

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE CHAPTER.

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to present an outline of the research that this thesis seeks to address. In doing so, section 1.2 will briefly consider the background to the general study of castles. Following this, 1.3 will pursue a more specific approach to research centred on motte and bailey castles and other Norman earthworks. It is hoped that what will arise from the introduction is an understanding of the lack of specialist research that has been undertaken previously in this area. The geological setting of the area researched, and its limits will be explained and outlined in section 1.4. Section 1.5 will cover the time span of the research and the reasons for having chosen the topic. Section 1.6 will present the aims of the research. The intention of section 1.7 is to present the layout of the thesis and an explanation of the chapters.

### 1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY.

Anyone interested in the study of castles will have no trouble at all in finding material with which to work. Their impressive ruins, sometimes foreboding, sometimes romantic, seem always to have caught the imagination of people. They whisper to us of times long past, of kings and knights, of foul deeds and fair, glory and despair. Many authors and artists have, over the centuries, put pen to paper and recorded their observations of these monuments to feudal power. Unfortunately the quiet witness of the castles themselves are no match to loud subjectivism at the hands of many a writer or artist who has sought to create their own personal record of history. In the same way that in the past the record has been biased towards the romantic and majestic, or the interests of the writer or the intended audience, today's presentation of castles continues with the trend towards misinformation. A prime example is the film industry which confuses us with a host of images; from one extreme, the gleaming walls of Camelot, to the other, the miserable timber castles of the Scottish frontier in 'Braveheart'. With this in mind it is imperative that the researcher distance himself from the easily available mass of information and concentrate firstly on the observable evidence. Then and only then can what has been written be critically evaluated.

#### **Evaluating evidence:**

In order to explain the process, consider the account written by Giraldus Cambrensis c.1188-1214: the following was taken from the translation of the final revision of *The Journey Through*

*Wales* 1214, concerning events at Abergavenny Castle 1175 & 1182, (Thorpe 1978. 50). There are three extracts relevant to castle research. In the first, he wrote that on the night before the castle was attacked ‘a strong force of soldiery concealed themselves in the overgrown ditches of Abergavenny Castle’, (Thorpe 1978. 110). In the second he wrote of William de Braose’s alibi for the 1175 massacre at Abergavenny; ‘William was tossed into the moat at one of its deepest and sheerest points’, (Thorpe 1978. 112). In the third; whilst relating the prowess of Gwent bowmen, he wrote, ‘two men at arms were rushing across a bridge to take refuge in the tower which had been built on a great mound of earth’, (Thorpe 1978 113). Gerald was not an eyewitness to the 1175 event for it was known he was in France from 1174-1176, (Thorpe 1978. 14). It was also unlikely that he was present for the 1182 event either, due to the phrasing of the stories. That, however, does not detract from the value of the accounts because the information comes not from what Gerald had to say but rather from what he assumed was public knowledge. Therefore the first extract is useful in that it tells us that Abergavenny Castle had deep ditches which were overgrown in 1188; an unwise part of the defences to neglect but possibly reflective of the times. In the second he tells us that the castle had a moat, both deep and sheer, whilst in the third, the castle had a tower on a mound that was approached by a bridge.

Today’s castle has neither ditch nor moat and the tower has long gone. However, the mound, now a landscaped feature covered by the museum building, is still there and can even be traced back to 1784 engravings (Vol. 2. plate 1). A local archaeologist, G. A. Makepeace, who has worked on the castle for several years, believes that the moat exists outside of the present north wall (*pers comm.*), a premise that can be backed up by Thomas Morrice’s survey of the castle in 1800 which was included in Coxe’s *Tour in Monmouthshire* (Vol. 2. figure. 1). In this instance the combination of documentary evidence, antiquarian evidence, and excavation helps towards revealing the early nature of the castle at Abergavenny which was very different from the present remains.

### **Castle studies:**

In 1963, two writers, Hogg and King, produced a preliminary list of the *Early Castles in Wales and the Marches*, in response to the fact that ‘no map or list has been published which shows the complete distribution of castles built at that time’ 1066–1215 (1963. 77). Initially conducted in ignorance of each other, Hogg’s desktop centred research and King’s fieldwork produced significant correlations. In 1967, they found it necessary, however, to add to the list in a paper called, *Masonry Castles in Wales and the Marches*, (Hogg and King 1967). Since then other writers have taken up the challenge of documenting castle history in Wales with the result that certain areas have received much needed research. Consultation with Frank Olding, at the time curator of Abergavenny Castle Museum, revealed that Glamorgan, Gloucestershire and northern

and eastern Herefordshire have received fairly extensive coverage over the recent decades. Gwent and Eryng, however, have suffered from neglect, which has left a potentially rich area of the medieval Welsh March un-researched in detail. So what are the sources that make up the background study to earthwork castles? It is possible to break them for convenience into three sources: primary, cartographic, and antiquarian and all will be used in appropriate parts of the thesis.

### **Primary sources:**

The primary sources are contemporary records relating to aspects of castles or their ownership such as the various Calendar Rolls and Warrants, or the Domesday survey, etc. However, two important problems concerning documentation and earthwork castles should be remembered. In the first instance there is a very limited amount of evidence available for earthwork castles, what there is tends to be indirect, inferred through association of ownership or time and place. Secondly, this type of source is limited further in respect to the Welsh marches because such documents were related to crown interests. In the case of the March, the castles were in the most part outside direct crown interest being the concern of the local lord. The Marcher lords were in fact tenants in chief of the king but in practice the Marcher lord was governor and universal landlord with the exception of church interests (Davies 1978. 41). They had the right to build castles and levy war without royal licence (Edwards 1956. 155). In the Marcher lordships 'the king's writs did not run' (Banks 1886. 17).

Also included in the primary source group are histories such as the *Brut Y Tywysogyon*, *Brenhinedd Y Saesson* and *The Anglo Saxon Chronicles* as well as the work of medieval writers such as Ordericus Vitalis, William of Malmesbury and Giraldus Cambrensis etc. All these sources can be used as a means to identify castles; there is even the possibility that they were still in use at the time of writing

### **Cartographic sources:**

The cartographic sources deal with maps over the centuries; contemporary maps recording the presence of castles across the land and retrospective interpretations of the specialist castle studies exponents. Unfortunately with the contemporary maps, churches appear to have been more favoured than castles amongst the mapmakers, and it is also often difficult to work out if an icon was supposed to mean a church or castle. Such sources of early mapmaking have many inconsistencies and should be treated with care. Michael pointed out in his book *The Mapping of Monmouthshire* (1985. 27) that a great deal of work done by later map makers was based on copies from the earlier prints provided by their predecessors rather than careful fieldwork. Errors are therefore continued throughout successive publications.

One of the earliest maps consulted for the present research was that of Christopher Saxton, 1577 (Vol. 2. figure 2). According to Saxton's map, not only were there no mottes in Monmouthshire but a number of the county's stone castles such as Usk, Abergavenny and Chepstow, were also left out. In all only seven castles are mentioned: Rogerstone, Greenfield, Grosmont, Skenfrith, White Castle, Raglan and Bishton. Interesting, that John Speed's map of 1610 (Vol. 2. figure 3) shows an almost identical treatment of castles as did Saxton's map. In another instance, John Ogilby's map of 1690 (Vol. 2. figure 4) went into great detail with respect to the village of Trelech but completely missed the motte, which had to have been very much in evidence at the time. In all fairness, the antiquary maps were not always negative in their information. Saxton's map for example showed the existence of the now vanished castles at Greenfield, Newport, Rogerstone and Bishton; although the latter probably was not a castle. Another useful map consulted during this study concerns the northern part of the research area; Taylor's 1754 map (Vol. 2. figure 5) of Hereford records Whitney Castle which was washed away in 1730 when the Wye changed course (Robinson 1869. 136).

By the beginning of the 19th century, interest among mapmakers in recording the castles seemed to have waned considerably giving way to town names and churches. The first reasonably accurate maps were published at the Tower of London 1832 by Lieutenant Colonel Colby of The Royal Engineers. On those maps were recorded castles, tumps, cairns and all manner of ancient works. Those maps were the product of the Board of Ordnance, produced in an effort to standardise cartographic recording (Hindle 1998. 114-5). In the desktop research for this study much work has been undertaken using the first edition maps of the Ordnance Survey Department in identifying and verifying castle sites.

Specialist castle mapping, however, did not really take place until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. William Rees produced the invaluable *Historical Atlas of Wales* in 1951 in which he proposed Marcher holdings throughout the medieval period (Rees 1972). However, Renn's invaluable motte distribution map, which was published in *Antiquity* in 1959, really established the graphical density of mottes in the UK (1959. 109).

### **Antiquarian sources:**

An Antiquarian interest in castle studies can be identified in the works of such 16<sup>th</sup> century authors as Churchyard and Leland. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the wanderings of certain gentlemen such as Hearne, Rogers, Wyndham etc, greatly increased the knowledge base. Although information contained in these types of sources is often highly fanciful, with the right analysis some items of value can be ascertained. The gentleman's tour continued to yield this sort of information well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century; examples will be used in relevant chapters. However, the 19th century produced more academic approaches such as Coxe, Duncumb, Robinson and Clark. In the first



decade of the 20th century two volumes of particular importance to this area of research were published *The Victoria County History for Hereford* and *A History of Monmouthshire from the coming of the Normans into Wales down to the present time*, by Joseph Bradney.

### 1.3 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

#### **The effect of limited evidence:**

Previous research into earthwork and timber castles has been fairly limited in comparison to their masonry counterparts. One of the reasons, noted above, is due to the lack of documents relating to this form of earthwork however, another contributory factor has to be the masonry castle, which has often had a much more visible and accessible impact on the landscape consequently their high visibility has stimulated much more interest and study. An influential reason for the paucity of information about earthwork castles is the nature of their construction materials:

‘ “timber, clay, cob, wattle and daub” has left little above ground evidence for modern popular notice’ (Higham, and Barker, 1994. 17) and in most cases the only remains of an earthwork castle is the mound, (the motte), on which it stood, with possibly a surrounding ditch and an area of enclosed ground, (the bailey). Unfortunately in other cases the mound has disappeared or been redeveloped subsequently all that remains is a scant mention in a written document, map, or word of mouth.

#### **Milestones of research:**

The twentieth century heralded a new approach to the study of earthwork castles with books such as *Early Norman Castles of the British Isles* Armitage (1912), *The English Castle* Braun (1936,) (1962-3. 1966-7. and 1970) Hogg and King, *Norman Castles in Britain* Renn 1968, *Castellarium Anglicanum*, King (1983), *Medieval Fortifications* Kenyon (1990), and *Timber Castles* Higham, and Barker (1994). These publications have brought earthwork castles into the realm of study establishing their importance and their context in history.

#### **Excavations:**

More direct approaches in castle studies can be seen with a slight increase in excavation since the 1960s; according to Renn apart from General Pitt Rivers’s excavation of the castle at Folkstone, in 1878 there had only been four previous relevant excavations including Abinger (Surrey), Mote of Ur (Kirkudbright), Clough, (Co. Down) and Old Aberystwyth (Ceredigion) (1959. 106-12). However, there are a few journal articles dating back to the 1840s that relate to earthwork castles, including reports of excavations by: Wright (1855), at Treago and the large tumulus at St Weonards (Herefordshire), and O’Neil (1936), excavations at Twyn y Cregen,

Llanarth (Monmouthshire). Since Renn's article, earthwork research has gained some momentum with excavations such as Der Hüsterknupp, Herrnbrodt (1960), Sulgrave, Davison (1960-76), Hen Domen, Barker (1960-77), Langstone Court Motte, Alcock (1964), Thetfield, Jarrett and Jones (1965), Longtown, Rowley (1965), Penmaen, Alcock (1966), Skenfrith Castle, Craster (1967), Bramber Castle, Barton and Houlden (1966-7), Hastings, Barker and Barton (1968), Tre Oda, Knight and Talbot (1968-70), Baile Hill, Addyman (1968-77), Richard's Castle, Curnow and Thompson (1970-82), Launceston Castle, Saunders (1970-82), Penhow Castle, Wrathmell (1976-9) and Abergavenny Castle, Makepeace (1999-2002), Penyclawdd (Phillips 2002-2003) and Trelech (Phillips 2002-2003) to select just a few.

## 1.4 FIELD AREA

### **Initial interest:**

The field area chosen for the research was the southern area of the Welsh March. Despite the fact that the area holds a large number of sites, it represents a very little understood area of the March in comparison to the more, well documented, middle and northern Marches. The area encompasses a pre-conquest castle at Ewyas Harold, an unusually large motte at Caerleon, and at least two interesting small villages with multiple castles, Longtown and Llangiby. These considerations made the region an ideal one for investigation of earth and timber castles.

### **Boundaries:**

The topographical area of this study encompasses the land between the rivers Wye, Usk, Ebbw and Severn with the north-western section running from Abergavenny to Hay on Wye, bounded by the Black Mountains (Vol. 2. figure 6). The map shows the area of the present research, bounded by the thick orange line with the dotted line showing the county boundaries that are presently in operation. The reason for the choice of area was that the rivers and mountains provide natural boundaries which arguably could have influenced land interests; 'this part of Gwent is so fortified by nature, that 'tis environ'd with three noble navigable Rivers'... (Rogers 1708. 24). Rees also interpreted boundaries drawn for the most part along major rivers and in the north-west along the base of the Black Mountains as can be seen in his map of Gwent and Ergyng between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries (Vol. 2. figure 7).

It is conceivable that an invading force would tend to choose such boundaries in an unfamiliar land both for defence and logistics. It is more expedient to defend a site protected by a river than an area of open ground; also in drawing a boundary what better than to use a river bank or mountain ridge. A similar pattern can be seen in the creation of Normandy in France. Normandy had no existence until the 911, when a district of land (*pagi*) was granted to Viking raiders by the

Carolingian King, Charles the Simple, (Bates 1982. 2). The district granted, was bounded in the north by the sea but the eastern edge ran along the rivers: Bresle, Epte and to some extent the Eure whilst the western edge was bounded by the river Risle. Further expansion in 924, moved the western edge of the frontier to the river Vire but It wasn't until 933, that the western edge of Normandy was brought to the coast (Vol. 2. figure 8).

As can be seen above, with the expansion of Normandy, one of the problems with imposed regions is that they change over time. In the case of Gwent and Eryng, however, the change is not only in area but also in name. Gwent and Eryng as bounded areas are a "best fit" interpretation adapted for this study; rather than something that was known to the 11<sup>th</sup> century Norman as a definite boundary. In the process of the research it was found that the choices of those two names were themselves problematic.

### **Eryng:**

Surprisingly the late sixth century name Eryng for the southern part of Herefordshire, north of the Monnow but south and west of the Wye (Davies 1996. 93), is generally accepted. Presumably that is because it has no present meaning the term having long ago disappeared from common usage. It was, however, very well delineated in 926 when Athelstane fixed the limits of territory of the Britons at the river Wye. 'This limit included the districts of Eryng; now called Archenfield, Ewyas and part of Gwent Uchoed...Eryng included all the land between the rivers Monnow and the Wye in its course from Holm Lacy to Monmouth', with its northern limit at the source of the Wormbrook 'and thence by riverlet which ran into the Wye, four miles below Hereford' (Banks 1885. 248). Conversely, Shoesmith suggests that the original land of Eryng probably extended east of the Wye possibly as far as the Severn (1996. 10). Eryng contains the Hundreds of Ewyas Lacy, Webtree and Wormelow with a small part of Greytree included at King's Caple (Vol. 2. figure 9). Archenfield and Ewyas are later subdivisions of the 'ancient British province of Eryng' (Duncumb 1912. 1). Archenfield bounded by the rivers Wye, Dore and Worm and Ewyas by the rivers Wye and Dore and by the Black Mountains to the west.

### **Gwent:**

The choice of Gwent, which has until recently been used to denote an area stretching further to the west than that used for this research, was less easy to define. As can be seen in an enduring debate included in appendix III of *The History of Monmouthshire*:

‘The jurisdiction of Cadair Morganwg (Chair of Glamorgan) extended over the present Glamorgan, Gwent or Monmouthshire, Euas, (Ewyas in Herefordshire) Erging, and Ystrad Yer (the two last now in Breconshire;) these counties, says Llywelyn Sion, were antiently known by the name of Gwent, first, and after that Effyllwg, (Siluria) which included the Forest of Dean.’

(Williams 1796. 13).

‘Gwent, as Llewelin Sion justly observes, included all Glamorgan formerly, as well as The above-mentioned parts of Hereford and Breconshires, and the antient divisions of Gwent were, Gwent uchgoed, Gwent isgoed,...Gwentllwg (Fenny Gwent)...Blaeneu Gwent...and lastly, Gorwennydd...’

(Williams 1796. 14)

‘...All these Gwents...include, according to the ancient limits, the whole of the present Glamorgan and Monmouth shires.’

(Williams 1796. 14)

The Gwent that is recognisable to most people today was adapted from the area established in 1535 by Henry VIII. with the Laws in Wales Act. The act abolished the Marcher holdings of the lords who built the castles that this study addresses. To anyone familiar with the last incarnation of Gwent there will be some surprise that the area delineated for this research does not extend to the River Rhymney. The reason is that the area between the Rivers Rhymney and Usk was divided into two commotes called Edlogan and Gwynllŵg.

‘When Robert fitz Hamon and his Normans dispossessed Jeftin ap Gwrgan, Prince of Glamorgan of his country; the appellation of Morganwg became limited to the country that lies between the Rivers Usk and Neath: this included all of Gwentllwg and Blaeneu Gwent. This extent or limit of Glamorgan continued till the time of Hen. VIII. when the present division of the counties of Wales took place...Gwentllwg is, by many, still considered as of Glamorgan...

(Williams 1796. 15).

‘Wentllwch, in its original acceptation, appears to have included the whole territory between the lordship of Abergavenny on the north, the Severn sea on the south, and was bounded by the river Usk on the east, and the Rumney on the west.’

(Morgan 1885. 259).

Within the time parameters of this study, Gwynllŵg was absorbed into Glywysing; ‘Until the 11<sup>th</sup> century the term Glywysing was used for the whole, while Gwent was used of the eastern part of that whole’ (Davies 1996. 103). The Kingdom of Glywysing eventually became Glamorgan. Edlogan, now in Torfaen, is the more problematic of the two, while the River Usk

would seem to be more a natural choice than the Rivers Ebbw or Shirowy, the steep valley sides of those rivers do provide defensible features as the presence of the mottes at Ruperra, Twmbarlwm, St Illtyd, Mynyddislwyn and Gelligaer show. Even though Ruperra, Mynyddislwyn and Gelligaer are outside of the boundary of this study all five mottes were looked at and the first three were surveyed. Permission to survey Mynyddislwyn was unobtainable and Gelligaer was in such a poor state that survey was inadvisable. The outcome was to include Edlogan as an addition to the main research in order to show the difference of typology amongst these higher altitude sites and their low lying contemporaries. Ruperra, Mynyddislwyn and Gelligaer were not included in this study because of the boundary.

## 1.5 TIME SPAN

The dates, AD 1050–1250, were chosen because that was the defining period for earthwork and timber castle construction. The earlier date of 1050 encompasses the record of Ewyr Harold, the pre-Norman castle in Ergyng. The later date includes Penrhos in Gwent built in 1248 and believed to be the last construction of a timber motte and bailey in the area of this study (Olding 2000).

## 1.6 THE AIM

The aims of the research are to provide as complete a list as possible of all the timber, motte and bailey castles, built in the counties of Gwent and Ergyng between AD 1050 and 1250. The list, once complete, will not only record number and place, but also size, shape, type, date of construction and date of disuse. It is also intended, where possible, to assign building and subsequent ownership, to as many of the castles as possible. Using the ensuing combined database, it is hoped that it will be possible to plot construction development of the timber and earthwork castle across the chosen area. What may emerge is evidence that supports a rolling frontier approach to timber castle construction.

### **The objectives are:**

1. To build as complete a database as possible, of the motte and bailey, timber castles of the chosen areas of the Welsh March that can be assigned to the period of 1050–1250.
2. To survey the castles and try to provide a classification system based on size, and shape, using medieval standard measurement. (*King, in his 1972 paper, identified a possible bias imposed through his use of modern metric calibration; rather than the medieval perch, 5.03m, whilst creating a typological base*).

3. To identify where possible owners or builders of each castle.
4. From 2 and 3 to recognise any patterns that may be identified i.e. did certain lords, build or favour specific castle types? If so, can a lord's progress be charted through castle type spread, or alternatively, can castle chronology be dated by historical records.
5. From 2, 3 and 4, to examine the concept of a rolling frontier as the motivation behind motte and bailey, timber castles.
6. Research spacing of sites in relation to earlier land use, topography or resources, by study of records, fieldwork and aerial photographs.
7. To examine the instances of multiple castle construction within close proximity.

## **1.7 THE LAYOUT**

Due to the quantity of material that the research generated it was decided to divide the thesis into two volumes. As a general overall explanation of the layout; the first volume contains the introduction to the study, chapter 1, followed by a social and historical background to the area and period, chapter 2. Chapter 3 follows with a discussion of castle definitions and introduction to the various types of earthwork and timber castles that can be found. The chapter also discusses the idea of pre-conquest castle in Britain and Normandy. In chapter 4, an assessment is made of present classification systems used to record castles and introduces an alternative method as employed by this study. Chapter 5 introduces the methodology and research strategies employed in this study. Chapter 6 contains the results of the statistical work undertaken on the findings of the study and chapter 7 presents distribution maps of the sites researched. Chapter 8 discusses the study in relation to the original aims and objectives and the results of the statistical analysis and distribution maps. The study is concluded in chapter 9.

A gazetteer is included at the end of the volume which contains an in-depth coverage of all the castles included in the study, in alphabetical order.

Volume II contains figures, plates, topographical surveys, resistivity surveys, excavation reports, spreadsheets and the bibliography.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### 2.1 THE SOUTHERN MARCH

##### **Introduction:**

In the 11th century a border area between Wales and England stretching from Chester, through Shrewsbury, to Hereford was created by William the Conqueror as a strategic buffer zone. The area was neither part of England nor was it a no-man's land, but rather it is best thought of as a Norman controlled part of Wales that stopped short of '*Pura Wallia*' (Carr 1995 p 36). As an assessment of the situation it can be assumed that the border zone fulfilled the roles of defence from raids and offence from which to attack. This can be seen from Edward the Confessor's granting of Norman Castles on the border; Ralph the Timid's at Hereford, Osbern Pentecost's at Ewyas Harold and Richard Scrob's at Auterone, (Stanford 1980 p 204). It is therefore, reasonable to interpret post-conquest, Norman policy concerning the border between Wales and England, as a take over of established order. To control the area William established three palatine lordships under the command of his trusted companions. The southern March, initially centred on Hereford, he placed in the hands of William fitz Osbern. It is generally accepted that the Marcher lordships were established as secure points from which to launch the conquest of Wales but Williams argued that it is possible that the Welsh conquest was not of prime concern to William at this stage, the Welsh were troublesome, but as long as they paid tribute and made occasional acts of submission, there was no point in exacerbating his more immediate problems (1993. 445-446).

##### **Location:**

The southern March was roughly consistent with modern Herefordshire and the land to the south, as far as the Severn arguably based close to the limits of the territory set out by Athelstan (see page 7, above). An example of application of the law using the river as a border can be seen in the translation: 'If a Welshman (on his side of the frontier river) kills an Englishman, he need only pay on his account half the dead man's wergild, and as little an Englishman for a Welshman (killed on that side)' (Bateson 1904. 30),

The western border, however, could best be described as fluid, changing with the fortunes of war. The visible impact of that western conquest may still be seen today in the castles that dominate the area but in order to understand the nature of castle building in the southern March,

one needs to first be conversant not only with the physical topography but also the social, political development of the area in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

## 2.2 PRE-1066

It is difficult to pick a precise time to begin a history of the area, for at no time does its evolution seem to have been broken; each preceding event, having had an influence on that which has come after. However, for the sake of brevity and the purpose of the study herein, a very brief outline of that history begins in the period after the Roman withdrawal.

### **Population:**

At this time, the whole of the population of Britain should be collectively thought of as Britons. The *ASC* records; in the year 449 Vortigen, a Brythonic king, bought the aid of Saxons to help suppress attacks on his land by the Picts (Swanton 2000. 12-13). They came and continued to come in great numbers, turning from ally to enemy. In lands to the east, later to become known as England, new invasion forces struggled with the old order, to carve up the land into kingdoms. Records from the *ASC* can be interpreted as 577 for the beginning of isolation for Wales when Cuthwine and Caewlin conquered Conmail, Condidan and Fairmail the kings of Gloucester, Cirencester and Bath, thereby opening the Severn Valley for invasion (Swanton 2000. 12-13). The isolation was completed in 615 when Æthelfrith of Northumbria won victory at Chester over the army of Scrocmal (Swanton 2000. 12-13). Bede records the leader of the Britons as Brocmal and blames his actions on the field of battle as the cause of Bishop Augustine's prophecy 'that the faithless Britons, who had rejected the offer of eternal salvation, would incur the punishment of temporal destruction' (Sherley-Price 1974. 103). Thus, by the mid 7<sup>th</sup> century Shropshire and Herefordshire were occupied by the *Wrocensæte* and the *Magesæte* who owed allegiance to the Mercian King (Swanton 2000. 12-13). There is, however, some evidence to suggest that Herefordshire was not part of the pre-Conquest Mercian earldom having been divided from Mercia by Cnut c.1023 (Lewis 1984. 197). An important point that may have led to the appointment of fitz Osbern to the Southern March (see page 15, below).

### **Ergyng:**

In 1043 the Earldom of Hereford, created from the dismemberment of Mercia, was granted to Swein; the eldest son of Godwin (Higham 1997. 125). Godwin was earl of Wessex and Edward's father-in-law, with an equally powerful rival for power in Leofric Earl of Mercia. Godwin, by the mid 1040s had acquired more favour with the king than Leofric, an outcome which was probably instrumental in the break up of Leofric's Mercian Earldom. Swein the eldest



of Godwin's five sons was a 'complete maverick' (John 1996. 175). After killing a kinsman, abducting the abbess of Leominster and forming allegiances with Welsh Kings and princes he was eventually banished in 1047 (John 1996. 175). At this point Edward appointed Ralph the Timid, as Earl of Herefordshire; the first foreigner to be appointed a temporal office in England (Bannister 1892. 8). It was under Ralph's earldom that the "Normanizing" of Herefordshire took place. Two of the Normans, Richard, son of Scrob and Osbern Pentecost defended lands given to them by Ralph by erecting castles after the Norman model (Bannister 1902. 8). Osbern was the builder of Ewyas Harold sometime during the four years of Swein's banishment; 1047–1051. Godwin himself went into voluntary exile in Flanders (Bannister 1902. 9).

The king put Ralph the Timid in command of the fleet at Sandwich to guard against the exiles return which left Herefordshire for the most part unguarded. Seizing the opportunity Gruffydd ap Llewellyn, king of Gwynedd and Powys raided as far as Leominster. News of the Welsh success inspired the Godwines to return to press their case against the "foreign yoke". By September 1052, Godwin had sailed up the Thames to London where the king agreed to outlaw the foreigners (Bannister 1892. 10). The foreigners with the exception of Osbern fled the country. Osbern surrendered the castle of Ewyas and himself into the hands of Leofric and was given safe conduct to Scotland. The castle was dismantled and the lands given to Alured (Alfred) of Marlborough, Leofric's nephew (Bannister 1902. 11.).

### **Welsh rule:**

The newly isolated area was not a unified nation but rather an area ruled by tribal or clan affiliations, whose leaders, warred with one another over various issues; mostly concerning land.

‘The ruler of each country was in theory an independent sovereign, no matter how small his country might be; but the chances of inheritance and marriage, of battle and murder, and of sudden death, meant that from time to time a ruler would build a bigger kingdom, which would break up again when he died’

(Jenkins 2000. xi)

Arguably, its law system of inheritance, '*gavelkind*', (Howell 1988. 41), whereby the closest dependants, starting with the sons, would have equal share of property, seems to be a contributory factor for the disjointed, self defeating make up of the Welsh social system. With each generation, any advances a father would make towards unity would diluted by the sons; 'between 946 and 1066 the main Welsh chronicle records the violent ends of no fewer than 35 rulers, more often at the hands of their compatriots than those of the English or the Vikings' (Carr 1995 p 28). An example relating to the area of study can be cited; Erb was known as king of Gwent and Ergyng (Rees 1840. 318). Erb c.525-555 (Howell 2004. 261). However, his son

Peibio was king of only 'the region of Eryng' (Rees 1840. 323). The separation appears to have continued until the marriage of Onbraust the daughter of Gwrgan, the last in the line of kings of Eryng, to Meurig ap Tewdrig, king of Gwent (Howell 1988. 41).

Despite the turbulent power struggles, there had been periods in which large parts of Wales, against all odds, had almost unified under a single prince such as Rhodri Mawr 878 (Carr 1995 p 27), Hywel Dda 942, (Jenkins 2000. xii), Maredudd ab Owain 999 (Carr 1995 p 27).

One can only assume that these occasions of unity must have produced a sense of unease amongst those on the other side of Offa's Dyke. An unstable Wales of warring princedoms could be an irritation when events spilled over the border, but a united Wales was a much more potentially tangible threat, (Golding 1994 p 50). These periods of unity in Wales had brought the area to the attention of the kings of Wessex and Mercia. There had also been contact by Welsh factions seeking help from the Saxons with local feuds such as Owain of Gwent's submission to Aethelstan in 927 or Gruffudd ap Llywelyn's co-operation with Sweyn of Hereford and later Ælfgar of Mercia, (Davies 1996 p114-5).

### **Gwent:**

In the early 11<sup>th</sup> century one of the periods of unity encompassed Gwent with Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, King of Gwynedd, Powys and Deheubarth (Davies 2004. 334). He had been the 'scourge of the border' since 1039 with many successful raids to his name (Richards 1971. 81). By 1056, with the help of Ælfgar of Mercia, Gruffudd ap Llywelyn had removed the Norman control from western Herefordshire (see above) and his conquests were ceded to him by Edward the Confessor (Richards 1971. 81). A rival to Gruffudd ap Llywelyn was another ambitious man, Gruffudd ap Rhydderch of Gwent, who had ideas of unifying southern Wales under his rule (Williams 1993. 448 : Jones 1952. 14 : Jones 1971.70 ). Gruffudd ap Rhydderch's ambitions were stopped in 1056 by Gruffudd ap Llywelyn who added Gwent to his own lands (Davies 2004. 331). In the same year, probably part of the same offensive strike Gruffudd ap Llywelyn laid waste to the lands of south western Hereford and sacked and pillaged the town (Jones 1952. 14 : Jones 1955. 25 : Jones 1971. 71). His actions were to have a direct influence on the way that Gwent was treated by the Normans, for on his defeat in 1063 his lands were seized by Harold Godwinson who began the erection of a hunting lodge at Portskewett. Davies argued that 'Harold may have wished to reassert English claims over this region (Davies 2004. 344). However, this act of English intrusion was not taken lightly and the unfinished site was destroyed in 1065 by Caradog ap Gruffudd (Swanton 2000. 191). Caradog ap Gruffudd was traditionally the last king of Gwent and he held the position until his death in 1081 (Howell 2000. 389).

## 2.2 POST-CONQUEST

### **Introduction:**

As was mentioned above, it is reasonable to assume William I had a lot of pressing concerns following the Battle of Hastings. First and foremost would have been the establishment of control over England followed closely by the need to retain control of Normandy. The Welsh situation may have seemed less of a threat; with the exception of occasional raids, they were after all a people that warred more amongst themselves than against the outside world. The Welsh had accepted Saxon rule in the past as testified by their ‘occasional acts of submission and payment of tribute’ (Williams 1993. 445). Arguably, King William may have been happy to let the situation continue, thereby, ensuring that at least one part of the frontier was reasonably trouble free. If such was the case then why was one of William’s foremost men, William fitz Osbern sent to control the frontier?

### **William fitz Osbern:**

It has been suggested that William fitz Osbern’s presence was less concerned with conquering the Welsh than controlling the English (Williams 1993. 445). ‘King William had been pursuing diplomatic relations with Mercia rather than rushing headlong into conflict’, but there is a possibility that Herefordshire was considered a separate entity even though it supposedly owed allegiance to the Mercian king (Lewis 1985.197).

On the death of Ralf the Timid in 1057, Harold Godwinson assumed responsibility for the earldom of Hereford (Walker 1999. 18), acquiring a considerable amount of land in Herefordshire, a holding that he enlarged after the defeat of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn in 1063 (Williams 1993. 446). *Domesday* gives some measure of the extent of Harold’s land for example; ‘Dorstone, Earl Harold held it’ (Thorn and Thorn 1983. 186c.d). During Harold’s control, many of his followers had settled in the area and these may have been the threat that William I responded to by sending in fitz Osbern (Lewis 1985. 197). In 1067 the threat materialized in the form of Eadric the Wild who, aided by the Welsh kings Bleddyn and Rhiwallon, attacked Hereford castle (Swanton 2000. 200-201). Eadric had been forced into action by attacks on his land by his Norman neighbour Richard fitz Scrob.

### **Control of Ergyng:**

Following the attack in 1067, see above, the Normans responded with an offensive strike towards Brycheiniog and it is possible that this saw the establishment of the first castles on the north-west edge of the Golden Valley thereby, establishing a firm grip on a possibly troublesome area. The line of castles along the Monnow and Usk valleys may also be part of the defence,

establishing a line of strongholds to protect Saxon Ergyng and lowland Gwent from any attack coming from the Black Mountains. Conversely, they could be part of the later campaign of Bernard de Neufmarché and his conquest of Brycheiniog (Rees 1968. 7). Unlike Gwent, Ergyng had a hostile frontier to control and the establishment of the castles at its north eastern end are probably testament to this.

### **Control in Gwent:**

Norman presence in Gwent by contrast is quite different in that the numbers of castles built during the early period are much fewer. It is quite probable that some form of agreement was arranged between kings; Caradog ap Gruffudd (Upper Gwent, Ystradyw and Gwynllŵg) and Rhydderch ap Caradog (Lower Gwent and Ewyas), and fitz Osbern concerning the overlordship of Gwent (Davies 2004. 342-343). Evidence from *Domesday* would support this; renders directed to the Norman overlord were requested of the King by fitz Osbern, to retain their traditional form and their collection was overseen by Welsh and Saxon officials (Williams 1993. 450), and *Lib Land* records Caradog and Rhydderch were subjects to King William (Rees 1840. 550). Caradog ap Gruffudd seemed to offer no conflict to his Norman neighbours and it is possible that the Normans supported his position in Gwynllŵg, posing as it did as a buffer zone between Gwent and Morgannwg. Arguably, Caradog ap Gruffudd lacked the resources to defend himself from either Norman Gwent or Morgannwg and saw the potential benefit of an alliance with the stronger party (Williams 1993. 452).

### **Castles:**

One point that does cause a problem in understanding the relation-ship between Caradog ap Gruffudd and the Normans is the building of castles. Gruffudd's reaction to Harold's hunting lodge had been decisive, (see page 14, above), yet the Normans built castles with apparent agreement. It is possible that they were seen as of mutual benefit in the defence of the area, arranged as they were along the river borders. However, the size of the structures can have left no doubt as to who held the upper hand. Davies recognised the difficulty of assessing fitz Osbern's influence in Gwent but suggested it may have been directed more towards the fertile low lands of lower Gwent. Upper Gwent was left to Caradog under the overlordship of fitz Osbern (2004. 344-345).

The situation seems to have remained the same under Roger de Breteuil with both parties exhibiting mutual support; Caradog was assisted with Norman troops in his battle against Maredudd ab Owain 1072 and Caradog showed loyalty towards Roger during his rebellion against the King in 1075 (Davies 2004. 345-346).

Following Caradog ap Gruffudd's death at Mynydd Carn in 1081 the situation seems to have changed with the victor Rhys ap Tewdwr now the force to be reckoned with. King William came to the area, possibly fearing uprisings as the kingdom changed hands, and he embarked on a program of castle building (Howell 2000 389). Arguably, this is where the castle policy moved from the periphery of Gwent to the hinterland with castles being built in strategic places, possibly forming lines of command with the more troublesome area to the North. However, if the period of unease was short lived then there would be no reason, nor indeed time, to implement and fulfil many major works. It is more likely that the castle building policy was the result of the rebellion by William fitz Osbern's son Roger. King William was reluctant to restore the baronial power that William fitz Osbern had enjoyed, finding it more prudent to parcel out the land amongst a few lords with scattered holdings rather than one overlord, other than himself. This would be a more plausible reason for the spread of castles through Gwent.

The situation in Gwent was probably one of relative peace for some years with the local inhabitants submitting to the ways of their new overlords. Although a background of hostility must have prevailed during the occupation, it would seem that apart from a few isolated uprisings any overt signs of aggression were probably manifest in the dealings between the lordships.

### **Castle development:**

The later castles that were built were very different to the early ones, being lower and smaller. Main centres of administration and power, the *caputs*; sub-infeuded lesser portions of land to trusted knights which in turn would have had defended centres.

Laws governing overlordship were in some ways quite specific as regards castle building of a non royal nature 'ditches were not to be dug so deep that the spoil could not be thrown out by a single shovel's throw, a palisade could only be built in single form and without battlements and wall-walks.', *Consuetudines et Iusticie* William II 1091, (cited in Higham and Barker 1995. 127). This could therefore explain the different castle built after 1081 when the power of the Marcher lords was diluted.

### **12<sup>th</sup> century:**

Elsewhere in Wales the great kingdoms grew and withered away as the Welsh warred with the Welsh whilst 'Henry I warmed his hands in the glow of their fires' (Crouch 2000. 55). Henry I used the diverted attention of the Welsh dynastic struggles to insert 'his loyal curial magnates' in the March and castles began to spring up 'like headstones on the graves of native lordships' (Crouch 2000. 55). A change started on January 1st 1136 when the Welsh of eastern Glamorgan stopped the intrusion of an English force in northern Gower (Crouch 2000. 56). On April 15

1136, Morgan ap Owain severed relations with England with the murder of Richard fitz Gilbert de Clare (Crouch 2000. 54 : Jones 1952. 51). At this point the Welsh went into revolt seizing the castles of Usk and Caerleon and taking control of the Usk and Tawe valleys (Howell 2000. 389 : Crouch 2000. 57). In south east Wales the revolt was short lived and Morgan ap Owain agreed a settlement with Earl Robert of Gloucester in exchange for his recognition of his conquests and additional lands on the Wentlŵg levels he provided troops to aid the Earl during the Anarchy (Howell 2000. 389). It is quite possible that this period saw resurgence in castle building or possibly a re-deployment of castles that had lost importance.

## CHAPTER 3

### EARTHWORK AND TIMBER CASTLES

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines current thinking with respect to earthwork and timber castles and encompasses generally accepted views with new interpretations arising from this study. However, any castle studies research must first deal with the problem of what exactly is a castle and this will be examined in the first section. In examining the definition of a castle consideration will be given to functionality of the various aspects of castle design. These will be compared to earlier examples of Anglo-Saxon fortifications in order to establish demonstrable changes. It will be argued that such changes in layout reflect changes in function.

This chapter will also examine theories relating to pre-conquest castles both in Britain and in Normandy where general opinion would suggest that the castle had its origin. Types of castle; ring-works, mottes, and motte and baileys will also be discussed with consideration given to construction, location and access. Preliminary conclusions will be presented in section 3.8.

#### 3.2 CASTLES, A DEFINITION.

When dealing with literature regarding castles, occasional sites are described as pre-conquest but this terminology may be misleading. In order to consider the extent to which this is the case, it is necessary to establish what constitutes a castle as well as examining the relationship of such structures to the Norman Conquest. An early, but still useful, definition was provided by Armitage who argued that, a castle is a private, residential, defensible seat of power (1912. 4-8).

##### **Armitage verses Clark:**

The above definition of a castle dismissed hill-forts, Roman camps, and importantly, Saxon burhs as castles; for they were ‘the fortifications of society and not the individual’ (Armitage 1912. 21). Much debate had raged in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as to the association of Saxon burhs with castles, the most renowned instigator of which was Clark with his 2 volume *Mediaeval Millitary Architecture in England* 1884. He argued that; ‘in 915... the Danes ascended the Bristol channel and entered *Irchenfield*, west of Hereford, remarkable, amongst others, for its burhs of Kilpeck and Ewias Harold...’(1884. 20). To Clark a burh was a ‘moated mound with a table top and base court...the caput or centre of an estate’ (1884. 23). He believed that they could be ‘safely dated to the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> and possibly 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, and to the English

people that is to the northern settlers generally, as distinguished from the Romans and Britons...' (1884. 23). Armitage noted that Clark equated burhs with Saxon castles and she went on to express disbelief that 'a man who was not in any sense an Anglo-Saxon scholar was allowed to affix an entirely new meaning to a very common Anglo-Saxon word' (1912. 20).

In defining castles Armitage stressed the distinction of the private stronghold rather than the communal defence to define a castle, arguing that 'a castle is built by a man who lives among enemies, who distrusts his nearest neighbours as much as any foe' (1912. 24). The Anglo Saxon burh had fortifications adapted to their tribal state, which required communal rather than individual protection (Armitage 1912. 64).

### **The burh and the Castle:**

Toy pointed out in his work on the *Castles of Great Britain* that 'little is known about the fortifications of the Saxons' (1954. 39), a situation which unfortunately remains to this day (Higham and Barker 1995. 39). However, an early literary distinction between castle and burh can be found in *The Anglo Saxon Chronicle*; 1092, 'William travelled north to Carlisle, with a very great army, and restored the town and raised the castle' (Swanton 2000. 227). The record, in this instance, can be interpreted as making a clear distinction between town (burh), and the castle; however, there are others where such a distinction has not been clearly stated, such as Ewyas Harold, which will be referred to below.

The term burh is usually taken to mean a defended town but Higham and Barker argue that it 'could mean any sort of enclosed space' (1995. 41). They cite late 7<sup>th</sup> century laws of Alfred in which mention is made to the process of laying siege to private houses in warfare (1995. 41). Such a siege was held at *Meretun* in the year 757, and the description infers that the site was a defensive structure situated within a defensive enclosure (Higham and Barker 1995. 41). They argue that it is reasonable to suggest that a royal residence, as *Meretun* was, would have been defensible, both for practicality and prestige; however, they added that present archaeological knowledge does not support this (1995. 41).

Along a similar vein, Stenton had previously argued that the trappings of defence and prestige may have been available to a lower group of people in the social hierarchy, namely the Saxon thegn (1985. 487). Thegn was a term introduced in the Laws of Edgar in the 10<sup>th</sup> century to replace *twelfhyndeman*. The status of a Thegn could be achieved by the fulfilment of the services due to a holder of an estate of five hides (John 1996. 10). 'If a freeman prospered',...so that he had fully five hides of land of his own, a chapel and a kitchen, a bellhouse and a *burhgeat*, a seat and a special office in the king's hall, then henceforth he was worthy of the rights of a thegn (Davison 1967. 204). Unfortunately, Davison did not cite his source; however, Higham and Barker give a shorter version (citing *EHD* Vol. 1. 431-4) as their source (1995. 367). Davison



continued Stenton's argument suggesting a thegn would likely boast 'some form of private defended enclosure or burh, in which stood his chapel and other buildings' (Davison 1967). He further suggested that as the *burhgeat* (gate or entrance) was singled out in the text as a separate entity, it must have been an important or elaborate feature (Davison 1967). Caution with Davison's interpretation is required since his source was written in the past tense and was possibly of local significance to Northumbria only (Higham and Barker 1995. 45).

A thegn can be seen as a public office in service to the king and the thegn's burh was the centre of that service's estate; i.e. the centre of local government. The king himself was charged with the defence of the realm and relied on the system of shire, hundred and *vill* in which the burh played an important part. Even if Davison's suggestion is correct, that the Saxons had private fortification there is arguably still a difference in motivation.

Armitage wrote that the nature of, and the size of, a motte to a bailey suggests that the builder had cause to protect himself from his own men, qualifying this interpretation by pointing out that the Normans employed mercenaries, early as A.D. 992 (1912. 74). Conversely, Davison argued that the Saxons were involved in ostentatious shows of stature rather than a need for personal defence amongst their own people. In comparison, the castle of the Norman lord had all of the above properties of a Saxon burh but his position was tenuous and jealously regarded. To explain the difference between castle and burh therefore the fundamental function of the castle must be remembered, i.e. whatever other functions it had, it was primarily a military weapon of war. '...the March of Wales was a military rather than constitutional problem; military considerations were uppermost in their, (the Normans) minds during the two hundred long years it took them to impose their authority in the March' (Davies 1978. 44). The Norman castle therefore included defence for the lord', i.e. private defence. This private defence gave the lord the power to settle disputes, organise treaties or even wage war, not only with the native peoples but also with other lords; all without the king's permission.

### **Feudalism:**

In-depth discussion of the complexities of feudalism is beyond the remit of this study; however, it must be mentioned in brief as it is fundamental to the process of the conquest. According to Armitage (1912.viii), the private stronghold, which did not exist in Britain until the arrival of the Normans, was synonymous with the feudal system; a system of military tenure introduced to England by William the Conqueror (Armitage 1912. 63 : Round 1909. 261-2). Although landholding in return for military service itself was not new; Critchley cites examples amongst the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, (1978. 27-35), a very fine distinction is drawn between obligation based on status, rather than on tenure. Critchley argued the case of the Saxon thegn, prior to the Norman Conquest, his obligation to military service arose from his personal

status, not his tenure (1978. 38). A thegn owned land, which although it could be confiscated if an obligation was not fulfilled, was not conditional on that obligation (Critchley 1978. 38). In comparison to land tenure under Norman feudalism, land and status was conditional upon service (Critchley 1978. 38, 51).

It has been suggested that the institution of '*servitium debitum* (contractual military service)... cannot be traced to pre-conquest Normandy', taking up Douglas's view that feudal organisation in Normandy was the result of the conquest of England (Davison 1967. 203). Forms of feudalism elsewhere are so called because they contain one or two elements of the Norman system but never the whole (Critchley 1978. 35).

The relationship between feudal tenure, the Norman Conquest and castle construction is clearly important and consequently consideration of the builders of castles is essential.

### **Castle builders:**

The initial builders of castles were, as far as can be demonstrated, the Normans and although later castles were copied by occupied peoples such as the Welsh and the Anglo-Normans, the design is, despite early arguments to the contrary, now generally accepted as having originated with the Normans.

### **3.3 PRE-CONQUEST CASTLES.**

Not quite so clear cut, however, is when the Normans began building castles. This is a key question in any description of a site as a castle, especially when the site has been identified as pre-conquest. Did the castle exist before the Norman Conquest and if so where? The obvious place to look for such structures would be Normandy although documentary evidence suggests that there were examples in Britain and these will be considered first.

#### **Evidence for Norman castles in England and Wales, pre-1066:**

The idea of pre-conquest castles in Britain derives from three much cited castles located along the March. There are many works available describing these three castles, built by the favourites of Edward the confessor in the 1050s. The castles named are Richard's castle in Shropshire, Hereford Castle, ruinous in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Shoesmith 1996. 132) and Ewyas Harold which is located within this study area.

#### **The Earldom of Hereford and Hereford Castle:**

It should be noted that the translations of *BT.RBH* and the *B.Saes* used in this thesis record Hereford castle as a fortress (*gaer*). The *ASC* (Peterborough Mss) records for the year 1051 that

‘The foreigners had then built a castle in Herefordshire in Earl Swein’s province and inflicted every injury and insult they could upon the king’s men thereabouts’ (Swanton 2000. 173-174). The foreigners were the Norman followers of Edward the Confessor, granted land after his accession 1043. The Earldom of Hereford had been created from the dismemberment of Mercia and was granted to Swein, the eldest son of Godwine Earl of Wessex (Higham 1997. 125). After killing a kinsman, abducting the abbess of Leominster and forming allegiances with Welsh Kings and princes he was eventually banished in 1047 (John 1996. 175). At this point Edward appointed Ralph ‘The Timid’, as Earl of Herefordshire and it was during Ralph’s earldom that the ‘Normanizing’ of Herefordshire took place (Bannister 1902. 8). Two of the Normans, Richard son of Scrob, and Osbern Pentecost, defended lands given to them by Ralph, by erecting castles after the Norman model. Osbern was the builder of Ewyas Harold sometime during the four years of Swein’s banishment; 1047–1051. William fitz Osbern created Earl of Hereford after the conquest refortified the castle sometime between 1067-1071, when he died (Thorn and Thorn 1983. 186a).

### **Ewyas Harold:**

Ewyas Harold therefore had a pre-conquest Norman interest and repairs were made to the site, post-conquest, to fortify it. The issue, however, is what was the nature of the Norman site before the conquest and why was it in need of refortifying? As has been noted, ‘no one seems to have asked of what such a refortification, of a scale worthy of record in the Survey, might consist’ (Davison 1966. 38). The motte at Ewyas Harold today dominates the site, but it may not have been a primary feature (*pers comm.* Davison 2004). The survey of the site (Vol. 2. survey 17) would suggest that the motte was an afterthought, added to a poorly defensible position. Furthermore the bailey required extensive ramparts to protect it from the ridge which towers above it. The suggestion is therefore that Ewyas Harold was originally built for a different purpose from that of a motte and bailey castle and in all likelihood the predominance of the bailey would suggest a communal purpose such as an enclosure castle or maybe a burh. If the motte was part of the post conquest refortification, Ewyas Harold one of the prime suggested examples of a pre-conquest motte type castle in England may not provide evidence for the existence of such sites.

### **Richard’s Castle:**

Richard’s Castle motte is also of dubious construction for excavations suggest that the motte had been added to a pre-existing triangular enclosure (Davison 1966. 38). The excavations yielded no evidence to confirm or contradict the pre-conquest date inferred for the site (Curnow and Thompson 1969. 112).

### **Evidence for Norman castles in Normandy pre-1066:**

As the evidence for pre-conquest motte type castles is inconclusive as far as Britain is concerned, then the castle may have origins in Normandy which can be traced. The most likely period to focus a search would be the later 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the break-up of the Carolingian power base of Western Frankia gave way to smaller groups controlled by the embryonic affinities of lordship and tenure (Liddiard 2003. 1)

### **Documentary evidence:**

The first recorded entry of the word castle as a private establishment is, according to Armitage (1912. 69), in the *Capitulary of Pitres* issued by Charles the Bald in A.D. 864: 'He ordered the destruction of castles, forts and hedge-works erected without his permission'. The full passage adds that; 'the villagers and those dwelling round about suffer many depredations and impositions from them' (Williams 2003. 40). This does tend to suggest that the castles were a focus for persons acting independently of the king. Throughout the tenth century the instance of the words *castrum*, *castellum*, *municipium*, *oppidum* and *munitio* increased dramatically but this may reflect the writers rather than the realities, all five words being undifferentiated and in most cases meaning fortified town. The first mention of a castle of the motte and bailey type may have been *The Chronicle of St Florence le Vieil* which records that in 1010 Fulk Nerra, Count of Anjou, built a castle on the western side of the hill at Mont-Glonne (Armitage 1912. 73). Significantly, however, the interpretation of the account relies on the word *agger* to be translated as motte (Davison 1966. 37). Armitage also dated three castles, Blois, Samur and Chinon, at between 932-962, built by Thibault-le-Tricheur, Count of Blois and Chartres (Armitage 1912. 74-75). The evidence of mottes at these sites is, however, retrospective originating from 12<sup>th</sup> century sources, and in the case of Chinon, a plan that shows that a motte could have existed.

### **Previous research:**

The concept of pre-conquest mottes was taken up by Davidson in 1965; he undertook 'a rapid survey' of those castles in Normandy thought to be early 11<sup>th</sup> century in date. He investigated early castles which he classified as based on early 11<sup>th</sup> century sources, probably fortified in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and inferred as of early 11<sup>th</sup> century. Within these groups he had three sub-sections for his findings: Enclosure castles (those with no motte), destroyed (including castles developed beyond identification), and Motte Castles. His findings were set out in the following tables which have been included below:

Sites referred to in early 11<sup>th</sup> century sources

Enclosure Castle	Destroyed	Motte Castle
Ivry la Bataille	Rouen	Gaillefontaine
Tillières	Eu	Neaufles
Falaise	Bayeux	
Domfront	Evreux	
Arques	Cherbourg	
Moulins-la-March	Le Homme	
	Brix	
	Cherrueix	
	Old Bellême	
	New Bellême	
	Alençon	
	Ambrières	
	St James de Beuvron	

Sites probably fortified in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century

Enclosure Castle	Destroyed	Motte Castle
Montaigu	Brionne	Montreuil-l'Argillé
Mortemer	L'Aigle	
Neufmarché	Echauffour	
Breteuil	St Cénéri	
	St Aubin	

Sites inferred as of early 11<sup>th</sup> century foundation

Enclosure Castle	Destroyed	Motte Castle
Montgomeri	Exmes	Mortain
Plessis-Grimoult	Vernon	Briquessard
Beaumont-le-Roger	Gournay	La Ferté-en-Bray
Montfort		Manéhouville

(Davison 1966. 47)

As can be seen from the tables, twenty-one of the sites are either destroyed or altered beyond recognition, fourteen of the sites are enclosure castles and only seven are identified as mottes. Within the first table only two of the sites, Gaillefontaine and Neauffles-St-Martin, now have mottes that appear to be referred to in pre-conquest literature. Gaillefontaine apparently resembled Ewyas Harold with a similar doubtful history and record; the dating of which depends on its charter witness *Bernardus Forestarius* known to be alive in 1063. He may still have been alive in 1066 or later in which case the charter could postdate the conquest (Davison 1966. 41-2). Neauffles-St-Martin has a mound, a round tower and a bailey but as will be explained later the mound is probably not a motte but a later addition to the 13<sup>th</sup> century round tower.

In the second table, which is dependant on less precise sources, only Montreuil-l'Argillé, (see below) is included as a Motte Castle. Davison, however, expressed a doubt as to the nature of the motte, suggesting that it may be an afterthought added to an enclosure or ring-work (Davison 1966. 41).

In the third table are the Motte Castles originating by inference from non-direct sources. The first, Mortain may have been built in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century but is not mentioned until after 1066. Its inclusion as a motte is also suspicious as Davison describes it as a natural motte utilizing a boss of rock (Davison 1966. 41). According to Professor de Boüard, the motte and bailey castle at Briquessard may be attributable to Ranulf of Briquessard, Vicomte of Bessin who took part in a revolt of 1047 (Davison 1966. 41). A similar conjecture for dating evidence is dismissed in this thesis for Walterstone Castle being built by Walter de Lacy (see chapter 9). In the case of La Ferté-en-Bray, a grant to the abbey of Sigy, sometime between 1037-1054, by Hugh La Ferté, of chapels 'within and without the *castrum*' may refer to the castle of La Ferté-en-Bray but the evidence is not conclusive (Davison 1966. 42). Lastly, lands, a church and mill at Manéhouville were granted to the Abbey of St Amand de Rouen by Goscelin, Vicomte of Arques in 1042. De Boüard suggested that the motte was part of the donation, however, it must be noted that the motte is not mentioned (Davison 1966. 42).

The existence of pre-conquest motte and bailey castles is clearly conjectural and, after much deliberation it was decided that a visit to Normandy to assess the sites in person would be advisable for this study. Discussion with Jeremy Knight led to discussions with Brian Davison, who undertook the research above. A telephone conversation with the latter produced a "hit list" of representative sites and many specific questions to be considered.

### **Fieldwork in Normandy:**

Over ten days in April of 2003 as many sites as possible were visited in Normandy with particular attention being paid to the sites listed in the three tables above. Not all were relevant, not all provided answers, and a number were not visited because they had either been destroyed

or are in private hands. The most important sites for this study were those described as of the Motte Castle variety and these were assessed for their form and type. In order to remove any bias, a selection of other sites was made so as to provide as wide a sample as possible. Below are those sites which are included in the discussion above, which were examined.

The first site was Arques-La-Bataille, 49°53'10"W, 1°07'16"E listed by Davison as an early 11<sup>th</sup> century enclosure; no motte. The castle is closed to the public due to its rather dangerous level of decay but it is possible to walk around the outside. It is situated on a chalk ridge which has been modified with the excavation of a very extensive ditch as can be seen in photograph (Vol. 2. plate. 2) and the plan and section (Vol. 2. figure 10). The profile of the top of the hill, shown in the plan section would tend to suggest that the site has been formed by digging the ditch rather than raising a mound. The second photograph shows the building complex to the south west of the site and although not clear from this view, closer inspection on site confirmed the absence of a motte (Vol. 2. plate 3). The third photograph (Vol. 2. plate 4) shows the barbican to the north-west of the site; again no evidence of a motte was visible and so the site does appear to be an enclosure castle rather than a motte and bailey. The fourth photograph was included to show the size of the ditch at the point where it was spanned by a masonry bridge (Vol. 2. plate 5).

An early date of 1052 is attributed to the site which was associated with a two year siege by William Duke of Normandy (Davison 1973. 100). Another account records the castle being built as an oval palisaded wall in 1038 when William Duke of Normandy gave the land to his Uncle Guillaume d'Arques (Beck 1986). This same uncle is the one against whom the siege was brought in 1052. If the dates are correct and the surviving structure is indicative of its original construction then it would seem that enclosed, ditched, defensive sites, possibly what could be called ring-works, existed in Normandy prior to 1066.

The next site of interest was Manéhouville, 49°50'10"W, 1°04'55"E listed in Davison's third table of inferred sites and thought to be part of a grant to the Abbey of St Amand de Rouen in 1042. Whilst caution is required in any assessment of a site in a country outside the main study area, the site showed no evidence of being an early motte. In fact, using the methodology developed in this study (see page 58) Manéhouville, is probably a late 13<sup>th</sup> century fortified site. As can be seen from the photographs (Vol. 2. plates. 6 and 7) the mound is of no great height, possibly only around the 2.5m mark. The area has been developed as can be seen from the main road which cuts across the base of the mound and so the problem of no ditches or bailey may be explained. However, to the north of the site is a high ridge which overlooks the mound. As a defensive position for a motte and bailey castle, Manéhouville couldn't have been built in a worse place, and it is unlikely that this site is representative of a pre-conquest motte.

The next castle to be visited was Monfort-sur-Risle, 49°17'49"W, 4°40'05"E, listed amongst the enclosure castles of Davison's inferred list. At the time of visit the castle was severely

overgrown and all that could be seen was a small part of curtain wall and an extensive outer ditch (Vol. 2. plates 8 and 9). The central area of the site appears to have a large mound but it is probable that the mound is the tumble of a masonry structure, parts of which are still discernable. The castle appears to have been quite extensive and must at one time been an important site. Unfortunately the dereliction of the site did not allow for any clear information to be gleaned.

Gaillefontaine, one of the two Motte Castles on Davison's first list could not be found. The site appears to lie within the grounds of a private park and although it is possible to drive around the outside of the estate it was not possible to see the castle.

Montreuil-l'Argillé, is included as the only Motte Castle on Davison's probably fortified in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century list. As noted above, Davison expressed some doubt as to the atypical nature of this motte, suggesting the possibility that the site was an enclosure with the motte added as an afterthought. The site is situated on a flat area of land which has been cut into the slope of a hill to form a 'D' shaped enclosure. The side on which the presumed motte is located is on the uphill side of the slope as opposed to the steepest part of the hill putting what should be the last bastion of defence in the forefront of attack, on the least defensive side. The structure of the earthwork, which appears to be made of flint rubble, forms a semicircular rampart enclosing the flat area seen in photograph (Vol. 2. plate. 10). The outside of the rampart is surrounded by a ditch which has been cut into the natural surface. The opposite side of the flat area, from the rampart, has no defence other than a steep slope of about 6m down to the village. The two photomontage images on (Vol. 2. plates 11 and 12) show a composite of both the outside and inside of the rampart. The top view shows the presumed motte on the right with its outer ditch cut into the slope of the hill. To the left of the motte-like structure is an entranceway into the enclosure. The bottom composite shows the presumed motte to the left, the entranceway, and the rampart to the right. Both composites show that the top of the rampart and the top of the motte are of the same height which is not really conducive to the motte being a strong point; the motte should be the highest point of the site otherwise it becomes vulnerable. A similar explanation can be seen in (Vol. 2 survey 20) Gypsy Tump which was surveyed for this research. It is of course possible that part of the motte has been removed; the rubble and gouge in the top of the mound seen in the top composite attests to this fact. However, the surrounding area could not accommodate a larger base and the top at present is an estimated 6m across. This would leave very little room in which to add more height except of course unless the height was gained by a wooden tower.

The interpretation of this site based on its presentation today would suggest that it is an enclosure or ring-work and not a motte (see page 208). The interpretation as a motte is unlikely due to the weak point of defence and height. The mound has been formed by part of the rampart being removed thereby isolating the section that now appears to be a motte, similar to Gypsy Tump. The enclosed area inside of the rampart has not been raised but the ramparts have. Therefore, the



site fits the criteria of a ring-work and consequently does not provide evidence for a pre-conquest motte and bailey castle although it does provide additional confirmatory evidence that enclosure castles were possibly being used.

The last site on Davison's list to be visited was Neauffles-St Martin. This was one of the two best examples of early 11<sup>th</sup> century motte building listed above, the other being Gaillefontaine which remains a mystery. Davison expressed some doubt concerning the motte at this site and examination of the site supports his reservations.

The first photograph shows a composite view across the site at Neauffles-St-Martin (Vol. 2. plate. 13). To the left and in the foreground is the substantial bailey, which is surrounded by the remnants of a rampart and ditch, possibly therefore an enclosure castle. To the right is the mound, covered in trees, on which stands the round tower. The tower, which is circular, is of a later date than the early 11<sup>th</sup> century; certainly in Britain such towers were not introduced until the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Kaufmann and Kaufmann 2001. 25). The second photograph shows a composite of the inside of the tower; it should be noted that a certain amount of foreshortening of the structure is evident at the top and bottom due to the perspective from which the photographs were taken (Vol. 2. plate 14). The reason that this photograph composite has been included is that the ground level at the top of the mound is about two thirds of the way up the bottom photograph. Therefore, approximately 2m of wall, and the arched room below (Vol. 2. plate 15), are beneath the top of the mound which would suggest that the tower is actually stood on the natural surface of the ground, at the level of the bailey. The fourth photograph shows the outside of the tower and gives a better impression of its height (Vol. 2. plate 16). The mound, which can be seen in (Vol. 2. plate 17), was therefore added after the tower was built, not a motte but a form of buttress. Similar construction was noted by Davison at Aldingbourne, Sussex and Lydford, Devon and the same phenomena can be seen at Caldicot, Longtown and Skenfrith (see pages 141, 246 and 314).

The ten day tour which took in some thirty mottes in all can hardly be described as groundbreaking definitive research but for all its limited sample size, it did show that, as Davison suggested, there is every reason to be suspicious of the existence of motte type castles in Normandy before 1066.

### **The Bayeux Tapestry:**

One final piece of evidence should be considered regarding the existence of Motte Castles in Normandy before the Norman Conquest. The Bayeux Tapestry depicts in pictorial fashion, the record of the Norman Conquest of Britain, however, the story starts in Normandy prior to the Conquest where four pre-conquest mottes are depicted at Dol, Rennes, Dinan and Bayeux (Vol. 2. plate 18). Dol, Rennes and Dinan figure in the war waged between Duke William and Conan

II (1040-66). Rivallon de Dol was one of William's Breton supporters and his castle or city had been besieged by Conan. William broke the siege and later attacked Dinan which is close by (Bates 1983. 82). This account agrees with that of William of Poitiers' *Gesta Guillelmi Ducis Normannorum et Regis Anglorum* written about the time of the tapestries construction (Grape 1994 : 55; Higham and Barker 1995. 147). The tapestry account, however, differs showing first Conan escaping from Dol, which he presumably occupied. He was then chased through Rennes to Dinan where he finally surrendered to William handing over the keys, on the tip of his lance. Grape points out that whereas Dol and Dinan are quite close to one another that Rennes is a considerable distance south making the sequence a little suspect (Grape 1994. 58). There is also no written account of the Norman army at Rennes nor any account of Conan being subdued. Conan is, however, recorded as having managed to elude William by taking refuge with the Count of Anjou (Grape 1994. 58).

The last Motte Castle to be depicted for Normandy is Bayeux where Harold is shown swearing the sacred oath to William. Interestingly the *Gesta Guillelmi Ducis Normannorum et Regis Anglorum* places the event before the Breton campaign and the site of the oath swearing as Bonneville-sur-Touques (Grape 1994. 58). Bonneville-sur-Touques is an oval enclosure castle documented as far back as 1059 as a ducal residence (European Commission: Raphaël Program 2004).

### **The Bayeux tapestry as a reliable source:**

The tapestry and the contemporary accounts can be seen to differ which must in itself cause doubt as to the tapestry's accuracy. However, most problematic with respect to using the tapestry as a source for pre-conquest verification is not so much its content but more its context. The tapestry is thought to have been made in the 1070s (Grape 1994. 23 : Liddiard 2003. 110) although where, by whom and exactly when are open to discussion. Certainly the earliest record of the tapestry is not until 1420 when it was listed in a Burgundian court inventory as 'a long tapestry containing no gold thread showing the conquest of England by William of Normandy' (Grape 1994. 23). One possibility is that it was made in southern England which would mean that the embroiderers would probably have been familiar with the mottes of post-conquest England (Liddiard 2003. 110 : Higham and Barker 1995. 147). Whatever the case, it must be accepted that the depictions were made with the knowledge of post-conquest development. As Davison rightly pointed out in his discussion of the tapestry 'even assuming that the artist took pains to depict each site individually, rather than symbolically, can we be sure that he or she made enquiries to determine what the site looked like 10 years earlier' (Davison 1966. 37).

A key to understanding the tapestry may lie with its use of symbolism. The depictions of Dol, Rennes, Dinan and Bayeux have always been interpreted as representations of mottes complete

with ditches, access bridges, palisades and towers, although Higham and Barker argued that they could equally well be interpreted as enclosed towns on hills rather than mottes (1995. 151). It is interesting that none of the mottes have baileys, which could support Higham and Barker's argument; however, whether this lack of baileys represents the actual absence of these features or is merely due to lack of space on the tapestry must remain a matter of conjecture.

The other motte depicted on the tapestry is Hastings along with the word *Ceastra* emblazoned above it. The depiction of Hastings is very different from the other mottes as there are no towers, no ditch and no bridge and yet Hastings would appear to be a motte. Unfortunately the motte at Hastings is itself problematic as all that was found during excavations at the site were unstable dumps of sand mixed with clay buried under a fourteenth century enlargement (Barker and Barton 1968. 88).

### **Discussion:**

After all the evidence for pre-conquest castles has been reviewed the best that can be said for the existence of pre-conquest castles is that enclosure castles were in use as they had been for centuries but mottes cannot be demonstrated until after 1066.

Research done in Normandy, Ewyas Harold and Richard's Castle would suggest that mottes were later additions to what Davison describes as enclosure castles. An enclosure castle, which will be considered in depth in the next section, would appear, due to its size, to have provided a more communal form of defence than the individual focus of the motte. A problem of definition therefore arises; if a castle is defined as a private, residential, defensible seat of power, should enclosure castles, which appear to provide communal defence, be described as castles at all? It is un-reasonable to expect that enclosure castles such as Arques-La-Bataille, Monfort-sur-Risle or even Ewyas Harold and Old Castleton, (Herefordshire) should be divested of the classification, for they are undoubtedly castles.

A solution to the origin of the motte and bailey castle may lie in Armitage's belief that the motte within the castle was designed to protect the owner from his own men as well as providing a secure bastion against outside attack. This state of affairs could arise in a conquest situation where an army of mercenaries had embarked into enemy territory. An army composed of men from Normandy, Anjou, Flanders, Aquitaine, Brittany, and even Sicily would have been motivated by differing means and faced with new circumstances and topographies (Davison 1967. 204). In such a situation there would be a need to erect rapid forms of defence and there may also have been a need to establish a firm secure base for the leader. At Pevensey and Hastings, according to William of Jumièges, both used as castle sites within days of the conquest, the Normans chose high ground on which to erect defences, (cited in Van Houts 1992. 167). The castles were possibly pre-fabricated and brought from Normandy, according to Wace

who wrote the account a hundred years after the conquest at the time when such a practice was common (Renn 1964. 128). A great number of castles appear to have been sited on available high ground such as tumuli, hill-forts, Roman camps, and Saxon burhs. Once the form of offence and defence had become a matter of course, tried and tested, there would have been no reason to change the pattern. In areas where there were no features offering high ground, and no ridge tops that could be modified, it would be reasonable for the Normans to erect mounds on which to build their defences.

Liddiard has suggested that the theory of the motte being introduced to England in 1066 is becoming more widely accepted in castle studies (2003. 9). This study supports the view that the motte was introduced in 1066 and should be treated as special kind of castle that was developed for, or as a result of, the function of conquest. As far as pre-conquest castles are concerned then they did exist as defended enclosures but not in the form of a motte and bailey.

### **3.4 ENCLOSURE CASTLES AND RING-WORKS.**

#### **Introduction:**

In the previous section it was seen that there is evidence that enclosure castles were in use before 1066 but little, if any to support the pre-conquest existence of mottes. It was also seen that the term castle itself is problematic and within a narrow field of criteria used for definition, allowance has to be made for sub-sets of specialist functions such as those served by the motte. One of these sub-sets is the castle without a motte referred to as an enclosure castle (Davison 1966).

#### **Enclosure castles:**

Kenyon argues that the term enclosure castle is unsuitable for castle studies because not only does the term cover both large masonry castles such as Conwy or Middleham and smaller earth and timber varieties, it is also used archaeologically for multi period earthworks (Kenyon 1991. 1). However, within the context of the Norman period an enclosure castle is an area of ground defended by a bank or wall and ditch, and within its encircling wall is a large amount of space possibly put aside for buildings to accommodate and service the inhabitants. In some ways, such an enclosed space could be thought of as a bailey without a strongpoint (Higham and Barker 1995. 198).

The basic design for such a structure can be traced back to pre-history and through different cultures: Iron Age hill-forts, Roman towns, Scottish brochs, and even places as far a field as great Zimbabwe, in southern Africa, can be described as enclosed settlements. A good example is found in Eastern Europe where the Slavonic peoples built fortified settlements called *Grody*

which were areas enclosed by wooden palisades or earthen walls, surrounded by a ditch and protected by a fortified gate (Kaufmann and Kaufmann 2001. 89). The larger settlements housed administrative centres and complex arrangements for the chieftain and his attendants, the same functions suggested by Clark for a Saxon burh (Clark 1884. 23). Interestingly, during the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries the gród, a long used form of communal structure, was adapted to specialist use with the creation of military or artisan based centres (Kaufmann and Kaufmann 2001. 89).

It is probable that the large enclosure castles had a communal function due to the size of the enclosed land which, in turn, would also suggest that a large number of defenders would have needed to be accommodated. There are, however, smaller versions of enclosed sites such as Old Castelton, and Gypsy Tump (Vol. 2. surveys 20 and 39), or Montreuil-l'Argillé discussed in 3.3 above; that have enclosed areas which are quite small. These and similar sized earthworks must have been used for quite different purposes than their larger counterparts and should therefore be categorised differently.

#### **Problems of ring-work definition:**

The terms used for these types of earthwork vary from ring-castle (Braun 1948 16), ring-motte (Fox 1937, cited in King and Alcock 1966. 92) to ring-work which is now probably the most acceptable. Higham and Barker further classify ring-works as:

- Ring-works without baileys.
- Ring-works with one or more baileys.
- Ring-works (with or without baileys) within earlier earthworks.

(Higham and Barker 1995 198).

It is important to note that Kenyon's criticism of the term 'enclosure castles' can also apply to ring-works; a term applied to 'all manner of annular banks' (King and Alcock 1966. 90). Both terms imply an inferred association if used in context of a period: Bronze Age enclosure/ring-work, Iron Age enclosure/ring-work etc. Such a matter comes to a head at Old Sarum, an Iron Age earthwork with a Norman castle within it; both are ring-works (Brown 1966. 12). Conversely, Hamilton would argue that no conflict exists, although having found evidence of such cases, he argued that the use of the term amongst pre-historians was limited to specific locations and therefore not nationally significant (*pers comm.*). However, without the period association neither term amounts to anything more than a physical descriptive sketch of a site. 'Archaeologists, it seems to me, in inventing types, are prone to think too much of shape rather than size, and too much of both rather than purpose' (Brown 1966. 12). Even with its period label, 'ring-work' is only a physical description, at present certainly as regards to medieval ring-works; function is still largely unknown beyond vague inference.

Surprisingly, even though ring-work is a classification that is readily accepted, castle experts seem loath to define its nature with any degree of rigidity. Explanation of the term is usually resolved by being told of examples to look at but unfortunately not what to look for (Knight 2002 *pers comm.*). When questioned on the subject Professor Renn agreed that the concept was “a little hazy” and added by way of explanation that it was similar to “a fisherman saying that which escapes my net are not fish” (Renn, *pers comm.*).

### **A new definition of a ring-work:**

The elusive and shadowy nature of ring-work definition suggests a need to establish a recognised criterion for the subject. A definition offered by this study was arrived at independently as a means of identifying certain anomalous sites included in the study area, previously identified as ring-works: Gypsy Tump, Llangiby, Llangwm Isaf, Mouse Castle 2, Twyn-y-bell and Wolvesnewton (Vol. 2. surveys 20, 26, 28, 33 and 54). The working model devised is similar to criteria devised by King and Alcock (1966. 93-94).

There would appear to be two main forms of medieval earthwork castle: the motte and the ring-work. In the simplest of terms a motte is a raised mound and a ring-work is a raised rampart surrounding an area of ground. The building of each would produce an encircling ditch which adds to the height of the structure when approached from the outside.

The definition recommended by this study would classify the small enclosed castles alluded to above, which have a circling bank and ditch, as ring-works only as long as the modification to the natural surrounding landscape involved in their construction is restricted to the raising of the bank and the digging of the ditch. The enclosed area of a ring-work must be unaltered in height. This theory was produced in diagrammatic form illustrating three instances of sites in elevation and plan view, and one elevation of a common circumstance from which arises errors in classification (Vol. 2. figure 11).

- Example (a) shows a stylised motte, the criteria being that the modified earth is raised above the natural surface to form a frustum.
- Example (b) shows a stylised ring-work where the modified earth forms an encircling rampart around an unmodified area. It should be noted that the shape does not have to be circular to be a ring-work.
- Example (c) shows a partial ring-work where the rampart is erected only around the unprotected side of an area. In the diagram the area denoted by the hachures would be a natural steep slope, escarpment or cliff. Internal modification of this type of site would be acceptable if it was confined to levelling of a slope.
- The final example (d) shows an instance that arguably produces the most common error of classification. The crux of the matter is that the inside enclosed area has been raised above the natural outside surface therefore the site would be a motte. The lip on the rim, rather than being a ring-work is actually the remains of a surrounding wall or ‘shell keep’.

It is entirely possible that in instances where the internal fill is only slightly higher than that of the outside natural surface that the fill represents either fallen structures such as was found in excavations found at Biggleswade, Bedfordshire (Addyman 1966 18), or soil wash from the ramparts, ‘other airborne detritus and adventitious matter’ (King and Alcock 1966. 94). The only way to be certain as each case requires individual attention is with excavation.

### **Testing the definition:**

In order to check if the above theory was applicable it was decided to test it by investigating recognised ring-works in the landscape. Luckily ring-works proliferate in Glamorgan, which is adjacent to Gwent and The Royal Commission have excellent published records for the area. Using the Glamorgan Volume III, Part 1a of the *RCAHMW Inventory*, (1991) as a source, seven of the most recognisable ring-works were chosen from the CR section, (*castle ring-works without masonry*). Visited were Bonvilston, Caerau, Coed-y-cwm, Gwern-y-Domen, Llandow, Llanilid and Penmaen.

Each site was evaluated using the fixed criteria arrived at before the visit. Caerau was unfortunately impossible to survey due to problems of security in the area so an assessment of the site is unavailable. Penmaen would appear to be a good example of a partial ring-work, one used in connection with a natural defence such as Gypsy Tump or Montreuil-l’Argillé, discussed above. Llandow was so badly eroded as to render any useful judgement impossible. The four remaining sites at Bonvilston, Coed-y-cwm, Gwern-y-Domen and Llanilid were assessed as mottes rather than ring-works due to the raised nature of their interiors. When applied to the sites listed as ring-works in the research area: Gypsy Tump, Llangiby, Llangwm Isaf, Mouse Castle 2, Old Castleton, Twyn-y-bell and Wolvesnewton. Only Gypsy Tump, Mouse Castle 2, Old Castleton and Twyn-y-bell satisfied the criteria. Twyn-y-bell and Mouse Castle 2, however, are unlikely to be medieval. Llangwm Isaf is a prime example of a motte with a raised lip consistent with example (d) (Vol. 2. figure 11). Llangiby and Wolvesnewton both give the impression of having been landscaped beyond all recognition. Both are low flat, raised mounds and both have large flat surface areas (Vol. 2. surveys 26 and 54). Although it is not easy to state with any precise detail what their purpose was, application of the theory shows quite unequivocally that they should not be classified as ring-works.

### **Size matters:**

It was suggested above that a ring-work should be classified differently from an enclosure castle because the area enclosed by the one is much less than the area enclosed by the other. Assuming that form follows function then the form of the one was born of a different function from the

form of the other. The larger enclosure castle was suited to a community need whilst the ring-work served the same function, but for a smaller group of people. Size of enclosure is a crucial variable in this unfortunately; the optimum size for such a differentiation cannot be defined with any accuracy from the limited research done in this study. Using the two examples of ring-works that were surveyed, the complete ring-work at Old Castleton encloses an area of 1724.843m<sup>2</sup>, (Vol. 2. surveys 39), whilst the partial ring-work at Gypsy Tump encloses just 162.917m<sup>2</sup>, (Vol. 2. surveys 20). In the case of the Gypsy Tump measurement the obvious damage to the site renders the measurement meaningless. The Glamorgan sites, assessed above, yielded only one example of a ring-work, Penmaen. Unfortunately the *RCAHMW inventory* does not supply a measurement of the area enclosed but using the scale on the drawing (1991. 124) a rough estimate can be made at 710m<sup>2</sup>, based on an average radius of 15m. A vague estimate of size therefore for a ring-work could be an enclosed area of between 1725m<sup>2</sup> and 710m<sup>2</sup>. Thus the earthwork ring at Mouse Castle 2, (Vol. 2. surveys 32) with its enclosed area of 96.815 m<sup>2</sup> falls not surprisingly outside of the parameters.

### **Pre-conquest ring-works:**

In sections, 3.3 and 3.4 above, it was argued that enclosure castles were shown to have existed before 1066 and the previous sub-section has demonstrated that ring-works and enclosure castle are very similar in all but size. Is it reasonable therefore to assume that medieval ring-works pre-date the Norman Conquest? An excavation carried out in Germany at Der Hüsterknupp would appear to have established a sequence for mottes and ring-works. The excavation of this low lying water defended site was carried out in the 1950s and the sequence shown in (Vol. 2. figure 12) interprets the ring-work as it was in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries as a site surrounded by a moat with a single access point to the right. The internal timber buildings were surrounded by a wooden palisade. Period II shows the site sectioned into two halves with the left half raised and containing a single elevated building in the centre with another building across the access way. Unfortunately no date is given for this transformation. Period III shows the site as a full fledged motte and bailey, again with no date given. The interpretation at Hüsterknupp was made possible by large scale excavation and similar findings were established by excavations at Goltho (Lincolnshire), Rathmullan (Co Down) and Mirville (Normandy) (Higham and Barker 1994. 268-273) However, as suggested above the difference between a ring-work and an enclosure castle may be dependent on the size of the enclosure. The example shown at Hüsterknupp is arguably large enough to be considered an enclosure castle. Using the diagram of the site in (Higham and Barker 1994. 268) the estimated size of the enclosure would be 1964m<sup>2</sup>, based on the shortest radius of 25m.

Sites which might be referred to as ring-works which have been excavated in Britain include:



- Cæsar's Camp in which a silver penny of Stephen was the oldest find (Pit-Rivers 1878. 431).
- Biggleswade in which limited excavation revealed pottery dating from the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century, Bedfordshire (Addyman 1966 17).
- Penmaen (Glamorgan) with pottery dating from the late 12<sup>th</sup> and early 13<sup>th</sup> century (Alcock 1960. 321).
- Old Castle Camp, Bishopston (Glamorgan) excavated in 1898 by Lt.-Col. W. Li. Morgan. The pottery assemblage dates to the late 12<sup>th</sup> and early 13<sup>th</sup> century (Alcock 1963. 215).
- Llantrithyd (Glamorgan), excavated by T.F.R., Jones, 1960-1969, with a plentiful assemblage of 12<sup>th</sup> century pottery. (Alcock 1963. 215).
- Gypsy Tump (Monmouthshire) not excavated but pot finds from the top of the mound are dated to the late 12<sup>th</sup> and early 13<sup>th</sup> century (Alcock 1963. 215).

The example shown is a very small sample and all that can be said with respect to dating ring-works is that there is no evidence to show that they pre-date the conquest.

### 3.5 MOTTE AND BAILEY CASTLES

#### **Introduction:**

It has been suggested in chapter 1 that the motte is a less visible legacy of the Norman period than its masonry counterpart and as such is generally less well understood. After all, towering walls, crenulations, murder-holes, portcullis slots and drawbridges give recognisable witness to the purpose of such an edifice. Not so the motte and bailey because there is no immediate evidence of function, only an indirect impression of what could have been. One obvious reason for the lack of impact on the modern public produced by a motte and bailey must be the lack of knowledge provided to the general public about such structures, both during the education process and after by the heritage industry. A more important reason, however, is its poor ability to survive the ravages of time.

#### **Problems of survival with earth and timber castles:**

In a structure of earth and timber all that remains overtime, barring exceptional circumstances is the earth which enclosed or supported the timber structure. It has to be remembered of a motte, that the surviving earthwork is the platform on which the defensive structure stood and not the defensive structure itself. As an illustration of this point consider (Vol. 2. figure 13) which shows examples of motte and bailey castles with interpretative structures included, whilst (Vol. 2. figure 14) shows the reconstruction of Staffordshire motte and bailey. Compare the last example to the schematics in (Vol. 2. figure 15) and the analogy is not far removed from reality. A good interpretation of what is invariably missing from a motte and bailey site can be seen in the

photographs of a motte and bailey reconstruction in St Sylvian, France (Vol. 2. plate 19).

Imagine the palisade and tower removed and the ditches dry and silted up and what is left looks like a good proportion of present day mottes. A similar approach can be given to the bailey shown in (Vol. 2. plate 20), without the buildings and fence all that would be left is a slight, probably dry ditch.

An important point to remember therefore, in dealing with the form of motte and bailey castles is that we only have much, altered surviving examples to rely on; they are rarely regular, invariably dictated by natural surroundings but were primarily dependant upon function. Any classification or interpretation has very little concrete evidence to work with, yet attempts have been made by various people to address the problem.

### **The motte and bailey castle, a definition:**

A simplified definition of the motte and bailey castle was offered by Higham (1989. 51) in his re-assessment of timber castles; he suggested that the common motte and bailey is ‘a large mound of earth or rock dominating a defended courtyard’. This study would suggest that both the motte and the bailey together make the castle but if either were missing at the time of the original construction then the outcome should not be considered a castle as will be explained below.

### **The motte form:**

A motte is a man-made mound, in the shape of a truncated cone (*geometrically a frustum*), that has been raised above the natural surface of the surrounding area to provide a defensible refuge. This study argues that the raising of the mound is a crucial point, for a mound that has been created by the excavation of a surrounding ditch, leaving it level with the surrounding landscape, is not a motte, (for examples see Goodrich, Grosmont and Kentchurch (pages 197, 203 and 211). Schematic representations of mottes can be seen in (Vol. 2. figure 15) which show a selection of motte shapes, in elevation and in plan view. The first type, a, is the tall type of motte which, as will be explained in section 4.2, is thought to equate to be an early design. Type b is much lower and marks the late period of motte use. The final example, discussed in the previous section on ring-works is an example of a motte with some of its palisade or wall remaining.

### **Motte construction period, in the study area:**

This study would suggest a date range of 1066-1248 for the building of mottes in south-east Wales and Herefordshire, and their use as a weapon of offence during the Conquest (see below). ‘The Norman conquest of England was accomplished in less than twenty years, that of Wales

took some one hundred years, was piecemeal and extended only permanently to the southern half' (Edwards 1956. 155).

### **Motte function:**

The function of a motte is primarily military, providing a defensible position for the protection of the person in charge of force of men in hostile territory. In writing of the period during the Norman conquest, Ordericus Vitalis recorded 'the king rode to remote parts of his kingdom and fortified strategic sites against enemy attack...the fortifications called castles by the Normans were scarcely known in the English provinces...' (cited in Chibnall 1990. 217-9). The motte could in fact be interpreted as the secret weapon that allowed such a small force of invaders to be successful against the more numerous occupiers; Ordericus Vitalis wrote that the castle was a major feature in the English defeat, (cited in Liddiard 2003. 1).

As part of a weapon of war the motte also served as an administration point, provided a secure habitation and also established a visible statement as to the military strength and intentions of the occupants.

An exception to this definition of the function of a motte is the watch-tower.

### **Watch-towers:**

The watch-tower is an earthwork motte with a small top surface area. Shape, size and in most instances location, suggest a different function for these mottes; which may not have had baileys or even ditches, and the defences of which were not on such a grand scale. The location of such places, overlooking great tracts of land or specific areas of interest such as quarries, would suggest that their function was as watch-towers rather than castles. When baileys are present on such sites, they tend to be quite small with little room to house more than basic needs of a small garrison. Arguably, such an ill-defended site should not be thought of as a castle and it is probable that they were never intended as such.

### **Watch-tower function:**

Arguably the function of a watch-tower was to over-see a disputed or weak area of defence in order to provide early warning of any unrest or hostile action. The duty of the guard or guards stationed at such a site would be to warn the main garrison of changes to the status-quo at the earliest opportunity. There would be no point in staying at the watch-tower to defend it against the approaching threat.

### **Evidence in support of watch-towers:**

There is very little evidence to support the above view of watch-towers, either as established types of motte, or in terms of function. The interpretation rests on circumstantial evidence found during the course of this study. The mottes identified as watch-towers follow the criteria listed above (see distribution map, Vol. 2. figure 22) shows that this form of motte invariably occupies high ground with a good view of the surrounding terrain. Obviously this interpretation is based on present line of sight; no accommodation has been given for the sort of ground vegetation that may have been present at their construction.

Each site classified in this study as a watch-tower (see chapter 10) is in view of at least one other motte or castle, for which it may have served as an outpost. Further more in the case of the western boundary of the study area the two watch-towers St Illtyd and Twmbarlwm can be argued to form part of defence chain with Gelligaer, Mynyddislwyn, and Ruperra, which are outside of the area of this research but similarly placed on high ground.

Only one suggested watch-tower, Caerwent, is on low ground and has no visual contact with another earthwork castle but it is suggested that this motte served as a guard post for the quarrying activity of the Roman masonry (see chapter 10).

### **Baileys:**

The bailey, or in some cases baileys, were enclosed, defensible areas of ground associated with the upkeep and supply of the castle. It was in this part of the castle that accommodation, workshops, stables, kitchens etc were housed. No evidence of such structures are visible today at any of the sites in this study; baileys today tend to survive as flat areas of land surrounded by an earthwork bank or ditch. In the case of Hen Domen, Montgomeryshire the archaeological evidence from the north half of the bailey and dated to c. 1150 showed that 'there was very little open space except immediately within the entrance; the buildings were large, of two stories in some cases...' (Higham and Barker 1995. 337). Higham and Barker went so far as to suggest that the bailey was so crowded with buildings that it would have had a claustrophobic atmosphere (Higham and Barker 1995. 337). However, the same castle c.1080, although massive, only had a large hall on the bailey, in front of a bridge which led to the motte, with a small granary to the side (Higham 1998. 59). It is difficult to know how representative of a standard motte and bailey castle Hen Domen is. The excavations at Goltho, Lincolnshire for example revealed archaeological evidence in support of a single hall structure in the bailey c. 1125-1150 (cited in Higham and Barker 1995. 281-289). Structures within the bailey therefore can only be guessed at since very few sites have benefited from such intense inspection as Hen Domen and Goltho. Certainly in the case of Hen Domen, by the 1150s the castle had become well established and had developed the infrastructure noted above. In the case of the early motte

and baileys, newly established in hostile territory, one can assume that the internal buildings may have been less extensive.

The bailey also served as a defence for the motte; in most cases it was set between the motte and the weakest defensible side. Presence of a bailey has proved to be one of the most reliable methods for assessing a site although mottes do exist without baileys, and there are examples of such sites in this study. In general, however, a motte has a bailey; if it doesn't, then it has been re-developed in some way, the site is classified incorrectly, or the motte has a different purpose than that of a castle, i.e. a watch-tower.

### **3.6 STRUCTURES ON THE MOTTE**

#### **Introduction:**

In 3.5 above it was explained that the earthwork castles, as we know them today, are nothing more than the bases on which their castles or towers stood. Like their masonry counterparts these earthwork castles 'carried the same mixture of defensive and residential structures...but with an important difference: they were built of timber, clay-clad timber, cob, wattle and daub, shingles and thatch' (Higham 1989. 51). To these structures may be added points of defensive access such as gates or bridges. Although it is reasonable to conclude that such crowning structures existed it is far more difficult to state what they looked like or how they were built. None survive other than as evidenced by a few post holes or beam slots which arguably form recognisable patterns from which interpretations are conjured.

#### **Documentary evidence, pictorial:**

Possible contemporary medieval evidence supports the view that mottes would have supported structures as can be seen on the Bayeux Tapestry (Vol. 2. plate 18). The castle of Dol, Conan's stronghold, is depicted as being attacked by Normans. The pictorial description supposedly shows a raised wooden tower atop the motte with a bridge approach. The interpretation is questioned in Higham and Barker, (1995. 150) because a reference to a stone tower at Dol was made in the 12<sup>th</sup> century; however, it is of course possible that the stone tower may have replaced an earlier wooden one. Whatever the case, at the base of the motte are shown rampart and ditch structures and a bridge, with steps and a gate at the top. The second depiction is that of Rennes, this time showing a patterned motte the interpretation for which is that it may show timber cladding or depict cobbles. The surrounding ditch has a timber palisade and there is a palisade around the top enclosing a tower. The third site, Dinan, is similar to Dol in that there is a rampart and ditch at the bottom with a span of a bridge with steps, however, there appears to be a gate at the bottom not the top. A wooden palisade surrounds a two story tower at the top of the motte

and appears to support an external fighting platform. The fourth depiction is that of Bayeux, again a motte but this time the building on top looks more solid, possibly in keeping with a masonry hall. Timber work appears to be limited to the towers, the roof and the flying bridge and it is noticeable that there is no ditch or ramparts. The last depiction is of Hastings and attention was drawn to its interpretation in 3.3 above, (page 31). Here are no ramparts, no ditch and no tower, just what appears to be a wooden palisade.

### **Documentary evidence, written:**

Written documentary sources are also available. Examples include a description of a three story, multi-roomed tower with an overhanging top floor at Ardres, northern France, c.1120 by Lambert of Ardres (cited in Higham and Barker 1995. 115-6). A second example, found in the biography of John Commynes, bishop of Terouenne from 1099, relates to Merchem (Northern Europe) where the practice of building a mound surrounded by a ditch and ‘enclosed by a palisade of hewn logs bound close together like a wall’ is described (cited in Higham and Barker 1995. 118). It goes on to state that within the palisade is erected a keep approachable only by a bridge. In Britain there is an account of the burning of the tower at York in 1190 and its subsequent rebuilding in timber only to be blown down in a gale in 1228 (cited in Higham and Barker 1995. 138). Writing in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century, *Giraldus Cambrensis* relates the fall of Pembroke castle c. 1091 where Arnulf de Montgomery had built a fortification of wooden stakes and turf (Thorpe 1978. 148).

### **Timber Structures:**

Higham and Barker devoted a chapter of their book *Timber Castles* to the structure of timber castles based on excavation and interpretation (1995. 244-264). In the chapter they cite a variety of excavated sites, detailing ground plans and construction interpretations. Using the available evidence they concluded that a ‘great variety of techniques’ were used by the Normans ‘often at the same time on the same site’ (1995. 244). These include timber framed buildings resting on ridged timber beams or dwarf walls to buildings erected on post either sunk into the ground or raised on pads.

They also sought to ‘illuminate’ an understanding of the ‘defences and internal structures of timber castles’ using extant Norman ecclesiastical towers and churches as examples (1995. 244-264). However, whilst such comparisons may admirably illustrate the construction techniques employed by the Normans and contemporary peoples; it is questionable whether they are of any benefit concerning what castle structures may have looked like. Is it advisable to assume that a bell tower was built the same way as a keep or watch tower? Each had a different purpose, each was built under different social pressures, each was designed to survive against different stresses

and strains and, most importantly, each was built in response to a different motivation. A modern analogy could be made with the comparison of a lighthouse and the clock tower of Big Ben, both contemporary, both towers, but that's where the similarity ends.

Higham and Barker identified one probable difference would be the roof. The high pyramidal roofs of bell towers would not allow for defenders to shoot from under the eaves; castle towers would probably have had flat, open tops (1995. 245).

There is no archaeological evidence within the study area for timber structures associated with either mottes or baileys.

### **Palisades:**

Discussions of timber-work often concentrates on the buildings with little attention given to the palisades which were also important structures. As with all the other timber structures there are no remains of palisades, only the earthen banks where they may have stood, however, it is possible to shed some light on their construction. A record of rules *Consuetudines et Iusticie* was recorded in Normandy in the reign of William Rufus (see page 17), some of which has relevance to palisade construction, 'a palisade (*palicium*) could only be built in single form and without battlements and wall-walks (*sine propugnaculis et alatoriis*)' (cited in Higham and Barker 1995. 127). The single wall was something allowed to be built without specific grant of the king, therefore it can be interpreted as a weaker form of unspecified palisade that could carry a wall walk and battlements. If the single palisade can be interpreted as a domestic defence then presumably the stronger version must have had a military function. Does this imply that military castles had double palisade walls complete with wall walks and battlements at least by the time of 1090 when William Rufus established the *Consuetudines et Iusticie*. If this is the case, then the encircling mounds of earth observed around the motte rim at some of the sites investigated in this study may require revised interpretation. Instead of a line of posts as seen at the St Sylvian reconstruction (Vol. 2. plate 20) imagine a double row of logs, possibly sawn timbers with a gap between filled with clay, soil or rubble. This could then be topped by a wall walk probably shielded by higher timbers on the outside forming battlements. (Vol. 2. figure 16) illustrates various interpretations of rampart types, all of which are possible. The first two show the single palisade example and the last four different configurations of the enclosed palisade with wall walk and battlements.

Within the bounds of this study, there is only one source of information relating to a timber palisade on an earthwork castle. At Langstone, Alcock interpreted a line of vertical impressions around the west side of the motte rim at Langstone as possibly having been formed by a timber revetment or palisade (Blockley and Courtney 1994. 18).

### **Bridges:**

The problem of survival of organic matter such as timber has led to the loss of structures associated with earth and timber castles. Conditions that alleviate this problem such as water-logging or soil sterility are exactly what should be expected in the in the case of bridge structures whose base members would have been located in wet ground. Unfortunately such ground causes difficulty in excavation necessitating deep trenching, pumping and post-excavation conservation all of which dramatically increases the cost of such ventures. Rigold writing in 1973 stated that in England and Wales ‘only about a dozen bridges have been totally excavated over the last sixty years’ (1973 183) because of the problems of expense. However, from the limited evidence available Rigold was able to suggest three types of bridge construction:

- Driven piles, such as at der Hüsterknupp (Germany), Rayleigh (Essex), bridge ‘T’ at Hen Domen (Montgomeryshire).
- Rigid, standing on quadrilateral ground frames, piers or cassions: Eynsford (Middlesex), West Derby, Leckhampton (Gloucestershire). Acton Burnell (Shropshire) and Elmer’s End (Kent/Surrey).
- Transverse trestle, with longitudinal strength provided by the gang way and its bracing; Camlet (Middlesex), Bushwood (Warwicks), Bodiam (Sussex), and Kirby Muxloe (Leicestershire).

(Rigold 1973 186-187).

The Trelech excavations undertaken as part of this research confirmed the presence of two beam slots, interpreted as holding the trestle beams for a flying bridge (see Vol. 2. excavations). Further bridges have been suggested by this study at Caerleon, Dingestow (Mill Hill), Dorstone, Llancillo, Pont Hendre and Rockfield (see Vol. 2. surveys: 4, 8, 10, 23, 43 and 45).

### **Timber verses stone, pros and cons:**

Before moving on to construction in the next section it is worth dispelling the myth that timber construction was necessarily inferior to stone. The timber castle should not be seen as a makeshift alternative; its defences were just as effective as those of stone and would certainly be more comfortable to live in. The perceived weakness of timber could well be a result of modern bias. Arguably timber is prone to fire damage but not if it is covered in clay or plastered, whilst the weight of masonry can be its downfall especially when placed on an artificial earthen bank. It should also be remembered that masonry castles were not timber free, substantial fittings and fittings, structural components and roofs would be made of timber (Wilcox 1972. 193-202; all prone to fire. There also appears to have been no rush to consolidate a timber castle with stone. For instance a Royal letter from Henry III to John de Gray, Justicar of Chester concerns the



replacement of the wooden palisade around Chester Castle with stone in A.D.1246 (Shirley 1866. 45).

It may well be that the initial choice between timber and stone was simply one of logistics. Sites such as Chepstow and Monmouth were both built just after 1066, which place them in the motte building hey-day, however, they were not built as mottes. Arguably, this might reflect their importance but then was Chepstow more important than Ewyas Harold, or Hereford or Clifford, sites which were mottes with probable timber buildings? One possible reason for the choice of building material could be the nature of the raw materials available. Both Chepstow and Monmouth are built high on natural rock outcrops thereby doing away with the need for mottes. Both may also have had ready access to easily obtainable stone, Chepstow certainly re-used Roman masonry. The two masonry castles may therefore have been built in stone because that was the most practical and readily available material to use. Once established of course, they may have taken on a more prestigious role than their timber counterparts, a role which along with their more durable construction material ensured their permanence.

Such an explanation, however, does not hold true for Caerleon, a huge motte next to a large quantity of Roman building material.

Possibly the most obvious in choosing timber over stone is the cost, time and man-power needed for building in the latter as will be discussed in the next section, see below. Renn held similar opinion regarding stone verses timber in castle construction for the period of conquest:

‘Needs and resources dictated the sort of castle that was put up – a motte and bailey with rough timber-work, put up in a matter of months...or an architectural masterpiece in stone, with every comfort and defensive feature possible, which would take as many years as the other took months’.

(Renn 1968. 14).

### 3.7 MOTTE CONSTRUCTION

#### **Introduction:**

Little research has been undertaken regarding construction of earthwork castles. This is hardly surprising because lack of documentary evidence means that the only way of acquiring definitive information is through excavation. With such large three dimensional structures, excavation is an option that requires a major investment of time and resources.

Mottes, ring-works and baileys are all basically raised structures that usually have surrounding ditches from which their fill was probably obtained. There are, however, circumstances where natural landforms or even pre-existing structures have been used in order to reduce the effort needed for their creation. As such it is unreasonable to assume that there was only one

construction technique and therefore, self-defeating to look for one defining method. Each site has unique factors which will have dictated construction methods and in order to assess construction of individual sites correctly, all these variables should be taken into account. One of the basic assumptions, as noted above, is that the digging of a ditch naturally provides the material for the mound or rampart. However, a mound or rampart raised without some form of consolidation will not retain its shape for long especially if it is surmounted by heavy structures.

### **Documentary constructional techniques:**

It has been a long standing belief that the Bayeux Tapestry depiction of the motte built at Hastings provides the answer to this problem (Vol. 2. plate 18). The coloured banding shown across the bottom of the motte is considered to show evidence of the use of consolidation layers of differing materials, although it is possible that the embroiderer was just using artistic licence to make the work more aesthetically pleasing. Doubt has increased over the theory since excavation of the motte at Hastings showed the construction fill to be comprised of 'a dump of differing sorts of sand, all of them unstable...a most unlikely basis for a motte put up by such efficient soldiers...no clay strengthening, nor timber strapping nor any other discernable reinforcement' (was observed) (Barker and Barton 1968. 88).

### **Excavation evidence from the study area:**

There are seven excavations within the area of this study including Abergavenny, Kilpeck, Langstone, Llanarth, Penyclawdd, Trelech and St Weonards (see chapter 10). Of these seven, only Langstone (page 218), Llanarth (page 220) and St Weonards (page 324) actually examined the mottes although the two excavations at Penyclawdd and Trelech, initiated for this research, did show that the base constructions of each were rock cut (Vol. 2. excavations). In support of the Bayeux model, the Langstone excavation showed that the motte was built up of layers of yellow green clay interspersed with layers of green stone fragments (Blockley and Courtney 1994. 18).

Likewise, the Llanarth excavation revealed that the artificial section of the motte was composed of layers of fine gravel, mixed soil and stone, and dark soil and pebbles (O'Neil and Foster-Smith 1936. 250). The St Weonards excavation also showed banding layers but recorded that they were sloped downwards towards the centre. Although the report is not clear, it seems to suggest that the fill was probably of a pre-historic phase rather than Norman (Wright 1855. 173). It would appear, therefore, on the bases of this sample of three, that the consolidation theory of motte construction suggested by the Bayeux tapestry is correct, however, to rely on such a small sample would be a mistake.

### **Time taken to build a motte:**

Time and effort for construction is an important point to be considered when constructing a defensible structure, especially in hostile territory. Kenyon (1990. 7), suggested that a ring-work must have been cheaper and quicker to build than a motte and bailey and there is an amount of evidence to support this view for example: the excavated sequences at der Hüsterknupp (Germany) (cited in Higham and Barker 1995. 88-89), the Tower of London (Davison 1967b. 40-43), Castle Neroche (Davison 1971-2. 24). However, with the possible exceptions of Old Castleton and Gypsy Tump, there is no evidence at present to suggest that ring-works preceded any of the mottes within the study area.

### **Documented motte construction:**

The *Gesta Normanorum Ducum* written in 1070 by William of Jumieges provides a contemporary account of motte construction. He recounts the building of a castle in one day at Pevensey, before moving to Hastings where another was built (cited in Van Houts 1992. 167). This account is probably accurate as the site at Pevensey was probably the pre-existing Roman fort and the castle was pre-fabricated. The record of pre-fabrication was provided by the Norman poet Wace who was writing almost a century after the conquest (cited in Higham 1998. 53).

A second account of castle building comes from Ordericus Vitalis and his *Ecclesiastical History* written c.1095–1114. In the third year of William's reign, 1069 there was a revolt in the city of York. The castle, held by 500 mounted knights, was taken and burned to the ground. William responded by riding to York and putting down the rebellion. He remained there for eight days to build a second castle which he left in the hands of William fitz Osbern (Chibnall 1990. 223). The second castle was probably Baile Hill but it is not possible to be certain (Addyman and Priestley 1977. 118). As an example of its size it stands about 12m high with a top diameter of 25m.

### **Comparative evidence on motte construction times:**

There have been attempts at estimating the number of man-hours required to construct a motte. Some have been designed for other studies such as Professor Atkinson's calculations for chalk built earthworks (cited in Barton and Holden 1977 69-70). Roseff cited the following comparative examples (2003. 19):

- Ian Baptie, Offa's Dyke experiment, which concluded that 40 people could dig 10m of ditch to construct 10m of bank, 2m deep, 2m high and 2m wide in 40 days
- David Maylam, Seven men dug and constructed 1,000 yards (914.4m) of the Canterbury town ditch and bank in 1246. The bank was 1.5m deep and 1.5m high.

- Corrie Renfrew, a contract archaeologist is expected to dig a ditch 3m by 1m by 1m per day.
- First World War manual: One person can shift on average 0.42m<sup>3</sup> per hour/ 2.26m<sup>3</sup> per day.

From these comparisons Roseff suggested that 'a typical Herefordshire motte 40m base diameter, 30m top diameter, 2m high...would take 50 people 25 days to construct' (2003. 20).

O' Connor cited other estimates of motte construction based on motte specific calculations (1993. 67):

- Bramber (Sussex), base diameter 59m, top diameter 27.5m, at a height of 9.14m.  
100 people working ten hour days = two hundred and twenty days + 60 for bad weather and winter daylight.
- Lodsbridge (Sussex) base diameter 43m, top diameter 16.5m, at a height of 5.3m.  
50 workmen, working ten hour days = 42 days in good weather.

This study, however, suggests that constructions techniques vary with the geology and previous use of a site, therefore unless individual calculations are used to account for each variation, the resultant figures are purely academic.

### **Building timber structures:**

An interesting study of timber construction was undertaken by Roseff which is summarised here: She postulated the amount materials required to construct a medium sized castle, e.g. Clifford (Herefordshire). Given that the bailey has a perimeter of 340m and the motte a perimeter of a further 108m, a total of 448m of palisade would have been required. The cost of constructing the 'great palisade' at Builth in 1278 was £16 6s 8d (citing Brown *et al* 1963 Vol I, 296), from which she estimated the cost of palisade construction at 16d/m. The accuracy of her estimates are obviously subjective and costing may not have been an issue in the circumstances of castle construction in an area that would provide a large subjugated workforce. She suggested that if a palisade was constructed of 2m lengths of wood 0.4m in width then four such uprights could be obtained from one small tree. The palisade would therefore require 280 small trees or 560 trees if double thickness.

For a tower, 6m by 6m by 6m high, a tree of 2m circumference would yield a rectangular block 3m by 0.6m by 0.5 which could be made into 0.05m planks to cover an area of 18m<sup>2</sup>. The tower would therefore require twelve trees. Other service buildings would need sills and uprights but would be mostly wattle and daub requiring smaller trees. More substantial timber would be required for gates and drawbridges; however, she suggested that the total amount of materials

would be in the region of 600 small trees and 40 larger ones. The value of this research is purely academic but it does illustrate the manageable aspect of the task of building in timber (Roseff 2003. 20-21).

### **Building in stone:**

Roseff also included information concerning masonry construction times (2003. 21). Her conclusion based on experimental archaeology was that a wall builder could erect 6.6m-8.5m of wall 0.6m high and 1m wide in a day. Delimiting factors include, lime mortar takes time to set, and approximately a week would be needed per 0.5m in height. The stone has to be quarried, transported, prepared and be ready at hand; all requiring the service of a number of workmen.

### **Motte fill equals ditch cut:**

The idea that ditch cut would provide motte fill seems to be unlikely unless the ditch cut was able to provide a range of fill types to account for the various layers of consolidation. To examine the premise, the survey project undertaken for this study allows for an alternative approach to excavation. Where circumstances have allowed, volume calculations have been projected from survey measurements in order to estimate the probability that ditch cut equals motte fill (see Vol. 2. surveys). This method involves subtracting the volume of the ditch, measured beneath the natural surface, from the volume of the motte, measured above the projection of the natural surface. Before going into detail, it is important to emphasise that the findings are approximate as they are at best measurements of features that have changed from their original configurations; mottes have eroded, ditches have silted up and the natural surface may be modern. Rowlestone for example (Vol. 2. survey 46) has a wet ditch, the water being at least a metre deep above a layer of soft sticky mud that underlies it. The measurements for this site were taken from above the water surface; therefore, at least a metre of the ditch volume is missing. How much volume is missing at the other sites through silting or damage is impossible to gauge.

Eleven of the 54 sites surveyed had enough remaining features for calculations to be made: these include Chanstone 1, Dixon, Dorstone, Llancillo, Llangiby, Mount Ballan, Nant-y-bar, Newton Tump, Penrhos, Rowlestone and Trelech (Vol. 2. surveys 7, 15, 23, 26, 31, 36, 38, 41, 46 and 50). Of these, three: Mount Ballan, Newton Tump and Penrhos were found to be built on raised baileys, therefore, the motte ditches were not cut; their sides were raised. The sites and their volume calculations are presented in the table below and the simple subtraction made to show the difference between motte fill volume and ditch cut volume.

Site	Motte volume	Ditch cut	Excess	Deficit
Chanstone 1	816.17m <sup>3</sup>	500.665m <sup>3</sup>	313.505m <sup>3</sup>	
Dixton	228.226m <sup>3</sup>	1197.443m <sup>3</sup>		1425.699m <sup>3</sup>
Dorstone	5781.57m <sup>3</sup>	2427.04m <sup>3</sup>	3354.53m <sup>3</sup>	
Llancillo	3209.024m <sup>3</sup>	1108.97m <sup>3</sup>	2100.054 <sup>3</sup>	
Llangiby	1822.44m <sup>3</sup>	379.69m <sup>3</sup>	1442.75m <sup>3</sup>	
Nant-y-bar	3151.318m <sup>3</sup>	7.344m <sup>3</sup>	3143.974m <sup>3</sup>	
Rowlestone	1010.46m <sup>3</sup>	42.99m <sup>3</sup>	967.47m <sup>3</sup>	
Trelech	939.76m <sup>3</sup>	643.57m <sup>3</sup>	296.11m <sup>3</sup>	

From the table, an interesting result is that of Dixton where some 1425.699m<sup>3</sup> of ditch cut volume is “missing”. Arguably, this would suggest that the mound has been levelled but the easiest way to level a mound surrounded by a ditch is to fill the ditch. In the cases of Chanstone 1, Rowlestone, Trelech, and possibly Llangiby, the findings would suggest that the excess could be accounted for from the ditch. Knowledge of the sites and their surroundings makes it possible to envisage ditches devoid of modern silting that could quite easily provide the necessary capacity for the excesses shown. At Trelech, some of the guess work has been removed, for the excavation revealed that the ditch to the north of the motte was almost a meter deeper than at present (see Vol. 2 excavations). Trelech also provides for consolidation material, as the ditch to the north at least was rock cut.

Dorstone, Llancillo, and Nant-y-bar, however, cannot be explained so easily. To have provided the fill for their mottes, the ditches at Dorstone and Llancillo would have to have been over twice as deep as they are now. The increase could only have been in depth because the outer circumference at both sites appears to be original. Interestingly, if the ditches were at such an estimated depth, both sites would have had very deep wet ditches supplied by streams that run past the site. At Nant-y-bar the increase would have led to a ditch some 428 times deeper than at present, this seems an untenable proposition.

These findings suggest therefore that the process of building a motte from a ditch was probably the normal procedure as long as the ditch provided a necessary range of fill types. However, the process was not always adequate and in some cases suitable fill must have been obtained elsewhere, possibly resulting in the need for quarries close by. Such quarries may have to be guarded as suggested at, Caerwent (see page 138), Great Goytre (see page 200), Llangwm Isaf (see page 240) and Rockfield (see page 307). The importation of material is evidenced at Chepstow castle by the string course of Roman tiles around the hall block. Furthermore, such importation of construction material has to have occurred at Mount Ballan (see page 255),

Newton Tump (see page 277) and Penrhos (see page 293), where there are large areas of raised land but no local evidence showing where the fill was obtained.

The construction of the earthworks at Mount Ballan, Newton Tump and Penrhos brings into focus another important aspect of castle construction: location. In the case of Mount Ballan and Newton Tump, to which can be added Orcop (see page 283), but interestingly not Penrhos, the land chosen for their siting was extremely boggy and waterlogged. Why the castles were placed in such positions is open to conjecture and possible explanations are offered below. The solution to building in such locations, however, was to construct or re-use a raised platform.

### 3.8 CASTLE SITING

#### **Introduction:**

‘We cannot speak of an overall strategically plan in castle siting; castles were built as the need arose or opportunity offered; to guard a pass or river crossing, to control a road or overawe a town, to protect a gang of adventurers trying to carve out a landholding for themselves in debated country or to provide a Norman earl with suitable headquarters to govern his lands’.

(Renn 1968. 14).

Exactly how much time or effort could be saved by re-using advantageous sites is debatable but it is probably safe to assume that an opportune high-point would have been seen as a deciding factor for rapid fortification in hostile country. It is also reasonable to assume that previously used sites would retain routes of communication such as rivers and roads and in the case of existing settlements the control of existing infrastructure, administration or religious focus would provide useful targets of interest to an invading force.

#### **Use of existing defences:**

A recurring aspect of Norman earthwork castle construction is the use of existing defences, be they natural or man-made. Both castles at Hastings and Pevensey have shown evidence of use before Norman times (Higham and Barker 1995. 58) and there are many other examples throughout the sphere of Norman influence. Such sites in the study area with evidence of pre-Norman activity include Abergavenny (Roman), Caerleon (Roman), Caerwent (Roman), Ewyas Harold (Saxon), Kings Caple (Saxon), Llangwm Isaf (Iron Age), Longtown (Roman), Mouse Castle (Iron Age), St Weonards (Pre-historic) and Twmbarlwm (Iron Age). Possible inclusions could also be: Bryngwyn (pre-historic), Castell Arnallt (pre-historic), Mount Ballan (pre-Norman) Nant-y-bar (pre-historic), Penrhos (pre-historic) St Illtyd (pre-historic) and Thruxton (pre-historic) (see chapter 10). Obviously re-use of a site will dictate the construction methods

needed to produce a set of defences. Caerleon for example has evidence of a pre-standing structure which may have been buried in order to raise the motte. Ewyas Harold was probably a Saxon burh and the Twmbarlwm defences were created by cutting a ditch through the rock at the edge of a high ridge.

A further series of sites were probably chosen because of natural formations which could be utilized for defensive purposes including Bacton (high ridge), Castell Arnallt (geological), Colstar (ridge), Cusop (steep spur), Didley (ridge), Dingestow, Mill Hill (high ridge), Dingestow 2 (spur), Gypsy Tump (ridge), Llanfihangel Crucorney (high river bank), Llanfair Kilgeddin (high river bank), Llanarth (geological) Llangwm Uchaf (ridge), Mynydd-brith (ridge), Old Castleton (high river bank), Poston (ridge) and Trelech (ridge) (see chapter 10).

Obviously there are some cross-overs with the re-use sites, because the original occupants would have found the same naturally defensible locations just as useful as their successors. The important point is that construction would have been governed by the end result and the available resources. Therefore, at Bacton, for example, security was provided by the creation of a ditch to separate part of the ridge from the rest of the hill. The other sides were already protected by the steep slope of the valley. At Llanarth a geological mound of glacial deposit was enhanced by raising it some two metres whereas at Trelech the motte was isolated from the bailey by a rock cut ditch and from the lower surrounds by a natural slope which may have been scarped.

### **Communication routes:**

In chapter 1, the border of the study area was explained as following the natural boundaries of rivers and mountain ridges and it was suggested that these would have provided logical methods for delineating tracts of land. Arguably, these natural boundaries would have also provided access routes into the country for a people unfamiliar with the area. The river Wye was certainly navigable to Hereford and will be suggested below that navigation may have extended to Clifford (see page 87). Coxe recorded that the Usk was navigable to Tredonnoc, dependant upon tide, (1801. 1) but it possible that navigation may once have extended to Usk or possibly Abergavenny. Excavation in 2003 revealed a Wharf at Skenfrith (Trott 2003. 136-138) which would suggest navigation was possible on the Monnow. River navigation would have been important for access and as supply routes to the Normans.

As was suggested above re-used sites or existing settlements would undoubtedly have track-ways connecting them to other parts of the area. These would be important for trade and communication. Norman interest would be focused on these routes not only for their own communication and trade but also to control the infrastructure of the local inhabitants.

It is interesting that most of the early sites are undoubtedly linked to the main rivers (see page 84) and known Roman roads. ‘... the piecemeal character of the Norman Conquest of Wales,



carried on, as it was, as separate enterprises, by way of the valleys and along Roman roads' (Rees 1968. 7).

### **Settlements:**

Any pre-existing settlements would also be of prime importance to the Normans and occupation of these, especially with the presence of a dominating castle, would be a means of controlling opposition. Such centres, Caerleon, Ewyas Harold, Kilpeck, Monmouth, Usk etc. would contain the administration facilities, prominent officials, as well as buildings of religious importance.

### **Administration:**

Arguably, the impact of 'Normanization' of the administrative structures of Wales varied from place to place. Upland areas, of little economic value, tended to have suffered little from Norman interest with native princelings and kin-groups allowed to govern themselves as long as the occasional tributes were paid or hostages surrendered (Davies 2000. 96). In the case of south-east Wales, however, 'the Norman grip was more secure, its lordship more precise and its profits more ample' (Davies 2000. 96). Davies suggested that here the 'Normans found a pre-existing pattern of authority on which they could build easily. A dependant peasantry was already organized into groups of *vills* under local reeves and owned specific renders of honey, swine, cows and sheep to native Welsh courts (*llysoedd*)' (2000. 96). Rather than impose a new system it would seem that the Normans adopted and adapted that which already existed, merely installing a change of head. As was suggested above, control of existing settlements would therefore lead to the creation of localised castles to promote and sustain the Norman interest. As will be seen in chapter 8 the distribution of mottes in the study area would tend to support this view.

### **The church:**

A different approach was given to the church '*clas*', which existed in Wales prior to the conquest. This church structure was unfamiliar to the Normans who wasted no time in installing their own version of religious practice; in the process of which they despoiled the diocese of Llandaff and St David's, laying claim to estates and revenue thereof (Walker 1999. 67). As seen with settlements above, the church was an important institution to control 'most castles were imposed within, and often located in relation to, an extant pattern of parochial topography' (Creighton 2002, 110).

There are different possible motivations behind the Norman focus on church sites. In one context the church was the collection point for tithe from the parish; 'the revenues of the church flow from voluntary contributions of the faithful' (Ekelund *et al* 1996. 5), The parish was created

from the ‘partitioning of the earlier *parochia*, (diocese of the bishop) (Morris 1997. 228), In an other it was ‘a centre of education and culture, with many churchyards also acting as market places’ (Smith 2002. 31). However, probably the most tactically important aspect of church control, in a period where religion ‘permeated through to every aspect of people’s lives’ (Smith 2002. 30), was its religious value.

Exerting religious restrictions or allotting them as a gift provided the Normans with a powerful hold of the conquered populace. The Normans achieved this either by barring the locals by placing the church inside the stronghold of the castle, such as at many masonry sites, for example Goodrich and White Castle, or restricting them by placing the church within the bailey, such as at Ewyas Harold, Bredwardine or possibly Newton Tump and Trelech.

It is noticeable that churches do seem to be located close to castle sites whether built after the castle or before it. During the Normandy field work for this study the most efficient way of locating a motte proved to be by first finding the church. In the few cases where mottes included in this study have no closely associated churches the earthworks are either not motte and bailey castles e.g. Gypsy Tump, Howton, Nant-y-Bar etc., or else there is a possibility that a church may have vanished such as at Newton Tump.

### **Resources:**

It will be suggested in (chapter 10) below that Trelech may have been the site of an early motte built in an area known from the 13<sup>th</sup> century as an important iron production site. It is possible that iron production was in place before the 13<sup>th</sup> century but as yet there is no proof of this theory.

Forests were another important resource to the Normans providing timber, fuel and hunting. These areas of land were greatly prized, indeed in the case of the Wentwood, it is suggested that at least six masonry castles were built with the sole purpose of administering the wood and protecting it from the indigenous population.

Agricultural land seems to have been a resource that was not fully realised until the 12<sup>th</sup> century when there is an increase in less offensive mottes. This is not really surprising as farming would have been a risky pursuit during the early conquest period and most of the area was still waste from the 11<sup>th</sup> century warring as attested by various entries in Domesday. However by the 13<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in the Golden Valley, the intensity of mottes designed as fortified sites would suggest that good agricultural land was of great interest.

## CHAPTER 4

### EARTHWORK AND TIMBER CASTLE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS

#### 4.1 PRESENT SYSTEMS.

##### **Introduction:**

Over the years, research into motte and bailey castles has been concerned with three distinct but interlinked approaches: typology, dating and construction. All have been discussed in the preceding sections of chapter 3 which provides background to a final stage of discussion, classification.

G.T.Clark's 1884 interpretation of the motte and bailey castle as a Saxon burh, and the subsequent dismissal of the argument by Round and Armitage, has already been described. Armitage's belief that the motte was a Norman invention has also been considered, and with the exception of its assumption of pre-conquest origin, accepted for this study. Three other forms of motte classification are worth mentioning and each will be presented below.

##### **Renn:**

In 1959 Renn produced a classification system for dealing with mottes in order to find any consistency with respect to dates or purpose based on size and shape. His system is presented below as it was published in *Antiquity*.

Most mottes are circular, but we may distinguish:

- I. The oval (diameters differing by 20% or more).
- II. The angular (sides at definite angles to each other).

In elevation we have:

- A. High (height greater than minimum top diameter).
- B. Low (pudding shaped).
- C. Crater (pronounced ring-bank).

The bailey may be: a, circular; b, oval; c, triangular; d, quadrilateral; e, lobed; f, polygonal.

And in relation to the motte they may be:

- 1 Central (own separate ditch).
- 2 Internal (inside bailey ditch).
- 3 Peripheral (astride bailey ditch).
- 4 External (outside bailey ditch).

(Renn 1959. 106).

Renn's findings were inconclusive 'producing only a few clusters of sites which on closer examination were better described as chains of defence along hill passes' (Renn 1959 107). The construction of these castles were furthermore interpreted as being 'built as and when need arose rather than a planned development' (Renn 1959 107). In 1968, Renn had modified his system and restricted it to mottes built before the reign of Henry III. Class C he changed from a crater motte to a ring-bank and he added a new class of bailey 'a/2' as subdivided, e.g. 'half moon' (Renn 1968. 83).

#### **Problems with Renn's system:**

An obvious problem can be seen with the above classification system, and its improvement, in that it compares shapes of castles in order to provide a classification. As has been seen, not only does the surviving shape of a motte give limited insight into the original castle but the surviving shape of a motte may not even bear any resemblance to its original shape. Another problem may arise from the use of the smallest diameter across the top of the motte calculated against its height. Again damage will affect such readings and he makes no record of how to deal with such problems when they arise.

#### **Müller-Wille system:**

A second classification system was in use in Germany before 1966 and was reported by King in Chateau Gaillard V: In 1966 Herr Müller-Wille published a system of motte classification that he had been using in Germany: *Mittelalterliche Burghügel (Motten) im Nördlichen Rheinland* (1966, Band 16 of the *Bonner Jahrbücher*) (cited in King 1972 101). The system classified mottes by height using a three band classification, allotting them accordingly:

Class I	mottes over 10m in height.
Class II	mottes between 10m and 5m in height.
Class III	mottes below 5m in height.

#### **Problems with the Müller-Wille system:**

As has been discussed chapter in 1.6, King pointed out the limitation of using the metric system to classify mottes arguing that as the Normans used the perch for measurement, application of an irrelevant calibration was unlikely to produce meaningful results. King also noted that the perch was a non-standard measurement, differing between districts (King 1972. 101).

Apart from the problem highlighted by King, the system is flawed because it relies on precise measurement of imprecise data. Every motte has damage, in differing amounts, from differing forces. A good example was highlighted by the excavations at Richard's Castle; what was presumed to be a very large motte was found on excavation to be a small motte with a large

masonry tower which had collapsed in on itself (King 1972. 102: Higham and Barker 1994. 196).

### **Higham and Barker's system:**

A third system of classification was offered by Higham and Barker in their book *Timber Castles*. They produced a system covering both mottes and ring-works:

Mottes without baileys or with no apparent baileys  
 Mottes with one or more baileys  
 Mottes (with or without baileys) within earlier earthworks.

(Higham and Barker 1994. 198).

### **Problems with the Higham and Barker system:**

This is a much less demanding system than the first two, requiring less information. Unfortunately, the insights provided are very limited. Whether or not a motte has one, two, three or no baileys may infer a scale of importance to a site; conversely it may suggest a range of possibilities including abandonment, differing usage considerations or ostentatious show. It is, for example, possible that many castles had three baileys but that development or farming practices have obliterated the evidence. All these considerations must be addressed with any such classification system.

The major problem with all these classification systems is the tendency to create groupings, rather than to provide an understanding of the particular sites. These systems use size, shape and configuration as separate entities rather than trying to work from the data as a whole, moreover, the systems rely on data which is flawed because the surviving earthworks are damaged.

## **4.2 ALTERNATIVE SYSTEM**

### **Introduction:**

This study offers a different approach to motte classification, an approach which considers size, shape, location, configuration, documentation and in some cases excavation, not as a final statement of quantitative data sources but rather as expressions of function, thereby providing qualitative data.

### **Case study:**

A case in point is the extremes of motte ranging from the tall tower to the short pudding shape- Renn's A and B or Müller-Wille's Class 1 and III. (Vol. 2. Figure 17) shows samples of two such sites which were taken from this study: Caerleon (Vol. 2. survey 5) and Chanstone Tump 1

(Vol. 2. survey 7). Below each photograph is a cross section of the motte; both have been shown at the same scale for comparison.

Similarities:

both mottes are frustums, or cones with the top removed.  
 both mottes have or had ditches.  
 both mottes may have had baileys.  
 both mottes are close to water.  
 both mottes are located in a valley bottom

Differences:

height,

maximum height of Chanstone above natural is 2.3m.

gradient,

the average gradient of Caerleon is 72.2%.  
 the average gradient of Chanstone is 40.39%.

approximate volume of earth moved for construction:

Caerleon	8788.15m <sup>3</sup> .
Chanstone	816.71m <sup>3</sup> .

surface area of top:

Caerleon	412.135m <sup>2</sup> .
Chanstone	574.189m <sup>2</sup> .

surface area of base:

Caerleon	3235.225m <sup>2</sup> .
Chanstone	1551.497m <sup>2</sup> .

Using the above data as a quantitative source, based on measurements of surviving features of the mottes would be as misleading as the classification systems used by Renn and Müller-Wille. Taken a stage further, by making simple comparisons, however, the following information is revealed:

Caerleon has:

- over 7 times more height than Chanstone.
- a slope gradient over 1.8 times that of Chanstone.
- over 10.8 times more volume of earth than Chanstone.
- over 2 times the base area that Chanstone has.
- Just under ¼ less top surface area than Chanstone.

It would seem that although Caerleon is much larger than Chanstone and consequently would have required more land and application of effort to build it, the space left for occupation or use was much less. What could the reasons be for such an apparent design flaw?

One possibility could be the demands of the terrain but this would not appear to apply in this instance, both are located in valleys next to rivers. A more likely reason is that a good deal of Chanstone motte could be missing for one reason or another, thereby giving measurements that do not reflect its original construction. Field examination of the site shows that the base of the motte at Chanstone is surrounded by a ditch; therefore, the base is more than likely quite close to its original size, 1551.497m<sup>2</sup>. It is possible that the top of Chanstone has been reduced in height and so by extending the line of each side at the existing gradient, a potential original height can be suggested, (Vol. 2. figure 18). A new height of 8m above natural can be achieved with this modification but of course such a projection would make the motte a cone with no horizontal surface area on top and so this explanation can be disregarded. It is also possible that the gradient of the slope at Chanstone has eroded; if the slope is restored to the same as that at Caerleon, a new height solution for the site can be projected:

- Solution a      If the sides of the motte at Chanstone are given the same gradient as at Caerleon it is possible to add just under 12m of height to the site. This would make Chanstone a sizable motte at over 14m above natural. However, as with a, this would mean that the top of the motte has no horizontal surface. Again this solution can be disregarded.
  
- Solution b      A further solution would be to extend the height until a surface area of 77.488m<sup>2</sup> as found at Caerleon was achieved. This would allow for 4m to be added making the motte only 6m high above natural.
  
- Solution c      Alternatively, if the new gradient is only continued until its present surface area of 86.74m<sup>2</sup> is reached then only just under 2m of height could be gained making the motte 4m high.

There is certainly a possibility that the motte at Chanstone could have attained a height of 6m above the natural surface from its current base area, within known possibilities of slope gradient and top surface area. However, even with such a height increase there is still a major difference between Caerleon at 16m and Chanstone at a projected 6m.

### **Underlying theory behind the alternative system:**

Rather than impose an arbitrary scale on the difference between mottes in order to classify each as does Renn and Müller-Wille, why not question the reasons behind the difference?

An obvious reason for the difference between mottes which must not be overlooked is the survival rate of each structure which will have been dictated by various means on different sites. However, bearing this in mind, other reasons for the difference between two mottes could be the function for which they were built, the difference in location or availability of materials. In the case of the above mottes, they are both on fertile land in valleys with running water so the latter condition would not seem to apply. That just leaves the motivation of function and it is this reason that forms the basis for the theory of classification offered by this study.

The underpinning tenet is “form follows function”.

### **Dating derived from form:**

The difference between Caerleon and Chanstone and arguably any other variation can be interpreted as resulting from a difference of original purpose. The function of a tall motte with a small top surface area must be different from a low motte with a larger top surface area. What that difference is, is open to speculation, however, logistically speaking the taller motte offers more defence than a smaller one whilst the smaller one offers the availability of defence, at a lesser degree, to more people. Such a consideration would be less likely to occur in the case of a structure intended initially for offence and defence in a hostile environment. In the case of Caerleon for instance, a larger top surface area was less important than height to the builders. Did the height therefore guarantee greater defence, a more visible show of power, or just reflect the availability of a larger workforce? Whatever the reason, the difference in height coupled with the useable top surface area is the main characteristic that divides the two examples above.

It has been suggested in this study that the motte was an innovation of the conquest. The *raison d'être* behind the motte and bailey has been assumed since Armitage to be to protect the owner from his own men as well as providing a secure bastion against outside attack. Therefore, if form follows function and the tall mottes were best suited for the hostile days of the early conquest, it would follow that the tall mottes are early, possibly 11<sup>th</sup> century in date. By similar deduction the low mottes, which were designed to accommodate more people albeit with a lesser degree of security, can be assigned to a more settled period and are therefore later, possibly 13<sup>th</sup> century. In between, there is a style of motte with a lower height but still a small surface area for private protection. This sort of halfway motte would logically mark the mid-point between both extremes, i.e. 12<sup>th</sup> century. Of course as well as these apparently succinct groups, there are the watch-towers with medium height, little top surface area and minimal defence.



These convenient time periods that are suggested above are approximate; one style did not give way to another at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Day of the next century. Rather, each style would be dictated by the social conditions apparent at a given time and place. Renn's conclusion was that castles were built not to plan but as and when needed (see above). Arguably the very tall, frontier mottes would gradually decrease in size as the conquered peoples yielded to Norman rule and the Norman lords had less to fear from their own men. By the time of the late mottes, the dangers against which the owner of a fortified-site defended himself were probably neighbouring estates, or rustlers, rather than armies of displaced indigenous populations. The owner of such a fortified-site, with its larger enclosed surface area, probable extended protection to family and servants, within the main area; the bailey having become redundant along with the need to maintain an army close by.

### **Problems with the alternative system:**

In initiating a theory to explain a phenomenon the ideal situation is to have a fixed starting point, an observable end point, and a strict set of stages in between that can be accounted for and included. In reality, however, one must include the confounding variables and accept that there will be problems to be considered at all stages. Usually in problem solving exercises it is possible to rely on two known factors in order to work out the third or alternatively have a recognisable ratio of change by which one factor can be modified to account for change in another. In earthwork classification, however, there are no definitive fixed points or any standard end points, but there are many confounding variables between the two.

Superficially, a fixed point in the context of the earthwork castle is the Norman Conquest. This fixed point should, provide both the builders of the castles and their motivation for the exercise. It is at this stage, however, that the first variables occur:

- The motivation behind the building of motte and bailey castles must have changed with circumstances over the 200 year period that this study addresses: from the initial offensive conquest of a hostile land, through the subjugation of a conquered people to the assimilation of the inhabitants into a viable system of land tenure and society.
- Such differences of motivation would also be reflected in location, the choice of an extremely defensible situation, a point of less defensive but extremely visible administration, or a lightly defended but centrally placed fortified-site.

- The use of the term Norman in this context implies a single entity; however, the Normans were a mix of individuals, arguably with their own ways of achieving ends. Therefore, all the castles were not built by one Norman and in all probability all the castles were not built from a single blueprint.

The final stage, the observable end point, is where most of the variables are misinterpreted; through forced standardisations which are imposed, rather than inferred, and based on the evidence of partial, and possibly far from representative, remains.

- In Higham and Barker's system, inclusion of the bailey or baileys, plays a major part in their classification but there is no way of knowing why a bailey was included, not included or multiplied at each site, or indeed any way of knowing if a surviving configuration is an accurate indication of the original design; i.e. has an original bailey been destroyed, enlarged or reduced.
- Another form of evidence missing from the three systems cited above is any reference to location. Arguably, a motte and bailey castle built in a location where there is no natural defence would necessarily be different from one built using the available natural resources to best advantage. A low lying motte would probably require the construction of encircling defences, depending on the social climate at the time of building, whereas a motte situated on a spur of a steep hill would simply need an isolating ditch. To classify such examples in terms of motte height or motte shape does not account for the underpinning motivation of location.

The middle part of the theory of construction is dictated by a strict set of changes that can be demonstrated. On one level this is an impossible task as the variables are unlimited and their effects unpredictable but here are a few obvious causes that could affect the final stage:

- The passage of time will have had variable affects on the surviving structures.
- The success, failure, destruction or redundancy of a site will have had variable affects on the surviving structures.
- Location will have had variable affects on the surviving structures either through climate, geology, original function and/or later land use.

- Misinterpretation will have had variable affects on the surviving structures.

In an attempt to remove some of these variables, it is suggested that using all the available evidence for each site is the better alternative. In this way, variance will occur at a different rate related to different sources. Similarly, the visible nature of a site may be affected by climate whereas the buried structure will not. Neither would the location or the documentation. Documentation for a site may disappear or may have been made in error but the physical nature of a site provides different evidence.

In summary, each site has to be treated individually; there can be no simple labelling technique to cover all. Even then the only certainty about a classification system for earthwork castles is that it is never likely to be adequate. However, it is possible to improve on what is available at present. It has, after-all, been shown that reliance on single forms of evidence is invariably flawed.

### **Evaluating the system:**

To evaluate the system it needs to be checked against reliable evidence to see if any correlation can be found. Within the study area are 71 earthworks, and of these only fourteen have associated dating evidence (Vol.2 spreadsheet 2). A further limiting factor is that only three of the fourteen; Clifford (see page 161), Cusop (see page 172) and Ewyas (see page 193), are construction date specific.

### **Early sites:**

Of the seven sites estimated as early: Abergavenny, Bredwardine, Caerleon, Clifford, Ewyas Harold, Old Castleton, and Trelech the classification system has produced a positive result at a ratio of 4:7, (see chapter 6) and some of the apparent error can be explained. Bredwardine was included as an early castle because of its form, but it has a late documentary date of 1374, (*Cal. Inq. p.m.*, XIV, no 12. 13). However, the date is for the castle as a ruin and not for its construction; therefore it can be dismissed from the equation. The dates for both Old Castleton 1140-1180 (see page 281) and Trelech 1175-1200 (see page 334) are for pottery finds. The Old Castleton pot sherds derived from a badger hole excavated deep into the north-east base of the motte and therefore have a *terminus post quem* value, i.e. the motte must have been built after c. 1140. However, as will be explained (see page 282) the motte is a secondary feature to the earlier ring-work at the site. In the case of Trelech, the pot sherds were found during the ditch excavation, at one of the lowest contexts but not at the bottom of the sequence. The Trelech sherds therefore may represent an early period of use but not the time of construction.

After removing the Bredwardine and Trelech data from the equation the results can be re-evaluated as a positive ratio of 4:5.

### **Mid-period sites:**

Of the three sites estimated as mid-period: Kilpeck, Langstone and Llanarth two have been interpreted with some accuracy by this system giving a ratio of 2:1 (see chapter 6). Kilpeck, late 11<sup>th</sup>- early 12<sup>th</sup> century (see page 213) and Llanarth, early 13<sup>th</sup> century (see page 220) are dated by pottery finds and although the Kilpeck date seems secure judging by the excavation reports, the Llanarth date seem less so, the pottery having come from non secure contexts. As with Trelech above, the Llanarth date may represent use rather than construction date for the motte. Langstone as well is suspect as the document which records the site does not mention any castle (*Bristol Cartulary f.36r-37v*) (see page 218).

### **Late period sites:**

Of the four sites estimated as late: Cusop (see page 172), Dingestow 2 (see page 182 , Penrhos (see page 293), and Penyclawdd (see page 296), three would appear to have been interpreted correctly, the one error being Dingestow 2, which was recorded as being built in 1182 (Jones 1952. 73 : 1955. 169 : 1971. 185). Dingestow 2 is however, atypical being a mound purpose built to take a stone castle.

### **Results:**

The results of dating using the classification method introduced by this study against dating evidence derived from finds or documentation are:

4:1 for early sites which gives a percentage accuracy of 80%.

2:1 for mid-period sites giving a percentage accuracy of 66%.

3:1 for late period sites giving a percentage accuracy of 75%.

### **Discussion:**

Arguably, the results show that applying the system of ‘form follows function’ classification to date mottes does seem to have some validity. Although the results show that the system is not infallible it does show that it has an acceptable degree of accuracy. Unfortunately, the sample size itself is small. The 15 mottes used only represent 10.65% of the castles within the study area. Therefore it is difficult to give a true assessment of the system; although there is no evidence to show that it does not work.

What this chapter has sought to do is to remove the need to squeeze earthworks into small categories by ignoring the bits that do not fit. It is preferable to keep the castles as individual entities and treat each one as a unique site within the confines of its own location, history and physical remains. Then, more accurate information can inform the process that will build an effective classification system.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This thesis required employment of various strategies in order to establish as clear a picture as possible of the earthworks within the area of study. The range of information included has been collected from various sources, some readily available, some involving detailed research and others newly created as part of the fieldwork. To explain the framework for this study it is important to detail the procedures used so that they can if necessary be recreated. This chapter will therefore set out the methodologies employed. The study includes eight different phases including - desktop research, fieldwork, survey, resistivity survey, excavation, processing of data, processing of results and finally the thesis. The order for each phase was designed to run as listed but circumstances were to dictate another course of action and the results were to modify the approaches.

#### **5.2 DESKTOP RESEARCH**

##### **Phase 1, site identification:**

The desktop research was planned as a two phase project. The first phase would be to establish a complete list of sites within the study area and the second, to be completed after the field-work, would be to collect documentary evidence concerning each site. To this would be added all the general background information on the area both prior to and post, the Norman Conquest.

In the first phase, a decision had to be made concerning the boundaries of the study area. Gwent was the area of choice as discussion with colleagues, including archaeologist Graham Makepeace and Abergavenny Museum curator Frank Olding, had intimated that this area had been severely neglected in comparison to Glamorganshire and Herefordshire. Initially, however, the county boundary created a problem for the two castles at Longtown were clearly important to the research. Why did such a small village need two castles? The problem with including Longtown in the research was that it is in Herefordshire. Research on boundary fluctuations, however, confirmed Welsh place names west of the River Wye such as Llanwarne, Maes-coed, and Treaddow. There was clearly a problem with imposing a modern county boundary on an ancient landscape. Therefore, it was decided that it would be better to use an area boundary that the Normans could have been aware of, the rivers and the mountains: Severn, Wye, Usk, and the connecting ridge of the south-east Black Mountains. The subsequent boundary for the research was therefore partly Welsh and partly English and more to the point partly Cadw and partly

English Heritage. This was to highlight differences in administrative and data presentation practices.

Research began with a data request to the Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) and the Hereford Sites and Monument Record Office (HSMR) asking for a list of motte and bailey castles, ring-works, tumps, tumuli and mounds of unspecified origin within the areas delineated. GGAT produced a list of 27 sites and the HSMR produced a *Microsoft Access* database of 417 sites. The extensive HSMR database had many listings such as hollow-ways enclosures and stone piles and a few well known pre-historic sites which were easily eliminated to reduce the list to 194. The reason for such a wide request was that it was decided early on to base the research on what could be seen rather than what should be seen; therefore, the lists were used only as a guide of sites to visit. The classifications were left until after each site had been inspected in person. When this had been done, the data was then cross-referenced with the works of King *Castellarium Anglicanum*, Hogg and King, *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 1963, 1967 and 1970, and Shoesmith, *Castles and Moated Sites of Herefordshire* 1996. This provided a database of known earthwork castles and other sites that needed verification.

### **Phase 2, field-work:**

All the sites were then plotted on Ordnance Survey 1:50,000, Landranger maps and much of the first period of the study was spent visiting the sites and classifying them, either for inclusion or dismissal dependent on their outward appearance. It should be added that in most cases, visiting of sites required permission from the owners which is a lengthy task in its own right. Indeed five years later at least two of the site's owners are still a mystery. Some of the sites to be checked were problematic; the entire information sheet for one consisted of 'mound in Mus 14346' with a six figure Grid reference, (HSMR), others such as 'Mound at Park Farm' with compass directions and distance, (HMSR), were given as three separate listings at slightly different co-ordinates; none of which resulted in an earthwork castle. Nevertheless, field-work during the initial period of study, reduced the sites to 154, including two, Cole's Tump and Rockfield, which were new additions. The database for the sites was stored in digital format originally on *Microsoft Access* but then reformatted for *Microsoft Excel*.

### **Phase 3, documentary research:**

The second phase of desktop assessment was brought forward to compensate for the outbreak of foot and mouth which curtailed all field-work activity. This research involved collection of available site records at both the National Monument Record in Swindon and The Royal Commission in Aberystwyth. Searches were also made at the Sites and Monument Record Office

in Hereford and the Cadw headquarters in Cardiff to check that the data was complete. These records were filled away for later use so as not to introduce a bias into the field-work.

As well as the collection of site records, research was done on general documentation such as *Calendar Rolls* and Journals as well as antiquarian observations. Most of the sources were readily obtainable but some were in various special collections. This study accessed resources at University of Bristol, University of Wales Cardiff, University of Glamorgan, University of Wales, Newport, University of Wales Lampeter, Cardiff Public Library, Cwmbran Public Library, Hereford Public Library, Newport Public Library, Abergavenny Museum Library, Legionary Fortress Museum Library, Caerleon, National Museum of Wales Library, The Woolhope Club Library, National Library of Wales and Gwent Public Record Office.

### 5.3 INTERPRETATION OF SITES IN THE FIELD

#### **Site identification, fieldwork:**

The second project phase was the process of identification in the field and this was reliant on constructing a set of criteria with which to identify earthwork castles. To do this, some of the more representative earthwork castles were visited such as Ewyas Harold, Pont Hendre, Trelech, Dixon, and Llanarth as well as others out of the area such as Richard's Castle (Herefordshire), Lingen (Herefordshire), Clun (Shropshire), Crickhowell (Powys), Hen Domen (Powys), Pains Castle (Powys), Launceston (Cornwall) and Clifford's Tower and Baile Hill (York). As a simplified working theory for identifying earthwork castles, a site should have a mound preferably with a surrounding ditch, and an associated enclosed area of land, again preferably surrounded by a break of slope of some sort. These features together are a good indication of an earthwork castle, however, various factors have to be taken into account, including location. The mound of raised earth, however, was the one variable that had to be taken as a constant, with the exception of ring-works and crop-marks. The end result of the field work further reduced the database of sites to 112 entries (see Vol.2 spreadsheet 1).

### 5.4 SURVEY WORK

#### **Topographical:**

The third phase of research involved the topographical survey of sites that were deemed to have enough recognisable remains to provide a useful set of measurements. At the beginning of the study it was decided that the best way of assessing the sites would be to acquire a reliable spread of information from which to work in order to address the aims and objectives that had been set (chapter 1). As was stated above, written evidence about each site was excluded at the initial



stage in order to remove any bias towards any remaining observable features. This strict approach was applied for each survey so that measurements were made of features that were evident, rather than features that reportedly exist.

### **Equipment:**

The survey technique used a Topcon GTS 212 Total Station, an instrument which is a laser measuring device that records distance and angles simultaneously. The instrument requires two operators, one to sight the station for each measurement and one to position a reflecting target over the spot to be recorded.

### **Problems:**

The drawback with using such equipment is that it is both “line of sight” and weather dependant. The laser has to be reflected back from a prism stationed above a point to be measured. If the line of site is blocked then no measurements can be taken. The practicality of the limitation means that the best survey period is autumn and winter when deciduous vegetation causes fewer problems. Ground cover as well causes less of a problem during these seasons allowing features to be more clearly visible. Unfortunately, the electronics in the instrument are susceptible to damp conditions, and the laser has difficulty with rain, fog and snow. The consequence of these problems was that the survey periods were restricted and had to take precedence over other data collection.

The surveys started in December 1999 and by February of 2001, nineteen had been completed but then all field work was cancelled due to the Foot and Mouth epidemic. It wasn't until early 2002 that the surveys could start again and by June of 2003 another 35 had been added to the list. Of the original 59 sites to be surveyed only five were excluded - Clifford, Kentchurch, Snodhill, and Twyn-y-Corras because permission could not be obtained and one, Kilpeck, because the vegetation was impenetrable.

### **Data record:**

The first few surveys were recorded manually on a survey log with the data inputted into a *Microsoft Excel* spreadsheet for later use. The first surveys were further processed in *AutoCad 14* to produce interpolated contours. The process was found to be inadequate to the task and extremely time consuming and so a surveying course was undertaken at Topcon. Resulting from the course, it was possible to switch to full data processing by direct download from the Total Station into a civil engineering package, *CivilCad 5.5*. The package and an instrument were on loan from a local construction firm for most of the study period.

The new package allowed for rapid data processing, allowing for interactive measurement and contour plotting. Unfortunately, as an engineering based program, it was not designed to produce images suitable for graphic display in archaeology. Therefore, further processing was needed and was accomplished through trial and error with a combination of software including *AutoCad 2000*, *Adobe Photoshop* and *Adobe Illustrator*.

One of the benefits of the processed data was the ability to produce three dimensional images on a computer screen and manipulate various parameters and calculations. Using a range of contouring calibrations, it was possible to identify very minute surface anomalies that had been noticed during field work but unfortunately could not be picked up in photographs. These anomalies led to the conclusion that certain sites still had vestiges of sub-surface remains *in situ*.

### **Geophysical surveys:**

University of Wales, Newport luckily runs lectures and practical sessions on geophysical techniques as part of the archaeology degree courses and staff were open to suggestions for suitable sites to work on. English Heritage granted Schedule Monument Consent for six sites and Cadw for three more whilst Dr Mike Hamilton provided students and equipment for resistivity surveys. These were to lead to some major discoveries providing previously unknown data (see Vol. 2. geophysics).

## **5.5 EXCAVATION**

The geophysical surveys provided particularly interesting information for five of the sites that led to two of them being excavated. The remaining three are in need of further work.

The excavations were carried out in two seasons at both sites; February to March 2002 and 2003 at Penyclawdd; and June to July 2002 and 2003 at Trelech (see Vol. 2. excavations)

## **5.6 PROCESSING OF DATA**

### **Topographical survey data:**

Processing of the data record was a continuous event throughout the study with a major contribution compiled during the Foot and Mouth epidemic. The original records were kept in *Microsoft Access* format but the program proved to be problematic and so the information was reformatted into *Microsoft Excel*. Sites were recorded under the headings Name, Grid reference, Type, Period, Information source, Owners, Location, and updated as new information was acquired.

The survey data was processed to produce graphic images of contour plans, cross-sections to illustrate both the form of the earthwork and its immediate surrounding landscape, and three dimensional isometric digital terrain models. Measurements of height and surface area were recorded across the sites using cardinal points and volumetric calculations were made wherever possible. All the relevant survey details and graphics were recorded in Vol. 2. surveys.

#### **Geophysical survey data:**

The geophysical data was downloaded into *Geoplot 3* and initially processed by the students at University of Wales, Newport. Selections of final shade plots were saved as bitmap images and opened in *Adobe Photoshop* where they were interpreted and later imported into *Adobe Illustrator* for final display in Vol. 2. geophysics.

#### **Excavation data:**

The excavation data was collected from the site logs and short reports of the conclusions were added to Vol. 2. excavations.

### **5.7 RESULTS**

#### **Statistical:**

Results of the study, which are discussed in more detail in chapter 6, are based on one of two different approaches: statistical analysis and distribution mapping. To analyse the statistics the original data acquired from the various sources was assessed to produce a final list of sites of potential interest. From the list, a database of relevant information was constructed in *Microsoft Excel* adding seven categories to be used for correlation assessment. The Renn classification system and the Müller-Wille were included in order to compare the capabilities of the study method.

#### **Distribution mapping:**

The distribution mapping was undertaken using the same period type classification as used in the statistics analysis above. This time, however, each site was plotted on an overlay of the research area created for the study. The maps were produced in *Adobe Illustrator* making use of the layer facility to produce a data set which could be interactively questioned. To do this each site was allotted its own separate layer which could be turned on and off depending on the data required. Thus, as an example, all the early mottes could be turned on and all the later ones off until the desired combinations were achieved.

The overall results were then assessed with a description of the findings for each period, detailed and discussed.

## CHAPTER 6

### RESULTS

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with the analysis of the data that has been collected against the dating hypothesis, as outlined in chapter 4, section 4.2. The outcome of each analysis must be regarded with a certain amount of caution as the results are based on a small sample group. Another factor that must be taken into account is the unequal numbers of sites assigned to each period, the proportion being: 48% early, 8% mid and 35% late. Therefore, in order to produce a more useful statistic, each chart is also analysed in terms of proportion. The statistics below are not in any way intended as verification of the theories used, but merely indicate the results of statistical analysis when applied.

In most instances the sites listed are referred to as earthworks to avoid confusion unless the data relates to specific instances in which case the term motte is used.

#### 6.2 DATA PRESENTATION

##### **Layout:**

In chapter 5 it was explained how the original database of 444 sites was reduced to 194 at the desktop stage, and then 154 at the start of field-work, eventually reducing to 111 by the end. The data was then turned into a spreadsheet format which can be found in Vol. 2. spreadsheets. The final database of 111 sites is included as Vol. 2.spreadsheet 2 'Results'. The spreadsheet contains four pages of data, divided into 12 columns with the following headings:

- Castle.            The name of the site.
- Grid ref.        The national grid reference.
- Original type.   The interpretation of the site by this study.
- Date.            The date of the site followed by a letter: D-documentary, P-pottery, nd-no date.
- Topography.    Location type is divided into two areas: natural defence and open.
- Height.         Greatest height of mound above adjacent natural ground.
- Top m<sup>2</sup>.         Surface area of top of mound.
- Base m<sup>2</sup>.         Surface area of bottom of mound.
- Gradient.       Steepest slope of mound.

- Bailey. Visible bailey at the time of visit.
- Builder. Builder named as such in documentary evidence, not by association.
- Theory. The date period given to the earthwork as explained in Vol. 2.

The spreadsheet format is continued for the following five sets of data, each selecting a different topic for analysis. Spreadsheet sets 5 and 6 have an extra column, in which are included the classification codes for the system devised by Renn, discussed in chapter 4, and the surface area percentage data, for top and base calculations.

### **Spreadsheet 1 (Vol. 2):**

It should be noted that spreadsheet 1 includes masonry castles, geological features, other period sites and unknown types, although those sites contain no further data than name and grid reference. Spreadsheet 1 (Vol. 2) was included to provide continuity with the study by accounting for all of the sites considered. Spreadsheet 2 (Vol. 2) reduces the total of relevant sites to 72 and serves as the base study for the rest of the spreadsheets.

### **Spreadsheet 2 (Vol. 2):**

‘Earthworks’, contains the 71 sites from the total of 111 that have been interpreted as earthwork forms by the nature of their surviving remains and in some cases documentary evidence. Included in the database are seven sites which could neither be identified nor dismissed due to lack of any verifiable information. They were included because their potential existence or form may be of interest later in the distribution maps. Of the 71 sites identified only 49 have full topographical survey records, the other identified sites have information derived from estimated interpretations. Five fully surveyed sites are missing from this spreadsheet; they are Caer Licyn (page 130), Castell Arnallt (see page 144), Dixon (page 186), Kemeys Inferior (Gypsy Tump) (page 186) and Mouse Castle 2 (see page 260). The reason for their exclusion is that they were discounted as mottes. Gypsy Tump was interpreted as a ring-work, but as it is one of the only two ring-works listed then it cannot be added to the statistics. The measurements for Old Castleton are concerned with the later motte not the ring-work.

### **Spreadsheet set 3 (Vol. 2):**

‘Topographic location’, ‘natural defence’, selects 42 sites which have been located on ridges, thereby using the natural defence of a high point to accentuate their position. The criterion of a ridge site relates to either a narrow spine or a steep edge of an escarpment and should not be taken to signify high altitude. Only ten of the sites have any real height gain over the surrounding country side. However, four hill sites have been added because although they do lack a steep

natural defence, their locations, on broad ridge tops, suggests the possibility of using natural height in their selection.

The other 29 sites are listed on the spreadsheet 'open'. The term 'open' has been used to signify low lying sites that appear to have no natural defence and whose location must presumably have been chosen for some secondary reason; such as to control a route, or to dominate a settlement.

Spreadsheet set 3 contains two pages of 'natural defence' related sites and one page of 'open' sites. Three of the "unknown" sites have been included because their whereabouts are known by documentary evidence even if their exact natures are a mystery.

#### **Spreadsheet 4 (Vol. 2):**

'Müller-Wille', includes interpretations of the 46 surveyed sites, which have been converted into the Müller-Wille system (see chapter 4); using the measurements acquired as part of this study (Vol. 2. surveys). They have been included in order to provide a comparison with the theory which underpins this survey.

#### **Spreadsheet 5 (Vol. 2):**

'Renn', contains a database of 48 sites with an extra column added showing the classification of sites in relation to Renn's model (see chapter 4). Kemeys Inferior has again been deleted because, as a ring-work, its data is different and Old Castleton is treated as a motte only.

#### **Spreadsheet 6 (Vol. 2):**

'Top surface area % to bottom surface area', again contains the database of 48 sites surveyed but with an extra column added to give the percentage of the area of the top surface in relation to the area of the bottom surface, of the earthwork. The reasoning behind this is twofold. In Renn's calculations, one of his main measurements was the minimum diameter of the top of the motte in relation to its height. Arguably, the minimum diameter of a motte top is hardly representative of its size, unless it is a perfect circle. Also not many of the mottes can be expected to have survived to their original diameter or height for that matter. Therefore, Renn's calculations are not only based on flawed evidence but also relying on the minimum diameter would mean using a scale based on a representation of maximum damage. This can be seen clearly in the case of Llanfihangel Crucorney, a kidney shaped motte, known to have been partially destroyed (see Vol. 2. survey 25). The maximum diameter is 11.06m whilst the minimum diameter, due to damage is only 6.403m.

Using the surface area of the surviving motte top is also subject to the same flaw created by damage, however, it gives a complete measurement of the surviving top rather than one

particular aspect, which arguably, reduces some of the error. Obviously neither system is perfect because each measures surviving remains and not original states of construction.

The second reason for calculating surface area is related to the theory that the useable space on top of a motte is relative to its intended function. Therefore, a later motte, having lost the need for private defence, would be lower with a larger surface area. However, rather than taking the overall surface area of an earthwork top as a quantitative measure, it is worth considering the importance of surface area as a percentage of the modified site, i.e. the base. Using the examples of Caerleon and Chanstone discussed in 4.2, the top surface area of the motte at Caerleon, 412.235m<sup>2</sup> is only 12.7% of the base area. In the case of Chanstone 1 the top surface area 574.189m<sup>2</sup> is 37 percent of the base area. Whatever the reason for the different motivation behind creating areas on raised platforms it can be clearly demonstrated that the in the case of Chanstone 1 the onus was for more space less height whilst at Caerleon less space and more height was desired.

### 6.3 ANALYSIS

#### **Introduction:**

As was explained above, spreadsheets sets 1 and 2 (Vol. 2) provide the base information sheets from which various selected forms of data could be highlighted for further analysis.

#### **Spreadsheet 3 (Vol. 2):**

The first form of analysis undertaken concerned topographic forms of site location in terms of natural defence or open. The findings were that of the 71 sites included:

- 42 were sites making use of natural defence.
- 29 were sites with no overt natural defence.

Of the sites included in the main database, 11 have not been dated for various reasons, Digget's Wood (see page 177,) destroyed, Gypsy Tump (see page 208), partial ring-work, Llangwm Isaf (see page 240), atypical, Llanvaches (see page 244), destroyed, Nant-y-bar (see page 267), atypical Nant-y-Glasdr (see page 270), unknown, Newport, Stow (see page 275), destroyed, Rogerstone (see page 309), destroyed, Silver Tump (see page 313), unknown, St Margaret's (see page 322), unknown and Whitney Castle (see page 357), destroyed. The table therefore contains only 60 of the 71 sites.

- 42 natural defence sites, subtract 7 undated sites leaves 35.



- 29 open sites, subtract 4 undated sites leaves 25.

Analysis of both spreadsheets into early, mid and late periods of construction produced the following results:

### 1<sup>st</sup> Analysis:

**Table 1**

Location	early	mid	late
Natural defence	21	4	10
Open	6	6	13

The numbers record occurrence of each dated type site, in relation to the two location types. Once the basic information was collated, the occurrence numbers were converted to percentage data for analysis as shown in table 1a

**Table 1a**

Location	early	mid	late
Natural defence	60%	11%	29%
Open	24%	24%	52%

The results suggest that a higher percentage of the early earthwork castles in this study tended to use natural defence; whereas the greater number of late earthworks were located in more open areas.

A second analysis, table 1b, was compiled from the data of table 1 to look at the correlation of period and location by proportion of period type.

**Table 1b**

Early	78%	Natural defence
mid	60%	Open
late	56%	Open

The results of the second analysis showed that there is a high probability that early earthwork castles did make use of natural defence for their location, whereas mid period earthwork castles were less restricted. The results for the later period earthwork castles showed that their builders were less concerned with naturally defensive locations.

The results of this analysis show that there is a small correlation between location, and period of construction in which it is possible that early earthwork castle sites were located to take advantage of natural defence.

## 2nd Analysis:

The next analysis examined the Müller-Wille system, chapter 4, using the survey data from 46 of the sites and converting them into the Class I, II, and III systems. The reason that only 46 sites were chosen out of the 71 is that mottes that were not surveyed have not been used as there is no height data available and mottes where it is difficult to differentiate the constructed height from the natural have not been included. One of the included sites, Nant-y-bar, has also been discounted as its date is unknown. Three rows of data were constructed, one for each system; the results are recorded below:

**Table 2**

Müller-Wille	early	mid	late
Class I	3	0	0
Class II	14	4	0
Class III	5	4	15

**Table 2a**

Müller-Wille	early	mid	late
Class I	100%	0	0
Class II	78%	22%	0
Class III	21%	16%	60%

The analysis suggests that Class I mottes are only to be found in the early period although the actual number of samples makes the statistics unreliable. Of the Class II, a significant proportion can be seen to be early with some inclusion of mid-period mottes. The most revealing evidence, however, is that there are no late period mottes included. In the Class III table there appear to be no significant results; the 60% tendency for mottes to be late if they are less than 5m could be a result of chance.

The second analysis table, however, shows some quite interesting results. Table 2b was analysed to look at the proportion of mottes of each of the three periods to find out what percentage were assigned to each class:

**Table 2b**

Müller-Wille	early	mid	late
Class I	14%	0	0
Class II	64%	50%	0
Class III	22%	50%	100%

Whereas table 2a showed that all Class I mottes were early, not all early castles are Class I mottes. The data revealed that early mottes are more likely to be Class II, with a not inconsiderable amount being Class III. Mid-period mottes show an equal distribution over Class II and III. The data for late mottes, however, shows that they are exclusive to Class III.

These Tables, based on the Müller-Wille system seem significant in the two extremes of Class I and Class III mottes, but as with the tables in the first analysis, the period data is tentative. Unfortunately, in the case of height measurement, the added variable of damage also affects the statistical outcome. The conclusion is that the Müller-Wille cannot be used as a measure of reliable probability.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Analysis:**

The third set of analysis was based on the Renn system of classification and again the 48 surveyed sites included in the study were converted to the system. Only 17 sites had baileys that could be accounted for and most were only partial, therefore the sample size was considered too small to offer any valid contribution.

**Table 3**

Renn	early	mid	late
IA	2	0	0
IB	19	8	9
IIB	1	0	6
IC	0	0	1

**Table 3a**

Renn	early	mid	late
IA	100%	0	0
IB	53%	22%	25%
IIB	14%	0	86%
IC	0	0	100%

Interpretation of the results from table 3a, albeit based on a small sample, suggests that all IA type sites are early. The same can be said of the 100% occurrence of type IC sites as late period. The most common form of earthwork would appear to comply with the IB criteria and the greater majority are early. Type IIB sites have a significant correlation with the later period. The results do seem a little more encouraging in this instance the same problem of sample size must be remembered as a limiting factor.

Table 3b looks at the proportional spread of the time period type earthworks, as a percentage of Renn's classification types:

**Table 3b**

Renn	early	mid	late
IA	9%	0	0
IB	86%	100%	55%
IIB	5%	0	40%
IC	0	0	5%

The data above shows that a significant amount of the early earthworks are of the IB type, as are all of the mid-period earthworks in the chosen study sample. Of the late period earthworks there is no significant data except for the absence of their occurrence as IA types.

Arguably, the Renn system does indeed produce significant statistical data.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Analysis:**

The next piece of analysis considers the surface area of the earthwork tops, using the percentage difference between the top surface area and the base surface area of the earthwork on which it was built. The theory behind the measurement of percentage change, suggests that there may be a noticeable difference, in the surface area set aside for use, which is dependent on the period in which construction took place. If the assumptions are correct, the earlier earthworks will have smaller top surfaces than the later ones due to the function of private defence.

Unfortunately, as there are no known examples of this sort of research; an arbitrary calibration system must be imposed. This unavoidable necessity obviously affects the outcome of the results, as a confounding variable of unknown influence.

The range of the data spread was from 0.45% to 61.8 % and so it was decided to calibrate the chart with 6 increments, each valued at 10%. The reason for the calibration was that too small an incremental step would tend to blur the findings by narrowing the range of possibilities. At the other extreme too large an increment would make the results difficult to manage.

**Table 4**

Arbitrary range	early	mid	late
0-10%	14	6	7
10%-20%	4	1	1
20%-30%	3	1	1
30%-40%	1	0	4
40%-50%	0	0	1
50%<	0	0	2

**Table 4a**

Arbitrary range	early	mid	late
0-10%	52%	22%	26%
10%-20%	67%	16.5%	16.5%
20%-30%	60%	20%	20%
30%-40%	20%	0	80%
40%-50%	0	0	100%
50%<	0	0	100%

Interpretation of the results from chart 4a shows that 52 % of the castles with the smallest top surface areas in proportion to their bases are early with both the other types sharing the remainder of occurrences. In the 10% to 20% proportion table, again the highest occurrence is with the early period sites. The 20% to 30 % also shows a bias towards early period earthworks. At the 30% to 40% mark, the occurrence rate swings in favour of the later earthworks and is only represented by later castles. It is possible to infer that sites where there is a less proportional difference between base surface area and top surface area are likely to be later. However, the same constraints concerning the validity of this analysis apply.

Application of the same data in table 4 to ascertain the percentage of each period type can be seen in 4b below:

Chart 4b

Arbitrary range	early	mid	late
0-10%	63%	75%	44%
10%-20%	18%	12.5%	6.25%
20%-30%	14%	12.5%	6.25%
30%-40%	5%	0	25%
40%-50%	0	0	6.25%
50%<	0	0	12.5%

Although, in agreement with table 4a, this analysis does suggest that sites with the least proportional difference between base surface area and top surface area are likely to be later.

### **Validity:**

The above sets of analysis have given examples of how using statistics on differing combinations of data can show both similarities and discrepancies. It was stated in the introduction to this chapter that the analysis was not undertaken to validate the general theory applied in this study but merely to examine how each of the four different approaches compared. It was also stated that the data was based on subjective analysis and therefore had to be treated with caution.

## CHAPTER 7

### CASTLE DISTRIBUTION

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

The distribution results were analysed by including the data from the study onto a map of the study area, introduced in chapter 1. All of the site descriptions can be found in the site gazetteer in chapter 10. The original map has been modified with the inclusion of a Roman road schematic taken from three different sources (Livingstone 1995. 108, and *OS* 1956 and 1973). The Roman period is outside of the remit of this study, but these roads are included as possible indicators of lines of Norman advance. Also included are sites of known Roman influence as recorded on the 1956 *OS* map, (see above). Six maps were produced with varying sets of data including:

- 1) Complete sites.
- 2) Early mottes.
- 3) Early mottes and watch-towers.
- 4) Early mottes, watch-towers and mid period mottes.
- 5) Early mottes, watch-towers, mid period mottes and late period mottes.
- 6) Fortified sites.

#### **Maps:**

The first map (Vol. 2. figure 19) includes the entire list of sites, coded into eight different type sites, as interpreted in chapter 10. The names of the sites are also included on the first map so that it can be used to find each site when discussed. This map, however, becomes somewhat confusing with such listings and it actually detracts from the visual impact, therefore, a second version of the map (Vol. 2. figure 20) is included without name labels and this unlabelled format is continued for maps three to seven (Vol. 2. figures 21-25). On each map, masonry castles are represented as black squares, whereas, mottes that have become masonry castles are shown as black squares with a trapezoid base and a red dot to represent the transitional nature of the sites. Mottes themselves are identified as red dots, ring-works as green, fortified-sites as blue and others as pink. The ‘other’ sites are those earthworks identified as “other than Norman”. The ‘?’ in a circle, is used to show sites that have not been identified with any degree of confidence and are, therefore, classified as unknown, whilst the ‘G’ in a circle pinpoints sites that have been identified as geological. All of the Roman data has been added in pink as either lines or small squares; the small squares indicating areas of known Roman interest.

The second map is the same as above but without the site names. It has been included to show the rather random nature of the sites as a whole, although, there do appear to be two distinct concentrations, one following the Monnow and Dore valleys and the other concentrated in the south, west of Mounton Brook.

The third map is obviously much less densely occupied, showing only those sites interpreted as early mottes, mottes that became masonry castles, masonry castles, and the unknown sites. As regards the mottes that became masonry castles, it is assumed that at this period they would have been earth and timber constructions. The following maps show different additions of sites including watch-towers, mid-period sites, late period sites and fortified-sites, based on the interpretations in chapter 10.

### **The Roman roads:**

With respect to the Roman road network, each of the major junctions of the road system is marked by either an early motte or a masonry castle including Chepstow (bottom right), Caerleon (bottom centre), Usk on the road above Caerleon, Monmouth, north-east from Usk, and Abergavenny north-west. Usk is shown as a masonry castle and there is no reason at present to believe that it started life as an earth and timber structure although the possibility should not be discounted (see chapter 10). From Abergavenny, the road continued to Brecon (*Y- Gaer*), passing either Maes Celyn or Crickhowell mottes. To the east it continued, although possibly to the east of where indicated, to the River Wye and on to Kenchester (*Magnis*). There is some doubt as to the accuracy of the road layout in this area; there is a suggestion, for example, that Longtown may have had a Roman presence (see chapter 10) although this has never been proved. The road at Monmouth splits with the left route leading to Hereford and the other to Weston-under-Penyard (*Ariconium*). If it is assumed that the network of roads, laid out by the Romans, were still passable in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century then it is a distinct possibility that the Normans made use of these access routes as they moved through the country. Chepstow, Caerleon and Monmouth are also at navigable points on rivers, where the road crossings were located.

### **Rivers:**

Discussion of the use of rivers as communication links was made in 3.8 above with reference to Abergavenny, Clifford, Chepstow, Caerleon, Monmouth, Skenfrith and Usk, however, the map shows that as far as the early mottes and ring-works are concerned, it is possible to add Bredwardine, Ewyas Harold, Gypsy Tump, Llancillo, Llanfihangel Crucorney, Old Castleton, Pont-Hendre, Rockfield, Snodhill, and Walterstone. With the exception of Old Castleton and Bredwardine, both on the Wye, the others are situated close to small streams which were



probably not navigable but may have served as the focus of settlement prior to the Norman Conquest.

## 7.2 DISTRIBUTIONS

### **Early mottes, (Vol. 2 figure 21):**

Chepstow (see page 159), Caerleon (see page 132) and Monmouth (see page 251) castles have been interpreted as important strategic positions, all of early date. It was explained in chapter 2 that Caradog ap Gruffudd, the local king, shared an alliance with fitz Osbern the Norman overlord, to the mutual benefit of both parties. It is possible, therefore, that the extensive building programme at these sites was agreed by both parties allowing for the work to progress unmolested. This would certainly explain why Caradog ap Gruffudd didn't react as he did in 1065 with Harold Godwinson intrusion at Portskewett. It is suggested that an occupation route from these three castles may have pushed along the roads or rivers to Usk (see page 347) and then Abergavenny (see page 111). The castles thus sited are part of the first phase of conquest, albeit a peaceful one.

To the west of Caerleon are three mottes including Stow (see page 275), St Illtyd (see page 320) and Twmbarlwm (see page 341) with a possible fourth at Rogerstone (see page 309), marked as unknown. It is suggested that these mottes should be identified as early watch-towers due to their forms and locations and it can be seen on the map that they form an effective high frontier lookout along the western border of this study. A word of caution must be added to the estimated position of Rogerstone; although situated on a high ridge, the ridge is in the bottom of a valley which would reduce its western viewpoint. Whether these mottes were built as the first phase of conquest or as a result of the unease caused by Caradog ap Gruffudd's death is not known. However, as they are located towards the west, it might be inferred that the latter interpretation is probably closer to the truth.

South of Caerleon and Chepstow are only two mottes, Caerwent (see page 138) and Mount Ballan (see page 255). In the site interpretation (see chapter 10) it is suggested that Caerwent is another watch-tower, guarding the quarry of Roman building materials for the possible construction of Chepstow castle. Mount Ballan has an entire raised bailey, used to lift the site out of the marsh. Such a construction may either represent a re-used habitation site or an extensive use of manpower. The former suggestion is given weight because to the east of the site is an area of higher ground that would have required less modification and provided a more strategic position. Whatever the underlying reason, being close to the estuary, the site may have had some strategic purpose that is now unclear.

In the extreme southern half of the map is the ring-work Gypsy Tump (see page 208). Unfortunately, other than to classify it as a ring-work, there is no evidence to explain its use.

North of the Caerleon-Chepstow line and east of Usk are just four mottes, Llangwm Isaf (see page 240), Llangwm Uchaf (see page 242), Llangovan (see page 238) and Trelech (see 332). Both sites at Llangwm are difficult to assess because of the damaged nature of their remains; it is possible that they may represent watch-towers and are therefore early, however, it has to be said that this suggestion is more likely for Llangwm Isaf as it has extensive views north, over the Roman road from Usk to Monmouth. Llangovan is again much damaged but obviously once was a fairly large castle judging by the extent of surviving portions of the bailey. Its position is problematic, having no obvious strategic advantage, unless it was used to overlook a settlement which has since been lost. Trelech is unusual in that it appears to be very isolated from other Norman settlements and although it enjoys a high position it doesn't have any noticeable strategic value. The site today is quite small but it is suggested in this study that its original size may have been a much larger, with an enclosed bailey area sufficient to garrison a large force. Its later use as an iron working centre may have been the original focus for this site.

West of Monmouth is Dingestow (Mill Hill, see page 179), possibly located to guard the road from Usk to Monmouth. Dingestow is another quite large motte and bailey complex and could have housed a substantial garrison.

North-west of Monmouth are Rockfield (see page 307), Newcastle (see page 271) and Orcop (see page 283). The strategic importance of these three castles may derive from proximity to the River Monnow; excavations in September 2003 (Trott 2003. 136-138), found a wharf at the later site of Skenfrith Castle (see page 314) on the Monnow, which would seem to suggest that the river was navigable at least to that point. Rockfield, close to a loop in the River Monnow, is in quite a low position and is some distance from the river but its importance may be due to quarrying, possibly for Monmouth Castle. It does, however, occupy the south-east end of the Monnow Valley and may have served to guard any route that lay in that direction. Newcastle, again a potentially large site, which lies to the north-west of Rockfield, has a much stronger position being well above the valleys of both the Trothy and the Monnow. Orcop is a little more difficult to understand, lying as it does in a shallow valley with no obvious strategic importance. The site, however, is similar to Mount Ballan in that it has a raised bailey in a waterlogged area of landscape. The possibility is that the site pre-dates the motte with the motte imposed on an earlier settlement.

The last site in the area is St Weonards (see page 324), known to be an opportune raised mound before the Norman incursion; it formed a convenient point from which to guard the road from Monmouth to Hereford.

The north western area is the most densely populated of the study, with mottes set at both the north-west and south-east ends of the Monnow and Dore Valleys. The most southerly motte, Llanfihangel Crucorney (see page 232), is well placed to guard both the Honddu river and the route from Abergavenny to Kenchester. To the north of Llanfihangel Crucorney lies the Monnow valley; above it to the east can be found the large motte of Walterstone (see page 349) whilst a little further north is the early site of Pont Hendre (see page 300). Both these mottes effectively control the valley, one above and one below.

North-east from Llanfihangel Crucorney is the large motte and bailey of Llancillo (see page 225) and above it the watch-tower of Rowlestone (see page 311), both guarding the Monnow and a possible route towards Hereford. At the confluence of the Dore and Monnow rivers is the site of Ewyas Harold (see page 193), known to have been in Norman hands from about 1051. These six motte and bailey castles, Llanfihangel Crucorney, Walterstone, Pont Hendre, Llancillo, Rowlestone and Ewyas Harold, effectively form a tight barrier across the valley mouths of the Dore and Monnow valleys. Any threat to the low lying areas to the south-east from the Welsh in the black mountains would thereby have been controlled. It is possible that Abergavenny to the south and the mottes in the Usk valley were all part of a chain of strategic sites around the Black Mountains. These sites could date from the conquest or 1081 or, conversely, be associated with Bernard de Neufmarché's push towards Brycheiniog (Rees 1968. 7).

The last collection of early mottes can be found towards the north-west where the River Wye turns south-west. Here there are eight mottes, one of which is set into an earlier ring-work; three have masonry castles on the summits of their mottes. The only firm dating evidence for any of the sites is that William fitz Osbern is said to have built Clifford (see page 161), the most north-westerly. Clifford Castle tends to bear the hallmarks of fitz Osbern's work. Like Monmouth, Usk and Chepstow these castles are all built on natural rock outcrops. It has been suggested above that fitz Osbern's masonry castle building in the south may be associated with an agreement with the Welsh king in which case the opposition to the work would have been removed.

Conversely, the hostility around the Clifford area could have had a profound affect on the construction teams; therefore it would have been necessary to have a strongly defended camp in the area before the skilled masons were brought in. It is possible that the ring-work of Old Castleton (see page 280), situated on what is now a land-locked river terrace, predates Clifford. A very large loop in the present river suggests that its path at one time skirted the bank on which Old Castleton is built. If the river were navigable to this point then the site would make an ideal landing spot for an offensive front. The ring-work may have been the first defence raised to protect an advance party with the small motte added later. Such an argument may well explain the extensive three bailey system that can be found there.

Clifford to the west and Bredwardine (page 125) to the east would have provided more secure sites than Old Castleton and these may well have replaced it at an early date, possibly once the conquest that appears to have been directed towards the Dore valley had begun. The interpretation of the push south from Old Castleton is that the open end of the ring-work is to the north of the river. If any perceived threat was from the north then the ring-work would have had its weakest side exposed unnecessarily. Conversely, the open end may be due to the construction of the motte.

The high sites of Mouse Castle (see page 257) with its Iron Age ramparts, and the isolated Bach Motte (see page 116), would have been useful as lookout points, the former becoming extensively modified to accommodate a large garrison. The large size of the site at Mouse Castle may reflect a threat from Brycheiniog and Powys at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The castles of Clifford and Bredwardine and the motte at Old Castleton may also indicate a perceived need to secure the north-east frontier.

The possible pre-existing mound at Nant-y-Bar (see page 267) and the later site at Mynydd-brith (see page 264) may have been forward sites as the Normans sought to close the Golden Valley and establish their influence back to Ewyas Harold in the south-east. Conversely, they may be part of Bernard de Neufmarché's suggested defence perimeter around the Black Mountains.

The last insight provided by the map is provided by the inclusion of the unknown sites, in the hope that their position might provide some clue as to their nature. In the south-west, Rogerstone (see page 309) has already been interpreted, with reservation, as part of the watch-tower pattern. The other two southern sites, Llanvaches (see page 244) and Bishton (see page 123), seem detached on the map and therefore cannot be interpreted any further on this basis. The next site is Trostrey (see page 340) to the north-west of Usk. Again, this site does not seem to fit into any recognisable pattern. The same can be said for Tretire (see page 336), Chapel Tump (see page 157) and Grafton (see page 199) in the sparsely populated area east of the River Dore. In the north-west, Werglodd (page 352) is an unlikely candidate for a motte as it is very close to Llancillo. Castle Bach (see page 147) and St Margaret's (see page 322) would have been well placed as watch-towers but the total absence of any visible features is a little suspicious given the nature of their position on marginal farm land. Silver Tump (see page 313), between the Monnow and Honddu rivers, again would have been an excellent position for a castle and it would have complimented the interpretation of a barrier against the Black Mountains; unfortunately, there are again no remains. In the north-west Nant-y-Glasdr (see page 270) is in an area that is heavily defended so it may have been a Norman defended site but again there are no remains to interpret. Lastly, Whitney (see page 357) was also well placed within the heavy defence of the Wye but again there are no remains.

### **Early mottes and watchtowers, (Vol. 2 figure 22):**

The third map replicates the data on the map discussed above with the inclusion of 'W' against those mottes thought to have been early watch-towers. It can be clearly seen that with the exception of Caerwent and the problematic Llangwm Isaf the range of the watch-towers guards the west of the area, the greatest concentration being to the north where the Norman zone directly confronted hostile Welsh territory.

### **Early mottes, mid mottes and watchtowers, (Vol. 2 figure 23):**

This distribution map shows the addition of mottes allocated to the mid-period; constructions of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. On the map can be seen the addition of ten masonry castles, three in the southern half of the map including Caldicot (see page 141), Dingestow 2 (see page 182) and Dinham (see page 184) as well as six to the north: White Castle (see page 353), Skenfrith (see page 314), Goodrich (see page 197), Kilpeck (see page 213), Grosmont (see page 203), Longtown (see page 246), and Wilton (see page 359). Of these castles only Kilpeck was known to have had an earlier motte and bailey and although the possibility exists that it was established before the 11<sup>th</sup> century the absence of any other Norman interest in the vicinity, suggests, that it should be attributed to the mid-period. Caldicot, Longtown and Skenfrith have what appear to be mottes but in the case of Skenfrith this has been shown not to be the case (Craster 1967), and this study suggests similar reasons for the dismissal of Caldicot and Longtown as mottes (see chapter 10).

Another motte apparently built during this period is Langstone in the south. This site is a motte of largely unknown scale situated in the lowland area to the south east of Caerleon. The motte may have been earlier as it overlooks the Roman route from Caerleon to Caerwent but evidence relating to the site is limited so to be cautious it was assigned to the later, mid-period, because of its lack of height and the large size of the top surface area. The interpretation of the site suggests that its motivation was more in keeping with agricultural interest than Norman defence.

Higher up the Usk valley, two small mottes were built at Bryngwyn (see page 128) and Llanarth (see page 220), both in fertile lowlands and neither with any real defence. Another site is at the head of the Trothy at Great Goytre (see page 200). This castle may also have had earlier origins as a watch-tower judging by its lack of defence, possibly guarding the valley of the Monnow or the quarry to its west, a suggested source for the construction of Abergavenny, or more likely, Llancillo. However, there is no way to assess the date of the quarrying; it may post date the motte. The nature of the stone work on top of the motte suggests a more permanent structure than a hastily built conquest watch-tower therefore it was interpreted as a mid-period site.

The lowlands to the east of the Dore saw the greatest intensity of Norman activity with the construction of Kilpeck motte and later masonry castle and the additions of the sites at Didley

(see page 175) and Thruxton (see page 327). These sites occupy the lowland farming expanses between the Dore and the Wye which it is suggested provides the motivation for their placement. They still retain defensive elements which would be indicative of troubled times, possibly the 'Anarchy'. Kilpeck is obviously to be regarded as a *caput* of the area and this is backed up by documentation, making the other sites probable tenant holdings from the lord at Kilpeck. The "unknown sites" of Digget's Wood (see page 177), Grafton (see page 199), Tretire (see page 336), and Chapel Tump (see page 157) may also have had their origins at this time as land tenure defences.

To the north-west there is little increase in the number of sites; only two castles have been added, Dorstone (see page 188) and Newton Tump (see page 277). Dorstone is a huge motte with an equally large defended top surface area suggesting its function as a site of administration, a *caput*. It is possible that this area had been a focus of attention in the latter part of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and it may have attracted several strong lords hence the foundation of three possibly four important centres at Snodhill (see page 317), Dorstone, Clifford and Bredwardine. Dorstone could represent the result of inter-lordship squabbles, alternatively, a centralisation of interests. Newton Tump on the other hand does not offer any clues towards its function. The fact that it is certainly not a seriously defended site argues against its early construction but considerable effort was expended on its building. The land is marginal due to water-logging and it is confined to a narrow valley. A possibility is that it replaced Old-Castleton becoming 'New ton', 'New Castleton' but this suggestion is entirely speculative.

#### **Early mottes, mid mottes, late mottes and watchtowers, (Vol. 2 figure 24):**

The fifth distribution map shows the addition of the six later sites including Bacton (see page 118), Castle Farm (see page 148), Chanstone 1 (see page 152), Cothill (see page 169), King's Caple (see page 216) and Penrhos (see page 293). Bacton was assigned to the later period due to the masonry construction the internal buildings and potential watch-tower. The defensive nature of the ditch to the west and its position on the map might tend to suggest that the site was part of the Black Mountain defence system of the early period. However, construction at this site differs significantly from those early watch-tower sites mentioned above. The site has an air of permanence with its well defended bailey and apparent masonry buildings, suggestive of a settlement. The motte itself also has no defence which is, as far as this study is concerned, the crux of the matter in this case.

Castle farm is one of the sites that has been almost totally destroyed by modern building leaving assessment very difficult. Its inclusion as a late site, however, fits well with its position on the map giving it extensive agricultural potential as a tenant farm-stead. The lack of any serious defence suggests an enclosed settlement with slight defence. This site may be one of the last

vestiges of castle building before the more recognisable forms of fortified-sites or defended homesteads became apparent. The same can be said of King's Caple, Chanstone, and Cothill, all of which are similar to Castle farm although Cothill may be closer to a fortified site than the others.

The last site to be dealt with is Penrhos, a documented late site built for the purpose of defining lordship claims. The site itself is unique in construction with no others of similar configuration within the study area. The documented problems between John of Monmouth, the builder, and William de Cantilupe of the neighbouring lordship testify to the nature of the problems in the area at this later period. No longer was defence provided solely against hostile Welsh raiders; the onus appears to have shifted towards inter-lordship squabbles, similar to those mentioned above for the mid-period.

### **Fortified-sites, (Vol. 2 figure 25):**

The final distribution map shows sites interpreted as fortified. The earlier representations of mottes and castles have been removed to simplify the presentation. Although the sites in most cases have raised mounds, the mounds are so low as not to be considered a form of defence. They are probably boundary markers or enclosed fences for a proposed settlement or homestead site.

In the south are Llangiby (Bowling Green, see page 236) and Wolvesnewton (see page 361), two sites with large enclosed areas suitable for a small settlement. These two sites are unlike any others found within the study area and their inclusion should be treated with caution. There is a remote possibility that the sites could be associated with indigenous villages, *Llysoedd* or burh but this interpretation is speculative.

The next site north is that of Penyclawdd (see page 296), a site that has been interpreted as a mound with two surrounding ditches. Excavation and survey, however, have shown that this particular site is not a motte and the dating puts it in the period when fortified-sites would have been more prevalent.

North-east of the River Dore are nine sites: Howton (see page 206), Kentchurch (see page 211), Moccas (see page 249), Monnington Straddle (see page 253), Much Dewchurch (see page 262), Poston (see page 303), Tregate (see page 330), Trippenkenett (see page 338) and Twyn-y-Corras (see page 343), all situated in very fertile farmland and all having very little defence. Howton probably has more in common with a moated site than a motte but the nature of the land which is quite flat and boggy may have dictated the raising of the platform to provide a dry building base. Kentchurch has no raised mound, only an excavated ditch which provides a rectangular platform making it a moated site. Moccas is a site where no fieldwork could be undertaken and the documentary evidence is conflicting. It has been tentatively included as a

fortified-site other than a motte. Monnington Straddle does have a raised rectangular mound but no defence. Its situation in the Golden Valley is well placed as a homestead but not as a motte. Much Dewchurch, again a slightly raised mound with no sign of any defence is situated in the middle of a very fertile tract of land and it would have been the ideal place for a small holding. Poston has one defensive side but any effectiveness of that defence would have been negated on the other three sides. It appears to have been a rectangular building possibly stood on a raised and levelled area of ground. Again it is well placed in farmland to have been a fortified-site or defended small-holding. Tregate is a very unusual site with its three terraces and mound. The site has no real similarity to a motte and bailey and its best interpretation is as a large fortified homestead. Trippenkenet is entirely unknown except for an excavation report that suggested its function as a 13<sup>th</sup> century fortified homestead. Twyn-y-Corras remains a mystery with no documentation and no access for fieldwork assessment.

West of the Dore are another two sites, Whitehouse Camp (see page 355) and Urishay (see page 345). Neither can be interpreted with confidence, Whitehouse camp being very badly eroded and Urishay having no public access.



## **CHAPTER 8**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will revisit the aims and objectives set out in chapter 1 and ascertain whether or not the study was successful in achieving them. It will bring together the findings of the study and discuss their outcomes.

#### **8.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

##### **The aims were:**

To provide as complete a list as possible of all the timber, motte and bailey castles, built in the counties of Gwent and Ergyng between AD 1050 and 1250. The list, once complete, will not only record number and place, but also size, shape, type, date of construction and date of disuse. It is also intended, where possible, to assign building and subsequent ownership, to as many of the castles as possible. Using the ensuing combined database, it is hoped that it will be possible to plot construction development of the timber and earthwork castle across the chosen area. What may emerge is evidence that supports a rolling frontier approach to timber castle construction.

The aims were then broken down into various objectives. Now that the research is finished it can be established that most of the aims were met but some unfortunately proved elusive. The evaluation process will be undertaken by looking at each objective in turn and explaining the outcome of the study in relation to the task. Again as an aid to the evaluation process those objectives are included below:

##### **The objectives were:**

- 1 To build as complete a database as possible, of the motte and bailey, timber castles of the chosen areas of the Welsh March that can be assigned to the period of 1050 – 1250.
- 2 To survey the castles and try to provide a classification system based on size and shape, using medieval standard measurement. King, in his 1972 paper, identified a possible bias imposed through his use of modern metric calibration; rather than the medieval perch, 5.03m, whilst creating a typological base.
- 3 To identify where possible owners or builders of each castle.
- 4 From 2 and 3 to recognise any patterns that may be identified i.e. did certain lords, build or favour specific castle types? If so, can a lord's progress be charted through castle type spread, or alternatively, can castle chronology be dated by historical records.

- 5 From 2, 3 and 4, to examine the concept of a rolling frontier as the motivation behind motte and bailey, timber castles.
- 6 Research spacing of sites in relation to earlier land use, topography or resources, by study of records, fieldwork and aerial photographs.
- 7 To examine the instances of multiple castle construction within close proximity.

### **Objective 1:**

It can be safely stated that this study has successfully completed the task outlined. A database has been produced which includes a list of all the known motte and bailey, timber castles built within the survey area and time period. The study, however, has gone much further than the limits imposed at the start. As the study progressed it was found that the parameters set had been very narrowly focused. To confine the study to motte and bailey castles or timber castles would have produced a serious bias in the results excluding masonry castles such as Chepstow and Usk, which, although outside of the tenet of this study, would have affected the interpretation of Norman interest in the area. Similarly, record was made of fortified-sites, geological anomalies and sites that it was felt had been misinterpreted.

It was also found during the research that the exact nature of a motte and bailey castle is open to debate. The interpretation used during this study does not represent the definitive view but the data collected is restricted by it. Therefore, including the wider range of earthwork types does at least allow for the evidence collected to be analysed by others.

Although, as complete a study as possible has been made of the sites and their interpretation, there is always the possibility that there are more; although some will have been destroyed, some will have been misinterpreted and some may just be lost, as was the case at Rockfield.

### **Objective 2:**

The purpose of this objective was to establish an alternative means of classification for earthwork castles to replace the Müller-Wille system currently in use, for it was felt that the system was flawed. To recap, the system relied on the measurement of the height of a motte which was then allocated to one of three classes.

After discussing the above system in an article, Cathcart-King, pointed out that using the modern metric system instead of Norman calibration, would impose artificiality on the findings. Consequently, the initial objective was to measure all the mottes in the study with dual calibration using the perch and the metre to find if there were any inherent problems. This approach was soon dropped, however, as it was realised that the problem came not in the calibration but in the object being measured. There is no way of knowing what the height of a

motte was when it was built but it can be safely assumed that it would be different over 800 years later; in some cases this could even mean higher as was found at Richard's castle. At best therefore, the Müller-Wille classification system can be said to categorise surviving structures; it cannot be used to analyse original function, shape or date. Therefore the measure used to calibrate is unimportant.

As the research progressed two other systems of classification were considered; one offered by Professor Renn and the other by Higham and Barker. It was decided that these also should be assessed in terms of this research to find out if they could be used towards the study but both were found to be equally flawed.

The above systems were assessed towards the end of the study as part of the results interpretation. The onus from the outset had been to establish an alternative approach to classifying earthwork castles that went beyond what were felt to be merely labelling techniques. It has to be admitted that one of the main approaches used for classification in this study was as guilty of inaccuracies as those above, relying as it did on the detailed measurement of surviving structure. However, rather than use the measurements as they stood they were used to perform probability calculations. Certain fixed limits were recognised, such as surrounding ditches or natural surfaces, and measurements were taken from these; thus given the area of a motte base and the area of a motte top surface, the percentage of difference was indicative of the use to which the motte was intended. It was the intended function of the motte that was to be the key in understanding its use; "form follows function". Using the percentage difference calculations in conjunction with the theories introduced in 1912 by Ella Armitage concerning private defence it was possible to make tentative interpretations of the earthwork castles in the study area. These initial interpretations were then added to information derived from other sources so that the final interpretations would not rely on data known to be flawed. The other sources were documentary, strategic location, geographical location and construction.

### **Objective 3:**

The documentary evidence regarding specific sites was to prove unsuccessful, with only three names identified as castle builders: William fitz Osbern, Roger Bigod and Ranulf Poer. Bigod's Cas Troggy was built after the period of research and Ranulf Poer's Dingestow (2) was probably a masonry build at the outset. The only castle of any relevance to this study, with a builder's name is Clifford, fitz Osbern's other confirmed castles being masonry. There were many more names associated with sites but they stop short of naming the person responsible for construction.

It has been acceptable to assume that a person holding land or donating land to the church was the builder of a castle that might be situated there, but this study chose not to jump to this

conclusion. An example of the problem was highlighted at Walterstone, (see page 26) thought to have been built by Walter de Lacy purely because of the name association. However, this raised the question which one? Walter de Lacy who died in 1085 or Walter de Lacy who died in 1241?

#### **Objective 4:**

This objective was not fulfilled because it relied heavily on documentary evidence which turned out to be sadly lacking. One possible exception is that of castles built by William fitz Osbern. His building style seems to be recognisable and his construction dates are fairly specific.

#### **Objective 5:**

Documentary evidence did prove invaluable as general background to the study highlighting periods of unrest and the two different approaches to conquest identified on each side of the Monnow River. Using this information in the distribution mapping analysis was the crux to understanding the spread of construction and motivations behind each site.

#### **Objective 6:**

Location proved to be a useful guide to castle construction. It involved use of natural defence in castle construction as opposed to castle siting for other reasons such as communication links, transportation, pre-existing settlement, re-use of defended sites and administrative and religious control.

#### **Objective 7:**

The last objective to be addressed was the instances of multiple castles that are in close proximity to one another. In most of the cases where these occur it is possible to offer the simple explanation that the castles were not contemporary. Function again is the underlying factor, as the need for small private defence diminished the need for larger defended sites became more prevalent. There are twelve instances including Bach Motte (The Bage) and Newton Tump, Caldicot and Mount Ballan, Didley and Kilpeck, Dingestow 1 (Mill Hill) and Dingestow 2. Llangiby (Bowling Green) and Llangiby Castle, Llangwm Isaf and Llangwm Uchaf, Longtown and Pont Hendre, Mouse Castle 1 and 2, Mynydd-brith and Nant-y-bar, Newport Castle and Stow Hill, and finally Treago and St Weonards.

In the case of Bach motte and Newton Tump, the former was interpreted as an early watch-tower, possibly part of the conquest of the Golden Valley, whereas Newton Tump is a later construction designed to function as an administrative centre. The castles are not contemporary and Bach Motte was probably out of use when Newton Tump was erected.

With Mount Ballan and Caldicot, the former is again an early castle, possibly built on a pre-existing site. Caldicot on the other hand is a much later build, a residential castle and administrative centre.

Didley and Kilpeck are a little more difficult to explain but the suggestion offered by this research is that Didley is a tenant site let from Kilpeck. Kilpeck has all the hallmarks of an administrative *caput* whereas Didley has very weak defences as would have been allowed by the law of William II. In this case both castles were probably contemporary.

The explanation for Mill Hill and Dingestow is that the former outlived its usefulness as a conquest castle and was replaced by a more modern example.

Llangiby (Bowling Green) and Llangiby Castle are not contemporary sites although it is not possible to state with any degree of confidence which is earlier.

Llangwm Isaf and Uchaf are problematic and this research has not come up with any reasonable suggestions as to why they were built so close together.

Longtown and Pont Hendre again suggest a simple case of function change although it may be possible that the dampness of the bailey at Pont Hendre due to the quarrying of the ditch may have shortened its useful life.

With Mynydd-brîth and Nant-y-bar, as with Llangwm, this research has not come up with any reasonable suggestions as to why they were built so close together.

In the case of Newport Castle and Stow Hill, there are no visible remains of the site at Stow Hill but based on antiquarian record and topographical setting it is assumed that Stow was a watch-tower of the early period. Newport castle on the other hand was built much later and therefore the two castles were not contemporary.

Treago and St Weonards, the last of the pairs, again can be explained as not contemporary. St Weonards is an early watch-tower and Treago wasn't built until the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

It can be seen therefore that four out of seven of the objectives were met with a good degree of success, with one more being absorbed into the four. Of the two unsuccessful objectives it has to be admitted that their inclusion was an error of judgement; after all if the documentary evidence existed, it might be argued that there would have been no need for the research.

### 8.3 STATISTICS

The statistical analysis undertaken for this study in chapter 6 had two main aims; to find if there was any correlation between topographical location of sites, and time period of construction, and secondly to find if there was any correlation between top surface areas of mottes and time period of construction. The opportunity was also taken to assess both the Renn system of classification and the Müller-Wille system of classification against the alternative used in this study.

As regards the main aims it must be said that the results overall were largely inconclusive in several key areas. However, there was a small bias towards the use of naturally defensive sites with the early castles (see chapter 6, table 1b). There was also a suggestion that the sites with the least proportional difference between top surface area and base surface area (low mounds with large tops) are late (see chapter 6, table 4b).

The Müller-Wille system proved to be unreliable with both early mottes and mid period mottes present in all three classes. It did however show that later mottes were all class III (see chapter 6, table 2b). However this is a circular argument because one of the main assumptions for interpretation of the alternative classification system used in this study is that late mottes are low. The Renn system fared little better showing that most mottes are IB classification irrespective of period of construction. However, only early mottes are type IA (see chapter 6, table 3b).

A reason why the statistical analysis proved to be of little value could be that the sample size was too small, coupled with the lack of firm evidence of dating, function, and builders, making subjectivity inevitable. The greater number of early castles seen as being related to natural defensive topography for instance is no surprise when one considers that part of the dating criteria was based on location. Tactical position was another criteria for early castles and again there was no surprise when they were found to lie along the Roman road routes. Nevertheless, application of this approach suggests a model which may prove useful in future research relating to earth and timber castles.

In defence of the findings it must be remembered that the statistical analysis did not set out to prove that the interpreted dating was right or wrong. Its aim was to show if any correlations existed. In comparison with other systems, the one offered by this study did tend to give more observable trends.

## **8.4 DISTRIBUTION**

The results of the distribution analysis have been quite instructive in producing possible patterns of castle construction within the study area. Using the dating interpretations of each site to plot the castles on a map and then using each period to show patterns of development has highlighted two different aspects of the conquest. The north-west with its unprotected border with Brycheiniog and Powys and hostile inhabitants had a greater concentration of early castles than the south. This is indicative of an active conquest policy in an area, which had to be quelled, contained and defended. In the south the relative lack of castle building seems to be indicative of less hostility amongst the indigenous population which would tend to support the view that the Gwent nobility and the Normans were working in agreement at least in the early period.

The interpretation of the map information is that Gwent below the Monnow would appear to have been occupied with little trouble. However, two periods saw changes to the status quo of

the area, the policy of power dispersal after 1075 and the later unease of 1081. This space of time could have seen an increase in the lower mottes with the larger baileys.

Another recognisable pattern can be seen in the rough line of sites extending from Llangwm Isaf to St Weonards taking in Llangovan, Dingestow (Mill Hill), Rockfield, Newcastle, and Orcop. The first and last mottes in the line, Llangwm Isaf to St Weonards are watch-towers but the intervening sites are all similar sized mottes with similar sized baileys. Their sphere of influence appears to be a line across the fertile lowlands to the west of Monmouth. Although it is possible that the castles were constructed along with the sites at Monmouth and Chepstow etc, it is more probable that they represent a slightly later period; either the dilution of control following the re-organisation of the March after Roger fitz Osbern's rebellion, or the short period of unease in 1081. If this was the case, Trelech, again a similar construction; could have been part of the same process.

The northern area, Ergyng, appears to have been a different story. This Saxon held territory was not so willing to yield to the Norman yoke, having suffered from their ill treatment since Edward the Confessor's time. The concentration of castles at both ends of the valley would tend to suggest a concerted effort to control the inhabitants in this fertile area of land. The situation was further exacerbated by threat of trouble from Powys and Brycheiniog which may have led to the strengthening of the border and then the conquest led by Bernard de Neufmarché.

The interpretation of the mid period sites is based on the use of less-well defended castles in areas associated with agricultural production. The emphasis has shifted from sites with significant private defence to ones associated with land tenure, strong defence being located in *caput* centres identified as masonry castles. The difference in the defensive nature of the castles may well be associated with building restrictions introduced by William II in 1091 (see chapter 2) above.

With the late mottes or fortified sites the overall pattern for this poorly understood type site is that they are arranged around low lying farmland which must suggest their functional priority.

In both forms of analysis subjectivity is a problem and there is no way to escape the fact that a circular argument has been created. However, with the distribution maps none of the dating methodology dealt with territorial location. The major difference of castle density south of the Monnow and east of the Dore; to the area of the Golden Valley, exists in reality and not in interpretation.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **CONCLUSION**

It is doubtful if any research goes exactly as expected and probably to be regarded with suspicion if it turns out that the original hypothesis was exactly as predicted. Perhaps not surprisingly, this research had a few twists and turns and even a couple of dead ends but they helped to pinpoint the route forward.

#### **9.1 CONQUEST PATTERNS**

At the beginning of the study an assumption was made that the conquest of the area would have been a scene of dramatic castle building, with areas becoming battle zones, and even though the tide of war would ebb and flow, the frontier would always creep inexorably westward. The staging posts of Chepstow and Hereford are depicted as frontline offensive castles for the conquest of the southern march and their impacts were expected to be evidenced by the castles erected along the way. The results have not shown this to be the case at least not for the area west of the Dore and south of the Monnow. The interpretations of the study, combined with the general documentary evidence for the area, have revealed a different story.

The chosen study area, as will be recalled, consisted of the land between the Rivers Usk and Wye with some additional land to the south-west ending at the Ebbw. It was explained in chapter 2 that the land at the time was more or less to be regarded as one with the modern distinction of England and Wales removed. At the close of the study this idea requires some slight modification because the results show that there were two entirely different tactics used for the conquest of the southern March. The defining line for the change lies along the Golden Valley from the north at Hay on Wye to the south at Ewyas Harold and then west possibly as far south as Abergavenny but certainly along the Usk Valley towards Breconshire.

Working from documentary evidence, the area of the Golden Valley had been the scene of a great deal of Saxon activity prior to the conquest. The ebb and flow of war in this region is well attested but in 1064 the winning hand was with the Saxons and to make matters worse for the Normans, Saxons that had been closely allied to Harold Godwinson. Much has been made of the fact that William I's chief trouble-shooter William fitz Osbern was given the task of dealing with the southern March but it may be that his particular talents were more than that of just a formidable opponent in a fight. The evidence suggests that fitz Osbern's immediate concern was with the troublesome Saxons that had settled in the area of what is now known as western Herefordshire and Shropshire. It is worth noting that this study has probably imposed an artificial boundary along the Wye at this point, for documentary evidence about the troubles of this part of



the March make no such distinction. Fitz Osbern was faced with his first sign of trouble in 1067 after which it is possible that he immediately set to the task of putting matters right. He refortified the castle at Ewyas Harold and built a castle at Clifford all before 1071 which would suggest that the area of the Golden Valley to the Wye had been conquered.

This study would suggest that the Golden Valley was taken from both ends at once using the Wye as a conquest front. The water-borne arm of the army landed at Old Castleton and consolidated its force in the quickly erected ring-work. Once the valley had been cleaned out of troublemakers the frontier was strengthened with Clifford, Bredwardine and Mouse Castle housing standing garrisons with watch-towers arranged across the east of the Black Mountains. The area to the north-east and north then probably retained the Wye and the Black Mountains as its border against Brycheiniog and Powys until 1091 when Bernard de Neufmarché pushed it further west. Subsequent castle building in the area appears to have been under the dictates of the imposition of William II regarding single palisades and shallow ditches which is more indicative of small sub-infeuded holdings than defensive castles. This part of the conquest was quick and decisive and complete within four years.

South-east of the Dore and south of the Monnow the conquest was more peaceful as can be interpreted from the scarcity of early castles, and confirmed by documentary evidence. The king of Gwent, Caradog ap Gruffudd paid allegiance to William I; as William had enough problems elsewhere without stirring up extra trouble in south-east Wales the agreement can be seen as of mutual benefit. As Caradog was also king in Gwynllŵg which appears to be where his main interest lay, he was seen as a buffer zone between Gwent and the hostile Maredudd ap Owain of Glamorgan. This study would suggest that the few castles that were built during the early period were agreed by both parties, which is suggested by the nature of their construction; not hasty earthwork and timber but masonry castles. The benefit to Caradog would be the support of the Normans against Glamorgan whilst for the Normans they had an early warning system for trouble from the west. The piecemeal spread of mottes after the first onslaught appears to have had the same sizing down restrictions mentioned earlier to the north-east as well as being located for agricultural purposes rather than strategic defence.

The conquest of Gwent therefore is interpreted by this study as a “non-event”. The Normans were garrisoned in Gwent as a threat against Glamorgan should trouble flare up. Of course as time went on the Normans made good use of their power bases turning them to their own ends and the host county was carved up amongst the strongest lords.

## 9.2 EARTHWORK CASTLES

It was stated at the beginning of chapter 1 that there was a vast difference in knowledge relating to masonry castles and earthwork castles. This, as was explained, is mainly due to the very visible aspect of the former, with their function written in their form; whereas the latter remain relatively unknown and un-promoted by the heritage industry. This is very much to be lamented because the earthwork castles are a very important record of the past, every bit as much a part of our heritage as their masonry counterparts. As a result of this study it is hoped that a greater understanding of the role of the earthwork castles will have been achieved; although the area covered was quite small it is hoped that it is in some way representative of other areas. As a result of this study it was necessary to revisit the discussion concerning the definition of a castle. The conclusions reached were that there is a need to widen the approach suggested by Armitage to include castles where personal defence had become less of a defining factor. This includes the ring-work and the mid-period mottes with no defensive ditch around the motte. However, this study would agree that defence of the community as seen in the enclosure fortifications remains outside the parameter of an earth-work castle. Also as a result of the study it was suggested that certain small mottes, usually with no bailey and situated in positions that allowed for a good view of the surrounding country side, should be interpreted as a special type of motte that functioned solely as a watch-tower.

## 9.2 DATING

Dating of earthwork castles was dealt with in two ways; overall dating of castle building and then the specific dating of sites within the study area. Firstly evidence was discussed concerning the pre-conquest/post-conquest nature of castles in Britain and this invariably meant widening the field of evidence to include Normandy. On the bases of evidence researched, this study concluded that there was little confirmation to suggest the existence of earthwork castles prior to the Norman Conquest, either in Britain or in Normandy. Furthermore it is suggested that the castle was an invention of the conquest, born of a need for rapid defence in a hostile environment.

## 9.3 CLASSIFICATION

The working tenet behind this study was dependant on a classification system based on 'form follows function'. Current systems were found to fall short of the needs of the study and so it was necessary to formulate an alternative approach. An obvious problem arose in the theory, in that precise function, as regards earthwork castles, is not known and can only be assumed.

However, the important fact as far as the classification system is concerned is that there must have been a reason behind the change in construction techniques whereby the outcome of a building programme resulted in a short motte with a large top surface area as opposed to a tall motte with a small top surface area. Distributions of the forms of castle were found to be consistent with a changing use of natural defence in the siting of such structures and it was therefore concluded that it was possible, at least up to a point, to date structures from form. Unfortunately, although the study achieved a certain amount of success towards this end, the very small sample size and the lack of documentary or archaeological evidence means that the system lacks confirmation. It is suggested therefore that work should be done in other areas, possibly where mottes are better documented, in order to test the system's accuracy.

#### **9.4 NEW DATA**

As the result of the fieldwork undertaken during this study, it has been possible to produce accurate surveys of 54 of the sites listed in the study. These will be valuable in monitoring future activity or damage at the sites. One of the worst realisations brought to light in the period of this research is how much deterioration is evident amongst these monuments. Whether such damage is deliberate or accidental it should not be allowed to continue unquestioned. Although some work has been done to consolidate sites and others have management agreements, there are many which are being reclaimed by nature; obscured mounds in obscure settings.

As well as the survey data, other information from this study has led to a previously unknown motte and bailey structure (Rockfield) which can be added to the database thereby ensuring its protection. The interpretation of the motte and bailey at Trelech can be reassessed which may give insight into the foundation of the town and its later development. Castell Arnallt should be reassessed as the site of an important *Llys* rather than a motte. Penyclawdd should be reassessed as a later-fortified house thereby removing it from the list of motte and bailey castles. Caer Licyn can also be removed from its classification as a motte.

#### **POST-SCRIPT**

It is time that these sites were given a greater measure of recognition for the parts they played in the past. It is time that these sites were counted as heritage and presented to the public so that people may more fully understand what otherwise will be vanishing, undetected, before their eyes.

## **GAZETTEER**

## THE SITES

1)	Abergavenny Castle	Grid: SO 29847 13974	<i>page 111</i>
2)	Bach Motte (The Bage)	Grid: SO 29787 43413	<i>page 116</i>
3)	Bacton	Grid: SO 37097 33554	<i>page 118</i>
4)	Battle Tump	Grid: SO 24457 15774	<i>page 121</i>
5)	Bishton Castle	Grid: ST 39237 88067	<i>page 123</i>
6)	Bredwardine	Grid: SO 33497 44298	<i>page 125</i>
7)	Bryngwyn (Wern-y-cwrt)	Grid: SO 39362 08799	<i>page 128</i>
8)	Caer Licyn	Grid: ST 38977 92828	<i>page 130</i>
9)	Caerleon	Grid: ST 34257 90553	<i>page 132</i>
10)	Caerwent	Grid: ST 46767 90623	<i>page 138</i>
11)	Caerwent 2	Grid: ST 47500 91100	<i>page 140</i>
12)	Caldicot	Grid: ST 48622 88527	<i>page 141</i>
13)	Castell Arnallt	Grid: SO 31942 10019	<i>page 144</i>
14)	Castle Bach	Grid: SO 36100 29900	<i>page 147</i>
15)	Castle Farm, (Madley)	Grid: SO 40622 38398	<i>page 148</i>
16)	Cas Troggy	Grid: ST 41482 95213	<i>page 150</i>
17)	Chanstone Tump 1	Grid: SO 36547 35894	<i>page 152</i>
18)	Chanstone Tump 2	Grid: SO 36462 35704	<i>page 155</i>
19)	Chapel Tump (Hentland)	Grid: SO 53922 24304	<i>page 157</i>
20)	Chepstow	Grid: ST 53362 94083	<i>page 159</i>
21)	Clifford	Grid: SO 24287 45633	<i>page 161</i>
22)	Cockyard Tump, (Abbey Dore)	Grid: SO 41087 33964	<i>page 165</i>
23)	Cole's Tump	Grid: SO 46292 28229	<i>page 166</i>
24)	Colstar Motte (Craig Wood)	Grid: ST 31872 92533	<i>page 167</i>
25)	Cothill Farm Mound	Grid: SO 33827 36293	<i>page 169</i>
26)	Cusop Castle	Grid: SO 33922 41393	<i>page 172</i>
27)	Didley Crt Farm	Grid: SO 45022 31964	<i>page 175</i>
28)	Digget's Wood	Grid: SO 44052 29454	<i>page 177</i>
29)	Dingestow 1 (Mill Hill)	Grid: SO 45977 10354	<i>page 179</i>
30)	Dingestow 2	Grid: SO 45567 10399	<i>page 182</i>
31)	Dinham	Grid: ST 48052 92333	<i>page 184</i>
32)	Dixton	Grid: SO 51822 13749	<i>page 186</i>
33)	Dorstone Castle	Grid: SO 31217 41623	<i>page 188</i>
34)	Eaton Camp	Grid: SO 45547 39338	<i>page 192</i>
35)	Ewyas Harold	Grid: SO 38502 28699	<i>page 193</i>
36)	Goodrich Castle	Grid: SO 57782 19969	<i>page 197</i>
37)	Grafton	Grid: SO 49400 36900	<i>page 199</i>
38)	Great Goytre (Gwern Castle)	Grid: SO 35292 23284	<i>page 200</i>
39)	Grosmont	Grid: SO 40522 24427	<i>page 203</i>
40)	Howton	Grid: SO 41487 29389	<i>page 206</i>
41)	Kemeys Inferior (Gypsy Tump)	Grid: ST 38877 93928	<i>page 208</i>
42)	Kentchurch	Grid: SO 42152 27009	<i>page 211</i>
43)	Kilpeck	Grid: SO 44387 30464	<i>page 213</i>
44)	King's Caple	Grid: SO 55932 28774	<i>page 216</i>
45)	Langstone Crt	Grid: ST 37037 89522	<i>page 218</i>
46)	Llanarth (Twyn-y-Cregen)	Grid: SO 36237 09614	<i>page 220</i>
47)	Llanbadoc (Twyn-y-Bell)	Grid: SO 37487 00073	<i>page 223</i>
48)	Llancillo	Grid: SO 36697 25539	<i>page 225</i>
49)	Llanfair Discoed	Grid: ST 44527 92438	<i>page 228</i>
50)	Llanfair Kilgeddin	Grid: SO 34947 06934	<i>page 230</i>
51)	Llanfihangel Crucorney (Tre-Fedw)	Grid: SO 33027 21769	<i>page 232</i>
52)	Llangiby Castle	Grid: ST 36402 97353	<i>page 234</i>
53)	Llangiby 2 (Bowling Green)	Grid: ST 37012 97363	<i>page 236</i>
54)	Llangovan (Penyclawdd)	Grid: SO 45147 07044	<i>page 238</i>
55)	Llangwm Isaf (New House)	Grid: SO 42422 01119	<i>page 240</i>
56)	Llangwm Uchaf (Camp House)	Grid: ST 42727 99798	<i>page 242</i>
57)	Llanvaches	Grid: ST 43397 92053	<i>page 244</i>

58)	Longtown Castle	Grid: SO 32057 29149	<i>page 246</i>
59)	Moccas Castle	Grid: SO 34800 42500	<i>page 249</i>
60)	Monmouth	Grid: SO 50682 12904	<i>page 251</i>
61)	Monnington Straddle Motte	Grid: SO 38197 36813	<i>page 253</i>
62)	Mount Ballan (The Berries)	Grid: ST 48757 89537	<i>page 255</i>
63)	Mouse Castle	Grid: SO 24827 42458	<i>page 257</i>
64)	Mouse Castle 2	Grid: SO 24787 42718	<i>page 260</i>
65)	Much Dewchurch	Grid: SO 48542 31259	<i>page 262</i>
66)	Mynydd-brîth	Grid: SO 27997 41463	<i>page 264</i>
67)	Nant-y-Bar	Grid: SO 27852 41023	<i>page 267</i>
68)	Nant-y-Glasdr	Grid: SO 23600 42600	<i>page 270</i>
69)	Newcastle (Llangattock V.A.)	Grid: SO 44737 17239	<i>page 271</i>
70)	Newport	Grid: ST 31172 88487	<i>page 273</i>
71)	Newport (Stow)	Grid: ST 30400 87400	<i>page 275</i>
72)	Newton Tump (Clifford)	Grid: SO 29272 44053	<i>page 277</i>
73)	Old Castleton	Grid: SO 28302 45723	<i>page 280</i>
74)	Orcop Castle	Grid: SO 47282 26529	<i>page 283</i>
75)	Panteg Castle Mound	Grid: ST 31300 98900	<i>page 285</i>
76)	Pembridge	Grid: SO 48817 19304	<i>page 287</i>
77)	Pencoed Castle	Grid: ST 40697 89432	<i>page 289</i>
78)	Penhow	Grid: ST 42322 90818	<i>page 291</i>
79)	Penrhos	Grid: SO 40952 13169	<i>page 293</i>
80)	Penyclawdd	Grid: SO 30967 20139	<i>page 296</i>
81)	Peterchurch mound, (River Dore)	Grid: SO 34192 38908	<i>page 299</i>
82)	Pont Hendre	Grid: SO 32572 28109	<i>page 300</i>
83)	Poston	Grid: SO 35807 37078	<i>page 303</i>
84)	Raglan	Grid: SO 41362 08284	<i>page 305</i>
85)	Rockfield	Grid: SO 48267 14129	<i>page 307</i>
86)	Rogerstone	Grid: ST 27100 87800	<i>page 309</i>
87)	Rowlestone	Grid: SO 37442 27164	<i>page 311</i>
88)	Silver Tump, (Craswall)	Grid: SO 28900 32800	<i>page 313</i>
89)	Skenfrith	Grid: SO 45607 20369	<i>page 314</i>
90)	Snodhill Castle	Grid: SO 32237 40358	<i>page 317</i>
91)	St Illtyd	Grid: SO 21692 01954	<i>page 320</i>
92)	St Margaret's	Grid: SO 35800 33900	<i>page 322</i>
93)	St Weonards Tump	Grid: ST 49657 24329	<i>page 324</i>
94)	Thrupton	Grid: SO 43512 34649	<i>page 327</i>
95)	Treago Castle	Grid: SO 49002 23879	<i>page 329</i>
96)	Tregate Castle Farm	Grid: SO 47977 17114	<i>page 330</i>
97)	Trelech (Tump Terret)	Grid: SO 49952 05409	<i>page 332</i>
98)	Tretire	Grid: SO 52067 23919	<i>page 336</i>
99)	Trippenkenett	Grid: SO 50057 22454	<i>page 338</i>
100)	Trostrey Castle	Grid: SO 35962 04304	<i>page 340</i>
101)	Twmbarlwm	Grid: ST 24382 92653	<i>page 341</i>
102)	Twyn-y-Corras, (Kentchurch)	Grid: SO 41907 24994	<i>page 343</i>
103)	Urishay	Grid: SO 32292 37568	<i>page 345</i>
104)	Usk	Grid: SO 37537 01039	<i>page 347</i>
105)	Walterstone	Grid: SO 33932 24999	<i>page 349</i>
106)	Werglodd Tump, (Llancillo)	Grid: SO 37100 25200	<i>page 352</i>
107)	White Castle	Grid: SO 37917 16714	<i>page 353</i>
108)	Whitehouse Camp	Grid: SO 29572 35684	<i>page 355</i>
109)	Whitney Castle	Grid: SO 27300 46500	<i>page 357</i>
110)	Wilton Castle, (Bridstow)	Grid: SO 59082 24489	<i>page 359</i>
111)	Wolvesnewton	Grid: ST 44912 99883	<i>page 361</i>

## CHAPTER 10

### GAZETTEER

#### 10.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the gazetteer of all the sites examined for this study. It starts with an introductory location map showing the spread of sites to be dealt with. Then each site is listed individually, in alphabetical order, with the information laid out as follows: In the top left hand corner is the name of the site with its *OS* grid co-ordinate, and underneath is a simplified map of the study area with the major rivers and the areas of Gwent and Eryng marked. Five major towns have been included to help with orientation and the site is marked with a star symbol.

##### **Introductory note:**

A few of the sites have introductory notes in which a relevant aspect is introduced prior to the site's discussion.

##### **Location:**

The general set-up starts with an explanation of how to reach the site from the nearest 'A' or 'B' road. It must be remembered, however, that most of the sites are on private land and permission should be gained from the owner before visiting them.

##### **Description:**

This section gives a brief description of the site, including in most cases photographs; either chosen to illustrate points of interest or to present general overall views. In the case of sites that have not been visited the descriptions are based on the observations of others. As changing interpretations of these sites are important to the study, antiquarian descriptions and explanations, as well as maps or plans are included where possible. In some cases, selections of maps from different time periods have been used to explain known earthwork extents which may have either disappeared or have become re-interpreted. All plates and figures, can be found in Volume 2.

##### **Topographic survey:**

This section deals with the salient points resulting from the topographic surveys undertaken at some of the sites; the full surveys are included in Volume 2, topographical surveys. In the case of sites that were not surveyed an explanation is given as to why they were left out.

**Geophysical survey:**

Geophysical surveys were undertaken on only nine of the sites and again only the salient points are listed in this chapter. The Geophysical data itself can be found in Volume 2, geophysical surveys.

**Strategic position:**

This section discusses the possible motivation behind a castle's location in terms of strategic position, or tactical advantage. Discussed are evidence of availability of natural defence, pre-existing infrastructure and possible land use.

**Documentary evidence:**

The documentary evidence is discussed, where available, under three sub-sections; primary, antiquarian and modern. The primary evidence has been gained from translations of contemporary or near contemporary sources in an attempt to locate each site in a time period by ascertaining either ownership or building records. There has been no attempt to date a site or assign ownership by relying on the blanket coverage of a lordship. As an example: the Ewyas lordship would cover a large number of earthworks, which would reasonably have been owned by one of the de Lacys. The problem arises in the circular argument; if a castle was in Lacy control then it was built by a Lacy, therefore it must date to the Lacy period. Arguably, this would be a perfectly reasonable assumption but not an unquestionable fact, as can be seen with the example of Walterstone; assumed to be named after Walter de Lacy and in Lacy control (see below). The dating problem arises with the two Walter de Lacys; one died in 1085 and the other in 1241 (see page 27). The only reliable information that can therefore be deduced from the tenuous Lacy tie is that the castle was built, either pre 1085 or pre 1241.

The antiquarian references come from any record written after 1500 but before 1900 and these mostly relate to descriptions of sites by interested visitors; however, towards the latter part of the Victorian era they include more academic interest and even excavation accounts. The antiquarian references also include interpretations of the primary documentation.

Modern references include information written after 1900 up to the present day. This information begins with the SMR number and is followed by any relevant data, physical description, interpretation or assessment. At the end of the section a selection of accessible additional references are included for further reading.



**Excavation:**

This section is added for a few of the sites, for the most part the result of the excavation by other parties but in the case of Penyclawdd and Trelech the excavations were undertaken as part of this study. These two excavation reports can be found in Volume 2, Excavations.

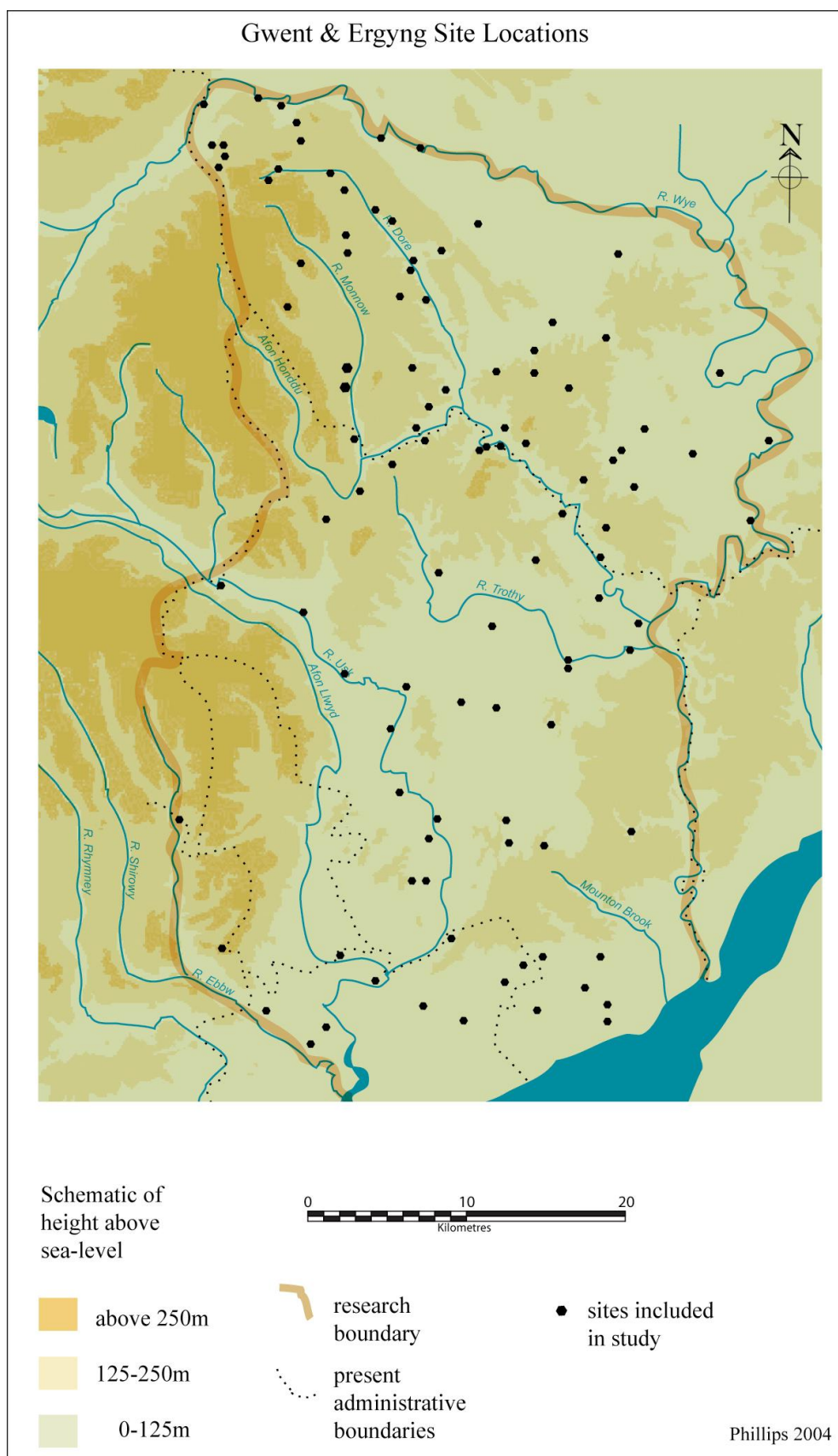
**Finds:**

This sub-section is included for Old Castleton only where a chance finds of datable pottery sherds were found.

**Interpretation:**

The last section gives the interpretation of each site giving type of earthwork and suggested period of construction; early (pre 1100), mid (1100-1200) and late (1200-1250). The interpretation is arrived at by assessing all of the available information and the sources used are listed for each site.

## 1.2 The sites



**ABERGAVENNY CASTLE****SO 29847 13974****Location:**

Abergavenny Castle is situated on the south-west of an area of high ground, lying to the north-east of the River Usk. The modern town of Abergavenny partially surrounds it, along the south-east to the north-west sides.

**Description:**

The visible remains of the castle today are a mixture of masonry ruins dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> century through to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which cover the site of a previous earth and timber castle comprising of a motte and bailey. The motte

and bailey castle was created by cutting a ditch across the north edge of a natural ridge and so isolating a section of ground. At the steepest point of the natural slope a large earthen mound was raised which was in turn separated from the bailey by a ditch. Unfortunately the motte has been considerably altered by the later masonry castle beyond the point of providing useful data for analysis.

**Topographic survey:**

Due to the almost complete destruction of the motte by later building it was decided not to survey it.

**Strategic position:**

The location of the site could have been chosen for its natural defence alone but the remains of the Roman Fort of Gobannium, see below, and the road links to Magnis (Kenchester), Burrium (Usk) and Cicutio (Y Gaer), (Vol. 2. figure. 1.19) may have ensured continuous habitation of the neighbourhood making Abergavenny an important place to control.

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

The earliest date suggested at present for the building of the Norman castle at Abergavenny is pre-1087. This has been arrived at from a charter in which Hamelin de Ballan gave to the monks of the Abbey of St. Vincent and St. Lawrence at Le Mans 'the chapel of his castle... and land for

making a principle church in which they would serve God, and land for their own dwellings together with more land to build a bourg also' (cited by Round 1899. 367-8). 'Hamelin, son of Dru de Baladon' accompanied William I into England to become first lord of Upper Gwent (Rhys 1854. 112). He died in 1090 after having at least instigated the building of the castle, 'in an ancient place of Abergavenny where in old time Agreus a giant had built a castle before' (Rhys 1854. 112). The priory is dated c. 1087 (Olding 1998. 1), thus it post dates the building of the castle. Further evidence comes from the de Ballan charter where he also gave 'elsewhere one church with all its appurtenances' (Soulsby 1983. 65). If the other church was St John's then it already existed prior to 1087, suggesting the presence of an earlier settlement.

Other early written accounts exist concerning Abergavenny castle such as that of Gerald of Wales, who wrote a contemporary description of the castle in 1188 (see chapter 1) describing it as having a master tower surrounded by ditches and walls, (Thorpe 1978. 110-111). He also described a bridge being present to give access to the tower; '...two men-at-arms were rushing across a bridge to take refuge in the tower which had been built on a great mound of earth...' (Thorpe 1978. 113). It is not certain if the castle was still a wooden construction at this time for neighbouring castles such as Bronllys had already acquired a stone keep by 1175 (Olding 1998. 3). Whatever the construction of the castle, it is recorded that Richard Marshal had it completely destroyed in 1233 (Jones 1952. 103 : Jones 1955. 231-233 : Jones 1971. 229).

Using 1175, above, as a possible date of conversion to stone, the owners of the earth and timber castle at Abergavenny included: Hamelin de Ballan who died in the reign of William Rufus leaving no heir (Mss. Man/A/2/336). He had two brothers, Wynocke and Wynebalde, and three sisters, Anne, Beatrice and Lucy (Bradney 1991. 149). Hamelin's barony was given not to the son of his eldest brother, the next blood heir, but rather to Brian de Wallingford, the son of his youngest sister from her marriage to Ednowain, Earl of Brittany (Bradney 1991. 149). Brian de Wallingford, called Bricut in the Rhys transcript, held the castle from 1119-1141. He had two sons by his wife Maud, Lady of Wallingford, both of whom were afflicted with leprosy (Gibbs. 1910, 20). He committed them into the priory at Abergavenny, making generous gifts for their souls (Mss. Man/A/2/336). He then gave the Castle to his cousin, Miles of Gloucester, and joined Henry I in Jerusalem where he died (Mss. Man/A/2/336). Miles held the castle of Abergavenny from 1141-1143. His claim derived from his father, Walter fitz Roger de Pitres, Earl of Hereford, whose mother was one of Hamelin's sisters. On the death of Miles on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1143, his possessions went to his son Roger, Earl of Hereford (Gibbs 1910, 20). Gibbs further records that Henry II confirmed Roger, Earl of Hereford in all his father's possessions in 1155 and states that Roger died a monk of Gloucester in the same year. His lands and titles passed to his brother Walter, which bypassed Henry the second eldest brother. It is

noticeable that Gibbs's account appears to leave a twelve-year gap of ownership between Roger's supposed inheritance in 1143 and the King's grant.

There is no mention of royal confirmation or of Walter's succession in 1155. Nor is there information of his ownership through to 1159, but due to the successors following, it must be assumed to have taken place. The following disagreement however, does appear in the 1767 manuscript, which states that Walter, High Constable of the Realm of England, having no heirs of his body gave his Barony to his youngest brother Henry. In doing so he bypassed his elder brother Roger, Earl of Hereford. He then forsook his office, for the habit of a monk at Llanthony Priory (Mss. Man/A/2/336). Coxe confuses the issue by stating that Milo (Miles) was in fact Walter's son and that he died without male issue. In this account the holdings of Miles were divided amongst his three daughters, one of whom, Bertha, married William de Braose by which marriage he became lord of Abergavenny (Coxe 1801. 181). Henry, Lord of Abergavenny, 1160-116?, younger brother to Walter and Roger, received the holdings from his brother Walter in 1160. This made him Lord of Hereford, Brecon and the Forest of Dean (Mss. Man/A/2/336). In 1172 he was slain by Seisyll ap Dyfnwal, a Welsh *uchelwr* from nearby Castell Arnallt (Bradney 1991. 146). At the death of Henry, Seisyll ap Iago, possessed the castle of Abergavenny until 1175 after which, on the advice of his brother in law, Lord Rhys, Prince of Deheubarth, he gave it to William de Braose, husband of Bertha, sister and heir to Henry (Bradney 1991. 146). Within the period of Seisyll's possession, the manuscript records that 'Seisyll ap Iago a valiant knight of North Wales...' was given the barony of Abergavenny by grant from Henry II (Mss. Man/A/2/336). Seisyll was slain before his first year of office ended. Hugh de Beauchamp was then granted the same Barony by Henry II but was captured by Seisyll ap Dyfnwal. Hugh was released by Seisyll ap Dyfnwal and because of this action Henry II granted Seisyll the Barony of Upper Gwent and Abergavenny (Mss. Man/A/2/336).

William de Braose's claim, 1175-1208, came from his father, Phillip, who married Bertha one of the daughters of Miles of Gloucester. William is infamous for the massacre at Abergavenny when he invited Seisyll ap Dyfnwal and his followers to the castle for a banquet on Christmas Day in 1175. Unarmed and unsuspecting, they were murdered that night on William's order. In the same event, unprotected at nearby Castell Arnallt, Seisyll's wife Gwladus and son Cadwaladr were likewise murdered (Jones 1952. 71 : 1955. 165 : 1971. 181-183). That act, probably revenge for his Uncle Henry's death at the hands of Seisyll, caused a rift between de Braose and King John, since the massacre had the potential to wreck the peace established in 1172 between Rhys ap Gruffudd and Henry II. Rhys was, after all, Seisyll's brother in law and therefore brother and uncle to his murdered family.

While the later history of Abergavenny is in many respects beyond the scope of this study, it has been discussed in some depth as this is one of the better documented sites in the study and

consequently provides a useful context.

### **Antiquarian reference:**

Three notable visitors to Abergavenny described the motte, writing of: 'Abergavenny's entrenched mound' (Wyndham 1781, 305), 'of the citadel no traces remain, although an intrenched mound close to the ruins evidently marks the site', (Barber 1803, 305) and 'To the south east is a tumulus, environed by a trench, with the foundation of a building on top...' (Coxe 1801. 172). The Coxe publication included an 1800 survey of Abergavenny by Thomas Morrice which included the castle motte (Vol. 2. figure 26).

To these written accounts can be added some illustrations, all dated before 1818;

(Vol. 2. plate 2) shows the west side of Abergavenny castle as seen from the banks of the River Usk. It was engraved by D.L. in 1784 and clearly shows a motte to the right of the castle. The motte appears to be subdivided across its centre. Behind the motte can be seen the remains of a tower, which still stands. The tower has been identified as one of the earliest remains of the stone castle, c. 1241 (Phillips 1999. 1-17).

(Vol. 2. plate 21), a watercolour painted by Joshua Gosselin, 1784, shows the same view from a slightly different angle. Again the same features described above can be seen with the exception of the c. 1241 tower which has been obscured by the tree. The mound appears to be overgrown.

(Vol. 2. plate 22), an aquatint from a drawing by Rev. I. Gardnor, 1784 shows the west tower from the south looking across the slope of the motte. The people in the foreground provide a useful scale for the earthwork.

(Vol. 2. plate 23), an aquatint, again from the banks of the River Usk but looking north-east. This anonymous plate, dated 1794, gives a good impression of the area of the motte and seems to suggest a steep bank on the western edge. The c. 1241 tower has, however, been moved to the south of the motte.

### **Modern reference:**

**MM056**

### ***Additional references:***

Armitage 1912. 97.

Renn 1968. 84.

Hogg and King 1963. 104.

King 1983. 278.

### **Excavation:**

It is known that the Roman timber fort of *Gobannium* certainly existed there between c. AD 55-60 (Blockley 1993. 171). 'Excavations, in advance of development in the years 1962-9,

produced evidence of a military ditch system in Flannel Street and timber buildings in Castle Street (Radcliff and Knight 1972-3. 65-103). Then in 1972, on the Orchard site, 'a typical granary (Roman) was found behind a turf and timber rampart' (Blockley 1993. 168-242).

A piece of dating evidence inferring early medieval defences at Abergavenny came from the find of a Type VIII silver penny bearing a possible Abergavenny mintmark. The coin is thought to date c. 1083-1086 (Besly 1998. *pers comm.*). It is reasonable, therefore, to assume an already extant form of security and defence structure in Abergavenny prior to 1086, to allow for such coins to be made. The association with Abergavenny comes from the inscription thereon: '+IFLIPINE ON FANI'. Boon, however, pointed out that the moneyer 'Aelfwine' was a common name on Type VIII coins with near contemporary examples having been found at both Cardiff and Rhuddlan, amongst others, dating from the reign of William I. He suggests that the inscription '+IFLIPINE ON FANI' means that the penny was made by 'Aelfwine' for the 'bourg (de) Fenni' rather than minted at Abergavenny, thereby nullifying the suggested argument (Boon 1986. 67).

A watching brief on the E tower in 1990 provided confirmatory evidence to support the premise that there had been a motte at Abergavenny, when core infill was interpreted as having come from an adjacent free standing bank (Maylan 1990. 8). The bank, the much-reduced motte, now has the museum building on it (Vol. 2. Plate 24). This building, 'Baker's regrettable erection', was built 1818-19 as a hunting lodge (Ralphs 1956. 2). The remains of the keep were pulled down to erect the building (White 1855. 95). Further excavations in 1999 at the north wall produced evidence of the original bailey rampart and ditch (Makepeace 1999), (Vol. 2. figure 26).

### **Interpretation:**

### **Motte and bailey (Early)**

Hamelin de Ballan's castle, if indeed he was the builder, is likely to have been a motte and bailey construction prevalent at the time. An artistic impression of the castle c. 1100 showing timber constructions contemporary with the period can be seen in (Vol. 2. plate 25).

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, strategic location, documentary evidence, antiquarian sources, and excavation, is that the motte was probably an early build, late 11<sup>th</sup> century. The size of the bailey and the site's historical and strategic locations would tend to suggest that the function of the castle was as a large occupation centre.

**BACH MOTTE (THE BAGE)****Grid: SO 29787 43413****Location:**

The earthwork situated at the Bage is known locally as Bach Motte, the name possibly taken from Bach Brook which runs past the site. The location of the site is to the north of Bage Court on the B4348, approximately 2.5km north-west of Dorstone.

**Description:**

Bach Motte, is built at the eastern edge of a ridge of ground and survives as a small mound. The motte may have been constructed by cutting a ditch across the narrow end of the spur and piling earth upon the isolated section.

To the right of the photograph can be seen the path of a railway line, now disused, that had been carved into the north-east side of the earthwork destroying its original form (Vol. 2. plate 26). To the south, a man made lake was created in 1977 by using the railway embankment to dam the Bach Brook (Hereford 2002). To the north-west of the motte is a natural raised plateau which would be the most likely place for a bailey if one had existed. However, the area shows no real evidence of any earthworks apart from a possible shallow ditch running from the tree on the right, towards the motte (Vol. 2. plate 27). Unfortunately, the ditch and bank run parallel with the disused railway and may have been made as a result of track-laying, with spoil from the cutting being heaped on that side.

The lack of a bailey is a problem as such a site must have needed an enclosed space for the protection of the garrison's animals and supplies. Any bailey, of which there is no evidence today, would have lain to the north-west as this is the only available area of suitable ground. A bailey situated in such a direction would also have added defence to the weak, north-west side of the motte. Whether the motte had no bailey or whether the bailey has been removed is not known.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 1)**

The top of the motte is quite small with a surface area of only 27m<sup>2</sup> which may be the result of erosion or damage, both of which are evident at the site. The height of the motte is quite impressive, considering its otherwise small proportions, reaching a height of 6.23m on the south-west where the natural slope has been used for best advantage. The north-west section is closer



to 4m from the bottom of the ditch to the top of the motte but the top is actually just over 1m lower than the adjacent hill from which it was cut. This drop in height between the natural ground and the top of the motte causes a weak point in defence which could be accounted for either by the addition of a tower or if the motte had originally been higher. It has to be noted that extensive landscaping and rail-works have altered the motte, particularly to the east, so it is possible that the base area could have been much larger in that direction. The greater base area would allow for a taller motte to have been built but unfortunately there is no way at present of confirming this speculation.

### **Strategic position:**

A rationale for the placement here of the motte would be that it occupies the narrowest part of the Golden Valley at its highest point. A motte placed here could control access to the route along the Golden Valley from Ewyas Harold to the Wye.

### **Documentary evidence**

#### **Primary reference:**

No firm documentary evidence has been found concerning this earthwork and so its inclusion here as a motte is based entirely on the present research criteria. A tentative mention is made of Bage '*Becce in Valle Stradelei*' as part of the parish of Clifford which was held by Gilbert son of Thurold (Thorn and Thorn 1983. 186d/187a) The land was held by Edwin in 1086 but the presence of a motte is not mentioned.

#### **Modern reference:**

**HWCM581**

#### ***Additional references:***

VCH 1908. 205-6.

RCHME 1931. 55-7.

King 1983. 204.

#### **Interpretation:**

#### **Motte (watch-tower) (Early)**

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, survey and location is that the earthwork was a motte. The shape of the motte, a tall frustum with a small top surface area, is suggestive of an early period build and could have supported a timber tower and palisade. The small overall size, even allowing for damage and erosion, would suggest that the site was probably used as an outpost rather than a main centre. A small outpost such as this located on the high point of a narrow pass may have served as a watch-tower.

**BACTON****Grid: SO 37097 33554****Location:**

The earthwork of Bacton is situated approximately 800m north of Bacton church (SO 371 324), where it stands on the north-east edge of a ridge, 45m above the River Dore, which runs along the Golden Valley. To the north and south of the site lie two mountain streams which serve to delineate the boundary of the site. It can be reached from the B4347, Ewyas Harold to Dorstone road, taking the private lane to Newcourt Farm, 300m west of the river bridge.

**Description:**

The earthwork at Bacton has been cut into the top of a triangular spur of hill which extends east from a north-south ridge utilizing the natural slope of ground to produce a very defensive bank over 10m in height. To the south-east of the site there is a low mound defining the motte (Vol. 2. plate 28). The motte/mound itself is unusually rectangular and quite small which could imply that it may well be a fallen building and not an earthwork mound at all.

The bailey has evidence of rectangular building remains, parts of which are delineated by exposed masonry walls. The south-east edge shows evidence of a defensive bank cut into the natural surface (Vol. 2. plate 29). The western edge of the site, which is slightly below the crest of the main ridge, has been made defensive by the addition of a cross ditch and rampart about 3m in height. (Vol. 2. plate 30).

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 2)**

The topographic survey of the site revealed that the motte/mound, which has a base area of 268.55m<sup>2</sup> is probably made up of a certain amount of tumble. Its top surface is only 82m<sup>2</sup> at a height of only 1.5m. The bailey is quite large in comparison with an enclosed surface area of 1231.979sq m.

**Strategic position:**

The site is well positioned above the Golden Valley and any access route from Ewyas Harold to Dorstone and it is possible to see a considerable number of the Golden Valley sites from its vantage point. The mound is positioned on the most defensive side of the site which is suggestive

of its purpose. The only weak point of the site would be from the south-west where the hill side rises but this has been adequately catered for by the addition of a ditch and rampart.

## **Documentary evidence**

### **Primary reference:**

There is no known early reference to a castle at Bacton; indeed the only mention of Bacton is in *Db H*; Gilbert held the manor of Bacton from Roger de Lacy. Which Gilbert is not specified (Thorn and Thorn 1983. 184 a, b). A later mention was cited by Marshall of a letter by the Archbishop of Canterbury concerning the dispute between Llandaff and Hereford 1132-34 (Marshall 1938. 149-150). The letter was to a number of men in the area one of whom was entitled Roger de Bachingtona and his men of *Possintone*. Marshall interpreted *Bachingtona* as Bacton and *Possintone* as Poston which is on the opposite side of the Dore valley.

### **Modern reference:**

**HWCM369**

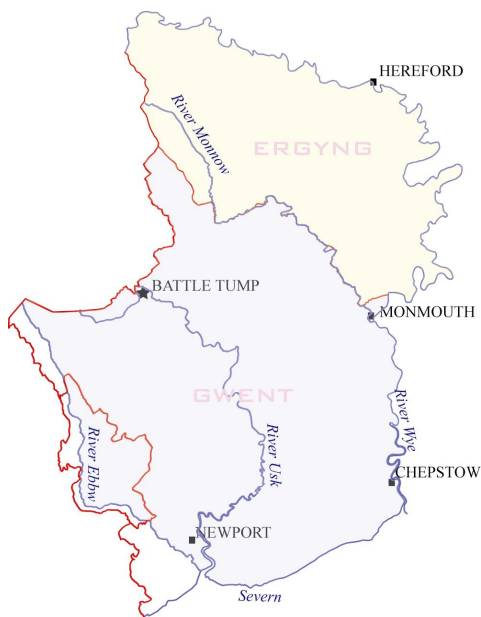
It was recorded early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the mound had a hollowed top (RCHME 1931. 20); evident elsewhere in the bailey are building platforms. Of the site itself *VCH* says 'The work is curious and of little importance, nor could it ever have been of much consequence, even if well stockaded with timber or walled with stone' (1975. p233). In Kay's opinion Bacton was a small castle which never developed beyond wooden status (1941-47. III. 313). After a subsequent visit in 1952, Kay suggested that the form of the site could date it anywhere from the 6<sup>th</sup> century onwards, however, the mound was probably late 11<sup>th</sup> century and consequently Norman (1952. III. 407). Kay also provided a sketch of the site in 1952 (Vol. 2. plate 31) and an interpretative drawing as it may have looked (Vol. 2. plate 32).

### **Interpretation:**

#### **Possible motte and bailey (watch-tower) (Late)**

The location of the site, high above the valley, suggests that the site may have been of strategic importance as a lookout point along the Golden Valley. The size and shape of the motte would tend to suggest that it was of later construction rather than part of the early conquest as there is no inner defence for the motte, from the bailey. In all probability applied defensive measures such as palisade and timber tower would have surmounted the site as Kay's interpretive sketch shows. The sunken nature of the motte's centre could either be the result of illicit excavation or a possible low wall to take a building, unfortunately, it is not known if the sunken centre is an original feature, or even if the proposed building is a later construction. It is unlikely that the motte/mound could have been much higher than it is at present because there is not enough room to take a larger structure at this point of the site.

The bailey shows signs of having had buildings inside its perimeter although there is no way of knowing at present if they are original or later additions. If the buildings were original then there is enough accommodation for a small garrison to be kept comfortable. Alternatively, the site could even be an enclosed farmstead, however, the ramp and ditch would tend to be over-elaborate for such a use.

**BATTLE TUMP****Grid: SO 24457 15774****Location:**

The earthwork is situated close to Lower Common, Gilwern, and is known locally as Battle Tump. It stands at the edge of a narrow lane leading from the village of Gilwern to Glangrwyney. Gilwern lies on the A465 Abergavenny to Merthyr road, 5km west of Abergavenny.

**Description:**

Its present form is that of an elongated mound with a narrow ridge top. Its orientation is north-west, south-east, aligning it with the valley and the river Usk approximately 300m to the north. The mound, as can be seen in the photograph (Vol. 2. plate 33) is covered with dense tress and bushes making it almost impenetrable. There is no sign of any bailey, ditch or banks although it has to be remembered that the area has been landscaped. A modern house has been built into its south west side exposing some of its sub-surface.

**Topographic survey:**

As the site is a geological land-form there was no reason to survey it.

**Documentary evidence****Modern references:****BR010**

Hogg and King included Battle Tump in their list of rejected sites (1963. 103). Local legend tells of the structure being the grave of warriors and also the grave of a giant whose skeleton as recovered some years ago (Olding *pers comm.*). The 1996 Cadw Schedule lists this site under the classification of MS. Medieval secular.

**Additional references:**

Hogg and King 1963. 103.

**Interpretation:****Geological**

The form of this earthen mound bears none of the characteristics of a motte and bailey castle, such as defensive banks or ditches; although it is possible that the location of the site on the

flood plain of the River Usk could be responsible for their erosion. However, from the lack of any evidence in support of a Norman connection, added to the similarity of other natural mounds in close proximity the site has been interpreted as a geological land form and was subsequently not surveyed.

**BISHTON CASTLE****Grid: ST 39237 88067****Location:**

The site of the earthwork of Bishton Castle is situated south of the M4, just east of Newport and can be reached from the B4245 Newport to Chepstow road by turning south at Llanmartin towards Bishton village.

**Description:**

The site lies under farm buildings. Its present form is that of a slight semi-circular ditch with other slight depressions; a mound seen from an aerial photograph (Vol. 2. plate 34).

**Topographic survey:**

As very little remains of the site it was decided that a survey would be of no benefit.

**Documentary Evidence****Primary reference:**

The earliest mention of Bishton comes from the *Lib. Land* and refers to the church of *Lann Catgulytyr* translated to *Llangadwaladr* (Rees 1840. 430). The church was founded c. 570 and a later name of *Lanckiscastle* became associated with the site.

**Antiquarian reference:**

There is no documentary evidence for any form of Norman occupation at this site although the Saxton map of 1577 (Vol. 2. Figure 2) and the Speed map of 1610 (Vol. 2. Figure 3) both record the name Bishton Castle. Rogers writing in 1708 mentions 'Bishton Castle...antient Seat of the Bishops of Landaffe' (Rogers 1708. 41). According the Bradney, *Lanckiscastle* was a misreading of Llangadwaladr's castle; a periodic residence of Bishops (Bradney 1932. 257). The transfer of place names has been noticed with the coming of the Anglo-Normans, such places as Bishton being produced from removal of the Welsh *Llan* and the addition of the Anglo-Saxon *ton* (Melville 1971. 91). Bradney's description of the site shows that any structural remains had already gone when he described it. He does mention a mound close by which may have been a motte but the strongest evidence of its former use came from the name of the farm house, the Castle, which stands on the site. (Rogers 1708. 41).

**Modern reference:****MM128**

The 1996 Cadw Schedule lists this site under the classification of MS. Medieval secular.

***Additional references:***

King 1983.289.

**Interpretation:****Unknown**

There are no remains on the ground that give any clue to the site's past use as an earthwork castle and the documentary evidence is of little use therefore the site must be interpreted as unknown.



**BREDWARDINE****Grid: SO 33497 44298****Location:**

Bredwardine is a small village situated on the B4352 Hay to Hereford road some 11km east north-east of Hay.

**Description:**

The site at Bredwardine is located on a natural ridge above the River Wye. The alignment of the castle is parallel to the river Wye which runs north/south at this point. The ridge appears to have been scarped in order to provide defensive banks of some height and the top of the ridge has been flattened to provide a large bailey.

The visible remains of the castle are quite difficult to interpret (Vol. 2. Figure 27). A further castle to the south is possible and there have been traces of three phase timber buildings found there dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century (Shoesmith 1966. 64). Shoesmith, however, felt that the later buildings were probably those of a 14<sup>th</sup> century farm complex although the earlier ones could have been defensive (Shoesmith 1966. 64) and consequently this research is concerned with the more northern site.

Unfortunately, the majority of the earthwork is covered on all sides by dense foliage, which as well as obscuring the view, has also damaged its form. What is still visible is a very impressive defensive bank on all sides except the north. The northern extent has modern buildings which presumably removed any defensive works on that side. The most likely place for an entrance gate would have been on the north side as all the other sides are steeply embanked. The top of the earthwork, which presumably was the bailey, is now used as a paddock, and completely devoid of any features (Vol. 2. plate 36). A slightly raised area is barely recognisable at the south end of the bailey which would be consistent with the 1908 map (Vol. 2. Figure 27). The line of bank probably represents the remains of a curtain wall (RCHME 1931. 26). At the time of the visit for this research the area had been cleaned of overgrowth revealing a scatter of faced masonry blocks (Vol. 2. plate 37). To the east of the south side are courses of masonry forming recognisable building remains (Vol. 2. plate 38). The building has been set into the bank which would have been the strategic position for the original motte, if a motte existed at Bredwardine.

**Topographic survey:**

The site has been damaged by later development, possibly the building of a stone castle, leaving little of the earthwork left for survey. A survey was therefore not undertaken.

**Strategic position:**

The castle at Bredwardine stands close to a crossing point on the River Wye which may have something to do with its origin; as an early river ford. It has been suggested that the origin of the name Bredwardine is 'broad village' with the *wardine* originating from the Anglo Saxon *worign* or *worine* meaning 'an enclosed homestead', and the *Brad* being identified with breadth before the 'e' was adopted. (Wood 1905.171). In order to add further credence to his research, Wood pointed out that as the village is located at a cross roads and extends along both axes, the name may have originated from a descriptive term applied to the settlement. (Wood 1905.171).

**Documentary Evidence****Primary reference:**

Two mentions can be found in the *T.N.* for 1227 and 1243 where Bredwardine is called Bradwardine, (cited in Wood 1905. 171). The earliest mention of the name Bredwardine, *Brochevrdie*, is in *Db.H* where it was held by 'Alured', Alfred of Marlborough and Earl Harold had held it before (Thorn and Thorn 1983.186 a, b). On Alfred's death Bredwardine passed to Bernard de Neufmarché (Coplestone-Crow 1979. 23). Only a portion of Alfred's fief is found in possession of his successor Harold son of Earl Ralf suggesting that his land holdings were either dismembered or forfeit just after the survey (VCH 1908. 281). Coplestone-Crow's theory is that the grant of Bredwardine may have passed to Roger de Baskerville but he states that firm Baskerville tenancy cannot be established until 1147 (Coplestone-Crow 1979. 23). Ralph de Baskerville is recorded as in possession of Bredwardine c. 1162 (Coplestone-Crow 1979. 23). Ralph had three sons Ralph, Robert and Thomas and a daughter Matilda by his wife Nest. His eldest son, an heir Ralph III, was involved with his mother and brother, Thomas, over tenancy of Bredwardine, culminating in 1199 with a king's writ being issued for Ralph to allow Thomas his tenement. The outcome was not resolved until 1205 when Thomas was awarded compensation. Ralph's overlord was William de Braose with whom he had a close association. William de Braose claimed that 'neither the King's justicars nor his sheriff ought set foot in his liberty' for the king's writ did not run in Bredwardine (Coplestone-Crow 1979. 23.).

In 1227 mention was made of Bredwardine when a grant was made to the church of St Mary, Dore of all the land above the park of Bredwardine (*Cal. Chart*, I, 58-9). By 1374 the castle, 'a

toft called “*castleplace*” held by the Lord of Penketlyn by service of a peppercorn’, is described as ‘an abandoned site’ (*Cal. Inq. p.m.*, XIV, no 12. 13).

**Modern reference:**

**HWCM1564**

The *VCH* identified the remains of Bredwardine castle as that of the Vaughan family mansion built about 1640 (*VCH* 1908. 233-4).

***Additional references:***

Renn 1968. 116.

Hogg and King 1963. 106.

King 1983. 203.

**Interpretation:**

**Possible motte and bailey (Early)**

The location of the site would certainly have been advantageous to the Normans as a means of controlling the northern frontier prior to 1090 when Brycheiniog was a real threat. It is suggested that the neighbouring site of Clifford, similar in nature to Bredwardine, was built for this purpose, see below. Unfortunately, the motte, assuming there was one, has been developed beyond the point of providing useful data for analysis, and was therefore not surveyed. The possibility that Bredwardine was an early motte and bailey castle cannot be ruled out but there is no evidence to support the view that it was.

**BRYNGWYN (Wern-y-cwrt)****Grid: SO 39362 08799****Location:**

The motte at Bryngwyn is situated to the south of the village in an area called Wern-y-cwrt, which gives the motte its name (Hogg and King 1963. 97). The site lies sandwiched between a private house to the south and the A40 Abergavenny to Raglan road to the north. Access is from the B4598 some 1.8km north-west of Raglan.

**Description:**

The visible remains of the castle today consist of a mound of earth from which a large tree and various bushes grow.

To the north-west is a slight change of slope which may be an old hedge row or the remains of an embanked ditch around the motte (Vol. 2. Plate 38). The photograph shows the feature which, because it is so slight, is very dependant on correct lighting conditions. The motte itself is in a sorry state; the surface area not covered with undergrowth is being eroded quickly, either from animal activity or human misuse. Some of the damaged area can be seen in the second photograph (Vol. 2. Plate 39).

A possible bailey is still evident to the north of the site and probably continued west and south-west where a modern house now stands. Towards the south-east is a stream and to the east is a drop in height after which modern development has destroyed all traces.

**Topographic Survey:****(Survey 3)**

The motte occupies a base area of some 551.06m<sup>2</sup> which would appear to be its original size as there is a suggestion of a surrounding ditch when viewed in the right light conditions. The ditch, which at its maximum depth measures only 0.23m, delineates the base of the motte, unless of course it was added or repaired after any destruction had taken place. All sides of the motte are badly eroded, possibly into the surrounding ditch which has subsequently almost disappeared. The top of the motte has quite a small surface area of only 89.597m<sup>2</sup>, and stands at a maximum height of only 3.98m above natural. There is every chance that the slope of the motte could have been much steeper which would have provided a larger top surface. Arguably, the motte could also have been taller although this is less likely from the surviving remains.

**Strategic position:**

The reason for the location of the site is difficult to understand; it has no natural defence and there would appear to be no obvious strategic advantage for a castle here. It is possible that an existing mound lent itself to the Norman advance, such as at St Weonards see below, but other than local folk tales there is no evidence to support this theory. The valley setting for this site is, however, surrounded by very good agricultural land.

**Documentary evidence****Antiquarian reference:**

The first mention of the site is in 1855 when Wakeman identified the tumulus as a '*Bryn dyoddef*' or place of execution (Wakeman 1855. 16-7). Bradney had little to add as far as the castle was concerned, his only contribution being to add local legend of a burial mound from the civil war complete with a vaulted arch of brick, and human remains (1914. 103).

**Modern reference:****MM0801*****Additional references:***

Hogg and King 1963. 97.  
King 1983. 281.

**Interpretation:****Motte and bailey (Mid)**

The earthwork at Bryngwyn represents the badly damaged remains of a motte and bailey castle which even though in such a bad state, was considered worthwhile to be included for survey.

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, survey and location is that the small motte and bailey represent an element within the system of land tenure, possibly held for part of a knight's fee. Such a site would have been needed to control settlement after the frontier of conquest had passed the area by. Bryngwyn does not present any major outworks that would be expected for a castle in hostile territory and Bryngwyn is, therefore, interpreted as mid period motte and bailey, a defended settlement site rather than an offensive conquest castle.

**CAER LICYN****Grid: ST 38977 92828****Location:**

The site of Caer Licyn stands on the ridge of Kemeys Graig, some 200m above the Usk. It can be reached by turning north at Cat's Ash, a village north of Langstone on the A48, Newport to Chepstow road.

**Description:**

The visible remains of the site today are in deciduous woodland and consist of a low mound made up of small stones, more reminiscent of a cairn than a motte. The mound is centrally placed, in the presumed bailey and does not have a separating ditch, both characteristics which argue against the site being a motte and bailey castle (Vol. 2. plate 40). The raised area itself has a well defined ditch or hollow way on the north-east side and some trace of ditch towards the south. The west side of the mound and its surrounding area have been cut by a track-way which has served to confuse the extent of the earthwork (Vol. 2. plate 41). The map included in Coxe reveals that interpretation of the site was that it ended in the north at the track-way (Vol. 2. figure 28). Careful inspection of the site, however, revealed that there is more of the raised platform to the north of the road before the natural ridge is reached. Indeed the ridge itself has been modified and possibly includes a bank around its edge with a slight ditch below.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 4)**

The survey at Caer Licyn revealed that the platform of the supposed bailey had a surface area of 7942.159m<sup>2</sup> and was surmounted by a centrally placed mound of earth and small stone, with a general height of about 1.5m. The mound of earth referred to as a motte has a maximum height of only 2.99m at a slope gradient of 32% which is negligible as a defensive measure. A steeper slope exists to the west but this is the result of an ancient track having been driven through the side of the mound. The top surface area of the mound is estimated at 52 m<sup>2</sup> but it is domed not flat which makes it difficult to estimate an edge.

**Strategic position:**

The position of this site for a motte and bailey castle would be ideal, offering extensive observation opportunities for a watch-tower and good natural defence possibilities. It is because

the natural defence was not used in any profitable way that tends to suggest that the site is not a motte and bailey castle.

### **Documentary evidence**

#### **Antiquarian reference:**

Its earliest reference suggests that it is to be found alongside the Striguil to Coed-y-Caerau track, on a 1790 map of Monmouthshire (Vol. 2 figure 29).

#### **Modern reference:**

**MM043**

#### ***Additional references:***

Hogg & King 1963. 104.

#### **Interpretation:**

#### **Pre-historic or post-medieval**

The position of the proposed motte, central to the proposed bailey, along with its lack of any defensive height would suggest that this site is not a Norman earthwork castle. The fact that the mound was not placed to take advantage of the steep north-west ridge also does not fit with practices seen elsewhere in this study. The existence of Kemeys Folly a little distance along the ridge makes for the argument that Caer Licyn is nothing more than an earlier attempt to build a similar structure. Kemeys Folly is a mock castle which stands centrally on a raised plateau of land. An argument against this late construction is that the road, which is ancient, cuts through the site. This would suggest the next most reasonable interpretation which is that the site is prehistoric, possibly a mix of Bronze Age with later Iron Age re-use. Although not a motte, the site was surveyed in order to help to define its purpose.

**CAERLEON****Grid: ST 34257 90553****Location:**

The town of Caerleon is situated some 2km north of Newport, occupying the north bank of the River Usk where the B4596 and B4236 cross the river.

**Description:**

The earthwork at Caerleon is a motte which probably had a bailey although it is not evident today. Today the motte stands in a private garden surrounded by high stone walls. This once formidable defensive structure now has a spiral path to the summit where a folly crowns the top of the

motte forming a ringed embankment with an opening to the south-east. Within the ring is an access ramp to the top of the embankment where there is a raised walkway (Vol.2. plate 42). The photograph shows the two figures on the access ramp with the opening behind them.

The motte itself is very large and impressive; indeed one of the largest earthworks encompassed by this research. There is no surrounding ditch at the motte and no sign of a bailey except possibly the area enclosed by the garden walls. The motte is difficult to photograph adequately, both because of its size within the restrictions of the garden, and also its covering of what Woollett in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, called 'luxuriant trees' (Woollett 1878). The photograph, (Vol.2. plate 43) shows that the luxuriant trees still remain.

Towards the base of the motte, on the west side, are the remains of two circular masonry tower bases (Vol.2. plate 43). At first site they look ornamental, having obviously been rebuilt as flower beds but this may not be the case, see below. On the right of the image can be seen a slope of earth, unfortunately now gone as a modern swimming-pool takes its place. It is possible that the mound may be part of the outer range of the ditch that surrounded the motte. The bank in the foreground may form an association with the tower bases if, for argument's sake, it is assumed that the bases formed a gatehouse then there may have been a bridge access to the motte from here.

Other remains of the later masonry castle can be found at the Hanbury Arms.



**Topographic survey:****(Survey 5)**

The motte has a maximum height of 16.19m making it the tallest motte in the survey; however, about 3m of the top is made up of a raised rampart which may be either the remains of a shell keep, or later landscaping.

**Strategic position:**

The motte is situated at the south edge of the built-up area above the old river crossing (Vol. 2. figure 30). A watercolour, (Vol. 2. Plate 45) shows the position of the motte in relation to the town and river. The location for the site would have had important strategic value, guarding as it possibly did a crossing on the River Usk (Boon 1987, 14). The site also controls the old Roman roads to Venta (Caerwent), Burrium (Usk) and Cardiff which may have still been in use. It is possible that Caerleon had seen some sort of continuous habitation since Roman times, Wakeman wrote that 'Griffith fortified Caerleon in 1035' but unfortunately does not give his source (in Clark 1869. 46). 'Griffith' probably refers to Gruffudd ab Iestyn of Gwynllŵg (Turvey 2002. xix). If the fortification did take place there is no way of knowing what form it took, the simplest solution would be a type of enclosure using the pre-existing walls of Isca.

The setting of the motte has little to offer in the way of natural defence but the remains of buildings outside the Roman fortress of Isca may have provided the Normans with a raised structure on which to build. With so much rubble surviving from the Roman ruins it is unlikely that the Normans relied too heavily on timber for this castle.

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

No firm sources occur for Caerleon until *Db.H*: 'William of Écouis holds 8 carucates in the castlery of Caerleon and Thurstan holds it of him (Thorn and Thorn 1983. 185c). The land was waste before 1066 when William acquired it (Moore 1982. E35). The next documentary evidence for Caerleon's ownership can be found in the *BT. Pen*, *BT. RBH*, and the *B.Saes*; however, although recording the same events, there are differences between the texts. All three agree that in 1158 Iorwerth ab Owain claimed Caerleon on the death of his brother Morgan (Jones 1952. 60 : 1955. 137 : 1971. 159) and that in 1171, Iorwerth ab Owain lost Caerleon to the king who 'journeying on the Usk,' during his preparation for the conquest of Ireland (Jones 1952. 66 : 1955. 155 : 1971. 173). Slight differences occur in the accounts of Iorwerth ab Owain's retaliation; he put together a small force and 'destroyed all Caerleon to the tower' (Jones 1952. 66), 'destroyed the town up to the castle' (Jones 1955. 155), 'destroyed the town of

Caerleon and burned it up to the castle' (Jones 1971. 173). In 1173 Iorwerth ab Owain took back the castle (Jones 1952. 70 : 1955. 163 : 1971. 179). Caerleon is again mentioned 1175 when Hywel ab Iorwerth removed his potential future rival for Caerleon by blinding and castrating him (Jones 1952. 70 : 1955. 163 : 1971. 179). The *B.Saes* gives the heir that he disabled, as his first cousin (Jones 1971. 179) but the two *Brut* versions give his uncle providing the name of Owain Pen carn (Jones 1952. 70 : 1955. 163). He was to lose Caerleon to the French within the week but in 1175 the king restored Caerleon to Iorwerth ab Owain (Jones 1952. 71 : 1955. 165 : 1971. 181).

The next account of Caerleon comes from Giraldus Cambrensis who in 1188 wrote of the '*Turrium giganteam*' (Thorpe 1978. 114); possibly the Roman tetrapylon in the centre of the fortress (Howell 2000. 387-395) or possibly the tower which reputedly stood 'at least forty foot high' (on top of the motte) until 1739, when severe frosts brought it down' (Coxe 1801. 88).

Returning to the *BT Pen*, *Bt RBH* and *B. Saes* for their last entries; 1217 William Marshal took possession of Caerleon (Jones 1952 96 : 1955. 217 : 1971. 219), and 1231 Llywelyn ap Iorwerth burned Caerleon (Jones 1952. 102 : 1955. 229 : 1971. 229).

The next record for Caerleon comes in 1233 when a 'liberate' was issued to Maurice the clerk of Morgan de Caerleon for the use of 20 Marks (*Cal lib* Vol. 1. 1233. 235). This was followed by a record in Rymer's *Fædera*, according to Willett, concerning a complaint to Henry III that the Earl of Pembroke had seized the Castle of Caerleon (Willett 1813. 164). A further record of Caerleon within the time period of this research is 1235 when the response to the above complaint received the following:

'Inspeximus and confirmation of a charter of Morgan son of Heol, giving to William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke, and his heirs, the castle of Caerleon, to hold in chief of the king as the said Heol held it and as the said Morgan held it after him: witnesses H. de Burge earl of Kent, Justicar of England, G. de Clare, earl of Glouster and Hertfor, S. de Selgrave, Ralph son of Nicholas and W. de Gamages.'

(*Cal. Chart* Henry III 1226 – 1257. Vol.I. 198).

A later record can again be found in the *Cal Chart*, in which a grant to Adam, son of Iorwerth the steward of 'Morgan of Karlyun of all the land of Iorwerth and his father and Cradoc his grandfather, both in the march and in upper land in Lethenith, as well as Karlyun as in Edelegon, with all the appurtenances, which land the said Adam has of the gift of said Morgan' (*Cal Chart* Henry III 1226 – 1257. Vol.I. 294). Lethenith (*libennith*) with Caldicot constituted the Welsh cantref of Gwent Is Coed (Moore 1982. W2).

**Antiquarian reference:**

In 1587, Caerleon castle must have been a memorable sight for it inspired the following words from the Elizabethan poet Churchyard:

‘As men may muse of to behold,  
But chiefly for to note:  
There is a castle very old,  
That may not be forgot.  
It stands upon a forced hill,  
Not farre from flowing flood:  
Where loe ye view long vales at will,  
Envyron’d all with wood’

(Churchyard 1587. 24).

By 1661 however it is described as ‘ruined by time’ (Enderbie 1661. 187).

Antiquarian accounts focus on the tower of the castle brought down in 1739 by severe frosts (Coxe 1801. 88). Donovan, writing in 1805, however, reported the tower as having gone ‘within the last few years’ (1805. 109). A third person account of the tower’s size is recorded by Coxe, relating to its height. At the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century it would seem that it was possible to see Somerset from the top of its walls (Coxe 1801. 88). However fanciful the tower’s height may have been, it seems likely that a large tower existed. It is worth remembering that the great height of Richard’s Castle in Shropshire was explained after excavations confirmed a stone keep buried in its surface (see chapter 3.2).

The landscaping of the motte into a garden feature with folly and spiral path appears to have started after 1839 as Woollett relates the eyewitness account of John James who told him that in 1839 the mound had a covering of ‘green sward’ and still retained its moat (Woollett 1878). In 1875 Clark described the mound at Caerleon as one of the ‘largest and best known moated sites in Wales’ (Clark 1875. 64). Photographs (Vol.2. plates 43 and 47) show that the moat has now gone.

It would seem that this work could be attributed to a Mr Jenkins who built stables adjoining his house in 1840; removing the soil from their foundations to the top of the motte where he added an extra 12 feet, (3.5m), of height in order to adorn the garden he built on the summit (Bradney 1923. 197). The folly presumably replaced the tower. However, Clark’s account would suggest that the moat was still in evidence when he visited it although he does not say when that was.

Another interest to the antiquarians was the two tower bases at the foot of the motte on the west side, mentioned above. A watercolour held in Newport Museum and dated 1799 shows them in situ, (Vol. 2. Plate 46) being systematically removed by workmen, a process described by Archdeacon Coxe when he witnessed it himself (1801. 88). Woollett interpreted the towers as having held a drawbridge (1885. 295). Possibly supporting this hypothesis, Coxe had written that within living memory dilapidated buildings and a flight of stone steps were still in existence at

the base of the motte (1801. 88). This would be consistent with a stair access route to the top of the motte which must once have existed, protected by a gate house. An example of such a structure can be seen on the Bayeux Tapestry in the representation of Dinan (Vol. 2. plate 48)

#### **Modern reference:**

**MM014**

Knight interpreted the towers as a gatehouse (Vol. 2. figure 31), recording a masonry area in roughly the right position for the above hypothesis (Knight 1963. 23-24).

#### ***Additional references:***

Armitage 1912. 113.

Renn 1968. 127.

Hogg and King 1963. 107.

King 1983. 281.

#### **Excavation.**

Another mention of the flight of stairs can be found in the excavation report of 1878 where stairs, possibly the ones suggested above, were reported by an eyewitness to have led down from an iron door (Woollett 1878). The witness was said to have been involved in their discovery and reburial c. 1718. The account held sufficient merit for Woollett to organize an excavation on the motte. An entrance to a tunnel can be found within the motte fabric, hidden behind dense foliage just above the proposed gatehouse. It is a brick arch construction, now used as a wood store. The tunnel is probably the remains of the excavation shaft dug by Woollett, the visible dimensions being the same as he recorded. His record states that they found Roman pottery and bricks, one of which was stamped Leg II Aug, and boar tusks. As the tunnel reached some 27 ft, 8m, they found the debris of a wall which they followed to a point where they stopped digging, roughly 50 ft, 15m. He suggested that because of the stratification of the finds that post Roman material had been heaped up on an earlier structure to create the earthwork. He suggested that the whole might have been the grave of Brabluc son of Belinus; a far more credible interpretation is that the Normans used a standing structure on which to erect their motte. As will be seen at the Caerwent site, this is not unusual.

#### **Interpretation:**

**Motte and bailey (Early)**

Presumably the castle was an earth and timber construction later rebuilt in stone; however, this is by no means certain, as there would have been plenty of masonry available for re-use, from the Roman remains. In a recent article for the *WHR*, Williams suggested that Norman defences would not have been built at Caerleon until after Caradog ap Gruffudd had died in 1081 (Williams 1993 451). He suggested that Caradog's territory of Gwynllŵg, land between the Usk

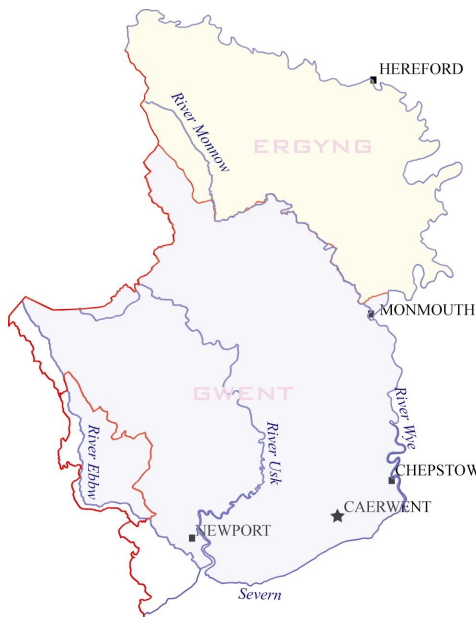
and Rhymney rivers, served as a buffer zone for William fitz Osbern, remaining so after his death until 1081 (Williams 1993 451), 'Norman interests being best served by an amicable relationship with Caradog (Williams 1993 451).

Contrary to William's beliefs, Caerleon motte has the size, shape and location to suggest that it was very likely one of the first castles built by the Normans during their conquest of Wales. Documentary evidence would suggest that the site was held by the Welsh as part of an allegiance to the Normans, only falling under Norman control in 1114. A possible solution may lie in the following theory:

The river crossing and road system would have been important to the Normans but so was the allegiance of controlled Welsh kings as it postponed the immediacy of conquest for this part of the frontier. It is possible, therefore, that the motte at Caerleon was agreed by both factions to seal an alliance to protect the crossing point. The size of the motte towering over the town walls, would serve as a deterrent to any raiders by establishing a very visible face of Norman power, whilst also serving to establish to the local Welsh, just who was allied to whom.

A consideration for this theory is the fact that the motte is outside of the old town wall and is always treated separately in the 12<sup>th</sup> century accounts of attacks. This differentiation between town and castle (Jones 1955. 155 : 1971. 173) and town and tower (Jones 1952. 66) could be important interpreting the '*Turrium giganteam*' of Giraldus Cambrensis (Thorpe 1978. 114). The tetrapylon was located in the centre of the fortress of Isca therefore if the town had been destroyed to the tower, (Thorpe 1978. 114) then the whole town was destroyed which begs the question why was the tower not included. Additionally, the other two accounts state that the town was destroyed but not the castle, (Jones 1955. 155 : 1971. 173); which was outside the town. As all three accounts relate the same occurrence then the tower and the castle are one in the same.

As can be seen the tower has been a focal point over the centuries, right up until Coxe 1801 and Donovan 1805, see above. The main point appears to have been the tower's height. It is known that the tetrapylon existed in the middle of the fortress (Zienkiewicz 1993. 140), and thought to have survived well into the medieval period (Zienkiewicz 1986. 263). If the Normans sought to overshadow the native people in their adapted Roman fortress, then they would have needed to build bigger than any possible surviving structures. The motte at Caerleon is the biggest one encountered in this study, include a tower on top and hence the constant referral to the gigantic tower.

**CAERWENT****Grid: ST 46767 90623****Location:**

The village of Caerwent is situated some 6km west of Chepstow, on the A48 Newport to Chepstow road. The motte occupies the south-east corner of the Roman wall which enclosed the *civitas* capital. (Vol. 2. figure 32).

**Description:**

The present motte was consolidated by Cadw in 2002 due to a worrying amount of erosion (Vol. 2. plate 49). The photograph was taken before the work commenced and shows the motte which has been built on the south east

corner of the Roman wall which probably already had a tower.

**Topographic survey:**

It was originally intended to survey the motte at Caerwent but the Cadw work modified the earthwork and therefore any data gained from the new motte would have been wrong.

**Strategic position:**

As with Caerleon, Caerwent is also a site best known for its Roman period and Roman remains dominate the town today. The location offers no great advantage other than the pre-established defences of the Roman town. It has been suggested that Caerwent may have provided masonry for Chepstow Castle in which case the motte may have been a guard tower during the work

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

Two references refer to Caerwent in *Db.G*: 'Belward of Caerwnt has half a carucate of land' and Jocelyn the Breton holds "5 carucates of land in Caerwent" (Moore 1982. 162b) One possible reference is found in *Lib.Land* according to Rees's interpretation with 'Nowi, and the Bishop with his nobles met together in the city of Gwent' (Rees 1840. 477). Bradney interprets this event for the year 955 (Bradney 1933. 128). An entry for 1234 in the *Cal. Close* of Henry III records Galfrido de Luscy being given back his lands at Caerwent which had been removed during the troubles between the king and Richard Marshal (*Cal. Close Henry III* 1234.).

**Antiquarian reference:**

Unfortunately none of the above mention the castle at Caerwent and it is worth noting that Lhwyd, 1660- 1709 wrote emphatically that there was 'no castle at Caerwent' (Lhwyd 1909-11. 20).

**Modern reference:**

In the same way as at Caerleon, the post-Roman and medieval history of the site has suffered in comparison, both in literature and excavation. Again as with Caerleon, it is accepted that Caerwent as a habitable centre did not come to an end with the Roman departure (Davies 1996. 24), and burials have been discovered at Caerwent dated to 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries (Davies 1996. 24). Unfortunately little exists in literature to demonstrate its continued presence throughout the intervening period from the Roman departure to the present.

***Additional references:***

Renn 1968. 127.

Hogg and King 1963. 107.

King 1983. 281.

**Interpretation:****Motte (watch-tower) (Early)**

It is probable that Caerwent continued to be occupied, possibly in the same way as suggested for Abergavenny. If such was the case, a Norman presence would have been required during the conquest. The motte, however, is very small, no more than a token, and it is unlikely to have been able to withstand an attack. There is no bailey unless the entire circuit of the Roman wall was used, which, would have required an immense garrison to defend it. There also appears to be no subdivision of the area around the motte for use as a defended bailey and no internal motte ditch.

If the Normans re-used Roman masonry in the construction of Chepstow Castle and it is more than likely that the abundant supply of stone at Caerwent would have provided an alternative building material. The rather poor motte on the south-west tower may have been nothing more than a security device, built whilst the quarrying activities were in place.

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains and location is that the small motte represents a watch-tower or guard-post. Caerwent does not present any outworks that would be expected for a castle in hostile territory and its size does not suggest intensive use at anytime. Based on the possibility that it guarded the quarry source for Chepstow, the motte may be early.

**CAERWENT 2****Grid: ST 47500 91100****Location:**

The site of Caerwent 2 (Castle Tump) is situated in the now largely disused RAF facility which includes Dinham. The site, which is MOD restricted, is to the north of the A48 at Caerwent.

**Description:**

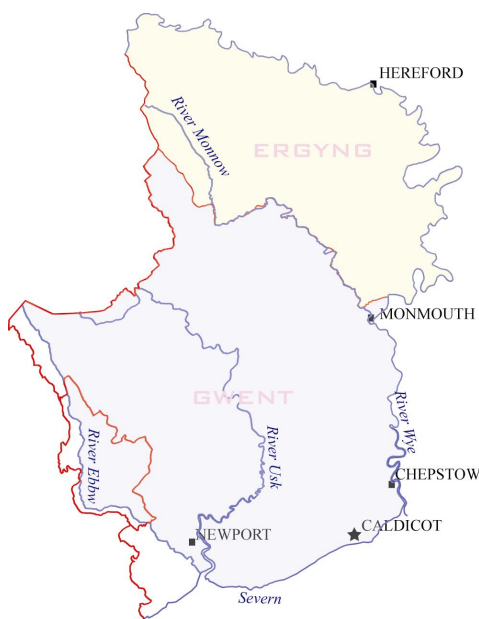
The area indicated by King in *C.Ang* as a possible castle ‘where walls have been struck’, is situated in dense wood just above the railway track (King 1983. 289). The area was searched thoroughly for any possible remains of earthworks during a Chepstow Archaeological Society field-trip. All that were found were identified as a possible Roman villa by Prof Martin Hennig (*pers comm.*).

**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken at this site.

**Documentary reference****Modern reference:****SAM MM152****Interpretation:****Roman Villa**



**CALDICOT****Grid: ST 48622 88527****Location:**

Caldicot castle is a large masonry ruin situated some 6km south-west of Chepstow. The site can be reached from the B4245.

**Description:**

Caldicot Castle is a large masonry edifice, however, of interest to this research is not the masonry remains but the earthworks on which they stand. The obvious area of interest therefore is the mound at the north corner on which stands the round tower. The first photograph shows the tower and mound as it looks on the inside of the curtain wall (Vol. 2. plate 50). The perspective from which the shot was taken clearly shows the symmetry of the mound which would suggest that a certain amount of landscaping has been done on the internal earthwork. The second photograph was taken outside the curtain wall where less landscaping is evident (Vol. 2. plate 51). Photograph (Vol. 2. plate 52), And plates (Vol. 2. plates 53 and 54) show the same portion of the mound from inside the curtain wall. Many features have remained and some important additions made, however, the difference in the shape of the mound is quite striking. The mound certainly looked more authentic as a Norman motte in 1830 and 1854.

**Topographic survey:**

After inspecting the round tower and the mound on which it stands it was decided that the remains did not represent a motte, see below, and so the castle was not surveyed.

**Strategic position:**

No reason for the site to have been built in this area is apparent other than its position close to the Severn Estuary on a raised portion of land above the Caldicot levels, (see below).

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

Early documentary evidence for Caldicot consists of an entry in *Db.G*: Durand the sheriff holds of the king, one land, in Gwent called Caldicot (Moore 1982. 162b).

**Antiquarian reference:**

The castle stands on raised ground above, until recently, the marshy plains of the Caldicot Levels (Vol. 2. plate 55). The engraving was made around 1800 and shows the castle standing on an area of raised ground. The castle was probably connected to the village on the west by a fortified ridge of land whilst the other sides were probably reached by the sea (Coxe 1801. 18). An engraving by Samuel Ireland, contemporary with Coxe shows sailing craft at a short distance from the castle walls (Vol. 2. plate 56). The view is shown through a breach in the south-east wall where the ruins of the 14<sup>th</sup> century gateway stand (Vol. 2. figure 33). In Coxe's opinion the castle stood on a peninsula lapped by the tide. This is a possibility as is the view that the ditch, which can be seen surrounding the castle, was probably wet. In Bradney's opinion the moat was probably made at the same time as the 14<sup>th</sup> century gateway (Bradney 1933. 117).

The castle was once interpreted by antiquarians as an early construction, suggesting a connection with Harold Godwinson (Clark 1869. 52 : Morris 1901. 86 : Pinnock 1820. 40). More informed speculation was recorded in *Arch. Camb.* for 1865 with Wakeman favouring a date of 1122 by Walter fitz Roger and Morgan suggesting the much later date of 1176 by Humphrey de Bohun (Review 1865. 67-69).

Although documentary evidence for the castle is scant, Wakeman suggested the following sequence of ownership:

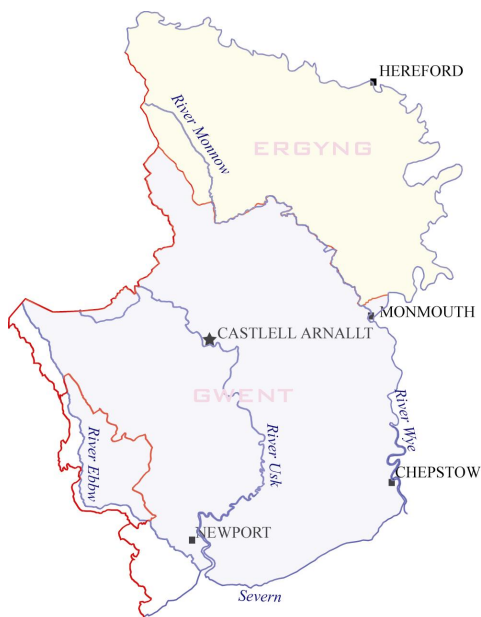
Walter Fitz Roger 1122 held Caldicot of the king but entered the Priory of Llanthony as a monk. He died in 1127. The castle passed to his son Milo Fitz Walter who held it until his death in 1144. He had five sons who succeeded him; Roger who died 1154, Walter who died in the reign of Richard I, Henry who was killed before 1175 by Sysyll ap Dyfnwal, Mahel who was killed at Bronllys and William who was shot by accident in the Forest of Dean. His sons died without issue leaving the castle to his eldest daughter Margaret who on marriage to Humphry de Bohun brought the castle to her husband. Humphry died in 1187 and his son Humphry held the castle. Humphry then died in 1197 passing the castle to his son Henry. Henry de Bohun lost the castle briefly in 1216 for his part in the Baron's revolt but it was returned to him upon the signing of *Magna Carta*. He died in 1220 leaving a son Humphry who was kept from his father's estates by William de Picot then Ralph de Norwich and finally William de Briwer. In 1221 he received his father's estate which he still held in 1246 (Wakeman 1854.5-14).

**Modern reference:****MM050*****Additional references:***

Renn 1968. 128.  
Hogg and King 1963. 107.  
King 1983. 281.

**Interpretation:**

A problem arises in interpreting the mound under the round tower as a motte when inspection of the rooms inside the tower is made. There are two levels of cellar beneath the entrance hall which puts the base of the tower very close to the level of the bailey. This would mean that either a pre-existing motte was hollowed out for the tower to be built or more likely, as was the case at Skenfrith, also with a round tower, the mound was added to the tower after construction (Craster 1967). It is worth noting that the circular form of the keep was introduced in the 12<sup>th</sup> century as a way of removing the threat posed by undermining the corner point of a keep (Kaufmann and Kaufmann 2001. 25). The round tower was better able to survive a subterranean attack, especially with an earthwork embankment added to the base.

**CASTELL ARNALLT****Grid: SO 31942 10019****Location:**

Castell Arnallt can be reached from the B4598 Abergavenny to Raglan road by turning south over the railway bridge just to the west of the turn for the Bryn, some 2.5km east south-east of Abergavenny.

**Description:**

The site is a large, oblong mound lying in pasture land by the side of the River Usk. Today is used for grazing cattle and is in a good state of preservation. The long axis of the mound can be divided into two areas, the eastern half being a flat-topped plateau some four metres higher than the western half, which takes the form of an elongated spur. However, apart from the mound itself the subsurface features, of which there are many, are very slight and dependant on lighting conditions. The photograph (Vol. 2. plate 57) shows the north face of the mound. The dark shadow running along its length is a fairly modern farm track leading to a derelict farm complex. Above the track and parallel to it is a barely discernable linear feature which marks a possible bank. To the right of the top of the mound, where the figure can be seen is a slight mound with more linear features. The linear features run from the top of the mound towards the barn. The round feature on top is a small quarry. To the right of the quarry is another circular feature which appears to be structural. The second photograph shows the western end of the site where the second circular feature is located (Vol. 2. plate 58)

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 6)**

The survey revealed that the oblong mound had a surprisingly large surface area at 10,671.346m<sup>3</sup> and was elevated by a 43% gradient to a maximum height above natural of 8.19m. This reading, however, is only representative of the one side of the mound, the other sides reducing to fairly shallow slopes and much less height. The western edge was reduced to two stages, the first rise being only 1.5m and the second an extra 4m.

**Geophysical survey:**

The geophysical survey of the site showed that the mound has a series of possible masonry walls across its surface which would suggest that its original height is quite close to that at the time of

the survey (Vol. 2. geophysics). The high resistance anomalies also suggest that the mound had a good number of sub-surface structures of more than one phase of construction. There is even the possibility of a gate structure to the west side of the upper mound.

### **Strategic position:**

There is no recognisable strategic advantage to the site other than its proximity to the river, however, as the site is not a motte and bailey castle there is no reason why defence should be an important consideration. The site at Castell Arnallt is a large mound that appears to be of natural origin, being one of a number of formations of this type in the immediate area. The mound probably offered some attraction as a settlement site and was probably chosen as a central place to an area of agricultural holdings.

### **Documentary evidence**

#### **Primary reference:**

In the record of the infamous massacre at Abergavenny Castle on Christmas Day 1175 record was made, not only the death of Seisyll and his eldest son but also later in the day the murder of the rest of his family and the destruction of his home, Castell Arnallt (Jones 1952. 70 : Jones 1955. 165 : Jones 1971. 181).

#### **Modern reference:**

**MM086**

Henry II recognised Seisyll as lord of “Over Gwent”, *Gwent Uwchcoed*, with the honour of Abergavenny castle in return for releasing a hostage, Hugh de Beauchamp. As part of the peace proceedings between The Lord Rhys and Henry II, Seisyll, the Lord Rhys’s brother in law, was persuaded to give the Honour of Abergavenny Castle to William de Braose (Phillips 2000. 17-31). There is no known reuse of the site after 1175 other than for agricultural purpose. The site has not been excavated and has been scheduled since 1947.

#### ***Additional references:***

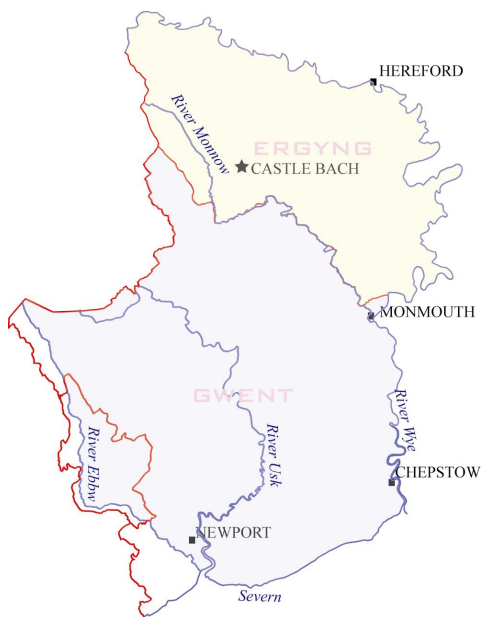
Hogg and King 1963. 96.

#### **Interpretation:**

**(Llys)**

The interpretation of the site was based on actual remains, topographical survey, geophysical survey, location and documentary evidence. The surveys confirmed an atypical layout for the site with no outworks but an amount of masonry sub-surface structures. The location suggested the use of natural formations; no motte was raised, and the documentary evidence confirmed that the

date for this site was pre-1175. The large surface area is suggestive of a later site as does the lack of defence but these are criteria used for assessing mottes and this site is not a motte but a Welsh fortified site and centre of administration, a *Llys*.

**CASTLE BACH****Grid: SO 36100 29900****Location:**

The site of Castle Bach can be reached from the B4347 at Ewias Harold, from the village centre taking the lane to the north-west passing the motte at Ewias Harold on the left. The first turn to the left at some 3km from the village leads to a private house. The proposed site is to the right but there is no evidence of an earthwork castle at this site.

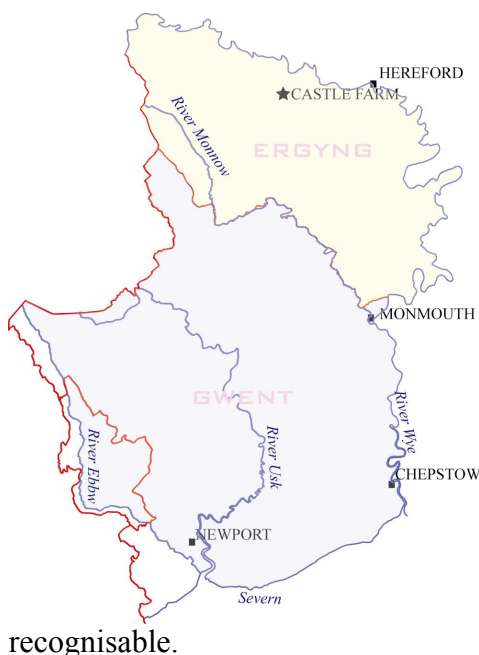
**Topographic survey:**

Given the lack of any evidence of earthworks, the site was not surveyed.

**Documentary evidence****Modern reference:**

The castle was included in this research because its name is cited in the index of Castles and Moated Sites of Herefordshire, (Shoesmith 1996. 243) and Castle Bach is shown marked on the first edition Ordnance Survey map for the area (Vol. 2. figure 34).

**Interpretation:****Unknown**

**CASTLE FARM, MADLEY****Grid: SO 40622 38398****Location:**

The site of Madley motte, now called Castle Farm, can be found to the south of the B4352, Clehonger to Hardwick road. A turning to the farm is on the south of the road about 1 kilometre from Madley church.

**Description:**

The site today is occupied by a modernised, '17<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse' which has done considerable damage to the earthwork (Shoesmith 1996. 179), (Vol. 2. plate 59). As can be seen in the photograph the motte is barely

recognisable.

**Topographic survey:**

No survey was attempted for this site as the remains are barely recognisable due to later development of the site.

**Strategic position:**

There does not appear to be any natural defence in the area to have made it an ideal choice for the Norman advance and it is located next to the Wye which would have been a troubled area prior to Bernard de Neufmarché's advance into Brycheiniog. The land, however, is extremely fertile.

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

The earliest mention of Madley is in *Db.H* where 'The Canons of Hereford have 3 hides in Madley' (Thorn and Thorn 1983. 181c, d). Madley is also recorded in the *Lib. Land* under the Life of St Dubricius. Madley is possibly made up from *Mad* (good) and *lle* (place); a site where a healing miracle was performed (Rees 1840. 324)



**Antiquarian reference:**

Both motte and later building are recorded on the 1<sup>st</sup> ed Ordnance Survey map for the area (Vol. 2. figure 35).

**Modern reference:****HWCM2241**

The *VCH* entry for the site merely records that its original name was Cublington and that this reputed castle was probably a moated manor (*VCH* 1908. 250). In King's opinion it was a fairly large motte which had been placed on a natural hillock (King 1963. 209). A possible bailey with scarp edges may exist to the east with a slight ditch to the west and south (Shoesmith 1996. 179),

The motte was not included in the survey due to the extensive re-development on the site. Madley was one of the few sites where access was not granted and so it was not possible to survey the site or to give any worthwhile opinion on the earthwork.

***Additional references:***

RCHME 1931. 198-99.

King 1983. 209.

**Interpretation:****Possible motte/fortified-site(Late)**

The site at Castle Farm, Madley looks as though it was once a quite sizable motte and there are reports of ditches associated with the site, see above. Unfortunately none of the evidence survives as the whole area has become incorporated into a farm complex. The interpretation therefore relies on location and strategic position resulting in a very tenuous inference that it is a possible motte but probable fortified-site of later construction.

**CAS TROGGY****Grid: ST 41482 95213****Location:**

Cas Troggy is the name given to a masonry castle on the north-west side of the Wentwood. It is best reached by turning north off the A48 Chepstow to Newport road at Caerwent and following the lane through Llanfair Discoed, past the reservoir and over the top of the Wentwood. On descent, by taking the first left, the castle can be seen in a grove of trees north of the fifth house (Vol. 2. plate 60).

**Description:**

The site of this masonry castle is very overgrown with large trees growing from the walls and ivy hiding most of the structure (Vol. 2. plate 61). There is no evidence of an earthwork castle at this site.

**Topographic survey:**

The site is a masonry castle and therefore outside the remit of this study, subsequently a survey was not undertaken.

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

The earliest record of the castle comes from 1307 'Troggy a tower newly built' by Roger Bigod (*Cal. Inq. p.m.* Vol. IV., no 434).

**Antiquarian reference:**

Two interpretations of the site can be seen in the plates showing the structure of the castle and its environs: (Vol. 2. figure 36) made in 1801 and (Vol. 2. figure 37) made in 1863. It is alarming to see the damage suffered in the intervening 60 years, most noticeable at the west tower but also the greater part of the bailey has disappeared.

The castle is one of six masonry castles that surround the Wentwood, possibly built to secure the forest. There is another suggestion that it was built as a hunting lodge (Gray *pers comm.*). The forest of Wentwood is thought to have covered 7000 acres, from the Usk to the Wye. In Saxon

times it was part of the territory taken from Caradog of 'Caerlleon' by Harold. (Morris 1901. 88). The Wentwood was created a Royal forest quite early in the Norman occupation with the de Clares building the six castles (Morris 1901. 89). Writing in 1796, Williams thought that this castle, which stands on an ancient track-way, was built by Gilbert Strongbow, who he describes as Earl of Ogie. Hence the name Cas Troggy, from *Castrum Ogie* (Williams 1796. 140).

**Modern reference:**

**MM015**

***Additional references:***

Hogg and King 1963. 103.

King 1983. 282.

**Interpretation:**

**Masonry**

Cas Troggy shows no evidence of ever having been an earthwork castle and if the date recorded for its building is correct, then it never would have been an earthwork castle. Consequently it was not surveyed.

**CHANSTONE TUMP 1****Grid: SO 36547 35894****Introductory note:**

Chanstone Tump is one of two sites listed for this area (Vol. 2. Figure 38). For the purpose of this research Chanstone Tump 1 will be taken to mean the site on the east side of the River Dore.

**Location:**

The site lies beside the B4347 road from Ewyas Harold to Vowchurch. The site is clearly visible from the side of the road, some 600m south of the junction with the B4348.

**Description:**

The form of the site is that of a low, flat-topped earthen mound with a surrounding ditch (Vol. 2. plate 62). The mound is cut into the east side of a bank, which slopes to the river. On the river side, the ditch ends as can be seen in the photograph (Vol. 2. plate 62). The surrounding area is without any features when observed from ground level. The aerial photograph, (Vol. 2. plate 62) shows the layout of the area (south at the top of the picture). Chanstone 1 is left of the stream which is marked by the line of trees.

There are no signs of any features to suggest a bailey, however, to the north of the motte/mound is a spur of ground on which can be seen a linear feature which dissects it. North and south of the spur are linear features which edge the landform.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 7)**

As the mound was created by cutting a ditch into the bank it is presumed that the fill from the ditch was piled on top of the created island to increase its height. The survey showed that the present height of the mound is just over 1m above the natural surface. Volumetric calculations on the ditch and the mound revealed that even at this low height, there is around 300m<sup>3</sup> of earth on the mound that had to have come from another source or else there is 300m<sup>3</sup> of silt in the ditch. It is suggested therefore that the mound is close to its original height.

The survey also revealed that the surface area of the top of the mound is quite large at 574.189m<sup>2</sup>, suggesting enough room for buildings, which were confirmed in the geophysical survey

**Geophysical survey:**

The geophysical survey was conducted on this site in order to investigate the hypothesis that such a large surface area must have supported buildings. The hypothesis was confirmed by the geophysical survey when four rectangular high resistance anomalies were revealed (see Vol. 2 geophysics). The resistivity survey also revealed three high resistance anomalies shown as rings located at the rim of the mound, the rim of the ditch bank and the bottom of the ditch (see Vol. 2 geophysics). These anomalies were interpreted as highlighting evidence of defensive measures such as palisade trenches although the readings may have identified geology or differential drying.

The resistivity survey of the surrounding field revealed no evidence of bailey or outer defensive earthworks at the site, although outlying buildings are possible on the spur of ground to the north of the motte/mound.

**Strategic position:**

The location of the site is difficult to understand in terms of defensive of strategy as there are no natural defences at this site or any readily observable strategic advantages. In fact, the mound has been built in a position that would make it quite vulnerable to attack. One plausible reason for the location of Chanstone could be the nature of the rich farmland that surrounds it.

**Documentary evidence****Antiquarian reference:**

Marshall notes a mention of Chanstone in *Db.H* where it is called *Elnodestune* and held by Roger de Lacy (Thorn and Thorn 1983. 184b). As Chanstone lies on the west of the Dore, see below, it must, according to Marshall; have been part of the Lacy holding (Marshall 1938. 149). However, this does not account for Chanstone 1 which is on the east of the Dore and therefore part of the Ewyas Harold holdings (Kay 1952. 442). It may, however, provide a key for explaining the close proximity of Chanstone 1 and 2 as outlying posts of two opposing land owners. With respect to Chanstone 1, there is no early record of its existence.

**Modern reference:****HWCM1535****Interpretation:****Possible motte/fortified-site (Late)**

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, topographical survey, geophysical survey and location is that the low mound represents a fortified-site of late construction built for land tenure, possibly held for part of a knight's fee. The dating relies on the height of the mound, the

large surface area of the top, the lack of bailey and the lack of defence. The site has no obvious strategic importance but does have good agricultural potential.

**CHANSTONE TUMP 2****Grid: SO 36462 35704****Location:**

Chanstone Tump 2 is the second site listed for this area; it stands on the west bank of the River Dore (Vol. 2. Figure 38). A later sketch map by Kay map gives more detail than does the *RCHME* shown in Chanstone Tump 1 (Vol. 2. Figure 39). The site is visible from the lane leading to Chanstone Court Farm.

**Description:**

The form of the site is complicated as it consists of a raised area which is surrounded by a ditch and a sunken area which is surrounded by an embankment. Neither is very well defined as the photograph of the sunken area shows (Vol. 2. plate 65). Even more than in the case of Chanstone 1, the site is best appreciated from the air. The same aerial photograph (Vol. 2. plate 64) shows the layout of this site in clear detail. The white lines running across the site are power cables and the white area in the top corner is a modern building. The track on the right of the picture is a disused railway line. A problem area on the photograph itself obscures the raised mound but its position can still be seen. The circular feature in front of the modern building and beneath the power cables is the sunken area. A bank can be seen running from the railway line to a circular white area in the centre of the field. This bank and the white area are visible on the ground as slight banks. Referring back to the Kay map it should be easy to follow his plan on the aerial photograph.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 8)**

The topographic survey helped a great deal in the interpretation of this site. The overall shape of the badly eroded mound is angular and quite low with a maximum height of 1.06m above the surrounding field. The other site, however, remains a mystery, the best guess being a fish pond although there is no evidence to support the hypothesis other than fish ponds are known at moated sites.

**Geophysical survey:**

The resistivity data collected for this site revealed six angular low resistivity features on top of the mound which were surrounded by linear high resistivity features interpreted as walls. The

site therefore either had a large building with internal walls or a series of closely packed small buildings. The earthwork to the south west revealed an internal circular low resistivity feature with a diameter of just over 20m. The whole encircling embankments revealing a high concentration of stone fill.

### **Strategic position:**

As with Chanstone 1 above there is no obvious strategic advantage to this site other than the agricultural land. However, as the site is not a motte strategic criteria would probably not be relevant in this case.

### **Documentary evidence**

#### **Primary reference:**

The interpretation of Chanstone in *Db.H*; where it is called *Elnodestune* and held by Roger de Lacy (Thorn and Thorn 1983. 184b), see above, fits this site better because of its position within the Lacy holding. If the *Elnodestune* connection is incorrect the site has no reliable documentary evidence.

#### **Modern reference:**

**HWCM1535**

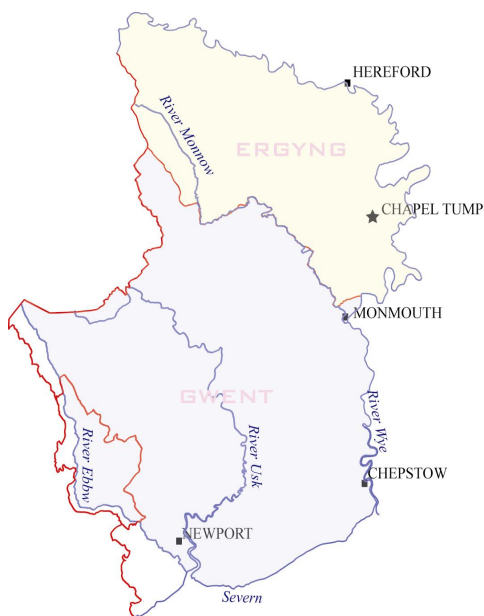
The site has none of the characteristics that would be associated with a motte and bailey castle' more closely resembling a moated site which would have been constructed much later than 1086. It is worth noting that the Hereford SMR report for Chanstone Tumps draws attention to an association with Laurence Chanu in 1207 from which it is suggested the name Chanstone derives (Hereford 2002). It is unfortunate that the web site does not provide a bibliography for its information.

#### **Interpretation:**

**Moated site**

This site has no evidence to suggest that it was an earthwork castle. The site does have similarities with later building features found at moated sites and it is possible, considering the proximity of the two sites, Chanstone 1 and Chanstone 2, that Chanstone 2 represents a transition from Chanstone 1. Interestingly Chanstone Court, possibly a 16<sup>th</sup> century manor house lies a few hundred metres to the south-east.



**CHAPEL TUMP (HENTLAND)****Grid: SO 53922 24304****Location:**

The earthwork of Chapel Tump is in the parish of Hentland and can be found by following the A4137 from its junction with the A49 Hereford to Ross road, south through St Owens Cross. The site lies on private land in a cul de sac on the west of the road.

**Description:**

The earthwork has been built over by modern cottages and access was not available when the site was visited. The description therefore relies on the *RCHME* for 1931 and the Hereford SMR records.

**Topographic survey:**

The site is apparently almost completely destroyed with later building work and so the site was not surveyed.

**Strategic position:**

The area has no observable form of natural defence or strategic advantage therefore the position of the site was probably chosen as a consequence of the rich agricultural land in which it is situated.

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

There is no documentary evidence for Chapel Tump but Hentland is mentioned three times in the *Lib. Land*. The first mention is in connection with the life of St Dubricius (Rees 1840. 324). In the second instance Ithael's grant of 'Hellan', "Hentland" to God and Saints Dubricius, Teilo and Oudoceus is recorded (Rees 1840. 432). The final mention is in an explanation of the territory of Ergyng (Rees 1840. 546).

**Modern reference:****HWCM6415**

The *RCHME* records that the site consisted of an oval enclosure with an area of .3ha. Traces of a bank ran along the north-west and south east sides and a ditch remained to the south-west which

was rock-cut. The height of the earthwork was some 8 ft, 2.5m, from the bottom of the ditch (RCHM 1931. 86). The SMR cites the *RCHME* record and adds that the motte was about 26m in diameter before it was cut away on the south side. Its height on the north side was 2.5m with the ditch 16m in width and 1.5m deep.

***Additional references:***

VCH 1908. 250.

King 1983. 213.

**Interpretation:**

**Possible motte/unknown (Late)**

Existing descriptions of the site are fairly un-informative but a low bank is mentioned as is the possibility of rock cut ditches, see above. The deciding factor in assessing this site must lie with the location: no natural defence, no observable strategic importance but an abundance of agricultural land. It is therefore possible that the remains represent a late fortified-site.

**CHEPSTOW****Grid: ST 53362 94083****Location:**

Chepstow castle, sometimes called Striguil, is situated in the northern part of Chepstow town. The castle is a large masonry edifice, built on a natural rock outcrop on the west bank of the River Wye (Vol. 2. plate 66).

**Description:**

The castle is well known as being one of the first, if not the first, stone built castles in the country. No motte is known or suspected to have been built on the site; from the outset Chepstow is believed to have been of stone construction and this research has not found any reason to suppose differently (Vol. 2. figure 40). The map shown gives the interpretation of the building phases at the castle.

Masonry included in the original structure is obviously of Roman origin and with the large Roman site of Caerwent not far from the castle it is possible that this is where the materials originated, see above.

**Topographic survey:**

As the castle was never an earth and timber construction it is outside the remit of this study and was consequently not surveyed.

**Strategic position:**

The castle's placement on the Welsh side of the river suggests that its role was as an offensive military structure for the early conquest of Wales as well as being in a strategic position for guarding this important port and waterway into the country.

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

It is known that the castle was built by William fitz Osbern, Lord of Breteuil (Thorn and Thorn 1982. 162a). As William died in 1071, the castle's initial construction must have been between 1067 and 1071. The following account of ownership for the castle is summarised from the *Ministry of Public Building and Works* Guidebook for Chepstow Castle 1968:

‘The lordship of the castle of Chepstow would have passed to his son Roger until his rebellion in 1175. The king then seized the Castle and it remained in Royal hands until 1115 when Henry I granted the castle to Walter fitz Richard. Walter died without issue and so the castle was granted by the king in 1138, to his nephew Gilbert. Gilbert died in 1148 and was succeeded by his son Richard. Henry II took the castle into royal hands in 1170, being returned to Richard soon after. Richard left no heir and so the castle was in the possession of his wife, Isabella who was ward of Henry II. In 1189 Isabella was given in marriage to William Marshal the castle thereby passing to him. The castle stayed in Marshal hands through a successive son and four grandsons until passing to the Bigod line in 1248.’

(Perks 1968. 5-8).

The castle is known to have come under attack in 1173 when Hywel ap Iorwerth brought all Gwent Iscoed, the castle only excepted, under his control (Enderbie 1661. 187).

**Modern reference:**

**MM003**

***Additional references:***

Armitage 1912. 125.

Renn 1968. 140.

Hogg and King 1963. 109.

King 1983. 282.

**Interpretation:**

**Masonry**

Interpretation based on field work and documentary evidence suggests the site is a masonry castle with no sign of the existence of a motte.

**CLIFFORD****Grid: SO 24287 45633****Location:**

Clifford Castle is situated on a rocky outcrop south of the River Wye. The castle which is in private hands, can be seen from the B4350 road that runs north from Hay on Wye to the A438 Hereford to Glasbury road.

**Description:**

The castle today is dominated by the masonry ruins that command the horizon from the summit of a hill (Vol. 2. plate 67). On close inspection, the large hill, probably a natural formation, suggests a motte. The photograph, taken in the winter of 2000, gives some idea of the impact of the castle as well as drawing attention to the impenetrability of the area due to foliage. This undergrowth was the major factor causing the site not to be surveyed as part of this research. The motte can be seen in the middle of the photograph, the western earthwork to the right and the bailey to the left, where the white house is located. The bailey was estimated to cover 2.33 acres, 0.94ha (Armitage 1912. 129). The second photograph gives a close up of the later masonry ruins on top of the motte (Vol. 2. plate 68). The third photograph shows most of the complex from the air, including the white house at the edge of the bailey, the motte with its later shell keep and the triangular earthwork, hidden by trees (Vol. 2. plate 69).

**Topographic survey:**

Unfortunately the site was in private hands and undergoing sale during the research period which prevented survey work. However, the dense vegetation would probably have rendered the survey impractical.

**Strategic position:**

The natural sandstone outcrop would seem to have been a prime position for guarding what is known to have been one of the 'major route-ways into Wales' (Remfry 1994. 1). It has been suggested that a Roman route from Clyro to *Gobannium* used a ford in the vicinity of the ridge at Clifford (Trumper 1889. 366). The outcrop would appear to have originally been a long ridge orientated north-east, south-west and running parallel with the Wye. The Norman earthwork operations at the site are interpreted as the cutting of the ridge to form isolated high points of

ground with the spoil from the excavations probably being added to the dislocated sections to improve their height. The 1908 map (Vol. 2. figure 41) is very interesting for the inset provided of a simplified cross section through the site. It is probable, allowing for accuracy or otherwise of the drawing, that the natural height of the ridge under the motte would have been as high as the left section; the triangular earthwork. The whole ridge originally sloped gently down towards the north-east.

### **Documentary evidence**

#### **Primary reference:**

According to *Db.H*, the castle was built by Earl William (fitzOsbern) on land owned previous to 1066 by 'Bruning'. 183a,b). A further record in *Db.H* states that the castlery of Clifford; then in possession of Roger, 'were waste and are waste' ((Thorn and Thorn 1983. 184a). William's son Roger inherited his land after 1071 but in 1075 it was taken by the Crown because of Roger's rebellion.

#### **Antiquarian reference:**

The first antiquarian interest is mentioned in Clark in 1884 who did not recognise the motte at Clifford, a fact picked up on by Armitage who wrote, 'It is extraordinary that Mr Clark, in his description of this castle, does not mention the motte' (1912. 129). Another antiquarian suggested that William only repaired the previous Saxon work at Clifford (Trumper 1889. 366). This view of Saxon *burghs* becoming later Norman mottes, was the predominant theory by Clark, prior to Ella Armitage's *Early Norman Castles* 1912. In this instance there is no evidence of pre-Norman building of any sort.

An early map, 1889, provides a useful plan of the site being a less angular plan than the *VCH* version, see above, (Vol. 2. figure 42). The motte is clearly identifiable on this map as an earthwork in its own right but by the time of the 1989 plan, the earthwork structure had become incidental to the illustration of the masonry remains (Vol. 2. figure 43).

#### **Modern reference:**

**HWCM713**

An invaluable source for Clifford castle was produced in 1994 by Paul Remfry and this has been used to supply the greater part of the modern record. The castle was granted to Ralph de Tosney, brother in law of William fitz Osbern soon after the 1075 rebellion. The castle was awarded the privilege of being part of England but exemption from dues and Hundred; the creation of a Marcher lordship (Remfry 1994. 2).

The importance of the castle can be judged from the men who owed service there. ‘So important was the post, and so urgent the need of holding it in strength, that in the castlery which was settled round it, great tenants-in-chief like Dru fitz Ponz, and even Roger de Lacy himself, did not disdain to become under-tenants’ (Bannister 1912. 42). The following complicated story of the Clifford holding has been summarised from the extensive account in *Clifford Castle and Lordship 1066-1299* (Remfry 1994).

The castlery of Clifford passed from Ralph to his son Ralph in 1102 who in turn died in 1126. The son, Ralph was succeeded by his son, Roger possibly granting the farm at Clifford to Walter fitz Richard fitz Pons, with the hand of his sister Margaret. Roger died c. 1157. and his son Ralph possibly succeeded until his death in 1162. It is around this time that the farm tenancy of Walter becomes the tenancy in chief of Clifford castlery. It is suggested that Walter adopted the surname Clifford c. 1139 whilst the family were still tenants of Tosney. Walter then held the castlery until his death c. 1190 whence his son Walter succeeded until 1220 when he too died. The next in line was another Walter, to become last of the Clifford lords.

(Remfry 1994).

This Walter is the one who was brother of the “Fair Rosamond”, ill fated-fated favourite of Henry II (Robinson 1859. 27). Walter was forced to surrender the Castle to the king in 1233 due to his involvement with Richard Marshal. In 1233 Henry de Turberville was granted seisin of all the lands and demesne of the lordship of Clifford. In 1234 Walter Clifford was fined a thousand marks and his liberty and then allowed to return home. His transgression against the king, reported by Mathew Paris, was to make the king’s messenger eat a message from the king, seal and all (Vaughn 1984 200). Robinson interpreted this as having his lands restored because he was ‘allowed to return home’ (Robinson 1859. 27).

#### ***Additional references:***

Renn 1968. 144.

Hogg and King 1963. 109.

King 1983. 203.

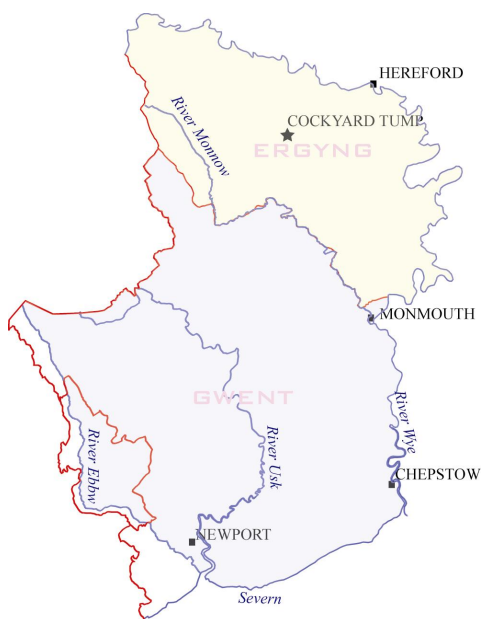
#### **Interpretation:**

#### **Motte and bailey (Early)**

The present masonry castle at Clifford may have been preceded by an earth and timber castle comprising of a motte and bailey, but other than the motte, there is no evidence to support this interpretation. The assessment therefore is from visual estimate and location only. That said there

is every reason to suggest that Clifford Castle is an early construction, a fact backed up by documentary evidence.



**COCKYARD TUMP, (ABBEY DORE)****Grid: SO 41087 33964****Location:**

Cockyard Tump can be reached from the B4347 at Thruxton where a signpost points the way.

**Description:**

The site is a natural mound of earth situated on a gap in the ridge to the north-west of Banses Wood. The site is a conical mound at the centre of a ridge. There is no evidence of any earthworks on the site but it is possible that some visible old tree throws may have been mistaken as ditches.

**Topographic survey:**

The site is a geological formation and so was not included in the surveys.

**Strategic Location:**

The location would have offered a superb strategic advantage for a motte which may be why it was added to the SMR record which simply records name and grid reference.

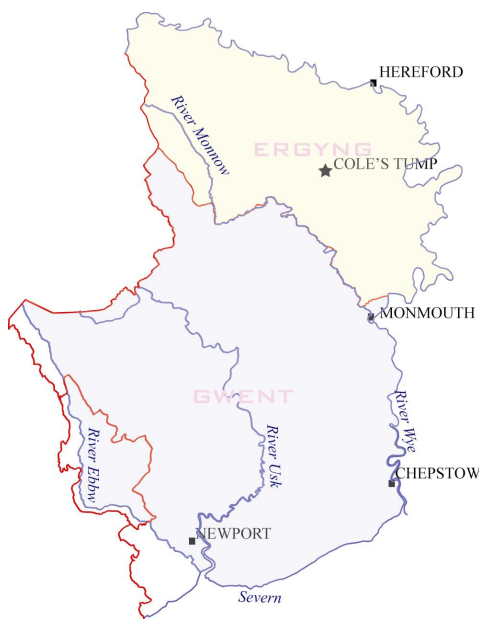
**Documentary evidence**

None.

**Interpretation:**

The site looked suspiciously natural and so a second visit was made with a colleague, Graham Makepeace, who as well as being a commercial archaeologist, has some knowledge of geology. He confirmed that this was natural.

**Geological**

**COLE'S TUMP****Grid: SO 46292 28229****Location:**

Cole's Tump is situated on the end of a ridge approximately 1.8km west of Orcop Hill. The site is best approached from the A 466 Wormelw Tump to Monmouth road by turning west, approximately 1.5km south of Wormelw Tump, towards Orcop Hill; the site is a further 2km on the right of the road.

**Description:**

The site is a roughly circular, low conical mound at the edge of a ridge (Vol. 2. plate 70). Its look is enhanced by the plantation of trees that crown it, and the circular fence which keeps out the grazing animals. The vegetation is quite different from the surrounding fields.

**Topographic survey:**

The site is a geological formation and so was not included in the surveys.

**Strategic Location:**

The location would have offered a superb strategic advantage for a motte, a fact which along with the name drew its attention to this study.

**Documentary evidence****Modern reference:**

None

***Additional references:***

RCHME 1931. 52.

**Interpretation:****Geological**

Two field visits were made to the site the second time accompanied by a colleague, Graham Makepeace, who as well as being a commercial archaeologist, has some knowledge of geology. He confirmed that this site was natural.

**COLSTAR MOTTE (CRAIG WOOD)****Grid: ST 31872 92533****Location:**

Colstar Motte is located 2.5km along the lane that runs west from Ponthir on the B4236, Caerleon to Cwmbran road. It stands at the edge of an access way to a car-breakers yard (Vol. 2. plate 71). The motte can be seen behind the cars and to the left of the house. It overlooks the grounds of Llantarnam Abbey with which it may have been associated.

**Description:**

The earthwork at Colstar is the partial remains of a motte and bailey castle, badly damaged by development and landscaping. The aerial photograph, (Vol. 2. plate 72). shows that the ground to the right of the motte is a level raised platform cut off from the motte by a separating ditch, which still remains between the motte and the bailey. The bailey, which has now been destroyed, was probably to the west of the motte along the top of the ridge on which the site is situated.

The ditch is suggestive of defences employed within the castle to ensure protection of the owner from his men. The ditch can be seen in its landscaped form at the point where the garden bridge crosses to the motte (Vol. 2. plate 73). At the south-east edge of the motte the ditch has a less altered form (Vol. 2. plate 74). On the northern edge, a slight berm remains at the base of the motte before the steep fall of the bank to the breakers yard below (Vol. 2. plate 75). The area covered by the breakers yard is considerably lower than the motte, as is the approach road to it. Even though the land has been considerably altered by development and building it is conceivable that the original topography is roughly preserved. The owner of the house explained that a considerable amount of earth was removed by heavy machinery whilst building the house and its swimming pool (Colinbourne. *pers comm.*).

The top of the motte is domed and at present used for a pet cemetery and theme garden featuring a Victorian lamp and a life-sized bronze stag (Vol. 2. plate 76).

**Topographical survey:****(Survey 9)**

The motte is located at the steepest point of the ridge giving it a maximum height of 5.89m; it is protected by an outlying crescentic horn-work to the east. The top surface area is quite large at 190.08m<sup>2</sup> which would allow for more than just a simple tower.

**Strategic position:**

The strategic position of this site is ensured by its lofty position in an otherwise wide low valley and this would be sufficient reason for its construction, however, the rich agricultural potential of the surrounding area must be taken into account although.

**Documentary evidence****Modern reference:****MM087*****Additional references:***

Hogg and King 1963. 100.

**Interpretation:****Motte and bailey (Mid)**

The interpretation of the site is based on actual remains, survey and location as well as the proximity of Caerleon and the possible Welsh alliance with the Normans. On shape and configuration the motte has the requirements of an early period construction. It also has some form of internal defence of the motte from the bailey, again considered to be an early feature. The same is true of the inclusion of the horn-work. However, the size of the motte top, the valley position in agricultural land and the general documentary evidence for the area would suggest that the castle was a later construction.

**COTHILL FARM MOUND****Grid: SO 33827 36293****Location:**

Cotthill motte is located between Dolward and Cotthill farms which lie on the hill above Turnastone. The village of Turnastone can be reached from the B4348, Wormelow to Dorstone road.

**Description:**

The site is fairly un-dramatic as can be seen in the first photograph (Vol. 2. plate 77). Cotthill motte is located in the centre of the photograph, on the horizon. Its position in the landscape is just beneath the summit of the hill on the south side above a tributary of the River Dore. The second photograph shows a close up from the same angle, the south-west, where it is possible to see the rise of the bank with just a slight ditch in front (Vol. 2. plate 78). The site is badly eroded into a slight raised mound with a dished centre. The dishing may be caused by the remains of a possible shell-keep around the rim of the mound. There are vague traces of a surrounding ditch but the remains are so slight as to be dictated by lighting conditions. The almost complete circle is breached on the north where it has been eroded. The sketch plan (Vol. 2. figure 44). shows the layout as Kay saw it in 1950 prior to damage being done in 1967 (Shoesmith 1996. 214). The southerly aspect in the 3<sup>rd</sup> photograph also shows some evidence of a slight ditch; noticeable where the hedge encroaches on the site (Vol. 2. plate 79). The final photograph for this site shows the north-eastern edge where part of a possible bank remains (Vol. 2. plate 80). A bailey is reported as having been possible to the north-east (Hereford SMR AA 92483/1) but there was no sign of it during the survey.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 10)**

The presence of the ditch suggests that the base area of the motte, 655.857m<sup>2</sup>, is close to original size. The remains of the possible shell-keep also suggest that the height of the mound, just less than 2m, is close to original.

**Strategic position:**

The site has no real natural defence as the hill on which it is situated has very gentle slopes. Other than as a viewing point, the site would appear to have no observable strategic advantage.

## Documentary evidence

### Primary reference:

The documentary evidence for Cothill falls into the same grey area that was recorded for Chanstone 1, above in that it rests on the interpretation of enumeration sequences for the Golden Valley recorded in *Db.H. Edwardestune* mentioned in *Db.H.* as being held by Roger de Lacy (Thorn and Thorn 1983. 184b). Although the exact location of *Edwardestune* is uncertain, its position as Cothill can be inferred from the sequence of enumeration in *Db.H.* In this instance, Marshall suggests that the parish of Turnastone, containing Cothill motte, was *Edwardestune* (1938. 149).

### Modern reference:

**HWCM92483/1**

If Marshall was right about the identification of *Edwardestune* then Turnastone is found in possession of William de Anesyia in 1221 and by 1250 his son Roger held it as part of the Snodhill Honour (1938. 149). Ralph de Tornai was probably owner of Turnastone 1132-34 (1938. 149).

The schedule document (Hereford SMR AA 92483/1) suggests that the south side of the mound would have been where an entrance would have stood, however, if the site was a motte it probably wouldn't have had an entrance as such as this would produce a weak point. It was recorded that damage to the mound occurred in 1967 with the removal of a tree and construction of an access ramp on the south (Shoesmith 1996. 214). At the time, the mound was suspected of being Bronze Age in origin with later Norman reuse. The dish effect of the interior was interpreted in the schedule document as the result of antiquarian interest (Hereford SMR AA 92483/1).

### *Additional references:*

Hogg and King 1963. 97.

### Interpretation:

#### **Possible motte (watch-tower)/fortified-site (Late)**

The interpretation of the site was based on actual remains, topographical survey and location. Assessment is difficult because configuration and size dictate that the site is late, possibly a fortified-site, however, its position allows for it to have been an early watch-tower. Against the watch-tower argument is the lack of defence from outside attack but then a watch-tower doesn't need to be defended in the same way that a residential castle would (see chapter 3.5). As a fortified-site the top surface area of 261.537m<sup>2</sup> is sufficient to house a number of buildings or a larger hall and sufficient defence would be offered against hostile attention by the encircling

palisade. It could also be that the mound was a low motte with a shell keep rather than a tall tower.

**CUSOP CASTLE****Grid: SO 33922 41393****Location:**

Cusop earthwork is located about 1km south-east of the town of Hay on Wye and is signposted from the B4348. On leaving Hay, towards Dorstone, a turning right is taken through the village of Cusop followed by a second turning left. The road takes a sharp turn in front of a house which is built in the ditch of the earthwork. Following this road to a dead end, the castle is on the right. As can be seen from the inset map the site lies on the border of the research area.

**Description:**

The appearance of the site is at first unimpressive because it is largely flat and the features are well rounded (Vol. 2. plate 81). On closer inspection, however, a rather unusual site reveals itself. In the photograph, to the left of the horse can be seen a raised platform which appears to slope off to the right. The platform is actually fairly level; it is the foreground that slopes to the left. This is where the present access path leads to the top, and there is every reason to suspect that this was the original entrance way; the road having led to this spot from the circuit of the ditch. In the foreground, in front of the nettles and leading to the left, is a slight bank which follows the edge of the platform. This bank probably marks the remains of a defensive perimeter. Within the earthwork are some depressions that mark probable buildings. The far rise marks the edge of a large structure, possibly a hall. The aerial photograph shows the layout of the site quite well (Vol. 2. plate 82). The Hall is located towards the top of the earthwork with the dark curved line forming both the edge of the structure and the tapered entrance ramp. The other side of the building is visible from the ground as a slight rise. The bailey is located at the bottom of the earthwork and it is possible to see the defensive bank along the left and bottom edge. On top of the bailey are various rectilinear structures as well as a track-way. The side towards the top of the picture is raised some height above a ditch and bank. The bank then falls off quite steeply to a stream. The photograph shows the depth of the bank and ditch on this side (Vol. 2. plate 83).

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 11)**

The site of Cusop has a very large oblong mound which is situated to the south of the bailey and raised above it by around 0.5m. The mound has a large surface area of 978.028m<sup>2</sup> and contains



traces of masonry which is possibly the reason for its existence: not a motte but a mound of tumble from a former building. This theory is supported by the fact that the two sides facing towards the bailey are linear suggesting walls rather than a motte base.

### **Strategic position:**

The site has good natural defences being high on the edge of a steep sloping ridge, however, the east and north are weak points; the east actually rises above the level of the site. The raised bailey does offer some level of protection on these sides. Strategically, there appears to be no obvious reason for the location of a motte and bailey here and its position is made more problematic by two early mottes which exist near by at Hay and Mouse Castle.

### **Documentary record**

#### **Antiquarian reference:**

There is no documentary evidence available for Cusop castle within the period of this study. The earliest mention is the 8<sup>th</sup> year of Edward II, 1315, when the manor of Cusop was held by the Clanowe family (Duncumb 1812. 286). It is interesting to note that Duncumb recorded ‘in the centre are quantities of loose stones, which are the only remains of the original mansion’ (Duncumb 1812. 286). In Robinson’s opinion the site was a structure ‘suitable for defense against a band of marauders but not capable of withstanding a siege’ (Robinson 1869. 40).

Information on the name of Cusop was offered by Trumper:

‘The name of this parish has been variously written, such as *Ceushope*, *Caushope*, *Keusope*, &c. but the etymology in the British language, from *Ceu* or’ *Cau*, *hollow*, and a second word implying a *hill* fully describes the situation of Cusop, it being placed in the hollow formed by mountains on the east and west sides, which unite towards the south.’

(Trumper 1889. 369).

### **Modern reference:**

**HWCM1229**

#### ***Additional references:***

VCH 1908. 225-6.

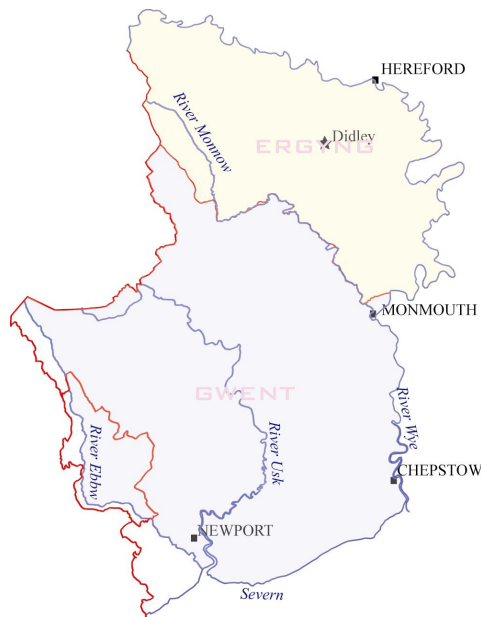
RCHME 1931. 47.

King 1983. 204.

**Interpretation:****Possible motte and bailey/fortified-site (Late)**

The present earthwork itself is of a design more suited to that of a fortified-site than a castle. This view is strengthened by the angular form of the mound and lack of any separation ditch between the mound and the bailey, although, the possibility that a motte may have been removed from the site, thereby covering the ditch during levelling operations should be considered. The matter might be resolved by geophysical survey or excavation.

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, topographical survey and location suggests that this site is a late construction with a function as a fortified-site probably associated with land tenure and agricultural holdings.

**DIDLEY COURT FARM****Grid: SO 45022 31964****Location:**

The earthwork at Didley Court is situated to the east of the A465, Hereford to Abergavenny road some 34km south-west of Hereford. Didley motte stands on the edge of a slight natural ridge, south of Didley Court.

**Description:**

Today the site is nothing more than a small conical mound of earth. The house obviously occupies the area of the bailey and any defensive features have been landscaped out of existence.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 12)**

The top surface area of the motte now measures 53.142m<sup>2</sup> and judging by the shape it is possible to suggest that just under half of the top surface area is missing. The destroyed section is evident to the north and north-west where a modern house has been built and with it has gone both evidence of a ditch that would have separated it from the bailey, and the bailey itself.

**Strategic position:**

The construction of the motte on the steepest part of a ridge has made use of the natural surroundings for defence although the defences are somewhat meagre. It is possible that its location had something to do with the route from Hereford to Abergavenny but the area's topography is that of a fairly wide valley, which would suggest a possible motte and bailey/fortified-site with a land tenure function rather than a strong offensive castle. The site is only a short distance from Kilpeck castle which appeared to be an important *caput* for the area, see below. It is quite possible that the castle at Didley represented an outpost of Kilpeck held on a fee basis but this is entirely speculative.

**Documentary record****Primary reference:**

There is no known early reference to a castle at Didley but the name is recorded in *Db.H* as being held by Walter, Bishop of Hereford (Thorn and Thorn 1983. 181c).

**Modern reference:****HWCM6813**

Didley motte was recorded in 1931 as having a ditch which at that time survived on the north-west side, as can be seen on the map (Vol. 2. figure 45) but to the south and east the ditch faded into a berm. A crescent shaped bailey was also still visible to the north and west with a ditch to the west of that and a further scarp to the south-west of the bailey (RCHME 1931. 224). Didley motte is also recorded by (Hogg and King 1963. 98) and (Shoesmith 1996. 201).

**Interpretation:****Motte and bailey (Mid)**

It is difficult to suggest any useful interpretation from the remains of the motte other than that it must have at one time been much bigger. The lack of any strong defensive nature of the location plus the proximity of Kilpeck suggests a later settlement period, possibly in response to resurgence of hostilities such as occurred during the Anarchy, although this is entirely speculative.

**DIGGET'S WOOD****Grid: SO 44052 29454****Location:**

The earthwork site at Digget's Wood is situated approximately 1km south-west of the village of Kilpeck. Kilpeck is situated 1.5km south-east of Wormbridge on the A465 Hereford to Abergavenny Road.

**Description:**

Digget's Wood was a mound to the north-east of a wood from which it was named. The site was reputed to have occupied low lying ground on the south side of a stream (RCHME 1931. 160). Today the site is a featureless

meadow.

**Topographic Survey:**

This site no longer exists therefore no survey was undertaken.

**Strategic position:**

The general area of the site is low lying in woodland and therefore difficult to access visually, however, it is obvious that there was no natural defence subsequently the site would have had to have had a range of earthworks to protect it if it had been a castle. The only observable advantage for the position would be the surrounding farm land, but as was mentioned above for Didley the site is very close to the caput of Kilpeck.

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

There is no known early reference to Digget's Wood; the first record is that by the *RCHME* below.

**Modern record:****HWCM6789**

This mound had a diameter of some 26m and stood about 2m in height (RCHME 1931. 160). The description of the earthwork is entirely acceptable for there are many such low mounds in

the immediate vicinity, still visible today. The earthwork unfortunately was levelled in 1973-4 as part of conversion of the site to pasture (Shoesmith 1996. 151).

**Interpretation:**

**Possible motte (Unknown)**

**DINGESTOW 1 (MILL HILL)****Grid: SO 45977 10354****Introductory note:**

The village of Dingestow is one of the locations in this research that has two earthwork castle sites in close proximity to one another. For the purpose of the research they were numbered Dingestow 1 and Dingestow 2. Dingestow 1, also known as Mill Hill, is the eastern one of the pair, located on the eastern bank of the River Trothy. Mill Hill will be dealt with first as it is felt to be the earlier of the two as was suggested by (Kay 1936. 143).

**Location:**

The site can be reached from the A40 Raglan to Monmouth road, taking the old road to Mitchel Troy from Raglan and turning north at The Bourne. The earthwork stands on a natural ridge that rises steeply above the Trothy.

**Description:**

The earthwork today is very difficult to interpret as it is covered in dense vegetation with only the large motte being instantly recognisable (Vol. 2. plate 84). The first photograph shows the southern end of the motte before it reaches what Kay thought was the bailey (Vol. 2. figure 46). The bailey sketched to the south by Kay in 1936 was interpreted as a simple defensive rampart or horn-work. The second photograph shows the northern end of the motte base to the left with the actual bailey rising on the right (Vol. 2. plate 85). Photograph 3 shows a view to the north of the motte where the western rampart and bailey ditch lie (Vol. 2. plate 86). The final photograph shows a view looking north through the rampart that forms the gateway (Vol. 2. plate 87).

The bailey appears to have been strongly defended to the north by a rampart and ditch, and to the west by scarping of the ridge to form a raised platform below which was a further ditch and outer rampart. The east of the site has suffered considerable damage and erosion making interpretation difficult.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 13)**

An intensive survey was done on this particular earthwork because of the inadequacy of evidence available. From this work it was found that the earthwork had an enclosed bailey to the north with an almost complete rampart and ditch. The motte has a maximum height of 8.36m and useable top area of 122.451m<sup>2</sup>. The gradient of the sides reach a steep 76% which leaves little doubt as to the function of such a site. The surface area of the bailey is quite large at 1189.465m<sup>2</sup> suggesting that a large garrison could have been accommodated here.

**Strategic position:**

This site is an excellent example of an early motte and bailey castle, located on a ridge and constructed to make best use of natural defences. The ditches have been cut into the ridge isolating the motte and the bailey into separately defensible areas. The motte has been placed at the steepest part of the site to utilise the natural scarp for defence and a crescentic horn-work has been added for extra security. The location commands a steep valley which may have controlled a land route from the south to Monmouth 'at the southern foot of the ridge is possibly the old ford point for the Monmouth to Raglan corridor' (Whittle 1992. 94). It is possible that the earthwork was built to defend the river crossing (Wakeman 1855. 16).

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

There is no record of Dingestow in *Db.G* but in his interpretive notes Moore suggested that Dingestow fell within the lands of the king and William son of Baderon. He further suggested that Dingestow was held by one of William's men-at-arms, unfortunately he does not state his reason (Moore 1982. E35). Dingestow church is mentioned in the *Lib. Land* as the Church of Dincat (Rees 1840. 486). Dr Griffin of Hadnock attributed Dingat as a saint's name with the 'stow' being Saxon for place or dwelling (Heath 1813). Dingat was reputedly a son of the 5th century chieftain Brychan Brycheiniog and he founded another church in Llanddingat in Llandovery. The Welsh for Dingestow is Llanddingat (Bradney 1911. 50). Other references can be found and will be dealt with in Dingestow 2 for it is believed that they relate to the other castle. If this is the case then there are no records for Dingestow 1.

**Modern reference:****MM114**



***Additional references:***

King 1983. 283.

**Interpretation:****Motte and bailey (Early)**

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, survey and location leaves little doubt as to the function of this castle. The shape and size of the motte makes it a strong defensible structure and there is good evidence that the motte was defended from the bailey giving the motte its private fortification function. The large bailey would have been big enough to house a small garrison, ideal for an early offensive castle.

**DINGESTOW 2****Grid: SO 45567 10399****Location:**

Dingestow 2 is located at the end of a ridge overlooking a river valley about 0.5km east of Dingestow 1, described above, on the west bank of the Trothy.

**Description:**

At first sight, the earthwork at Dingestow would appear to be quite a large motte with a raised bailey but on closer inspection certain features are atypical. The site takes the form of a large flat topped rectangular mound with steep, high sides on all sides except the east (Vol. 2. plate 87).

The aerial photograph shows the site's northern edge. Also showing quite clearly is the ditch construction to the south which leaves a ramped causeway into the bailey. Kay's sketch shows the structure as it was in 1936 (Vol. 2. figure 47). The ditch between the rampart and the mound on the west side can be seen in photograph 3 (Vol. 2. plate 88). Photograph 4 shows the causeway approach from the west leading up to the bailey. (Vol. 2. plate 89). The west side can be seen in photograph 2; the mound itself shows above the tree line which marks the outer rampart (Vol. 2. plate 90). It is unusual in design; the majority of mottes being rounded. It is possible that the mound was constructed to take a rectangular structure more likely in a masonry castle.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 14)**

The survey levels show that the large mound appears to be mostly natural having been formed by excavation of a ditch into the hill to separate the castle base. The apparent raised bailey is actually at natural ground level. West of the bailey is the raised mound, rectangular in form and some 4m higher, presumably constructed for a masonry castle destroyed before completion in 1182 see below.

**Strategic position:**

The castle construction has made use of the edge of a natural ridge resulting in a formidable set of defences. Its location, however, does not offer any immediate advantage other than control over agricultural land.

## Documentary evidence

### Primary reference:

The earliest mention of Dingestow has been noted above, but unlike Dingestow 1, there is a certain amount of literature that deals with this site. *Giraldus Cambrensis* relates the destruction of the unfinished castle of Dingestow to a band of men from Gwent. The builder was Ranulf Poer, Sheriff of Herefordshire whom Gerald implicates as one of De Braose's henchmen in the massacre at Abergavenny Castle, see above (Thorpe 1978. 111). The event is recorded for 1182 in the *B. Saes* and the *BT .Pen and BT. RBH* (Jones 1952. 73 : 1955. 169 : 1971. 185). Bradney records a date of 1184 for the attack and carries on to state that the castle was later rebuilt only to be lost in 1233 to Richard Marshal who had joined Llywellyn ap Iorwerth against Henry III (Bradney 1911. 53). There is, however, no mention of Dingestow in either the *B. Saes* or the *BT .Pen and BT. RBH* list of castles taken during this campaign.

### Modern reference:

**MM113**

The castle is described as having been a large stone built structure on top of an earthen mound (Whittle 1992. 94).

### Additional references:

Renn 1968. 166.

Hogg and King 1963. 110.

King 1983. 282.

### Excavation:

Excavation in 1969 within the 'inner bailey' revealed poor quality walls (Leslie 1969. 28).

### Interpretation:

#### Possible motte/ masonry castle (Mid)

In this instance the interpretation is based on actual remains, survey, location and documentary evidence. How much of the raised mound is natural or even tumble from the masonry castle is unknown, but its possible contribution, along with documentary evidence makes the inclusion of this site as a motte and bailey castle questionable.

**DINHAM****Grid: ST 48052 92333****Location:**

The castle at Dinham is quite difficult to find because it is well off the road in a dense wood, just to the north of the restricted area of RAF Caerwent. The approach is from the Shirenewton to Chepstow road where at approximately 1.5km south-east of Shirenewton a private drive leads towards the wood. After gaining access permission, the lane is followed to the edge of the wood and skirting west until a track-way is found. The castle lies above the track to the left.

**Description:**

The photograph, (Vol. 2. plate 91) shows one of the more visible aspects of the site: a masonry wall base. There is very little to see of this site as the vegetation has almost hidden it entirely. That which can be identified consists of mounds of masonry as can be seen in the second photograph (Vol. 2. plate 92).

**Topographic survey:**

The vegetation at this site obscures the entire area and it was therefore impractical to consider undertaking a survey.

**Strategic position.**

The thick wood in which the castle is situated makes it very difficult to assess the land but there appear to be no natural defences available which would have instigated the castles construction. The suggestion in the documentary evidence is that the castle was placed to control the wood, see below.

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

Dinham is mentioned in *Db.G* as one of 3 dairy farms held by Roger de Ivry (Moore 1982. 162a). In 1129 Castell Dinham, with wood, and meadow is mentioned in a Bull of Pope Honorius II to Urban, Bishop of Landaff (Rees 1840. 584).

**Antiquarian reference:**

Dinham is one of the six castles erected to surround the forest of Wentwood, in the colourful antiquarian description of Barber, in order to prevent the “natives” from sallying forth from its impenetrable wilderness (Barber 1803. 227-8). It is, however, more likely that the castles were built to ensure the rights of the forest. The dilapidation of the site is not a recent occurrence for even at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Coxe reported difficulty in discerning either site or foundation and pointed out that neither Camden nor Leland mentioned the site, suggesting that it must have been ruinous in their time (Coxe 1801. 29).

**Modern reference:****MM153**

Salter described the castle as overgrown remains of a 13<sup>th</sup> century tower with courtyard and outbuildings possibly built on an earlier site of 1150 (Salter 2002. 26). As to the courtyard and outbuildings, it has to be emphasised that the site is extremely overgrown and none of these features were identifiable at the time of visit.

***Additional references:***

Hogg and King 1963. 110.  
King 1983. 283.

**Interpretation:****Masonry**

There is no evidence to suggest that there was ever a motte and bailey castle at this site but the remains of a masonry structure are evident. Antiquarian sources suggest that the site was a masonry castle and this study finds no reason to disagree. Dinham therefore falls outside of the remit for this study.

**DIXTON****Grid: SO 51822 13749****Location:**

The earthwork site at Dixon is located about 0.8km north-east of Monmouth and can be clearly seen from the A40 just north-east of the roundabout for the Monmouth bypass, on low ground just above the River Wye.

**Description:**

The site is extremely low and is more noticeable by its ditch rather than by its mound. The photographs show views from the north-east and south-east where the ditch is most pronounced (Vol. 2. chapter plates 93 and 94).

The photographs show clearly that the mound itself is not very high above the surrounding natural area. Confusion may have arisen for this site's origin from an error in classification. The 1886 *OS* for the area shows Dixon to be a tumulus which would tend to infer a high mound possibly a motte (Vol. 2. figure 48).

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 15)**

There is no evidence of a bailey at the site and the maximum height of the mound above the natural surface is less than 1m in height. The area of the base is quite large at 984.206m<sup>2</sup> which would allow for a higher motte to have been in existence and a calculation of the volume of earth removed from the ditch and the current volume of the mound above natural leaves 1197.443m<sup>3</sup> of soil unaccounted for, assuming that the ditch soil was used to raise the mound. If it is assumed that the site had been levelled for some purpose, then the levelling process would have tended to remove both ditch and mound. As the third photograph shows the ditch, this is clearly not the case (Vol. 2. plate 95). The mound is angular and the ditch is square with rounded corners. To the north-east, (top of the photograph), can be seen a widened spur of the ditch, which leads to the stream. It is probable that the stream fed a wet moat around the mound, the present ditch being the moat.

**Strategic position:**

As a defensive site Dixon leaves much to be desired, the earthwork is a low rectangular mound surrounded by a ditch which is situated on gently sloping ground with no natural defence. A

small stream-fed moat is not really a viable defence and there is no evidence of any outer earthworks suggesting a bailey.

### **Documentary evidence**

#### **Primary reference:**

The only early documentary evidence for Dixton comes from *Db.G* where it was held by William son of Baderon (Moore 1982. E 35). A later record exists, dated 1144 concerning confirmation of a grant by 'Guienoc' and his nephew William fitz Baderon to Monmouth Priory listing the church of Dixton amongst others (Barrow 1993. 45).

#### **Modern reference:**

**MM125**

The site was examined in 1997, when, due to erosion, sherds of pottery were recovered from a nearby stream indicating 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century activity at the site (Clarke and Wilson 1997, 100).

#### ***Additional references:***

Renn 1968. 166.

King 1983. 283.

#### **Interpretation:**

**Moated site**

Interpretation based on field work suggests there is no evidence of an earthwork castle at this site as the feature has no motte, bailey, natural defence, or observable strategic purpose. It is, however, plausible that this was a moated site which subsequently put it outside the remit of this study.

**DORSTONE CASTLE****Grid: SO 31217 41623****Location:**

Dorstone motte is situated to the west of the small village of Dorstone in the Golden Valley. The village lies on the B4347 Ewyas Harold to Hay on Wye road.

**Description:**

The site occupies a corner of land which is surrounded on two sides by the River Dore. A road through the village now crosses the north-east end of the probable bailey's original extent, where there is a bank within the roadside hedgerow.

Today the motte is a very imposing structure, (Vol. 2. plate 96) commanding fields that are used for pasture. The top has been planted with large trees, originally, probably twelve around the circumference with one in the middle. The top of the motte is very unusual in size and shape within the area studied. The other large mottes, with the exception of Ewyas Harold, all have small tops. The motte top at Dorstone is similar to the surface area of the lower mottes that predominate the locality. The bailey is evident to the north east of the motte and its shape suggests the possibility of an entrance base at the west end. Remains of masonry were found in a 'scratch dig' on the east of the motte top which were interpreted as a gatehouse (Shoesmith 1996. 88). It is possible to postulate from the plan view, (see Vol. 2. surveys), that a large bailey may have extended some distance to the north but most of it has been lost to farming practices. There is no way of knowing if this was indeed the case but it is arguable that the large motte top must have held more than just a wooden tower and such a large castle would have needed a large work-force to be accommodated, and the bailey would be the place for this accommodation.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 16)**

The site at Dorstone is a curious mix of two apparently different motivations for building. The motte is tall, 8.66m, allowing for good defence but it also has a large top surface area, 727.411m<sup>2</sup>, which would allow for defence more suited for a large number of people than a man in charge and his immediate retainers. The latter observation was supported by the geophysical survey, see below.

The contour plan shows a ramp bridging the ditch to the west, (see Vol. 2 surveys). The ramp is today the chosen route to the top of the motte but whether it is original or not is open to question.



A small rise in the ground level to the south of the ramp could mark a possible bridge base but this is speculation. The mound does not show up on the contour plot unless the setting is changed to 0.10m. Unfortunately, such a setting tends to confuse the rest of the site when shown on a printout. It has to be noted, however, if the supposition that the bailey extended to the north-east is correct, see above, then the access to the motte top would probably have been from the west. A small depression in the outer bailey bank, above the motte ditch, may mark a more likely location, (see Vol. 2 surveys). There is a corresponding change of shape on the motte itself, noticeable at this point where the motte flares slightly into the ditch.

### **Geophysical survey:**

The geophysical survey was conducted on this site in order to investigate the hypothesis that such a large surface area must have supported buildings. The hypothesis was confirmed by the geophysical survey which indicated a large number of potential masonry structures on top of the motte, (see Vol. 2 geophysics). Most of the structures appeared to share north-south, east-west alignments, possibly indicating a large building with internal room divisions rather than individual buildings. A high resistance curvilinear anomaly was also recorded around sections of the motte rim, probably indicating the remains of a shell keep.

### **Strategic position:**

There doesn't appear to be any reason for the placement of the castle in such a place' no natural defence and no observable strategic advantage. The castle is however situated within a very fertile valley.

### **Documentary evidence**

#### **Primary reference:**

The earliest record of Dorstone is in *Db. H* where it is listed under the land of Drogo son of Poyntz having formerly been in the possession of Earl Harold (Thorn and Thorn 1983. 186c,d). It will be remembered that in the section on Clifford Castle above, Dru fitz Ponz, was named as an under tenant to Ralph de Tosney, of Clifford (Bannister 1912. 42).

#### **Antiquarian reference:**

The name Dorstone is derived from the Welsh *dŵr* meaning water and *ton* the Saxon for enclosure (Robinson 1869. 50).

**Modern record:****HMCW1559**

The map shows how the layout of the area appeared in 1891 and it is possible to see that the south-east end of the site had already been truncated with a hedge-row, see above, and footpath which are still used today (Vol. 2. figure 49). The more archaeologically trained eye of the *VCH* surveyor was able to identify a more cohesive structure for the site as can be seen in the 1908 site map (Vol. 2. figure 50). The surveyor was able to produce a standard motte and bailey castle layout, uncluttered with features that confused the intention. It is useful to note the inclusion of the causeway in this map, see above. The third map, (Vol. 2. figure 51). produced for the *RCHME* in 1931, includes the features that the previous map neglected, features which are still evident today such as the ramp to the north of the motte and the development to the east. The record also makes note of the absence of an outer rampart which is indeed unusual for such a site (RCHME 1931 236).

There have been suggestions that Durand of Gloucester was tenant in chief at Dorstone (Marshall 1938. 145). This is based on an interpretation by Duncumb that Dorstone is a derivation of *Torches-stone* which actually refers to Stratford Hundred (Robinson 1886. 50). Marshall's account itself is derived from Theophilus Jones's interpretation that the name Dorstone transmuted from Thurstan a standard bearer to William the Conqueror (Marshall 1938. 152). There is no record of ownership of the castle within the period of this research but in the late 12th century the castle became the holding of the Solers Family (Shoesmith 1996. 89). This site was included in the survey.

It has been inferred that the plan of the village is suggestive of a borough plantation probably associated with the ancestors of the Clifford family before they became holders of Clifford (Noble 1964. 66).

***Additional references:***

Hogg and King 1963. 104.

King 1983. 205.

**Interpretation:****Motte and bailey (Mid)**

The interpretation of the site is based on actual remains, topographical survey, geophysical survey and location. The overall impression appears to suggest that the function of the motte was as a large scale defensive structure rather than a small offensive motte and bailey of the conquest period. It is possible to infer from its size that the castle may have been an important administrative centre, the defence motivation behind the height being to protect the office of a lord rather than the person. There is no evidence of any private strongholds on the site which

would date the castle to an earlier period, therefore, Dorstone motte and bailey may represents a stable period possibly early 12<sup>th</sup> century.

**EATON CAMP****Grid: SO 45547 39338****Location:**

Eaton Camp is located above the south bank of the River Wye some 4km west of Hereford. It can be reached from the A465 south-east of Hereford from a lane leading to Eaton Bishop.

**Description:**

Iron Age hill-fort.

**Topographic survey:**

A survey was not required as the site is obviously outside the remit of this study.

**Strategic position:**

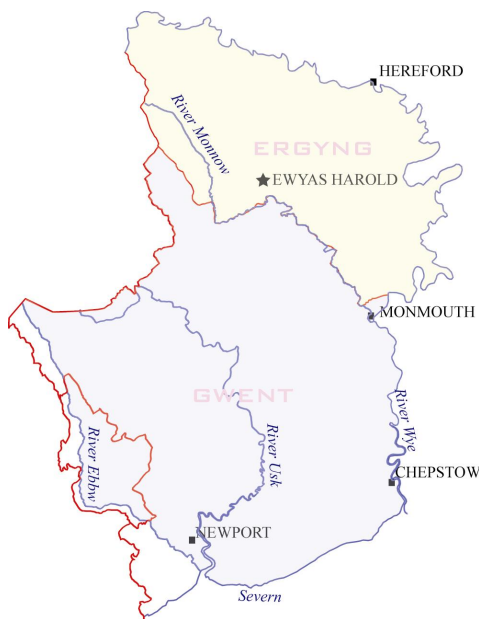
The position would have offered a pre-existing set of ramparts and ditches overlooking the River Wye from a high vantage point on the south bank.

**Documentary record****Modern reference:****HWCM907*****Additional references:***

King 1983. 212.

**Interpretation:****Pre-historic**

The reason for its inclusion in this research is that mention is made by Shoesmith of a possible motte at the eastern apex of the site (1996. 103), (Vol. 2. figure 52). The site was visited twice during the research but unfortunately no evidence was found that would suggest Norman influence at this site.

**EWYAS HAROLD****Grid: SO 38502 28699****Location:**

The village of Ewyas Harold is located to the west of the A465, Hereford to Abergavenny road, 31km north of Abergavenny. The castle occupies the south-east end of a spur of high ground to the north west of the village.

**Description:**

The visible remains of the castle today are quite substantial: a large heavily wooded motte with bailey, ramparts and ditch (Vol. 2. plate 97). Streams surround the motte on all sides except the north-west where the end of a ridge has been modified by the creation of a defensive ditch which cuts the motte off from the rest of the hill (Vol. 2. plate 98). The west, north-west and north sides of the motte have evidence of quarrying which has seriously destroyed the motte top on those sides. There are also discernable earthworks on the top of the motte which suggest sub-surface remains of buildings. To the south and east of the motte is the bailey which consists of a flat area of land itself some height above the surrounding valley and town. Running from the north-east of the motte towards the bailey edge are the remains of a cross-rampart (Vol. 2. plate 99). A similar rampart may once have existed to the south-west of the motte but this has been almost completely destroyed by farm buildings (Vol. 2. plate 100). A modern bungalow with landscaped garden occupies an area of high ground to the north of the motte.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 17)**

The most interesting detail revealed during the survey was that the 16.36m of height attributed to the motte only managed to raise it some 6m above the hill from which it was cut; by the excavation of the defensive ditch. Consequently, the large motte has only about 6m of height resulting from artificial modification, the other 10m being natural hillside. Survey of the motte top revealed that the present plan area was a sizable 384.839. However there is considerable damage to the motte rim resulting in angular and concave cuts made by quarrying. By predicting the original motte rim by rounding out the damaged areas it is possible to estimate an earlier plan area of 498.017 m<sup>2</sup>.

The bailey area is also quite large with a surface area of 6924.617m<sup>2</sup> which is raised above the south-east fields by 9.45m, again using the natural hill rather than raising an artificial mound.

**Strategic position:**

The site probably offered obvious natural defence possibilities with the end of a steep ridge which the site has used to good advantage. There is, however, a possibility that the site was re-used as will be discussed below. If this was the case then the strategic advantage would be linked to such re-use.

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

An early record for the castle is in the *ASC (Peterborough Mss)* which records for the year 1051 that 'The foreigners had then built a castle in Herefordshire in Earl Swein's province and inflicted every injury and insult they could upon the king's men thereabouts' (Swanton 2000. 174-5). Doubt as to the accuracy of the term castle was discussed above, (see chapter 3), however, the account does suggest that Ewyas Harold was fortified in some way.

*Db.H* records three records for the castlery of Ewyas and one mention of the castle itself: 'Of these nine hides, one part is in Alfred's castlery of Ewyas' (Thorn and Thorn 1983. 181c), 'In the castlery of Ewyas Earl William gave four carucates of land to Walter de Lacy' (Thorn and Thorn 1983. 184a), 'In the castlery of Ewyas (Harold) Roger holds from Henry three churches' (Thorn and Thorn 1983. 185b) and 'Alfred of Marlborough holds the castle of Ewyas from the King. The king himself granted him the lands which Earl William, who had refortified the castle had given him' (Thorn and Thorn 1983. 186a). William fitz Osbern's refortification must have taken place between 1067-1071, (see chapter 3).

The earliest mention of the village of Ewyas is: '*Elcon*, situate on *Dulais*', comes from the *Lib. Land* (Rees 1840. 451). How or when *Elcon* became Ewyas Harold is not known and the origin of the name Harold has always been cause for speculation by antiquaries, see below.

**Antiquarian reference:**

Some of the main theories identifying which Harold were recorded by Bull in 1869:

- 'The son of 'Kynge Harold' (Leland).
- The son of fitzOsborne Earl of Hereford (Dugdale).
- The son of Ralph Earl of Hereford (Gough).
- The son of Drogo fitzPonz (Freeman).'

(Bull 1869. 29).

The son comes from frequent use of the term 'Mab Harold' in documents relating to him; Mab meaning son (Bull 1869. 29). The most likely contender would, however, be the 5 year old son of Ralf the Timid, Earl of Hereford (Marshall 1938. 144).

The earliest antiquarian record of the castle comes from Leland who in 1530 seemed less than impressed with the site writing 'nothing remains of it now but the mound and fosse' (cited in Bull 1869. 32). In Leland's time a church stood in the castle, probably on the bailey, 'a large part of the castle still stands' together with a chapel of St Nicholas within it' (Chandler 1998. 228).

The dating of the castle here is central to one of best known arguments in the field of Norman castle construction. Vying for the claim to be the first castle built in Britain are Richard's Castle outside Ludlow, Hereford Castle and Ewyas Harold Castle, all products of Norman followers of Edward the Confessor who were granted land after his accession in 1043 (Swanton 2000. 162). An early claim for Ewyas Harold's construction came from Bannister, his *History of Ewyas* suggested that it was built on a former Saxon *burgh* constructed around 915 as a defence against the 'Black Pagans', the Danes (1902. 6).

#### **Modern reference:**

**HWCM1449**

The modern record of the site can be best presented by two maps, one the *RCHME* 1931, (Vol. 2. figure 53) and the other by Kay from the 1940s, (Vol. 2. figure 54). The *RCHME* version shows the layout of the site in relation to the topography of the area, and includes detail of earthworks to the south of the bailey. It also includes a longer section of the east rampart than remains today and without the breach for the access road to a modern bungalow north-east of the motte, on the raised earthwork. The Kay sketch identifies more of the features of the site than the earlier map including the shell keep on the top of the motte and the earthworks to the south and east of the bailey. It should be noted that Kay's compass bearing is about 260° out.

#### ***Additional references:***

VCH 1908. 237-238.

Armitage 1912. 150-151.

Renn 1968. 184-185.

Hogg and King 1963. 111.

King 1983. 278.

#### **Interpretation:**

#### **Motte and bailey (Early)**

Ewyas Harold is one of the best known motte and bailey castles in the country, cited as a standard by which to measure others. The site, however, is not as standard as it would first appear. The site occupies the end of a ridge where the Norman practice of cutting a ditch has been used to separate an area of ground for a motte. Along from the motte, the top of the ridge would normally be used as the bailey, thereby, providing added protection to the motte and added defence to the bailey by incorporating the natural defence of the ridge sides. In the case of Ewyas Harold the motte is adjacent to the top of the ridge and only 6m above it, putting the most

secure part of the castle in a weak position. A misconception about Ewyas Harold is the enormity of the motte itself. The survey showed that of the 16m of height of the motte some 10m is probably natural.

The bailey was formed by levelling the ground to the east, south and west to make a platform, possibly not as large a task as may be thought since the natural hillside may have already been partially shelved due to glacial action which is common in the region. Spoil from this operation could have been used to create the steep defensive bank around the bailey. A problem with the site comes from the fact that the bailey is overlooked by the ridge, making it very open to attack. It is possible that the cross ramparts may have been designed to shield the bailey from the ridge. As they do not appear to form a curtain wall up the motte sides, they cannot have been used as a defensive earthwork to bar entry. Such a shielding structure would seem to be a remedy to an existing problem rather than a pre-conceived strategic device.

The usual layout for a motte and bailey castle would be to have the motte at the steepest part of the natural landscape with the bailey in front, in the weaker direction. At Ewyas Harold, therefore, the motte would have been to the south of the pre-existing ridge with the bailey to the north, on top of the ridge. The ditch could still be in the same position but a further ditch or rampart, or both would have been cut to secure the bailey. This apparent anomaly is worth noting for it may shed light on the origin of the site. Possibly the Norman rebuilding of the castle in 1052 is the key. The site is a motte and bailey castle now, but what was it originally? Does its unusual layout result from a use that dictated a different form, less dependent on the need for defence? It is possible that the Normans developed a pre-existing Saxon burh.

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, survey, location and documentary evidence leaves little doubt as to the function and date of this castle. There is no question as to the castle's early date as documentary evidence tells us that fitz Osbern repaired the castle in 1067-1071, thereby, establishing its place in early conquest history. The unusual size of the top of the motte, similar to Dorstone, suggests that this castle also functioned as an administrative centre. The lack of any evidence of private defence is a problem that cannot be explained but it is possible that masonry structures atop the motte would have catered for such a function.



**GOODRICH CASTLE****Grid: SO 57782 19969****Location:**

Goodrich castle is situated north of the village of Goodrich, high above a bend in the River Wye. It is reached from the A40 between Monmouth and Ross on Wye.

**Description:**

The castle is a significant masonry ruin built in local red sandstone. The plate included shows a watercolour produced sometime in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It shows the southern approach to the castle which lies in its surrounding ditch, just past the tree line (Vol. 2. plate

101).

**Topographic survey:**

Goodrich castle is a masonry construction with no sign of any raised earthworks therefore it is outside the remit of this study.

**Strategic position:**

The castle is situated on a natural rock out-crop which has been modified to produce a rock cut ditch (Vol. 2. figure 55).

**Documentary record****Modern reference:****HWCM239*****Additional references:***

VCH 1908. 254.  
 RCHME 1931. 74-78.  
 Renn 1968. 195.  
 Hogg and King 1963. 112.  
 King 1983. 206.

**Interpretation:**

There is no reason to suppose that the castle at Goodrich was ever a motte construction. As with Chepstow Castle and Monmouth Castle, the available defence at this point was a naturally occurring rock.

**GRAFTON****Grid: SO 49400 36900****Location:**

The hamlet of Grafton is situated about 2km south of the River Wye at Hereford. It is best approached from the A465 Hereford to Abergavenny road. On the outskirts of Hereford at the Belmont roundabout a southerly lane leads to The Callow. About 1km along this lane a right turn leads to Grafton Hotel and just under the railway bridge, the site is on the left.

**Description:**

There are no physical remains of any earthworks at Grafton. It was included in this survey because it was mentioned in *Castles and Moated Sites of Herefordshire* (Shoesmith 1996). Research at the Hereford SMR led to the aerial photograph which is included (Vol. 2. plate 102). This unmistakeable crop mark is the only evidence of a structure at Grafton. The photograph shows a circular feature just to the left of the right-angled road turn. Beneath this is a second circle which has been eroded by the pathway. The pathway is recorded as early as 1890 as the map shows (Vol. 2. figure 56). The left and north of the circle are surrounded by a double parallel line. The whole area enclosed by the lines, and up to the hedge, shows evidence of soil change. It is not impossible that this is indeed the site of a motte and bailey castle, but it requires excavation or geophysical survey to demonstrate this.

**Topographic survey:**

There are no physical remains of this site above ground therefore a survey was not relevant.

**Strategic position:**

There are no observable natural defences in the area and the only recognisable value of this site appears to be its position in rich agricultural land.

**Documentary record****Modern reference:****HWCM1046****Interpretation:****Possible motte and bailey (unknown date)**

**GREAT GOYTRE (GWERN CASTLE)****Grid: SO 35292 23284****Location:**

Great Goytre motte, also called Gwern Castle, is located on the north-west side of a ridge above the A465 Abergavenny to Hereford road. It stands on the land belonging to Upper Goytre Farm, from where it can be reached. Upper Goytre Farm is reached by turning east of the A465 at Llanfihangel Crucorney and travelling to Campstone Hill. The farm is on the left.

**Description:**

The inclusion of this site to the research was initiated by its mention in *C. Ang.* A single line says 'Motte, small; standing in lofty position' (King 1983. 283). In surveying the castle it is now at least possible to add some description to this list. The motte and bailey castle at Upper Goytre Farm consists of a small motte, surrounded by an almost complete ditch and vestiges of ramparts. The motte is in a bad state of repair with denuded banks slowly eroding away. The first photograph, (Vol. 2. plate 103), shows an aerial view of the site from the east, the clump of trees in the centre of the photograph shows the position of the site, with the motte to the right. The motte shows evidence of a rectangular stone building on its summit with some parts eroding from the sides of the motte but others still firmly entrenched along the top. The masonry may suggest a possible shell keep or tower stood there (Vol. 2. plate 104). There is no way to date the structure at present. As with most mottes of this type, it is assumed that a small tower would have stood on the summit, both to protect the people assigned to its use and to provide extra height from which to scan the surrounding area.

The hedge row from the bottom of the picture marks the point on the circuit of the bailey where the rampart disappears. To the south and east of the site the land rises slightly to an area of exposed rock which appears to have been the site of quarrying at some time.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 18)**

The site at Great Goytre is in a poor state of repair which makes it difficult to assess its function. The site has quite a small motte, with a top surface area of only 56.15m<sup>2</sup> and a base area of only 268.66m<sup>2</sup>. As the motte is surrounded by a ditch it is safe to conclude that it was never much bigger than it is now.

**Strategic position:**

The location of the site, on the crest of a broad ridge, does not offer much natural defence in this case, although the location does offer extensive views over the surrounding countryside. A possible reason for the location of the motte here could be related to an interesting feature to the west of the site: a small length of sunken track-way. Again dating is problematic but it is possible that the motte may have been placed in this position because of the track-way, to guard its use. It is of course equally likely that the track-way provided access to and from the outpost or the quarry.

**Documentary record****Modern record:****MM138**

Two sketch maps of the site were produced by Kay; one in 1946 (Vol. 2. figure 57) and the other in 1950 (Vol. 2. figure 58). Both maps show the line of an ancient track-way, suggested above as a possible reason for the motte's existence. The track-way is not noticeable today nor does it show on the aerial photograph, see above. Photograph, (Vol. 2. plate 105) shows the east side of the site at ground level (the motte stands on the extreme right of the tree line) and again there is no track-way evident on the photograph. Photograph, (Vol. 2. plate 106) shows the motte from a closer angle; the rise on the left is the start of the outer rampart which can be seen on Kay's 1947 map. Photograph, (Vol. 2. plate 107) shows the motte with its ditch and rampart on the left of the photograph. Both Kay's maps agree with its position and shape.

Today the land to the south and east of the motte looks more akin to quarrying activity than earthworks of a bailey. What isn't apparent from the two sketch maps is that the areas marked as 'platform' are well below the level ground to the east. This would place these structures at a severe disadvantage to attack. The suggestion on the 1950 map that the bailey stood between the fosse and the moat is quite unacceptable because the fosse is not convincing as an enclosing rampart. It certainly lacks impact towards the south where the extremely narrow bailey opens to the track way and also to the north where the very small ditch joins to the motte.

It is very difficult today to see where the bailey actually lay because of quarrying. Great Goytre is a site that requires detailed investigation as to its layout.

***Additional references:***

Hogg and King 1963. 97.  
King 1983. 283.

**Interpretation:****Motte (watch-tower) (Mid)**

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, topographical survey and location suggests that the function of this site was that of a watch-tower or out-post. The size of the motte could be dated to the early period where this simple structure would be used to guard the valley leading from Abergavenny to Ewyas Harold. However, the possible masonry tower gives the site a little more permanence suggesting a more likely date in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

Towers in the early period, to which this site should be assigned, tended to be of wood but it is possible that quarry stone, close at hand to the north-east may have been more readily available. The way the masonry features are buried would suggest that they are in fact contemporary with the initial construction phase, a building or maybe just a strong base on which a tower stood.

It has been suggested that a bailey lies to the north-east but this is unlikely for a bailey in such a position would overshadow the motte. The area to the north-east is probably simply the remains of a quarry of some unspecified date. A further possibility is that the motte was built to guard the quarry, as has been suggested for Caerwent above. Such a quarry may have supplied stone for the nearby castles of Grosmont, Llancillo or Abergavenny.

**GROSMONT****Grid: SO 40522 24427****Introductory note:**

Grosmont Castle is one of group of castles known as ‘The Three Castles’, the other two being Skenfrith and White castle. The three share a history and were for most of the period in the hands of the king.

**Location:**

Grosmont castle stands to the north west of the village of Grosmont, easily approachable from the A465 Hereford to Abergavenny road. Approaching from Abergavenny, the turning left at Llanfihangel Crucorney leads along the road over Campstone Hill before, the cross-roads, and taking the first left which leads to Grosmont.

**Description:**

The castle is a masonry construction built on a mound that has been formed by the digging of a surrounding ditch. The layout of the castle, with date interpretations can be seen on the enclosed plan (Vol. 2. figure 59).

**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken at this site as the castle was interpreted as an original masonry construction.

**Strategic position:**

As the castle was a later period masonry construction the criteria for assessing earthwork castles and natural defence may not apply. However, the site does have some advantage being cut into the top edge of a hill. Its position, however, considering the later date of construction was probably associated with agricultural holding.

## Documentary record

### Primary reference:

A tentative mention is found in *Db.G* concerning the area in which Grosmont is situated. As part of the commote of Teirtref; in Norman hands by 1074, (Moore 1982. W4n), the land belonged to King Gruffudd by permission of William (Moore 1982. 162a). There is, however, doubt as to whom is referred to as King Gruffudd with the contenders being: Gruffudd ap Maredudd of Deheubarth who died in 1091, or Gruffudd ap Llywelyn of Powys, Deheubarth and most of South Wales, who died in 1063. Although both were dead by 1086, the term customary dues by King William's permission could still be used by the new owners as regards dues (Moore 1982. W4n). If Gruffudd ap Maredudd was the holder of Grosmont, then Grosmont would have passed to William de Braose in 1205, having been previously in the hands of the crown (Moore 1982. W4n). Banks argued a different scenario suggesting that the castle was in the hands of John of Monmouth until King John's death, at which time Reginald de Braose took possession as part of the return of his father's lands by grant from Henry III (Banks 1876. 305).

### Antiquarian reference:

Banks argued a different scenario, suggesting that the castle was in the hands of John of Monmouth until King John's death, at which time Reginald de Braose took possession as part of the return of his father's lands by grant from Henry III (Banks 1876. 305).

### Modern reference:

**MM007**

It is worth noting that in Craster's opinion, there was no masonry at the site prior to 1184 and £14 6s 8d spent on the castle, (see below), was for ditching and palisade construction (Craster 1967. 134).

Benn in his paper for *TWNFC* found the following records relating to Grosmont:

1164	Ralph de Grosmund £8.5.6 for liveries of sergeants.
1182-3	Kings castle
1182-3	Miles Muzegroes 100/- for keeping the castle from Whitsuntide to three weeks after Easter.
1183-4	work at the kings castle
1185-6	work at the kings castle
1201	repair to the castle.

(Benn 1941. 130).

Three of the entries specifically state "the King's castle".

Proceedings were started c. 1218 against Reginald de Braose by his nephew John de Braose who sought tenancy of Grosmont, Skenfrith and White Castle, forfeited by his grandfather William de



Braose. John perceived himself to have been heir to the three castles (Banks 1876. 305). The outcome was that Hubert de Burgh was given seisin of the castles in 1208 (*Cal Close. Henry III. 404-5*). In 1227 as part of the defence policy of Hubert, Hugh de Kilpeck was ordered to provide 50 oak trees from the forest of Trevill for the purpose of work at Grosmont (*Cal Close. Henry III. 129, 179*). An entry for 1227 names Edwina daughter of Ralf of Grosmont (*Cal. Chart, I, 59*). It is difficult to reconcile these two entries. In 1228 John de Braose was finally granted lordship of the three castles which he held until his death in 1231 (*Cal. Chart, I, 74*). The castle then reverted to Hugh de Burgh but was taken by the king in 1232 when de Burgh fell from the king's pleasure. The three castles were granted to Peter de Rivaux (*Cal. Chart I, 185*). Rivaux was subsequently removed from office and the castles were restored to de Burgh in 1234 (*Cal. Chart I, 185*). In 1239 de Burgh was ordered to return the castles to the king where they remained until 1254 (*Cal. Chart I, 185*).

***Additional references:***

Renn 1968. 196-197.

Hogg and King 1963. 112.

King 1983. 283.

**Interpretation:**

**Masonry**

It has been said that the mound created is artificially raised above the surrounding landscape (Banks 1876. 304), which would make it a motte. This interpretation was accepted in 1968 for the official guide book (Radford 1968. 2). In the plate included, which was probably how the castle looked to Banks, this can be clearly seen (Vol. 2. plate 108). However, the raised centre would appear to be tumble from the walls. Now that the ruin has been cleared for public access, Radford's interpretation would appear to be flawed. In the light of observation possible today there is no artificial mound at Grosmont and there is no reason other than speculation, to believe there was. Grosmont therefore, as a masonry castle, falls outside the remit of this study.

**HOWTON****Grid: SO 41487 29389****Location:**

The earthwork at Howton stands in a field alongside the A465 Abergavenny to Hereford road some 3km north-east of Pontrilas.

**Description:**

Its form is that of a low circular mound with traces of a very shallow ditch (Vol. 2. plate 109). The ditch can just be seen to the right of the mound and to the left where the tree stands. The second photograph shows the ditch in front of the mound (Vol. 2. plate 110). Any surrounding features that may have existed are likely to have been lost through ploughing. As can be seen from the photographs, the earthwork shows no sign of any defences. The stream that passes the site to the north east has been diverted to form a very straight waterway although it is conceivable that this may once have been used to provide a feed of water to a moat (Vol. 2. figure 60). Towards the south a railway embankment has been constructed.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 19)**

The earthwork at Howton is a low rounded mound with a maximum height of only 2.38m and a large top surface area measuring some 526.872m<sup>2</sup>. As the earthwork is surrounded by a ditch, it is not likely to have had more of a base area than it has now. There is a possibility that the mound was much higher but this is unlikely because any removal of earth would have tended to obscure the ditch.

**Geophysical survey:**

The resistivity results for this mound established no features with the exception of a low resistance oblong interpreted as an excavation trench from 1906 (VCH 1908. 227).

**Strategic position:**

There is no natural defence to the site, and no observable strategic reason for its existence other than the agricultural land in which it is located. The shape and size the mound suggests that it would appear to have had little defensive significance to the occupants but would have offered sufficient space for a number of people or buildings. As with Dixton recorded above, any

removal of the mound for re-development would have caused the filling of the ditch. It is suggested therefore that the mound is at its original height.

### **Documentary record**

#### **Modern reference:**

**HWCM923**

#### ***Additional references:***

RCHME 1931. 152.

King 1983. 207.

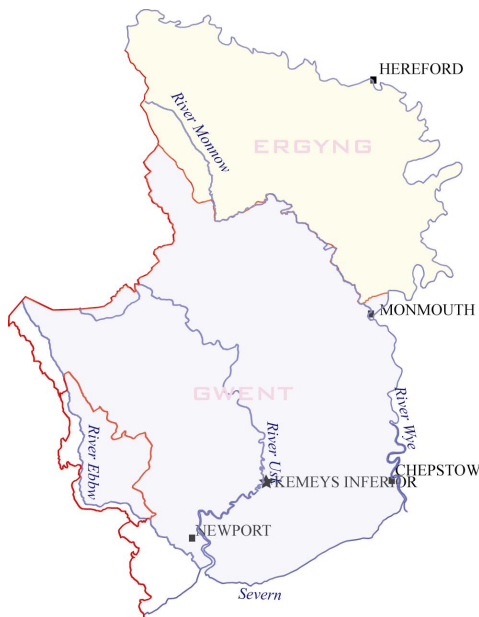
#### **Excavation:**

A partial excavation was made of the mound in 1906 from which no useful information as to use, structure or date was gleaned (VCH 1908. 227). The *VCH* also noted that there were no natural defences evident (VCH 1908. 227).

#### **Interpretation:**

#### **Fortified site (Late)**

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, topographical survey, geophysical survey documentary evidence and location is that the low mound represents a fortified-site of late construction and representative of land tenure, held for part of a knight's fee. The dating relies on the height of the mound, the large surface area of the top, the lack of bailey and the lack of defence.

**KEMEYS INFERIOR (GYPSY TUMP)****Grid: ST 38877 93928****Location:**

The earthwork at Kemeys Inferior is best known as Gypsy Tump. It can be reached from the lay-by on the west of the A449 Monmouth to Newport road.

**Description:**

Gypsy Tump is situated at the edge of a steep embankment above the flood plain of the River Usk; to the south is a small mountain stream that has etched a deep channel into the slope effectively terminating the site in that direction. To the west the ground rises quite steeply overshadowing the top of the earthwork in a distance of less than 20m. To the north lies the only surviving ditch which separates the rampart from the natural surface of the land. The fourth side abuts the steep bank. The earthwork is in a very bad state of preservation, being covered by trees and bushes to an almost impenetrable level. It is believed that erosion of the bank has been responsible for the loss of a major part of this earthwork.

The old ditch to the south of the earthwork is used as access for the dumping of rubbish (Vol. 2. plate 111). The next photograph shows a slight mound on the left which is all that remains of the rampart to the north west of the main earthwork (Vol. 2. plate 112). Evidence exists of illegal excavation pits on top of the round mound.

The form of the earthwork has been interpreted as a rampart shaped like a boomerang and a conical mound which is described as a motte. The whole structure is cut on the east by a road and on the west by a steep bank (Vol. 2. plate 113). The photograph shows the mound towards the centre of the picture on the right of the road. To the south is an earthwork ditch and to the north a culverted stream. The simple map included, (Vol. 2. figure 61) is as good as any to illustrate present knowledge of the site.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 20)**

The earthwork consists of a rampart with a maximum outer height of 4.39m, including the ditch, and an internal height of 4.62m. At the time of the survey the rampart appeared as three separate sections, the middle one considered to be the motte (King and Alcock 1969. 101). The plan view of the site shows that the mound would fit the circuit of the rampart, and furthermore, the circuit

continued north-west to include the smaller earthwork recorded on the contour plot (Vol.2 surveys).

### **Strategic position:**

The site would be in a good strategic position for watch-tower for overlooking the Usk valley and the presence of the road is unlikely to have been a consideration because it appears to have been added after the site was built: it cuts into the east side of the rampart. As a defended site the choice of the steep scarp gives excellent protection but the other three sides are all distinctly disadvantageous as they overshadowed by higher ground.

### **Documentary record**

#### **Modern reference:**

**MM039**

#### ***Additional references:***

King 1983. 284.

#### **Interpretation:**

#### **Partial ring-work (Unknown)**

The site has long been open to question as to what its form and function actually were. It is listed on the Ordnance Survey maps as a motte and bailey, however, this is probably its least likely interpretation.

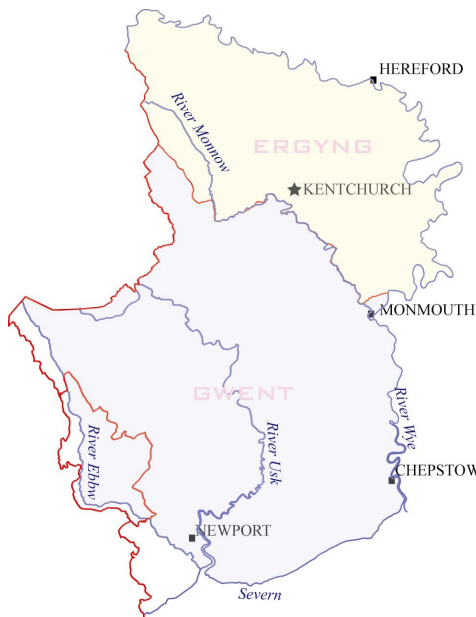
Interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, survey, location, and finds is that it could have functioned as an outpost or watch-tower. Conversely, evidence from the survey, providing the shape and size of the rampart, would tend to suggest that the site is very poorly defended and therefore, not likely to have had an obviously military purpose. The supposed motte is likely to have been formed when part of the rampart perimeter was breached. The reason for the breach could be a case of access, or possible slighting of the defence, or damage during the building of the road which cuts through the east of the site. The mound is more than likely just a section of rampart that has been partially isolated. The reason for this theory is that the maximum height of the mound above the rampart is a mere 0.22m. The widest part of the separating ditch is 9m, narrowing to 3.2m at a depth of 1m. This is not really sufficient to suggest that the mound's isolated position gave it a measure of defence. A counter argument to this point would be that earth has been removed from the mound, possibly during the building of the road. However, a volume calculation of earth fill on the site, minus earth cut for the ditch shows that too much earth is present now, assuming that the fill came from the ditch.

It is probable that beyond the western extremity of the rampart, further earthworks have been lost to the valley edge, a process that is still continuing to this day.

The lack of a bailey is a point against Gypsy Tump being a motte and bailey castle. If the site had a motte, the motte would have been most strategically defensible if placed next to the steepest part of the site, i.e. the west. To the east the ground rises which would make the bailey higher than the motte which does not seem likely. To the north there is no area of ground in which to build a bailey. This leaves the south as the last possible location and there are no remains of any earthworks to be seen in this direction.

The rampart was probably a continuous crescentic bank enclosing a parcel of land on three sides with the fourth protected by the steep natural slope to the river plain. In its present form it is slightly angular on the south-east corner and it has been suggested that this is unusual for a ring-work (Hamilton. *pers comm.*). However, this partial ring-work has been damaged which may explain the shape.

Traditionally ring-works are assumed to predate mottes and would therefore be early (Alcock 1963. 87). King and Alcock, however, were of the opinion that in England and Wales, they were contemporary alternatives (1966. 99). Gypsy Tump doesn't seem particularly suited for an early period site and a chance find of pottery on top of the rampart gave a date of 12<sup>th</sup> century (Alcock 1963. 91). All that can be said of this site with any certainty is that at present dating is impossible but for the sake of classification its shape would suggest a partial ring-work.

**KENTCHURCH****Grid: SO 42152 27009****Location:**

The site of Kentchurch is not accessible to the general public due to farming and hunting practices. The earthwork is situated on the west side of a hill to the west of Kentchurch Court which can be reached from the A465 Abergavenny to Hereford road by turning east from Pontrilas along the B4347.

**Description:**

The earthwork today stands within the edge of a wood to the east of a stream. A mound has been formed by cutting a ditch, in the shape of an angular 'C', into the natural edge of the stream bank. The construction method is quite evident as the inner mound is the same height as the surface of the surrounding fields. The site is completely overgrown with bramble and trees which makes any assessment of its form very difficult. The first of the photographs shows the internal platform of the site which stands some 3m to 4m above the ditch on the south-west corner (Vol. 2. plate 114). The second photograph shows the north-west bank of the ditch which has been cut into the hillside (Vol. 2. plate 1154). To the east of the main earthwork the ditch becomes very wide and contains an isolated mound (Vol. 2. plate 116).

**Topographic survey:**

Although it was possible to obtain permission to visit the site the arrangement of a survey date is still under negotiation. It is likely at this stage that the survey will not be undertaken.

**Strategic position:**

The site has no natural defences at all other than its position at the top of a gently sloping ridge. The only probable motivation behind the construction of this site must be agricultural interest.

**Documentary record****Modern reference:****HWCM6785**

Three maps/sections have been included in order to give an impression of this site. The first was taken from the *RCHME* inventory of 1931 and shows a very simplified sketch of the site (Vol. 2.

figure 62). It is noticeable that the surveyor recorded structure on top the earthwork and no structure outside of its immediate environs; that is to say no evidence of a bailey. The second map is that of Kay which he produced in 1949/50 (Vol. 2. figure 63). It shows the site with at least three of the corners being angular. He also recorded the internal structures. The third entry is the section drawings that go with map 2 (Vol. 2. figure 64). It is clear from the sections that the internal mound has not been heightened. The small mounds on its surface are merely the result of fallen structures. It has to be said that most of the information for this site has come from Kay for there are no other credible sources in this instance.

***Additional references:***

King 1983. 207.

**Interpretation:**

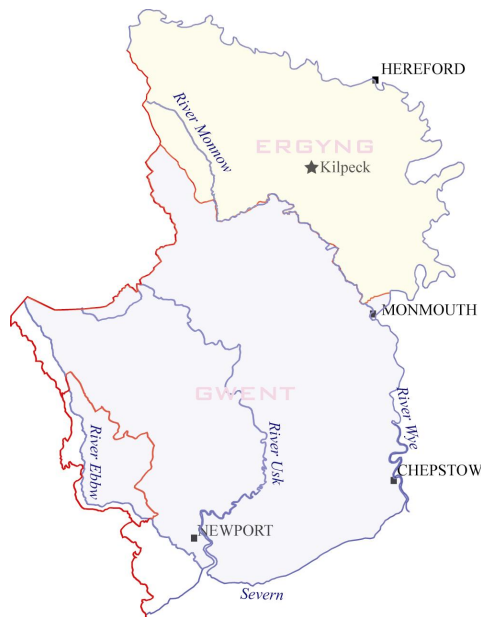
**Fortified-site (Late)**

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, and location is that the low mound represents a fortified-site of late construction and representative of land tenure, held for part of a knight's fee. The dating relies on the shape of the mound, the large surface area of the top, the lack of bailey and the lack of defence. The important clue to the nature of the site is the rectilinear form which is still evident today, as are the masonry structures across the top. The mound itself does not appear to have been raised above the natural surrounding surface; therefore it is not a motte.

The purpose of the isolated mound is open to conjecture but it is possible that it may have been a pontoon for an access bridge. The path to the north of it would after all have been impracticable if the ditch had been a wet moat. The proximity of the stream in the north-west and the scarping of the bank would suggest that the moat was fed from the stream.

As was seen at Dixton and Howton there is no real defence available here which would suggest that the site is not a motte.



**KILPECK****Grid: SO 44387 30464****Introductory note:**

Kilpeck is famous for its church with its unique adornments. It is known that there was a religious interest in Kilpeck, before the building of the castle (see below). Kilpeck also provides a classic example of a planned medieval settlement with the streets and house platforms still preserved beneath the ground to the east of the castle (Shoesmith 1992. 162).

**Location:**

Kilpeck Castle is located east of the A465 Abergavenny to Hereford road. It can be reached by turning east at Wormbridge and continuing for about 2km in that direction. The castle can be found tucked away to the west of the church, the approach being through the churchyard itself.

**Description:**

The present masonry castle at Kilpeck is built on the site of a possibly earlier earth and timber castle comprising of a motte and three baileys. The site was probably created by cutting deep ditches across a natural hill and so isolating sections of ground to form the motte and the baileys. The castle is very large and very overgrown which makes it extremely difficult to interpret the earthworks there. The overgrowth and lack of vantage points make photographs fairly meaningless. The easiest approach to understanding Kilpeck is from the top of the motte where there are the remnants of the later shell keep. An alternative option is to use one of the maps that have been made in the past. Two have been chosen to aid the explanation of this complicated castle. The first was produced for the *VCH* in 1908 (Vol. 2. figure 65) and the second for the *RCHME* 1931 (Vol. 2. figure 66).

The first map shows a simplified layout of the site. The motte stands in the middle with its '12<sup>th</sup> century' masonry walls picked out in black (Shoesmith 1996. 150). A ditch runs to the east from the ditch which surrounds the motte. The effect creates an inner bailey with an apparent entrance to the south although this may have been damaged later. To the south of the inner bailey is an outer bailey which, judging by the shading to the west, must have had an enclosing rampart as well as its ditch. To the west of the motte is another raised bailey which from the sketch appears

to be weakly defended. The section drawings included leave no doubt as to the classification of the motte as the mound has been raised well above the natural landscape.

The later plan of the site provides much more detail of the site giving way to a less stylistic approach. The extensive ditch building can be seen more clearly with the perceived weak western bailey now showing signs of a rampart against the motte. A third possible bailey is shown to the north but this has since been destroyed.

### **Topographic survey:**

It was not possible to survey this site because of the dense vegetation. By estimate, the motte stands at about 6m and has a large surface area which is now surrounded by a masonry shell-keep.

### **Strategic position:**

Kilpeck is similar to Dorstone, see above, in that there does not appear to be any reason for the siting of the castle in such a location; there is no natural defence and no observable strategic advantage. The castle is however, situated within a very fertile valley.

### **Documentary evidence**

#### **Primary reference:**

Early mention of Kilpeck can be found in the *Lib. Land* with the grant by Ffanw of the church at “*Cilpedec*” to God and St Dubricius and St Teilo (Rees 1840 416). Kilpeck is mentioned again with the Bishop Herewald consecrating the church of “*Cilpedec*” in the time of William (Rees 1840. 548). Interestingly, a few sentences before this account are the words ‘before the castle of Monmouth was built’, while on the page 459 are the accounts of ordinations dated after the castle of Monmouth was built, all of which would suggest a date within the later 1060s.

*Db.H* records that William fitz Norman held “*Chipcete*” in Archenfeld and Cadiand held it before 1066 (Thorn & Thorn 1983. 180 d, 181 a). None of the above mention the castle.

#### **Modern reference:**

**HWCM714**

Kilpeck is known to have been of religious significance in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries being the site of a church dedicated to Dewi (Baring-Gould & Fisher, 1907-13. 317-8. cited in Shoesmith 1992. 162).

#### ***Additional references:***

Renn 1968. 216.

Hogg and King 1963. 113.  
King 1983. 207.

**Interpretation:****Motte and bailey (Mid)**

The interpretation of Kilpeck can therefore be the same as at Dorstone: the function of the motte was as a large scale defensive structure rather than a small offensive motte and bailey of the conquest period. It is possible to infer from the size that the castle may have been an important administrative centre, the defensive motivation behind the height being to protect the office of a lord rather than the person. There is no evidence of any additional private strongholds on the site which would date the castle to an earlier period of settlement. The castle therefore represents a stable period, possibly early 12<sup>th</sup> century.

**KING'S CAPLE****Grid: SO 55932 28774****Location:**

King's Caple is situated on the east bank of the River Wye. It can be reached from the A449 Ross on Wye to Ledbury road by taking the B4224 from Old Gore, 5km north of Ross. The site is located to the south east of St John the Baptist's church.

**Description:**

The motte is a circular mound raised by the side of the old Roman road (Taylor 1997. 21). The earthwork at King's Caple is a low isolated mound with flat top surrounded by the remains of a rampart, possibly

signifying the former existence of a palisade or shell-keep. The perimeter of the motte top has been planted with a circle of twelve trees and the owner of Colley's Forge, next to the motte, confirmed that a thirteenth tree used to stand in the middle (*pers comm.*). The area of the top of the motte, which is still used for village gatherings and activities, would be suitable to accommodate a number of buildings but the defences would not be very formidable. There is a possibility that a bailey existed on the other side of the road which passes the earthwork to the north-west of the site, as the church standing there occupies a raised area. The map shows the position of the motte and road (Vol. 2. figure 67).

To the west of the motte, but curiously beneath the rampart, is a large stone lined well. The well must have been inside the castle bailey which means that a considerable amount of damage has been done on this side.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 21)**

King's Caple motte is an isolated mound with a maximum height of 4.59m and a flat top with a surface area of 439.248m<sup>2</sup>.

**Strategic position:**

The site is located on low ground without any natural defence or recognisable strategic importance other than the surrounding agricultural land.

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

The only documented history of King's Caple is in *Db.H*: William fitz Norman holds King's Caple and Walter holds it from him. King Edward held it in lordship (Thorn & Thorn 1983. 181a).

**Modern reference:****HWCM921*****Additional references:***

RCHME 1931. 98.  
King 1983. 207.

**Interpretation:****Motte and possible bailey (Late)**

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, topographical survey and location suggests that it was a late construction, probably motivated by land tenure and agricultural holdings. The lack of any natural defence or observable strategic advantage of the site would tend to rule out the possibility that the motte and possible bailey were part of a defensive war strategy.

**LANGSTONE COURT****Grid: ST 37037 89522****Location:**

Langstone motte is situated about 1km east of the outskirts of Newport. It can be reached from the A48 Newport to Chepstow road by turning south at Langstone and continuing on, under the M4, for about 0.5km. The motte is located in the grounds of 16<sup>th</sup> century Langstone Court (Blockley and Courtney 1994. 17).

**Description:**

The motte today is badly overgrown and has been damaged by both the road and the house (Vol. 2. plate 117). The photograph shows the motte in the undergrowth, cut by the retaining wall which is now bulging. The map gives an impression of the layout (Vol. 2. figure 68). It can be seen both on the plan, and at the location, that the road has been built within the ditch of the motte. The second photograph possibly shows part of the motte ditch on the corner of the road and the drive to the house (Vol. 2. plate 118). This can be verified from an account of road-works c. 1860 when the road was lowered revealing that the motte and ditch were man made (Wakeman 1864. 34).

The appearance of the motte today seems to be of a medium sized mound. Access was not available so further description is based on existing sources. Wakeman said in 1864 that the motte was one of those ancient mounds, surrounded by a fosse and having a flat summit adding that no masonry was evident (1864. 34). This, however, was disproved by the 1964 excavation which revealed evidence of a shell keep or retaining wall (Alcock 1965. 193). There is a suggestion from the plan that the house was built upon the east rampart but it was impossible to check this assumption.

**Topographic survey:**

Survey was not undertaken at this site as permission was not available.

**Strategic position:**

The location of the site is good, a gentle ridge overlooking the road from Isca to Venta. The motte is also well placed as an agricultural holding; the motte today does not appear to be particularly well defended.

## Documentary evidence

### Primary reference:

There is no specific documentation for Langstone until 1189 when Nicholas fitz Robert is recorded as its holder (*Bristol Cartulary f.36r-37v.* (cited in Blockley and Courtney 1994. 23). A second record records that ‘Nicholas fitz Robert granted the manor of Langstone to Ralph Bloet on the marriage of his daughter’ (*Bristol Cartulary f.36r-37v.* cited in Blockley and Courtney 1994. 23). A further mention of Ralf Bloet ‘of Langstone’ can be found in the (*Cal Close* 1231-4).

### Modern reference:

**MM059**

### *Additional references:*

King 1983. 284.

### Interpretation:

**Motte (Late)**

Interpretation of this motte is very tenuous due to the lack of evidence collected, however, from the limited information it is suggested that the motte was a later construction, probably motivated by land tenure and agricultural holdings. The reasons for this interpretation are a combination of size, height and lack of defence, all of which have probably been modified by damage and erosion.

**LLANARTH (TWTYN-Y-CREGEN)****Grid: SO 36237 09614****Location:**

The motte at Llanarth can be reached from the B4598 road between Abergavenny and Raglan. The turning for Llanarth is signposted just before Clytha Park. The motte can be seen in the field to the right once the bridge over the A40 has been crossed.

**Description:**

The earthwork at Llanarth is the remains of a motte that has been badly damaged by quarrying and possibly later road construction. The view in photograph 1 shows the very overgrown motte, as seen, from the bridge over the A40 (Vol. 2. plate 119). The second photograph was taken in 1936 from about where the A40 now runs (Vol. 2. plate 120). It gives a much better impression of the size of this motte showing the flat top which is now almost unidentifiable amongst the trees. The map included was again from the 1936 publication and gives an excellent representation of the layout, again almost indecipherable now with its dense vegetation (Vol. 2. figure 68). As can be seen in photograph 3, the steepness of the bank on the west side of the motte is not that acute and indeed on this side the motte doesn't seem to have offered much defence (Vol. 2. plate 121). It is probable that any bailey, if one existed, would have been on this side but there is no evidence of this today and the building of the A40 so close to the site cannot have helped its preservation. The last photograph shows a long shot of the west of the motte prior to the road being built (Vol. 2. plate 122). It is possible that the dark line across the centre of the photograph was an old bank of the bailey.

The above map shows a raised bank running from the motte to the north-east which was present at the motte but which has subsequently been destroyed by the road. It marks the edge of raised land before it drops quite considerably to the stream. The bank has a ditch between it and the motte which continues as a berm around the east side. The berm was probably either a rampart or more likely the setting for a palisade. The whole of the east and south sides of the motte are very marshy and low lying in comparison to the rest of the site. However, the gravel pit has seriously confused the area to the south and south-east. What is still apparent, however, is that the motte was raised on high ground overlooking the stream and marsh which would have provided maximum defence.



**Topographic survey:****(Survey 22)**

The area on top of the motte is a sizable 237.379m<sup>2</sup> but the irregular shape and the quarry to the side suggests that a large portion of the top is missing. A motte with such a large top surface area would be able to accommodate a number of buildings rather than just a tower. Although the motte looks quite high it is only about 5.6 m above the natural surface of the hill.

**Strategic position:**

The location of the motte uses a natural defence to good advantage. It was built on top of a glacial deposit which formed alongside a stream resulting in the formation of a mound with a steep scarp. It is possible that the building of the motte here was influenced by the geological feature of a ready made mound and the fertile nature of the surrounding farmland.

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

There is no documentary evidence known for this motte although the *Lib.Land* records 'LanGarth' being given by King Iddon son of Ynyr Gwent to the church of St Peter at Llandaff and to Archbishop Teilo (Rees 1840. 358). It also records Bishop Nudd residing at Langarth (Rees 1840. 483), and in 1129 Langarth is mentioned in a Bull of Pope Honorius II to Urban, Bishop of Llandaff (Rees 1840. 584).

**Antiquarian reference:**

Wakeman described the mound as a 'very large moated round, and rendered more conspicuous by its having been planted with fir trees' (1855. 16). According to Bradney; the most ancient mound called Twyn-y-Cregen was the burial mound of a Welsh chieftain as it was not situated very wisely to have been a place of defence (1906. 301).

**Modern reference:****MM080**

In the introduction of the excavation report, O'Neil and Foster-Smith, state that the motte was intact up until around 1932 when the quarry was re-opened and part of the mound was removed (O'Neil and Foster-Smith 1936. 248).

**Additional references:**

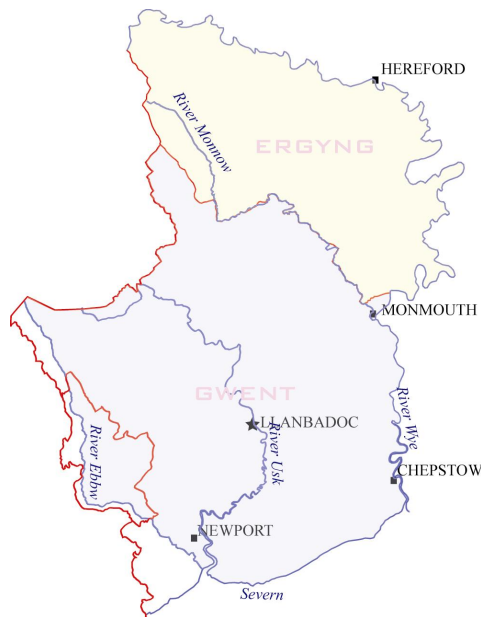
Hogg and King 1963. 97.  
King 1983. 284.

**Excavation:**

Two excavations have been reported at the site, one by Bradney which amounts to ‘a shaft dug down through the mound in 1857 found nothing of any interest’ (1906. 301). This may have been a treasure hunt exercise popular amongst the Victorians. The other was more archaeologically minded, with records having been produced. This excavation revealed the natural glacial mound which lies under the motte, detailing the artificial section of the motte as composed of layers of fine gravel, mixed soil and stone, and dark soil and pebbles (O’Neil and Foster-Smith 1936. 250) (Vol. 2. figure 69). The excavation also revealed that only about 1.5m of the motte top had been raised artificially further suggesting that the fill volume was directly proportionate to the ditch volume (O’Neil and Foster-Smith 1936. 252). The ditch, no longer present today and just a berm in 1936, used to surround the ‘highest part of the mound’ (to the north) isolating it from the natural ridge (O’Neil and Foster-Smith 1936. 247).

**Interpretation:****Motte (Mid)**

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, topographical survey, past excavation and location suggests that it is a mid construction probably motivated by land tenure and agricultural holdings. The low motte without any formidable defensive ditch, see cross-section (Vol. 2. figure 69), suggests that the castle was built at a time when hostile attack was less of an issue.

**LLANBADOC (TwyN-Y-BELL)****Grid: SO 37487 00073****Location:**

Llanbadoc earthwork is otherwise known as (Twyn-y-Bell). It is located in the private grounds of Twyn-y-Bell house and is not accessible to the general public. It is, however, possible to glimpse the site from a public pathway to the west of the house. The site can be reached from the Usk to Caerleon road. The village of Llanbadoc is about 1km south of Usk. The earthwork is formed on the end of the precipitous ridge above St Madoc's church.

**Description:**

The site today has been heavily landscaped as part of the gardens for the house but a large section of part of the ring-work still remains. The first photograph shows the outside of the surviving section with ornamental trees on it (Vol. 2. plate 123). The clothes line and survey pole are in the surrounding ditch whilst the photograph is being taken from the natural ground surface. The second picture shows the inside of the same bank showing its crescentic form (Vol. 2. plate 124). The rest of the ring has been removed for the house construction.

**Topographic survey:**

No topographic survey was undertaken as the site is not an earthwork castle.

**Strategic position:**

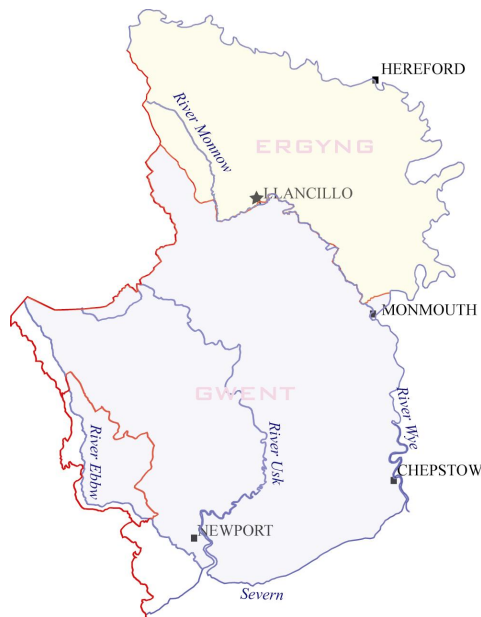
The site offers a good strategic position at the end of a high and steep ridge overlooking the River Usk.

**Documentary record****Modern reference:**

The site has no known documented history. Three references were found that mention the site: Bradney 'the house, originally a cottage stands on an ancient earthwork (1923. 78), Hogg and King included in the list of early castles (1963. 97) and King noted a 'partial ring-work' (King 1983. 284).

**Interpretation:****Possible partial ring-work****(Unknown)**

The site is very difficult to assess because a large proportion would seem to have been removed and that which is left has been heavily landscaped. In comparison to Gypsy Tump, see above, and Old Castleton, see below the top of the rampart is much lower, however, the top of the rampart is also flat and quite wide which may suggest that its height has been reduced. The most that can be said with any certainty is that the site is not a motte but it is a partial ring-work. Whether the ring-work is of medieval origin or pre-historic remains unknown at this time.

**LLANCILLO****Grid: SO 36697 25539****Location:**

Llancillo motte is located on private farm land belonging to Llancillo Court. It is difficult to find which explains why this excellent example of a motte and bailey castle is so little known. It is reached by taking the A465 Abergavenny to Hereford road through the village of Pandy. About 6km north of Pandy is a private road to the left which crosses the River Monnow. After the bridge is a fork and the dirt road goes to the right across fields to the railway. Under the railway is a narrow bridge and the track goes right, towards Llancillo Court and the motte.

**Description:**

The earthwork at Llancillo is a large motte and bailey castle situated to the west of Llancillo Court, in a very narrow side valley between two ridges. The valley opens into the larger valley of the Monnow which contains the route between Abergavenny and Hereford. Photograph 1 shows the position of the motte and some of its associated earthworks (Vol. 2. plate 125). The telephone pole to the right of the motte stands on a line of different vegetation; this marks the line of a bailey rampart. To the left of the motte is another earthwork believed to be a bridge base. The map (Vol. 2. figure 70) shows a simplified layout of the area including the bailey bank and bridge rampart mentioned above. It also shows an earthwork to the left of the plan just above the church. The earthwork is still visible as a masonry platform. The cross section through the motte shows black blobs on the rim; these mark standing masonry walls. The second map (Vol. 2. figure 70) from the late 1940s shows much more detail than the first, most of which is still visible in the field today, the only exception being the rampart to the left which has now gone. The Kay map also shows an almost complete circle of masonry on top of the motte. Most of the circle has now, however, gone. Interesting is his interpretation of an opening to the west. In the course of this research emphasis has been given to access bridges to the top of the motte. The bank marked inner rampart has been interpreted during this survey as just such a feature, the ramp being a bridge base from which to span the moat. Photograph 2 (Vol. 2. plate 126) shows the bridge base to the left of the motte. It rises gently from the south and ends abruptly with the suggestion of a curve inwards. On the motte top opposite, where Kay interpreted the opening in the shell keep, is a depression which may have taken the bridging structure. The third picture shows the south end of the ramp (Vol. 2. plate 127). The ditch which still holds water was

probably a wet moat fed from the nearby stream (Vol. 2. plate 128). The masonry around the rim of the motte is quite substantial, standing a few courses high in some places and embedded well into the surface as can be seen in photographs (Vol. 2. plates 129-131). There are, however, embellishments to the shell wall such as can be seen in the relevant photograph (Vol. 2. plate 132). The masonry blocks have been rebuilt into the form of a wall. Some of the blocks are rough whereas others have been carefully carved. To the left of the prism is a block shaped in section like the end of a house. This moulding does not belong in this position. There are four more above it and many more in the enclosure wall of the nearby church. Wherever these carved stones came from must have been a prestigious building, possibly a great keep on top of the motte or a hall from one of the baileys.

The bailey has not fared nearly so well but it is possible to infer from various ground ridges and the general topography of the site that at least one bailey existed to the north and west.

### **Topographic survey:**

**(Survey 23)**

The motte itself towers above the surrounding fields at a maximum height of 7.37m and an average slope gradient of 66.28%. The surface area of the top is quite large at 289.906m<sup>2</sup> and as the rim still retains traces of a surrounding masonry shell-keep it is likely that this represents the original size. The base of the motte, 1117.238m<sup>2</sup>, is surrounded by a ditch which also tends to suggest that the motte retains its original proportions.

### **Strategic position:**

The location of the site seems a little unusual in that it appears to be almost hidden away, situated as it is in a side valley. The ridges to the north and west, although quite high, offer no problem for defence as they are relatively distant, however, they do restrict the view from the castle. There is no natural defence provided for the site other than secrecy and no obvious strategic advantage.

### **Documentary record**

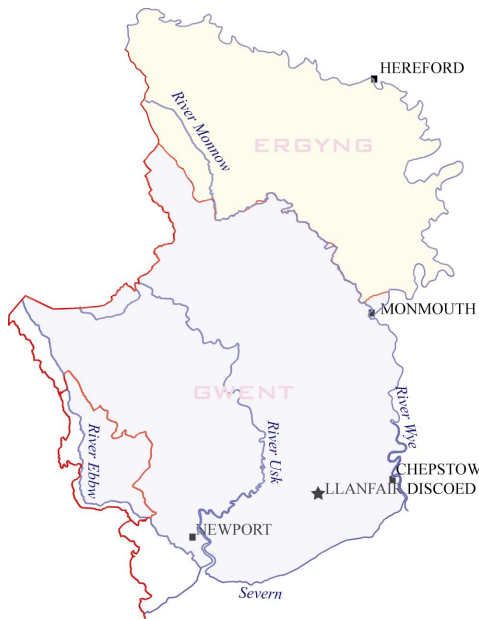
### **Modern record:**

### ***Additional references:***

VCH 1908. 228.  
 Renn 1961. 141.  
 Hogg and King 1963. 97.  
 King 1983. 208.

**Interpretation:****Motte and Bailey (Early)**

The interpretation of the site is based on actual remains, topographical survey and location. The size of the motte, and the surrounding ditch, for internal defence of the motte, would suggest that this site is one of the early construction period castles. The location, however, is not consistent with the very visible projection of power associated with the Norman offence. The masonry shell-keep also suggests a castle that had reached a state of permanence rather than an *ad hoc* construction associated with a volatile and possibly mobile frontier. The large surface area of the top of the motte would be suitable for a number of buildings rather than just a tower suggesting a similar purpose to the function of Dorstone and Ewyas Harold noted above. Obviously both Dorstone and Ewyas have larger surface areas but this may reflect the importance of the overlord and in the case of Dorstone, a later date construction. The only problem with this interpretation is the lack of documentary evidence describing Llancillo as a *caput* or administrative centre. All things considered, the visible aspect of the motte must override the subjective deficiencies allowing the site to be classified as probably early.

**LLANFAIR DISCOED****Grid: ST 44527 92438****Introductory note:**

The castle is another of the six masonry castles that surround the Wentwood, 'to keep the natives in check' (Barber 1803. 227).

**Location:**

Llanfair Discoed is the name given to a masonry castle on the south-east side of the Wentwood. It is best reached by turning north off the A48 Chepstow to Newport road some 2km west of Caerwent and following the lane to Llanfair Discoed where the castle can be partially glimpsed through high trees.

**Description:**

The castle is in private hands and as it is in an unsafe state and it is not possible to visit the site due to the danger of falling masonry. The description therefore relies on the observation of past visitors and aerial photography. The aerial photograph shows the top of the tower and a square section of wall (Vol. 2. plate 133). The photograph particularly reveals the thickness of the overgrowth.

Coxe observed that the castle had been a large building with walls seven feet thick, with both square and round towers (1801. 34). He included a ground plan of his observations on which are marked both standing walls and the interpretation of ruined bases. (Vol. 2. figure 72) Interestingly, on Coxe's plan is the ditch to the south and east. Morgan who visited in 1863 was less impressed and wrote that he thought it had not been large 'nor were its precincts of great extent' (1863. 34). Morgan's plan of the castle is slightly different in layout but in some ways is more detailed (Vol. 2. figure 72). The time gap between the two plans is some sixty years and it is possible to see how much masonry had gone in that time. Morgan did, however, record the two three story drum towers with holes at their tops for Brétèches (1863. 35). An artistic representation of the castle in 1810 gives some idea of the sight that Morgan may have seen (Vol. 2. plate 134). He further suggested the possibilities of two or three courts but thought their surrounding walls were likely to have been timber (1863. 35).

As has been noted, the site today is very overgrown with large trees growing from the walls and ivy hiding most of the structure.



**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken at this site as access permission was not available.

**Strategic position:**

There is no natural defence or observable strategic value to this site other than its position in relation to the Wentwood, as was suggested above by Barber.

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

There is no documentary evidence for the castle within the time period of this research, although the area is mentioned in *Db.G*: 'in Wales there were three dairy farms Llanvair, Portskewett and Dinham, and Roger of Ivry expected 100s for them' (Moore 1982. 162a). The wording in *Db.G* gives 'Lamecare' which Moore translated to Llanfair Discoed (Moore 1982. W1).

**Antiquarian reference:**

The antiquarian record for the site was given above in the description section. All that needs to be added is that Bradney reported that the castle was thought to have been built during the reign of Henry III but does not give his source (1932. 181). He also assigned the Manor of Llanfair Discoed 'soon after the conquest'... to 'Payn fitz John, held by one knight's fee of the lords of Chepstow' (1932. 181), however, again he does not give his source and it is not recorded in *Db.G*.

**Modern reference:****MM047*****Additional references:***

King 1983. 284.

**Interpretation:****Masonry**

Interpretation based on field work and documentary evidence suggests the site is a masonry castle with no sign of the existence of a motte.

**LLANFAIR KILGEDDIN****Grid: SO 34947 06934****Location:**

The location of the motte at Llanfair Kilgeddin can be reached from the B4598 road between Abergavenny and Usk. Llanfair Kilgeddin village is about 3km from the turn off at the Chart House Inn. The motte can be seen in the field to the left of the road.

**Description:**

The earthwork at Llanfair Kilgeddin represents the partially eroded remains of a possible motte. The aerial photograph shows the motte at the edge of the bank above the River Usk (Vol. 2. plate 135). The motte is quite round in shape with the exception of a flat front next to the river. It is reasonable to assume that the flattening has been formed by the bank eroding away and falling to the river which is some distance below. A similar interpretation applies to Gypsy Tump above. The surviving part of the motte is surrounded by a ditch; the top of the motte is quite small and flat with no evidence of any structure on its top. There is no evidence of a bailey to be seen either on the ground or from the air although it must be said that the fields around the motte are ploughed regularly.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 24)**

The earthwork occupies a present base area of some 536.961m<sup>2</sup> which would appear to be a good deal less than its original size due to obvious erosion of the bank into the river. The top of the earthwork has also suffered from the same erosion which now leaves a surface area of only 131.433m<sup>2</sup>. It is impossible to estimate if the damage has also affected the height but at present it stands at only 3m maximum above natural which does not make for a very defensive structure.

**Strategic position:**

The site has no natural defence, and there would appear to be no obvious strategic advantage for a castle here. The valley setting for this site is, however, surrounded by very good agricultural land and the river provides fishing and possible transport potential.

## Documentary evidence

### Modern reference:

**MM082**

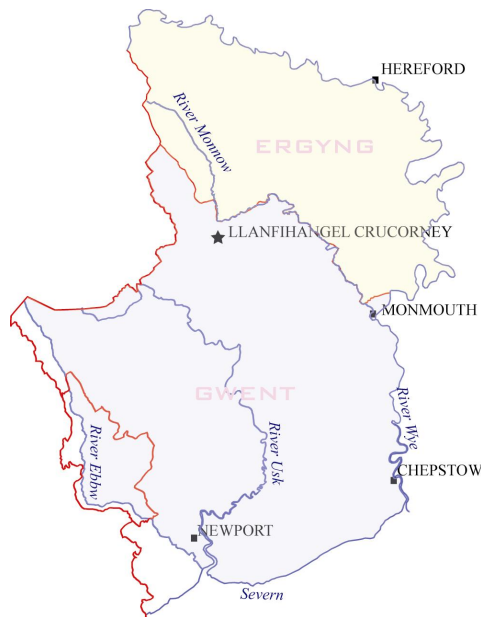
King listed the site as ‘Motte overhanging the Usk; evidently a bailey in front, now ploughed down’ (1983. 284).

Hogg and King 97.

### Interpretation:

#### Possible motte/fortified-site (Late)

The interpretation of the site is based on actual remains, survey and location and from these it is possible to suggest that the small low earthwork (Vol. 2. plate 136) was a later fortified-site dependent on land tenure, possibly held for part of a knight’s fee. Such a site would have been needed to control settlement after the frontier of conquest had passed the area by. It is possible that the site may have once been a motte but the location and present size make this unlikely. The bailey mentioned by King is certainly not present today and it seems from his wording that it had gone in 1983, therefore there has to be a question as to why he included the statement.

**LLANFIHANGEL CRUCORNEY (TRE-FEDW)****Grid: SO 33027 21769****Location:**

The motte at Llanfihangel Crucorney is probably better recognised as Tre-Fedw. It can be reached from the A465 Abergavenny to Hereford road by turning north east at Llanfihangel Crucorney and then to the right over the river bridge at the bottom of the hill. The motte can be clearly seen on the right after going under the railway bridge.

**Description:**

The remains of the motte today are noticeable because of stand of fir trees (Vol. 2. plate 137) which were planted on top of the partial remains of the motte; partial because the motte has been quarried away on the north-east side, apparently some time in the 1920s by the grandfather of the present owner (*pers comm.*). The photograph (Vol. 2. plate 138) shows the heavily damaged side which today seems to be eroding from a path that has been worn to the top. To the east, which would have given access from the motte to the River Monnow, the railway line has literally carved its course. The aerial photograph (Vol. 2. plate 139) clearly shows the layout of the motte between the road and the railway. The eastern side, before the railway, has a steep drop that was probably used as an early defence as well as being the possible reason for the location of the motte. Any bailey, of which there is no sign today, would have been on the north, south or east of the motte. The aerial photograph showed evidence of sub-surface features which unfortunately have not reproduced very well. The adapted photograph, (Vol. 2. plate 140) was included to show the location of the features which have hitherto not been recorded. The feature to the right is probably not associated with the Norman period and may be a prehistoric site.

On the ground there is evidence of a circling ditch to the south and east of the motte. The west side has been completely destroyed, probably in the quarrying process.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 25)**

The motte at Llanfihangel Crucorney has been greatly damaged within living memory reducing the motte base area, presently of 801.953m<sup>2</sup>, considerably. This reduction is also noticeable on the top of the motte where the available surface area of 35.951m<sup>2</sup> is much depleted. A calculation is suggested in the survey for the original estimated plan area of the top of the motte (see Vol. 2

surveys). The original surface area may have been closer to 95.18m<sup>2</sup>; 2.6 times the present area. There is no way of knowing if the current height has also been affected but even at today's surviving structure, an impressive measurement of 7.88m is still obtained.

**Strategic position:**

The location of the castle has made good use of the natural ridge along the river bank, placing the motte on the steepest side for maximum defence. From this position, the castle could control movement along the Abergavenny to Hereford valley.

**Documentary evidence**

**Modern reference:**

**MM063**

***Additional references:***

Hogg and King 1963. 97.  
King 1983. 284.

**Interpretation:**

**Motte and bailey (Early)**

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, survey and location suggests an early period of castle building when offence played a major part of the design needs. The steepness of the motte and the surrounding ditch also show that inner defence was also a major issue.

**LLANGIBY CASTLE****Grid: ST 36402****97353****Location:**

Llangibby Castle is located in the private grounds of the Llangibby estate and is not accessible to the general public. It is situated east of The Bowling Green, see below, to the west of the road from Caerleon to Usk approximately half way between the two. It is not possible to visit the site without permission from the owner. The site is in a dangerous condition and very overgrown.

**Description:**

The first photograph shows the gate at the east of the site (Vol. 2. plate 141). This gate is shown on the first plan but may be in the wrong position. (Vol. 2. figure 74). The second plan shows a gate house which is more accurate as the position marked by Coxe is that of a ruined tower (Vol. 2. figure 75). The two maps are interesting to compare as they show how the castle has altered in 200 years with large pieces of curtain wall disappearing. There are, however, obvious discrepancies of interpretation between the two cartographers that must be taken into account. The second photograph shows the interior of the north-western hall which has portcullis fittings and gothic columns (Vol. 2. plate 142). The final photograph shows the gatehouse to the south-east, a massive twin towered front with a long internal passage (Vol. 2. plate 143).

**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken at this site because as a masonry castle it falls outside the remit of this study.

**Strategic position:**

The site has excellent natural defence being placed on a high knoll with steep sides. However, as the castle appears to be of masonry construction its placement is outside the remit of this study.

**Documentary evidence**

**Primary reference:**

The site has no known documented history for the period included within this study, although Moore noted that Llangiby was included in the commote of Edlogan mentioned under Reeve villages in *Db.G* (Moore 1982. W2).

**Modern reference:****MM109**

The estate at Llangiby passed to the de Cares in 1245 but the castle, called Tregrug, was probably not started until 1312 (Salter 2002. 30). At one time it was called Tregrug which means home of the heather, although it could also mean farm/town or hill/town (Howell *pers. comm.*). Roger Mortimer, when he granted the town of Usk its charter, styled himself Lord of Tregrucke (Morris 1901. 86). The site was surveyed as it is not an earthwork castle.

***Additional references:***

Hogg and King 1967. 110.  
King 1983. 284.

**Interpretation:****Masonry**

Interpretation based on field work and documentary evidence suggests the site is a masonry castle with no sign of the existence of a previous earthwork castle.

**LLANGIBY 2 (BOWLING GREEN)****Grid: ST 37012****97363****Location:**

Llangibby 2 earthwork is otherwise known as (Bowling Green). Located in the private grounds of the Llangibby estate and is not accessible to the general public, it is situated to the west of the road from Caerleon to Usk approximately half way between the two. Although not accessible, it is possible to glimpse the site from the road where it is recognisable from its tree cover.

**Description:**

The site is a large flat topped circular mound raised slightly above the surrounding landscape; especially to the south and east where the land slopes away. The photograph shows the surface of the mound top which has recently been planted with fir trees (Vol. 2. plate 144); it is not possible to recognise any features on top of the mound because of the vegetation. The mound is surrounded by a deep ditch which has a possible entrance to the north, although this may be a more modern addition (Vol. 2. plate 145). The photograph shows one of the clearer sections of the ditch to the west; the mound is on the right. To the east of the site are slight traces of earthen banks which may have been a small bailey. The rim of the mound has stretches of a surrounding masonry bank. The next photographs show the wall from the bottom of the ditch, and a close up of the surviving masonry (Vol. 2. plates 146 and 147). The site shows the result of landscaping and its name, Bowling Green, may allude to its use as a recreational area in the not too distant past. The last photograph shows an aerial view of the site and it is possible to see the amount of large scale landscaping which has been done to the area in the past. The mound to the left of the farm buildings is a modern slurry pit (Vol. 2. plate 148).

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 26)**

The earthwork at Llangibby 2 is a low rounded mound with an extremely large top surface area of 2279.535m<sup>2</sup>. Almost the entire earthwork is surrounded by a ditch, in places up to 2.89m in depth below the natural surface. The height of the mound, however, never exceeds 1.2m above the natural. The circumference of the mound has a narrow berm which is surmounted by a possible shell-keep in the form of an earth rampart. In places sections of masonry courses are exposed within the earth covering.



**Strategic position:**

The location of the mound has very little to offer in the way of natural defence, being situated on an exposed, gently sloping hillside. The location of the stone castle some few hundred metres away does; it is eminently situated as it is on a steep knoll. There is no evidence of any bailey although there are suitable locations. Unfortunately modern buildings and a farm yard occupy the most likely position.

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

The site has no known documented history although Moore noted that Llangiby was included in the commote of Edlogan mentioned under Reeve villages in *Db.G* (Moore 1982. W2).

**Modern reference:****MM110*****Additional references:***

Hogg and King 1963. 100.  
King 1983. 285.

**Interpretation:****Fortified-site (Late)**

The earthwork at Llangiby is problematic because it is in an area where extensive '18<sup>th</sup> century' landscape gardening, on a park estate, is evident (King and Perks 1956. 98). Arguably much evidence may have been lost during this period. The accepted opinion of the site is that it predates the unfinished stone castle to the west and this interpretation would suggest an early time period for its construction, however, it is possible that this is not the case.

The interpretation of the site is based on actual remains, topographical survey and location. The shape of the mound to the east is unusual in that it has two straight sides with a right angled corner (see Vol. 2 surveys). This is a feature that tends to denote moated sites or fortified houses. It is possible, therefore, that Llangiby post dates the stone castle and was used as a much more labour intensive habitation than the aborted Llangiby castle.

Whether the shell-keep around the top is equated to its original construction or added as a feature more recently is impossible to tell without excavation. The name 'Bowling Green' has long been associated with the site which may hold a clue to its present form.

**LLANGOVAN (PENYCLAWDD)****Grid: ST 32057****29149****Introductory note:**

The site at Penyclawdd of the motte and bailey castle is better known as Tre Castle and both Bradney and Hogg and King refer to it as such (Bradney 1913. 201, Hogg and King 1963. 98), although Bradney suggests the spelling of *Tre'r-castell*, meaning *castle town*, which may tend to infer information about the nature of the site, as will be seen below (Bradney 1913. 201).

**Location:**

The site, which is now mostly covered by farm buildings, can be reached from Raglan by taking the old Monmouth road and turning south just after the service station, at the cross roads continuing straight on; the turning signposted Tre Castle is on the right.

**Description:**

The earthwork at Llangovan represents the partial remains of a motte and bailey castle, badly damaged by the development of a farm and farm buildings on the site. The motte is to the north-east of the site and part of the bailey outer ditch survives to the south. In between these extremities most of the surface has been concreted over and various sets of farm buildings obscure the rest. The motte was very overgrown and at the time of the visit no vantage point could be found from which to take a photograph. The explanation is therefore reliant on a plan published in Bradney in 1913 (Vol. 2. figure 76). As can be seen, farm buildings and a house now occupy the site with the motte tucked in behind a barn and cow sheds. The crescentic mound to the east of the house still exists and can be seen to have been the bank and ditch to the outer bailey, possibly the east side of the entrance. This feature has been described erroneously in the past as a second mound (Bradney 1913. 201). The house possibly stands on the bailey with the old entrance formed to the east of the house. The motte itself still has a ditch around the west, north, and east but the southern side has been cut into by farm buildings.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 27)**

The motte at the time of survey had a domed surface area of 225.887m<sup>2</sup> with obvious damage on the south side. The height of the motte is some 6.8m above the ditch at its highest point and the whole earthwork has a base area, again truncated on the south, of 1095.035m<sup>2</sup>. The extensive

damage makes it difficult to assess the site on survey features alone; however, it is evident that the motte was much bigger than it is now. The contour plot (Vol. 2. surveys) shows that the top of the mound is quite domed which is confusing for it may be due to the collapse of a former structure or else be suggestive of erosion of a taller mound.

The bailey appears to have had an encircling ditch which would have added extra defence to the site. Only one part of the ditch could be identified with any confidence and at that point it was full of slurry, however, a height of 2.79m was obtained from above the slurry and here the ditch was 6.82m wide.

### **Strategic position:**

The site is at the edge of a shallow valley offering little in the way of natural defence except possibly secrecy. The motte is not overlooked by any higher ground but it has a view restricted by neighbouring hills. There is no obvious strategic advantage for the placement of site here other than agricultural tenure.

### **Documentary evidence**

#### **Modern reference:**

**MM098**

Bradney wrote a brief description of the site, see above, and suggested the translation of ‘castle–town’ for Tre’r-castell (Bradney 1913. 201). King had little to add other than the listing ‘motte and bailey, the motte uphill. Wet ditch; an outer bailey downhill again’ (1983. 285).

#### **Interpretation:**

**Motte and bailey (Early)**

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, topographical survey and location suggests that this earthwork was a later construction probably motivated by land tenure and agricultural holding. It is, however, also likely that the present surviving ruin is not representative of its original construction shape and size. If that is the case, then judging by the size of the bailey ditch and the potential for size increase at the motte, the site could be an early construction motte and bailey.

01119

**Location:**

The site of the earthwork at Llangwm Isaf is located to the north-east of the B4235 road from Usk to Chepstow. It is 1km north of the village of Llangwm on the crest of a ridge (Vol. 2. plate 149). The view shows how overgrown the site is with fairly thick vegetation, photography difficult.

**Description:**

The site of Llangwm Isaf is on the top of a hill with a summit that gently slopes away on all sides. The earthwork consists of a small mound with a slightly dished interior. The second photograph was taken on top of the earthwork showing the surface, which is featureless (Vol. 2. plate 150). It is possible to see the edge of the earthwork in the photograph, which is a raised bank for most of its circumference. The northern edge of the raised bank is bisected by a hollow-way which presumably may have been the entrance and can be seen in the next photograph (Vol. 2. plate 151). Outside of the hollow section, the bank drops off quite steeply which would suggest that an access ramp may have been required if the previous assumption is right (Vol. 2. plate 152). The whole earthwork is surrounded by a ditch and the next two photographs show the ditch first on the north and then on the south-east (Vol. 2. plates 153 and 154). To the north-east of the site is a long section of very damp ground which is densely forested. If the site is a motte and bailey then this is where the bailey would have to be. Unfortunately the ground is below the level of the surrounding landscape which would tend to make it less defensive.

North-east of the motte is a partially waterlogged rectilinear area excavated from the surrounding bank. To the west, the waterlogged area is bounded by a raised area with an outer bank. It is unlikely that these features represent a bailey since part of it is flooded and beneath the surrounding natural surface. It is more likely that the feature represents quarrying activities of some unspecified date.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 28)**

The survey revealed that the motte is quite low with a maximum height not exceeding 2.9m of which 0.5m is accounted for by the remains of a shell-keep around the rim. The site is listed as a ring-work by Cadw but the raised interior argues against this interpretation (see chapter 3.3). The

top enclosed surface area is very large at 926.409m<sup>2</sup>, suggestive of a space large enough to accommodate more than a few buildings. The entire motte is surrounded by a ditch which has almost disappeared in certain sections but apart from this there are no other defensive outworks.

### **Strategic position:**

The position of the site offers an excellent view point of the surrounding countryside which would give a motte placed here a good vantage point as a watch-tower. The natural defence of the site, however, is quite weak and without further earthworks reliant only on the fairly gentle slope of the hill.

### **Documentary evidence**

#### **Modern reference:**

**MM074**

#### ***Additional references:***

Hogg and King 1963. 98.

King 1983. 285.

#### **Interpretation:**

#### **Motte (Watch tower) (Unknown)**

The site at Llangwm Isaf is difficult to assess as it may represent multiple phasing. The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, topographical survey and location suggests the following possibilities:

- The site may be a re-used pre-historic site due to the location and the shape of the earthwork.
- The site may have been adapted as an early period watch-tower, or a guard post for the quarry. The absence of a bailey wouldn't be a problem as the enclosed area would be large enough to accommodate supplies and horses for a small garrison.
- The site may also be a late period fortified-site suggested by the size of the mound's top surface area and the lack of any real defence. There is no satisfactory way given the available information to assign a period to this earthwork.

Dating of the site is difficult as it would be dictated by any of the above combinations therefore this site must remain undated at present.

**LLANGWM UCHAF (CAMP HOUSE)****ST 42727 99798****Location:**

The site of the earthwork at Llangwm Uchaf is located to the east of the B4235 road from Usk to Chepstow. It is located on the crest of a ridge to south of the village of Llangwm.

**Description:**

Llangwm Uchaf is located on the northern edge of a hilltop spur, above the junction of two streams. The aerial photograph shows the position, just beneath the house (Vol. 2. plate 155). It is just possible that the photograph reveals the position of the bailey which is roughly where the house now stands. To the right of the house, the fence marks a very slight ditch whereas to the left of the house, the barn is situated on much lower ground. The building complex above the road also seems to have reused a former enclosure line. The site has been almost entirely levelled to produce a lawn feature for a large house which now occupies the area of the possible bailey, the ditch having been filled in on that side. The resultant earthwork is best appreciated from a distance for there is nothing left to be seen of any internal earthworks. The second photograph gives some example of the size of the motte although it is impossible to gauge how much is missing (Vol. 2. plate 156).

There is no way of knowing what form the motte originally took but the use of the natural slope as part of the defence system would have been adopted in the earlier constructions. If the bailey did indeed lie to the south then the site would have followed the convention for the early castles designed for offence. However, a note of caution should be added for given the present height and the present surface area, the motte could not have been much taller without losing a vast amount of useable top surface area. Also there is not enough space to include a ditch between the motte and the bailey to provide the former with any real defence as a private fortification.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 29)**

It has a very low motte with a maximum height not exceeding 1.52m and a top surface area of 274.532m<sup>2</sup>.

**Strategic position:**

The location of the site uses natural defence to good advantage but this is only the case on the north side. To the south the hill actually continues to rise, which would have been disadvantage for a motte and bailey castle. The strategic value of the site is not immediately apparent unless it was used as a watch-tower for the lands to the north.

**Documentary evidence****Modern reference:****MM061***Additional references:*

King 1983. 285.

**Interpretation:****Possible motte and bailey (Unknown)**

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, survey and location is very difficult given the limited and contradictory evidence available. The most likely interpretation is that the site was a watch-tower with a limited directional advantage. It is not possible to assign the site to a period but it is less likely that it was a late construction as it would have been too small for residential purposes.

**LLANVACHES****Grid: ST 43397 92053****Introductory note:**

The castle is another of the six masonry castles that surround the Wentwood; presumably to 'keep the natives in check' (Barber 1803. 227).

**Location:**

Llanvaches is the possible site of an earthwork castle situated to the south of the Wentwood. It is best reached by turning north off the A48 Chepstow to Newport road some 2km west of Caerwent, opposite the sign for Penhow Castle. Following this lane, a second right, turns to the village of Llanvaches. The site can be found in a field behind some modern houses.

**Description:**

The site of the proposed castle at Llanvaches offers very little in the way of evidence for its original form. Of the slight ridges and mounds barely visible in the field, no alignments could be found to suggest the existence of a motte and bailey castle or ring-work. Those features that were recognisable as man-made tended to be rectilinear which would be more in keeping with a masonry castle. The site is edged by two shallow linear banks as can be seen in the first two photographs: (Vol. 2. plates 157 and 158). To the right of the second photograph can be seen a slight mound. The third photograph shows a close up of this mound which would appear to be a slightly raised, angular platform with a dished centre (Vol. 2. plate 159).

**Topographical survey:**

No survey was undertaken for this site as not enough remains are left to provide any useful information.

**Strategic location:**

The site offers little in the form of natural defence and other than the suggestion offered by Barber, above, apparent motivation behind its choice of location.



## Documentary evidence

### Primary reference:

There is no documentary evidence for the castle within the time period of this research. The area is not mentioned in *Db.G* but Moore identifies Llanvaches as part of the lands of William of Eu. (Moore 1982. W16n).

### Modern reference:

**MM129**

The site was noted by King as a possible vanished castle (King 1983. 289).

### Interpretation:

### Possible masonry (Unknown)

Interpretation based on field work and documentary evidence and field-work suggests the site is a masonry castle with no sign of the existence of a motte, bailey or ring-work. At present, from the remains that are visible, it is not possible to be sure of this interpretation.

## LONGTOWN CASTLE

Grid: SO 32057 29149



### Location:

Longtown castle is situated in the Olchon Valley at the eastern foot of the Black Mountains. The castle stands at the northern end of the village of Longtown which can be reached from the A465 Abergavenny to Hereford road. The road to Longtown branches off the A465 to the north of Pandy.

### Description:

Longtown castle is a large masonry structure which stands on a hill above the linear village of Longtown. The castle is dominated by circular masonry tower which surmounts an earthen mound. The earthen mound has an associated masonry rectangular wall enclosing a bailey. The whole of the masonry structure is further enclosed within a rectilinear earthen rampart. The masonry, round tower keep, sits on top of a large mound which is widely accepted as a motte (Vol. 2. plate 161). The second photograph shows the round tower on its mound behind its curtain wall (Vol. 2. plate 162). The gate way to the castle can be seen on the right and there are unusually no corner towers.

### Topographic survey:

No survey was undertaken at this site as it was decided that the castle did not represent a motte and bailey construction.

### Strategic position:

There is every probability that the larger earthen 'playing card' shaped enclosure is of Roman origin and Roman finds were reported in 1869 from the east bailey (Ellis 1997. 78). If the origin had been Roman then similarities could be drawn particularly between Longtown and Caerwent, although plenty of evidence exists for similar re-use such as Pevsney, London, Exeter and Winchester (Higham and Barker 1995. 58). The site itself offers little in the way of natural defence and other than as possible agricultural interest, does not appear to offer any reason for the choice of location.

## Documentary evidence

### Primary reference:

The first mention of Longtown castle could be 1187-1188 entries when a castle called *novum castellum* was built at Ewyas Lacy with Hugh de Lacy as the holder, (*Pipe Roll*. Ellis 1997. 67).

### Modern record:

### HWCM 1036

It is generally accepted that the round keep is a later development in castle design. Its use was first experimented with in East Anglia during Stephen's reign but it wasn't until the 1170s that its use became widespread (Braun 1947. 49). A date range of 1185-95 was suggested for Longtown (Renn 1961. 133). Knight referred to Richard Hartley's work at Longtown, where he suggested that the building hadn't started before 1200 (cited in Hillaby 1985. 223). Hillaby, however, favours an even later date of between 1215 to 1233. He suggests that the castle was the work of Walter de Lacy who was sheriff of Herefordshire between those dates. Walter was in exile in Ireland before 1213 and lost his shrievalty in 1233 (Hillaby 1985. 223). In 1233 Henry 'Turbleville' was in payment of custody of Ewyas (*Cal Close*. 1226-1240. 235).

The late date for the castle is important to establish, for Longtown has the unusual fortune of having two castles. The other is a motte and bailey type situated less than a half a mile to the south at Pont Hendre. Documentary evidence for Longtown is never separated for the two castles because the two have never been referred to separately in old documents. This research will only assign evidence after 1170 to the new castle at Longtown, the reason being the safer criterion of typological design quoted in Braun. The earlier references will be assigned to the earlier castle at Pont Hendre.

The first map (Vol. 2. figure 77) shows the layout of the site with its outer ramparts attached to the motte in 1908. There is no apparent gap between the two, on either the east or south side and the whole perimeter of the earthen rampart is surrounded by a ditch. By the 1931 plan for the *RCHME*, a definite break can be seen on both sides of the earthen rampart where apparently there had previously been a join to the motte. (Vol. 2. figure 78). The discrepancy may simply be a result of idiosyncrasies of the two cartographers but it may provide evidence of landscaping around the motte. It has to be said that there is something altogether unusual about the shape of the motte on which stands such a large tower. The third photograph for this site shows the eastern masonry wall at the motte joining with the earthen rampart behind it (Vol. 2. plate 163). The third map of the site shows a much more up to date interpretation (Vol. 2. figure 79). It can be seen that the curtain wall only exists on the south and east of the inner earthwork enclosure. To the west, the earthwork bank forms the defence although the Kay plan, on the next map,

shows masonry along the top (Vol. 2. figure 80). It is probable that the earthwork bank around the whole site is the original feature and that the entire masonry structure is a later addition. As well as his rough plan of the site, Kay provided a sketch of his interpretation of the castle in 1225 (Vol. 2. plate 164). If his interpretation is close to the original then Longtown was a very unusual castle.

The mound on which the castle stands is recorded in the SMR as a motte but this may not be the case.

**Interpretation:**

The nature of the presumed motte has much in common with Caldicot, (see above). It is very symmetrical and steep, however, this may be the result of conservation measures or landscaping at some time in the past. It is also very tight to the base of the tower which would seem a little precarious as a support for such a large and heavy structure. Therefore, it is likely that the mound was added to the base of the tower rather than the tower having been built upon it. As the round tower type is very rare before the 1170s it would mean that the entire construction is a late build. Interpretation based on field work and documentary evidence suggests the site is a late period masonry castle with no sign of the existence of a motte.

**MOCCAS CASTLE****Grid: SO 34800 42500****Location:**

The site of the earthwork at Moccas thought to have been west of the Moccas Deer-park, can be reached from the B4352 Hay on Wye to Hereford road. Unfortunately this was one of the sites not found during the course of the field work. The only description therefore must be based on old maps and the observations of others.

**Description:**

Three plans were available for the site; all show the same overall appearance but the later ones show increasing tendency to interpret the site as a motte and bailey castle. The first map shows a roughly oval shape with a ditch to the south (Vol. 2. figure 81). The scale included gives the measurements of 350ft by 280ft, 107m by 85m. A slight mound is shown to the east of the site. The second map shows a much more elaborate structure with ditch to north and south and a separate mound on the east, which also has a ditch (Vol. 2. figure 82). The latter has the form of a motte and bailey earthwork. Unfortunately there is no scale supplied with the plan so it is difficult to estimate the size of the round feature on the right. The third plan was produced in 1953 and shows a definite motte and bailey layout (Vol. 2. figure 83). The motte on the east side has a ditch which separates it from the bailey; it appears to be a raised structure surrounded by a moat. Without personal knowledge of the site it is impossible to give a considered evaluation of its nature.

**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken at this site as it could not be found.

**Strategic position:**

It is not possible to give an accurate appraisal of the strategic position of this site because the earthworks could not be found and the nature of the site is unknown. However, the general area is very flat offering no obvious natural defence. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century the site would have been exposed to the full impact of the disputed area and would therefore have required formidable defences. If these existed and were later removed by some force is not known.

**Documentary evidence**

**Primary reference:**

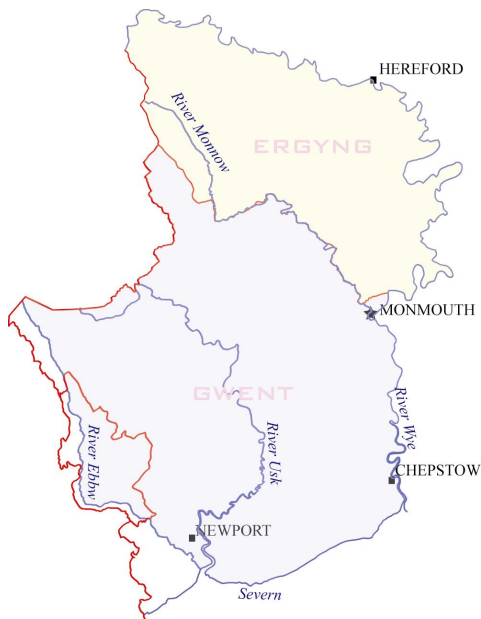
The earliest reference to the earthwork at Moccas, however, dates to 1294 when Hugh de Fraxino received a royal licence to fortify his manor house at Moccas with stone but ‘without tower or turret and not exceeding 10 feet in height’ (*Rot. Pat. 21 Edw. I.* cited in Robinson 1869. 106). This may put the probable fortified house outside of the date parameters of this research. Although it is not known what form Fraxino’s house took before it was fortified, it was not referred to as a castle and if it had been then why was it in need of fortification and not re-fortification?

**Antiquarian reference:**

An account by the *HLAS* states that ‘Moccas was the residence of Pepian, Prince or Regulus of Gwent and Erenwc (which comprised the district south of the river Wye, known as the Saxon Erging, or Irchenfield, and a portion of Monmouthshire,) in about the middle of the fifth century’ (*HLAS* 1850. 215).

**Modern reference:****HWCM1558****Interpretation:****Possible motte/fortified-site (Unknown)**

The site of Moccas earthwork proved to be elusive during the fieldwork stage of this study and so there is no first hand information available on which to make an assessment. Interpretation is therefore, dependent on documentary sources which in themselves are somewhat contradictory. The best that can be said for the site is that it may have been a motte and bailey or a later fortified house. A point in favour of the latter is that the general topography of the area has no natural defence and no observable strategic value with the possible exception of the proximity of the River Wye. The site is, however, situated on very fertile agricultural land.

**MONMOUTH****Grid: SO 50682 12904****Location:**

The Castle, which is not one of Monmouth's more prominent features, can be found at the highest part of the town just off Agincourt Square. The lane called Castle Hill road leads up to what used to be the front gate. Access would have been over a bridge as the castle would have had a ditch on this side. The other approaches were protected by steep slopes. The castle is not open to the public.

**Description:**

The plate shows a very picturesque view of the castle from 1810 (Vol. 2. plate 164). It is useful as a means of showing the position of the castle site, rather than for identifying any architectural ruins that remained. The castle was greatly altered in 1913 in a programme described as conservation and repair. Not much of the old castle survives as the plan shows (Vol. 2. figure 84); the areas in heavy black are the remaining parts of the castle masonry.

**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken at this site because it is a masonry castle and therefore outside the remit of this study.

**Strategic Location:**

The castle at Monmouth occupies a natural rock outcrop, above the Monnow river, commanding the eastern border of Norman occupation at the start of the conquest. Passage along the river Wye and the possible old Roman routes to *Ariconium* (Weston under Penard), *Burrium* (Usk) and *Magnis* (Kenchester) (OS 1956) could all have been controlled from this strong vantage point. Additionally, Monmouth has been identified as Roman *Blestium* with numerous Roman finds having been recovered in the area (Taylor 1976. 5). If the town had been occupied since Roman times as is suggested for Abergavenny and Caerleon then this could have been behind the Norman need for a large, strong castle, an overt show of Norman power.

## Documentary evidence

### Primary reference:

There is some good early documentary evidence relating to the castle. The *Lib Land* records that the castle was built in the time of King William, Earl William (fitz Osbern), Walter de Lacy and Raul de Bernai, clearly stating that the castle had not been built before this time (Rees 1840. 548-9).

### Antiquarian reference:

One Victorian theory suggested that Monmouth was probably a Saxon outpost arguing that the Normans merely built castles of stone where Saxon castles existed before (Sheppard 1895-7. 66), but the idea of a pre-existing Saxon castles has fallen out of favour since (Armitage 1912).

### Modern reference:

**MM159**

Kissack dates the building of the castle to 1068 but does not name his source (Kissack nd. 2), he also suggests that the great tower was built in 1140 and the great round tower built in 1230 (Kissack nd. 11). The date for the round tower does fit with the general theory for this later typology of building style such as mentioned earlier at Longtown.

### *Additional references:*

Hogg and King 1963. 116  
King 1983. 286.

### Excavation:

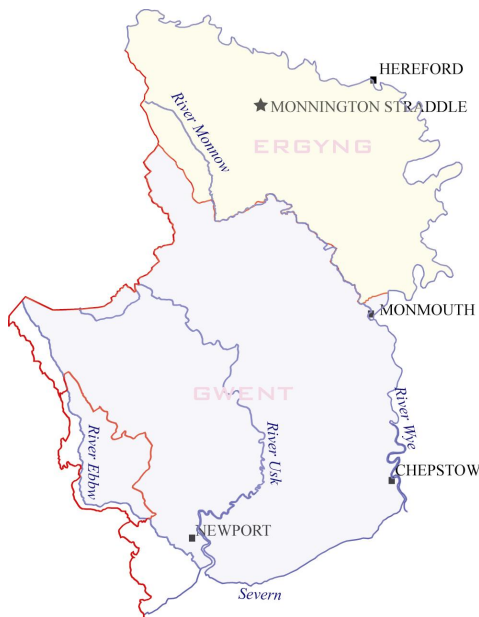
Information emerged during the later stages of this research that a possible earth layer found during excavation of the castle ditch by Steve Clark of Monmouth Archaeology may signify a motte but this is at present unsubstantiated Clark (*pers comm.*).

### Interpretation:

**Masonry castle (Early)**

Interpretation based on field work and documentary evidence suggests the site is a masonry castle built on a natural rock outcrop above the River Monnow, with no sign of the existence of a motte.



**MONNINGTON STRADDLE MOTTE****Grid: SO 38197 36813****Location:**

The Monnington straddle earthwork is situated on low ground in a valley surrounded by fairly steep hills. The valley opens to the south-east and south-west. The earthwork which is on private land, can be reached from the B4348, Hereford to Peterchurch road. To the south-west at a distance of about 2km lies Chanstone Tumps, and 2.4km to the north lies Poston earthwork.

**Description:**

The visible remains of the castle today are unimpressive and quite overgrown as can be seen in the photograph (Vol. 2. plate 165). The view is of the southern edge; the earthwork is the central mass of trees. The second photograph shows a close up of the same bank where it is possible to see a course of masonry (Vol. 2. plate 166). Whether or not the masonry is contemporary with the earthwork or the result of later land development is impossible to say. The whole site appears to have made use of a stream to the west as a means of diverting water to a surrounding ditch. The *RCHME* reports a crescent shaped bailey to the west of the mound, (1931. 245) but the flat platform that is visible today would appear to have been formed naturally from stream action. The aerial photograph (Vol. 2. plate 167), shows the stream to the left which has cut quite deeply into the surrounding field forming what could be mistaken for a crescent shaped bailey. In fact, if any bailey had existed it would most probably be under the farm complex.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 30)**

The earthwork at Monnington Straddle is a low oblong mound with a maximum height of only 2.79m and a large top surface area measuring some 485.493m<sup>2</sup>. The site is irregular in shape which would tend to suggest that some damage has occurred, although this is likely to be confined to the top surface rather than the overall mound, as the base of the latter seems confined by the natural features of a stream to the west and south, and a ditch on the north. The east side seems to be the most regularly shaped, although there is a masonry revetment on that side.

**Geophysical survey:**

In 2000, 'Terradat (UK)' undertook a geophysical survey of the top of the earthwork to look for the grave of Owain Glyndŵr. A large building, possibly a hall was interpreted as having once stood there, (Dr T Young, 'Terradat (UK)' *pers comm.*).

**Strategic position:**

The location of the site has no natural defence, and there would appear to be no obvious strategic advantage for a castle here. The valley setting for this site is surrounded by very good agricultural land which may suggest the motivation behind its placement.

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

Very little documentary information exists on this site. *Db.H* lists the area as waste (Thorn and Thorn 1983. 186 a, b). The land had been given to the King by Earl William and the King had granted that land to Alfred of Marlborough (*ibid.* 186a).

**Modern reference:****HWCM890**

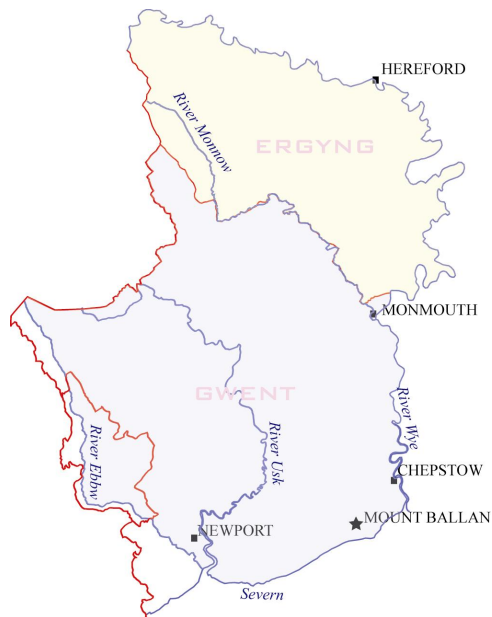
Kay visited the site in 1952 and produced a sketch plan (Vol. 2. figure 85). The site is not so well defined today due to overgrowth. Marshall interpreted the site at Monnington as unlikely to be that of a motte but more likely to be a later form of fortified residence (Marshall 1938. 146-7).

***Additional references:***

Hogg and King 1963. 97.

**Interpretation:****Fortified-site (Late)**

Interpretation based on field work and survey evidence suggests the site is a late period fortified-site and not a motte. On shape and size, the mound would appear to have had little defensive significance to the occupants but would have provided sufficient space for a number of people or buildings.

**MOUNT BALLAN (THE BERRIES)****Grid: ST 48757 89537****Location:**

The site is in private hands and not open to the public. It can be reached from the A48 Newport to Chepstow road taking the south turn at Crick towards Portskewett. It is in a field behind the railway on the west of the road.

**Description:**

The site of Mount Ballan, commonly known as The Berries, is on low lying marshland north of the Severn Estuary. The site is well hidden from public view as it is surrounded by trees with the exception of the east side which is obscured by a high railway embankment. The

obscurity of the site has already been stressed but the aerial photograph emphasises the point (Vol. 2. plate 168). The motte is situated to the left of the railway line towards the top of the photograph and is surrounded by the remains of a ditch which separates it from the bailey, providing internal defence. It is possible to see the curve of the ditch at its base. The 'D' shaped field that it is in is the bailey, which is raised above the surrounding marsh. The area to the north-east of the motte, which should have been the most securely defended as this is where the motte stands, is unknown because of dense vegetation and the fact a large railway embankment has been constructed there destroying any features in that direction. The second photograph shows the motte from across the bailey (Vol. 2. plate 169); the motte is under the clump of trees just left of centre and the bank that can be seen on the right is the eastern rampart. The third photograph shows the east of the motte which has been altered by a track-way that runs along the edge of the original ditch (Vol. 2. plate 170). The track then cuts across the rampart to the south (Vol. 2. plate 171).

The motte still has evidence of a surrounding ditch as was recorded in 1855 (Wakeman 1855. 17). The top surface area of the motte is very small and there is no evidence of any features, however, the bailey does show a number of rectilinear features which are possible building foundations. The bailey itself is raised above the marsh on the south, west and north with a ditch on the north and east.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 31)**

The motte is quite small, 4.16m in height with a top surface area of only 67.688m<sup>2</sup>, however, the bailey, which is raised, is quite large measuring some 6157.588m<sup>2</sup>. Evidence of the defence around the outside of the motte can still be seen to the south where a 2.9m earth rampart survives along the edge of the bailey.

**Strategic position:**

At the time of the survey, there were no signs of any natural defence which would have justified the site and no observable evidence of any strategic value. However, a clue to the placement of the motte and bailey may be the marshy and waterlogged condition of the surrounding fields. It is just possible that the site was created as an island using the wet and boggy terrain as defence and this could explain why the majority of the bailey had no surrounding ditch.

A consideration against this interpretation is worth noting; if the raised bailey has been correctly identified, then its construction would have been an enormous and time-consuming feat of earthmoving. If the castle was built in hostile territory then a quicker solution could have been found using the higher ground close by.

Possible solutions could be that the raised bailey area could be natural or that the Normans re-used a pre-existing site. The bailey does contain a large amount of shallow earthworks which would be worth evaluating either by excavation or geophysical survey.

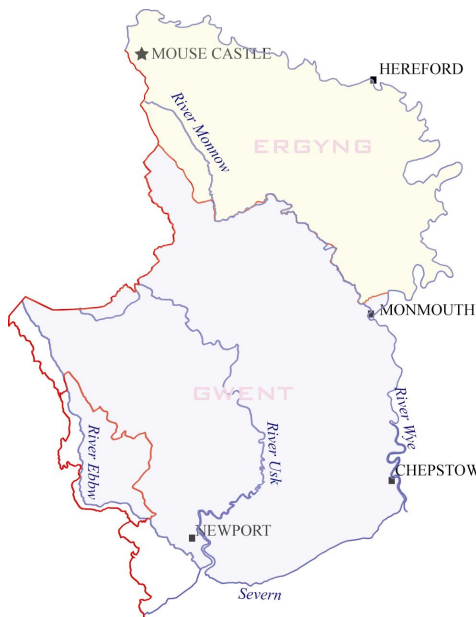
**Documentary evidence****Modern reference:****MM026*****Additional references:***

King 1983. 282.

**Interpretation:****Motte and bailey (Early)**

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, survey and location leaves little doubt as to the function of this castle. The shape and size of the motte makes it a strong defensible structure and there is good evidence that the motte was defended from the bailey, giving the motte its private fortification function. The large bailey would have been big enough to house a small garrison, ideal for an early offensive castle.

It is possible that the bailey was a pre-existing site, possibly some form of pre-Norman settlement.

**MOUSE CASTLE****Grid: SO 24827 42458****Location:**

This is an awkward castle to reach, travelling east from Hay on Wye along the B4348. After passing through Cusop a small road to the left is sign-posted Dorstone. At a distance of about 2km the road reaches the top of the pass and a small lane leads to the left. At the end of the lane is a private house, and a pathway to the summit.

**Description:**

The view from the end of the lane can be seen in the first photograph (Vol. 2. plate 172). The castle is covered by the trees to the left. At the edge of the trees, on the brow of the hill it is possible to see part of the outer eastern rampart. Mouse castle occupies the summit and the path follows a very extensive rampart and ditch system that is apparently Iron Age in date. The site itself is unfortunately covered in vegetation no where more so than the motte itself, shown in the first photograph (Vol. 2. plate 1732). The motte is the mound on the right and the dip in the middle is part of the motte ditch on the east. The motte itself is flat on top, with exceptionally steep sides. It was not possible to get a good view of the site on the ground, and so a plan of the site would give the best chance of explaining the layout (Vol. 2. figure 86). The plan shows how much of the site is still recognisable and how extensive its layout was. Unfortunately the graphic representation does not adequately illustrate the height of the ramparts. Also missing is the obvious modification done to the precipitous slope. The third photograph shows the area to the east of the motte, between the two ramparts (Vol. 2. plate 174). The area does still show evidence of possible building platforms. The last photograph shows the western edge of the rampart at the point marked entrance (Vol. 2. plate 175).

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 32)**

The earthwork at Mouse Castle is located on the top of the summit of a hill overlooking the River Wye. The site consists of a motte 5.16m high with a surface area of 321.322m<sup>2</sup>; which may have been cut from the hill rather than raised above it, a large bailey and five sections of an encircling earthen rampart, one of which has an outer height of 4m. There are suggestions that the rampart formed a complete circuit of the hill but vegetation obscures most of the south-west of the site and erosion has also had a detrimental effect. The extent of the site, the identifiable

area, measures some 7194.499m<sup>2</sup>. It is unusual for such a high position but this may be representative of its importance. Conversely, the majority of the site may be Iron Age with the Normans just using part of it. A similar interpretation will be seen below at Twmbarlwm.

### **Strategic position:**

The location of the site is extremely defensive and there is the possibility that it is an example of the re-use of an existing fortification, the earlier site being an Iron Age hill-fort. The site is an obvious choice for a lookout point and would have given a very good strategic position to the occupants of such a castle. Mouse Castle stands on high ground above the River Wye and from its vantage point, only the area to the south-east is higher.

The entire hill on which the site stands shows evidence of extensive scarping, which again would be more typical of an Iron Age site. The Norman influence seems to be the motte and an extensive bailey built within the outer ramparts. Atypical of the configuration is the position of the motte which would have been better placed towards the edge of the western bank in order to maximise the defensive capabilities of the steepest slope. It is possible that the unusual position for the motte could have been dictated by the existence of a pre-standing structure.

### **Documentary evidence**

#### **Primary reference:**

Mouse Castle may exist in *Db.H* under the manor of Kingstone. 'Before 1066 Cusop belonged to this manor and King Edward held it; Roger of Lacy holds it from the king (Thorn and Thorn 1983. 179c). Marshall suggested that the castle was built by Roger de Lacy as he held part of Cusop from the King (1938. 151).

However, the interpretation of Cusop as Mouse Castle is based on the typology of the site at Cusop dealt with earlier in this chapter. The form of the site at Cusop is of a much later fortified house rather than a motte and bailey castle.

#### **Modern reference:**

**HWCM1227**

#### ***Additional references:***

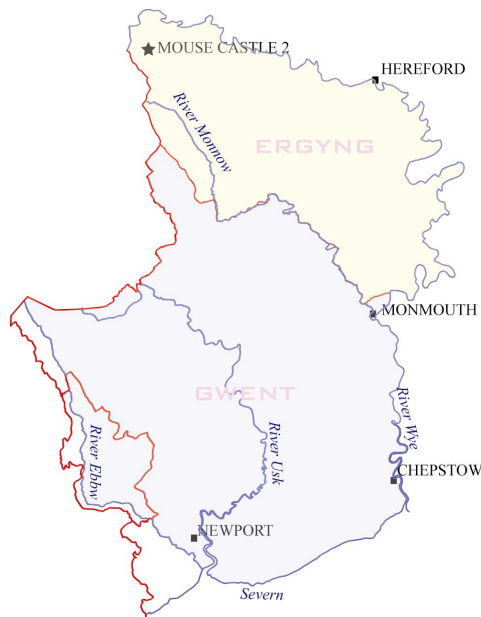
VCH 1908. 235.  
RCHME 1931. 47.  
King 1983. 204.

#### **Interpretation:**

#### **Motte and bailey (Early)**

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, survey and location is that the site

probably functioned primarily as lookout point. The overall size, however, would suggest that a large garrison may have been employed here. The site would have been very effective as the most north-easterly point of Norman control prior to the move into Brycheiniog in 1090. Evidence from the survey, providing the shape and size of the motte, would tend to suggest that the site was of an early period as there are signs of inner defence between the motte and the bailey.

**MOUSE CASTLE 2****Grid: SO 24787 42718****Introductory note:**

The site was investigated early in the research as it was listed on the SMR response database for the original site search. Mention is also made of the site as a siege work or ring-work (Shoesmith 1996. 86).

**Location:**

Mouse Castle 2 is a site that stands just below Mouse Castle, on the slope to the north-west. To reach it follow the directions for Mouse Castle, above.

**Description:**

The site takes the form of a low mound when seen from the north, further down the slope (Vol. 2. plate 176). The view, however, is very misleading for what appears to be a flat mound is actually a small ring bank (Vol. 2. plate 177). The second photograph shows the survey of the site being undertaken. The depth of the internal ground level can be gauged from the knowledge that the person shown drawing is standing up.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 33)**

The site of Mouse castle 2 is a small oval earthen ring-bank with a maximum height of only 1.32m located on the slope of a hill just below Mouse Castle. The ring-bank, which is open to the south, has an enclosed area of 96.815m<sup>2</sup>.

**Strategic position:**

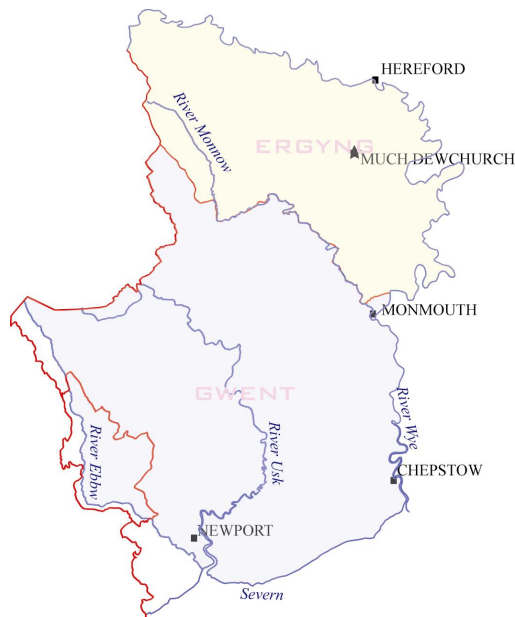
The site has no observable strategic value other than being high on the side of a hill. There is no natural defence available and it is directly overlooked by Mouse Castle.

**Documentary evidence****Modern reference:****HWCM1231**



**Interpretation:****Ring-bank (Unknown)**

The site is unique amongst those visited during this research. It has no characteristics of a motte and bailey castle and to call it a ring-work would give it attributes that it may not deserve. The site is an enigma, a ring-bank of undetermined date or use.

**MUCH DEWCHURCH****Grid: SO 48542 31259****Location:**

The earthwork at Much Dewchurch is situated some 10km south of Hereford and can be reached from the A49, Hereford to Ross on Wye road. At King's Thorn the A466 Monmouth road is taken to Wormelow Tump before turning north-west onto the B4348. The earthwork is east of the village of Much Dewchurch and stands on farm land.

**Description:**

The earthwork at Much Dewchurch is situated on a gently rising hillock, an island of vegetation surrounded by featureless fields that are regularly ploughed (Vol. 2. plate 178). The form of the earthwork is roughly oval with two concave indentations, one to the north and one to the south, (see Vol. 2. surveys). The indentations would appear to be damage rather than original features. The photograph shows the motte ditch as seen at a distance from the north. The second photograph (Vol. 2. plate 179) shows the southern side of the motte giving some idea of its height. Both pictures indicate how close to the site ploughing is carried out thereby removing any traces of outer works such as those noted in the *VCH* (1908. 244).

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 34)**

The mound has a maximum height of 2.93m and a top surface area of 1201.466m<sup>2</sup>, which is quite substantial. There is evidence of a ditch to the west and north-east but neither are very convincing. The site lacks any conclusive evidence for a bailey or any defences other than a mound.

**Strategic position:**

The strategic position of such a site for a motte and bailey castle would be adequate as it is located at the high point of ground with a good all round view. However, for defence there would have been a need for extensive earthworks as the location provides no natural advantage. There are no surviving remains of any outer defences although as was noted above, the surrounding area has been heavily ploughed.

**Documentary record****Modern reference:****HWCM890****Modern record:**

The *VCH* included a short record and a plan of the site, (Vol. 2. figure 87), which shows the possible remains of a moated bailey to the west of the site. Shoesmith referred to the bailey in his publication and added two additional enclosures on the east (1996. 182). There was no sign of these features at the time of survey and as a cautionary note Shoesmith stated in his description ‘that they survived until recently’ (1996. 182). The report does not state if the evidence was seen by him or whether it came from another source. Shoesmith also reported that traces of masonry were found on the motte and suggested that there may have been a ring-work here (1996. 182). Arguably the masonry could also point to there having been a shell-keep here.

***Additional references:***

King 1983. 209.

**Interpretation:****Fortified-site (Late)**

Interpretation based on field work and survey evidence suggests the site is a late period fortified-site and not a motte. The shape and height of the mound suggest its later date and function whilst the poorly defended location would suggest the unsuitability of the site for a structure of offence. The valley setting for this site, surrounded by very good agricultural land may suggest the motivation behind its placement.

**MYNYDD-BRÎTH****Grid: SO 27997 41463****Location:**

The site is reached by travelling east from Hay on Wye along the B4348. After passing through Cusop a small road to the left is sign-posted Dorstone. This road leads up to the top of the hill and as it starts to drop down into the valley a sharp right turn leads back up to the site of Mynydd-brith.

**Description:**

The motte at Mynydd-brith is situated on the northern slope of the pass through the hills between Hay on Wye and Dorstone. The site stands on high ground above a stream that eventually runs past the site at Dorstone. The site is in very close proximity to another motte called Nant-y-bar (see below). The earthwork today consists of a conical motte sat on the edge of a steep valley side, in a field next to a house, with a road limiting the extent to the north-east and steep stream banks to the north, west and south. The motte itself has almost a complete circle of low masonry wall around the rim, (see below). To the east of the motte is a slight rise which forms a crescentic bank, interpreted as a possible horn-work; unusually, on the uphill side. The photograph shows the north-west side of the motte, which is on the right, and the valley on the left (Vol. 2. plate 180). A very faint ditch is just about visible in front of the motte and the foreground of the photograph is part of the horn-work. The aerial photograph, (Vol. 2. plate 181) shows the motte in the centre, with a horn-work below and to the right.

The whole area appears to be located on extensive earthworks that probably have some association with the medieval site. The earthworks may extend to the farm on the other side of the road, (top left), where to the right of the farm buildings can be seen ridge and furrow plough marks, a rectilinear feature and some curvilinear ditches. These features were noted during survey work carried out in 1994 for English Heritage, (see below).

The 1908 map shows the layout (Vol. 2. figure 88). There are traces of a rampart and ditch to the south east, as shown on the second photograph (Vol. 2. plate 182). Unfortunately the site has been much altered by the road and the modern buildings so these features may not be original. They were, however, recorded on the later 1931 plan (Vol. 2. figure 89).

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 35)**

The motte at Mynydd-brîth occupies the edge of a steep ridge above a stream and in so doing makes good use of natural defence to enhance its security. The site exhibits a motte with a maximum height of 5.27m at a gradient of 81.18% and a top surface area of 213.658m<sup>2</sup>. The top surface rim has five sections of low masonry wall, linear in shape and all well cemented. Whether the masonry is original is not known but, if it is, then the motte had an angular shell-keep.

Only two small sections of ditch are visible and it is not possible to tell their original extent. The one to the east of the motte has a maximum depth of only 0.33m and the one to the south reaches a depth of 1.36, for a very short distance. Evidence for a bailey at the site is minimal, restricted to a few surface anomalies to the west of the motte.

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

Evidence for the castle does not exist but the name 'Mynydd-brîth' is recorded in *Db.H* as being held by Drogo son of Poyntz (Thorn and Thorn 1983. 186 c, d).

**Modern reference:****HWCM1241**

Marshall suggested that Mynydd-brîth was earlier than Nant-y-Bar because of its weaker position. He further suggested that Mynydd-brîth may have been held by Roger de Lacy but his assumption was based on lordship boundaries for 1667 and 1701 (Marshall 1938. 150). The site was surveyed. In 1994 The Archaeology Service, Hereford and Worcester County Council carried out a survey of the site for English heritage (Jackson 1994.). The purpose of the survey was to produce a conservation and protection plan for the site. During the process Mr Stirling-Brown helped the department by clarifying his past operations at the site. In the report much comparison was made between the plan drawn by R.S. Kay in 1952 and the survey produced for the report (Vol. 2. figures 90 and 91). The conclusions noted that the site had suffered 'tidying' and 'renovation' work as well as unauthorised excavation. It noted that walls were exposed where walls had not been visible before and that the motte was somewhat lower now than when Kay recorded it (Jackson 1994.).

Unfortunately Mr Stirling-Brown's efforts to 'tidy' and 'renovate' the site has led to doubt about its original form. The third photograph shows a very substantial masonry wall across the south-east edge of the motte (Vol. 2. plate 183). A doorway appears to be set, at the bottom of the photograph. The last photograph shows the east end of the motte top complete with a low

rectangular building base (Vol. 2. plate 184). As was mentioned above, the date of the masonry may date from medieval times or the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There is no way of knowing for certain but it certainly wasn't as prominent in 1908, 1931 or 1952.

***Additional references:***

VCH 1908. 236.

RCHME 1931. 57.

King 1983. 205.

**Interpretation:**

**Motte and possible bailey (Early)**

The remains of the motte are a little problematic as it is known that the site has been tampered with by a former owner, who has more than a passing interest in earthwork castles. The motte has a variety of masonry foundations most of which were possibly modified fairly recently. The former owner, Mr Stirling-Brown, is a well known castle researcher in the area and apparently worked within the control of English Heritage (*pers comm.*).

It is difficult to be certain what remains are original, the result of repair, or the result of well-intentioned reconstruction.

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, survey and location is that the site probably functioned as a frontier outpost and is therefore early. The small nature of the site would have restricted its use to a small garrison and there is evidence of private internal fortification for the motte. The masonry structure on top is not convincing and is best disregarded but in its excavation or construction an unknown amount of earth from the top of the motte would have been moved. It is therefore possible that the motte may have been higher.

**NANT-Y-BAR****Grid: SO 27852 41023****Location:**

The site is reached by travelling east from Hay on Wye along the B4348. After passing through Cusop a small road to the left is sign-posted Dorstone. The road is followed to the top of the hill and as it starts to drop down into the valley a sharp right turn leads back up to the site of Mynydd-brîth. After continuing past Mynydd-brîth for about 0.5km, the road reaches Nant-y-Bar farm. The earthwork is at the top of the hill (Vol. 2. plate 185); the photograph shows the earthwork from the farmyard.

**Description:**

Just visible to the left of the image, where the trees touch the mound, is a slight change of slope which corresponds to the outer bank of the ditch. The site consists of a low rounded mound which is completely surrounded by a ditch. Some slight evidence of an outer bank is discernable in places. The top of the mound has a pronounced raised rim and the inside surface dips into a shallow dish shape. To the east is a sloped track which crosses the ditch with a narrow causeway. The aerial photograph, (Vol. 2. plate 186) shows quite clearly the eastern causeway and the surrounding ditch. To the west is a possible triangular bailey but it would have been very small. To the north the fields are regularly ploughed which would tend to have removed any possible earthworks. Unfortunately, the topography of the site would suggest that north of the earthwork would have been the likely place for a bailey.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 36)**

The site at Nant-y-bar is a badly eroded hill-top mound with a slightly dished top surface area. Two sections of the rim of the mound are raised, at one point as much as 1.27m, which with the dishing would tend to suggest that a shell-keep once surrounded the top. The remains of the possible shell-keep also suggest that the height of the mound is close to original. The top enclosed surface area is quite large at 431.494m<sup>2</sup> suggestive of a space large enough to accommodate a guard out-post including watch tower, and room for mounts. The entire mound is surrounded by a ditch but apart from this there are no other defensive outworks.

Interestingly, calculations on the volume of the mound showed a surfeit of 3143.964m<sup>3</sup> of fill, if it was assumed that the fill came from the ditch. Even accounting for the fact that the ditch has

silted up, it cannot have been deep enough to provide the fill for the mound. The earth therefore, was transported to the site which would tend to suggest either that it was important, as the transportation would be very time consuming, or alternatively, the mound was already there when the Normans arrived and they merely modified it for their use. This could explain the close proximity of the two mottes at Nant-y-Bar and Mynydd-brîth. Such a pre-existing mound at the site could have been a pre-historic feature such as a cairn or a chambered tomb.

### **Strategic position:**

The location of the site has some natural defence as the hill on which it is situated is quite steep. However, other than as viewing point, the site would appear to have no observable strategic advantages.

### **Documentary evidence**

#### **Modern reference:**

**HWCM1266**

The site is not mentioned in Domesday but the land on which Nant-y-bar earthwork was built lay on the northern extremity of the Castlery of Ewyas Lacy (Marshall 1938. 150). The land which was waste was held by Walter de Lacy and then his son Roger. Marshall suggests that Nant-y-bar superseded Mynydd-brîth as it would have been a much stronger position. (Marshall 1938. 150) However, it is possible that the two mottes were contemporary, with both being outstations of the castleries of Clifford and Ewyas Lacy.

#### ***Additional references:***

VCH 1908. 236.

RCHME 1931. 57.

King 1983. 205.

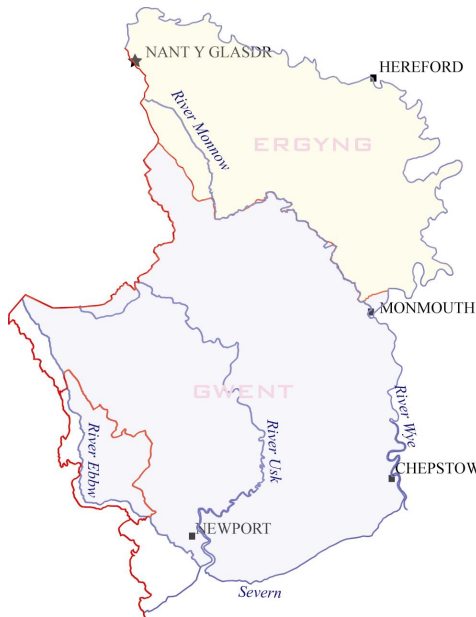
#### **Interpretation:**

#### **Possible motte (watch-tower) fortified-site (Unknown)**

The interpretation of the site as a motte would be benefited by the existence of a bailey and it is possible that a small one existed to the north-west, but heavy ploughing would have probably eradicated it and there was no sign of it during the survey. The interpretation of the site was based on actual remains, topographical survey and location. Assessment of the site is difficult because configuration and size dictate that the site is late, possibly a fortified-site, however, its position allows for the site to have been an early watch-tower. Arguing against the watch-tower interpretation is the lack of defence from outside attack, as has been noted, but then a watch-tower does not need to be defended in the same way that a residential castle would. This is a site



that has very limited data all of which is potentially contradictory; consequently it cannot be dated or classified from the available data.

**NANT-Y-GLASDR****Grid: SO 23600 42600****Location:**

The area is reached by leaving Hay on Wye on the B4348 towards Hereford and on the outskirts of the town turning left towards Nant-y-Glasdr farm.

**Description:**

The site at Nant-y-Glasdr farm was not found although a mound was spotted in roughly the right area. The mound, however, was nothing more than farm workings.

**Topographic survey:**

No topographic survey was undertaken for this site as no earthwork remains were found at the given co-ordinates.

**Strategic position:**

The general area has no natural defence and no observable strategic value with the possible exception of the proximity of the River Wye.

**Documentary evidence****Modern record:****HWCM1234****Interpretation:****Possible motte/fortified-site (unknown)**

The site of Nant-y-Glasdr earthwork proved to be elusive during the fieldwork stage of this study and so there is no first hand information available on which to make an assessment. Interpretation is therefore, dependent on documentary sources which in themselves are poor (HWCM. SMR 1234). The best that can be said for the site is that it may have been a motte and bailey or a later fortified house. A point in favour of the later is that the general topography of the area has no natural defence and no observable strategic value with the possible exception of the proximity of the River Wye.

**NEWCASTLE (LLANGATTOCK VIBEN AVEL)****Grid: SO 44737 17239****Location:**

The site of Newcastle can be reached from the B4233, Monmouth to Newcastle road. It stands about 14km north-west of Monmouth on high ground.

**Description:**

Most of the site has been built over by Newcastle Farm but the motte and part of the bailey still survive. The site is on private land, belonging to the farm and not open to the public; a large pack of guard dogs deters the unwelcome visitor and should not be taken lightly. The

aerial photograph shows the present layout of the castle (Vol. 2. plate 187). The photograph is orientated with east to the top of the image. It can be seen that the east of the motte is almost entirely covered with later farm buildings. It may however be possible to trace a bailey: the road curves around the area in almost a semi-circle. The south side of the semi-circle continues along a hedge line which itself has a ditch, then returns back to the motte. The enclosed area is high ground.

The motte itself is a rather badly eroded mound as can be seen in the photograph (Vol. 2. plate 188). The side to the left of the photograph has been cut by a modern barn, and the top of the motte has at some time in the past had a large water tank fitted into it. The whole motte, with the exception of the barn area, is surrounded by a ditch, part of which can be seen in the next photograph (Vol. 2. plate 189). The ditch on the west side separates the motte from a narrow crescentic bailey to the east. The bailey can be seen in the next photograph (Vol. 2. plate 190). The view is taken from the field to the west and shows the outside of the crescentic bailey with the motte just visible to the right; there is a ditch on both sides of the bailey. The last photograph shows a fallen section of masonry that lies in the ditch to the south of the motte (Vol. 2. plate 191).

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 37)**

The highest side of the motte is to the south and it measures 6.21m at a slope gradient of 57.75%. The top surface area measures only 31.03m<sup>2</sup> but a conservative estimate of the original top, if it had been round instead of its present oval shape would have been 116.109m<sup>2</sup> (see Vol.3 chapter

4). It can also be assumed that the excavation to bury the water tank may have reduced the overall height.

The horn-work is also quite large with a top surface area of 529.255m<sup>2</sup> and a maximum height of 4.63m. As is usual the horn-work stands on the opposite and down-hill side of the motte to the main bailey, which in this case would place the latter to the north-west under the farmyard.

The whole of the unmodified site is surrounded by a ditch, cut some 0.94m into the natural; a certain amount of silting can be assumed to have filled the ditch. An inner ditch also cuts between the motte and the horn-work at a maximum depth of 1.48m giving the motte the function of an inner defence from the horn-work. If this ditch could be traced around the north-west of the motte and the bailey could be found then the site would represent a perfect example of an early motte and bailey castle.

### **Strategic position:**

The site itself has a high vantage point above the surrounding area, perched as it is on top of a hill. There is no obvious strategic value to the site but it possibly represents one of the advance castles for the frontier conquest moving along the valley from Monmouth.

### **Documentary evidence**

#### **Modern reference:**

**MM085**

#### *Additional references:*

Hogg and King 1963. 117.

King 1983. 213.

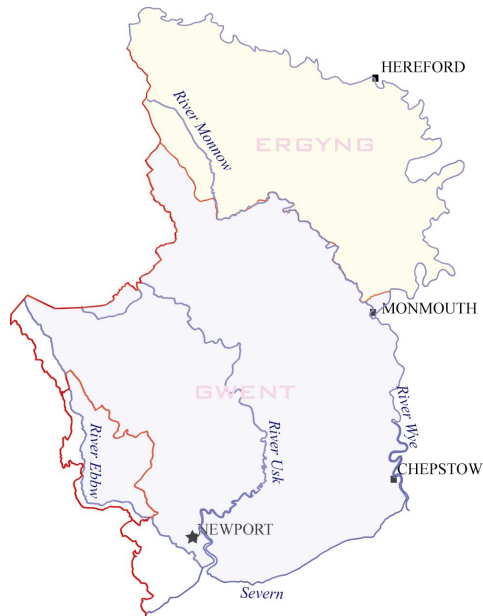
#### **Antiquarian record:**

There is no documentary evidence known about the castle, however, Edward Lhwyd 1660-1709 knew of the site and wrote 'There is in this parish an artificial mount where by report stood heretofore a wooden castle and is therefore still called 'Cast newydd or New Castle' (cited in Morris 1909-11. 19). However, by 1847 the castle had been reduced because Willet wrote 'The remains of Newcastle are very inconsiderable consisting of a tumulus or barrow' (1847. 41).

#### **Interpretation:**

#### **Motte and bailey (Early)**

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, survey and location suggests of the early period of castle building when offence was a major factor in design requirements. The steepness of the motte and the surrounding ditch show that inner defence was also a major issue.

**NEWPORT****Grid: ST 31172 88487****Location:**

The city of Newport is situated on the banks of the River Usk at its mouth where it joins the River Severn. The city is easily accessed from the M4 motorway.

The castle in Newport is not difficult to find for it dominates the waterfront.

**Description:**

As can be seen in the plate (Vol. 2. plate 192), the castle is a masonry structure and there is no evidence to suggest the presence of an earlier earthwork structure on this site.

**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken at this site because it is outside the remit of this study.

**Strategic position:**

The position of the castle would be well placed to defend the river passage or a crossing point but there is no observable natural defence other than the river itself.

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

The *B.Saes* and *BT. RBH* mention the new castle on the Usk in connection with the slaying of Iorwerth ab Owain (Jones 1955.159 : 1971. 177). However, the *BT. Pen* translates the same phrase as new town not new castle (Jones 1952. 68).

**Antiquarian reference:**

Coxe wrote of Newport that the old name used to be Welsh Castell Newydd or Newcastle, and inferred that this name was coined after the old castle at Caerleon was replaced by the newer creation at Newport (1801. 45). It is, however, likely that the Newcastle in the town replaced the old castle on the hill at Stow.

**Modern reference:****MM009**

The castle at Newport was dated from documentary and architectural evidence to 1327 to 1386 (Knight 1991. 21).

***Additional references:***

Renn 1968. 257.

Hogg and King 1963. 117.

King 1983. 205.

**Interpretation:****Masonry**

Interpretation based on field work and documentary evidence suggests the site is a masonry castle with no sign of the existence of a motte.

**NEWPORT (STOW)****Grid: ST 30400 87400****Location:**

The general area of the motte at Stow Hill can be reached from the masonry castle at Newport by taking the road called Stow Hill and travelling to the top past St Woolos Cathedral.

**Description:**

The earthwork that used to stand at the top of Stow Hill in Newport no longer exists and so there is no way of knowing exactly what it was. The description therefore must rely on antiquarian accounts of the earthwork:

The first is from 1587 'On a round hill by the church there is for sea and land the most princely sight that any man living at one instant may with perfect eye behold' (Churchyard 1756. 50). The second, 'near the church of St Woolos was a barrow called Twyn Gwynlliw, The tomb of St Woolos (Evans and Britton 1810. 121). A third comes from Wakeman who reported that 'Twyn Gwynlliw stood very near the church of St Woolos; the extension of the town of Newport in that direction, has, I believe, occasioned its removal' (1855 123). The last from Banks, 'The field in which it stood was called Fir Tree Field'.... 'it was a circular mound with a flat top some 50 feet in diameter and surrounded by a ditch' ... 'the area was used for dumping spoil from the tunnels excavated by The Great Western Railway in the 1840s. The motte is supposed to be buried under them (1886. 21).

**Topographic survey:**

As the site no longer exists it was not possible to undertake a survey.

**Strategic position:**

The exact whereabouts of the site are unknown and the entire area has now been developed so assessment is fairly problematic. However, the lofty position of the site must have offered considerable advantage as a look-out point for a watch-tower at least.

**Documentary evidence**

**Modern record:**

It is reported by Salter that the land on which the motte was built c. 1100, was given to Robert of Hay by Roger fitz Hamon (Salter 2002. 34). Unfortunately he does not cite his source for this information.

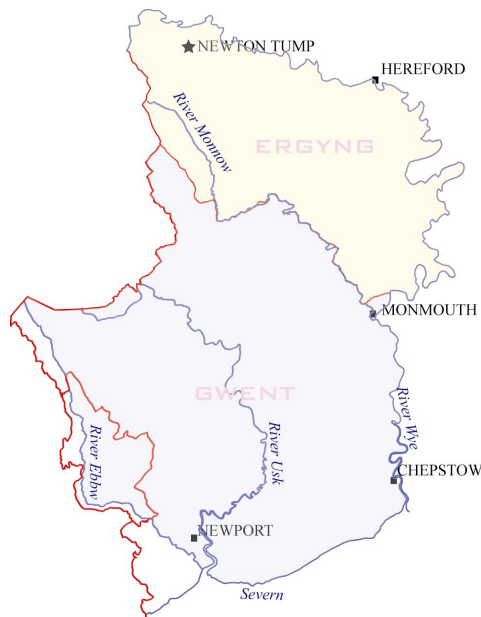
***Additional references:***

King 1983. 289.

**Interpretation:****Possible motte and bailey (Early)**

It can be presumed therefore that a large earthwork, possibly a motte and bailey castle existed on the summit of the hill close to St Woolos Cathedral. It is suggested that the motte would have been early due to its position on the presumed Gwent/Gwynllŵg border.



**NEWTON TUMP (CLIFFORD)****Grid: SO 29272 44053****Location:**

The earthwork situated at the Newton Tump is located to the north of Bage Court on the B4348, approximately 3.5km north-west of Dorstone.

**Description:**

Newton Tump is undoubtedly a medieval motte and bailey castle with motte, ditch, bailey and outer ditch. The site, however, is not a usual form and may represent differing phases of construction. Its present form is that of a small, tree clad mound of earth at the north-west corner of a bailey (Vol. 2. plate 193). The bailey is completely surrounded by a ditch, which in some places retains some of its inner rampart (Vol. 2. plate 194). The aerial photograph gives a good view of the site showing the motte to the bottom left (Vol. 2. plate 195); (north is to the left in this view). The squared off front of the ditch is a very unusual feature for this type of earthwork although Lingen, SO 366 673, motte and bailey to the north is similar. There are traces of stonework on the motte and also in the rampart. In the middle of the east ditch is a depression and two mounds, one either side, which could be a gateway to the bailey. The various patches of vegetation on the bailey do denote the presence of sub-surface earthworks.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 38)**

The maximum height of the motte is some 4.47m and the top surface area is 143.370m<sup>2</sup>. The shape of the motte is oval but slightly irregular, which could suggest that some damage has occurred with possible, associated loss of height. The motte is surrounded by a ditch, which varies from 0.86m to 1.27m in depth, separating it from the bailey and thereby, providing internal defence. The continuous ditch would suggest that the base of the motte is close to its original size.

The bailey is quite large with a surface area of 3238.46m<sup>2</sup> and appears to be raised above the natural surface, especially towards the north. Interestingly, the survey data shows that the surface of the bailey has a south to north gradient of 0.7%, whereas, the natural surface of the surrounding field slopes south to north at a gradient of 9.93%. The bailey has therefore been levelled using 570.157m<sup>3</sup> to produce a horizontal surface (see Vol. 2. surveys).

**Geophysical survey:**

The geophysical survey of the site also confirmed that the bailey had been raised because ridge and furrow marks were picked up running at an angle to the bailey but stopping at its edge (see vol. 2. geophysics). The geophysical survey also picked up high resistivity features in various parts of the bailey which were interpreted as possible buildings, two wall towers, a gatehouse and a bridge base.

**Strategic position:**

The overall position of the motte and bailey is bad as there are no apparent natural defences. Although the bailey protects the motte on most sides, the north is completely exposed. The remnants of a perimeter rampart on the bailey to the south and east provides a clue to the defences. As the location has no obvious natural defence, the entire site would have needed to be enclosed by a wall or rampart, which would have included the motte within its perimeter. It is possible that the ditch was wet due to the feeder inlet to the southwest of the outer ditch. The presence of water on the site may be the key to its position and construction of the raised bailey and the seemingly unprotected motte. The site today is heavily waterlogged to the north and the present owner reported that drainage is an ever-present problem. It is possible that the Normans used the boggy ground as a defence, raising their motte and bailey above it. A similar interpretation for Mount Ballan has been suggested earlier in this chapter. In this way the unusual form of the site may represent a solution and response to the location. The shape of the bailey, with the two straight edges, is very unusual but may be the result of the efforts to raise the platform on the east and north side, the straight lines being more easily managed at a planning stage.

**Documentary evidence****Modern reference:****HWCM1401**

Marshall made the assumption that the motte and bailey were probably built on the land held by Gilbert fitz Turolde due to its proximity to The Bage discussed above (Marshall 1938. 153).

***Additional references:***

VCH 1908. 235.

RCHME 1931. 39.

King 1983. 204.

**Interpretation:****Motte and bailey (Mid)**

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, topographical survey, geophysical survey and location is that there were probably different phases of construction.

The most evident aspect of the site, the raised bailey, suggests that it was late construction designed as a centre of administration and control rather than conquest. Such a site would have justified the extra work of flattening the bailey area; with most early sites, such effort was usually not expended.

The shape of the motte, however, is of early form designed for private defence; conversely its present and non strategic position would limit such use. Had the site been on a high point with good views, the motte would have worked well as an outpost/lookout, but in the bottom of a valley a more defensive enclosure would be expected.

The combination of a high motte, which would signify an earlier construction, and the low badly defended position of a later site, confuses the dating process. Possible solutions could be that an extensive enclosing wall and the boggiess of the ground did indeed provide a good defence for the motte. Alternatively, the motte was the original structure and the bailey was added in its present form at a later date. With the current evidence it is difficult to arrive at a date for the site, however, as the bailey is such a visible feature and the linear walls are atypical with early mottes the tentative interpretation for this site would place it in the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century, a period of stability.

**OLD CASTLETON****Grid: SO 28302 45723****Location:**

Old Castleton is situated on a natural outcrop south of the River Wye and can be reached from the B4352 road that runs north-east from Hay on Wye to Hereford.

**Description:**

Old Castleton, assuming that it was an earthwork castle, is in a remarkably good state of preservation. It is an unusual site in that it would appear to have two very distinct earthwork types in evidence, a ring-work and a motte and bailey castle. The aerial photograph, (Vol. 2. plate 196)

shows the central area of the site, with the motte to the left and the small enclosed inner bailey to the right. What the photograph misses is the possible baileys to the top and bottom of the picture which can be seen on the map (Vol. 2. figure 92). Today the western bailey is still apparent but the eastern one is less convincing. The whole site is located on the edge of the scarp with the motte separated from the inner bailey by a ditch. The outer edge of the motte base lies on ground that is prone to flooding as can be seen in the next photograph (Vol. 2. plate 197). Photograph 3 shows a view from the southern rampart, across the inner bailey to the top of the motte (Vol. 2. plate 198). It can be seen from this angle that the motte was actually lower than the bailey which is an unusual occurrence. It also suggests that the river side was less of a defence problem because the motte is next to it rather than protected behind a bailey. The last photograph shows the view across the west bailey back to the motte (Vol. 2. plate 199). The bailey would appear to have had a rampart across the western and southern edges; however, the building of the road may have confused the southern side. The rampart around the inner bailey is in such good condition that it is possible that it has a masonry core.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 39)**

The height of the motte above the bailey is only 2.03m towards the outside it reaches a height of 8.48m. The top surface area is quite large at 164.495m<sup>2</sup> and it is evident that some damage has occurred to the south which has made the surface area smaller as well as reducing the height.

The bailey, to the south of the motte, is the sloping surface of the hill-side which has been surrounded by a two adjacent crescentic earthen ramparts, with a maximum height of 2.9m, thereby, enclosing 1724.843m<sup>2</sup> of land. The rampart is open to the south which is opposite the

motte. Outside the rampart, to the west, is an outer bailey measuring some 3355.591m<sup>2</sup>. To the north the bailey is defended by the 7.42m natural slope of the ridge and to the east it is bounded by a 1.28m ditch which separates it from the rampart. South and west of the bailey the ridge has been scarped and quarried but vegetation coverage prevented survey in that section. According to documentary evidence a further bailey exists to the east but this area was not visited during the research due to access problems.

### **Strategic position:**

The location of the site has very good natural defences in the form of a steep ridge which the Normans used to best advantage by building first a crescentic ring-work and later a motte and bailey. The strategic position of the site is somewhat unclear but heavy rain at the time of the first survey may have provided the answer. The River Wye floods to the base of the ridge on which the castle is built. It is possible that the Normans first fortified the ridge as a riverside site either during heavy flooding or possibly the river course has changed. If the latter is the case then it could also have made the castle redundant if the course moved away from the site.

### **Documentary evidence**

#### **Modern reference:**

**HWCM1015**

There is no documentary evidence for this site but although Castleton was not mentioned in *Domesday* it probably occupied land held by Gilbert the Sheriff (Marshall 1938. 155). Unfortunately Marshall does not give a source for this information.

#### ***Additional references:***

VCH 1908. 234-236.

RCHME 1931. 38-39.

Hogg and King 1963. 117

King 1983. 203.

### **Finds:**

Dating evidence is provided for the motte by two pieces of a handmade Worcester cooking pot rim from a badger set at the bottom of the motte. The find was made by Chris Smith during the survey and dated by Steve Clark. The pieces fit together and are considered to be good dating evidence as one was found in the soil from the set and the other within the entrance way. As the pot sherds came from the fabric of the motte itself the motte construction must post-date the pottery. Pottery dates, earliest 1100 with more precise estimate of 1140-1180. The pottery sherds were donated to Hereford Museum.

**Interpretation:****Ring-work (Early) motte and bailey (Mid)**

Interpretation of the site was made from field-work, survey, documentary evidence and location. The configuration of the site would suggest that a natural ridge above the River Wye was chosen as a suitable place for a defensive structure. It is also possible that the site was located from the river, because it is known to flood up to the bottom of the ridge as the photographs above show. The first structure built was the ring-work possibly making a defended enclosure for a garrison in hostile country. It has been suggested that this site was chosen to guard the north entrance to the Golden Valley as a precursor to the more established stone castle at Clifford (Purser 1994. 73). This would obviously date the site to pre-1071 as part of fitz Osbern's control measures. At a later stage, possibly post 1100 but probably 1140-1180, the motte was added, possibly as a private fortress for the owner, possibly as a watch tower. It is possible that the site may have been a riverside castle; possibly a change in the river's course may have led to the decline of this site.

**ORCOP CASTLE****Grid: SO 47282 26529****Location:**

Orcop motte and bailey castle is situated on farmland in a very damp area of low lying ground. It can be reached from the A465, Hereford to Abergavenny road by turning east at Pontrilas. The site lies about 8km along this road.

**Description:**

The motte and bailey at Orcop occupies low lying ground in the bottom of a valley surrounded by hills and takes the form of a high sided conical motte surrounded by a ditch and raised bailey similar to those at Newton Tump and

Mount Ballan (see above). The motte is very overgrown and difficult to reach because of the wet moat. However, the top is fairly flat and there are some traces of masonry embedded in the surface rim. Although it is possible that these represent the ruins of a shell-keep, this can only be confirmed by excavation. If the masonry remains are contemporary with the construction then it would confirm the height of the present motte as original.

The aerial photograph gives an excellent idea of the layout of the castle as it appears today (Vol. 2. plate 200). When the map, (Vol. 2. figure 93), was drawn, more of the bailey was apparently intact towards the north end. The photograph above shows how marshy the field is, something that may have been used for defence. The second photograph shows the motte from ground level (Vol. 2. plate 201). It is possible from this angle to see that the ditch had some sort of bank, possibly a rampart or more likely a palisade. The base of the motte is surrounded on all sides by a wet ditch, supplied by water from a stream to the east, which skirts the site. The third photograph shows the wet moat, which appears to be a permanent feature (Vol. 2. plate 202). To the south-west of the motte ditch is a small counter-scarp bank which may be the remains of a horn-work on the opposite side of the motte from the bailey providing a defence for the down-hill side of the otherwise unprotected motte.

To the west of the motte the ditch is barely discernable; the outer edge abuts the natural surface of the field, whilst to the east, a small bank with an inlet or outlet leat separates the site from the stream. The last photograph shows the remnant of the bailey ditch towards the north-east of the site, as shown on the map above (Vol. 2. plate 203).

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 40)**

The motte stands at a maximum height of 6.59m above the natural surface and has a top surface area of 270.4m<sup>2</sup>. The position of the encircling ditch confirms the original size of the motte base, 1200.442m<sup>2</sup>. The bailey has been destroyed to the north by the construction of farm buildings across its end but the surviving area still covers some 2730.5m<sup>2</sup>. The form of the bailey, at the time of the survey, is an area of ground, raised on the west by 1.15m and the east by 1.78m. The north end has been destroyed and the south is terminated by the wet ditch around the motte. The height from the surface of the water to the top of the bank reaches a maximum of 2m. As with Newton Tump, the level of the bailey has been modified to a north to south gradient of 0.7% whilst the natural land slope is 1.8%.

**Strategic position:**

The site has no apparent natural defence to encourage the construction of a castle here and has no obvious strategic importance. However, as with Newton Tump and Mount Ballan, poor drainage causes the field area to remain either waterlogged or at best marshy.

**Documentary evidence****Modern record:****HWCM922*****Additional references:***

VCH 1908. 243-244.

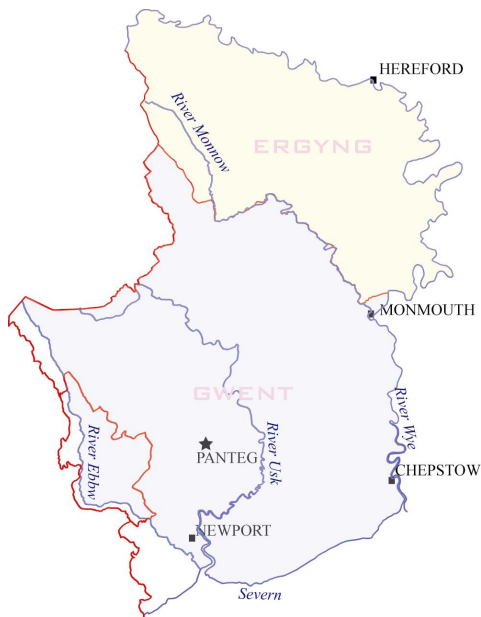
RCHME 1931. 208.

King 1983. 209.

**Interpretation:****Motte and bailey (Early)**

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, survey and location leaves little doubt as to the function of this castle. The shape and size of the motte makes it a strong defensible structure and there is good evidence that the motte was defended from the bailey providing a private fortification function and therefore suggesting an early construction date. As with Newton Tump and Mount Ballan, the argument against the site being early is the immensity of effort required in raising such a large area of ground in hostile territory, particularly when more readily defensible sites were available. In the case of this site, however, the size and configuration of the motte and bailey would tend to outweigh the latter argument and suggest that the site is early.



**PANTEG CASTLE MOUND****Grid: ST 31300 98900****Introductory note:**

The site no longer exists and consequently has not been seen for this research. Information is derived from an excavation in 1989 by GGAT to determine the function and date of the feature. Previous interpretations had ranged from Bronze Age to Victorian.

**Location:**

Panteg Castle Mound was located to the south-east of Pontypool in an area known as New Inn.

**Description:**

‘The feature lies on the south-western slope of one of the small tributaries of the Sôr Brook, some 30m north-east of Panteg rectory. It is ‘D’ shaped, surrounded on three sides by linear hollows and on the fourth by the stream. It is overlooked by high ground to the east and west, and is only a maximum of 1m higher than the ground to the north-west’ (Maylan & Page 1989).

**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken because the site no longer exists.

**Strategic position:**

Unknown

**Documentary evidence****Modern record:**

The first documentary evidence from the site comes from its listing on the 1886 Ordnance Survey Map. King recorded it as a low ‘small and feeble’ motte (King 1983. 286) and Courtney dismissed it as a motte in his doctoral thesis (Courtney 1983). An Ordnance Survey record card for 1957, records that the mound was created during the rebuilding of the rectory (Curtis-Morgan 6,9,57. ST39W4).

***Additional references:***

Hogg and King 1963. 100.  
King 1983. 286.

**Excavation:**

The excavation revealed nothing structural about the mound and the pottery assemblage was mostly 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century with a few bits of other post medieval material, consequently the mound is dismissed as an ancient monument (Maylan and Page 1989).

**Interpretation:**

Interpretation based on the above documentary evidence suggests that the mound is 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**PEMBRIDGE****Grid: SO 48817 19304****Location:**

The site is reached by travelling north-east from Abergavenny on the B4521 to Skenfrith. Approximately 2.5km past Skenfrith is a cross roads in the village of Broad Oak. The lane to the right, passes the gate house of Pembridge castle.

**Description:**

Pembridge castle is a large masonry structure located to the north-west of Monmouth. The castle today is a private residence and it is not open to the public. It can, however, be viewed quite easily from the road (Vol. 2. plate 204).

**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken as the site is a masonry castle with no evidence to suggest an earlier earthwork site.

**Strategic position:**

The requirements for the positioning of a masonry castle are probably different to an earthwork structure therefore to assess this site would be outside the remit of this study. However, it is possible to suggest that the rich agricultural nature of the land would have been a consideration.

**Documentary evidence****Modern record:****HWCM 2246**

The castle is a late construction with estimates dating to some time before 1219 (Salter 1992. 36). There appears to be no reason to suspect that the castle was ever of earthen construction as can be seen by the construction phase interpretation (Vol. 2. figure 94).

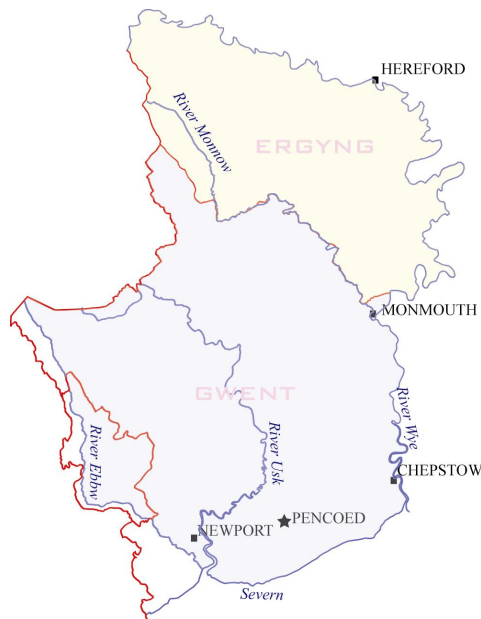
***Additional references:***

Renn 1968. 273.

King 1983. 209-210.

**Interpretation:**

**Masonry**

**PENCOED CASTLE****Grid: ST 40697 89432****Location:**

The location of Pencoed Castle is about 5km east of the outskirts of Newport. It can be reached from the B4245 Newport to Magor road by passing through Llanmartin and following a turning to the left which leads to Pencoed Castle.

**Description:**

The structure is a masonry castle and from its form there is nothing to suggest that this was ever an earth and timber castle (Vol. 2. plate 205), (Vol. 2. figure 95).

**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken as the site is a masonry castle with no evidence to suggest an earlier earthwork site.

**Strategic position:**

The requirements for the positioning of a masonry castle are probably different to an earthwork structure. Consequently, to assess this site would be outside the remit of this study. The rich agricultural nature of the land could have been a consideration.

**Documentary evidence****Antiquarian record:**

The earliest reference to it is quoted by Wakeman as 1270 when Sir Richard More owned it (1864. 6).

**Modern reference:*****Additional references:***

King 1983. 286.

King 1983. 290.

**Interpretation:**

**Masonry**

**PENHOW****Grid: ST 42322 90818****Location:**

Penhow Castle is located some 9km east of the outskirts of Newport. The site is reached by taking the A48 Newport to Chepstow road and turning right for Penhow castle which is open to the public.

**Description:**

The castle is a masonry structure which occupies a natural outcrop of rock beside the road.

The castle has no outward signs of ever having been an earthwork or timber castle (Vol. 2. figure 96 :Vol. 2. plate

206).

**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken as the site is a masonry castle with no evidence to suggest an earlier earthwork site.

**Strategic position:**

Since the requirements for location of a masonry castle will probably be different to an earthwork structure, assessment of this site would be outside the remit of this study. However, rich agricultural land may have been a consideration.

**Documentary evidence****Antiquarian record:**

Morgan examined the architecture of the building and saw no reason to call it a castle in the ordinary sense of the word as there are 'no outworks, no fosse, moat or barbican, no drawbridge, gate house or portcullis nor any attempt at military defences in its construction' (1867. 18).

**Modern reference:*****Additional references:***

King 1983. 286.

**Interpretation:**

**Masonry**



**PENRHOS****Grid: SO 40952 13169****Location:**

Penrhos castle is situated just over 5km north of the village of Raglan which itself lies on the A 40. The site occupies a small spur of high ground that overlooks the River Trothy.

**Description:**

The site at Penrhos is a motte of very unusual design. It consists of an earthen mound surrounded by a ditch and rampart which show up clearly in the aerial photograph (Vol. 2. plate 207). To the north, west and south is a further ditch and rampart, whereas to the east only a ditch is visible. The photograph shows two of the rampart ends with the motte in the middle (Vol. 2. plate 208). There is no evidence of a bailey and the only large area encompassed by the defences, apart from the motte, appears to be the top of the north rampart.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 41)**

The motte itself is fairly small with a top surface area of 135.449m<sup>2</sup>; it may have held a watch-tower of some sort since the site is unlikely to have accommodated many people. The site is devoid of any natural defence which would have drawn the Normans to build there so it is possible that it was chosen because it already had a mound. To support this interpretation, a series of measurements were computed from various locations within the confines of the earthwork to the outside. The calculation resulting from taking the natural plane from the built surface digital terrain model showed that the entire earthwork contained about 2220.274m<sup>3</sup> of fill. The surprise, however, was that the calculation recorded no cut volume which was strange as a large ditch surrounds the motte. To check the program various height calculations were computed from the ditch to the outside natural surface and all recorded positive heights ranging from 0.5m to almost 4m. It would seem therefore that the entire mound has been piled onto the natural surface and the ditch cut into it at no time cutting into the natural. Arguably to create a mound and then reshape it to such an extent would be inefficient. A more likely scenario would be the reshaping of an existing mound to suit a purpose for which it was not originally intended. It is therefore possible that the motte at Penrhos has been created on an earlier site of undetermined date.

**Strategic position:**

As was stated above the site has no observable strategic value or natural defence but the possibility, inferred from comparison of the entire earthwork with the natural background is that a pre-existing mound may have stood at the site. This possibility and the documented history of the site (see below) may suggest that the site was ideal as it was part of a disputed area between the lordships of Abergavenny and Monmouth.

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

The earliest reference to Penrhos castle so far found is that of 1248 granting John of Monmouth *seisin* of Penros castle (*Cal. Pat.* 28). In the same year William de Cantilupe the younger had intruded into the castle of Penros but later surrendered it to the king's mercy (*Cal. Pat.* 29). 1251, 'Waler Teutonico,' sherrif of Hereford was sent to the castle by the king to remove by force if necessary, 'certain malevolent persons ' who had 'intruded themselves in a hostile manner into the castle of Penros' (*Cal. Close.* 1247-51. 540-1). Two more records of 1251 state 'Walerand le Tieys' was sent to Penros to secure the surrender 'of those who hold themselves therein' and 'Walerand le Tieys' was instructed to deliver Penros into the hands of John of Monmouth (*Cal Pat.* 97). The last record for 1251 frees William de Cantilupe from punishment for his deeds concerning the intrusion on the castle (*Cal Pat.* 97). In 1252 it was suggested that John of Monmouth put the castle in the hands of the sheriff of Hereford for safety (*Cal. Close.* 1251-52. 50) and some days later the sheriff was told to restore the castle to John of Monmouth (*Cal. Close.* 1251-52. 54). A warning was issued to both John of Monmouth and William de Cantilupe not to take matters into their own hands concerning the castle (*Cal. Close.* 1251-52. 200-201). The final mention comes in 1253 where William de Cantilupe was given warning of his trial for having 'thrown down' the castle of Penros (*Cal Pat.* 97).

**Antiquarian reference:**

Antiquarian interest in the site goes back to the visit by Wakeman who recorded not only the moated tumulus but also two moated 'half moon' platforms and a 'hollow way' running west to north; adding that if the latter were indeed a track-way then access to the mound would have required steps (1855.15).

**Modern reference:****MM097**

Olding summarised the primary evidence above suggesting that the castle was built in 1248 much to the irritation of William de Cantilupe who swiftly acted against it seizing it three times. On the first two occasions he was ordered to restore it to John of Monmouth but the last time he destroyed it (Olding1998).

***Additional references:***

King 1983. 287.

**Interpretation:**

Interpretation of this site from fieldwork and survey is impractical because the motte is typologically different from the others in this study. Dating from the documentary evidence and Olding's interpretation would suggest that the castle was built in 1248.

**PENYCLAWDD****Grid: SO 30967 20139****Location:**

The motte at Penyclawdd can be reached from the A465 Abergavenny to Hereford road by turning north-west just before the village of Llanfihangel Crucorney then turning to the right after the railway bridge. The lane is sign-posted Penyclawdd Court. The motte stands in the grounds of Penyclawdd Court which is private property.

**Description:**

The land occupied by the motte is at the foot of a steep hill to the west. The remains of the motte today consist of a low flat topped mound with a surrounding ditch on all sides except the south-east where it has been truncated by the garden of Penyclawdd Court. The aerial photograph, (Vol. 2. plate 209) shows the layout of the site with the modern buildings to the south and east. The second photograph shows the motte as seen from the eastern rampart (Vol. 2. plate 210), which surrounds the ditch, and another ditch, which is filled by a stream from the west, surrounds the rampart (Vol. 2. plate 211).

The farm yard would seem to be the most likely place for a bailey if one existed. To the south of the farm complex is another ditch which has been used in the road construction but a bank here, may have had older origins.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 42)**

The mound is circular with a surface area of 327.367m<sup>2</sup> and a height above the bottom of the inner ditch of only 2.16m. Calculations resulting from the survey revealed that the top of the present motte is actually beneath the surrounding natural surface of the hill at height reductions ranging between 1m to 0.29m, (see cross section Vol.2. surveys). The present mound therefore was not raised but cut from the natural slope and so does not represent a motte.

The rampart stands higher than the surrounding natural landscape and obviously the enclosed mound, which again is an unusual feature that defies an easy explanation. Outside of the rampart is another cut ditch which incorporates a stream and has been dammed to create a wet moat. The latter probably has nothing to do with the fortified-site but has been added later as a landscape feature. The suggestion by the owner, supported by an 18<sup>th</sup> century estate map, indicates that the

idea that this was the remains of a wet moat is unfounded as the south of the site lies 1.5m lower than the north so neither argument or topography would hold water.

### **Geophysical survey:**

The top surface of the mound was surveyed with a resistance meter and the results showed high resistivity anomalies that were interpreted as masonry walls, probably the remains of a large building (see Vol.2 geophysics). Excavation of an evaluation trench based on the geophysical survey confirmed the presence of masonry walls to the north east of the mound surface see (Vol.2. excavations). The largest wall had a width of 1.8m and stood 0.86m high consisting of courses of unfinished sandstone on both outer and inner surfaces and containing a rubble fill.

### **Strategic position:**

The location of the site has no natural defence with which to attract castle builders and its position on the gentle slope of a hill, which towers above it a short distance away, weakens the location. Furthermore, the mound is actually lower than the defending bank, which is itself lower than the surrounding fields. There also appears to be no strategic advantage in building a castle at this place other than the surrounding agricultural potential.

### **Documentary evidence**

#### **Primary reference:**

There is no early documentary evidence for the site and indeed its first mention is 1349 when Walter de Kymbard held the site from Lawrence de Hastings of Abergavenny for half a Knight's fee (Bradney 1906. 211).

#### **Antiquarian reference:**

A 1775 estate map shows a stylised view of the site complete with the double ditched motte (Vol. 2. figure 97). It is worth noting, from comparison of the estate map and the aerial photograph, (see above), that the rectangular fields to the east and north have been present for a long period of time.

#### **Modern reference:**

**MM145**

#### ***Additional references:***

Hogg and King 1963. 96.  
King 1983. 285.

**Excavation:**

Excavation at the site had two aims; firstly, to test the existence of an encircling ditch around the mound and secondly to investigate the nature of the geophysical anomalies identified on top of the mound. In the first instance, the ditch was shown to have existed to the south of the mound where all evidence had been previously lost. The excavated ditch reached a depth of 2.67m before natural was reached; at this point the mound has a height of 1.89m, therefore the original ditch had a depth of 4.56m from the bottom to the top of the mound. The ditch showed phases of levelling, underneath which were collapse layers of large stone roof tiles. Initial pottery analysis dates the collapse layer to late Tudor. Beneath the layers associated with the tumble of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but still above the oldest silting at the bottom of the ditch, were two sherds of medieval pottery (both Bristol Redcliffe) dating to the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Anthony, *pers comm*).

The evaluation trench on top of the motte contained areas of burning and collapse debris such as roof tile, as well as pottery of the same period. The evidence would suggest therefore that the mound once supported a large rectangular masonry structure which suffered fire damage, and part of the building collapsed into the ditch. It is possible that the masonry was used to build the adjacent 16<sup>th</sup> century Penyclawdd Court.

**Interpretation:****Fortified-site (late) possible motte and bailey**

The earthwork at Penyclawdd is an awkward site to interpret with any certainty as it may well be the result of different phases of construction. The interpretation based on actual remains, topographical survey, geophysical survey, location and documentary evidence would suggest that the shape and height of the mound as it stands today has more in common with a later fortified-site than a motte and bailey castle. However, the excavations revealed a possibility that a motte and bailey castle may have pre-dated the present mound. This possibility is suggested by the depth of the encircling ditch coupled with the potential of the existence of a bailey as suggested by the bank south of the barn complex (see above). This form of survival was noted above at Llangovan where the entire area of the bailey has been destroyed by the construction of a farm-yard leaving the motte at one side and a partial ditch and embankment on the other. Curiously both have roughly contemporary later buildings in the bailey, both of which are called Penyclawdd.

**PETERCHURCH MOUND RIVER DORE****Grid: SO 34192****38908****Introductory note:**

The site of Peterchurch was one of the sites included in the original list of information obtained from the Hereford SMR at the beginning of this research. Its location took a great deal of field work but it was eventually found using a hand held GPS.

**Location:**

The site is reached by travelling to Peterchurch on the B4348, Hay on Wye to Hereford road. On the northern outskirts of the village is a public house beside a lane to the west which leads to Snodhill. Travelling along this lane to the river bridge and then walking along the river bank towards the south, the site is found on the east bank.

**Description:**

Seen from Peterchurch the site appears as a low tree clad mound. On closer inspection it can be seen that the mound is an old derelict house (Vol. 2. plate 212).

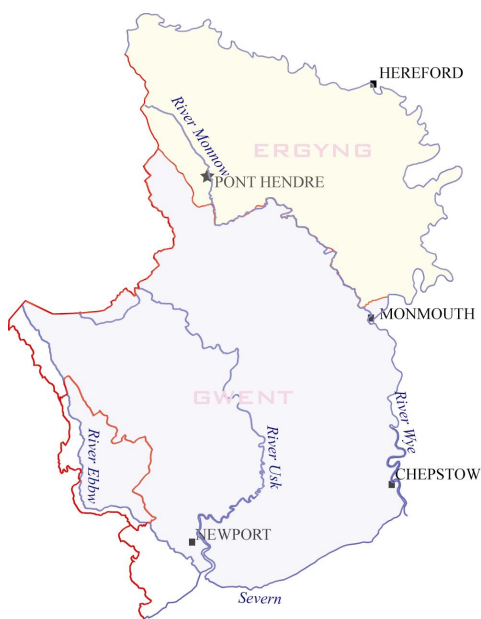
**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken because the site was a modern derelict building.

**Strategic position:**

The classification in this instance does not apply.

**Documentary evidence****Modern:****HWCM11334****Interpretation:****Modern**

**PONT HENDRE****Grid: SO 32572 28109****Introductory note:**

Pont Hendre has already been considered earlier in this chapter because of its relationship to Longtown Castle. It was decided in the Longtown description that documentary evidence pre 1170 would refer to this site at Pont Hendre.

**Location:**

Pont Hendre castle is situated in the Olchon Valley at the eastern foot of the Black Mountains. The castle stands just outside the southern end of the village of Longtown, which can be reached from the A465 Abergavenny to Hereford road. The road to Longtown branches off the A465 to the north of Pandy. The site lies to the west of the road just before the bridge over the Olchon Brook.

**Description:**

The site of the castle stands on a high point above the road. Its form is that of a large mound that has been separated from the ridge by a massive ditch. The aerial photograph, (Vol. 2. plate 213) shows the layout of the site, the motte being to the west. The motte is almost round in shape with a domed profile (Vol. 2. plate 214). Almost no flat surface is to be found on the top of the motte which could mean that a collapsed structure of some sort is buried there. Two sections of ramparts enclose the south and north of the motte and provide a partially enclosed bailey (Vol. 2. figure 98). The bailey has a scarped bank to the west, which along with the ramparts, can also be seen on the aerial photograph above, and the next photograph (Vol. 2. plate 215). Of particular interest is the rampart on the west which appears to provide a slope on one side and steep banks on the others. The fourth photograph shows this rampart from the top of the motte (Vol. 2. plate 216). A similar feature has also been noted at Llancillo earlier and was interpreted as a bridge base.

The bailey of the earthwork which is enclosed between the two arms of the rampart is flat and featureless with the exception of a modern drainage ditch. There area is quite marshy which may have been a problem when the castle was in use.



**Topographic survey:****(Survey 43)**

The earthwork at Pont Hendre consists of a large motte with a maximum height of 10.6m, top surface area of 121.303m<sup>2</sup>, and a partially enclosed bailey with a surface area of 2151.234m<sup>2</sup>. The motte has been constructed by cutting a very large ditch through the edge of a hill to the west, effectively isolating a mound to which spoil has been added to raise the resulting motte to a greater height than the surrounding landscape. The effect of the work can be seen on the east/west cross section A-B on the survey plan (Vol. 2. plate 213). It can be assumed, because of the existence of the surrounding ditch that the base of the motte is close to its original size, as is the motte height, judging by the steepness of the surviving slope and the small surface area of the top. The ditch has been rock cut in places and at its deepest point measures some 3.27m in depth and 6m in width. There can be no mistake in assessing the effectiveness of the defences of the motte.

The same cannot be said for the bailey for although it is protected to the north by a rampart above a steep natural slope, and to the south and east, by further slopes, the west is well below the height of the ridge and so vulnerable. In this aspect it shares a design flaw with Ewyas Harold, discussed above.

The southern edge of the bailey is quite interesting in that it is edged by a slope which becomes a rampart with an abrupt end some 3m above the surrounding field. A similar feature, though considerably smaller, was recorded at Llancillo where it was interpreted as a ramp base to allow access to the motte top by way of a bridge. It is worth noting the curious weak spot in the defence, seen to the west of the terminal end of the ramp, providing an unrestricted approach to the motte (Vol. 2. surveys) It could be that the rampart has been breached where it once continued to the ditch edge thereby enclosing the motte more effectively. A small crescentic rampart also edges the north side of the bailey but this does not reach the height of the southern one.

**Geophysical survey:**

A geophysical survey of the bailey area and lower south slope was used to establish a function for the two areas. No anomalies were evident in the bailey other than drainage channels but to the south there may have been some occupation structures.

**Strategic position:**

The site itself provides a high vantage point above the surrounding area, perched as it is on top of a hill. There is no obvious strategic importance to the site other than establishing a presence along the Monnow valley.

## Documentary evidence

### Primary reference:

*Db.H* records Roger de Lacy as holder of Longtown (Thorn and Thorn 1983. 184 a).

### Modern reference:

**HWCM1038**

Marshall wrote that Walter de Lacy was given the lands of Ewyas at the conquest; however, he died in 1085 and his land passed to his son Roger who held it at the time of *Domesday*. (1938. 148). Unfortunately he does not name his source; however, Walter was the father of Roger de Lacy which would suggest a connection. Purser was in agreement when he argued the frontier castle at Pont Hendre was built by Walter de Lacy in an important position guarding one of the three possible approaches to Hereford; Walter died in 1085 (1994. 76). Purser cites Ordericus Vitalis for mention of a joint expedition by William fitz Osbern and Walter de Lacy into the area before 1071 for the purpose of defence (1994. 76).

### Additional references:

VCH 1908. 242-243.

RCHME 1931. 184.

Hogg and King 1963. 118

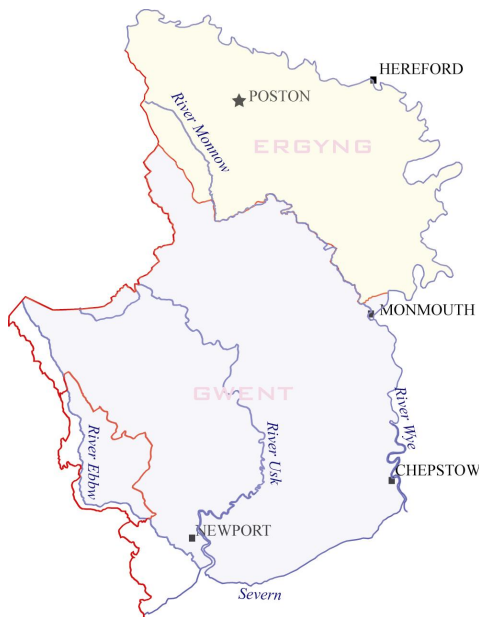
King 1983. 208.

### Interpretation:

#### Motte and bailey (Early)

Interpretation of the site is based on actual surviving remains, geophysical survey, topographical survey and location. The size and configuration of the motte suggests an early construction period for this motte as there are similarities with Ewyas Harold specifically with the weak position of the bailey in relation to the adjoining ridge height but also in the method of construction. The apparent problem could have been resolved if the bailey had been on top of the ridge, to the north of the motte, as was suggested at Ewyas Harold (see above). Similarly as at Ewyas Harold it is possible that the Normans refortified a pre-existing site that had been built originally for a different function.

The site may well represent one of the advance castles for the frontier conquest moving along the valley from Abergavenny or Ewyas Harold. The proximity of Pont Hendre and Longtown could result from abandonment of the former due to the wet nature of the bailey which appears to have forced the habitation quarters outside the protection of the ramparts. The boggy nature of the bailey is caused by a spring which issues from the bedrock located in the cut of the ditch to the north. Although the spring provides water to keep the ditch wet it has effectively removed the bailey area from being of any practical use.

**POSTON****Grid: SO 35807 37078****Location:**

The Poston site is situated on a slight spur of land some 30m above and to the north-east of the B4348, Hereford to Peterchurch road.

**Description:**

The visible remains of the castle today are unimpressive (Vol. 2. plate 217). The most visually accessible aspects are the modified bank on the south-west of the site, which appears to have had its gradient exaggerated, and a berm running from the east to the north forming a slightly elevated rectilinear platform (Vol. 2. plate 218). Close inspection of the site reveals very indistinct earthworks. A good vantage point from which to assess the site can be gained from the north looking back across the spur (Vol. 2. plate 219). To the left of the trees, which mark the line of the defensive bank above the road, can be seen two ramparts with an intervening ditch. On the right of the trees there is a change of slope which marks the north extent of the raised platform. The best view of the site, however, is from the air as the next photograph shows (Vol. 2. plate 220). The extent of the platform can be seen surrounded by a ditch, a bank and a further ditch outside. There appears to be no bailey which supports the view that this site represents a later fortified homestead rather than an earthwork castle of the motte variety.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 44)**

The earthwork consists of an irregular rectilinear mound with an indistinct top surface of some 257m<sup>2</sup> and a base area of approximately 718.423m<sup>2</sup>. In construction of the mound, the builders made use of the natural slope to the east and south adding extra gradient to the latter to achieve a height of 6.14m. The other sides rise no more than 2m.

**Strategic position:**

To the south-west lies the River Dore whilst above it to the north-east stands the Iron Age hill-fort of Poston. Surrounding the site and visible from it are the Norman sites of Bacton, Chanstone, Cothill and Snodhill whilst Monnington is a little more than 2km to the west. In terms of strategic position Poston has all the right conditions for a motte and bailey castle. It is a mound situated on the edge of a steep slope and it is possible that the flat area to the north and

east may have been a bailey. Unfortunately the site has been almost entirely ploughed out and indeed the reason that the mound remains may be that it contains a considerable quantity of stone making it difficult to plough.

### **Documentary evidence**

#### **Primary reference:**

Very little documentary information exists on this site. *Db.H* lists it as ‘Poscetenetune’ in the ‘Valle de Stratelei’. The tenant in chief was William de Scohies and Ralph held it of him. Edwin had previously held it and it had been waste but at the time of the survey, 1086, was valued at 5s (Thorn and Thorn 1983. 185c). William de Scohies was an absent lord with the land worked by his tenant (Marshall 1938. 145).

#### **Modern reference:**

**HWCM8408**

Kay visited the site in 1952 and reported that then the earthworks were ‘extremely vague’ possibly as a result of recent ploughing (1967. 42). He did, however, make a plan of what he was able to see at the time (Vol. 2. figure 99).

#### **Interpretation:**

**Fortified-site (Late)**

The site of Poston is difficult to classify because it is so badly damaged. The only certainty is that a man-made structure exists there; it is not a natural formation. Interpretation based on field work, survey and documentary evidence suggests the site is a late period fortified-site and not a motte. The shape and height of the mound provide the basis for this interpretation whilst the valley setting, surrounded by very good agricultural land may suggest the motivation behind its placement.

**RAGLAN****Grid: SO 41362 08284****Location:**

Arguably, the castle in Raglan is one of the best known masonry castles in the country. It stands over the village of Raglan in South Wales.

**Description:**

The castle has nothing to do with the subject of this research as it was probably not built before 1250 and even then it was built in stone.

**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken because Raglan castle is outside the remit of this study.

**Strategic position:**

The requirements of a stone castle site may differ from those of an earthwork castle therefore it is inappropriate to speculate on the position of Raglan.

**Documentary evidence****Modern reference:****MM005*****Additional references:***

King 1983. 287.

Various interpretations have been suggested for the construction of Raglan Castle ranging from the late thirteenth century (Lewis 1987. 143) to the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Kenyon 1991. 39). It has, however, been suggested that there was a previous castle on the site before the masonry castle was built (Kenyon *pers comm.*). Bradney wrote that the earliest mention of Raglan is in the 12<sup>th</sup> century when the de Clares erected a castle there, on a tump called Twyn y Ceirios (the cherry tree tump) (1895-97. 76); unfortunately Bradney does not name his source. It has even been suggested that the base on which the Yellow Tower is built may have been a motte.

**Interpretation:****Masonry**

The fact is, however, that there is no evidence to point to a pre-existing earth work castle at Raglan.

**ROCKFIELD****Grid: SO 48267 14129****Introductory note:**

The site is listed in *C. Ang* as a 'motte, small and rounded; possibly traces of a small weak bailey' (King 1983. 284). The grid co-ordinates SO 483 142 lead to an overgrown mound on Newbold Farm which has a slight ditch and a large depression to the side. The land has been ploughed and so it is difficult to trace any outworks. The owner of the farm soon took away any doubt about the earthwork with the explanation that it had been dug for drainage with the pit eventually being used as a dumping ground (*pers comm.*). The flat topped mound was the spoil from the pit.

However, on his advice a site within the nearby Golf club was examined and found to be a motte with enclosing ditch. This second site would not have been described by King in the way that he did, consequently it must be assumed that he was not looking at the right one. The actual site therefore would seem to be previously unrecorded.

**Location:**

Rockfield motte and bailey castle is situated on private land belonging to the Rolls Golf Club of the Hendre. The Hendre is some 5km north-west of Monmouth. The site located just off the B4233 Monmouth to Skenfrith road, can only be visited with permission from the owners.

**Description:**

The first photograph shows the motte on the horizon with the rampart that surrounds the ditch in front of it (Vol. 2. plate 221). A small triangular bailey, interpreted as a horn-work, lies to the west of the motte as can be seen in photograph two (Vol. 2. plate 222). The horn-work is situated at the exposed point of the motte, opposite the bailey as was suggested for Newcastle, Mynydd-brîth and Colstar and in evidence at Dingestow (see above). The motte runs down to its surrounding berm before dropping to the ditch and then rising to the low triangular bailey. A larger bailey to the east complete with sections of rampart can be seen in the third photograph which shows a view along the rampart with the bailey on the inside (Vol. 2. plate 223). The last photograph shows part of a cut ditch which may be the result of later quarrying or some unidentified internal form of unknown function (Vol. 2. plate 224).

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 45)**

The motte is quite small at 4.19m high, with a top surface area of only 156.74m<sup>2</sup>, suitable for a wooden tower. The bailey, 919.373m<sup>2</sup>, is separated from the motte by a ditch and raised above the natural surface, maximum height 2.61m, on at least three sides; the fourth has been quarried away at some unspecified time. The south-west edge of the bailey has remnants of an earthen rampart which may have surrounded the entire rim, possibly as a palisade. There is even the possibility of a bridge base for access to the motte on the east of the bailey.

To the south-east of the bailey is a crescentic rampart or horn-work with a surface area of 495.138m<sup>2</sup> and a maximum height of 1m.

**Strategic position:**

The site has good natural defence being situated on top of a ridge but no other observable strategic advantage. There is a possibility that the quarry may have provided the motivation behind the choice of site.

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

Documentary evidence can be found for the site, but not the castle, in *Db.G* where it is noted that Monmouth was held of the King by William son of Baderon, and that William's men at arms held Rockfield (Moore 1982. E 35).

**Modern reference:****None****Interpretation:****Motte and bailey (Early)**

This previously unrecorded motte and bailey castle has all the characteristics of an early period construction. However, the site is atypical as the motte is not situated at the steep part of the slope; the bailey is. It may be that the motte already existed as an earlier mound which the Normans re-used. Alternatively, its position may have been dictated by the geology of the fault line to the north-east as a quarry source (BGS. 233. 1974).



**ROGERSTONE****Grid: ST 27100 87800****Location:**

The site of Rogerstone castle is situated to the north of, and above the banks, of the River Ebbw. It can be reached from Newport along the A467 Newport to Risca road, at the Rogerstone, double roundabout, turning south to an industrial estate. The site is opposite a garage.

**Description:**

The earthwork that used to stand on this spot no longer exists and so there is no way of knowing exactly what it was. It was possible to find the site only because it is marked on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1886/1887, *OS* map of the area (Vol. 2. figure 100). Today all that is left is the overgrown and featureless mound shown in the picture (Vol. 2. plate 225).

The description therefore must rely on antiquarian accounts of the earthwork which are unfortunately very scant and dismissive:

‘We did not visit Rogerstone Castle, about two miles north-west of Newport, a fortress of the Stradlings who came over with fitz Hammon. Parts of the remains appear in the foundation of the mansion built on the site, belonging to the Morgans, but tenanted by Mr Butler of Caerleon’.

(Barber 1803. 195).

‘Rogerstone castle, an ancient seat of the Morgans, is half a mile from Bassaleg: but few remains of the original structure now exist. The premises are in the possession of the Royal Mine Company, and occupied by a copper works’.

(Willet 1813.191).

**Topographic survey:**

No topographic survey was undertaken as the site no longer exists.

**Strategic position:**

The strategic position is difficult to assess because of the amount of development in the area, however if the position of the site was located properly for this study then it is possible to suggest that it would have had very good natural defence on one side.

**Documentary evidence****Antiquarian reference:**

Given above as the only description of the site available.

**Modern reference:**

‘It was built by an ancestor of the Stradlings one of the twelve knights of fitz Hamon who assisted him in the conquest of Glamorgan. The Welsh called this castle Castell Gwilym’ (William’s Castle).

(Morris 1901. 89).

***Additional references:***

King 1983. 287.

**Interpretation:****Possible motte and bailey (Unknown)**

Interpretation is based entirely on antiquarian sources which suggest a castle did exist at this spot.

**ROWLESTONE****Grid: SO 37442 27164****Location:**

Rowlestone motte is sited some 2km south-west of Ewyas Harold. It is reached by taking a south-west turn from the A465, Hereford to Abergavenny road just before the turn to Ewyas Harold, following the lane to the top of the hill and at the crossroads turning right. The earthwork stands in the yard of Rowlestone Farm which is private property.

**Description:**

The motte is situated high on a south westerly facing ridge overlooking the Cwm Brook, which flows into the River Monnow at Llangau. The motte is a small earthen mound covered with thick vegetation. The photograph shows one of the more recognisable sides (Vol. 2. plate 226). The mound is almost completely surrounded by a wet ditch which is fed from a stream. The second photograph shows the south-west section of the motte where the stream leaves the moat to continue its descent to the valley (Vol. 2. plate 227). The map shows the layout of the site as it was in the late 1940s (Vol. 2. figure 101). Today the site has altered a little in that farm buildings now occupy the whole area that Kay marked as 'site of bailey'. Even the moat has been built over on the south-east corner.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 46)**

The motte is some 4.06m high with a surface area of 368.29m<sup>2</sup> and occupies an original base area of some 820.907m<sup>2</sup>. It is possible that the motte may have been higher as there is a lot of damage on the top and the steepness of the sides at 71.7% would certainly allow for more height whilst still retaining a relatively large top area.

There is no bailey evident at the site but extensive farm buildings to the east may have obliterated any trace.

**Strategic location:**

The location of the site has no natural defence although it does occupy a high ridge giving it a good vantage point as a watch-tower. The strategic advantage of the site may lie in its proximity to Ewyas Harold and Llancillo, both mentioned earlier.

## Documentary evidence

### Modern reference:

There is no documentary evidence for the earthwork at Rowlestone although a link has been made with John Turbeville for 1266 (cited in Remfry 1998. 18). An earlier interpretation was offered by Marshall who suggested that four carucates of land held in Cutesorn Hundred included Rowlestone (1938. 148). The record states that ‘in the castlery of Ewyas Earl William gave 4 carucates of waste land to Walter de Lacy. Roger his son holds them, and William fitz Osbern from him’ (Thorn & Thorn 1983. 184a).

### *Additional references:*

VCH 1908. 229-230.

RCHME 1931. 223.

King 1983. 210.

### Interpretation:

### Motte (Watchtower) (Early)

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, survey and location is that the small motte was probably an early watch-tower, and the possible association with the two castles mentioned above may help to date it as an early construction. If the motte was indeed an outpost of either of the castles cited above then a bailey would probably not have been needed as the site would be abandoned once a warning was received.

**SILVER TUMP, CRASWALL****Grid: SO 28930 32750****Location:**

The site of Silver Tump is situated in the Olchon Valley at the south-east foot of the Black Hill. It can be reached from the A465 Abergavenny to Hereford road turning west at Pandy, following the road through Longtown and turning left through Llanveynoe to Little Black Hill.

**Description:**

There are no physical remains of any earthworks at Silver Tump. The site was included in the original response from Hereford SMR at the outset of this research. Its listing SMR record 13050, records aerial photographic images which apparently show a mound with a slight double enclosure. The reference for the photographs is given as 1023 OS 1973 and 3556 OS 1964. It has not been possible to locate the 1964 aerial photograph; however, the 1973 photograph has been included (Vol. 2. plate 228) along with (Vol. 2. plate 229), with the crop marks highlighted. Three features are visible; to the left a right angled line of bank, top right a double linear line and bottom right a curved area bisected by another double line. It is the last feature that is interpreted as 'a mound and slight double enclosure crop marks, the motte and bailey' (HWCM 13050). It is not impossible that this is indeed the site of a motte and bailey castle, but it requires excavation or geophysical survey to demonstrate this.

**Topographic survey:**

There are no physical remains of this site above ground therefore a survey was not relevant.

**Strategic position:**

There are no observable natural defences in the area and the only recognisable value of this site appears to be its position in rich agricultural land.

**Documentary record****Modern reference:****HWCM13050****Interpretation:****Possible motte and bailey (unknown date)**

**SKENFRITH****Grid: SO 45607 20369****Introductory note:**

Skenfrith castle dominates the village of Skenfrith where it commands the west bank of the River Monnow (Vol. 2. plate 230). Skenfrith is one of 'The Three Castles' mentioned earlier in the chapter in relation to Grosmont.

**Location:**

Skenfrith village is located to the north-west of Monmouth and can be reached on the B4521 from Abergavenny or the B4347 from Monmouth.

**Description:**

The castle occupies an unusual position in the bottom of a narrow valley surrounded by hills. The oil painting by Ibbetson from sometime between 1759–1817 shows the height of one of the surrounding hills above the castle (Vol. 2. plate 231).

The castle is a masonry construction built on level ground with a surrounding ditch, cut as a defensive measure. It has four curtain walls with corner towers and an internal round keep (Vol. 2. figure 102). There are also footings remaining of internal stone buildings (Anon 1957. 158). The two photographs show the round keep apparently situated on a low motte (Vol. 2. plates 232 and 233).

**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken at the castle as the site represents a masonry construction with no evidence for an earlier earthwork castle.

**Strategic position:**

The site has no observable natural defence other than the River Monnow which flows past on one side of the site. The value of the site would appear to be its location in fertile valley, however, works to strengthen the river defences in 2003 revealed the presence on an early wharf (Trott 2003. 136-138). This would imply that the Monnow was navigable to this point and may explain the placement of the castle here.

## Documentary evidence

### Primary reference:

The site seems to have been recorded in the past as 'Eskenefrith' *Originalia Rolls*, 38 Henry III, (cited in Banks 1876. 300). Documentary evidence in *Db.G* for Skenfrith was suggested by Moore within the identification of Teirtref; in Norman hands in 1074 (1982. W 4 n). As part of the commote of Teirtref dues were paid to King Gruffudd by permission of William (Moore 1982. 162a). There is, however, doubt as to whom is referred to as King Gruffudd with the contenders being: Gruffudd ap Maredudd of Deheubarth who died in 1091, or Gruffudd ap Llywelyn of Powys, Deheubarth and most of South Wales, who died in 1063. Although the latter was dead by *Domesday* the term customary dues by King William's permission could still be used by the new owners. If Gruffudd ap Maredudd was the holder of Skenfrith, then Skenfrith would have passed to William de Braose in 1205, having been previously in the hands of the crown (Moore 1982. W4n).

### Antiquarian reference:

Banks argued a different scenario than the castle being held by King Gruffudd suggesting that the castle was in the hands of John of Monmouth until King John's death, at which time Reginald de Braose took possession as part of the return of his father's lands by grant from Henry III (1876. 305).

The importance of Skenfrith was enhanced by Bagnall-Oakeley when he pointed out that Skenfrith, the smallest of 'The Three Castles', is in its own hundred (1895-97. 93).

### Modern reference:

**MM088**

### *Additional references:*

Hogg and King 1963. 120.

Renn 1968. 311-312.

King 1983. 285.

### Excavation:

The site at Skenfrith has been known since Roman times with iron working dating to the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> century being found under the bailey during excavations for The Department of the Environment (Knight 1973. 166). Knight wrote that it is possible that the level ground on which the site stands is the remains of the motte; since 3.6m of gravel was found underlying the site during archaeological excavations (Knight 1987. 82, Knight 2000. 29). It is also possible that the gravel was used to raise the site above the river, not as defence from attack but for practicality from

flood. Similar extensive earthworks were found at Mount Ballan, Newton Tump and Orcop, (see above).

The keep itself, which is round, appears to be built on a mound, but excavations in the late 1960s revealed that the mound was contemporary with the tower (Craster 1967).

Consolidation work to the north-west of the castle in 2003 revealed the importance of the river to the choice of site, when extensive wharf structures were uncovered (Vol. 3. figure 103) (Trott 2003. 136-138). The first photograph shows a view from the excavation of the wharf with the ends of three substantial walls running out of the bank (Vol. 2. plate 234). The walls are over a metre thick and some 3m to 4m high. The stone on the river bank is also part of the structure forming a right angled corner to the left wall and a return. The second photograph was taken to the left of photograph 1, closer to the castle (Vol. 2. plate 235). It shows a lower wall, probably a dock. Between this wall and the first large wall is a slipway. The third photograph shows the slipway with the edge of the large upright wall (Vol. 2. plate 236). In the river are the remains of the right angle return wall shown in the first photograph. Pot sherds were also uncovered dating to the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century (Blockley *pers comm.*).

#### **Interpretation:**

#### **Tower buttress, masonry castle (Late)**

Interpretation based on field work and documentary evidence and excavation suggests the site is a late period masonry castle with no sign of the existence of a motte. The mound on which the castle stands has been recorded as a motte, but excavation showed this not to be the case, (see above), the tower was built first on natural ground and the mound was added after, as a means of strengthening it against attack. The nature of the presumed motte has much in common with Caldicot and Longtown discussed above. Like them it is very symmetrical, steep, and very tight to the base of the tower. Unlike the other two, however, the mound is quite low.

The visible remains of the castle today probably date to a period between 1219 and 1232 when the castle was held by Hubert de Burgh (Knight 2000. 29). This has been suggested from the absence of records for the expenditure; the three castles have extensive records for the periods when they were in royal hands. As mentioned earlier in this chapter under Caldicot, the circular form of the keep was introduced in the 12<sup>th</sup> century as a way of removing the threat posed by undermining the corner point of a keep (Kaufmann and Kaufmann 2001. 25).



**SNODHILL CASTLE****Grid: SO 32237 40358****Location:**

Snodhill Castle is located towards the northern end of the Golden Valley on the eastern edge of the Black Mountains. It is about 2.5km south-east of Dorstone. The site is reached by travelling to Peterchurch on the B4348, Hay on Wye to Hereford road. On the northern outskirts of the village is a public house beside a lane to the west which leads to Snodhill.

**Description:**

The castle is on private land and it hasn't been possible to contact the owners for permission to survey this site. Moreover, the site is very overgrown which would hinder any survey and which even makes photographing it very difficult. The description therefore is heavily reliant upon the writings of others. One of the castle's more accessible angles can be seen in the photograph, showing the motte surmounted by the south-west tower of the gateway to the shell keep (Vol. 2. plate 237). The castle earthworks are very large covering about 4ha (Shoesmith 1996. 190).

The site was probably created by scarping a natural hill and raising the top area to create a motte, raised bailey and surrounding ditch; by estimate the motte stands at about 6m high. The inset of the plan gives some idea of the extent of the site (Vol. 2. figure 103). The masonry shell is shown as having 10 sides although today such detail is no longer obvious. The south-west gate tower and masonry, shown on the plan, and still standing. The motte itself is as noted above, very overgrown but it is possible to make out the bailey area on which it stands. There is no evidence of a ditch separating the motte from the bailey. The bailey itself is raised on a steep bank and has a surrounding masonry wall; some of the footings are still recognisable. It is reasonable to suggest that the whole site may have had a surrounding ditch. An interesting feature of the castle is the masonry curtain wall that joins the shell keep by running up the motte. This feature was also observed at Longtown and at Caldicot although these were later examples with round keep towers.

**Topographic survey:**

No topographic survey was undertaken as it has not been possible to trace the owners.

**Strategic position:**

The reason for the location of the castle may be the advantage of the small knoll on which it was built, offering as it would, some natural defence that could have been utilized. There is, however, no observable strategic advantage to the site and the close proximity of the large castle at Dorstone would seem to be a problem, if they were both contemporary, as documentary evidence suggests.

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

Documentary evidence for the site may be found in *Domesday* but it is not conclusive. It was Robinson who first made the connection of Hugh L' Asne with Snodhill. (1869 122). This interpretation was questioned by the Rev T.P. Powell who could find no mention of Snodhill in *Domesday* (1888. 288). According to Marshall 'The interpretation is based on *Wilmestone* equating with Wilmastone on which Snodhill is built' (Marshall 1938. 151). If the interpretation is right then the *Db.H* account suggests that Leofled held it and it had been waste. At the time of the survey it was held by Hugh L' Asne (Thorn & Thorn 1983. 187 a,b).

**Antiquarian reference:**

An early visitor to Snodhill was John Leland who wrote of the castle which 'stands in a walled park on "South Hill": the castle which used to belong to the Chandos family is somewhat ruinous' (Chandler 1998. 227). Another visitor, Kay, when he made his second visit to the site in 1952, made an interpretative drawing which is useful in understanding its size (Vol. 2. plate 238).

As well as his contribution on the *Domesday* record above, Robinson also made an interesting point concerning the name Snodhill, suggesting a derivation from the Anglo Saxon *Snoed* which signifies a piece of land separated from a manor, a description which could be applied to Snodhill (1869 121). Snodhill became an honour to which a number of manors scattered in other hundreds did service (Marshall 1938. 145).

Robert de Chandos was probably the first person to hold the honour of Snodhill (Robinson 1869 121). It would seem that the honour was passed down the family as Marshall made mention of a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury to Robert de Chandos (Lord of Snodhill) sometime between 1132-1134 which would tend to confirm the Chandos claim (1938. 149).

Robert's son Roger was granted a license from Henry III, to hold a fair at Fownhope, within the honour of Snodhill in 1221 (Robinson 1869 121).

**Modern reference:****HWCM1557*****Additional references:***

VCH 1908. 243-245.

RCHME 1931. 212-213.

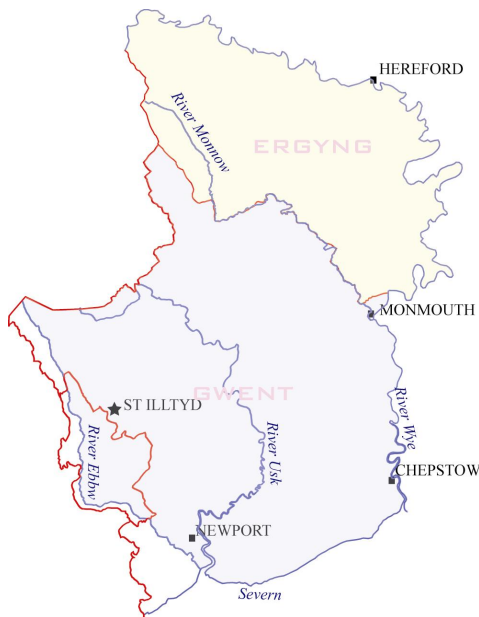
Renn 1963. 313.

Hogg and King 1963. 121

King 1983. 285.

**Interpretation:****Motte and bailey (Early)**

The interpretation of Snodhill based on actual remains and documentary evidence would suggest that the castle was originally a motte and bailey, probably constructed early in the conquest period. This interpretation rests on the shape and size of the motte which is steep, round and high, on its raised bailey, to allow for private fortification. The angular shell-keep and curtain wall would appear to be later constructions for, although they look impressive, their rather precarious nature would suggest afterthought rather than fore-planning.

**ST ILLTYD****Grid: SO 21692 01954****Location:**

The earthwork, 'St Illtyd motte', is situated south-west of St Illtyd church in the parish of Llanhilleth. The location is high on a west facing ridge above the River Ebbw. The site can be reached from the B4471 Hafodyrynys to Abertillery road, turning east at Brynithel, to the top of the hill. The earthwork is on private land behind farm buildings.

**Description:**

The oval motte which is quite prominent but small, has a surrounding ditch, the top of which can be seen in front of the motte in the photograph (Vol. 2. plate 239). The surface of the motte is covered in short grass with some gorse bushes. The north-east side of the motte base has been cut into by a retaining wall associated with the farmyard.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 47)**

The motte is 6.19m high at its maximum point and has a top surface area of 269.801m<sup>2</sup>, partially damaged to the north by what appears to be a modern access route. The damaged area covers some 36m<sup>2</sup> of the motte top and averages about 1 m in depth. The north-east side of the motte base has been cut into by a retaining wall associated with the farm-yard. It is probable that the building of the wall has affected the motte side in this area; the plan view shows that not only is the width of the slope narrower at this point but also the shape of both the top and bottom of the motte has been flattened (see Vol. 2. surveys). The average slope gradient is about 60% but in the narrow area it increases to 79%.

A shallow ditch is visible extending from the north-west of the motte towards the south and its width varies from 4m to 5m; the depth never exceeds 0.8 m. A fence and bank, which possibly has confused its shape, borders the ditch for most of its western length. To the south, the ditch, deepest at this point, has a berm between the motte and its inner top. It is probable that the ground at this point has been much altered by the road and its construction, as well as the accumulation of dumped building materials and agricultural machinery, etc.

**Strategic position:**

The site has no natural defence other than its general position on top of a ridge, however, the site is well placed for strategic purposes as a watch-tower.

**Documentary evidence****Antiquarian reference:**

No early documentary evidence survives for the site at Llanhilleth: the first mention appears to be Coxe in 1801 who notes a mound or barrow to the west of the church (1801. 253). Pinnock who visited later in 1820, and Bradney 1907, were more interested in the double mound with masonry to the east of the motte called *Castell Taliurum* (Pinnock 1820. 53) and (Bradney 1907. 463). Some interesting observations were made by Dunkin in 1872 namely that Twmbarlwm could clearly be seen from the motte and that there was no evidence of any outworks (1872.154). He also qualified his observation stating that such mounds were common in association with Roman camps, serving as watch-towers, however, even though the 'old paved roadway known to the Romans' passes close to the spot he felt the mound may be later (1872.154). The map shows the plan of the site made by Coxe (Vol. 2. figure 105).

**Modern reference:****MM141****Interpretation:****Motte (Watch-tower) (Early)**

There is an antiquarian belief that the mound was an old barrow but there is no evidence to support this, (see above), however, if it was the case then there is no reason to suppose that the Normans would not have used the height of such a pre-standing mound in order to erect a defended position. The lack of any evidence of a bailey is not necessarily problematic as the phenomenon has been noticed at other watch-tower positions including Bach Motte, Caerwent, Great Goytre and Rowlestone. In such situations, however, there is normally a larger castle close by. There are suitable locations for a bailey to have existed, the most likely being under the farm to the east.

The interpretation of this site, based on actual remains and survey, would suggest that the motte is an early watch-tower.

**ST MARGARET'S****Grid: SO 35800 33900****Introductory note:**

The earthwork at St Margaret's was one of the sites included on the original search database provided by the Hereford SMR.

**Location:**

St Margaret's church can be reached from the B4347, Ewias Harold to Peterchurch road at Bacton Stud turning left and travelling about 2km to a cross roads then turning right and then right again at the next cross roads.

**Description:**

The site of St Margaret's earthwork was searched for but could not be found during the fieldwork stage of this study and so there is no first hand information available on which to make an assessment. Three attempts were made to find visible evidence of this site but all failed, furthermore whilst engaged in a watching brief at the church, it was possible to question a number of the local inhabitants as to the whereabouts of the earthwork but none of those questioned could remember such a mound.

**Topographic survey:**

No topographic survey was undertaken as the site could not be found.

**Strategic position:**

It is very difficult to assess a site for strategic position if there is no accurate location for it, therefore the interpretation can be no more than a general observation. As such, the area has no observable natural defence other than a gentle hill slope. The site could, however, have been useful as a lookout point for a watch-tower.

**Documentary evidence****Modern reference:****HWCM9253**

The site is included in the *RCHME* 1931 inventory as unclassified and the description describes an oval mound 600 yards (0.6km) east/north-east of the church, which stands between 10ft, (3m)

and 5ft, (1.5m) above the surrounding land (RCHME 1931. 227). King was also successful in finding the site and described 'a small heap of earth, the spoil from some fairly modern digging' which he duly added to his list of reject sites (1983 214).

**Interpretation:****Possible motte/fortified-site (Unknown)**

The interpretation for this site is based on the one piece of documentary record and the SMR listing. The best that can be said for it is that the earthwork may have been a motte and bailey or a later fortified house and a point in favour of the latter is the general topography of the area which has no natural defence and no observable strategic value.

**ST WEONARDS TUMP****Grid: SO 49657 24329****Location:**

The site of St Weonards is in the centre of the village of St Weonards by the side of the village school. It can be reached from the A466, Monmouth to Hereford road which passes through the village.

**Description:**

The motte at St Weonards is an earthwork situated high on a ridge with no associated outer earthworks. The motte today consists of a tree clad and overgrown mound which has been very much reduced from its original shape. Any

bailey that may have existed has long been removed. There are, however, suitable locations for a bailey to have existed, the most likely being under the farm to the north-west. The first photograph shows the eastern side of the mound which, as can be seen, has been modified by the road (Vol. 2. plate 240). Any evidence of the ditch mentioned in the *VCH* has been removed although apparently the erasure was started by 'the cottagers, following the evil example set them' (VCH 1908. 230), referring to the Wright's excavation which had been left open, (see below). The west side has fared no better with a house and garden covering the ground on that side (Vol. 2. plate 241). The south-west side shows visible damage with the house and car parking space actually cut into the bank (Vol. 2. plate 242). Not all the damage was created by the same lack of interest in the earthwork; some was caused intentionally by excavation, (see below). The fourth photograph shows the excavation trench on the southwest side (Vol. 2. plate 243). The fifth photograph shows the damage the trench did to the top of the earthwork (Vol. 2. plate 244).

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 48)**

The motte is 6.15m high at its maximum point and has a top surface area of 531.984m<sup>2</sup>, badly damaged to the north-west by a 19<sup>th</sup> century excavation trench that sectioned the motte to the bedrock. The damaged area covers some 105.493m<sup>2</sup> of the motte top and sinks about 1.4m in depth at the mid-point. The east side of the motte base has been cut into by a retaining wall associated with a house and car-park space; there is no doubt that the building of the wall has affected the motte side in this area as can be seen in the plan view, (see Vol. 2. surveys). Further damage to the motte surface has been caused by the insertion of a concrete water tank, 2.3m by



3.2m on the south-east side. With these facts taken into account it is likely that the remains of the motte have been substantially altered from its original shape, not only in diameter but more importantly in height. Unfortunately, these are good indicators of primary function.

### **Strategic position:**

The site has no natural defence other than its general position on top of a ridge; however, it is well placed for strategic purposes such as a watch-tower. The antiquarian excavation proved that the mound was an old barrow and, as has been explained, it is probable that the Normans used such pre-standing mounds in order to erect defended positions.

### **Documentary evidence**

#### **Primary reference:**

The only documentary evidence for St Weonards is contained in the *Lib Land: St Weonards*, identified as Llan-Sant-Gwainerth, is recorded as being part of Ergyng (Rhys 1840. 546).

#### **Antiquarian reference:**

Wright recorded that the rim of the mound had been planted with fir trees and one huge poplar stood in the middle (1855. 169). Similar occurrences also occurred at King's Caple and Dorstone, as noted earlier in this chapter. Wright also recorded the custom of holding fêtes and Morris-dancing on the summit of the tumulus (1855. 169).

The map shows how the site looked at the turn of the twentieth century (Vol. 2. figure 106).

#### **Modern reference:**

**HWCM920**

In the opinion of the *VCH*, it is suggested that 'there is little room for doubt that long ere it supported a tower of defence it was a prehistoric burial mound' (1908. 230).

#### ***Additional references:***

RCHME 1931. 227.

Hogg and King 1963. 98.

King 1983. 209.

#### **Excavation:**

In 1855 an excavation trench was cut down through the mound to ascertain its nature (Wright 1855. 161-174). The plate shows an impression of the excavation at the time (Vol. 2. plate 245), and the map pinpoints where the damage was done (Vol. 2. figure 107). Two burials were found in a vaulted chamber, which were partial cremations.

**Interpretation:****Motte (Watch-tower) (Early)**

The lack of any evidence of a bailey is not necessarily problematic as the phenomenon has been observed at other watch-tower positions. However, the problem of there being no-known large castle close by which would have used an outpost or watch-tower should be noted. The interpretation of this site, based on actual remains, survey and documentary evidence, is that the motte is an early watch-tower built on top of a pre-existing, pre-historic burial mound.

**THRUXTON****Grid: SO 43512 34649****Location:**

The earthwork Thruxton is situated to the south of the B4348, Peterchurch to Wormelow road about 3km west of the junction with the A465.

**Description:**

The earthwork consists of a mound covered in bracken with a partial ditch to the north and north-east. The top of the motte contains a square, lined depression which may be a water tank such as was found at Newcastle and St Weonards mottes noted above. The first photograph shows the north side of the earthwork. The sloping bank in front of it to the left is the area of the ditch (Vol. 2. plate 246). There is a slight suggestion of a surrounding ditch to the north-east but the evidence is poor and very disturbed by later dumping of field spoil. The ground around the earthwork is heavily developed with farm buildings encroaching from the east. The whole south-east of the earthwork has been cut back and fenced off (Vol. 2. plate 247). The map enclosed, simple as it is, suggests that there was a good deal more of the earthwork in 1908 than there is now (Vol. 2. figure 108).

There do not appear to be any definite earthworks outside of the mound but in all probability these would have been lost under the farm area and it has been suggested that traces of several baileys lie under the present house and gardens (Shoesmith 1996. 213). There is no evidence of a bailey at Thruxton although a slight bank and plateau can be seen to the south-east. Given the geology of the area, there is no reason to think that the feature is other than natural. The most likely place for a bailey would have been to the north-east which would use a natural slope in that direction as a defensive bank. Unfortunately, the entire area is now occupied by a large house and garden.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 49)**

The motte is irregular in shape, 5.56m in height with a top surface area of 244.087m<sup>2</sup>. The plan view shows that a large proportion of the top surface area is missing (Vol. 2. surveys). The destroyed sections are evident to the north where there is a noticeable change to the rim, and to the south where a retaining wall has cut into the motte base. In the case of the latter, the

steepness of the slope 151.79% or 1:0.65 ratio, leaves little doubt as to the effect of the modern construction on the motte.

### **Strategic position:**

It has to be said that natural defence does not figure prominently in this area but from what was available the choice was well made. The surrounding land appears to be very fertile which may suggest the reason for the motte's placement.

### **Documentary evidence**

#### **Primary reference:**

There is specific documentary evidence for the castle at Thruxton but the land which was waste and held by Robert son of Wymarc was held by Bernard from Durand of Gloucester in 1086 (Thorn and Thorn 1983. 186 c).

#### **Modern reference:**

**HWCM6808**

According to Shoesmith, the mound was dug into in the 1870s with a rudimentary chamber having been found (1996. 213). Interestingly during the work at the earthwork, the exposed east section revealed its construction as 'the top third shaley/gravel with at the bottom what appeared to be natural clay' (Shoesmith 1996. 213). This may suggest two phases of building; possibly similar to St Weonards with one prehistoric and the other later Norman re-use. Without excavation this idea is nothing more than speculation.

#### ***Additional references:***

VCH 1908. 229, 231.

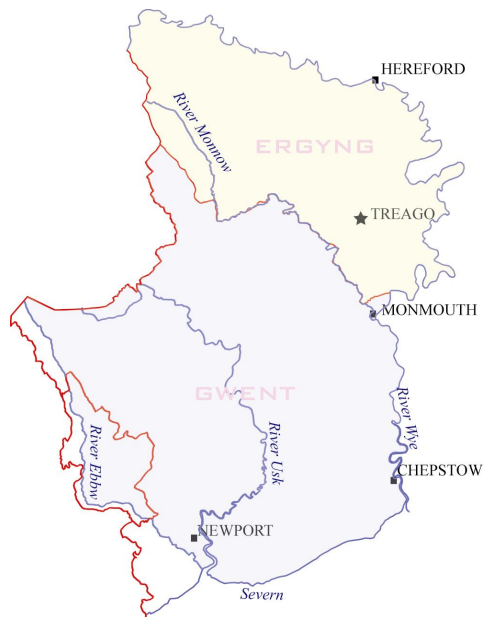
RCHME 1931. 239.

King 1983. 211.

#### **Interpretation:**

#### **Motte and possible bailey (Mid)**

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, survey and location is suggestive of the early period of castle building when offence played a major part of the design needs. However, as with Didley, (see above), the lack of any strong defensive nature to the location, plus the proximity of Kilpeck, would be more suggestive of a later settlement period possibly during a resurgence of hostilities, such as the Anarchy. This interpretation is, however, entirely speculative.

**TREAGO CASTLE****Grid: SO 49002 23879****Location:**

The site of Treago is located about 0.5km to the south-east of the village of St Weonards. It can be reached from the A466, Monmouth to Hereford road which passes through the village.

**Description:**

The castle is a private residence and the present owner Sir Richard Mynors is also the owner of St Weonards earthwork.

**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken at this site because the fortified manor house of Treago lies outside of the remit of this study.

**Strategic position:**

The strategic position of this later masonry structure is outside the remit for this study.

**Documentary evidence****Antiquarian reference:**

The castle does not relate to the subject of this research as it was built as a 13<sup>th</sup> century (Wright 1855 161-174).

***Additional references:***

RCHME 1931. 230.

King 1983. 211.

**Interpretation:****Masonry**

Interpretation based on field work and documentary evidence suggests the site is a masonry castle with no sign of the existence of a motte.

**TREGATE CASTLE FARM****Grid: SO 47977 17114****Location:**

Tregate earthwork is situated to the north-west of Monmouth on the east side of the River Monnow and lies at the base of a ridge. It is best approached from Monmouth on the A466 taking a left turn on the outskirts of the town towards Osbaston. The lane passes through the middle of Tregate farm which was built on top of the earthwork.

**Description:**

Little survives of the structure except for some enigmatic mounds and depressions. The main feature of interest is a mound that now houses a large house and farm buildings. The photograph probably shows the best descriptive view of the earthwork, the mound on which the house stands (Vol.2. plate 248). The mound is either a levelled motte or the raised embankment for a fortified house; interestingly, footings for a shell-keep were reported here (Shoesmith 1996. 166) and this is reiterated in the SMR report. However, a trench cut through the western rampart showed no defensive structure present (HWCMSMR 6255).

The map is of little help in this instance because the strong circular depiction of the earthwork gives the wrong impression of the structure (Vol.2. figure 109). The layout of the bailey area is also problematic. The map shows two rectangular terraces which are still evident today. Although the whole site is raised on the south-west there are no apparent defences to the north-east. There are also no defences for the baileys but as Shoesmith points out this could be the result of later landscaping (Shoesmith 1996. 166).

**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken at this site because later development has removed most of the archaeology.

**Strategic position:**

The site has very little apparent natural defence, which would have encouraged the construction of a castle here, and has no obvious strategic importance. The quality of the surrounding farm land, however, may have been a motivation for a small fortified-site based on land tenure.

## Documentary evidence

### Modern reference:

**HWCM6255**

The modern record has been provided above with the exception of the date for the building of the house which surmounts the mound. The *VCH* suggested that its initial construction would have been in the Tudor period (*VCH* 1908. 223). This may show some similarity of origin with the two Penyclawdd sites discussed above, although the link is very tenuous.

### *Additional references:*

RCHME 1931. 172.

Hogg and King 1963. 98.

### Interpretation:

**Possible motte/fortified-site (Late)**

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains and location leaves little doubt as to the function of this earthwork. The shape and size of the mound does not suggest a strongly defended castle but does infer a later fortified-site.

**TRELECH (TUMP TERRET)****Grid: SO 49952 05409****Location:**

The site can be reached on the B2493 Monmouth to Chepstow road which passes through the village of Trelech. The motte is to the south of the church on private farm land.

**Description:**

Trelech earthwork is situated in a shallow hill valley to the south-east of Monmouth. The valley opens to the south-west in the direction of Chepstow. The site today has suffered considerable damage by the encroachment of the village and the building of a farm and farm-yard. It consists of an earthen mound with quite steep sides (Vol. 2. plate 249). The motte is surrounded on all sides by a ditch but to the south and west, most of the ditch has been levelled off, however in the right light conditions it is still possible to see its course. Its existence was recorded on a sketch-plan made sometime between 1937 and 1940 by Kay which luckily shows the complete ditch before it was damaged by the farm buildings (Vol. 2. figure 110). The south side of the site has a natural slope therefore the ditch and bank on this side would have served as an outer defence. In other sites such as Newcastle, Mynydd-brith, Colstar and Dingestow, such a position is usually marked by a horn-work and although there is no evidence to support this it is worth considering especially as its position is on the opposite side of the motte to the bailey.

The north and part of the east section of the ditch has survived much better; to the north is a raised platform, as a result of this study, interpreted as a section of the bailey which has unfortunately become truncated by houses to the east and north; although it is possible to see some of the effect of a raised bank along the road to the east (Vol. 2. figure 111). The second photograph shows the northern face of the motte which has a platform just over half way up; beneath where the figure is standing (Vol. 2. plate 250). On the bailey, directly opposite, is a rectangular depression (Vol. 2. plate 251). On examination, it seemed likely that the two features marked both sides of an access bridge to the motte.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 50)**

The motte, which shows damage to the south, has a present height of 5.58m, a top surface area of 142.762m<sup>2</sup> and an estimated volume of 2236.956m<sup>3</sup>. However, the excavation, (see below),



revealed that the ditch on the north side had been rock cut which means that some of the motte base must be natural. It is probable that there was a surrounding ditch encircling the base of the motte which would mean that its present base area of 758.373m<sup>2</sup> is close to original. To the north, the surviving ditch separates a raised portion of land from the motte; at this point the depth is 2.6m with a bottom width of 4.3m. It was here that excavations were made in 2002 and 2003 in order to evaluate a depression in the bank observed during the initial topographic survey (see above).

### **Geophysical survey:**

Prior to excavation, the site was surveyed with a resistance meter which also showed an anomaly in the area of the depression (see Vol. 2. geophysics).

### **Strategic position:**

There is no obvious strategic value to the site but it possibly represents one of the advance castles for the frontier conquest moving along the valley from Monmouth. The village has extensive iron working evidence from a later period and it is possible that this may have provided the initial interest in the area.

### **Documentary evidence**

#### **Primary reference:**

No documentary evidence for Trelech castle is known before 1231 when mention is made in the *Cal. Pat.* (cited in Soulsby 1981/2. 41).

#### **Antiquarian reference:**

Edward Lhwyd 1660-1709 knew of the town and wrote, 'Hard by the churchyard there is an artificial mount which is called by the inhabitants Twyn Tirret' (Morris 1909-11. 19). Coxe visited the site and wrote of the tump 'in the garden of Mrs Rumsey, a tumulus or barrow, enclosed by a moat with extensive entrenchments' (1801. 323). In his opinion the site had been a Roman exploratory camp connected with Akerman Street and the Julia Strata (1801. 323). The Roman origin was continued over a hundred years later when Wood stated that Trelech was the site of a Roman camp with the tumulus outside it to the south (1910. 120). It would seem now that the Roman origin is tenuous, however, Wood was a reliable observer and one must wonder if he interpreted the rectangular embanked church enclosure as a Roman camp. Interestingly, the embanked church enclosure, now separated from the bailey, is the same height, which may infer it was once one in the same.

**Modern reference:****MM016****Excavation:**

A considerable amount of information was obtained from the excavation which has led to a re-evaluation of the site. The ditch was found to be rock cut and 0.92m deeper than at present. This would suggest that the site was cut into the end of the ridge by a ditch which separated an island of bedrock from the natural surface. The motte was then raised by about 3m not 5.58m to its present height which would have required a fill of only 939.76m<sup>3</sup> for completion. The practice of constructing mottes this way was discussed at Ewyas Harold and Pont Hendre above.

Two beam slots were found interpreted as the location trenches for trestles to support a bridge. Such a structure would have led from the bailey to the top of the motte for access. Resulting from these findings it was possible to state that access to the top of the motte was by a bridge from the north which suggests that the motte was defended from the bailey and thereby had the function of a private stronghold. Furthermore the bridge base suggests that the bailey was to the north of the motte not as was previously suspected to the south.

The excavations also provided datable finds: pottery from the ditch included one sherd of Bristol Redcliff (13<sup>th</sup> century), 2 sherds of Monnow Valley ware (mid 13<sup>th</sup> century), one sherd of A5 (mid thirteenth century) and thirteen sherds of A3 hand-made late (12<sup>th</sup> century) (Clark *pers comm.*, Anthony *pers. comm.*). Documentary evidence given above stated that the motte was ruinous in 1231, therefore it must have been built some time before. The pottery gives a date of late 12<sup>th</sup> century for the existence of the site. A piece of wood taken from the bottom of the ditch returned a date of 1138 ±34.

***Additional references:***

Hogg and King 1963. 121.

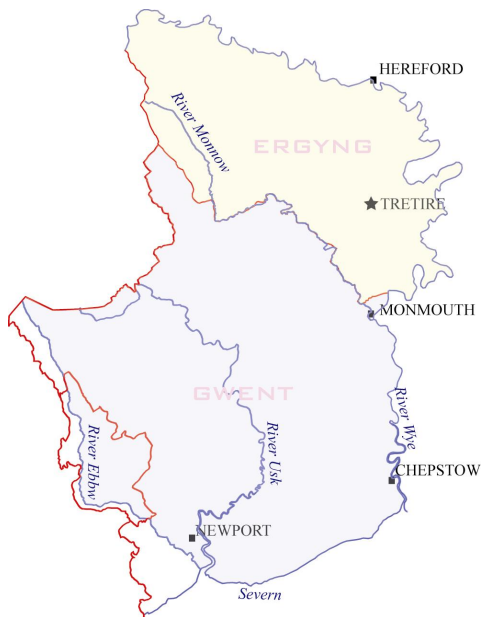
King 1983. 288.

**Interpretation:****Motte and bailey (Early)**

The new interpretation of the position of the bailey has led to speculation about its original size. The surviving remains have obviously been truncated probably by the small farm and public house car-park to the north. Continuing past these areas of development, along the crest of the ridge, is the enclosed and raised high ground now occupied by the church and church-yard. The level of the church yard and the level of the surviving bailey are quite similar in height. The natural slope up to this high ground is still noticeable throughout the village and surrounding fields, therefore it is possible that the bailey in its original form actually occupied the entire ridge

top. This would then have provided the site with a good natural defence as well as a high vantage point above the surrounding area, perched as it is on top of a hill.

The interpretation of the site is based on actual remains, topographical survey, geophysical survey, excavation, location and documentary evidence. The motte and bailey at Trelech can be identified, on the basis of size and shape, as one of the early type of castles built during the initial conquest of the area. The steepness of the motte and the surrounding ditch also show that inner defence was also a major issue. The site is located on the edge of a ridge of land with the motte at the steepest side and the bailey separated from it by a ditch. The bailey stretches to the north and may be of considerable size judging by the modifications to the natural terrain that are evident throughout the village.

**TRETIRE****Grid: SO 52067 23919****Location:**

The location is reached by travelling south from Hereford on the A466 Hereford to Monmouth road and about 2km south of St Weonards turning left onto the B4521 to Tretire. The site is on a right angle bend just past the village.

**Description:**

The site of Tretire earthwork was found at the given co-ordinate; unfortunately no remains are to be seen with the exception of a steep grassy bank upon which a house with

tennis court stands.

**Topographic survey:**

No topographic survey was undertaken as the site was not an earthwork castle.

**Strategic position:**

Irrelevant in this case.

**Documentary evidence****Antiquarian reference:**

The first suggestion of a castle here seems to belong to the antiquary Rev John Webb (cited in Robinson 1869. 162).

***Additional references:***

VCH 1908. 255.  
 RCHME 1931. 240.  
 Hogg and King 1963. 99.  
 King 1983. 214.

**Modern reference:****HWCM6409**

This site was included in the study, as it was recorded by the Hereford SMR as a rectangular mound. The update of the SMR now records it as a 13<sup>th</sup> century manor house based on

excavations in 1965 prior to the site being levelled (Hereford 2004). The excavation was based on the record of the manor being held in 1211 by Walter de Muchgros but no early building in stone or wood and no castle mound was found (Bridgewater 1966. 202). The site was also rejected in *C. Ang* as a 'shapeless mound...but never at any time a castle' (King 1983. 214).

**Interpretation:****Natural**

Interpretation based on actual remains and location is that the mound is probably natural.

**TRIPPENKENNETT****Grid: SO 50057 22454****Location:**

The area is reached by travelling south from Hereford on the A466 Hereford to Monmouth road and is about 2 km south of St Weonards, turning left onto the B4521 to Trippenkenett.

**Description:**

The site of Trippenkenett earthwork was not found at the given co-ordinate and the elderly owner of the present house, at the site, is not aware of any mound or earthwork. This was taken to be a polite refusal of

permission to search.

**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken at this site as the site could not be found and permission was unavailable.

**Strategic position:**

Unknown.

**Documentary evidence****Modern reference:****HWCM6416**

The site was included in the study as it was recorded by the Hereford SMR.

**Excavation:**

The site was excavated 1959-1963 and revealed in the earliest phase a ditch and possible timber buildings. In the second phase a first floor hall with undercroft and garderobe tower was dated to pre-1250. The third phase saw the erection of a mound with a house on top dated c. 1250-1300. The identification of this site as a motte seems tenuous on this information alone and the building of the mound after 1250 would suggest a fortified house rather than a castle. (Hereford 2004).

**Interpretation:****Fortified-site (Late)**

Interpretation of this site was reliant upon documentary evidence alone. The site was probably a fortified site dating to the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

**TROSTREY CASTLE****Grid: SO 35962 04304****Location:**

The site known as Trostrey Castle is easily located from the B4598, Abergavenny to Usk road. A little way past Chain Bridge a narrow lane climbs to the left to Trostrey church and the site lies behind it.

**Description:**

The site for the castle has been the subject of long term excavations directed by Geoff Mein. The finds stretch back to prehistory and the suggested castle was a wooden palisaded ring-work set on top of a slighted Roman fortlet. Later stone construction has been dated to the mid 13<sup>th</sup> century (Mein 1991. 47).

**Topographic survey:**

No topographic survey was undertaken at this site as no earthwork could be found.

**Strategic location:**

The site is in a good location for natural defence.

**Documentary evidence****Modern reference:**

Supplied by Mein.

***Additional references:***

King 1983. 289.

**Interpretation:****Rejected**

Investigation of the site in 2003 gave no indication of an earthwork castle having existed here, furthermore, the site has been the subject of many years of excavation and although it contains a palimpsest of archaeological time periods the director confirmed that no motte had been found (Mein *pers comm.*).



**TWMBARLWM****Grid: ST 24382 92653****Location:**

The site of Twmbarlwm is one of the most inaccessible locations in this research. It is situated high on a mountain range to the east of the River Ebbw. The approach to the site is from Cwmcarn, which lies on the B4591 Newport to Newbridge road. At Cwmcarn the forestry park on the east of the town provides a walk which will lead to the site.

**Description:**

The earthwork is situated to the east of a large oval Iron Age enclosure which can be seen in the aerial photograph (Vol. 2. plate 252). Coxe visited the site and had the following plan produced (Vol. 2. figure 112). The site is very large if the hill-fort enclosure is included. It would; however, be a mistake to do this as such an area would require a vast amount of man power to defend. More probably, the limit of Norman influence on the site would have been at the eastern end. The remains today have been severely modified by the council and Cadw whose work has been previously noted at Caerwent motte. The mound seen in photograph 2 is the motte, viewed from towards the far end of the Iron Age enclosure (Vol. 2. plate 253). The third photograph shows the motte from the supposed bailey top, the immediate west of the mound (Vol. 2. plate 254). No evidence is visible for the bailey but Coxe noted a small circular enclosure on his map and two more platforms were identified during this research. These features may be associated with the Norman presence. The motte is surrounded by a rock cut ditch along the south, west and north. The ditch has actually cut the Iron Age ramparts. To the east is a very high steep natural slope which has possibly been modified. Certainly the motte base has had a slight ditch and berm added.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 51)**

The motte, which is now landscaped and provided with two flights of stone steps for easy access, reaches a height of 9.63m at its steepest side and has a top surface area of 185.794m<sup>2</sup>. It was constructed by excavating a ditch into the bedrock of the ridge to isolate a mound. The mound was then raised; at present it is just over 2m above the natural hill surface at the highest point, but its original height can only be estimated.

There is no documentary evidence for Twmbarlwm and it has not always been classified either as a hill-fort or as a motte. Coxe for example mentions the theory of the site marking a grave (1801 75). Knight questions the Iron Age period and suggests the motte was an unfinished de Clare castle (*pers comm.*). The site was surveyed.

### **Strategic position:**

The site has excellent natural defence to the east but the Iron Age defences around the other sides would have been of little use unless a garrison of many men had been stationed there. The only real added defence would have been the rock cut immediately surrounding the motte.

The location of the site provides excellent strategic advantage as a watch-tower and it may have been part of a string of such positions of which Ruperra, Bassaleg, Rhiwderin, Rogerstone, Stow Hill, Twmbarlwm, Mynyddislwyn, St Illtyd, Gelligaer and Mouse Castle survive today.

### **Documentary evidence**

### **Modern reference:**

**MM044**

### ***Additional references:***

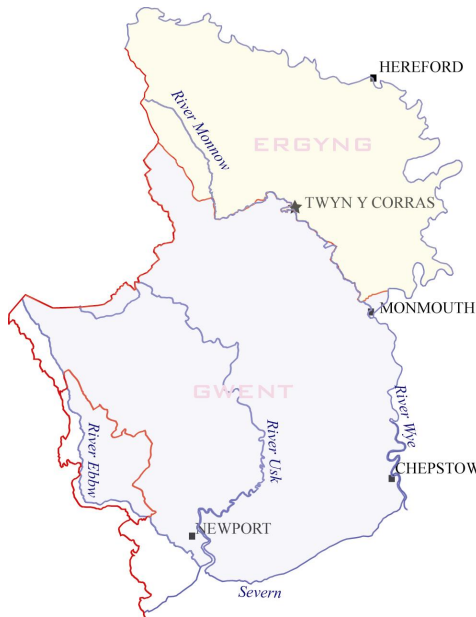
King 1983. 287.

### **Interpretation:**

### **Motte (watch-tower) (Early)**

This site represents quite clearly a situation where the Normans re-used an existing site. No bailey is evident but as has been explained, the lack of a bailey is not necessarily problematic; however, as noted with respect to St Illtyd above, in such situations there is normally a larger castle close by. There are, however, suitable locations for a bailey to have existed.

The interpretation of this site, based on actual remains and survey, is that the motte was an early watch-tower.

**TWYN-Y-CORRAS, KENTCHURCH****Grid: ST 41907 24994****Location:**

The earthwork is situated on the west side of a high bank above the River Monnow, to the west of Kentchurch Court. Kentchurch Court can be reached from the A465 Abergavenny to Hereford road by turning east from Pontrilas along the B4347.

**Description:**

The site of Twyn-y-Corras is not accessible to the general public as it stands within the grounds of a private house. Repeated attempts to contact the owners have failed; therefore the information on this site relies on the work of others. The earthwork today stands within the grounds of a house and is very heavily overgrown with bramble and trees making any assessment of its form very difficult. The photograph shows the extent of fieldwork knowledge gained from this site (Vol. 2. plate 255). Luckily Kay visited the site around 1941 and made a sketch plan of what he saw (Vol. 2. figure 113). Using the plan it is possible to see that the site amounts to a square platform with a raised mound. There is also the possibility of three rectangular platforms included on the embanked mound. Shoesmith mentioned two baileys associated with the mound; one of which is now occupied by a modern house (1996. 144). The fact that Kay did not see these earthworks is a little problematic as Kay has been a reliable source.

**Topographic survey:**

No topographic survey was undertaken at this site as permission to visit was not obtained.

**Strategic position:**

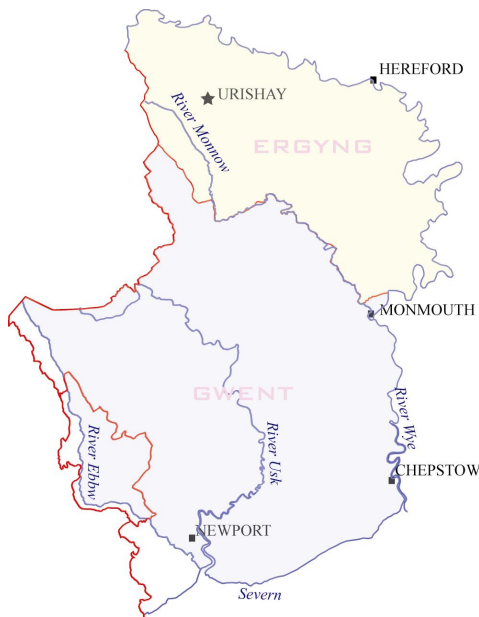
Unknown

**Documentary evidence****Modern reference:****HWCM6248**

The information for this site comes from Shoesmith and Kay, see above, and Tonkin (1984. 34). It is notable that Hogg and King did not list it; neither did the *VCH* nor the *RCHME*. King did list the site in citing Kay for the information (1983. 207).

**Interpretation:****Fortified-site (Late)**

Interpretation for this site rests solely on the sparse documentary evidence. Using Kay's plan the shape is more akin to a moated site or fortified house than an earthwork castle.

**URISHAY****Grid: SO 32292 37568****Location:**

The site of Urishay Castle is reached most easily from Peterchurch which lies on the B4348 Ewyas Harold to Dorstone road turning west from the centre of the village along a lane which goes straight past Urishay Castle.

**Description:**

The site is in the grounds of a farm and there is no admittance to the public. The photograph shows the only view accessible from the public highway (Vol. 2. plate 256). Data collected on this site consequently relies on

others.

Again this study is able to call on the work done by Kay for an account of this little understood site. The sketch map produced shows the extent of the site as it was known to him (Vol. 2. figure 114). The photograph above shows the edge of the building that Kay has recorded on his map; the mound on which the building stands is also very much still in existence. A sketch of the building was included in Kay's notes (Vol. 2. plate 257).

What is less well known is the ditch and bank extent that Kay recorded. A related question is whether there any outworks away from the vicinity of the mound. Shoesmith provided evidence for one set of outworks to the west in the plan from his book (Vol. 2. figure 115).

**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken as permission to visit the site could not be obtained.

**Strategic position:**

Information on this site is quite limited as it was not possible to visit it therefore it is difficult to assess it with any degree of accuracy. However, there do not appear to be any natural defences at the site which would have induced the Normans to build an earthwork castle here. Apart from the nature of the agricultural potential, neither does there appear to be any advantage to the site.

## Documentary evidence

### Primary reference:

*Alcamestune*, 'Leofled had held it and it was waste but at *Domesday* it was held by Hugh L'Anse' (Thorn & Thorn 1983. 187b).

### Antiquarian reference:

In Robinson's opinion Urishay was not a castle but a defensible house along the lines of Treago discussed above, (1869. 130). His opinion was probably based on the first record of Urishay known to him which dated to the late 14<sup>th</sup> century. Marshall, however, identified Urishay with *Alcamestune*, (see above).

### Modern reference:

**HWCM598**

### *Additional references:*

VCH 1908. 254-255.

RCHME 1932. 213-214.

King 1983. 287.

### Interpretation:

### Possible motte/fortified-site (Late)

Interpretation of this site is based on documentary evidence which as can be seen is very limited. The site would appear to be a fortified-site, however, having glimpsed the shape of the mound from a distance it is not possible to dismiss the idea that it may have been a motte.

**USK****Grid: SO 37537 01039****Location:**

The town of Usk is easily found where the A472 crosses the River Usk. The castle is a masonry edifice, built on a natural rock outcrop on the east bank of the Usk (Vol. 2. plates 258 and 259).

**Description:**

Masonry castle, the map shown gives the interpretation of the building phases at the castle (Vol. 2. figure 116).

**Topographic survey**

No survey was undertaken at this site as it is outside the remit of this research.

**Strategic position:**

The site is located above the Roman town of Burrium (Usk), controlling the road and river.

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

The castle was known to Giraldus Cambrensis who mentioned it in his description of the course of the Usk (Thorpe 1978. 226).

**Modern reference:****MM012**

William Marshal is the most advocated builder of Usk castle, supposedly before 1189; however, the square keep may be attributable to de Clare, pre 1174 (Knight 1987. 76-78). The Cadw guide book to *Ancient and Historic Wales* suggests that a castle was built here soon after the conquest, because of its strategic position (Whittle 1992. 106). The hypothesis is quite reasonable, since the site was on a Roman road which was probably still in use and the type of site, a high natural outcrop above a river, was certainly one of fitz Osbern's preferred choices. However, fitz Osbern didn't in general build mottes, an exception being Clifford mentioned above. There is no documentary evidence that the castle existed before 1185 (Taylor 1947. 253).

***Additional references:***

Hogg and King 1963. 122.

Renn 1968. 336.

King 1983. 288.

**Interpretation:****Masonry**

No motte is known or suspected to have been built on the site; from the outset Usk is believed to have been of stone construction and this research has not found any reason to suppose differently. Spurgeon had the same conclusion, likening Usk to Chepstow and White Castle in this respect (1987. 26). Usk therefore, plays little part in the research.



**WALTERSTONE****Grid: SO 33932 24999****Location:**

The castle stands at the eastern end of the village of Walterstone which can be reached from the A465 Abergavenny to Hereford road. The road to Longtown branches off the A465 to the north of Pandy, the first crossroads going right, and then first left at Alltynys. The site of the mound is to the north-east of the village close to The Carpenter's Arms and 100m west of the church.

**Description:**

The motte, and possible bailey at Walterstone occupies a broad expanse of land on top of a ridge to the east of the Olchon Valley. Unusually, the motte has been built beneath a shallow rise. Using Ewyas Harold and Pont Hendre as examples with mottes placed beneath slopes and ridges, the bailey occupies the ground behind the motte, although it has to be said the motivation is not understood. Two of the closest castles to Walterstone are Ewyas Harold and Pont Hendre, both regarded by this study as early.

The first photograph, (Vol. 2. plate 260) shows the motte in the distance, covered with trees and just in front of it, before the mud, is a faint dark line. The line represents a southern ditch denoted 'w' on the Remfry plan (Vol. 2. figure 117). The motte itself is quite sizable with a fairly large flat top. A ditch surrounds the motte completely and is for the most part wet (Vol. 2. plates 261 and 262). The last photograph shows the spread of stone that litters the motte, although it is difficult to say in what capacity it was used; motte fill or building material (Vol. 2. plate 263). There is a noticeable raised rim at parts of the motte top which could be the remains of a shell keep or just an old palisade setting. Remfry, who also noted the rim, drew a possible similarity to the shell keep at Llancillo, which is suspected to be contemporary both in builder and period (1998. 14).

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 52)**

The motte takes the form of a high sided conical motte 8.76m, with a top surface diameter of 574.189m<sup>2</sup> and containing an estimated 5539.545m<sup>3</sup> of fill. The actual raised portion, however, can be reduced to 1391.525m<sup>3</sup> as it is surrounded by a ditch 2.89m deep which has been cut into

the natural surface. The highest point above natural is to the east at 8.06m where the ditch is only 0.9m deep.

Surprisingly, calculations on ditch volume and motte volume revealed that some 1103m<sup>3</sup> of cut from the ditch is not accounted for on the motte which may either suggest that the motte was bigger, which is unlikely, or that outer earthworks such as a rampart or raised bailey are missing. The ditch to the east of the motte is only 0.9m deep whereas elsewhere it is at least 1.18m rising to 2.89m.

### **Strategic position:**

The position of the motte is fairly weak, lying quite close to a ridge that overlooks it. It is probable that there must have been earthworks surrounding the site otherwise there would have been no defence and whereas this has been seen to be reasonable at a watch-tower, the size of Walterstone motte would suggest that this was a more substantial castle. The farm land around the site is heavily ploughed which would have removed any low-lying earthworks. Another possibility for defence may be the waterlogged nature of the site, a strategy discussed for Mount Ballan, Llancillo and Newton Tump, (see above).

### **Documentary evidence**

#### **Modern reference:**

**HWCM5590**

The second map shows the layout of the site with its outer ramparts as it was 1900 (Vol. 2. figure 118). Since then extensive farming activities and modern building works have served to reduce the earthwork perimeter. An example of this is that the RCHME inventory records that the bailey to the east and south-east is mostly bounded by a scarp (1931. 247), but there is no evidence of this today. The Remfry map, (see above), shows a different, more detailed interpretation of the site. The field survey for this study failed to identify baileys 'n' and 'b' shown on the second map but 'w' is still identifiable and referred to above. In his account of the castle, Shoesmith mentions that stone defences were unlikely, the site having been abandoned by 1137 (1996. 220). Unfortunately, there is no documentary evidence for Walterstone and no source cited by Shoesmith for his given date. As to the lack of stonework the last photograph, (see above) shows this not to be the case.

No early documentary evidence exists for this castle but much has been made of the name Walterstone drawing the obvious association with Walter de Lacy (Marshall 1938. 149). If this association is correct then the motte would be dated either pre-1085 or pre-1241 when the two respective Walter de Lacys died. Remfry argues the case for the former suggesting the likely transformation from 'Walter's tun' to Walterstone (Remfry 1998.14). If this is the case, then the

castle would represent one of the earliest castles of the de Lacy holdings possibly as early as 1067.

*Additional references:*

VCH 1908. 246.

Hogg and King 1963. 97.

King 1983. 212.

**Interpretation:**

**Motte and possible bailey (Early)**

Interpretation based on actual remains, survey and location would suggest that the motte and possible bailey at Walterstone are early constructions. The shape and size of the motte along with the surrounding ditch emphasize the function of the private defensive strong point noticeable in the early castles.

**WERGLODD TUMP, SE LLANCILLO****Grid: SO 37100 25200****Introductory note:**

The site of Werglodd Tump was one of the sites included in the list of information obtained from the Hereford SMR at the beginning of this research. Its location took a great deal of field work but it was eventually found using a hand held GPS.

**Location:**

To reach the site, it is necessary to take the A465 Abergavenny to Hereford road through the village of Pandy. About 6km north of Pandy is a private road to the left which crosses the River Monnow. After the bridge is a fork and the dirt road goes to the right across fields to the railway. The site of Werglodd Tump earthwork no longer exists as it was destroyed during track laying for the Great Western Railway Hereford to Abergavenny line in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Hereford SMR).

**Description:**

None.

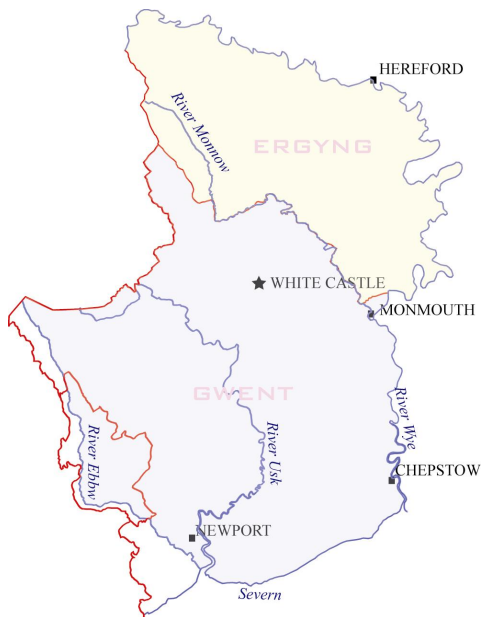
**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken as the site no longer exists.

**Strategic position:**

Unknown.

**Documentary evidence****Modern record:****HWCM8762****Interpretation:****Unknown**

**WHITE CASTLE****Grid: SO 37917 16714****Introductory note:**

White Castle is one of the ‘Three Castles’; the other two are Skenfrith and Grosmont. The three share a history and for most of the period they were in the hands of the king.

**Location:**

White castle stands to the north-east of Abergavenny, easily approachable from the B4223 Abergavenny to Monmouth road. When approaching from Abergavenny, the turning is at Llantillio Crossenny to White Castle.

**Description:**

The castle is a masonry construction built on a mound that has been formed by the digging of a surrounding ditch (Vol. 2. figure 118). The resultant mound is not raised but remains at the same height as the surrounding landscape (Vol. 2. plate 264).

**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken at this site because the castle is a masonry structure and outside the remit of this study.

**Strategic position:**

The castle occupies a low hill surrounded by rich agricultural land. There appears to have been no natural defence.

**Documentary evidence****Primary reference:**

A tentative mention is found in *Db.G* concerning the area of Llantillio Crossenny in which White Castle is situated. As part of the commote of Teirtref, in Norman hands by 1074, (Moore 1982. W4n), the land belonged to King Gruffudd by permission of William (Moore 1982. 162a). The earliest part of the castle would appear to be a small rectangular keep dating to the early 12<sup>th</sup> century (Whittle 1992. 127).

**Modern reference:****MM006*****Additional references:***

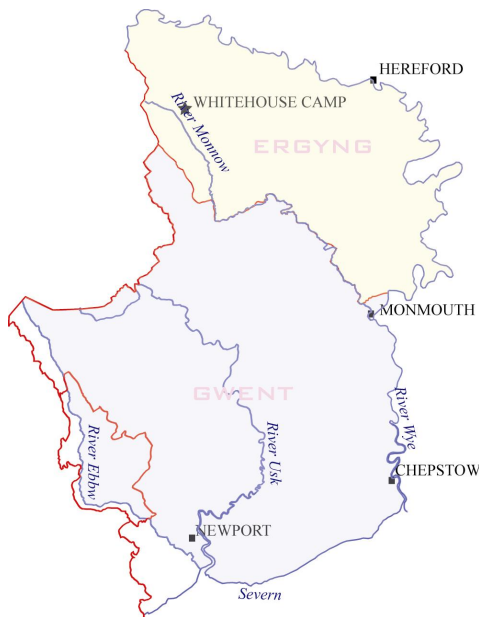
Renn 1968. 345.

Hogg and King 1963. 122.

King 1983. 289.

**Interpretation:**

As there is no artificial mound at White castle and there is no reason to believe that there ever was, the castle is not within the remit this study.

**WHITEHOUSE CAMP****Grid: SO 29572 35684****Location:**

The earthwork at Whitehouse Camp is inaccessible by road, situated as it is, high on a ridge above the River Monnow and the Escley Brook. It is reached by turning west at Vowchurch, which is located on the B4347 Ewyas Harold to Dorstone road, towards Michaelchurch Escley. The site is on top of the mountain to the north-east of the village.

**Description:**

The earthwork at Whitehouse Camp is situated on the top of a ridge and consists of a low mound surmounted by a smaller mound and two sections of crescentic rampart. The upper mound is to the south, towards the higher part of the hill and takes the form of a rectangular earthwork which has evidence of masonry. The first photograph shows the north-west view of the site where the hollowed out mound takes the form of two crescentic banks on the edge of a heightened platform (Vol. 2. plate 265). The second photograph shows the south-east side; the trees are on top of the rectangular mound (Vol. 2. plate 266). There are no outer earthworks and nothing to offer any serious form of defence at the site; therefore, judging from the present remains, the site is unlikely to have had a military function. It is impossible to estimate how much of the site may have been lost but judging from the size of the present footprint for the platform it can't have been anything more than a small lookout. The rectangular mound probably held a small building, raised above an enclosed court.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 53)**

The rectangular mound is at most 1.96m high having a top surface area of 64.35m<sup>2</sup>. The mound would appear to have a very stony fill consistent with a fallen building. The two crescentic ramparts are joined to the base of the upper mound and follow both the east and west rims of the mound base, towards the north where they terminate leaving a gap of about 12m. Between the ramparts and the oblong mound is an enclosed area of about 293.771m<sup>2</sup>.

**Strategic position:**

The site shows no sign of any natural defence other than its height above the surrounding valleys. A track-way to the south takes the form of a greenway and there is every reason to

suspect that it may have Roman origins or earlier as it seems to respect two barrows a little to the north-east. Whatever the period, the track could have a bearing on the placement of the earthwork.

### **Documentary evidence**

#### **Modern reference:**

**HWCM166**

Kay visited the site in 1952 and produced a sketch plan of the site (Vol. 2. figure 120). Although accurate in most respects the map does not show just how small the entire site is, less than 20m<sup>2</sup>. The cottage ruins have disappeared and the map shows a larger change of slope around the entire site which could signify a defensive bank, but no evidence survives today to examine. The photograph, (Vol. 2. plate 265) shows no change of slope where Kay recorded one.

Shoesmith suggested that the site was a miniature motte and bailey but was more inclined to see it as a defended homestead (1996. 180).

#### ***Additional references:***

VCH 1908. 230.

RCHME 1931. 52.

King 1983. 212.

#### **Interpretation: Camp**

**Fortified-site (Late)**

The interpretation of the site, based on actual remains, survey and location is that the low mound represents a fortified-site of late construction date, probably associated with land tenure, held for part of a knight's fee. The dating relies on the shape of the mound, the large surface area of the top, the lack of bailey and the lack of defence.



**WHITNEY CASTLE****Grid: SO 27300 46500****Location:**

The site of Whitney Castle can be reached from the A438 Hereford to Hay on Wye road some 8km north east of Hay on Wye.

**Description:**

Whitney Castle no longer exists, having been washed away when the River Wye changed course in 1730 (Robinson 1869. 136).

**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken as the site no longer exists.

**Strategic position:**

The site would have had the natural defence of the River Wye which would have offered some protection but more than that it is impossible to state. The location of the site would have been extremely hazardous if built before 1090 when the area was still fairly hostile.

**Documentary evidence****Antiquarian reference:**

In 1869 stone masonry was still to be found in the river bed attesting to the nature of the former structure. The map enclosed provides all the physical information available on the site (Vol. 2. figure 121).

In terms of documentary evidence Melville wrote 'the Wye winds it way thence to Whitney which gave its name to the famous Whitney family' Gough's edition of Camden's Britannia (cited in Melville 1896. 7). Apart from this, a mention of Sir Robert de Whitney, Knight in 1242 in the *Testa de Neville* (cited in Melville 1896. 216), is all that has been found.

**Modern reference:****HWCM1192****Additional references:**

King 1983. 213.

**Interpretation:**

**Unknown**

**WILTON CASTLE, BRIDSTOW****Grid: SO 59082 24489****Location:**

Wilton castle is a modest masonry structure located on the west bank of the River Wye at Ross on Wye. The castle is a private residence and not open to the public.

**Description:**

Knowledge of this site is unfortunately dependent on the observations and writings of others (Vol. 2. 267). It cannot be viewed easily although a foot path passes close to the west side.

**Topographic survey:**

No survey was undertaken at this site because permission to visit could not be obtained.

**Strategic position:**

The site offers no natural defence other than the river, however, the position would allow for control of the river and the bridge.

**Documentary evidence:**

An early mention, c.1188, of the castle of Wilton is made by Giraldus Cambrensis in his description of the course of the Wye (Thorpe 1978. 225). Robinson cited Leland who wrote that the castle had been built by King Stephen c. 1141 but suggested an error as Hugo de Longchamp had been granted the manor by Henry I (1869. 143). Possibly Stephen refortified the site during the Anarchy.

The existing castle is a late build with estimates dating to some time at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Salter 1992. 48) (Vol. 2. figure 122). There is a suggestion that the castle was of earthen construction with a motte to the south-east (Salter 1992. 48.). It has to be said, however, from the limit of observation possible that nothing visible remains to support this suggestion today.

**Modern reference:****HWCM918**

***Additional references:***

VCH 1908. 252.  
RCHME 1932. 29-31.  
Hogg and King 1963. 123.  
King 1983. 212.

**Interpretation:****Masonry**

Interpretation based on field work and documentary evidence suggests the site is a masonry castle with no sign of the existence of a motte.

**WOLVESNEWTON****Grid: ST 44912 99883****Location:**

The site of the earthwork at Wolvesnewton is located to the east of the B4235 road from Usk to Chepstow. Its position is on the brow of a gently rising hill to the east of the village of Llangwm.

**Description:**

The earthwork at Wolvesnewton is a very large irregular oval mound with a flat top and slight earthen bank surrounded by a ditch. The low flat topped mound has evidence of a raised rim along the edge of one side. The

whole top of the mound is now a lawn, devoid of any surface features, and a house has been built along one edge (Vol. 2. plate 268). The entire north part of the earthwork is inaccessible due to buildings and dense vegetation. The photograph shows possibly the clearest view of the site including house, lawn, and ditch to the left. The ditch which is wet surrounds the entire mound but it is impassable in some areas.

**Topographic survey:****(Survey 54)**

The height of the mound varies from 1.51m to 2.29m above the natural surface with the addition of a further 1.92m towards the west where the ditch is at its deepest. It is possible that the ditch surrounded the mound entirely but modern development has destroyed sections of it.

**Strategic position:**

The site offers no natural defence and the only observable advantage to such a location would be the rich surrounding agricultural land

**Documentary evidence****Modern reference:****MM067*****Additional references:***

Hogg and King 1963. 100.  
King 1983. 289.

**Interpretation:****Possible fortified-site (Unknown)**

Interpretation based on field work and survey has not provided a reliable solution to this site. It is not a ring-work because the interior is raised, therefore it is a mound. However, it is not a conventional motte because it is too low and large with no defence or bailey. It is true that this can be said of some of the motte watch-towers above, however, the size of this mound means its function was definitely not a watch-tower. There are two similar sites in this study most notably Llangiby (Bowling Green) which is almost identical but smaller and Much Dewchurch again much smaller but both identified as late fortified-sites.