

## XV.

## FINAVON CASTLE.

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“When Finavon Castle rins to sand  
The world’s end is near at hand.”

## HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

In 1934 Professor Childe, in a masterly paper contributed to our *Proceedings*, set forth the results achieved by his partial investigation of the famous vitrified fort of Finavon.<sup>1</sup> I have now to communicate the results of excavations, similarly partial in nature, at the once powerful castle of Finavon, for long the seat of the Earls of Crawford, of the Lindsay stock. When it is remembered that the parish contains, in addition to the vitrified fort and the castle, the site of a buried parochial church built in 1380, and apparently of unusual architectural distinction,<sup>2</sup> as well as the Roman marching camp of Battledykes,<sup>3</sup> it will be realised that Finavon, or Oathlaw as the parish is now usually called, is a place of more than ordinary historic and archæological interest.

The ruins of Finavon Castle (fig. 1) occupy a strong and romantic situation on the right or S. bank of the pleasant little Water of Lemno, a short distance above its confluence with the River South Esk, and about 125 ft. above sea-level. On the N. side of the Castle, the ground forms a level terrace, probably in part artificial, extending out about 20 yds. from the High Tower of the Castle to the edge of a steep bank descending to the Lemno, here a placid stream about 20 ft. broad, some 30 yds. distant from the Castle, and about 30 ft. below it. To the E. of the Castle the ground falls gently for about 20 yds. into a subsidiary ravine, down which a brisk streamlet, joined by another, careers in a series of tiny cascades to meet the Water of Lemno. Thus the site of the Castle is well-secured on the N. and E. To the S. and W. the ground forms a fairly level platform, extending in the latter direction for about 150 yds. to the modern castle of Finavon, a handsome Victorian Gothic structure, erected in 1865 for the then laird, David Greenhill Gardyne, by Messrs Carver and Symon, an Arbroath firm of architects, in their day of some reputation. Towards the modern mansion

<sup>1</sup> *P.S.A.S.*, LXIX, 49-80.

<sup>2</sup> See A. Jervise, *The Land of the Lindsays*, 2nd ed., pp. 162-4.

<sup>3</sup> See O. G. S. Crawford, *The Topography of Roman Scotland North of the Antonine Wall*, pp. 94-97.

extensive foundations can be traced amid the undergrowth: and it is clear that the upstanding portion of the Castle, imposing as it is, represents

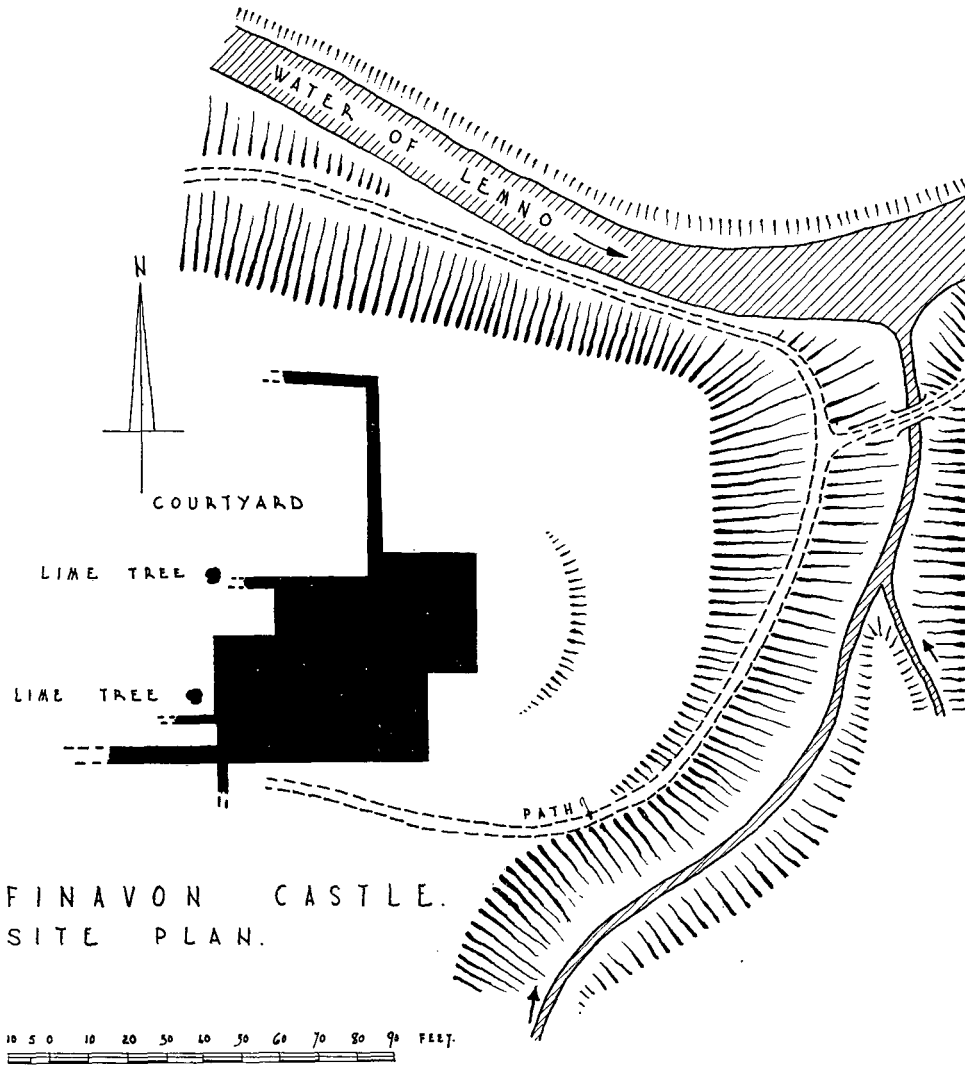


Fig. 1. Finavon Castle: plan of site.

merely the eastern end of what has been a large and important structure, worthy of its dignity as the principal seat of a powerful earldom. The whole site is now included in the Finavon policies, and is covered with large old trees and shrubbery, while the little valley of the Lemno forms an

umbrageous walk amid one of the choicest vignettes of woodland scenery in Angus.

The bed-rock of the parish is the Lower Old Red Sandstone, here a warm, brownish-red in colour, fine-grained and very free from pebbles.<sup>1</sup> It forms a good freestone easily worked in every direction, and weathers on the whole well enough. Out of it the facework and much of the core material of the Castle has been built, though Highland rocks, mostly in the form of glacial boulders, have been used to some extent both in the hearting and in the foundation courses. The enormous quantities of limestone required for so large a structure must have been brought in from elsewhere. The Castle is founded on a deep bed of stiff red clay. Ample timber would be supplied by what remained of the ancient Forest of Plater, of which Finavon formed a part. Conformably to the practice which has prevailed for centuries in Strathmore, the Castle was roofed not with slates but with slabs of the red Turin sandstone, sometimes as much as half an inch thick, and secured by wooden pegs. Numbers of roofing slabs, sometimes with the pegs in position, were recovered in the course of our excavations.

The history of Finavon Castle has been very fully set forth, with ample documentation, by Andrew Jervise in that admirable work, *The Land of the Lindsays*.<sup>2</sup> It is, therefore, requisite only to give the briefest summary for our present purpose. The barony of Finavon formed the eastern part of the ancient and once extensive royal forest of Plater, which stretched from Finavon to Kirriemuir, a distance of not less than 7 miles. At an early date the eastern portion of this forest land was constituted into a parish, and the site of the old parochial church, now marked by a couple of trees, is on the right bank of the River South Esk a little below the confluence of the Water of Lemno. In 1380 this church was rebuilt by Sir Alexander Lindsay of Glenesk, the then lord of Finavon, and created into a prebend of Brechin Cathedral.<sup>3</sup> The barony of Finavon was held first by the Comyn Earls of Buchan, then by Philip the Forester, who by a brilliant feat of arms won Forfar Castle for Bruce in 1308. After him, Hew Polayne and the Earl of Ross were in turn lords of the barony until in 1369 the latter was succeeded by Sir David de Annand, who in 1375 resigned his interest to the Crown, by which in the same year Finavon was conveyed to Sir Alexander Lindsay of Glenesk, together with the office of Keeper of the Forest of Plater. Sir Alexander's son was the famous Sir David Lindsay, hero of the celebrated tournament with Lord Welles on London Bridge in 1390, in the presence of King Richard II and his queen, Anne of Bohemia. In 1398,

<sup>1</sup> On Finavon Hill, however, the rock is conglomerate.

<sup>2</sup> I quote always from the second edition, edited by J. Gammack, in 1882. The first edition, published in 1853, is the better one to read, much of its fine literary character having been marred in Gammack's scholarly revision. In the historical summary which follows, except where specified, authority for the statements made will be found in Jervise.

<sup>3</sup> For the tiled pavement and monuments recovered from the church see Jervise, *op. cit.*, p. 163. Fragments of glazed tiles and bits of masonry are freely picked up on this site.

Sir David Lindsay "was created Earl of Crawford, by solemn belting and investiture, in the parliament held in Perth that year—the Earldom of Crawford being the third created since the extinction of the Celtic dynasty, that of Douglas having been the second, and Moray the first."<sup>1</sup> Sir David Lindsay is said to have been the founder of Finavon Castle, and certainly the oldest masonry which we have exposed has every appearance of belonging to about his time. He died at Finavon Castle in February 1407.

The most famous, or rather notorious, of the Lindsay Earls of Crawford was the terrible "Tiger Earl," or "Earl Beardie" as he was called from his hirsute aspect. He took part with the Douglasses in their great rebellion against the House of Stewart in 1452, was defeated by the Earl of Huntly at the Battle of Brechin, and had to yield Finavon Castle to the victorious troops of James II, who visited the Castle in person and there, in a dramatic scene, received the submission of the defeated Earl.<sup>2</sup>

In April, 1546, the Castle was the scene of the wedding, celebrated with the greatest pomp, of the Master of Crawford and Margaret, a daughter of Cardinal Beaton, who himself attended the ceremony. Extravagance ruined the Crawford fortunes, and in 1625 the barony of Finavon was disposed of by a forced sale to Lord Spynie, from whom it passed to the Earl of Kinnoul, and later to the Earl of Northesk. In 1697 Lord Northesk made Finavon over to his second son, the Hon. James Carnegie. It is said that the greater part of the Castle fell without warning towards the middle of the 18th century, having been undermined by the current of the Lemno.

The subsequent owners of Finavon do not concern us here. In 1843 the Castle was bought by Thomas Gardyne of Middleton, whose descendant, the late Lieut.-Col. Alan D. Greenhill Gardyne, was the laird during the period of the excavations. Through an 18th-century marriage he came of the old Lindsay stock. Col. Greenhill Gardyne died in 1953, leaving the estate to his daughter, Mrs Susan Mazur.

Excavation work upon the buried portion of the Castle was begun just before the Second World War by Col. Greenhill Gardyne, and continued by him thereafter, partly with the aid of Mr Harold Entwistle, for some time the tenant of a flat in the modern mansion. In 1949 I was invited into consultation about the problems raised by the progress of the work; and the upshot was that in August 1952 a concerted attack upon the site was mounted by a party of students drawn from the four Scottish Universities and the University of London. The work was carried out under the auspices of the Scottish Field School of Archæology, and financial assistance was also forthcoming from Aberdeen University and from our own Society. During the Easter vacation of 1954 the well which had been discovered in

<sup>1</sup> Lord Crawford, *Lives of the Lindsays*, I, 97.

<sup>2</sup> See the picturesque account in Lindsay of Pitscottie, *Historie and Chronicles of Scotland* (S.T.S.), I, 101-13.

the Great Tower was cleaned out, with the assistance of workmen supplied by the Ancient Monuments Department of H.M. Ministry of Works. It is the purpose of the present paper to report the results of these excavations, and to provide a full description of the remains of the Castle so far as now revealed.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE RUINS.

The imposing five-storeyed tower (Pl. XLV, 1, 2), rising to a height of nearly 90 ft., which alone bulks large at Finavon Castle to-day, is plainly a very late structure, dating from about the year 1600. But our excavations have revealed, what indeed the history of the Castle might permit us to infer, that this tower is nothing more than an adjunct tacked on to the NE. corner of a much older, more massive and more extensive structure. The remains now exposed are shown on the annexed plan (fig. 2). As the ground further W. is planted with valuable shrubs and fine old timber, including two enormous limes, measuring about 6 ft. thick at 5 ft. above ground level, it is not practicable to excavate much more of the foundations, and so we must be content to remain in ignorance of the complete plan of what has undoubtedly been one of the largest and most massive of Scottish castles.

The principal portion of the older Castle, as now exposed, consists of the basement of a very powerful tower-house, one of the largest in Scotland. It lies E. and W., and measures 57 ft. by 33 ft. 4 ins. over walls 9 ft. 6 ins. thick. The door into the basement is in the N. front, there were loopholes in either end wall, in the centre of the interior is a draw-well, and at the SE. corner a floor-drain. This Great Tower probably dates, to judge by its masonry, from late in the 14th century. To its NE. corner was added, about the end of the 16th century, the tall rectangular tower which still partly stands to the full height of its chimney cope. In the usual late Scottish manner, this High Tower was echeloned to the main structure, and in the N. re-entrant thus formed was placed the main staircase, of the square or scale-and-platt design. Underneath the stair is a small vaulted prison or "pit." To facilitate the description that follows, I propose to refer to the Great Tower, the High Tower, and—in old Scottish parlance—the Staircase "Jamb."

The masonry of the Great Tower consists of a grouted core faced with squared rubble almost approaching to ashlar (Pl. XLV, 3, 4). The courses vary in height and the stones in length, but there is a general approximation to a short or almost square face. The large door or window in the E. end wall of the well-house seems, to judge by its remaining cheek, to have been forced: the cheek is faced or patched in with small horizontal stones, poor work. Probably an original narrow slit or loophole has been enlarged. This appears the more likely because there is an unaltered loophole in the opposite

or W. end wall of the well-house. The N. wall of the well-house, which survives to a height of about 6 ft., shows dook holes, as if for lath and plaster. There is no trace of vaulting. Just W. of the well the N. wall of the Great Tower shows the finely wrought jamb of a door, intended to

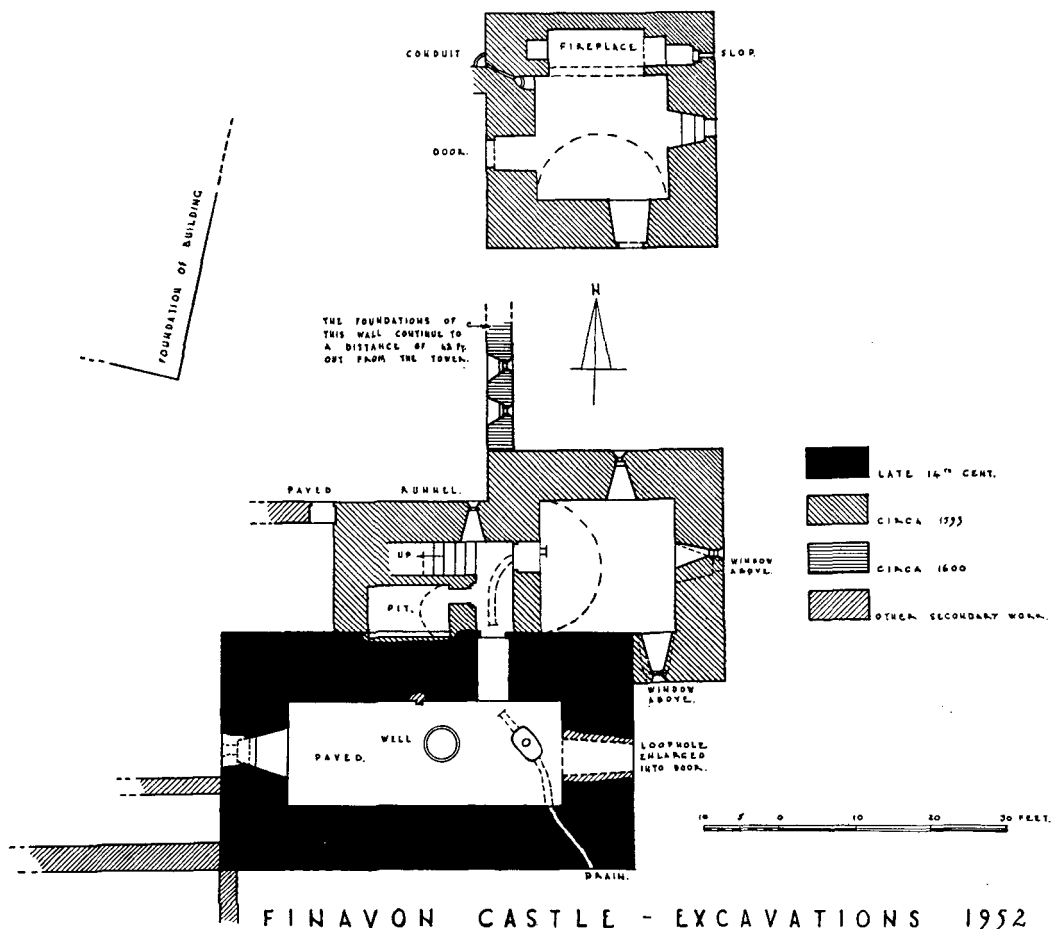


Fig. 2. Finavon Castle: general plan of excavations, with first floor plan of High Tower.

admit to a passage or further room to the W. This jamb has a 3-in. chamfer. It is an evident insertion in the 14th-century masonry. As no trace of a cross wall has been found, either on the floor of the well-house or at the point where such a partition would have butted against the S. wall of the Great Tower, it seems probable that the partition was never built. Possibly the idea was given up because of the proximity of the well. The floor of the well-house is roughly paved with freestone slabs (Pl. XLVI, 2). In its

western part, where an enormous pile of masonry had crashed down upon it, this pavement was found in a badly shattered and indented condition. At the SE. corner is a built floor-drain (Pl. XLV, 4), carried through the outer wall of the Great Tower, and continued onwards to a catch-pit or sump about 8 ft. E. of the well. The drain measures about 8 ins. broad and 4 ins. deep, with a well-paved freestone floor and was covered by large rough lintels, the whole being carefully luted in clay. The catch-pit was closed by a single stone measuring about 4 ft. by 3 ft., and 3 ins. thick. In the centre of this covering slab is a perfectly formed round hole with vertical sides 6 ins. in diameter, closed by a neatly fitting stone bung in the form of a half-ball. All these features were found *in situ* and undisturbed, though, unfortunately, the covering stone of the catch-pit was broken into two in lifting it. Obviously this floor-drain could not have been dug through the concrete of a wall nearly 10 ft. thick after the wall was built. Therefore it is in its earliest portion contemporary with the construction of the tower; and so also, inferentially, must be the well. Probably the digging of the well was the first work done upon the site, to provide water for slaking the lime.

The well (Pl. XLVI, 3) is 3 ft. 10 ins. in diameter, and is steened or cradled throughout in excellent coursed rubble, with a rim course of ashlar. It had been deliberately filled up, mostly with building rubbish, including quantities of closely packed large boulders and some freestone dressed fragments. In 1952 we cleared it out to a depth of 25 ft.: time and tackle available forbade us then to go further. Arrangements were made to renew the attack on the well in March 1953, but were abandoned owing to the lamented death of Col. Greenhill Gardyne, which took place at Finavon on the fifteenth of that month. The work was, however, successfully accomplished in March 1954, largely through the courteous co-operation of H.M. Ministry of Works, who supplied two skilled men with the necessary tackle, sheerpoles being kindly lent to us by Mr Alex. Ross, Sculptor, Forfar. The two men cleared out the well, and the material as brought to the surface was sifted by Mr Hector Thomson, of the Department of Greek, University of Aberdeen, with the assistance of Mr Gordon Coutts, a student at that University. At a depth of 30 ft. water was found, and bottom was reached at 33 ft. 3 ins. Here we encountered a neatly constructed platform of oaken boards, six in number, crossing the base of the shaft from NW. to SE., and held in position against the cradling of the well by a series of six pegs, dowelled into the wall above the boarding in three places, in pairs. Reading from the NW., the breadths of the six planks are:  $6\frac{1}{2}$  ins.,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ins.,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ins.,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  ins.,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  ins. and 6 ins. The platform is slightly concave. As it could not be extracted without taking it to pieces, we judged it best to leave it in place: but one loose peg was brought up for examination, and found to be evergreen oak. It was 10 ins. long.

Such basal timbering is not uncommon in ancient wells, notably on

Roman sites. Its purpose was to keep the water clean. On a muddy or sandy bottom the bucket, every time it grounded, could stir up sediment: the wooden platform prevented this. In some Roman wells, a wooden tub is thus found inverted in the base of the shaft. The presence of this construction at Finavon might warrant the inference that our well terminates in sand or clay, not on rock. But the fact that our brander appears, from the sample examined, to have been made of "live" oak proves (see *infra*, p. 414) that it is of comparatively recent date. Perhaps, therefore, when it was inserted, the lower portion of the well may have been partly filled with silt, and the shaft may therefore be deeper. It was not until the wood had been identified that I realised the late date of the brander. Had I known this at the time, I should have lifted it and continued our investigation. Perhaps our Finavon well has not yet told all its secrets.

Almost to the bottom the well was found to have been filled in with large stones. Those recovered near the foot included a heavy door jamb with a bull-nosed arris, and a gable stone with the chase for a roof. Near the bottom of the well were found some roofing slabs; a door-jamb stone with filleted edge roll and cavetto moulding; also two flat pieces of carefully wrought Italian marble, evidently floor paving. Great quantities of broken liquor bottles were taken out, including large flagons, mell-shaped bottles, and bottles of a square form, with rounded angles. Some of the necks retain their cork stoppers. In all, 261 pieces of bottle were recovered from the well. The pottery includes a few scraps of the usual green-glazed medieval ware, a number of sherds of greybeard, about one-half of a Dutch drug-pot of the 17th century; pieces of Dutch or Lambeth delft, and of early Staffordshire salt-glazed ware; and sherds of a black or dark-brown glazed commonplace earthenware of Fifeshire origin. Some fragments of painted window glass were brought up, also a number of heavy plaster cornice mouldings. The iron work, mostly in a poor state, included a well-preserved fish-hook. Portions of timber and fragments of leather were recovered near the bottom. Here there were also some largish masses of peat. The animal bones were very numerous, and included much evident kitchen refuse. Upon the whole, the successful clearance of this well must be regarded as a highlight of our enterprise.

It is obvious that the well had been deliberately filled up with rubbish from the ruined Castle. Probably when the fallen pile was partly cleared away, for the sake of its materials, by its then owner, James Ford, early in the last century, the well was exposed and used by him, and finally filled up at some time for reasons of safety. Since its excavation, it now contains water to an average depth, in winter time, of 2 ft. 7 ins.

The entrance to the well-house, or basement of the Great Tower, is in the N. wall towards the E. end (Pl. XLV, 4). It is a passage 3 ft. 8 ins. wide, checked at the outer end for a door with a  $2\frac{5}{8}$  ins. chamfer. On the W. jamb



is an iron hinge-crook, and above it the shallow socket for a bar, which must have pried on the door, as there is no corresponding bar-hole in the opposite jamb. It looks as if this door had been altered when, or perhaps before, the later building was added outside. Greater precautions for security would be expected in the basement entrance to a 14th-century tower. The early work stops at the E. jamb of this door, and the further walling on this side, including the door leading into the vaulted basement of the High Tower, is 16th century rubble work. It is evident that the jamb stones of the door have been cut away to engage the later masonry. Moreover, the outer face of squared stones of the Great Tower is clearly visible in the lower courses on the S. side of the High Tower cellar (Pl. XLVI, 4), and also in the corresponding position in the "pit" under the scale-and-platt stair: and in both, it is evident how the later vault has been benched into the 14th-century facework. Thus, the N. front of the ancient Great Tower is clearly verified in the later work which now masks it.

The drain which crosses the Great Tower was found to continue under the entrance in its N. wall, and along the passage outside until it turns into the vaulted cellar of the High Tower, where it disappears.

The entrance to the "pit" or prison in the Staircase "Jamb" is a well-wrought freestone door, of no more than 2 ft. in width. The door has a double check, for an outer wooden door and an inner iron "yett." In the N. jamb the iron hinge crooks of both barriers still remain. This cell measures 10 ft. 8 ins. by 7 ft. 2 ins. As it lies beneath the second flight of the ascending scale-and-platt stair, its vault is raked, so that while the cell is 6 ft. high at the entrance it is little more than 4 ft. in height at the back end. In its S. wall, the squared facework and basal scarcement of the Great Tower are, as stated already, conspicuous. The "pit" has no visible loophole. Latterly it had been used for a wine cellar, as appears from the scores of fragments of bottles which were found when it was cleared out. Evidently the cellar had been well-stocked when the vault was crashed in upon the contents by the fall of the High Tower. That the bottles were full is shown by the fact that many necks retained their corks.

Beyond the "pit" is the lowest flight of the scale-and-platt stair, which occupied the upper portion of the "jamb." It is 4 ft. wide, and is lit by a gunloop in the N. wall. Only the lowest six steps of the flight remain. At the landing, over the raked vault of the "pit," some remains survive of a large opening to the W. This may have been the principal entrance, as the ground outside appears latterly to have been about 5 ft. higher than the basement floor levels inside the Castle: where the 16th-century Staircase "Jamb" butts against the N. face of the Great Tower, the latter is seen to be founded 4 ft. lower. In this connection it appears significant that on the W. face of the NW. corner stone of the staircase, a jamb has been formed, checked for a door and still retaining the sockets for a hinge-crook. Excava-

tion here showed the foundations of a wall 2 ft. 10 ins. thick, running westward. This foundation is below threshold level, and no trace of the corresponding jamb accordingly was obtained. But the fact that the ground in front is paved strongly suggests that we have here the remnant of a porch covering the supposed main entrance. Evidently the great stair in its "jamb" mounted right to the summit of the High Tower, as the landings and doors may still be traced in the broken W. wall of the latter.

The basement of the High Tower (Pl. XLVI, 4) measures 17 ft. 6 ins. by 18 ft. 6 ins., within walls about 6 ft. 6 ins. thick. It contains a single vault, on an EW. axis. In each free face is a gunloop, with wide outer horizontal splay (Pl. XLV, 3). Those on the E. and S. sides have a window above, of which the eastern one was subsequently reduced to a mere square hole. The walls and vault of this cellar are in good coursed rubble: but along the S. side, nearly as far as the gunloop, the squared facing stones of the ancient tower are apparent. The cellar retains its massive old wooden door, constructed in two thicknesses, the outer boards being vertical and the inner horizontal, all clinched with large hand-wrought iron nails having pyramidal heads.

The first floor of the High Tower contains a kitchen. In the N. gable is the enormous cavernous fireplace, 13 ft. 6 ins. wide. Its arch, and much of the vault above, has fallen. In the W. ingo is a capacious aumbry, gible-checked for a door, and slotted for two shelves. Underneath is a gunloop, now blocked. In the opposite ingo is the recess for a sink, with a large slop-drain carried through the wall. Close to the fireplace, in the W. wall of the kitchen, is a recess containing a water basin, with a conduit from a trough in the re-entrant angle outside. Water could be poured into this trough from a well in the courtyard, or more likely it was supplied with rain water by a downpipe in the re-entrant angle: in fact, there is an iron hook outside that may have served as a holdfast for such a downpipe. The kitchen was vaulted on a NS. axis, the weight of the two lower vaults in the tower thus being distributed over all four walls. The kitchen vault, however, has fallen. The kitchen had a large window, well formed, on the E. side, another on the S., and on the W. side a door leading to the second platt of the main stair.

Above this the High Tower contained three full storeys and a garret of joisted living rooms; but nearly the whole of the S. gable and more than half of the W. wall of this imposing structure has fallen. The upper rooms must have been very comfortable owing to the great kitchen "lum" in their northern wall. Moreover, each room, including the garret, except the one on the fourth floor, has a fireplace in that wall: the fireplace in the fourth floor room was doubtless at the opposite end. These fireplaces have, or had, plain lintels beneath well-formed relieving arches. All the rooms have had good windows on the three surviving sides, and from each a door led through to the corresponding landing of the scale-and-platt stair.

The High Tower is built of well-coursed irregular rubble, with the free use of pinnings characteristic of the time. Oyster-shell pinnings are occasionally found. Its quoin stones are well wrought and of large size. The eastern wall, with four tall ruinous windows one above the other, and the lofty blank northern gable,<sup>1</sup> with its crow-steps and immense broad chimney, form a most imposing fragment, whose picturesque effect is heightened by the finely corbelled angle turret at the NE. corner. This turret oversails boldly on four continuously moulded corbel courses. It has two windows with architrave mouldings, doublet pistol loops, and holes pierced downward through the corbels. The wall head on the E. side finished with a hollow-moulded cornice, broken by a dormer. The tower windows have bull-nosed margins. All these windows were furnished with projecting iron cages or grilles; and the lower windows on both sides, S. and E., also exhibit in their jambs the holes for stanchions. In the usual Scottish fashion, the groove for glass is confined to the upper part of the windows, the lower portion of the window being shuttered.

There has been a richly corbelled turret stair commencing at wall-head level in the western re-entrant of the High Tower. This served the garret from the topmost landing of the main stair. For some reason, the tower wall on this side, at third-floor level, has been built thinner than the rest, and is corbelled out above to the full width in a very effective manner.

From the NW. corner of the High Tower a courtyard wall, 3 ft. 8 ins. thick, has run out northwards for a length of about 42 ft. to the edge of the bank, where it turns W. and follows the crest. Near the tower it contains two wide-mouthed gunloops, covering the ravine of the little burn to the E. This wall is an addition to the High Tower. In the re-entrant angle formed by the N. wall of the staircase, the adjoining shoulder of the High Tower, and the courtyard wall, there has subsequently been inset a lean-to building of two storeys, as shown by well-formed joist holes which have been sunk at a height of 8 ft. on both the High Tower and the courtyard wall, and by a roof chase cut level with the lintel of a first floor window in the latter. The floor of this lean-to was beautifully paved with large freestone slabs, and was covered with coal dust and fragments of coal, so that the basement of the lean-to had evidently been used as a fuel store.

At the SW. corner of the Great Tower we uncovered the foundations of two walls, at right angles to each other, and butting against the quoin of the High Tower. The wall running W. is 3 ft. 8 ins. thick, that running S. no more than 2 ft. At first it appeared that a second tower had been echeloned to this corner of the central structure, so as to convert the High Tower into a castle of the well-known three-stepped or Z-plan. But the way in which these two walls hang on to the central structure only by their

<sup>1</sup> Along this gable, at a height of about 18 ft., is the mark of a late lean-to roof.

finger tips, and likewise their relative thinness, forbid the assumption of a massive tower at this corner, and the nature of the structure which they represent must await further investigation. From the W. end of the Great Tower, just S. of the loophole, another wall runs out. This is only 1 ft. 9 ins. thick, and of poor construction, of small stones laid in clay. All these walls had sunk badly—a witness (doubtless) to the defective foundations that caused the final catastrophe of the Castle.

As to the dates: the Great Tower is doubtless the work of Sir David Lindsay, the first Earl, if indeed it was not commenced by his father, Sir Alexander, the first Lindsay owner of Finavon, and the rebuilders of the parish church. In the time of Patrick de Leuchars, Bishop of Brechin from 1354 to 1384, there is a record of Elias the wright working on the bank of the Lemno at Finavon, doubtless in constructing a timber bulwark.<sup>1</sup> This certainly suggests that there was already a residence of some kind at Finavon, and that even then its stability was giving cause for anxiety. The Great Tower was of course a tower house, providing in itself a complete and imposing habitation for its lord. Doubtless there will have been a stately hall on the first floor, with living rooms above.

A stone from the Castle was formerly extant, displaying the initials E.D.L., for the eleventh Earl, David Lindsay, and the date 1593.<sup>2</sup> This may be accepted as fixing the period of the High Tower and Staircase "Jamb." The addition was well conceived. It provided a stately new entrance and stair, giving access, doubtless, to the old great hall, to a spacious new kitchen conveniently placed with reference to the hall, and to a fine suite of private apartments for the lord in the High Tower from the second floor upwards. The isolated position of the lord's suite in a strong tower is in full accordance with late medieval practice.

Jervise has printed an *Inventory of the Furniture in the Castle of Finhaven in 1712*.<sup>3</sup> It mentions the "skool chamber," the "rid [red] roume," the "pented [painted, or possibly pended—vaulted] roume," the "gold collured roume," the "great roume," the "busting roume," the "high dyning roume," the "drawing roume," the "ffyne roume," the "nurssrie," the "loa [low] dynning roume," the "Laird and Ladys roume," the "kitchen," the "woman house," the "milk house," the "brew huss," the "roume opposite to John Strachan's," the "servants' roume," the "porter's roume," the "bottle house," the "seller," and the "cupboord;" besides sundry closets. In the present fragmentary state of the building, it is impossible to identify with certainty any of these apartments.

About 1682 the Castle is described by Ochterlony of Guynde as "a great old house: but now by the industrie of this present laird [the

<sup>1</sup> . . . *currum quem fecit Elisius Wrycht tunc commorans apud Fynnewyn super le bank de Lymyny.* *Reg. Ep. Brechin.*, I, 74.

<sup>2</sup> Jervise, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 425-8.

Hon. James Carnegie] is made a most excellent house; fine rooms and good furniture, good yards, excellent planting, and inclosures, and avenues.”<sup>1</sup> Some doubt exists as to the way in which this once magnificent structure fell into such utter ruin. The accepted account, as given above, is that it collapsed suddenly, undermined by the Lemno. But it is a little difficult to understand how this stream, flowing fully 30 yds. out from the Castle and at least 30 ft. below it, could have had such a disastrous effect. That there has been a great fall is strongly suggested by the present condition of the High Tower, and perhaps a sufficient explanation might be found in the relative thinness of its western wall, which, fully 50 ft. in height above the kitchen vault, is not more than 2 ft. thick. But what happened to the Great Tower? It is hard to imagine the sudden collapse of so monumental a structure. None the less, there has clearly been a mighty fall, probably of its western gable at least, as was shown by the enormous masses of masonry which had filled up this end, and by the shattered state of the paving below. That the fall took place suddenly, when the Castle was still fully inhabited, seems to be indicated by the large amount of broken crockery and bottles with which the interior was littered, and even more so by the scattered remains, found under all the fallen mass, of the draughtsmen and board which were lying on the impacted pavement.

However it perished, the absence of so much of its fallen masses suggests that these have been despoiled for the sake of their materials. In this connection it should be stated that a tradition handed down in the family of the present laird avers that Mr James Ford, a Montrose manufacturer, who was proprietor at Finavon from 1804 until 1817, and greatly improved the estate at the cost of his own bankruptcy, laid the ruins under contribution for his various building projects, road making and dyke building. Spoliation of the ruins has certainly occurred. In the farmhouse of Milton of Finavon, for example, there is a well-formed freestone door showing a 3 in. chamfer, which undoubtedly has come from the Castle. In the ruined farmstead at Haughs of Finavon, destroyed by fire about 1870, is a loophole evidently derived from the old Castle. And in Major Neish's garden at Tannadyce is an important fragment, brought thither by him from the Haughs, and, like the loophole, evidently part of the spoil of Finavon Castle. It is the large dished runnel and weeper of an open parapet, and may be accepted as affording good evidence of the way in which the wall-head of the Great Tower was probably terminated. But the most important architectural fragment of the Castle now lying about appears to be a triangular pediment preserved at the modern mansion. It bears the initials A.L., for Alexander Lindsay, with a shield displaying the Lindsay arms, now much defaced, surmounted by an esquire's helmet.

<sup>1</sup> *Misc. Spottiswoode Club*, I, 334.

## RELICS.

A considerable amount of relics was found in the course of our two seasons' digging. From the middle levels of the well came a large assortment of broken crockery and bottles, mostly, as it would seem, belonging to the first half of the 18th century, but including considerable portions of an interesting Dutch drug-jar of the preceding century. In laying bare the external foundations of the Great Tower, fragments of glazed tiles and a number of pieces of a "greybeard" were the only important artefacts found. Inside the Great Tower the drain was found to be filled with an evil-smelling sludge. This was removed with a trowel, spread out to dry, and then broken up and sifted by hand. The only relic found was part of the bowl of a "fairy" pipe. Another two bowls and parts of the stems were found in the interior of the Great Tower. But the most interesting relics came from the W. end of the well-house, lying on the shattered pavement and under the enormous pile of stones and masonry that had crashed down upon it. Here, scattered over a wide area of floor, were found two ivory draughtsmen, part of the wooden framework of the board, a number of the ivory squares, and portions of two engraved silver hinges and three silver pins for fixing the latter. Also from this area came fragments of 18th-century Staffordshire table-ware with imitated metal-work patterns. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the excavations was the huge quantity of broken wine bottles that were found, not only in the wine cellar, but within the Great Tower, and indeed in almost every quarter where we dug. In many cases the mouths of these bottles retained their cork stoppers, and therefore were full and in storage when the Tower fell upon them. Only two or three pieces of medieval pottery were picked up. The coins numbered no more than two—one from the south-western wall system and one from inside the Great Tower.

*Architectural Fragments.*

Portions of a Renaissance pilaster measuring 1 ft. 10 ins. high, possibly from a balustrade on the head of the Staircase "Jamb". The head of a crocketed finial, with the hole for a stang. A bull-nosed door jamb. The gable stone of a roof. Portion of a newel, 6 ins. in diameter. It had belonged to a spiral stair of the older type, before *circa* 1500, in which the riser intersects the newel diametrically, without the offset which later became universal. A number of fragments of a plaster cornice, showing a heavy torus moulding and some traces of colouring, in one case red. Portions of wall plaster which had been laid on lath. Fragments of floor tiles, glazed yellow or dark brown,  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. or 1 in. in thickness. Many roofing slates, or rather slabs of Turin stone of the so-called "countess" size,  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. in thickness. These have been hung on laths by two oval wooden pegs in each case. The "scants" or short smaller slates for the ridge have been hung on one peg. Fragments of thin grisaille window glass. Portions of a paving slab or slabs,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ins. thick, in white marble. The Geological Department of Aberdeen University report that it is a pure calcite marble, probably from Carrara.

*Glass.*

Mention has been made of the vast quantities of broken bottles found in the Great Tower, the well, and the "pit" in the Staircase "Jamb." The mell-shaped wine bottles in dark green glass are of a type that can be roughly dated from the

end of the 17th until the middle of the 18th century. One that could be largely restored is 6 ins. high and 4 ins. in diameter. A pointed oval base is that of a smaller bottle meant to be stored in earth or sawdust. Of the flagon-shaped bottles, the bases are usually  $4\frac{3}{4}$  ins. in diameter, but others show a diameter of  $2\frac{7}{10}$  in. Many of the necks retain their cork stoppers.

The mouth, neck and part of the body of two scent or unguent bottles in thin translucent glass. The mouth has a flat projecting brim. Diameters of brim and internal diameters of neck: 1 in.,  $\frac{1}{2}$  in.;  $1\frac{1}{10}$  in.,  $\frac{2}{5}$  in.

### Pottery.

(a) *Medieval*.—A few sherds of green-glazed ware. One shows the usual leaf-shaped depressions below the attachment of a handle. Another has a stab-and-drag ornament in incised horizontal and sloping lines. Fragments of the usual unglazed soot-encrusted pipkins.

(b) *Greybeard*.—A base (diameter 4 ins.) and eighteen other fragments of salt-glazed Bellarmine-shaped pottery flagons, ranging from cool grey through umber to a deep warm brown in their "tiger-ware" colouring. They appear to be all of one grey clay body.

(c) *Later*.—Part of one side of a Dutch drug-jar of albarello form, with a white glaze outside and inside, ornamented externally in blue and rose-beige. It very closely resembles one found in Duke Street, London, and now in the Guildhall Museum, with horizontal bands and rows of spots or dabs in brown and guilloche pattern in blue. This jar is assigned to the 17th or 18th century (Pl. XLVII).<sup>1</sup>

Numerous fragments of delft pottery, mainly from domestic articles, mostly plain white, but with a few varieties of blue and white, chiefly copying Chinese patterns. These are imported types, dating from the earlier part and middle of the 18th century. From its thick glaze, brilliant white lustre and resonance it is probable that most of the plain delft is of Dutch origin. Finavon of course is quite near coastal ports such as Montrose and Arbroath. The blue and white delft is certainly continental, probably Dutch of the mid-18th century, known as "kwart". The sherds appear to be from bowls or deep dishes, cast, not wheel-turned.

Parts of the rim of a moulded rosewater dish in Lambeth ware, scalloped as in mid-17th century examples. Such delft ware dishes were used along with the dinner napkin in a time when forks were still uncommon. Our Finavon example belongs to the same type as the one (dated 1651) shown in Pl. 11 B of F. H. Garner's *English Delftware*. Also a fragment of a dish of mid-18th century Lambeth ware similar to that illustrated in Pl. 10 B of the same book.

Part of the handle in salt-glaze, lobed and pierced like Gothic tracery, of a porringer: English ware, late 17th century. It closely resembles two dishes, dated 1686, shown at the top of Pl. XII in F. H. Gardner's *English Delftware*. But as we have only one handle of this dish, it could perhaps have belonged to a bleeding bowl.

By date and quality the sherds of these dishes might be parts of the "three leam dishes standing high," and the porringer lug might have come from one of the "two leam trenchers," in item 25 of the 1712 inventory of the contents of the castle.

<sup>1</sup> *Guildhall Mus. Cat.*, 1908, p. 215, and Pl. LXXIII, no. 5. I am indebted for this photograph to the courtesy of the Keeper of the Guildhall Museum.

Among the remains of table salt-glaze are a number of bits (Pl. XLVIII, 4) from the rim of a mid-18th century deep plate in biscuit-coloured ware, with a typical English Staffordshire impressed ornament derived from metal moulds and following the tradition of English metal ornament. The fragments show a broad rim with wavy edge. The rim is impressed with a pattern of trellis work, arranged so as to slope in opposite directions on either side of two opposed feathers, which form a cartouche. On the one side each compartment in the trellis contains five drupes; on the other side the compartments are filled with eight-pointed stars. This pattern is identical with that shown as No. 109 of Pl. XXIII of the *Catalogue of English Pottery and Porcelain exhibited in the Victoria and Albert Museum, May 5–June 20, 1948*. This dish is dated about 1760. It is also identical with the pattern on the bottle mould, dated about 1750, shown as G 57 in Pl. XXII of the *Catalogue of English Pottery in the British Museum*. Another sherd, from a very similar dish, shows the feather cartouche and a closely interlocked fret-work ornament, identical with that seen in alternate panels on the rim of the dish shown on Pl. CLXXXIX, E. of W. B. Honey's *European Ceramic Art*.

One sherd of capucine brown colour on the outside, having inside a *rouge de feu* floral ornament. This is part of a tea-bowl dating from the early 18th century.

A number of pieces of Chinese blue and white porcelain, distinguishable from the delftware by its translucency. None are earlier than the 18th century.

Two portions, including part of the brim, probably of a teapot in thin hard brown ware, showing a roulette pattern like that on the mug illustrated at fig. 36 of B. Rackham's *Early Staffordshire Pottery*.

Coarse brown-glazed kitchen ware, yellow inside, such as was made in the coastal towns of Fife during the 18th century. Some of the sherds have yellow blobs applied *en barbotine* as external ornament.

Portions of two narrow and smallish bottles in thick brown stoneware; probably for mineral waters, quite modern. One brown clay marble, probably the stopper for one of the above bottles.

#### *Ironwork.*

Part of the band and hinge of a hand-wrought hasp for a door, with the staple for a pin and three nail holes. A similar hasp and door band, with the hinge and five holes for nails; the band has a double-lobed expansion on either side near the outer end. A key, much corroded. An iron cannon ball,  $2\frac{7}{8}$  ins. in diameter. Portion of a rake, with remains of two teeth. A sharp pointed hook of uncertain use—perhaps a large fish-hook. Nails. Indeterminate objects. The ironwork was kindly treated for preservation by the Keeper of the National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh.

#### *Bronze.*

Convex stud, diameter  $\frac{1}{2}$  in., probably from a Highland target, 17th or 18th century.

#### *Miscellaneous.*

Draughtsboard and playing-pieces: ten complete ivory squares of  $1\frac{3}{8}$  ins. and portions of others; fragments of the frame in Indian rosewood; portions of the two hinges of the board, which must have folded to form a box containing the draughtsmen. The hinges are in silver, chased with Indian arabesque ornament.



Three small silver pins or tacks for fixing the hinges. Two of the draughtsmen in ivory, diameter  $1\frac{1}{8}$  ins. (see Pl. XLVIII, 3).

Fragments of three "fairy" pipes.

Portions of leather, probably from a shoe.

Two coins: one a George III half-penny dated 1799; the other probably a British farthing of George II. (Kindly identified by Mr Robert Kerr, O.B.E., F.S.A.Scot.)

#### Bones.

Quantities of animal bones were found all over the site; but only those recovered from sealed deposits were preserved for investigation. These formed two collections, respectively from the drain and from beneath the fallen debris of the Great Tower. The Natural History Department of Aberdeen University has reported on them as follows:

"Both collections clearly represent the debris of the kitchen—sheep, oxen, deer, wild boar and fragmentary remains of a few birds, together with an odd mollusc or two account for the whole. Several ox bones are axe-marked.

The animals represented at the two sites are:

*Drain.* Red deer (1), sheep (2), roe (1), wild boar (1, very large), oxen (2).

Also 2 birds (possibly pigeon and fowl).

*Tower.* Red deer (1), sheep (probably 3), roe (1), wild boar (1, teeth only: calcined), oxen (2).

Birds (4), including a duck, fowl and pigeon or similar birds, and a larger bird, possibly a buzzard.

Molluscs (3), represented by a single specimen each of banded snail, periwinkle and freshwater mussel.

Besides the foregoing in each sample there was a quantity of shattered bones and debris amounting roughly to half the sample. So far as can be seen most of this is referable to the remains identified."

#### Wood.

The timber fragments recovered from the well proved to be evergreen or "live" oak (from the brander), pine and Scotch pine. As to the "live oak," the Forestry Department of Aberdeen University reports as follows:

"The only unexpected identification is the piece of Live or Holm Oak (*Quercus Ilex*). It is known to have been introduced into England by the 16th century (Gerard). The actual date of its introduction into Scotland is unknown, but judging from the list of individual trees in London's *Arboretum* and *Fruticetum Britannicum*, 1838, it appears to have been relatively uncommon then, and judging from the sizes of the trees listed, they were probably planted in the 18th century. If this deduction is correct, it is unlikely that there was a *Quercus Ilex* tree at Finavon of size for utilisation before say about 1800."

This evidence bears out the suggestion made (p. 405) that the well was used by Mr Ford.

As stated previously, the wooden frame of the draughtsboard was identified as *Dalbergia latifolia* (Indian rosewood)—a tree widely distributed in India.

Nothing could be made of the peat samples submitted.

I have to acknowledge assistance, in describing the relics, from Mr George Davidson, Senior Research Fellow in Scottish Arts and Crafts in the University of Aberdeen; and, specially in regard to the Delft Ware from Commander H. J. S. Banks, R.N. The relics are now displayed in the modern Castle of Finavon; and in this arrangement and labelling, I was much helped by Mrs Evelyn Steele, B.A., of the Cataloguing Staff in Aberdeen University Library.

#### CONCLUSIONS.

As has been stated in the Historical Introduction, the Castle of Finavon is said to have fallen suddenly about the middle of the 18th-century, owing, it was believed, to undermining by the Lemno water. Although I have found no contemporary record of the catastrophe, it is recorded by a number of later writers, including the most reliable historian of Angus, Andrew Jervise. Our excavations have made it quite clear that the disaster did in fact take place, and at a time when the Castle was in full occupation. The enormous masses of masonry and plaster work which we found filling up the interior of the Great Tower had obviously fallen from a height, as was vividly brought home to us when we had cleared this material away and looked upon the shattered and impacted condition of the paved floor below. It hardly needs to be added that we were not required to remove the whole of the fallen material, as a great deal of this, and no doubt all the timber work from the upper floors, must have been cleared away long ago. It is in fact known that James Ford, who owned the estate in the early part of last century, removed much of the fallen material for the sake of the lime.

The vast number of fragments of broken bottles and of kitchen and table ware obviously represented the plenishing that had come down in the crash. The truth of this was made obvious to us by the fact that many of the wine bottles, including those found in the original "pit"—later used as a wine-cellar—retained their cork stoppers, and therefore were full when they perished. The draughtsboard with its pieces found scattered over the floor of the Great Tower had similarly come down from an upper room in the crash.

A feature that at first struck us as remarkable was the almost entire absence of medieval pottery, in contrast to the abundance of later wares. Clearly, however, the explanation is that when the Castle was in tranquil occupation, broken pottery and household refuse of all kinds would be thrown out over the bank of the Lemno. A small area of the slope of this bank was searched, but without any definite results. Nevertheless, I suspect that a more extensive investigation here would be fruitful of relics. In contrast, the pottery, glasswork, and other relics found within the building itself must represent its actual contents at the time when it fell. Further proof of the catastrophe is shown by two paintings of the ruined Castle

preserved in the modern mansion (Pl. XLVIII, 1, 2). To judge by their style and the costumes shown, these paintings date from soon after the middle of the 18th century—therefore very shortly after the date assigned to the catastrophe. Nevertheless they show the Castle very much in its present condition.

No doubt when Mr Ford had cleared away a great deal of the fallen debris for the sake of the materials, he discovered the well, as this part of the Great Tower was not deeply encumbered with fallen masonry when it was cleared by Colonel Greenhill Gardyne. Mr Ford had evidently used the well; later on, it was filled in, doubtless to avoid the risk of dogs or sheep falling into it.

Apart from the archæological interest of the results obtained by our excavations, the conclusion must serve as an interesting proof of how what must have been quite a spectacular event in Angus at the time apparently passed without any contemporary record surviving, so far as I am aware, either in print or in manuscript.

Owing to the greatly encumbered nature of the site, it is unlikely that opportunity will be available for much further investigation within the actual area of the Castle. Further work which it is hoped to undertake will therefore consist of: (1) a more extensive exploration of the bank of the Water of Lemno below the Castle; and (2) the investigation of the site of the parish church referred to above, p. 400. Medieval glazed tiles can be freely picked up here, and it appears that the site would well repay investigation.

It would be unpardonable to conclude this Report without acknowledging the splendid performance of our student excavators: the help in solving mechanical problems furnished by the late Mr Hector Lees; and the constant encouragement and abounding hospitality extended to us all by the late Colonel Greenhill Gardyne and his lady. The plans (figs. 1 and 2) were kindly redrawn from my own survey by Mr Michael Macdonald.



1. Finavon Castle: High Tower from NE.



2. Finavon Castle: High Tower from SW.



3. Finavon Castle: junction of NE. corner of Great Tower with S. wall of High Tower.



4. Finavon Castle: inner NE. angle of Great Tower. Note floor-drain with bung *in situ*.



1. Finavon Castle: inverted door jamb in S. wall of Great Tower.



2. Finavon Castle: interior of Great Tower, W. end, showing impacted paving of cellar.



3. Finavon Castle: well, as excavated.



4. Finavon Castle: cellar in base of High Tower, showing 16th-century vault benched into face-work of 14th-century Great Tower.

W. DOUGLAS SIMPSON.



1. Finavon Castle: Dutch drug-jar.



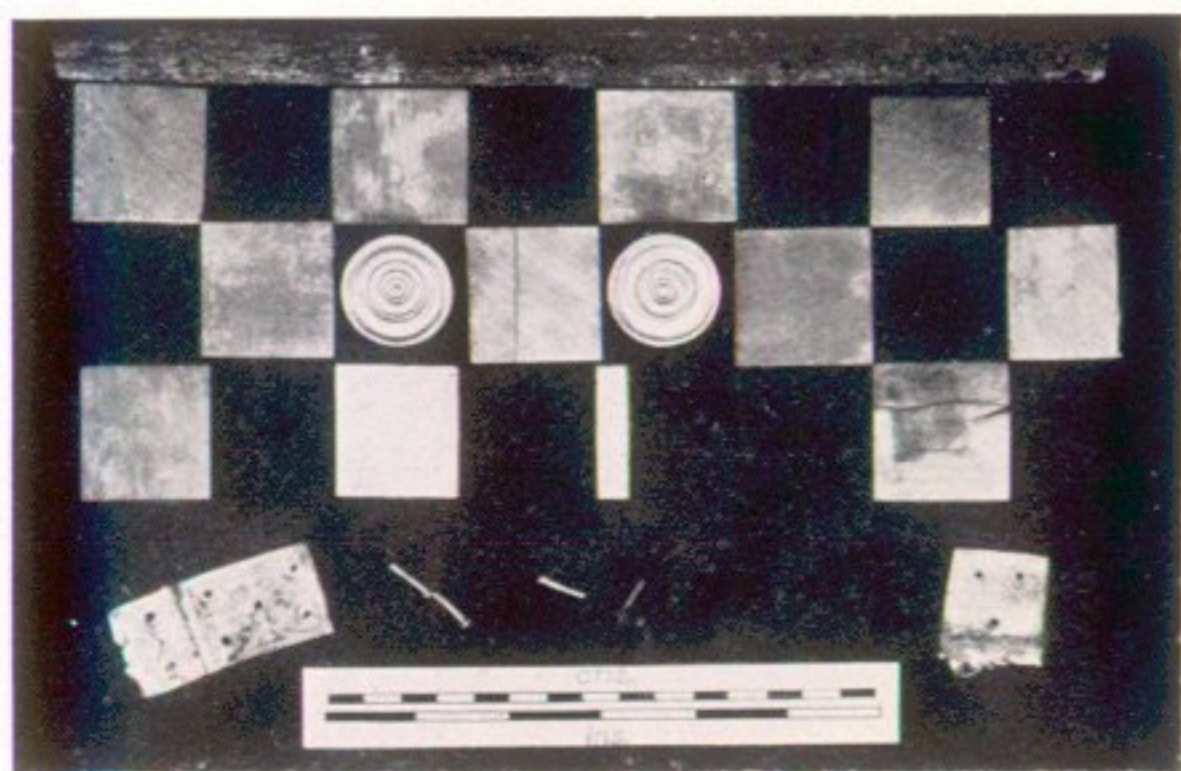
2. Dutch drug-jar in the Guildhall Museum.



1. Finavon Castle from NE.: oil painting,  
*circa 1750.*



2. Finavon Castle from SW.: oil painting,  
*circa 1750.*



3. Finavon Castle: remains of Indian draughts board.



4. Finavon Castle: Staffordshire  
metal-moulded dish.