

THE HISTORY OF
TAUNTON CASTLE
IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT EXCAVATIONS

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Taunton Castle has been studied on many occasions. The results down to 1941 were published in a paper by Mr. A. W. Vivian-Neal, F.S.A., and Mr. H. St. George Gray, F.S.A. In 1952 the repair and reflooring of the Great Hall presented an opportunity to examine an area which had not previously been available for close study and in which early remains might be expected. The Council of the Society therefore sanctioned the cutting of trenches under the floor of the hall, to explore strata which would be sealed in by the new concrete bedding.

The work was carried out in October, 1952, under the direction of the writers. The cost of labour was defrayed by a generous gift from Mrs. J. B. Clark. Two men, supplied by Messrs. Potter & Son, were employed for two weeks. Miss Rosamond Fleming, Mrs. A. D. Hallam, Miss Anne Maltby, Miss Barbara Maltby and Miss Linda Witherill took part in the excavation and assisted in recording the features disclosed by the stripping of plaster from the walls. Mr. E. R. Tyzack, Borough Surveyor, kindly had the necessary levels taken and the section prepared on which Fig. 2 is based. Mr. T. J. Hunt, who is engaged on a systematic examination of the Pipe Rolls of the Bishops of Winchester, kindly read the earlier part of this report in draft and contributed helpful historical notes, which have been incorporated; without his assistance the dating of the 13th century work would have lacked that precision which is now possible. The writers also desire to acknowledge their indebtedness to Mr. Vivian-Neal and Mr. St. George Gray, whose paper remains the basic account of Taunton Castle. Both these scholars have kindly read the report in typescript.

The two authors are jointly responsible for the account of the excavations and the ensuing discussion of the architectural development of the Castle. The concluding section, describing the pottery found in the hall and analagous material from other parts of the Castle, is the work of Mr. A. D. Hallam. The thanks of the writers are offered to all those mentioned and to others who assisted in

the work. Mr. W. A. Seaby, Keeper of the Somerset County Museum at the time of the excavations, and Mr. R. C. Sansome, the present Keeper, afforded every facility for the excavation and for the study of the objects. Finally thanks are due to the Council of the Society for permission to undertake the investigation.

THE EXCAVATIONS IN THE GREAT HALL

The Great Hall of Taunton Castle lies on the north-west side of the Inner Ward, facing the courtyard ; the further wall, towards the outer moat, forms part of the curtain. The main front of the hall is largely masked by a modern office block, on the site of the late 18th century Grand Jury room, and by a pillared and glazed portico used for exhibits. At the S.W. end is the block formerly containing the Bishop's Camera on the upper floor. This looks on to the inner moat and has its main axis at right angles to that of the hall. The garden beyond the hall runs down to the Mill Stream ; it covers the line of the outer moat, which is no longer visible. The existing hall, 120 ft. by 31 ft.,¹ is a composite building, incorporating work of several periods.

Trench I was dug, 4 ft. wide, across the hall, 26 ft. from the S.W. end (Figs. 1, 2). The trench was everywhere carried down between 1 ft. and 2 ft. into the undisturbed subsoil ; a small pit against the face of the inner wall of the hall was dug to a depth of 3 ft. 6 ins. The section shewed that the subsoil was a geologically recent alluvial deposit with inclusions of coarse gravel. The surface of this deposit sloped gently to the N.W., with a total fall of 10 ins. in 27 ft. The top of the alluvium was clean, with no trace of an old ground surface, shewing that the turf had been stripped. Above this was piled a bank of redeposited triassic marl. This attained a maximum thickness of 2 ft. near the centre of the hall, where there was a slight depression in the surface of the subsoil. The bank was levelled when the first stone building was erected. The marl is local material, found below the alluvial deposits ; it probably came from the lower levels of the outer moat.

16 ft. 6 ins. from the curtain a foundation trench, 5 ft. wide by 3 ft. 6 ins. deep, was cut through the bank of marl and 18 ins. into the subsoil. The sides were irregular, suggesting that the trench had stood open for a period and begun to crumble before being

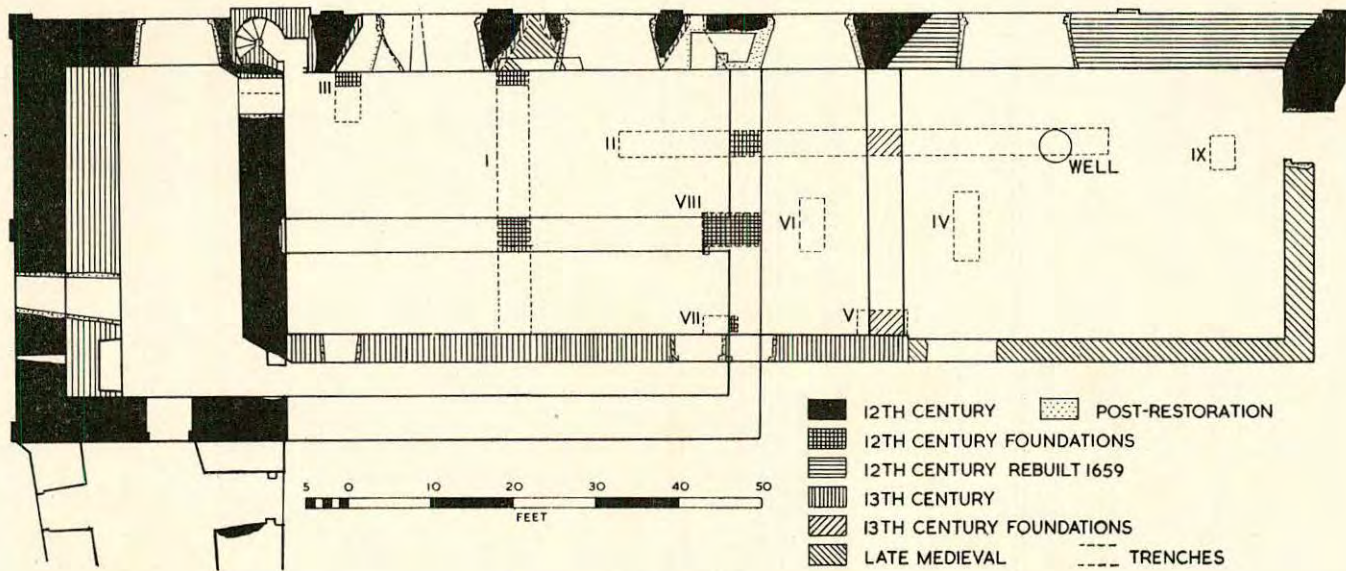


Fig. 1. TAUNTON CASTLE
Plan of Hall and Camera shewing excavation trenches and 12th century plan restored.

filled with a loose packing of stones, gravel and rubbish. The foundation of the outer curtain had an offset 18 ins. wide, below which it was carried down for 3 ft. ; it was built of large lias rubble. This wide offset was thought at first to be connected with a later fireplace, but Trench III, 7 ft. from the W. angle of the hall, and test holes at intervals along the line of the curtain showed that it was a constant feature except in two places where it had been robbed. The foundation of the inner wall had an offset 8 ins. wide rising 6 ins. above the level of that of the curtain. The masonry was carried down 4 ft. 9 ins. below this offset ; the rubble foundation was not noticeably different from that of the curtain. A narrow wedge of dark soil and rubbish in each case marked the filling of the foundation trench alongside the face of the wall. Above the marl was loose modern rubbish ; recent attempts to improve the ventilation beneath the timber flooring cut away parts of the highest levels left by the medieval builders.

Trench II, 3 ft. wide, was cut parallel to the main axis of the hall, 7 ft. 6 ins. from the curtain.¹ It started 41 ft. from the S.W. end and was continued for 63 ft. The trench was designed to locate cross walls and was only carried down sufficiently far for that purpose. Where not disturbed in recent times the surface reached was that of the marl bank. Two cross walls were found at 54 and 70 ft. from the S.W. end of the hall. The first was badly robbed. None of the outer stones remained in position, but a few marked the line of the inner face. The wall was originally rather over 4 ft. thick. Trench VII, dug against the inner wall face, shewed that this cross wall had been demolished when the existing inner wall was built ; the latter was carried straight through, ignoring the older line. The second cross wall was 4 ft. thick, with some stones belonging to the lowest course still in position on each face. These stones included re-used, axe-dressed ashlar blocks of the 12th century. The line of this wall coincided with a decrease in the thickness of the inner wall of the hall. Trench V shewed that the second cross-wall was contemporary with the older and thicker part of this wall and removal of the plaster disclosed the scar left by its demolition. A flat, ashlar faced pilaster buttress with a projection of 6 ins. had been incorporated in the thinner wall extending towards the N.E. There was no scar on the inner face of the curtain at the corresponding



A View of the CASTLE and CASTLE Green in the PARISH of Bishop HULL, near TAUNTON in the COUNTY of SOMERSET.

Taunton Castle in 1773. From a drawing in the possession of the Society.

Photo : R. C. Sansome

angle, suggesting that the cross wall had been built against an earlier curtain. 13 ft. beyond this point Trench II disclosed a circular well 25 ft. from the end of the hall.² Trenches IV and IX, also at this end of the hall, shewed that the whole area had been badly disturbed in the middle of the 17th century. Trenches VI and VIII proved that the rubbish filled foundation, located in Trench I, was contemporary with the first cross wall and did not extend beyond it.

THE SEQUENCE OF STRUCTURES ON THE SITE OF THE GREAT HALL AND CAMERA

THE PRE-CONQUEST RAMPART. The earliest feature disclosed by the excavations was the bank of redeposited triassic marl under the floor of the Great Hall. The material was clean ; no datable objects or rubbish were found under the bank or in its makeup. The original width and height are unknown, but the surface section (fig. 2) suggested that it did not extend more than a few feet beyond the present inner wall of the hall—perhaps as far as the 12th century inner wall (p. 66). This would give a width of some 50 ft., assuming, as is probable, that the lip of the outer moat lay just beyond the face of the curtain. The marl bank, which was already consolidated at the time of its erection, is clearly much earlier than the first building of stone. This building, represented by the curtain and the robbed foundation trench, is older than the middle of the 12th century and will be attributed (p. 62) to the time of Bishop William Giffard (1107-29). The pre-Conquest date of the bank is therefore certain ; its significance will be considered in connection with the general history of the castle (p. 86).

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. NATURAL GRAVEL | 5. C13 FILLING OF C12 WALL TRENCH |
| 2. MARL BANK | 6. C13 WALL TRENCH |
| 3. C12 WALL TRENCH | 7. C13 WALL |
| 4. C12 CURTAIN WALL | 8. FILLING OF FIREPLACE |

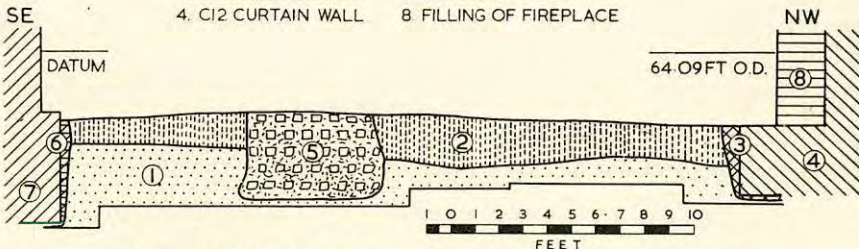


Fig. 2. Taunton Castle Section across Great Hall. (Trench I)

THE 12th CENTURY HALL AND CAMERA. The earliest stone structure on the site of the Great Hall is represented by the outer curtain (Pl. III), the robbed foundation trench and the first cross wall, which were shewn to be earlier than the present inner wall of the hall. Stripping the plaster from the south-west wall revealed the meaning of these foundations. The masonry retains the scar of the ends of two parallel barrel vaults separated by a wall (Pl. IIa), which stood on the foundation.³ The outline of the inner vault could be traced almost to the apex; the curve shewed that it had extended beyond the later inner wall. The line of the other vault was less distinct, but sufficient remained to shew that it was of the same size as the first and that it sprang from the curtain (Fig. 3). Each vault measured internally 17 ft. 6 ins. wide by 12 ft. high, with a central wall 4 ft. thick; they extended 54 ft. up to the first cross wall. The assumed inner face of the inner vault would be exactly in line with the end of the vault beneath the Camera and it may be assumed that this wall, which is of the 12th century, originally continued to form the inner wall of the hall. (Fig. 1)

The original masonry at the end of the hall is lias rubble. The natural jointing of this stone produces rectangular blocks, often giving the appearance of coursing. When the vaults of the hall were demolished, the projecting stones bonding them into the end wall were withdrawn and the scars on the face of the wall made good with rubble, formed of much smaller stones (Pl. IIa). The masonry of this type continues upward as far as the creasing of the later roof (p. 66). The outer face of the curtain above the outer moat and the face of the wall towards the inner moat have been extensively refaced in recent times, but a close examination shews some very similar rubble at the base of the walls, reaching in places to as high as 10 or 12 ft. The W. angle where the two walls join has a shallow clasping buttress faced with ashlar of yellow Ham stone (Pl. IIb). Shallow pilaster buttresses of the same type occur at intervals along the two walls (Pl. IIb, III). These buttresses rise from a plinth, with a slight chamfered capping of Ham stone, which runs along the base of the walls about 4 ft. above the modern ground level. The last external buttress on the N.W. wall occurs at a point a few feet short of the cross wall marking the end of the barrel vaults. The plinth of Ham stone continues for a further 30 ft. and then stops. Beyond this point the whole

curtain was rebuilt in 1659 (p. 73). At the far end the N. angle of the present Great Hall is ancient with an ashlar-faced clasping buttress of Ham stone. One reformed buttress occurs in the rebuilt portion of the curtain; its presence suggests that the series once extended along the whole length, but the spacing cannot have corresponded with that of the three outside the early hall.

With the exception of the clasping buttress at the W. angle, the whole series now stops at a height of about 11 ft. above the plinth; they are finished with later weathering of various types. On the N.W. curtain of the Great Hall this height marks the top of the original wall face. The upper parts of the Camera are entirely refaced;⁴ only the squared quoins are ancient. These are mostly of grey or red triassic sandstone, which is not found in the earlier work. The western clasping buttress runs up for an additional 6 ft. Its facing is partly Ham stone, but the masonry of the upper part is much disturbed and includes many pieces of grey triassic sandstone. In its present form it is not older than the 13th century, though one would normally assume that this heightening reproduces an original feature.

The Camera, lying at the S.W. end of the hall, now stands above a 13th century barrel vault 15 ft. wide (p. 68). Originally the space at ground level was 21 ft. 6 ins. wide with an outer wall 6 ft. thick. These measurements are established by a loop near the S. angle. This loop is 18 ins. wide at the inner end with splayed sides and a rectangular opening, 30 ins. high by 6 ins. wide⁵; the inner end is blocked by a 13th century thickening of the wall (p. 68). The opening has chamfered dressings of Ham stone. Traces of a similar loop have recently been discovered in the outer curtain of the hall, midway between the first and second buttresses. The head of the embrasure has here been destroyed and that under the Camera has been disturbed.

The space below the Camera was probably covered with a barrel vault like those on the site of the hall. An original entrance remains at the S.E. end, facing the courtyard. The doorway has a segmental head with chamfered jambs and voussoirs, both largely restored. The arched opening through the wall is faced with good axe-dressed ashlar; the jointing is regular. A number of the stones have been renewed. The original floor, as may be seen on the sides of the opening, lay some 9 ins. higher than at

present. The door is eccentrically placed in relation to the early chamber, suggesting the former existence of a porch or forebuilding on this side. Part of this remains in the wall forming the left side of the modern entrance, which is of axe-dressed ashlar similar to that of the doorway. The plan of the forebuilding cannot be recovered without further excavation. It probably housed an external stair leading up to the Camera. A vaulted porch on the level of the courtyard would then give access to the ground floor. The surviving masonry shews that the stairs to the Camera must have risen from the S.W., where an oblique angle of ashlar on the south corner of the Camera may perhaps be explained as the jamb of an arch at the bottom of the stair.

This whole building dates from the 12th century; it was largely destroyed when the new hall and camera were built about 1245 (p. 68). In the later 12th century the keep and the revetment of the moat surrounding it were completely faced with ashlar of freestone.⁶

This building is ascribed to Bishop Henry of Blois (1129-71) and the free use of stone brought from a distance is in keeping with the wealth and magnificence of this prelate. The details of the keep and the sculptured corbel found at the bottom of the well⁷ indicate a date in the later years of his episcopate. The building now under consideration is far rougher and since it was the most important part of the castle a date before the middle of the century is clearly indicated. The masonry, rubble with ashlar dressings and ashlar faced pilaster and clasping buttresses, has close analogies with the work at Sherborne Old Castle, carried out by Bishop Roger of Salisbury (1107-39); the gatehouse of that castle with its consistent use of ashlar is more advanced than anything in the early building at Taunton.⁸ Moreover the composite character of this building, timber above a vaulted lower storey of stone (p. 64) points to an early date. The architectural evidence indicates Bishop William Giffard (1107-29). Giffard is known to have interested himself in Taunton where he founded the Augustinian Priory of St. Peter and St. Paul.

The words hall and camera have been used to describe these remains; the later structures on the site were certainly used as such. The early 12th century building consisted of a ground floor with three barrel vaulted spaces, lighted by narrow loops. These can only have served as store rooms with the more important



(a) Scar of Barrel Vault at S.W. end of Great Hall. *Photo : Miss R. Fleming*



(b) S.W. Wall of Camera

Photo : R. C. Sansome

apartments on the first floor. No trace of this upper storey survives and it is difficult to believe that a stone structure would have entirely disappeared, when so much of the subvaults remains. The first floor apartments must therefore have been of timber and it is a legitimate inference that there were two, corresponding to the two barrel vaults at the N.E. end and the single transverse vault on the S.W.

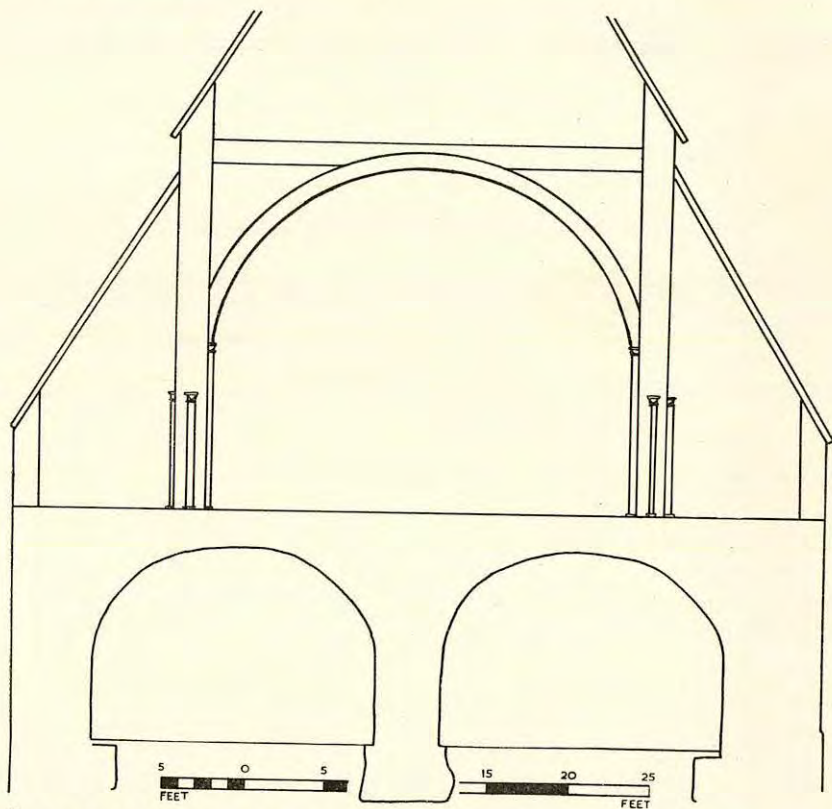


Fig. 3. TAUNTON CASTLE Section showing the 12th century subvaults and conjectural restoration of Hall.

Students of Norman architecture have postulated the existence of a composite type of hall with the principal apartment of timber on the first floor above a vaulted basement of stone.⁹ No example survives, but the picture of Harold's Hall at Bosham in the Bayeux

Tapestry is best explained as being of this type. The same is true of the hall of Devizes Castle, another building erected by Bishop Roger of Salisbury.¹⁰ This is a very pertinent parallel. The two Bishops were contemporary and their needs were probably similar.

The arrangement of the upper floor at Taunton is necessarily conjectural. The hall probably lay on the site of the later hall, above the two barrel vaults at the N.E. end (Fig. 3). This hall has an overall measurement of 58 by 50 ft., giving an internal measurement of at least 54 by 46 ft., which may be compared with 70 by 40 ft. of the hall at Devizes Castle.

These are not unreasonable measurements. The late 11th century aisled hall at Westminster was 67 ft. 6 ins. wide;¹¹ the halls at Taunton and Devizes must also have been aisled. At Taunton we may go a stage further in the reconstruction. The spacing of the buttresses on the outer side of the N.W. curtain can most easily be explained on the assumption that they mark the position of transverse sleeper beams on which the main uprights were bedded (Fig. 4). This would give two bays each of 20 ft., with half bays at each end, corresponding to the aisles on the sides. This type of building is today represented by the mast churches of Norway, the finest of which—Urnes—dates from the second half of the 11th century. Describing another of these churches, Borgund, Strzygowski¹² writes: "the ground plan is square, $23\frac{1}{2}$ by $19\frac{1}{2}$ feet. To understand the construction we must begin, not with the floor itself, but with four sleepers under the floor, laid so as to enclose a square, the ends crossing at the corners and projecting beyond the walls. At each of the points of intersection ($15\frac{1}{2}$ by $11\frac{1}{2}$ feet) stands a mast, and there are two others on each side of this mast—twelve in all. . . . The twelve masts do not themselves give the ground plan of the church. Parallel to the rows of masts and three feet distant there are the walls or more correctly screens. . . ." Borgund is a small church—smaller than Urnes,—but the principles which govern the construction are the same as those indicated at Taunton. There the hall will have had two bays, in place of the single bay forming the nave of the mast church, and, like the church, aisles on all four sides. The chancel, which in the Norwegian churches forms an appendage to the main structure, will naturally have been lacking. The type was known in Saxon England, though no example now survives. It is the

form of the church erected by Alfred at Athelney. This is described by William of Malmesbury as having "four posts set in the soil which carry the whole structure and four aisles with rounded ends on the four sides."¹³

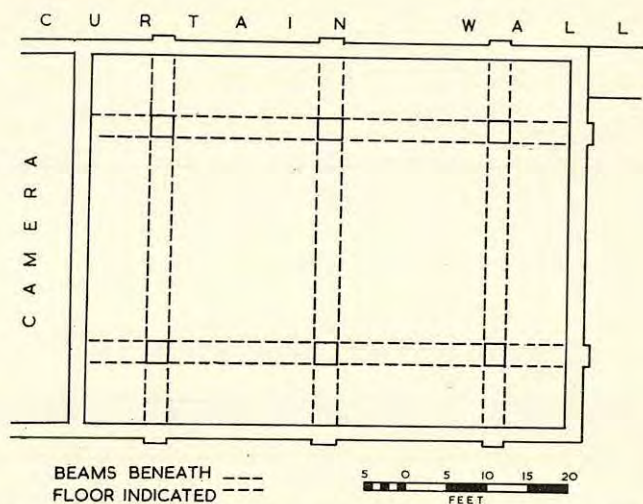


Fig. 4. TAUNTON CASTLE. Restored plan of 12th Century Hall.

The service quarters of the hall would have lain at the N.E. end, inside the extension of the 12th century curtain which ran as far as the Water Gate. Cooking was done at this period in the open air or under slight shelters, so we may picture this space was an open court with one or more pent houses and a well in the centre.

The main entry to the hall would have been from the courtyard by an outside stair; this probably lay at the N.E. end. The separate stair and forebuilding at the end of the camera (p. 71) should be explained as a survival from the time when these would have been separate buildings each with its own entry.

THE 13TH CENTURY HALL. The next stage in the development of the site is the building of an aisleless hall on the ground floor and an extension of the Bishop's private apartments.

The new hall, as revealed by the excavations, was a large building, 70 ft. 6 ins. by 31 ft. The older curtain was re-used to form the outer wall. The cross wall towards the Camera was also retained, the scars left by the demolition of the barrel vaults being

roughly refaced to take a plaster finish. The new inner wall of the hall survives; it is 3 ft. thick and retains a flat pilaster buttress on the N.E. face of the E. angle. The masonry is much patched rubble, the buttress ashlar faced; their real character can barely be appreciated as the whole structure has been defaced by later alterations. The new end wall was formed by the second cross wall discovered in the recent excavations (Fig. 1). The floor level of the new hall was 6 ins. above that of the earlier sub-vaults; it is marked both by the offset on the inner wall and the original threshold of the door to the turret stair (p. 69). The roof was a single span of 31ft. with the principals and rafters springing from the inner edge of the side walls about 15 ft. above the floor. This is a large span for a 13th century roof, but there is an almost exact parallel at Stokesay Castle, where the hall of c. 1260-80, measuring c. 52 by 31 ft., is roofed in four bays with arch-braced collar beam principals.¹⁴ The roof at Taunton, as at Stokesay, was steeply pitched; its slope can be restored with certainty from large stretches of the original creasing, which remain in position on the end wall of the hall (Fig. 5). The outer curtain was pierced with

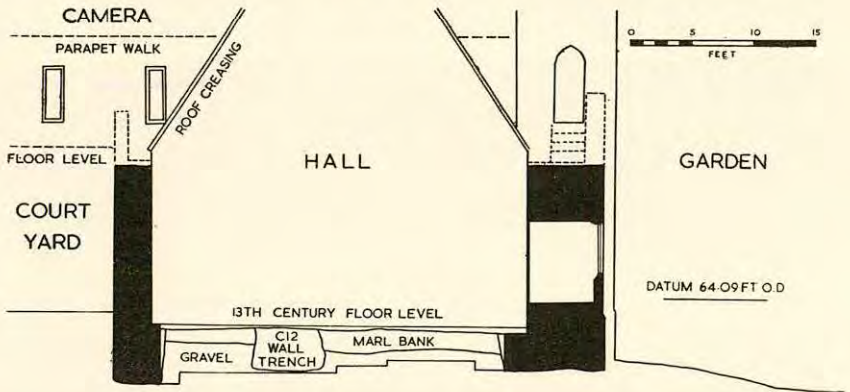


Fig. 5. TAUNTON CASTLE. Section showing relation of 13th century Hall to marl bank and present ground level.

widely splayed window embrasures. Traces of two remain. The better preserved, near the S.W. end of the wall, can be restored (Fig. 6 (1)). It has a segmental rerearch. The opening was about 16 ins. wide and over 5 ft. high; the missing top may have been pointed. The existing seats are an insertion, set on top of the

original paving. Traces of two more embrasures remain, one behind the later fireplace (p. 77). In the centre of this wall a large fireplace has been inserted into the curtain.¹⁵ The base of the jambs and of the sides and back were found, giving an original opening with a width of 10 ft. 6 ins. and a depth of 18 ins. The left jamb is largely preserved. At a height of 4 ft. 3 ins. there is a slight setback, marking the spring of the hood. Above this the opening begins to narrow indicating a hood of the normal conical form. The top of the curtain was examined in 1953 during repairs, but no flue was found. Perhaps the chimney was corbelled out from the face of the curtain; there are slight traces that might be interpreted in this way. No detail remains to establish the date of this fireplace; it cannot be original, since it blocks a window. It may be as late as circa 1600 (p. 72), but it is probably older. The screens lay to the N.E. The kitchen and service rooms were in a separate building further to the N.E.

The old Camera, over the S.W. transverse vault, was extended to the S.E. to provide a larger apartment. The external facing of this wall is, as has been noted, largely modern, but the quoins of grey or red triassic sandstone and the dressings of Ham stone are original. The end wall facing N.W. has two lofty lancets, with wide embrasures and seats. The more northerly is renewed. The other is old; it was reopened in 1884, after being used for a late 18th century fireplace and chimney. In the N.E. wall, beyond the line of the hall roof, was a range of four windows with widely splayed embrasures, segmental rerearches, seats and rectangular openings, 52 ins. high by 13 wide. The first remains with slight repairs. On the outside the dressings at the bottom corner are cut to leave a sloping string forming part of the creasing of the hall roof, thus proving that the alterations to the Camera were carried out at the time when the new hall was built. The second was partly removed and partly blocked by the insertion of a late medieval window of four lights, which completely destroyed the third of the earlier series (p. 71). Removal of the blocking in the second opening disclosed one splayed side with the remains of contemporary painting on the plaster. The whole design could not be recovered, but foliate scrolls of an early character have been recognised. The fourth of the series, near the corner of the room, retains the embrasure intact with a reformed opening. The only other original feature in the Camera is the doorway at the

top of the turret stair in the north corner. This has been badly defaced by the fitting of a late 18th century door frame. The level of the threshold shews that the 13th century pavement was about 10 ins. below the modern floor. During the repairs a slight offset, some 10 ft. above the present floor level, was clearly visible on the N.E. wall, marking the top of the 13th century masonry ; it shews the level of roof before the heightening of the block in the late 18th century.

The vault under the Camera is a contemporary insertion formed by thickening the outer wall by some 7 ft. and thus reducing the span to be covered. In the process the inner end of the 12th century loop was blocked (p. 61). At this point the new subvault was provided with a fireplace. The opening has stop-chamfered jambs of Ham stone, set at a level corresponding to the 12th century floor. The original lintel has gone. At a later date a wooden chimney breast was inserted at a higher level. The fireplace led into a circular chimney shaft, the only one of this type now remaining in the castle.

Access from the new hall to the Camera was provided by a small turret with a circular stair set against the N.W. curtain and overlapping the junction of the two apartments. The masonry of this turret is internally ashlar of grey triassic sandstone with dressings of Ham stone. Externally it is rubble built of lias with sandstone quoins and dressings of Ham stone. The lower door beside the W. corner of the hall has a two-centred arched head with chamfered jambs. The dressings have mostly been renewed, but the original stones are Ham, chisel-tooled (Fig. (6) 3). There is a similar door in the same corner providing access between the hall and the sub-vault of the Camera (Fig. 6 (2)). The turret continues with a stair to the roof. Five steps above the Camera is an original doorway leading to the wall walk along the N.W. curtain.

The character of this work indicates a date in the first half of the 13th century ; the extension of the Camera to the S.E. shews that it must have taken place after the building of the curtain facing the inner moat. The line of this moat is clearly later than the building of the keep in c. 1160-70 (p. 89). Its end in that direction shows that the moat surrounding the keep was disused when the inner moat had been completed. The curtain, planned in straight stretches with half round towers at the angles, belongs to a type of fortification elaborated in the early 13th century.



Taunton Castle. The Great Hall and 12th century curtain wall from the N.E., c. 1800. From a print in the possession of the Society.

Photo : R. C. Sansome

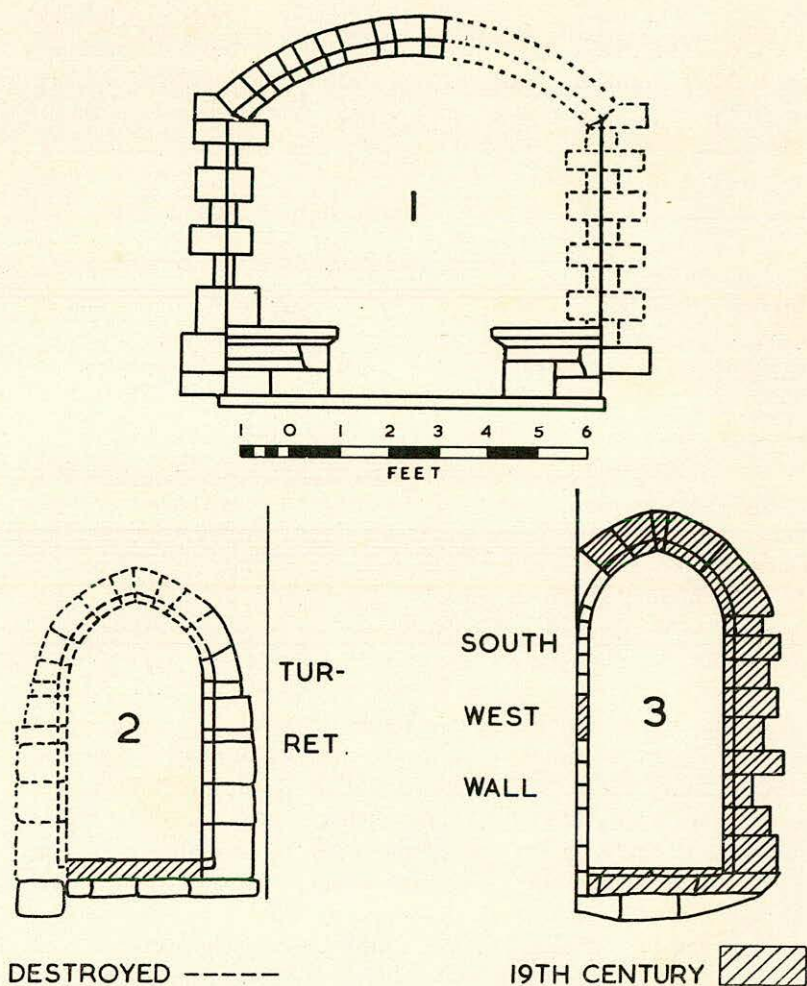


Fig. 6. TAUNTON CASTLE. Great Hall. 1. 13th century window, N.W. end. 2. 13th century doorway between Hall and subvault of Camera. 3. 13th century entrance from Hall to Turret.

There is a good parallel at Grosmont, Monmouthshire, where a similar curtain was added to the older hall by Hubert de Burgh, who held the castle between 1201 and 1243.¹⁶ At Taunton these alterations must be equated with the "new wall" and the "new ditch" mentioned in the Pipe Roll of the Bishop of Winchester for

1208-9.¹⁷ The Pipe Roll for the year 1245-6 records expenditure of £4 6s. 11d. for cutting and hauling stone from "Hamedon," while in the following year the large sum of £75 1s. 8d. is spent on the building of the hall. This expenditure covers the work of Master John, the carpenter, Master Walter, the mason, John, the plumber, and their assistants, together with sums for boards, nails, lead, cord for the louvers, linen cloth for the windows and stone tiles for the roof of the hall.¹⁸

The purpose of this rebuilding was to provide the Bishops of Winchester with a residence more in keeping with contemporary ideas. The new hall was more spacious, its floor unencumbered with pillars: masonry replaced the old half-timbered walls. Moreover a hall at ground level was far more convenient for those great occasions such as royal visits, when it was necessary to provide for large retinues. The same would apply to the holding of courts in the Bishop's great manor at Taunton, the new hall allowing more easy access to the many tenants, who came from far and near.

The enlarged Camera, or great chamber, provided the main apartment of the Bishop's private suite. This suite would also include his bedchamber and a private chapel. The upper storey of the nearer round tower, now the Tite Room, probably formed the Bishop's bedchamber. The Chapel is known at a later period to have lain in the adjacent range, on the site of what is now the Adam Library. The N. and E. sides of this room probably represent the walls of the 13th century chapel (Fig. 7). The N.E. quoin, with jambs of grey lias limestone, is visible from the courtyard, embedded in a later extension of the range. This extension is part of the work added to the gatehouse in the time of Bishop Thomas Langton (1493-1501). The existing roof of the Library, above the coved late 18th century ceiling of plaster, is of late medieval type and also forms part of the work carried out by Langton. A piece of one of the roof principals was cut out during repairs in 1910 and is now preserved in the Museum. It has an ogee sectioned moulding and is slotted to take wooden panels, which were doubtless richly painted.¹⁹

The 13th century arrangement at Taunton may be compared with other bishop's palaces of this period. At Wells there still remains the chamber, chapel and bedroom with garderobe erected for Bishop Jocelyn (1206-42). Alongside this block is the great

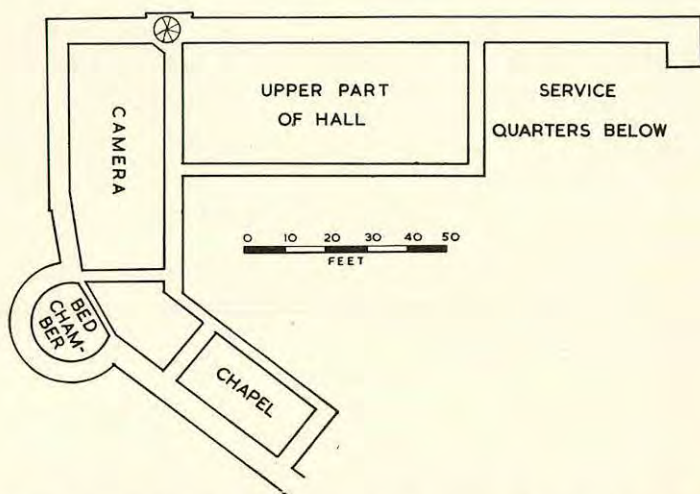


Fig. 7. TAUNTON CASTLE. Block plan showing 13th century arrangement of Bishop's Apartments on first floor.

hall added by Bishop Burnell (1275-92) probably to replace an earlier hall of timber.²⁰ At Lamphey, Pembrokeshire, a manor of the Bishops of St. Davids, the great mid-13th century Camera had a small annexe with a garderobe for the bedchamber; a new and separate hall was added 100 years later to replace the old hall, which had been the only stone building in the early 13th century palace.²¹ At St. Davids also the Bishop's private suite included a camera and chapel, dating from the 13th century; here again the camera was provided with a small annexe serving as the bedchamber.²²

LATER MEDIEVAL ALTERATIONS. The early 13th century layout survived with only slight alterations down to the Civil War. The re-roofing of the chapel about 1500 has already been mentioned.²³ The late medieval window of the Camera looking into the courtyard is of the same date or slightly later; it has four uncusped lights with four-centred heads set in a rectangular frame with a hood.

The walls forming the extension of the Great Hall to the N.E. may also go back to the later Middle Ages. This area must have contained the medieval service rooms and kitchen (p. 65). These would have been slight buildings, probably with pent roofs. The enclosure of this area to form a small courtyard would be a natural

arrangement. The discovery of a wide opening, 10 ft. high and 8 ft. 5 ins. wide, with a segmental head in the inner wall near the E. corner of the hall, shews that this enclosure had taken place by 1500, and possibly earlier as the blocked arch may replace that of an earlier gate. That this area was used as the service quarters down to the Civil War is proved by the well and the large quantity of domestic debris and broken pottery found during the recent excavations and described below.

THE 16TH AND EARLY 17TH CENTURIES.

Though the sequence of the numerous post-medieval alterations to the Castle Hall can be fairly easily determined, their dating often presents some difficulty. There is a tradition, first mentioned by Toulmin²⁴ and repeated by Savage²⁵ and subsequent writers, based on the presence of a carved stone escutcheon on the wall of the grand jury room (demolished in 1931) that it was built, or at least remodelled in 1577 by Bishop Horne. That work was carried out on the Great Hall during the latter part of the 16th century may be deduced from the occurrence of a blocked doorway of this period, which must have replaced the original entrance from the Inner Ward.²⁶ To this period, also, may perhaps be attributed the large window at the S.W. end of the inner wall, the right-hand jamb of which alone remains. It may have been one of a range of large windows looking on to the Inner Ward. The insertion of this window, and the others, if they existed, necessitated the raising of the wall by about 2 ft., the new level being marked by a substantial wall-plate, which is exposed at the S.W. corner and can be traced throughout the length of the 13th century inner wall. This operation must also have involved the renewal of the roof, all traces of which, except the wall-plate, have vanished. The heightening of the wall would have blocked the north-westernmost of the 13th century windows of the Camera.

The tradition that Bishop Horne was responsible for this work cannot be substantiated, as, from at least as early as September, 1560, the manor was in the hands of the Crown, and was not handed back with the other temporalities of the See on Horne's appointment in the following February, it having been granted to Sir Francis Knollys for three lives.²⁷ In 1564 it seems to have reverted to the Crown by exchange.²⁸ In 1578 (a year later than

the date on the escutcheon) it was still in the hands of the Crown, as is shown by a warrant²⁹ listed in the Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, and dated 6 May. It is quoted more fully in the *Somerset County Herald* for 1 September, 1898. the preamble reading as follows: “. . . it appereth that the halle and other buyldinges of the Castle of Taunton are in great decay, both in the walles, tymberwork, coberings, windowes and roufes, so that the charges of the repaires thereof will cost £391 10s. . . .” The warrant goes on to direct that Sir Hugh Paulett, Her Majesty’s Chief Steward of the Lordship of Taunton, shall be paid annually out of the casualties growing within the Lordship of Taunton the sum of £100, until £300 be paid, for the repair of the Castle of Taunton. It is therefore to the Crown, through Paulett, that we must attribute the late 16th century alterations.

During the Civil War the Castle suffered severely, the N.W. curtain in particular being exposed to gunfire from beyond the Tone. A breach 47 ft. long was made, extending from the junction of the end wall of the Hall with the curtain as far as the N.E. corner buttress. The numerous pits found on the floor of the courtyard can be attributed to the bombardment, which, with the collapse of the wall, destroyed the head of the well and the upper courses of its steening. This episode also probably accounts for the large amount of building rubbish in the filling of the well. The size of the breach is clearly indicated by the replacement of the Ham stone capping of the Norman plinth of the curtain by an inferior one of lias, a buttress also being rebuilt in the same stone. The date 1659 accompanied by the initials H. B., carved on the N.E. buttress, probably gives the date when the curtain was repaired. At the same time the well and the pitted surface of the courtyard were filled in with ashes and household rubbish, perhaps to serve as a bedding for flag stones.

It is not easy to say how much harm was done to the Great Hall. The N.E. corner must have been destroyed when the breach in the curtain was made (Fig. 1), and it is most unlikely that the roof could have survived two years’ siege without sustaining considerable damage. It is probable that it had been repaired, or patched sufficiently, by 1647 for the Manor Courts to be held there, as in that year the jury presented that the Great Hall of the Castle had been time out of mind the regular meeting place of all courts of the manor.³⁰ There is no mention of it there as being

unfit for use. Five years later, in 1652, the Quarter Sessions were held "at the Castle of Taunton"³¹ and the grand jury then considered "the Castle Hall, near Taunton, to be the fittest place within this County for the honourable judges and others to meet for the service of the Commonwealth at the Assizes, being a place time out of mind made use of for that service."³²

THE HALL AFTER THE CIVIL WAR.

The next features of the Great Hall to be considered are the two large stone mullioned windows, of five and four lights respectively, inserted in the curtain in the S.W. end (Pl. III). From the style of their mouldings they may be assigned to the late 16th century; but their present form cannot be paralleled in genuine work of this period. Moreover it is extremely unlikely that large and easily damaged windows such as these could have survived the Civil War. They would, from their very nature, invite the attention of the artillery across the Tone. It is therefore difficult to escape the conclusion that they consist of material removed from some other part of the building and inserted in the curtain after the Civil War. Their peculiar form can probably be explained by assuming that the easternmost of the two windows was, through carelessness of the workmen employed, inserted upside down³³ (the transom is inverted), the other being reconstituted, with the transom the right way up, to match the first. The same scheme was followed when the remaining two mullioned windows were inserted in the 18th and 19th centuries. Additional evidence that the windows in their present form postdate the Civil War is afforded by the discovery in the masonry of the pier between them of a tobacco pipe whose form suggests the third quarter of the 17th century rather than the first or second, a form found in the filling of the outer moat, which can be attributed to the slighting of the Castle in 1662. The repair of the breach in the adjacent part of the curtain in 1659 implies fortification rather than construction of a peaceful kind;³⁴ so that we must attribute the insertion of the windows to a date subsequent to this, but before the enlargement of the Hall; for then we should expect a different and more symmetrical scheme of fenestration.

Before very long the Great Hall was again in bad condition, and in 1677 the Bishop of Winchester was presented in his own court for neglecting to repair the Castle Hall.³⁵

At the end of the 17th or beginning of the 18th century the Hall was drastically remodelled. It was extended to its present length of 120 feet, taking in the area covered by the courtyard. The walls were raised a further 2 ft. 6 ins. A new roof (the third), of medium pitch, was constructed, concealing the 13th century weathering on the S.W. end wall. A gallery was made, lighted by a range of oval windows with brick dressings, extending right round the interior of the Hall, including the curtain, as far as the two large windows³⁶ (Pl. III). Into the N.E. gable end were inserted side by side two large wooden mullioned windows similar in character to those in the curtain at the other end of the Hall. This is another instance of the reuse of 16th century material.³⁷

By 1785 the Great Hall had once more become so dilapidated that Taunton was in danger of losing the assizes. Sir Benjamin Hammett having obtained the Keepership of the Castle proceeded to put the Great Hall into repair. He divided it into two, by means of a brick partition³⁸ converting the N.E. end into the Nisi Prius Court and the S.W. end into the Crown Court.³⁹ The gallery against the curtain was removed, the oval windows lighting it being blocked up. Additional light was given to the Nisi Prius Court by the insertion of a large five-light mullioned window, made to match the other two in the Crown Court (Pl. III). It cuts one of the oval windows, thereby providing a *terminus post quem* for its construction. The curtain between the new and the old windows was hollowed out to form one, or possibly two urinals and a cell or latrine, lighted by two small square-headed windows.⁴⁰ In place of the gallery removed, two new ones were erected against the partition between the two courts.⁴¹ Against the exterior of the S. wall Hammett built "a commodious and elegant grand jury room."⁴² This, with the adjoining witnesses' room, formed the upper floor of a portico supported on brick arches and wooden pillars, being built partly of re-used material. A carved escutcheon bearing the arms of the See of Winchester impaling those of Horne with the inscription CRVX ET VANITAS and the date 1577 was built into the wall.

There is no record of further alterations until 1816, when, owing to the decayed state of the Great Hall the town was once more in danger of losing the assizes. The sum of two hundred pounds, raised by public subscription, was laid out on the courts,

most of the money being spent on the provision of improved accommodation for the judges, counsel and officers of the courts.⁴³ This accommodation consisted of a single-storey lean-to structure of irregular plan, "composed of timber principally with a few bricks."⁴⁴ It was built against as much of the exterior of the inner wall of the Great Hall as was left after the construction of the grand jury room.⁴⁵ Access to the courts was provided by piercing numerous doorways in the 13th century wall,⁴⁶ (thereby materially increasing the difficulty of determining its architectural history when the masonry was exposed in 1952).

Savage, from whom the account of the 1816 alterations is mainly taken, makes no reference to a new roof; and it is unlikely that the £200 expended included this item. The present low-pitched roof, composed partly of re-used timbers from its predecessor was designed for and was concealed by a flat plaster ceiling. The N.E. end was hipped, to the great disadvantage of the building's appearance. A probable date for the installation of the new roof, which must have been constructed before 1853,⁴⁷ is 1839, when the Judges' Lodgings were taken over and managed by a company floated for the purpose.⁴⁸

The Assizes were held in Taunton Castle for the last time in 1857,⁴⁹ but the Great Hall continued to be used for assemblies, etc. In about 1863 the partition between the two court rooms was removed and a fourth stone mullioned window of four lights was inserted in the curtain to the S.W. of Hammett's. The long gallery on the inner wall was retained, but that erected against the N.E. wall of the former Crown Court was removed to the S.W. end.⁵⁰ The Great Hall was in this state when the Society took possession of the Castle in 1874. Between that year and 1877 the galleries were removed and the accretions of 1816 swept away, with certain other post-medieval buildings in the Inner Ward.⁵¹ In 1899-1900 the plaster ceiling was removed and a series of functionless brackets was affixed to the ends of the tie-beams.⁵² The Great Hall had then assumed the form in which it was known up to 1952.⁵³

THE CAMERA AFTER THE CIVIL WAR.

The later architectural history of the Camera and its sub-vault may, as far as it can be made out, be summarised as follows:—

In the 17th century a long two-light window with stone or wooden mullion and transom was inserted in the S.W. wall.⁵⁴ From its size and position it is unlikely to have predated the Civil War, and it is not unreasonable to assign it to the same period as that of the insertion of the two large windows in the Great Hall; that is to say, after 1659.

In the 18th century, perhaps at the time of the enlargement of the Great Hall, the roof was either rebuilt or much altered as the 1773 sketch shews a hipped roof flanked by a crumbling parapet (Pl. I). The Camera was evidently divided into two floors, for the drawing shows a pair of windows of 18th century type at the S.E. end on a level with the parapet and overlooking the ruinous round tower.

Between 1785 and 1789⁵⁵ Hammett made extensive alterations to the Camera block. How much he did to the roof cannot be determined, as the perspective of the 1773 drawing leaves much to be desired. The parapet was repaired and adorned with battlements. Four pointed sash-windows were inserted in the S.W. wall (Pl. IIb), which was faced with brick internally. The more westerly of the two 13th century pointed windows in the N.W. end wall was blocked and a fireplace built in the embrasure. The other was replaced by a sash window similar to those in the S.W. wall. The Camera itself was divided up into four bedrooms with attics above.⁵⁶

The Camera was almost certainly the large room referred to by Toulmin as having been "formerly used as an assembly-room, as a theatre, as an armory for the militia and for other purposes."⁵⁷ He does not, however, make any mention of its being converted into four rooms; though it is difficult to see how Hammett could otherwise have provided enough bedrooms for the dwelling-house into which this part of the castle was converted.

The Camera remained essentially in this state until 1884, when it was converted once more into a single room. The walls were raised by about seven feet and a new high-pitched timber roof was constructed. The 13th century pointed window was unblocked and a replica of the original inserted in place of the adjacent sash-window.

The "dungeon for prisoners," referred to by Toulmin,⁵⁸ can no doubt be identified with the sub-vault of the Camera, and it is almost certainly the "Saxon Arch" which Hammett converted

into an apartment,⁵⁹ lighting it by the insertion of a large sash-window in the N.W. end and cutting through 13 ft. of masonry to make a doorway and fanlight into the S.W. wall (Pl. I Ib). It was used, until 1816, as the indictment room.⁶⁰ Examination of the exposed medieval masonry shews that the floor has been lowered by about a foot. That this alteration cannot have been made later than Hammett's time is proved by the fact that the doorway, which he made to communicate with the Crown Court, was constructed when the floor was at its present level. There is no reason to believe that lowering of the floor was earlier. In 1816 the doorway was blocked up and converted into a cupboard.⁶¹ The former indictment room was made the dining room of the Judge's Lodgings, the S.E. end being partitioned off to form an ante-room and a china pantry.

THE WELL

The well discovered in Trench II was situated (measuring from its centre) 18 ft. 6 ins. from the N.E. wall of the 13th century Hall and 9 ft. from the curtain. As has been mentioned above (p. 73) the well-head and the first 3 ft. 6 in. of the steening were destroyed as a result of the bombardment during the Civil War. Their site was occupied by a pit, the contents of which was continuous with the filling of the well.

When emptied, the well was found to be 21 ft. 8 ins. deep. It was circular in section, its diameter from the highest surviving part of the steening to 18 ft. 6 ins. being 4 ft., tapering to 3 ft. 6 ins. at 20 ft., and with a rounded bottom. The steening, which consisted of blocks of lias, with an occasional brick (identical with those found in the filling) ceased at 16 ft. 6 ins. The workmanship was not good. The depth of water on 6 October, 1952, was 11 ft. 8 ins., and when drained the well refilled at the rate of about 5 ft. in 24 hours.

The well had been filled to ground level with a mixture of coal-ashes, building debris and general household and kitchen refuse, including a large amount of pottery. There were no signs of stratification and the filling was evidently carried out in a single operation, fragments of the same pot being found at various levels. No residue of manifestly earlier pottery was found at the bottom.

PLATE IV.

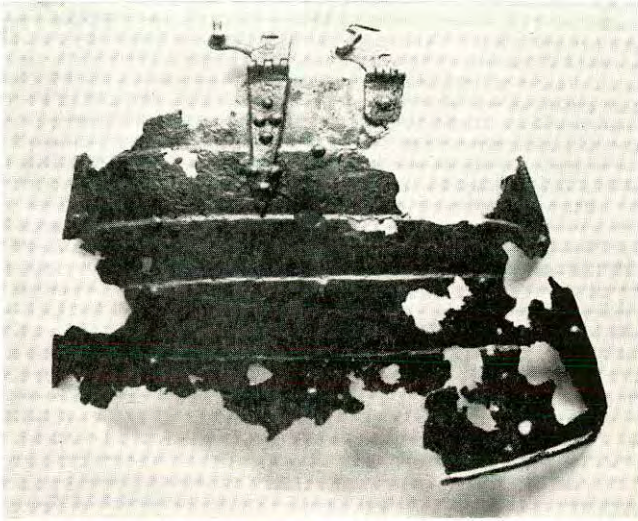


Photo : R. C. Sansome

(a) Pikeman's Tasset from the Well, Taunton, 1952

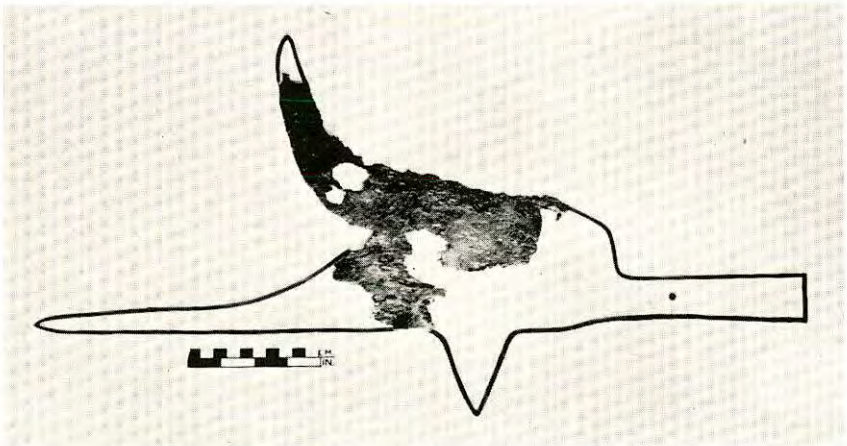


Photo : R. C. Sansome

(b) "Brown Bill" From the Well, Taunton Castle, 1852.
Restored outline based on an example from Sudbury, Suffolk.

The well had, therefore, either been recently and thoroughly cleaned out, or was sunk only a short time before it became disused.

The most important objects found in the filling of the well are described below. All are now in the Society's Museum.

I. ARMS AND ARMOUR.

1. Pikeman's tasset (right). (Pl.IVa). Thin sheet-iron, made in one piece, with imitation lames and functionless rivets. Right-hand catch for attachment to skirt a replacement. This piece of armour is thin and of poor quality. It may be compared for style with a tasset described and illustrated by Sir G. F. Laking⁶² and assigned by him to the end of the 16th or the beginning of the 17th century.

2. Fragment of blade of "brown bill" (Pl.IVb). This is of the same type as one found at Sudbury, Suffolk, and ascribed by Laking⁶³ to the late 16th century.

3. Socket and base of blade of another (not illustrated). This is much decayed, but there are indications that it was of the same type as 2.

II. BUILDING MATERIALS.

1. *Bricks.* A large number of bricks, nearly all broken, and many with mortar still adhering, were found in the filling of the well. They are all of the same type, the fabric being very coarse and full of large grit with an occasional small pebble. The composition of the grit is consistent with its derivation from a fine gravel laid down by the Tone. There is no reason to doubt that the bricks are of local manufacture. They are normally red and often warped. Their average dimensions are 9 ins. \times 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ ins. \times 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ ins., rather coarser in texture and slightly thicker than those used in the construction of Gray's Almshouses, Taunton, which can be dated on documentary grounds to 1635-1640.⁶⁴ They are comparable with bricks datable to the second quarter of the 17th century rather than those made at a later period as the following table shews:—

		DIMENSIONS IN INCHES			
Gray's Almshouse (1635-40)	...	9	4 $\frac{1}{4}$	2	
Well, Taunton Castle	...	9	4 $\frac{1}{4}$	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	
Hamwood, Trull (c. 1640)	...	9	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	
Oval windows, Great Hall (c. 1700)	...	9	4 $\frac{1}{4}$	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	
Market House, Taunton (1772)	...	8 $\frac{3}{4}$	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 $\frac{3}{4}$	
11, Hammet St., Taunton (1788)	...	9	4 $\frac{1}{4}$	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	
Paul's Meeting, Taunton (1795)	...	9	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	

From this it will be seen that the dimensions of the bricks from the well fall between those from Gray's Almshouse and those from Hamwood and that the bricks made during the second quarter of the 17th century are appreciably thinner than those made in the 18th century and probably also in the last quarter of the 17th. It is not unreasonable to date them to the second quarter of the 17th century.

2. *Ridge-tiles.* A few occurred in the filling, all of which, when recognizable, belonged to Fox's Class IV.⁶⁵ The date-range for this class has not yet been determined, but a nearly complete set may be seen *in situ* on the roof of the W. wing of Poundisford Park, near Taunton (built c. 1548). The manufacture of this class may well have continued to the last quarter of the 16th century, and this is borne out by the fabric of those from the well, which is of a post-medieval type and comparable with that of the associated pottery. It is very likely that they came from the roof of the Hall, the N.E. end of which must have been badly damaged, if not destroyed during the Civil War (see p. 73). It has also been suggested above that the Hall was re-roofed in or about 1578 (see p. 72), and it is to this date that the ridge-tiles may be assigned.

3. *Roofing-slates.* Numerous fragments were found. They were all of the local Middle Devonian slate, the nearest source of which is the S.E. end of the Quantock Hills, between Broomfield and Adsborough. They may well have come from the slate-quarries near Rooks Castle (N.G.R. 31/252323), which were being worked at least as early as the 14th century⁶⁶ and continued until the 19th.

III. CLAY PIPES.

The bowls of three pipes were found (Fig. 8). All belong to the same type and are almost certainly by the same unknown maker (they are unmarked). They are intermediate between Type 4c and Type 5b of Oswald's classification,⁶⁷ which, according to his dating, would give a range between 1630 and 1670. This is not inconsistent with the suggested dating of the bricks.

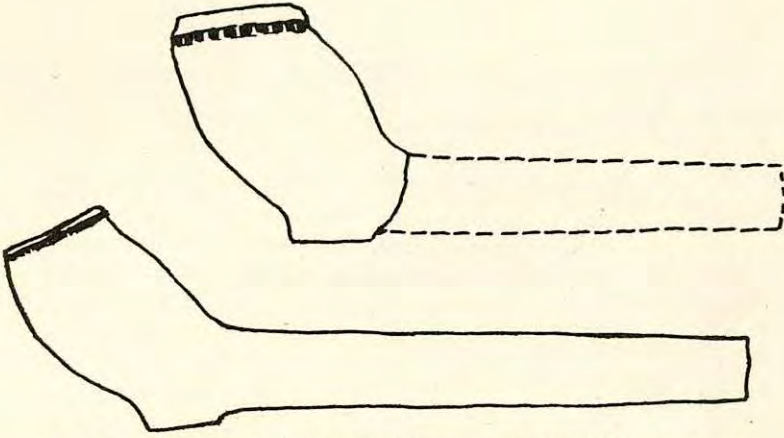


Fig. 8. Clay Pipes from the Well, Taunton Castle, 1952. Scale 1/1.

IV. POTTERY.

The filling of the well contained a representative series of domestic pottery datable, according to associated objects considered above, to the first half of the 17th century and probably continuing into the first decade of the second. (Figs. 9-12)

Donyatt Wares

With the exception of three (4, 7 and 15) all the vessels found were made at Donyatt, near Ilminster. In every example the fabric and technique and in many the form itself could be matched with wasters from the Donyatt kiln-sites.

The fabric is fine-grained, rather soft, free from sand and normally red, though it is often discoloured owing to uneven firing. The lead glaze, which is tinged with yellow owing to impurities, is usually applied to the interior of the vessel, in contradistinction to the local medieval technique where the glaze is always external. Decoration, when used, consists of a covering of white slip (6, 8) or a design is incised through the slip, exposing the red fabric beneath ("sgraffito" technique). The design is usually made while the vessel is rotating on the wheel, and consists basically of a close spiral concentric with the axis of rotation, crossed by a wave-pattern or radial lines (1, 2). On some of the larger vessels (16, 18, 19) the design is combed, producing parallel waves. In the latter type of decoration (as far as this period is

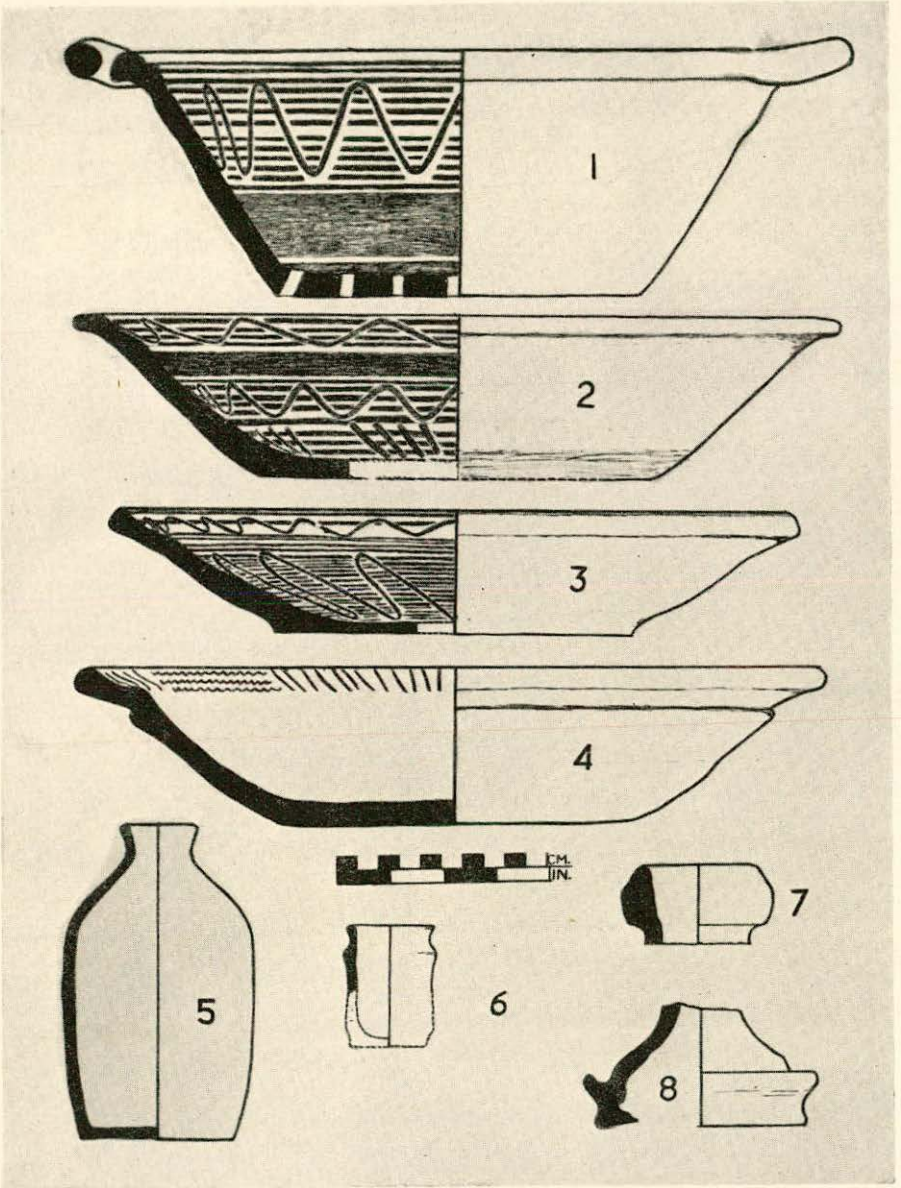


Fig. 9. 17th century Pottery from the Well, Taunton Castle, 1952.

concerned) the spiral element is always omitted. Trailed slip decoration was not used at this period at Donyatt, though it was both before and after. Nicking the edge of a flanged rim or cordon (10), moulding (11) and thumb pressing (19) were also employed.

In form there is a marked break-away from the medieval tradition, though there is no reason to believe that pottery was not made continuously at Donyatt throughout the period. With the change in style there is a concomitant change in fabric, the hard, thinly potted and predominantly grey ware familiar in late medieval local pottery being replaced by the comparatively soft fabric described in the preceding paragraph. The vessels themselves are usually thick-walled, basins and dishes normally having a substantial and often flanged rim (1, 10, 11). Jugs and drinking-pots are often copied from Rhenish stoneware models with globular or pear-shaped bodies and cylindrical necks, such as the "tiger-ware" jugs imported during the second half of the 16th century, and the often elaborate products of Raeren or Grenzau characteristic of the first half of the 17th (12, 13, 17).⁶⁸ In the handles of these copies, however, the medieval tradition is carried on. They are nearly circular in section, with a more or less pronounced groove down the back (12, 14). Numerous transitional forms among the waster-heaps at Donyatt make it clear that they are derived from the late medieval strap-handle, which itself persists in 18. Another medieval survival is the thumb-pressing round the outside of the rim and on the applied strip round the shoulder in 19. Another form represented by fragments of several vessels is the bucket-handled pitcher (16). This seems to be a characteristic 17th century west country type. Many fragments come from the Outer Moat and from other Taunton sites, and pieces of numerous vessels occur among the kiln-wasters at Donyatt. This type of pitcher was made at at least one other pottery (at present unidentified) which served S.E. Somerset, and the Museum possesses several complete examples of these from Charlton Mackrell.

NOTES ON THE POTTERY ILLUSTRATIONS

FIG 9

1. *Colander*. Interior glazed, the upper half slip-covered with sgraffito decoration. Interior of base similarly decorated.

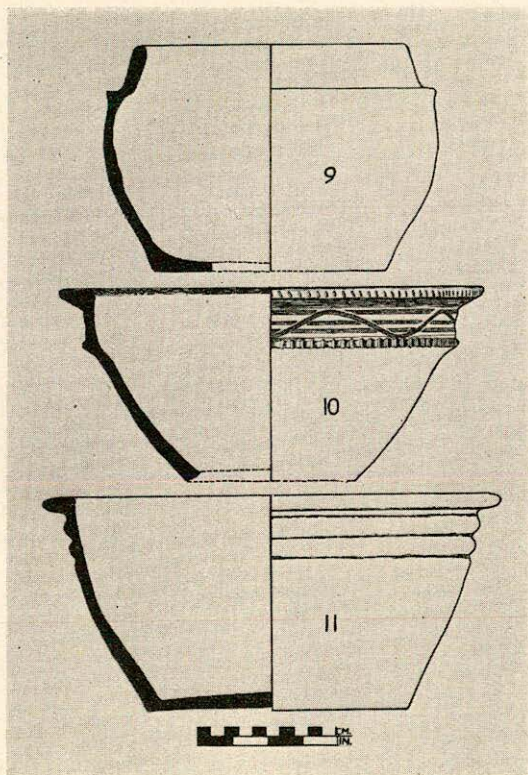


Fig. 10. 17th century Pottery from the Well,
Taunton Castle, 1952.

2. *Dish*. Base-angle knife-trimmed. Interior glazed and slip-covered with sgraffiato decoration.
3. *Dish*. Distinctly waisted at base, in contrast to 2. A form intermediate between this and 2 comes from the Outer Moat.
4. *Dish*. Differs from 1-3 both in form and decoration. It closely resembles a dish from the Outer Moat, which itself belongs to a class of pottery well represented there and from other sites in Taunton. This class has not been found at the kiln-sites at Donyatt. The decoration is of the same type as that on the bucket-handled pitchers from Charlton Mackrell, referred to above, and also on some stylistically earlier jugs from Priddy (in Wells Museum).
5. *Bottle*. Interior of neck and exterior, nearly to base, glazed.
6. *Ointment-pot*. Restored from a nearly complete example from Taunton Castle. Exterior slip-covered and glazed. This is clearly derived from the imported or native tin-glazed albarello.
7. *Mouth of large bottle or amphora*. Hard, pinkish-grey sandy ware, with whitish-grey surfaces. Unglazed. This is almost certainly an import. A fragment of an almost identical, but larger vessel comes from the Pithay, Bristol (in City Museum, Bristol).
8. *Base of candlestick*. Exterior slip-covered and glazed. This is a copy in earthenware of a metal form datable to the first half of the 17th century.⁶⁹ Several more of this type come from the outer moat and from other sites in Taunton, the nearest parallel to this particular example being from Fore Street (in the Society's Museum).

FIG. 10

9. *Bowl*. Neck and interior glazed. A smaller example of this form, the neck of which bears sgraffito decoration, comes from the Outer Moat.
10. *Bowl*. This and 9 are end-members of a series, usually decorated, connected by a number of intermediate forms, from both the well and the Outer Moat.
11. *Bowl*. This example, with strongly moulded neck, can also be connected with 9 by intermediate forms, which are usually decorated.

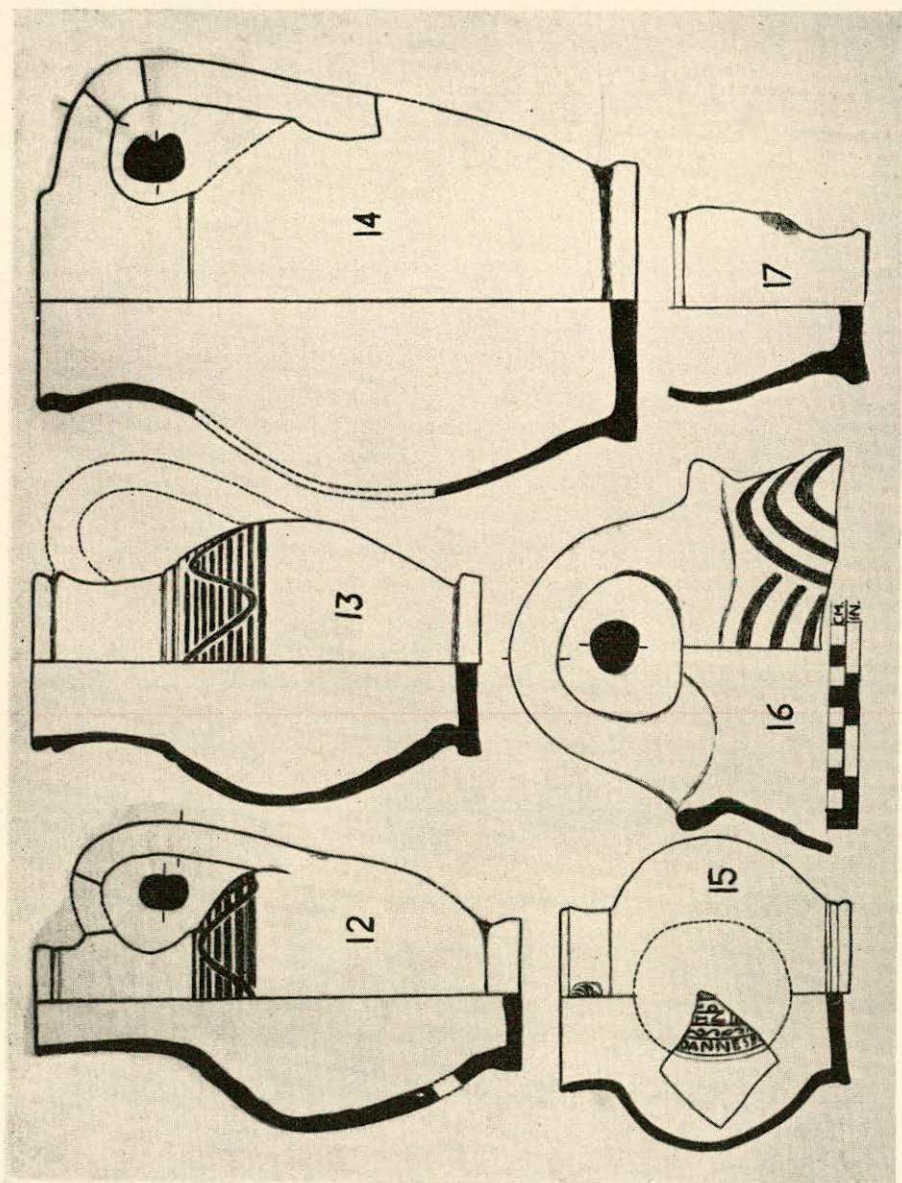


FIG. 11. 174L. Pottery: from the W. II. Trench. C. 4. 1052

FIG. 11

12. *Jug.* Interior of neck and exterior of body, almost to foot, glazed. Shoulder slip-covered with sgraffiato decoration. This form is derived from an imported Rhenish stoneware prototype, such as a jug from Grenzau of *c.* 1630, illustrated by W. B. Honey.⁷⁰
13. *Jug.* Decoration similar to that on 12. Handle restored from a fragment of a similar, though smaller vessel from the Outer Moat.
14. *Jug.* Suggested reconstruction from a number of fragments. Interior, nearly to bottom, covered with a very shiny greenish-brown glaze. The form of this jug is influenced predominantly by the medieval tradition, and may be regarded with 12 as end-members of a series more or less influenced by imports from the Rhineland.
15. *Jug, pale-grey, salt-glazed stoneware.* Neck decorated with applied stamped rosettes; body with brown, oval applied stamped medallion inscribed round the edge (I)OANNESP(A). In the centre part of a monogram or merchant's mark survives. Reconstructed from a number of fragments. This is an import from the Rhineland. The form is not typical.
16. *Top part of bucket-handled pitcher.* Interior glazed: shoulder slip-covered, with combed sgraffiato decoration.
17. *Lower part of small jug or drinking-pot,* covered inside and out with dark brown glaze. This is the only example from the well of a class much better represented in the Outer Moat, and at the Donyatt kiln-sites, all members of which are strongly influenced by Rhenish stoneware forms.

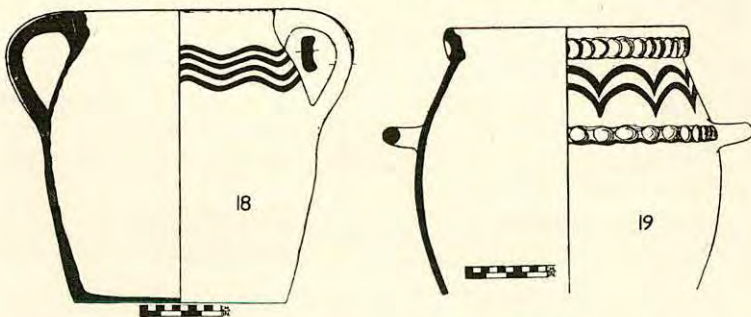


Fig. 12. 17th century Storage-Jars from the Well, Taunton Castle.

FIG. 12

18. *Large two-handled storage-jar.* Interior glazed : shoulder slip-covered and partly glazed with combed sgraffiato decoration. A handle, which must have belonged to a similar vessel comes from the Outer Moat.
19. *Large two-handled storage jar.* Interior glazed. Shoulder slip-covered and partly glazed, with combed sgraffiato decoration. The applied thumbed decoration round the rim and on the body is a medieval survival. It persists on Donyatt wares until the 18th century.

DATE OF THE FILLING OF THE WELL

It is unfortunate that space does not permit the description of the pottery recovered in 1926 from the Outer Moat to the E. of the Keep,⁷¹ but it may be said here that nearly all types found in the well are represented in this deposit, with a number of others in addition. The clay pipes are, on the whole, a little more advanced in form than those from the well, but comparison between the two assemblages shews clearly that there can be little difference in date between them. It has already been suggested that the Outer Moat was filled up (probably only partially) in 1662,⁷² and there is every reason to accept this date. The evidence provided by the clay pipes is consistent with a slightly later date for the filling of this part of the Outer Moat than that of the well, and on these grounds the year 1659, when the curtain was repaired (see p. 74), may be suggested as a likely date for the latter.

The dating of the well itself presents some difficulty as there is little in the way of positive evidence to bring forward. The roughness of the steening, which may be contrasted with the fine ashlar work to be seen in the square well in the Keep,⁷³ argues hurried construction. The presence of bricks in the steening (unless they represent later patching) makes a 17th century date almost certain.⁷⁴ Its position, right away from the centre of the courtyard and with, apparently, no architectural relation to it, also argues that this is not the original well, but is, perhaps, the latest of a series sunk from time to time and filled up on becoming too foul to use. Taking all these points into consideration, it is suggested that this well dates from the time of the Civil War and was sunk to supply the garrison during the siege.

THE BEARING OF THE RECENT DISCOVERIES ON THE HISTORY OF
THE CASTLE

The bearing of the results obtained during the excavations of 1952 on the general history of Taunton Castle must now be considered. The time has not yet come for a full survey of the architectural and historical development of the buildings. A fuller investigation of the surviving remains will be needed before this can be written, while the systematic examination of the Pipe Rolls of the Bishops of Winchester, now being carried out by Mr. T. J. Hunt, will certainly throw light on the problems involved. In the meantime the fullest and best account remains that published in 1941 by Mr. A. W. Vivian-Neal and Mr. H. St. George Gray.⁷⁵ The present note is based on their work and only discusses those parts which need modification in the light of the latest discoveries.

The pre-Conquest rampart beneath the floor of the Great Hall (p. 59) raises the question of the relation between the Castle and the town of Taunton. Taunton at the time of the Norman Conquest was both a borough⁷⁶ and the seat of a monastery, an "old Minster" to use the vernacular term. The line of the medieval town defences is well shewn on the map (Fig. 13). They start at the S. end of the present bridge across the Tone, where the North Gate lay at the junction of North Street and St. James Street. From that point they ran S.E. to the East Gate,⁷⁷ which lay immediately to the E. of Gray's Almshouses. This part of the line is still marked by the boundary between the parishes of St. James and St. Mary Magdalene; it was the borough boundary before the Reform Act of 1832. From the East Gate the line ran southward and westward along the Hurle Ditch⁷⁸ to join the stream known as the Town Ditch.⁷⁹ This flowed down the W. side of the defences to the point where they reached the S.W. corner of the Outer Bailey of the Castle. They then followed the line of the castle ramparts on the W. and N. back to the N. Gate. These defences enclose an area of about 57 acres, within which the modern map shews an extensive survival of the long narrow burgage tenements of the medieval borough. The sharp angles made by the S. and E. sides of the outer moat of the castle, where they join these defences, shew that this moat is secondary and strongly suggests that the ramparts of the later borough follow the line of the defences of the pre-Conquest burgh.

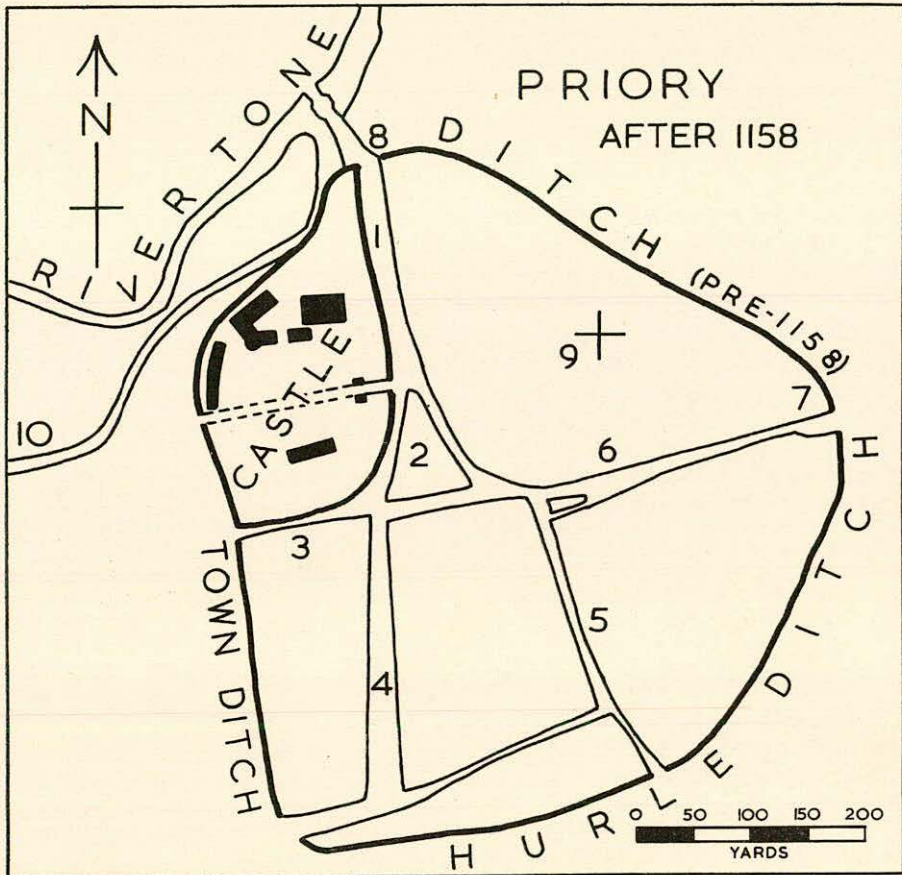


Fig. 13. TAUNTON. Plan shewing relation between the Castle and the medieval Borough. Based on a Town plan of 1849.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. North Street. | 6. East Street. |
| 2. Cornhill. | 7. East Gate. |
| 3. Hunt's Court (now Bath Place). | 8. North Gate and Tone Bridge. |
| 4. High Street. | 9. Church of St. Mary Magdalene. |
| 5. Paul Street. | 10. Mill-Stream. |

Taunton in Saxon days formed the centre of an extensive estate of 54 hides, which belonged to the Bishops of Winchester.⁸⁰ The oldest document in the 12th century cartulary is a charter of 737,⁸¹ which the monks of Winchester later interpreted as the

original gift of the estate.⁸² But the heading of the charter (*Carta Frithewith Reginae de Tanton*) is clearly a later interpolation and the document, as the text shews, is a confirmation by King Athelheard of Wessex (726-40) of a gift by the queen, to which he had added additional lands. The gift of the queen is described as the estate in Taunton (*Rus in Tanton*) and is not more closely particularised. This is not the earliest reference to Taunton. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* under the year 722 inserts the enigmatic statement: "In this year Queen Aethelburg destroyed Taunton which Ine had previously built."⁸³ Henry of Huntingdon, writing in the 12th century, explains this by connecting the entry with the revolt of Eadbert, who is supposed to have taken refuge in Taunton.⁸⁴ For our present purpose these details are irrelevant. The *Chronicle* is here based on a contemporary source and is good evidence of the existence of a settlement with some sort of defensive enclosure at Taunton as early as the time of King Ine of Wessex (688-726). The extensive grant of 54 hides to the Bishop of Winchester has been compared with similar grants at Chilcombe in Hampshire and Downton in Wiltshire, both of which go back to the earliest days of Christianity in Wessex.⁸⁵ Taunton must in origin have been a similar royal grant and its donation to the Bishop of Winchester points to a period before the division of the Diocese in 705. The next comparable grant to the west, that of 20 hides at Crediton, is made to the Bishop of Sherborne in 739.⁸⁶

How soon the defences of Taunton developed is unknown. The episode of 721 may have concerned no more than the hedge or fence round a timber hall and buildings. Taunton does not figure in the *Burghal Hidage*, a list of national fortresses drawn up in the early 10th century. But coins were struck there at least from the time of Aethelred II (969-1014)⁸⁷ and the laws of Athelstan (925-39) forbade the coinage of money except in a port or town.⁸⁸

The Saxon monastery is first mentioned in a charter of 904.⁸⁹ It was already old by that date and had doubtless been founded soon after the original grant to the Bishop of Winchester, in order to provide for the religious needs of the estate. These Saxon monasteries were normally communities of priests, with a collegiate rather than a monastic organization. At Taunton this monastery survived into the 12th century. The priests of Taunton are shewn in the *Geld Inquisition* (1086) as holding two hides and

one virgate of the Bishop of Winchester.⁹⁰ About 1120 Bishop William Giffard replaced the priests with Augustinian Canons. The first foundation was for five brethren, among whom was the famous Master Guy of Merton. An attempt was made to incorporate the old priests into the new community, but in vain.⁹¹ In 1158 Bishop Henry of Blois gave the Augustinian Canons land outside the N.E. side of the town, on which to build the Priory of St. Peter and St. Paul.⁹² The canons became responsible for the services of the churches on the Bishop of Winchester's estates. The Castle at Taunton, like other English castles, was a creation of the Norman Age, and as we have shewn, the line of the moat facing the town is secondary to the defences of the Saxon Burh (Fig. 14). Tradition describes the building of this Castle to Bishop William Giffard (1107-29). It was of the motte and bailey type with defences of earth and timber. The motte stood at the N.E. corner, near the bridge across the Tone.

The stone keep, set on the site of the motte, was explored by Mr. St. George Gray between 1924 and 1929.⁹³ It was a massive rectangular tower surrounded by its own moat. The plan could not be fully established, but there is evidence of a forebuilding on the S. side. The keep was of ashlar with a series of chamfered offsets at the base of the wall. The surrounding moat, where it was opened on the S. and S.W. sides, was revetted with fine ashlar masonry. The character of this work indicates the reign of King Henry II (1154-89). The only datable object, a corbel found at the bottom of the well, bears this out. On historical grounds the work should probably be ascribed to the later years of Bishop Henry de Blois (ob. 1171) and dated 1160-70.

The 13th century saw the formation of the present inner ward with its own line of defences separating the dwelling of the Bishop from the main part of the Castle. The new inner defences belong to the early years of the century. The remodelling of the buildings within the inner ward was probably carried out between 1240 and 1250. The main gatehouse of the Castle, of which the gateway or Castle Bow survives, was rebuilt towards the end of the century. Old drawings shew a fine hall with windows of early Decorated character on the upper floor. This would normally serve as the dwelling of the Constable and was probably designed for this purpose at Taunton.

NOTES

- 1 Measurements, unless otherwise stated, are internal.
- 2 The well will be described later in connection with the pottery (p. 81).
- 3 The masonry has been replastered, but the line of the vaults is marked on the wall surface in the store room at the end of the Great Hall.
- 4 Most of the upper part of the Camera and of the adjacent curtain is rubble faced with small stone, mostly chert. Much of this work is clearly of the late 18th century and a comparison with other dated buildings convinces us that chert rubble of this type is not used at Taunton in medieval buildings.
- 5 Cf. the similar "early Norman" window at Corfe Castle (*Archæologia*, lxxix (1929), 95).
- 6 *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, lxxxvi (1940-41), 59 and 63-5.
- 7 *Ant. Journ.*, xxi (1941), 67; Pl. XIII.
- 8 *Royal Commission on Historical Monuments: West Dorset*, 64.
- 9 Margaret Wood in *Arch. Journ.*, xcii (1935), 216 and 173, where further references will be found.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 207; E. H. Stone, *Devizes Castle*, 26 and 114.
- 11 *Royal Commission on Historical Monuments: West London*, 121.
- 12 Strzygowski, *Early Christian Art in Northern Europe*, 118.
- 13 William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum* (Rolls Series, li, 199): quattuor enim postes solo infixi totam suspendunt machinam, quattuor cancellis opere spherico in circuitu ductis.
- 14 *Arch. Journ.*, cv, suppl., 64; Parker and Turner, *Domestic Architecture of the Middle Ages*, i, 257.
- 15 The more prominent opening further to the N.E., in which a large late medieval overmantel from a house in Taunton has been inserted, is post Restoration, reformed in 1953.
- 16 Official Guide: Grosmont Castle (Ministry of Works).
- 17 H. Hall, *The Pipe Roll of the Bishopric of Winchester for . . . 1208/9*, p. 68.
- 18 We are much indebted to Mr. Hunt for this information.
- 19 *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, lvi (1910), ii, 46; fig. 13 and 14.
- 20 *Arch. Journ.*, cv, suppl., 74; Parker, *Architectural Antiquities of the City of Wells*.
- 21 *Arch. Camb.* xciii (1938), 6.
- 22 Official Guide: The Bishop's Palace, St. Davids (Ministry of Works).
- 23 Other work in this area, in particular the room between the chapel and the gate, may be rather earlier in date.
- 24 J. Toulmin, *History of Taunton* (1791), 48.
- 25 J. Savage, *History of Taunton* (1822), 261.
- 26 J. Houghton Spencer, *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, lvi (1910), ii, 48, fig. 17.
- 27 *Cal. State Papers, Domestic*, 23 Sep., 1560.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 25 May, 1564.
- 29 A. W. Vivian-Neal and H. St. George Gray, *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, lxxxvi (1940), ii, 53.

- 30 R. G. Hedworth Whitty, *The Court of Taunton in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (1934), 24. There is an 18th century copy of the 1647 Presentment in the possession of the Society (Taunton Castle MS., TN. 16).
- 31 *Quarter Sessions Records for the County of Somerset*, Som. Record. Soc., xxviii (1912), 177.
- 32 *Ibid.*, xxiv.
- 33 A similar phenomenon can be observed in Oake church, where a large window, said to have come from Taunton Priory, has been inserted inside out.
- 34 The order of the Council of State dated 13 Oct., 1651, directing that Taunton Castle be dismantled seems to have been forgotten or shelved. Cf. *Cal. State Papers, Domestic*, 1651, 13 Oct. ; 27 Oct., No. 16 ; 30 Oct. ; 14 Nov., Nos. 6, 7, 8 ; 25 Nov., No. 1.
- 35 R. G. Hedworth Whitty, *op. cit.*, 86.
- 36 The external appearance of the Great Hall at this period can be judged from a print of c. 1800 in the possession of the Society (Pl. III). The blocked oval windows can be clearly seen. Subsequent work has largely obliterated these features.
- 37 The print of c. 1800 shews a single five-light mullioned window. This may be a mistake on the part of the artist. The double window was there in 1875 (cf. plan of that date in possession of the Society).
- 38 MS. note book of Edwin Sloper (d. 1905) in the possession of the Society. This MS., besides other important material, contains the only known description of the interior of the Great Hall as it was before the alterations of c. 1863 and 1874-5.
- 39 J. Savage, *op. cit.*, 264.
- 40 cf. Pl. III.
- 41 Sloper MS.
- 42 J. Toulmin, *op. cit.*, 51-2.
- 43 J. Savage, *op. cit.*, 263.
- 44 Sloper MS.
- 45 These additions are shewn in outline in Liversedge's plan of Taunton Castle (*Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, iv (1853), ii, 32), and in detail, after the removal of the partition, in J. Houghton Spencer's plan, dated 1875, in the possession of the Society.
- 46 The purpose of each door is given in Sloper MS.
- 47 *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, iv (1853), ii, 29.
- 48 Cf. Minute Book of the Company, Taunton Castle MS., TN. 147.
- 49 Sloper MS.
- 50 Sloper MS.
- 51 Sloper MS.
- 52 J. Houghton Spencer, *op. cit.*, 39. The Society possesses a photograph of the interior of the Great Hall taken before the ceiling was removed.
- 53 *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, xlvi (1902). Frontispiece.
- 54 Shewn in a drawing, dated 1773, in possession of the Society (Pl. I.) This is the earliest known representation of Taunton Castle and it is of particular importance, in spite of bad drawing, as it shews the Castle before it was altered by Hammett.

- 55 A *terminus ante quem* is given by a drawing of Taunton Castle, dated 1789, by Coplestone Warre Bampffield, in the possession of the Society. It is the original of the engraving in Toulmin's *History of Taunton*.
- 56 This arrangement is shewn in the plan of 1875.
- 57 *Op. cit.*, 49, 50.
- 58 *Op. cit.*, 50.
- 59 F. Warre, *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, iv (1853), ii, 30.
- 60 Sloper MS.
- 61 It is shewn as such in the plan of 1875.
- 62 *A Record of European Arms and Armour*, v (1922), 57 and fig. 1465b.
- 63 *Op. cit.*, iii (1920), 115 and fig. 914.
- 64 The limiting dates are given by two deeds among the Society's MSS. (1), 20 March, 10 Car. I: Sir William Portman to Robert Gray; conveyance of the land on which the Almshouse was built. (2) Exemplification of a decree, 29 May, 15 Car. I, which recites that Robert Gray "did . . . erect a faire house and Chappell."
- 65 *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, lxxxv (1939), ii, 126.
- 66 In the Churchwardens' Accounts of St. Mary, Bridgwater, for 1393-4 there is an entry for the purchase of 4200 stone roofing tiles "emptis apud Rokescastell." *Bridgwater Borough Archives, 1377-1400*. S.R.S., liii (1938), 229.
- 67 A. Oswald, *Arch. News Letter*, iii (1950-1), 155-7.
- 68 The copying of Rhenish stoneware in earthenware has been noticed by M. R. Holmes, *Antiq. J.*, xxxi (1951), 176 and Pl. XXIVa.
- 69 Cf. A. O. Curle, *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, lx (1925-6), 199, fig. 10, nos. 1-3.
- 70 *European Ceramic Art* (1949), Pl. 10c.
- 71 Vivian-Neal and Gray, *op. cit.*, 58-9. N.B. In the paragraph alluding to the pottery the words 'lead-glaze' and 'salt-glaze' should be transposed.
- 72 *Ibid.* The clay pipes from the W. side of the Outer Moat, on the site of the Gaumont Cinema, suggest a date in the late 17th or early 18th century.
- 73 Vivian-Neal and Gray, *op. cit.*, 64.
- 74 Stylistically Gray's Almshouse (see p. 79) is the earliest brick building in the neighbourhood.
- 75 *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, lxxxvi, ii, 45-78.
- 76 Maitland, *Domesday Day Book and Beyond*, 214.
- 77 Charter of Henry de Blois, 11 October, 1158, boundary between Town and Priory: "From the Eastgate along the ditch to the Northgate," quoted by A. W. Vivian-Neal, *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, lxxxviii (1942), ii, 118.
- 78 Hurle Ditch. Conveyance, 20 March, 10 Car. I, Sir William Portman to Robert Gray, of the site of Gray's Almshouses bounded by "the Towne ditch commonly called Hurle ditch on the South." Survey of Taunton Deane, 1647-18th century copy in possession of the Society—(Taunton Castle MS. TN. 16, f. 8): Under Holway Hundred and Tithing:—"Philip Lissant holdeth . . . Four acres and half upon Hureditch."

- 79 Town Ditch. Deed of 3 March, 32 Car. II : John Whetham the elder to Edward Dymond. Conveys property in Fore Street, Taunton, bounded by "the Town Ditch on the west part and Fore Street on the east," transcribed by Edwin Sloper. (Sloper MS.)
- 80 Domesday Book in *V.C.H. : Somerset*, i, 442.
- 81 Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum*, i, 228 ; No. 158.
- 82 See the 12th century *Annales Wintonienses* in *Dugdale Monasticum Anglicanum* (1846), i, 205.
- 83 *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, s.a. 722 (Rolls Series, xxiii, ii, 39).
- 84 *Historia Anglorum* (Rolls Series, lxxiv, 112) ; but cf. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon-England*, 70.
- 85 Maitland, *op. cit.*, 498 ; cf. *ibid.*, 113.
- 86 Napier and Stevenson, *Crawford Charters*, No. 1.
- 87 G. C. Brooke, *English Coins*, 76.
- 88 Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 158/9 (Athelstan 11, 14).
- 89 Kemble, *Codex Diplomaticus Aevi Saxonici*, v, 155 ; No. 1082.
- 90 *Inquisitio Geldi* in *V.C.H. : Somerset*, i, 527.
- 91 *Epistola de vita venerabilis Guidonis meritonensis* in British Museum Royal MS. 8 E ix, fol. 93 (quoted by J. C. Dickinson, *The Origins of the Austin Canons and their Introduction into England*, 118 and 242. For the foundation of Taunton Priory *ibid.*, 118, and for a fuller history of the house *V.C.H. : Somerset*, ii, 141.
- 92 A. W. Goodman, *Winchester Cathedral Cartulary*, 198 ; No. 459.
- 93 *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* (1940), lxxxvi, ii, 63.