

**NPRN 301795**

**EXCAVATIONS AT THE FIRST CASTLE OF  
ABERYSTWYTH: Current 06/08/2010**

**Stratigraphic Analysis: this work is in progress and is not to be considered DMB's final view; it should also be read in conjunction with the further analysis 'First Castle of Aberystwyth', where some of the inconsistencies have been sorted out.**

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**INTRODUCTION**

The reference numbers given for the finds mentioned in the descriptions of deposits are those used in the original records. The same number was often used for several finds.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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**RING MOTTE INTERIOR**

*Excavation units*

A grid of 2.44m-square excavation trenches was laid out within a block of land 15.25m-square, which covered about half of the interior of the ring motte. Trench E1 was in the north-west of the block, E25 in the south-east. Two field plans survive indicating the principal features excavated in the trenches. The stratification and associated finds from each of the trenches are described in the numerical order assigned to them by the excavators. Wherever possible the number assigned in the field notes to an individual context has been retained; otherwise, new numbers have been assigned to contexts described without numeration. The plan position of features and objects are recorded in the site books as first eastings then northings in the manner of the Ordnance Survey's National Grid Reference system.

Consideration has been given to showing a plan of those postholes whose positions were certain. However, it has been decided not to do this as it was likely to give a potentially highly misleading impression of the true distribution of postholes in the

interior, the relative chronology of the postholes is uncertain and a plan would be of little or no value in interpreting the nature of the structures there.

The principal excavations took place over two seasons. In 1956 the following trenches were opened: E1, E2 (probably upper part only), E3, E5, E11, E13, E14, E15, E21, E23, and E25. The following trenches were opened or further excavated in 1957: E1, E5, E10, E11, E14, and E19. Some later excavation also seems to have been undertaken, for example in 1959.

## **Trench E1**

### *Description*

The excavators recorded three contexts under bracken-infested topsoil. **Context E1.1** is described as a posthole full of rounded pebbles and pieces of shale. It was dug into clay which filled a natural fissure. The post hole was of oval plan, 0.76m by 0.64m and up to 0.2m deep. A packing stone 0.34m long by 0.13m wide was in situ on the north-west. **Context E1.2** is described as '2 out-of character stones'; no further details are given. The field notes and plan also seem to indicate the finding of another possible posthole with a clay fill, **context E1.3**, 0.88m south-east of context E1.1. It had a subrectangular plan, about 0.31m square.

The position in the trench of several ecofacts and artefacts was recorded without specifying the precise stratigraphic context: bone (E1.1), pottery (E1.2, E1.101), a lump of clay (E1.4), and nails (E1.1, E1.3, E1.5).

### *Interpretation*

Part of a timber building or buildings stood on the site. There is no mention in the records of any evidence of an 'occupation' layer or destruction by fire.

## **Trench E2**

### *Description*

The excavators recorded only one context below the topsoil: **context E2.1** was a hard surface, 0.05m-0.08m thick, running diagonally across the trench from north-east to south-west; no further details are given.

A piece of pottery (E2.2) was found in the topsoil.

### *Interpretation*

The area was the site of a floor, path or track. There is no mention in the records of any evidence of an 'occupation' layer or destruction by fire.

## **Trench E3**

### *Description*

The field notes record only **context E3.1**, a ‘charred area’ which lay in the north-east quadrant of the excavated square. Incorporated in the deposit was a piece of stone, tentatively identified as sandstone (E3.13).

The records list several finds from the trench without specifying their stratigraphic contexts: pottery (E3.1, E3.2, E3.3, E3.4, E3.6, E3.7, E3.9, E3.11, E3.12), nails (E3.5, E3.14, E3.16), a lump of clay (E3.10), charcoal (E3.15), and flint (E3.17).

### *Interpretation*

There is evidence of the presence of a fire in the area, but it is uncertain of what kind. The presence of a possibly non-native stone is noteworthy.

## **Trench E5**

### *Description*

The field notes describe only context E5.1. The deposit lay at a depth of between 0.31m and 0.41m below the surface, resting on bedrock, and consisted of a very dark soil containing small scattered lumps of charcoal. Incorporated in the layer were a nail (E5.101) and a very small potsherd (E5.102).

The records list several finds from the trench without specifying their stratigraphic contexts: pottery (E5.1, E5.2, E5.3, E5.4, E5.6, E5.7, E5.9, E5.11, E5.13, E5.14), bone (E5.8, E5.10), iron nail or possibly dress pin (E5.12), iron key (E5.14), iron nail (E5.15), and charcoal (E5.14).

### *Interpretation*

The excavators considered **context E5.1** to be an ‘occupation layer’, not evidence of fire-damage.

## **Trench E10**

### *Description*

The lower deposit in the trench was **context E10.3**, which consisted of a charcoal-rich layer, encountered at 0.2m below the surface; its thickness is unrecorded. The records describe a particularly dense concentration of charcoal, 0.31m wide, running across the trench, parallel to its north-east edge and 0.61m from it. An iron nail (E10.108) was incorporated in the deposit. Charcoal fragments were also particularly noticeable in the western corner of the trench.

The upper layer of the trench was bracken-infested topsoil, **context E10.1**, within which were found pottery (E10.101 and probably E10.112) and charcoal (E10.102, E10.105, E10.110). An iron nail (E10.111) could have come from either deposit.

### *Interpretation*

The concentration of charcoal, and particularly the dense band, probably represents the remains of timber structures destroyed by fire.

## **Trench E11**

### *Description*

The records for 1956 describe the finding under the topsoil of a layer of stones which included sandstone foreign to the site (sandstone – E11.3). The same notes then list ecofacts and artefacts excavated with their plan position in the trench, but without giving further stratigraphic information. The only exception occurs towards the end of the list, where an extent of charcoal with associated pottery and metal fragments is noted; a sketch drawing of the latter in juxtaposition with large stones which may have formed part of the site's geology suggests that they were part of the second 'level' of deposits identified in the 1957 season (see below).

The finds recorded in 1956 were: charcoal (E11.5, E11.23, E11.24, E11.29, E11.32, E11.36, E11.42 (possibly a piece of a carved peg), E11.47, E11.49); beans (E11.7, E11.24, E11.32), grain (E11.32), bone (E11.29, E11.32, E11.45, E11.46), pottery (E11.1, E11.2, E11.11, E11.12, E11.14-E11.16, E11.19-E11.21, E11.26, E11.30, E11.31, E11.34, E11.38, E11.40, E11.41, E11.43, E11.44, E11.47, E11.48, E11.52-E11.54), spindle whorl (E11.53), iron nail (E11.4, E11.37), metal unspecified: nails (E11.6, E11.8, E11.9, E11.14, E11.18, E11.22, E11.25, E11.27, E11.32, E11.35, E11.39, E11.50, E11.51), hook (E11.10), cross pendant (E11.17), ring (E11.28).

The field record for 1957 divides the finds into two 'levels'. It must be assumed that the second 'level' is the lower; there are no further details.

The finds from the second level were: charcoal (E11.113, E11.123, E11.132, E11.134, E11.142, E11.146, E11.152, E11.164), beans (E11.123, E11.131, E11.193, E11.102A), grain (E11.113, E11.131, E11.164, E11.193, E11.102A), bone (E11.113, E11.116, E11.102A), pottery (E11.113-E11.115, E11.117, E11.119, E11.120, E11.122-E11.125, E11.127, E11.130, E11.131, E11.133-E11.136, E11.138, E11.140-E11.142, E11.146-E11.149, E11.153, E11.155, E11.156, E11.158-E11.167, E11.169-E11.174, E11.176-E11.186, E11.188-E11.192; E11.101A, E11.103A, E11.104A, E11.106A, E11.108A-E11.110A, E11.114A-E11.117A, E11.119A, E11.120A), unspecified metal: nails (E11.118, E11.123, E11.126, E11.128, E11.129, E11.143, E11.150, E11.105A, E11.107A, E11.121A), lump of clay (E11.157).

The finds from the first level were: pottery (E11.101, E11.104, E11.105, E11.110-E11.112, E11.139, E11.144, E11.145, E11.175, E11.111A, E11.112A), unspecified metal: nails (E11.106, E11.168), sandstone whetstone or fragment of a quern (E11.108), large square-shaped stone (E11.109).

### *Interpretation*

Both principal deposits appear to have been a mixture of domestic refuse. They may represent two distinct periods of occupation. The excavators did not note any evidence of fire damage. The presence of 'foreign' sandstone is again noteworthy.

## **Trench E13**

### *Description*

The field records give no details of the stratification other than describing the existence of at least 0.15m depth of 'soil' above rock. However, the application for assistance to the Board of Celtic Studies in 1957, preserved in the NMRW, mentions a large posthole being encountered in Trench E11, and the field plan seems to indicate the existence of two. One was partially exposed in the west face of the trench and measured 0.69m by at least 0.24m. About 0.7m to the south was another probable posthole of polygonal plan, 0.34m by 0.26m.

The following finds were recorded: pottery (E13.1, E13.2, E13.4, E13.5, E13.7) and a fragment off a rounded, greyish flint nodule, possibly a scraper (E13.6).

### *Interpretation*

There is evidence of part of a timber building in this area. There is no mention in the records of any evidence of destruction by fire.

## **Trench E14**

### *Description*

The field book records two features. **Context E14.1** was in the south-west part of the trench, close to its south side, and comprised a posthole measuring 0.3m by 0.33m by 0.2m deep. In plan its north-west corner formed a right angle and south-east corner an acute angle. Four packing stones were in situ at its south-west corner and along its east edge.

**Context E14.2** was very close to the south-east corner of the trench and comprised a posthole, trapezoidal in plan, 0.28m (south side) by 0.36m (east side) by 0.2m (north side), by 0.15m deep, with its south-east corner forming a right angle. The posthole was cut into the rock; loose stones in its fill were interpreted as, possibly,

displaced packing stones, but the deposit may have been disturbed by bracken roots. No finds were recorded.

It is very difficult to reconcile the above record with what appear to be two postholes drawn on the field plan in the eastern quarter of the trench. It may be that they were uncovered during otherwise unmentioned excavations in 1959.

### *Interpretation*

Despite the ambiguities in the records there seems to be no doubt that there is evidence of part of a timber building or buildings in this area. There is no mention in the records of any evidence of an 'occupation' layer or destruction by fire.

## **Trench E15**

### *Description*

The field record states that the deposits above bedrock in this trench were shallow, 0.15m to 0.2m deep. **Context E15.2** was a posthole 1.16m from the north corner of the trench and 0.58m from the north-east edge of the trench; charcoal was noted in the depression in its upper fill, but no further details were recorded. The posthole was oval in plan, about 0.46m by 0.49m. The posthole is shown on the plan at the edge of a shallow rectangular depression occupying most of the east and north quadrants of the trench; it may have been part of the interior of the building formed in part by the timber of the posthole. A field sketch shows two rectangular stones (**context E15.1**) of the same width in an alignment about 0.5m long towards the east corner of the trench.

A few artefacts were recovered, but their context is uncertain: pottery (E15.3), a possible, but doubtful, whetstone (E15.1) and possible daub (E15.2).

### *Interpretation*

There is evidence for part of a timber building or buildings in this area, and the hint of, possibly, destruction by fire.

## **Trench E19**

### *Description*

Bedrock was found to lie only a few centimetres below the top of the trench. **Context E19.1** comprised a small area of blackened bedrock in the south-east part of the trench; a potsherd, E19.101, was associated with this area. The excavator noted that 'the whole area' (presumably all the trench) contained many fire-affected pieces of stone. The field plan shows a rectangular feature 0.34m by 0.38m in the east quadrant

of the trench, but it is unclear whether it is a stone or a posthole. The feature was not transferred to the general plan, probably indicating that a stone was being drawn.

### *Interpretation*

There is strong evidence of fire in this area, but no information as to its nature.

## **Trench E21**

### *Description*

Only topsoil was removed in this trench, down to the stony surface of the material of the bank. Almost no details are given of the excavations in this trench other than recording the recovery of a 0.05m-long nail, E21.1, in the '1<sup>st</sup> layer', 0.15m below ground level.

## **Trench E23**

### *Description*

Several features and artefacts were noted in the record, but their inter-relationships were not defined.

**Context E23.1** was in the south-east corner of the trench and comprised an ill-defined hollow, about 0.61m long, containing softer soil and flecks of charcoal.

**Context E23.2** was immediately north of context E23.1 and consisted of a possible posthole about 0.3m square. This was probably the same as the posthole referred to elsewhere in the field notes as having been associated with a potsherd, E23.12.

**Context E23.3** was described as a trodden floor with associated potsherds, between 0.2m and 0.25m below the top of the trench.

**Context E23.4** was a hollow filled with dark soil in the north-east part of the trench and had a potsherd, E23.7, associated with it. **Context E23.5** was a posthole in the north-east corner of the trench and had a potsherd, E23.11, associated with it.

Several artefacts and ecofacts were recorded as having been found in the trench, but their specific contexts were not given: pottery (E23.1, E23.4, E23.6, E23.8, E23.10), iron nail heads (E23.3, E23.9), iron hook (E23.2), possible whetstone (E23.5), flat stone pebble – not an artefact (E23.14), possible, but very doubtful, stone rubber (E23.15), possible daub (E23.13) and charcoal (E23.15).

It is very difficult to correlate the above records with the field plan which appears to show two postholes: one near the south corner had an oval plan, 0.44m by 0.51m; the other was partially exposed in the north-west face of the cutting and had a diameter of about 0.42m.

#### *Interpretation*

There is evidence for part of a building or buildings in this area, but not for any destruction by fire.

### **Trench E24**

#### *Description*

The only stratigraphic information comes from the field plan. This shows that the originally-intended trench was extended westwards and southwards (see fig. ), probably because of the discovery of the posthole at the west corner. The posthole had a rectangular plan 0.43m by 0.46m; a stone, regarded as a packing stone, was encountered near one edge. The plan shows a segment projecting westwards from the side of the main plan; this might indicate two phases to the posthole. About 1.5m to the east was a smaller hole of about 0.3m diameter. Just over 1.5m south of the posthole the drawing shows two 'laid stones'.

The Finds Record indicates that 13 sherds of pottery were recovered, E24/H4.101, E24/H4 102 and E24/H4.104, and two pieces of metal, E24/H4.103; there are no further details.

#### *Interpretation*

Further indications of the existence of timber buildings.

### **Trench E25**

#### *Description*

The field plan indicates a single posthole roughly in the middle of the trench, with a diameter of about 0.3m. The field notes record only finds of pottery: E25.1, E25.5, E25.6.



## Trench F1 (with E5 and F2)

### *Excavation unit*

This trench and the adjacent ones were excavated in 1957, 1958 and 1959.

### *Description*

The principal feature excavated in Trench F1 and part of the adjacent trenches, E5 and F2, was a deep rock-cut pit. When part emptied the pit had a diameter of about 4.27m and a depth of between about 3.05m and 3.66m, the bottom sloping down from east to west. The west side was almost vertical, the east very steep but more inclined.

The main fills of the pit are described from the information supplied by a west-east cross-section drawing (*Fig. ...*), supplemented with data derived from other field sketches and notes. Comparison of the main section drawing with several sketches of a north-south section to the east of the pit suggests that the main drawing in this part has failed to recognise the full subtleties of the stratification at this point.

The lowest fill, covering the floor of the pit, is described as humus, up to 0.18m deep. Above this, on the east side, was a series of raking deposits designated only by their predominant colour, alternately grey or brown (**Context 309b**). The deposit or deposits with which they merged to the west are drawn as a single mass. The combined deposits on the east were about 1.52m deep. The following artefacts and other material were recovered from Context 309b: eighteen sherds of pottery, some charcoal, including fairly large pieces, one fragment of flint, a piece of cut bone, a piece of iron, three pieces of lead, animal bones and teeth, and shells.

**Context 309a/209**, a deposit of shale of the same type as the pit wall, lay immediately above Context 309b and the rock face of the upper part of the east side of the pit. It raked down steeply to the west and was up 0.38m thick. Most of the records describe it as brown, although the main section drawing has it as dark grey. The finds register and later lists record as from this deposit: 40 potsherds, animal bones and teeth, shells, three pieces of iron and a lump of possible slag.

The west-east section drawing (*Fig....*) shows a deposit up to 0.74m deep, filling the hollow between the upper surface of Context 309a/209 and the west wall of the pit; unfortunately it was not assigned a context number and no description is given. Above the latter deposit, against the west wall of the pit, was a layer of fine brown silt (**Context 106**), up to 0.3m thick, in which was found a fragment of bone and six sherds of pottery.

The angle of rest of the upper surfaces of Context 309a/209, the unnumbered layer and context 106 formed a concave hollow in the upper half of the pit. Along the east face and in the bottom of this 'hollow' was an unnumbered fill of black soil, about 0.3m thick. Above was **Context 308c**, a fine black gritty soil, up to 0.36m thick. Both the latter deposits merged on the west with a dark grey-brown soil layer, 0.3m thick, containing bone and charcoal. The records are ambiguous, but this may have been designated **Context 210**, from which case one sherd of pottery was recovered, along with a piece of animal jawbone and teeth.

The upper fill of the 'hollow' was designated variously **Contexts 104, 205, 208, 308a and 308b**. The deposit was black soil containing noticeable amounts of burnt material, including large lumps of charcoal, near the west face of the pit and large stones towards its east side; it was up to 0.66m deep. A notable inclusion was the skeleton of a horse; bones of another horse were also present. Other artefacts and material in the fill were: 160 sherds of pottery (there may have been more, but the finds record is ambiguous), two spindle whorls (one crudely incised, see ...), one flint chip, 25 pieces of unspecified metal, three or more pieces of iron, and four pieces of lead. Context 208 also contained the illustrated whetstone (see fig. ...). Unspecified animal bones and teeth were also recovered, some of them burnt.

The uppermost fillings below the bracken-infested topsoil were described as being brown soil. **Context 105** raking down gently from the west face was up to 0.18m thick and contained 12 sherds of pottery and a nail. **Context 207**, on the east, contained 33 potsherds, three metal nails, two metal hooks, one metal bowl rim, three pieces of unspecified metal, a flint fragment, six pieces of animal bone and some animal teeth. The sheet of copper alloy numbered F1 107 may have been from here. Two sherds of pottery were recovered from the topsoil.

### *Interpretation*

Several possible functions have been assigned to the pit. Christopher Houlder suggested that it might have served as the undercroft of a main building, or as a dungeon. **DMB NEEDS TO REFERENCE ALL HOULDER'S SUGGESTIONS AND THINK FURTHER ABOUT THIS.**

It is reasonable to assume that a pit of this size was excavated for a specific purpose other than as a refuse receptacle. However, it is possible that, whatever the original reason for initiating it, orders were changed and it was left as an open hole to be filled. If this had occurred the primary fillings probably occurred shortly afterwards given the nature of the subsoil and the prevailing climate and judging from how the profile remained noticeably sharp.

If we assume that the pit served its intended original function for a period, the following is one possible interpretation of the evidence of subsequent infilling:

Phase 1: the pit served its original function. This phase came to an end when its covering was removed. The lower half of the pit was filled fairly soon after the covering was removed, largely by natural processes, though some cultural refuse also found its way into the deposit (309b); the excavators were of the view that the latter layer was largely derived naturally.

Context 309a/209 was likewise considered to have represented a time when the site was in a state of disrepair or abandonment and to be derived from weathering of the wall of the pit and the rear of the adjacent motte bank. The presence of cultural materials in the deposit could be explained by natural re-deposition of materials originally deposited on the surface peripheral to the pit. Context 106 and the un-

numbered one beneath, but over 309a/209, seem best interpreted as natural accumulations. However, the unnumbered deposit under context 106 is described by Houlder on an interpretative sketch as 'Filling from the destruction of Period I'. There is an inconsistency in Houlder's terminology in interpreting the same context, leading to ambiguity: in this case he describes the process of deposition of the context in question as being the result of 'dilapidation' in one reference, but resulting from 'destruction' in another. Houlder included the black soil below context 308c as part of his 'Period of abandonment' between his Period I and Period II.

Phase 2: The deposits filling the upper part of the pit below Contexts 105 and 207 were largely made up of domestic refuse. Houlder suggested that this was pre-existing refuse collected from the vicinity to level the top of the pit preliminary to a reoccupation of the site and that the overlying layers, 105 and 207, accumulated during the lifespan of that occupation. Whatever the actual situation, and the reason for burial of the horse, it can be agreed that the deposits represent renewed activity on the site after a period of quiescence.

### **Trench F2 (east of the large pit)**

#### *Description*

The lowest deposit encountered immediately over the bedrock was a layer of brown soil, **context 204**; no depth is recorded, but it was clearly a thin horizon. A sketch made on 10 June 1958 seems to show that the large pit mostly located in Trench F1 was cut through context 204. Above context 204 was **context 203/206**, described as black occupation material, containing 21 potsherds, part of a horseshoe (Fig. IJ), a fragment of metal with wood adhering and a large flat piece of metal bar (Fig. KL). The field sketches suggest that context 203/206 was a continuation of **context F1.205** and its associated deposits and contemporary with them. Above context 203/206 was about 0.38m of turf-covered, bracken-infested topsoil.

#### *Interpretation*

Context 204 was probably the original, pre-castle topsoil. Context 203/206 was contemporary with Phase 2 of the pit in Trench F1 and part of the same process of formation.

*Note:* In some finds' labelling deposit 203 is designated F1.203, but is almost certainly referring to deposit F2.203 described here.

## **Trench F11**

### *Excavation unit*

This trench was excavated in 1956 and measured 2.45m square (fig. ).

### *Description*

The evidence for the features revealed by this trench is an annotated sketch plan, which shows three main contexts. The soil encountered below at least some of the features drawn, **context 4**, is described as ‘generally dark, but containing little recognisable charcoal...’ and as ‘merging into peat...’

**Context 1**, in the west corner of the trench, was possibly a posthole, about 0.23m in diameter. There is no evidence that it was excavated in 1956. **Context 2**, in the east corner, was a hollow, 0.76m wide north to south by at least 0.76m west to east and extending beyond the north-east corner of the trench. It was filled with soil and random small rubble. **Context 3** was a burnt area covering much of the south-east half of the trench between contexts 1 and 2.

The plan also shows the position of 25 potsherds, objects F11.101, scattered in the trench area between contexts 1 and 2. Unfortunately, there is no precise record of the pottery’s stratigraphic position, especially in relation to context 3.

### *Interpretation*

There is evidence in this area for the probable existence of a timber building, and for an occupation and/or destruction deposit.

## **Trench F12**

### *Excavation unit*

The trench was excavated in 1957 (fig. ).

### *Description*

The field notes describe an ‘occupation layer’, **context 2**, under context 1. The deposit contained much blackened grain (F12.102 and F12.104), as well as 66 potsherds (F12.104), fragments of iron (F12.104), lead ‘petals’ (F12.104), a lead spindle-whorl (F12.104) and charcoal (F12.104). It is also likely that the nine sherds of pottery, F12.101, were unearthed from the uppermost part of context 2.

The field notes describe an upper deposit of soil and ‘larger’ stones, **context 1**, lying over context 2. Context 1 contained six sherds of pottery (F12.103), a nail head (F12.103) and a lump of slag (F12.103). There is also a reference to a clay layer, context 3, in the ‘east corner’ of the trench, but no further details are given.

### *Interpretation*

The deposits appear to represent the refuse of occupation.

### **Trench F21**

This trench was opened in 1958 (fig. ) according to the Finds Record, which indicates that three plain potsherds, F21.201, were recovered from the 'bracken layer'; there are no further details.

## **RING MOTTE BANK**

### **Trench MBI (figs...)**

#### *Excavation unit*

The trench was cut in 1956 across the ring motte bank on the east side of the castle, 6.1 metres south of trenches F1 and F2. Although apparently originally intended to be over 12.2m long, it was only excavated to bedrock between 3.51m and 7.32m from its western end; i.e. it was confined to the rear face of the bank. The trench was 1.07m wide. Incomplete records show that further work took place in the trench in 1959, 1961 and 1962.

#### *Description (figs...)*

**Context 22** was a posthole with a round plan on three sides but straight on the west, 0.3m in diameter, vertical-sided, flat-bottomed and 0.23m deep. It is shown on a field plan and section as lying in the centre of the trench, just over 6.4m from its west end. Its stratigraphic position is uncertain, but the section drawing would seem to indicate that it possibly pre-dated the rubble bank, context 21, and also possibly context 5. The field plan seems to indicate another post pit, **context 23**, 1.83m west of context 22, but its stratigraphic context is uncertain. It had a sub-rectangular plan, measuring 0.61m north-west to south-east by 0.43m and was 0.18m deep.

Although the field notes are ambiguous, it would seem that **context 5** overlay or was associated with context 22 and underlay, i.e. was earlier than, the rubble bank, context 21. It consisted of a soil containing abundant carbonised grain (MBI.5), and also incorporated charcoal, including pieces from what looked like shaped timber, much pottery (MBI.5), two nails (MBI.5), and probably bone (MBI.5). The finds record also seems to suggest finds of lead and slag; a small irregular plate of lead is labelled MBI.5. A record card dated 31.5.62 describes **context 531** as 'Dark soil right

on rock in S.W. corner ? within building'. This may have been the equivalent of context 5.

**Context 21** was the west tail of the ring motte bank, built of clean, heavy rubble. Over the rear face and at the foot of the bank had accumulated a layer of stone rubble up to 0.13m deep, **context 20**.

A record card dated 17.5.62 describes **context 532** as 'NW Corner beneath stone at bottom of Per I rubbish i.e. most primary fall'. Houlder's note suggests that the deposit built up at the beginning of the first period of rampart construction or earlier.

**Context 4** lay above context 20. It consisted of a deposit of burnt material which included a great deal of charcoal and was up to 0.13m thick. Among the material was a charred length of timber which might have come from the revetment of the bank. A field note, probably describing part of this deposit, refers to charred brushwood thought to have come from the bank revetment. The layer became less burnt and more stony and earthy to the west. Within the deposit were found 11 potsherds (MBI.4) and a heat-altered nodule of greenish glass (MBI.4), whilst on its surface were discovered 11 potsherds (MBI.1) and a sliver of bone. A single card, dated 26.4.61, refers to a deposit numbered **535** and described as 'Lowest burnt layer over rubble (Cowell/Corfield)'. It may be the same as context 4.

The records also mention other finds made during excavation in the vicinity of context 4 but do not state clearly the stratigraphic context: 15 potsherds (MBI.2), metal nail head (MBI.2), metal nail shank (MBI.2), and possible slag (MBI.2). Even less certain are the contexts of a small piece of tooth and a sherd of pottery found in 'discarded rubbish', and plain pottery and slag described as from a pit (MBI.3).

Context 4 was covered by **context 2**, grey humic rubble up to 0.15m deep over the rear face of the bank. This in turn was masked by bracken-infested topsoil up to 0.36m deep.

Limited excavation of the crest of the bank showed it there to be built of rubble of small stones with the occasional larger one. The right (south?) section showed signs that parts of the bank were composed of layers of flat stones.

### *Interpretation*

Phase 1 (and Phase 2?): before the construction of the rubble bank, context 21, a timber structure of uncertain function was erected on the site (context 22). The fate of this structure is also uncertain, but it may have ceased to function before or at the time of the beginning of the formation of context 5; alternatively, it may have been contemporary with context 5. The excavators were of the view that context 5 represented the refuse of a period of occupation.

Phase 2 (or Phase 3 and Phase 4?): the first bank of heavy rubble was constructed (context 21). Houlder speculated that the rubble layer, context 20, could represent rubble displaced in the slighting of the bank. There seems little doubt that context 4 represents the destruction of the defences.

Context 2 represented post-abandonment weathering of the earthwork.

Two possible sequences are:

- A. Phase 1 – context 22
  - Phase 2 – context 5
  - Phase 3 – 1<sup>st</sup> bank, contexts 21 & 20
  - Phase 4 – 2<sup>nd</sup> bank, context 4
- B. Phase 1 – contexts 22 & 5
  - Phase 2 – 1<sup>st</sup> bank, contexts 21, 20, 4

### **Trench MBII (figs...)**

#### *Excavation unit*

In 1961 trench MBI was extended to the north by a width of 0.76m. As well as field drawings illustrating features and stratification, there is a series of file cards accompanying the pottery collection which describe the stratification in this cutting; these are given numbers in the 500s, e.g. 501. The author has attempted below to correlate these with the other records.

#### *Description*

The field records describe **context 7** as the original topsoil of the site, light brown in colour, on which the first ring motte bank was raised. On and in the surface of the topsoil was a layer of flat stones of uncertain derivation. **Context 501** is described as ‘Chocolate coloured soil directly over rock and over light brown soil. Layer D’. This would appear to refer to a deposit formed immediately over context 7, or possibly part of context 7. There is no reference to the bank, which suggests 501 was regarded as pre-bank.

**Context 6** consisted of coarse rubble forming the rear tail of the bank and was set immediately on context 7. **Context 31** was a shallow posthole of oval plan, 0.3m north to south by 0.28m and 0.15m deep, with near vertical sides and a slightly concave bottom. Although the stratigraphic position of this feature was not indicated precisely, it is probable that it was associated with context 6 and contemporary with context 5. The site plan depicts a possible stakehole 0.41m west of the posthole, context 5, but no further details are recorded.

**Context 5** was a posthole of sub-rectangular plan with near vertical sides and a slightly concave bottom, situated 0.91m from the west end of the trench. The records are incomplete but they indicate that it measured at least 0.61m north to south by 0.53m and was 0.38m deep. The feature lay only 0.18m north of the north corner of context MBI.23. The posthole was cut through context 7 and bedrock and filled with context 4 material. **Contexts 515 and 533** are described as ‘Base of NE post in big P.H.’, which probably refers to posthole, context 5. Another card records **context 518** as ‘Square P.H. (Cowell) in the northern half of the cutting. This might also refer to posthole context 5, or another, undrawn, posthole of uncertain phase.

**Context 4** was a layer of light fine rubble constituting part of the rear slope of the bank and covering the immediately adjacent interior to the west; it measured up to 0.38m deep on the bank and 0.08m over the interior.

The field records indicate the presence of a stone revetment wall along approximately the toe of bank but the details are vague. It is likely that the wall was associated with the later phase of the bank.

A record card describes **context 508** as ‘Among top stone of “wall” in SW corner’. The meaning of this is ambiguous but it could be taken to suggest that there had been a southern extension of wall MBIII, context 4, which had later been disturbed [Period 3 building in new analysis].

**Context 3** covered that part of context 4 which formed the lower rear slope of the bank. Above it was **context 2**, the equivalent of context MBI.4, consisting of black burnt earth covering the lower rear slope of the bank, up to 0.3m thick in places.

**Contexts 509 and 538** are described as ‘Black layer’ and are probably equivalent to context 2. [Period 3 destruction in new analysis]

Several of the contexts described on the record cards cannot be securely located stratigraphically, but their descriptions are evidence of occupation at the rear of the rampart. **Context 504** was at ‘NW corner of occupation layer’. **Context 510** is described, without details, as being at ‘W edge of cutting’. There is more information about **context 513**: ‘W side (Miss Kilgom) Dark earth 10”- 1’2”’. **Contexts 522 and 526** are described as ‘Cooking site. N edge of cut’. The only information about **context 534** is that it was in the north half of the cutting.

The uppermost layer was bracken-infested topsoil up to 0.28m deep, covered with turf.

### *Interpretation*

Phase 1: a bank of coarse rubble (context 6) with a timber rear revetment (context 31) was erected. The northern continuation of the line of the revetment in MBIII is noted on the interpretative plan of MBIII drawn by Houlder. Associated with the bank was a timber building (context 5). The layer of flat stones was probably associated with this phase. The phase is the equivalent of sequence B, phase 2 or sequence A, phase 3 in trench MBI. The timber building was, at least in part, dismantled immediately before the formation of context 4.

Phase 2: the bank was refurbished (context 4) with a rear revetment of stone, and the interior was levelled up for construction (see ‘South of F1). The defence was destroyed by fire and slighted (contexts 2 and 3). The phase is the equivalent of trench MBI sequence B, phase 2 or sequence A, phase 4.

### **Trench MBIII (fig...)**

#### *Excavation unit*

Trench MBII was extended to the north in 1961 as trench MBIII. Its precise dimensions are uncertain. The features uncovered were drawn on a field plan (fig...), and on an interpretative plan and section (B) drawn by Houlder. Further details of the stratification of the trench are given on a series of file cards, using numbers in the



500s (503, 506 etc.) to designate particular deposits. The writer has attempted below to correlate the details on these cards with the plan and other information available.

### *Description*

**Context 9** is described as the original topsoil (or subsoil) of the site, but no further details are available.

Other deposits can be referred to in relationship to the wall, context 4. **Context 8** was a posthole of rectangular plan, 0.28m north-east to south-west by 0.3m, and up to 0.61m deep. The field drawing suggests that this feature pre-dated context 4.

**Context 6** is described as a floor found under context 4, but no further details are given. In the interpretative section drawing (B), drawn between the pit edge in F1 and context 8, Houlder shows a layer called 'Period I debris', up to 0.25m deep over the original subsoil and beneath a 'floor' and a stone platform (see below). **Context 502** is described as 'Burnt destruction layer Per I', and from other notes appears to pre-date wall context 4. Houlder's **context 507** is a deposit of uncertain nature but described as 'Beneath stones of rough "wall" at E (back) of cut'. The wall must be context 4, and context 507 must belong to the pre-wall Phase 1 (see below) occupation and/or destruction. Undefined **context 523**, described as 'Beneath wall between cuttings [MBIII/IV]' presumably was under context 4 and belonged to Phase 1. **Context 537** is described as 'PH under wall'; this may be the same as context 8, but in any case is good evidence for timber structures pre-dating wall context 4. This evidence is reinforced by the card for **context 525**, described as 'Bright brown throughout from Per I PHS', which would appear to refer to pre-wall postholes behind the rampart.

The field plan (fig...) shows the remains of a wall of stone rubble (**context 4a**) along the toe of the bank, with an arm projecting west almost at right angles for 1.52m before turning south-west for 0.61m and then disappearing (**context 4b**); the depiction is not clear enough to establish if there was bonding or a joint between the north-south wall and the west 'arm'. The wall was between 0.53m and 0.61m wide; its surviving height is not recorded. The west arm of the wall had been laid in a foundation trench, the south side of which ran roughly parallel and 0.15m south of the wall face. The interpretative plan and section B show a 'stone platform' between the large pit in F1, the rear of the stone revetment wall (context 4a) and stopping short of the wall, context 4b. The stones were laid up to 0.38m deep and covered an area 1.83m N-S by 2.13m. **Context 519** is described as: 'Make up of wall at E of room (? Per I).' It is not clear what 'make up' of the wall means, but it may describe earlier refuse gathered to form the core of the Phase 2 wall (context 4).

**Context 7** was a posthole of oval plan, 0.56m north to south by 0.48m; it had steeply sloping sides, a flat bottom and was 0.3m deep. The feature was associated with or cut through the south end of the stretch of wall, context 4a, along the toe of the bank.

A context (**520 = 512**) described on cards by Houlder seems to belong to MBIII to judge from the sketch stapled to them. The cards state: 'Rough wall under bank removed (I.e. on edge of platform)'. The sketch shows over the area of the west arm of context 4 a zone described as 'Area of burning and grain above base stones'. The

arm is shown along its south face as 'Perfect Straight Edge'. The foundation trench of wall context 4b is described as a 'gully filled with grain'. At the angle made by the west arm of the wall 4b and the wall along the toe of the bank, on the south side, the ground is described as a 'soft area 2 pieces of glazed pottery'.

**Context 3** was the rubble forming the rear of the bank.

**Context 2** is described as a dark layer containing large stones and incorporating a coin, pottery, grain, bones and teeth. It was almost certainly the equivalent of contexts MBI.4 and MBII.2. Contexts 506 and 527 are described as 'Destruction layer of Period II' and are probably the equivalent of context 2.

**Context 517** is described as 'Late rubbish over Per II wall [context 4]'. It appears to have been a deposit associated with the destruction of Phase 2 or later. **Context 503** is described as 'Rubble and roots above Per II burnt layer (but prob. contains some pot from burnt layer)'.

### *Interpretation*

Phase 1: the pre-wall phase or phases. The interpretative plan indicates that the tail of the bank with a timber rear revetment crossed the east edge of the cutting. A timber construction of uncertain nature was erected (context 8 and others (507, 523, 537, 525)). The floor, context 6, seems to have belonged to this phase. This phase probably ended with destruction by fire (context 502). The floor of this phase was equated by Houlder with 'the main rubbish fill of the pit' [F1].

Phase 2: a wall with an interior projection (context 4a) was constructed to revet the toe of the ring motte bank. The projection from the wall (context 4b), and possibly a posthole, formed part of a building at the rear of the bank. Alternatively, the latter posthole represents a later phase or sub-phase. A stone platform was constructed to the north of the putative stone-based building, with an associated occupation deposit building up to its south. The defence seems to have suffered from burning and slighting.

### **Trench MBIV**

Record cards describe deposits in the otherwise unregistered cutting MBIV, presumably an extension of MBIII, judging from cards marked MBIII/IV. Work was carried out in July 1961 and May 1962. The point of reference is context 4 of MBIII.

### *Description*

**Context 505** is described as 'Black filling of base of cutting beneath ? platform'.  
**Context 516 = 529** is described as 'Black rubbish filling of hollow going down into

pit beneath stones of rough wall at back of MBI'. **Context 521 = 528 = 536** is described as 'Per I rubbish with charcoal beneath cross wall (Per II)'. **Context 530** is not defined but described as 'Period I Under stone platform. S side of pit'.

**Context 511/524** is described as 'Corner of pit cutting. Rubbish layer with burning, continuous with destruction of Per II wall at back of cut = provenance of coin'.

### *Interpretation*

Phase 1: Pre-wall. Occupation refuse and pit(s) and destruction refuse.

Phase 2: wall and part-masonry building. Destruction deposit.

## **South of trench F1**

### *Description*

The records include a sketch plan which shows a stone platform, about 1.83m north to south by 2.13m, immediately to the south of the pit in trench F1. It also shows the 'line of

Period I revetment' at the rear of the ring motte bank, about 0.61 m east of the platform and running for at least 7.32m to the south of the pit.

A sketch section running north to south from the trench F1 pit shows the aforementioned stone platform to be composed of or set on the spread of rubble, context MBII.4. Context MBII.4 is also shown spreading south and filling context MBII.5. The stone revetment of the bank is drawn projected over the rubble spread. The section also indicates a floor and occupation above the same spread.

### *Interpretation*

Phase 1: a bank with a timber rear revetment was constructed. The 'Period I revetment' can be equated with that assigned to phase 1 in trench MBII.

Phase 2: the bank was refurbished and the adjacent interior levelled. The rear of the bank was revetted with a stone wall and new buildings erected behind it.

## **RING MOTTE GATEWAY**

The description of the excavations at the gateway is organised slightly differently from other parts of the paper to aid in understanding the distribution of the stratification. It begins by describing the trenches and their sequence of excavation and is followed by details of the contexts and their distribution through the cuttings.

### *Excavation units (Fig...)*

Trench MGI, 6.1m by 1.22m, was begun on May 26 1956 and cut across the apparent site of the entrance to the ring motte, with its long axis in a west-east direction; work continued in this cutting in 1957. After the initial removal of turf and topsoil excavation was confined to the west of what proved to be the revetment wall to the gate-passage. Trench MGII was also opened in 1956 and dug parallel to and north of MGI, separated by a baulk 0.61m wide; the trench was 1.2m wide and 3.1m long. In the same year trench MGII was extended to the north (MGIIb) at right angles to its long axis; the extension was 0.91m wide by 1.68m long, its south-west corner being 1.07m from the north-west corner of trench MGII. Work continued in trench MGII in 1957 and in the same year the baulk between it and trench MGI was removed. In 1957 trench MGIIc extended the excavations to the salient west of MGIIb and north of the north-west end of trench MGII. In the same season trench MGIIb was extended to the east as trench MGIIId; the precise dimensions of the cutting are not given, but its purpose was to trace eastwards any further timber revetment (the excavators' interpretation of contexts 66 and 67 (see below)) of what was described in the notebooks as the 'period II' bank.

In 1958 a new trench, MGIII, was dug to extend southwards, at right angles, the south edge of trench MGI west of the gateway revetment wall; it was extended further south in the same season as trench MGIIIa. As work proceeded to lower levels the designation MGIII was extended to include the former MGI west of the revetment wall; however, the designation MGI was used to label finds from MGI, II and III.

The site notebook records that excavations took place in the 'northern half of M.G.I. at the end of the wall, and to the east'. This would have been in the area of the former trenches MGIIb and MGIIId. Only three days appear to have been spent on excavating the gateway in 1960, at the rear of the rampart immediately to the east of the gate passage.

### *Description (Figs...)*

The numbers in square brackets in this description are those used in the excavators' notebooks. MGI etc refers to the trench in which a deposit was encountered. In many instances details of the stratification are scanty.

The lowest deposit recorded in MGI was **context 16[208]**, a brown soil found only in the south half of the cutting between the revetment wall (context 6: see below) and the west end of the trench. **Context 15** was a soft brown soil in MGI whose relationship to contexts 14 and 16 was ambiguous, but it may have been the upper part of the same formation as context 16. The equivalent deposit in MGIII was **context 158[208]**, variously shown as *under contexts 153, 154 or 157*; it is described as soft brown earth or as 'soft, brown or orange brown topsoil'. The excavators designated the deposit as 'original topsoil'. **Context 173** was the continuation of the same in MGIIb and MGIIId. **Contexts 195 and 196** probably belonged to the same horizon; the former was a turf-line over subsoil and ended at the rear edge of the bank, immediately to the east of the gate passage; the latter was a patch of thicker brown

soil containing many small fragments of charcoal in the original ground surface close to the area of context 36 (see below).

The next deposit in the stratigraphic sequence in the gate passage was a layer of rubble, **context 157[209]** in MGIII, which lay upon context 158.

The succeeding group of deposits had varying constituents. **Context 14[207]** in MGI was a soft brown soil containing evidence of burning, including a large piece of charcoal (1957 MGI 102); at the base of the layer were patches of clay. The context also yielded an unspecified piece of metal (1958-9 MGI 207). There is some doubt about the relationship of this layer to context 15; it is possible that the two were part of the same general process of deposition. In MGIII **context 153** was a layer of dark earth overlying **context 154**, an area of iron-stained soil to the south of posthole **context 151**. **Context 155**, a 'pocket' of charcoal and carbonised wheat, may have been associated with this group of deposits. Also part of this group was **context 172**, excavated in 1959 in the area of former trenches MGIIb and IIc; this was a dark brown soil just over one centimetre thick which ran up to the base of the revetment wall. **Context 192**, dug in the 1960 season, lay over context 195 and consisted of an area of burnt material including charcoal, on and in a layer of small stones. The excavators were not consistent in their view as to whether these stones comprised a 'paving' or not. It is not certain, but probable, that this was part of the excavators' layer 207.

**Context 13[206]** was deposited upon contexts 14 and 15 in MGI. It consisted of fine rubble and soft, chocolate-brown soil containing charcoal; its depth varied between 0.51m and 0.13m east to west. Within the layer were found eight potsherds (1957 MGI 101; 1958-9 MGI 206), five metal fragments (probably iron; 1958-9 MGI 206), two formless pieces of lead (1958-9 MGI 206), and a bone (1958-9 MGI 206). An iron horseshoe nail (1956 MGI 6) was found in the surface of the layer, and a potsherd (1956 MGI 7) is described as having been found on or just above it. **Context 37** in MGII was part of the same depositional process as context 13 and consisted of a layer of greyish soil and shale. Three spindle whorls (MGII 11-13) were found on the surface of the deposit and under the paving, **context 35**; a horseshoe (MGII 10) was also found on its surface, below context 34. **Context 65** in MGIIb was the continuation of context 37 and consisted of loose stone rubble; it is described in the site notebook as having been found beneath the 'make up of period II Rampart revetment'. In trench MGIIc the extension of the latter deposit was designated **context 95** and consisted of stone rubble in a loose matrix of white, clayey soil at least 0.15m deep; the layer became looser and stonier in its lower part. Context 95 extended across trench MGIIb, where it was designated **context 65**, to the line of the stone revetment wall (**context 6**). A large sherd of very coarse pottery was found in the deposit (MGII 104), and a piece of metal (MGII 103) was found at the interface with context 93. In trench MGIIc the same depositional episode was designated **context 123**, which comprised very loose rubble associated with a large long stone exposed along the south edge of the trench. In MGIII the equivalent layer was context 152, light-coloured stony rubble, 1.17m deep; there was variation in the content of the rubble, which included red, burnt stone and charcoal and a few potsherds. In the records the deposit is also described as 'a great thickness of shale rubble'. Where it was excavated in 1959 the deposit of rubble was numbered **171[206]**.

A series of postholes or possible postholes were excavated which would have been the remains of parts of gate structures. They are listed as follows:

(i) **Context 156** in the north-east corner of trench MGIIIa was a posthole within a post-pit. The post-pit was 1.6m deep, with a diameter of about 1.07m. The packing was of larger stones set about the timber in a matrix of finer rubble. The posthole was about 0.53m square in plan and a void for an upper depth of 1.14m, with a lower fill of 0.46m of dark soil. C. H. Houlder believed that rabbits had been responsible for emptying the posthole of most of its fill; there were rabbit burrows to the south. Houlder is quite definite in assigning this to his Period I.

(ii) **Context 66** in trench MGIIb was at the north end of the stone revetment wall and consisted of a round hole containing dark-brown soil and a few stones. It was probably a posthole, but whether belonging to the gate or the rear revetment of the rampart is uncertain.

(iii) **Context 67** in MGIIb was 0.3m east of context 66. There are no other details other than it was a posthole, and its function is uncertain.

(iv) **Context 36**, in MGII and the baulk between MGI and MGII, was a posthole, 0.69m in diameter and 1.07m deep. The east side of the posthole was vertical and in line with the revetment wall (context 6), but the west side was sloping and 'filled with packing stones'. The rest of the hole was filled with chocolate-brown earth containing very small stones and the occasional larger one. The fill also contained large pieces of charcoal and there was a greater density of charcoal at the edge of the hole; a large piece of timber seems to have survived towards the bottom of the posthole against its side at a depth of 0.74m (MGII 9). A potsherd was discovered at a depth of 0.97m (MGII 14); a very small sherd was found at the bottom of the hole (MGII 15). C. H. Houlder suggested that the carbonised timber from context 34 (see below) represented part of the post from this posthole. He also noted the absence of facing stones in the revetment adjacent to the empty posthole and suggested that they had been dislodged when the post had been withdrawn. Houlder assigned this feature to his Period II.

(v) **Context 94** in the north-west corner of trench MGIIc was a round hole with an upper fill of earth and a lower fill of loose stones. No dimensions are given in the records, but the feature was probably a posthole. The stone surface, context 93, was disturbed in this area, obscuring the relationship between it and context 94.

(vi) **Context 151** in the north-east corner of trench MGIII was a posthole whose upper plan had straight north and east sides with a chamfered north-east corner; the other sides and corners were less distinct. A large stone at the upper south-west corner may have been the remains of packing in the post-pit. The fill was a very dark soil. The depth of the hole is not stated, but it was probably between 0.91m and 1.22m.

(vii) **Context 159** in MGIII lay between contexts 151 and 156 and probably belongs to the same phase. There are no further details other than it was square sectioned.

(viii) The site notebook has a sketch indicating that there was a large posthole in the centre of the gate-passage west of context 36.

**Wall.** The terminal of the rampart on the east side of the entrance passage was revetted by a stone wall (**context 6**), traced for just over 5m. The north-east corner stone of the passage seems to have been located, but the wall at the rear of the rampart to the east of this was robbed. In trench MGI four courses of masonry survived to a height of 0.36m, above a footings course 0.1m high. The wall was also four courses high in trench MGIII. The revetment was found to continue across trench MGII, but not to its north face. Some of the stones of the wall-face in the centre of the cutting had slipped forward of the original line. The north-east corner stone lay in trench MGIIb.

In MGI, adjacent to the base of the wall, was a small oval pit 0.23m by 0.18m, but of unstated depth, the lower part of which was filled with a firm, stony soil and the upper 0.15m by soft, brown soil (**context 12**). Above context 12 was **context 10**, a thin spread of chocolate-brown, soft, fine soil lying against the revetment wall on the north side of cutting MGI.

**Context 11** in MGI [204; the excavators used this number to designate both the roadway and the so-called occupation deposit upon it] was a consistent layer up to 0.08m thick across much of the trench between its west end and the revetment wall. It consisted of a chocolate-brown, compact stony deposit; it was particularly stony halfway between the end of the trench and the revetment wall. In its surface were found an iron nail, bones and a seed (1956 MGI 5), and on its surface near the wall charcoal and a potsherd (1956 MGI 1A). **Context 35** in MGII was the continuation of context 11. In this area it was described as a layer of rough paving, with a group of stones on edge amongst the paving. Four potsherds were associated with **context 35** (MGII find 8), and an iron bolt was found on its surface (MGII find 101). The continuation of this horizon in trench MGIIc was **context 93**[**site book layer 1**], a stone surface comprised of small flat fragments of stone, much dark, reddish soil and appreciable quantities of charcoal; a few large flat stones survived in places. The earth above and on the stone surface contained much charcoal, and a large piece of charcoal was found immediately above the surface at its east edge. The surface did not run up to the revetment wall. At the south end of the cutting the surface was laid on sloping ground. The compact, very hard, light-brown stony surface in trench MGII d (**context 122**) was probably also part of the horizon. A large piece of metal (MGII find 105) was found lying on the surface, and closely adjacent were potsherds (MGII finds 106 and 107).

Above the stony surface in MGI, at the north-west corner of the trench, there was marked evidence of burning in the form of brownish red soil and stones, charcoal and what appeared to be a carbonised bean (**context 8**; 1956 MGI 3). Large pieces of carbonised wood seem also to have been part of this deposit (1956 MGI 4). In trench MGII the equivalent deposit was **context 34** which was a thin, roughly oval, 0.69m by 0.56m, layer of dark earth containing much charcoal and a large piece of

carbonised wood (MGII find 7); the soil was an accumulation against the base of the revetment wall on the edge of the roadway.

**Context 7** in MGI filled a round small pit, 0.1m in diameter and perhaps as much as 0.13m deep, and consisted of chocolate-coloured soft earth containing charcoal and carbonised cereal grains (1956 MGI 2). Whether the pit was associated with context 11 or was dug through it is unclear from the record.

**Context 11[204]** and the deposits associated with and immediately over it were overlain by rubble in MGI, described variously as loose or compact (**context 9[202]**). Context 9 sloped down from the surviving top of the revetment wall, where it reached a depth of 0.41m. The equivalent deposit in trench MGII was **context 33** and consisted of randomly aligned stone rubble in a matrix of very compact, yellowish, stony soil, at least 0.3m deep; larger stones were found lower in the deposit. **Contexts 92** in MGIIc (a stony surface with a few flat stones) and **121** in trench MGII d (dark, loose earth) were probably part of the same horizon. Similar rubble seems to have been excavated in 1960 at the rear of the rampart immediately to the east of the gate-passage (**context 191**).

The excavations at the gateway did not penetrate significantly the structure of the flanking defences and few details of its constituents were revealed. Immediately to the east of the gate-passage the rear tail of the ?phase 2 rampart may have been revealed as clean laid rubble (**context 194**). A deposit of compact earthy rubble, **context 193**, lay against the rear of the rampart, most likely a largely natural accumulation rather than a deliberately built low terrace.

In trench MGI the deposit above the rubble, **context 9**, was a compact, clayey earth containing small stones (**context 5**), 0.1m to 0.17m deep; in or on its surface was a small potsherd (1956 MGI 1). The equivalent deposit was found in trench MGII (**context 32**) and trench MGII b (**context 62**). Some finds were recovered from unspecified contexts above numbers 33 and 32: pottery (MGII 1, 2, 6), two nail shanks (MGII 5), carbonised seeds (MGII 4) and bone (MGII 3).

The uppermost horizon throughout the excavation area was bracken-infested topsoil, 0.0.13m to 0.29m deep [201].

### *Interpretation*

The pre-castle topsoil seems to have survived in part at the site of the gateway (contexts 16, 15?, 158, 173, 195, 196). The relationship between context 195 and the toe of the bank suggests that turf was stripped from the site of the bank prior to its erection; the charcoal associated with 196 may have been created during the phase of site preparation.

There are problems in assigning the various postholes to their relative phases.

Phase 1: rubble was dumped to form the basis for the gate passage (context 157). Contexts 14, 153, 154, 172, 192 seem to be part of what C. H. Houlder refers to variously as Period I occupation material or the Norman road level [207]; he also describes 207 as a 'dark brown layer'. It would seem reasonable to interpret this as refuse accumulating during the first phase of the defences. There is no clear evidence



for the nature of the revetment of the defences' terminals at this phase. Houlder assigned posthole context 156 to his Period I gateway, and possible posthole context 66 to the Period I revetment. Context 67 may also relate to this. DMB TO CONSIDER HOW POSTHOLES CAN MAKE A SENSIBLE GATEWAY. Contexts 66 and 67 could belong to phase 2.

Phase 2: the level of the gate-passage was raised (contexts 13, 37, 65, 95, 123, 152, 171) and a new gate constructed. The posts for the gateway were placed in pits dug through the latter foundation rubble. The postholes or probable postholes of this gateway were probably contexts 36, 151, 159, an un-numbered posthole west of 36 (centre of the rear of the gate), 94?, 66?, and 67? (but the latter two may be earlier). The east terminal of the rampart at this phase was revetted by a drystone wall (context 6). The pit, context 12, might have been associated with the construction of the wall. Context 10 belonged to the same phase. Contexts 11, 35, 93 and ?122 comprised the roadway through the gate and the refuse that accumulated upon it. Context 35 seems to have been repaired with a patch of stones on edge.

The gateway seems to have been burnt and demolished (contexts 8 and 34, and partly 11?). The excavators suggested that the carbonised wood of context 34 was the remains of the post from context 36 that had been extracted and then burned.

The rubble deposit, contexts 9, 33, 191, ?92, and ?121 represented either a slighting of or the collapse through decay of the gate-passage wall.

Post-castle times: further deposits seem to have developed through natural processes.

## **Trench G1**

### *Excavation units*

A polygonal trench (fig. ) is recorded as being opened in 1958 to the north of MGIIb, MGIIc and MGIIId. The available plan suggests that the east edge of the trench was later extended a short distance eastwards and to the south (east of the end of MGII). A section drawing titled 'Gateway cutting E face' records the stratigraphy of the extension in 1961 (presumably the date of the extension). There are some inconsistencies between the two stratigraphic records which require them to be described separately. It can be assumed safely that the 'Gateway cutting' was further to the east than the sketch sections of the record of trench G1.

### *Description (notebook): trench G1*

The lowest level recorded, **context 207**, is described as original soil; no depth is given. Above this was compact raking rubble, **context 204**, forming the tail of the ringwork bank. Another layer of rubble, **context 203**, described as earthy, rested on context 204; it contained a formless piece of lead. Over the tail of the rubble, context 204, and extending northwards was dark soil designated an occupation layer, **context 205**. This incorporated nine potsherds, three metal nails and nine unspecified pieces of iron. Bracken-infested topsoil capped by turf covered both contexts 205 and 203.

### *Interpretation*

Context 207 was the pre-castle soil. On this was erected the first earthwork, represented by context 204 (phase 1). The record provides too little detail to be sure, but context 203 may represent a renewal of the defence (phase 2). It is likely that the 'occupation layer', context 205, should be associated with the latest phase of site occupation as a castle.

### *Description (section drawing): 'Gateway cutting'*

There are discrepancies between the field drawing and the interpretative drawing prepared by Houlder. As the latter is usually more definite in its representation of relationships it is followed here.

The plan shows an irregular 'slot' (**context 10**) cut into rock, up to 0.45m wide, with possibly a southern arm. The slot finished short of the section face, but is shown in the drawing projected onto it and with a subrectangular section 0.38m wide by 0.38m deep. It is possible that the slot is 'projected' onto the section to indicate that it predated the 'topsoil', **context 9**. Otherwise, the earliest deposit was a 0.1m-thick horizontal layer (**context 9**) described as topsoil, disturbed north of the hollow (see below). Cut through context 9 was a hollow 1.09m wide by 0.18m deep, containing two fills, the lower clay and stones (**context 12**), the upper brown soil (**context 11**). It was traced for 1.22m in the trench. [This has been reinterpreted]

Above the topsoil was a raking bank of coarse rubble at least 1.83m high (**context 8**). Covering this was a 0.3m-thick layer of fine rubble (**context 5**). To the north, at the toe of the fine rubble, was a deposit 0.74m wide by about 0.2m deep described as 'made rubble' (**context 6**). **Context 7**, fine silt, 0.13m thick, spread to the north of context 6 and also covered the hollow. Earthy rubble with possible traces of burning (**context 2**) lay over the fine rubble, context 5. Tailing to the north of context 2 as an apparent continuation of it were two rubble deposits, the nearer described as 'fallen'. A dotted line on the interpretative section drawing indicates 'position of robbed REVETMENT [sic]', which possibly relates to the stone revetment of the latest phase of the bank.

The whole sequence of deposits was covered by bracken-infested topsoil capped with turf.

### *Interpretation*

This record suggests the possibility of a pre-castle activity phase on the site, if the slot did predate the formation of the topsoil present when the castle was first erected. Indeed, it suggests a feature of considerable antiquity.

The description of the deposits forming the bank suggests a two-phase sequence.

## CAUSEWAY

### *Excavation unit*

In 1956 a trench was dug across the causeway between the ring motte and bailey. Its dimensions and precise location are not recorded.

### *Description*

Two deposits were recorded under 0.15-0.23m of bracken-infested topsoil. **Context MCI.2** was a hard-packed, almost level surface composed of fragmented shale and a few rounded pebbles. Bordering MCI.2 was **context MCI.3**, an irregular area of larger, flat stones and some rounded boulders, which dipped at an angle of 30 degrees.

### *Interpretation*

Context MCI.2 formed the material of the road between the ring motte and bailey. Although the field notes are somewhat ambiguous, context MCI.3 was probably part of the west kerb or revetment of the causeway.

## RING MOTTE DITCH

### *Excavation units*

In 1957 a trench 1.22m wide by 8.54m long was cut across the ditch separating the ring motte and the bailey, just west of the causeway connecting them. Only the upper deposits in the ditch were examined (contexts 1957.1-1957.4). Further excavations were made in the trench in 1958, and the field notes describe a series of deposits, but their inter-relationships are not always explicitly stated (contexts 1958.201-1958.204; 1958.211). The finds records indicate that work also took place in the trench in 1959, but no further information is available. In 1964 the trench was widened by another 1.22m to the west, and a sequence of deposits was excavated to the bottom of the ditch (contexts 1964.1-1964.7).

### *Description (Fig. )*

The ditch in this sector, as revealed by excavation, was about 6.7m wide and 1.37m deep, cut into the native rock. The upper part of the north edge sloped at about 45 degrees for a depth of 0.6m, but the south edge was almost vertical. The lower half of the ditch profile was gently round-bottomed. There was no evidence of recutting.

The lowest deposit (**context 1964.7**), covering sporadically the bedrock bottom of the ditch, was a thin layer of brown soil, up to 0.08m deep in places. The layer contained an arrowhead and other unspecified finds, but certainly two pieces of iron.

Over it was **context 1964.6 = 547 = 539 = 541** (at the north end) = **542** (north end, east half), which filled most of the lowest part of the ditch to a maximum depth of 0.33m, in places in direct contact with parts of the bedrock base of the ditch. The layer consisted of grey stony rubble incorporating some charcoal, pottery, bone, nails and possible sling stones. **Context 546**, which is undescribed, lay 'On rock S. end', presumably an early deposit.

**Context 1964.5**, grey, clayey, fine silt with little humus, covered 1964.6. At the west face of the trench the silt tipped down gently from the base of the upper part of the north edge of the ditch, pinching out about 1.22m from the south edge. Further east the deposit was in the centre of the ditch, but thinned out markedly northwards. At its thickest on the north-west it was 0.23m deep.

A layer of burnt rubble (**contexts 1964.4 = 543 = 544** (north end, east face); **1958.202**) covered the upper surfaces of context 1964.5 and 1964.6 (where the latter had not been covered by 1964.5 near the south edge of the ditch). The rubble was restricted to the south half of the width of the ditch in the west face of the trench, but covered the whole width further east. The deposit was up to 0.13m thick at its deepest in the bottom of the shallow hollow it filled. Two sherds of pottery were found in 543 at the west half of the north end of the cutting; one sherd came from 544.

**Context 1964.3 = 545** (north end, east face) (which was probably part of the same deposit as **contexts 1957.4, 1958.204 and 1958.211**) filled the whole width of the ditch to a maximum depth of 0.36m, covering 1964.4 and the north upper surface of 1964.5. It consisted of brown earth and rubble, with stones up to 0.15m long. **Context 545** contained two potsherds, two fragments of bone and some charcoal. **Context 1958.211** contained some charcoal, two pieces of iron and two potsherds (MDI.211).

**Context 1964.2** (which was probably the same deposit as **contexts 1957.3 and 1958.203**) filled the slight hollow up to 0.23m deep that remained after the accumulation of 1964.3. The light-brown, fine silt, containing a few stones and flecks of charcoal, spread for a width of 4.58m from the north edge of the ditch in the west part of the trench, not reaching the south edge; it narrowed to stop short of the north edge in the east face of the trench. Three iron objects were recovered from context 1958.203 (MDI.203).

The uppermost layer in the trench was bracken-infested topsoil, 0.2m deep.

### *Interpretation*

Phase 1: after the initial excavation of the ditch, a thin weathering deposit (1964.7) accumulated in its bottom, though the ditch was probably maintained by regular cleaning during the build up of the fill, judging by the latter's patchy nature. The end of this phase of maintenance or usage was marked by the rubble deposit 1964.6. The records do not allow us to be clear about the process of deposition of 1964.6, which might represent the products of deliberate slighting of structures above the ditch, or an accumulation of material weathered naturally from abandoned features above.

There does not seem to have been any attempt to clean out the ditch after the deposition of 1964.6. Instead the surviving hollow was allowed to silt up with context 1964.5.

Phase 2: the end of a phase of reoccupation of the ring motte was marked by the dumping of burnt rubble in the ditch (1964.4). The distribution of the rubble suggests it was deposited from the east, probably as the result of destruction or demolition in the vicinity of the gate and causeway. The ditch would have ceased to have had any useful defensive function.

The overlying rubble (1964.3) could be associated with the end-of-Phase-2 activities or represent a later phase of activity on the site; the evidence is equivocal. The upper fills of the ditch belonged to the post-castle centuries.

## **BAILEY**

### *Excavation unit*

In 1957 a trench 24.4m long by 0.61m wide was opened east-west across the southern tip of the interior of the bailey. The excavators examined only the uppermost deposits in the western part of the trench, and their records are of no value for understanding the archaeology of the site. Much more attention was paid to the 9m stretch at the east end of the trench. Further excavation of the east end of the trench took place in 1965, when the trench was widened by 0.31m to the north and south for a length of 6.1m. The records for the latter investigation are rudimentary, but describe the exposure of a burnt level, probably context RB.5 (see below), which contained iron objects, as did the overlying topsoil.

### *Description*

The lowest deposit excavated ( **context RB.10**) was a very thin (6mm) layer of burnt brown earth, recorded 2.64m west of the east end of the trench. Over RB.10 was **context RB.9**, a dark, heavy deposit of charcoal and black earth, about 0.1m deep, stretching at least between 1.68m and 2.75m west of the east end of the trench.

Context RB.9 was covered in part by **context RB.8**, and in part by **context RB.7**. RB.8 was recorded 2.75m west of the east end of the trench, and consisted of a thin layer (0.05m) of fine, dark-brown soil. RB.7, which stretched west from 1.37m from the east end of the trench, was a layer of yellowish soil about 0.1m deep.

**Context RB.5**, at about 0.31m below the ground level at the time of excavation, covered contexts RB.7 and RB.8 between 1.37m and 2.93m west of the east end of the trench. It consisted of a layer of charcoal-rich, very fine, black soil, between

0.08m and 0.1m deep. Incorporated in the deposit were iron objects (RB.112, RB.114) and a tiny fragment of bone. A band of charcoal (**context RB.6**) running across the width of the trench between 3.74m and 3.89m west of the east end of the trench may have belonged to the same phase of deposition as RB.5.

**Contexts RB.2, RB.3 and RB.4** overlay context RB.5; all were encountered under topsoil, up to 0.38m deep, from which were recovered pottery (RB.101), an egg-shaped stone, possibly a sling shot (RB.104), and an iron nail head (RB.111). Context RB.2 lay in the north face of the trench 1.22m and in the south face 1.53m from the east end of the trench. It was a linear concentration, 0.46m to 0.76m wide, of loose, 'not very big' stones. The stones did not appear to be in regular formations, but their dispositions on their ends or their thinner edges suggested to the excavators that they had been deliberately placed so. Context RB.3 had been disturbed by bracken roots. It consisted of loose stones, some laid flat, others on edge, spread between context RB.2 and the east end of the trench. Context RB.4 was a layer of stones between 2.75m and 3.74m west of the east end of the trench.

### *Interpretation*

Phase 1: the first occupation (or the earliest encountered by the excavators) of the bailey seems to have ended with the burning of its timber buildings. The colour and consistency of context RB.10 may have been due to having had hot materials falling or dumped on it.

Contexts RB.7 and RB.8 probably accumulated at a time when the bailey was completely or largely unused.

Phase 2: a reoccupation of the site seems to have come to a similar end as phase 1, with the burning of buildings, represented by contexts RB.5 and RB.6.

Phase 3: it is possible that context RB.2 was the remnant of a structure belonging to a further reoccupation of the site. No strong case can be made out for identifying the rubble spreads RB.3 and RB.4 as floors, and the excavators made no such claims.

## **FINDS**

### **Pottery**

#### *The excavators' notes on the pottery*

A plate illustrating thirty-nine sherds was prepared by Houlder from a series of drawings of profiles and elevations. This is presented as fig. ... with accompanying notes about the fabrics and forms derived from field and study notes.

1. Context MBI.5 XII. Phase 1
2. Context MBI.5 XIV. Phase 1
3. Context F12.104. Phase 1?
4. Context F1.104. Phase 2
5. Context E25.5. Uncertain
6. Context E11.40 and E11.124. Phase 1?
7. Context MBI.5 XVII. Phase 1
8. Context E5.6. Rim in a fine, hard fabric, fired red. Uncertain
9. Context MBI.5 XI. Phase 1

10. Context E11.183. Phase 1
11. Context F1.104. Phase 2
12. Context E11.133. Possibly the same pot as nos. 13 and 14. Phase 1
13. Context E11.41. Possibly the same pot as nos. 12 and 14. Uncertain
14. Context E11.19. Possibly the same pot as nos. 12 and 13. Uncertain
15. Context MBI.5 XIII. Phase 1
16. Context E11.158. Phase 1
17. Context MBI.1. Phase 2
18. Context E11.1. Uncertain
19. Context E11.21. Uncertain
- 19a. Context F1.105. Post Phase 2
20. Context F1.104. Phase 2
21. Context F1.208 IX. Phase 2
22. Context F1.104. Phase 2
23. Context MGII.6. Post Phase 2 residual?
24. Context MBI.5 XV. Phase 1
25. Context F1.208.V. F1.208 VI is very similar. Phase 2
26. Context E24.104. Uncertain
27. Context E23.10. Uncertain
28. Context MBI.5 XVI. Phase 1
29. Context MGII.8. Phase 2
30. Context F1.208 I. Phase 2
31. Context F12.104 2. Phase 1?



32. Context F1.104. Phase 2
33. Context MBI.1. Phase 2
34. Context F12.104. Phase 1?
35. Context F12.104. Phase 1?
36. Context F1.104. Phase 2
37. Context F1.208 X. Phase 2
38. Context F1.208. Phase 2
39. Context E24.102. Uncertain

Not illustrated:

40. Context F1.205. Glazed
41. Context F1. 208. Glazed
42. Context E11.136. Base. Glazed.

*Further descriptions of the pottery are given in the surviving notes to an exhibition of finds from the site.*

‘The pottery of Period I is generally of a red to pink colour, with simpler, more upright rim forms.’

‘The decorated pottery is unusual, and may be of local manufacture during the Welsh occupation of 1136-43, when contact with England was lost’.

‘The yellowish glaze of Period I gives an early example of the use of this technique’.

‘The tripod-footed jug is a common medieval form, found here in Period I.’

‘The pottery of Period II is generally of a darker paste, with more developed rim forms, folded and turned outwards. Contact with English traditions is again clear.’

Houlder’s notes distinguish between pots with the lip folded in (nos. 1-8) and those with the lip folded out (nos. 9-19).

*In a transcript of an interview for the BBC Houlder states that:*

‘... the most common type of cooking pot we have found corresponds with that found at Lydney and they are dated to the mid-C.12.’

‘There is ... reason to believe that a kiln must have been in operation in the Aberystwyth area as some pottery is of the usual form but rather coarse, and suggests the use of poorer local material. In any case it seems unlikely that all the requirements of the group of garrisons in Ceredigion would have been imported. The presence of a few poorly glazed sherds is also of interest at this early date’.

‘There are as yet only two fragments of ware which are not likely to be Norman – both with crude incised decoration and obviously handmade’. [**presumably nos. 38 and 39**]

### *Specialists’ notes on the pottery*

#### *John Hurst*

The late John Hurst (letter to Michael Freeman 9 November 2001; letter to Houlder 25 June 1959) looked at the pottery in 1959, 1960 and 1970, passing some observations to Houlder but no formal report. Hurst’s notes are of some interest as they indicate a problem with Houlder’s published chronology.

In 1960 he wrote: ‘Rough wares 1110-1143 & harder infolded 13C’

In 1970 he wrote: ‘But 2 hard sherds with period I ... not just sloping in and out but squared with start of flange. This therefore cannot be before late 12C and there must be a non pottery phase for 1110-1143.

Period II – with folded rim sandy wares squared as well as sloping. Still associated with coarse ware whether contemporary or residual? Also tripod foot in rough ware. [fig. ..., no. 36?, but this is Period II in the pit] Good sandy light grey wares with patchy glaze and triangular notch rouletting. [fig. ... no. 38?]. This likely to be 1220+ but all well before 1250 as no highly decorated pottery’.

In 2001 he wrote: ‘Kit [Houlder] said the hard ware were [*sic*] primary but they can hardly still I think be put before 1150 ... *So I think there is still a problem*’. [My italics]

In a published comment (1962-3, 143) Hurst stated that the pottery included ‘hard, well-developed cooking pots with infolded rims of West Midland type which are unlikely to date before 1150’.

Hurst (1961, 262-5) illustrates and discusses some general shape parallels to the inward rolled rims of Aberystwyth, which he dates at Northolt, 1150-1250.

*S. E. Rigold & P. A. Barker*

Rigold (1962-3, 99, fig. 36, no. 16, with discussion p. 100) illustrates a vessel from North Elmham whose rim type is comparable with that of fig. ..., nos. 1-8 at Aberystwyth. He describes the rim as 'Convex rim with marked inner bead, approaching or imitating a late twelfth- to thirteenth-century profile ...'. Barker (1961, 198 & 199, fig. 52, nos 54-5) illustrates vessels with inward rolled rims generally similar to those of fig. ..., nos. 1-8, which he ascribes to 'presumably of the early thirteenth century'.

*F. H. Thompson*

Thompson 1976, 211-212, fig. 38, no. 1 resembles those sherds at Aberystwyth with infolded rims (for example, fig. ... nos. 1, 2, 6, 8, 20), discounting the body decoration, and the same is true of *ibid.* fig. 38, no. 4, especially to fig. ... nos. 1, 2, 6. The excavators at Chester date their finds to 1250-1350.

*Cliona Papazian and Ewan Campbell*

In 1992 Cliona Papazian and Ewan Campbell published a review of available collections of medieval pottery from Wales (Papazian and Campbell 1992). Papazian was able to examine the excavated pottery from the site which has subsequently largely disappeared. The authors are critical of the delay in publishing the material: 'It should be noted that assemblages which are not fully published contribute nothing to our knowledge of the period and can lead to wasted effort and repetition of work. A classic example is the case of Old Aberystwyth Castle (excavated in the 1950s), which provides dates of *c* AD 1110 for the use of proto-Ham Green ware and *c* AD 1136 for the use of glazed Ham Green ware. If this information had been available in the 1960s when Ham Green ware was first recognised a quarter-century of *Angst* over the question of the dating of this ware ... might have been avoided' (Papazian & Campbell 1992, 4).

Papazian and Campbell make a valid point. Unfortunately, they have followed Houlder's correlation of the excavated phases with the evidence of the chronicles, which is in considerable doubt. In other words the excavated evidence does not necessarily indicate a date towards the beginning of the twelfth century for proto-Ham Green, or *c* 1136 for glazed Ham Green ware; the contexts could be rather later.

There is confusion in Papazian and Campbell's account of the presence of pottery types at Old Aberystwyth (the First Castle at Aberystwyth of this paper). For the sake of clarity I will deal first with wares that in one way or another seem to be assigned to Old Aberystwyth but which in fact occurred at the Edwardian site; I will then consider those which undoubtedly come from the first castle.

On page 16 three sherds of Rouen ware, which does not appear in Wales until the early thirteenth century, are assigned to 'Aberystwyth Castle', the name the authors use for the Edwardian castle to distinguish it from the older site they call 'Old Aberystwyth Castle'. However, on the distribution map for Rouen ware, fig. 2, page

15, it is shown as present at Old Aberystwyth Castle. I am inclined to think that this is a careless piece of cartography and the correct location is the Edwardian site.

Also on page 16 two sherds of Normandy Gritty and Red-painted wares, whose ‘... occurrence on western sites is usually dated from the early 13<sup>th</sup> century ...’, are assigned to Aberystwyth Castle, but are shown at Old Aberystwyth Castle on fig. 2. A cartographic mistake is again indicated.

Alternatively, the text might be in error in both the former cases, in which case, if the sherds are of the early thirteenth century, we have important evidence for the date of the last phase at the castle. Evidence of carelessness elsewhere inclines me to believe that this is not so. For example, fig. 19 shows Malvern wares at Old Aberystwyth, but page 43 makes it clear that the site referred to is the Edwardian castle. On page 40 there is a reference to the substantial presence of Herefordshire wares at Aberystwyth (Edwardian) Castle, but the distribution map, fig. 16, does not show any. There are two other probable wrong assignments: fig. 14 shows Bristol Redcliffe ware at Old Aberystwyth and fig. 18 shows Irish wares at the same place; both cases probably properly refer to the Edwardian site.

There is no doubt about the presence of certain wares at the site. However, for the reason noted above, we must disregard Papazian’s and Campbell’s chronology for these.

According to Papazian and Campbell (1992, 28) the ‘dominant fabric’ of Houlder’s Period I (Phase 1) was Bristol Pottery Type 114, Proto-Ham Green.

Three sherds of Ham Green glazed ware were associated with the destruction phase of Houlder’s Period I; the pieces were not from cooking pots (Papazian and Campbell 1992, 28, 32, 34, fig. 13).

Papazian and Campbell (1992, 35) also state that Minety ware was present ‘at Aberystwyth’, belonging to the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries; this could be taken to mean at Old Aberystwyth.

Two-thirds (67%) of the sherds, i.e. 947, were identified as being of or related to Powys Siltstone-tempered fabric (Papazian & Campbell 1992, 71-3). This is designated group MB in the Clwyd-Powys Pottery Fabric Series and described as ‘Sandy fine - micaceous. Fabrics with inclusions of quartz, fine mica, occasional red iron minerals, and rare to abundant fragments of igneous or sedimentary rocks and low grade metamorphics of Ordovician or Silurian origin, from the Welsh basin. This group forms the bulk of the pottery from both Capel Maelog and Montgomery’ (Courtney & Jones 1988, 10).

Judging by the comments about the pottery of Houlder’s Period I much of it was of this ware (exhibition notes and Hurst’s comments: see above).

The occurrence of Powys Siltstone-tempered ware at Old Aberystwyth stands out markedly from the central Marches distribution of the rest of it. Papazian and Campbell (1992, 71) suggest that the assemblage at the site may have come from closer to home, the manufactory using clay sources and tempers of similar composition to a Marches pottery.

An interesting negative observation about the assemblage, with implications for the chronology of the ware in west Wales, is that there was no Dyfed Gravel-tempered fabric at Old Aberystwyth (Papazian & Campbell 1992, 56-7).

### *Other observations*

Fig. ... , no. 1. General resemblance in rim form to cooking pot at Capel Maelog, Radnorshire, said to be thirteenth century (Courtney & Jones 1988, 17, no. 21); form resemblance to siltstone-tempered cooking pot at Montgomery Castle, dated to thirteenth century, not before 1223 (Knight 1990-1, 45, no. 145); form resembles Type 2 cooking pot at Brockhurst Castle, Shropshire, dated c.1154-1214 (Barker, P 1961-4, 75); resembles material from Hen Domen, especially Ratkai 2000, 92-3, fig. 1, no.1 in a siltstone/mudstone tempered ware, assigned twelfth to early thirteenth century; compare, from Chester, Thompson 1976, 211-212, fig. 39, no. 16 and fig. 40, no. 42, assigned to the thirteenth century; compare with Hurst & Hurst 1967, 80-1, fig. 13, no. 47, from Ashwell, in a rough gritty ware, probably late twelfth or early thirteenth century;

Fig. ... , no. 2. General parallels at Loughor, second half twelfth to early thirteenth century (Lewis 1993, fig. 11); general resemblance in rim form to cooking pot at Capel Maelog, Radnorshire, said to be thirteenth century (Courtney & Jones 1988, 17, no. 21); form resemblance to siltstone-tempered cooking pot at Montgomery Castle, dated to thirteenth century, not before 1223 (Knight 1990-1, 45, no. 145); form resembles Type 2 cooking pot at Brockhurst Castle, Shropshire, dated c.1154-1214 (Barker 1961-4, 75); compare, from Chester, Thompson 1976, 211-212, fig. 39, no. 16 and fig. 40, no. 42, assigned to the thirteenth century; compare with Hurst & Hurst 1967, 80-1, fig. 13, no. 47, from Ashwell, in a rough gritty ware, probably late twelfth or early thirteenth century;

Fig. ... , no. 3. Compare Hinton & Rowley 1974, 92, fig. 16, assigned to the twelfth century. The related shape of Fig. ... , no. 6 is said to run into the thirteenth century (ibid, 96, fig. 19, no. 60)

Fig. ... , no. 6. Some general parallels at Loughor, second half twelfth to early thirteenth century (Lewis 1993, fig. 11, fig. 12, no. 17); general resemblance in rim form to cooking pot at Capel Maelog, Radnorshire, said to be thirteenth century (Courtney & Jones 1988, 17, no. 21); similar to cooking pot in Dyfed Gravel-tempered Ware at Newcastle Emlyn, said to be thirteenth century (Early & Morgan 2004, 98, fig. 2, no. 1); remember Papazian and Campbell deny the existence of this fabric at Aberystwyth; form resemblance to siltstone-tempered cooking pot at Montgomery Castle, dated to thirteenth century, not before 1223 (Knight 1990-1, 45, no. 145); form resembles Type 2 cooking pot at Brockhurst Castle, Shropshire, dated c.1154-1214 (Barker 1961-4, 75); Hinton & Rowley 1974, 96, fig. 19, no. 60 assign a related shape to this to the thirteenth century; a later-twelfth to early thirteenth-century date is assigned to broadly similar material at other Oxford sites, such as St Ebbe's (Hassall, Halpin & Mellor 1989, 205, fig. 47); compare, from Chester, Thompson 1976, 211-212, fig. 39, no. 16 and fig. 40, no. 42, assigned to the thirteenth century; compare with Hurst & Hurst 1967, 80-1, fig. 13, no. 47, from Ashwell, in a rough gritty ware, probably late twelfth or early thirteenth century;

Fig. ... , no. 7. Form resembles Type 2 cooking pot at Brockhurst Castle, Shropshire, dated c.1154-1214 (Barker 1961-4, 75)

Fig. ... , no. 8. The rim has a general resemblance to one at Wintringham, dated twelfth-early thirteenth century; see Beresford 1977, 248 & 259, fig. 26, no. 6

Fig. ..., no. 9. Form resembles Coad & Streeten 1982, 208-9, fig. 24, no. 4 at Castle Acre Castle, assigned 1140s to second half of the twelfth century; general parallels at Loughor, second half twelfth to early thirteenth century (Lewis 1993, fig. 11); form parallel at Loughor, same date range (Lewis 1993, fig. 16, no. 79); general resemblance in rim form to cooking pot at Capel Maelog, Radnorshire, said to be thirteenth century (Courtney & Jones 1988, 17, no. 21); similar in shape to a vessel dated late twelfth to early thirteenth century at Cumnor, Oxon (Allen 1994, 328, fig. 69, no. 5); compare with Murphy & O'Mahoney 1985, 209, fig. X.11, no.1, thought to be thirteenth century; compare, from Chester, Thompson 1976, 211-212, fig. 38, no. 14, assigned to the thirteenth century; form has a general resemblance to a vessel from Wintringham, dated thirteenth century; see Beresford 1977, 248 & 260, fig. 27, no. 16; for the rim form compare a vessel from Rickmansworth in Biddle, Barfield & Millard 1959, 163 & 165, fig. 9, no. 1, dated 1250-1300; generally similar to the profile of a pot from Richard's Castle (Curnow & Thompson 1969, 121, fig. 8, no. 1), from in or under the town bank erected c.1200; also from Richard's Castle a related lip shape, *ibid*, 126, fig. 12, no. RC23, dated c.1250;

Fig. ..., no. 15. General parallel for the lip form at Loughor, late twelfth century to 1215 (Lewis 1993, fig. 15, no. 54); generally similar in profile to sherd from Warwick dated twelfth-thirteenth century (Cracknell and Bishop 1991-2, fig. 5, no. 30); general similarity to Bradley 1976, 83, fig.24, no. 1, assigned to the twelfth century; for the general shape of the neck and lip, compare Drewett 1975, 128-9, fig. 22, no. 231, assigned thirteenth century, perhaps the first half; general similarity to pottery from Ashwell assigned to the twelfth century, see Hurst & Hurst 1967, 76-7, fig. 11, nos. 12-17;

Fig. ... , no. 16. For a possible parallel from Rickmansworth, see Biddle, Barfield & Millard 1959, 163 & 166, fig. 10, no. 4, residual in deposits of 1250-1300.

Fig. ... , no. 17. General similarity to pottery from Ashwell assigned to the twelfth century, see Hurst & Hurst 1967, 76-7, fig. 11, nos. 12-17;

Fig. ..., no. 18. There are resemblances between this profile and those of Hirst & Rahtz 1996, 43-4, Illus. 19, nos. E4 & RF 750, which are assigned eleventh to thirteenth century.

Fig. ..., no. 21. There is a close parallel from Shrewsbury (Barker 1961, 198 & 199, fig. 52, no. 55), presumed to be of thirteenth century date; also compare with a pot from Nantwich associated with wick house 1, assigned to the period 1150-1175 (McNeil 1983, 72, fig. 11, no. 13).

Fig. ..., no. 30. For the general shape of the rim compare with Murphy & O'Mahoney 1985, 210, fig. X.12, nos. 22, 23; for the general shape of the neck and lip, compare Drewett 1975, 128-9, fig. 22, no. 231.

Fig. ..., no. 31. General similarity to pottery from Ashwell assigned to the twelfth century, see Hurst & Hurst 1967, 76-7, fig. 11, nos. 12-17;

Fig. ..., no. 32. General similarity to pottery from Ashwell assigned to the twelfth century, see Hurst & Hurst 1967, 76-7, fig. 11, nos. 12-17;

Fig. ..., no. 38. A sherd from Hen Blas exhibits generally similar wavy-line decoration; see Leach 1960, 28-9, fig. 11, nos. 1 & 2, assigned to earlier part of the thirteenth century.

#### *Pottery: general observations*

The pottery from Aberystwyth seems to have been distinct from that found in the south of the county. For example, Maynard (1974-5, 354) examined Houlder's collection and found that the pottery from Cardigan ('Gwbart Ware') '... also differ [*sic*] from the early medieval pottery found at Tan-y-castell, Aberystwyth'.

There are specific and general resemblances between the cooking pots with infolded rims at Aberystwyth and those in siltstone/mudstone tempered wares and coarse sandy cooking pot wares at Hen Domen (Ratkai 2000, 92-3, figs. 5.1, 5.2).

The resemblances of certain Phase 1 cooking pots at Aberystwyth to thirteenth-century pottery at other sites suggests a later rather than earlier date for them in the twelfth century, or indeed an early thirteenth century date. This has important implications for attempts to align the evidence from archaeology with that from the *Bruts*.

*Spindle whorls* **[get hold of and use three drawings in Ceredigion Museum]**  
**Found at the Gateway on the surface of context 37, below the paving context 35.**

**Parallels:** AJ 1935 fig 3. no. 14  
Med arch VI-VII 151-2. K  
Bris. And Glouc AS 71 (1952), 70, 76 fig 10 nos 54-6  
AC 1936, 247  
BBCS XIII, 251  
AC 1939, 163  
AJ XV 332  
Cardiff Nat trans 1948-50 Flatholm

**ADD TO LIST TWO FROM F1.104**

For stone spindle whorls in the form of truncated cones and 'tall loaf' from London, see Pritchard 1984, 67, fig. 18, nos. 14-16.

## **Ironwork**

There are sketches of the better-preserved ironwork in the site finds notebooks; however, it would be misleading to present finished drawings of most of this in this report in the absence of cross-checks against the original material. The figures published are from finished drawings.

### *Carpentry nails*

1. From Trench MBI in the vicinity of context 4 (MBI.2). A nail with a large round head, of 24mm diameter, which can be compared with Type A nails at Capel Maelog, Radnorshire (Britnell 1990, 68, fig. 16, no. 89). Not illustrated.

2. From Trench MBI context 5 (MBI.5). Two tapering nails with no heads, at least 45mm long and 6 and 8mm wide at the top, respectively. For similar objects see the Type C nails from Boteler's Castle, Alcester (Jones, Eyre-Morgan, Palmer & Palmer 1997, fig. 22); also possibly similar objects, designated type D, from Rattray, Aberdeenshire, in Murray & Murray 1993, 179 & 180, fig. 34, no. 80. Not illustrated.

3. From Trench E21. Nail E21.1 is similar to those designated Type A1 at Carmarthen Greyfriars (James 1997, 187, fig. 38); compare with Caldwell, Ewart & Triscott 1998, 62-3, Illus. 26, no. 74, possibly residual in a late-thirteenth- or early-fourteenth-century context;

For medieval carpentry nails see, for example, Type A at Rattray, Aberdeenshire in Murray & Murray 1993, 179 & 180, fig. 34, nos. 75-6; late eleventh to mid twelfth century at Durham in Carver 1979, 23, fig. 13, no. 19/1574; for twelfth-century timber nails with broad flat tops at Ascot Doilly, see Jope & Threlfall 1959, 266-7, fig. 20, no. 7, and for rectangular-sectioned nails from the same site, see *ibid.*, 266-7, fig. 20, nos. 9-11; c.1200-1230 at Weoley Castle in Oswald 1962-3, 130 & 131, fig. 51, nos. 26, 28; 'Type A' at Hen Domen in Goodall & Goodall 2000, 94, fig. 5.3, no. 6a; for further nails/spikes at Hen Domen, see Higham & Rouillard 2000, 102, fig. 5.5, nos. 87-90; for nails at Auldhill, Portencross, see Caldwell, Ewart & Triscott 1998, 62, Illus. 26;

For carpentry nails for building and coffin use at Carmarthen, see James 1997, 187, fig. 38, and at Ripon, see Hall & Whyman 1996, 113-114.

Wacher noted the longevity of nail types at Riplingham, East Yorkshire (1963-6, 654, fig. 20, nos. 1-11); similarly nails 'occurred in most layers' at Loughor, from the twelfth century to post-castle deposits (Lewis 1993, 148-9, fig. 22, nos. 17-24)

### *Staples (?)*



1. From Trench E11 (E11.10). A 'hooked' piece of metal which was probably the remnant of a staple with a square to rectangular cross-section, 8.5 by 8.5 mm to 8 by 7mm; the longer, intact arm about 0.05m long. Not illustrated.

Staples with square sections from Cumnor and St Ebbe's, Oxon, are illustrated in Allen 1994, 375, fig. 91, nos. 136, 137 and Hassall, Halpin & Mellor 1989, 229, fig. 64, no. 52. For a staple from Coventry, see Wright 1982, 96, fig. 53, no. 1; for an undated staple from Shrewsbury Abbey, see Baker 2002, 115, fig. 68, no. 4; for staples from Loughor, dated from the second half of the twelfth century onwards, see Lewis 1993, 148, fig. 22, nos. 26-30; for staples from Castle Acre Castle, dated mid-later twelfth century, see Coad & Streeten 1982, 228 & 231, fig. 39, nos. 37, 39; for a staple from York in a twelfth- to thirteenth-century context, see Addyman & Priestley 1977, 138 & 143, fig. 10, no. 18; for a thirteenth-century example from Rattray, Aberdeenshire, see Murray & Murray 1993, 179 & 180, fig. 34, no. 51; for an example from Rumney, see Lightfoot 1992, 136 & 140, fig. 17, no. 44; a staple from Weoley Castle is dated to c.1200-1230 (Oswald 1962-3, 130 & 131, fig. 51, no. 7); for a staple at Lismahon, Co. Down, dated thirteenth to fourteenth century, see Waterman 1959, 162 & 163, fig. 61, no. 4; for staples at Hen Domen, see Higham & Rouillard 2000, 101, fig. 5.5, nos. 85-6; a staple from Beaumaris came from a feature containing thirteenth- to fifteenth-century pottery, see Hopewell 1997, 13 & 35, fig. 14; for a staple from Bramber Castle, probably fourteenth century, see Barton & Holden 1977, 65-6, fig. 20, no. 16;

#### *Horseshoe nails*

Horseshoe nails of fiddle-key type, with heads varying from semi-circular to round, between 14 and 21mm wide, were found in several contexts: Trench MGI, context 13 (1956 MGI 6); Trench E1 (E1.1, E1.3, E1.5); Trench E3 (E3.5, E3.14, E3.16); Trench E5 (E5.15); Trench E11 (E11.4, E11.6, E11.8, E11.9, E11.18, E11.25, E11.35, E11.39, E11.51). Not illustrated.

A fiddle-key nail of the same type as found at Old Aberystwyth is figured in a report of excavations at Dundrum Castle, Co. Down, the early bank of which dates to the last quarter of the twelfth century (Waterman 1958, 65, no. 14).

For comparable specimens from Northolt Manor, see Hurst 1961, 288 & 290, fig. 76, no. 2, dated 1050-1150; from Durham, see Carver 1979, 23, fig. 13, no. 98/1627, no. 99/1627, late eleventh to mid-twelfth century; from Warwick, see Cracknell and Bishop 1991-2, 28, fig. 14, no. 16; from twelfth-century deposits at Ascot Doilly, see Jope & Threlfall 1959, 266-7, fig. 20, no. 6; from Brandon Castle, Warwickshire, see Chatwin 1955, 82, fig. 12, no. 3a; from Castle Acre Castle, mid-later twelfth century, see Coad & Streeten 1982, 234, fig. 41, nos. 131-3; from Loughor, see Lewis 1993, 148, fig. 22, nos. 8-10, from the late twelfth century onwards; for twelfth- to early-thirteenth-century horseshoe nails from Penmaen, see Alcock 1966, 198, fig. 9, nos. 3-4; for twelfth- to thirteenth-century examples at York, see Addyman & Priestley 1977, 138 & 144, fig. 10, nos. 57-58; for thirteenth- to fourteenth-century examples

from Rattray, Aberdeenshire, see Murray & Murray 1993, 185 & 186, fig. 38, nos. 163-5; from Hen Domen, see Goodall & Goodall 2000, 95, fig. 5.3, no. 16 ('Type A'); from Auldhill, Portencross, see Caldwell, Ewart & Triscott 1998, 62, Illus. 26, no. 67; for fiddle-key nails in thirteenth- to fourteenth-century deposits at Bramber Castle, see Barton & Holden 1977, 64-5, fig. 20; for an undated example from Brixworth, see Everson 1977, 94, fig. 9, no. 18; from a medieval site at Barry, see Thomas & Davies 1974, 16, fig. 6, no. 10;

*Horseshoes* [use line drawing and photo (on multiple photo)] **FIG AB**

**1. Complete example, Fig AB, found at the Gateway on the surface of context 37 and below context 34.**

Compare with an example from Alcester, Warwickshire, said to be a 'typical 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> type' with countersunk nail holes (Jones, Eyre-Morgan, Palmer & Palmer 1997, 59, fig. 23, no. 42); also London Museum 1940, 113, fig. 36, no. 7, attributed to the late twelfth century; Loughor, dated 1215 to c. 1302 (Lewis 1993, 148, fig. 22, no. 7); Rumney, assigned to the twelfth century (Lightfoot 1992, 136 & 138, fig. 15, no. 22); from Castle Acre Castle, mid-later twelfth century, see Coad & Streeten 1982, 234, fig. 41, 126-130; for horseshoes in deposits at Bramber Castle, dated between the late eleventh century and fourteenth century, see Barton & Holden 1977, 62-3, fig. 19, nos. 17-23; for a horseshoe from York in a twelfth- to thirteenth-century context, see Addyman & Priestley 1977, 138 & 143, fig. 10, no. 52; for a fragment from York, assigned to the mid-twelfth century, see Richardson 1959, 100-1, fig. 28, no. 8; for horseshoes assigned to the twelfth to thirteenth centuries at Hen Blas, see Leach 1960, 32-3 & 35, fig. 13, nos. 1-4; compare, from Hadleigh Castle, Drewett 1975, 140-1, fig. 28, no. 342; compare from Saxilby, Whitwell 1969, 141-2, fig. 6, nos. 49 & 50, assigned to c.1300, although no. 50 has a noticeably wavy outline; for a fragment assigned to the late twelfth century, from Dover, see Rigold 1967, 108-9, fig. 9, no. Fe5; another from Dover, assigned mid-thirteenth century, *ibid*, 108-9, fig. 9, no. Fe6;

**2. Partial example of similar type to no. 1. Provenance given as F1.203, but probably F2.203. Fig IJ**

Other parallels, dated to the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries are found at Salford Priors, Warwickshire (**dmb to get full ref: Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society 103 (1999), 145, fig. 61, no. 22**); at Brandon Castle, Warwickshire similar horseshoes are dated to the thirteenth century, though some were possibly earlier (Chatwin 1955, 82, fig. 12, nos. 1-6); for thirteenth- to fourteenth-century examples at Wintringham, see Beresford 1977, 258 & 276, fig. 46, nos. 76-7; for an example from Rickmansworth, dated 1250-1300, see Biddle, Barfield & Millard 1959, 183-4, fig. 19, no. 28

For medieval horseshoes in general, see London Museum 1940, 112-117, and Clark, J (ed.) 1995. *The medieval horse and its equipment c.1150-1450. Medieval finds from excavations in London 5*, London: HMSO.

Following his dating of his Period II Houlder argues that the horseshoe from the gateway roadway must have belonged to a Welshman, despite its 'Norman' type. i.e. abandoned by Welsh 1143. [now thought to be later and this argument will not hold]

*Bit?*

Among the illustrated ironwork, but unprovenanced, is what might have been a fragment of a horse bit. See E on photocopy of drawings.

*Pricket candlestick?*

Among the illustrated ironwork, but unprovenanced, is what might possibly have been part of a candlestick. See D on photocopy of drawings.

*Axe-head*

For wood-working

*Manacle and chain [use line drawing and one photo] FIG CD*

**Context uncertain: check CHH's published statements.**

Designed with three interlocking loops so that it could not be opened whilst the further end of the chain was secured.

**Ref to use Rot. Lit. Pet. 17b (or 6)**

Renn raises possibility that may have been used to hobble ponies.

Chaining of Welsh prisoners 1183 **ref?**

Renn suggests that the chain was made by a blacksmith, who forged it from bar iron. He believes that if it had been made by an armourer it would have been made by the chain-mail technique, i.e. by riveting loops of drawn wire.

Double manacles are displayed on the arms of the Johnson family of Suffolk (**DATE OF EARLIEST DEPICTION**) (Slater 2002, 83).

For a picture of a 'prisoner' in irons, see Williams 1956, pl. 1.

For shackles of earlier eras, see Thompson, H. 1993.

**Parallels:** Archaeological Journal XIII pl. II; LXXXIX pl. II  
**Proc. Soc. Antiq.** xxvi (1914), 116

*Object with D-ring* [use line drawing and one photo] FIG EF

**Context uncertain: check CHH's published statements**

Derek Renn accepts it might be a door hasp, the D-ring being a handle; but he doubts E. T. Price's suggested fitting as a 'rather difficult' construction

The object bears some resemblance to an object identified as a barrel padlock at St Ebbe's, Oxon (Hassall, Halpin & Mellor 1989, fig. 65, no. 143, with discussion on pp. 228, 230).

*Keys*

**1. PHOTO A (1)**

Provenance uncertain. The object in the photograph resembles one identified as a possible handle of a barrel padlock key found at Capel Maelog, Radnorshire (Britnell 1990, fig. 14, no. 56); see also an object from Caergwrle Castle in Manley 1994, 112 & 113, fig. 15, nos. 2, 3; it also resembles what has been interpreted as part of a latch-lifter (Johnstone 1999, 280-1, fig. 19, I.5); for barrel padlock keys at Hen Domen, see Higham & Rouillard 2000, 101, fig. 5.5, nos. 80-3;

**2. PHOTO A (2)**

Found in Trench E21 in 1956. The object might have formed part of a barrel padlock hasp; see Britnell 1990, fig. 14, no. 54, but the apparently integral hook and flanged haft of the Old Aberystwyth example set it apart.

**3. Key 3**

Found in Trench E5, but no specific context given (E5.14).

A form of 'Type II' key in the London Museum catalogue (1940, 135-6, fig. 42), attributed to the late eleventh to thirteenth centuries or even later. For comparison, from York, see Richardson 1959, 82-3, fig. 18, nos. 13 & 14, described as Anglo-Danish. The key resembles an example with mid-thirteenth- to early-fourteenth-century parallels from Burton-in-Lonsdale, Yorkshire (Moorhouse 1971, 94, fig. 3, no.1); for a comparable handle from Hen Domen, see Goodall & Goodall 2000, 94, fig. 5.3, no. 8; for a general comparison, see Coad & Streeten 1982, 232, fig. 40, no. 103, undated from Castle Acre Castle;

**Copper alloy**

*Cruciform pendant* [use line drawing with Ceredigion Museum] FIG GH

**Found in Trench E11.**

The pendant is a piece of horse furniture hung from a fitting attached to a harness strap (London Museum 1940, 118). An illustration of a piece in the Musée de Cluny in the London Museum catalogue (1940, 119, fig. 39) shows how it would have fitted.

Houlder suggested that the cross-hatching might have provided a key for a paste; the piece in the Musée de Cluny has dark red enamel on the hatched surfaces. H. N. Savory of the National Museum of Wales noted that one of the cupped terminals had been broken off and reattached in antiquity.

There is a close parallel to this pendant from Hadleigh Castle, Essex; it was found in the top of a foundation trench of the Phase III solar, dated to the end of the thirteenth century or early fourteenth century; see Drewett 1975, 140 & 142, fig. 28, no. 344.

According to the London Museum catalogue (1940, 119) the type was not common in England, but a similar type of pendant was recovered from disturbed levels at the Jewry Wall site, Leicester (Kenyon 1948: 255-6).

For another type of horse harness pendant in the form of a shield see Manley 1994, 114 & 113, fig. 15, no. 12; for a fourteenth- to fifteenth-century harness pendant from Rattray, Aberdeenshire, see Murray & Murray 1993, 192 & 193, fig. 42, no. 207; for a gilt harness pendant with four roundels, but an open centre, from Castle Acre Castle, see Coad & Streeten 1982, 238, fig. 44, no. 35, c.1140s;

**CHECK** Kidwelly: *Archaeologia* 83; *Proc. Soc. Antiq.* 2, xxii (1908), 455

#### *Ring – silver-gilt [from where?]*

Silver-gilt, probably originally adorned with a small jewel; probably a lady's ring. Houlder thought that markings suggested that a fine wire might have been wound around the main ring, though he concedes that the markings may just reflect corrosion.

#### *Coin*

According to correspondence of 16 August 1961 between Houlder and Rigold the coin was found at the top of 'a late rubbish layer ... It must have been derived to its place of discovery from the motte bank at the time of a late slighting'. Label records it as from MBIV 511 which belongs to Houlder's Period II and, therefore, clearly residual by about 80 years.

Stuart Rigold described the coin as follows:

Henry I group X, WULGAR ON LUND i.e. London, from the same dies as *BMC, Norman Kings*, No. 66. This type is the third commonest of Hen[ry] I's, but still quite scarce, the rarity being of course due to the accident of finds of hoards or absence of

them. [dmb to check if this is still the case] Date c.1121-4 ... and should be obsolete within a year or two of issue.

### *Stone*

A whetstone is recorded from Trench E15, but the stones in the collection are unconvincing as artefacts.

Illustrated whetstone (fig. ...) is from feature F1 208. It has a groove on each of the flatter, broader sides and is made of a rounded local pebble derived from the nearby beach or river bed.

It is suggested that the grooves on a whetstone found at St Ebbe's, Oxon, were formed in sharpening needles (Hassall, Halpin & Mellor 1989, 238-9. Aileen Fox (1939, 188-9 & pl. vii, no. 3) illustrates a sharpening stone of different shape from a medieval house context on Gelligaer Common, dated thirteenth to fourteenth century.

### **Organic remains**

Charred wheat and oat grains. The oat grains belong to a variety that was previously not thought (late 1950s) to have been introduced before the sixteenth century.

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### **Interpretation**

It seems reasonable to equate the latest physical evidence of substantial activity on the site with the latest activity recorded in the chronicles and to proceed to equate other evidence by working from the later to the earlier.