

Alva House Estate and Ice House

The Bruce family of Culross owned the Alva estate, then the Erskines of Gogar acquired it by 1636. Silver was found in 1714 in Sir John Erskine's time and he used his new wealth to improve the estate. In 1775 James Erskine, Lord Alva, sold it to John Johnstone who in 1789 commissioned plans for altering Alva House and for a family mausoleum. His son James Raymond Johnstone made further changes and probably built the fine ice house, buried on the slope below the stable block, between c 1805-20.

Alva Ice House is a sophisticated structure which must have been an expensive enterprise. It consists of an entrance passage which leads into a heptagonal corridor within which is the main ice chamber in the shape of an egg with a flattened base. The ice house at Alva is the only one to have survived intact from the many estates which once existed in Clackmannanshire.

James Raymond Johnstone died in 1830 and the new laird was his eldest son James Johnstone (1801-88), who is commemorated in the Johnstone Park, which he gave to the people of Alva in perpetuity for their health, recreation and enjoyment.



Pictures of the excavation and preservation of the ice house.

A short video was prepared by the Ochils Landscape Partnership <http://www.ochils.org.uk/alva-ice-house>.