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The Ringwork Castles of Medieval Leinster and Meath

Emma Arbuthnot

Volume Two – Gazetteer of Sites

PhD

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Site no:	**1**
Site name:	**Carlow Castle**
Townland:	**Carlow**
Parish:	**Carlow**
Barony:	**Carlow**
County:	**Carlow**
Co-ordinates:	**271769, 176632**
RMP no:	**CW007-018002**
RMP classification:	**castle - Anglo-Norman**
Inventory no:	**701**
Inventory classification:	**castle**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: RINGWORK CASTLE

Siting

Carlow Castle is located on a natural rise at the confluence of the River Barrow and the River Burren. This raised area now stands approximately 2-3m above surrounding ground level. The summit area of the knoll has been much reduced as a result of quarrying over the past two centuries.[1] In the medieval period, the castle may have been effectively an island as it was surrounded by an area of marsh which was drained in the eighteenth century.[2]

The siting of the castle at Carlow would have enabled the Anglo-Normans to control both a strategically important crossing point and traffic on the River Barrow. The documentary evidence suggests that the River Barrow was navigable from the sea to beyond Carlow in the medieval period; in 1298, a weir on the River Barrow apparently prevented the passage of ships sailing to Athy,[3] which lies upriver from Carlow.

Excavations

Excavations at Carlow Castle were carried out in 1996 under the direction of Kieran O'Conor. These excavations revealed evidence for an early earth and timber castle on the site. The excavations uncovered a curving ditch, running roughly east-west across the site.

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[1] Kieran O'Conor, 'Carlow Castle preliminary excavation report', (unpublished report, excavation no. 96E0105, 2002), p. 2.
[2] Ibid., pp 2-3.
[3] James Mills (ed.), *Calendar of the Justiciary Rolls or proceedings in Court of the Justiciar of Ireland, 1295-1314,* (3 vols, London, 1905-56), i, 202; G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans,* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20), ii, 231.

The excavated ditch had a v-shaped profile and measured 2m wide at the top and was up to 1m deep. However, the excavator believes that this fosse may have been considerably deeper and wider originally, as will be discussed below. The fact that a layer of silting, 0.15m in depth, was excavated in its base suggests that the ditch was left open for some time.[4]

Ten postholes were excavated on the southern side of the fosse. These postholes were spaced 50cm apart, and measured between 10cm and 14cm in diameter. When excavated, these postholes were only 50cm deep. The line of postholes seems to be contemporary with the ditch, being roughly on the same alignment as it. It seems probable that these postholes represent the remains of a simple palisade running along the southern side of the fosse. This defensive line, consisting of a fosse and palisade, seems to predate the keep and is therefore probably associated with an early earthwork castle although it produced no datable finds. It appears to have divided the summit of the low rise on which the castle is situated into two parts.[5]

A pit shaped like a figure-of-eight was excavated to the north-west of the curvilinear fosse and postholes. This pit measured 2.3m in length, a maximum of 1m in width and was 0.63m deep. The fill at the base of this feature consisted of burnt orange soil, charcoal and fragments of bone. It is probable that this feature belongs to the earthwork phase of the castle, as it partly underlies the line of the western wall of the keep. O'Conor has interpreted this feature as a corn-drying kiln.[6]

A ditch running northwards from Grid 9 may also be associated with the early castle. The alignment of this ditch combined with the absence of any modern finds suggests that this linear feature is not associated with post-medieval activity. O'Conor argues that the similarity of its fill to other Phase 1 contexts suggests that it may be contemporary with the

[4] O'Conor, 'Carlow Castle preliminary excavation report', pp 30-1
[5] Ibid., p. 31.
[6] Ibid., pp 31-2.

earthwork castle, although the lack of any datable finds makes it difficult to reach any definite conclusions concerning its date.[7]

These features seem to represent the remains of an early earth and timber castle. A number of factors may explain the relative scarcity of features and finds associated with early Anglo-Norman occupation on the site. The processes associated with the construction of the stone castle appear to have resulted in the destruction of much of the evidence for the earlier castle. The knoll seems to have been deliberately flattened, creating a completely level site in preparation for the construction of the stone keep. The flattening of the site seems to have destroyed the structures and occupation levels of the earth and timber castle. O'Conor believes that the ground level of the earth and timber castle prior to the levelling of the site was higher in places than that of the later stone castle. Therefore, only the lower levels of relatively deep features survived to be excavated.[8] In the nineteenth century, following the failed attempt to convert the castle into a lunatic asylum, the site became part of a vegetable garden. The deep cultivation furrows associated with this vegetable garden also contributed to the disturbance of the site's stratigraphy.[9] The disturbed nature of the site's stratigraphy means that the features associated with the early castle are isolated from one other. The contexts which would ordinarily overlay contemporary features and link them together are missing. This means that it is difficult to show that the fosse, palisade and corn-drying kiln are contemporary with one other, especially as the contexts associated with these features failed to produce datable finds. However, as all of these features clearly predate the keep, it seems likely that they all belong to the same early Anglo-Norman earth and timber castle.

Antiquarian drawings from the eighteenth century show that the summit of the natural rise was originally much larger. For example, a drawing by Austin Cooper depicts the castle prior to the early nineteenth century activity which resulted in the destruction of the eastern

[7] Ibid., p. 33.
[8] Ibid., p. 37.
[9] Ibid., p. 33.

half of the castle and shows that the mound originally had a much larger summit area.[10] Much of the knoll seems to have been quarried away in the nineteenth century. The excavations failed to find any evidence for defences around the perimeter of the mound and it seems likely that quarrying has resulted in the destruction of all evidence for these defences. However, as O'Conor argues, military logic suggests that there would originally have been a line of defences around the edge of the raised area.[11]

The stone castle at Carlow belongs to a group of castle found in south-eastern Ireland, which Leask labelled 'towered keeps'.[12] As at Ferns, Lea, Terryglass and possibly Wexford, the castle consists of a square keep with round towers on all four corners, built around a very small courtyard or light well.

In the early nineteenth century, Carlow Castle was leased to a Dr Middleton, who was planned to convert the castle into a lunatic asylum. During the course of this work, the castle was badly damaged, resulting in the collapse of much of the keep.[13] While the excavation uncovered some evidence for processes associated with the construction of the keep, it did not produce any conclusive evidence for the castle's chronology. A number of antiquarian drawings show the castle as it survived, prior to the works of 1814. Only the western wall, the south-western tower and the north-western tower are still standing. The upper parts of the castle seem to have been much altered in the late medieval period. The third floor of the north-western tower is clearly a later addition. The presence of a rectangular-headed, three-light window suggests that it was added *c.*1600.[14] The crenellations also appear to have been added at this time.[15]

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[10] Peter Harbison, *Cooper's Ireland: drawings and notes from an eighteenth-century gentleman* (Dublin, 2000), pp 88-9.
[11] O'Conor, 'Carlow Castle preliminary excavation report', p. 34.
[12] H.G. Leask, *Irish Castles and Castellated Houses* (Dundalk, 1999; reprint of second edition published in 1951), pp 47-51.
[13] O'Conor, 'Carlow Castle preliminary excavation report', 15.
[14] Ibid., p. 23.
[15] Ibid., p. 21.

Originally, the keep was entered at first floor level via a doorway with a pointed arch in the northern wall. Features which are useful in dating the construction of the castle include the embrasures and arrow-loops. At ground floor and first floor levels, there are a number of round-arched embrasures. In contrast, at second floor level, there are segmental-arched embrasures. Also, while the passageways of the ground floor and first floor have arched roofs, those on the second floor have flat roofs. These differences suggest that the keep was built in two main phases.[16]

The form of the arrow loops in the keep may also offer some clues regarding the chronology of the structure. In the south-western corner tower, there are plunging cruciform arrow-loops which are notably different to the simple plunging rectangular loops found in the other surviving corner tower and the western wall of the keep. Cooper's drawing shows that cruciform arrow loops were also found in other places around the keep. The surviving cruciform loops are situated at ground floor level and seem to be original. Although this form of loop-hole has traditionally been interpreted as dating to after *c.*1225, recent research in Wales has shown that these arrow-loops may in fact have been utilised in the 12th century. At Chepstow Castle, it has been shown that the gatehouse, which features similar arrow loops, dates to the 1190s. The medieval oak doors of the gatehouse, which were the main doors to the castle until their removal in 1964, have been dated using dendrochronology. On stylistic grounds, it was thought that these doors, and the gatehouse itself, dated to the period when Marshal's sons held the castle, between 1219 and 1245.[17] However, the dendrochronological results have shown that the trees were felled between 1159 and 1189.[18] It must be noted that dendrochronology can only supply the date of the felling of the trees, rather than the date when the timbers was utilised in construction. In this case, however, the timbers do not appear to have been reused; evidence of shrinkage was noted, suggesting that the doors were made within a year or two of the felling of the

[16] Ibid.
[17] J. F. Knight, *Chepstow Castle and Port Wall* (Cardiff, 1991) p. 6.
[18] Richard Avent, 'A late twelfth century gatehouse at Chepstow castle, Monmouthshire, Wales' in *Chateau Gaillard*, xx (2000), p. 29.

trees.[19] Also, during the course of excavations at the gatehouse in 1991, a silver penny of Henry II, minted in the mid 1180s, was found in association with the construction levels of the gatehouse.[20] The evidence therefore suggests that the Chepstow gatehouse was constructed in the late 1180s. Chepstow came into the possession of William Marshal in 1189, on his marriage to Isabella de Clare and Avent has argued that the construction of the gatehouse may have been part of Marshal's first building project at the castle.[21] At Pembroke Castle, cruciform arrow-loops were used in building projects that were carried out under Marshal in the late twelfth century or early thirteenth century.[22] It is notable that these early examples of cruciform loops are found in castles which, like Carlow, were probably constructed under the William Marshal the Elder

Documentary references

Orpen believed that the manor of Carlow was held in demesne by Strongbow during the period of his Lordship of Leinster.[23] However, whilst Carlow was certainly a demesne manor by the time of the partition of Leinster in 1247, it may not always have been one. O'Conor has argued persuasively that, in the late twelfth century, John de Clahull may have held the lands around Carlow.[24] The Song of Dermot and the Earl records that Strongbow granted the barony of Obargi to John De Clahull in the early 1170s;

> 'To John De Clahull the marshalship
> Of Leinster, the rich,
> With all the land, know in sooth,
> Between Oboy and Leighlin.'[25]

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[19] Ibid., p. 29.

[20] Kevin Booth, 'Chepstow Castle: excavations in the Great Gatehouse' in *Monmouthshire Antiquary*, ix (1992), pp 19-25.

[21] Richard Avent, 'William Marshal's building works at Chepstow Castle, Monmouthshire, 1189-1219', in J. R. Kenyon and Kieran O'Conor, (eds), *The medieval castle in Ireland and Wales: essays in honour of Jeremy Knight* (Dublin, 2003), p. 53.

[22] D.J.C. King, 'Pembroke Castle' in *Chateau Gaillard*, viii (1977), pp 169-79; I. W. Rowlands, 'Pembroke Castle and the historian' in *Chateau Gaillard*, xvii (1996), pp 151-55.

[23] G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20), i, 374.

[24] Kieran O'Conor, 'Castle of Carlow – who built and occupied the first castle here?' in *Carloviana*, 4 (1998), pp 37-42.

[25] Evelyn Mullally, (ed.), *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland. La Geste des Engleis en Yrlande. A new edition of the chronicle formerly known as 'The Song of Dermot and the Earl'* (Dublin, 2002), Lines 3100-03.

O'Conor's re-evaluation of the documentary evidence has shown that Oboy was more extensive than Orpen believed, including parts of north-west Carlow and north-east Kilkenny.[26] A charter dating to c.1200 supports the argument that the site of Carlow Castle lay within de Clahull's fief of Obargi. It records that John de Clahull appointed a man called Thurstin to the moiety of several churches in Obargi, including those located at Killeshin and Carlow.[27] This is significant because Gerald of Wales refers to the construction of a castle by Hugh de Lacy for John de Clahull 'on the River Barrow, not far from Leighlin' in the late 1180s.[28] This has been interpreted as referring to the motte at Killeshin.[29] However, as O'Conor points out, Killeshin is located over three kilometres from the Barrow. Also, if this was the site of de Clahull's castle, it seems odd that Gerald would give a vague description of its geographical location rather than simply stating that it was located at Killeshin, a pre-existing monastic settlement.[30] If O'Conor is correct in arguing that de Clahull held Carlow at this time, it seems more reasonable to conclude that the castle referred to may be Carlow Castle, which stands on the banks of the Barrow. It has been suggested that Killeshin may have been de Clahull's original caput castle in Oboy. The motte at Killeshin may have been erected in order to control the pre-existing monastic settlement there. The caput may have moved to Carlow Castle later, when it became clear that Carlow, situated on the River Barrow, had more potential as an economic centre than the relatively isolated settlement of Killeshin.[31]

The manor of Carlow seems to have passed from John de Clahull into the hands of William Marshal in the first decade of the thirteenth century. The charter already discussed, concerning the institution of Thurstin to the moiety of churches in Obargi, shows that John de Clahull held Carlow c. 1200. Carlow's town charter shows that the borough of Carlow was founded by Marshal in the first decade of the thirteenth century, which suggests that he

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[26] Kieran O'Conor, 'The town and castle of Carlow', unpublished conference paper entitled given at Western Michigan University (May 2001), p. 5.
[27] Charles McNeill, (ed.), *Calendar of Archbishop Alen's Register, c. 1172-1534* (Dublin, 1950), p. 26.
[28] A.B. Scott and F.X. Martin (eds.), *Expugnatio Hibernica. The Conquest of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis* (Dublin, 1978), p. 195.
[29] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, i, 386.
[30] O'Conor, 'The town and castle of Carlow', p. 5.
[31] Ibid., pp 4-5.

had gained control of the area.[32] Internal evidence suggests that the town charter was granted before 1210.[33]

O'Conor has suggested that John de Clahull may have been involved in the rebellion of the Leinster barons against Marshal in 1207-8 and it is perhaps in this context that we should view Marshal's acquisition of Carlow.[34] However, there is only circumstantial evidence to support this hypothesis. In a letter dating to 1207, John de Clahull is named amongst a group of Meath and Leinster barons addressed by the king in relation to their protests regarding lands in Offaly which the king had taken into his own hands.[35] This letter suggests that the Irish barons were uniting against Meilyr fitz Henry and the king.[36] However, it is unclear whether de Clahull supported fitz Henry, the justiciar, or William Marshal, lord of Leinster, in the conflict of 1207-8. Fitz Henry himself lost much as a result of the events of 1207-8, forfeiting his castle at Dunamase. However, he was permitted to keep the remainder of his Leinster lands for the rest of his lifetime. De Clahull seems to have held lands in Munster as a vassal of Meilyr fitz Henry after this point. In 1216, King John confirmed the lands of Offerba in Kerry to him,[37] and later generations of the de Clahull line seem to have held lands exclusively in Munster.[38] This could be interpreted as evidence that de Clahull was loyal to fitz Henry rather than Marshal and may corroborate the theory that he had forfeited some or all of his Leinster lands in the aftermath of the 1207-8 rebellion. What seems certain is that, by 1210 at the latest, Carlow was in the hands of William Marshal.

It seems most likely that the stone castle was begun after the manor had come into Marshal's hands. The first clear reference to the castle dates to 1231, when the king issued

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[32] Tommy Clarke, 'Medieval Carlow: some documents' in *Carloviana*, xxviii (1980), p. 4.
[33] Gearóid MacNiocaill, *Na burgéisi, XII-XV aois,* (2 vols, Dublin, 1964), pp 130-8; O'Conor, 'Carlow Castle – who built and occupied the first castle here?', p. 39.
[34] O'Conor, 'The town and castle of Carlow', p. 6.
[35] H. S. Sweetman, *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland* (Dublin, 1875), i, 49.
[36] David Crouch, *William Marshal: knighthood, war and chivalry, 1147-1219*, (2nd edition, London, 2002), p. 104.
[37] Sweetman, (ed.), *C.D.I.*, i, 107-8.
[38] G. H. Orpen, 'The origins of the FitzMaurices, Barons of Kerry and Lixnaw' in *E.H.R.,* xxix (1914), pp 302-317.

orders to the constables of the castles of Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford, Ross, Kildare, the Island, Kerry, Dunamase and Odoth to hand over their castles to Walerand le Teys, the king's bailiff.[39] O'Conor believes that construction probably began between 1210 and 1215.[40] The architecture of the keep seems to be consistent with this interpretation.

Other sites in the local area

A major town developed at Carlow in the Anglo-Norman period. As discussed above, the borough received its charter from William Marshal the Elder before 1210. The Anglo-Norman parish church of St Mary's, which is mentioned in the sources c.1200, was located approximately 150m to the north-east of the castle. No traces of the medieval church survive and the site is now occupied by a eighteenth-century Church of Ireland church. The castle was separated from the church and town of Carlow by an area of marsh, which was not drained until the nineteenth century.[41]

Discussion

O'Conor's excavations have shown conclusively that there was an early castle at Carlow and it seems the most likely candidate for de Clahull's castle on the Barrow, as mentioned by Gerald of Wales. But what category of earth and timber castle was constructed at Carlow? Due to the lack of evidence, is not possible to draw any conclusions regarding the nature of the castle's perimeter defences, entrance and internal structures. The castle was clearly designed to utilise the natural topography of the site to the best advantage. It seems likely that the entire summit of the natural knoll was enclosed. The presence of the internal fosse shows that the castle was divided into two parts. As a large circular area bisected by an internal division, it does not resemble the typical form of either a motte or ringwork castle with a bailey attached. It is perhaps more similar to the arrangement of many contemporary stone castles which often had an inner ward accessed only through an outer ward. The castle does not seem to have been a motte for several reasons; the knoll was natural rather than artificially raised, it is much lower than the typical motte and the summit

[39] Sweetman, (ed.), *C.D.I.*, i, 278-9.
[40] Kieran O'Conor, 'The origins of Carlow Castle' in *Archaeology Ireland*, xi (1997), p. 15.
[41] O'Conor, 'The town and castle of Carlow', p. 3.

seems to have been a relatively large enclosure with room for all the castle's buildings within it. It seems reasonable to classify the site as a ringwork castle, with a raised interior, which was divided into two parts and may have been defended by a bank and fosse. As O'Conor has argued, the construction of the stone castle probable commenced between 1210 and 1215. If the ringwork castle was constructed by John de Clahull during the late 1180, it may have been occupied for a period of over thirty years.

Site no:	**2**
Site name:	**Moone**
Townland:	**Moone**
Parish:	**Moone**
Barony:	**Kilkea and Moone**
County:	**Kildare**
Co-ordinates:	**278324, 192278**
RMP no:	**KD036-034001**
RMP classification:	**castle - ringwork**
Inventory no:	**N/A**
Inventory classification:	**N/A`**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: RINGWORK CASTLE

The site is located in the townland and parish of Moone. On the First Edition O.S. map, the site is depicted as a circular earthwork, which is labelled 'Moone Rath'. The earthwork is currently classified as a ringwork castle by the RMP, although it was listed as a ringfort in the 'Urban Archaeological Survey'.[1]

Siting

The site is located approximately 750m to the south-west of the early medieval monastery and Anglo-Norman church of Moone. The ringwork castle seems to have been modelled out a natural hill which commands excellent views of the surrounding countryside, including the church of Moone to the north-east.

Field report

The site consists of a raised interior enclosed by a fosse and a large external bank (Figure 2). The interior is sub-circular in shape and measures 41m in diameter from east to west and 31m in diameter from north to south. The interior is raised up at the centre and the slope down into the fosse is extremely gradual. Although the interior is quite overgrown, it is apparent that the ground level of the interior is quite uneven and seems disturbed.

[1] John Bradley, Andrew Halpin and H. A. King, 'Urban Archaeological Survey - Kildare', (unpublished, Archaeological Archives, Dublin, undated), p. 339.

The grave of Thomas Ashe, who owned the manor of Moone in the early eighteenth century, occupies a central position in the interior. The inscription on the limestone tombstone records that Ashe was buried here at his own request in 1741.[2] This request is also contained in his will, which states, 'I order and direct that my body...shall be interred in the most private manner by my executors hereafter named, nine foot deep in the centre of the mount in the mount-field, being part of my estate at Moone, in the county of Kildare.'[3] The eighteenth-century antiquarian, Francis Grose, recorded that Ashe was buried in a 'large Danish Rath', and records that it was '...railed around and planted with trees'.[4] No trace of these railings survives but there are a number of large trees around the perimeter of the interior. The burial of Ashe and the erection of these railings may account for the disturbed state of the interior. There is no evidence for a bank around the perimeter of the interior.

From the east clockwise to the southwest, the interior is enclosed by a fosse and a large external bank, which forms a field boundary. The fosse is wide and flat-bottomed. It measures up to 2m in depth below the interior and measures up to 8m in width. The bank measures approximately 1.6m in height above the fosse and 1.4m in height above external ground level. On the northern side of the site, the enclosing fosse and bank are absent. The ground slopes gradually from the interior down to external ground level, between 2m and 3m below.

It is unclear where the original entrance was located. As there is no evidence for an entrance at the east, south-east, south or south-west of the site, where the fosse and outer bank are intact, it seems probable that the entrance was located at the west, north-west, north or north-east of the site.

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[2] Walter Fitzgerald, 'Notes and queries - Ashe of Moone' in *J.K.A.S.*, i, no. 1 (1891), p. 41.
[3] Walter Fitzgerald, 'Replies to queries – Ashe of Moone' in *J.K.A.S.*, vol i, no. 2 (1892), pp 150-51.
[4] Francis Grose, *The antiquities of Ireland by Francis Grose* (2 vols, London, 1797), ii, 26.

Documentary references

An early medieval monastery was located at Moone. The monastery was reputedly founded by St Colmcille in the sixth century. The *Annals of the Four Masters* record that, in 1040, the monasteries at Moone, Castledermot and Dunmanoge in Co. Kildare and Clonmore in Co. Carlow, were '...plundered by Diarmaid, son of Mael-na-mbo, lord of Ui-Ceinnsealaigh; and he carried many prisoners from the oratories.'

The monastic house at Moone seems to have become a parish church under the Anglo-Normans. The history of the church is relatively well-documented. In 1179, a papal bull confirmed that the church of Moone was part of the diocese of Glendalough.[5] The diocese of Glendalough was merged with the archdiocese of Dublin in the late twelfth century and, in 1216, Maon Cholmchille was listed amongst the possessions of Dublin and Glendalough.[6] In 1220, William Marshal the Younger granted the church to Henry de Londres, archbishop of Dublin.[7] Two years, the archbishop granted the church, including its lands, chapels and tithes, to the canons of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.[8]

The early history of the Anglo-Norman manor of Moone is unclear. Orpen believed that the manor of Moone was the principle manor held by Thomas Flandrensis of Ardree and his successor, Milo de Stanton, in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century.[9] However, as Otway-Ruthven has shown, Orpen appears to have confused Moone with Mounmohennok (modern Dunmanoge), in the barony of Dunlost.[10] This confusion is understandable because Mounmohennok was frequently referred to as 'Moun' in charters.[11] The thirteenth century documentary evidence suggests that Moone was held as a demesne manor of the

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[5] Charles McNeill, (ed.), *Calendar of Archbishop Alen's register, c.1172-1534* (Dublin, 1950), p. 5.
[6] Ibid., p. 38.
[7] N.B. White (ed.), *The 'dignitas Decani' of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin* (Dublin, 1957), pp 18-9.
[8] White, *The 'dignitas Decani' of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin*, pp 20-1; Charles McNeill, (ed.), *Calendar of Arrchbishop Alen's register, c.1172-1534* (Dublin, 1950), p. 52.
[9] G. H. Orpen, 'Motes and Norman castles in Ireland' in *E.H.R.*, xxii (1907), p. 249; G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20), i, 385; iii, 176 and 215.
[10] A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'The medieval county of Kildare' in *I.H.S.*, xi, no. 43 (March 1959), p.182.
[11] J. T. Gilbert (ed.), *Register of the Abbey of St Thomas, Dublin* (London, 1889), p. 161 and pp 163-4.

Marshal lords of Leinster and it seems likely that the manor was held in demesne from the time of Strongbow onwards, as suggested by Bradley, Halpin and King.[12]

The borough of Moone seems to have been established during the period of William Marshal the Elder's lordship of Leinster, although the earliest surviving charter was issued by his son, William Marshal the Younger, *c.*1223.[13] The charter records that the rent of one shilling per burgage had been set by Geoffrey fitz Robert. Geoffrey was sent to Leinster by William Marshal the Elder at some time in the last decade of the twelfth century,[14] and the documentary evidence suggests that he acted as seneschal; he is styled 'seneschal of Leinster' in the witness list of a charter recording a grant from William de St Leger to St Thomas's Abbey, Dublin, which was issued in the early thirteenth century.[15] The dates of Geoffrey's seneschalcy are unclear as this position seems to have been rotated amongst Marshal's most trusted household knights;[16] John Marshal seems to have been sent to Ireland in 1204 to take over as seneschal and John of Earley and Jordan de Sanqueville were appointed joint seneschals in 1207, albeit with orders to heed the advice of several fellow knights, including Geoffrey fitz Robert.[17] In 1210, Geoffrey was one of the knights demanded as hostages by King John to guarantee William Marshal's good behaviour,[18] and he died in custody at Hereford in 1211.[19] Although the exact dates of Geoffrey's seneschalcy are unknown, the agreement that he made with the burgesses of Moone regarding rent must have been made in the last decade of the twelfth century or the first decade of the thirteenth century. The borough had been established by 1210 at the latest and the 'foundation' charter therefore postdates the foundation by up to three decades.

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[12] Bradley, Halpin and. King, 'Urban archaeological survey – Kildare', p. 324.
[13] Gearóid MacNiocaill, *Na buirgéisí: XII-XV aois* (Dublin, 1964), pp 246-50; James Mills, (ed.), *Calendar of the Justiciary Rolls or proceedings in Court of the Justiciar of Ireland, 1295-1314,* (3 vols, London, 1905-56), i, 369-71.
[14] Sidney Painter, *William Marshal: knight errant, baron and regent of England* (Baltimore, 1933), p. 152.
[15] Gilbert (ed.), *Register of the Abbey of St Thomas, Dublin,* pp 124-5.
[16] David Crouch, *William Marshal: knighthood, war and chivalry, 1147-1219* (2nd edition, London, 2002), pp 172-3.
[17] A. J. Holden, Stewart Gregory and David Crouch, (eds), *Histoire de Guillaume le Marechal or History of William Marshal* (2 vols, London, 2002-06), Lines 13503-06.
[18] Ibid., Lines 14325-30.
[19] Ibid., Lines 14459-62 and 14483-86; N. B. White, (ed.), *Irish monastic and episcopal deeds, AD 1200-1600* (Dublin, 1936), p. 313.

Geoffrey fitz Robert seems to have played a major role in urban development during his time in Ireland. The rent to be paid by the burgesses of the boroughs of Carlow, Kilkenny and Wexford was set by Geoffrey and Painter has argued that Geoffrey may also have responsible for establishing the borough of New Ross.[20] Like Moone, Carlow received its charter from William Marshal the Younger *c.*1223, despite having been established during the period of Geoffrey's seneschalcy.[21] The granting of charters to pre-existing boroughs does not seem to have been particularly unusual; as O'Keeffe has pointed out, '...charters often postdate the foundations to which they referred.'[22]

The charter issued by William Marshal the Younger outlines the rights and privileges of the burgesses and refers to several structures which were already extant by *c.*1223, including a castle and 'corn mills'.[23] As was usual, the burgesses were each entitled to a burgage plot. It is notable that William Marshal's charter refers to the castle as 'castelli mei', implying that the castle was his property, but it also mentions the bailiffs of the castle.

Moone continued to be held in demesne by the Marshal lords of Leinster until the partition of 1247. The manor of Moone, along with Kildare, Carbury, Maddenstown (Ballysax), Castlecomer, Taghmon and Clonmines, was assigned to the share of Sibyl Marshal. Moone was the most valuable of these manors,[24] although this is probably because, as the extents listed below show, the lands of Moone also included the nearby borough of Ardscull. Sibyl had died by 1247 and her share of the Leinster inheritance was divided up amongst her seven daughters and their husbands.[25] The manor of Moone was inherited by William de Mohun, through his mother, Isabel de Ferrers, and an extent of the manor was taken on his

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[20] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 152.
[21] *Chartae, privilegia et immunitates, being transcripts of charters and privileges to cities, towns, abbeys and other bodies corporate: 18 Henry II to 18 Richard II, 1171 to 1395* (Dublin, 1889), p. 37; Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, i, 56.
[22] Tadhg O'Keeffe, *Medieval Ireland: an archaeology* (Stroud, 2000), p. 90.
[23] Bradley, Halpin and King ('Urban archaeological survey – Kildare', p. 324) also stated that there was a 'hospice' at Moone based on this charter. However, the charter seems to refer to people under the earl's hospitality rather than a physical 'hospital' building.
[24] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, iii, 98.
[25] Ibid., iii, 97-8 and 101-2.

death in 1282.[26] This extent offers a description of the manor of Moone but it is notable that it makes no reference to a castle but mentions the 'grange' of Moone. During this period, the manor of Moone was frequently referred to as 'Grangemohun'. The features associated with the manor at this time included a dovecote, a garden and a mill, which was valued at 40*s*.

An second inquisition of the lands of William de Mohun was taken in 1284, two years after his death, and it recorded that William's lands included eight knights' fees at 'Grangemone', valued at £47 17*s*. William's heir was his son, Reginald, who was seven years old at this time, and a third of William's lands were assigned to his widow, Beatrice, as her dower lands.[27] Reginald seems to have died without issue and, in 1297, his lands were divided between his sisters, Mary and Elizabeth, who were married to John de Merriet and John de Carew (also known as John de Mohun) respectively. The manor of Moone was included in Elizabeth and John's share.[28]

In 1299, John surrendered his lands in Kildare and Dublin to the king in exchange for the manor of Long Compton in Warwickshire.[29] An extent of the manor of Moone and the other lands formerly held by John was taken later in the same year.[30] This extent implies that the main residence held by John at Moone was 'the messuage of Grange Moun', which was worth only 1*s*. with its curtilage. This grange was also mentioned in the extent taken in 1282. Although the term 'grange' was generally used to describe ecclesiastical farms, it may in this context refer to the ringwork castle. The reference to the 'castle' of Moone contained in William Marshal the Younger's charter suggests that, in the early thirteenth century, the fortification was considered to be a castle. However, by the turn of the

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[26] Paul Dryburgh and Brendan Smith, (eds), *Inquisitions and extents of medieval Ireland* (Kew, 2007), pp 25-7; Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, iii, 101.
[27] Dryburgh and Smith, (eds), *Inquisitions and extents of medieval Ireland*, p. 33.
[28] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, iii, 101.
[29] H. S. Sweetman (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland,* (5 vols, London, 1875-83), iv, 270; James Mills, (ed.), *Calendar of the Justiciary Rolls or proceedings in Court of the Justiciar of Ireland, 1295-1314,* (3 vols, London, 1905-56), i, 369.
[30] Sweetman (ed.), *C.D.I.*, iv, 309-10.

fourteenth century, perceptions of castles may have changed and the same fortification may have been viewed as a manor house with an associated farm rather than a castle.

The extent of 1299 shows that, by the late thirteenth century, Moone was quite a large town. It recorded that the burgesses paid £8 0*s*. 4*d*. (the equivalent of 160*s*. 4*d*.) in rent.[31] According to William Marshal the Younger's charter of *c.* 1223, the burgesses of Moone paid an annual rent of 12*d*. (1*s*.) per burgage.[32] This indicates that, in 1299, there were160 burgages in the town.[33] The borough of Ardscull was a thriving borough in its own right; in 1282, there were 160 burgages at Ardscull, suggesting that it was roughly the same size as Moone.

The justiciary rolls contain some interesting references to crime in Moone and the surrounding area in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century. In 1297, there were three cases relating to Moone or people from Moone. William Cadel of Moone and Richard Clement of Moone were amongst eight men charged with assaulting and robbing John le Notour on the highway near Timolin.[34] William, son of Milo de Norrath, and Math M'gillemory broke into the church of Moone and stole goods from it and also robbed cows from the town of Moone. They fled and were outlawed.[35] Finally, William, son of William of Norrath, stole two cows and nine pigs from the town of Moone and was outlawed, having fled.[36]

The following year, in 1298, Michael de Weston was charged with stealing five cows, which were the property of the son-in-law of Henry Thun, from the town of Moone and driving them to Mounmohennok (Dunmanoge). The jury found that Michael stole them on

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[31] Ibid., iv, 309-10.
[32] MacNiocaill, *Na buirgéisí,* pp 246-50; Mills, (ed.), *Cal. just. rolls,* i, 369-71.
[33] Bradley, Halpin and King, 'Urban archaeological survey – Kildare', p. 327.
[34] Ibid., i, 171.
[35] Ibid., i, 183.
[36] Ibid., i, 185.

the orders of his lord, Walter Lenfaunt, and he was fined only half a mark 'because it was in time of disturbance'.[37]

An entry in the justiciary rolls, under the year 1302, records a dispute between the king and the community of the town of Moone. Prior to surrendering his lands to the king in 1299, John de Mohun had given the mill and 200 acres of pasture to the community for a fee farm of 24 marks. However, the community 'being much impoverished by the heavy farm' returned the pasture to their lord.' Following John's surrender of his lands to the king in 1299, the people of Moone occupied the pasture without royal permission. The provost and community of Moone were ordered to pay 60*s*. for the two years they had used the pasture.[38]

In 1308, John, son of John of Moone, was accused of attacking Walter Dullard in the town of Timolin but was found innocent by the jury.[39] Two years later, in 1310, three men, including 'David the weaver of Moone', were charged with breaking into the priory at nearby Timolin and stealing property. Although one of his accomplices was found guilty and sentenced to hanging, David was found not guilty.[40] Later in 1310, Agatha, daughter of William of Meath, was accused of stealing silver and other goods from a chest belonging to her father, which was stored in the church of Moone.[41]While these entries in the justiciary rolls offer an insight into life in the town of Moone at the turn of the fourteenth century, they shed little light on the history of the ringwork castle.

In 1305, the lands of 'la Berton and Mon', which had been held by John de Mohun until 1299, were granted to the justiciar, John Wogan, to hold for a period of ten years. However, the advowson of the church of Moone was retained by the king.[42] The manor of Moone continued to be held by the Wogan family. An extent of the manor was taken in 1357,

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[37] Ibid., i, p. 207.
[38] Ibid., i, 185.
[39] Ibid., i, 35.
[40] Ibid., i, 148.
[41] Ibid., i, 158.
[42] Sweetman, (ed.), *C.D.I.*, v, 127-8.

following the death of Thomas Wogan. This extent supplies very little information about Moone but records that Thomas was succeeded by his son, John, and his wife was allocated one third of her husband's estates as her dower lands.[43] The manor of Moone remained in the hands of the Wogan family until 1447, when it passed into the possession of the Eustace family.[44]

In 1580, there was a garrison stationed at 'the Moone',[45] and it seems likely that the garrison was based in a castle.[46] The *Civil Survey* records that there were two 'castles' at Moone in the mid-seventeenth century, one of which was worth £15 and the other £40. There was also a mill. The 'Mannor of Moone', which was forfeited by Thomas and Maurice Eustace, contained 120 acres, of which 700 were arable, 260 pasture and 30 meadow. The parish also contained Greate Birton, Little Birton and Kilbecan.[47]

The 'census' of 1659 recorded that there were still 109 people resident at Moone, suggesting that it was still a sizable settlement in the seventeenth century.[48]

In 1703, Thomas Ashe, an alderman of Dublin, purchased the manor of Moone.[49] As discussed above, he requested that he be buried in a grave at the centre of the earthwork site. It is interesting that Ashe's will referred to the site as the 'mount in the mountfield'.[50] This local name for the site has not survived; century later, on the First Edition O.S. map, the site was labelled as 'Moone Rath'.

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[43] Dryburgh and Smith, (eds), *Inquisitions and extents of medieval Ireland*, pp 192-3.
[44] E. F. Tickell, 'The Eustace family and their lands in Co. Kildare' in *J.K.A.S.*, xiii, no. 8 (1955), pp 270-87; Bradley, Halpin and King, 'Urban Archaeological Survey – Kildare', p. 328.
[45] H. C. Hamilton, (ed.), *Calendar of the state papers relating to Ireland of the reign of Elizabeth 1574-85 preserved in her Majesty's Public Record Office* (London, 1867), p. 266.
[46] Bradley, Halpin and King, 'Urban archaeological survey – Kildare', p. 328.
[47] R. C. Simmington, (ed.), *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-1656. Volume 8: County of Kildare* (Dublin, 1952), pp 116-7.
[48] Seamus Pender, (ed.), *A Census of Ireland circa 1659 with supplementary materials from the poll money ordinances 1660-61*, (Dublin 1939); Bradley, Halpin and King, 'Urban archaeological survey – Kildare', p. 326.
[49] Walter Fitzgerald, 'Replies to queries – Ashe of Moone' in *J.K.A.S.*, vol i, no. 2 (1892), pp 150-51.
[50] Ibid.

Other sites in the local area

The ringwork castle is located approximately 750m to the west of the church at Moone. As discussed above, the documentary evidence shows that there was an early medieval monastic house of some importance at Moone. The church was located in a prominent position, on a ridge above the River Greese. As the church was already in existence, the site on which the ringwork castle was constructed would have been the best available site when the Anglo-Normans arrived. This may explain why the church and castle are located relatively far away from each other. The documentary evidence discussed above suggests that the medieval borough of Moone was quite a large settlement. The precise location and extent of the settlement is unknown. It was concluded in the 'Urban Archaeological Survey' that, based on the local topography, the most likely site for the bulk of the houses and burgage plots would have been the area to the west of the church.[51] It seems possible that the borough would have filled much of the space between the church and castle, although no trace of this settlement survives at ground level.

Several eighteenth and nineteenth century sources state that there was a Franciscan friary at Moone.[52] There does not seem to be any evidence for a friary and it seems possible that Moone has been confused with Clane, where a Franciscan friary was founded in 1258.[53]

A late medieval tower house is located to the south of the church, in the grounds of Moone Abbey House.[54] This small tower house may be one of the two castles at Moone mentioned in the *Civil Survey,* as mentioned above.

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[51] Bradley, Halpin and King, 'Urban Archaeological Survey - Kildare', pp 326-7.

[52] Mervyn Archdall, *Monasticon Hibernicum: or, an history of the abbies, priories and other religious houses in Ireland* (2 vols, Dublin, 1786), i, 335; Grose, *The antiquities of Ireland by Francis Grose*, ii, 26; Michael Herity, (ed.), *Ordnance Survey letters Kildare: letters containing information relative to the antiquities of the County of Kildare collected during the progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1837, 1838 and 1839* (Dublin, 2002), ii, 87.

[53] Aubrey Gwynn and R.N. Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses: Ireland, with an appendix to early sites* (London, 1970) p. 280; Miriam Clyne, 'Interim report on the excavations at Moone Abbey, Co. Kildare, 1998' in *J.K.A.S.*, xviii, no. 4 (1998-9), p. 475.

[54] Mike Salter, *The castles of Leinster* (Malvern, 2004), p. 53.

The documentary evidence listed above shows that there were at least two mills at Moone in the Anglo-Norman period. Although the location of these mills is unknown, it seems likely that one of them may have been in the same location as 'Moone Mills', which is shown on the First Edition O.S. map, to the east of the ringwork castle.

The First Edition O.S. Moone Park labels the area to the east of the ringwork castle, on the opposite side of the river, as 'Moone Park'. It seems probable that this park is post-medieval in origin. However, it is not inconceivable that there may have been a park associated with the Anglo-Norman manor. Unfortunately, there does not appear to be any documentary evidence for a medieval park in this location.

The references to Moone contained in the *Justiciary Rolls*, which are discussed above, suggest that Moone was on a major medieval route-way. The references indicate that there was a highway linking Kildare, Timolin, Moone and Castledermot, following roughly the same route as the modern road.

Discussion

Although the earthwork at Moone is poorly preserved, it seems to be a typical example of a ringwork castle, consisting of a raised interior enclosed by a wide fosse and substantial bank. The earthwork is sites strategically on a high point in the landscape, which commands excellent views of the surrounding countryside. The documentary evidence shows that there was a castle at Moone in the thirteenth century, which was associated with a demesne manor of the Marshal lords of Leinster. It has been suggested that the earthwork at nearby Ardscull represents a motte castle associated with the manor of Moone and Ardscull. However, as O'Conor has pointed out, the history of the possible motte at Ardscull is obscure as it does not appear in the documentary sources before the seventeenth century. [55] The earthwork at Moone seems a much more likely Anglo-Norman castle, particularly in view of the documentary evidence for a castle in this location. The earthwork has therefore been classified as a definite ringwork castle.

[55] Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), ii, 673.

Site no:	**3**
Site name:	**Pollardstown**
Townland:	**Pollardstown**
Parish:	**Pollardstown**
Barony:	**Offaly East**
County:	**Kildare**
Co-ordinates:	**277481, 215108**
RMP no:	**KD023-004**
RMP classification:	**castle - ringwork**
Inventory no:	**N/A**
Inventory classification:	**N/A**

The ringwork castle at Pollardstown was excavated in 1971 because it was in the process of being destroyed as a result of quarrying activity.[1]

Siting

The site was situated on the summit of a steep-sided esker ridge. This ridge was composed of gravel and boulder clay. The site commanded excellent views of the surrounding area, including the Curragh to the south.

Field report

By the time the site was excavated in 1971, it had already been badly damaged as a result of quarrying activity and only the western third of the earthwork was intact (Figures 2 and 15). It has since been completely destroyed and no traces of it are visible at ground level. Unfortunately, a full description of the site's morphology does not seem to exist. According to the excavation report, the site originally consisted of an oval interior, enclosed by a small inner bank, a fosse and an outer bank. The interior seems to have been raised slightly above external ground level. The site had an overall diameter of approximately 70-80m.[2]

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[1] Thomas Fanning, 'Excavation of a ringfort at Pollardstown, Co. Kildare' in *J.K.A.S.*, 15 (1973-4), p. 251-61.
[2] Ibid., p. 253.

A cutting was opened across the inner bank and into the interior on the western side of the site, in addition to two small cuttings across the fosse and outer bank. The outer bank was shown to consist of up-cast boulder clay from the fosse. No evidence for a palisade was discovered in the cutting across the inner bank.[3]

Although the main cutting extended into the interior, no evidence for structures was discovered. However, it was only possible to excavate an area measuring 3-4m², which represents a small proportion of the original area of the interior.[4] The excavation of the interior did uncover a habitation deposit, consisting of fine black soil, which had an average depth of approximately 0.2m.[5] Finds recovered from this deposit included two iron stirrups, an iron arrowhead, an iron buckle, iron nails and animal bone.[6] Two small spreads of charcoal were revealed in the interior; one contained pieces of burnt bone while the other, which was surrounded by an area of burnt gravel, contained two small pieces of iron slag. This suggests that iron smelting may have been carried out at the site, particularly as there iron ore was readily available in the local area.[7]

The finds suggest that the site was occupied from the twelfth to the fourteenth century.[8] As argued by the excavator, the finds from the site are military in character and do not represent a typical ringfort assemblage, being more comparable to '...the type of object one finds in a military encampment of Anglo-Norman type.'[9] The habitation deposit appeared to be contemporary with the construction of the earthwork and there was '...no reason to doubt that it represents one period of occupation.'[10] As Fanning argued, the excavated evidence suggests that the site was constructed as an Anglo-Norman ringwork castle and does not represent a reoccupied or adapted ringfort.[11]

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[3] Ibid., pp 252-4.
[4] Ibid., p. 257.
[5] Ibid., p. 254.
[6] Ibid., p. 256-9.
[7] Ibid., p. 254.
[8] Ibid., p. 259.
[9] Ibid., p. 260.
[10] Ibid., p. 259.
[11] Ibid., p. 260.

Documentary references

Pollardstown seems to have been held by the de Wellesley family from the late thirteenth century. The de Wellesleys were originally from Wellesley and Dulcote in Somerset. The documentary evidence suggests that the first member of the family to hold lands in Ireland was Waleran de Wellesley, who was active in Ireland from *c.*1226 until his death *c.*1261. Waleran appears to have held lands in southern Wicklow.[12]

The first known reference to Pollardstown is contained in an extent taken in 1297, following the death of William de Vescy. This extent recorded that Waleran de Wellesley held of William, '...his tenements at Kynheygh by the service of 7*l.* 10*s.* per year....his tenements at Pollardstown by the service of 1 mark a year and his tenements at Galmorestoun by the service of 100*s.* a year.'[13] Waleran, who may have been the son or grandson of the Waleran de Wellesley mentioned above, died in 1303.[14]

At the time of the Ecclesiastical Taxation of Ireland in 1302-6, the church at Pollardstown was valued at 50*s.* and the vicarage was worth 30*s.*[15]

In the fourteenth century, Pollardstown seems to have passed into the hands of the Fitzgerald family. An extent taken in 1331, following the death of Richard fitz Thomas, shows that Richard had held the manor of Pollardstown in demesne, although John de Wellesley also rented lands there. [16]In the mid-fourteenth century, Thomas de Cartoun held one carucate of land at Pollardstown.[17]

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[12] E. St J. Brooks, *Knights' fees in counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny* (Dublin, 1950), pp 54-5.
[13] H. S. Sweetman, (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland,* (5 vols, London, 1875-83), iv, 225-6.
[14] J. T. Gilbert, (ed.), *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin, with the register of its house at Dunbrody and Annals of Ireland* (2 vols, Dublin, 1884), ii, 332.
[15] Sweetman, (ed.), *C.D.I.*, v, 244-5.
[16] Gearóid MacNiocaill, (ed.), *The Red Book of the earls of Kildare*, (Dublin, 1964); Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), ii, 720.
[17] James Mills and M. J. McEnery, (eds), *Calendar of the Gormanston Register* (Dublin, 1916), p. 115.

Other sites in the local area

The ruined parish church of Pollardstown is located within a triangular graveyard, approximately 860m to the west of the ringwork castle.[18] The church, which had triple lancet windows in both the east and west gables, can be dated to the thirteenth century on architectural grounds. O'Neill views the church as an 'architectural satellite' of Kildare cathedral, which was probably constructed under John of Taunton, bishop of Kildare between *c.*1232 and 1258.[19] It is unclear when the church at Pollardstown went out of use; it was described as a ruin in the early nineteenth century.[20]

A burial ground of unknown date was discovered by workmen excavating gravel, approximately 250m to the south-east of the ringwork castle. The workmen claimed to have come across 'human skulls, also bones of horses and deer horns'.[21]

There is a ringfort approximately 500m to the east of the ringwork castle.[22] A second enclosure is located roughly 50m to the south of this ringfort.[23]

The ringwork castle is located close to the motte castle of Morristownbiller,[24] which lies approximately 900km to the south-east. It can be assumed that the stream which serves as the modern townland and parish boundary functioned as the dividing line between the Anglo-Norman manors of Pollardstown and Morristownbiller.

The ringwork castle at Pollardstown commands good views across the Curragh to the south. In the Anglo-Norman period, the Curragh was frequently used as a mustering point

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[18] KD023-003.
[19] Michael O'Neill, 'The medieval parish churches of County Kildare' in William Nolan and Thomas McGrath, (eds), *Kildare: history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 2006), pp 172-3.
[20] Raymond Refausse, 'The Visitation Notebook of Charles Lindsay, Bishop of Kildare, 1804-1808' in *J.K.A.S.*, xvii (1987-1991), p. 143.
[21] KD023-005.
[22] KD023-007.
[23] KD023-006.
[24] KD023-009 and KD023-008.

for the army. A battle between royal forces and rebelling barons, in which Richard Marshal was killed, was fought at the Curragh in 1234.

Discussion

The earthwork at Pollardstown was not particularly impressive before its excavation and was believed to be a ringfort. However, Fanning's excavations showed that the earthwork was high medieval in date and that many of the finds were of military character. Unfortunately, very little of the earthwork was available for excavation and no internal buildings or features were uncovered. The documentary evidence suggests that the ringwork castle was associated with the Anglo-Norman manor of Pollardstown, which was held by the de Wellesley family until the early fourteenth century. The ruined church of Pollardstown, which lies approximately 860m to the west, was probably part of the same manorial settlement, although the distance between the castle and church suggests that the settlement may have been quite dispersed. The findings of Fanning's excavations combined with the documentary evidence for Anglo-Norman settlement justifies the classification of this earthwork as a definite ringwork castle, although it is no longer extant and its exact dimensions are unknown.

Site no:	**4**
Site name:	**Rathangan**
Townland:	**Rathangan**
Parish:	**Rathangan**
Barony:	**Offaly East**
County:	**Kildare**
Co-ordinates:	**266963, 219619**
RMP no:	**KD017-011001 and KD017-011004**
RMP classification:	**ringfort – rath and castle - ringwork**
Inventory no:	**N/A**
Inventory classification:	**N/A**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: RINGWORK CASTLE

Siting

The earthwork is located to the north-west of the modern town of Rathangan. It is situated on a slight rise and commands reasonably good views of the surrounding area. The River Slate is located approximately 300m to the south of the site.

Field report

The site at Rathangan consists of a raised circular interior enclosed by a deep, wide fosse (Figures 2 and 26). The interior measures approximately 60m in diameter and is dished, with ground level around the edge of the interior rising up to 1.5m higher than ground level at the centre of the earthwork. The centre of the interior is not raised significantly above external ground level. The raised ground level around the perimeter seems to represent a poorly preserved inner bank.

The enclosing fosse is wide and steep-sided and has a u-shaped profile. It measures between 3m and 5m in depth below the interior and between 1.6m and 2.5m in depth below external ground level. It measures between 12m and 14.5m in width. O'Conor has noted that the traces of an outer fosse can be seen on the northern side of the site, approximately

6m beyond the edge of the main fosse. This fosse is very shallow, measuring up to 0.3m in depth and up to 5m in width.[1]

The probable original entrance is located at the east of the site. It consists of a causeway over the fosse and a corresponding gap in the inner bank. The causeway measures 3.8m in width and approximately 0.5m in height above the base of the fosse. The gap in the inner bank is 2.9m wide. It is notable that the entrance is orientated towards the Church of Ireland church, which lies approximately 60m to the east-south-east (Plate 4a). A slightly raised track-way extends for approximately 20m from the entrance causeway towards the church. As O'Conor has suggested, this feature may represent a medieval roadway linking the castle and church.[2] There is also a possible entrance at the west of the site. It consists of a causeway over the fosse and a gap in the inner bank. However, it seems likely that the entrance at the south-east, which is orientated towards the church and the probable location of the associated medieval settlement, represents the original entrance.

Documentary references

Rathangan was the site of a royal centre of the Uí Failge from as early as the sixth century.[3] It appears regularly as the in the sources as the 'Rath of Imgháin'. A poem composed by Berchán describes the ringfort and lists the kings of Uí Failge kings who occupied it;

> 'The fort over against the oakwood,
> It was Bruidge's, it was Cathal's,
> It was Áed's, it was Ailill's,
> It was Conaing's, it Cúilíne's,
> And it was Maél Dúin's.
> The fort remains after each king in turn,
> And the hosts sleep in the ground.'[4]

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[1] Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1992), ii, 721.
[2] Ibid.
[3] A. P. Smyth, *Celtic Leinster: towards an historical geography of early Irish civilisation, AD 500-1600* (Dublin, 1982), p. 68.
[4] Kuno Meyer (ed.), *Selections from Irish poetry* (London, 1959), p. 93; M. A. O'Brien (ed.), *Corpus Genealogiarium Hiberniae* (2nd edition, Dublin, 2001), p. 58.

The names of the Uí Failge kings listed in the poem seem to match up with those given in the annals. Smyth believes that this poem was composed in the early eighth century.[5] Under the year 801, the *Annals of the Four Masters* record that 'Flaithiusa, son of Cinaedh, lord of Uí Failghe, was slain at Rath Imghain'. .

It seems certain that the early medieval site referred to in the sources is the earthwork site which now stands close to the church. However, the documentary evidence shows that there was an Anglo-Norman castle at Rathangan and it seems probable that this site was re-fortified.

The early history of the Anglo-Norman manor of Rathangan is unclear; the Fitzgeralds clearly held Rathangan in the thirteenth century but it is uncertain how they came to possess it. It has been suggested that Rathangan was granted to Maurice fitz Gerald by Strongbow.[6] Alternatively, it may have been part of Strongbow's grant of Offaly to Robert de Bermingham and Maurice fitz Gerald may have inherited it, along with Lea and Geashill, by right of his wife, Eva de Bermingham.[7]

The documentary evidence shows that, by the mid-thirteenth century, the manor of Rathangan was held by the fitz Gerald family. Following the death of Maurice fitz Gerald, who drowned crossing the Irish Sea in 1268,[8] William de Valence promised 3000 marks to Thomas de Clare for the custody of the lands and tenements formerly held by Maurice fitz Gerald, with the marriage of his heirs, the custody of the castle of Lea and the manor of

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[5] A. P. Smyth, 'Hui Failgi relations with the Hui Neill in the century after the loss of the plain of Mide', *Etudes Celtique*, XIV, ii (1975), p. 511.
[6] Walter Fitzgerald, 'Rathangan' *in J.K.A.S.,* v, no. 3 (1907), p. 137 and p. 158.
[7] G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans,* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20), i, 381; John Bradley, Andrew Halpin and H. A. King, 'Urban archaeological survey – Kildare', (unpublished, Archaeological Archives, Dublin, 1986), p. 413; O'Conor; 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', ii, 722. For a full discussion of the lands inherited by the fitz Geralds through Eva de Bermingham, see Lea site report (no. 16)
[8] Michael O'Clery *et al.,* (eds), *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters; from the earliest times to the year 1616* (8 vols, Dublin, 1990, reprint of edition published Dublin, 1856), *s.a.* 1268.

Rathangan.[9] It is notable that, while the castle at Lea is mentioned, there is no reference to the existence of a castle at Rathangan at this time.

Between 1288 and 1293, Amabilia, daughter of Maurice fitz Maurice, issued two quitclaims in relation to lands including the manors of Maynooth, Rathmore, Rathangan, Lea and Geashill.[10] Rathangan in mentioned in a writ issued in 1288-90, which makes provision for the defence of the area against the Gaelic Irish and states that Peter de Bermingham was to be responsible for guarding the area between Totemoy and Rathangan.[11]

In 1299 or 1300, a 'fortalice' at Rathangan was destroyed by the Gaelic Irish. John fitz Thomas petitioned the king for help in rebuilding the fortification, and received the following response;

> 'The King sends his writ: Edward, &c., to John Wogan, his Justiciar of Ireland. John, son of Thomas has petitioned, that when he was in the King's service in the parts of Flanders, certain Irish malefactors burned John's town of Rathymegan, and committed homicides and depredations in the neighbouring lands. The King wills to grant him the King's service of Ireland for one time, in aid of building anew a fortalice against the Irish in those parts. The Justiciar is to call the Council, and consider the petition, whether it would be for the utility of the land and the firmer preservation of peace, and at his discretion may grant the service. Teste at York, 28 May *a. r.* xxvi' [12]

This reference to the rebuilding of a 'fortalice' at Rathangan is notable because it shows that there was a fortification of some kind at Rathangan in the late thirteenth century. The interpretation of the term 'fortalice' has been a matter of some debate. In fifteenth or sixteenth century contexts, the word is most frequently used in relation to tower houses.[13] However, O'Conor has suggested that, in a late thirteenth century context, the term may

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[9] H.S. Sweetman, (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland,* (5 vols, London, 1875-83), ii, 141.
[10] Gearóid MacNiocaill, (ed.), *The Red Book of the earls of Kildare*, (Dublin, 1964), pp 77-8.
[11] Sweetman, (ed.), *C.D.I.*, iii, 267.
[12] Ibid., v, 20; James Mills, (ed.), *Calendar of the Justiciary Rolls or proceedings in Court of the Justiciar of Ireland,* 1295-1314, (3 vols, London, 1905-56), i, 230.
[13] C. T. Cairns, *Irish tower houses* (Athlone, 1987), p.9.

relate to earthwork castles.[14] As it seems highly unlikely that this late-thirteenth century reference relates to a tower house, O'Conor's argument seems reasonable. By the later thirteenth century, many castles had been built in stone, so the term may have been used to imply that the fortification was a 'lesser' castle of earth and timber rather than a stone castle. O'Conor believes that the 'fortalice' rebuilt at Rathangan is the earthwork site which now stands adjacent to the church and that it had been adapted by the Anglo-Normans in the late twelfth or thirteenth century to form a ringwork castle.

Very little is known about the settlement at Rathangan before the early fourteenth century. In the writ quoted above, it is recorded that, in 1299 or 1300, the town of Rathangan was burned down.'[15] In an extent taken in 1331, following the death of John fitz Thomas, it is recorded that the rent from the burgages in the town of Rathangan amounted to £6 3*s*. 2*d*.[16] This shows that the town had acquired the status of a borough and indicates that, if the annual rent was 1*s* per burgage as it was in many other Irish medieval boroughs, there were approximately 120 burgages in the town.[17] This extent also mentions the castle (*castrum*) at Rathangan.[18]

The castle at Rathangan does not reappear in the documentary sources again until the sixteenth century. A castle at Rathangan was used by Silken Thomas during the rebellion of 1535. Royal forces took the castle from the Fitzgeralds and used the castle in 1535 and 1537 in campaigns against the local Gaelic Irish.[19] As discussed below, it seems probable that the sixteenth century castle was located to the south of the ringwork castle, where the site of a castle is marked on the First Edition O.S. map. However, the documentary evidence suggests that the ringwork castle may have been reused in the sixteenth century.

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[14] Kieran O'Conor, 'The later construction and use of motte and bailey castles in Ireland: new evidence from Leinster' in *J.K.A.S,* xvii (1987-91), pp 13-30.
[15] Sweetman, (ed.), C.D.I., v, 20; Mills, (ed.), *Cal. Just. Rolls,* i, 230.
[16] MacNiocaill, (ed.), *The Red Book of the earls of Kildare*, p. 102; Bradley, Halpin and. King, 'Urban archaeological survey – Kildare', p. 414.
[17] Bradley, Halpin and. King, 'Urban archaeological survey – Kildare', p. 414.
[18] MacNiocaill, (ed.), *The Red Book of the earls of Kildare*, p. 102.
[19] Walter Fitzgerald, 'Rathangan' in *J.K.A.S.,* v, (1907), pp 144-6; O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster, ii, 721.

In a letter from Gerald Aylmer, the Chief Baron, to Thomas Cromwell, it is recorded that a fortification outside Rathangan was used by a including Lord Leonard Gray and Sir William Brabazon and their men in 1535; they went to

> '....Rathangan, as well to view the keeping of the said garrison as to view the company of Chaier Ochonor; with whom, and our awne, we entered the woode in the marises beside Rathangan, wherein Thomas has a Stronge house, made all of erthe, and so deched, watered, and of soche force, as men of experience said that being manned, ordenaunced and vitteld, it had not be pregnable. Albeit we brenned it so, as we trust that the matter is now at that point that Ochonor shall no longe trouble us.'[20]

The description of this fortification fits the ringwork castle at Rathangan. The early modern town seems to have been located to the east and south-east of the site, so it site would have been 'beside' Rathangan, although there is no evidence to suggest that this area was wooded or 'in the marises' or bog. The description mentions a ditch, which was wet, and states that the fortification was made of earth. This all seems to describe the ringwork castle quite well. Although the enclosing fosse is no longer wet, is seems possible that it was in the early modern period.

Other sites in the local area

The medieval church of Rathangan was located on the site of the Church of Ireland church, which lies 60m to the south-east of the possible ringwork site. The present church on the site is a First Fruits church, constructed in 1828. The documentary evidence suggests that the medieval church had been in use up until the early nineteenth century. The visitation notebook of Charles Lindsey, Bishop of Kildare, records that he visited Rathangan in 1804 and found that the town had '...suffered much in the Rebellion in 1798' and 'since that time the church has been made a kind of citadel.....and the windows been half built up with loop holes for firing upon an attacking populace'.[21] However, by the time of his next visit in 1808, the church at Rathangan was 'in complete repair'.[22]

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20 *State papers published under the authority of His Majesty's Commission: King Henry the Eighth* (11 vols, London, 1830-1852), ii, 266; Fitzgerald, 'Rathangan', p. 146.

[21] Raymond Refausse, 'The Visitation Notebook of Charles Lindsay, Bishop of Kildare, 1804-1808', *JKAS*, XVII (1987-1991), p. 133.

[22] Ibid., p. 142.

As the documentary sources discussed above show, there was a borough at Rathangan in the medieval period. Although the first reference to this borough is contained in a document dating to 1331, it seems likely that the town was established in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. As Bradley, Halpin and King have pointed out, the plots on Main Street seem to preserve a burgage plot pattern.[23]

The site of a castle is shown on the First Edition O.S., approximately 300m to the south of the ringwork castle. It seems probable that this castle site represents the castle mentioned in the sixteenth and seventeenth-century sources. It was probably a stone castle of tower house type. This castle was destroyed in the mid-eighteenth century and the stone was re-used in the construction of a house called Rathangan Lodge, which stands approximately 100m to the north of the castle site.[24]

Discussion

The documentary sources show that there was both an early medieval stronghold and an Anglo-Norman castle at Rathangan. As O'Conor has argued, it seems probable that both of these fortifications are represented by the earthwork site adjacent to the church at Rathangan. The site is morphologically acceptable as a ringwork castle and is extremely well-defended by its earthen bank and deep wide ditch. The documentary sources indicate that this castle was associated with the Fitzgerald manor of Rathangan and the proximity of the earthwork to the castle indicates that these sites were associated and were the main components of an Anglo-Norman manorial settlement. It seems probable that the early references to a castle relate to a stone structure located approximately 300m to the south.

[23] Bradley, Halpin and. King, 'Urban archaeological survey – Kildare', p. 415.
[24] Fitzgerald, 'Rathangan', p. 157; O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster, ii, 722.

Site no:	**5**
Site name:	**Rathasker**
Townland:	**Rathasker**
Parish:	**Naas**
Barony:	**Naas North**
County:	**Kildare**
Co-ordinates:	**287783, 217115**
RMP no:	**KD024-001001**
RMP classification:	**enclosure**
Inventory no:	**N/A**
Inventory classification:	**N/A**

O'Conor identified a possible ringwork castle site in the townland of Rathasker, based on the cartographic evidence.[1] Although the site has been quarried away and nothing remains of it at ground level, it is depicted on the first, second and third edition Ordnance Survey maps as a 'castle' enclosed by a circular earthwork. Nothing now remains of either the castle or the enclosing earthwork as the site was removed in the 1980s.

Siting

The site lies approximately 2km to the south-west of Naas in the townland of Rathasker. The townland of Rathasker is divided between the civil parishes of Naas and Killashee and the site is located close to the boundary, just inside the parish of Naas. The site was located on the summit of a small hill, which is the highest point in the local area, and would have commanded good views in all directions. A small river lies 150m to the south of the site.

Field report

Although nothing of the site remains at ground level, three field reports contained in the RMP file offer an overview of the site's morphology. It was possible to draw a section of the earthwork based on the measurements contained in these reports (Figure 2).

The first report was written by David Sweetman following a visit to the site in 1971. This report recorded that the site was being damaged and provided a detailed description of the

[1] Kieran O'Conor, 'Earthwork castles in Leinster', (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), ii, 744.

site. The site consisted of a raised circular platform enclosed by an inner bank, a fosse as well as an outer bank in places. The entrance was located at the east. The enclosed area was roughly circular and had an internal diameter of 40m from north to south and 39m from east to west. This circular platform was raised roughly 2m above external ground level. The inner bank measured 0.45m in height above the interior. From the top of the inner bank, there was a drop of between 2.3 and 2.5m down into the fosse. The fosse was between 5 and 5.5m in width. It is not clear how deep the fosse was below external ground level, or the outer bank where it was present; it is described as 'shallow'. Sweetman's report was written at a point when quarrying activity had damaged the site but not yet destroyed it. Quarrying had cut into the site from north to east to south and the fosse was visible in profile. The fosse was v-shaped. Unfortunately, the photographs showing the fosse in section have since been lost. There was evidence for an outer bank at the south of the site but its measurements are unknown.[2]

Sweetman stated that there were remains of a stone building near the centre of the enclosed area, consisting of a rectangular depression measuring 16m square and 0.45m deep, with parts of a stone structure clearly visible within it.[3] It seems probable that this depression represented the remains of the rectangular 'castle' which is shown on all three editions of the Ordnance Survey maps. Austin Cooper recorded in 1781 that a 'mount' stood on a hill to the southwest of Naas, which was 'surrounded with trees and on it the remains of a Castle, called Rahasker, or I suppose properly Rathesker'.[4] O'Donovan, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, recorded that, 'In Rathascar townland are the ruins of a castle standing in the centre of a Fort or Mound.'[5] By the 1970s, it seems that little of this 'castle' building remained. O'Keeffe has stated that the stone building at Rathasker is '...not Anglo-Norman but later' and that there is no reason to believe that the earthen enclosure is anything other

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[2] P. D. Sweetman, Field Report, 1971, KD024-001001.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Liam Price, (ed.), *An eighteenth century antiquary. The sketches, notes and diaries of Austin Cooper*, (Dublin, 1942), p. 26; T. J. De Burgh, 'Ancient Naas', *J.K.A.S.*, xv, p. 322.
[5] Michael Herity, (ed.), *Ordnance Survey letters Kildare: letters containing information relative to the antiquities of the County of Kildare collected during the progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1837, 1838 and 1839* (Dublin, 2002), p. 59.

than a reused ringforts.[6] Unfortunately, O'Keeffe does not offer any evidence for his dating of the stone structure.

The RMP file records that, on the basis of Sweetman's recommendation, a preservation order was put on the site at Rathasker in 1971. A second field report, which is anonymous, shows that the site was revisited in 1972. This report is less detailed than Sweetman's but mostly agrees with it. It differs from the first report in attributing the depression at the centre of the site to modern disturbance rather than recognising it as the remains of a structure. Also, it states that the entrance was at the north of the site rather than the east as recorded by Sweetman.[7]

An undated third report, written by Anna Brindley, records that when the site was visited again, it was found to have been levelled, despite the preservation order. This third report probably dates to the mid or late 1980s.[8] No trace of the site now remains at ground level.

Documentary references

While there is no known documentary evidence for a medieval castle at Rathasker, there is limited evidence for Anglo-Norman occupation there. According to a fourteenth-century list of tenants holding lands in Kildare by royal service, Philip Kerdyfe held 8 carucates of land, valued as half a knights fee, at 'Rahoskyr' of William de London.[9]

The *Civil Survey* records that, in the mid-seventeenth century, 'ye fields of Rahasker' in the parish of Naas, were held by Sir James Ware and William Plunkett, both of whom were Protestant. The lands consisted of 12 acres of arable land worth £1 and 10*s*.[10]

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[6] Tadhg O'Keeffe, 'The archaeology of Norman castles in Ireland' in *Archaeology Ireland* iv (3) (1990), p. 17.
[7] Anonymous Field Report, 1972, RMP file 24:1002-2.
[8] Rachel Barrett, DoEHLG Archives, pers. comm., July 2007.
[9] *James* Mills and M.J. McEnery, (eds), *Calendar of the Gormanston Register* (Dublin, 1916), p. 1; A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'Knight's fees in Kildare, Leix and Offaly' in *J.R.S.A.I.,* ix, no. 2 (1961), p. 166.
[10] R. C. Simmington, (ed.), *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-1656. Volume 8: County of Kildare* (Dublin, 1952), p. 68.

Other sites in the local area

There appears to be no evidence for a medieval church at Rathasker. The nearest known medieval church site is located at Killashee, which lies approximately 1500m to the south-east of Rathasker. Killashee was an Early Christian ecclesiastical site of some importance. Although an eighteenth-century Church of Ireland church stands on the site of the medieval church, ecclesiastical remains, including a graveyard, a holy well and several grave-slabs, are located at the site, which is situated within a large circular enclosure of probable early medieval origin. The site of a 'castle' is marked 50m to the north-east of the church on the First Edition O.S. map.

Discussion

It seems possible that this site was an earth and timber castle with a stone or stone footed tower within it. The siting and morphology of the site, as described in the RMP field reports, seems to be consistent with the classification of this site as a possible ringwork castle. David Sweetman, having re-read the report that he wrote in the 1970s, agrees that this site may have been an earth and timber castle of ringwork type.[11]

[11] David Sweetman, pers. comm., 12 July 2007.

Site no:	**6**
Site name:	**Castletobin**
Townland:	**Castletobin**
Parish:	**Callan**
Barony:	**Callan**
County:	**Kilkenny**
Co-ordinates:	**145105, 242482**
RMP no:	**KK026-003**
RMP classification:	**castle - ringwork**
Inventory no:	**N/A**
Inventory classification:	**N/A**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: RINGWORK CASTLE

This site was removed when the Kilkenny to Callan road was widened in the mid-1970s. Limited excavations were carried out at the site in 1974-75, prior to its destruction.

Siting

The site was located approximately 1.3km to the north-east of the medieval town of Callan. The site was defined on its southern side by the main Kilkenny to Callan road. The earthwork was situated at the summit of a slight rise and commanded good views in all directions. The field in which the site was located was known locally as the 'Castlefield'.

Field report

This earthwork was removed when the Kilkenny to Callan road was widened in the mid-1970s and no traces of the site are visible at ground level. The following description is based on information contained in the excavation report.[1]

The site consisted of a sub-circular area, enclosed by a single ditch. The enclosed area measured approximately 50m in diameter and was sub-circular in shape, although it was slightly squared off at the north-west and south-west. It is notable that the site was depicted on the First Edition O.S. map as a hexagonal rather than a circular earthwork.

[1] Deborah Sutton, 'Archaeological excavation preliminary report: Castletobin, Callan, Co. Kilkenny. December 1974 - January 1975' (unpublished excavation report, licence no: 74E140, 2003).

The interior was defined by a ditch, which measured up to 4m in width. Prior to excavation, there was no evidence for an enclosing bank.

The entrance may have been located at the north-west of the site, where there appeared to be a slight causeway over the enclosing fosse.

Excavations

Excavations were carried out at Castletobin over a five week period between December 1974 and January 1975, prior to the widening of the Callan-Kilkenny road, which resulted in the site's destruction.

Due to financial and time constraints, only a small proportion of the site was excavated. Initially, a cutting measuring $5m^2$ was opened in each of the four quadrants of the interior, in addition to two linear trenches across the enclosing ditch. Two further cuttings were opened in the interior, in addition to four extra trenches across the ditch, including one in the area of the probable entrance.[2]

The excavation of the ditch showed that it originally had a u-shaped profile and was cut into the natural boulder clay. The ditch measured up to 5.5m in width and up to 2m in depth.[3] The excavation revealed no evidence for a bank on either side of the ditch; the up-cast boulder clay resulting from the digging of the ditch seems to have been spread out evenly rather than used to form an enclosing bank. The finds recovered from the ditch included two sherds of thirteenth or fourteenth-century local, unglazed pottery, in addition to sherds of early modern and modern pottery, animal bone, iron nails, a knife and a horseshoe. These finds all came from the rubble fill in the ditch and could not be used to date the ditch's construction.[4]

At the north-west of the site, immediately to the south of the probable entrance, a stone wall was exposed along the inner face of the ditch. This wall proved to be the outer wall of a small stone tower, measuring approximately 1.9m internally. The north, south and

[2] Ibid., p. 6.
[3] Ibid., p. 7.
[4] Ibid., p. 10.

east walls of the tower measured between 0.55m and 0.65m in thickness. The western, outer wall was thicker, measuring approximately 1m in width, and had a slight batter.[5] It seems possible that the stone tower represents part of a gatehouse associated with the probable entrance feature directly to the north. Very few finds were found in association with the tower. However, a sherd of thirteenth-century, probable Ham Green Ware was found in the interior fill at the base of the tower, suggesting that the tower may have been in use at that time. An ornamental bronze anchor pendant or charm, of sixteenth or seventeenth-century date, was found on the upper surface of the ruined north wall. This may show that the tower had gone out of use by this time.[6]

The other trenches excavated across the ditch revealed no evidence for an enclosing wall along the inner face of the ditch elsewhere. Several features were excavated in the interior of the site, including a well, three post-holes, an area of cobbling and some post-medieval field drains. [7]

The excavator has suggested that Castletobin is a 'two period habitation site' as the ditch seems to have been re-cut to accommodate the construction of the stone tower.[8] Unfortunately, the lack of stratified finds makes it impossible to accurately date the excavated features. The two phases of the site's construction may have been separated by only a few years rather than decades or centuries. The lack of evidence for early medieval occupation indicates that the site probably represents a two phase purpose-built ringwork castle, as argued by Barry,[9] rather than a re-used early medieval ringfort, as originally suggested by the excavator.[10]

Documentary references

There are no known references to a castle or manor at Castletobin in the Anglo-Norman period. It seems probable that the ringwork castle at Castletobin was associated with a

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[5] Ibid., p. 8.
[6] Ibid., p. 8.
[7] Ibid., pp 10-15.
[8] Ibid., p. 16.
[9] T.B. Barry, 'Anglo-Norman ringwork castles: some evidence' in Terence Reeves-Smith and Fred Hammond, (eds), *Landscape archaeology in Ireland* (Oxford, 1983), p. 307; T. B. Barry, *The archaeology of medieval Ireland* (London, 1987), p. 48.
[10] Deborah Sutton, 'Castletobin' in *Excavations summary accounts of archaeological excavations in Ireland* (Belfast, 1974), p. 18.

branch of the Tobin family. The name 'Tobin' seems to be a corrupted version of the Anglo-Norman name 'St Aubyn', which also appears in Latin as 'de Sancto Albino'. It is known that the Anglo-Norman Tobin family were active in Kilkenny from the early thirteenth century. William de St. Albino witnessed Geoffrey fitz Robert's charter to the priory of Kells in Ossory between 1204 and 1206.[11] The Tobins held lands at Ballytobin, approximately 5km to the south-east of Callan from the mid-thirteenth century. The lands of 'Ballagh' had originally been granted to Reginald de Albamara. When Reginald died without issue, his lands passed into possession of his son-in-law, Adam, son of Thomas, son of William de Sancto Albino.[12] The manor of Ballagh adopted the name of its lords and became known as Ballytobin. It seems possible that the ringwork castle at Castletobin, approximately 6km to the north of Ballytobin, had some connection with this branch of the Tobin family.

The documentary sources show that there was a castle and associated settlement at Castletobin in the early modern period. In 1597, an inquisition found that, at the time of his death, William Lincoll's property included the moiety of the castle, towne and land of 'Castelltobane' in Co. Kilkenny.'[13] In 1629, another inquisition found that Katherine Lincoll had held the same 'castle, town and land of Castletobban' at the time of her death.[14]

Other sites in the local area

The ringwork castle appears to be quite isolated in the landscape; there are no recorded sites or monuments within a 1km radius of the site. The documentary evidence discussed above indicates that there was a settlement at Castletobin in the early modern period and the First Edition O.S. map also shows that there was a hamlet there in the mid-nineteenth century. However, no traces of this settlement survive at ground level. .

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[11] N. B. White, (ed.), Irish monastic and episcopal deeds, AD 1200-1600 (Dublin, 1936), pp 1-3; E. St J. Brooks, Knights' fees in counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny (Dublin, 1950), p. 252.
[12] White, (ed.), *Irish monastic and episcopal deeds*, p. 306; Brooks, *Knight's fees*, p. 253.
[13] *Inquisitionum in officio rotulorum cancellariæ Hiberniæ asservatarum, repertorium. Volume 1: Leinster* (Dublin, 1826), Kilkenny, Eliz., no. 2.
[14] Ibid., Kilkenny, Car. I, no. 24.

It is notable that the site lies approximately 1.3km to the north-east of the Anglo-Norman town of Callan. The town of Callan was established in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century and received its charter from William Marshal the Younger between 1219 and 1231.[15] The settlement became an important Anglo-Norman town, located on one of the main route-ways into Munster.[16] It seems likely that the modern Callan to Kilkenny road follows the approximate route of the medieval road that linked the two towns. If this is the case, the ringwork castle would have been in an ideal position to guard the approach to Callan.

Discussion

The excavations at Castletobin seem to have proved that this earthwork was occupied in the Anglo-Norman period as a ringwork castle. The excavator originally interpreted the site as a refortified ringfort. However, Barry has convincingly argued that it is just as likely that the two phases of the site represent two Anglo-Norman phases of a ringwork castle. Although the historical context of this earthwork castle is unclear, its position in relation to the approach road to Callan must have made it strategically important.

[15] Gearoid MacNiocaill, *Na burgeisi, XII-XV aois* (2 vols, Dublin 1964), i, 109-20.
[16] Conleth Manning, 'The finding of the Civil Survey of Inistioge and Callan' in *Archaeology Ireland*, xiv, no. 3 (2000), pp 18-23; Sutton, 'Archaeological excavation preliminary report: Castletobin, Callan, Co. Kilkenny. December 1974 - January 1975', p. 3.

Site no:	**7**
Site name:	**Danesfort**
Townland:	**Danesfort**
Parish:	**Danesfort**
Barony:	**Shillelogher**
County:	**Kilkenny**
Co-ordinates:	**252138, 146465**
RMP no:	**KK023-080**
RMP classification:	**castle - ringwork**
Inventory no:	**N/A**
Inventory classification:	**N/A**

The site is located in the townland and parish of Danesfort. It has been classified as a ringwork castle by the RMP. However, a more likely ringwork castle is located in the adjoining townland of Pigeonpark, approximately 1.75km to the north (site no. 10).

Siting

The site is located on the west side of the N10 road from Kilkenny to Stoneyford, approximately 1.75km south of Danesfort crossroads. The site appears to have been sculpted out of a natural hillock. It occupies a dominant position in the landscape and commands excellent views in all directions. As the First Edition O.S. map shows, the site lay within the estate landscape associated with Danesfort House.

Field report

The site consists of a raised platform enclosed by a wide fosse and a substantial outer bank (Figure 2). A post-medieval ruined octagonal building occupies a central position on the platform. The circular platform measures 28.5m in diameter from east to west and 43m from north to south. There is no evidence for an inner bank. From the summit, there is a steep drop down into the fosse. The platform stands approximately 4m in height above the fosse.

The fosse and external bank are best preserved on the eastern side of the site. Here, the fosse is wide and U-shaped in profile, measuring approximately 8.7m in width at the top and 2m at the base.

The external bank measures between 60cm and 1.5m in height above the fosse and between 1.50m and 2.50m in height above external ground level. However, from the base of the external bank, the ground slopes quite steeply away in all directions, except around the entrance feature at the north of the site.

At the north of the site is an entrance feature, consisting of a ramp which goes over the bank and fosse. The ramp or causeway is approximately 5m in width. It is unclear if this feature is original or if it is contemporary with the folly on the summit.

The ruins of a post-medieval building occupy a central position in the interior of the site. The building is octagonal and seems to have had two-storeys. It has an internal diameter of 5.5m. The building has some features, including round-headed windows at both ground and first floor level, a fireplace at first floor level and a door at the north. The documentary evidence discussed below suggests that this building was a summer house.

Documentary references

As is outlined in the report on the ringwork and bailey at Pigeonpark (site no.10), there is documentary evidence for a manorial centre of some importance at Danesfort. However, it seems likely that the ringwork and bailey castle at the crossroads, rather than this site, represents the remains of an earth and timber castle associated with the medieval manor.

The history of this site seems very much linked to that of Danesfort House, which was situated approximately 90m to the north-north-west. Although Danesfort House is no longer extant, a surviving antiquarian drawing of the house shows that it was a late seventeenth century house with later additions.[1] The house was constructed by the Wemyss family, who owned the estate from the late seventeenth century until the late nineteenth century.[2] The earthwork site lies within the area of the estate landscape which surrounded

[1] Francis McAvoy, 'The Wemyss family of Danesfort, County Kilkenny', *O.K.R.*, lviii (2006), pp 135-136.
[2] Ibid.

Danesfort House. The structure on the summit of the earthwork site was an integral part of this manicured landscape; it would have been visible to anyone approaching the house from the south or passing by on the road and it would also have offered an ideal vantage point for viewing the demesne. The exact date of the building's construction is unknown; it was certainly in existence by the mid-nineteenth century as it was depicted on the First Edition O.S. map, dating to 1839-42, where it was labelled as a "turret". It was labelled a "turret (in ruins)"on the Second Edition, published in 1903. Although it has been described as a folly, it seems that structure was actually used in the nineteenth century as a 'summer house'.[3] The fact that the building has internal features, including a first floor fireplace, also suggests that it was not purely ornamental.

In the mid-nineteenth century, three 'sepulchral urns' were discovered in close proximity to the earthwork. An account of their discovery by Revd James Graves records that these Bronze Age urns were discovered during the course of gravel extraction works in the area around the earthwork;

> 'The sand-pits were formed in a spur running eastward from the knoll, which, crowned by the well-defined earthen dun, with some planting, and an old summer-house, forms a conspicuous object in the deer-park of Danesfort.'[4]

Graves' account also records that several skeletons were uncovered in addition to the urns. This indicates that the earthwork originated as a Bronze Age tumulus although it may have been re-used in the medieval period. The place-name evidence seems to support this; 'Danesfort' is a corruption of 'Dún Feart', meaning 'the fort of the graves'. It seems probable that the nineteenth-century quarrying activity combined with the deliberate landscaping of the estate associated with Danesfort House caused significant disturbance to the earthwork and may have changed its appearance significantly. Orpen's suggestion that this earthwork represents the eponymous Dunfert, whereas the earthworks at the crossroads (Pigeonpark) mark the centre of the Anglo-Norman settlement, seems reasonable.[5]

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[3] James Graves, untitled account, in *J.R.S.A.I.* iii (1860), p. 169.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, iii, 92.

Other sites in the local area

The site is located approximately 1.75km to the south of the ringwork and bailey castle at Danesfort cross-roads, which seems to mark the centre of the Anglo-Norman manor of Danesfort. The medieval parish church of Dunfert lies 110m to the north and the sites of Danesfort House and the late medieval castle lie approximately 90m to the north-north-west.

The earthwork was located within the estate landscape associated with Danesfort House. The landscape around the house was much altered between the late seventeenth century and the mid-nineteenth century, in order to form a designed landscape. Nineteenth century descriptions of the estate record that the area to the south of the house, within which the earthwork is located, was used as a deer park.

The archaeology of the townland of Danesfort is discussed more fully in the site report for Pigeonpark (site no. 10).

Discussion

The morphology of this earthwork is similar to that of a ringwork castle and its siting, on a high point in the landscape, gives the site commanding views over the surrounding area. The documentary and archaeological evidence indicates that there was a thriving manor and borough at Danesfort in the high and late medieval periods. However, as Orpen and O'Conor have both argued, the earthwork at Danesfort crossroads seems a far more likely candidate for a ringwork castle associated with the Anglo-Norman manor.

Site no:	**8**
Site name:	**Kilkenny Castle**
Townland:	**Dukesmeadows**
Parish:	**St Patrick's**
Barony:	**Shillelogher**
County:	**Kilkenny**
Co-ordinates:	**250863, 155688**
RMP no:	**KK019-026078**
RMP classification:	**castle - Anglo-Norman**
Inventory no:	**N/A**
Inventory classification:	**N/A**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: **RINGWORK CASTLE**

Siting

Kilkenny Castle is located on a naturally raised site, above the River Nore. The land falls away steeply towards the river on the northern side of the castle. On the eastern, southern and western sides of the castle, the ground slopes away gently.

The site overlooks a fording point on the River Nore, approximately 200m to the north-west.[1] In the medieval period, the River Nore was navigable from Waterford Harbour to beyond Kilkenny. This was probably one of the main factors that influenced William Marshal's decision to make Kilkenny the *caput* of his lordship. It was also the main reason for the economic success of the medieval town.

Excavations

A series of excavations were carried out at Kilkenny Castle in the 1990s under the direction of Ben Murtagh. The first excavations were carried out between 1991 and 1993, underneath the central wing of the castle. Between 1995 and 1998, excavations were carried out in under and around the south tower. Finally, in 1998-9, excavations were carried out in the

[1] Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), ii, 737.

south-western half of the castle yard. Unfortunately, only interim reports for these excavations are available at present.[2]

The earliest feature excavated under the stone castle was a sod-built building. Three walls of this structure were excavated under the central wing of the stone castle; the fourth wall of the building had been truncated by the line of the later curtain wall. This structure was square with rounded corners and measured approximately 4.2m by 4.6m internally.[3] Although no datable finds were associated with this the sod building, it seems to pre-date the earth and timber castle. However, it is unclear if this structure represents pre-Norman or early Norman activity on the site.[4]

Murtagh's excavations uncovered evidence for an earth and timber castle under the stone castle, in the form of an enclosing fosse and bank. The excavations showed that the up-cast material from the fosse was been used to construct an internal bank, which measured between 2.4m and 3m in height.[5] The excavated evidence indicated that the stone castle may have followed the plan of the pre-existing earthwork castle; Murtagh has stated that '...the curtain wall was built along the ridge of the rampart and circular towers were constructed at each of the four corners of the enceinte.'[6] This suggests that the ringwork castle may have been sub-rectangular rather than circular in form. The excavations also showed that the base batter of the stone castle follows the line of the outer slope of the rampart associated with the ringwork castle.[7] As only a small proportion of the ringwork castle has been excavated, it is not possible to come to any definite conclusions regarding its shape and size.

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[2] Ben Murtagh, 'The Kilkenny Castle Archaeological Project 1990-1993: interim report' in *Old Kilkenny Review*, xlv (1993), pp 1101-1117; Ben Murtagh in Isabel Bennett, (ed.), *Excavations bulletin; summary accounts of excavations in Ireland*, 1991, p. 81; 1992, p. 110; 1996, p. 393; 1997, p. 304; 1999, p. 449.
[3] Murtagh, 'The Kilkenny Castle Archaeological Project 1990-1993: interim report', p. 1108.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid., p. 1108-10.
[6] Ibid., p. 1111
[7] Ibid.

The programme of excavation and conservation work carried out at the castle has led to an improved understanding of the plan of the stone castle and has shown that more of the medieval fabric survives within the modern castle than was previously believed.[8] Originally, Kilkenny seems to have had a similar plan to the royal castles of Dublin and Limerick, being an enclosure castle, which lacked a central keep.[9] The conservation project showed that the four towers and the surviving three walls have preserved much of the medieval fabric within them and that the antiquarian drawings present an accurate portrayal of the plan of the medieval castle. It seems to have consisted of four wings with a large circular tower at each of the four corners, built around a large courtyard. The castle was trapezoidal shape may reflect that it preserves the plan of its ringwork predecessor. The castle seems to have been entered via a twin-towered gatehouse, located at the centre of the western curtain wall.[10] Nothing of this gatehouse survives and its plan is known solely from antiquarian drawings.

Kilkenny and the royal castles of Dublin and Limerick share very similar plans, suggesting that they are roughly contemporary with one another.[11] They were all constructed as keep-less enclosure castles with large round towers at the corners, and all utilised twin-towered gatehouses at their entrances. A royal writ records that King John ordered the construction of Dublin Castle in 1204.[12] However, the building of the castle may not have started immediately. Manning believes that the man chiefly responsible for the design and construction of the castle was Henry of London, justiciar of Ireland from 1213, and the documentary evidence shows that work on the castle was still in progress in the 1220s.[13] King John's Castle in Limerick is roughly contemporary with Dublin Castle. The Anglo-Normans seem to have gained full control over Limerick by 1197,[14] and it seems likely that

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[8] Ibid., p. 1115.
[9] Ibid., pp 1104-5.
[10] P. D. Sweetman, *The medieval castles of Ireland* (Cork, 1999), pp 50-2.
[11] Murtagh, 'The Kilkenny Castle Archaeological Project 1990-1993: interim report', pp 1104-5.
[12] J.T. Gilbert (ed.), *Historic and municipal documents of Ireland, A.D. 1172-1320* (London, 1870), no. 10, p. 61; H. S. Sweetman, (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland,* (5 vols, London, 1875-83), i, 35.
[13] Conleth Manning, 'Dublin Castle: the building of a royal castle in Ireland' in *Chateau Gaillard,* xviii (1998), p. 119.
[14] G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans,* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20), iii, 45-78.

the construction of the castle commenced soon after this date, probably in the first decade of the thirteenth century.[15] Like Kilkenny, Limerick appears to have been constructed on the site of a ringwork castle, which may date to the first period of Anglo-Norman occupation in Limerick, *c.*1175-6. [16]

Although it was generally accepted in the past that twin-towered gatehouses were not constructed before the 1220s, there now seems to be evidence for the construction of this type of entrance feature from as early as the late twelfth century. Recent research at Chepstow Castle has shown that the twin-towered gate-house, which was believed to be mid-twelfth century in date, may have been constructed in the 1180s. Dendrochronology has shown that the trees used to make the oak doors of the gatehouse were felled between 1159 and 1189.[17] There was some evidence of shrinkage, suggesting that the doors were made within a year or two of the felling of the trees.[18] Also, during the course of excavations at the gatehouse in 1991, a silver penny of Henry II, minted in the mid 1180s, was found in association with the construction levels of the gatehouse.[19] The evidence therefore suggests that the Chepstow gatehouse was constructed in the late 1180s. Chepstow came into the possession of William Marshal in 1189, on his marriage to Isabella de Clare, and Avent has argued that the construction of the gatehouse may have been part of Marshal's first building project at the castle.[20]

The gatehouse at Chepstow castle is similar to the one which antiquarian drawings show at Kilkenny and it is significant that the gatehouse at Chepstow was constructed under William Marshal. As discussed below, the documentary evidence suggests that the stone castle may have been begun as early as 1192. There is nothing in the archaeological

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[15] Sweetman, *The medieval castles of Ireland*, p. 36.
[16] Kenneth Wiggins, Kenneth, Anatomy of a siege. King John's Castle, Limerick, 1642 (Bray, 2001).
[17] Richard Avent, 'A late twelfth century gatehouse at Chepstow Castle, Monmouthshire, Wales' in *Chateau Gaillard*, xx (2002), p. 29.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Kevin Booth, 'Chepstow Castle: excavations in the Great Gatehouse' in *Monmouthshire Antiquary*, ix (1992), pp 19-25.
[20] Richard Avent, 'William Marshal's building works at Chepstow Castle, Monmouthshire, 1189-1219' in J. R. Kenyon and Kieran O'Conor, Kieran, (eds), *The medieval castle in Ireland and Wales: essays in honour of Jeremy Knight* (Dublin, 2003), p. 53.

evidence to contradict this date. However, as discussed below, the historical circumstances make it seem more likely that the castle was begun slightly later, in the first decade of the thirteenth century.

Documentary references

Kilkenny was an important ecclesiastical centre in the early medieval period. The first church at Kilkenny was reputedly founded by St Canice in the sixth century.[21] Early annalistic references to Kilkenny are problematic because 'Cill Chainnigh' could refer to any ecclesiastical site dedicated to St Canice, including Kilkenny, the monastic site at Aghaboe in Co. Laois and Kilkenny West in Co. Westmeath. However, it is generally accepted that from the later eleventh century, annalistic references to 'Cill Chainnigh' refer exclusively to Kilkenny.[22] It is recorded in the *Annals of the Four Masters* that Kilkenny was burnt in 1085, and again in 1114.

Kilkenny was named as the diocesan seat of Ossory at the synod of Rath Breasail in 1111.[23] However, it is generally accepted that the see was not moved from Aghaboe to Kilkenny until the late twelfth century, probably towards the end of the episcopacy of Bishop Felix O'Dulany (1178-1202).[24] Kilkenny also seems to have been a political centre in the pre-Norman period, which was controlled by the Mac Gilla Patraic kings of Osraige. This sept was in competition with the Mac Murroughs for the kingship of Ui Cheinnselaig in the pre-Norman period. The *Annals of the Four Masters* records that, in 1146, the grandson of the Mac Gilla Patrick king of Osraige was killed 'in the middle of Kilkenny'.

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[21] Aubrey Gwynn and R. N. Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses: Ireland, with an appendix to early sites* (London, 1970), p. 84.

[22] Michael O'Clery *et al.* (eds), *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters; from the earliest times to the year 1616* (8 vols, Dublin, 1990, reprint of edition published Dublin, 1856), footnote, p. 923; John Bradley, 'The early development of the medieval town of Kilkenny' in William Nolan and Kevin Whelan, *Kilkenny: history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (1990, Dublin), pp 64-5.

[23] Bradley, 'The early development of the medieval town of Kilkenny', pp 64-5.

[24] C.A. Empey, 'The Anglo-Norman diocese of Ossory' in C. A. Empey, (ed.), *A worthy foundation: the Cathedral Church of St Canice, Kilkenny, 1285-1985* (1985, Portlaoise), p. 15; George Cunningham, *The Anglo-Norman advance into the south-west midlands of Ireland, 1185-1221* (Roscrea, 1987), p. 61.

The *Song of Dermot and the Earl* contains one reference to Kilkenny; Maurice de Prendergast, who defected and joined the king of Osraige in 1169, spent a night at Kilkenny with his men.[25] It seems probable that the Mac Gilla Patraic kings of Osraige had a residence at Kilkenny, as Bradley has suggested.[26]

The earliest reference to a castle at Kilkenny is contained in the *Annals of Tigernach*, which records that the castle of Kilkenny was attacked by Domnall Mor Ua Briain under the year 1173. The inhabitants of the castle fled to Waterford, leaving the castle to be destroyed by the Gaelic Irish, which was '...a grief to the Foreigners of Ireland.'[27] The *Annals of Tigernach* also record that '...the town was breached after the Foreigners had left it.' As Bradley has argued, this suggests that the Anglo-Normans had attempted to establish a town at Kilkenny in the 1170s.[28] Gerald of Wales briefly describes the attack on the Anglo-Normans in Osraige but does not mention Kilkenny by name and does not record the destruction of a castle or the presence of a town.[29]

The castle at Kilkenny seems to disappear from the sources until the end of the twelfth century. As Empey has argued, the Anglo-Normans seem to have withdrawn from central Ossory following the abandonment of Kilkenny in 1173, only returning in the last decade of the twelfth century.[30] The documentary evidence suggests that most of central Ossory was not sub-infeudated under Strongbow but was parcelled out in land grants during the period of William Marshal the Elder's lordship of Leinster. Many of William Marshal's household knights, including John of Earley, Thomas fitz Anthony and Geoffrey fitz Robert, seem to have been granted lands in this area, supporting Empey's theory that the sub-infeudation and settlement of the area around Kilkenny took place at the end of the

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[25] Evelyn Mullally, (ed.), *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland. La Geste des Engleis en Yrlande. A new edition of the chronicle formerly known as 'The Song of Dermot and the Earl'* (Dublin, 2002), Lines 1311-13.
[26] Bradley, 'The early development of the medieval town of Kilkenny', p. 66.
[27] Whitley Stokes, (ed.), *The Annals of Tigernach* (2 vols, Felinfach, 1993, reprinted from *Revue Celtique*, 1896/7), *s.a.* 1173.
[28] Bradley, 'The early development of the medieval town of Kilkenny', p. 66.
[29] *Expugnatio Hibernica. The Conquest of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis*, edited by Scott, A. B., and Martin, F. X., (eds), (Dublin, 1978), p. 139.
[30] C. A. Empey, 'County Kilkenny in the Anglo-Norman period' in William Nolan and Kevin Whelan, (eds), *Kilkenny: history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1990), p. 77.

twelfth century or the beginning of the thirteenth century. This explains the silence in the Anglo-Norman sources regarding Kilkenny during this period and the lack of any further references to a castle there before the 1190s.

According to the seventeenth-century historian, Sir James Ware, the chartulary of the Hospital of St John recorded that William Marshal constructed a castle at Kilkenny in 1192.[31] While the date of 1192 is not impossible for the beginning of construction at the stone castle, an early thirteenth century date is perhaps more likely in view of both the architectural evidence, which is discussed above, and the historical circumstances. William Marshal inherited Leinster by right of his wife, Isabella de Clare, on their marriage in 1189. However, Marshal does not seem to have visited Ireland or exercised any real control over his Leinster lands during the first decade of his lordship.[32] It has been suggested that the construction of Kilkenny Castle may have been commenced in the 1190s on the orders of Marshal's representative in Ireland, Geoffrey fitz Robert,[33] but this seems unlikely.

Marshal may have visited Ireland for the first time between September 1200 and March 1201. Although there is no clear evidence for his presence in Ireland at this time, the documentary evidence shows that he was absent from the king's entourage and it has been suggested that he may have been visiting his lands in Wales and Ireland.[34] It seems possible that Marshal selected Kilkenny as his *caput* at this time and that he may have ordered the construction of the stone castle. If the castle was begun in 1201, following Marshal's visit, it may have been habitable by the time he returned in 1207. Bishop Felix O'Dulany granted 'all the tithes of the castle of Kilkenny' to the Priory of St John the Evangelist in Kilkenny prior to his death in 1202. This shows that a castle of some kind was in existence at the

[31] James Ware, *The whole works of Sir James Ware concerning Ireland*, translated by Walter Harris, (Dublin, 1764), 'Annals', *s.a.*1192, p. 33
[32] David Crouch, *William Marshal: knighthood, war and chivalry, 1147-1219*, (2nd edition, London, 2002), pp 70-1.
[33] Sidney Painter, *William Marshal, knight-errant, baron and regent of England* (Baltimore, 1933), p. 152.
[34] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 88.

beginning of the thirteenth century and it may indicate that the construction of the stone castle had begun in 1200 or 1201.[35]

The documentary evidence shows clearly that Kilkenny functioned as Marshal's *caput* castle during the period he spent in Ireland between 1207 and 1213. The *History of William Marshal* records that Marshal summoned the Leinster barons to a council at Kilkenny, before leaving his wife in residence there when he was summoned back to England by King John in late 1207.[36] The *History of William Marshal* also contains a direct reference to Kilkenny Castle. According to this source, King John kept Marshal at court in early 1208 against his will and, during this time, he told Marshal a fabricated story regarding events in Ireland. John claimed that he had heard news that Marshal's wife had been besieged in Kilkenny. It is implied that Isabella was resident in a castle; the *History* refers to the garrison and states that a man was let down from the battlements to fetch help.[37] The reference to battlements suggests that Kilkenny Castle was a stone castle by this time.

The development of Kilkenny as a major Anglo-Norman urban settlement had also begun by the early twelfth century. Kilkenny acquired a town charter under the William Marshal the Elder in 1207. No original copy of this charter survives but it is reproduced in a fourteenth century entry in the *Liber Primus Kilkenniensis*, along with a second charter issued by William Marshal the Younger in 1223.[38] It is notable that the 1207 charter also refers to the castle.

The documentary evidence indicates strongly that the stone castle was constructed during the period of William Marshal the Elder's lordship. It seems likely that the excavated ringwork represents the fortification destroyed and abandoned in 1173. It seems possible

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[35] William Carrigan, *The Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, (4 vols, Dublin, 1981, facsimile reprint of edition published in 1905), iii, 48.
[36] A. J. Holden, Stewart Gregory and David Crouch, (eds), *Histoire de Guillaume le Marechal or The history of William Marshal* (2 vols, London, 2002-06), Lines 13527-13550 and 14067-14072.
[37] Ibid., Lines 13801-13851.
[38] A. J. Otway-Ruthven (ed.), *Liber Primus Kilkenniensis* (Kilkenny, 1961), pp 5-9.

that the ringwork castle was briefly re-occupied in the 1190s, when the Anglo-Normans returned to Kilkenny.

Other sites in the local area

The cathedral church of St Canice is located approximately 750m to the north-west of the castle, on a naturally raised knoll. Although the present cathedral is early thirteenth-century in date, it stands on the site of an early medieval church, reputedly founded by St Canice in the sixth century. The round tower and several Hiberno-Romanesque carved stones are all that remains of the pre-Norman church.[39] The area around the cathedral, which was later known as Irishtown, was owned by the church. This may have been one of the reasons why the castle and associated Anglo-Norman town were established down-river, approximately 750m to the south.[40]

The parish church associated with the Anglo-Norman settlement, which became known as the Englishtown, was dedicated to St Mary. This church was located approximately 250m to the north-west of the castle at the centre of the area defined by the first defences of the Anglo-Norman settlement. Kilkenny developed into a major Anglo-Norman town. As discussed above, there is limited documentary evidence for a town being established in the 1170s. However, the documentary and archaeological evidence suggest that the town's development took off in the early thirteenth century, after the ringwork castle had been replaced by the stone castle.

Discussion

Murtagh's excavations have shown that the stone castle at Kilkenny was definitely preceded by an earth and timber castle. The excavated evidence indicates that this castle was a ringwork castle, enclosed by a massive earthen bank and fosse. The excavator has described the earthwork castle as a 'great ringwork'. This is supported by the documentary evidence, which attests that there was a fortification at Kilkenny from as early as 1173.

[39] Peter Harbison, 'Carved stones from the twelfth century predecessor of St Canice's cathedral' in *O.K.R.*, vi (1974), pp 26-9; Bradley, 'The early development of the medieval town of Kilkenny', p. 66.
[40] Bradley, 'The early development of the medieval town of Kilkenny', p. 67.

Unfortunately, the presence of the stone castle has made the excavation process more difficult and it is not possible to excavate the entire ringwork castle. This means that the overall shape and dimensions of the ringwork castle are unknown. However, the excavated evidence combined with the documentary evidence justifies the classification of this site as a definite ringwork castle.

Site no:	**9**
Site name:	**Mallardstown**
Townland:	**Mallardstown Great**
Parish:	**Mallardstown**
Barony:	**Kells**
County:	**Kilkenny**
Co-ordinates:	**244942, 141722**
RMP no:	**KK027-037**
RMP classification:	**ringfort - unclassified**
Inventory no:	**N/A**
Inventory classification:	**N/A**

CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

Siting

This site has been removed and the field in which it was located is now under plough. The site was located approximately 1.5km to the south of the King's River, which marks the northern boundary of the civil parish of Mallardstown and presumably the boundary of the medieval manor. The site was located on a gentle south-facing slope but commanded quite good views in all directions.

Field Report

The site has been removed and no trace of it remains at ground level. However, it is depicted on the First Edition O.S. map as an irregular, D-shaped enclosure. The depiction suggests that it was raised but it is unclear if it had any enclosing banks or ditches. The map shows that it was approached via a road from the north-west. This road appears to have continued as a track way over the site before heading in a south-easterly direction.

It is unclear when the site was destroyed. It is depicted on the Third Edition OS map, which indicates that it was still in existence in the 1940s. The RMP file does not include any field reports or any information relating to the site's removal.

Documentary references

The place name of Mallardstown is derived from the name of William Maillard, who arrived in Ireland with William Marshal in the early thirteenth century. A charter issued in 1229 records that 'Maillard, late servant of the earl William Marshal' had held property, including a twenty-nine acres of land and a mill, at Upton in Wiltshire.[1] This suggests that William Maillard came from Wiltshire and may explain his connection to the Marshal family. It is recorded in the *History of William Marshal* that Maillard served as William Marshal's standard bearer and was one of the men that Marshal left behind in Leinster when he was summoned back to England by King John in 1207.[2]

It is unclear exactly when William Marshal granted the lands of Mallardstown to William Maillard. Painter interpreted both this grant and the grant of Earlstown to John d'Earley as rewards for loyalty to William Marshal during the rebellion of his Leinster vassals in 1207-8.[3] William Maillard's name appears in the witness list of the foundation charter of Kells-in-Ossory, which was issued by William fitz Geoffrey between 1211 and 1216, showing that he was in Kilkenny at this time.[4] The documentary evidence shows that William was definitely in possession of Mallardstown by 1218 at the latest; Bishop Hugh de Rous of Ossory (*c.*1202-1218)[5] appears in the witness list of a charter recording William's grant of the church of Kilmacmintan (Mallardstown) and the chapel of the Villa Mallardi to St Mary's Priory, Kells.[6] This charter explicitly states that William Maillard received the lands of Mallardstown directly from William Marshal himself. As Brooks has argued, this charter implies that there was both a parish church called Kilmacmintan and a chapel at

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[1] *Calendar of the Charter Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office* (6 vols, London, 1903-27), i, 98; A. J. Holden, Stewart Gregory and David Crouch, (eds), *Histoire de Guillaume le Marechal or The history of William Marshal* (2 vols, London, 2002-06), 'Notes', iii, 154.

[2] Ibid., lines 13511-2; David Crouch, *William Marshal: knighthood, war and chivalry, 1147-1219* (2nd edition, London, 2002), p. 107.

[3] Sidney Painter, *William Marshal: knight errant, baron and regent of England* (Baltimore, 1933), p. 161.

[4] Gearóid MacNiocaill, *Na buirgéisí: XII-XV aois*, (2 vols, Dublin, 1964), pp 126-30.

[5] F. J. Byrne, 'Bishops, 1111-1534' in T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin and F. J. Byrne (eds), *A new history of Ireland*, ix, (Oxford, 1984), p. 316.

[6] Edmund Curtis, (ed.), *Calendar of Ormond Deeds, 1172-1603* (6 vols, Dublin, 1932-43), i, 18; N. B. White, (ed.), *Irish monastic and episcopal deeds, AD 1200-1600* (Dublin, 1936), p. 307.

Mallardstown.[7] The name 'Kilmacmintan' suggests that the church at Mallardstown was probably established in the early medieval rather than the Anglo-Norman period.

At the time of the partition of Leinster in 1247, William Maillard held ¼ of a knight's fee at 'Maylard'.[8] The charter discussed above, relating to William Maillard's lands at Upton in Wiltshire, implies that William Maillard died before 1229.[9] Therefore, the man who held Mallardstown in 1247 was probably the son of the original William.

Mallardstown passed into the hands of the Cheevers family in the second half of the thirteenth century or early fourteenth century. A charter records William Maillard's quit-claim to Richard, son of Patrick Chevre, of all rights and claims to the lands which formerly belonged to Robert Maillard in 'Tylathtromtyron, which is called Mayllardeston'.[10] This charter seems to be the only incidence of the place-name 'Tylathtromtyron', which may represent the pre-Norman name for Mallardstown. The date of this charter is unclear as it is erroneously dated 'the fiftieth year of the reign of Edward son of King Edward'. Curtis dated this charter to the fiftieth year of Henry III's reign, i.e. 1266.[11] However, Brooks's suggestion that the date should be the fifth or fifteenth year of Edward II, i.e. 1312 or 1322, seems more likely.[12]

The ownership of the lands at Mallardstown in the early fourteenth century is somewhat problematic. In 1317, William le Whyte is recorded as holding the ¼ of a knight's fee at Mallardstown. However, a later version of the 1317 feodary records that the ¼ fee was divided between John, son of David de Sancto Albino and Richard Cheever.[13] Brooks has suggested that John de Sancto Albino represents William le Whyte,[14] but this still does not explain the absence of Richard Cheever's name in the original document. By 1355, both the

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[7] E. St J. Brooks, *Knights' fees in counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny* (Dublin, 1950), pp 260-1.
[8] Ibid., p. 192.
[9] *Cal. Charter Rolls*, i, 98
[10] Curtis, (ed.), *Calendar of Ormond Deeds,* i, 361.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Brooks, *Knight's fees*, p. 261.
[13] Ibid., p. 194.
[14] Ibid., p. 261.

¼ of a knight's fee at 'Maylardestoun' and the ¼ of a knight's fee at Rathgulvy (Rathculbin near Mallardstown), formerly held by David Cheever, were held by the heir of Richard Cheever, whose first name is not recorded.[15] The names of both William Whyte of Mallardstown and Walter Cheever appear in the witness list of a charter issued by William, son of Thomas de Sancto Albino, in 1397, which records his grant of two messuages, thirty-eight acres of land called 'le Herleslonde' and two acres of meadow in 'le Oldecoyllagh' to Richard, son of David de Sancto Albino.[16]

The Cheevers continued to hold the lands of Mallardstown and Rathculbin throughout the late medieval period. In 1498, Paul Cheever, Lord of the Villa Mallardi, donated a wood called Southwood *alias* Cheeverswood to Kells Priory.[17] A month later, James Cheever, son of Nicholas Cheever, issued a quitclaim in relation to the same property, which had belonged to Paul Cheever, his late relative.[18]

Other sites in the local area

The site of the medieval parish church of Kilmacmintan is located approximately 400m to the south of the site of the possible ringwork castle, also in the townland of Mallardstown Great.[19] This church was dedicated to St James and was known locally as the White Church. O'Donovan visited the site in 1839 and recorded that 'the farmer on whose land it stood had just rooted up the last stones of the foundation when we visited a few days ago.'[20] However, Carrigan, writing in the early twentieth century, recorded that 'the east gable is standing to a height of 4 ft (1.2m), but all the other walls have been uprooted from the foundations.' [21] Very little of the church now survives at ground level although the

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[15] Ibid., p. 201.
[16] Curtis, (ed.), *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, ii, 230.
[17] White, (ed.), *Irish monastic and episcopal deeds*, p. 52.
[18] Ibid.
[19] KK027-038001.
[20] *O.S. Letters, Kilkenny*, p. 118.
[21] William Carrigan, *The Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, (4 vols, Dublin, 1981, facsimile reprint of edition published in 1905), iii, 323.

foundations are still visible beneath some earth and rubble. The building has internal dimensions of approximately 14m east-west and 7m north-south.[22]

The church site is located inside a graveyard, which is defined by a wall and raised slightly above the level of the surrounding field. The graveyard is sub-rectangular in shape with two curved corners.

The location of the 'chapel of the Villa Mallardi', which is referred to in the medieval sources discussed above, is unknown. It seems possible that it may have been located within an earthwork castle located at the manorial centre.

The sites of both the possible ringwork castle and the parish church are located within the townland of Mallardstown Great. This townland is at the western side of the civil parish of Mallardstown. The townlands of Rathculbin and Spruceshay, at the north-western extremity of the civil parish, seem to have made up the independent medieval manor of Rathculbin, which was held as ¼ of a knight's fee, before being added to the parish of Mallardstown in the post-medieval period. With this exception, the civil parish of Mallardstown seems roughly co-extensive with the medieval manor.

The First Edition OS map shows that the local road network has changed considerably since the mid-nineteenth century. The map depicts several roads which no longer exist, including a road which left the main road to the north-west of the site, curved around to the farm adjacent to the site and rejoined the main road to the south-west of the site. Also a track ran up to the earthwork from the farm and seems to have gone over the top of it.

Discussion

Unfortunately, as the earthwork has been removed, it is not possible to accurately describe and measure it. The depiction of the earthwork on the First Edition OS map does not resemble a particularly convincing ringwork castle. However, the townland of

[22] Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, 'Field report' (29 November 1994) in RMP file KK027-037.

Mallardstown Great does seem the most likely location for the medieval settlement of 'Villa Mallardi' and the proximity of the earthwork to the medieval church makes it seem the most likely candidate for an earthwork castle associated with the manor of Mallardstown. It is also possible that the earthwork was a low, flat motte, similar to those located at Dunshaughlin in Co. Meath and Fethard-on-Sea in Co. Wexford, rather than a ringwork castle.

Site no:	**10**
Site name:	**Pigeonpark (Danesfort)**
Townland:	**Pigeonpark**
Parish:	**Danesfort**
Barony:	**Shillelogher**
County:	**Kilkenny**
Co-ordinates:	**251810, 148288**
RMP no:	**KK023-057 and KK023-058**
RMP classification:	**ringfort – unclassified; ringfort - unclassified**
Inventory no:	**N/A**
Inventory classification:	**N/A**

REVISED CLASIFICATION: RINGWORK CASTLE

Siting

The site is located to the north-east of Danesfort cross-roads, in the townland of Pigeonpark. It seems likely that the site was originally within Danesfort townland as the adjoining townland of Pigeonpark seems to have been created in the post-medieval period. The site is located on a slight rise and commands good views of the surrounding area.

A second earthwork, which has been identified as a possible ringwork, is located in the adjoining townland of Danesfort (Site no. 7). However, it seems likely that the site at Pigeonpark, which is here interpreted as a ringwork and bailey castle, represents the centre of Anglo-Norman Danesfort.

Field report

The earthworks at Pigeonpark (Danesfort) consist of two enclosures; a small, raised enclosure, which seems to be a ringwork castle, adjacent to a larger enclosure, which can be described as a detached bailey (Plate 6a).

The ringwork enclosure consists of a slightly raised interior defined by an inner bank and a deep fosse (Figure 2). The interior is circular in shape and measures approximately 43m in diameter. It is raised up to 1m in height above external ground level. Trees have been

planted around the perimeter of the ringwork, suggesting that may have been deliberately landscaped in the eighteenth or nineteenth century.

The traces of a possible building are visible in the interior of the enclosure, in the form of earthen banks overlying possible wall foundations. This possible building appears to be orientated east-west and measures approximately 21.5m by 8.5m internally. It seems possible that these banks represent the walls of a building and it is tempting to interpret it as a hall, as its dimensions are comparable to those of excavated timber and stone halls in England and Wales (Plate 8a).[1]

The interior is defined by a small bank around its perimeter, which measures up to 0.75m in height above the interior. The site is enclosed by a deep, u-shaped fosse, which measures up to 2.5m in depth below the summit of the inner bank and up to 1.5m in depth below external ground level. No trace of an outer bank is visible either at ground level or on the aerial photographs. However, the field in which the site is located is used for growing cereal crops and it seems possible that an outer bank has been ploughed out over time.

A second enclosure, which seems to be a detached bailey, stands to the south-west of the ringwork; there is a gap of approximately 10m between the external fosses of the two enclosures and there is no evidence to suggest that they were originally conjoined. The bailey is larger than the ringwork, measuring 52m from north to south and 64m from east to west internally. The interior of the bailey is bisected by a low bank running from east to west, which is clearly visible both at ground level and on aerial photographs. At its eastern end, on top of the inner bank, there is a small irregular mound. Orpen, who visited the site in the early twentieth century, recorded that this linear feature was a wall.[2] This feature may indicate that the bailey was originally divided into two parts, like the ringwork enclosure excavated under Carlow Castle. However, it may be nothing more than a post-medieval

[1] J. R. Kenyon, *Medieval fortifications* (London, 2005), pp 109-11.
[2] G. H. Orpen, 'Motes and Norman castles in Ossory' in *J.R.S.A.I.* xxxix (1909), p. 321.

field boundary. Orpen also recorded that there were 'traces of buildings' within the enclosure.[3] Nothing of these structures is now visible at ground level.

The bailey is enclosed by a substantial earthen bank and external fosse. This bank is best preserved at the east, where it measures 1.5m in height above the interior; elsewhere, it measures between 0.5 and 1m in height. The bank is very wide, measuring up to 5m in width at its base. It seems likely that the bank has slipped somewhat and was originally higher and less wide. According to Orpen, the 'traces of a circular tower (?) and other buildings on the bank' were visible when he visited in the early twentieth century.[4]

A deep, external fosse encloses the site, except at the south-west where the car park of a public house has been built over the filled-in ditch. The fosse measures between 6m and 8m in width and is most impressive at the south and east of the site where it measures up to 3.8m in depth below the top of the inner bank and up to 2m below external ground level. Elsewhere, it is less deep, measuring between 1m and 1.5m in depth below external ground level. Two sections of the fosse, located at the south-east and north of the site, were filled with water when the site was visited in December 2007.

The modern entrance to the bailey is located at the south-south-west of the site, adjacent to the car park of the public house. The fosse has been filled in at this point and there is a gap in the inner bank. The most likely medieval entrance is located at the north-north-east of the site, to the west of the dovecote. This entrance consists of a slight causeway over the fosse and a corresponding gap in the bank. The fosse is very overgrown on this side of the site.

Documentary references

The modern place name of 'Danesfort' is derived from 'Dún feart', meaning 'the fort of the graves'. It seems likely that, as Orpen suggested, this place name originally related to the

[3] G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans,* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20), iii, 92.
[4] Orpen, 'Motes and Norman castles in Ossory', p. 321.

earthwork at the southern end of the townland of Danesfort,[5] as several Bronze Age urn burials were discovered in this area in the nineteenth century (see Site Report no. 7).

The central part of Ossory does not seem to have been intensively settled by the Anglo-Normans until the end of the twelfth century or the early thirteenth century.[6] It seems likely that Danesfort was established as a demesne manor during the period of the Marshals' lordship of Leinster in the first half of the thirteenth century.[7] On the partition of Leinster in 1247, Danesfort, along with other lands in Kilkenny, was included in the share of Isabella Marshal. In an inspeximus dating to 1279, lands including "the castle, burgh, and county of Kilkenny; the manors of Dunfert, Lochmatheran and Trenan; the castle and vill of Kallan (Callan)", were confirmed to Isabella's grandson, Gilbert de Clare, earl of Gloucester and Hertford.[8]

In 1305, it is recorded that John Geydoun made a complaint against Henry le Clerk, receiver of Danesfort on a plea of trespass but did not prosecute.[9]

An extent of the manor of 'Dunfert' was taken in 1307, following the death of Joan, countess of Gloucester and Hereford. It contains a detailed description of the structures associated with manor of Danesfort in the early fourteenth century. The extent states that 'Within the close of this manor there is a hall, a chamber, a dairy, a grange, a brattice (*brittagium*) beyond the gate and other wooden houses'.[10]

It is difficult to reconcile this description of the buildings with the surviving earthworks. Orpen suggested that the 'enclosure' mentioned, which contained the hall, chamber, dairy

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[5] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, iii, 92.
[6] C. A. Empey, 'County Kilkenny in the Anglo-Norman period' in William Nolan and Kevin Whelan, (eds), *Kilkenny: history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1990), p. 80.
[7] Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), ii, 710.
[8] H. S. Sweetman, (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland,* (5 vols, London, 1875-83), ii, 325.
[9] James Mills, (ed.), *Calendar of the Justiciary Rolls or proceedings in Court of the Justiciar of Ireland,* 1295-1314, (3 vols, London, 1905-56), ii, 155.
[10] Paul Dryburgh and Brendan Smith, (eds), *Inquisitions and extents of medieval Ireland* (Kew, 2007), pp 79-80.

and grange, corresponds with the larger of the two enclosures (the bailey). Meanwhile, the '*brittagium* beyond the gate' referred to the smaller enclosure (the ringwork), which, Orpen believed, would have supported a timber tower.[11] However, as discussed above, there may have been a hall rather than a tower in the interior of the ringwork, and it seems equally possible that the '*brittagium* beyond the gate' was a gate-tower at the entrance.

Following the death of Gilbert de Clare in 1314, the manor of Danesfort passed into the possession of the Despencer family. Very little documentary evidence relating to the Despencer lordship of Danesfort has survived. In 1391, Hugh Despencer sold Kilkenny Castle, the manor of Danesfort and various other lands in Kilkenny to James, the third earl of Ormond.[12] According to Carrigan, the earl of Ormond constructed a castle at Danesfort between 1382 and 1405, on a site close to Danesfort House.[13] Carrigan presumably meant between 1392 and 1405, as he stated in the previous sentence that the Butler family had only acquired Danesfort in 1391. Carrigan neglected to reference this information; it seems possible that it was contained in a document which is no longer extant.

The documentary evidence shows that the settlement of Danesfort was relatively large and continued to thrive into the late medieval period. A charter dating to 1366 records that John, son of John de St Leger, quit his claim to various properties located in Kiltram, Crokeresgragh, Flemingstown, Huberdstown, Danesfort and Kells in favour of John, son of William Coterel, and his wife, Johanna.[14] In a charter dating to 1426, it is recorded that John Keppagh granted 'one messuage and five acres in the lordship of Dunfert' to a clergyman named Ralph Archer. The messuage lay 'outside the south gate of said town in the corner near the highway which leads to Waterford' and '...the five acres two and a half lie near . . . a boundary which lies between the land of the earl of Ormond and the land of the bishop of Ossory in length, and the other two and a half acres lie near the valley which

[11] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, iii, 92-3.
[12] Edmund Curtis, (ed.), *Calendar of Ormond Deeds, 1172-1603* (6 vols, Dublin, 1932-43), ii, 213-19.
[13] William Carrigan, *The antiquities of the diocese of Ossory*, (4 vols, Dublin, 1981, facsimile reprint of edition published in 1905), iii, 371
[14] Curtis, (ed.), *Cal. Ormond deeds*, ii, 93-4.

leads towards the water which is called 'Corne' in length, and in breadth between the land of the said earl'.[15] The reference to the 'south gate' is notable because it implies that the settlement of Danesfort was enclosed by defences of some kind in the early fifteenth century. A deed of attorney appointing Robert Herford of Dunfert as the man responsible for giving Ralph Archer seisin,[16] and a quit-claim issued by John Keppagh are also preserved in the *Ormond Deeds*.[17]

The rentals for the manor for the four years between 1440 and 1443 have survived and these documents show that Danesfort was quite a large settlement. The rental for 1440-1 records the names of twenty-seven men who rented property in the town. Thomas White, who rented two twenty-four acres in addition to the fishery, seems to have been the most important tenant. Six other men rented between one acre and eight acres. A further twenty men are recorded as having paid rent but, as the amounts of rent and the size of their properties are not recorded, it seems likely that these men rented smaller parcels of land. The rental also records that two women paid rent for their cottages.[18]

A manorial court seems to have sat regularly at Danesfort in the later medieval period. The court records relating to a court held at Danesfort in 1442, before Walter Sherlock, seneschal of the Ormond lands survive.[19] The details of manorial court cases are also included with the rentals for the manor of Danesfort in the 1440s. For example, in the rental of 1443, the details of nine law-suits, involving offences including trespass, bloodshed and not drawing the lord's corn are given.[20]

In 1443, in a list of payments made to the Earl of Ormond's servants at Easter term, it is recorded that the unnamed serjeant of Danesfort received 3*s*., 4*d*.[21]

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[15] Ibid., iii, 56-7.
[16] Ibid., iii, , 57.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid., iii, 136.
[20] Ibid., iii, 124-5.
[21] Ibid., iii, 138-40.

In 1449, James, earl of Ormond, granted to Walter all lands, tenements, rents and services which formerly belonged to the earl and countess of Stafford in the town and county of Kilkenny, including a water mill in Danesfort.[22]

In 1653, Danesfort was amongst the lands granted to the countess of Ormond. At this time there was a castle, which was described as 'lately repaired', in addition to two thatched houses with chimneys and other cabins.[23] It seems probable that this reference relates to a stone castle rather than the ringwork and bailey castle. The evidence for a tower house at Danesfort is discussed below.

Other sites in the local area

A ruined dovecote stands between the ringwork and its detached bailey. The northern half of the structure is still standing and pigeon holes can be seen in the internal side of the wall. It is heavily overgrown. Although it is tempting to identify this structure as the dovecote mentioned in the extent of 1307, it appears to be post-medieval in date, possibly dating to the sixteenth or seventeenth century.[24] However, it may mark the site of the medieval dovecote.

The parish church of St Michael's lies approximately 700m to the south-south-east of the ringwork and bailey castle and is linked to it by the old road. Although the ruined church appears to be late medieval in date, it almost certainly stands on the same site as the Anglo-Norman church. The church is accessed via a round headed doorway in the western wall. The east gable has a window consisting of four pointed lights divided by mullions while the west gable originally supported a belfry. The church stands in a rectangular graveyard.

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[22] Ibid., iii, 165-6.
[23] Conleth Manning, 'The 1653 survey of the lands granted to the countess of Ormond in Co. Kilkenny', in *J.R.S.A.I*, cxxix (1999), p. 58.
[24] Conleth Manning, 'Field report' in RMP file KK023-059 (19 May 1997).

The documentary evidence suggests that there was a late medieval stone castle at Danesfort. According to Carrigan, the castle was constructed between 1382 and 1405.[25] The preciseness of these dates suggests that Carrigan may have formed this opinion based on documentary evidence which has since been lost, although unfortunately he failed to name his source. The late medieval castle seems to have been located close to Danesfort House, approximately 800m to the south of the ringwork and bailey castle. The seventeenth-century Down Survey barony map depicts a stone castle in this area, on the western side of the Stonyford road,[26] and local tradition maintains that the castle stood close to Danesfort House in a field known as the 'castle field'.[27] It seems possible that this castle was of tower house type.

The late medieval castle was succeeded by Danesfort House, which is also no longer extant. Nineteenth-century drawings of the house show that it was a late seventeenth century mansion.[28] It was owned by the Wemyss family who lived at Danesfort from the late seventeenth century until the late nineteenth century.[29] Much of the topography of the local area seems to have been altered by the construction of Danesfort House and its extensive landscaped demesne.

The documentary evidence summarised above shows that Danesfort was a thriving settlement in the later medieval period. The references to burgesses contained in the sources suggest that it had attained the status of a borough by the early fourteenth century, although its charter has not survived. The exact location and extent of the settlement are unknown. It seems likely that it lay in the area between the ringwork and bailey at the crossroads and the church. The linear pattern of the present field system at the north-east of the townland of Danesfort is suggestive of burgage plots. While the present fields are far too large to be interpreted as burgage plots, they may have been created by joining several plots together.

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[25] Carrigan, *The history and antiquities of the diocese of Ossory*, iii, 371
[26] Down Survey barony map for Shillelogher, TCD Map Library.
[27] Owen O'Kelly, *The place names of Co. Kilkenny* (Kilkenny, 1985), p. 180.
[28] Francis McEvoy, 'The Wemyss family of Danesfort' in *O.K.R.* lviii (2006), pp 135-6.
[29] Ibid., pp 127-38.

The charter issued by John Keppagh in 1426, which is discussed above, states that the property in question lay 'outside the south gate of said town in the corner near the highway which leads to Waterford.' This suggests that the settlement of Danesfort was enclosed by defences of some kind. As no trace of these defences remains, it seems most likely that they were of earth and timber rather than stone. A linear crop mark running from east to west is visible on the aerial photographs to the north of the ringwork castle. Also, a linear crop-mark running from north to south is recorded at the north-east of the townland.[30] It seems possible that these linear features may mark the line of the late medieval town defences.

The extent of 1307, discussed above, records that there was 'a weir, whose fishery with the fishery of the River Nore, extends at 5*s*.' The First Edition O.S. map shows three rectangular pools at the south-west corner of the townland of Danestown, which are supplied with water by a small stream. A small building, labelled 'bathing house' is also depicted, indicating that these pools were used for bathing in the nineteenth century. However, it seems possible that these pools, which are almost certainly man-made, may represent the fishing weir mentioned in the extent. A possible fishpond has also been identified beside the dovecote, within the fosse of the ringwork enclosure on its south-western side. This section of the fosse is deeper than elsewhere and is filled with water. The edges of this rectangular pond seem to have been deliberately lined with stones. While this pond may be a post-medieval feature associated with the estate around Danesfort House, it is also possible that it represents a medieval fishpond. The archaeological evidence from castles and manor houses in England shows that moats often functioned as fishponds as well as defensive barriers.[31]

Discussion

The earthworks at Danesfort cross-road can be interpreted as a ringwork and bailey castle, associated with a demesne manor of the Marshal lords of Leinster. The ringwork enclosure

[30] KK023-060001 and KK023-060002.
[31] Christopher Dyer, 'The consumption of fresh-water fish in medieval England', in Michael Aston, *Medieval fish, fisheries and fishponds*, (2 vols, Oxford 1988), i, p. 27.

is classified as a ringwork because it is the smaller enclosure of the two. It is slightly raised above ground level and is defended by a bank and external fosse. The larger, bailey enclosure is enclosed by a substantial earthen bank and deep, external fosse.

The ringwork and bailey castle does not seem to be located in a particularly strategic location. It is not located close to a river; the River Nore is approximately 3km away from the site. However, the ringwork is located on a slight rise and commands reasonably good views of the surrounding area. The documentary and archaeological evidence clearly shows that the earthwork castle was associated with a thriving Anglo-Norman manor and a settlement, which almost certainly had the status of a borough. This settlement continued to thrive into the late medieval period. Although the earthwork at the southern end of the townland of Danesfort (site no. 7) has also been identified as a possible ringwork castle, the earthworks at the cross-roads make a much more convincing ringwork castle. This site has therefore been classified as a definite example of a ringwork and bailey castle.

Site no:	**11**
Site name:	**Purcellsinch**
Townland:	**Purcellsinch**
Parish:	**St John's**
Barony:	**Gowran**
County:	**Kilkenny**
Co-ordinates:	**253551, 154868**
RMP no:	**KK019-103**
RMP classification:	**enclosure**
Inventory no:	**N/A**
Inventory classification:	**N/A**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: RINGWORK CASTLE

Neary identified this site as a ringwork castle in an article published in 2005.[1] The site is currently classified as an 'enclosure' by the RMP

Siting

The site is located approximately 2km to the east of Kilkenny City, on a ridge overlooking the River Nore. At the south and south-east of the site, the land slopes down to the River Nore approximately 380m away. A small tributary of the River Nore flows past the eastern side of the site. The topography of the local landscape has been severely impacted by the construction of the Purcellsinch Industrial Park and the Purcellsinch Sewage Treatment Plant, both of which are located to the west of the site.

Field report

The site consists of a sub-circular interior enclosed by a fosse and the remains of an outer bank (Figure 2). The interior measures approximately 46m from north to south and 40m from east to west. The interior is quite overgrown. There is no evidence for an inner bank or lip around the perimeter of the platform and it is defined by the enclosing fosse. Large beech trees have been planted around the edge of the platform. The site would have been within the grounds of Inch House (see below) and it seems likely that the trees were planted

[1] P.J.H. Neary, 'A newly discovered Anglo-Norman ringwork castle from Purcell's Inch townland, Kilkenny' in *O.K.R.*, lvii (2005), pp 106-8.

deliberately in order to form a tree ring, which would have been visible from the avenue leading up to the house.

From the east to the south of the site, there is a section of enclosing bank, measuring approximately 30m in length. Neary has interpreted this feature as a 'stockade'.[2] However, it seems more likely that this section of bank is all that remains of a bank that originally enclosed the whole site. It has therefore been interpreted as a fosse and external bank. It is a relatively small bank, measuring approximately 20cm above the fosse and 50cm above external ground level. It is flat-topped and measures 1m in width across the top. The fosse between the platform and the external bank measures between 4m and 4.5 in width across its base.

From the south clockwise to the east of the site, the platform is defined by a scarp. The platform is between 2m and 3m in height above external ground level. As argued above, it seems likely that there was originally a fosse and outer bank that has been removed. The area around the site appears to be very disturbed. Unfortunately, no field reports predating the construction of the industrial park survive so it is not possible to ascertain if the site was damaged at that time. An earthen bank orientated north-east to south-west joins the site at the south-west. This bank, which is shown on Neary's plan, appears to be modern.

Neary identified an 'entrance ramp' at the south-south-east of the site.[3] This ramp curves around the terminal of the surviving section of bank. It measures approximately 4m in width and may represent the original entrance to the site.

Neary also noted that, in 2004, a fosse measuring 7m wide and 1.1m deep was exposed by the excavation of a new industrial site adjoining the monument site. This fosse is shown on Neary's plan of the site, which shows that the centre of the fosse was located approximately 40m from the edge of the platform, at the south-west of the site. Although the fosse was not

[2] Ibid., p. 106.
[3] Ibid.

archaeologically excavated, Neary interpreted it as being associated with the ringwork castle. While it is possible that this feature represents the outer defences of the ringwork castle, its alignment seems somewhat strange. It runs for 10m from south-west to north-east before turning 30 degrees and running northwards.

Documentary references

Purcellsinch seems to have been known as Kilmallog in the medieval period. Carrigan believed that the church of Kilmallog was founded in the pre-Norman period,[4] and the place name would seem to support this argument. The place-name suggests that the church was dedicated to St. Molaga, a well-known Irish saint who also gave his name to St Mullins in Carlow. According to Carrigan, the church of Kilmallog was appropriated by the priory of St John's in the thirteenth century. The parish of Kilmallog was merged with the parish of St John's at the Reformation. It seems likely that the medieval parish and manor of Kilmallog were roughly co-extensive.[5]

The place name of 'Purcellsinch' does not appear in the documentary sources before the late medieval period. However, the documentary evidence shows that the Purcell family were associated with Kilmallog from as early as the fourteenth century. In an extent of the barony of Gowran, taken in 1306, it is recorded that Walter, son of Hamundi Purcell, held a fee in 'Kylmelag', which had formerly been held by J. Keting by royal service. The names of Walter's tenants, are also listed, including Richard de Lea, Walter Terry, David White, John Leget, John Peris of Kilkenny, Walter Gaverneuth, Roger Fleming and the prior of St John's, Kilkenny. [6]

It seems likely that the Purcells of Kilmallog/Purcellsinch were related to the Purcells of nearby Fennell. In 1306, Simon Purcell held one fee in Fennell of the baron of Gowran.[7] In

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[4] William Carrigan, *The Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, (4 vols, Dublin, 1981, facsimile reprint of edition published in 1905), ii, 264.
[5] Ibid., ii,. 266.
[6] N. B. White, (ed.), *The Red Book of Ormond* (Dublin, 1932), p. 38.
[7] Ibid., p. 37.

1347, Simon, son of Walter Purcell, granted the advowson of the church of Fennell to Maurice, son of Walter Purcell.[8] It seems possible that the Walter Purcell mentioned is the Walter who held lands at Kilmallog in 1306, while Simon and Maurice may have been brothers, although, if this was the case, it seems strange that the charter failed to mention the relationship.

The origins of the Purcells of Kilmallog and Fennell are unclear. Brooks has suggested that they may have been related to the Purcells of Urlingford.[9] Brooks has shown that the Purcells of Urlingford were descended from Walter Purcell, who came to Ireland with William Marshal the Elder.[10] Walter is mentioned in the *History of William Marshal*,[11] and witnessed several charters including William Marshal the Elder's charters to Tintern Abbey[12] and Kilkenny,[13] and William Marshal the Younger's charter to Moone.[14]

On the death of Gerald Blanchvild in 1597, it was found that he held 'Blanchvild's land' of Philip Purcell as of his manor of Kilmallog, and had let it out to William Shee and Margaret Walsh. Blanchvild's land probably corresponds with the townland of Blanchfieldsland to the north-west of Purcellsinch.[15]

The name Purcellsinch appears for the first time in an inquisition taken on the death of Philip Purcell in 1625, which records that Philip Purcell of Ballyfoyle was seised of 'the manor, town and lands of 'Mullerge, otherwise Purcell's ensh' in addition to the manor of Fennell and other lands.[16]

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[8] Edmund Curtis, (ed.), *Calendar of Ormond Deeds, 1172-1603* (6 vols, Dublin, 1932-43), I, 337.
[9] Brooks, *Knights' fees*, pp 262-4.
[10] Ibid., pp 182-6.
[11] A. J. Holden, Stewart Gregory and David Crouch, (eds), *Histoire de Guillaume le Marechal or The history of William Marshal* (2 vols, London, 2002-06), Line 13507.
12 *Chartae, privilegia et immunitates: being transcripts of charters and privileges to cities, towns, abbeys and other bodies corporate: 18 Henry II to 18 Richard II, 1171 to 1395* (Dublin, 1889), p. 80
[13] J. T. Gilbert, (ed.), *Register of the Abbey of St Thomas, Dublin* (London, 1889), p. 355.
[14] James Mills, (ed.), *Calendar of* the *Justiciary Rolls* or proceedings in Court *of* the Justiciar *of Ireland*, 1295-1314, (3 vols, London, 1905-56), i, 369.
[15] *Inquisitionum in officio rotulorum cancellariæ Hiberniæ asservatarum, repertorium. Volume 1: Leinster* (Dublin, 1826), Kilkenny, Eliz., no. 3.
[16] Ibid., Kilkenny, Car. I, no. 103.

Other sites in the local area

The ruins of the medieval church of Kilmallog are located 530m to the north-west of the ringwork castle site, immediately to the south of the railway line.[17] The walls survive to a maximum height of 2m and measure 9m from east to west and 7m from north to south. The First Edition O.S. map depicts the church as a rectangular structure, labelled 'church (in ruins), within a sub-circular area, planted with trees. The sub-circular shape of the graveyard may indicate that the church was founded in the early medieval period, as the place name suggests. According to local tradition, there was a 'bishop's grave' at Kilmallog. The church is now located within the Purcellsinch Industrial Park and the area around it has been landscaped, leaving no trace of a graveyard. A bridge known as Aughmalogue Bridge crosses Fennell Stream, a small tributary of the River Nore, approximately 350m to the north-west of the church. 'Aughmalogue' can be translated as 'the ford of Molaga'.

A residence called Inch House was located approximately 200m to the east of the site.[18] Inch House was removed when the Purcellsinch Industrial Park was built in the 1980s. As the house is depicted on the Downe Survey map, it must have been constructed before the mid-seventeenth century, although it may have been rebuilt or modified later. The First Edition O.S. map also shows Inch House with associated buildings and gardens. It depicts a circular mound planted with trees, approximately 290m to the north-west of the ringwork castle site, midway between the ringwork castle and the church. A rectangular structure, which is labelled as a 'turret', is shown on the eastern side of the summit of the mound. Both the turret and the mound were removed when the Purcellsinch Industrial Park was constructed in the 1980s. The RMP file contains only a field report which postdates the site's removal and confirms that nothing of the site remained when the last site visit was conducted in 1994.[19] O'Kelly, writing in the 1960s, described the site as 'a turret in ruins

[17] KK019-029.
[18] KK019-081.
[19] Field report by Liz Fitzpatrick in RMP file KK019-035.

on a rath-like mound'.[20] The siting of the 'turret', on a mound to the west of the avenue leading to Inch House, in a position visible from the main Dublin to Kilkenny road, suggests that it was probably a post-medieval folly associated with the estate around Inch House. The mound may have been constructed at the same time as the folly or, alternatively, a pre-existing earthwork, possibly associated with the Anglo-Norman settlement at Purcellsinch, may have been reutilised.

The remains of a lime kiln are located 200m to the east-south-east of the ringwork site, immediately south of the site of Inch House.[21] The lime-kiln is probably post-medieval in date and may be associated with the estate surrounding Inch House. As this site lies within the area of the sewage treatment plant, it was not possible to visit it.

The documentary references listed above show that there was a watermill at Purcellsinch by the early modern period. There are two streams at Purcellsinch, both of which flow into the Nore. The Fennell Stream flows through the townland, to the west of the church, while the second stream flows past the eastern side of the ringwork site and marks the townland boundary. Both of these streams could have been used as the water supply for watermills and it also possible that watermills could have been located along the River Nore itself.

Discussion

The defences of the earthwork at Purcellsinch are not particularly impressive. However, the area around the site is quite disturbed and it seems possible that the external bank, which only survives from the east to the south of the site, originally enclosed the site fully. The siting of the earthwork, above the River Nore, guarding the approach to Kilkenny seems quite strategic. The documentary evidence suggests that the Keating family held the manor of Kilmallog in the twelfth century, before the Purcells, after whom the modern townland is names, acquired it in the early fourteenth century. The proximity of the earthwork to a medieval church suggests that it may have been located at a manorial centre. Although

[20] Owen O'Kelly, *The place names of County Kilkenny* (2nd edition, Kilkenny, 1985; originally published as *The history of County Kilkenny* in 1969), p. 92.
[21] RMP KK019-104.

there are no documentary references to a castle at Kilmallog, there is documentary and archaeological evidence for Anglo-Norman settlement at Purcellsinch and it seems probable that the earthwork represents an Anglo-Norman ringwork castle.

Site no:	**12**
Site name:	**Rathealy**
Townland:	**Rathealy**
Parish:	**Tullaroan**
Barony:	**Crannagh**
County:	**Kilkenny**
Co-ordinates:	**238410, 160510**
RMP no:	**KK013-059001**
RMP classification:	**castle - ringwork**
Inventory no:	**N/A**
Inventory classification:	**N/A**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: RINGWORK CASTLE

Siting

The ringwork castle seems to have been modelled out of a natural hillock. It is situated at a high point in the landscape and commands excellent views of the surrounding, undulating countryside. The ringwork castle, church and deserted settlement are all located in the same field, which is used as pasture for cattle.

Field report

The site consists of a raised circular platform, fully enclosed by a small inner bank and fosse and a middle bank. An outer fosse and outer bank are present from the west to the south of the site (Figure 3).

The interior is circular in shape and measures approximately 41m east-west and 47m north-south in diameter. The interior is defined by a small bank or lip around its perimeter, which measures up to 70cm in height. Three rectangular depressions, representing probable buildings, are visible at the western side of the interior. Two of these depressions are orientated roughly east-west while the third, which is sandwiched between them, is orientated north-south. While these depressions are visible at ground level, they can be seen more clearly on aerial photographs (Plate 6b).

According to local tradition, there is a 'cave or underground chamber' at the west side of the interior, beneath the probable house sites.[1] This 'cave' was probably a souterrain and it seems possible that the small, square pit, which is visible to the west of the most southerly of the rectangular house platforms, marks the entrance. The existence of a souterrain, combined with the place-name and the arrangement of the enclosing banks and ditches, suggests that the site may be early medieval rather than Anglo-Norman in origin.

From the small inner bank which encloses the interior, there is a steep drop down into a deep, flat-bottomed fosse. The fosse ranges between 3.5m and 5m in depth below the level of the inner bank and measures between 2.5m and 3.5m in depth below the top of the middle bank. The fosse is flat-bottomed, measuring approximately up to 3m in width at its base and up to 13.5m from the top of the middle bank across to the corresponding point on the slope up to the inner bank.

The middle bank completely encloses the fosse, with the exception of two small gaps at the east-north-east and south of the site, which are probably modern, and the entrance gap at the east. The middle bank has a flat top, which measures up to 2m in width. The middle bank measures between 1.8m to 2.5m in height externally.

From the west to the south of the site, an outer fosse and bank are present. The fosse measures up to 3m in width at its base and approximately 1.5m in height above both the fosse and external ground level. The western terminal of this bank is flattened and looks quite disturbed. Although the outer bank only survives at the south-west of the site, the curved field boundary on the north of the site is aligned with the outer bank and it seems probable it preserves the line of the original bank.

The entrance is located at the east-north-east of the site. It consists of a gap in the inner bank, a slight causeway across the inner fosse and a gap in the small inner bank. The gap in

[1] William Carrigan, William, *The Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, (4 vols, Dublin, 1981, facsimile reprint of edition published in 1905), iii, 497; Anonymous, 'Miscellanea - Rathealy Fort', in *J.R.S.A.I.*, lxxxix (1959), p. 97; J. P. Healy, 'Tullaroan' in *O.K.R.*, iv (1951), p 12.

the inner bank is quite narrow, measuring 2.5m in width, while the gap in the outer bank is wider, measuring 6.5m. The aerial photographs show a clear rectangular depression where the ramped entrance meets the summit, measuring approximately 5m north-south by 3m east-west. This depression could be the result of post-medieval quarrying activity, although the depression seems too neat for this explanation. Alternatively, this rectangular depression may represent the site of a timber gatehouse, positioned to guard the entrance to the ringwork castle.

A short section of bank projects eastwards from the middle bank on the north side. This bank seems to be intended to defend the entrance and is similar to the section of bank adjacent to the entrance at Rathtroane, Co. Meath (site no. 25).

Documentary references

The place name and documentary evidence suggests that the ringwork castle may have been adapted from an early medieval ringfort. The place name may be derived from either 'Rath Iomlaigh', meaning 'rath of the lime', or 'Rath Aolmhaigh', meaning 'Aolmhach's Rath'.[2]

An important early medieval road, known as St Kieran's Road, is believed to have run past Rathealy. This route linked Fertagh and Callan, via Borrismore, Adamstown, Rathealy and Lisnalea.[3] According to local tradition, as recorded by Carrigan in the early twentieth century,

> "St. Kieran's horse was robbed one day on Boher-Kierawin, in Rathealy, while carrying messages from Fertagh to Callan, or *vice versa.* This so annoyed the saint that he left his malediction on Rathealy, declaring that for all future time the townland would be the first to sow and the last to reap."[4]

There is some documentary evidence for Anglo-Norman settlement at Rathealy. At the time of the partition of Leinster in 1247, Roland Bloet held ¼ of a knight's fee at 'Rathely'.[5] By 1317, the ¼ knight's fee at Rathealy was held by John de Weston.

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[2] Carrigan, *The history and antiquities of the diocese of Ossory*, iii, 497; Owen O'Kelly, *The place names of County Kilkenny* (Kilkenny, 1985), p. 30.
[3] Carrigan, *The history and antiquities of the diocese of Ossory*, iii, 497.
[4] Ibid., iii, 497.

The Bloet family held extensive lands in Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Wiltshire and Somerset and were important vassals of Strongbow and subsequently, of the Marshal earls of Pembroke; as Crouch has argued, the Bloets '...could not be ignored by any lord of Striguil.'[6] The four Bloet brothers, who were the sons of Ralph II Bloet of Silchester and Henry II's former mistress Nest, were active in Ireland from the period of the Anglo-Norman conquest onwards. Ralph Bloet III of Silchester was the eldest of the four brothers. Following Strongbow's death in 1176, Ralph held Chepstow Castle during the period of Isabella de Clare's wardship, before handing over the castle to William Marshal on his marriage to Isabelle in 1189. Ralph's three younger brothers, Walter, Richard and Roland, were also involved in the Anglo-Norman invasion. *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* records that Walter Bloet along with Raymond le Gros and Hervey de Montmorency remained at the fortification at Baginbun Head following the battle against the Irish which had taken place there.[7] Walter was also among the barons summoned by Strongbow to attend a council in Dublin in 1171.[8] Walter Bloet seems to have been one of Strongbow's closest followers; as Flanagan has pointed out, Walter was the most frequent witness of Strongbow's Irish charters, with the exception of his marshal, John de Clahull.[9] In 1173 or 1174, Strongbow granted the manor and castle of Raglan in Monmouthshire to Walter.[10]

All four of the Bloet brothers witnessed a charter recording Strongbow's grant of the lands of St Mullin's to Peter Giffard *c.*1170.[11] The names of both Walter and Richard Bloet appear in the witness list of the foundation charter of Dunbrody Abbey, dating to 1173 or

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[5] E. St J. Brooks, *Knights' fees in counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny* (Dublin, 1950), p. 238.
[6] David Crouch, *William Marshal: knighthood, war and chivalry, 1147-1219* (2nd edition, London, 2002), p. 149.
[7] Evelyn Mullally, (ed.), *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland. La Geste des Engleis en Yrlande. A new edition of the chronicle formerly known as 'The Song of Dermot and the Earl'* (Dublin, 2002), Lines1494-99.
[8] Ibid. Line 1811.
[9] M. T. Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship: interactions in Ireland in the late twelfth century* (Oxford, 1989), p. 157.
[10] *Calendar of the Patent Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry IV, 1399-1401*, p. 181; G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20), i, 182.
[11] George Wrottesley, 'The Giffards from the Conquest to the present time' in *William Salt Archaeological Society: collections for a history of Staffordshire*, v (1902), pp 212-13.

earlier,[12] although this charter may be a forgery.[13] Walter and Roland witnessed another of Strongbow's charters, recording his grant of Rathenny and Gilcolman to a man called Vivien.[14]

During the period of William Marshal the Elder's lordship of Leinster, the names of the next generation of Bloets began to appear in charters. On Ralph Bloet's death in 1198 or 1199, his son, Ralph (Ralph IV of Silchester), succeeded him, taking his father's place as one of William Marshal's chief followers. Ralph witnessed a charter, dating to 1204, in which Geoffrey FitzRobert quit his claim to the lands of Duiske in favour of his lord William Marshal, in order that the Cistercian monastery of Duiske could be established there.[15] Both Ralph Bloet (IV) and his son, Ralph, witnessed William Marshal's charter to Adam de Hereford *c.*1207.[16] To confuse matters Walter Bloet of Raglan also had a son called Ralph; a charter recording a grant from William Marshal's to William de St Leger was witnessed by Ralph Bloet and Ralph, son of Walter Bloet.[17]

Two of the brothers of Ralph IV of Silchester, Thomas and Roland, served King John as knights of the royal household and were used as trusted royal messengers. For example, in 1208, Thomas was sent to Ireland to deliver writs demanding that William Marshal's deputies, John d'Earley, Jordan de Sanqueville and Stephen d'Evreux, return to England.[18] In the same year, Roland Bloet was one of several men sent to Meilyr fitz Henry with orders from the king '...commanding that the justiciary have faith in what they shall tell him on the king's behalf regarding his affairs, and that he do it; if not, the king has enjoined

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[12] J. T. Gilbert, (ed.), *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin, with the register of its house at Dunbrody and Annals of Ireland* (2 vols, Dublin, 1884), ii, 152-54.
[13] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, iv, 308.
[14] Gilbert, (ed.), *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin,* i, 258.
[15] C. M. Butler and J. H. Bernard 'The Charters of the Abbey of Duiske' in *P.R.I.A.,* xxxv (1918), Section C, p. 14.
[16] Edmund Curtis, (ed.), *Calendar of Ormond Deeds, 1172-1603* (6 vols, Dublin, 1932-43), i, 19-20; Brooks, *Knights' fees*, p. 202.
[17] J. T. Gilbert, (ed.), *Register of the Abbey of St Thomas, Dublin* (London, 1889), p. 137 and pp 356-7.
[18] A. J. Holden, Stewart Gregory and David Crouch, (eds), *Histoire de Guillaume le Marechal or The history of William Marshal* (2 vols, London, 2002-06), Lines 13661-2; 13700-3; 13757-60.

the messengers to cause it to be done.'[19] A second letter, dated the following day, states that Roland and his companions are to '...survey the state of Ireland, to be present at the councils of the justiciary, and to expediate the king's business.'[20] Roland held the de Braose lands in Sussex on behalf of the crown from 1209 to 1216. He joined the rebels supporting Prince Louis briefly but seems to have returned to the royalist side in July 1217.[21] Roland died in Wales in 1217,[22] leaving his younger brother William as his heir.[23]

William Bloet also seems to have had strong connections with the royal household. He was a royal squire in 1209-10, which is possibly where he became acquainted with William Marshal the Younger, who was a royal hostage at that time. William served as served as William Marshal the Younger's standard bearer at Battle of Lincoln in 1217.[24] As Crouch has argued, William's association with William Marshal the Younger seems to have been short-lived as he was retained as a royal knight in 1218 and continued to be associated with the royal household until after 1261.[25] In 1237-8, the justiciar, Maurice fitz Gerald, was ordered to provide lands worth £20 for William Bloet, 'knight of Alianore'.[26] Alianore was the king's sister and the widow of William Marshal the Younger.

At the time of the partition of Leinster in 1247, Roland Bloet held ¼ of a knight's fee at Rathealy,[27] while William Bloet held a 1/5 of a knight's fee at Kilcorky in Co. Wexford.[28] While all of the Bloets active in Ireland in the twelfth and thirteenth century were clearly related, being descended from the Bloets of Silchester, it is unclear how these two men are related to each other and how they fit into the Bloet family tree. Brooks's identification of William Bloet of Kilcorkey as William Bloet, son of Ralph III of Silchester, seems

[19] H. S. Sweetman, (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland,* (5 vols, London, 1875-83), i, 377.
[20] Ibid., i, 379.
[21] Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 187).
[22] Holden, Gregory and Crouch, (eds), *The history of William Marshal,* Lines 17766-7; Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 137.
[23] E. P. Ebden, (ed.), *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the second year of the reign of King Henry III* (London, 1972), p. 39.
[24] Holden, Gregory and Crouch, (eds), *The history of William Marshal,* Lines 16913-26.
[25] Ibid., 'Notes', p. 187.
[26] Sweetman, (ed.), *C.D.I.*, i, 364 and 367.
[27] Brooks, *Knights' fees*, p. 238.
[28] Ibid., p. 26.

questionable. It seems equally likely that there were two William Bloets who were cousins. The lands at Kilcorkey were probably granted by Strongbow to one of the four Bloet brothers involved in the Anglo-Norman invasion,[29] and the William Bloet of 1247 could have been the son or grandson of any of them. Brooks also suggested that Roland Bloet of Rathealy was the son of the Roland who died in 1217.[30] However, this seems unlikely as Roland's brother, William, was named as his heir, suggesting that he died without issue.[31] It seems more likely that Roland Bloet of Rathealy was the son of one of the other Bloet brothers. It is tempting to view the grant of Rathealy as a reward from one of the Marshals to either Ralph Bloet III or William Bloet, as they seem to have had the closest ties to the Marshal family. The circumstantial evidence suggests that this grant may have been made in the early thirteenth century, as William Marshal the Elder seems to have made grants of lands in central Ossory to several of his followers, including William Maillard and John d'Earley, at this time.

By 1317, the Bloet family of Rathealy seems to have died out and John de Weston is recorded as hold the ¼ of a knight's fee at Rathealy. Brooks has suggested that this may be the same John de Weston who was active in Carlow and Kildare in the early fourteenth century.[32]

According to Carrigan, the lands of Rathealy, which were held by Peter Rooth and Robert Shee, were forfeited during the Cromwellian confiscations. The moiety forfeited by Robert Shee contained 253 acres and included 'Rathealy Castle'.[33] It seems likely that Carrigan's information was derived from the *Civil Survey* for Co. Kilkenny, which is no longer extant. It seems probable that this relates to a castle of tower house type rather than the ringwork castle as a known castle site is located in the field adjacent to the ringwork.

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[29] Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship*, p. 87.
[30] Brooks, *Knights fees*, p. 238.
[31] Ebden, (ed.), *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the second year of the reign of King Henry III*, p. 39.
[32] Brooks, *Knights' fees*, p. 238.
[33] Carrigan, *The history and antiquities of the diocese of Ossory*, iii, 497.

Other sites in the local area

The ruins of a medieval church are located approximately 80m to the east-south-east of the ringwork castle.[34] Although very little remains of the structure, it seems to be aligned roughly east-west and measures approximately 16.5m by 6.5m. O'Donovan, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, briefly mentioned the church but was unimpressed by it; he stated that the local people '...show a part of the gable of a house in the townland of Rathealy in this parish, and assert that it was a Church, but nothing remains to support the assertion."[35] According to Carrigan, the east gable of the church, including an ogee-headed window within a square moulding, was standing until it fell down on a stormy night in 1886.[36] Carrigan also recorded that there was a graveyard around the church, although it had no monuments and had not been used since about 1820.[37] No trace of a graveyard around the church survives at ground level. According to Carrigan, a chalice was found close to the church in the nineteenth century and was used by the local clergy until it was broken.[38] The field report contained in the RMP file also records that a large iron key was found close to the church.[39]

Between the ringwork castle and the field boundary to the east, there is a complex of earthworks, representing a deserted settlement of probable Anglo-Norman date. Carrigan recorded that, in the field to the east of the church, there were, '...many traces of buildings; also a square enclosure within which, no doubt, the castle of Rathealy stood.'[40] Unfortunately, this field is now under plough and no traces of castle site or earthworks are visible. However, Carrigan's description suggests that the deserted medieval settlement was more originally extensive than is now apparent. Carrigan's reference to a square enclosure is interesting; it seems possible that this square enclosure was the remains of a bawn. The

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[34] KK013-060001.
[35] Michael Herity, (ed.), *Ordnance Survey letters Kilkenny : letters containing information relative to the antiquities of the county of Kilkenny collected during the progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1839* (Dublin, 2003), p. 69.
[36] Carrigan, *The history and antiquities of the diocese of Ossory*, iii, 496-7.
[37] Ibid., iii, 497.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Victor Buckley, field report contained in RMP file KK013-060 (12 November 1987).
[40] Carrigan, *The history and antiquities of the diocese of Ossory*, iii, 497.

documentary evidence discussed above attests that part of Rathealy including a 'castle' was confiscated from Robert Shee, an Irish Catholic, in the mid-seventeenth century. This suggests that the castle site described by Carrigan may have been a late medieval tower house and that there may have been continuous high-status settlement at Rathealy from the thirteenth century through to the seventeenth century.

A standing stone, known as the 'Stuaic of Rathealy', is located in the farmyard to the east of the ringwork castle. According to the landowner, this stone once stood on the ringwork castle but was moved to its present location a few decades ago.

The documentary evidence, which is discussed above, suggests that an important early medieval route-way, which linked Fertagh and Callan, ran past Rathealy. Unfortunately, the road network seems to have changed considerably since the medieval period and Rathealy is not very close to any major roads. However, the First Edition O.S. suggests that a road may have run past the settlement at Rathealy in the medieval period. The modern road which runs through Ballyroe Townland now turns southwards approximately 1.3km to the north-east of the site. However, both the disjointed sections of road shown on the First Edition O.S. map and the modern field boundaries indicate that this road may once have led to the settlement at Rathealy.

Discussion

The morphology and siting of this earthwork are very impressive. The site consists of a raised interior enclosed by the remains of three banks and two intervening ditches. The site is located at a high point in the landscape and commands extensive views over the surrounding area. The place-name, the documentary evidence and the trivallate morphology of the earthwork all suggest that this earthwork originated as a high-status early medieval ringfort. However, the documentary and archaeological evidence also suggest that the site was used as a ringwork castle in the Anglo-Norman period. The ringwork castle seems to have been associated with an Anglo-Norman manor which was held for ¼ of a knight's fee. The proximity of the earthwork to a medieval ruined church and a complex of earthworks

that seem to represent a deserted medieval village, indicates that the ringwork castle was associated with a manorial settlement. Although this site may have been constructed originally as an early medieval ringfort, the evidence for Anglo-Norman re-use justifies its classification as a ringwork castle.

Site no:	**13**
Site name:	**Dunbrin Lower**
Townland:	**Dunbrin Lower**
Parish:	**Ballyadams**
Barony:	**Ballyadams**
County:	**Laois**
Co-ordinates:	**268850, 191800**
RMP no:	**LA020-002**
RMP classification:	**castle - motte**
Inventory no:	**905**
Inventory classification:	**motte**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: RINGWORK CASTLE

Both Orpen and Armitage identified the site at Dunbrin Lower[1] as an earthwork castle of motte type.[2] It is currently classified as a 'motte' rather than a ringwork castle by both the RMP and the *Inventory*. However, as O'Conor has argued, the site should be classified as a ringwork castle based on its morphology.[3]

Siting

The earthwork is located in an elevated position on the western bank of the River Barrow, approximately 2km south of Athy. It commands very good views, including views of the River Barrow itself in both directions. The documentary evidence suggests that, in the medieval period, the River Barrow was navigable to beyond Dunbrin; in 1298, a weir on the River Barrow apparently prevented the passage of ships sailing to Athy.[4] The earthwork may have overlooked a fording or bridging point on the river Barrow, as discussed below.

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[1] The townland name can also be spelled 'Dunbren'.

[2] G. H. Orpen, 'Motes and Norman castles in Ireland' in *E.H.R.*, xxii (1907), p. 249; E. S. Armitage, *Early Norman castles of the British Isles* (London, 1912), pp 331-2.

[3] Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), ii, 711-13.

[4] James Mills (ed.), *Calendar of the Justiciary Rolls or proceedings in Court of the Justiciar of Ireland, 1295-1314,* (3 vols, London, 1905-56), i, 202; G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans,* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20), ii, 231.

Field report

The site has been damaged by quarrying activity and was so overgrown that it was inaccessible when the site was visited in 2009. Basil Stalleybrass visited the site in the early twentieth century, on behalf of his aunt, Ella Armitage. Stalleybrass drew a plan of the site, which is contained in the 'Book of Motes' held by the Yorkshire Archaeological Society in Leeds. Although the site was visited as part of the present study, it has been necessary to rely principally on the descriptions of the site supplied by Armitage and O'Conor for the following field report.

The site consists of a raised interior enclosed by the remains of an inner bank, a fosse and an external bank (Figure 3). O'Conor believes that the enclosed area was originally oval in shape, measuring approximately 24m in diameter from north to south and 22m from east to west.[5] The interior is raised between 50cm and 1m in height above external ground level on its western, landward side. However, on the eastern side, where the ground has been built up to form the flat interior, the interior is up to 4m in height above the base of the fosse.[6]

The interior was defined by a small bank, which survives at the north and west of the site. This bank measures approximately 2-3m in width at its base and up to 80cm in height above the interior.[7]

According to O'Conor, Stalleybrass' plan shows that the fosse fully enclosed the site. It still survives on the western, northern and eastern sides but has been removed by quarrying at the south of the site. The fosse measures between 3m and 8m in width. It is not particularly deep, measuring only 40cm in depth below external ground level at the west of the site. [8]

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[5] Ibid., ii, 712.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.

At the east and north-east of the site, there is an external bank, which measures 50cm-1m in height above the base of the fosse and 1.5-2m in height above external ground level. At its base it measures approximately 10m in width. Stallybrass' plan shows that this bank once enclosed the whole site.[9]

When Stalleybrass visited the site in the early twentieth century, he noted some sherds of pottery, which he believed to be of medieval date, in a section which had been exposed by quarrying.[10]

Documentary references

The origins of the earthwork castle at Dunbrin Lower are unclear. The place-name, which can be translated as 'Bran's fort', suggests that the site may have been originated in the pre-Norman period. There were several kings of Leinster called Bran in the early medieval period.

Although the archaeology of the local area suggests that the site was occupied in the Anglo-Norman period, definite documentary references to the castle are elusive. Dunbrin was within territory of Uí Buidhe or Oboy, which lay between Timahoe and the River Barrow in the barony of Ballyadams. This territory was granted to Robert de Bigarz and Gerald of Wales recorded that Hugh de Lacy constructed a castle for Robert by in 1182. According to Gerald, the castle was located in Uí Buidhe, close to Meilyr fitz Henry's castle at Timahoe. Hugh de Lacy also constructed a castle for Thomas of Flanders, 'not far from there, in the furthest part of Uí Muireadhaigh, separated from Uí Buidhe by the waters of the Barrow'.[11] It seems clear that Thomas of Flanders' castle was located at Ardree on the eastern side of the Barrow while Robert de Bigarz's castle was somewhere close to Ardree on the western side of the river. Orpen's suggestion that the earthwork at Dunbrin Lower represents

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Armitage, *Early Norman castles of the British Isles*, p. 332; O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', ii, 712.

[11] *Expugnatio Hibernica. The Conquest of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis*, edited by A. B. Scott and F. X. Martin, (eds), (Dublin, 1978), p. 195.

Robert's castle seems unlikely.[12] While the geographical description seems to fit the ringwork castle at Dunbrin very well, it could equally be applied to the motte and bailey at Kilmorony, approximately 3km to the south of Dunbrin, which seems a more likely candidate.[13] The castle of Oboy is also mentioned in an inquisition taken on the death of John de Hastings in 1313, which recorded that John held 'the manor of the castle of Oboy from the king in chief by the service of 10 marks whenever royal service is proclaimed.'[14] This inquisition offers no further clues regarding the castle's location.

The lands of Oboy reverted to the Marshals as lords of Leinster in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century and, when the Marshal lands were partitioned in1247, Oboy was included in the lands assigned to Roger de Mortimer, son-in-law of Eva Marshal. However, the documentary evidence suggests that, although Dunbrin was on the western side of the Barrow in the territory of Oboy, it was held by the de Stanton family, along with their manors of Ardree and Moone, in the thirteenth century. The manorial centre of Ardree was situated opposite Dunbrin, on the eastern side of the River Barrow. As mentioned above, Ardree was granted to Thomas of Flanders by Strongbow, as is recorded in *The Song of Dermot and the Earl*,[15] and Hugh de Lacy constructed a castle at Ardree for Thomas of Flanders in the early 1180s.[16] Orpen identified the raised mound on which the graveyard is located as the original motte castle of Ardree, and suggested that the flat platform on which Ardree House is situated may represent an associated bailey.[17]

Thomas of Flanders seems to have played a significant role during the period of Strongbow's lordship of Leinster; his name appears in the witness list of a charter issued by Strongbow, in the company of some very prominent Anglo-Normans, including Hervey de

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[12] Orpen, 'Motes and Norman castles in Ireland', p. 249.
[13] G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans,* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20), i, 384.
[14] Paul Dryburgh and Brendan Smith, (eds), *Inquisitions and extents of medieval Ireland* (Kew, 2007), pp 97-8.
[15] Evelyn Mullally, (ed.), *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland. La Geste des Engleis en Yrlande. A new edition of the chronicle formerly known as 'The Song of Dermot and the Earl'* (Dublin, 2002), Lines 3112-13.
[16] *Expugnatio Hibernica*, p. 195.
[17] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, i, 384-5; Orpen, 'Motes and Norman castles', p. 249.

Monte Marisco, Raymond le Gros, John de Clahull and Walter de Riddlesford.[18] Two charters issued by Thomas of Flanders himself survive. The first records his grant of the chapel of Tilwine and a carucate of land known as Toehe Brigide to St Thomas's Abbey, Dublin.[19] The locations of these places are unknown, although 'Toehe Brigide' may be a corrupted form of 'Tobar Brigid', meaning 'Brigid's Well'. The second of Thomas's charters records his grant of the church of Moone and a carucate of land to Robert, chaplain of 'Salopsbirie'. This charter must postdate 1176, as it states that the grant was for the souls of his ancestors and Earl Richard.[20] Thomas Flandrensis is also mentioned in a charter recording a grant made by his vassal, Hugh de Breskyr, of the ecclesiastical benefices of the churches in his lands of Magothe, in addition to a messuage in the vill of Rathkarthin, to St Thomas's Abbey, Dublin.[21] This grant was confirmed by Macrobius, bishop of Glendalough, between 1179 and 1192.[22]

By the end of the twelfth century, Thomas Flandrensis had been succeeded by Milo de Stanton as lord of Ardree and Moone, through either regrant or marriage. Milo de Stanton's wife, Avicia, is mentioned in two of Milo's charters,[23] and it seems probable that she was the daughter of Thomas Flandrensis and that Milo inherited Ardree through her.[24] However, it is unclear how Milo also came to possess Dunbrin. Thomas Flandrensis also had a daughter called Margery, whose first husband was Robert de Bigarz. It seems possible that Thomas or his successor, Milo de Stanton, acquired Dunbrin through an arrangement made when the lands of Oboy reverted to the Marshals on Robert's death.

The origins of the de Stanton family are unclear; it has been suggested that their name may have been derived from Stainton in the hundred of Rhos near Haverfordwest in

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[18] J. T. Gilbert, (ed.), *Register of the Abbey of St Thomas, Dublin* (London, 1889), pp 369-70.
[19] Ibid., p. 236.
[20] Ibid., p. 167.
[21] Ibid., p. 168.
[22] Ibid., pp 291-2.
[23] Ibid., pp 161-2.
[24] Orpen, 'Motes and Norman castles in Ireland', p. 249, note 114; A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'Knight's fees in Kildare, Leix and Offaly', in *J.R.S.A.I.*, xci (1961), p. 169.

Pembrokeshire.[25] Three grants of property made by Milo de Stanton to St Thomas's Abbey, all dating to the end of the twelfth century, reveal some interesting clues regarding the relationship between the manorial settlement at Ardree and the ringwork castle site at Dunbrin Lower. The first charter records that Milo de Stanton granted the church of Ardree to St Thomas's Abbey, Dublin. In addition to the church itself, the abbey received half of the land of Kildrum, five messuages to the north of the church in Ardree, a mill and fishponds, and, most notably, the 'the site in which the castle was located with the whole yard (*orto*)'.[26] This charter supports Orpen's theory that the mound on which the graveyard is located represents the original castle of Ardree,[27] and implies that the castle of Ardree was no longer in use by the turn of the thirteenth century.[28] The fact that the castle was no longer needed suggests that Milo de Stanton had moved his *caput* elsewhere. Orpen believed the manor of Moone was the principle manor held by Thomas Flandrensis and Milo de Stanton.[29] However, as Otway-Ruthven has shown, Orpen had confused Moone, which was almost certainly a demesne manor of the lords of Leinster, with Mounmohenok (modern Dunmanoge).[30] It seems probable that Milo's *caput* was transferred to Mounmohennok (Dunmanoge) from Ardree by the beginning of the thirteenth century.[31]

In a roughly contemporary charter, Milo de Stanton granted the church of Dunmanoge to St Thomas's Abbey.[32] In a third charter, it is recorded that Milo de Stanton granted the church (*ecclesiam*) of Dunbrin and the chapel (*capellum*) of Dunlost, with all their appurtenances, to the St Thomas's Abbey, Dublin.[33] The location of the church of Dunbrin is unknown but, as is discussed below, it seems likely that it was located close to the ringwork castle site,

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[25] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, iii, 215; M. T. Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship: interactions in Ireland in the late twelfth century* (Oxford, 1989), p. 161, note 112.
[26] Gilbert, (ed.), *Register of the Abbey of St Thomas, Dublin*, pp 162-3; John Bradley, Andrew Halpin and H. A. King, 'Urban Archaeological Survey - Kildare', (unpublished, Archaeological Archives, Dublin, undated), i, 29.
[27] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, i, 384-5; Orpen, 'Motes and Norman castles', p. 249.
[28] Bradley, Halpin and King, 'Urban Archaeological Survey – Kildare', i, 29.
[29] Orpen, 'Motes and Norman castles in Ireland', p. 249; Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, i, 385.
[30] A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'The medieval county of Kildare' in *I.H.S.*, xi, no. 43 (March 1959), p.182.
[31] Otway-Ruthven, 'Knight's fees in Kildare, Leix and Offaly', p. 169; Bradley, Halpin and King, 'Urban Archaeological Survey – Kildare', i, 27.
[32] Gilbert, (ed.), *Register of the Abbey of St Thomas, Dublin*, p. 161.
[33] Ibid., pp 160-1.

somewhere in the townlands of Dunbrin Upper and Dunbrin Lower. 'Dunlost' is no longer in use as a townland or parish name. The map accompanying Samuel Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary* shows that the settlement of Dunlost was located in the modern townland of Rosetown, approximately 3km to the south-east of Dunbrin, where there is a graveyard and possible church site.[34] The fact that the church of Dunbrin was referred to as an '*ecclesiam*' in the charter, while Dunlost was only a '*capellam*', suggests that the church at Dunbrin had the status of a parish church while the church at Dunlost was a chapel.

It has been suggested that the styling of Milo as 'Milo de Stanton of Dunbrin' may be significant because it 'may be an indication that the *caput* of his lands was located at Dunbrin at this stage.'[35] However, it is important to note that he is styled 'Milo de Stanton de Dunbrin' only in the heading of the charter rather than in the text of the charter itself. This heading was almost certainly added later, at the time when the chartulary was being compiled. As discussed above, it seems likely that, having granted of the site of the castle of Ardree to St Thomas's Abbey in the late twelfth century, Milo's *caput* castle was located at Dunmanoge.

Milo de Stanton's name appears in the witness lists of several charters, including two late twelfth century charters recording grants from Adam de Hereford and John de Hereford's to St Thomas' Abbey.[36] Milo and his brother, Henry, also witnessed Hugh Dullard's charter, recording his grant of two burgage plots in Ardree to St Thomas's Abbey.[37] Milo's name also appears in the witness list of a charter issued by Tancard, son of Osbert, recording the grant of the church of St Thomas's at 'Barewe' to St Thomas's Abbey, Dublin. Milo is described as Osbert's lord in this charter which was also witnessed by Geoffrey, cleric of Dunbrin.[38] In 1205, Milo de Stanton witnessed a document recording a settlement between Cartmel Priory and St Thomas's Abbey, Dublin.[39] As Crouch has

[34] KD037-012001.
[35] O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', ii, 713.
[36] Gilbert, (ed.), *Register of the Abbey of St Thomas, Dublin*, pp 86-87 and pp 75-76.
[37] Ibid., p. 168.
[38] Ibid., p. 152.
[39] Ibid., pp 337-8.

argued, the document seems to have been drawn up in Dublin with John Marshal acting on behalf of his uncle, William Marshal the Elder.[40]

Milo de Stanton was succeeded by his son, Adam, sometime after 1205. Adam confirmed his father's grants of the churches of Ardree, Dunmanoge and Dunbrin to St Thomas's Abbey.[41] However, these churches do not seem to have been held by St Thomas's Abbey for long as the documentary evidence shows that they had passed into the possession of St Patrick's Cathedral by *c.*1220.[42]

The manor of Ardree, presumably including Dunbrin, remained in the hands of the de Stanton family throughout the thirteenth century. Adam de Stanton, the probable grandson of the first Adam, died in 1300,[43] and his lands in Leinster, Connacht and Wales were divided amongst his five daughters.[44]

Other sites in the local area

No other archaeological sites are recorded in the townland of Dunbrin Lower. There is a circular enclosure approximately 700m to the east-north-east of the ringwork site, in the adjoining townland of Dunbrin Upper.[45]

Although the documentary evidence discussed above attests that there was a church at 'Dunbrin' in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, its location is unknown. O'Hanlon and O'Leary, writing in the early twentieth century, recorded that, 'there was a

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[40] David Crouch, *William Marshal: knighthood, war and chivalry, 1147-1219* (2nd edition, London, 2002) p. 103, note 12.
[41] Gilbert, (ed.), *Register of the Abbey of St Thomas, Dublin*, pp 163-4.
[42] Ibid., pp 323-8.
[43] W. M. Hennessy, (ed.), *The annals of Lough Cé*, (1939, Dublin; reprint of edition published in London, 1871), 1300.
[44] James Mills, (ed.), *Calendar of* the *Justiciary Rolls or proceedings in Court of the Justiciar of Ireland*, 1295-1314, (3 vols, London, 1905-56), i, 305-6; Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans,* iii, 215.
[45] *Inventory*, no. 195, p. 25; LA020-001.

ruined chapel at Doonbrin ... and it lay on the western banks of the Barrow.'[46] If O'Hanlon and O'Leary were correct in stating the church was located beside the river, it must have been within 500m of the ringwork castle.

The ringwork castle at Dunbrin Lower is located approximately 1km to the south of the Anglo-Norman settlement of Ardree, on the opposite side of the River Barrow. The medieval church and graveyard at Ardree mark the location of the Anglo-Norman settlement.[47] The church of Ardree was dedicated to St Nicholas, suggesting that it was an Anglo-Norman foundation. As is argued above, this church and graveyard seems to have been constructed on top of a probable motte; the castle seems to have gone out of use in the early thirteenth century and the site was granted to the church. The townland adjoining Ardree to the north is called Coneyburrow, indicating that there may have been a rabbit warren associated with the Anglo-Norman manor there.

The settlements of Ardree and Dunbrin were both held by the de Stanton family in the early thirteenth century. The cartographic evidence suggests that they may have been linked by a bridge or ford. The lane which leads to the ringwork castle site now terminates approximately 300m from the site and the site is accessed via a large field used for growing cereal crops. However, the First Edition O.S. map shows that, in the mid-nineteenth century, the road ran past the southern side of the site and terminated on the western bank of the River Barrow. A corresponding track also led up to the eastern bank of the Barrow. This suggests that there may have been a ford or bridge linking Dunbrin and Ardree, which would have been overlooked by the ringwork castle site.

Discussion

The site is in a poor state of preservation, having been badly damaged by quarrying activity, and is very overgrown. However, it is clear that the original morphology of the

[46] John O'Hanlon, Edward O'Leary and Matthew Lalor, *The history of the Queen's County with an introduction by Edwin Phelan*, (2 vols, Kilkenny, 1981: reprint of edition published in Dublin, 1907-1914), i, 184.
[47] KD035-032.

site, which consisted of a raised oval platform, enclosed by two banks with an intervening fosse, resembled that of a typical ringwork castle. The siting of the earthwork, on the bank of the River Barrow, overlooking a probable fording point, is also characteristic of an earthwork castle. The documentary evidence shows that there was an Anglo-Norman manorial settlement at Dunbrin. However, although the church is mentioned several times in the sources, there are no known direct references to a castle at Dunbrin. Although the exact location of the church at Dunbrin is unknown, it seems likely that it was relatively close to the ringwork castle, somewhere in the small adjoining townlands of Dunbrin Upper and Lower. Both the archaeological and documentary evidence indicates that the earthwork site at Dunbrin is a definite example of an Anglo-Norman ringwork castle.

Site no:	**14**
Site name:	**Dunrally**
Townland:	**Vicarstown (Dodd)**
Parish:	**Moyanna**
Barony:	**Stradbally**
County:	**Laois**
Co-ordinates:	**263300, 202310**
RMP no:	**LA014-006001**
RMP classification:	**ringfort - rath**
Inventory no:	**281**
Inventory classification:	**ringfort**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

The site is located in the townland of Vicarstown in the parish of Moyanna. It is classified as a ringfort in both the *Inventory* and the RMP[1] O'Conor identified the site as a ringwork castle, based primarily on its morphology, siting and defensibility.[2] However, more recently, Kelly and Haas have identified the site as a possible Viking *longphort* site.[3]

Siting

The site is located on the west bank of the River Barrow, where it is joined by a tributary called the River Glansha. The site occupies a low-lying position on flat and marshy ground which, prior to the nineteenth-century Barrow drainage scheme, was prone to flooding. The siting of this earthwork would be extremely unusual for a ringfort.[4]

The site is located in a central position within a large D-shaped enclosure. To the north, north-east and east, the D-shaped enclosure is bounded by the River Glansha, while, at the south-east, the enclosure is defined by the River Barrow itself.

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[1] *Inventory*, no. 281, p. 34; LA014-006001.
[2] Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), i, 363-7.
[3] E. P. Kelly and John Maas, 'The Vikings and the kingdom of Laois' in P. G. Lane and William Nolan, (eds), *Laois: history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1999), pp 123-60; E. P. Kelly and John Maas, 'Vikings on the Barrow. Dunrally Fort, a possible Viking *longphort* in County Laois' in *Archaeology Ireland*, xxxiii (Autumn, 1995), pp 30-32.
[4] Kelly and Maas, 'The Vikings and the kingdom of Laois', p. 141; O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', i, 362-3.

The site overlooks a crossing point on the River Barrow, which may have been of major strategic importance in times of war.[5] It is also worth noting that the Barrow was navigable beyond Dunrally in the Anglo-Norman period. Therefore, the fortification may have played an important role in controlling both shipping on the river and traffic using the crossing point.

Field report

The site consists of a circular enclosure defined by a bank and ditch within a D-shaped enclosure (Plate 11a). The D-shaped outer enclosure is located at the junction of the River Barrow and the Glansha River. It measures 360m in length from northwest to southeast and 150m in width at its widest point,[6] which suggests that it originally had an area of approximately 30000m^2. The enclosure is defined by the Glansha River on its northern and north-western sides and the River Barrow to the west. On its north-eastern, eastern and southern sides, it is enclosed by a bank and an external water-filled ditch. In places, there is also a counterscarp bank on the external side of the ditch. The D-shaped enclosure is accessed via a stone bridge over the ditch. This entrance appears to be contemporary with the late eighteenth century house which is located in the interior of the possible ringwork.[7]

The possible ringwork consists of a raised platform, enclosed by two banks and an intervening fosse (Figures 3 and 25). The interior is roughly circular in shape and measures 42m in diameter from north to south and 50m from east to west. The interior is raised approximately 50cm above external ground level.

A ruined nineteenth-century house is located in the south-eastern quadrant of the interior. This structure was constructed as a summer residence by Henry Grattan, following his purchase of the Moyanna estate from Lord Sydney Crosby in 1782. According to O'Hanlon and O'Reilly,

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[5] O'Conor, The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster, i, 365-7.
[6] Kelly and Maas, 'Vikings on the Barrow. Dunrally Fort, a possible Viking *longphort* in County Laois', p. 31.
[7] Ibid.

> '...the new proprietor conceived the idea of building a country house, within the enclosure of the old Fort of Dunrally, and he laid out garden-plots around it to the very upper slopes of the fortress, and then he contrived a circular walk on the elevated rampart. He also laid out an artificially elevated avenue to the high road, over the banks of the River Barrow, and he planted trees on either side, which have now attained a venerable growth.'[8]

Besides the ruined house, there are no other visible features within the enclosed area.

The interior is defined by a low inner bank or lip around its perimeter. This bank has been removed at the east and south-east of the site, presumably as a result of the construction of the house. The bank is flat-topped and measures approximately 6m in width across the top. It measures between 75m and 1.5m in height above the interior.

From the top of the inner bank, there is a steep drop down into the enclosing fosse. The fosse is u-shaped in profile and is water-filled. The fosse measures between 7m and 11m in width at the top (from the top of the external bank across to the slope of the inner bank) and between 2.5m and 3m at its base. The fosse is 2.5m and 3m in depth below the summit of the internal bank and 1.5m in depth below the top of the external bank.

The external bank survives on the west, south-west and south of the site. The bank measures between 2.5m and 5m in width and is 70cm in height above external ground level.

It is unclear where the original entrance to the enclosure was located. The present entrance, which consists of a causeway, is located at the east of the site. There is a short section of wall revetting the outer face of the inner bank on either side of the causeway. These features appear to be contemporary with the late eighteenth-century house and the stone bridge which crosses the outer defences.[9] However, it seems possible that the original

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[8] John O'Hanlon, Edward O'Leary and Matthew Lalor, *The history of the Queen's County with an introduction by Edwin Phelan*, (2 vols, Kilkenny, 1981: reprint of edition published in Dublin, 1907-1914), I, 293.

[9] O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', ii, 714-15.

entrance may also have been in this location as there is no trace of an alternative entrance elsewhere.

Documentary references

The site is located in the townland of Vicarstown in the parish of Moyanna. The site is labelled as 'Dunrally' on the First Edition OS map and this place name appears to relate to the site and the immediate locality.

The place name of 'Dunrally' seems to be derived from 'Dun Rothlaibh' which can be translated as the 'fort of Rodulf'. This has led scholars to identify the site of Dunrally as *Longphort-Rothlaibh*, a site mentioned in the Gaelic annals as the base of the ninth century Viking leader, Rodulf.[10] Rodulf seems to have been active in Ireland from the mid 850s until 862, conducting raids along the Barrow and Nore valleys. The annals record three Vikings raids in Laois and Ossory during this period.[11] Rodulf and his Viking followers were finally driven out of the area in 862. The *Annals of the Four Masters* records the destruction Rodulfs *longphort* in 862;

> 'The destruction of Longphort Rothlaith by Cinnedidh, son of Gaithin, lord of Laighis, on the fifth of the Ides of September; and the killing of Conall Ultach and Luirgnen, with many others along with them.'[12]

The *Fragmentary Annals* seems to corroborate this, although they relate that it was Rodulf's fleet rather than his *longphort* that was destroyed;

> 'Cerball son of Dúnlang and Cennétig son of Gáethíne (i.e. the son of Cerball's sister) defeated Rodolb's fleet, which had come from Norway shortly before that; and Conall Ultach was killed there, and Luirgnén, and many others.'[13]

As Kelly and Haas have argued, it seems likely that the *longphort* and fleet were destroyed in the same battle. Rodulf appears to have been driven out of Ireland. In 863, a Viking called Rodulf appears in the Frankish annals in relation to raiding activity on the Rhine. If,

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[10] Kelly and Maas, 'The Vikings and the kingdom of Laois', pp 123-60; Kelly and Maas, 'Vikings on the Barrow: Dunrally Fort, a possible Viking *longphort* in County Laois', pp 30-32.
[11] Kelly and Maas, 'The Vikings and the kingdom of Laois', pp 132-6.
[12] Michael O'Clery, *et al.* (eds), *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters; from the earliest times to the year 1616* (8 vols, Dublin, 1990, reprint of edition published Dublin, 1856), 862.
[13] J. N. Radnor, *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland* (Dublin, 1978), 862.

as Kelly and Haas have argued, this is the same Viking leader who was previously active in Ireland, he can be identified as the son of Harold, a deposed king of Denmark who settled in Frisia and had died by the early 850s. His son Rodulf died in 873.[14]

Kelly and Haus's identification of Dunrally as a Viking *longphort* is based purely on the surface remains as the site has not yet been excavated and their interpretation is not universally accepted as there appear to be several possible flaws in their hypothesis. The relationship between the possible *longphort* site at Dunrally and the nearby ecclesiastical site at Cloney, on the opposite side of the River Barrow, is unclear; Ó Floinn has argued that the pre-existing monastic site at Cloney is a more likely location for Rodulf's base than Dunrally. The morphology of the site at Dunrally is also problematic. The outer D-shaped enclosure, located between the River Barrow and a tributary, appears to be similar in terms of morphology and siting to other known Viking sites, including Repton in Derbyshire,[15] and the possible *longphort* site at Athlunkard in Co. Clare.[16] However, the central enclosure at Dunrally, which Kelly and Haus describe as 'the citadel', seems an unusual feature for a Viking settlement and may not be contemporary with the outer enclosure. As O'Floinn has pointed out, the site at Dunrally 'has no ready morphological parallel among known Viking sites of the ninth century, and, on morphology alone, could even be a ringwork of Anglo-Norman date.'[17]

There is no known documentary evidence for an Anglo-Norman earthwork castle or settlement at Dunrally. However, it seems possible that the outer enclosure was re-fortified and a ringwork castle constructed in its interior during the conquest period. As O'Conor has pointed out, the site is strategically important, as it overlooks a crossing point on the River Barrow, and its riverside siting is reminiscent of that of several other Anglo-Norman

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[14] Kelly and Haas, 'The Vikings and the kingdom of Laois', pp 136-7.
[15] Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjolbye-Biddle, 'Repton and the Vikings' in *Antiquity,* lxvi (1992), pp 36-51.
[16] E. P. Kelly and Edmund O'Donovan, 'A Viking longphort near Athlunkard, Co. Clare' in *Archaeology Ireland*, xxxiv (Winter, 1995), pp 13-16.
[17] Raghnall Ó Floinn, 'The archaeology of the Early Viking Age in Ireland' in H. B. Clarke, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh and Raghnall Ó Floinn, (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia in the Early Viking Age* (Dublin, 1998), p. 163.

ringwork castles in Leinster.[18] The morphology of the inner 'citadel' is not dissimilar to that of a typical ringwork castle. However, the lack of documentary evidence suggests that any Anglo-Norman settlement here was probably relatively short-lived.

Other sites in the local area

The nearest medieval church site to Dunrally is located at Cloney, approximately 1km to the south-east of Dunrally, on the eastern side of the River Barrow. The extant remains at Cloney consist of a ruined church and graveyard,[19] and a castle site of unknown date,[20] within a circular enclosure of probable early medieval date.

An ecclesiastical site is located approximately 2km to the south-west of the site, also in the townland of Vicarstown. This site is labelled 'Kylemahoe Church (site of)' on the First Edition OS map. Nothing of the site is now visible at ground level. However, a circular crop-mark around the site, possibly representing an early medieval ecclesiastical enclosure, is visible on the aerial photographs. The ruins of the parish church of Moyanna are located approximately 5km to the south-east of Dunrally.[21] It seems likely that this church, which appears to be late medieval or post-medieval in date, is on the site of an early medieval church site as it is located within a circular enclosure defined by an earthen bank and is associated with St Monenna.[22]

A possible moated site lies between the church site at Kylemahoe and the possible ringwork, approximately 600m to the north-east of the church and 1200m to the south-west of the possible ringwork site. It was depicted as a rectangular enclosure on the First edition OS map. The Grand Canal was constructed immediately to the east and this seems to have destroyed most of the site. The remains of a bank survive at the east and south-east.[23]

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[18] O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', i, 363.
[19] KD030-003.
[20] KD030-002.
[21] *Inventory*, no. 781, p. 86; LA014:016.
[22] *Inventory*, no. 781, p. 86
[23] *Inventory*, no. 590, p. 61; LA014-007.

There are also two enclosures of unknown date and function in the townland, one of which is situated on the bank of the Barrow, approximately 1300m to the south-east of the possible ringwork, while the other is located 1300m to the south-west of the site.[24]

Discussion

The evidence suggests that the D-shaped enclosure at Dunrally represents a Viking *longphort*. However, this does not necessarily mean that the 'citadel' within the enclosure is not a ringwork castle of Anglo-Norman date. The apparent lack of any documentary evidence for Anglo-Norman occupation of the site, combined with the absence of an associated church or settlement, indicates that any Anglo-Norman period of occupation was probably short-lived. Due to the lack of documentary evidence for an Anglo-Norman presence at Dunrally, the site can only be classified as a possible ringwork castle.

[24] *Inventory*, no. 558, p.58; SMR LA014-023; Not recorded in *Inventory*; SMR LA014-085.

Site no:	**15**
Site name:	**Lea Castle**
Townland:	**Lea**
Parish:	**Lea**
Barony:	**Portnahinch**
County:	**Laois**
Co-ordinates:	**212018, 257065**
RMP no:	**LA005-006001; 002**
RMP classification:	**castle - Anglo-Norman; castle - ringwork**
Inventory no:	**936**
Inventory classification:	**castle**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

The keep and inner ward at Lea are situated on a naturally raised knoll, similar to that on which Carlow Castle is built. O'Conor has noted that the curtain wall of the inner ward encloses a circular area, which may represent the area enclosed by an early Anglo-Norman ringwork castle.[1]

Siting

Lea Castle is centred on a natural hillock on the southern bank of the River Barrow, approximately 3.5km to the east of Portarlington. Although it is located on low-lying ground beside the river, it commands reasonably good views in all directions. The area around the castle was probably marshy in the medieval period, making the castle effectively an island. The modern barony name of 'Portnahinch' is derived from an alternative medieval name for Lea, meaning 'the fort of the island'.[2] It is unclear if the River Barrow was navigable as far as Lea, which lies on the most northerly stretch of the river. In 1298, a weir on the River Barrow apparently prevented the passage of ships sailing to Athy.[3] If

[1] Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), i, 175-6; Kieran O'Conor, 'Anglo-Norman Castles in Co. Laois' in P.G. Lane, and William Nolan (eds), *Laois: history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1999), p. 197.
[2] G.H. Orpen, 'Motes and Norman castles in Ireland' in *E.H.R.* xxii (1907), p. 253; O'Conor, 'Anglo-Norman Castles in Co. Laois', p. 197.
[3] James Mills, (ed.), *Calendar of the Justiciary Rolls or proceedings in Court of the Justiciar of Ireland, 1295-1314,* (3 vols, London, 1905-56), i, 202; G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20), ii, 231.

boats could sail only as far as Athy, as this reference implies, boats may not have been able to reach Lea Castle.

Field report

The documentary evidence, which is discussed below, shows that there was a castle in existence at Lea by *c.*1201. As the stone castle can be dated to the mid-thirteenth century on architectural grounds, this indicates that there was an earthwork predecessor at Lea in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century. It has been suggested that the earth and timber castle was a motte, which was levelled to make way for the stone castle.[4] However, as O'Conor has argued, there is no evidence for a motte at Lea and the morphology of the stone castle strongly suggests that it was constructed on the site of an earlier ringwork castle.[5]

The inner ward of Lea Castle is slightly raised above surrounding ground level. As mentioned above, the place name suggests that the castle made use of a naturally-raised 'island', which was surrounded by a marshy area beside the river. The inner ward is oval in shape and measures approximately 65m from north-west to south-east and 50m from south-west to north-east. The inner ward is enclosed by a wall from the north-east to the south-east while at the south, west and north, it is defined by a fosse. However, it seems probable that the wall originally enclosed the inner ward of the stone castle fully, probably following the line of the timber palisade of the earlier ringwork castle.

The dating of the stone castle at Lea has been the subject of some debate. This debate is relevant to this study because it obviously informs our understanding of the chronology of the probable ringwork castle. It is generally accepted that the twin-towered gatehouse is late

[4] Orpen, 'Motes and Norman castles in Ireland', p. 253; E. S. Armitage, *Early Norman castles of the British Isles* (London, 1912), p. 34.
[5] O'Conor, 'Anglo-Norman Castles in Co. Laois', p. 197; O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), i, 175-6

thirteenth-century in date.[6] However, as Sweetman has pointed out, the twin-towered gatehouse is not bonded to the curtain wall, suggesting that it was inserted after the curtain wall's construction.[7]

The inner ward, especially the towered keep, is harder to date. It has been suggested that the keep may have been constructed during the period of William Marshal's lordship of Leinster.[8] This argument is based on the affinities of the keep at Lea with the towered keeps at Carlow Castle and Ferns Castle. Excavations at Carlow failed to shed much light on the chronology of the keep.[9] However, O'Conor has argued that the documentary evidence indicates that the most likely historical context for the construction of the stone castle is the period between 1210 and 1220.[10] The dating of the keep at Ferns is more problematic. Although Sweetman has argued for an early thirteenth-century date,[11] it has also been suggested it may be late thirteenth-century in date.[12] As argued below, it seems unlikely that the castle was constructed by William Marshal as he was holding the castle on behalf of his ward, Maurice fitz Gerald. As O'Conor has argued the stone castle was probably begun after Maurice gained seisin of his lands. However, as argued below, Maurice may not have acquired Lea and Geashill until 1234.

The keep originally consisted of rectangular block with round towers at all four corners. The castle is now in a ruined state and only one of the corner towers is still standing. Some architectural features survive and are useful for dating the structure. Leask believed that the

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[6] H. G. Leask, *Irish castles and castellated houses* (Dundalk, 1999; reprint of second edition published in 1951), pp 50-1; O'Conor, 'Anglo-Norman Castles in Co. Laois', p. 186; P. D. Sweetman, *The medieval castles of Ireland* (Cork, 1999), pp 60-1.

[7] Sweetman, *The medieval castles of Ireland*, pp 60-1.

[8] Walter Fitzgerald, 'The history and antiquities of the Queen's County Barony of Portnahinch. Part III – Lea Castle' in *J.K.A.S.*, v, no. 5 (1905), p. 329.

[9] Kieran O'Conor, *Carlow Castle preliminary excavation report*, (unpublished report, excavation no. 96E0105, 2002).

[10] Kieran O'Conor, 'Carlow Castle – who built and occupied the first castle here?' in *Carloviana,* iv (1998), pp 37-42.

[11] Sweetman, *The medieval castles of Ireland*, p. 78.

[12] Leask, *Irish castles and castellated houses,* p. 49; Tadhg O'Keeffe and Margaret Coughlan, 'The chronology and formal affinities of the Ferns *donjon*, Co. Wexford' in J.R. Kenyon and Kieran O'Conor (eds), *The medieval castle in Ireland and Wales: essays in honour of Jeremy Knight* (Dublin, 2003), p. 147.

presence of trefoil-pointed windows showed that the keep was later than Carlow and Ferns, dating to the mid-thirteenth century.[13] However, these trefoil-headed windows are located at second floor level and O'Conor has pointed out that there is a visible difference in construction technique between the first floor and second floor of the keep.[14] While the ground floor and first floor seem to be original, the upper two floors seem to be a later addition. This suggests that the castle was built in two phases and that the trefoil-pointed windows can only be used to date the second phase. The round-arched embrasures of the ground floor and first floor at Lea are similar to those found at Carlow. Lea Castle also has cruciform arrow loops, some of which are at first floor level and seem to be original. O'Conor suggests that Maurice fitz Gerald constructed this castle as a 'direct copy' of Marshal's Carlow Castle, around 1220.[15] However, as argued below, the documentary evidence suggests that Maurice may not have gained seisin of Lea and Geashill until 1234.

Documentary references

An entry in the *Annals of the Four Masters* under the year 976, suggests that Lea may have been a place of some importance in the pre-Norman period. The entry records that the foreigners of Dublin defeated the men of Leinster at the battle of Bithlann and the men killed included 'Conghalach, son of Flann, lord of Leighe and Rechet'.

Lea appears regularly in the Anglo-Norman sources from the late twelfth century onwards. The *Song of Dermot and the Earl* records that Strongbow granted 'Offaly to the west of Offelan' to Robert de Bermingham before 1176.[16] Robert died before the end of the twelfth century and Gerald fitz Maurice inherited his lands in Offaly, including the manor of Lea by right of his wife, Eva de Bermingham.[17] In 1199, Maurice fitz Philip attempted to claim the ownership of the manors of Lea and Geashill, and paid 400 marks to King John to

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[13] Leask, *Irish castles and castellated houses*, p. 51.
[14] O'Conor, 'Anglo-Norman Castles in Co. Laois', p. 188.
[15] Ibid., p. 189.
[16] Evelyn Mullally, (ed.), *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland. La Geste des Engleis en Yrlande. A new edition of the chronicle formerly known as 'The Song of Dermot and the Earl'* (Dublin, 2002), Lines 3104-5.
[17] G.H. Orpen, 'The Fitzgeralds: barons of Offaly' in *J.R.S.A.I.* xliv (1914), p. 99; Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, iii, 113; Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven, 'Knights' fees in Kildare, Leix and Offaly' in *J.R.S.A.I*, xci (1961), p. 178.

obtain a judgement in the King's Court regarding this dispute.[18] This claim seems to have failed and Gerald fitz Maurice held Lea and Geashill at the time of his death in 1201. The justiciar, Meilyr fitz Henry, was ordered to deliver the castles and lands of 'Lega and Geisil' into the hands of William Marshal, who was to hold the castles and lands, in addition to the wardship of Gerald's heir, Maurice fitz Gerald, for the period of Maurice's minority.[19] This writ is notable because it contains the first known reference to a castle at Lea. It seems likely that the castle was an earth and timber castle at this time.

In 1216, Maurice gained seisin of the lands 'which Gerald his father held in fee on the day of his decease.'[20] However, Lea and Geashill are not mentioned specifically and, as Orpen has argued, it is likely that Maurice did not gain seisin of those lands until *c.* 1234.[21] As Gerald fitz Maurice had held Lea and Geashill by right of his wife, Eva, these lands did not pass directly to their son, but were held by Eva for the rest of her lifetime. Eva married twice more, to Geoffrey fitz Robert, lord of Kells-in-Ossory, and to Geoffrey de Marisco. By 1226, Eva had died and her widower, Geoffrey de Marisco, who was the justiciar, seems to have retained some lands that had been held by right of his wife. Maurice fitz Gerald attempted to claim these unnamed lands through the court of William Marshal the Younger, lord of Leinster. However, the king intervened on behalf of the justiciar, ordering that the barons should not give a judgement with regard to this plaint.[22] In 1234, Geoffrey participated in Richard Marshal's rebellion against the crown and was subsequently imprisoned and had his lands confiscated. Maurice fitz Gerald had remained loyal to the crown and was justiciar of Ireland at this time. The king seems to have rewarded Maurice by allowing him to bring a claim before the King's Court regarding 'certain tenements' held by Geoffrey de Marisco and others.[23] As Orpen has argued, '...these tenements, we

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[18] H. S. Sweetman, (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland,* (5 vols, London, 1875-83), i, 16; Orpen, 'The Fitzgeralds: barons of Offaly', p. 100.
[19] Sweetman, (ed.), *C.D.I.*, i, 30.
[20] Ibid., i, 108.
[21] Orpen, 'The Fitzgeralds: barons of Offaly', pp 101-4.
[22] Sweetman, (ed.), *C.D.I.*, i, 220.
[23] Ibid., i, 321-2.

may infer with probability, were Lea and Geashill'.[24] Geoffrey's lands were returned to him in 1235, with the exception of certain lands which he had 'granted' to Maurice.[25]

The ownership of Lea in the early thirteenth century has implications for the dating of the stone castle. William Marshal has traditionally been credited with its construction.[26] However, it seems unlikely that Marshal would have funded the construction of a major stone castle on lands which he was holding on behalf of his ward for a limited period of time.[27] O'Conor and Sweetman have both argued that the stone castle was constructed during the period of Maurice fitz Gerald's lordship of Lea, with construction probably commencing soon after 1216.[28] However, as argued above, the documentary evidence suggests that Maurice did not gain seisin of Lea until *c.*1234. It is unlikely that construction began under Geoffrey de Marisco as he would have known that his claim to the lands of Lea and Geashill would be dubious if his wife were to die. Therefore, the most likely historical context for the construction of the stone castle seems to be the period of Maurice fitz Gerald's lordship of Lea, which was probably limited to the period between *c.* 1234 and his death in 1257.

Maurice fitz Gerald succeeded by his grandson, Maurice. As Maurice was a minor at this time, the custody of Lea Castle was given to Thomas de Clare who held it until 1268, when he sold his rights to the wardship of Maurice fitz Gerald, the castle of Lea and the manor of Rathangan to William de Valence for 3500 marks.[29] In 1264, Theobald Butler, John de Cogan and the justiciar, Richard de la Rochelle, were captured by Maurice fitz Gerald and his uncle, Maurice fitz Maurice, and imprisoned in the castles of Lea and Dunamase.[30]

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[24] Orpen, 'The Fitzgeralds: barons of Offaly', p. 104.
[25] Sweetman, (ed.), *C.D.I.*, i, 339; Orpen, 'The Fitzgeralds: barons of Offaly', p. 104.
[26] Walter Fitzgerald, 'The history and antiquities of the Queen's County Barony of Portnahinch. Part III – Lea Castle' in *J.K.A.S.*, v, no. 5 (1905), p. 329.
[27] O'Conor, 'Anglo-Norman castles in Co. Laois', p 189.
[28] Ibid., p. 189; Sweetman, *The medieval castles of Ireland*, pp 77-8.
[29] Sweetman, (ed.), *C.D.I.*, ii, 141-2.
[30] *The Annals of Ireland by Friar John Clyn*, edited by Bernadette Williams (Dublin, 2007), *s.a.*1264; W. M. Hennessy, (ed.), *The annals of Lough Cé*, (1939, Dublin; reprint of edition published in London, 1871), *s.a.* 1264; Fitzgerald, 'The history and antiquities of Portnahinch: Lea Castle', pp 329-32; Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, iii, 241.

Maurice fitz Gerald drowned while crossing the Irish Sea in 1268,[31] and was succeeded by Gerald fitz Gerald.

By the late thirteenth century, there seems to have been a sizable settlement at Lea. In 1279, the justiciar, Robert de Ufford, and his forces passed through 'the new vill of Leyes' on their way to deal with the Irish of Offaly, who were in rebellion.[32] Following the death of Roger de Mortimer in 1282, an *inquisition post mortem* was held at 'the new town of Leys in the county of Kildare'. This inquisition found that the heir of Maurice fitz Gerald (Gerald fitz Maurice) held Lea and Geashill for the service of four knights' fees.[33] In 1292, a fine of ½ mark was paid to the Irish Exchequer from 'Stephen Kyft, by pledge of the burgesses and commonalty of the new vill of Leys, because he did not prosecute.'[34] This reference to burgesses shows that the settlement had acquired borough status by this time.

Lea Castle was attacked and burned several times in the fourteenth century. In 1307, the Irish attacked and destroyed the castle of Geashill and burned the town of Lea. They briefly besieged the castle of Lea but were driven off by John fitz Thomas and Edmund Butler.[35] Lea Castle was burned by the Edward Bruce's army in 1315, shortly after the Battle of Skerries.[36] Under the year 1345, *Grace's Annals* record that 'the castles of Ley and of Kilmehede were burned by the Irish.'

Other sites in the local area

The medieval church of Lea is located approximately 350m to the east-south-east of the castle, in the adjoining townland of Loughmansland Glebe.[37] Very little of the structure

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[31] Michael O'Clery et al., (eds), *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters; from the earliest times to the year 1616* (8 vols, Dublin, 1990, reprint of edition published Dublin, 1856), *s.a.* 1268.
[32] Sweetman, (ed.), *C.D.I.*, ii, 529.
[33] Ibid., ii, 467.
[34] Ibid., iii, 476.
[35] James Grace, *Annales Hiberniae*, translated and edited by Richard Butler (Dublin, 1842), *s.a.* 1307.
[36] Ibid., *s.a.* 1315; Sean Duffy, 'The Bruce Invasion of Ireland: a revised itinerary and chronology' in Sean Duffy, (ed.), *Robert the Bruce's Irish wars: the invasions of Ireland 1306-29* (Stroud, 2002), p. 26.
[37] LA005-007.

survives. This church was abandoned in early nineteenth century when the church at New Lea (Portarlington) was constructed.

The castle at Lea is located on the banks of the River Barrow and the aerial photographs and the First Edition O.S. map suggest that there were several water features around the medieval castle. A probable mill race can be seen to the north of the castle, making use of a natural bend in the River Barrow. This channel separates from the river immediately to the north of the castle and rejoins it approximately 300m downstream. It is unclear if this channel is a natural or manmade feature but it seems probable that it was used to power the manorial mill, which must have existed at Lea. The earthworks around the castle suggest that it may have been enclosed by a moat fed by the River Barrow.[38] There also seems to have been a complex of water features around the castle at Lea. On the western side of the castle, a channel leaves the Barrow and feeds a small pool at the south-west of the castle, which in turn feeds several small channels. To the south of the castle is a long rectilinear pool, while a second rectilinear pool lies to the south-west of the castle. The function of these water features is unclear; it seems unlikely that they formed a moat or defensive boundary around the castle as they are too far away from the castle. It seems possible that the pools represent fish ponds while the channels were designed to feed the ponds and may also functioned as drainage channels.

The documentary evidence discussed above shows that there was a town with borough status at Lea by the late thirteenth century. The orientation of the entrance to the stone castle shows that it was approached from the south-east and a road seems to have led to the castle from this direction. The First Edition O.S. map shows that there was a cross-roads to the south-east of the castle, halfway between the castle and the church. This may have been the centre of the medieval settlement. The earthworks visible on the aerial photographs indicate that there was also settlement on the southern and western sides of the castle. The First Edition O.S. map also shows that, in the mid-nineteenth century, a road ran westwards from the settlement towards a crossing point on the River Barrow, approximately 900m to

[38] Mike Salter, *The castles of Leinster* (Malvern, 2004), p. 89.

the west of the castle. The earthworks visible suggest that there were burgage plots on the southern side of this linear feature.

There was still a village at Lea in the mid-nineteenth century. However, the topography of the local area was changed drastically as a result of the construction of the Royal Canal. The settlement at Lea seems to have been abandoned in favour of the new town at Portarlington, which lies approximately 3.5km to the west.

Discussion

The documentary evidence clearly shows that there was a castle at Lea by the turn of the thirteenth century. As the stone castle seems to be thirteenth century rather than twelfth century in date, it seems probable that it was preceded by an earth-and-timber castle. As O'Conor has argued, the circular shape of the inner ward, which is located on a raised circular knoll, indicates that the original fortification at Lea was probably a ringwork castle. Although the site has not been excavated to confirm this theory, it seems reasonable to classify it as a possible ringwork castle.

Site no:	**16**
Site name:	**Rathdowney**
Townland:	**Rathdowney**
Parish:	**Rathdowney**
Barony:	**Clandonagh**
Co-ordinates:	**228290, 178330**
RMP no:	**LA028-055003**
RMP classification:	**castle - ringwork possible**
Inventory no:	**515**
Inventory classification:	**enclosure (site)**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

Siting

This site is no longer extant. According to Carrigan, the earthwork was located 150 yards (137m) to the north-east of the Church of Ireland church, on the north side of Rathdowney Square.[1] The site is not shown on the First Edition O.S. map, published in 1841, but the space between the buildings depicted on the map shows its probable location.

Field report

The site at Rathdowney was described by Carrigan, who never actually saw the site himself but acquired his information from Patrick Murphy, the landowner, who was responsible for the site's removal, *c.* 1840. The description of the site given by Carrigan is very basic; he states that it was, '...circular in shape, 25 or 30 yards (23-27m) in diameter and flat at the top, and raised about 8 ft. (2.4m) over the surrounding land.'.[2] The site cannot be classified with any certainty on the basis of such a vague description of its morphology.

Murphy told Carrigan that, when the site was levelled, '...he found it filled with human bones (but there were no skulls), and that he removed five cart-loads of them thence for

[1] William Carrigan, *The Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, (4 vols, Dublin, 1981, facsimile reprint of edition published in 1905), ii, p. 339.
[2] Ibid., ii, pp 339-40.

interment elsewhere.' He also found '...some bone pins 2 or 2 ½ ins. (5-6cm) long, but no objects of iron or bronze, or anything else of interest.'[3]

Carrigan believed that the presence of such large quantities of 'human' bone indicated that the site was a churchyard associated with an early church. He argued that the place name of 'Rathdowney', which can be translated as 'the rath of the church' supported this hypothesis.[4] However, Carrigan's conclusion that the enclosure was an early medieval church site seems unlikely for several reasons. Firstly, the 'human bones' noted during the levelling of the site may well have been animal bones; it seems unlikely that the owner was able to distinguish human bones from animal bones with any degree of accuracy, particularly as the skulls were reportedly absent. Also, no remains of a church building were uncovered during site's demolition. Finally, it seems probable that the Church of Ireland church marks the location of the earliest church at Rathdowney and there is no evidence to suggest that there was a second church site nearby. The description of the finds recovered during the demolition of the site is interesting. It is notable that no metal finds were found as the finds assemblages from Anglo-Norman ringwork castle excavations typically include many metal finds of a military nature. However, the report of the finds given by Carrigan must be treated with a degree of scepticism; Carrigan was not actually present when the site was levelled and his conversation with the owner must have taken place several decades later. Also, as the site was levelled rather than excavated, it is likely that many small finds were missed.

Documentary references

The deaths of three lords of 'Rath Tamhnaigh' are recorded in *The Annals of the Four Masters* under the years 874, 909 and 1069. These references suggest that there was a stronghold associated with the chiefs of the Magh-lacha at Rathdowney in the early medieval period.

Rathdowney first appears in the Anglo-Norman sources in the early thirteenth century. A charter issued by William Marshal, *c.*1207, records his grant to Adam de Hereford of,

[3] Ibid., ii, p 340.
[4] Ibid., ii, p 340.

'...the district called 'Mamocle', in which his castle of Raduoeny stands, by seisin of two knights with the usual customs and liberties'.[5] The district of 'Mamocle' probably represents the pre-Norman territory of Magh-lacha.[6] This charter contains the only known reference to a 'castle' at Rathdowney and the wording of the charter suggests that William Marshal himself may have been responsible for its construction.

Adam de Hereford died in 1216 and was succeeded by his son, Stephen. On the death of Stephen de Hereford in 1237, Hugh de Legh was granted custody of his Irish lands for the duration of his heir's minority.[7] As Brooks has argued, the feudory of 1247, which states that Rathdowney was held by Stephen de Hereford for two knights' fees, was a decade out of date.[8] Following Stephen de Hereford's death without issue, Rathdowney passed into the hands of the Pippard family. Alice Pippard, Stephen's niece through his sister, Auda, was married to Ralph fitz Nicholas. Their son, Ralph, who adopted his mother's maiden name of Pippard, inherited lands including Rathdowney through his mother.[9]

Although there is much documentary evidence relating to the Pippards and Rathdowney, there is no evidence to suggest that they ever resided there. While most of the Pippards' charters do not record the place that they were issued from, the few charters that do record a location were issued at Ardee in Co. Louth,[10] and Castlewarden in Co. Kildare.[11] It is notable that none of their charters are known to have been issued at Rathdowney. Many of the documentary references relate to the Pippards' vassals in Rathdowney. A charter dating to 1267 records the quitclaim of Agnes, wife of the late Henry Scurich, to the lands of Glasha and Clonburren in the parish of Rathdowney and Kildellig in the parish of Clarmallagh.[12] In a document dating to 1267, Nicholas de Scottoc and Henry Malerbe made peace between them and agreed that they would send three men each to Rathdowney who would elect six men from the barony of

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[5] Edmund Curtis, (ed.), *Calendar of Ormond Deeds, 1172-1603* (6 vols, Dublin, 1932-43), i, p.19; E. St J. Brooks, *Knights' fees in counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny* (Dublin, 1950), p. 202.
[6] Carrigan, *The history and antiquities of the diocese of Ossory*, i, pp 5-9.
[7] *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1234-7, p. 500; Brooks, *Knights' fees*, p. 205.
[8] Brooks, *Knights' fees*, p. 206.
[9] Ibid., p. 206-7.
[10] Curtis, (ed.), *Cal. Ormond Deeds,* i, 82.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid., i, p. 64.

Rathdowney and '...make good for any trespasses, according to their judgement'. If there were any disagreements regarding the settlement, they would be dealt with by Ralph Pippard.[13]

In an indenture dating to 1276, Ralph Pippard rented out, '...his lordship of Rathdowney, his mill, his toll of ale of same and pasture of his herbage of his wood near Rathdowney towards the east', to a group of eight men for a period of fifteen years. These men are named as Alexander, son of Thomas, Nicholas Wennedune, Adam Carpentarius, Maurice Meant, Gilbert, son of Robert, Osbert, son of Adam, Henry, son of Thomas and Philip Meant of Rathdowney.[14]

Nicholas de Dunheved appears to have been the most prominent of the Pippards' vassals at Rathdowney. In a charter dating to between 1260 and 1286, John Pippard granted to Theobald Butler, '...the lordship and rent of six pence which Sir Nicholas de Dunheud owed him in the tenement of Rathdowni together with all the homages, services etc pertaining thereto and the advowson and glebe of the church of Rathdowni.'.[15] In a charter dating to *c.* 1290, John again granted, '...the lordship and rent of 6*d*., which Nicholas de Dunheved was wont to pay him out of Rathdowni', to Theobald Butler.[16]

In a charter issued *c.* 1282, Nicholas de Dunheved promised to Ralph Pippard rights relating to the wardships, marriages and reliefs of all free tenants in the manor of Rathdowney.[17] Two late twelfth-century charters record that Nicholas Dunheved granted both 'his manor of Alcroyl' and 'the land and rent which Sir Hugh Purcel and Joan his wife hold of him in the manor of Athcrcol' to Ralph Pippard.[18] Brooks suggested that this manor was located at Cruell in the parish of Aghaboe.[19]

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[13] Ibid, i, 64.
[14] Ibid, i, 82.
[15] Ibid, i, 59.
[16] Ibid, i, 113.
[17] Ibid, i, 100.
[18] Ibid, i, 101.
[19] Brooks, *Knights' fees*, p. 59.

Ralph Pippard granted all of his castles and manors in Ireland to his eldest son, John, in 1294. It is notable that this charter mentions the castles of Leixlip, Ardee, Castlewarden and Donaghmoyne but mentions only 'the services of Rathdowney which Sir Nicholas de Donheved and others formerly held of him'.[20] Ralph issued this charter at Rutherfeld Pyppard in Oxfordshire, the principle manor held by the Pippards in England, which suggests that Ralph may have retired to England by this time.

A thirteenth-century charter records that a chaplain called Adam de Wodna, chaplain, granted to John Pippard, '...a messuage with garden, in the vill of Rathedouny which was formerly Robert the clerk's on the west side of the church of the vill'.[21]

In 1297, John Pippard appointed Maurice de Blauchevyll as seneschal of Rathdowney.[22] However, later in the same year, he granted the overlordship of Rathdowney and Moynochle to Theobald Butler,[23] and issued a charter to Maurice de Blauchevyll, instructing him to yield seisin to Theobald.[24] He also issued mandates to inform his chief tenants in Rathdowney, namely Hugh Purcel, John de Druhull, Milo de Rocheford and Richard de Scothoc, of this.[25]

By 1317, the two fees at Rathdowney were held by Theobald Butler's brother and heir, Edmund.[26]

Other sites in the local area

The documentary evidence listed above demonstrates that there was a large medieval settlement at Rathdowney. Unfortunately, due to the development of the modern town, very few traces of the medieval settlement remain.

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[20] Curtis, (ed.), *Cal. Ormond Deeds,* i, 129.
[21] Ibid., i, 144; Curtis dates this charter to *c.* 1300. However, John Pippard granted the overlordship of Rathdowney to Theobald Butler in 1297and it seems likely that this charter predates that grant.
[22] Ibid., i, 135-6.
[23] Ibid., i, 136; *Brooks, Knights' fees*, p. 59.
[24] Curtis, (ed.), *Cal. Ormond Deeds,* i, 135-6.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Brooks, *Knights' fees*, p. 209.

The Church of Ireland church is located approximately 140m to the south-east of the removed earthwork site. A medieval church, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, stood on this site until it was replaced by the present church building in 1818.

The First edition O.S. map shows a large mill pond to the west of the earthwork site in addition to two mill races. There is also a large mill pond and mill race approximately 700m to the south. It seems possible that some of these features were associated with water mills of medieval origin.

The main road that runs through Rathdowney leads to a bridge over the Erkina River, approximately 1km to the east of the site. This bridge is labelled on the First Edition O.S. map as 'Coneyburrow Bridge'. This may indicate that there was an Anglo-Norman rabbit warren here, possibly associated with the Anglo-Norman manor of Rathdowney.

Discussion

The documentary references show that the there was a castle at Rathdowney in *c.*1207 and that there was also a sizeable Anglo-Norman settlement throughout the thirteenth century. As the probable earthwork castle site was removed in the nineteenth century, it is not possible to classify the site with any certainty. Based on Carrigan's description, it seems likely that the site was either a ringwork castle or a low, flat motte. The site has been therefore been classified as possible ringwork castle.

Site no:	**17**
Site name:	**Rathpiper**
Townland:	**Rathpiper South**
Parish:	**Rathdowney**
Barony:	**Clandonagh**
Co-ordinates:	**229623, 177192**
RMP no:	**LA028-060002**
RMP classification:	**castle – ringwork**
Inventory no:	**520; 1004**
Inventory classification:	**enclosure; castle (site)**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

Siting

The site is situated in undulating countryside. It commands reasonably good views.

Field report

This earthwork site is relatively unimpressive. Only the western half of the enclosure survives, defined by an earthen bank that runs from the south-west clockwise to the north (Figure 3). The bank measures approximately 50cm in height and between 1.5 and 2m in width at its base. The First Edition O.S. map, published in 1841, shows a square building labelled 'site of castle' within a large D-shaped enclosure.

Nothing of the stone castle depicted on the O.S. map remains at ground level. Carrigan recorded that the ruins of the castle '...were cleared away about 1836 and the materials used for road metal'.[1] It seems possible that this castle was a tower house rather than a castle of Anglo-Norman date.

Documentary references

The place name of 'Rathpiper' may indicate that the site was associated with the Anglo-Norman Pipard family. However, while the Pippards held land in the Rathdowney area in the thirteenth century, there is no known historical evidence to link them to the site at Rathpiper.

[1] William Carrigan, *The Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, (4 vols, Dublin, 1981, facsimile reprint of edition published in 1905), ii, 341.

The documentary evidence shows that Rathpiper may have been an assembly place of some importance to the Mac Gilla Patrick chiefs of Ossory in the Elizabethan period. A document dating to 1572 refers to a meeting held at 'Pyperath' in 1558, at which Brian Mac Gilla Patrick ceded lands to his son, Barnaby. Fitzpatrick has suggested three possible locations for the meeting place; the 'castle' of Rathpiper, Kilcoran Rath in the adjoining townland of Kilcoran and a mound in Kilcoran, which was recorded by Carrigan and is no longer extant.[2]

Other sites in the local area

There is an enclosure site approximately 240m to the north of the site, in the adjoining townland of Coolnaboul.[3] Another smaller enclosure lies approximately 250m to the north of the first enclosure, also in the townland of Coolnaboul.[4]

The nearest medieval church seems to have been located at Coolkerry, approximately 800m to the north-west of the site.[5] This church was dedicated to St John the Baptist and belonged to St Thomas's Abbey, Dublin, in the medieval period. The modern road runs past the site at Rathpiper and leads to the church at Coolkerry via Coolkerry Bridge. Carrigan believed that this road was '...the main highway from the western side of Upper Ossory to Kilkenny in ancient times'.[6] However, while the possible ringwork site is located within the civil parish of Rathdowney, the ruined church and graveyard at Coolkerry lie within the parish of Coolkerry, on the opposite side of the Erkina River. This may indicate that the sites were not part of the same settlement or manor in the medieval period although they do seem to have linked by the road. According to Carrigan, there was also a medieval church site at Kilcoran, approximately 1km to the east of the possible ringwork site. Carrigan records that the foundations of the church could be seen church in the interior of a large enclosure known as Kilcoran Rath.[7]

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[2] Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, *Royal inauguration in Gaelic Ireland, c. 1100-1600: a cultural landscape study* (Woodbridge, 2004), pp 23-24.
[3] LA028-059; *Inventory* no. 373, p. 43.
[4] LA028-058; *Inventory* no. 372, p. 43.
[5] LA028-061; *Inventory* no. 722, p. 78.
[6] Carrigan, *The history and antiquities of the diocese of Ossory*, ii, 62.
[7] Carrigan, *The history and antiquities of the diocese of Ossory*, ii, 340.

Discussion

The poor preservation of the site means that it is not possible to classify the site on the basis of its morphology. While local tradition maintains that there as a 'castle' in the interior of the enclosure, the date of the castle is unknown; it seems possible that the castle was a tower house constructed within an earlier ringfort or enclosure. While the place name may indicate that the site was associated with the Pippard family, there does not appear to be any documentary evidence to suggest that there was an Anglo-Norman castle at Rathpiper.

Site no:	**18**
Site name:	**Redcastle**
Townland:	**Redcastle**
Parish:	**Clonenagh and Clonagheen**
Barony:	**Maryborough West**
County:	**Laois**
Co-ordinates:	**237275, 195947**
RMP no:	**LA017-002001 and LA017-002002**
RMP classification:	**castle – unclassified and ringfort - rath**
Inventory no:	**266**
Inventory classification:	**ringfort**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

The site is located in the townland of Redcastle in the parish of Clonenagh and Clonagheen. The site is recorded as two sites by both the RMP and the *Inventory*, and is classified as a 'castle – unclassified',[1] within a 'ringfort'.[2]

Siting

The site is located on a low rise and commands reasonably good views of the surrounding undulating countryside. The site was visited in winter and it was found to be quite waterlogged; both of the ditches were wet on the northwest, west and south-west of the site and, in the interior, there was several inches of standing water in places. It seems likely that the site would always have been prone to being waterlogged in winter.

Field report

The site consists of a large circular interior, enclosed by an inner bank, fosse, outer bank and traces of an outer fosse (Figure 3).

The interior is roughly circular and has a maximum internal diameter of 93m from east to west, making it far larger than that of a typical ringwork castle. The First Edition OS map shows a 'castle in ruins' in the interior of the site. Nothing of the 'castle' structure can be

[1] *Inventory* no. 1005, p. 121; LA017-002001
[2] *Inventory* no. 266, p. 32; LA017-002002.

seen at ground level. However, a ruined cottage, which appears to be nineteenth or early twentieth century in date, stands near to the castle site.[3] There is a raised rectangular area on the northern and eastern sides of the cottage. There is also a raised area between the two entrances at the north and north-west of the site. This area may have been disturbed when the entrances, which appear to be modern, were created. There is a third raised area at the west of the site. There is also a large rectangular depression to the west of the cottage. It seems possible that these raised areas and depressions in the interior may represent the sites of buildings. There is also a well in the western quadrant of the interior.[4] It seems likely that this feature is associated with the 'castle' site.

The interior is defined by an inner bank at the east-south-east, east and north-east. It seems likely that this inner bank originally extended all the way around the site. The inner bank measures approximately 65cm in height and is flat-topped, measuring 1.2m across its top.

Outside of the inner bank is the inner fosse. This fosse is wet from the north of the site counter-clockwise to the south. On the eastern side of the site, the ditch is dry. On the eastern side of the site, the fosse is approximately 2m deep, below the summit of the inner bank, and 65cm below external ground level. It is flat-bottomed and measures approximately 3 across its base. On the western side of the site, the ditch is wet and is much wider, measuring up to 10m in width.

On the western side of the site (from the north counter-clockwise to the south-south-east), the defences are generally more impressive and there is an additional bank and wet-bottomed fosse. The outer bank and fosse are quite overgrown. The outer bank is flat topped and measures approximately 6m in width and between 2m and 2.5m in height above the inner fosse.

[3] Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), ii, 745.
[4] LA017-002003.

The external fosse is water-filled and is very wide, measuring up to 12m in width in places. At the north of the site, between the two entrances, the outer fosse widens and is like a pond. It seems possible that this pond was excavated in the recent past in order to provide material to build up the substantial causeway associated with the northern entrance.

The interior of the site is used as a large circular field for grazing cattle. The site can be accessed via three entrances, all of which have modern gates. These entrances are located at the south-south-east, north and north-west and consist of gaps in the enclosing banks and causeways over the fosses. It is probable that one of these entrances is on the site of the original entrance but it is not possible to identify which one. The entrance at the south-south-east seems the most logical candidate as it is orientated towards the road, which leads directly to the ecclesiastical site at Clonenagh. If this site was originally constructed as a ringfort, an entrance in the south-eastern quadrant would be typical.

Documentary references

There are no known documentary references to a castle, or indeed any form of settlement, at Redcastle in the Anglo-Norman period.

The First Edition OS map depicts the ruins of the 'castle' in the interior of the earthwork enclosure, which suggests that the ruins of the structure must still have been visible in the mid-nineteenth century. The small black rectangle on the map seems to be the 'castle' while the bigger rectangle appears to represent the ruined house which still stands in the interior. O'Byrne, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, stated that, 'In the vicinity of Mountrath is Red Castle, supposed to be a fortress of the Fitzpatricks.' According to O'Byrne, the site was believed to be haunted and a strange tale was told locally regarding the collapse of the castle. Apparently, a man called William Phelan and his sister, Bridget, were living in part of the old castle. One night, they had visitors, including an elderly local man who told them that, according to legend, the call of a strange bird would be heard shortly before the castle would collapse. After their visitors had departed, Bridget heard a strange noise and persuaded her brother to leave the castle. By the next morning the castle

had collapsed.[5] Unfortunately, O'Byrne did not record exactly when the castle is supposed to have collapsed. It seems likely that there was very little of the castle left by the early twentieth century as the Third Edition OS map (1906-7), does not depict any buildings and labels the site as 'Castle (site of)' rather than 'ruins'. O'Hanlon and O'Leary referred to Redcastle briefly, stating that, 'Near Clonenagh is the site of the ruins of Red Castle, probably erected in the sixteenth century'.[6]

There is some documentary evidence for early medieval and Anglo-Norman settlement at nearby Clonenagh. There was an early medieval monastic settlement of some importance at Clonenagh, which was reputedly founded by St Fintan in the sixth century. The annals refer to various abbots of Clonenagh between the eighth to the eleventh century and the monastery was raided by Vikings in 840 and 919 and by the king of Cashel in 937.[7] There are no known references to the monastery after 1071 and it seems likely that, as Manning has suggested, Clonenagh ceased to be a monastery in the twelfth century and continued as a parish church.[8]

A battle was fought close to Clonenagh in the late twelfth century. It is recorded in Mac Carthaigh's Book under the year 1179 that the English of Dublin and Leinster were defeated by the Leinstermen at *Tochar Cluana Eidhneach*.[9] The *Tochar Cluana Eidhneach* seems to have been a causeway across the bog close to Clonenagh, which formed part of the major communication route known as the *Slighe Dhála*.[10]

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[5] Daniel O'Byrne, *The history of the Queen's County: containing an historical and traditional account of its antiquities together with a history of the ancient septs of the county... also an account of some noble families of English extraction* (Dublin, 1856), pp 73-4.

[6] John O'Hanlon, Edward O'Leary and Matthew Lalor, *The history of the Queen's County with an introduction by Edwin Phelan*, (2 vols, Kilkenny, 1981: reprint of edition published in Dublin, 1907-1914), i, 210.

[7] Michael O'Clery *et al.* (eds), *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters; from the earliest times to the year 1616* (8 vols, Dublin, 1990, reprint of edition published Dublin, 1856), *s.a.* 840, 919 and 937.

[8] Conleth Manning, 'Cross-slabs from Clonenagh, Co. Laois' in Conleth Manning, (ed.), *Dublin and beyond the Pale: studies in honour of Patrick Healy* (Bray, 1998), p. 185.

[9] Séamus O'hInnse, (ed.), *Miscellaneous Irish Annals (AD 1114-1437)* (Dublin, 1947), p. 69.

[10] Manning, 'Cross-slabs from Clonenagh, Co. Laois', p. 185; George Cunningham, *The Anglo-Norman advance into the south-west midlands of Ireland, 1185-1221* (Roscrea, 1987), p. 45.

In the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, the lands of 'Garfclon, Clondangen, Clonehadhe and Blenlared' were granted by Philip, son of Rhys, to Murkirtah Otothel.[11] A charter issued in the late twelfth century records that John Comyn, archbishop of Dublin, had appointed a cleric called Thurstin to a moiety of the churches of Killeshin, Sletty, Carlow, Cloydagh and the church of Saint Gauen of Clonena, having been petitioned to do so by John de Clahull.[12]

An interesting reference to Clonenagh is contained in a charter issued by Gilbert Marshal between 1234 and 1241, which records a grant to Stephen de Hereford of twenty-five librates of land in the bailiwick of Dunamase for the services of two knights. The lands are described as being located between the land of Philip de Barri and 'Cloneinach, where Roger de Hyda constituted his burgages'.[13] The paucity of documentary evidence for activity at Clonenagh in the Anglo-Norman period suggests that this settlement was probably short-lived.

By the Reformation, the property of the Augustinian priory of Greatconnell included the rectory of Clonenagh.[14] The priory was founded by Meilyr fitz Henry sometime before 1205 and Manning has suggested that the rectory of Clonenagh may have been included in the original foundation grant.[15]

Other sites in the local area

There are no other recorded sites in the townland of Redcastle. However, there is archaeological evidence for an early medieval and Anglo-Norman settlement at Clonenagh, approximately 1500m to the east-south-east of Redcastle.

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[11] J. T. Gilbert, (ed.), *"Crede Mihi". The most ancient register book of the Archbishops of Dublin before the Reformation* (Dublin, 1897), p. 51

[12] Ibid., p. 52; Charles McNeill, (ed.), *Calendar of Archbishop Alen's register, c.1172-1534* (Dublin, 1950), p. 26.

[13] Edmund Curtis, (ed.), *Calendar of Ormond Deeds, 1172-1603* (6 vols, Dublin, 1932-43), i, 39.

[14] N. B. White, (ed.), *Extents of the Irish monastic possessions, 1540-1541* (Dublin, 1943), pp 161-2.

[15] Manning, 'Cross-slabs from Clonenagh, Co. Laois', p. 185.

The extant remains at Clonenagh include two churches, several burial grounds and several cross-slabs. The ruins of the medieval parish church are located on the southern side of the main road, within an irregular shaped graveyard.[16] The church is a nave and chancel church of probable sixteenth century date.[17] If, as O'Byrne and O'Hanlon and O'Leary have suggested, the 'castle' at Redcastle was sixteenth century in date,[18] the church and the castle may have been roughly contemporaneous. There are no visible traces of the early medieval church itself but the presence of early medieval cross-slabs, a holy well, a holy tree and several Romanesque carved stones attest the presence of an importance Early Christian ecclesiastical site in this location. Also, the ecclesiastical remains are located within a within a large circular enclosure, the line of which is preserved in the local field boundaries.

A probable motte castle is located to the south of the graveyard wall. It consists of a low circular mound which is approximately 2m high and has a maximum summit diameter of 22m.[19] There are also traces of a fosse around the mound. This earthwork is classified as a 'possible motte' in the RMP and as a 'ringfort' in the *Inventory*.[20] As Manning has argued, this earthwork 'can be classified as a low motte and is material evidence for the Norman presence here.'[21] Although this probable motte seems rather unimpressive, it is comparable to the low flat mottes at Fethard in Co. Wexford and Dunshaughlin in Co. Meath. It seems a more likely earthwork castle site than the site at nearby Redcastle.

The second church site is located approximately 650m to the west-north west of the first church, on a low mound. Only a rectangular hollow area on the summit of the mound marks the probable site of the church.[22]

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[16] *Inventory*, no. 713, p. 76; LA017-003001.
[17] *Inventory*, no. 713, p. 76.
[18] O'Byrne, *The history of the Queen's County*, p. 73; O'Hanlon and O'Leary, *The history of the Queen's County,* i, 210.
[19] Manning, 'Cross-slabs from Clonenagh, Co. Laois', p. 186.
[20] *Inventory*, no. 176, p. 24; LA017-003009.
[21] Manning, 'Cross-slabs from Clonenagh, Co. Laois', p. 186.
[22] *Inventory*, no. 715, p. 77; LA017-0040.

The First Edition OS map shows that, in the mid-nineteenth century, a road ran past the earthwork at Redcastle and led directly to the church site at Clonenagh. It seems possible that this road may have existed in the medieval period, linking the site and the ecclesiastical site. Only the section of road leading from the earthwork to the junction is still in use. This road is known locally as Cromwell's Road and it is believed to mark the line of Cromwell's army's march to Birr.[23]

Discussion

It seems probable that the ruins of the 'castle' which stood in the interior of the enclosure at Redcastle until the nineteenth century were those of a tower house rather than an Anglo-Norman castle. There does not appear to be any documentary or archaeological evidence for an Anglo-Norman castle or settlement in this location. It seems likely that the earthwork enclosure represents a large pre-Norman ringfort rather than a ringwork castle.

[23] LA01-002, Irish Tourism Association Survey, 1942, anon.

Site no:	**19**
Site name:	**Clonard**
Townland:	**Mulpheddar**
Parish:	**Clonard**
Barony:	**Upper Moyfenrath**
Co-ordinates:	**265641, 244986**
RMP no:	**ME04-005**
RMP classification:	**castle - ringwork**
Inventory no:	**1693**
Inventory classification:	**ringwork**

CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

Sweetman interpreted this earthwork site as a ringwork castle, having excavated several cuttings around the site in the 1970s.[1] Based on Sweetman's excavation report, the site has been classified as a ringwork castle by both the RMP and the *Inventory*. In 2007, a field-walking survey was conducted at Clonard and the results published. In the resulting publication, Kenny seems to have accepted Sweetman's interpretation of the site as a ringwork castle, without really analysing the arguments for or against this classification.[2]

Siting

The site is located in the townland of Mulpheddar, in the parish of Clonard. It lies on the south side of the Clonard River, overlooking a bridging point. A motte castle is located on the opposite side of the river, in the townland of Clonard. There was a major ecclesiastical settlement at Clonard in the medieval period and it seems likely that the foundation of the Anglo-Normans castle and settlement was a deliberate attempt to dominate a pre-existing centre of ecclesiastical and secular power.

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[1] P.D. Sweetman, 'Excavation of medieval 'field boundaries' at Clonard, Co. Meath' in *J.R.S.A.I.* cviii (1978), pp 10-22.
[2] Niall Kenny, 'Medieval Clonard' in *J.R.S.A.I.* cxxxvii (2007), pp 55-69.

Field report

The site consists of a large irregular shaped area defined by the remains of a low bank, fosse and external bank. The interior is an irregular, elongated diamond shape. It measures approximately 110m from north-east to south-west and 75m from north-east to south-east. This would be exceptionally large for a ringwork castle site.

The enclosing elements are most intact at the north and east of the site. The interior is enclosed by a low bank, which is present from the north-east of the site clockwise to the north-west and also at the south-east of the site. Elsewhere, the interior is defined by a scarp.

There is a fosse and external bank present from the west to the north of the site. At the west of the site, it looks quite disturbed. Elsewhere, there are sections of associated banks. At the south-east, there is a small section of bank running eastwards and, at the north-east, there is another small section of bank running east towards the river.

The site is in a poor state of preservation; it looks quite disturbed in places, particularly at the west, and its defences seem to have been damaged by agricultural activity. Parts of the field in which the site is located are still under plough, including the defences at the south and west of the site and the interior.[3]

Excavations

Archaeological excavations were carried out at Clonard in the 1970s, prior to drainage works. These excavations, which were directed by Sweetman, focused on three areas close to the Clonard River.[4]

The first area excavated was located along the river bank, immediately south of the probable site of the early medieval monastery. These excavations focused on a series of

[3] Kenny, 'Medieval Clonard', p. 59.
[4] Sweetman, 'Excavation of medieval 'field boundaries' at Clonard, Co. Meath', pp 10-22.

ditches which had been identified as archaeologically significant on the basis of aerial photographs. Twenty-eight cuttings were placed across ditches on both sides of the river and they were found to be part of a complex drainage system. Only two of the cuttings (nos. 19 and 27) yielded finds, including late thirteenth and early fourteenth-century sherds of pottery.[5]

The second area excavated was located to the east of Clonard Bridge, on the northern side of the Clonard River. Two cuttings were excavated in this area. The first cutting (no. 29) uncovered a ditch with late thirteenth and early fourteenth century pottery overlying it. Eleven skeletons were uncovered in the second cutting (no. 30) but were excavated as the drainage works were deemed unlikely to disturb them. The skeletons lay immediately under the topsoil, were aligned east-west and and lay one on top of the other. In the opinion of the excavator, these burials were relatively modern and probably date to the famine period.[6]

The third area of excavation was located between the possible ringwork site and the river. Three cuttings were opened up in this area. The first cutting (no. 31 in Sweetman's report), was placed across a bank which projects eastwards from the ringwork towards the river. This earthen bank measured approximately 1.5m in height and had a layer of stones on top of it. The excavation found no evidence for a ditch on either side of the bank. A handle sherd of late thirteenth or early fourteenth century date was found at the base of the bank. This means that the feature must have been constructed by the early fourteenth century.[7]

The second cutting (no. 32) was opened to the north-east of the first cutting. The excavation revealed no features were in this cutting and only one sherd of medieval pottery was found.[8] The third cutting (no. 33) was located to the north-east of the second cutting. The remains of a wooden palisade were excavated in this cutting. This palisade feature was made up of fifteen planks in a line, which ran from east to west, heading towards the river.

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[5] Ibid., pp 12-15.
[6] Ibid., p. 15.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.

Sweetman interpreted this feature as part of the outer defences of the ringwork. Some sherds of late fourteenth or early fourteenth century pottery were found in the context immediately over the timbers so this feature must have been completed by the early fourteenth century.[9]

The finds from the excavation (including Areas 1, 2 and 3) included 125 sherds of late thirteenth and early fourteenth century pottery. Four iron objects were recovered; two nails, a handle-like object and an unidentified object.[10]

A field-walking survey was carried out at Mulpheddar (Clonard) in 2007, after the field had been ploughed. The area walked consisting of the western half of the field in which the site is located. The survey took in the western part of the interior of the 'ringwork' site and also included the area to the north-east of the site towards the river and the area to the south between the site and the modern road.[11]

The finds recovered by the field-walking survey included sixteen sherds of late thirteenth and early fourteenth-century pottery of Irish origin. Fifteen of these sherds were found at the 'ringwork' site while one sherd was found approximately 40m to the south. Eight iron objects were also found in the interior of the site. These objects included two probable candleholders and several medieval nails of different types. The most notable nails were two 'fiddle-key' nails, which were used to attach horseshoes and ox-shoes, and are generally found in thirteenth and fourteenth century contexts. A possible blade and a possible knife were also found.[12]

A large quantity of iron slag was also found around the possible ringwork site. Kenny has identified a 'metal-working area' in the interior of the site, based on the distribution of slag

[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid., pp 18-21.
[11] Kenny, 'Medieval Clonard', p. 59.
[12] Ibid., pp 61-3.

finds.[13] This identification seems somewhat dubious as it is based purely on stray finds picked up during field walking and it seems possible that the slag has been spread around by ploughing activity.

The field-walking survey also identified a burial ground to the south of the earthwork site. This site consists of an oval enclosure defined by a low scarp and a possible outer bank. Large quantities of human bone were found in this area, indicating that the site is a burial ground of unknown date.[14]

Documentary references

The documentary evidence shows that there was a major early medieval monastic site at Clonard, reputedly founded by St Finian in 520.[15] The monastery also functioned as the seat of the bishops of Clonard in the early medieval period, as the abbot was frequently also held the title of bishop. At the Synod of Rathbreasail in 1111, Clonard and Duleek were chosen as the seats of the bishops of western Meath and eastern Meath respectively.[16] However, later that year, it was decided that Clonmacnoise should be the seat of the bishop of western Meath and Clonard the seat of eastern Meath.[17] The religious houses of St Mary's Abbey for Arroasian canonesses and St Peter's Abbey for Augustinian canons were founded at Clonard *c.* 1144.[18]

The annals record that Dermot McMurrough led an expedition into Meath in 1170, plundering several monastic sites, including Clonard. According to the *Annals of Tigernach*, there was a '...hosting led by Mac Murchada into Meath and he plundered Clonard. Thence he went to Kells, and he plundered and burnt Kells and Dulane and Slane and many other churches, and thence he went to Slieve Gory, made plunderings o the Huí Briúin, and returned home.' The *Annals of Inisfallen* also records this raid but does not list

[13] Ibid., pp 63-6.
[14] Ibid., p. 65.
[15] Aubrey Gwynn and R. N. Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses in Ireland* (London, 1970), p. 63.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid., pp 63-4.
[18] Ibid., p. 149.

the plundered churches by name. At the time of the Anglo-Norman conquest, Etru O'Miadhacain was bishop of Clonard and he did fealty to Henry II in 1172. An entry in *The Annals of the Four Masters* records that he died in 1173. The Anglo-Normans constructed a castle at Clonard in the late twelfth century, which was presumably intended to dominate the pre-existing ecclesiastical settlement. According to Gerald of Wales, Hugh de Lacy built several castles in Meath, including Clonard, in 1182.[19] Neither the excavations nor the field-walking survey at the earthwork site have discovered any evidence to suggest the earthwork site is twelfth century in origin. Therefore, it seems logical to assume that the twelfth century references to a 'castle' relate exclusively to the motte site. Around this time, Hugh de Lacy also founded an Augustinian priory dedicated to St John at Clonard. This priory seems to have co-existed with the Augustinian Abbey of St Peter's for some time before the two houses were united in the early thirteenth century.[20]

The castle and settlement at Clonard were attacked by the Gaelic Irish in 1200; the annals record that, 'Mahon, the son of Gilla Patrick-O'Keary, was slain by the English of Clonard' and 'Clonard was burned by O'Keary, to injure the English who were in it.'[21] Simon de Rochford had become the first Anglo-Norman bishop of Meath in 1192 and he moved the see from Clonard to Trim in 1202, marking the end of Clonard as a major monastic centre.[22] Both the unified Augustinian abbey, dedicated to St John and St Peter, and St Mary's Abbey struggled on up until the Reformation. However, they seem to have been relatively poor religious houses.[23]

Other sites in the local area

A motte castle is located approximately 100m to the north-east of the site, on the opposite side of the river, in the townland of Clonard Old (also known as Anneville). It seems likely that this site represents the 'castle' constructed by Hugh de Lacy in 1182. The motte castle

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[19] *Expugnatio Hibernica. The Conquest of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis*, edited by Scott, A. B., and Martin, F. X., (eds), (Dublin, 1978), p. 195.
[20] Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses in Ireland*, p. 163.
[21] *A.F.M.* s.a. 1200.
[22] Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses in Ireland*, p. 64.
[23] Ibid., pp 163-4 and p. 314.

at Clonard is a typical example, consisting of a conical mound with a possible bailey attached at the north-east. The motte measures 9.5m in height and its summit measures 14m in diameter.[24] Both the motte castle and the possible ringwork castle overlook Clonard Bridge to the east. This bridge may mark the site of a medieval crossing point on the river. However, it is also possible that the medieval bridge stood further west than the modern bridge, between the motte and the possible ringwork. Kenny has suggested that the two fortifications may be contemporaneous and, '...may have been connected to each other across the Clonard River and may be the remains of one extensive military fortification.'[25] It the two sites were connected, it would be logical to interpret the enclosure to the south of the river as a large bailey associated with the motte, rather than as a ringwork castle in its own right. However, more excavation is necessary to determine the nature of the relationship between the two sites.

The documentary evidence listed above shows that Clonard was the site of a major early medieval monastery. From the mid-twelfth century, there was also an Arroasian convent and an Augustinian abbey. In the Anglo-Norman period, a second Augustinian house was founded at Clonard and there was also a parish church. The exact locations of these ecclesiastical sites are unknown. It seems probable that the disused Church of Ireland church, constructed in 1808, marks the location of both the early medieval monastic site and the Anglo-Norman parish church. Nothing remains of either the early medieval monastic site or the Anglo-Norman church, although a font of late medieval date from the site is kept in the local Roman Catholic church[26]. A drawing by Austin Cooper, which is a copy of a work by Thomas Ashworth, shows 'Clonard Church' as it was in the eighteenth century.[27] It was a square structure with a bellcote and a chimney. As Harbison has commented, it 'looks more like a fortification than a place of prayer'.[28] The Church of Ireland, which probably marks the site of the Anglo-Norman church, is situated on the

[24] *Inventory*, no. 1603, p. 156.
[25] Kenny, 'Medieval Clonard', p. 67.
[26] *Inventory*, no. 1326, p. 127; H. M. Roe, *The medieval fonts of Meath* (Navan, 1968), pp 28-35.
[27] Peter Harbison, *Cooper's Ireland: drawings and notes from an eighteenth-century gentleman* (Dublin, 2000), pp 266-7.
[28] Ibid., p. 266.

northern side of the river, approximately 300m to the south-east of the motte. The motte and the church are located on the same side of the river and are clearly associated with each other. The lane that links the church site to the main road is orientated directly towards the motte, although it now terminates where it joins the road, halfway between the two sites.

Discussion

The results of the field-walking survey seem to corroborate the chronology indicated by the finds from Sweetman's excavations. The combined finds show that the possible ringwork site was in use in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Although the fieldwork carried out at Clonard has shown that the site is an earthwork enclosure of Anglo-Norman date, it is not very convincing as a ringwork castle. The enclosed area seems too large and the defences too unimpressive for a ringwork castle site, although the defences may have been damaged by agricultural activity. Also, the finds do not seem to be consistent with the classification of this site as a ringwork castle. The large quantity of slag found shows that there was metal-working activity at the site while the pottery sherds indicate that the enclosure may also have had a residential function. Ringwork castle excavations generally produce finds of a military nature and these are notably absent at Clonard, although it must be noted that very little of the site has been excavated. The siting of the earthwork in close proximity to a motte castle would also be unusual for a ringwork castle; perhaps the site should be interpreted as a large detached bailey rather than an earthwork castle in its own right. In order to shed more light on the functions and chronology of this site and its relationship with the motte and medieval settlement of Clonard, it would be necessary to excavate more of the site, including its interior, in order to ascertain whether there were buildings inside it. At present, there is not sufficient evidence to support the classification of the site as a ringwork castle; as O'Keeffe has argued, '...some monuments, including the Clonard 'ringwork, Co. Meath, are better labelled unclassified'.[29]

[29] T. O'Keeffe, 'The archaeology of Norman castles in Ireland' in *Archaeology Ireland*, iv (3) (1990), p. 17.

Site no:	**20**
Site name:	**Danestown**
Townland:	**Danestown**
Parish:	**Danestown**
Barony:	**Skreen**
County:	**Meath**
Co-ordinates:	**297759, 264799**
RMP no:	**ME032-007**
RMP classification:	**ringfort -rath**
Inventory no:	**618**
Inventory classification:	**bivallate ringfort**

REVSIED CLASSIFICATION: ringwork castle

Sweetman identified this earthwork site as a possible ringwork castle, based on its morphology and proximity to a medieval church site.[1] The morphology of this site combined with its defensive siting, its location next to a church and the documentary evidence for an Anglo-Norman manor, shows clearly that it is a definite example of an Anglo-Norman ringwork castle.

Siting

The site is situated in the townland of Danestown in the parish of the same name. The ringwork castle appears to be have been modelled out of a natural ridge. Its siting is clearly defensive and it commands excellent views in all directions. The ruins of a medieval church within a graveyard are located approximately 45m to the south-west of the site.

Field report

The site consists of a raised platform enclosed by two banks with an intervening fosse (Figure 3). The interior is a raised platform, which is oval in shape and measures 40m east-west and 34m north-south (from scarp to scarp as the inner bank is only present in places). As the site has been modelled out of the end of a natural ridge, the platform is raised higher above external ground level on its southern and eastern and northern sides than it is at the west and north-west. The interior appears to be highest on its southern

[1] P. D. Sweetman, 'Some ringwork castles in County Meath' in Christiaan Corlett and Tom Condit (eds), *Above and beyond: essays in memory of Leo Swan* (Bray, 2005), p. 394.

side, where it is approximately 4.5 or 5m above external ground level. The interior of the site is fairly level and no internal features are visible.

The interior was originally defined by a small inner bank around its perimeter, although this bank now survives only from the north-west anti-clockwise to the south-south-west. It is best preserved at the west where it is 70cm in height above the interior. It is possible that the inner bank was more substantial at the western end of the site in order to compensate for the fact that the site is less high above external ground level at this point than it is elsewhere, as it is here that the site is cut off from the rest of the ridge.

From the summit of the inner bank (or from the platform where the inner bank has not survived) there is a steep drop down into a wide fosse. From the top of the external bank to the slope opposite, the fosse measures between 7m and 12.8m wide. The fosse is U-shaped and flat-bottomed, measuring between 3m and 4.8m in width across the base (Plate 3a).

The outer bank stands between 70cm and 1.9m in height above the fosse and between 70cm and 3.8m above external ground level. At the west, the bank is lowest above external ground level, at only 70cm because it is here that the defences cut the ringwork castle off the from the rest of the natural ridge to the north-west. The top of the external bank is quite wide, measuring between 1.6 and 2m in width.

The entrance to the ringwork castle is located at the south-west and is orientated directed towards the ruins of the medieval church. The entrance consists of a gap in the inner bank, a corresponding gap in the outer bank and a well-defined ramped causeway across the fosse. The gap in the inner bank measured 4.5m in width at the base, while the gap in the outer bank measures 7.8m. The causeway measures approximately 3m in width across the top and 6m at its base and has a maximum of 0.4m in height above the base of the fosse.

There is also a gap in the outer bank at the east. As there is no evidence for a gap in the inner bank or a causeway over the fosse, it seems likely that this is the result of relatively modern disturbance rather than an original feature.

As noted by Sweetman, the fosse contains a large quantity of small stones.[2] It seems possible that this stone was used to revet or strengthen the earthen banks.

Documentary references

The place-name Danestown seems to be derived from 'de Aveni's town'. The documentary evidence indicates that the de Aveni family held this manor as vassals of the de Feipo lords of Skreen from the late twelfth century. The history of de Aveni family of Danestown has been discussed by Hickey in her study of the de Feipo lords of Skreen and their tenants, based on evidence from the charters contained in the *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin.*[3]

Hickey has suggested that the de Aveni family of Danestown were related to the 'de Avene' lords of Afan in Glamorgan.[4] The lords of Afan were of native Welsh rather than Norman descent and seem to have adopted the surname 'de Avene' as they became increasingly assimilated into Anglo-Norman society.[5] Several members of the de Aveni family seem to have arrived in Ireland either at the time of the Anglo-Norman conquest or in the decade following it. They appear most frequently in the sources in association with the de Feipo family, from whom they held Danestown. The first de Aveni in Ireland for whom there is documentary evidence is a man called Odone de Avene who witnessed a charter issued by Adam de Feipo *c.*1175.[6] Although nothing more known of Odone, it seems probable that he was related to Robert de Aveni.

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[2] Sweetman, 'Some ringwork castles in County Meath', p. 394.
[3] Elizabeth Hickey, *Skryne and the Early Normans: papers concerning the medieval manors of the Feypo family in Ireland in the 12th and early 13th centuries* (Meath, 1994), pp 106-7.
[4] Hickey, *Skryne and the Early Normans*, p. 106.
[5] R.R. Davies, *The age of conquest: Wales 1063-1415* (2nd ed., Oxford, 2000: originally published as *Co-existence, conquest and change* in 1987), p. 424.
[6] J. T. Gilbert, (ed.), *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin, with the register of its house at Dunbrody and Annals of Ireland* (2 vols, Dublin, 1884), i, 91-2.

In a charter dating to *c.*1185, Bishop Eugenius of Clonard confirmed Adam de Feipo's grant of the ecclesiastical benefices of the churches in Adam de Feipo's barony of Skreen to St Mary's Abbey. According to the charter, the churches affected included the churches of Geoffrey de Cusack, Amauri the Elder and Amauri the Younger, Maurice se Beaufussel, Robert de Aveni, Geoffrey (de Feipo?), John (de Feipo?), Ranulph and Walter Duff.[7] Unfortunately, the charter lists the names of the men who held the lands on which the churches were located but fails to give the names of the churches or manors themselves.

A charter from Thomas, Archbishop of Armagh, also confirmed Adam de Feipo's grant to St Mary's, including the temporalities of the churches at Dysartale and Santry, in addition to the churches of the barony of Skreen. Robert de Aveni's name again appears amongst a list of tenants in the barony of Skreen whose ecclesiastical benefices are included in the grant to St Marys.[8]

Although Danestown is not specifically mentioned in either of these charters, it can be assumed that the lands held by Robert de Aveni comprised the civil parish of Danestown. The only known charter issued by Robert himself dates to *c.*1190 and records a grant of lands in Cruiceregan and Rascunin to the Hospital of St John the Baptist in Dublin. This grant was made when a female relative (*consanguinee*) called Emmeline entered the hospital, having been called by God to serve there. This witnesses for this charter included Robert's brother, Matthew, and Amauri de Feipo the Younger.[9] A charter recording Amauri de Feipo the Younger's grant of lands in the barony of Skreen to the Hospital of St John the Baptist in Dublin, also dating to *c.*1190, was witnessed by both Robert and Matthew de Aveni.[10]

Robert de Aveni witnessed a charter issued by Geoffrey de Cusack regarding his lands at Killeen in the barony of Skreen *c.* 1230.[11]

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[7] Gilbert, (ed.), *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin,* i, 156-7.
[8] Ibid., i, 144-5.
[9] E. St J. Brooks, (ed.), Register of the Hospital of St John the Baptist without the New Gate, Dublin (Dublin, 1936), pp 172-3.
[10] Ibid., p. 184.
[11] Ibid., p. 161.

Danestown next appears in the records in 1233, in a charter relating to the dispute between Richard de la Corner, Bishop of Meath, and St Mary's Abbey, regarding the temporalities of the churches in the barony of Skreen. The church at Danestown is referred to as the 'ecclesia Willelmi de Avygny'[12] Robert de Aveni had apparently been succeeded by William de Aveni, presumably his son, by this time. It is notable that the charter uses the word 'ecclesia' to refer to some of the churches, including Danestown, while other churches are described as chapels (*capellis*), indicating that Danestown probably had the status of a parish church by this time. The existence of a graveyard at Danestown would also suggest that it was a parish church. It is notable that the church is named in the sources as 'the church of William de Aveni' rather than by its location or dedication; this may imply that it was owned and founded by the de Aveni family. This contrasts with the names of some of the other churches in the barony, including Skreen, Kilcarne and Killeen, which are clearly Gaelic in origin. The fact that Danestown church does not appear to have had a pre-Norman name may suggest that it was an Anglo-Norman foundation.

In the ecclesiastical taxation carried out between 1302 to1306, Danestown is listed as 'Daveny' and is valued at 33s. 4d., while the vicarage there is worth 12s. 4d.[13] A charter dating to 1396 records that 'Christopher de Preston has granted to Hugh Lang, vicar of Stamolyn, William Saundre, vicar of Julianstown, Roger Deuenysshe, vicar of Daueneystoun and Adam Iue, chaplain, a third part of the manor of the Nynche, with its appurtenances...'.[14] It seems likely that the vicar of Danestown mentioned was a member of the de Aveni family. The spelling of his name is notable as it seems to show that the surname of 'de Aveni' or 'Daveney' was changing, becoming closer to 'Devenish'. This may explain why it is difficult to trace the progress of the family, as Devenish was a relatively common name in the later medieval period.

[12] Gilbert, (ed.), *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin,* i, 165-170.
[13] H. S. Sweetman, (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland,* (5 vols, London, 1875-83), v, 255-6.
[14] James Mills and M. J. McEnery, (eds), *Calendar of the Gormanston Register* (Dublin, 1916), p. 34.

In the mid-sixteenth century, Dowdall's register recorded that the church of 'Ville Daneny' was worth 2s. while the vicarage was worth 12d.[15] By the seventeenth century, Danestown had passed into the possession of the Kent family. In 1606, Nicholas Kent held 320 acres of arable land in 'Daneston' of the baron of Skreen.[16] According to the *Civil Survey* of 1654, the parish of Danistowne contained townlands called 'Danistowne', 'Ranaghan' and 'Cisles'. Danestown and Ranaghan were held by Nicholas Kent and consisted of 345 acres, of which 280 was arable, 50 was pasture and 15 was meadow.[17]

Other sites in the local area

Much of the documentary evidence listed above relates to the medieval church of Danestown, the remains of which lie 45m to the south-west of the ringwork castle. The entrance to the ringwork castle is orientated directly towards the church (Plate 11b).

The documentary evidence suggests that the church was in existence by the late twelfth century. The apparent close association between the earthwork castle and the church, combined with the fact that the church of Danestown is referred to several times in the sources as the church of de Aveni family rather than any pre-Norman name, suggests that the church was founded by the De Aveni family. It seems likely that the ringwork castle and the medieval church were constructed at the same time, as the main components of a planned manorial centre.

Cogan records that in the nineteenth century, the remains of a church of nave and chancel church could still be seen. It measured 59 feet (18m) in length and 18 feet 8 inches (5.7m) in width. A chancel arch stood 20 feet (6m) from the east end.[18] Only faint traces of a rectangular structure orientated east-west can now be seen, measuring

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[15] L. P. Murray, (ed.), 'A calendar of the Register of Primate George Dowdall, commonly called the "Liber Niger" or "Black Book"' in *County Louth Archaeological Journal*, vii (1930), p. 262.
[16] *Inquisitionum in officio rotulorum cancellariæ Hiberniæ asservatarum, repertorium. Volume 1: Leinster*, Meath, Jac. I, no. 1.
[17] R. C. Simmington, (ed.), *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-1656. Volume 5: County of Meath with returns of tithes for the Meath baronies* (Dublin, 1940), p. 57.
[18] Anthony Cogan, *The diocese of Meath, ancient and modern* (4 vols, Dublin, 1992, reprint of work originally published in Dublin, 1862-70), i, 348.

approximately 11m in length and 5m in width.[19] Comparing this with Cogan's description it seems likely that it is the remains of the nave which survive while the chancel has now disappeared completely.

The church stands within a sub-rectangular graveyard. Although the earliest extant gravestone dates to 1737,[20] it seems likely that the medieval parish church had a graveyard attached to it. The present rectangular graveyard enclosure may be relatively modern as Bishop Dopping's Visitation Book recorded that the church was unenclosed in the late seventeenth century; by this time the church was no longer in use, having been ruined since 1641.[21]

Discussion

The earthwork site at Danestown is a good example of an Anglo-Norman ringwork castle. The site's morphology, consisting of raised a interior enclosed by a small inner bank, wide fosse and substantial outer bank, is consistent with this interpretation. The siting of ringwork, on one end of a ridge also seems typical of a ringwork castle. The documentary evidence suggests that the ringwork castle was associated with the manor of Danestown, which was held by the de Aveni family of the de Feipo lords of Skreen. The ringwork's proximity to a medieval church site also indicates that there was a manorial settlement in this location.

[19] *Inventory*, no. 1379, p.133.
[20] B.F.E. Moore, John Cawkill and Fionnuala Cawkill, 'Some interesting tombstones in Danestown, Co. Meath' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, v, no. 4 (1974), pp 87-97.
[21] C.E. Ellison, (ed.), 'Bishop Dopping's Vistiation Book' in *Riocht na Midhe*, v, no. 2 (1972), p. 6.

Site no:	**21**
Site name:	**Dollardstown**
Townland:	**Dollardstown**
Parish:	**Painstown**
Barony:	**Lower Duleek**
County:	**Meath**
Co-ordinates:	**293031, 271136**
RMP no:	**ME026-001**
RMP classification:	**enclosure**
Inventory no:	**996**
Inventory classification:	**enclosure (site)**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

The site at Dollardstown is classified as an enclosure in the *Inventory* and the RMP. However, the *Inventory* entry states that the site has been almost entirely quarried away and may represent the remains of either a ringfort or a motte.

Orpen identified the site at Dollardstown as a possible earthwork castle site associated with the fief held by the Dullard brothers in the late twelfth century, describing it as a 'large rath or fort',[1] and, later, as a 'terraced mote'.[2] Orpen appears to have recognised that the site was probably of Anglo-Norman origin but was unsure how to label it as it clearly differed from the average motte. In modern terminology, it seems possible that the site belongs in the ringwork category.

Siting

The site is situated in the townland of Dollardstown in the parish of Painestown, approximately 7km to the north-east of Navan. The site is located in undulating countryside and there are several mounds in the vicinity of the site, which appear to be natural glacial features. It seems probable that the site was modelled out of a natural hillock. The site is located close to the River Boyne, which lies approximately 750m to the north.

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[1] G. H. Orpen, (ed.), *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* (Felinfach, 1994, facsimile reprint of edition published Oxford, 1892), note, p. 315.
[2] G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans,* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20), ii, 79, footnote 1.

Field report

The site is a very poor state of preservation as the northern half of the site has been quarried away and the remainder of the site is heavily overgrown. Measurements were taken at the south of the site where the enclosing features seem to be best preserved (Figure 3).

The site appears to have consisted of a raised oval or circular interior defined by an inner bank, fosse and outer bank. The enclosed area now measures 10m from north to south and approximately 30m from east to west. It is defined by the original bank on its southern, eastern and western sides. However, on the northern side, it is defined by a high bank which appears to consist of up-cast material from the quarry below. It is difficult to estimate the original dimensions of the enclosed area as so little of it is left; it may have been as large as 40m in diameter.

The interior is raised between 3.5m and 4m above external ground level on its southern side. The inner bank is well defined and flat-topped, measuring 65cm in height above the interior. From the top of the inner bank, there is a steep drop into the flat-bottomed fosse below. The fosse measures between 3m and 4m in depth below the top of the inner bank and 70cm below the external bank. The fosse is flat-bottomed, measuring 2.3m across its base and 5m from the top of the external bank across to the slope of the inner bank. A small external bank surrounds the fosse. This bank measures 70cm in height above the fosse and 95cm above external ground level. It is flat-topped, measuring 1.5m in width across the top.

The above measurements were taken at the south of the site where it is relatively well-preserved. However, descriptions of the site written in the early twentieth site, before the site was so badly damaged by quarrying, show that the southern side of the site may not representative of the site as a whole.

Documentary References

The townlands of Doollardstown and Paynestown seem to have acquired their names from Adam Dullard and his brother, Payne.[3] Adam was a knight in the service of Hugh de Lacy and, in the account of the subinfeudation of Meath given in *The Song of Dermot and the Earl,* it is recorded that Hugh de Lacy granted lands to Adam;

'To Adam Dullard likewise
The land of Rathenuarthi.'[4]

Orpen believed that 'Rathcunarthi' was the name of the Dullards' territory in eastern Meath.[5] However, it seems more likely that 'Rathcunarti' represents Rathconrath in Westmeath and that the Dullards also received a unrecorded grant of land in eastern Meath. The evidence from later charters shows that the Dullards' lands in eastern Meath were centred on the townlands of Dollardstown and Painestown. Although no charters issued by Adam Dullard himself have survives, his name appears in the witness lists of several charters. Adam witnessed a charter recording King John's grant of the castle of Carrickittle and five knights' fees in Limerick to William of Naas.[6] This charter was issued at Rouen in 1199 and it shows that Adam Dullard had travelled to Normandy with King John and that he must have been quite an influential or favoured man to have been asked to witness a royal charter.

Both Adam and Payne Dullard witnessed a charter recording Ernold Brun's grant of the church of St Michael's at 'Baliormorhead' to St Mary's Abbey, Dublin.[7] On the basis of the witness list, this charter can be dated to the early thirteenth century.[8] The ruins of this medieval church are located in the townland of Brownstown, approximately 4km to the south-south-east of the site at Dollardstown.[9] Ernold Brun would have been a neighbour of the Dullards as his manor of Brownstown seems to have adjoined the

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[3] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, ii, 78-9
[4] Evelyn Mullally, (ed.), *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland. La Geste des Engleis en Yrlande. A new edition of the chronicle formerly known as 'The Song of Dermot and the Earl'* (Dublin, 2002), Lines 3164-5.
[5] Orpen, (ed.), *The Song of Dermot and the Earl,* p. 315; G. H. Orpen, 'Motes and Norman castles in Ireland' in *E.H.R.*, xx (1907), p.
[6] James Mills and M. J. McEnery, (eds), *Calendar of the Gormanston Register* (Dublin, 1916), p. 163.
[7] J. T. Gilbert, (ed.), *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin, with the register of its house at Dunbrody and Annals of Ireland* (2 vols, Dublin, 1884), i, 68.
[8] Hickey, *Skryne and the early Normans*, p. 87
[9] *Inventory*, no. 1356, p. 131; RMP ME026-014.

Dullards' lands to the south. Both 'Sir Pagan Dullard' and 'Sir Ardnald Brun' also witnessed a charter a charter issued by Robert le Breton.[10]

Adam Dullard's name appears for the final time in the witness list of a charter recording King John's grant of Ratoath to Philip de Worcester for the service of one knight in 1210.[11] King John was in Meath at this time and was engaged in confiscating the lands of Walter de Lacy, Earl of Meath, and those of his brother, Hugh, as punishment for harbouring William de Braose and his family. The barony of Ratoath had been seized from Hugh de Lacy, who had held it of his elder brother, and the king re-granted it to Philip de Worcester. The presence of Adam's name in the witness list of this charter suggests that he managed to avoid becoming involved in the de Lacy's rebellion.[12]

Adam must have died sometime after the issuing of this charter in 1210. It is unclear if he was succeeded by a son or if he died without issue. The name Thomas Dullard appears in the witness list of a charter recording Peter de Messeth's grant of 20 acres in Gillisse near Ratoath to Ralph de May, which dates to *c.*1210.[13] It seems possible that Thomas Dullard was the heir of either Adam and Payne Dullard, or both. However, the Dullards of Meath seems to disappear from the documentary record at this point.

Much of the documentary evidence for the manor of Painestown and Dollardstown relates to a dispute between the Priory of Llanthony Secunda and the Knights Hospitallers, regarding the church and tithes of the manor of Adam Dullard. In a charter issued between 1187 and 1191, John Comyn, archbishop of Dublin, decreed that the tithes and church of Dollardstown legally belonged to the Hospitallers. However, they were to pay twelve pence of silver at Easter to William, the vicar of the church, for the rest of his lifetime. After the death of William, they were to pay fifteen shillings per annum to the Priory of Llanthony Secunda.[14] This document indicates that Adam and

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[10] Mills and McEnery, (eds), *Gormanston Register*, p. 42.
[11] Ibid., pp 179-80; Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, ii, 248.
[12] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, ii, 247-9.
[13] Mills and McEnery, (eds), *Gormanston Register*, p. 150.
[14] E. St J. Brooks, *The Irish cartularies of Llanthony Prima and Secunda* (Dublin, 1953), p. 233; Arlene Hogan, *The Priory of Llanthony Prima and Secunda in Ireland, 1172-1541: lands, patronage and politics* (Dublin, 2008), pp 240-1.

Payne Dullard must have granted the church and its tithes to the Hospitallers in the 1170s or 1180s.

In 1212, Innocent III confirmed the possessions of the Knights Hospitallers in Ireland. In the version of the document calendared by Bliss, it is stated that 'the land of Adam Dullart and Payn his brother' was held by the Hospitallers.[15] Orpen stated that the Dullard's lands passed into the hands of the Hospitallers, presumably on the basis of this document.[16] However, as McNeill pointed out, it was the church on the lands of Adam and Payne Dullard which was held by the Hospitallers, rather than the lands themselves.[17]

The Hospitallers' claim to various churches in Meath, including the church at Painestown, was later disputed by Richard de la Corner, Bishop of Meath (1232-1250). Arbitrators decided that the churches in question should be divided between the Hospitallers and the bishop, *c.*1235. While the Hospitallers were allowed to keep the churches of Rathmolyon, Donaghpatrick, Tara, Leckno, Dungrey and Teltown, the churches of Kells, the vill of Dullard, Ardmulchan and Keneuelane were ceded to the bishop.[18]

The ecclesiastical taxation of 1302-6 recorded that the 'Church of the vill of Pagan' was worth 8*l.*[19] These references appear to relate to the church site at Painestown which is discussed below. It seems likely that the civil parish of Painestown which includes the townland of Dollardstown is roughly coterminous with the medieval parish.

The *Civil Survey* of 1654 records that 'Dillardstowne' consisted of 270 acres, of which 240 acres was arable, 10 meadow and 20 pasture. There was 'one castle and a mill and divers Out houses and cabins on the sayd lands'. At Painestown, meanwhile, there was

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[15] W. H. Bliss, *Calendar of entries in the Papal registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland. Volume 1, 1198-1304* (London, 1893), p. 36.
[16] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, ii, 79, footnote 1.
[17] Charles McNeill,(ed.), *Registrum de Kilmainham* (Dublin, 1932), p. 139.
[18] McNeill,(ed.), *Registrum de Kilmainham*, pp 143-4.
[19] H. S. Sweetman, (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland,* (5 vols, London, 1875-83), v, 253.

'a castle and a church and a fishing Weare.'[20] This reference to two castles located at Dollardstown and Painestown is interesting as there is no known evidence for a castle of any type in either location. It is possible that the possible ringwork castle at Dollardstown could have been recognised and described as a castle in the mid-seventeenth century. However, this seems unlikely as the 'castles' listed in the *Civil Survey* were generally stone structures. It is more probable that the 'castles' mentioned were of tower house type.

Other sites in the local area

The site of the medieval parish church of St Mary's is located in the townland of Painestown, approximately 1600m to the east-south-east of the ringwork castle site.[21] Although the earliest documentary evidence relating to this site is thirteenth century in date, it seems likely that the church was founded when the manor was established in the late twelfth century. A Church of Ireland church was constructed on the site of the medieval church in the post-medieval period but this structure has now also been levelled.[22] No trace of the medieval church is visible at ground level.

A small statue was recently discovered under a wall in the farmyard of Dollardstown House. The sculpture seems to be early sixteenth-century in date and depicts Mary holding the infant Jesus. This carving undoubtedly comes from an ecclesiastical site and it seems possible that it was removed from the church at nearby Painestown in the wake of the Reformation, as such religious statues became targets for iconoclasts.[23] A late sixteenth century effigy, which is believed to have come from the church at Painestown, is now housed in the Church of Ireland church at Slane.[24]

According to the RMP, a burial was discovered in a field in the townland of Haystown and Carnuff Little, 380m to the south-west of the site. The date of this burial is

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[20] R. C. Simmington, (ed.), *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-1656. Volume 5: County of Meath with returns of tithes for the Meath baronies* (Dublin, 1940). p. 43.
[21] *Inventory*, no. 1474, p. 142; RMP ME026-002.
[22] *Inventory*, no. 1474, p. 142
[23] http://www.beauparcparish.ie/index.php?option=content&task=blogcategory&id=22&Itemid=72, accessed 15 August 2008.
[24] *Inventory*, no. 1474, p. 142

unknown and it does not seem to be associated with a cemetery or church. No further information is recorded in the RMP file.

The probable ringwork castle at Dollardstown is located between the motte at Ardmulchan, which is located 3km to the west-south-west, and the possible motte site at Thurstianstown, which lies 3km to the east-north-east of the site. The possible motte at Thurstianstown, which does not seem to be associated with any known church site or manorial settlement, may be another contender for the site of the Dullards' castle.

Aerial photographs of the area around the site at Dollardstown show that the roads system around the site has changed slightly. The road which leads from the hamlet of Yellow Furze to the T-junction to the south of the site appears to have been straightened and aerial photographs show that it used to run past the western side of the site before continuing towards the north. The railway line which runs past the site on its northern side has caused some disturbance to the site. It is unclear whether some features in the field to the west of the site are original or if they are a result of this disturbance.

The RMP file states that the OPW carried out some excavations at the site in the 1950s. These excavations apparently found that the site was Iron Age in date. However, the lack of any further information relating to these excavations makes it impossible to evaluate the conclusions reached. There was apparently no evidence to suggest that this was a medieval castle site.

Discussion

Although the earthwork at Dollardstown is in a very poor state of preservation, its morphology seems to resemble that of a ringwork castle. Although the overall dimensions of the site are unknown, it consists of a raised interior enclosed by two banks and an intervening fosse. If the site is an earthwork castle, its morphology would place it in the ringwork rather than the motte category. The documentary evidence indicates that both Adam and Payne Dullard held lands in the parish of Painestown, within which the townland of Dollardstown is located. It seems possible that the earthwork represents an earthwork castle constructed by one of the brothers in the late

twelfth century. However, the earthwork is located 1600m away from the nearest known medieval church site and there is no archaeological evidence, besides the possible ringwork castle, for a manorial settlement in the immediate vicinity. Excavations in the 1950s apparently showed that the site was of Iron Age origin. However, very little information about these excavations is available. Even if the site originated in the Iron Age period, it seems possible that it was refortified by the Dullard brothers in the late twelfth century. Although there is insufficient evidence to justify the classification of this site as a definite ringwork castle, it seems reasonable to classify it as a possible ringwork castle until future excavations shed more light on its chronology.

Site no:	**22**
Site name:	**Drumsawry**
Townland:	**Drumsawry / Summerbank**
Parish:	**Loughcrew**
Barony:	**Fore**
County:	**Meath**
Co-ordinates:	**257567, 278270**
S.M.R. no:	**ME03-004**
S.M.R. classification:	**ringfort - rath**
Inventory no:	**722**
Inventory classification:	**ringfort**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

Sweetman has indentified this site as a possible ringwork based on its morphology.[1] It is classified as a 'ringfort' by both the *Archaeological Inventory* and the RMP.

Siting

The site is located in the townland of Drumsawry, also known as Summerbank, in the civil parish of Loughcrew. The site occupies a commanding location on a raised hillock, 170m above sea level. Although the site is overshadowed by the Loughcrew Hills which lie to the south and south-east, it commands good views in all other directions. The ground slopes away in all directions from the site.

Field report

The site consists of a raised circular platform enclosed by two banks, with an intervening fosse (Figure 4). Features include an entrance at the south-east, a rectangular depression near the centre of the enclosure and a crescent-shaped annexe attached to the site (Plate 7a).

The interior of the site is roughly circular in shape and measures 56m in diameter. It is raised between 2 and 2.5m above external ground level and is defined by a bank which supports the foundations of a stone wall. While it may have a rubble or earthen core, this appears to be a wall rather than an earthen bank faced with stone. It measures

[1] P. D. Sweetman, 'Some ringwork castles in County Meath' in Christiaan Corlett and Tom Condit, (eds), *Above and beyond: essays in memory of Leo Swan* (Bray, 2005), pp 395-6.

between 1.4 and 2m in width and survives to a maximum height of 90cm above the interior of the enclosure and 50cm above the top of the slope down into the outer fosse.

From the base of the external face of the wall, there is a drop of between 2m and 2.5m down into the fosse. The slope is interrupted by the remains of a second wall structure, creating a shelf halfway down the bank. The fosse is a wide U-shaped feature. It is 1.5m in depth below the external bank. The fosse is very wide, measuring between 7m and 9.4m across, from the top of the external bank to the slope of the inner bank.

Like the inner embankment, the outer 'bank' appears to be a well-defined stone wall with earth piled up around against its outer side. At the top, this wall measures between 1.9 and 2m in width. It survives to a maximum height of 2m above the exterior at the south. Exterior ground level is slightly lower from the north-west clockwise to the south due to the absence of the annexe feature here.

The entrance is orientated towards the south-east and consists of a gap in the outer bank, a causeway over the fosse and a gap in the inner bank. The gap in the external bank measures 2.8m in width while the gap in the inner bank is 1.9m in width. Both of these gaps are well-defined, as they are faced with stone on both sides of the gap. The causeway across the fosse is less well defined. At its highest point, it measures 60cm in height and 2.8m in width but it slopes gradually down into the bottom of the fosse. It is notable that this entrance is orientated towards the cluster of passage tombs on the summit of Carnbane East, and away from the probable location of the medieval church of Drumsawry.

The remains of a rectangular structure stand within the interior, occupying a position just north-east of its centre. The depression has a maximum depth of 1.1m. Both the *Inventory* and the RMP reports attribute this depression to quarrying activity. However, upon closer inspection this feature can be recognised as the remains of a structure as stone walls clearly line the inside of the depression. Internally, the building measures 8.7m in length and 5.2m in width. As the depression is surrounded by earthen banks, it is not possible to measure its external dimensions and wall thickness without

excavation. The walls stand to a height of up to 1.1m above the interior of the structure. There is an un-dug square area at the centre of the structure, which stands 70cm in height. The entrance to the building appears to have been at the south-east where there is a well-defined gap in the wall, measuring 80cm in width. This entrance is orientated towards the entrance to the enclosure. Sweetman has interpreted this structure as the remains of a wooden tower with stone foundations.[2] While it is possible that this structure represents a tower of the type commonly found in association with mottes, it is by no means certain that the structure is Anglo-Norman in date. Rectangular 'hut sites' of similar dimensions have been noted at several ringforts in Meath.

The aerial photographs show clearly that a crescent shaped annexe was attached to the enclosure site from the north-east of the enclosure, going anti-clockwise to the south-west. Although the modern field boundaries cut across this feature, the field boundaries of an older field system, visible on the aerial photographs, seem to radiate out from this annexe. This feature is clearly visible at ground level. It is raised between 0.5 and 1m above external ground level and is defined by a scarp. At its widest point the annexe measures approximately 30m from the external bank of the enclosure to the scarp. It seems that it was not possible to access this annexe directly from the main enclosure as the entrance at the south-east is the only visible gap in the enclosing defences and is orientated away from the annexe. Sweetman has stated that this annexe '...either represent a bailey or could possibly be part of an earlier enclosure.'[3] Crescent shaped baileys associated with earth and timber castles are rare but not unknown. For example, the bailey associated with the earthwork castle at Sycarth in Wales is crescent-shaped although it a much wider arc than the possible example at Drumsawry. The shape and relatively small size of the feature at Drumsawry makes it seem an unlikely bailey. An alternative interpretation of this feature is that it is an annexe associated with an early medieval phase of the site. Ringforts with annexes are not uncommon in this part of Meath. Of 456 ringforts listed in the *Inventory*, seven including Drumsawry have annexes attached, which tend to be lunate in form. Of these seven ringforts, five can be described as bivallate.[4] It has also been suggested that this feature may represent the

[2] Ibid., p. 395.
[3] Ibid., p. 396.
[4] *Inventory*, nos. 485, 623, 644, 669, 815, 825 and 886.

remains of a third enclosing bank.[5] However, this seems less likely than the other two suggestions.

Documentary references

There is little documentary evidence for Anglo-Norman activity at Drumsawry. The ecclesiastical taxation of 1305-6 records that the chapel at 'Drumsauory', which belonged to the abbey of Fore, was valued at 'nothing, because waste'.[6] This reference suggests that the church had been constructed some time before and had gone out of use.

There are two references to Drumsawry in the Irish patent rolls. In an entry dating to 1389, it is recorded that Philip Cruys held one messuage and one carucate at 'Loppinestoun' and other lands and tenements in Drumsaury, which together were worth 40*s*. per annum. In 1382, Philip enfeoffed two chaplains called Walter White and Simon Mothe, chaplains, who granted the same to Henry Cruys and his heirs forever. Henry held these lands until they were confiscated by the sheriff on the orders of the king because Philip Cruys had been declared an outlaw. Henry petitioned to have his lands returned to him. As Philip was dead by this time, Henry paid a fine of 100*s*. to have him pardoned and received a license from the king to hold the lands.[7] In 1434, a Robert Cruys of 'Dromsawry' is mentioned.[8]

Drumsawry does not reappear in the sources until the early modern period. In 1613, Richard Nugent, lord of Delvin, was granted the possessions of the Abbey of Fore, including a house, a cottage, a chapel and its tithes in 'Dromsaurie'.[9] The *Civil Survey* recorded that Drumsawry was held by Richard Nugent, earl of Westmeath.[10] The Plunket family of Loughcrew also held land at Drumsawry in the seventeenth century; an inquisition post mortem held in 1627 found that Christopher Barnwell of Moylagh

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[5] *Inventory*, p. 71, no. 644.
[6] H. S. Sweetman, (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland,* (5 vols, London, 1875-83), v, 268.
7 *Rotulorum patentium et clausorum Cancellariæ hiberniæ calendarium* (Dublin, 1828), 13 Richard II, p. 143.
[8] Ibid., 13 Henry VI, p. 256.
[9] *Irish Patent Rolls of James I*, (Dublin, 1966), p. 238.
[10] R. C. Simmington, (ed.), *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-1656. Volume 5: County of Meath with returns of tithes for the Meath baronies* (Dublin, 1940), p. 265.

had deeded his lands in trust to Oliver Plunkett of Drumsawry.[11] According to local tradition, following the confiscation of the church at Loughcrew in the early seventeenth century, the Plunket family of Loughcrew restored the chapel at Drumsawry and walked from Loughcrew to attend mass there.[12] However, there does not appear to be any documentary evidence for this. The church at Drumsawry appears to have gone out of use by the late seventeenth century. Bishop Dopping's Visitation Book (1682-85) briefly lists 'Drumfannery' as a chapel in the parish of Oldcastle, but records only that it had 'walls standing'.[13]

Other sites in the local area

The reputed site of the church of Drumsawry lies 570m to the north-west of the ringwork site, in a field known as 'castle field'. It is a rectangular building, orientated east-west, but, as so little remains of the structure, it is not possible to determine its date or function with any certainty. In the adjoining townlands of Ballinvally and Boolies, eighteenth century grave slabs, supposedly from the church at Drumsawry, have been built into field walls. [14]

Adjacent to the church is the site of the 'castle'. The ruins of a 'castle' at Drumsawry are depicted on Taylor and Skinner's eighteenth century map.[15] Little more than a pile of stones now remains. According to the *Inventory*, the structure measured 9.4m east-west and 6m north-south.[16] It seems likely that this structure was a tower house, dating to the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Local tradition maintains that it was held by a branch of the Plunkett family of Loughcrew and that Oliver Plunkett was born at the castle.

The site at Drumsawry is overlooked by the prehistoric passage tomb cemetery of Loughcrew or *Slieve na Caillighe* which lies to the south and south-east. The cemetery

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[11] *Inquisitionum in officio rotulorum cancellariæ Hiberniæ asservatarum, repertorium. Volume 1: Leinster* (Dublin, 1826), Charles I, 1627-8, no. 22.
[12] Matthew O'Reilly, 'The Plunket family of Loughcrew' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, i, no. 4 (1958), pp 50-51.
[13] C. E. Ellison, 'Bishop Dopping's Visitation Book, 1682-85' in *Riocht na Midhe*, vi, no.1 (1975), p. 10.
[14] *Inventory*, no. 1391, p. 134.
[15] George Taylor and Andrew Skinner, *Maps of the roads of Ireland, surveyed in 1777* (Shannon, 1969: reprint of 2nd edition published in Dublin in 1783), p. 57.
[16] *Inventory*, no. 1734, p. 170.

consists of over twenty-five passage tombs, dating to the period between 4000 and 2000 BC. The passage tombs form three main clusters, situated on the summits of three hills known as Carnbane West, Carnbane East and Patrickstown. The passage tomb cemetery is located at the centre of a complex archaeological landscape, including stone circles, field systems and standing stones, which is currently being investigated by the Loughcrew Landscape Project.[17] A possible cursus or processional avenue has also been recently identified. This linear feature runs from north to south before turning sharply towards the south-west.[18] The point where the cursus turns south-west is located approximately 300m to the east possible ringwork site.[19]

There are also thirteen sites which are classified as ringforts or cashels, including the possible ringwork castle, within a 1km radius of the passage tombs. Although these settlement sites are probably far later in date than the passage tombs, it seems likely that they are associated in some way as they seem to be deliberately clustered around the passage tomb complex.

Despite its proximity to the prehistoric cemetery complex at Loughcrew, the site lies within a landscape where the influence of the Anglo-Normans is clearly visible. The mottes at Oldcastle, Loughcrew and Patrickstown all lie within 3km of the site.

Discussion

Sweetman has suggested that this site is a ringwork castle, based on its morphology and its proximity to the site of a medieval church. He has suggested that the rectangular building represents the remains of a stone-footed Anglo-Norman tower while the annexe could be a castle bailey. Sweetman's interpretation of the site seems possible. The general morphology of the site is correct for a ringwork castle, consisting as it does of a raised circular platform enclosed by two stone-laced banks with an intervening

[17] Colin Shell, 'The Loughcrew Landscape Project' in *PAST:the newsletter of the Prehistoric Society*, li (November, 2005), pp 1-3.
[18] Conor Newman, 'Notes on four cursus-like monuments in County Meath, Ireland' in Alistair Barclay and Jan Harding, *Pathways and ceremonies: the cursus monuments of Britain and Ireland*, (Oxford, 1999), pp 141-2; Conor Newman, 'A cursus at Loughcrew, Co. Meath' in *Archaeology Ireland*, xxxiv (Winter, 1995), pp 19-21.
[19] Newman, 'A cursus at Loughcrew, Co. Meath', pp 19-21.

fosse, accessed by a causewayed entrance. The site does appear to have a number of features that could be Anglo-Norman in origin.

As discussed above, there is limited documentary evidence for an Anglo-Norman settlement at Drumsawry and it seems possible that the site was used as a ringwork castle during this period. However, the morphology of the site and its proximity to the Loughcrew complex suggests that the site is early medieval or earlier in origin. It may be significant that the entrance to the site is orientated directly towards the cluster of passage tombs on Carnbane East and away from the probable location of the medieval church. These two interpretations of the site are not mutually exclusive; Drumsawry may be a multi-period site, which originated in the early medieval period and was adapted to form an earth and timber castle under the Anglo-Normans.

Site no:	**23**
Site name:	**Kilcarn**
Townland:	**Kilcarn**
Parish:	**Kilcarn**
Barony:	**Skreen**
County:	**Meath**
Co-ordinates:	**290354, 264837**
RMP no:	**ME03-004**
RMP classification:	**ringfort – rath**
Inventory no:	**722**
Inventory classification:	**ringfort**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: RINGWORK CASTLE

Siting

The ringwork castle site is located approximately three km to south-east of Navan. The ringwork is situated on the summit of a slight hill, which is the highest point in the relatively flat surrounding area. Although it commands good views in all directions, the site does not stand out as being particularly suitable for an earthwork castle. It is not close to a river and does not have the advantage of any natural defenses other than its slightly raised position.

Field report

The site consists of a roughly circular internal area enclosed by a substantial bank and an external fosse (Figure 4). The interior measures 50m in diameter from north to south and 49m from east to west. The interior is slightly higher (25-50cm) than external ground level. No internal features are visible at ground level.

The interior is defined by a large grassy bank around its perimeter. The bank is 50cm above the interior and 2.5m above the fosse. The fosse is very wide and has a flat bottom, making it u-shaped in profile. It is 3m wide at the base and 6.6m wide at its widest point. The fosse is 2.5m in depth below the internal bank and 1.75m below external ground level. In places there are traces of an external bank, which is either poorly preserved or else was relatively insubstantial originally. As the site is situated on good farmland, the outer bank may have been damaged by ploughing.

There are two modern gaps in the inner bank, located at the west and at the south-south-west. The original entrance seems to have been at the east where there a gap in the internal bank, measuring 2.5m in width, as well as a slight causeway over the fosse.

Although this site is classified as a ringfort in both the *Inventory* and the RMP, it has many of the morphological features characteristic of ringwork castles including an inner bank, an unusually deep wide fosse and slight traces of an outer bank as well as a causewayed entrance. The documentary evidence seems to corroborate the interpretation of this site as a ringwork castle as is discussed below.

Documentary references

The medieval manor of Kilcarn was located within the de Feipo barony of Skreen. The Song of Dermot and the Earl records that Hugh de Lacy granted the barony of Skreen to Adam de Feipo,[1] probably as early as 1172 or 1173.[2] Adam held Skreen in addition to some lands in western Meath until his death in 1190 or 1191.[3] While Adam's eldest son Richard succeeded him as lord of Skreen, one of his younger sons, Geoffrey, seems to have held the manor of Kilcarn in addition to the manor of Santry in Dublin. In a charter dating to c.1185, 'Geoffrey' and 'John' are named in a list of Adam de Feipo's feudatories.[4] It seems likely that this refers to Geoffrey and John de Feipo, two of Adam de Feipo's younger sons. Unfortunately the charter does not name the lands which they held at this time and it is unclear when Geoffrey acquired the manors of Santry and Kilcarn.

A charter issued by John Comyn, archbishop of Dublin, confirming the church at Santry to St Mary's Abbey, Dublin, stated that the manor of Santry had been held by Geoffrey de Feipo but had reverted to his older brother, Richard, following Geoffrey's death.[5] As John Comyn died in 1212, both Geoffrey's death and the issuing of this charter must

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[1] Evelyn Mullally, (ed.), *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland. La Geste des Engleis en Yrlande. A new edition of the chronicle formerly known as 'The Song of Dermot and the Earl'* (Dublin, 2002), Lines 3156-7.
[2] Elizabeth Hickey, *Skryne and the early Normans: papers concerning the medieval manors of the Feypo family in Ireland in the 12th and early 13th centuries* (Meath, 1994), p. 34.
[3] Ibid., p. 52 and p. 201.
[4] J. T. Gilbert, (ed.), *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin, with the register of its house at Dunbrody and Annals of Ireland* (2 vols, Dublin, 1884), i, 156.
[5] Ibid., i, 177

have taken place prior to this date. As Hickey has argued, it seems likely that Geoffrey's main residence was located at Santry, which seems to have been as a larger and more prosperous manor than Kilcarn.[6]

The only documentary evidence linking Geoffrey to the manor of Kilcarn is a charter issued by Geoffrey himself. Although it is possible to date this charter precisely it seems probable that it dates to the last decade of the twelfth century or the first decade of the thirteenth century. The charter records Geoffrey's grant of property at Kilcarn to St Mary's Abbey and it seems to contain a rare medieval description of a ringwork castle As there are no other known ringforts, moated sites or enclosures in the townland of Kilcarn, this reference almost certainly relates to the ringwork castle site.[7] It was presumable intended that the ringwork would be used as a residence for the clergy serving the parish of Kilcarn. According to the charter, the property at Kilcarn consisted of; '..unum mesuagium, cum domo que ibi est et curia sicut fossato vallata est in terra mea que in tenemento de Tyrcarn quod Thomas, capellanus, de me tenuit.'[8] This can be translated as '...one messuage, with the house which is there and the courtyard which is ditched and palisaded on my land, which is in tenement of Tyrcarn and which Thomas the chaplain holds from me.'

The terminology used to describe the site is somewhat problematic as earthwork castles of both motte and ringwork type are usually referred to as castles in the sources, while the term 'messuage' generally seems to have been used to describe a farmstead, defended farmstead or manor house. The fact that the site is being granted as a residence for clergy may also imply that it functioned more as a defended residence than as a military castle. The purpose for which this residence was originally constructed is unclear from the charter. Although this charter records the granting of the property to St Mary's Abbey, it may have functioned as a ringfort in the pre-Norman period and subsequently been adapted, or it may have been constructed in the late twelfth century as a lordly residence at a manorial centre. Even assuming that Geoffrey spent most of his time at his manor of Santry and that Kilcarn was looked after by a

[6] Hickey, *Skryne and the Early Normans*, p. 103.
[7] Ibid., p. 102.
[8] Gilbert, (ed.), *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin*, i, 94.

bailiff, it seems likely that there would also have had a residence of some kind at Kilcarn. It is not clear whether Geoffrey received the grant of Kilcarn or Santry first. Could Geoffrey have acquired the less important manor of Kilcarn first and constructed the ringwork castle before moving his headquarters to Santry later on, leaving the ringwork castle to be granted for the clergy of Kilcarn?

As the documentary evidence suggests that the site functioned as a defended residence for the local clergy, it seems possible that it should be interpreted as a circular moated site rather than an earthwork castle. The site has many of the characteristics of a moated site, including an internal bank, wide fosse and a causewayed entrance. However, the site's positioning at the summit of a gently sloping hill would be unusual for a moated site. Moated sites are generally found in relatively low-lying locations, although as Barry has pointed out, some moated sites are situated in elevated, 'defensive' positions.[9] The location of the Kilcarn site, close to a medieval church, would also be unusual for a moated site as they tend to be found in peripheral locations rather than at the centre of manorial settlements,[10] and seem to represent a secondary phase of Anglo-Norman settlement. Also, as the site at Kilcarn is positioned at a high point in the landscape, it is highly unlikely that it could ever have had a wet fosse. Although dry moats are not unknown, moated sites are typically enclosed by wet moats. These factors combined with the fact that circular moated sites seem to be relatively rare in both England and Ireland means that Kilcarn should probably be interpreted as a ringwork castle although the documentary evidence does suggest that it may have been similar to a moated site in terms of function. It is important to remember that these classifications are a modern construct and had no meaning in the medieval period.

Much of the documentary evidence for medieval Kilcarn relates to the church there. There is some evidence to suggest that the Anglo-Norman church may have been constructed on the site of an early medieval church. The 'kill' element of the place name may indicate that the church is early medieval in origin. According to the

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[9] T. B. Barry, 'The defensive characteristics of Irish moated sites' in J. R. Kenyon and Kieran O'Conor, (eds), *The medieval castle in Ireland and Wales: essays in honour of Jeremy Knight* (Dublin, 2003), p. 182.

[10] T. B. Barry, *The medieval moated sites of south-west Ireland* (Oxford, 1977), p. 177.

Tirechan, writing in the late seventh century, St Patrick founded a number of churches in eastern Meath including 'the church of Cerne'.[11] Hogan identified Kilcarn is the most likely location for the church of Cerne.[12] However, others have argued that the townlands of Upper and Lower Carnes in the parish of Duleek are a more likely possibility. It may be significant that while many parishes in the barony, including Danestown, Follistown, Staffordstown and Dowdstown, acquired their names from their Anglo-Norman settlers, Kilcarn, along with Skreen and Killeen, seems to have kept its pre-Norman place-name.

The first known reference to the Anglo-Norman church at Kilcarn is contained in a charter issued in 1217, which records the dedication of a cemetery at Kilcarn.[13] According to this charter, it had previously been necessary for the inhabitants of the parish to travel as far as Skreen in order to bury their dead in the graveyard there. It is generally accepted that a grant of burial rights indicates that a medieval church had achieved parish status. It therefore seems likely that Kilcarn was a parish church by 1217.

There are further documentary references to the church at Kilcarn in the thirteenth century, all relating to a dispute regarding the temporalities of the churches in the barony of Skreen. Adam de Feipo explained in a letter, written to the pope *c.*1185, how he had built a chapel dedicated to St Nicholas in his castle at Skreen and, with the assistance of Bishop Eugenius, his brother, Thomas de Feipo, was installed as chaplain. The tithes from all the churches in the Adam's barony of Skreen were then payed to this chapel. When Thomas de Feipo entered St Mary's Abbey as a monk, Adam granted the temporalities of the churches of Skreen to St Mary's Abbey.[14] This grant became the subject of a long-running dispute as successive bishops of Meath questioned Adam's right to grant the temporalities of the churches in his barony to a monastic house outside the diocese. The grant was originally confirmed by Eugenius, bishop of Meath, in the

[11] Ludwig Bieler, (ed.), *The Patrician texts in the Book of Armagh* (Dublin, 1979), p. 167.
12 Edmund Hogan, *Onomasticon Goedelicum locorum et tribuum Hiberniae et Scotiae: an index, with identifications, to the Gaelic names of places and tribes* (London, 1910), p. 229.
[13] Gilbert, (ed.), *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin*, i, 159.
[14] Ibid., ii, 21.

charter dating to *c.*1185.[15] The fact that it was confirmed twice more on the orders of Pope Clement III between 1194 and 1200, by the archbishop of Armagh,[16] and by Simon de Rochford, bishop of Meath,[17] and again by King John in 1200,[18] shows that it was a contentious grant.

This issue was raised again under Richard de la Corner, who was Bishop of Meath from 1126 to 1250. The matter was taken to Rome for the pope's judgement for a second time and, following that, to a court in Dublin which judged in favour of St Mary's Abbey. Bishop de la Corner was forced to make an agreement with the Cistercians and, in a charter dating to 1234, he finally confirmed the temporalities of the churches of Skreen to St Mary's Abbey.[19]

In 1296, Richard de Nugent paid a fine of 10*s.* '...for default of common summons, and for pledge of the vicar of Kylkernan (Kilcarn).'[20]

The ecclesiastical taxation of 1305-6, valued the Kilcarn at 10*l.* Within the rural deanery of Skreen, only the churches of Galtrim and its chapels (40 *l.*, 13*s.* 4*d.*), Skreen (37marks) Kilmore (16*l.*) and Kilmessan (16 marks) were worth more. Knockmore (10*l.*) and Clonmellon (10*l.*) were valued at the same amount as Kilcarn.[21] The figures given in the ecclesiastical taxation suggest that, in the early thirteenth century, the church at Kilcarn was wealthier, and perhaps more important, than the churches at Killeen, Danestown, Athlumney, Dowdstown, Follistown/ Staffordstown and Lismullen.

The visitation book compiled on the orders of Bishop Dopping between 1682 and 1685 records that the medieval church at Kilcarn had gone out of use by the late seventeenth

[15] Ibid., i, 156.
[16] Ibid., i, 144.
[17] Ibid., i, 157-8.
[18] Ibid., i, 88-9.
[19] Ibid., i, 166-70.
[20] H. S. Sweetman, (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland,* (5 vols, London, 1875-83), iv, 171.
[21] Ibid., v, 264.

century. According to this source, the church and chancel had been left unrepaired since 1641 and Kilcarn had been united with Skreen in 1677.[22]

Other sites in the local area

The ruins of St Stephen's Church and graveyard are located 530m to the north-west of the ringwork site. The church consists of an undivided nave and chancel with two opposing doors in the south and north walls towards the western end of the church. The west wall supports a ruined belfry. Some of the church's architectural features seem to be late medieval in date. For example, the double cusped ogee-headed window within a square hood moulding which lies on the ground inside the church, presumably having fallen from its original position in the belfry wall, appears to be fifteenth or sixteenth century in date. Other features, including a pointed lancet light within an embrasure in the south wall to the west of the door, appear to be earlier in date suggesting that the church may have been originally constructed as early as the late twelfth or early thirteenth century and was modified later in the medieval period.

Although the church St Stephen is the only church site listed by the RMP and the *Inventory*, there may also have been an earlier church in the parish. Anthony Cogan, writing in the mid-nineteenth century recorded that, according to local tradition, there was another church site in the adjoining townland of Oldtown. This church was known as the Black Church and apparently had an extensive cemetery attached to it; Cogan recorded that farmers had come across human skeletons whilst planting potatoes.[23] Hickey has argued that this site rather than the site of the medieval church in the townland of Kilcarn may have been the location of the early medieval church, suggesting that the townland name of Oldtown reflects that there was a settlement there that was known to be older than the medieval settlement at Kilcarn.[24] Although nothing survives of the church or cemetery, aerial photographs show an extensive field system

[22] C. C. Ellison, C. C., (ed.), 'Bishop Dopping's Visitation Book 1682-1685' in *Ríocht na Mídhe,* vi, no. 1 (1975), p. 6.
[23] Anthony Cogan, *The diocese of Meath, ancient and modern* (4 vols, Dublin, 1992; reprint of work originally published in Dublin, 1862-70), ii, 240 and 248.
[24] Hickey, *Skryne and the Early Normans*, p. 103.

where the townlands of Oldtown and Corballis meet.[25] It is possible that that the Anglo-Normans moved the focus of settlement from Oldtown to the townland of Kilcarn.

Besides the church and the field system at Corballis/Oldtown, there are no other known archaeological sites in the immediate vicinity. Approximately 2km from the ringwork site stands Kilcarn Bridge. This bridge dates to the second half of the sixteenth century and is located at an important crossing point on the River Boyne. It seems probable that this bridge is positioned on the site of an older fording point.

The First Edition O.S. offers some clues regarding the layout of the medieval settlement at Kilcarn. This map shows that the road system in the nineteenth century differs from the modern one. The road linking the modern road to Kilcarn church now ends at the church while, in the early nineteenth century, it appears to have continued on. In the medieval period it may have gone even further as the field boundaries seem to respect its line. The entrance to the ringwork site seems to have been at the east and so is aligned towards the route of the modern road which would have run towards the church. If both of these roads were in use in the medieval period, they would have formed a triangle with the church at the apex. In the nineteenth century, this triangle seems to have been a single field. It seems possible that an associated manorial settlement may have been situated within that triangle.

Discussion

Neither the morphology nor the siting of the earthwork at Kilcarn is particularly impressive. The site consists of a sub-circular interior, defined by a bank and external fosse. However, the documentary sources provide clear evidence for the site being used as a high-status residence in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century. Also, the proximity of the site to the medieval church of St Stephen's indicates that the two sites were the focus of a manorial centre associated with the small medieval parish and manor of Kilcarn. The site has therefore been classified as definite ringwork castle.

[25] *Inventory*, no. 1826, p. 182.

Site no:	**24**
Site name:	**Rathregan**
Townland:	**Rathregan**
Parish:	**Rathregan**
Barony:	**Ratoath**
County:	**Meath**
Co-ordinates:	**297352, 248197**
RMP no:	**ME044-020**
RMP classification:	**ringfort -rath**
Inventory no:	**857**
Inventory classification:	**ringfort**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: MOTTE (DISCARDED)

Siting

The site is located in the townland of Rathregan in the parish of Rathregan. The site positioned on a low ridge and commands a good view in all directions. The River Tolka, which at this point is a small stream, runs past the site on its eastern side.

Field Report

The site is a raised mound, consisting of a roughly circular interior defined by a steep scarp (Figure 4 and Plate 2b). The summit of the mound measures 36m in diameter from north to south and 31m east/west. The mound is raised between 1.75m and 2.3 m above external ground level. The interior of the site is roughly level although it slopes slightly downwards from the southern end to the northern end. There are faint traces of an inner bank at the south. There is no evidence for an external fosse and bank around the site. There may have been a ramped entrance at the south-south east, where the embankment is less steep than elsewhere. This possible entrance seems to be orientated towards the ruined church and graveyard.

Documentary references

Rathregan appears relatively frequently in the medieval sources from the late thirteenth century. The manor of Rathregan seems to have been held by the le Blound family as a sub-manor of the de Lacy manor of Ratoath. Over time, the Anglo-Norman name le Blound was increasingly translated into English as White, and also appears occasionally

in Latin as Albinus. The individuals mentioned all appear to be members of the same family.

In 1299, John le Blound of Rathregan was involved in several legal cases. Two records in the justiciary rolls relate to debts owed to him by a knight called Thomas de Ledwych.[1] In the same year, John was one of six men accused of assaulting a man at Peynestown, Co. Meath.[2] However, the plaintiff later withdrew his complaint.[3] In 1306, John le Blound appears again in the justiciary rolls as a witness in a civil case.[4] In the same year, it is recorded that John le Blound and Hugh de Lacy agreed to mainprise the prior of the house of St Peter at Trim, who had been accused of murdering a fellow monk.[5] John le Blound of 'Raregan' appears next in the sources as a member of the jury summoned in 1317 to consider the involvement of Walter and Hugh de Lacy in the Bruce Invasion.[6]

The documentary evidence shows that there was a church at Rathregan by the early fourteenth century. The ecclesiastical taxation of 1302-1306 recorded that Rathregan was valued at 5 marks, although the vicarage did not 'suffice for burdens'.[7] This may mean that the church at Rathregan did not have sufficient income to maintain a vicar and may have been served by a chaplain instead.In 1330, it is recorded that Hugh le Blound, who was probably the son of John le Blound, granted the advowson of the church of Rathregan, as well as a pond in Rathregan, to the church of St Peter and Paul at Trim.[8]

In 1345, Hugh le White of Rathregan was exempted from obligations to sit on juries and assizes and from appointments to various public offices against his will.[9] A charter

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[1] James Mills, (ed.), *Calendar of the Justiciary Rolls or proceedings in Court of the Justiciar of Ireland, 1295-1314,* (3 vols, London, 1905-56), i, 226 and 249.
[2] Ibid., i, 274.
[3] Ibid., i, 280.
[4] Ibid., i, 313.
[5] Ibid., i, ii, 508 and 512.
[6] J. T. Gilbert, (ed.), *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin, with the register of its house at Dunbrody and Annals of Ireland* (2 vols, Dublin, 1884), ii, 407.
[7] H. S. Sweetman, (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland,* (5 vols, London, 1875-83), v, 254.
[8] *Calendar of the Patent Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward III* (London, 1891), i, p. 530.
[9] *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Edward III, vi, p. 518.

dating to 1359 shows that Hugh le White of Rathregan sold the manors of Donmurhill and Balymurlerhan.[10]

The manor of Rathregan passed into the possession of the Plunkett family in the late fourteenth century. However, there were still members of the White family resident at Rathregan in the 15th century. In 1428, 'Jon Witte of Raregan' appears as a witness to a charter confirming a grant of property in nearby Ballymaglassan.[11]

The seventeenth century sources offer a more detailed view of property in Rathregan than earlier sources. An the early sixteenth century, there was a castle at Rathregan in addition to a watermill, 6 messuages and 40 acres of land there.[12] According to the *Civil Survey,* there was a 'stone house and outhouses' at Rathregan by the mid-seventeenth century, as well as a church, a mill and several farm houses and cottages.[13]

Other sites in the local area

The ruins of a church are located approximately 85m to the south-south-east of the raised mound. It is notable that the site's probable entrance is orientated towards the church. The church consists of a rectangular nave as well as remains of a probable chancel, and is situated within a graveyard. Rice has argued that it may have been constructed in the fifteenth century under the patronage of the Plunkett family as its plan seems to resemble those of the Plunkett churches at Killen, Dunsany, Rathmore and Loughcrew.[14] It seems likely that the church had gone out of use by the early nineteenth century as it is marked as a 'ruin' on the First Edition O.S. map. It seems likely that the Anglo-Norman church of Rathregan occupied the same site as this later church.

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[10] James Mills and M. J. McEnery, (eds), *Calendar of the Gormanston Register* (Dublin, 1916), p. 139.
[11] E. St. J. Brooks, (ed.), *Register of the Hospital of St John the Baptist without the New Gate, Dublin* (Dublin, 1936), p. 375.
[12] *Inquisitionum in officio rotulorum cancellariæ Hiberniæ asservatarum, repertorium. Volume 1: Leinster* (Dublin, 1826), Meath, Car. 1, no. 137.
[13] R. C. Simmington, (ed.), *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-1656. Volume 5: County of Meath with returns of tithes for the Meath baronies* (Dublin, 1940), p. 86.
[14] Gerard Rice, *Norman Kilcloon, 1171-1700* (Navan, 2001), p. 117.

The seventeenth-century references to a 'castle' and a 'stone house' probably relate Rathregan House. It is not possible to classify Rathregan House with any certainty as little of the structure remains. It seems most likely that the ruins are those of a tower house. If this is the case, it would almost certainly have been in existence by the mid-seventeenth century and could have been described as both a 'castle' and a 'stone house'. It seems very unlikely that the earth and timber castle would have been described as a 'castle' in the seventeenth century.

A sunken roadway runs past the western side of the earthwork site linking the site of Rathregan House and the ruined church to the south. Aerial photographs show that the sunken roadway continued south beyond the church and the field boundaries shown on the First Edition OS map appear to respect this line. Aerial photographs also show a deserted settlement site with probable burgage plots, covering approximately five acres, to the south and east of the sunken roadway.[15]

To the east of the mound there is a small ruined stone bridge, crossing the River Tolka. On the far side of the river, in the adjoining townland of Mill Lands, there is a large pond. This could be the pond referred to in the seventeenth century Inquisitions and is possibly connected to the water mill mentioned, which must have been located somewhere along the river.

The earthwork at Rathregan may be poorly preserved as a result of post-medieval activity. Writing in the mid-nineteenth century, O'Donovan recorded that a mound in Rathregan townland was known as Mill Hill and that it was locally believed that a windmill had once stood on it.[16] The fact that the townland adjoining Rathregan to the north is called Mill Lands corroborates this tradition. The *Civil Survey*, carried out in the mid-seventeenth century, also records the existence of a mill at Rathregan,[17] although it does not specify the type of mill and this reference could alternatively relate to a water mill which is also known to have existed at Rathregan in the seventeenth

[15] The Geological Survey, GSAP N294; *Inventory*, no. 1691, p. 164.
[16] Michael Herity, (ed.), *Ordnance Survey letters Meath: letters containing information relative to the antiquities of the County of Meath collected during the progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1836* (Dublin, 2001), p. 113.
[17] Simmington, (ed.), *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-1656. Volume 5: County of Meath,* p. 86.

century. The mound seems too large to be a purpose-built medieval windmill mound. If a windmill was situated here, it seems likely that a pre-existing site was adapted and reused as a windmill mound. Whereas medieval windmill mounds were constructed around the cross-trees of post-mills and supported the structure, post-medieval windmills tended to be constructed on top of pre-existing mounds in order to give the windmill more height, enabling it to catch more wind.

Discussion

The site at Rathregan is classified as a ringfort by both the RMP and the *Archaeological Inventory*.[18] However, the mound's siting at a known manorial centre suggests that it should be interpreted as an earthwork castle. Although Rice has suggested that the mound may be a poorly preserved ringwork castle,[19] its morphology is not consistent with this interpretation as it is merely a raised mound, defined by a scarp, and lacks any definite enclosing banks or ditches. It seems more reasonable to classify the site as a low motte castle. In terms of morphology and size, it is comparable to the motte castle at Dunshaughlin in Meath, which measures 2.5-3m. in height and has a summit diameter of 34m,[20] and the small motte at Fethard in Wexford which measures 1.4-2.2m in height and has a summit diameter of only 13m.[21]

[18] *Inventory*, no. 857, p. 88; ME044-020.
[19] Rice, *Norman Kilcloon*, p. 24.
[20] *Inventory,* no. 1627, p. 158; ME044-033(001).
[21] *Inventory,* no. 1450, p. 157; WX050-011(002).

Site no:	**25**
Site name:	**Rathtroane**
Townland:	**Rathtroane**
Parish:	**Rathcore**
Barony:	**Lower Moyfenrath**
County:	**Meath**
Co-ordinates:	**280208, 243331**
RMP no:	**ME048-014**
RMP classification:	**ringfort - rath**
Inventory no:	**859**
Inventory classification:	**trivallate ringfort**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: RINGWORK CASTLE

Sweetman identified this site as a ringwork castle based on its morphology, which is similar to that of the sites at Rodanstown, Danestown and Drumsawry. Sweetman has argued that the circular depression at the centre of the site may represent the site of a circular timber tower.[1]

Siting

The ringwork castle seems to have been modelled out of a high natural ridge (Plate 7b). As the site is located at the southern end this ridge, the defences are least impressive at the north of the site and most substantial on the southern side of the site. The ringwork castle commands excellent views of the surrounding countryside. The field in which it is located is used as pasture for cattle.

Field report

The site consists of a circular platform enclosed by an inner fosse, inner bank, second fosse and second bank (Figure 4 and Plate 7a).

The interior is circular in shape and has a maximum diameter of 42m. There is a large circular depression at the centre of the interior. The depression has an internal diameter of 11m and measures up to 1.9m in depth. The depression is surrounded by a small bank around its rim, which measures between 1m and 1.5m in width and up to 1.5m in height above the interior of the ringwork. The inner face of the depression is steep sided

[1] P. D. Sweetman, 'Some ringwork castles in County Meath' in Corlett, Christiaan, and Condit, Tom, (eds), *Above and beyond: essays in memory of Leo Swan* (Bray, 2005), p. 396.

and seems to contain a lot of stone, including some large squarish stones. The field report contained in the RMP file attributes this feature to quarrying activity. However, this explanation seems unlikely; quarrying is more effective when carried out on a horizontal rather than a vertical plane, and it would be very unusual for quarrying activity to result in a perfectly circular hole enclosed by a bank. Sweetman's suggestion that the depression '...could originally have been the site of a wooden tower' seems more plausible.[2] The bank around the edge of the depression may represent the foundations of a stone wall and it seems reasonable to suggest that the depression was the basement level of a stone or stone-footed tower. In terms of size, this structure would have been larger than the polygonal towers associated with the mottes at Shanid in Co. Limerick and Castleknock in Co. Dublin, which both had internal diameters of between 6m and 7m.[3]

The ground is slightly raised around the perimeter of the interior, indicating that there may originally have been a wall or inner bank. The interior is defined by a steep scarp down into the fosse below. This fosse is between 2m and 6m in depth below the summit at the north, west and east of the site. The inner fosse measures up to 5m in depth at the south of the site. The fosse is flat-bottomed and measures between 1.5m and 3m in width across the base.

The inner bank measures between 1.25m and 1.75m in height above the inner fosse and between 1.5m and 2m in height above the outer fosse, except at the south of the site where it measures up to 3.5m in height above the outer fosse. The inner bank is absent at the north-east of the site; it seems likely that it was present originally and has been damaged as a result of agricultural activity. It is also very disturbed at the east of the site.

An outer fosse and outer bank are present from the south-east of the site clockwise to the west. At the east of the site, this bank becomes the field boundary along the edge of the road and is very disturbed. The fosse is wide and flat-bottomed, measuring between

[2] Sweetman, 'Some ringwork castles in County Meath', p. 396.
[3] P. D. Sweetman, *The medieval castles of Ireland* (Cork, 1999), p. 85.

2m and 2.5m in width across its base. The external bank measures between 1.5m and 2m in height above both the inner fosse and external ground level.

There is a large quantity of loose stone in the bases of the fosses and in the earthen banks. It seems possible that the earthen banks were either faced with stone or had walls on top of them, particularly in light of the documentary reference to walls and parapets discussed below.

There are two possible entrances to the site; the first is located at the west-south-west while the second is at the east. The entrance at the west-south-west seems to be an original feature. It consists of gaps in the two banks and a causeway over both fosses, crating a ramped passageway up onto the summit. The inner faces of both banks contain large quantities of stone, suggesting that they may originally have been faced with stone. The gaps in the banks do not quite match up and the entranceway seems to zig-zag slightly. The ramp is 1.3m in width where it meets the summit, the causeways across the inner and outer fosses measure 3.1m and 2.7m in width respectively while the gaps in the inner and outer banks measure 8.9m and 3.4m respectively. A short section of bank projects outwards from the external bank immediately to the north of the entrance. This bank may have been intended to defend the entrance. At its narrowest point, the entrance would have been just 1.3m wide, which seems relatively narrow for a ringwork entrance; the ramped entrance at Danestown, which measures a minimum of 3m in width, seems more typical.

The second possible entrance, which Sweetman implies is the original entrance, is located at the south-east of the site. If the site was based on an early medieval ringfort, as the place name suggests, the south-eastern quadrant is where one would expect to find the entrance. The site is very disturbed at the south-east; the inner bank has been removed, possibly as a result of quarrying activity, and the outer bank marks the boundary between the site and the modern road. There is a possible causeway across the inner fosse at this point. It seems possible that this 'entrance' has been created as a result of modern disturbance and agricultural activity. According to the landowner, this

entrance is used as the modern access route to the site and a small tractor is sometimes driven up onto the summit.

Excavations

Several cuttings were excavated at a post-medieval house site at Rathtroane in 2005, prior to development. The house, which is probably nineteenth century in date, is located to the south of the ringwork castle, on the opposite side of the road. Features were uncovered in two of the cuttings. The first feature consisted of a short section of ditch close to the modern road. The excavator believed that this ditch could be associated with either the ringwork castle or with the farmhouse. The second feature uncovered was a spread of burnt clay. No finds were found in any of the three trenches.[4]

Documentary references

The 'rath' element in the place name of 'Rathtroane' indicates that the site may be pre-Norman in origin. The 'troane' in the place name may be derived from 'tsruthain', meaning 'streamlet'.[5]

The documentary evidence suggests that Rathtroane was originally part of the manor of Cloncurry. The manorial centre of Cloncurry, where there is a motte beside a ruined medieval church, is located approximately to 2km the south of Rathtroane. In the thirteenth century, Cloncurry was held by the Butlers from the Pippard family. Following Ralph Pippard's grant of all of his Irish lands to the crown in 1302, the Butlers held Cloncurry directly from the crown.[6] In 1304, an extent of the manor of Cloncurry recorded that Peter Griffin held a carucate of land in 'Ratrone'.[7]

Later documentary evidence shows that the de Bermingham family held the manor of Rathtroane of the Butler earls of Ormond, along with the manor of Donadea. The manor of Donaghda probably corresponds to the civil parish of Donadea, which adjoins the parish of Cloncurry to the south. In a letter patent issued in 1391, Richard II granted the

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[4] Roseanne Meenan, http://www.excavations.ie/Pages/Details.php?Year=&County=Meath&id=14302
[5] P. W. Joyce, *The origin and history of Irish names of places*, (3 vols, Dublin, 1913), i, 458.
[6] A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'The medieval county of Kildare' in *I.H.S.*, xi, no. 43 (March 1959), p. 198.
[7] N. B. White, (ed.), *The Red Book of Ormond* (Dublin, 1932), p. 31.

manors of 'Donaghda' and 'Rathtrone' to James Butler, Earl of Ormond. The letter explains that the manors had been held by a knight called John de Bermingham by military service but had been forfeited to the crown when John was convicted of 'certain treasons and felonies' during the reign of Edward III. As the earl had suffered the loss of the lordship and services of the manors, which were valued at 16*l.* per annum, he petitioned the king and was granted the manors to hold under the same terms as John had held them.[8] A writ issued in 1369 records that John de Bermingham 'of Donaghda' had originally been sentenced to be hung, drawn and quartered for his crimes but was later pardoned.[9] This writ makes no mention of the manor of Rathtroane.

The only reference to a castle at Rathtroane is contained in a document dating to 1420, recording James, Earl of Ormond's lease to John Roche of Cloncurry of 'Great Ratron and Little Ratron in Meath near Bacounestown' for thirty years. The document states that, 'John and his heirs or assigns shall make vaults, parapets and battlements (*voltabunt tabellient et batalliabunt*) for the castle of Great Ratron at their own expense within the first seven years of the term and shall rebuild the old walls and parapets'.[10] As the document describes the castle's location and there is no other known castle or enclosure site in the townland, there is no doubt that it relates to the site at Rathtroane. While it is quite late in date, it is clear from what it says about the 'old' walls that the castle was being refortified rather than constructed in the fourteenth century. It is notable that Rathtroane lies very close to the boundary of the territory that would later become the Pale. The refortification of the castle at Rathtroane may indicate that, even if the Pale was not officially in existence until the later fifteenth century, castles were being constructed or refortified in the earlier part of the fifteenth century in response to the perceived threat from the Gaelic Irish.

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[8] Edmund Curtis, (ed.), *Calendar of Ormond deeds, 1172-1603* (6 vols, Dublin, 1932-43), ii, 312-13.
[9] James Mills and M. J. McEnery, (eds), *Calendar of the Gormanston register* (Dublin, 1916), p. 140; A. J. Otway-Ruthven, *The history of medieval Ireland* (2nd ed., London, 1980), p. 297.
[10] Curtis, (ed.), *Cal. Ormond deeds*, iii, 29-30.

In 1556-7, two Dublin merchants called James Stanyhurst and James Handcock, obtained a licence to alienate various lands, including 'Rathtrone', to Sir Thomas Butler, Earl of Ormond.[11]

The *Civil Survey* records that by the mid-seventeenth century, 'Rathroone' in the parish of Rathcore was held by William Fitzgerald, a Roman Catholic, and consisted of 204 acres; 110 arable, 60 pasture, 4 meadow and 30 bog.[12] It is notable that the *Civil Survey* makes no mention of a castle site at Rathtroane.

Other sites in the local area

A possible church site is located approximately 280m to the north-east of the ringwork castle. When the site was last visited in the 1980s, the foundations of a rectangular building were visible. It was orientated east-west and measured 6.3m from east to west and 4.2m from north to south. A possible entrance was located on the south side.[13] No trace of this building survives at ground level. The landowner pointed out the site and confirmed that it is locally believed to be a church site. There is no known documentary evidence relating to a church in this location.

The only other known archaeological site in the townland is a circular cropmark, visible on aerial photographs. It is located approximately 100m to the south-south-west of the ringwork castle and measures roughly 25m in diameter.[14]

The entrance at the west-north-west of the site is aligned with the modern road; it seems possible that this road is medieval in origin. It may originally have continued towards the medieval settlement at Rathcore as it is aligned with a track shown on the Ordnance Survey maps, which ran along the boundary of the townland of Jordanstown.

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[11] James Morrin (ed.), *Calendar of Patent and Close Rolls of Chancery in Ireland of the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth*, (2 vols, Dublin, 1861), i, 375.
[12] R. C. Simmington, (ed.), *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-1656. Volume 5: County of Meath with returns of tithes for the Meath baronies* (Dublin, 1940), p. 182.
[13] *Inventory*, no. 1488, p. 144; RMP ME048-014.
[14] *Inventory*, no. 1173, p. 113; RMP ME048-015; C.U.C.A.P., AHM 80.

The archaeology of the landscape around Rathroane suggests that the area was densely settled and castellated in the Anglo-Norman period. Three motte castles are located with a 3km radius of Rathtroane; the motte at Cloncurry is located approximately 2k to the south, the probable motte at Jordanstown (close to the manorial centre of Rathcore) is 3km to the west and the motte at Agher is 3km to the north-east.

Discussion

On morphological grounds, this site is acceptable as a ringwork castle. The scale and arrangement of the defences seems unusual for a ringwork castle; the site is enclosed by an inner fosse and bank and an outer fosse and bank. Both the morphology of the site and the place name suggest that the site originated in the pre-Norman period. The quantity of loose stone in the banks and fosses suggests that the ringwork castle may have had some stone features. The siting of the ringwork castle, on a high ridge commanding exceptional views, is very good. The documentary evidence shows that there was a castle at Rathtroane in the later medieval period and hints that it had existed for some time. However, there is little evidence for an associated medieval settlement at Rathtroane. While there is a 'church' site close to the ringwork, very little of the structure survives and there is no known documentary evidence relating to it. The historical geography of the area also suggests that Rathtroane was not a settlement of major importance; the townland of Rathtroane is located in a peripheral position within the large parish of Rathcore. On the whole, the morphology and siting of the earthwork at Rathtroane, combined with the documentary evidence for a castle in this location, justifies the classification of this site as a definite ringwork castle, despite the lack of evidence for associated settlement. It seems probable that the ringwork castle was adapted from a pre-existing early medieval ringfort.

Site no:	**26**
Site name:	**Rodanstown**
Townland:	**Rodanstown**
Parish:	**Rodanstown**
Barony:	**Upper Deece**
County:	**Meath**
Co-ordinates:	**29016, 241707**
RMP no:	**ME049-019**
RMP classification:	**ringfort - rath**
Inventory no:	**869**
Inventory classification:	**trivallate ringfort**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: RINGWORK CASTLE

This site at Rodanstown is classified as a 'trivallate ringfort' in the *Archaeological Inventory* and as a 'ringfort' by the RMP. Sweetman identified this site a as a possible ringwork castle on the basis of its morphology, siting and proximity to a medieval church site.[1]

Siting

The site is located in the townland of Rodanstown in the parish of the same name. The site commands excellent views in all directions, being the highest point in the surrounding area. It is unclear whether the raised interior at the centre of the site is completely artificial or whether the site was constructed in this location to take advantage of a natural hillock. The site is located in a large field which is used as pasture for cattle. Although the site is in a relatively good state of preservation, the presence of cattle has inevitably led to a certain amount of damage to the banks and associated fosses as they have been trampled down.

Field report

The site consists of a raised circular platform fully enclosed by an inner fosse and bank. A second fosse and bank are present in places (Figure 4).

[1] Sweetman, 'Some ringwork castles in County Meath', pp 394-95.

The interior of the site is raised up to 7m in height above external ground level. It measures between 39m and 41m in diameter. The interior is quite level and there is no visible evidence for any internal structures. Several young trees have been planted at the centre of the site and are enclosed by a low fence. There is no trace of a bank around the perimeter of the platform and the interior is defined by a deep, wide fosse.

The inner fosse measures approximately 5m in depth below the interior. It measures between 4.8m and 9.5m in width at the top and approximately 4.2m at its base, making it distinctly flat-bottomed and U-shaped in profile. The inner bank measures approximately 0.7m in height above the inner fosse and between 3m and 4m in height above the outer fosse. This bank has an extremely flat top, which measures between 1.3m and 3.5m in width. The inner fosse and bank fully enclose the site. On the western side of the site, from north to south, the site is also enclosed by an additional outer fosse and bank.

The second fosse measures 4.5m in width at the top. Like the inner fosse, it is quite flat-bottomed, measuring 2.6m across at its base. The outer bank measures approximately 0.6m in height above the base of the second fosse and approximately 0.8m above external ground level. Like the inner bank, it has a very flat top, measuring 1.5m in width. While both banks may originally have been flat-topped, it seems possible that this has been accentuated as the field is used as pasture for cattle and the banks may have been trodden down.

At the north of the site, the outer fosse and bank end abruptly. It seems possible that it may originally have continued further around the site but has been levelled. At the south of the site, the outer fosse and bank terminate as the outer bank turns inwards and merges with the inner bank. At this point there is a break in the outer bank, which could be interpreted as an entrance to the site. However, there is no corresponding ramp over the causeway linking it to the platform. It seems likely that this is a post-medieval feature, creating as a result of agricultural activity. When the site was visited in April 2008, the presence of tyre marks showed that a tractor had recently been driven over parts of the site. Sweetman, writing in 2005, recorded that he had visited Rodanstown in his capacity as Chief Archaeologist,

having received reports that the site was being damaged. It was discovered that the owner was routinely driving a tractor up onto the platform with cattle feed.[2]

The probable original entrance is located at the south-east of the site. It consists of a gap in the inner bank and a ramp over the inner fosse and up onto the platform. The gap in the inner bank measures 8.3m in width while the causeway over the fosse is approximately 10m wide. The outer bank and fosse are missing on this side of the site. It is notable that this entrance is orientated directly towards the road leading to the site of the medieval church. It seems possible that the modern road network preserves some medieval routes and that that this road originally extended all the way up to the entrance.

Documentary references

Rodanstown does not seem to have been an independent manor in the Anglo-Norman period but seems to have been part of the Hussey manor of Galtrim. There documentary evidence suggests that there were holdings in the parish based around residences located in the townlands of Rodanstown, Calgath and Dolanstown. The later medieval history of this area is relatively well documented, due to the survival of numerous charters relating to Rodanstown in the *Christ Church Deeds*.

A junior branch of the Hussey family of Galtrim appear to have held the lands in Rodanstown in the later medieval period and it seems possible that the Husseys were responsible for the construction of the ringwork castle, presumably in the late twelfth or thirteenth century. The first clue that members of the Hussey family may have actually lived at Rodanstown comes from early fourteenth century legal records.

In 1306, Adam Hussey, Thomas Hussey and Henry Arnold were charged with various robberies. These men, along with 'other felons', had robbed Richard de Mora of '9 afers (small horses), a brass pot, a brass posnet, 51/2 marks of silver, rings, brooches, and divers clothes of the value of 40*s*.'. They had also robbed John le Waleys of a horse worth one

[2] Ibid.

mark, and stolen 2 afers worth 10*s.* from both Adam Gerard and Ralph Carrik. Adam, Thomas and Hugh were each fined 20 marks. The individuals who offered pledges on their behalf named as Peter de Tuyt and Henry Betagh, who pledged 5 marks each, and William de Cane and Hugh, son of Richard of Rodanstown, who each pledged 10 marks.[3] Unfortunately, the surname of Hugh and Richard of Rodanstown is not given. Rice has speculated that Hugh and Richard of Rodanstown were members of the Hussey family who were resident at Rodanstown.[4] Alternatively, Adam and Thomas may have been members of a junior Hussey branch who were resident at Rodanstown and that Hugh and Richard of Rodanstown were known to them as neighbours. In 1415, John Hussey of 'Balrodane' witnessed John Seys' grant of his lands in Rodanstown and Bryanstown to Thomas Sparke and Nicholas Nugent.[5]

The Boys family are first attested in the local area *c.*1381, when Henry Boys granted 'a messuage and cartilage' in Rodanstown to a chaplain called Nicholas Sex.[6] The Boys were still holding land in the area in the mid-fifteenth century. In 1439, 'Robert and Alice Doude granted a messuage and thirty acres of land in Bryanstown and three acres of meadow in Rodanstown to John, son of Peter Boys.[7] William Lang was appointed to deliver seisin of this property to John Boys.[8] The following year, John released this property in addition to three acres of wood in Brynestown to John, son of Thomas Seys.[9] The Boys family seem to have added to their lands over time. In 1451, John Boys leased a messuage, an orchard, a dovecote, an acre of arable land and three acres of meadow, all of which was situated in Rodanstown, from Philip and Johanna Payne, for ten years.[10]

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[3] James Mills, (ed.), *Calendar of* the *Justiciary Rolls* or proceedings in Court *of* the Justiciar *of Ireland*, 1295-1314, (3 vols, London, 1905-56), ii, p. 490.
[4] Gerard Rice, *Norman Kilcloon, 1171-1700* (Navan, 2001), pp 112-13.
[5] M. J. McEnery and Raymond Refaussé, (eds), *Christ Church Deeds* (Dublin, 2001), p. 187.
[6] Ibid., p. 171.
[7] Ibid., p. 195.
[8] Ibid., p. 195.
[9] Ibid., p. 196.
[10] Ibid., p. 198.

Henry Boy's charter of 1381, mentioned above, also contains the first reference to the Seys or Sex family. In 1415, John Seys of Rodanstown granted his lands in 'Balrodane', which were held of the lordship of Galtrim, to Thomas Sparke and Nicholas Nugent, chaplains. This property was then 'reconveyed' to the grantor the following year.[11] In 1439, John Seys was granted a messuage with a recently built dovecote at Balrodane, along with some property in Bryanstown, by James Marshall of Clone, who had received the property from Nicholas Seys, chaplain.[12] This property seems to have been included in John's grant of lands in Dublin, Crumlin, Bryanstown and Rodanstown to three chaplains called John Oweyn, John Sprot and Martin Brown in 1447.[13] Both Nicholas and John de Seys were clerics. While the sources show that John was the son of Thomas Seys of Dublin, it is unclear how he was related to Nicholas; it seems possible that John was Nicholas's nephew.

In 1472, Joneta Seys, wife of Thomas Seys and mother of John Seys, released to John Walshe, her son-in-law, property including land in Aghsly, in Rodanstown.[14] John's son, also called John Walsh, granted these lands to John Estrete in 1485,[15] and appointed John Lawles to deliver seisin.[16] Nicholas Derram of Trim, who had married John's Walsh's mother, issued a quitclaim with regard to these lands.[17]

In 1485, John Estrete acquired lands in Rodanstown from Martin Brown who, along with two other chaplains, had been granted lands in Rodanstown by John Seys in 1447.[18] Later in the same year, John Estrete granted property, including a messuage, land and meadow in Rodanstown to Master John Waryng, rector of Malahide, and Sir Thomas Laudey, chaplain.[19]

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[11] Ibid., pp. 187-8.
[12] Ibid., p. 195.
[13] Ibid., p. 197.
[14] Ibid., p. 205.
[15] Ibid., pp 215-16.
[16] Ibid., p. 215.
[17] Ibid., p. 216.
[18] Ibid., p. 216.
[19] Ibid., p. 99 and p. 216.

In 1488, property including, '...a messuage, orchard, and dovecote in Ballirodan, land called Fennokysmede and land between Athtsly and Camokesgreym, all situate in Ballirodan, lordship of Galtrym' and 'land in the field called Aghknuk in Brynestoun, near Balrodan, in the lordship of Moyclare, Co. Meath', all of which had belonged to John Seys of Rodanstown, were granted to the Priory of the Holy Trinity, Dublin.[20] Walter Devenysh was appointed by Thomas, prior of the church of the Holy Trinity, to receive seisin of these lands.[21] Rentals from the sixteenth century record the names of the tenants who held lands at Rodanstown of the Priory of the Holy Trinity.[22]

The *Civil Survey* of 1654 recorded that Rodanstown was owned by 'John Hussey of Rodanstown, Irish Papist' and consisted of 96 acres, of which 80 were arable, 2 were meadow and 14 were pasture. It was observed that there was also 'an old castle and church' at Rodanstown.[23]

The church of Rodanstown seems to have functioned as a chapel belonging to the parish church of Galtrim, along with the churches of Kilclone, Balfeighan, Gallo and Drumlargan. The chapel at Rodanstown was therefore served by a chaplain appointed by the Hussey family of Galtrim.[24] The name of only one chaplain of Rodanstown Church is recorded in the medieval sources; in a charter issued c. 1240, records that Simon, son of Gordon granted an acre of land, which stood to the west of land held by Peter, clerk of Balrodden, to the Hospital of St John the Baptist.[25]

However, it seems likely that some of the chaplains who held land around Rodanstown in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as discussed above, may have served as the chaplains of Rodanstown although this is not explicitly stated in the sources. As Rice has argued, the

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[20] Ibid., p. 220.
[21] Ibid., p. 100.
[22] Ibid., pp 273-4 and p. 287.
[23] R. C. Simmington, (ed.), *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-1656. Volume 5: County of Meath with returns of tithes for the Meath baronies* (Dublin, 1940), p. 157.
[24] Rice, *Norman Kilcloon*, p. 52.
[25] E. St J. Brooks, (ed.), Register of the Hospital of St John the Baptist without the New Gate, Dublin (Dublin, 1936), p. no. 248, Rice, Norman Kilcloon, p. 66.

prevalence of chaplains in the documents relating to lands held in Rodanstown suggests that these chaplains may have supplemented their clerical income by farming.[26]

Other sites in the local area

A ruined Church of Ireland church lies approximately 550m to the south-east of the site.[27] The present structure appears to be eighteenth century in date but it stands on the probable site of the medieval church of Rodanstown. A crypt, of possible medieval date, survives under the church.[28] The church is located in a circular graveyard, measuring approximately 40m in diameter, possibly indicating that the church site is Early Christian in origin. The entrance to the ringwork castle is located at the south-east of the site and is orientated directly towards the road which leads straight to the church, indicating that the two sites were associated with one another.

The First Edition OS map shows a rectangular enclosure to the south-south-east of the ringwork site, in the corner of a field. The depiction suggests that the site may have been enclosed by a moat, had external dimensions of approximately 50m by 40m and was planted with trees in the nineteenth century. As the site has been removed and no trace of it is visible either at ground level or on the aerial photographs, it is not possible to classify it with any degree of certainty. If the depiction on the map is accurate, the enclosed area was approximately 875m^2. While this seems small for a moated site, it is not unfeasibly so; Barry's study of moated sites in the south-east of Ireland found that 44 sites out of a total of 118 had enclosed areas measuring less than 100m^2.[29] Alternatively, this rectangular feature could represent the orchard at Rodanstown mentioned in the late medieval sources, as discussed above.

There may also have been a tower house at Rodanstown as the *Civil Survey* recorded that there was a 'castle' at Rodanstown in mid-seventeenth century. Rice has suggested that the

[26] Rice, *Norman Kilcloon*, pp 58-9.
[27] *Inventory,* no. 1492, p. 144; SMR 049:021
[28] Rice, *Norman Kilcloon*, p. 65.
[29] T. B. Barry, *The medieval moated sites of south-west Ireland* (Oxford, 1977), pp 183-228.

ringwork castle may have been occupied as a castle until the end of the medieval period and was subsequently recorded as a castle in the *Civil Survey*.[30] However, it seems unlikely a ringwork castle would have been described as a castle in a mid-seventeenth century context; and it seems more likely that the castle recorded in 1654 was of tower house type. The location of the castle mentioned is unknown but the most likely possible sites for it are the site of the enclosure depicted on the OS map or possibly the site of Rodanstown House, the eighteenth-century farmhouse, located to the north-east of the ringwork castle.

Discussion

The earthwork at Rodanstown is morphologically impressive, consisting of an interior which is raised up to 7m above external ground level, enclosed by two banks and two external fosses. The morphology of the site suggests that it may have originated as an early medieval ringfort, as discussed in Chapter Six. The siting of the earthwork, on a natural hillock commanding extensive views of the surrounding area, is also very impressive. The proximity of the earthwork to a medieval church site also suggests that the site is Anglo-Norman in date, and it is notable that the two sites are linked by the modern road suggesting that they are associated with one another. Unfortunately, although there is a wealth of documentary evidence for Anglo-Norman activity at Rodanstown, the sources contain no references to a castle. Furthermore, the manor of Rodanstown does not seem to have come into being until the later medieval period. It seems possible that the earthwork represents a ringwork castle constructed by a junior branch of the Hussey family of Galtrim. Despite the lack of documentary evidence for an Anglo-Norman castle and manor at Rodanstown, it seems reasonable to conclude that the earthwork is a ringwork castle as its morphology and siting and its proximity to a church site support this classification.

[30] Rice, *Norman Kilcloon*, p. 25.

Site no:	**27**
Site name:	**Trim Castle**
Townland:	**Manorland (1st division)**
Parish:	**Trim**
Barony:	**Lower Moyfenrath**
County:	**Meath**
Co-ordinates:	**256710, 280282**
S.M.R. no:	**ME036-048033**
S.M.R. classification:	**castle - ringwork**
Inventory no:	**1692**
Inventory classification:	**ringwork**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: RINGWORK CASTLE

Siting

Trim Castle is located on a ridge overlooking a crossing point on the River Boyne. The pre-Norman name of Trim, 'Ath Truim', reflects that the settlement was located at a fording point on the Boyne. By 1194, there was a bridge at this crossing point at Trim, although the medieval bridge which survives today is probably fourteenth century in date.[1] The documentary evidence shows that the River Boyne was navigable as far as Trim in the medieval period; in 1194, Walter de Lacy granted the burgesses of Drogheda the right to sail as far as the bridge at Trim.[2]

The documentary evidence discussed below shows that Trim was a place of some importance in the pre-Norman period, in both secular and ecclesiastical terms. It seems likely that the suitability of the site and the presence of a pre-existing settlement were the main factors that contributed to the choice of the site at Trim for the castle.

Excavations

The first excavations at Trim Castle were carried out between 1971 and 1974 under the direction of Sweetman. These excavations showed that the first fortification at Trim was a ringwork castle.[3] Part of the ringwork's enclosing fosse was uncovered in addition to two

[1] Michael Potterton, *Medieval Trim; history and archaeology* (Dublin, 2005), p. 196.
[2] Gearóid MacNiocaill, *Na burgéisi, XII-XV aois,* (2 vols, Dublin, 1964), i, 172.
[3] P. D. Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle, Co. Meath, 1971-74' in *P.R.I.A.*, lxxviii (1978), Section C, pp 227-98.

buildings, Structure H and Structure J, which are discussed below. Following Sweetman's excavation, some scholars continued to argue that the first castle at Trim was of motte type; McNeill argued that the castle was a motte, based on the descriptions of the castle contained in *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* (see below), despite the evidence to the contrary.[4]

Trim Castle was purchased by the State in 1991 and, as part of the subsequent conservation programme, more excavations were conducted by Alan Hayden between 1995 and 1998. These excavations proved conclusively that the first Anglo-Norman castle constructed at Trim was a ringwork castle and showed that were two main phases of the ringwork castle. This fits in with the documentary evidence, which shows that the castle was burnt and rebuilt in the early 1170s (see below).

Hayden's excavations exposed the remainder of the fosse, which enclosed a sub-circular area measuring between 45m and 50 m in diameter (Figures 4 and 16).[5] The entrance gap, which measured 20m in width, was located at the south of the site and consisted of an un-dug section of fosse.[6] The fosse was quite unusual in form as it seems to have been made up of short straight sections joined up to make a rough circle; its slightly irregular form may be due to the fact that, on the north-east side, it skirts around an outcrop of rock.[7] It was dug mostly into boulder clay although in some places, it cut into the bedrock. [8]

The excavated fosse measured between 1.2m and 2.5m in depth and between 6m and 10.5m in width. However, Hayden believes that the original ditch may not have been so wide. The fosse remained in use after the construction of the stone castle and was only backfilled in the later thirteenth century.[9] Hayden has argued that erosion in the intervening century may

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[4] McNeill, 'Trim Castle, Co. Meath; the first three generations', pp 308-336.
[5] Alan Hayden, 'Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8' (unpublished excavation report, 2 vols, licence no: 95E077, Archaeological Projects Ltd., 2005), p. 49.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid., i, 31.

have caused the fosse to widen considerably, and that it may originally have been only 5-6m wide.[10]

Evidence for a sophisticated palisade was uncovered on the internal side of the fosse. This palisade, which is discussed fully in Section 5.2, consisted of a double row of posts linked by slot-trenches (Figure 20). It is generally accepted that palisades of this type were intended to support a sentry-walk or fighting platform. No evidence for an internal or external enclosing bank was excavated at Trim.[11] As Hayden has stated, this '...is somewhat puzzling but might be accounted for by the type of palisading that was uncovered.' Hayden has suggested that the earth dug from the fosse may have been used to create an entrance ramp up to the site, as excavation has revealed evidence of a possible early defensive structure under the west gatehouse.[12]

Hayden's excavations uncovered three timbers structures from the first phase of the ringwork. These buildings were destroyed by fire at the end of the first ringwork phase. The only one of these buildings which could be assigned a function was a square wooden structure, represented by post-holes and slot trenches, which was excavated to the north west of the keep. This structure was covered by a thick layer of burnt oats, leading the excavator to interpret it as a granary. Radiocarbon dating on the burnt oats was used to confirm that this structure was Anglo-Norman and the calibrated results confirmed that it could be dated to between 1167 and 1216.[13] Following the fire, the ringwork castle appears to have been rebuilt with a similar plan. A stone footed building associated with the second phase was excavated. This building appears to have been destroyed when the keep was constructed.

Structure J, a rectilinear stone building excavated by Sweetman, may also belong to the second phase of the ringwork castle. Only three walls survived; Sweetman believed that the

[10] Ibid., i, 45.
[11] Ibid., i, 49.
[12] Ibid., i, 50.
[13] Ibid., i, 41.

fourth wall was missing because it had been truncated by the ditch of the ringwork. He therefore dated it to the pre-Norman phase as it appeared to pre-date the early-Norman ringwork castle. Also, because the structure was orientated east-west, and taking into consideration the fact that Trim Castle seems to have been built on Church lands, Sweetman suggested that Structure J may have been a pre-Norman church.[14] However, no datable finds were recovered from this building and Sweetman's interpretation of its chronology was based purely on its apparent relationship with the ringwork. Hayden has reinterpreted this building and believes it to be contemporary with the second phase of the ringwork.[15] He has argued that although the fosse of the ringwork appeared to truncate the building, this only seemed to be the case because the fosse had widened considerably in the thirteenth century, due to a combination of erosion and the cleaning and re-digging of the fosse. In the twelfth century, the building would have been within the ringwork enclosure. There seems to be little evidence to justify the interpretation of this structure as a church. Although the building is orientated east-west, no burials have been found in association with it. All structures within the ringwork castle seem to be orientated alike, probably in order to maximise the space available. The siting of Structure J to one side of the entrance suggests that it may have had a defensive function.[16] Alternatively, Hayden has suggested that it may be a hall, although its dimensions indicate that it would have been a rather small hall.[17]

Hayden's reassessment of the archaeological evidence also led to a re-interpretation of Structure B. Sweetman's excavation uncovered this building, situated in the entrance gap of the ringwork castle, and it was interpreted as a defensive structure contemporary with the ringwork phase[18]. However, the excavation uncovered no datable finds in association with the construction levels of the building and Sweetman's interpretation was based solely on the buildings relationship with the surrounding deposits. The structure was somewhat

[14] Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle, Co. Meath, 1971-74', p. 131.
[15] Hayden, 'Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8', i, 50.
[16] Ibid., i, 51.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Trim Castle, Co. Meath, 1971-74', p. 131.

puzzling, as it appeared to have no foundation trench, and had half a metre of un-faced wall at its base. Hayden has reinterpreted this structure and believes it to be much later in date, arguing that what were excavated were actually the footings of the wall which would originally have been in a foundation trench, and that ground level was at the height of the offsets which were visible at the top of the half metre footings.[19] If this interpretation is correct, the building's floor level would have been half a metre higher than was originally thought, meaning that it is much later in date. Hayden has suggested that it may be as late as the seventeenth century.[20]

The excavations at Trim Castle, and the associated conservation project, have led to a clearer understanding of the chronology of the stone castle. This is highly relevant to the present study because the chronology of the keep obviously informs the interpretation of the ringwork phase of the castle and its chronology. The keep at Trim consists of a central square block with a tower projecting from each of the four sides. The keep seems to have been constructed in three phases.[21] During the course of conservation work, a number of well-preserved oak timbers were discovered inside the walls of the keep. These timbers were dated using dendrochronology, facilitating the accurate dating of the three main phases of the keep's construction. Some of the timbers were part of the hoarding while others were probably scaffolding.[22] Thirteen samples were taken from timbers at different levels and, along with a sample taken earlier, they were sent to the Dendrochronology Laboratory of Queen's University, Belfast.

The samples from the timbers can be divided into three groups belonging to the three phases of the keep's construction. None of the four timbers of the first set had bark, which suggests that they may have been reused. The absence of bark makes it more difficult to accurately date the samples but they probably date to 1173 or later. These timbers may have

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[19] Hayden, 'Trim Castle, Co. Meath: excavations, 1995-8', i, 32.
[20] Ibid., i, 31.
[21] P. D. Sweetman, 'The development of Trim Castle in the light of recent research' in *Chateau Gaillard*, xviii (1998), p. 224.
[22] Ibid.

been taken from the ringwork castle that preceded the stone castle and re-used for hoarding.[23] It is important to remember that dendrochronology can only give the date that a tree was felled, not the date that a particular building was constructed. It is possible that the timbers from the ringwork castle were reused or, alternatively, they could have been put in later to replace original timbers. The three timbers that Sweetman assigns to the second phase of the keep included one with bark present. This timber was felled in 1195-6 and the presence of bark means that it is unlikely that the timber was reused. The other two probably date to around the same time.[24] Of the six timbers assigned to the third phase, five had bark present. Four of them can be securely dated to 1202-3 while the fifth was felled in 1203-4.[25] The dendrochronology results therefore indicate that the first phase of the stone keep was begun between 1173 and 1190, while the second phase of construction was carried out in 1195-6, and the building was completed in 1202-4. This fits in well with the documentary evidence discussed below.

Documentary references

The documentary sources show that Trim was the site of an ecclesiastical centre from the early medieval period. The church at Trim was reputedly founded by St PatrickTrim appears in lists of Armagh's daughter churches from the seventh century onwards.[26] Duffy has argued that Trim was also an important secular site in the pre-Norman period. A royal residence of the Ua Caindelbain kings of Loegaire was located at Trim.[27] Evidence for an unenclosed farmstead was uncovered during the course of the excavations at the castle, but there is no evidence to suggest that the pre-Norman site excavated was particularly high-status.[28] In addition to the defensive qualities of the site, the presence of both an early medieval church and a royal residence at Trim may have contributed to de Lacy's decision to construct his *caput* castle in this location. Trim is mentioned several times in the

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[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., p. 225.
[26] Seán Duffy '"The key of the Pale": A history of Trim Castle, Co. Meath' in Alan Hayden, 'Trim Castle Co. Meath, Excavations 1995-8' (unpublished excavation report, 2 vols, excavation no. 95E 077, Archaeological Projects Ltd., 1999), p. 2.
[27] Ibid., p. 4.
[28] Hayden, 'Trim Castle Co. Meath, Excavations 1995-8', i,.131.

immediate pre-Norman period. The *Annals of Inisfallen* records the burning of 'Trim, including church, people and cattle' at Trim in 1128,[29] and the *Annals of the Four Masters* states that the church was burned in 1143,[30] and again in 1155.[31]

The construction of a castle at Trim in 1172 is recorded in the twelfth century sources. *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* contains a description of the castle;

> 'Hugh de Lacy
> Fortified a house at Trim
> And threw a trench around it,
> And then enclosed it with a stockade.
> Within the house he then placed
> Brave knights of great worth;
> Then he entrusted the castle
> To the wardenship of Hugh Tyrrel.'[32]

This description seems to correspond with the evidence excavated by Sweetman and Hayden; the trench and stockade mentioned must relate to the fosse and internal palisade which enclosed the ringwork castle. It is notable that, later in the poem, when the author is describing the destruction of the castle, the motte (*mot*) is mentioned;

> 'They demolished the motte
> And razed everything to the ground
> But first they burned down
> The castle.'[33]

This may indicate that the author was unfamiliar with the morphology of the castle. Alternatively, it may suggest that the term '*mot*' or '*mota*' was sometimes used in a general sense to describe an earthwork castle and does not necessarily mean that there was a

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[29] Seán MacAirt, (ed.), *Annals of Inisfallen* (Dublin, 1988, reprint of edition published Dublin, 1944), *s.a.* 1128.
[30] Michael O'Clery *et al.*, (eds), *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters; from the earliest times to the year 1616* (8 vols, Dublin, 1990, reprint of edition published Dublin, 1856), *s.a.* 1143.
[31] Ibid., *s.a.* 1155.
[32] Evelyn Mullally, (ed.), *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland. La Geste des Engleis en Yrlande. A new edition of the chronicle formerly known as 'The Song of Dermot and the Earl'* (Dublin, 2002), Lines 3223 - 3229.
[33] Ibid., Lines 3298 - 3301.

'motte', as modern archaeologists understand the term, at sites where a '*mota*' is mentioned in the sources.

Gerald of Wales also records that the castle at Trim was destroyed and was subsequently rebuilt.[34] Analysis of the historical sources seems to suggest that the first castle was constructed in the summer of 1172, probably under the supervision of Hugh de Lacy, before being destroyed in the winter of 1172-3 and rebuilt in 1173.[35] This fits in well with the excavated evidence; Hayden's excavations showed that the first phase of the ringwork castle ended with an episode of burning, before the second phase was constructed.

It is recorded in *MacCarthaigh's Book* that the English built a castle at Trim in 1175-6.[36] It seems possible that this reference relates to the construction of the first phase of the stone castle; as discussed above, the results from dendrochronology carried out on timbers from the keep dated this phase to the period between 1173 and 1190. Hayden has argued that Hugh de Lacy probably began his castle soon after his return to Ireland in 1174 and that the date of 1175-6 may be accurate.[37] It seems probable that the first phase of building came to an end with the death of Hugh de Lacy in 1186.[38] Hugh's heir, Walter, was a minor at the time of his father's death and he became a ward of Henry II. Walter seems to have gained seisin of Meath in 1189.[39] It seems probable that Walter was responsible for the second and third phases of the keep's construction, which dendrochronology has dated to 1195-6 and 1202-4 respectively, as discussed above.

The documentary evidence suggests that Trim castle was constructed on lands belonging to the Church. A letter dating to 1362, records that Milo Sweetman, Archbishop of Armagh,

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[34] *Expugnatio Hibernica. The Conquest of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis*, edited by A. B. Scott and F. X. and Martin, (eds), (Dublin, 1978), p. 141.
[35] Duffy '"The key of the Pale": A history of Trim Castle, Co. Meath', p. 5.
[36] Séamus O'hInnse, (ed.), 'MacCarthaigh's Book' in *Miscellaneous Irish Annals (AD 1114-1437)* (Dublin, 1947), *s.a.* 1176.
[37] Hayden, 'Trim Castle Co. Meath, Excavations 1995-8', i, 49.
[38] Sweetman, 'The development of Trim Castle in the light of recent research', p. 225.
[39] Colin Veach, 'Nobility and crown: the de Lacy family in Ireland, England and Normandy, 1172-1241' (PhD, Trinity College Dublin, 2010), pp 84-97.

had petitioned the king in relation to rent that was owed to the Church for the 'castle of Trym'.[40] The document states that no rent had been paid since the castle had come into the possession of the Crown following the death of Roger de Mortimer in 1360. The fact that this rent seems to have paid rather than contested, and the existence of later references to rent owed to the Church for the site of Trim Castle, indicates that the castle had been constructed on Church lands.[41]

Other sites in the local area

The documentary sources discussed above attest that there was a church at Trim in the early medieval period. Although no traces of this early church have survived, it seems probable that it located on the same site as the present Church of Ireland cathedral of St Patrick.[42] The recent excavation of thirty-five human burials to the east of the cathedral, between the modern boundary wall and Haggard Street, has shown that the medieval enclosure may have been far larger than previously believed. Radiocarbon dating has shown that some of these skeletons are early medieval in date.[43] Further skeletons, some of which seem to be of early medieval date, have been uncovered to the west of the modern graveyard, under Loman Street.[44] These findings indicate that the early medieval ecclesiastical site may have been much larger than previously believed.[45]

The settlement which grew up around the castle developed into a major Anglo-Norman town. The settlement seems to have acquired the status of a borough relatively early; a letter written in 1188 refers to two burgages in the town.[46] In the late twelfth century, Walter de Lacy issued a charter granting the law of Breteuil to the burgesses of the town of

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[40] Brendan Smith, (ed.), *Register of Milo Sweetman, Archbishop of Armagh 1361-1380* (Dublin, 1996), pp 140-2.
[41] Duffy, '"The key of the Pale"; A history of Trim Castle, Co. Meath', p. 5.
[42] Mark Hennessy, *Irish historic towns atlas. Number 14: Trim* (Dublin, 2004), p. 1.
[43] Eoghan Kieran, 'Burials at St Patrick's Cathedral: new evidence for the early medieval ecclesiastical site at Trim' in Michael Potterton and Matthew Seaver, (eds), *Uncovering medieval Trim: archaeological excavations in and around Trim, Co. Meath* (Dublin, 2009), p.80-1.
[44] Ibid., p. 81.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Maurice Sheehy, (ed.), *Pontificia Hibernica: medieval papal chancery documents concerning Ireland, 640-1261* (2 vols, Dublin, 1962), i, 86-8; Michael Potterton, *Medieval Trim: history and archaeology* (Dublin, 2005), p. 130.

Trim.[47] However, it is unclear if there was a settlement of any size at Trim during the period when the ringwork castle was in use. It seems probable that the borough was established after construction on the stone castle was begun, which was some time between 1175 and 1186, as discussed above.

There seems to have been a deer park at Trim in the Anglo-Norman period. The earliest known documentary reference to a park is contained in a document dating to 1388.[48] However, both red deer and fallow deer bones have been excavated in thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth century contexts at Trim Castle, suggesting the presence of a deer park nearby.[49] However, it seems unlikely that the deer park was established during the few years of the ringwork castle phase.

Discussion

The excavations conducted by Sweetman and Hayden have proved beyond doubt that the first castle at Trim was of ringwork type. The archaeological evidence shows that there were two phases of the ringwork castle and that the first phase ended with an episode of burning. This fits in well with the evidence from contemporary historical sources, which records the construction of a castle at Trim in 1172, and its subsequent destruction and rebuilding in 1172-3. Unfortunately, the construction of the stone keep obliterated the traces of many of the buildings and structures associated with the ringwork castle. The evidence for the timber structures of the ringwork castle is fully discussed in Chapter Five. The programme of conservation and excavation carried out at Trim in the 1990s also led to a much clearer understanding of the chronology of the keep. Dendrochronology has shown that the keep was begun between 1175 and 1190. As argued above, it seems likely that this phase came to an end with the death of Hugh de Lacy in 1186. Therefore the ringwork

[47] Michael Potterton, *Medieval Trim: history and archaeology* (Dublin, 2005), p. 130-1.
[48] Margaret Murphy and Kieran O'Conor, 'Castles and deer parks in Anglo-Norman Ireland' in *Eolas: The journal of the American society of Irish medieval studies*, i (2006), p. 63.
[49] Murphy and O'Conor, 'Castles and deer parks in Anglo-Norman Ireland', p. 63; Hayden, 'Trim Castle Co. Meath, Excavations 1995-8', ii, 244.

castle can only have been in use for a maximum of fourteen years and, possibly, a period as short as three years.

Site no:	**28**
Site name:	**Clonmacnoise Castle**
Townland:	**Clonmacnoise**
Parish:	**Clonmacnoise**
Barony:	**Garrycastle**
County:	**Offaly**
Co-ordinates:	**200760, 230550**
RMP no:	**OF00-003001 and OF00-003002**
RMP classification:	**castle - Anglo-Norman; earthworks**
Inventory no:	**819**
Inventory classification:	**castle**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: RINGWORK CASTLE

Siting

Clonmacnoise Castle is situated on the eastern bank of the River Shannon, to the west of the medieval monastic settlement. The castle is located on a low east-west ridge and is elevated slightly above the surrounding low-lying land. It commands reasonably good views in all directions.

Clonmacnoise occupies a position of major strategic importance, at the junction of the route way known as the *Slighe Mhór* and the River Shannon, which were two of the principal communication routes of medieval Ireland. The castle overlooks a crescent-shaped inlet on its western side, which is the best natural harbour on this stretch of the River Shannon.[1] It is ideally positioned to control both traffic on the river itself and traffic on the *Slighe Mhór*, which crossed the Shannon at Clonmacnoise. The remains of a bridge of early ninth-century date have been excavated directly to the north-west of the castle. The lifespan of such bridges was relatively short and it seems likely that this bridge went out of use in the mid-ninth century.[2] However, the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* refer to a bridge over the Shannon under the year 1158, and there was probably a bridge in the vicinity of the castle in the Anglo-Norman period.

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[1] Kieran O'Conor, and Conleth Manning, 'Clonmacnoise Castle' in King, H. A., *Clonmacnoise Studies Volume Two: seminar papers 1998* (Dublin, 2003), p. 138.

[2] Tom Condit and Gabriel Cooney (eds), 'The Clonmacnoise bridge: an early medieval river crossing in County Offaly', *Archaeology Ireland*, Heritage Guide no. 11 (2000); Linda Doran, 'Medieval communication routes through Longford and Roscommon and their associated settlements' in *P.R.I.A.*, 104C (2004), p. 66.

Field report

Clonmacnoise Castle consists of stone buildings enclosed by a massive ringwork. The area enclosed by the earthworks is an irregular, elongated D-shape, which measures approximately 70m from north-west to south-east and 33m from south-west to north-east. The total enclosed area measures approximately 2800m². It is raised up to 3m above external ground level (Figure 4 and Plate 8b)

The interior is enclosed by a substantial inner bank, a fosse and a large outer bank. The inner bank measures between 1.5m and 4.5m in height above the interior and between 2m and 7m above the base of the enclosing fosse. This bank is at its highest and most substantial at the south-east of the site where it encloses the inner ward. The fosse is very wide and flat-bottomed and measures up to 12m in width.

The original entrance to the castle seems to have been located at the north-west of the site. This arrangement is comparable to that of major stone castles; in order to reach the hall-keep, it would have been necessary to enter via this entrance at the far end of the outer ward, pass through the outer ward and then the inner ward. The entrance consists of a gap in the inner bank, which measures approximately 5m in width at its base, and leads onto a 3m wide berm, which stands below the level of the inner bank and above the level of the enclosing fosse. A curvilinear section of bank and ditch extends westwards from the outer bank, just to the north of the entrance feature. O'Conor and Manning have interpreted this feature as a barbican intended to protect the entrance.[3]

The area enclosed by the earthworks was divided into two distinct areas; the inner ward and the outer ward. The inner ward consists of a complex of stone buildings and structures, grouped at the south-eastern end of the interior. These buildings have been surveyed and described in detail by O'Conor and Manning and all of the following measurements have been taken from their study.[4]

A rectangular hall-keep is located at the south-eastern end of the ringwork. It measures approximately 18m by 11m externally and is orientated north-east to south-west. Very

[3] O'Conor, and Manning, 'Clonmacnoise Castle', p. 155.
[4] Ibid., pp 142-9.

little of this building survives. The most complete part of the building is the north-western corner and the western part of the northern wall. Here, the wall stands to roof and parapet level, showing that the building originally had only two storeys.[5]

The original doorway to the hall-keep survives, at first-floor level at the western end of the north-western wall. This doorway was accessed from the inner ward via a staircase enclosed by a rectangular fore-building. The fore-building has slipped downwards and to the east, possibly as a result of undermining.[6]

The north-western wall of the hall-keep marks the south-eastern boundary of the inner ward of the castle. The other three sides of the inner ward consist of stone walls of varying thickness. The north-eastern wall measures 1.55m in width and has no surviving features. The north-western wall measures only 1.06m in thickness, suggesting that, if it did support a wall-walk, it was probably constructed partly in timber.[7] The 2m wide gap at the centre north-western wall seems to represent a later break while the gap at the western end of the wall, which measures 1.62m in width, is the original entrance. This entrance is guarded by the gate tower at the western terminal of the south-western wall. The south-western wall survives to parapet level. The wall thickness narrows from 1.55m at its southern end to 0.76m at its western end.

The hall-keep seems to have stood partly on top of the massive inner bank of the ringwork, leading some scholars to erroneously interpret the castle as a motte and bailey. However, it seems more reasonable to interpret the site as a ringwork castle, the interior of which was divided into two wards.

Documentary references

Clonmacnoise was an early medieval monastery of major importance. The first church at Clonmacnoise was reputedly founded by St Ciarán of Saighir in the sixth century. Clonmacnoise was located on the Esker Riada, one of the principle communication routes of early medieval Ireland.

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[5] Ibid., p. 142.
[6] Ibid., p. 147.
[7] Ibid., pp 148-9. .

It has been suggested that there may have been a fortification at Clonmacnoise in the pre-Norman period on the basis of two references to a place called 'Lissenabbey' contained in the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*. Under the year 1135, it is recorded that Clonmacnoise was burnt on Easter Sunday along with 'the church yard of Moreigh O'Duffie and the place called Liseanabbeye.' In 1205, '...47 houses both great and small were burnt about the pace called Lissenabby.' O'Brien and Sweetman have proposed that Lissenabby 'was an earlier earthwork fortification built to protect the wooden bridge over the Shannon at Clonmacnoise and later re-fortified by the Anglo-Normans.'[8] However, it must be noted that the annalistic references do not specifically state that Lissenabbey was a fortification and it seems possible that it was an undefended settlement.

There is no known evidence for a late twelfth century Anglo-Norman castle at Clonmacnoise. The monastic settlement seems to have been unaffected by the Anglo-Norman invasion until 1178, when the *Annals of Tigernach* record that 'Hugh de Lacy came with a great and strong battalion to plunder Clonmacnoise.' The *Annals of the Four Masters* also record this raid, adding that the Anglo-Normans '...plundered all the town, except the churches and the bishop's houses.'

The documentary sources show that Clonmacnoise Castle was constructed as a royal castle in the second decade of the thirteenth century. The construction of the castle is recorded by the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* and the *Annals of Loch Cé* under the years 1213 and 1214 respectively. The *Annals of Loch Cé* also record that, later in 1214, Cormac, son of Art O'Melaghlin, and his followers 'carried off a prey of cows from the castle of Cluain and defeated the Foreigners of the castle.' It seems unlikely that a castle of this size was constructed in a single year, as these references suggest. It is more probable that the castle was started in 1213 or 1214 and was attacked while it was still under construction.

[8] Caimin O'Brien and P. D. Sweetman, *Archaeological inventory of County Offaly* (Dublin, 1997), p. 137.

In 1215, Ralph de Derevaus and Walter Reboth, who had been given custody of the castle of Clonmacnoise by Henry de London, were ordered to yield custody of the castle to the justiciar, Geoffrey de Marisco.[9] In 1216, the king issued a writ ordering the justiciar to compensate the bishop of Clonmacnoise, '...for his land occupied in fortifying the castle of Clonmacnois, for his fruit trees cut down, his cows, horses, oxen, and household utensils taken away'.[10] This shows that the castle was constructed on lands which had formerly belonged to the monastery.

Although the construction of Clonmacnoise Castle is well-documented in comparison to that of other Irish castles, subsequent references to the castle are rather scarce. In 1221, Clonmacnoise was listed amongst the royal castles surrendered by Geoffrey de Marisco at the end of his time as justiciar.[11] In 1224, the custody of the castle of Clonmacnoise was committed to the justiciar, Richard de Tuite, who was to receive £20 a year in payment.[12] In 1233, Clonmacnoise was listed amongst the castles that Richard de Burgh was to deliver into the custody of the justiciar, Maurice fitz Gerald.[13]

It is unclear when the castle was abandoned as there are no further direct references to the castle in the documentary sources after 1233. The sparse documentary evidence suggests that royal influence over Clonmacnoise declined in the later thirteenth century. In 1288, Bishop Gilbert of Clonmacnoise resigned, having been blinded by some 'sons of perdition' and the archbishop of Armagh and the bishop of Clogher were instructed to '...make provision to him of a fit portion of the revenues of the see.'[14] Following Gilbert's resignation, the revenues of the vacant see should have been collected by the escheator, Walter de la Haye, on behalf of the crown. However, in 1289, Walter reported that 'no extent could be made of the demesnes because they lay uncultivated among the Irish'.[15] In 1290, Edward I confirmed the election of Gilbert's successor,

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[9] H. S. Sweetman, (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland,* (5 vols, London, 1875-83), i, 94
[10] Ibid., i, 107; G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans,* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20), ii, 303-5.
[11] Sweetman, (ed.), *C.D.I.*, i, 155-6; Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, iii, 25-6.
[12] Sweetman, (ed.), *C.D.I.*, i, 178-9.
[13] Ibid., i, 299.
[14] W. H. Bliss, (ed.), *Calendar of entries in the Papal registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland. Volume 1, 1198-1304* (London, 1893), i, 501; Kehnel, *Clonmacnoise: the church and lands of St Ciarán,* p. 183.
[15] 'Pipe Roll 15 Edward I. Account of the escheator', *The 37th report of the Deputy* Keeper, p. 40; Kehnel, *Clonmacnoise: the church and lands of St Ciarán,* pp 184-5

William O'Duffy,[16] and William became the last bishop of Clonmacnoise to be invested by the justiciar.[17] In 1324, the chapter of Clonmacnoise received a pardon for having elected a new bishop without royal permission.[18] O'Conor and Manning have argued that '...royal influence at Clonmacnoise and therefore government control of the castle were things of the past by 1324.'[19]

Other sites in the local area

The remains of the monastic site of Clonmacnoise are located to the east of the castle. As Bradley has shown, a thriving monastic town grew up around the early medieval monastery.[20]

The documentary sources listed above show that the monastery continued to function through the Anglo-Norman period and was the seat of a bishop. The cathedral church at Clonmacnoise remained in use during this period; the latest alterations to the structure are believed to be mid-fifteenth century in date.[21]

Clonmacnoise was strategically important in the Anglo-Norman period because the castle overlooked a bridge over the River Shannon, controlling a gate-way into the west of Ireland. The castle would also have controlled traffic on the river. There was also a natural inlet at Clonmacnoise, which would have allowed supplies for the castle to be brought in by boat.

Discussion

There has been some debate regarding the classification of Clonmacnoise Castle. It seems reasonable to classify the site as a large ringwork castle with some stone buildings. Perhaps the closest parallels for this castle are the twelfth century earth and

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[16] Sweetman, (ed.), *C.D.I.*, iii, 344.
[17] Ibid., iii, 343; Kehnel, *Clonmacnoise: the church and lands of St Ciarán,* p. 183; O'Conor and Manning, 'Clonmacnoise Castle', p. 138.
[18] *Calendar of patent rolls preserved in the Public Record Office: Edward II, 1324-7*, p. 45; Annette Kehnel, *Clonmacnoise: the church and lands of St Ciaran,* p. 184.
[19] O'Conor and Manning, 'Clonmacnoise Castle', p. 138.
[20] John Bradley, 'The monastic town of Clonmacnoise' in H. A. King, *Clonmacnoise Studies Volume One: seminar papers 1994* (Dublin, 1998), pp 42-55.
[21] Conleth Manning, Clonmacnoise Cathedral' in H. A. King, *Clonmacnoise Studies Volume One: seminar papers 1994* (Dublin, 1998), p. 84.

stone castles of Castle Rising and Castle Acre in Norfolk. Castle Rising, in particular is morphologically very similar to Clonmacnoise Castle and likewise seems to have been conceptualised as a castle of earth and stone from the beginning rather than as a timber castle that had stone buildings added to it later.

Site no:	**29**
Site name:	**Bellanalack/Knockdomny**
Townland:	**Bellanalack/Knockdomny**
Parish:	**Ballyloughloe**
Barony:	**Clonlonan**
County:	**Westmeath**
Co-ordinates:	**215759, 239798**
S.M.R. no:	**WM030-073**
S.M.R. classification:	**castle - ringwork**
Inventory no:	**N/A**
Inventory classification:	**N/A**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

Siting

The site seems to have been modelled out of a natural ridge. It commands panoramic views to the south-west, west and north. The view is blocked by the hill of Knockdomny to the south and south-east and by a lower hill to the north-east and east.

Field report

The site consists of a circular platform enclosed by four concentric banks and intervening ditches (Figure 5). The enclosed area is roughly circular in shape and has a maximum diameter of 32m. The interior is bisected by a stone wall which runs across the site from the north-west to the south-east. This wall marks the boundary between the townlands of Knockdomny and Bellanalack. At the centre of the interior, there is a distinct raised square area which measures approximately 10m east-west and 9m north-south. It seems possible that this square area, which is between 30cm and 70cm above the rest of the interior, represents the site of a building. The stone wall also cuts across this feature. The interior is defined by a small bank around its perimeter. The internal side of this wall is faced with stone in places. The bank measures 30-35cm in height above the interior and between 1.3m and 1.9m in width across its top.

From the top of this bank, there is a drop down into the innermost fosse, which lies between 1.6m and 3m below. On the eastern side of the site, the slope is quite gradual and is broken by a small ledge which seems to represent a second small enclosing bank. This feature is

more prominent on the western side of the site, where it is a small bank containing lots of stone at then centre of the innermost fosse. It measures approximately 65cm in width and 30cm in height. The inner fosse is exceptionally wide and flat-bottomed, ranging from 4.5m to 11.9m in width.

The third bank is the most substantial bank of the four. It measures between 80cm and 1m above the innermost fosse and stands approximately 2m above the external fosse. It has a flat top that measures between 2.05 and 2.1m in width. The second fosse measures between 1.5m and 3m in width and is also flat-bottomed.

The fourth and final bank measures between 50cm and 1.1m in height above the internal fosse. It is flat-topped and measures between 2.25 and 3m in width. On the western side of the site, the defences are less impressive than elsewhere because they are modelled out of the natural ridge and the outer bank measures only 15cm in height above external ground level. However, on the other sides of the site, external ground level is lower and the bank measures up to 3.5m in height above external ground level.

From the north-west clockwise to the south-east, the site is enclosed by a field boundary wall made up of large stones and boulders, which seems to be modern. The stone may have been cleared from the surrounding fields or, alternatively, it may have come from the site. The stones used in this wall seem to be rough stones rather than cut stone blocks.

The entrance to the site is located at the north-east. It consists of gaps in all four of the enclosing banks and corresponding causeways over the intervening fosses. The inner faces of the ends of the banks and the edges of the causeways appear to have been deliberately faced with large stones creating a ramped passageway up to the interior. This passageway is relatively wide, ranging from 2.5m to 3.5m in width.

Documentary references

There is no known historical evidence for an Anglo-Norman castle or settlement in this location. However, it has been suggested that a reference to a late twelfth-century Gaelic Irish fortification contained in the Gaelic annals may relate to the possible ringwork castle at Bellanalack.

The annals record that the Art O'Melaghlin, king of Meath, together with the people of Offaly and the English, won a major victory over his kinsman, Melaghlin Beg, in 1178. However, after this victory, 'Melaghlin Beg O'Melaghlin took the house of Art O'Melaghlin, who made his escape out of it; but Flann, the son of Mac Awley, chief of Calry, was killed by Melaghlin'.[1] The Mac Awley territory of Calry was located between Athlone and Moate. It has been suggested that this annal entry implies that Art's house was located near Calry and that the 'fort' at Bellanalack may be the 'house' referred to.[2] The site is known locally as King Malachy's Fort or Dun Murchada. This place name supports the identification of the site as a twelfth century O'Melaghlin stronghold as Murchada was the name of several important O'Melaghlin kings of Meath.

The documentary evidence shows that the nearby Hill of Knockdomny functioned as a parley site in the sixteenth century. In 1579, the commissioners appointed to revise the assessment of the lordship of Calry issued their award at 'the Hill of Downmayne'.[3] Twenty years later, Hugh Ó'Néill visited 'Knock Dumayne' in order to parley with Mac Awley of Calry.[4]

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[1] Michael O'Clery *et al.*, (eds), *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters; from the earliest times to the year 1616* (8 vols, Dublin, 1990, reprint of edition published Dublin, 1856), 1178.

[2] Paul Walsh, 'The Ua Maelechlainn kings of Meath' in Paul Walsh, *Irish leaders and learning through the ages. Paul Walsh: essays collected, edited and introduced by Nollaig Ó Muraile* (Dublin, 2003), pp 165-83; Liam Cox, 'The O'Maeleachlainn kings of Meath' in *Riocht na Midhe*, v, no. 2 (1972), p. 28.

[3] Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, 'Parley sites of Ó'Néill and Ó'Domhnaill in late sixteenth century Ireland', in David Edwards, (ed.), *Regions and rulers in Ireland, 1100-1650: essay for Kenneth Nicholls* (2004, Dublin), p. 209.

[4] Francis Moryson, *An itinerary containing his ten yeeres travell through the twelve dominions of Germany, Bohmerland, Sweitzerland, Netherland, Denmarke, Poland, Italy, Turky, France, England, Scotland & Ireland* (4 vols, Glasgow, 1907: reprint of work originally published in 1617), ii, p. 288; Fitzpatrick, 'Parley sites of Ó'Néill and Ó'Domhnaill in late sixteenth century Ireland', p. 209.

Other sites in the local area

There are two earthworks close to the site. The first is a small, circular earthwork, approximately 250m to the west of the possible ringwork site, on the same high ridge. This earthwork, which measures approximately 30m in diameter, is classified as a ringfort in the S.M.R.[5] It consists of a raised platform defined by a small bank around its perimeter. The second 'ringfort' is located approximately 200m to the north-east of the site.[6] It consists of an enclosure, measuring approximately 40m in diameter, defined by a single bank.

The possible ringwork site is located to the approximately 1km from the summit of the Hill of Knockdomny. This hill seems to have been the focal point of a complex archeologically landscape from prehistoric times up until the early modern period. A roundhouse site of probable Bronze Age date has been excavated in the townland of Knockdomny, approximately 1250m to the east-south-east of the possible ringwork site.[7] There are several cairns and barrows in the vicinity of the hill in addition to many ringforts.

It seems likely that the mound on the summit of Knockdomny Hill marks the sixteenth-century parley site referred to in the documentary sources.[8] Fitzpatrick has suggested that the Hill of Knockdomny may also have functioned as an inauguration site for the Mac Awley chiefs. However, there does not appear to be any documentary evidence for this and, according to local tradition, the election place of the Mac Awley was located in the vicinity of the prominent hill at Ballymurray, approximately 4km to the east of Knockdomny.[9] Although there is no evidence to suggest that the possible ringwork castle site was associated with either the medieval inauguration place of the Mac Awley or the sixteenth-century parley site, it is notable that the site is located in close proximity to these sites and it seems possible that that the site may have been occupied or reoccupied periodically into the later medieval period

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[5] WM030-072.
[6] WM030-074.
[7] Graham Hull, Penny Johnson and Laura O'Donnell, 'Excavation of a Bronze Age round-house at Knockdomny, Co. Westmeath' in *J.I.A.*, xv (2006), pp 1-14.
[8] Fitzpatrick, 'Parley sites of Ó'Néill and Ó'Domhnaill in late sixteenth century Ireland', p. 209.
[9] Ibid., p. 210.

Discussion

The lack of documentary evidence and the apparent absence of a church site in the local area also suggest that there was probably not an Anglo-Norman castle or settlement at Bellanalack. However, the scale of the site's defences suggests that this site is not an ordinary early medieval ringfort. The morphology of the site would also be unusual for an Anglo-Norman ringwork castle as, typically, ringwork castles are enclosed by two banks with an intervening fosse. The site at Bellanalack is enclosed by four banks and these banks are relatively widely spaced with flat-bottomed fosses in between them. The site is morphologically similar to the probable Gaelic ringwork castle at Crover in Co. Cavan, which may have functioned as a stronghold of the O'Reilly family in the high medieval period.[10] The suggestion that the site may have been functioned as an O'Melaghlin stronghold in the late twelfth century seems plausible and, if Bellanalack is the site referred to in the Gaelic sources, it seems reasonable to interpret it as a Gaelic version of a ringwork castle. As the annal entry implies that the site may have been in the context of military campaigns in the high medieval period, its function and chronology appear to be consistent with it being classified as a ringwork castle. However, it is important to note that the identification of the site at Bellanalack as Art O'Melaghlin's stronghold is based on the place name evidence combined with a single annal entry and must therefore be treated with some caution.

[10] Linda Shine, pers. com., April 2009.

Site no:	**30**
Site name:	**Duneel**
Townland:	**Duneel**
Parish:	**Killare**
Barony:	**Rathconrath**
Co-ordinates:	**224902, 250253**
S.M.R. no:	**WM024-010**
S.M.R. classification:	**castle - ringwork**
Inventory no:	**N/A**
Inventory classification:	**N/A**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

Siting

The site commands good views of the local area. It seems likely that the site was constructed on a natural hillock. The area around the site is waterlogged and marshy. The area may have been even wetter in the medieval period as the drainage ditches which criss-cross are probably relatively modern. It is notable that there is a large, flat-topped hill known as Ballydavid Hill approximately 500m to the north of the site, which seems a more suitable location for an earthwork castle.

Field report

The site consists of a raised platform enclosed by a ditch and external bank (Figure 5). The raised interior is circular in shape and has a maximum diameter of 46.5m. The interior is bisected by the modern field boundary which runs across the site from east to west. A bank, which probably represents an old field boundary, joins this bank at a perpendicular angle and runs off to the south. There is no evidence for a bank or lip around the perimeter of the interior. The interior slopes away gradually into the enclosing ditch. At the east and south-east, where the defences are most impressive, the ditch is wide and flat-bottomed, measuring approximately 8.2m across its base. Beyond the ditch, there is a large external bank measuring 90cm in height above the base of the ditch and 1.2m in height above external ground level. The ditch and external bank can be traced clockwise from the north-west of the site to the south-west of the site. On the western side of the site, where the

defences are least impressive, the ditch and external bank are absent and there is a gentle slope from the platform down to the exterior of the site.

The original entrance to the site seems to have been located at the south east. It consists of a ramped entrance, measuring approximately 3.5m in width. There is no evidence for a corresponding causeway across the ditch or a gap in the outer bank as a modern track and field boundary cut across the southern side of the site at this point.

Documentary references

The place name of 'Duneel' translates as 'the fort or stronghold of the lime'.[1] The site is labelled as 'Doon Castle (site of)' on the First Edition O.S. map. According to local tradition, there was a castle in this location and it seems possible that it was the predecessor of the nearby 'Duneel Castle'. However, there does not seem to be any documentary evidence for an Anglo-Norman castle or settlement at Duneel.

Other sites in the local area

The ruins of the tower house known as 'Duneel Castle' are located approximately 650m to the north-east of the site. Only one corner of this structure is still standing, making it difficult to date with any degree of certainty.

It is notable that the earthwork site is located approximately 5k to the north-west of the Hill of Uisneach, on the periphery of the complex archaeological landscape which surrounds the hill. It may be significant that the probable entrance at the south-east of the site is orientated towards the Hill of Uisneach.

Discussion

There seems to be little evidence to suggest that this earthwork site is a ringwork castle. The RMP classification of this site as a ringwork castle seems to have been based on the

[1] P. W. Joyce, *The origin and history of Irish names of places*, (Dublin, 1913, 3 vols), iii, p. 340; Paul Walsh, *The placenames of Westmeath* (Dublin, 1957), p. 352.

site's morphology and the First Edition O.S. map which shows it as the site of 'Doon Castle'. In terms of morphology, the site would be acceptable as a ringwork castle, although its defences are unimpressive. However, the poor siting of the earthwork in a water-logged area, combined with the lack of archaeological and documentary evidence for an Anglo-Norman castle or settlement in this location suggests that the site is not a ringwork castle. It seems probable that the site is early medieval in date.

Site no:	**31**
Site name:	**Baginbun**
Townland:	**Ramstown**
Parish:	**Fethard**
Barony:	**Shelburne**
County:	**Wexford**
Co-ordinates:	**280000, 103160**
S.M.R. no:	**WX050-015001 and WX050-015002**
S.M.R. classification:	**promontory fort and linear earthwork**
Inventory no:	**962**
Inventory classification:	**possible ringwork**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: RINGWORK CASTLE

Siting

The site is located on Baginbun Head, a headland in the townland of Ramstown on Hook Head in southern Wexford. Baginbun Head is extremely defensible, as it is defined by steep cliffs on all sides. There are several small sandy beaches at the foot of the cliffs, which would make suitable landing places for small boats. In places, it is possible to climb from these beaches up onto the headland above.

Field report

The site at Baginbun consists of two distinct linear earthworks, which O'Conor has labelled 'Site 1' and 'Site 2' 9Figure 19).[1] Site 1 consists of a linear earthwork running from south-west to north-east, which cuts off the whole of Baginbun Head. Site 2 consists of the promontory fortification at the north-eastern extremity of Baginbun Head (Figure 5).

Site 1

Site 1 is a linear earthwork, which extends for approximately 214m,[2] cutting off the whole of the headland, an area of approximately twelve hectares, from the mainland.[3] This earthwork seems to have originally consisted of two banks and two ditches, although, as O'Conor has stated, the earthworks have been damaged by agricultural activity over the

[1] Kieran O'Conor, 'A reinterpretation of the earthworks at Baginbun, Co. Wexford' in Kieran O'Conor and J. R. Kenyon, (eds), *The medieval castle in Ireland and Wales* (Dublin, 2003), pp 17-31.
[2] Ibid., p. 19.
[3] Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), ii, 753.

past few centuries.[4] Towards the eastern end of the earthworks, the banks are cut by a road leading to a Martello tower and a modern house. At the south-western end of the linear earthwork, a house has been constructed on the northern side of the earthwork and this house and its garden have caused some disturbance to the earthwork. A shed belonging to this house has been constructed on top of the inner bank and ditch. This shed is accessed via a gap in the outer bank. An eighteenth century limekiln has also been inserted into the inner bank at this end of the earthwork.

The inner bank (on the most southerly side of the earthwork) measures up to 2m in height above external ground level. It is flat-topped, measuring approximately 1.5m in width across the top and up to 7m at its base. The inner fosse, between the inner and the outer banks, measures up to 11.5m in width and is flat-bottomed.

The outer bank measures up to 2m in width above the outer fosse and is up to 7m in width at its base. As O'Conor has noted, the outer ditch is barely visible as it seems to have been in-filled.[5] It is best preserved at the eastern end of the earthwork, where it measures up to 7m in width and is approximately 50cm in depth.

Site 2

Site 2 consists of the promontory fortification located at the north-eastern tip of the headland. The promontory fort, which can be interpreted as a partial ringwork castle, currently encloses an area of approximately 7200m².[6] It currently measures approximately 187.5m from east to west and between 25m and 65m from north to south.[7] However, O'Conor has argued that the enclosed area may have originally been up to 1400m² larger, as the promontory at Baginbun is composed of friable shale which can erode quite rapidly,

[4] O'Conor, 'A reinterpretation of the earthworks at Baginbun, Co. Wexford', p. 19.
[5] Ibid., p. 21.
[6] Ibid., p. 22.
[7] Ibid.

and the line of the defences of Site 1 indicates that some of the interior has been lost to coastal erosion.[8]

The promontory is cut off from the headland by two banks and two fosses. The inner bank measures up to 1.5m in height above the interior of the site and up to 3m in height above the base of the fosse. At the south of the site, the inner part of the bank appears to have fallen into the sea as a result of coastal erosion. The inner fosse is cut into the rock and measures up to 13m in width.

The outer bank measures up to 4m in height above the base of the inner fosse and up to 2m in height above the outer fosse. The outer bank measures up to 12m in width at its base and approximately 2m in width across its flat top. Both the inner fosse and the outer bank turn sharply eastwards at the south of the site and terminate at the cliff-edge.[9]

Like the inner fosse, the outer fosse is cut into the rock. It currently measures approximately 6m in width and is up to 1m deep below external ground level. However, as O'Conor has pointed out, this fosse has been disturbed by a modern field boundary.[10]

The entrance to the partial ringwork is Y-shaped, consisting of a gap in the inner bank, a causeway over the inner fosse and two gaps in the outer bank. The gap in the inner bank measures 6m in width while the gaps in the outer bank measure approximately 5m in width. Although this Y-shaped entrance seems unusual, O'Conor implies that it represents the original entrance feature.[11] Gerald of Wales' account of the battle at Baginbun in 1170, which is discussed below, refers to the entrance to the castle; he states that the Anglo-Normans went out to meet the Irish but were forced to turn back towards their camp and,

[8] O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', ii, 74-5.
[9] O'Conor, 'A reinterpretation of the earthworks at Baginbun, Co. Wexford', p. 23.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

'...in their haste to enter it, they allowed the enemy, who were pursuing them from behind, inside the doors, which had not been completely hung up on their hinges.'[12]

Documentary references

The documentary sources indicate that the earthworks at Baginbun represent one of the earliest Anglo-Norman fortifications in Ireland. The first contingent of Anglo-Normans, under the command of Robert fitz Stephen, landed at Bannow Bay, to the north-east of Baginbun Head in early May 1169.[13] In 1170, as Strongbow was preparing to set out for Ireland himself, he sent over a second advance force under the leadership of Maurice le Gros. It is recorded in both the *Expugnatio Hibernica* and *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* that Maurice and his men landed at a place called 'Dundonnell'.[14]

Orpen identified the headland of Baginbun, on the Hook Peninsula, as the location of 'Dundonnell' and this identification is generally accepted.[15] The place name 'Dundonnell', which can be translated as 'the dún or stronghold of Domhnaill', suggests that there was a pre-existing promontory fort on the site although this site would almost certainly have been abandoned by the time the Anglo-Normans arrived. The place-name 'Dundonnell' seems to have gone out of use in the medieval period and neither the name Baginbun nor the townland name of Ramstown is attested before the early modern period.

The headland of Baginbun roughly fits Gerald of Wales' description of the site's location; according to Gerald, Dundonnell was located 'about four miles from Waterford and to the south of Wexford', and it was necessary for the Irish army, which was comprised of the citizens of Waterford and the men of Decies, to cross the River Suir to reach Dundonnell.[16]

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[12] *Expugnatio Hibernica. The Conquest of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis*, edited by A. B. Scott and F. X. and Martin, (eds), (Dublin, 1978), pp 56-7.
[13] *Expugnatio Hibernica,* pp 31-2; Evelyn Mullally, (ed.), *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland. La Geste des Engleis en Yrlande. A new edition of the chronicle formerly known as 'The Song of Dermot and the Earl'* (Dublin, 2002), Lines 459-62.
[14] *Expugnatio Hibernica*, pp 57-9; Mullally, (ed.), *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland*, Lines 1400-09.
[15] G.H. Orpen, 'Site of Raymond's fort, Dundonnulf, Baginbun' in *J.R.S.A.I.* xxviii (1898), p. 155-60; G. H. Orpen, 'The battle of Dundonnell (Baginbun), A.D. 1170' in *J.R.S.A.I.,* xxxi (1904), pp 354-60.
[16] *Expugnatio Hibernica*, p. 57.

While no location within a four mile radius of Waterford City can really be described as 'south of Wexford', the site at Baginbun fits the locational description better than anywhere else. Orpen has suggested that the manuscript may have been corrupted at this point. However, it should also be noted several other inaccurate statements regarding distances between locations can be found in Gerald's work.[17] As pointed out by Orpen, it is explicitly stated by the author of *The Song of Dermot* and the Earl that Dermot McMurrough gave his permission for the construction of the fortification at Baginbun. This implies that Dundonnell lay within Dermot's territory and it must therefore have been located on the Wexford side of Waterford Harbour.[18]

It is recorded in both *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* and the *Expugnatio Hibernica* that, following their landing at Dundonnell, Raymond le Gros and his men constructed a fortification, which was the scene of a major battle. Gerald of Wales consistently describes the fortification at Baginbun as a 'castrum',[19] while the anonymous author of *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland* repeatedly refers to it as a 'chastel'.[20] Modern translations of these sources seem to have deliberately shied away from translating the terms 'castrum' and 'chastel' as 'castle'; Martin's translation of the *Expugnatio Hibernica* translates the term 'castrum' as 'fortification' and 'camp' while Orpen's translation of the anonymous poem consistently translates the term 'chastel' as 'fort' and Mullally's more recent edition of the same poem translates it as 'stronghold' and 'fort'. This hesitancy to describe the site as a 'castle' seems unfounded as the medieval sources clearly show that the fortification was perceived by contemporary Anglo-Normans as a castle, albeit one of a temporary nature.

Gerald of Wales offers a brief description of the site, stating that it was 'a somewhat flimsy fortification (*castrum*) of branches and sods'.[21] The scale of the surviving earthworks suggests that the defences could hardly be considered flimsy, particularly considering that

[17] Orpen, 'Site of Raymond's fort, Dundonnulf, Baginbun', p. 156.
[18] Mullally, (ed.), *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland*, Lines 1398-9; Orpen, 'Site of Raymond's fort, Dundonnulf, Baginbun', p. 156.
[19] *Expugnatio Hibernica*, pp 56-59
[20] Mullally, (ed.), *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland*, Lines 1407, 1418, 1423, 1428, 1432 and 1455.
[21] *Expugnatio Hibernica*, pp 56-7.

the banks probably supported timber palisades. It is notable that Gerald described the defences of the contemporary partial ringwork castle at Carrick in almost identical terms.[22] As O'Conor has argued, Gerald may have deliberately exaggerated the flimsy nature of the defences at both Carrick and Baginbun in order to portray his Geraldine kinsmen in a more favourable light. Gerald's exaggeration regarding the shoddiness of the defences at Baginbun would have made the victory achieved by the Anglo-Normans, under the command of Raymond le Gros, seem even more impressive.[23]

Both the *Expugnatio Hibernica* and *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* record that there was a major battle at Baginbun in 1170, when the Anglo-Norman fortification was attacked by an army comprised of the men of Waterford City and the Déisi. According to Gerald of Wales, the Anglo-Normans were outnumbered and were forced to retreat towards the castle, allowing the Irish to follow them in. However, Raymond le Gros turned to face the enemy and 'transfixed with his sword the first to enter.'[24] Raymond succeeded in rallying his troops who then overcame the Irish army, who turned and fled.[25] It seems clear that Gerald's account of the battle was intended to portray Raymond, who was his first cousin, in the best possible light. The account of the battle contained in *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* is slightly different; the Anglo-Normans were outnumbered by the Irish but were ordered by Raymond to sally forth and attack the Irish, leading to an overwhelming victory.[26] The *Song* also relates that cattle played a major role in the victory, stating that Raymond had ordered that some cattle be brought into the fortification and that, when the Anglo-Normans charged out of the castle, the cattle also charged;

> 'The cows were frightened
> by the armed men
> and the noise they make :
> by main force and strength
> the cows charged out all abreast through the gate.
> This was the first company, I believe,
> To come out from the fort.'[27]

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[22] Ibid., pp 80- 81.
[23] O'Conor, 'A reinterpretation of the earthworks at Baginbun', p. 30.
[24] *Expugnatio Hibernica*, pp 56-7
[25] Ibid., pp 56-9.
[26] Mullally, (ed.), *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland*, Lines 1417-1473.
[27] Ibid., Lines 1448-1455.

'Baginbun' has traditionally been recognised as the site of a major Anglo-Norman victory over the Gaelic Irish. Hollinshed's *Chronicles* records an 'olde ancient rithme';

> 'At the creeke of Baginbunne
> Ireland was lost and wonne.'

O'Conor has suggested that the castle described in the sources is represented by the site at the end of the promontory (Site 1). After the battle, Raymond and his companions, including Hervey de Monte Marisco and Walter Bluet, remained at Baginbun.[28] O'Conor has argued that Raymond's men may have spent the months after the battle constructing a second linear earthwork (Site 2), which cut off the whole of the headland. This larger fortification may have been intended to function as a base for Strongbow's army when they arrived. However, as O'Conor has argued, '...political and military events in Ireland had moved faster than Strongbow had originally anticipated back in Wales and, therefore, he never had any need to utilize this base directly.'[29]

It seems likely that the castle was abandoned in the early 1170s as there do not appear to be any further references to Baginbun in the historical sources.

Other sites in the local area

There is no evidence to suggest that an Anglo-Norman settlement developed around the site at Baginbun. There is no known church site in the immediate vicinity of the site and the documentary evidence discussed above suggests that the Anglo-Norman occupation of the site was limited to the conquest period. The closest known Anglo-Norman manorial settlement is located at Fethard, approximately 2km to the north of Baginbun.

The place name of 'Dundonnell' suggests that the Anglo-Norman fortification was based on a pre-existing coastal promontory fort. The archaeological evidence also suggests this

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[28] Ibid., Lines 1494-9.
[29] O'Conor, 'A reinterpretation of the earthworks at Baginbun', pp 30-31.

although, without excavating, it is difficult to differentiate the Anglo-Norman earthworks from pre-existing defences with any degree of certainty.

Discussion

O'Conor has argued convincingly that the smaller promontory enclosure (Site 2) represents the original Anglo-Norman 'castle', described by Gerald of Wales. It was from this earthwork castle that the Anglo-Normans probably won the battle of Dundonnell, as recorded in both the *Expugnatio Hibernica* and *The Song of Dermot and the Earl*. It seems likely that the Anglo-Normans also constructed the outer linear earthwork (Site 1), which cuts off the whole headland. As O'Conor has argued, this earthwork may have been constructed in the weeks and months following the victory over the Irish and Norse, in order to provide a larger encampment for the army that Strongbow was intending to land with.[30]

The documentary evidence clearly shows that this site was occupied by Anglo-Normans in the conquest period. Therefore the chronology of the site is not at issue. In terms of function, the documentary evidence suggests that the site was used as a temporary fortification at the time of the conquest and was perceived by the Anglo-Normans as a 'castle'. There evidence suggests that the site was abandoned after a relatively short period of time. The main problem with classifying the site as a ringwork castle is its morphology. The site essentially consists of a headland cut off by a series of ramparts. While the site does not conform to the usual morphology of a full ringwork castle, it is morphologically similar to castles like Carrick in Co. Wexford (site no. 36) and Penmaen and Dinas Powys in south Wales and can be classified as a partial ringwork castle.

[30] O'Conor, 'A reinterpretation of the earthworks at Baginbun, Co. Wexford', pp 30-1.

Site no:	**32**
Site name:	**Ballygarvan**
Townland:	**Ballygarvan**
Parish:	**Owenduff**
Barony:	**Shelburne**
County:	**Wexford**
Co-ordinates:	**278272, 119312**
RMP no:	**WX040-004**
RMP classification:	**ringfort - unclassified**
Inventory no:	**260**
Inventory classification:	**ringfort**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: RINGFORT (discarded)

The site at Ballygarvan was included in Barry's list of possible ringwork castles, on the basis of information supplied by Isabel Bennett.[1]

Siting

The site is located on low-lying ground and does not command particularly good views.

Field report

The site consists of raised oval platform enclosed by a single, well-defined bank (Figure 5). The interior of the site has been planted with conifers and it is currently inaccessible. The following measurements have been taken from Moore's field report which was written following a site visit in 1988.[2]

The interior measures 28.5m in diameter from east to west and 26.5m in diameter from north to south. The interior is slightly raised above external ground level and is defined by an earthen bank. The bank measured up to 60cm in height above the interior and between 1.5m and 1.75m in height above external ground level. There is no evidence for a fosse outside the bank. The probable entrance is located at the south of the site. It consists of a gap in the bank, measuring approximately 3m in width.

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[1] T.B. Barry, *The archaeology of medieval Ireland* (London, 1987), pp 52-3.
[2] Michael Moore, 'Field report' in SMR file WX040-004.

This site's morphology seems consistent with its classification in the *Inventory* and the RMP as a univallate ringfort.

Documentary references

There is no known documentary evidence for an Anglo-Norman castle at Ballygarvan. It seems probable that, in the high medieval period, the lands of Ballygarvan were part of the estate held by Tintern Abbey. Colfer has suggested that there may have been a monastic grange at Ballygarvan.[3] This suggestion seems to be based on later documentary evidence, which shows that Ballygarvan was part of the Tintern estate by the time of the Reformation and that there was a castle at Ballygarvan in the early modern period. The *Civil Survey* records that, in the mid-seventeenth century, there was a 'decayed castle' with 240 acres at Ballygarvan.[4] This 'castle' was the property of Sir Caesar Colclough, who owned the lands which formerly comprised the Tintern Abbey estate.

Local tradition maintains that the castle at Ballygarvan was constructed by the Rossiter family of Slevoy.[5] However, documentary evidence to support this tradition seems to be lacking. According to an article published in *The People* newspaper, the castle at Ballygarvan was octagonal in shape and was taken down a in the early nineteenth century so that the stone could be reused for the construction of houses in the local area.[6]

The documentary evidence indicates that the 'castle' at Ballygarvan was probable quite late in date. It seems most likely that it was an unusually shaped tower house. As it was decayed by 1640, it may have been constructed in the fifteenth or sixteenth century. A castle structure is depicted on Valentine Gill's map of Wexford, which was published in 1811.

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[3] William Colfer, *Arrogant trespass: Anglo-Norman Wexford 1169-1400* (Enniscorthy, 2002), p. 191.
[4] R. C. Simmington, (ed.), *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-1656. Volume 9: County of Wexford* (Dublin, 1953), p. 179.
[5] 'Antiquarian' in *The People*, 26 April 1913; W.H. Jeffrey, *The castles of Co. Wexford: notes compiles from various sources* (Wexford, 1979), p. 135.
[6] 'Antiquarian' in *The People*, 26 April 1913.

Other sites in the local area

According to local tradition, the castle at Ballygarvan was located in the 'castle field',[7] which lies approximately 500m to the south of the earthwork.[8] No trace of this castle is visible at ground level. A ringfort is located approximately 1km to the south. It consists of a sub-circular area, measuring up to 28m in diameter, enclosed by a single earthen bank.[9] The earthwork at Ballygarvan is quite far away from the parish church of Owenduff, which lies approximately 2.5km to the south-east. The church at Nash, which is also within the civil parish of Owenduff, is located approximately 2km to the north-west. The modern road leads directly from the site at Ballygarvan to Nash.

Discussion

The morphology of this site suggests that it is an early medieval ringfort. The earthwork is not particularly well-sited and there is no evidence to suggest that there was a church or manorial settlement nearby. There is also no documentary evidence for an Anglo-Norman castle in this location although there seems to have been a tower house nearby in the early modern period. For these reasons, the earthwork has been discarded for the purposes of this study.

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[7] Jeffrey, *The castles of Co. Wexford: notes compiles from various sources*, p. 135.
[8] *Inventory*, no. 1572, p. 183; WX040-051.
[9] *Inventory*, no. 261, p. 31; WX040-068

Site no:	**33**
Site name:	**Ballyhoge**
Townland:	**Ballyhoge**
Parish:	**Ballyhoge**
Barony:	**Shelmalier West**
County:	**Wexford**
Co-ordinates:	**297640, 128480**
RMP no:	**WX032-014**
RMP classification:	**promontory fort**
Inventory no:	**957**
Inventory classification:	**possible ringwork**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

This inland promontory fort has been identified by Colfer as a possible ringwork castle.[1]

Siting

The site is located approximately 1km to the west of the River Slaney. It is located on a triangular inland promontory, above a small river, which is a tributary of the Slaney. The promontory is defined by steep cliffs on its northern, western and southern sides. These cliffs are up to 20m in height above the ravine below.[2]

Colfer has suggested that the location of the Knights Hospitallers' lands at Ballyhoge, with which he believes the possible ringwork was associated, would have allowed the Hospitallers to control this section of the River Slaney[3]

Field report

The site consists of a triangular area, which is defined by steep cliffs on its northern, western and southern sides, and by a poorly preserved fosse on its eastern side (Figure 5). The interior is an irregular shape; although the promontory itself is triangular, the fosse on its eastern side is semi-circular, giving the site the shape of an ice-cream cone. The interior

[1] William Colfer, *Arrogant trespass: Anglo-Norman Wexford, 1169-1400* (Enniscorthy, 2002), p. 57 and p. 62.
[2] Michael Moore, 'Field report', 14 October 1987, SMR file WX032-014.
[3] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass,* p. 203.

measures up to 50m from eats to west, and up to 38m from north to south. The interior is bisected by a field fence running from north-south.

The fosse on the eastern side of the site is very shallow, measuring no more than 50cm in depth. It seems to measure between 4m and 8m in width.

The site appears to have been landscaped at some point; a path runs around the perimeter of the interior and the First Edition OS map shows that a path or track led to the site from the direction of Brookhill House, a nineteenth-century country house, which lies approximately 300m to the north. It seems possible that the earthwork was part of the landscaped grounds associated with Brookhill House.

Documentary references

The documentary evidence shows that the manor of Ballyhoge was held by the military order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, more commonly known as the Knights Hospitaller, from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century until the Reformation.

The Hospitallers were introduced to Ireland by Strongbow, who granted them ten carucates and one burgage in Ferns and the church of St Michael in Wexford Town in *c.* 1175. William Marshal added to their possessions c.1210, granting them four more churches in Wexford Town in addition to lands in 'Baliocynan'.[4] The lands at 'Baliocynan' are unidentified although Colfer has suggested that they may perhaps be the lands at Ballyhoge.[5]

In 1212, Pope Innocent III confirmed to the Hospitallers possessions in Ireland including the church of 'Sancti Johannis de Balischauc'.[6] Although the Hospitaller preceptory of

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[4] *Calendar of ancient deeds and muniments preserved in the Pembroke Estate Office, Dublin* (Dublin, 1891), pp 11-13.

[5] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 202.

[6] P. H. Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford* (6 vols, London, 1900-11), iii, 241-50; Charles McNeill, (ed.), *Registrum de Kilmainham* (Dublin, 1932), pp 138-41; Aubrey Gwynn and R. N. Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses: Ireland, with an appendix to early sites* (London, 1970), pp 334-5.

'Balischauc' has traditionally been identified by historians as Ballyhack on Waterford Harbour,[7] Colfer has examined the primary sources and has demonstrated that Ballyhoge, which was spelled 'Ballykeoge' up until the eighteenth century, is the correct location for this preceptory.[8]

The Hospitaller manor at Ballyhoge seems to have been coterminous with the modern civil parish of Ballyhoge, which consists of the townlands of Ballyhoge, Garranstackle, Kereight, Ballymorris and Galbally. Colfer has suggested that the moated sites at Galbally[9] and Garranstackle[10] and the possible moated site at Ballymorris[11] indicate that the Hospitallers of Ballyhoge were expanding in the later thirteenth century.[12] Following the suppression of the Templars in 1307, the manor of Kilcloggan was granted to the Hospitallers, although they did not manage to take possession of it until 1326.[13] From that time on, the preceptories of Kilcloggan and Ballyhoge seems to have been administered as one preceptory under the same commendator.[14]

The documentary sources do not offer any clues regarding the form of the Hospitaller centre at Ballyhoge in the thirteenth century. However, an intriguing reference to the Hospitallers' house is contained in Archdall's *Monasticon Hibernicum*. In 1334, the prior of Kilmainham granted to friar John fitz David, '...the stone chamber which he had built near the gate of this house...,' for the rest of his life.[15] Colfer assumed that this reference related to a tower house structure, possibly that represented on the Down Survey map.[16] However, 1334 seems rather early for a tower house and bawn.

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[7] McNeill, (ed.), *Registrum de Kilmainham*, p. 153;
[8] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 202.
[9] *Inventory*, no. 1024, p. 102; WX031-022.
[10] *Inventory*, no. 1027, p. 102; WX031-017.
[11] *Inventory*, no. 1110, p. 110; WX031-021.
[12] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 206.
[13] Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford*, iv, 282; Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 205.
[14] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 205.
[15] Mervyn Archdall, Monasticon Hibernicum: or, a history of the abbies, priories and other religious houses in Ireland (3 vols, Dublin, 1786), iii, 732.
[16] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 206.

The location of the Hospitaller manor at Ballyhoge probably resulted in it being overrun by the Gaelic Irish in the later medieval period. Ballyhoge is not listed amongst the Hospitallers' possessions in 1541, possibly indicating that it had been abandoned in the later medieval period.[17]

The *Civil Survey* records that the parish of Ballykeyog consisted of the 'lands of Keiright and Galball and Garrinstacoll', and contained 1000 acres in the mid-seventeenth century. The entry does not record anything of archaeological interest.[18]

Other sites in the local area

A castle site is located approximately 1km to the north-east of the possible ringwork castle. The documentary evidence discussed above indicates that this 'castle' was in existence by the mid-sixteenth century. According to local tradition, it was the property of the local Fitzhenry family.[19] Nothing survives of this 'castle', which may have taken the form of a late medieval tower house or fortified house. This structure seems to have been built into or replaced by an eighteenth-century mansion known as Bellevue House, which was burned down during the Civil War of 1922-3.[20]

The remains of the medieval parish church of St John's are located almost 2km to the north-north-east of the possible ringwork castle, also in the townland of Ballyhoge. Very little remains of the church; the west wall stands to a height of 2m while the other walls survive only as grass-covered foundations. The church stands within a D-shaped enclosure, which seems to occupy the northern half of a possible oval enclosure.[21] A holy well, known as St John's Well, is located approximately 30m to the north of the church.[22]

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[17] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, pp 206-7.
[18] R. C. Simmington, (ed.), *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-1656. Volume 9: County of Wexford* (Dublin, 1953), pp 224-4.
[19] *Inventory*, no. 1574, pp 183-4; WX032-016.
[20] Peter Doyle, 'Memories of Bellevue' in *The Past: The organ of the Uí Cinsealaigh Historical Society*, xxii (2000), p. 106.
[21] *Inventory*, no. 1188, p. 121; WX032-009.
[22] *Inventory*, no. 1188, p. 121; WX032-009.

Discussion

Colfer has suggested that the earthwork site at Ballyhoge represents a ringwork castle associated with the Hospitaller preceptory there. In terms of siting, the promontory location of this earthwork is reminiscent of the ringwork castle at Carrick (site no. 36) and the possible ringwork at nearby Dunanore (site no. 38). However, the fosse which defines the site on its landward side is very unimpressive and the promontory seems much less defensible than the sites at Carrick and Dunanore. It is notable that the earthwork site at Ballyhoge is quite far away from both the parish church of St John's, which presumably marks the manorial centre of the Hospitallers' manor, and the site of the probable tower house. In addition, there is no known documentary evidence for a castle at Ballyhoge and the fourteenth century reference discussed above seems to imply that, by this time, the main buildings may have been stone. While it is possible that this site represents a ringwork castle associated with the Hospitaller manor of Ballyhoge, there seem to be enough question marks to justify its classification as a possible rather than a definite ringwork castle.

Site no:	**34**
Site name:	**Ballyorley Upper**
Townland:	**Ballyorley Upper**
Parish:	**Kilcormick**
Barony:	**Gorey**
County:	**Wexford**
Co-ordinates:	**307110, 145164**
RMP no:	**WX021-001**
RMP classification:	**castle - ringwork**
Inventory no:	**958**
Inventory classification:	**ringwork**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

The site is located in the townland of Ballyorley Upper in the parish of Kilcormick. The Barry included this site in his list of possible ringwork castles on the basis of information supplied by Isabel Bennett.[1] O'Conor and Colfer also interpreted this site as a ringwork castle.[2] It has been classified as a 'ringwork' by both the RMP and the *Inventory*. However, more recent debate regarding the nature of the structure in the adjacent field has cast doubt on thee classification of this site as an Anglo-Norman ringwork castle.

Siting

The site is located on relatively flat ground. In terms of location in the landscape, the site does not have any particular defensive attributes which would recommend it as an outstanding site for an earth and timber castle, although it does command reasonably good views in all directions. Large trees are planted in the interior of the site and it is quite overgrown. The site has been damaged by the roots of these trees and also by animal burrows. The field in which it is located is used as pasture for cattle

[1] T. B. Barry, *The archaeology of medieval Ireland* (London, 1987), pp 52-3.
[2] William Colfer, *Arrogant trespass: Anglo-Norman Wexford, 1169-1400* (Enniscorthy, 2002), p. 52; Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), ii, 705-6.

Field report

The site consists of a raised dished interior enclosed by an inner bank, a steep scarp and the remains of an outer fosse(Figure 5).

The interior is circular in shape and measures approximately 26m in diameter, from scarp to scarp. However, the slope up to the summit of the inner bank is very gradual giving the interior an extremely dished appearance. This means that the flat area at the centre of the interior is only about 10m in diameter. The interior is defined by a substantial inner bank around its perimeter, which currently stands 1.2m above the lowest point at the centre of the interior. The bank is flat-topped and measures approximately 1.1m in diameter. It seems likely that it has been damaged by cattle, animal burrows and tree roots, causing slippage. The bank may originally have been better defined, resulting in a larger flatter internal area which would be more suitable for constructing buildings.

The interior is raised approximately 2m above external ground level. From the summit of the inner bank, there is a steep scarp down into the fosse, approximately 3m below. The fosse is very faint but seems to be between 8 and 12m wide and less than 50cm deep below external ground level. This fosse was originally far more impressive; as O'Conor has recorded, the farmer filled in the fosse about forty years ago but remembers that it was about '8 feet deep' (2.43m) then.[3] There is no visible trace of an outer bank. The site is now known locally as 'the moat'.

Documentary references

Colfer has argued that the possible ringwork castle at Ballyorley may represent the manorial centre of a manor held of the Prendergast fee of Schyrmal.[4] However, there is no known documentary evidence for an Anglo-Norman castle or settlement at Ballyorley.

[3] O'Conor, The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', ii, 706.
[4] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 106.

The Civil Survey records that, in the mid-seventeenth century, 'Balliorlimore' consisted of 260 acres, which comprised both arable and pasture land. There was also a 'ruined mill' there.[5]

Other sites in the local area

In the field adjacent to the possible ringwork site, approximately 70m to the north-east, stands the ruins of a building.[6] The structure is orientated east-west and is located in a central position within a large enclosure. This enclosure is sub-circular in shape, measuring approximately 80m in diameter. It is defined by a scarp on its western, northern and eastern sides while at the south-west, there are traces of a fosse and at the south, a modern hedgerow cuts across it.

The site is classified as a 'church' site in both the *Inventory* and the RMP, and local tradition also maintains that this structure is a church. The east/west orientation of the building and its location within a probable Early Christian ecclesiastical enclosure would suggest that this structure is a church. The building was 'excavated' by an amateur local historian, Father Ranson, Administrator of Enniscorthy Cathedral, between 1958 and 1964. He discovered that the structure was divided into four cells which can still be clearly seen. The partition of the structure into four rooms would be an unusual arrangement for a church. An enclosure adjacent to the church on its southern side may have been used as a killeen and a souterrain was apparently uncovered close to the church about fifty years ago.[7] In the hedgerow, approximately 200m to the south of the 'church', is a stone cross which, according to local tradition, was moved from the church site.[8] As the cross is shown in its present position on the First Edition OS map, it must have been moved prior to 1840. The cross is granite and may be sixteenth or seventeenth century in date.[9]

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[5] R. C. Simmington, (ed.), *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-1656. Volume 9: County of Wexford* (Dublin, 1953), p. 26.
[6] *Inventory*, no. 1159, p. 116; WX021-022.
[7] O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', ii, p. 706.
[8] *Inventory*, no. 1383, p. 147; WX021-002.
[9] Kieran O'Conor, 'Field Report' (19 August 1987) in WX021-002.

An alternative interpretation of this site is that it represents the remains of a late medieval law school. There was a law school of the O'Doran family at Ballyorley in the Elizabethan period and it seems possible that the building, with its small rooms, may have been constructed for this purpose. Culleton has suggested that there may have been a law school at Ballyorley from the early medieval period onwards.[10] However, there does not appear to be any documentary evidence to support this theory.

Discussion

The interpretation of this adjacent building clearly has implications in terms of classifying the earthwork site. As proximity to a 'church' is generally taken as an identifying characteristic of a ringwork castle site, the fact that an associated site may not actually be ecclesiastical in function makes the classification of the ringwork castle rather dubious. If the structure was indeed used as a medieval law school, it seems possible that the earthwork site was used as a law school prior to the construction of the stone structure, or, alternatively, that it was used as a residence for those teaching and studying at the law school. If this is so, the earthwork site may be a late occupied ringfort or a rare example of a Gaelic owned ringwork castle.

The siting and morphology of the site would seem to be consistent with its classification as a ringwork castle. However, as the function of the adjacent site is unknown, it is not possible to classify the earthwork site with any degree of certainty and it has therefore been classified as a possible rather than a definite ringwork castle.

[10] Edward Culleton, *Celtic and Early Christian Wexford*, AD 400-1166 (1999, Dublin), p. 204.

Site no:	**35**
Site name:	**Boley**
Townland:	**Boley**
Parish:	**Owenduff**
Barony:	**Shelburne**
County:	**Wexford**
Co-ordinates:	**279860, 279860**
RMP no:	**WX040-020002**
RMP classification:	**moated site**
Inventory no:	**989**
Inventory classification:	**circular moated site**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: CIRCULAR MOATED SITE

The site is located in the townland of Boley in the parish of Owenduff. It is classified as a circular moated site by both the *Inventory* and the RMP. Colfer identified the site as a possible ringwork castle,[1] and it was included in Barry's list of possible ringwork castles on the basis of this.[2] Colfer appears to have subsequently revised his views on this site, discussing it as a circular moated site and monastic grange in his later work.[3]

Siting

This site is not particularly well positioned. It is situated on low-lying ground and is overlooked by higher ground to the south-east.

Field report

The site consists of a circular interior enclosed by a deep, wide fosse and an external bank (Figures 5 and 12). As the interior of the site is very overgrown, it was not possible to measure of the diameter of the enclosed area. According to the field report contained in the RMP file, the interior has a maximum diameter of 34m.[4] No trace of an inner bank

[1] William Colfer, 'Anglo-Norman settlement in medieval Shelburne, 1169-1307' (MLitt, TCD, 1986), pp 80-1.
[2] T. B. Barry, *The archaeology of medieval Ireland* (London, 1987), pp 52-3.
[3] William Colfer, William, *Arrogant trespass: Anglo-Norman Wexford, 1169-1400* (Enniscorthy, 2002), p. 102 and pp 190-1.
[4] Michael Moore, 'Field report', 15 September 1987, WX040-020(02).

survives. However, if there was such a feature originally, the deliberately clearing of the interior in the 1980s may have removed it.

The interior is defined by a wide, flat-bottomed fosse, which is U-shaped in profile. The fosse measures between 4m and 6m in width at its base and up to 9m at the top. The fosse measures up to 1.75m in depth below the interior and up to 2m in depth below the external bank although it is less deep in places. The fosse was wet when it was visited in September 2008. It seems to be fed by a small stream.

The site is enclosed by a large earthen bank. This bank is most substantial at the north-west, north and east of the site. It measures up to 2m above external ground level, and has a flat top measuring approximately 1.5m in width at the top at the north of the site. However, to the east of the site, the top of the bank is far wider, measuring up to 7.5m. At the south of the site, the bank has been flattened down to form a drove way going past the site and eastwards towards the church.

There is now a causeway over the moat at the SSW of the site. It measures approximately 4m in width. The field report states that this causeway is modern, and it seems possible that it was constructed to facilitate the clearing of the site in the 1980s.[5] However, as there is no evidence for any other entrance to the site, it is probable that this causeway marks the site of the original entrance.

The site is very overgrown and the interior is inaccessible.

Documentary references

The site at Boley was located on lands which were granted to Tintern Abbey by William Marshal the Elder *c.* 1207. According to Marshal's charter, a copy of which has been preserved by Hore, the lands granted to Tintern Abbey consisted of 'the whole land which

[5] Moore, 'Field report', WX040.020(02).

belonged to Meilyr, the Serjeant, to the west of Auanduff'.[6] Colfer tentatively identified the site at Boley as a ringwork castle constructed by Meilyr in the late twelfth century.[7] This suggestion is appealing as there are no known earthwork castles in the parish. However, it is by no means a certainty that there was an Anglo-Norman castle here; there is no documentary evidence for one although it seems likely that Meilyr constructed some sort of residence for himself.

Boley seems to have been held by Tintern Abbey from the early thirteenth century until the Reformation. It seems likely that the earthwork functioned as a monastic grange throughout this period. Unfortunately, there is no known documentary evidence relating to Boley between Marshal's grant of lands to Tintern Abbey *c.*1307 and the mid-sixteenth century when Tintern, along with all the other monasteries, was dissolved. In an inquisition dating to 1541, 'Bole' is listed amongst the lands held by Tintern Abbey, and it is stated that the property consisted of 60 acres of land, including arable land, pasture and wood. Although the property had been recently been worth 16s, it was 'waste' and was worth only 6s.[8]

The *Civil Survey* records that there was a 'ruined castle' at Boley in 1654, which was the property of Sir Caesar Coclough.[9] It seems probable that this reference refers not to the earthwork site at Boley, but to the adjacent tower house, the evidence for which is discussed below.

Other sites in the local area

The site of a tower house lies adjacent to the earthwork site on its western side, amongst a complex of farm buildings.[10] O'Donovan, writing in the mid nineteenth century, records that the castle had four storeys and stood to a height of 55 ft (17m). It had external dimensions of 26½ ft by 22 ft 4 inches (approximately 7m by 8m) and the walls were 4 ft

[6] P. H. Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford* (6 vols, London, 1900-11), ii, p. 19.
[7] Colfer, 'Anglo-Norman settlement in medieval Shelburne, 1169-1307', p. 81.
[8] N. B. White, (ed.), *Extents of the Irish monastic possessions, 1540-1541* (Dublin, 1943), p. 359.
[9] R. C. Simmington, (ed.), *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-1656. Volume 9: County of Wexford* (Dublin, 1953), p. 179.
[10] *Inventory,* no. 1512, p. 170; WX040-020(01).

(1.2m) in thickness.[11] This tower house was demolished in the early twentieth century and the stone was taken away to be reused.[12] The current landowner confirmed that nothing survives of the castle and pointed out the site it once occupied, which is now a slurry pit. The documentary evidence listed above suggests that this tower house was constructed while Boley was in the possession of Tintern Abbey or, alternatively, by the Colclough family who acquired the Tintern estate after the Dissolution. The castle was in a state of ruin by the mid-seventeenth century. Colfer has argued that the tower houses at Boley, Tellarought, Taylorstown, Ballygarvan, Nash and Rathnageeragh formed a defensive line of tower houses along the northern periphery of the Tintern lands in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[13]

The ruins of the medieval parish church of Owenduff lie approximately 830m to the east of the circular earthwork site, in the adjacent townland of Yoletown.[14] The walls of the nave survive up to their original height in places. Faint traces of a chancel can be seen attached to the western end of the nave. The church stands within a graveyard which is sub-rectangular in shape although its boundary wall is noticeably curvilinear in places. Several graves in the graveyard are marked by stone crosses which appear to be medieval in date.

Although the distance between the church and castle may seem relatively great, it was not uncommon for associated earthwork castles and churches to be this far apart. However, if the earthwork at Boley does indeed represent a ringwork castle, it is surprising that it was not constructed closer to the Owenduff River which runs past the medieval church. Also, it is notable that there is a more suitable site for an earthwork castle in the local area. This site consists of a small hill, which commands excellent views in all directions, which lies to the south-west of the parish church. The hill is far closer to the church and the river than the site at Boley and is a better site for an earthwork castle from a defensive viewpoint.

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[11] John O'Donovan, *Letters containing information relative to the antiquities of the County of Wexford during the progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1840* (2 vols, Bray, 1933), ii, 139.
[12] W. H. Jeffrey, *The castles of Co. Wexford: notes compiled from various sources* (Wexford, 1979), p. 139.
[13] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 191.
[14] *Inventory,* no. 1312, p. 138; WX040-022.

There is limited evidence to suggest that the possible ringwork castle and the church were linked by a track way or road. The First Edition OS map shows a road or track way leading westwards from the church towards Boley and terminating roughly halfway between the tow sites. This track may have linked up with the track that ran from the farm, past the possible entrance to the earthwork site and eastwards through the fields. However, it is also possible that these tracks are nothing more than post-medieval drove ways.

A holy well site, known as the Lady's Well, is shown on first edition O.S. map, approximately 100m to the north-north-east of the earthwork site. There is also a ringfort in the townland of Boley. It lies approximately 1km to the south-west of the site.[15]

Discussion

Although this site is circular in shape, like a typical ringwork castle or ringfort, the morphology and siting of the site indicate that it did not function as an earthwork castle. As O'Conor has argued, the earthwork's, '...low-lying, non-defensive siting, and wide wet fosse are more reminiscent...of a moated site rather than a ringwork or ringfort.'[16]

The documentary evidence shows that the lands of Boley were held by the monks of nearby Tintern Abbey and, as both Colfer and O'Conor have argued, it seems probable that the earthwork functioned as a monastic grange.[17] Taking the site's morphology, siting and probable historical context into consideration, it seems reasonable to classify the site as a circular moated site. However, it is possible that the site previously functioned as a residence for Meilyr the Sergeant who held the lands of Boley in the late twelfth century.

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[15] *Inventory*, no. 283, p. 33; WX040-031.
[16] Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), i, 350.
[17] Ibid., i, 351; Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 190.

Site no:	**36**
Site name:	**Carrick**
Townland:	**Newtown**
Parish:	**Carrick**
Barony:	**Shelmalier West**
County:	**Wexford**
Co-ordinates:	**301387, 123131**
RMP no:	**WX03-028002**
RMP classification:	**castle - ringwork**
Inventory no:	**961**
Inventory classification:	**ringwork**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: RINGWORK CASTLE

The site is located within the area of the Irish National Heritage Park approximately 3km to the west-north-west of Wexford Town. Although the site is located in the townland of Newtown in the parish of Carrick, it is often referred to as 'Ferrycarrig', which is the name of the townland on the opposite side of the Slaney. In this study, the site is referred to as 'Carrick' because it was known as Carrick or Carrick-on-Slaney in the medieval period. The site is also known locally as 'Shan-a-Court Castle', meaning 'the old court'.[1]

Siting

The site occupies an exceptionally good defensive site on a headland above the River Slaney. The site is defined by steep cliffs on its northern and eastern sides. On its western and southern sides, it is cut off from the rest of the headland by a fosse and internal bank. The construction of the Wexford ring-road in the 1980s dramatically altered the topography of the local area. In order to construct the new road, a cutting was made through the headland, separating the site from the land to the south-east.

The ringwork castle commands excellent views in all directions (Plate 10b). The site would have been strategically important in the medieval period because its location would have

[1] W. H. Jeffrey, *The castles of Co Wexford* (Wexford, 1979), p. 102.

allowed it to control both the ferry crossing and traffic travelling up the River Slaney from Wexford Town.

Excavations

Three seasons of excavation took place at the site in the 1980s. The first excavation was directed by Isabel Bennett in 1984 and a brief excavation report has been published.[2] Bennett's excavation consisted of a cutting, measuring 4m by 14m, across the enclosing bank and fosse at the south-west of the site. Three cuttings, each measuring $4m^2$, were also opened in the field to the south west of the site. However, these three cuttings were found to be 'almost totally sterile'.[3] Further excavations took place in the summers of 1986 and 1987 under the direction of Claire Cotter and an excavation report was submitted to the D.o.E.H.L.G. However, this excavation report is now missing.[4] Brief accounts of these excavations are contained in the *Excavations* bulletins for 1986 and 1987, and some information has also been supplied by the excavator. Cotter excavated the whole of the rock-cut fosse in the first season and opened three cuttings in the interior of the site in the second season.

The site is a partial ringwork, located on a cliff-top, high above the River Slaney. On its eastern and northern sides, the site is defined by the steep cliffs. On the landward sides, to the south and west, the site is enclosed by a bank and an external, rock-cut fosse. There is no evidence for an external bank(Figure 5).

The enclosed area is D-shaped and has a surface area of approximately $1000m^2$, measuring up to 47m north-south and 26.5m east-west.[5] It is notable that the interior is not raised significantly above external ground level. An imitation round tower, which was erected as a Crimean War memorial in 1857-8, stands in the centre of the interior.

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[2] Isabel Bennett, 'Preliminary archaeological excavations at Ferrycarrig ringwork, Newtown Td., Co. Wexford' in *J.W.H.S.*, x (1984-5), pp 25-43.
[3] Bennett, 'Preliminary archaeological excavations at Ferrycarrig ringwork', p. 33.
[4] Pers. comm., Rachel Barrett, S.M.R. Archives, D.o.E.H.L.G., 15 June 2009.
[5] Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), ii, 715-6.

The First Edition O.S. map, published in 1840, shows a rectangular building at the centre of interior (Figure 18). It seems possible that the structure depicted represented a hall or keep associated with the medieval castle. However, Cotter's excavations showed that the construction of the round tower caused major disturbance to the interior of the site and all traces of the pre-existing building seem to have been removed.[6] It has been suggested that stone from the castle buildings may have been reused for the round tower,[7] although there is no visible evidence for this. According to Hore, cut stone was taken from the castle to be used in the construction of nearby Belmont House at the turn of the nineteenth century.[8] O'Donovan, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, stated that 'the stones were carried away to build the stone part of the Bridge of Wexford'.[9]

Cotter opened two cuttings in the interior of the site. The first, Cutting A, was opened at the west of the interior. This cutting revealed that the area had been disturbed by activity associated with the construction of the round tower. The surface layer consisted of stony chippings, containing sherds of thirteenth-century pottery.[10] Underneath this layer lay a dump of occupation material, which was up to 1m thick. This layer yielded some mid-thirteenth century local ware, Ham Green ware, Saintonge ware, two silver long-cross pennies and animal, bird and fish bones. This occupation material overlay a burnt layer, which the excavator has suggested may represent a flimsy timber building. A hearth was also excavated at the eastern end of the cutting.[11]

The second cutting in the interior, Cutting C, was opened on the eastern side of the interior, where a platform of material extended from the bank into the interior. This cutting revealed the traces of a thirteenth century building, labelled Structure A by the excavator. The south

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[6] Claire Cotter, *Excavations Bulletin 1987;* http://www.excavations.ie/Pages/Details.php?Year=&County=Wexford&id=3635, accessed 27 January 2011.
[7] Bennett, 'Preliminary archaeological excavations at Ferrycarrig ringwork', p. 32.
[8] P.H. Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford*, (6 vols, London, 1900-11), v, 34, note 6.
[9] O'Donovan, *Ordnance Survey Letters, Wexford,* p. 357.
[10] Cotter, *Excavations Bulletin 1987;* http://www.excavations.ie/Pages/Details.php?Year=&County=Wexford&id=3635.
[11] Ibid.

wall and part of the west wall were uncovered on the crest of the bank. Parts of the western and northern walls were also exposed but they appeared to have been mostly robbed out. According to the excavator, the exact dimensions of the building are unknown but, based on the excavated evidence it must have measured no more than 5.6m east-west and at least 5m north-south. The dating of this structure was based on the pottery found in association with it. The presence of Ham Green ware, Minety ware and northern French monochrome ware led the excavator to suggest a late twelfth century date for the building's construction.[12]

The interior is defined by a substantial earthen bank on its landward sides. The bank was very overgrown when the site was visited in 2009. The bank measures between 1.5m and 2m in height above the interior. It is flat-topped and measures approximately 1.5m in width across its summit.

In 1984, Bennett excavated a 4m wide section of the bank at the south-west of the site. When the topsoil was removed from the bank, it was found that it supported a stone wall, measuring 1.15-1.30m in width and approximately 0.40m in height.[13] Bennett speculated that this wall probably continued all the way along the enclosing bank.[14] Cotter's excavations in 1986-7 also exposed parts of this wall, although it was noted that the wall was missing in places. However, as argued by the excavator, '...a partial curtain [wall] makes no sense and it is possible that the wall has been robbed out elsewhere.'[15] Both the chronology of this wall and the nature of its relationship with the earthen bank are unclear; the excavator believes that the wall probably represents a secondary addition.[16]

Both Bennett's and Cotter's excavations found evidence for a timber palisade on top of the earthen bank. In 1984, Bennett's excavation uncovered five possible postholes on the crest of the bank, immediately outside the excavated section of curtain wall at the south-west of

[12] Cotter, pers comm.
[13] Bennett, 'Preliminary archaeological excavations at Ferrycarrig ringwork', p. 39.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Cotter, pers comm.
[16] Ibid.

the site. These postholes ranged from 2.5cm to 18cm in width and from 1cm to 20cm in depth.[17] Subsequently, Cotter's excavations revealed possible evidence for a timber palisade at the east of the site. In Cutting C, 'random stake-holes', were excavated in the bank underneath the rectangular building referred to in the reports as Structure A. These stake-holes ranged from 8cm to 10cm in diameter and were approximately 4cm deep.[18] Both Bennett and Cotter have suggested that the excavated stake-holes may represent a timber palisade associated with the conquest-period castle.[19]

From the summit of the bank, there is a steep drop down into the external rock-cut fosse, approximately 4m below. A 4m wide section of the rock-cut fosse, located at the south-west of the site, was fully excavated during the course of Bennett's excavations. The fosse was found to be 1.9m in depth below external ground level. It was originally flat-bottomed and U-shaped in profile, measuring 1.8m width across its base and 5.2m in width at the top.[20] Finds recovered from the fosse included several small pieces of iron and a sherd of thirteenth or fourteenth century imported pottery. Bennett has argued that the general paucity of finds may indicate that the fosse was regularly cleaned out, that it was not continuously occupied for long periods of time, or that the inhabitants threw all of their refuse over the cliff into the Slaney, rather than into the fosse.[21] The remainder of the fosse was excavated during the first season of Cotter's excavations.[22]

The excavations failed to definitely identify the original entrance to the castle. There are currently two breaks in the bank, located at the south-south-west and the south-east. The bank was cut at the south-west to facilitate the modern entrance, when the Irish National Heritage Park was established. The break at the south-east, adjacent to the cliff-edge, may

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[17] Bennett, 'Preliminary archaeological excavations at Ferrycarrig ringwork', p. 40.
[18] Cotter, *Excavations Bulletin 1987;* http://www.excavations.ie/Pages/Details.php?Year=&County=Wexford&id=3635.
[19] Bennett, 'Preliminary archaeological excavations at Ferrycarrig ringwork', p. 40; Cotter, *Excavations Bulletin 1987,* http://www.excavations.ie/Pages/Details.php?Year=&County=Wexford&id=3635.
[20] Bennett, 'Preliminary archaeological excavations at Ferrycarrig ringwork', p. 35.
[21] Ibid., pp 38-9.
[22] Cotter, *Excavations Bulletin 1987;* http://www.excavations.ie/Pages/Details.php?Year=&County=Wexford&id=3635.

represent the original entrance. However, as Bennett has argued, the erection of at least three successive E.S.B. poles in this area has caused significant disturbance. Although this entrance may be original, it has probably been widened; in the 1980s, Bennett noted that the break in the bank looked very fresh.[23] Alternatively, Cotter has argued that the entrance may have been located at the south-south-west of the site, where the enclosing fosse is narrowest. Cotter's excavations revealed burnt timbering on the inner edge of the ditch at this point[24] and a possible posthole had previously been excavated by Bennett on the base of the ditch here.[25] The excavations also revealed that the floor of the ditch is rougher at this point than elsewhere. Cotter has suggested that there may originally have been a rock causeway at this point, consisting of an un-cut section of the rock-cut fosse, and that this causeway was later replaced by a timber structure, represented by the burnt timbering and the posthole.[26] However, as Cotter has also noted, the curtain wall on the enclosing bank is unbroken at this point, suggesting that the entrance may have been located elsewhere.[27]

The area enclosed by the partial ringwork is approximately 1000m², which seems quite small for a major castle. It seems probable that some of the buildings associated with the castle, which are described in the fourteenth century extent discussed below, were located outside the enclosed area, possibly in an associated bailey. During the course of Bennett's excavations, three cuttings, each measuring 4m², were opened in the field to the south-west of the castle. These cuttings proved to be 'almost totally sterile'.[28] However, it still seems possible that a bailey was located somewhere to the south, south-west or west of the castle. The area enclosed by the stone defences of the Black Castle in Wicklow Town is comparable to that of the partial ringwork Carrick in terms of size and it is notable that the Black Castle had a large bailey on its western, landward side, which is represented by clearly visible earthworks. It seems unlikely that the area immediately to the south and

[23] Bennett, 'Preliminary archaeological excavations at Ferrycarrig ringwork', p. 40.
[24] Cotter, pers. comm.
[25] Bennett, 'Preliminary archaeological excavations at Ferrycarrig ringwork', p. 35.
[26] Cotter, pers. comm.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Bennett, 'Preliminary archaeological excavations at Ferrycarrig ringwork', p. 33.

south-west of the partial ringwork at Carrick was simply an empty space and further excavation in the area could be fruitful.

Documentary references

The ringwork castle site at Carrick is the first documented castle in Ireland. Both Gerald of Wales and the anonymous author of *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* record that it was constructed soon after the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, in late 1169 or early 1170. According to Gerald of Wales, 'FitzStephen built a fortress on a steep crag, about two miles from Wexford, called Carrick in the vernacular, and improved by artificial means a place naturally well protected.'[29] *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* also records the construction of the castle at Carrick but attributes its construction to Maurice FitzGerald rather than Robert FitzStephen.[30]

In 1171 the castle at Carrick, which was under the command of Robert FitzStephen, was besieged. According to Gerald of Wales, Strongbow and his forces were at Dublin when news reached them that FitzStephen and his men were besieged at the castle of Carrick and would be unable to hold out for longer than three days.[31] Gerald subsequently relates that FitzStephen and his men were 'in the midst of their enemies, trapped in a most ill-fortified castle, which was enclosed by a flimsy wall of branches and sods.'[32] The excavated defences at Carrick, which can reasonably be assumed to be those of the siege of 1171, seem to be rather more substantial than Gerald's description suggests. Gerald's description may reflect his own Geraldine bias rather than the actual state of the castle's defences; as O'Conor has argued, 'Giraldus may well have decided to describe the fortification as weak and to claim that it was taken by deceit, because he wanted FitzStephen's military reputation to remain untarnished.'[33]

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[29] *Expugnatio Hibernica. The conquest of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis*, edited by Scott, A. B., and Martin, F. X., (eds), (Dublin, 1978), pp 52-3.
[30] Evelyn Mullally, (ed.), *The deeds of the Normans in Ireland. La Geste des Engleis en Yrlande. A new edition of the chronicle formerly known as 'The Song of Dermot and the Earl'* (Dublin, 2002), Lines 1396-8.
[31] *Expugnatio Hibernica*, pp 78-9.
[32] Ibid., pp 80-1.
[33] O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', i, 96.

Gerald states that the castle at Carrick was defended by FitzStephen, five other knights and a few archers.[34] *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* offers a possible explanation for the castle being so undermanned; FitzStephen had apparently sent thirty-six of his men to Dublin to assist Strongbow.[35] It seems credible that the site at Carrick, consisting of a partial ringwork defended on one side by high cliffs, could have been defended by relatively few men.

Gerald states that the castle was taken when the Irish resorted to treachery, having realised that they would be unable to take it by force. The bishops of Wexford and Kildare approached the castle ditch to speak with FitzStephen and succeeded in convincing him that Strongbow, Maurice FitzGerald, Raymond le Gros and all of their men had been killed. The bishops promised to convey him to safety in Wales, as a united army of Connaught and Leinster forces was fast approaching.[36] FitzStephen agreed and he and some others were taken prisoner while some of the Anglo-Normans were killed.

The Song of Dermot and the Earl offers a briefer account regarding the siege of Carrick. The site is identified only as 'a castle on the Slaney' but it corroborates the main points of Gerald's account;

> 'In a fortress (chastel) on the Slaney,
> According to the chronicle (geste) which relates it thus,
> The traitors captured Robert
> 'And imprisoned him on Beggerin Island.
> They imprisoned five knights altogether
> On Begerrin.'[37]

The Anglo-Normans seem to have recaptured the castle relatively quickly. On the arrival of Henry II in Ireland in 1171, Carrick seems to have been taken into royal control along with the town of Wexford. The documentary evidence shows that the manor of Carrick was later held as a demesne manor of the earls of Leinster. In view of this, it seems likely that

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[34] *Expugnatio Hibernica*, pp 84-5.
[35] Mullally, (ed.), *The deeds of the Normans in Ireland*, Lines 1760-69.
[36] *Expugnatio Hibernica*, pp 84-5.
[37] Mullally, (ed.), *The deeds of the Normans in Ireland*, Lines 1776-81.

Carrick was included in Henry II's grant of the town of Wexford and the castle of Wicklow to Strongbow in 1173.[38] Following the death of Strongbow in 1176, the demesne lands of Leinster, including the castle and manor of Carrick, passed into the hands of the justiciar, William fitz Adelin.

The castle and manor of Carrick continued to be held in demesne by the Marshal earls of Leinster. On the death of William Marshal the Younger in 1231, the constables of the castles of Leinster, including Carrick, were ordered to give up their keys to Walerand le Teys.[39]

The castle of Carrick is mentioned in a deforestation charter issued by Richard Marshal, earl of Leinster (1231-1234). The castle and manor of Carrick seem to have been located just inside the boundary of the Forest of Taghmon and the boundary is described as running from, '...the place where the river which flows between the castle of Karrich [and] the park flows [into] the Slaney, and by that river ascending to my mill on that river.'[40] The river mentioned must be the stream that runs past the medieval parish church of St Nicholas's and joins the Slaney to the east of the castle.[41] This stream forms the boundary between the townlands of Newtown and Park. The burgesses of Carrick are mentioned for the first time in this charter which shows that the borough was in existence by 1234; it seems likely that the borough was established in the early thirteenth century.[42]

Following the partition of Leinster in 1247, Carrick passed into the possession of the de Valence family. An extent dating to 1307 briefly describes the lands held by the late Joan de Valence including the manor of Carrick;

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[38] Ibid., Lines 2902-05; *Expugnatio Hibernica*, p. 121; Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford*, v, 32; G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans,* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20), i, 326.
[39] *Cal. pat. rolls*, 15 Henry III, p. 429; Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, iii, 59.
[40] J. T. Gilbert, (ed.), *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin, with the register of its house at Dunbrody and Annals of Ireland* (2 vols, Dublin, 1884),ii, 154; G. H. Orpen and E. St John Brooks, 'Charters of Earl Richard Marshal of the Forests of Ross and Taghmon' in *J.R.S.A.I.*, lxiv (1934), p. 56.
[41] Orpen and Brooks, 'Charters of Earl Richard Marshal of the Forests of Ross and Taghmon', p. 61.
[42] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, i, 231.

> 'In Carrik there is a castle with 2 carucates and 20 acres of appurtenant land in demesne worth 60*s*. a year, but which were formerly worth 66*s*. 8*d*. Burgage rents there come to 111*s*. 9*d*. a year, while the rent of one [free tenant] is worth 2*s*. Two watermills are worth 30*s*. The issues of pasture and underwood at *Colynat* are worth 10*s*. a year. The perquisites of the hundred court are worth 2*s*. and the ferry 10*s*. a year.'[43]

A second extent, taken following the death of Aymer de Valence, earl of Pembroke, in 1324, offers a more detailed description of the castle and manor of Carrick. This extent is particularly interesting because it may show the effects that the events of the previous decade, including the Bruce invasion and the famine of 1315-18, had on the manor and town. The castle seems to have been abandoned between 1307 and 1324;

> 'There is an empty and broken-down castle without a keeper, which extends at no value as nothing can be received from it. Within the close of the castle there is an unroofed and almost ruinous hall and chapel, which cannot be extended likewise.' [44]

It is notable that the castle had its own chapel as this may explain the relatively large distance between the castle and the parish church of St Nicholas's. The demesne lands associated with the castle included 2 carucates of arable and pasture land, a wood containing a carucate of land and a pasture called 'le Gortyn'. There was also a patch of pasture below the castle which used to be worth 40*d*. but 'no profit can be made form it due to the war and a lack of tenants'.

The extent also records that the town at Carrick had 110 burgage plots but 3 were waste due to a lack of tenants. The extent also records that there were two watermills worth 40*s*. a year. The ferry across the River Slaney, which had been worth 2 marks, was now worth nothing as 'all of the tenants have been destroyed due to the war'. The documentary evidence shows that the ferry was later restarted.

The extent also mentions the advowson of the parish church of St Nicholas's, which seems to have been held as part of the lordship of the manor of Carrick. The church was later granted to Selskar Abbey; Hore states that this grant was made in 1404 but his source is not

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[43] Paul Dryburgh and Brendan Smith, (eds), *Inquisitions and extents of medieval Ireland* (Kew, 2007), p. 85.
[44] Ibid., p. 126.

referenced.[45] It seems likely that this is accurate as the church of Carrick was listed under the possessions of Selskar Abbey at the Reformation.[46]

The extent of 1324 seems to emphasise that property had been damaged and lands and burgage plots left unoccupied due to the 'war' and 'lack of tenants'. The castle appears to have suffered serious damage and been abandoned. Also, some lands and 3 burgage plots were left vacant. However, as 107 of 110 burgage plots were apparently still occupied, the settlement seems to have survived the events of the previous decade in relatively good shape.

From the fifteenth century, the manor of Carrick seems to have been held by the Roche family. In an inquisition post mortem taken on the death of Nicholas Roche of Newbawn (Newbay townland in the parish of Carrick) in 1582, it is recorded that he held a burgage in Carrick in addition to the castle of Carrick. The *Civil Survey* records that, in 1654, the lands of 'Newtowne', 'Ballindeynis' and 'Collestowne' were held by Philip Roche.[47] The castle of Carrick, which is not mentioned, would have been part of Newtown. It is also recorded that William Synott held 'the Parke'. These lands, which represent the area of the Anglo-Norman deer park, are described as consisting of 57 acres of arable land and 3 acres of meadow.[48] Under the parish of Tikillin, located on the northern side of the Slaney, it is recorded that Walter Roche of Clonlogh held 'the ferry and parish of Carrigge'.[49] The tower house of Ferrycarrig, which was in existence and possibly still occupied in the mid-seventeenth century, is not mentioned in the *Civil Survey*.

Other sites in the local area

The ruins of the medieval parish church of St Nicholas's are located approximately 850m to the south of the castle, also in the townland of Newtown. The church is a small

[45] Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford*, v, 34-5.
[46] N. B. White, (ed.), *Extents of the Irish monastic possessions, 1540-1541* (Dublin, 1943), p. 368.
[47] R. C. Simmington, (ed.), *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-1656. Volume 9: County of Wexford* (Dublin, 1953), p. 105.
[48] Ibid., p. 107.
[49] Ibid.,, p. 112.

rectangular structure with internal measurements of 13.6m from east to west and 6m from north to south. The walls survive to a maximum height of 1.5m.[50] There is no documentary or archaeological evidence to suggest that this church is pre-Norman in origin and the dedication to St Nicholas suggests that it was founded by the Anglo-Normans. A holy-well, known as St Nicholas's Well, is shown on the First Edition O.S. map, to the south-west of the church. The documentary evidence discussed above shows that, by the early fourteenth century, there was also a chapel within the castle.

The documentary evidence outlined above shows that the medieval borough of Carrick was a sizeable settlement. The absence of any visible house platforms or burgage plots means that the exact location of this settlement is unknown. The Urban Archaeological Survey concluded that, '...the north bank of the river would appear to be the most likely site of the medieval borough,' on the grounds that Bennett's excavation had shown that the field to the south-west of the castle was almost totally sterile. However, it is important to note that Bennett's excavations were limited in their scope, consisting of only three cuttings, each measuring 4m², in the immediate vicinity of the castle. Despite the lack of archaeology to the immediate south of the castle, it is probable that the borough was located on the south side of the river, between the castle and the parish church. The townland name of 'Newtown' also supports this theory. It is difficult to reconstruct the medieval road network as much of the local topography has changed. The First Edition O.S. map shows that, in the mid-nineteenth century, a road led from the crossroads to the west of the church towards the castle, turning right about 200m short of the castle. It seems possible that this road is medieval in origin and that the settlement was strung out along this road linking the castle and the church. The aerial photographs show that a track or road may have linked this road with the church originally. The settlement of Carrick seems to have been abandoned in the later medieval period; as Colfer has argued, 'its location close to the established port and trading centre of Wexford resulted in what was to be a futile battle for economic survival'.[51]

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[50] WX037-030.
[51] Billy Colfer, *Arrogant trespass: Anglo-Norman Wexford 1169-1400* (Enniscorthy, 2002), p. 147.

There is little evidence for medieval activity on the north side of the River Slaney besides the late medieval tower house known as Ferrycarrig Castle. This tower house can be dated to the fifteenth century on architectural grounds.[52] The documentary evidence discussed above shows that the ferry crossing, which had been belonged to the manor of Carrick in the fourteenth century, was controlled by the Roche family in the late medieval period. Local tradition attributes the castle to the Roche family,[53] and the documentary evidence listed above suggests that this is probably correct. As the only known major crossing point on the River Slaney between Enniscorthy and the sea, the ferry would have played an important role in the local communication network.[54] On the north side of the river, the ferry probably landed close to the tower house whilst on the southern side, the local topography suggests that it would have docked to the east of the castle.

The townland of Park, which adjoins Newtown to the east and is bounded by the Rive Slaney on its northern side, probably represents the area of the medieval deer park mentioned in the documentary evidence listed above. As the park mentioned in Richard Marshal's deforestation charter, issued in the early 1230s, it must have been created in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. There is no known archaeological evidence for banks or ditches around the periphery of the park.

Both the extent of 1307 and the extent of 1324 record that there were two watermills at Carrick. The locations of these watermills are unknown as there is no known archaeological evidence for mill buildings or mill races. It seems possible that they were located somewhere along the stream that marks the townland boundary of Newtown. The First Edition O.S. map shows a corn mill on this stream to the south of the church.

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[52] *Inventory*, no. 1523, p. 172.
[53] Richard Roche, 'The Roches of Wexford' in *J.W.H.S.*, ii (1969), pp 39-48.
[54] John Bradley and H. A. King, 'Urban Archaeology Survey, Part XI: County Wexford' (Dublin, undated), pp 67-68.

Discussion

The site occupies an exceptionally good defensive site, in a location which would have been of major strategic importance. The site is a partial ringwork, similar to those found in southern Wales, which would have been familiar to the invading Anglo-Normans. The documentary evidence shows that the ringwork castle was constructed in the initial phase of the Anglo-Norman invasion and was occupied until the early fourteenth century. Limited archaeological excavations uncovered some evidence to support the identification of the site as the castle constructed in 1169, as recorded in the documentaery sources. This site is a definite example of a ringwork castle.

Site no:	**37**
Site name:	**Castlesow**
Townland:	**Castlesow**
Parish:	**Tikillin**
Barony:	**Shelmalier East**
County:	**Wexford**
Co-ordinates:	**302875, 128723**
RMP no:	**WX032-022**
RMP classification:	**castle - motte**
Inventory no:	**942**
Inventory classification:	**possible motte**
REVISED CLASSIFICATION:	**MOTTE (discarded)**

This earthwork site was first identified as a possible ringwork castle by Nicholls.[1] It was included in Barry's list of possible ringwork castles,[2] and was treated as a ringwork castle by Colfer in his research on medieval Wexford.[3] However, more recently, it has been argued that the morphology of the site is more similar to that of a motte than a ringwork castle.[4] The site was classified as a possible motte by the *Inventory* and is currently classified as a motte in the RMP.

Siting

The site is located on an inland promontory above a bend in the River Sow. The site commands excellent views in all directions. A second earthwork, which has also been identified as a possible ringwork castle, is located across the river in the adjoining townland of Toberfinnick (site no. 46).

Field report

The site consists of a raised, sub-circular summit area, defined by a fosse and outer bank (Figure 5). The enclosed platform measures approximately 16m from north to south and

[1] K. W. Nicholls, 'Anglo-French Ireland and after' in *Peritia*, i (1982), p. 391.
[2] T. B. Barry, *The archaeology of medieval Ireland* (London, 1987), pp 52-3.
[3] William Colfer, 'Anglo-Norman settlement in County Wexford' in Kevin Whelan and William Nolan, (eds), *Wexford: history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1987), p. 77; William Colfer, *Arrogant trespass: Anglo-Norman Wexford, 1169-1400* (Enniscorthy, 2002), pp 56-7 and p. 60.
[4] Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), ii, 479.

13m from east to west. O'Conor has suggested that the interior was originally circular and measured 16m in diameter but has been damaged by erosion on the eastern side.[5] The traces of two rectangular buildings are visible on the platform. Each of the depressions measures approximately 5.2m by 2.5m and approximately 50cm in depth. O'Conor has argued that the dry-stone walling that lines these depressions indicates that they may represent original buildings.[6]

The platform is defined by a fosse, which measures approximately 5m in width, 1.5m in depth below the level of the summit, and between 50cm and 1m in depth below the top of the external bank. This bank is flat-topped and measures up to 1.5m in height above the natural slope. The bank is absent on the eastern side where the site seems to have been damaged by the encroaching farm buildings.

From the base of the bank, the ground slopes away steeply. At the north of the site, there is a steep drop down to the River Sow, approximately 10m below. On the western and south-western sides, there is a also a steep drop, which is broken by a second fosse and counterscarp bank. This second fosse begins approximately 5m below the base of the fist bank. It measures approximately 3m in width and is up to 1m in depth below the counterscarp bank, which measures up to 1m in height above the natural slope. From the base of this bank, there is a steep 3m slope down to ground level.

On the eastern, landward side, where the bank is absent, the drop from the summit of the earthwork to external ground level is only 2.5m. O'Conor has suggested that the flattish area to the east of the earthwork may once have been a bailey, which would have measured approximately 60m east-west and 35m north/south.[7] Unfortunately, this area is now occupied by farm buildings and is quite disturbed, making it difficult to envision its original appearance.

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[5] O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', ii, 477.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid., ii, 478-9.

This earthwork castle has been described as a ringwork castle.[8] However, as O'Conor has argued, its morphology is more consistent with a motte classification.[9]

Documentary references

There are no known direct references to an Anglo-Norman castle at Castlesow. However, it has been suggested that the motte at Castlesow may represent the *caput* castle associated with the Roche fee of Fernegenal.[10]

Strongbow granted the lands of Fernegenal to Maurice de Prendergast *c.*1172, to be held by the service of ten knights.[11] The southern part of Fernegenal seems to have passed into the hands of Robert fitz Godebert, from whom the de Rupe or Roche family were descended, in the late 1170s or 1180s. This is recorded in the *Song of Dermot and the Earl*, although the author admits that he does not know how the change in ownership occurred.[12] Brooks has speculated that the Roches may have acquired these lands from William fitz Audelin who was appointed keeper of Wexford following the death of Strongbow in 1176.[13] However, Orpen believed that Maurice de Prendergast granted these lands to Robert fitz Godebert himself.[14] As Brooks has noted, the feodary of 1247 records that the Roches held lands in Fernegenal for five knights' fees,[15] which suggests that the Roches held half of the lands originally granted to Maurice de Prendergast.

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[8] Nicholls, 'Anglo-French Ireland and after', p. 391; Colfer, 'Anglo-Norman settlement in County Wexford', p. 77; Barry, *The archaeology of medieval Ireland*, pp 52-3; Colfer, *Arrogant trespass,* pp 56-7 and p. 60.
[9] O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', ii, 477.
[10] Nicholls, 'Anglo-French Ireland and after', p. 391; Colfer, 'Anglo-Norman settlement in County Wexford', p. 77; O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', ii, 479.
[11] Evelyn Mullally, (ed.), *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland. La Geste des Engleis en Yrlande. A new edition of the chronicle formerly known as 'The Song of Dermot and the Earl'* (Dublin, 2002), Lines 3072-81.
[12] Mullally, (ed.), *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland,* Lines 3082-3.
[13] Brooks, *Knights' fees in counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny,* p. 145.
[14] G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans,* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20), i, 391-2.
[15] E. St J. Brooks, *Knights' fees in counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny* (Dublin, 1950), p. 145.

The Roches continued to hold Fernegenal for the rest of the medieval period. In 1509, Gerald Fitzgerald, eighth earl of Kildare, acquired lands including Castlesow from the 'Baron of Sowy'.[16]

Other sites in the local area

There are no other known archaeological monuments in the townland of Castlesow. The possible ringwork castle of Toberfinnick (site no. 46) stands approximately 100m to the north of the motte at Castlesow, on the opposite side of the River Sow. It is unclear where the nearest medieval church to Castlesow was located. There is no evidence for a church site in the immediate vicinity of the motte castle. Although Castlesow lies within the civil parish of Tikillin, the medieval church at Tikillin is located over 5km away from the site.

Discussion

It seems probable that the earthwork castle at Castlesow represents the *caput* castle of the Roches of Fernegenal. However, while this site almost certainly represents a castle, it seems more appropriate to categorise it as a motte castle rather than ringwork castle, based on its morphology.

[16] Nicholls, 'Anglo-French Ireland and after', p. 391; O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', ii, 479.

Site no:	**38**
Site name:	**Dunanore**
Townland:	**Dunanore**
Parish:	**Clonmore**
Barony:	**Bantry**
County:	**Wexford**
Co-ordinates:	**296372, 136545**
RMP no:	**WX026-012001**
RMP classification:	**castle - ringwork**
Inventory no:	**959**
Inventory classification:	**possible ringwork**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

The site at Dunanore was included in Barry's list of possible ringwork castles, on the basis of information supplied by Isabel Bennett.[1] Colfer also classified the site as a ringwork castle site, suggesting that it may represent the *caput* castle of the De Denne manor of Kayer.[2] However, O'Conor rejected the site as a ringwork castle, arguing that it is pre-Norman in date. O'Conor cited several reasons for rejecting the site, including the apparent lack of documentary evidence for a castle site in this location, the lack of an adjacent church and the presence of circular hut sites in the interior of the site.[3] The site is currently classified as a 'ringwork' by the RMP and as a 'ringwork (possible)' in the *Inventory*.

Siting

The site is located on an inland promontory. To the west-south-west, west and north, the site is defended by high cliffs which drop steeply down to the River Boro approximately 20m below. The site is exceptional in terms of its defensibility. The views from the site are difficult to assess as it now lies within an area of coniferous forest. However, as the site is located at a high point in the landscape, it seems likely that it commanded excellent views of the surrounding area prior to the planting of the coniferous forest which surrounds it. As

[1]T. B. Barry, *The archaeology of medieval Ireland* (London, 1987), pp 52-3.
[2]; William Colfer, *Arrogant trespass: Anglo-Norman Wexford, 1169-1400* (Enniscorthy, 2002), p. 56.
[3] Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), i, 342-3.

O'Conor has observed, this promontory earthwork is similar to the partial ringwork castle at Ferrycarrig, in terms of both its siting and morphology.

Field report

The site consists of a semi-circular interior which is defined by the cliff-edge on the west-south-west, west and north of the site. On the north-east, east, south and south-west of the site, the interior is defined by an inner bank around its perimeter, a deep, wide fosse and an outer bank (Figure 5).

The interior is raised approximately 5m above external ground level. This may partly be due to the ground being naturally higher although the interior was probably levelled when the site was constructed.

An inner bank encloses the interior. It is flat-topped, measuring approximately 2m across the top, and stands approximately 45cm in height above the interior. From the top of the inner bank, there is a steep drop down into the fosse. At the south-east of the site, the fosse is between 5 and 5.5m deep, below the level of the summit of the inner bank. The fosse is notably flat-bottomed, measuring between 2.5m and 4m in width at its base and 5.2m in width from the top of the outer bank to halfway up the scarp.

Outside the fosse, there is a large outer bank. This feature is most impressive at the south-east of the site. However, this may be due to the fact that it may have been artificially flattened and/or widened when it was made into a pathway. At the south-east of the site, the bank is 6.5m wide across its summit, 1.8m in height above the fosse and 1.25m in height above external ground level.

The entrance to the site is located at the south of the site. The entrance appears to be original and consists of causeway over the fosse and a gap in the inner bank. The causeway over the fosse is well-defined and measures 1.8m in width across the top and a maximum of 1.3m in height above the fosse. The gap in the inner bank measures 1.25m in width at its

base. It is not clear if there was a corresponding gap in the outer bank with a ramp leading up to it as the outer bank appears to be somewhat disturbed here due to the footpath. The inner faces of the gap in the inner bank seem to have been faced with small stones.

O'Conor, in the field report contained in the SMR file, records that there were three rectangular depressions and two circular hut sites in the interior of the site. Feature 1, as recorded by O'Conor, is located to the west of the entrance, just inside the inner bank, on the western side of the site. O'Conor records that the structure had dimensions of approximately 7m east/west and 5.5m north/south. On visiting the site, the present author found that the structure was stone, or at least stone-footed, and the south-western and south-eastern inner corners of the structure were located. The building clearly had an internal width of 6.8m east-west and it seems to have been rather longer than previously believed. The long walls of the structure were traceable and were found to measure approximately 15m in length.

Feature 5 is another rectangular sunken feature, located close to the cliff-edge at the north-west of the site. The building seems to have been stone or stone-footed and measures 5.1m by 3.8 m internally.

The eastern side of the interior is now very overgrown, making it difficult to see Features 2, 3 and 4, as identified by O'Conor. According to O'Conor's notes, Feature 2 and 3 are located in the south and south-east of the site. They are both circular enclosures, measuring 3.5m and 4.8m in diameter respectively.[4] These circular features proved difficult to find when the site was visited by the present author in 2008, as the site is now quite overgrown in places.

Documentary references

The name 'Dunanore', which can be translated as 'the fort of the brink' or 'the fort of gold', may provide some clues regarding the site's origins. O'Conor has argued that the

[4] Kieran O'Conor, 'Field Report', 23 October 1987, WX026-012001.

place name may indicate that the site is pre-Norman in origin.[5] Colfer, on the other hand, has suggested that site was used as an Anglo-Norman ringwork castle but was based on an earlier promontory fort and that, '...this may also explain the name of the barony: Kayer is synonymous with the Irish word *cathair*, a stone fort.'[6]

There is no known documentary evidence for a castle at Dunanore. However, as Colfer has argued, the site at Dunanore may represent the *caput* castle of the large Anglo-Norman manor of Kayer.[7] The medieval barony of Kayer or Keir was located on the west side of the River Slaney, to the south of Enniscorthy. The manor of Kayer, as held by the de Denne family, seems to have consisted of the parishes of Clonmore, Killurin, Whitechurchglynn, Ardcandrisk and Kilbrideglynn. These lands were divided into two parts, with the Hospitaller lands at Ballyhoge in between. There were several small manors within this area which were not held of or by the de Denne family, including the fitz Henry manor of Mackmine, held of the de Valence lords of Wexford by the service of one knight.[8] In addition to the lands in Kayer, which were held of the Bigod lords of Carlow, the de Dennes seem to have held Edermine on the eastern side of the River Slaney of the Valences as well as 11/2 knights fees in 'Ogenti', the area around Thomastown in Kilkenny.[9]

At the time of the partition of Leinster in 1247, Kayer was held by William de Denne by the service of three knights. It seems possible that Kayer was granted to the de Denne family as early as the late twelfth century or early thirteenth century. Several members of the de Denne family appear to have been active in Wexford at this time. For example, 'Renaldo de Dene' witnesses a charter dating to 1203, in which Hugh le Rous, Bishop of Ossory, confirmed William Marshal's the Elder's grant of confirmation to the Priory of Kells in Ossory.[10] Ralph de Denne is listed as a witness to William Marshal's charter to

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[5] O'Conor, 'The earthwork castle of medieval Leinster', i, 344.
[6] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 49.
[7] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 48.
[8] E. St J. Brooks, *Knights' fees in counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny* (Dublin, 1950), pp 44-5.
[9] Ibid., pp 45-6.
[10] N. B. White, (ed.), *Irish monastic and episcopal deeds, AD 1200-1600* (Dublin, 1936), pp 301-2; Brooks, *Knights' Fees*, pp 45-6.

Dunbrody Abbey, dating to *c.* 1207,[11] although this charter is probably a forgery.[12] A Reginald de Denne was Archdeacon of Ferns from 1223 until his death in 1230.[13] It seems likely that these early De Dennes were members of the same family and that they already held Kayer at this stage, although conclusive documentary evidence is lacking.

William de Denne, who held Kayer at the time of the partition of Leinster, appears to have held Kayer by *c.*1230. In Gerald De Prendergast's charter of *c.*1230, recording his grant of the House of St. John near Enniscorthy to St. Thomas's Abbey, Dublin, it is stated that the lands granted extended along the banks of the River Slaney as far as the boundary of William de Denne's lands.[14] As Brooks argued, it is likely that the unnamed Baron of Kayer referred to in Richard Marshal's forest charter, granted between 1231 and 1234, was William de Denne.[15] William went on to become seneschal of Ossory *c.*1255 and *c.*1260 and sheriff of Wexford between 1241 and 1245, during which time he witnessed three charters given to Dunbrody by Walter Marshal. He became Justiciar of Ireland in 1260-1, was present at the Battle of Callan in 1261 and died, possibly as a result of wounds acquired in the battle, later that year.[16]

The de Denne family continued to hold the barony of Kayer until the line died out with the death of Reginald de Denne in 1302. An extent taken after Reginald's death found that he had held the barony of Keir' of Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, by the service of three knights.[17]

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[11] J. T. Gilbert, (ed.), *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin, with the register of its house at Dunbrody and Annals of Ireland* (2 vols, Dublin, 1884), ii, pp 158-9.
[12] Brooks, *Knights' Fees*, p. 46; G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans,* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20), iv, 309.
[13] C. M. Butler and J. H. Bernard, (eds), 'The Charters of the Abbey of Duiske' in *P.R.I.A.,* xxxv (1918), Section C, p. 65; P. H. Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford* (6 vols, London, 1900-11), vi, p. 347.
[14] J. T. Gilbert, (ed.), *Register of the Abbey of St Thomas, Dublin* (London, 1889), p. 186.
[15] G. H. Orpen and E. St J. Brooks, 'Charters of Earl Richard Marshal of the Forests of Ross and Taghmon' in *J.R.S.A.I.*, lxiv (1934), pp 54-63; Brooks, *Knights' Fees*, p. 46.
[16] Ibid., p.49.
[17] Ibid., pp 50-1.

Other sites in the local area

The only other recorded site in the townland of Dunanore is a moated site, which lies approximately 650m to the south-west of the site.[18]

A medieval church and graveyard site is located 770m to the east-south-east of the possible ringwork site, in the adjoining townland of Kilcarbry. A 'site of church' and 'burial ground' is depicted on the First Edition OS map. However, there is now no visible trace at ground level although a post-medieval granite doorway, believed to have come from the site, has been built into the mill in the adjoining townland of Sweetfarm. The *Inventory* also records that there is a holy well site immediately adjacent to the church site.[19]

Little is known regarding the origins of the church site at Kilcarbry. The 'kill' prefix in the place name may indicate that the church site was a pre-Norman foundation. It was presumably for this reason that Culleton included Kilcarbry in his list of early medieval church sites in Wexford.[20]

The townland of Wilton, which is located approximately 2.5km from the possible ringwork castle at Dunanore, seems the most likely location for a *caput* castle associated with barony of Kayer.[21] The *Civil Survey* records that there was a 'castle', a watermill and a rabbit burrow at Wilton in the seventeenth century and this settlement was named as 'Kayer'.[22] The 'castle' described in the *Civil Survey* no longer survives. It was probably on the site which was later occupied by a late seventeenth century house, which was then replaced by a mid-nineteenth century Gothic mansion.[23] The exact locations of the recorded mill,[24] and

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[18] *Inventory*, no. 1020, p. 102; WX026-020.
[19] *Inventory*, no. 1371, p. 145; WX026-013.
[20] Edward Culleton, *Celtic and Early Christian Wexford*, AD 400-1166 (Dublin, 1999).
[21] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, iii, 85.
[22] R. C. Simmington, (ed.), *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-1656. Volume 9: County of Wexford* (Dublin, 1953), p. 221.
[23] *Inventory*, no. 1615, p. 187; WX025-026.
[24] WX025-042.

rabbit warren are unknown. There is also an enclosure, presumably an early medieval ringfort, at Wilton, which is located approximately 450m to the west of Wilton House.

Discussion

In the absence of any known earthwork castle site at Wilton, Colfer's suggestion that the site at Dunanore represents the *caput* castle of Kayer must be considered. Dunanore has therefore been classified as a 'possible ringwork castle' for the purposes of this study.

However, nearby Wilton seems a more likely location for a castle associated with the manor of Kayer. If there was an early earthwork or stone castle at Wilton, the traces of it must have been obliterated by later aristocratic residences on the site or, alternatively, it may have been removed in the course of landscaping activity around Wilton House, which is surrounded by a post-medieval demesne landscape as depicted on the First edition OS map.

Site no:	**39**
Site name:	**Enniscorthy Castle**
Townland:	**Enniscorthy**
Parish:	**St Mary's**
Barony:	**Scarawalsh**
County:	**Wexford**
Co-ordinates:	**297320, 139820**
RMP no:	**WX020-031003**
RMP classification:	**castle - Anglo-Norman**
Inventory no:	**1437**
Inventory classification:	**castle**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

Enniscorthy Castle is located at the centre of the town of Enniscorthy, in the townland and parish of the same name. It has been suggested that the surviving masonry castle may have been constructed on the site of an earlier ringwork castle.[1]

Siting

Enniscorthy Castle is located on a natural promontory overlooking a crossing-point on the River Slaney, in what would be an ideal location for a partial ringwork castle. The site is protected by natural defences, as the grounds slopes steeply away to the north, east and south sides. The easiest approach to the castle would have been from the west and, in order to construct a partial ringwork castle on the site, it would only have been necessary to erect defences on that side. The town centre of Enniscorthy is now very built-up, making it difficult to envision the topography of the medieval town.

Field report

Hore suggested that an early earth and timber castle may have been located on this site and recorded that a rock-cut fosse, cutting off the promontory on its landward side, was

[1] P. H. Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford* (6 vols, London, 1900-11), vi, 337; Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), ii, 726-8; William Colfer, *Arrogant trespass: Anglo-Norman Wexford, 1169-1400* (Enniscorthy, 2002), p. 56.

uncovered when the Athenaeum on Castle Street was being constructed in the late nineteenth century;

> 'All that was required to fortify the spot in primitive fashion was to cut a trench and throw up a rampart on the west side; and such a trench, cut in the rock, we are assured on good authority was uncovered when the foundations of the Athenaeum building on this side were being laid. Such a spot was almost an ideal situation for a "promontory Castle."'[2]

O'Conor and Colfer have both concurred with Hore, suggesting that the discovered fosse may have been associated with an early partial ringwork castle at Enniscorthy.[3] Unfortunately, the dimensions of this fosse are unknown, making it difficult to assess its significance. Also, as O'Conor has pointed out, it seems possible that the ditch is contemporary with the stone castle rather than an earth and timber predecessor, representing nothing more than an outer defensive ditch.[4]

If there was an earth and timber castle at Enniscorthy, it seems likely that it was of ringwork rather than motte type. Not only is there is no archaeological or documentary evidence for a motte, but the topography of the site suggests that it would have been unnecessary, as the site has adequate natural defences and commands excellent views.

The chronology of the surviving stone castle at Enniscorthy is unclear. The documentary evidence, which is discussed below, indicates that a stone castle was constructed at Enniscorthy in the thirteenth century. Extensive works were carried out at the castle in the late sixteenth century by Sir Henry Wallop. There has been some discussion as to whether the present castle is entirely a product of the sixteenth century or, alternatively, an extensively renovated or rebuilt castle sharing the same plan as the original thirteenth century structure. Hore believed that the present castle was essentially a thirteenth century castle, which was extensively renovated by Henry Wallop in the sixteenth century.[5] This seems unlikely as there is no known evidence for any medieval fabric in the structure.

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[2] Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford*, vi, 337.
[3] O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', ii, 726-8; Colfer, *Arrogant trespass,* p. 56.
[4] O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', p. 727.
[5] Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford*, vi, 345.

Leask regarded Enniscorthy Castle as a sixteenth century rebuilding of the medieval castle, built to the same plan as its predecessor. On these grounds, he classified it as a 'towered keep' along with the authentic thirteenth century castles at Ferns, Carlow, Terryglass and possibly Wexford.[6] However, more recently, it has been argued that the castle is entirely a sixteenth century structure.[7] Further investigation into the fabric of the castle would be needed in order to fully resolve this debate.

Documentary references

From the late twelfth century, Enniscorthy served as the *caput* of the Duffry, a territory delimited by the River Slaney on the west and the Blackstairs mountains on the east. *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* records that Strongbow originally granted the Duffry to Robert de Quency in 1172 for the service of five knights.[8] Robert, who may have been a distant relative of Strongbow's,[9] was also given one of Strongbow's daughters in marriage as well as the constableship of Leinster.[10] Robert de Quency's lordship was short-lived as he was killed in a raid into Leinster in 1173.[11] However, it seems possible that Robert ordered the construction of an earthwork castle at Enniscorthy before his death.

Raymond le Gros subsequently petitioned Strongbow for the hand of Raymond's sister, Basilia, in marriage, for the constableship of Leinster and for the guardianship of Maud de Quency.[12] Strongbow refused Raymond's request at first,[13] but he later relented and Raymond held Maud's lands along with his own during the period of Maud's minority.[14] It

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[6] H. G. Leask, *Irish castles and castellated houses* (Dundalk, 1999; reprint of second edition published in 1951), p. 51.
[7] T. E. McNeill, *Castles in Ireland: feudal power in a Gaelic world* (London, 1997), p. 118; P. D. Sweetman, *The medieval castles of Ireland* (Cork, 1999), p. 77.
[8] Evelyn Mullally, (ed.), *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland. La Geste des Engleis en Yrlande. A new edition of the chronicle formerly known as 'The Song of Dermot and the Earl'* (Dublin, 2002), Lines 2741-8.
[9] M. T. Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship: interactions in Ireland in the late twelfth century* (Oxford, 1989), pp 158-9.
[10] Mullally, (ed.), *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland*, Lines 2741-8.
[11] Ibid., Lines 2805-16.
[12] Ibid., Lines 2817-42.
[13] Ibid., Lines 2843-54.
[14] Ibid., Lines 3022-36.

seems unlikely that Raymond constructed a castle at Enniscorthy as he was holding the Duffry on behalf of his ward for a limited period of time.

Philip de Prendergast gained seisin of the Duffry on his marriage to Maud de Quency in *c.*1190.[15] The construction of the stone castle at Enniscorthy has traditionally been attributed to the de Prendergast family,[16] and it seems probable that they constructed the castle at some time in the first half of the thirteenth century.

The first known reference to Enniscorthy in the Anglo-Norman sources is contained in a writ issued in 1226, granting the bishop of Ferns permission to hold weekly markets at his manors of Ferns, Templeshanbo and Enniscorthy.[17] This reference indicates that an episcopal manor existed alongside the seigniorial manor at Enniscorthy in the early thirteenth century, as was also the case at Ferns. The bishop of Ferns was subsequently involved in a dispute with Philip de Prendergast regarding lands on the eastern side of the Slaney, where the both the early medieval church of Senan's and the episcopal manor seem to have been located. In 1227, this dispute was resolved when the bishop exchanged his lands at Enniscorthy for lands located elsewhere and it was agreed that, '...Philip and Matilda, his wife, and their heirs, shall hold the said town of Enniscorthy as a lay fee in future for ever to them and their heirs.'[18]

The manor of Enniscorthy passed into the hands of Maurice de Rochford, who married Matilda, daughter of Gerald de Prendergast, following the death of Gerald in 1251. By the early fourteenth century, the manor of Enniscorthy was coming under increasing pressure from the Gaelic Irish. An extent of the manor was taken in 1323-4, following the death of Aymer de Valence. By this time, '...the lands were waste and destroyed by the war of the

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[15] Ibid., Lines 2817-24.
[16] G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans,* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20), i, 391.
[17] H. S. Sweetman, (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland,* (5 vols, London, 1875-83), i, 216.
[18] Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford*, vi, 343-4. The document recording the settlement of this dispute was enrolled in the Patent Rolls at the request of Sir Henry Wallop in the late sixteenth century and is quoted in full by Hore.

Irish'.[19] It is unclear if this reference relates to the violence that accompanied the Bruce Invasion or to ongoing warfare with the local Gaelic Irish. The castle seems to have fallen into the hands of the Kavanaghs in the later medieval period.

The castle was purchased and restored or rebuilt by Sir Henry Wallop in the late sixteenth century as discussed above.

Other sites in the local area

The ruins of a medieval parish church dedicated to St Sénan are situated on the eastern side of the River Slaney, in the adjoining townland of Templeshannon.[20] There was a church on this site from the early medieval period onwards. The church which survives in ruins is Romanesque in style and consists of an original nave and a later chancel.[21] The church stands in a D-shaped graveyard, which may originally have been circular, considering the site's early medieval origins. This church is the only evidence for pre-Norman settlement at Enniscorthy. As discussed above, the lands on this side of the Slaney were the subject of a dispute between Philip de Prendergast and the Abbot of Ferns in the early thirteenth century.

In the Anglo-Norman period, a sizeable settlement developed around the castle at Enniscorthy. Although there is no surviving charter to prove it, it seems probable that Enniscorthy had the status of a borough; as Colfer has argued, there is no evidence for any borough located within the de Prendergast lands of Schyrmal and the Duffry.[22]

The site of the medieval parish church of St Mary's is situated approximately 100m to the southwest of the castle. A nineteenth-century Church of Ireland church, which was designed by Pugin, now occupies the site and nothing of the medieval church survives at

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[19] Paul Dryburgh and Brendan Smith, (eds), *Inquisitions and extents of medieval Ireland* (Kew, 2007), pp 121-4; Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford*, vi, 349.
[20] *Inventory*, no. 1301, p. 137; WX020-031(001).
[21] *Inventory*, no. 1301, p. 137.
[22] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p.

ground level.[23] The dedication of the church and its position in relation to the castle indicate that this church was an Anglo-Norman foundation.

An Augustinian priory and a Franciscan friary were also located at Enniscorthy. The Augustinian priory of St John the Evangelist was founded by Gerald de Prendergast *c.*1227-9.[24] It was a daughter house of the Abbey of St Thomas, Dublin, and was located to the south of the town in the parish of St John's. No traces of the priory are visible at ground level.[25]

The Franciscan friary was founded in the fifteenth century. The site of the friary lies approximately 200m to the south east of the castle.[26] There are no surviving remains of the friary.[27]

Discussion

It seems possible that the earliest castle at Enniscorthy was a ringwork castle. As Hore, O'Conor and Colfer have observed, the site, which is located on a natural promontory above the Slaney, would have been ideal for a partial ringwork. Hore's report of a rock-cut fosse cutting the site off on its western side appears to support the ringwork castle theory. However, the dimensions of this feature are unknown and, in the absence of any evidence for an earthwork castle at ground level, this site can only be classified as a possible ringwork castle. Unfortunately, the castle's urban setting means that the site has been much disturbed by post-medieval activity and it seems unlikely that much evidence survives to be uncovered by future excavation.

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[23] *Inventory*, no. 1439, p. 155; WX020-031(004)
[24] Aubrey Gwynn and R. N. Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses: Ireland, with an appendix to early sites* (London, 1970), p. 175.
[25] John Bradley and H. A. King, 'Urban Archaeology Survey - Wexford' (unpublished, Archaeological Archives, Dublin, undated), p. 41.
[26] *Inventory*, no. 1438, p. 154; WX020-031(02).
[27] Bradley and King, 'Urban Archaeology Survey - Wexford', pp 41-2.

Site no:	**40**
Site name:	**Ferns Castle**
Townland:	**Castleland**
Parish:	**Ferns**
Barony:	**Scarawalsh**
County:	**Wexford**
Co-ordinates:	**301770, 149850**
RMP no:	**WX01-003001; 007**
RMP classification:	**castle - Anglo-Norman; castle - ringwork**
Inventory no:	**1441**
Inventory classification:	**possible ringwork**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

Excavations under the major stone castle at Ferns revealed possible traces of an earlier fortification, possibly a ringwork castle of early Anglo-Norman date.

Siting

Ferns Castle is located on a ridge which is the highest point in the local area. The castle would have commanded excellent views of the local area. The River Slaney is located approximately 3km away from the castle, while the River Bann, a tributary of the Slaney, is located approximately 1km to the east of the castle. It seems likely that the castle was established in this location, away from these rivers, in order to control Ferns, which was a major pre-Norman centre of power.

Excavations

Excavations were carried out in the castle between 1972 and 1975, under the direction of David Sweetman.[1] These excavations uncovered limited evidence for an earlier fortification under the stone castle.

The excavations revealed that the base of the stone castle was surrounded by a wide rock-cut fosse. This fosse seems to be contemporary with the construction of the stone castle as

[1] P. D. Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Ferns Castle, Co. Wexford' in *P.R.I.A.* lxxix (1979), Section C, pp 217-45.

it follows the line of the keep's walls and, as Sweetman has pointed out, the stone quarried from the fosse appears to have been used in the construction of the lower levels of the castle.[2]

A short section of a second rock-cut ditch, Fosse No. 2, was excavated approximately 10m to the east of the south east corner tower. This second fosse measured 1.2m in depth and 2.5m in width and, like the larger fosse enclosing the stone keep, it was cut into the bedrock. There was 40cm of sticky fill, which provided no datable finds, in the base of this ditch. The fill was overlaid by a layer of shaley stones and, above that, sherds of thirteenth and fourteenth-century pottery were found.[3] Sweetman believed that this showed that the filling of the ditch occurred prior to the deposition of the thirteenth-century pottery, suggesting that the fosse could belong to an earlier phase of occupation of the site.[4]

O'Keeffe and Coughlan have raised valid concerns over the dating of this small section of fosse. They have argued that the sherds of early thirteenth-century pottery that were found overlaying the fill in the bottom of the fosse may be in a secondary context as they seem to have been in a fill of seventeenth-century material.[5] If this is the case, the fosse cannot be dated without further excavation. Regardless of the dating issue, the dimensions of the fosse suggest that it is not wide or deep enough to be considered as the main ditch of a ringwork castle, although it may represent an outer defensive ditch contemporary with either an early earth and timber castle or the stone castle. Also, the fact that only a short length of this fosse has been excavated is problematic. In order to prove that this fosse is even a circular enclosing feature which could plausibly be part of the outer defences of the castle, rather than merely a curvilinear ditch, further excavation would be needed.

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[2] Ibid., p. 221.
[3] Ibid., p. 224
[4] Ibid.
[5] Tadhg O'Keeffe and Margaret Coughlan, 'The chronology and formal affinities of the Ferns *donjon*, Co. Wexford' in J.R. Kenyon and Kieran O'Conor (eds), *The medieval castle in Ireland and Wales: essays in honour of Jeremy Knight* (Dublin, 2003), p. 135.

Sweetman has since revised his interpretation and believes that this ditch need not necessarily be associated with the defences of an early earthwork castle.[6]

Sweetman's excavations inside the castle found that, at the south-eastern side of the interior, the castle was built onto boulder clay rather than bedrock.[7] Sweetman now believes that this boulder clay represents a rampart associated with a castle of ringwork type, although the boulder clay was not identified as such at the time of the excavation.[8] However, it is also possible that this boulder clay deposit was associated with the pre-Norman defended residence of Dermot MacMurrough, which was located at Ferns.

The excavations failed to shed much light on the chronology of the stone castle and this issue has remained the subject of much scholarly debate. The stone castle originally consisted of a trapezoidal block with round towers projecting from all four corners. Only two of the corner towers and the southern, eastern and northern walls are still standing. The keep seems to have been three storeys tall and the excavations showed that the keep had no cross wall. Sweetman's excavation showed that the castle was surrounded by a rock cut fosse, which is discussed above. An entrance causeway, consisting of an uncut section of fosse, allowed access to the castle on the south side. The debate surrounding the castle's chronology has centred on the dating of architectural details, including the arrow loops and windows and the rib-vaulted chapel, which is located at first-floor level in the south-east tower. At ground floor level, the lights consist of cruciform loops while, at the first and second floor levels, there is one cruciform arrow-loop in addition to larger windows featuring tracery work.

Along with Carlow Castle, Lea Castle and Terryglass Castle, Ferns Castle belongs to a group of castles found in south-eastern Ireland, which Leask described as 'towered or

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[6] P.D. Sweetman, pers. comm., April 2006.
[7] Sweetman, 'Archaeological excavations at Ferns Castle, Co. Wexford', p. 218.
[8] P.D. Sweetman, pers. comm., April, 2006.

turreted keeps'.[9] The dating of this group of castles has been the subject of much debate. The excavations at Carlow Castle uncovered very little evidence for the chronology of the stone castle.[10] However, O'Conor has argued that the documentary evidence indicates that the most likely historical context for the construction of the stone castle is the period between 1210 and 1220.[11] The first definite reference to the castle itself is contained in a writ issued in 1231, ordering the constable of the castle to hand it over to Walerand le Teys, the king's bailiff.[12] Lea Castle is believed to have been constructed in the first half of the thirteenth century, although the exact date of its construction is unknown. It seems probable that the construction of the castle was not begun until after 1234, when Maurice fitz Gerald seems to have gained seisin of the manor of Lea (see site report no. 15).

Sweetman has suggested that Ferns Castle dates to the early thirteenth century, arguing that the castle, '...is so similar to Carlow and Lea that it must date to this early period.'[13] However, as stated above, while it is generally accepted that Carlow is early thirteenth century in date, Lea Castle was probably not begun until after 1234. Sweetman has argued that the traceried windows and other later features are not original but were inserted later.[14] Also, Sweetman has noted that the towered keep at Ferns, as at Lea and Carlow, was constructed in two or more phases.[15] There seems to be a clear difference in construction between the ground floor and the upper two floors and the architectural details that are generally pointed out as 'late' features may belong to the second phase of construction at the castle. Sweetman's hypothesis that Ferns and the other towered keeps were constructed during the period of the Marshal's lordship of Leinster is compelling,[16] and it is interesting that all of the towered keep' castles were connected in some way to the Marshals. However,

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[9] H. G. Leask, *Irish castles and castellated houses* ((Dundalk, 1999; reprint of second edition published in 1951), pp 47-51.
[10] Kieran O'Conor, *Carlow Castle preliminary excavation report*, (unpublished report, excavation no. 96E0105, 2002).
[11] Kieran O'Conor, 'Carlow Castle – who built and occupied the first castle here?' in *Carloviana,* iv (1998), pp 37-42.
[12] H. S. Sweetman, (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland,* (5 vols, London, 1875-83), i, 278-9.
[13] P. D. Sweetman, *The medieval castles of Ireland* (Cork, 1999), p. 78.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., p. 81.
[16] Ibid., pp 77-84.

neither the documentary nor the archaeological evidence seems to support this hypothesis. In the case of Ferns, a mid-thirteenth century date seems more likely. Leask argued that Ferns Castle was constructed by the de Valence family, in the mid-thirteenth century, based on the architectural details.[17] O'Keeffe and Coughlan have also argued that the stone castle at Ferns dates to the later thirteenth century. They believe that the castle was constructed wholly under the de Valances, sometime after 1247.[18] They have argued that the distinct construction phases visible in the fabric of the castle merely show that building stone was coming from different quarries and do not reflect that the phases of the castle's construction were far apart in date. They also believe that the form of the windows and loops, as well as the architectural features of the castle's first floor chapel, are indicative of a later thirteenth century date.

Documentary references

The documentary evidence shows that Ferns was an ecclesiastical and political centre in the early medieval period. A church was reputedly founded at Ferns by the seventh century saint, Maedhog.[19] The selection of Ferns as the diocesan capital at the Synod of Rath Breasail in 1111 shows that it was considered to be an important ecclesiastical centre. The sources suggest that, in the immediate pre-Norman period, Dermot MacMurrough, the king of Leinster, was based at Ferns. While it is not clear exactly what form his headquarters at Ferns took, the documentary sources imply that it was a fortified site; according to the *Annals of Tigernach*, Tiernan O'Rourke and his allies destroyed Dermot's stone house and longphort at Ferns in the year 1166.[20] The *Annals of Inisfallen* also report the burning of Ferns in that year.[21]

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[17] Leask, *Irish castles and castellated houses,* p. 49.
[18] O'Keeffe and Coughlan, 'The chronology and formal affinities of the Ferns *donjon*, Co. Wexford', p. 147.
[19] Aubrey Gwynn and R. N. Hadcock, Medieval religious houses: Ireland, with an appendix to early sites (London, 1970), pp 78-9.
[20] Whitley Stokes, (ed.), *The Annals of Tigernach* (2 vols, Felinfach, 1993, reprinted from *Revue Celtique*, 1896/7), 1166.
[21] Seán MacAirt, (ed.), *Annals of Inisfallen* (Dublin, 1988, reprint of edition published Dublin, 1988), 1166.

Little is known about Ferns in the immediate post-Conquest period. Although Ferns was a demesne manor of the Marshal lords of Leinster by the mid-thirteenth century, it is somewhat unclear who held Ferns in the late twelfth century. *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* records that, following the death of Dermot MacMurrough at Ferns in 1171, Strongbow granted 'the kingdom of Hy Kinsellagh' Dermot's nephew, Murtough.[22] Murtough MacMurrough held some lands in Leinster up until his death in 1193, and Orpen believed that Ferns was left in his possession.[23] However, it seems more likely that Strongbow kept Ferns as a demesne manor as, after Strongbow's death in 1176, Ferns seems to have been in the hands of the justiciar, William fitz Adelin. According to Gerald of Wales, William fitz Adelin, took the castle at Wicklow 'by trickery', following the death of Maurice fitz Gerald in 1176 and, 'a little later', probably in 1177, he gave Ferns to Maurice's sons in exchange.[24] Maurice's sons 'immediately' built a castle at Ferns, despite being 'surrounded by enemies'. Shortly later, this castle was 'destroyed and razed to the ground' by Walter 'the German', nephew of William fitz Adelin, who had been bribed by Murtough MacMurrough.[25] Gerald's account suggests that a castle was constructed and subsequently destroyed at Ferns between 1176 and 1179. It seems likely that this early Norman castle at Ferns may have been an earth and timber construction and it seems probable that this castle was in the same location as the later stone castle.

The documentary evidence contains few clues regarding the date of the stone castle's construction and this issue remains a subject of much academic debate, as discussed above. In the early thirteenth century, there was a dispute between William Marshal the Elder and Albin O'Mulloy, the Gaelic Irish bishop of Ferns. Bishop Albin appealed to Pope Innocent III, accusing Marshal of illegally appropriating lands in the vicinity of Ferns.[26] It seems likely that this dispute related to Marshal's acquisition of the seigniorial manor of Ferns,

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[22] Evelyn Mullally, (ed.), *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland. La Geste des Engleis en Yrlande. A new edition of the chronicle formerly known as 'The Song of Dermot and the Earl'* (Dublin, 2002), Lines 2181-8.
[23] G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans,* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20), i, 238-9 and 390.
[24] *Expugnatio Hibernica. The Conquest of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis*, edited by Scott, A. B., and Martin, F. X., (eds), (Dublin, 1978), p. 171.
[25] Ibid., p. 173.
[26] Albert Way, 'Letter to William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke, c.1216, by the Archbishops of Tuam and Dublin (note)' in *J.R.S.A.I.*, v (1864-6), p. 138; Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans,* iii, 29.

which seems to have been previously held by Murtough MacMurrough.[27] The bishop of Ferns seems to have had an episcopal manor at Ferns, which existed alongside the seigneurial manor.[28] In 1226, the bishop of Ferns received permission to hold a weekly market and an annual fair at Ferns.[29]

In a letter issued in 1332, it is recorded that Richard Marshal, earl of Pembroke, had offered the 'manor and castle of Ferns' to the widow of the younger William Marshal.[30]

The Marshal manor of Ferns seems to have had a borough attached to it. In 1245, the manor seems to have been thriving, as it was valued at £81 15*s*.[31] On the partition of Leinster in 1247, the manor of Ferns was allocated to the share of Joan Marshal, which passed into the hands of de Valence family. This share also included Wexford, Rosslare, Carrick, Bannow and Taghmon, all in Co. Wexford, and Odogh, Co. Kilkenny, but it is notable that the manor of Ferns was the most valuable of the manors included in Joan's share.[32] It seems probable that there was a stone castle at Ferns by this time.

In an inquisition taken in 1280, it had been recorded that the episcopal manor was worth £11 10*s*. and 9.25*d*., of which the burgesses of Ferns contributed £2.[33]

By the later thirteenth century, the seigneurial manor seems was in decline; in 1296, it was recorded that 49.5 of the burgages in Ferns were vacant.[34] By 1307, the manor was worth only £38 16*s*. 6*d*., of which the burgesses contributed only £8 0*s* 4*d*.[35] Based on these figures, Bradley and King have calculated that there were approximately 200 burgages at

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[27] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, iii, 54-5.
[28] Ibid., iii, 29-31; Bradley and King, 'Urban Archaeology Survey - Wexford', p. 48.
[29] Sweetman, (ed.), *C.D.I.*, i, 216.
[30] Close Roll, 16 Henry III, pp 144-5; P. H. Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford* (London, 1900-11), iii, 6.
[31] Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford*, vi, 6.
[32] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, iii, 85-90.
[33] Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford*, vi, 190.
[34] Ibid., vi, 192.
[35] Paul Dryburgh and Brendan Smith, (eds), *Inquisitions and extents of medieval Ireland* (Kew, 2007), pp 84-6.

Ferns in the later thirteenth century.[36] It is notable that the manor seems to have already been in decline before it was affected by the Bruce invasion and the famine of 1315-18.

Other sites in the local area

A cluster of ecclesiastical sites are located approximately 500m to the east of Ferns Castle. The first church at Ferns was reputedly founded by St Maedhog in the seventh century. The Annals of the Four Masters contains a reference to 'Lia Ferna', which O'Donovan has translated as 'the stone church of Ferns', under the year 787.[37] Nothing of this early medieval church survives. However, the heads of four high-crosses, the base and shaft of a high cross, and a cross-slab can be seen in the sub-circular graveyard.[38]

A cathedral church was constructed on the site of the early medieval church in the thirteenth century. It is thought that at least the chancel was constructed under John de St John, the first Anglo-Norman bishop of Ferns. The cathedral was cruciform in shape, consisting of an aisled nave, a chancel, north and south transepts, and a crossing tower. The chancel of the Anglo-Norman cathedral was restored and incorporated into the present cathedral in the seventeenth century.[39]

To the south east of the cathedral lie the ruins of the Augustinian priory. This priory, which was dedicated to St Mary, was established in the pre-Norman period. Dermot MacMurrough introduced the rule of St Augustine to the abbey between 1160 and 1162.[40] The earliest phase of the priory building can be dated to the second quarter of the twelfth century on architectural grounds.[41]

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[36] John Bradley and H. A. King, 'Urban Archaeology Survey - Wexford' (unpublished, Archaeological Archives, Dublin, undated), p. 49.
[37] Michael O'Clery *et al.*, (eds), Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters; from the earliest times to the year 1616 (8 vols, Dublin, 1990, reprint of edition published Dublin, 1856), 787.
[38] *Inventory*, no. 1443, p. 156.
[39] *Inventory*, no. 1445, p. 156.
[40] Tadhg O'Keeffe, 'Diarmait Mac Murchada and Romanesque Leinster: four twelfth-century churches in context' in *J.R.S.A.I.*, cxxvii (1997), p. 54.
[41] Ibid., pp 56-60; Tadhg O'Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland* (Dublin, 2003), pp 235-7.

The ruined church of St Peter's is located 300m to the north east of the cathedral. This parish church dates to the early post-medieval period,[42] but it may be on the site of an earlier parish church.

Discussion

The documentary evidence indicates that Dermot MacMurrough had a residence at Ferns in the mid-twelfth century and that there was also an early earth and timber castle at Ferns. The siting of the early ecclesiastical structures suggests that the focus of the pre-Norman settlement may have been further to the east. However, it seems likely that one or both of these fortifications was located on the same site as the later stone castle.

Excavations at Ferns Castle produced some possible evidence for an earlier fortification in the form of a small rock-cut ditch and a layer of boulder rock underneath the stone castle, possibly representing the rampart of an earlier site. Sweetman has suggested that the evidence indicates that there was a ringwork castle under the stone castle. However, valid concerns regarding the nature and dating of the excavated evidence have been raised by O'Keeffe and Coughlan.

It seems probable that there was an earth and timber castle at Ferns, which may have been adapted from Dermot MacMurrough's earlier fortification. It also seems likely that this early castle was on the same site as the later castle and that it took the form of a ringwork castle. However, as the excavated evidence was far from conclusive, this site can only be classified as a possible ringwork castle.

[42] O'Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland*, p. 322.

Site no:	**41**
Site name:	**Finshoge**
Townland:	**Finshoge**
Parish:	**Old Ross**
Barony:	**Bantry**
County:	**Wexford**
Co-ordinates:	**274512, 124866**
RMP no:	**WX034-008001 and WX034-008002**
RMP classification:	**castle – unclassified and ringfort - unclassified**
Inventory no:	**313**
Inventory classification:	**bivallate ringfort**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

The site is located in the townland of Finshoge (sometimes spelled 'Funshoge') in the parish of Old Ross. This site was first identified as a possible ringwork castle by Colfer.[1] Barry included this site in his list of possible ringwork castles based Colfer's identification.[2] The site is classified as a bivallate ringfort in the *Inventory*, and as a both a 'ringfort – unclassified' and 'castle - unclassified' in the RMP. The First Edition OS map depicts the site as multi-vallate enclosure, containing a small building labelled 'site of castle'.

Siting

The site is located beside a stream at the bottom of a small valley. The ground is somewhat boggy and waterlogged. Although the stream is located only 20m to the west of the site, there is no evidence to suggest that it was used to feed a wet moat. The site is overlooked by higher ground to the east and the west. From a defensive viewpoint, the siting of this possible ringwork castle is exceptionally poor.

[1] William Colfer, 'Anglo-Norman settlement in medieval Shelburne, 1169-1307' (MLitt, TCD, 1986), p. 81.
[2] T.B. Barry, *The archaeology of medieval Ireland* (London, 1987), pp 52-3.

Field report

The site appears to have originally consisted of an enclosure defined by a small inner bank or lip, a fosse and a substantial outer bank (Figure 5). The interior is circular in shape and measures approximately 37m in diameter. The First Edition OS map depicts a small square building, labelled 'site of castle' at the centre of the earthwork site. According to Colfer, 'some rubble', possibly representing the remains of a stone structure, was visible in the interior when he visited the site in the 1980s.[3] When Sweetman visited the site in 1980, a rectangular depression, measuring approximately 2m by 1.5m, was visible at the north of the interior. Sweetman suggested that this depression might be part of a souterrain.[4] No trace of either of these structures can now be seen at ground level. However, this may be because the interior is so overgrown.

The enclosed area can be described as dished; it seems probable that there was once an inner bank as ground level is approximately 0.5m higher around the perimeter than at the centre of the interior.

The fosse and outer bank are best preserved on the western side of the site (from north-west to south-west). The fosse measures up to 2m in depth below the interior and up to 3m in depth below the top of the external bank. The fosse measures up to 5m in width. The external bank is flat-topped and measures up to 4m in width across its base and approximately 1.5m in width across its flat top. This bank measures up to 2m in height above external ground level.

The entrance may have been located at the south of the site, where the outer bank is absent and there is a slight ramp up to the interior.

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[3] Colfer, 'Anglo-Norman settlement in medieval Shelburne, 1169-1307', p. 78.
[4] David Sweetman, 'Field report', 1980, SMR file WX034-008002.

Documentary references

There is limited documentary evidence for Anglo-Norman settlement at Finshoge. On the partition of Leinster in 1247, Luke le Lu held ¼ knight's fee at 'Ballikermuth'.[5] As Brooks has argued, although the place name of 'Baillikermuth' or 'Ballydermot' is now obsolete, later documentary evidence suggests these lands were located in the townland of Finshoge.[6] The 1247 feodary also records that a Henry le Lu held ¼ knight's fee of the Marshals, which had formerly been held by Roger Everard. Although the name of their land-holding was not recorded in 1247, it was listed as 'Ballyen' in 1324 and 'Ballyhem' in 1425. Based on this, Brooks identified this fee as the townland of Ballyhine in the parish of Kilbrideglynn in the barony of Shelmalier West.[7] It is unclear if and how Luke le Lu and Henry le Lu were related to each other and to other men of the same name who were active in Ireland.

As outlined by Brooks, the le Lu or Lupus family seem to have held lands of the Marshals in Pembrokeshire and England and were present in Ireland from the late twelfth century.[8] Robert le Lu's name appeared in the witness list of a charter issued by the Roche brothers *c.*1182, in relation to Begerin Island in Co. Wexford.[9] By the early thirteenth century, several members of the le Lu family appear to have been active in Ireland. They seem to have been closely connected to the de Prendergast family, as the names of several members of the Lupus family appear in the witness lists of de Prendergast charters. Robert Lupus, who may have been a son of the Robert mentioned above, witnessed a charter relating to Philip de Prendergast's grant of lands at Rathboghal in Bantry, Co. Wexford, to Duiske Abbey *c.* 1226.[10] A man called Simon Lupus, who was probably related to Robert, witnessed a charter relating to the same grant.[11] The name of John Lupus appears in the

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[5] E. St J. Brooks, *Knights' fees in counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny* (Dublin, 1950), p. 18.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid., p. 162.
[8] Ibid., pp 18-19.
[9] Eric St John Brooks, (ed.) 'Unpublished charters relating to Ireland, 1177-82, from the Archives of the City of Exeter' in *P.R.I.A.*, xliii (1936), Section C, pp 316-19.
[10] J.H. Bernard and C. M. Butler (eds.), 'Charters of the Abbey of Duiske' in *P.R.I.A.,* xxxv (1918-20), Section C, p. 42.
[11] Ibid., pp 39-40.

witness list of a thirteenth century charter issued by Philip de Prendergast, recording a grant of a knight's fee at Crosspatrick in northern Wexford to Walter de Barry.[12] John Lupus also witnessed William de Valle's grant of the lands and messuage at Roscat (in the parish of Ardristan in Co. Carlow) to Theobald Butler between 1259 and 1283 and Thomas Roche's grant of lands in 'Glynnekorch and in Knokebrenech' to Theobald Butler, *c.* 1270.[13] Unfortunately, the limited documentary evidence does not show how these men were related to each other. It can be speculated that all of the le Lu or Lupus men mentioned above were probably members of the same family and may have been descended from the Richard le Lu who was active in Ireland in the late twelfth century.

By the late thirteenth century, the lands of Ballydermot were no longer in the hands of the le Lu family. In 1283-4, David Trillec, provost of the manor of Old Ross, received 25 *s.* for the fourth part of a fee in Balidermot for relief of service of Cecilia de la Ware.[14] This suggests that Cecelia had recently succeeded to these lands.[15]

The Bigod account rolls show that various tenants rented lands in Ballydermot in the late thirteenth century. In 1281, William O'Dermot paid 16*s.* 2*d.* in rent for 54 acres in Balidermot. In the same year, Henry and Philip Blundus, Ralph 'de Balymadermoc' and their companions paid 100*s.* in rent for two carucates at 'ffynchak'.[16] In 1282-3, the two carucates in Ffunchoky were rented by a group of fifteen men.[17]

By the early fourteenth century, the ¼ knight's fee at Ballydermod had passed into the hands of the Lund family; the feodary of 1307 records that 'John Lounde of Balygermoc' held ¼ knight's fee.[18] Brooks has suggested that the Lund family acquired these lands

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[12] Edmund Curtis, (ed.), *Calendar of Ormond Deeds, 1172-1603* (6 vols, Dublin, 1932-43), i, 47-8.
[13] Ibid., i, 57 and 73.
[14] 'Accounts of Earl Roger Bigod, 1238-45' in P.H. Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford* (6 vols, London, 1900-11), i, 30.
[15] Brooks, *Knights' fees*, p. 19.
[16] Accounts of Earl Roger Bigod, 1238-45' in Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford*, i, 12.
[17] Ibid., i, 20.
[18] Brooks, *Knights' fees*, p. 19.

through regrant after the le Lu line failed.[19] However, it seems equally likely that a member of the Lund family acquired Ballydermot through marriage to Cecilia, who may have been a member of the le Lu family by birth.

Other sites in the local area

The site at Finshoge is surrounded by a cluster of ringforts sites. One ringfort lies very close to the possible ringwork castle, approximately 100m upslope to the south-east. It is lightly smaller than the possible ringwork, consisting of a circular area, which measures approximately 33m in diameter, enclosed by a substantial earthen bank and external fosse.[20]

Three more enclosure sites, all in the townland of Finshoge, are marked on the first edition OS map. However, these sites have been removed and nothing of them is visible at ground level.[21]

There is a rectangular moated site in the adjoining townland of Ballymacar. It lies further up the small valley, on the same side of the river as the site at Finshoge.[22]

There is no evidence for a medieval church in the local area. Finshoge lies within the civil parish of Old Ross, and is seems possible that the medieval parish church at Old Ross, approximately 6km to the north-west, would have served this area.

Discussion

The morphology of this earthwork site is not inconsistent with a ringwork castle classification. However, there is no documentary evidence to suggest that there was a castle or manorial centre in this location. Also, there is no historical or archaeological evidence for a medieval church in the local area. The siting of the earthwork is exceptionally poor as

[19] Ibid.
[20] *Inventory*, no. 314, p. 36; WX034-010.
[21] *Inventory*, nos. 839, 840, 841, pp 82-3; WX034-009, WX034-012 and WX034-013.
[22] *Inventory*, no. 975, pp 96-7; WX034-004001.

the site is overlooked by higher ground in all directions. It seems likely that this earthwork originated as an early medieval ringfort as it is surrounded by several ringforts and enclosures of probable early medieval date. The 'castle site' within the earthwork may represent the site of a tower house rather than a castle of Anglo-Norman date. For these reasons, the site has been classified as a possible ringwork castle rather than a definite ringwork.

Site no:	**42**
Site name:	**Greatisland 1**
Townland:	**Greatisland**
Parish:	**Kilmokea**
Barony:	**Shelburne**
County:	**Wexford**
Co-ordinates:	**115420, 268430**
RMP no:	**WX039-028001**
RMP classification:	**castle - ringwork**
Inventory no:	**960**
Inventory classification:	**possible ringwork**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

Siting

As the place name suggests, Greatisland was a large island in the medieval period. It is located to the north-east of the confluence of the River Barrow and the River Suir. As the channel that separated Greatisland from Co. Wexford silted up in the post-medieval period, it is no longer an island. The earthwork is located on the eastern bank of the River Barrow, towards the southern tip of Greatisland. The earthwork commands reasonably good views of the local area. The land slopes away to the west of the site towards the River Barrow below. The First Edition O.S. map shows that, in the mid-nineteenth century, a road led from the settlement at Kilmokea towards the hamlet at Greatisland. This road turned sharply westwards immediately to the north of the earthwork, before terminating on the eastern bank of the River Barrow. It seems possible that this road once led to the landing point for a ferry, as the documentary evidence discussed below shows that there were at least two ferries operating from Greatisland in the medieval period.

The topography of the local area has been significantly altered in the modern period. A power station is located at the southern tip of Greatisland and a road leading to it cuts across the interior of the probable enclosure.

Field report

The site consists of a curvilinear section of bank and ditch, which may originally have formed part of an earthwork enclosure. The enclosing earthen bank is quite low and wide. It measures approximately 5m in width across its flat top and up to 11m in width at its base and up to 1m in height above external ground level. The external fosse is quite shallow, measuring up to 1m in depth below external ground level. It is flat-bottomed and measures between 10m and 12m in width.

The depiction of these earthworks on the First Edition O.S. map suggests that they have not changed much since the mid-nineteenth century. It seems probable that this curved bank and ditch originally formed part of a large oval or D-shaped enclosure but it is difficult to reconstruct its original form on the basis on the surviving evidence. It has been suggested that the site was originally D-shaped and may have extended as far as the River Barrow on its western side, giving it an internal diameter of approximately 250m from east to west.[1] However, the local topography and the morphology of the site suggest that it is more likely that the earthwork was an oval or sub-circular shape. Based on this assumption, O'Conor has estimated that the enclosure probably had internal dimensions of between 125m and 130m from east to west and approximately 150m from north to south.[2]

The area around the site is quite disturbed. Several buildings have been constructed in close proximity to the earthwork site, including a bungalow at the north-western end of the earthwork and a farmhouse with outbuildings to the south-west. Also, a modern road now cuts across the probable eastern side of the site, leading to the power station at Greatisland. The site's defences, in their current state of preservation, are not particularly impressive. While it is possible that the current appearance of the enclosing bank and fosse is a result of damage caused by agricultural activity in the modern period, it is also possible that the defences were never very substantial to begin with.

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[1] Michael Moore, 'Field report', 1988, in SMR file WX039-028-005.
[2] Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), ii, 733.

Documentary references

In the medieval period, Greatisland was known as 'Hervey's Island' which was frequently abbreviated to 'Insula' or the 'Island'. Although the first reference to 'Hervey's Island' dates to 1246,[3] the name is probably derived from the name of Hervey de Monte Marisco, who held this area in the late twelfth century.[4]

Hervey was a paternal uncle of Strongbow and he was amongst the first contingent of Anglo-Norman invaders, who landed at Bannow in May 1169.[5] The references to Hervey contained in both the *Expugnatio Hibernica* and the *Deeds of the Normans in Ireland* show that Hervey played a prominent role in the invasion. Hervey's name frequently appears along with those of Raymond le Gros and Robert fitz Stephen, showing that he was a trusted commander under Strongbow.[6] At one point, these three men are described as 'the leaders of the English'.[7] Hervey was present at the battle at Baginbun in 1170,[8] and, in 1171, he was sent by Strongbow to negotiate with Henry II.[9] In the foundation charter of Dunbrody Abbey, which issued by Hervey at some time in the 1170s, Hervey styled himself as the king's marshal of Ireland and seneschal of Lord Richard's lands.[10] Gerald of Wales' account portrays Hervey in a particularly negative light, presumably because Gerald viewed Hervey as a threat to the ambitions of his Geraldine kinsmen.[11]

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[3] Carew MSS vol. 611, quoted in P.H. Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford* (6 vols, London, 1900-11), iii, 198.

[4] Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford,* iii, 198; T.H. Westropp, 'Five large earthworks in the barony of Shelburne, Co. Wexford' in *J.R.S.A.I.*, xlviii (1918), p. 3; Ian Doyle, The medieval borough of Hervey's Island, Co. Wexford: 1169-1654: a study of its origins, economy, archaeology and decline' (Moderatorship thesis, TCD, 1994), p. 29.

[5] Evelyn Mullally, (ed.), *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland. La Geste des Engleis en Yrlande. A new edition of the chronicle formerly known as 'The Song of Dermot and the Earl'* (Dublin, 2002), Lines 457-8.

[6] Ibid., Lines 850-5 and 928-31;

[7] Ibid., Lines 600-608.

[8] Ibid., Lines 1494-1499

[9] *Expugnatio Hibernica. The Conquest of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis*, edited by Scott, A. B., and Martin, F. X., (eds), (Dublin, 1978), p. 89 and p. 309, note 133; G.H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20), i, 248; A. J. Otway-Ruthven, *The history of medieval Ireland* (London, 1980) p. 48; M. T. Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship: interactions in Ireland in the late twelfth century* (Oxford, 1989), pp 119-20.

[10] J. T. Gilbert, (ed.), *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin, with the register of its house at Dunbrody and Annals of Ireland* (2 vols, Dublin, 1884),151-2; Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, i, 323-4; iv, 308-10; Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship*, p. 159 and pp 291-2

[11] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, i, 146-7; *Expugnatio Hibernica*, pp 159-61 and p. 189.

According to both Gerald of Wales and the author of *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland*, Dermot McMurrough granted the large territory of 'Obarthy' to Hervey de Monte Marisco.[12] This territory consisted of the modern baronies of Bargy and Shelburne in the south-west corner of Co. Wexford. Gerald of Wales inferred that Hervey received these lands immediately after the taking of the city of Wexford in 1169, making this a particularly early land grant.

It seems probable that Hervey established his *caput baroniae* at Greatisland,[13] although there does not appear to be any direct documentary evidence for this. However, the documentary evidence shows that there was a settlement of some kind at Greatisland by the late twelfth century. A charter issued by Prince John in 1185 records a grant to Alard, son of William, his chamberlain, of various lands and privileges, including the right to hospitality at the house of Henry Roth at the Island, in addition to twenty acres of land there.[14]

Hervey de Monte Marisco retired and entered the monastery of Christ Church, Canterbury, in 1179,[15] bringing his lands to the monastery with him.[16] Hervey's lands seem to have reverted back to his overlord, William Marshal, on his death in 1205.[17] However, Hervey had alienated a large proportion of the original land grant, including the lands he granted to Dunbrody Abbey on its foundation.[18]

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[12] *Expugnatio Hibernica*, p. 35; Mullally, (ed.), *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland*, Lines 3068-9; Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, i, 393.
[13] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, iii, 83-4; William Colfer, 'Anglo-Norman settlement in medieval Shelburne, 1169-1307', (MLitt, TCD, 1986), p. 59.
[14] Edmund Curtis, (ed.), *Calendar of Ormond Deeds, 1172-1603* (6 vols, Dublin, 1932-43), i, 3-4.
[15] Gilbert, (ed.), *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin*, ii, 304-5; *Expugnatio Hibernica*, p. 189; Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship*, p. 156.
[16] J. B. Sheppard, (ed.), *Literae Cantuarensies: the letter books of the monastery of Christ Church, Canterbury* (London, 1887-9), pp xl-xlix; Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship*, p. 156.
[17] Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford*, iii, 23; William Colfer, *Arrogant trespass: Anglo-Norman Wexford, 1169-1400* (Enniscorthy, 2002), pp 65-6 and p. 77.
[18] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, i, 393 and iii, 84.

The Marshal lords of Leinster seem to have kept Hervey's lands in demesne rather than regranting them. In 1231, letters were issued to the constables of the castles of Kilkenny, Odoth, Wexford, Old Ross, Dunamase, Carlow, Kildare, Carrick and 'de Insula', informing them that their lord, William Marshal the Younger, had died and requesting that they come to confer with the king in England.[19] This is the first known reference to a castle at Greatisland and Colfer has suggested that it implies that the castle was a stone construction.[20] However, although several of these Marshal castles were probably stone castles by this date, this does not necessarily apply to all of the listed castles. By the mid-thirteenth century, the settlement at Greatisland had developed into an important Marshal port. A writ issued by King John in 1236 reports that ships were habitually docking at Gilbert Marshal's ports of New Ross and the Island, rather than at the royal port of Waterford, and the justiciar, Maurice Fitzgerald, was ordered to forbid this practice.[21]

A rental of the lands held by William Marshal in 1246, shows that the 'villa de Insula Hervey' was held by the Marshals by the mid-thirteenth century.[22] On the partition of Leinster in 1247, the manor of the Island was assigned to the portion of Maude Marshal, along with Carlow, the castle and town of Ross and the manors of St Mullins, Fothered and Ballisax.[23] Maude died in 1248, and her share of the lands of Leinster was inherited by her son, Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk.[24] In 1253, the justiciar was ordered to give William de Valence land to the value of £19 7*s*. 2½ *d*., which had been previously been assigned to Reginald de Mohun and his wife, Isabel. This land was located 'in the island of the land of Earl Roger'.

A series of account rolls for the Bigod lands in Ireland has survived and excerpts from the accounts relating to the manor of the Island are contained in Hore's *History of the town and*

[19] H. S. Sweetman, (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland,* (5 vols, London, 1875-83), i, 278-9.
[20] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 154.
[21] Sweetman, (ed.), *C.D.I.*, i, 351.
[22] Carew MSS vol. 611, quoted in Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford*, iii, 198.
[23] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, iii, 80-5; Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 140.
[24] Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, iii, 84.

county of Wexford.[25] These account rolls show that the castle at Greatisland underwent extensive repairs in 1286. Thomas Wade claimed for money spent on the materials and labour involved in the repairs, including lead, the breaking of slates, the roofing of the castle, lime, mortar, timbers for repairs to the castle, two hundred boards, nails and tin. The provost's account for the same year mentions the 'moat' of the castle', lime and nails.[26] These references suggest that the castle may have been a stone castle by this date. The account of Griffin, son of Richard, provost of the Island, for the year 1280, contains an interesting reference to the 'expenses of the greyhounds (*leporariorum*)', which amounted to 7 ½ *d*., presumably per day. As Hore has argued, this may indicate that the earl's castle at Greatisland was used as a base for hunting.[27]

The mill associated with the manor of the Island had a mill seems to have been destroyed and rebuilt several times during the decade covered by the surviving account rolls. The mill is mentioned under the year 1281-2 and, under the following year, it is recorded that the mill was destroyed by the River Barrow, which is tidal at this point.[28] In 1286, a mill was constructed and 'palings for the dam' are mentioned, indicating that the mill in question was a watermill rather than a windmill.[29] The following year (1287-8), Thomas Sluy paid 'for the burning of the Island mill'; it seems likely that this payment represents a fine for carelessness leading to the destruction of the mill.[30]

The Bigod account rolls contain several references to the burgesses of the Island, the earliest of which dates to 1282.[31] This indicates that the settlement had acquired the status of a borough by this time. Colfer has suggested that Hervey was responsible for establishing the borough prior to his death in 1205.[32] However, as discussed above, Hervey retired in 1182 and it seems likely that the settlement acquired borough status either before

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[25] Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford*, iii, 197-236.
[26] Ibid., iii, 202-3.
[27] Ibid., iii, 206.
[28] Ibid., iii, 200-1; O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', ii, 735.
[29] Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford*, iii, 203.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid., iii, 207.
[32] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 140.

this date or, O'Conor has suggested, after William Marshal gained control of Hervey's lands in 1205.[33]

Several early fourteenth century references to the town at Greatisland are contained in the justiciary rolls. In 1302, three serving men were sent to water their masters' horses at 'a certain well near the manor of the said Philip in the town of Island Heruy' and were assaulting leading to a brawl involving 'the men of the town'.[34] In 1312, it is recorded that two men, with two afers and two bundles, arrived at Crook in Co. Waterford, wishing to cross into Wexford by ferry. The men were accused of theft and the afers were taken from them so they went to 'the Island of Hervicus and there obtained letters patent under the common seal of the town of the said island, testifying that they were loyal men.'[35] These references seem to indicate that the settlement was relatively large at the turn of the fourteenth century.

An extent of the manor of Hervey's Island was taken in 1307, following the death of Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, in December 1306.[36] This extent recorded that, 'at Hervey's Island there is a castle without a roof which cannot be extended'. The watermill is also mentioned, indicating that it had been rebuilt following its destruction by fire in 1287-8. The burgesses of the town had 'three carucates in burgage and render 110*s*. 3*d*. a year'. This indicates that, if the rent at Greatisland was 1*s*. per burgage plot per year, as it was in many medieval Irish boroughs, there may have been approximately 110 burgesses in the town. Although burgage rentals were rarely this straightforward, it does indicate that the town had a sizable population in the early fourteenth century.

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[33] O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', ii, 725.
[34] James Mills, (ed.), *Calendar of the Justiciary Rolls or proceedings in Court of the Justiciar of Ireland, 1295-1314*, (3 vols, London, 1905-56), ii, 395-6.
[35] Mills, (ed.), *Cal. just. rolls*, iii, 249.
[36] Sweetman, (ed.), *C.D.I.*, v, 172-81; Mills, (ed.), *Cal just. rolls*, ii, 345-50; Paul Dryburgh and Brendan Smith, (eds), *Inquisitions and extents of medieval Ireland* (Kew, 2007), pp 71-3.

In 1411, an *inquisition post mortem* found that the late Thomas de Mowbray had held the castle and the manor of the Island, which were worth ten marks per annum.[37] The manor passed into the ownership of the earls of Ormond in the sixteenth century.[38] The early modern sources suggest that there were two 'castles' at Greatisland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In 1557, it was confirmed that James Walshe of Waterford held certain messuages and two acres of land at Greatisland and had the right to corn sown on this land by men including Pierce fitz William, 'constable of the Great Castle of the said Iland'.[39] A later deed, issued in 1573, refers to a castle called 'Shortcastle *alias* Castlemole' at Greatisland.[40] In 1608-9, there were two castles, a leper hospital, fishing weirs, forty messuages and fifteen acres in the hands of the crown.[41] The *Civil Survey* recorded that there was a 'large castle', held by the earl of Ormond, at Kilmokea in the mid-seventeenth century,[42] and also recorded elsewhere that Greatisland was 'a Place of Consequence Haveing therein a large pile of a stone Castle And also the Butt of another Castle Besides other stone houses'.[43] These documentary references suggest that, in the early modern period, there was a large castle belonging to the earl of Ormond, possibly representing the old Anglo-Norman castle, in addition to the remains of a second castle, which was probably of tower house type.[44]

Other sites in the local area

The earthwork is located close to a second possible ringwork site (site no. 43 - Greatisland 2), which lies approximately 150m to the south-east.

The First Edition O.S. map depicts two castle sites in the interior of the possible ringwork castle. No visible remains of these 'castles' can be seen at ground level. According to local

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[37] H.F. Hore's MSS, vol. 56, quoted in Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford,* iii, 224.
[38] Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford,* iii, 229.
[39] Edmund Curtis, (ed.), *Calendar of Ormond Deeds, 1172-1603* (6 vols, Dublin, 1932-43), v, 104.
[40] Ibid., v, 238.
[41] Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford,* iii, 229; Doyle, 'The medieval borough of Hervey's Island, Co. Wexford: 1169-1654', pp 53-4.
[42] R. C. Simmington, (ed.), *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-1656. Volume 9: County of Wexford* (Dublin, 1953), p. 181.
[43] Simmington, (ed.), *Civil Survey,* p. 167.
[44] Doyle, 'The medieval borough of Hervey's Island, Co. Wexford: 1169-1654', pp 51-3.

tradition, there was a 'leper hospital' located within the enclosure and the reputed site of this leper hospital is shown on the Second Edition O.S. map.[45] As discussed above, the documentary evidence also attests that there was a leper hospital at Greatisland in the early seventeenth century. In 1979, several skeletons were discovered when a trench was dug through the enclosure to the new bungalow at the north west of the site. Mary Cahill directed a limited excavation of these burials, which included one skeleton in a stone-lined grave. Both the location of the burials in relation to the leper hospital site and the finds, which included fragments of a cloak or shroud and a pair of leather boots, suggested that the burials were late medieval in date.[46] Shaw-Mason, writing in the early nineteenth century, recorded that a large collection of human bones had been found at Greatisland. Although the exact location of this site is unknown, it may have been associated with the leper hospital.[47]

The centre of the settlement of the manor of the Island was probably located at Kilmokea, approximately 1km to the north-east of the possible ringwork site (Greatisland 1). There was a church at Kilmokea from the early medieval period onwards. The church site is located within a graveyard, which is located within a large circular enclosure of probable early medieval date.[48] Although nothing remains of the church at ground level, the graveyard contains a high cross and a font,[49] and two bullaun stones have also been identified within the outer enclosure.[50]

An exceptionally large moated site is located to the east of the church at Kilmokea, immediately to the west of the silted up channel that once separated Greatisland from the mainland.[51] The moated site encloses an area measuring approximately 7238m² and,

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[45] WX039-028005; *Inventory*, no. 1320, p. 139.
[46] Doyle, 'The medieval borough of Hervey's Island, Co. Wexford: 1169-1654', pp 53-4; Michael Moore, 'Field report', 1988, SMR file WX039-028(005).
[47] W. S. Mason, *A statistical account, or parochial survey of Ireland, drawn up from the communications of the clergy*, (3 vols, Dublin, 1814-19), iii, 542.
[48] WX039-018007.
[49] WX039-018004 and WX039-018009.
[50] WX039-018003 and WX039-018005.
[51] WX039-019; *Inventory*, no. 1036, p.103.

although the site is in a poor state of preservation, it originally had substantial defences, in the form of two large banks with a wide intervening fosse.[52] It has been suggested that this site may represent the *caput* castle associated with Hervey de Monte Marisco's manor of the Island.[53] This site seems a more likely candidate for Hervey's caput castle as it has more substantial defences than either of the two possible ringwork castle sites at Greatisland, is located closer to the medieval church site at Kilmokea and is strategically positioned to guard the approach to the settlement at Kilmokea from the mainland.

A series of earthworks lie between this site and the church at Kilmokea, marking the probable location of the medieval borough discussed above.[54]

Discussion

The poor state of preservation makes it difficult to assess the importance and function of this earthwork. Greatisland was clearly the location of an important settlement and *caput* castle in the Anglo-Norman period and it seems plausible that the earthwork represents the remains of a ringwork castle. However, a case can also be made for the large moated site at Kilmokea, which is closer to the site of the pre-exisiting monastic settlement and medieval parish church. It seems reasonable to classify this earthwork as possible ringwork castle based on the current state of knowledge.

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[52] T. B. Barry, *The medieval moated sites of south-west Ireland* (Oxford, 1977), p. 63.
[53] Westropp, 'Five large earthworks in the barony of Shelburne, Co. Wexford', p. 12; Colfer, Anglo-Norman settlement in medieval Shelburne, 1169-1307', p. 60; T.E. McNeill, 'Early castles in Leinster' in *J.I.A.*, v (1989-90), p. 58 and p. 64.
[54] Barry, *The medieval moated sites of south-west Ireland*, p. 63.

Site no:	**43**
Site name:	**Greatisland 2**
Townland:	**Greatisland**
Parish:	**Kilmokea**
Barony:	**Shelburne**
County:	**Wexford**
Co-ordinates:	**115200, 268560**
RMP no:	**WX039-028004**
RMP classification:	**enclosure**
Inventory no:	**736**
Inventory classification:	**large enclosure**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

Siting

The site is located in the townland of Greatisland, approximately 150m to the south-south-east of the possible ringwork castle of Greatisland 1 (site no. 42). The site was located halfway down a gentle south-west facing slope overlooking the River Barrow.

Field report

This site is no longer visible at ground level. The existence of two field reports from 1988 and 1992 indicates that the site was visible until the early 1990s, although the measurements given suggest that it was relatively unimpressive. The site consisted of a large sub-circular area, measuring approximately 100m in diameter from north-south and 62m east-west, which was defined by a slight scarp on its southern, western and northern sides. On its eastern side, the site was cut by a field boundary. The interior was raised between 0.5m and 1m above external ground level but the slope of the scarp was very gradual.[1]

The site is shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map as a large circular enclosure. On the south-western side of the enclosure, a well, which is labelled 'Major's Well' is depicted.

[1] Michael Moore, 'Field report' in RMP file WX039028004 (1988); Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), ii, 734.

Documentary references

For a full discussion of the documentary sources relating to Anglo-Norman settlement at Greatisland, please refer to the site report for Greatisland 1 (site no. 42).

Other sites in the local area

The possible ringwork castle of Greatisland 1 is located 150m to the north-north-west. For a full discussion of all possible associated sites, please refer to the site report for Greatisland 1 (site no. 42).

Discussion

As with the possible ringwork site of Greatisland 1, there is some evidence for an enclosure is this location, although it is no longer extant. It seems possible that one of these enclosure represents a ringwork castle. However, as discussed in the site report for Greatisland 1 (no. 42), it seems probable that the *caput* castle of the Island is represented by the exceptionally large 'moated site' at Kilmokea.

Site no:	**44**
Site name:	**Rathnageeragh**
Townland:	**Rathnageeragh**
Parish:	**Owenduff**
Barony:	**Shelburne**
County:	**Wexford**
Co-ordinates:	**279049, 120733**
RMP no:	**WX035-048**
RMP classification:	**ringfort - unclassified**
Inventory no:	**371**
Inventory classification:	**ringfort**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: CIRCULAR MOATED SITE

The site is located in the townland of Rathnageeragh in the parish of Owenduff. Colfer identified this earthwork as a possible ringwork castle,[1] and it was included in Barry's list of possible ringworks on the basis of this suggestion.[2]

Siting

The site overlooks Rathnageeragh Bridge which crosses the Owenduff River approximately 50m to the south-west. The site is situated on a slight rise. The land slopes away gently towards the river to the south, south-west, west and north-west, allowing good views in those directions. To the north and north-east, the site is overshadowed by Tinnacarrick Hill.

Field report

The site consists of a sub-circular platform enclosed by a deep, wide fosse (Figures 5 and 13). The site is very overgrown. The enclosed area has a maximum diameter of 47m (west-north-west to east-south-east) and a minimum diameter of 33m (north-north-east to south-south-west). As the site is very overgrown, it was not possible to obtain internal measurements of the site so these diameter measurements have been taken from the RMP file.[3] The enclosed area is dished, suggesting that it may originally have had an inner bank

[1] William Colfer, 'Anglo-Norman settlement in medieval Shelburne, 1169-1307' (MLitt, TCD, 1986), pp 78-80; William Colfer, *Arrogant trespass: Anglo-Norman Wexford 1169-1400* (Enniscorthy, 2002), p. 191.
[2] T.B. Barry, *The archaeology of medieval Ireland* (London, 1987), pp 52-3.
[3] Michael Moore, 'Field report', 1988, WX035-048.

which has since been trampled down. It is also slightly raised above external ground level. This is more pronounced at the southern side of the site, where the interior is up to 1m than external ground level.

The interior is defined by a steep scarp down into the fosse. The width of the fosse varies from 4m to 8m. The fosse measures between 0.5 and 2m in depth below external ground level. It is flat-bottomed and u-shaped in profile. The fosse was wet when visited in late summer. It seems to be fed by a stream.

There is no evidence of an outer bank and the location of the original entrance is unknown.

Documentary references

By the Reformation, Rathnageeragh was part of the estate held by the Cistercian monks of Tintern Abbey. However, it is unclear if the lands of Rathnageeragh were included in the foundation grant of the abbey. Tintern Abbey was founded by William Marshal *c.*1200, although the foundation charter seems to have been issued several years later.[4] Marshal's charter, which can be dated to 1207-13 based on the witness list, described the abbey's lands as 'next to the water of Bann (Bannow)' and 'west of Auanduff (Owenduff)'.[5] These lands had originally been part of Hervey de Monte Marisco's barony of Bargy but had reverted back to William Marshal, earl of Leinster, on Hervey's death in 1205.[6] Although Rathnageeragh is located to the east of the Owenduff River, the documentary evidence does suggest that Rathnageeragh was part of the Tintern estate in the thirteenth century.

The deforestation charter issued by Richard Marshal, earl of Leinster (1231-1234), seems to contain a reference to Rathnageeragh. It records that the boundary of the Forest of Ross

[4] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, pp 185-6.
[5] G.H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20), ii, 207; Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 185.
[6] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, pp 185.

ran past 'the bridge of the sheep of the monks'.[7] As suggested by Orpen and Brooks, this bridge may have been located at Rathnageeragh.[8] The place name of 'Rathnageeragh' can be translated as the 'rath of the sheep' and the townland of Rathnageeragh is located in roughly the correct location in relation to the other places listed along the boundary. The present Rathnageeragh Bridge, which appears to be relatively modern, crosses the Owenduff River approximately 500m to the south-west of the site.

If this reference does relate to Rathnageeragh, it suggests that the monks of Tintern held Rathnageeragh by 1234 at the latest, and that it was probably included in the original early thirteenth-century land grant. As both Colfer and O'Conor have argued, it seems likely that Rathnageeragh functioned as a monastic grange in the thirteenth century.[9]

Rathnageeragh was held by Tintern Abbey at the time of the Dissolution; an extent of the monasteries possessions in 1541 states that 'Ranageeragh' consisted of 60 acres of pasture, wood and moor, and was leased to David Power with the usual customs for 17s.[10]

The *Civil Survey* records that there was 'a decayed castle' and 240 acres at 'Ranageeragh' in the mid-seventeenth century. It was the property of Sir Caesar Coclough, who also held Boley and Ballygarvan.[11] Although this is the earliest known reference to a castle at Rathnageeragh, the fact that it was 'decayed' may suggest that the castle had been there some time. It seems likely that this castle was a stone castle situated within the earthwork at Rathnageeragh. Jeffrey noted that the field in which the site is located is known locally as the 'Castle Meadow' and that there were 'a few large stones' in the interior of the site.[12]

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[7] J. T. Gilbert, (ed.), *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin, with the register of its house at Dunbrody and Annals of Ireland* (2 vols, Dublin, 1884), ii, 154; G. H. Orpen and E. St J. Brooks, 'Charters of Earl Richard Marshal of the Forests of Ross and Taghmon' in *J.R.S.A.I.*, lxiv (1934), p. 56.
[8] Orpen and Brooks, 'Charters of Earl Richard Marshal of the Forests of Ross and Taghmon', p. 56.
[9] Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), i, 351; Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, 190-1.
[10] N. B. White, (ed.), *Extents of the Irish monastic possessions, 1540-1541* (Dublin, 1943), p. 359.
[11] R. C. Simmington, (ed.), *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-1656. Volume 9: County of Wexford* (Dublin, 1953), p. 179.
[12] W.H. Jeffrey, *The castles of Co. Wexford: notes compiled from various sources* (Wexford, 1979), p. 167.

Colfer also reported that there were traces of masonry rubble in the interior.[13] No trace of a stone structure can now be seen at ground level but this may be because the site is so overgrown at present. Colfer's suggestion that the stone castle here may have been a tower house rather than an earlier castle seems the most likely interpretation. It may have been part of a defensive line of tower houses, including those at Boley, Tellarought, Taylorstown, Ballygarvan, which were constructed along the eastern boundary of the Tintern lands in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[14]

Other sites in the local area

There are no other known archaeological sites in the townland of Rathnageeragh and there is no evidence for a church in the immediate vicinity. The parish church of Owenduff lies approximately 4km away in the townland of Yoletown. However, a medieval church also existed at Nash, approximately 1650m to the southwest of the site. The modern road runs directly between Rathnageeragh and Nash. Although a rectangular graveyard still survives at Nash, nothing of the church structure survives at ground level. This church may have functioned as a chapel, serving the northern end of the parish of Owenduff.

Discussion

Although this earthwork seems be Anglo-Norman in origin, there is little evidence to support its classification as a ringwork castle. In terms of morphology, the site resembles a circular moated site, particularly as it has a wet moat fed by a stream. The earthwork's siting is not particularly defensive and there is no documentary evidence for a manor being established at Rathnageeragh in the late twelfth century or for an associated medieval church or manorial settlement in this location. The later documentary evidence strongly suggests that Rathnageeragh was part of the estate held by Tintern Abbey and it seems likely that the earthwork functioned as the centre of a monastic grange. Therefore, O'Conor's classification of the site as a circular moated site seems reasonable.[15]

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[13] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 191.
[14] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 191.
[15] O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', i, 343-52.

Site no: **45**
Site name: **Templetown**
Townland: **Templetown**
Parish: **Templetown**
Barony: **Shelburne**
County: **Wexford**
Co-ordinates: **275559, 103633**
S.M.R. no: **WX049-007**
S.M.R. classification: **earthwork**
Inventory no: **927**
Inventory classification: **earthwork (site)**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: DISCARDED

This earthwork was identified as a possible ringwork castle by Colfer,[1] and was included in Barry's list on the basis of information provided by Colfer.[2] The earthwork was removed in the 1970s.

Siting

This earthwork site was located immediately to the north-west of the ruined medieval church at Templetown, on a natural hillock overlooking a stream.

Description

Colfer has shown that there was a circular enclosure site here. It consisted of a circular raised platform, which was raised approximately 1m above ground level and measured *c.* 25m in diameter.[3] It was deliberately levelled in the 1970s and has since been repeatedly ploughed over. However, Colfer drew a plan of the earthwork prior to its destruction (Figures 5 and 14). No trace of the site is visible at ground level.

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[1] William Colfer, 'Anglo-Norman settlement in medieval Shelburne, 1169-1307' (MLitt, TCD, 1986), p. 77; William Colfer, *Arrogant trespass: Anglo-Norman Wexford, 1169-1400* (Enniscorthy, 2002), p. 57 and p. 196.
[2] T. B. Barry, *The archaeology of medieval Ireland* (London, 1987), pp 52-3.
[3] Colfer, 'Anglo-Norman settlement in medieval Shelburne, 1169-1307', p. 77.

This site is shown on the First Edition OS map as a circular enclosure adjacent to the church. While it is likely that this raised mound was of archaeological significance, it is unclear what type of site it was. Colfer has suggested that the mound may have been the remains of a partial ringwork castle, constructed by the Knights Templar adjacent to their church.[4] Colfer has suggested that there is a link between military orders and ringwork castles and has also identified a possible ringwork castle associated with the Hospitaller manor at Ballyhoge (site no. 33).[5] The recorded morphology of the destroyed earthwork at Templetown makes Colfer's interpretation seem unlikely as there was apparently no trace or an enclosing bank or fosse around the platform. Excavations in Britain have shown that the settlements associated with Templar preceptories were generally more agricultural that military in character and typically took the form of granges rather than castles.

As the site appears to have been merely a raised, circular platform, Colfer's more recent suggestion that it represents a windmill mound seems more probable.[6] Located on a natural hillock close to the coast, the site would have been ideal for a windmill. As discussed below, the documentary evidence indicates that there was a windmill associated with the manor Kilcloggan by the early fourteenth century.

The use of windmills is documented in western Europe from the late eleventh century, and in England from the late twelfth century.[7] Although the first known documentary reference to a windmill in Ireland is from 1281 and relates to the windmill at Rindoon, it is likely that they were in use before this date.[8] The most common type of medieval windmill was the wooden post-mill. The post-mill structure could be rotated around a central post in order to catch the wind. As post-mills were constructed around a central post, they could be unstable and prone to falling over in stormy weather. Excavations of post-mills have shown that they relied upon a supporting substructure, consisting of a horizontal cross of two huge

[4] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass,* p. 57 and p. 196.
[5] Ibid., p. 205.
[6] Ibid., p. 200, footnote 97.
[7] Richard Holt, *The mills of medieval England* (London, 1988), pp 20-1.
[8] Rynne, *Technological change in Anglo-Norman Munster*, p. 79.

timbers (the cross-trees) with sloping beams connecting the cross-trees and the central post. This substructure was often covered by earth to further strengthen it, creating a low mound.[9] The remains of medieval post-mills can be recognised in the landscape as small mounds, often featuring cross shaped depressions on their summits. These depressions are caused by earth falling into the cavities left when the timbers of the wooden foundations have rotted away. These mounds resemble 'hot-cross buns' and can be identified on aerial photographs.

Some later windmills of tower-mill type seem to have also been constructed on raised platforms. This may be because they were constructed on the sites of post-mill predecessors or, alternatively, it may have been intended to heighten the windmills allowing them to catch more wind.

Documentary references

In 1172, Henry II granted lands including Clontarf in Dublin, Crook and Kilbarry in Waterford, and 'the church of St Aloch near Wexford' to the Knights Templar.[10] It is generally accepted that the latter refers to Kilcloggan, on the Hook Peninsula.[11] The medieval manor of Kilcloggan consisted of the civil parishes of Templetown and Hook.

The Templars had probably established their preceptory at Kilcloggan by the end of the twelfth century. Colfer has suggested that the earthwork site adjacent to the medieval church of Templetown may represent the remains of a ringwork castle constructed by the Templars. However, there are no known references to a castle located in the vicinity of Templetown ain this period. It is notable that an early fourteenth-century inventory of the manor of Kilcloggan, which was taken following the arrest and imprisonment of the Templars in 1307, makes no mention of a castle. It is notable that the possessions listed in

[9] Holt, *The mills of medieval England*, p. 140-1.
[10] H. S. Sweetman, (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland,* (5 vols, London, 1875-83), iii, 329.
[11] P. H. Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford* (6 vols, London, 1900-11), iii, 266; G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans,* (4 vols, Oxford, 1911-20), i, 274; Colfer, *Arrogant trespass,* p. 196.

the inventory consist almost completely of agricultural and household goods.[12] This suggests that the main concern of the Templars of Kilcloggan was farming, as one might expect of a monastic grange, albeit one belonging to a military order.

The inventory does contain a very interesting allusion to a windmill; it records that, amongst the Templars' possessions, there was 'iron for the repair of the broken sail of the windmill'.[13] This lends weight to Colfer's suggestion that the earthwork at Templetown may have been a windmill mound.[14]

Although documentary evidence for an Anglo-Norman castle at Templetown is lacking, the historical sources show that there was a castle in the area in the later medieval period. An extent of the manor of Kilcloggan, dating to 1540-41, records that there was, 'a castle or fortilage in good repair, very necessary for the defence of the country and protection of the goods of the king's tenants in time of war of the Caverners and other Irish, near whose countries the castle lies'.[15] The *Civil Survey* recorded that there was an 'old castle' at Kilcloggan, which was the inheritance of Nicholas Loftus.[16] It seems probable that these references relate to the tower house known as Kilcloggan Castle, which is discussed below.

Other sites in the local area

The site of the medieval church stands within a rectangular graveyard, approximately 50m to the south-east of the site of the earthwork. Although only traces of the original church are visible, a fortified tower, which is thought to have been added to the church by the Hospitallers, has survived.[17] A bullaun stone and a thirteenth century coffin-lid have been

[12] Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford*, iii, 277.
[13] Hore, *The history of the town and county of Wexford*, iii, 277.
[14] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass,* p. 200, footnote 97.
[15] N. B. White, (ed.), *Extents of the Irish monastic possessions, 1540-1541* (Dublin, 1943), p. 100.
[16] R. C. Simmington, (ed.), *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-1656. Volume 9: County of Wexford* (Dublin, 1953), p. 169.
[17] *Inventory*, no. 1302, p. 137; WX049-008.

noted within the graveyard. The coffin-lid is notable because it features a depiction of a floriated cross and *Agnus Dei,* a symbol commonly used by the Templars as a seal.[18]

A promontory fort is located approximately 1km to the south of the earthwork site, also in the townland of Templetown.[19]

The tower house known as Kilcloggan Castle is located approximately 1km to the north-north-west of the church and adjacent earthwork at Templetown, in the adjacent townland of Kilcloggan.[20] This tower house can be dated to the fifteenth century on stylistic grounds.[21] It seems likely that this is the castle referred to in the early modern sources.

Discussion

The levelled mound appears to be a site of archaeological significance. There does not seem to be any evidence to support the interpretation of this site as a ringwork castle. It seems more likely that it represents the remains of a windmill mound.

[18] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass,* p. 200.
[19] *Inventory*, no. 228, p. 26; WX049-009.
[20] *Inventory*, no. 1528, p. 173; WX049-004.
[21] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass,* p. 204.

Site no:	**46**
Site name:	**Toberfinnick**
Townland:	**Toberfinnick**
Parish:	**Artraman**
Barony:	**Shelmalier East**
County:	**Wexford**
Co-ordinates:	**302903, 128840**
RMP no:	**WX032-021**
RMP classification:	**castle - ringwork**
Inventory no:	**963**
Inventory classification:	**possible ringwork**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

This earthwork was first identified as a possible ringwork castle by Colfer.[1] It was classified as a possible ringwork castle in the *Inventory* and is currently classified as a ringwork castle on the RMP.

Siting

The site is located on a promontory above a bend in the River Sow. There are steep slopes down to the river on the north, east and south of the site. On the western, landward side, there is a gentle slope down to the remainder of the promontory.

The probable motte at Castlesow (site no. 37) is located on the opposite bank of the river, approximately 100m to the south of the earthwork at Toberfinnick.

Field report

The site consists of a sub-circular interior defined by a substantial inner bank and external fosse on its landward side and by steep scarped slopes down into the ravine on its eastern, southern and western sides (Figure 6).

[1] William Colfer, *Arrogant trespass: Anglo-Norman Wexford, 1169-1400* (Enniscorthy, 2002), p. 56 and p. 60.

The interior slopes from north-west to south-east, although this may be partly due to the collapse and spread of the inner bank at the north-west. From scarp to scarp, the interior measures approximately 29m from north-west to south-east and approximately 21.5m from north-east to south-west.

At the northwest of the site, there is an inner bank, which measures up to 2.5m above the centre of the interior. However, the bank is not very well-defined and the slope down towards the interior is very gradual.

From the inner bank, there is a steep drop down into the fosse, approximately 3m below. The fosse is flat-bottomed and measures up to 4m in width and up to 1.5m below external ground level. The fosse is only present at the north-west of the site. However, it extends as a berm or terrace, which measures up to 3m in width, around the rest of the site. From the edge of the terrace there is a steep slope down into the ravine.

It is unclear where the entrance to the site was positioned. It may have been located in the same position as the modern path which enters the site at the west-north-west.

Documentary references

There is no known documentary evidence for a castle or Anglo-Norman manorial settlement at Toberfinnick.

Toberfinnick lay within the district of Fernegenal. It has been suggested that the motte at Castlesow, which lies across the river from the earthwork at Toberfinnick, represents the *caput* castle of the Roche lands in Fernegenal. For a full discussion of the documentary sources relating to history of this area, please refer to the site report for Castlesow (site no. 37).

The Roches enfeoffed the Sinnotts with some lands in Fernegenal sometime in the first half of the thirteenth century. The River Sow was to from the boundary between the two

portions of land.[2] Colfer has suggested that, '...this could possibly be the reason for the two defensive earthworks [Castlesow and Toberfinnick] in such close proximity.'[3] While this is possible, it must be remembered that there is no documentary evidence to prove that both sites functioned as castles and were occupied contemporaneously. Also, it seems unlikely that the Sinnotts would have deliberately constructed a castle directly opposite that of their Roche overlords. More recently, Colfer has suggested that the motte at Ballinamorragh in the parish of Ardcolm may represent the manorial centre of the Sinnott land-holding,[4] which seems more likely.

Other sites in the local area

The only other known archaeological monument in the townland of Toberfinnick is a possible enclosure,[5] which is located approximately 300m to the west-north-west of the possible ringwork.

A probable motte (site no. 37) is located on the opposite bank of the river, in the adjoining townland of Castlesow.

Discussion

Both the siting of this earthwork on a promontory overlooking the River Sow and its morphology are consistent with a ringwork castle classification. However, there is no known documentary evidence for a castle or manorial centre in this location. There is also no archaeological evidence for a church or any other associated Anglo-Norman features in the local area. The nature of the relationship between this earthwork and the probable motte across the river at Castlesow is unknown. In conclusion, while it seems possible that this site represents a ringwork castle, the lack of a historical context for its construction and the

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[2] E. St J. Brooks, *Knights' fees in counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny* (Dublin, 1950), pp 147-8.
[3] William Colfer, 'Anglo-Norman settlement in County Wexford' in Kevin Whelan, and William Nolan, (eds), *Wexford: history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1987), p. 77
[4] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 105.
[5] WX-032-036.

lack of evidence for associated settlement make it dubious. For this reason, the site can only be classified as a possible ringwork castle.

Site no:	**47**
Site name:	**Ballyvolan Lower**
Townland:	**Ballyvolan Lower**
Parish:	**Killiskey**
Barony:	**Newcastle**
Co-ordinates:	**328784, 201730**
RMP no:	**WI019-017**
RMP classification:	**castle - ringwork**
Inventory no:	**1108**
Inventory classification:	**ringwork**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: RINGWORK CASTLE

Siting

The site is located on flat ground and does not command particularly good views. A small stream flows past the site to the south and south-east. The documentary sources discussed below frequently refer to the castle sites of Newcastle McKynegan, Kilmartin and Killoughter together. These sites seem to have been deliberately constructed in a line, at 2km intervals, in order to protect the coastal strip between Bray and Wicklow. This may account for the relatively poor siting of the castle.

Field report

The site is very overgrown. It consists of a D-shaped interior, defined by fragments of a stone wall and enclosed by a wide fosse and external bank (Figure 5). A modern bungalow, constructed in 1959, is located in the interior of the site.[1] The drive leading up to the house crosses the enclosing fosse at the south of the site. The original entrance was probably located here. There is also a possible entrance causeway at the east of the site.[2]

The straight side of the D-shaped enclosure, which runs from the north-west to the south of the site, measures approximately 35m in length. From east to west, the site measures

[1] Michael Moore, 'Field report', 1994, RMP file WI019-017; Liam Price, Christiaan Corlett and Matthew Weaver, *The Price Notebooks*, (2 vols, Dublin, 2002), ii, p. 648-9.
[2] Linzi Simpson, 'Anglo-Norman settlement in Uí Briúin Cualann, 1169-1350' in Ken Hannigan and William Nolan, (eds), *Wicklow: history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1994), pp 191-235.

approximately 28m. The interior was originally enclosed by a stone wall around its perimeter. A section of this stone wall can be seen at the north of the site where it measures 1.5m in width and survives to a maximum height of 4m. This section of wall follows the curve of the enclosure; this suggests that the wall may follow the line of an earlier timber palisade.[3] A low wall continues in a clockwise direction around the perimeter from the north to the south. However, as O'Conor has pointed out, this section of the wall appears to be an overgrown, modern wall, defining the garden of the bungalow.[4] Price, writing in 1959, recorded that the owner of the bungalow had discussed 'repairing' the wall with him and he had advised against it.[5] A low bank runs along the western, straight side of the enclosure. This bank measures approximately 3m in width and is a maximum of 50cm high. This bank may cover the foundations of the original wall.[6] There may also have been towers at the angles of the enclosing wall. When Price visited the site in 1931, the foundations of a square tower were clearly visible at the south-western corner of the site.[7] Price later noted that the possible traces of a round tower or bastion could be seen at the north-east angle.[8]

A deep, flat-bottomed fosse encloses the site. It measures between 10 and 15m in width. On the eastern and northern sides, it measures up to 3.5m in depth below the level of the internal and external ground level. On the western side of the site, the fosse is shallower, measuring approximately 50cm in depth. According to the field report contained in the RMP file, this is because the fosse on this side was deliberately backfilled in the last thirty-five years.[9] The fosse may originally have been water-filled; Price, who visited the site in the 1930s, noted that the stream to the south of the site could have supplied water to fill the

[3] David Johnson, quoted by Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), ii, 708.
[4] Ibid., ii, 707.
[5] Price, Corlett and Weaver, *The Price Notebooks*, ii, 649.
[6] O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of Leinster', ii, 707.
[7] Price, Corlett and Weaver, *The Price Notebooks*, i, 109-10, 158 and 161.
[8] Ibid., ii, 553.
[9] Moore, 'Field report', WI019-017.

ditch and he was also informed that a stone lined tunnel conducted water from the stream into the fosse.[10]

An external bank survives on the eastern side of the site and at the northern-western corner. This bank measures between 3m and 5m in height above the base of the fosse.

A silver ring pin brooch was found at Ballyvolan in the late nineteenth century. It is decorated with raised bosses and interlaced birds and is believed to be late ninth or tenth-century in date.[11] The brooch was reportedly found 'in the ruins of Ballyvolan Fort'.[12] When Liam Price visited Ballyvolan in 1932, the landowner informed him that the brooch had been found in the wall of the fort on the north side. However, Price doubted that this statement was 'accurate enough to be accepted without verification'.[13]

Documentary references

The fortification at 'Kilmartre' appears frequently in the mid-fourteenth-century documentary sources. In 1335, Murchadh O'Byrne negotiated peace with the justiciar, John Darcy, and it was agreed that Murchadh and his wife would live under English protection at Kilmartin or Wicklow.[14]

A document dating to 1356 refers to, '...wards placed by the king and by the communities of those parts at Killoghtre, Kylmartre, Newcastle McKinegan, Kylrothery, Bree, Carrigmayn, Dundrom, Tauelaght and Saggart in Leinster in Co. Dublin and at Kylhele, Rathmore, Balymore, and Grane in Cos. Kildare and Carlow, in defence of the marches of those counties and the king's faithful people there against the hostil attacks of Obryn, Otothill, Onolan and their accomplices..'[15] This shows that the site at Kilmartin was part of

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[10] Simpson, 'Anglo-Norman settlement in Uí Briúin Cualann, 1169-1350', pp 220-1.
[11] http://www.ulstermuseum.org.uk/look-and-learn/object-of-the-month/20, accessed 3 May 2009.
[12] Liam Price, 'Early Irish silver brooch from County Wicklow' in *J.R.S.A.I.*, lxviii (1938), pp 145-6.
[13] Price, Corlett and Weaver, *The Price Notebooks*, i, 162.
[14] N.L.I. GO MS191, pp 57-8, paraphrased by Emmett O'Byrne, *War, politics and the Irish of Leinster* (Dublin, 2003), p. 93.
[15] Philomena Connolly, (ed.), *Irish Exchequer Payments, 1270-1446* (Dublin, 1998), p. 472.

a chain of fortifications occupied by royal forces, located on the peripheries of the territory under royal control.

A series of entries in the *Irish Exchequer Payments*, refer to the site at Kilmartin in the mid-fourteenth century. In 1356, Donaldus, son of Paul Lawles, received £5 13*s.* 4*d.*, '...for the wages of 16 foot soldiers in his company in a ward at Kilmartre for the secure defence of that place and the neighbouring parts.'[16]

In 1356-8, it is recorded that John Scrop, the clerk appointed to '...pay wages to the men at arms, hobelars and foot soldiers in the castles of Newcastle McKynegan, Kylloghtre, Kylmartre and other fortalices and wards in the marches of Leinster...', received £369 5*s.* 4*d.*[17]

In 1358-9, John Scrop received £200 to pay wages to the men 'recently' in the castles of Newcastle McKynegan, Killoughter and Kilmartin and other wards and fortalices in the marches of Leinster and to provide victuals and other necessary items to the said fortifications.[18]

In 1359-60, Scrop received £179 10*s.* 8¼*d.* to pay the wages of the men 'staying at the castles of Newcastle McKinegan, Killoghtre, Kilmartre and other fortalices and wards.' This entry is notable because it alludes to the activities taking place during the warfare in Wicklow. The payment also covered the wages of messengers going between the justiciar, the king's court and the Gaelic Irish 'for the restoration of peace'; repairs to the castles; carriage of victuals to the castles and payments to '...men appointed to burn the enemies' houses by night and to spy out booty in their possession.'[19]

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[16] Ibid., p. 471.
[17] Ibid., p. 480.
[18] Ibid., p. 492.
[19] Ibid., p. 497.

Another entry, dating to 1359-60, refers to the provision of supplies to the castles of Newcastle McKynegan, Killoghtre and Kilmartre. It also states that nearby Killoghtre was besieged by the local Gaelic Irish but was relieved by royal forces.[20]

In 1360-61, John Scrope received £302 16*s*. 4*d*. to pay wages to the men in '...the king's castles of McKinegan, Kiloghtre, Kilmartre and other fortalices and wards'.[21]

These references clearly show that, in the mid-fourteenth century, the fortifications at Kilmartin, Newcastle McKynegan and Killoughter were occupied by royal forces and played a major role in the military campaigns against the Gaelic Irish in Wicklow. In the case of Newcastle McKynegan, the historical evidence shows that the castle was constructed in the twelfth century and continuously occupied into the fourteenth century. However, it is unclear if the site at nearby Kilmartin was constructed in response to pressure from the Gaelic Irish in the fourteenth century or if a pre-existing ringwork castle was refortified by the royal forces. The lack of earlier documentary evidence suggests that, if there was already a castle here, it may have been a relatively unimportant site. The contemporary sources refer to the site as both a 'castle' and a 'ward'.

Other sites in the local area

A ruined church is located approximately 290m to the south of the site, in the adjoining townland of Kilmartin. The church stands within a sub-circular graveyard. Both the shape of the graveyard and the 'kill' element of the place name suggest that the site may be pre-Norman in origin. Price and Leask visited Kilmartin Church in 1932. It is recorded in *The Price Notebooks* that Leask 'came to the conclusion that the church was Anglo-Norman, not earlier.'[22]

A possible metal-working site was discovered at Ballyvolan in the 1950s. Price recorded that the site was located between 250 and 300 yards (230-275m) to the west of the

[20] Ibid., p. 498.
[21] Ibid., p. 505.
[22] Price, Corlett and Weaver, *The Price Notebooks*, i, p. 161.

ringwork site. It consisted of an underground tunnel, lined with boulders and covered with flagstones, which led to a pit with iron slag in it. Price believed it to be 'some kind of medieval iron-smelting place' and wondered if it was contemporary with the ringwork site.[23]

The documentary references listed above clearly show that, in the fourteenth century, the site at Kilmartin was closely associated with the castles of Newcastle McKynegan and Killoughter. Newcastle McKynegan is also a ringwork castle classified it as a ringwork castle (see site report no. 50). The castle of Killoughter is probably represented by a site consisting of two conjoined rectilinear enclosures in Killoughter townland, which is currently classified as a 'moated site – probable' by the RMP.[24] These three castle sites are located at 2km intervals in a line. The historical evidence records that the castles housed small garrisons engaged in warfare with the Gaelic Irish. The castles would also have provided some protection for Anglo-Norman settlements along the arable strip of land along the coast between Bray and Wicklow. Shanahan has argued that, as local levies helped to pay for the royal troops stationed at these castles, '...it would appear that these small garrisons were designed to protect existing manor communities.'[25]

The O.S. maps show that the road network around Ballyvolan Lower has changed considerably over the past century. As Price has argued, it seems likely that the small modern road, which runs past the church and curves around the western side of the site, represents a medieval road. This road leads directly to Newcastle Middle to the north and Killoughter to the south.[26] These three castles may have been deliberately constructed close to the road in order to protect traffic using it.

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[23] Ibid., ii, pp 552-3.
[24] *Inventory*, no. 1077, p. 169; WI019-040001.
[25] Brian Shanahan, 'The manor in east county Wicklow', in James Lyttleton and Tadhg O'Keeffe, (eds), *The manor in medieval and early modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2005), pp 132-59.
[26] Price, Corlett and Weaver, *The Price Notebooks*, i, 42-3, 46-7 and 651.

Discussion

The morphology of the site at Ballyvolan Lower is roughly consistent with that of a ringwork castle. Many ringwork castles are irregular or D-shaped rather than circular. However, the interior appears to have been defined by a substantial stone wall in addition to the wide external fosse. The presence of stone features does not necessarily contradict the classification of the site as a ringwork castle. However, as both Simpson and McNeill have argued, it is perhaps more logical to interpret the site in its final phase as a polygonal stone enclosure castle with earthwork defences rather than a ringwork castle.[27] The documentary evidence shows that the site was occupied in the fourteenth century. However, it seems probable that the fourteenth century enclosure castle was based on a pre-existing castle of ringwork type and was not an entirely new fortification.

[27] Simpson, 'Anglo-Norman settlement in Uí Briúin Cualann, 1169-1350', pp 191-235; T. E. McNeill, *Castles in Ireland: feudal power in a Gaelic world* (London, 1997), pp 155-6.

Site no:	**48**
Site name:	**Black Castle**
Townland:	**Corporation Lands (1st Division)**
Parish:	**Rathnew**
Barony:	**Newcastle**
County:	**Wicklow**
Co-ordinates:	**332309, 194042**
RMP no:	**WI025-013**
RMP classification:	**castle - Anglo-Norman**
Inventory no:	**1124**
Inventory classification:	**castle**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

It has been suggested that the Black Castle at Wicklow may have originated as a partial ringwork.[1] Although there is documentary evidence for an early Anglo-Norman castle at Wicklow, it is not clear whether or not the early castle was on the same site as the Black Castle.

Siting

The Black Castle is located on a triangular promontory to the south-east of the harbour at Wicklow Town (Plate 3b). This exposed rocky promontory is cut off on its western, landward side by a deep fosse. On its sides, the promontory is defined by steep cliffs.

Field report

The inner ward of the stone castle is located on the triangular promontory, which measures approximately 28m from north to south and 17m from east to west. This promontory is cut off from the bailey by a deep rock-cut fosse, which appears to be at least partly natural. The fosse measures approximately 11.5m in width and 5m in depth (Figure 6).

The stone castle is roughly triangular in plan, making maximum use of the space available on the small promontory. It seems to have been a castle of enclosure type, consisting of a

[1] Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), i, 113-16.

triangular curtain wall enclosing the area of the promontory with towers at each of the angles.

On the western landward side, the curtain wall survives to a maximum external height of 1.2m. There is a gap of 1.5m at the centre of this wall, allowing visitors to access the site via rock-cut steps leading up from the fosse. While the rock-cut steps appear to be modern, it is unclear if the corresponding gap in the wall is original or not. It seems possible that there was originally a bridge in this position.

The remains of a corner tower survive at the angle where the western and southern walls meet. This tower survives to a height of over 4m in places, and is roughly rectangular or quadrangular in shape. The southern and eastern walls survive to a height of two courses in most places. There are traces of a corner tower where the southern and eastern walls meet. There may have been a third corner tower at the third angle although no traces of it remain.

Two simple straight arrow-loops survive in the southern corner tower. The dressings around one of the arrow loops in the southern corner tower appear to be of Dundry stone, an oolithic limestone imported from the Dundry Hills near Bristol.[2] This stone was imported into Ireland from *c.*1175 onwards and was used in the construction of many Anglo-Norman buildings along the eastern coast of Ireland. [3]

In the eastern wall, there is a small opening and a gully, possibly representing the remains of a garderobe. Adjacent to the southern wall, there is a rectangular depression, measuring 13.8m by 3.4m. O'Conor has suggested that this depression may represent the remains of the castle's hall.[4]

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[2] D. M. Waterman, 'Somersetshire and other foreign building stone in medieval Ireland, 1175-1400' in *U.J.A.*, xxxiii (1970), p. 71; O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', ii, 747.
[3] Waterman, 'Somersetshire and other foreign building stone in medieval Ireland, 1175-1400', pp 73-4
[4] O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', ii, 748.

A flight of steps down to the sea survives on the eastern side of the castle. These steps are known as the 'Blackamoor' steps and they appear to have been re-cut several times. It is not possible to date these steps although the level of weathering suggests that they are relatively old.

The bailey lies to the adjacent to the castle on its landward side. This area is defined by earthen banks and there also seem to be the remains of some walls below ground level in the bailey area.

Documentary evidence

Wicklow was an important Viking coastal settlement in the pre-Norman period. The town of Wicklow does not seem to have been included in the original land grant of Leinster to Strongbow. According to Gerald of Wales, Henry II retained control of Dublin and the coastal cities, presumably including Wicklow, for himself.[5] However, the king made an additional grant of both the city of Wexford and 'the castle of Wicklow' to Strongbow in 1172.[6] This is the earliest direct reference to a castle at Wicklow. Strongbow subsequently granted the castle to Maurice fitz Gerald.[7] Strongbow seems to have continued to hold some demesne lands in the vicinity of Wicklow town as the documentary evidence shows that he continued to make grants of land around Wicklow.[8]

Maurice fitz Gerald held the castle at Wicklow until he died in 1176, shortly after Strongbow himself. The justiciar, William fitz Adelin, seems to have taken the castle of Wicklow from the Maurice's sons; Gerald of Wales records that fitz Adelin cheated the sons of Maurice by taking the castle of Wicklow from them through trickery, although they

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[5] *Expugnatio Hibernica. The Conquest of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis*, edited by A. B. Scott and F. X. Martin (Dublin, 1978), p. 28.
[6] Ibid., p. 44.
[7] James Mills and M. J. McEnery, (eds), *Calendar of the Gormanston Register* (Dublin, 1916), p. 193; *Expugnatio Hibernica*, p. 4.
[8] *Calendar of ancient deeds and muniments preserved in the Pembroke Estate Office, Dublin* (Dublin, 1891), p. 11.

later received the manor of Ferns in compensation.[9] The circumstances surrounding this incident are unclear. It seems possible that fitz Adelin was acting on behalf of the king and that Maurice fitz Gerald was the constable of the castle at Wicklow rather than the owner. If this was the case, fitz Adelin may have legitimately taken Wicklow into his custody along with all castles held by the Lord of Leinster, in order to hold them until Strongbow's heir reached majority.

The fitz Geralds seems to have retained control of some of their lands in Wicklow, but not the castle itself. In the late 1180s, they granted the manor of Wicklow to Meiler fitz Henry. In 1216, King John ordered that when fitz Henry should die or enter a religious order, his overlord William Marshal would receive all his lands.[10] However, when fitz Henry became a monk, the manor of Wicklow seems to have reverted to the fitz Gerald lord of Naas, because it had been originally granted to him by the fitz Geralds. In a charter dating to 1229, Wicklow is referred to as the 'the land of the baron of Naas'.[11]

William Marshal appears to have held the castle and some demesne lands in Wicklow in the early thirteenth century. The *History of William Marshal* records that William Marshal was in residence at a castle at Wicklow in late 1208 or early 1209. Having fallen out of favour with King John, William de Braose fled to Ireland with his family, seeking shelter with the Earl of Ulster. However, the ship was blown off course during a storm and landed at Wicklow;

> 'His mind was in great torment
> And the rising waves and tide
> Drove his ship towards Wicklow
> Where the earl was in residence'.[12]

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[9] *Expugnatio Hibernica*, p. 15.
[10] H. S. Sweetman, (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland,* (5 vols, London, 1875-83), i, 106.
[11] Ibid., i, 262.
[12] Holden, A. J., Gregory, Stewart, and Crouch, David, (eds), *Histoire de Guillaume le Marechal or The history of William Marshal* (2 vols, London, 2002-06), Lines 14184-14187.

Marshal seems to have offered shelter to the de Braose family, a decision that King John questioned when he arrived in Ireland. During the reported conversation, Marshal states that he did so because de Braose had landed below his castle at Wicklow.[13]

The documentary evidence clearly shows that there was a castle in Wicklow town from as early as the 1170s. The issue of whether the early castle was located on the same site as the Black Castle will be discussed below.

Other sites in the local area

It seems possible a mound at the northern end of the town, rather than the Black Castle, could represent the remains of an early motte castle at Wicklow. This steep sided mound, known as the 'Round Mount', is between 6 and 7 m high and is situated on high ground overlooking the River Leitrim.[14] In addition to its morphology, the siting of the mound in a defensive position adjacent to the probable site of the medieval church suggests that it is a motte castle. While it seems likely that the Round Mount was an early earth and timber fortress, its origins are unclear. The focus of the Viking town seems to have been in this area of the town and it seems possible that the mound may have been a feature of the Viking settlement. Price has suggested that the 'Round Mount' could be a Viking 'assembly mound'. However, as Duffy has argued in relation to the location of the Viking assembly in Dublin, there is little evidence to suggest that such assemblies met on raised mounds.[15] The morphology and defensive siting of the 'Round Mount' are more suggestive of an earthwork castle, of either Viking or Anglo-Norman date. It seems probable that it was this mound, rather than the Black Castle, which was the site of the early Anglo-Norman castle, referred to in the 1172 grant. The site may have already been fortified by the Vikings, making it logical for the Anglo-Normans to re-occupy it. Future excavation may clarify the chronology and function of this mound.

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[13] Ibid., Lines 14296-14399.

[14] *Inventory*, no. 1112, p. 177; WI025-012.

[15] Seán Duffy, 'A reconsideration of the site of Dublin's Viking *Thing-mót*' in Christiaan Corlett and Tom Condit, (eds), *Above and Beyond: essays in memory of Leo Swan* (Bray, 2005), p. 352.

Nothing remains of the medieval parish church of Wicklow. It seems probable that it occupied the same site as the present Church of Ireland church.[16]

Discussion

The documentary evidence shows that there was a castle of some description at Wicklow by 1172. O'Conor has suggested that the early castle may have been a partial ringwork on the site of the Black Castle. This interpretation seems unlikely for several reasons. Firstly, the Round Mount seems a more likely site for the early castle although it is not impossible that there could have been two earthwork castles. Secondly, the exposed location is unsuitable for a ringwork castle with defences consisting of earth and timber. Given the topography of the site, it seem probable that the Anglo-Normans found it easier to build in stone directly on to the bedrock from the beginning, rather than attempt to construct an earth and timber castle on such an exposed site. It seems more likely that this castle was constructed in stone from the beginning, as a very small enclosure castle, consisting of a triangular curtain wall with towers on the corners. It is difficult to date because the ruins are lacking in datable features. While it has traditionally been assigned to the thirteenth century, there is no apparent reason why it could not have been constructed in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century.[17]

It is possible that the Black Castle was constructed under William Marshal the Elder. The references to the castle at Wicklow in the *History of William Marshal* are significant for several reasons. The descriptions of the ship sailing towards Wicklow and landing below the castle suggests that Marshal's castle at Wicklow was on the site of the Black Castle, which stands on a cliff overlooking the present harbour. However, nothing in the *History* explicitly suggests that the castle was stone rather an earth and timber construction. The poem clearly shows Marshal referring to Wicklow as his castle, suggesting that it was in his

[16] Colmán Etchingham, 'Evidence of Scandinavian settlement in Wicklow' in Ken Hannigan and William Nolan, (eds), *Wicklow: history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1994), p. 125.
[17] O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', ii, 749.

possession by this time. If the castle referred to is indeed the Black Castle, it must have been in existence by *c.*1209.

While the documentary evidence clearly shows that there was a castle at Wicklow in the twelfth century, it is unclear if this castle was located on the same site as the Black Castle or not. O'Conor's suggestion that there may have been a partial ringwork on this site seems unlikely as the site seems too exposed and it would have been difficult to construct an earth and timber castle on this rocky promontory. For these reasons, the site has been classified as a possible ringwork castle.

Site no:	**49**
Site name:	**Kilpipe**
Townland:	**Kilpipe**
Parish:	**Kilpipe**
Barony:	**Ballinacor South**
County:	**Wicklow**
Co-ordinates:	**311121, 177166**
RMP no:	**WI039-016**
RMP classification:	**castle - motte**
Inventory no:	**1117**
Inventory classification:	**motte**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: RINGWORK CASTLE

The site is located in the townland and parish of Kilpipe in south Co. Wicklow. This site was identified as a ringwork castle by Colfer.[1] It is classified as a motte in both the *Inventory* and the RMP. O'Conor rejected the site as an earth and timber castle, stating that 'this site is a ringfort and not a motte.'[2]

Siting

The site is located on the north-eastern end of a high natural ridge, which runs from north-east to south-west (Plate 9b). A ruined church and graveyard are located approximately to the south-west of the site, on the opposite end of the ridge. The site commands excellent views in all directions. A river flows past the site on its eastern and northern sides, providing a defensive barrier.

Field report

The site appears to have been modelled out of one end of a natural ridge. It consists of a platform defined by a fosse and external bank (Figure 6).

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[1] P. D. Sweetman, *The medieval castles of Ireland* (Cork, 1999), p. 9; William Colfer, *Arrogant trespass: Anglo-Norman Wexford, 1169-1400* (Enniscorthy, 2002), p.43.
[2] Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1992), ii, 776.

The enclosed area is raised a minimum 2m above the external ground level. The interior is D-shaped shape and is relatively level. The enclosed area has maximum and minimum dimensions of 41.5m (north-north-east to south-south-west) and 31m (north-west to south-east). There is no evidence for any features in the interior or for an inner bank. The interior is defined by a fosse, which measures up to 4m in depth below the interior. The fosse is not particularly wide, measuring between 4.5m and 8m in width.

The outer bank measures between 50cm and 2m in height above the base of the fosse. The bank measures 1.8m above external ground on the western side of the site where it has been utilised as a field boundary. Elsewhere the bank measures up to 1m above the natural slope; the ground falls away steeply from the base of this bank on the northern, eastern and south-eastern sides of the site.

It is unclear where the original entrance to the site was located. It seems possible that it may have been located at the south-east of the site where the fosse and bank are disturbed. If this disturbance does represent the original entrance, it cannot have been a very wide entrance and access to the site would have been via the steep slope up the ridge from the bailey and through the narrow gap in the bank. This would only have been possible for people on foot as it would have been too steep for vehicles or animals. It seems possible that steps linked the ringwork and the bailey below; an entrance in this location would have had the advantage of allowing direct access from the ringwork down into the bailey.

The bailey is located to the south-east of the ringwork, in the field below the ridge on which the ringwork is located (Plates 5a and 5b). Although this bailey is not mentioned in the RMP file or the *Inventory*, it can clearly be seen in aerial photographs and at ground level. The bailey consists of a large D-shaped enclosure, which measures approximately 80m north-south and 50m east-west. It is defined by a small bank measuring approximately 50cm in height above the interior and up to 1m in width. The external fosse measures up to 1.5m in width, up to 1m in depth below the bank, and approximately 50cm below external

ground level. As discussed above, steps may have connected this bailey to the ringwork castle.

Documentary references

Much of the documentary evidence for Kilpipe relates to the church site there. Although there is no known pre-Norman documentary evidence for a church at Kilpipe, the place-name suggests that it may have been established in the early medieval period. The earliest known reference to the church is contained in a papal bull issued in 1179. In this bull, versions of which are preserved in both *Archbishop Alen's Register* and the *Crede Mihi*, Alexander III confirmed the possessions of the diocese of Glendalough, including the church of 'Cellpichi', to Bishop Malchus, and took the diocese and its churches into papal protection. [3]

Between 1244 and 1251, Lucas, archbishop of Dublin, granted lands including 'Kilpeth', to Theobald Walter.[4] In a later copy of this deed, the place name is written as 'Kilpoth'.[5]

Kilpipe is next mentioned in a writ of Edward I, issued *c.*1301. This writ relates to a request by John Wogan and Maurice de Carreu for the king's permission to grant lands to the Knights Hospitallers; John Wogan intended to grant 10 carucates in 'Kilpyp' while Maurice wished to give 6 carucates in Ballylough in Wexford. An inquisition, held to investigate if it was in the king's interests to give permission for the proposed grants, found that the lands at Kilpipe and Ballylough were held of Joan de Valence by the service of 1/2 of a knight's fee and 1/10 of a knight's fee respectively. It was concluded that John Wogan could afford to grant the lands at Kilpipe, as he would still be left with 10 knights' fees.[6]

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[3] Charles McNeill, (ed.), *Calendar of Archbishop Alen's register, c.1172-1534* (Dublin, 1950), pp 5-6; J. T. Gilbert, *Crede Mihi: the most ancient register book of the archbishops of Dublin before the Reformation,* pp 6-8.
[4] Edmund Curtis, (ed.), *Calendar of Ormond Deeds, 1172-1603* (6 vols, Dublin, 1932-43), i, 44-5.
[5] Ibid., v, 216-7.
[6] H. S. Sweetman, (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland,* (5 vols, London, 1875-83), iv, 355-6.

In 1390, John Brown was presented as chaplain of the church of Kilpipe in the Diocese of Ferns.[7]

Colfer has suggested that the church and ringwork castle at Kilpipe may represent a secondary manorial settlement, which was established on the northern boundary of the large Prendergast manor of Kynelaon.[8]

Other sites in the local area

Kilpipe Church stands approximately 110m to the south-south-east of the ringwork castle, on the opposite end of the same high ridge, overlooking the bailey in the field below. The ruined church which now stands on the site seems to be early eighteenth-century in date. The church is architecturally unusual; it is rectangular with a semi-circular apse at its eastern end, an entrance in the western wall and large Georgian windows. The church was drawn by Beranger in the late eighteenth century, and as it was in ruins by that time, it cannot have been in use as a church for very long.[9]

The 'kil' prefix in the place-name of Kilpipe suggests that there may have been a pre-Norman ecclesiastical site here. The graveyard around the church is enclosed by a small bank and external ditch and is irregular in shape. Although it is roughly rectangular at the east, it appears to be almost circular in shape to the west of the church. It seems possible that this churchyard may preserve the line of a circular enclosure around the church.

The juxtaposition of the ringwork castle and the church site shows that they were closely associated and it seems probable that they formed the nucleus of an Anglo-Norman manorial settlement.

A second possible castle site is located approximately 1.5km to the south-west of the site, at the southern end of the townland of Kilpipe.[10] This site is marked on the First Edition OS

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[7] *Cal. pat. rolls*, p. 144.
[8] Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 43 and p. 110.
[9] Peter Harbison, *Beranger's rambles in Ireland* (Bray, 2004), p.102.
[10] *Inventory*, nos. 1079 and 1139, 169 and 185; WI039-013.

map, where it is depicted as a square structure within a rectangular enclosure and labelled as 'Site of Kilpipe Castle and Rampart'. The depiction on the OS map resembles a moated site with a stone structure (possibly a tower house?) within it. There is no trace of this site at ground level. O'Donovan recorded in his *OS Letters* that he had been told about the castle site by a local man; 'An old man told me that there were, some years ago, at the village of Kilpipe, some remains of what was conceived to be a Castle, but I doubt that they were the remains of one.'[11] This suggests that the depiction on the map was based purely on local tradition and not on any earthworks or structures which were visible in the mid-nineteenth century. Liam Price, writing in 1949, also recorded that the site was known locally as the 'castle field'. At the time of Price's visit, there were traces of a rectangular enclosure, defined by 'a rectangular fosse, although so completely filled in as to be almost entirely defaced.' Price also records that he was told by local people that a man who had died ten years before had been employed to cart stones from the castle to Shillelagh in order for them to be used for the construction of the workhouse there.[12]

A small ringfort and two possible enclosure sites are recorded in Kilpipe townland. There ringfort is located approximately 500m to the south-south-west of the ringwork castle. This site is shown on First Edition OS map. It is classified as a rath in the *Inventory* and as a ringfort in the RMP.[13] Price records that he visited an elderly man in 1935 who claimed to have found an urn at Kilpipe *c.*1900, while ploughing 'near a raheen, a good way south of the old church'. This urn had been lost by the time of Price's visit.[14] It seems likely that this small ringfort is the 'raheen' referred to.

A possible enclosure site is situated 500m to the south-east of the ringwork castle.[15] It is depicted as a large circular enclosure of a similar size to the ringwork castle on the First

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11 Christiaan Corlett and John Medlycott, (eds), *The Ordnance Survey letters : Wicklow* (Wicklow, 2000), p. 48.

[12] Liam Price, Christiaan Corlett, (ed.) and Matthew Weaver, (ed.), *The Liam Price notebooks* (2 vols, Dublin, 2002), ii, 501.

[13] *Inventory*, no. 341, p. 61; WI039-014.

[14] Price, Corlett, (ed.) and Weaver, (ed.), *The Liam Price notebooks*, ii, 252.

[15] *Inventory*, no. 591, p. 90; WI039-018.

Edition OS map. The second possible enclosure is located 450m to the south-south-east of the ringwork castle.[16] Neither of these sites are visible at ground level.

Discussion

Although this earthwork has previously been described as a motte, its morphology seems more consistent with a ringwork castle classification, as it is defined by a fosse and external bank and is not raised significantly above the natural ground level of the ridge. The siting of the earthwork, of one end of a high ridge, seems typical for an Anglo-Norman ringwork castle. The proximity of the earthwork to the site of an Anglo-Norman church suggests that it is located at a manorial centre, although documentary evidence for the settlement seems scarce. Although the precise historical context of this site is unclear, it seems reasonable to classify it as a definite ringwork castle.

[16] *Inventory*, no. , p. 590; WI039-017.

Site no:	**50**
Site name:	**Newcastle McKynegan**
Townland:	**Newcastle Middle**
Parish:	**Newcastle Lower**
Barony:	**Newcastle**
County:	**Wicklow**
Co-ordinates:	**329274, 204221**
RMP no:	**WI019-050(004)**
RMP classification:	**castle - ringwork**
Inventory no:	**1120**
Inventory classification:	**possible ringwork**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: RINGWORK CASTLE

Siting

The ringwork castle seems to have been modelled out of the western end of a natural ridge, which runs from the east to west (Plate 2a). The site, which is located in undulating countryside, commands very good views of the surrounding area. It seems likely that the castle was intended to protect the road which linked ran along the coast, linking the Anglo-Norman castles and associated settlements at Bray, Wicklow and Arklow.[1]

Field report

The site consists of a raised circular platform, enclosed by a small inner bank, a fosse and an external bank (Figures 6 and 23). The interior is almost perfectly circular, measuring approximately 63m from east to west and 62m from east to west. The interior is defined by a small inner bank, which measures up to 30cm in height above the interior. In places, this bank seems to cover the possible foundations of a stone enclosing wall.

On the eastern side of the site, the castle is divided from the rest of the ridge by a fosse. This fosse, which is present north-east, east and south-east of the site, measures up to 5m in width. At the east, the fosse measures up to 4m in depth below the interior. On the northern and southern sides of the site, there is a flat terrace or berm rather than a fosse, and then the

[1] G. H. Orpen, 'Novum Castrum McKynegan, Newcastle, County Wicklow' in *J.R.S.A.I.*, xxxviii (1908), p. 129; Kieran O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster' (3 vols, PhD, Cardiff, 1993), i, 182.

ground slopes down from the natural ridge. The interior measures up to 5m in height above this terrace. At the west of the site, the ground slopes gently down from the entrance, which is at the end of the ridge.

Orpen's plan of the site clearly shows an external bank at the east of the site, separating the castle from the rest of the ridge. This feature seems to have survived as a very overgrown field boundary, which measures up to 1.5m in height above the fosse and up to 1m in height above external ground level.

A rectangular stone gatehouse is located at the western side of the ringwork castle. It is four storeys tall and incorporates an entrance passage. Both Orpen and O'Conor have stated that this structure is sixteenth century in date.[2] However, more recently, it has been suggested that the core of the gatehouse is thirteenth century in date; McNeill has argued that the gatehouse was originally an Edwardian-style gate-house with twin, projecting D-shaped towers, and that it was altered at ground-floor level and rebuilt from first-floor level upwards in the sixteenth century.[3] This dating of the structure is supported by the documentary evidence, which is discussed below.

It seems likely that the entrance was always located in this position as the topography dictates that the obvious approach to the castle is from the west. A cobbled area extends westwards from the gatehouse for approximately 100m. It seems possible that this represents a medieval road leading to the castle from the direction of the church and associated settlement.

Documentary references

The castle at Newcastle was associated with a royal manor. The manor, and the castle after which the manor was named, appear in the medieval sources as 'Newcastle McKynegan'. This was to differentiate this manor from another royal manor at Newcastle Lyons to the

[2] Orpen, 'Novum Castrum McKynegan, Newcastle, County Wicklow', p. 128; O'Conor, 'The earthwork castles of medieval Leinster', i, 182.
[3] T. E. McNeill, *Castles in Ireland: feudal power in a Gaelic world* (London, 1997), pp 127-8.

west of Dublin. Orpen suggested that the 'McKynegan' element of the place-name may have been derived from the surname 'Mac Fhinnagain' although there is no evidence for a family of this name in the area.[4] Price's suggestion that the name was derived from Findacan, son of Fiacra, son of Maelchainneach of the Uí Briuin Cualann, seems more likely.[5]

The first known reference to the castle at Newcastle is contained in a charter issued by John Comyn, archbishop of Dublin, which records the grant of 'the church of New Castle, towards Wykinglo' to the abbey of Grace Dieu.[6] McNeill dated this charter to between 1181 and 1212, based on the dates of John Comyn's episcopacy.[7] Newcastle in mentioned again in a charter issued by Thomas, abbot of Glendalough, *c.*1210-13, recording a grant of lands *'juxta Novum Castellum versus Wikinglo'* to the Abbey of St Thomas, Dublin.[8] In 1228, 'Newcastle McKynegan with its increase and mill' was let for six months for £10 13*s.* 4*d.* Rents were also received from betaghs in the neighbouring districts of Othee and Obrun.[9] In 1261, the rent from the farm of the manor, including pleas and perquisites, amounted to £31 2*s.* 2*d.* for the year.[10] These references, which indicate that the castle and its manor were rented out, suggest that conditions in this part of Wicklow were relatively peaceful in the thirteenth century.

From the late thirteenth century onwards, the historical sources show that, as the area was increasingly affected by conflict between the Anglo-Normans and the local Gaelic Irish, the castle became strategically important and large amounts of money were spent on improving its defences. In 1274, an expedition was led by the justiciar, Geoffrey de Geneville, against the Gaelic Irish in Wicklow. This campaign was unsuccessful and several important Anglo-

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[4] Orpen, 'Novum Castrum McKynegan, Newcastle, County Wicklow', p. 126, footnote 1.
[5] Liam Price, *Place-names of County Wicklow* (6 vols, Dublin, 1945-57), v, 395.
[6] Charles McNeill, (ed.), *Calendar of Archbishop Alen's register, c.1172-1534* (Dublin, 1950), p. 31.
[7] Ibid.
[8] J. T. Gilbert, (ed.), *Register of the Abbey of St Thomas, Dublin* (London, 1889), pp 166-7; Orpen, 'Novum Castrum McKynegan, Newcastle, County Wicklow', pp 128-9.
[9] Pipe Roll, 13 Henry III, 35th Report of the Deputy Keeper, p. 29; Orpen 'Novum Castrum McKynegan, Newcastle, County Wicklow', p. 129.
[10] Pipe Roll, 13 Henry III, 35th Report of the Deputy Keeper, p. 43; Orpen 'Novum Castrum McKynegan, Newcastle, County Wicklow', p. 129.

Normans were taken prisoner. In 1275-6, Geoffrey de Geneville led a second expedition into Wicklow, using Newcastle McKynegan, of which John de Blound was constable, as the base for his troops.[11] The next expedition was led by the new justiciar, Thomas de Clare, in 1277. As Orpen has argued, the sources suggest that the castle at Castlekevin, to the south of Newcastle, was used as the base for the royal troops on this occasion.[12]

In 1279, the constable of the castle, Hugh de Cruys, was paid £12 'to build the new castle of Mackinegan'.[13] Three further payments, totalling £18 18*s*. 10½ *d*., were made to Hugh in 1279 and 1280.[14] In 1280-82, the next constable, David de Offyntoun, was paid £74 6*s*. 9*d*. to 'build a tower'.[15] In 1282, £110 17*s* was paid to John de Stratton,[16] and £213 14*s*. 8*d*. was paid to John de Bentley for works at the castle.[17]

In 1280-82, it was stated that the money paid to David de Offyntoun was for a 'tower'. It seems probable that this tower was a stone gate-tower. It has been suggested that core of the present gatehouse, which incorporates many post-medieval features, is of medieval date and it seems possible that it represents the gatehouse constructed in the late thirteenth century. Alternatively, the tower may have been a predecessor on the same site as the surviving gate-house. It is unclear exactly what the other payments made during this period were for. If a substantial gatehouse was under construction, all of the payments may have related to the same structure.

In 1282, the castle was leased to Robert de Hastings for a rent of 40 marks for a period of twenty years.[18] In 1290, petitioned the king, asking the king to grant him the castle and two

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[11] H. S. Sweetman, (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland,* (5 vols, London, 1875-83), ii, 181 and 237; Orpen, 'Novum Castrum McKynegan, Newcastle, County Wicklow', p. 130.
[12] Orpen, 'Novum Castrum McKynegan, Newcastle, County Wicklow', p. 131.
[13] Sweetman, (ed.), *C.D.I.,* ii, 309; Philomena Connolly, *Irish Exchequer Payments, 1270-1446* (Dublin, 1998), p. 32.
[14] Connolly, *Irish Exchequer Payments, 1270-1446*, pp 33-4 and p. 38.
[15] *Irish Pipe Roll, 9th Ed. I, 36th Report of the Deputy Keeper*, p. 53; Orpen, 'Novum Castrum McKynegan, Newcastle, County Wicklow', p. 131.
[16] Sweetman, (ed.), *C.D.I.,* ii, 442-3 and 536
[17] Ibid., ii, 440 and 535.
[18] Ibid., iii, 250-51 and 310

and a half carucates of land to hold in fee for a certain term. The king decided that Robert could have his term but '...the king does not intend to demise the castle in fee.'[19] A second petition from the same year requested that the king take the castle back into his own hands. This document includes some interesting details regarding the castle and manor; the castle is referred to as '...almost the strongest in Ireland', and Robert claims that '...the lands were waste when he took them to farm, whereby he spent much money on them, more than the lands are worth.' It seems unlikely that the lands were as unprofitable as Robert claimed.[20]

In 1295, violence broke out again in Leinster and Orpen has speculated that Robert de Hastings was probably killed in this year.[21] After 1295, the castle was not rented out again but was administrated by a constable appointed by the king. John de Stratton was constable of the castle from 1295 until at least 1307. During this time, major works were carried out on the castle, which seems to have been badly damaged in 1295.

In 1295, John de Stratton spent £30 4*s*. 9½ *d*. on quarrying stones and burning lime to build a wall at the castle, and for other works at the great hall and other houses there.[22] In 1296 and 1297, similar amounts were spent on works at the castle. The entry for 1298 is particularly interesting because it records that money was spent on '...the building of a wall around the castle and mote.'[23] It seems likely that this reference relates to the same wall that was mentioned in 1295. It is notable that the 'mote' is mentioned specifically. Orpen has suggested that the wall was constructed around the base of the ringwork, on the level terrace which encloses the ringwork castle, and was separate from the wall which would have enclosed the interior of the ringwork castle. Orpen believed that the documentary references pointed to multiple walls and that, '... the whole plan of the castle after these

[19] Ibid., iii, 250-51.
[20] Ibid., iii, 310.
[21] Orpen, 'Novum Castrum McKynegan, Newcastle, County Wicklow', p. 133.
[22] Irish Pipe Roll, 26 Ed. I, 38th Report of the Deputy Keeper, p. 47; Orpen, 'Novum Castrum McKynegan, Newcastle, County Wicklow', p. 133
[23] Irish Pipe Roll, 26 Ed. I, 38th Report of the Deputy Keeper, p. 47; Orpen, 'Novum Castrum McKynegan, Newcastle, County Wicklow', p. 133

works would approximate to the type known as concentric.'[24] However, there is no archaeological evidence for a wall in this location and there is nothing in the sources to suggest that there was more than one enclosing wall. The most logical location for an enclosing wall would have been around the perimeter of the interior, where slight traces of stonework are still visible, as discussed above.

In 1304-5, an extent of the lands of Newcastle McKynegan was taken. Although the castle is not mentioned, this extent records that there were two mills and a brewery. There were also 180 burgages, 11 burghers and a pasture, rendering £10 5*s*. 4*d*.[25] It seems likely that the borough at Newcastle was established in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century although the earliest references to burgesses at Newcastle are contained in late twelfth century documents. In the years leading up to 1282, four burgesses of the town accounted for the farm of the manor; after 1282, the castle was leased to a man called Robert de Hastings for twenty years. The extent, which states that there were 180 burgages, indicates that the settlement must have been quite large.

The castle at Newcastle McKynegan was repeatedly attacked in the early fourteenth century, as Orpen has outlined.[26] In 1308, the castle at nearby Castlekevin was burned, the English forces were defeated at Glenmalure, and several towns were burned.[27] Although an attack on Newcastle is not mentioned in the sources, it seems likely that the castle suffered some damage as it is recorded that the castles of Castlekevin and Newcastle were re-edified in 1309.[28]

In 1315, the O'Tooles and O'Byrnes attacked and burned several towns in Wicklow in the wake of the Bruce Invasion. The towns burned included Arklow, Bray and Newcastle.[29] In

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[24] Orpen, 'Novum Castrum McKynegan, Newcastle, County Wicklow', p. 134.
[25] Sweetman, (ed.), *C.D.I.*, v, 115.
[26] Orpen, 'Novum Castrum McKynegan, Newcastle, County Wicklow', pp 135-6.
[27] Ibid., p. 135.
[28] 'Annales Hibernie, 1162-1370, MS. Laud' in J. T. Gilbert, (ed.), *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin, with the register of its house at Dunbrody and Annals of Ireland* (2 vols, Dublin, 1884), ii, p. 338.
[29] Ibid., ii, 348.

1370, the castles of Wicklow and Newcastle McKynegan were captured by the O'Byrnes but were later retaken by royal forces.[30] In 1376, the castle of Newcastle McKynegan was destroyed and some of its garrison were taken prisoner while others were killed.[31]

The O'Byrnes seem to have made peace with the king in the early fourteenth century.[32] However, in 1405, it is recorded that the O'Byrnes attacked and burned Newcastle McKynegan.[33] Although the castle does not appear again in the sources until the mid-sixteenth century, it seems possible that it was occupied by the O'Byrnes in the intervening period.

Other sites in the local area

A nineteenth century Church of Ireland church, which occupies the probable site of the medieval parish church, is located approximately 50m to the south-west of the castle. The church is located within a triangular graveyard. The gravestones are generally eighteenth century or later in date, although the base of a seventeenth century grave-slab is located to the east of the church.[34]

As discussed above, the documentary sources show that there was a mill at Newcastle in 1228 mills and there were two mills by the early fourteenth century. A mill-race and post medieval water-mill are located to the south-west of the castle.[35] It seems possible that one or both of the medieval mills were located in the vicinity of the later mill.

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[30] 'Annales Monasterii Beate Marie Virginis, juxta Dublin. MS Trinity College Dublin' in J. T. Gilbert, (ed.), *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin, with the register of its house at Dunbrody and Annals of Ireland* (2 vols, Dublin, 1884), ii, 283.
[31] Ibid., ii, 284.
[32] Orpen, 'Novum Castrum McKynegan, Newcastle, County Wicklow', p. 1
[33] A. M. Freeman, (ed.), *The Annals of Connacht* (Dublin, 1944), 1405; W. M. Hennessy, (ed.), *Annals of Ulster*, (4 vols, Dublin, 1998, reprint of edition published Dublin, 1887), 1405.
[34] *Inventory*, no. 875, pp 133-4.
[35] *Inventory*, no. 1189, pp 201-2.

The documentary references listed above indicate that there was a sizeable settlement at Newcastle. It seems probable that it was centred on the church and castle. However, there do not appear to be any visible traces of burgage plots or house sites at ground level.

Discussion

The documentary evidence shows that the castle at New castle was constructed in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century and remained in use until it was overrun by the Gaelic Irish in the early fifteenth century. The castle was reoccupied in the early modern period, as the alterations to the gate-house show. The documentary evidence also shows that the castle was associated with an Anglo-Norman settlement of some size. The site of the parish church of this settlement is marked by the modern Church of Ireland church. There is therefore no doubt that the earthwork at Newcastle Middle is an earthwork castle. However, the classification of the site is problematic as archaeologists have classified it as both a motte and a ringwork castle. The morphology of the earthwork castle differs depending on the angle one examines it from. From the south and north, the castle seems like a motte, consisting simply of a raised mound. However, from the eastern side, the earthwork has the profile of a ringwork castle as, on this side, a fosse and external bank separate the site from the rest of the ridge on which it is located. The castle seems to have functioned more like a ringwork than a motte as it was accessed via a ramped entrance and a gatehouse, and had a much larger interior than the average motte summit, which could have been used to house a garrison, animals and supplies. For these reasons, it seems reasonable to classify the site as a ringwork castle.

Site no:	**51**
Site name:	**Rath Turtle Moat**
Townland:	**Deerpark**
Parish:	**Blessington**
Barony:	**Talbotstown Lower**
County:	**Wicklow**
Co-ordinates:	**296464, 215265**
RMP no:	**WI005-012**
RMP classification:	**ringfort - unclassified**
Inventory no:	**1113**
Inventory classification:	**ringwork**

REVISED CLASSIFICATION: POSSIBLE RINGWORK CASTLE

This earthwork has been identified as a possible ringwork castle based on its morphology.[1]

Siting

The possible ringwork known as Rath Turtle Moat is located in Glen Ding Wood, approximately 2km to the north-west of Blessington. The site is situated at the highest point on a natural ridge, at an altitude of approximately 900 feet. It commands excellent views of the surrounding area and seems to be located in a strategic and defensive location. This type of siting is typical of an Anglo-Norman ringwork castle and would be highly unusual for a ringfort.

Field report

The possible ringwork consists of a sub-circular platform defined by a low bank, with an external fosse and bank (Figure 7 and Plate 10). The enclosed area is sub-circular in shape and is raised significantly above external ground level. The site seems to have been modelled out of the highest point of a natural ridge. There is a hollow or depression on the eastern side of the platform. This depression may be natural although it is possible that it could reflect the collapse of a timber structure. The enclosed area measures 49m from north to south and 36m from east to west.

[1] P. D. Sweetman, *The medieval castles of Ireland* (Cork, 1999), p. 16.

The internal bank measure between 50cm and 1.5m in height above the interior. It is flat-topped and has notably vertical sides in places, perhaps indicating that may cover the foundations of an enclosing wall.[2] The fosse is a wide flat-bottomed ditch with a U-shaped profile. There is a steep drop from the crest of the internal bank into the fosse, between 3.5m and 4m below.

Beyond the fosse is an external bank which measures between 50cm and 2m in height above the base of the fosse. This external bank is approximately 1.5 m wide at the top and stands between 50cm and1.5m in height above external ground level.

There is a narrow gap (1m) in the inner bank which corresponds to a similar gap in the outer bank and there seems to be a causeway across the ditch. This seems to represent the original entrance to the site.

The presence of a causewayed entrance and the scale of the defensive banks and fosse, in relation to the relatively small internal area, suggest that this site is morphologically more similar to an Anglo-Norman ringwork than a ringfort.

The possible ringwork lies within an outer enclosure which can be seen on the Third Edition OS map. This outer enclosure is defined by a low bank and internal ditch. To the north of the site, this bank and ditch are so close to the possible ringwork that they can be considered to be part of its defences. However, it seems possible that these outer earthworks represent post-medieval landscaping activity as this area lay within the estate associated with Blessington House, as discussed below.

Documentary references

The name 'Rath Turtle Moat' has led to suggestions that the site may Hiberno-Norse in origin. Although the earthwork is depicted on the First and Second Edition OS maps, the

[2] Eoin Grogan, 'Field Report', WI005-012.

site is only labelled 'Rath Turtle Moat' on the Third Edition map. According to Price, Rath Turtle was the name of a townland in the sixteenth century and appears in many forms in the early modern sources, including 'Rathnekyll', 'Rathtorkyll', 'Rathtorkill' and 'Rathturkill'. Price believed that the name Rath Turtle preserved an older name, 'Rath Torcaill', meaning 'Torcaill's Fort'.[3]

The MacTorcaills were a Hiberno-Norse family who rose to power in the twelfth century. Ascaill MacTorcaill was the king of Dublin when it was conquered by the Anglo-Normans in 1172. The documentary sources suggest that the territory around Viking Dublin was known as Dyflinaskiri, meaning Dublin shire.[4] Dyflinaskiri was the rural hinterland influenced, if not directly controlled by, the Scandinavians of Dublin. To the north and west of the city, the hinterland was known as Fine Gall, which has survived in the modern place name Fingal. The Vikings also controlled much of south County Dublin. The importance of the rural hinterland's role in supplying the Norse city of Dublin with essential provisions has been emphasised by both Bradley[5] and Valente.[6] As an urban trading settlement, Dublin was heavily dependant on the surrounding countryside. For example, it has been estimated that 90% of meat consumed in the city would have been brought in from the hinterland.[7] However, defining the limits of the territory controlled by the Vikings of Dublin has proved to be somewhat problematic. It seems likely that the boundaries of the area controlled by Dublin were not static and changed over time. Also, the nature and strength of Norse influence over their territory is uncertain; it seems unlikely that the entire area was settled by Scandinavian people alone, and the Scandinavian Norse seem to have exerted control over some areas occupied by Gaelic-Irish tribes, including for example, the Ui Briuin Chualann of north Wicklow.[8] Also, as nearly all excavations have focussed on urban centres such as Dublin, it is uncertain what a Viking rural settlement would have

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[3] Liam Price, *Place-names of County Wicklow* (Dublin, 1945-57), p. 203.
[4] John Bradley, 'The interpretation of Scandinavian settlement in Ireland' in John Bradley, (ed.), *Settlement and society in medieval Ireland: studies presented to F. X. Martin* (Kilkenny, 1988), p.53.
[5] Ibid.
[6] M. A. Valente, 'Dublin's economic relations with hinterland and periphery in the later Viking Age' in Sean Duffy, (ed.), *Medieval Dublin I* (Dublin, 2000), pp 69-83.
[7] Bradley, 'The interpretation of Scandinavian settlement in Ireland', p.52.
[8] Ibid., p. 58.

looked like. Did the people of Dublin's hinterland live in undefended settlements, ringforts or a completely different type of site?

There is some archaeological evidence for Scandinavian influence in Dublin's pre-Norman hinterland. For example, many examples of a distinctive type of gravestone, known as the 'Rathdown Group' have been found. The distribution of the Rathdown slabs corresponds roughly with the territory which early Anglo-Norman documentary sources refer to as 'the lands of the sons of Torcaill' in south Dublin.[9]

Rath Turtle is quite distant from the main hinterland area of south County Dublin but it does not seem implausible that Rath Turtle could have been under the control of Dublin at some point. The *Annals of Ulster* infer that the influence of the Scandinavians of Dublin extended as far as Ath Truisten, near Mullaghmast, in County Kildare in the year 938.[10] There is also evidence to suggest that Ballymore Eustace, located a few miles to the south of Rath Turtle, may once have belonged to the Scandinavians of Dublin. Bradley has identified Ballymore Eustace as 'Ballimore Abbott', which is mentioned in the twelfth-century sources.[11] A charter records that Downall, son of Helge', granted lands between 'Ballimore Abbott and Kealmuatamoch' to Christ Church Cathedral. [12]

Like Rath Turtle, the name 'Curtlestown' also seems to be Scandinavian in origin, and incorporating the personal name Torcaill. There is documentary evidence to suggest that Curtlestown is derived from 'Baile mhic Turcaill'. There is an interesting site at Curtlestown which could possibly be Viking in origin. This site is classified simply as an 'earthwork' in the *Archaeological Inventory* as the nature of the site is unclear.[13] It consists

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[9] Ibid., p.60.
[10] W. M. Hennessy, (ed.), *Annals of Ulster*, (4 vols, Dublin, 1998, reprint of edition published Dublin, 1887), *s.a.* 938.
[11] Bradley, 'The interpretation of Scandinavian settlement in Ireland', p. 57.
[12] Charles McNeill, (ed.), *Calendar of Archbishop Alen's register, c.1172-1534* (Dublin, 1950), p. 28.
[13] *Inventory,* no. 719, p. 105.

of a semi-circular bank and ditch feature. It has been suggested that this feature may represent the boundary of a deer park. [14]

There does not appear to be any documentary evidence for Anglo-Norman settlement at Rath Turtle. The nearest documented settlement was located at Burgage, approximately 3km away from the site.

In 1668-9, Charles II granted the lands around the modern village of Blessington to Michael Boyle, archbishop of Dublin. Boyle constructed Blessington House in the late seventeenth century and an elaborate landscaped demesne developed around the house. This estate landscape is the subject of a report by Eileen Reilly for Margaret Gowen and Co. Ltd.[15]

Other sites in the local area

The possible ringwork castle at Rath Turtle is very isolated from any other known medieval sites. The nearest known medieval church site is located at Burgage, approximately 3km to the south-east, where there was an Anglo-Norman settlement. The settlement and church at Blessington, approximately 2km to the south-east of the site, were established in the late seventeenth century.

The construction of Blessington House began in the early 1670s. The site of the house, which was destroyed in 1798,[16] is located approximately 1.5km to the south-east of the earthwork site.[17] The development of the estate landscape around Blessington House began in the late seventeenth century and continued throughout the eighteenth century. A 'crows-foot' pattern of avenues can be seen on the aerial photographs. These avenues radiated out

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[14] Margaret Murphy and Kieran O'Conor, 'Castles and Deer Parks in Anglo-Norman Ireland' in *Eolas: the journal of the American society of Irish Medieval Studies*, i (2006), pp 61-2.
[15] Eileen Reilly, 'Brief History of Blessington Demesne' (2000), http://www.mglarc.com/index.php/leinster/106-brief-history-of-blessington-demesne-co-wicklow-.html, accessed 23 July 2009.
[16] Ibid.
[17] *Inventory*, no. 1174, p. 198; WI005-018.

from the house in all directions. The main avenue led from the main entrance to the house to the church in the village. Formal gardens were laid out behind the house. The demesne landscape also incorporated several ponds and two canals.[18]

The townland of Deerpark, within which the possible ringwork castle is located, was also part of the demesne landscape associated with Bleesington House. This area seems to have acquired its name from a post-medieval deer park associated with the Blessington estate and there is no evidence to suggest that there was an Anglo-Norman park in this location. It seems possible that some of the features in this small townland, including the possible ringwork site and the surrounding earthworks, were altered in the post-medieval period as they would have become features of the manicured demesne landscape.

Discussion

It seems possible that Rath Turtle Moat lay within the area that came under the influence of the Norse settlement of Dublin. However, this does not necessarily mean that the earthwork itself is of Norse origin. As Bradley has pointed out, it may be virtually impossible to distinguish between the native Irish and the Scandinavians of the hinterland by looking at the material culture, as they seem to have shared a common, Hiberno-Norse culture.[19] Even with excavation of the site at Rath Turtle, we may not find satisfactory answers to these questions, as it can be virtually impossible to confidently assign an ethnic identity to a settlement on the basis of material culture, in the absence of historical evidence.

The possibility that Rath Turtle is a Norse site does not necessarily mean that it is not a ringwork castle. Whether or not there was Norse settlement at Rath Turtle, it seems possible that the site was used in the high medieval period as the Anglo-Normans frequently reused pre-existing earthwork sites. However, unless the locality was known by an entirely different name in the medieval period, Rath Turtle does not seem to appear at all

[18] Eileen Reilly, 'Brief History of Blessington Demesne' (2000), http://www.mglarc.com/index.php/leinster/106-brief-history-of-blessington-demesne-co-wicklow-.html, accessed 23 July 2009.
[19] Bradley, 'The interpretation of Scandinavian settlement in Ireland', p. 60.

in the Anglo-Norman documentary sources. Combined with the fact that the possible ringwork seems to be an isolated site, this implies that it was not a notable settlement or an important castle in the Anglo-Norman period. It is not located close to any known medieval church, or any other medieval sites at all. This suggests that, if the site is indeed a ringwork castle, it was probably a temporary, campaign castle, rather than a castle associated with an Anglo-Norman manor.