

1380 Thornton Castle, Aberdeenshire, Scotland

By Jan C. Rasmussen Medieval 44.5" wide 21" deep 30" tall scale 1:12



Exterior view

This is the central part of Thornton Castle near Glamis (north of Edinburgh) in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. Luckily, the castle tower part of the castle is an AirBnB and there is an active clan society, so there were several pictures of the castle on the internet. An ancestor of my grandfather Clayton Winslow (his Grandmother Frances A. Fobes) was a descendent of Elizabeth Strachan Forbes, daughter of Laird Alexander Strachan of Thornton Castle, Scotland in the 1500s. Their son, John Forbes, was born in Scotland, grew up in Holland where he was friends with Puritans, and came to America in 1636 and died in Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

The squat, circular tower to the left of this building (which I will build later using several metal Christmas cookie containers) was built after 1350, so I have furnished this part of the building as if it were owned by wealthy landowners in the late 14th century. There would only have been 2 chairs in the house at that time and people only had benches and stools to sit on. There were no closets, only trunks for clothes and other valuables. The only major furniture would have been the beds, which used drapes to surround the bed and keep the heat in.

		
<p>Strachan coat of arms in the base of the squat, round tower on the left side of the now front.</p>	<p>Coat of Arms of the Clan Strachan Society</p>	<p>Strachan Coat of Arms of Thornton Castle</p>

The Strachan coat of arms has a deer profile. I wonder if this is why I have so many reindeer pulling Santa's sleigh as Christmas decorations.



Interior view



Exterior view, left side



Exterior view, right side

Although there would not have been double doors in a castle in the 14th century, the holes in the building I started with had two very large entry doors. I had these double doors in my stash, so I covered the glass, which would not have been in the doors at that time, and used them.



Entry and stairs, 1st floor, left side



Entry Hall, Armory wall, 1st floor, left side

I know that horses would not have been allowed in the house, but the horse and suit of armor came as a lamp base and I couldn't resist using them as they looked so medieval. The round shield was an antique brooch pin that I covered the back with tinfoil and painted bronze. I still need to find some bows and arrows and maces and other medieval weapons. The knights are dressed as crusaders, although the crusades happened earlier. All dolls in the castle are by the late Susan Waterman of Tucson. The small table is by Warren Dick and probably dates from a later period. They probably would have had hunting hounds and herding Shetland sheepdogs.



Great Hall, 1st floor center



Great Hall, Dining Trestle Table

The Great Hall contains two trestle tables, which are boards on supports and which would have been taken apart after the meal and stacked along the wall. There are only spoons as they did not have forks and each person would have had a small, sharp knife for cutting meat on their person. Most everyone would have been sitting on the benches or stools. There also is a settle next to the fireplace; it's a bench with a cushion and a seat that lifts up for storage beneath the seat. The lady in red has a lute to make music with. There would also have been a small harp and other instruments.



Tapestry in Great Hall



Large Tapestry in Great Hall

The tapestries helped to keep out drafts. They used to be purses, but make great tapestries for the wall. I don't know if the Scots wore kilts at this time, but I put him in here to indicate it is a Scottish castle. Most of the candle holders are made of wrought iron, with only a few brass ones. The plates are pewter, not porcelain or glass, and the goblets are brass. The cupboards contain copper, brass, and pewter goblets, pitchers, and platters. Pottery and glass were extremely rare.

The shutters are on the inside so that they can be shut and barred in case of attack. Thornton Castle is surrounded by rich farmland in the Scottish Lowlands, bordering the Highlands and Grampian Mountains, so it was susceptible to raids.



Great Hall, tapestry and cupboard



Great Hall, large tapestry and cupboard

The kitchen also has two trestle tables for food preparation and only benches or stools to sit on.



Kitchen, 1st floor right side



Kitchen, 1st floor right side, vegetable baskets

Copper or cast iron pans, kettles and utensils were used and a turning spit for roasting venison.



Kitchen, Venison on spit



Kitchen, central trestle table with eggs for custard



Kitchen, 1st floor right side



Kitchen, 1st floor right side

Copper pans and utensils were stored in cupboards and hanging racks.



Kitchen cupboard with teakettles and platters



Kitchen cupboard with copper pans and spoons and knives



Wizard's Room, above Entry, 2nd Floor, left side



Wizard's Room, Above Entry, 2nd Floor, left side

I doubt if there were wizards, but there would have been a still room for healing herbs, supplies and a few books or ledgers.



2nd floor, center bedroom



2nd floor, center bedroom, bed with curtains

They would have had a spinning wheel. The writing desk is by Warren Dick and the table chairs are from the Butterfly collection. The deer head is cut off from the venison roasting in the kitchen. The four-poster bed has drapes to keep in the heat.



2nd floor, center bedroom



2nd floor, center bedroom, Large tapestry



2nd floor, right side bedroom



2nd floor, right side bedroom, draped bed

The table and chest and writing desk are by Warren Dick, purchased more than 20 years ago.



3rd floor, attic bedrooms



Attic, center bedroom

I'm still working on the attic bedrooms. They would have been very sparse with simple rope under the straw mattresses that could be tightened (origin of "Sleep tight" phrase).



Attic, left side bedroom



Attic, right side bedroom

I purchased this very, very heavy, derelict dollhouse for \$25 at the October 2019 Tucson Miniature Society Showcase. I removed a lot of the ½ inch plywood under and beside the house in order to make it lighter and to remake it into similarity to the central part of the Thornton Castle in Scotland. I had to add some wood to make the purchased windows and doors fit and cut off the roof so I could have the battlements on all sides.



Exterior, derelict house I started with



Interior, I started with a very heavy house

The current Thornton Castle has the tower portion as an AirBnB rental and the Strachan Society has a website with some history, so there are several photos on their websites.



Thornton Castle, near Glamis, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, view entering from the northwest.



Thornton Castle, Aberdeenshire, Scotland

The round tower on the left and the portion of the Thornton Castle on the right will be a later project.

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