

= Tantallon Castle =

Tantallon Castle is a semi ruined mid 14th century fortress , located 5 kilometres ( 3 @. @ 1 mi ) east of North Berwick , in East Lothian , Scotland . It sits atop a promontory opposite the Bass Rock , looking out onto the Firth of Forth . The last medieval curtain wall castle to be constructed in Scotland , Tantallon comprises a single wall blocking off the headland , with the other three sides naturally protected by sea cliffs .

Tantallon was built in the mid 14th century by William Douglas , 1st Earl of Douglas . It was passed to his illegitimate son , George Douglas , later created Earl of Angus , and despite several sieges , it remained the property of his descendants for much of its history . It was besieged by King James IV in 1491 , and again by his successor James V in 1528 , when extensive damage was done . Tantallon saw action in the First Bishops ' War in 1639 , and again during Oliver Cromwell 's invasion of Scotland in 1651 , when it was once more severely damaged . It was sold by the Marquis of Douglas in 1699 to Hew Dalrymple , Lord North Berwick and the ruin is today in the care of Historic Scotland .

= = Construction = =

Tantallon is of a singular construction within Scotland , the defences comprising only a single large wall securing a coastal promontory . The south @-@ east , north @-@ east , and north @-@ west approaches are naturally defended by steep sea cliffs , and were only ever protected by relatively small defensive walls . To the south @-@ west , a massive curtain wall blocks off the end of the promontory , which forms the inner courtyard . The curtain wall is built of the local red sandstone , and has a tower at either end and a heavily fortified gatehouse in the centre , all of which provided residential accommodation . A north range of buildings , containing a hall , completed the main part of the castle , enclosing a courtyard around 70 by 44 metres ( 230 by 144 ft ) . In total , the buildings of the castle provided around 1 @, @ 100 square metres ( 12 @, @ 000 sq ft ) of accommodation .

In its form , Tantallon follows on from the 12th @-@ century castles of Bothwell and Kildrummy , as a castle of enceinte , or curtain wall castle . It was the last of this type to be built in Scotland , as the smaller tower house was becoming increasingly popular . For example , Threave Castle , built at around the same time by Earl William 's cousin Archibald the Grim , is a much more modest tower . There are also similarities between Tantallon and " courtyard " castles , such as Doune , which also dates from the late 14th century , and is entered via a passage beneath a strong keep tower .

= = = Curtain wall = = =

The curtain wall is over 15 metres ( 49 ft ) high , 3 @. @ 6 metres ( 12 ft ) thick , and around 90 metres ( 300 ft ) long . There are several small chambers within the walls , and stairs with arched ceilings accessing the parapet walk . This parapet walk , beneath the 16th @-@ century crenels of the curtain wall , connects the three towers .

The northwest tower , known as the Douglas Tower , was circular in plan and 12 metres ( 39 ft ) across , although the west side has collapsed . Seven storeys high , this tower would have formed the lord 's " donjon " , or keep , containing his private accommodation , and connecting to the hall in the north range . The lowest storey was a pit prison and the timber @-@ floored chambers above were square , with vaulted garderobes or privies .

The East Tower is of D @-@ plan , with the curved face outwards , and is 9 metres ( 30 ft ) across . Originally consisting of five storeys , the bottom three were reduced to two after the 1528 siege , by the insertion of stone vaults . Large gun ports were also added in the basement at this time . The third floor of the tower was designed to have access to a parapet on the south @-@ east wall , although this wall was never built .

The central gatehouse tower is square , 13 metres ( 43 ft ) across , and up to 24 metres ( 79 ft ) high . It contained four storeys of chambers , some with canopied fireplaces , although the internal walls and floors are now missing . The main entrance ran through a passage below , protected by a

drawbridge , three pairs of doors , a portcullis , and machicolations ; holes in the ceiling enabling the defenders to drop missiles on to intruders below . There are two bartizans , or corner turrets , facing in toward the courtyard , where a 16th @-@ century spiral stair gives access to the head of the curtain wall . The entrance was originally via a pointed arched gateway , flanked by round towers . A defensive barbican , or outer gate , was added in the early 14th century , and was destroyed in the 1528 siege , although fragments can still be seen . After the siege , the facade of the gatehouse was rebuilt , with more gun ports at ground level , and the gateway corridor was narrowed . The rebuilding covered up the remains of the earlier round towers , narrowed the main gate , and gave the tower rounded corners for additional strength .

= = = Inner court = = =

The north range of buildings , around 10 by 40 metres ( 33 by 131 ft ) , is connected to the Douglas Tower . The western section dates from the 14th century , and comprises the remains of the great hall , used by the lord , over the former laigh , or low , hall , used by the labourers , and later divided to form cellars . The marks of the hall 's pitched roof can be seen on the inside wall of the Douglas Tower . The 16th @-@ century eastern section contained a bakehouse and further private chambers , and has partially collapsed into the sea . Only a small section of the other walls remains to the east , and contains a postern gate , giving access to the sea through a cleft in the cliffs below . The well is 32 metres ( 105 ft ) deep , and was re @-@ excavated in the 19th century .

= = = Outer court = = =

Alongside the curtain wall is a deep , rock @-@ cut ditch , with a larger second ditch around 100 metres ( 330 ft ) away , defining the outer court of the castle . Within the outer ditch are two mounds , which Charles McKean suggests may conceal 16th @-@ century caponiers , defensive positions allowing covering fire along the trench . McKean notes that Sir James Hamilton of Finnart , the King 's Master of Works , and a noted military engineer who built Scotland 's only known caponiers at Craignethan and Blackness , was present with the King during the 1528 siege , and worked at Tantallon afterwards . A stone @-@ fronted mound formerly ran along the outside of the ditch , although only a 30 @-@ metre ( 98 ft ) section of the outer wall survives , at the south end , terminating in a two @-@ storey round tower . This tower , with several gun ports , was built prior to the siege of 1528 , and may have been inspired by the new artillery defences at nearby Dunbar Castle . A 17th @-@ century " lectern " type doocot , or pigeon house , is the only building within the outer court . Beyond the outer ditch is a 17th @-@ century ravelin , a triangular earthen artillery defence , and the remains of a third , smaller , ditch .

= = History = =

A map of the area , dated to before 1300 , shows a castellated site with the name of " Dentaloune " , possibly a corruption of the Brythonic *din talgwn* or " high @-@ fronted fortress " . The barony of North Berwick , including Tantallon , was in the possession of the Earls of Fife at this time .

= = = Early history = = =

In 1346 , William Douglas ( c . 1327 ? 1384 ) , nephew of Robert the Bruce 's companion Sir James Douglas , had returned to Scotland , from France , to claim his inheritance as chief of the name of Douglas . By murdering his godfather , Sir William Douglas of Liddesdale , William became the undisputed head of the House of Douglas . He was created Earl of Douglas in 1358 .

It is not clear how Douglas came to possess Tantallon , but in correspondence of 1374 , he refers to " our castle of Temptaloun " . Douglas may have been made castellan of Tantallon , as a tenant of Isabella , Countess of Fife , and it appears that he built the present castle either shortly before , or shortly after , his elevation to the peerage , to reflect his new @-@ found status . It was intended as

a status symbol , although it followed the medieval curtain wall type , which at the time was becoming outmoded and superseded by the tower house . The Douglasses continued to hold the lands of Tantallon as tenants of Robert Stewart , Earl of Fife ( c.1340 @-@ 1420 ) , from 1371 until 1372 , when he resigned the title in favour of his son Murdoch . Tantallon was the home of William Douglas ' sister @-@ in @-@ law and mistress , Margaret Stewart , Countess of Angus , the mother of his illegitimate son George Douglas ( 1380 ? 1403 ) . In 1377 , the Earl made his close friend , Alan de Lawedre of The Bass , Constable of Tantallon Castle , an office he held until at least 1389 . In 1388 , when the 2nd Earl of Douglas died , the Earl of Fife claimed the lands of Tantallon , and confirmed the Countess ' right to live there . Several attempts were made to dislodge the Countess , but the agreement was formalised by parliament in April 1389 , and George Douglas was recognised as Earl of Angus , as his mother 's heir .

#### == The Red Douglasses ==

The Barony of North Berwick , surrounding Tantallon , stayed with the Earldom of Fife , but despite the Earl 's claim , the castle passed outright into the Douglas family , and was inherited by George Douglas , illegitimate son of the Earl of Douglas , who also inherited his mother 's Earldom of Angus in 1389 . This was the start of the division in the House of Douglas . Archibald the Grim became head of the main line , known as the " Black Douglasses " . George Douglas was the progenitor of the " Red Douglasses " .

In 1397 , George Douglas married Mary , daughter of King Robert III , allying the Red Douglasses with the Royal House of Stewart . From 1425 to 1433 , Isabella , Countess of Lennox , the widow of the executed Duke of Albany , was warded at Tantallon . In 1429 another royal enemy , Alexander , Lord of the Isles , was held at Tantallon until his reconciliation with King James I two years later . The 3rd Earl of Angus ( 1426 ? 1446 ) made Tantallon his main residence , and was in rebellion from 1443 until his death . He raided the Black Douglas lands of Abercorn , leading to retaliation , and his forfeiture in 1446 , a few months before his death . In 1452 , King James II granted Tantallon to the 4th Earl , brother of the 3rd Earl , who led the Royal force which defeated the Black Douglasses at the Battle of Arkinholm , in May 1455 .

The Red Douglasses , in the person of Archibald " Bell @-@ the @-@ Cat " ( 1453 ? 1514 ) , the 5th Earl , turned against the Royal house in 1482 . Around 1490 , Angus struck a treasonable deal with Henry VII of England , against James IV of Scotland . On 11 October 1491 , Tantallon Castle was besieged by James IV , with guns sent from Edinburgh and Linlithgow , and crossbows and culverins ( a primitive type of hand gun ) from Leith . However , Angus submitted and the castle did not suffer extensive damage . By 1493 Angus was back in favour as Chancellor of Scotland .

#### == The Siege of 1528 ==

In 1514 , Archibald Douglas , 6th Earl of Angus ( 1490 ? 1557 ) married James IV 's widow Margaret Tudor , daughter of Henry VII , and Regent of Scotland for her infant son James V. The couple unsuccessfully conspired to take the young King to England , sparking off civil war . The Regency was handed to John Stewart , Duke of Albany , who seized Tantallon in 1515 , although it was returned the following year when Angus made his peace .

In 1525 , Angus , with support from Henry VIII of England , staged a virtual coup d'état , taking custody of the young King , and becoming Chancellor . But , in 1528 , the sixteen @-@ year @-@ old James V escaped , and , joining his mother at Stirling , pronounced Angus attainted , banishing him to " north of the Spey " . Angus instead retreated to Tantallon , and then to England . The castle was seized by the King , but Angus managed to return and refortify his stronghold . On 23 October 1528 , King James laid siege to Tantallon which was defended by Angus 's servant Simon Penango . Angus himself remained at Billie in the Merse . James V borrowed the guns from Dunbar Castle which was held by the French garrison of the Duke Albany . According to Pitscottie , the guns supplied by Captain Maurice of Dunbar were Thrawinmouth , Mow and her marrow ( partner ) , two great botcards , two moyanes , two double falcons , four quarter falcons , with powder , gunners and

bullets . James left three hostages with Maurice in pledge for the guns . The castle was bombarded with this cannon for 20 days , although the King 's guns could not be brought close enough to the walls to do substantive damage , due to the deep outer ditch . The King lifted the siege and returned to Edinburgh , at which point Angus counterattacked and captured the King 's artillery and his principal gunner David Falconer was killed . In May 1529 , Angus fled to England , leaving the castle to James . Simon Penango , having received no further supplies or reinforcements from Angus made terms and surrendered the castle . Tantallon was retained as a Royal fortress until James V 's death in 1542 , when Angus returned and recovered it .

To repair damage sustained during the siege , the King set about rebuilding and strengthening the castle . First , Sir Thomas Erskine of Brechin , the king 's secretary , was made the keeper and organised strengthening and repair works . Then the castle was given to the king 's eldest illegitimate son James . Soon after , Oliver Sinclair was installed as captain , and the surviving accounts for the period 1537 ? 1539 record that George Sempill was the master mason , carrying out the repairs under the direction of John Scrimgeour , the King 's Master of Works . The front of the gatehouse was rebuilt , and the East Tower strengthened . Wide @-@ mouthed gun holes were punched through the landward walls of the tower , and a crenellated parapet was added to the curtain wall . To strengthen the great landward curtain wall several chambers and passages within were filled with masonry , and can be seen today . Pitscottie described this operation : " the king caused masons come and ranforce the wallis , quhilkis war left waste before as transis ( passages ) , and through @-@ passages ; and maid all massie work , to mak it the more strang . "

= = = Later 16th century = = =

On Angus ' return in 1542 , he was still in contact with Henry VIII , and allowed Sir Ralph Sadler , English ambassador to Scotland , to reside at Tantallon during the attempts to negotiate a marriage between the infant Mary , Queen of Scots , and Edward , Prince of Wales in 1542 ? 43 . It has been claimed that when the Earl of Hertford invaded Scotland in 1544 , during the ensuing War of the Rough Wooing , Tantallon was bypassed by the English army , due to the Earl 's English sympathies , though the castle of Oliver Sinclair is listed amongst places burnt by the returning English army in contemporary sources , but it was left unmolested in 1547 . Angus was finally imprisoned at Blackness Castle in 1544 , after which he changed sides to support the Scottish cause . The gunners of Tantallon were rewarded in August 1548 , after firing on English ships during an engagement in the Firth of Forth .

Angus died at Tantallon in January 1557 , and the castle was seized by the Queen Regent , Mary of Guise . It was given over to the Laird of Craigmillar , and repairs were carried out the following year . In 1558 , George Drummond of Blair was keeper of Tantallon , with a garrison of seven horsemen and 22 soldiers . James Douglas , 4th Earl of Morton took control in 1565 , on behalf of his nephew , the young 8th Earl of Angus , but the following year , Mary , Queen of Scots , gave the Captaincy to Robert Lauder of the Bass , and his son , Robert Lauder , younger of the Bass . The appointment of the Lauders followed the surrender of Sir William Douglas of Lochleven , who was one of those charged with the murder of Queen Mary 's favourite , David Rizzio , in March 1566 . Mary visited Tantallon herself in November 1566 . The Yester Writs record an Andrew Hume as Captain of Tantallon Castle in 1577 . Following the death of the 8th Earl in 1588 , the Earls of Angus lived elsewhere , and had little to do with Tantallon Castle .

= = = 17th century = = =

After a period of peace , Tantallon again saw military action during the Bishops ' Wars in 1639 . The Douglas family had remained Catholic after the Scottish Reformation , incurring the wrath of the Presbyterian Covenanters , who opposed Charles I 's attempts to interfere with the Scottish Church . In 1639 , the Covenanters captured Tantallon while William , newly created Marquess of Douglas , was in Edinburgh .

In 1650 , during the Third English Civil War , Oliver Cromwell 's Parliamentarian forces invaded

Scotland , taking control of the south of the country after their victory at Dunbar in September . In February 1651 , Cromwell found his lines of communication under attack from a small group of Royalists based at Tantallon . This group , led by Alexander Seton , comprised just 91 men . Despite this , Cromwell 's retaliation was to send 2 @, @ 000 to 3 @, @ 000 troops under General Monck , together with much of the artillery he had in Scotland , and lay siege to Tantallon . Seton was ennobled by Charles II , as Viscount of Kingston , on 14 February , during the siege . After twelve days of bombardment with cannon a breach was made in the Douglas Tower . The defenders were compelled to surrender , but only after quarter had been granted to them in recognition of their bravery . After the siege Tantallon was left in ruins : it was never repaired or inhabited afterwards . The siege of Tantallon was also interesting in that the Commonwealth land forces were supported by the Commonwealth Navy .

= = = Later history = = =

James Douglas , 2nd Marquess of Douglas , the 12th Earl of Angus , was forced , due to gambling debts accrued by himself and his father , to consolidate his estates . The ruins of Tantallon were sold , in 1699 , to Sir Hew Dalrymple , the President of the Court of Session , who also owned the Barony of North Berwick , the Bass , Fidra and other properties in the area . Dalrymple allowed the castle to decay further , and to be quarried to a certain extent for stone . Sir Walter Scott described the castle at length in his 1808 epic poem Marmion . Some restoration was carried out by the Dalrymples in the late 19th century , and in 1924 , the castle was handed over to the UK Government 's Office of Works by Dalrymple 's descendant , Sir Hew Hamilton @-@ Dalrymple , Bt . It is now in the care of Historic Scotland , and is a category A listed building and a Scheduled Ancient Monument .