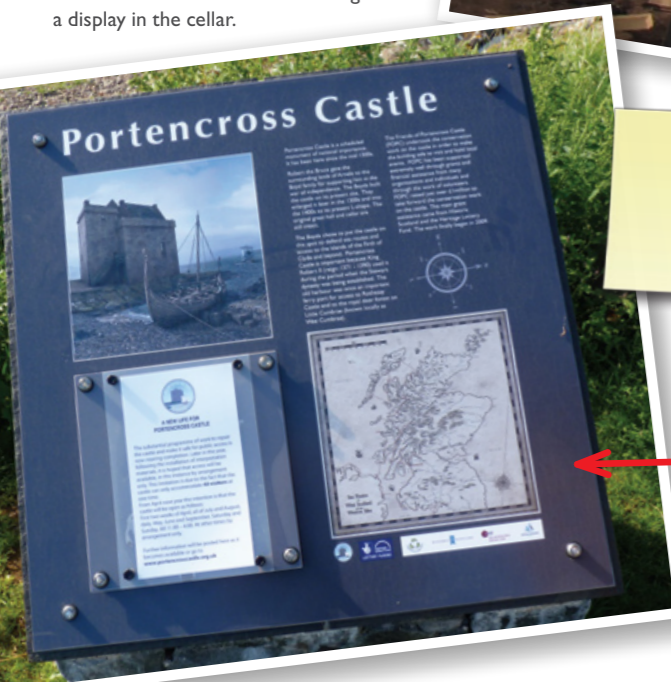


Stunning Displays

In the final phase the castle gained some modern additions. Electricity was installed along with a roof-top webcam pointing directly at Arran. Regulations restrict the number of visitors to the roof to eight at any one time. The webcam allows everyone to see the view from the roof using a display in the cellar.



NEW LIFE FOR PORTENCROSS CASTLE



Castle Signage

MKWdesign created stunning displays for the cellar area and all the signage for the castle, including those on the roof area.

Thanks to the creativity and detailed work of Bob Marshall from BMedia, the drawings we have of how Portencross Castle looked in its heyday leave a marvellous legacy for visitors and future generations to appreciate.

About Portencross Castle

Portencross has been inhabited for thousands of years. An archaeological dig found evidence of an Iron Age settlement on Auldhill, just behind Portencross Castle. The Iron Age lasted from around 800 BC to 100 BC.

Portencross Castle was constructed in three phases starting in 1360. It was the home of a branch of the Boyds. The lands around Portencross were given to the Boyds of Kilmarnock by King Robert I as reward for their help at the Battle of Bannockburn. A number of Royal Charters were signed at the castle and it had close links with King Robert II during that period.

After the 1600s, it was occupied by local fishermen. The roof was destroyed in a gale in January 1739. By the 20th century, the Adams of Auchenames owned the castle. It became a scheduled ancient monument in 1955.

Friends of Portencross Castle

This leaflet was produced by Friends of Portencross Castle (FOPC).

FOPC is a recognised Scottish Charity (No. SC028181) dedicated to conserving the castle and providing access to the building.

In 2007 FOPC was awarded grant support from The Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Scotland and the Architectural Heritage Fund. With additional support from local charities, North Ayrshire Council and many individuals, FOPC was able to raise just over £1 million pounds for the costs of the project.

Grant support does not include maintenance. As a result FOPC has to raise costs for staff, maintenance, education materials, website and overheads. We will remain open with the help of donations and by having events and functions at the castle.

Please donate if you can. You can become a Guardian of Portencross Castle. Find out more from our web site www.portencrosscastle.org.uk or pick up details at the castle during opening hours.



© 2010 Friends of Portencross Castle (FOPC)



The restoration of Portencross Castle began in earnest in 2007 when Friends of Portencross Castle were awarded grant support from The Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Scotland and the Architectural Heritage Fund.

With additional support from local charities, North Ayrshire Council and many individuals, FOPC was able to raise just over £1 million pounds for the costs of the project.

A huge amount of work had to be carried out by way of feasibility studies, tidal studies, archeological assessments and engineering appraisals. FOPC extends its thanks to all those who were involved in this painstaking work.

Stone Engineering, a division of the Ayrshire-based Land Engineering, was the main contractor involved in the restoration of Portencross Castle. Friends of Portencross Castle carefully selected Stone Engineering from a number of contractors for the sensitive construction work involved.

The construction work involved consolidating, repairing and rebuilding the external stonework of the castle and recreating an authentic interior. Finally, the work included installing a range of 21st Century additions required for a modern visitor experience including a rooftop webcam and touch-screen displays.

Using carefully selected materials and traditional construction techniques, Stone Engineering's team of expert stonemasons overcame a number of construction challenges. The result is the transformation of a castle ruin into the impressive building that we see overlooking the Firth of Clyde today.

Work began in March 2009 and was completed in September 2010.

The Contractors and Design Team Rise to the Challenge

The castle's status as a scheduled ancient monument and its location beside the crashing waves of the Firth of Clyde presented Friends of Portencross Castle, its architects Peter Drummond and Gray, Marshall & Associates, the rest of the design team and Stone Engineering's expert craftsmen with a number of unusual challenges.

The first task on site was to erect specialist cantilever scaffolding without fixing onto the listed building to allow the stonemasons to work safely – particularly on the two sides of the castle overlooking the waters of the Clyde.

Maintaining the historic integrity of the original stonework was paramount throughout the restoration. Before each phase of external work could begin, the team spent days photographing and recording the position of stones to ensure they would be replaced in exactly the same position.

The stonemasons – well versed in this method of construction – welcomed the opportunity to work with these traditional materials and techniques, despite the labour intensive nature of the work and the constant threat of disruption from the Scottish weather. This phase also provided excellent experience for the stonemason apprentice who worked throughout the project alongside three experienced workmates.



The Architect



The Challenge Ahead



After a Storm



Stonemason



Roof Before



Roof During

When the external stonework was complete the team turned to the construction of a new lead roof and an extensive viewing platform offering stunning views across the Clyde.



Cantilever Scaffolding



New Roof

As part of the internal work, the contractors fitted a new steel and oak spiral staircase. The original plan was to have it supported by the floor but this had to change when investigations uncovered a 'bottle dungeon' beneath the floor. Instead, the contractors suspended the staircase from the internal beams of the roof.



New Solid Oak Doors

The new doors are made of solid oak with hand-made locks and latches. The internal handrails are made of phosphor bronze.



Stairs to the Roof



Portencross Castle with Scaffolding



Deciding the Archaeological Dig

Archaeologist, Heather James, from Glasgow University was present during all the excavation work in case of the discovery of any historic artefacts. During preparation for the electrical installation two large anchors were uncovered.



Archaeologist

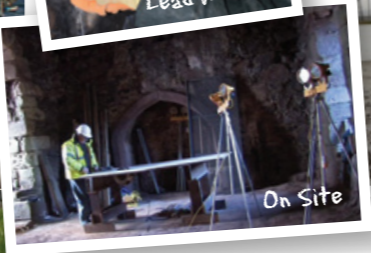
The choice of appropriate materials was also of vital importance. Following a geological survey, six types of stone were identified as being possibilities for restoration use. Stone Engineering sourced samples for the design team and they selected three – Dunhouse buff sandstone for the replacement quoins (cornerstones), Corsehill red sandstone for the replacement wall indents, and St Dees stone for the slab and trough parapet walkways. Caithness stone was selected for the floors of the great hall, kitchen and west garret display area on the roof.



Lead Worker



Progress



On Site