

# Castle of Mey

The Castle of Mey was built by George Sinclair, the 4th Earl of Caithness, for his second son William Sinclair, c.1567. However, due to fighting between William and his older brother John, which resulted in both their deaths; the castle was left to the third son, George Sinclair. He founded the family of the Sinclair's of Mey, and he also changed the name of the castle to Barrogill Castle. Barrogill castle then became the seat of the Earls of Caithness for the next one hundred years.

In 1819 the twelfth Earl commissioned the architect, William Burn, to make various ambitious alterations to the castle - these included building a proper frontage to the south and extending the façade, adding on a west wing, and cutting down the turret roofs and crowning them with battlements. Alterations to the house were accompanied by improvements to the landscape, creating a view similar to what you see today.



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The castle finally passed out of Sinclair ownership with the death of George, the 15th Earl of Caithness in 1889. He had never married and, having no children he left the castle to his friend F G Heathcote, on condition that he changed his name to Sinclair.

During the Second World War, it was requisitioned as a coastal-defence billet for a company of the Black Watch. After that it was left empty for some years, and fell into disrepair.



The Queen Mother, having seen it on a trip to Caithness while visiting friends, saw its potential, and within three months of first seeing the building, she had purchased it – the only house she ever actually owned . She changed its name, calling it The Castle of Mey, although usually the format would be Mey Castle, the name has remained so ever since. Members of the Royal family still stay there for a few days every summer.

Papers relating to the protracted repairs are preserved at the castle. The architect appointed to oversee the restoration project was Hugh Macdonald of Sinclair Macdonald and Son, based in Thurso.



# Castle of Mey Questions

**Read over the information about the Castle of Mey,  
and then answer the questions below.**

1. What else was the Castle of Mey called by George Sinclair?

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2. Which son of George Sinclair was the Castle of Mey originally built for?

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3. Which architect did the 12th Earl commission to make alterations to the castle?

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4. Which military company was the castle requisitioned for during the Second World War?

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5. Which member of the Royal family bought the castle and repaired it?

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# Castle of Mey

## Answers

1. What else was the Castle of Mey called by George Sinclair?

**Barrogill Castle**

2. Which son of George Sinclair was the Castle of Mey originally built for?

**William Sinclair, his second son**

3. Which architect did the 12th Earl commission to make alterations to the castle?

**William Burn**

4. Which military company was the castle requisitioned for during the Second World War?

**Black Watch**

5. Which member of the Royal family bought the castle and repaired it?

**The Queen Mother**

