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# DIRLETON CASTLE

EAST LOTHIAN

Official Guide

Price One Shilling

DIRLETON CASTLE stands in the centre of Dirleton Village on the Edinburgh-North Berwick Road. A frequent 'bus service operates from Edinburgh.

*Hours of Opening—*

April to September: weekdays 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Sundays 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.

October to March: weekdays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sundays 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

*Admission Charge—*

Adult 6d. Child 3d.

# DIRLETON CASTLE

## EAST LOTHIAN

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## History

### *Lands of the Barony*

IN the north of East Lothian lie the lands of the barony of Dirleton. They consist of an extensive tract of fertile loam and sandy soil and are bounded on the north by the Firth of Forth. From earliest times, the coastal region, now for the most part buried under blown sand, was inhabited and cultivated. Before 1170, a church, dedicated to Saint Andrew, was built at Gullane on the western limit of the lands. To the north of Dirleton, close to the sea, stood the manor of Eilbotle, a frequent resort of the Scottish Kings as late as the time of Malcolm IV. Another ancient and fortified dwelling, referred to in old charters as the *mons castris vocat* (us) *Tarbet*, was situated on the inshore island of Fidra, which is within the barony.

### *The De Vaux Family*

Some time during the 12th century, these lands were acquired by a de Vaux (or Vallibus), one of the wealthy Anglo-Normans who had come to Scotland under the patronage of King David (1124-1153). The first-known owner of the barony was William de Vaux, a favourite of King William the Lion (1165-1214). About 1220 this baron gave the island of Fidra, or Eilbotle as it was then called, to the White Canons of Dryburgh. He was succeeded by John de Vaux, who was seneschal to Marie de Coucy, the consort of King Alexander II (1214-1249). The next baron was Alexander, a son of John, and, like his father, he continued to enjoy the lands of Dirleton and Gullane as well as other lands in the Constabulary of Haddington, as East Lothian was then called. Alexander's son, John, was a loyal supporter of Scotland during the Wars of Independence, and consequently suffered great losses. On his death, his son, William de Vaux, succeeded him. During the reign of King David II (1329-1371), a daughter of this last-named baron married John Halyburton, the second son of Sir Adam Halyburton of Halyburton.

For the erection of his house-of-defence, the first baron de Vaux chose a small craggy knoll at the eastern end of a long low ridge of gently rising ground. This site was conveniently situated for dominating the lands of his fief. It adjoined the road leading to North Berwick where the Cistercian convent and the pilgrim's hospice supplied accommodation for travellers going by ferry to Fife, and for pilgrims on their way to the shrine of Scotland's patron saint at St. Andrews.

The first stronghold was of the earth and timber type. It consisted of an elevated tower of wood and other buildings of wattle and daub, all of which were surrounded by a ditch and earthworks crested by wooden palisades. During the reign of King Alexander III (1249-1286), the last of the "Kings of Peace," stone-built castles began to replace those of wooden construction. This architectural progress in castle-building was, however, very gradual and, in Scotland, many of the earlier type remained until towards the end of the 15th century. That the Castle of Dirleton was rebuilt in stone at an early period may have been due to the fact that good freestone was obtainable from a quarry near Gullane, on the western boundary of the baron's domain. This stone was used in the thirteenth-century building operations at the Convent of North Berwick, and masons working there and at the quarry may have been enrolled for the building of the castle.

Additional strength was given to the small plateau on its north, west, and south sides, by quarrying the rock-faces, and improving the fosse which appears almost to have surrounded it. The castle now consisted of a group of three towers, which still exist, at the south-west corner, and two large round towers on the eastern flank, one being at the south-east corner and the other at the north-east. All the towers were connected by a curtain wall which on the north and west sides was carried round the edge of the plateau. The area within the castle walls was called the "Ward," or to use the Scottish term, the "Close." The walls of this building were massive and faced externally with hewn ashlar, and were possibly finished at the wall-head with wooden projecting galleries. Within, the chambers and passages were ceiled with stone vaults of rib-and-panel character, the rib construction being of the "false" type. This massively constructed castle, built by Royal licence, was founded on the solid rock. It was one of the most formidable fortresses of its time in Scotland, and one which the stone-throwing engines of attack were not expected to overcome.

#### *The Castle during the Wars of Independence*

When Edward I of England invaded Scotland in 1298, he detailed a force under the command of Anthony de Beck, the Palatine Bishop of Durham, to lay siege to the castle. At first the attacks failed owing to the lack of suitable siege pieces and food for the soldiers. In July 1298, after the English had received provisions and powerful stone-casting mangonels and catapults, the castle was forced to surrender. The garrison, however, were allowed to go free with their lives and property.

Robert de Mandlee was governor of the Castle of Dirleton for Edward I in 1299. It appears that in 1306, Aymer de Valence was directed to seize the castle with all its appurtenances, lands and

tenements, and all the goods and chattels found there. The castle was then to be furnished with munition and delivered to the brother of John de Kyngeston. The place continued to be garrisoned by the English until 1311, and during these years a certain amount of repair work was carried out on the building. When it once more fell into Scottish hands, parts of the castle, in accordance with Bruce's policy, would in all probability be cast down. This would account for the demolition of the great round tower, which occupied the south-east angle, and the parts of the curtain walls directly connected with it.

Following upon the death of King Robert the Bruce, Scotland was thrown into disorder time and again by English intrigues. The championing of Edward Balliol by the English King wellnigh brought disaster to all that the Bruce had achieved. During the four years of Balliol's reign (1292-1296) Gilbert Talbot held the barony of Dirleton for him. The castle was seized in 1363 by William, Earl of Douglas, as a first step in a revolt against King David II (1329-1371) for misappropriation of public money; prior to this event it was in Crown hands.

#### *The Halyburtons*

John Halyburton who married the heiress of the lands of Dirleton was killed at the battle of Nisbet in 1355. His son, John, who in 1382 had obtained a protection for the castle and barony of "Drylton" from Richard II of England, headed a successful expedition into England in 1402. This baron, who in a charter dated 1382 is styled "dominus de Dirleton," married Margaret, daughter and co-heiress of Sir John Cameron of Ballegarno, and about 1402 their son Walter married Isobel, one of the daughters of the Duke of Albany. The next heir was Sir Walter Halyburton. He was one of the hostages for the ransom of King James I (1406-1437), and was Lord High Treasurer in 1438. He married Mary, daughter of "Blak Archibald," 3rd Earl of Douglas and widow of David, Duke of Rothesay.

John, Sir Walter's son, was according to *The Scots Peerage* the first Lord Halyburton of Dirleton. He was succeeded in turn by his sons, Patrick and George. The latter was killed at the battle of Sauchieburn where his son was also killed. James the fourth Lord Halyburton, the grandson of the third lord, was succeeded by Patrick, the fifth and last Lord Halyburton, who died in 1505, leaving three daughters, who were co-heiresses of the Dirleton estate. About 1515, his eldest daughter, Jonet, Baroness of Halyburton and Dirleton married William, the second Lord Ruthven, Provost of Perth, an Extraordinary Lord of Session and Keeper of the Privy Seal.

On the Halyburtons assuming the ownership of the castle, extensive works of consolidation and reconstruction were carried out. When

the partial destruction of the castle was effected much of its masonry had been cast into the fosse. The debris was left lying and various parts of the ditch were completely filled in, thus forming a new ground level at the base of the new defensive walls. The existing entry and its fore-work, with rooms behind, substituted the original entry, and over the site of the south-east tower, within massive walls, was placed a high-vaulted kitchen. To the north was constructed a long waggon vaulted cellar or casemate with a dining-hall above it. This part of the castle abutted the remains of the north-east tower which appears to have been rebuilt in the form of an octagon. A jamb was added to the tower. Later on, probably in the first Lord Halyburton's time, this tower was demolished and the line of the eastern façade extended northward, partly on the line of the original fosse. This extension gave accommodation at its lowest level for a prison and pit; at the close level, for a chapel, and at a yet higher level, for the dais chamber connected with the great hall and a storey above. The upper part of the largest of the existing thirteenth-century towers appears to have been consolidated at this time. The wall-tops of the towers and curtain walls of the castle were probably remodelled and provided, where possible, with gun platforms to suit the weapons introduced by the invention of gunpowder. There does not seem to have been a corbel course to carry the parapet wall, the walls being sufficiently wide to carry the walk. In the Halyburton building, the walls are for the most part composed of a local whinstone, although old freestone masonry from the ruins of the early buildings has been worked in just as it came to the hands of the masons. New quarried freestone from the Gullane district was, however, used for the corner stones, door and window rybats<sup>1</sup> and other moulded details. The Halyburton restoration of the Castle of Dirleton was begun towards the end of the fourteenth century. It was carried on throughout the following century. There is documentary evidence that building was going on in 1505, for, in September of that year, King James IV (1488-1513) visited the castle and, while there, gave the masons and the workmen drink-silver to the sum of twenty-eight shillings. The construction in question was probably the rectangular block at the north side of the close.

#### *The Ruthvens*

In 1515 one-third of the barony of Dirleton, and its castle, passed into the hands of the Ruthvens. The son of the second Lord Ruthven and Jonet Halyburton was Patrick, the third Lord Ruthven. He was one of the leading nobles who supported the Reformers during the troubled times of Queen Mary's reign. A staunch adherent of Darnley,

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<sup>1</sup> Dressed stone side pieces.

he was the principal participant in the murder of the Queen's favourite, Riccio, at Holyroodhouse in March 1566. In this affair, his son, William, who succeeded him, was also implicated. Both fled to England, where the father died at Newcastle the same year and the heir returned to Scotland after receiving the Royal pardon.

#### *The Raid of Ruthven*

William the fourth Lord Ruthven was created Earl of Gowrie in 1581. He was one of those who waited on Queen Mary at the Castle of Loch Leven when she signed her resignation of the Crown. He voted against the Queen's divorce, and in 1571 was Treasurer for Scotland during the minority of King James VI. Gowrie engineered and carried out "the Raid of Ruthven," an important event in Scottish history. The young King when returning from a hunting expedition in the Highlands was invited to the Earl's House of Ruthven near Perth. Here he was detained and the power assumed by Gowrie and his confederates for the next ten months in defiance of the Earl of Arran, under whose influence the King had been. When King James at last found freedom, he once more came under the power of Arran. A Royal Proclamation was made, offering free pardon to Gowrie and his faction. The Earl again fell into disfavour and was beheaded at Stirling in May 1585, on account of being implicated in a plot to seize the Castle of Stirling.

For two years Lady Dorothea, the Earl's widow, with her five sons and ten daughters, was left in poverty. Immediately upon her husband's execution, she surrendered the Castle of Dirleton to the King, who, a month later, granted it with the lands to the Earl of Arran. From Calderwood's *History of the Kirk of Scotland* we learn how Arran enjoyed his ill-gotten possession. He records that in 1585 "the pest brake in Edinburgh the 1st May, in Flesh Mercat Close, by the infection of a woman, who had beene in Sanct Johnstoun where the plague was. The King road the same day to Dirleton to a sumptuous bankett prepared by the Erle of Arran. The King remained at Dirleton twelve days. There were in companie with him Arran, Sir Robert Melvill, Secretar Matlane, Phairnihurst, Colonel Stewart, and the Maister of Gray. They passed the time with the play of Robinhood. After the bankett was ended, Arran fell deidlie sicke." Within a short time afterwards, Arran and his family were commanded by the King to remain continually at Dirleton and not to venture within twelve Scots miles of the Court.

#### *The Gowrie Conspiracy*

In 1586, the castle and lands were restored to Lady Dorothea, and she was residing at Dirleton when another great tragedy in her life

occurred. On the 6th August 1600, her two eldest surviving sons, John the third and last Earl of Gowrie, and Alexander Ruthven, were killed within the Earl's town house at Perth in an alleged attempt on the life of the King, which, still shrouded in mystery, is known as "The Gowrie Conspiracy."<sup>1</sup> The bodies of the two Ruthvens were carried to Edinburgh where, after certain judicial formalities, their whole estate, real and personal, was forfeited and annexed to the Crown, and their names, memory, and dignity were extinguished. Thereafter the bodies of these unfortunate young men were taken to the public Cross of Edinburgh and there hanged, drawn, and quartered. Their heads and quarters were publicly exposed in Edinburgh, Perth, Dundee and Stirling. Not content with the doom pronounced on the dead Earl and his brother, The Lords and Estates of Parliament ordered the name of Ruthven to be abolished and their surviving brethren to be incapable of succeeding to or holding any offices, honours, or possessions.

As soon as the news of the tragedy reached their mother, she successfully accomplished the escape of her two surviving sons to England. These young men were attending the schools in Edinburgh. They at once rode to Dirleton, from whence they hastened by foot without "money, horse or apparel" to Berwick-upon-Tweed, where they were received on 10th August by the Governor, who "considering the pitiful and lamentable case of the distressed good Countess" helped them on their way to Cambridge. Half an hour after the lads had made their departure from Dirleton, the King's Herald, accompanied by horsemen, arrived to apprehend the Ruthvens. He presented himself at the castle and, according to the formalities of the age, displayed his coat of arms, had the trumpet sounded, and then several times gave six knocks on the entrance door. Although the estate was forfeited and the lands given to Sir Thomas Erskine of Gogar who was with the King at the House of Gowrie and slew Alexander Ruthven, the widowed Countess was permitted to reside at the castle.

#### *Ruthven Building*

As soon as the Ruthvens had acquired the Castle of Dirleton, they reorganised the residential quarters which were over the main entry and to the west of it. Part of the thirteenth-century work was taken down and a three-storeyed addition, conforming more to the plan of a domestic residence, was erected. This latter building, which was in the style of the Scottish early classic renaissance, was served by two turnpike stairs, one of which connected with rooms of the older

<sup>1</sup> One of the conspirators, Robert Logan of Restalrig, made the estate of Dirleton the price of his co-operation. Logan esteemed the place to be "the pleasantest dwelling in Scotland."



THE CASTLE FROM THE SOUTH-WEST



THE FOREWORK OF THE ENTRANCE (EARLY 14th CENTURY)

building. The new roof and the reorganised roofs had crow-stepped gables and were slated. The windows were protected by external cage-grilles and furnished with shot-holes for handguns. There were fixed leaded lights in the upper parts and oak shutters in the lower parts. Within, the walls were plastered and the ceiling of the first and second storeys were of wood and their respective surfaces were probably decorated with patterns applied in tempera paint. On the first storey the flooring was of hard-baked tiles,<sup>1</sup> ornamented with indented heraldic and other patterns and green glaze. When the addition was made, the rooms of the adjoining early towers were replastered. Originally the walls and the vaulted ceilings of these chambers were treated with colour decorations applied in a thin skin of lime plaster. A fragment of a vault-rib showing chevron pattern in white and red was recovered from the moat when an examination pit was sunk in front of the stump of the demolished south-east tower. The doors of all periods were of oak and studded with nails. Each was furnished with a drawbar which, when not in use, was housed in a chase in the wall.

#### *Furnishings and Garden*

In the early years of the castle the furnishings were scanty, and probably consisted of a few wooden beds, chests, benches, stools and trestle tables. No doubt in later times, tapestries from France and Flanders would adorn the walls of the principal apartments and possibly the Earl of Gowrie would be the possessor of a few pictures as he was a patron of the Arts. This Earl was one of Scotland's pioneers in arboriculture, and doubtless it was he who devised and laid out the terraced garden beneath the castle craig, planting it with holly and yew in formal settings. For many years the garth has been used as a bowling green, but at first it probably had a raised central feature called a "knot." This form of garden planning was in vogue in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. King James V formed a knot garden in Stirling Castle, and King James VI made a larger one in the King's Park below this castle. To the north-east of the Castle of Dirleton and close to it stands an arched gateway of sixteenth-century date. This is the sole remaining fragment of the wall that enclosed the barmkyn which surrounded the castle and its garden and contained the barn, stables, etc. The "castlegait" or approach road to the drawbridge and the main entry was through this arch. Westward from this gateway is the dovecot furnished inside with hundreds of stone nesting-boxes, and, like the gateway, it belongs to the Ruthven period.

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<sup>1</sup> For an account of these, see *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, Vol. lxxiii, pp. 281 to 310.

Sir Thomas Erskine was created by King James VI Lord Dirleton, Viscount Fenton and Earl of Kellie. He acquired the other two-thirds of the barony from the descendants of the Halyburton co-heiresses and thus the barony was restored to its original extent. Sir Thomas' son, Alexander, sold the lands in 1625 to Sir James Douglas, brother of the Earl of Angus, who in turn sold them for £100,000 to Alexander Morieson of Prestongrange, one of the Senators of the College of Justice. In 1631 the lands again changed hands when they were purchased by James Maxwell who, in the previous year, had acquired the lands of Innerwick. A staunch loyalist and a man of enterprise, Maxwell with others was granted trading rights on the west coast of Africa in 1634, and in 1636 the same men obtained a lease of all the minerals in Scotland for twenty-one years. Later they obtained a charter, giving them the right to erect a lighthouse on the Isle of May and to exact a duty of 10s. a ton on Scottish and 4s. a ton on English ships. In 1646, Maxwell was created Earl of Dirleton, Lord Fenton of Eilbotle. He was succeeded by his daughter who married an Englishman, Viscount Cranborn. Her son, James, who, on the death of his grandfather in 1668, became Lord Salisbury, acquiesced in the sale of Dirleton to Sir John Nisbet in 1663.

#### *The Dirleton Witches*

In June 1649, some miserable wretches, who confessed to the crime of witchcraft, were imprisoned in the castle. Their depositions were taken in the presence of the Rev. John Mackgill, Minister of the Parish and his elders, when the Devil's marks were discovered on each by a witchfinder called John Kincaid. The depositions were sent to the Presbytery at Haddington in August, and, thereafter, on the orders of The Estates of Parliament, these unfortunate men and women were strangled and burned at the stake. To all of them the Devil had presented himself "in liknes of a greate blak man" and as such he had attended a "Meiting on the green of Dirleton," with "many others of his servandis forcand James Nicolsonis dur."

#### *Cromwell and the Moss-Troopers*

The castle appears for the last time in the annals of Scottish history in 1650. When the army of Cromwell controlled the district, bands of Royalist horsemen located themselves in such strongholds as the Castles of Innerwick, Tantallon, and Dirleton. From these strong points they attacked the lines of communication of the Protector's army, capturing men, munitions, and provisions. In the contemporary English state papers these men are referred to as "Moss troopers." The perpetrations of the Tantallon and Dirleton Moss troopers

caused both of the castles to be besieged by the Commonwealth soldiers. On 9th November the Castle of Dirleton was attacked. This episode is described thus in a letter of the time:—"That G. [General] Monk, with a party of 1600 was sent to take Derlington House, a nest of Moss-troopers who killed many souldiers of the Army. That M.G. [Major-General] Lambert came before the House and cast up Batteries the same night, so that their great Guns were ready to play the next morning by the Break of Day. That their great shot played, and that the fourth shot of their mortar-piece tore the inner Gate, beat down the Draw-bridge into the Moat, and killed the Lieutenant of the Moss-troopers, so that they called for Quarter, which would not be given them, nor would they agree to surrender to Mercy, but upon Reverence, which was consented unto. That they took the Governour; and the Captain of the Moss-Troopers and 60 souldiers. That two of the most notorious of them and the Captain were shot to death upon the Place. They took in it many Arms, 60 Horse which they had taken from the English, and released ten English prisoners, and demolished the House." Tantallon was captured three months later after a twelve days' siege. Great numbers of Cromwellian soldiers succumbed to "the flix" and many were shipped back to England. The Castle of Dirleton was used as a hospital for the sick of Colonel Daniel's regiment.

For a brief period during the short régime of the commonwealth, the castle and lands were granted to Sir Robert Fletcher, but they were returned to the Countess of Dirleton after June 1650. Finally Sir John Nisbet, who was descended from the Nisbets of that ilk, a Berwickshire family, and was Lord-Advocate under Charles II, purchased the lands of Dirleton in 1663. He built a new mansion-house at Archerfield, a short distance to the north-west of the Castle or old house of Dirleton. The castle is still in the ownership of representatives of his family, though the control of the ruin and its pleasance is vested in the care of the Commissioners of H.M. Works. The ruin has been cleared of the deadly embrace of the treacherous ivy which for years enveloped it, and its walls have been consolidated for preservation.

### *Description*

EACH building period of the castle has its own distinctive features, and a few mason's marks appear on all periods of masonry. In that of the de Vaux (13th century) the mason work is freestone ashlar built in courses. The chambers are ceiled with rib-vaulting and the passages have pointed segmental ribbed arches. The doorways have

pointed arch-heads. In the outer walls there were windows with pointed arched-heads and tall window-slits which were used by bowmen in times of siege. These slits are "salmon-tailed" at top and bottom.

In the Halyburton building (late 14th and 15th century) the mason work is rubble, the stone being massive and of a volcanic rock which apparently was obtained on the site. The windows are square-headed and have freestone dressings, the larger ones being boldly moulded on the outside. The doorways are round-arched or square-headed. When vaulting is used it is of the waggon or barrel type. The freestone corners are of considerable size.

The Ruthven building (16th century) consists of mason work similar to the above, but the stones used are smaller and old dressed freestone from the demolished thirteenth-century walls has been used to a certain extent. Exterior elevations have moulded string and wall-head courses of freestone. The windows are square-headed, have freestone dressings and loops for handguns under the sills. The doorways are square-headed but the larger openings have semi-circular heads. Barrel-vaulting is used in the ground-floor cellars and timber ceilings in the upper floors. The chimneys are tall and narrow and the gables crow-stepped.

#### *West Façade*

By studying the castle from the outside, it is easier to understand the plan with its somewhat complicated internal arrangement. The west curtain wall, which crested the crag for a considerable distance, has been reduced to a mere foundation. Sufficient, however, is left to suggest the layout, and to indicate that the remains are those of walls of different periods dating from the thirteenth century. The flight of steps (16th century) leads to an entrance in the curtain, but only the threshold and a jamb-stone now remain of the doorway. The lower part of the building immediately to the south belongs to the de Vaux period, and the upper part with the windows and the gable is Ruthven building. In the picturesque towers grouped on the rock at the southern end of the west façade the early mason work is fully represented. The towers now stand two storeys high and some of their window-slits have been built up. A group of garderobe shafts forms the feature of the curtain between the towers.

#### *South Façade*

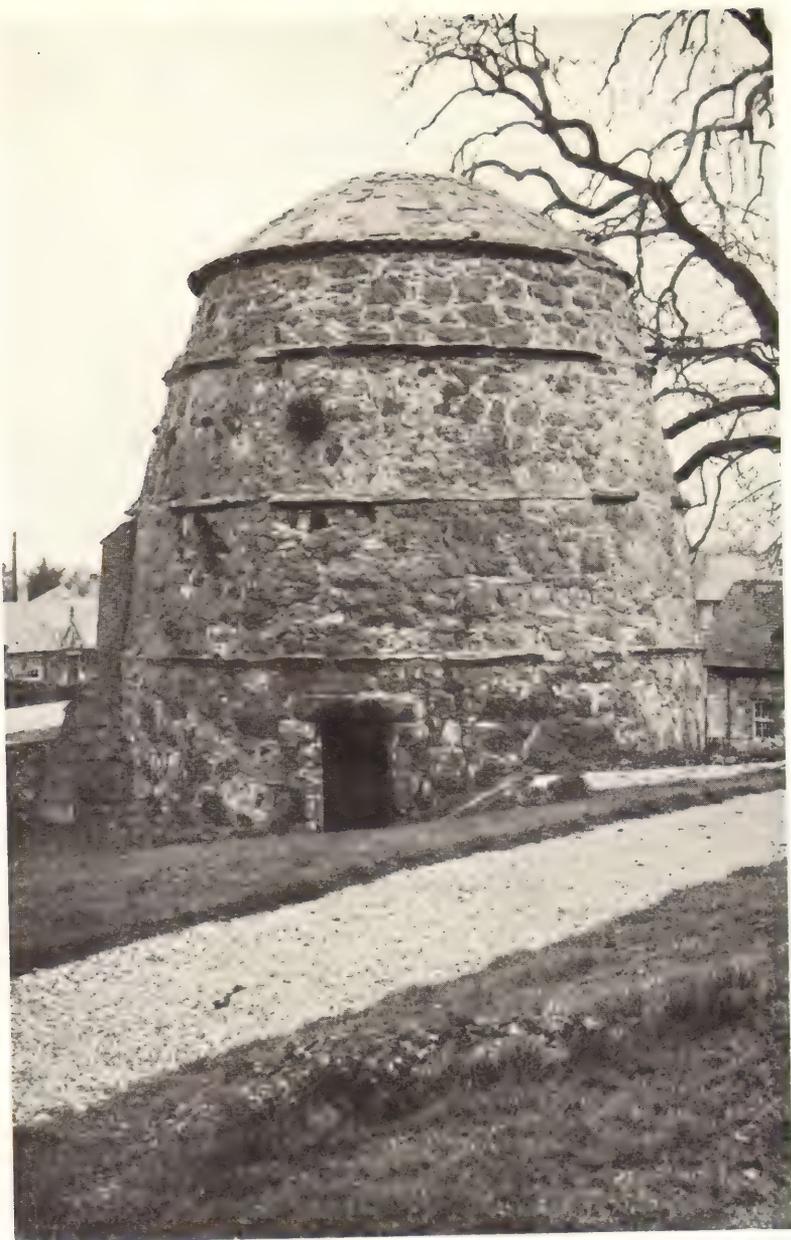
The south elevation is the "fore-face" of the castle. Here only the remains of the fosse or moat are to be seen. In the centre of this façade is the forework of the main entry, built in the Halyburton period. It consists of two massive jambs, projecting outwards from



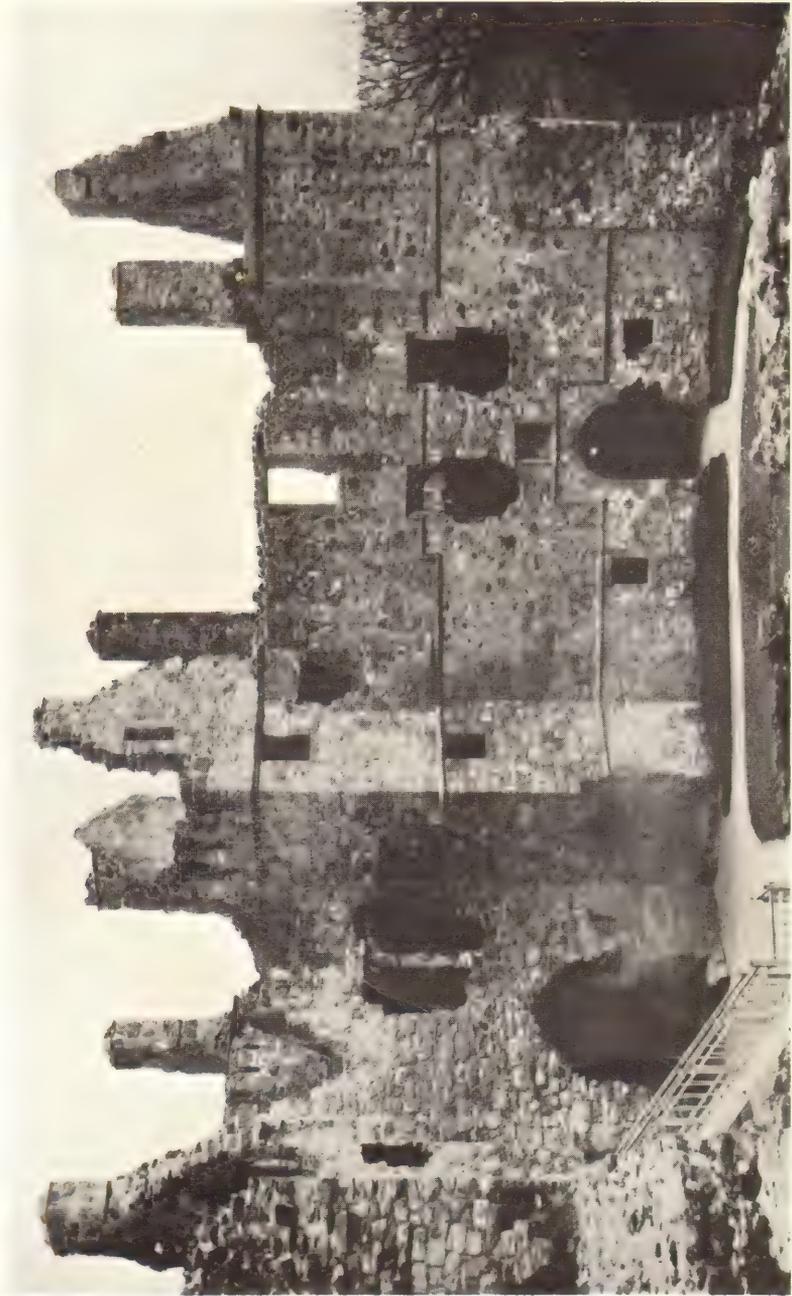
THE GREAT DRUM TOWER (13th CENTURY)



THE SOUTHERN CORNER: 16th CENTURY RUTHVEN BUILDING  
AND BASE OF 13th CENTURY TOWER



THE DOVECOTE (16th CENTURY)



THE "WARD" OR "CLOSE," SHOWING THE 16th CENTURY RUTHVEN BUILDING

the curtain and linked together by a bridge constructed with an obtusely pointed arch, the entrance gateway being recessed between the jambs. At the arch level the jambs are corbelled out to carry small circular turrets. The corbelling is machicolated except on the west side of the western jamb, where it surmounts a projecting garderobe. The turrets have been roofed with conical slated roofs, and the chambers which they contained were lighted by small windows. Between the turrets was a space, at first forming a platform and later incorporated into an apartment where the windlass for working the drawbridge was housed. The outer doorway of the entry is seven feet wide and its sill set between the jambs, sloped downwards and outwards. Behind the sill and immediately under the doorway is a pit, nine feet square by nine feet deep.

#### *The Drawbridge*

The drawbridge, which occupied the site of the existing oak bridge, was of the counterbalance type, and was pivoted just without the gate. When raised it occupied an almost vertical position between the jambs of the forework, the inner end dropping into the pit. When lowered, the outer end rested on a bridge carried up from the fosse, the drawbridge being level with the floor of the entry. On the landward side it was connected with the castle gait (as the road leading up to the castle was called) by an earthen ramp and an inclined timber bridge. On the south side the present ground level of the fosse is higher than it was in the time when the castle was inhabited. At a later period the arrangement of the drawbridge was altered. It was brought forward and hinged in line with the full projection of the jambs, while a new timber bridge was erected on stone arches, the stumps of which are still to be seen. The space between the jambs was decked with timber at a higher level than the original level of the trance and the pit was filled in. Above the arched head of the gateway the wall is corbelled out. In it there is a small window formerly protected by a massive iron grille, and over this window is a recess which originally contained the Halyburton coat of arms with a sculptured "leaf and stem" surround. This carving was destroyed when the present moulded frame was inserted to contain the Ruthven coat of arms, which has now disappeared.

In the west of the forework is the great round tower, a dominating feature of the castle. It is two storeys high and furnished with window-slits in the lower part. The upper storey had arched windows but these were superseded in later times by the present square-headed variety. It is apparent from the mason work that the tower was considerably restored during the thirteenth century. At a later period the upper part has been rebuilt and, judging from the vast amount of soil

removed during the consolidation work by the Ancient Monuments Department, it would appear that the tower-head formed a stance for cannon which were protected by gabions and ramparts of turf. There have been projecting garderobes on the curtain to the west of the tower, but these seem to have been removed during the early repairs on the castle. Between the tower and the forework the curtain is of the de Vaux period, and it contains a small postern doorway and early window-slits. The window at the top with the handgun-loop is, however, a Ruthven addition.

#### *East Façade*

East of the forework and projecting into the moat is the stump of the south-east tower. This belongs to the thirteenth-century castle, and possibly a small area of ashlar lying close up to the forework is also of this period. The small crosslet-loop in the vicinity is of fourteenth-century character, but the extensive and plain wall-face with three windows, which had deep cavetto external mouldings, is Halyburton building.

The east façade is a massive curtain, unbroken, except by two large windows which lighted the great hall on the first floor. The lower part of this wall was built against the older curtain now lying within it. It is constructed within the early moat which has long since been filled in and obliterated.

When it was first erected the Halyburton curtain abutted at its northern end an octagonal tower and jamb. This tower appears to have been an early rebuilding on the base of a circular one. In the fifteenth century the tower and its jamb were demolished and the line of the curtain was extended northward. This addition was carried over part of the moat on the north side, leaving no trace of this early defensive feature.

#### *North Façade*

The reduced north wall of this Halyburton building is broken only by two large windows with bold exterior mouldings of a different character from those of the earlier Halyburton work. Beneath the lower of these is a narrow slit, one of two which once lighted the prison. Immediately under this, and below the ground level, is the position of the pit, a dark vault in which many an unfortunate suffered hunger and cold. The lower part of the west side of this addition abuts the rock-face of the plateau, and to the west of it are indications of the thirteenth-century curtain wall which extended along the crest of the crag. Behind the parapets of the east and west curtains rose the pitched roofs of the hall and the northern addition, the latter being set at right angles to the former.

## THE INTERIOR

After the destruction of the drawbridge in Cromwell's time, the only entrance to the ruin was by ascending the steps on the west side of the castle rock. The stairs were made in the Ruthven period to provide a direct way from the close to the Earl's terraced garden which lies immediately to the west. The doorway at the head of the stairs opened direct into the close and within this courtyard are the remains of a brewhouse and other inferior buildings of a later period. Behind these foundations the ruin of a long building of early sixteenth-century date stands on slightly elevated ground. The main castle buildings occupy the south and east sides of the close.

*The Entry*

The entry has been barrel-vaulted and protected by an iron yett, and outer wooden door and iron portcullis, and an inner wooden door. The yett and all doors were of two-leaved construction, and the outer door was provided with a great oak draw-bar, the chase for its reception when not in use being still visible in the thickness of the west wall. Immediately over the drawbridge pit (now covered with modern decking) and between the iron yett and the outer door is a circular opening in the ceiling. This is a "murder hole" through which stones, boiling water or pitch could be dropped on besiegers who had actually reached the inner door. On the rybats of the outer doorway are grooves and markings made by the men at-arms when sharpening their pikes and weapons. The lower ones are the older, as they were made before the floor of the trance was raised by the decking.

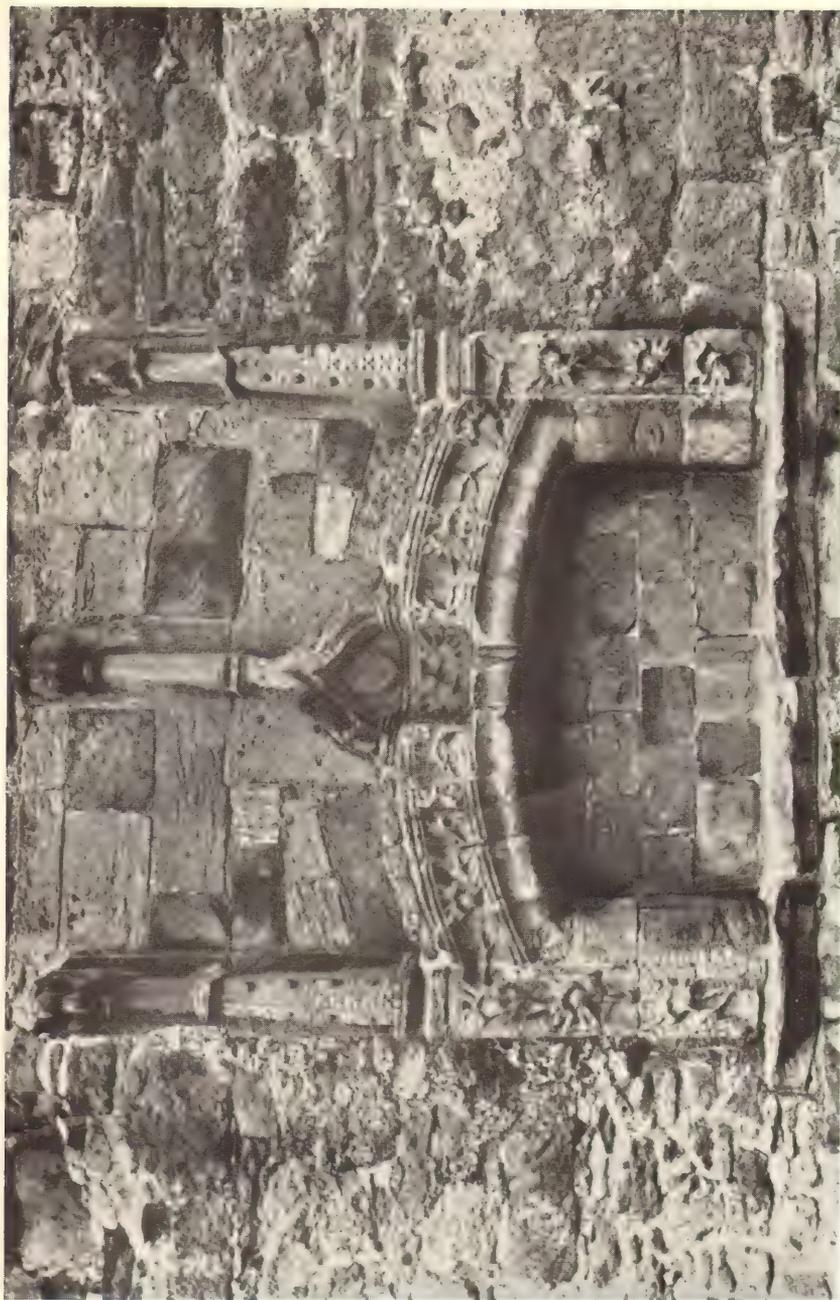
*Ruthven Lodging*

To the west of the entry and facing the close is the Ruthven lodging. Behind it is the lesser close which is surrounded by de Vaux buildings. The lodging is over the foundations of a thirteenth-century building. It is three storeys high and served by two turnpike stairs. An additional narrow wheel-stair led to a small roof chamber with crow-stepped gables, situated over the fore-stair. On the ground floor are two cellars and a trance leading to the lesser close. The cellars are vaulted with ashlar re-used from the earlier building, which was demolished to make room for the present structure. The upper storeys appear to have been divided into two apartments by wooden screens, each room having a fireplace and a mural press. On the first floor the rooms were laid with patterned and plain green glazed tiles; similar tiles have been found at Crichton Castle in Midlothian. The Ruthven coat of arms was displayed over the round head of the entrance to the through trance.

*De Vaux Towers*

From the lesser close one enters the ground-floor apartments of the de Vaux Towers. The Ruthven turnpike encroaches on the western round tower. This stair, which replaced a smaller one, led to the upper chambers of the tower, a garderobe, and the western rooms of the Ruthven building. At the foot of the stair there is direct access to the ground-floor chamber of the tower and its mural garderobe. In the south wall of the chamber the fireplace has been formed in the embrasure of a window-slit. The fireplace, occupying a similar position in the upper chamber, is also an insertion. Near the south-west angle of the court is a doorway giving access to the cellar of the corner tower. This room was provided with three bow-slits, but the one in the south wall has been built up in the thirteenth-century repairs. The approach to the ground floor of the south round tower has been through a vaulted trance at the east end of the lesser close. The stumps of the ribs on the converging walls indicate the length of this passage, which also led to the south postern and to a well shaft cut through the rock to a depth of 23 feet. To defend the space at the back of the postern a "murder hole" was made in the ceiling; this is now built up. A short flight of steps leads down to the vault in the south tower. This room is six-sided; three adjoining sides each contain a window-slit; the next side contains a recess, from which a mural passage leads to a garderobe and the next again a fireplace. The false-rib construction used by the early masons can be seen on the stone vault where many of the ribs have fallen.

The upper storeys of the south tower and the adjoining closet and the well chamber can be reached from the fore turnpike on the west side of the entry. When the castle was in use, however there was an outside stair which led up from the lesser close. The principal apartment of the de Vaux building is in the south tower. It is six-sided and has a lofty domed ceiling of bastard vault construction. In four adjoining walls there are windows, three of which are furnished with stone benches and the other with a slop. Within the next space is an arched wall-recess for a ewer and wash-hand basin, and a doorway to a passage leading to a wheel-stair and the chamber and garderobe in the corner tower. The longest side of the apartment contains the fireplace, now somewhat decayed, but the most important architectural feature left of the de Vaux period. It has a recessed shaft in each jamb rising from a Gothic base to a plain "inverted-bell" cap. Above the shafts it is corbelled out to carry the arch which supported the projecting hood. The corbelling is elaborately moulded and enriched with a nail-head pattern and there is a slot on the inner side of each jamb, probably to support an iron brace on which were hung the pot



THE BUFFET IN THE GREAT HALL (15th CENTURY)



THE GARDEN, WITH DOVECOTE IN BACKGROUND

chains. The chamber in the corner tower has window-slits and brazier flues in the right-angle corners. The mural garderobe, entered from the passage, served both rooms. The stair led to the fortified wall top which communicated with the Ruthven building.

#### *Guardroom and Casemate*

There is a small chamber on the west side of the entry and a dimly-lighted guardroom on the east side. This room has a fireplace, slop, and a doorway opening on to a stair leading down to the floor of the great cellar. Above the entry and the guardroom there are two storeys. The lower is the portcullis chamber which can be reached either from the fore turnpike or from a small-wheel stair off the kitchen trance. When raised, the portcullis was suspended by its gearing from the ceiling and occupied a position in the middle of the room. There is a mural passage in the south wall which leads to a garderobe. On the upper storey and directly under the timber roof there was a chamber and from it the drawbridge chamber of the forewall was entered.

A doorway at the south-east corner of the close gives access to a flight of steps which leads down to the casemate, a great vaulted apartment used for storage. Five doorways give access to it from the close. The principal one, contained in a jamb, was partly blocked at a later period when the south end of the casemate was made into a bakehouse, and ovens, fireplaces, and flues were introduced. The south wall contains a well shaft 38 feet deep. There is an opening at the bakehouse level and the shaft is carried up to the kitchen above. Early building is evident in part of the outer wall and includes the remains of a built-up doorway. This doorway formed one of the entrances of the de Vaux castle and it has been defended by an iron-shod wooden portcullis. The doorway was blocked when the Halyburton curtain was built and the recess thus formed was used as a brazier stance, a flue for the chase having been constructed in the wall which housed the portcullis when raised. On the ceiling can be seen the impressions of the long wide boards used in the "centering" when the vault was constructed. These impressions can be traced to a line where the casemate originally terminated against the north-east tower buildings, beyond that, the vault is ragged and of later date.

#### *Chapel*

At the northern end of the casemate the outer curtain is 22 feet thick, and a passage in the thickness of the wall leads to a turnpike ascending to a mural chamber furnished with a fireplace and a garderobe. The room was probably the "Priest's Chamber" as a doorway leads from it into the chapel.

The chapel is set east and west, and was entered at the west end from a passage which led to the close through a building of later date. On the east side of the entrance from the priest's chamber, and just within the chapel, is the remains of a piscina bowl, and nearby in the south wall is part of an arched credence recess and a daylight opening to the casemate. A hanging probably extended across the east end of the chapel, cutting off the north-east angled corner, and in front of this stood the altar. In the north wall there is a fireplace which has an ingle seat with a pointed head and cusps carved in relief. Beyond the fireplace are two windows with stone seats. Alongside the doorway in the west wall are a holy-water stoup, a window, and, near the north-west corner, a book-press, with a pointed head, ornamented with crockets or projecting leaf carvings.

#### *Prison and Pit*

Under the chapel is a low ill-lighted vault entered by the passage leading from the chapel to the close. There is a garderobe beside the stair, and a fireplace in the north wall. Alongside the fireplace is a recess formed by the ingoing of a narrow window. In this is the trap which gives access to the "pit." This awful place of confinement is about 11 feet square, and it is without light and only ventilated by a flue in the wall. At the north-east angle of the pit is a narrow stair terminating in a garderobe. The floor is the solum of the moat of the de Vaux castle and the southern side of the pit is formed partly by naked rock.

#### *The Great Hall*

Over the casemate is the ruin of the great hall. The entrance was at the south or "screens" end and was approached by a flight of steps from the close. A trance from the screens leads to the kitchen, in the south-east quarter of the castle, and to a small turnpike contained within a corbelled turret, which served the rooms over the entry. Just within the trance is a built-up doorway in the outer wall. This led to a small chamber within the jamb over the main entrance to the casemate. On the opposite side of the passage are the remains of a stone bench and a service hatch opening into the kitchen.

The kitchen is entered through a vestibule which contains a small oven inserted in its south wall. This lofty apartment is 32 feet high and has a pointed "barrel" vault which is pierced with a circular aperture. The kitchen is furnished with two great arched fireplaces, and within their ample jaws stood the large turnspits which were tended by the "turnbrochies." A hatch in the floor immediately under the one in the ceiling communicates with the bakehouse, and another forms the head of the well shaft. There is a small but deep mural press in the window embrasure, and under the window is a slop.

The great hall was entered from the "screens" and occupied the full space between the kitchen and the chamber of dais over the chapel. It was probably ceiled with an open timber roof and at the south end there would be a minstrel gallery over the "screens." There were two large windows in the west wall, with moulded internal arches and window seats. The northmost was converted into a mural chamber at the time of the later Halyburton alteration. There was a similar window in the west wall and possibly another to the north. At the north or dais end of the hall the floor was slightly raised and here stood the high table for the baron, his family and friends. A stone fireplace of elaborate design would no doubt form the central feature of the north wall. Doorways at this end of the hall opened into the withdrawing-room or chamber of dais and to a stair leading to the lower storeys. Another feature of the dais end of the hall would be an arched recess for the laver or wash-hand basin and ewer. Certain fragments of moulded arch stones which have been recovered probably formed part of this feature. A doorway in the west wall gave access to a stairway leading to the close. The "screens" was a service passage at the south end of the hall. At the east end is a mural chamber which served as a pantry. This has a hatch communicating with the bakehouse below. A stone buffet in the Gothic style in the south wall, designed to display the plate at banquets, is one of the most interesting architectural fragments in the whole building. Its present position seems wrong, as such furnishings were placed within the dining part of the hall. This buffet has elaborately moulded jambs and a segmental-arched head enriched with leaf-and-stem ornament. The finials at the sides and centre are crocketed and above the crown of the arch, a small ogival head contains a weather-worn shield on which can still be traced the Halyburton coat of arms, 1st and 4th on a bend three mascles for Halyburton, 2nd three bars for Cameron, 3rd a bend for Vaux.

Beyond the hall is the chamber of dais where the baron and his friends retired after meals. It was a large room lighted by windows on its north and west walls. The fireplace was probably in the south wall and there was a mural garderobe in the west wall. At the north west corner of the room a wheel-stair led to the wall-walk and possibly to an upper storey, as this end of the castle may have been higher than the roof-ridge of the great hall.

APPENDIX

*Our Ancient Buildings*

A large number of ancient monuments are now in the charge of the State and are being preserved and made accessible to the public. Most of them are open all the year round and in the summer months from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m. or 8 p.m.

Guide books and leaflets to many of the monuments are available and may be obtained at the monuments concerned or from the Sale Offices of H.M. Stationery Office at the addresses on cover page iv. Those at present on sale or in preparation are listed below.

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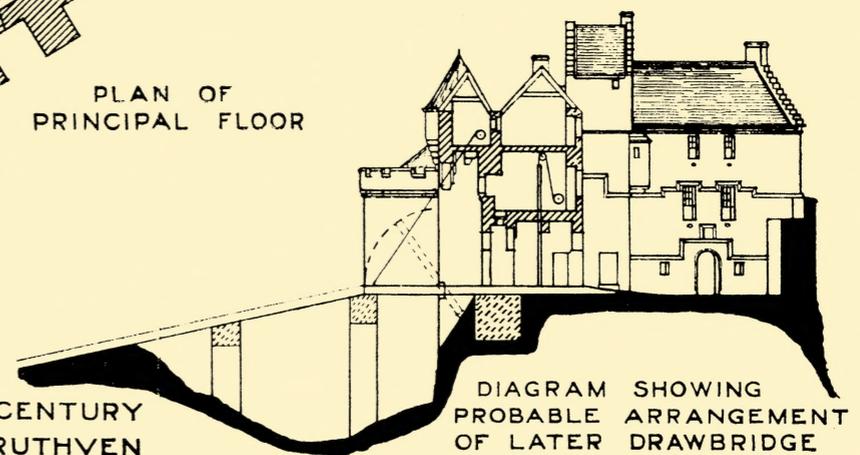
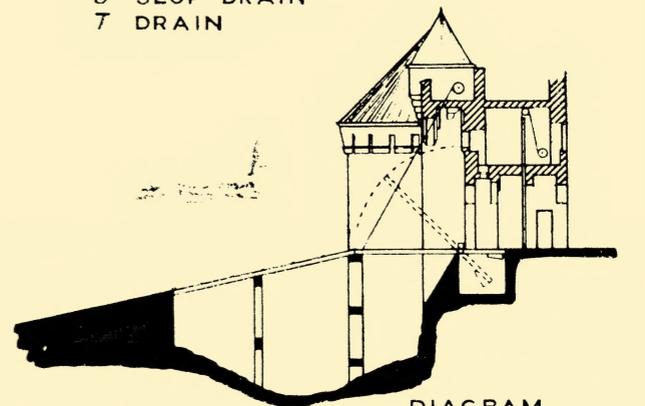
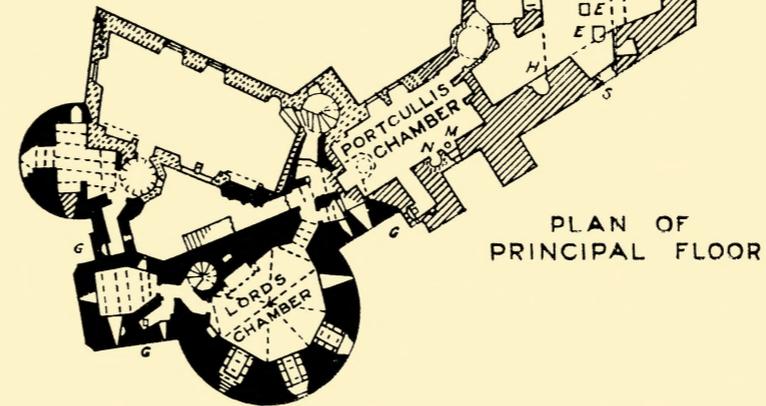
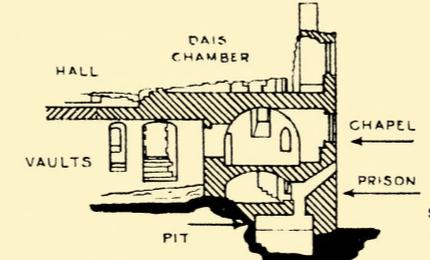
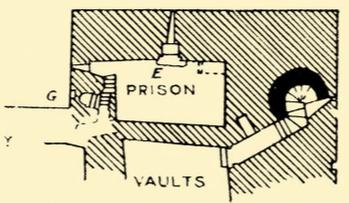
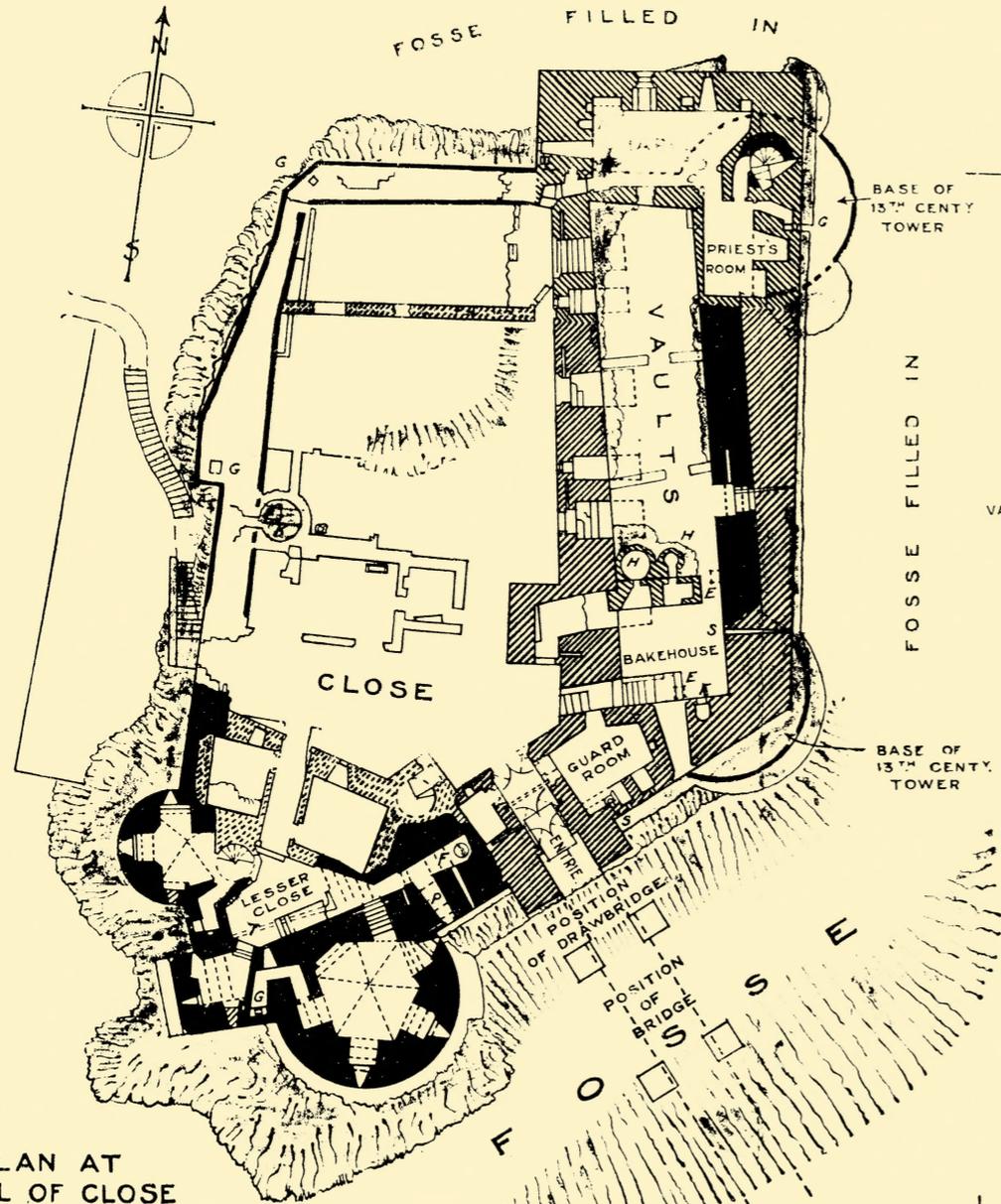
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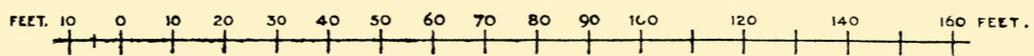
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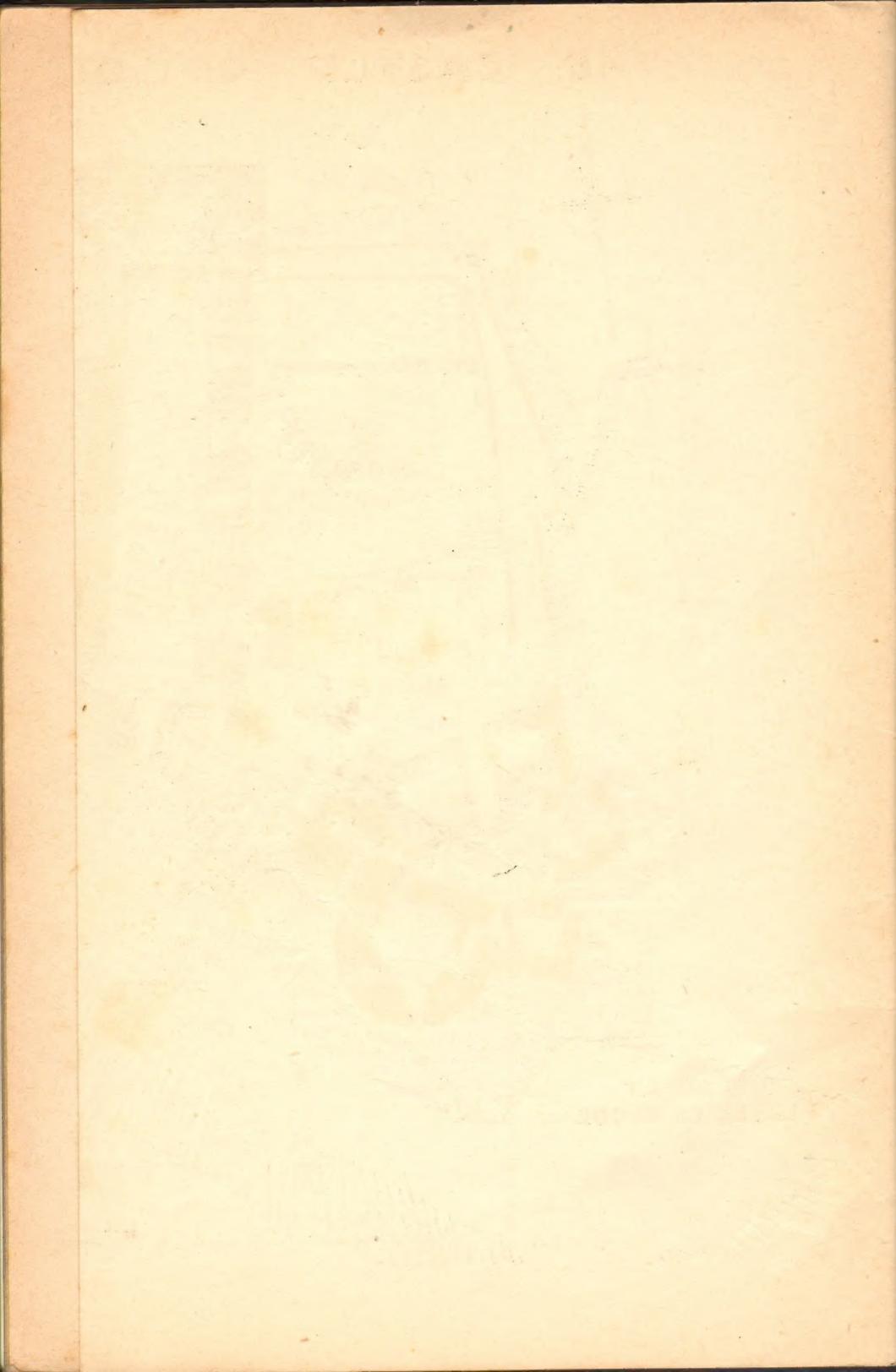
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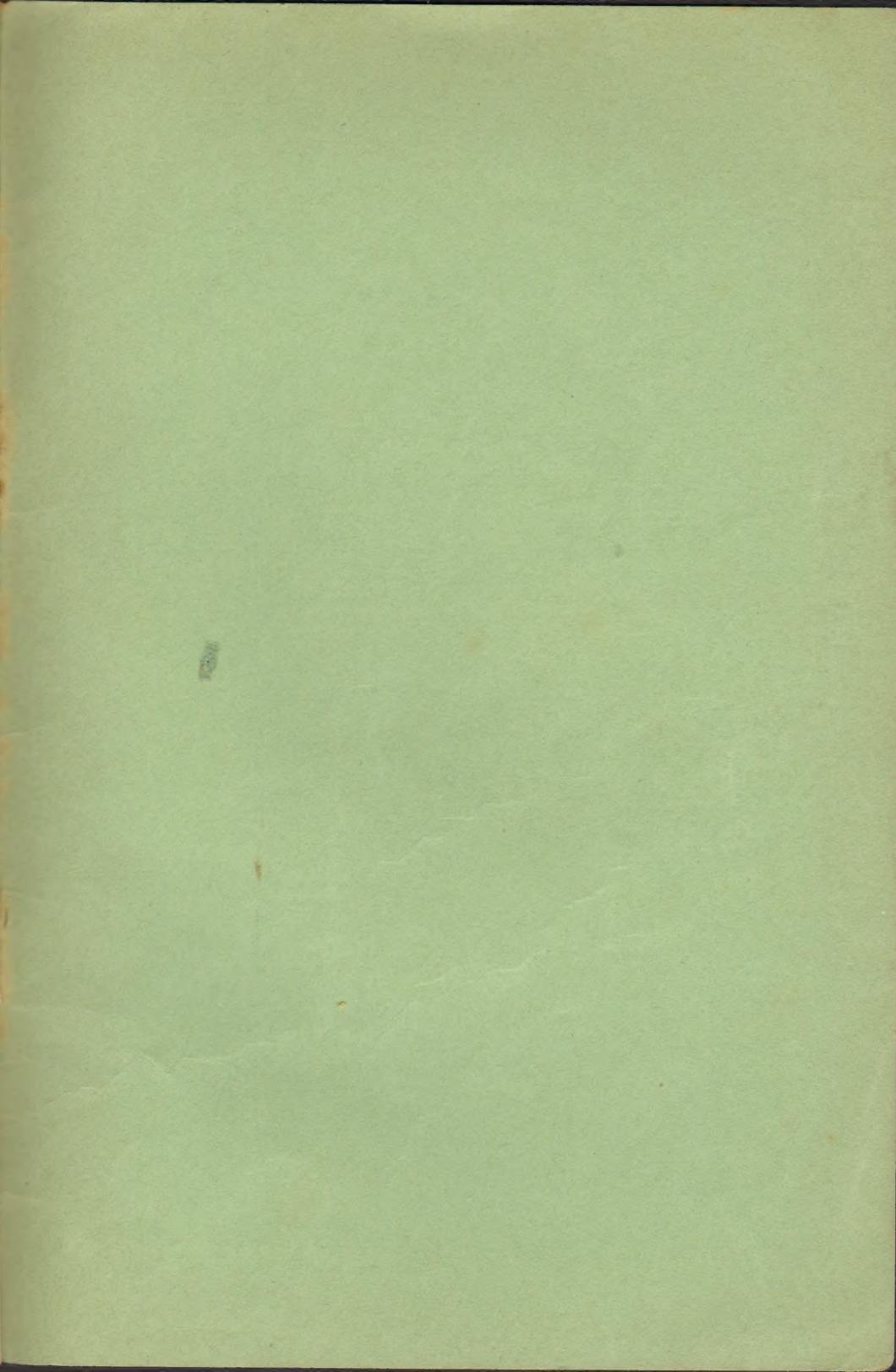
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