



Ground Plan of Odiham Castle, Hants.

## ODIHAM CASTLE, HANTS.

By G. T. CLARK.

ABOUT a mile north-west of the town of Odiham, in the tything of North Warnborough, stands what remains of this ancient Castle. It is placed on the left bank of the White-water, a rather copious stream, which rises about two miles south, and flows northwards to fall into the Loddon at Swallowfield. About the Castle the ground is low and flat, and in consequence very wet. The Basingstoke canal has been carried across the marsh, and being now abandoned and choked with weeds, adds to the dreariness of the scene. The place no doubt was always one of strength, and the open woodland about it was favourable to the preservation of game, and to the wilder kind of sporting in which the Plantagenet monarchs took great delight.

Whatever may have been the extent of the Castle in its great days, its remains in masonry are confined to a single tower, now in a very dilapidated condition. This tower is an octagon, described within a circle of about 29 ft. radius, the faces, not quite equal, averaging 22 ft. 6 in. The walls, casing included, were 10 ft. thick ; the interior faces, therefore average 14 ft. 9 in., and the interior diameter from face to face is 38 ft. At each angle is set a buttress of 4 ft. projection and 2 ft. breadth, rising to the summit, or nearly so, of the building, now about 60 ft. high, and which, the parapet and part of the wall being gone, may have been 8 ft. higher. As the tops of some of the upper windows remain, it may be inferred that the height, when complete, did not exceed 68 ft.

The material of the tower is a conglomerate of small flint nodules grouted in a large quantity of very good mortar. The whole exterior seems to have been faced with small ashlar blocks, possibly of Caen stone. The casing is

gone, but the mortar has preserved the beds of the stone more or less perfect. The same stone was used in the interior for dressings for the openings, and for a band about 4 ft. high at the base of the wall, and for the groining of the internal angles. In these two latter positions some of the ashlar has been left undisturbed. About one-third of the tower, including most of the two western faces, has fallen, but though the remainder is very rough, and a mere mass of flint conglomerate, held together by the excellence of the mortar, the cores of the buttresses remain, and enough of the recesses of the window openings to show something of their original form and dimensions.

The tower is composed of a basement and two stories. The basement floor is about 6 ft. below the exterior ground level. It was about 12 ft high, and six of its eight faces appear to have been pierced. Of these openings five within commence at 4 ft. from the floor. They were round-headed, and 4 ft. wide. They converged upon an ordinary loop, and as the sill rose by six steps, the base of the loop was about a foot above the exterior ground level. Three of these recesses are tolerably perfect. The sixth opening, judging from an appearance in the wall above, may have been the door into the base of a well-stair, ascending in the wall to the summit. Such a stair there was likely to have been, and the hollow in the wall is more like that for a staircase than for a chimney shaft or a garderobe vent, and the weakening of the wall by such staircase would account for its having fallen on this side. The stair, if such it was, occupied the south end of the south-west face. Two of the openings in the basement have been called doorways of entrance from without. What remains scarcely leads to this conclusion, and it is exceedingly improbable that there should have been a door on the ground level, when there certainly was one on the first floor. Sir E. Home's plan, mentioned below,<sup>1</sup> shows a sort of staircase in the centre of the tower, as though descending to a sub-basement floor. Of this not a trace is visible, and in so wet a soil a chamber much below the surface would be usually full of water. As regards the ground-floor entry, it is very possible that here, as usual, a basement window may,

<sup>1</sup> In the *Archæologia*, vol. xxix. plate xliii., is given a plan of Odiham Tower, but accompanied by no description, and

without date. It was laid before the Society of Antiquaries by Sir E. Home in 1840.

in modern times, for the convenience of entry, have been converted into a door, and so the present appearance produced.

The first or state floor was about 30 ft. high. Its south face was occupied by a very capacious fireplace, with a bold hood and mantelpiece of ashlar, now gone, and it had a round back and a large circular chimney shaft carried up vertically in the thickness of the wall. Of the other seven faces two are gone, and four are pierced with lofty round-headed arches, about 8 ft. broad, and slightly splayed. These no doubt terminated in small coupled windows. In the east face is an opening without splay, evidently a doorway, and no doubt the main entrance, with an exterior stair, as at Brunless and Coningsburgh. In an adjacent face is a large square locker.

The upper floor also had a fireplace, a smaller one above that on the state floor, and in front of its chimney shaft. This lesser shaft seems to have been of ashlar. The arch of the fireplace is of three pings, each of large thin red tiles, having a very Roman aspect. In this floor the window recesses were ranged in pairs, two in each face. Of these three and a half pairs or seven window arches remain. In the east face is a small locker. This story may have been 18 ft. high.

The floors were of timber, and composed of large beams, laid about 6 in. apart. As the wall is the same thickness throughout there are no sets-off, and the walls are pierced with square recesses for the beams. As these recesses are not parallel but radiating, it is clear that the floor rested, as in the Wakefield Tower in the Tower of London, upon a central pier or post.

There are no traces of any mural chamber of any kind.

The history of this tower, the character of its casings, the thickness of its walls, and the round-headed figure of such arches as remain point to the Norman, or commencement of the Early English period. Nevertheless, it is in plan very unlike the usual Norman structures, and the buttresses, clearly original, are characteristic of a very much later period. If it be Norman or transitional, it is very late, indeed in the style as late as the reign of Richard I., but it must be confessed that the buttresses are much more in harmony with the date of Richard II.

The tower stands near the centre of a roughly-circular

platform, about 38 yards diameter, slightly raised above the marsh, and surrounded by a ditch. Beyond this ditch there is, on the north-east front another enclosure with its ditch, and the canal seems to have been carried through something of the same character. All this looks as though there was an earlier fortification of earth and timber, probably the seat of the Saxon Odo, of whom nothing is known or surmised but his name.

There are no traces of any other masonry than the tower, and if it stood alone this would account for the otherwise marvellous exploit, of the castle having been held out by thirteen men for many days against the Dauphin's army. Of course, the extent of wall which so small a garrison could defend would be very limited, but with a tower such as Odiham, well victualled, and a fire-proof door, an army, especially if unprovided with mining tools or military engines, as with an invading force would not be improbable, could do but little. Nevertheless, some of the records relative to the Castle indicate other buildings besides the tower, though all traces of them are now gone.

Odiham has no history before the time of Domesday. That it was the seat of a Saxon lord is to be inferred from its name, though some authorities repudiate "Odo" and his "Hæne," and substitute for him Woodyham, Oodyham, Odiham, an etymology no doubt applicable enough to the district.

In Domesday King William is recorded as holding Odiham in demesne; Earl Harold had held it. It is twice mentioned in that record, and was in the hundreds of Edefele and Bermesplet, though a hundred of Odiham is also named. Nothing is said of a Castle, nor does the name of the Bishop of Winchester, to whom it has usually been attributed, occur, either then or afterwards, in connection with the lordship, borough, or Castle. Among the royal tenants occur certain "Taini regis," who were represented in the reign of Edward I. by the "Homines et sokemanni regis," who then had common of pasture in Odiham.

Richard I. held Odiham. In the first year of his reign certain payments are entered upon the Pipe Rolls of the Exchequer connected with it. Roger fitz Renfrid accounted for 20s. for a cowhouse or vaccary there; Wm. de Bend, for 100s.; and the sheriff accounted for 12*d.* for land held by Richard de Rollos. The town also fined 20s. for a murder.

Odiham is frequently mentioned on the same rolls in the reign of John, who was there nineteen times in nine years, for at least forty days in all. In the third of John, Wm. de Bend' is probably represented by Adam de Benderges, who appears with Richard de Rollos.

5 John. The men of Odiham had a charter concerning the manor and they held the vill in fee farm at a fine of 100 marks or £35 4s. rent.

6 John, 1204. King John was here on the 28th July. Probably he had a palace here, for such there certainly was a little later at Odiham, and it is said to be represented by a farm house still known as "Palace" or "Place Gate." 11th March, Hugh fitz John was to have his corn at Odiham, then in the King's hands, and (26th May, 8 John, 1206) John fitz Hugh was allowed in his rent the value of his chattels which the bailiff of Robert de Vipont had taken, saving the stock sold from the same manor for the King's use by his orders.

9 John, 1207. On the 23rd June the King was at Odiham; and on the 29th, John fitz Hugh was to take and hold the manor until the men there had paid the debt due to the King. 10th Aug. the same John was ordered to have 20 marcs from the King's treasure for the works at Odiham; and 26th Oct., a new bed was ordered for Woodstock and another for Odiham, in which no doubt King John slept when there in December for three days. There also was an order for payment for making the ditches there at the King's command (Close Roll. p. 94 b). In 11 John, £50 was ordered for works there. In February, May, and October of the same year, 1210, John was at Odiham; in 14 John, 1212, he went from Lambeth to Odiham, and arriving on Sunday, 6th May, tested documents there. On Monday 3s. were paid for the hire of three carts, travelling two days and resting one, conveying the wardrobe from Lambeth, also 13*d.* to Ferling the huntsman and Thos. de Porkericiis, with the hounds, for their expenses and sleeping one night on the road. John then left, but returned to Odiham on the 10th; while absent on the 8th at Freemantell, he paid 6s. for the heads of six Welshmen,—ghastly trophies sent to him. On the 10th 5*d.* were paid for cords bought at Winchester to string the crossbows, besides expenses for hiring carts. John was seven days at Odiham in the May of this year, and afterwards in December. On 25th May he paid 5s. to Stephen de

Guildford for a wolf caught by his master's dogs at Freemantell.

15 John, 1214. Money had been spent by John fitz Hugh on repairs of the King's castles of Windsor and Odiham. The King was at the latter place in January.

Magna Charta was tested 15th June, 1215, 17 John. In the preceding May the King was at Odiham, from the 21st to the 25th, and from the 28th to the 30th, seven days. On the 29th he addressed the letter to Pope Innocent, in which he pleaded the contumacy of the barons as the reason why he could not go to the Holy Land. On the same day the castle of Devizes was ordered to be repaired, and Hugh de Beauchamp's lands were to be taken possession of if he was with the rebels. From the 31st of May to the 3rd of June, the King was at Windsor. On 4th June he was at Odiham, whence he went to Winchester and was there from the 5th to the 8th. He thence paid a hasty visit to Merton, but was at Odiham on the 9th, it is said with seven knights only. On the 11th he was at Windsor, and there remained, visiting Runnymede, from thence to grant the Charter, and returning to Windsor till the 21st, when he was again at Runnymede. And so to and fro till the 26th when he was at Odiham for a day. In that year there was also a charge for putting garrisons into Odiham and other castles.

At this time John seems to have been preparing for the struggle by collecting what he had portable of value. The Prior of Reading brought to him at Odiham, on the 26th June, a silver cabinet and an ivory cabinet with precious stones and reliques, a gold cup given him by the Pope, much silver and silver-gilt plate, various rolls of the royal chamber and of the Exchequer and his seal, all which had been deposited in Reading Abbey. On the following day he was at Winchester, and there received by Adam, the cellarer of Merton, more plate and jewels, sapphires, balas rubies, &c., which had been in keeping of the convent there, and again on the same day a very much larger quantity also of plate and jewels, brought by Michael, a canon of Waltham, from the custody of the house there. The details of all these valuables are given at length on the Patent Rolls. From Winchester he went to various places in Wiltshire and the south of England.

In the following year, 1216, 17 John, the King was at Odiham for the last time for five days in April, and on the 15th

ordered twenty tuns ("dolia") of his prisage wines to be sent there from Southampton. He issued thence an immense number of instruments and finally left for Farnham on the 18th. On 21st April, the manor of Odiham was to be transferred by Bartholomew Peche to the Seneschal, Engelram de Cygoin, or his attorney, who seems to have been John fitz Hugh, to whom it was again transferred on the 29th. The transfer however was confined to the manor, for by a mandate of the 31st of May, directing seisin to be given to Fitz Hugh, the Castle was specially retained in the King's hands.

How strong the place was appears from the resistance it opposed in this year to the Dauphin Louis and the invading army. Marlborough, a very strong castle, had surrendered, when the French appeared before Odiham. The tower, says Wendover, was held by three knights and ten soldiers, who were besieged in form. On the third day when such engines as were with the army were in place, and an assault had been made and failed, the garrison sallied out, and captured a number equal to their own as prisoners. After eight or, as some accounts say, fifteen days, the thirteen surrendered on terms, retaining their horses and arms and their liberty. Wendover says the tower belonged to the Bishop of Winchester, but all the evidence seems to show that neither the Castle nor domain were ever alienated from the crown.

The first mention of Odiham in the reign of Henry III., is an order to De Cigoin to allow Bartholomew de Peche to hold the rents of the vill for his sustenance in the King's service (18th April, 1 Hen. III., 1217). John fitz Hugh appears to have been in opposition and to have been dispossessed, for on 12th Aug., he returns to his fidelity and is allowed seisin of the manor and hundred of Odiham. The great Earl Marshall's policy was to pardon and reward all who gave in their adhesion to the new Sovereign. The Castle was kept up even to storing the ditches with fish, for John de Venuz was ordered (4th Ap. 1222, 6 Hen. III.) to allow to Cygoin twenty breams from the King's marsh of Woolmer, for stocking "our ditches at Odiham." On 2nd May, 1222, 6 Hen. III., two tuns ("dolia") of the King's prisage wines were ordered from Southampton to Odiham. 16th Nov. 1222, 7 Hen. III., the King had let the manor of Odiham to farm for £50 per annum, but regard was to be had to the rights of the "Men of Odiham." 15th Jan, 1224, 8 Hen. III., the

Archbishop of Canterbury, who holds the Castle of Odiham, is directed to give up to Engelram de Cygoyn all his chattels and farming stock at the Castle (Close Roll. p. 581), and again, on 20th Feb., the Constable of Odiham is directed to permit Engelram to remove all his chattels, stock, mares, &c., from the park of Odiham, and what he bought with his own money. This done, the King seems to have taken to farming on his own account, for on 23rd Feb. following, the treasurer is directed to pay to Walter de Kirkeham and Walter de Brackel £100 to defray their expenses, and to Ralph Brito 50 marks for the purchase of oxen for the King's ploughs at Windsor and Odiham, and for seed for the lands there. Further, on the 5th of May, by virtue of an order directing the distribution of wine from Southampton to certain of the royal residences, a tun ("dolium") of spiced wine was sent to Odiham. On 4th June in the place of Henry de Feslegh, deceased, Gilbert de la Dene is appointed a verderer in the forest of Odiham, and is to take the usual oath.

In 18 Hen. III. the royal forests of Windsor and Odiham were committed to the care of Engelram de Cygoyn—then a very old servant of the Crown, and (20 Hen. III.) he had also the park of Odiham. In 21 Hen. III. Alianor, Countess of Pembroke, the King's sister, had the Castle, and afterwards (33 Hen. III.), as Countess of Leicester, the manor. Meantime, however, (28 Hen. III.) her husband, Simon de Montfort, held the park as the King's tenant. In the same year De Cygoyn had a writ of "allocate" for £40, due to the King for two years rent of the manor of Odiham; also in the same year, however, De Cygoyn was dead, and the Sheriff was to receive from his executors all his ploughs and stock, and to deliver them to De Montfort.

In 30 Hen. III. Richard le Male held the manor. The Bishop of Bath and Wells had a grant of three acres of land out of Odiham to augment the park of Dogmersfield. In 34 Hen. III. John, the representative of the De Beninges family, long connected with Odiham, had been outlawed, and inquiry was directed as to what he held in chief there, which appears to have been three virgates. In 35 Hen. III. William de Synago had a grant of Stapelegh in the parish of Odiham, and Gilbert de Eversley appears among the tenants, as (38 Hen. III.) does Wm. Villers for two acres.

It appears from a document of this reign, printed by Rymer, that upon William, the son of Durandus Nanus (the dwarf), proposing to become a monk, the King allowed his land to pass to his cousin Margaret, wife of Alexander de Barentin. The land lay in Warnburn (Warnborough) and Odiham, and had been purchased by Durandus "de suffacio" in the time of Henry I. with the King's consent. The land carried with it certain rights of herbage, cutting firewood, enclosing within hedges, &c., and the whole was evidently held direct from the Crown.

The chief interest of Odiham ceases with the reign of Henry III. Edward I. was much engaged in the North and West, and the value of fortresses in the interior of England was small under a Prince whose sway no Englishman ventured to contest. His visits to Odiham were but few. The park or forest seems to have been kept up, but only as a place of diversion, and the Castle probably was allowed to fall into decay.

2nd Sept. 1274, 2 Ed. I., the King was at Odiham. In the third year of the reign John de London, the King's Escheator, was to hold the Castle during pleasure. He probably did not hold it long, for (10 Ed. I.) it was committed to Nicholas le Gras in succession to Ralph de Sandwyche, and in 12 Ed. I. Hugh le Despenser had it. In 27 Ed. I. the Castle, park, town, and hundred of Odiham were included in the ample jointure settled on Queen Margaret, and described as "*Castrum et villa de Odeham et appruamentum (emolument) parci ibidem* ;" or, in another schedule, "The castle and vill, with the park and hundred and appurtenances in the county of Hants." In 33 Ed. I. John de Beauchamp of Fyfhed held the manor.

Edward II. appears to have seen little of Odiham. In 5 Ed. II. the Castle, which Queen Margaret had, was committed to Robert le Ewer during pleasure. In 9 Ed. II. Robert atte Burgh had licence to enfeof for Stapelegh Manor and Odiham Manor with suit of court, and a document of this date throws some light on the extent of the hundred of Odiham, which, it appears, included the vills of Odiham, Greywell (now Grewell), Monks Hartley, Helvethan (now Elvetham), Wynchesfelde, Dogmersfelde, Bynteworth (now Bentworth), Brocham (now Burkham), Lassham, Shaldene (now Shaldon), Weston-Patrik, Horefeld and Lys—the two last only not having been identified.

Of all these Odiham only belonged to the King. Next year (10 Ed. II.) Thomas de Warblyngton held the manor, and (12 Ed. II.) Ewer again held the Castle, manor, vill, hundred, and park. The change was perpetual—inspired probably by perpetual distrust. In 13 Ed. II. Hugh le Despenser, junior, held the Castle and manor, and (15 Ed. II.) the former was again committed to Ewer. In this year the King's circumstances probably led him to look to his strong places, for William de Kyngeston, clerk, is made receiver and keeper of provisions, stores, &c., within the Castle. In 17 Ed. II. Margery de Burgh held the Castle and suit of court, as had (18 Ed. II.) John de Loxle and Constantia, his wife. In this year is an order to repair the King's houses within Odiham Castle.

Edward III. seems to have turned Odiham to account as a place for breeding horses, and he kept up the Castle. At his accession John de Meriet and Maria his wife had the manor, and (4 Ed. III.) John de Mohun had it, and it was in the hands of Joan, widow of John, 6 Hen. IV. The custody of the Castle was then in John Wodelok—he paying for it £60 per annum, and Nicholas de la Beche had the reversion after the Queen's death. In 5 Ed. III. the King committed to Master William Mareschal the care of the great horses, and the supervision of the royal stud in the park at Odiham. The King himself was there October 25th. In 7 Ed. III. Sir Bernard Brocas had a grant of the lordship for life. In 14 Ed. III. Richard de Rokeland was keeper of the colts ("pullanorum") in the King's park at Odiham. In 1346 (19-20 Ed. III.) the Battle of Nevile's Cross was fought, and King David Bruce was taken prisoner and committed to Odiham, where he stayed the better part of fifteen years. In 25 Ed. III. John atte Berwe held twelve acres in Odiham of the Castle of Winchester, and William Talemache and others held four virgates of land there; and (33 Ed. III.) the Sheriff is to provide oats, litter, and carriage for the support of the royal stud in the parish of Odiham, and there is a specified allowance for grooms, their robes, and their shoes. In 38 Ed. III. the people of Odiham had been making free with the boards and timber purchased for the King's work at the park. Five years later (43 Ed. III.) Walter Walsh holds the Castle, vill, &c., providing carpenter, park-keeper, and

tiler for the repair of the houses outside and inside the Castle, except the covering of the great tower and the working stone for the Castle walls. He was also to feed the beasts in the park. In 46 Ed. III. Elizabeth, wife of James de Wyndesor, held the manor.

It appears from a record (2 Ric. II.) that Odiham contained places called Shepcote, Smethes, Romeles, and Dunton. We read also of the "campus de Odiham"—probably the common field. In 5 Ric. II. Henry Esturmy held the manor—probably the son of a man of that name who had it 33 Ed. I. In 15 Ric. II. Alianore, wife of William Fremelesworth, has Le Potte and other lands in the parish.

The Castle does not seem to have attracted the notice of royalty during the reigns of Henry IV. or V. In the former reign Lord Beaumont had it for life, probably after the death of Joan de Mohun. The domain was still held by the Crown. In 19-23 Hen. VI. a jury affirms that within the King's manor of Odiham was a house called "le Shippe," which Joan, Queen of England, held in dower. Also, in 1450 (28 Hen. VI.), the lordship, manor, and hundred of Odiham, for which £21 7s. 3d. is paid by John Basket, Esq., forms an item in the royal civil list, and in 1454 (32 Hen. VI.) the "Castrum, dominium, manerium et hundredum de Odyham" form a part of the jointure settled on Queen Margaret, who, indeed, seems to have had a previous settlement (22 Hen. VI.). Later in the reign (35 Hen. VI.) William Warbleton has a grant in fee of the office of Constable of Odiham Castle and park.

In 1467-8 (7 & 8 Ed. IV.) Odiham again was included in a royal jointure in favour of the Queen of that Prince.

In 1 R. III. the King took advantage of his brief power to appoint Richard Hansard Constable and porter of the Castle, parker and warrener of the lordship, and steward for life. Whatever might be the arrangements as to its mesne lords, the principal officers seem to have been always appointed by the Crown, and in the Act of Resumption of 1485 (1 H. VII.) is a saving clause in favour of the right of Nicholas and John Gaynesford to the offices of steward of the manor, Constable and porter of the Castle, and keeper of the park and warren—all held for their lives. The interest of the Crown was not finally extinguished until the reign of James I., who alienated the whole.