



COMISIWN BRENHINOL HENEBION CYMRU
ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE ANCIENT AND HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF WALES

CEFNLLYS CASTLE

RADNORSHIRE



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AND
ALASTAIR PEARSON

CEFNLLYS CASTLE

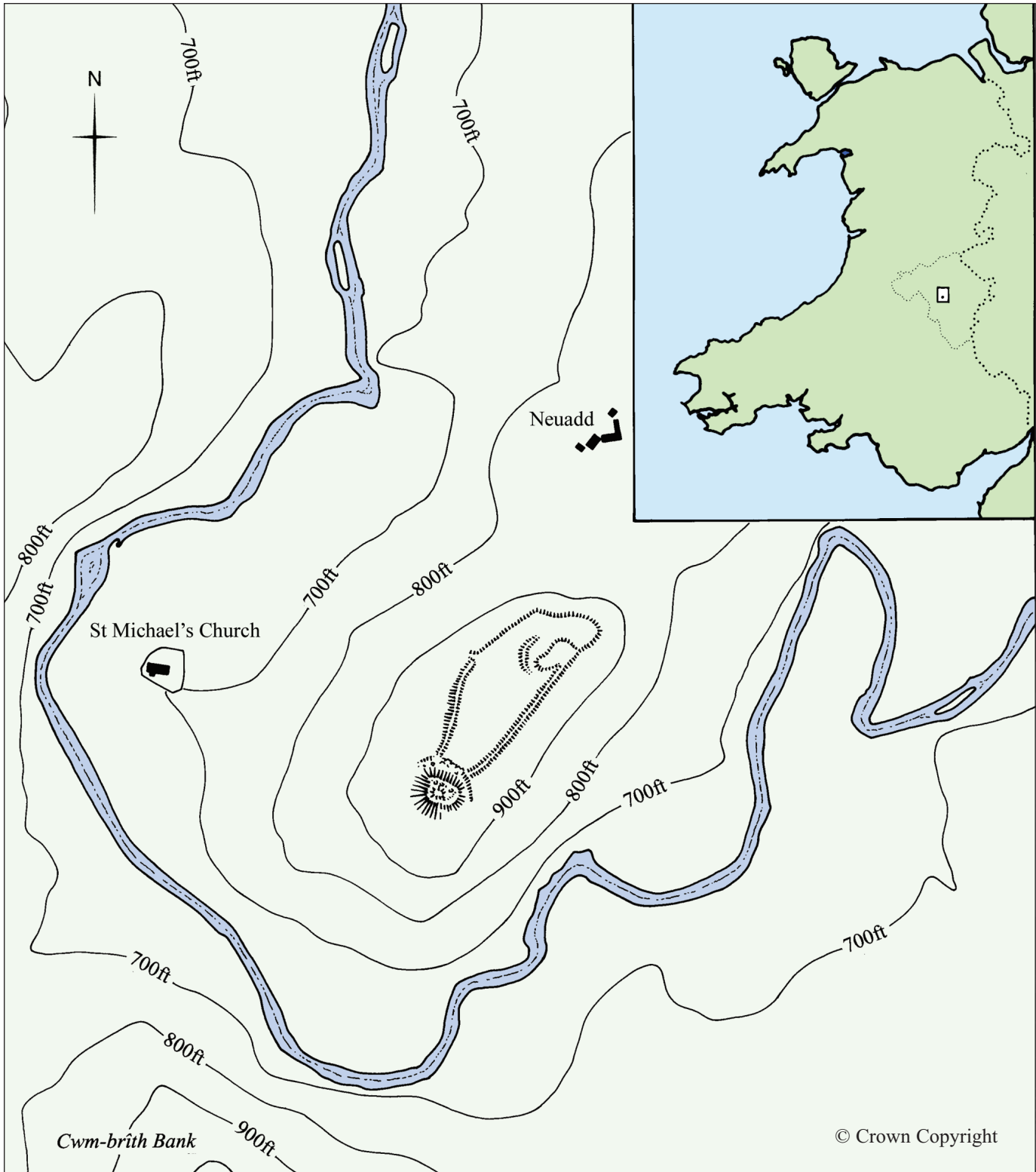
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INTRODUCTION TO THE SURVEY

The survey described in this article was carried out in the summer of 1985 as part of an investigation into the merits of using photogrammetry in field recording (Browne and Pearson 1985), and the advent of new technology in the Royal Commission has made its broader dissemination now possible. A field visit was undertaken in 2005 to verify the details on file. The authors of the paper have confined themselves to considering the evidence for the medieval castles at Castle Bank and, except where relevant to these buildings, are not concerned with the nature or history of the borough or park of Cefnllys, because the survey did not cover adequately the full extent of these.

No archaeological excavations have been carried out at the site. Consequently, our only available evidence for possible sequences of construction must come from historical sources. The evidence from these is considered below after a consideration of the topographic setting of the site. The earthworks are then described in some detail to explain the accompanying drawings and photographs. Lastly, a general interpretation is offered of the probable sequence in which the components of the site were built.



THE GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

The later castles of Cefnlllys were built on the south-west end of a ridge called Castle Bank, rising to 304 metres above OD, 2.7 kilometres east of Llandrindod Wells (OS National Grid Reference SO 089 614). The base of the ridge is confined on all sides except the north-east within a sharp loop of the River Ithon. The position is naturally strong, with steep slopes falling from the relatively narrow summit on three sides, especially the south-east and south-west. The approach from the north-east is less formidable, but still moderately steep. The upper surface of the hill is reasonably level south-west of a small rocky prominence towards its north-east end.

Castle Bank is a strategic location, being conveniently situated to control or threaten several routes penetrating the heart of Wales that converge on the valley of the River Ithon.

The castle established on Castle Bank was probably also regarded as an important forward defence by the

towns of some of the English border shires. Breeze (1999, 174) has argued that Cefnlllys castle was regarded as being of great strategic importance to Hereford, indeed its 'principal advance defence' against Welsh incursions. One witness to this is the evident alarm expressed by the bishop of Hereford in a letter to King Henry III in 1263 concerning marauding Welsh bands (*Foedera*, 423).

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The varying fortunes of the garrisons and buildings of Cefnlllys Castle were inextricably linked to the vicissitudes of the Mortimers, lords of Wigmore, in their relations with the native Welsh inhabitants of Maelienydd, Prince Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, and successive kings of England from the mid-thirteenth century to the extinction of their male line at the end of the first quarter of the fifteenth century.

The Mortimers had been attempting to conquer the land of Maelienydd since the first half of the twelfth



century, and they had achieved an apparently permanent suzerainty by 1199 (Smith, J. B. 1970-2, 78-81). However, at the beginning of the reign of Henry III, with the aid of Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, the local native rulers were able to reassert their traditional rights. Nevertheless, despite his ardent efforts, Llywelyn was unable to establish permanently arrangements favourable to the local Welsh lords and Gwynedd. On 31 July 1240, shortly after Llywelyn's death, the king granted possession of Maelienydd to Ralph Mortimer. This act provoked a violent reaction from the Welsh inhabitants, who were assisted by men sent by Dafydd ap Llywelyn of Gwynedd. The uprising was in vain, and the insurgents were defeated and submitted by mid-August 1241. Indeed, it appears that the local Welsh lords were not reinstated in their lands and may have quitclaimed them to Mortimer (Smith, J. B. 1970-2, 81-3). Mortimer secured a promise from the young Llywelyn ap Gruffudd to forgo any claim to Maelienydd (Smith, J. B. 1998, 42-3). It is probably in the context of Ralph Mortimer's triumph that Cefnlllys Castle was founded to consolidate his gains.

The foundation may be recorded by the references in ancient sources to the fortification of a castle in Maelienydd in 1242 by Ralph Mortimer. (Williams ab Ithel, 1860, 84; Jones, T. 1952, 106; Jones, T. 1955, 239; Jones, T. 1971, 235; Cole 1946, 5; Brown 1972, 12). Brown (1972, 12; Hogg and King 1967, 97) suggests that the work referred to was a reconstruction in stone of an existing site. Beresford places the foundation of the borough by Mortimer in the 1240s (Beresford 1967, 344), but supplies no authority.

The years of the rule of Dafydd (1240-6), successor to Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, were ones in which Henry III exerted severe diplomatic and military pressure to limit the aspirations of the principality of Gwynedd. In these circumstances the Mortimers renewed their various claims in the Marches.

Ralph Mortimer died on 6 August 1246 (DNB 2004, 391). On 2 October 1246 Henry III instructed W. Teutonicus, to whose keeping he had committed castles at Wigmore, Cefnlllys and Knucklas, to hand them over to Richard of Dover, who was to hold them at the king's pleasure (*CPR 1232-1247*, 489). It has been assumed that the castle referred to was the one on Castle Bank (Brown 1972, 12). Roger, Ralph's son, gained his lands on 26 February 1247 (DNB 2004, 391).

According to D. S. Davies (1940) Llywelyn ap Gruffudd took several sites, including Cefnlllys, during his widespread military actions that commenced with the invasion of the 'Four Cantreds' in November 1256. However, he provides no authority for the assertion, and this claim should be dismissed.

There is no doubt about the role of Cefnlllys in the events of six years later. At the end of November 1262 (Edwards 1935, 27; Smith 1998, 147) a band of men from Maelienydd took Mortimer's 'new' castle by subterfuge, killing the gatemen and capturing the constable, Hywel ap Meurig, and his family (Williams ab Ithel 1860, 100; Jones, T. 1952, 112; Jones, T. 1955, 253; Jones, T. 1971, 245; Edwards 1935, 15, 27; Christie 1887, 83; Luard 1869, 447; Luard 1890, 476; *Foedera*, 423; Shirley 1866, 227-9, 232-3). Having secured the fort they informed Llywelyn ap Gruffudd's seneschal and constable, who came to it and put it to the torch. Mortimer's immediate response was to rally a force, which included Humphrey de Bohun Junior and other Marcher barons, to retake Cefnlllys, in which he succeeded, camping within the ruins for a short time, during which he endeavoured to restore the damaged walls. However, Llywelyn had no intention of allowing him to reoccupy the site and came with his army to invest the castle. In the event, negotiations between the hostile parties resulted in Roger, who rapidly ran short of supplies, being allowed to retire unmolested to Brycheiniog, probably just before 20 December (*CR 1261-1264*, 269-70; Shirley 1866, 227-9, 232-3; Luard 1890, 476). Presumably Llywelyn completed the destruction of the castle.

The primary sources state (e.g. Jones, T. 1952, 112) that the Maelienydd war band acted at its own instigation, but Beverley Smith (1998, 139) thinks it more likely that the men were directed by Llywelyn ap Gruffudd. In Smith's view (1998, 140-7) the action was part of his broader strategy designed to achieve a comprehensive peace treaty with Henry III and recognition as Prince of Wales. Llywelyn judged that a show of force was necessary to achieve this, particularly a successful strike against the man he perceived to be the greatest barrier between himself and the king, Roger Mortimer. Cefnlllys was a potent symbol of Mortimer's power and influence in the middle March. Llywelyn was prepared to risk the possible consequences of breaking his truce with Henry, and the king's protests (*CR 1261-*

1264, 269-70) show that the latter was upset considerably. Llywelyn's grant of safe passage to Mortimer and his companions suggest that his actions were measured and that he was careful not to overplay his hand.

The recognition Llywelyn desired was achieved in the Treaty of Montgomery, sealed in 1267 (*Foedera*, 474; Smith, J. B. 1998, 182-3; Tout 1902, 130, 135). One of the provisions of the treaty allowed Roger Mortimer to build at Cefnlllys on condition that the land was held from Llywelyn (Edwards 1940, 2), once the latter had shown his right to it in law. The potential for Cefnlllys to become a continuous source of contention is clear (Powicke 1947, 641). Smith (1998, 362; *CR 1264-1268*, 496) adduces evidence for building beginning at the castle before the end of 1267.

The continuing friction between Llywelyn and the Marcher lords, particularly Mortimer, is emphasised by a letter from the prince to the new king, Edward I, sent from Mold on 22 July (Edwards 1935, 94). Llywelyn was preoccupied by the fact that Mortimer does not seem to have rendered him the deference he claimed was due to him under the Treaty of Montgomery and, probably of greater concern, by the amount of building that Roger was undertaking. Llywelyn asserted that the treaty allowed for repairs only, but that Mortimer was engaged in constructing 'a new work' rather than just a fence as the latter had assured the king he was erecting. Llywelyn described 'a wide and deep ditch' and the stockpiling on the site of enough timber and masonry to build a fortress (*forceleti*), unless the king or he, in an undisguised threat, stopped it.

In 1282, at the time of the renewed and last phase of warfare between the king and Llywelyn, eight horse and twenty foot were maintained at Cefnlllys (Morris 1901, 172 quoting Pipe Roll, PRO, E372/128).

Roger Mortimer died on 26 October 1282 (DNB 2004, 394) and his castles were given into the custody of the royal sheriff, at a time when Welsh rebels were still active in the Marches (Morris 1901, 172). After some delay, Roger's heir, Edmund, gained possession, by the king's permission, on 24 November 1282 (DNB 2004, 395), and paid for their garrisoning in the continuing Welsh war.

One of our sources (Luard 1869, 526) states that 'Rees ap Morgan', who should, given the context of the passage, be identified with Morgan ap Maredudd, led a

rebellion in Glamorgan beginning in October 1294, which resulted in the capture and destruction of Morlais Castle (Glams.) and 'Kenles'. It is difficult to understand the supposed connection between Morgan ap Maredudd and Maelienydd; it is possible that the source has wrongly attributed an action by Madog ap Llywelyn, the leader of revolt in North Wales, to Morgan. Alternatively, 'Kenles' refers to a site in Glamorgan.

We have evidence that the rule of the Mortimers in Maelienydd in Roger's day and under Edmund was the cause of considerable unrest amongst the subject population, which felt its traditional rights were being constantly infringed by the lord's agents. In 1297 Edmund made an attempt to ameliorate the situation by issuing a document that granted the men of Maelienydd recourse to the court of Cymaron to settle grievances according to traditional procedures '... provided that from henceforth no one shall make any controversy about the demesne of the castles of Keventhles ...' (*CPR 1292-1301*, 290).

Edmund died in July 1304 (DNB 2004, 396). Roger, his son, gained his lands in April 1306, before achieving his majority. It was thought at the time that this was achieved by paying off handsomely Piers Gaveston, who had wardship of Roger (DNB 2004, 396).

In January 1322 the castle, along with his other properties, was taken by Edward II from Roger Mortimer for his part in the rebellion of Thomas, earl of Lancaster; Gruffydd ap Rhys was entrusted with its administration (*CFR iii*, 91-2). Walter le Gras (named as 'William' in *CChR 1300-1326*, 442) was appointed keeper of Cefnlllys castle, and he, with the clerk John de Norton, was ordered to make an indenture of Roger Mortimer's goods and chattels (*CFR iii*, 91-2); John was to receive payment of 2s a day (*CCR 1318-1323*, 415). Walter le Gras was also ordered to compile a list of Edward II's enemies locally and to give the names of suitable hostages for their good behaviour (*CCR 1318-1323*, 422). Roger was imprisoned in the Tower of London; he was sentenced to death but the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, and he subsequently escaped (Cole 1946, 10; Cole 1953, 49-50). On March 30, 1322, the castle was given to Edmund, earl of Kent (*CChR 1300-1326*, 442).

In 1326 Roger returned, illegally, from banishment and raised a rebellion against the king. Edward tried desperately to counteract the rising by ordering his

sheriffs to raise armies, which were to be paid, and putting a price of £1000 on the body or head of Mortimer (*CCR 1323-1327*, 650-1). In the successful aftermath of the coup Roger regained his property.

Mortimer enjoyed his supremacy for only a few years. His enemies had their revenge on 29 November 1330 when he was executed as a common criminal (DNB 2004, 401); previously, on 4 November, his lands were forfeit to the Crown (*CFR i*, 231; *CCR 1330-1333*, 345). A writ was issued on 6 December 1330 for an inquisition into the lands of Joan, his widow (*CIM ii*, 281).

On 4 February 1331 the castle was rented for one year to Thomas de Cloune, parson of the church of Hopesaye (*CFR i*, 230-1). Later that year, on 5 July, a commission was issued for an inquisition that was held on the Sunday after 1 August, which established the rights of Edmund (Roger's son) in the lands and castle of Cefnlllys and elsewhere (*CIM ii*, 281). William de Shaldeford, who had been the king's keeper and surveyor in the area since 12 May 1331 (*CCR 1330-1333*, 460), was ordered on 12 October to hand over Cefnlllys and his other properties to Edmund Mortimer (*CCR 1330-1333*, 345-6). Five days later Thomas de Cloune was ordered to hand over Cefnlllys specifically (*CCR 1330-1333*, 346). There is evidence that certain barons had attempted to extort more than what was due from Thomas, an abuse corrected by the king (*CCR 1330-1333*, 460-1). On 21 October, in orders to various officials and Thomas de Cloune, the king enlarged his grant to Edmund by returning goods, furniture, and fittings seized from Roger Mortimer (*CPR 1330-1334*, 193). A year later, 7 December 1332, Roger Chaundos, lately sheriff of Hereford, under whose supervision they had been, was discharged his account of them (*CCR 1330-1333*, 515).

Edmund enjoyed his inheritance for only a very short time, dying in December 1331; the writ with regard to his death was issued on 21 January, and inquisitions were held on 8 March 1332 and 3 July (*CIPM vii*, 278-80). At the latter it was established that the borough had 20 burgesses, 80 acres of arable, meadows and a water-mill (Beresford 1967, 255). The king issued an order on 16 September that Cefnlllys and Edmund's other properties were to be delivered to his widow, Elizabeth Badlesmere, to be held in dower (*CFR i*, 325).

Elizabeth subsequently married William de Bohun,

earl of Northampton. She died in 1356, and the inquisition on her estate established that she held the castle and town of Cefnlllys in dower from the king by service of a single knight's fee. Her son, Roger Mortimer, was her legitimate heir and was old enough to take up his inheritance (*CIPM x*, 248-9; Cole 1946, 14; Cole 1964, 31). On 4 July 1356 Thomas at Barre, escheator in Gloucestershire, was ordered to hand over the issues of Elizabeth's estate in Maelienydd to Roger, second earl of March (*CCR 1354-1360*, 271; Cole 1964, 31).

E. J. L. Cole (1964; PRO SC6/1209/11) has published a translation of a Ministers' Account in the National Archives (The Public Record Office, Kew) which records repairs at the castle from Michaelmas 1356 to Michaelmas 1357. The 'steps to the hall' were repaired with stones, gravel and lime. A barn was repaired with thatch, and possibly the same building had one of its doors fixed. A blacksmith provided the prison with a new pair of shackles. The lead fittings of the great keep were also renovated, and tin was bought for an unstated purpose at the building.

Roger Mortimer died in France on 26 February 1360 (DNB 2004, 403). An inquisition was held at Radnor on 4 May 1360 concerning Cefnlllys and other Marcher properties (*CIPM x*, 640, p. 535). Mortimer's lands reverted to the Crown. An order was issued on 30 May 1360 to Thomas Saundres, escheator in the March, to pay the constable and porter at Cefnlllys (*CCR 1360-1364*, 39). Roger's heir, Edmund, became a ward of the king (Cole 1946, 15). On November 22 1360 an order was given to John atte Wode, escheator in the March, to deliver in dower to Philippa, widow of Roger Mortimer, Cefnlllys castle and other lands in compensation for the loss of Montgomery and elsewhere to the Prince of Wales (*CCR 1360-1364*, 81-2). Philippa held Maelienydd in dower until her death in 1381 (Cole 1946, 17 quoting an account roll for 1381-2).

In 1368 Edmund Mortimer married Philippa, daughter of Lionel, Edward III's second son (Cole 1946, 16). Edmund died in Ireland on 27 December 1381 (DNB 2004, 374). His son, Roger, was a minor and the lands reverted to the Crown (Richard II). On May 16 1382 Walter de la Halle was appointed king's receiver for Cefnlllys and adjacent lands (*CFR ix*, 294). On 12 December 1382 Maredudd ap Madog Fychan was appointed king's receiver in his stead (*CFR ix*, 343). We

also know from *CCR 1381-1385*, 321 that Thomas Ydefen was appointed constable and janitor of Cefnlllys in May 1382, although the order to pay him was not made until 2 October 1383.

Roger Mortimer was given livery of his lands on 25 February 1394 (*CCR 1392-1396*, 203-4). Four years later he met his death in Ireland on 20 July 1398 (DNB 2004, 404). Once again a Mortimer heir, his son, Edmund, was a minor and the Crown assumed control of their territories (*CFR xii*, 155).

On 24 November 1401 Hugh Burnell was appointed keeper during Owain Glyndŵr's revolt; he was empowered to accept the unconditional surrender of the rebels but not to issue pardons without the king's permission (*CPR 1401-1405*, 22; POPC 1834(a), 176). The appointment was confirmed on 9 March 1402 (*CFR xii*, 155).

The garrison at Cefnlllys under Sir William Heron, lord Say, about 1402-3 was stated to be 12 spearmen and 30 archers (POPC 1834(b), 68). On September 12 1403 the bishop and sheriff of Worcester and John Ryall were given a commission to supply Cefnlllys with 8 quarters of wheat, one tun of wine, 3 tuns of ale, 200 fish and 60 quarters of oats (*CPR 1401-1405*, 296).

There is a record of 27 January 1406 of the grant of the castle to Richard, lord Grey, which seems to suggest that it was 'burned and wasted by the Welsh rebels', probably some time in 1405, although Brown doubts it (*CPR 1405-1408*, 145; Brown 1972, 15). The grant to lord Grey was confirmed on 8 December 1406 during the minority of Edmund Mortimer (*CPR 1405-1408*, 293).

Edmund Mortimer died of plague on 18 January 1425, leaving no children (DNB 2004, 377). His heir was his nephew, Richard, duke of York, but as he was a minor the properties reverted to the Crown (*CPR 1422-1429*, 270). The lands were handed over to Richard in 1432 (*CPR 1429-1436*, 207-8).

Richard's newly acquired estates were managed by men of an emerging class. Richard Suggett has discussed this phenomenon recently in the context of the lands to be later grouped as Radnorshire, and specifically with reference to Cefnlllys (Suggett 2005, 37-8). According to Suggett (and other historians of this age) the fifteenth century was a time of 'The transfer of power and influence to local men ... expressed architecturally by the decay of the masonry castles, the

historic centres of lordship administration, and by the building of new timber halls at or near the castle sites by the Welshmen of influence within a lordship. It was their halls which became the focus of lordship.' This was in contrast to the fourteenth century when top Marcher administrative posts had rarely been in the hands of Welshmen, a cause of much resentment (Davies, R. 1978, 207).

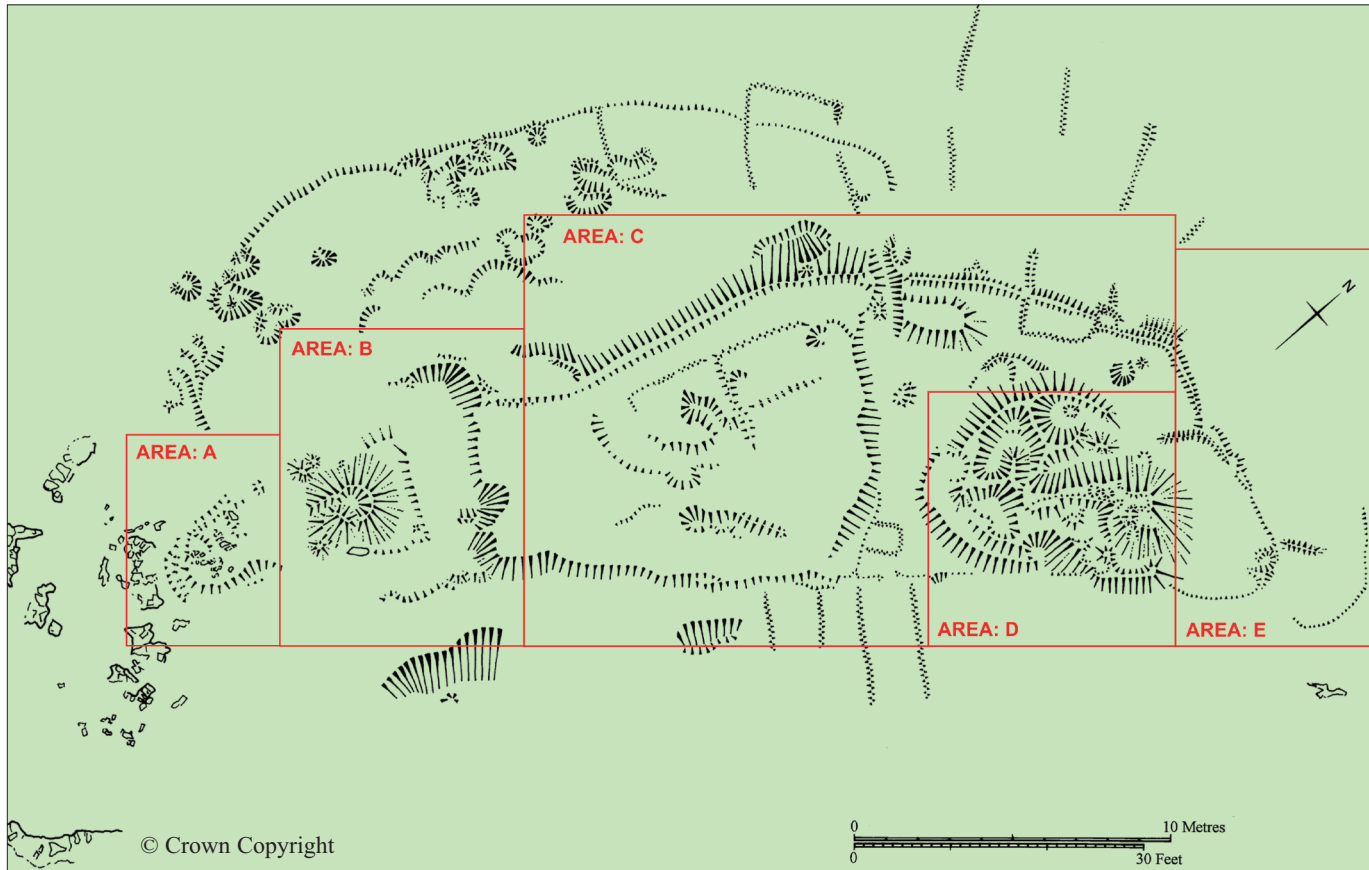
The itinerant poet Lewys Glyn Cothi addressed four poems of praise to the constable of Cefnlllys and receiver of Maelienydd, Ieuan ap Phylip and his wife, Angharad (Jones, E. D. 1936; Johnston 1995, nos. 169-72). Such personalised eulogies addressed to generous and prosperous patrons were the stock-in-trade of contemporary poets (Haycock 1994, 25-6, 31). The date of the poems is somewhat uncertain (Suggett 2005, 37). They could belong to the period 1432-59 if Ieuan was appointed to his posts by Richard, third duke of York, or they might be later if he was appointed in succession to Rhys ap Dafydd ap Hywel Fain, receiver 1461-3. It has been suggested that they could be as late as 1474-83 (Johnston 1995, no. 170.63n).

The poems contain several interesting descriptive details (discussed at greater length below), but most notably an effusive passage about the hall-house built on the site for the constable by the *pensaer*, Rhosier ab Owain (Johnston 1995, no. 171.31). Haycock (1994, 30-1) points out how: 'The quasi-religious imagery alleviates the rank materialism of the descriptions, and underlines the economic importance of the patronage system.' More prosaically, the poems are also evidence that courts were still held at the castle (Brown 1972, 15)

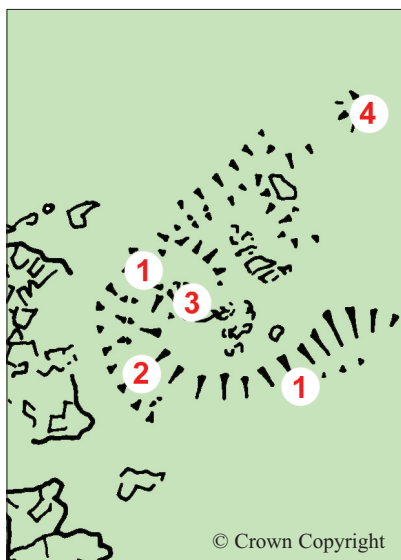
In 1459 Richard of York was attainted. His lands were given to the keeping of John Milewater on 13 December (*CPR 1452-1461*, 530), an appointment confirmed on 21 February 1460 (*CPR 1452-1461*, 573). With the accession of Richard's son as Edward IV in 1461 Cefnlllys became Crown land.

On 5 November 1493 Cefnlllys was among several of the mainly ruinous castles in Wales granted to Prince Arthur, firstborn son of Henry VII (*CPR 1485-1494*, 453; Colvin, Ransome and Summerson 1975, 174). The castle is described as 'now downe' by John Leland in the early sixteenth century (Smith, L. T. 1906, 11). The site is described as 'the ruins of an old castle' in a deed of bargain and sale of 11 July 1687 (Owen 1908, 642-3 [1131]).

DESCRIPTION OF THE VISIBLE REMAINS



For ease of description and cross-reference the site has been divided into five areas, beginning in the south-west. The earthworks, where their composition is ascertainable, are of stone rubble and earth consolidated by turf growth.



AREA: A

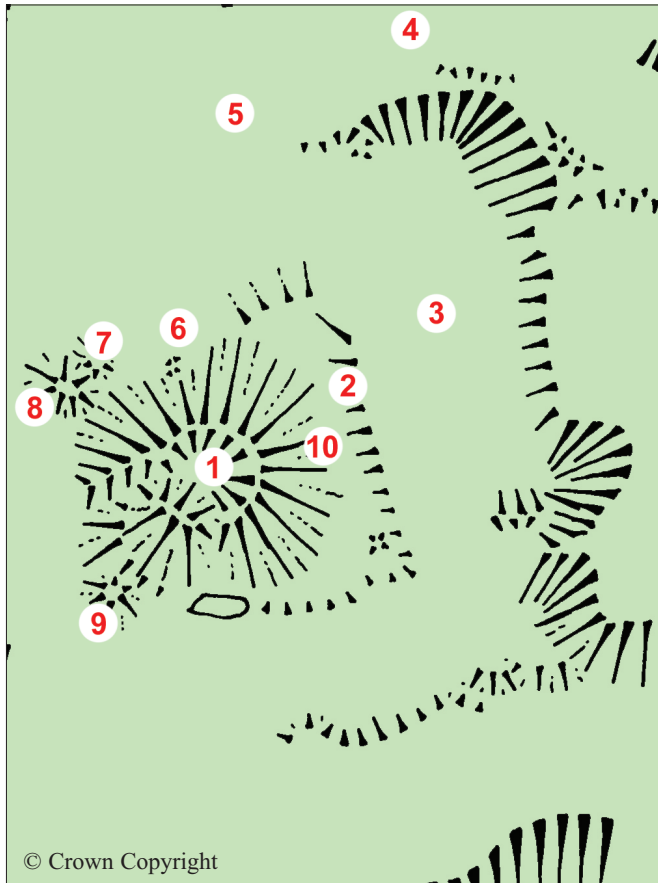
Area A comprises the spur that forms the south-west end of the Cefnlllys ridge. The earthworks visible here are:

- A1.** A ditch of variable width around the edge of the spur. The inner scarp is 1m deep on the east, 0.8m on the south-west, and becomes shallower and of diminishing width as it curves around to the north-east. The inner scarp is between 0.6m and 0.7m deep.
- A2.** A bank 1m wide and 0.4m high running along the base of the south-west stretch of ditch A1.
- A3.** An apparent breach in the continuity of the inner scarp of ditch A1, suggestive of the site of a pathway.
- A4.** A small mound 0.4m high.

It is difficult to isolate any other significant man-made features from natural ones in this area.

AREA: B

Area B comprises the zone containing the tower mound and its associated features, including the rock-cut ditch to the north-east. The earthworks visible here are:



B1. The tower mound, with an oval base-plan and almost circular summit in its present condition. At its highest point it stands 10.5m above the surface of the spur to the south-west and 4.8m above the berm at its foot on the north-east. Patches of scree mask part of its slopes. The summit is a roughly circular hollow about 2.2m deep.

B2. The remains of a wall or bank along the inner lip of the deep ditch to the north-east that separates the tower mound from the rest of the ridge. The inner scarp of the bank is up to 1.6m high. The irregular scarp running south-west from its south-east end to the base of the tower mound represents the continuation of this demarcating feature and survives to a height of 0.5m. A slight scarp at right angles to the north-west termination of the north-east bank may mark a further continuation of the feature connecting to the north-west slopes

of the tower mound. There are two adjacent hollows, 0.6m deep, just inside the junction of the north-east and south-east sides.

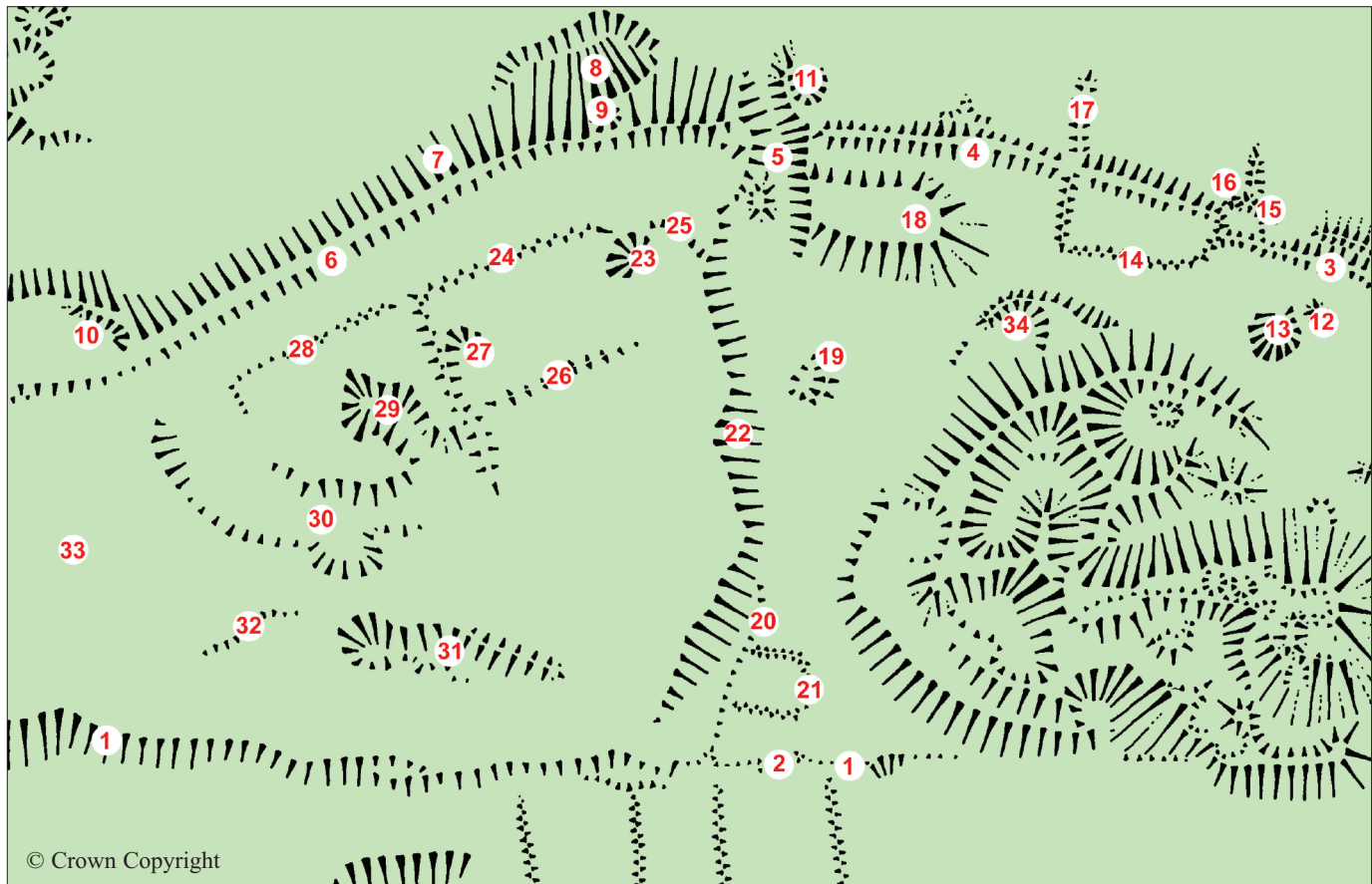
B3. A rock-cut ditch, most formidable in its south-east to north-west arm, with lesser extensions south-west at either end, the whole isolating the tower mound from the rest of the ridge. In the middle of the main arm the scree-covered, steep south-west side is 7.3m deep; the almost vertical, rock-cut face on the north-east side is 4.5m deep. The ditch becomes progressively shallower away from this point; the outer south-east scarp, for example, is 1.4m deep. South-east of the mid-point of the main arm there appears to have been some slumping from the north-east face into the ditch bottom leaving an amorphous mound about 1.5m high. It is possible that this phenomenon was connected with some form of crossing feature.

- B4.** Scarp, 0.4m high.
- B5.** Scree-filled hollow and upcast, 0.4m deep.
- B6.** Mound, 0.5m high.
- B7.** Mound, 0.4m high, with a slight hollow to the north.

- B8.** Mound, 0.9m high.
- B9.** Mound, 0.5m high.
- B10.** A penannular shelter built with low rubble walls since time of main survey.

AREA: C

The long saddle of the ridge north-east of the rock-cut ditch B3. The earthworks here are:



C1. The severely denuded remnants of a wall or bank along the south-east crest of the saddle, taking either the form of a south-east facing scarp up to 1m high in places or a low bank. Both quarrying and the passage of later tracks have contributed to its present form.

C2. An apparent gap in the ‘curtain’, either side of which the low banks turn inwards towards the midline of the ridge. The possible site of a gate.

C3. A bank up to 1m high. There is little sign of denudation or robbing. There is a parallel depression running along part of the length of its foot.

C4. A bank about 0.6m high internally (facing the axis of the ridge) and up to 1.1m externally (facing downslope).

C5. A marked gap in the continuity of the ‘curtain’ and the lip of the ridge, up to 1.8m deep.





C6. A long stretch of bank up to 0.6m high. Immediately inside the bank is a series of slight hollows representing the quarries from which the material for the bank most likely came.

C7. Apparent scarping of the hillslope for a height of up to 3.8m.

C8. A ditch with its east scarp 3.4m deep and its west 1.7m. A shelf extends the line of C8 southwards at the foot of C7 as far as C10. The track from the north-east approaching C5 may, at its south-west end, have occupied the site of a ditch or berm.

C9. A hollow 0.4m deep. Its base is 3m below the lip of the ridge.

C10. A quarry hollow 0.6m deep.

C11. A quarry hollow 1m deep.

C12. A mound 0.7m high.

C13. A quarry hollow 1.9m deep.

C14. A bank. 0.4m high, forming a trapezoidal enclosure with the 'curtain' bank on the north-west, which is 0.6m

high. The bank, C14, appears to be an addition to the 'curtain'. Features C15, C16, and C17 may have been associated with C14.

C15. A short, curving bank up to 0.6m high. There is evidence of quarrying upslope between C15 and the foot of C3.

C16. A mound or bank of similar height to C15, from which it is separated by an eroded hollow.

C17. A bank 0.6m high. There is a shallow ditch at its foot along the south-west side; this was undoubtedly the source of the bank's material.

C18. A platform 0.7m high.

C19. A hollow 0.7m deep with an associated upcast mound 0.5m high. The hollow is now a pond.

C20. A scarp or very low bank up to 0.3m high. At its south-east end it seems to ride over the remnants of the scarp/bank, C1. There is a faint breach in the scarp towards its south-east end.

C21. A slight bank with three arms 0.15m high, forming an enclosure with bank C20 on its south-west side.

C22. An irregular scarp up to 1.7m high. The form of the scarp is probably largely dictated by underlying outcrop.

C23. A quarry hollow 1.7m deep.

C24. An L-shaped bank 0.7m high.

C25. A low curving scarp. This may represent the north corner of the enclosure defined by C24 and C25, the gap between it and C24 being possibly the site of an entrance.

C26. A bank 0.4m high. Air photographs (e.g. RCAHMW collection 86-MB-1213-1215; 881381/1) indicate another very low bank parallel to C26, about 13 metres apart to the east.

C27. A terraced platform with a rear scarp up to 0.7m high.

Note: C24, C25, C26, the bank parallel to C26, and C27 seem to delineate a tripartite building complex.

C28. An L-shaped bank 0.3m high. There is a slight breach nearly half way along the north-west arm, which might indicate the site of an entrance. The north-west arm is aligned with C24 and may represent part of the boundary of another enclosure attached to that of C24.

C29. A quarry hollow up to 1.1m deep.

C30. A quarry hollow up to 0.9m deep.

C31. A quarry hollow up to 1.5m deep.

C32. A scarp 0.7m deep.

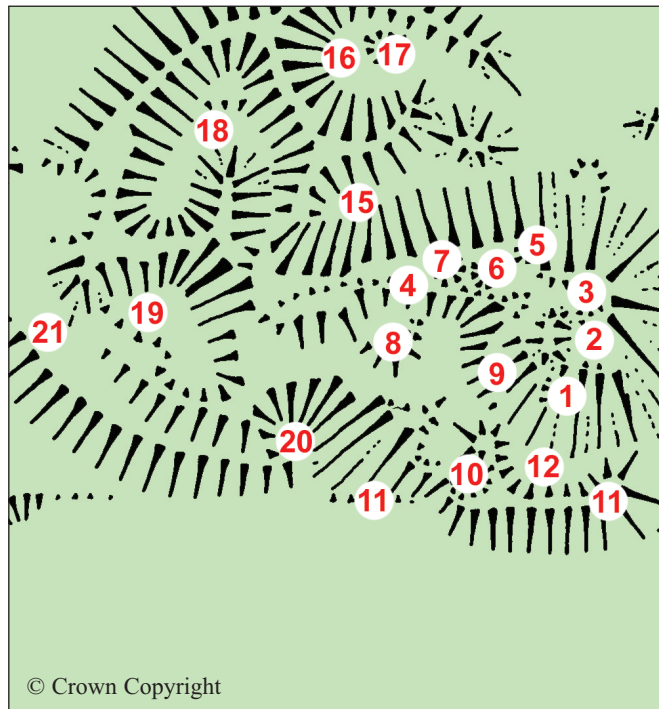
C33. An area of shallow cultivation ridges.

C34. A low curving scarp and bank up to 0.4m high.

C35. A curving bank, 0.7m high.

AREA: D

The principal feature of this area is the citadel complex, the summit of which appears to have been in part constructed by piling locally-obtained boulders and stones.



D1. A small quadrilateral enclosure with banks between 0.6m and 0.7m high.

D2. A quadrilateral enclosure. The most prominent bank is on the south-west, 0.7m high above the interior; the other banks are much less well-defined. An apparent gap on the south gives access to D1.

D3. A bipartite structure with defining banks up to 0.5m high.

D4. A bank up to 0.7m high in its middle stretch and 0.9m high internally and 0.5m high externally at its south-west end. The apparent gap about midway along is probably not original.

D5. A quarry hollow up to 0.6m deep.

D6. A quarry hollow up to 0.9m deep.

D7. A quarry hollow up to 0.5m deep.

D8. A bank representing a badly ruined structure; up to 0.8m high at its west angle.



D9. An ascending/descending terrace, partly quarried into.

D10. A rectangular embanked hollow 0.7m deep. To its north is a rubble mound up to 1m high; to its west is a flat area bounded on the south-east and south-west by a narrow bank 0.5m high, and on the west by a broader bank, also up to 0.5m high. The latter bank may be the terminal of the west-east return of D4. The rectangular element of D10 seems to impinge on the line of the 'curtain', D11.

D11. A bank up to 0.5m high south-west of D10. At its north-east end it returns at right-angles and stands up to 1.4m high internally. This is the probable site of a gate.

D12. A depression.

The numbers D13 and D14 were not assigned in the field report.

D15. A ditch. Its south-east scarp is about 5m deep. The west side is defined by a mound, about 2.1m high above the present ditch bottom, which curves back to the foot of the scarp at the south end, blocking access to the length of ditch around the

south-west end of the citadel promontory. The ditch has been quarried into and the mound at its north end is 1.1m high.

D16. A ditch. The defining bank around its south-west end is 2.2m high above the ditch bottom; the outer scarp of the defining bank on the north-west is 4m high.

D17. A low penannular bank about 0.5m high; there is a narrow gap, 0.45m wide, on the north-east. The feature, which may be a hut, seems to post-date the ditch construction.

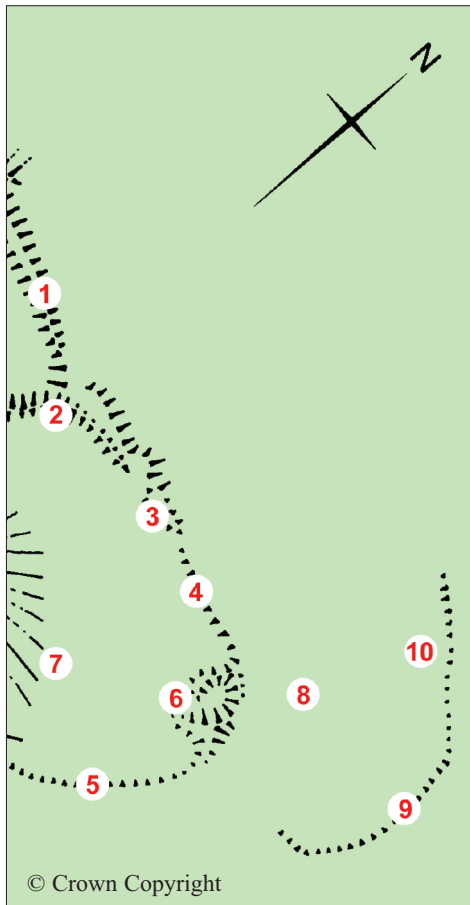
D18. A ditch; the outer scarp of the defining bank on the west stands 5m above the adjacent surface of the ridge saddle. There is later quarrying in the bottom of the ditch.

D19. An irregular ditch or hollow; the defining mound on the south is 1.3m high or less. The hollow is partly masked by scree and there is evidence of later quarrying.

D20. A ditch or hollow 1.7m deep.

D21. A terraced trackway; its outer scarp is up to 3.2m high on the south-east.

AREA: E



E1. The termination of bank D22, 0.7m high internally and 0.9m high externally.

E2, E3, E4 and E5 are probably parts of a single enclosure bank, variously eroded.

E2. A bank 0.6m high.

E3. A bank 0.2m high.

E4. A scarp 0.4m high.

E5. A scarp 0.5m high with a flat crest 0.9m wide.

E6. A penannular bank which rises internally up to 0.8m high on the west and 1.3m high on the east. The bank appears to be set at an angle to the trend of the enclosure bank and to override it.

E7. A rock-cut ditch 0.5m deep.

E8. A track approaching E6.

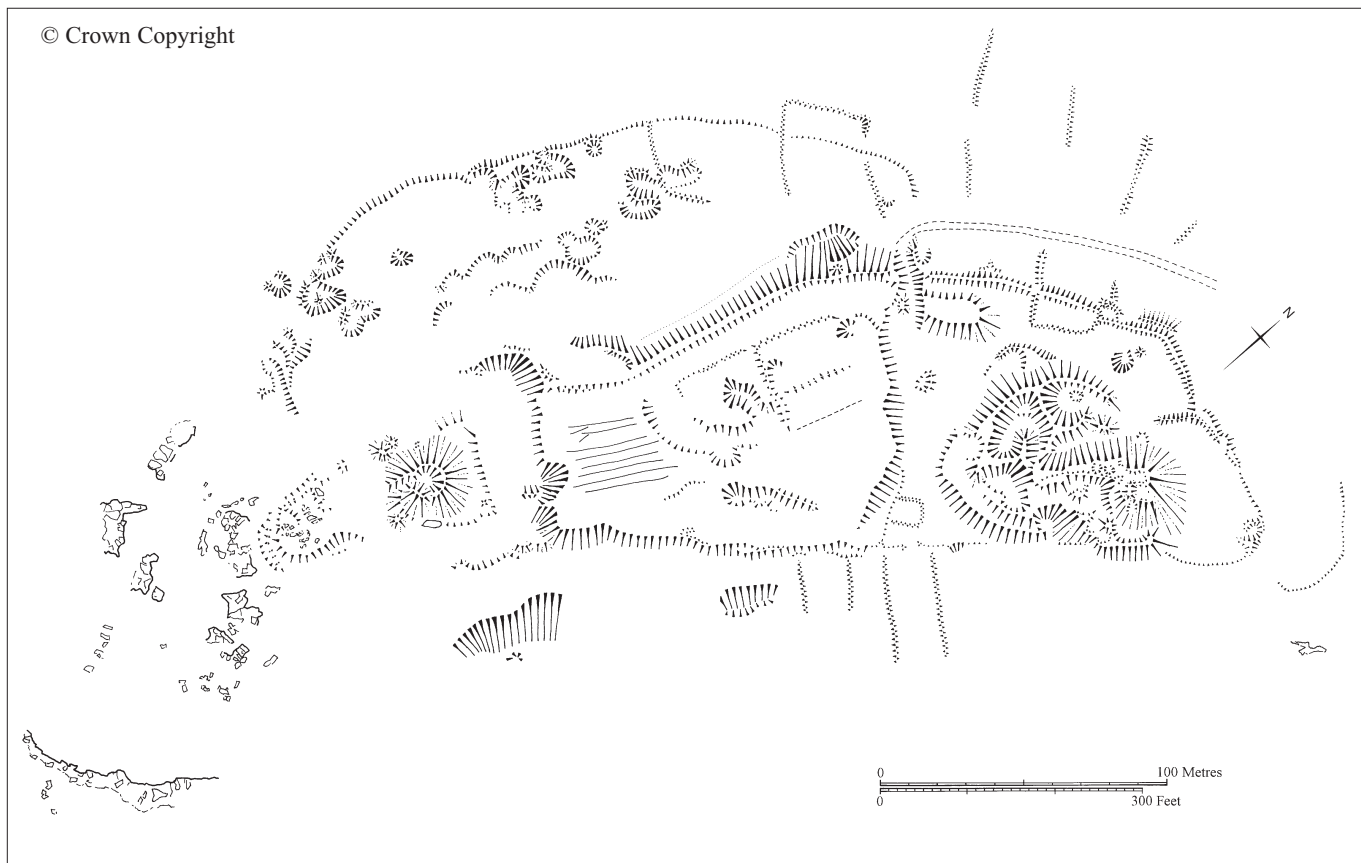
E9. A scarp up to 0.3m high.

E10. A track.

ON THE SLOPES OF THE RIDGE

The long, curving low bank on the lower west slopes of the ridge shown on the plan beyond a complex of quarries might represent an annexe to the putative hillfort or the castle. The various circular, oval and semicircular and

the like hollows indicated are the remains of quarrying, probably all of post-medieval date. The linear banks and enclosures are features associated with agricultural activity after the ruin of the castle.



INTERPRETATION OF THE VISIBLE REMAINS

INTRODUCTION

The documentary sources can be interpreted to support the following sequence of building:

Period 1: 1242 Mortimer's first castle; destruction end 1262; partial refortification end 1262; completed destruction end 1262-1263.

Period 2a: 1267 Mortimer's rebuild.

Period 2b: ca. 1272-3 expansion of Mortimer's build (Smith 1998, 362).

Period 2c: 1356-7 repairs to hall (steps), barn? (door), barn (same as building with door repair? – thatching), prison (iron shackles), great keep (lead and tin).

Period 3: mid-15th century hall.

POSSIBLE HILLFORT

Several authors have suggested that the medieval castle was sited upon the remains of a pre-Roman hillfort (Davies, T. P. 1932, 31; Hogg & King 1967, 97; Brown 1972, 16; Browne & Pearson 1985, 44). W. Ll. Morgan in RCAHMW 1913, 30 considered any possible hillfort to 'have long been obliterated', and Savory (1952-4, 80) opined that there were 'no unambiguous traces'. The suggestion that a hillfort had been built here is not unreasonable given the topography; there is space on the summit for a fort of about 10 hectares. The later walls, C1, C3, C4, C6, may have followed the line and utilised the materials of earlier defences. In 1985 Browne and Pearson suggested that feature D10 might be the remains of a rectangular tower built across the line of a pre-existing earthwork; more recent examination suggests this interpretation may have 'over-read' the visible evidence. Brown (1972) postulated that the

hollow-way C5 may have been the entrance to a hillfort with an associated guard chamber to the south, but he also admits that the features may be medieval. Brown also speculated that some unspecified features at the far south of the site might have been huts; nothing was noted in the current survey to support this suggestion. The annexe identified by Brown on his figure 1 need not have anything to do with a hillfort, but may have been associated with the borough.

FIRST CASTLE

The first castle occupied the north-eastern third of the ridge, areas D and E. It has a tripartite layout. The elevated core (299.2 metres above OD) contains the principal buildings. To the south-west a rock knoll forms a bailey, strongly defended on all sides, but particularly from the easy access along the ridge from the south-west. Below the central elevation, to the north-east, is another enclosure. A trackway, E10, approaches the latter. As Brown has pointed out (1972, 18), the castle is at its most vulnerable when approached from the north.

The principal building of the castle, the 'keep', had three rooms at ground level, D1, D2 and D3, D2 being the main one. There was apparently a small court south-west of D3 through which the visitor passed to the main building from the access-way D9.

Access between the 'outer bailey' to the north-east and the 'inner bailey' or ward was probably via a gate situated at a point between the in-turn of D11 and the south-east slopes of the central elevation. Access to the main building of the citadel was via the ramp D9.

The 'inner bailey' was a triangular spur, defended by a curtain, D4, set back from the exposed rock edge of the promontory. Part of D4 was lost to quarrying along the south-east. D8 is the remains of a building in the south-west of the 'inner bailey'.

There are several possible interpretations of the earthworks D20, D21 and D10. One possibility is that D20 is quarrying interrupting access to the 'inner bailey' via D21 and a gateway at D10. D20, however, may have been part of the defensive ditch system, shallow or unfinished. D21, now a berm, may have been part of the defences rather than a track. D21 might have been the access track to later quarrying, D20.

It is possible to suggest a sequence for the building of the defences below the promontory. Ditch D15 was constructed first by quarrying the promontory edge and

piling a high mound on the downhill side. D16 was built next by excavating and piling a mound downslope. D18 followed, and then D19. The status of D20 is uncertain. The defences become slighter as they progress around the southern tip of the promontory and there is the possibility that they are incomplete.

It is difficult to understand Brown's description of access to the 'inner bailey's' north-west side on the basis of the earthworks observed in this survey; the oven he mentions may be feature D17, which was not probed.

In area E, the 'outer bailey' to the north-east of the first castle, the nature of the more complex earthworks, E6, at the north-east tip is uncertain. It is possible that they are the remains of a gateway, possibly a later insertion. Their apparent relationship to the trend of the main enclosure bank could indicate a later, unrelated structure. The point is approached by a track delineated by an outer bank, E9. The limited extent and depth of the rock-cut ditch, E7, could indicate unfinished work.

W. Ll. Morgan's doubts as to the medieval date of the remains on the northern knoll may be dismissed (RCAHMW 1913, 30).

G. Sandford (1882, 78) has made the interesting suggestion that some of the entrenchments on the west side of the hill below the summit might relate to siege works thrown up in 1262.

THE SECOND CASTLE

The massive rock-cut ditch, B3, protecting the north-east side of the fortifications at the south-west end of the ridge must be that referred to in Llywelyn's letter to King Edward in 1273 (see above). There can be little doubt that, barring the putative pre-Roman defences, the works in this area were begun to replace or supplement those of the first castle, which had proved too vulnerable to assault.

The principal feature is the large mound, B1, the remains of a round or octagonal tower (King 1988, 124-5). Brown (1972, 18) suggests that 'tumbled stonework', presumably B8 and B9, may be the sites of towers on the south-east and south-west, but this is debatable. The mound lies within an almost square walled enclosure, B2. The rock-cut ditch, B3, guards the north-east side, and the only likely site for some form of structure or mechanism to cross the ditch is at the point where some slumping has apparently occurred on its north-east side. Area A forms a bailey to the south-west.

In one of Glyn Cothi's poems (Brown 1972, 19; Johnston 1995, no. 170.1-3) the castle wall is described as white, possibly a description of the colour of the stone or lime plastering. Given the date of the poems, it can only refer to the second castle. Much more intriguing is the description of the castle as an 'eight-sided fort' (*caer wythochr*), which Brown suggests could mean octagonal or many-sided. The piece also describes 'A Greek fort in twelve encircling bands' (*Caer Roeg mewn deuddeg gwregys*), prompting Brown (1972, 15) to ask if this could mean an octagonal tower surrounded by four walls.

THE SECOND CASTLE: OTHER POSSIBLE FEATURES

If we accept that the long stretches of bank on the north-east and south-east edges of the hill between the first and second castle were originally erected in pre-Roman times, it is, nevertheless, clear that they were subsequently modified in places.

Brown (1972, 18) has suggested that the scarp C22 represents a bank which might have acted as a forward defence for the second castle (he gives the orientation wrongly as NE-SW, rather than NW-SE). This is a reasonable suggestion and we can envisage a large northern bailey incorporating several buildings. The sites of two, possibly built one after the other, are represented by the banks C24, C26 and C28. C35 may be the site of the oven identified by Brown.

PERIOD 3

The postulated northern bailey of the second castle is the most probable position for Ieuan ap Phylip's oak-built hall described by Lewys Glyn Cothi (Brown 1972, 20; Johnston 1995, no. 171). Suggett (2005, 38) concludes from the description that 'the house had a central open and wide hall set between two storeyed wings.' This would explain the reference to it being 'modelled on three courts' (*molt teirlllys*) and 'wide' (*Llydan*). The latter statement Suggett takes to suggest the use of a base-cruck truss. The house was 'closed in by planks' (*caeëdig blancau*), which Suggett interprets as the use

of close studded walls, and roofed with 'shields' (*tariannau'n glos*), probably tile stones. The overall appearance is described as 'moonlike, chalky', probably referring to the external rendering (synopsis of the poem by E. D. Jones in Suggett 2005, 38). The theme of 'whiteness' links the poems (J. B. Smith *pers. comm.*)

The remains of buildings represented by C24, C26 and C28 are the most likely candidates for the site of the hall (Suggett 2005, 36). Suggett suggests that the surviving hall at Upper House, Painscastle is similar to how the lost building at Cefnlllys would have looked.

Glyn Cothi's poem (Johnston 1995, no. 170.35-40) might describe erecting a building in stone with lead fixtures (Brown 1972, 19, 21), but the passage may be an elaborate trope.

OTHER FEATURES

It might be speculated from its relatively sharp profile that the bank C3 represented a 'new' wall formed from the materials of an earlier, denuded rampart or curtain along the same alignment. In this interpretation the 'new' wall occupies the rear of the site of the rampart, comprising material piled up from the front, which would account for the hollow along its foot. The bank does not seem to be an obviously defensive structure. South-east of C15, C3 appears to have been deliberately slighted. This slighting might have been associated with the formation of C15 and C16 or C14, or both. The latter enclosures definitely post-date the rampart and C3 in this area and may have been built after the effective life of the castle had ended. The same is probably true of the rectangular enclosures on the steep south-east slopes of the ridge in the vicinity of feature C2. The chronological position of the possible buildings represented by platform C18 and enclosure C21 is uncertain.

The area to the north-east of ditch B3, C33, has been cultivated at some period, as can be ascertained by the presence of a series of parallel cultivation ridges. The ridge top and sides have been quarried quite extensively. Brown suggests that some of the pits might have provided the stone for tiling St Michael's church roof in 1760 (Brown 1972, 19).

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