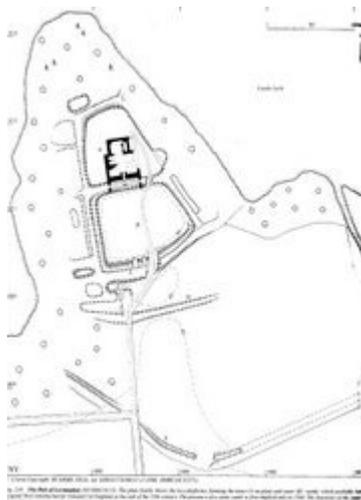


Lochmaben Castle

On his march south after the defeat of William Wallace at the Battle of Falkirk in 1298, Edward 1st ("Hammer of the Scots") camped at Lochmaben to survey a site for a new and stronger castle of stone on the southern shore of the Castle Loch. At a location 1.5 miles to the south-east of the town, the Peel was built on an island and surrounded by a ditch. When the water level of the Castle Loch was lowered by dredging the Valison Burn, the outlet from the loch to the River Annan, the castle site became a peninsula. Although in ruins today, Historic Scotland have stabilised the remaining walls and hope to clear the outer courtyard of trees and scrub to uncover the network of ditches and give a better idea of what is considered to be the best example of an Edwardian Peel in Scotland. The Peel comprises a rectangular enclosure, measuring 32m * 23m with an added block to the north side. The entrance was to the south, where there are the well preserved remains of the counterweight pit of the drawbridge and where the curtain wall is fronted by a canal 6.1m wide spanned by high winged walls at either end. Entry was through a roofed passage, with chambers to either side, and hall and other domestic apartments above. To the south of the Peel was an outer ward ("Peel Toun"), protected by a deep ditch and, further to the south, an area of parkland which would have provided food for the inhabitants of the castle.



The Castle today.



Lochmaben is situated between three lochs:

Mill Loch



The Mill Loch is the deepest of the three main lochs reaching a depth of over 14 metres (50 feet). As its name suggests it supplied a mill downstream where the old gasworks were sited on a lane named Mill Road. There was also a Lint (Flax) Mill at the head of the loch, sited on the burn coming from the Upper Loch. The Mill Loch's main claim to fame is that it was home to the world renowned Vendace fish the last of which was netted from the loch in 1966. Vendace can now be viewed in the Council Chambers of Lochmaben Town Hall and in Dumfries Museum. Scottish Natural Heritage has plans to reintroduce the Vendace if the water conditions become favourable. A recent problem on the loch has been the introduction of a pernicious fringed water lily. If the lily were left to spread, 25% of the loch's surface would be covered in 10 years, changing its character completely so annual spraying is needed to keep the menace under control. The loch is popular with fishermen, attracting locals and also visitors from other parts of Scotland and from Northern England all of whom are keen to catch Coarse Fish such as Bream and Pike.

Kirk Loch



The Kirk Loch is situated behind the old cemetery, which was the site of the first church in Lochmaben. The flat area at the edge of the loch was Katie Waugh's Yard and was common land for the residents of the Burgh. This is now part of a very successful Caravan Park run by Dumfries & Galloway Council. The loch is home to a large variety of bird life including coot and swan, etc. Motorised boats are not allowed to launch from the jetty but some of the lochside residents jet-ski. Canoes, rowing boats and windsurfers are permitted to operate here. When there are extreme winter temperatures, ice-skating is possible. In very cold conditions, curling bonspiels have been held on the loch.

