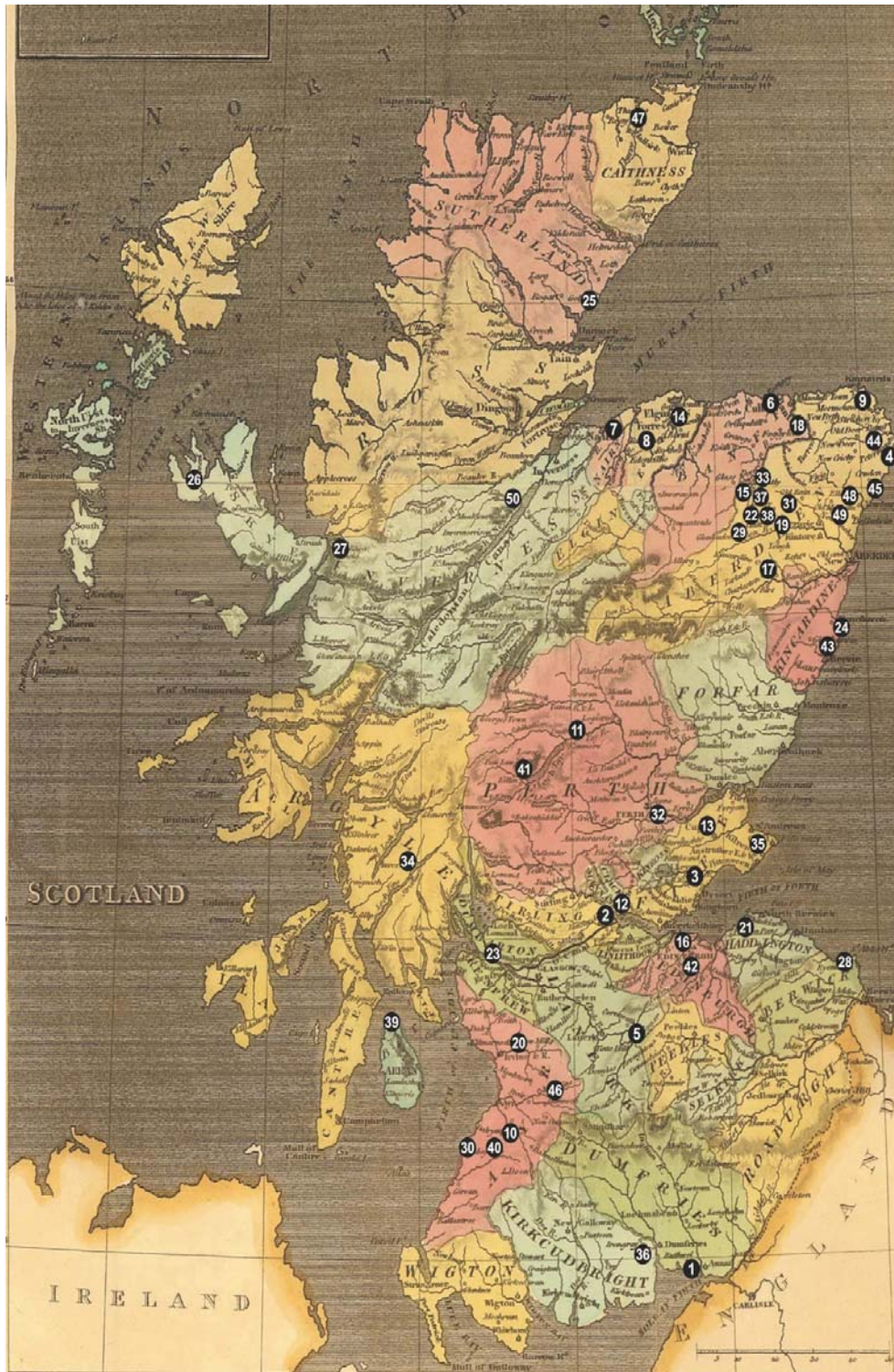


Scottish Castles and Fortified Tower Houses - Then and Now

Hand Coloured Map of Scotland by Benjamin Capper, Published 1808

The Benjamin Capper map has been included to show the general locations of all 50 Castles and Tower Houses illustrated in the book; it is not intended to give definitive place locations. The map will aid the reader in planning a tour of selected Castles and Tower Houses in a given area.

To aid the reader, the relevant UK Ordnance Survey Landranger Map Grid References along with What3words are given on each individual Castle or Tower House page.



Map Reference

1. Abbot's Tower, New Abbey, Dumfries

2. Airth Castle, Airth, Falkirk

3. Balgonie Castle, Glenrothes, Fife
4. Boddam Castle, Boddam, Aberdeenshire
5. Boghall Castle, Biggar, South Lanarkshire
6. Boyne Castle, Portsoy, Aberdeenshire
7. Brodie Castle, Forres, Moray
8. Burgie Castle, Forres, Moray
9. Cairnbulg Castle, Cairnbulg, Aberdeenshire
10. Cassillis Castle, Dalrymple, Ayrshire
11. Castle Menzies, Weem, Aberfeldy, Perthshire
12. Clackmannan Tower, Clackmannanshire
13. Collairnie Castle, Dungog, Fife
14. Coxtan Tower, Lhanbryde, Moray
15. Craig Castle, Rhynie, Aberdeenshire
16. Craigcrook Castle, Edinburgh
17. Craigievar Castle, Alford, Aberdeenshire
18. Craigston Castle, Fintry, Turriff, Aberdeenshire
19. Dalpersie Castle, Tullynessle, Aberdeenshire
20. Dean Castle, Kilmarnock, East Ayrshire
21. Dirleton Castle, Dirleton, East Lothian
22. Druminnor Castle, Rhynie, Aberdeenshire
23. Dumbarton Castle, Dumbarton, Dumbartonshire
24. Dunnottar Castle, Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire
25. Dunrobin Castle, Golspie, Sutherland
26. Dunvegan Castle, Dunvegan, Isle of Skye
27. Eilean Donan Castle, Dornie, Ross
28. Fast Castle, Coldingham, Berwickshire
29. Glenbuchat Castle, Kildrummy, Aberdeenshire
30. Greenan Castle, Ayr, South Ayrshire
31. Harthill Castle, Oyne, Aberdeenshire
32. Huntingtower Castle, Huntingtower, Perthshire
33. Huntly Castle, Huntly, Aberdeenshire
34. Inveraray Castle, Inveraray, Argyll
35. Kellie Castle, Armcroach, East Newk of Fife
36. Kenmure Castle, New Galloway, Kirkcubrightshire
37. Leith Hall Castle, Kennethmont, Aberdeenshire
38. Leslie Castle, Auchleven, Aberdeenshire
39. Lochranza Castle, Lochranza, Isle of Arran
40. Maybole Castle, Maybole, South Ayrshire
41. Meggernie Castle, Fortingall, Perth & Kinross
42. Merchiston Tower, Edinburgh
43. Muchalls Castle, Newtonhill, Aberdeenshire
44. Ravenscraig Castle, Peterhead Aberdeenshire
45. Slains Castle, Cruden Bay, Aberdeenshire
46. Sorn Castle, Sorn, East Ayrshire
47. Thurso Castle, Thurso, Caithness
48. Tolquhon Castle, Pitmedden, Aberdeenshire
49. Udney Castle, Udney Green, Aberdeenshire
50. Urquhart Castle, Drumnadrochit, Inverness-shire

Introduction

As a young boy growing up in North Wales, the magnificent Conwy Castle was my playground. There, during my school holidays, I would pretend I was a knight, following Owain Glyndwr into battle during the Welsh Revolt against the rule of Henry IV of England. My lifelong love of castles clearly began at a very young age.

After leaving North Wales, I served in the Royal Navy for twelve years. This allowed me the opportunity to travel the world and further my interest in history. Whilst my shipmates were using their shore leave to explore local bars and waterfront taverns, I used my leave to visit local castles, fortifications and museums. Visiting such places as Malta, Gibraltar, Cyprus and the Middle East with the Royal Navy was the perfect opportunity for me to follow in the footsteps of the Crusaders, marvelling at the beauty of the castles they built.

In 1975, I moved to Scotland, to work within the oil industry. This move enabled the continuation of my historical research, and it was at this time that I developed what proved to be an enduring and lifelong fascination with Scotland's castles and tower houses, which, at that time, comprised of over 4,000 known sites.

Over a period of in excess of forty years, I have collected many antiquarian engravings and books depicting castles and fortifications across the whole of the United Kingdom, although predominantly in Scotland. When studying engravings from the mid-1700s to late 1800s, I have always been intrigued by the changes from those early drawings to the structures which remain today, both in deterioration and restoration; sadly, they bear witness to the disappearance of some altogether. I made the decision to document these changes by photographing a number of castles from similar angles in order to compare and contrast their evolution and, in some instances, their demise. You will note that, from the 50 castles and fortified tower houses included in this book, some still remain as magnificent stately homes, whilst others have been lovingly restored by their owners and have become stunning family homes.

In 1535, a Parliament of James V of Scotland enacted that *'it is statute and ordained for the safety of men, their goods and gear upon the borders in time of war and all other troublesome times, that every landed man dwelling in the inland or upon the borders having there a hundred-pound land of new extent shall build a sufficient barmkin upon his heritage and lands in the most suitable place, of stone and lime, containing three score foot of the square, one ell thick and six ells high, for the protection and defence of him, his tenants and their goods in troublesome times, with a tower in the same for himself if he thinks it expedient, and that all other landed men of smaller rent and revenue build palisades and great strengths as they please for the safety of themselves, men, tenants and goods, and that all the said strengths, barmkins and palisades be built and completed within two years under the pain.'* From *The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland 1707* KM Brown et al eds (St Andrews 2007 – 2020). Thus, the majority of present day Scottish castles (dating from this point forward) have as their nucleus a fortified tower house.

I made the decision to restore, and bring back to life, a ruined Scottish fortified, tower house, there followed of around five years searching for the perfect ruin, but my search was in vain. A plethora of disappointments followed but, in 1994, I came to the conclusion that the only way in which I would be able to actually achieve my dream would be to design and build my own fortified tower house! My passion in this regard was reignited following an evening spent in the company of John Wetten Brown, a Glasgow-based architect. Thus began the beginning of the realisation of my long-held dream.

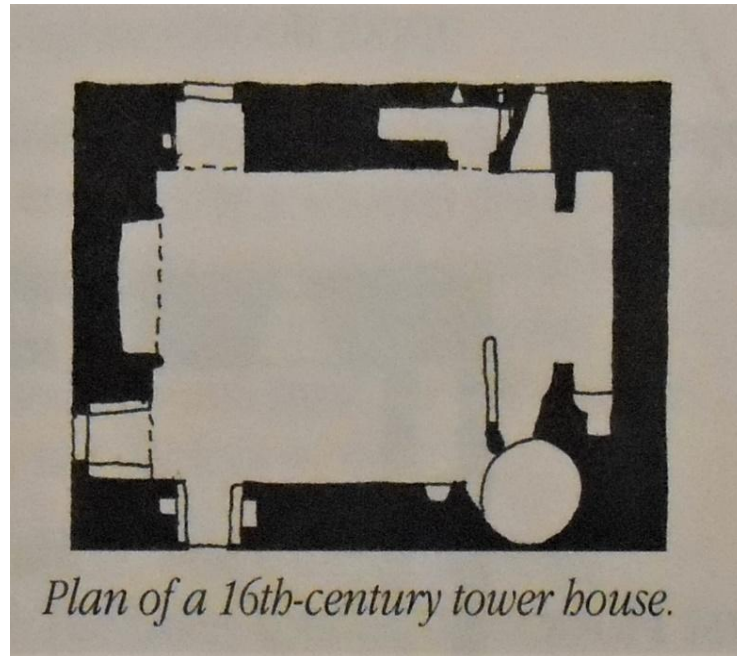
Over the course of the next twenty-five years, I built Craigietocher Tower, a reproduction sixteenth century, Scottish fortified tower house, close to Turriff in Aberdeenshire. Craigietocher Tower has become our much-loved family home



The Development of the Scottish Fortified Tower House.

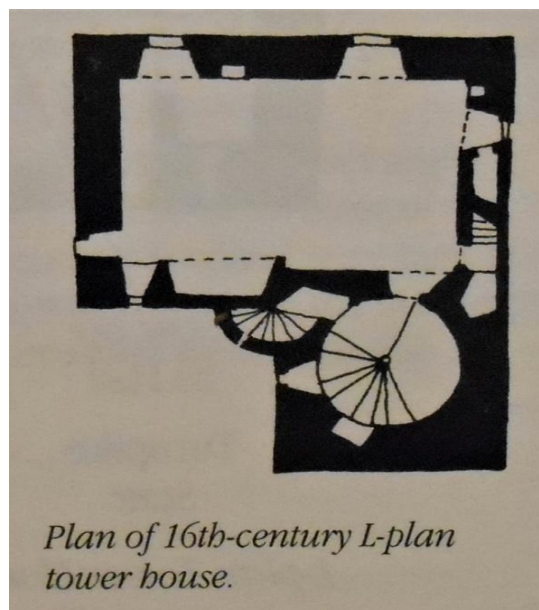
Initially, the fortified tower house was built to protect the laird, his land, livestock, and people from the possibility of attack from border reivers and other hostile Scottish Clans during the early fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

A tower house of the latter fifteenth and sixteenth centuries would have been a basic oblong building of 4 to 5 floor levels, with the entrance doorway sited at first floor level; the ground floor was usually a vaulted cellar being accessed via a trapdoor from the first floor level.



Coventry, Martin

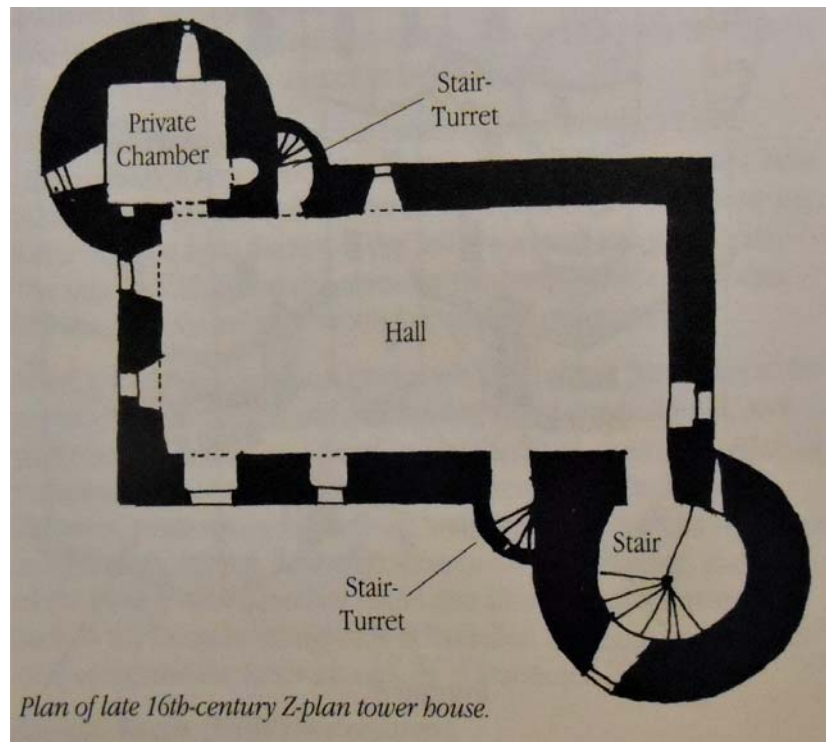
With the passage of time and lessening hostilities, the tower house concept was revised in order to provide more comfort for its occupants, whilst still retaining the ability to defend the Laird and his people when and if necessary. The result was what is commonly called an L-plan tower house. The entrance door, often at first-floor level, was now usually at ground-floor level at the re-entrant angle, with protection being afforded by gun loops.



Coventry, Martin

Scottish Castles and Fortified Tower Houses - Then and Now

The beginning of the seventeenth century saw the tower house becoming more of a family home rather than merely a defensive structure. Thereafter, further additions, such as additional round or square towers, were added to form the Z-plan shape.



Coventry, Martin

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Abbot's Tower

Abbot's Tower, a late sixteenth century tower house, situated near New Abbey, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland, was built by the Abbot of Sweetheart Abbey. In the early 1990s, the tower house was restored and is now used as a private residence.

The tower was originally built in the late sixteenth century as a refuge, by Gilbert Broun, S. O. Cist., the last Abbot of the Cistercian Sweetheart Abbey. Despite the Abbey's suppression during the Scottish Reformation, Broun continued to uphold the Roman Catholic faith until 1605 when he was arrested and ultimately exiled.

Abbot's Tower is an 'L' Plan Tower House, which originally measured 28.75 by 23.6 feet, with a short staircase wing extending north 8.5 feet. Each of its random rubble walls was about 4 feet thick, having just one room on each storey. Each room had a fireplace at one end and a garderobe in the south corner. By 1892, The tower house was in a ruinous state, although portions of the surviving walls still remained, some of which were 32 feet in height. Although the staircase and west walls remain substantially complete, with the partial collapse of the other walls, the high-quality ashlar quoins and carved masonry have been removed.

Remnants of outbuildings, together with portions of what were believed to be foundations of the barmkin walls were revealed by archaeological investigations which took place in the early 1900s. Restoration of the tower house and, thereafter, conversion into a private residence was affected in the 1990s. As at 2020, the current owners of the tower house were offering Bed and Breakfast facilities.

Photo, Phill Plevey.

Engraving, Francis Grose from *The Antiquities of Scotland* by Francis Grose, published by S. Hooper, London 1797.

GB Grid Reference: NX972666.

What3words – Master Claw Husay

Scottish Castles and Fortified Tower Houses - Then and Now



Drawn by J. P. Neale

Engraved by H. Wallis

AIRTH CASTLE.
STIRLINGSHIRE.



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Airth Castle

Airth Castle overlooks the village of Airth and the River Forth in the Falkirk area of Scotland. Traditionally, its origins date back to a simple defensive tower said to have been built there by Fergus de Erth (Airth) in the years prior to 1300. The oldest part of the castle is called Wallace's Tower and commemorates a raid on the castle, at the time in English hands, by William Wallace, to rescue his uncle who was imprisoned there. By 1488, the castle was in the possession of the Bruce family. During their ownership, the castle was attacked by James III, resulting from their support for James IV's claim to the throne, and the old tower was substantially rebuilt after this date. The addition of the second wing, forming the 'L', and numerous other changes took place in 1581.

Today, Airth Castle has become a bespoke hotel, part of which comprises of the castle itself. The castle now has two very distinctive faces; from the south, it appears to be a traditional L-plan tower house whilst, from the north, all that can be seen is the baronial style mansion, which was built to fill the arms of the 'L' in the early 1800s.

Airth Castle is reputed to be haunted, and reported phenomena include sightings of a nanny with two young children, who are all said to have died during a fire at the castle. It is said that the sounds of children playing can be heard in rooms 3, 4, 9 and 23. and heavy footsteps can be heard outside room 14, which suddenly cease and disappear. There have also been reports of cries and screams being heard, which are believed to be those of a maid who was attacked and left to die by her master. In addition, a ghost dog with a predilection for biting ankles is believed to roam the hallways of the castle, with a groundsman purporting to haunt the lower floor.

Photo, Michal Szulc-Michalak.

Engraving, Views of the Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen in England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. Published by J P Neale 1820.

GB Grid Reference: NS 90007 86834.

What3words – Stormy Inversion Silver