

Their origins are the stuff of legend. The Forbeses emerged as a powerful influence in the north east, producing great warriors and men of faith. They were the victims of one of Scotland's most infamous massacres. The Forbeses not only left us fine castles, but did much to preserve the memory of those who fell at Culloden.



THE FORBESSES DID MUCH TO PRESERVE THE MEMORY OF THOSE WHO FELL AT CULLODEN

Forbes Clan tartan

Corgarff Castle



Tolquhon Castle



FORBES SITES

The Forbeses justly earned themselves a reputation as **doughty defenders of their castles and their country.**

According to one tradition the roots of this Aberdeenshire family lie with a character called Ochochar who, legend says, killed a ferocious bear in the Braes of Forbes.

During the Wars of Independence with England Sir Alexander de Forbes was charged with holding Urquhart Castle.

In 1303 the army of King Edward I 'Hammer of the Scots' laid siege to the powerful fortress by Loch Ness.

Despite determined resistance the castle fell and Sir Alexander was killed in the aftermath.

Urquhart Castle changed hands several times during these long wars.

During the 16th century the lonely moorland castle of Corgarff became the focus of terrible events which caused horror even in an age well used to bloodshed.

In 1571 while the laird was away their enemy Adam Gordon arrived determined to capture the castle from his wife, Lady Margaret.

She refused to yield.

Enraged, Gordon and his men set fire to the castle killing Lady Margaret and all the servants and children within.

The events are recalled in the traditional ballad of 'Edom o' Gordon' which has the lines:

*Gi' up your house, ye fair lady,
Gi' up your house to me,
Or I sall burn yourself therein,
Bot and your babies three.*

While exactly who built Corgarff is unclear it probably dates from around 1550 and may have been the work of John Forbes of Towie, who was granted the lands by Lord Elphinstone. After the final Jacobite rising of 1745-6, it was converted to a government army base, part of a plan to stamp out Jacobite activity in the highland.

In the 19th century it was garrisoned again by Redcoats whose job was to help revenue officers track down illicit whisky stills.

ARCHANGEL'S BIRTHPLACE

Druminnor was the seat of the Forbesees for 500 years until 1770. It may date from 1271 when Alexander III granted the lands to Duncan Forbes.

The family gradually embellished the castle and in 1456 James, 2nd Lord Forbes received royal permission to fortify the tower of 'Drumynour'.

Known as Castle Forbes, it was the probable birthplace of John Forbes (1570/1-1606).

The son of an ardent Protestant, he converted to Catholicism, went to Europe to become a Capuchin monk and was renamed Archangel.

The Capuchins were renowned for opposing Protestantism.

When plague broke out in the Flanders town of Waasmunster, Archangel tended the sick but fell ill and died.

Such was his reputation for piety that there were calls to have him beatified.



Fyvie Castle

Urquhart Castle



DUNCAN FORBES OF CULLODEN RAISED THE MEMORIAL CAIRN WHICH IS THE LARGEST MEMORIAL ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

CULLODEN MOOR

Scots of many clans fell at Culloden, fighting in both the Jacobite and government armies.

Bonnie Prince Charlie spent his final nights before the battle at a country house requisitioned from his enemy Duncan Forbes of Culloden.

Forbes helped keep many Scots loyal to the Hanoverians but tried to curb reprisals against the Highlanders after the uprising was crushed.

In 1881 another Duncan Forbes of Culloden raised the Memorial Cairn which is the largest memorial on the battlefield.

Around seven metres tall it stands halfway between where the two forces lined up in 1746.

He also marked the graves of the clans and the Well of the Dead where the body was found of MacGillivray of Dunmaglass, leader of the Clan Chattan regiment which lost 350 men.

TOLQUHON

Sir William Forbes was a man of vision – renowned for being enlightened, cultured and good company.

In 1584, of advanced years and poor health, he embarked on a major project to rebuild his modest tower house and create something altogether more grand.

Six years of work resulted in one of the finest lordly residences of its time – and though ruined Tolquhon Castle remains highly picturesque.

Forbes, the 7th laird, invited James VI to visit shortly after it was completed.

In 1589 he started another project, to create a fine memorial tomb in the south aisle of the kirk in Tarves for him and his wife, Elizabeth Gordon.

The tomb features charming portrait statuettes of the laird and his wife.

FORBES SITES

- 1 Corgarff Castle:**
Built by the Forbesees of Towie around 1550, this lonely tower at the head of Strathdon was the scene of a horrific event in 1571 when Margaret Forbes refused to hand it over to men sent by her powerful neighbour, Adam Gordon of Auchindoun. This led to her death and that of the other 23 occupants
- 2 Craigievar Castle:**
The Forbes family lived here from 1610 to 1963 when they gave the castle to the National Trust for Scotland.
- 3 Culloden:**
Duncan Forbes of Culloden raised the memorial cairn which now stands on the battlefield
- 4 Fyvie Castle:**
One of the five towers is associated with the Forbes-Leith family
- 5 Tolquhon Castle:**
Sir John Forbes married Marjorie Preston from whom the old tower is named; William Forbes built the rest from 1584 to 1589.
- 6 Urquhart Castle:**
Alexander Forbes was killed defending Urquhart Castle against the forces of Edward I.



Key to sites

- Historic Scotland
- National Trust Scotland
- Historic Houses Association

Culloden

Corgrarff Castle

Inside Urquhart Castle

