

# The Tudor Defences of Scilly

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## INTRODUCTION

The military significance of the Isles of Scilly (**Fig. 1**) has been recognised for the past five centuries. In 1602 the Governor of the islands, Sir Francis Godolphin, eloquently described their strategic position:

It is as an inn by which ships trading westerly or southerly are to pass and return, whereby it both succours and secures our traffic, and no other place can so aptly permit or restrain the traffic of Ireland and the north of Scotland with France or Spain. The enemy may soon make it impregnable, and use it as a rendezvous of his navy, a citadel or scourge against the realm. From thence he may interrupt the sending of munition, &c. from London and the south of England into Ireland, and also interrupt most of our traffic into foreign parts, proving a more hurtful neighbour in the west than Dunkirk is in the east.<sup>1</sup>

Although surrounded by dangerous rocks, a wide and sheltered anchorage can be found in The Road, protected from the north and west by the island of Tresco, and from the east by St Mary's, the largest and nearest island to the mainland. Artillery placed on these two islands would defend The Road from its most common approaches, and, in particular, artillery placed on The Hugh or Hugh Hill, a peninsula jutting out into The Road at the south-west extremity of St Mary's, and linked to it by the sand bank on which the only town, Hugh Town, was built. Therefore from the late 1540s a succession of fortifications were placed, first on Tresco and later on St Mary's. The earliest structures, The Old Blockhouse and King Charles Castle on Tresco, probably built between 1548 and 1550/1, were conservative in form, but Harry's Walls on St Mary's, begun in 1551, with its angled bastions, reflected the very latest

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<sup>1</sup> *Calendar of State Papers Domestic* [hereafter *CSPD*], 1601-3, London, 1870, 162, 14 March 1602; records also online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/> accessed 24 June 2010.

military thinking in England. This ambitious structure was never completed, but in the 1590s the renewed threat of Spanish attack led to the construction of Star Castle and the first part of the Garrison Walls, both on The Hugh.

Scilly continued to be of strategic importance until World War II, and with each threat that Britain faced, new structures were built or adapted to face an enemy that fortunately rarely came. But the absence of military action, combined with its remote location and the lack of development pressure over the centuries, means that the military heritage of Scilly has survived largely untouched, and for a place with the population of a large village, the variety of its military remains cannot be matched in such concentration on the mainland.

#### SCILLY'S DEFENCES DURING EDWARD VI'S REIGN

Scilly has a number of Iron Age structures once described as military in origin. For instance, William Borlase, writing in 1756, was convinced that Giant's Castle was a fortification predating the Norman Conquest, but the modern interpretation of these structures is that they were ceremonial rather than military in origin.<sup>2</sup> Scilly's major medieval fortification was Ennor Castle, overlooking Old Town Bay on St Mary's, which is first mentioned in the 13th century.<sup>3</sup> John Leland tersely described it in the 1530s as 'a meately strong pile'; two centuries later Borlase noted that 'part of the walls still remains'.<sup>4</sup> Today nothing survives above ground, but there is a distinct mound visible beside the main road through Old Town.

Before the 16th century responsibility for any defences near the coast lay in the hands of major landowners, acting to safeguard their own, local interests rather than protecting the country *per se*. However, with the renaissance development of national integrity and state power, local action was no longer

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<sup>2</sup> William Borlase, *Observations on the Islands of Scilly*, Oxford, 1756, facsimile edition Newcastle upon Tyne, 1966, 11; Adam Sharpe, 'Treryn Dinas: cliff castles reconsidered', *Cornish Archaeology*, XXXI, 1992, 65-8; Barry Cunliffe, *Iron Age Communities in Britain* London, 2002, 205, 288-90.

<sup>3</sup> RL Bowley, *The Fortunate Islands*, Reading, 1968, 41.

<sup>4</sup> Lucy Toulmin Smith (ed.), *The Itinerary of John Leland*, London, 1964, I, 190; Borlase, *op. cit.*, 8.

considered adequate and the Crown took national initiatives.<sup>5</sup> This shift in policy was the result of a general change in the philosophy and practice of government, and specifically due to the predicament that resulted from Henry VIII's decision to break from the Papacy. England faced invasion in 1538 by the combined forces of the Emperor Charles V and Francis I of France, seeking to re-establish papal authority. Coastal fortifications were constructed from Hull to Milford Haven. There was an underlying plan, the Device, which was drawn up by February 1539. It envisaged a series of gun platforms, transitional in type between the medieval castle and the modern fort. Unlike their predecessors, they were purely military in character, rather than serving as the domestic and political power base of a nobleman.<sup>6</sup> Although there may have been central direction of sorts, there was great variety in their design.<sup>7</sup> The smallest were blockhouses defending the shores of the Thames, which cost from around £500 to just over £1,000.<sup>8</sup> On the south coast huge cylindrical blocks were built, surrounded by rounded bastions, costing between £5,000 and £10,000. Firepower ranged from a handful of guns in a small blockhouse to dozens of gun positions in castles such as those at Deal, Walmer, Sandgate or St Mawes (**Fig. 2**).<sup>9</sup> Although vast sums were spent during Henry VIII's reign, these fortifications were not put to the test, as on 7 June 1546 a peace treaty ended the immediate danger of war with France.<sup>10</sup>

The creation of new fortifications in Scilly was not part of the Henrician programme, but elements of it seem to have been incorporated into the structures built on Tresco and St Mary's during Edward VI's short reign. The new King was nine years old when he ascended to the throne in January 1547, and a council of the old king's executors was dominated by the new king's uncle, Edward Seymour (c.1500 –1552), Earl of Hertford (rapidly

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<sup>5</sup> BM Morley, *Henry VIII and the Development of Coastal Defence*, London, 1976, 30.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Charles Fissel, *English Warfare 1511-1642*, London, 2001, 36.

<sup>7</sup> HM Colvin (ed.), *The History of the King's Works*, IV, part II, London, 1982, 377; AD Saunders, *Fortress Britain*, Liphook, 1989, 37ff; Peter Harrington, *The Castles of Henry VIII*, Oxford, 2007, 15.

<sup>8</sup> Harrington, *op. cit.*, 8; Morley, *op. cit.*, 26.

<sup>9</sup> Saunders, *loc. cit.*; Morley, *op. cit.*, 10ff; Jonathan Coad, *Deal Castle*, London, 2005, 25-7; Jonathan Coad *et al.*, *Walmer Castle and Gardens*, London, 2005, 25-8; Paul Pattison, *Pendennis Castle and St Mawes Castle*, London, 2009, 19-28.

<sup>10</sup> Norman Longmate, *Defending the Island*, London, 2001, 398.

created Lord Protector of England and Duke of Somerset), until he was toppled in October 1549.<sup>11</sup> Somerset's younger brother, Thomas, Lord Seymour of Sudeley (c.1509-1549), was appointed Lord Admiral;<sup>12</sup> following growing concern about shipping around Scilly, he visited the islands in April 1547.<sup>13</sup> His visit seems to have stimulated a programme to remedy the lack of defences. On 3 February 1548 the Privy Council issued a 'warrant to deliver to Sir Frauncys Flemmyng towerdes the charges of the fortificacions at Silla, xxij<sup>li</sup> xvij<sup>s</sup> iiiij<sup>d</sup>', and on 6 February five fadders of lead were to be sent for the project.<sup>14</sup> Flemmyng, 'Lieutenant of the Ordnance', had been knighted between 26 November 1547 and 9 January 1548.<sup>15</sup> On 24 April 1548 the Privy Council issued a further instruction: 'Sir Wimund Carewe, knight, Thresaurer of the First Fructes and Tenets, had warrant to deliver to Sir Frauncys Flemmyng, knight, ccc<sup>li</sup>, to be deliveryd to him in Cornewall, being sent thider for the fortificacions at Sylla.'<sup>16</sup> The Court of First Fruits and Tenths was the financial instrument established to collect the portion of clergy income that had previously been paid to Rome.<sup>17</sup> In July 1548 'Mr Williams had warrant for xliij<sup>li</sup> vj<sup>s</sup> viij<sup>d</sup> to Sir Frauncys Flemmyng for his diettes [debts] at vj<sup>s</sup> viij<sup>d</sup> by the daye for cxxx dayes, ryding in post with two servants and one guyde from London to Cornewall two several tymes about the fortificacion at Sylla and Plymouth'.<sup>18</sup> Mr Williams was probably a son of Sir John Williams (c.1500-59), one of Thomas Cromwell's former circle, and from 1544 to 1554 Treasurer of the Court of Augmentations, another instrument to divert church money to the government, in this case the value of monastic property.<sup>19</sup> The value of

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<sup>11</sup> Barrett L Beer, 'Seymour, Edward, duke of Somerset (c.1500–1552)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford, 2004 [hereafter *ODNB*], XLI, 860-8; online edn, Jan 2009 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25159>, accessed 8 June 2010]

<sup>12</sup> GW Bernard, 'Seymour, Thomas, Baron Seymour of Sudeley (b. in or before 1509, d.1549)', *ODNB*, XLI, 896-9.

<sup>13</sup> *CSPD*, 1547-80, London, 1856, 3, 20 April 1547; A L Rowse, *Tudor Cornwall*, London, 1941, 384.

<sup>14</sup> *Acts of the Privy Council* [hereafter *APC*], 1547-50, London, 1890, 167, 169; a fother is a cart load of lead, somewhere between 2,184 and 2,520 pounds.

<sup>15</sup> *APC*, 1547-50, 145, 158.

<sup>16</sup> *APC*, 1547-50, 187.

<sup>17</sup> A Harding, *A Social History Of English Law*, London, 1966, 160.

<sup>18</sup> *APC*, 1547-50, 214, 25 July 1548.

<sup>19</sup> GR Elton, *The Tudor Revolution in Government*, Cambridge, 1953, 118, 228; Sybil M Jack, 'Williams, John, Baron Williams, c.1500-1559', *ODNB*, LIX, 220-1. Williams was knighted some time between November 1538 and June 1539, so he cannot have been Mr Williams in 1548; his two sons died in August 1551.

monastic lands to the Crown was estimated at around £130,000, a sum which was easily consumed by the ambitious programme of coastal defences.<sup>20</sup>

The Council's instructions provide no detail about the expenditure, other than the cost, and for nearly a year no further instructions were issued. However, in June 1549 £100 was sent to John Killigrew of Arwennack, near Falmouth, Governor of Pendennis Castle, apparently for soldier's pay and provisions; and on 20 October 1549 Killigrew drew £262 0s. 10d. to pay for the discharge of 100 soldiers who had served in Scilly during the summer, possibly suggesting the existence of structures in which they could have served.<sup>21</sup>

Scilly had been a priority since the Duke of Somerset became Lord Protector, but following his arrest on 11 October 1549 an examination of the progress of the defences in Scilly and in the Channel Islands was ordered. On 5 November 1549 Captain William Tyrrell was ordered to Scilly with a brief to examine all aspects of the defences.<sup>22</sup> To aid his work he was to 'summon' Sir William Godolphin (c.1518-1570) of Godolphin, near Helston, described as the General Captain of the islands, and John Killigrew, surveyor of fortifications, who in later documents is described as the Captain of Tresco. Tyrrell's survey was to be wide-ranging, and would examine all aspects of the military establishment on the islands. The most significant part of his brief was to 'consider whether the forts are best placed for defence, their strength and, if they are not completed, the charges of finishing them; what store there is, and order further provision as requisite. If the forts are not best placed and are not mostly completed he may order their stay until further order.'<sup>23</sup>

Unfortunately, Tyrrell's report has not been located, but from his orders and subsequent actions it may be inferred that he was examining a programme still in progress, and that there was some disquiet about the location of the forts. This investigation may have contributed to Borlase's belief that the site

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<sup>20</sup> H Maynard Smith, *Henry VIII and the Reformation*, London, 1964, 118.

<sup>21</sup> *APC*, 1547-50, 289, 13 June 1549; 292, 20 June 1549; 347, 20 October 1549. For Killigrew, see Pattison, *op. cit.*, 33, and PW Hasler, *The House of Commons 1558-1603*, London, 1981, II, 395.

<sup>22</sup> *APC*, 1547-50, 354; *CSPD*, 1547-80, 26, 5 November 1549.

<sup>23</sup> *CSPD*, 1547-80, 26, 5 November 1549.

of Harry's Walls on St Mary's was a mistake, but it predates by at least a year any work even starting on Harry's Walls.<sup>24</sup> Instead it may refer to the fact that the first new fortifications were all concentrated on Tresco, later the power base of John Killigrew, who was directing the construction and drawing the money.

During the summer of 1550 building work continued. On 15 March 1550 'A warraunt to John Caplen, deputie to Sir Thomas Arundell, knight, Receivour of the Duchie of Cornwall, to paie vij<sup>li</sup> in prest to John Kellygrewe, to be employed upon the Kinges Majesties fortificacions in the Isles of Silley' was issued.<sup>25</sup> The issue of £700 seems to mark the start of preparations for work during the construction season. Timber was acquired in south Wales for use by Richard Hutton, who was described as the Master Carpenter for the works in Scilly. One consignment consisted of 340 whole oak trees and another document refers to a payment for 200 oaks.<sup>26</sup> In October 1550 Hutton was paid £60 for his 'workemanshipp of tymber in Wales, provided for the Ile of Silley.'<sup>27</sup> Such large orders and substantial payments suggest large amounts of scaffolding, as well as timber floors and roofing, and thus extensive works. Scilly could not have furnished any suitable trees.

## TRESCO

In the first years of Edward VI's reign building work was focussed on Tresco. Although St Mary's was more populous and could control more of the key roads between the islands, it already had some defences, and Killigrew may have been using Crown money to secure the island that was to become his power base. Using the documentary references already examined in combination with the evidence of the buildings, the likely order of construction is that the two buildings on Tresco were built from 1548 until 1550 or 1551, with work on Harry's Walls on St Mary's only beginning in 1551. The design of the Tresco buildings may only predate Harry's Walls by a year or two, but they

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<sup>24</sup> Borlase, *op. cit.*, 11.

<sup>25</sup> APC, 1550-2, London, 1891, 233, 15 March 1550.

<sup>26</sup> APC, 1550-2, 101, 10 August 1550; 147, 25 October 1550.

<sup>27</sup> APC, 1550-2, 148, 16 October 1550.

belong to an earlier generation of fortification design. Of the two structures on Tresco, the Old Blockhouse seems the less ambitious, though this does not necessarily mean that it predates King Charles' Castle.

The Old Blockhouse, known in the 17th century as Dover Fort, is the smaller of the two (**Figs. 3, 4 and 5**).<sup>28</sup> It stands on raised ground overlooking the harbour at Old Grimsby, on the north-east side of the island, and consists of a paved, square platform that could have housed three guns. The low walls around the platform must have been reduced in height if they were to have provided protection for the gun crews. There is no evidence of how or whether the platform was roofed over. On the south side there is evidence of a built-in locker, perhaps to keep powder dry. A small heated room is attached to the west side of the gun platform. Its creation led to the blocking of a window opening in the west wall of the platform. However, there is no obvious joint in the south wall between the two parts of the structure, though considerable re-pointing has taken place. Around the building there is a shallow bank that may be contemporary, or could date from the Civil War.

On the south-west side of Tresco, King Charles's Castle was erected on Castle Down, overlooking New Grimsby Harbour (**Figs. 6, 7 and 8**). It consists of a partly-octagonal, approximately D-shaped, two-storeyed gun room or single-storeyed gun platform. Originally there were five firing positions on the ground floor, although one was abandoned later when a small room was created in the north-east corner. On the east side of the building there was a single large room, its northern half a kitchen, with a large fireplace and a bread oven. Attached to the north and south ends of this room are small, square bedchambers. Neither has a fireplace, but in the northern room there is a triangular, stone floor in one corner, perhaps the footing for a small brazier. Even in summer this would have been a fairly inhospitable place to live, but fragments of medieval floor tiles found in excavations, presumably robbed from nearby Tresco Abbey, and Spanish wall tiles used as floor tiles

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<sup>28</sup> London, The National Archives, Public Record Office [hereafter TNA], E317/Corn/35, 18; Norman J Pounds (ed.) *The Parliamentary Survey of the Duchy of Cornwall*, Torquay, 1984, II, 137.

suggest attempts were made to provide some creature comforts.<sup>29</sup> Remains of slate and ridge tiles found in excavations provide the only evidence for the roofing of the building, though the lead was apparently stripped from the church of Glasney College, near Penryn.<sup>30</sup>

Evidence for the height of King Charles's Castle is inconclusive. A schematic late-16th-century map shows King Charles's Castle as two-storeyed, particularly above its domestic half, and, if it was, presumably it had further artillery on its roof.<sup>31</sup> Some worked masonry lies around the outside of the building, although whether there is enough to recreate a full upper storey has not been determined. On the other hand it may have been simply a single-storeyed gun platform. There is no obvious position for a stone stair; and, even if there had been a wooden stair, there is no part of the ground floor where it could have been located without blocking a door or a window. A steep, ladder-like stair could have been provided on the inside face of the large domestic room, but such an arrangement would not be satisfactory if the upper storey was used for military purposes, as moving bulky guns and heavy ammunition up a wooden stair would have been difficult. If the gun platform was two-storeyed, guns and ammunition may have had to be hoisted into position, either outside or through an internal trap-door.

Although the Tresco buildings date from the reign of Edward VI, their form was derived from some of the buildings erected late in Henry VIII's reign. King Charles's Castle resembles a group of blockhouses built on the Thames in 1539-40, Sandsfoot Castle at Weymouth (1540), and the former castle on Brownsea Island (1543) (**Fig. 9**).<sup>32</sup> These buildings were probably different in their detailing, but they shared the basic plan of a semi-octagonal or semi-

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<sup>29</sup> TJ Miles and AD Saunders 'King Charles's Castle, Tresco, Scilly', *Post Medieval Archaeology*, IV, 1970 (1971), 1-30, 27-30.

<sup>30</sup> Rowse, *op. cit.*, 298.

<sup>31</sup> London, British Library [hereafter BL], Cotton MS. Augustus I.\*\*\*. 18.

<sup>32</sup> Miles and Saunders, *op. cit.*, 13-14; Victor TC Smith, 'The artillery defences at Gravesend', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, LXXXIX, 1974, 141-68; Paul Pattison, *Tilbury Fort*, London, 2004, 19-21; D Thompson and Mrs V Smith, 'The Excavation of the Gravesend Blockhouse, 1975-76', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, LXXXVIII, 1978, 153-77; Victor TC Smith, 'The Milton Blockhouse, Gravesend: Research and Excavation', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, LXXXVI, 1980, 341-62; Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England [hereafter RCHME], *Dorset*, II, part 2, London, 1970, 336-8; Morley, *op. cit.*, 33.

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circular gun platform or gun room, with attached domestic accommodation in a rectangular or square block on the landward side of the structure. The height of these blockhouses may have varied, but the one on Brownsea Island had a two-storeyed domestic block with a single-storeyed gun platform in front.<sup>33</sup> Key missing sites that may be related to the design of King Charles's Castle are the 1540s defences of Plymouth Harbour, some of which seem to have been similar in form to this type of fortification, according to 16th-century maps. It may be significant that the borough accounts of Plymouth contain records of payments to Sir Francis Flemming, who was responsible for expenditure on the defences of Scilly in 1548.<sup>34</sup>

Both of the Tresco fortifications were defended by earthworks. The Old Blockhouse had a simple bank around it, and by providing an earthwork around a blockhouse, the builders may have been following a practice that had been used in the construction of some of the Thames blockhouses.<sup>35</sup> King Charles's Castle is located in the south-west corner of a much larger, more ambitious earthwork, one that reflects almost textbook military thinking (**Fig. 10**). It is roughly square in plan with a bastion at its north-west corner and a demi-bastion at its north-east corner. A couple of hundred metres to the south-east of King Charles's Castle there is another 400m-long earthwork across the plateau.<sup>36</sup> This has a central bastion with a demi-bastion further east and there may be a fragment of another to the west. Although it can be described as an earthwork, its slight nature, nowhere more than around 0.3m high, suggests that it was laid out, but never built to its intended height.

There is often an assumption that all earthworks in Scilly must date from the Civil War, and most do seem to date from the mid-17th century. However, the earthworks of this period are often small-scale, almost hurried in appearance,

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<sup>33</sup> Inspection from the seaward side might make it possible to ascertain whether Sandsfoot Castle's front section was one- or two-storeyed, its perilous cliff-top location preventing examination.

<sup>34</sup> Mark Brayshay, 'Tudor Military Towers and their Role in the Defence of Plymouth in 1588', *The Devon Historian*, XXXV, 1987, 3-14, 6-7.

<sup>35</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, 1974, 144; Paul Pattison, *Tilbury Fort*, London, 2004, 21.

<sup>36</sup> NV Quinnell, 'A 16th-century Outwork to King Charles' Castle, Tresco', *Cornish Archaeology*, XVII, 1978, 142-3.

or larger but irregular in plan. The same cannot be said of the more elegant earthworks around and near King Charles' Castle. These are well-built, and follow almost textbook forms, as if they were less urgently built. It has been suggested that the linear earthwork on Castle Down might have been formed in the 1550s,<sup>37</sup> and this might be supported by an order to place thirty men from Scilly's garrison on Tresco in 1554 'for the better fortificacion thereof'.<sup>38</sup>

The acute angle of the bastions of the other earthwork around King Charles' Castle suggests a later date. In plan and height it resembles the remains of defences, probably dating from around 1623, built around the mid-16<sup>th</sup>-century Sandsfoot Castle, near Weymouth, although this may only be a coincidence.<sup>39</sup> Yet on 28 May 1627 Bernard Johnson, 'engenier to his Majestie', was instructed that 'he shall have occasion to cut turffe and earth, take timber, carts and other caryages, and lykewise to hire workmen' to carry out work at Pendennis and in Scilly.<sup>40</sup> Similar new defences were created at Pendennis and were intended at St Mawes, and this is thus the most likely date for the earthwork around King Charles's Castle.<sup>41</sup>

In addition to the surviving structures on Tresco, there may have been a Tudor blockhouse where Cromwell's Castle now stands, at the north end of the island on its western shore; and the form of its circular tower is suspiciously similar in form to the core block of the larger Henrician Castles (**Fig. 11**). However, a document of 1554 describes a much more modest structure: 'At the blocke howse under the castell. Item ii porte peces. Item iii chambers with no shott.'<sup>42</sup> The late-16<sup>th</sup>-century map shows no structure on the site, but the Old Blockhouse is also not shown.<sup>43</sup> A survey of the islands in 1579 stated that: 'King Edward VI built ... two [b]lockhouses in Treskawe', presumably the Old Blockhouse and King Charles's Castle, and not one

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>38</sup> APC, 1554-6, London, 1892, 6, 30 March 1554.

<sup>39</sup> RCHME, *op.cit.*, 336.

<sup>40</sup> APC, January 1627- August 1627, London, 1938, 301, 28 May 1627.

<sup>41</sup> Pattison, *Pendennis, op. cit.*, 38.

<sup>42</sup> TNA, E 101 63/8; text reproduced in Miles and Saunders, *op. cit.*, 4.

<sup>43</sup> BL, Cotton Augustus, I, ii.

where Cromwell's Castle now stands.<sup>44</sup> In 1600 a letter from the Governor of the islands, Sir Francis Godolphin (c.1534-1609), Sir William Godolphin's nephew and heir, suggests that a new blockhouse was needed for the Cromwell's Castle site, as if there was no substantial pre-existing structure there.<sup>45</sup> In the 1652 Parliamentary Survey Cromwell's Castle is described as 'new blockhouse', but within the tall gun tower there is a date-stone on the inside face of the door on to the gun platform, which has the incised legend 'M1591H'.<sup>46</sup> This is probably reset, as its inconspicuous location is at odds with its commemorative contents, and it should be noted that, if it were turned upside down, it would read 'H1651W'. The documentary and physical evidence seems to be contradictory, but they imply that there were early structures in this location and it is possible that they were incorporated into the mid-17th-century gun platform beside the tower.

#### ST MARY'S

Harry's Walls stand on the north-eastern side of St Mary's Pool, the principal anchorage for St Mary's, on the western side of the island. The earliest undisputed reference to Harry's Walls occurs on 27 May 1551:

A letter to John Kelligrewe to make the forte in our Ladies Isle at Silley upon the little hill betwixt the freshe water and St. Marie Roode, whereof to receive a plat at his sonnes handes; and to cover the one half therof this sommer, for which purpose leade shalbe shortely sent; and to sett the brewe howse with out the forte nere unto the freshe water, and in thende therof a horse mill for victualling, &c, according to the declaracion of his saied sonne and Hutton the carpenter.<sup>47</sup>

John Killigrew had five sons, but the son whose hands delivered this plat was probably the eldest, John (d. 1584), MP first for Lostwithiel (1563), thereafter for Penrhyn (1571 and 1572), as there are further references to John Killigrew

<sup>44</sup> CSPD, 1566-79, London, 1871, 559, April 1579.

<sup>45</sup> CSPD, 1598-1601, London, 1869, 429-30, April 1600. For Sir William Godolphin, see JPD Cooper, 'Godolphin, Sir William (b. in or before 1518, d. 1570)', *ODNB*, XXII, 597-9, and ST Bindoff, *The House of Commons 1509-1558*, London, 1982, II, 219-20. For Sir Francis Godolphin, see Hasler, *op. cit.*, II, 198.

<sup>46</sup> Pounds, *op. cit.*, 137.

<sup>47</sup> APC, 1550-2, 282, 27 May 1551.

'junior' in September 1551.<sup>48</sup> A plan of Harry's Walls at Hatfield House bears the legend: 'This fortress begonne in our ladies llande for the defence of the whole Isles, and not finished, the tymberworke for the same alre dy framid to the setting up, with a brewhouse & a milne lying in South Wales, redy to be conveyed to the saide Isles, when order may be given as touching the same' (**Fig. 12**).<sup>49</sup> The Hatfield plan, which refers to a building already begun, is evidently not the plan delivered to Killigrew in May 1551, but it indicates that the structures which the master carpenter Richard Hutton prefabricated in south Wales were part of Harry's Walls. Whether they ever left south Wales is unknown, but Harry's Walls was never completed. All that remains today is the western side of the lower parts of the fort, with two acutely-pointed bastions linked by a stretch of thick curtain wall (**Fig. 13**). On the north side, the corresponding ditch was cut. The internal side of the earthworks have slight indications of geometric forms that might accord loosely with the proposed internal layout shown in the Hatfield plan.

The form of the bastions allowed flanking fire, the intention of which is revealed by the pairs of guns in the Hatfield plan.<sup>50</sup> Angled bastions, invented in Italy, had first appeared at English possessions on the continent during the mid-1540s, at Boulogne, and at nearby Ambleteuse.<sup>51</sup> The earliest close comparison in Europe for the form of Harry's Walls is probably the plan of the town of Terra del Sole, just south of Forli, designed by Baldassre Lanci of Urbino for Grand Duke Cosimo I of Tuscany in 1564, with angled bastions at the four corners of the proposed defences.<sup>52</sup> The first angled bastions in England may have been at Portsmouth in 1546 and at Yarmouth Castle in c.1547.<sup>53</sup> They were also the basis of the new fort, the Citadel, and the slightly

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<sup>48</sup> CSPD, 1547-80, 34, 10 September 1551; for the second John Killigrew see Hasler, *op. cit.*, 395-8.

<sup>49</sup> Hatfield, Hatfield House, Archives, CPM II, 34.

<sup>50</sup> AD Saunders, 'Harry's Walls, St Mary's, Scilly: a new interpretation', *Cornish Archaeology*, I, 1962, 85-91, 85.

<sup>51</sup> AD Saunders, *Fortress Britain*, Liphook, 1989, 48-9; LR Shelby, *John Rogers Tudor Military Engineer*, Oxford, 1967, 61 ff.

<sup>52</sup> JR Hale, *Renaissance Fortification: Art or Engineering?*, London, 1977, 55.

<sup>53</sup> AD Saunders, 'Hampshire Coastal Defence since the Introduction of Artillery with a Description of Fort Wallington', *The Archaeological Journal*, CXXIII, 1966, 134-237, 141-2; JR Kenyon, 'An aspect of the 1559 survey of the Isle of Wight: The State of all the Quenes ma<sup>tes</sup> Fortresses and Castelles', *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, XIII, 1979, 61-77, 62, 68-9.

later town defences being erected in Berwick-upon-Tweed, roughly contemporary with the construction of Harry's Walls.<sup>54</sup> The distance between these early examples and the reference to John Killigrew junior bringing the plan to his father, indicates that the plans were formulated in London and interpreted in the provinces. On the same day that the plan was sent, a letter was also sent to Sir William Sharington of Lacock Abbey, Wiltshire, a senior servant of Lord Thomas Seymour, asking him 'to spare his man for ij or iij monethes for the better setting forthe of the Kinges Majesties worckes at Silley'.<sup>55</sup> Sharington was at that time rebuilding Lacock Abbey in a contemporary Renaissance style. His principal workman was the statuary mason John Chapman, whom he subsequently loaned to his neighbour Sir John Thynne to work at Longleat, so he was accustomed to passing on his employees. But it is not known whether Chapman's skills were confined to stone carving, or whether they extended to 'setting forthe' defensible traces. But two architects with such experience may have visited Scilly prior to the construction of Harry's Walls. At some point between January 1549 and May 1551, probably during 1550, the clerk of works on Alderney paid £40 for the 'costs and chardges of John Rogers late Surveyor of Bolloigne and John (sic) Rydgeway, late Surveyor of the works at Berwick, sente to the island of Alderney and Scilly by the King's Council for the surveye of the said isles'.<sup>56</sup> Either could have provided the plan for Harry's Walls after returning from their survey. Another figure who features in slightly later documents is Richard Graynefield or Greenfield (probably Richard Grenville of Penheale, near Launceston), 'Surveyour of Sulley' in 1554, when he is mentioned in connection with the garrison and the desire to use competent soldiers for building works.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Colvin, *op.cit.*, 589-91; Iain MacIvor, 'The Elizabethan Fortifications of Berwick-upon-Tweed', *Antiquaries' Journal*, XLV, 1965, 67-70..

<sup>55</sup> APC, 1550-2, 282, 27 May 1551.

<sup>56</sup> Colvin, *op. cit.*, 591.

<sup>57</sup> APC, 1554-6, 6, 30 March 1554 (Richard Greenfield is also mentioned in connection with Scilly's military later in the year); APC, 1554-6, 24, 19 May 1554. Graynefield and Greenfield were not infrequent variants of the name of the Grenville family, whose two branches came from Penheale and from Stowe, in Kilhampton parish, near Bideford [Hasler, *op. cit.*, II, 217-8].

Work continued on the construction and equipping of Scilly's defences throughout 1551 and 1552. On 7 June 1551 a warrant was issued to deliver large quantities of military equipment to Thomas Godolphin in Scilly including bows, arrows, ingredients to make gunpowder and wheels for the carriages of a canon, a culverin and a saker.<sup>58</sup> Godolphin was probably the Thomas Godolphin, younger brother of Sir William, the general captain of the isles.<sup>59</sup> On 10 September 1551 John Killigrew junior sought payment for wages, and reiterated his father's request, as surveyor, to keep men working through the winter.<sup>60</sup> Later in the month some money was made available to keep thirty men at work, but the same letter required John Killigrew junior to provide the 'Receyvour of the countie of Cornwall' with the accounts of how the money had been spent.<sup>61</sup> When the financial records were submitted they revealed that between 1548 and 1552 £3,123 18s. 9d. had been spent on the defences of Tresco and St Mary's.<sup>62</sup>

Through the rest of 1551 and 1552 there are references to payments, the largest being £630 3s. 11d. paid to John Killigrew.<sup>63</sup> Some also went directly to the master carpenter, Richard Hutton. He was paid the sum of 20d. per day and by 23 November 1551 was owed £100.<sup>64</sup> However, on 29 July 1552 Hutton was ordered to dismiss all his men, and on 1 August £40 was paid to him to pay his workmen.<sup>65</sup> He received a further £100 for men working under him on 14 December 1552.<sup>66</sup>

From this date onwards there is no definite reference to the main building campaign until the 1590s, and Harry's Walls was left unfinished. Its abandonment has been variously ascribed to the choice of location and the

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<sup>58</sup> APC, 1550-2, 296, 7 June 1551. Even as late as 1715, archaic culverins and sakers were still part of the armaments protecting St Mary's [BL, King's Topographical Collection, 45, 'Survey of the Fortifications in Plymouth Division by Col. Christian Lilly 1714-1717 (hereafter Lilly)', fols. 13-15].

<sup>59</sup> JPD Cooper, 'Godolphin, Sir William (*b.* in or before 1518, *d.* 1570)', *ODNB*, XXII, 597-9.

<sup>60</sup> CSPD, 1547-80, 34, 10 September 1551.

<sup>61</sup> APC, 1550-2, 373, 30 September 1551.

<sup>62</sup> Colvin, *op. cit.*, 588.

<sup>63</sup> APC, 1552-4, London, 1892, 74, 11 June 1552.

<sup>64</sup> APC, 1550-2, 357, 12 September 1551; 426, 23 November 1551.

<sup>65</sup> APC, 1552-4, 104, 29 July 1552; 107, 1 August 1552.

<sup>66</sup> APC, 1552-4, 193, 14 December 1552.

smallness of its site. Borlase writing in the 1750s said that: 'Besides the Fortifications at the Old Town, and the Hue, there was a Fort begun injudiciously on a hill above the Pool, but the mistake in the choice of ground being discovered, it was never finished.'<sup>67</sup>

Yet the site commands the entrance to St Mary's Pool, and the Roads west of the island, and, if completed, it would have afforded reasonable views of the waters to the south of St Mary's as well. It has limitations, but that would be true of any single site on the island. Is it therefore possible that it was to be seen as an addition to the pre-existing defences on St Mary's? There was the modest Ennor Castle overlooking Old Town, on the south-east side of the island, and Mount Holles Battery, located in front of the Garrison Gate, is said to be the remains of an early fortification. Borlase in 1756 described this 'old Fort' as 'a round hillock' that 'seems to have had a Keep on the top of it'.<sup>68</sup>

There was also another military structure there, described in the Parliamentary Survey of 1652 as: 'An old Fort called the Follye which is onely the old walls and shedderd within for the quartering of soldiers, scituate towards the south end of the Hugh Hill.'<sup>69</sup> A chart in the Bibliotheque Nationale de France, prepared by Romain de Hooge in 1693, shows St Mary's with the fort set in the middle of the Garrison and the early wall across the hillside cutting the Garrison off from Hugh Town.<sup>70</sup> However, the single fort shown is not Star Castle, but the 'old Fort', including its ordinal orientation. This structure also appears on Christian Lilly's map of 1715 at the south end of the Garrison, overlooking St Agnes (**Fig. 14**). It appears to have been a small, heavily-buttressed, square block, typical of a small 16th- or 17th-century blockhouse, and on this site the remains of some low earthworks of roughly the same shape have been found. The only discrepancy is that the orientation is slightly different, but this may have been a cartographical error in the depiction of a ruinous structure.

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<sup>67</sup> Borlase, *op. cit.*, 11.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>69</sup> TNA, E317/Corn/35, 55; Pounds, *op. cit.*, 147.

<sup>70</sup> Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale de France, Cartes et Plans – GE AF PF – 35 (46).

A survey of 1579 mentions that: 'King Edward VI built two [b]lockhouses in St Mary Isle, and began a fort and a house, and two [b]lockhouses in Treskawe; their charge with that of the garrison cost 6,000l.'<sup>71</sup> There are the remains of a blockhouse at the eponymous Block House Point at the north-east corner of St Mary's, which existed as early as 1554.<sup>72</sup> Is the Old Fort the second blockhouse mentioned and therefore a work of Edward VI's reign or does it predate this, as Mount Holles may have done? The 1554 survey of the artillery on St Mary's specified that there was a culverin and a demi-culverin on the Hugh, but there are two separate entries for the 'old castell', one before the entry concerning the Hugh and the other at the end of the St Mary's section. Is this just a mistake or were there two old castles, perhaps one of which was near the Hugh, either the Old Fort or Mount Holles?

The reason for the incompleteness of Harry's Walls is that the Crown ran out of money. In September 1552 all the expenditure on the military of the previous decade was collated.<sup>73</sup> Henry VIII had spent £181,179 12s. 6 7/8d. [sic] on fortifications, while in the first five years of Edward VI's reign a further £35,228 18s. 2 1/4d. had been spent. If wages are added, a total of £290,662 16s. 6 1/8d. [sic] had been invested in England's defences. Scilly had accounted for £3,787 6s. 2 1/2d. on buildings, with a further £4,184 7s. 1d. expended on wages. With the threat diminishing during the early 1550s, the logical decision was to halt construction and restrict expenditure to arming existing fortifications. Plans for fortifications in Ireland were abandoned in 1551; garrisons were cut in size; and the limited amount of ordnance available meant that there were withdrawals from some fortifications.<sup>74</sup>

Work had ceased on the major fortifications in Scilly by the end of 1552, but in 1554, the year after Queen Mary's accession, the aim was to establish a permanent garrison of 150 men, with as many as practicable being masons or workmen who could 'worke upon the forte there', presumably an attempt to

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<sup>71</sup> CSPD 1566-79, 559, April 1579, where 'clockhouses' are printed, presumably a mistranscription of the MS.

<sup>72</sup> TNA, E 101 63/8; text reproduced in Miles and Saunders, *op. cit.*, 3

<sup>73</sup> CSPD, 1547-53, London, 1992, 261-3.

<sup>74</sup> Colvin, *op. cit.*, 399; Longmate, *op. cit.*, 402.



revive the Harry's Walls project.<sup>75</sup> Thirty of the garrison were directed to Tresco 'for the better fortificacion thereof'. Harry's Walls do not seem to have been advanced and whether Tresco's defences were improved is unknown, though it is possible that this could be a reference to the preparation of the earthworks on Castle Down near King Charles' Castle.<sup>76</sup> In 1554 a detailed survey of the armaments of the islands was undertaken, ranging from relatively modern artillery to bows and arrows.<sup>77</sup> One of the final actions of Queen Mary's reign regarding Scilly was to send Sir John Chichester in 1557 to review the defences and report on them.<sup>78</sup> Perhaps the Queen's death in the following year meant that this report was never submitted.

#### SCILLY'S DEFENCES DURING ELIZABETH I'S REIGN

In 1570 Sir William Godolphin, general captain of the islands, died, leaving Godolphin House and his estates in west Cornwall to his nephew Francis (c.1534-1608), the son of his brother Thomas;<sup>79</sup> and in the same year Francis Godolphin was granted a 38-year lease of the Isles of Scilly.<sup>80</sup> In that year the first major invasion threats of Elizabeth's reign were made,<sup>81</sup> and in 1571 a report was received that Spain intended to seize Scilly, though no attempt followed.<sup>82</sup> In 1573 Scilly was to be provided with two culverins and two sakers to replace old pieces of artillery that were no longer serviceable.<sup>83</sup>

It was Queen Elizabeth's decision in 1585 to support the Netherlands in its struggle for independence from Spain that triggered almost twenty years of warfare.<sup>84</sup> In August 1587 a fleet of 120 Spanish Ships was reported off Scilly and in the following year the Spanish Armada ('the Spanish floating Babel' as

<sup>75</sup> APC, 1554-6, 6, 30 March 1554.

<sup>76</sup> Quinnell dated it to the late 16th century, although there are no documents of that period regarding fortifying Tresco [Quinnell, *op. cit.*, 142-3].

<sup>77</sup> TNA, E 101 63/8; text reproduced in Miles and Saunders, *op. cit.*, 3-4.

<sup>78</sup> APC, 1556-8, 157, 26 July 1557.

<sup>79</sup> Cooper, *loc. cit.*

<sup>80</sup> Longmate, *op. cit.*, 418.

<sup>81</sup> DM Palliser, *The Age of Elizabeth*, London, 1992, 447; CSPD, 1547-80, 397, 14 December 1570

<sup>82</sup> Calendar of the State Papers relating to Ireland, of the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth, 1509-[1603]. Vol. 1:1509-1573, 2 May 1571.

<sup>83</sup> APC, 1571-5, London, 1894, 198, 14 February 1573.

<sup>84</sup> Longmate, *op. cit.*, 433.

Francis Godolphin's friend, Richard Carew, described it) failed in an abortive invasion of England.<sup>85</sup> The Spanish became a particular threat to Scilly after 1590 when they captured a foothold in Brittany at Blavet.<sup>86</sup> The Armada had prompted no immediate action in Scilly, but the relative proximity of Spanish forces in western France started a new phase of fortification. In May 1591 the West Country's defences were made ready for an imminent invasion and Scilly was to be reinforced with additional ships and land forces.<sup>87</sup> By July the immediate threat seems to have passed and Godolphin was allowed to stand down sixty men.<sup>88</sup>

In the following year the Privy Council began to consider how to improve the defences of the islands. By March 1592 a plan had been 'drawne for the fortifieng of the Iles of Sylley and especiallie St. Marie Iland, for defence of the roade'.<sup>89</sup> At the same meeting Robert Adams, 'a man of verie good skill and knowledge', was ordered to go to Scilly to examine the works that had already taken place and to establish how to complete them according to the original plan or in a better fashion. Consideration was being given to completing Harry's Walls, but Adams was also briefed to consider other ways of protecting St Mary's.<sup>90</sup> Adams had carried out a survey of Flushing for Sir Francis Walsingham, the Secretary of State, in 1585, and in 1588 he mapped the fortifications on the Thames.<sup>91</sup> In 1589 he surveyed Ostend and in the following year he carried out repairs there. Thereafter, he went to work at Plymouth and Scilly. He was appointed Surveyor of the Queen's Works in September 1594, but died in August or September 1595.<sup>92</sup>

On 8 March 1593 the Spanish threat to Scilly was again assessed, and the conclusion was that from May until September 'there should be a garrison of

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<sup>85</sup> FE Halliday (ed.), *Richard Carew of Antony*, London, 1953, 155; *CSPD*, 1581-90, London, 1865, 421, 9 August 1587; 476-497, 23 June 1588.

<sup>86</sup> Rowse, *op. cit.*, 400-1.

<sup>87</sup> *APC*, 1591, London, 1900, 131, 16 May 1591.

<sup>88</sup> *APC*, 1591, London, 1900, 345, 29 July 1591.

<sup>89</sup> *APC*, 1591-2, London, 1904, 344-5, 20 March 1591/2.

<sup>90</sup> *APC*, 1591-2, London, 1904, 347-8, 20 March 1591/2.

<sup>91</sup> Colvin, *op. cit.*, 412, 603-4; Adams's famous plan of the Thames is BL, Add MS 44,839.

<sup>92</sup> John Summerson, 'Three Elizabethan Architects', *John Rylands Library Bulletin*, XL, September 1957, 202-8.

eighty men at least, one half to be strong labourers to further the fortifications, whereof there is great need. They will also need at least 6 or 8 demiculverins and sakers, with powder and shot ...<sup>93</sup> By 9 May a plan for the defences had been finalised.<sup>94</sup> The sum of £400 was set aside for garrisoning the islands, which would involve manning the still unbuilt fort, as well as two other smaller sconces during the summer. The garrison ordinarily would consist of a lieutenant, three gunners, and twenty-six soldiers in summer, with only ten soldiers necessary during the winter. Sir Francis Godolphin (who had been knighted in 1580) was to build the fort which is now known as Star Castle, 'with advice of Rob. Adams'.<sup>95</sup> On 14 May Adams was authorised to start:

A warrant to the Lieutenantes of the county of Cornwall and to all other publique officers within that countie to assist Mr Robert Adams in the seasing and taking up all such materials as he shall think need to be used in the fortifieng of the Isles of Syilly, and of convenient cartes for his carriages and vessels to transport them over into those Islandes at her Majesty's prices.<sup>96</sup>

On 6 August Sir Francis wrote to Lord Burghley: 'Adams is well deserving, for besides his perfect skill in numbers and measures, he is very provident in saving, and no less painful in attending; the work considered, so much has seldom been performed at such small charge, and with so few hands, in so short a time'.<sup>97</sup> Following this almost Churchillian accolade, he noted that fine weather and the ability to produce lime on site had contributed to rapid progress. However, he was already highlighting the fact that the project would exceed its original budget. By the end of October 1593 £377 9s. had been spent on Star Castle and in December 1594, when completed, its cost had risen to £958 11s. 2d., of which only £450 had been paid.<sup>98</sup> Once completed Captain Giles Beden (or Beeton) was sent as the first commander of the fort, though he was relieved of his command in 1597, and replaced by Sir

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<sup>93</sup> *Calendar of the Cecil Papers held in Hatfield House, 1590-4*, London 1892, 290-9, 8 March 1592/3 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/> accessed 30 June 2010.

<sup>94</sup> CSPD, 1591-4, London, 1867, 347, 9 May 1593.

<sup>95</sup> *Idem*; Cooper, *loc. cit.*

<sup>96</sup> APC, 1592-3, 236, 14 May 1593.

<sup>97</sup> CSPD 1591-4, 366-7, 6 August 1593.

<sup>98</sup> CSPD, 1591-4, 378, 28 October 1593; CSPD, 1595-7, London, 1869, 16-7, 13 March 1595.

Francis's son, William, who had served with Essex's army in Ireland.<sup>99</sup> In 1596 the garrison was set at fifty from April to September, with twenty-four guarding the islands during the rest of the year.<sup>100</sup>

The earliest description of Star Castle occurs in the Parliamentary Survey of 1652:

The Castle is built in the forme of an acute octogon fort with a good stone rampaire of the same forme, but verrie low and litle consisting of a hall or new roome, butterye and two sellers with a kitchen, pastrye and larder below staires with a dyneing roome and fowre chambers in the second storie and seaven litle roomes over them with fowre litle turrets upon the leads, also upon the rampere and over the port are five litle roomes for the gunners stores and under the rampere and at the port is a court and guard and fowre other litle roomes for stores also.<sup>101</sup>

Star Castle is entered from the north through a square-headed, moulded doorway with the date 1593 carved onto its lintel. Above are the initials of Elizabeth I and at the base of the door jambs are the initials of Francis Godolphin and Robert Adams. This door gave access to a passage protected by a gun position within it. The castle is a small fort, eight-pointed in shape, set within similarly-shaped outer defences surrounded by a deep, dry ditch (**Figs. 15 and 16**). It has two storeys, an attic and a small basement, and it contained the domestic accommodation. At the heart of the structure is a large stack heating the rooms around it. Surrounding the building there is a narrow passage and a series of outbuildings including stores, an arrangement that may have been contrived in 1600.<sup>102</sup> These provide the base for the rampart around the perimeter of the castle, where eight pieces of artillery were to be positioned. Joints in the walls of the parapet indicate the position of these guns and there were loops in the walls for muskets. Four small, square

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<sup>99</sup> *APC*, 1597-8, London, 1904, 29-30, 10 April 1597.

<sup>100</sup> *CSPD*, 1595-7, London, 1869, 176, 26 February 1596.

<sup>101</sup> Pounds, *op. cit.*, 146.

<sup>102</sup> *CSPD*, 1598-1601, 429-30, April 1600.

buildings on the rampart were used as barracks for soldiers. The bell-cote in the north-east corner was the alarm bell for invasions that never came.

Star-shaped fantasy designs, using five-, six- or eight-sided stars abound in the notebooks and published drawings of 16th century architects and military engineers.<sup>103</sup> However, the star-shaped plan seems to have been more aesthetically-satisfying than practical and as early as 1624 Sir Henry Wotton said that: 'designs of such nature doe more ayme at Rarity, then [sic] Commoditie; so for my part I had rather admire them, than commend them.'<sup>104</sup> He was talking about the star-shaped lodges created by King Basilius in Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* and he may have been unaware that examples had been built in Britain. Star Castle may have inspired Sir Thomas Ridgeway to bring masons from his native Devon to create the star-shaped Spur Royal Castle at Augher in County Tyrone around 1610.<sup>105</sup> In Europe there is at least one earlier example of this form, the bizarre Hvězda Pavilion at Prague built in 1555. Sidney went to Prague in 1575 and 1577 and may have used it as his inspiration.<sup>106</sup>

Sir Francis Godolphin and Robert Adams may have originally thought they were providing a formidable military structure, at least for the money that was available, but as early as 6 August 1593 Godolphin had identified that Star Castle on its own would be inadequate to defend St Mary's:

When the fort and house are ended, many works should be speedily performed, as three blockhouses, four platforms, all the ordnance carriages newly made, and a trench and bank to compass the hill near the sea, to shadow the men from discovery by the shipping; also a windmill, and houses for brewing and baking, dwellings for soldiers, and a pier for the safety of boats and ships, for which there is a very apt place under command of the fort.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Hale, *op. cit.*, 43ff.

<sup>104</sup> Sir Henry Wotton, *The Elements of Architecture*, London, 1624, reprint 1903, 15.

<sup>105</sup> Mark Girouard, *Elizabethan Architecture Its Rise and Fall, 1540-1640*, New Haven and London, 2009, 31.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

<sup>107</sup> *CSPD*, 1591-4, 363, 6 August 1593.

In 1595 Sir Francis Godolphin explained to Lord Burghley that: 'the three sconces intended to guard the great ordnance on the lower part of the Hew Hill would be insufficient', presumably holding out for the four platforms he had advocated two years earlier.<sup>108</sup> This stretch of wall would impede any enemy forces that landed on the beaches at Hugh Town from attacking Star Castle. Four platforms would describe the stretch of the Garrison Walls running north to south, from Well Battery at the north end of the Garrison to the two Benham's Batteries at the east side (**Fig. 17**). The style of this stretch of wall is the earliest on the Garrison, consisting of monumental blocks irregularly laid with small packing pieces to fill the widest joints.

In the second half of the 1590s improvement of the defences became more urgent. With the failure of an assault on the south-east in 1588, Spain, with its foothold in Brittany, turned its attention to the west. In 1595 Cornwall was attacked, with raids on Mousehole and Newlyn, and there were further threats in 1596 and 1597.<sup>109</sup> Unrest in Ireland since 1593 led to a short-lived Spanish intervention in late 1601, and, if Spain had attempted further support for the Irish rebellion before its collapse in 1603, Scilly could have been an important harbour of refuge for enemy forces.<sup>110</sup>

The strategic significance of Scilly was such that in 1600 Godolphin wrote a four-page letter to the Privy Council, petitioning for further defences.<sup>111</sup> After describing the recent work there, he listed the defects of the newly-built Star Castle and suggested improvements. He wanted a stronger parapet, filling in the rampart to create three casemates that served as outbuildings, and he wished to add a portcullis in the entrance passage. These alterations were duly made, doubtless at this time, but not an elaborate ditch which Godolphin advocated to strengthen the approaches. However, the ground to the north of the building is too overgrown to be certain, and there are some unsurveyed

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<sup>108</sup> *CSPD*, 1595-7, 16-7, 13 March 1595.

<sup>109</sup> Halliday, *op. cit.*, 37; Longmate, *op. cit.*, 486, 493; David Howarth, *The Voyage of the Armada*, London, 1981, 247.

<sup>110</sup> Longmate, *op. cit.*, 497; *CSPD*, 1601-3, London, 1870, 162, 14 March 1602.

<sup>111</sup> *CSPD*, 1598-1601, 429-30, April 1600.

earthworks in a field to the east. Godolphin noted the lack of a water supply, but did not suggest a solution. He asked for new 'powder, matche and shotte', and requested that something should be done about the eight or ten pieces of artillery that had been provided in the reign of Edward VI, but were now too rusty to use. Godolphin estimated the cost of these projects at £600.

Godolphin also requested a further £200 to create new blockhouses on Nut Rock, between St Mary's and Tresco, to protect 'St Mary Sound or Road' between the two islands; at 'portlistry' to cover Crow Sound, on the north-east side of St Mary's; and on Tresco on 'dobrock' to protect the harbour at New Grimsby. Each of these were to be large enough for at least three or four pieces of ordnance and were to have 15ft high walls, 10ft of which was to be filled with earth, and the top of each was to be paved with stone to provide a platform to support the ordnance.

These locations are not easy to identify. Nut Rock is a small, isolated rock that would be impossible to support militarily. But in the Parliamentary Survey of 1652 Rat Island is said to have had a blockhouse: 'Rat Iland near the Hugh and the Hugh Harbour, which is a blockhouse for preservation of the said harbour unto which at low water they may pass on drye ground, but is of noe other value or use then aforesaid.'<sup>112</sup> Perhaps Godolphin confused Nutt and Rat. 'Portlistry' was presumably near Pelistry Bay, at the north-east corner of St Mary's. Today there are remains of a small, rectangular structure at Block House Point and the 1554 survey of the ordnance on the islands contains a reference to a blockhouse in this area: 'At the blocke howse called helvere and Allines howse. Item ii Curtalls with iiii<sup>xx</sup> Shott. Item ii Demi Culverines. Item one porte peace.'<sup>113</sup> Helvear, Block House Point and Pelistry Bay are on a short stretch of coastline, and it was presumably not intended to erect separate blockhouses at all three; there is probably some licence in the use of place names. Helvear overlooks Block House Point, and the modest structure there is probably the one mentioned in 1554, while the Pelistry reference may

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<sup>112</sup> Pounds, *op. cit.*, 147. In 1715 Lilly recorded that there had been a battery on Rat Island [Lilly, 5f].

<sup>113</sup> TNA, E 101 63/8; text reproduced in Miles and Saunders, *op. cit.*, 3.

be to a building that was never built, or to a replacement for the earlier structure. In the late 17th century and the mid-18th century the blockhouse still featured on charts as a navigational feature.<sup>114</sup> On Treco the new blockhouse proposed in 1600 would have protected the harbour at New Grimsby, as Cromwell's Castle does today, but, as explained above, there could have already been a blockhouse on this site in 1554.

Even before Godolphin was seeking funds to reinforce Scilly, changes on the international political scene would allow the islands a brief respite from possible conflict. In 1598 Spain concluded a peace treaty with France, returning the key port of Blavet in Brittany and therefore reducing the immediate threat to Scilly.<sup>115</sup> Later in the year England's implacable enemy, Philip II of Spain, died and after Elizabeth I's death in 1603 England and Spain were able to conclude a peace treaty the following year.<sup>116</sup>

#### SCILLY'S DEFENCES UNDER THE EARLY STUARTS

Although considerable effort had been made to fortify Scilly during the 16th century, within a generation the renewed threat from Spain prompted a reconsideration of the islands' defences. In 1626 the garrison was reinforced and re-armed, and in the following year a warrant for an imprest for £800 was issued to repair 'the Fort of St. Mary's'.<sup>117</sup> However, the only tangible works surviving from this period may be the earthwork added around King Charles' Castle, and possibly the Powder House, near the Garrison Gate. In December 1627 David Portius and Nicholas Geevelo from Holland were in the Isles of Scilly to help with improving the fortifications, but no further detail is provided in the State Papers.<sup>118</sup> The 'Fort', Star Castle, less than forty years old, was still claimed to be inadequate in 1631, and in 1634 the Governor, another Sir Francis Godolphin, submitted an estimate of £800 for the work needed,

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<sup>114</sup> TNA, MPH 1/369; Borlase, *op. cit.*, opposite 36.

<sup>115</sup> Longmate, *op. cit.*, 496.

<sup>116</sup> Longmate, *op. cit.*, 497; Angus Konstam, *The Spanish Armada*, Oxford, 2009, 193.

<sup>117</sup> APC, June-December 1626, London, 1938, 393, 3 December 1626; CSPD, 1627-8, London, 1858, 123, 3 April 1627.

<sup>118</sup> CSPD, 1628-9, London, 1859, 187, June 1628, reporting their visit the previous December.



presumably reiterating the request of seven years earlier, though by 1635 this had risen to £1,000.<sup>119</sup> In 1637 another assessment of the islands' defences was being prepared, but with the death of, Sir Francis Godolphin, this effort seems to have come to nought.<sup>120</sup>

During the Civil War Scilly became one of the last strongholds of the Royalist forces, who surrendered to the Parliamentary General-at Sea Robert Blake in May 1651.<sup>121</sup> During their occupation of the islands they built earthworks around the whole of the Garrison, but the strong points on Tresco, established a century earlier, still had a leading role in the defence of that island. Today the Old Blockhouse and King Charles' Castle are picturesque curiosities, the incomplete Harry's Walls serves as a vantage point to admire the harbour, and Star Castle is now a luxury hotel. However, during the 16th century these modest structures played a part in the strategic conflict between England and the Catholic powers, and had a Spanish fleet attempted to seize Scilly, they would have been called into action to repel the enemy and secure the western approaches.

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This article arose from a project undertaken by the Research Department of English Heritage, the aim of which was to record and analyse the fortifications of Scilly. Alan Brodie and Mark Bowden, *Defending Scilly*, English Heritage, Swindon, 2011, was the outcome, describing the threats that the islands have faced and the structures built to deal with them between 1500 and 1945. Mark Bowden was my partner in this research project and assisted with the preparation of this paper, as well as carrying out the archaeological surveys used in it. I would also like to thank Paul Pattison of English Heritage, Amanda Martin of the Isles of Scilly Museum and Eleanor Breen and Trevor Kirk from the Council of the Isles of Scilly for their assistance with drafting this paper. Mike Hesketh Roberts took the excellent terrestrial photographs, while

<sup>119</sup> *CSPD*, 1631-3, London, 1862, 97, 1 July 1631; *CSPD*, 1634-5, London, 1864, 432, 1634; *CSPD*, 1635, London, 1865, 91, 29 May 1635.

<sup>120</sup> *CSPD*, 1637, London, 1868, 455, 30 September 1637; *CSPD* 1639-40, London 1877, 557, 18 March 1639/40.

<sup>121</sup> NAM Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: a Naval History of Britain 1649-1815*, London, 2004, 5-6.

Damian Grady was responsible for the aerial photography. Mark Fenton produced the new plans included in this paper. Richard Hewlings asked critical questions about the topography, and provided biographical and bibliographical information.

## CAPTIONS

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**Fig. 1.** This map of Scilly in 1740 shows the hazardous rocks around the main islands as well as the perils of shallow sands between some of the islands. Nevertheless, the waters at the heart of the cluster have provided a safe anchorage for ships for centuries.

*National Monuments Record.*

**Fig. 2.** St Mawes Castle (Cornwall) is one of the larger Henrician fortifications of the 1540s, with three rounded bastions around a taller, central block, similar in general form to the tower of Cromwell's Castle on Treco built over a century later.

*DP023961*

**Fig. 3.** This aerial photograph of the Old Blockhouse shows the main body of the building with the small addition to the left and the earthwork around the structure.

*National Monuments Record, NMR 26577/023*

**Fig. 4.** Plan of the Old Blockhouse

**Fig. 5.** The Old Blockhouse sits on high ground near the coastline and has commanding views over Old Grimsby Harbour to the left and the waters between Treco and St Martin's behind the building. The steps lead up to the gun platform and the small addition is at the front of the building.

DP085143

**Fig. 6.** This aerial photograph shows how King Charles' Castle protected the harbour on the west side of Tresco. Set on high ground, it had commanding views, though its position may have hampered its ability to fire on enemy ships. Around it can be seen the outline of the 1620s earthwork.

*National Monuments Record. NMR 23933/028*

**Fig. 7.** Plan of King Charles' Castle

**Fig. 8.** The domestic accommodation of King Charles' Castle was entered from the large door on the right from the porch. Beside it was a large kitchen fireplace, the only heating in this room and the smaller door in the centre led to one of the chambers.

DP116104

**Fig. 9.** Sandsfoot Castle at Weymouth (Dorset) was a two-storeyed blockhouse that originally had a gun platform or gun room attached to its seaward side. To the landward side can be seen the 1620s earthwork defences.

*National Monuments Record. NMR 24690/034*

**Fig. 10.** Survey of the 1620s earthworks around King Charles's Castle.

*Mark Bowden*

**Fig. 11.** Although described as new in 1652, Cromwell's Castle, Tresco is archaic in form, echoing the core towers of Henrician castles. A previous blockhouse on this site may have been located where the low gun platform stands.

*National Monuments Record. NMR 26577/012*

**Fig. 12.** This plan of 1551 shows how Harry's Walls would have looked if it had been completed. In the angled bastions small guns are shown providing flanking fire along the sides of the fortification.

*Hatfield House. CPM II 34*

**Fig. 13.** This aerial photograph of Harry's Walls shows that only the stretch of wall overlooking the harbour was ever constructed.

*National Monuments Record. NMR 23940/008*

**Fig. 14.** This map of 1715 by Colonel Christian Lilly shows Star Castle at the top and at the southern end of the Garrison can be seen the 'old Fort'. Around the Garrison can be seen the walls that existed (shown with a red outer line) with earthworks shown in black. Above is a view of the Garrison from approximately where Harry's Walls was built.

*British Library, King's Topographical Collection, XLV. © British Library Board*

**Fig. 15.** This aerial photograph of Star Castle shows the castle in the centre with a narrow passage around it. Outside this is the ramparts and the whole site is surrounded by a dry ditch.

*National Monuments Record. NMR 23939/025*

**Fig. 16.** In the foreground of this photograph of the north side of Star Castle is the dry moat around the site and in the wall of the castle the musket loops can be seen. At each angle of the star there was originally a gap in the walls to allow artillery pieces to fire.

*DP085292*

**Fig. 17.** Lower Benham Battery was built on the shore to prevent any enemy forces outflanking the new Garrison Walls. However, its location by the seashore means that it has had to be regularly repaired and rebuilt, at least from the early 18th century.

*DP116034*