

DINEFWR CASTLE, CARMARTHENSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS
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CONTENTS

List of figures	Page 2
Summary	Page 3
1. INTRODUCTION AND BRIEF	Page 4
1.1 Introduction	
1.2 The study area: geology and topography	
1.3 Project brief and objectives	
1.4 Methodology	
2. STUDY AREA: BACKGROUND INFORMATION	Page 6
2.1 Historical background	
2.2 Archaeological background	
3. EXCAVATION RESULTS	Page 10
3.1 Area A: Middle gatehouse and additional planning of the north gate	
3.2 Area B: Inner ward gatehouse	
3.3 Area C: Stair to north-east block	
4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS	Page 13
5. BIBLIOGRAPHY	Page 15
6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	Page 17

APPENDIX A.
Project brief

APPENDIX B.
Archive index

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig 1. Location plan of excavated areas
- Fig 2. Area A: Plan of excavated area and middle Gatehouse remains
- Fig 3. Area A: North-facing main section
- Fig 4. Area A: East-facing section
- Fig 5. Area B: Plan of excavated area
- Fig 6. Area B: North and south-facing segments of main section
- Fig 7. Area B: West-facing section through Post-medieval structure
- Fig 8. Area C: Plan of excavated area
- Fig 9. Area C: Southeast-facing main section

SUMMARY

In March 1997, staff from Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology were involved in the limited excavation of three areas within the inner ward and middle gatehouse at Dinefwr Castle, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire. The work was required for the purposes of recording during the present ongoing programme of conservation work being carried out at the castle. The excavation was commissioned, and followed an archaeological specification prepared by Cadw.

The site of Dinefwr has been proposed as the possible site for a range of fortifications dating from the late Iron Age and through the Roman and Dark Age periods. Traditionally, the site has been identified as the ancient seat of power for the kings of Deheubarth from the 9th century and is therefore of immense importance in Welsh history. In the 12th century, the castle and estate became one of the cornerstones of Rhys ap Gruffudd (The Lord Rhys) power in South Wales and recorded seat of the lords of Debeubarth, until it came under English administration in 1277.

The castle of Dinefwr has never been the focus of a large-scale planned programme of archaeological excavation, it is thought to have been constructed, perhaps by Lord Rhys, sometime in the late 12th century, although much altered since.

The excavations within the middle gatehouse revealed part of the almost trapezoidal-shaped footings of a gatehouse/guardroom, sub-divided into at least two separate chambers. The trench positioned between the circular keep, the south-western curtain wall and the 'picturesque' period stair located a narrow wall or finger pier encased within a series of consecutive rubble tips used to build-up the ground level in that area. The wall/pier was found to be sitting on rubble material comparative with those of a post-medieval date and the feature is possibly either related to the 17th/18th arched walkway or a slightly earlier predecessor. Within the inner ward, the trench located against the north-east chamber and hall block, uncovered a wall that would appear to be part of the extended footings of the 17th/18th stair. The continuation of the wall and the robber trench for the stair's robust outer wall would suggest that the stair originally extended out further to the west. The limited depth of the excavations meant that no stratified medieval deposits or surfaces were encountered within the three areas.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BRIEF

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 In March 1997, staff from Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology were involved in the limited excavation of three small areas within the bounds of Dinefwr Castle, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire (PRN 882) centred on NGR SN 612 218 (Fig 1.). The work was required for the purposes of recording possible structural features which may have been uncovered during the present programme of conservation work being carried out at the site. The castle and its adjacent area has been designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Carms. 29).

1.1.2 The work was commissioned by Cadw and followed an archaeological specification prepared by Dr. Sian Rees, Cadw (Appendix 1).

1.1.3 This report presents the results of the archaeological excavations and additional planning carried out at Dinefwr Castle, with a limited summary of the historical and archaeological background to the study area. All PRN numbers quoted in this report are taken from the regional SMR, held by Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire.

1.2 The study area: geology and topography

1.2.1 Dinefwr castle is situated within the south-western portion of Dinefwr park, *approx.* 1 mile from Llandeilo town centre. The castle is situated upon the highest point of a rocky outcrop of Red Ordovician sandstone-Llandeilo series (BGS 1994), at a height of *approx.* 100m OD. The castle has an imposing southern and south-western aspect, with an almost sheer drop into the valley bottom below, with a commanding view of the Tywi valley. To the north and east, the land slopes away with a gentler gradient, although still with good all round visibility of the surrounding countryside.

1.2.2 The northern and eastern slopes for *approx.* 300m from the castle are covered with dense woodland, now preserved as a wildlife reserve owned by the West Wales Naturalists' Trust. Slightly further to the north lies Newton house, a substantial mansion, on the site of the 16th century successor to the castle as the seat of the Rhys family.

1.2.3 After many years of neglect the castle was taken into the guardianship of the Secretary of State for Wales in February 1983. The castle is at present undergoing a programme of consolidation that will lead to the castle being opened to the public in 1997.

1.3 Project brief and objectives

1.3.1 The archaeological specification prepared by Cadw identified three areas to be investigated;

Area A: A rectangular trench, *approx.* 8m x 3m, located within the castle's middle gatehouse.

Area B: An 'L' shaped trench, 6m x 1m (N/S) and 14m x 1m (E/W) located between the circular keep, the south-western curtain wall and the 'picturesque' period stair onto the curtain wall.

Area C: A square trench, 3m x 3m, located against the stair to the North-east chamber and hall block, within the inner ward.

1.3.2 In the case of trenches A and C, the main objective of the excavation was to remove soil dumps within the areas and then to hand-excavate through the topsoil, subsoil and rubble horizons to the top of any significant archaeological deposits or structures, which would then be recorded.

1.3.3 In particular, within area A, it was anticipated that more information would be forthcoming on structures within the gatehouse and the relationships between the curtain wall, the gatehouse footings and the adjacent steps. For Area C, the main objective was to establish if the remains of the stair or the 15th century hall's inner wall, previously untraced, survived at a high level.

1.3.4 Trench B was intended to investigate the 3m high post-medieval build-up presently landscaping the area between the south-west curtain wall and the keep. The trench was to be excavated to a maximum depth of 1m, the first stage in the eventual removal of the build-up. In particular it was important to establish if any remains of the gatehouse/pre-keep structures survived at a high level.

1.3.5 An addition programme of planning was undertaken of the whole north side of the gate area up to where the masonry turns to join the circular keep.

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 All three areas, specified in the brief, were hand-excavated to an appropriate depth. The areas were then recorded using methods and guidelines expressed in the site recording manual used by Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology. All definable layers, deposits, surfaces and walls were given a unique number (context number) by which they can be identified and recorded in a written record.

1.4.2 To supplement this written record, a photographic and drawn record was kept of the three areas. The photographic record consisted of monochrome and colour slide film. Sections and plans were drawn at a scale of 1:20, with the additional planning of the middle gatehouse carried out by EDM.

1.4.3 Since there was no provision in the brief for a detailed analysis of the finds, material recovered from the site was bagged by context and will be included in the site archive (Appendix 2) deposited with Cadw.

2. STUDY AREA: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Historical background

Pre-12th Century

2.1.1 The origin of the name 'Dinefwr' is shrouded in some mystery. A number of different versions have been put forward, which includes a derivation from 'Dinas Ifor' (Fortress of Ifor) pertaining to the 7th century figure, Ifor ab Alun, as well as a connection with the 4th century Bishop Ebur. Another source of the name may have been derived from the 'Efwr' or cow-parsnip which grow on the slopes of the ridge (Owen 1996) and (Fisher 1925).

2.1.2 The earliest surviving written reference to the site of Dinefwr is found in the Llandaff Charters (Davies 1979) which can be somewhat unreliable in nature. In particular, one charter details the gift from the seventh century king of Dyfed, Noe ab Arthur, to the church of Llandaff of the church and territory of Llandeilo Fawr and contained an additional statement, in Welsh, giving details of the gift's boundaries. These were said to run along the stream *Pistyll Dewi* to *Gwaith Dinefwr* and then down to the river Tywi (Lloyd 1935).

12th-15th Century

2.2.3 Dinefwr is not mentioned again in documents until the 12th century when it is obvious that the site played an important role in Welsh politics. From the erection of the castle, probably sometime in the 12th century, until the fall of Debeubarth, the association of a prince's name with Dinefwr was synonymous with a claim to sovereignty (Owen 1996).

2.2.4 The tradition that Dinefwr had served as an ancient seat of power for the kings of Deheubarth before the 12th century and Lord Rhys is particularly strong, although unconfirmed due to the lack of physical evidence. The location of Dinefwr, close to the probable site of St. Teilo's monastery at Llandeilo, an important early religious centre from the 7th-9th century, may be significant for the site's traditional importance.

2.2.5 Giraldus Cambrensis in his '*The Itinerary through Wales*' dated to the late 12th century, related that there were three regal palaces in Wales, corresponding to the three ancient kingdoms of Wales. These were; Aberffraw on Anglesey for the kingdom of Gwynedd, Pengwern (Shrewsbury) for the kingdom of Powys and Dinefwr for the kingdom of Deheubarth (Cambrensis 1908). In a similar vein, a letter from Llywelyn the Great to Henry III in September 1220, described Dinefwr as;

'A castle whose glory had already ceased, a castle which of yore possessed all the dignities of Deheubarth as the centre of the territory' (Edwards 1935).

2.2.6 However, no mention was made of Dinefwr in '*The Mabinogion*', a strange occurrence for a place apparently endowed with such importance, and indeed the first mention of Dinefwr in *The Chronicle of the Princes (Brut y Tywysogyon)* (Jones 1955) was for the comparatively late date of 1163. This was the occasion when Rhys ap Gruffydd submitted to King Henry II at Pencadair and in return was allowed to keep the lordship of Cantref Mawr, and Dinefwr, as his own. This lordship became one of the cornerstones of Lord Rhys power in South Wales and the seat of Dinefwr, the main centre of the lords of Debeubarth, until taken over by the English in 1277. It has been suggested that the ancient traditions of Dinefwr, as a centre of power, may have been created and popularised at the end of the 12th century, in the interest of Lord Rhys and his newly secured territory (Griffiths 1991).

The Dinefwr townships of 'Old town' and 'Newtown'

2.2.7 A number of early references refer to communities housed close to the castle. A reference to the vill '*Trefscoleygon*' was made in the grant of land from Edward I to Rees ap Maredydd, Lord of Dryslwyn in 1277. A later enquiry in 1318 also mentioned the '*Tref yscloeigion*' (The township of the scholars). The Royal Commission suggested that these two references referred to Llandeilo (RCAHMW 1917), although it has been shown that since the 1318 enquiry made reference to both Llandeilo Fawr and '*Tref yscloeigion*' it was very unlikely that the two townships are the same (Griffiths 1991). A survey of the Dinefwr estate in March 1280 by Edward I's surveyors noted the presence of a '*Villa de Scleygon*' with 14 tenants with an assessed rent of four marks.

2.2.8 The clearest picture of the nature and function of the Welsh medieval court comes from the laws of Hywel Dda (Jenkins 1986). The court as described in the laws was highly formal and hierarchical, separated into military, administrative and festive (Owen 1996). Since it was customary for the priests and clerks of the court to be in close attendance to the lord, it would be expected that land adjacent to the castle was given over to house this group. It was this small supporting community that formed the nucleus of the castle's township, later to be known as the 'old (or upper) town' of Dinefwr.

2.2.9 Within 20 years of the castle falling into English administration, the community was already undergoing significant development. It seems likely that community was swelled, within this period, by an influx of immigrants. Due to this expansion, a second related site, later known as Newton (or lower town), grew up further down the castle hill, probably where the present mid 17th century 'Dinefwr castle' mansion is situated. The decision to expand the community around the castle appears to have been taken, on behalf of Edward I, by the Justiciar of South Wales, Walter de Pederton. The introduction of a revised rental agreement in 1302-3 enables the ethnic make-up of the twin towns to be closely observed, with the 'old town' tenants being exclusively Welsh and that of the 'new town' almost exclusively of English or other immigrant extraction (Griffiths 1991).

2.2.10 In 1298 the New town contained 26 burgages, rented at the usual rate of 1s. each. This had risen to 35 burgages (all but two with rights to commons and out-lands) by 1302. This rose to 44 burgages by 1306. The town was constituted a free borough in 1363, consisting of 46 burgages with the charter inspected and confirmed in 1394 (Richard 1935). The relationship between the church's tenants at Llandeilo and the King's tenants at Dinefwr seems to have fairly cordial, although not without occasional friction (Rees 1975).

2.2.11 In 1403 Hugh de Waterton reported that the towns of Llandeilo Fawr and Newtown had been burnt during a three day siege by Owain Glyndwr and a force of 8240 men (Anon 1851) and (Davies 1995). Although both townships recovered, the township at Dinefwr was apparently in terminal decline and by the early 16th century had largely disappeared, the land being absorbed into the Dinefwr estate.

Post-medieval period

2.2.12 A survey of the lands of the recently disgraced Rhys ap Gruffydd in 1532 reported that 'The mansion of Newton stands within the town of Newton', The mansion having been built either by Sir Rhys ap Thomas or his grandson and successor Sir Rhys ap Gruffydd. The ownership of the castle and estate remained with the Crown until 1615 when it was sold to a Richard Budd. The estate was later sold to the Rice family in 1635 and remained in their procession until the middle of this century (Jones 1987).

2.2 Archaeological background

General

2.2.1 Despite the relative importance of Dinefwr castle, and indeed in contrast to many of its contemporaries, the castle has never been the focus of a large-scale planned programme of archaeological excavation. In the absence of any conclusive proof from excavation, the site of Dinefwr and the original builder of Dinefwr castle has been, and still is, the subject of a great deal of speculation.

2.2.2 The '*Gwaith*' or entrenchment mentioned in the Llandaff charter has been taken to refer to the large outer ditch enclosing part of the outer ward, *approx.* 60m to the south-east (PRN 880). It has been suggested that this outer ditch is more characteristic of a late prehistoric hill-fort than a Medieval feature (Austin 1984), although a number of sources have disagreed with this interpretation and see no evidence for any earlier structures or earth works within the study area (Griffiths 1991). A number of scattered prehistoric finds and barrows are located in the vicinity of Llandeilo, but none have been firmly identified and recorded within the bounds of Dinefwr park.

2.2.3 The earliest finds located in the immediate area of the castle site, sometime around 1800, were of Roman origin. A hoard of 1st century Roman silver denarii in a earthenware vessel were found 800m to the north-east, on the site of the Newton house kitchen garden (PRN 869) (Fenton 1917) and were exhibited in 1854-5 (Allen 1855). Again in the same period, levelling of the churchyard at Llandyfeisant church, 1100m to the north-east, allegedly produced evidence for the footings of a Roman temple (PRN 7367) (Rees 1873), although the remains may have related to a more domestic type of structure.

2.2.4 A number of Roman inscriptions, many now missing, have also been located around Dinefwr and Llandeilo (Lhwyd 1858) and (Westwood 1876), although at least one of the inscriptions, found incorporated into the Dinefwr park wall, has been shown to have originated well outside the area (Rees 1854) and (James 1991). The coin hoard, building and inscriptions have been used from at least the early 19th century as the basis for the claim of the existence of a Roman military fort on or near the site of Dinefwr castle (eg. Fenton 1917).

2.2.5 Based on historical events and inferences from 12th century writings, a number of historians have credited the site of Dinefwr castle with a series of fortifications from the 9th century onward, linked with the lords of Deheubarth (Davies 1858) and (Samuel 1868). However, this period in the history of the site remains poorly understood

The Castle

2.2.6 It has been suggested that one of the possible builders of the stone castle was in fact Norman, the Earl Gilbert de Clare (Armitage 1912). Although this was refuted (Fisher 1925), mainly due to a the wrong assumption that Dinefwr could be equated with the site of Dinweiler, it has been accepted that the plan of the castle could possibly reflect a previous motte and bailey design, with the motte having been lowered to form the present smaller inner ward.

2.2.7 One of the most likely builders of the original stone castle remains Lord Rhys, sometime in the mid to late 12th century. Rhys is held to be one of the first Welsh leaders to fortify sites in stone. An example of this is at Cardigan castle, which he refortified in stone in 1171, after he had previously captured and demolished it (Griffiths 1990).

2.2.8 Dinefwr castle's present appearance is the result of many episodes of additions and repairs to the original castle. Numerous attacks were made on the castle in the late 12th and 13th centuries, both during Welsh internal struggles as well as in the wars between the Welsh and English (Hogg and King 1963). In one recorded incident, in 1220, the castle was dismantled by one of the sons of Lord Rhys, Rhys Grug, to prevent Llywelyn the Great from gaining the castle. Rebuilding, or repair, of the castle soon afterwards may have included the construction of the circular keep, a type of structure traditionally dated to this period.

2.2.9 Certainly, over the next hundred years the castle was repaired, and alterations made, on a number of occasions, both by the Welsh and from 1277 by the English. Despite the keep being on the point of collapse in the mid-14th century, the castle survived a three day siege by the forces of Owain Glyndwr in 1403. The castle underwent alterations late in the 15th century, one of which was the construction of the north hall block by Sir Rhys ap Thomas, who later may have been responsible for the final abandonment of the castle for a new mansion on the site of the present Newton house (Rees 1992).

2.2.10 In the late 17th and 18th century the castle was extensively converted into a 'picturesque' ruin, including the construction of a summer-house on top of the keep, later shown in the Buck print of 1742. The alterations made during this period, together with later general estate work, has masked and altered many of the features from previous centuries and has led to a poor fully detailed understanding of the evolution of the castle.

Archaeological work to date

2.2.11 Despite the lack of any archaeological excavation, some valuable information has been gained from a number of limited watching briefs carried out on parts of the castle's structural fabric, uncovered during the present programme of consolidation (eg. Murphy 1995).

2.2.12 Only one limited archaeological excavation has been carried out within the castle, situated immediately to the west of the present entrance and within the castle's inner ward. Four hand-excavated 'V'-shaped test-pits, each only 1.4m x 0.70m and 0.68m in depth, were archaeologically excavated to house concrete thrust pads used in shoring the west wall of the 17th/18th century stairs which give access to the south curtain wall.

2.2.13 Not surprisingly, given the limited size and depth of the test-pits, little of archaeological significance was uncovered. The only two deposits uncovered consisted of a thick layer of mixed topsoil overlying a rubble build-up, assumed to be of a post-medieval date, with no indication of the depth of deposits sealing the surviving medieval horizon (Darke and Wilson 1996).

3. EXCAVATION RESULTS

3.1 Area A: Middle gatehouse and additional planning of the north gate (Fig 2)

3.1.1 The rectangular trench, 8m x 3m, was located within the castle's middle gatehouse, *approx.* 9m to the east of the present entrance into the castle's inner ward. The area was excavated to a maximum depth of 96.48m OD, still within post-medieval rubble, *approx.* 0.45m below the present ground surface, with up to 0.50m of dumped overburden removed, from the whole area. An outcrop of natural bedrock was encountered in the north-west corner of the area at a height of 97.12m OD, 0.20m below the present ground surface (Fig 3).

3.1.2 The earliest feature identified consisted of part of the almost trapezoidal shaped footings of the middle gatehouse. This consisted of a narrow continuous wall (1008) forming the northern, western and southern walls of the gatehouse, giving a total size of *approx.* 9m x 3 to 4m in width. The wall, consisting of irregularly coursed mortared limestone blocks/slabs, was 0.42m in width and had survived to a height of 0.65m, the highest points of the north wall being 0.20m above the present ground surface, while the majority of the wall lay at a height of 96.87m OD, 0.20m below the present ground surface.

3.1.3 The portion of the gatehouse excavated appeared to have been sub-divided into at least two separate chambers with the addition of a cross-wall (1007), 0.80m in width, 0.25m in height and of similar build to wall (1008). This wall, although in a poorer condition than wall (1008), had survived to a height of 96.88m OD, 0.13m below the present ground surface.

3.1.4 Abutting against the south-west corner of wall (1008) was the remains of a substantial wall, or possible buttress (1006), running *approx.* east/west. This wall consisted of heavily mortared irregularly coursed limestone blocks /slabs was 0.90m in width and survived to a height of at least 0.27m (97.07m OD), 0.52m below the present ground surface. Soundings made in the eastern chamber of the gatehouse would seem to indicate that there was the possibility of much deeper deposits being located there, perhaps within a deep cellar.

3.1.5 The stratigraphic deposits overlying the walls (Figs 3 and 4) consisted of; a heavy limestone rubble in a reddish-brown sandy clay (1005) lying at a depth of 0.45m (96.48m OD) below the present ground surface and spread uniformly over the whole area. This was sealed by a 0.20m thick mixed deposit of limestone rubble within a dark-brown sandy clay loam subsoil matrix (1004) which was overlaid by a 0.08m thick modern surface of limestone chippings (1003) and a general trample layer of sand, cement and abrasive material (1002), 0.05m thick. This was finally overlaid by a 0.70m high overburden of mixed sandy clay loam topsoil (1001).

3.1.6 Only a small amount of material was recovered from the excavated contexts; bone and tile fragments and 18th century glass from (1004) and bone and clay pipe fragments with 19th century sherds recovered from (1005).

3.1.7 Additional planning was carried out around the north side of the gate by EDM, the results included with Figure 2. Between the present curtain wall and gatehouse, the stair was fully revealed, with six steps partly built on to the bedrock and heavily mortared onto the adjacent north gatehouse wall and overlaid by the castle's south-west curtain wall. The full extent of the outline of the middle gate masonry was recorded, up to and including the point where it meets, and is overlaid by, the south-western curtain wall.

3.2 Area B: Inner ward gatehouse (Fig 5)

3.2.1 The 'L' shaped trench, 6m x 1m (north/south) and 14m x 1m (east/west) was located on top of the post-medieval make-up, between the circular keep, the south-western curtain wall, under the arch and the 'picturesque' period stair. During the course of the work, due to the uniformity of the underlying deposits, the decision was taken to replace the intended programme of full excavation of the whole trench to a maximum depth of 1m, with a series of test-pits, totalling 13m, within the same area and to the same depth. In addition, the trench was extended 1m further west to test the footings of the 'picturesque' period staircase. The area was excavated to a maximum depth of 1m (100.98m OD), still within the 3m high post-medieval make-up.

3.2.2 The only structure identified consisted of a narrow wall or finger pier (2008) running approx. north/south across the trench and stopping just short of the medieval keep wall (Fig 7). The wall/pier consisted of a rough heavily mortared limestone coursed wall, 0.78m in width and surviving to a height of 0.40m (102.14m OD), 0.40m below the present ground surface. This was built onto a broad foundation base, 0.40m high and 1.20 in width, with a coursed face of mortared limestone blocks /slabs and a heavily mortared rubble core.

3.2.3 A small additional *sondage*, 0.30m in depth, was excavated against the foundation base and confirmed that the base was sitting on a deposit of brown sandy clay with a high percentage of limestone rubble (2013), identical to other post-medieval dumped deposits recorded elsewhere in the trench.

3.2.4 The stratigraphic deposits overlying the wall/pier remains (Fig 6) consisted of a series of consecutive rubble tips, starting at the eastern end of the area and extending westwards. The pier, to the east, was partly overlaid by a light brown sandy clay tip deposit (2006), 0.40m in depth, which also overlaid a dump of mortared wall masonry (2009), further to the east. Deposit (2006) was overlaid by a 0.30m thick tip deposit of rubble within a dark-brown sandy clay (2005) which also overlaid a light-brown sandy clay tip deposit (2012), at least 0.74m in depth, at the east end of the trench. Both (2012) and (2005) were partly overlaid by a 0.18m thick layer of greyish-brown sandy clay loam (2011/2004), 0.24m below the present ground surface.

3.2.5 The pier (2008) in the western half of the trench, was overlaid by a consecutive series of similar rubble tips (2010), (2007) and (2003), all deposits being a light to medium brown sandy clay matrix containing between 30-40% limestone rubble. The latest deposit in this series, (2003) appeared to have been deposited against the wall of the 'picturesque' period stair, rather than the in-filling of any construction trench. Sealing the tip deposits (2011/2004), (2005) and (2010) was a 0.24m thick mixed sandy clay loam subsoil (2002) itself overlaid by a thin mixed trample layer of sandy clay (2001), 0.1m in depth.

3.2.6 The material recovered from the excavated contexts included; two badly abraded early post-medieval pottery sherds from (2003) and (2006), mid-19th century porcelain sherds from (2006) and (2002) some of which co-joined with sherds between contexts, fragments of lead sheeting (2005), possibly from the summerhouse located on top of the keep and a stamped and decorated mid-19th century clay pipe bowl, probably from Chester (Davey and Rutter 1980). A large quantity of small chicken/bird bones and a few larger butchered joint bones were recovered from (2011), (2004) and (2005).

3.3 Area C: Stair to north-east block (Fig 8)

3.3.1 The trench was located at the foot of the 17th/18th century porch stair, and the western corner of the north-east chamber. Although the specified size of the area was originally 3m x 3m, the removal of widespread overburden increased the final size to 3.0m x 3.90m. The area was excavated to a depth of 100.64m OD, 0.33m below the present ground surface, with an additional 0.70m of dumped overburden from recent activity also removed.

3.3.2 The earliest feature identified consisted of a narrow wall (3007) running *approx.* north-west/ south-east through the centre of the area and abutting the wall of the north-east chamber. The wall, consisting of at least four courses of heavily mortared limestone slabs, was 0.40m in width, 3m in length, and survived to a height of at least 0.46m, the highest points of the wall being only 0.04m below the present ground surface. The badly damaged south-western face of the wall was faced with a smooth mortar finish with a slight projection for a step at its south-eastern end.

3.3.3 Along the southern edge of the area, the remains of the porch stair's outer wall (3008) were located, running north-west/south-east for 1.40m. The wall's original width of 0.48m appeared to have been widened, at a later date to 0.70m. The wall survived to a height of 101.10m OD, 0.12m above the present ground surface, although the same wall outside the area exists to a much greater height of *approx.* 3m.

3.3.4 The stratigraphic deposits overlying the walls consisted of; a dark-brown sandy clay rubble dump (3010) lying at a depth of 0.33m below the present ground surface (100.97m OD) and located between the two walls. This was overlaid by a thin lens of small crushed limestone slab fragments (3009). This thin deposit, only 0.03m in depth, was cut by a probable robber trench [3005], associated with the continuation of wall (3008). The unexcavated robber trench, at least 1.60m in length and 0.70m in width, was filled with a dark-grey sandy clay fill (3006).

3.3.5 The robber trench appeared to have been sealed by a 0.20m thick dump deposit of limestone rubble within a dark-brown sandy clay matrix (3003) which uniformly covered the entire trench, both in the area between walls (3008) and (3007) and the north-east half of the trench, beyond wall (3007) (Fig 9). Contained within this rubble deposit was a thin discrete lens of a cream sandy clay (3004), 0.04m in depth and 0.80m x 0.62m, close to the eastern limits of the trench and between the two walls.

3.3.6 The rubble deposit (3003), very similar to (3010), was overlaid by a 0.10-20m thick layer of greyish-brown silty clay loam (3002) which makes up the present ground surface. This was overlaid by a 0.70m high overburden of mixed sandy clay loam topsoil mixed with building rubble (3001).

3.3.7 Again, only a small amount of material was recovered from the excavated contexts, namely a small amount of bone and clay pipe fragments from (3002) and two badly abraded early post-medieval sherds, bone fragments and a large c. 17th/18th century iron key recovered from (3003).

4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 Area A: Middle Gatehouse

4.1.1 The earliest feature identified consisted of part the almost trapezoidal-shaped footings of the middle gatehouse or a later inserted guardroom. The structure appears to be sub-divided into at least two separate chambers. Although the probability of deep stratified medieval deposits seems low in the western half of the area, given the appearance of outcropping of the natural bedrock, soundings within the eastern chamber would seem to indicate some depth of deposits. Whether this includes stratified medieval deposits is impossible to say, at this stage.

4.1.2 No evidence was found to prove if the structure was an original part of the middle gate or a later insertion, although the masonry of the structure is not directly keyed into that for the angular gate projection. If the southern curtain wall is an original medieval feature for the middle gate, then the location of the structure, and the wall (1006) running behind it, would have greatly narrowed the passage into the castle.

4.2 Area B: Inner ward Gatehouse

4.2.1 No evidence of any traces of the medieval inner ward gatehouse were observed within the uppermost metre of make-up in that area. The only structure identified was the narrow wall or finger pier (2008). First indications were that the wall may have pre-dated the circular keep and cut by the keep's construction, but on closer examination the wall/pier appeared to have facing on its north face, and therefore was fairly complete. The *sondage* against the base of this structure identified a rubble make-up under the wall/pier, which would appear to be consistent with a post-medieval date, although no datable material has been recovered from it.

4.2.2 The function of the wall/pier is somewhat in doubt. Due to the limited nature of the trench, no established relationship with either the arched walkway or the south-western curtain wall was possible. However, if the wall/pier was part of the foundations for the present arched walkway then it would be expected that another similar pier would have been found further to the east, when in fact none was.

4.2.3 The possibility exists that the wall/pier may be the only surviving traces of the foundations for a earlier post-medieval walkway, constructed prior to the raising of the area to its present height. A third possibility is that the wall may have served as a narrow revetment in a planned landscaping of the make-up, although the structure appears to have been quickly buried under further tip deposits, which finally led to the whole area being infilled up to the wall of the 'picturesque' period stair. Perhaps when part of the build-up is removed it will be possible to establish its relationship with other structures and therefore define its function more clearly.

4.3 Area C: Stair to North-east Block

4.3.1 Within this area, the wall (3007) would appear to be part of the extended footings of the 17th/18th stair. The slight mortar-faced projection or corner, surviving where the wall abuts the corner of the north-east chamber would appear to be the remains of a step or a slot for a wooden support. The continuation of the wall and the robber trench for the stair's robust outer wall (3008) would suggest that the stair extended out further to the west, although it was unlikely to extended very much further out, given the slightly converging nature of walls (3007) and (3008).

4.3.2 The similarity between the rubble dump deposits (3010) and (3003) may suggest that the thin limestone slab deposit (3009) was simply another dumping episode, rather than a possible surface, associated with the stair.

4.3.3 The depth of excavation was not deep enough to fully penetrate the post-medieval and modern rubble contexts, consequently no trace of the inner wall of the 14th century hall or other medieval structures, deposits or surfaces were encountered.

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6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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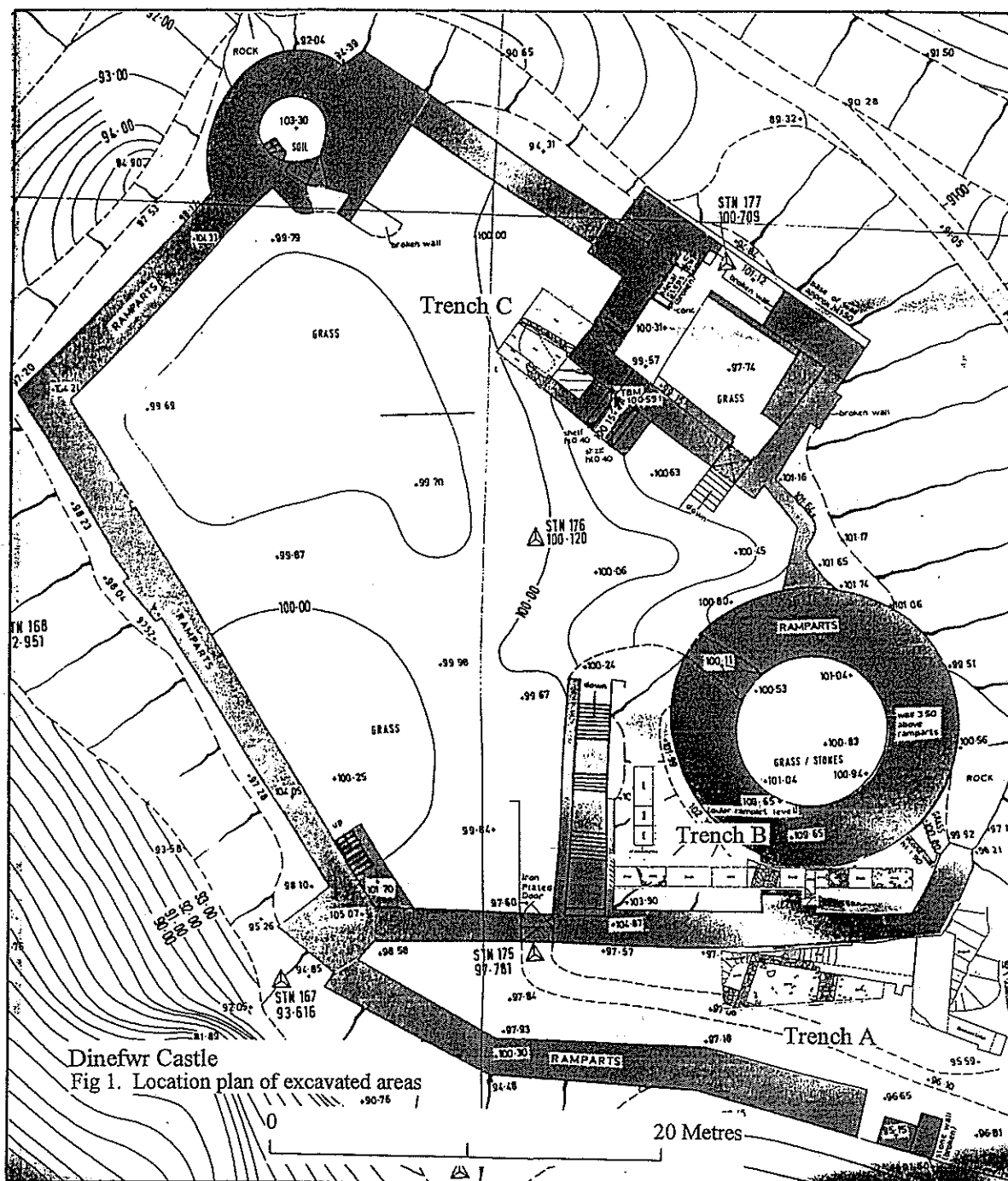
Dr. Sian Rees, Cadw
The Conservation staff at Dinefwr castle

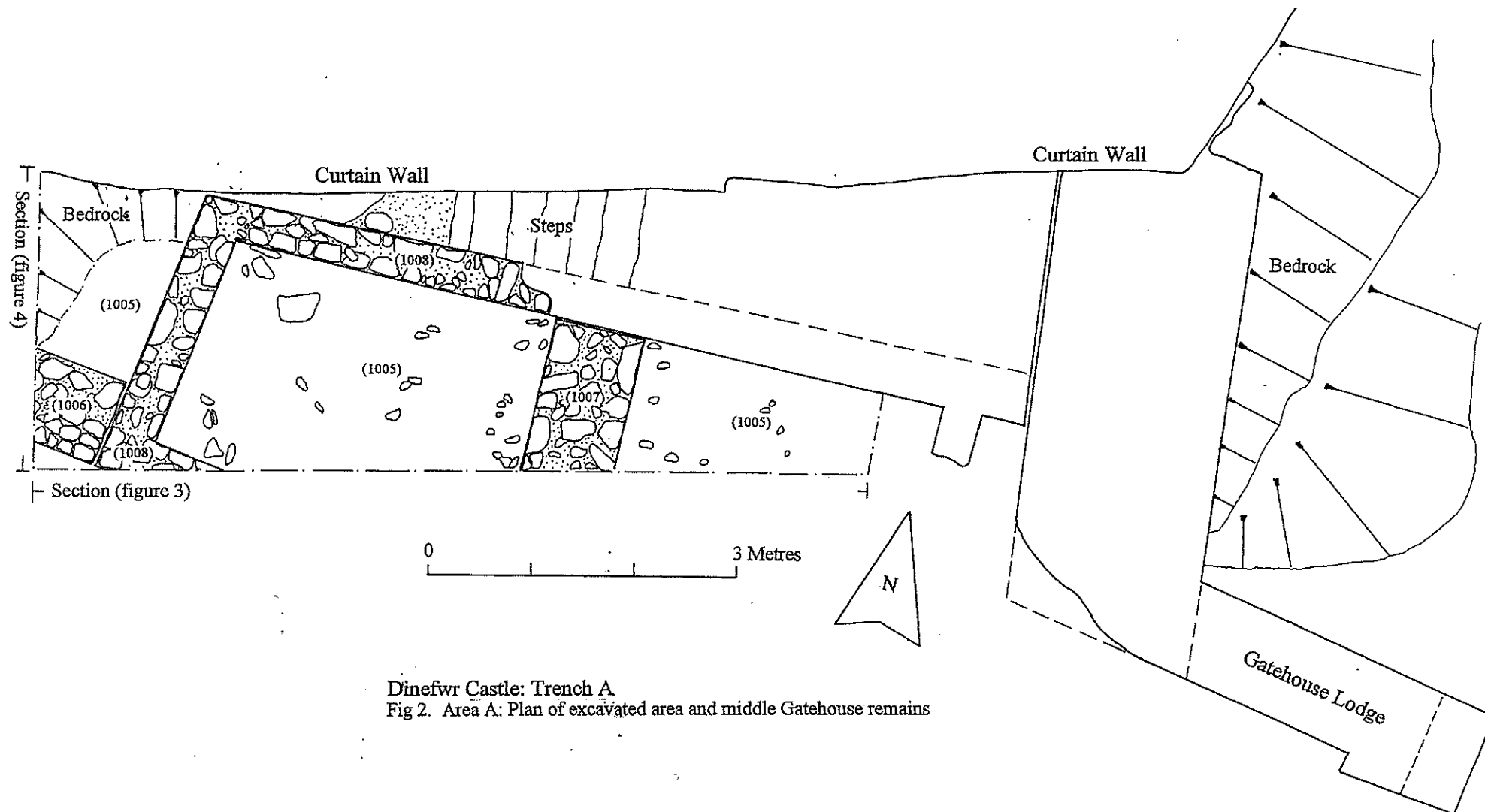
Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology staff involvement:

Project Management: Ken Murphy

Fieldwork: Karl Lander, Andy Manning, Richard Ramsey and Maugan Trethowan

Text and Illustrations: Andy Manning





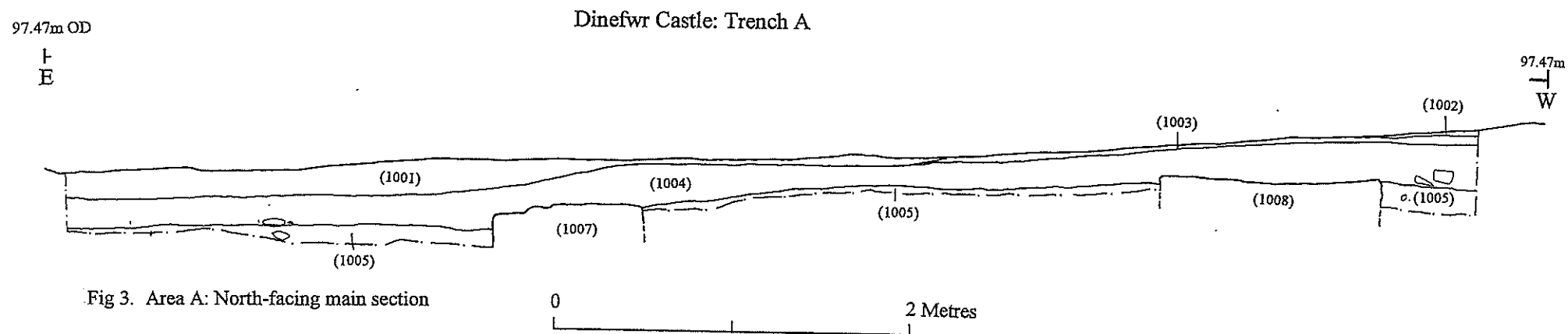


Fig 3. Area A: North-facing main section

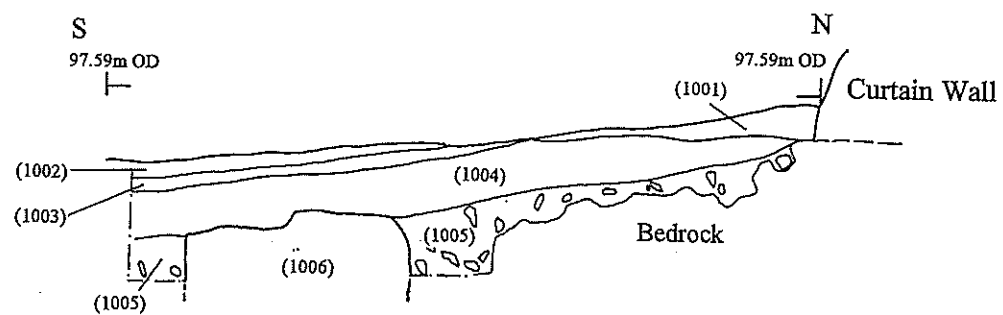
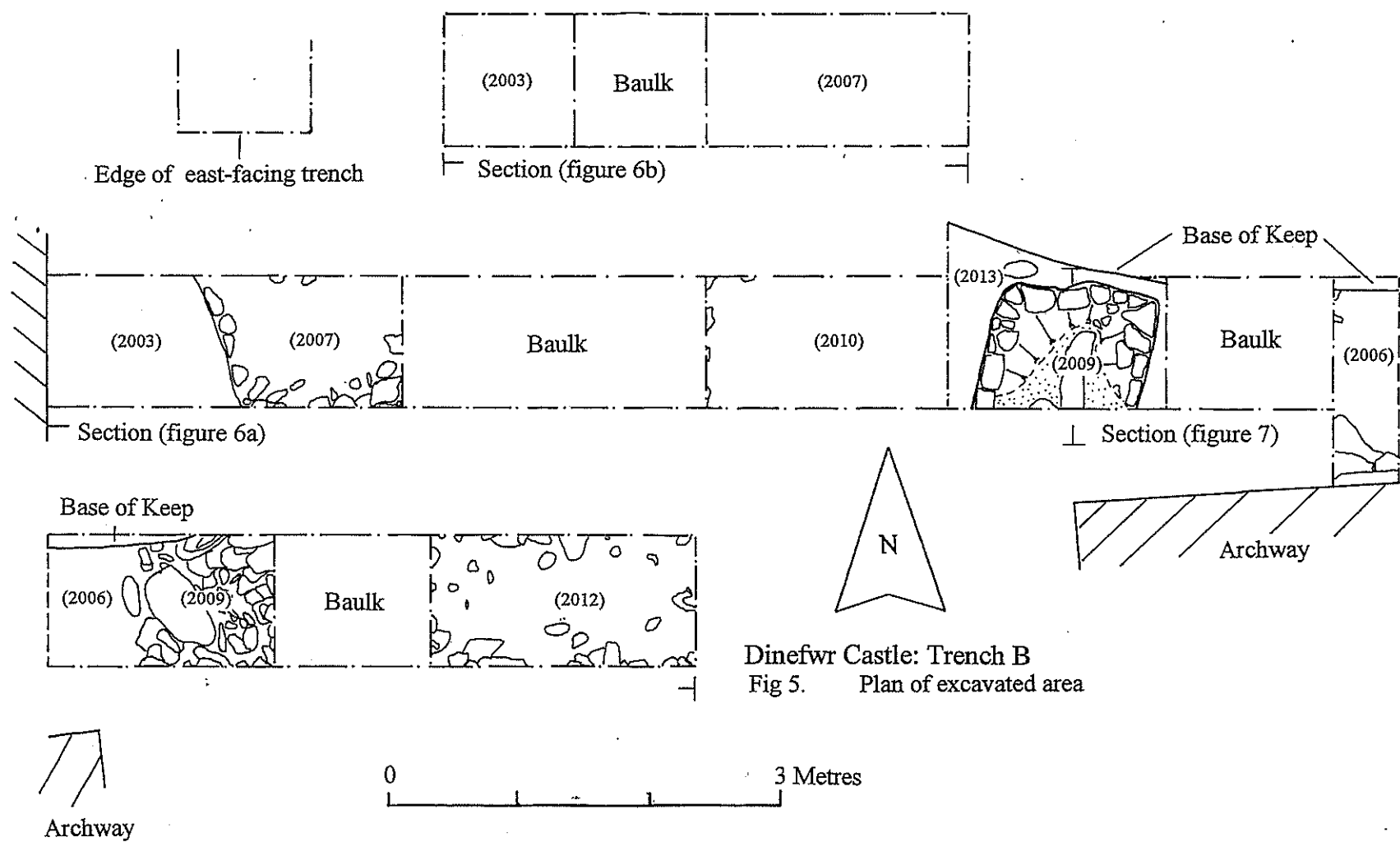


Fig 4. Area A: East-facing section



Dinefwr Castle: Trench B
Fig 5. Plan of excavated area

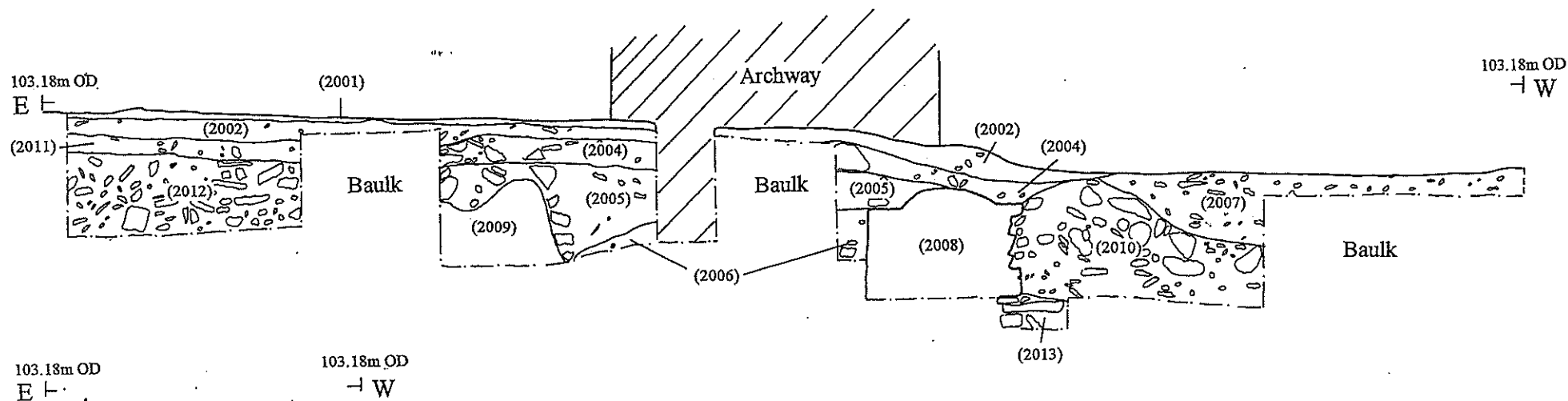


Fig 6a. North-facing segment of main section.

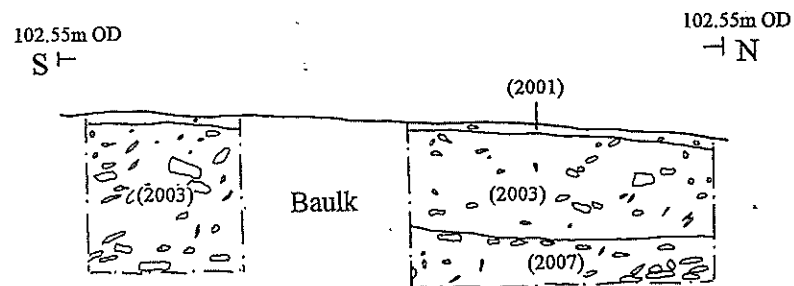
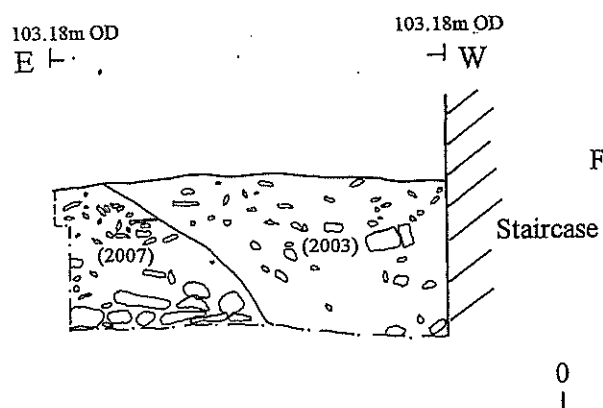


Fig 6b. East-facing segment of main section.

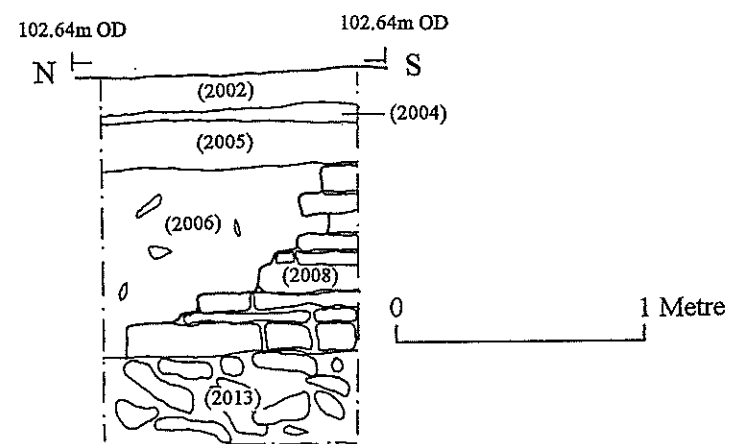


Fig 7. West-facing section through post-medieval structure.

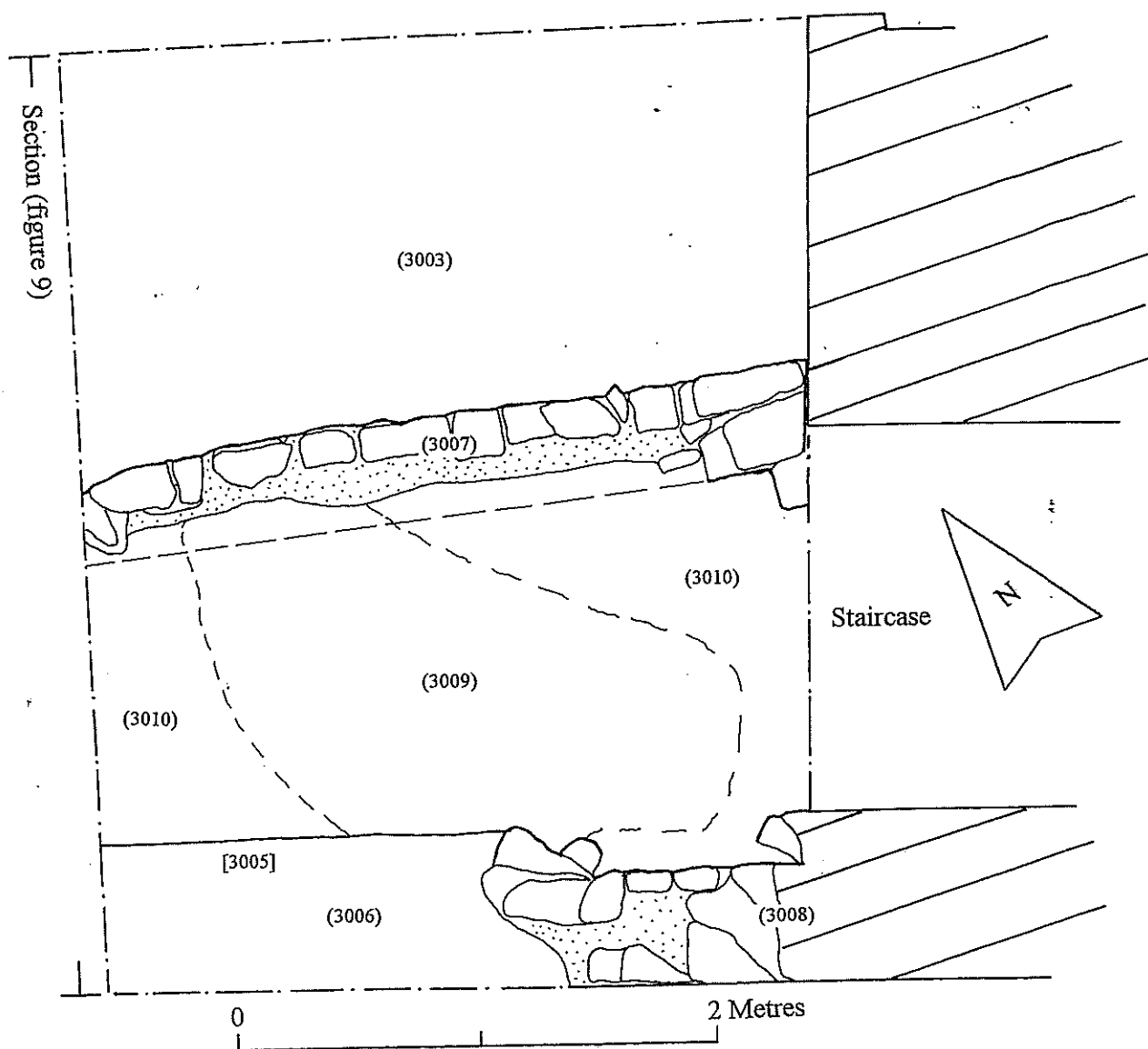


Fig 8. Area C: Plan of excavated area

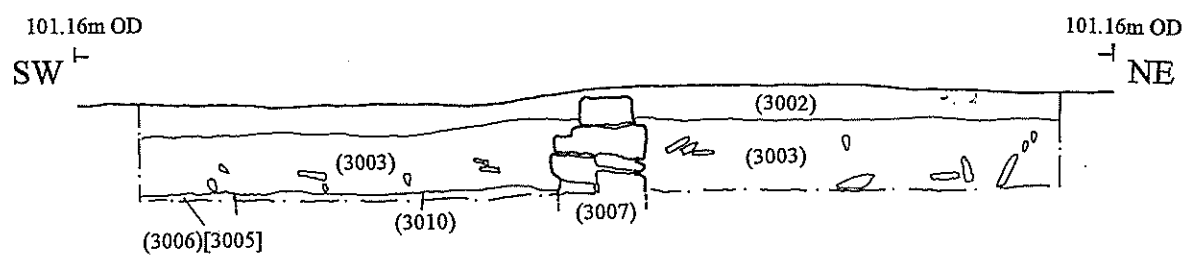


Fig 9. Area C: South east-facing main section

Dinefwr Castle: Trench C

APPENDIX A.

Project brief:

As supplied by Dr. Sian E. Rees, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Cadw

DINEFWR CASTLE, LLANDREILO (SN 612 218)

Medieval Masonry Castle in Cadw ownership, in process of consolidation

Quotations for costs are invited for the following archaeological work:

A. Middle Gatehouse. Hand excavation of rectilinear area 10m long, 3m wide to uncover and interpret protruding foundations of middle gate. Establish relationship between stair, curtain wall and footings. Remove higher area of soil (500 mm high) at approximate point shown on plan. Spoil to be temporarily stored immediately adjacent. No backfilling required. After excavation, plan whole of north side of gate, continuing to where the gate masonry turns to join the keep. Area to be planned shown as dotted line.

B. Inner Ward Gatehouse. Hand dig L-shaped trenches 6m x 1m, and 1m deep, to run 1m from side and end walls and 14m x 1m parallel to and 2m from south-west curtain. Aim is to establish if footings, archaeological surfaces or any other features survive in this area. Originally the inner part of the gatehouse must have stood here, but it is not known if any traces survived the establishment of the stair in the 16th/17th century. If no archaeological features are uncovered, a machine will be used to lower the area by 1m. This will require an archaeological watching brief. Please quote daily rate for this work, which should last for up to one week.

Spoil to be stored immediately adjacent. No backfilling required.

C. Stair to North-east Block and Hall Wall: Hand dig area 3m x 3m at base of stair to establish if any remains survive at high level to return of hall inner wall or base of stair. Lump of soil at stair base some 700mm deep to be excavated away. Spoil to be stored immediately adjacent. No backfilling required.

All three areas to be planned at appropriate scale and photographed with monochrome prints. No sums should be included for artefact analysis, dating, or conservation, which will be met by Cadw if required. Three copies of the report on the three areas should be forwarded to Cadw within one month of the completion of work.

Work should be undertaken as soon as possible, preferably within the months of February/ early March. Indications of when the work could be done should be given. Work will be monitored by the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments. Access to the castle may be arranged with Cadw in normal working hours.

Sian E. Rees
Inspector of Ancient Monuments

APPENDIX B.

Archive index

The project archive has been indexed and catalogued according to National Monument Record (NMR) categories and contains the following;

A. Report

A1. Copy of final report

B. Site Written Data

B1. Context records-paper

B5. Survey data-paper

C Drawings

C1. Catalogue of drawings

C2. Site drawings

D Photographs

D1. Catalogue of photographs

D2. Colour slides

D3. Black and white contact prints

Also finds, bagged by context.