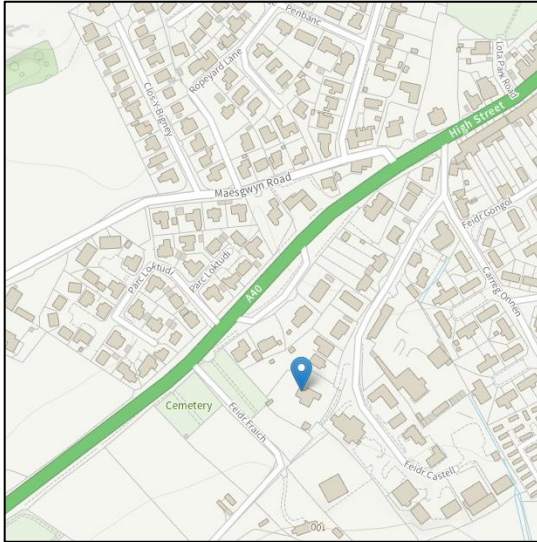




FISHGUARD CASTLE - CASTELL MWRTACH

According to the book 'Walks In Wales' written by Thomas Evans in 1815. There were ruins of a castle with only the gateway left in Fishguard, no exact place is mentioned. It was built by the descendents of Martin de Tours and Rhys ab Gruffyd, the Prince of Wales was detained there at some point. The castle was demolished when in the possession of the Flemings. There is no picture of Fishguard and the author arrived from Haverfordwest direction.

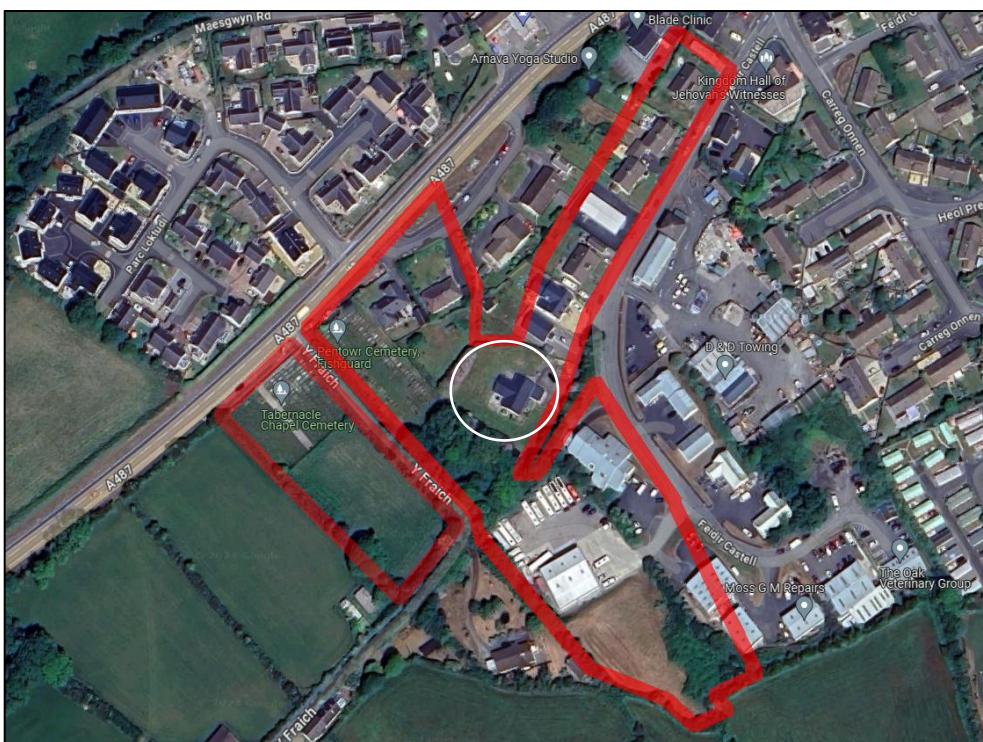
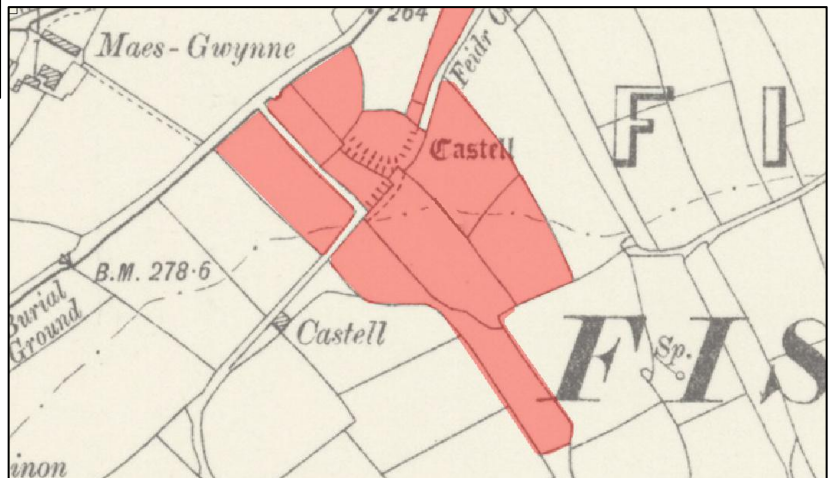


This data shows that the site was originally much larger than what Thomas Evans saw in 1815.

Below you can see the effected land in the present day. Most of the land is now covered with houses, with a small part still being farmland. The Flemish arrived in Pembrokeshire by 1111, so the castle would've been mostly demolished at that point.

Castell Mwrtach is a site located in the South of Fishguard's town. According to 'Coflein' in 1870, the site was a ploughed-down sub-rectangular enclosure, about 34m square internally, described as square with rounded corners & depicted as such, about 44m north-west to south-east by 38m, on OS County series (Pembroke. IX.3 1889): for the location of a possible Roman coinhoard/burials see Nprn309754.

According to the Welsh Tithe Maps of 1836, the surrounding land of the castle is listed as fields. However they are still named after the castle, with names such as Lower Castell Mwrtach, Parc Castle Mwrtach and Castle Field. The land named after the castle can be seen in the below map. Highlighted in red are the fields the Tithe map showed being named after the castle in 1836.



The white circle indicates where the main part of the castle may have been located.

Although the castle was demolished by 1200, many other sources after that indicate that some of the castle still remained.



Artwork Made by Andrew Harries

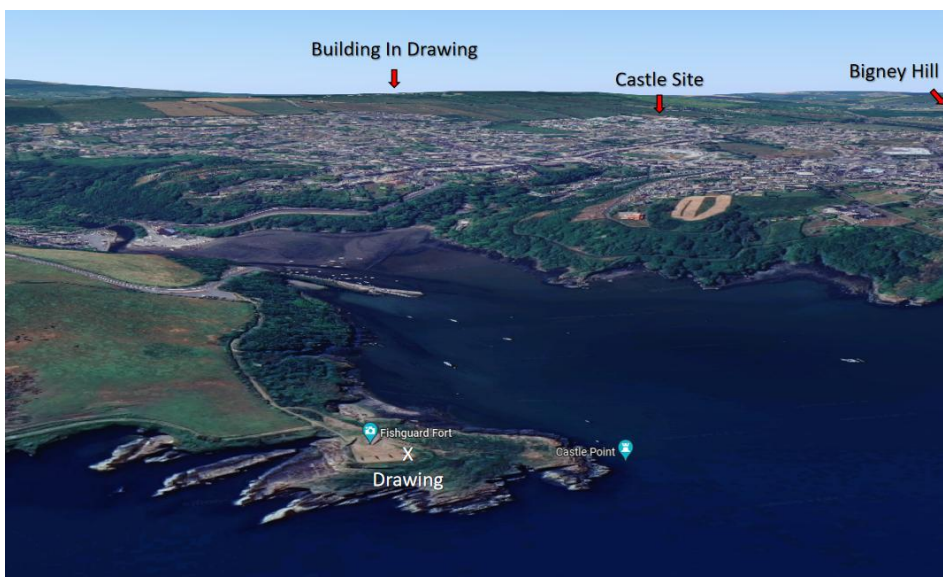
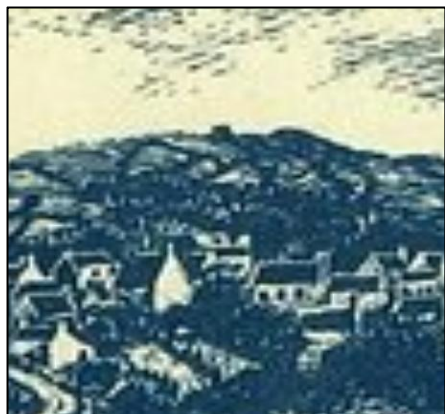


This drawing was done for the last invasion and was drawn in 1797. The drawing was done from Fishguard Fort, with Fishguard being seen in the distance.

Upon zooming in to the picture, you can see what seems to be a large building towering over the town. This area is near the site of the castle.

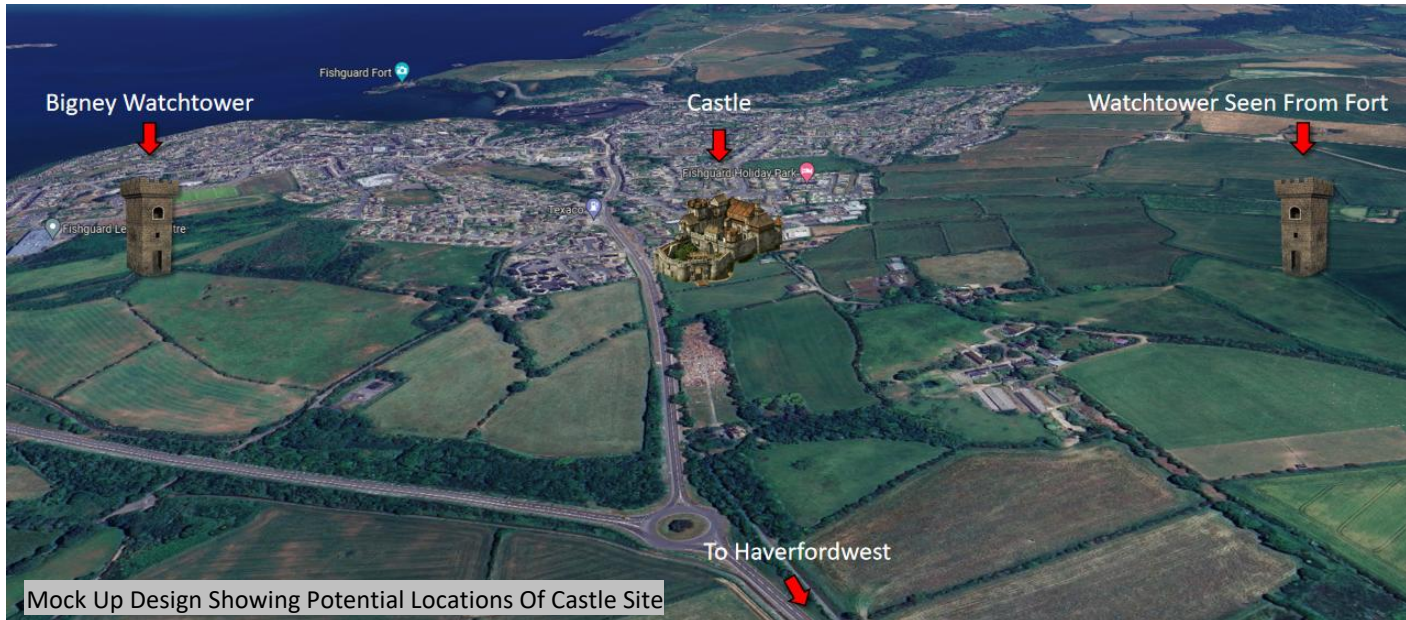


This image was also drawn for Fishguard's last invasion. No date is known for this drawing, however, once again upon zooming in to the image, you can see another tall structure towering over the town.



As you can see in the present day image to the left. The site of the castle is further to the right, compared to the drawing.

This could indicate that the drawing shows a medieval watch tower, which was also believed to be on the Bigney Hill as well, according to CADW's records.



If the author was travelling from Haverferdwest, into Fishguard. It is possible that the castle gateway he saw in 1815, was in fact this castle. With the castle being destroyed by the Flemish, it is possible that it was destroyed due to the construction of Haverfordwest Castle which was also owned by the Flemish.

1840

<https://sublimewales.wordpress.com/places/fishguard/>

Some of this might date to the 1813 edition.

FISHGUARD, a market town and parish, is beautifully situated on the N. coast of the county of Pembroke, facing the Irish Channel, and nearly opposite Wicklow in Ireland. This place is also called in Welsh Abergwayn, from the locality of the port formed by the estuary of the river Gwayn. It assumed the name of Fishgarth as far back as the time of Richard II. "Garth," in Saxon and old law language signifies "a wear." To no spot of equal extent in the whole county has history or tradition annexed such a paucity of memorable events as to this parish. Consequently there are few relics worthy the attention of the traveller or the antiquary; and those which occur present nothing of more importance to the latter than a beacon. There is indeed in the town a spot, called in ancient deeds "Y Castell," which, from its situation on an eminence commanding the entrance of the harbour, might once have been crowned with an entrenchment. Another ancient site is called Castell Mwrtach. About the year 1783 was turned up by the plough, an urn of mean pottery, filled with Roman copper coins of the lower empire; a few also of Gallienus, Posthumus, Victorinus, and other emperors; but were melted down soon after their discovery. The spot where they were deposited exhibits not the smallest indication of an ancient camp or Roman station. Of eminent men, few places

This is a website referencing all the historical records of travellers visiting Fishguard over the years. In 1783, it was documented that Castell Mwrtach was dug up with a plough. They discovered numerous artifacts and treasure.

This proves that the castle is of important value and there may be many more artifacts still underground.

Below is a section of an article written in 1856. It is taken from an article labelled 'Archaeologia Cambrensis a record of the antiquities of Wales'. It states that Castell Mwrtach may be of Irish / Celtic origin. It states the site is a 'curious earthwork', implying there is not much left of the site in 1856.

Many of the names along the coast of Pembrokeshire are pure Irish, and here you can trace the fortresses of the invaders as well as those of the defenders; the distinction between the both is very striking. Those of the Gael, or Irish, are invariably composed of earth, and are called *rath*, the Irish for a rampart; whereas the aggers of the British forts are always composed of loose stones, and are termed *caers*; the word *castell* is applied indifferently to both, as *Castell Mwrtach* (a regular Irish name) to a curious earthwork, near the town of Fishguard.—I remain, &c.,

JOHN FENTON.

Glyn-y-mêl, 10th July, 1856.



This is a map that was drawn to comemerate the battle of 'Mynedd Carn' in 1081. Castell Mwrnach was drawn into the map as it was a location of historical significance for the battle.

As you can see according to this map, the site of the castle is exactly the location we have outlined on previous pages.



<https://brwydr.blogspot.com/2009/11/blog-post.html>

Upon looking at the translation of Castell Mwrnach, I was met with a range of results. 'Castell' is of course 'Castle' in Welsh. The hard part was where the name Mwrnach / Murnach / Myrtach originated from.

If the castle was indeed of Gaelic origin, the word Murnach translates to 'Murderous'. However, with the site being named 'Castell' it implies it is of Welsh origin. If this is the case, the word 'Myrtach' / 'Mwrnach' translates to 'Myrtle' or 'More'. - It is likely 'Mwrnach' is a family name.

10

When Martin of Tours came to Fishguard it was however to stay and found a Norman colony. Cemas became a March with Martin and his successors as Lords Marchers. Yet in spite of its Norman lords Cemas is as Kymric to-day as when Martin arrived (a parallel instance is Glamorgan-shire conquered by Normans but quite Welsh to-day). Yet in South Pembrokeshire, colonized about the same time by Danes and Normans, and subsequently by Flemings, all is English. Why is this? The ordnance map shows that with the exception of Fishguard and Goodwick there are no Norse names in Cemas, but in South Pembrokeshire Norse names abound. The Normans we know intermarried with their subjects. The Normans who married Welsh-women became Welsh, but those in South Pembrokeshire who married into the Danish colony never learnt Welsh, and soon learnt the tongue of the district, which was probably English. This may partly account for the English of South Pembrokeshire. We shall see later that numerous other foreign settlers—Flemings, etc.—came to join these Normans.

This research (left) is written in 1901 by T.R Dawes and is titled 'The Flemings In Pembrokeshire'.

This section of the research speaks of Fishguard, when Martin of Tours came and founded a Norman Colony. This must be around the same time Fishguard was founded. Thomas Evans' book in 1815 mentions this same story, but states it was 'decendents of Martin de Tours'.



Martin Of Tours Emblem

<http://www.thepenvro.com/Flemings-of-Pembrokeshire.pdf>

It is possible that Castell Mwrnach once belonged to Rhys ab Owain who was a king of Deheubarth in southern Wales. Rhys was the son of Owain ab Edwin from the line of Hywel Dda, and member of the Dinefwr dynasty. He followed his brother Maredudd as king of Deheubarth in 1072.

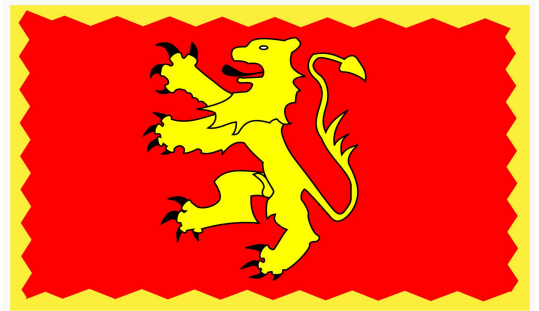
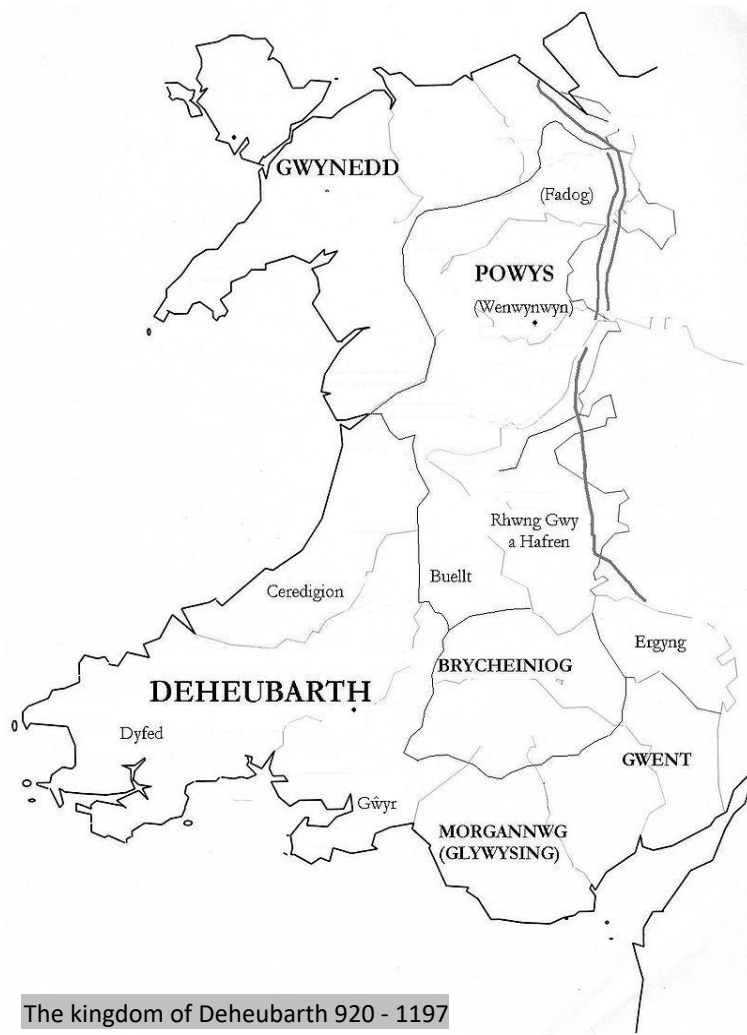
In 1078 Rhys ab Owain was defeated by Trahaearn ap Caradog, who had followed Bleddyn on the throne of Gwynedd, in a battle at Pwll Wdig (now known as Goodwick Moor).

Later the same year Rhys was beheaded by Caradog ap Gruffydd of Gwent. His defeat and death were hailed in the annals as "vengeance for the blood of Bleddyn ap Cynfyn".

Rhys was followed as king of Deheubarth by his second cousin, Rhys ap Tewdwr.

Upon Rhys ap Tewdwr's death in 1093, the Normans seized much of South Wales. Which may have been around the time Castell Mwrnach was destroyed.

Deheubarth disestablished in to the modern day counties in 1197. A few years before Newport became the main town in North Pembrokeshire.



within the memory of man, games in honour of that saint were annually celebrated on his festival. At the time of the Norman Conquest of England, this place was a small and unimportant fishing village, which, from its situation at the mouth of the river Gwayn, was called, by the Welsh, *Aber-Gwain*. Soon after that period, an Anglo-Norman leader, named Martin de Tours, or de Turribus, whose services under the Conqueror had been rewarded by a grant of lands in Devonshire, on the coast of the Bristol channel, being desirous of extending the limits of his possessions, fitted out an expedition to act against such part of the Welsh coast as he should find least prepared for defence; and having sailed round the south-western extremity of the county, he succeeded with little difficulty in landing his troops at this place, and in subduing the territory, which subsequently formed the ancient lordship of Kemmes, within the limits of which it was included, and one of the lordships marcher. In the subsequent partition of the conquered territories among his followers, Martin assigned the town of "Aber-Gwain," and nearly the whole of the district which is at present comprehended within the parish, to Jordan de Cantington, who introduced into his newly acquired possessions an English colony, by which the name of the town was changed to *Fish-Garth*, the latter word signifying in the Anglo-Saxon language a "wear;" and of this name its modern appellation of *Fishguard* is only a slight modification. Jordan, after repeated attempts to excite in his Welsh and English subjects sentiments of reciprocal conciliation, and

<https://www.genuki.org.uk/big/wal/PEM/Fishguard/Fishguard1833>

The paragraph above is from a section of the book 'Lewis' Topographical Dictionary of Wales' which was written in 1833. Lewis writes about the history of Fishguard and mentions that the town was once a large settlement with Celtic origin. It wasn't until after the Norman conquest of England, that Martin Of Tours came to the town.

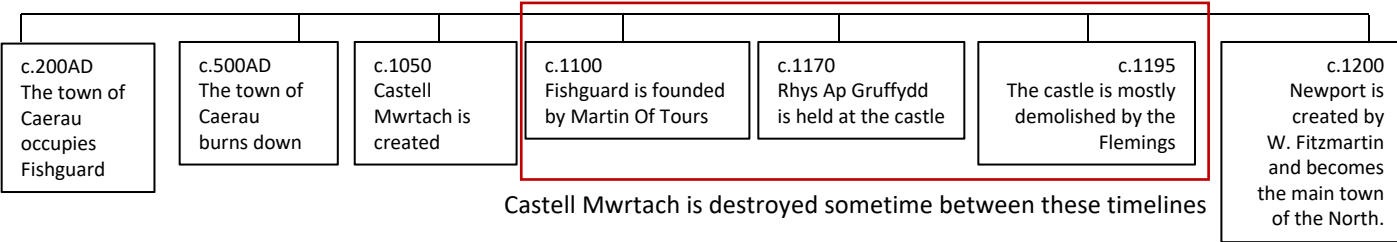
The living is a discharged vicarage, in the archdeaconry and diocese of St. David's, rated in the king's books at £4. 0. 5., endowed with £200 royal bounty, and £800 parliamentary grant, and in the patronage of the King, as Prince of Wales. The vicar receives one third of the whole tithes of that portion of the parish which is situated to the west of the river Gwayn, and the impropiator all the remainder. The church, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, is pleasantly situated in the Upper Town: it has recently been repaired, and is a neat small edifice, but not distinguished by any peculiarity of architecture. A handsome vicarage-house, called Vicar's Park, from the name of the plot of glebe on which it stands, has been erected by the present incumbent, the Rev. Samuel Fenton, M.A., which has much improved the entrance into the town from Haverfordwest. The town, previously to the erection of the present church, is said to have comprised two distinct parishes, now forming only one; and the ruins of three ancient chapels, called respectively Llan-Vihangel, Llan-Vartin, and Llan-Ist, may still be traced: of these, two probably were parish churches, and the third a chapel of ease to one of them. There are places of worship for Baptists, Independents, and Calvinistic Methodists. The hills in this parish, which enclose the romantic Vale of Gwayn, were formerly thickly strewn with Druidical relics, of which several vestiges may still be traced; and near the site which was formerly occupied by the ancient town called *Caerau*, three Roman urns have been found, containing numerous coins, chiefly of Gallienus, Posthumus, Claudius, and some other emperors; but they were melted down soon after their discovery. In various parts of the parish are numerous tumuli, some of which have been found to contain relics of the rudest ages, urns of various forms and of the coarsest workmanship, implements of stone, bones, ashes, and curiously wrought stones. Near the town are several tumuli, or artificial mounds, intrenched, as if for military purposes, and called *Castellau*, or "the Castles," probably from that circumstance: these Mr. Fenton supposes to be sepulchral monuments of a very remote age, and to have been reduced to their present form, which is that of a truncated cone, and probably surmounted by forts, during the wars between the Welsh and the invading Saxons. On the bank of the river Gwayn, in a secluded and romantic situation, stands the neat mansion of the late Richard Fenton, Esq., barrister-at-law, and author of a "Historical Tour through Pembrokeshire;" it is pleasantly embosomed in a thick grove of trees, and is now the property and residence of his eldest son. A mineral spring in the parish was formerly in high estimation for its efficacy in the cure of numbness of the limbs and other complaints. The average annual expenditure for the maintenance of the poor is £400.

11.

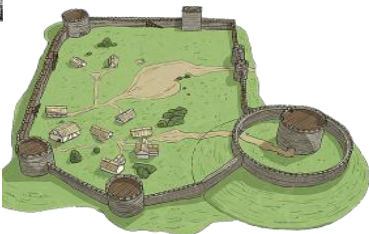
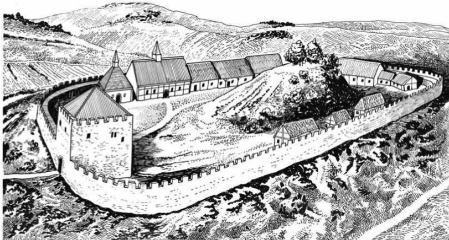
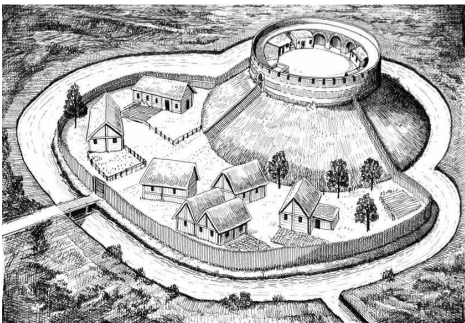
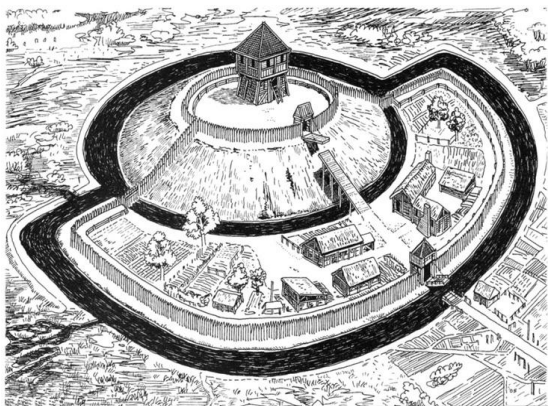
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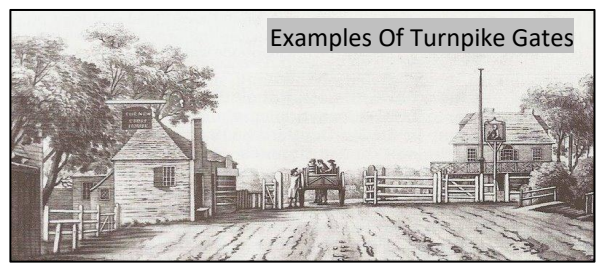
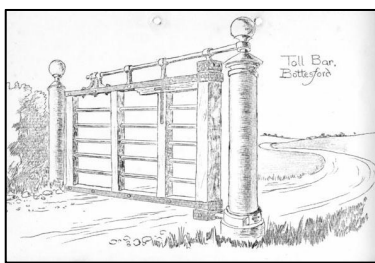
At the end of Lewis' article, he writes about the castle sites around the town. This also suggests that Castell Mwrtach was used around the same time the wars between the Welsh and the Saxons happened. This may indicate that the castle was built within the first few years of Martin Of Tours settling in Fishguard. - More likely the castle was made years after, due to it being supposedly founded by 'The Decendents' of Martin Of Tours.

Here is a possible timeline of the research I have found so far



Designs Similar To Castell Mwrtach





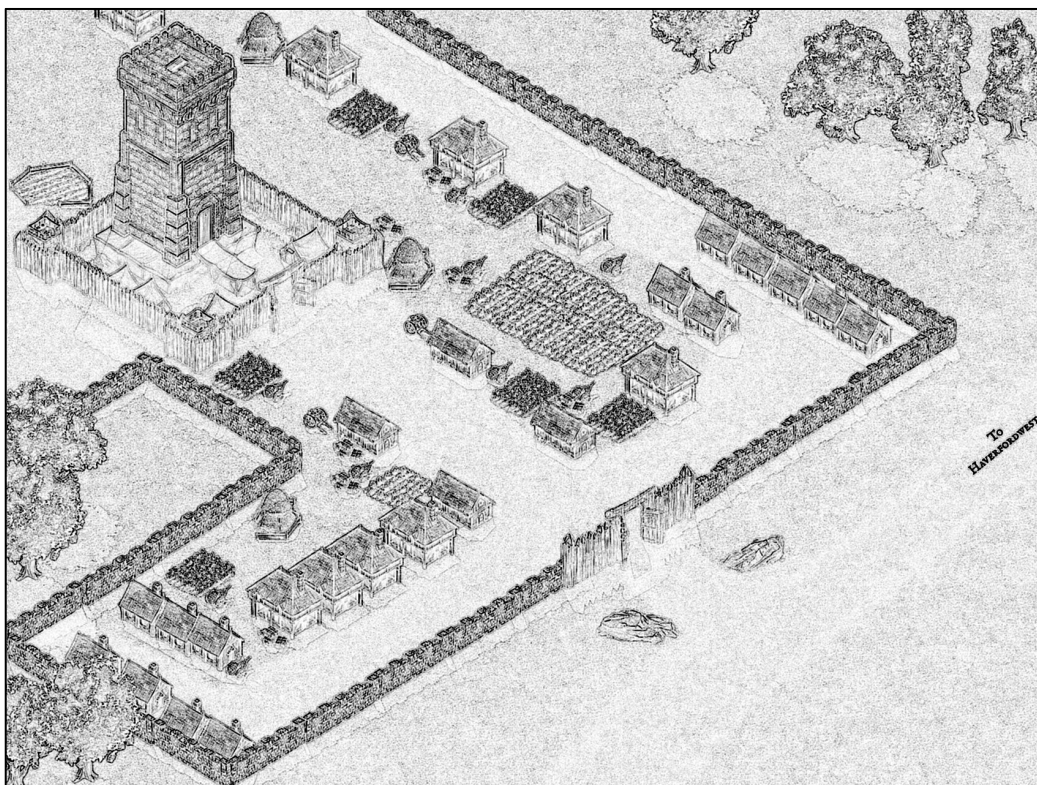
Examples Of Turnpike Gates

In this map from 1798, you can see that Fishguard is relatively small in size. Upon zooming in, you can see that there is a turnpike gate near the castle site. These were used to stop visitors going into the town without paying a toll fee.

The remains of Castell Mwrtach being near this site, make it a perfect location for a turnpike. As it allows a defense wall to further prevent people gaining access to the town without paying the fee.



<https://militarymaps.rct.uk/french-revolutionary-wars-1792-1802/fishguard-and-pembrokeshire-1797-a-plan-of>

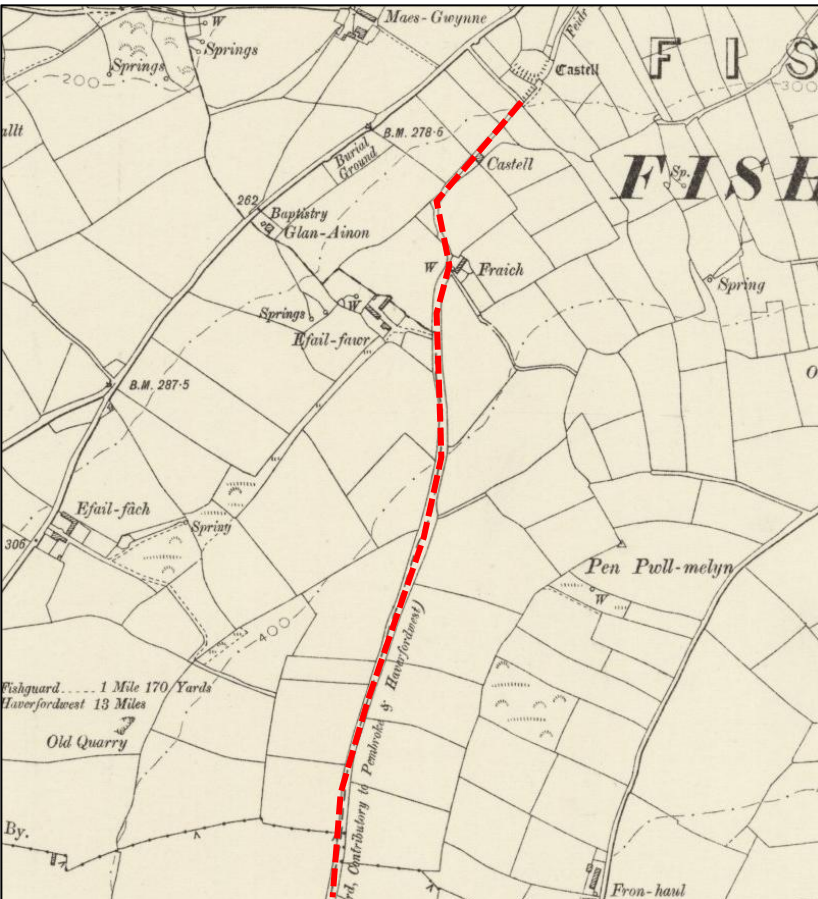
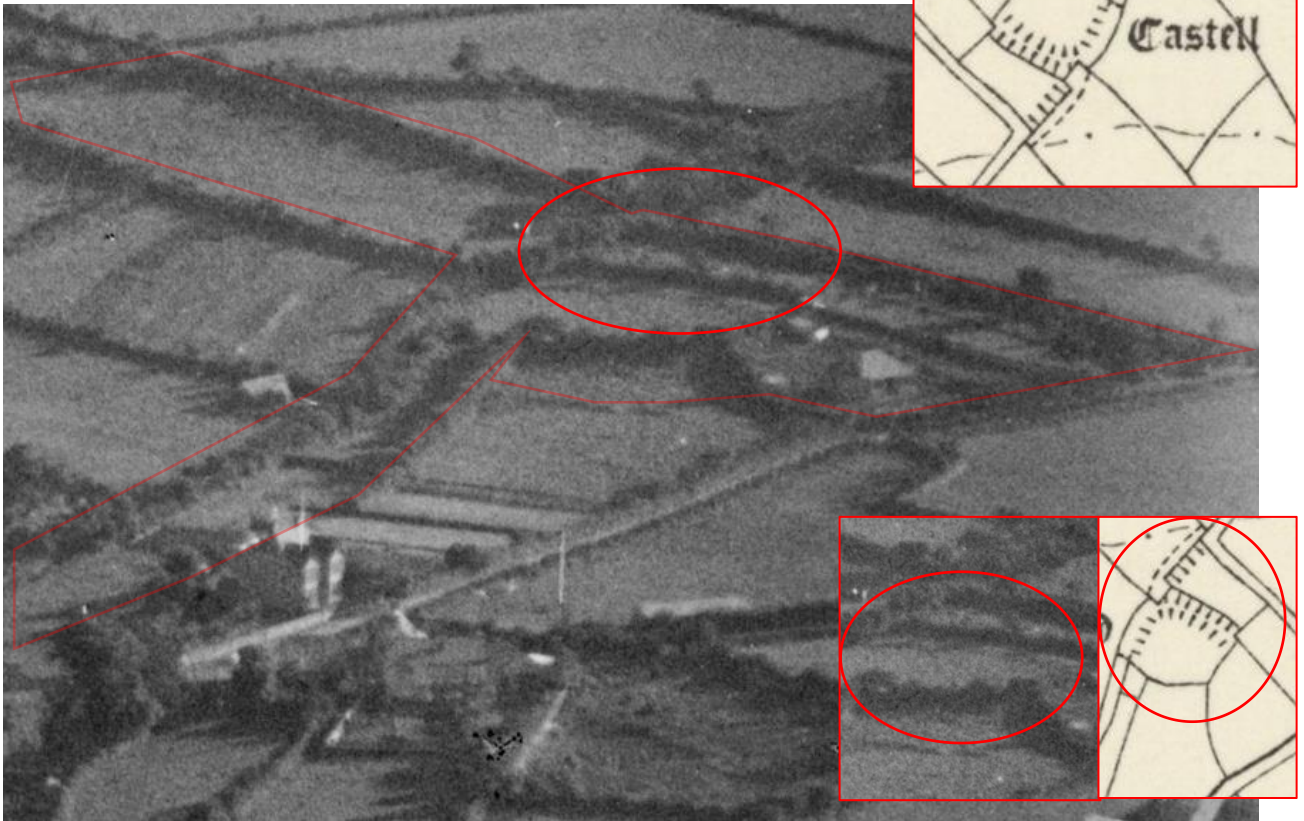


This is a rough drawing of what the castle may have looked like in 1100. Being mainly made from wood, with the outer walls being stone.

The design of the perimeters are based off the shape of the fields labelled after 'Castell Mwrtach'.

This is of course only an artists perspective of the castle and is not done or approved by a historian.

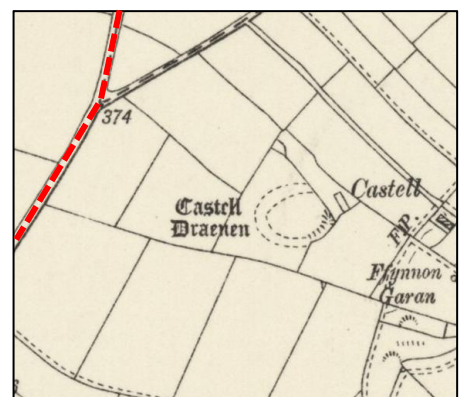
In the below image you can see the site of Castell Mwrtach in 1929. The fields of the supposed castle are very much the same to the tithe map in 1836. Although most of the land is farmland in this picture, one thing that is noticeable is the abnormal rock / mound shaping in the field circled. This is very similar to the markings seen on the 1888 map. A part of this land is still a field and has not been touched in decades.



It is also worth noting that Castell Mwrtach is located on the old main road that leads to Fishguard and passed through Llanstinan. Llanstinan was of course formerly a significant Christian/pre-Christian sacred site with a circular llan located at or near seven springs. There was once a settlement close to the church and as legend has it this was vacated when disease struck the inhabitants. It was likely to be tuberculosis

It is entirely possible that the disease outbreak may have also been the downfall of Castell Mwrtach.

The road also passed through a site known as 'Castell Draenen', which may have been used or worked alongside Castell Mwrtach.



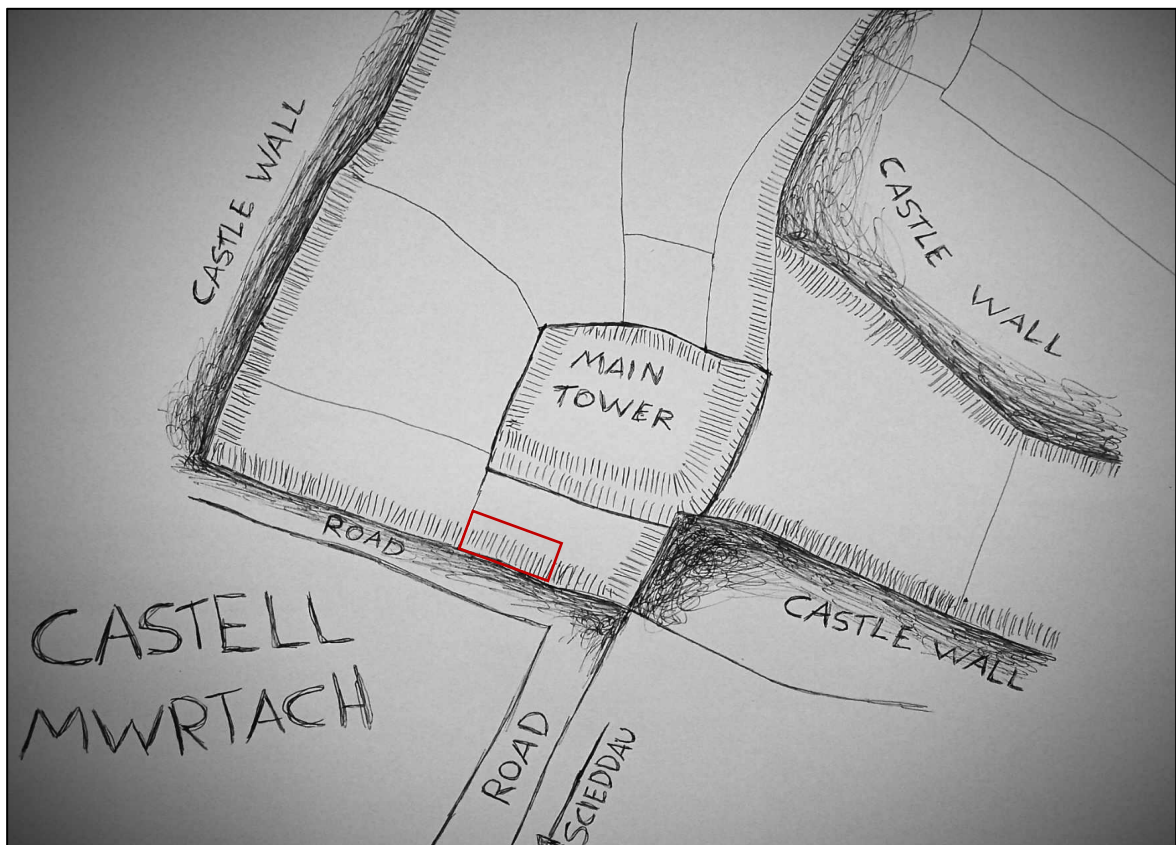
DIVISION II (EARTHWORKS), SUB-DIVISION C (RECTANGULAR CAMPS).

241. *Castell Murtach* (6 in. Ord. Surv. sheet, Pem. 9 N.E. ; lat. $51^{\circ} 59' 18''$, long. $4^{\circ} 58' 52''$).

About 100 yards south of **Fishguard** vicarage, on the right of the high-road leading to Haverfordwest, are the faint traces of an earthwork marked "Castell" on the 6-inch Ordnance sheet, of which no further description can now be given. Cultivation has practically wiped it out ; a slight rise in the ground may mark its enclosing bank. When seen in 1870 there was visible "a square with rounded corners, 38 by 40 yards, on fairly level ground. Trench only on E. side." It is bounded by a narrow lane called "Feidr Castell," the Castle Lane. The field on which it stands is known in the Tithe Schedule (No. 883) as "Castell Murtach," and an adjacent cottage is called "Castell." About 600 yards south of the site are several fields, which doubtless were formerly one enclosure, bearing the name "Parc Castell Murtach" (Tithe Schedule, Nos. 165-7, 682).—Visited, 3rd June, 1915.

257. *Old Castle Close* (6 in. Ord. Surv. sheet, Pem. 9 N.E. ; lat. $51^{\circ} 59' 6''$, long. $4^{\circ} 56' 55''$).

Several fields around Ddolwen farm-house were formerly known as Old Castle Close (Tithe Schedule, No. 348), but the name has died out in the district, and is not remembered at the farm itself. About 500 yards immediately north, just over the border in the parish of **Fishguard** North, are the remains of the earthwork (No. 240).—Visited, 7th September, 1920.



This is a drawing of the possible design of Castell Mwrtach. The outer walls follow the boundary of land named after the site in the Tithe Map from the 1800s. Whilst the lines mark the raised land that supported the outer walls. Some of these lines can also be seen on the 1888 map.

1791?

Print of Fishguard is dated 1.5.1797 in vol. 2, opp. p. 186

FISHGUARD, or ABERGWAYN, rather a populous town, the greater part of which, including the shops, small inns, market, church etc. is situated on a lofty eminence above the port formed by the estuary of the river Gwayn which rising in the mountain of Perceley, after a lapse of nine or ten miles through a narrow wooded valley, (which, though pregnant in all its extent with beauty, the traveller from want of curiosity or information never penetrates), resigns its virgin freshness to the embrace of Neptune. The houses appropriate to that port skirt the tide, are happily disposed for the purposes of trade, and are backed by a pleasing gradation of distances of which you gain a charming bird's eye view from a spot in the upper town, called the castle. The shipping a trade of this port are very considerable, and daily increasing; and were its obvious natural advantages turned to the best account, vast benefit would result not only to the place itself, but to the commerce of the Irish channel. The entrance of the harbour is covered by a small battery, and packets not able to make Milford frequently touch here as a place of great safety and easy access; and a question has been agitated with respect to the expediency of stationing a packet here, provided a communication were opened between this place and Carmarthen by an old road now disused by which fifteen miles at least would be saved, and an intercourse between the sister kingdoms accelerated, besides opening an acquaintance with scenes hitherto little known, yet rich with picturesque beauty.

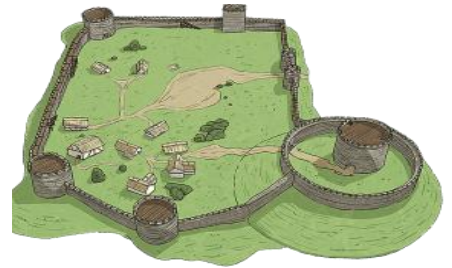
vol 2

<https://sublimewales.wordpress.com/places/fishguard/>

This is an extract from a traveller that visited Fishguard in 1791. They mention that there was a site at the top of the town that allowed you to view the whole of the area from up high. The site is named the castle.

Castell Mwrtach was also located at the top of the town in this area.

The site also states that in 1797, Welsh is the main language in Fishguard and English church services only take place once a month. This might explain why the castle is named in Welsh.



The adjoining cliffs consist of a species of mixed marble called pudding stone, and a vein of Portland stone has lately been discovered in the vicinity, of great extent. There are also quantities of blue slate, but for want of spirit in the inhabitants, and the heavy duties on this article, little is done: nor do they even procure them for domestic use. The cliffs abound, in the very teeth of the western breeze, with *ligustrum vulgare*, and *euonymus Europaea*; and nearly two acres of the hill beneath the churchyard are completely covered with *sambucus ebulus*, which, when in bloom, perfumes the air with its powerful fragrance. On the banks of the Gwayne grow *nymphaea lutea*, *verbena communis*, and *campanula erecta*.

There is on a neighbouring hill what appears to have been a beacon, called the castle; and in ploughing, some brass coins have been found chiefly of the lower empire, and some earthen pots of Roman workmanship were dug up a few years ago, which favours the opinion that the Romans were once here; and what tends to confirm this opinion is, that about twenty years since was discovered, in a dingle below the church, a spring the water of which was covered with a crust of iron, evidently possessing strong medical properties. On

<https://sublimewales.wordpress.com/places/fishguard/>

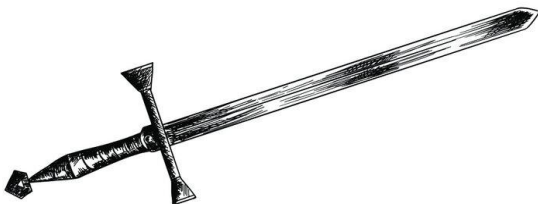
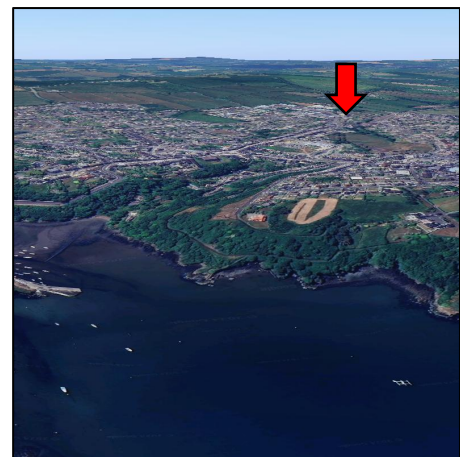
In this part of the website, it talks of a traveller visiting the town in 1803. They also mention the castle site at the top of the town.

Another traveller also mentions this in 1808.

They describe the castle site as a great view point and a beacon.

There is, on a neighbouring hill, what appears to have been a beacon, called the Castle; where some brass roman coins have been found. In a dingle below the

<https://sublimewales.wordpress.com/places/fishguard/>



1830

Some of the following might have been derived from earlier descriptions, such as Fenton's 'Statistical account ... (1795), above, but it includes some original material.

Fishguard is situated upon the north coast of the county of Pembroke, facing the Irish channel, and nearly opposite to Wicklow in Ireland, called Abergwayn, from the port formed by the estuary of the river Gwayn. It bore the name of Fishgarth, as far back as the time of Richard the second. Garth, in Saxon, and the old language of the law, signifies a wear, or dam of water. To no spot of equal extent in the whole county has history or tradition annexed fewer memorable events than to this parish; and, consequently, fewer relics to excite the attention of the traveller or the antiquary scarcely any where occur, presenting nothing to the curious eye above the dignity of a beacon. There is indeed in the town a place called, in old deeds, Y Gastell, which, from its situation upon a small tongue of land commanding the entrance to the harbour, might once have been crowned with an occasional entrenchment.

<https://sublimewales.wordpress.com/places/fishguard/>

This is the last large piece of information that mentions Castell Mwrtach. This could indicate that most of the site was turned into farmland some 20-30 years after this.

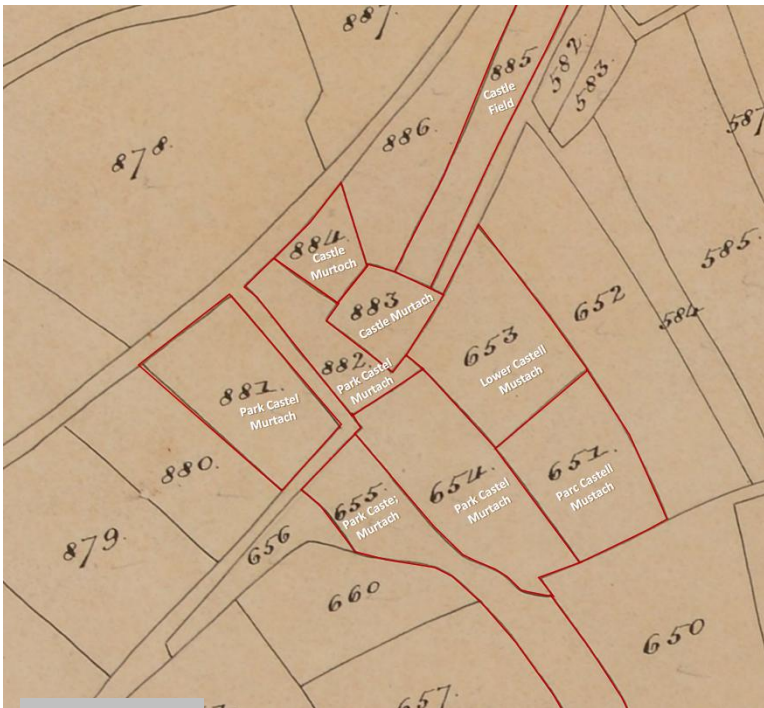


These are some of the earthwork mounds we have discovered since further investigating what is left at the site.



The mounds are solid earthwork and seem to be the remains of the outer castle defense wall.





Tithe Map 1830s

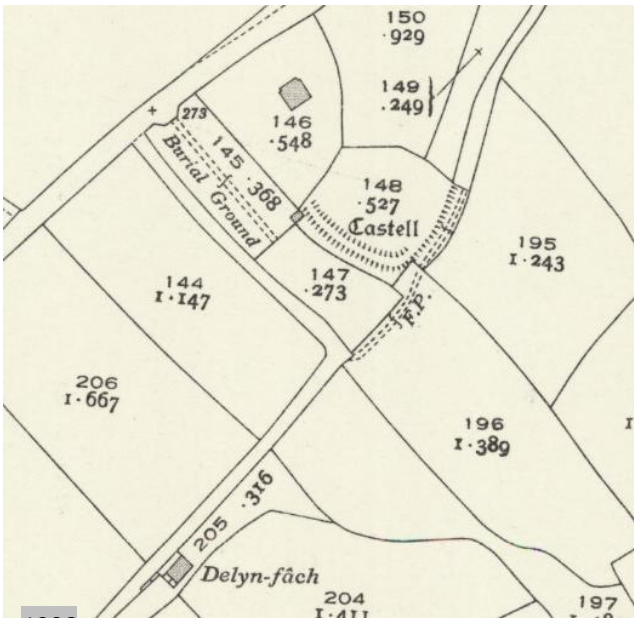
As you can see in this tithe map from c.1830. Castell Mwrtach's name is marked on multiple fields.

This would mean that the castle was roughly the following measurements;

Total area: 36,905.24 m² (397,244.66 ft²)
Total distance: 1.36 km (4,447.64 ft)



1897

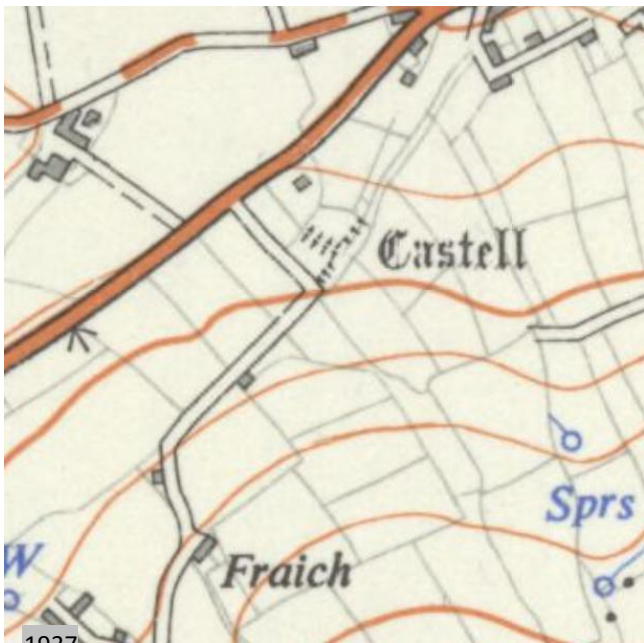


1906

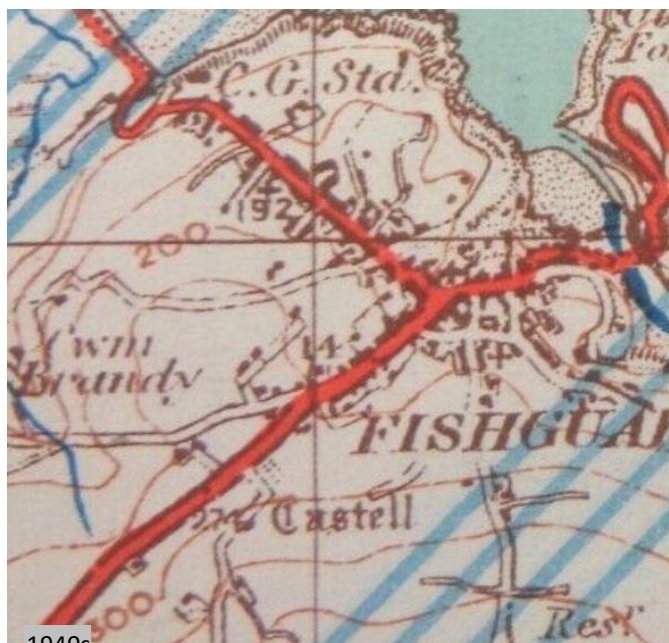
As you can see in all of these maps (on next page as well), Castell Mwrtach is mentioned until the 1980's when a house was built on top of the main site.

The erection of the dwelling removed the main part of the castle, which would've most likely have been the castle keep / main tower.

The only remaining evidence of the castle is the earthwork mounds previously mentioned, as well as the footpath which borders the site today.



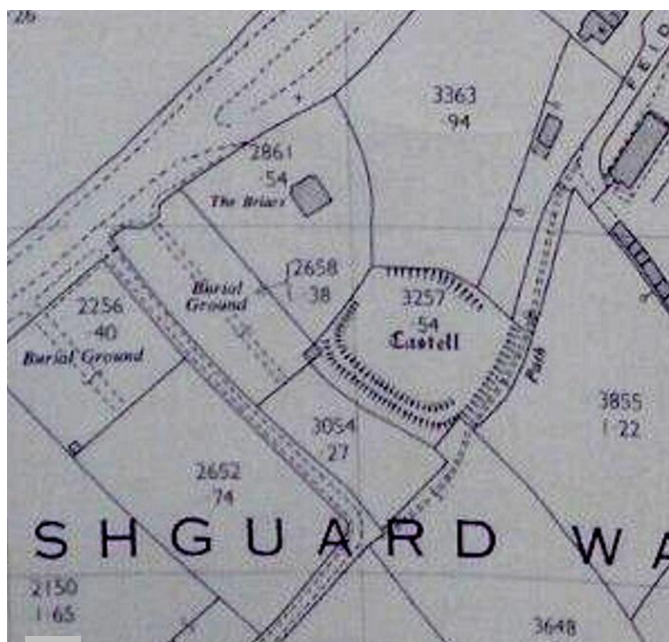
1937



1940s



1957



1964



1969



1981



Here is some artwork made showing what Castell Mwrtach may have looked like.

You can see that it had a wooden defense wall that covered over 4000 ft.

The flag is the flag of the kingdom of Deheubarth, which was the kingdom in which Fishguard was located in at the time.

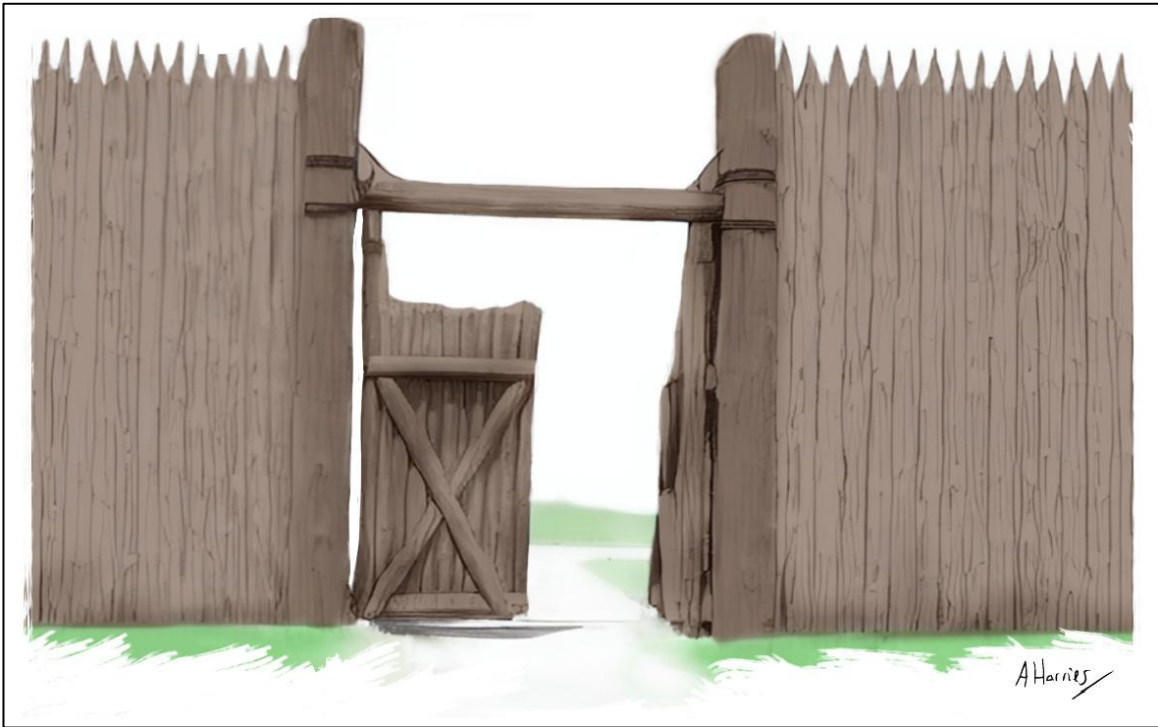


Image showing the size of the castle if it was still standing today

lvi		THE CHRONICLE OF THE PRINCES.	
		TEXT.	VARIOUS READINGS.
Page	Line		
198,	14,	uuduchockau	- ufuddocau, Ib.
200,	14,	deuab ¹	- deu uab.
„	„	Idnerth ²	- Idnerth.
„	15,	ef	- wynt, MS. Ll.
204,	4,	Diernut	- Diermit.
„	20,	dywetit	- dyweid, MS. Ll.
206,	10,	Diernut	- Diermit.
„	„	Morchath	- Mwrtach, MS. Ll.
„	19,	ac—Kymry	- a dewredd y Cymry, MS. Ll.
208,	7,	achledyfeu	- a chleddyfeu, Ib.

<https://ia601004.us.archive.org/19/items/brutytywysogiono00cara/brutytywysogiono00cara.pdf>

It is recorded that in 1167, the King of Leinster, Diarmait Mac Murchada, was deprived of his kingdom by the High King of Ireland.

To recover his kingdom, the exiled king fled to Wales and from there to England and Aquitaine in France, in order to gain the consent of King Henry II of England to recruit soldiers.

On returning to Wales, Fitz-Stephen helped him to organise a mercenary army of Norman and Welsh soldiers, including Richard de Clare, 2nd Earl of Pembroke, alias Strongbow.



Diarmait Mac Murchada

1168. The ensuing year, Robert, son of Stephen, was released from the prison of the lord Rhys, his friend; and Diermid, son of Murchath, took him with him to Ireland, and they landed at Lough Garmon, where they gained the castle.



Robert FitzStephen

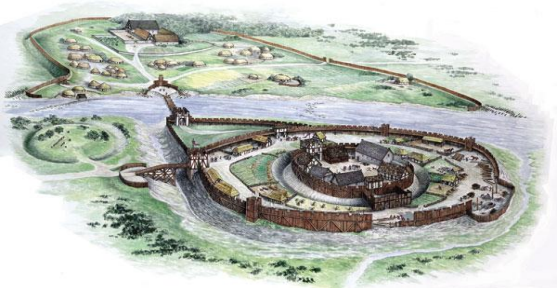
This source shows that it is possible that Diarmait was captured by Lord Rhys upon returning to Wales. He would then meet Robert in prison.

Upon escaping with eachother in 1168, they both then organise an army to invade Ireland.

If this theory is true, this would date the creation of Castell Mwrtach to the years 1167 - 1169, with it only taking a few weeks to build. This would also mean that the Castle's true name would've been 'Murchada Castle'.

The site would've been captured by Lord Rhys around the year c.1168. Where both Diermait and Robert were imprisoned.

Upon escape, Robert helped Diarmait prepare to invade Ireland. Which commenced the following year in 1167.



An Irish Motte & Bailey Castle



Invasion Of Ireland by the Anglo Normans

On 1 May 1169, Robert led the vanguard of Diarmait Mac Murchada's Cambro-Norman auxiliaries to Ireland, thereby precipitating the Norman invasion of Ireland

The name Mwrtach, is mentioned in the Welsh book named ' The Chronicles Of Princes' - dated 1857.

It states that Mwrtach is also known as Murchath. Which is a family name from Ireland.

It later states that Diermit, son of Murcath escaped Wales with his friend Robert Fitzstephen in 1168.

Diermit was most likely 'Diarmait Mac Murchada', who historically worked with Robert on conquoring Ireland.



This is the other potential flag of Castell Mwrtach. If it did indeed belong to Diarmait Mac Murchada and the Normans, this would be the flag that was flying. This is the flag of the Normans.

Summary So Far (08/05/2024)

From the research found so far, Castell Mwrtach has 2 potential origins.

It may have been founded by Rhys ab Owain to help control his kingdom of Deheubarth, as well as assist in the battle of Pwll Wdig in 1078. After losing the battle, it may have resulted in losing the castle to Trahaearn ap Caradog, which was then destroyed.

The other potential origin is that it was created by Diarmait Mac Murchada (known as Diermit Mwrtach in Welsh) in 1167, when he was exiled from Ireland. Diarmait was then captured by Lord Rhys, where he then met Robert FitzStephen. Upon escaping in 1168, they then prepared their attack on Ireland for the following year in 1169. The castle was then abandoned and later dismantled by the Flemings when they conquered Pembrokeshire.

This research will be worked on throughout 2024 and will be updated when new evidence is discovered.

Regards,

Andrew Harries