Warkworth Castle

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WARKWORTH lies six miles south-east of Alnwick, in a horseshoe bend on the River Coquet, a mile-and-a-half from its mouth at Amble. The castle stands on the high ground at the mouth of the horseshoe, and the village lies below to the north between the castle and the river. At the top of the horseshoe is the very fine medieval bridge.

Half-a-mile upstream from the castle, on the opposite bank, is Warkworth Hermitage, also in the care of the Ministry of Public Building and Works. O.S. 1″ map no. 71; ref. NU 247057.

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The cover device, the lion of the Percy family, is drawn from the carved panel on the north face of the keep.

Ministry of Public Building and Works
Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings

Warkworth Castle

NORTHUMBERLAND

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LONDON: HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
1954: *Reprinted* 1970

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SBN 11 670037 8

History

THE mound upon which the keep of Warkworth stands is placed at the highest point of the hill up which the main street of the village climbs steeply southwards from the fortified bridgehead of the Coquet. This hill falls precipitously to the river on the west, with a more gradual slope on the east. The only level approach to the castle is from the south, and this is strongly guarded by the south curtain wall, with its deep moat, and the great gateway flanked on east and west by the Montagu and Carrickfergus towers.

The name of Warkworth appears in the twelfth century as *Wercewordе*, that is the enclosure or homestead of a woman named Werce.[1] The place first comes into the light of history when, in the year 737, Ceolwulf, king of Northumbria (to whom Bede dedicated his history), gave it and its church of St. Lawrence, which he had himself founded, to the abbot and monks of Holy Island.

Darkness descended upon Northumberland during the ninth century, when the Danes burnt and pillaged the monasteries and laid the whole country waste; little is known of the history of that century, but we have a passing glimpse of Warkworth in the reign of Osbert the last king of all Northumbria, when it is recorded that he took it away from St. Cuthbert. His death in A.D. 867, fighting the Danes at York, was thought to be a punishment for this sacrilege. Warkworth does not appear to have been restored to the monks of Holy Island but remained a possession of the rulers of Northumberland, called either kings, dukes or earls, who ruled over it from their stronghold of Bamburgh. We know nothing more of Warkworth until the end of the eleventh century, when the great Norman earl of Northumberland, Robert of Mowbray, gave its tithes to the prior and monks of Tynemouth.

Henry, son of David I, King of Scotland, had been created earl of Northumberland by the treaty of Durham in A.D. 1139, and shortly thereafter he confirmed a grant of a salt-pan at Warkworth to the monks of Newminster, near Morpeth, and granted another to the priory of Brinkburn which was confirmed by his son Earl William, afterwards William the Lion of Scotland. The royal castles of Bamburgh and Newcastle upon Tyne were excepted from the grant of the county to Earl Henry, and, as the earl would need a strong place as the head of his earldom, it seems probable that it was he who either built the first castle at Warkworth, or, more probably, strengthened an earlier motte and bailey castle by the addition of a stone curtain wall, building his hall and chamber against the east side of the west wall. However this may be,

[1] This was the name of the abbess who gave a sheet of fine linen to the Venerable Bede, to be used for his shroud.

there was a castle at Warkworth before A.D. 1158, in which year King Henry II, who had compelled Malcolm the Maiden to give up the county of Northumberland to him in A.D. 1157, granted 'the castle and manor' to Roger son of Richard to be held by the service of one knight.

Roger son of Richard was the son of a Richard whose parentage is unknown, whose wife was a daughter of Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk. Roger son of Richard married Alice, daughter of Aubrey de Vere II and widow of Robert of Essex. It seems probable that this grant, made at Rhuddlan, was to reward Roger for his bravery at the ambuscade laid by Owen of North Wales against Henry II in the defile of Coleshill near Flint, when a great disaster to the English army was narrowly averted. A few years later Roger received the honour of Clavering in Essex, from which place his descendants later took their surname. He probably added little to the defences of the castle, though part of the present east curtain wall may be his work; at any rate, in 1173, when William the Lion, the sometime earl of Northumberland and lord of Warkworth, invaded the county and besieged the castle, it was too weak for defence. Roger, therefore, retired to Newcastle upon Tyne, of which castle he was the constable, and successfully defended it against the Scots.

Roger died in A.D. 1177 and was succeeded by his son Robert, then a youth who did not come of age until A.D. 1191, and who resided as a young man chiefly in Norfolk, in which county he owned large estates in right of his wife, the daughter and heiress of William of Chesney. King John, in 1199, confirmed the castle and manor of Warkworth to him for the sum of 300 marks; after this Robert appears to have lived more in the north. He was sheriff of Northumberland in the year 1203, and being, apparently, a favourite of the king received grants of numerous manors in Northumberland from him in the years 1204–5. He was a man of wealth and added much to the strength of his castle of Warkworth. He built the great gateway which, though heightened and strengthened at a later date, still stands to testify to the excellence of its workmanship. He also built the west part of the present south wall including the Carrickfergus tower, and added to the amenities of the castle by improving the Great Hall and chamber, the chapel in the bailey and the other houses within the walls. It also seems probable that by this time a stone keep of some sort must have arisen upon the base of the ancient mound though no certain remains of it are now visible. Robert died in A.D. 1214 and was succeeded by his son John. In the following year King John marched an army into Northumberland to avenge himself upon his opponents the barons, lords of Mitford, Morpeth, Alnwick and Wark, whose lands he plundered and burnt. Warkworth apparently was not molested though its lord was one of

the committee of twenty-five to whom the barons of the Great Charter subjected King John.

Roger son of John, who succeeded his father in A.D. 1240, was known, from his mother's family, 'as of Baliol'; he was accidentally killed, whilst still a youth, in a tournament held in 1249 at Argences in Normandy. His lands and the castle of Warkworth were given into the charge of William of Valence, earl of Pembroke, as the heir Robert was still an infant. When of age Robert became a prominent man in both the civil and military affairs of the kingdom. He was ordered to attend the council of the king at Shrewsbury in the year 1283 and was summoned by writ as a baron to Parliament in the years 1295–1309 and distinguished himself in the Scottish wars of the end of the century. In December 1292, Edward I was himself at Warkworth for one night.

Robert son of Roger died in 1310 and was succeeded by his son, John of Clavering, who had already been summoned to Parliament as a baron from 1299 onwards. At this period, owing to the long-drawn-out Scottish war, the king had strengthened Warkworth by furnishing part of its garrison. In 1319 an agreement, made between the wardens of the Marches, mentions that Warkworth had its own garrison of twelve men at arms, and that the king would place in it, at his own cost, four men at arms and eight light horsemen. In the Scottish campaign of 1322, the constable of the castle sent twenty-six light horsemen (*hobelars*) to the king's army. In 1323 Edward II ordered John of Clavering to provision the castle well and guard it carefully, as the castles on the Marches towards Scotland must be well kept even in time of truce. In 1326 he was ordered to repair the castle at his own cost. The expected attack came in August 1327, when the Scots, in their retreat from Stanhope in Weardale, laid siege to Warkworth. The attack was beaten off, as was another at the end of the same year, when Robert Bruce led a large army into Northumberland and again besieged the castle.

Peace was signed with Scotland in 1328, but even after that the castle continued to be used partially as a royal fortress. John of Clavering during his lifetime had alienated nearly all the estates of his family, probably because of debts, and when he died in January 1332, without male issue, Warkworth and his other lands in Northumberland passed by grant of the king to Henry, the second Lord Percy of Alnwick.

Architectural evidence points to these early years of the fourteenth century as the date when the gatehouse was heightened, the curtain walls strengthened, and the east curtain wall flanked by the impressive tower called the Grey Mare's Tail. The portion of the old keep, to be seen within the present one, might also date from this time.

The history of Warkworth from the year 1332 is chiefly that of the

second house of Percy, itself part of the history of England. The castle became the favourite residence of the lords of Alnwick; both its first and second Percy lords appear to have lived there when in the north; various charters granted by them are dated at Warkworth and they both died there, one in the year 1353, the other in 1368. It was probably shortly after Henry, Lord Percy, received Warkworth that improvements tending towards greater comfort were made in the Carrickfergus tower and to the solar adjoining it in the bailey.

A great part of the general history of England revolves around the third Percy lord of Warkworth. He was a renowned soldier who had led troops in the French wars before 1360, was made a knight of the Garter and created earl of Northumberland at the coronation of Richard II in 1377.

He and his son Harry Hotspur—famous in history and ballad, the hero of the battles of Otterburn and Homildon Hill—were chiefly instrumental in placing Henry IV on the throne in the year 1399. The earl lived much at Warkworth during the few peaceful intervals in his strenuous and restless life. The conspiracy he formed against Henry IV, which ended in Hotspur's defeat and death at Shrewsbury in 1403, was prepared within its walls, and after that fatal battle the earl withdrew with his household to its defences. Three of the scenes in Shakespeare's *First Part of King Henry the Fourth* are laid at Warkworth. The turbulent earl joined the abortive conspiracy of Archbishop Scrope in 1405 to depose Henry IV and place the earl of March upon the throne, and after its failure he escaped into Scotland. But the king's patience had become exhausted; he marched into Northumberland, at the head of a large well-equipped army furnished with all the engines of war, and besieged Warkworth; and after the royal cannon had battered its walls by seven discharges the castle surrendered to the king.

In 1403 the king had made his younger son John (afterwards duke of Bedford and regent of France under Henry VI) lord-warden of the East Marches. He now (1405) granted him the forfeited Percy baronies of Alnwick, Prudhoe and Langley, and Warkworth became John's headquarters whilst he was warden; letters written thence by him are still extant. It would seem that the castle itself was also granted to him, as in the year 1413 he confirms a charter from 'our castle of Warkworth'. The old earl of Northumberland had been slain at Bramham Moor in February 1408; his grandson Henry, son of Hotspur, was released from his captivity in Scotland by the intervention of Henry V and in 1416 he did homage to the king in Parliament. He was restored to his lands and to the forfeited earldom of Northumberland and appointed warden of the East Marches, and Warkworth became his favourite home; many

View of the castle from the River Coquet

of his grants and letters yet remaining are dated from the castle between the years 1417 and 1450. He was killed at the battle of St. Albans in 1455 fighting on the side of the Lancastrians against the Yorkists.

There is unfortunately no documentary evidence as to the state of the castle in the later fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, but important additions and alterations must have been made in that period. Architectural evidence seems to show that the keep, as well as the collegiate church whose foundations yet stretch across the bailey, formed part of one scheme which may have been planned by the first earl and, with modifications, carried out in the time of the second earl in the first half of the fifteenth century. A new front to the Great Hall in the bailey was also built about the same time.

Little is known of Warkworth during the life of Henry, the third earl, whose life was spent in the service of Henry VI and the Lancastrian cause. He was slain on Palm Sunday, 1461, on the bloody field of Towton. The castle was retained by the Lancastrians after that defeat, but in 1462 Edward IV granted it to his brother George, duke of

Clarence. The great earl of Warwick, the kingmaker, made it his headquarters in his campaign in the north in the winter of 1462 and from it he directed the sieges of the castles of Bamburgh, Alnwick and Dunstanburgh. Warkworth was never again a Lancastrian stronghold. In 1464 John Neville, Lord Montagu, brother of Warwick the kingmaker, was created earl of Northumberland and lord-warden of the Marches; he also made Warkworth his northern home and letters were written by him from the castle during the period 1464–9. In the latter year Sir Henry Percy, eldest son of the third earl, swore fealty to Edward IV and was released from the Tower; he was appointed lord-warden of the East and Middle Marches and is styled earl of Northumberland in 1471.

The earl, who had married Maud, daughter of William Herbert, earl of Pembroke, in 1472, came to Warkworth in the summer of that year and much cleaning was done at the castle in preparation for the reception of him and his countess. The earl was again living in the castle for at least part of the years 1480–9, a period during which the castle must have been kept in good habitable condition, as considerable general repairs are then recorded to have been done. It was about this time that the porch giving entrance to the Great Hall in the bailey was heightened into a tower and its front decorated with the stone panel upon which is carved the Percy lion which gives its name to the Lion Tower.

The fourth earl was murdered at Cocklodge in Yorkshire in 1489. His son and successor, the fifth earl, called 'the magnificent', lived chiefly in the south; considerable work was, however, done at Warkworth during his life; the castle was kept in good repair and the earl lived there occasionally himself. A staircase was made in one of the towers, either the Lion Tower or that at the south end of the hall, the north curtain wall was rebuilt and many workmen were employed repairing the Great Hall and other houses in the bailey; considerable work was also done in the keep and wood was provided to repair the chapel windows there. Henry, the sixth earl, called 'the unthrifty', succeeded in 1527. He was lord-warden of the Marches in the years 1529–32, and then lived chiefly at Warkworth. Many of his letters of these years are dated from the castle, whilst in 1533, in view of a threatened Scottish invasion, the whole Council of the North repaired to him as lord-warden at Warkworth. In 1536 he was made lord-president of the Council of the North, and next year he died childless.

During his lifetime much work was done in the castle. The south wall between the Montague tower and the great gateway was rebuilt, with buttresses; a new drawbridge over the moat was made with timber from Acklington, the fireplace in the Great Hall in the keep was

renewed and other minor repairs carried out both there and in the houses in the bailey. Shortly before his death the earl had given his estates to Henry VIII, hoping, no doubt, that they would be restored to his nephew Thomas Percy whose father had been attainted and executed in 1537 for taking part in the Pilgrimage of Grace. Warkworth thus passed into the king's hands, and he, in 1538, appointed commissioners to inquire into the state of all the royal castles in Northumberland. They reported that Warkworth Castle was in 'good reparacion' with a few exceptions; the keep was well covered and needed only a little lead for the roof of one tower, but the solar, the Great Hall in the bailey and the little chamber over the gate needed their roofs repaired. The 'little chamber over the gate' was doubtless that on the first floor of the Lion tower in which the last earl lived in his later years.

Lord Parr of Kendal, lord-warden of the Marches in 1543, chose Warkworth for his residence because it was considered to be exceptionally healthy. Repairs on a fairly large scale were then carried out, chiefly, it would seem, in the range of buildings in the bailey containing the kitchen, hall, and solar, but other houses in the bailey also received needed repairs.

Lord Grey of Wilton, the king's lieutenant on the Borders, made Warkworth his headquarters during the winter of 1547–8 and much of his correspondence is dated from the castle. At length, in 1557, the Percys came to their own again; in that year Sir Thomas Percy, nephew of the sixth earl, was restored by Queen Mary to Warkworth and his other estates and created earl of Northumberland. He lived partly at Warkworth and wrote letters thence to the queen in the year 1558. It was by his orders that George Clarkson made a careful survey of the castle in 1567. It seems to have been in fair condition except that the Great Hall, the east aisle of which only remained, the chambers, and other buildings near them in the bailey were much decayed and needed re-roofing to prevent their entire destruction. The earl joined the Rising of the North in 1569. When he marched south in this attempt to restore the Roman church he left Warkworth strongly garrisoned by his own men; so well was it kept that Sir John Forster, then lord-warden of the Middle Marches, had great difficulty in getting possession of it for the queen. The unfortunate earl, after the abortive Rising, had taken refuge in Scotland, but was sold by the Scots to Elizabeth I and beheaded at York in 1572. It was on his orders, doubtless following upon Clarkson's report, that the Great Hall and its offices in the bailey were taken down.

In May 1570, the royal commissioners, appointed to inquire into the estates of the rebels, were at Warkworth. They reported 'that the hall

and other houses of office late taken down by the Earl of Northumberland meaning to re-edify the same again which is not done and no provision made for rebuilding'; the keep, they reported, was 'well buylded all of stone and covered with lead'. It must then have been habitable, as in the summer of 1570 the earl of Sussex, president of the Council of the North, made it his residence; Lord Hunsdon, lord-warden of the East Marches and captain-general of the forces of the Borders, was there with him in the autumn of the same year. In 1572 the latter wrote to Lord Burghley complaining of the systematic way in which Sir John Forster, the masterful warden of the Middle Marches, was plundering the castle for his own use. Later, in 1574, it was reported that the spoil and waste then done was 'gret and marvellous'.

Sir Henry Percy, the eighth earl, succeeded to his attainted brother's titles, under a special remainder, but he did not receive Warkworth and his Northumbrian estates until 1574 and was not summoned to Parliament as earl of Northumberland until 1580. The castle was restored to the earl's commissioners, who reported that the roof of the 'old drawing room', that is the solar in the bailey, was utterly decayed and wasted and the Carrickfergus tower in utter ruin and decay. An inventory of the goods and chattels then in the castle shows its furniture to have been scanty in the extreme. The eighth earl died in 1585, a prisoner in the Tower, where he had been committed on a charge of high treason. He was succeeded by his son Henry, the ninth earl. Warkworth had long ceased to be a residence of the earls and after this earl's commitment to the Tower on a charge of complicity in the plot of Guy Fawkes, he granted a lease of the 'manor-house or castle called Warkworth Castle' with its demesne lands to Sir Ralph Grey of Chillingham for twenty-one years. Sir Ralph did not live there and apparently neglected it entirely, allowing the buildings to become even more ruinous. In 1608 the earl's agent informed him that the castle was very ill-used, all lodgings except the tower-house were in complete ruin, the castle was a waste, used as a fold for cattle, and the gates left open both by day and by night.

In 1617 James I came to Warkworth on a journey to Scotland. He gazed upon it much and when he saw the lion on the wall of the tower said, 'this lyone houldes up this castle'; some of the lords in his retinue went into the castle and stayed there over an hour. They found goats and sheep in almost every chamber and were 'much moved to see it soe spoyled and soe badly kept'. In 1618 the earl got possession of the castle by giving Sir Ralph Grey a new lease of the demesne lands, and his agent then used the hall in the keep for storing oats. This was found very inconvenient for those who had the custody of 'the rooms above

the stairs', and also because courts were held twice yearly in the room next adjoining the hall, so the oats were laid in the cellars upon boards the earl provided.

In 1622 the castle and its lands were leased to Sir Francis Brandling of Little Houghton. We know nothing of its condition then, but in 1644 it was captured by the Scots, who were apparently there until 1645 when it was delivered to the agents of the tenth earl, who had succeeded in 1632.

The soldiers of the Commonwealth occupied it in 1648 and upon withdrawing in the following year did further great damage. Joscelin, the eleventh and last earl of the second House of Percy, leased the castle with its park and demesne to Ralph Milbourne of Newcastle upon Tyne. Its final ruin came in 1672 when Earl Joscelin's widow gave the material still left in it to John Clarke, the estate auditor, who carted away no less than 272 wagon loads of lead, timber, and other materials with which to build his manor-house at Chirton.

Charles Seymour, duke of Somerset, who was the third husband of Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Earl Joscelin, thought at one time, it is said, of restoring the castle and making it his northern residence, but the idea was given up. The rebuilt castle of Alnwick became the Northumberland home of the dukes of the third House of Percy. Warkworth remained a picturesque ruin, exciting the admiration and interest of generations of antiquaries. About the middle of the nineteenth century Algernon, the fourth duke of Northumberland, caused the Keep to be repaired and part of it to be made habitable. He also, by doing other needed repairs to the castle, prevented its further decay. In 1922 the eighth duke of Northumberland placed the castle under the guardianship of the Commissioners of H.M. Works (now the Ministry of Public Building and Works).

Description

THE castle has always kept to the lines of the 'motte and bailey' plan with which it began its history, though the bailey had a strip, about 70 ft wide, cut from its east side when the east curtain wall was built. The keep at the north end of the site stands upon the lower part of the 'motte' or mount, and the distance from the centre of the keep to the threshold of the southern gate is one hundred paces—a not unusual length in larger castles of this type in England.

It is best to come to Warkworth Castle from the south, the only direction from which the fortress can be viewed as a whole, and whence there is a level approach. Here there is a fine view of the south curtain wall running from the Montagu Tower in the east to the Carrickfergus Tower in the west and having in its centre the early English gatehouse which is perhaps the best piece of pure architectural design in the castle. Only on this front is there a ditch; elsewhere the steep sides of the promontory whereon the castle is set were deemed sufficient protection.

THE GATEHOUSE

The gatehouse was built at the beginning of the thirteenth century and heightened, as the curtain was, probably in the reign of Edward I. It consists of a long vaulted entry, flanked by two narrow guard-rooms which project in front of it in the form of semi-octagonal bays and have polygonal corner buttresses rising from a spreading base or 'talus'. The gate is reached by a timber bridge over a gap in a stone-built causeway which did not form part of the original design. The first drawbridge probably had its pivot at the threshold of the entry and, by means of counterweights in a pit, it could be raised flat against the face of the gatehouse in a recess whose corbelled head can be seen above the archway. The large corbels higher up support a *machicoulis*, and near them are square holes which, spaced at intervals round the castle walls, carried the timber supports for 'hoarding', 'brattishing', or 'mantling' —a boarded gallery pierced with arrow slits and having machicolations in its floor. On towers or strong points such brattishes were sometimes built up two or three stages in height, and they were considered so important that their removal amounted to a dismantling of the defences. Behind the drawbridge was probably a door, and 4 ft behind that was a portcullis, and the enemy who got through these obstacles only found himself in a death trap, for the courtyard end of the entry was closed by an iron gate and he was exposed to a point-blank fire from arrow slits in the side walls of the guard-rooms. The good workmanship of all the slits should be noted.

The back of the gatehouse stands only to first-floor level. In the lower part of the structure there are three well-proportioned plain archways, the centre arch (the front part of which has been removed) for the entry, and those beside it opening into the guard-chambers. On each side of the gatehouse rise broad flights of steps and it is worth while to go up them to the first floor in order to see the slots for the portcullis and its counterbalance weight, and to admire the beautifully made flat arches which border the slots. West of the gatehouse, in the thickness of the curtain wall, is a small chamber overlooking the moat.

THE BAILEY, west side

Beyond the gate lies the bailey or courtyard. It is bounded on three sides by fragmentary ruins clinging to the curtain wall of the castle, but at one time these buildings were two or more storeys in height with the top of the curtain hidden by their parapets.

Chapel

To the left of the gatehouse lie the ruins of the chapel with a piscina in the usual position. It was rebuilt in the fourteenth century and though at one time separated from the curtain by a passage and stairs leading to the battlements it is now joined thereto by chimneys, built when the west part of the chapel was divided into two storeys of rooms. Near the west end of the chapel a small hole in the floor opens into a vault of unknown size and purpose.

West of the chapel, in the south-west corner of the bailey, are the main domestic buildings forming part of a palatial mansion stretching along the west curtain and bearing the marks of more than one reconstruction.

Great Hall

In the middle was the Great Hall, a room now 41 ft wide by about 57 ft long. This was originally built by Earl Henry, in the twelfth century, and the west wall of that date survives; but it was rebuilt in the thirteenth century as a nave with narrow side aisles. The foundations of the two pillars of the east aisle, and part of an arch springing from a corbel carved with nailhead ornament, alone remain of the aisle arcades. The west arcade was removed in the fourteenth century, and the east aisle, which had a Norman fireplace at its south end, was widened and its new wall was divided by buttresses into four parts, three with large tracery windows and the northernmost with an entrance door. The latter remains, but only the foundations of the aisle wall, one side of a window, and part of the jamb of another. A row of beam-sockets on

the inside of the curtain wall may mark the ceiling level of the first low aisleless Norman hall, or the gutter of the west aisle roof. Near the south end of the hall are two hearths, the earlier nearly on the centre-line of the thirteenth-century plan, the later near the present centre-line. At the south-west corner a door leads into a lobby in the thickness of the west curtain wall, and out of this a straight flight of stairs leads up and southwards to the solar on the first floor, while another door opens into the east side of the lobby from a cellar under the solar.

Cellar

The cellar was divided lengthwise by a row of three pillars which supported a longitudinal beam to carry its ceiling joists, and at the south end a pointed arch opens into a passage 3 feet wide in the thickness of the south curtain wall. The walls of this passage are still coated with many layers of lime-wash, the topmost of a dark red colour. The east end of the passage was blocked when the door was altered and heightened, but the west end opened by another plain-pointed archway into the ground floor of the Carrickfergus Tower (see p. 18).

Solar

The solar stood over the cellar, but only the west and south walls remain. A crooked passage in the south wall led to the first floor of the Carrickfergus Tower and a straight flight of stairs in the same wall led to the second floor. On the east side a flight of steps descended to the floor of the chapel, and at the south-west corner is a small room in the thickness of the west wall. In its present form this is obviously an insertion, and it may be the *calketa* or closet referred to in 1304. Near the north end of the west side of the solar is a fourteenth-century fireplace, and to the north of it there is an arched opening, forming a window recess over the staircase. The window is large and square-headed, and had two lights with wood frames externally: it is set back from the outer face of the wall. As it has a chaplet of foliage carved on the outside lunette above, it seems likely that there was a balcony here, giving a pleasant view over the river, and saved from risk of attack by the steep bank and by the river. It is noticeable that the only windows in the curtain are all on the west side of the castle: two high up in the kitchen, one in the cellar, one in the solar, and two in the staircase.

Tower

From the north-east corner of the cellar a door leads into the base of a tower about 19 ft square, awkwardly intruded into the south-east corner of the hall in the fifteenth century. On the ground floor it contains a vaulted L-shaped passage, its north end opening to the hall through a door with a modern 'Tudor' head, and its east to the bailey through a similar door in a wall of roughly built modern construction supporting the south-east corner of the tower. The north-east quarter of the ground floor of the tower contains masonry which may have supported a staircase or, less probably, may have been the lowest of a series of garderobes, for it has a shoot on its east side. From the south side of the tower a narrow passage of slight construction, but formerly three storeys high, led to the chapel already referred to. There was access to the upper storeys of the chapel passage, to the two upper storeys of the tower, and to the room over the solar from a turret staircase which ascends from the north-east corner of the solar, finally rising above the tower's flat roof to end in a graceful spire, prominent in all views of Warkworth. The newel post of the staircase runs up above the steps at the top to support an 'umbrella vault'. Little is left of the chambers in the upper part of this tower; both had recesses in their south walls and windows to the east, and the first-floor room was covered with a groined vault springing from carved corbels. Above

second-floor level the tower walls are thickened, below it they are so thin that a high vault was rather dangerous; and in fact, after it lost the support of the hall aisle, the whole north-eastern quarter of the tower collapsed. The great beauty of the lower room has led to its being described as a chapel and it may well have been a private oratory, but it retains no features to justify such an ascription, and its handsome doorway is planned as if the room was to be an ante-room to the solar.

The Buttery and Kitchen

At the north end of the hall are the lower stones of a pair of doorways placed in the centre of the space between the former aisle arcades, and dating from the reign of Henry III. One opened into the buttery and the other led through a pantry and a little hall or court to the kitchen and the larder. Only the lower parts of these remain, except where the curtain was their wall, but their plan can still be traced; they seem to have been rebuilt in the fourteenth or fifteenth century.

The Lion Tower

The Lion Tower covers the entrance to the hall near the north end of the east side, and forms a handsome porch with a Percy lion carved on the central boss of its groined vault, and well-moulded outer and inner archways. By means of a door on its north side and a wide corridor this porch also served as a south porch to the collegiate church, to which reference will be made later (see p. 21). After the college scheme had been abandoned this passage was partly blocked by a square stair-turret leading to the two upper storeys by means of which the fourth earl of Northumberland converted the porch into a tower. This tower is now called the Lion Tower from the Percy lion which adorns its eastern face. The lion has the crescent badge around its neck engraved with the word 'Esperance', and is surmounted by two much decayed shields of arms. The whole forms an imposing armorial group in very bold relief set in a large recessed tabernacle. The yellow stone used for the carvings, and for the carved parts of the tabernacle, differs from that used in other parts of the work and may have been brought, ready worked, from a distance. The staircase also served two upper storeys over the passage and over the pantry and buttery; in short, this entire range of buildings must have been three storeys high except the Great Hall and the kitchen. The upper room in the tower had a south window, and a garderobe on its north side. The lower appears to be the 'guest chamber' of 1574 and 'the littyll chamber over the gaytts where the erle lay hymself' referred to in 1538. Before the tower door lies 'the Blue Stone of Warkworth', the subject of a legend of buried treasure.

It is a tub-shaped block of hard grey stone and may have been brought to be carved into a font for the collegiate church.

A passage or slype separated the kitchen from the church: this passage leads to the bottom of the fosse which separated the motte from the bailey. At the foot of the motte are the foundations of a brew-house or a laundry, whose east end abutted on a building set against the east curtain wall. Under this a conduit carried off rain-water and other drainage from this lowest part of the castle enclosure.

West Postern

At the west end of the fosse is the west postern gate tower, built very early in the thirteenth century but strengthened and heightened at later dates. Beside it a spiral staircase rose to a portcullis chamber and to a chamber level with the battlements, and was lit by narrow loopholes, some of which remain. The gate opens on to a steep bank above the Coquet; the view over the wooded valley is well worthy of attention, as also the view to the right where the curtain wall, stiffened at the

bottom of the fosse by a magnificent early English buttress, ramps up the steep slope of the motte to the south-west angle of the great keep.

In order to see what is probably the only surviving fragment of the older keep, the visitor must climb the motte, and pass round the first projecting tower of the later keep. In the north part of the west wall is a pointed doorway and splayed plinth mostly hidden behind later facing.

It is worth while also to turn southwards from the postern and walk along the track outside the west curtain as far as the Carrickfergus Tower. First should be noticed the two great semi-circular relieving arches, on which is founded that part of the wall which retains the earth below the kitchen floor. Next comes a gap, filled with a wall of modern construction resting on early foundations, and then the windowless wall of the hall, the lower part of rude massive early Norman ashlar similar to the corresponding part of the east curtain. At the solar there is an abrupt change and the thirteenth-century masonry is almost as fresh as on the day it was hewn.

Carrickfergus Tower

At the angle stands the Carrickfergus Tower, so called from the Irish property of Robert Fitz-Roger. The west side collapsed in 1770, despite a deep buttress whose lower part remains. The tower was built in the early part of the thirteenth century. It is semi-octagonal and projects southwards and westwards from the curtain in a peculiar manner which suggests the former existence of a small sally port in the re-entrant angle. The ground floor was designed as a nest for cross-bow men and has a loophole in each of its sides. The first floor was used as an 'inner chamber' and in the fourteenth century its windows were enlarged and a fireplace introduced; its floor beams were supported on large carved corbels one of which formerly bore traces of the lion of the Percys. The third storey also was altered and provided with larger windows. A straight joint may be noted internally between the tower and the solar but externally the facing of the tower bonds with that of the south curtain wall.

THE KEEP

Re-entering the bailey by the postern the visitor may now turn to the best preserved part of the castle, the great keep of the early fifteenth century, which lacks only roofs and window glass to make it all habitable, as part of it still is.

The early arch already referred to, dislocated and crushed, suggests

the existence of an older keep, and at the same time explains why this had to be replaced. The present keep, a square of about 65 ft with its corners cut off and a large projecting bay in the centre of each face, is somewhat irregularly set out and this suggests the possibility of its having incorporated some masonry of the older keep without any previous clearance of the site.

The keep was much altered in the sixteenth century and externally has been considerably restored and refaced, particularly the south bay and the south-west quarter, which was roofed and made habitable, 1853–8, from designs by Anthony Salvin. And, as the new windows catch the eye before the old ones, the building gives an impression of lateness in date which is not justified by the details of the untouched masonry. Round the upper part of the keep are ranged shields upheld by demi-angels but so weathered that they cannot be deciphered. In the centre of the north projecting bay is a panel, supported on demi-lions, and carved with a magnificent Percy lion looking out over the ancient town of Warkworth and its encircling river.

Ground Floor

The entrance to the vaulted ground floor of the keep is by an entirely modern doorway in the south projecting bay. It opens into a vestibule, with a concealed pitfall below; on the right a porter's room opens out of the window embrasure, and opposite is a postern giving access to the wall-walk of the east curtain. Beyond the vestibule is the entrance hall. On either side of the entrance hall is a room; that on the right is said to have been the pages' dormitory and the other, which has complicated mural chambers, was probably intended either as a cloakroom for the use of visitors or as a guard-room in time of war, and the pit under its floor may have been used as a place of punishment. There is the bowl of a medieval font on the floor. Behind the entrance hall is a well for light, which extends from top to bottom of the keep, and from this long narrow store-rooms radiate to west, north and east, the northernmost giving access to a complicated arrangement of ducts by means of which the garderobe shafts from the upper chambers were flushed from a cistern filled by rain-water from the light well or 'lantern' as it was called. In the north-east corner of the keep is another store-room and in the north-west corner a goods reception room entered by a postern door and having stairs up to the kitchen, as also had the west store-room. The doors of these rooms have plain chamfered pointed arches and may be thirteenth-century stonework re-used. All the ground-floor rooms are covered by unribbed barrel vaults, most

of them of segmental pointed section. At the foot of the main staircase is a small chamber in the thickness of the wall.

First Floor

A wide and easy flight of stairs leads up to the first floor where all pretence of military character is abandoned, the rooms having large windows and the walls, though apparently 8 ft thick, being really two quite thin walls separated by ingeniously planned closets, cupboards and stairs. From the ante-room at the top of the principal staircase (its windows seem to have been much higher at one time) a small lobby leads into the Great Hall, 41 ft by 25 ft, and extending in height to the roof of the keep. At its east end was a dais with the unusual feature of a gallery over it entered from a door at second-floor level. The south side of the hall has two deeply recessed windows, one with a stone table or sideboard, the other now blocked by a fireplace inserted when the hall was altered in 1523 or 1533. All the windows had ventilating flues in their rear-arches.

At the north end of the dais a door leads into the chapel, the most ornate portion of the keep. The semi-octagonal eastern part is as lofty as the hall, but the ante-chapel was in two separate storeys, of which the upper formed a gallery or 'oriel', communicating with the gallery of the hall and overlooking the chapel. The lower storey is lit from the central area and has a lavatory discharging into it. On the south side of the chapel is a sacristy cleverly fitted into the thickness of the wall above a staircase which leads from the hall dais down to the cellars. It has an altar-like stone table, really a bulkhead over the staircase at its south end, and a dummy piscina, with undrained basin, in its west wall. In the chapel itself, piscina and sedilia are well preserved. The chapel windows are heavily moulded and differ from the other windows of the castle; they are grooved for lead glazing.

From the north side of the chapel a narrow passage leads to the solar and the inner chamber, both well-lit rooms with magnificent views towards the sea. A narrow passage leads from the solar direct to the Great Hall.

At the west end of the hall are three doorways, one to the buttery, one to the pantry, and the northernmost to a kitchen, 20 ft square, having two great fireplaces and rising to the full height of the building. The lower part of the masonry at the back of the fireplace is of rubble and may be part of the earlier keep, but it might also be restoration where the facing had been burnt away. A smaller one-storey kitchen with fireplace, oven, and set-pot, opens out of the large kitchen and each has a closet in the thickness of the wall.

The keep and the inner ward from the south

Second Floor

The second floor is reached by four separate staircases: one in the entrance lobby of the Great Hall serves a pair of rooms in the south-west part of the building; another in the western projecting bay connects the same suite with the servery so that meals could be brought up from the kitchen; a third staircase in the north projecting bay connects the private chambers with a pair of similar rooms above them facing northwards and eastwards; and a fourth, rising from the ante-chapel, led to the oriel or chapel chamber and also to the larger of the two north-east rooms. From this room a staircase in straight flights, and partly modern, rises past two storeys of small rooms and then in a turret serves three superimposed apartments in a look-out tower. These upper rooms are not open to the public.

THE CHURCH

The foundations of this church have already been noticed. It was apparently the intention of the first Percy earl to found a College of

Secular Canons within the castle. Certain buildings of the courtyard would have been devoted to the use of the college, and a new church was designed extending right across the bailey. Its foundations were laid early in the fifteenth century and, had it been completed, it would have been the most beautiful building in the castle and one of the finest of its size in the country. But it is very doubtful if the upper part was ever built; if it was, it has entirely disappeared, apart from the plinths and foundations of some of its pillars; but there is a small vaulted cellar under the north transept, a larger vault under the west half of the choir, and an arched passage running under the eastern part of the choir to afford communication between the bailey and the keep. The bailey was levelled up in later times, concealing the church altogether, and it would have been forgotten but for the vaults which were kept in use as stores.

The church was intended to have a nave with side aisles of four bays, a central tower on four ingeniously planned piers, aisleless transepts, and a choir of either two or three bays (foundations at the east end leave this uncertain) which were wider than those of the nave. The cellars were no doubt intended to form a treasury or a mausoleum; the awkward entrance suggests the former. In the larger chamber will be noticed an octagonal pillar, and parts of another, passing right through the graceful four-centred soffit of the vault. These were intended to give a direct bearing for two of the choir piers; they look older than the church and may have come from another building. In this cellar are preserved various pieces of wrought stone including bases and pillar and arch blocks of the church, and here may be seen the lower part and socket stone of a cross which stood in the market place of Warkworth from 1705 till 1830.

THE BAILEY, east side

East of the church is a tangle of foundations whose history is not easily made out. There may have been a tower here and certainly late in the thirteenth century a square building stood against the east curtain. This building in its turn was interfered with by the substructure of the church, but was restored in the sixteenth century after the church was abandoned.

Grey Mare's Tail Tower

Behind these ruins rises the flat back of the so-called 'Grey Mare's Tail' Tower. This is a semi-octagonal tower which projects eastwards from the curtain, and is contemporary with its upper part and battlements. The tower can be entered at ground-floor level by a crooked

passage whose north-east corner gives access to a two-storeyed double garderobe in the angle between tower and curtain. A flight of modern steps leads up to the floor of the tower. Its interior resembles that of the Carrickfergus Tower, having two tiers of short embrasures for arrow slits with timber beams binding the walls together, but externally the slits are continuous and fit awkwardly to the interior. Iron bars across the south and east embrasures recall that the tower was used latterly as a prison, and at the same time throw a doubt on the age of the external openings which are now too narrow to need bars. The outer part of the north-east embrasure is notable for its curious, archaic-looking carvings —a crucifix on each side, preparation for a third further out, and a group of human heads. These may be the work of a bored cross-bow man, or a Roman Catholic prisoner after the Pilgrimage of Grace. The carver had to crouch in an awkward attitude in the embrasure, but he seems to have been anxious that his work should not be noticed. The carving is well preserved as all the lower embrasures except those on the east and south had been built up and were only recently re-opened.

To the south of this tower within the curtain are the foundations of a long building, the lower part of which was divided into two halves and had a double doorway; it was either the Great Stable or the 'ox house' of the castle and had granaries over it. The lower part of the curtain wall here is of Norman work.

On the highest point of the courtyard, in front of the south half of the stables, lies the paved floor of the well-house which enclosed the castle well. The well is nearly 7 ft in diameter and has been cleared to a depth of 60 ft without reaching bottom. It is steyned with hewn stone except the lower part, which on its north side is cut out of solid rock. The water would be raised by a horse wheel or tread-mill, and the three channels which will be noticed in the floor doubtless led to conduits which conducted it to the principal places where water was in request, such as the kitchen, the brew-house, and the laundry.

South of the stables a postern gives access to the strip of nearly level ground cut off from the original bailey when the stone curtain wall was planned. The doorway had a pointed arch cut out of horizontal courses and its door was hung externally as at the west postern, but later the head was cut square and the door moved to the middle of the wall and made to open inwards.

From outside this postern there is a fine view of the long line of the curtain running northwards and broken first by a heavy fourteenth-century turret which supports a couple of garderobes on the level of the battlements; they have quatrefoiled openings to the outside and a pair of small arches towards the parapet walk. The curtain is next

interrupted by the semi-octagonal Grey Mare's Tail Tower whose long arrow slits are neatly connected to its heavy sloping base. They have in parts a rather 'restored' appearance, and it is recorded that the tower was in ruins in 1609, but the grey stone of which the slits are made differs from that used elsewhere at Warkworth; it may be a harder stone and original work. On both the curtain and the tower the thirteenth-century battlements are well preserved, and the holes for beams and struts to support hoardings already referred to may be clearly seen. North of this tower the curtain heads for the keep and is stiffened at the foot of the mount by a deep buttress similar in plan but not in elevation to that beside the west postern.

Careful examination of the curtain south of the Grey Mare's Tail reveals the outlines of the battlements of the Norman wall with the thirteenth-century addition above. Some of the rude, wide-jointed ashlar in the lower courses may perhaps represent a still earlier wall on this line.

Amble or Montagu Tower

At the south-east corner of the bailey is the Amble or Montagu Tower, a square tower believed to have been named or re-named after John Neville, Lord Montagu, earl of Northumberland, who was granted the castle of Warkworth in 1464. The tower is four storeys high with one room on each floor; the upper floors have fireplaces and finely detailed two-light windows, and were no doubt lodgings or bed-chambers. It is noteworthy that the tower contains none of the 'Tudor' or four-centred arches which are common on the west and north sides of the courtyard. South-west of the tower may be seen traces of two mural staircases which successively gave access to the tower and the parapet walk of the south curtain. Apparently the curtain wall had become insecure, probably after the castle was bombarded in 1405 or because its foundations were too near the edge of the ditch. It was taken down in 1534 and rebuilt with three broad buttresses, one containing a staircase, but was not battlemented till 1538; it had been half taken down again before 1728, and *c.* 1750 it was taken down to ground level. Inside the present modern wall there are complex and massive foundations of two successive buildings set against the curtain. Both appear to be of thirteenth-century date and they were demolished when the curtain was rebuilt in 1534.

Appendix

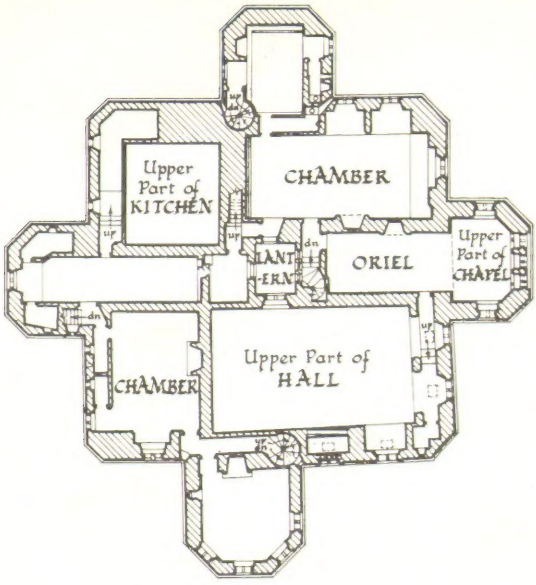
MASON'S MARKS

Warkworth Castle exhibits an unusually rich collection of mason's marks which the visitor will find it interesting to notice. It will be observed that some popular marks appear on nearly all parts of the work without respect to date; while others, such as the pentagrams on the keep, the capital E (a mark of very ancient origin) on the foundations east of the gatehouse, and the zigzag on a stem with a slanting cross-stroke on the collegiate church, are peculiar to different parts of the work. A selection of the marks, collected by Colonel Reavell, was published in Volume V of the County History of Northumberland, a work to which the authors of this guide are much indebted for historical references, and which contains a very well illustrated description of the castle.

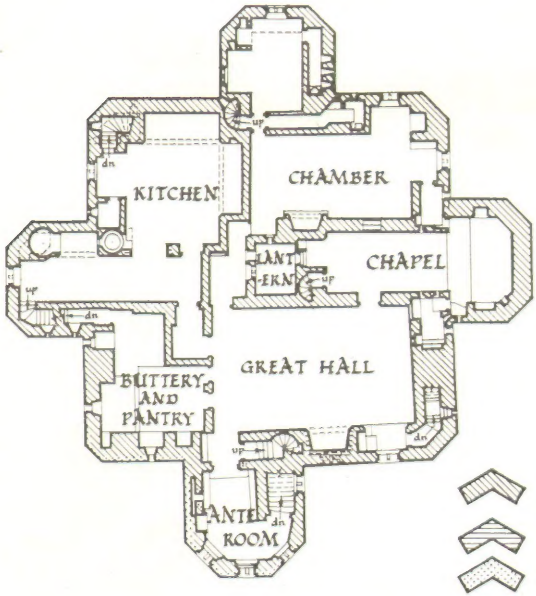
Visitors to the castle should also visit the Hermitage, half a mile upstream on the opposite bank of the river. Admission fee includes passage by boat. A guide-pamphlet is on sale.
Visitors should also see Warkworth Old Bridge, at the north end of the village, one of the finest medieval bridges in the country.

Glossary

BAILEY	Courtyard or ward.
CORBEL	A projection from a wall, intended to support a weight.
CURTAIN	The wall enclosing a courtyard.
DRAWBRIDGE	A wooden bridge, which can be raised towards a gateway by means of chains or ropes attached to its outer end.
EMBRASURE	A splayed opening in a wall for a window.
GARDEROBE	Latrine
HALL	The principal room in a medieval house.
HOARDS	Also Hourds. Covered wooden galleries attached to the top of the external wall of a castle for defence of the base of the wall. They were supported on a wooden bracket, the horizontal holes for which may sometimes be seen.
KEEP	Great tower or donjon; normally used of eleventh- and twelfth-century buildings, but sometimes applied loosely to those of later date.
MACHICOLATION	An opening between corbels of a parapet or in a floor, such as a vault of a gateway, through which a garrison could assail besiegers with missiles.
MOTTE	A castle mound of earth or turf (eleventh and twelfth centuries).
PISCINA	Small basin in wall-niche beside altar, for washing sacramental vessels.
PORTCULLIS	An iron-shod wooden grille suspended by chains in grooves in front of a gate, and let down to ground level in times of necessity.
POSTERN	A back door.
QUATREFOILED	In the form of four leaves.
SCREENS	Wooden partition at the lower or kitchen end of a hall. Between it and the kitchen, etc., lay the screens passage.
SEDILIA	Stone seats for officiating clergy.
SLIT	Arrow slit; a narrow opening in a wall for discharge of arrows and admittance of light.
SOLAR	A sitting-room, adjacent to the upper end of a hall.
WARD	Courtyard or bailey.



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



Late 14th and Early 15th Century
16th Century
Modern

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Scale of feet

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12th Century
1191 – 1214
1249 – 1310
Early 14th Century
Late 14th & Early 15th Century
Late 15th Century
16th Century
Modern
Uncertain, probably 14th Century
Undercroft of Church

N

POSTERN
GOODS HALL
up to Kitchen
LARDER & TANK ROOM
WINE CELLAR
LANTERN
WINE CELLAR
Up to Hall
Up to Buttery
BEER CELLAR
GUARD ROOM
ENTRANCE HALL
PAGES' ROOM
Pit under
up
Terrace
Pit under
Later Wall on 13th Century Foundation
Modern Steps
WEST POSTERN TOWER
BREW HOUSE or LAUNDRY
INNER WARD
Oven
KITCHEN
Slype
Vault Under
CHURCH
Vault Under
Passage Under
GREY MARE'S TAIL TOWER
LARDER
BUTTERY
PANTRY
LION TOWER
HALL
AISLE
2nd Hearth
1st Hearth
Norman Fireplace
STABLES
& etc
OUTER WARD
WELL HOUSE
TURRET
EAST POSTERN
TOWER
SOLAR
Cellar Under
Pit Under
CHAPEL
Piscina
GREAT GATE TOWER
AMBLE or MONTAGU TOWER
CARRICKFERGUS TOWER
GUARD ROOM
GUARD ROOM
Later Wall on 13th Century Foundation
Bridge

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Scale of feet

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