

Sheffield Castle.

Excavations between Oct. 1927 & Jan. 1928, on the site of new premises for the Brightside & Carbrook Co-operative Society, at the junction of Daingate & Exchange Street, Sheffield, have revealed extensive remains of the historic castle built by ~~the~~ ^{Thomas} De Furnival in 1270, to replace a still earlier building, possibly dating from Saxon times, destroyed by the Barons in 1266. It was to this castle that Mary Queen of Scots was brought, a prisoner, in 1571 & where she was kept for over 12 years in strict durance under the care of George, Earl of Shrewsbury. In the struggles between Charles 1st & Parliament the castle was held & besieged in turn by both sides & was finally demolished, by order of Parliament, in 1648. So thoroughly was this work accomplished that its precise situation was completely lost & has long been the subject of controversy, no authentic plan or record of the building having come down to us, though detailed schedules of its furnishings & of its piece-meal demolition exist, also household acc^ts & a wealth of information relative to the families of Neville, Shrewsbury &

Howard who, in turn, resided there & held the Lordship of Hallam. On the evidence of place names, such as Castle Green, Castle Folds &c. many local historians have favoured a location for the castle itself near the junction of the rivers Sheaf & Don & it is within this area that the recent discovery has been made.

The remains uncovered comprise the base of a massive circular bastion, or tower, which forms part of the 13th century castle of Thomas de Furnival. A rectangular building, of somewhat more recent date, abuts against the bastion & appears to form part of a projecting gate-house.

There is reason to believe that the principal entrance of the castle was situated here & that the tower discovered is one of two which flanked this entrance & between which the gate house was placed ~~situated~~. The finding of a massive pier of ashlar, contemporary in date with the bastion, & ~~standing~~ occupying a position in the centre of the moat immediately opposite to & parallel with the gate-house wall, support this view. The pier is believed to be that which supported the end of the drawbridge. The walls discovered rise to a height of 20 feet above the bottom of the

moat & are faced with dressed ashlar rising in 12 inch courses from a bold chamfered plinth. Beneath the plinth the base of both walls is splayed outwards at an angle of 75° .

The general direction of the moat has been defined for a considerable distance & a series of accurate sections obtained showing it to have been a width of 30 feet & average depth of 21 feet measured from the surface level at the period of demolition. An average depth of 12 feet of debris has accumulated over the whole site since that period & the bottom of the moat now lies about 33 feet below the level of Exchange Street.

An important series of relics have been recovered from the moat, comprising pottery fragments dating from the 12th to 17th centuries, coins & objects of brass & iron, leather shoes, stone ballista balls, cannon balls &c.

Thanks to the public spirit displayed by the Directors of the Co-operative Society & the Architect, most of the walls found have been left in-situ & a considerable portion of the bastion & gate-house will be exposed to view in the new basement. A detailed account of the excavations will be published in the Transactions