

ART. XIII.—*Howgill Castle, Westmorland.* By J. H. MARTINDALE, F.R.I.B.A.

Read at Howgill, September 10th, 1908.

I believe our Society has only once before visited Howgill, and at first sight you may think there is very little to see except an uninteresting modern house; but I can assure you that, concealed by a cold rough-cast exterior, we have a warm and interesting ancient building. Modern alterations and so-called "improvements" have covered ancient features, but many still exist.

The manor of the forest of Milburn, of which Howgill was the caput or seat, was granted to de Stuteville in the reign of King John—that is to say, in the very beginning of the thirteenth century. In some seventy years it seems to have reverted by forfeiture or otherwise to the Crown, and was granted by Edward I. to the powerful de Lancasters of Kendal Castle. A Lancaster had married a Stuteville, a younger branch of whom made it the home of an influential county family for about one hundred and sixty years, when in 16 Henry VI.—*i.e.*, 1438—it passed by marriage to the Crackanthorpes. The Crackanthorpes only continued for three generations and ended in daughters, when the manor was brought to the Sandfords in the reign of Henry VIII. It continued in the family for nearly two hundred years, and then passed by marriage to the Honeywoods, and was sold to the ancestors of the present owner, Lord Hothfield.

The site commands an extensive and magnificent view to the south and west. It is defended by a natural gill and deep ravine on the north-west. Howgill appears as third in point of size in Dr. Taylor's list of "peles." I venture to think we have something more than a pele, by

which is usually understood an isolated tower, around which later additions grew. Here we have two towers, "twins" of similar outline and age, and connected by a central block from their foundation. I think the work is earlier than fourteenth century; the thickness of the walls tends to confirm this. Of thirteen peles mentioned by Dr. Taylor none exceed and only three (Sizergh, Dacre, and Hutton John) approach within two feet of the 10 feet 6 inch thickness of Howgill. We probably have work earlier than the date usually assigned to the pele towers, and possibly buildings erected by the de Stutevilles or first de Lancasters. The building has been so much modified, especially by the varying levels of first and second floors, that the plan is difficult to follow and explain.

Sir Daniel Fleming describes Howgill Castle as "a fair stone building." This is the only seat in Westmorland in which he mentions the material, and it seems to imply that the masonry was either very good or out of the common in character. Sir Daniel was a descendant of the de Lancasters of Howgill, and therefore, probably, was well acquainted with the castle.

Originally the castle consisted of the eastern and western towers, and a central block between. The north wall of this central block remains 10 feet 6 inches thick, but its existence seems to have been overlooked by Dr. Taylor.* The entrance was in the north wall of the centre block near the east tower, giving direct access on the ground level to rooms in the east tower and to the centre block, but not to the west tower. A straight mural stair in the north wall led up to the first floor, which was entered through a fine pointed arched door. This stair, which is about three feet wide, was lighted by three loops which remain, with moulded corbel course under the

* Whose article on Howgill Castle is printed in these *Transactions*, o.s., xii., p. 27.

square heads of the reveals. The mortices for guard bars are visible.

The ceiling of this stair is very singular, and consists of a series of stepped trefoil arches of solid masonry. This part is difficult of access, as the only way is by a trap door in a ceiling, and then through a narrow loop. There is a curious paragraph in Nicolson and Burn (i., p. 388), which says, speaking of Howgill, "underneath the dwelling-house (to which they ascended *by stairs on the outside*) are vaults, &c."

The ground floor of the western tower consists of two rooms, both with barrel vaults, at present entered on the level, but originally, I think, only approached by descending from the first floor—the northern room by a circular stair in the north-east angle, and the south by a straight stair in the east wall. Both these stairs are now blocked up. The east tower, now the kitchen, was entered from the ground floor; it was probably in one compartment and is vaulted; a straight mural stair, ascending the reverse way from the one in west tower, gives access to the first floor. There is also a circular stair in the north-west angle, which is continued up to the roof, and not entered from the kitchen, but from a small lobby in the wall. The fireplace in the kitchen is an eighteenth century insertion.

The first floor has been raised three feet higher than the original level. The west tower was probably one room, or only divided by a panelled partition; the east tower may have been divided by a wall as at present. The towers have mural chambers and stairs, but the present cupboards and recesses are lined with old oak panelling, probably taken from the walls of the hall, and painted, and the original forms and sizes cannot be made out. The centre block was a fine hall as at present, with an elaborate stone fireplace and an old dog-grate basket and back.

On the second floor, the west tower has been so altered



ARCHES OF THE STAIRCASE,
HOWGILL CASTLE.

Photo. by C. J. F. Martindale.

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in the eighteenth century that it is impossible at present to make out the internal divisions. We have in the east tower the old garderobe with shoot pipe down to the ground level, and the inside openings of the three-light windows. The original level of the floor can be seen by the entrance to the garderobe.

Externally, on the north of the east tower can be seen one of the two-light windows of the original work, with later insertions and windows of various dates. You can also see the level of the oversailing course of the parapet and the outline of two embrasures in which the moulding is carried round, clearly a later repair. There are two old shoot pipes from the parapet of plain early type.

The block of offices to the north was probably added by the Sandfords at the beginning of the sixteenth century. There is only one piece of carved stone work visible, and it is of very doubtful date; it is in this block, and not on the west tower. There is no armorial or date stone visible in the building. The oak stairs to the present first floor form a fine piece of work, which may be attributed to the later Sandfords or to the Honeywoods. There is a fine old oak table in the hall.
