

FORD CASTLE.

THE Castle of Ford was originally built by Sir William Heron, who obtained a licence to fortify his manor house there from Edward III. at Ipswich on 16th July, 1338, just before the king set sail for Antwerp.¹ In 1385 the Scots, under the Earls of Fife, March, and Douglas, took and dismantled this castle, as well as those of Wark and Cornhill.² A truce was concluded at Billymire in the following summer;³ but in spite of this, a band of Scots entered the lands of William Heron of Ford in time of truce, killing his men and carrying off £600 worth of cattle. In consequence Heron's men carried a foray after them into Scotland, from the spoils of which the Earl of Northumberland compelled him to restore 320 oxen, 1,600 sheep, and £100 in money, promising him compensation for the injuries he had suffered from the Scottish incursion. In connection with this affair, Heron was imprisoned in Newcastle, while Henry Lilburn, Thomas Roddam, and others came in warlike array to his castle of Ford, and assaulting it took by force of arms booty of great value against the peace of the king.⁴ In 1509 the castle of Ford, though it belonged to William Heron, was inhabited by William Selby. It was then supposed to be capable of keeping a garrison of 40 horsemen within its walls.⁵ Shortly before the battle of Flodden in 1513, it was taken by James IV. of Scotland. William Heron was then a prisoner in Scotland, but his wife Elizabeth and her daughter were in the castle at the time of its surrender. The lady of Ford besought King James to preserve it from demolition, spoiling, or burning, and he consented to do so on

¹ 'De manso manerii Kernellando. Rex omnibus ballivis et fidelibus suis ad quos etc. salutem. Sciatis quod de gratia nostra speciali concessimus et licenciam dedimus pro nobis et heredibus nostris dilecto nostro Willelmo Heyrun quod ipse mansum suum apud manerium suum de Forde in comitatu Northumbrie muro de petra et calce firmare et Kernellare et mansum illud sic firmatum et Kernellatum tenere possit sibi et heredibus suis sine occasione vel impedimento nostrum vel heredum nostrorum, Justiciariorum, Escaetorum, Vicecomitum, aut aliorum ballivorum seu ministrorum nostrorum quorumcunque. In cujus &c. Teste Edwardo duce Cornubie et comite Cestrie filio nostro carissimo custode Anglie, apud Gippewicum xvj die Julii. Per ipsum Regem.'—*Patent Roll*, 12 Ed. III. pt. 2, m. 10, P.R.O.

² Ridpath, *Border History*, 1810, p. 355, on authority of Buchanan, l. 9, p. 170.

³ *Ibid.* p. 356; Rymer, *Fædera*, viii. p. 526.

⁴ *Rot. Parl.*

⁵ See above, p. 24.

condition of her bringing and delivering to him on the morning of the 5th of September the laird of Johnstoun and Alexander Hume, at that time prisoners in England. She appears to have proceeded to Alnwick, where she met the Earl of Surrey advancing with his array. Surrey immediately agreed to restore the prisoners in question upon receiving letters of protection for the castle under the king's seal, and further promised to restore Sir George Hume and William Carr, if the king would release William Heron. To these proposals King James replied by his Islay herald that he thereto would make no answer, and proceeded to burn down the castle. This is, it seems, all that history knows respecting the connection of Ford Castle with the campaign before Flodden.⁶

Sir William Heron died in 1535, leaving as his heir-general his grand-daughter, Elizabeth Heron, then only six years old. The Border Survey of 1541 reports that the castle of Ford was burnt by the last King of Scots a little before he was slain at Flodden Field. Some part of it had been repaired again since that time, but the great buildings and necessary houses had remained ever since waste and in decay. If it was repaired, the Commissioners estimated that it could receive and lodge a hundred horsemen or more.⁷

In 1549 the Scots entered England under the French general D'Essé, bringing with them four field-pieces. They attacked the castle of Ford, and again burnt the greater part of it, but were obliged to retire, leaving unreduced one of the towers, which was defended by Thomas Carr, a younger son of the Captain of Wark.⁸ The bravery Carr displayed on this occasion seems to have led the heiress of Ford to bestow her hand upon him. The Herons, however, maintained that Ford should by right have passed to the heirs male of Sir William Heron; and on Saturday, 27th of March, 1557, John Dixon one of the constables of Berwick, together with about twenty of the garrison, took possession of Ford Castle in the name of George Heron of Chipchase, and expelled Robert Carr, a brother of the owner, with four other men and three women who were in it at the time. The next morning as Ralph Gray of Chillingham, a justice for the county and

⁶ Ridpath, *Border History*, p. 486n; Hall, *Chron. Hen. VIII.* p. 39.

⁷ See above, p. 39.

⁸ Ridpath, *Border History*, p. 567; Beaugé, *Hist. des Campagnes 1548, 1549*, pp. 94, 95.

deputy warden, Giles Heron, treasurer of Berwick and brother of Heron of Chipchase, and Robert Barrow, mayor of the town, were approaching the castle with a band of thirty men, they were set upon by Robert Carr, with from eleven to sixteen followers. Heron and Barrow, who are said by their party to have been 'rydinge in peacable maner (what so ever was otherwise done),' were both slain, 'the maior after his stroke never spake worde, the treasurer had xv blodye wounds uppon him.' One or two more of the company were 'somewhat hurt and wounded.' That same afternoon a great number of Gray's following came 'in forcible and warlike arraye of armour and weapons to the comfortye and assistance' of the Heron garrison. On the Monday Sir Robert Ellerker, the sheriff, John Bednell, and Robert Horsley themselves witnessed the arrival of a further reinforcement composed of fourteen of George Heron's tenants who 'in like warlike sort .. did . repair to the said house of Ford to the great terror of all good quiet subjects of this country and piteous affrays of the civil peace of the same, and ever sure where toward in these parts of this country almost no person rideth unarmed, but as surely upon his guard as if he rode against the Enemy of Scotland.'⁹ In the end the Carrs regained possession of Ford Castle, and in 1584 it is described as belonging to William Carr, esq., and as 'decayed by want of reparation of a long continuance.' It was recommended that it should be repaired, the cost being estimated at £300.¹⁰ The male line of the Carrs of Ford came to an end in about 1685, and the castle was carried by successive heiresses through the families of Blake and Delaval into that of the Marquis of Waterford in 1822.

An old ground plan of the castle, entitled 'The True Draught or plat-form of the Castle, Courts, and Gardens of Ford, particularly carefully measured all with his own hand,' by John Purdy, on the 5th of August, 1716, together with three elevations of the castle at that time, has fortunately been preserved. From this we see that the castle originally consisted of four towers joined together by walls so as to form an inner court, something in the same way as Chillingham,

⁹ *Talbot Papers* in the College of Arms. The précis of this in Raine, *North Durham*, introd. p. xxx. has been corrected by a transcript of the original, kindly lent by Col. Carr of Dunston Hill. Raine had wrongly given the date as 'Saturday the 28th of April'—the 28th of April, 1557, was a Wednesday—and Carr's following in the skirmish as only six or seven men.

¹⁰ See above, p. 73.

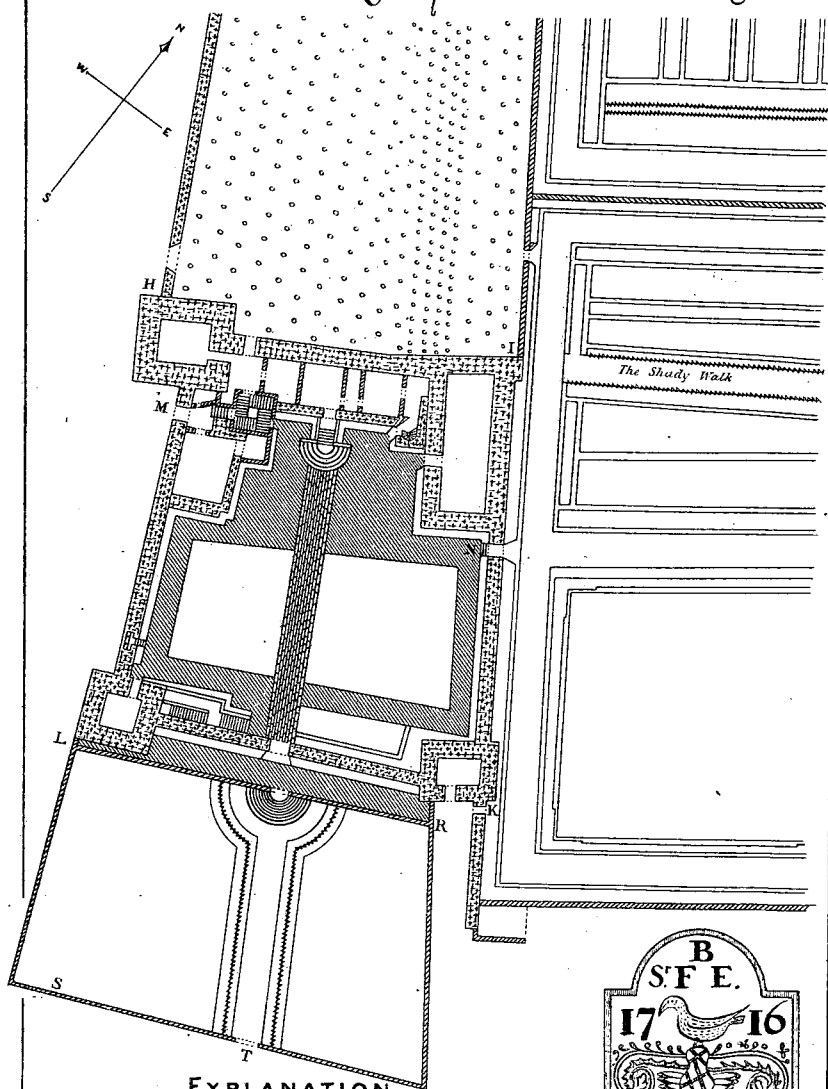
though with less regularity. At the N.W. corner the tower now called *King James's Tower*, about 35 feet square outside, projected considerably beyond the line of the curtain-wall, and formed the strongest portion of the pile. Immediately under it to the south was the 'Western Gate or Common Passage into the Castle,' for it must not be forgotten that a considerable portion of the village then stood on the west side of the fortress. From the N.E. corner a long building with very thick walls stretched along the east curtain. This apparently contained the Hall, as a Decorated window with a transom was still left at the southern end; if so, the Hall was about 55 feet long by 20 feet wide inside. The tower at the S.W. corner, now called the *Cow Tower*, and that at the S.E., which has now entirely disappeared, were then both surmounted by turrets built up with thin walls on the inner face of the thick tower walls. Between King James's Tower and the Hall a good house, with Elizabethan windows and two stair-turrets, stretched along the north curtain; and there was also a building with a corbie-stepped gable on the east side of the courtyard.

Sir John Hussey Delaval destroyed the most interesting features of the castle in 1761 by converting the main portion into a mansion, designed in the atrocious style which was then supposed to be Gothic. Louisa, Marchioness of Waterford, the present owner, has almost entirely removed the unsightly work of last century, and made Ford one of the most beautiful houses in the North of England.



King James's Tower retains its ancient vaulted basement, with many 14th century mason-marks. A ray of light is let into this vault by an original slit in the north wall. 'The West Profil' of the castle, drawn by John Purdy in 1716 shows that there were then no windows in the west wall of this tower. In the room occupying the uppermost floor a large west window was inserted during the alterations of 1761, and from the lovely view then obtained from this in the direction of Flodden, the room became so much associated with the name of King James that at last he was said to have slept in it on the night before the battle. Till 1761 the upper portion of this tower seems to have been unconnected with the main residence, and access to the room in question could only be had by a narrow stair in the thickness of the wall; when, however, Sir John Hussey Delaval incorporated the tower in his mansion, he seems to have broken a new door into this room



*The True Draught or plat-form
of the Castle Courts, & Gardens of Ford
Particularly & Carefully measured by John Rudy 5 Aug. 1716.*

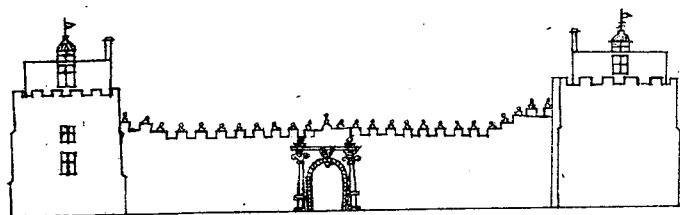


EXPLANATION.

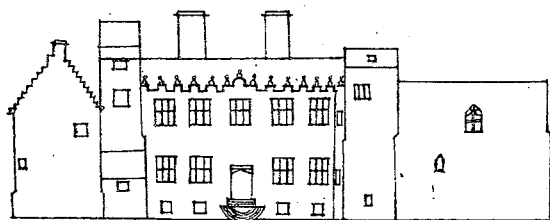
The Castle consists of Four Towers with walls joining them together and enclosing the inner Court. these old thick walls are marked thus  all the other walls thus . HIKL the Castle. M the Western Gate or Common Passage into the Castle. N the Door opening from the inner Court into the Gardens. RLS the outer Court. T the outer Court Gate facing South toward the Church. FGHI called the Newark where some trees are planted.



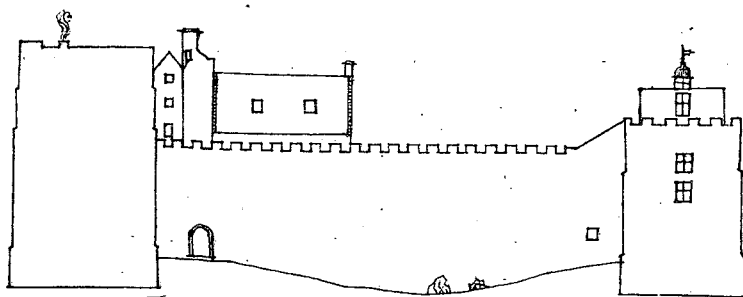
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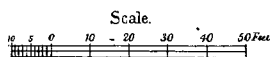
The Southern Prospect of Ford Castle Without.



The South Prospect within the Inner Court.



The West Profile Without ~ ~ ~





through the east wall, and to have walled up the old stair as useless. Similar stairs closed in this way still remain in Featherstone, Halton, Craster, and other towers. During subsequent alterations the forgotten stair at Ford was again discovered, and opened out. It was soon pronounced to have been a secret stair, and has been connected in the broadest fashion with the legendary intrigue of King James and Dame Heron—a legend rendered in the highest degree improbable by the known facts of history, and invented most probably by the patriotic imagination of the Scots for the purpose of explaining away the crushing defeat their host sustained.

During the troubles connected with the Pilgrimage of Grace in the autumn of 1536, John Heron of Chipchase kept the castle of Ford by 'strong hande' in defiance of the king's authority.¹¹

¹¹ *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII.* vol. xii. 1090, 35.

COLDMARTIN TOWER.

AN enquiry into the decays of the East Marches made on the 24th of September, 1584, led to the presentment of a tower of stone and lime at Coldmartin as being utterly decayed. This tower was then the property of Roger Fowberry of Fowberry, gent., and it should have been in good repair since there was land attached to it capable of supporting two men and horses fit for service.¹ A fragment of the south-west wall of this tower, which has been 6 feet thick, is still standing about 9 feet high, in an exposed situation overlooking Wooler Water and facing the Cheviots. The tower seems to have been only about 27 feet square, outside measurement.

¹ See above, p. 80.