

The Landmark Trust

KINGSWEAR CASTLE

History Album



Compiled by Charlotte Haslam in 1990

Updated in 2015

The Landmark Trust Shottesbrooke Maidenhead Berkshire SL6 3SW
Charity registered in England & Wales 243312 and Scotland SC039205

Bookings 01628 825925 Office 01628 825920 Facsimile 01628 825417
Website www.landmarktrust.org.uk

BASIC DETAILS

| | |
|---|---|
| Built | 1501-2, abandoned by 1700. Converted into a house in 1855. |
| Listed | Grade I |
| Acquired by The Landmark Trust | 1987 |
| Let for first holiday | 1990 |
| Repaired | 1992-1993 |
| Architect | Peter Bird of Caroe & Martin |
| Builders | Exeter Cathedral Stonemasons; St Cuthbert's Builders. |

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Kingswear Castle was built to protect the mouth of the River Dart.

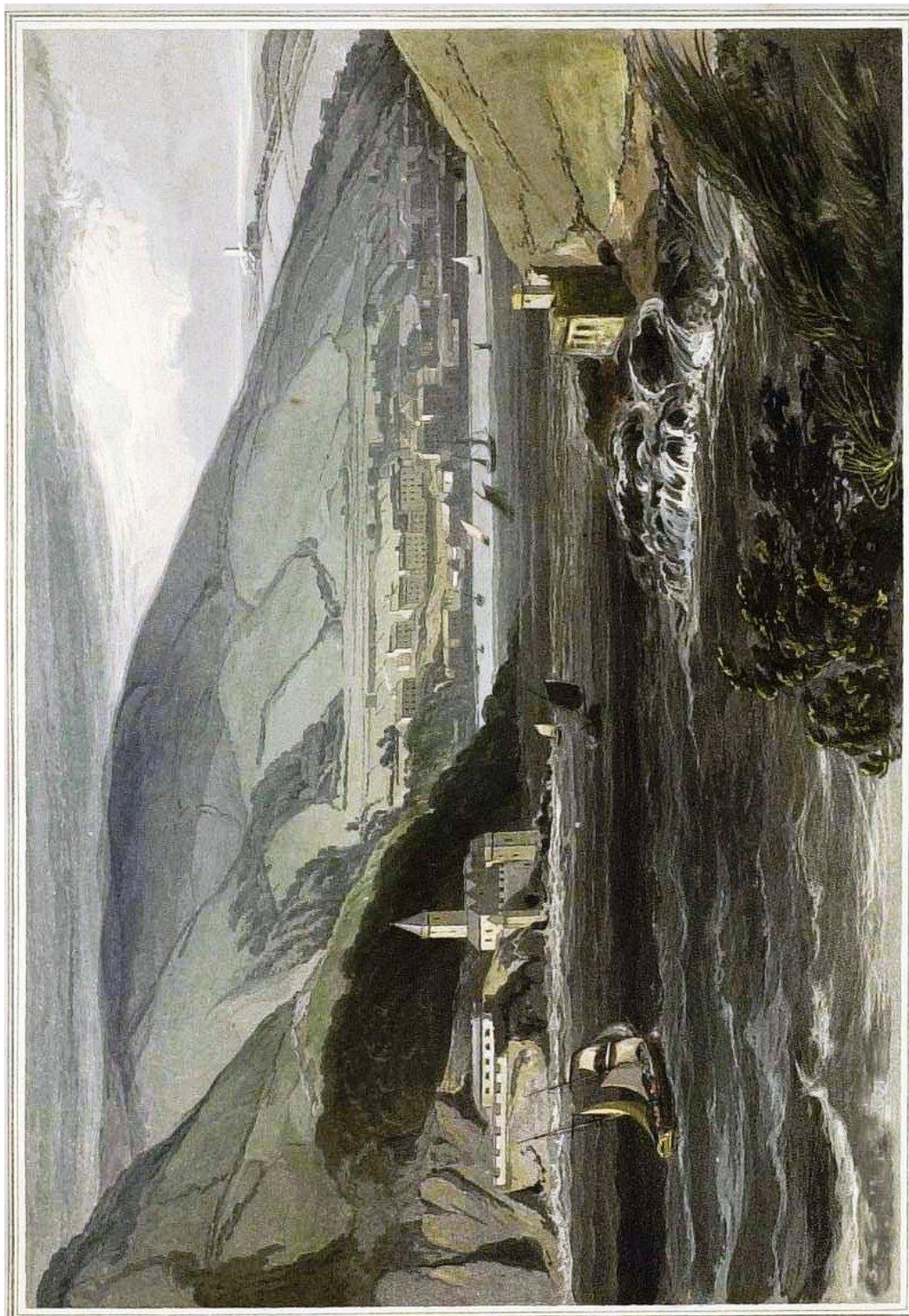
Summary

The building of Kingswear Castle was completed in 1502 during the reign of Henry VII, having probably been begun in earnest only the previous year. It is thus slightly later than Dartmouth Castle, which was begun in 1481 and completed by 1495. The two castles are very similar in design, however, and formed part of a single defensive plan for the river mouth; together they share the distinction of being the earliest fortifications in Britain to be designed specifically for heavy artillery, incorporating as they do a gun platform on the ground floor.

Fifty years after it was completed Kingswear was redundant. This was due mainly to advances in military engineering, which had produced guns powerful enough to cover the whole width of the river from Dartmouth Castle alone. Kingswear must always have been difficult to maintain, too, being more exposed to the weather – in a gale, the sea crashes around and even over the building. It is hardly surprising to find, therefore, that after the end of the 16th century Kingswear was only manned in times of emergency, such as the Civil War.

According to a survey carried out in 1661, the main gun platform had by then been moved to the top of the castle. Responsibility for maintenance had by then transferred from the Corporation of Dartmouth to a Governor appointed by the Crown. The survey recommended certain improvements and repairs, and some of these were apparently carried out: another survey in 1717, although declaring the castle ruinous and useless, lists two 9-pounders among the guns surviving there, which are unlikely to date from before the late 17th century. Two guns of this size have recently been seen on the sea bed below the castle.

Kingswear stood in a ruinous state for the next 130 years. Then, in 1855, it was acquired by Charles Seale Hayne, a wealthy 22-year-old bachelor, who repaired it and transformed it into a summer residence. To carry out the work, which included the addition of the round tower, he employed Thomas Lidstone, a builder from Dartmouth. The castle has remained a private residence since then, with a brief return to military use during the Second World War, when it was occupied by the Marines. The concrete blockhouse was built at this time. It was bought by the Landmark Trust in 1987. Its restoration was completed in 1990.



'Entrance to Dartmouth, Devon', by William Daniell, from a Voyage Round Great Britain by R. Avton. Vol. VIII (1814-25)

A tour of the building

The approach

The original access to the castle was probably by a path running above the shore from Kingswear village, or alternatively by boat from Dartmouth to a landing place just upriver. When Seale Hayne restored the castle in 1855 he made a drive down from what was then a turnpike road higher up the hill. An intricate system of paths were constructed which – either skirting the round tower or crossing a ramshackle wooden bridge from the garden – converged at the castle itself. These paths subsequently became overgrown and in 1990 a new, single approach was formed.

The setting of the castle was radically altered in January 1990, when gales did terrible damage to the surrounding woods of maritime pine, planted by Seale Hayne. Having been a secret and hidden place, scarcely visible from the land until you stood on the bank above, looking unexpectedly at its parapet, it is now exposed to view from all directions.

The exterior

The castle when built in 1501-2 consisted of a single tower or blockhouse, roughly square in plan. The walls were five feet thick at the base, narrowing to three feet at the top of the building, giving a slight external slope, or batter. It had three main storeys with an open roof platform and, on the north side, a taller projecting turret containing a newel stair. The tower is planted directly on the bedrock, which was levelled to accommodate it.

The shaley coastal stone of which the castle is built probably came from within a few hundred yards, as did any stone needed for repairs between 1988 and 1990. The walls were then given a shelter coat of a very thin lime plaster, coloured greyish-white from the sand, traces of which remain. Much of the original lime mortar also survives in sound condition;

repairs to pointing in the same material help to give the tower something of the pale colouring that it would have had when built. For dressings to doors, parapets and loops, local red sandstone was used.

As you stand outside the main entrance door you can see above you the shutes of the machicolations, down which missiles could be launched to target any attackers who reached the main entrance; or water emptied on fires lit there to burn down the door. This is a typical feature of a traditional medieval fortification.

The ground floor

Immediately inside the door, steps descend into the gun battery. In the 19th century, a wall just to the right was taken down to make an access through to the main stair, but this has now been built up again to recreate the original plan. Further partitions divided the battery into a kitchen and pantry, and a new floor had been laid at a substantially lower level than its earliest predecessor. With the removal of these, the ground floor as a whole has now returned as nearly as possible to its 16th century appearance.

One small section of the original bedrock floor was found at the foot of the newel stair. The new floor, of random slate and lime mortar, is therefore similar to the earliest floor surface. From the stair it slopes to the opposite corner, for drainage; and it is very nearly level with the cills of the gun embrasures. The reason for this is that heavy guns at this period were mounted on timber beds, like sledges, rather than being raised on carriages with wheels: the whole gun, bed and all, had to be able to slide forward right into the embrasure.

An interesting detail at Kingswear is the timber plate that was found to run through the cills of the gun embrasures. On the ground floor this had almost entirely rotted away, leaving only an empty channel that has now

been filled in to allow water to drain away more efficiently. However, it can be seen almost intact on the first floor. In the centre of each embrasure is a central socket, for a pin, and it seems that these acted in conjunction with an upright element in the bed of a breech-loading gun to limit recoil.

The rectangular gun ports themselves, very similar in design to those at Dartmouth, were a great advance on anything that had gone before. Combined with the internal splay of the embrasure, they gave a far wider field of fire than the medieval loop, and thus for the first time allowed the mounting of large guns inside the tower, rather than on the roof, as had necessarily been the case until then. The new castle was an actively offensive weapon, rather than an object for defence.

The gun ports, nine in all, effectively covered the whole river, from the straits at its mouth, right around to Dartmouth Castle itself. When not in use they were sealed with shutters. Three old 17th or 18th-century shutters survive and have been repaired. New oak shutters for the remaining openings were made to the same pattern, fastened by a chain and cleat.

Above the gun embrasures are regularly-spaced holes that run right through the wall, the purpose of which is unclear. They do not seem to relate specifically to each individual embrasure. They may have been smoke vents (though these do not occur elsewhere before 1540), or just possibly spyholes. In the east wall is an embrasure that might have served as a magazine for use during combat, or for more mundane storage. It has a flue running out of it, so it possibly doubled as a smoke vent. In the north wall is a fireplace, now blocked, but also apparently original.

The ceiling, which had been lowered, with the floor, in the Seale Hayne restoration, is once again at the correct height; oak beams supporting the new first floor rest in the original Tudor pockets.

The round tower

At the foot of the main stair, a narrow passage leads to the small round tower. For some time the purpose of this tower puzzled the experts, who thought that the walls seemed earlier than 1855, and suggested that it might have been a magazine – a very large and damp one if so. It is now certain, from the fact that it does not appear in any illustration before 1855, that it is entirely Victorian. Thomas Lidstone, Seale Hayne's builder, was simply very good at copying the earlier work, particularly in the passage, which is roofed in stone slabs like the gun embrasures.

The heraldic corbels supporting the ribs of the vault in the circular bedroom bear the arms and crests of the Seale and Hayne families. The fireplace, again, is an example of Lidstone's skill at working in a traditional manner; the surround has all the appearance of the 17th century, and were it not carefully fitted to the curve of the wall, could be mistaken for a work of that date, reused from another building.

The stairs

It was thought at first that the staircase had been altered, because at the top, steps and newel post are from a single piece of stone, while lower down the steps are of rubble masonry, and the newel post shows the stumps of other steps, cut off. Then, when taking away concrete steps leading up from the ground floor, the bottom of the spiral was found, running right down to ground level, and built well into the castle wall. It seems that the stair has always been as it is now, and indeed that any interference would result in its total collapse. The stone for the newel may have been reused from another building.

The first floor

The first floor contains a mixture of Tudor and Victorian work. It is likely that this was the guardroom, where the soldiers of the intended garrison would have spent most of their time, so that here there was also a fireplace, now with a Victorian surround.

It has recently been discovered that the room contained other conveniences. The large window in the east wall was inserted earlier this century; before there was only a recess here, used as a wine store. When investigating the cill of this, the original seat and shutte of a garderobe were found, with a small window beside it.

In times of combat the room also served as a gun platform; the embrasures still have their timber plate, complete with sockets. The cill level is well above that of the floor, so that an anchor for the gun would have been an obvious advantage, even if there were trestles behind as well. It is likely that the guns used on this floor were smaller than those in the main battery.

The upper openings would have been for siting, and for handguns. The floor is at its 16th-century level, but is laid with the 19th-century elm floorboards. The exposed beams of the ceiling are also Victorian, as is the door and the door surround, whose stones are worked in a different way to the earlier dressed stone details.

The second floor

This room demonstrates more than any other the well-chosen site of the castle, with its sweeping views of the river mouth and out to sea. It also contains least early detail, because it suffered most from the long period as a ruin, and consequently was more thoroughly altered in 1855.

This floor, like the two lower floors, was also equipped for combat. It has small loops on all sides from which handguns could be fired in close combat with an attacking ship, or a force on the landward side. On the south (front) and west sides, larger windows cut through the loops. These have all the appearance of being part of the 1855 restoration, but illustrations show that the openings existed before that: whether they are ports for the large, late 17th-century guns, or are the result of an unknown 18th-century phase of repair is uncertain. If they were gun ports, the guns would need to have been mounted on a platform. It may be that there was a time, in either century, when the castle was used as a look-out post for the port, a use for which this room is pre-eminently well-suited.

In the 19th century the second floor was divided into bedrooms and dressing rooms, which have been removed. The plaster decoration in the centre of the ceiling is Victorian, as is the window joinery.

The ceiling height in 1502 was substantially lower than it is now; the pocket for a beam supporting the first roof structure – level with the window heads – could be seen in the walls when the plaster was stripped off. The depressions in the wall below the ceiling were formerly openings; these appear to have related to the early roof structure.

The roof

The Tudor roof was at a substantially lower level than the present one. According to a survey of 1661 the roof was of timber, caulked with oakum and tar like the deck of a ship, as opposed to the more usual lead covering. It is possible that this was how it was when first built, by men who would have been more used to building boats than castles. Water ran off through openings at the base of the parapet, which acted like scuppers on a ship. The position of these can be seen high up in the walls on the second floor. It is likely that a new roof was put on in the late

17th century, but any traces of this were lost in the 1855 restoration. The Victorian roof was pitched, and was replaced by the existing platform.

The parapet around the three seaward sides of the castle dates mainly from 1855, but at the back the higher parapet and the little turret are Tudor. The room in the turret was presumably for a look-out. In this rear wall are the sockets for a covered platform or 'hoard', which hung over the main wall walk, enabling soldiers to fire on a landward attacking force. The parapet, as at Dartmouth, is taller on this side to give extra protection from the hillside above. It is interesting to see the same detail repeated in West Blockhouse fort on Milford Haven, built in the 1850s, and also sited on a steep hillside.

The blockhouse

The concrete blockhouse, with its conning tower, was built in the 1940s, and is exactly as it was then, except for the door, which now enters the turret on the opposite side to the original entrance. Until 1987 it retained its bunks, but unfortunately these were removed by the previous owner.



From *Devonshire and Cornwall Illustrated from Original Drawings* by Thomas Allom e al. (1832). As in other early 19th-century drawings, there is no sign of the detached Round Tower at Kingswear.

Historical Background

Introduction

Several accounts have been written of the development of Dartmouth and its defences from the Middle Ages until the 20th century. A copy of the first, and chief, of these, by B.H. St. J. O'Neil, is contained in a separate album. This article, published by *Archaeologia* in 1936, contained the first analysis of the significance of Dartmouth Castle in the history of fortification, and although his conclusions on Kingswear itself have since been shown to be wrong, it stands as the leading work on the subject. A clear summary, benefiting from recent research and a wide knowledge, is contained in A.D. Saunders' guide to *Dartmouth Castle* (1983), which should be read in conjunction with Austin C. Carpenter's excellently-illustrated booklet *The Cannon of Dartmouth Castle* (1984).

Medieval Dartmouth

The Corporation of Dartmouth that caused Kingswear Castle to be built was not the town council of a sleepy Devon fishing village. It was the ruling body of one of the major ports of what was, in the 14th century, the leading seafaring nation in Europe. Its members were rich and powerful, and their contact with continental ideas probably accounts for the pioneering design of the town's castles. Chaucer's Shipman in *The Canterbury Tales*, written about 1390, was a Dartmouth captain:

*...of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,
His stremes, and his daungers hym bisides,
His herberwe, and his moone, his lodemenage,
There nas noon such from Hulle to Cartage.
Hardy he was and wys to undertake;
With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake
He knew alle the havenes, as they were,
Fro Gootland to the cape of Fynystere,
And every cryke in Britaigne and in Spayne.'*

Dartmouth developed as a major port between the 12th century and 14th centuries, and in 1341 was incorporated as a borough. With the town's steep slopes and poor communications, it was never ideal as a trading port, but Dartmouth's value as a safe anchorage was already well established: Totnes, at the head of the river, had been an important trading centre since Saxon times. The safety of Dartmouth's harbour also made it a suitable place for naval assemblies: in 1147 it was the rendezvous of the European fleet bound for the Second Crusade, and in 1346 Dartmouth harboured 31 ships that took part in the siege of Calais.

At around out the same time, the citizens of Dartmouth became conscious of a need to make some provision for defence, especially when Edward III was succeeded by Richard II in 1377, ushering in a period of national insecurity and fear of attack from France. In the 1380s the first fortification on the headland occupied by the present Dartmouth Castle was begun. In 1402 John Corp, a citizen of the town, was granted licence by the king to 'crenellate a lodging of his by the entrance of the port.'

O'Neil mistakenly took this second fortification to be Kingswear, on the evidence of an error contained in a great map of the south coast, drawn up in 1540 on the order of Henry VIII, which shows a ruined tower on the site of the present Kingswear Castle. He took this as evidence that Kingswear was medieval, and in decay, identifying it with the building described in 1591 as the 'old castle of Kingswear.' However the old castle was, in fact, a building upriver of the existing castle, whose proper name was Godmerock, or Gomerock, which is thought to have existed in the 15th century, and to have fallen into ruin in the 17th. Confusingly it stood on the site of a tower shown in full fettle on the 1540 map. Whether Gomerock was also John Corp's lodging, or whether this was another building entirely on the Dartmouth side of the river, has not been established.

These early defences proved ineffective against a large-scale attack by the French in 1404, when a force of 6,000 men avoided them entirely and landed in a bay further down the coast. This formidable force was repulsed but, according to the French, returned shortly afterwards and sacked the town of Dartmouth. It must have been assaults such as this that encouraged the town's Corporation to obtain a chain that could be strung across the river, from the castle headland to a site below Gomerock. This was in place in the 1460s.

Raids by French, or more particularly Breton, ships were a genuine and constant hazard for the harbours of the south-west (as were the raids of ships from Devon and Cornwall on ports in France). It was force of necessity, therefore, that brought about a sudden breakthrough in the design of fortifications, which occurred first of all in the strong tower at Dartmouth, begun in 1481, and then was copied elsewhere in the peninsular.

Guns had been used in castles from the 14th century, but mounted either on the roof (if large) or fired through narrow keyhole-shaped loops, derived from arrow slits, if smaller. Either must have been more effective for their deterrent psychological effect than from any ability to hit the object aimed at, even when it could be clearly seen.

The innovation at Dartmouth seems so obvious that with hindsight it is difficult to see why no one introduced it before: instead of a narrow slit, the gun port is a large rectangular opening, measuring some 2ft 6in (760mm) high and 2ft (610mm) wide. Combined with the internally-splayed walls of the embrasure itself it was possible for guns of large calibre to be manoeuvred over a limited traverse, or field of fire. A.D. Saunders wrote of Dartmouth in a letter in 1987:

'it is the first surviving example where large cannon were employed internally to provide a more effective gun tower.'

The whole castle thus became a formidable weapon, which could prove at least an equal opponent to the fast-developing cannon power of ships.

Who had the foresight to make this leap – from medieval methods of defence to the beginnings of artillery fortification – is now impossible to say. It has been suggested that the more advanced fortifications of Brittany served as an inspiration, and certainly ships from Dartmouth must have been uncomfortably aware of these. What is also certain is that Dartmouth Castle was a local initiative, begun by the Mayor and Corporation of the town, although the King (Edward IV) was quick to advantage of it, and to support them with an extra annual payment from the customs revenue.

Tudor and Elizabethan Dartmouth

In the reign of Henry VIII (1509-1547) there was an expansion of the navy and especially of foreign trade, which continued under his children. The explorations and adventures of Elizabethan seamen were amazing and numerous, and many of them began in the ports of the West Country – Plymouth (whence Drake sailed round the world), Bideford and Dartmouth. The stories of many of these expeditions were collected by Richard Hakluyt and published in *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation made by Sea or Overland to the remote and Farthest Distant Quarters of the Earth at any time within the compasses of these 1600 Yeares* (1589). Hakluyt got the stories from whomsoever he could, and so one of the book's many remarkable features is that it is a very early collection of extended pieces of writing in English by ordinary non-literary people like sailors and merchants.

One of the most interesting accounts in Hakluyt's book is that which describes the attempts of John Davis (or Davys) of Dartmouth to discover a North-West passage to the Pacific. No such passage exists, so Davis's failure was not his fault, but he discovered the strait that bears his name, entered Baffin Bay, and was one of the earliest Arctic explorers. Davis's diary kept on the voyage was printed by Hakluyt, and was the original model of the log-book system. Ships' record books have been kept in this way ever since. After further travels in the Far East, Davis was killed by pirates at Bintang, east of Singapore, in 1605.

In the 16th century the importance of Totnes, further upriver and with easier access, increased while Dartmouth declined. Plymouth was also growing in importance, and under Sir Francis Drake and the Hawkinses (Sir John Hawkins and his son Sir Richard) became the great base of the royal fleets in the west of England. The Dart (including Totnes) sent nine ships to face the Armada in 1588, and the accounts survive for two of them, the *Crescent* and the *Harte*, fitted out by the merchants and inhabitants of the Dartmouth neighbourhood. The battle must have seemed very close, for on 28th August, Raleigh's privateer¹ the *Roebuck* towed the Spanish ship *Nuestra Senora del Rosario* into Dartmouth.

In the early 17th century Dartmouth prospered with the profits of fishing off Newfoundland, discovered by the Elizabethan explorers. However, the Civil War dealt the trade a blow from which it never recovered. At its outbreak, Dartmouth declared for Parliament and hastily defended itself. In 1643, after a month's siege, it was taken by Prince Maurice, who garrisoned it for the Royalists. It remained a Royalist stronghold for the next three years, although it was blockaded by sea. In January 1646 the town was besieged again and taken by the Parliamentarians, under the leadership of Sir Thomas Fairfax.

¹ An armed ship that is privately owned and manned, commissioned by a government to fight or harass enemy ships.

Dartmouth – eighteenth century to the present day

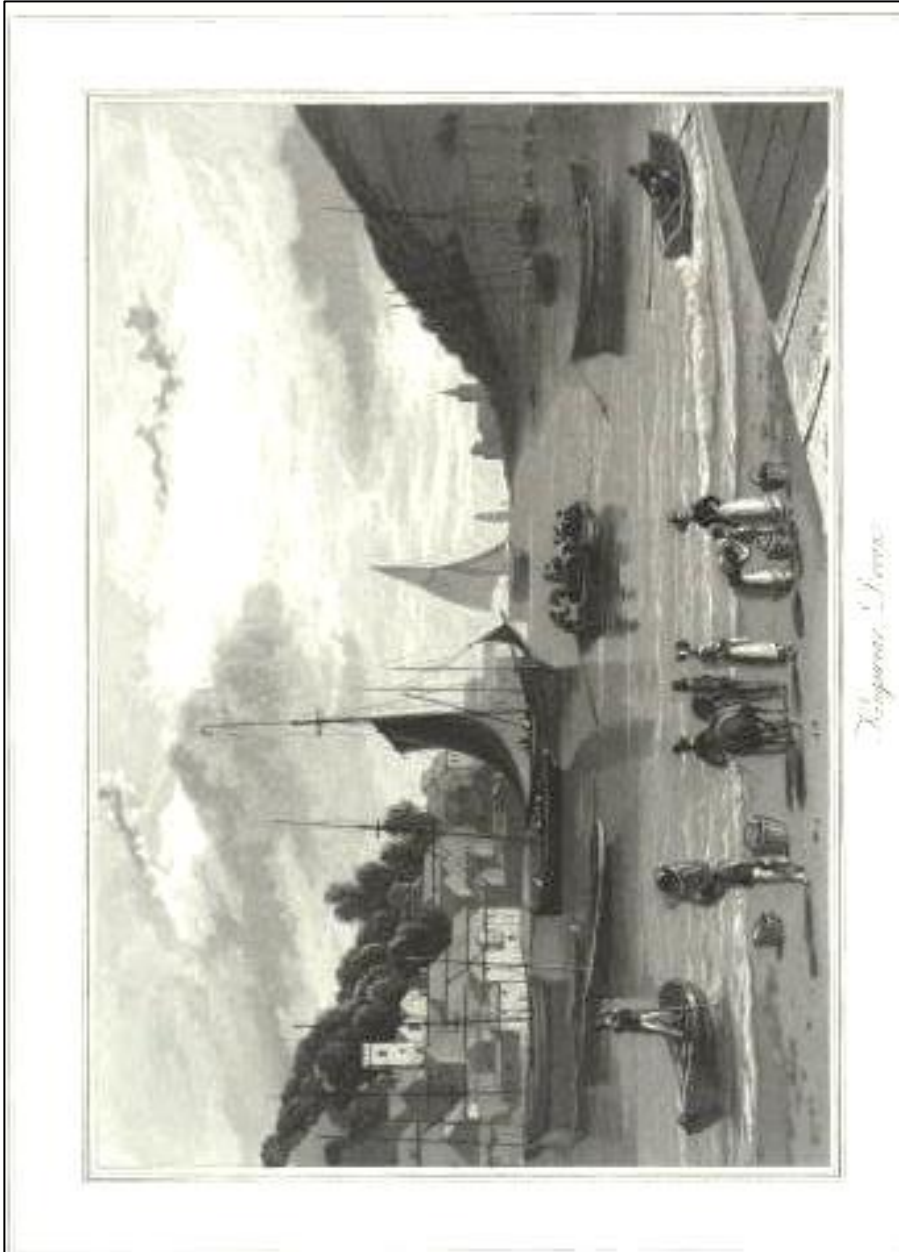
In *The Worthies of Devon* (1701), Rev. John Prince describes

Dartmouth's architecture along its waterfront:

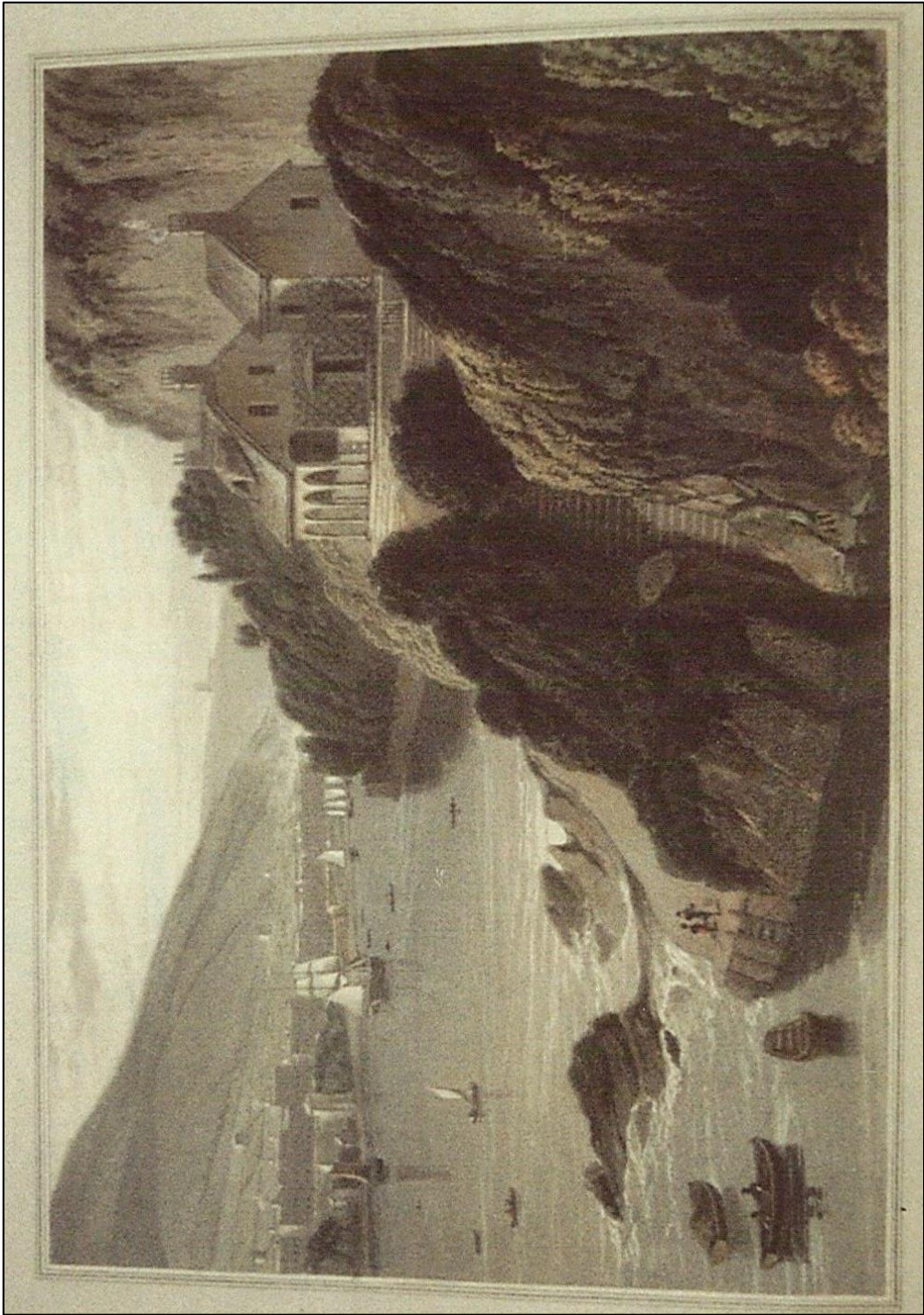
'...the houses, as you pass on the water, seem pensil, and to hang along in rows, like gally-pots in an apothecary's shop; for so high and steep is it, that you go from the lower to the higher part thereof by stairs.'

In the century following Prince's description Dartmouth's fortunes depended on various trades, including that in port wine. This was especially so after 1750 with the invention of the cylindrical bottle, which enabled wine to be laid down and matured. This trade was dominated by the Newman family, for many years prominent citizens of Dartmouth. But the increasing size of sailing ships made Dartmouth, with its crosswinds, unsuitable as a big commercial port. The 18th century's most distinguished Dartmouth resident was Thomas Newcomen (1663-1729). He invented, in around 1710, the first practical steam engine for pumping water. Used for pumping out tin mines, it paved the way for most of the industrial developments of the next hundred years.

In the nineteenth century Dartmouth continued to have an important role as a naval port. In 1863 the naval ships *Britannia* and *Hindustan* – for training Royal Navy officers – were moored in the town's harbour. In 1905 a more permanent training base, the *Britannia Royal Naval College*, was built to designs by Sir Aston Webb on a site near Mount Boone. During the Second World War Dartmouth reverted to its old role as a safe haven and gathering point for warships; in June 1944 480 boats left the port for Normandy. *Britannia College* was targeted by bombing, and cadets were moved to Eaton Hall in Cheshire. Also affected by bombing was the ship building company of Philip & Son, just upriver from Dartmouth at Noss, which operated from 1858 until the late 1990s. When it closed at the end of the 20th century it was Dartmouth's last industrial shipyard.



The village of Kingswear about 1820. From R. Ayton *A Voyage Round Great Britain* (1814-25) illustrated by William Daniell



'The first Brookhill, which fell down the cliff

Kingswear Village

The village of Kingswear existed from the Middle Ages, but although it shared the advantages of Dartmouth in terms of its harbour, and had better access to Exeter, it never prospered in the same way. Even when Seale Hayne brought the railway to it in 1864, Kingswear never achieved a more than local importance. Occasionally it received mention as a stopping place on the route to Dartmouth, because until the late 18th century the main road from Exeter ran to Kingswear and over the ferry (thus the village was on Leland's itinerary, for example). However, by the first decade of the 19th century the main ferry was diverted to the north, avoiding Kingswear altogether.

During the 19th^h century, with a burgeoning interest in romantic settings, a few handsome villas were built. Among them was Brookhill, built about 1820 for Arthur Howe Holdsworth M.P., hereditary governor of Dartmouth Castle. Unfortunately it slid off the cliff in a landslide soon afterwards, and Holdsworth was forced to rebuild higher up. The second house has been converted into flats.

It was Holdsworth, too, who began to plant trees along the previously bare coastline of the river mouth, a lead followed by Seale Hayne, who encouraged other landowners to do likewise. The woods of maritime pine growing down to the water's edge are today an important part of the estuary's character and charm, but they are now over-mature, and very vulnerable to storm damage.

As the railways opened up the west country for tourism, Kingswear had visitors too. The novelist George Macdonald holidayed there, for example. According to a directory of 1908, between 1851 and 1901 the population jumped from 315 to 815, but the village had only two telephone subscribers.

The writer comments

'The villas embowered in green foliage which help to constitute a charming picture when seen on approach from the sea bespeak Kingswear as a comfortable little community, and the circumstance of the Bishop of Ripon recently taking a house there gives the place a picturesque stability in the social world.'

In the Second World War the Royal Dart Hotel at Kingswear became H.M.S. Cicala for the duration, and Brookhill was occupied by the Free French Navy. The latter has ever since kept up associations with the area, and the village was visited by President Mitterand, an ex-officer of the Free French Navy, on a visit to England in 1984.



From *F. C. Lewis, Scenery of the River Dart (1821)*, clearly showing Kingswear Castle.



Kingswear Castle

Construction

The grant of Edward IV to the Mayor and Corporation of Dartmouth in 1481 read that in addition to completing in all haste the strong tower that they had begun, they were to *'find a chain to stretch athwart the mouth of the haven from that tower to another tower there at all necessary times.'* The other tower may simply be the already-existing one at Gomerock, below which the chain was fixed. However it seems more likely that the intention from the start was to build a duplicate of the Dartmouth tower on the other bank of the river. The building of blockhouses in pairs was already a feature of the Fowey estuary, where two small towers were constructed in 1457; these too were linked by a defensive chain. Indeed, A.D. Saunders suggests that the new Dartmouth chain was one taken from Fowey in 1474.

The building of Dartmouth Castle progressed only slowly throughout the 1480s; it was not roofed until 1495. In 1490-1 the Corporation paid £40 *'for a bulwark begun on the Kingswear side for the defence of the Port.'* Some authorities have taken this to mean the beginning of the construction of Kingswear Castle itself, and assumed that, like Dartmouth, it then progressed slowly over the next decade until 1501-2, when the next record of expenditure on it occurs.

Local historians Percy Russell and Gladys Yorke, in their article *Kingswear and Neighbourhood* for the *Transactions of the Devonshire Association Vol LXXXV* (1953), argue convincingly against this. They note the fact that the Mayor's accounts record in detail the expenditure on Dartmouth Castle over the following years, but that there is no further mention of work on the Kingswear side. They suggest that the work in 1490-1 was carried out on the coast below Gomerock, fulfilling the original intention to build the second tower at the other end of the chain. In support of this

they point to evidence of a platform cut out of the cliff, with beam-pockets in its vertical face. They surmise that the site proved so awkward that work was discontinued, and when it began again, it was on an entirely new site.

This is borne out by evidence in the castle itself, which shows no signs of a break in construction. The likelihood is, therefore, that once Dartmouth Castle had been completed and armed with guns, and the funds of the town had recovered from this expense, their thoughts turned again to the tower on the other side. The threat of raids from France had become more serious, too, when in 1491 the marriage between Charles VIII of France and Anne of Brittany had brought about the full union of the two. Howard Colvin in *The History of the King's Works* points out that French ships could now sail from Breton ports, with the advantage of the prevailing wind to carry them straight to Devon.

The likelihood is that the record of expenditure in 1501-2 marked the start and completion of Kingswear Castle in one continuous programme of work. The mayor's account actually records a payment of £68 19s 0d to Thomas Smyth, Parson of Modely, for the work which he had supervised there during the previous two years (this work was itemised in a separate account book, now lost). Larger works were completed elsewhere in the following decades in the space of two years; and the sum is consistent with the likely expenditure on a straight-forward tower, with no outworks, as seems to have been the case.

It may be surprising to us now to find a parson in charge of a military building, but this may not have been so at a time when any important town still had walls and gates, and defence was an ordinary part of life, especially on the coast. Nor was it unknown in the 16th century for a parson to be appointed as the equivalent of a quantity surveyor, overseeing the detail of expenditure on a building. Mark Girouard in

Robert Smythson and the Architecture of Elizabethan England (1966)

says:

'...in many cases the duties of Comptroller were taken on by the employer's bailiff or occasionally (as, at one stage, at Hardwick) by the local vicar, who was made responsible for organisation, co-ordination and the payment of the workmen.'

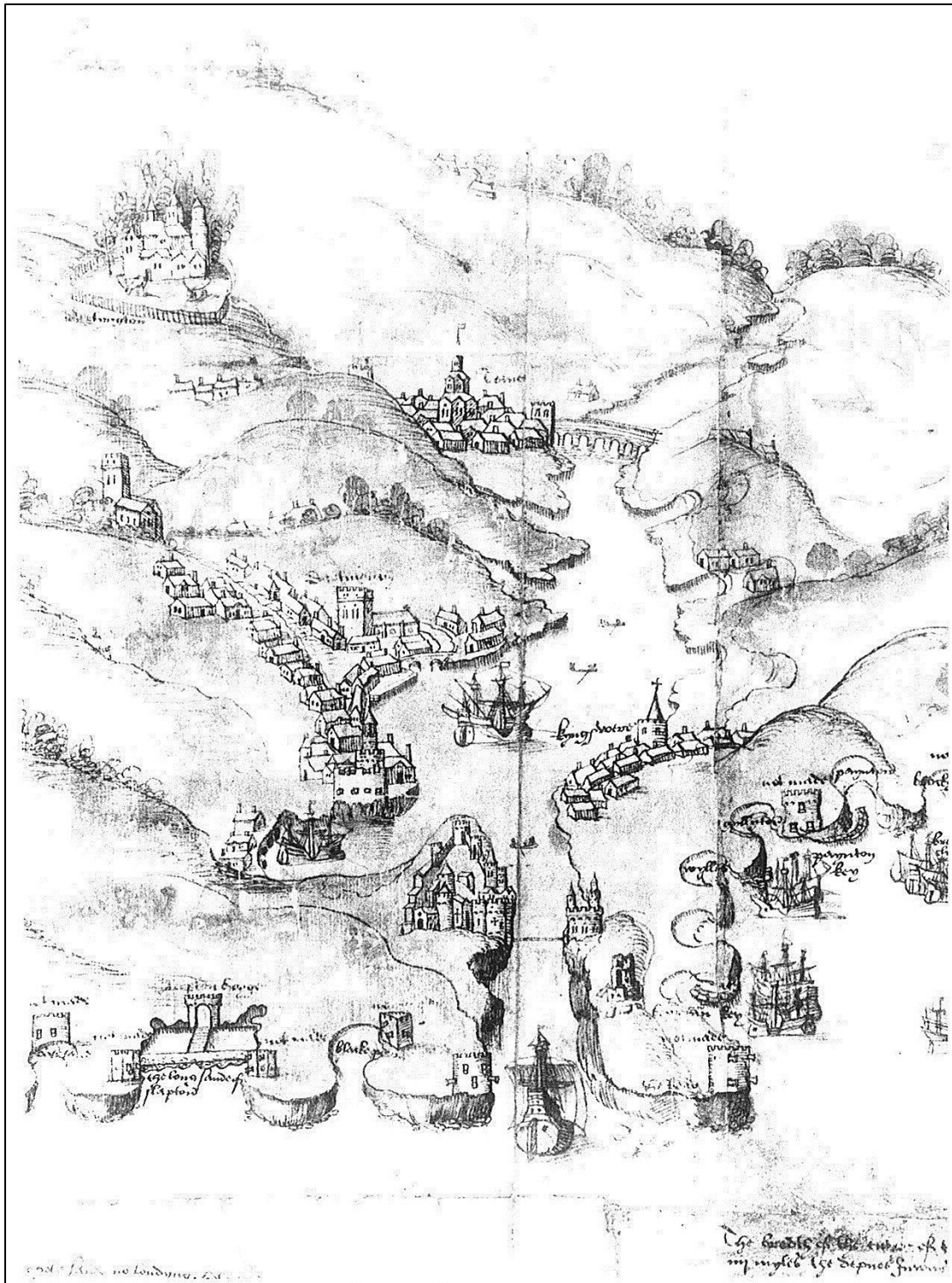
Such a move is understandable when a parson was likely to be one of the few numerate and literate men in a rural area.

Russell and Yorke credit Thomas Smyth with choosing the site for the castle, but this is not known. The site is skilfully chosen, from a strategic point of view, and since the castle in all its details, from gun ports to parapet, is the twin of Dartmouth, there must have been a single and highly original designer behind both buildings. Whoever it was, they were well aware of the advantage having a tower in this advance position, looking out to sea. Such a tower would force any raiding ship over towards the probably-superior ordnance of Dartmouth, hidden from sight by the headland.

Dartmouth was always the principal fortification, and was certainly more comfortably equipped for a garrison. It is unlikely that Kingswear was ever manned at all on a regular basis, except perhaps for a caretaker; inevitably it was the first to be abandoned when technological advances gathered pace in the 16th century.

Further advances in artillery fortification

The main gun platform at Kingswear, as at Dartmouth, was on the lowest floor, and its gun ports were similarly-designed for guns on wooden beds, rather than wheeled carriages. Like Dartmouth, it was probably provided with the type of cannon called a Murderer, along with 7-inch calibre, breech-loading Serpentynes (indicated by the restraining block in the embrasures). For guns of this type, even the slight internal splay of the



A section of B.L. MS Cotton Augustus li, showing the mouth of the Dart in 1540. The map is inaccurate in depicting a mined tower on the site of Kingswear Castle, and one in good repair at the end of the harbour chain. The rock to which the end of the chain was fixed in times of danger can still be seen, below Gomerock.

Dartmouth castles allowed a reasonably good traverse: certainly far better than anything that had gone before.

Within another fifty years, however, all that was to change, when Henry VIII instigated the first great period of development in English coastal fortification. Hitherto the defence of the coast had been largely a matter for local authorities, such as the Corporation of Dartmouth or a local magnate, acting under Royal approval. But from the beginning, Henry resolved that defence of the south coast should be undertaken on a national scale. This resolve was given greater urgency by the break with Rome in 1539, and consequent threat of Catholic invasion. It was then that he began the major programme of coastal defence that saw the construction of fortifications from Kent to Cornwall.

In March 1539 a committee, later the Council of the West, was appointed to supervise the building of forts and blockhouses from Poole to Penzance. It was for this committee that the gigantic map of 1540 was prepared, with its confusing evidence on the defences of the port of Dartmouth. It is now in the British Library (*Cotton MS. Augustus I.i.*), and was intended to show the state of the new and old forts at that time. Unfortunately the map makers drew what had obviously been intended to be the new tower at the end of the harbour chain, opposite Dartmouth Castle. In the actual position of Kingswear Castle they drew a ruin (hence the confusion with Gomerock). The answer, in fact, must simply be that Gomerock does not feature at all: Kingswear is shown carrying out its job as pair to Dartmouth, but in the wrong place. The ruin, as Russell and Yorke suggest, must be the long-vanished Trinity Chapel, which was used both as a look-out post and a mark for seamen.

By the time the Henrician forts were built, military architects were aware of developments abroad, especially in Italy. Their designs reflect knowledge of Renaissance fortifications, including round, polygonal or

more elaborate geometrical plans. The importance of showing only the minimum amount of wall to your enemy was also realised, so most Henrician forts are consequently low in height. Most important of all, military designers were coming to understand the practical advantage of mounting guns on wheeled carriages; the guns themselves were also becoming ever-more powerful.

The adoption of wheeled carriages demanded a new look at gun ports, which led in turn to the introduction of a raised cill height, and an outer as well as an inner splay. The maximum possible field of fire was thereby allowed, while keeping the opening itself to a minimum. Once this development had been made, the Dartmouth batteries were so restrictive they became almost obsolete, and had to be adapted or abandoned.

However, the fact remains that they were originally revolutionary. Without such pivotal buildings, speedily improved-upon but providing the cornerstone for future improvements, advances in military design would not have been made at all. J.R. Kenyon, in his fascinating study *Early Artillery Fortifications in England and Wales: a Preliminary Survey and Re-appraisal*², sums up the contribution of the unknown designer of Dartmouth by stating that, for all the medieval appearance of its two tall towers, 'the importance of Dartmouth cannot be overemphasised.'

In and out of operation

Cannon were a long-term investment, so the Corporation of Dartmouth was hardly likely to throw away their guns because a newer model was available for more up-to-date forts. Certainly they acquired more powerful guns whenever they could, and later lowered the floor of the battery in Dartmouth Castle so that guns on carriages could be used there, but they considered that what they already had was formidable enough. The Earl of Surrey, inspecting the harbour for Henry VIII in 1522, agreed. He

² *Archaeological Journal* Vol. 138, 1981.

reported that he 'never saw a goodlier haven after all our opinions', before going on to describe the 'blockhouse of stone' at the entrance (Kingswear), the old castle on the same side (Gomerock), and another old castle on the other side, with another blockhouse and a chain ready to be laid (Dartmouth).

However, the temptation must have been to gradually improve and adapt Dartmouth and to let Kingswear go, especially when Dartmouth's guns became powerful enough to cover the whole width of the river. Some evidence was found in 1988 of an attempt to build up the cills of the embrasures at Kingswear as well, perhaps combined with a lowering of the floor, although evidence for this was destroyed in 1855. In general, however, the indications are that the castle had become disused by the end of the 16th century.

In 1583, Sir John Gilbert (elder brother of Sir Humphrey and half-brother of Sir Walter Raleigh) declared that the castle needed 'four pieces of ordnance royal.' He recommended that these should be brass, 'for the breath of the sea will consume quickly iron ordnance....' The implication is that the castle had no other guns at the time, and it is unlikely that any was given, particularly of brass, which was expensive.

More conclusive evidence for Kingswear's abandonment is provided in 1599. A declaration survives in the Elizabethan *Calendar of State Papers* of a captured Spanish spy, Hortensio Spinola. He was sent to examine and report back in detail on the defences and navigability of the major ports of the English south coast. His description of Dartmouth states, for example, that the port was large enough for 600 vessels, that there were generally 30 vessels of merchandise or war in the port, that the depth at low tide was five yards, and that the people were warlike, and 'constantly at sea with vessels to attack the Spaniards and other enemies.' Naturally he also describes the fortifications, including the number of guns mounted

in each one and the size of garrison, but there is no mention of Kingswear. Only the bastions and castle on the west shore (including Dartmouth) are listed. Kingswear appears to have been without armament at that time. The building still existed, however, to be called on in times of emergency.

Seventeenth century rearmament

During the war with France in the 1620s, additional earthwork fortifications were made at Dartmouth to defend the town from attack from the countryside, and the chain was repaired. New guns, sakers and demi-culverin³ were sent, but there is no record of where they were mounted.

Clearer evidence for the repair and renewal of existing fortifications, including Kingswear, comes with the Civil War. In 1654 the Corporation of Dartmouth prepared a detailed account of its expenditure on fortifying the town in 1642, probably in the hope that the Protector's government would reimburse them. The total figure was £9,873; among the items listed was 'paid 4 deales for dores for Kingsweare Castle 4s Od.'

Russell and Yorke suggest that since the Royalists apparently did not have access to Kingswear Castle after they captured the town, it was possible that 'the retreating Parliamentarians burnt or blew up Gomerock and Kingswear Castles.' There was a fire at Kingswear, and it might well have been at this time. However, it is also evident that the stronghold, even if previously abandoned, was brought back into service.

At the Restoration in 1660 the arrangements for the Dartmouth defences were put on a new footing. A governor appointed by the King now took charge of the castles, removing the burden of their upkeep from the

³ A culverin with a bore of about 4½ inches (11cm) and firing a shot of about 10 pounds (5kg).

Corporation, which had been responsible for them until the Civil War. A round of repairs and rearmament seems to have been carried out on all the defences, including Kingswear, no doubt because of the threat of an invasion by the Dutch.

The first act of the Crown was to commission Sir Edward Sherburne, Clerk of the Ordnance, to carry out a survey of the *'Romaynes of all ye Ordnance Armes Ammunition & all other Habbiliaments of War togoather with the Particular Deforts of Carriages, Platforms, ffortifications, Storehouses, Courts of Guards, Centinel Houses and all other Buildings'*, belonging to the castles of the western district. He made his report in 1661, and at *'Kings Weare Castle'* found:

| | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Iron Ordnance</i> | <i>Saker: 4.</i> | <i>1po: 18 pest.</i> |
| <i>Inserviceable</i> | | <i>2po: 18 '</i> |
| <i>Burnt with ye ffire</i> | | <i>3po: 18 '</i> |
| <i>viz.</i> | | <i>4po: 18 '</i> |
| | <i>Mynion cutt</i> | <i>1po: 7 pest.</i> |

Buildings and reparacons *To make a new Coveringe of Tymbor and Planck above ye Plattforme of this Castle wch was formerly Calked Tyte wth oakham and tarr to keepe out ye Weather, but to bee Covered now wth Lead would bee much more Serviceable and Secure, (this togoather wth ye Plattforme and all ye Tymber worke in ye Castle beeing burnt by ffire which is alledged haponndd by accident.)*

There is likewise wanting att this Castle 396 foote of Stone plattforme to bee well Joynted & close layed togoather.

This important document tells us a number of things. Firstly it bears out Russell and Yorke's theory that Kingswear was burned by the retreating Parliamentarians during the Civil War. Secondly it provides the interesting detail of the timber roof *'deck'*, which Sherburne suggests should be covered with lead, protected by a covering or staging of *'timber and*

Survey of the Romaines of all y^e Ordnance Armes, Ammunition & all other Habilliments of Warre together wth the Particular Defects of Carrriages, Platforms, Fortifications, Storehouses, Courts of Guards, Centinell Houfes, and all other Buildings Necessaryes &c. w^{ch} doe particularly belonge to his Ma^{ties} Castles and Garrisons followinge: viz. S^t Maryes Castle & Truce: upon Scilly, Pentennis Castle, S^t Marz Castle, Plymouth Fort and Islands, Portland w^{ch} Castles of Weymouth & Sandfoote, Hurst Castle, Carisbrooke Castle, Sandham Fort, Lowz Castle, Yarmouth Castle, Portsmouth wth South Sea Castle, hereafter mentioned, taken by Edward Sherburne, Esq^r Clarke of his Ma^{ties} Ordnance: accordinge to a Warrant from y^e Kings most Excellent Ma^{tie} under his Royall Signe Mannall dated y^e 27th day of December 1660, And the Rth hono^r: S^t M^{rs} Compton Kn^t: M^r Gen^l: of his Ma^{ties} Ordnance his Signification thereupon dated y^e 20th day of August 1661) as followeth

viz

Island of Scilly y^e 11th day of October 1661

St Marys Castle The Romaine

| | | |
|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| | Serviceable | Unserviceable |
| Culveringd: 5 | 1 po. 50. 0. 00. | |
| | 2 po. 50 | |
| | 3 po. 50 } post | |
| | 4 po. 40 | |
| | 5 po. 30. 0. 00. | |
| Ordnance | 1 po. 30 | |
| | 2 po. 30 } post | |
| | 3 po. 30 | |

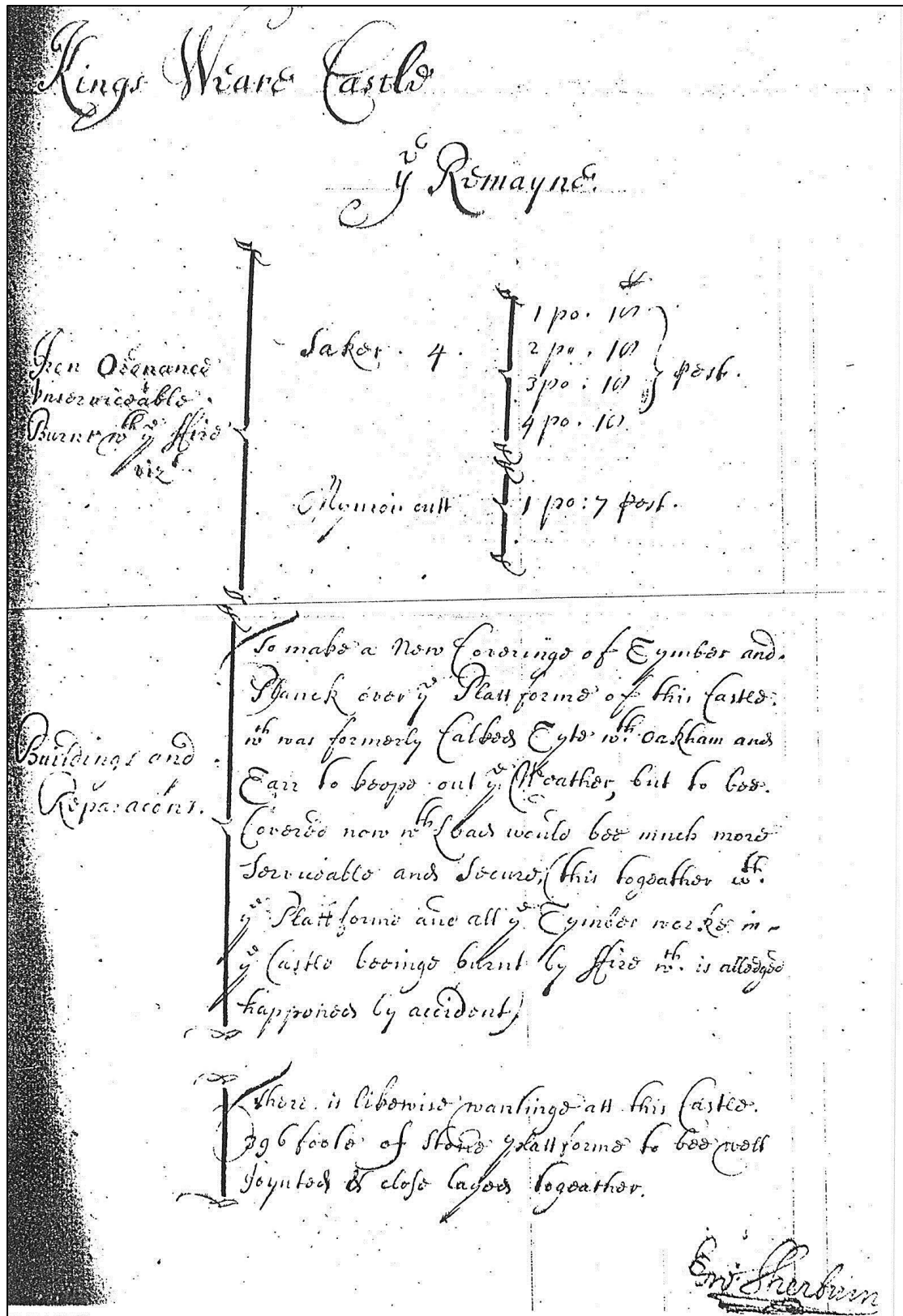
Charles II's first act after the Restoration was to order a survey of Britain's fortifications. Sir Edward Sherburne submitted his report (above) in 1661.

plank.’ Lastly and most significantly it tells us that when the building was rearmed for the Civil War, the *‘platform’* was at the top of the building, probably actually on the roof. This was the natural consequence of the development of the gun-carriage: even with the cill height modified, the embrasures of the original ground floor battery would still have been unusable for a carriage-mounted gun of any size (although Sherburne is apparently suggesting that new stone paving be laid there, the old bedrock by then being presumably worn and uneven). Even the embrasures on the first floor, which at least had the advantage of a viewing window above, would have been extremely awkward for all but small cannon. As in the early days of artillery in the 15th century, the only answer was to mount the larger guns on the roof.

Geoffrey Parnell of English Heritage, in a letter written in 1988, had some interesting comments on the guns themselves:

‘Sakers were c. 10ft long with a small bore; the description ‘1 po. 18 pest’ I interpret as meaning ‘1 poiz 18lb per estimate’ which strongly suggests that Sherburne was weighing the guns. I feel sure that the sakers, which by now would have been old-fashioned, were mounted on the roof of the castle. The fact that the carriages are not mentioned suggests that they were consumed in the fire that gutted the building. The only other piece mentioned, the ‘Mynion cutt’ refers to a much smaller weapon, c. 3½-pounder, with a cut down barrel which doubtless was located on one of the lower floors where it could have been employed as an anti personnel device to ‘spray’ would-be attackers with small shot.’

It seems very likely that the repairs suggested by Sherburne were carried out, since a number of documentary references imply that Kingswear was in active use in the second half of the 17th century. Certainly in 1667 the Dutch fleet held back from attacking the English straits fleet, because the latter were so securely ensconced in Dartmouth Haven. In July of that year, it was reported to the King that ‘the Earl of Bath and Sir Thomas Allin have returned leaving Dartmouth well fortified, having planted 160



The entry for Kingswear Castle in the 1661 survey.

guns upon the quays etc. The Dutch fleet are supposed to have quitted the coast.' The likelihood is that some among this great array of weapons were mounted on Kingswear.

The commissions in 1662 and 1677 of a new '*captain and governor of the castles and blockhouses in the town and port of Dartmouth*' show the monarch-appointed governor to have been provided with:

'one sergeant, one gunner, one matrosse [seaman], eighteen soldiers and one boatman as the constant garrison thereof, with power to draw into the said castles and blockhouses such soldiers of the trained bands of the said town, as he shall see cause....' (quote from where?)

Since other evidence indicates that the harbour chain was no longer usable, the boatman must principally have been employed to row the governor or his sergeant across to Kingswear on occasional visits of inspection.

Prince in *The Worthies of Devon* (1701) describes the port as he knew it, giving further evidence of Kingswear's continued employment:

'the mouth of the river ... is well guarded with two Castles and munitions standing on the opposite banks thereof. Heretofore was also a chain which reached from one side to the other, which in time of war was wont to be set up to prevent any invasion of the enemy.'

Abandoned altogether

To a more military eye, these defences did not amount to much. In 1703, a complaint came from the Corporation that the castles and platforms at the mouth of the river had been neglected since peace had been concluded with France. The situation deteriorated thereafter. The next time we hear of Kingswear Castle is in another survey of the coastal defences of the South West, carried out by Colonel Christian Lilly, '*one of His Majesty's Ingeniers*', in 1717. His report on the defences of the port as a whole was damning in the extreme, listing only one serviceable carriage among 58 guns of all sorts and sizes. Of Kingswear he noted:

'On the East side of the Harbour's mouth Stands an Old ruined Square Tower called Kings Ward Castle, having a Platform with five guns on top, which are all mounted on Unserviceable carriages, and the Tower itself is useless and Irreparable.'

Of the five guns in Kingswear, one was of 12 pound ball, two of 9 and two of 8 pound ball. The first was 8ft 9in long, the next two 10ft and 9ft long respectively, and the last two 7ft 6in and 9ft long. The diameter of the touch holes were 15in 27; 11in 14; 12in 9; 12in 9. He notes: *'These are 5 Service-able Gunns, Standing on the Top of Kingsward Castle, on Old Rotten Ship Carriages.'* A further note adds: *'Rose and C Crown.'*

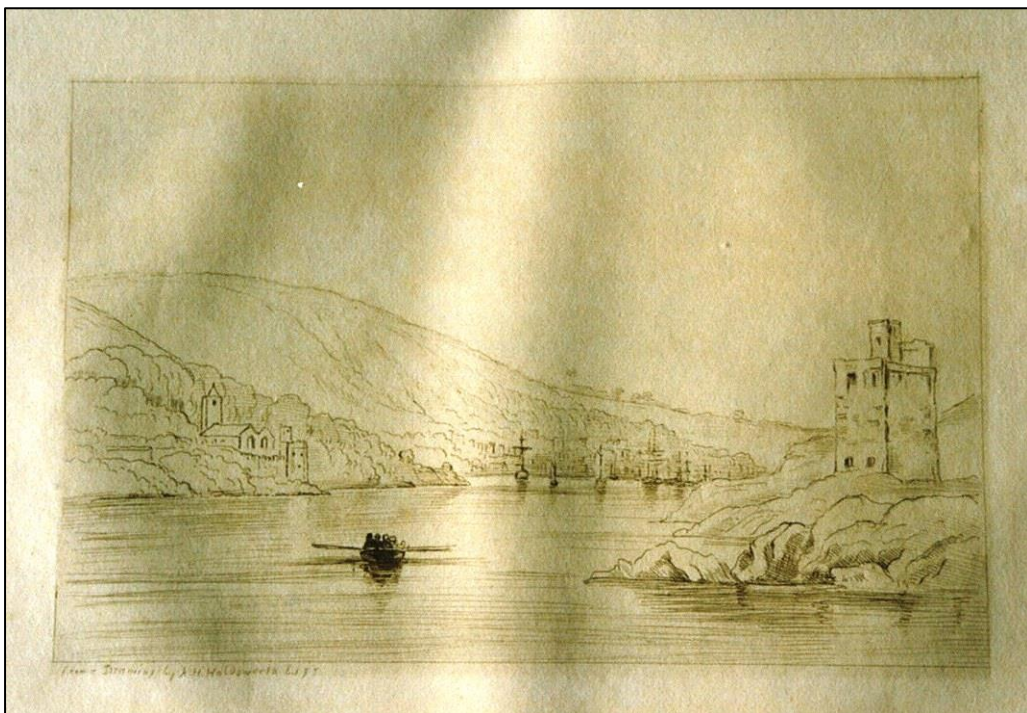
These guns must all date from the rearming of Kingswear Castle after Sherburne's report of 1661. The two 9-pounders at least, in the opinion of Geoffrey Parnell, date from the late 17th century. From the fact that they are mounted on the roof, we can assume that the platform had been renewed, presumably with a lead covering as recommended by Sherburne.

Later surveys make no reference to the castle, and it seems reasonable to conclude that it was abandoned and derelict. On 5 September 1817 the Board of Ordnance ordered the disarmament of a great many redundant and old-fashioned batteries in the Western District. There is no mention of Kingswear, but Dartmouth lost twelve guns from various batteries. It was probably in some similar rationalisation during the previous century that Kingswear was finally disarmed for good.

In 1988, two guns matching Colonel Lilly's descriptions were seen on the seabed below the castle. It would not have been the first time that redundant guns were simply consigned to the waves.



Kingswear Castle in prints from *Scenery of the River Dart* by F.C. Lewis (1821)





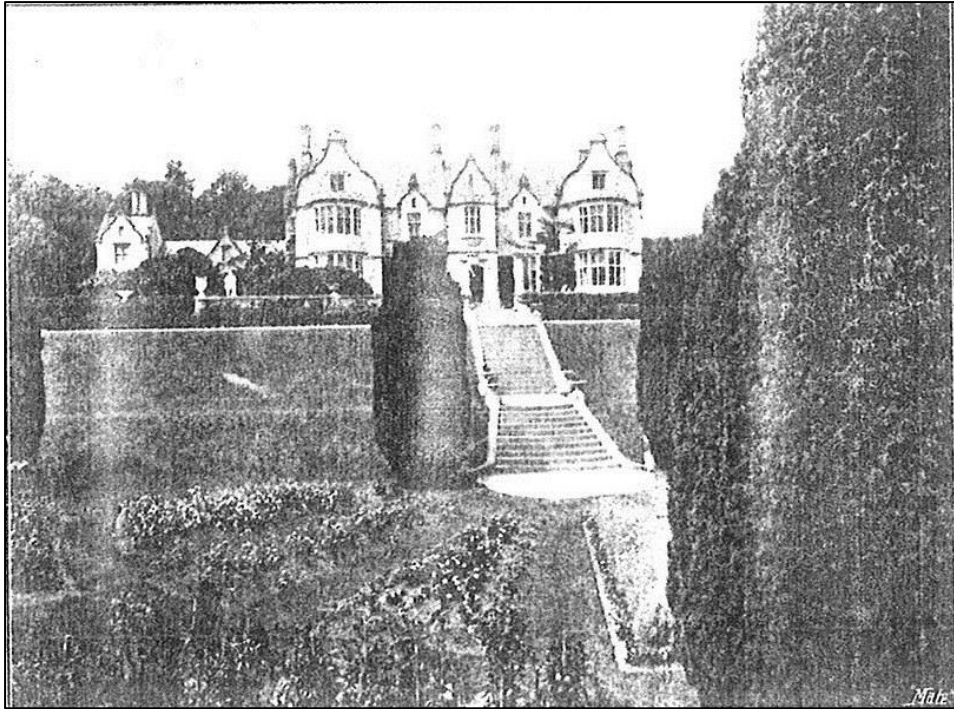
The Rt. Hon. Charles Seale-Hayne (1833-1903)

Rescue and repair – the Seale Hayne restoration

Several early 19th-century prints and watercolours show Kingswear in an abandoned state, with its parapet collapsing. In 1855 the castle was acquired by Charles Hayne Seale Hayne, who restored and extended it, and turned it into a private home.

Seale Hayne was born in Brighton, on 22 October 1833. His father, born Charles Hayne Seale, was the younger son of Sir John Seale, 1st Bt., M.P. for Dartmouth, and a descendant of the Seale family of Mount Boone in Dartmouth, who owned much of the town. When still at Eton, Charles Hayne Seale (senior) inherited a fortune from his great-uncle, Charles Hayne, on condition that he adopted Hayne as his surname. Renamed Charles Hayne Seale Hayne, he married Louisa, daughter of Richard Jennings of Portland Place, and died in 1841, when his son Charles (junior, the restorer of Kingswear) was only eight.

Seale Hayne, educated at Eton, was a rich orphan of 22 when he began to convert Kingswear Castle in 1855. He had also inherited Fuge House, his father's house in Dartmouth, and later on Pitt House at Chudleigh Knighton, so Kingswear was only ever used in summer.



Pitt House, Chudleigh Knighton, near Newton Abbot, home of Charles Seale-Hayne, and enlarged by him (from a photograph in (F.J. Snell) *Devonshire Historical, Descriptive, Biographical* (Mate's Country Series), 1907




Pitt House today

The design of the interior, and of the additions, may be attributed to a local architect/builder, Thomas Lidstone, on the authority of *Kelly's Directory*, which comments:

'Farther out towards the Channel is another fort, or blockhouse, which, until very recently, was filled with rubbish; in 1856, it was fitted up with great care, under the superintendence of Mr Thomas Lidstone, jnr, as a summer residence for the owner, Charles Seale Hayne Esq.'

DARTMOUTH, SOUTH DEVON.

Thomas Lidstone,
HOUSE BUILDER, & c.,



Supplies *Chimney Pieces*, in Marbles, Portland, and other Stone, *Headstones, Tombs* (including Iron Railing), *Tablets, &c.* CHURCH WINDOWS, with *Obituary Glass*, for which Designs and Estimates will be furnished. *Ecclesiastical Wood CARVING*, Church Furniture, Clerical Vestments, Encaustic Tiles, &c. ORNAMENTAL LETTERING. *Terra Cotta* and other Chimney Pots. *Purbeck & Slate* Paving. *Approved Drain Pipes* and Closet Traps. BRICKS. CEMENTS.

FUNERALS FURNISHED.

AGENT TO THE (LONDON) "SUN" FIRE AND LIFE OFFICES.

Lidstone's firm had an elaborate advertisement in this same directory. Thomas Lidstone, whose father was also an architect, was the restorer of Newcomen Lodge, Ridge Hill, Dartmouth (1868); architect of the Board School, Higher St, Dartmouth (1873-4) and of Waddeton Court, Torquay (1868-9), to which was attached a private chapel. He also designed or restored a number of other churches and parsonages in Devon. The work at Newcomen Lodge involved the rebuilding of a half-timbered house, and in White's *Devonshire Directory* (1878) it is recorded:

'The principal portions of [the house were]...obtained by Mr T. Lidstone, a local architect, from the residence of Mr Thomas Newcomen, the inventor of the atmospheric steam engine. Mr Lidstone has preserved the fireplace at which the inventor is said first to have satisfied himself of the power of steam by experiments with his kettle.'

John Evidently Lidstone was a pioneer of sympathetic restoration.

SEALE and HAYNE families

Colonel Charles Hayne
of Fuge House,
Dartmouth,
(d, 1821)

Sarah Hayne (1752-1815) = John Seale (1752-1824)

Sir John Henry Seale, 1st Bt.
(1790-1844)

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Sir Henry Paul Seale (1806-1897) | Charles Hayne (1808-1841) heir to his great-uncle Charles Hayne who d, 1821 m, Louisa dau, of Richard Jennings of Portland Place, who m, 2 nd ly James Buller of Dunley, Devon, and d, 1879, | Edward Taylor (1811-1893) ↓ | Elizabeth (1812-1899) m, 10 th Baron Cranstoun ↓ | 9 brothers 1 sister d.s.p. |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|

Sir John Henry Seale (1843-1914) Charles Hayne Seale Hayne M.P. (1833-1903)

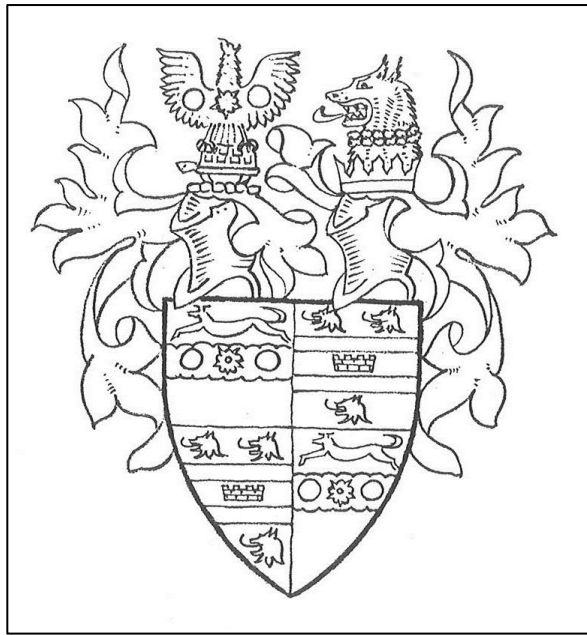
Sir John C, H, Seale
1881-1964)

Sir John H, Seale
(b, 1921)

Information from Mr, Richard Seale,

Seale Hayne was called to the Bar in 1857, but never practiced. In 1885 he was elected M.P. for the Ashburton district of Devon, a seat which he retained until his death. In 1892 he was paymaster-general in Gladstone's fourth administration, and was made a privy councillor. He held office until the defeat of the government in 1896. It was owing to Seale Hayne's efforts that the South Devon railway was extended to Kingswear in 1864 (the descent being too precipitous on the Dartmouth side). At Kingswear station a boat took passengers across to Dartmouth, which was the only train station in England never to have a railway track leading to it. Seale Hayne also erected the 80ft column on Down End as a daymark for shipping. In about 1889 he came into possession of Pitt House, Chudleigh Knighton, which was left to him by Robert Pulsford, a relative of his mother's who had been M.P. for Hereford.

Seale Hayne died a bachelor at his London house in Upper Belgrave Street on 21 November 1903, aged seventy, and left the bulk of his fortune, to the indignant fury of some of his relations, to establish and endow '*a college, to be erected in the neighbourhood of Newton Abbot, Devonshire, for the technical education of artisans and others, without distinction of creed.*' The Trustees received over £90,000, some of which came from the sale of his notable art collection, including works by Hogarth, Gainsborough, Turner, Bellini, Raphael, Titian, Velasquez, Canaletto and Guardi, and a Virgin and Child by Leonardo da Vinci. His publications included *Politics for Working-men; Farmers and Landlords;* and *Annals of the Militia, Being the Records of the South Devon Regiment* (Plymouth, 1873).



The quartered Arms and Crests of Charles Seale-Hayne

Kingswear Castle, which was also left to the Newton Abbot College trustees, was sold to the Rev. Harold Burton for £1,200. He lived there for about twenty years, but by the mid 1920s the castle had passed into the hands of Major L. Wright, T.D. It was Wright who turned Seale Hayne's wine cupboard on the first floor into a window, and added the concrete bathroom block below the round tower.

During the Second World War the castle was occupied by the Marines. Thereafter it remained empty, and in the 1950s Mrs Wright, now a widow, put it up for sale, but without immediate results. Finally, in 1957, it was bought by Mr (later Sir) Frederic Bennett, M.P. for Torquay, who repaired it as his constituency residence, much to the interest of the local press. He put it up for sale after his retirement as an M.P. and it was bought by the Landmark Trust in 1987, after long and complicated negotiations.

Working out the history of Kingswear Castle has been very much a joint effort:

Charlotte Lennox-Boyd did the initial research and wrote a preliminary account; Peter Bird, the architect, and Paul Quinn, of St. Cuthbert's Builders, noted, recorded, and helped piece together the evidence provided by the building itself. Andrew Saunders and Geoffrey Parnell, of English Heritage, contributed their knowledge of Tudor fortifications and artillery. Colin Carpenter and Francis Kelly (also of English Heritage) have shown us Dartmouth Castle, and the former has demonstrated the loading (but sadly not the firing) of the breech-loading bed-stock gun there, which he made himself. David Sumpster (formerly of English Heritage) and Nigel Fradgley of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England have contributed further ideas. It is thanks to them all that I have been able to write this account.

Charlotte Haslam, 1990.

Association
des
Forces Navales Francaises Libres
59 Rue Vergniaud
Paris 75013
Tel: 581-61-56.CCP. Paris 7377-18Y
President Amiral Girardon



Section de Grande-Bretagne
President: d'Honneur: J. Blanchard
President: Charles Guillois
138 Hanover Road
Willesden
London NW10 3DP
Tel(OI 459 5156)

Miss Charlotte LENNOX-BOYD
9 Eland Road
London SW11 9JX
Tel(OI 228 III9)

London 29 September 1987.

Dear Miss Lennox-Boyd.

I am Writing to you in reference to our telephone conversation this morning, concerning Kingswear Castle near Dartmouth S. Devon. The Castle was occupied by the Free French Navy from 1940 to 1945, it was the Naval Officer formation center school. The present Admiral Phillip De GAULLE, son of the General Charles De Gaulle stayed there, also Admiral Bigot De Casanove, Admiral Herbout, and many superieurs Officers. It was also the base for the M.T.B. Motor Torpedo Boat Officers an Men. In 1984 our actual President of France went Back to Dartmouth as an ex Officer of the Free French Navy, Monsieur MITTERAND, to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of D.DAY. Kingswear Castle of Dartmouth is very much in the history of France's Navy, during the war years of 1940 -1945 .

On the 15,16,17,18 and 19 of October I will be at Toulon south of France for the congress of the Free Frenh Naval Forces, so I will meet some chaps who stayed at the castle during the war; if I can get hold of some Photographs, I will let you know.

Yours Sincerely

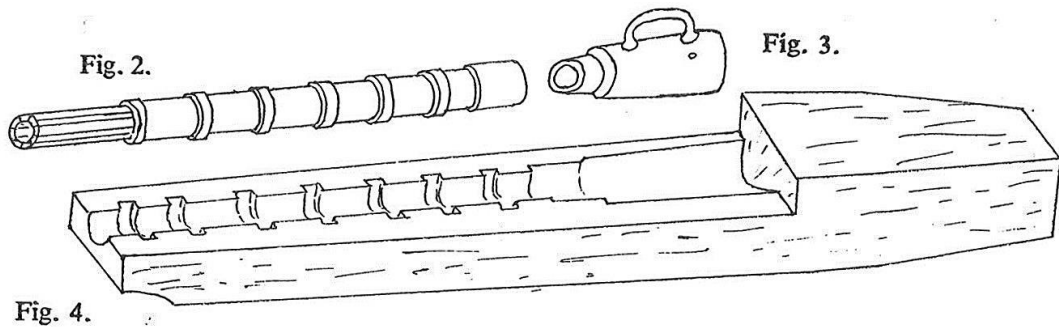
Charles Guillois



Unfortunately in his letter M. Guillois has confused Kingswear Castle with Brookhill, where the officers of the Free French Navy were stationed. No doubt there was much to-ing and fro-ing between them and the marines in the castle, however. The torpedo station survivies below Kingswear Court.

Early Guns: Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century

These guns were built-up of wrought-iron. One of the types of construction for heavier guns consisted of a number of long flat bars placed edge-to-edge around a mandrel or solid core, over these bars, iron rings and collars forged and fire welded, were driven red hot until the whole length was covered (Fig. 2) then as the collars and rings shrank, so they contracted around the long bars, the whole becoming integral. The mandrel or solid core was removed leaving a built-up forged iron tube, the main bore of the gun. To complete the barrel, further forged collars were made and fitted to the breech to reinforce this end of the tube, the muzzle was treated likewise and usually provided with some form of elementary front sight.



Figs. 2, 3 and 4. The components of a breech-loading gun. Fig. 2. The barrel in the making. Fig. 3. The breech chamber. Fig. 4. The bed.

The second component was the breech-chamber (Fig. 3) which held the powder charge and was forged from wrought-iron strip wound one coil on top of another leaving a central cavity to take the charge and being coiled thickly enough to withstand the pressure generated by exploding gunpowder. One end of the chamber was forged over and sealed, the open end was shouldered to fit snugly into the breech end of the barrel previously described.

The final requirement to complete the piece was the bed or stock and Fig. 4 gives a general idea of the design which housed the barrel and chamber. This was usually made of elm or oak and fitted with straps of wrought-iron to hold the barrel into its bed, some of the more primitive being held in place by ropes or bindings. An iron wedge attached by a chain to the bed was used to force the loaded powder-chamber into the barrel prior to firing (Fig. 5).

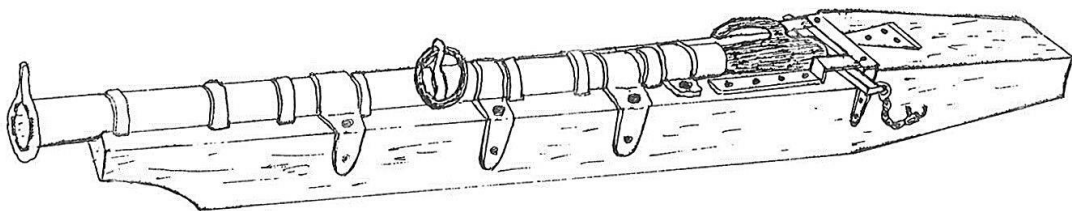
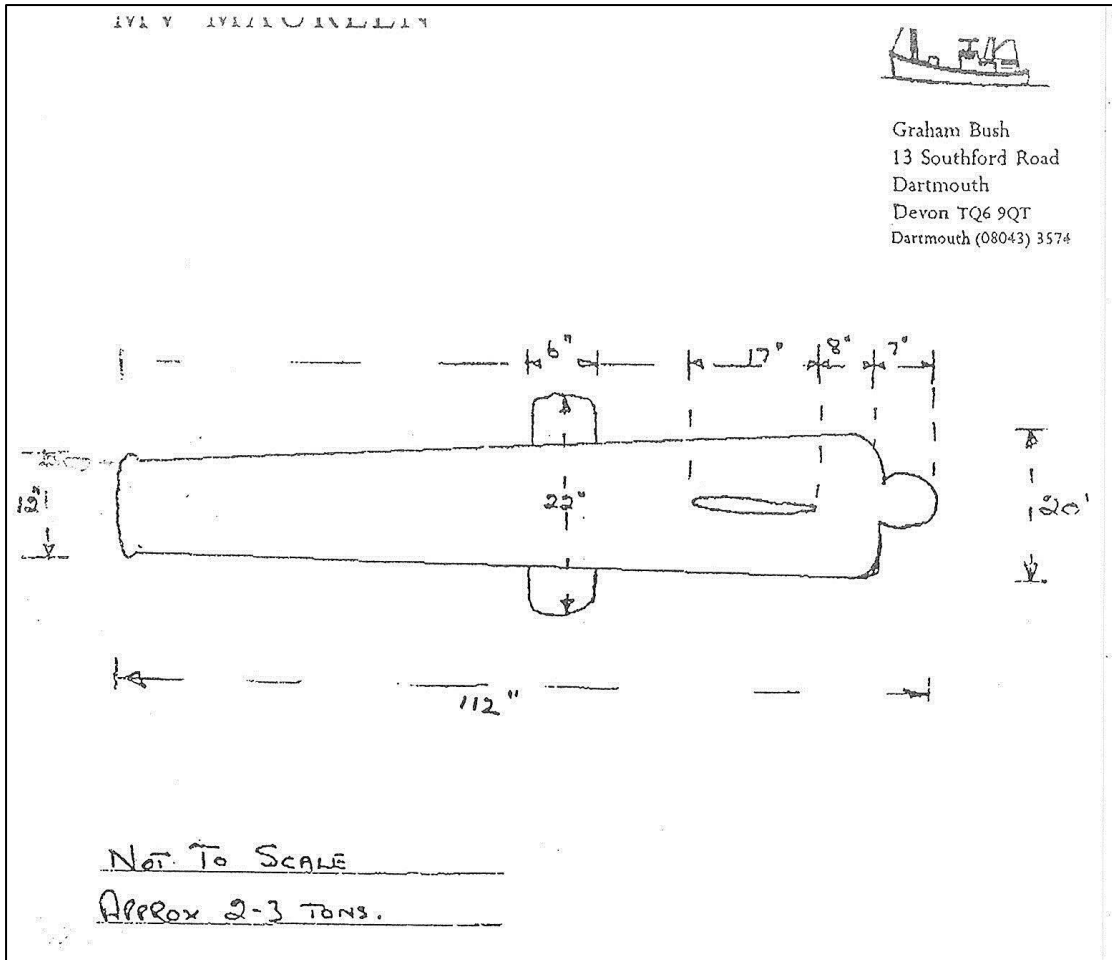
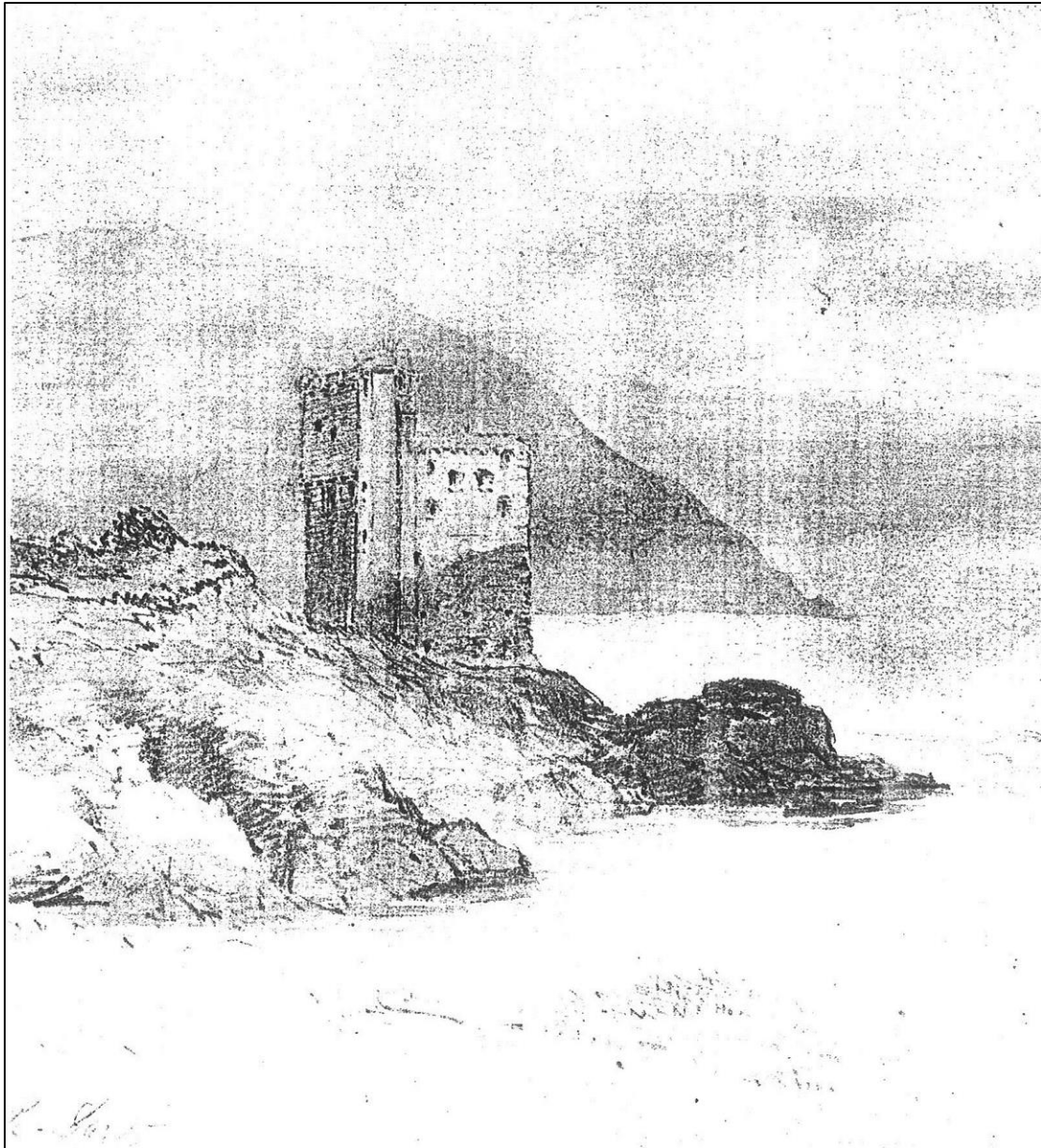


Fig. 5. A wrought-iron breech-loading gun on a bed-stock showing the chamber and wedge in position.

From *The Cannon of Dartmouth Castle* by Austin C. Carpenter.
Kingswear was designed for guns similar to this.



Gun found on sea bed below the Castle



This watercolour, discovered while work was in progress, finally killed off the theory that the round tower pre-dated 1855.

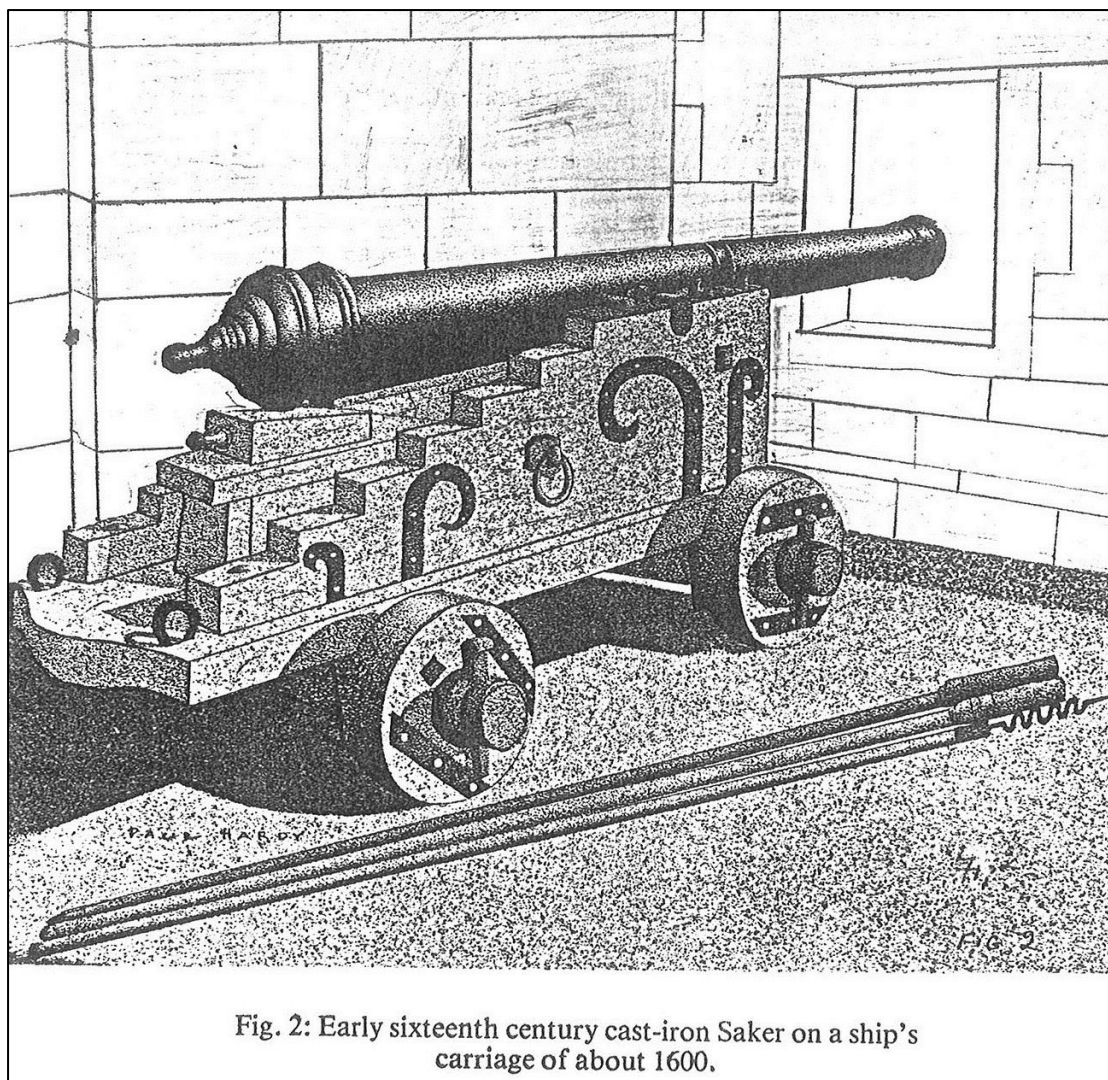
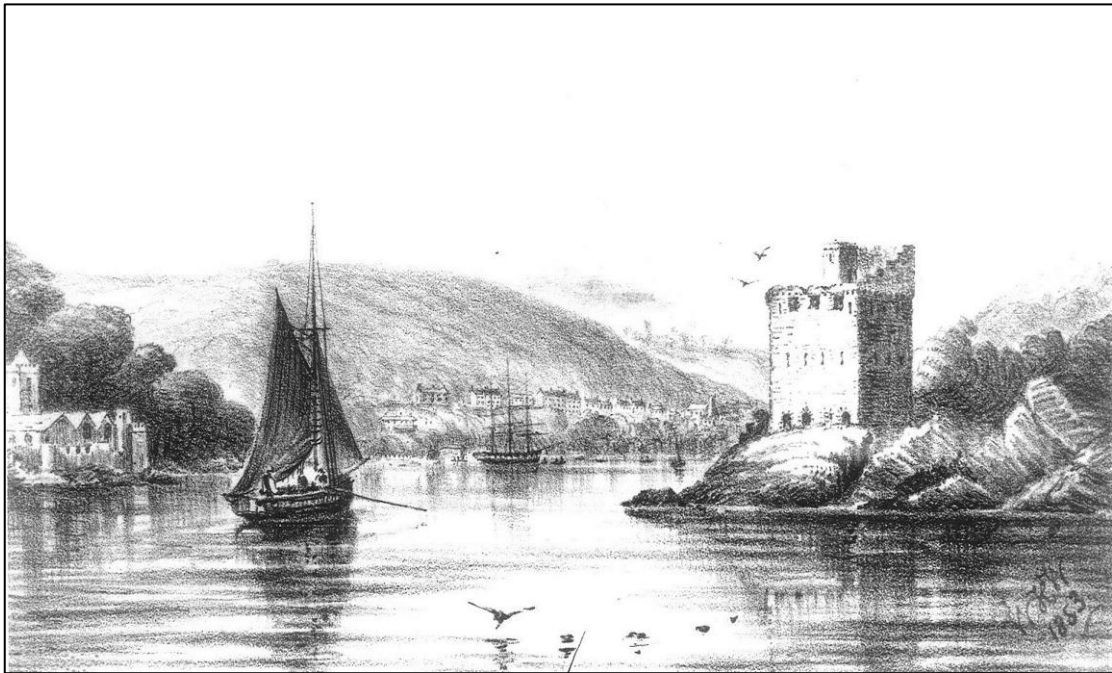
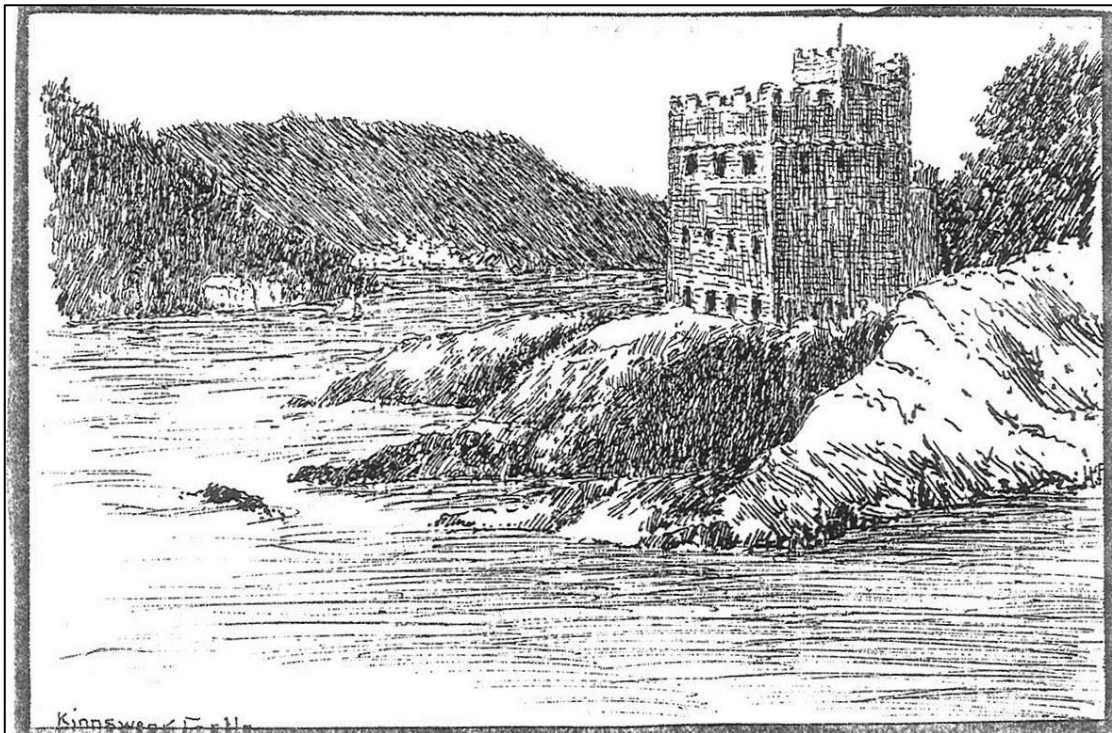


Fig. 2: Early sixteenth century cast-iron Saker on a ship's carriage of about 1600.

An illustration from Austin C. Carpenter's *The Cannon of Pendennis and St Mawes Castles, Cornwall*. Similar ad hoc combinations of guns and carriages would have been found at Dartmouth and Kingswear Castles in the late 16th and early 17th centuries.



Before Seale Hayne's restoration, above (a lithograph in Exeter Local Studies Library) and after his restoration, below (undated drawing, early 20th-century, from Patterson Sketches, Devon Record Office)



SOUTH DEVON
Near **DARTMOUTH.**

PARTICULARS, PLANS, VIEWS & CONDITIONS OF SALE,
OF SOME EXCEEDINGLY ATTRACTIVE

Freehold Residential & Sporting Properties

Situate in the PARISHES of BRIXHAM, DARTMOUTH, BLACKAWTON and SLAPTON,

Within easy reach of the Town of Dartmouth, with its exceptionally fine YACHTING HARBOUR, and the Kingswear Railway Station, on the Torquay and Newton Abbot Branch of the Great Western Railway, whence Torquay may be reached in about half an hour, Newton Abbot in an hour, and London in about 5 hours.

THE PROPERTIES COMPRISE ON THE KINGSWEAR SIDE

THE EXCEPTIONALLY INTERESTING

KINGSWEAR CASTLE,

Situated at the Entrance to the River Dart, with charming PLEASURE GROUNDS forming a delightful MARINE SUMMER RESIDENCE;

FOUR MARINE VILLA RESIDENCES,

Commanding extensive views of the proverbially beautiful scenery of the district;

A well-equipped AGRICULTURAL HOLDING, including numerous Sites for the erection of good-class Residences, together with an extensive Warren.

The Properties on the Dartmouth Side

COMPRISE

A COMMODIOUS BLOCK OF BUILDINGS,

Having an important length of Harbour Frontage, and offering a very VALUABLE SITE for the erection of a first-class HOTEL, or for any other important Business Establishment; a very desirable

Sporting & Residential Property, ^{KNOWN AS} "HIGHER FUGE,"

Situated about 6 miles from Dartmouth, with a superior RESIDENCE eminently suited for the occupation of a Gentleman Farmer;

A SMALLER AGRICULTURAL HOLDING, together with several Enclosures of Accommodation Land & Cottages,

The whole yielding an actual and fairly estimated Rental Value of upwards of

£1,400 per Annum:

Messrs. WALTON & LEE

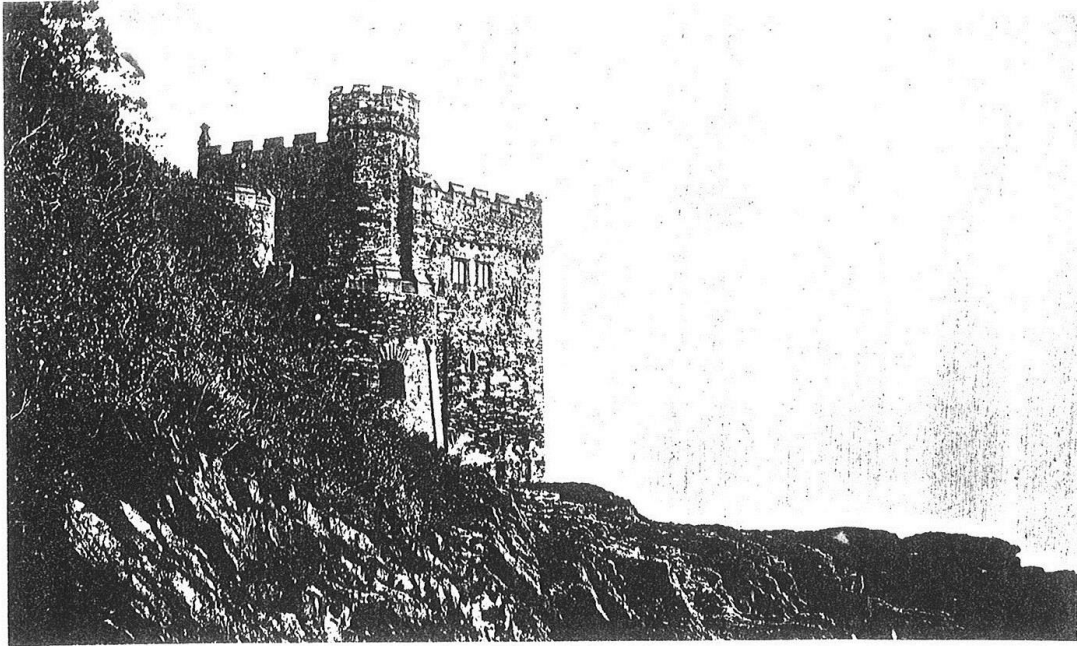
Have been instructed by the Executors of the Right Hon. C. SEALE HAYNE, M.P., deceased, to offer the above for SALE BY AUCTION,

AT THE "CASTLE" HOTEL, DARTMOUTH,

On Tuesday, the 31st day of May, 1904,

AT ONE FOR TWO O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON,

In a number of convenient LOTS or GROUPS OF LOTS unless otherwise Sold by Private Treaty.



LOT 1

(See Plan No. 1).

A SINGULARLY INTERESTING

Freehold Residential Property

KNOWN AS

KINGSWEAR CASTLE,

Situate in the Parish of Brixham, and overlooking the Mouth of the River Dart, the Town of Dartmouth being about a mile distant by boat, and the Village of Kingswear about three-quarters of a mile from the Property. From Kingswear Station, on the Torquay and Newton Abbot Branch of the Great Western Railway, Torquay may be reached in about half an hour, Newton Abbot in 1 hour, Exeter in 1½ hours, and London in about 5 hours. The Property comprises

A STONE-BUILT CASTELLATED RESIDENCE,

Forming a rectangular pile with central annexe, the major portion of which is said to date from the time of King Henry II. It forms a unique Marine Summer Residence, or Yachting Station, for a Bachelor.

.....

Adjacent to the Building are some delightful old-world Pleasure Grounds which, in a series of slopes and terraces, descend to the rock-bound coast line.

The Castle contains a circular Drawing Room, about 16 ft. in diameter, commanding most exquisite views of the River Dart and of Dartmouth Harbour, and fitted with a Spiral Staircase leading to a turret outlook; Dining Room, lighted by ten windows and fitted with open beam ceiling; while arranged in the thickness of the wall is a Wine Store. From this Apartment a Spiral Stone Staircase leads to two Bed Rooms and two Dressing Rooms, with Water Closet. It also affords access to the battlemented roof, with Smoking Room or Observatory.

The DOMESTIC OFFICES are on the LOWER FLOOR, and consist of Kitchen, with Store Cupboard and Coal House, and having Servants' Bed Room adjoining. There are also Butler's Pantry and Wine Cellar.

The Castle is supplied with Water from a specially-constructed Reservoir, situated in Enclosure No. 1254 on Sale Plan, and forming part of Lot 7, and which in its turn is fed by a powerful Spring. Lot 7 will be sold subject to the Purchaser undertaking to keep the water pipes and other appliances in proper repair, in order to maintain, as far as practicable, such supply in the future; subject to a payment, at the rate of £3 per Annum, being made by the owner of this lot. (See footnote to Lot 7.)

THE PLEASURE GROUNDS,

Which have been tastefully laid out in character with the surroundings, are inexpensive to maintain. They are intersected by numerous winding paths, and are well sheltered by Coniferous Trees and Ornamental Shrubs. They include a Terrace Lawn with Rustic Summer House, while on the other side of the Castle winding paths lead to cosy Nooks and Knolls, whence most lovely views of the Dart scenery may be obtained, as well as of the Seascape and Coast Line beyond. Another secluded path leads from the Castle to a quaint Bathing Pool of natural formation.

At a short distance from the Castle is

A PRODUCTIVE KITCHEN GARDEN.

The Plot shown as No. 1263c on Sale Plan, and situate in the North-East corner of the lot, forms an excellent Site for a good class Marine Residence. It possesses long frontages to two existing private roads, and is Ripe for Immediate Development.

The above, including the thriving Plantations and Grounds, extend over an area of about

8 a. 2 r. 4 p.,

As shown in the following Schedule:—

| No. on Plan. | Description. | Quantity. | | |
|--------------------|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | A. | R. | P. |
| PARISH OF BRIXHAM. | | | | |
| 1263 | Kingswear Castle, Pleasure Grounds, Rocks, &c. | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| 1263c | Building Site | 1 | 0 | 19 |
| 1263d | Private Roadway | 0 | 1 | 25 |
| Total | | A. 8 | R. 2 | P. 4 |

The Castle and Grounds are at present in hand, and Possession will be given on Completion.

The Property is of the fairly estimated Rental Value of

£ 5 0 p e r A n n u m .

The lot will be sold, subject to existing Rights of Way to Landing Place, in favour of Lots 2 and 3, between points A, B and C on Sale Plan (see footnotes to Lots 2 and 3). It is also subject to a Right of Way over the Private Roadway, shown as No. 1263d on Sale Plan, in favour of Lots 2, 3, 6 and 7. Lot 7 will be sold subject to the existing Rights of Way over the Private Roads numbered 1249 and 1266c for occupation purposes in favour of this Lot and Lots 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

The lot is subject to Tithe Rent-charge, that has been divided for the purposes of this Sale, at the sum of 7d., the value for the past year having been 5d. It is believed to be free from the payment of Land Tax.

The Purchaser of this Lot shall have the option of taking, at a valuation, the Furniture and other effects in the Castle (subject to the right of the Vendors to make such reservations, if any, as they shall think fit). The Vendors reserve a right to hold a Sale by Auction of such things, if any, as they shall reserve, and, if the Purchaser shall not exercise his option, also of the



Photograph in the National Monuments Record, of about 1930. The large window on the first floor has not yet been formed.

M.P.'s home his castle—and it's a real one

THERE is a maxim which claims that an Englishman's home is his castle, but in the case of Torquay's M.P., Mr. F. M. Bennett, and his wife, Marion, it would be more true to say that their castle is their home.

For their permanent postal address during the past two years has been Kingswear Castle, which perches on the top of rocks on the edge of the River Dart with an enviable view of Dartmouth Castle over the water on one side and Start Point and the open sea on the other.

The purchase of the castle began romantically and its conversion, almost complete, has proceeded with such success that if the castle had a pet ghost it would have to take a second look at the unchanged exterior to make sure it was haunting the right, ancient monument.

If the castle had not been considered an ancient monument the Bennetts would not own it today. When they were taking a walk in Kingswear to forget their disappointment over the refusal of plans they had drawn up for a contemporary house they took one look at the castle, fell in love with it immediately, and decided they would move heaven and earth to get the "For sale" notice taken down in their favour.

BUYER BACKED OUT

But they discovered it was all but sold to a wealthy purchaser who was in the throes of arguing his right to knock down walls and put in picture windows. Finally convinced it was an ancient monument and the exterior could not be altered, he backed out and the castle was theirs.

Then began the long, arduous job of making habitable a castle which, though an enchanting landmark to millions of tourists, was, in fact, flooded with sea water to the depth of several feet and possessed only the most primitive sanitary fittings and a badly crumbling roof.

Undaunted, the Bennetts set about cleaning and repairing.

Their aim was to keep the character of the fort—which has withstood many a siege and remained Royalist to the bitter end against the Roundheads and which in turn has housed the Seale-Hayne family, a local vicar, and Free French troops—and at the same time make it habitable.



Mr. F. M. Bennett, M.P., and his wife photographed at the fireside of the main room in their Kingswear Castle home.

Disregarding the conviction of their friends that they were crazy, this young M.P. and his wife had electricity installed and the many gun ports and arrow slits reinforced with unbreakable glass against the bitter gales which batter the castle.

CEILING PAINTED

The guardroom where nine brass cannons used to be is still unchanged except that the thick stone walls and the oak floor and oak beams have been cleaned and the ceiling painted blue. It has a huge log fireplace bearing some unknown coat of arms, and hung with many emblems including three breastplates found in the dungeon.

The low doorways, the winding stone steps and passages also remain unchanged, but sleeping accommodation, the dining-room, and the kitchen would be a joy to any young housewife.

Out of four rooms the Bennetts have made two pretty bedrooms with pastel coloured wash walls over plastered stone and a compact bathroom complete with an electrically warmed towel rail.

The dining-room still retains an old-world atmosphere, but the kitchen is completely modern, with strip lighting, tiled floors, and even a refrigerator.

Western Morning News (21 April 1959)

GALE DAMAGE

When all this was completed and Mr. and Mrs. Bennett had been in residence for about two months the worst gale the country had known for many years battered the castle, throwing huge boulders against the windows and flooding the kitchen and dining-room. The strip lighting was torn off the ceiling and china and glassware smashed to bits. But the Bennetts did not give up. They set to work again making everything more galeproof, and within six months were back in residence.

The beauty of their planning is that although this tiny castle is now a comfortable home it has not lost its sense of fun and mystery.

"We still have our hatch through which they used to throw unwanted visitors into the sea and the boiling lead slit over the front door," said Mr. Bennett. "We also have a meditation room, but there is always far too much going on to be able to meditate there."

They have discovered near their natural swimming pool a cave which they intend to explore at low tide, and various battlements in the eight-acre, tree-covered grounds.

In time the Bennetts will have a garden beside their castle and an extra bedroom and bathroom and study-library in the adjoining round tower which was built on to the main part 200 years later.

'MORE FUN'

Mrs. Bennett said at her castle: "It is much more fun living here than in an ordinary house and I am always delighted when I can leave my flat in London.

"The only thing that I find a disadvantage is when I am going to an evening function and I have to put on boots to get up the path to the car. In winter when it is muddy and the wind is blowing it can be awful."

And of the friends who at first thought them crazy Mr. Bennett said: "They have changed their minds now. The castle is always filled with visitors at week-ends and they love it."

So the Bennetts have fulfilled a long-standing wish to live on the edge of the sea in something unusual and at the same time in the constituency Mr. Bennett represents.

Kingswear Castle

Sir,—Since many of your readers take a serious interest in ancient buildings, I feel that some comment should be made on the reported saying that "Kingswear Castle was built in the reign of King John, though there are traces of Saxon architecture."

The round tower, with its supposed Saxon work, never appears in illustrations of the castle before Mr. Charles Seale-Hayne repaired and extended the ruins of the main tower in 1855.

The main square tower is almost an exact copy of the tower of Dartmouth Castle erected in 1484-1490, and the Mayoral Accounts of Dartmouth for 1501-02 show the payment of just over £60 to Thomas Smith, parson, of Modely, overseer of the building of Kingswear Castle.

The itineraries of King John (built up from the list of orders issued) show that John landed on the Kingswear side of the harbour on crossing from Normandy, but nothing more

PERCY RUSSELL,

Hon. Curator, Dartmouth Museum.

The Butterwalk, Dartmouth, Sept.

30

Western Morning News (4 October 1954)

Torquay M.P. buys Kingswear Castle as constituency home

KINGSWEAR Castle, at the mouth of the River Dart, has been bought by Mr. F. M. Bennett, Conservative M.P. for Torquay, and Mrs. Bennett, as their constituency home.

The fortress, now scheduled as an ancient monument, has stood empty for many years and will require a great deal of work before it can be made fit for occupation.

Nothing will be done to alter its historical external character and appearance, but inside a scheme to introduce modern amenities, including a bathroom, and provide three bedrooms and three living-rooms will be put in hand.

Mr. and Mrs. Williams, who now live in a rented house at Wellswood, Torquay, hope to move to the castle in about four or five months' time. They will retain their flat in Central London for convenience on days when Parliament is sitting.

LEGEND EXPLODED

Kingswear Castle was first offered for sale in recent times in September, 1954, on the instructions of the widow of Maj. M. N. Wright, of Bolton Hall, Clitheroe, in whose family it had been for 30 years.

The price then asked by a firm of London auctioneers was £7,000.

The building was then described as one of the oldest inhabited castles in the country. The accommodation was said to include a main reception-room, with a lofty beamed ceiling, a circular drawing-room and four bedrooms.

Legend had it that the castle was built in the reign of King John, but this was exploded by Mr. Percy Russell, the Dartmouth historian, who pointed out that the main square tower is almost an exact copy of the tower of Dartmouth Castle, erected between 1484 and 1490, and that the Dartmouth mayoral accounts for 1501-2 recorded the payment of just over £60 to Thomas Smith, Parson of Modely, "Overseer of the building of Kingswear Castle."

RARE EXAMPLE

The date was also confirmed in May, 1956, by Mr. R. Gilyard-Beer, chief inspector for England of the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings, who emphatically denied the existence

found no visible remains at Kingswear earlier than the 15th century.

Mr. Gilyard-Beer agreed, however, that Kingswear Castle was a rare example of its kind, with its original features little changed. He said it would be a serious archaeological loss if the gun turrets and loops were altered to give more light to the interior, and added: "Kingswear and Dartmouth between them are the earliest examples in this country of specialised artillery fortification on a significant scale. With their crude and undeveloped gun ports, they are now the only surviving examples of the late 15th-century beginnings of the science of coastal fortification by means of artillery that made such rapid strides about half a century later."

RESTORED IN 1855

Mr. Russell has also written: "Kingswear Tower was put in order in 1642, but was not used by the Royalists in 1644 and was almost certainly burnt and ruined when the Parliamentarians had to surrender to Prince Maurice in October, 1643. It stood a ruin until restored by Mr. Charles Seale-Hayne in 1855."

Western Morning News (12 April 1957)

The Other Kingswear Castle

PHILIP KNOWLING

THE OTHER
KINGSWEAR CASTLE,
DEVON

Further to Mick Corton's discovery featured in the last magazine (FOLLIES #60, p. 12)...

Kingswear Castle is a local landmark (literally, as it's a Landmark Trust holiday let). It's well known to anyone who has sailed into the mouth of the River Dart. But just around the coast stands the other Kingswear castle – smaller, harder to find and rather more mysterious.

On the shores of Mill Bay Cove, at the end of a narrow valley, stands a small pile of turrets and towers. It's not far from Kingswear and it's not far from the National Trust's Coleton Fishacre property, but it could be a thousand miles from anywhere. The castle is the focus of a vista that would have inspired Claude or Poussin. It has been suggested that this is a miniature copy of the real Kingswear Castle, but that's clearly not right. For a start, the big castle is square and this is round; if anything, it looks like Dartmouth Castle. It's known to the current owners simply as 'the castle at the cove', while some locally call it the Fairy Castle. You can see why: with turrets upon turrets and little lancet arches, it looks like something out of a Brothers Grimm tale. Yet its appearance belies its hard-working past, for in its time this folly has been a lime-kiln, a mill and a generator-house.

The full history is hazy. A map of 1904 shows a lime-kiln – built presumably because the cove offered a safe harbour for boats bringing raw materials. In the 1930s the building here housed a generator for nearby Warren Cottage. It seems likely that, sometime in the early twentieth century, the owner of Warren Cottage converted the lime-kiln to take a generator and finished off the work with some fanciful embellishments. Someone with a romantic imagination looked at an old lime-kiln and saw a fairy-tale palace. Well done, whoever you were.

The place may also have been – as the name of the cove suggests – a mill of some description. Water still trickles from a pipe that leads off the stream in the valley; this could have provided power. There's rusting gear to be glimpsed inside, but it doesn't look like it ever generated electricity. This could have been a winch to haul boats out of the water: the main door points out along the cliff and the path joins a slip-way where passengers could have disembarked. There's a small,



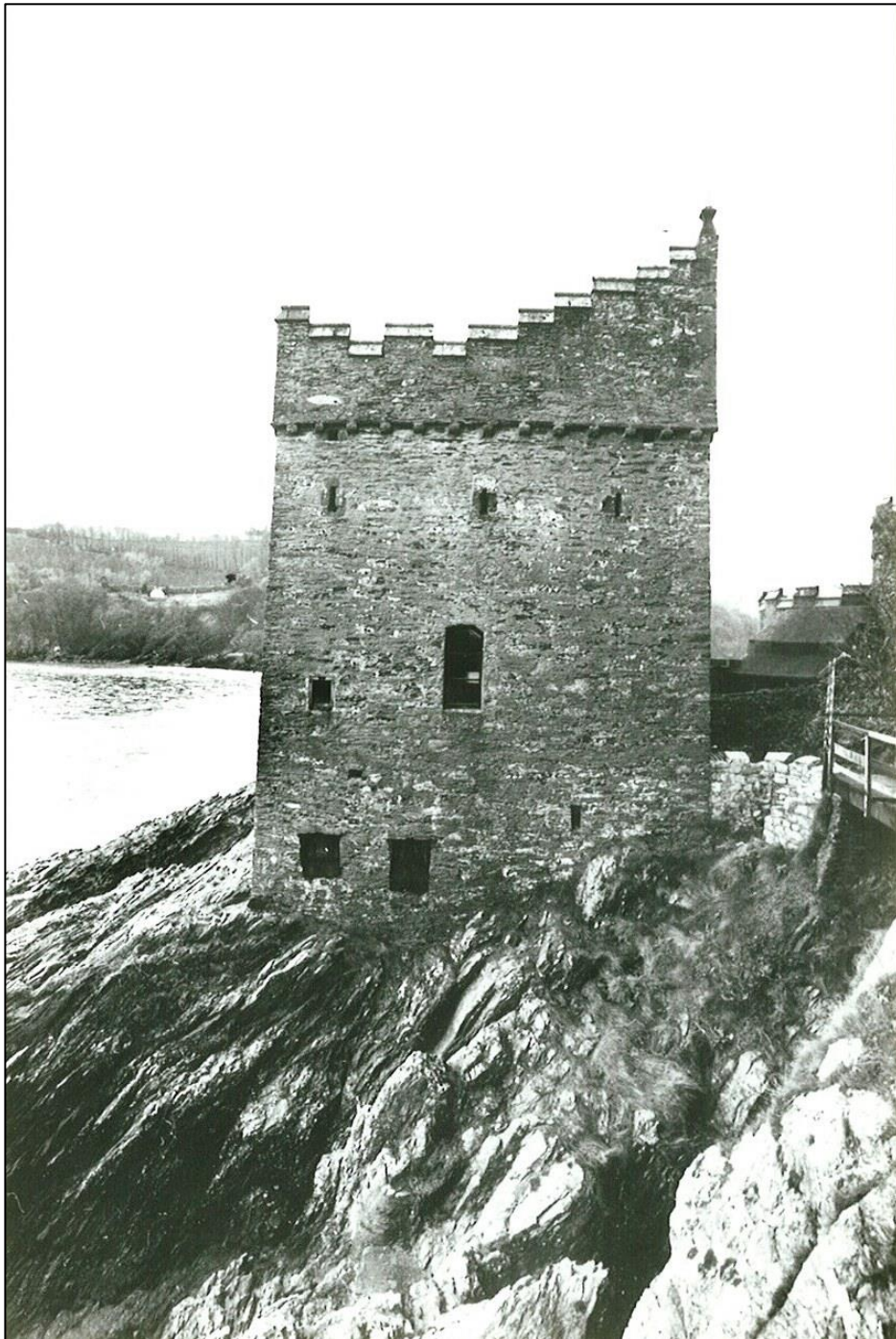
square opening in the front of the folly from where a cable could have led down to the water.

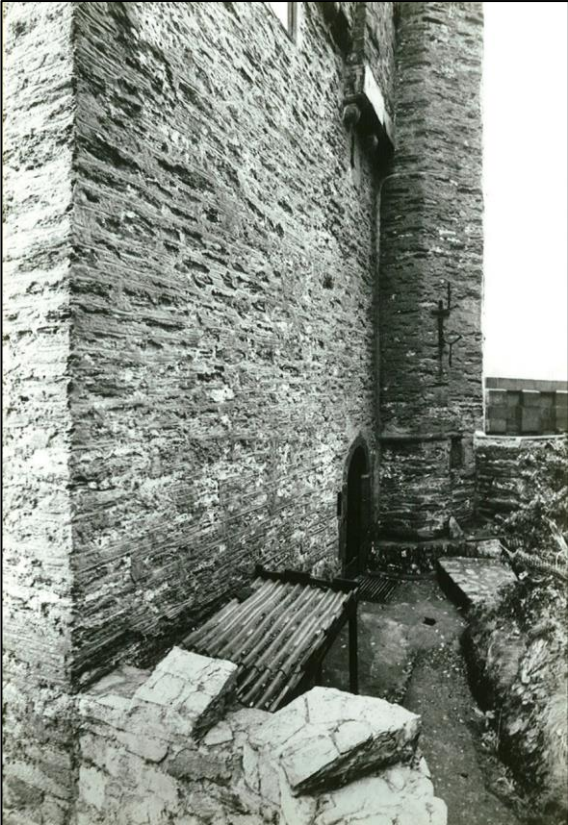
Sadly, reality has set in like a rot; romance has given way to rust. The many warnings of danger should be well heeded. How can the current owners remain unmoved by its plight? Well, the foundations were recently repaired with help from Devon County Council – but the investment seems likely to arrest decay only temporarily. The South West Coast Path goes right by the castle at the cove, so you can view it in safety. It's unusual to find a folly, particularly a sham castle, right on the shore like this. The place is crying out for restoration – to become, for instance, another character holiday let for the Landmark Trust. It's small, yes, but it has an appeal as large as any great castle in England.

With thanks to Bob Mann, Robin Toogood at South Hams Coast & Countryside Service, Ray Freeman of the Dartmouth History Research Group and Mr Tim Jones.

[Philip's article first appeared in *Devon Life*, November 2000].

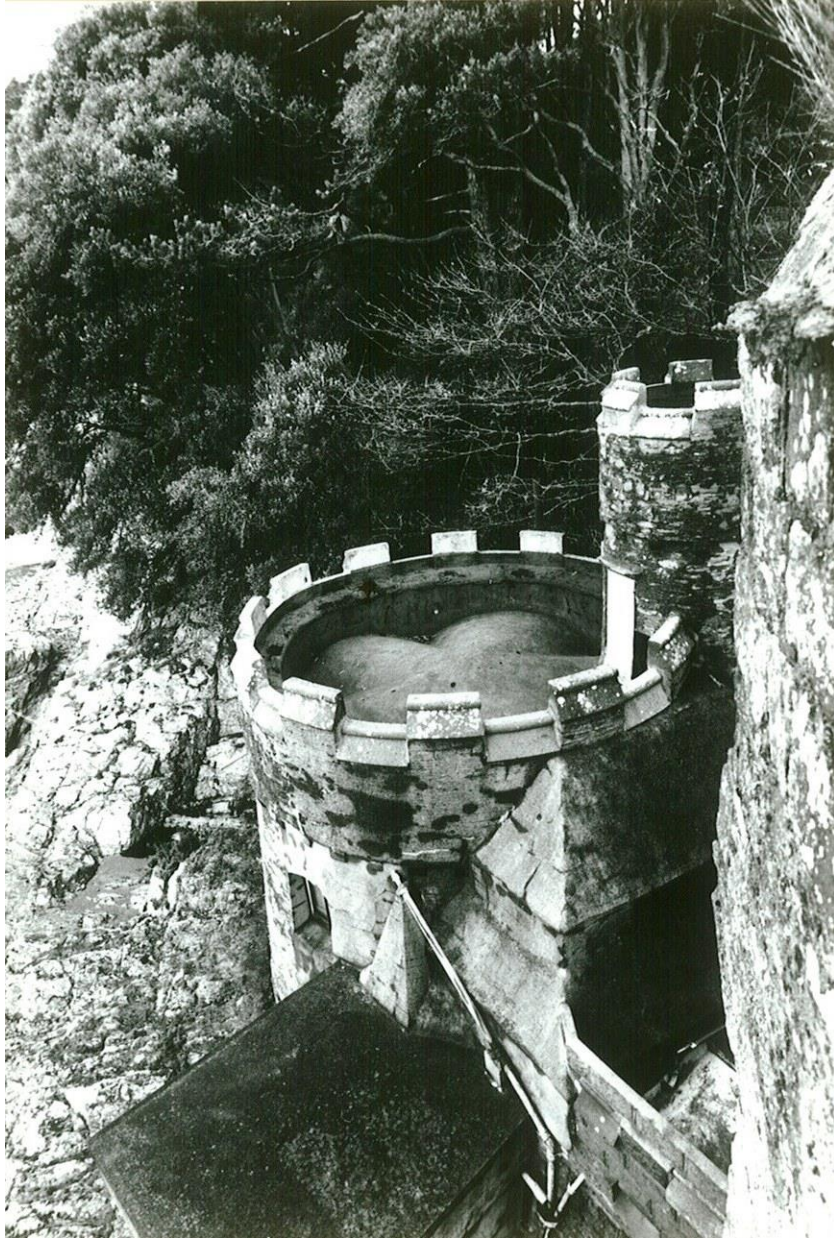
Kingswear pre-restoration in 1987







Cement had been smeared over the walls of the castle



The Round Tower





The ground floor – east side







The ground floor – west side





The first floor





The second floor – east side





Second floor – west side & bathroom





**Shower room at top of
newel stair**



Second floor



The Round Bedroom



The Blockhouse



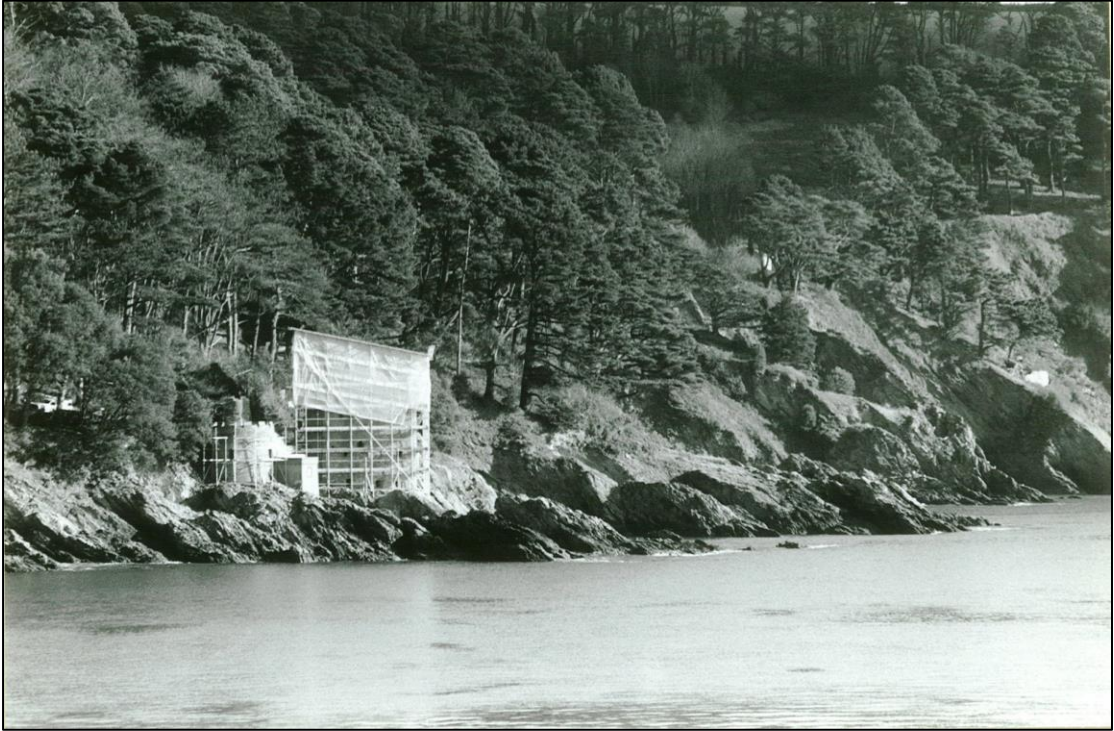
One of the timber plates discovered in the cills of the gun embrasures.

Restoration of Kingswear Castle

There have been two main themes running through the restoration of Kingswear Castle, in addition to the straightforward one of its structural repair. The first of these has been archaeological: the discovery of details of its original construction and use as a fortification, and subsequent alteration. The second has been the reconciling of the Tudor fortification with the Victorian bachelor's residence, in such a way as to leave both clearly visible, as the two most important phases in the building's history.

Elements of discovery continued well into the building work, but most of the investigation was carried out in the first few months. As concrete floors, damp plaster and cement mortar were chipped away, the walls of the castle began to tell their secrets, and the removal of partitions revealed the rooms in their earliest form. Most of this inferior work had been carried out in the last fifty years, and in some cases was actively causing damage: the cement smeared over the external walls was exacerbating the inevitable problem of damp, for instance, by preventing the walls from ever drying out.

At the same time, research was being carried out, both into the history of Kingswear Castle itself and into the design of contemporary fortifications. Trips were made to Dartmouth Castle, and other historians and experts consulted. Opinions formed, and then changed in the light of new evidence; aspects of the castle's design, such as the unusual form of its first timber roof, and the timber plates in the gun embrasures, caused much discussion and debate, as different theories were put forward. The round tower went from being Victorian to Tudor, and back to Victorian again.

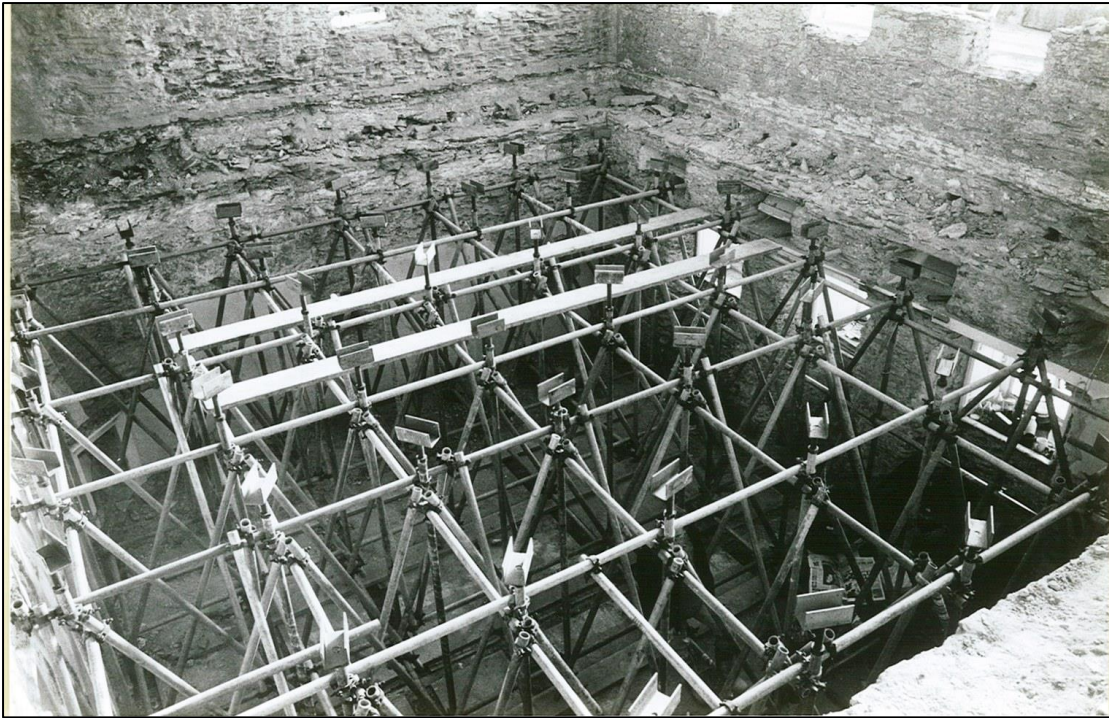


Kingswear Castle as it appeared to the outside world during the building works.

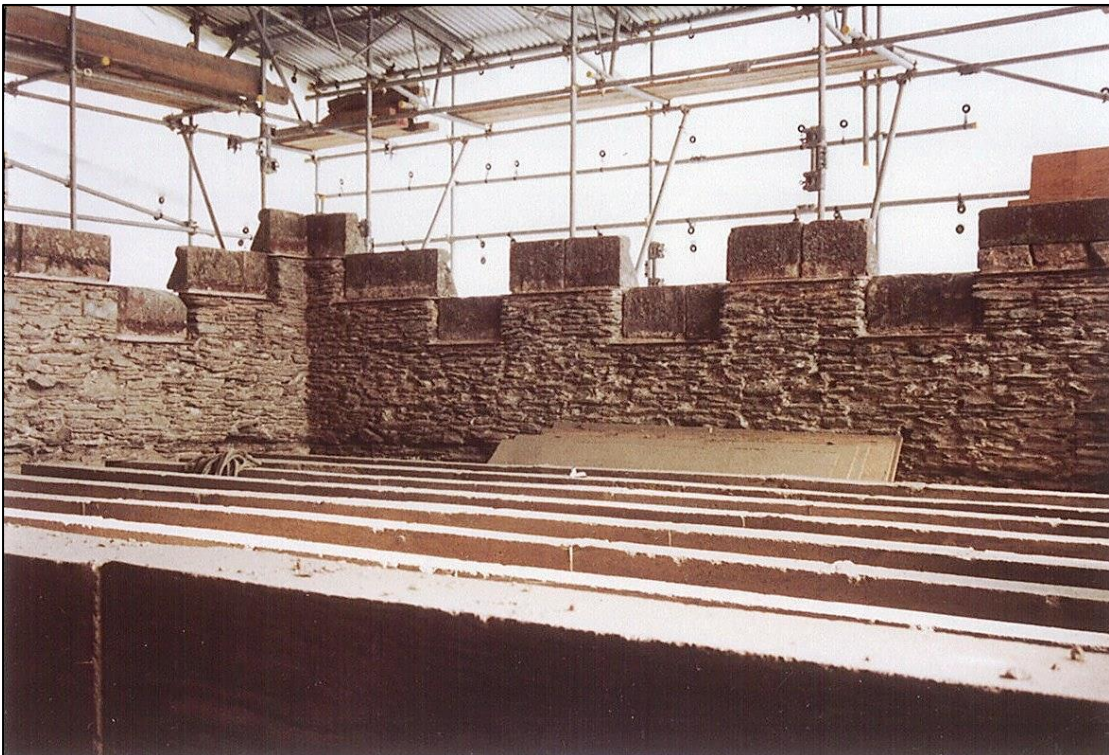
Out of all this the scheme for the restoration of the building, and its use as a Landmark, gradually developed. Inevitably, there were conflicts of approach and of philosophy. English Heritage felt so strongly against our proposal to take down all the partitions on the second floor, especially those of the bathroom which occupied nearly a quarter of it, and the then necessary re-siting of the bathroom against the rear parapet of the roof, that they made it a condition of their grant offer for the repairs that we did not put this into effect. We felt equally strongly that this upper room, particularly, with its exceptional, sweeping view of the river, should be left uncluttered by later subdivisions; and that in its new location the bathroom would simply disappear into the background. And so the grant was forfeited.

Achieving a balance between the two aspects of the building's personality – the Tudor fort and the Victorian bachelor's residence – turned out to be relatively easy. The round tower, of course, is undiluted Seale Hayne. On the ground floor, which had been altered in the 1950s, it became clear that the Tudor gun battery should be given priority, and that the room should revert as closely as possible to its original state. On the first floor, both periods are present in a satisfactory mix, with Seale Hayne ceiling, door and fireplace, but Tudor garderobe and gunports, and the floor once more at its Tudor level. The second floor had been most altered, retaining least original detail: while the undivided plan and the gun loops are Tudor, the window openings themselves are of unknown date, and the window joinery, including the shutters, is Victorian, as is the plaster decoration on the ceiling. On the roof, there is once again a platform from which to survey the surrounding scene, while the lean-to bathroom evokes the timber shelter that once stood against this wall.

Before any of this could be realised, and the refinements of finishes be arrived at, there was a lot of structural work to be done: the Victorian pitched roof, for example, was decayed and leaking badly, and had to be



The birdcage scaffold for the shutterings of the new cast concrete roof structure.



The new roof, with its upstand beams, or ridges.

renewed; much of the parapet was rebuilt; considerable amounts of new joinery was needed. Because of the amount of work, and the awkward site, two different building teams were employed for interior and exterior works, so that both could run concurrently, and finish more quickly.

Exeter Cathedral Stonemasons worked on the outside, and St. Cuthbert Builders, who had already done the early stages of investigation, worked inside. A close eye was kept at all stages by the quantity surveyors from Bare, Leaning & Bare.

Again because of the difficulty of working on such an exposed site, and the length of time the contract was expected to last, it was decided to buy and erect our own scaffolding, including a temporary roof and cladding. This provided shelter for the men, allowing work to continue through the winter, though it meant that for everyone else the castle disappeared from view for nearly two years. Special care was taken to rivet the scaffolding to the rock, in expectation of winter storms: the precautions paid off, because although the sheeting blew away several times, the most severe storm bent only one pole and the main structure remained entirely secure.

Another unusual feature of the work was the giant slide that was constructed from the road above down to the castle. It was impossible to get a lorry down the drive, so all building materials were unloaded at the top, and made a direct descent to where they were needed.

Work started with the roof. Because of the new bathroom, and because the roof was to be paved in stone, the structure was cast in concrete, to support the weight. Architect Peter Bird describes how this was done:

The whole of the old roof was taken away and, to support the shuttering, a bird cage scaffold was erected, bearing on the heads of the walls at second floor level. A new concrete roof structure was then cast, designed with upstand beams [or ridges], and with a separating membrane between that part of the concrete roof which

supports the bathroom, and the remainder of the roof. The roof was designed in this way so that a waterproof lead deck could be laid over boarding, over ventilated voids between the upstand beams; the upstand beams themselves then support the 3' thick Forest of Dean stone flags, which are all butt jointed and pointed. This has produced a stone roof that looks and sounds solid, as if it were built on a vault.

Other external works are also described by the architect:

The roof of the round tower was also renewed. When we first came to the castle, the round tower had no proper roof; the top surface of the vault within the round tower was exposed, and painted with black bituminous paint, which had resulted in severe leaks and some damage to the stonework of the vault itself. A new timber structure was built over the vault, spanning clear of the vault crown, so as to avoid imposing any further load upon it, and covered with copper, with lead gutters.

The crumbling parapets of the stair turret, and of parts of the main parapets, were taken down and rebuilt in lime mortar. Cement had been smeared around the external walls of the castle, and this was cut out and removed, often revealing the original building mortar in good, sound condition. Some care was taken to match the new pointing with the original in terms of both colour and texture, producing a white joint which would avoid a patchwork effect when the work was finished. Stone was only re-pointed where the original mortar had decayed. A different mortar mix was made for work on the Victorian building; here the builders had used a slightly different and yellower mortar, which was carefully matched.

Meanwhile work progressed steadily inside the building. On the ground floor the partition dividing the room into a kitchen and pantry was taken down, and modern fittings and storm-proof brass windows were taken out. Under the modern concrete floor, a small area of the original floor was discovered during investigations at the base of the newel stair, itself hidden behind some modern concrete steps. From this, the level of the new floor was gauged, allowing for a fall to the gun embrasure in the

opposite corner. Infill material used to build up the cills of the gun embrasures was also removed, returning the cills to their correct level in relation to the floor. The paving is Lundy slate, uncovered during excavation work there, which is the closest material we could find to the original shaley bedrock (which was possibly also levelled with lime mortar in the hollows).

The oak frames and shutters for the gunports were repaired, or if beyond repair, renewed to the same design. The system of closing them with chains, and for securing the chain, was devised. Just inside the entrance door, the opening leading directly to the spiral stair was blocked.

Everyone who enters the building must now do what the men of the garrison did, and descend first of all into the gun battery before going to the upper floors. The entrance door itself was renewed, and the steps leading down into the battery altered slightly to make them less steep. Lastly, the walls were limewashed.

The floor to the passage leading from the ground floor to the round tower was originally nearly 2ft lower than it is now, which meant descending some awkward steps, and then going up again into the bedroom at the end. Raising the floor level, and the roof, not only makes it easier to walk along, but also improves the appearance of the exterior, where the concrete roof and blockwork parapet have been replaced in stone; and there is still enough height to provide shelter against the sea, which in severe gales can break against the castle.

Back in the main body of the castle, the immense oak beams, joists, and boards of the new first floor are visible from the ground floor.

Investigation of the walls here revealed the original pockets for the bridging beams, about 8' higher than the Victorian floor. The new beams are set in those same pockets. Because of their size, they had to be worked outside the building, before being manoeuvred into place. The

new oak boards are not, in fact, visible from within the first floor bedroom. To keep in some warmth, a layer of insulation was laid on top of them, and then the Victorian elm boards were relaid on top of that. The fireplace was provided with a new hearth, of Hollington stone, at the same time.

The plaster had been stripped off the first floor walls some time ago, but traces of the old thin lime plaster were found, and this was matched as closely as possible, and then limewashed. The salt in the walls inevitably causes this to bubble; there is little that can be done about this.

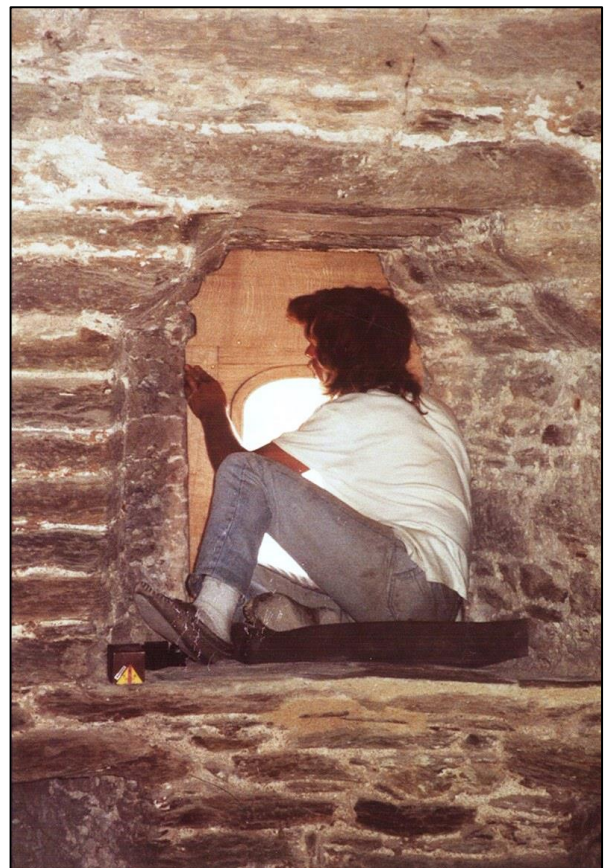
In 1987, the ceiling of the first floor was plasterboard, with boxed-in beams. When this was stripped away, Seale Hayne's beams and boarded ceiling were revealed. The ends of the beams on the seaward side had rotted, and so have been secured with stainless steel plates. The boarding was in very poor condition so new boards have been fixed below, leaving only the beams visible. The central one has carved decoration, and the traces of a Latin inscription.

In the east wall of the first floor room was a large window. We knew this had only been made after the Second World War; before that it had been a recess, used by Seale Hayne as a wine cupboard. The cill of this window had clearly been built up, and when this was investigated it was discovered that there had in fact been a garderobe here. Blocking the shut was the cill of a small window loop, which probably once lit the garderobe itself. The seat and flap have been reinstated, and a new oak door provided.

The other windows had been glazed close to the inner face of the wall, which allowed seagulls to nest in the gun embrasures, making a lot of mess. The new oak windows have been set on the outer face, therefore.



Working the bridging teams for the new first floor.



Fitting a new window on the first floor.

Glazed frames for the gun ports were set in the original rebates, and internal shutters provided, should visitors feel over-exposed.

The timber plates, where they survive in the embrasures, have been covered with paste to moisten and preserve them, and bedded in lime mortar. Where the timber has rotted away completely, the channel where they were has been left recessed.

On the second floor, as already described, the Victorian and modern partitions were stripped out to recreate a single space. The floor boards were re-laid and patched. The plaster decoration was moved to the centre of the room, and wall plaster damaged by archaeological investigations during the work was repaired. The scuppers, for draining the original roof, were blocked, but the plaster has been left recessed to mark their positions. New leaded glass has been provided for the window loops. The door is Seale Hayne, as is the window joinery.

At the top of the stairs, where a door now leads onto the roof, there is a bathroom. This is roofed in lead and hung with Delabole slates. It is also securely bolted to the concrete roof structure, to prevent it being blown away. In the small turret room, the seat, dado and hinged table were repaired, as was the flagpole.

In the Blockhouse, little was done besides moving the door to face the castle, and blocking up a modern window on the landward side. The interior was limewashed, a shower and loo provided, the ladder secured, and the beds painted the same green as the original bunks.

Outside the castle a new path was laid from the parking place, replacing a complicated web of existing paths. There is now better access to the garden, on a single level from where it branches off the main path. New trees were planted to replace those lost in the gale of January 1990. The

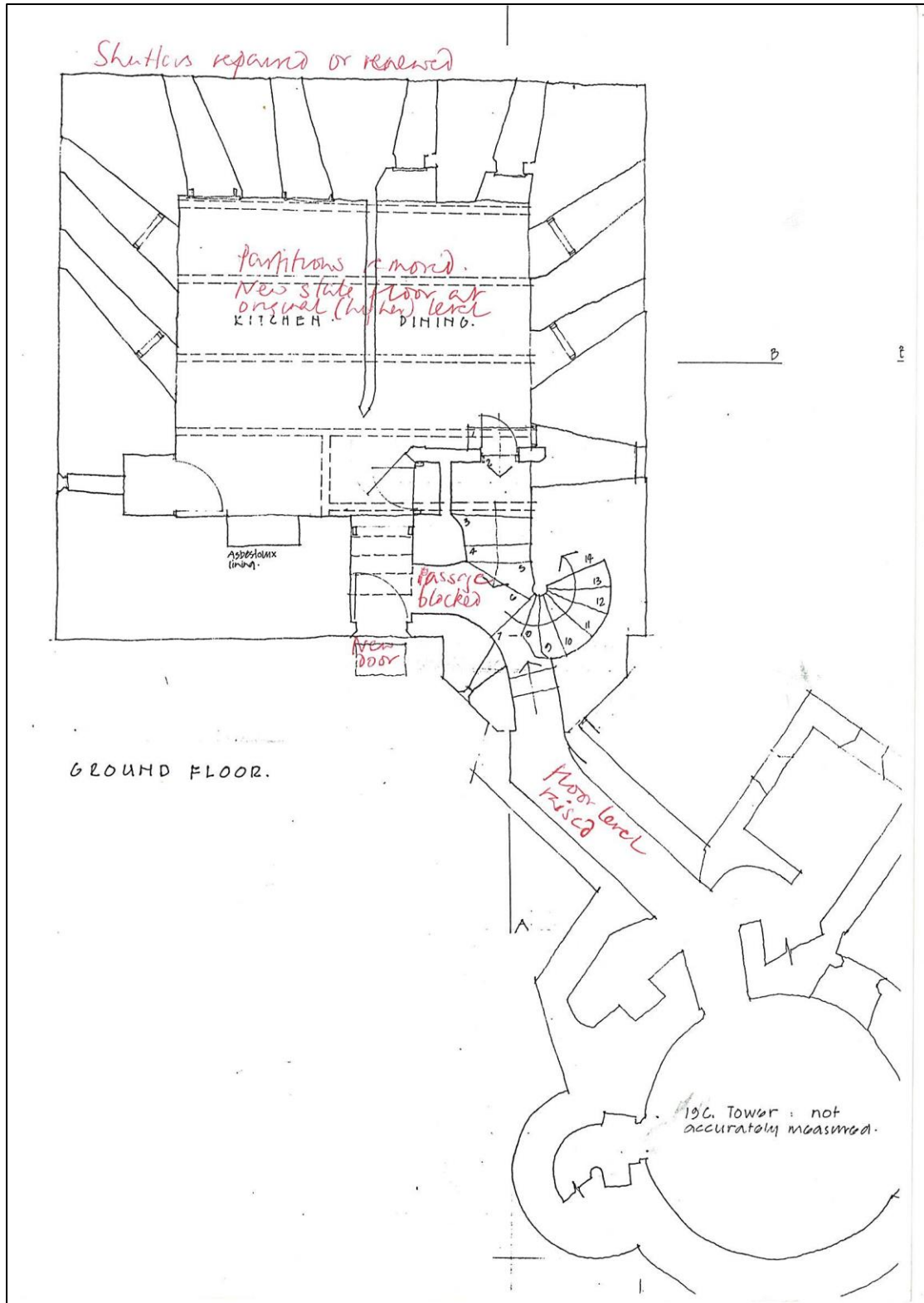
landscape setting of the restored castle is now very similar to that in which it was originally built, as shown in the many engravings dating from before the middle of the nineteenth century.



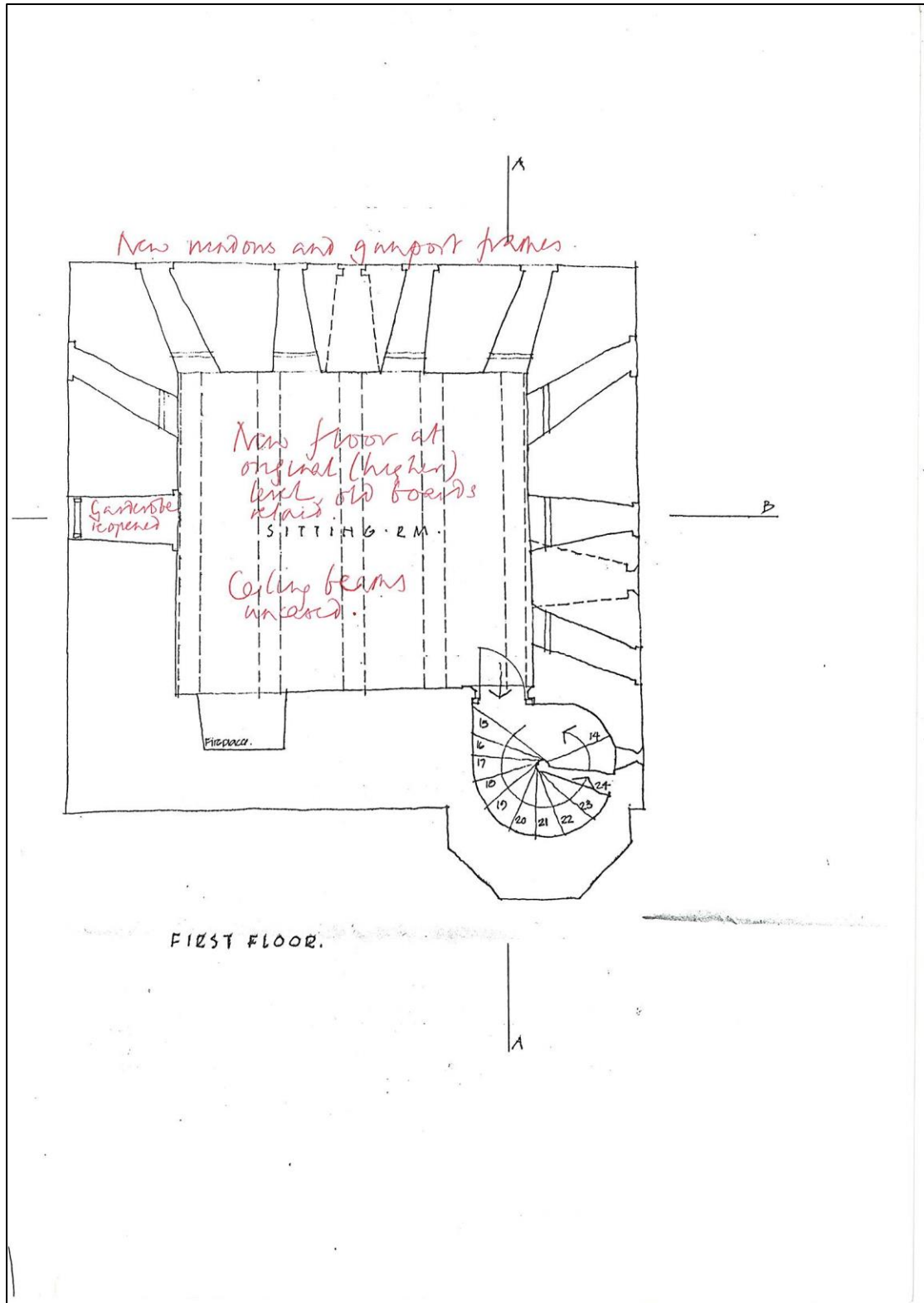
During a storm in 1990, a massive tree blew down, blocking access to the Castle. Serious storm damage occurred again in February 2014 (photos at the end of the album).

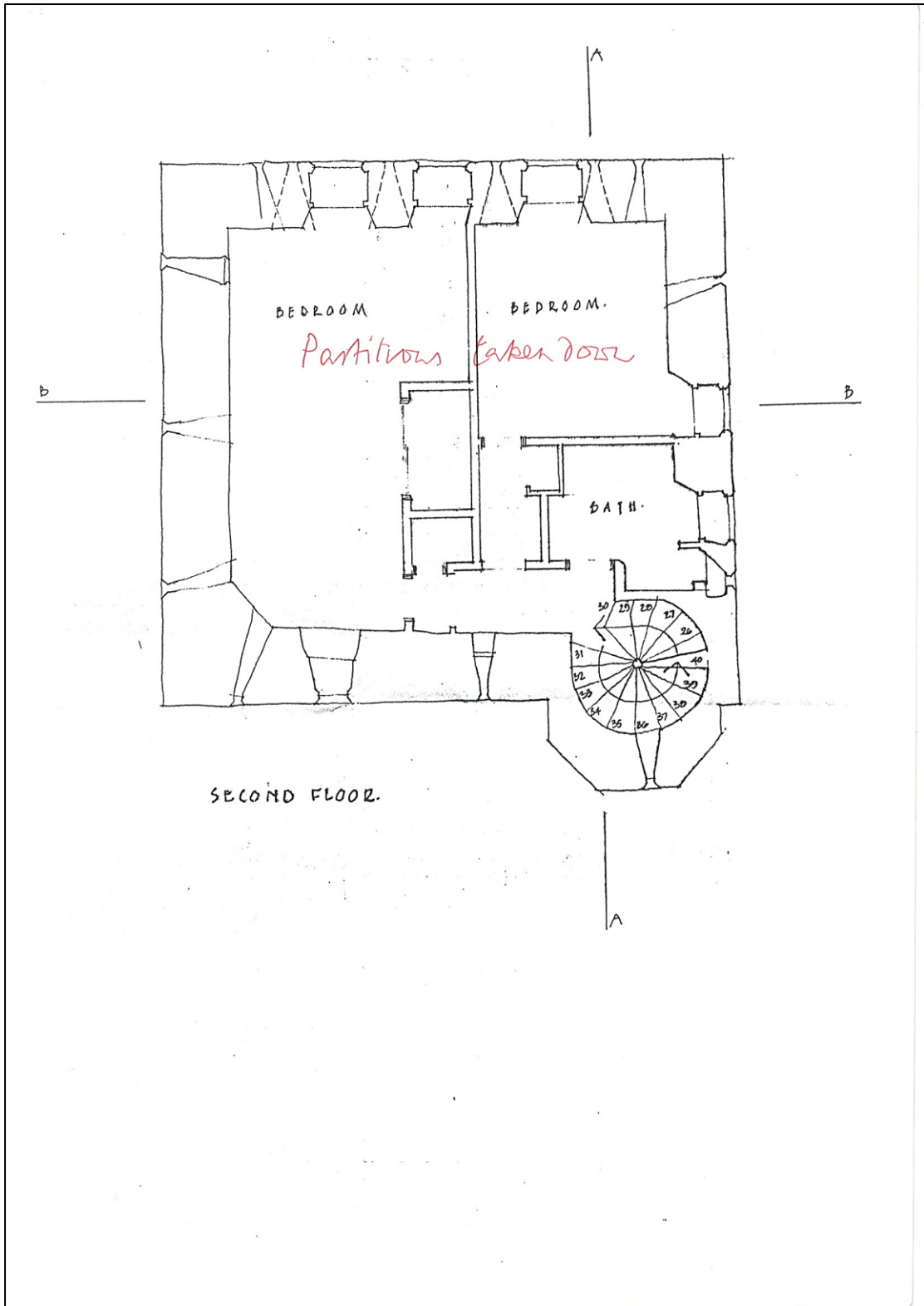


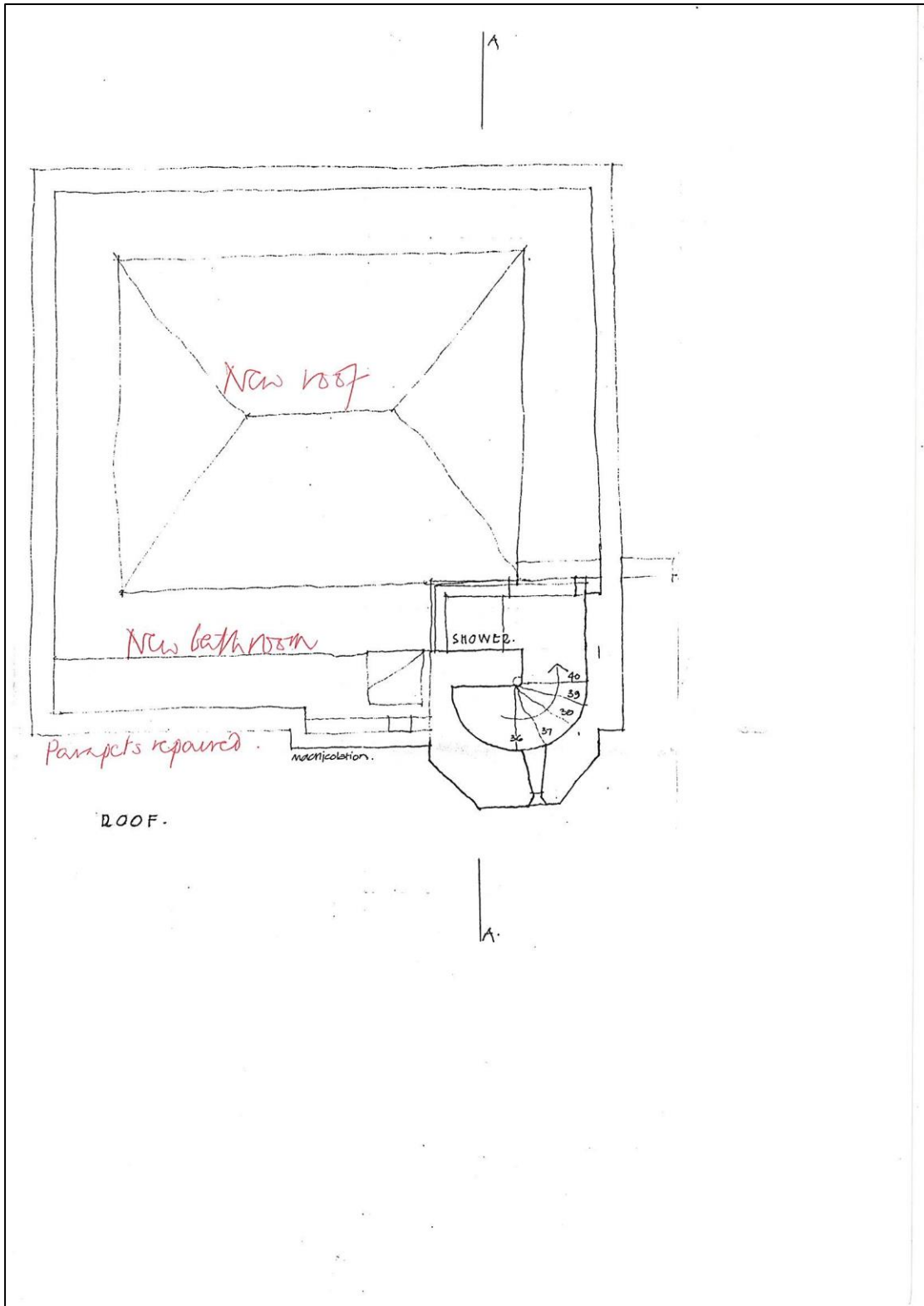
The aftermath of the 1990 storm.

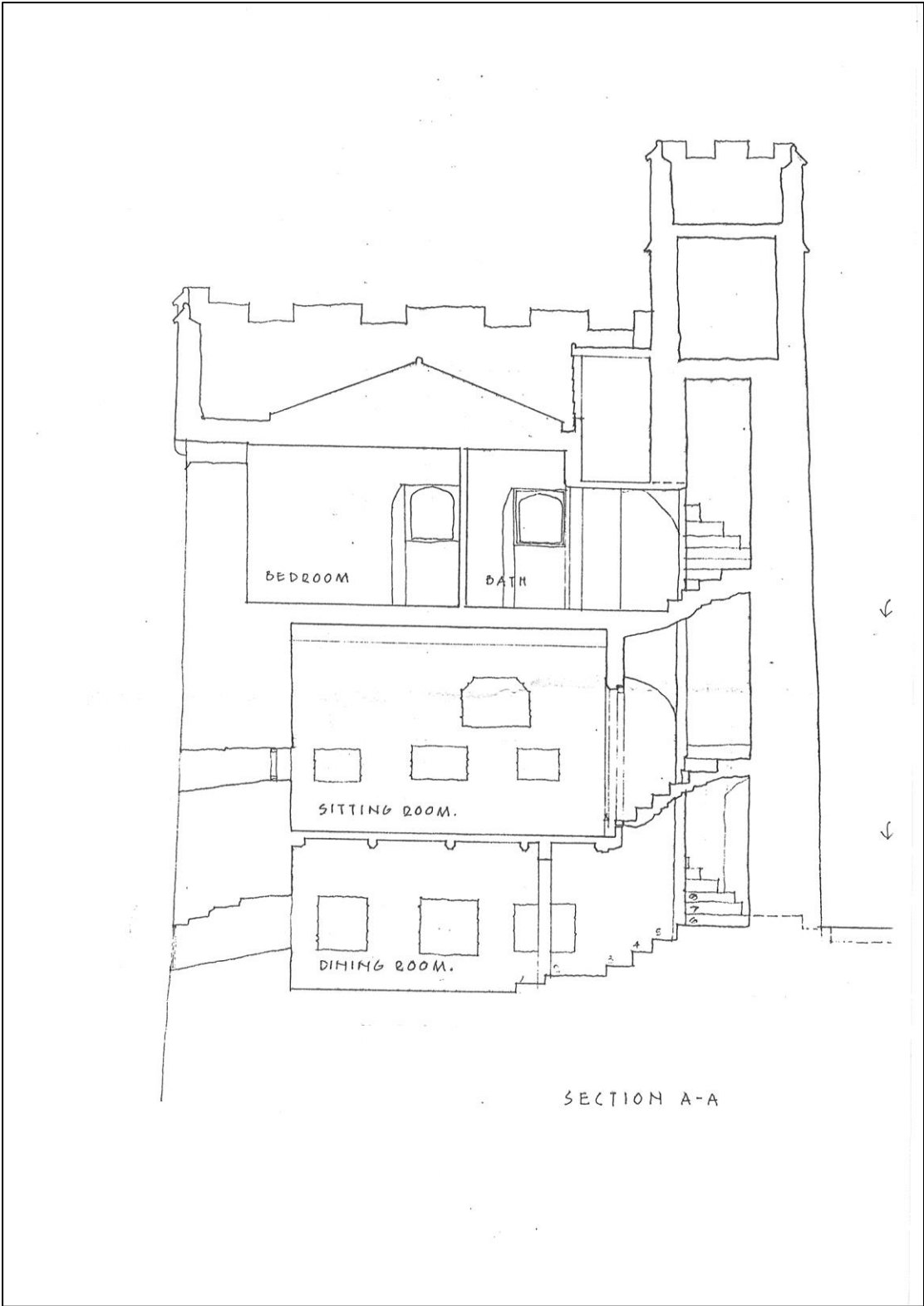


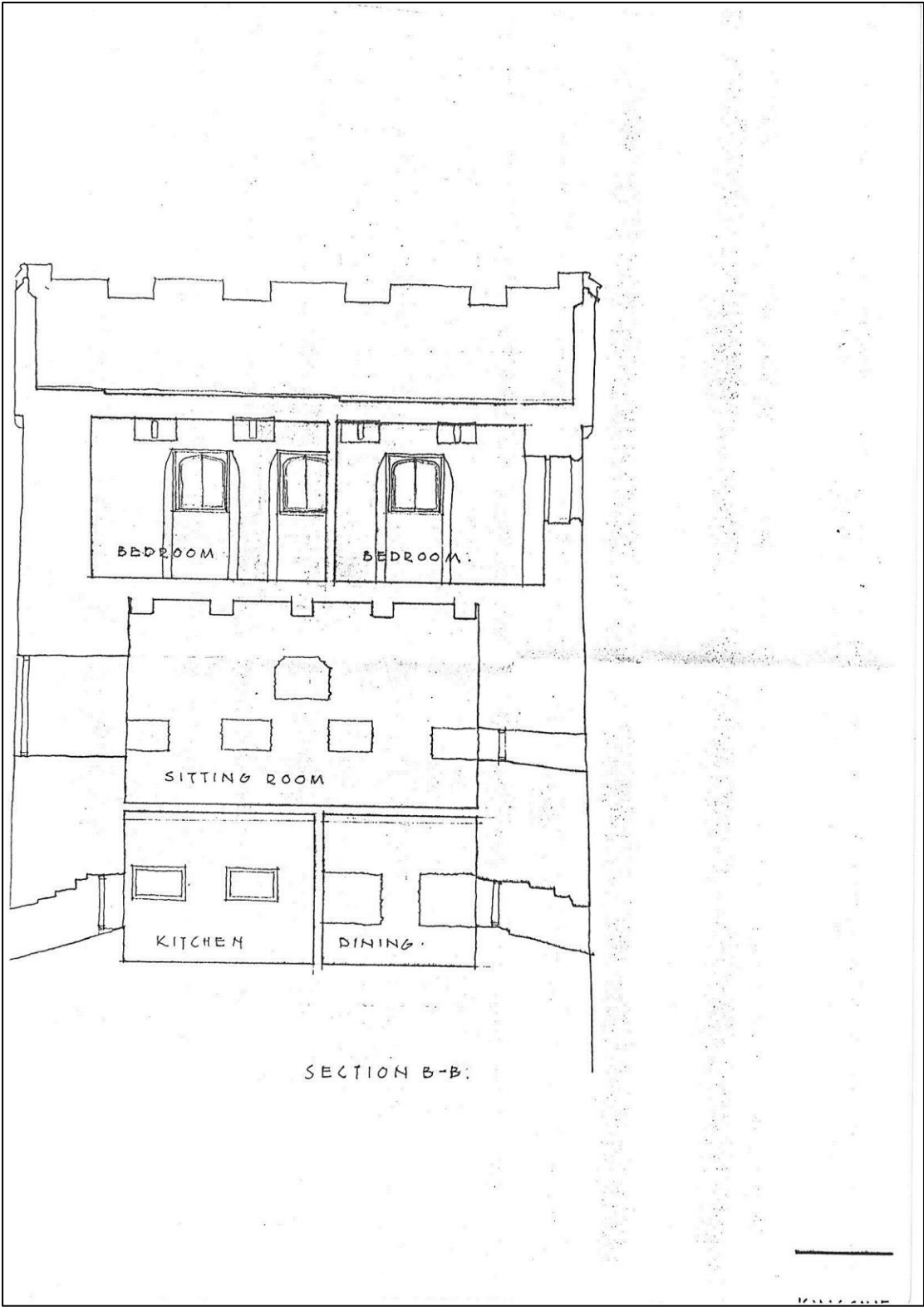
Survey plans before restoration.











Kingswear Notes from visit 23.11.88

Ground Floor

Gun ports have been taken down to original level. Two in south-west corner had been filled much more than others, using a brown mortar, and then limewashed. That in south-east corner is slightly lower than the others, which appear to have been

on a gradient, sloping down to that corner (i.e. for drainage?)

A fragment of hair plaster is caught on the corner of one of those in east wall. Running through base of the gun ports, and certainly on the south wall as a single piece, and therefore contemporary with the building, is a timber beam. It is set about 18' in and is roughly 1 foot deep. In its centre is a hole, about 4' - 6' in diameter.

Above the gun ports on all three outer walls are pockets, about 6' square. They are regularly spaced, but do not relate in any obvious way to the individual gun ports.

First Floor

Wide oak boards have been lifted, to reveal narrow boarded floor beneath. Beam pockets for original floor have been opened out. It is difficult to be precise about original floor level from them (within about 3') because they have clearly been disturbed by the removal of the beams, and at their inner end the top is lower than at the outer face.

The window surrounds have all been removed from the gun ports. Those in North-west corner do not have rebates, as all the others do. Running through the base of all those on the south wall (and west?) is a beam similar to that on the ground floor.

Making a rough guess at the floor level, and looking at the sandstone newel, you would originally have stepped down into this room.

Second Floor

All partitions stripped out, and plaster off south wall. At east and west ends of this can clearly see blocked loops. Seem to be blocked using a mortar

containing some cement. The later, larger, openings were not necessarily splayed originally. The central one, where the 1855 partition ran into it, runs out straight into the room. In the top of this is part of what seems to be a beam pocket. It lies about 8' below the scuppers - therefore is about right for original roof. More scuppers can be seen on east and west walls. On east wall, at about the level of the south windows, the wall is of very poor and rough rubble. Higher up, the masonry improves again (1855 rebuilding?). Beneath floor have uncovered some nicely chamfered joists of 1855 rebuild, set into the main beams (which are covered up in floor below). Near the north wall is a section of hair plaster.

Decisions

Raising the floor to level of lowest gun port will not cause problems at entry to ground floor from main door. To raise the floor level on first floor to original (difficult to establish precisely) floor level would bring it roughly half a step higher than present landing on newel stair - i.e. only about four inches. It is doubtful whether the benefits within the room itself (which will be much improved anyway by floor at same level as landing) are great enough to justify the raising of the door surround, and the alterations to the steps that would be necessary if you are not to step up into the room (Peter Bird is slightly concerned at how much interference the stair will take in any case).

Inside the first floor room the removal of the window surrounds from the lower gun ports has made a great difference to the feel of the room, and it may be a pity to close these up again, even with removable shutters. I suspect that anyone staying there would want them open. A decision will be needed soon on whether the outside is just to be repointed, or whether it should be limewashed - as there is evidence that it was originally.

Kingswear Notes from visit with Francis Kelly and Mr Carpenter

21.12.88

Ground Floor

Floor level (bedrock) now shown to be level with, or fractionally lower than, gun ports. Both Mr Carpenter and Francis Kelly thought that the timber running through the gun ports was structural, and not connected with guns. Occurs in other

castles and in Tower of London. A sort of ring beam - ??name for it used by Mr Kelly. Frames for shutters with bars more likely to be late 17th century, when basement no longer used for heavy guns - couldn't fire between bars, even with smaller guns used then.

Blocked openings above gunports must be smoke vents, although one that goes right through wall doesn't slope upwards as would expect. They show on front, south, side in 1886 photo in Dartmouth Castle however. Mr Carpenter was surprised that they bothered with smoke vents in 1500 however.

Query: Why are gunports on west wall thought to be later - is it just because they are higher? Detail of construction appear to be same as others.

First Floor

Embrasure - now window - in east wall an extra magazine - for use during combat.

Timber 'ring-beam' again thought to be structural not functional - Mr Carpenter thought holes, as though for a pivot, probably a later attempt to see whether a swivel gun could be used here - but gunports don't provide a wide enough field to make them effective.

Top Floor/Roof

Clearly all rebuilt above window level by Seale Hayne. Messrs Kelly and Carpenter not convinced by theory that vents are scuppers.

Large windows seem to be Seale Hayne from construction, but evidence of 1853

sketch against this - Seale Hayne could simply have rebuilt existing ones to

better standard? No theories as to the date at which these replaced smaller loops.

Kingswear Magazine (cont)

Seems to be some doubt as to whether this could be original. Is far larger than would be necessary - larger even than 19th-century magazine at ?Dartmouth. Mortar also seems similar to that of Seale Hayne work. Francis Kelly doubted whether ferramenta in lower window were in fact ancient. Mr Carpenter pointed out the similarity between it and the base of the round tower at Dartmouth, however.

It would be useful to compare in detail with Dartmouth the construction of gunports, fireplaces, floors etc. - and the comparative sizes and splays of gunports - to see what changes were made in the slightly later building. Should also look at Bayard's Cove, which is slightly later again.

Caroe & Martin Architects

M B Caroe FSA RIBA
D S Martin RIBA
P F Bird RIBA
P W Crawford RIBA
Consultant
A D R Caroe OBE FSA FRIBA
Associate
J R Saunders RIBA
Partnership Secretary
Irena Matlin

**Penniless Porch
Market Place
Wells Somerset BA5 2RB
Tel 0749 77561
Fax 0749 76207**

and at
90 Eversholt Street
London NW1 1BT
Tel 01 387 0477
Tel 01 387 4773
Fax 01 387 1697

VAT Reg No. 232 1265 07

PFB/GS/t

17 November 1988

Charlotte Haslam
21 Deans Yard
Westminster
London
SW1P 3PA

Dear Charlotte

As I mentioned on the telephone, Paul Quinn is now well under way with clearing out and opening up inside the castle, and has discovered quite a bit of detail about the gun ports on the ground floor.

The original level of the ground floor is still not clear, but the work inside the gun ports does reveal that the original sill level of the gun ports seems to be at about 7" or 8" above the present floor level, and that the sill level rises from east to west, so that the south western gun port sill on the south wall is higher than the south eastern gun port sill.

was given later than these were contemporary not inserted

The later west facing gun ports all appear to have been built up with a higher sill level than the earlier gun ports; which would make sense, because if these were inserted in the 17th century, then the guns by then would have had carriages, rather than the earlier slides which sat the guns directly on the floor.

Two at least of the south facing gun ports appear to have been built up perhaps at the same time, raising the sill level in a stone bedded in a brown mortar compared to the earlier creamy white mortar to a level approximately in line with the sill of the later gun ports. Some similar alteration appears to have taken place in the sills of all of the gun ports, because the remaining two gun ports on the south wall have been disturbed, and some refacing of the sill has taken place on the inner ends of the sills.

One very interesting discovery is that in the southernmost east facing gun port, part of the embrasure has been chipped away on the inside face as if to pass some bulge or protuberance in the ordnance; there are traces of old limewash on this embrasure.

We began to unpick the Castle...

Charlotte Haslam

17 November 1988

We have also found in the south wall four apertures at about head height, clearly made at the time of the original building, and about the size of a normal putlock hole. These four apertures, which are equally spaced, do not however, run through the full thickness of the wall, and indeed they are inclined slightly downwards. I wonder if they were pockets for some kind of timber gantry which may have been associated with the guns.

*They did
originally.*

On the second floor, the vertical "crazy paving" of face bedded rubble stones that we saw in the head of the east facing wall turn out to have been dubbing out for the plaster, to level up very rough areas of masonry. The walling in fact runs through to the full height of the wall with the natural bedded shale as elsewhere, but in this area the bed joints are very deeply eroded; exactly as one would expect to find in an area of wall built up against the back of a frame of some kind. While we have not in this area found the beam pockets we thought we originally saw, we have on the other hand found a real beam pocket in the centre of the wall, exactly at the level we wanted to support a roof at the level of the scuppers. The pocket is filled with a reddish brown sandstone rubble, in a brown mortar once again, similar to the filling in the sills of the ground floor gun ports I mention above. This single beam pocket would be consistent with one bressummer supporting a roof alone; if there were no heavy ordnance on the roof, then it would not require any more substantial a structure. Directly below this beam pocket we found the inside face of the blocked east facing loop; and we have also found the blocked inside face of the scupper facing east in the south east corner; this has been blocked with a single large piece of ashlar - and you can still see daylight through one of the joints beside it. The opposing beam pocket facing west is exactly in the position of the (?) 18th century window, so I do not think we shall find evidence of it on the west wall. The scuppers, this beam pocket, the rough masonry, and the evidence of the levels in the newel stair all seem to give fairly solid evidence for the position of the original roof.

Yours sincerely

Phyllis Gibson

Peter Bird

dictated by PETER BIRD
 & RECORDED IN HIS ABSENCE

Ground floor level revealed, but there is still confusion with the stair and the round tower.

Caroe & Martin Architects

**Penniless Porch
Market Place
Wells Somerset BA5 2RB
Tel 0749 77561
Fax 0749 76207**

M B Caroe FSA RIBA
D S Martin RIBA
P F Bird RIBA
P W Crawford RIBA
Consultant
A D R Caroe OBE FSA FRIBA
Associate
J R Saunders RIBA
Partnership Secretary
Irena Mallin

and at
90 Eversholt Street
London NW1 1BT
Tel 01 387 0477
Tel 01 387 4773
Fax 01 387 1697

VAT Reg No. 232 1265 07

PFB/PG/t

Charlotte Haslam
The Landmark Trust
21 Deans Yard
Westminster
London
SW1P 3PA

20 December 1988

Dear Charlotte

KINGSWEAR CASTLE

Paul Quinn has now taken out the curious steps in the north west corner of the ground floor, and exposed a large chunk of bed rock, hacked level on the top surface, which lines exactly with the level of the ground floor we propose and which we suppose was the original floor level here. I suspect that originally the whole of the ground floor finish was a mixture of exposed and roughly levelled rock, and tamped earth.

*At this stage
although the
stair has been
rebuilt, perhaps
to advance to
the new support
magazine tower.
Further discovery
confirms that they
are part of original
work.*

Removal of the steps here has also exposed more of the built up steps at the bottom of the newel stair, and it does appear that the mortar of which they are built resembles very closely the mortar of the Castle walls themselves - or at least the mortar around the embrasures of the later gun ports, which were possibly inserted when the Castle was refortified in the 17th century. I should prefer in any case the rebuilding of this newel stair to be of the 17th century work, rather than the earlier work associated with the magazine which Mr Sumpster suggested.

Yours sincerely

PFB

Peter Bird

The early date of the round "magazine" tower is still going strong.

Caroe & Martin Architects

**Penniless Porch
Market Place
Wells Somerset BA5 2RB
Tel 0749 77561
Fax 0749 76207**

M B Caroe FSA RIBA
D S Martin RIBA
P F Bird RIBA
P W Crawford RIBA
Consultant
A D R Caroe OBE FSA FRIBA
Associate
J R Saunders RIBA
Partnership Secretary
Irena Martin

and at
90 Eversholt Street
London NW1 1BT
Tel 01 387 0477
Tel 01 387 4773
Fax 01 387 1697

VAT Reg No. 232 1265 07

PFB/GS/t

**Charlotte Haslam
21 Deans Yard
Westminster
London
SW1P 3PA**

24 February 1989

Dear Charlotte

KINGSWEAR CASTLE

Kingswear has revealed yet another of its secrets; we have found an old garderobe in the present east window of the first floor; the inclined shute is clearly visible, and we have also found the pockets for the original seat, and some blocking which suggests that the front of the seat had a heavy timber baulk across it. The aperture is offset to one side of the opening, slightly, as if to leave room for a medieval copy of the Financial Times.

19th cent.
round tower

The outside face of the garderobe shute was blocked with the red sandstone cill from a loop; the last time we spoke about this (I think I have mentioned this cill to you before) we thought the window originally had a small loop at a curiously low level inside it. It now appears that this cill has been re-used from elsewhere, and it and the remainder of the blocking-up associated with the garderobe has been done using the same mortar as that which the magazine is built in. It follows that when the magazine was built, with its new garderobe, the old garderobe was no longer necessary and indeed was probably slightly inconvenient; so the two go together very well.

Paul has also noticed that the same mortar has been used around the larger windows in the second floor; so that it does appear likely that the loop cill in the garderobe on the first floor may have been brought down during the second floor alterations.

This does tie together the construction of the magazine and the new garderobe there, the construction and formation of the new window on the second floor, and the blocking of the old garderobe on the first floor. Indeed does it begin to put the construction of the magazine within the period of 17th century refortification?

Nicholas Cooper was most excited, and I spoke briefly with him last Wednesday when I met Rebecca. (Nicholas incidentally thought that the bathroom on the roof was a splendid ideal) He did say that he thought he could detect a change of build in the magazine along the line of the vaults, which is where we would expect it to be.

Rebecca remains implacable.

Yours sincerely

Phyllis Gibson

Peter Bird

Dictated by Peter Bird
& signed in his absence

Some cold water on the magazine tower theory,

Caroe & Martin Architects

M B Caroe FSA RIBA
D S Martin RIBA
P F Bird RIBA
P W Crawford RIBA
Consultant
A D R Caroe OBE FSA FRIBA
Associate
J R Saunders RIBA
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Wells Somerset BA5 2RB
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and at
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London NW1 1BT
Tel 01 387 0477
Tel 01 387 4773
Fax 01 387 1697

VAT Reg No. 232 1265 07

PFB/DLC/t

Mrs Charlotte Haslam
The Landmark Trust
21 Deans Yard
Westminster
London
SW1P 3PA

28 February 1989

Dear Charlotte

KINGSWEAR CASTLE

The sea on Friday fulfilled all the dire warning given by Sir Freddie. Paul Quinn reports that the waves were breaking inside the battery, and foaming over the steps in front of the door. Friday was a stormy day, and I believe we had a high Spring tide; so that the sea was washing through the open gun ports to such effect that it demolished and washed away the stonework recently put up to block up the fireplace, as well as sweeping away a pile of new stone Paul had high up on the cliff face beside the magazine. The magazine is still six inches deep in water - perhaps not such a good magazine after all! The spray entered the gun ports at the first floor level.

I am sure the effects of the storm will be less dire when the gun ports and gun port shutters are in place; but I await with interest the next storm.

Yours sincerely

Peter Bird

Peter Bird

DICTIONARY BY PETER BIRD
& SIGNED BY PETER BIRD

In February 2014 a storm ran up the English Channel and within the space of a couple of hours had inundated two Landmark buildings, Fort Clonque on Alderney and Kingswear Castle. Both suffered similar degrees of damage caused by the huge waves and storm surge. The ground floor of Kingswear Castle was flooded and the surrounding land was eroded where the waves hit. We arrived the following morning to find sections of wall missing as well as erosion of the garden.



Castellations were knocked down at Kingswear.



This dramatic picture appeared in the national press.



The waves breached the twin room.