed and dresser, drinking glasses and porcelain tea set - while the lowest of the three contains four trunks which can be recognised from **Document 2** as the boxes containing the papers salvaged from the fire in 1710. The question is where these three rooms were located.

Two possible locations present themselves. The first of these is the chamber wing of the gallery range, at the south-west corner of the building, where a comfortable chamber opened off the gallery, supported by two more rooms on the floors below, interconnected by a spiral stair leading down to the gardens. This little tower certainly had three superimposed rooms, all of them fitted up as bedrooms in 1676, and the uppermost was fitted out as the best guest bedroom, grand enough therefore to be taken over by the Earl (NAS GD150/2843/10, cf. also GD150/2843/1-2, from the 1640s); this chamber, "the room off the gallery", was also the place where the charter chest and the four trunks had been placed for safety in 1710. Most tellingly, in 1731, the 13th Earl's son, Lord Aberdour, was contemplating a refit of "the three rooms off the Gallery" to act as his own accommodation (NAS GD150/34/76). This can be considered the most likely location for the remaining chambers documented in 1730.

However, the question arises of whether there was any space near this tower to accommodate the well-equipped kitchen documented in the inventory, and also whether the lowest of the three rooms was suitable for the four-poster bed documented there in 1730. In its current form, it appears quite habitable and well-lit, but old plans and photographs show that this room is almost entirely a modern creation, constructed during the period of state care to serve as part of the custodian's apartment - the north window is a replacement for a door slapped through the wall, while the south window appears to be an outright innovation in what was previously plain masonry, and there is no indication of a hearth or flue on the old plans. Nonetheless, the room did have a single window facing east, while it must be conceded that the inventory does *not* record an iron grate for a hearth in the lowest chamber; the insertion of a four-poster bed here may therefore have been necessitated by the lack of space elsewhere.

The alternative possibility is that the accommodation documented in 1731 was located in the old keep. If it remained habitable, this building would certainly provide space for bedrooms across its three upper storeys, and also contained a fourteenth-century kitchen in the basement, which might have still been in use as the primary cooking space in the castle in the 1640s (GD150/2843/2 indicates that the kitchen was in a second-floor chamber known as the "upper wardrobe", and this is the only obvious location). The lack of a fire grate in the lowest of the three bedchambers would be explained by its origins as a medieval great hall, with a hearth which would be too large to be practically lit with a coal grate, requiring a



pile of logs to get the fire properly going (and also to warm the upper rooms with the heat from its flue). If this was the case, the keep would have been serving as the earl's apartment, while Lord Aberdour's plan to move into the gallery wing would have been in order to obtain *additional* space for himself - a plan which was abandoned, as the south-west wing was *not* considered suitable for refitting as his accommodation; the omission of the gallery wing in the 1730 inventory would be explained if it was no longer fully habitable, or if it lay outwith the part of the house immediately available to the earl - the stable below the gallery is also excluded from the inventory, and perhaps the gallery wing had already become what it would later be - the gardener's house (by the 1920s it was a somewhat ramshackle cottage, but in the eighteenth century, the gardener at a great house was considered a gentleman, and was entitled to a suitable grace-and-favour apartment).

Whatever the location of the apartment in use in 1730, the old castle was in the process of being demoted to the status of a secondary residence. In 1725, the 12th Earl had acquired an adjacent laird's house named Cuttlehill, just across the Dour Burn from the castle (GD150/3659) - named after Cuttle Hill, the ridge above the harbour to its south, the name of which identifies it as the ancient "court hill" of the barony; possibly from the outset it was occupied by his nephew, who seems to have resided in Fife more regularly than his father or uncle; becoming Lord Aberdour when his father succeeded as the 13th Earl in 1730, he certainly made Cuttlehill his home with his young family, and in 1731 was planning to have it rebuilt in a more fashionable style; his flirtation with fitting up rooms in Aberdour Castle was in order to provide himself with temporary accommodation during the building works (GD150/3476).

The current Aberdour House, just to the west of the castle across the Dour Burn bridge, was the result of his rebuilding project (Ross 1885, p. 25, Apted 1966, p. 21); it prefaces the older crow-stepped laird's house dated 1672 with a north-facing entrance front in a rather plain Palladian style, just possibly by James Smith. The search for a suitably modern noble residence, underway since 1690, was finally solved in the 1740s, when the 14th Earl - the Lord Aberdour of 1731 - acquired a Palladian villa at Dalmahoy near Edinburgh.

## Editorial principles

In general, the aim of this appendix is to provide an accurate transcript of the documents, retaining the orthography, pagination, and line-breaks of the original text. It does not seem useful to modernise the language and spelling of the texts, as they are by and large intelligible regardless of the eccentricities of orthography and phrasing, and a modernisation would conceal the Scotticisms which represent an important layer of the prose style in all four documents. Moreover, attempting to render the text in a

clearly comprehensible modern form would come too close to outright translation - those words which might present a problem of interpretation to the reader are generally either Scots terms which *cannot* be easily rendered in a more familiar "English" spelling, or else familiar words being used in unfamiliar specialised contexts which require annotation to explain them: these are duly explained in glossary appended to the text, along with an annotated index of the individuals and places mentioned in the text.

Nonetheless, certain editorial conventions have been adopted, principally for text whose formatting and layout in the original is too complex to format in print: contracted words have been expanded using (brackets), while overline insertions in the text are parenthesised /between obliques/, and when necessary to add editorial commentary, it is [*italicised in square brackets*].

A number of eccentric features of the original handwriting also have to be addressed, the most obvious of which is the use of *y* for *th*, a characteristic which has been retained in the transcribed text. This is seen in words such as "broyr" for *brother*; it is perhaps most confusing at the start of page 2 of **Document 1**, where "yr goods" means "their goods" rather than "your goods". There is also some idiosyncrasy in the hand of **Document 4** between the use of a conventional capital "A" and a larger version of a lowercase "a". However, the sizes of letters in handwriting are not exact, and it can sometimes be hard to decide whether the writer intended to emphasise the letter. In this transcribed text, a decision has therefore been made to print the lowercase letters as "a" regardless of their size, and to only capitalise the letters actually written as an uppercase "A" within the text - the one exception is the name of Aberdour, which is capitalised throughout.

## NAS GD150/3458/9 Document 1: Letter to the 11th Earl from the Master of Morton

(p1)

Ed(inbu)r(gh) 5th Sept(embe)r 1710

My Lord,

These are to acquaint Your lo(rdshi)p That  
on Sunday last your house at Aberdour was misfortunately  
brunt Ther being some officers lodged ther for some  
months past, It seams by your lo(rdshi)p allowance, and on  
Saturdayes night ther servants after washing the rouses  
haveing put on great fires for drying them The fire -  
did insensiblie sease some of the rouses in the night  
tyme, and about five a cloacke in the morneing, the fire  
broke out with great violence in the roun above the -

dining room, whereon Colonel Upton lay fast asleep -  
but his servant broke into the room and got the Colonel  
out in his shirt without any harm. The whole apartments  
betwixt the gallery and the Castle are quite burnt. They  
saved the gallery by building up the doorway to the  
dining room with stone, most of all the pictures are  
broken or destroyed. It is said the Charter chest that stood  
in your bed chamber is saved as also some of the papers  
in the closet. Newbigging went to Aberdeen yesterday to  
cause secure what papers and your things were saved belonging  
to your lordship

(p2)

My lord the officers have most of your goods either stolen or destroyed  
by the fire. This accident must not push your lordship to build a new  
house and I shall reckon it not unlucky, if it draws your lordship to -  
Scotland from the great charges you are put to at London by these  
troublesome tradesmen (*[several words in parentheses deleted]*) Your  
lordship  
complain much to you so much for money, and I shall hope you will find  
much more satisfaction and advantage in bestowing your money on a house  
than in the prodigalities at London, and to likewise to -  
may you live happy and safe in it. Pardon this freedom from  
Your affectionate brother  
and most humble servant  
Robert Douglas

(Addressed)

The Right honourable  
The Earl of Morton  
at his lodgings in Little German Street  
near St James Street  
London

(seal still attached in red wax, with the shield of the house of Morton)

## NAS GD150/2544/6 Document 2: Letter to the 11th Earl from (?) the Master of Morton

*[An excerpt from a long business letter dated 19 September 1710: see  
introduction for the question of authorship.]*

(p3)

Mr Young and I were at Aberdeen last week viewing the  
burnt house where there is nothing but ruinous walls and rubbish  
the whole timber burnt and what was saved of the furniture

little worth, the chares and tables being all broke the hangings and bedcloths all spoylt and torn as I wrote befor the Gallerie wes saved, but the pictures all torn and broke in peices. The Charter Chist in your bed Chamber saved, and the papers that wer lying in schelvs and boxes in the Charter room wer carried out by the Mob, Mr Chrystie hade got them gathered together next day from the people, but /what/ may be lost cannot be knowen. Mr Young and I wer five dayes ther, we put what we found most materiall in the Charter chist The rest are put in foure trunks /in/ A view yrof yr is nothing but old misivs and usles papers. We caused make safe all the trunks and lock them up in the room of the gallerie.

(p4)

we did enquire into the occasion of the fire and its thought the chimney in the room above the dining room wes faultie, which no body observed, before, haveing a small rift through which the fire hade seased some timber that lay in a Closet att the back of that Chimney, which having brunt all night the fire broke out with violence in the morning, and if it hade not bein the touns people that observed a great smoke from the hous, and Gave the alarum, the officers hade perished in the flames, so that it cannot be supposed it was wilfully don, Nor yet by Extravagance or carusing the officers being sober kynde of men altho your broyr and I were both ag(ain)st your lo(rdshi)p giving them libertie to Loge yr.

*[The writer follows by advising that, rather than pursuing the officers for damages, the Earl should petition Queen Anne's government for compensation, as the soldiers' deployment was state business; citing successful examples of similar reimbursement in the past, he suggests that if a comparable sum is obtained, "it might make a litle convenient hous". The letter ends abruptly at this point, with no signature.]*

### NAS GD150/3460/19x Document 3: Letter from the Earl of Morton, c. 1713

*[A letter by the 11th Earl to an unnamed nobleman, offering his thoughts and feelings on the fire of 1710 and placing it in the context of a lack of sympathy from the government. See Introduction for context.]*

(p1)

My dear Lord pardon all this follie and give me leave to write a little to yow of bussiness.

I have writte to my Lord Advocate the state and Condition of this cuntrey and what is absolutely necessar for the Queens service, And the ruleing & Governing this Cuntrey I have desyred him to draw a memoriall in termes of Law what will be necessary for that purpose, And send it to My Lord Thesaurer who I'm very sure will goe into all mesures that is propper& good for the Queens service -

My dear Lord I must tell yew with a sorrowfull heart that I have not a house in the whole world to putt my head in except what I pay rent for and what is worse I have not a shilling to spare to build one, I have bein obliged to make some small figure, to live lyke the Representative of an old familie who have bein always true & faithfull servants to the Crown, And I doe sincerely tell you upon my honor & credit That, since ever I possessed this Estate of Orkney & Zetland it hes never yeelded me near the interest of my money notwithstanding I bought the few dewty.

There is not one house the Queen has, Or I in Orkney or Zetland but what is down to the ground and only ruinous old walls left, I had one house called Aberdour left me among a great many that belonged to my predicessors, I had the misfortune to lend this house for the better accomodating some of the Queens officers, The Major and two of the Captans in Leivtennnent Generall Eklings- Regiment of dragoons By misfortune & negligence

of

(p.2)

of their servants, They brunt down my house to the ground, and lost most of my old fyne valuable pictures all the furniture I had, and worst of all, lost some of my old antient charters & peapers, and how this can be made up God knows, I know not, God help me.

I pray and hope that the dear & good Queen will take my deplorable condition under her Royall Consideration, And if it be her Majesties good will & pleasure to order what her Majestie thinks fitt for my carieing of the purse Befor Her Commissioner, the Duke of Queensburrough, last session in parliament in Scotland, which I did allennarly for the Honor & service of the Queen which did give her com(m)issioner a greater Representation & made her business goe better on, I am sure I made al the friends I could in that parliament

and old former ones, and did not go by halves, But  
went thro stirkes & ever shall continue to doe the  
same faithfully to serve my great & good Queen -  
to follow & obey her measures to the last dropp of  
my blodd.

For which service for the purse I resaved nothing  
as yet, albeit the duke of Queensburrough told me  
and promised that I should have as much for bearing  
of the purse as would clear my lord Balcarres of the  
ten years few duety that was appoynted to be payed  
him out of my Morgage of Orkney and Zetland, This  
Obleidged me to morgage the small estate I had att  
Aberdour to pay and clear him, Which morgage I never  
have bein able to redeem, so that I have nothing out of~  
my

*[at this point, the end of the sheet is reached, and the text stops  
incomplete; no continuation has so far been located]*

#### NAS GD150/2843/7 Document 4: Inventory of Aberdour Castle, 1730

(p.1)

##### Ane Inventory of the Furniture In The Castle Taken and Signed June 10th 1730

##### In The Gallarie

Imp: Three Timber Tables and four Carpets  
Eleven Plush Chairs and a Pewther Monteith  
a Box with Six Drinking Glasses  
Twelve Lime Plaits Two Glass Decanters  
a Vinigar and Oyle Crewite One Iron Chimnay  
Thertie One Pictures Twelve New Chairs not-  
covered Two Marble Tables with Frames

##### The Earl's Room

Impr: One Bed with Bed Curtains Two Feather Beds  
One Bolster and Three Pillows  
a Charter Chest a Press with a Green Velvet  
Tollett and Dressing Glass upon it  
One Old Arm Chair and Old Cave with three  
Glasses in it  
a Closs Box one Lime and Pewter Chamber  
Potts one Cave Locked One Brass Winter and  
Brass Tea Kettle Two Guns  
Two Stone Tea Potst Six Blew and white China

Cups Five Saucers One China Bowl and Stane  
Milk Pott One Pair of Blankets and ane old-  
Twill upon the Bed one Iron Chimney

In the Room Below the Earl's

Impr: One Bed with Old Curtains one Feather Bed one  
Bolster and two Pillowes  
One Old arm Chair and three Other Chairs Old  
ones one Iron Chimney and Closs Box

In the Room Below the Above

Impr: One Bed with Old Curtians Three Feather Beds  
Two Bolsters and Four Pillowes a Cours Twill  
One Chest and four Trunks all locked  
Green and white curtians for a Bed  
a Closs Box and Lime Chamber Pott

Turn over

(p.2)

Six Brass Candlesticks Two Lime Poringers  
Twelve Pairs of Blankets all Old

In the Kittchin

Impr: One Iron Chimney One Pair of Standing Boxes  
One Speett One Pair of Kitchin Tongs Two-  
Crans Two Cooper Potts with Covers One Cooper  
Kettle Two Sauce Panns one Bigge Pan with-  
two handles Two Smaller Pans on /of thim/ with a cover  
One Scumer One frying Pan Two Old Tables ane  
Old Press with a Cavie for Fowlles a Big Mettle  
Pott

In the Porter Lodge

Impr: One Iron Chimney and Timber of ane old  
Bed a Marble Morter

The Linnings

Impr: Six Dozen of Table Naprie  
Ten Table Cloaths  
Four Tea Napkins  
Three Pair of New Holland Sheetts and Six PillowCases  
Two Pair of Sheetts and four PillowCases  
Four Pairs of Course Sheetts for Ser(van)tts  
Two Pair of Linning Sheetts for D(itt)o four PillowCases  
One Pair for a wrapper  
Two P(air)s<sub>2</sub> of Orknay Stufte Yallow

Two P(air)s of Dark Colored Camllet  
One New Calligoe Twill with a Red Ground  
Note The Trunk in which the above Linnings are is  
Locked

(endorsed)

Copie  
Inventory  
of the  
Castle of Aberdour  
taken  
June ye 10th 1730  
The principale  
Given to  
Lord Aberdour

## APPENDIX 4: GLOSSARY

*[These references are largely drawn from standard reference works (OED, DOST, SND, DNB, SP, and Dalton's Army Lists); indexing of dictionary entries has not been thought necessary, but reference to other sources are given, as are a number of citations from unpublished documents in the Morton Papers, relevant for identifying the 11th Earl's agents and administrators.]*

### Technical terms and idiomatic Scots

- **allennarly** - Scots equivalent of “only”
- **Calligoe** - calico, an undyed cotton fabric originally imported from the trading city of Calicut or Kozhikode in southern India.
- **Camllet** - “camlet”, fine fabric, ultimately inspired by medieval cloth imported from the Arab world, which was popularly thought to have been woven from camel hair; in practice, it denoted various sorts of smooth, plush woolen, including angora and wool-and-silk mix.
- **Cave** - originally a name for a wine cellar, but here, a box containing bottles and/or glasses for wine or spirits.
- **Cavie** - a cavity or coop; in this case, it is not entirely clear whether there is actually a chicken-coop built into the kitchen *press*, or simply a keeping place to hang game birds.
- **Charter Chist** - the “charter chest” is a large strongbox in which a baron traditionally keeps his charters , key legal documents; the spelling here shows influence from Scots “kist”.



- **Chimney** - most of the uses of this word are entirely conventional, but the “iron chimney” in Document 4 is a metal grate for coal sitting on the hearth, rather than the flue leading upwards from the fire - a much older meaning of the word.
- **Closs Box** - a “close” or closed box, containing a chamber pot.
- **Crans** - iron “cranes”, on which a pot can be swung above the fire; descriptions of their design vary, but the original type probably had a single upright support placed in front of the hearth, and a horizontal bar projecting back from it.
- **Crewite** - a cruet, or phial.
- **Dressing Glass** - a mirror on a dresser, used while dressing
- **duns** - to “dun” someone is to persistently make demands on them, especially for money owed; a term of seventeenth-century English origin rather than a genuine Scots word, it is not in DOST or SND.
- **few dewty** - more conventionally spelt “feu duty”, an annual payment made by a feudal vassal to his lord in return for the land granted to him or his ancestors; a typical element of a nobleman’s revenue in eighteenth-century Scotland.
- **Holland** - a type of linen cloth originally made in the Netherlands.
- **Lime** - the wood, rather than the fruit
- **Monteith** - a large bowl with a scalloped edge, often used for cooling wine glasses upside-down in water, with one glass resting over each scallop.
- **Porringer** - a porridge-bowl
- **Press** - any large chest or cupboard, but most typically an upright dresser set into a wall recess; in the 1730 inventory, the term is used both for the Earl’s dressing table and a kitchen cupboard.
- **Purse** - a ceremonial wallet made of velvet, containing the commission which empowered the Lord High Commissioner to act as the president of the Scottish Parliament in lieu of the absent king, carried by a nobleman known as the Purse Bearer, who preceded the Commissioner during the ceremonial horseback “riding” up the Royal Mile to the parliament building beside St Giles. Exercising this office in the final two sessions of the pre-1707 parliament gave the Earl of Morton a *de facto* promotion from his place among the earls to lead the group of higher-ranking dukes and marquises accompanying the Commissioner. In more practical terms, his personal access to the presiding officer made him a key intermediary in the system of patronage and lobbying which the London government attempted to control in order to “manage” Scottish politics. The concept of the

office was probably a seventeenth-century innovation based on the model of the pursebearer who carries the Lord Chancellor's seal of office in English parliamentary processions, but a Purse Bearer is still retained by the Lord High Commissioner appointed to preside over the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, historically regarded as a meeting of one of the Three Estates (Alexander Mudie, *Scotiae Indiculum* (London 1682), ch. 5, repr. J. Chamberlayne, *Magnae Britanniae notitia: or, the present state of Great-Britain, with divers remarks upon the antient state thereof* (London, 1711), pp. 144–5; the current Purse Bearer is an Edinburgh lawyer, Tom Murray.

- **stirkes** - a Scots word cognate with English “strikes”, used in a wider sense of “punishments” or “sufferings”.
- **Scumer** - or “skimmer”, a utensil for skimming off the scum which rises to the top off a pot of boiling or fermenting liquid, such as broth or ale; often made of brass.
- **Speett** - a “spit” for roasting meat over the fire, written in an orthography which gives a clear sense of the Scots pronunciation amid the English prose.
- **Tollett** - the fabric cover on top of a dressing table, from French *toilette*; the familiar English usage of “toilet” was originally an euphemism, describing people as being “at their toilet” in the sense of standing at the dresser smartening their clothes, when they were really on the *closs box*.
- **Winter** - a metal rack in front of the fire, on which to sit a utensil full of drink or food in order to warm it.

## People and Places

- **Balcarres, Lord** - Colin Lindsay, 3rd Earl of Balcarres (1652-1722); a Jacobite in sympathy, he was exiled in the 1690s, but the personal friendship of the Duke of Queensbury (see *Queensburrough*) and Lord Marlborough had procured his returned to Scotland, along with a grant of £5,000 to clear his debts, to be paid out of the royal revenue of Orkney and Shetland over ten years from 1704 to 1714. This grant clashed with the Earl of Morton's rights to revenues from the Northern Isles, so in return for his support of the Act of Union in 1707, the 11th Earl of Morton was offered a scheme where he paid down Balcarres' debts in cash, in exchange for full control of the relevant revenues and a promise of later reimbursement for his outlay; the Earl duly paid, but got no reimbursement, and found himself unable to generate enough revenue from the islands to pay off even the interest on the loan he had used to pay Balcarres - nonetheless, his nephew, the 14th Earl, was eventually given full

control of the seigneurial rights in the islands in 1742, and sold them for £63,000 cash in 1766 (Paul Hopkins, "Lindsay, Colin, third earl of Balcarres (1652–1721)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2007 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16687>, accessed 18 Oct 2016]; for the Morton seigneurial rights in Orkney, see *Scots Peerage*, ed. Sir. J. Balfour Paul (9 vols., Edinburgh 1904-1914), vol. vi., pp. 377, 379, 381-382).

- **Chrystie, Mr** - Alexander Christie, the Earl of Morton's factor (estate manager) at Aberdour (GD150/2317; cf. GD150/2061, GD150/2406/1-47).
- **Commissioner** - the president of the Scottish parliament from 1603 to 1707; see *Queensburrough*.
- **Douglas, Robert** - the Hon. Robert Douglas, Master of Morton, next brother of the 11th Earl, who judging by his letters evidently acted as his brother's man of business in Scotland; later succeeded as 12th Earl of Morton, 1715-1730 (*Scots Peerage*, ed. Sir. J. Balfour Paul (9 vols., Edinburgh 1904-1914), vol. vi., p. 380).
- **Ekling, Leivtennent Generall** - Lieutenant-General Robert Echlin, commanding officer of the Black Dragoons; sitting as an MP in both London and Dublin, and acting as an aide-de-camp to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Duke of Ormonde (father of the *Major*), he was essentially an absentee, drawing pay and exercising patronage rather than actively leading the regiment (D. W. Hayton, "Echlin, Robert (c.1657-by 1724), of Monaghan, Ireland, and Purfleet, Essex", in *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1690-1715*, ed. D. Hayton, E. Cruickshanks, and S. Handley (5 vols., Cambridge 2002), vol. 3).
- **little german street** - Jermyn Street in London
- **Lord Advocate** - the senior legal advisor to the government in Scotland, in principle the sovereign's personal lawyer; at the time that **Document 3** was written, this was probably Sir James Stewart.
- **Lord Treasurer** - although the spelling is distinctively Scottish, the reference is to the Lord Treasurer of Great Britain, based in London; at the time that **Document 3** was written, this was probably Robert Harley, 1st Earl of Oxford and Earl Mortimer, the *de facto* prime minister of Queen Anne's government (W. A. Speck, "Harley, Robert, first earl of Oxford and Mortimer (1661–1724)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2007 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12344>, accessed 18 Oct 2016]).

- **Major, the** - Major William Butler, illegitimate son of the Duke of Ormonde (see *Ekling*), serving as major of Echlin's Dragoons from 1709; he had been the senior officer actually present with the regiment when they moved to Scotland, and **Document 3** suggests that he was the ranking member of the party of officers to whom the staterooms at Aberdour had been loaned, though **Document 2** attests to the presence of Lt.-Col. *Upton*, who had succeeded him as *de facto* commanding officer in early 1710. Major Butler's career was evidently ended by his father's defection to Jacobitism in 1715, though sources disagree if he resigned his commission out of shared principle, or was penalised for his father's actions in spite of his own loyalty to the Hanoverian succession (C. Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers, 1661-1714* (6 vols., London 1892-1904), vol. 6, p. 226; James Butler, *The Case of James Butler, Esq; Late an Officer in his Majesty's Navy, respecting his Connexions with the House of Ormond* (London 1770), pp. 15-20; Stuart Handley, "Butler, James, second duke of Ormond (1665-1745)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2006 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4193>, accessed 18 Oct 2016]).
- **Newbiging** - George Robertson, the laird of Newbigging, one of the business agents of the Earl of Morton; possibly the author of **Document 2**; his son James enlisted in the army as an ordinary soldier, and eventually rose to become a general and British governor of New York (Milton M. Klein, "Robertson, James (*bap.* 1717, *d.* 1788)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23796>, accessed 18 Oct 2016]; cf. GD150/2545/30, GD150/3452/10-12, GD150/3465/24, GD150/3468/2).
- **Queensburrough, the duke of** - James Douglas, 2nd Duke of Queensberry (1662-1711), the *Commissioner* at the parliament of 1706 which voted to accept the Act of Union with England. The organiser of the scheme of patronage and bribery by which the independence of Scotland was said to be "bought and sold with English gold", though in **Document 3**, the 11th Earl of Morton complains that rather than being remunerated, he had effectively been swindled out of £5000 to pay off the government's debt to the Duke's Jacobite friend *Balcarres* (John R. Young, "Douglas, James, second duke of Queensberry and first duke of Dover (1662-1711)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2010 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7897>, accessed 18 Oct 2016]).
- **Upton, Colonell** - Lieutenant-Colonel John Upton, appointed second-in-command of Elchin's Dragoons in February 1710; as General Elchin was an absentee commander, this made him the effective leader of

the regiment. Younger son of a prominent planter family settled at Castle Upton in County Antrim, presbyterian in religion and Cornish by descent; probably the “Jno. Upton” who served as a captain in General Steuart’s Regiment of Foot in 1697-1707, with whom he fought at the Siege of Liège in 1702; in early 1707, evidently while on campaign in Spain, he gained a promotion to major and a transfer to Killigrew’s Dragoons, with whom he fought at the the Battle of Almansa in April; promoted Lieutenant Colonel in that regiment in April 1709, but given six months’ leave of absence in July-December 1709 “for recovery of his sight”, and afterwards transferred to Echlin’s; in November 1711, he was promoted to brevet-colonel of dragoons, meaning he was given the pay and status of a full regimental commander without a formal promotion, and led the regiment at Sheriffmuir in 1715. In 1725, he succeeded his brother as head of the family, and his son, Clotworthy Upton, eventually became the 1st Lord Templetown (C. Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers, 1661-1714* (6 vols., London 1892-1904), vol. iv., p. 177, vol vi., p. 40, 197, 226, 379; Stuart Reid, *Sheriffmuir, 1715: The Jacobite War in Scotland* (Barnsley 2014), p. 175).

- **Young, Mr.** - from the context, evidently a servant of the Earl of Morton; perhaps John Ewing of Craigtoun, WS, the Earl’s lawyer (cf. GD150/2554).
- **Zetland** - an old spelling of the name of Shetland.