

SKELBO ESTATE / FARM

- C.1808 - Skelbo Estate 'passed' to The Countess of Sutherland and her husband Earl Gower after a long and complicated legal wrangle.
- C.1809 - Bailie James Boog was tenant of Skelbo. His sub-tenant was Duncan Matheson of Shinness.
- C.1809 - Earl Gower effectively took over the running of Skelbo. Matheson's son a Lawyer in Edinburgh, relinquished the tenancy on his father's death.
- C.1810 - Earl Gower immediately made plans to incorporate Skelbo in his extravagant Achavandra Improvements, straightening boundaries, making roads and dykes.
- C.1810-11 - A new steading was planned
Two slightly differing sketch plans are to be seen. The completed building seems to have been different from both plans.
This steading was to serve the improved farms of Skelbo and Achavandra.
- C.1810-11 - Stocking of Skelbo began. A groom was sent to Suffolk to bring north a stallion and some Brood mares.

C.1811 /

- C.1811 - The whole of Skelbo and Achavandra had been laid out in regular fields for cropping.
- C.1811 - By now a settlement had been made for the displaced tenants of Skelbo. Mrs Boog the widow of Bailie J. Boog had a life time rent so was bought out.
- C.1811 - The foundation of a Meal Mill and Kiln was laid at Skelbo.
- C.1815 - "Skelbo is now very perfect, and no farm wherever its situation, can be more beautiful as it is seen from the road." James Loch in a letter to The Marquis of Stafford.
- C.1815 - Thomas Barclay was Earl Gower's grieve at Skelbo.
- C.1816 - Thomas Barclay also became grieve at Morvich Farm and had to ensure that the accounts of each farm were kept separately.
- C.1816 - All the improvements at Skelbo are finished.
- C.1866 - Skelbo house built as a 'picnic' house for shooting parties from Dunrobin Castle.

C.1900 /

- C.1900 - Skelbo Farm, Achavandra, Cambusavie,
Cambusmore and much more was acquired by the
Wignall family.
- C.1900 - At this time a Mr Haldane was tenant of Skelbo
Farm. He died in tragic circumstances.
- C.1950 - Haldane's widow was still living in Skelbo
house. There was no longer a tenant farmer in
Skelbo. It was again being run by the 'Landlord'.
- C.1958 - The present owner bought what had by now become
Cambusmore Estate which includes Skelbo Farm.

SKELBO FARM STEADING

C.1811 - A modern 'purpose built' steading was built, to cater for the improvements being carried out at Skelbo and Achavandra. More cattle, pigs and poultry were kept and of course work horses.

Note the differences in the two sketch plans.

1811 Version shows a stable for horses.

1812 Horses and oxen were both to be used!

1812 Pigs on ground floor and poultry above!

1812 Shows servants' kitchen with maids' room above.

1811 Version has the same area for a Bothy for Ploughmen.

1811 Does not show the 'necessary' indicated by Q on the 1812 plan.

It is doubtful if the actual steading when built, exactly resembled either the 1811 or 1812 plans entirely.

In the 1930's and 40's the bothy for ploughmen was located in the south west corner of the steading.

At this time also two 'necessaries' were to be seen in the steading.

The/

The threshing mill run by a water wheel was originally located as indicated in the south west wing. Later it was removed to the area behind the stables when further building took place.

STAFF. 6 possibly 7 horsemen or ploughmen - at least 2 cattlemen. 3 others possibly including the grieve and the 'orra man'

FIELD NAMES. Some of the field names still exist, West Park, Castle Park, Mill Park and Knock-glass are still in use today.

Others changed, Shore Park became Haldane's. Balvraid Park changed to The Laundry. Cubick Park is now called The Bothy and The Heather Park became The Rock Field.

A field called the Stallion Park of approximately 4 acres no longer exists as a field. Skelbo House was built in it and it became the policies of the house.

Crops grown at the time of the improvements were oats, potatoes and some wheat and of course grass for hay and grazing.