

**ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY
DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST**

CAMROSE CASTLE

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF ON THE
WATERMAIN RENEWAL SCHEME,
AUGUST 1996**

Dyfed PRN 3294

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Fig.1 Copy of Ordnance Survey, 1:2500 Second Edition, Pembrokeshire
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Summary

A watching brief was maintained on the excavation of a section of trenching for a watermain renewal at Camrose, Pembrokeshire. The pipeline trench ran along the course of an unclassified road through the centre of Camrose castle, a motte-and-bailey of the medieval period.

It was demonstrated that the great depth of this road construction had destroyed any potential archaeological evidence either for the castle or any associated features. A substantial section of the bailey has been destroyed and with it any trace of bank and ditch or buried soils. The pipe trench revealed only natural deposits and bedrock.

However, the opportunity has been taken within this report to assess the importance of Camrose Castle and the surrounding archaeological resource, and to review the history and morphology of the settlement.

1.2 Development proposals and commission

Following consultation with Cambria Archaeology/Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Heritage Management Section, D Ryan Bowen of Dwr Cymru notified DAT Field Operations Section of the intention to renew the watermains at Camrose, Keeston and Pelcomb Cross and accepted the recommendation that a watching brief be undertaken at the Camrose section. The scheme was to involve the excavation of a trench along the course of the Keeston/Pelcomb road heading south out of the village where it bisects Camrose motte and bailey castle.

DAT Field Operations accordingly submitted a cost estimate for the watching brief on 26 June, which was accepted by Dwr Cymru in a fax of 31 July.

The watching brief took place 1-5 August 1996.

1.3 Content and scope of a watching brief

An archaeological watching brief is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during an operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons - normally a development or other construction project - within a specified area where archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive.

The watching brief will be intended to allow, subject to resources, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits in advance of their disturbance or destruction and to provide an opportunity, if necessary, for the watching archaeologist to alert all

interested parties to the presence of an archaeological find for which the resources allocated to the watching brief are insufficient to support satisfactory treatment.

The watching brief is not intended as a substitute for contingent archaeological excavation.

The client will be supplied with 3 copies of an archaeological report of the results of the watching brief. The report will be fully representative of all the information recovered. A copy of the report will also be deposited with Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record.

1.4 Purpose and methodologies of the watching brief

The purpose of the watching brief is to undertake as complete a record as possible of any archaeological features affected by the client's scheme of works. In the case of larger archaeological sites it will seldom be possible or necessary to undertake a record of the entire site; the record will be undertaken only on those areas of the site that may be affected.

The primary stage of the watching brief for any scheme involves consultation of the Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record, which is maintained by Cambria Archaeology/Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Curatorial Section, the client will normally advise Cambria Archaeology/Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Field Section of any changes in the proposed works which may be affected by the scheme. The client will also provide the Field Section with a proposed schedule of works in order that a full field study may be performed on any affected site prior to the commencement of the works.

Work on or around those affected sites will be subject to the watching brief. The work will be closely observed by an archaeologist from the Field Section who will also undertake a full drawn, written and photographic record of any archaeological features which may be disturbed by the scheme, and any artifact or find exposed during the works. Recording will be carried out where necessary and when convenient: it is the Field Section's aim to minimise any disruption to the client's schedule. However, if archaeological features may be lost during the scheme, it may be necessary for the Field Section to request a postponement of the works in order that the archaeology may be recorded. Larger areas affected may require fuller excavation and/or survey.

2. 0 CAMROSE CASTLE

2.1 Location

Camrose Castle (Dyfed PRN 3294; Scheduled Ancient Monument Pe 217) is situated on the southern side of the village of Camrose, at NGR SN 9267 1989, some 6 km north west of the town of Haverfordwest, within Camrose parish in the county of Pembrokeshire. Geologically, the site is of Ordovician shales partially overlain by glacial drift deposits of sand and gravel. The castle is some 25m above sea-level and set on top of a slight valley overlooking Camrose Brook, and water mill, to the north, the village of Camrose lying further north still. The brook is a tributary which feeds the Western Cleddau river.

2.2 Site history

The medieval history of Camrose is obscure. The motte and bailey castle has no recorded history, but was probably founded during the early 12th century.

What is now Pembrokeshire was invaded in 1093 by the Normans under Roger de Montgomery. The extent of his conquests is unknown, but eventually a lordship was established based on the castle at Pembroke. The lordship was acquired by the crown in the person of Henry I in 1102, and its administration re-organised upon Anglo-Norman civil lines. In 1138 the lordship was declared an earldom and granted to Gilbert 'Strongbow' de Clare by King Stephen.

Camrose lay in the medieval lordship of Rhos, the successor to the Welsh cantref. Rhos was annexed to the earldom of Pembroke from 1138 onwards but its relationship with the earldom was fluid.

Rhos is referred to in a fiscal account of 1130 (Hunter, 1929, 136-7) as under the control of one 'Godebert the Fleming'. However, the administrative centre of the lordship of Rhos was, in the later 12th century at least, at Haverfordwest where a castle had been established by one 'Tancard the Fleming' c1110, and indeed the lordship was later termed 'Haverford'. This may imply that during the earlier part of the century Rhos was administered from another centre, either singly or jointly with Haverfordwest. The 'rose' suffix in the place-name Camrose suggests that it was of some importance within the lordship, and the motte and bailey castle may represent this second centre; however the same element occurs at Rosemarket where another earthwork castle may be a contender.

Camrose is mentioned by name (as 'Kamros') in 1188 by Giraldus Cambrensis who, travelling through it on his way from Haverfordwest to Newgale (Thorpe, 1975, 156), relates the tale of the murder there of one Gerald son of William and the subsequent retaliative ravaging of Rhos. His itinerary suggests that a routeway existed through Camrose but none is shown as a medieval road by Rees (1932). Any route would, of course, have taken a different line from the present road through the castle; indeed, present occupants of Camrose House (Dyfed PRN 6500; at NGR SM 9270 1979)

informed the author that the route of the old road passed directly in front of the house until it was re-routed by the then owners at the beginning of the 19th century.

Unfortunately Giraldus does not describe any settlement. It is impossible to determine the nature of the settlement at this time with any certitude, but that a manorial village was present is indisputable. The church of St Ishmael (Dyfed PRN 2423), formerly St Ambrose (Charles, 1992, 575), is a parish church, and indeed Camrose was a parish in the medieval period (Rees, 1932). The church was in existence by at least 1291 (Charles, 1992, 575), and the village corn mill (Dyfed PRN 17737) was established by at least 1376 (Owen, 1911, 107) - both probably originated earlier on in the medieval period. These components of castle, parish church and mill all indicate a manorial settlement of at least some pretension.

The manorial lands of Camrose were extensive, taking in Wolfsdale and Cuffern Mountain. An account of the 'Manor of Cameros' at the Public Record Office covers the period 1376-1545 (Owen, 1911, 107). A number of tenements and their occupants are mentioned, the corn mill, and in 1387, a fulling mill that was 'in decay'. In 1376 the manor was in the hands of the King's daughter.

The relationship of the manor of Camrose to the lordship of Haverford (formerly Rhos) became obscured in the later medieval period and by the 14th century Camrose was not included, for fiscal purposes, within the lordship but was assessed separately (Owen, 1911, 14; RCAHM(W), 1922, 45). It came to be linked with the town of Haverfordwest itself, and in 1331 one Richard Symond was appointed by the crown as keeper of the former lord Roger Mortimer's town of Haverford and the 'foreign land called Cameros' (Rees, 1911, 14). In 1585 Haverfordwest Borough still maintained rentals of properties in Camrose (Charles, 1966, 197). In direct contrast, Camrose is cited as lying within the lordship in 1544, and with the reversion of the lordship to the crown in the 16th century, Camrose was included with West Haverford lordship in a grant of profits to Anne Boleyn, Marchioness of Pembroke (Owen, 1911, 32-4).

The castle - whatever its status, whether a Norman administrative centre or not - appears not to have been rebuilt in stone and, like many early motte castles that remained solely of timber, was probably abandoned by the 14th century.

The castle lies within the grounds of a mansion, Camrose House (Dyfed PRN 6500), which may represent the site of a domestic habitation that succeeded the castle as the seat of the lords of the manor. The Bowen family, owners by the 18th century at least, had apparently settled in the parish in the early 14th century (Jones, 1996, 21). A deed of 1722 describes the property as 'a capital messuage called Castle, containing six ploughlands' (*ibid.*). The present house site displays possible field evidence for an earlier dwelling.

2.3 Site description

Settlement morphology

The form of the settlement is dictated by its situation within the narrow valley of Camrose Brook and its bridge. However, focal points are provided by the castle and church, and the suggestion of an early routeway provided by Giraldus.

The church and present nucleation lie at a crossroads and may represent the medieval village core. However, prior to its re-routing through the castle site, the road subject to the watching brief followed a line some 100m further south through what is now the curtilage of Camrose House. Assuming the N-S road and thus the bridge to be primary features, a T-junction would then come to lie at the foot of the motte; some settlement may have occurred around this junction either prior to or contemporaneous with 'Church Camrose'. The fact that the manor house came to lie in this vicinity may suggest origins as a feudal settlement with manorial obligations.

Which would be the earlier, and why are the church and castle distanced by Camrose Brook? The separation of secular and ecclesiastical centres within a given settlement is a phenomenon that occurs throughout Britain, but is especially marked in SW Dyfed. It has been recently suggested by fieldworkers that this represents a continuation of a native Welsh tradition and indeed may indicate a pre-Norman origin for the church and also the castle (as a Hall or 'llys'). If the latter is the case, then the putative 'Castle Camrose' may be the earlier of the two.

The surrounding landscape is characterised by long narrow fields, evidence of the enclosure of medieval open field strips. These are, however, co-axial on both E-W routes.

Camrose Mill (Dyfed PRN 17737) is situated some 15m east of the castle bailey in the valley below. A corn mill, it has a long headrace rising 320m upstream from the mill itself, which conveyed water to the overshot waterwheel which is still *in situ* on the north end of the building. The mill may be supposed to occupy the site of the medieval corn mill. St Ishmaels Church (Dyfed PRN 2423) consists of nave, chancel and west tower from the 14th-15th centuries and was restored in the late 19th century.

The Castle

Camrose Castle is in King's list (King, 1987, 391) but no further description is included; the sources for the castle are sparse, being limited to the RCAHM(W) Inventory and the SAM description by the Cadw Inspector.

The castle is a motte-and-bailey lying on the south bank of Camrose Brook. the motte lies to the south of the small bailey, both being defined by well-preserved upstanding earthworks. It appears not to have been rebuilt in stone and, like many early motte castles that remained solely of timber, was probably abandoned by the 14th century.

Motte and bailey are now separated by a modern road, the road which forms the subject of this watching brief.

The motte is 4.8 metres high and measures some 34.0 metres diameter at its base. A modern wall some 0.3 metres high encircles a platform at the summit of the motte, this measuring 16.0 metres diameter. The whole mound is wooded and seemingly terraced by drystone retaining walls, presumably in the Victorian era, in an attempt to transform the site into a garden feature and walk; the walls seem to delineate a spiral walk up to the summit. The bailey lies to the north and has been partially destroyed by the modern road. The remaining portion of the bailey is approximately triangular and measures 24.0 metres N-S by 28.0 metres E-W; it has an outer ditch on its western side, the remaining sides following a natural fall down into the slight valley where the corn mill and its accompanying race have been constructed.

The modern road bisecting the site is some 1.5 metres below the level of the bottom of the silted-up ditch on the western side of the bailey, and drystone retaining walls have been constructed on both sides of the road where it runs through the castle.

The castle lies some 80m distant to the north of Camrose House (Dyfed PRN 6500). The present house is 18th century and is rectangular, featuring three storeys over a basement. Structural evidence in the form of truncated walling close to the east end of the present house suggests the presence of a fairly substantial earlier structure.

3.0 METHODOLOGIES AND RESULTS

3.1 The Trench

The section of watermain pipe-trench excavation observed for the purpose of this watching brief extended some 120m along the centre-line of the present road. The ground level follows an uphill slope to the west. The east end of the trench lay roughly opposite the present day entrance to Camrose Mill. The trench, which was wholly machine dug, measured 0.36m wide and 1.20m deep uniformly throughout its length, and was excavated to contain a 0.15m diameter medium density polyethylene pipe.

The only hand excavation undertaken consisted of trowelling down the vertical sides of the trench, selectively, to enable a clearer characterisation of the stratified deposits. The trench sections are described below from east to west.

3.2 Observations

Throughout the length of the trench the average depth of the tarmac was 0.07m; this overlay a very compact stony hardcore layer of some 0.06m average depth. These two layers represented the total road makeup throughout, the ground below being sufficiently stable not to require any further consolidation or structural modification.

At the eastern end of the trench, for the first 15.00m or so of its length, the road make-up lay directly upon a very compact homogeneous orange-brown silty clay soil containing 30% small and medium angular gravel. This layer exhibited closely bedded deposition lines sloping downwards to the east (following the topography of the valley) and occasional brown iron stain discolouration as a result of leaching. It was lying on a sloping, unstable, dark-stained greyish-brown shale bedrock. The clay deposit was 1.20m deep for the first 1.80m length of the trench and gradually became less deep until the 15.00m point where the underlying bedrock was exposed directly beneath the road makeup. The silty clay layer had all the characteristics of a fluvioglacial deposit, however the possibility that it could result from hillwash, or other slope-forming weathering processes, cannot be totally ruled out. That the deposit is geological rather than archaeological, however, is not in dispute.

From the 15.00m point and a further 15.40m westwards along the trench the shale bedrock continued to be exposed directly beneath the road makeup; at the latter point it stopped and formed a nearly vertical interface with a compact homogeneous orange brown clay soil containing 20% small and medium angular shale fragments. The undisturbed, homogeneous appearance of this soil strongly suggests that its origins are geological rather than archaeological. This soil continued down beyond the bottom of the excavation trench and westwards along the trench for a further 15.00m or so, at which point it again lay against steeply sloping unstable shale bedrock. The bedrock in turn lay directly beneath the road make-up, and was thus exposed, for some 2.50m before gradually sloping down and levelling out at a depth of 0.80m below the original road surface. The bedrock continued thus to the end of the trench.

The sequence of deposits above the bedrock extending to the west end of the trench consisted of a 0.40m deep compacted/friable orange-brown silty sandy clay soil containing 40% small and medium angular shale fragments, overlaying what appeared to be fluvio-glacial gravels 0.25m deep. The upper silty sandy clay soil had the appearance of a naturally formed subsoil. The gravels were closely bedded, showing distinct deposition lines, and consisted of 30% small angular stones, 20% small rounded stones and 20% medium size rounded pebbles set in a soil matrix of sandy silt, with occasional lenses of very small coarse gravel.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The construction of the road running through the castle apparently entailed excavation to a considerable depth. This has destroyed any potential archaeological evidence either for the castle or any associated features. A substantial section of the bailey has been destroyed and with it any trace of bank and ditch or buried soils. The pipe trench revealed only natural deposits and bedrock.

However, Camrose is a little-known example of a good motte-and-bailey castle, with potential for survival of substantial archaeology elsewhere on the site.

5.0 THE FINDS

No finds, artifacts or ecofacts, were encountered during the watching brief.

6.0 THE ARCHIVE

The archive, indexed according to the National Monuments Record (NMR) material categories, is held by the Cambria Archaeology/Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Llandeilo, and contains the following:

- A.** Copy of the final report
- B.** Field notebook
- D.** Photographs (monochrome)
- L.** General admin.
- M.** Project correspondence

There is no material for classes **C, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, and N.**

7.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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8.0 REFERENCES

Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record

Printed maps

Ordnance Survey, 1:2500 Second Edition, Pembrokeshire Sheets XXII. 10, XXII. 11, XXII. 14, XXII. 15.

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Fig 1. Copy of Ordnance Survey, 1:2500 Second Edition, *Pembrokeshire Sheets XXII. 10, XXII. 11, XXII. 14, XXII. 15, showing Camrose village and location of watching brief.*

Camrose House