

Archaeology Wales

Kidwelly Castle, Kidwelly, Carmarthenshire

Archaeological Watching Brief and Evaluation



By

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Report No. 1197



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Archaeological Watching Brief and Evaluation

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Date: 19/2/2014

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areas, and consequently survives as a near-complete Norman fortification that developed according to changes in fortification styles over the following centuries.

3. Watching Brief Results

The watching brief was carried out during the removal of slumped material from the base of the moat and all groundworks to the castle mound itself. The initial methodology involved the removal of the slumped material from the moat to create a stable surface for a mechanical excavator to stand on while it excavated sections of the Motte mound. This methodology was altered when it was discovered that the 13 tonne excavator was unable to reach the top of the proposed work area on the castle mound. In order to gain elevation, the slumped material at the base of the moat was kept in situ and added to with spoil taken from the disturbed area on the castle mound to create a stable platform for the excavator.

Prior to the creation of the platform, a 0.4m wide trench was excavated through the slumped material to a depth of 0.3m to ensure that the surface of the moat was not disturbed. This revealed that the slumped material comprised a mix of dark brown, silty loam topsoil and brown silty clay. A pipe was installed within the trench to aid drainage and then covered over with the original excavated slump material. A terram sheet was laid over the top of the spoil and railway sleepers placed above that in order to preserve the moat base and sides.

The excavation of the site of the Motte mound revealed that it comprised a dark brown silty loam topsoil (100), 0.2m deep, directly below the turf. This overlay a mid-brown silty clay (101) that was tentatively identified as the up cast spoil from the creation of the castle moat and was excavated to a depth of 0.12m (fig. 3).

The excavation of the four evaluation test pits was abandoned due to the base of the moat being continually flooded despite repeated attempts to drain the excess water (fig. 4).

4. Discussion and Interpretation

The slumped area of the castle mound revealed a 0.2m thick band of silty loam topsoil (100) that extended throughout the monitored area. This lay directly above a mid-brown silty clay (101), a deliberate dump deposit of up cast material from the construction of the moat. This deposit makes up some of the artificial mound that Kidwelly Castle was built upon. The extent of the slumping has only had a minor impact upon this silty clay deposit (101), removing the upper surface but leaving the remainder, which is compact and stable, in situ. No finds were recovered during the excavation of the slumped Motte material and no dating evidence found. A modern clay drain pipe was discovered in the northeast corner of the working area on the castle mound, but did not extend down the bank.

Standing water within the base of the moat did not allow for any of the test pits to be excavated.

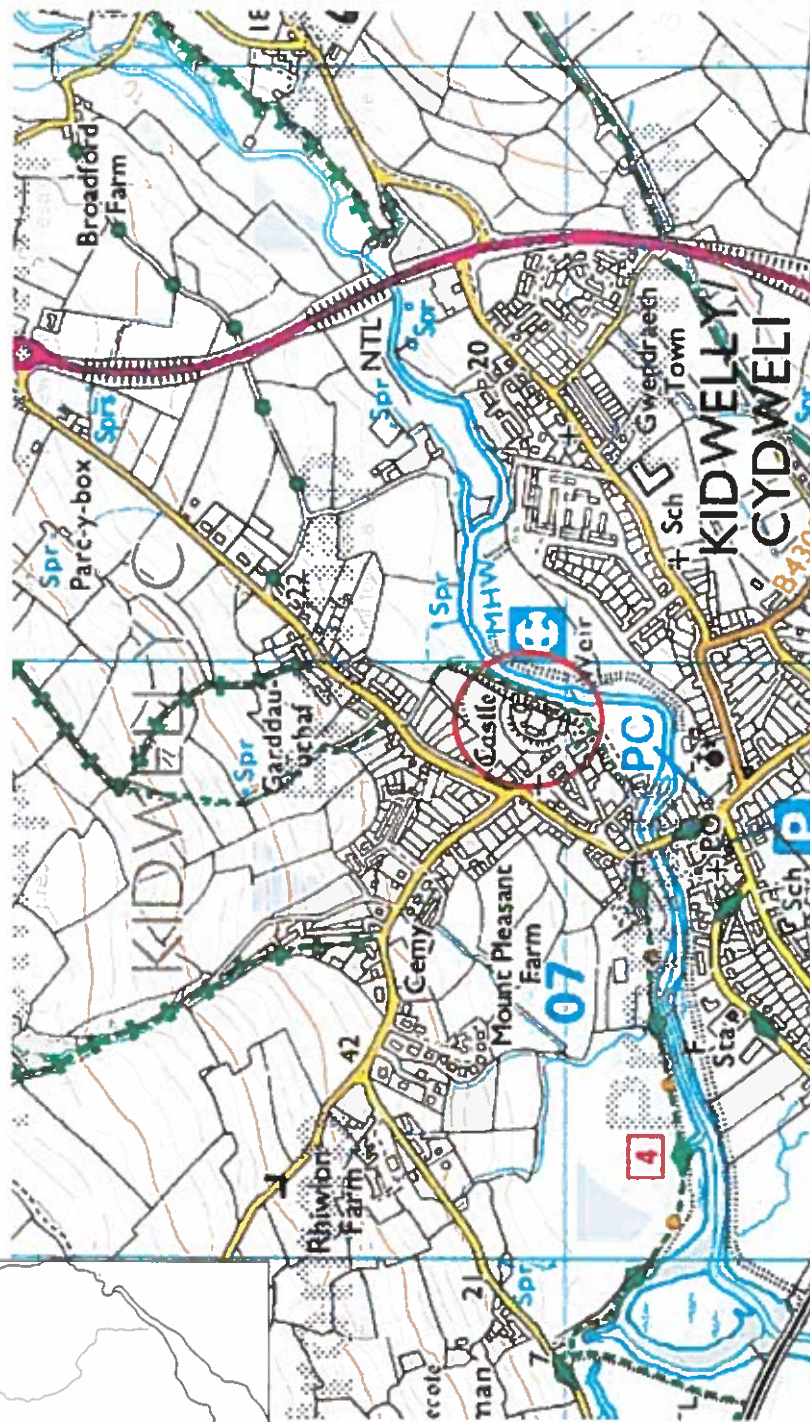
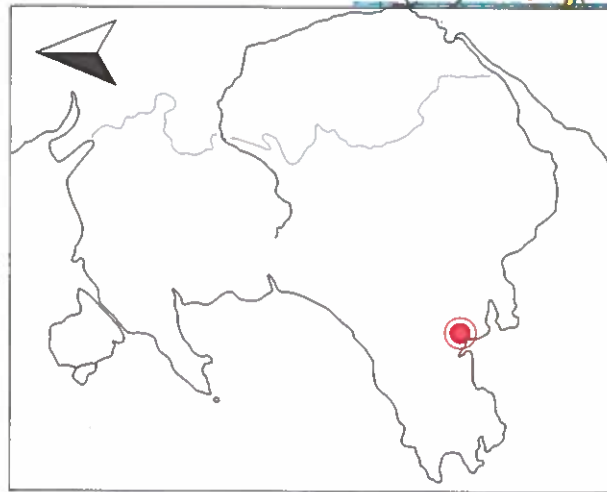
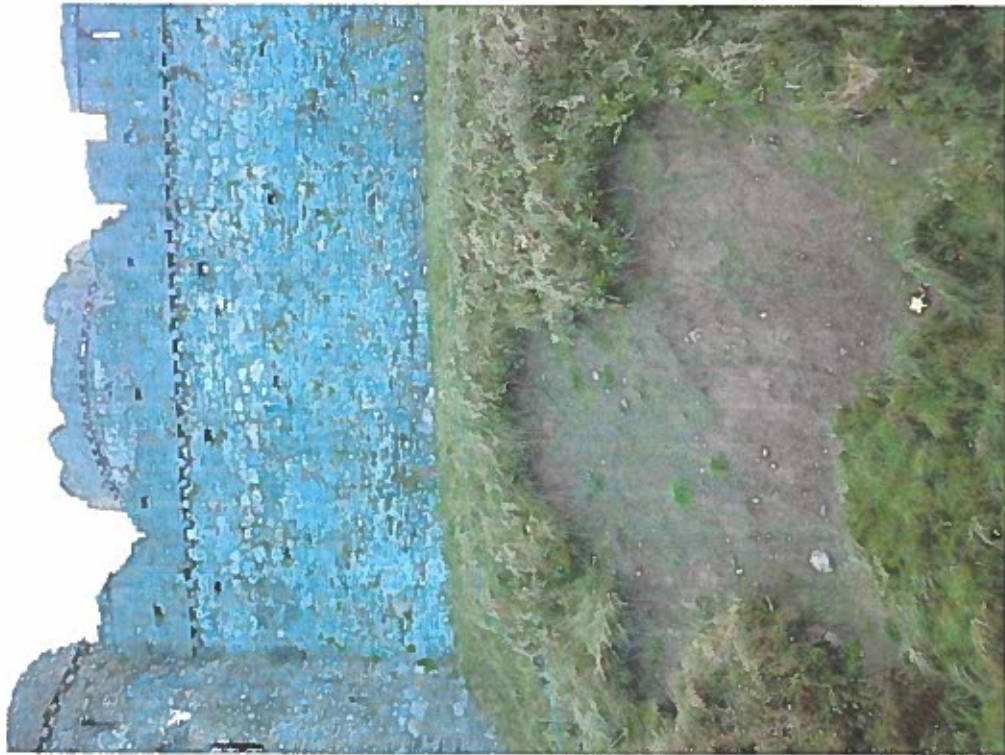


Fig. 1
Location of
site



a. Landslip prior to remedial works



b. Landslip area under excavation



c. Section through exposed Motte. Scale = 1m

Fig. 3
Landslip area

