



Discover Portencross Castle

The rise and fall of Portencross Castle

There have been many thousands of castles established in Scotland over time and mainly for defence. During medieval times it was important to fight for ownership and protection of land and for family honour. A great number of these constructions withstood attacks from enemy troops on more than one occasion, but following the Union of Scotland and England in the early 1700s, defending the land became less important. Castles were no longer considered suitable accommodation for noblemen and their families. As a result many castles which had not fallen to enemy troops fell into disrepair and are left ruined.

Portencross Castle fell victim to natural powers not enemy action. Built in the mid 1300s, it stands on a rocky outcrop overlooking the Firth of Clyde. To this day, it remains at its full height and is a three-storey oblong structure in red sandstone with an adjoining four-storey east wing.

The castle originally belonged to the Ross family. The Ross family supported the Comyns against Robert the Bruce during the Scottish Wars of Independence. Returning home victorious, the triumphant King Robert I gifted the castle to the Boyd Family of Kilmarnock. It is thought that his successors - Robert II and Robert III - spent some time at the castle.

Portencross Castle remained in the Boyd family until 1785. During the 1700s it housed French prisoners of war. Tragedy struck, when in 1739, a devastating storm blew in and left the castle without a roof. Local fishermen then used the castle. In 1910 following much decay to the structure of the building, the owners added a concrete slab roof.

The castle remained uninhabited and ruined until local residents formed the Friends of Portencross Castle and worked tirelessly to restore it. It is a Grade A listed building.



Connections with Kings

King Robert II used the castle as a stopping-off point on his journey across the Clyde from Rothesay Castle to his coronation ceremony at Scone Palace in 1371. King Robert II also stayed at Portencross Castle from time to time and he signed a number of Royal Charters (laws) there.

Find out more about Portencross Castle.
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