

THE DEED



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Culbrennald Castle, circa 1550,
prior to collapse of Great Hall in 1961

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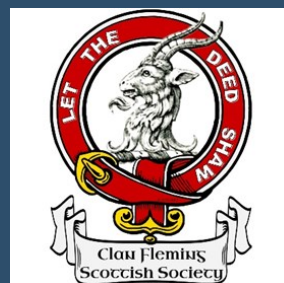


The Newsletter of the Clan Fleming Scottish Society

THE DEED

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Cumbernauld Castle: Yesterday and Today

By James Fleming

The earliest surviving record of Fleming ownership of the Cumbernauld estate dates to a 1315 charter whereby King Robert I (the Bruce) granted to Sir Malcolm Fleming *"the Barony of Kirkintilloch ... the lands of Lenzie and Cummernauld"* in return for Malcolm providing a knight for the king's army and for his service as Sheriff of Dunbarton. The Fleming family retained Cumbernauld for over 600 years.

As the charter mentions, the estate had *"formerly belonged to John Comyn, Knight, and which had been granted to William Comyn by King Alexander previous to 1216"*. John Comyn had been in contention for the crown of Scotland before his rival, Robert the Bruce, murdered him in the Greyfriars church at Dumfries in 1306.



The Comyn family had long held vast estates and wielded immense power in Scotland through their ownership of numerous castles, including a motte and bailey castle at Cumbernauld. It was probably never designed as a residence and may have been a ruin when the Fleming ownership began. So, the Flemings continued to live at Fulwood and Biggar for many years.

Malcolm's grandson Thomas Fleming built Cumbernauld Castle in about 1371 as a new residence, but the expense of building

it caused financial difficulties that forced him to take out a mortgage on Cumbernauld and to sell the earldom of Wigtown. Malcolm Fleming of Biggar, as heir to his cousin, paid out the mortgage and the estate was retained by his descendants thereafter.

The earliest part of the castle was probably a very strong, simple and roughly-built stone tower. It would have been L-shaped, comprising a rectangular block with a wing projecting from one end. A few small timber or stone outbuildings would also have been attached. As time went on, and the power and influence of the family grew, the castle would have been enlarged by the addition of other stone structures, such as the great hall that was used for festive occasions.

The family entertained members of Scotland's royal family at Cumbernauld Castle on many occasions over subsequent centuries. For example, John 2nd Lord Fleming was married to Eupheme Drummond whose sister Margaret was a mistress to King James IV. The king made frequent visits to Cumbernauld to woo her and they had a daughter, Lady Margaret Stewart. In 1502 both sisters died of food poisoning at Drummond Castle.

Mary Queen of Scots visited the castle more than once and was present in January 1562 when the roof of the great hall collapsed, killing 7 or 8 people. Eight years later, during the Marian Civil War, the castle was sacked by Mathew Stewart, 4th Earl of Lennox, regent for his grandson King James VI.

In 1640, with religious fervour raging, eighteen Scottish noblemen met at the castle to sign the Cumbernauld Bond, by which they pledged to defend the country against extreme Presbyterians. At a political level it was an agreement to oppose the policies of the Earl of Argyll who controlled the dominant political faction in Scotland. When Argyll found out about the bond, he wanted to have them all (including Lord Fleming) tried for treason but relented when they agreed to burn the bond.

Ten years later, the Earl of Wigtown was ordered to garrison Cumbernauld Castle but it was, nevertheless, largely destroyed a year later following a siege by Cromwell's General Monck. The remnants were burned to the ground during the rebellion of 1715.

John, 6th Earl of Wigtown, built Cumbernauld House on the site of the former castle in 1731. It was designed by William Adam (1689-1748), the foremost architect in Scotland at the time.

Following the death of the last clan Fleming chief, Charles 7th Earl of Wigtown, the house passed to his niece and heiress, Lady Clementina Fleming. After her death on the first day of 1799, it passed to her grandson Charles Elphinstone-Fleming. His son John eventually owned many more large estates when he succeeded as 14th Lord Elphinstone in 1860. After his death, Cumbernauld passed through the marriage of his sister into the Maude family but it was sold in 1875, ending 660 years of association with the Fleming family and its descendants. The house was sold to the government in 1955 for the development of Cumbernauld new town and has since been subdivided into apartments.



Scottish Halloween Tradition

Adults and children enjoy visiting the many haunted castles all around Scotland. If you're looking for a horrifying experience many castles even have ghost tours!

Edinburgh Castle: Known for its rich history and numerous ghost sightings, a visit to Edinburgh Castle promises to thrill. There are plenty of Halloween 'high-jinks' with a Halloween trail, and dark tales told by ghouls and ghosts. Not far from the castle, you'll find the Edinburgh Dungeons, a full-on sensory experience that will take you back through the centuries. To finish off your Halloween experience, with a ghost bus tour of Edinburgh.

Stirling Castle: With its long history of battles, Stirling Castle has more than a few tales to tell during its Halloween Shenanigans weekend. Suitable for families, with kids that love a bit of Halloween fun!



Glamis Castle: Known for its ghostly legends, Halloween brings a mix of family-friendly storytelling and teen-appropriate tours in the castle after-dark on a selection of dates in October.

[Halloween In Scotland With Kids | Activities, Events & Traditions \(trekkingthedream.com\)](https://www.trekkingthedream.com/)

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