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County

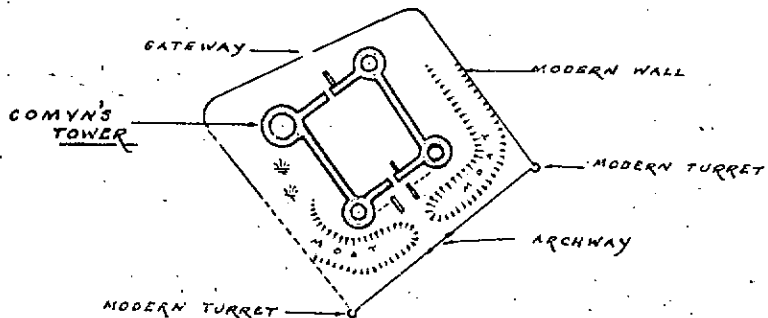
Parish

NN 17 NW 0001

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Illustration

INVERLOCHY CASTLE



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Antiquity No.

County

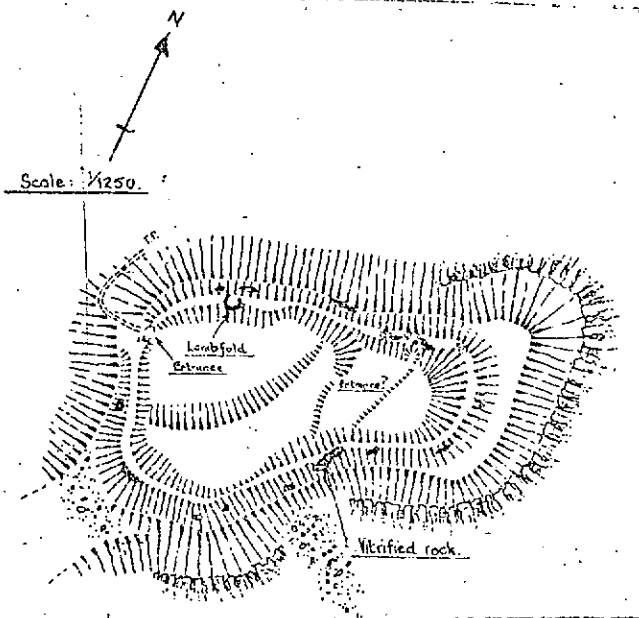
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HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL



FIELD MONUMENTS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

1 SITE CODE H	N	N	1	7	N	W	0	0	1
2 NGR NN 12037544	3 QUAL CE								
6 SITE NAME INVERLOCHY/CASTLE									
10 GENERIC TYPE CASTLE									
14 PERIOD/DATE EM-LM/13thc				15 DATING METHOD TYP					
18 SHAPE SQUARE				19 THREAT AND DATE					

4 DISTRICT LOCHABER	5 PARISH KILMONIVAIG	
7 AREA STATUS	8 SITE STATUS GUARDIANSHIP	9 REGIONAL STATUS
11 CONCORDANCE OS NN 17 NW 1+4 NMR	12 FORM STANDING STRUCTURE	13 DIMENSIONS
16 RELATIONSHIP OF ELEMENTS		17 CONDITION RUINED
20 LAND USE LAND BUILT UPON+GARDEN		21 GEOLOGY
22 SOILS		23 VEGETATION
24 HYDROLOGY/DRAINAGE		25 RELIEF GENTLE SLOPE TO RIVER
		26 ASPECT N
		27 ALTITUDE 2+10m OD

28 EXCAVATION (EXCAVATOR: DATE: EXTENT: QUALITY)

29 BIBLIOGRAPHY (AUTHOR: DATE: TITLE: JOURNAL OR PUBLISHER: VOLUME: DETAIL)

- 1 ORDNANCE SURVEY: 1904: 6" MAP
- 2 MACGIBBON & ROSS: 1887: CASTELLATED AND DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE OF SCOTLAND: :VOL 1: pp73-
- 3 CRUDEN S: 1960: THE SCOTTISH CASTLE: SPURBOOKS: pp57-64, plan
- 4 TOY, S: 1950: CASTLES OF GREAT BRITAIN: : pp132-133 plan
- 5 HBM (SDD): 1985: LIST OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS
- 6 ORDNANCE SURVEY: 1975: 1/10,000 MAP
- 7 MACCULLOCH, D B: 1938: ROMANTIC LOCHABER: : pp97-98

30 GROUND PLAN NO.	31 GROUND PHOTO NO.
32 SLIDES NO.	33 HR. AP. NO.
34 NMR. AP. NO.	35 OTHER AP. NO.: SOURCE
36 ARCHIVE AND LOCATION	
37 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY	38 SAMPLES
39 PALYNOLOGY	40 NUMERICAL DATES: RANGE: LAB NO.
41 SMALL FINDS	42 MUSEUM/LOCATION
43 OTHER	

44 NAME & ADDRESS OF OWNER	45 ATTITUDE OF OWNER
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46 NAME & ADDRESS OF TENANT	47 ATTITUDE OF TENANT
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48 ACCESS & RESTRICTIONS		
49 NAME & ADDRESS OF FINDER/RECORDER: DATE SM: 4.9.1986	50 RECORDER: DATE SM: 4.9.1986	51 CHECK: DATE A.R. 9.9.1986

52 TEXT

"See continuation cards for text and plans"

"NN 121 755: Inverlochy Castle." (5)

BOX 29.

8 MACFARLANE, W: 1907: MACFARLANES GEOGRAPHICAL COLLECTION: SCOTTISH HISTORY SOCIETY: SER 1: 5
52: pp xxi, xxx, xlix, xlv, 159, 18

9. LEWIS, J: 1983: DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND: CBA(SCOT): P 14

INVERLOCHY CASTLE, INVERNESS-SHIRE.

(2)

Inverlochy Castle, Inverness-shire, is situated on level ground on the south side of the river Lochy, a short way above its junction with Loch Linnhe, and about 2 miles from Fort-William.

There is no record of the origin of this castle, but, according to the Statistical Account, tradition says that it was built by the Comyns.

In the absence of any proper history, it has been conjectured that it may have been erected in the latter half of the fifteenth century by George, second Earl of Huntly, and it is stated to have been still unfinished in the time of Charles II.

As will be hereafter pointed out, some great castles with quadrangles were erected in the fifteenth century, but their leading characteristics are different from those of Inverlochy. They have high and thick enclosing walls, and sometimes round towers also, but the walls of the enceinte invariably form an integral part of the buildings which compose the castle. In this case the walls of the enceinte stand alone, without connection with any internal buildings, nor are there any windows or shot-holes in the walls (such as we invariably find in fifteenth-century work) to indicate that any buildings of that kind ever existed.

A glance at the plan (Fig. 51) will show that it has much more affinity with the arrangements of the thirteenth-century castles above described, while its great round towers projecting boldly at the four angles bring it into connection with the more finished castles of the period about to be referred to.

Inverlochy Castle consists of a great courtyard, measuring 101 feet from north to south, by 90 feet from east to west, surrounded by walls of enceinte 9 feet in thickness, and which were probably about 30 feet high, though now reduced to from 20 to 25 feet. There is a principal gateway in the south wall, 7 feet 6 inches wide, and another immediately opposite in the north wall, 5 feet 6 inches wide. These were each provided with a portcullis, the grooves for which are still partly preserved. Some portions of the freestone dressings of the doors still exist, showing that the angles have all plain splays. The south gate has had an internal gate-house, with probably an interior door and apertures in the roof from which assailants might be attacked. The north door has been strengthened with two oaken bars running into grooves in the wall, one opposite the lower part and the other opposite the higher part of the door. There are some traces of building outside this door, which may indicate that there was at one time an outer porch or gate-house.

The angles at the north-east, south-east, and south-west are fortified with round towers, about 14 feet diameter internally, and each is provided with a stair in the thickness of the wall, winding round the tower, and giving access to the two upper floors and the battlements.

The tower at the north-west angle (Fig. 52), called the Comyn's Tower, is larger than the others, and formed the donjon or residence of the lord of the castle. It is 20 feet in diameter within the walls, which are 10 feet 4 inches thick, and contain a staircase 3 feet 6 inches wide, arranged in the same manner as in the other towers. The angle towers were provided with loops to light the staircases and upper rooms; but these are now represented only by holes in the walls, the freestone dressings being torn out. There is, however, a portion of one loop left in the north-east tower, showing that they were narrow slits, splayed on the outside, with a round termination or oilet at the bottom. The donjon was probably higher as well as larger than the other towers, as we shall see was usually the case.

The whole castle was surrounded with a moat about 30 feet wide, placed about 40 feet from the building. This was no doubt supplied with water from the river. Its position may still be traced in the marshy depression in the ground round the castle. Along the south front (Fig. 53) the ground between the towers is raised above the general level, and has formed a platform with a retaining wall. Some remains of masonry in front of this and immediately opposite the entrance gate indicate the position of the drawbridge.

The locality of Inverlochy is supposed to have been the site of an ancient Pictish town, which was demolished by the Danes. But apart from this tradition, we think there can be no question about the antiquity of the castle. Its thick walls, without openings, and unconnected with other buildings, associate it with the style of castles erected in the thirteenth century, while its boldly projected round towers give it a striking resemblance to the castles of the period in France and England, such as Rouency and Pevensey. The form of the staircases in the towers is also characteristic of thirteenth-century work, as for example at Conisborough Castle, Yorkshire.

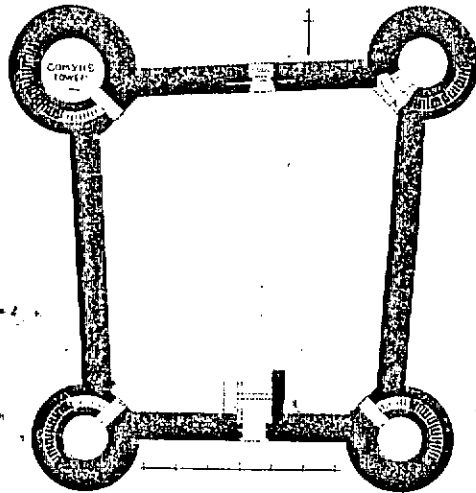


FIG. 51.—Inverlochy Castle. Plan.

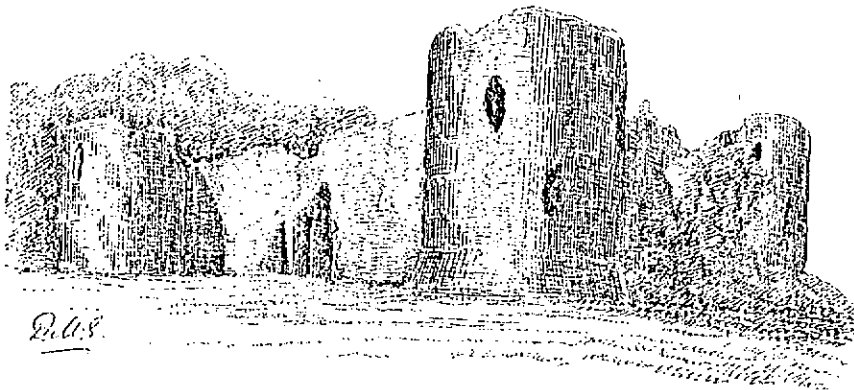


FIG. 52.—Inverlochy Castle from the North-West.

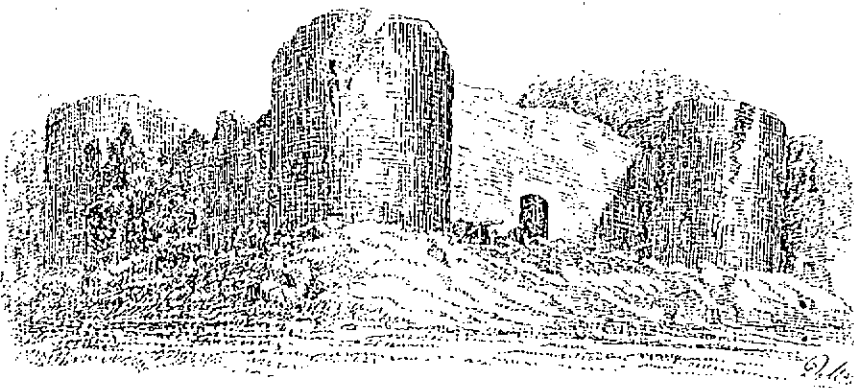


FIG. 53.—Inverlochy Castle from the South-West.

(1)
 (NH 12037544) Inverlochy Castle (in ruins)
 Cunyn's Tower

HNN 17 NW 001
 (1)

Inverlochy Castle, of c. 1270-1280 date, is a simple square courtyard contained by four high curtain walls. A massive round tower projects boldly from each corner, one, the donjon (Comyn's Tower), being larger than the others. (2)

The enclosure so formed has two entrances, plain pointed arch openings, without foreworks or gatehouse, through the centre of two opposite sides. The entrance is but a doorway in which hung a heavy two-leaved door secured by a draw-bar and protected by a portcullis. The curtain is surrounded by a wide ditch and outer bank concentrically disposed about it. The ditch is silted but clearly definable round 3 sides. The fourth side confronting the R. Ness, was not ditched. The entrance through this side was the water-gate; before it, there would no doubt be a channel from the river and a small harbour or dock. Water from the river was introduced to the ditch round the other 3 sides. (O.S.F.I:CFW:17.3.1961)

The curtain and towers stand to a height of about 30'.

[Toy describes and plans a banakin here. Not only is this a 'folly' but his description and plan are in error].

There is no proper history for this castle but tradition has it that it was built by the Comyns, Lords of Lochaber and Badenoch from about 1080 to the accession of Bruce in 1306. In 1505 its ruined site was granted to George, second Earl of Huntly on condition he built 'a tower and strength and Barmekyn' to serve as a Royalist garrison.

Scheduled.

Inverlochy Castle : as described by Cruden

Boece states that King Edwin II built a castle and city at Inverlochy some years before the commencement of the Christian era. It is further reputed to be the place where a treaty was signed in 790 between the ambassadors of Charlemagne and Achaius (Angus), King of the Picts, for their mutual protection against the depredations of the English. Inverlochy was at last so defaced by the Danes that it was unable to regain its 'prestine renoune'. (7)

Some notes, attributed largely to Timothy Pont also mention the 'ancient towne' of 'Innerloghie' and that it was the residence of kings, including King Edwin and King Eugenius. (8)

(O.S.F.I:
 NKB:6.5.1970)

No further information.

"NN 1203 7544, INVERLOCHY CASTLE" (6)

"NN 121 755 INVERLOCHY CASTLE" (5)

There are no castles with true mid-wall towers in Scotland. The intermediate towers of Kildruminy and Bothwell are placed obliquely in the curtains at the angles of their polygonal circuits. But in Inverlochy Castle (Inverness-shire) there is a first-rate and rare example of the quadrangular castle fortified with round corner towers, a type not uncommon in England and Wales and there dated securely to the last quarter of the thirteenth century, e.g. Kidwelly (c. 1275), Flint (1277) and Harlech (1283).

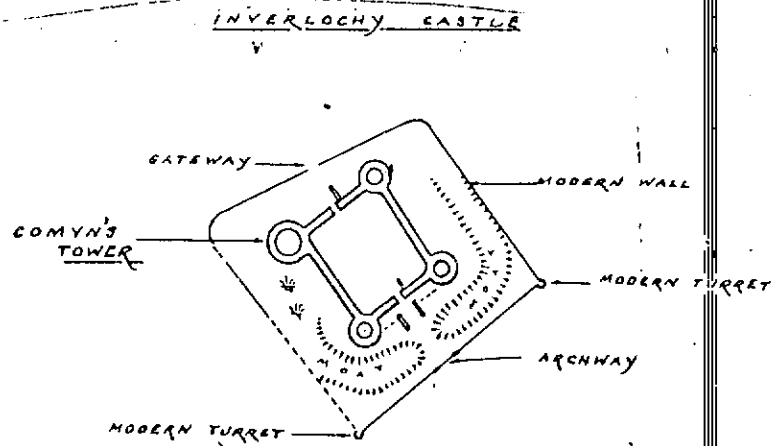
Inverlochy (fig. 6) is a simple square courtyard contained by four high curtain walls. A massive round tower projects boldly from each corner, one, the donjon, being larger than the others. The enclosure so formed has two entrances, plain pointed-arch openings, without foreworks or gatehouse, through the centre of two opposite sides. The entrance is but a doorway in which hung a heavy two-leaved door secured by a draw-bar and protected by a portecullis. The curtain is surrounded by a wide ditch and outer bank concentrically disposed about it. The ditch is silted but is clearly definable round three sides. The fourth side, confronting the River Ness, was not ditched. The entrance through this side was the water-gate; before it there would be no doubt a channel from the river, and a small harbour or dock, such as still exists at Beaumaris in Anglesey, an Edwardian castle which was begun in 1295. Water from the river was introduced to the ditch round the other three sides.

The curtain and towers stand to a height of about 30 feet. The towers were floored and each is equipped with long narrow loops with fish-tailed cills resembling those at Dunstaffnage. The floors were each served by a mural stair within the thickness of the wall. It does not rise as a wheel or spiral stair characteristic of later building, but as a slower curve within the arc of the wall, which is unusual in Scottish architecture but occurs in the keep of Dunstaffnage. The wall-head is much broken, and on the south side the crenellations have been remodelled in recent times.

The donjon tower is closed to the courtyard by a straight gorge wall which cuts obliquely across the corner of the enceinte. At ground level there is an entrance from the court which penetrates the wall to the interior of the basement of the tower; its door was secured by draw-bars housed in deep holes in either jamb. On the left hand of the deep entrance passage a doorway admits to the bottom of the mural stair which rises as far as the second floor. The first-floor chamber is entered directly from this stair. The floor itself was supported upon a wide scarcement which has been repaired and finished with an inward slope, doubtless to cast off rainwater falling through the roofless ruin of the tower, which gives a misleading indication of vaulting. The embrasures of the long narrow loops are wide, double-played and straight-lintelled, just as in the curtains and towers of Conway Castle, for example, erected by Edward between 1283 and 1287. In the corner, where the tower meets the west curtain, there is a mural garderobe chamber, dog-legged in plan, and blocked on the outside where the masonry of the curtain is thickened to accommodate the garderobe chute. The second floor of the tower has no less than three doorways: one from the stairhead, one from an adjacent garderobe chamber, and one through the centre of the gorge wall. The garderobe chamber overhung the curtain at its junction with the tower, as it does at Caerlaverock and Rothesay. Two deep channels in the wall-walk testify to the presence of deep-seated projecting timbers or stone corbels. Of the chamber nothing remains.

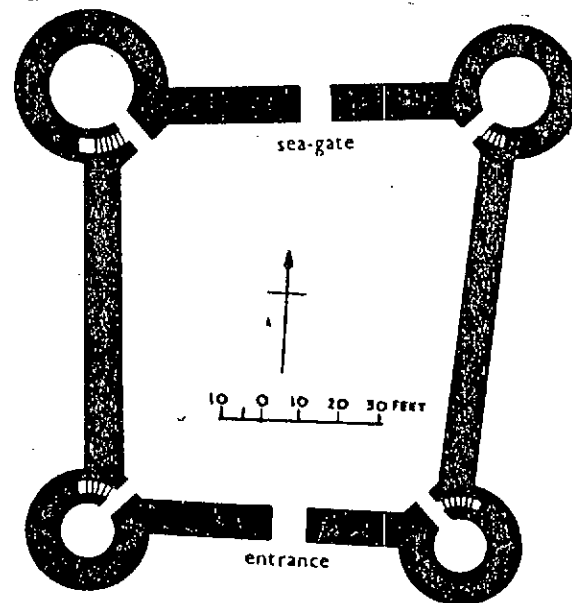
At second-floor level the gorge-wall is reduced in thickness and the ledge thus formed serves as a passage or gallery across the corner, connecting the wall-walks of the flanking curtains at a slightly lower level. The parapet walk of the south curtain steps down from the wall-head to the second-floor level of the tower, crosses the straight rear face of the tower to the west curtain, and by another short flight of steps carries one to its wall-walk. From here a flight turns sharply back towards the tower and climbs steeply to the leads. The merlons stepped up with it, as at Rothesay, where this interesting aid to mobility on the *chemin de ronde* is still to be seen, embodied in a later heightening of the wall. From the leads a hoarding of the tower overhung the wall-face. Over the elevated entrance to the tower there are two ashlar corbels; these carried the curving overhang of the tower which above the passage level resumes its circular form.

The continuation of the curtain wall-walk across the corner, by-passing the tower as it were, permitted quick circulation and security, two requirements difficult to reconcile when a tower straddled a curtain or was interposed at the junction of two. Access from one curtain to another through the interior of an intervening tower increased its vulnerability by the unavoidable necessity of two doors; on the other hand completely to isolate the tower from the curtains stopped access from one to another at wall-walk level, where the rapid and even precipitate movement of men and materials from one part of the wall-head to another was an activity to be provided for. But again, in the event of a curtain being taken, it was greatly to the advantage of the garrison if a number could retreat from the captured wall-head into a tower, there to rally, re-emerge and drive the intruders off. Consequently, where there existed a likelihood of a curtain being taken, there was need for towers capable of both independent resistance and direct access to the adjacent curtains, not obstructing free passage nor being obliged to open their doors to provide it.



(3) (O.S.F.I.; C F W:18.7.1961)

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SCALE 1:2500



(b) Inverlochy

The Inverlochy solution of this wall-head problem, as we are able to study it in the donjon tower, is a sound and ingenious one. It provides admittance to the second floor of the tower and a refuge therein directly from the wall-walk, and that by only one door. Now, movement within the tower was by the mural stair, which finishes at this level, and it was probably only through the tower and up this stair that the wall-head was reached from ground level. This is both safe and convenient. Furthermore, should the door be necessarily secured against the wall-walk, rapid and unimpeded movement round it would still be possible. A somewhat similar passage serves the same purpose behind the mural towers of the outer curtain at Beaumaris. Like the Inverlochy passage it is lower than the flanking parapets and reaches them by a short flight of steps at each end. It is not offset in the tower wall as the Inverlochy gallery is; it is an oversailing walk corbelled out from the wall of the tower.¹ At Harlech (1283-90) and upon the castle walls of Conway (1283-9) there is a similar method of ensuring mobility, but the *chemin de ronde* maintains its level course upon the wall-head, and the interiors of the towers thus by-passed are not always provided with direct access

¹ The history of the outer curtain of Beaumaris is disputable. J. G. Edwards (1946), 24-30, argues the matter comprehensively for a period 1295 to about 1343, but J. Harvey (1934), 236, gives it as in and after 1316.

to it. The method is of interest rather than importance; the princely Caernarvon, for instance, does not have it, but goes to the extremes of providing access through the interiors of the towers which straddle the walls and, on the other hand, completely stopping wall-head movement by running the parapet walk straight into the solid wall of intervening towers, where it stops. But Caernarvon had other methods of ensuring mural circulation within the thickness of the walls and at different levels.

Everything about Inverlochy proclaims the thirteenth century and nothing contradicts it. The simple quadrangular layout, the high curtain walls and projecting corner towers rising from long spreading bases, the pre-eminence of one tower as the donjon, the long fish-tailed slits in the towers and the total lack of openings in the curtain, the simple entrances in each of two opposite sides, and the form of a ditch are all unmistakable thirteenth-century characteristics. With its primitive entrances in an architectural context of good quality, which implies that the castle is as good as its builders could make it, Inverlochy is hardly likely to be later than 1280, say about 1270-80. A naval engagement was fought outside its walls in 1297.¹ As a first-rate transitional work its importance can scarcely be exaggerated.

The plan of Inverlochy is a most satisfying one to study. Simple and direct, it conveys the impression that here is nothing fortuitous. The symmetrical disposition of the towers and entrances, the projection and weight of the towers in relation to the lengths of curtain they contain, and the slight convergence of the east and west walls such as occurs at Harlech, all combine to make it a plan of quite unusual distinction. It is a classic example of the early curtain wall and tower type, technically far in advance of anything we have yet considered, with the exception of Rothesay, which is fundamentally the same, with the square made a circle as it were. But whereas Rothesay is a hybrid of disputable architectural pedigree, Inverlochy is closely related to a highly respectable family with unimpeachable connections.

The quadrangular enclosure with high curtains and round corner towers boldly salient is the basic plan in England and Wales in the later thirteenth century. Developing in the course of time, as we shall see it did in Scotland also, it occurs as early as 1220 at Skenfrith, where however the enclosure is an irregular quadrilateral and the

¹ Annie I. Dunlop (1950), 178, giving references; ER vi.1, 60001, 406, etc.

² For this type of entrance see R. Feilden and J. Thomson (1937), 51.

³ R. C. Reid (1926), 117. ⁴ C. A. R. Radford (1934).

(3)

defence is still pre-eminently the keep upon a mound. The corner towers do not control the curtain, the lay-out spreads (a weakness of Lochindorb also), and there is room for improvement. Again, at Pevensey,² within a large and irregular Roman enclosure wall there is set a polygonal and more formal curtain of about 1250,³ fortified by projecting rounded towers which are equipped with long slits and have a profile and overall appearance very similar to the towers of Inverlochy.

In the last quarter of the thirteenth century, under the direction of Edward I's master masons, to be numbered among the most accomplished in Europe, the simple plan of Skenfrith is pulled in and becomes tighter, foursquare, and stereotyped. The inner ward of Kidwelly (c. 1275) is a square enclosure contained by a high curtain with four fully rounded towers, one at each corner. Another early example of this logical and basic type is Flint,⁴ which, like Bothwell, Kildrumny and Inverlochy, preserves the early characteristic of the superior size and strength of one tower as the donjon or keep. This is one of the last keeps or donjon towers to be erected in England or Wales. The successors to the motte-castle, they were themselves superseded by the elaborate frontal gatehouse, such as that of Harlech, erected by Edward in 1286. Begun by him in 1277 and finished in 1280, Flint was the first of his chain of northern Welsh castles to be systematically erected in accordance with campaigns and policy designed to contain and subdue the Welsh.

Master James of St George, of whom more will be said, was in charge of this work from 1278 concurrently with a similar undertaking and responsibility at Rhuddlan.⁵ In 1290 he was Constable of Harlech, then nearing completion. The plan of its inner ward, excepting the gatehouse, bears a strong similarity to Inverlochy, extending even to the convergence of the two opposite curtains which do not have entrances. Harlech furthermore presents with Inverlochy an instructive comparison of dissimilarity.⁶ It has a massive frontal gatehouse. Inverlochy has no sort of gatehouse at all.

¹ C. Peers (1952).

² A. J. Taylor (1919); J. G. Edwards (1946), 37-7.

³ C. Peers (1952), 11.

⁴ W. J. Hemp (1929).

⁵ A comparison of the great Edwardian castles of North Wales reveals nothing more striking than their dissimilarities. Among these more or less contemporary works, which were erected under the same direction, close parallels are strangely hard to find. Their absence is of little significance in dating, as Edward's strictly contemporary first two castles, Flint and Rhuddlan, forcibly demonstrate. They are quite dissimilar. Building sites available and deliberate intent could account for much variation among the castles of this group. Certainly no enemy familiar with the lay-out and the tricks of one would find his knowledge of much advantage in attempting to reduce another.

Harlech presents a new idea. Inverlochy perpetuates the old. While demonstrating the two basic defensive ingredients, curtain and tower, at an advanced stage of development, Inverlochy retains the entrances as mere openings in the walls, and it also retains the early superiority of one tower over the others.

(3)

" The principal area of excavation was the NE tower where rubble upto 1m metre overlay the original floor of roughly levelled reconstruction debris. The tower had been built against disturbed soils which included skeletal remains believed to be human. This indicates an occupation of the site earlier than that of the extant castle's reconstruction.

Adjacent to the tower within the courtyard, a 5m x 4m trench was opened. Nothing of this trench substantiated the theory that there had been a range of timber buildings in the east of the courtyard, although a line of squared sockets along the entire length of the east curtain, at the first floor level, would suggest that such buildings had once existed there.

Access to the living quarters of the north east tower was probably gained via the first floor and in the north curtain there was an entrance way (later blocked) that may have coincided with the level. A sandstone threshold in the basement exhibited almost no signs of wear suggesting this to have been a little used room.

A cobbled floor of good construction uncovered outwith and adjacent to the north curtain and the north east tower. This was of late date and may have belonged to a building erected by the Invergarry Ironworks Company in the second quarter of the eighteenth century." (9)