LEEDS CASTLE.

BY CANON SCOTT ROBERTSON.

Leeds Castle was one of the Royal residences, during more than 250 years, in the Middle Ages. It often formed part of the dower settled upon England's Queens-consort; and several of them have dwelt within its walls.

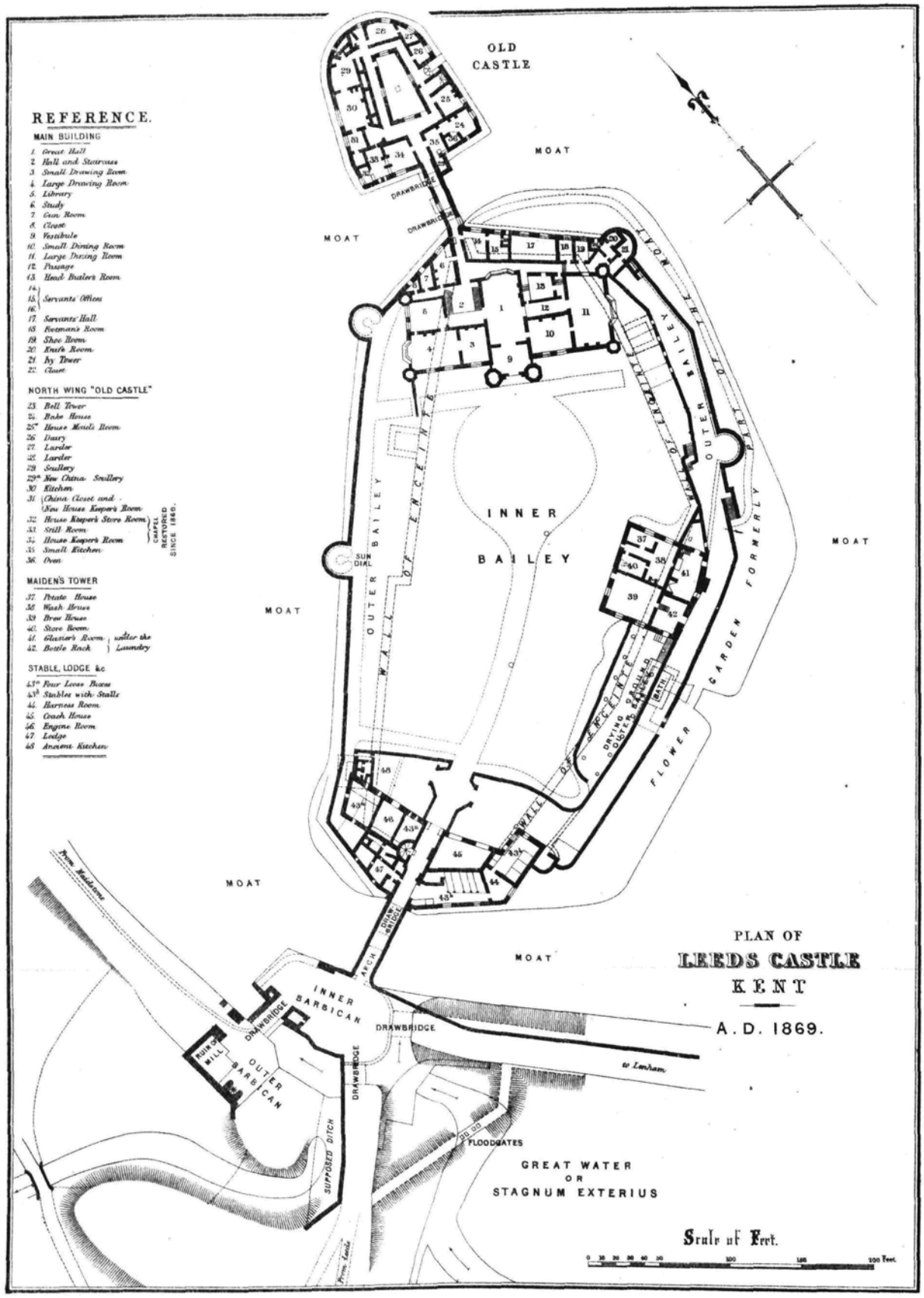
Its position was one of great strength, as it occupied three distinct islands, and was approached by six or seven drawbridges. Permanent bridges have replaced them all, for sixty years or more, but the sites of those ancient drawbridges are marked on the annexed Plan.

The Outer Barbican, now in ruins, contained the water-mill of the Castle, and stood upon the edge of the mainland. Several of its massive walls and arches remain, and are passed by every visitor who enters the Castle. Those who approach from the Maidstone road can walk through the ruins. The date of their erection is problematical. *Perhaps some portions of them were built in the thirteenth* century, and others in the fourteenth.

The Inner Barbican occupied the first, or southern, island. It was approached by means of three drawbridges, corresponding with the roads from Maidstone, Leeds, and Lenham respectively. From this Inner Barbican the present road of entrance passes over a stone bridge of two arches. While these arches are themselves comparatively modern, the central pier between them, and their two abutments north and south are the ancient supports of the original drawbridges.

The northern abutment of the bridge stands on the second, or central, island, which is about 500 feet long, but less than 300 feet broad. Here we see the Gatehouse,* with the Constable's chamber over the gateway, and its guard-rooms on either side. One doorway of stone, in an upper room of this gatehouse, bears Early English chamfer-stops of the time of Henry III., or even, it may

* The gatehouse is now utilized for a lodge, stables, coach-houses, apple lofts, and other rooms, Nos. 43 to 48 on the Plan.



C.F.Kell, Photo-Litho. Castle St. Holborn, London, E.C.

be, of King John. Its newel staircase of stone was lighted by cruciform slits, deeply splayed, now blocked by the lodge outside them. Mr. Charles Wykeham-Martin believed that King Edward I. added much to this gatehouse, and probably he was right; but it is quite clear that the machicolations over the gateway, and doubtless other details also, were not constructed until the reign of Richard II. We know from the records that in 138$\frac{5}{6}$ two portcullises, and other defensive appliances here, were paid for.

This central island is protected by a massive wall of stone, which rises from the bed of the moat, and entirely encircles the island. Four semicircular bastions added to its defensive capabilities. How the principal area (*the Inner Bailey*) of this island was originally laid out or occupied we do not know. After leaving the gatehouse buildings (now coach-houses and stabling), we find, on the right hand, or eastern side of the island, beneath the lawn now used as a ground for drying clothes, a swimming-bath, constructed by King Edward I., now utilized as a boat-house. Close beyond it is a building called the MAIDEN'S TOWER, which contains the modern laundry and brewhouse. The date of its erection is not clearly known; but it is ascribed to the time of King Henry VIII. In it on two stories there are two garderobes, the shaft of which communicates directly with the moat. The origin of this tower's name is not known. Some trace it to the Royal "maids of honour;" others to "main-tower," or principal tower; others suggest that an anchoress, or maiden recluse, may in ancient times have inhabited a tower upon the site of which this was built.

The chief dwelling-house or MAIN BUILDING (Nos. 1 to 22 on the Plan) now occupies the northern extremity of the central island. It was entirely rebuilt, in 1822, by Mr. Fiennes Wykeham-Martin, who expended upon this Castle much more than the sum of £30,000, which was left to him for its restoration by his mother's second cousin, General Philip Martin. From the old general, Mr. Fiennes Wykeham inherited Leeds Castle, and adopted the name of Martin, in addition to his own patronymic. Mr. Wykeham-Martin pulled down the remains of a Jacobean mansion, which had been built on the same site, about A.D. 1616, by Sir Richard Smythe,* uncle of the first Lord Strangford. Two relics of Sir Richard Smythe's house still remain. That which is visible to all is the very handsome mantelpiece in the great dining-room; the other relic is

* Sir R. Smythe purchased the Castle from his nephew, the second Sir Warham St. Leger. Sir Richard was residing at Leeds Castle in September 1616.

a vaulted cellar, 60 feet long, which runs beneath the outer Hall (No. 9), and the great Hall* (No. 1 on the Plan). This cellar is mainly excavated in the solid earth, and has little or no vaulted masonry. Its antiquity is a matter for speculation. It has been assigned, by some, to the Norman period; but it is quite possible that Sir Richard Smythe may have caused it to be excavated. At the extreme eastern point of the central island (Nos. 20 and 21) stands the only bastion which retains its roofed superstructure of half timber and plaster, probably erected by King Henry VIII.

The north wing, or OLD CASTLE, which was mainly rebuilt by King Henry VIII., stands on the third island. Probably its foundations of masonry and its lower walls contain many relics of the original Castle, which was captured early in the summer of 1138, by Robert, Duke of Gloucester, on behalf of the Empress Matilda, and retaken by King Stephen soon after the following Christmas. Mr. G. T. Clark thinks that the existing foundations are those of a Norman or Early English shell-keep. The Crêvecœurs, seven generations of whom possessed the manor (from the end of the eleventh century until A.D. 1265), erected a powerful fortress here. Sir Roger de Leybourne, who possessed the Castle for six years only, 1265–71, probably did little for it. By a singular coincidence it happens that the present owners of Leeds are descendants of that Sir Roger de Leybourne, through his granddaughter Idonea de Say, and her offspring the Lords Say and Sele. Sir Roger's son, Sir William de Leybourne, alienated the Castle to King Edward I. before A.D. 1279, and it remained a possession of the Crown until 1552, when it was granted in Fee Farm to Sir Anthony St. Leger. Within the old building, we see in the chapel, the scullery, and elsewhere, windows and other traces of masonry inserted by Kings Edward I., Edward II., and Edward III. Close to the bell-tower a corner of the Castle was rebuilt between A.D. 1438 and 1441, and the bell within the tower bears the date 1435. The present kitchen (No. 30 on the Plan) was the banqueting hall in the new building erected for Henry VIII., by Sir Henry Guldeford, who was Constable of the Castle from 1512 to 1532. Over it is a fine room, called the Queen's room, which, like several others in this part of the Castle, has a handsomely carved mantelpiece of that period. While the Castle was rented from Lord Culpeper as a prison for 500 or 600 French and Dutch prisoners, from 1665 to 1667, a fire

* In the great Hall it was that the members of the Kent Archæological Society stood, to hear Canon Scott Robertson's paper on the History of Leeds Castle, at their visit on the 3rd of August 1882.

destroyed the rooms in a large portion of this old Castle, on the northern island, so that much of the interior work had to be renewed. The old Castle is connected with the modern residence, or MAIN BUILDING, by a bridge of two arches, over the moat. This bridge is two stories in height. Its arches are modern; although the piers and abutments supporting them are ancient. Drawbridges formerly rested upon these, and the occupants, by raising them, could cut off the connection between the two buildings.

Since the Culpepers purchased Leeds from the daughters of Sir Richard Smythe, soon after 1632, it has never passed away from the possession of their descendants, or those connected with them. Catherine, the only child of the second Lord Culpeper, carried it in dowry to her husband Thomas, the fifth Lord Fairfax. Their daughter, Frances Fairfax, married Mr. Denny Martin, and her son, General Philip Martin, bequeathed it to Fiennes Wykeham, the son of his second cousin Mrs. Mary Wykeham (*née* Fox of Chacombe). Mr. Fiennes Wykeham-Martin died in 1840, and from that year until 1869 Leeds Castle was possessed by his son Charles, who was M.P. for Newport, Isle of Wight, and wrote an admirable History of this Castle. His first wife had been Lady Jemima Isabel Mann, daughter of the fifth and last Earl Cornwallis, of Linton Place. Having had several children, Lady Jemima died in 1836, four years before her husband inherited Leeds Castle, and eight years before the birth of her sister Lady Julia, who in 1861 married Viscount Holmesdale. When Lord Cornwallis died in 1852, Linton and his other estates passed to this young daughter, then a child of eight years of age, to the exclusion of Lady Jemima's offspring. His lordship's will provided, however, that if Lady Julia had no issue, the Cornwallis estates should, at her death, go to his younger grandson, the second son of Lady Jemima Wykeham-Martin. Leeds Castle caused this provision to be made. Lord Cornwallis excluded, from the succession, Philip his eldest grandson, because his lordship would not permit Linton to become an appendage of Leeds Castle. The proviso has already taken effect. On the lamented death of Lady Holmesdale, in September, 1883, Linton passed to her elder sister's young grandson, Fiennes Wykeham Cornwallis, nephew of the late Philip Wykeham-Martin, of Leeds Castle, M.P. for Rochester. Leeds Castle is at present occupied by the widow of Mr. Philip Wykeham-Martin, who died in 1876; but it will pass eventually to her son, Mr. Cornwallis Philip Wykeham-Martin, who meanwhile resides at Stede Hill House.