

III.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BALVENIE CASTLE. BY W. DOUGLAS SIMPSON, M.A., D.LITT., F.S.A.SCOT.

I. HISTORICAL SKETCH.

The ruined castle of Balvenie, in Banffshire, occupies a strong position on the left bank of the River Fiddich, a little below the point where that beautiful stream receives the Dullan Water, and about half a mile north of Dufftown (O.S. Map, 6", Banffshire, Sheet xxv). From the knoll on which the castle stands an extensive view over the surrounding country is obtained. It commands (see Sketch Map, fig. 1) the approaches both down and up Glen Fiddich; blocks the outlet from Glen Rinnes, down which the Dullan Water flows; and forbids the passage through the narrow "slack" which leads by the modern Drummuir Castle to Glenisla, and is now traversed by the railway. Moreover, it also sentinels the old hill-road leading over by the Cabrach to Donside, which Edward I. used on his return journey from Elgin, in July 1296.¹ The position of the castle is thus one of considerable tactical and strategic importance; and it may be regarded as a link in the great chain of early strongholds guarding the avenues into the unruly Celtic palatinate of Moravia.² From Huntly or Strathbogie Castle, where on their timbered *motte* the Normanised Celtic Earls of Fife were settled under William the Lion, the high-road led past Balvenie to the de Moravia castle of Boharm, thence to the castle of the de Pollocs at Rothes, and so through the Glen of Rothes towards the Laigh of Moray and the royal castle at Elgin.

¹ For this road, see J. Taylor, *Cabrach Feerings*, pp. 12-16.

² See my paper on Huntly Castle in *Proceedings*, vol. lvi. pp. 148 and 150; also my *The Castle of Kildrummy*, pp. 49-51.

Balvenie Castle is a ruin of high architectural merit and interest. It shows work belonging apparently to the three chief periods of secular construction in Scotland—the thirteenth, the fifteenth, and the later sixteenth centuries; and the special value that attaches to this succession of styles is that the different additions are here not the result of repairs after partial destruction, but of the orderly development of the castle fabric to suit advancing social conditions. The evidences of repeated violent usage, so visible in many others among our greater Scottish castles, seem in this case to be totally absent. Except for the great gate, which has clearly been refashioned after being roughly handled, the present condition of the building seems to be entirely the result of the gradual adaptation of a primitive and purely military castle of *enceinte*, to serve the later purpose of a fortified residence.

The history of the castle, so far as germane to our present purpose, may be very briefly told. In the thirteenth century the lordship of Balvenie is said by old writers¹ to have belonged to the Comyns, but no contemporary verification of this statement seems to be known. Authentic records do not appear until the early fifteenth century, when we find Balvenie in possession of James Douglas, surnamed "The Gross," afterwards seventh Earl of Douglas, first Earl of Avondale and Lord Balvenie. As James Douglas of Balvani, he was present at a General Council held at Inverkeithing on 19th August 1423, when he was appointed a commissioner to treat in London concerning the release of James I.² It has been stated that he obtained Balvenie through his mother, Joanna Moray, heiress of Bothwell.³ If this is so, Balvenie would previously

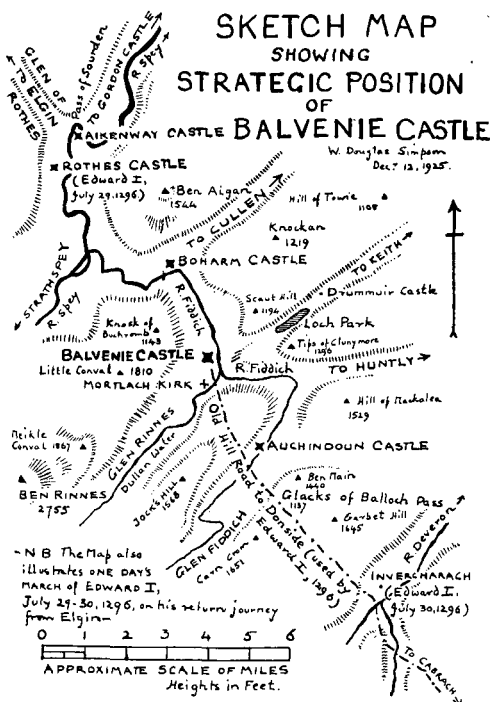


Fig. 1. Balvenie Castle: Strategic Map.

¹ See "Short Account of the Progress of the Lordship of Balveny," written *circa* 1771, printed by Dr W. Cramond in *The Castle and the Lords of Balveny*, p. 34; cf. *ibid.*, p. 10.

² Rhymer's *Fœdera*, vol. x. p. 298; *Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 227.

³ Sir W. Fraser, *The Douglas Book*, vol. i. p. 431, footnote.

have belonged to the great northern family of de Moravia, who in the thirteenth century held the neighbouring castle of Boharm. In Mortlach Church is a slab with a cross of Calvary, inscribed to a *constabularius de Balvenie*, who died in 1420. This is evidence of the existence of a castle, at all events, by that date. With the downfall of the Black Douglasses under James II., Balvenie was involved in the general forfeiture of their estates (1455); and on 25th March 1460 the lordship and castle were bestowed upon John Stewart, first Earl of Atholl, and his wife Margaret, widow of Earl Douglas. The *reddendo* is "one red rose at the chief messuage of the said lordship, at the feast of the nativity of St John the Baptist, in name of blench farm, if asked only."¹

In the hands of the Stewart Earls of Atholl Balvenie remained until the beginning of the seventeenth century. On 24th September 1562 it was honoured by a visit from Queen Mary, then on her northern campaign against the Gordons.² Dying in 1595, John, fifth Earl of Atholl, left four daughters, who in 1610 resigned their interest in the lands to the Crown, by whom the lordship was granted on 6th April of that year, as a new infeftment, to James, Lord Innerneath, second Earl of Atholl in the new creation.³ He had already executed a contract of alienation, disposing it to Lord Abernethy of Saltoun (13th December 1609), who, on 20th April following, received a charter under the Great Seal.⁴ From Lord Saltoun the property passed in 1612 to Sir James Stewart, Lord Ochiltree, who two years later sold it to Robert Innes, fifth baron of Innermarkie, the new owner obtaining a charter under the Great Seal, 26th December 1615.⁵ This Robert Innes was created a Baronet of Nova Scotia by Charles I. in 1631. In the Civil War his son and grandson bore themselves as staunch Royalists, and as a result of their loyalty they incurred heavy losses, which brought about a sale of their estates in or before 1658. After various vicissitudes, Balvenie was purchased in 1687 by Alexander Duff of Braco, ancestor of the ducal house of Fife, in whose possession it still remains. The castle itself had a disturbed history during the civil tumults of the seventeenth century,⁶ and was finally unroofed in 1724, when the new house of Balvenie was built.⁷

¹ *Hist. MSS. Commission*, Appendix to Seventh Report (Atholl Papers), p. 708, No. 48; see also *Registrum Magni Sigilli*, 1424-1513, p. 157, No. 750. Later, the *reddendo* is fixed at two roses (*Ibid.*, 1580-93, pp. 3-4, No. 8; 1609-20, pp. 493-4, No. 1357).

² *Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, vol. ii. pp. 579, 584, 586.

³ *Registrum Magni Sigilli*, 1609-20, p. 101, No. 275.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 103, No. 279.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 493, No. 1357.

⁶ See Wishart's *Deeds of Montrose*, ed. A. D. Murdoch and H. F. Morland Simpson, p. 244, note 3, and p. 304, note 47; also *Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, vol. ix. pp. 447-8.

⁷ See Cramond, *op. cit.*, pp. 20, 26.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE RUINS.

The framework of the castle (see Plan, fig. 2) is a large and ancient quadrangular wall of *enceinte*, into which have been worked additions

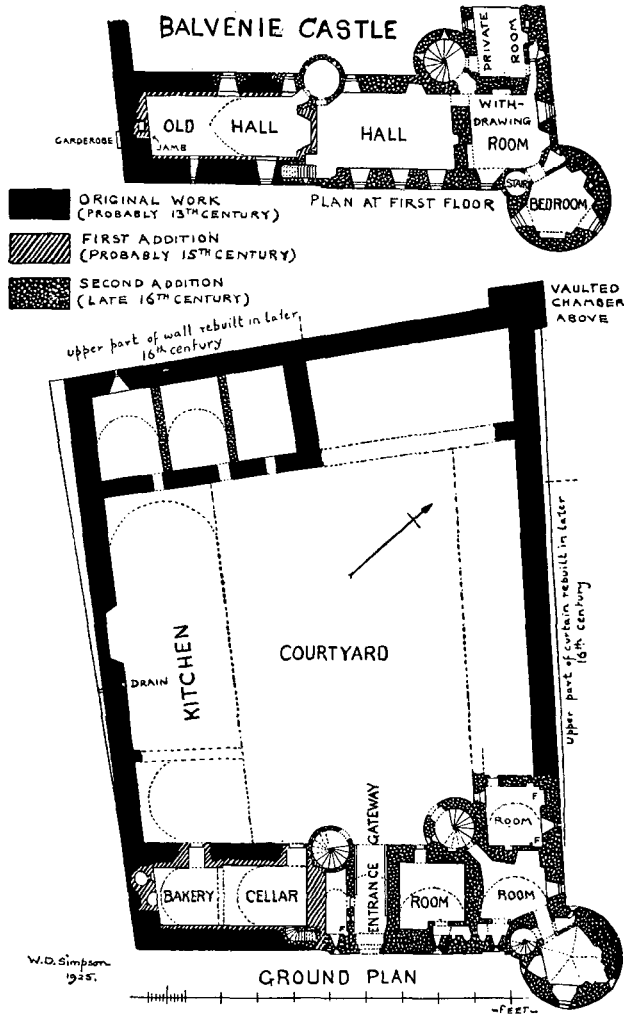


Fig. 2. Balvenie Castle: Plans.

of various subsequent epochs. This wall measures about 158 feet by 131 feet exteriorly, and is built of massive, well-coursed rubble-work, 7 feet thick, and remains in most places to a height of over 25 feet, and

on the south front¹ to a height of fully 35 feet. Small scraps of the parapet wall still remain at one or two places. There are no indications of a hoarding or any other mode of oversailing parapet defence.² The two western angles of the *enceinte* are unfurnished with any sort of flanking protection, although an evident patch in the wall, and a large relieving arch, suggest that there may at one time have been a tower with westward salient at the north-west angle. On the other hand, the battered base of the wall below here shows no sign of disturbance. The south-east angle has been altered in connection with the later buildings at this point. The remaining angle, to the north-east, is strengthened by a rectangular buttress, 12 feet 6 inches by 15 feet 6 inches, large enough to contain a vaulted chamber, now ruinous, at the first-floor level. Along the east and west curtains massive sloped plinths are found; midway in the west curtain opens a basal drain from the kitchen, and near its south end a garderobe shaft has been corbelled out from the first floor; but its outer walling was removed and the vent blocked, apparently, when the building containing the old hall was erected inside against this part of the wall. In connection with the later buildings at the opposite or south-east corner of the *enceinte*, the whole of the upper part of the east curtain, except a length of 42 feet at its north end, has been rebuilt.³ A similar reconstruction of the upper part of the north curtain has been effected where a range of internal buildings abuts against its west end. Of the south curtain, only the western portion (see on the left in fig. 5) is original, and contains a plain loop with sandstone dressings, now much weathered. In the total absence of distinctive detail, it is hard to form any opinion as to the date of this great quadrangular wall of *enceinte*; but the masonry is of early character, and the general design recalls the simpler enclosure castles of the thirteenth century, such as Kinclaven or Kincardine.⁴

All round the court there have been buildings of various ages, but these survive only in two places, along the south side and at the north-west corner. At the latter point we find against the north wall a building of two storeys, containing a basement divided into three cellars, the two western only of which are vaulted, with an upper floor now

¹ For purposes of description I have referred to the side containing the entrance as the south front, and to the others accordingly. The correct orientation is shown on the plans.

² The present mode of access to the parapet walk is from the upper floor of the building at the north-west corner, but it is not clear how the walk was originally reached. It may have been from the buttress tower at the north-east corner.

³ The different style and tint of the masonry are clearly visible in the upper part of the curtain wall, as shown on the left in fig. 6.

⁴ The general style of the battered base and the character of its masonry forcibly recalls similar features in the thirteenth-century castle of Coull (see my paper in *Proceedings*, vol. lviii. pp. 45-99).

ruined. The west cellar shows an original blocked¹ loop piercing the north wall of the *enceinte*. The external walls of this building seem contemporary with the curtain, into which they bond; the vaults were inserted later, and an upper room provided above them, the north curtain here being rebuilt with suitable windows. To judge by the style of masonry, these alterations were effected in the later sixteenth century.

The buildings on the south side are grouped round the main entrance, which has probably always been in this position, although the present work dates only from the latter half of the sixteenth century. The entry (fig. 5) is by a segmental arched gateway, 5 feet 9 inches wide and 8 feet in height. It is moulded with a half-engaged filleted round set on a chamfer between wide cavettos, all springing from a stop-chamfer with foliated enrichment. There have been double doors, and behind them still swings, in perfect preservation, the massive two-leaved iron "yett"² (fig. 3). Within is found a vaulted trance, on either side of which is a stone bench or offset, while a door on the left leads into the guardroom—a mere slip or tunnel of an apartment, with a splayed gunloop to the field, another raking the trance, and a small fireplace in the south-east corner. The west wall of this guardroom is formed by the more ancient gable end of the old hall.

In the interior or courtyard view of the castle (see fig. 6), a couple of large wheel-stairs in projecting towers dominate the composition. The smaller of these stairs served the apartments west of the trance. These consist of the old hall, and another room above it which is much destroyed. Below the hall, on the ground floor, are a cellar and bakehouse, both of which were vaulted; but the vaults have now fallen. The old hall measures about 40 feet by 15 feet 8 inches, and is covered in by a lofty pointed barrel vault. There are good-sized

¹ The blocking is due to a modern repair.

² The "yett" is described by Dr D. Christison in *Proceedings*, vol. xxii. p. 305, from which the drawing given herewith is reproduced. Dr Christison's description may be quoted. "With the exception of the one at Doune, this is the only 'yett' with two leaves. It is round-headed to suit the arched doorway, and measures 8 feet 9 inches by 7 feet 1 inch. The usual alternate penetration of the bars occurs throughout in only one leaf; in the other a number of the cross-bars simply pass behind the uprights, and are riveted to them at the intersections. In both leaves all the bars are similarly riveted to the framework, instead of passing through it. We may conjecture, therefore, that this 'yett' has undergone a comparatively rude reconstruction after being half destroyed. The two hinges for each leaf are of the usual type. There is no bolt, and there is no hole in the wall for the customary bar; but their place is supplied by the singular contrivance of a bifurcated bar turning on hinges fixed on an upright bar of the 'yett' itself; how fastened on the opposite side does not appear. The 'yett' is withdrawn fully 3 feet within the entrance, behind a rebate; and further out are two other rebates, behind each of which a hinge remains, evidently for two other doors, the first 22 inches in front of the yett, and the second 6½ inches in front of the first."

windows on two sides, and a large fireplace in the east end. The vault is plainly an insertion. In one of the windows on the courtyard

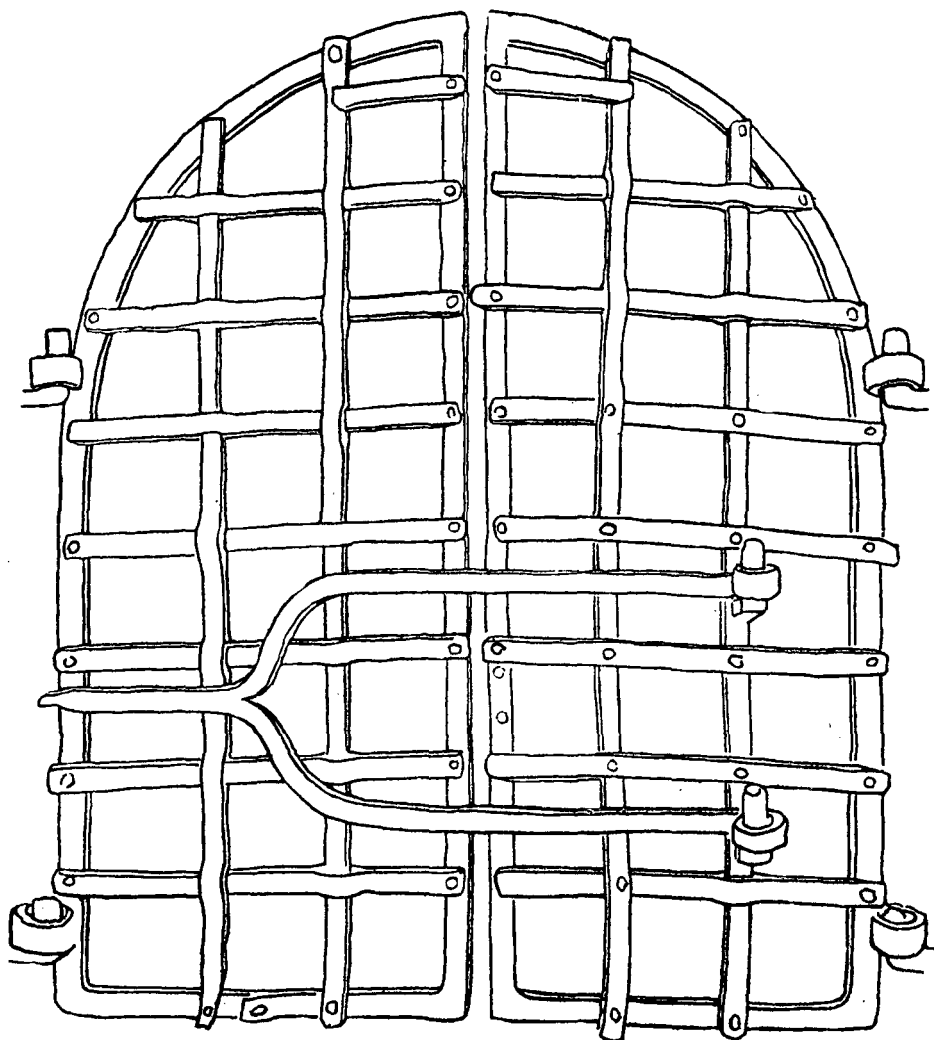


Fig. 3. Iron Yett at Balvenie Castle.

side, the vertical face of the older wall, with the scoinson arch of the window, are visible inside the later ingo, which opens in the haunch of the vault (fig. 4). The ingo of the other window on this side

is lintelled, but in the jambs the joint between the older and newer masonry is clearly evident. Similarly, on the opposite side, a breach in the vault exposes the older vertical wall above, with an original window. In this wall also another window, now blocked, pierces the haunch of the inserted vault, and here again the masonry of the original outer wall is visible in the jambs. The west gable wall of the hall has been greatly altered, its northern section having been almost completely rebuilt to provide for the flues of the bakery inserted in the basement; but there still remains one jamb of a door (shown on plan), apparently opening to the garderobe whose flue exists outside, but which was built up when the later hall was inset.

From all this evidence it is clear that there was originally an unvaulted hall on the first floor against the south wall of the *enceinte* here, with two windows overlooking the courtyard, two others on the opposite side, and a garderobe in the west wall: and that subsequently the present vaulted hall, with a vaulted basement, containing cellarage and bakehouse, was inserted, the windows of the older hall being made available to light the new one by leaving apertures in the haunch of the inserted vault. These windows themselves on the north side were subsequently enlarged so as to give more light to the gloomy vault, for the masonry around them, as seen from the courtyard, has evidently been slapped and rebuilt.¹ To judge by the style of the inserted stonework and the chamfer found on the rybats, this final alteration took place about the end of the sixteenth century, and was doubtless part of the general re-organisation of the castle carried out when the large additions providing new domestic accommodation were added eastward from the old hall. Lastly, it appears that the upper storey, over the pointed vault, is an afterthought; for the wall facing the courtyard has been heightened above the vault, the upper level of masonry being of a different tint and texture,² and set back somewhat from the older wall-plane below. This upper masonry, like that round the slapped windows underneath, is similar to that of the late sixteenth-century buildings now occupying the south-east corner of the castle. One window in the upper level (to the left in fig. 6) has a plain round un moulded



Fig. 4. Balvenie Castle: west window in north wall of Old Hall, seen from interior.

¹ This is clearly visible in the window beside the stair tower in fig. 6.

² This can be seen in fig. 6.

arch of a type sometimes found in sixteenth-century work, for example, at Dunnottar Castle.

The pointed barrel vault and other features of the old hall would suggest a date probably in the fifteenth century. The doorway into the bakehouse shows a $3\frac{1}{4}$ -inch chamfer, as distinct from the $2\frac{1}{4}$ -inch chamfer found generally in the sixteenth-century buildings. A heavy chamfer was usual in Scottish work of the fifteenth century. The original unvaulted hall which preceded these changes was contemporary with the early castle, as its north wall bonds into the west curtain, while the south curtain with its windows is all of one build. The



Fig. 5. Balvenie Castle: View of Entrance Front.

blocked garderobe in the west curtain is a relic of the original arrangements, and passed out of use when the vaulted hall was built.

The bakehouse contains a well-formed oven, with semicircular arched entry and flue in front. The oven is of a domed shape, measuring 5 feet 7 inches in diameter, and about 4 feet high. It is very neatly lined with small bricks, measuring $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch.

East of the trance we have on the ground floor three vaulted rooms, of which one extends northward along the east curtain, the whole thus forming an L-shaped block, in the re-entrant angle of which is placed the main-stair tower. The two rooms forming the limbs of the L are entered from the court, while the third room in the heel between them is reached through the stair tower. All three were living apartments. The two southern ones are each provided

with a low garderobe, over which is a window, and from the garderobes wide-mouthed gunloops open below these windows. It is curious that neither of these rooms has a fireplace. There are, however, some indications that the east room once possessed a fireplace, later withdrawn, on the east side of the deep recess at its north-east corner. The vaults of both rooms have now fallen. The third or



Fig. 6. Balvenie Castle: View in Courtyard.

Photo by G. W. Wilson.

north room still has its vault, and is provided with a couple of fireplaces.

On the first floor is a similar arrangement of rooms, but all unvaulted. That on the east side was a private room, and the centre one formed a withdrawing-room. The western apartment is carried right over the trance, so as to abut against the east gable of the old hall. Thus a spacious dining-room, measuring 36 feet 6 inches by 20 feet 8 inches, was secured. It seems to have been meant to supersede the old hall, being unvaulted and much more cheerful. The withdrawing-room and private room are entered from the main stair, and also communicate with one another by a narrow mural passage, off which is a garderobe common to both. The new hall, or dining-room, is

entered from the withdrawing-room as well as from the second stair, beside the entrance. Like one of the rooms below, it presents the uncommon peculiarity of having two fireplaces, both apparently original. It has three large windows on the south side and one looking to the north, while at the south-west corner a narrow service stair leads down to the cellar below the old hall. This stair has been cut through the gable-end masonry of the old hall after the dining-room was built. Over the dining- and withdrawing-rooms there has been a third storey, now inaccessible, and above the wall-head garret accommodation was provided under the roof, which, where it abuts against the cape-house of the main-stair tower, has subsequently been raised to obtain more head-room, as appears from a new raggie, which shows that this later roof had partly masked a window of the capehouse. The east room on the upper floor has a fireplace with double roll-and-hollow moulding, stop-chamfered below.

On the east side the sixteenth-century house was of two floors only. The roofing of the upper room originally butted, or was designed to butt, pentice-wise against the east and south walls, as appears by the water-table, corbels, and raggie still extant (see fig. 6). Subsequently a new roof was formed against the south wall, at a slightly lesser pitch, the two successive raggies being visible against the stair-tower. When this alteration took place it is clear that there can have been no further extension of buildings along the east curtain: and indeed it is probable that these were never built, the failure to complete the design being responsible for the altered roofing arrangements of the private room. The main stair in the south-east corner had steps about 4 feet 3 inches wide; the other stair was somewhat narrower, and was contracted above the first-floor level, but both are now reduced to mere empty shells, all the steps having been torn out.

There remain to be described the rooms in a massive and striking round tower (see fig. 5), which projects from the south-east angle. This tower is 28 feet in diameter, with three-quarter salient, and thus provided a formidable flanking defence for the entrance gateway, which otherwise would have been a weak element in the design. The basement of the tower contains a pentagonal vaulted living-room with fireplace. The passage leading into this room through the gorge-wall of the tower has a door on each side, of which that to the left enters a mural garderobe, while the other gives access to a wheel-stair in a turret corbelled out in the west re-entrant. This staircase served the two upper rooms of the tower, but, like the others, it is now merely a shell. The room on the first floor is also entered from the withdrawing-room,

and appears to have formed a bedchamber. It is hexagonal, and is furnished with a fireplace and garderobe. The upper room, now inaccessible, was also a sleeping apartment.

With the exception of the three cellars already noted at the north-west corner, the other apartments round the courtyard are entirely destroyed. Along the west curtain indications of a vaulted basement remain, but elsewhere these apartments had timbered flooring, as appears from joist-holes in the walls. On the west side was the kitchen, the huge ruinous fireplace of which, about 16 feet in width, with slop-drain adjoining to the south, still remains in the curtain. Of the other rooms grass-grown mounds alone are visible. All these apartments were of two storeys only.

The external aspect of the south front (fig. 5) is imposing, with the great south-eastern round tower dominating the composition. Between the old hall and the newer buildings to the east a perpendicular joint traverses the masonry from top to bottom. All to the eastward of this, as the design and details clearly prove, is work of the later sixteenth century. Its masonry shows the uncoursed rubble and frequent use of pinnings common in the north at this period, and contrasts markedly with the older masonry of the walls of *enceinte*, in which the coursed boulders are much more massive and pinnings are sparingly employed. All the approaches to the entrance are commanded by splayed gunloops in the front wall and in the tower, and the windows have all been heavily grated, the bars of those on the first floor being projected to form a cage. At the basement level the walling of the sixteenth-century house projects slightly from the plane of the older *enceinte* to the westward. The projection is reduced above by an offset, which is carried vertically up the joint with the older work as far as the first-floor level, thereafter traverses the front of the sixteenth-century building below the dining-room windows, and is continued round the south-east tower. The dining-room windows have square heads beneath elliptic relieving arches, and have been shuttered in their lower parts, the upper being grooved for glass. Between two of them over the gateway is the empty niche for a coat-of-arms, having a depressed trifoliated head, of which the central lobe is triangularly pointed. A cable moulding with external cavetto is continued round the head and jambs of the niche. The windows on the second floor are peculiar, and form a very interesting feature of the design, having projecting moulded canopies and continuously corbelled bases. There are also two of these windows on the round tower and one on the east gable adjoining. Above these windows a string-course is carried partly across the south front and round the tower, and on the east side across the sixteenth-

century gable. The staircase turret adjoining the tower is corbelled out very near the ground, as often in late work; at the level of the offset it is enlarged by a collar of corbels. There are three coats-of-arms, two on the main front and one on the stair turret. One of these, over the entrance, has the royal arms and thistle of Scotland. The other, on this front, bears the arms of the Stewart Earls of Atholl: quarterly, 1st and 4th, paly of 6, for Atholl; 2nd and 3rd, a fess chequy for Stewart; also the initials I.S. Below it on a long scroll a hand points to the proudly self-reliant motto: "FVRTH·FORTVIN·AND·FIL·THI·FATRIS"¹ The shield at the head of the stair turret is blazoned: dexter, Stewart and Atholl quartered, as on the first shield; sinister, quarterly, 1st and 4th, 3 boars' heads couped, for Gordon; 2nd, 3 garbs for Buchan; 3rd, 3 crescents for Seton. This suggests that the builder of the sixteenth-century extension was John Stewart, fourth Earl of Atholl (1542-79), who married Lady Elizabeth Gordon, third daughter of George, fourth Earl of Huntly.

The interior or courtyard front of the castle (fig. 6) is not less interesting. While partaking of the same massive character, it has a more residential aspect. Both stair-towers are traversed at the first-floor level by a string-course with hollowed under-profile, and on the floor above are indrawn by an offset. The main stair-tower is corbelled out into the usual square oversailing gabled cape-house, reached by a corbelled turret stair on the east side. The doors leading into these stair-towers have the same mouldings as the main gate,² and over each is the empty recess for a coat-of-arms, framed in a cabled moulding set on a chamfer within a wide cavetto. A shield, apparently from one of these towers, now lies defaced in the trance; in the first quarter the six pales of Atholl are alone distinguishable.³ The wall-head is finished with a cornice, and there are the usual tall coped chimneys, decreasing by successive intakes. The gables have not been crow-stepped. Some of the gargoyles are wrought as imitation cannon. The windows of the dining-room have a half-engaged roll set on a chamfer.

An interesting peculiarity in the design of the sixteenth-century house is the way in which the vaulted basements, usually apportioned as offices, are here planned as living-rooms. Doubtless, this special feature is due to the fact that in this case the sixteenth-century house was fitted into

¹ Surely "Forth, Fortune, and File thy Fetters," and not the almost meaningless "Fill the Fetters" usually given.

² As clearly shown in fig. 6, the right jamb of the door in the east tower has been torn out, and the overhanging masonry above is caught up with rough modern under-pinning, the gun-loop shown on plan being thereby masked.

³ A. Jervise (*Epitaphs and Inscriptions*, vol. i. p. 334) and Cramond (*op. cit.*, p. 8) speak of a shield "over which is the motto: SPES MEA XPS, Christ my Hope."

a courtyard castle, in the other buildings round whose walls ample storage accommodation was available.

III. THE EVOLUTION OF THE BUILDING.

Although the absolute dates of the successive alterations and additions are to some extent a matter of conjecture, the development of the castle in its main outlines is tolerably distinct. It began as a great quadrangular enclosure, screened by thick and lofty walls of *enceinte*, and dating probably from the thirteenth century. This early castle was an ill-contrived, home-grown structure, lacking adequate flanking and parapet defence, and relying for its strength mainly on the great outer ditch and the mere passive resisting power of its massive walls. It stands at the opposite or vernacular end of the scale, in the same great building epoch which saw the erection of such noble castles of foreign *provenance* as Dirleton, Kildrummy, and Bothwell. Along the north side of the enclosure there was an unvaulted range, on the west side was the kitchen, and along the south side at its west end was a building two storeys in height, with an unvaulted hall on the first floor, lit by two windows on either side, and having a garderobe corbelled out from the curtain at its west end.

In the fifteenth century, apparently, a lofty pointed barrel vault was inserted in this hall, with a vaulted basement below it, containing at the west end a bakery, the oven of which was afterwards lined in brick. Towards the end of the succeeding century, when the whole castle was reorganised by the building of the new house to the eastward, the courtyard wall of the old hall was heightened, and an extra storey built above it, while more light was admitted to the hall itself by enlarging its windows towards the courtyard.

To build the new house, the whole of the south curtain eastward from the west gable of the old hall, and the east curtain northward for a length of some 45 feet, were pulled down. Into the gap thus formed was fitted a lofty building, which comprised a complete house in itself, having vaulted living-rooms in the basement, dining- and withdrawing-rooms on the first floor, and ample private accommodation overhead, with two wheel-stairs providing easy access to all storeys. Only there are no kitchen, bakery, and offices, these being already elsewhere to hand. Through the basement of this building was carried the new entrance, having a guardroom on the left, built against the gable wall of the old hall. Flanking defence for the entrance was secured by the big tower built at the south-east angle, which also supplied much additional domestic accommodation, just at a time when, with improved social

standards, such extra space was urgently desired. This tower has its own stair, and was clearly designed to be in some measure private, serving perhaps as the lord's own suite, like the similar tower at Huntly Castle,¹ to which this sixteenth-century house at Balvenie has many points of resemblance. Communication with the cellarge below the old hall was gained by cutting down a narrow service-stair through its west gable.

About the same time when the new house was built, the east curtain, for about three-quarters of its length northwards, was heightened, in order no doubt to give an extra storey of lean-to buildings against its inner side. These buildings were designed to have a pentice roof, for which provision was made in the curtain; but, except for the room at the south end forming part of the main house, this range was probably never completed, and the open end of the main house was roofed in by a lean-to constructed against the south wall, and subsequently raised, as was also the roof on the south side.

To the sixteenth century also must in all likelihood be ascribed the erection of a two-storey building, with vaulted basement, at the north-west corner of the courtyard, lying between the west curtain and old partition walls running out from the north and west curtains. As on the east side, so also here, when this later construction was built against the north curtain, the latter was heightened or rebuilt, with large windows lighting the first floor within.

IV. THE OUTWORKS.

The castle has been enclosed by a wide ditch (see plan, fig. 7) on all sides except the east. On this side, where the ground descends very steeply towards the Fiddich, no ditch is found. Instead, a level terrace, about 35 feet broad, intervenes between the edge of the bank leading down to the river and the knoll on which the castle stands, the knoll rising some 10 feet above this terrace, and having its scarp about 30 feet out from the curtain wall. This terrace extends round the north-east angle of the castle, and then falls gradually away in a north-westerly direction, until it merges in the general slope of the eminence, upon which at this point an elbow of the turnpike road below has somewhat encroached. The terrace is clearly artificial, and suggests an ancient drive, approaching the castle from the north, and swinging round its east flank to gain the entrance in the south front.

Under the north-east buttress of the castle, and at a distance of about 30 feet out from the curtain, the huge ditch begins, and is continued

¹ See my paper in *Proceedings*, vol. lvi. pp. 134-63.

round the north, west, and south sides of the *enceinte*. It averages about 40 feet in width; in places on the north front is still fully 12 feet deep,

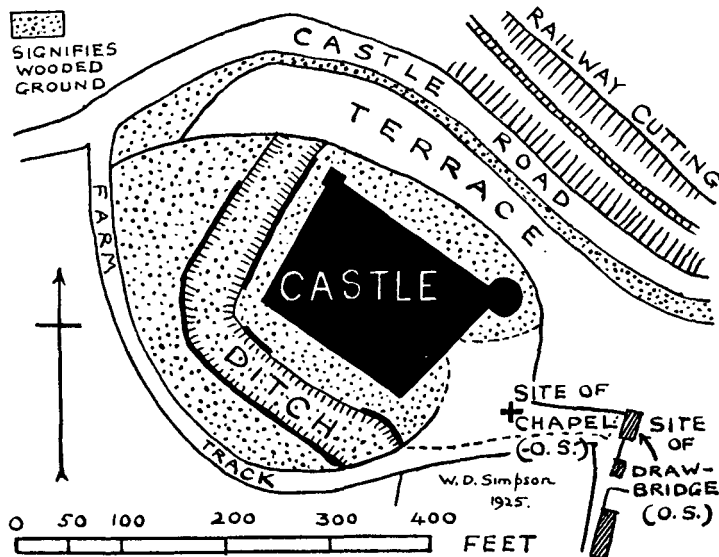


Fig. 7. Balvenie Castle: Plan of Precincts.

and has been enclosed within vertical revetment walls of solid grouted masonry. On the south side the ditch is considerably obscured by a cart-track leading to the adjoining farm, although its sinking is still very apparent. This ditch is a very remarkable feature of the fortress; but its character is wholly mediæval, and there is nothing about it that suggests a prehistoric origin.

At the foot of the counterscarp or *glacis* slope, on the west side of the ditch, the mediæval bronze censer shown in fig. 8 was found about the year 1890. It measures over 6 inches in diameter at the mouth, and weighs about two pounds. On each side is a small circular aperture for the chains used in suspension; around the circumference are set six groups of openings in a cruciform pattern, probably for air, and the rim shows

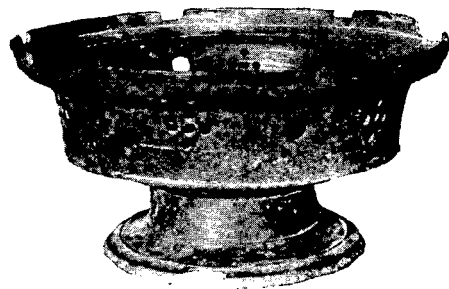


Fig. 8. Bronze Censer found at Balvenie Castle.

the rim shows

six indentations, apparently to fit the cover. The censer is now preserved in the Roman Catholic church at Dufftown.¹

It is deplorable to have to conclude this paper by observing that the ruins of this fine and deeply interesting castle are now in a shocking state, utterly neglected, and overgrown with young trees whose expanding roots threaten every day to bring large portions to the ground. The whole castle is absolutely buried in large old timber, growing close up against its walls, which render it impossible to get a photograph of the exterior.

I have once more to make grateful acknowledgment of my indebtedness to Dr Thomas Ross, F.S.A.Scot., Edinburgh, who has kindly allowed me to base my own survey on the plan prepared by his colleague, the late Dr Macgibbon, for their joint work on *The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland*. In making my own measurements, I have again enjoyed the assistance of Mr Thornton L. Taylor, Aberdeen.

¹ See *Proceedings*, vol. xxix. pp. 59-60. On the level ground in front of the castle the Ordnance Survey map, I do not know on what authority, marks the site of a chapel. In this connection it is interesting to note that St Walloch, who died in 733, and was one of the last evangelists sent out into Northern Pictland from St Ninian's missionary centre at Candida Casa, is recorded to have had a church at Balvenie (see David Camerarius, *De Scotorum Fortitudine*, 1631, p. 91, wrongly numbered as p. 75). Jervise (*op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 333) says that at Balvenie was a well noted for curing various diseases. For St Walloch, see my *Origins of Christianity in Aberdeenshire*, pp. 30-1. There is an interesting paper on him by Sir A. Mitchell, in *Proceedings*, vol. x. pp. 604-13. Camerarius says also (p. 202) that St Manire of Crathie, in Braemar, whose death is given in the year 824, was honoured at Balvenie. The Ordnance Survey map indicates the "site of a drawbridge" east of the chapel site.