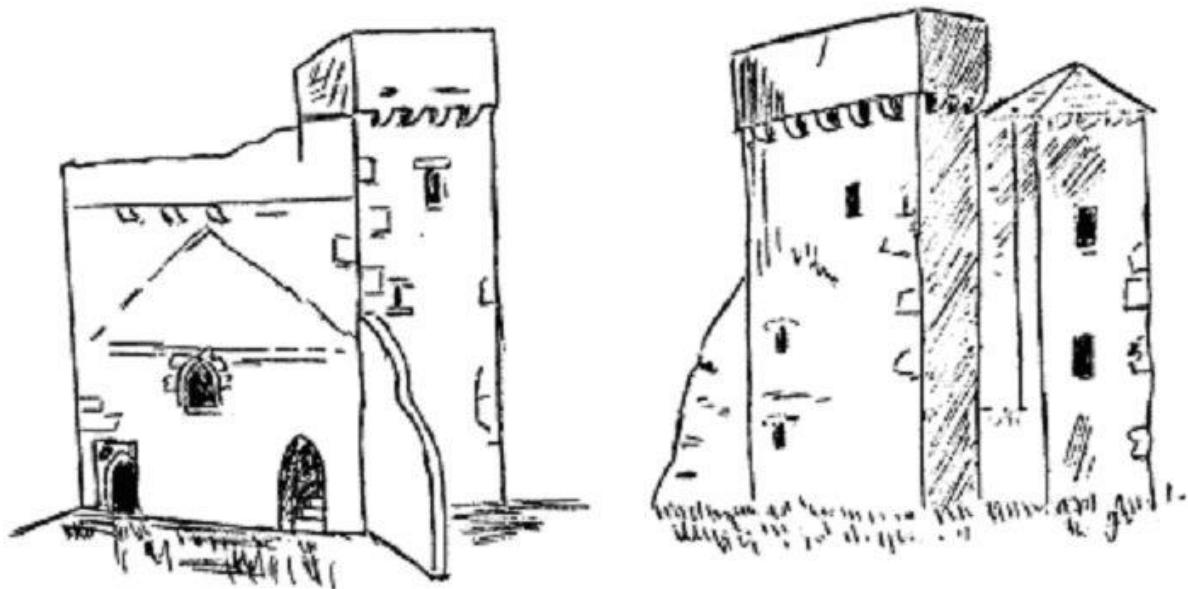


BONVILLE'S CASTLE FORTIFIED MANSION

This is the site of a fortified mansion which was probably founded by a member of the De Bonville family during the early 14th century. The De Bonvilles were a Norman family with lands in southwest England and Glamorganshire, the first of whom to come to Pembrokeshire being William De Bonville, who was appointed Seneschal of Pembroke Castle in 1272. His grandson, Nicholas De Bonville held land in the area and is likely to have been responsible for building Bonville Castle. It may have been built to help protect Anglicised South Pembrokeshire from attacks from the Welsh to the north and west.

Erasmus Saunders (who may have given his name to Saundersfoot) lived here in the late 16th century, when he was Mayor of Tenby. The castle passed through the hands of several owners during the 17th century, and was still apparently occupied in 1680. When Richard Fenton visited the area during the early 1800s, he noted only "small remains of a baronial residence." The castle had evidently fallen into ruin by his day.

Until the end of the 19th century, the remains of a fortified tower and other parts of the castle were still standing and sketches of the site, dating from 1860, survive. By the 1890s, the building was being used as a workshop by the adjacent Bonville's Court colliery. During the early 20th century, continued mining at Bonville's Court resulted in the disused castle becoming engulfed in the growing spoil tips around the mine. By the 1940s the castle remains had vanished from view. It is quite likely that archaeologically important remains are now sealed beneath the old colliery spoil tips, which have themselves been levelled and forgotten.



Two views of the ruins of Bonville's Court Castle
as it appeared in 1860