



GORDON CASTLE
SCOTLAND

The History





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the history people

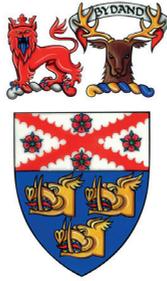
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Professor C. Hood p. 4 (bottom).



Welcome

Whatever the reason you have come to pick up this book, we hope you will find it interesting and informative. If you have Gordon roots, it tells you a little about the significant role Gordon Castle had in your history and indeed about the history of the castle itself. If you are a keen garden historian, snippets of fascinating information is contained within, including the central role played by one extraordinary gardening family.

If you want to see how the garden will develop, it highlights the new and amazing contemporary design by Chelsea Gold medal winner, Arne Maynard.

We hope there is something in here for everyone.

The family has been at this very special place since the fifteenth century and there is a little piece in the book as to how it now falls to us to continue its amazing story.

We hope you enjoy reading it.



Angus

Angus and Zara Gordon Lennox

Zara

Gordon Castle

was once described as the "most magnificent edifice north of the Forth" and in its heyday it was one of the grandest houses in Scotland.

The Gordon family were first given the Forest of Enzie by King David II of Scotland. In 1479, George Gordon 2nd Earl of Huntly, began constructing the original Castle Gordon which was often known until the eighteenth century as Boggieth or Bog o' Gicht (*pronounced Gicht and meaning 'Windy Bog'*).

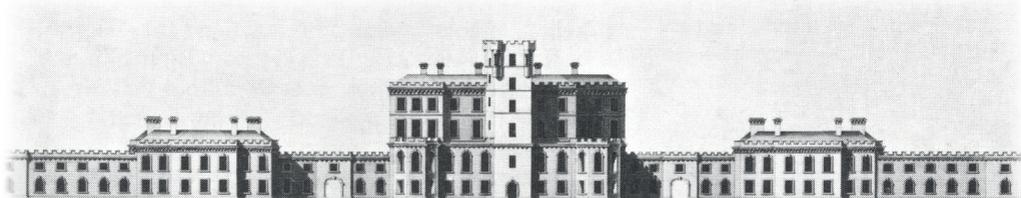


Gordon Castle ca. 1672

The 4th Earl of Huntly extended the castle, turning it into a magnificent Renaissance mansion, probably based on the Scottish Z-plan. It was engraved (*above*) by John Slezer in 1672. The old castle, had it survived, would have been one of the finest Renaissance style buildings in Scotland. Richard Franck in his Northern Memoirs described the castle in the middle of the seventeenth century:

Boggieth, the Marquis of Huntly's palace all built of stone facing the ocean, whose fair front worthily deserves an Englishman's applause for her lofty and majestic towers and turrets that storm the air and seemingly make dents in the very clouds.

In 1769, Alexander, 4th Duke of Gordon commissioned the architect, John Baxter, to rebuild the castle on a monumental scale.



The 4th Duke and his wife, the celebrated beauty and society hostess, Jane Maxwell, entertained many important guests here including Robert Burns who wrote a poem 'Castle Gordon' by way of a thank you for the hospitality he had received.

The principal rooms in the castle were located on the south front (below) with the Drawing Room and Dining Room being on the first floor either side of the central tower. The family apartment occupied most of the rest of the central block and there was a chapel in the east wing.



The south front of Gordon Castle, ca. 1900

Following the death of the 5th Duke of Gordon in 1836, the castle and the estate passed to his nephew, Charles Lennox, 5th Duke of Richmond, whose English seat was Goodwood, and it was under these Gordon Lennoxes that the castle enjoyed its heyday.

During the tenure of the 6th Duke of Richmond (*from 1860 to 1903*) and during that of his son, the 7th Duke (*from 1903 to 1928*), Gordon Castle became an important gathering place for society and the Prince of Wales (*later King George V*) was a regular visitor to the castle. The family would generally arrive in late July or early August, after the end of the racing at Goodwood and stay in Scotland through to the autumn, normally returning to London ahead of the parliamentary year recommencing in November.

During the First World War, the castle was used as a military hospital and, as the photograph below shows, many of the soldiers treated here were Gordon Highlanders.



Military hospital staff and soldiers

The First World War affected the 7th Duke of Richmond's own family profoundly. In the early weeks of the War, in November 1914, his youngest son, Lord Bernard Gordon Lennox was killed at Ypres. Then, in the final days of the Russian Campaign in 1919, his eldest grandson, Lord Settrington, was also killed in action.

Life at the castle was never quite the same although some traditional features continued. Most notable among these was the Gordon Castle Highland Games which was a fixture during the 7th Duke's time and would

often attract between twenty and thirty thousand visitors. The Highland Games were revived in 2011 and take place in May each year.



Gordon Castle Highland Games

The 8th Duke had a relatively short tenure (1928 –1935) but he tried many innovations to make the estate successful. His early death, coming only seven years after his father's, resulted in double Death Duties. His son, Freddie, 9th Duke of Richmond and Gordon reluctantly took the decision to part with the castle and estate, handing it over to the Crown Estates in lieu of tax. It seemed like the end of the line.

During the Second World War, the castle was occupied by troops, save for designated parts of it in which the Archives and the Wine Cellar were located. The years of occupation by the military and successive harsh winters were not kind to the structure and by the late 1940s the enormous central block was in a poor condition with raising damp, wet rot and dry rot.



'Geordie'

In the early 1950s, the Crown Estate decided to sell the castle and the immediate policies. They were purchased by Sir George (Geordie) Gordon Lennox (left), the son of Lord Bernard who had been killed in action at Ypres. Geordie and his wife Nan took the difficult decision to demolish the central block. They converted the old east wing into a comfortable family home.

Gordon Castle today, reduced in scale but still an elegant country house



The Gordons and The Gordon Lennox Family



The Gordon family took its name from the lands of Gordon near Kelso in the eastern Scottish Borders, where they originated in the middle of the twelfth century. In 1296, Sir Adam Gordon paid homage to Edward I at Elgin, in the English King's partially successful attempt to conquer Scotland; but raids on Sir Adam's home in Berwickshire subsequently caused him to support Robert the Bruce. King Robert granted him land in Aberdeenshire, Banffshire and Morayshire. These included the old Castle of Strathbogie at Huntly.

Sir Adam's great-grand-daughter, Elizabeth became the heiress of the Gordon Lands and when she married, Sir Alexander Seton, he became Lord Gordon, a Lord of Parliament in Scotland.

Their son, Alexander Seton changed his name to Gordon and in 1449 was created Earl of Huntly. He also rebuilt Huntly Castle. His son, the 2nd Earl, built the first tower house here at Gordon Castle in the Forest of the Enzie, lands which the family traditionally held.

George Gordon, the 6th Earl of Huntly was much involved in the political and military intrigues of Scotland at the end of the sixteenth century. He became a great favourite of King James VI and was, in 1599, created Marquess of Huntly, Earl of Enzie and Lord Gordon of Badenoch.

The Gordon family was one of the few Scottish families to have remained Roman Catholic at the time of the Reformation and their protection meant Catholicism thrived in the surrounding district. George Gordon, the 4th Marquess of Huntly (1649 – 1716) was extremely loyal to the House of Stuart and became 1st Duke of Gordon. As a Catholic, educated in a seminary in France and gave steadfast support to the Jacobite cause after the overthrow of King James VII and II in 1688.

The family were still Jacobites at the time of the 1715 Uprising. However, under the influence of Lady Henrietta Mordaunt, wife of Alexander, 2nd Duke of Gordon (*himself a Jacobite*) the family gradually became Protestant with the Duchess taking the children, very publicly to the Protestant Parish Church the Sunday after her (*Catholic*) husband died. The family thereafter professing their loyalty to the Crown at the time of the 1745 Uprising.



Alexander, 4th Duke of Gordon

By this time, the early eighteenth century, Fochabers and Gordon Castle was the family's principal seat. The Dukes were often referred to as *Gudeman o' the Bog* or more grandly the *Cock o' the North* and that latter title was perhaps most closely associated with Alexander, 4th Duke of Gordon (1743 – 1827) who was Duke for 75 years. It was he who rebuilt the Castle, planned out the new village of Fochabers, had the Walled Garden built and made many other improvements.

The Cock o' the North was also noted for his tempestuous marriage to Jane Maxwell which ended in a bitter and acrimonious estrangement after his mistress (*and subsequently his second wife*), Jean Christie gave birth to a child.

Alexander's son George became the 5th and last Duke of Gordon. He was responsible for raising the Regiment which would later become the Gordon Highlanders and with his father is believed responsible for the legalising of whisky production for his tenant George Smith at Glenlivet.

George and his wife, Elizabeth Brodie, had no children and on his death in 1836, the Dukedom became extinct. The title of Marquess of Huntly went to distant cousin along with the chieftainship of the Clan. Gordon Castle, however, passed to the late Duke's nephew, Charles Lennox, 5th Duke of Richmond whose principal seat was Goodwood in Sussex. He added the ancient name of Gordon to his own.



7th Duke of Richmond and Gordon
~ this portrait can be found within the
Gordon Castle Octagonal Hall

In 1876, Charles Gordon Lennox, 6th Duke of Richmond petitioned Queen Victoria to create him Duke of Gordon. This followed his work as President of the Board of Trade and Lord President of the Council in Disraeli's administration. So, in 1876, the Gordon Dukedom was revived.

His son, Charles, 7th Duke (1845 – 1928), left, was very highly-regarded locally. The 7th Duke being commemorated as one of the *Famous Fochaberians*. It was he, together with William Baxter, who measured out the land across the River Spey which was to become the site of the famous Baxters of Speyside factory.

It was the 7th Duke's grandson, Sir George Gordon Lennox who re-purchased the Castle and part of the land from the Crown Estates and thus re-established the old link between castle and family which continues today with Sir Geordie's grandson Angus and his family.

Family Tree

GEORGE GORDON
*Marquess of Huntly
& 1st Duke of Gordon*
b 1643 d 1716

m

LADY ELIZABETH HOWARD
d 1732

ALEXANDER
2nd Duke of Gordon
b 1678 d 1728

m

LADY HENRIETTA MORDAUNT
b 1688 d 1760

COSMO
3rd Duke of Gordon
b 1720 d 1752

m

LADY CATHERINE GORDON
b 1725 d 1779

ALEXANDER
4th Duke of Gordon
b 1743 d 1827

m

1. **JANE MAXWELL** b 1748 d 1812
2. **JEAN CHRISTIE** b 1770 d 1824

LADY CHARLOTTE GORDON
b 1768 d 1842

m

CHARLES LENNOX
4th Duke of Richmond
d 1819

CHARLES GORDON LENNOX
5th Duke of Richmond
b 1791 d 1860

m

LADY CAROLINE PAGET
b 1796 d 1874

CHARLES GORDON LENNOX
*6th Duke of Richmond
and 1st of Gordon*
(*Second Creation*) b 1818 d 1903

m

FRANCES HARRIET GREVILLE
b 1824 d 1887

CHARLES GORDON LENNOX
*7th Duke of Richmond
and Gordon*
b 1845 d 1928

m

1. **AMY MARY RICARDO**
d 1879
2. **ISABEL CRAVEN**
d 1887

**LORD BERNARD
GORDON LENNOX**
b 1878 d 1914

m

HON. EVELYN LOCH
b 1879 d 1944

**LT-GEN SIR GEORGE
GORDON LENNOX**
b 1908 d 1988

m

NANCY DARELL
b 1909 d 1994

**MAJOR GEN BERNARD
GORDON LENNOX**
b 1932

m

SALLY-ROSE WARNER

ANGUS GORDON LENNOX
b 1964

m

1. **CAMILLA PILKINGTON** b 1966
2. **ZARA LEGGE-BOURKE** b 1966

The Walled Garden

There has been a walled garden at Gordon Castle for several centuries with the first one being located much closer to the castle itself on the south front. After the castle was rebuilt in 1770, the landscape around it was also redesigned. It is probable that Richard Robinson was responsible for this, removing very formal gardens and creating a park landscape in the style of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown.

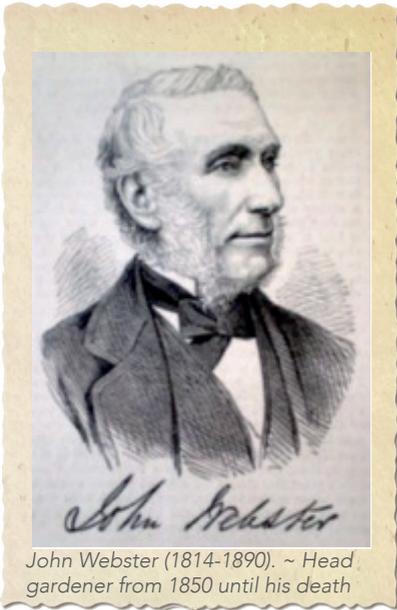
The next phase of the 4th Duke's improvements involved the relocation of the entire village of Fochabers. Originally, Old Fochabers was located where the northern portion of the Walled Garden is today and just outside the garden can be seen the Jougs or Mercat (Market) Cross for the old village.

With Fochabers relocated further to the south, it enabled the creation the Walled Garden as we see it today. It is almost certain that construction of the walls took place between 1803 and 1804, as the archives contain many references such as "*payment to William Logie for freight and expenses of a cargo of stones from Burghead for coping to the garden wall*".



The Jougs or Mercat Cross of Old Fochabers

Lakeside House (*just beyond the Walled Garden*) was constructed in the early 1800s with the Gardener's House being built in 1811. From the beginning of the 1820s through until 1938 the Walled Garden was filled with herbaceous borders, mixtures of perennials and annuals and produced huge quantities of fruit and vegetables.



John Webster (1814-1890). ~ Head gardener from 1850 until his death

In 1850, John Webster (1814 – 1890) was appointed as Head Gardener. His reign would last for forty years and he would be succeeded by his son Charles who remained in post until 1937. The impact that Webster – father and son – had on the garden and the wider policies was huge.

One of Webster's first tasks was to reinstate a formal flower garden at the castle itself. In this, he was assisted by Sir Joshua Jebb (1793 – 1863) who is otherwise best-remembered for designing the parkland around the Broadmoor Asylum. Together, they created a lush and elaborate garden.



Gordon Castle from the Flower Garden



The Walled Garden gate

John Webster also established an extensive orchard beyond the Walled Garden, in front of Lakeside House and here grew a wide variety of different fruiting apples including *Warner's King*, *Newton Wonder*, *Bramley's Seedling*, *Lane's Prince Albert*, *Bailey Neilson*, *Golden Beurre*, *Worcester Permain*, *The Beauty of Moray*, *Northern Dumpling* and *The Gordon Castle Plum* (both propagated here).

After Webster's death in 1890, his son Charles succeeded him as head gardener. During his long tenure, the Walled Garden at Gordon Castle became famous for the range of fruit grown. In addition to the orchard, further apple trees were trained on espaliers in the Walled Garden with there being somewhere in the region of 250 trees around the walls. Soft fruit production was also one of Charles Webster's specialities, particularly gooseberries and redcurrants and, he oversaw the cultivation of figs, nectarines, peaches and greengages all in the open air.

An article in the *Gardeners' Magazine* from 1903 gives an account of the garden at this time:

"Proceeding to next to the extensive fruit and kitchen gardens, and vineries, a very profitable hour is spent in examining their well-cultivated quarters, and the excellent crops to be seen on all sides. These gardens have long been famous for the abundance and high quality of the fruits they produce; Mr. Webster can show many varieties in abundance. The same fruitful feature may be observed in the vineries and other glass structures, which are all fully stored with the fruits, flowers and plants in demand in the ducal establishment. Everything presents the appearance of skilful and successful management, and gives much pleasure to all who have the good fortune to visit the gardens. Leaving the gardens, the walk winds past the ornamental ponds".†

†Kelly, W. *Gordon Castle and its Gardens*. *Gardeners' Magazine*, 22 August 1903.

Gordon Castle Gardens were much visited during Charles Webster's time and he was widely acclaimed as a fruit grower.



Left Charles Webster and his family outside Gardener's Cottage ca. 1910

"...Not the least interesting part of the afternoon's visit was the inspection of what is known as the fruit room in the castle grounds. It is a thatched house which, surrounded by espaliers higher than the walls of the building, represents the last of the dwellings in what was old Fochabers... In this little darkened building, used as a store room for fruit, there were laid out on the table a tempting display of and lovely apples (all of uncommon size, some weighing a pound each) ...It is impossible to enumerate anything like the hundreds of sorts of apples that Mr. Webster has grafted, budded and reared with such fastidious care in espaliers, cordons and standards".††



Apple Cottage ~ the 'fruit room' for the Estate

†† 'Fruit growing in Moray: Gordon Castle Orchards'.
Elgin Courant and Courier, 31 October 1924.

These were the final 'glory days' for the Castle and Gardens with huge production of fruit and vegetables and *"masses of lovely roses, still blossoming profusely, and magnificent beds of antirrhinum and a magnificent display of sweet peas, still lingering in their glory"*.



The Walled Garden and Gardener's Cottage in the early 1930

Following the death of the 8th Duke of Richmond and Gordon, the decision was taken, reluctantly, to part with Gordon Castle and the Estate in lieu of Death Duties and the whole property was handed over to the Crown Estates in 1938.

After the Second World War, the eight acres of the garden were given over to commercial raspberry growing. This gathered momentum with the purchase of the castle and its policies by Sir George Gordon Lennox (*grandson of the 7th Duke*) in the early 1950s. He and his wife, Nan, developed a successful market gardening operation. This was eventually discontinued in the 1980s and the Walled Garden was turned to a low-maintenance area but the wall fruit trees continued to be well-tended. The garden was overseen by Willie Robertson who worked here from 1946 until 2014.

In 2008, the running of the Castle and Estate fell to current owners, Angus and Zara Gordon Lennox. The development of the Walled Garden has been their most recent and ambitious focus and the addition of the restaurant and shop is part of this ongoing vision.

The ambitious design for the 'new' Walled Garden has been created by Arne Maynard, the world-renowned garden designer. Arne had a very clear vision for the garden from the start, combining innovative design with respect for tradition. He has described the work at Gordon:

This is a hugely romantic and ambitious project with one of the largest walled gardens in Scotland. This family run property is being given a new lease of life and will be a very exciting collaboration of highly respected plants people. The garden will become a destination for visitors, young and old, to explore, admire and learn about the art of kitchen gardening. In addition, a range of luxurious products is being made using ingredients grown in the garden.

The new garden reverses some of the aspects familiar in historically laid-out walled gardens of this kind. At the heart of the new garden are the vegetable and produce beds with herb ribbons around the central dipping pool. This is in contrast to the historical design which ensured the beds along the main axial paths in the garden were luscious herbaceous borders which would be "pleasing" to the Ducal family as they processed through the garden. Crop, vegetable and herb production being tucked away behind these.

The glasshouses were constructed by Mackenzie and Moncur of Edinburgh, one of the most famous manufacturers of hothouses and their work at Gordon Castle is a particularly fine example.



Angus Gordon Lennox, Zara Gordon Lennox & Arne Maynard



For Gordon Castle Walled Garden, the production of crops is central to the entire garden concept and the produce is used both in the restaurant and in many of products sold in the shop and all over the UK.

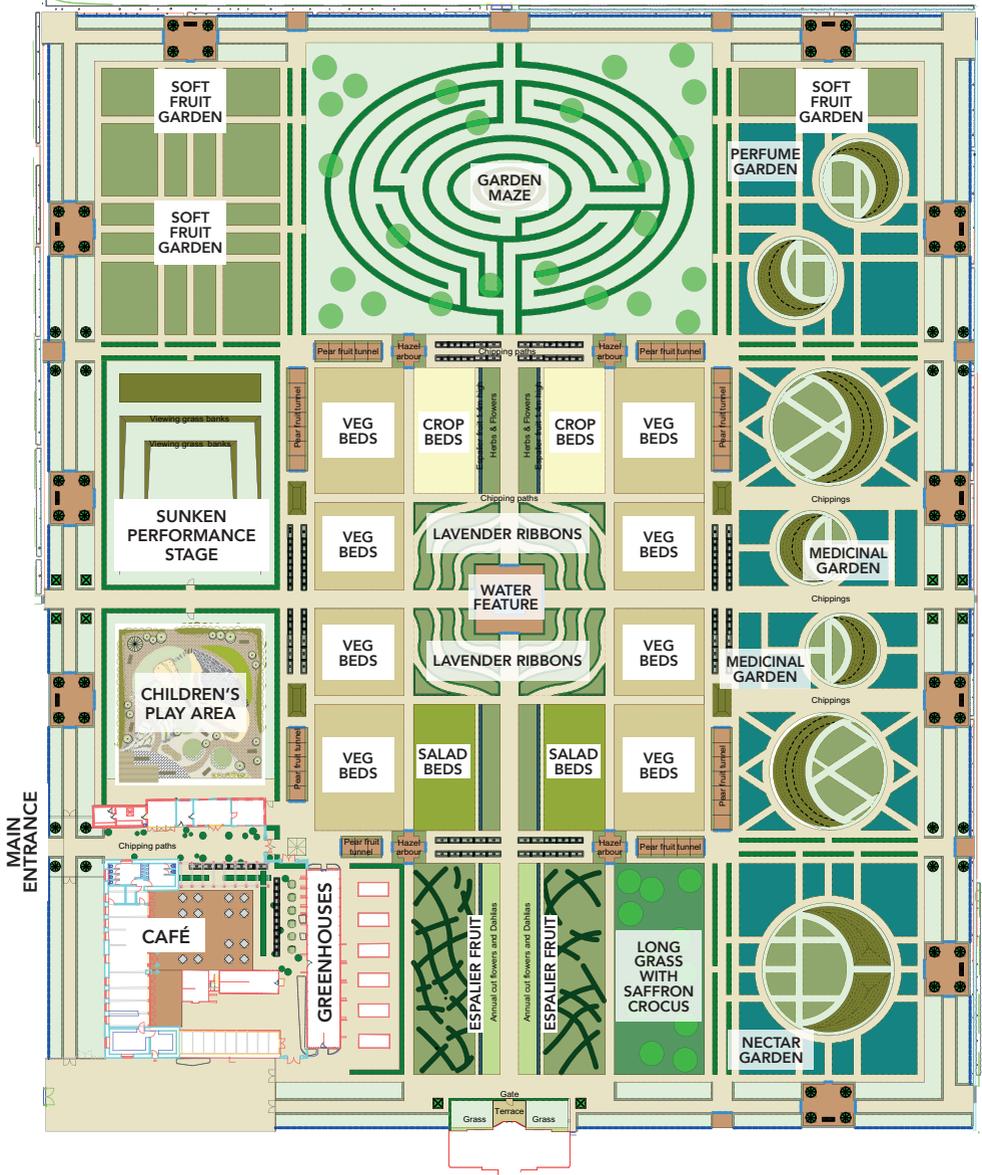
Medicinal, nectar, perfume and soft fruit gardens will all feature in various parts of the garden, with rises and promenades to enable visitors to see all parts of the garden from different perspectives and angles. A labyrinth maze will occupy the southern end of the central part of the garden. There is also a sunken performance area and children's play area on the east side. The play area incorporates stone from the demolished part of Gordon Castle.



The Walled Garden



The Walled Garden



Provenance doesn't get any purer



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Leo dui ut amet, vehicula suspendisse, et malesuada sollicitudin

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