

## ARDOE HOUSE BANCHORY DEVENICK

was built on land which was gifted to the Abbot and Convent of Aberbrothock by Alexander 11 King of Scotland in 1244 . Throughout it's history , the Estate which extended to about one thousand acres has been described as being in two parts "the sunny half and the shady half ". A member of the Fraser of Durriss family finally brought the two parts together with one single purchase .

The earliest owners of whom records exist appears to be the Meldrums of Fyvie ..

One of the most well known owners was the Rev Dr. William Guild ( 1586 -- 1657 . Guild was born in Aberdeen, an academic and theologian , he was Chaplain to King Charles 1 and is remembered in Aberdeen by the naming of Guild Street and the William Guild building in his honour ..

In the 1630 s Sir Gilbert Menzies of Pitfodels acquired the whole lands until they were sold by his son William to the Gordon Family .

The Estate was then purchased in November 1747 for the sum of £21,400 Scots by a John Fordyce , a merchant from Huntly .Fordyce had previously been a Gunner's Mate on Commodore Anson's ship "Centurian" in it's voyage round the World . Having survived repeated attacks of Scurvy which carried off almost three quarters of the crew . Fordyce returned to Britain in 1744 and according to Rev Dr. Paul , he

then travelled to Aberdeen on horseback with all his prize money in his saddlebags .

John Fordyce married a daughter of Irvine of Cults , and did much to improve the conditions of his tenants holdings ..Mr. Fordyce died on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June 1794 .

John Fordyce was succeeded by his daughter Agness who never married and died on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 1834 aged 76 ..

.Agness bequeathed £100 for the “behoof of the poor of the parish “ and the Estate was left to Andrew Watson Advocate in Aberdeen who died on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 1837 at the tender age of 26 ...

In 1839 the Estate was sold to Alexander Ogston who was born on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 1799 , a Soap manufacturer known as “Soapy Ogston “, (I vaguely remember the name around the 1950s in Aberdeen )On the 18<sup>th</sup> of December 1834 he married Eliot Lawrence daughter of James Lawrence Merchant in Aberdeen ..

In 1853 the Shady half was which is now known as Cotbank was sold to the Rev James Gillan D.D. Alford .

Alexander Ogston died on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 1869 .

In 1870 his son Alexander Milne Ogston purchased the estate from his father”s Trustees and bought back the lands of

Cotbank , then in 1878 choosing a prominent position on the estate Alexander decided to erect a large mansion house in the Scottish Baronial style .

The architect of Ardoe House was James Mathews whose prolific practise was responsible for Drummuir , Ballindalloch and Aldurie Castle . Taking inspiration from the nearby Royal residence of Balmoral , the house is decorated and furnished throughout in an elaborate style as an expression of Ogston's wealth and Scottish Ancestry ..

The Ardoe House Ghost " The White Lady " is reputed to be the spirit of a former owners daughter Katherine Ogston who committed suicide and has been seen in parts of the House ..

In 1872 , it was represented to the Herald Office , that the family of Ogston of Ardoe had " by the extension of all others of the name , whose descent could be traced , , become the sole representatives of the Ogston's of that ilk .

The evidence concerning the claim was submitted to the Lord Lyon King of Arms on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 1876 who was pleased to grant the arms of the Ogston's of that ilk to the family represented by Alexander Milne Ogston of Ardoe .

Ardoe House was converted into a house in 1947 and is now known today as the Mercury Ardoe House Hotel .

P.S. The late Diana , Princess of Wales is claimed to be descended from a branch of the Ogston Family

P.P.S. Colonel James Ogston “born 29<sup>th</sup> May 1845 “second son of Alexander Ogston of Ardoe “purchased Norwood Hall ( the site where Pitfodels Castle once stood ) in 1872 and had it partly re-built in 1881, before moving his wife and young family back across the river Dee to Ardoe House . He then moved his mistress into Norwood Hall so that they could meet .After years of torment both his wife and mistress wanted James to leave the other but James refused .. It is said that Norwood is now haunted by the two lovers and his wronged wife who longs for revenge for the torrid years she had to endure . The apparition of James has been seen standing in front of the fireplace in the dining room .The ghost of his mistress has been reported to haunt the main stairs , perhaps looking for her lover . His wife is the most active ghost with reports of her being seen in the hall , the kitchen , and also the dining room .