

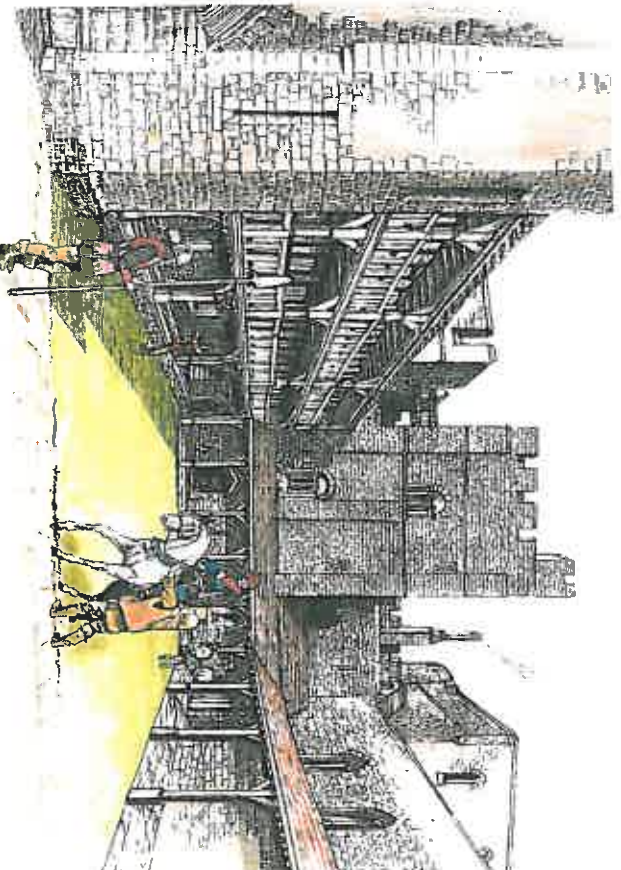
Archaeological Investigations Ltd

---



# THE DUNGEON, GOODRICH CASTLE HEREFORDSHIRE

*Excavation and building recording*



**November 2008**

Hereford Archaeology Series 807  
SMR 48682

This report is produced by

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS LTD**

Manager: A Boucher BSc MIFA

Unit 1

Premiere Business Park

Westfields Trading Estate

Faraday Road

Hereford

HR4 9NZ

Tel: (01432) 354901

Fax: (01432) 340900

For:

English Heritage

Cover picture: Illustration by Brian Byron showing

Goodrich Castle courtyard in the 15<sup>th</sup> century

---

*Archaeological Investigations Ltd is a trading company wholly owned by the Hereford City and County Archaeological Trust Ltd, a registered charity founded in 1997 to further the work of the City of Hereford Archaeological Committee (founded in 1974) throughout Herefordshire. The Company maintains a core staff with a broad range of expertise, whilst also making extensive use of specialist contract personnel. Besides working on the buried archaeology of Hereford and the country in general, the Company specialises in geophysical survey, historical illustration and the archaeological recording and analysis of standing buildings. Work is usually on a commission basis on behalf of organisations such as English Heritage, the National Trust, and the Landmark Trust. The Company also accepts commissions from local authorities and private developers and provides specialist consultancy advice in relation to archaeology in the planning process and general environmental issues.*

---

Hereford City & County Archaeological Trust: company number 3283805

Registered charity number: 1060840

Archaeological Investigations Ltd: company number 3356931 VAT 692 1750 2

# THE DUNGEON, GOODRICH CASTLE

## Excavation and Building Recording

NGR SO 557 199

Text: D. Doyle

Fieldwork: D. Doyle and D. Lewis

Illustrations: D. Doyle and S. Mayes

### Contents:

1	Summary.....	1
2	Introduction .....	2
3	Historical and archaeological background .....	2
4	Aims and objectives.....	3
5	Methodology.....	4
6	Results .....	4
7	Discussion.....	5
8	Conclusion.....	6
9	Site archive.....	6
	Bibliography .....	7
	Appendix.....	8

## Illustrations

### Figures:

Figure 1: .....	9
Figure 2: .....	10
Figure 3: .....	11
Figure 4: .....	12

### Plates:

Plate 1: .....	13
Plate 2: .....	14
Plate 3: .....	15
Plate 4: .....	16
Plate 5: .....	17
Plate 6: .....	18
Plate 7: .....	19
Plate 8: .....	20
Plate 9: .....	21

November, 2008

© Archaeological Investigations Ltd

# **THE DUNGEON, GOODRICH CASTLE**

## **Excavation and Building Recording**

**NGR SO 557 199**

### **1 Summary**

Goodrich Castle is a scheduled ancient monument overlooking the Wye Valley. English Heritage commissioned Archaeological Investigations Ltd to remove the modern gravel overburden covering the dungeon floor and to identify the source of flooding at the entrance which prohibited public access. A new wooden floor is due to be laid in the dungeon at a later date.

The gravel overburden was removed to the bedrock and the floor was cleaned and a photographic record was made of the walls, floor and vaulted ceiling. A contour survey was carried out on the floor. The walls and the floor were inspected for evidence relating to the use of the dungeon. A few stones were revealed at the entrance hinting that a stone floor may have been in place at one point. The northwest interior wall contained a small recess and a sealed passage leading to the keep.

The bedrock surface is approximately 30cm higher at the rear of the dungeon creating a gradual slope to the entrance which allowed water to pool at this position causing the flooding.

All of the walls showed some chalk markings relating to previous survey work. The dungeon floor was left exposed when the work was completed.

The work was carried out on the 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> October 2008.

## 2 Introduction

Goodrich castle is situated on top of a wooded hill and occupies a key position overlooking the Wye Valley to the south of Ross-on-Wye (Figure 1, Plate 1). The geology of the area is Old Red Sandstone.

English Heritage commissioned Archaeological Investigations Ltd to remove the modern gravel overburden covering the dungeon floor (as public access to the dungeon was inhibited by the ingress of water at the entrance) and to carry out a detailed survey of the interior of the dungeon. The source of the water was to be identified if possible.

The dungeon is four bays deep with a vaulted ceiling and constructed from coursed ashlar of a grey, conglomerate sandstone on a bedrock surface. Its northwest wall, of poorly-coursed rubble, is more or less underneath the southeast wall of the keep (Figure 1, Plate 2). The surface of the dungeon covers an area of approximately 6m by 2m. The dungeon lies beneath the rubble and deteriorated stonework of the platform and steps that were once above it. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was described as:

“..... smaller dungeon, strongly secured, under the platform belonging to the steps of the entrance, and having a very small air-hole on the same side” (Brayley, E. W., and Britton, J. 1805, 518.)

The thickness of the modern gravel overburden was between 0.01m and 0.20m. This gravel was removed and then spread on the eastern walkway (Figure 1).

The scope of the work encompassed a small scale excavation and a programme of recording.

## 3 Historical and archaeological background (After HAS 73)

The original castle was established in 1095 by Godric Marplestone who held the manor at the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086. Goodrich Castle is not mentioned in the survey but one reference to a Godric's Castle has been dated to c. 1095 and there are other references to it in 1144 and 1146 (Shoemith. In prep).

The keep is generally regarded as being the oldest upstanding structure dating to the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century. It most probably dates to around the 1160's (RCHN, 74; Pevsner, 1963, 137), in the time of Richard 'Strongbow' de Clare, Earl of Pembroke and Lord of Goodrich 1148-76.

Goodrich Castle then passed to William Marshal, 'the Elder,' 1st Earl of Pembroke, in 1204 as a consequence of his loyal support for the unpopular King John. It then passed in succession to his four sons. It was under William's fourth son Walter, 5th Earl of Pembroke, that the surrounding outer stone walls and turrets were completed between 1220 and 1245. Goodrich passed to the Crown after the death of the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl.

William de Valence then became owner of the castle shortly after. A period of strengthening and reconstruction continued throughout the 13<sup>th</sup> century which included

the construction of the D shaped barbican and rebuilding the living quarters to the most up to date standard.

In the early 14<sup>th</sup> century Goodrich was briefly in the possession of Hugh le Despenser. However it was passed back to an heir of the de Valence family, Richard Talbot in 1326. The Talbots, a Shropshire family, moved their local seat from Eccleswall Castle, near Weston-under-Penyard to Goodrich, and remained in possession of Goodrich for several centuries. The Talbots gained wealth and notoriety fighting in the 100 years war. Some of this wealth was directed towards improvements to their castle at Goodrich which included, in 1346, the foundation of the nearby Augustinian Priory of Flanesford. It is recorded that Sir Richard Talbot received a grant from Edward the Third to build a dungeon at Goodrich (King, T.1852, 435). This suggests that the dungeon was added around 1327-1377, probably during some alterations to the keep which occurred in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

The Talbots received the Earldom of Shrewsbury in 1442 and Goodrich Castle no longer served as their main residence.

Goodrich saw very little action for the next two centuries right up to the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century until the outbreak of Civil War. Goodrich was held, firstly by the parliamentarians under the Earl of Stamford in 1642. It was then taken and held by the Royalists under Sir Henry Lingen until 1646 when it was slighted following a four and a half month long siege by Colonel John Birch and his Parliamentary forces. The castle fell out of use in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.

After several centuries of dereliction, the ministry of works carried out considerable repair works in the 1920's and 1930's. In 1984 it passed into the hands of English Heritage and they have continued this program of consolidation and improvement.

Quite a lot of archaeological work has been carried out at Goodrich Castle. Most of this work was carried out by The City of Hereford Archaeological Unit in the early to mid 1980's. A detailed survey of the keep (Figure 2) was carried out in 1990 (HAS 73). Other work in 2004 when English Heritage commissioned Archaeological Investigations to produce enhanced elevation drawings of the North Range, Solar Arch (HAS 639). English Heritage also commissioned the company to produce profiles of the Solar pier capital and voussoirs for remedial works in 2006 (HAS 805).

#### **4 Aims and objectives**

The aim of this project was to enable archaeological features to be adequately recorded in the areas affected by the proposal and to identify the source of water ingress.

The objectives were to:

- Remove the existing gravel surface and identify the date and nature of any archaeological features.
- Assess survival, quality, condition and relative significance of any archaeological features, deposits and structures within the study area.

- Identify the source of the water if possible.
- Produce a contour survey and photometric record of the floor,
- Photograph the walls and any features identified.
- Produce a report.
- Deposit the archive.

## **5 Methodology**

As part of the project previous records of this part of Goodrich Castle were consulted. Two archaeologists were on site for the duration of the excavation works and the creation of a metrically controlled photographic record and one other archaeologist was on site during the surveying process. Flood lights powered by a generator were used to provide sufficient light for the excavation, photography and survey of the dungeon.

The floor position and survey grid were tied into features shown on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 mapping. A temporary site bench mark was set up on site using a Trimble GPS unit with sub-metre accuracy. A contour plan at the scale of 1:20 of the dungeon floor was also produced using the Leica Total Station TCR 1105R.

The gravel overburden was removed from the dungeon floor using mattocks and shovels. The gravel was transported and deposited on the eastern walkway using 15 litre buckets. It was spread over the area using a rake. The dungeon floor was cleaned to enable the identification of archaeological features and to aid the production of an accurate record. This was undertaken through a combination of the use of shovels, draw hoes, and pointing trowels.

A metrically controlled photographic record was taken of the dungeon using B&W negative and colour print film. Digital format was also used for general shots.

Registers were kept for context records and photographs on site.

## **6 Results**

The gravel was removed and spread in the eastern walkway. The dungeon floor was cleaned to reveal the Old Red Sandstone bedrock surface. The source of the flooding appears to stem from rain water running down the steps from the higher ground level outside and then pooling in a natural hollow at the entrance. The floor also rises approximately 35cm from the entrance to the rear wall, also helping to explain why the water pools at the dungeon entrance.

A contour plan of the floor was created showing the irregular surface and an interior survey of the building was created (Figure 3). Along with the photometric survey of the floor (Appendix 1.Black and white photos archive, shots 1-24), a photographic survey of the walls was compiled (Colour photos archive, Shots 2-36). A large hole at the top of



the rear wall is visible (Plate 3). The function of this is unclear and it may be the result of damage or deterioration of materials. A large recess is also apparent on the northwest wall (Plate 4) and again its function is unclear. The resealed passage to the keep, noted in HAS 73, on the NW wall is clearly visible (Plate 5). A few stones were uncovered near the entrance (Plate 6) and within the gully which runs down the southeast wall (Plate 7).

## 7 Discussion

The modern gravel was removed from the dungeon floor to reveal a surface of Old Red Sandstone bedrock. The surface was very irregular with a gully running down the southeast wall (Plate 7). This gully contained a few square stones. It is quite possible that this gully may be a remnant of the footings trench for the southeast wall when the dungeon was constructed. The stones within may have been placed here in an attempt even out the floor surface. It seems feasible that the other stones uncovered near the entrance may have served the same purpose. It is unlikely that there would have been a laid stone floor in a building designed to be a dungeon when the bedrock would have served this purpose.

The contour survey results show that the interior dimensions of the dungeon are not symmetrical, with the width varying from 2.75m at the entrance, to approximately 2.35m at the rear. The internal height is 2.85m and the length is 6.05m. The surface rises by 35cm from the entrance to the rear wall which explains why the water pools at the front of the dungeon.

Currently the dungeon is accessed externally from the court yard via a set of steps within a narrow passageway but this was not always the case.

In the northwest wall of the dungeon at the northern end there was a rough opening (Plate 5), now blocked with core work set about 0.4m from the lost wall face. This was a passage that lead directly into the ground floor of the keep. From inside the keep the corresponding opening is now obscured by a modern wooden staircase and is set back from southeast wall. In the early 19th century this rough opening was described from inside the keep as:

“-But at (c-d) is a very narrow passage to a still smaller dungeon (N), strongly secured under the platform belonging to the steps; and to this second dungeon is a very small air hole, at (d); but such as cannot deserve the name of a loop. (King, 1805, 250-1)

The letters refer to a plan (Figure 4) which shows the passage at the extreme northern end of the northwest wall, whilst the ‘air hole’ is now roughly where the present doorway leads from the courtyard into the dungeon. This air hole can be seen at the far right of the accompanying engraving in King’s *Munimenta Antiqua* (Figure 4). A photograph from c.1890-1900 (Plate 8) shows the steps to the platform and second floor entrance completely overgrown with no evidence of an entrance from the courtyard to the dungeon. Shoosmith suggests the courtyard entry was probably opened in the 1920s during restoration works (Shoosmith In prep). Interestingly the doorway in the entry is 14<sup>th</sup> century in style and it is the opinion of the author that it was once the original doorway from the passage on the northwest wall that was later removed and

reconstructed in its current position. The wall around and above the doorway is constructed from a number of different types of bricks and the mortar used is consistent with that used in restoration throughout the castle in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Black and white photos archive, shots 25-28).

The small recess in the northwest wall (Plate 4) has an uncertain function. It could have been purpose built if this room was later used as storage or it may be the result of a collapse in the wall at some point.

The rear wall appears to have been heavily reconstructed, possibly during restoration, as the blocks are larger than those in the other walls and there is evidence of scotch mortar and fragments of glass in other mortars (Plate 9). The large hole at the top of this wall may be the result of damage or deterioration of materials.

There was no evidence of any fixtures or fitting on the floor or walls pertaining to the possible uses of the dungeon throughout the lifetime of castle. Although it has been noted that there was graffiti from antiquity in the dungeon in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century (Shoosmith In Prep).

## **8 Conclusion**

The aims and objectives of this project were fully satisfied. There is now a photographic record of the interior of the dungeon and a contour plan of the floor. The reason for the flooding has been identified.

## **9 Site archive**

The primary archive will be deposited with either Hereford City Museum or Atcham (English Heritage) and will consist of the following:

- written records made on-site
- photographic register
- digital photographs
- 35mm black and white negatives and 35mm colour photographs
- A copy of this report (a digital copy of this report will also be submitted to the Archaeology data Service [ADS] for on-line storage).

## **Bibliography**

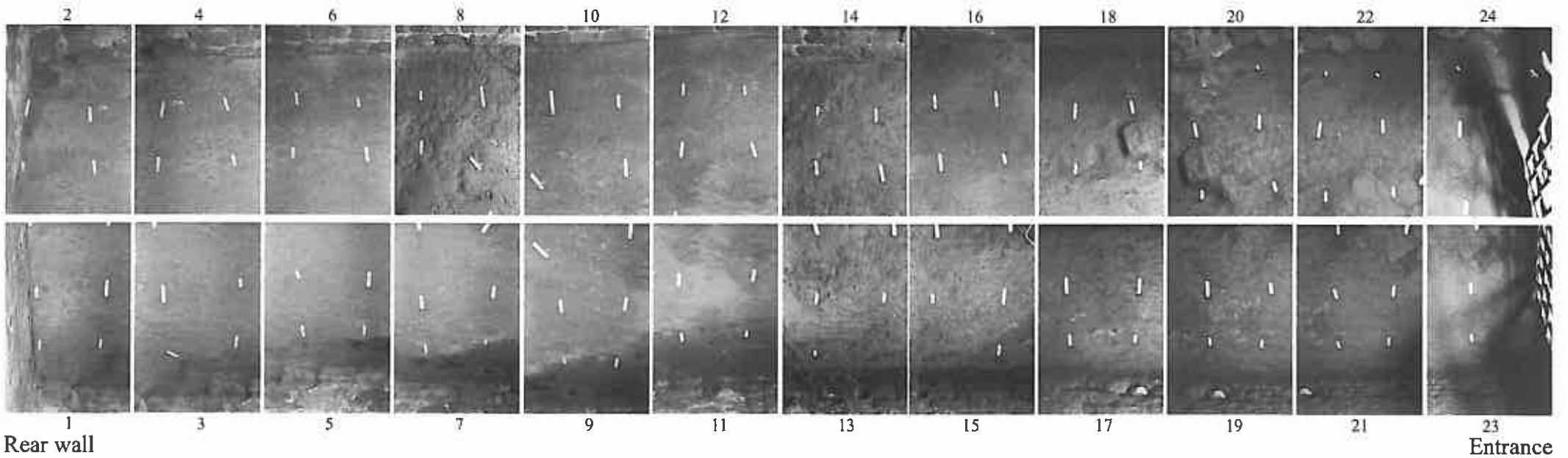
- Doyle, D., 2008. Goodrich Castle Solar Arch Pier Capital and Remedial Work. 'Historical Conservation and Building Recording'. HAS 805.
- Mayes, S., 2004. Goodrich Castle North Range Solar Arch. 'Historic Building Recording, Additional Record'. HAS 639.
- Morris, R., 1990. Goodrich Castle Survey: The Keep. First preliminary report. HAS 73.
- Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), 1931. An inventory of the Historical Monuments in Herefordshire. Vol I -South West-. London.
- Brayley, E. W. and Britton, J., 1805. The Beauties of England and Wales or, Delineations, Topographical, Historical, and Descriptive, of Each County. Vol VI. London
- King, E ., 1805. Munimenta Antiqua. Vol III.
- King, T. J., 1852. *Account of Goodrich Castle, Accompanying the exhibition of rubbings from sculptures upon the walls, there, supposed to have been cut by prisoners.* Archaeologia. Vol 34.
- Shoosmith, R. In Prep. English Heritage publication on Goodrich Castle

# Appendix

Dungeon Floor.

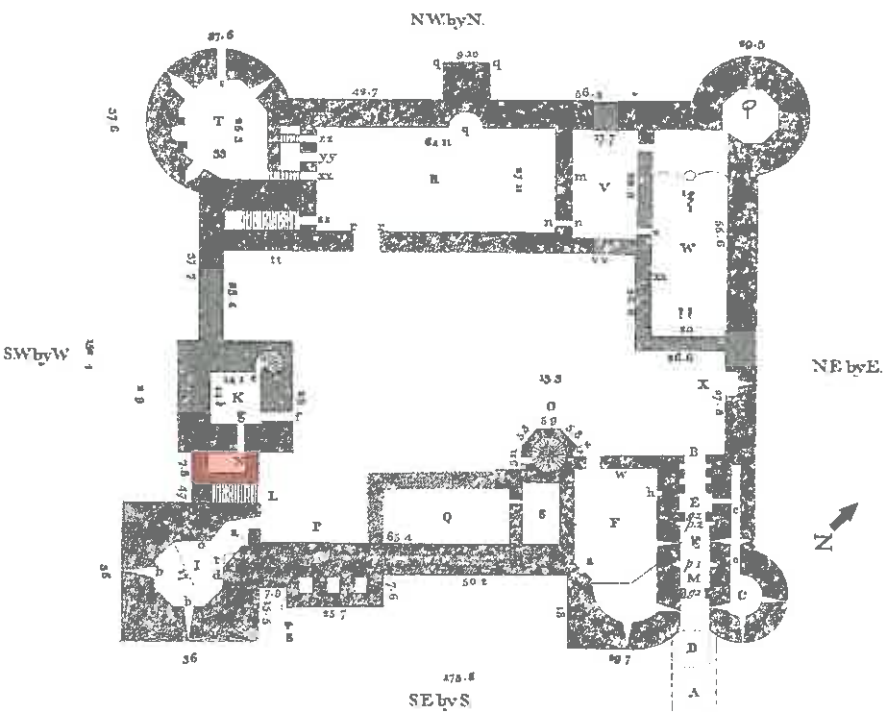
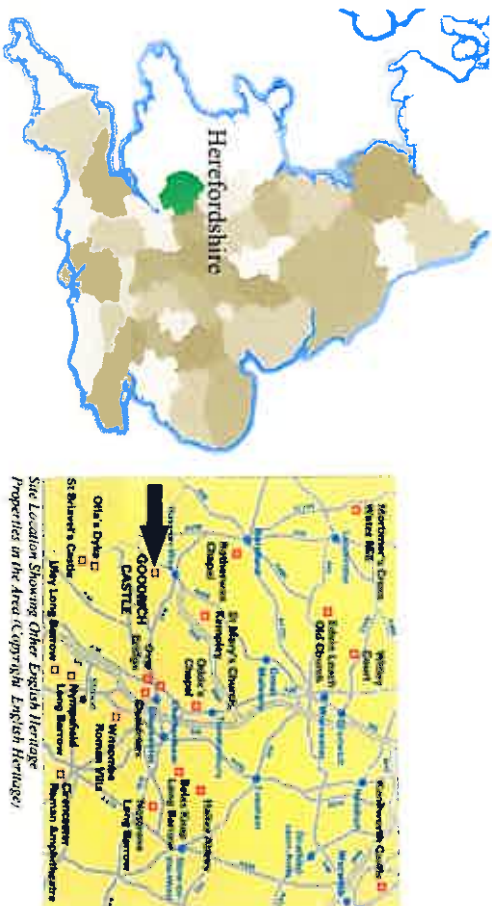
The black and white photometric floor survey.

The photograph numbers relating to the photo archive are shown above or below each photograph (all photos overlap).



# Illustrations

## Figures



Goodrich Castle plan from King's 1805 'Munitienta Antiqua'

Figure 1. Location plan. Position of dungeon shown in red

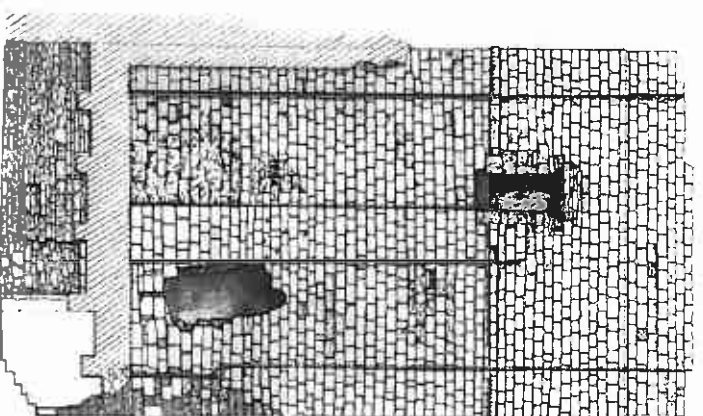
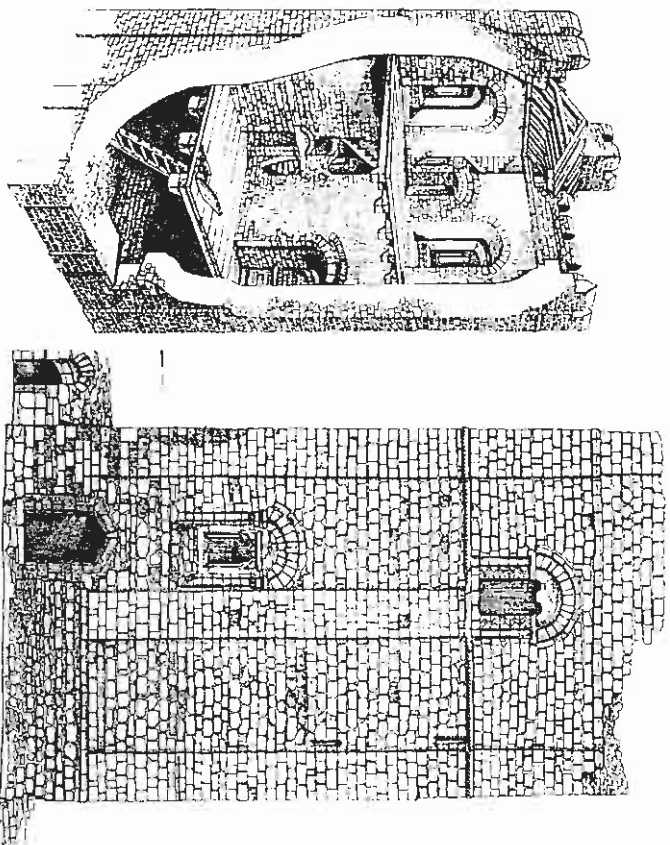
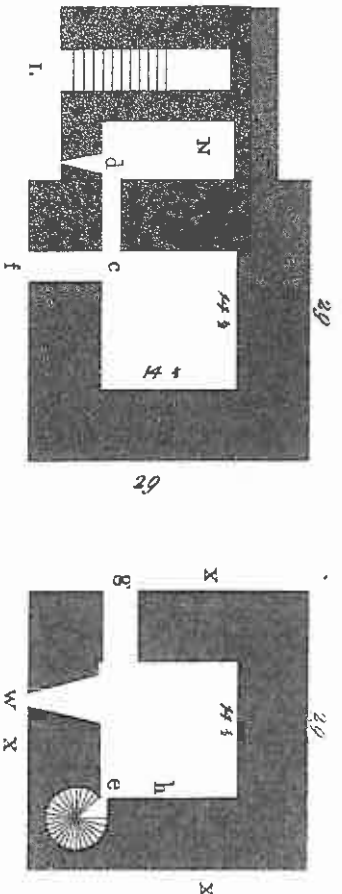
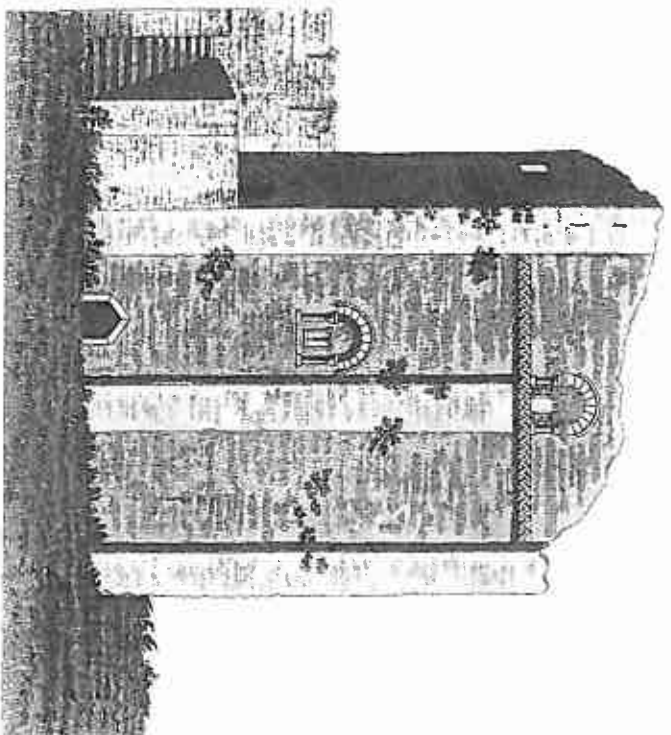


Figure 2. Reconstruction of the keep (top left) .The northeast wall of the keep (top right) showing the dungeon entrance to the east and the southeast wall showing the dungeon below



Figure 3. Contour plan and cross sections of Goodrich Castle Dungeon



*Keep & Towers at Goodrich Castle, in Herefordshire.*

Figure 4. Plan and engraving of the keep from King's 1805 *Munimenta Antiqua*



## Plates



**Plate 1. Goodrich Castle. Situated in a prime location overlooking the river Wye**



Plate 2. The dungeon adjoining the southeast wall of the keep



Plate 3. Hole at the top of rear dungeon wall and red sandstone bedrock surface





Plate 4. Recess in the northwest wall



Plate 5. The resealed opening on the northwest wall leading to the keep

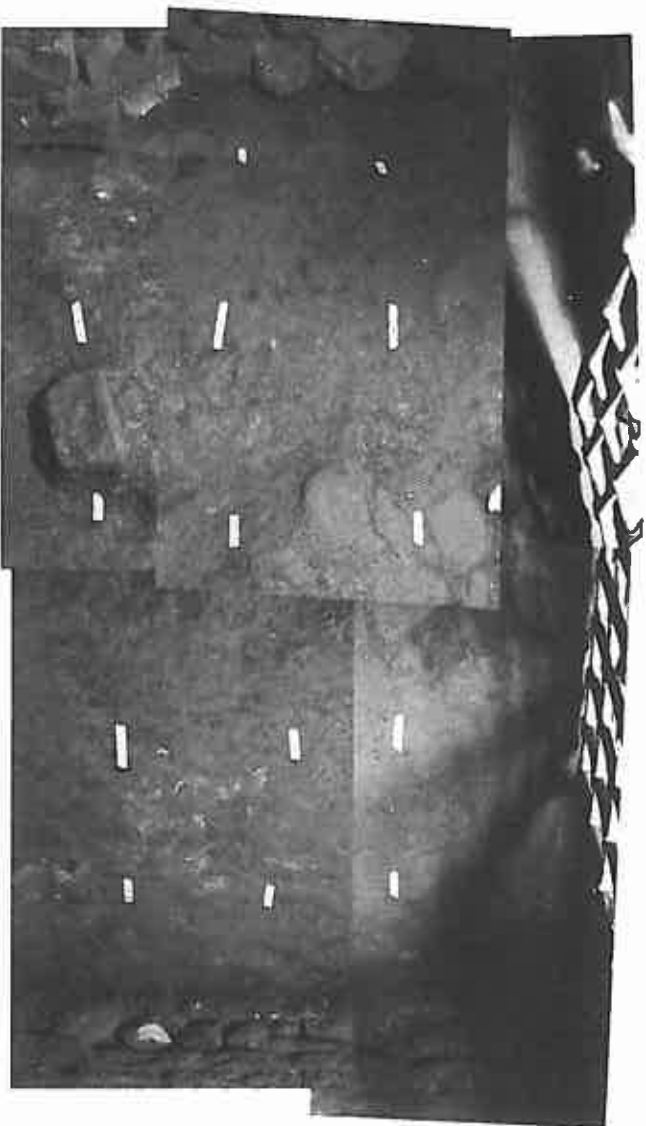


Plate 6. The stones near the entrance



Plate 7. Gully which runs down the southeast wall. Possible remnant of a footings trench for the southeast wall of the dungeon





Plate 8. A photo from c. 1890-1900 showing the overgrown steps leading to the keep and no apparent entrance to the dungeon (Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA)





Plate 9. The rear wall of the dungeon with obvious signs of repair and maintenance



---

Archaeological Investigations Ltd  
Unit 1, Premiere Business Park  
Westfields Trading Estate  
Faraday Road  
Hereford  
HR4 9NZ  
Tel:01432 364901  
[www.archaeologists.tv](http://www.archaeologists.tv)