DARTMOUTH

CASTLE

H.M.S.O. 15p

Location

Dartmouth Castle stands on a point on the west side of the Dart estuary, a mile S.E. of the town by road B3205. O.S. Map reference SX887503.

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Department
of the
Environment

DARTMOUTH CASTLE

A. D. Saunders
MA, FSA

London
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1965

OPPOSITE, *A study by S. and N. Buck in 1734*

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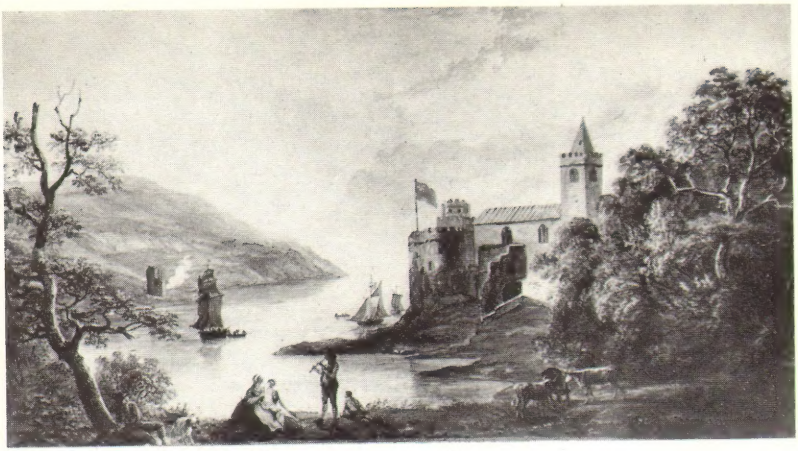
INTRODUCTION

Dartmouth Castle stands guard over the entrance to the Dart estuary and haven. The castle belongs to the time when at the end of the Middle Ages the merchants of Dartmouth felt the need to protect their homes and warehouses. Such men ranged far in their little ships for trade, and when times were difficult were not too particular in the way in which they treated foreign competitors or even their neighbours. Then they needed to guard against retaliation. Later, the fortifications at the habour mouth fell within the sphere of national defence, and over the centuries were enlarged and maintained. Guns were mounted there in the second World War. It says much for the foresight and eye for a strategic position of the burgesses of Dartmouth that the site of the fortress, within the area of a still older castle, has not been bettered. When begun in 1481 it was a most advanced piece of fortification for England, and it remains today the first castle designed specifically with artillery in mind. With its neighbour across the water, Kingswear

Castle, it covered the haven entrance. Any hostile shipping which broke through this cross-fire could be met by the guns in the small fort of Bayard's Cove built not long after the other two and defending the town quays themselves.

BELOW, *the seven rectangular gunports facing the estuary*

OPPOSITE, *a painting from a position upstream by Paul Sandby*



HISTORY

The Harbour

THE ESTUARY is difficult to detect from seaward. It lies between high, tree-covered hills and presents difficulties for sailing ships because of the eddying winds. Once inside there is a good, land-locked anchorage and great security. Perhaps because of the difficulties the harbour did not achieve any importance until after the Norman Conquest. The original port was at Totnes, the head of the tidal waters, and the lowest crossing of the river. A *burh* was established there in Saxon times.

The first mention of Dartmouth is in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year 1049/50. After the Norman Conquest, William's followers were given lands and manors in the area. They were largely recruited from Normandy, Brittany and Flanders, and these men must have found it necessary to keep in contact with their existing lands on the Continent. The haven probably developed from the seaborne traffic.

Dartmouth's importance grew during the Middle Ages. In 1147 it was the rendezvous for the great European fleet which set out on the Second

Dartmouth
Totnes
Dartmouth
Kingswear
Castle
Gallants Bower
Gallants Bower
Gallants Bower

Crusade. Later it was a leading port for the wine trade with Bordeaux. It became one of the chief ports in the kingdom and among the contributors of shipping towards the siege of Calais in 1346. Dartmouth, with 31 ships, was bettered only by the contingents of 47 from Fowey and 43 from Yarmouth. When Gascony ceased to be an English possession there was a temporary decline in the town's prosperity until the growth of the cloth trade which by Tudor times had brought many vessels to the harbour. The pilchard fishery too had long been important. Salt was fetched from La Rochelle for preserving the fish in hogsheads. They were sold on both sides of the Channel and in Spain. By the end of the sixteenth century Dartmouth was taking part in the Newfoundland cod fishery. This is perhaps not surprising when one remembers that Sir Humphrey Gilbert, that champion and explorer of the North-West Passage, was Dartmouth-born. The Newfoundland fishery was for long the mainstay of the town's economy but after the Civil War the trade declined, partly through the losses suffered in the Dutch Wars. Cod fishing was succeeded by the trade with Portugal in port wine, but Dartmouth never achieved great importance again. Other ports like Bristol and Plymouth had greater resources and were better placed geographically for expansion.

The comparatively late development of Dartmouth as a port affected the growth of the town itself. The original settlement was at Tunstall on the high ground above and west of the present town. The segregation of the maritime portion from the agricultural took place at the beginning of the thirteenth century when the township of Clifton-Dartmouth-Hardness was developing on the land by the water's edge. For a long time the only church in the parish was at Tunstall and it was not until 1370 that the Bishop of Exeter agreed to the erection of a chapel of ease at Dartmouth. In addition, there was a further disadvantage in that the lords of Totnes claimed jurisdiction over the whole course of the Dart. However, in 1341 the port received a charter giving the right to the burgesses to elect their own Mayor and to deal with many of their own affairs. They were now in a position to attend to their self-protection.

LEFT, *Dartmouth Haven, from a chart drawn in the reign of Henry VIII*

Early Defences

As Dartmouth grew in wealth and importance during the Middle Ages so the burgesses felt more and more insecure. Even without the intermittent bouts of warfare in France during the Hundred Years War, the sea was an unruly sphere of communication and commerce. Trade included the capture or sinking of foreign merchants' ships and sometimes those of your own countrymen – actions which today would be classed as outright piracy. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries they were considered fair risks. The conflict between the Yarmouth men and the men of the Cinque Ports was a case in point. The Dartmouth captains had an especially bad reputation, particularly in their relations with the Bretons.

Therefore it is not surprising that in 1336 Edward III commissioned Hugh Courteney and Philip de Columbers to take precautions in view of the rumours of a French attack on this part of the coast. Likewise in 1374 John Hawley and others of Dartmouth were instructed "in consideration of the damage and reproach which might befal the town of Dertemouth and the adjacent country through hostile invasion for lack of good governance to survey and correct all defects in the said town and port, fortify the same, array the men of the town and do all other things that may be necessary". This commission was renewed in 1377, 1381 and 1385.

After more than a decade of fear of a French attack the townspeople of Dartmouth in 1388 were stated to be in the course of building "a fortalice [a small fortress] by the sea at the entrance of that part for the defence of the town and of the ships of other parts of the realm which touch there". This was during the time when John Hawley was Mayor. He was one of the more powerful and colourful of Dartmouth's merchants and is thought to be the model used by Chaucer for the Shipman in *The Canterbury Tales*:

> "Ful many a draughte of wyn had he ydrawre
> Fro Burdeuxward will thal the Chapman steepe
> Of nyse conscience took he no keepe;
> If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hand,
> By water he sente them hoom to every land."

John Hawley's brass in St. Saviour's Church, Dartmouth. His wives Joan and Alice are shown beside him

The high curtain wall and the ruin of a mural tower close to the present car park and below the hillside are probably the remains of this fortalice. It must have been a fairly simple fortification cutting off the headland by means of a deep, wide ditch and a thick curtain wall with two, or possibly three, mural towers flanking it. As the first effort in the

history of the defences of Dartmouth, the old castle had a short life. Once the strong influence of Hawley was removed it seems that the site was abandoned. Later the lords of Stoke Fleming, in which parish the castle was situated, built a residence within the enclosure. In 1539 the old castle was described by John Leland as deserted, but the tradition of a domestic residence continued into the eighteenth century. On plans of this date the area within the early walls is described as part of "the enclosure of a former Gentleman's House". The old castle also had within it the church of St. Petrock whose history is far older. It is recorded in the twelfth century and may have come into existence as a chapel in which a light could be kept to guide sailors into the haven. The church assumed its present proportions in 1641.

Spasmodic concern for defence continued and in 1402 a prominent citizen of the town, John Corp, was granted a licence "to crenellate [add battlements to] a lodging of his by the entrance of the port of the town for defence against the King's enemies". It is not certain where this lodging was. It may have been at Paradise Point on the northern side of Warfleet Creek where a strong round tower was demolished in 1855 to make way for a house called Ravensbury. On the opposite side of the river are the ruins of a late medieval fortified house now called Gomerock. Very little is known of it and the earliest documentary mentions are in deeds of 1580 and 1590 when it is referred to as "the old castelle of Kingswear", presumably to distinguish it from the present Kingswear Castle. It may date from Hawley's fortification of the harbour mouth.

That such defensive preparations were not the result of mere rumour is borne out by the successful French raid on the coasts in 1377 and by the assault directed against Dartmouth in 1404 by 6,000 French and Bretons under Du Chatel. The landing probably took place at Slapton Sands, five miles south-west of the castle. The English and French accounts report that the force was victoriously repulsed by the local peasantry and Du Chatel mortally wounded. The French, but not the English, chronicles describe a second raid in which the French took and burnt the town. Such raids were in retaliation for similar acts of aggression by the English. It was a time when the prosperity of Dartmouth was declining and the temptation grew to bolster up diminishing fortunes by piracy.

The Building of the Castle

DURING the fifteenth century a form of defence was maintained by stretching a chain across the harbour mouth. A royal grant of £30 from the customs of Exeter and Dartmouth was made in 1462 towards this. There is evidence also for a watch being kept at a place called "Galions Boure", Compass Hill, overlooking the castle.

Nevertheless, it was not until 1481 that we first hear of the construction of the castle which remains today. It was clearly begun on the initiative of the townspeople, and regarded by Edward IV as such a valuable contribution to national coast defence that he renewed the annuity of £30 from the customs with an additional £30 for five years. This was in consideration of the fact that the Mayor and burgesses "have begun to make a strong tower and bulwark of stone and lime adjoining the castle there they shall finish it with all haste and henceforth fortify, repair and keep it garnished with guns and artillery and other ordnance and find a chain to stretch athwart the mouth of the haven from that tower to another tower there at all necessary times". In 1486, after the conclusion of the period of the doubled grant, Henry VII increased the sum for maintenance to £40 a year at which figure it stood for nearly 350 years.

The "strong tower" is really a double tower. Work began on the building of a round tower but after this had been taken to a fair height there was a change of plan and a rectangular tower was built alongside the round one. Ultimately the two structures merged into one. This change can be seen in the building and will be described later. In spite of the stress put on the need for haste in the 1481 indenture, work on the castle dragged on over many years. The building accounts for the years 1488–95 remain among the Dartmouth Corporation records and provide us with an impression of the cost and progress of the job.

Many of the building materials – stone, lime and sand – were brought by barge. The better-quality stone came from Charleton near Kingsbridge, and was sometimes brought in larger vessels. Eight to twelve masons were employed at a time and each was paid 7*d*. a day for meat, drink and wages. Labourers received 5*d*. a day. It is not until 1493/4 that we learn of the purchase of nine great beams for the square tower,

together with other timber, various kinds of nails and a large quantity of lead. Twelve years had thus elapsed before it was ready to receive its roof. Material for the round tower roof was provided the following year and included a "master beme" which cost 13*s*. 4*d*. Otherwise the main beams in the square tower averaged 7*s*. 1*d*. each and in the round tower 5*s*. because of the shorter span.

To do the town justice, the castle had not been undefended or unequipped during the interval. Weapons had been purchased and provided with ample supplies of powder and shot. In 1491 four watchmen were paid 6*s*. 8*d*. a month to keep the castle and again the next year. The harbour chain was kept in repair, and hawsers and winding cable for it purchased. The chain may have been the one taken away by the Dartmouth men from Fowey in Cornwall in 1474. Small boats called cobles were hired to carry the chain across the water. Six seemed to be adequate for the job and were hired by the month for 48*s*. each. One year one of the cobles was lost in a storm and the Corporation had to make up for it to the tune of £8 10*s*. The chain across the river was fixed to the cliff near Gomerock where there is a hole in the rock for fixing the chain. There was also a small shelter on that side of the river; the joist holes for the beams are still visible. Boom defence of this kind occurred elsewhere in England. Fowey had a chain protected at either end by two small blockhouses; and there was one across the Medway at Upnor harnessed to two great timber wheels.

In its construction Dartmouth is noteworthy in being the first castle in England to be designed to have guns as its main armament. Gunpowder had been used in warfare since the mid-fourteenth century but the development of the new weapon was slow. By the 1390s some of the first gunports are found in a building, the West Gate at Canterbury. But these gunports and others, which were designed or inserted into earlier buildings up to 1481, were little more than enlarged arrow-slits usually covering an entrance. At Dartmouth there are properly conceived gunports which could cover the estuary, with a certain amount of flexibility for the guns' field of fire. Here was a tower in which guns were used as an offensive weapon and not restricted to narrowly self-defensive purposes. The guns were placed in the basement near the water-line with accommodation for the garrison in the two floors above. The gunports were rectangular openings which could be closed by

external shutters. They were splayed internally to allow a degree of traverse without increasing the size of the "port" itself. It was not an ideal arrangement but it was a beginning in the development of artillery fortification. The gunports also indicate that artillery was still in a primitive stage. The sills are at original floor-level, since guns at this time were strapped down to flat wooden beds and were rarely mounted on wheeled carriages as they were to be in less than fifty years' time when Henry VIII was building his coastal forts. The Corporation's accounts indicate the type of armament in use. Cannon called "murderers" were provided and there are payments for binding and stocking them. Other guns called serpentynes, possibly of $7\frac{1}{2}$-inch calibre, were also used; early breech-loaders with removable chambers.

Kingswear Castle

THE COMPANION work on the Kingswear side of the haven was begun in 1491. £40 was spent by the Dartmouth Corporation in that year but building proceeded slowly so that a further £60 is shown in the accounts for 1501/2, when Thomas Smyth "parson of Modeley" received this sum to reimburse him for the two years' work which he had overseen. The castle is similar in style to the square tower of Dartmouth. Its gunports were similar down to the shutter arrangements. While linking effectively with Dartmouth, as a building it was so open to the elements that iron guns were no use there and had to be replaced by brass. With the improved weapons of the later sixteenth century the castle became obsolete. The guns of Dartmouth alone could cover the estuary. By the 1640s Kingswear was abandoned and ruined. In 1855 Seale Hayne brought it back into use as a summer residence.

Bayard's Cove

THE NEXT addition to the fortifications of Dartmouth Haven was the building of a small fort at the southern end of the town at Bayard's Cove, or Bearscore, as it was sometimes known. This small work, again built specifically for artillery, may possibly be dated to 1509/10 when there is a record of an indenture between the King and the bailiff of Dartmouth for a tower to be built and furnished with artillery to protect

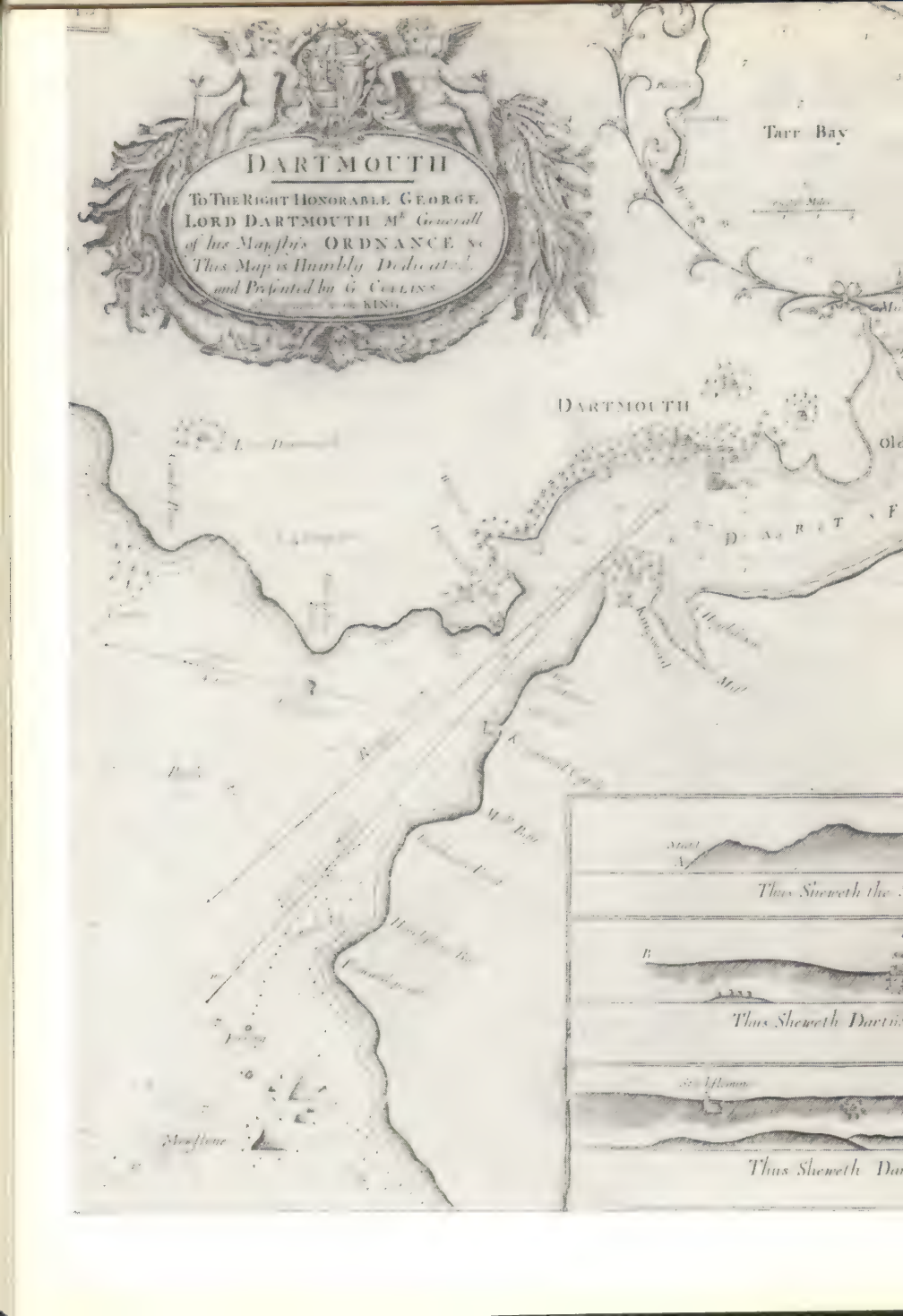
the harbour mouth. It was certainly in existence by 1537 when it is mentioned as the "New Castle" in a Corporation lease. Leland in 1539 described it as "a fair bulwark, built of late". It is irregular in plan and consists of thick walls pierced by a single line of eleven gunports with a wall-walk and parapet above. Although larger in size they are similar to the Dartmouth Castle gunports with internal splays, and externally rebated for shutters. They were still designed for guns mounted on flat beds. The stairs to a narrow wall-walk climb over the mutilated arch of the entrance. The parapet of the wall-walk is now mostly missing but was projected outwards slightly on a corbel-table and could have given shelter to musketeers. Traces of lean-to structures survive in the rock face against which the fort was built.

The fort was brought back temporarily into military use in 1940 and adapted as a machine-gun post. It was quickly abandoned for exactly the same weakness which marked its construction, the restricted field of fire from the gunports. Owned by the Trustees of the Dartmouth Charities, the fort has been in the guardianship of the then Ministry of Public Building and Works since 1954.

Sixteenth-Century Repairs and Additions

In such a building as Dartmouth Castle, even if it was not continually occupied, alterations were inevitable over a period of time. General repairs were put in hand but in 1567 we find that the rock floor of the basement was dug down and perhaps the rock face in the round tower was cut back in order to give more space for storage or for the manipulation of improved guns. In 1596/7 the Corporation spent money in repairing the bridge over the "chasm" on the approach to the castle (in fact this was the ditch of the earlier castle) and in inserting three more gunports in the square tower.

Repairs apart, the defences were improved and in 1545 Lamberd's Bulwark is referred to. This was a gun battery on the top of the cliff above the bathing beach, the site now occupied by the large granite-faced nineteenth-century battery. It was not an elaborate affair and the only description of it is to be found in the statements of Hortensio


DARTMOUTH
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Lord Dartmouth Mr. Generall
of his Majesties ORDNANCE &c
This Map is Humbly Dedicated
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A map of the late seventeenth century

Spinola, apparently a captured Spanish spy, in 1599. "Thence I went to Dartmouth, a large port for 600 vessels, and at low tide, five yards of water; at the entrance, a bastion of earth with six or eight pieces of artillery [Lamberd's Bulwark]; further in, a castle, with 24 pieces and 50 men; and then another earth bastion, with six pieces. The place is large, but not walled, the mountains serving for walls; the people are warlike, and constantly at sea with vessels, to attack the Spaniards and other enemies . . ." It is uncertain where that last bastion was.

The Civil War

During the early years of the seventeenth century the piratical activities of the Sallee Rovers from Morocco meant that the defences of the port were in commission at the outbreak of the Civil War. The town declared for Parliament but was soon captured by Prince Maurice for the King in 1643 after a month's siege. The Corporation kept an account book listing all the expenses of the town towards their defence. Tunstall church served as an outwork with two guns mounted on the tower, Kingswear was repaired and 141 new links were made for the harbour chain.

Dartmouth remained in Royalist hands with a garrison of about 500 men, who used the castle and adjoining buildings as a citadel. Several outworks were constructed, and after the New Model Army triumphed at Naseby and the forces of Parliament turned west, two elaborate earthwork forts were erected on the high ground on either side of the haven. Mount Ridley above Kingswear and Gallant's Bower above Dartmouth Castle are fine examples of the fortifications of this period. They show the change which had overtaken military engineering by this time. They are of irregular plan, with projecting bastions at each angle which could cover with flanking fire the long sides or curtains.

As Cromwell and the cavalry moved westwards, Sir Thomas Fairfax set off for Dartmouth and the decision was taken to storm the town. A contemporary account in Sprigge's *Anglia Rediviva* describes the action in 1646. It provides a good impression of a battle in this most unprofessional of wars:

> "Saturday 17 January the General went again to view the Town; all things were concluded on for a storm, and Lots

cast for every man, who should fall on first, and who to come on as Reserves; the officers of all the Regiments viewed their several Posts, and every man provided his guides.

"Lords-day 18 Mr. Del in the morning and Mr. Peters in the evening exhorted the soldiers to their duty; the souldiers were all drawn out; about seven at night Forlorn hopes were set; the evening very milde as at Midsomer, the frost being newly gone; the Worde was given, God with us; the signal of the souldiers was, their shirts out before and behind. About 11 o'clock at night, the storm begun; and after the Enemy had discharged once, our Men got under their canon, and quickly possessed them, and turned them against the Enemy; for the Army had no Peeces at all of their own,

Sir Thomas Fairfax

> the way and weather not admitting any to be drawn against that place, where there were an hundred Peeces ready mounted against them. The commanders of every party possest those places they were designed with; Lieut. Colonel Pride, who led on Colonel Barlowe's Regiment, possest Mount Boon wherein were 22 pieces of Ordnance; Colonel Hamond possest the West gate wherein were 4 pieces of ordnance, and two in the Flanker. Colonel Fortescue gained Tunstall Church with 12 Pieces of Ordnance and so we became masters of the whole Town, and the old Castle [Bayard's Cove] in which were 5 great Iron guns which commanded the River. In all our men possessed themselves of about 60 peeces of Ordnance in the storm, among which one Brass Demi-canon. And such was even the miraculous goodness of God in this storm that we lost but one man and had very few wounded, not withstanding they plyed most fiercely both great and small shot upon our men from the Forts. The storm succeeding so well the Comptroller of the Ordnance was sent to summon two Men of War which lay in the River which no sooner received the Summons but they yielded immediately."

In the castle and at Gallant's Bower the Royalists made a little more effective show; but on the Tuesday morning they also surrendered.

Later History

WITH THE END of the Civil War, the defences of Dartmouth were maintained only against a possible attack from the sea. The "new fort" of Gallant's Bower was ordered to be demolished but the castle was kept in repair. At the Restoration the custody of the castle appears to have been finally taken away from the Mayor and Corporation. Although no longer responsible for its maintenance, the town still kept the annuity of £40 from the customs proceeds until 1828.

The castle was kept on a war footing during the Dutch Wars. There was a great scare in 1667 when de Ruyter and the Dutch fleet were cruising triumphantly in the Channel. A convoy of shipping took refuge

A brigantine outward bound from Dartmouth about 100 *years ago*

in the haven but the Dutch did not dare attack. It was said that 160 guns were planted on the quays and elsewhere.

Probably as a result of these alarms the King signed an order in 1672 for an additional blockhouse or fort at Dartmouth and in 1690 the Elizabethan Lamberd's Bulwark was rebuilt in stone. Two years later, according to a contemporary chart, there was also a large battery opposite the Blackstone and another above Sugary Cove, near the castle. But when the crisis passed all these defences were neglected, maintenance was ignored and the quality of the garrisons allowed to deteriorate. When Colonel Lilly was surveying the fortifications of the south-western coasts in 1717 he counted 58 guns of all sorts at Dartmouth, but only one had a serviceable carriage. A couple of aged gunners had in charge a variety of mouldering stores and the remaining twenty feet of the famous harbour chain.

This was to be the pattern for the remaining history of Dartmouth Castle – occasional bursts of activity during wartime interspersed with long years of somnolent decay. The part of the defences which was maintained was confined to the castle area. In 1747 Lamberd's Bulwark, which by now had been named Maiden Fort, was again rebuilt as a stone battery for 12 guns in two tiers. There was already a line of

communication between the battery and the castle protected by a masonry wall and batteries on either side of the tower. The basement of the castle served as a magazine. During the Napoleonic Wars it was an assembly point for the local volunteer infantry and yeomanry.

Repairs continued to be made from time to time but the next and last major work of defence did not take place until 1861. Then, as part of the general strengthening of British coastal defence, inspired by the fear of invasion from France, a strong battery was built on the site of the Maiden Fort. This remains and is today commonly called the "old battery". It was constructed to mount five 64-pounder guns, three in casemates, with magazines behind them and some accommodation for a garrison, and two more guns in open battery above. The office of governor had been abolished in 1857 but in 1886 there was still a garrison, albeit only one master gunner and two men, and the castle was still a centre for the local militia.

In 1940 the castle was again pressed into active service and a brick position for a 4·7-inch gun was built on one of the two upper embrasures and platforms of the "old battery". The War Department had handed over the castle itself to the Commissioners of H.M. Works in 1907. In 1909 and 1955 the remaining portions of the defences were made over in guardianship to the Department as a National Monument.

BELOW, *St. Petrox Church, from downstream*
OPPOSITE, *an impression by J. Thomas*, 1832

DESCRIPTION

The exterior

THE VISITOR usually enters the castle from the car park which today occupies "the green spot of ground . . . where formerly Guns were planted". The road into the car park cuts through the line of the curtain wall of the castle's fourteenth-century predecessor. The remains of this castle associated with the merchant John Hawley are still impressive. One of the round towers and the high curtain wall dominate the car park below. The curtain wall is over 7 feet thick and over 40 feet high, an attempt to counteract steeply rising ground beyond. Outside the tower and wall is a wide ditch cut in the rock. Two centuries ago more of the curtain wall with other towers was visible as far as the cliff on the river side. It looks an elaborate building on the map of Henry VIII's reign, but on the mid-eighteenth-century plans it was slightingly described as "an old ruin'd wall which in former ages was part of the Enclosure of a

Gentleman's House". There is now no trace of the house but the stone steps inserted into the remaining tower were probably to make it into a garden feature or a look-out.

On the headland to the left of the car park is the "old battery". Despite its name it is the most recent part of the fortifications. It was built in the early 1860s as a replacement for earlier batteries on the site. It is now used as a restaurant and the interior is not open to visitors. There are casemates for three guns with magazines behind them and a certain amount of barrack accommodation in the block over the main entrance. The external appearance gives a good impression of the strength and purpose of a small fort of a century ago. On the landward side of the building is some earlier rubble masonry, which contrasts with the general large uncoursed blocks of bluish limestone. This, and a corner of early masonry on the point, are the surviving remains of the eighteenth-century Maiden Fort. The small battlemented brick structure occupying one of the two embrasures of the upper gun platform is an emplacement for a 4·7-inch gun, built in 1940 and disguised as an antiquity. The other embrasure now contains one of the original guns newly mounted on a traversing carriage of a type in use during the 1870s. Two of the guns remain, both 64-pounder, rifled muzzle-loaders with a $6\frac{1}{4}$-inch bore. One was cast in 1870, the other four years later.

The term "castle", although formerly embracing the whole area within the first curtain wall, is now usually restricted to the strong tower of 1481 together with the gun platforms which flank it. In order to reach this the visitor must make his way between the Victorian tower built as a harbour lighthouse beside the church and the "old battery". The wall along the cliff edge is basically fifteenth- or sixteenth century. In the eighteenth century it was termed "a line of communication between Maiden Fort and the old castle". On either side of the castle itself are gun platforms, on the right for three guns, on the left for five. The embrasures are eighteenth-century remodellings. The original approach to the castle was through the Elizabethan doorway at the end of the northern platform to the left. It was entered from the lower road across a bridge over a "chasm", probably the ditch of the first castle. The bridge today is modern. At the back of this northern platform is a doorway which must have given access to a flight of steps leading to

the church door. It has been blocked and the filled-in area utilized for graves at least from 1780 onwards.

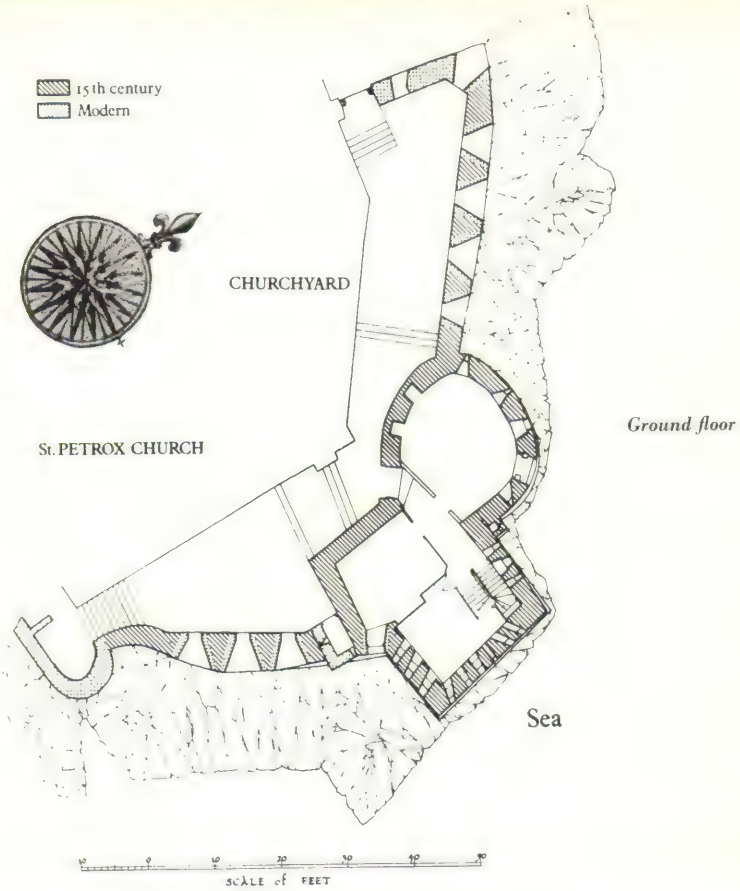
By looking carefully at the masonry of the castle's exterior it is possible to pick out the difference in building materials that resulted from the change of plan already described on page 11. The round tower was built first of large rubble, often limestone. Work stopped before the round tower was finished, and the square tower was begun beside it. The stones used here are different in size and almost entirely composed of slate. Ultimately this material was used for the upper portions of the round tower when the two parts were completed together.

The door into the castle is in the square tower. Although the present doorway is now at a higher level it is on the site of the original entrance. The mutiliated relieving arch of the earlier doorway is still visible.

Ground Floor

THE CASTLE has three storeys and the entrance leads directly into the ground floor. The level of this is now three feet higher than it was originally. The purpose of this floor was probably shared between the needs of accommodation and those of defence. The square room contains eleven small, square, splayed openings, with sandstone dressing, for hand guns. With the original floor so much lower the musketeers must have used them from a wooden fire-step. Most of the other openings in this room are later. Three in the wall overlooking the river were for cannon and may be Elizabethan. The other two lower openings perhaps belong to the late seventeenth century.

The room in the round tower shows the gap and awkward join in the masonry where the square tower was butted on before both towers were carried up in continuous building. This room also has small openings which may have been for muskets, but the chief feature is the large timber-framed opening. Its condition suggests that the chain which stretched across the harbour mouth passed through it over a pulley. The marks of successive slots for the axle of the pulley can be seen in the jambs. The chain seems to have been hauled in by means of ropes, with the aid of a capstan or of two wheels on an axle. The housing may have been in the holes in the back wall of the room. Whenever the chain was in use the farther end was fixed at the Kingswear side.



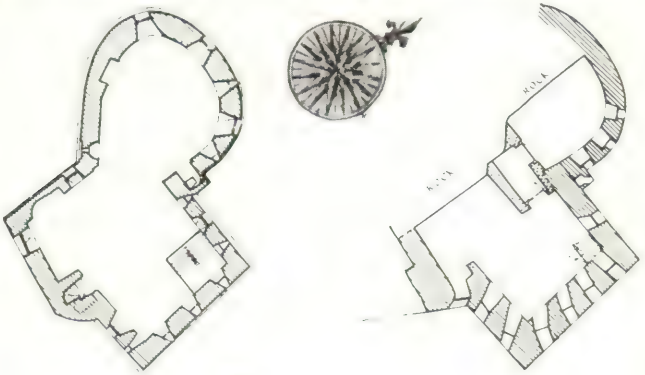
It is impossible now to know how the rooms were subdivided. The early fireplace on the right of the entrance suggests a certain degree of comfort was provided here. Nor do we know where the stairs were to the basement and the upper floor. The present stairs are modern. In 1848, when the castle was used more for accommodation and storage than for defence, the square room was divided into two barrack rooms and the round room served as an artillery store. Now the modern partitioning has been removed and on the walls hang a number of pieces of body armour and helmets of the Civil War period and some later swords. The stone and iron shot mounted to the right of the entrance, suitable for demi-cannon and culverin calibre of cannon, were found in the river.

Basement

THE BASEMENT must have been extremely cramped if one takes into account that the ceiling was lower by 3 feet or more and the rock floor was higher by 15 to 18 inches. The ledges on which the beams rested can be seen on two sides while on the other two sides are holes to take the beams. The original level of the rock floor can be seen at the back of the room. Headroom in the square tower therefore was only about 6 feet 6 inches. Conditions there must have been dreadful whenever the guns were in action.

There are seven openings or ports for guns in the walls facing the sea. They are the earliest example of this type of gunport to be found in England. They are rectangular and splayed internally to allow a degree of traversing for the gun without enlarging the external opening. Shutters were provided on the outside, hinged on one of the jambs. These were probably kept closed during the times the guns were not manned in order to protect them and the castle from the weather, a necessary precaution whenever high seas were running. Damp, ill-ventilated and uncomfortable as the basement must have been, it was certainly intended as something more than a battle-station. The fireplace at the back of the room suggests that men may have been quartered there and in the nineteenth century this part was used as a guardroom. The window may belong to this later period. The seaward portion of the square tower ultimately declined in importance to become a coal store.

The room in the round tower too has been greatly altered. The rock



First floor (*left*)

Basement (*right*)

was cut back when the castle was built to form a level floor. It has been suggested that the harbour chain may have been stored here, but it is a room which is also equipped for guns. The four upper openings are narrow slits for muskets which must have been reached from a small fire-step. The three lower openings are gunports, similar to those in the square tower for guns on flat beds. As they seem to have been roughly cut through the existing masonry and lack relieving arches over them, unlike those in the square tower, they may have been the result of an afterthought – possibly an improvement implemented when the square tower was built and added to the round tower. This room was eventually converted into a magazine.

First Floor

If the visitor returns up the stairs the first floor can be reached. This was the main living floor. It is now open and lacks the partitions which once divided it up into three. Two barrack rooms occupied the square tower, divided by a passage leading to the stairs to the roof, and there was one large room in the round tower separated from the others by a long cupboard. This last room was known in the nineteenth century as the Governor's Room and indeed it was undoubtedly the best equipped. Not only was there a fireplace but also a latrine which opens out on to

the rocks below. In the square tower originally there may have been one long room, perhaps a common hall. The fireplace at its back has the remains of an oven in one side which suggests that cooking was done here. There was once a fireplace on the seaward wall, probably due to later subdivision. Although the emphasis is clearly on accommodation and the openings are largely windows there are others which could have been used for musketry.

Today the walls are hung with pikes and armour of the Civil War period and swords of more recent date. In the cases are a number of plans and drawings which show the development of fortification at Dartmouth.

Roof

THIS HAS to be approached by a newel stair entered through a pointed sandstone arch. It must always have been awkward for access. The visitor should realize that the original level of the roof was roughly that of the lowest of the present lead gullies. This helps to account for the seemingly low level of some of the embrasures in the parapet. The sills on the seaward side have holes which probably held the pivots for light guns while the musketeers were provided with narrow loops in the merlons. On the landward side the battlements were raised at some time when additional protection from the high ground behind was thought necessary. Without it the gunners on the roof were liable to be picked off in any siege. It was a point not visualized by the first builders, as can be seen by the "straight joint" of the later work against the side of the turret over the stairs. The turret had two storeys and must have served as a look-out. Over the castle entrance was provision for last-ditch defence. If the castle was finally attacked at close quarters, four machicolations, openings provided by corbelling out from the parapet, enabled the defenders to drop grenades or shoot down on to an enemy trying to force the door. Evidence of more peaceful days and of repairs done to the fabric is the lead plaque on the chimney stack serving the round tower, recording the work of the governor in 1773, A. Holdsworth.

From the roof of the castle the defences of Dartmouth Haven can be imagined at the various stages of their history. The fourteenth-century castle can be seen below the wooded hillside; Dartmouth's twin, the restored Kingswear, across the water; on the hill above the castle and

on that behind Kingswear are the legacies of the Civil War; and there is the town itself – inspiration and source of these efforts towards self-defence. Here, with the small boats continually passing and repassing in the mouth of the estuary, the visitor can appreciate the value and importance of the castle's own position, one which has been occupied and used for nearly 500 years.

Acknowledgments

The originals of illustrations on page 5 (SANDBY), page 21 (early photograph), and page 31 (ROWE) are in Dartmouth Museum.

The portrait of FAIRFAX on page 19 was supplied by the National Portrait Gallery.

The impression by THOMAS on page 23 was supplied by the National Buildings Record.

The illustration showing the gunports on page 4 appeared in B. H. ST. J. O'NEIL's *Castles and Cannon*, published by the Clarendon Press.

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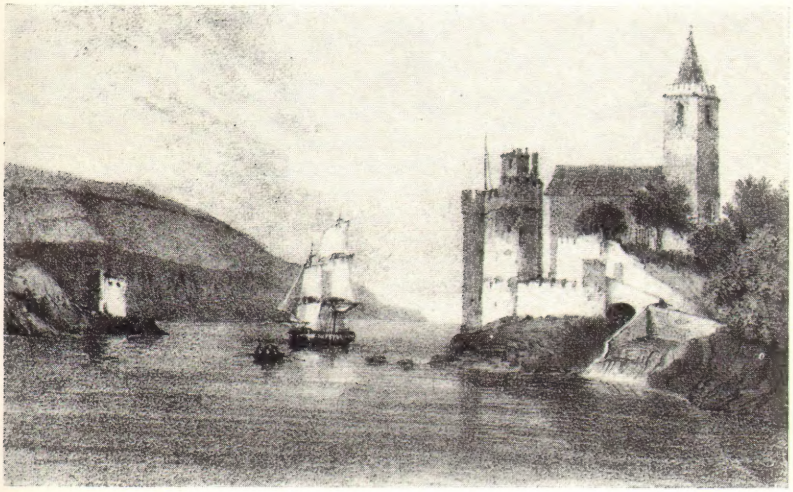
Dartmouth Point, by George Rowe, 1820



Conversion Table

Page 14	$7\frac{1}{2}$ in	190 mm
18	5 yds	4·6 m
22	64 pounds	29 kg
	4·7 in	118 mm
23	7 ft	2·1 m
	40 ft	12·2 m
24	4·7 in	118 mm
	64 pounds	29 kg
	$6\frac{1}{4}$ in	159 mm
27	3 ft	91 mm
	15 in	375 mm
	18 in	457 mm

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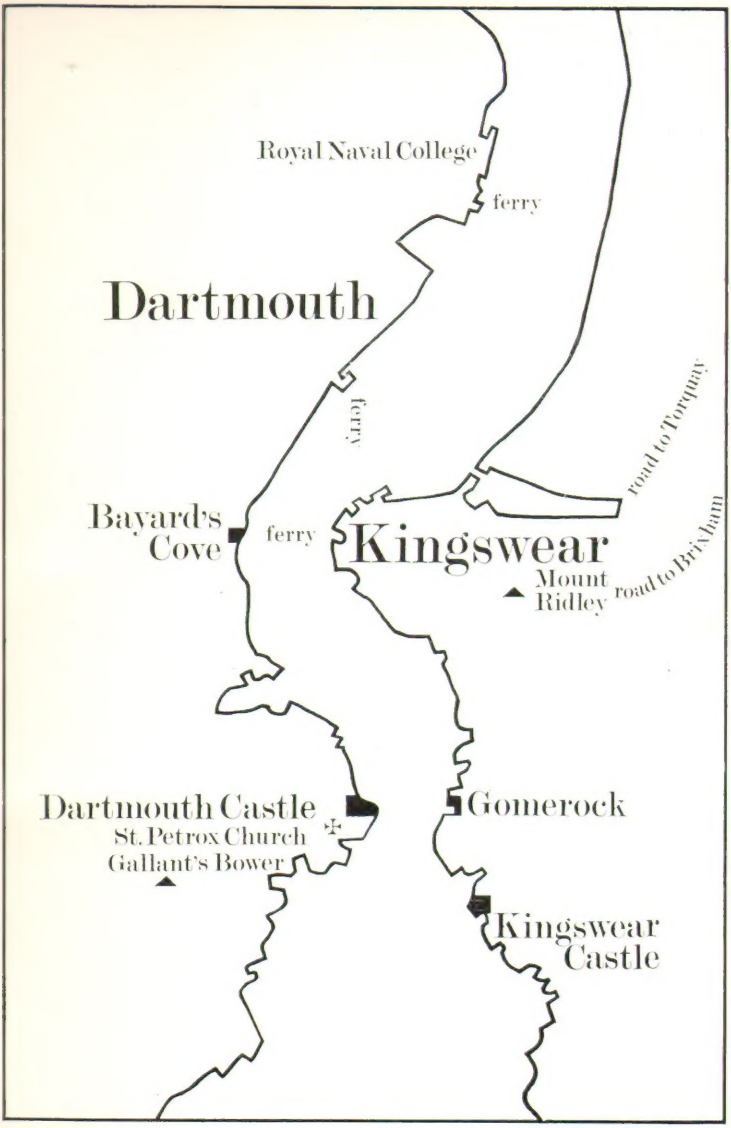
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