Three Castles of the Clare family in Monmouthshire during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries

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INTRODUCTION

Compared to the vast literature on the castles of the Clare family in Glamorgan (in particular, Caerphilly Castle), considerably less has been written about their castles in Monmouthshire. This is surprising, in view of the impressive remains which can be appreciated at Usk and Llangibby castles, and to a lesser extent, at Caerleon; and the substantial body of surviving documentation relating to these castles, still largely unpublished, which is preserved in the National Archives in London. It is the intention of this article to redress the balance, to a limited extent, with this detailed study of the architectural history of the castles of Usk, Llangibby and Caerleon (Fig. 1). It will focus specifically on the period *c.* 1250–1350, for which we have a considerable quantity of documentary and structural evidence.[1]

The National Archives (which incorporates the Public Record Office) holds a large collection of late-thirteenth and early-fourteenth century ministers' account rolls for the lordships of Usk and Caerleon, and the manor of Llangibby.[2] These rolls include accounts of the receivers of the lordship of Usk, the reeve (*prepositus*) of the castle and manor of Usk, the beadle of the borough of Usk, the reeve of the manor and borough of Caerleon, and the reeve of the manor of Llangibby (then known as Tregruk).[3] Accounts have also survived for other Clare estates in Monmouthshire, including the borough of Trellech and the manors of Llantrisant and Troy.

In comparison, no accounts have survived for any of the Clare estates in Glamorgan during the time of Gilbert II de Clare, earl of Gloucester (1263–95), or his son Gilbert III de Clare (1307–14). The only exceptions are an escheator's account taken in 1262 at the death of Richard de Clare, and a solitary reeve's account for the manor of Merthyr.[4] The almost total disappearance of all the Clare accounts for Glamorgan is not difficult to explain. If they were kept at Caerphilly—which appears to have served as the administrative centre for the Clare estates in Glamorgan—it is possible that they were destroyed when Llywelyn Bren's forces attacked Caerphilly in 1316. More likely, the loss may have occurred when the castle was sacked by the enemies of Hugh Despenser the younger in 1321. Many muniments and records belonging to the Glamorgan properties of the younger Despenser are known to have been destroyed during the 1321 uprising.[5] It should also be noted that the very full and thorough inventory of possessions in Caerphilly Castle in 1327 makes no reference to any rolls or other records stored in the castle.[6]

The fortuitous survival of so many accounts for Usk, Llangibby, Caerleon and other estates belonging to the Clare family in Monmouthshire can be attributed to two factors. Firstly, these estates were not in the hands of Hugh Despenser at the time of the revolt of the Marcher lords in 1321, and consequently escaped the general devastation which befell all his castles and manors in Glamorgan. Secondly, it appears that a large quantity of the household and administrative records of Elizabeth de Burgh, who held the lordship of Usk (including Caerleon and Llangibby) from 1320 to 1360, came into the hands of the Crown on her death.

The value of this remarkably large series of ministers' accounts for the Clare estates in Monmouthshire has not been overlooked by economic historians. William Rees's classic study of social and agrarian conditions in the Welsh March from 1284 to 1415 makes frequent reference to these accounts,[7] while G. A. Holmes made use of them in his analysis of demesne arable production at Usk and Caerleon between *c.* 1280–1340.[8] Rees appears to have been the first historian to realize the importance of these accounts

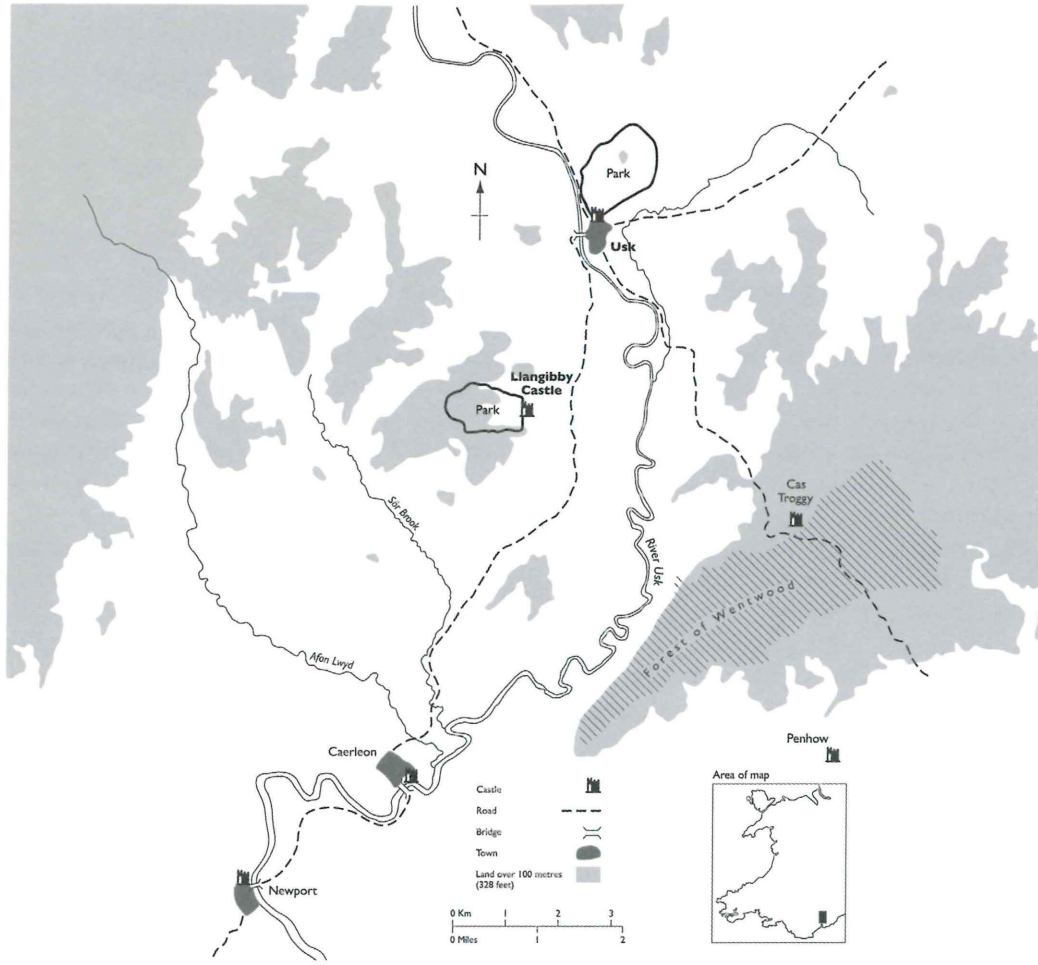

Fig. 1. The Clare Castles in the Usk Valley, Monmouthshire. *Drawing: P Lawrence.*

as a source of information on building activities at the Clare castles in Monmouthshire, translating brief extracts relating to works at Llangibby and Usk.[9]

The existence of these documents was also noticed by Arnold Taylor, who, in a postscript to his 1947 article on 'Usk Castle and the Pipe Roll of 1185', printed an extract from an account of the receiver of Usk in 1289.[10] But it was not until nine years later that systematic use was made of these ministers' accounts, by D. Cathcart King and J. C. Perks, in their pioneering study of Llangibby Castle.[11] A lucidly written synthesis of the results of architectural investigation and documentary research, it remains an inspiration to historians in the field of castle studies, although it will be argued in this paper that their conclusions need to be modified significantly, in the light of fresh documentary and structural analysis.

In 1977, J. K. Knight published an important article entitled 'Usk Castle and its affinities', which remains the most detailed and authoritative account of the architectural development of Usk, superseding B. H. St John O'Neil's brief monograph on the castle, written in 1938.[12] Knight alluded to the 1289 receiver's account and some other unpublished documentation, but made no further reference to the

ministers' accounts for Usk. Many of Knight's observations about the building sequence at Usk Castle, particularly regarding the date of the hall, chapel and chamber block on the west side of the inner ward (which he correctly assigned to the early fourteenth century), are corroborated by the evidence of the ministers' accounts.

Very recently, J. C. Ward made extensive use of the ministers' accounts for Usk in an illuminating article on 'Elizabeth de Burgh and Usk Castle', charting the history of the castle and lordship of Usk during its long, sometimes turbulent tenure by Elizabeth de Burgh between 1320 and 1360.[13] Dr Ward focuses on the tempestuous events of the 1320s, when Elizabeth struggled with Hugh Despenser the younger for control of the lordship, and the more peaceful late 1340s, when the lady de Burgh, her family and household stayed frequently at Usk and Llangibby. Ward's especial interest is in the political and administrative history of the lordship of Usk, rather than the architectural development of the castle, but she devotes some attention to building works carried out at Usk Castle by Elizabeth de Burgh and her predecessors.

USK CASTLE

The ruins of Usk Castle stand impressively on a spur, immediately to the north of the town of Usk (Fig. 2). It consists of a roughly rectangular inner ward, probably the nucleus of the original Norman earthwork castle built in the late eleventh century, and an outer ward of an irregular quadrilateral shape. The earliest surviving part of the castle, the keep, probably dates from the second half of the twelfth century. Its construction has usually been attributed to Earl Richard 'Strongbow' de Clare (d. 1176), although opinions differ as to whether it was finished before the castle was seized by the Welsh lord, Hywel ap Iorwerth, in 1173, or after its recapture by Strongbow in the following year.[14] After the death of Earl Richard in 1176, the Clare inheritance, including Usk, passed to his daughter and sole heir Isabella de Clare, then a minor, who became a ward of Henry II. Hywel ap Iorwerth, the Welsh lord of Caerleon, took advantage of the situation to seize Usk for himself; however, the Crown regained possession of the castle in about 1183. Two years later, Henry II spent £10 3s on the repair of the castle and the houses within it.[15]

In 1189, the great marcher lordship of Striguil, including the castles of Chepstow and Usk, passed to William Marshal, who married Isabella de Clare, daughter and heiress of Richard de Clare. It was Marshal who transformed the castle from essentially an earthwork structure with a stone keep into a substantial masonry castle. He built the stone enclosure wall of the inner ward, strengthening the angles with towers, most notably the imposing, circular Garrison Tower (Fig. 3). In 1245, the last of William Marshal's five sons died, and, in the absence of a male heir, the Marshal inheritance was divided among the Marshal's five daughters and their heirs. The honour of Striguil was partitioned, the southern portion, including Chepstow Castle, passing to the eldest daughter Matilda (sometimes Maud), who had been married to Hugh Bigod II, earl of Norfolk (d. 1225). Richard de Clare (d. 1262), son and heir of Matilda's sister Isabel, widow of Gilbert I de Clare, earl of Gloucester, obtained the northern and western parts of the honour (including Usk and Caerleon).

Richard de Clare is not known to have carried out any building works at Usk, nor is there any evidence of building activity during the years 1262–63, when Usk was in royal hands during the minority of his son.[16] However, Richard's son, Earl Gilbert II de Clare (1263–95), the renowned builder of Caerphilly Castle, certainly made some additions to the fabric. An account of the receiver of Usk for 1289 mentions a lock being bought 'for the new tower where the Lord Earl's treasure is placed for safe keeping'.[17] This has been convincingly identified by Arnold Taylor and Jeremy Knight as referring to the D-shaped North Tower, which is clearly of a late thirteenth-century date.

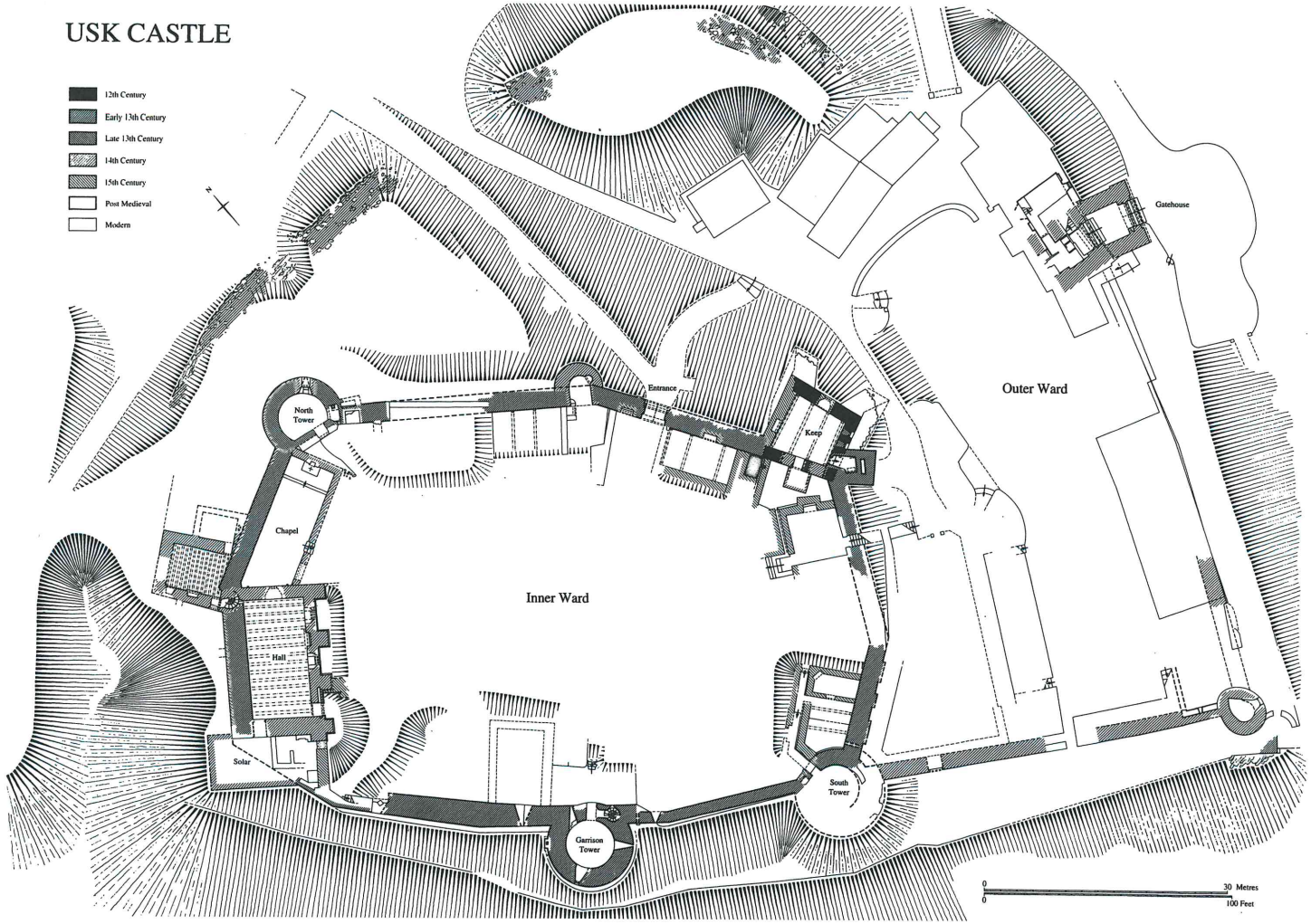

Fig. 2. Ground plan of Usk Castle. *Crown Copyright: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.*

The same account mentions alterations to the windows of the Round Tower of the castle, which may be identified with the circular 'Garrison Tower' at the south-west angle of the inner ward (Fig. 3). The upper stage of the tower also shows signs of having been remodelled and heightened. It has been argued by Jeremy Knight that these alterations correspond with the details given in the 1289 account. However, new documentary evidence has come to light which would seem to indicate that the Garrison Tower might have been substantially refurbished and remodelled some twenty years later.

After Earl Gilbert's death in 1295, his estates, including the castle and lordship of Usk, came into the hands of his widow Joan of Acre (d. 1307), daughter of Edward I. The surviving receivers' accounts show that sporadic repairs were carried out during Countess Joan's tenure of the castle, but no large-scale building works were undertaken. The most interesting reference is to the building in 1302–04 of a new brattice or outwork (*Nova Britasch*) situated 'outside the gate of the castle towards the Garden'.[18] This may refer to the earthwork 'barbican' guarding the entrance to the inner ward. The purchase of nails for the 'new brattice' would seem to suggest it was partially a timber structure.

Joan of Acre died in 1307, and was succeeded by Gilbert III, son of Gilbert II de Clare, who was then aged seventeen. Gilbert is known to have stayed at Usk Castle quite frequently during his youth and continued to reside there after becoming earl.[19] Unfortunately, very little documentation has survived for Earl Gilbert III's tenure of Usk, but a solitary receiver's account for 1308–09 has been preserved, which shows that Gilbert was carrying out significant building works at the castle.[20] The sum of £8 14s 10d was expended on the work of the tower over the prison and on making a wall adjoining part of it, while another £11 11s 12d was spent roofing the same tower with lead. This structure appears to be identical with the 'round tower over the prison' mentioned in 1315–16.[21] It seems reasonable to identify it with the Garrison Tower, the upper stages of which show evidence of having been remodelled and heightened, either during the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.

Other expenditure on works in 1308–09 included payments for extending a building called the 'New Chamber' and roofing it with tiles. Although the location of this new chamber is not specified in the accounts, it may be identified tentatively with the rectangular tower projecting outside the curtain wall, which appears to be a chamber block (Fig. 4). It is possible that this new chamber is identical with the building described in later accounts as the 'Countess's Chamber'. It is likely that building activity at Usk continued until shortly before Earl Gilbert's death in 1314, judging from a reference in the account of the reeve of Llangibby for 1312–13 to costs incurred in transporting coal and lime 'for the works of the castle of Usk'.[22]

After the death of Earl Gilbert III at the battle of Bannockburn on 24 June 1314, his vast estates came into the hands of the Crown by escheat. It ushered in a period of great uncertainty about the succession to his considerable inheritance. As the last earl died without any surviving heirs of his own, this meant that the nearest heirs would be Gilbert's three sisters—Eleanor, wife of Hugh Despenser the younger, Margaret, widow of Piers Gaveston, and Elizabeth de Burgh, widow of Richard de Burgh earl of Ulster.[23]

However, it was widely believed that Gilbert's widow, Countess Matilda de Clare, was pregnant. Matilda's apparent pregnancy gave Edward II the opportunity to postpone the partition of the Clare estates. In December 1314 and February 1315, he granted one third of the inheritance to her in dower, including the castles of Usk, Caerleon and Llangibby, evidently confident that she would produce the expected heir.[24] Matilda's pregnancy was clearly of financial and political advantage to the king, for, as Michael Altschul has observed, 'an heir to the inheritance would prevent its division and would provide him with considerable revenue during the subsequent period of wardship, which under normal circumstances would thus last twenty-one years'.[25] In the event, Matilda ultimately failed to produce an heir, and on 15 November 1317, the Clare inheritance was formally partitioned between the late earl's three sisters. But in spite of the partition, it appears that the lands assigned to her in dower (including Usk, Llangibby and Caerleon) remained in her hands until her death in July 1320.[26]

Fig. 3. Usk Castle: the Garrison Tower from the Inner Ward. *Photograph: K. Hoverd.*

The accounts of the receivers of Usk for the years 1314–20 reveal that the Countess Matilda stayed frequently at Usk, and that she spent large sums on building works at the castle. Much of the domestic range along the north-west side of the inner ward appears to have been built during this period (Fig. 5). It comprises a two-storey buttressed hall-block, with a chapel at the east end of the hall and a square tower at its northern angle, projecting beyond the curtain wall. There is another building, probably a service block at the west end of the hall. It is likely that the building of this domestic range was begun, at least in part, by the late Earl Gilbert, in view of the evidence for work on a 'New Chamber' in 1308–09. Other references in the accounts for 1314–20 add weight to the argument that the countess was indeed completing work started by her late husband.

The building of a new hall at Usk Castle seems to have begun in about 1314–15. Although no mention of it occurs in the receiver's account for that year, a later account for 1318–19 records a payment of £62 2s 10d for part of the work of 'a hall newly built in the castle' by William Keys, who was receiver of Usk in 1314–15. The hall was not completed until about 1318–19 when the receiver in office, Sir John Goz, spent another £35 13s 8½d to finish the work.[27] In the same year, a plasterer named Master Hugh was hired to make a louvre for the new hall, while tenants of the nearby manor of Llangovan were employed in making tiles for the roof of the hall, and carrying them to the castle.[28] A survey of Usk Castle taken in 1564 gives the dimensions of the hall as being 42 feet in length and 32 feet in width.[29]

The building of the chapel appears to have started slightly earlier than the hall. The receiver's account for 1315–16 contains payments for lime burning and the breaking of stones for work on the chapel, the remainder of which were accounted for in the roll for 1313–14, during the lifetime of the earl (*tempore Comitis*).[30] Unfortunately, the latter roll has vanished, but nevertheless it seems reasonable to suppose that the building of the chapel was begun during the time of Earl Gilbert III de Clare, and that it was completed by his widow, the Countess Matilda.

The account for 1315–16 supplies some interesting details about the building of the chapel. Its construction appears to have begun with the rebuilding of a ruined piece of the wall facing the chapel, presumably the curtain wall along the north-western side of the inner ward. A door and window were inserted in the wall of the chapel '*ex parte castri*'. The meaning of this phrase (literally, 'on the side of the castle') is unclear. It may mean that the door and window were facing the interior of the inner ward, and there is a door jamb against the curtain wall at first floor, which would allow access to the chapel from the upper part of the D-shaped North Tower. Stone was brought from an unspecified quarry, while lime was carried from Caerleon and Langstone. A reference to the making of oriel windows in the chapel strongly suggests that, like the hall, it was located at first-floor level and not on the ground floor as had been previously thought.

After the death of Countess Matilda on 2 July 1320, the castle and lordship of Usk passed into the hands of Elizabeth de Burgh, sister and heiress of Earl Gilbert III de Clare, and her husband Roger Dammory (d. 1322).[31] Elizabeth and Dammory clearly regarded Usk as one of their principal residences, spending sizeable amounts of money on building works and repairs during the years 1320–22. In 1320 they spent £14 4s 2½d on various building works and repairs. Most of this was spent on building a dresser house situated 'between the hall and the kitchen'. This places it at or outside the west end of the hall, where there are still some remains of the service rooms. The kitchen may have been free-standing further to the south (Fig. 4). The same account refers to an oriel window for the goldsmith next to the door of the countess's chamber and for an alure (rampart walk) between the said chamber and the wall of the castle.[32]

In 1320–21, however, the considerably larger sum of £59 was spent on building works at the castle. £21 19s 6¾d was spent on building a new gate at the entrance from the castle to the town. This must almost certainly refer to the great gatehouse at the east end of the outer ward. It was evidently a substantial stone

building; a mason named David Godewey was paid to build an arch of freestone for the said gate at taskwork, and £6 6s 11d was spent on burning lime and digging and carrying stone and sea coal for the work of the gate. References to the carpentry of the lodging over the gate suggest the upper storey may have been, at least partly, half-timbered in construction

Substantial sums were also expended on strengthening the defences of the castle. Over £10 was spent on the construction of two drawbridges in the castle, one at the upper gate (presumably referring to the entrance to the inner ward) and the other at the new outer ward gatehouse. Two watch-towers were repaired, with shields (*targes*) attached to them for battlements; the ditches were scoured and a new watercourse (*aquario*) was made in front of the castle gate. £4 19s 6d was spent on the provision of armaments for the castle.

The defensive preparations carried out by Elizabeth and Dammory at Usk, Caerleon and Llangibby were doubtless connected with the uprising of the Marcher lords in May 1321.[33] The revolt of the Marcher lords (among whom Dammory was a leading figure) was directed against the unscrupulous activities of Hugh Despenser the younger, lord of Glamorgan and Edward II's favourite, who sought to usurp the property of various great lords in south Wales by fair means or foul. In particular, Despenser sought to obtain the other two portions of the Clare inheritance held by the co-heiresses Elizabeth de Burgh and Margaret (wife of Hugh d'Audley).[34] Margaret had obtained the lordship of Gwynllŵg,

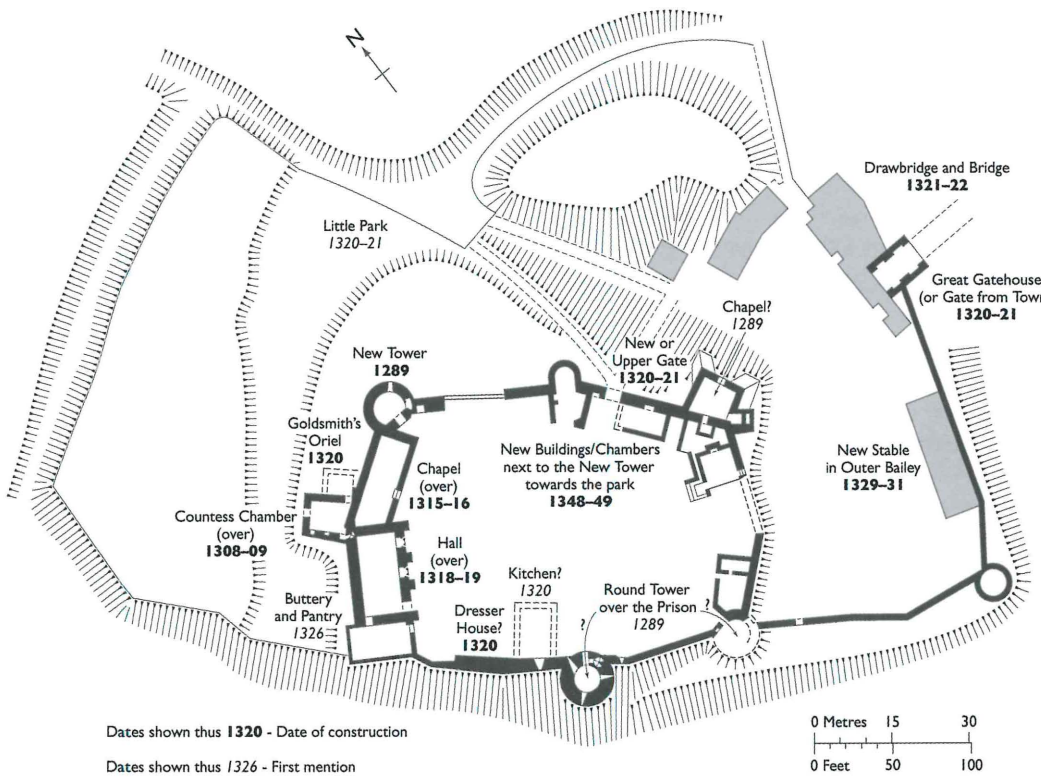

Fig. 4. Outline plan of Usk Castle, showing the likely location of the building works described in the accounts. *Drawing: P. Lawrence.*

centred on Newport, in the partition of 1317. The measures taken to strengthen the defences of Usk may have been prompted by the possibility of an attack by Despenser's forces, or by the threat of an assault by a royal army sent to suppress the rebellion.

Initially, the revolt of the Marcher lords seems to have been a complete success. In early May, the whole of Despenser's lordship of Glamorgan was overrun and devastated, and Roger Dammory assumed the keepership of Cardiff Castle and took possession of the lordship of Glamorgan, ostensibly in the name of the Crown. The ultimate objective of the barons was achieved on 14 August, when Edward II reluctantly agreed to banish the Despensers. However, from October 1321 the king began a swift and vigorous counter-offensive against the baronial opposition, recalling the Despensers from exile and effectively subduing the Welsh marcher barons by early 1322. Elizabeth de Burgh was taken prisoner at Usk Castle in January 1322, along with her daughter and wet nurse, while her husband Roger was captured at Tutbury Castle on 10 March and died two days later.

Shortly after being taken prisoner in January 1322, Elizabeth de Burgh was removed with her children to Barking Abbey, near London, and all her lands and possessions were taken into royal hands. While she was at Barking she received letters from the king persuading her to give Usk to Hugh Despenser the younger in exchange for the lordship of Gower. Although Elizabeth was unwilling to make the exchange, as Gower was much less valuable than Usk, she was forced to acquiesce, on pain of losing all her property. The exchange seems to have taken place in about June 1322.[35]

While Despenser may have gone to great lengths to acquire the lordship of Usk, there is little evidence to show that he resided frequently in Usk Castle or spent much money on its maintenance. No receivers' accounts have survived for his four-year tenure of the castle (1322–26), although a number of accounts of the reeve of the castle have survived, showing that small amounts were spent on the repair of the grange, stables and other ancillary buildings.

Of particular interest here is a cryptic reference in the account of the reeve of Usk Castle for 1326–27, to the 're-making of a certain hedge around the pound broken down by the Welsh coming in the army of Hugh Despenser the younger, in aid of the father'. Precisely what incident this refers to is uncertain. It could possibly refer to damage caused during Despenser's capture of Usk Castle in about January 1322, but this seems unlikely. It is more probable that it alludes to the events of October 1326, when Edward II and the two Despensers fled to Wales upon the arrival in England of an army led by Queen Isabella and Roger Mortimer. The reeve's account also refers to the provision of food for the household of Hugh Despenser the younger, while he was staying at Usk 'for the support of his father'. Clearly then, Despenser stayed briefly at Usk, at some point during October or early November 1326, but it is not easy to specify the date, and even more difficult to explain why he should have been leading an army of Welshmen 'for the support of his father'.

The precise movements of Edward II and his followers in Wales, from 14 October until the king's eventual capture on 16 November 1326, are not easy to establish.[36] It is known that Edward II and the Despensers arrived at Tintern Abbey on 14 October, and then proceeded to Chepstow Castle where they stayed for five days. At about this time, according to contemporary annalists, the king dispatched Hugh Despenser the elder to hold Bristol against the approaching rebel forces. The elder Despenser held Bristol until 26 October, when he surrendered the town to Queen Isabella and was promptly executed.

It is generally believed that the king, along with Hugh Despenser the younger and a small band of followers, embarked from Chepstow on the 21st, apparently in an attempt to seek refuge on Lundy Island. This attempt having failed, they reached Cardiff, probably on 25 or 26 October, and then proceeded to Caerphilly, from where the king tried to muster support from the men of Glamorgan and Gower. It is conceivable that, at about this time, the younger Despenser may have made a last, futile bid to save his father by attempting to muster an army from among the local tenants in his lordship of Usk, and other

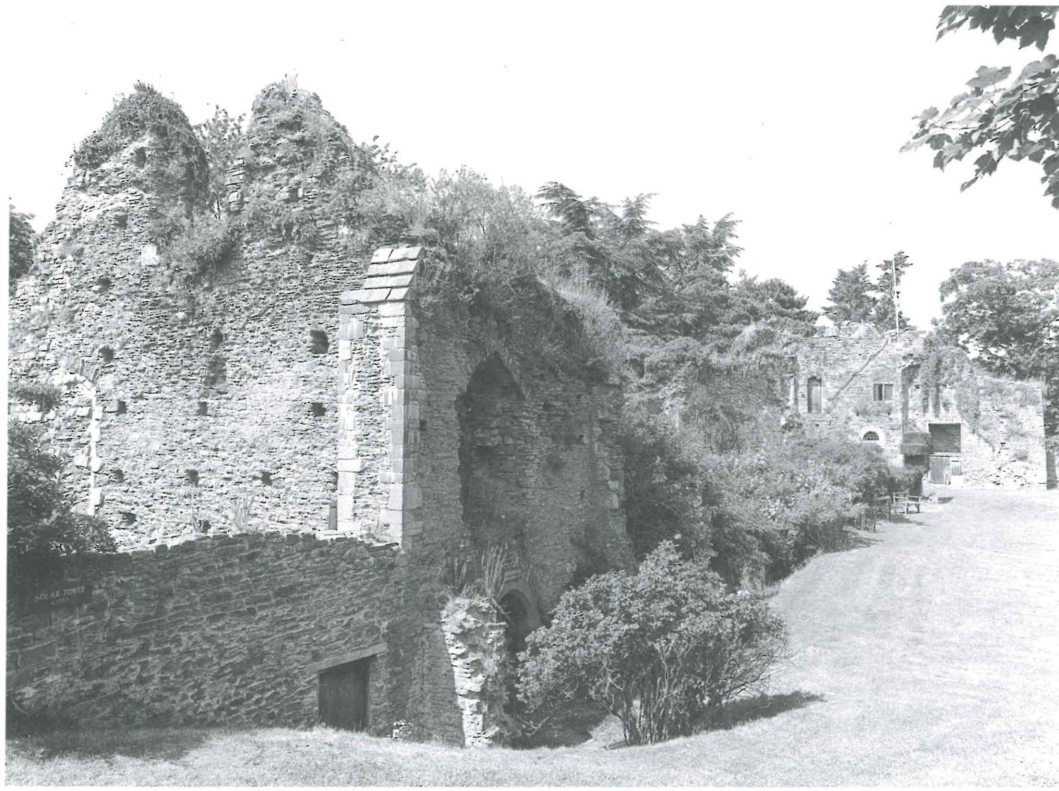

Fig. 5. The domestic range on the north side of Usk Castle. *Photograph: K. Hoverd.*

estates in Monmouthshire. The receiver's account for 1326–27 also contains a payment of money to Welshmen at Monmouth aiding the king and Despenser.

However, a seemingly insuperable obstacle to accepting this version of events is the evidence of the household account roll of Elizabeth de Burgh for 1326–27, which specifically states that the lady Elizabeth and her household were in residence at Usk by no later than 14 October 1326.[37] This means that the younger Despenser's stay at Usk must, almost certainly, have occurred before 14 October 1326. If this is the case, then Hugh Despenser the elder must have been sent to hold Bristol for the king sometime earlier than the date of 16 October, which is usually supposed. Moreover, it implies that Hugh Despenser the younger arrived in Wales some way ahead of the king and his retinue (who only reached Tintern on the 14th).

It appears then, that the most plausible explanation of Hugh Despenser the younger's stay at Usk, which probably took place in early October 1326, was to muster an army to assist his father, who had just been dispatched to hold Bristol against Isabella and Mortimer's forces. The immediate capitulation of the elder Despenser to the rebels in late October suggests that his son's efforts to provide reinforcements failed miserably, and the impression given in the reeve's account of the depredations caused by Despenser's army is that it was little more than a disorganized rabble. Although Despenser left a garrison at Usk Castle, there is no evidence that they offered any resistance against Elizabeth de Burgh's supporters, when they came to recover possession of the lordship.

On regaining possession of Usk, in about mid October 1326, it appears that Elizabeth de Burgh caused repairs to be put in hand immediately on the 'Lady's Chamber' and other buildings in the castle, which suggests that certain parts of it could have fallen into a state of neglect under Despenser's ownership. The well-preserved household accounts of Elizabeth de Burgh show that she resided intermittently at Usk Castle from October 1326 until about 1350, ten years before her death.[38] Unfortunately the ministers' accounts for Usk have not survived in a continuous series (there is a significant gap between 1331 and 1341); however enough remains to show that Elizabeth spent a reasonable amount of money on building works and repairs to the castle during her lifetime.

The accounts for the years 1327–31 mostly relate to routine maintenance and repairs to ancillary buildings in the outer ward of the castle, in preparation for visits by the Lady Elizabeth. Elizabeth stayed at Usk from mid-October 1326 until late 1327, and continued to stay there frequently throughout the years 1328–30.[39] The one major work carried out during this period was the building of a stable in the castle in 1329–31. It appears to have been a substantial masonry structure, the receiver's account for 1330–31 refers to the making of a lime pit in the castle, evidently connected with the construction of the stable.

Owing to the loss of the receivers' accounts, little is known of building works at Usk Castle between 1331 and 1341. However, from 1341 to 1350, the surviving receivers' accounts, along with some detailed rolls of particulars, reveal that Elizabeth de Burgh carried out significant building works and repairs to the castle. In 1341–42, £25 was spent on the building of 'diverse new chambers and chimneys at the Lady's order, and for the carpentry work, plastering and roofing of various other houses and walls'. The location of these new chambers is unfortunately not specified; but it seems reasonable to assume they were situated somewhere within the inner ward (Fig.4). While the construction of these 'new chambers' was taking place, Elizabeth de Burgh and her household were in residence at Usk, throughout the summer and autumn of 1342.[40]

From October 1348 to April 1350, the household accounts of Elizabeth de Burgh show that she and her household resided at Usk Castle, making occasional visits to Llangibby, Caerleon and other places within the lordship of Usk. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that extensive repairs, and new building works, were carried out at Usk Castle during this period. The account of Henry Motelot, receiver of Usk for 1348–49, contains payments for work on the building of a bell tower (*campanila*) in the castle at a cost of 25s 4d. The location and purpose of this bell tower is unclear; possibly it was connected with the chapel. It appears to have been a wooden structure. At the same time, work was progressing on the construction of certain new chambers and latrines situated 'next to the new tower towards the park', at a cost of £16 9s 11¼d.

Usk Park was situated to the north of the castle (Fig. 1). Its extent can be ascertained from a number of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century surveys of Usk, and from a map of the possessions of the Duke of Beaufort to the north of the River Usk, drawn up in 1776.[41] It seems reasonable to identify 'the new tower towards the Park' as the small semicircular tower on the northern apex of the inner ward, flanking the gateway to the ward, which has been dated by Jeremy Knight and others, on architectural grounds, to the fourteenth century. If this hypothesis is correct, then the 'new chambers' were probably situated against the north wall of the inner ward. It is not known whether these 'new chambers' are identical with those recorded as having been built in 1341–42.

Elizabeth de Burgh is not known to have visited Usk after 1350, and no ministers' accounts have survived for Usk between that date and Elizabeth's death ten years later. After her death, her possessions came into the hands of the Crown during the minority of her great-granddaughter, Philippa, who subsequently married Edmund Mortimer earl of March in 1368. Little documentary evidence has survived for building works at Usk during its tenure by the earls of March (1368–1425), and the Herbert earls of Pembroke.

However, it is known that some repairs to the defences were made in 1405, when Gruffudd, son of Owain Glyndŵr, made an unsuccessful assault on the castle.[42] At this time, the castle and lordship of Usk was in the hands of Henry, prince of Wales, during the minority of Edmund Mortimer, earl of March. A number of ministers' accounts have survived for this period, showing that general repairs were done to the walls and buildings in the castle.[43] Most significantly, in 1411–12 a new chamber (*nova camera*) was built in an unspecified location within the castle, at a cost of £20 3s 6d.[44] This, taken together with the evidence for the partial rebuilding and remodelling of the keep in the middle of the fifteenth century, shows that Usk Castle remained in use both as a residence and as an administrative centre until the middle of the sixteenth century.

LLANGIBBY CASTLE

Llangibby Castle is an enormous ruined structure, situated on a hilltop enveloped by dense woodland. It comprises an extensive walled enclosure of an irregular quadrilateral shape, aligned east to west, with a massive keep-gatehouse at its south-west corner, and an equally large residential tower at its north-west corner. Remains have also been found of what appears to be a small, twin-towered gatehouse at its south-east corner.

No study of Llangibby can overlook the article published by the leading castle historians D. Cathcart King and J. C. Perks in 1956, which to this day remains the standard account of its historical and architectural development.[45] Their analysis of the architectural evidence is indispensable (particularly since the castle was more complete and considerably less overgrown in the 1950s) and their conclusions about whom may have built the present castle can be accepted, to a certain extent. However, the misdating of several key documents means that their proposed chronology of building works at Llangibby must be rejected. They also adopted what was then the traditional approach to castle studies in their analysis of the two main surviving buildings. Their concern was to assess their defensive capabilities as paramount taking their remarkable internal planning and decoration rather lightly. The expanded documentary history calls for a reassessment of what role Llangibby Castle had in the Clare estates as a whole, as well as considering the particular function of the Great Gatehouse and the Lord's Tower.

The early history of the ownership of Llangibby Castle was treated fully by King and Perks, and will only be briefly summarized here. The castle and manor of Llangibby was known throughout the Middle Ages as 'Tregruk', taking its name from the commote of Tref-y-Grug in which it stands. The castle is first mentioned in an account of Humphrey de Bohun, earl of Hereford, acting as keeper of the Clare lands after the death of Richard de Clare for the year 1262–63.[46]

Richard's son, Gilbert II de Clare (d. 1295), the renowned 'Red Earl' and builder of Caerphilly, took possession of his father's inheritance in 1263. At some time before 1284, Earl Gilbert granted Llangibby to his brother, Bogo de Clare (d. 1294), to hold of him in tail male. Bogo de Clare was a powerful, ostentatiously wealthy ecclesiastic and a notorious pluralist, holding the offices of chancellor of Llandaff, treasurer of York and as many as twenty benefices. A number of his household accounts have survived for the years 1284–86, and these show that he resided fairly frequently at Llangibby during this time.[47] Upon Bogo's death in 1294, the castle and manor of Llangibby reverted back to his brother Earl Gilbert, who died in the following year. It then passed to Gilbert's widow, Joan of Acre, daughter of Edward I, who held it until her death in 1307. Llangibby then came into the hands of her son, Gilbert III de Clare, who was now old enough to succeed her. After Gilbert's death in 1314, Llangibby came into the hands of his widow, the Countess Matilda, who retained it in dower until her death in 1320.

Having summarized the tenurial history of Llangibby Castle, what light does the surviving documentary evidence shed on building works there? The account of Humphrey de Bohun for 1262–63

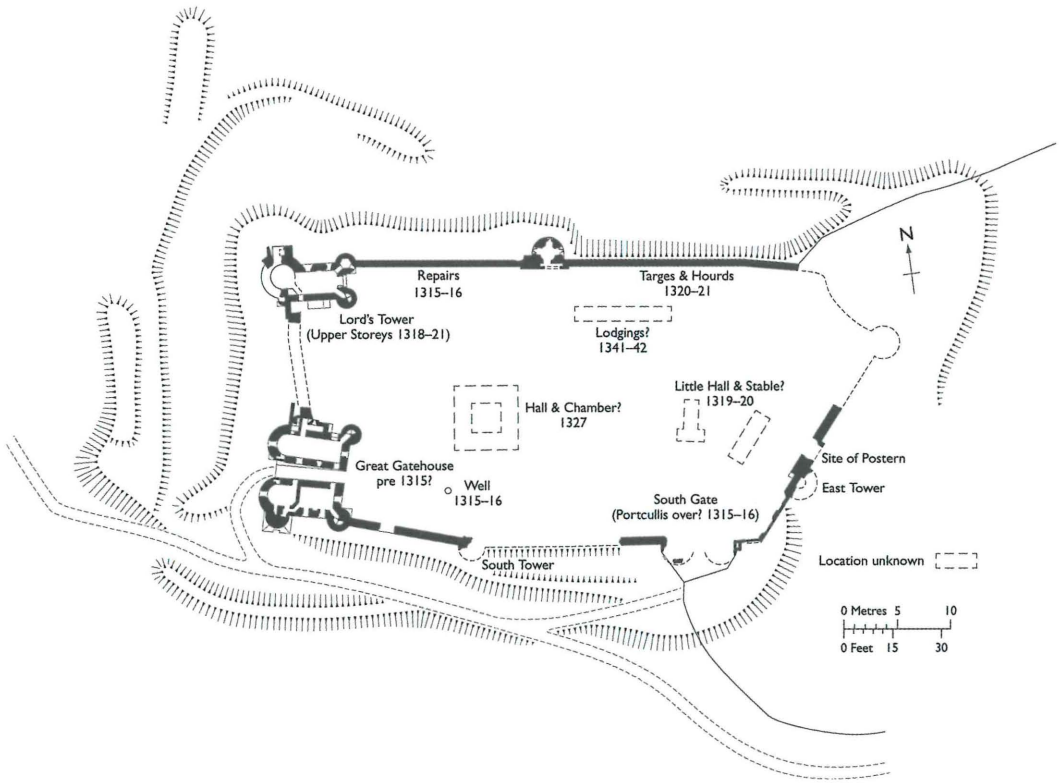

Fig. 6. Outline plan of Llangibby Castle showing the buildings mentioned in the accounts. *Drawing: P. Lawrence after King and Perks.*

contains no references to works at the castle. Similarly, little or nothing is known about Bogo de Clare's building activities at Llangibby, either from his household accounts or other sources. It will be noted that this assertion directly contradicts the account given by King and Perks, who quote accounts of the manor of Tregruk which they assign to the years 1282–87.

However, these manorial accounts, assigned by King and Perks to 1282–87, can clearly be proved from internal evidence to date from 1315–16, 1317–18, 1319–20 and 1320–21. The evidence for this redating can be summarized thus. There is a remarkable absence of any references to Bogo de Clare in these documents, which is extremely difficult to account for, if these accounts are to be assigned to 1282–87, when the castle was certainly in Bogo's possession. Moreover, there are frequent references to the Countess, who must almost certainly be the Countess Matilda (d. 1320) widow of Earl Gilbert III de Clare, and to persons who can be positively identified as officers of her household.[48] The redating of these accounts inevitably leads one to reconsider the documentary evidence for building works at Llangibby in its entirety, and the picture which emerges is significantly different to that outlined by King and Perks.

The first secure reference to building works at Llangibby occurs in an account of the reeve of Tregruk for 1301–02, which alludes to a payment of 43s 3d for the repair and rebuilding of 'a certain tower burnt by the War'.[49] King and Perks were unable to explain the meaning of this reference, but it seems likely,

Fig. 7. Llangibby Castle: the Lord's Tower from the Inner Ward.
Photograph: Ministry of Works, dated 31/12/1948.

in the absence of any other plausible explanation, that the phrase '*per Gwerram*' relates to the great rebellion of Madog ap Llywelyn and his supporters in 1294–95.[50] It is well known that many castles of Earl Gilbert de Clare in the neighbouring territory of Glamorgan were attacked or destroyed by the rebels, and in some cases (e.g. Llantrisant) they were not repaired until some years after the revolt.[51]

Evidence of further damage caused during the rebellion of 1294–95 appears in the following year's account, for 1302–03, when a mason called Thomas de Cornely was employed in mending a breach in the wall of the castle.[52] More extensive repairs were carried out in 1305–06; this account is especially important as it contains the first references to domestic buildings in the castle. Work was still being carried out on repairing the breach in the castle wall; at the same time repairs were made to the roof of the hall, the timberwork of the stable, bakehouse and kitchen. The sum of £4 14s was also spent on covering an unspecified tower with lead.[53]

Unfortunately, it is impossible to identify any of the buildings mentioned in these accounts with the surviving remains at Llangibby. King and Perks remarked that the references to building works in these accounts suggest that 'at this period the castle was still a small affair . . . and the picture conveyed is that of a small compact castle with a stone tower and curtain, a stone hall, wooden kitchen and bakehouse'.[54] They argued that the references in these accounts for 1302–06 relate to the earlier twelfth century ringwork castle, (known as the 'Bowling Green'), situated to the east of the present castle, and that shortly after this date, it was superseded by the present huge walled enclosure with the elaborate keep gatehouse and residential tower at its west end.[55]

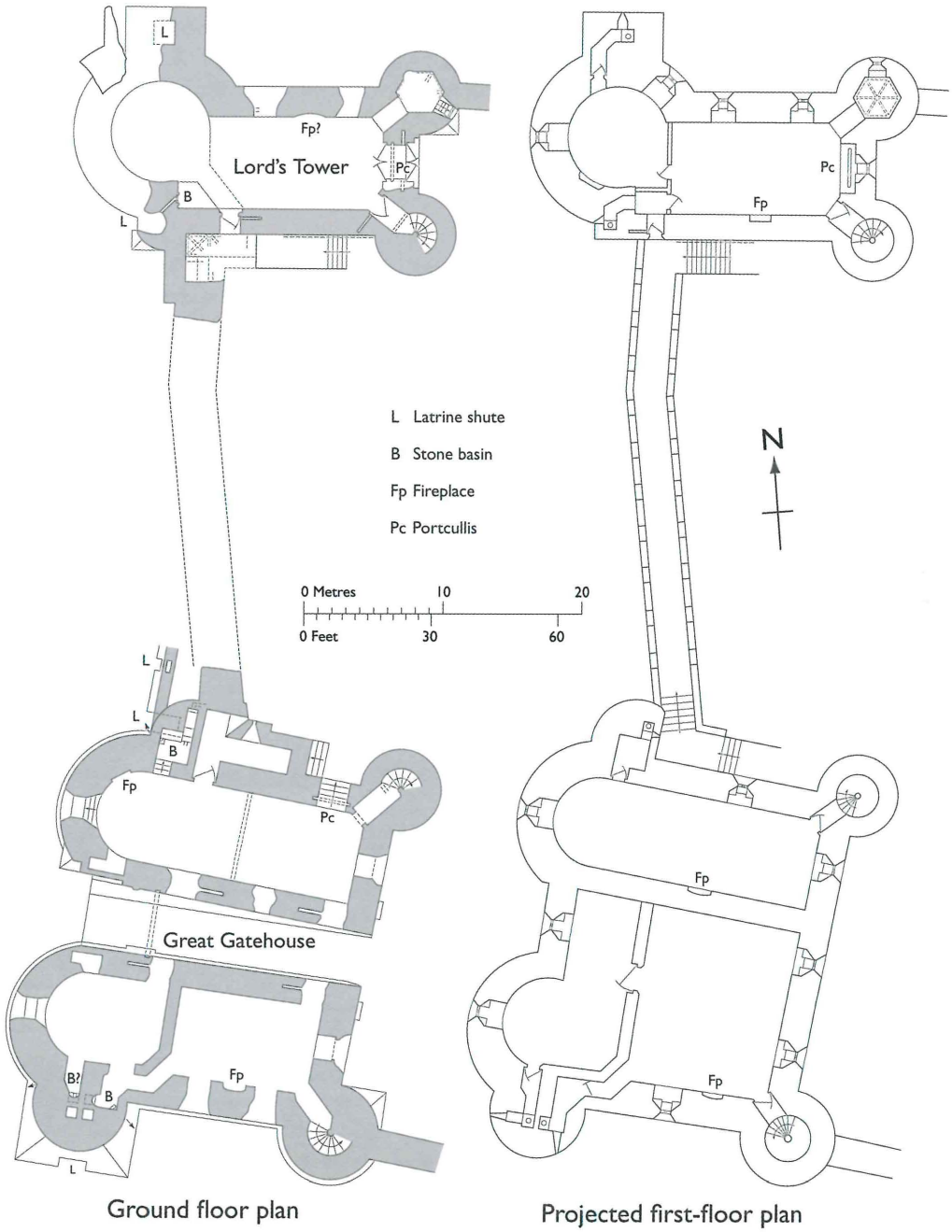

Fig. 8. The western half of Llangibby Castle. *Drawing: P. Lawrence after King and Perks.*

The building accounts

While the architectural evidence supports King and Perks' attribution of Earl Gilbert III as the patron of the main surviving buildings of Llangibby, the surviving documents shed curiously little light on activity at the castle during his lifetime. A solitary reeve's account for 1312–13 contains payments for repairs to the manorial buildings at Llangibby, but makes no mention whatsoever of building works at the castle.[56] This implies that if Earl Gilbert III built or at least began the present castle, he must either have started building soon after 1307, and halted (for some unknown reason) before the end of 1312, or he must have begun work on Llangibby in late 1313 to early 1314.

The next surviving reeve's account, for 1315–16, contains a little more detail about the buildings existing in the castle at that time (Fig. 6). It hints at a recent assault on the castle which had caused some damage. The fairly substantial sum of £4 15s 11d was spent on provisioning the castle during the war (*tempore Gwerr*'), and 20s 5d was spent on repairing a breach in the curtain wall, which had been broken down '*per Guerram*'.[57] It is possible that this entry relates to continuing repairs made to the curtain wall after the destruction caused during the revolt of 1294–95. This would imply that Llangibby Castle was not rebuilt on a virgin site by Earl Gilbert de Clare after 1307, as argued by King and Perks, but that it occupied the site of a pre-existing fortress.

However, it is more probable that the damage to the castle occurred recently; either in 1314, when the native Welsh of Glamorgan staged a rebellion after the death of Earl Gilbert III de Clare, attacking and burning castles at Neath and Kenfig, or during the large-scale insurrection of the men of Glamorgan, led by the Welsh lord Llywelyn Bren, from January–March 1316. Numerous castles of the Clares were besieged by Llywelyn and considerable damage inflicted. It is not impossible that the flames of rebellion could have spread from Glamorgan into the Marcher lordships of Monmouthshire. The fact that Usk and Llangibby were both garrisoned and provisioned by the Countess Matilda against a possible attack at this time shows that the threat was considered to be very real.[58]

The 1315–16 account also mentions the existence of a castle gate and the provision of a portcullis over the gate. Whilst it is tempting to identify this gate with the Great Gatehouse in the south-west corner of the castle, it is also possible that these references could relate to a smaller gatehouse at the south-east corner of the castle.

Significantly, the account also indicates the presence of domestic buildings within the castle, as shown by a payment of sixpence to a tiler hired 'to repair all the faults of the houses in the castle', and the existence of a well. Unfortunately the location of the domestic buildings has not yet been identified, but the site of the well is pinpointed on Morrice's plan of the castle, published in William Coxe's *Tour of Monmouthshire* of 1801, where it is shown to be situated roughly 30 yards eastward of the Great Gatehouse.[59] Further evidence of the existence of internal, free-standing buildings in the castle is supplied in a later reeve's account for 1319–20, which mentions repairs to a little hall (*parva aula*) and a stable (evidently a wooden structure) within the castle.

The next surviving reeve's account, for 1317–18, documents only minor repairs to the castle gate.[60] By 1319–20, however, it is evident that some large-scale building work was already under way at Llangibby Castle.[61] Two pits were being made ready and sea coal dug and carried to the castle for the burning of lime. Evidently, preparations were in hand for the building of a large masonry structure in the castle. The purpose of these activities is revealed in the next entry in the account, for the purchase of a pick 'to break up stones for the work of the tower'. Frustratingly, the account does not specify which tower is being referred to here.

However, the following year's account, for 1320–21, which describes in great detail the continuing work on the construction of this tower, makes clear that it was intended to be a residential building several storeys high.[62] There is no indication that this tower was the Great Gatehouse, as the earlier references to the castle gate suggest that it may already have been completed before 1315.

Fig. 9. Llangibby Castle: view up the gatehouse passage from outside the castle. *Photograph: K. Hoverd.*

Fig. 10. Llangibby Castle: the south side of the gatehouse showing the entrance into the latrine tower. *Photograph: K. Hoverd.*

Having ruled out the Great Gatehouse, the only possible candidate can be the great tower at the north-west corner of the castle (christened the 'Lord's Tower' by King and Perks).

Description of the remains of the Great Gatehouse and Lord's Tower at Llangibby

King and Perks[63] provided a comprehensive description of the fabric of the castle. They were able to see more details of the castle than visible today (Fig. 7), due to the regrowth and replanting of trees and general accretion of leaf mould and fallen branches. Some areas of the castle walls have fallen over the past 50 years. Their description of the northern, eastern and southern defences[64] cannot be challenged but some review of their interpretation of the western defences concentrating on the Great Gatehouse and the Lords' Tower is possible, especially in the light of the more detailed documentary evidence outlined above.

Fig. 11. Llangibby Castle: view up the latrine shafts in the south side of the gatehouse. *Photograph: K. Hoverd.*

They described the general situation of the castle lying on a rectangular promontory with stream valleys to the north and south, a steep escarpment on the east side and a more gentle saddle to the west. They do not describe the approach to the castle. Unlike Usk and Caerleon castles, Llangibby does not dominate a crossing point of the river (Fig. 1). It is over a kilometre west of the road from the village of Llangybi to Usk, which runs along the margin of the flood plain. The castle cannot realistically be seen to control this route as would have been the case with the earlier ringwork. The two principal structures, which provide defensive and architectural emphasis on the western side, look away from the river and are not approached by any modern roadway. It is hard to imagine who might have been intimidated by this remote aspect.

The modern vehicular approach to the castle contours the south side of the hill before turning up in to the south-east gate (Fig. 6). An earlier pathway, lined with ancient sweet chestnuts continues along the contours, to pass under the south curtain wall and the south aspect of the Great Gatehouse. One branch of this pathway continues down into the parkland and the other turns inside the defensive ditch into the entrance passage. This pathway may belong to a garden layout relating to the now demolished mansion,[65] or follow the original medieval approach. The earthworks guarding the western side of the castle do not betray an obvious approach leading to a drawbridge in front of the castle, though King and Perks[66] speculated that those earthworks might have been modified during the Civil War. They do identify the massive size of this gatehouse and its unusually high length to width ratio. Unlike the comparative structures that they list,[67] the gatehouse forms a corner rather than a central feature within the defences. It is also not really symmetrical, with the southern half having a larger footprint than the north. Also, the curvature of the southern tower is greater; it has no internal spur buttress or rebate, and it is decorated with a narrow ashlar band (Fig. 8).

King and Perks refer to the present entrance being within a drawbridge pit of which nothing is now visible. However, the lower rubble-stone side walls of this passage are continuous and show no evidence of a bridge. The passage narrows and its floor seems to rise, which give a heightened effect of distance. At a higher level, the doorways above the entrance passage are set in walls of a better build which are set back from the lower passage walls (Fig. 9). This would seem to imply a lost wooden floor leading directly from an elevated bridge, roofing a lower passage beneath. The doorways at either end of this passageway also seem to operate only at this elevated level and there is now no certain evidence for any portcullises within the passageway.

The internal arrangements are hard to discern, so we must rely on King and Perks' description and plan to a large extent. The huge size of the gatehouse had created large rooms, which were well appointed with garderobes, fireplaces and windows. In the southern range the rear room was *c.* 9.6m by 6.0m, heated and with access to a private latrine and handbasin. It could be sealed from the entrance passage by a barred door and controlled access to the spiral staircase to the lost upper floor. It connected via a door in the latrine passage to the forward room, which had an independent barred access from the passageway. It had its own latrine but appears to have been unheated.

The quality of the ashlar work involved in making the latrines and their shafts is very remarkable. In this southern half of the gatehouse, the latrines were focused on a D-shaped projection raised on spur buttresses. A doorway between the buttresses led to the base of the shafts (Fig. 10). Its rear arch consists of a tier of five, chamfered orders, corbelling inwards to carry the thickness of the wall. Once inside you can look up into four rectangular latrine shafts separated by spine walls carried on the remains of chamfered arches (Fig. 11). At ground–floor level, the latrine servicing the rear room was reached by a zig-zag passage lined in ashlar. In one corner is a handbasin, carved from a single ashlar block of sandstone, with a drain hole leading out to a stone spout on the outer wall face. Above the latrine itself, the stonework formed a semicircle to provide additional comfort to the sitter. The front room had its

Fig. 12. Llangibby Castle: the doorway to the latrine pit on the north side of the gatehouse. *Photograph: K. Hoverd.*

Fig. 13. Llangibby Castle: view within the northern latrine shafts showing the dividing arch and the square socket in the side wall. *Photograph: K. Hoverd.*

latrine down a short, straight passage, where no evidence of a door survives. The external spout suggests that there may have been a basin in the angle. The slots for the wooden seat survive intact and the stone wall to the rear is again curved.

Rooms of this size, comfort and architectural treatment seem to offer more than a guardroom and prison as proposed by King and Perks. One can speculate that there was a similar floor plan at first floor level (Fig. 8) as there are two pairs of garderobe shafts in the southern projection.

The northern range does not have a stone party wall, though it has two doorways from the passageway and contains two fireplaces. The forward part of the range had access to a private latrine and to an L-shaped storeroom, whilst the rear provided not only access to the stair turret, corresponding with that in the south range, but also to a flight of steps passing through the north wall. The latter was closed with a portcullis and led out into the interior of the castle. Immediately to the left was an open flight of stairs rising over the L-shaped room which probably provided independent access to the curtain wall walk, an arrangement paralleled on the south side of the Lord's Tower.

In the northern half of the gatehouse, there is just a pair of latrine shafts. The base of the shafts was entered by a tall, pointed doorway in a length of forward curtain wall at the point where it joins the circular tower (Fig. 12). Sockets within the passageway suggest that it may have contained a metal gate or grille to prohibit access. Inside there is quite a small ashlar-lined rectangular chamber. Looking upwards, the shaft is divided unequally by a chamfered stone arch with a shaft to the south serving the ground floor room and the wider shaft to the north, the upper storey (Fig. 13). An unusual feature of this chamber are the 0.25m-square shafts in the north and south walls. In the north wall, the shaft remains open and turns a right-angle to pass into the body of the wall. These may have been drains from

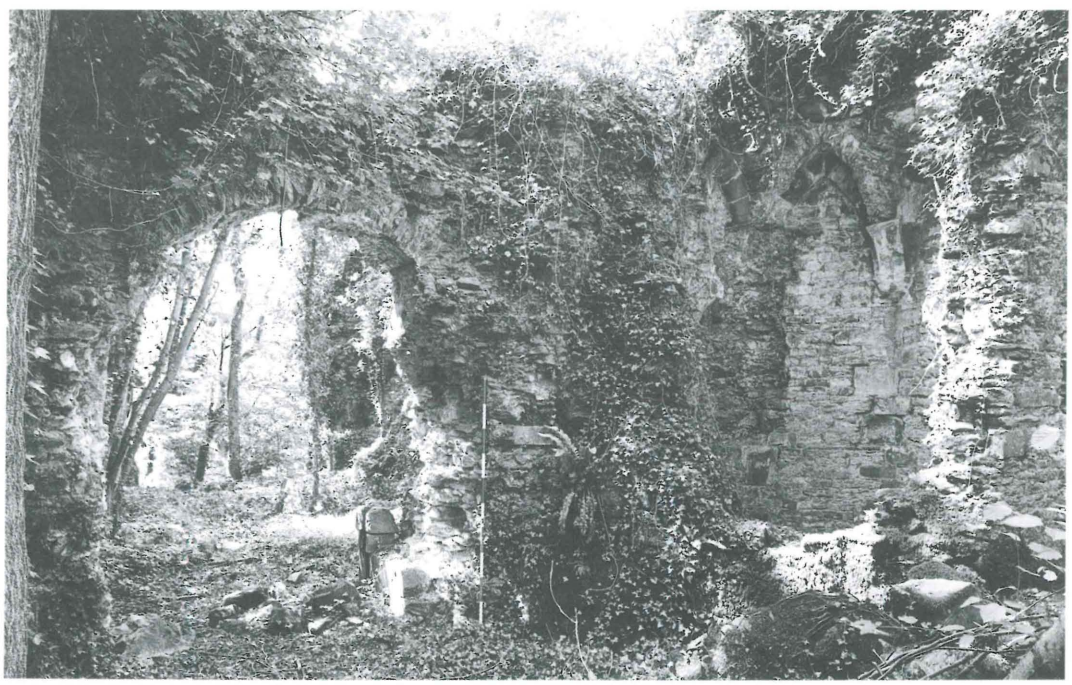

Fig. 14. Llangibby Castle: the entrance into the Lord's Tower from the Inner Ward.
Photograph: K. Hoverd.

Fig. 15. Llangibby Castle: detail of the portcullis slot and the rear rebate in the entrance passage. *Photograph: K. Hoverd.*

washbasins or even brought rainwater from the roof to flush the latrine pit. The latrine serving the ground floor chamber was entered up steps into a small rectangular room with an ashlar basin in one angle and the latrine in the other. A broad stone shelf links the two. Just to the north of the gatehouse, along the forward curtain wall was another latrine shaft with its own cleaning arch.

The layout in this range seems to demand a party wall creating two well-appointed rooms. They may have been paralleled with another pair of rooms above. The external stairway against the north wall perhaps indicates that there was no common or direct access out of the gatehouse into the west curtain wall or even from the south-east stair tower onto the southern curtain. All these arrangements imply that much of the accommodation within the gatehouse was interconnecting but essentially self-contained from those using the passage and those on the wall walks. This gatehouse is not only unusually large, but it also seems to be poorly provided with defensive capabilities.

King and Perks[68] justifiably called the Lord's Tower 'a most amazing structure'. It balances the Great Gatehouse at the other end of the western defences and overlooks a broad ditch and counterscarp bank (Fig. 6). These earthworks continue further north to cut off the end of the promontory and overlook the natural ravine running across the northern side of the castle. The Lord's Tower shares similarities in form and detailing with the Great Gatehouse, suggesting that they were contemporary or part of a single programme of work (Fig. 8). The tower is bonded into the north curtain wall.

The tower was entered from the inner ward through a gateway in its east side, set between two circular projections (Figs 7 and 13). The form of the gateway is incomplete and the threshold is buried. However, enough survives on the north side to suggest that there was a pair of doors on the outside that opened *outwards* into the inner ward, yet with a drawbar socket behind so they could be locked on the inside. Within the short gate passage was a well-masoned portcullis slot and a rebate beyond, which might have allowed for a second pair of doors (Fig. 15).

Fig. 16. Llangibby Castle: the interior of the rib-vaulted, hexagonal closet. *Photograph: K. Hoverd.*

The main ground floor room was rectangular (12.5m by 6.25m) with two elevated windows with window seats looking north, and the possible remains of a fireplace between them. A passage in the north-east corner of this room led into a small rib-vaulted hexagonal room or closet (Fig. 16). This has an elevated window reached by steps up to the window seat (Fig. 17) with a view out over the inner ward. The rear arch of this window is chamfered and has a ball and bar stop. A window in this position compromises the defensive capabilities of the entrance. In the south-east corner, a doorway with a drawbar socket behind leads to a spiral staircase rising to an upper chamber.

In the south wall of the ground-floor chamber, there was a larger doorway with a double-chamfered doorcase with ball and bar stops (Figs 18 and 19). It had a drawbar socket behind. The doorway opens into a small L-shaped room. Two bays of the longer arm had chamfered, quadripartite vaulting rising from flat foliage corbels of the same design as those surviving in the hexagonal room in the opposite corner (Figs 20 and 21, no. 1 and 3) and a squatting man in the corner (Fig. 21, no. 2). The rest of the room was ceiled by lower, rubble-vaulted spaces supported on chamfered dressed stone arches. Traces of a small window survive in the outer angle. The L-shaped room carried the upper part of an external flight of stone steps, which must have risen to the curtain wall walk, corresponding with the similar flight on the north side of the Great Gatehouse. Against the main wall of the tower is an angled dressed-stone course marking the line of the roof over these steps.

King and Perks' plan indicates an angled sunken passageway leading from the doorway of the L-shaped room down into the lower room of the circular tower (Fig. 8). The raised platform in the south-west corner, formed by this passageway includes the blundered remains of an ashlar washbasin similar to the survivors in the Great Gatehouse (Fig. 18). Its drain passes into a latrine shaft coming from the upper storey emptying out alongside the corner of the circular tower. A rectangular projection on the north side of this tower contained a latrine shaft from the upper storey. No further evidence of this upper level can be traced except by careful examination of the fallen pieces of masonry in the castle ditch.

The first-floor plan can be interpolated from the ground floor plan (Fig. 8), with the position of the latrines being fixed by the location of their shafts. It has been assumed that there would be a corresponding hexagonal vaulted chamber in the north-east corner and the spiral staircase would continue in the south-east corner up to the crenellated wall-walk level. Between these two projections any window reveal would have to have been modified to enable the portcullis to be raised. However, a similar portcullis in a very awkward position is encountered in the chapel of Marten's Tower, Chepstow Castle.[69] The building account refers to the upper chamber of the tower having partition walls, which needed plastering. This suggests a division between the rectangular and circular rooms. There may or may not have been access onto the curtain wall walk.

The builders and later history of the castle

It is difficult to say who was responsible for beginning the work on the Lord's Tower. The documentary evidence, albeit incomplete, would appear to suggest that work commenced in 1318–19 (it was certainly well under way by 1319–20), and that the upper stages of the tower were largely completed in 1320–21, when it was roofed with 2,000 tiles. If this is the case, then the tower could have been begun by the Countess Matilda, widow of Earl Gilbert III, who died in July 1320, and subsequently completed by her successors, Elizabeth de Burgh, sister and heir of Earl Gilbert, and her husband Roger Dammory. However, the accounts for 1318–21 seem to relate to the latter stages of construction, as evidenced by the references to embattling the tower, the work on the garderobe in the upper chamber of the tower (*superiora camera turris*) and the planking and roofing of the tower. They contain no references to making the foundations or lower stages of the tower, which suggest that this work probably took place at an earlier date.

Fig. 17. Llangibby Castle: the window seat within the hexagonal closet. *Photograph: K. Hoverd.*

Fig. 18. Llangibby Castle: the south-west corner of the Lord's Tower showing the doorway into the L-shaped room and the hand basin. *Photograph: K. Hoverd.*

In view of this evidence, a more plausible hypothesis is that the Lord's Tower was originally started by Earl Gilbert III de Clare. Its construction was halted for some years, perhaps due to his death in 1314, and to an assault by the Welsh at some point during the years 1314–16. Perhaps more simply, delays were due to financial constraints, or the fact that the countess was preoccupied with building the hall and chapel range at Usk. Work then resumed in 1318; the upper stages of the tower being finished by 1320–21, when it was roofed. We have already seen at Usk that the countess was carrying out a programme of building works which began during her late husband's lifetime, so it is reasonable to suppose that she could have been following a similar course at Llangibby.

On taking possession of Llangibby Castle in 1320, Elizabeth de Burgh and her husband Roger Dammory installed a substantial garrison, and strengthened its defences with wooden fortifications, as they had done at Usk. The reeve's account for 1320–21 mentions the making of wooden *targes* and *hourds*, which presumably would have been fixed to the curtain wall as a defensive measure. However, these precautions were to no avail, for Llangibby, along with Usk and Caerleon, were surrendered by Elizabeth de Burgh to Hugh Despenser the younger in June 1322.

No other reeves' accounts have survived for the fourteenth century, so our knowledge of building works at Llangibby post-1322 is extremely limited, and depends mostly on stray references in the accounts of the receivers of Usk. In July–August 1323, three masons were employed for about four weeks, repairing a breach in the curtain wall of the castle.[70] It is not known whether this breach was the same one, which was under repair in 1315–16, or whether it had occurred at a later date. It is possible that this work may represent an effort to finish the building of the curtain wall surrounding the vast enclosure at Llangibby, which may never have been fully completed.

Elizabeth de Burgh eventually regained possession of her Monmouthshire estates (including Llangibby) in early November 1326. An account roll of Elizabeth de Burgh's household for 1326–27 shows, although she resided at Usk for most of that year, she did spend a week at Llangibby, from 10–17 July 1327, and rushes were purchased for the hall and chamber in the castle on 22 July.[71]

The evidence of this and other intermittent visits made by Elizabeth to Llangibby show that it remained in use as a residence for the lady and her household, usually for brief sojourns during the summer or autumn months. Elizabeth visited Llangibby several times between June and September 1342, on one occasion she appears to have stayed there separately from the main body of her household, which remained at Usk.[72] The last recorded visits made by Elizabeth to Llangibby were on 9–17 July 1349 and 21–22 September 1349. Marie de St Pol, countess of Pembroke, is known to have stayed in the castle at about the same time.[73]

In view of the evidence for the visits of Elizabeth and her entourage to Llangibby, it is not surprising that she should have spent some money on building works or repairs to the castle. Unfortunately, no manorial accounts have survived for Llangibby for the remainder of the fourteenth century. However, included in an account of the receiver of Usk for 1341–42, is a payment of £7 5s 3½d for the 'new building of various houses in the castle of Tregruk'. Further allusions are made to 'the making of various houses, chambers and chimneys . . . . along with hedges made around the courtyard (*curia*) according to the lady's [Elizabeth's] wishes'.[74] This reference is extremely significant, as it provides clear evidence that building work at Llangibby did not cease altogether post-1322. On the contrary, a new range of lodgings was built, presumably to provide additional accommodation for Elizabeth's guests and household servants. The building of a new domestic range at this time may well be connected with Elizabeth's frequent visits to Llangibby, during the summer of 1342.

The rediscovery and reassessment of documentary evidence concerning Llangibby Castle helps to answer some questions about the chronology of building works there, and raises many others (particularly about the phasing of works and the existence of internal buildings within the bailey), the answers to

Fig. 19. Llangibby Castle: the double-chamfered and stopped doorway into the L-shaped room.
Photograph: K. Hoverd.

Fig. 20. Llangibby Castle: the two bays of rib vaulting in the L-shaped room.
Photograph: K. Hoverd.

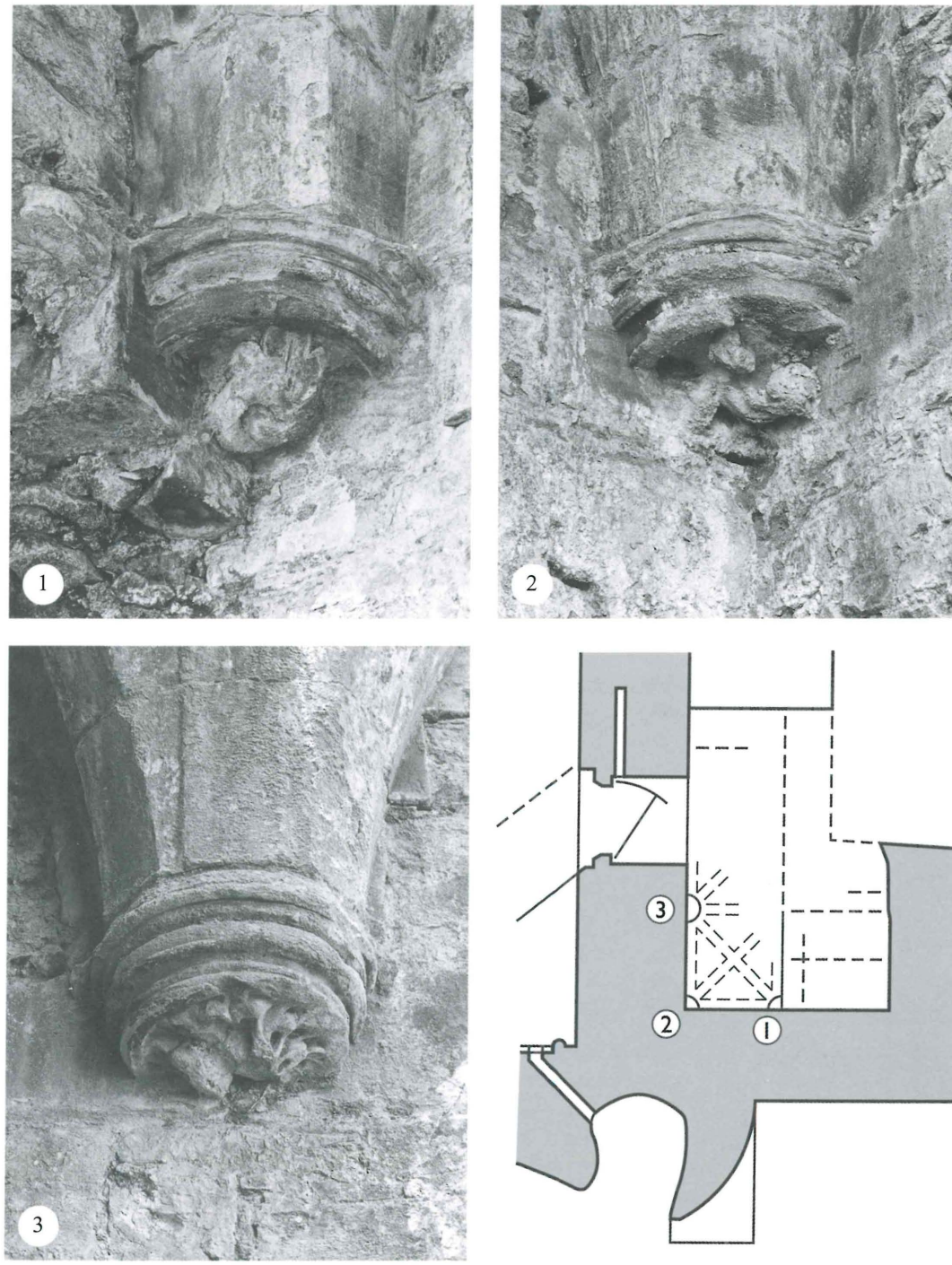

Fig. 21. Llangibby Castle: the three surviving corbels in the L-shaped room
Photograph: K. Hoverd.

which can only be supplied by a thorough programme of archaeological excavation. While the basic design of the present castle, the huge enceinte with a great gatehouse and residential tower, may be attributed to Earl Gilbert III, the documentary evidence strongly suggests that he cannot have been solely responsible for its construction, nor was the castle simply abandoned after his death at Bannockburn.

To summarize, it would appear that the Great Gatehouse was begun by Earl Gilbert III de Clare shortly after 1307, and that it was probably largely completed before his death in 1314. The curtain wall, however, was not completed by the time of Earl Gilbert's death, and seems to have undergone extensive and intermittent repairs from about 1315 to 1323. It is likely that Earl Gilbert also began construction of the sumptuous residential tower known as the Lord's Tower. However, it was not until 1318–21 that its upper stages were finally completed. Furthermore, the documentary evidence clearly shows that Llangibby was not simply abandoned and left to decay. The construction of a range of new lodgings at Llangibby by Elizabeth de Burgh in 1341–42, and the evidence of her visits there, show that the castle must have remained in frequent occupation at least until *c.* 1350. Also, within the huge inner ward, there was a complex of domestic buildings, either free-standing or built against the curtain wall, along with a stable and a well house.

Although there is little evidence of repairs to the castle during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it would seem to have remained in a habitable state until well into the seventeenth century.[75] The Royalist diarist and antiquary Richard Symonds (writing in 1645) described Llangibby as 'strong and inhabited and fortified', with a garrison of sixty men.

The function of Llangibby Castle

King and Perks[76] reached a number of conclusions about Llangibby Castle. They identified it as having what appeared to be the largest inner ward in England and Wales. They described it as a 'fortress of the first rank, and not merely a fortress either: the number and elaboration of sanitary arrangements alone argue, for a very large population and a remarkable concern for hygiene'. This led them to propose that it 'was the beginning of a most palatial, as well as a powerful castle', but they argued it was never finished. They correctly identified the initiator of the building as Gilbert de Clare III and tried to understand why he should embark on such an ambitious building project 'when he already owned the substantial castles of Usk, only two miles to the north-east, and Caerleon, five miles to the south'. In the end they believed that if Gilbert had lived, 'no doubt the domestic buildings would have been completed as well as the fortifications and the castle would have become a noble dwelling as well as a fortress; it would also become an administrative centre, with a borough of its own growing up beneath it walls'.[77]

In the light of the newly-transcribed documentation, it can be shown that Gilbert's work at Llangibby was completed by his widow to a point where the buildings were roofed. The castle was maintained, extended and regularly if only briefly used by Elizabeth de Burgh. They also show that within the castle was a range of domestic buildings of which no trace is now visible. Given that there was a hall, chamber, kitchen et cetera within the castle walls, the status of what King and Perks called the twin keeps, the Great Gatehouse and the Lord's Tower needs to be reviewed.

When Gilbert III de Clare inherited his vast estates from his mother in 1307 he became owner of a string of castles in Glamorgan: Caerphilly, Cardiff, Llantrisant, Neath, Kenfig, Llangynwyd, Llanblethian, the dismantled ruins of Morlais and Castell Coch. In addition he held the three castles in Monmouthshire, and great castles such as Tonbridge in England. His father had built the largest and most elaborate non-royal castle of all at Caerphilly and undertaken major works at many of the other sites. How was Gilbert III de Clare to make his mark and spend some of his estimated income of £6,000 a year?[78]

As the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales have identified, Gilbert III added a new, imposing gatehouse and corner tower as part of a new defensive circuit at Llanbethian,

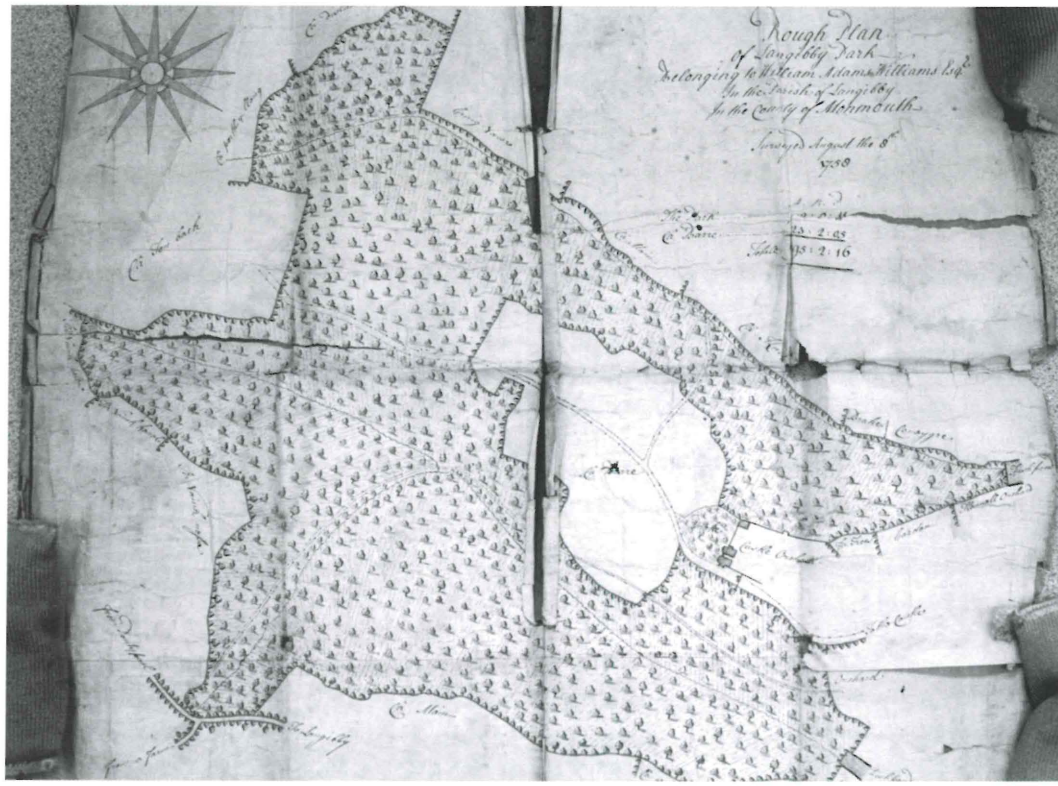

Fig. 22. A plan of Llangibby Park in 1758. *Reproduced by kind permission of the Gwent Record Office.*

near Cowbridge, Glamorgan.[79] This created a magnificent new eastern façade to what was otherwise a rather weakly-defended, minor castle set apart from any settlement. Gilbert's inquisition post mortem, described Llanblethian as a 'certain castle begun by the earl', implying that he may have intended a more elaborate scheme. An earlier keep within the inner ward could have contained additional apartments. Llanblethian is only about one quarter the area of Llangibby. The scale, complexity of plan and ornament of the gatehouse and the corner tower at the former is far simpler and smaller when compared to the latter. However, the composition of a fine new gatehouse and a residential corner tower linked by a high curtain wall implies that they were designed together. Gilbert III may also have redeveloped the castle at Neath to create an imposing new gatehouse and remodelled the internal accommodation.[80] This showed that he had an interest in redeveloping some of his secondary castles to have much more dominating façades. They contained suites of additional accommodation and secured the interior against relatively weak forces. Other lords were doing the same, such as Roger Bigod, fifth earl of Norfolk (1270–1307) at his castle of Bungay in Suffolk.[81] Perhaps at Llanblethian and Neath, for example, there was need to house a constable or receiver to manage these estates in suitable style and safety.

A building with the same scale and ambition as Llangibby is Goodrich Castle, Herefordshire. Here the Valences, earls of Pembroke, developed an integrated fortress-palace around an existing Norman keep. The inner ward is entered by a massive corner gatehouse, with the remainder of the domestic accommodation disposed around the curtain walls and within the corner towers. As at Llangibby, there are spur buttresses and latrine towers adding emphasis to the external appearance. The work was initiated

by William de Valence (d. 1296), continued by his widow Joan (d. 1307) and brought to completion by Aymer de Valence (1307–24).[82] So the work at Llangibby was contemporary with the later stages of the work at Goodrich.

The size and quality of the work at Llangibby Castle suggests that it was intended for the earl or the countess to use. Some idea of how, comes from Elizabeth de Burgh's household accounts.[83] She regularly resided at Usk as her preferred residence in south Wales. Unusually for an important person in the fourteenth century, several of these stays were extended. She was at Usk from at least October 1348 until April 1350, and made short visits to Llangibby in July and September 1349 taking only part of her household, leaving the rest at Usk.[84] Llangibby offered a retreat away from the formalities and administrative burdens of the centre of the lordship. This is how Gilbert de Clare may have intended it to be viewed, neither as a fortress or a palace but as a retreat. The function of the Great Gatehouse and the Lord's Tower may need to be reviewed in that light.

The Lord's Tower and Great Gatehouse faced west across bold defensive earthworks raised high on a hill. They overlooked what is shown on an estate plan of 1758[85] as Llangibby Park. This map (Fig. 22) shows an open area (*Cae Barre*) covering just over 23 acres. This is a classic example of a *laund*, an open area within a park where deer could graze and be driven.[86] This pasture is surrounded by broad swathes of trees forming the park, covering 172 acres. There are fishponds to the south and north of the castle hill, and a rabbit warren (*Coneygre*) just outside the park. The layout remained the same on the Tithe Map of 1841,[87] and is essentially the same today.

Bradney in his *History of Monmouthshire* describes the deer park as existing from time immemorial.[88] The earliest documentary reference was a grant for life, in 1382, to John de Leukener, yeoman of the chamber, of the park of Tre-grug by the king during the minority of the heir. The medieval park was probably larger as the farm names, Clawdd-y-Parc and Pen-y-Parc, survive to the west and south of the eighteenth-century boundaries. The park was reduced in size some time in that century, and was disparked in 1861, when the deer were killed.

So the principal aspect of Llangibby Castle overlooked a medieval deer park. In Elizabeth de Burgh's time, it was used for occasional visits by her and a proportion of her household. The Great Gatehouse offered at least seven, large and well-appointed chambers for leading members of the household. The Lord's Tower contained large and well-appointed chambers on two floors for the use, when it was roofed in 1320/21, very briefly by the widowed Matilda de Clare, and later Elizabeth de Burgh. Access into this tower was from the inner ward through a playfully defensive gateway. Associated with the ground-floor rooms at least was a small, hexagonal, vaulted closet with a view back into the castle, and a vaulted but more remote L-shaped room, which may have acted as a treasury or muniments room. Neither the tower nor the gatehouse had a kitchen or service rooms, implying that meals were taken in the hall complex sited elsewhere in the inner ward.

The conclusion to be drawn from this summary of the evidence is that despite its great size, its defensive appearance, and the fact that it was attacked during Llywelyn Bren's revolt, Llangibby Castle's prime purpose was act as a sumptuous hunting lodge. Gilbert de Clare and his widow seem to have taken buildings of a military form to create imaginative new types of domestic accommodation. These were of a quality which had not been seen in the castles of the Welsh Marches, though components can be seen at Chepstow, Caerphilly and Kidwelly Castles[89] from a generation earlier, and at Ludlow[90] and Goodrich Castles,[91] and Cas Troggy, Monmouthshire[92] from the early fourteenth centuries.

Royal hunting lodges, such as Clarendon Palace, Hampshire,[93] were often on a scale far beyond what was necessary for the functional requirements of this most favoured of medieval pastimes.[94] Llangibby Castle is a little known but important example of what a great magnate of Edward II's reign could achieve on his marcher estates.

CAERLEON CASTLE

The remains of Caerleon Castle stand on the north bank of the Usk, guarding a strategically important crossing point, where the old Roman road from Chepstow forded the Usk (Fig. 1). With the exception of a round tower by the Hanbury Arms Hotel (Fig. 23), very little standing masonry survives, much of it having been robbed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but an 'unusually fine' motte still survives.[95]

It originally consisted of a motte and bailey castle, which was almost certainly built before 1086, as it is mentioned in the Domesday survey.[96] Some authors have suggested that the castle of Caerleon was thrown up by the Welsh lord Caradoc ap Gruffydd of Gwynllŵg (d. 1081),[97] but it seems more likely that it was built by the Normans; the evidence of Domesday Book indicates that a castlery (*castellaria*) had been established at Caerleon, a distinctively Norman unit of jurisdiction. It is possible that the castle was erected by William d'Ecouis, who held eight carucates of land in the castlery of Caerleon in 1086, or by his sub-tenant, Thurstan fitz Rolf.

The castle is sited just outside the south-east defences of the Roman fortress that will have been largely standing in the eleventh century (Fig. 24). The steep motte still survives, with a large, irregular pentagonal enclosure appended (now heavily wooded), the outlines of which are largely preserved in the grounds of the Mynde (formerly known as Castle Villa). This house was originally built in the eighteenth century by the Williams family, then lords of the manor of Caerleon. In about 1839, the owner of the Mynde, a local magistrate named John Jenkins, built the present high, embattled stone wall around the enclosure.

At some time during the twelfth century, a large masonry tower, presumably a shell-keep, was erected on top of the motte. It appears to have been a very substantial structure; according to the antiquarian William Coxe, the walls of the tower remained standing until the middle of the eighteenth century, to a height of no less than forty feet. It has been suggested by Coxe and other writers that this was the 'tower of prodigious size' mentioned by Gerald of Wales in the description of the town of Caerleon contained in his *Itinerarium Kambriae* (*c.* 1188–90).[98] However, Gerald's primary interest was in the splendid remains of the Roman legionary fortress, and no explicit reference is made therein to the castle.[99]

The keep may have been built by the de Ballon family, who appear to have held the castle and lordship of Caerleon from *c.* 1090 until the late 1130s.[100] Another possible candidate is the Welsh lord Morgan ab Owain (d. 1158), who seized control of Usk Castle in 1136, and may well have taken possession of Caerleon at around the same time.[101] He was certainly in possession of Caerleon by 1154, and held it until his death four years later, when he was succeeded by his brother Iorwerth ab Owain.[102] It has also been suggested that the stone keep was built by Henry II, who seized Caerleon from Iorwerth ab Owain in 1171 and held it until 1173.[103] The Pipe Roll for 1171–72 certainly shows that large quantities of food and salt were sent by the king for the provisioning of Caerleon Castle, but there is no record of expenditure on building works there.[104]

Taking advantage of Henry II's absence overseas, Iorwerth ab Owain and his son Hywel finally recaptured Caerleon Castle in July 1173. The useful account of the siege of Caerleon in the *Brut y Tywysogyon* describes how Iorwerth captured the men who were defending the bailey, and that the castle, presumably referring to the keep, was surrendered on the following day.[105] The fact that the rest of the garrison were still able to hold out in the keep (albeit for a day) in spite of the bailey having been taken, perhaps hints that it was more than a mere timber structure, and that the stone keep may have been constructed before the siege.

From 1175 until 1217, Caerleon remained in the hands of the Welsh lords of Gwynllŵg, passing from Iorwerth ab Owain to his son Hywel (founder of nearby Llantarnam Abbey) who apparently held the

Fig. 23. The medieval tower next to the Hanbury Arms, Caerleon. *Photograph: K. Hoverd.*

castle until about 1210, when he was succeeded by his son Morgan (d. 1248).[106] In 1217, William Marshal seized Caerleon from Morgan ap Hywel, and, according to the contemporary account in the *Histoire de Guillaume le Marechal*, compelled Morgan to issue a charter granting his castle to him.[107] From that point onwards, Caerleon became part of the Marshal inheritance, although Morgan ap Hywel attempted unsuccessfully on numerous occasions to recover the castle through litigation in the king's court.[108]

As at Usk, it is probable that the Marshal and his sons were chiefly responsible for converting Caerleon Castle from what was still a largely timber and earthen structure into a stone-built castle. From a plan drawn up to accompany Coxe's description of the castle, together with a number of eighteenth-century engravings, it is possible to show that the bailey was surrounded with a stone wall, fortified with D-shaped and circular towers along its circuit, one of which survives next to the Hanbury Arms Hotel (Fig. 23). This tower has three well-preserved arrow slits, which, as Knight has shown, are identical to those in the Garrison Tower at Usk Castle, which is believed to have been built by the Marshal before 1219. The fact that Caerleon Castle successfully resisted an attack by the formidable Welsh prince Llywelyn ab Iorwerth in 1231, despite the town being reduced to ashes, bears testimony to the strength of its defences. It appears that there was also an outer enclosure, fortified with a stone wall and towers, extending westward along the riverside. On the death of the last of the Marshal's sons in 1245, the partition of the estate brought Usk and Caerleon to earl Richard de Clare.[109]

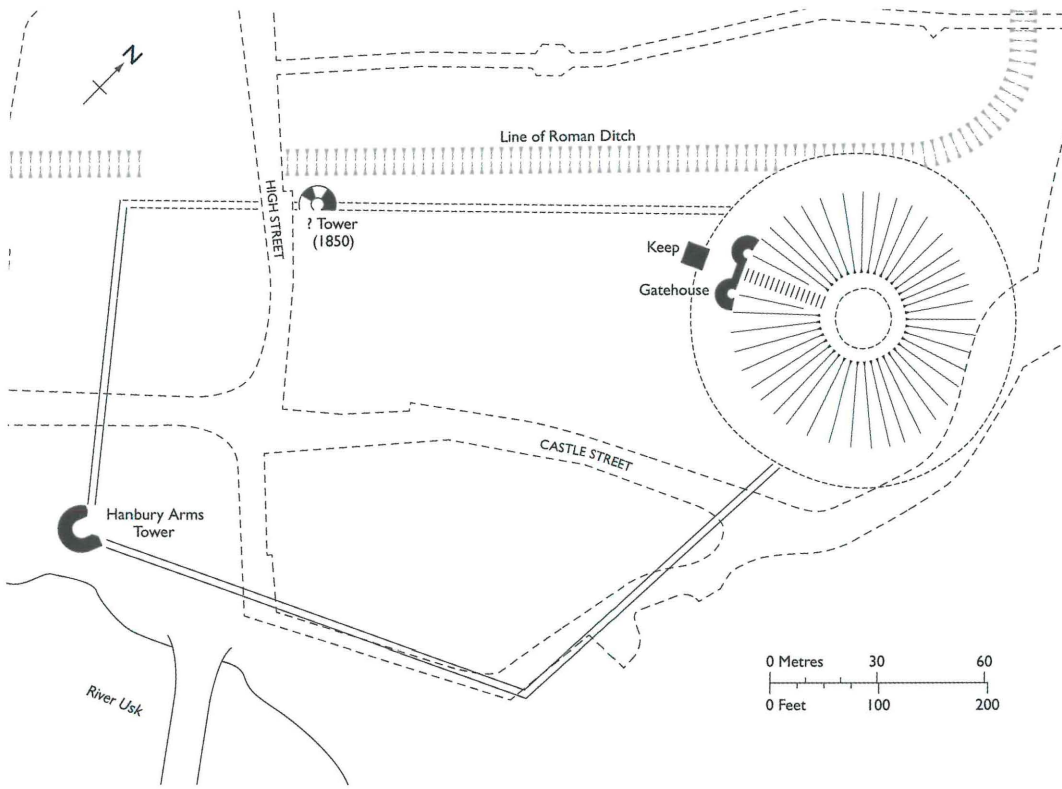

Fig. 24. A plan of Caerleon Castle in relation to the Roman legionary fortress.
Drawing: P. Lawrence after J. Knight.

There is little evidence of major building works at Caerleon Castle during the time of Richard de Clare (d. 1262) or Gilbert II de Clare (d. 1295). The earliest surviving account of the reeve of the manor of Caerleon, for 1292–93, alludes merely to the roofing of a round tower with 600 shingles.[110] More extensive repairs to the castle were undertaken in 1303–04, when the sum of £4 19s 7d was spent on refurbishing the earl's chamber,[111] and in 1305–06, when repairs amounting to £7 were carried out to the lodgings in the castle.[112]

Earl Gilbert III de Clare appears to have carried out some new building work at Caerleon. In 1309–10 he was carrying out repairs to an unspecified tower in the castle and erecting a large stone latrine block.[113] Caerleon, like Usk and Llangibby, came in dower to Gilbert's widow, the Countess Matilda (d. 1320). There is little evidence of building works at the castle between 1314 and 1317.[114] However, from 1318 to 1320, the surviving manorial accounts reveal that substantial repairs were carried out to the domestic quarters in the castle and its outer defences were strengthened.

A new furnace was built in the castle at a cost of £4 12s 9d, while £4 18s was spent on an extensive programme of building works and repairs to the gates, towers and domestic buildings in the castle. Repairs were carried out to the carpentry work of the countess's chamber and the gutters around a closet or latrine (*cloaca*) in the same chamber, while tilers were employed in repairing faults in the kitchen, pantry and stable and making four louvres in the kitchen. Carpenters were hired to make a window in the hall and a stairway leading from the kitchen, and a dresser house next to the door of the hall. A pentice or lean-to building, probably of wood, was built adjoining the dresser house.

A large quantity of boards were purchased for roofing over a window in the hall (presumably a bay window) and a chamber in the 'high tower' (*Alta Turri*) where John de Merlawe, keeper of the countess's household, used to sleep. The 'high tower' mentioned here must almost certainly be the tower upon the motte, and was evidently still in a habitable state. It is clearly distinguished in the account from another structure called the great tower (*magna turris*) which could possibly have been a residential building, but seems to have fallen into some disrepair. The windows of the same tower were repaired, and labourers were employed in removing stone and earth, which had been dumped there on account of the demolition of a stretch of curtain wall next to the kitchen for the building of the new pentice.

In 1319–21, substantial amounts of money were spent on strengthening the defences of the castle. A new wall was built, which is described as being situated outside the bailey, towards or adjoining the new mill. The precise location of the wall and the mill is difficult to pinpoint exactly; but from the evidence of the accounts it appears that the new wall was situated close to the river. Somewhat surprisingly, instead of reusing old Roman building materials, of which there was an abundant supply at Caerleon, it appears that stone was brought from a quarry at Liswerry, near Newport.

Elizabeth de Burgh surrendered Caerleon to Hugh Despenser in June 1322, but regained possession of it, along with Usk and Llangibby, in 1326. However, there is little evidence that Elizabeth or her household stayed frequently at Caerleon Castle, or spent very much on its maintenance. Consequently, the primary function of the castle increasingly became that of an administrative centre rather than a residence. By the early fifteenth century, it appears that the great tower was being used as a prison for the town of Caerleon.[115]

CONCLUSION

It has not been the intention of this article to provide a complete architectural history of these three castles, but to concentrate on a particular period, the years between *c.* 1250–1350, for which we have a remarkably large and detailed body of documentary and structural evidence. However, while an analysis

of the surviving documents and standing remains can yield considerable light on the building sequence at these castles, there are many unresolved questions, which might only be answered satisfactorily by a programme of archaeological excavation.

Above all, it should be noted that the majority of the surviving ministers' accounts for Usk, Llangibby and Caerleon date from after 1295. Relatively few accounts have survived for the time of Earl Gilbert II de Clare (1263–95), so we only have a very limited and fragmentary picture of the building works carried out by this renowned castle-builder. Nevertheless, there is little evidence to suggest that he was responsible for major building campaigns at these three castles, with the exception of the building of a new tower at Usk *ante* 1289. Earl Gilbert seems to have been chiefly preoccupied with his frontier castles in Glamorgan, above all, his great fortress of Caerphilly; the key to consolidating his control over the upland commotes of Glamorgan.

Based on the evidence of the accounts, it is possible to define a series of three distinct building phases:

1. Between 1307 and 1320, Earl Gilbert III de Clare and his widow, the Countess Matilda spent considerable sums improving the domestic accommodation at Usk and Caerleon, and rebuilding Llangibby on a grand scale.
2. Between 1320 and 1322, Elizabeth de Burgh and her husband Roger Dammory completed the domestic buildings begun by their predecessors at Usk, Llangibby and Caerleon, and also executed a rapid programme of fortification at all three castles.
3. Between 1327 and 1350, sporadic repairs and new building works were carried out by Elizabeth de Burgh at Usk and Llangibby, mostly to improve and enlarge the existing residential buildings.

In general, it is certainly true that these building works were largely domestic and not military in character. At Usk, where the chamber block and service range project beyond the curtain wall of the inner ward, it is clear that domestic considerations took precedence over defensibility.[116] Similarly at Llangibby; although the huge Great Gatehouse and Lord's Tower present an imposing façade, it is evident, when viewed more closely, that the emphasis was increasingly on domesticity. The large windows and latrine chutes inserted in both structures afford ample evidence that they were envisaged primarily as residences, and that defensive considerations were of secondary importance.

The building works at Usk, Llangibby and Caerleon may be viewed as indicative of a changing trend in baronial castle building in the Welsh March during the first half of the fourteenth century, aptly characterized by Anthony Emery as a 'movement towards residential improvement'.[117] As the political situation in south Wales gradually stabilized, the Marcher barons could concentrate less on fortifications, and spend more on enhancing the standard of residential accommodation in their castles. The great hall and kitchen erected by the younger Despenser at Caerphilly during the 1320s,[118] the range of apartments built at Grosmont by the earls of Lancaster in the early to mid-fourteenth century,[119] the domestic ranges built at Coity Castle by the Turberville family during the same period,[120] the New Lodgings added to Swansea Castle[121] and Humphrey de Bohun's residential keep-gatehouse at Caldicot Castle, built during the middle decades of the fourteenth century,[122] may be cited as other examples of this movement.

Defensive works were, however, not neglected altogether; the climate of unrest stirred up by Despenser's policy of territorial expansion in the Welsh March, culminating in the baronial revolt of 1321–22, provided a strong motive for the Marcher barons to strengthen their defences. However, with the notable exception of the outer ward curtain and gatehouse at Usk Castle, most of these fortifications were of a temporary, ad hoc character, mostly consisting of wooden brattices and ditches, rather than substantial masonry works.

The building activities of Gilbert II de Clare have always (understandably) overshadowed those of his less illustrious successors. This paper has tried to show, that the works carried out by Earl Gilbert III de Clare and his successors at Usk, Llangibby and Caerleon during the first half of the fourteenth century, while by no means as extensive as the works of the 'Red Earl' at Caerphilly or Morlais, are nonetheless of great historical, architectural and archaeological interest. It has also highlighted the role of women in completing schemes started by their husbands and in commissioning major building works to suit their particular needs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Mr D. A. Addams-Williams and Mr and Mrs H. Humphreys for their permission to undertake work at Llangibby and Usk Castles respectively. We would also like to thank Ken Hoverd for the photography and Pete Lawrence for help in preparing the line drawings. The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales have kindly given permission to publish their recent plan of the Usk Castle, and the Gwent Record Office have allowed the reproduction of an estate plan from their collections. Jack Spurgeon read and made a number of very useful suggestions on the text. John Kenyon and John Goodall have also provided helpful comments. The research work was funded by Cadw, who have generously given a grant towards the publication of this paper.

APPENDIX

BUILDING ACCOUNTS IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES FOR USK, LLANGIBBY AND CAERLEON CASTLES 1289–1350

USK CASTLE

SC6/926/30	Receiver's account 4/1 – 16/7/1289
SC6/926/31	Receiver's account 29/9/1293 – 29/9/1294
SC6/927/2	Receiver's account 29/9/1296 – 29/9/1297
SC6/927/5	Receiver's account 29/9/1302 – 29/9/1303
SC6/927/6	Receiver's account 29/9/1303 – 29/9/1304
SC6/927/8	Receiver's account 29/9/1304 – 29/9/1305
SC6/927/9	Receiver's account 29/9/1305 – 29/9/1306
SC6/1247/29	Receiver's account 29/9/1308 – 29/9/1309
SC6/927/15	Receiver's account 5/12/1314 – 29/9/1315
SC6/927/17	Receiver's account 29/9/1315 – 29/9/1316
SC6/927/18	Receiver's account 29/9/1315 – 29/9/1316
SC6/927/21	Receiver's account 29/9/1316 – 29/9/1317
SC6/927/23	Borough reeve's account 29/9/1315 – 29/9/1317
SC6/927/24	Receiver's account 29/9/1318 – 29/9/1319
SC6/927/25	Manorial reeve's account 29/9/1318 – 29/9/1319
SC6/927/27	Receiver's account 3/7/1320 – 29/9/1320
SC6/927/29	Receiver's account 29/9/1320 – 29/9/1321
SC6/927/30	Manorial reeve's account 29/9/1320 – 29/9/1321
SC6/927/31	Receiver's account 1321–1322
SC6/927/32	Manorial reeve's account 29/9/1322 – 29/9/1323
SC6/928/2	Receiver's account 29/9/1326 – 12/5/1327
SC6/928/3	Manorial reeve's account 29/9/1326 – 29/9/1327
SC6/928/5	Castle reeve's account 29/9/1328 – 29/9/1329
SC6/928/7	Receiver's account 29/9/1329 – 29/9/1330
SC6/928/9	Receiver's account 29/9/1330 – 29/9/1331
SC6/928/11	Receiver's account 29/9/1341 – 29/9/1342
SC6/928/12	Receiver's account 29/9/1342 – 29/9/1343
SC6/928/13	Receiver's account 29/9/1344 – 29/9/1345
SC6/928/14	Receiver's account 29/9/1345 – 29/9/1346
SC6/928/15	Receiver's account 29/9/1346 – 29/9/1347
SC6/928/16	Receiver's account 29/9/1348 – 29/9/1349
E101/91/14	Account of food supplied for Christmas feast at Usk in 1326.

LLANGIBBY (TREGRUK) CASTLE

SC6/925/10	Reeve's account 29/9/1297 – 29/9/1298
SC6/925/11	Reeve's account 29/9/1301 – 29/9/1302

SC6/925/12	Reeve's account 29/9/1302 – 29/9/1303
SC6/925/13	Reeve's account 29/9/1305 – 29/9/1306
SC6/925/14	Reeve's account 29/9/1312 – 29/9/1313
SC6/925/15	Reeve's account 29/9/1315 – 29/9/1316
SC6/925/16	Reeve's account 29/9/1318 – 29/9/1319
SC6/925/17	Reeve's account 29/9/1319 – 29/9/1320
SC6/925/18	Reeve's account 29/9/1320 – 29/9/1321
SC6/927/31	Attachment to Usk receiver's account 12/7/1323
SC6/928/11	Usk receiver's account 29/9/1341 – 29/9/1342

CAERLEON

SC6/920/13	Manorial reeve's account 29/9/1292 – 29/9/1293
SC6/920/15	Borough reeve's account 29/9/1293 – 29/9/1294
SC6/920/17	Borough reeve's account 29/9/1305 – 29/9/1306
SC6/920/18	Borough reeve's account 29/9/1309 – 29/9/1310
SC6/920/21	Borough reeve's account 5/12/1314 – 29/9/1315
SC6/920/26	Borough reeve's account 29/9/1318 – 29/9/1319
SC6/920/28	Borough reeve's account 29/9/1319 – 3/7/1320
SC6/920/29	Manorial reeve's account 29/9/1319 – 29/9/1320
SC6/921/1	Manorial reeve's account 29/9/1320 – 29/9/1321
SC6/921/2	Borough reeve's account 29/9/1320 – 29/9/1321
SC6/921/3 m.2	Manorial reeve's account 7/11/1321 – 25/1/1322
SC6/921/4	Borough reeve's account 29/9/1321 – 29/9/1322
SC6/921/5	Manorial reeve's account 29/9/1325 – 29/9/1326

NOTES

1. At least three other demesne castles were held by the Clare family during the period under discussion. These were: the motte at Trelech, held in dower by Countess Maud (1263-89); the minor demesne castle at Rumney in Gwynllŵg lordship, which survived until its destruction in 1295; and more significantly, as *caput* of Gwynllŵg, Old Newport on Stowe Hill, which survived well into the fourteenth century before it was replaced by a new stone castle alongside the River Usk.
2. These accounts are to be found in the National Archives: Public Record Office (PRO), Class SC6 (Ministers' Accounts).
3. See Appendix for a list of these accounts.
4. PRO, SC6/1202/1; PRO, SC6/1202/2.
5. *Calendar of Close Rolls 1321–24*, 15 Edw III (1322), 541–2. This states that 'in the said towns and castles . . . took and burnt all the charters, remembrances and muniments of the said Hugh, to his damage of £2,000'.
6. W. Rees, *Caerphilly Castle and its place in the Annals of Glamorgan* (Caerphilly, 1974), 109–21.
7. W. Rees, *South Wales and the March 1284–1415* (Oxford, 1925).
8. G. A. Holmes, *The Estates of the Higher Nobility in Fourteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1957), 36.

9. Rees op. cit. (note 7), 133 n.
10. A. J. Taylor, 'Usk Castle and the Pipe Roll of 1185', *Archaeol. Cambrensis* 99 (1947), 249–55.
11. D. J. C. King and J. C. Perks, 'Llangibby Castle', *Archaeol. Cambrensis* 105 (1956), 96–132. A letter from David Cathcart King to Arnold Taylor thanks him for passing on his transcriptions of the documents (John Kenyon pers. com.).
12. J. K. Knight, 'Usk Castle and its affinities' in M. R. Apted, R. Gildyard-Beer and A. D. Saunders (eds), *Ancient Monuments and their Interpretation: Essays Presented to A. J. Taylor* (Chichester, 1977), 139–54; B. H. St John O'Neil, *Usk Castle* (1938).
13. J. C. Ward, 'Elizabeth de Burgh and Usk Castle', *Monmouthshire Antiquary* 18 (2002), 13–22.
14. Knight op. cit. (note 12), 139–41. The first definite reference to the keep occurs in a petition of the prior of Goldcliff to Edward II dated 1321–22, concerning his seizure and imprisonment by Roger Dammory for seven days 'in the "donjon" in the castle of Usk': W. Rees (ed.), *Calendar of Ancient Petitions relating to Wales* (Cardiff, 1975), 102–4.
15. Taylor op. cit. (note 10), 249–55.
16. The account of Humphrey de Bohun keeper of the estates of Richard de Clare during the years 1262–63 is in PRO, SC6/1202/1. It contains an account of expenses for the garrisoning of Usk Castle, but no references to works.
17. PRO, SC6/926/30, printed in Taylor op. cit. (note 15), 254–5.
18. PRO, SC6/927/5 m.1.
19. The accounts of the receiver of Usk for 1293–95 contain references to the expenses of the earl's son and his household while resident at Usk, apparently for brief visits (PRO, SC6/927/6, 8–9). An account of the expenses of the Earl Gilbert for a journey from Berwick to Usk in 1309 is printed as an addendum in W. B. D. D. Turnbull (ed.), *Compota domestica familiarum de Bukingham et d'Angouleme 1443, 52, 62. Quibus annexae expensae cujusdam comitis in itinere 1273* (Abbotsford Club: Edinburgh, 1836), 95–104.
20. PRO, SC6/1247/29.
21. PRO, SC6/927/17. It is worth noting that, according to local tradition, the castle prison was situated in the Garrison Tower.
22. PRO, SC6/927/14: '*Pro carbon et calc car pro operibus castri de Usk*'.
23. For a detailed account of the partition of the Clare inheritance after the death of Earl Gilbert III de Clare in 1314, see M. Altschul, *A Baronial Family in Medieval England, the Clares 1217–1314* (Baltimore, 1965) 165–71.
24. *Calendar of Close Rolls 1313–18*, 131–9.
25. Altschul, op. cit. (note 23), 166–7.
26. An enrolled copy of the partition of Earl Gilbert's inheritance is in PRO, C47/9/23–25. For an analysis of the document see Altschul op. cit. (note 23), 169–70, who argues that it was probably drawn up in about 1320.
27. PRO, SC6/927/24.
28. PRO, SC6/927/24; SC6/927/25.
29. National Library of Wales, Bute Estate Records M58/1.
30. PRO, SC6/927/17.
31. The death of the Countess Matilda on 2 July 1320 is confirmed by the account of the receiver of Usk (PRO, SC6/927/27) which runs from 3 July to 29 September (Michelmas) 1320.
32. PRO, SC6/927/27. A building was constructed for the queen's goldsmith at Rhuddlan Castle in 1283. See H. M. Colvin (ed.), *The History of the King's Works: the Middle Ages* (HMSO, 1963), vol. 2, 1037.

33. For a useful account of the revolt of the Marcher lords in 1321, see J. Conway Davies, 'The Despenser War in Glamorgan', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 3rd ser., 9, (1915), 21–64.
34. For an analysis of Despenser's territorial ambitions in the March, see R. R. Davies, *Lordship and Society in the March of Wales 1282–1400* (Oxford 1978), 279–81.
35. G. A. Holmes, 'A Protest against the Despensers, 1326', *Speculum* 30 (1955), 208. Holmes prints a letter written by Elizabeth de Burgh, written on 22 May 1326, protesting against her treatment at the hands of Despenser. This letter survives in a copy enrolled in the Mortimer estate cartulary known as the Liber Niger de Wigmore (British Library, Harleian MSS, 1240).
36. See 'The Itinerary of Edward II and his Household', *PRO Lists and Indexes Soc.*, 211, 290–1. Also see an analysis of Edward's itinerary, based on the chronicle sources, in W. Stubbs (ed.), *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II* (Record Series, 1883), vol. 2, xciii–xcvi.
37. PRO, E101/91/14 m.1. The top part of this membrane is partly defaced and difficult to read, but it certainly states that the lady Elizabeth and her household were at Usk by 14 October 1326, if not earlier.
38. The place of Usk in the itinerary of Elizabeth de Burgh is discussed at length in Ward op. cit. (note 13).
39. PRO, E101/91/14 The roll of expenses of Elizabeth de Burgh's household from Michelmas 1326 – Michelmas 1327 shows that she was in residence at Usk from no later than 14 October 1326 to September 1327. The account of the reeve of Usk for 1328–29 contains several specific references to the repair of buildings '*contra adventum Comitisse*'.
40. PRO, E101/92/22 Account of the expenses of the household of Elizabeth de Burgh, 16 Edw III.
41. P. Courtney, *Medieval and Later Usk — Report on the Excavations at Usk 1965–76* (Cardiff, 1994), 102–3 and notes there cited.
42. C. Given-Wilson (ed.), *The Chronicle of Adam Usk 1377–1421* (Oxford, 1997), 212. Usk states that 'Griffith, the eldest son of Owen, attacked Usk Castle with a great host on the feast of St Gregory [12 March 1405] – an evil hour for him; however, the defences there had been considerably strengthened, and Lord Grey of Codnor, Sir John Greyndour, and many more of the king's soldiers were there, and they made a sortie in force from the castle and captured him and his men'.
43. PRO, SC6/928/18–23.
44. PRO, SC6/928/22.
45. D. J. C. King and J. C. Perks, 'Llangibby Castle', *Archaeol. Cambrensis* 105 (1956), 96–132.
46. PRO, SC6/1202/1. For a fuller study of this account see: R. F. Walker and C. J. Spurgeon, 'The custody of the de Clare Castles in Glamorgan and Gwent, 1262–1263', *Studia Celtica* 37 (2003), 43–73.
47. A number of Bogo de Clare's accounts for the years 1284–86 are printed at length with valuable notes in E. A. Giuseppi, 'Wardrobe and Household Accounts of Bogo de Clare A.D. 1284–6', *Archaeologia* 70 (1920), 1–56. Of particular interest is a reference to Bogo taking part in hunting at Llangibby in September 1285. However, one gets the impression from Bogo's household accounts that he regarded Llangibby as more than merely a fortified hunting lodge, but as one of his most important residences.
48. Richard de Esden, who appears as keeper of the countess's household in 1315–16, is named as one of the executors of the Countess Matilda's estate at the time of her death in 1320 (*Calendar of Close Rolls 1318–22*, 323). The account SC6/925/16 can be securely dated to 1317–18, on the basis of specific references to courts held on the Saturday on the day after the feast of St Martin, and the Saturday on the Feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary.

49. PRO, SC6/925/11: '*In quadam turri in Castro combusto per Gwerram emendando et reficiendo in parte ut patet per parcell xliii.s iii.d ob.*'.
50. For evidence (albeit inconclusive) that the revolt of Madog ap Llywelyn may have spread to Gwent, see J. E. Morris, *The Welsh Wars of Edward I* (Oxford, 1901), 251–2.
51. RCAHMW, *An Inventory of Ancient Monuments in Glamorgan Vol. III* (Llandudno, 2000), part 1b, 5, 187.
52. PRO, SC6/925/12.
53. PRO, SC6/925/13.
54. King and Perks op. cit. (note 45), 104.
55. Following King and Perks, Walker and Spurgeon op. cit. (note 46), 63–4 accepted their view that the nearby ringwork constituted a modest stone castle that was replaced by the huge stone castle on the hill. They add in support that the earlier castle was deemed sufficiently defensible to have been garrisoned by de Bohun in the crisis of 1262–63.
56. PRO, SC6/925/15.
57. PRO, SC6/925/16.
58. PRO, SC6/927/17.
59. W. Coxe, *An Historical Tour of Monmouthshire* (London, 1801), 118.
60. PRO, SC6/925/16.
61. PRO, SC6/925/17.
62. PRO, SC6/925/18.
63 King and Perks op. cit. (note 46), 110–126.
64. Ibid., 110–116.
65. J. C. Bradney, *The History of Monmouthshire* (London, 1923), vol. 3, 96.
66. King and Perks, op. cit. (note 46), 110.
67. Ibid., 118.
68. Ibid.,122.
69. R. C. Turner, *Chepstow Castle*, Cadw guidebook (Cardiff, 2002), 44.
70. PRO, SC6/927/31: '*In quodam brecca muri de castro de Tregruc fract' reparanda- xxix.s viii.d.*'.
71. PRO, E101/91/14: '*Die Merc xxii Jul . . . Aula et Camera – In cirpis emptis pro aula et camera apud Tregruk iii.d.*'.
72. PRO, E101/92/22: account of the expenses of the household of Elizabeth de Burgh, 16 Edward III.
73. PRO, E101/93/2.
74. PRO, SC6/928/11 m.1d.
75. Thomas Churchyard writing in 1587 describes: 'upon a mightie hill, Langibby stands, a castle once of state: where well you may the countrey view at will, and where there is, some building newe of late': T. Churchyard, The Worthines of Wales (London, 1567, reprinted 1776), 20. For Richard Symonds see C. E. Long (ed.), 'Diary of the Marches of the Royal Army during the Great Civil War kept by Richard Symonds', *Camden Society* 74 (1859), 206.
76. King and Perks op. cit. (note 46), 127–32.
77. Ibid., 131–2.
78. Altschul op. cit. (note 23), 171.
79. RCAHMW, op. cit. (note 51), 175–83.
80. Ibid., 236–41.
81. H. Cane, *Bungay Castle Guide* (Bungay, 1994).
82. See C. M. Woolgar, *The Great Household in Late Medieval Britain* (New Haven and London, 1999), and A. Emery, *Greater Medieval Houses of England and Wales 1300–1350, Vol. II. East Anglia, Central England and Wales* (Cambridge, 2000), 537–40.

83. Ward op. cit. (note 13).
84. Ibid., 4.
85. Gwent Record Office (GRO), Newport 3385.
86. O. Rackham, *Trees and Woodland in the British Landscape* (London, 1976), 146.
87. GRO, D.871.7.
88. Bradney op. cit. (note 65), vol. 3, 103.
89. See Turner op. cit. (note 69); D. Renn, *Caerphilly Castle* (Cardiff, 2004); J. Kenyon, *Kidwelly Castle* (Cardiff, 2003), all Cadw guidebooks.
90. M. W. Thompson, 'The Great Hall & Great Chamber Block', in R. Shoesmith and A. Johnson (eds), *Ludlow Castle* (Logaston Press, Herefordshire, 2000), 167–4.
91. C. A. R. Radford, *Goodrich Castle*, English Heritage guidebook (HMSO, 1987).
92. J. Newman, *The Buildings of Wales – Gwent / Monmouthshire* (London, 2000), 420–1.
93. T. B. James and A. M. Robinson, *Clarendon Palace: the history of a medieval palace and hunting lodge near Salisbury, Wiltshire* (London, 1988).
94. M. Vale, *The Princely Court* (Oxford, 2004), 179–86.
95. D. J. C. King, *Castellarium Anglicanum* (New York, 1983), vol. 1, 281. Also see the description in *Archaeol. Cambrensis*, 6th ser., 13 (1913), 79–80.
96. Domesday Book, vol. 1, 185b: '*Willelmus de Scohies tenet viii carucatas terre in castellaria de Carliun, et Turstinus tenet de eo.*'
97. Newman op. cit. (note 92), 142.
98. J. F. Dimock (ed.), *Giraldi Cambrensis, Opera,* vol. 6, 55.
99. See E. Armitage, *Early Norman Castles* (London, 1904), 113–15, for a careful discussion of the context and actual meaning of Giraldus's reference to a 'gigantic tower'.
100. For a useful account of the de Ballon family and their estates in England and Wales, see J. H. Round, *Studies in Peerage and Family History* (London, 1901), chapter 4. Round showed that Winebald de Ballon acquired the estates of Thurstan fitz Rolf, probably by grant from William Rufus, in about 1090.
101. J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the earliest times to the Edwardian Conquest,* 3rd edn (London, 1939), vol. 2, 478, n. 63.
102. Ibid., 478 n. 63, 507. Pipe Roll 2 Henry II, 49.
103. A. Pettifer, *Welsh Castles* (Woodbridge, 2000), 122.
104. *Pipe Roll, 18 Henry II*, 119: '*Et pro C summis frumenti ad muniendum Castellum de Carliun viii.li et xiii.s et x.d.*'.
105. T. Jones (ed.), *Brut y Tywysogyon or the Chronicle of the Princes – Red Book of Hergest Version* (Cardiff, 1955), 162–3.
106. The date of Hywel ap Iorwerth's death is difficult to establish precisely. He was alive in 1184–85, when he appears 'Hoel de Carliun' in the Pipe Roll for that year as one of six who kept the castles of Neath, Newcastle, Newport and Cardiff for the king (*Pipe Roll* 31 Henry II, 7). He may possibly be identified with 'Hoel fil Morgani' who rendered 40s blanch to the king for holding Caerleon until as late as 1200 (*Pipe Roll*, 1 John, 21).
107. P. Meyer (ed.), *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal . . .* (Paris, 1894), vol. 2, 277–9.
108. Lloyd op. cit. (note 101), vol. 2, 674 n. 108. In 1220 Morgan ap Hywel sued William Marshal the younger, earl of Pembroke (d.1231) for possession of Caerleon (*Rotuli Clausarum,* vol. 1, 436b). In 1222 and 1223, the earl was ordered to hand over the castle to the Crown, but there is no evidence that he complied with these orders (*Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1216–25*, 352, 363). In fact, Caerleon Castle was still in the hands of William Marshal at the time of his death in 1231. Morgan

again sued the Marshals in the king's court for possession of Caerleon in 1233 and 1236 (*Calendar of Patent Rolls,* 1232–47, 26, 160; *Curia Regis Rolls*, 15 (1233–37), no. 489).

109. Altschul op. cit. (note 23), 75.
110. PRO, SC6/920/13.
111. PRO, SC6/920/15.
112. PRO, SC6/920/17.
113. PRO, SC6/920/18.
114. In 1314–15, the reeve of the borough of Caerleon accounted for 23s 2d spent on unspecified repairs to the lodgings in the castle (SC6/920/21). Unfortunately the particulars relating to this account are lost.
115. PRO, SC6/928/18.
116. A parallel for this can be found at Grosmont, where in the early to mid fourteenth century, substantial alterations were made by the earls of Lancaster to provide more comfortable domestic accommodation, including the building of two rectangular residential blocks projecting beyond the curtain wall of the castle: J. K. Knight, *The Three Castles, Monmouthshire,* Cadw guidebook, 2nd edn (Cardiff, 2000), 13–4.
117. A. Emery op. cit. (note 82), 622–24.
118. D Renn, *Caerphilly Castle,* Cadw guidebook (Cardiff, 2004).
119. Knight 2000 op. cit. (note 16), 13–4.
120. J. R. Kenyon and C. J. Spurgeon, *Coity Castle, Ogmore Castle and Newcastle*, Cadw guidebook (Cardiff, 2001), 11–4.
121. RCAHMW, *The Inventory for Glamorgan – the Later Castles,* part 1b, 360–8.
122. Newman, op. cit. (note 92), 420–1.

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