

## Excavation of an unnamed castle at Cullykhan, Castle Point, Troup

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### ABSTRACT

*The peninsula known as Castle Point, Troup, was occupied or used from the Late Neolithic period to the Second World War. This paper deals with the construction and use of the castle, from the 13th to 17th centuries. The excavations of the castle site revealed the footings of a rectangular tower, with a cobbled courtyard and the remains of a kitchen range to its south-east. Within the kitchen was a collapsed fireplace arch bearing two similar masons' marks. A small quantity of pottery sherds, three coins, dated to the 16th century, and a few other artefacts were also recovered. Evidence of earlier medieval structures underlay the kitchen area, including a number of stone drains, two narrow clay-lined channels and a pit.*

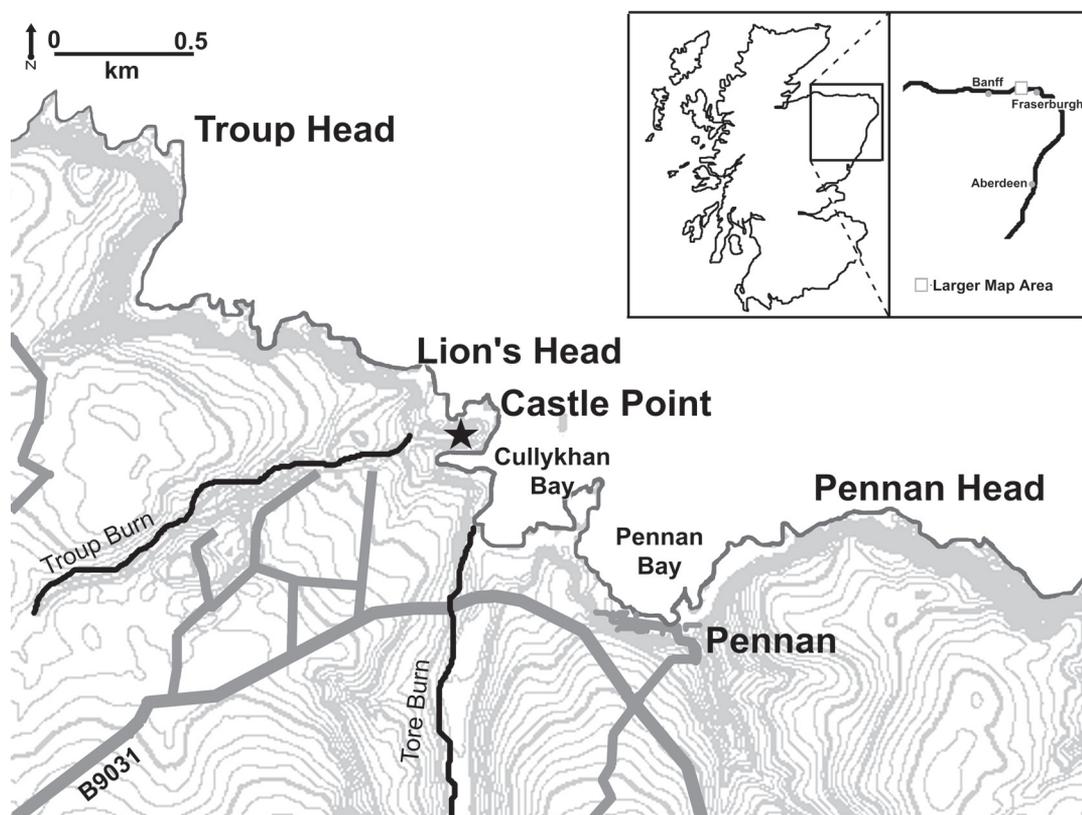
### INTRODUCTION

The excavations conducted by the late Colvin Greig between 1964 and 1972 revealed that the promontory known as Castle Point, Troup (NGR: NJ 8378 6617; NJ 86 NW1), had a long history of occupation, from the Neolithic to the Second World War, with evidence to suggest that the whole promontory was probably in use, with particular activity in the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age (Greig 1971: 15–21), and in the 12th century (Greig & Greig 1989: 279–97). The promontory, called Cullykhan by the excavators, lies on the north coast of the modern local authority area of Aberdeenshire, within the historical county of Banffshire, between Banff and Fraserburgh, about 1km to the west of the village of Pennan. The promontory itself is of rather irregular outline, *c* 240m long and 50–80m wide, with a fairly level top at 20–25m above Ordnance Datum, with an area of about 0.6ha. It is bounded on all sides by steep cliffs of conglomerate rock,

which provide a strong natural defence, where, like the earlier inhabitants, the medieval builders also saw the potential. A number of other coastal promontories show similar reuse of prehistoric sites in the medieval period, such as the great castle of Dunnottar (NGR: NO 8805 8385), on the east coast south of Stonehaven, and at Dundarg (NGR: NJ 8945 6487), a few miles to the east of Pennan (Beveridge 1914: 184–92; Simpson 1954: 131; Simpson 1960: 9–25; Fojut & Love 1983: 449–56). Farther south, on the east coast of Angus, is Prail Castle (NGR: NO 6970 4645), and also Black Castle (NGR: NO 7098 5356) which was excavated between 1957–61 (Wilson & Wilson 1967: 249–53).

The approach to the site is defined by the channels of two burns; that on the north is a narrow rock-cut feature some 10–15m deep; that to the south is less sharply defined. Between them is a neck of land only 1.5m across. At some point in the past, the rock neck has been cut through and then later bridged over by

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ILLUS 1 Location map, Ordnance Survey under licence No 00100020767 © Crown Copyright

a stone-built narrow arch of red sandstone, allowing the diversion of an off-shoot of the burn to power a mill that once lay below this bridge – and which is visible on an estate map of possible 18th- century or early 19th-century date. The remains of a track survive to the south of and below this narrow causeway. This ran down to the mill and continued on towards a small quay at the base of the cliff, and to the beach itself.

The 20m-high cliffs are pierced by a natural cave, the Needle's Eye, which runs right through the peninsula. The cave begins as a narrow defile at its southern end and runs north to where it opens out into a large cavern, the Devil's Dining Room, beneath the castle itself. This has contributed to considerable erosion

and collapse over the centuries, which is still on-going.

Although the headland is exposed, it is sheltered in part from the west and the north-west by Lion's Head, and is, to some extent, in the lee of Troup Head, which is up to 112m high. According to the Schoolmaster, Mr Whyte in the *New Statistical Account 1845*; 274:

The warmest and earliest part of the parish (of Gamrie) is the eastern or Troup district, which has the double advantage of south exposure and of shelter from the north blast by the rocks of Troup Head.

The headland provides a sheltered anchorage in Cullykhan Bay, where the remains of an undated small quay lie against the cliff, below the castle.



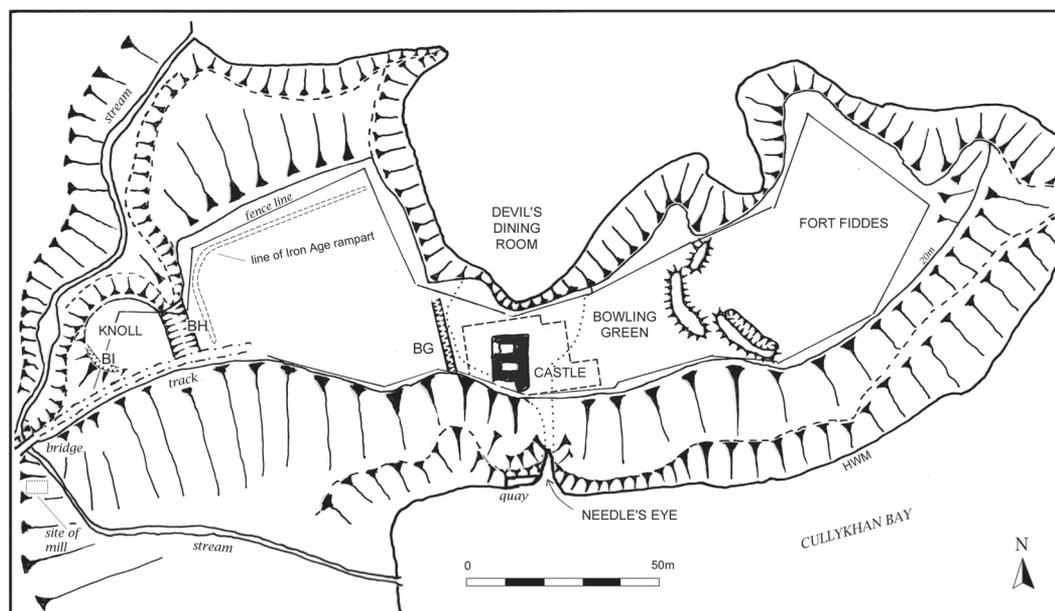
ILLUS 2 Photo of an estate plan of 18th- or 19th-century date, showing a track-way across the site to the bowling green and Fort Fiddes, with the mill and a quay below, but with no indication of any castle remains

#### SITE DESCRIPTION

A narrow track leads over the bridge to the south of a small raised area, just to the east of the narrow access to the promontory. This low natural hummock was named 'The Knoll' by the excavators, and this term is used throughout this report as a convenient label for describing the various structures built there. To the west and below the Knoll is a V-shaped ditch (Feature BI) curving round its base, while to the east is another wider ditch (Feature BH) running north/south. The track then leads across the main area of the promontory and on towards the east, where the peninsula narrows once again and is cut by another smaller, narrow ditch (BG). Just to the east of this ditch lie the reduced remains

of a rectangular tower with, still farther east, the remnants of a late 18th-century bowling green, followed by the remains of a probable late 18th-century military fort, Fort Fiddes, on the most easterly part of the promontory.

There are two areas of medieval occupation on the peninsula. The earliest, dating to the 12th century, was found on the Knoll, the findings of which have been published (Greig & Greig 1989: 279–97). Here, the remains of a bow-ended stone and wooden structure were found, along with a hearth and some post-holes, associated with which was a concentration of 12th-century finds, including a coin, a gilt buckle plate and pottery, both Scottish and imported. The eastern part of this structure was



ILLUS 3 Site map of Castle Point Troup showing the location of the Knoll, ditches, castle, bowling green and Fort Fiddes

destroyed by the insertion of ditch BH. As well as 12th-century pottery sherds, a number of 13th-century sherds were found in the upper fill of the V-shaped ditch (BI) to the west of the Knoll. These, along with collapsed remains of a structure, would indicate that some form of a building, perhaps a guardhouse, had stood here after the 12th century (Greig & Greig 1989: 289–93). The focus of this report, however, is on the later medieval structure, which lies farther to the east, where the promontory narrows again, and to the east of ditch BG.

#### THE CASTLE SITE

While the estate map (see illus 2) shows Fort Fiddes, the bowling green and the mill, there is no reference to the remains of a castle. That there was a castle on the Cullykhan peninsula is attested to by several early mapmakers and compilers of journals, though references are few and very limited in terms of description. Timothy Pont's map (1580–90s) of the area

depicts a small tower within a surrounding wall, called 'Troupp'. Jan Janssen's map of Scotland between the River Tay and the Moray Firth, published in Amsterdam in 1659, shows a castle at Troup. Robert Gordon's map, published by Blaeu in Amsterdam in 1654, indicates Troup, and this is echoed in the 'corrected and improved' version of Gordon's map, published by Robert Morden in London in 1687. Morden published a very similar map, again showing Troup, in London in 1695. A map of Scotland by Nicolaus Visscher, published in Amsterdam in 1689, includes Troup.

The evidence from journals is brief. In preparing the map of the area mentioned above, Robert Gordon of Straloch described some castles along the coast, noting that 'Next comes Troup, built on a rock on a neck of land, but now neglected' (Gordon 1908: 278). Unfortunately, this can only be dated with certainty to the range 1608–61. In 1722, William Duncan simply states that there is an old castle at Troup (Duncan 1908: 48).

In 1777, Williams, who was much more interested in pieces of vitrified stone he noted protruding from the grass-covered ramparts of an Iron Age fort, which lay to the west, between the Knoll and the castle remains, mentions that ‘there are some very obscure ruins of stone and lime work, which appear to have been very strong’ on Cullykhan (Williams 1777: 67). Finally, in 1868, the Ordnance Survey Name Book for Banffshire records that on the same promontory as Fort Fiddes are to be seen faint traces of the foundation walls of an ancient stronghold or castle.

#### THE EXCAVATION

Prior to excavation, the site of the castle was covered in rough grass, with a large mass of lime and mortar-bound rubble showing through the grass just to the east of a narrow ditch (BG) that was visible cutting across the peninsula. Removing the topsoil revealed loose rubble with mortar attached to many stones, which varied between 0.15m–0.55m in size, covering the whole area. This in turn overlay several large masses of collapsed mortar-bound walling, beneath which stone foundations of a major structure were revealed. The surviving walls of the structure consisted of large, random rubble boulders, bound with lime mortar and standing, in some areas, up to two or three courses high, up to 0.70m high and *c* 1.84m wide. A large mass of fallen masonry lay to the west. Further less substantially built structures were noted to the south-east of the main building, along the south side of a cobbled surface that extended to the east and north of the main building.

#### *Structures*

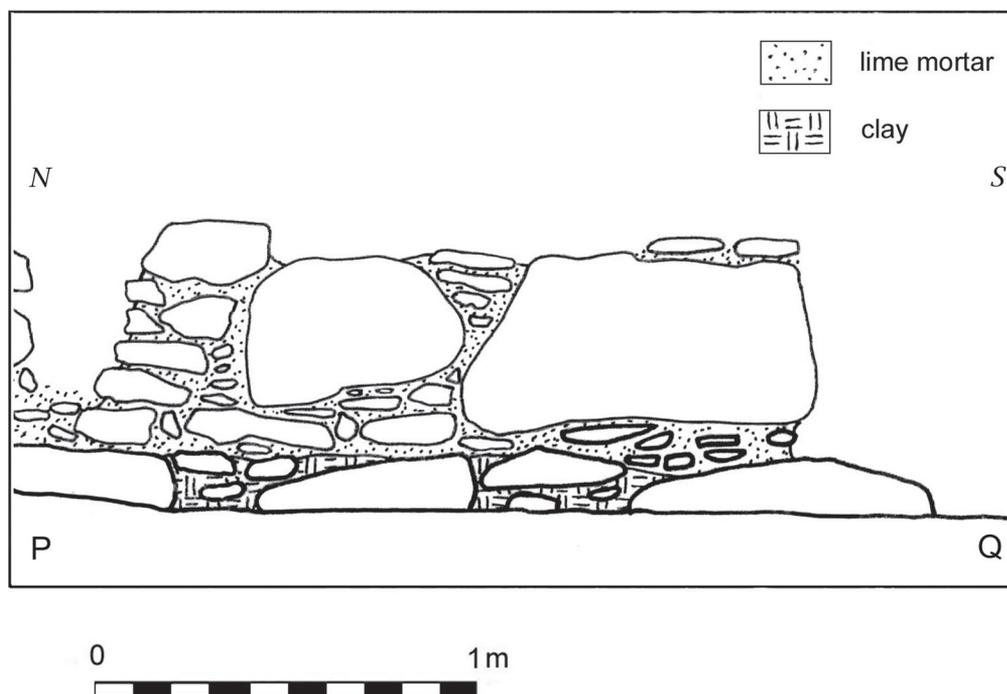
The main structure was rectangular, built of random rubble and measuring 8.79m east/west by 12.25m north/south, externally, at its two lowest courses, which were clay-bonded and *c* 1.8m wide. Above these, with a step in of 0.34cm, the walls were built with lime

mortar and had a thickness of 1.40m. The stones varied in size from relatively small (*c* 0.10m × 0.25m × 0.28m) to large boulders (1.2m × 0.70m × 0.60m), particularly near the corners. The foundation walls of the structure were complete, apart from the northern half of the western wall, where robbing seems to have left only a ghost wall trench. The internal measurements of the lime-mortar structure were 5.60m east/west by 9.20m north/south.



ILLUS 4 Photo of the south-west corner of the castle wall looking north, showing the stepped foundation (P–Q) of the tower

The interior of the ground floor was divided by two narrow walls into two small rooms and a corridor on the eastern side; wall AB ran east/west and was 0.7m thick and 5.16m long, while wall AC ran north/south and was 0.5m thick and about 3.3m long. Neither of these walls was tied into the main walls. The floors of both chambers were of beaten clay, which swept up to the walls. Very little depth of deposit survived within either of the chambers and few artefacts were recovered, although Greig’s site notes record a number of animal bones being found, such as sheep, pig, fish and fowl, which were identified by a local vet.



ILLUS 5 West-facing elevation drawing of the south-west corner (P-Q) of the castle, showing the clay-bonded basal stones with lime and mortar above

The corridor (AJ) on the eastern side of the basement was narrow and floored with small, rounded beach pebbles, a few of which also lay within the southern chamber, most likely indicating a doorway here. Site notes also describe ‘at the southeast corner of wall AC a large, roughly dressed sandstone block had been placed with a check on the SE corner’, which would support this theory.

Excavation revealed traces of what the excavator interpreted as a timber lining to the corridor. Greig’s site notes describe ‘after a severe rainstorm signs of timber staining were observed. On closer examination timber slots appear to have been placed parallel to all walling of the corridor, but little depth of deposit survived above the pebbling’.

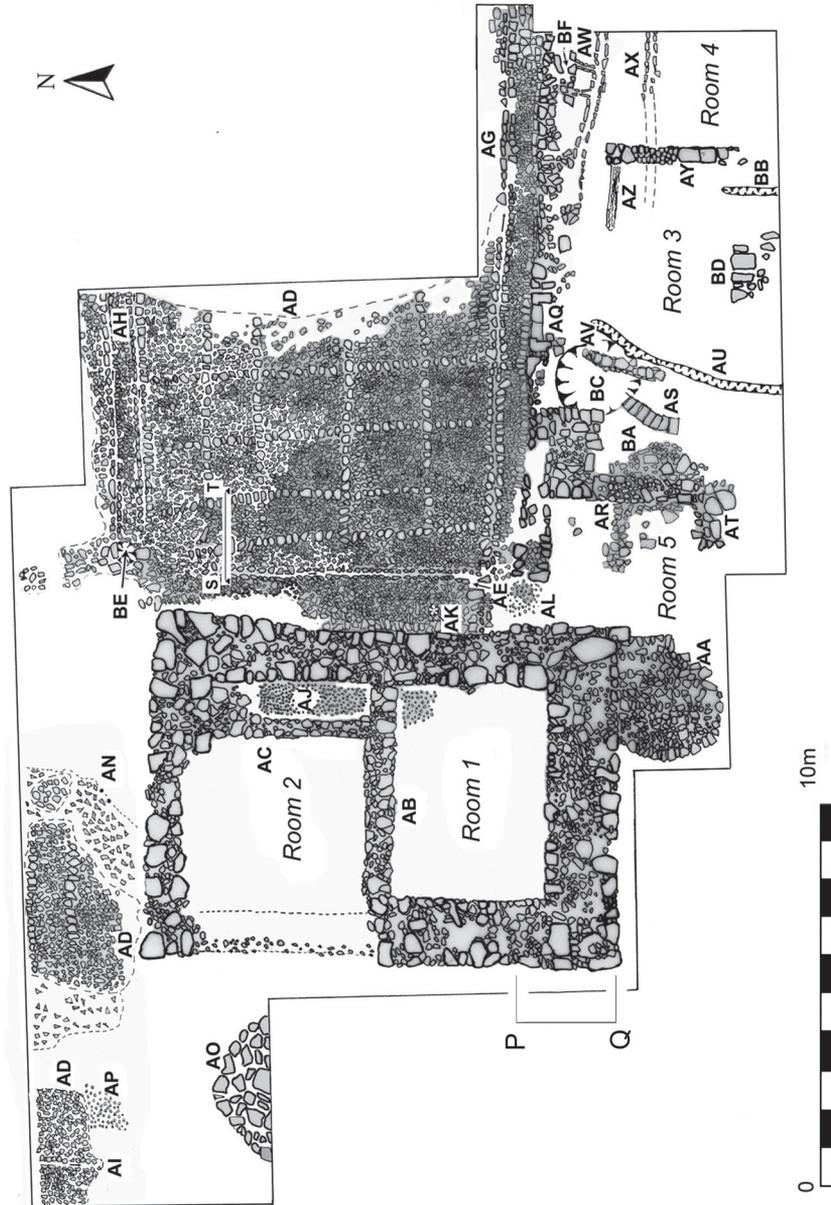
Against the south-east corner of the southern exterior wall of the main structure the foundations of a round staircase (AA) c 3.2m diameter were

found, with a stepped, straight side 1.4m wide on the east side. The stones were of relatively small size and contained many pieces of red sandstone. The foundations were not tied into the main wall, and were of inferior build.

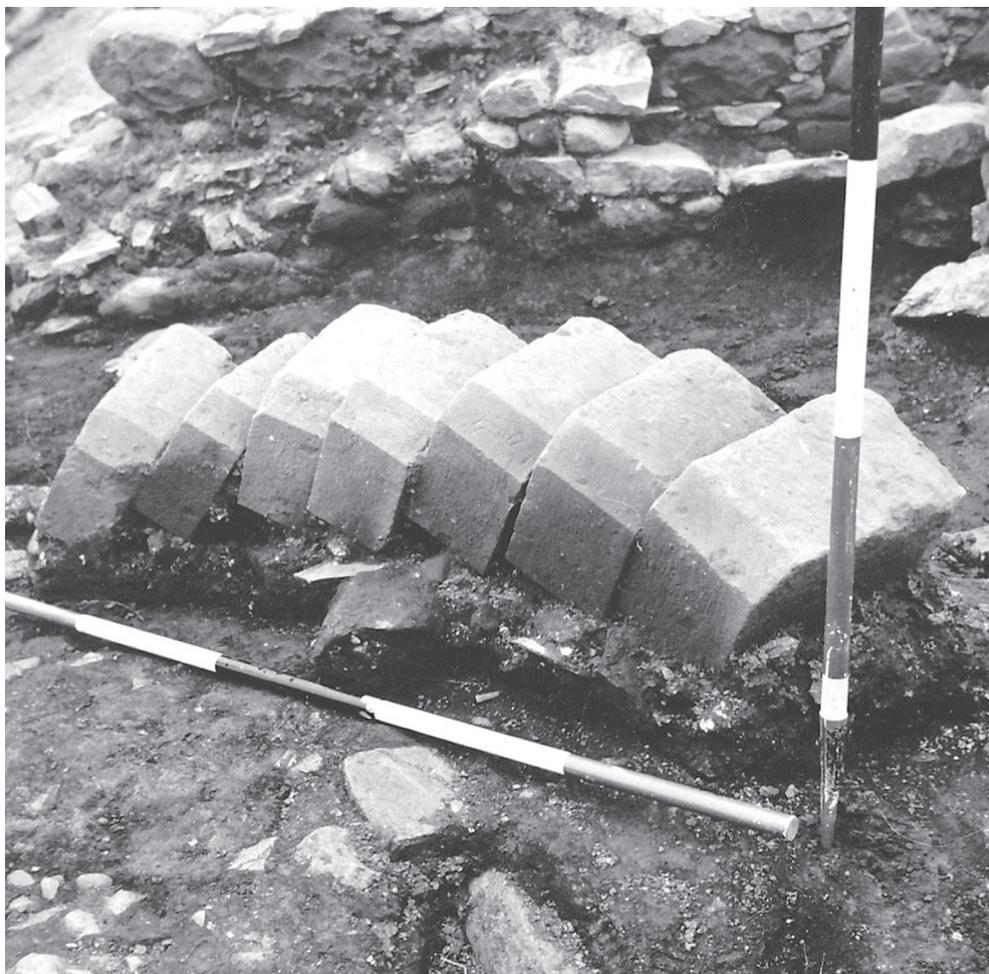
The main structure is interpreted as a tower, with an entrance at first-floor level; there is no evidence of an entrance in the walls of the ground floor.

#### *The southern building*

The building to the south-east of the tower had exterior walls of red sandstone, surviving to a few courses high on its west side, while that on the north side had only the lowest course surviving. A doorway (AQ) led through the north wall, from the courtyard into a room, Room 3, with the lowest, stepped door jambs of dressed red sandstone still standing upright. A blocked doorway was evident in the western wall (AR).



ILLUS 6 Plan of the tower, courtyard and other features



ILLUS 7 Photo of collapsed fireplace arch (AS), looking west during excavation, with the remains of hearth (BA) against the west wall in the background. The mason's mark is visible on the third stone from the right (see illustration 12)

No evidence of the east wall was found, although it is not clear whether it had been demolished or whether the excavation trench did not extend far enough to the east to uncover evidence of it. However, fragmentary remains of a small section of south wall foundation (BD) survived and an internal wall (AY) ran north/south across the area. Only a few stones of the interior revetment of the north wall survived.

The floor of Room 3 was covered with earth and loose rubble. As this was removed, the

remains of a collapsed, dressed red sandstone arch (AS) were revealed near the western wall. This proved to be the arch of a fireplace; together with evidence of a hearth or oven (see below) which would suggest that this was part of a kitchen. There were seven surviving arch stones, two of which had similar masons' marks incised in them (see illus 12).

The rounded base of either a hearth or oven (BA) lay against the west wall of the kitchen and in front of the blocked doorway. An extra

thickness of walling of rounded large pebbles had been built around the back of this feature. In front of the fireplace, and on the western side of the area, were layers of orange peat ash (Context 26) overlying an earthen floor (C22). Immediately south of the fireplace, and at a slightly lower level, lay the remains of an oven (AT) with an internal diameter of 1.3m and external diameter 1.8m, with the heat-cracked stone base and a small part of the doming surviving.

On the east side of the kitchen, the remains of the wall (AY) (3.4 × 0.5m) running north/south, had a large flat stone (0.8 × 0.4m) forming a step through to another room (Room 4) at its southern end. A sleeper beam trench (AZ) (1.8 × 0.22m) lay against the western side of the wall, at its northern end forming a slight partition in Room 3 (see illus 6).

Beneath the earthen floor a narrow stone-lined drain (AV) (2 × 0.2m) built of rounded, large beach pebbles was uncovered in Room 3, while in Room 4 two other stone-lined drains were uncovered to its east (AX) (1.5 × 0.10 × 0.12m deep) and (AW) (4 × 0.15 × 0.13m deep). These were of a different build, with irregular sharp-edged stones lying on their edges to form the sides of the drains, with small irregular capstones covering over them. The most northerly of these two drains (AW) had three small off-shoots running to the north – under the building wall – and what appeared to be the remains of an entrance, consisting of an earthen and pebble ramp (BF), leading through the wall, partly overlying it between two of the off-shoots.

In Room 3, running close to the stone drain AV, but partly underlying it, was a narrow clay-lined shallow channel (AU) (4.9 × 0.25m) with a depth varying between 0.11m and 0.13m, with a second north/south clay lined channel (BB) (1.4 × 0.2m × 0.10m deep) lying 0.8m to the west of the southern end of the dividing wall (AY). They were cut into an earthen floor with a deposit of dark grey occupation above it (C27). Also underlying drain (AV) was a pit (BC), roughly 1.3m in diameter and c 0.35m

deep, which was found in the last few days of excavation and so was not fully excavated. Traces of a coarse type of hemp-like fabric, which was thought to have lined it, were recovered from the sides of the pit. The pit partly underlay the north basal stone supporting the arch of the fireplace, which had caused some slumping into it and may have contributed to the collapse of the fireplace arch. Its northern edge also lay almost below the remains of the north wall.

On the west side of the kitchen, between it and the castle, was another small room (Room 5) entered from the courtyard, which would have originally led into Room 3 through the now blocked doorway (AR). The south wall of this room was not evident and again, only a few foundation stones remained of its northern wall. It would have measured 3.48m east/west by about 3.6m north/south, although the full extent is unknown due to the lack of a surviving south wall. Small areas of large cobbling, similar to the courtyard, survived on parts of the floor, some of which lay against the blocked doorway (see illus 10). On a lower level, beneath these cobbles, were traces of pebbling as well as remains of a clay floor.

#### *The courtyard*

The courtyard was very well built, with a distinct pattern formed by roughly parallel lines of larger flat stones, dividing it into rectangles which were infilled with smaller stones (see illus 6). Long, angled depressions forming drains lay on the west (AE) and south (AG) sides of the courtyard, with another drain (AH) (6m remaining) on the northern side, consisting of two parallel channels lying close to each other. The courtyard itself angled down slightly from north to south and the drain on the southern side dropped down from west to east – as did the northern drains. Part of a fourth drain (AI) running north/south survived in the remnants of the courtyard to the north-west of the castle.

One stone in the courtyard was a re-used anvil stone of prehistoric date. A definite post-hole (AK) was also noted in the courtyard,



ILLUS 8 Photo looking west along the north side of the courtyard showing the distinct edge to the cobbling

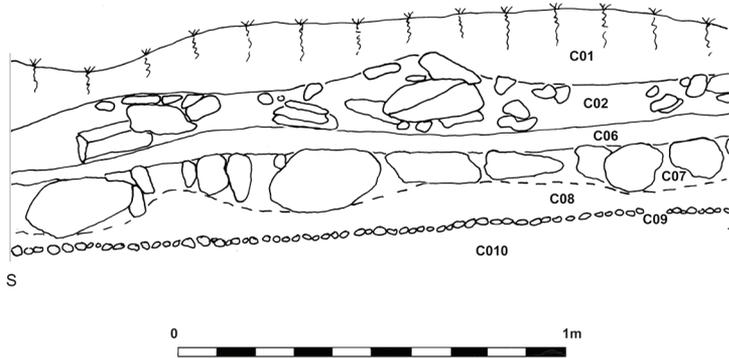
towards the south-west corner, 0.8m from the castle wall. Greig's site notes record

... slots and a large post-hole in the cobbling. In connection with this feature iron nails and fragments of wood were found. Taking into consideration the alignment of the post-hole and checks in the cobbling, the feature may have been some type of platform ie access to the upper floor'.

In other words, it is possible that these may have held the base of a wooden stair, giving entry to the first floor of the castle. Another type of stone check (BE), with larger stones around

main entrance into the castle. No evidence of buildings on the northern side or eastern side survived. However, there was a very definite edge to the northern side of the courtyard, similar to where it abutted the castle and kitchen walls, and this could therefore suggest that it may have also abutted structures (see illus 8). Given the considerable erosion which has taken place in this area, it is therefore probable that structures once stood here and have since disappeared due to cliff collapse over several centuries, as well as later robbing.

An occupation horizon of *c* 60mm deep (C06) overlay parts of the courtyard (C07), which in turn overlay an earlier occupation varying in depth from 60–120mm (C08), on top of a pebbled layer set into the natural base clay (see illus 9). A few sherds of prehistoric pottery and a number of post-holes of prehistoric date, which were inserted into the pebbling (AP), were found on the north side of the tower, along with some sherds of medieval pottery in C08. This pebbled horizon had been noted to cover



ILLUS 9 South-facing section S–T through the courtyard, showing context C08 overlying the earlier pebbling (C09), with a second deposit (C06) on the upper surface of the courtyard (C07)

its edge, was set into the courtyard cobbles, near the west end of the double drain (AH) and near the north-east corner of the tower. This was probably part of a gateway across the entrance to the courtyard.

The courtyard abutted both the castle wall and the kitchen wall, suggesting a later build, possibly contemporary with the kitchen, although in some small areas, some stones had been removed. Whether this was caused by repair or later damage was unclear.

On the northern side of the tower, the courtyard extended west beyond the castle wall and could therefore have formed part of the

prehistoric phases of occupation of the promontory. It is therefore possible that the earliest phases of the castle also used this convenient original surface as a courtyard.

#### THE DITCHES

Curving round the west side of the Knoll lies a steep, V-shaped ditch (BI) (W 3.50m; depth 1m) of uncertain date, but which cut through the earlier prehistoric features and contexts. A number of late 12th- and early 13th-century pottery sherds were recovered from its upper fill (Greig & Greig 1989: 293) (see illus 3).

On the east side of the Knoll lies the wide ditch (BH) (W c 13m; depth: 2.1m), which cut through the remains of the 12th-century structure and other earlier deposits. It is therefore post-12th century and may have been dug as part of the defences of the later castle.

The other ditch farther east (BG) lies at a point where the peninsula narrows again, near the castle. This ditch (W 1.9m; depth 1.13m) appears to be of little defensive use and, given that the cutting of it destroyed part of the road to the bowling green and Fort Fiddes, it would therefore make it of a post-18th century date.

#### PHASING OF STRUCTURES

At least four different building phases can be identified, although one of these was a fairly minor addition and there is also a possibility of a fifth, although again minor.

##### *Phase one: foundation of the tower and associated structure*

The first phase was the building of the tower itself, using random rubble with some fragments of vitrified material from the prehistoric site being built into the fabric. It is not clear if the internal dividing walls are from this first phase, but they were not tied in to the main walls of the tower and could therefore be of later date. They also contained fragments of red sandstone. Clay flooring (C05) swept up to the interior of the main walls within the structure.

The construction of the tower must have cut through any surviving prehistoric levels on the promontory, as no evidence of anything earlier lay within the tower. However, the prehistoric pebbled surface survived outside the tower, beneath the later paved courtyard. As suggested above, this pebbling was re-used as an early courtyard surface, as a deposit of 50–120mm (C08) (see illus 9) had built up on top of it, within which a few medieval pottery sherds were recovered.

From the remains of collapsed building debris that survived on top of the later courtyard,

at least three large clumps of vaulting were evident, so the tower had at least one vaulted floor, although the original height is unknown.

Possibly associated with the tower was some type of structure built to its south-east, with an earthen floor (C27) in which there were two narrow channels and a pit (AU, BB and BC). However, it is difficult to date these features as no datable artefacts or charcoal deposits were found. They could therefore predate the tower building itself.

Due to coastal erosion and later disturbance it is unknown if other outbuildings stood to the east or north of the tower.

Ditch (BH) may have formed part of the western defences of this phase. With the finding of 13th-century pottery in ditch (BI), west of the Knoll, along with the remains of some type of collapsed structure, it is quite probable that some form of guardhouse stood on the Knoll to protect the narrow entrance on to the promontory.

##### *Phase two: stone building to the south-east of the tower*

The second phase of construction was the addition of a stone building overlying this earlier structure to the south-east of the tower, the north wall of which almost overlay the northern edge of the pit, which would indicate a later date of construction. The main entrance was by a wide door (AR) (W 1.20m) of simple construction, through the west wall, leading from a small room, Room 5, which lay between it and the tower. This room appeared to use the prehistoric pebbled surface as a preliminary floor as some pebbling was still evident, both within the room and at its entrance (AL) in the north through wall AE.

Within the stone building are three probable contemporary stone-built drains (AV, AW and AX) with the remains of an earth and pebble entrance ramp (BF) leading in through its north wall, at the east end (see illus 12). The three off-shoots of drain (AW) also ran to the north beneath the existing walling. The other stone drain (AV) also ran towards the north and may

have exited under the northern wall and below the level of the later courtyard.

The other door (AQ) (W 0.90m) through the north wall is unlikely to be contemporary, due to both its location immediately adjacent to the drain (AV) and also the difference in its construction compared to the main door (AR), which did not have dressed-stone jambs. It is also set at a higher level and would have required several steps to the lower floor level, of which there was no evidence.

*Phase three: reorganisation of the stone building to form a kitchen*

After a period of time, there was again some slight reorganisation. The western doorway of the building was blocked off and a simple

hearth, consisting of a few basal flat stones, was formed in front of it on the eastern side. A small oven (AT) was built against the southern end of the west wall, to the south of this hearth. It is possible that the door (AQ) was built through the north wall at this point, but more likely it belongs to the next phase. Entrance could have continued through the use of the ramp at the eastern end of the north wall. Contexts 24 and 25 are associated with this phase.

*Phase four: reorganisation of the castle, the kitchen and laying of the courtyard*

The next phase saw a major reorganisation of the castle and its outbuildings. It may have been at this phase that the lower floor of the tower was converted into two rooms.



ILLUS 10 Room 5, looking south, with the blocked doorway (AR) on the left and the later cobbling built against it. An earlier clay floor underlies the cobbles



ILLUS 11 Room 4 under excavation, looking NNW, showing drain (AX) running diagonally across the lower centre of the photo, cut by the later wall (AY), with sleeper beam trench (AZ) at the northern end of the wall. The denuded earthen ramp entrance (BF) underlies the horizontal ranging pole, with drain (AW) and its off-shoots alongside it

Room 3 was converted to a larger kitchen with a later hearth or oven (BA) built on top of the earlier hearth, with an added thickness of rounded stones being built against the wall behind it. A large arch of dressed red sandstone was built over the front of the fire. Two masons' marks – of the same mason – were incised in two of the arch stones (see illus 7 and 12). The remains of the earthen clay floor (C23) swept up to the west wall.

The doorway (AQ) (W 0.90m) was most likely inserted through the north wall, into Room 3, during this phase, as dressed red sandstone was also used for its chamfered door jambs. This led from a paved courtyard, which was laid abutting the kitchen and tower walls and extended into the small room, Room 5, between the kitchen and tower, covering the lower part of the blocked doorway (see illus 10) and also part of the oven (AT).

At the eastern end of the kitchen, a partition wall was built (AY) which cut through and partly destroyed one of the stone drains (AX), with a sleeper-beam (AZ) forming a small division in Room 3 against its west side. A large flat stone formed a step between the rooms. Contexts 08, 22, 23 and 26 are associated with this phase (see illus 11).

A posthole and check (AK) was set into the courtyard, on the east side of the tower, with cobbling laid round it, suggesting that a type of wooden stair may have been built here, possibly to replace an earlier one, to gain access to the first floor of the castle.

It is not clear if a slightly later phase of building took place, with a circular stair tower being added to the south-east corner of the tower (AA) (Diam 2.9m), which was not tied into the main castle wall, and was of an inferior build compared to the tower. Given that the posthole

and checks in the courtyard were contemporary with the courtyard, this could therefore suggest that it was built at a later date.

## THE POTTERY

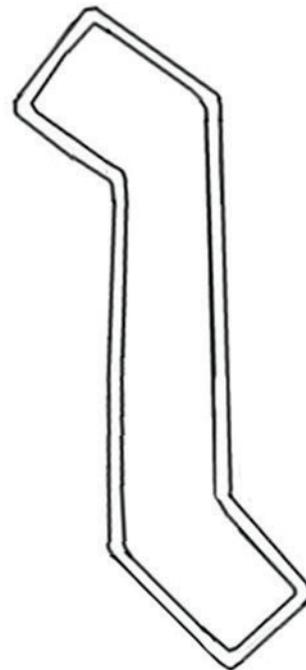
Derek Hall

### *Introduction*

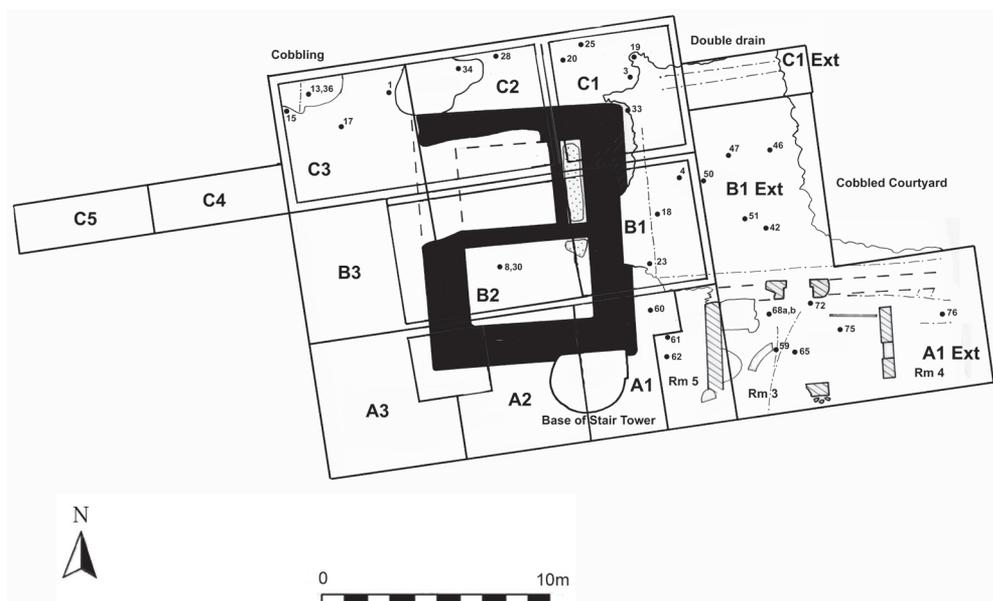
These excavations produced 73 sherds of pottery (not illustrated) of medieval date and one possible prehistoric sherd. This material has all been examined by eye using an ×10 hand lens and, where possible, has been assigned to a recognised fabric name. (See illus 13 for location of original grid squares and find locations of artefacts.)

### *Scottish Redwares*

This is the most common fabric present, being represented by 34 sherds which are all from splash-glazed jugs. Recent study and scientific analysis has indicated that from the late 12th/early 13th century, most – if not all – of the medieval burghs on the east coast of Scotland had a local redware pottery industry (Hall 1998; Haggarty et al 2012). The Cullykhan redwares have the standard purple heat skin that is a common feature of this fabric and are fairly micaceous, there are two examples of incised decoration on bodysherds (SF3 and 68a) from grid C1 (C06) and within Room 3 (C22). The closest known production site to Cullykhan is at the deserted burgh of Rattray (Murray 1993), but the Cullykhan material seems likely



ILLUS 12 The mason's mark which was incised on two of the fireplace arch stones, and which was also noted at Huntly Castle



ILLUS 13 Plan showing the layout of the initial excavation trenches prior to later removal of baulks and extensions to the east, with find locations of artefacts

to have a more local source. This industry is thought to continue until at least the 17th or 18th centuries, when it is supplanted by the Scottish Post Medieval Oxidised and Reduced Wares (Haggarty et al 2012).

#### *Scottish White Gritty Wares*

There are nine sherds in the fabric from Room 3, contexts 22 and 24 (SF68b and 72) which have long been recognised as Scotland's earliest pottery industry dating from the 12th to 15th centuries (Jones et al 2003). The splash-glazed jug body sherd (SF68b) from C22 is quite thick and crude, suggesting that it is more likely to date to the later end of this industry. Recent scientific analysis of this fabric type indicated that its production centres were located in the Scottish Borders and Central Belt, so the material from Cullykhan can be regarded as being imported.

#### *French Earthenwares*

There are seven very abraded small body sherds (SF4, 13, 15, 17, 34 and 69) from grid B1 (C07)

and grid C3 (C06 and C08) with traces of green glaze that are probably of French origin (G Haggarty pers comm). They are too small and undiagnostic to accurately provenance, but would fit best as being Beauvais lead-glazed earthenwares, probably of a date no earlier than the 14th century (Haggarty 2006, Word file 26).

#### *Rhenish Stonewares*

These hard-fired German fabrics first began to appear in Scotland from 1350 onwards, they become very popular in the burghs and on high status sites such as castles (Hurst et al 1986). The three small sherds from Cullykhan include two brown-glazed body sherds (SF18 and 65) from grid B1 (C06) and in Room 3 (CF22), which are probably from the Raeren or Frechen production centres, and date from the mid- to late 16th century (Gaimster 1997: 208–50). The third sherd (SF42) from grid B1 ext (C06) is from a jug in a lighter grey fabric with a speckled brown salt-glazed surface and is probably a product of the Cologne production

centre and would also date to the 16th century (ibid: 191–207).

#### *Unidentified fabrics*

There are 19 sherds which have not been possible to provenance; nine of these are in association with other identifiable medieval fabrics.

#### *Pottery: discussion and conclusions*

This small assemblage does not contain any pottery that dates any earlier than the 14th century and the latest material present is of a 16th-century date. There are no sherds of late medieval/post medieval Oxidised and Reduced Redwares present, which would suggest occupation in the 17th or 18th centuries (Caldwell & Dean 1992; Haggarty et al 2012). The presence of a few small sherds of Northern French pottery and Rhenish Stoneware is of interest, and provides further evidence for the coastal trade in these imported fabrics. The Scottish Redwares present could usefully be incorporated into the on-going Scottish chemical sourcing project.

## ARTEFACTS

Sue Anderson, with contributions by Ann Clarke, Nick Holmes and Dawn McLaren  
The available finds from the excavation are reported on below by function (not illustrated). (For find locations of artefacts see illus 13.)

### COINS

Nick Holmes

A copper alloy coin (SF28) was recovered from topsoil (C01) in grid C2. The surfaces were corroded but the obverse clearly showed the initials 'C R' below a crown. These were off-centre, as was the legend on the reverse, and the coin appeared to have been poorly struck. The coin was a turner, probably of the third issue of Charles I (1643–50) (Holmes 1998).

Three other coins were identified, two of which came from Room 5 (C03).

These were SF61, a contemporary forgery of a James VI billon hardhead, 2nd issue (commencing November 1588) and SF62, a James VI billon plack (1583–90), type 3. The other coin (SF76), a Mary and Francis billon lion/hardhead (1559), unclassified type, was found in Room 4, although the context was not secure.

### DRESS ACCESSORIES

A lace tag or chape (SF51) was found in an occupation layer (C06) in grid B1 ext. The tag was made of rolled copper alloy sheet, was slightly tapered and had an inward folded joint. Tags of this type are usually of post-medieval date and fall into Oakley's Type 2, which is dated to the 16th/17th centuries (Oakley 1979; Margeson 1993: 22).

An iron object (SF47, B1 ext, occupation layer C06) could be a fragment of nail, but the oval cross-section and tapered point suggests it may be a fragment of a pin, possibly from a brooch or buckle.

### PERSONAL OBJECTS

A clay pipe stem fragment (SF19) was found in rubble layer (C04) in grid C1. The bore was c 3mm in diameter, placing it within the range of pipes of 17th-century date in Edinburgh (Lawson 1976: fig 29).

### HOUSEHOLD OBJECTS

#### *Copper alloy*

Two copper alloy sheet rivets were found. The smaller of the two (SF59, Room 3, C22) was made of a narrow strip of copper alloy folded to form a rectangular 'head', but the lower part was abraded. SF25 (grid C1, rubble layer C02) was more typical of the type, being made from a lozenge-shaped cut sheet which formed a hexagonal 'head' when folded. These rivets were used to mend splits in copper alloy vessels (Margeson 1993: 93; Egan 1998: 176) and are

found in contexts of medieval to early post-medieval date.

#### *Glass*

Four fragments of vessel glass were recovered. Three of these were from the cobbled courtyard (C07) in grid C1 and comprised a tiny fragment of colourless glass, which had decayed to a yellowish colour (SF20iii) and may be of medieval date, a thin sliver of a possible engraved ale glass, of probable 18th-century date (SF20ii), and a colourless shard with a white glass tube, which may be from a post-medieval bowl (SF20iv). A fourth shard (SF50) was from occupation layer (C06) in grid B1 ext and comprised a fragment from the neck of a post-medieval green bottle of 16th-/18th-century date.

#### *Stone*

Ann Clarke

A fragment of a stone bowl (SF30, B2, rubble layer C02) is too small to determine its original shape – although it appears to have had a shallow cross-section. What survives of the interior is very smooth in contrast to the exterior, which is quite rough, and this may indicate that it was used as some type of mortar in which to grind substances to a powder, though there are no concretions or staining visible on the inside of the bowl.

The ovoid water-worn pebble (SF33, grid C1, occupation layer C06) from the courtyard must have been brought onto site, but its function remains obscure. Pebbles of this shape, from later Iron Age sites, can be interpreted as gaming pieces, particularly when they occur in groups (Clarke 1998: 178), but the one from Cullykhan is perhaps too large for this use. A small bit of pecking damage on one face suggests that it was used incidentally as a hammerstone.

#### *Stone sharpener?*

A grooved slab (SF8, grid B2, rubble layer C02) points to some kind of craft activity

that required the shaping of short, parallel lengths of bone, horn or perhaps wood. The slab was of medium-grained sandstone and three wide, longitudinal grooves have been worked on one face. The grooves are shallow, *c* 2mm deep, with a flat base and are parallel-sided *c* 9–11mm in width. They were most likely produced during the shaping of a narrow length of organic material, such as bone, horn or wood – metal would have made crisper edges.

#### BUILDINGS AND SERVICES

##### *Window glass*

One tiny fragment of medieval window glass (SF20i) was recovered from cobbled courtyard (C07). The fragment was decayed but showed no signs of decoration.

##### *Nails*

Up to 16 hand-made iron nails (SF23i–viii, SF46i–iv and SF60i–iv) were collected from rubble (C03) and occupation layer (C06). All were heavily corroded but showed similar characteristics, with square shanks and flat, square, sheet heads. Two, apparently complete, examples from (C06) in grid B1 ext measured 41mm and 63mm in length, and one incomplete shank from Room 5 was 71+mm long. Nails of this type are common in both the medieval and post-medieval periods.

#### MANUFACTURING WASTE

##### *Lead waste*

One fragment of lead (SF45), from occupation layer (C06) in grid B1 ext, was an irregular piece of sheet, with fragments of iron sheet adhering to one surface. An extension to one edge appeared to have been cut and it is possible that this was a fragment of a larger object, but if so, its form is uncertain.

## MISCELLANEOUS FINDS

*Metalwork*

A fragment of copper alloy sheet (SF1, grid C3, rubble layer C03) with a circular rivet/nail hole and one straight edge was a probable fitting of uncertain function.

A short iron bar (SF46v, grid B1 ext, occupation layer C06) fragment was abraded and of uncertain function, although a few of the nails may have had shanks of this shape.

An irregular, roughly triangular, fragment of lead sheet (SF75) was found in Room 3, C22. Lead sheet was used for a number of purposes, including roofing and the manufacture of small objects. This may be an offcut from plumbing (lead-working) activity.

*Vitrified material*

Dawn McLaren

A small assemblage of vitrified material was recovered. The assemblage comprises five small fractured fragments of vitrified and fused stone (183g) and a melted amorphous lump of lead-rich copper alloy (110g). None of the material is chronologically distinctive.

The degree of vitrification varies between the pieces, ranging from slight surface modification, in the form of a thin glassy coating, to other pieces which appear to have become molten, giving the surfaces a liquid, 'flowed', appearance. None of the fragments are magnetic, nor do they have any charcoal inclusions or impressions to suggest deliberate firing or association with metalworking.

The vitrified stone is likely to have derived originally from the remains of the later prehistoric vitrified fort located on the promontory (Greig 1971: 15). The earliest foundations of the castle appear to disturb prehistoric levels and the vitrified material may have been disturbed and upcast during construction of this later structure. Two fragments (SF32 and SF74) have patches of calcium-rich lime mortar adhering to them, suggesting that they were incorporated within a wall or floor of the medieval castle.

## SMALL FINDS: DISCUSSION

Most of the dateable finds in this assemblage are of post-medieval date, the majority being 17th or 18th century. They include objects which may have been deposited as the result of casual loss, such as the coins, the lace tag and the clay pipe fragment, as well as fragments which may represent the discard of domestic waste, such as the glass vessel shards.

Items which may possibly be of medieval date, and related to the structure of the castle itself, include a small fragment of window glass and possibly the iron nails. Some of the vitrified stone from the prehistoric fort may have been re-used in the medieval structure. Fragments of rivets from copper alloy vessels may also belong to this period of occupation.

Unfortunately, the other finds, including metal fittings and the stone objects, are largely undiagnostic, and could belong to either the medieval or the post-medieval period.

## DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Alex McKay

Although no foundation charter for the castle has been found, there are a significant number of references to people and places associated with Troup. These cover the period from the late 13th century through to early 17th century and provide glimpses of events involving people who held the lands of Troup. Two family names predominate. In the early period of the castle, the key names are members of the de Trop family, who were ultimately succeeded through marriage by a branch of the important north-east family, the Keiths.

The earliest references linking a person and the name Troup date from around 1300. Occupation of the medieval settlement on the Knoll predates this. The likelihood is that these, and subsequent, references are to the period of occupation of the castle site. While some claim that Troup took its name from the de Trops, it is

much more likely, and consistent with practice elsewhere, that the de Trops took their name from the headland, Troup Head, one of the most prominent along the coast.

One reference, which may be the earliest one, should be considered. On 28 August 1296, at Berwick upon Tweed, the name 'Hamund de Troup' is included in the Ragman Roll (Bain 1884: 198). However, in the description in an appendix of the seals appended at the ceremony, the seal is described as 'Hamelin de Trup' (Bain 1884: 550). It is reasonable to consider Hamund as a transcription error. There is no other reference to Troup in the Ragman Roll. The Ragman Roll states that Hamund/Hamelin came from Lanarkshire. Research in Lanarkshire has found no reference to a Hamund/Hamelin or Troup there. On balance, it is likely that this represents the first link between a named individual, Hamelin, and Troup.

The next reference is when Hamelin de Troup was doing homage to Edward I, at St Andrews in March 1304 (Palgrave 1837: 299–301).

#### *The de Troup petitions*

In the Rolls of Parliament (of England) there are three petitions to Edward I in 1304/5. Hamelin de Troup, sometimes singly and sometimes as father and son (also called Hamelin), alleged incursions into their lands (Findon and Logie) by Sir Duncan de Fren draught, sheriff of Banff (and, in the first petition, Sir Reginald le Chen), harassing their people and burning crops. In each case, Edward's response was to order his local lieutenant to investigate and take action. From the later petitions, it is clear that, in the de Trops' eyes at least, no satisfactory resolution took place. In 1306, months after the last petition, Hamelin had joined Robert Bruce (Barrow 1976: 158). In the same year, Hamelin's name appears in the list of Scottish landowners forfeited by Edward I (Palgrave 1837: 315).

#### *Hamelin as Sheriff*

At some point, Hamelin was made Sheriff of Banff. It is likely that this happened after 1323.

Hamelin is recorded as being accused, but acquitted, in August 1320 of taking part in the de Soules conspiracy against King Robert (Barrow 1976: 310). The only clear reference to Hamelin as sheriff, where he receives a 'contribution for peace for the term of Whitsunday', includes the date 1328 (Stuart & Burnett 1878: 106).

#### *Final references to Hamelin de Troup*

Four other references to a Hamelin de Troup in chronological order are dated 1332, 1337/8, 1342 and 1345. The second reference states that 'for the great compassion he [King Edward III of England] has for the condition of Elyne the widow of Hamelyne de Troupe who lately died in his service in Scotland, grants her to keep herself and her children 6s 8d a week' (Bain 1887: 230).

The accusation of involvement in the de Soules conspiracy may indicate that Hamelin, at times, supported the Balliol cause. This could also explain the forfeiture of the estate of Troup and the grant of it to Andrew Buttergask, a royal servant, in 1342, in the third reference (Thomson 1984: 559).

The first and fourth appear to be linked as the first is a letter from the Pope in Avignon, with a concurrent mandate to the bishop of Aberdeen and the Abbot of Deer, for the provision of a canonry and prebend of Aberdeen to Hamelin de Troup (Bliss 1893: #385). The fourth, dated 1345, states that Hamelin's petition for the church of Inchbrioc, just south of Montrose (Wilson 1868: 103), in the diocese of St Andrews, was granted, again by the Pope. In the record, Hamelin is described as an advanced scholar and bachelor of law of the diocese of Aberdeen. It is stated that he was ready to resign his current church at Logry, in the diocese of Aberdeen, to move to Inchbrioc (Bliss 1893: 86). This is surely a different generation to the Hamelin mentioned above.

Andrew Buttergask was killed, along with many others, at the disastrous Scottish defeat at the Battle of Neville's Cross in 1346 (Penman

2004: 136). Given the number of grants of land to Andrew Buttergask, and their geographical spread, the probability must be that he did not live at Troup. It appears that sometime after 1346, the de Trops were confirmed at Troup, although no record has been found to verify this, as a number of sources bear out that the line of the de Trops ended with an heiress who married a Keith of the marischal's family.

#### KEITHS OF TROUP

More than one name has been recorded for the Keith who married the heiress. However the most authoritative sources agree that it was Sir Robert Keith, son of Sir William Keith, marischal of Scotland (Douglas 1813: 188; Innes 1927: 280). No dated contract has been found for Robert's marriage. However, Douglas states that it took place 'in his elder brother's lifetime' that is, before the end of 1375 (Douglas 1813: 188).

The first written evidence linking Robert Keith to Troup is a charter of March 1406, in which Robert, duke of Albany, governor of Scotland, confirmed two charters by Sir William Keith to Robert (Thomson 1984: #883,884).

Sir Robert Keith of Troup succeeded his father William as marischal of Scotland, probably in 1408. He was the marischal who became the first Lord Keith. Sir Robert's second son, John, became the laird of Troup. While it may have happened earlier, it was confirmed in a charter in 1413 (Spalding Club 1843: 491).

All the indications are that John Keith of Troup had a long life. Despite this, the glimpses of his life unfortunately are few, with references to him being a witness on 1447, 1454 and 1457. In 1462, John Keith of Troup resigned his whole estate of the barony of Troup to his nephew William, who had succeeded his elder brother Robert in 1446, and became the first Earl Marischal in 1458. At the same time, John received for himself and his male heirs a new charter of the Ten Merk lands and barony of Northfield, part of the estate of Troup.

The next clear reference to Troup is in 1493, when there was a charter to William, second son of William, 2nd Earl Marischal, whose wife was Elizabeth Gordon, daughter of George, earl of Huntly, for the lands of Troup, confirmed in 1494 by James IV (Paul 1984: #2208).

William Keith of Troup was a witness to one of his father's charters at Dunnottar, dated 3 March 1511. He was killed at Flodden on 9 September 1513. He had no children. In accordance with the terms of the charter of 1493, he was succeeded by his next brother in line, Gilbert.

There are further references to Gilbert Keith of Troup in 1521, 1530, 1537 and 1552, where he is cited as a witness to a charter or in minor land transactions (Spalding Club 1857: 115).

The succession, after Gilbert Keith, cannot be clearly determined. His son, or possibly brother, Alexander Keith of Troup, had inherited by August 1577, as at that date there is a dated agreement between him and Patrick Cheyne of Esslemont. This document records that the contract was settled 'at Troup', which may be the only surviving reference to the castle (NRS, RH6/2445). In 1580, Alexander Keith is designated as a burges of Aberdeen, but not to hold property or office therein (New Spalding Club 1890: 75). In 1587, John Keith, oldest son of Alexander, is fiar of Troup (Bulloch 1903: 204).

John Keith was associated with a number of incidents in 1587, 1589, 1594 and 1602. These incidents were all of a violent nature where Keith, sometimes with others, was alleged to be the aggressor. However, the outcomes are uncertain.

By 1610, Gilbert Keith, presumably a son of John, succeeded to Troup. He is mentioned in terms of the consent and discharge of a wadset, dated 24 December 1600, of 8,000 merks held by George, Earl Marischal, over the lands of Troup (New Spalding Club 1906: 159).

This may be the last of the line of Keiths as the next reference (Ferguson 1913: 227) is to

the grant of the lands of Troup in 1632 to Sir James Gordon of Lesmoir.

In 1654, the Gardens acquired Troup when Major Alexander Garden, who had served under Gustavus Adolphus in Sweden, returned to Scotland and purchased the estate (Grant 1922: 31). There is a family connection between the Gardens and the Keiths. George Garden, who became laird of Banchory in 1555, married Isobel Keith, daughter of the Laird of Troup, about 1548 (Spalding Club 1852: 326). The likelihood is that she was another daughter of Gilbert Keith, or possibly his sister. The great-grandson of George and Isobel was Major Alexander Garden, 1st laird of Troup, born in 1629.

#### DISCUSSION: CONSTRUCTION AND OCCUPATION OF THE CASTLE

The first point to highlight in considering the dating of the phases of construction is the significant absence of helpful detail available in the records. That does not imply that nothing can be said but it may restrict comments to a limited number of the total phases identifiable in the archaeological record. To date, no historical source identifies a construction date for the castle. Only one definitive link, in 1577, exists between the castle and its likely occupants. However, the archaeological evidence clearly establishes occupation on the peninsula over a prolonged period and the historical record does contain many references to the lands or Barony of Troup, people associated with Troup, charters and events. The sources are not always consistent and are often more detailed when concerning people and events in the surrounding area.

As indicated above, no charter for the construction of a castle on Cullykhan has been found. Accordingly, any consideration of the likely date of construction must draw on wider evidence. A set of pointers may be related to the proximity of the Comyns and their activities. Young states that the period after 1260 saw

a burst of building activity by the Buchan Comyns, comparable to corresponding activity by the Badenoch Comyns. In addition to two almshouses (1261 and 1272), an extensive castle building programme in Buchan took place at Slains, King Edward, Cairnbulg and Rattray (Young 1997: 150). If the neighbours were taking such steps then it is not unreasonable to imagine similar activity at Troup.

The simple structure and rectilinear shape of the tower would suggest an early tower house, similar to that at Hallforest (NGR: NJ 7771 1543), which is considered to be early 14th century. However, Hallforest is of slightly larger size, being 14.6m × 9.1m, with a wall thickness of 2.1m, compared to the 12.25m × 8.79m and wall thickness 1.8m of the tower on Castle Point, Troup. The scant documentary evidence might suggest it has at least an early 14th-century date, but it is more likely to be late 13th century. This would place it nearer to the building of the Castle of Dunnideer (NGR: NJ 6121 2816), which is said to have been built *c* 1260 and considered to be one of the earliest towers built in Scotland. Again, there is a difference in size, with Dunnideer being 15m × 12.5m, although the wall thicknesses are more similar, being 1.9m thick. Another early tower is that at Drum Castle (NGR: NJ 7962 0050), also thought to have been built in the later 13th century, but this is of a more massive construction, being 16.2m × 11.9m with walls *c* 3.65m thick.

Taking all these considerations together, this would have been an opportune time for the family, who became known as de Trop, to build a larger, stronger, structure of stone to replace the timber structure on the Knoll. Given the relatively small area of the Knoll, this entailed moving it further east, on to the narrower part of the promontory, making it easier to defend. The earlier 12th-century structure itself was partly destroyed by the cutting of the wide defensive ditch (BH) through the eastern side of it. It is quite probable, however, that some type of guardhouse remained to protect the narrow entrance on to the promontory.

In summary, the previously quoted date of 1260 for the construction of the castle cannot be verified from the known historical record. However, there are a number of pointers to a date towards the end of the 13th century. The historical evidence points to a date certainly prior to 1304 – and probably prior to 1296. The first phase of construction is the square keep. As discussed above, a date in the latter half of the 13th century seems probable, as there was no evidence of the earlier wood and stone structure on the Knoll itself being in use after the end of the 12th century.

It is unclear what the simple structure to the south-east of the tower may have been used for, but possibly a brewhouse or stable. No evidence of walling or postholes survived, which were most likely destroyed by the later building. The two narrow clay-lined channels (AU and BB) and the pit (BC) would appear to be associated with it. The western channel (AU) was partly overlain by one of the stone drains (Feature AV), which also overlay the area of the pit (BC). Unfortunately, no dateable artefacts were found, but it can be said to be of pre-15th-century date, as it underlay the first of the later stone building phases of this range. Although environmental samples were taken, along with samples of the coarse fabric that appeared to line the pit, unfortunately, no reports are available, due to later contamination and subsequent loss of samples in the laboratories. There is even a possibility that this structure may pre-date the tower itself.

The replacement building was a more substantial structure, with a door in its west wall leading from a small room, Room 5, which had an access to the earlier pebbled courtyard in the north-west corner against the tower. There was evidence of this pebbled surface within this room, as well as at its entrance. Within the building, to its east, were the three stone drains, two of which were of an earlier date than the later kitchen, as they lay underneath the occupation (C22) above the earthen floor (C23) associated with the fireplace. The most westerly (AV)

crossed the kitchen area in front of the kitchen fire, so it was therefore probably associated with the earlier hearth as it also lay beneath the occupation layer (C22). It would have been in a rather inconvenient location for a drain if it had been associated with the later fireplace. This drain (AV) was of slightly different construction to the two to the east, with more rounded capstones over it, so it was not contemporary with the other two drains (AW and AX). The offshoots of the other stone drain (AW), also ran under the wall and beneath the later courtyard. Drain (AX) was cut by the insertion of the east wall (AY) of Room 3, so it predated the kitchen. It is not possible to place exactly when these drains were built, but certainly prior to the laying of the cobbled courtyard.

The oven (AT) lay partly within Room 5, but also formed part of the southern end of the west wall of Room 3; it was also at a slightly lower level than the later hearths in Room 3. It was partly overlain with the later paving or cobbled surface within Room 5, so would also predate the later kitchen.

Perhaps the relatively long tenure of Gilbert Keith coincided with further development on Cullykhan, such as the building of the kitchen. A number of large fragments of dressed red sandstone were recovered from the courtyard, along with a shard of window glass, pointing to a building of some distinction. One of the most striking features uncovered in the excavation of the castle site was the collapsed arch of dressed red sandstone in the kitchen, which has two examples of the same mason's mark (see illus 7). While structurally the arch has similarities to others, for example, at Edzell Castle in Angus (NGR: NO 5846 6908), the same mason's mark (illus 12) has been found at Huntly Castle (NGR: NJ 5315 4056) and Delgatie Castle (NGR: NJ 7544 5054), both in Aberdeenshire. The acknowledged date of completion of this part of the building at Huntly is 1553. Associated with this phase at Huntly are George Gordon, 4th earl of Huntly, and his wife Elizabeth Keith (Simpson 1922: 139), whose marriage contract is

dated 1530. She was a sister of William, 3rd Earl Marischal, for whom Gilbert Keith of Troup had been tutor. Masons' marks can, in some cases, be used as a method of helping date a structure. 'Identical masons' marks appearing in different buildings permit the drawing of dating parallels, which means that these buildings can be regarded as roughly contemporaneous' (Zeune 1992: 58). However, Fawcett acknowledges that similar marks do 'not necessarily mean that the same mastermason is responsible' (Fawcett

1994: 246). Given the family ties between the above buildings, there is a good possibility that the same mason was used.

There are other attested links – marital and other – between the Keiths and the Gordons. Two examples are the marriage of William, 2nd Earl Marischal, to Elizabeth Gordon, daughter of the earl of Huntly (probably in January 1481/2), and secondly, when in 1530, Gilbert Keith of Troup was a witness, a fellow witness was George, earl of Huntly. In such circumstances, it seems



ILLUS 14 Photo looking north, showing the build-up of shale rubble beneath the courtyard to raise the area on the north side of the tower. Beneath the rubble is the earlier pebbled surface (C09). The horizontal ranging pole lies on the upper surface of the courtyard

reasonable for a mason to be engaged to work both at Troup and at Huntly, when major work was being undertaken.

Apart from the possible building link using the same mason in the 16th century, three coins, all dating from the mid- to late 16th century, were found, two of which were found on top of the later cobbled area in Room 5. The majority of artefacts recovered from the contexts associated with the kitchen (C22) and cobbled courtyard (C06 and C07) also all point to a 16th-century date.

Although there is a distinct lack of significant artefacts, and a relatively small pottery assemblage, the pottery report does point to sherds of Scottish Redwares of late 12th-/early 13th-century date being found, along with some Scottish White Gritty Wares, dating from the 12th to the 15th century. Unfortunately, the majority of these sherds were not from secure contexts. Some of the sherds of Redware were considerably abraded and were found on the courtyard surface near the drain (AH). This would point to some heavy disturbance in this area, which brought earlier buried material to the surface. Certainly Greig's excavation site notes and photographs of this area show that when the courtyard was built along the northern side of the tower, the area was raised considerably by a layer of shale rubble, possibly removed from the prehistoric site to the west. This was placed over the earlier pebbled surface courtyard to form more of a slope. This was no doubt to assist drainage, as the original pebbled courtyard was probably subject to flooding in wet weather. There is a noted downslope run from north to the south in drain (AF) and again from west to east in drain (AG). There was also major disturbance in the area when both the later bowling green and fort were built.

The design of the courtyard itself, with its distinctive rectangular pattern, is unusual and has not been noted in other surviving courtyards of castles in north-east Scotland. However, many other castles have either lost their original courtyards, or they have been covered over,

so no comparison can be made. Strangely, one castle that has been noted with a similar pattern is Bolton Castle (NGR: SE 0337 9183) in north-east England.

Pottery evidence suggests a 13th-/16th-century date, but use of the castle would appear to have continued certainly into the early 17th century. Other artefactual evidence indicates dates from the medieval period through to the 17th century, although the later dating is from a Charles I coin of 1643–50, which was found in topsoil, again from the northern area of the courtyard where disturbance had taken place. Although two small slivers of glass, of 18th century and of post-medieval date, were found on the courtyard surface, it is quite possible that the courtyard was still relatively exposed at that date.

Although site notes do indicate that animal, fish and fowl bones were found, none have been located to obtain a report. Also, as no midden was found, there is the probability that the cliff was used as a convenient method of disposing of midden material.

## CONCLUSIONS

Dating of phasing from both artefactual and documentary evidence would suggest the following:

- Phase I: 13th century
- Phase II: late 13th–early 14th century
- Phase III: 15th century
- Phase IV: 16th century
- Phase V: late 16th–early 17th century

The castle tower was most likely built in the 13th century, as a successor to the wooden 12th-century structure that was situated further to the west, on the area called the Knoll, near the neck of the promontory. Associated with the early tower was an external structure with associated clay-lined channels and a pit to its south-east. In possibly the late 14th or early 15th century,

a new red sandstone building replaced this, with a wide door leading into it on its west side, with related stone drains and an oven. This might have happened when Robert Keith married the Troup heiress in the 1370s. This building was then later altered, most likely in the mid-16th century, probably by Gilbert Keith, by blocking up the west door and building a stone-arched fireplace in front of it, and inserting a new door through the north wall leading to a large cobbled stone courtyard with drains. A new circular stairway was added to the west side of the tower slightly later. There was no evidence to suggest that the castle had ever been attacked and set on fire. Pottery evidence would appear to suggest that the castle went out of use by the end of the 16th century, or very early in the 17th century, as no later pottery was recorded. Also the estate map shows no evidence of the castle, so this would indicate that most of it had been removed prior to the late 18th or 19th century.

Apart from the foundations, and the collapsed section of wall lying within the tower and to the west, as well as the three large clumps of vaulting found on the courtyard to the east, few large stones survived, suggesting that after partial collapse, many of the stones were removed. Given the exposed nature of the castle site, and also the instability of the cliffs, it made it a less desirable place to rebuild as a residence, so the stones were removed and used for rebuilding elsewhere, most likely for the building of the first Troup House, built after the Gardens acquired Troup in 1654. Also by 1654, the castle on Cullykhan, as observed by Gordon of Straloch, was 'neglected'.

It would be nice to surmise that the broken clay pipe fragment (SF19) was dropped by a worker during the construction of the bowling green or Fiddes Fort, as it was found within the disturbed rubble layer along the north of the castle.

To the seaward side of the castle is a flat area which was laid out as a bowling green at an uncertain date, but generally thought to be in the early 18th century. Beyond this again are

the ramparts of Fort Fiddes, a coastal defence, thought to have been built by a Captain Fiddes about 1680, but more likely later, who was resident temporarily at Troup House. Both are visible on the estate map and both of these features contributed, along with significant coastal erosion, to the extensive destruction of the castle. Any surviving buildings on the east side were most likely removed during their construction.

Through the documentary evidence, we now know the main families who once owned the Barony of Troup, from the de Trops in the 13th century through to the Buttergasks in the 14th century and subsequently the Keith family over a relatively extensive period, before coming to the Gardens in the 17th century, although not all necessarily stayed in the castle. The castle itself does not appear to be mentioned by name in any of the early documents, only the Barony of Troup. The name of the castle itself is not evident on modern maps, the only pointer to one having existed is with the promontory itself being called Castle Point. However, from the earlier maps from the 16th and 17th centuries, the castle would appear to have been called Troup Castle.

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