

Restormel Castle by Samuel Dakin

Restormel Castle had not been used in many decades. Moss and ivy had long overtaken the great walls and stones littered the moat, but our lives would depend on it. We worked through the night barricading the archway. When we finally laid down to rest, the night was plagued by the cries of injured men. The Royalists had already taken Lostwithiel, and Fowey Bridge which was our escape route to rendezvous with the Parliamentarian Army.

We were woken by the lookouts as they sighted the royalists marching up the valley. They were a terrifying sight. A sea of men twice as large as our feeble puddle of soldiers. We scrambled to our posts, but they were already in the bailey.

“Take cover!” I shouted as their musketeers aimed.

Ten seconds passed and the deadly squall of lead had still not hit us. I peered over the turret to see what was happening along with many others when our questions were answered by an almighty Bang! I dived to the floor and when I picked up my hat discovered a bullet had gone through it. Unfortunately others had not been as lucky as men laid slumped on the floor.

Instead of shooting volley after volley of shots at us, they started to make camp. I then came to realisation – they were planning a siege – I looked around at us, we would be lucky to survive the night: We only had sixty men compared to their army of two hundred.

I peered down the old well and saw a tunnel leading down from the pit. Just as I did this an almighty thud sounded around the courtyard.

“They’re breaking in” shouted the watchman.

Chaos erupted in the castle – horses rearing, people shouting and shots being fired. The Earl finally stopped it by firing his pistol into the air. He then climbed on a cart.

He then declared, “We shall fight them until we have democracy!” This rallied the men.

But then I shouted out, “I know of a means of escape!”

“Carry on,” the Earl urged me.

“There is a tunnel at the bottom of the well,” I replied

“I say do it,” announced the Earl and many others as part of the barricade collapsed.

I climbed down to the bottom of the well as water swamped our shoes. I prised open the rusty trapdoor covering the tunnel as we made our descent into the unknown, we rushed down the rope ladder until the tunnel became horizontal, and I lit a lantern. The sound of the trapdoor shutting and the almighty crash of the barricade giving way echoed around the tunnel. “Fowey River” was etched in the wall, relieved we carried on.

After a while, I saw light! We waded forward as fast as we could, eager to leave the tunnel. We got out and we were under Fowey Bridge! We then started the trek to re-join the parliamentarian army in high spirits, after all we had just eluded King Charles’s army.