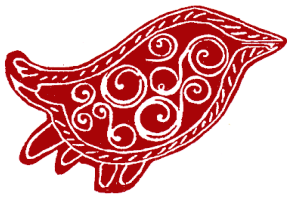
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Notes on the Fortifications of Kinsale Harbour.

By B. H. StJ. O'NEIL, M.A., F.S.A.,
Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Wales.

In the library at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire, England, there is a large collection of late sixteenth century plans, many of which portray contemporary fortifications. Amongst this collection there are two plans of the siege of Kinsale (1601). The present writer, being a student of the fortifications of this period and having also an ancestral connection with the siege, decided to examine the ground near the town for evidence of the works constructed at that time. A very brief visit was paid there in August, 1939, and owing to the great kindness of the Rev. Father P. McSwiney, C.C., M.A., Mr. J. H. Thuillier, and Mr. Seamus Breathnach much ground was covered and a number of sites were visited. Nevertheless, prolonged study on the spot as well as much historical research would be needed in order to prepare a comprehensive survey even of the earthworks of the siege of 1601, quite apart from the many interesting earlier and later defences of the harbour. Another visit being out of the question at the present time and opportunities for research being few, it has seemed best now merely to set down preliminary observations on these various points and to publish the two Hatfield House plans in the hope that others will be able to derive from them detailed information of value. For the privilege of publishing the plans the writer is very much indebted to their owner, the Marquis of Salisbury and to the Trustees of the British Museum.

"The Plot of Kinsale" (Plate VII), which is on vellum and coloured, if one may judge from its legend, appears to have been drawn from information supplied by Mr. Iuyes. It seems likely that this is none other than Paul Ivy or Ive, the celebrated English engineer, who was earlier responsible for work at Pendennis Castle, Cornwall, and who was later employed at James Fort, Kinsale.[1] The drawing is poor, when compared with Boazio's version, and little more need be said about it here than that with great caution it may be used to confirm Boazio's information; but it should never be used against the latter. A and C of "The Plot" represent respectively the predecessors of Charles Fort and James Fort, but their delineation here is useless as evidence of their form.

The other plan (Plate VIII), which is inscribed "Baptista Boazio Made this plott," is in quite a different category. It is on paper, mounted and coloured. It bears the stamp of accurate knowledge for the most part, and it will be used forthwith to help in the study of the gradual multiplication of the defences of the harbour. Boazio shows conventional medieval walls, with machicolated mural towers and gate towers, surrounding a double

[1] *Dictionary of National Biography*, where it is referred to as Castle Ny Park.

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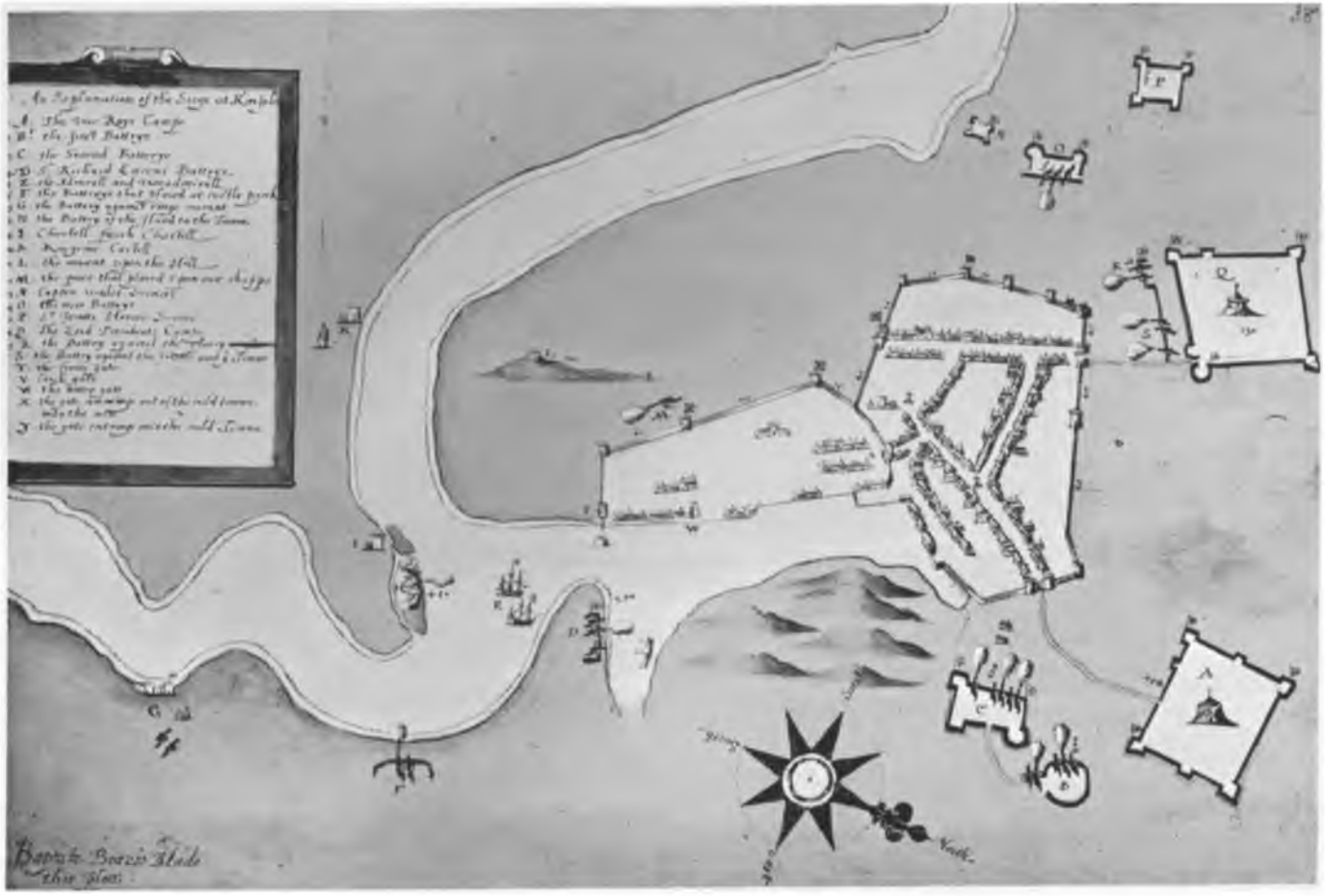


PLAN OF THE SIEGE OF KINSALE, NOW AT HATFIELD HOUSE.

Transcription of Legend :

A.—A castle taken from the Spaniards 1 Nouembr
B.—The place whence the same castle was Battered
C. and D.—Places of so small moment as they will be abandoned when the town is beaten
E. and F.—Betwene them a Muskett will play levell at high water
G.—A hill from whence the towne is wholie looked into
H.—The weste side of Kinsale which standeth higher than I., the east side of the town at the least 60 foote
I.—The haven is dry at low water
K.—Ther lieth one of the Quenes shipps
L.—Ther lieth a man of warr

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PLAN OF THE SIEGE OF KINSALE, NOW AT HATFIELD HOUSE.

Transcription of Legend :

AN EXPLANATION OF THE SIEGE AT KINSALE.

A.—The Vice Roys Campe
B.—the First Battrye
C.—the Second Batterye
D.—Sir Richard Lucens Battrye
E.—the Admirall and Vice admirall
F.—the Batterye that plaied at castle parck
G.—the Battery against ringe courant
H.—the Battry of the Iland to the Towne
I.—Chastell parck Chastell
K.—Kingrmc Castell
L.—the mount upon the Hill
M.—the pecce that plaied upon our shipps
N.—Capten wades Sconces
O.—the new Battrye
P.—Sr Jeratts Horseis Sconce
Q.—The Lord Presidents Campe
R.—the Battry against the Friary
S.—the Battry against the friarie and y Towne
T.—the Friars gate
V.—Corck gate
W.—the water gate
X.—the gate comminge out of the ould towne into the new
Y.—the gate entringe into the ould Towne

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town. He describes the southern part of the double town, which is divided from the northern part by a curtain wall, pierced by a gate, as the old town. Houses within this area are sparse and it is clear that by 1601 it was largely deserted in favour of the newer area. This old town is indeed in a very remarkable position for a defended medieval town. In plan, as indeed in modern aspect, it resembles the southern prolongation of Dartmouth, Devon, but the latter, as far as the writer is aware, was never defended. The walls of Kinsale appear to have been intact a hundred years after the siege of 1601, but no portion of them has so far come to light in recent times. The line of them can, however, still be traced, and it is hoped that the publication of this " plott " will enable the archaeologists in the town to fix the line with certainty and also to derive interesting information about the houses and streets.

For some time after the invention of gunpowder guns proved to be of little real value in fortifications, and it was not until the second half of the fifteenth century that engineers began to erect buildings for defence with artillery. As was to be expected at that time, these earliest buildings were medieval in style, but by 1500 or soon after (in England) engineers had begun to design buildings of a more suitable type. The walls are lower and of more solid construction than those of medieval castles, in order to withstand the shock, whether external or internal, which was produced by the new weapon. On Boazio's " plott " below " Y the gate entringe into the old Towne," standing in the water but apparently connected with Y by means of a wall, there is a squat round tower. Its position, some distance from the water front, may perhaps be explained by the remark on M. Iuyes's plot, " I—the haven is dry at low water." In other words, if the water receded at low tide some distance from the water front at this point, any additional defence of this kind would need to be carried down to low water mark.[1] The tower of Belem at Lisbon is in a very similar position. This was built between 1515 and 1521 and still stands, but it is obviously a much more elaborate and florid building, and cannot be quoted as a near parallel to the tower at Kinsale. The site of part of the Kinsale tower seems to be represented by a garden, .304 of an acre in extent, which is shown on the 25″ O.S. map (Cork CXII. 13. 1932 ed.) immediately opposite Scilly. This plot of land appears on the map as surrounded by a shallow ditch, but there is now no sign of anything unusual in this area. An inspection from the water of the end of the promontory of Scilly failed to disclose any signs of ancient fortification. Nevertheless, it seems to the present writer very probable that a chain was stretched across the narrow channel between this promontory and the round tower already discussed, as a protection to the inner harbour of Kinsale. Such chains were a common feature of the defences of havens at least from the fifteenth century onwards. A good example existed at Dartmouth and is discussed in *Archaeologia*,[2] and many others are known to have existed. If this was the case, it is probable that the chain was securely fixed on Scilly and worked by means of a capstan

[1] Such a wall and tower, projecting into the river, was built as part of the Town Wall of Conway in North Wales in the time of Edward I. Some of the wall still exists.

[2] LXXXV, 137, 139–140.

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at the Kinsale end. At Dartmouth the chain was raised at night and in war time; otherwise it rested on the bed of the harbour.

It seems that the earliest defence of the harbour, away from the town, was a blockhouse for artillery at the extreme point of Castle Park promontory. This was subsequently enlarged and appears on at least one eighteenth century plan as "Block House," but it seems from the masonry that the inner part, *i.e.* that which is built on the rock above high water mark, is of a very primitive type. Examination of the structure is rendered difficult by its position and by the accumulation of debris in the back part of the building, but it did seem from the outside that there was a definite straight joint between the inner, *i.e.* western, masonry and the later extension eastwards. Against the inside face of the northern wall of the inner part there is a vaulted magazine,[1] and next to it eastwards a smaller room. Here through the main wall of the blockhouse, which is 2 feet 8 inches thick, there is an opening. Externally this is 4 inches wide and 9 inches high; it is widely splayed internally, the width of the opening at the inner face being 3 feet. As the bed of this opening or embrasure is flat and is 2 feet 2 inches above the present ground level, it seems probable that this opening is for cannon. No other openings of this kind could be located in the building, but this one example by itself is sufficient to invite comparison with the most primitive gunports known in England, *e.g.*, at Kirby Muxloe Castle in Leicestershire (built 1480–84). These in their turn may be compared with primitive gunports in Sendlingertor, Munich, which unfortunately have not been closely dated.

It is highly probable that a chain was stretched from this fifteenth century blockhouse to the nearest point on the opposite shore. Certainly there was a chain at this point at a later time, since a French chart of the late seventeenth century[2] indicates a building on the opposite shore with the legend "Cabestan de la Chaisne."

In the sixteenth century it is probable that various small castles on the Bandon river, whether newly erected for the purpose or already in existence, formed part of a general scheme of coastal defence against invasion by sea. Of these castles only Poulnalong or Shippool Castle (Downalong Castle on the O.S. map) was examined closely. This most interesting building appears to have been erected in 1543 and lies on the bank of the river at a suitable landing place. It consists of a rectangular tower with a round turret at one corner on the landward side (Plate IX: 1). It not only commanded the approach by water, but could also "impeach a landing" by means of flanking fire from the turret on any who had managed to struggle ashore. This point is obvious on the ground, but is difficult to explain without an accurate plan, which is not available. Apart from a series of holes from the first floor of the round turret, which seem to have been for the discharge of muskets etc. downwards against attackers who had approached close to the tower, the chief defence consisted of cannon at

[1] It is so described on a plan of 1815, now in the War Department Records Branch (B. 93), and seen by the courtesy of the staff there.

[2] A portion of this chart was reproduced by Father McSwiney in this *Journal*, XLIV (July-December, 1939), plate VIII, opp. p. 96.

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POULNALONG OR DOWNALONG CASTLE, SHIPPOOL.

(1) The base of the round turret, showing gun-port.

(2) The side facing the river, showing a blocked gun-port.

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ground level. The gun ports include three in the round turret and one, now blocked, facing the river (Plate IX: 2). All are of one type with internal and external splays approximately equal. This characteristic tallies with the date given for the erection of the tower (1543), since it was precisely in the middle of this century that the development from internal to external splay was taking place. These gun ports, however, are much greater in width than in height and are examples of a type, which has not so far been noted by the present writer anywhere in England, but is characteristic of Scottish fortifications of this period and may well be of French origin.

The eastward extension of the block house at Castle Park promontory cannot be very much later than Poulnalong Castle. Most of its features were destroyed when the building was turned into a factory, but below the wall of the factory it is still possible to see the sloping parapet of the original structure, which had no upper storey. It is difficult to judge the original shape of the embrasures, since they have been turned into windows for the factory, but their general character is still plain when seen from the sea, and the external splay appears to have been about three times the length of the internal splay. Doubtless the chain was still in use at this period. It should be noted that two old plans of the second battle of Kinsale (1690), now kept at the War Office Records Branch,[1] show round towers at the western and southern corners of the block house, but, as the bastioned projections of the Castle Park enceinte are also shown rounded, this evidence should not be taken too much into account.

The Castle known as Castle Park appears on the plans of the siege of 1601. How long it had been in existence is difficult to judge, since it now has few, if any, architectural details, but it does not all seem to be of one period. The actual building is surrounded by a rather primitive bastioned enceinte, which is shown on the O.S. map with fair accuracy. Even this appears to be of two periods. In one place where the bank behind the wall has been cut away it can be seen that the wall was at first slightly lower. It seems to have been heightened at a later date and the earth bank placed against its inside face. The top of this earth bank made a wall walk, and there was a series of small holes through the wall, which may have been for gun or muskets. It is likely that this enceinte or at least the earlier work in it was already in existence by the time of the siege of 1601, although nothing of this character is shown on either of the Hatfield House plans. There is a well-preserved covered way from the block house at the end of the promontory in a south-westerly direction up the hill. This is shown on the O.S. map, and its apparent continuation within the later James Fort suggests that it was constructed in connection with the bastioned enceinte of Castle Park rather than with the later fort.

At the time of the siege of 1601 there was a fortification on the site of the later Charles Fort, but of its character there is little evidence. On Boazio's plan (Plate VIII) it is conventionally figured with an English flag, but not mentioned; in Iuyes' plan (Plate VII) it is marked "A a castle taken from the Spaniards 1 Nouembr." On Plate VII (facing p. 96) of his paper

[1] Z. 1/14; seen by courtesy of the staff of that branch.

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in the last number but one of this *Journal* Father McSwiney figures part of a maritime chart, which shows this earlier Barry Óg Castle. The two towers shown in this chart may perhaps be identified in Boazio's plan, but this is unlikely. There are no remains of it now, and it is quite impossible to give any idea of the date of its erection.

The two Hatfield House plans of the siege should be useful to those who have detailed topographical knowledge of the area in elucidating the movements of that year, but it must always be understood, when dealing with battle pictures of this period, that the artist is likely to be drawing without personal knowledge of the whole of the field. Thus Iuyes's plan is of little real value for detailed study. "The Campe" which he marks N. of Kinsale with many standards and tents is clearly only a conventional rendering of a camp of this period. Similarly the delineation of the town conforms only generally with its known shape. The points A,B,C and D are useful indications of the tactics employed, but are of no architectural value.

Boazio's plan is far better and it has already been used in this article with some confidence as an indication of the appearance of the medieval town. On the other hand its evidence cannot be taken as final, since it does not show the block house at the end of Castle Park promontory, which was certainly in existence at this time, unless it is portrayed as "H." This, however, is unlikely, since "H" is described as "the Battry of the Iland to the Towne," and it would hardly be possible to fire at the town from the blockhouse in question.

Much of the available time in August, 1939, was spent in searching for traces of the siege works north-west of the town, as well as looking for "L the mount upon the Hill." No trace of the latter was found unless a small mound on Compass Hill, which appears to be a round barrow, is part of it or was utilized for military purposes at this time.

The site of "O the new Battrye" was located from the general probability of its position and from Mr. S. Breathnach's recollection of what he had been told about it. It seems to have been is a small field (.578 of an acre, O.S. Cork CXII. 13) on the S. side of Bandon road in part of Abbey Lands.

"Q The Lord Presidents Campe" seems to have vanished completely, unless a portion of it is represented by a slight hollow lying E. and W. in the middle of a field on the W. side of Innishannon road (5.126 of an acre, O.S. Cork CXII. 13), a short distance S. of Annmount. This is the precise position for convenience according to Boazio's plan.

There are, however, distinct traces of "P Sr. Jeratt's Horseis' Sconce." It lies on the top of the hill astride the road in a splendid position for its purpose according to accounts of the siege, some 210 yards W.S.W. of Cappagh House. Most of its outline is just traceable as a hollow in the fields on each side of the road, and its eastern bastion, which according to Boazio's plan was of an unusual design, exists as a formless lump in the field. It seems to have been 90 to 100 yards square. Although very much levelled, it should be just possible to make a plan of this earthwork.

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Time did not allow a search for other fortifications, but it is by no means improbable that some traces of them still exist.

The construction of a new fort at Castle Park, now called James Fort or Old Fort, was begun immediately after the end of the siege of 1601 and appears to have occupied over two and a half years.[1]

According to the *Dictionary of National Biography* the work was under the superintendence of Paul Ivy, that very engineer whose hand is suspected in one of the Hatfield House plans. He was perhaps the leading man in his profession in England and was the author of one of the earliest treatises on fortifications in the English language. The main outline of the fort is adequately shown on the O.S. map, but, since the stone facing which once covered the whole of the outside, has been entirely removed, the precise original shape of the bastions is sometimes uncertain. It seems, however, that the angle between the curtain and the flanks or sides of the bastions is sometimes obtuse and at others a right angle. In this respect it resembles the five pointed fort called the Redoubt at Kingswear in Devon, probably erected in 1627,[2] where also these angles vary in shape. In the five pointed bastioned earthwork at Horsey Hill, Huntingdonshire,[3] however, all the angles appear to be obtuse ; this fort probably dates from the time of the Civil War (1642 onwards). In the formative years of the science of fortification differing views on the question of the angle between the curtain and the flanks of bastions held the field in different Continental countries. The obtuse angle was eventually shown to be the best in order to provide complete covering fire for the next bastion, and a system of this kind is to be seen at Carisbrooke Castle, Isle of Wight. It occurs also at Pendennis Castle, Cornwall in the large outer fort, which is the work of Paul Ivy. It is therefore not surprising that James Fort, which is also his work, shows the latest development of the art of fortification. The drawing of the fort in *Pacata Hibernia*[4] indicates the different angles of the bastions, but not with complete accuracy.

A detailed examination and accurate survey would doubtless reveal many interesting features in the fort. Even a cursory glance showed that a firestep, now a narrow ledge in the grass, is usually visible below the parapet of the curtain, and that there are ramps up to the bastions from the interior of the fort for the haulage of guns into position. There are also many traces of the actual embrasures for guns on the flanks and faces of the bastions, wherever the parapet is well preserved. Most of these features can be paralleled at the Queen's Sconce, Newark, Nottinghamshire, erected in the Civil War (1642 onwards) and other fortifications of the same period. The western and southern bastions, which face the approach from the landward side, are more massive than the other three, but do not differ from them in type. Their outline has been somewhat confused by later field walls, and there does not seem now to be any trace of the

[1] O'Sullivan, *History of Kinsale*, 99.

[2] *Archaeologia*, LXXXV, 146.

[3] *Roy. Comm. Hist. Mon., Hunts.*, pp. 247-8.

[4] Reproduced in O'Sullivan, *History of Kinsale*, opp. p. 129.

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ravelin or detached triangular work, which formerly existed in advance of the ditch between the two bastions.

Charles Fort was begun in 1670 and has above the gate a date which is understood to be 1680. No description of the fort can here be undertaken, since long study would be needed in order to disentangle the original work from later additions. It seems to the writer, however, that very few of the original gunports still remain. Most have been rebuilt in brick or a different stone and have even wider splays than the original examples. This difference seems to be indicated on the 25″ O.S. map (CXXV. 2). Some original gunports exist in the parapet of the western bastion flanking the entrance. One typical example here measured 2 feet in width internally and about 8 feet externally. The total length from inner to outer face of the wall is 13 feet 6 inches; the first 1 foot 6 inches from the inner face is flat and has vertical jambs 2 feet apart; the remainder is splayed downwards. The height from the floor level to the bed of the embrasure is 1 foot 8 inches. The work is done in rough ashlar, which seems to be the original material of 1670–80.[1]

On the 25″ O.S. map (CXXV. 2 at bottom left corner) a "Chain Hole" and "Tunnel" is marked at the extremity of a promontory. The distance eastwards to the opposite shore is about half a mile and there is no indication on the map there of any point where the other end of the chain may have been fixed, but it is by no means improbable that this is the position of the "boom made across the channel for the security of the harbour" in 1667.[2]

The writer hopes that these brief notes will encourage someone with historical and topographical knowledge of Kinsale to embark upon a detailed study of the defences of the harbour. It already appears that there is much of more than purely local interest still remaining at different points near Kinsale, and there is little doubt that just such an illuminating story could be told in this case as has been attempted elsewhere for Dartmouth in Devon.[3]

[1] A plan probably of mid eighteenth century date, now kept at the War Department Records Branch and seen by courtesy of the staff there, seems to show that all the embrasures in the fort were of this type at that date.

[2] O'Sullivan, *History of Kinsale*, p. 117.

[3] *Archaeologia*, LXXXV, 129–157.

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