

'Sandilands'

St. Michaels

Fife

Scotland

KY16 0DU

22nd November '93

Tel 0334-839431

Dear Mr Spottiswoode,

Many thanks for your letter of 13th November. I was delighted to receive as I'd twice written to you and had my letters returned to me marked initially "not known" and latterly "gone away." I'm also pleased to be able to pass on the good news about Dairie Castle which from about 1675 till 1650 was the home of the Spottiswoodes in Fife. Dairie Castle lies about 6 miles inland from St Andrews and about 2½ east of the ancient burgh of Cupar. I've enclosed a wee map showing its position. As castles go Dairie is quite small, measuring some 60 feet by 25 feet, latterly rebuilt by Archbishop Spottiswoode on a Z-plan style, based on the foundations of previous 13th and early 16th centuries buildings. In 1335 the castle had been the seat of a Scottish Parliament called by the Scots patriots Robert the Steward (later the first true Stuart king) and the Earl of Moray. The renowned Earl of Arhole "came in a state almost kingly"

and attempted to foment discord between "the Steward" and Moray. The aim of the Parliament was to agree a policy to fend off a threatened English invasion.

The castle had been held in perpetuity by the bishops of St Andrews until the early 1520s when it was sold to the lusty and powerful Learmonth family who held sway in St Andrews from about 1470 till 1610.

During this time one of the most notable regular visitors to Dairie was Sir William Kirkcaldy, a Scottish soldier of incomparable daring. He was married to a daughter of the House of Learmonth. When the Learmonthes were forced out by bankruptcy, the Archbishop took the castle over, and proceeded to write his history of Scotland within its walls. A regular visitor to Spottiswoode's table was the Marquis of Montrose, the great Royalist guerrilla leader who could have shown Che Guevara a thing or two! Spottiswoode built a private chapel next to the castle which he intended would be a model church based on the episcopal style with a rood screen. It was due to his pro-episcopal stance that he and his family were persecuted so much: The Archbishop was forced to flee to London where illness overtook him and he died in 1639. His eldest son, Robert was Chancellor of Scotland but was executed

by the extremist Covenanters, his only offences being the fact he was the son of his father, and that he brought his friend, the Marquis of Montrose, a commission to take control of Charles I's army in Scotland. The Archbishop's grandson who fought with the Marquis was also executed despite his youthfulness.

So that's a very brief spotted history of the castle which on more than one occasion was assailed and besieged. It seems that it was last inhabited c. 1750 and thereafter fell into dereliction. In 1986 six local people decided to attempt to consolidate its walls to stop it becoming more ruinous: only 2 main walls remained, and there was no roof. It really was a sorry sight. However "Dainie Castle Trust," managed to raise money and employ professional assistance, but the inflationary spiral of the late 80's caught up with us and we had to make a temporary halt. Then the land upon which the castle stands was sold to pay off bank debts. We had only a fiduciary interest, not a Leetable one. The castle was sold as a separate entity to a Yorkshire Chap living in the Far East, Christopher Ruffle. He re-kindled my dream that the castle could be rebuilt. To cut a long story short, reconstruction

work started in May 1993 after an archaeological dig by the University of St Andrews. Work goes on apace despite the onset of an early winter.

I've enclosed a copy of the plans and one or two newspaper cuttings. There does seem to be a resident ghost which the workmen have called Belinda, but I'm a bit sceptical!

It's a long haul but I'm presently trying to write a history of the castle from its early beginnings to the present day. I'm at the site most days and visitors are very welcome. I know Chris Ruffle is keen to have members of the Leamouth and Spottiswoode families visit the castle. Should you wish to come you will be most welcome. Please give me a phone if you think you can come. I do hope you can make it

Yours sincerely

David Scott.

P.S. You may be interested to know that Dairie Castle is also strongly connected to Mikhail Yevgenievich Lermontov, the great Russian poet whose ancestor, a Leamouth, left Scotland for eastern Europe about 1610.