
Bitesize History - Castles

Elliston Castle



This—now complete ruin —was an oblong tower, with extensive outworks on its east side, where the main entrance was, and the probability is that it was moated all around. The tower was in the north corner, and it is only a small portion of the walls of this tower that now remains, although the foundations of the outworks can still be traced, a part of which is yet visible to the eye, partially elevated above the surface of the ground. It was the family residence of the potent family of Sempill up till about the year 1500, and the Barony of Sempill may have been in their possession from near the beginning of the 14th century, at which time Robert Sempill was steward to the High Stewarts over their Barony of Renfrew.

A charter belonging to the Wilsons of Haylee, Largs, is granted by Thomas Sempill of Elziotstoun, and dated at the Castle of Elziotstoun in 1483 (Rob. Ayrshire Families). The masonry of this castle is very plain. It must have been erected when warfare in this kingdom was carried on with bows and arrows, and before cannon came into use, for although a few gunports appeared on the walls (not now to be seen, however, from the demolition of most part of them), these must have been made in the course of some repairs done subsequent to its erection. The length of the tower is about 42 feet, and its breadth 33 feet. The walls are from 8 to 9 feet thick at the east and west ends, and the side walls (south and north) about 7 feet. At present, the height of the walls may be from 20 to 30 feet, but how much higher they were originally cannot be stated.

Mr Hodgert, who was factor to the late Mr Harvey, of Castlesemple, the purchaser of Castlesemple Estate about the year 1810, with Gothic barbarity attempted to take down and remove the walls of this ancient tower, to afford stones with which to erect some farm steadings, but the work was not an easy one, for the stones were firmly cemented with lime that it was found much more easy to produce the stones from the whinstone rock.



The above photographs of the castle are taken from the YouTube video

‘Lochwinnoch through the Ages’