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Council**

HEREFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeological investigations at Clifford Castle, Herefordshire.

February 2018



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Herefordshire Archaeology Report No. HAR 373

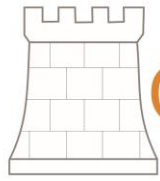
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Herefordshire Archaeology is Herefordshire Council's county archaeology service. It advises upon the conservation of archaeological and historic sites and landscapes, and carries out conservation and investigative field projects.



Castle Studies Trust

Advancing the Understanding of Castles

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Summary:

An application for a grant from the Castle's Studies Trust was successfully made by Herefordshire Archaeology in order to undertake geophysical survey and small scale, targeted, excavation to provide information concerning the form and development of Clifford Castle.

The geophysical surveys, (Ground Penetrating Radar and Resistivity) undertaken within the bailey and around the gatehouse failed to locate any major features with the exception of ridge and furrow or orchard ridging which appears to run on a south-west / north-east axis over much of the area.

A total of seven small trenches or test pits were excavated by hand. The test pit within the bailey revealed that the archaeology was being masked by the dumping of glacial gravels used to form orchard ridging across what was the bailey. These have sealed well preserved, medieval deposits within the bailey and explains the disappointing geophysical results.

Excavations on the Hornwork have shown that this was never developed as an outwork of the castle despite its strategic location.

Excavations within the keep located the central door to the hall at ground floor level. A test pit across the western end of the Hall recorded its western wall and the continuation of a narrow passage. It is thought that the passage could have given access either to a garderobe chamber (no others are known at motte-top/ground-floor level) or to arrow-loops offering covering fire over the NW angle of the castle buildings, interlocking with the arcs provided by windows at two levels in the NW tower.

A test pit located in the centre of the motte revealed a significant depth of *in-situ* deposits, the top 0.7m relating to post medieval and modern clearance of the site including the organised stacking of masonry. The lower levels revealed what is believed to have been a large post-hole beneath a succession of two cobbled surfaces. Pottery from these deposits, including the fill of three post holes has been dated to between the late 11th and mid 13th centuries.

Disclaimer: It should not be assumed that land referred to in this document is accessible to the public. Location plans are indicative only. National Grid References are accurate to approximately 5m. Measured dimensions are accurate to within 1m at a scale of 1:500, 0.1m at 1:50 and 0.02m at 1:20m

Figures contained within this report contain material from the Ordnance Survey. The grid in this material is the National Grid taken from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (OS Licence 100024168). This material has been reproduced to locate the site in its environs.

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1. Introduction

This report (Herefordshire Archaeology Report No. 373, EHE 80299) provides an account of archaeological investigations at Clifford Castle, Herefordshire. The investigations comprised a geophysical survey followed by a series of test pits designed to answer specific questions relating to the use and development of the castle. The project was made possible by a grant from The Castle Studies Trust and was supported by the land owner and Historic England.

Clifford Castle is located at NGR SO 244 456, approximately 3.5km to the north-east of Hay-on-Wye.



Figure 1: Location of Clifford Castle in relation to Herefordshire. © Herefordshire Council

2. Aims and Objectives

At the beginning of 2017 repair work began at Clifford Castle, Herefordshire, grant-aided by Historic England; at that time the buildings were in a poor state of repair and the castle appeared on the 2016 Heritage at Risk Register. The repair work was undertaken on behalf of the site owner by the building contractors Treasure & Son, under the overall direction of Nick Joyce Ltd, conservation architects. Herefordshire Archaeology was appointed to undertake an archaeological watching-brief on the repair work on the motte-top buildings.

To complement these works, Herefordshire Archaeology applied for a grant from the Castle Studies Trust for Geophysical survey and small scale, targeted, test pitting in order to answer specific questions.

The principal aim of the project was to further our understanding of one of the principal castles of the Welsh Border and to provide information regarding its plan, development and phasing. This will complement the analysis of the upstanding masonry currently being undertaken by Herefordshire Archaeology on behalf of Historic England.

The Grant Application was successful and issued on 16th February 2017.

Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent was granted for the above works on 30th August 2017.

Proposed fieldwork as submitted in the Castle Studies Trust application:

The geophysical survey (Magnetometry) of as much of the Scheduled Area as is possible in order to better understand the form and function of the bailey (Subject to obtaining a Section 42 licence). The use of Ground Penetrating Radar (where practicable) to provide information concerning the depth of deposits, their scale and their make-up. This will be undertaken across the line of the wall which must have subdivided the bailey and onto which the gatehouse is built and at points around the bailey bank in order to detect the presence of masonry foundations. It will also be employed across the "horn-work" in order to identify any evidence of stone structures including perimeter walling.

A series of small trenches will be excavated (subject to SMC being granted). These will be carefully targeted in order to address specific questions.

It is proposed that a trench is excavated to the top of significant archaeology between Rosamund's Tower and the Hall in order to record the foundation of the western end of the hall. This will provide evidence concerning the wall lines and how they relate to the tower and may also provide information regarding the positioning of doorways.

It is proposed that a trench is excavated over the present access into the Hall, from the courtyard, through its southern wall in order to confirm that this was a doorway.

It is proposed that a trench is excavated within the centre of the courtyard in order to record the floor surface and provide evidence for any central structure.

It is proposed that a maximum of three trenches are excavated on the "Horn-work" in order to provide information concerning its use and date.

3. Policy and guidance

The works have been undertaken with reference to relevant legislation, National Planning Policy and Guidance, and Regional and Local Planning Policy relating to Cultural Heritage.

Legislation

Clifford Castle is a Grade 1 Listed Building (1167903) and is Scheduled as an Ancient Monument (ref SM HE36, HA 1001774).

Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings are protected by statute. Legislation regarding Scheduled Monuments is contained within The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Under this legislation it is an offence to carry out any works resulting in the demolition or destruction of or any damage to a scheduled monument without prior written consent.

Scheduled Monument Consent was granted for this project in accordance with the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

4. Site location, description and setting

Clifford Castle is a classic example of a larger motte-and-bailey castle upgraded in stone, in this case in the early 13th century. The castle is situated on top of an escarpment where the River Wye cuts into a natural glacial gravel ridge. The bailey is a large, flat, trapezoidal area defined by ditches on three sides, to its west is the motte; further west still is the mound-like feature known as the 'Hornwork', of uncertain origin and function, with a flat, triangular summit. The castle was founded by William fitzOsbern, Earl of Herefordshire, between 1067 and 1071, most probably to control traffic into and out of Wales along the upper Wye valley (DB f.183; Coplestone-Crow 2017).

Castle buildings survive above ground in two locations. The main group is on the motte top, where a gatehouse with two towers and a polygonal curtain wall with three towers enclose a small hall or domestic building, most probably a chamber block, and a small courtyard. This group of buildings, which would have presented a multi-lobed, turreted appearance from most directions, is sometimes referred to as a 'shell keep' though this label is misleading and anachronistic. The current consensus is that these buildings were built in a single episode in the early/mid 13th century.

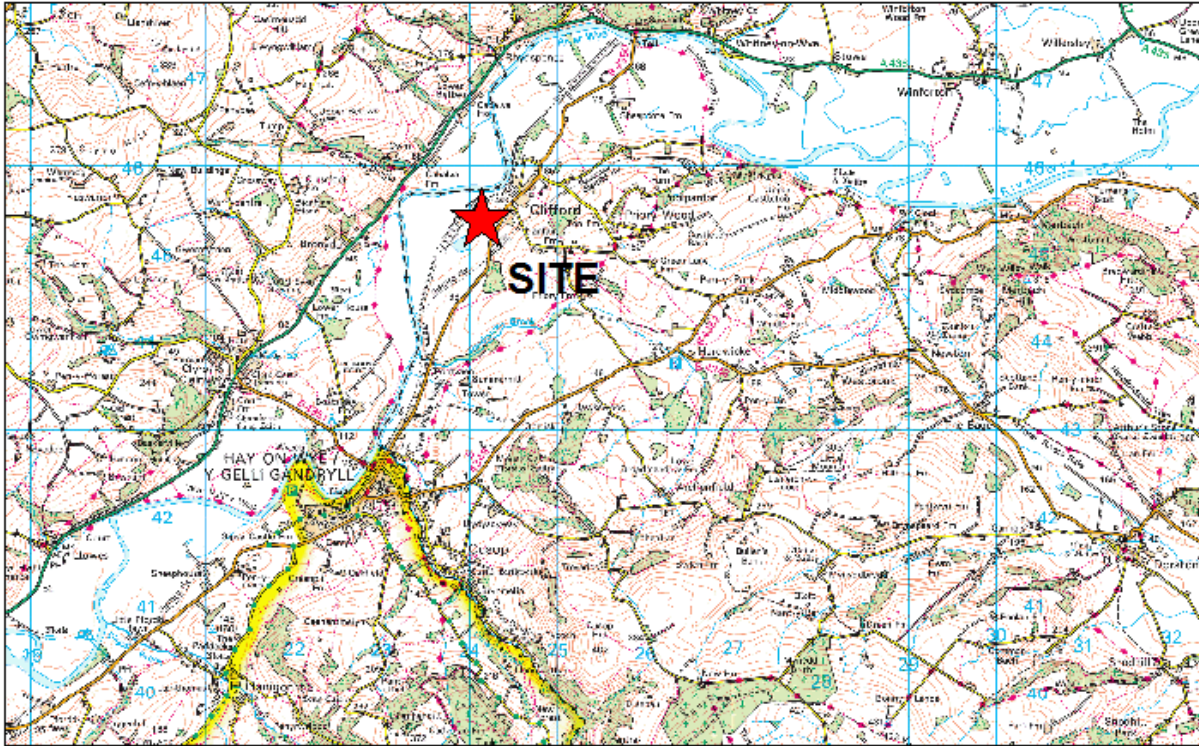


Figure 2: Location of Clifford Castle in relation to the nearest towns and villages. © Herefordshire Council

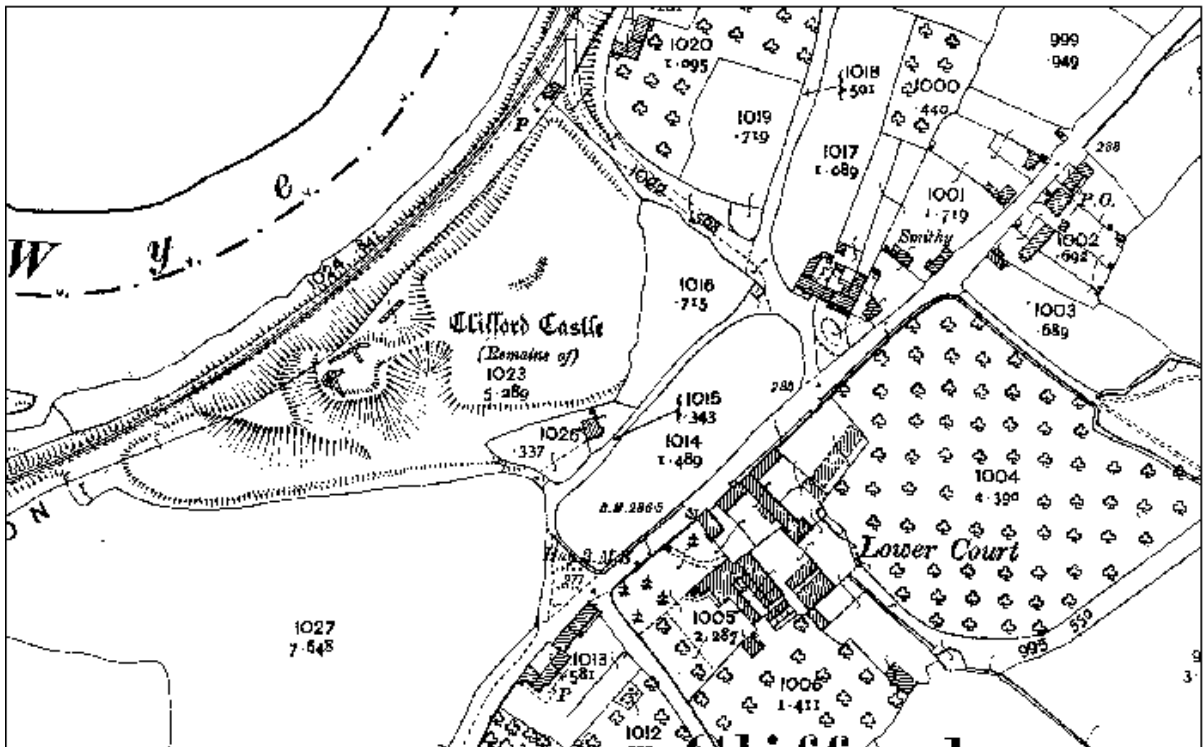


Figure 3: Extract from the 1887 Ordnance Survey Map.

5. Geology

The underlying solid geology within the area of works comprises Dittonian deposits of the St. Maughans Formation forming mudstone and siltstone, red with interbedded purple, red-brown and green sandstones and calcrete. This is overlain by slightly acid, loamy and clayey soil with impeded drainage.

(British Geological Survey website, Sheet 197 Hay-on-Wye, Accessed 30-10 2016;
(<http://www.bgs.ac.uk>).

6. Historical and archaeological background

There is hardly any pre-Conquest historical data generally available on Clifford. The settlement, along with its castle, is first mentioned at the time of the 'Domesday' survey (1086). The castle had been built 'on waste land' by William fitz Osbern, who was palatine Earl of Hereford between 1067 and 1071. 'This castle is in the kingdom of England and (is) not subject to any Hundred or customary dues' states the relevant entry. Although Ralph de Tosny possessed the castle in 1086, Gilbert the (then) Sheriff (of Herefordshire) rented from him not only the castle, but also the borough that had by then been founded there, and the arable lands pertaining to it. In 1066, 'Browning' had held the place, and this lordship by an Englishman reflects the extent of English settlement here by the eleventh century. Nonetheless, not only 16 burgesses but also five Welshmen are listed as resident in 1086. A mill is also noted as present.

Clifford castle stands on an eastward flowing section of the River Wye near to the current boundary between England and Wales. The castle was founded by Earl William Fitz Osbern in the period between his being made earl of Hereford soon after Christmas 1066 and his death at the battle of Cassel in Flanders on 22 February 1071. In that time it is likely that his engineers found the natural knoll lying alongside the steep drop to the River Wye near a ford. This gave the site its later name, the cliff by the ford or Clifford. Fitz Osbern's men scaped and ditched the knoll they found into what is today a motte with a secondary platform to the West. The land of Clifford was at that time waste, but under the earls of Hereford and their successors this waste was brought to blossom with castle, borough and church. After Earl William's death, his son, Earl Roger, held the castle for four years until his revolt in 1075. Then, on Roger's imprisonment, the castle passed to his father's brother-in-law, Ralph Tosny (d.1102), and he and his descendants held the castle until the wars of Stephen and Matilda between 1138 and 1154. During the years of Tosny lordship the castle was transformed into a great stone structure of which there are some remains today. The caput of the family was the castle of Conches in Normandy. Here the Tosny's built a great shell keep with five round towers in the enceinte. A similar structure remains at Clifford and

the implication is that both structures are the work of the house of Tosny. With the wars of Stephen and Matilda the Tosny's hold on Clifford castle weakened. Roger Tosny's steward, Walter fitz Richard, had for a long time been calling himself Walter Clifford and had married Isabel Tosny, Roger's sister. In 1144 he still acknowledged Roger as his overlord of Clifford, but by the end of the war he had made himself de facto lord of Clifford and refused to return castle and lordship to their rightful owners. During the reign of King Henry II, Walter Clifford cleverly introduced his daughter, renowned as the Fair Rosamund for her beauty, to Henry. Soon the two became lovers and Walter's powerful daughter ensured that he never lost control of Clifford to its rightful owners.

In 1233 Walter Clifford's grandson, another Walter Clifford, rebelled against King Henry III rather than return the castle to the Tosnys. This led to the castle's only known siege by Henry III. After just a few days the castle surrendered to the king under the threat of death. Walter himself had retreated into Wales and attempted to persuade his father-in-law, Prince Llywelyn Fawr, to join him in rebellion. On failing to achieve this aim Walter met the king at Shrewsbury and made his peace. Within a month Walter was back in the Welsh Marches leading a royal army against Prince Llywelyn who had finally thrown his power behind the rebels! Such were the convoluted twists and turns of thirteenth century politics! Twenty years later the king served a writ on the now ancient Walter Clifford, ordering him to observe the king's command in his Marcher barony. This was in breach of Walter's Marcher privileges and in a fit of pique he made the royal messenger eat the writ, seal and all. In those days the king's seal would have consisted of a dinner plate sized piece of wax! Once more a king of England marched against a baron of Clifford, but this time the septuagenarian lord of Clifford surrendered without a fight, losing all his hard won gains of independence. Walter died, having regained the king's favour in 1263.

In 1271 Walter's widowed daughter and heiress Matilda was kidnapped from her home by the young John Giffard of Brimpsfield. In terror she managed to get a letter to the king telling of her abduction and rape. Once more Henry III took to the field, this time for the honour of the baroness of Clifford. However before he had proceeded far he received another letter from Matilda saying everything was alright now and she had married her abductor! The marriage was subsequently blessed by the birth of two daughters before Matilda's death in 1284. By 1311 the castle had passed into the hands of the Mortimers and from that time forth was left to gently decay as just one more castle in the hands of that powerful family.

Clifford castle now consists of a great motte as constructed by the men of William Fitz Osbern back in the late 1060's. This was later sub-divided and the eastern part was crowned by an ovoid shell keep with five D-shaped towers in its circuit. Its north wall appears to overlie part of William Fitz Osbern's original hall. To the east of the motte is the castle bailey. Most of the walls of this structure have disappeared, but centrally are the remains of

a great twin-towered gatehouse (shown above) probably of the mid thirteenth century. To the west of the castle is a broken earthwork dam which would have flooded the valley to the south of the castle. With the River Wye to the north the fortress would have been surrounded by water on all sides except for the east. As such it would have been a very difficult fortress to take by storm. Half a mile to the south are the remains of the castle borough with the church of Clifford. Within lies a wooden monument which probably represents Simon Clifford the son of the first Walter Clifford and brother of Fair Rosamund.

A surviving axial road to the east of Castle Farm and parallel to the Wye on a north-south alignment marks the site of the borough. Faint earthwork traces of burgage plots and house platforms are traceable in improved pasture east and west of this road, and stone is said regularly to have been ploughed up in these fields. It is not clear whether the town had defences, though this seems likely. In 1368 the townsmen of Hay were said to have burned 200 houses at Clifford. While undoubtedly an exaggeration, it does indicate that it was regarded even by then as a thriving place. The construction of the railway probably put paid to any traces of the defences above the Wye on the western side of the town. The later settlement appears to have re-aligned to the present Whitney road in the post-Medieval period.

Previous archaeological investigations

Mr. Trumper, the then owner of the site, carried out a series of excavations between 1925 and 1928, which were successful in revealing the bases of twin towers either side of the castle entrance, and a large building (containing an annexe and bailey) to the east of the castle. Evidence was also discovered for a southern tower, guardroom and portcullis, alongside a section of the curtain wall. Findings from the excavations of this period unrelated to the castle included a boar's tusk, wolf vertebra, and a Roman brooch.

Between 1950 and 1953 a further series of excavations were embarked on, discoveries from which included the foundations of a tower on the motte, alongside a further sections of curtain wall. A complete excavation of the barbican was undertaken, and evidence of a roadway uncovered. Findings from these excavations included pottery and iron, arrowheads, a knife, a bullet mould, a key, iron nails and a bridle bit.

In early 2014 Border Archaeology undertook a programme of limited archaeological excavation prior to the implementation of structural alterations affecting the modern dwelling known as Clifford Castle. The excavation comprised foundations for an extension on the southern and western sides of the existing building and a circular excavation for a wine cellar. All excavation was by hand or by machine under archaeological supervision. A number of pits and surfaces were revealed apparently dating to the later 12th or early 13th centuries. The foundation of a possible structure was also identified which may be interpreted either as the continuation of a wall discovered during previous excavations

carried out in 2007 or as a wall running parallel to it. This feature also ran parallel to the projected line of the curtain wall. Four of the five pits excavated contained little evidence for refuse disposal and it is possible that they represented quarrying activity for the extraction of building material: it is thought the castle was rebuilt in stone at some point prior to the middle of the 13th century. Late 12th -or early 13th -century pottery recovered from layers sealing these pits may provide corroborative evidence for the construction date. An Archaeological Observation was also undertaken of drainage trench excavations associated with conversion of the upper storey of an existing garage at Clifford Castle to occasional guest accommodation. No archaeological deposits or features were seen during the present phase of work, with modern deposits and features lying immediately above natural subsoil.

The castle is currently on the English Heritage Heritage At Risk Register 2010. The present owners are working closely with English Heritage to implement a maintenance policy, followed by a program of works to stabilise the current structure and prevent further decay

7. Methodology

A series of research questions were identified that if answered would provide significant information regarding the layout and development of the castle, these included:

- Has the ridge and furrow evident across the bailey destroyed the underlying archaeology?
- What was the Hornwork used for and were there structures upon it?
- Where was the ground floor entrance into the Hall?
- What was the layout of walls at the western end of the Hall?
- Where was the medieval ground surface on the top of the motte and what was it made of?

Two geophysical surveys were undertaken by TigerGeo, a local specialist geophysics company. The first comprised coverage of as much as was practicable of the bailey using Ground Penetrating Radar, the second was a Resistivity Survey. The surveys were undertaken in June and early July 2017.

The excavations comprised seven small trenches or test pits, all excavated and backfilled by hand. Fieldwork was undertaken in September 2017. The trenches were carefully located in order to provide the best opportunity for answering the questions listed above.

8. Geophysical Survey

Two separate surveys were undertaken, primarily a Ground Penetrating Radar survey followed by a Resistivity (earth resistance) survey. The full report for the geophysical survey has been produced by TigerGeo Ltd, (Clifford Castle Herefordshire CCH171) and is available as a separate pdf.

The surveys were confined to the area of the bailey as undergrowth and difficulty of access made it impossible to use the equipment on the top of the Hornwork.

Both survey techniques had difficulty picking up the presence of even what were expected to be large scale features, for example the remains of the curtain wall which appears to run both to the south and north of the barbican. The small, localised numbers of features which were detected can all be explained in terms 19th and 20th century activity on the site, including disturbance from the 1920's excavations and garden landscaping.

The only recognisable features of historic interest which were recorded were the north-east / south west aligned ridges thought to be associated with either late medieval ploughing or orchard ridging, many of these still exist as subtle but visible earthwork features. It was therefore concluded that this type of land use was either masking medieval features or that if ridge and furrow, much of the underlying archaeology had been severely truncated.



Figure 4: GPR plot showing ridge and furrow / orchard ridging.

CCH171 Clifford Castle, Herefordshire
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 Orthographic Scale: 1:500 @ A3 Spatial Units: Meter. Do not scale off this drawing
 File: CCH171.map Copyright TigerGeo Limited 2018



9. The Excavations

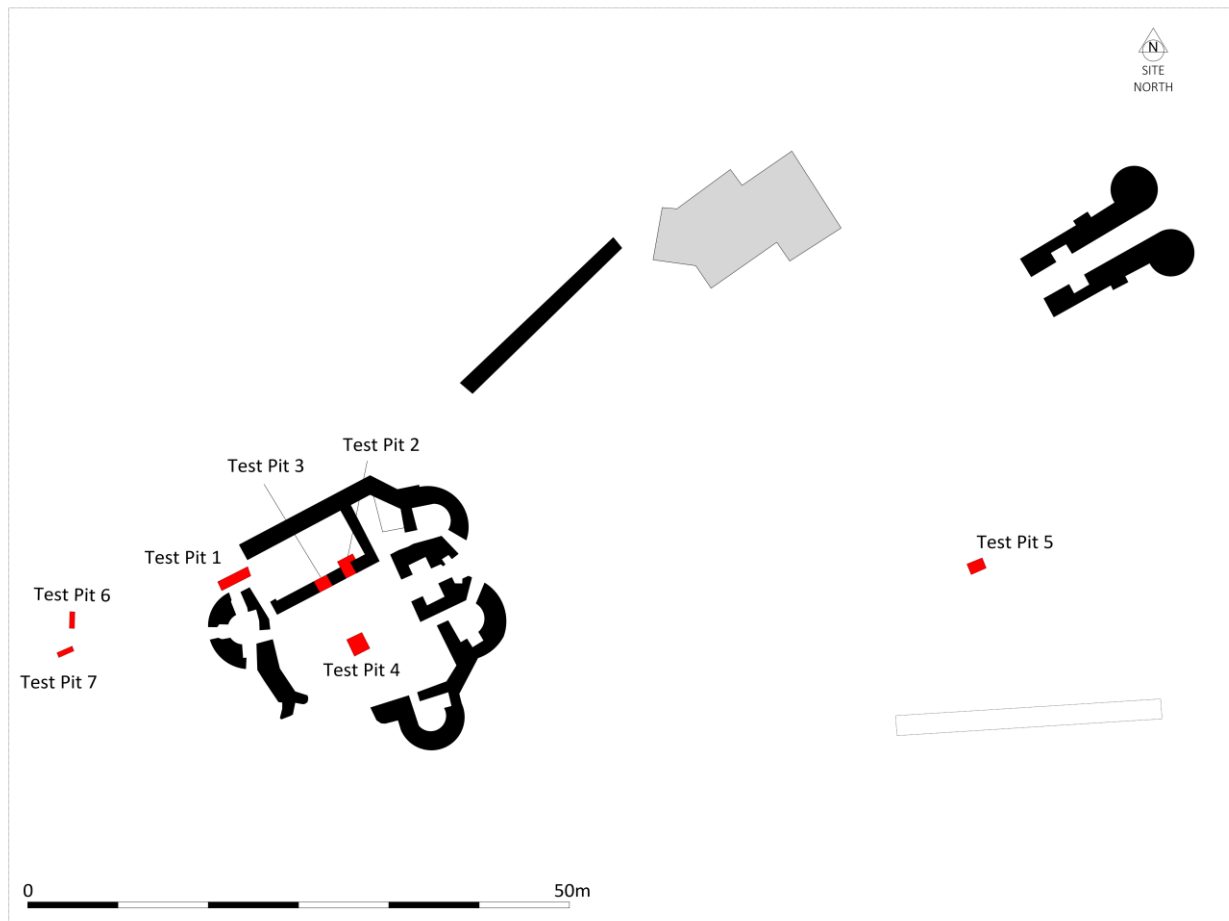


Figure 5: Plan of test pits and features recorded during the excavation.

Test pit 1

This was located in the angle of the so-called hall (more probably the chamber block) and the NW Tower, the relationship between the two buildings having been ambiguous since the castle was first surveyed by the Royal Commission in 1929. Close attention to the standing fabric in the first half of 2017 (Baker 2018) suggested that the west end of the undercroft space was closed by a wall, partly surviving above ground at its south end. Beyond it, there appeared to be a passage, alongside the undercroft, with a barrel-vaulted roof over it, the voussoirs of the passage vault protruding from the interior face of the surviving south wall. The hall space or chamber at first-floor level would have oversailed the passage, ending at an end wall that no longer survives above ground. The truncation and rebuilding of the west end of the north (external) hall wall, probably by a 19th-century railway company, added to the uncertainty around the arrangement of this area.

TP1 was excavated across the line of the suspected passageway. Removal of turf and topsoil (101) exposed the walls (106/107), on the east, closing the end of the hall/chamber

undercroft, and (105), on the west, forming the exterior end wall of the hall/chamber block and making a junction with the NW tower. Having exposed the tops of each wall, the excavation between them continued down to their footings but found only topsoil with occasional small pieces of 19th-century pottery right down to the base of the excavation (103: any original floor surface or sub-floor make-up between the two walls had evidently eroded down the steep slope to the west, or had otherwise been destroyed. The eastern wall – the west end wall of the undercroft – was c.1.6m wide, composed of coursed stone rubble of the kind used throughout the castle buildings. Three levels or tiers of footing were exposed (see photograph); the interior face of the wall was only exposed at the uppermost level as it was intended to leave the deposits within the interior of the hall/chamber undercroft untouched and in situ.



Test Pit 1, looking south. The left-hand wall with footings on three levels is the end wall of the hall/chamber-block undercroft; the right-hand wall is the original exterior end wall of the hall/chamber block, joining the fabric of the NW tower (top right corner)

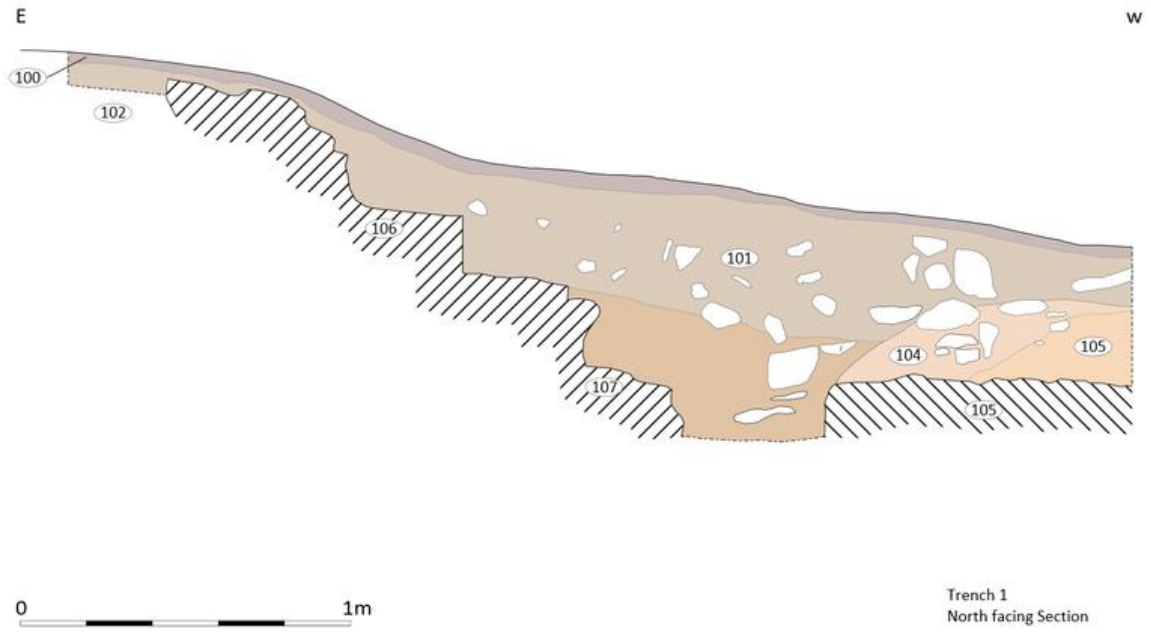


Figure 6: South section of Test Pit 1



Test Pit 1, looking east towards the hall/chamber undercroft, wall 106/107. 1

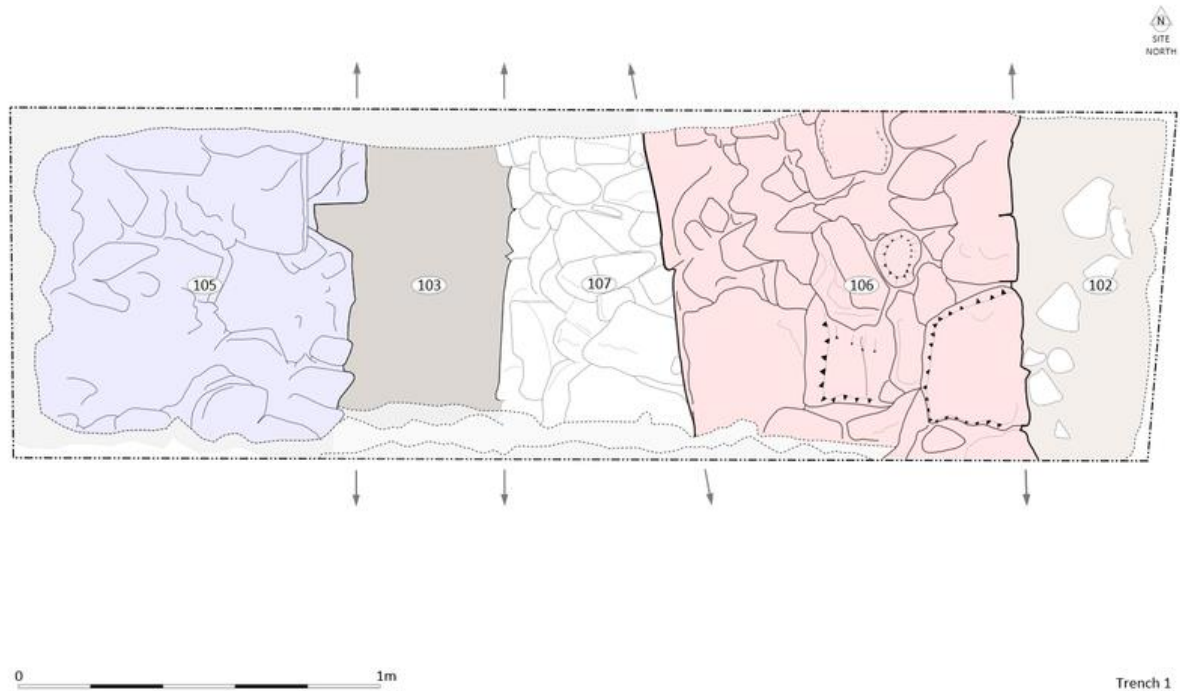


Figure 7: Excavation plan of Test Pit 1 with soil deposits in grey (102 within the undercroft, 103 within the walls), the end wall of the undercroft (106, 107), right, and the exterior end wall of the hall (105), right

Test Pit 2 & Test Pit 3

Two test pits were excavated against the outer (south/courtyard) face of the remains of the south wall of the hall/chamber-block building with the aim of determining whether a gap in the wall towards its east end represented an original doorway position, and in general to better understand the construction of the wall which, from the visible fragmentary exposures of its faces below its grassed top, seemed to be largely crudely rebuilt in drystone construction.

Test Pit 2 was positioned in the gap in the standing remains of the wall towards its eastern end. Removal of the vegetation and its root mat (201) immediately exposed in-situ masonry and rubble (204). The southern (courtyard) face of the wall was found to be intact right across the base of the excavation, immediately disproving the existence of an original doorway in this position. However, set back from the wall face towards the interior of the wall a reveal was identified at right-angles to the outer face, but not continuing up to it. This appear to have formed the west side of a wall-cupboard or niche (203) whose back wall was broken through to form the present gap in the wall. The identification of this feature as a cupboard or niche is strengthened by the existence of similar features elsewhere in the hall/chamber undercroft space: to the west, in the surviving stub-end of the south wall, and in the east gable end. Without excavation of the interior down to undercroft floor level some doubt as to the arrangement of this space will remain, but from the fragmentary exposures currently possible, it is likely that there were a number of these features in the undercroft interior, reminiscent of recesses that are found in Hereford city-centre domestic

undercrofts, where they have been interpreted as storage places for barrels, particularly where those undercrofts are known or likely to have seen use as taverns.

Test Pit 3 was positioned mid-way along the hall/chamber block south wall. Vegetation together with its rot mat and adhering topsoil (301) was peeled off onto a very substantial rubble deposit (302) thought to be, at least in part, the product of the ruination of the south wall and the hall/chamber block generally. The rubble deposit also contained some fragmentary architectural stonework, including a possible column fragment and a piece of plaster with a curved surface; these, together with a small amount of animal bone, suggested that the upper part at least of the rubble may have been dumped in this position, possibly from clearance of the courtyard, and perhaps gatehouse, interiors, perhaps by Dr Trumper in the mid-1920s. A lower deposit within the rubble (303) contained more voids between the stones and a piece of 18th-19th-century Staffordshire slipware; this may have been the undisturbed destruction deposit arising from the ruination of the building.

Removal of the rubble (while not excavating much below the level of the present courtyard surface) exposed the eastern reveal of an opening that seems to have passed through the thickness of the wall. The reveal (306) was composed at the base/lower plane of squared sandstone ashlar mortared with a pinkish pebbly mortar, and with traces of render remaining on its surface; a plane above appeared to be a different rubble-based build. The original mortar was consistent with that seen in the corework of the south wall and the NW tower in damage at their junction, suggesting that this opening was an original feature. No western reveal was exposed within the trench, but this opening is interpreted as a primary doorway opening located in the centre of the south wall, giving access to the undercroft from the courtyard. If the interpretation of multiple recesses around its walls is correct, such a door may have been wider than usual to admit bulk goods and barrels.

To the immediate west of Test Pit 3 the fabric of the outer wall face was composed solely of very thin slabby courses of unmortared sandstone (307). The build was irregular; this, and the recovery of Staffordshire slipware from voids in this fabric suggests strongly that it is a recent antiquarian rebuild, possibly further work by Dr Oswald Trumper in the 1920s or early 30s.

In conclusion, Test Pits 2 and 3 were effective in demonstrating that the remains of the south wall of the hall/chamber-block is a partial rebuild, but one that is based on original fabric. This includes a central doorway and at least one wall recess that formed part of the interior arrangements of the undercroft.



Test Pit 2, looking north towards the undercroft interior showing the base of the south wall continuing across the trench



Test Pit 2, looking west, showing the western reveal on two planes of a cupboard recess



Test Pit 3, looking north, showing eastern reveal of the doorway opening and secondary wall fabric partly closing the doorway



Test Pit 3, looking east, showing the eastern door reveal, with mortared ashlar work visible at the lower level

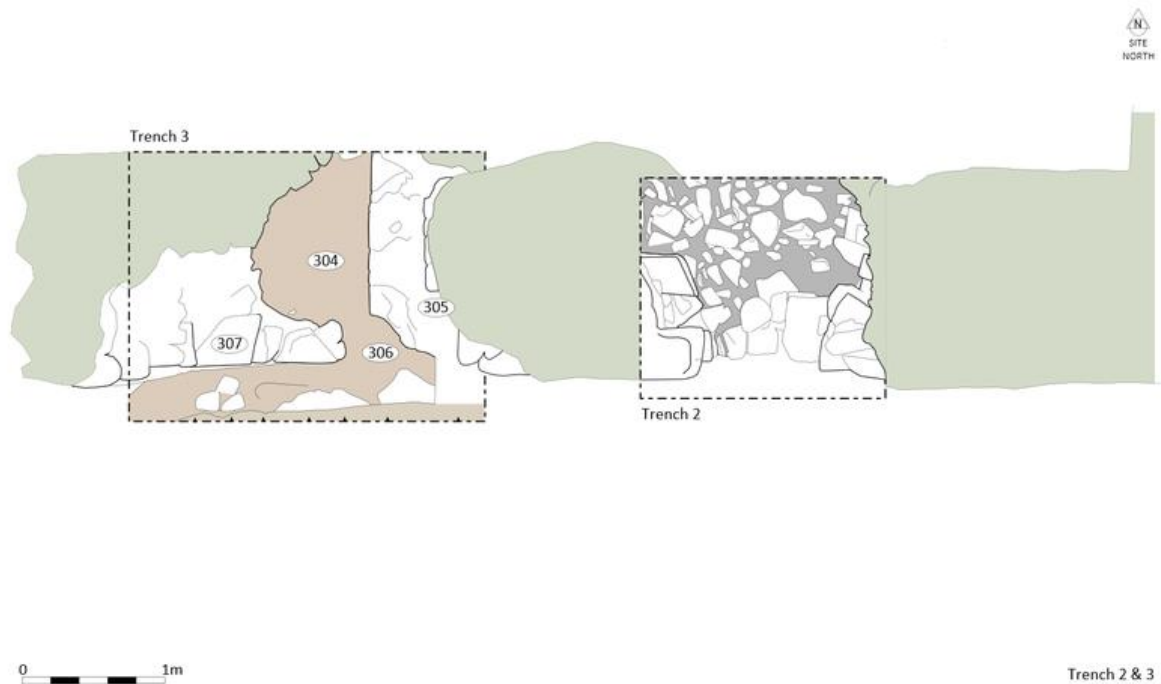


Figure 8: Composite plan of test pits 2 & 3.

Test Pit 4

This was positioned close to the middle of the keep. The grass and topsoil layer (400) was removed by hand. Below was a former ground surface (401) consisting of mostly small (0.05-0.10m) rounded cobbles and small angular stones but also a few larger (0.20m) angular stones in a mixed deposit. Below 401 was a deposit of orangey dark brown sandy silt (402) approximately 0.19m deep containing inclusions of mortar and charcoal as well as grit and gravel. When 402 was removed it revealed below a vertical sided, flat bottomed cut [404] and fill (403) that aligned roughly east to west and cutting through the middle of the trench. This feature was continuous beyond the edges of the trench and was the result of excavations carried out by the land owner/s between 1925 and 1953.



Test Pit 4 looking north.

This feature measured 0.30m wide by 0.46m deep. The fill contained pottery from the late 11th to early 13th centuries which had come from the underlying deposit (406). The purpose of this feature was apparently to look for buried building walls.

The linear feature cut through a deposit of large stones (405) within a deposit of mid brown silt containing charcoal, mortar and plaster. The stones were pitched on edge as if they had been collected together for later reuse. Among the pitched stones were roof tiles, evident from the carefully cut peg holes. Within the deposit, pottery was found dating between the 16th and 17th centuries.

Underlying the pitched stones was a trampled occupation layer (406) up to 0.15m deep consisting of dark blackish brown moist silt deposit containing inclusions of charcoal and mortar. Pottery and animal bone were present within the deposit. The pottery dated between the 11th and 13th centuries.

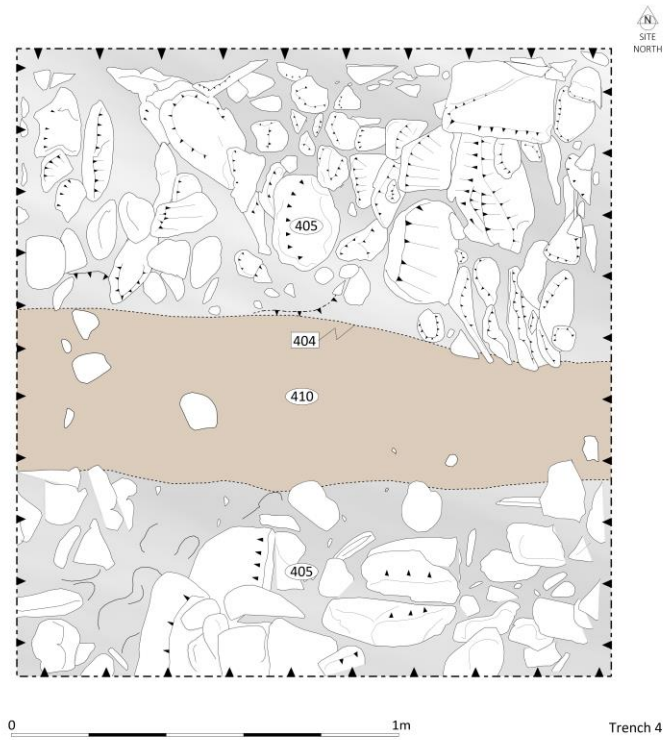


Figure 9: Plan of the upper levels of Test Pit 4



Stacked stones and roof tiles with fragmented cobble surface below.



Detail of stacked stones and roof tiles

Immediately underlying 406 was a 0.10m deep deposit of grey brown silt containing lots of cobbles (407). There appeared to be some mixing and lensing between deposits 406, 407 and 408, possibly implying that the three deposits were all part of a dumping episode. Pottery from within these deposits all dated to 11th to 13th centuries.

Deposit 408 was a lense of reddish-grey-brown with gravelly, sand and gritty inclusions. Charcoal and mortar was also present within the deposit. The deposit measured 0.35m by 0.15m and its depth did not exceed 0.07m. As environmental preservation of this deposit appeared good a soil sample (sample 2) was taken from 408. Layer 409 was a loosely compacted occupation deposit measuring up to 0.12m deep by 0.50m wide and 0.90m long. The deposit consisted of grey silt containing patches of charcoal and mortar. There were no finds associated with this deposit.

Underlying and sealed by 409 were three cut features, [412], [415] and [418].

Feature 412 was the largest of the features located in trench 4. The feature was a large post hole located in the south east corner of the trench. Assuming that the feature was somewhere near circular, approximately a quarter of it was present within the trench. The exposed sides of the feature sloped at an angle close to 45°. The feature measured 0.80m deep by 0.50m wide by 0.58m long. The feature contained two fills (411) and (413). Fill 411 was the compacted primary fill of the feature and it held packing stones that had once secured a timber post. This fill was greyish red brown silt containing charcoal and possible small lumps of daub. The fill also contained pottery and animal bone. The pottery again dated between the 11th and 13th centuries. The visible dimensions of the fill measured 0.20m in diameter by 0.62m deep.

Within the packing stones a moderately loose fill (413) had replaced the timber post. This fill consisted of dark grey brown silt with cobbles, sand, gravel and clay inclusions. Also within the fill were inclusions of charcoal and rare mortar inclusions. At the bottom of the cut there was a horizontally laid flat stone pad. The visible dimensions of the post fill were 0.80m deep by 0.44m wide. Finds from within the fill included pottery, deer antler, animal and fish bones. The pottery dated to the 11th to 13th centuries.

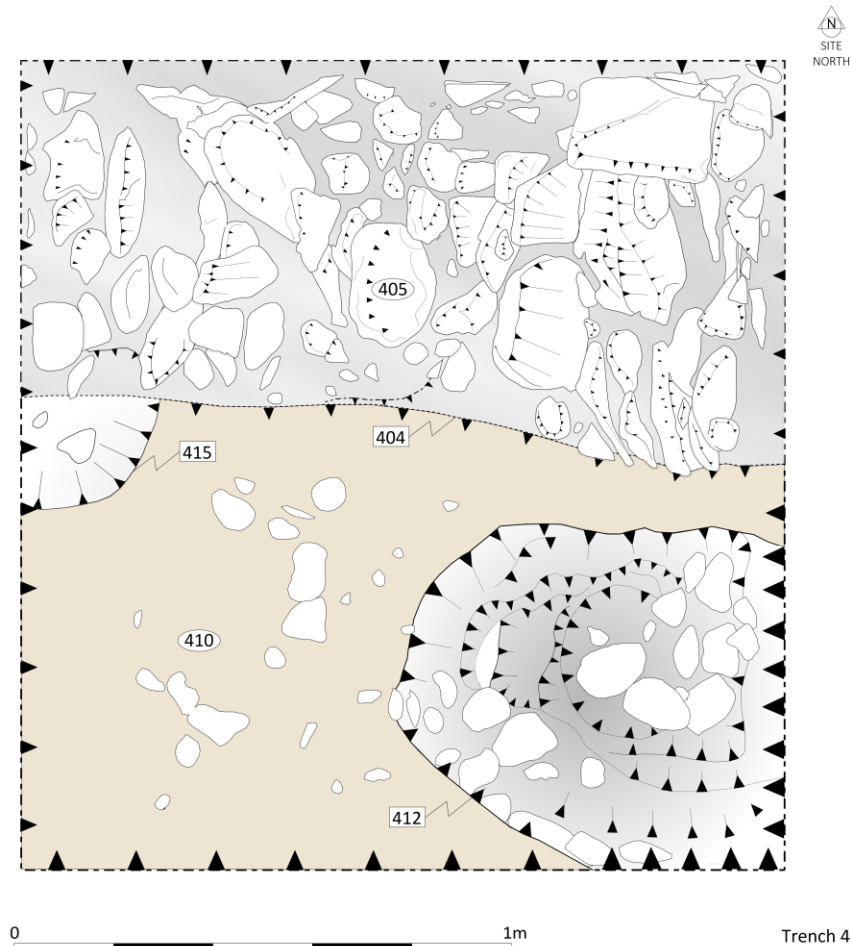


Figure 10: Plan of lower levels of Test Pit 4

Located in the north-west angle of the trench was the shallow D shaped half of another post hole [415] with a single fill (414). The edges and base of the feature had been lined with packing stones. The fill consisted of grey blackish brown silt with charcoal inclusions. Finds from within the fill included pottery, animal bone and a small number of iron nails. This feature was much smaller than [412] and is quite different in nature.

The third feature was [418] a possible third shallow post hole located at the bottom of the west section close to feature [415]. Approximately half of the feature (0.14m diameter) lay within the trench. Its fill comprised dark grey brown silty clay. No finds were present in the fill.

Also underlying layer 409 and cut by features [412], [415] and [418] was deposit 410 (see also 416, same deposit). The deposit consisted of compacted orangey pinkish red silt that appeared to have been heat affected. Included within the deposit were small pebbles and gravel and occasional charcoal pieces. This appears to be redeposited natural and part of the original 11th century motte.



Western section of Test Pit 4

Test Pit 5

This was located within the bailey of the castle, to the south-west of the gatehouse. It was located in order to investigate the effect which the ridge and furrow or orchard ridging has had on the underlying archaeology. It was anticipated that, as suggested by the geophysical survey, the majority of the medieval archaeology may have been severely truncated or completely removed by later medieval ploughing.

The trench measured 1.5m long (east – west) and 1m wide. Upon removal of the topsoil (501) it immediately became apparent why the geophysical surveys had been so disappointing. A 0.22m thick layer of glacial gravel covered the trench (502). This appeared to get thinner and or less well compacted to the eastern and western sides of the trench and matched in both scale and alignment the ridges that were picked up on the geophysical surveys and, indeed the few that are just visible on the ground. This confirmed that these linear features were the earthwork and buried remains of orchard ridging rather than the result of ploughing.



Figure 11: North facing section of Test Pit 5

Immediately below the gravel ridge was a 3cm thick layer of reddish brown silt which contained charcoal flecks and small lime mortar fragments, (503). This appears to be a thin buried ground surface which has not had time to thicken into a fully formed soil. The character of this deposit together with the fine and “crushed” nature of the charcoal and lime mortar suggests that this deposit had been trampled or walked over repeatedly and had therefore been an exposed surface for a period of time. Within this layer was a large flat stone ((506) on plan) which appeared to have been part of this surface. A 0.75 by 0.5 m sondage was cut through this layer to reveal a 0.15m thick layer of light reddish brown silty loam, (505). This was well mixed and soft with occasional small stones. No artefactual material was recovered from this layer. Immediately below this deposit, at a depth on 0.55m below the present ground surface, was a very hard layer of light red sandy silt with glacial gravels (505). This appeared to be natural.

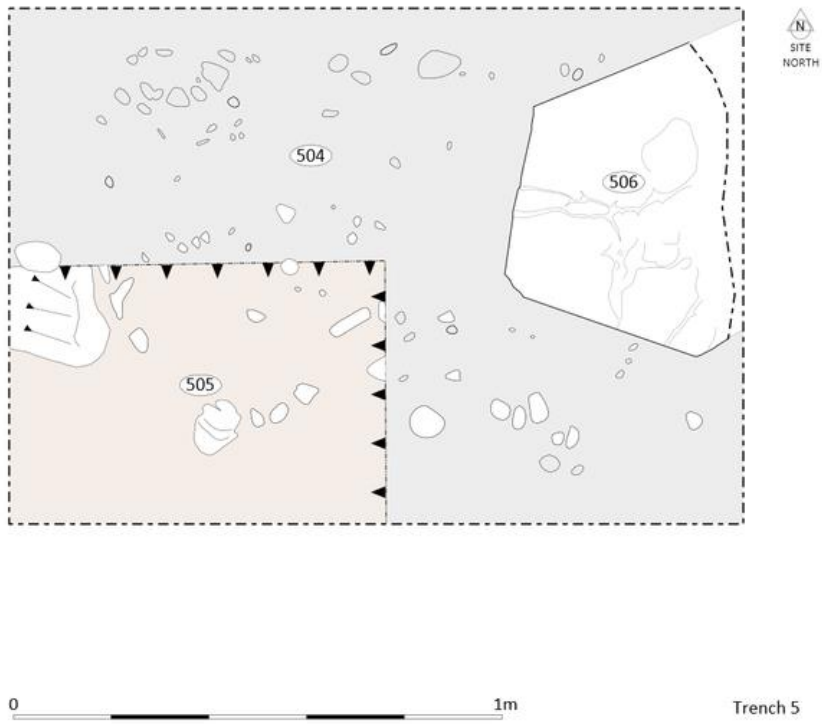


Figure 12: Plan of Test Pit 5



Test Pit 5 looking west

Test Pit 6 & Test Pit 7

Two test pits were excavated on the top of the so-called Hornwork, west of the motte. The summit of this steeply-side feature is completely flat, and forms a right-angled triangle with its longest side facing south-west, and its short side facing the ditch that separates it from the motte – whose top is at a slightly higher level, making a right-angle with the side overlooking the Wye and the railway line alongside it. The Parliamentary fence erected by the railway runs across the Hornwork summit parallel with the north side and c.4m in from the edge of the slope.

The two test pits were excavated to sample the interior of the Hornwork summit towards its northern edge (T6) and to look at the SW-facing edge itself – with a view to locating any defensive feature at the top of the slope (T7). In the event neither trench found any evidence of archaeological structures or deposits.

Test Pit 6, just within the railway fence towards the north side of the Hornwork, first exposed a thin and completely dry woodland topsoil, 8-15cms deep and dominated by large roots and mats of smaller roots (601). This faded into a B-horizon type subsoil (602) with further roots and a larger component of compact silt and gravel – again completely dry, without moisture. This in turn faded into a fine compact light khaki silt with rounded (but not polished) pebbles or cobbles at a depth of 0.5m (603). This was interpreted as a natural deposit of glacial origin; its top was reached in a mid-trench sondage, each deposit being exceptionally hard and compact between the extensive root systems. No pre-20th-century artefacts were found.



Test Pit 6, looking SW. The central sondage has exposed the top of natural glacial deposits. For location, the wire of the railway fence can be seen on the ground bottom-right

Test Pit 7, right on the edge of the steep slope down to the south-west, first exposed a light grey-brown topsoil (701), which produced one piece of worked flint. Removal of 701 exposed a very compact light khaki fine silt with large quantities of small round cobbles, resembling a metalled surface but of natural origin (702); a small depression or hole possibly cut into this (703/704) was interpreted as a small tree throw. The silt-with-small cobbles layer 702 faded into a lower material (705), lighter in colour with cobbles that were inconsistent in size but generally much larger than those in 702. Again, this was interpreted as a natural glacial deposit.



Test Pit 7, surface of 702 with depression 703

No light could therefore be shed on the use of the Hornwork during the medieval period. It seems highly unlikely that it would have been left undefended, rising within a few metres of the motte-top buildings and presenting a substantial area of dead ground (out-of-sight from the motte buildings) to its west. Nevertheless, there was no sign of medieval activity or any defensive structures. The only new light shed on the Hornwork by these trenches was confirmation of its likely glacial origin, suggesting that it was a moraine-like ridge along the riverside escarpment that probably also formed the basis of the motte.

10. Discussion

These small scale excavations have answered a number of important questions regarding the layout, development and preservation of Clifford Castle.

Test pit 1 has shown some complexity in the walls of the hall and passageway. While the lowest course of exposed footings was parallel with the inside face of the wall at its top, interestingly, the second level of footings were at a slightly divergent angle. This was in fact picked up by the Royal Commission from what could be seen of the wall in 1929. The base courses and top of the wall make an accurate right-angle with the north and south walls of the hall/chamber/block. The divergent angle (slightly west of north) runs parallel to the opposite side of the passageway where it survives above-ground as part of the fabric of the NW tower. The possibility that the lowest courses of wall 106/107 belong to an earlier phase of structure cannot be absolutely dismissed, but there was no evidence of a difference in phase or build character. It is more likely that, either (as the RCHM plan suggests) the wall was thicker at one end than the other, the inside face perpendicular to the remainder of the building while its outer/passageway face was parallel to the opposite side of the passage, or that this is evidence of a design change at the earliest stages of constructing the footings, reflecting the difficulty of setting-out buildings around a curved perimeter. The height differential between the surviving walls either side of the passage is seen as an accurate reflection of the erosion and loss of fabric at the NW corner of the motte-top complex. The actual junction of the fabric of the NW tower with the end wall of the hall was not exposed, but it is assumed that they were of one build, or at least of the same phase, as the string course on the outside of face of the north wall of the hall/chamber block is continued around the NW tower.

No light could be shed on the function of the narrow, vaulted passageway at the end of the undercroft, between the two excavated walls. There need not necessarily have been a doorway through it into the undercroft as there were doorways into that space in the middle of the south wall (see trench 3) and at the south end of the east wall. The passage could have given access either to a garderobe chamber (no others are known at motte-top/ground-floor level) or to arrow-loops offering covering fire over the NW angle of the castle buildings, interlocking with the arcs provided by windows at two levels in the NW tower. Further excavation here to attempt to clarify these points would probably prove pointless due to the loss of deposit on this angle of the motte top.

Although the area under Test Pit 2 has been used over recent years as the entrance into the Hall the excavation here has proved that the straight return within the wall did not go all the way through and was more than likely one side of a cupboard. Test Pit 3 has shown that this was the original entrance way into the hall at ground floor level but appears to have been purposefully blocked by piled up rubble during the 19th or early 20th century.

The evidence from Test Pit 4 demonstrates much of the story of the phases of Clifford Castle, starting with the original top of the motte "as built". The structure of the motte was revealed at the very bottom of the trench and comprised redeposited natural that appears to have been affected by burning. The earliest features on the top of the motte appear to be

three post holes which are thought to represent part of a timber keep or associated structure. Pottery recovered from the primary fills of these post holes date from the late 11th century, (a piece of deer antler was recovered from this deposit), the upper fills dating to the mid 13th century and it is assumed that the upper fills of the post holes relate to material which has fallen in after the timbers have been removed. It is therefore likely that the timbers were initially erected in the late 11th century and removed in the early to mid 13th century. It is possible that the timbers were burned rather than pulled out of the post holes, this might explain the possible burning detected on the natural gravels and also the significant amount of charcoal present within the layer which directly overlay the post holes. Over this deposit was the remains of a cobbled surface which is assumed to be the 12th or early 13th century with another fragmentary cobbled surface slightly higher up the section. All the layers between these surfaces contained 12th to 13th century pottery.

The lack of pottery from the 14th and 15th centuries implies probable abandonment, which fits with the known history of the castle.

The pottery recovered from the pitched stone layer dates to the 16th and 17th century and clearly dates to after the castle went out of use. The stone appears to have been deliberately stacked for collection and later reuse. Among the stacked stones were a number of stone roof tiles.

After this it appears that the castle is completely abandoned. It would appear that quantities of soil are being deposited within the Keep and that this material was a good quality loam – what would usually be termed a garden soil. This supports the findings during the building conservation works, where it appears soil was being placed at locations of the top of the walls in order to grow plants and create a romantic ruin.

Whilst the results of the geophysical surveys were disappointing, the excavation of Test Pit 5 has shown that under the re-deposited gravel used to form the orchard ridging, well preserved archaeological deposits survive. The construction of the orchard ridging is interesting, the use of glacial gravels as a material of choice would perhaps indicate that the orchard trees were planted on the top of the ridge and their roots would then be drawn towards the wetter areas either side of the ridge, perhaps ensuring that the roots spread out faster giving a more “groundfast” tree.

The excavations, (Test Pit 6 and Test Pit 7), on the Hornwork strongly suggest that what at first looks to be an obvious location for some form of out-work or other defensive feature, was never utilised as such and was probably lowered in height in order to afford better visibility along the river.

11. Conclusion

This modest project has provided a significant amount of new information regarding the layout and development of Clifford Castle. It has also provided much useful information regarding the depth of deposits within the Keep and the preservation and survival of deposits within the bailey. The ground floor layout of the Hall has been clarified and whilst questions remain regarding the narrow passageway which runs along the outside of the western wall of the hall, the fact that it does continue has been established. The excavations here have also reinforced the comments made by the RCHME concerning the phasing of the hall. The Hornwork appears to me the remains of a natural gravel ridge the continuation of which runs under the motte. The Hornwork top was probably lowered and levelled and possibly its sides enhanced in order to make access difficult but it would appear that there was no large scale activity on this feature. This project has also made it clear that retrieving additional detail regarding the layout of the bailey will require “ground truthing” rather than the reliance on geophysical techniques, however, the small excavation within the bailey has shown that well preserved deposits do survive.

12. Appendix 1: Pottery Report by Stephanie Ratkai

CLIFFORD CASTLE, HEREFORDSHIRE (CC17)

A small collection of pottery (46 sherds weighing 690g) from three trenches were catalogued. The medieval sherds were examined under x 20 magnification and divided into fabric groups following Vince's (1985) Hereford pottery type series. Table 1. Three medieval fabrics were identified; Worcester-type sandy cooking pot (Hereford fabric C1), Malvernian cooking pot (Hereford fabric B1) and a glazed oolitic ware, probably Hereford fabric D2 or D3.

Worcester-type cooking pot is known from the late 11th century in Worcester itself but the ware name is something of a catch-all and covers pottery made at several kiln sites, none of which has been identified. At Clifford Castle there appeared to be three fabric variations:

(1) moderate, ill-sorted, sub-angular quartz 0.25-0.5mm, rare, sandstone, rare, clear, yellowish inclusions with marked planes of cleavage (orthoclase feldspar?); black fabric

(2) moderate-abundant, ill-sorted, sub-angular quartz, rare sandstone, dense black inclusions (dolerite?); grey fabric

(3) abundant, medium-sized, angular quartz; brown fabric, grey core

However despite the fabric variations the general forms are always much the same and they clearly belong to a single tradition.

Worcester-type cooking pot is found extensively in the Welsh Marches. What is striking is that it is often found associated with the earliest levels of 11th-century motte and bailey castles. Examples come from Wigmore Castle (Rátkai 2015) and Eardisley Castle (Rátkai 201?), Herefordshire, from Hen Domen, Montgomeryshire (Vince 19??) and further east (although still considered part of the Marcher lordships) at Stafford Castle (Rátkai 2007) and Dudley Castle (pers. inspection) Staffordshire. It is possible, therefore, that the Worcester-type cooking pot at Clifford Castle would have been the earliest pottery used on the site.

Malvernian cooking pot is often found together with Worcester-type cooking pot in the West Midlands and the Marches. Thus, far there is no evidence to suggest that the Malvernian ware is earlier than the 12th century, although evidence from Wigmore Castle might indicate that it was made from quite early in the 12th century. This date could also be appropriate for the glazed oolitic pitcher sherd if it was fabric D2, although Vince (1985) notes that this fabric has only been found in Hereford itself and nowhere else in the county, whilst also noting that it has a wide distribution as far as Droitwich and Dublin. Fabric D3, dating to the late 12th-early 13th century, has also only been identified at one find-spot in

Hereford and that was again Hereford. Looking at the fact that Worcester-type cooking pot is the most common of the three fabrics it would not be unreasonable to conclude that most of the medieval contexts date to the 12th century - 413 could be late 11th century.

As is usually the case, it is impossible to tell that the medieval pottery came from an important or high-status site; it is the faunal remains that more often reveal this.

The post-medieval pottery consists mainly of the fine bodied oxidised, often micaceous, wares, so common in the Marches. Some of these may be from Newent in Gloucestershire but the other possibility is Witney-on-Wye, a much more likely candidate because of its proximity to Clifford. A sandier, redder fabric with black glaze has been termed 'coarseware' in the table and catalogue, a term not used by Vince (1985) but one that is quite useful to denote utilitarian wares, mainly bowls and jars with black or dark brown glazes and no known sources. Only two other types of post-medieval pottery were present, North Devon gravel-tempered ware, a not uncommon find in the West Midlands and mottled ware another rather ubiquitous ware manufactured in the Staffordshire Potteries and in Bristol, the two centres producing virtually indistinguishable wares.

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14. Bibliography

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- Archaeological records held by Herefordshire HER
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15. Site Archive

- 130 digital photographs.
- 64 context records.
- 2 site note book entries
- 4 site drawings on perma-trace @1:20 scale.
- DXF datafiles (CAD)
- This Document