

## **Visiting the Old Estate of Auchmedden**

Getting to Auchmedden can be somewhat difficult if you are depending upon public transport. It is suggested that you rent a car at the Aberdeen Airport, if you don't already have one when you arrive in that city. You drive through a small town called Dyce and onto the A-90, then finally turn onto the A-948 to reach the fishing village of Pennan (which was the fishing village of the Bairs and on the Auchmedden Estate). The ride is about an hour, but if it is the first time you have taken the route, it may take a little longer.

If you really must use public transport and do not wish to drive, there is daily bus service to Pennan from Aberdeen. There is no train service. Be sure you have reservations for the night at the Nethermill or Pennan Inn before you leave Aberdeen. There are very few rooms available, and it is a long walk to MacDuff or Banff to secure a room. While you are in Pennan and the area, be prepared for long and up-hill walks, but well worth the great beauty and majestic views of the ocean and cliffs.



*The Pennan Inn and famous Red Phone Box*

The Estate of Auchmedden no longer exists in its entirety. There is a farm called the Mains of Auchmedden, where the old castle and manor house foundation is under the soil in a large field. The residents are not interested in allowing anyone to look for the foundation, having fears that a full excavation will be called for by the Scottish powers that be and they will not be able to use the field for production. So, if you want to try it, and ask just to see where the foundation was, be really nice, and be sure you assure the farmers that you will not report anything to the authorities.

The Mains of Auchmedden is one of the farms that was on the estate at the time of William Baird, the 7<sup>th</sup> and last Laird. William was one of Bonnie Prince Charlie's officers, and borrowed heavily to raise an army from his estate and give money to the cause of the Stuart's for the 1745 Rising. When all was lost at Culloden, he had no means of paying his debts and barely sold the estate in 1750 to George Gordon, The 3rd Earl of Aberdeen (called Lord Haddo until 1745), for very little money; just before the Duke of Cumberland and the English King were to take the estate for William's activities in the Rising. Later, when the Earl of Aberdeen's son, George Gordon, Lord Haddo, married Charlotte (sometimes called Christian) Baird, Sir David Baird's sister, the estate was again tied to the Baird's. This Baird family is part of what is called the Newbyth line, but originated from Auchmedden many, many years before this marriage.

There were several farms at the time of the 1750 sale to the Gordons. A partial list as of 1811, when these farms were to be let again, were as follows:

Pennan Farm, 150 Arable Acres, 180 improved Acres of Muir and Pasture  
Walkmill, 20 Arable Acres, 10 improved acres of Muir and Pasture  
Bankhead, 40 Arable Acres, 140 improved acres of Muir and Pasture  
Pitnecaldar, 30 Arable Acres, 180 improved acres of Muir and Pasture  
Little Byth and Strathwhapple, 100 Arable Acres, 400 improved acres of Muir and Pasture  
Kinbeam, 55 Arable Acres, 540 improved acres of Muir and Pasture  
Glenhouses, 85 Arable Acres, 170 improved acres of Muir and pasture  
South Foresterhill, 35 Arable Acres, 40 improved acres of Muir and Pasture  
North Foresterhill, 36 Arable Acres, 44 improved acres of Muir and Pasture  
A number of crofts upon Cummertown, and East and West mains of Auchmedden, and other parts of the estate.\*

*\*Published in the Aberdeen Journal, Wednesday 2nd October, 1811.*



*The estate of Auchmedden in part, with Pennan, the fishing village in the sunlight. Taken from Cullykhan Bay.*

The Gordon's sold Auchmedden around 1811 to Sir Charles Forbes of Newe, who owned other lands in Aberdour. It was offered in the Aberdeen Journal on November 7, 1810. Below is a copy of the advertisement.

"Aberdeen Journal" (November 7, 1810),  
Aberdeenshire. To be sold by private contract, the estate of Auchmedden in the parish of Aberdour, containing upwards of 5,750 English acres, lying altogether in a fine climate on the sea-coast, between the commodious harbours and excellent markets of Banff and Fraserburgh;

being ten miles from the former, and six from the latter. Great part of the soil on this extensive estate is of a rich, fine quality, capable of bearing weighty crops of wheat, beans, and other grain, and of turnips and grass. It extends nearly four miles along the shore (on the South side of the Moray Firth) which produces abundance of valuable keep belonging to the estate. There is also a profitable white fishery, which has been long established upon it ; and an inexhaustible millstone quarry, peculiarly fine, and in high repute. The present rents of the estate are very low, and many of the leases are near expiring. The extent, qualities, and local advantages of this estate, which is situated in a district where improvements are only in their infancy, render it improveable in an unusual degree ; and particularly deserving the attention of the agriculturist, or the capitalist. A considerable part of the purchase-money may remain on security of the estate, payable by instalments. Printed particulars are preparing for delivery ; and further information may be had by application to Messrs Cardale and Son, solicitors, Bedford-Row, London ; Messrs Mackenzie and Monypenny, writers to the signet, Edinburgh ; and Andrew Davidson, Esq., Advocate, Aberdeen

In 1854, the Baird's of Gartsharrie, the iron and coal family from near Glasgow, bought the estate from the trustees of Sir Charles Forbes of Newe. They were the last Baird's to own Auchmedden.