

THE HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE OF MORAY

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In this paper the term 'historic architecture' has been taken, arbitrarily perhaps but conveniently, to cover the period from the early twelfth century onwards when Moray came to be effectively absorbed into the medieval Scottish kingdom, itself being integrated into a pattern of life developed in most parts of Europe in what has sometimes been called 'the medieval renaissance'.

In terms of organisation this pattern involved four major elements. First was the authority of the King of Scots based on royal castles like those of Elgin and Forres under such officers as constables or sheriffs. Second, associated with certain castles, were settlements of merchants and craftsmen that might (as at Elgin and Forres) develop into organised urban communities or *burghs*. Third, in the surrounding countryside, were the defensible dwellings of greater and lesser lords holding lands and authority directly or indirectly from the king and ultimately answerable to him. Fourth was the medieval church, an international organisation under the Pope but enjoying a certain autonomy in each of the countries in which it functioned and closely associated with these other elements at every level.

Kings, Barons, and Burghers

Each element in this 'medieval order' had its distinctive building requirements. For the king control of the previously strongly independent regional dominion of Moray stretching from west of the River Ness to east of the Spey was secured by the building of castles (with associated sheriffs) at Inverness, Nairn, Forres, and Elgin. Beyond the Spey was another at Banff but in civil affairs most of the area there had little direct association with Moray until comparatively recently, while in the west Inverness became the seat of a different and more extensive authority. In ecclesiastical organisation, however, Moray survived to its full traditional extent as a diocese of the medieval church, identifiable from at least 1120.

It was, then, the castle of Elgin that became the chief centre of royal authority here from the 'conquest of Moray' by King David I in 1130; and with the selection of a site nearby as the centre of the diocese in 1224 its dominance in the life of the area became clearly paramount. Like most medieval castle sites that of Elgin made use of a natural feature, the 'Lady Hill', rising steeply to the south of the flood-plain of the River Lossie and commanding on its southern side a level plateau on which an associated burgh could be located. As first planned this seems to have formed a rectangular enclosure some 550 metres long by 250 metres wide with the Castle at its north-west corner and the burgher houses arranged along a single longitudinal street.

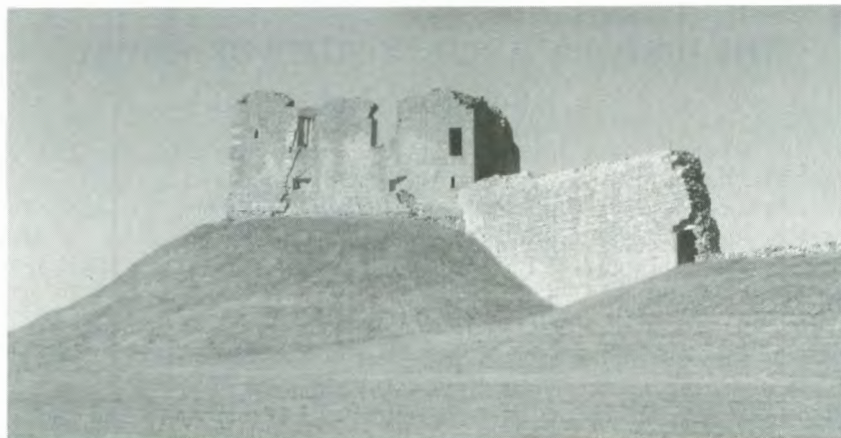


Fig.11.1 Duffus Castle. Fourteenth century work on earlier motte. (E Beaton)

At Forres there was a somewhat similar arrangement but with the castle at the west end, on a low hill protected by the Mosset Burn, and with the burgh enclosure forming a rough ellipse to the east. The arrangement is virtually that of the 'motte and bailey' so characteristic of defensive works of this period, the motte being a mound surmounted by a tower and the bailey an associated annexe on a lower level. Of this — but without any burghal provision — there is a remarkable example at Duffus north of Elgin (Fig.11.1), granted by King David in military tenure to Freskin, a Fleming already settled in West Lothian. The original structure, here as elsewhere, would probably be of timber — later replaced by stone.

In addition to great *fiefs* like Duffus, held by a family of such importance that it came to be known as the house of Moray or Murray, there were lesser military tenants. Of such a good example is another Lothian Fleming, Berowald, who held lands at Innes — from which his descendants eventually took their name — also a *toft* in the burgh of Elgin for 'knight-service' (but perhaps not in person) in the castle. Mingled with these 'incomers', however, were representatives of older indigenous families of some standing, holding their lands on ancient tenurial conditions with associated social relationships that affected the whole functioning of society — though of their dwellings we know little until a rather later period.

A particular problem in Moray for the descendants of King David I (Malcolm IV and William I) was the claim to regional authority advanced by descendants of the ancient *mormaers* or *earls*, and its association with a further claim to the crown itself by a more senior branch of the Royal house, so much so that it was only after 1200 that the new 'medieval order' became an irreversible fact of life here.

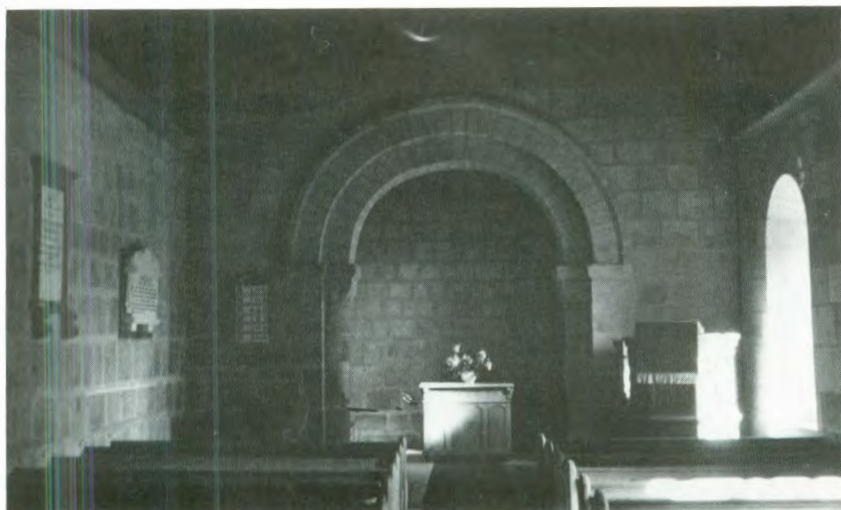


Fig.11.2 Birnie Kirk. (Crown Copyright: RCAMHS)

The Medieval Church

In this process the king and his local representatives had a particularly effective ally in the church. As we have seen, a 'territorial' (rather than a 'personal') bishopric of Moray had emerged by the 1120's, but it was not until the early 1200's that it acquired a fixed base. Before this, apparently, the bishop made use of three churches in the neighbourhood of Elgin — Birnie, Spynie, and Kinnedar. The first of these may still be seen, almost in its pristine state, a simple *romanesque* structure of nave and chancel built of squared stone or *ashlar* (Fig.11.2).

Sometimes dated as early as 1130 or 1150, the church had a particular association with Bishop Simon de Tosni who arrived here in 1172 with authority from King William to extend to his diocese the system of tithes or *teinds* already in operation in southern Scotland by which one tenth of each year's produce was assigned to the church. Beginning at the diocesan level the arrangement was extended to districts associated with a major church or *minster*, as at Elgin and Forres, with subordinate chapels in the surrounding area. By the mid thirteenth century most of the latter had acquired 'parochial status'. And although Birnie alone can show a structure of the earliest phase of this development, Altyre has a small early gothic church complete apart from its roof, while the minster of Mortlach, though replaced as an episcopal centre by Old Aberdeen (c.1130), was rebuilt in a dignified gothic style c.1240.

The earliest surviving example of this more sophisticated form of design to be seen here is the sadly ruined abbey of Kinloss founded by King



Fig.11.3 Elgin Cathedral. (R W Billings)

David for Cistercian monks from Melrose c.1150, but unlikely to have secured buildings of this quality until late in the century. In 1206 Bishop Brice de Douglas obtained authority from the Pope to establish a proper cathedral (and associated *chapter*) at Spynie, but before this plan could be fully implemented King William died (1214) and his successor Alexander II seems to have prompted the construction of a much larger building on a new site just to the east of Elgin.

This was the church of the Holy Trinity (the patron of the diocese for some time already), a cruciform structure the choir and transepts of which were inaugurated as Elgin Cathedral in 1224. Parts of the early fabric survive in the south transept gable and the lower stages of the western towers, the architecture a mingling of romanesque and early gothic details carved in ashlar by masons from southern Scotland but in walling otherwise of local traditional *rubble*. Yet the over-all concept as completed after a fire in 1270 was of more international provenance, the twin-towered nave with its double aisles of French inspiration and the extended choir and octagonal chapter-house English, but blended in a form wholly appropriate to its locality and function (Fig.11.3). Surrounding it was a walled precinct known as ‘the College of the Chanonry’, containing the manses of its associated clergy, maintained (to a regrettable extent) by the ‘appropriation’ of parochial tithes throughout the diocese.

Rivalling Elgin Cathedral in the scale and elegance of its component parts yet never completed to its original design was the Priory of Pluscarden founded for monks of the French Valliscaulian order by King Alexander II in 1230. But if the building in its present form derives much of its character from late medieval improvisations and modern restorations it is nevertheless one of the finest examples of a medieval abbey to be seen in Scotland, in a setting moreover of exceptional natural beauty.

Climax and Decline of the Medieval Order

The reigns of Alexander II (1214-49) and Alexander III (1249-86) formed a period of consolidation when the changes effected in Scotland, and Moray in particular, developed into a more homogeneous and harmonious pattern. In the two main centres of royal authority here, at Elgin and Forres, the timber structures of the castles would now be replaced by stone — in which the parish churches would have been built from the outset. But as burghal growth seems to have been relatively limited there would be no thought of replacing or enlarging them until a later period. Stone houses, too, were as yet a rarity and self-government concerned mainly with the regulation of trading activities by the merchant guild.

By the close of the thirteenth century the Comyns had erected the great stone-walled fastness of Lochindorb in Brae Moray and there are suggestions that the Morays or Murrays might have effected a comparable transformation of their motte and bailey counterpart in the Laich but

more probably not until rather later. By this time the political situation in Moray, as in Scotland generally, had been profoundly altered by the succession crisis of 1290 and the attempted subordination of the northern kingdom to the English monarchy by Edward I and his successors. Although the attempt failed, the long struggle — in which Moray was crucially involved — weakened the ability of later Scottish kings to maintain control of their realm.

The situation was further complicated by the arrival of two new dynasties (though descended from the old royal house), that of Bruce from 1306 to 1371 and of Stewart thereafter. And while King Robert I had undoubtedly saved the independence of his realm, the redistribution of lands and authority that resulted from what was in part a civil war left problems that would endure for long thereafter. In the case of Moray, the title of Earl, with much of the associated lands and jurisdictions, was conferred on Thomas Randolph, one of King Robert's principal lieutenants, but at the expense of families like the Comyns who seized every opportunity to reassert their former influence. The chief failing of the Randolph family, however, was its lack of dynastic continuity, though under John Dunbar, Earl from 1372 to 1391, it made a magnificent addition to its castle of Darnaway in the great hall that has now been scientifically dated to this period, as discussed elsewhere in this volume.

By contrast, the greatest threat to the wellbeing of Moray in the later fourteenth century came from within the new royal house in the person of Alexander Stewart, brother of King Robert III, who in 1390, from Lochindorb, ravaged first Forres and then Elgin, so severely damaging the cathedral as to necessitate the reconstruction of the chapter house and central tower, with the loss of the three-spired profile that had been one of its finest features. His career is discussed in this volume by Alexander Grant. In 1424, however, a more effective period of royal government began under James I, and although the reigns of each of his like-named successors began with a minority, there was a steady growth in the power of the crown, especially under James II who in 1455 destroyed the threat of the house of Douglas in Moray as in southern Scotland, redistributing its lands to 'new' great lords like the Gordon Earls of Huntly and lairds associated with the royal service.

Burghs, Churches, and Castles of the last Medieval Phase

The period 1400-1560 was marked by considerable development of the burghs. As these had originally been laid out on a fairly generous scale their later growth was not so much in area — though both Elgin and Forres expanded eastwards at this time — but in the character of their buildings. These were now increasingly of stone, of two main storeys, with 'crowstepped' gables, dormer windows, and *pends* leading through to *closes* at the back. Among the first of these was the Great Lodging of the king

in Elgin, replacing the royal residence in the castle destroyed in the War of Independence. The Lodging would subsequently pass into private hands as Thunderton House but parts of the original fabric survive to this day. Otherwise most of the structures of this type still to be seen belong to the late fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries and will be discussed later.

In the centre of the High Street, adjacent to the parish church of St. Giles, was the Market Place and Tolbooth, the sturdy tower and spire of the last perhaps already in existence by this time. Most Scottish burghs continued to be served by a single church enlarged or re-built in this period — as would be necessary here in any event after the disaster of 1390. A severe gothic cruciform structure with unaisled choir and transepts, low central tower, and an aisled nave of five bays, the new St Giles would serve the community for four centuries and come to occupy a special place in its affections but had perhaps more character than elegance as an architectural design.

Little is known of the corresponding Church of St. Laurence at Forres, but the lower (stone) part of the old Tolbooth tower might date from this period, both communities having become 'royal burghs' with extensive powers of self-government under the crown in their town councils, merchant guilds, and craft organisations. As the larger urban centre Elgin also attracted such new religious orders as the Dominicans and Franciscans (Black and Grey Friars) who, unlike the more conservative monks, did not cut themselves off from contact with the ordinary world but wrestled with its problems. Both were in Elgin in the thirteenth century but their principal architectural legacy was the church of the revived Franciscan foundation of 1479, a simple but elegant structure admirably restored by John Kinross for the 3rd Marquess of Bute in 1896.

For the smaller communities of the countryside parish churches were of more modest character but when King Robert I's wife Elizabeth died at Cullen in 1327 he endowed a chaplainry in her memory, an example followed by other benefactors until in 1543 the whole group of clergy acquired corporate status as the provost and prebendaries of a 'collegiate church'. These 'chantry foundations' were characterised by special chapels and sepulchral monuments of remarkable elaboration. More representative, however, of country churches is the long plain building at Duffus (widened after the Reformation) with a fine vaulted porch of 1524 and, like several others in Moray, a kirkyard cross that may have served as a market centre.

These country churches depended much on the support of the local landowner whose primary concern, understandably, was with his own residence. Among the most important in Moray of the fifteenth century was that usually known as Gordon Castle, begun by the 2nd Earl of Huntly in 1479 for what was then becoming the greatest family of north-east

Scotland. Completed in the sixteenth century and largely re-built in the eighteenth, all that remains of its one-time splendour is a single gaunt tower six storeys high. By contrast the massive tower-house added to Spynie Palace by Bishop David Stewart in 1461-75 as a defence against this same Earl still forms part of the most impressive episcopal stronghold in Scotland. The Gordons themselves had another castle at Auchindoun to the east of Dufftown that for a century before its burning in 1591 completely dominated the short hill routes giving access to Moray from the east.

Reformation and Renaissance

In 1560 a coalition of Scottish nobles favourable to a reform of the church, with English naval and military assistance, overthrew the government of the Queen Mother, Mary of Lorraine. Just two years before, in 1558, by the marriage of her daughter Mary Queen of Scots to the future King Francis II, Scotland had passed under French control from which it was now freed. And when the Scottish queen, after the death of her husband, returned to her own country in 1561 she found it impossible to alter this general situation. Although the Reformed Church failed to recover more than part of the parochial teinds, especially those appropriated to monastic houses, now mainly under the control of Protestant nobles, it was nevertheless the only church permitted to function in the land, and by 1600 its dominance was almost complete. In such places as the Enzie and the Braes of Glenlivet, however, geographical and political circumstances enabled the old faith to survive, precariously, over the next two centuries.

On certain fundamental issues, especially the functioning of the church at parochial level, the Reformers were at one, but on the nature of its higher government — whether by a form of episcopacy like that of England or a system of courts (generally known as Presbyterianism) — and its relations with the civil government there was controversy. With the details we are not concerned here but it may be noted that from the early 1600's to 1638, and again from 1661 to 1689, the polity of the 'established church' was Episcopal and from 1638 to 1661 and from 1690 onwards Presbyterian. In actual practice these alternations made little difference to the character of church buildings or their use, only a small element in the Episcopal party inclining in this period to services of a liturgical character like those in the Church of England.

Between 1560 and 1690, then, the typical parish church was the medieval building (or its nave) re-furnished so as to accommodate a 'congregation' gathered round the two focal points of pulpit and communion table. In larger buildings like St. Giles' Elgin *lofts* or galleries were inserted by the town council, guildry, and trades, and in country churches by the local lairds. In Moray the only completely new church to be built in this period was that of Drainie, grudgingly provided by the *heritors* of the parish in



Fig.11.4 Balvenie Castle, Dufftown. Mid sixteenth century facade. (E Beaton)

1654-71 but replaced in 1823 and, with its successor, unfortunately removed in 1952 for the extension of Lossiemouth aerodrome. Although of Reformed 'T-plan', its detail was gothic of which an even later example may be seen nearby in 'Michaelkirk' built in 1705 by the widow of Sir Robert Gordon of Gordonstoun as a mortuary chapel for her husband of whose architectural eccentricity another example may be seen in the famous 'round square' adjoining his mansion.

The Reformation was, in part at least, a product of the more general cultural renaissance that occurred in Europe in this period. The movement derived its name from the re-birth that it involved of the legacy of the ancient world. And as it developed first in Italy it was natural that Roman models should dominate its concepts of art and architecture. Such influences were apparent in Scotland by 1500 but it would be a full century and a half before they reached maturity with Sir William Bruce (c.1630-1710), architect of the first truly 'classical' buildings here.

In the intervening period, nevertheless, renaissance influences may be seen, not only in decorative details but in a desire, first apparent in the greater nobility, as they became better acquainted with the more relaxed and sophisticated manner of life of their English and continental counterparts, to live in buildings of a more horizontal or 'palatial' character. An early example of this, still impressive in ruin, is the new front added to Balvenie Castle by the 4th Earl of Atholl in 1547-57 (Fig.11.4). And if the lesser nobility proceeded with more caution, in such buildings as Brodie

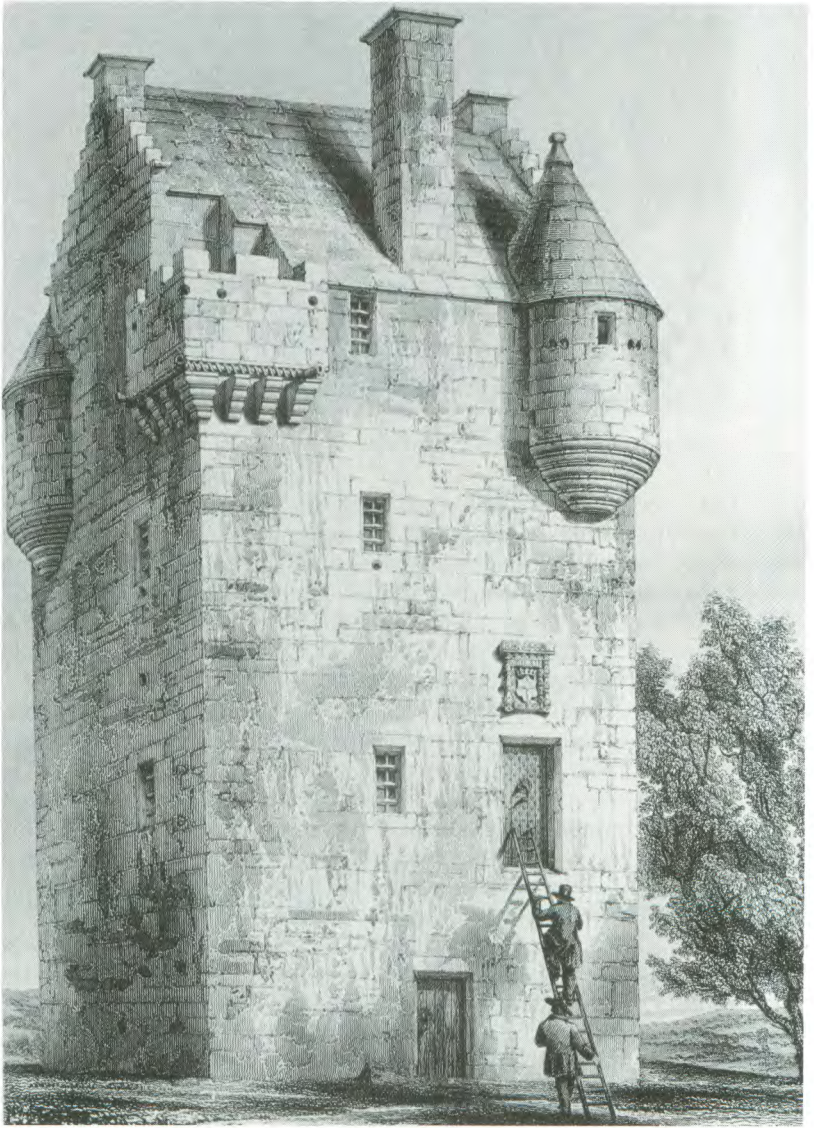


Fig.11.5 Coxton Tower. Early seventeenth century. (R W Billings)



Fig.11.6 *Innes House. Mid seventeenth century. (E Beaton)*

Castle (1567) their interiors were both spacious and elegant. Thus when the Laird of Innes built his new house in 1640-53, although it maintained a strong vertical emphasis, its designer, William Aytoun, master mason of Heriot's Hospital Edinburgh, ensured that it was in essence a mansion, not a castle. And it is only necessary to compare it with the little tower, vaulted throughout and accessible only by an external ladder, built by another Innes at Coxton at this time, to see how different they are in character (Figs.11.5, 6).

In the burghs the greatly enhanced prosperity of the merchants and craftsmen was reflected in the handsome stone buildings that fronted their streets. If some of their details derived from such town mansions of the neighbouring nobility as Thunderton House in Elgin, enlarged by the Sutherlands of Duffus around 1650, the arcaded structures that came to line its High Street — of which three survive from the later seventeenth century — were highly original versions of a formula developed earlier in Edinburgh and Glasgow and ultimately of Italian origin as the designation *piazza* indicated.

Georgian Elegance

As the seventeenth century drew to a close, classical design, from being a comparative rarity, became the norm to which most buildings came to conform, if not in particular details, in the symmetry that was its most characteristic feature. In the higher reaches of this development were structures of considerable size and sophistication designed for great mag-

nates by 'architects' familiar with stylistic developments elsewhere in Europe but themselves, for the most part, products of the indigenous building traditions of their own country. Among these were such well-established families as the Mynes and the Smiths (from Forres), joined in the opening years of the eighteenth century by William Adam (1689-1748) whose influence would be continued for a further generation by his sons John (1721-92), Robert (1728-92), and James (1731-94). But despite the special respect in which they and others of the kind might be held, the distinction between 'architect' and 'builder' was sensibly blurred and some of the most pleasing designs of the period were by unrecorded master-masons.

While the parliamentary union of Scotland with England — following on the 'regal union' of 1603 — inevitably reduced the distinctive identity of the smaller country, and architects like Robert and James Adam and James Gibb or Gibbs (1682-1754) followed the nobility, politicians, and other Scots in making their careers mainly in the south, life in an area like Moray retained a vigorous identity of its own for some time to come. Nevertheless, as in previous periods, it was to be expected that innovations should come mainly from outside, albeit in response to local initiative. Among the most ambitious clients of the elder Adam was a *nouveau riche* family of Moray banker-politicians, the Duffs of Braco, who in 1730, in their ascent to the peerage (as Earls of Fife) commissioned the vast and ornate classical mansion of Duff House at Banff — deliberately outside the milieu in which they had risen to affluence. More representative, however, was the New House of Balvenie designed for them by James Gibbs in 1722 (but demolished in 1929).

Among surviving country houses of the ensuing period the most pleasing tend to be those of moderate size like the re-casting of Moy to a plan by John Adam (c.1762), Dalvey (c.1770), or Invererne (1818) (Fig.11.7), all near Forres. The three largest mansions are, by contrast, somewhat disappointing. At Gordon Castle little now remains of the enormously extended facade added by John Baxter in 1769 to the remodelled tower-house of its ducal proprietor and representations of it when complete suggest an 'unresolved duality' between horizontal and vertical emphasis. At Gordonstoun, the massive central block inserted between earlier wings in 1775 composes rather better and features impressively in the formal landscape in which it is set. At Darnaway the new building by Alexander Laing that in 1802-12 replaced the ancient stronghold of the Earls of Moray — apart from its great hall — includes restrained castellations in its external design, though more as a polite historical allusion than mere pretence, in a composition of some merit on its own account. In a class by itself is Robert Adam's severe (but appropriate) garden front of Letterfourie (1773).

As landed proprietors these great magnates and lesser lairds were



Fig.11.7 Invererne House, Forres. (E Beaton)

responsible for farm-houses, cottages, steadings, and doocots on their 'improved' estates, also for public roads and bridges, and (as heritors) for parish churches and manses. Among such a wide range of buildings, of such general merit, it is possible to mention only a few. Speymouth (on the Gordon Castle estate) has a handsome church and manse of 1732-3 and, nearby, the elegant farmhouse of Stynie. Other churches of merit are at New Spynie (1736, with details from its predecessor near the old episcopal palace), Edinkillie (1741, with manse of 1821), and a charming neo-gothic example at Rafford (Gillespie Graham 1826). Remarkably, however, the finest country church of this period is the Roman Catholic basilica at Preshome in the Enzie (1788-9), boldly anticipating the coming of freedom of worship in 1794-5 and a striking contrast to the discreetly unobtrusive 'sheepcote kirk' of 1755 at Tynet nearby or the college maintained at Scalan in Glenlivet between 1717 and 1799. Among bridges the most impressive are those over the lower Spey, at Fochabers (a four-arched design of 1804 but with two arches replaced by a larger single one, first in wood and then in iron, after the disastrous floods of 1829), and Telford's majestic metal span of 1814 at Craigellachie.

A distinctive activity of these 'improving landlords' was the founding of 'new towns' on a scale exceeding most parts of Scotland of the time, amounting as they did to some twenty in all. The earliest, Lossiemouth, was in fact of burghal origin, as the port of Elgin from 1698, though it was only in 1764 that it acquired its definitive plan, and its growth as a major fishing port owed much to the enterprise of the Branders of Pitgaveny, from 1830 onwards, in promoting the adjoining settlement of Brand-erburgh. Further west, at Burghead, a port of more varied character was developed from 1805 onwards by a group of neighbouring landowners headed by the enterprising William Young of Invergie. East of the Spey,



Fig.11.8 Fochabers Square. (Valentine Collection)

the success of Port Gordon (1770) was less enduring and it was not until late in the next century that Buckie would become the busiest fishing port in Scotland.

These new towns were laid out on a rectangular plan of which that devised by John Baxter in 1776 for the re-sited (Gordon) burgh of Fochabers, with the parish church of 1798 at its centre, is the most impressive and best preserved (Fig.11.8). Larger and more successful as an urban venture is New Keith, first set out alongside Old Keith in 1750 by the Earls of Seafield (whose own particular new town of Cullen was not begun until 1820). An interesting feature of its plan is the prominence accorded to the Roman Catholic Church of St Thomas (William Robertson 1828-31, dome by C J Menart 1916), though the Parish Church of St Rufus (a towered gothic design by Gillespie Graham 1816-18) holds an appropriately commanding position in the open space between the old town and the new. Further south, other new towns at Dufftown (1817), Aberlour (1812) and Tomintoul (1775) provided centres for localities previously unprovided in this way, and if Archiestown (1760) was little more than a village, it had amenities singularly lacking in such places hitherto.

It was only to be expected that a comparable spirit of 'improvement' should show itself in the long-established burghs of Elgin and Forres, and though this would reach its climax in the ensuing period, it was now that Elgin acquired the three major buildings that still dominate its townscape — in the west Dr Gray's Hospital (Gillespie Graham 1815-19), in the centre a new St Giles' Church (Archibald Simpson 1825-28) (Fig.11.9), in the east Anderson's Institution (likewise by Simpson 1830-33). And if



Fig.11.9 Elgin High Street: St Giles Church. (Valentine Collection)

Forres has only one such for this period — Anderson's School (William Robertson 1823) — this has both elegance and charm. On Cluny Hill above, Nelson's Tower (Charles Stewart 1806) forms an impressive landmark for miles around.

Victorian Variety

Although architecture of the Georgian age was mainly of Roman derivation, it included Greek and Gothic designs, but these were as nothing to the self-confident variety of the Victorian age in town and countryside alike. And if building initiative of the preceding period had come mainly from the landed aristocracy of the countryside it was now most vigorously pursued by the merchants and manufacturers of the towns. This was particularly true of Moray, and at the present day the architectural character of its principal urban centres — Elgin, Buckie, Forres, Keith, and Lossiemouth — derives predominantly from this vigorous and accomplished age.

A further point of interest is the extent to which this spirit of self-reliance involved the employment of local architects. Foremost among these was William Robertson (1786-1841) whose practice was continued by his nephews A & W Reid and thence through their partners and successors J & W Wittet to the present time. The other major figure was Thomas Mackenzie (1814-54) who came to Elgin by way of Archibald Simpson's office in Aberdeen. If his own career was short — though brilliantly productive — his talents descended to his son and grandson, practising from Aberdeen until well into the present century.

Among Moray towns Elgin is now by far the largest but partly because of this it has sustained injuries to its character that make it less attractive than in the early years of this century. Buckie, by contrast, has suffered a



Fig.11.10 Forres High Street: Tolbooth. (Valentine Collection)

decline, and it is now arguably at Forres that the civic dignity of the Victorian age is to be seen to best advantage. Appropriately dominant in its High Street is the Tolbooth as re-built by William Robertson in 1838, its tower recalling the form of its historic predecessor (Fig.11.10). Nearby is the Italianate Falconer Museum (A Reid 1869) and opposite it the Town Hall, its imperial facade (by John Forrest 1901) masking Archibald Simpson's more elegant interior of 1829.

By the Victorian era denominations other than the established church, having achieved complete toleration, were concerned to provide places of worship of some architectural equality. In Forres, indeed, it was only in 1904 — beyond the Victorian era yet in a part-Victorian mode — that the Establishment would have in John Robertson's new Church of St Lawrence (replacing that of 1775), a building to compare with St John's Episcopal Church (as re-modelled by Thomas Mackenzie 1843) or the United Free High Church (now St Leonard's) by Ross and Macbeth 1901-3. Viewed from without the resulting assemblage of towers and spires is wonderfully impressive, and as all these buildings were in the main street and linked by others of good design, while the outer residential areas developed in this period were of equally high quality, the combined effect is one of the most pleasing townscapes of its kind in Scotland.

Unlike Forres, Elgin entered the Victorian age well equipped with public buildings (though William Burn's Assembly Rooms of 1822 would eventually be lost in 1970). To these were added in 1842 Thomas Mackenzie's Museum and in 1864-6 A & W Reid's Sheriff Court, each in its own Italianate manner. As in Forres, but on a grander scale befitting the county town, the central part of the High Street (on each side of St. Giles' Church) was lined with three-storeyed buildings for the conduct of its business

activities, the Royal Bank of 1876 (by Peddie and Kinnear) being only the most outstanding. These were continued southwards, by Commerce and Batchen Streets, into the corresponding part of South Street and from 1840 onwards the area beyond (mainly in municipal control) was laid out for further extensions.

It was here that several of the churches and public buildings of Victorian Elgin would come to be sited. Already in 1824 a new gothic Episcopal Church of Holy Trinity had been built by William Robertson, skilfully closing the vista of North Street from the town centre. In the southern development an even more emphatic focal point was supplied by the spired South Church (a gothic design of 1852 by A & W Reid for a second Free Church to supplement the High Church of 1843). The Reids also provided the United Presbyterians (in 1858) with the towered building in Moss Street, still a feature of the Elgin townscape. Less ambitious but with a charm of its own is Thomas Mackenzie's Roman Catholic Church of St Sylvester (1844) at the head of Duff Avenue. Among public buildings of the area (all in Moray Street) were the new Elgin Academy of 1885, a classical design by A & W Reid, the huge baronial Town Hall, also of 1885, by A M Mackenzie (burned out in 1939 and later demolished), and the 'Richardson romanesque' Victoria School of Science and Art of 1890 by G Sutherland.

If much of the character of Victorian Forres and Elgin is derived from their churches, this is even more true of Buckie which has as its most prominent feature the twin-spired Roman Catholic Church of St. Peter (by A and W Reid and Bishop James Kyle 1850-7) (Fig. 11.11). Of comparable merit, however, are the crown-towered North Parish Church (Duncan MacMillan 1880) and the fastidiously detailed All Saints Episcopal Church (Alexander Ross 1875). At Lossiemouth, too, the sturdy tower, white walls, and red roof of St Gerardine's Parish Church (Sir John Burnet 1901) seem entirely appropriate to its location and stand out dramatically in more distant views. The principal churches of Keith have already been described. But the most influential unifying factor here was provided by the strong architectural character of Mid Street in New Keith, and by two buildings in particular — the North Church (originally Free, by A & W Reid 1845-6) and the Institute with its elegant clock-tower (F D Robertson 1885-9).

Despite the proliferation of country mansions in the Georgian era, Victorian landowners had both the inclination and resources to add to their number or engage in massive reconstructions and extensions of earlier buildings. Among new designs architects of the locality were deservedly prominent, William Robertson's classical Aberlour (1838) being followed by Thomas Mackenzie's grandly romantic Drummuir (1847), and, as the century ended, by the baronial ostentation of what is now the Rothes Glen Hotel (Alexander Ross 1896). To this same general locality Robertson

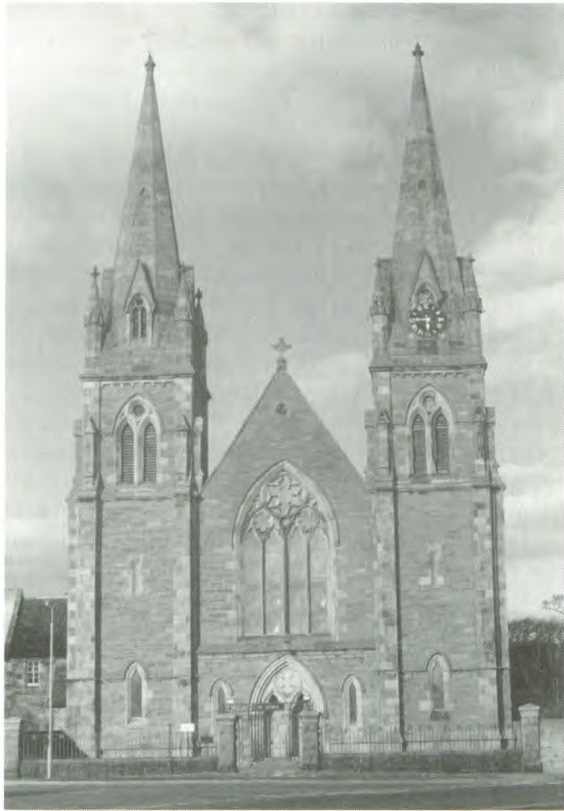


Fig.11.11 St Peter's Church, Buckie. (E Beaton)

also contributed a sympathetic addition to the charming little castle of Kininvie (1840) and Mackenzie a more grandiose enlargement of Ballindalloch (1847). But in all this activity David Bryce's majestic enlargement of Cullen House for the Seafield family from 1859 onwards must undoubtedly be accorded pride of place (Fig.11.12).

Later Developments

The point at which architecture becomes or ceases to be 'historic' can never be precisely determined. It is nevertheless possible, well before the end of the nineteenth century, to identify certain ideas or inclinations that would undermine many of its assumptions and strongly influence the architecture of the succeeding age. What these tendencies had in common was a questioning of the self-confidence, at times verging on an aggressive ruthlessness, that characterised much Victorian activity. In one form this

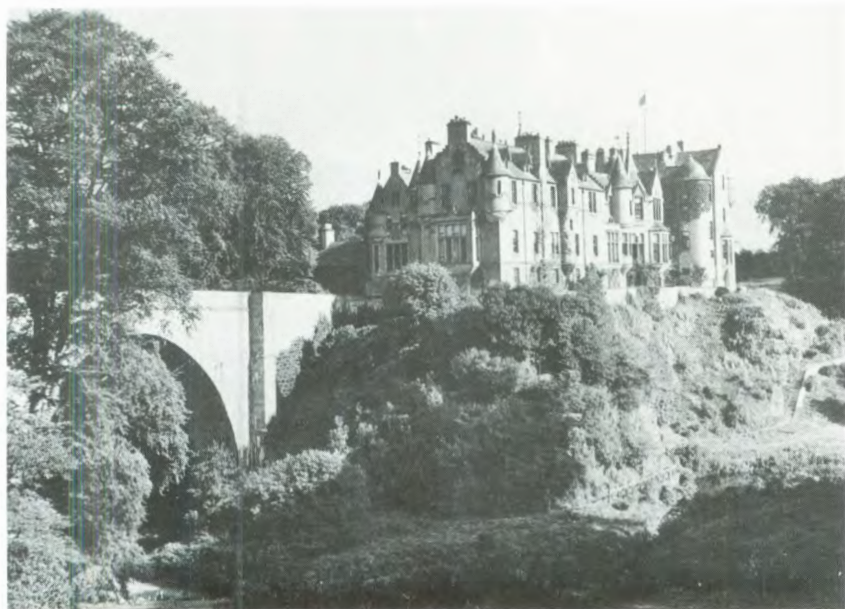


Fig.11.12 Cullen House. (Valentine Collection)

produced the 'arts and crafts movement' promoted by William Morris in England but having influential support in Scotland. Among other things Morris advocated a more restrained and informed approach to the 'restoration' of works of former ages (especially churches) and to this end in 1877 founded the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. By the 1890's, too, there were others who argued that architecture should be more simple and direct in its approach, an attitude that might incline them to such varied forms of expression as 'modernism', 'functionalism', and *art nouveau*, but sometimes to a sharing of sympathies with 'arts and crafts' exponents.

Influences of this kind are evident in the work of John Kinross (the restorer of Greyfriars, Elgin), as in his church at Chapelton, Glenlivet (1897) and Cothall Cottages at Altyre (1900). And if Macgregor Chalmers' 'romanesque-transitional' church at Elgin (St Columba's 1906) is more traditional, it belongs to the same general group, likewise the new mansion house of Blevie near Forres in a simplified classical style by J D Dick Peddie 1906. And when the remarkable Edward S Harrison (1879-1979) came to build his own house of The Bield, west of Elgin, in 1930 (with J B Dunn as architect) it incorporated traditional features but in a commendably functional manner. In Elgin itself his distinguished services as Lord Provost are most fittingly commemorated by the arcaded Harrison



Fig.11.13 Harrison Terrace, Elgin. (Crown Copyright: RCAHMS)

Terrace, designed for the Town Council by John Wright (of J & W Wittet) in 1949 (Fig.11.13).

It says much for the stylistic awareness of architects here that this same firm was also responsible for the austere 'modern' block of flats in Hay Street c.1930. And when a new Town Hall came to be built in the 1960's it was entrusted to a partnership of two of the most accomplished 'modernists' of the time, William Kinninmonth and Basil Spence.

Bibliographical Note

This article is a reconstruction — with the kind assistance of Elizabeth Beaton and Ian Keillar — of an illustrated talk (rather than a formal paper) given at the Forres conference of 1987. For this reason no detailed notes or citation of sources have been provided here. An admirably comprehensive survey of the whole range of buildings in the area, with a book list, may be found in Charles McKean's *The District of Moray: an illustrated architectural guide* published in 1987 by the Scottish Academic Press in association with the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland.

Illustrations are reproduced by courtesy of Mrs Elizabeth Beaton, the University of St Andrews and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.