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EVIDENCE FOR LEAD WORKING FROM
WIGMORE CASTLE

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Summary

An assemblage of lead working debris from Wigmore Castle was assessed. The assemblage relates to the use of lead in various building activities including fenestration and roofing.

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Evidence for lead working from Wigmore Castle

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Introduction

Excavations conducted at Wigmore Castle during 1997 recovered approximately 35kg of lead in various forms including window cames, spillages, offcuts and scrap. This short report details these finds and their technological origin.

Lead finds from Wigmore Castle

Table One details the lead finds from Wigmore Castle by find number, weight and identification. Limited XRF analysis of these finds identified only lead. The absence of tin and/or antimony confirms that this debris was not associated with the manufacture of tableware or other similar portable artefacts.

The identification of lead finds from Wigmore Castle suggests that they were associated with the building and maintenance of the castle structure. Many of the finds were of lead cames and ties used in castle fenestration. Other finds such as sheet trimmings and sheet fragments were most likely derived from the roofing of the castle. The presence of the large lead plano-convex hearth bottom is evidence that lead was melted in bulk for use in various building applications. The category of finds identified as spillages is problematic. It remains possible that such finds do indeed represent spillages of lead which occurred during its transportation in the molten state but the possibility that 'spillages' represent lead fittings which have melted during accidental fires should not be discounted.

Conclusion

The assemblage of lead debris from Wigmore Castle represents the use of lead in various activities relating to the building and maintenance of the castle. The lead remains are the by-products from construction episodes and/or demolition. Characterisation of some debris suggests that these activities at least included fenestration and the roofing of the castle.

Small Finds Number	Identification	Weight (g)
119	spillage	5785
112	comes/ties	640
043	sheet	9
172	spillage(s)	3132
014	Pb impregnated	1482
170	Spillage & comes	1125
093	comes	26
114	plano-convex hearth	21600
113	trimmings from	37
176	non-diagnostic scrap	15
171	spillage	171
036	non-diagnostic scrap	14
011	comes	67
135	spillage(s)	242
124	non-diagnostic scrap	74
115	non-diagnostic scrap	106
098	trimmings from	557
005	spillage	324
196	trimmings from	36
152	spillage	27
096	spillage	67
140	off-cuts	23
088	spillage	19
126	sheet fragment	14
167	spillage	63
085	trimming	40
011	spillage	56
012	trimming	84
007	spillage	87
011	comes	12
158	trimmings from	14
010	trimmings from	15
121	spillage	12
128	trimmings from	9

Table One. The lead finds from Wigmore Castle.

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