

= Doune Castle =

Doune Castle is a medieval stronghold near the village of Doune , in the Stirling district of central Scotland . The castle is sited on a wooded bend where the Ardoch Burn flows into the River Teith . It lies 8 miles (13 km) north @-@ west of Stirling , where the Teith flows into the River Forth . Upstream , 8 miles (13 km) further north @-@ west , the town of Callander lies at the edge of the Trossachs , on the fringe of the Scottish Highlands .

Recent research has shown that Doune Castle was originally built in the thirteenth century , then probably damaged in the Scottish Wars of Independence , before being rebuilt in its present form in the late 14th century by Robert Stewart , Duke of Albany (c.1340 ? 1420) , the son of King Robert II of Scotland , and Regent of Scotland from 1388 until his death . Duke Robert 's stronghold has survived relatively unchanged and complete , and the whole castle was traditionally thought of as the result of a single period of construction at this time . The castle passed to the crown in 1425 , when Albany 's son was executed , and was used as a royal hunting lodge and dower house . In the later 16th century , Doune became the property of the Earls of Moray . The castle saw military action during the Wars of the Three Kingdoms and Glencairn 's rising in the mid @-@ 17th century , and during the Jacobite Risings of the late 17th century and 18th century . By 1800 the castle was ruined , but restoration works were carried out in the 1880s , prior to its passing into state care in the 20th century . It is now maintained by Historic Scotland .

Due to the status of its builder , Doune reflected current ideas of what a royal castle building should be . It was planned as a courtyard with ranges of buildings on each side , although only the northern and north @-@ western buildings were completed . These comprise a large tower house over the entrance , containing the rooms of the Lord and his family , and a separate tower containing the kitchen and guest rooms . The two are linked by the great hall . The stonework is almost all from the late 14th century , with only minor repairs carried out in the 1580s . The restoration of the 1880s replaced the timber roofs and internal floors , as well as interior fittings .

= = History = =

The site at the confluence of the Ardoch Burn and the River Teith had been fortified by the Romans in the 1st century AD , although no remains are visible above ground . Ramparts and ditches to the south of the present castle may be the site of an earlier fortification , as the name Doune , derived from Gaelic dùn , meaning " fort " , suggests . The earliest identifiable work in the castle dates from the thirteenth century , but it assumed its present form during one of the most creative and productive periods of Scottish medieval architecture , between 1375 and 1425 , when numerous castles were being built and remodelled , including Dirleton and Tantallon in Lothian , and Bothwell in Lanarkshire .

= = = Regent Albany = = =

In 1361 , Robert Stewart (c.1340 ? 1420) , son of King Robert II (reigned 1371 ? 1390) , and brother of King Robert III (reigned 1390 ? 1406) , was created Earl of Menteith , and was granted the lands on which Doune Castle now stands . Building may have started any time after this , and the castle was at least partially complete in 1381 , when a charter was sealed here . Robert was appointed Regent in 1388 for his elderly father , and continued to hold effective power during the reign of his infirm brother . He was created Duke of Albany in 1398 . In 1406 , Robert III 's successor , James I , was captured by the English , and Albany became Regent once more . After this time , the number of charters issued at Doune suggest that the castle became a favoured residence .

= = = Royal retreat = = =

Albany died in 1420 , and Doune , the dukedom of Albany , and the Regency all passed to his son Murdoch (1362 ? 1425) . The ransom for James I was finally paid to the English , and the King

returned in 1424 , taking immediate steps to gain control of his kingdom . Albany and two of his sons were imprisoned for treason , and then executed in May 1425 . Doune Castle became a royal possession , under an appointed Captain , or Keeper , and served as a retreat and hunting lodge for the Scottish monarchs . It was also used as a dower house by Mary of Guelders (c.1434 ? 1463) , Margaret of Denmark (1456 ? 1486) , and Margaret Tudor (1489 ? 1541) , the widowed consorts of James II , James III and James IV respectively .

In 1528 , Margaret Tudor , now Regent of Scotland for her infant son James V , married Henry Stewart , 1st Lord Methven , a descendant of Albany . His brother , Sir James Stewart (c.1513 ? 1554) , was made Captain of Doune Castle , and Sir James ' son , also James (c.1529 ? 1590) , was created Lord Doune in 1570 . Lord Doune 's son , another James (c.1565 ? 1592) , married Elizabeth Stuart , 2nd Countess of Moray around 1580 , becoming Earl of Moray himself . The castle thus came to be the seat of its keepers , the Earls of Moray , who owned it until the 20th century .

Mary , Queen of Scots , (reigned 1542 ? 1567) stayed at Doune on several occasions , occupying the suite of rooms above the kitchen . Doune was held by forces loyal to Mary during the brief civil war which followed her forced abdication in 1567 , but the garrison surrendered to the Regent , Matthew Stewart , 4th Earl of Lennox , in 1570 , after a three @-@ day blockade . George Buchanan and Duncan Nairn , Deputy Sherriff of Stirling presided over the torture and interrogation of a messenger , John Moon , at Doune on 4 October 1570 . Moon was carrying letters to Mary , Queen of Scots and Mary Seton .

King James VI visited Doune on occasion , and in 1581 authorised £ 300 to be spent on repairs and improvements , the works being carried out by the master mason Michael Ewing under the supervision of Robert Drummond of Carnock , Master of Work to the Crown of Scotland . In 1593 , a plot against James was discovered , and the King surprised the conspirators , who included the Earls of Montrose and Gowrie , at Doune Castle .

= = = Prison and garrison = = =

In 1607 , the minister , John Munro of Tain , a dissenter against the religious plans of James VI , was imprisoned with a fellow minister at Doune , though he escaped with the contrivance of the then Constable of the Castle , who was subsequently imprisoned for aiding the dissenters . The Royalist James Graham , 1st Marquess of Montrose occupied Doune Castle in 1645 , during the Wars of the Three Kingdoms . In 1654 , during Glencairn 's rising against the occupation of Scotland by Oliver Cromwell , a skirmish took place at Doune between Royalists under Sir Mungo Murray , and Cromwellian troops under Major Tobias Bridge . The castle was garrisoned by government troops during the Jacobite Rising of Bonnie Dundee in 1689 , when repairs were ordered , and again during the rising of 1715 . During the Jacobite Rising of 1745 , Doune Castle was occupied by Charles Edward Stuart , " Bonnie Prince Charlie " , and his Jacobite Highlanders . It was used as a prison for government troops captured at the Battle of Falkirk . Several prisoners , held in the rooms above the kitchen , escaped by knotting together bedsheets and climbing from the window . Escapees included the author John Home , and a minister , John Witherspoon , who later moved to the American colonies and became a signatory of the United States Declaration of Independence .

= = = Ruin and restoration = = =

The castle deteriorated through the 18th century , and by 1800 Doune was a roofless ruin . It remained so until the 1880s , when George Stuart , 14th Earl of Moray (1816 ? 1895) began repair works . The timber roofs were replaced , and the interiors , including the panelling in the Lord 's Hall , were installed . The castle is now maintained by Historic Scotland , having been donated to a predecessor organisation by Douglas Stuart , 20th Earl of Moray , in 1984 , and is open to the public . The castle is a Scheduled Ancient Monument , and is a Category A listed building , the highest levels of protection for nationally important built heritage in Scotland .

= = Description = =

Doune occupies a strategic site , close to the geographical centre of Scotland , and only 5 miles (8 @. @ 0 km) from Stirling Castle , the " crossroads of Scotland " . The site is naturally defended on three sides by steeply @-@ sloping ground , and by the two rivers to east and west . The castle forms an irregular pentagon in plan , with buildings along the north and north @-@ west sides enclosing a courtyard . It is entered from the north via a passage beneath a tower containing the principal rooms of the castle . From the courtyard , three sets of stone external stairs , which may be later additions , lead up to the Lord 's Hall in the tower , to the adjacent Great Hall , and to the kitchens in a second tower to the west .

The main approach , from the north , is defended by earthworks , comprising three ditches , with a rampart , or earthen wall , between . Also outside the castle walls is a vaulted passage , traditionally said to lead into the castle , but in fact accessing an 18th @-@ century ice house . There are no openings within the lower part of the castle 's walls , excepting the entrance and the postern , or side gate , to the west , although there are relatively large windows on the upper storeys . Windows in the south wall suggest that further buildings were intended within the courtyard , but were never built . The stonework is of coursed sandstone rubble , with dressings in lighter Ballengeich stone .

= = = The Lord 's tower = = =

The principal tower , or gatehouse , is rectangular in plan 18 metres (59 ft) by 13 metres (43 ft) , and almost 29 metres (95 ft) high , with a projecting round tower on the north @-@ east corner , beside the entrance . It comprises the Lord 's Hall , and three storeys of chambers above , located over the entrance passage . The vaulted , cobbled passage , 14 metres (46 ft) long , was formerly defended by two sets of timber doors , and a yett , or hinged iron grille , remains . Guardrooms on either side overlook the passage via gunloops , and also on the ground floor is a well , in the basement of the round tower .

There is no direct communication between the ground floor and the Lord 's Hall above , which occupies the whole first floor . This is accessed via an enclosed and gated stair from the courtyard . The hall is vaulted , and has an unusual double fireplace . The floor tiles , timber panelling , and minstrels ' gallery are additions of the 1880s . It was originally thought that the connecting door to the Great Hall was also of this date , but is now accepted as being original . Side rooms on the hall level include a chamber in the round tower , with a hatch above the well , and a small chamber within the south wall which overlooks both hall and courtyard . A machicolation , or " murder hole " , below the hall 's north window , allows objects to be dropped onto attackers in the passage .

Above the hall is a second hall , forming part of the Duchess ' suite of rooms . An oratory in the south wall , overlooking the courtyard , contains a piscina and credence niche . The oratory gives access to mural passages leading to the walkway along the curtain wall . The timber ceiling of the Duchess ' hall , and the timber floors and roof above , are of the 1880s . The upper parts of the stonework are among the repairs dating from 1580 .

= = = Great Hall and kitchen tower = = =

West of the Lord 's tower is the Great Hall , 20 metres (66 ft) by 8 metres (26 ft) , and 12 metres (39 ft) high to its timber roof , again a 19th @-@ century replacement . The hall has no fireplace , and was presumably heated by a central fire , and ventilated by means of a louvre like the one in the modern roof . No details of the original roof construction are known , however , and the restoration is conjectural . Large windows light the hall , and stairs lead down to the three cellars on ground level .

The hall is accessed from the courtyard via a stair up to a triangular lobby , which in turn links the hall and kitchens by means of two large serving hatches with elliptical arches , unusual for this period . The kitchen tower , virtually a tower house in its own right , is 17 metres (56 ft) by 8 metres (26 ft) . The vaulted kitchen is on the hall level , above a cellar . One of the best @-@ appointed castle kitchens in Scotland of its date , it has an oven and a 5 @. @ 5 @-@ metre (18 ft) wide

fireplace . A stair turret , added in 1581 and possibly replacing a timber stair , leads up from the lobby to two storeys of guest rooms . These include the " Royal Apartments " , a suite of two bedrooms plus an audience chamber , suitable for royal visitors .

= = = Courtyard and curtain wall = = =

Projecting stones on the south wall of the kitchen block , known as tuskings , and four pointed @-@ arched windows in the south curtain wall , suggest that further ranges of buildings were planned . The large , eastern @-@ most window , may have been intended for a chapel , and it is recorded that a chapel dedicated to the 8th @-@ century monk Saint Fillan was located at Doune Castle , but the lack of foundations suggest that there was no large building in this part of the castle . The foundations which do exist were excavated in September 2002 , revealing a structure which was interpreted as a kiln or oven against the south wall . The central well is around 18 metres (59 ft) deep .

The curtain wall is 2 metres (6 @. @ 6 ft) thick , and 12 metres (39 ft) high . A walkway along the top of the wall is protected by parapets on both sides , and is carried over the pitched roofs of the hall and gatehouse by steep steps . Open , round turrets are located at each corner , with semicircular projections at the midpoint of each wall . A square turret with machicolations is located above the postern gate in the west wall .

= = = Interpretation of the layout = = =

The Lord 's tower is a secure , private set of rooms , probably intended for the sole use of the Lord and his family , and with its own lines of defence . The architectural historian W. Douglas Simpson interpreted this arrangement as being the product of the " bastard feudalism " of the 14th century . During this period , Lords were required to defend their castles by means of mercenaries , rather than the vassals of the earlier feudal system , and Simpson suggested that the Lord of Doune designed his tower to be defensible against his own , potentially rebellious , garrison . This interpretation is no longer widely accepted by historians , and the castle is instead seen as a development towards more integrated courtyard buildings , such as the royal palace of Linlithgow , which was constructed through the 15th and early 16th century . The layout of Doune has similarities with those of the contemporary castles at Tantallon and Bothwell , and appears , at various scales , in other buildings of the period .

= = In fiction and drama = =

Doune Castle has featured in several literary works , including the 17th @-@ century ballad , " The Bonny Earl of Murray " , which relates the murder of James Stewart , 2nd Earl of Moray , by the Earl of Huntly , in 1592 . In Sir Walter Scott 's first novel , Waverley (1814) , the protagonist Edward Waverley is brought to Doune Castle by the Jacobites . Scott 's romantic novel describes the " gloomy yet picturesque structure " , with its " half @-@ ruined turrets " .

The castle was used as a location in MGM 's 1952 historical film *Ivanhoe* which featured Robert Taylor and Elizabeth Taylor . The BBC adaptation of " *Ivanhoe* " in 1996 also featured Doune as a location . The castle was used as the set for Winterfell in the TV series *Game of Thrones* (2011 ? present) , an adaptation of the *A Song of Ice and Fire* series of novels by George R. R. Martin . The castle was used as a stand @-@ in for the fictional " Castle Leoch " in the TV adaptation of the *Outlander* series of novels .

= = = Monty Python and the Holy Grail = = =

The British comedy film *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* ? a parody of the legends of King Arthur by the Monty Python team ? was filmed on location in Scotland in 1974 . The film 's producers had gained permission from the National Trust for Scotland to film scenes at several of their Scottish

castles , as well as the permission of Lord Moray to film at Doune Castle . However , the National Trust later withdrew their permission , leaving the producers with little time to find new locations . Instead , they decided to use different parts of Doune Castle to depict the various fictional castles in the film , relying on tight framing of shots to maintain the illusion .

Scenes featuring Doune Castle include :

At the start of the film , King Arthur (Graham Chapman) and Patsy (Terry Gilliam) approach the east wall of Doune Castle and argue with soldiers of the garrison .

The song and dance routine " Knights of the Round Table " at " Camelot " was filmed in the Great Hall .

The servery and kitchen appear as " Castle Anthrax " , where Sir Galahad the Chaste (Michael Palin) is chased by seductive girls .

The wedding disrupted by Sir Lancelot (John Cleese) was filmed in the courtyard and Great Hall .

The Trojan Rabbit scene was filmed in the entryway and into the courtyard .

The only other castles used for filming were Castle Stalker in Argyll , also privately owned , which appears as " Castle Aaaaarrrrrrggghhh " at the end of the film , and (briefly) Kidwelly Castle in Wales . The DVD version of Monty Python and the Holy Grail includes a documentary , In Search of the Holy Grail Filming Locations , in which Michael Palin and Terry Jones revisit Doune and other sites used for filming . Doune Castle has become a place of pilgrimage for fans of Monty Python and the film , and , since 2004 , an annual " Monty Python Day " has been held at the castle .