

I.

RAIT CASTLE AND BAREVAN CHURCH, NAIRNSHIRE.

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Rait Castle occupies an exceedingly fine situation on rising ground at a height of 250 feet above sea-level, overlooking to the northward the valley of the Nairn and the rich champaign country that skirts the Moray Firth. It thus commands a magnificent panorama, of which the centre point is formed by the many-spired town of Nairn, with the blue waters of the Firth extending behind it on either hand, and beyond them the bluff red cliffs of the Black Isle and Nigg, sundered by the dark cleft of the entry to Cromarty Firth. Behind these again, in a higher lift, is a long grey line of distant hills, stretching from the swart couchant mass of Ben Wyvis on the left to the far-distant, high-upstanding cone of Morven of Caithness on the right. But from the standpoint of defence the position of the castle is a wretchedly poor one. Immediately to the south of it the ground rises abruptly into a large rough irregular knoll with bossy outcrops of glaciated porphyritic granite—a beautiful pink stone with twinned felspar phenocrysts. This rock exhibits distinct striation, the direction of the ice-flow having been to the east and south-east.¹ The slopes skirting the knoll are thickly strewn with erratic boulders, and the whole area is at present covered with a dense undergrowth of thorn, whin, and broom, all rising into a sombre background of pine and larch. The main building—or “palace,” to give it its technical term—is placed on the northern margin of the site, while the barmkin or courtyard enclosure, upon which the palace fronts, extends southward to the foot of the rock.

The palace (see plans, fig. 1) consists of an oblong hall, raised upon unvaulted cellarage and having a garret overhead: to its south-west² corner is appended a round tower of three-quarter salient, with storeys corresponding to the main building; and from the west or dais end of the hall projects northward a narrow oblong garderobe tower, now greatly ruined. The dimensions of the main building, on the ground level, are 54 feet 3 inches by 21 feet 7 inches, within walls 5 feet 8 inches thick, and the round tower, with walls a foot less in thickness, has an

¹ This eastward drift of the ice has carried erratics of the Rait porphyry as far afield as Banffshire.

² For convenience in description it is assumed that the palace lies east and west. The actual orientation is shown on the plans.

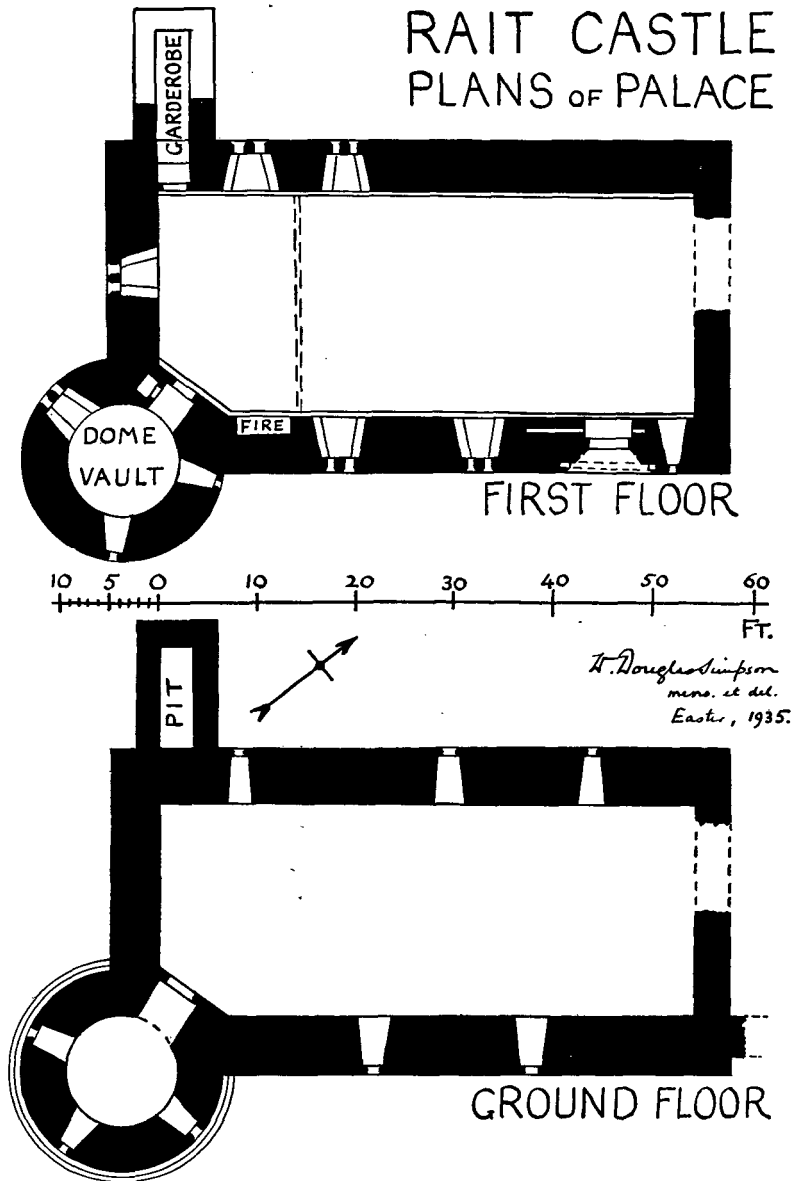


Fig. 1. Rait Castle: Plans of ground floor and first floor of Palace.

internal diameter of 11 feet 6 inches. The garderobe tower was 8 feet 2 inches broad with a projection of 12 feet 8 inches, its walls being 2 feet 8 inches thick. At present the walls of the palace exist to an average height of about 36 feet on the north side and 25 feet on the south side, and the tower survives to a greatest height of 27 feet.

As already stated, the palace faces south upon the courtyard. In the basement on this front (fig. 2) are two small oblong windows with



Fig. 2. Rait Castle: View of Palace from south. [Photo: J. Craig.]

a heavy external chamfer. On the first floor close to the east end, at a height of 8 feet 8 inches above ground, is the entrance (fig. 3), a conspicuous and handsome feature of the castle. It consists of an outer and an inner arch, both of a drop-centred pointed form. The outer arch has a broad chamfer beneath a heavy hood moulding with chamfered upper and hollowed under faces, the whole resting on plain stops. Within this is a portcullis chase, and behind this again is the inner portal, which has a heavy double chamfer and was furnished with a wooden door, secured by a bar, withdrawn into a long slot on the western side. The daylight measurements of the inner or true portal are: breadth, 4 feet; height, 7 feet 3 inches. Immediately to the east of the portal is a pointed and chamfered observation loop for the porter.

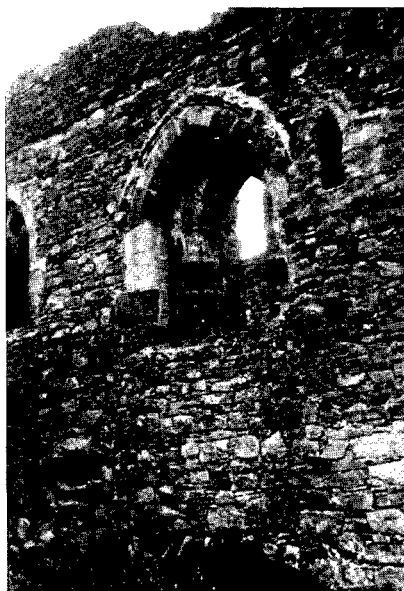
West of the doorway and set midway in the front are two large windows lighting the body of the hall (fig. 2). They have a plain chamfer without hood mould, and are of pointed arched form, divided into two lancets by a chamfered mullion branching at the impost level, so as to form a lozenge-shaped void in the head. In each case the mullion has gone, but the tracery survives, owing to the fact that the entire head of the inner order of the window, above the impost level, is cut out of a single stone, in the manner of plate tracery. The over-all daylight dimensions of these windows are: breadth, 2 feet 8 inches; height, 6 feet $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch.

The east end wall of the palace is breached throughout its height. It has been crowned with a parapet oversailing on a single continuous corbel table at a height of about 24 feet above ground. Near the south end are the tusks of a barmkin wall which engaged at this point: it was 3 feet 7 inches thick and about 8 feet in height.

On the north side at the basement level are a pointed loop at either end and a plain oblong window in the middle, similar to those on the opposite front. All have the usual heavy chamfer. The loops are at a higher level than the window. On the first floor level the only openings are two large windows (fig. 4), placed close together near the west end. These have been similar in pattern to those on the south side, but have lost both mullions and tracery.

The west wall has no basement openings. On the first floor is a large window of the usual pattern (fig. 4), but now robbed of its mullion and tracery.

The basement of the tower is lit by three loopholes, of which the south-east one is still preserved, and is a narrow unarched opening with the usual heavy chamfer. The other loopholes have had their dressings torn out and are roughly restored. On the first floor are two loopholes and also a very handsome window looking north-west (figs. 4, 5). This is of the standard pattern with branched mullion forming two lancets and a lozenge in the head, but the tracery is built in separate



[Photo : J. Craig.]

Fig. 3. Rait Castle: Entrance.

pieces, and is enclosed in a chamfered oblong frame, of which the lintel has been crudely renewed.

The masonry of the palace is rough but good, closely packed, whinstone and granite rubble brought to course, and showing a fairly free use of pinnings. On the south front in the lower part of the wall is a considerable admixture of red and yellow freestone. This material is used



[Photo : J. Craig.]

Fig. 4. Rait Castle: View of north and west fronts of Palace.

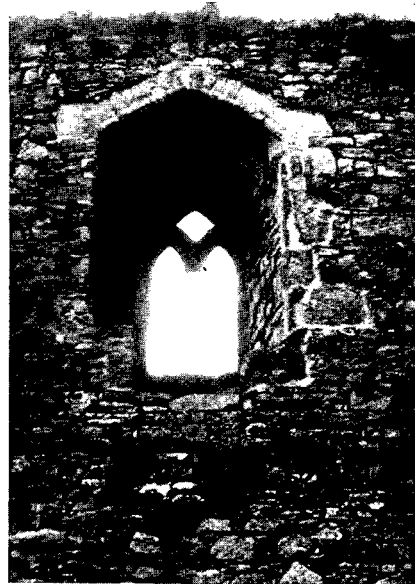
throughout for the dressings. The prevailing chamfer on the large windows is of 3 inches, but in the narrow loops it is of 4 or 5 inches, and at the portal it is increased to 6 inches. All the larger windows are bored for iron grilles. The tower has a low battered base of two splayed freestone courses with a vertical course between and a vertical plinth in rubble work below.

Passing now to describe the interior of the palace, we find in the basement no features of interest save the loopholes and windows already noted. These have splayed ingoings with lintels originally of freestone, but now roughly restored with granite or whinstone. They are checked for internal shutters. The scarcement, 6 inches broad, for the hall floor still exists on the side walls at a height of 8 feet 6 inches above

ground level. On this floor the porter's loop has a splayed and lintelled ingoing in whinstone. The portal has a high elliptic chamfered rear-arch, carefully wrought in freestone: no doubt the jambs below were also in freestone, but are replaced by rough modern repairs. The traceried windows are also carried out in freestone throughout (fig. 6). They have seats in their splayed ingoings, the benches of which project



[Photo : J. Craig.]



[Photo : J. Craig.]

Fig. 5. Rait Castle: Window in Round Tower.

Fig. 6. Interior view of east window, south side.

and are chamfered below. These window bays are all most carefully finished off with ashlar scoinsion arches, strengthened by a mid-rib and a rear-rib, moulded with a double hollow chamfer of rather delicate profile. All the windows were strongly barred, and are furnished with checks and bat-holes for internal wooden frames or shutters. At the west end on the south side there has been a fine fireplace, unfortunately now much ruined. It is 5 feet 2 inches wide and 1 foot 9 inches deep, and has had chamfered freestone jambs with a lintel, now gone, resting upon corbels projected in two courses.

The two large windows close together on the north side may both have been intended to light the dais. On the other hand, this would seem to imply a dais too large in proportion to the hall; and it is more

probable that (as suggested on plan) there was a light partition crossing the hall between the two windows, so as to form the normal mediæval accommodation of hall, great chamber, and solar in the tower. In that case the hall will have had a central hearth with a louvre.

The garderobe tower (fig. 4) enters the hall level by a plain freestone door, the lintel of which is gone; the jambs are checked for a door closing against the hall. The garde-robe chamber has been roughly arched. The pit below measures 10 feet 2 inches by 3 feet 3 inches, and is 8 feet deep. In excavating it a small midden deposit was found, consisting of animal bones and a little comminuted charcoal.¹



[Photo : J. Craig.]

Fig. 7. Rait Castle: Vault in Round Tower.

At the inside wall-head level on the south side of the hall a few of the rough corbels still remain which had carried the timbers of the roof.

The round tower has a diagonal gorge wall in which are the doors of access from the basement and hall. Above the latter the gorge wall is set back so as to allow a bench for the roof timbers. The lower door has been roughly rebuilt: the upper has chamfered freestone jambs and lintel. The basement of the tower has not been vaulted, but the joist-holes have disappeared in the course of modern repairs, and the ingoings of the three

loopholes have also been refashioned. The south jamb of the south-west loop shows a freestone quoin, re-inserted, on which is incised

¹ The bones have been submitted for examination to Mr R. M. Neill, M.C., M.A., of the Natural History Department, University of Aberdeen, who reports as follows:—

Rait Castle, Animal Remains.—Two oyster valves, one left metacarpus of a medium-sized ox, and nineteen broken fragments, up to 3 inches in length, of ox and sheep bones.

Details: 1. Sheep (young)—3 fragments skull.

1 fragment vertebra.

1 „ „ right scapula.

11 fragments limb bones.

2. Ox (medium size)—1 left metacarpus.

1 fragment left humerus.

1 „ „ phalanx of foot.

1 „ „ skull.

3. Two oyster valves.

a large sigma-shaped mason's mark, about $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches long. The first floor is ceiled with a most beautifully constructed dome vault (fig. 7) in fourteen perfect rings of yellow freestone ashlar, mostly oblong blocks closely jointed, and centred on a plain octagonal unprojected keystone. The entrance passage on this floor has freestone lintels carried on a curved freestone corbel course, and on the north side is a small aumbry neatly wrought in freestone, with an inner check. The two loopholes on this level have freestone jambs and lintels, all without chamfer. The ingoing of the large traceried north-west window has side benches similar to those of the hall windows: it is covered by lintels resting on a double course of curved continuous corbels, all in freestone.

No stairs are apparent anywhere in the palace, and the connection between the different floors must have been by trap-doors and ladders. It is also curious that there is no fireplace in the round tower. Both these absences indicate a relatively early date.

Owing to their greatly ruined state and the densely overgrown and encumbered condition of the site, it is impossible to give a satisfactory description of the courtyard buildings. Their plan, so far as ascertainable, is indicated on fig. 8. A striking feature is the way in which the enclosing wall on the rearward or south side is involved with a great ledge of ice-worn granite outcrop, forming a smooth, very steep, and perfectly straight slope some 8 feet high, and running about 80 feet in a south-south-westerly direction. These barmkin walls are nowhere more than 9 feet in height, and are of very slight construction, not more than 2 feet 6 inches thick. In materials and texture they are not dissimilar from that of the palace. At the position marked on plan is an area filled with stones, amid which, when the upper few layers are removed, water is found. This may mark the position of a well.

No trace now exists of the entrance. Probably it lay along the west end of the palace and past the round tower, which thus would command the approach. The main door into the palace will, of course, have been reached from the courtyard building connected with it.

Rait Castle is in every way a most noteworthy building. In fact there is nothing quite like it in Scotland. It is an excellent and early example of the "palace" plan, introduced into Scotland in the latter part of the fourteenth century.¹ As the name indicates (*palatium* in mediæval Latin signifies "hall" ²), this plan consists essentially of a long

¹ See W. Mackay Mackenzie, *The Mediæval Castle in Scotland*, chap. v.

² So also in mediæval German records, the regular name for the hall part of a castle is *palas*.

hall, raised upon storage which may or may not be vaulted, and often, as in the present case, having private accommodation adjoining it in an angle tower. The plan is thus radically different from the tower-house plans which were more usually in vogue in Scotland at this period, and are so well exemplified in the neighbouring castles of Cawdor and Kilravock. Particularly remarkable features at Rait are the unusual and elaborate treatment of the well-proportioned windows, more suggestive of ecclesiastical than of domestic architecture; the large and

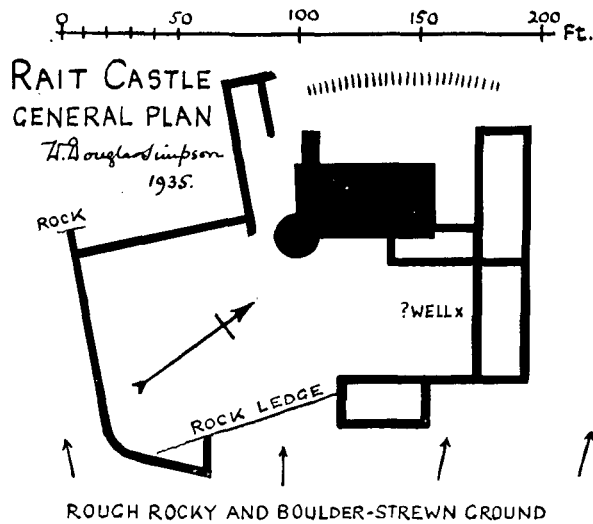


Fig. 8. Rait Castle: Plan showing Courtyard Buildings.

strongly defined doorway, which seems out of scale with the rest of the edifice; and the extremely careful finish of all the freestone dressed work and moulded detail. An attempt to work out the date and affinities of this very important building involves us in some interesting questions.

The fertile soil and sunny climate of the ancient province of Moravia have been celebrated for many centuries. After its incorporation in the expanding dominions of the Canmore dynasty, these natural advantages led to the province being extensively colonised by Anglo-Norman settlers, both lay and ecclesiastical. The Church, in particular, secured large possessions in this favoured region; and both the Cathedral Kirk of Moray at Elgin and the conventual establishments in Elgin and at Urquhart, Pluscarden, and Kinloss, soon drew to themselves great wealth. Wealth in the Middle Ages inevitably expressed itself in terms

of building; and in Moravia conditions were particularly suited for fine building, because the low-lying portion of the province consists of broad and deep beds of Old Red and Triassic sandstone. Thus it happened that the architecture of these ecclesiastical establishments in Moravia reached a degree of perfection and a richness not surpassed anywhere else in Scotland. The existence of these great and ornate buildings of necessity implies the presence in the province of a school of masons trained in the highest conventions of their art: and it is certain that these men must have exercised an important influence also on the lay architecture of the district from the moment that stone castles began to supersede the timbered earthworks which the first early Anglo-Norman settlers threw up.

That this was the case at Rait no one who has studied the building can doubt for a moment. It is obvious that its master mason was a man of high professional standing, and familiar with the fine Gothic building which was going on at the neighbouring ecclesiastical sites. It is, however, certain that Rait Castle is not to be bracketed with the first great efflorescence of mediæval architecture in Moray during the thirteenth century—the period that gave us the noblest work at Elgin, Pluscarden, and Kinloss. The plan of the castle at once forbids any such idea; for, as already stated, these “palatial” buildings do not appear before the middle of the fourteenth century at the earliest. The oldest documented example seems to be Kindrochit in Mar, which can be dated, on fairly certain evidence, to *ante* 1371.¹ Here we have the characteristic long hall on unvaulted cellarage, with private accommodation opening off it in flanking towers. The doorways have the same heavy chamfer which is found at Rait. Such broad chamfers are usual in Scotland throughout the fourteenth century: they may be studied, in a dated example, at David’s Tower in Edinburgh Castle, built between 1367 and 1378;² and, in a nearer instance from the very beginning of the century, at Lochindorb Castle in Badenoch,³ where the small oblong windows in the angle towers, with their heavy chamfer, have a close resemblance to those at Rait.

Another early example of the “palatial” plan, upon whose date needless doubt has been cast, is Tulliallan Castle in Fife. Here the cellarage below the hall is beautifully groin-vaulted on central piers. The fourteenth-century character of all this detail has long been recognised, and in view of the fact that the fortalice or “forslete” of Tulliallan is

¹ See my paper in *The Antiquaries Journal*, vol. viii. No. i. (Jan. 1928) pp. 69–75.

² See *Proceedings*, vol. xlviii. pp. 230–70; W. T. Oldrieve, *David’s Tower at Edinburgh Castle*, 1914.

³ See my paper in *Magazine of the London Morayshire Club*, new series, vol. iv. (Nov. 1931) pp. 33–42.

on record in 1402 and in 1410¹ there seems no reason to doubt that the building is really of the date which its moulded features indicate. Tulliallan possesses one feature paralleled at Rait, namely, the narrow oblong garderobe tower opening off the dais end of the hall.

The greatest of the early castles in Moravia appears to have been Duffus, which indeed is one of the grandest examples of a mount-and-bailey lay-out extant in Britain. No doubt owing to the presence in the province of fine building stone and skilled masons, its timber defences were at an early date replaced with a stone tower and curtain walls carried out on a big scale and with the high architectural finish usual in Morayland. Here again, as at Rait, the detail indicates a date in the latter half of the fourteenth century:² and further, it presents points of such close resemblance with Rait as to make it almost certain that the same master mason was responsible for both buildings. We find at Duffus the same narrow oblong or lancet windows with a heavy chamfer, and in the mural passages of the tower is the identical corbelled lintel construction which we have noted at Rait.

The old church of Barevan, near Cawdor, described in the second part of this paper, exhibits strong architectural affinities with Rait Castle. Its lancet windows have the same broad plain chamfer, and there is also one larger window of two lights with tracery of design exactly similar to those at Rait—except that at Barevan the external mouldings are slightly richer.

I have little doubt that the castles of Duffus and Rait and the church of Barevan were all built by the same masons, and that their date falls somewhere in the latter half of the fourteenth century—probably fairly near its end. These three buildings thus form a group the interest of which is not surpassed in the north of Scotland.

A good deal of rather harsh repair work was carried out on the castle shortly before the War, but it is now in an unsatisfactory state, and it is much to be desired that the wall-heads and the vault in the tower should be cleared of vegetation and made weatherproof.

The Thanedom of Rait was one of the oldest manors in Nairnshire. It is first on record among a list of estates in the bailiwick of Nairn

¹ Sir William Fraser, *The Douglas Book*, vol. iii. pp. 402, 406. There was a still earlier castle of Tulliallan, whose walls Edward I. ordered to be strengthened in 1304 (J. Bain, *Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland*, vol. ii. No. 1514). But this could not have been the present "palatial" building, and was no doubt a structure of timbered earthwork. It will be represented by the remains of an embanked ditch which still encloses the site.

² Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 46. Although the work carried out by the Ancient Monuments Department on Duffus Castle was completed so far back as 1928, it is most disappointing that no account has yet been published. The failure of H.M. Office of Works to provide records of the operations undertaken by them is a serious handicap to mediæval studies in Scotland.

in the year 1238.¹ The statement has been made that its original owners were Mackintoshes, and that Shaw, fourth chief of that clan, married Helen, a daughter of the Thane of Cawdor, and before 1265 obtained a grant of Meikle Geddes and Rait.² Be this as it may, its earliest lords of whom we have contemporary record took their territorial designation from the manor, and nothing certain is known as to their origin, though they are said to have been Comyns. Sir Gervaise de Rait appears as witness to the charter granted by Elizabeth Bisset, conveying the lands of Kilravock to her son-in-law, Hugh Rose of Geddes: this charter is undated, but seems to belong to the closing years of Alexander III.'s reign.³ The form of the name therein is *Rath*, which means simply "fortress." Under the provisional government established by Edward I. during the contested succession, Sir Gervaise was constable of the castle of Nairn, and takes from its keeper, Thomas de Braytoft, a receipt for the latter's salary, dated at Rait, Thursday, 8th March 1292.⁴ His name is found in the *Ragman Rolls* among a list of Scottish magnates who at Elgin, on Friday, 27th July 1296, gave in their allegiance to the all-conquering Plantagenet; and his letter of submission is still extant.⁵ Sir Gervaise de Rait, with his younger brother Sir Andrew, attended as vassals of the English King at the parliament summoned by him at Berwick on 28th August following.⁶ Early in June of next year Sir Andrew de Rait was in England, and on the 11th of that month King Edward at Ospringe issued two documents affecting him. The first was a letter patent signifying that the King had committed to his liege Andrew Rait all the lands of Gervaise Rait, his brother in Scotland, presently in the King's land. The second was a safe conduct for him "going on the King's particular business to Scotland," and authorising him to use the public horses.⁷

The great revolt against English domination had now broken out in Morayland, and the lords of Rait remained true to Edward. At the end of July Sir Andrew de Rait was sent back by the Bishop of Aberdeen with a letter to the King detailing the efforts that had been made to stamp out the rising. "He can tell you these affairs in all points," wrote the Bishop, "for he was in person at all these doings." Sir Andrew travelled south along with a cleric, Bernard de Mouat, and carried with

¹ *Registrum Episcopatus Moraviensis*, p. 34.

² *Macfarlane's Genealogical Collections*, vol. ii., reff. in Index.

³ *The Family of Kilravock*, ed. C. Innes, pp. 28-9.

⁴ J. Bain, *Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland*, vol. ii. No. 579; cf. J. Stevenson, *Documents Illustrative of the History of Scotland*, vol. i. pp. 283-4 (where the date is given as 6th March).

⁵ *Ragman Rolls* (Bannatyne Club), pp. 103-5, 158; Bain, *Calendar*, vol. ii. No. 793, also p. 195.

⁶ Bain, *Calendar*, vol. ii. p. 210.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Nos. 893, 961.

him letters to the English King from the Countess of Ross and the Earls of Mar and Strathearn. Before leaving Scotland they had an audience of the notorious Hugh de Cressingham, Edward's rapacious Treasurer of Scotland, who was afterwards slain at Stirling Bridge, and is said to have had his skin flayed from his corpse and made into saddle girths by the infuriated Scots. Cressingham evidently had his reasons for distrusting Sir Andrew, for on 5th August 1297 he writes from Berwick to his royal master warning him that "Sir Andrew Rait is going to you with a credence which he has shown me, and which is false in many points and obscure, as will be shown hereafter, as I fear; and therefore, Sire, if it be your pleasure, you will give little weight to it."¹

In 1304 Sir Andrew de Rait was employed in making a survey of the King's lands in Scotland.²

At this period the residence of the de Raits, like most contemporary Scottish castles, will have been a construction of timbered earthwork. Whether or not it was on the site of the later stone building we cannot say.

What became of the family of de Rait is not certainly known, but it is said that the last of them, Sir Alexander, had to flee the neighbourhood in 1404 for slaying Andrew, Thane of Cawdor, and that thereafter he founded the family of Rait of Hallgreen in the Mearns.³ At all events there was a Thane Andrew who was newly dead before 11th July 1405, on which day his son obtained a precept of sasine as Sheriff of Nairn and Constable of its castle.⁴ The devolution of the manor of Rait remains obscure until 1442, when it was granted to the Mackintoshes. At Moy Hall there still exists

"a precept, dated 5th October 1442, by Alexander de Seton, Knight, Lord of Gordon, to William, Thane of Cawdor, as his bailie, directing him to give sasine to Malcolm Mackintosh in the lands of Meikle Geddes and half of the lands of Rait with the Castle thereof. The charter on which this precept founds was dated at Inverness on the preceding day. Towards the end of the century a charter of the lands and castle was granted by Alexander de Seton of Tullibody, eldest son of the foresaid Alexander Seton (first Earl of Huntly) to the Thane of Cawdor, to whose family the other half of Rait already belonged, but the Mackintoshes still asserted rights, and a dispute arose between them and the Campbells of Cawdor, successors of the old Thanes, which was not settled till 1521."⁵

¹ Stevenson, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. pp. 209-15, 227; Bain, *Calendar*, vol. ii. Nos. 920, 921, 924, 932.

² Bain, *Calendar*, vol. ii. pp. 441, 443. See E. M. Barron, *The Scottish War of Independence*, 2nd ed., pp. 196-9.

³ Lachlan Shaw, *History of the Province of Moray*, ed. 1775, p. 111.

⁴ *Book of the Thanes of Cawdor*, ed. C. Innes, p. 5.

⁵ *Scottish Historical Review*, vol. ii. p. 104. In the Cawdor charter chest is a grant of feu-farm by Alexander Seton of Tullibody to the Thane of Cawdor, conveying to him "my lands of Meikle Geddes and my half of the *vill* of Rait," but not mentioning the Castle. It is dated at Elgin 26th October 1493 (*Book of the Thanes of Cawdor*, p. 80).

The half of the lands of Rait that belonged to the Thaness of Cawdor included the mill, as appears from a writ in the Cawdor charter chest, dated 17th August 1442.¹ In 1501, owing to the non-entry of Alexander Seton of Tullibody, the other half of the lands were bought from the Crown by Walter Ogilvie of Boyne. This action was resisted by the Thane of Cawdor, who "in the hall or house of Geddes," on 29th May 1501, solemnly annulled the sasine by the ceremony of breaking a dish and casting it into the fire.² Notwithstanding this, the Ogilvies succeeded in retaining possession until finally the lands were bought from them by Sir John Campbell of Cawdor, by a contract dated at Elgin 16th July 1532.³ Even then the Ogilvies reserved the superiority, and so, when John Campbell of Cawdor succeeded his father as a minor in 1551, his uncle, the Prior of Ardochattan, in his capacity as tutor-in-law to the young laird, obtained a gift of non-entry of these lands from Alexander Ogilvie of Carnousie and Durn, "superior of the landis of Geddes and Rait, with the fortalice liand in the samyn."⁴ The " fortalice of Rait " recurs in a service of John Campbell of Cawdor as heir of his father, given at Nairn on 16th November 1596.⁵ The Hiltown and Castletown of Rait are on record in 1622.⁶ At what date the castle ceased to be occupied does not seem to be known, but it is perhaps significant that in Gordon of Straloch's map, *circa* 1650, Raitloan is shown but not Rait Castle.

The well-known legend of the massacre of the Comyns by the Mackintoshes at Rait Castle is told in the *New Statistical Account*, and more fully by Bain;⁷ but the difficulty is to dovetail the incident into the authenticated history of the ownership.

Somewhere near the castle was the chapel of St Mary of Rait, with a hermitage of which Nicholas the Hermit was the occupant in 1343.⁸

BAREVAN CHURCH.

The ruined church of Barevan stands within its ancient kirkyard, surrounded by moss-covered tombstones, in a secluded position about two miles south-south-west of Cawdor, and at a height of some 500 feet above sea-level. It has been a plain oblong structure (fig. 9) measuring 70 feet 9 inches long by 20 feet 3 inches broad, within walls 2 feet 9 inches thick on the sides and 3 feet 2 inches in the gables—which last are reduced to mere foundations, while the side walls survive to a height of between 11 and 12 feet. The orientation of the church is 15° N. of E. It is

¹ *Thaness of Cawdor*, p. 14, etc. (see ref. in Index).

² *Ibid.*, p. 111.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

⁷ Vol. xiv. (Inverness), p. 449; G. Bain, *Hist. Nairnshire*, 2nd ed., p. 131.

⁸ *Family of Rose of Kilravock*, p. 118.

built of good, though rough, well-coursed rubble, but the dressings are all very carefully carried out in yellow freestone. In the south wall, near the west end, is a pointed door which seems completely modernised, though it retains on the east side a bar-hole 5 feet long. The middle part of this wall shows a couple of lancet windows, and immediately east of them a second door, narrow, likewise modernised, but with a plain pointed arch that looks old. There are three courses in the thickness of the wall, each course being of two stones. At the east end is a two-light window, and beside it a double piscina. The north wall near its west end bears evidence of a slap infilled; no doubt there was the usual third door here. On the inside of this wall a plain freestone corbel and a bat-hole indicate the position of the rood screen, dividing off a

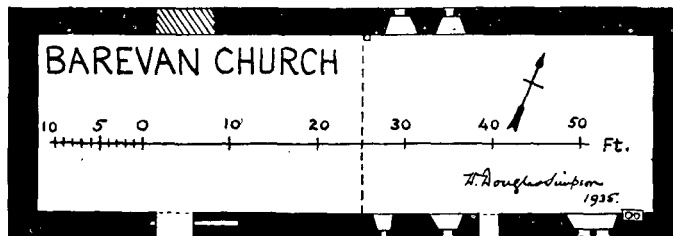


Fig. 9. Barevan Church: Plan.

chancel about 32 feet in length. Immediately beyond the screen are a couple of lancet windows.

The architectural features of the little church, though simple, are of distinct merit. The lancet windows (fig. 10) have daylight measurements of 4 feet 6 inches or 5 feet 6 inches in height and 1 foot 1 inch broad: externally they show a 4-inch chamfer continuous on arch and jambs. In each case the arched head is cut out of a single stone. Internally these windows (fig. 11) have depressed pointed rear arches with a 3-inch chamfer, dying out on the jambs.¹ As stated already, the large double-lancet window in the south wall (fig. 12) very closely resembles those at Rait Castle, except that it shows externally a double, deeply hollowed chamfer on the main arch and jambs, with a hood moulding hollowed underneath and resting upon stops, of which the western is foliated, while the eastern has been left plain. The mullion and inner lancets have filleted rounds instead of the cavetto. The rear arch (fig. 13) is of elliptic form, with a 4-inch chamfer, omitted on the jambs. As at Rait, the whole head of the inner order, comprising the lancet tops and the lozenge between, is wrought in a single stone, and hence has survived

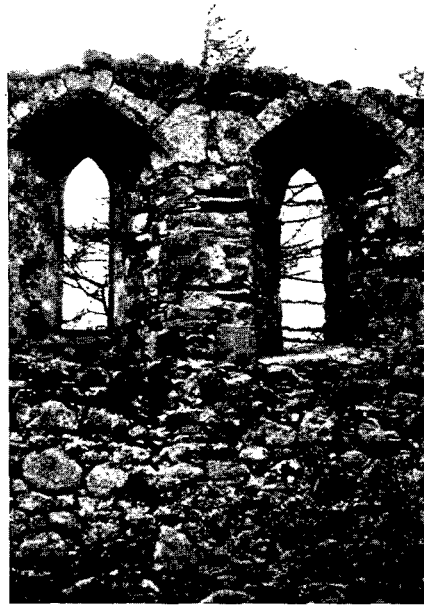
¹ The west window in the south wall is now lintelled internally.

though the mullion is gone. The over-all daylight dimensions of this fine window are: height, 6 feet 7 inches; breadth, 3 feet 6 inches. All the windows in the church are bored for bars and checked internally for casements. The piscina niche has had its arch and jambs robbed; the base is a square freestone block, projecting 2 inches from the wall, chamfered underneath, and containing two bowls, 8 inches in diameter, each with a central drain, uniting below.



[Photo : J. Craig.]

Fig. 10. Barevan Church:
Lancet Windows, south side, exterior.



[Photo : J. Craig.]

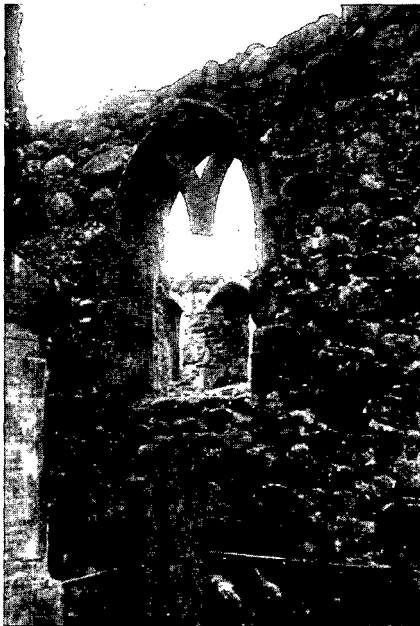
Fig. 11. Barevan Church:
Lancet Windows, north side, interior.

A number of moulded fragments lie outside the south wall of the church, and behind it to the north is a stone coffin of mediæval date, with a rest separately cut for the head. To the south and south-west of the church lie some late mediæval grave slabs: these are now almost totally submerged in moss and coarse grass, but are described and illustrated by the late Mr Hugh R. Young of Burghead in a paper on Barevan Church communicated to the *Reliquary* in 1901.¹

The history of this most interesting church appears to be almost a complete blank. A very fine Celtic bell, said to have formerly belonged

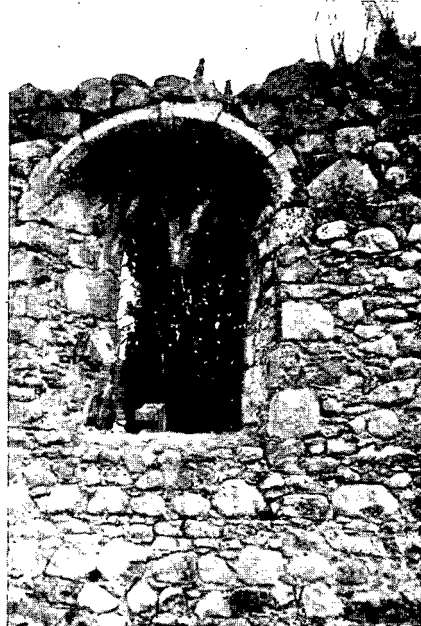
¹ New Series, vol. vi. pp. 47-52.

to it, is now at Cawdor Castle. Apparently Barevan Kirk had been the original parish church of Cawdor, and was superseded by the present church in 1619. The early form of the name was *Brae-evan* or *Bra de Evan*, Evan presumably being the name of a Celtic saint.¹ In the *Exchequer Rolls* for 1457 we have the *villa ecclesie de Evan que vocatur Braa de Evan*.² In 1632 Cawdor parish is styled "the parochin of



[Photo : J. Craig.]

Fig. 12. Barevan Church:
Window in South Wall, exterior.



[Photo : J. Craig.]

Fig. 13. Barevan Church:
Window in South Wall, interior.

Barevan";³ and in a memorandum dated 30th November 1725, drawn up by Sir Archibald Campbell of Clunes for the commissioners of his nephew, the Laird of Cawdor, we are told that

"the old burial place called Barrivan, of the Thanes and all the Campbells of Calder who dyed in the north preceding Sir Hugh's time [*i.e.* 1654-1716], where formerly the old kirk of Calder was, likewise needs to be repaired, which Sir Archibald conceives may be done for £10 Sterline, which he expects the Commissioners will comply with, for the honour and memory of the family."⁴

This survey of Rait Castle and Barevan Church was carried out in

¹ West of Barevan is the vitrified fort of Dun Evan.

² *Exchequer Rolls*, vol. vi. pp. 215, 376.

³ *Book of the Thanes of Cawdor*, p. 275.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 428.

April 1935 under the auspices of the Nairn Literary Institute, by which the expenses were defrayed. I have to acknowledge my warm thanks to the Council of the Institute for sponsoring the undertaking, and to Dr John Craig, F.S.A.Scot., and Mrs Craig for assistance in making the surveys. Colonel Baillie, Factor to the Cawdor Estates, kindly had some of the undergrowth around Rait Castle removed and the garderobe tower excavated during our visit. Mr John Calder in Raitloan and Mr Donald Johnston in Raitcastle provided us with ladders and were also most helpful in other ways. The photographs were taken by Dr Craig.