DUNDRUM CASTLE

Ulster-Scots Translation

DUNDRUM CASSLE

Coontie Down

History

The place naime “Dundroma”(Fort o’ the Ridge), likely alloos fer an earlie christyin fort i tha’ airt, an delvin i 19&50 shewed fins fae afore the Normans, (laike the bronze roundel, pictur abeen) an dry stane biggins, the mair at the site an uise o’ thaim isnae certes. Hit’s likely at thon important site wus fortified bae John deCourcy es pairt o’ es Conquest o’ Ulster fae 11&77 oan, the mair at the furst screed tae mak mention o’ the cassle wusnae maide ‘til 1205, efter eh’d fel’ fae pouer. Hit wus yin o’ a string o’ cassles oan the shore laike Carlingford, Downpatrick an Carrickfergus at the Anglo Normans uised tae tak’ houl o’ the nor’aist. Hit wus cried the “Cassle o’ Rath” fae the parish quhar hit stans. “Rathmarbulig”, (noo Maghera); the cassle wus onie gien the naime Dundrum fae earlie I the 16th century.
The cassle wus baeseiged, bit wusnae tuk, i 1205 an wus tuk bae Kang John i 12&10 quhan hit hed es monie sodgers es Carrickfergus. Thon shews hoo important Dundrum wus. Hit passed fae the Kang tae the Earls o’ Ulster i 12&27. Catter pit tae fixins writ doon i 12&60 wur mebbe adae wi’ the yetthoose, bit an inquisition o’ 13&33 maks mention o’ “a fell awa’ cassle at hes nae annual value accause hit’s i sich sarious need o’ fixin at naething can bae gat fae hit”. Fer sim o’ the laite middle aiges hit wus hel bae the Airish Magennises. Hit wus sayed tae hae baen spoiled bae Cromwell i 16&52 bit the Blundell femmelie dwallin hoose i the laigh ward wus likely biggit i the 17th century es weel. The cassle wus pit intae government care bae the Marquis o’ Downshire i 19&54, sine thon tim’ a baag programme o’ fixins hes baen unnertuk.

A Tour o’ the Cassle

Hit’s bes’ tae heid straucht tae the furst maide wie intae the Upper Ward aa (1). Noo thon bes onie a slap i the walsteids, the yett wus langsine protected bae a drawbrig athwort a stane sned sheugh. The Upper Ward(2) bes a neir oval area o’ aboot 2 _ acres wi a curtain wal’ roun hit biggit i shoart straucht lenghts. Thair wur mebbe defences o’ clie an timmer afore hit, hooiniver the stane wal’ maun hae baen biggit soon efter the Anglo Norman invasion. The wal’ hes, maistly, stuck hit weel, mair sae tae the W. quhar hit stans tae hit’s fu’ heicht an hes hit’s parapet. Hit’s a thocht less nor 4 fit thick, wi a wal’pad ahin the parapet ats onie 18 inches acroass, bit holes i the wal’ aa thon heicht wud hae hel’ baag timmers fer a fechtin pletfoarm, (see oor hypothetical re-biggin). Owreleukin the ward bes the Roun’ Keep(3) biggit no lang efter the curtain an yinst linked tae hit bae a brig fae a dure aa furst flure level. The main wie in wus yinst bae anither furst flure dure oan the SE, no heigh abeen grun level bit aa yin tim gat intae bae an ootby stair. Theday’s wie in wus maide i the 15th century. Noo the keep hes a grun flure ruim an twa chaummers abeen, bit the langsyne layoot o’ the heigh pairt isnae certes accause o’ re-biggin i the 15th century. The biggin bes awa tae a shell noo bit the flure levels ir clear fae affsets, (projectin’ lippins tae houl’ timmers), an joisthales. The grun flure gat licht fae twa sprachled loops, blocked noo, through the gye thick wals. Fae thon level a baag pit wus sunk 23 fit intae the stane tae houl watter. Hit wus filt bae seepage. Wells ir affen foun’ i cassle keeps bit cisterns laike thon ir gye scairse. A spiral stair gaes ap tae the furst flure chaummer at yinst gien gran’ an’ bield lee’in quarters: note the twa

windas wi' seats an a baag hooded ingle neuk, fel' awa noo. Thair wud hae baen anither bield bit mair private chaummer oan the secon' flure afore the 15th century fixins. A wheen o' wee connectit chaummers, (at the visitor danners through noo), appened fae a baag middle ruim wi' licht fae narra loops an ruifed wi owrelippit flegs, (corballing) ir wi' vaults at shew the imprent o' aphaudin wicker centerin' at ir saen i the levels ablow. The wal'pad an parapet ir maistly fel'awa bit rain watter drainin' hales aa the fit o' the parapetir clear. Fae the tap o' the keep thair ir braw views o' the Mournes, the sea, an the kintraside tae lan'ward. Roun' keeps ir no kenspeckle i Airlan, the mair at thair's a braw yin aa Nenagh,(Tipperary). I Britain the bes' yins ir i sooth Wales, the maist unco bein aa Pembroke, an hit's intherestin at men fae thon airt wur tae the fore i the invasion o' Airlan i the 12th century. Thon maun bae the beckgrun fer the Dundrum keep – a boulder an mair ap tae date design nor the great rectangular keep aa Carrickfergus.

A danner roun the inside o' the curtain wal' wul shew ap ither features. Neirhan the keep ir twa cludgies(4): the mairk o' a lang awa gable enn ruif bes clear. The cludgies empied intae chutes at can bae saen i the ootby side o' the curtain. Aa (5) ir thrie sprachled loops holed intae the wal' mebbe i the 15th century. Heir, fernenst the furst maide wie in, wus a postern yett. The "beck dure" o' the cassle thon wus, thon wus stapped ap laiter an quhar hit wus can onie bae saen ootby. Aa (6) bes a titherin feature, a skin o' masonary biggit agin the NE curtain. Neirhan' delvin foun' naethin o' a stane biggin heiraboots, an the curtain dusnae need strenghtenin heir. The hauf circular tower gat tae bae steps wus biggit lang efter, bit quhan hit wus biggit isnae kent. Aa (7) bes the yetthoose biggit laite i the 13th century, mebbe the 12&60s. Fell awa noo hit maun hae bein strang an croose aa yin tim'. Hit wus biggit oantae the curtain wi' a vennel rinnin atween twa towers square tae the upper ward, bit the yin tae the aist, hauf circular ootby bes noo stannin oan an unnersned rocky scarp. Thon lapsided plan maks mense quhan ye jalouse at the onie road tae hit wus bae a narra stie pad fae the Sw, blocked bae the hauf circular tower. Wee ruims i the towers, likely guard chaummers linked aa the level abeen wi the wal' pad. The timmer biggins shewn i the upper ward i oor reconstruction ir pure hypothetical, bit thair a mindin aa wee biggins wur likely stannin inbythe curtain. We shew a haa, kitchen an chapel.

Afore leukin intae the Lower Ward visitors ir axed tae danner roun ootby the Upper Ward curtain wal'. Bae daein thon ye'll unnerstan' baith the strenght o' the site an the size o' the stane sned sheughs.

The Lower Ward(8) bes noo a pairk o' gress oan the braeface ablow the earlie cassle. Agin hit's loast biggins maun bae thocht aboot, no saen. Thae biggins wur likely a mixtie o' lee'in quarters an fairm biggins. The Lower Ward wal', ats fel'awa, wus biggit laiter nor the Upper Ward. Hooiniver hit cannae bae wrocht oot quhan hit wus biggit, mebbe i the 13th century, no lang efter the work described abeen, bit hit wus mebbe laiter quhan the Airish hel' the cassle. The wal' bes mair thick tae the S. an W., the mair exposed approaches, nor tae the E. quhar pairts hae fel' doon the stie brae. The wie in(9) bes bae a simple pointed arch wi a draw bar socket sunk intae the jamb. Neirhan tae the SW corner, quhar the wal' stans hit bes', twathrie sprachled loops can bae saen gien cover tae the aisy wie in fae the sooth.

The maist lately bigit feature bes the hoose(10) biggit pairt agin an pairt athwort the curtain wal', likely earlie i 17th century. Noo wal'steids hit maun hae baen a gran' dwallinhoose i hit's day, hit's rubble masonary bes harled, (rendered), an hit's ootline maide lively bae dormer windaes an chimley stecks. The hoose bes L shaped, wi the W. wing likely biggit a wee afore the E. The chaummers ir oan twa flures wi' a laigh basement i the E. wingAa hae ingle neuks an hae a roughness o' licht fae a clatter o' windaes, (a wheen noo stapped ap an ithers maide baag tae bae dures). The S. gable enn o' the E. wing stans tae hit's fu' heicht an the mairks o' fancy triangular pediments ir abeen the windaes o' the grun an furst flures. The W. curtain, wi the hoose biggit agin hit, hes twa loops fer defence, bit the hoose leuks laike hit wus biggit fer lee'in in wi'oot bein' set ap fer fechtin. Thon's fer wie Dundrum shews the chainge at cum aboot laite i the 16th an i the 17th century fae

fortification tae architecture.

The Site

The cassle hes a michty site, owreseein the kintra aroon an the watter. Hit's biggit oan a baag knowe o' shale an grits, wrocht oot o' the ice: The rock can bae saen unner the yetthoose an i the sheugh. Sited oan the W. shore o' inner Dundrum Bay hit owresees a gran' nattural moorin' at let fowk gang farder inlan'; especially tae the guid grawin lan' o' the Lecale Penninsula. Thon strategic importance wus jaloused bae thaim at biggit the earlie christyin "Dun" an the Anglo Norman cassle wus allooed tae bae "yin o' the strangest houls i Airlan an maist commmodious fer defendin' the hale kintra o' Lecale, hes watter roun' hit an cannae bae gat intae fae lan' savin bae wie o' the cassle" bae Lord Leonard Grey wha tuk Dundrum i 15&38. Dundrum wus an important faschin port i the 16th century, an nae doot afore thon. The mair at the knowe bes coverit bae luvesum trees theday the brae wus likely bare langsyne fer trees wud hae bielded yins attackin' the cassle.

Mair Raidin

Waterman D.M. in "Ulster J. Archaeol. 14 (19&51), 15 – 29 an 27 (19&64) 136 – 9; "An Archaeological Survey of Co. Down (H.M.S.O. 19&66), 207 – 11

Finnin the wie

Aphill tae NW. fae clachan o' Dundrum (Grid Ref. J404370). Carpairk ablow cassle.