

IV.

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF BRAEMAR AND CORGARFF CASTLES, 1746.

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Dr Douglas Simpson has dealt at great length with the buildings of these barracks after the '45 (*Proceedings Soc. Ant. Scot.*, 1926: lxi. 48-103). Further details about the cost of these structures are contained in an Ordnance Expense Ledger, preserved at the Public Record Office, (W.O. 48; 254; pp. 114, 153, 200, 212, 284). The details are scattered over different pages. I have arranged them chronologically:—

1748-9, Feb. 4.	John Adams for repairs at "Brae Marr" Castle	£1265	0	0	
1749, Mar. 13.	Col. David Watson empowered to pay George Forbes, Esq., £150 and £50 for lands etc. [at Corgarff?]		200	0	0
1749, May 24.	Alex. Peter for beds to Braemar and Corgarff		64	4	0
1749, Sept. 30.	George Fern for work at Braemar and Corgarff		5	9	8
1749, Sept. 20.	John Adam for work at Braemar		42	9	0
1749, Dec. 1.	Barrack beds at Braemar and Corgarff		48	18	4
1749, Dec. .	Thomas Leslie for keeping beds [at Braemar and Corgarff] in order		28	10	0
1750, Mar. 31.	David Lyon rent of Braemar Castle		14	0	0
1750, June 30.	Thomas Leslie for beds to Braemar and Corgarff		63	10	0
1750, July 1.	George Leslie for stoves at Braemar and Corgarff		93	14	9
1750, Sept. 30.	John Adam for mason-work at Corgarff from June 1, 1748		124	1	5
1750, Sept. 30.	John Adam for mason-work at Braemar from May 1, 1748		214	5	0
1750, Sept. 30.	James Wilson, blacksmith-work at Braemar		16	0	0
1750, Sept. 30.	John Adam, mason-work at Corgarff		124	1	5
1750, Sept. 30.	John Adam for work at Braemar		214	5	0
1750, Dec. 31.	Lt.-Col. David Watson for purchase of Corgarff Castle and land		231	0	4
1750, Dec. 31.	Thomas Leslie for beds		28	10	0
1751, Dec. 31.	Charles Tarrant, overseer		11	10	0
1751, Dec. 31.	Henry More, overseer		55	0	0
1751, Dec. 31.	Thos. Walker, overseer		55	0	0
1752, Jan. 30.	John Leslie for repair of beds at Braemar and Corgarff		31	15	0
1752, Jan. 30.	John Leslie for conveniences at Braemar and Corgarff		100	0	0

I may say that John Adam, George Fern, Henry More, Charles Tarrant, and Thomas Walker, were not local tradesmen. They were also engaged at Fort George and elsewhere.

It was in 1748 that the Farquharsons of Invercauld gave a 99 years' lease to the Crown of Braemar Castle and fourteen acres at £14 sterling a year. When the soldiers left it is not clear. But it fell into bad repair and the question came up before the Board of Ordnance in 1807, when difficulties occurred about the terms of the agreement with the Government which I have not been able to find. On 8th May 1807, the Board of Ordnance wrote to Lt.-Gen. Morse (W.O. 55; 818):—

“Sir,—Lieut.-Gen. Sir Charles Ross of Balnagowan having on the part of Mr James Farquharson, the proprietor of Braemar Castle [his brother, who had married Catherine Farquharson, the heiress of Invercauld and had adopted her name], consented to the stipulation in which that building was to be given up, and requested that the relinquishment might take place on Whitsunday next. I have the Board's commands to desire you will communicate the above to the commanding Royal Engineer of Scotland in person on the part of the Ordnance to meet the gentleman to be appointed by Mr Farquharson for the purpose of ascertaining the state of the Castle at the time when it is delivered up, of which an account must be sent to the Board.”

The “Commanding Royal Engineer” at the moment was Captain Birch, at Fort George, and he arranged for Captain Cardew, on 25th May 1807, to meet “the person appointed by Captain Farquharson, and to examine and report on the Castle.” I do not know the name of Farquharson's representative, but Cardew sent in a very interesting account of his inspection as follows: -

Ground floor.—This consists of a black hole, a small stone room and dungeon, which are in a tolerable state of repair.

1st floor—consists of two apartments, viz. one large room and one small ditto. The rooms are exceedingly damp, and I am informed the rain is admitted at the chimnies and even the walls. The plastering is broken in some places and the floor partly decayed. There are no locks on the inside doors and some of the glass is broken.

2nd floor—consists of two similar apartments to those above. These are in a worse state than those on the first floor both with respect to the floors and plastering.

3rd floor—consists of two similar apartments. These are in much the same state as the first floor, with the addition that the ceiling is cracked in many places.

4th floor.—consists of two similar apartments. The large room is in the same state as that on the first floor, but the small one is in good condition.

Turrets.—The turrets admit the rain which has quite destroyed the floors, and the doors are unserviceable.

Staircase.—The steps of the staircase are many of them out of repair.

Roof.—The slating of the roof is entirely gone, but the timbers are sound.

Walls.—There is a slight crack in the east side of the castle wall, which goes nearly from the top to the bottom of the building, but by inquiry I find it has been in the same state for twenty years past. The rough casting on the outside is in a bad state and in many places quite gone. The surrounding wall is cracked in three different places and the east side is likely to come down unless speedily repaired.

General Observations.—It appears evident that the great defect of the inside of the building has been produced from the roof being unsound and the rough casting on the outside of the wall being in many places taken off by the frost; and, if the building is not made weather-proof by reslating the roof, serious consequences are to be dreaded. From the excessive damp it is now scarcely habitable.

The chimnies, too, smoke to such a degree that the whole of the apartments are quite black with it.

The vague character of the agreement between the Farquharsons and the Government is indicated in the covering letter by Birch (7th June 1807), who said that the report would be signed by Farquharson at Edinburgh:—

“I, in consequence, applied to Captain Farquharson to do so, but he being on the point of leaving for Braemar, he wished to take the report with him to verify it and, if he found it correct, he said he would transmit it to the Board with his signature joined to that of Captain Cardew. He, Captain Farquharson, finds occasion to enter into some correspondence with the Board on the subject of the present state of the Castle, which from its having been suffered to fall so much into ruin, contrary to the former agreement, he thinks he cannot be expected to put it into a state of repair and retain it in the same agreeable to the present agreement, which when he entered into he was not aware of the state of the Castle.”

What the upshot of it all was I do not know, for there seems to be no more correspondence in the Ordnance papers about the subject.