

First mentioned in 1153, Destroyed
in 1260, Rebuilt in 1280's

Soulby + Jones 1975

100B No. 28

Tenby

Castle

3698

The little round donjon on the summit of the Castle Hill is apparently the oldest bit of masonry in Tenby; it may date from the 12th century; the square tower attached to it on the northern side is an addition, perhaps erected by Warine de Muntchensy when he rebuilt St. Mary's Church in 1245. The castle proper, of which but little remains, was probably commenced by William de Valence towards the end of the 13th century (there is a very characteristic bit of walling near the northern entrance to the Castle Hill which closely resembles the lower portion of the town wall in the garden of the Lion Hotel, this latter we may pretty safely assume to be Valentian) but the buildings were altered and added to from time to time. Tenby Castle was a fortress separate from the walled town of Tenby, and independent of the latter from a judicial as well as a military point of view. The Provost (subsequently called Mayor) and the two Bailiffs represented the Earl of Pembroke in the town, but on the Castle Hill the Governor of Tenby was his delegate. William de Valence granted to the Burgesses of Tenby that "they should not be brought for any transgressions, contracts, or covenants, further nor elsewhere, than to our gate of our castle of Tenby, if they can find complete pledges of standing the law." This was confirmed by the subsequent earls. Unlike the ordinary run of Pembrokeshire castles, Tenby was rather a residence than a barrack; perhaps the Governor had charge of arms and stores, and trusted chiefly to the Burgesses of Tenby for his men. There were in the castle a number of fine rooms with no upper storeys, a large chapel and a series of detached buildings; the curtain wall was very strong. We find from an incident related in the life of Fox, the Quaker, that the Mayor and Governor of Tenby were not always of one accord. See Tenby Charters; Buck's Views; Fenton 446; Reinagle Panoramic Views of Tenby, No. 3; Norris' Etchings of Tenby plates 27 and 27; Norris' Water Colours; Phillips' Collection, Free Library, Cardiff (15014) 28, 44; (15019) 20, 30, 43; (15026) 17; Life of George Fox; His visit to Wales, 1657; Little England 145.

Present remains comprise a gate tower & barbican at the S.W. entrance, a donjon, defensive walls & parts of domestic buildings, the largest of which now forms the shell of the present museum (once used as a National School). To the west lies the Museum Cottage. Donjon has been enlarged to west. All castle remains hold LB2A status. See p 7 for group interest. 5 cannon are of LB2 status.