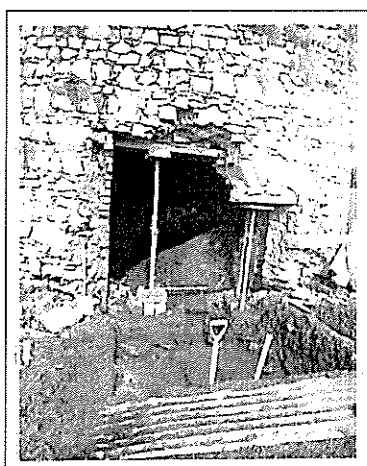


ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

ANGLE DOVECOTE, PEMBS.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION ,
MARCH 1999

Project Record No. 37128



Report prepared for SPARC
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Summary

Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology were invited, by SPARC (South Pembrokeshire Partnership for Action with Rural Communities Ltd) to undertake a trial excavation at the dovecote, Angle (Dyfed PRN 3089; SAM Pe 67), in order to inform decisions regarding intended consolidation and enhancement works. The excavation was undertaken from 1 - 3 March, 1999.

The dovecote cannot be closely dated. It may have been constructed during the medieval period, possibly in the first half of the 14th century; however, it may be as late as the early 17th century. However, it seems certain that it formed a constituent of the medieval Angle Rectory, represented by 'The Old Rectory', a fortified enclosure immediately to the south, and probably fell into disuse when a new rectory was established on a different site during the modern period.

The dovecote is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Pe 67) and is a fine example of a circular masonry dovecote, with a vaulted roof and apical flight-entrance. It is complete, and in fair-good condition. The only area of concern is the entry which has been enlarged in recent years and has a damaged lintel, and some areas of missing facework. The excavation of two 2m² trenches, within and immediately outside the building, demonstrated that the contemporary ground surfaces had not survived but had been truncated during the post-medieval period, possibly prior to the association of the building with smithing activity; archaeological deposits, both within and without, lay directly upon the bedrock and were largely confined to 20th century smithing waste-products and equipment. There was no archaeological evidence for any internal structures or fittings, but the robber-trench for a possible doorway sill was present.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The dovecote is leased by SPARC (South Pembrokeshire Partnership for Action with Rural Communities Ltd). In 1996, SPARC commissioned *Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology* to undertake a full survey of the site, a standing building survey of the dovecote itself, and historical analysis prior to a NHLF bid for consolidation and enhancement work.

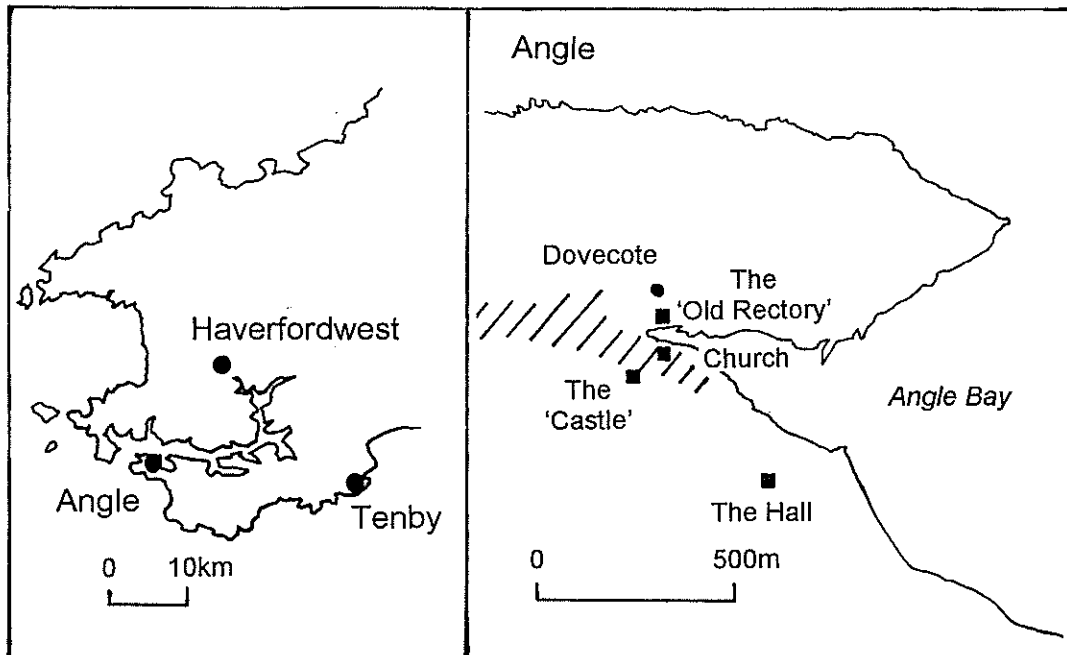
The survey report drew attention to the possibility of survival of archaeological features and deposits, in particular evidence for internal superstructures and fittings generally associated with dovecotes eg. a *potence*, a central pivoting ladder used for the collection of birds from nesting-holes.

In advance of any consolidation and enhancement works, SPARC accordingly invited *Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology* to undertake a trial excavation, in the form of two 2m² trenches excavated within and immediately outside the building, in order to test for the presence of below-ground archaeology that may inform decisions regarding intended works. The excavation was undertaken from 1 - 3 March, 1999.

1.3 Site location and topography

Angle Dovecote is situated at NGR SM 8660 0307 and lies upon a gentle slope southwards down to Angle Bay and the 'Old Rectory' site, between 10m and 11m OD and 100m from the shoreline. The solid geology is represented by an area of Carboniferous Lower Limestone Shale (*Cleistopora* Zone), overlying the predominant Devonian Old Red Sandstones which occur within the remainder of the immediate locality and have weathered to a fine, rich fertile soil. The latter give way to sea-cliffs of the main Carboniferous Limestone Series 50m north of the site.

Fig. 1: Angle dovecote - location maps



The dovecote is situated within a rectangular north-south trending field, which forms a part of a co-axial system of properties dating from the immediate post-conquest period (Kissock, 1993, 17-18). With the exception of the northern, western and eastern field boundaries, which are hedgebanks with possible rubble cores and probably early, there are no associated archaeological features. The depression running NE-SW through the field some 30m north-west of the dovecote probably represents a the channel of a stream that formerly joined the north-south flowing stream along the western hedgebank; it was associated with a hedgebank until recently (shown on the Ordnance Survey 1:10560 map of 1964). A narrow, linear, shallow depression can be discerned running east-west 7m south of the dovecote, and is probably a below-ground field drain. The wire-mesh fence that forms the south boundary is modern; the field was formerly open to the northern boundary, formerly a moat, of the 'Old Rectory' enclosure that lies 30m to the south. The field is now pasture but, away from the dovecote, was probably arable during the medieval period.

1.4 Site history

Angle formed a manor associated with the Lordship of Pembroke during the medieval period. The history of the dovecote appears, however, to be linked to the ecclesiastical settlement in the form of the church and rectory of Angle.

There is no good published account, or structural description, of the dovecote, and its history is little understood. Richard Fenton mentioned it in his *Tour* of 1811, and it receives a short description in the RCAHM(W) *Inventory* for Pembrokeshire, of 1925. However, little has hitherto been achieved in terms of linking either the dovecote, or the other early structures and features with which Angle is comparatively wealthy, with the morphology and development of the settlement as a whole.

During the early-mid 20th century the dovecote was associated with a forge, and was used as storage for both equipment and waste-products.

1.4.1 Angle: Manorial history

Angle was a manor of the Lordship of Pembroke during the medieval period, probably coterminous with the present parish, but its precise relationship to the lordship is not clear. The manor comprised 2 knights' fees and indeed, during the later medieval period, it appears to have been divided into two, 'Angle' and 'Hall in Angle'; however, Bangeston to the east may represent the second knights' fee. Angle was further divided into areas of secular and ecclesiastical ownership. Angle Hall, the descendant of the manor-house of 'Hall in Angle', remains inhabited to this day.

Medieval

A settlement at Angle cannot be proposed to have originated before the post-conquest medieval period, and indeed the morphology of the village would appear to confirm this (see below, 8). The place-name has traditionally been regarded as having Scandinavian origins, but it has recently been suggested that it is of Middle English derivation in the form of *angle*, 'land in a corner or nook' (Charles, 1992, 672).

The medieval history of Angle begins with the conquest of south-west Dyfed by the Anglo-Normans under Roger de Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury, in 1093, and the establishment of Pembroke Castle. From this centre, Roger's son Arnulf carved out dependant territories occupying most of what is now South Pembrokeshire, Angle included. By the 12th century, the area was formally recognised as the Lordship (or County) of Pembroke and, in 1138, after a period of royal control, an Earldom was created by King Stephen.

Much of the western half of the peninsula of South Pembrokeshire was directly dependent, in the form of the demesne manor of Castlemartin, to the earl at Pembroke Castle. However, the status of the Manor of Angle and its relationship to the lordship is, like that of Stackpole and Bosherton, unclear. Whilst recognised as a member of the lordship, it neither formed part of the demesne of the lordship, did not owe 'castle-guard' to Pembroke and the Earls of Pembroke themselves may have had no direct tenurial rights. However, at the same time it appears not to have had the status of a barony nor a sub-lordship. George Owen, writing in the early 17th century, lists among the discrete holdings in the peninsula, the following - 'The Barony of Pembroke; Castlemartin; Stackpole and Bosherton; Angle' (Owen, 1897, 374); the Lordship of Castlemartin appears to have been a recent upgrading of the demesne manor, created for William Herbert in 1551 (Jones, 1987, 200).

Early lords of the Manor of Angle appear to have included Gilbert de Angle who joined King Henry II in his invasion of Ireland in 1171 and in return was granted lands in Meath (Owen, 1875, 86, citing Giraldus, *Expugnacio Hibernica*).

Upon the death without heirs of Anselm Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, in 1247, the Lordship and Earldom were divided among his four coheirs through the female line. Whilst the Lordship of Pembroke eventually passed to William de Valence, Angle passed to Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, held in chief by Guy de Brian (Owen, 1918, 99-100). By this time at least, Angle comprised two knights' fees, and it was held in turn of de Brian by Richard de Angle. Interestingly, an unidentified 1/20th of a knights' fee was held by one Adam de Angle.

The tenure of Angle appears to have soon afterwards passed to the Shirburn family. Fenton, writing in 1811 (Fenton, 1903 edn., 219), claims that he had in his possession 'a very ancient deed', whereby Robert de Vale, the mid 13th century lord of Dale acting on behalf of de Brian, permitted Stephen de Angle and Phillip de Angle to grant the Manor of Angle to Phillip's son-in-law Robert Shirburn, Sheriff of Pembroke. The deed is discussed more fully by Owen, who therefore must have seen it, and dated to 1278 (Owen, 1875, 86).

A Shirburn was a juror at a younger Guy de Brian's *Inquisition Post Mortem* in 1307 in which the holding at Angle is not listed among the de Brian/de Clare possessions, but there are several illegible sections within the manuscript and his name is not preserved (Owen, 1918, 78-81). A Walter de Shirburn was a 'janitor' of Pembroke Castle during the period 1326-31 (Owen, 1918, 115) and juror at three *Inquisitions* of 1331, during the minority of Lawrence Hastings, Earl of Pembroke (Owen,

1918, 89-91). By 1348 and Lawrence's own *Inquisition Post Mortem* the earls were claiming 18d rent of Angle *pro messione* (for sowing); Walter's heir Nicholas de Shirburn was a juror (Owen, 1918, 89-91).

In the *Inquisition Post Mortem* of William's son Aymer de Valence, in 1324, the 'rent of assize of the vill at Angle at Michaelmas' was worth 18d (Owen, 1918, 85). This demonstrates that Angle, although forming a part of the de Clare inheritance, was, in matters of legal administration and jurisprudence, subject to the Earls of Pembroke. This situation was reflected in many other independent lordships and baronies in Pembrokeshire, over which the earls claimed legal authority. Among other levies claimed by the earls of Pembroke were tolls levied on ships calling at Angle, cited in 1390-91 (Owen, 1918, 143).

A list of the knight's fees held by Lawrence Hastings was drawn up in 1353 (Owen, 1918, 97-8). Nicholas de Shirburn held 2 1/2 carucates of land in Angle, and 12s of rent, held of the Earl of Gloucester. He was succeeded by his son John, who predeceased his sister; she married John Cradock, of Newton in Rhos (Owen, 1918, 98) and their descendant, Sir Richard Cradock, acquired nearby Eastington, changing his name to Newton (Fenton, 1903 edn., 219). Nevertheless, a Shirburn inheritance continued and an Edmund Shirburn held lands in Angle alongside Richard Newton in the late 15th century (RCAHMW, 1925, 11-12n.); while in 1480, a John Shirburn was liable for rent to the Earl of Pembroke for a house in the town (Owen, 1918, 146).

At some period during the early 16th century Sir Rhys ap Thomas appears to have obtained lands in - or the manor of - Angle (Nash, 1986, 40). He was a ruthless estate builder and held extensive lands and offices - Justice of the Principality of South Wales, Steward, Receiver and Chancellor of the Crown Lordship of Haverfordwest, Lord of Carew and Knight of the Garter. He died in 1525, his lands and possessions largely falling to his grandson, the 17 year old Rhys ap Gruffydd who was arrested for alleged treason in 1529 to be executed in 1531 (Rees, 1987, 33).

Modern

The Act of Union in 1536 abolished the Marcher Lordships of Wales and with them the Lordship of Pembroke. A new county of Pembrokeshire was drawn up on civil lines, and divided into hundreds. Angle came to lie within the Hundred of Castlemartin.

Nevertheless, the manorial system persisted. In his list of Pembrokeshire manors, George Owen, writing in the early 17th century cites two within Angle itself - Angle and 'Hall place in Angle' (Owen, 1897, 400), which may represent the division of the two knights' fees into two manors; however, the second knights' fee might just as easily have been represented by Bangeston, a known medieval holding to the east (Ludlow, 1994, 8). A Hall at Angle had been established prior to 1600 and from the first was tenurially distinct; in an estate map of 1825, the overall holding is still referred to as 'Hall and Angle' (Pemb. R. O., D/Angle/75). In Owen's time Angle itself was under the tenure of one Walter Rees, while Hall formed part of the extensive Perrott holdings (Owen, 1897, 522); the Perrotts had held the neighbouring estate at Popton, a castle-guard fee of the Earls of Pembroke, during the medieval period (Owen, 1918, 86).

Shortly afterwards, one John Harries acquired Angle Hall. His daughter Margaret married into the Devereux family (Laws, 1888, 306) and by 1613 the entire holding of Angle, along with much South Pembrokeshire property, was in the hands of John Devereux of the House of Essex (Howells, 1987, 363).

The Angle estate, and the Hall which was by now the centre of the manor, were in the hands of one Griffith White in the early 18th century. His daughter Elizabeth married one John Hooke and so ultimately Angle came to lie within the extensive Cawdor Estate. The Manor of Castlemartin had passed to the Cawdor line in 1720 when Gilbert Lort, the previous holder, died (Jones, 1987, 201). His sister Elizabeth inherited the estate and married Sir Alexander Campbell whose descendant, John Campbell, was created Baron Cawdor in 1796; his son was created Earl Cawdor in 1827 (*ibid.*, 201-202). A Campbell, John Hooke Campbell, was John Hooke of Angle's godson. He inherited Angle

and was succeeded by his nephew John Campbell, Baron Cawdor (Ludlow, 1994, 8). The last Lord Cawdor at Angle died in 1821, but prior to this, in 1805, the Angle estate had been acquired by John Mirehouse of Brownslade, from 1778 an agent for the Cawdor estate (Murphy, 1993, 10) whose family are still the major landowner within the parish, and still reside at the Hall.

1.4.2 Angle: Ecclesiastical history

The dovecote at Angle is a probably a product of the ecclesiastical history of the settlement (see Section 1.4.4 below).

Angle church is dedicated to St Mary. In the absence of firm evidence for a pre-conquest foundation, its history must be said to begin after 1098, when it was appropriated to the Benedictine Priory at Monkton, Pembroke, which had been founded in 1098 by Arnulf de Montgomery as a cell of Seez, in Normandy, in memory of his recently killed brother, Hugh (Laws, 1909, 168). The exact date of the grant is not known but had occurred before 1175 (see below); it may have been as early as 1098-1100, when 'Arnulf (de Montgomery) gave the churches of all his land in Wales, and the tithes...to the monks of St Martins, Seez' (Conway Davies, 1946, 247). In 1377 Angle church paid an annual charge of 23s. to Monkton Priory (Laws, 1909, 193).

It was a parish church from the first, the parish being coterminous with the two knight's fees that made up the holding of Angle. In the *Taxatio* of Pope Nicholas of 1291 the church was assessed at £8, the tithes due to the king being 16s (Green, 1911, 234); the valuation was the same in 1379 (Laws, 1909, 195). In the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1536 the figures were for the church, £10 9s 10d, with 21s tithes, and for the vicarage 79s, with 7s 11d tithes (Green, 1911, 235).

The living was both a rectory and a vicarage, and from at least 1175; in 1175-76, during the episcopate of David Fitzgerald, Giraldus Cambrensis ('Gerald of Wales') was, whilst Archdeacon of Brecon, was also Rector of Angle (Conway Davies, 1946, 280 D.192). At the time the inhabitants of Angle were recalled under the sentence of interdict, on account of their refusal to pay tithes, as testified by Giraldus in his *De Rebus* (Conway Davies, 1946, 280 D.190).

The Rectory of Angle was a landowner in its own right. 'Certain lands and tenements which were in the hands of feoffees to....the parish church' were valued at 48s. 10d. (RCAHMS, 1925, 11, citing PRO, Chantry Certificates No. 22, no date given). In his will of 1500 Richard Newton (see above, 5) bequeathed four tenements in Haverfordwest and Pembroke' to the church (*ibid.*). Monkton Priory was also a landowner within the parish (Rees, 1975, 270), and it is probable that the holdings represented by the blocks of tithe-free land depicted on the Tithe Map of 1841 belonged either to the Priory or directly to the Rectory of Angle (Kissock, 1990, 238). More significantly for the present study, a large compact strip of land which included the dovecote was rectorial glebeland in 1814 (NLW, Tithe map, 1841).

Monkton was an 'alien priory', ie the daughter-house of a French monastery. As such it was intermittently seized by the crown, as in 1285 under Edward I (Laws, 1909, 177) and, more frequently, during the Hundred Years War. The king then claimed the Angle church's holdings and exercised the right of presentation to the benefice of Angle. For instance, in 1406 John Clifford was admitted to the church of Angle 'on the presentation of King Henry (IV), patron of the Priory of Pembroke, being in his hand by occasion of the war between himself and his adversaries the French' (RCAHMS, 1925, 11). The complexities of a similar case in 1324, when Thomas de Colyngnam was presented to Angle church by Edward II, but was contested by the bishop of St Davids and his nominee Hywel ap Gruffydd, are discussed in Laws (1909, 181-182); it is not known which nominee succeeded to the living. All alien priories, including Monkton, were finally suppressed under Henry V in 1415, their lands and appropriated benefices falling to the crown (Laws, 1909, 201).

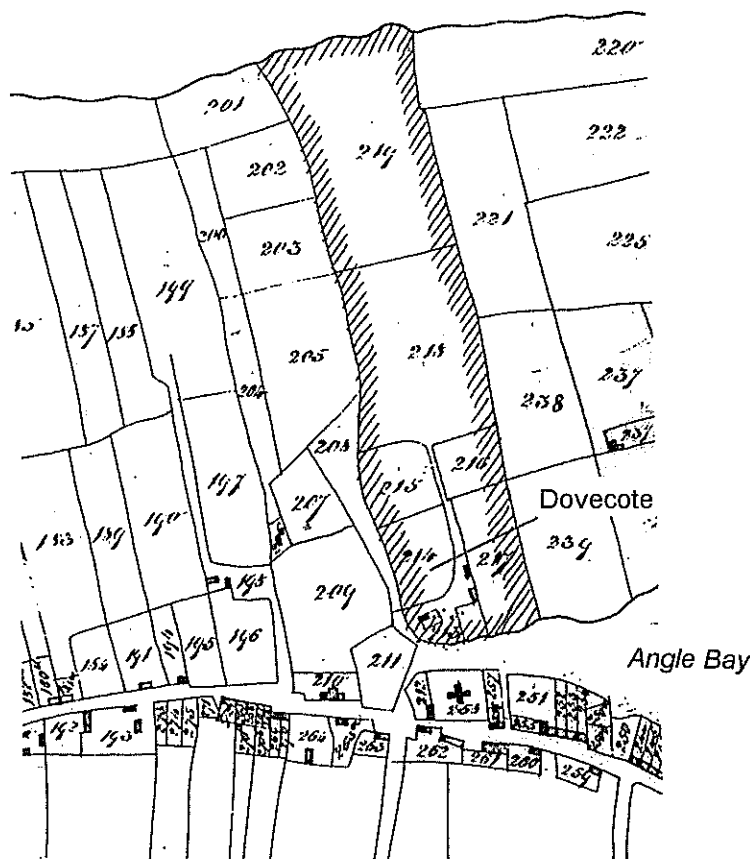
In 1833, the living was a sinecure rectory and a discharged vicarage, the former valued at £10 10s., and the latter at £3 19s 0d. Two-thirds of the tithes were appropriated to the rectory, and one-third to the vicarage (Lewis, 1833). The benefice of Angle is still a rectory (Church in Wales, 1997, 12).

'The Old Rectory'

'The Old Rectory' lies within the magnate core on the north shore of Angle Bay, opposite the church. It is termed 'homestead' in the Tithe Apportionment of 1841 and has been known as 'Castle Farm' since at least 1925 (RCAHMW, 1925, 9). The house itself occupies a former moated enclosure. Much of its morphological features have become obscured in recent years, but it formerly constituted a square enclosure, with a moat to the north, west and east, still partly wet in 1925, and whose masonry revetment can be seen today on the west side. A 'pele-tower' stands at the south-west corner of the enclosure and there are the possible remains of a second corner tower to the north-east; there is a local tradition of there having formerly been four corner towers (occupant, Castle Farm, *pers. comm.*). The pele-tower has been described by Smith, 1988, 23, 32), and can be dated to the 15th-16th centuries.

What was the original function of the site? It has traditionally been regarded as the site of a rectory and is labelled as such on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1864 and 1908. However, Fenton, writing in 1811, gives a rather different account and describes the site as locally being termed the 'Castle' and said to have been the principal residence of the Shirburns, ie purely secular; at the time of his visit the house was an inn, 'The Castle Inn' (Fenton, 1903 edn., 220). It nonetheless stood on a regular rectangular strip of rectorial glebeland (Fig. 3), part of the medieval co-axial property system and which incorporated the dovecote, but which by 1841 was under the ownership of the Mirehouses (NLW, Angle Tithe, 1841). By 1841 the present rectory had been established away to the south-east and was presumably the only one inhabited as a rectory at the time of the survey.

*Fig. 3: Angle - rectorial glebeland in 1841
(from NLW, Angle parish, Tithe Map, 1841)*



'The Castle'

The second further high-status (semi fortified?) masonry building stands on the opposite side of Angle Bay, just south of the main street through the village and opposite the church. Known locally as the 'Castle' since at least the mid 19th century, the masonry building comprises a first floor hall of the late 14th-15th century. It was termed the 'Almshouse' in 1925 (RCAHMS, 1925, 10) but Fenton recounts the local tradition that three co-heiresses each built themselves a house, respectively the Castle, the moated site, and the site now occupied by the Hall (Fenton, 1903 edn., 220). Fenton himself was inclined to the view that it was a nunnery.

The Hall

Angle Hall, to the east of the medieval magnate core, is, as it stands, a building of the 18th-19th centuries. Fenton, who saw it in 1811, remarked that 'in its day it appears to have been very respectable' (Fenton, 1903 edn., 220) and so may have seen it in a different form than today. It cannot, in the absence of evidence, be proved to be the site of the 'Hall place in Angle' first mentioned c.1600 and the centre of the second manor (see above, 6), but the name is clearly significant, as is the close proximity of the present rectory.

1.4.4 Territorial divisions and the dovecote

The possible arrangement of tenure within the magnate core in the medieval and early modern periods is discussed below.

It is apparent from the above that there were at least three high-status occupants within the Manor of Angle - the Lord of the Manor of Angle, the Rector of Angle as landowner, and, from c.1600 at least, the lord of the Manor of 'Hall place in Angle' (in an intriguing reflection of the three co-heiresses of the local tradition).

The possible magnate core breaks up into two well defined units. The church and rectorial glebeland lie to the north of the axial road, which was a primary feature, while 'The Castle' lies to the south of the road. 'The Castle' has affinities with buildings in South Pembrokeshire with known secular manorial functions, usually in a dual role as residence and administrative/judicial centre, eg. Castell Coch, Newton North, with which it is stylistically very similar, and Lydstep Palace near Tenby (Ludlow, 1996 and 1997). Both are of similar late 14th-15th century date. It seems probable, then, that 'The Castle' represents the centre of the Lord of the Manor of Angle.

The area represented by the rectorial glebeland lies within the medieval property system and encloses the 'Old Rectory'. There is no reason, then, to suppose that it was anything but a rectory from the first. It is associated with the church on the north side of the co-axial road, and in form is very like the enclosure and pele-tower at Monkton Priory, which in itself is significant. The medieval rectors were landowners of some status and comparatively wealthy, and included some significant individuals, for example Giraldus Cambrensis, during his Archdeaconry of Brecon. The dovecote stands immediately north of 'The Old Rectory' within the rectorial glebe, and was doubtless established by the rectors; the privilege of establishing a dovecote was, for a long time, restricted to abbots and lords of the manor but by the later medieval period was extended to include the rector and the squire.

The Hall, to the east, is secondary and may well be on the same site as the centre of the 'Hall place in Angle' of c.1600. This division of Angle manor may however have occurred even earlier, and while there is no supporting physical evidence, the site may have been occupied from the later medieval period. The landlords of the united Angle presumably found it a more suitable site during the modern period and chose it in favour of 'The Castle'. The establishment of a new rectory nearby is consistent with this decision, and had occurred before 1811 (Fenton, 1903 edn., 220) but its exact date of construction is unknown.

2.0 METHODOLOGIES AND RESULTS

2.1 Project methodologies

Two trial trenches, T1 and T2, were hand-excavated down to the level of the natural soil. Both T1 and T2 were 2m² in plan, and the natural soil occurred at an average depth of 0.30m. Trench T1 was excavated within the interior of the dovecote, slightly north-west of centre; T2 was excavated just outside and to the south of the entrance, its northern edge more-or-less on the line of the projected wall-face, with a small extension through the site of the original entry.

Written, drawn and photographic records (monochrome, colour slide and colour print) were maintained throughout the course of the excavation. Contexts were recorded using a continuous, numbered single-context system on *pro-forma* recording sheets in accordance with *Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology Field Operations Recording Manual*. Plans and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20; photographic records were in 35mm format. Drawn records were related to the Ordnance Survey datum.

All finds were of recent post-medieval date; all were noted, but none were retained for further analysis.

2.2 Site description

The dovecote is a cylindrical, single-storeyed structure constructed from roughly coursed, medium-large sized Carboniferous Limestone rubble from a local source. It lies upon a south-facing slope with a fall of 0.75m and has an external diameter of 5.82m, an internal diameter of 3.70m, and is 7.2m in height. The walls are 0.90m thick, with an external batter, to a height of 0.97m at the entry, which increases the basal thickness to 1.20m. The conical roof is vaulted. With the exception of remodelling of the entry in recent years, it appears to be of a single build. The structure features no dressed stone. There are no remains of any finishes, either externally or internally.

It is a fine example of a dovecote and is complete, and in fair-good condition. The only area of concern is the remodelled entry which has a damaged lintel, and some areas of missing facework. The walls are free from cracks and there is little external plant growth, but grass has established itself on the vault exterior. The interior has until recently been used as a store by the owner of Castle Farm.

2.2.1 The dovecote exterior

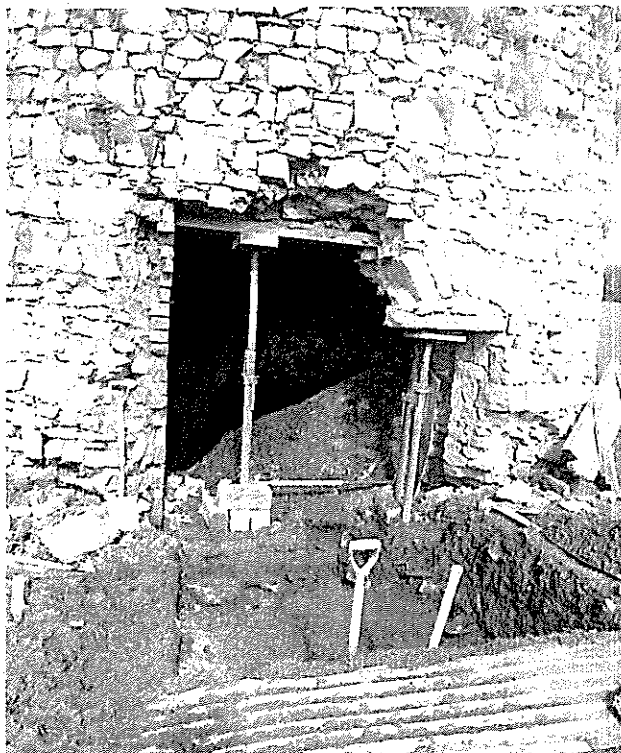
Externally, the structure is a plain cylinder up to a height of 4.6m above ground level where a plain, squared limestone string-course lies at the junction with the conical, vaulted roof, which is of limestone rubble like the walls. The roof slopes inwards to the circular flight-entrance, which has an external diameter of 0.3m. A further similar string-course lies 1m above the lower string-course. External string-courses were often applied to dovecotes to discourage climbing predators from reaching the flight-entrance(s). There is no evidence that the flight-entrance was ever protected by a cupola.

The entry faces south. In its original form it was a simple square opening, unsplayed, with plain jambs and a plain limestone lintel 1.4m above present ground level. A segmental outer arch, of limestone rubble voussoirs, lies above the lintel but there is no corresponding rear arch. The entry was enlarged, probably during the earlier 20th century, by breaking the walling away to the west. The work is very crude and, though the reveal was lined with brick, corework was left exposed beside and above the breach. A timber lintel was inserted over the breach, but the end of the original lintel-slab, both external and internal, were left unsupported and still are. The entry is in poor condition.

Apart from the string-courses, the exterior is devoid of architectural features, with the exception of three tiers of small, square sockets, 0.2m square, occurring at very irregular intervals. They are

probably putlog holes for the scaffolding used during the construction of the dovecote. In addition, there are nine square through-sockets of similar form and size, lying within the same tiers, while a further eight similar through-sockets pierce the roof between the two string-courses. The function of these through-sockets is unknown; they lie radial to the central axis of the building and may be structural, perhaps as a support for an internal scaffold for the dome, or for an internal timber superstructure of unknown nature.

Plate 1: The dovecote during excavation, from the south.



There are some areas of missing facework, particularly on the south-west part of the roof.

The dovecote is surrounded by a low, irregular bank of material, concentric to it and 3m wide at its greatest extent north-east of the structure. To the south, the build-up is as a result of recent dumping (see Section 2.3.2 below) and the remainder is likely to be similar, or be soil accumulation due to wash and livestock activity. Bird-dung was a valuable commodity used as both fuel and fertiliser, as well as in the tanning industry, and so is unlikely to be represented within the earthwork.

2.2.2 The dovecote interior

The interior of the dovecote features a great number of square nesting-holes, around the entire internal circumference. These are arranged in twelve tiers, between 1.8m and 4.6m above internal ground level and of rather irregular alignment. Each nesting hole is 0.12m square and separated by two stones at a distance of 0.30m apart. Each nesting-hole is 0.3m deep and expands to a 0.30m square, irregular nesting chamber. Only the fifth, seventh and tenth tiers are supplied with ledges; these are similar to the external string-courses.

The internal walls grade into the conical barrel-vault without a defined spring-line, the interior of the vault curving like the exterior. The circular flight-entrance has an internal diameter of 0.7m. There is no physical evidence for any internal superstructure, except for a low, 20th century upright timber post towards the north-west.

Much of the internal facework is missing from the lower reaches of the interior, particularly in the northern half where it has weathered back to expose the corework footings lying directly upon the natural soil.

Fig. 4: Plan of excavation trenches T1 and T2 showing archaeological features

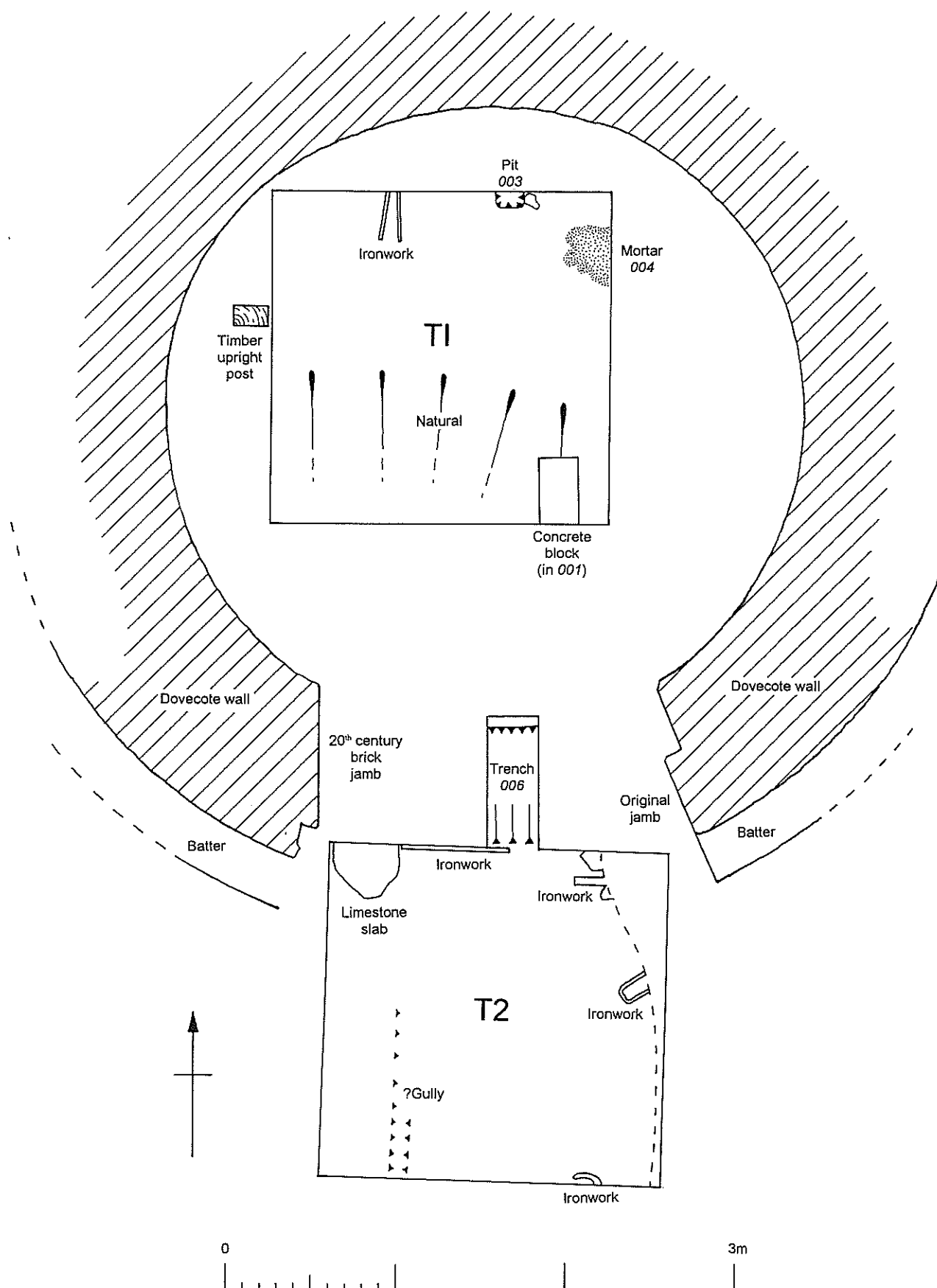
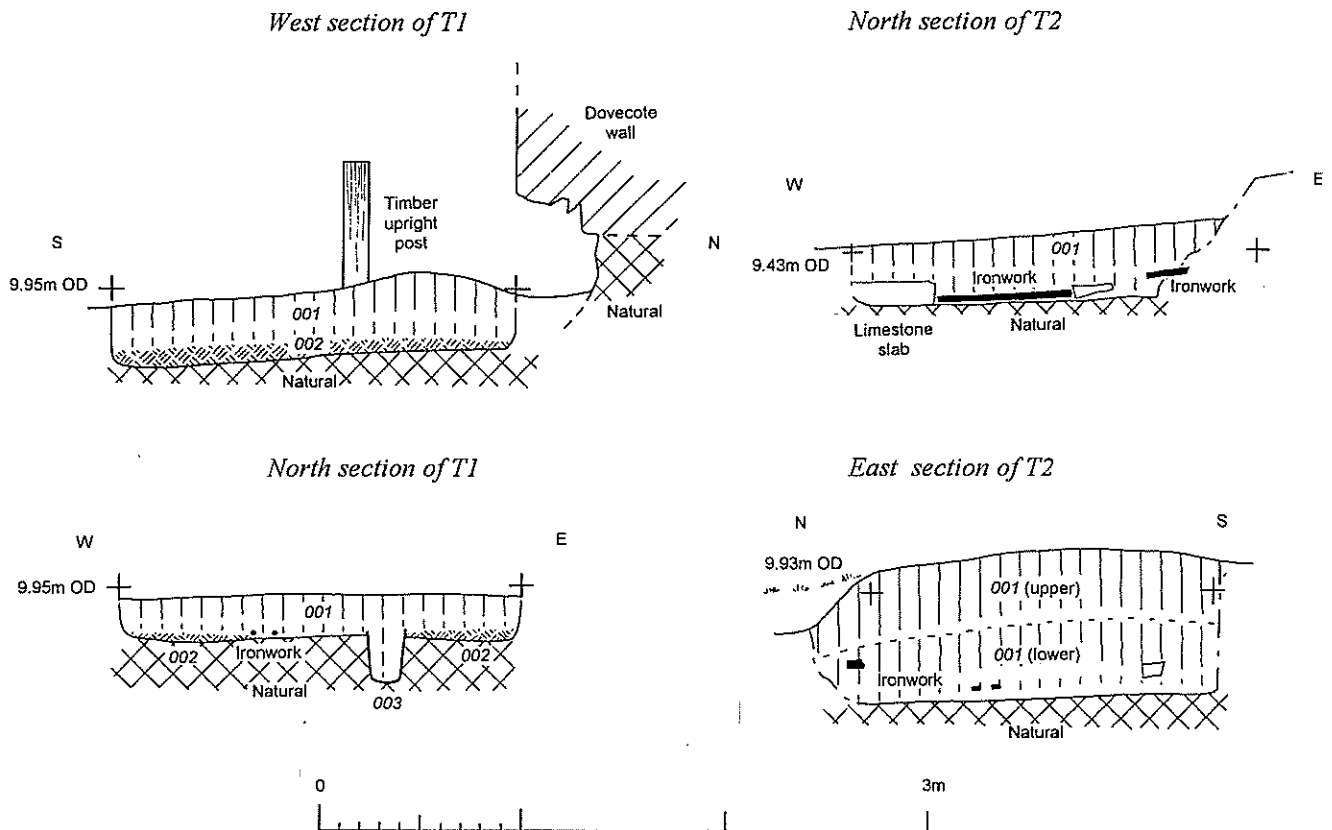


Fig. 5: Sections of excavation trenches T1 and T2 showing archaeological features



2.3 Project results (Figs. 4 and 5)

This section describes the archaeological deposits and features. Each has a unique number - a 'Context Number' - by which the deposit or feature ('Context') is defined.

2.3.1 Trench T1

Trench T1 measured 2m² in plan and was excavated within the interior of the dovecote, slightly north-west of centre, aligned north-south/east-west. Four contexts were represented:-

001 - Layer. From the surface to an average depth of 0.20m lay a very mixed layer comprising black ash and cinders with extensive lenses of reddish burnt and ferrous material occupied the entire trench. The deposit appeared to represent furnace waste and rakings, and contained smithing debris and equipment such as grabs, horseshoes etc. a good state of preservation and datable to the early-mid 20th century, as well as bar iron. Also present was a substantial quantity of timber, similarly well-preserved. One piece lay east-west, apparently co-axial upon the low timber upright just to the east of the trench and noted in Section 2.2.2, and was thought to be structural; in the event it was found to lie loose within 001 like the remainder of the timber and iron. A large, rectangular concrete block lay within 001 in the south-east corner.

002 - Layer. Lying beneath 001 in the western half and north-eastern quarter of T1, at an average depth of 0.20m - 0.25m, was a layer of orange-yellow clay, similar to a natural clay soil in appearance and, where it occurred, lying directly above the natural. However, its constituents were like to those within 001, including iron tools, and it is apparent that 002 is redeposited natural and closely contemporary with the deposition of 001.

003 - Pit. A small, square pit occurred towards the north-west corner but was not fully excavated, running beneath the northern edge of the excavation. It was 0.25m deep, measured 0.18m from east-west and was filled by 001; it appeared, in the section, to cut layer 002 which it would then post-date.

004 - Layer. A small spread of clean, white, compact mortar, lying beneath 001 and directly upon the natural, occurred towards the north-east corner, running beneath the eastern edge of the excavation. It measured 0.38m north-south and was very thin, averaging only 0.01m.

The natural soil. The natural soil occurred at an average depth of 0.30m and followed a shallow downhill slope to the south, from 9.69m OD to 9.52m OD, with a pronounced break of slope running east-west across the centre of the trench. It comprised vertically-bedded limy shale bedrock (Carboniferous Lower Limestone Shale, *Clestopora* Zone) without any soil formation, which appears to have been truncated. Indeed, the natural can be seen occupying a level 0.60m higher (at 10.21m OD) a mere 0.30m to the north of T1 where it has been exposed beneath the dovecote wall (see Fig. 5).

2.3.2 Trench T2

Trench T2 measured 2m² in plan and was excavated just outside and to the south of the entrance, its northern edge more-or-less on the line of the projected wall-face. It was aligned slightly at an angle to the north-south/east-west axes and incorporated a short extension, 0.80m north-south by 0.30m east-west, through the site of the original entry. Three contexts were represented:-

001 - Layer. In T2 the uppermost deposit 001 occurred in two parts. From the surface to an average depth of 0.30m lay a deposit of Old Red Sandstone derived 'ploughsoil'. This was thick - up to 0.38m thick - in the eastern half where it was presented as a pronounced 'bank' running southwards from the eastern jamb of the entry, but diminished in thickness and eventually petered out towards the west of the trench. It contained a large amount of late 20th century material including soft-drink cans and bottles, sweet-wrappers etc and was evidently a recent deposit of imported soil. Beneath it, the entire trench was occupied, to an average depth of 0.32m, by a similar Old Red Sandstone derived soil containing a fairly high proportion (approx. 40%) of rounded and angular stones, and smithing debris and equipment similar to that in T1 and contemporary with it. One flat limestone slab, lying at the base of the soil at the north-west corner, measuring 0.40m east-west and 0.10m thick but running beneath the northern section, may be associated with the sill of the 20th century widening of the entry (see Section 2.2.1) which lies 0.08m to the north; a single, north-south aligned brick, lying immediately south of the slab, appeared to continue the line of the western stop of the rebuilt entry.

005 - Fill. Beneath 001, the northwards extension of T2 was occupied by a soilmark comprising very similar limy shales to the bedrock but in a clayey matrix and containing some ironwork like that within 001. It represented the fill of 006.

006 - Trench. Context 005 filled a feature, 0.60m deep and measuring 0.70m north-south, defined by a vertical northern edge and a gentle southern edge, but running beneath the edges of the T2 extension to both east and west. It was cut directly into the natural bedrock and may represent part of an east-west running trench; its northern edge appears to follow the line of the inner face of the dovecote walling.

The natural soil. The natural soil occurred at a depth of 0.75m to the east, where the overburden was thicker, and at 0.30m to the west. It followed a very shallow *uphill* slope to the south, from 9.39m OD in the northern trench extension, to 9.43m OD at the south end of T2. In all other respects it was identical to that within T1. A very slight north-south running hollow, 0.10m wide and 0.01m deep, observed in the south-west quarter of T2, is likely to represent a natural feature.

Plate 2: Trench T1 from the south as fully excavated

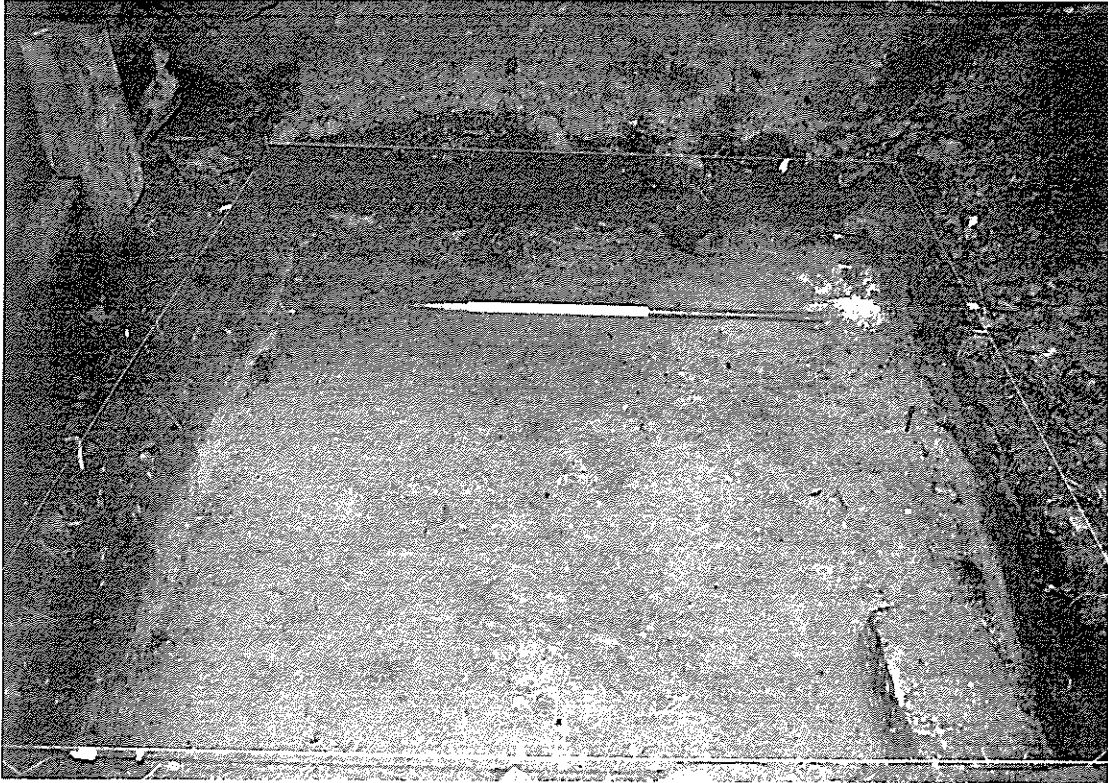
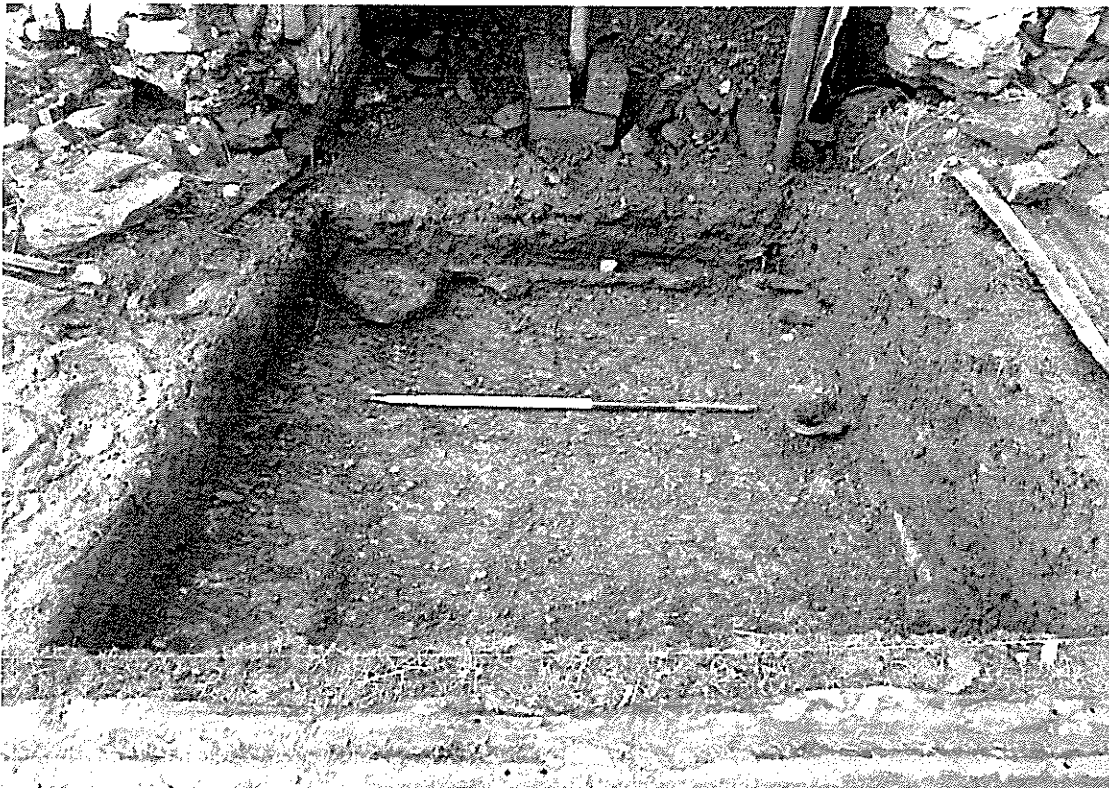


Plate 3: Trench T2 from the south as fully excavated



3.0 DISCUSSION

3.1 General discussion

The dovecote at Angle is a fine example of its kind. Dovecotes were frequent features of manorial and domestic sites well into the modern period, the pigeon being kept for a variety of uses - for food, for its dung, and, during the Middle Ages, for medicinal purposes. There are many standing post-medieval dovecotes but fewer have survived from the medieval period.

The privilege of establishing a dovecote was, for a long time, restricted to abbots and lords of the manor but by the later medieval period was extended to include the rector and the squire. The restrictions were strictly enforced; in addition, stealing or killing the birds was a punishable crime. Since the birds were responsible for severe crop depredation, considerable resentment developed among the rural population. Most of Britain's surviving dovecotes were constructed after building restrictions were lifted in the early 17th century.

Circular dovecotes have frequently been assigned to the medieval period. That at Dunster, Somerset, has been attributed to c.1150, though the tiled timber roof is later (Howell, 1988). In Pembrokeshire, there are two very similar examples to the Angle dovecote at Manorbier and Rosemarket, which both repeat the conical vaulted roof with string-courses, low segmental door, and plain exterior. At Rosemarket (Plate 4) the dovecote, though slightly smaller than Angle, features many more nesting-holes which descend to ground level while each is separated by only one stone; the entire structure is more regular than Angle and may be slightly later. The Manorbier dovecote also shares with Angle the unusual feature of small through-sockets in the walls. The only other British examples of this feature are at Cadoxton Court, Glamorgan, and 'a few other of the ancient beehive dovecotes of Devon and Cornwall', where they have been interpreted as flight-holes (Howell, 1988, 61); at Angle they are more likely to represent a support for an internal scaffold for the dome, or for an internal timber superstructure of unknown nature.

Plate 4: The dovecote at Rosemarket, Pembs., from the north



A very similar vaulted dovecote, almost identical in general form to the Angle example but with a lower external string-course, occurs at the site of the former Knights Hospitaller Commandery at Garway, Herefordshire; the cupola is a later addition. A Latin inscription over the door reads 'In the year 1326 Brother Richard built this dovecote' (Howell, 1988, 73). It is unknown whether the orthography of the script has been checked by an expert, and suspicions must be aroused that it may be a Victorian forgery. However, if the inscription is genuine, it provides the only close date for this type of dovecote. However, circular dovecotes are mainly confined to the South-western region of Britain and appear to represent a regional building type rather than an episodic fashion; none of the openings into the circular dovecote at Avebury, Wilts., for example, is any earlier than the 17th century, and all appear to be contemporary with the structure itself.

Angle dovecote displays a number of 'primitive' features which may be suggested as indicative of an early date. For example, only three tiers of nesting holes are supplied with internal ledges and there is an absence of ledges or sunning-boards on the exterior. There is no evidence that the flight-entrance was ever protected by a cupola, which allowed birds into the flight-entrance but protected the interior from rain. However, the raising of the lowest tier of nesting holes to 1.8m above internal ground level to reduce the threat from rats was a feature common to later dovecote design; the external string-courses served the same purpose as well as being decorative features. There is no evidence for a 'potence', or central rotating ladder, which comprised a thick, central pole, pivoted above and below and equipped with lateral arms, which was used for collecting birds for the table. Potences were often associated with circular dovecotes and were in widespread use from the medieval period onwards; that at Dunster is said to be more than 400 years old. However, the evidence at Angle is inconclusive (see Section 3.2 below); furthermore there were various other methods for collecting the birds, including the use of a long-handled net.

If the Garway inscription is genuine, then Angle may be a close contemporary and have been constructed during a period when the possessions of Monkton Priory were temporarily sequestered by the crown; it has been argued above, Section 1.4.3, that the dovecote was established as a part of Angle Rectory and it might even be that it was built in 1324-6 during the incumbency of either Thomas de Colyngham or his rival Hywel ap Gruffydd, the only two known rectors of Angle between Giraldus Cambrensis, 1175-6, and William de Farrington, 1383 (Green, 1911, 238-239).

However, there is considerable evidence that the dovecote may be somewhat later. There is a marked lack of dateable features in the form of dressings etc., circular dovecotes can be post-medieval, vaulted structures were under construction in South Pembrokeshire well into the 17th century, and the nesting-holes are raised from the ground.

In summary, it is difficult to provide a date for Angle dovecote. However, it was probably established by a Rector of Angle and was certainly in existence by 1841 when it was depicted on the tithe map (NLW, Tithe map, Angle, 1841); the establishment of the new rectory at Angle had occurred at an unknown date, but before 1811 (Fenton, 1903 edn., 220), by which date the dovecote will have become disused.

3.2 The excavated evidence

It appears from the excavated evidence that the internal deposits, and those immediately south of the entry, have been truncated. In Section 2.2.1 it was seen that the natural soil beneath the north wall footings lies at a level 0.60m higher than it does just 0.30m to the south, with an almost vertical downhill slope, suggesting that a considerable thickness of natural was removed. The truncation is apparently confirmed by the absence of any evidence for relict buried soil.

This truncation has resulted in the loss of most of the archaeological evidence. Presumably, a considerable deposit of pigeon excrement was formerly present within the dovecote, and it may be that it was the final removal of this ammonia-rich material which resulted in the truncation of the deposits. However, it is likely that evidence for a former potence would have survived in one form or another; a post which would need to stand at least 4.75m tall would require a post-setting of

considerable depth, deeper than the 0.60m limit of the truncation, presumably with a masonry lining and deep post-pad. The evidence is at best inconclusive.

The truncation, moreover, appears to have occurred at a late date. The 20th century smithing waste *001* lies directly above the natural with no intervening deposits (apart from layer *004* - see below).

Those pre-20th century contexts which will have survived are those which occurred at a deeper level, ie. features such as trenches, pits etc. cut through the natural to a sufficient depth to lie beneath the truncated level. Within T1 and T2 there was only one such feature, *006*, which may represent a trench. Its northern edge continues the line of the internal wall-face of the dovecote, but its location suggests that it lies at least partly in the area of the original entrance, suggesting that a masonry sill, or sill-stone, was formerly present. Its fill, *005*, also contained 20th century smithing debris and it is therefore likely that, if *006* does represent a wall/sill line, the trench has resulted from the robbing of the masonry wall or sill. The distance from the surface of the natural to the original entrance lintel is 1.48m, but, as has been noted, the natural has been truncated here.

Layer *004* in T1 was a very clean mortar lying between *001* and the truncated natural. As such, it would at first sight appear unlikely that it represents constructional mortar. However, it may be that within this area, the buried soil had been truncated prior to the construction of the dovecote, and that *004* is a remnant of a much thicker area of constructional debris.

Layer *001* was very similar to deposits encountered within the Old Rectory 'pele-tower' during clearance work in 1995. The presence of forge waste-products and equipment at both buildings confirms their association with smithing activity in the early-mid 20th century.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

*'No man need ever have an ill-provisioned house if there be but attached to it
a dovecot, a warren and a fishpond... '*
(Olivier de Serres, c.1600)

Angle Dovecote is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Pe 67) and a fine example of a circular masonry dovecote, with a vaulted roof and apical flight-entrance. It is complete, and in fair-good condition. The only area of concern is the entry which has been enlarged in recent years and has a damaged lintel, and some areas of missing facework.

The dovecote cannot be closely dated. It may have been constructed during the medieval period, possibly in the first half of the 14th century; however, it may be as late as the early 17th century. However, it seems certain that it formed a constituent of the medieval Angle Rectory, represented by 'The Old Rectory' - a fortified enclosure immediately to the south - and probably fell into disuse when a new rectory was established on a different site during the modern period.

The excavation demonstrated that the contemporary ground surfaces had not survived but had been truncated - along with natural soil - during the post-medieval period, possibly prior to the association of the building with smithing activity; archaeological deposits, both within and without, lay directly upon the bedrock and were largely confined to 20th century smithing waste-products and equipment. There was no archaeological evidence for any internal structures or fittings, eg. a rotating central ladder or *potence*, used for the collection of birds from the nesting-holes, but the robber-trench for a possible doorway sill (or adjacent wall) was present. In addition, a spread of mortar may belong to a constructional phase and represent the sole surviving pre-20th century archaeological deposit.

5.0 THE FINDS

Finds were limited to waste-products and equipment associated with smithing activity in the early-mid 20th century. Among the latter were numerous tools including grabs, tongs and cradles, horseshoes, and bar-iron. None of the finds were retained by *Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology*, but were noted and left on site for the landowner.

6.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was compiled by Neil Ludlow of *Archaeoleg Cambria Archaeology*. The excavation was undertaken by Neil Ludlow and Richard Ramsey, also of *Archaeoleg Cambria Archaeology*.

Acknowledgements to Richard Tree and Tony Marmara of SPARC (South Pembrokeshire Partnership for Action with Rural Communities Ltd) and the occupants of Castle Farm for their kindness and co-operation.

7.0 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

The archive, indexed according to the National Monuments Record (NMR) material categories, will be deposited with the NMR, maintained by RCAHM(W), Crown Buildings, Plas Crug, Aberystwyth SY23 1NJ. It contains the following:

A.1. Copy of the final report

A.4. Disk copy of report

B.1. Context records - paper

B.4. Field notebooks

B.5. Survey data - paper

C.1. Catalogue of field drawings

C.2. Site drawings

C.3. Survey drawings

D.1. Catalogue of site photographs

D.2. Colour slides

D.3. Mono prints and negs

E.4. Context finds records

G.1. Source documentation

G.2. Correspondence on archaeological matters

I.4. Final report - typescript

I.4. Final report - disk

I.4. Proofs

I.4. Paste-ups

J.2. Final publication drawings

L.4. General admin.

M.1. Non-archaeological correspondence

There is no material for classes **F**, **H**, **K** and **N**.

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