

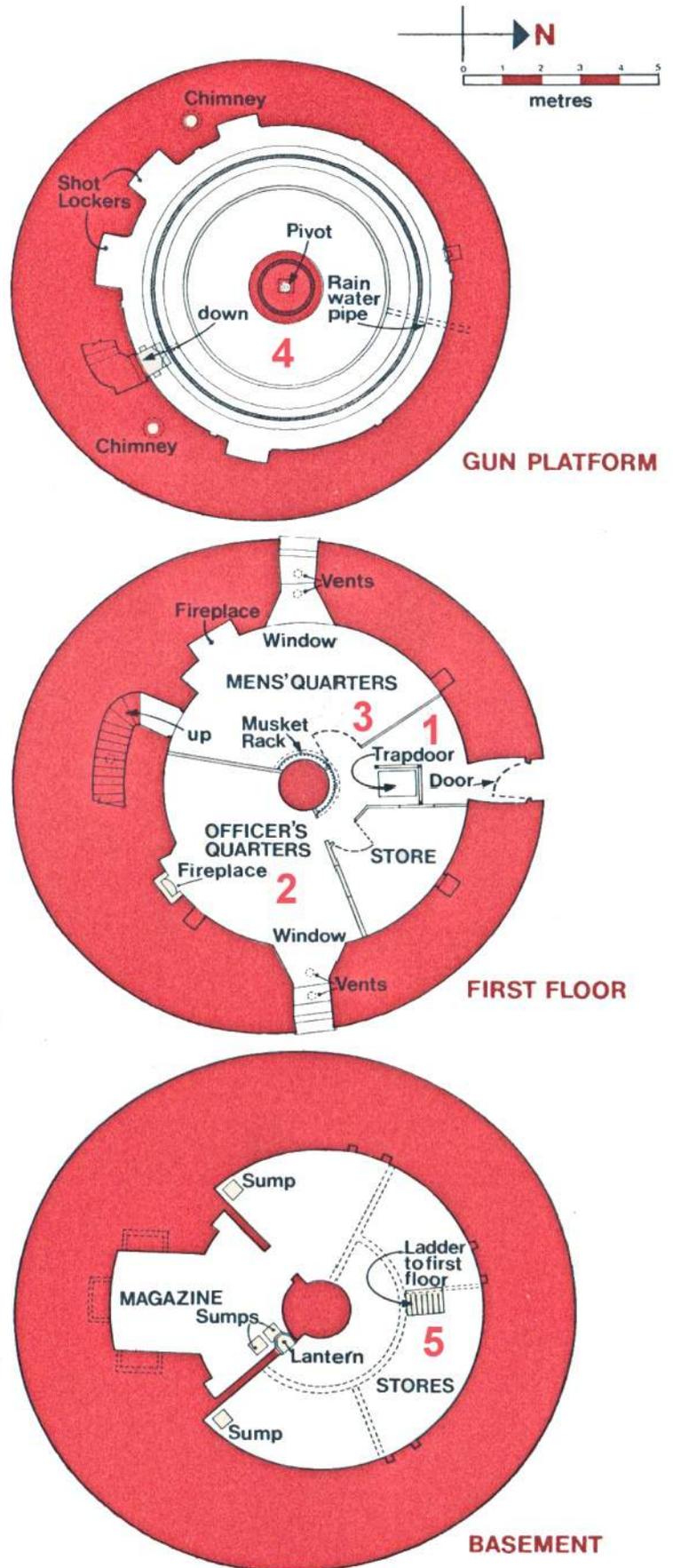
## Martello Tower No.24 - Tour

Enter the tower at first-floor level by the wooden stair which replaces the original removable ladder. Note the slotted metal plate sunk into the threshold which held the top of the ladder steady. At the back of the vestibule (1), facing the entrance, is a rack for muskets. To the left was the Quartermaster's Store (now the custodian's office) and a hatch leading down to the basement. In the ceiling above is an iron ring used for hauling stores up from below.

Turn left into the officer's room (2), with window and small coal-burning fireplace. Two openings in the arch over the window and one high up in the wall are for ventilation and to clear smoke from musket fire. The square hole left of the fireplace provided ventilation for the basement.

Right from the vestibule is the soldiers' barrack-room (3), with vented window, large wood-burning fireplace and rack for muskets. Even with double berths there can have been little room for a complement of 24 men, but the garrison was probably rarely up to strength and those not on duty may well have been accommodated outside the tower except in an emergency. The bust is of William Hobson, the contractor who built the south-west chain of towers and the portraits of William and his wife.

Climb to the gun-platform (4) noting the vent in the roof of the stair and the round ventilation hole in the wooden door at the top. The cast-iron gun is a smooth-bore, muzzle-loading 24-pounder which could be turned through 360 degrees with the aid of ropes looped through the iron rings in the parapet wall. It was worked by a detachment of 10 to 14 men using the step-boards along each side. On top of the barrel is the cipher of King George III, while the letters WC stamped on the trunnion or pivot show that it was made by Walker and Co of Rotherham, Yorkshire. The touch hole is at the back and degrees of elevation and depression are scored across the base ring. The gun was set at the required angle by wooden wedges and fine adjustments made by an iron elevating



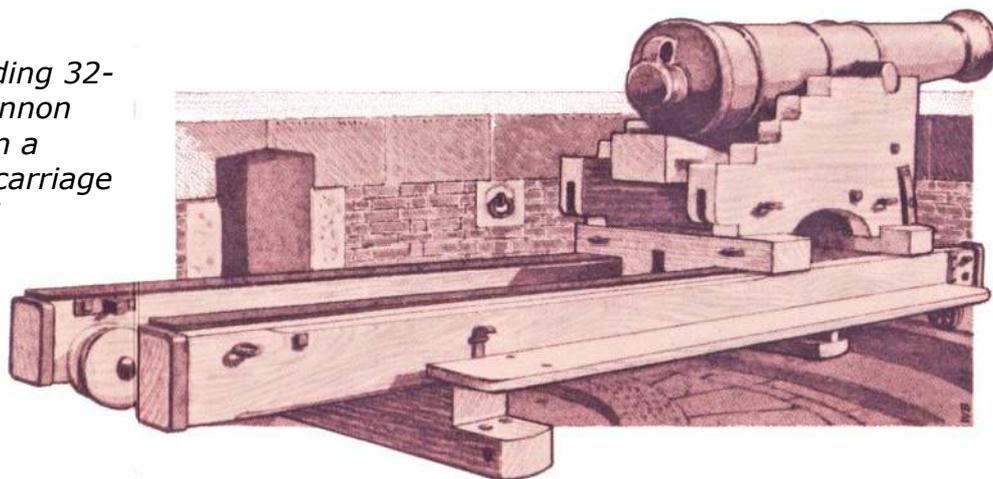
screw. A gun of this type was a formidable weapon which, using common gunpowder, could fire a solid or explosive round shot for over a mile.

The gun is mounted on a reproduction traversing carriage over the solid pillar which forms the core of the tower. Ammunition lockers were recessed into the thickness of the parapet wall. Rainwater from the parapet walk drains into the pit and from there down to a sump under the tower. The air ducts from below open into the side of the pit through a vent under the gun.

Return to the vestibule and descend to the basement (5). Here were stored ammunition, fuel and provisions separated from each other by wooden partitions, except for the magazine which had a vaulted ceiling and brick partition and now contains reproduction gunpowder barrels of the period in a specially ventilated recess. The risk of fire was avoided by providing a shelf for a lantern separated from the magazine by a glass plate. All stores had to be kept dry, so good ventilation was essential; there are horizontal ducts to the open air low down in the walls and ducts below the ceiling leading to the floor above. In addition there were drainage sumps to remove surplus water below the original wooden floor.

On leaving the tower note the number 24 painted above the entrance, and the slides below the doorway for the ladder and the hoist for stores.

*Muzzle-loading 32-pounder cannon mounted on a traversing carriage on the roof*



*East to west section*

