

# THE EVOLUTION OF A CASTLE, TIBBERS, DUMFRIESSHIRE

Piers Dixon, Iain Anderson,  
with a contribution by  
Oliver O'Grady



HISTORIC  
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# THE EVOLUTION OF A CASTLE, TIBBERS, DUMFRIESSHIRE

Measured and  
geophysical survey  
2013-14

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# CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	1
Introduction and documentation	3
The recording of the castle	5
The significance of Tibbers Castle	7
Survey method	8
Site description	9
THE MOTTE AND BAILEY	9
THE STONE CASTLE	11
The geophysical survey	17
THE RESULTS	17
Discussion	23
Conclusion	25
Bibliography	26





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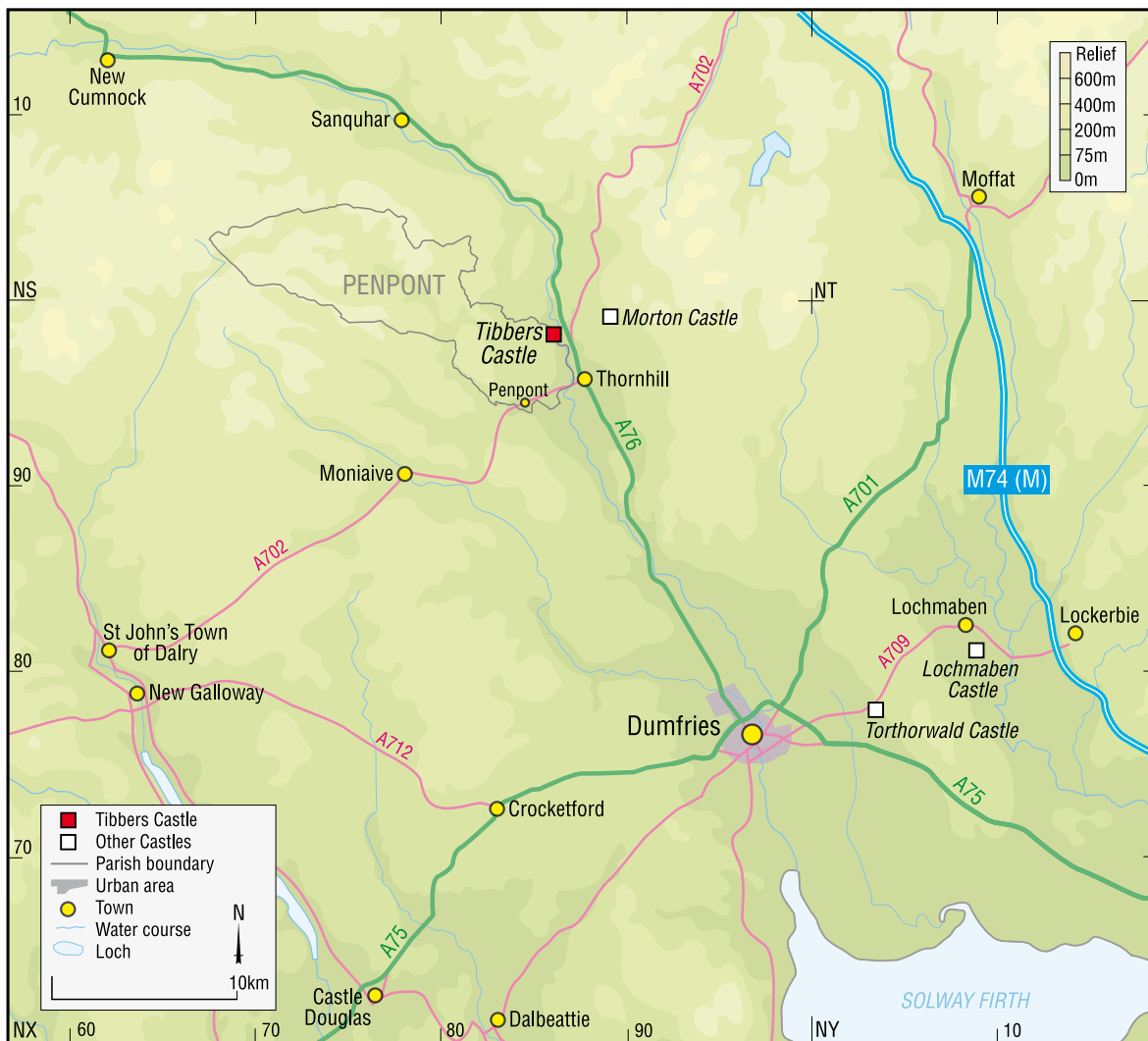


Fig 1 Location map. GVO06075. Contains OS data, OS licence number 100057073. All rights reserved.  
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Fig 2 The tree covered castle mound from the haugh land beside the River Nith. DP151884



# INTRODUCTION AND DOCUMENTATION

Tibbers Castle (NX 8625 9821, Canmore ID 65153) is situated a short distance south-east of Drumlanrig Castle on a terrace overlooking the River Nith (Figs 1 and 2). Its position dominates a ford across the Nith, which has antecedents as a routeway in the Roman occupation of the area with the nearby fort on the haugh c500m to the north-west, commanding not only the route up and down the valley but also that from upper Lanarkshire to the north-east and to Galloway to the south-west. In appearance Tibbers is a motte and bailey castle, originating in the 12th or early 13th century, but it is more than that.

The barony of Tibbers (Toibar in Gaelic meaning a well) that is documented from the 14th century (see below) suggests that the castle was the focus of an earlier estate within the lordship of Nithsdale, possibly coincident with the parish of Penpont (Fig 1). The castle was strengthened in the Scots Wars of Independence with the construction of a stone castle of enclosure. The house, as it was described, was either begun or strengthened by Sir Richard Siward in 1298 (Bain 1881a, no. 1005), and work continued during the English occupation with £100 spent on the castle in 1302 (Bain 1881a, no. 1307); it was garrisoned by 2 knights, 13 'valets darms' and 8 footmen or archers. Taken by Robert de Brus in 1306 after the killing of John Comyn, it was regained by the English from John de Seton, who was put to death for his treachery, and garrisoned by 4 esquires and 50 footmen under the command of Thomas Bell (Bain 1881b, no. 529). This occupation ended in 1313 with the resurgence of Robert Bruce's campaigns against the English.

The lordship of Nithsdale was in the hands of Thomas Randolph by c1313 (Paul 1909), and the estate devolved on Patrick Dunbar, earl of March, in the late 1350s following the break-up of the Randolph inheritance after the death of Thomas Randolph, 3rd earl of Moray, at the battle of Neville's Cross in 1346. George Dunbar succeeded to the earldom of March by c1369 and gained control in due course of the baronies of Morton and Tibbers. It is likely that Morton became the administrative centre for both the Morton and Tibbers estates, and the terminology used to

describe Tibbers through the later 14th century and after (eg Webster 1982, no. 509, refers to the lands and tenements of the barony of Tibbers but not the castle) implies that it was a castle site and not a centre of lordship that existed at Tibbers.

The Dunbars were forfeited in 1435 for George's treasonable dealings with England. On 27 February 1450/1, King James II granted Tibbers to George Crichton of Cairns, Admiral of Scotland (Paul 1984, no. 418). When he died in 1454, his lands and titles reverted to the crown. The tenants of Tibbers who were under crown control before 1451 and after 1454, and under George Crichton, were the Maitlands. A grant by William Maitland of Thirlestane in blenchfarme of which the service due was payment of a silver penny 'at the toun of Tibbers' (Paul 1984, no. 452) suggests that the castle was no longer functioning as an administrative centre in 1451. On the resignation of William Maitland of Lethington, it passed to the Douglasses of Drumlanrig who held it in 1508-9 (Paul 1984, no. 3312). The Maitlands of Auchincassil in Annandale held 'the castle place and hill' in fee farme in 1489 (Paul 1984, no. 1885), and in 1541 it is described as '*castrum locum et montem lie Mote de Tibberis nuncapatus extendendum ad duas acras terrarum*' (Paul and Thomson 1984, no. 2342), which may be translated as 'the place and mount of the castle called the Motte of Tibbers extending to two acres of land'. None of this suggests a functioning castle.

Tibbers was the focus of internecine strife shortly after when it, presumably the toun, was burned by Alexander Stewart of Garlies and Dalswinton in 1547 (Smith 1930, 104), and although the lands and barony '*cum castro et lie castell-mote, granorum et fullorum molendinis*' (ie 'with the castle and the castle mount, grain and fulling mill') were confirmed to Sir James Douglas of Drumlanrig in 1592 (Thomson 1984b, no. 2034), neither the castle nor the toun appear on Blaeu's map (1654), although the mill does. A lease of 1593 by James, Commendator of Holywood, included the 'castell of Tibberis, called the Peillydykes' (HMC 1897, 76), which suggests a palisaded enclosure.

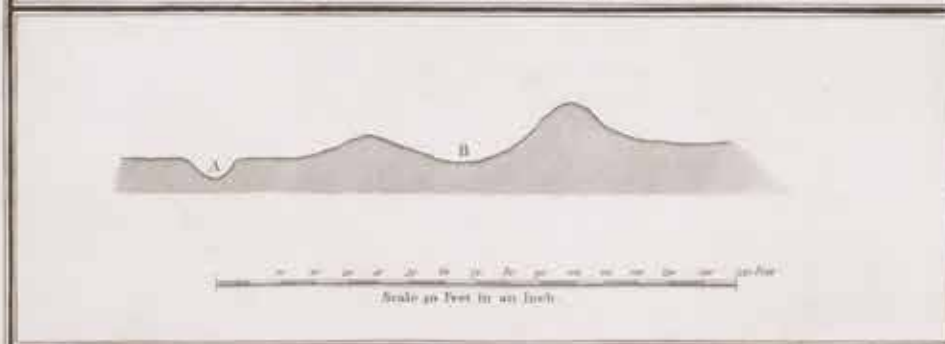
PL. XLIX.

PLAN of TIBBERS CASTLE supposed to have been a ROMAN CAMP.



A The Outer Camp.  
 B The Inner Camp higher than the other.  
 C (Probably the Praetorium... about 20 Feet higher than the Inner Camp.

Perhaps there has been a Gate or Descent to the D Camp C, but at present it is in the Form as represented in the Plan.  
 A&B also refer to the Section of the Ditches.



Scale 500 Feet in an Inch.

*Surveyed by General Roy, 1754.*

*Published according to an Act of Parliament, April 25 1755.*

Fig 3 General Roy's survey interpreting the motte as the praetorium of a Roman fort and the two outer baileys as camps. Plate XLIX from William Roy 'Military Antiquities of the Romans in Britain' 1793. DP192283

# THE RECORDING OF THE CASTLE

Antiquarian interest in the site goes back to the 18th century, when it was recorded by General Roy as a Roman military camp (Roy 1793, Plate 49; Fig 3). Excavations which were carried out at the castle in 1864 revealed the ruins, and the finds included two coins of Edward II as reported by the *Dumfries Courier* on 12 June of that year. A quillon dagger, now in Dumfries Museum, from this site is datable to the first quarter of the 15th century. The site was planned by RCAHMS for the inventory in 1912 (RCAHMS 1920, no. 157), showing the motte and a single bailey and a detail of the stone structure revealed by the excavations.

Estate plans of the site are instructive. In the 18th century the castle ridge was under cultivation and in 1758 was depicted with curved strips that were orientated along the ridge (Fig 4a). The castle was annotated within a clearing in the trees at the end of the ridge, the side of which was also tree-covered

(NRS RHP 37652). In 1820, however, the site is depicted in much the same fashion but two roughly parallel lines of trees are shown in the cultivated ground to the south of the castle (NRS RHP 37542), which have a spacing that suggests these might be the ramparts of the baileys that are visible on the ground today (Fig 4b).

Tibbers was selected for survey in 2013 because it had not been recorded in plan form since the RCAHMS survey in 1912 and a reconnaissance to the site in November 2012 showed that the site had been incorrectly understood, both with respect to the stone castle and the additional bailey. The site which was added to the Schedule of Ancient Monuments in 1937 included the stone castle and the inner of two baileys, indicating that the Ancient Monument inspectors had recognised the site as a motte and bailey castle as recorded by RCAHMS, but not the additional bailey beyond, which General Roy had planned.

Fig 4a Estate plan of 1758 showing the castle in the woods and the Castle Bank with rig cultivation. North is to the right. Published by courtesy of His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch. NRS RHP 37652

Fig 4b Estate plan of 1820 showing two parallels tree lines across the ridge. Published by courtesy of His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch. NRS RHP 37542



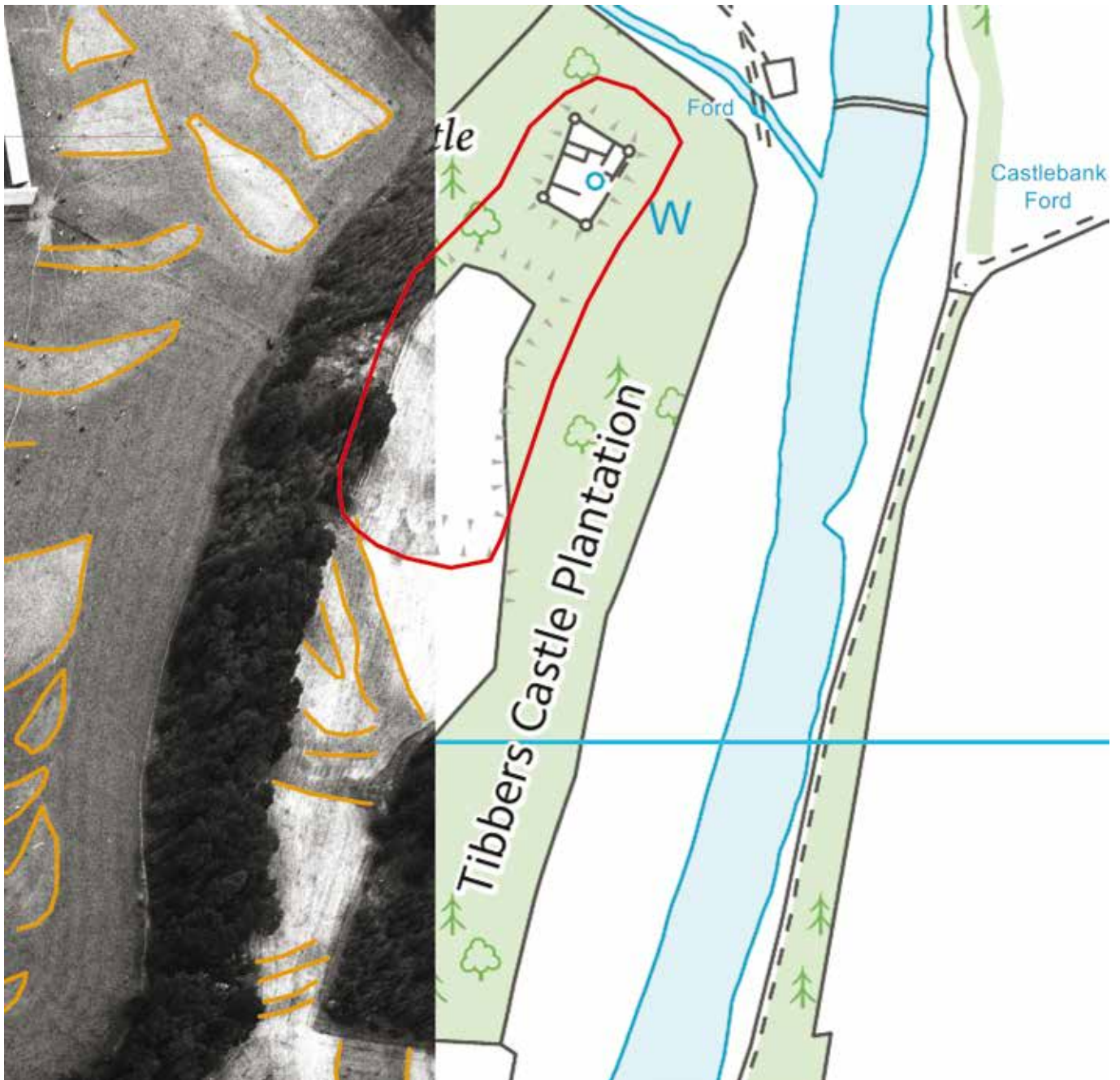


Fig 5 Aerial photograph showing the scheduled area of the motte and bailey (in red), the cropmark mapping (in orange) of the ditch of the outermost bailey and the geological features within it, and the west end of a ditch within the

outer bailey, neither which were plotted. OS licence number 100057073. All rights reserved. © Copyright 2016. Aerial photograph © HES (John Dewar Collection) SC1519570

The excavations in the later 19th century had focused on the motte and the remains of the stone castle, revealing a developed four-sided castle of enclosure with round towers at each corner and an entrance defended by an additional projecting round tower immediately beside it. This was clearly a 13th century castle of enclosure with round towers, and it has been interpreted as the work of Sir Richard Siward, Sheriff of Dumfries under Edward I, who fell foul of Robert Bruce's take over in 1306 as a supporter of John Comyn, who was lord of Dalswinton, near Dumfries. The 19th century excavations seem to have been a wall-following exercise and the dumping of debris from this process to either side of the robber trench

appears to have misled the RCAHMS surveyors into interpreting the eastern curtain as a double wall. Although the 19th century excavations revealed the walls of the castle, and the site was made more accessible with a path up the side of the motte, it has not been maintained in recent times, and the bridge across the burn at its foot has rotted, as has the stair up to the entrance. Management of the vegetation on the site has not continued, allowing dense undergrowth to envelope the site in summer, making it impossible to understand. The castle is, however, marked by a sign at the road end as an item on the Robert Bruce trail, although few will be able to appreciate it.

# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TIBBERS CASTLE

This is the largest surviving earthwork castle in Nithsdale, as evidenced by the two successive baileys that extend 200m along the ridge on which it sits. Together, these make it one of the largest early castles in Scotland, comparable in scale with the bailey at the primary Lochmaben Castle, beside the burgh in Annandale, or that at Torthorwald in Nithsdale (Fig 1). Torthorwald is particularly notable for the extent of its outer bailey, which, although ploughed out, cropmarks show it once extended some 100m south of the inner bailey occupied by the 14th century tower. Lochmaben the bailey of the early earthwork castle extends about 100m west to Kirk Loch. However, castles with double baileys are rare. Windsor castle has two, but there the motte stands at the focus of the two rather than at one end. A Welsh example at Llandinam in Powys has two baileys extending one beyond the other in similar fashion (Higham and Barker 2004, 226–7). In area,

the two baileys at Tibbers extend to about 2 acres, or 0.8ha, comparable in extent, at least, with places of first importance, like Roxburgh, and matching the area documented in the charter of 1541 (see above). It is conjectured, however, that the additional bailey provided protection for a market centre, and Tibbers may therefore have been intended as the main strength and focus of the lordship of Nithsdale outside Dumfries itself, the castle of which is now lost. After all, it was here at Tibbers that Richard Siward, the sheriff of Dumfries, chose to invest in an up-to-date stone castle in 1298. It changed hands in the 14th century, as the wars with England waxed and waned, and was strongly garrisoned by Edward I, indicative of its strategic importance. Tibbers stone castle is a good example of the developed enclosure castles of the 13th century with round towers on the corners, comparable with Comyn castles such as Lochindorb or Inverlochry, both in Highland, if smaller in extent.

## SURVEY METHOD

The aim of the survey, begun in the spring of 2013, was to make an overall plan and profile of the site that included the two outer baileys (Fig 8), and such additional detail of the stone enclosure as could be made once the vegetation was cleared to obtain a more detailed plan at 1:250 (Fig 12), complemented by a comprehensive photographic survey. The tree cover made it difficult to use differential GPS for some parts of the site, but GPS provided the mapping framework nonetheless. Where needed, it was supported by the use of electronic distance meter (EDM), while plane table and telescopic alidade were used for the detailed recording of the stone castle (Fig 6), and differential GPS was used for the profile of the site.



Fig 6 Recording the entrance of the stone castle in progress. DP151889

Although there was a cropmark image of the site (Fig 5) and mapping of the features that showed along the ridge, the aerial photograph did not encompass the whole site and so assessment of the archaeology by this method was limited. It did show the ditches of the two outer baileys and the geological feature that ran diagonally across the outermost. It also showed the west end of a ditch feature within the outer bailey. This limitation in the available data led to the consideration of how to address the questions that had been raised by the visible structures and the additional unrecorded bailey in particular. It was clear that the use of the ridge for arable in both the modern and post-medieval periods had smoothed the ground occupied by the two baileys, and that it would require other methods to try to understand them.

In consequence, and with the opportunity of new grants that became available from the Castle Studies Trust in 2013, it was decided to seek funds to pay for a geophysical survey of the ridge, using resistivity and magnetometer. This bid was successful and OJT Heritage was engaged to carry out the work in the late spring of 2014, which in the event was delayed by the wetness of the spring and the need to raise additional funds from Historic Scotland to enable a complete coverage of the ridge with both gradiometer and resistivity survey. Thus the survey could not be completed until the autumn when the rank vegetation died down and the site was again accessible for survey.

# SITE DESCRIPTION

## THE MOTTE AND BAILEY

Tibbers Castle occupies a long narrow promontory that forms part of the river terrace on the W of the River Nith, with which it is parallel, about 1km SE of Drumlanrig Castle. The castle comprises a motte (inner bailey) and two other baileys (outer and outermost), one extending beyond the other along the ridge, over a distance of c330m from NNE to SSW by a maximum of 85m transversely (Figs 7, 8 and 21). Each of the baileys is c100m in length and about 1 acre (0.4ha) in extent, which matches the extent of the castle that is described in 1541 (see Introduction and documentation above). The reduced earthworks of the two baileys may be traced in the woodland fringe that covers the sides of the ridge, and although modern ploughing has flattened out the ramparts of the baileys that cut across the ridge itself, the banks and external ditches may still be traced. Modern plantation banks have modified the earthworks, especially on the E, where they inter-digitate with the rampart, while on the W the plantation bank runs along the interior of the ridge about 10m E of the

rampart, which is best-preserved on this side. Indeed the rampart still stands to as much as 1m in height at the W end of the outer of the two baileys. Here, it is as much as 9.3m in thickness and rises to a mound at the butt end. The rampart on the W, which is now covered by woodland, is slighter at 4.6m in thickness and up to 0.5m in height externally. The ditch of the outermost bailey is some 20m across and very shallow as a result of modern ploughing. The inner of the two baileys visibly steps up from the outer one. The intervening ditch measures about 14m in breadth, is once again quite shallow as it survives in the ploughed field, and is set forward some 8–10m metres in front of the rampart, which is spread to some 15m in thickness. A large dump of spoil that is visible down slope from the W end of the ditch may be from its excavation, supplemented by weathering. At its E end the rampart across the ridge is reduced to nothing short of a terrace that marks the E side. There has been much dumping of clearance; it is possible that there was an entrance or causeway at this end. The ramparts along the sides of the bailey are of similar size to those of the outermost bailey, ranging from 3.4m to 5.5m in thickness and up to 0.5m in height.

Fig 7 View of outer bailey from the south showing the rise of the rampart. DP192495





Fig 8 Site plan of the motte and bailey castle. GV006223

The motte is formed by the cutting of a deep ditch, c23m in breadth by c5m in depth, across the nose of the promontory, and by the scarping of the sides; the spoil from the excavation of the ditch is visible as mounds at the end of the ditch to the WNW and

ESE and there is evidence that the ditch extended along the ESE of the motte, with a low counterscarp bank visible along this side with a spoil dump at its NNE end.



## THE STONE CASTLE

The top of the motte, which measures around 44m transversely from NE to SW by 27m from SE to NW, is surmounted almost entirely by the ruinous stone walls of a late 13th century castle of enclosure. The castle enclosure or inner bailey is formed by straight walls which run parallel to the edges of the scarp and built-up quadrilateral motte-top, the corners of which are extended in rounded bulges to accommodate round towers at each corner of the enclosure. The exterior enclosure walls measure 11.6m on the SW side, 26.8m on the NW, 14.5m on the NE and 25.4m on the SE between the corner towers, with the courtyard internally measuring 35.4m diagonally from NNW to SSE and 34.6m diagonally from WSW to ENE. A narrow shelf of ground, varying from 5.8m at the entrance to between 2.5m and less than 1m around the sides and rear, surrounds the base of the walls prior to the motte-side falling away.

The main entrance to the castle is located in the S corner of the enclosure wall on the SW side of the castle, fronting onto the aforementioned ditch. An earthen abutment for a bridge, connecting motte and baileys, projects from the SW side of the ditch opposite the entrance. The SW enclosure wall is formed by three rounded towers connected by two short stretches of connecting wall, each measuring c2.8m in thickness. The entrance gateway, measuring 2.3m wide, is set within the right-hand stretch of connecting wall, flanked immediately to the right by the SSE tower of the castle (Fig 9) and to the left by (what appears as) a blank rounded 'tower' projection in the centre of the SW wall, measuring c8m in breadth and at its deepest point over 6m thick, leaving only c1.4m of connecting enclosure wall between this projection and the WSW round tower. The entrance is elevated some 1.5m above the level of the external ground shelf at the S corner of the castle, with access to the entrance presumably provided by a drawbridge or structure which connected with a bridge across the ditch, any evidence for which is now lost (Fig 11). The gateway was defended by a portcullis, the squared slots for which were visible on either side of the entrance passage (Fig 10). Behind it was the return for a door stop, the dressed stones of which had been ripped out.



Fig 9 SE tower, showing the sloping plinth (see also Fig 22). DP151860



Fig 10 Portcullis slot on W side of entrance. DP151866



Fig 11 Castle mound looking north from the projecting abutment on the opposite side of the ditch from the motte, showing the entrance. DP151832

Within the castle enclosure the buildings are located along the entire NW side of the courtyard, with a well in the yard to the ENE, itself seemingly within a small enclosure or building. The arrangement of these buildings shows there to be at least two phases of development within the courtyard, the form of which cannot be fully explained by the evidence surviving today – the remains of the walls are scant, surviving largely as low rubble mounds which are robbed and very overgrown. Only the occasional section of facing or dressed stone survives to demonstrate any character. Two primary walls running from WNW to ESE form good right angles with, and appear to be bonded into, the main NW enclosure wall, suggesting they belong to the same phase and

formed buildings within the N (annotated ‘Kitchens’ on plan) and SW (annotated ‘Chamber’ on plan) corners of the courtyard. Some further evidence of form is found in the remains of these putative buildings; the WNW–ESE wall of the Chamber turns a right angle to evidence a SSW return which (if complete) would have returned close to the W side of the entrance gateway, and in the Kitchen building, there is a significant and sudden depression in the ground surface at the NW end which suggests that a basement was located at this end of the building. It is suggested on the basis of these observations that the range was divided by the two primary walls into three, comprising the Chamber, Great Hall (annotated on plan) and Kitchens of the castle.

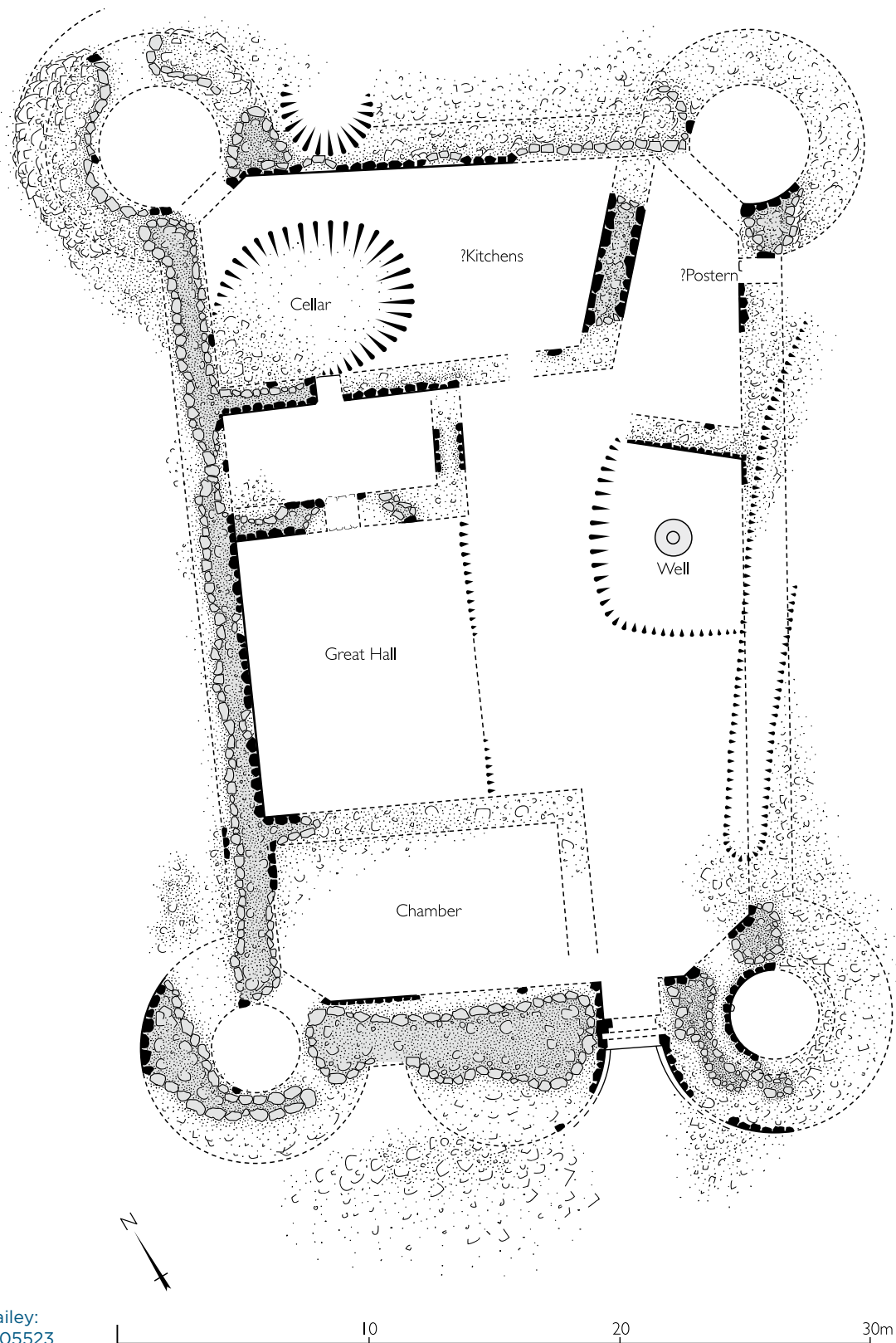


Fig 12 Plan of inner bailey:  
the stone castle. GVO05523



Fig 13 Chamfered opening from the 'ante-chamber' to the Great Hall. DPI51875

The possibility of second phase development within the buildings of the courtyard is evidenced first by the walls which form the small 'ante-chamber' which abuts on the north the WNW-ESE wall of the Kitchen and secondly by the oddly angled wall which returns this same WNW-ESE wall to the NE curtain wall.

The walls of the ante-chamber do not appear to tie into the stone coursing of either the NW curtain wall or the WNW-ESE building which they abut – suggesting that this chamber might be a later addition and in turn suggesting the present form of the 'Great Hall' as identified on the RCAHMS plan may be, at least partially, a second phase redevelopment. Evidence of a doorway linking this ante-chamber with the Kitchen building remains *in situ*, though the dating of this feature to the first or second phase is not possible – it could be an insertion made at the time of the ante-chamber addition; equally, it could be a doorway that led to a first phase building or to the courtyard. The WNW-ESE wall of the ante-chamber is pierced midway by an opening with a chamfered quoin (Fig 13), indicating an entrance to the Great Hall in a secondary phase. The heavily robbed nature of this part of the castle makes accurate assessment of the few surviving ground level remains difficult.

The skewed wall which sits at the E end of the Kitchen building offers firmer evidence for second phase development of the courtyard interior. This wall is thicker than any other wall within the courtyard, measuring c1.5m thick compared with the c1m thickness of the wall it adjoins and the c1.2m thickness of the walls of the chamber. The angle at which this wall sits, when projected to meet the enclosure wall, suggests that it might overlap with the corner formed between the enclosure wall and the wall across the front of the round tower (see Fig 12). It is also not evident why this wall sits at such an odd angle within the courtyard; while the two walls which it joins together are not parallel, this mis-alignment is relatively slight and the skewed wall does nothing to compensate for this – indeed, it forms a particularly awkward corner with the NE curtain wall for a reason that is not clear with the remaining evidence.

The round towers of the castle sit on the SSE, NNW, ENE and WSW corners of the quadrilateral enclosure. According to the surviving evidence, the tower to the SSE may have been slightly larger than the others and it remains the best surviving; the others exist largely as rubble mounds with only occasional facing stones surviving *in situ*. The SSE tower has surviving evidence to demonstrate the form of two levels within its interior; entering through the courtyard level entrance (evidenced by stones of the right door jamb *in situ*) the ground floor chamber appears to have measured c4.2m across the circular interior – it is not clear whether the chamber was entirely round or if it had a flat face across the entrance. The walls of the tower at this level measure c2.5m thick, allowing for the possibility of intra-mural stairs, although that there is no surviving evidence for these. The SSE tower also had a round basement chamber, measuring 3.5m across, with roughly half of the stonework – good quality, squared ashlar facing stone (Fig 14) – surviving *in situ* around the courtyard side of the chamber's circumference (the outward facing side may have been deliberately removed during the dismantling of the castle). The depth of this basement is accommodated partially within the change in ground level between the courtyard and the external motte-top, with the SSE tower sitting

atop a plinth level which rose to a significant height at this corner of the castle. This is evidenced in the SSE corner by the sloped coursing of the tower stonework adjacent to the entrance, and again in the NNW and WSW corners, where the thickness of the walls would appear to be large enough to accommodate a sloped plinth course around parts of the tower bases.

The towers to the NNW and WSW corners of the enclosure appear to have been accessed from within courtyard buildings, while those to the SSE and ENE seem to have entrances directly onto the courtyard and have not been internalised within other structures. In those towers to the ENE and NNW, the ground floor chambers appear to have been (roughly) 5/6ths round, with a flat wall across the face of the entrance, and in the NNW tower, there is evidence in the form of facings for a door in this flat wall connecting the tower chamber with the interior of the NW building (Fig 12).

The ground floor chamber of the WSW tower appears to have been notably smaller than the equivalent chambers in the other towers: 3.5m, as opposed to 4.2m (SSE) or c5m (NE & NNW), and the ground floor chamber of this tower may have been entirely round – similar to the equivalently sized, round basement chamber in the SSE tower. The condition of this WSW tower base at inner courtyard level (which would have been accessed from within the SW building) is such that the form is unclear; there is no surviving evidence for a door connecting the chambers within the building and tower, and if the tower chamber was indeed entirely round, this might suggest that this lowest chamber might have been accessed from the floor above (as also seems to have been the case within the SSE).



Fig 14 Basement of SSE tower. DP151827



Fig 15 View of inner bailey showing the millstone capping of the well within the terraced area of the well house, and the walls of the SW chamber beyond. DP151841

At the centre of the SE wall there remains evidence for a well house projected off the wall into the courtyard, enclosing a still-extant well, capped with a gridded millstone (Fig. 15). The foundation of the NE wall of this well house survives, while a slight shelf runs around the remaining two sides suggesting where walls previously sat. A question remains about whether these walls were stone and of the same thickness/construction as that to the NE (this is the most heavily robbed area of the castle, so their complete loss is entirely possible) or, whether there is the possibility that the size of the NE well house

wall was much thicker than the two lost walls and also related in some way to the angled wall at the ESE end of the NW courtyard building.

Within this small area to the ENE corner of the courtyard (bounded by the well house, NW building and ENE tower) there has been a postern gate through the SE enclosure wall immediately adjacent to the corner tower. This is evidenced by two of the largest, best-preserved ashlar blocks within the castle forming the postern's left return through the enclosure wall.

# THE GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

(extracted from O'Grady 2015)

RCAHMS commissioned Oliver O'Grady (OJT Heritage) to undertake resistance and flux-gate gradiometer surveys at Tibbers Castle in the spring of 2014. The aim was to find out by non-invasive means if geophysical analysis could reveal anything relating to the use of the two baileys and the area beyond.

The drift geology comprises fluvial-glacial deposits (gravel, sand and silt), which are superficial deposits formed up to 3 million years ago in the Quaternary Period in an environment previously dominated by Ice Age conditions. These deposits overlie the Carron Basalt Formation / Olivine-basalt, which is igneous bedrock formed approximately 271 to 299 million years ago in the Permian Period (British Geological Survey [www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk)). Variable depth of the glacial gravels and till is common with igneous dykes closer to the surface at specific locations. This proved to be the case here. The presence of igneous geology disrupted the flux-gate gradiometer survey in the area of the outermost bailey, but this was not a constraint encountered within the outer bailey where the drift geology or fluvial-glacial deposits were presumably deeper.

The resistance survey used an RM15 advanced Geoscan resistance meter with a PA5 probe frame and 0.5m separated parallel probes. Sample density was 1m x 1m and survey grids 20m square. Data processing using Geoplot involved background removal using *despike* and *highpass* filter functions followed by the application of an interpolation algorithm. Flux-gate gradiometer survey was undertaken using a Bartington Grad-601 dual sensor. The sample density was 1m x 0.25m with 20m square survey grids. The gradiometer survey was 17,230m<sup>2</sup> in area and covered the entire bailey field, as did the resistivity survey (Figs 17 and 18). The gradiometer fieldwork was undertaken during spring in bright conditions after heavy rain, and the resistance survey was undertaken in autumn in dry overcast conditions.

## THE RESULTS

What is presented here is a summary of the full results (O'Grady 2015). The geophysical surveys provided valuable new information about the extent and possible character of archaeological remains within the medieval bailey enclosures at Tibbers Castle, particularly at the north end of the geophysical survey area, known as the outer bailey. Despite geological constraints, results from the resistance and gradiometer surveys have also complemented each other well and identified a concentration of archaeological remains within the outer bailey.

Key new findings included the identification of two possible ditches (Figs 19 and 20, anomalies 1, 8, m5, m7, m10) that appear to cross the outer bailey and are potentially associated with two inner banks (anomalies 19, m14). The lack of recognisable surface earthworks relating to these features is noteworthy and may be accounted for by the action of post-medieval agricultural activity and the potentially small size of the features (though at least anomaly 1 may indicate a feature approximately 4m wide). The dating of these enclosures or defensive works will require further comparative analysis with other medieval baileys and physical inspection by excavation. It is worth noting that the ditch anomalies do appear to respect the area of other anomalies that are indicative of possible building remains in the outer bailey. This would seem to imply that these features are collectively related to the medieval bailey.

Readings indicative of possible building platforms (Figs 19 and 20, anomalies 3, 5, 6, 12, m1) were also located within the north end of the outer bailey by both the resistance and gradiometer data. These may represent fragmentary foundations for timber buildings, such as small halls and other lesser structures that may have been associated with ancillary settlement, and craft-working areas that supported the main keep, such as workshops, barns or housing for men-at-arms.



Fig 16 Oliver O'Grady and William Wyeth carry out geophysical survey. DP192524

In the outermost bailey igneous geology has obscured a large section of the gradiometer results. Nonetheless useful new findings have included a possible roadway (Figs 19 and 20; anomalies 20, m20) that could be traced from the outer bailey to the south-west extent of the survey area. At the western and southern end of the outermost bailey concentrations of discrete low resistance globular anomalies may indicate a

wide spread of densely positioned pits, which are potentially significant indications of occupation activity. The possibility that these could be the remains of tree bowls cannot be discounted, although none of the 18th and 19th century estate plans or 19th century OS maps show any woodland planted across the site except along the sides of the ridge and along lines of the ramparts in 1820 (Fig 4b).



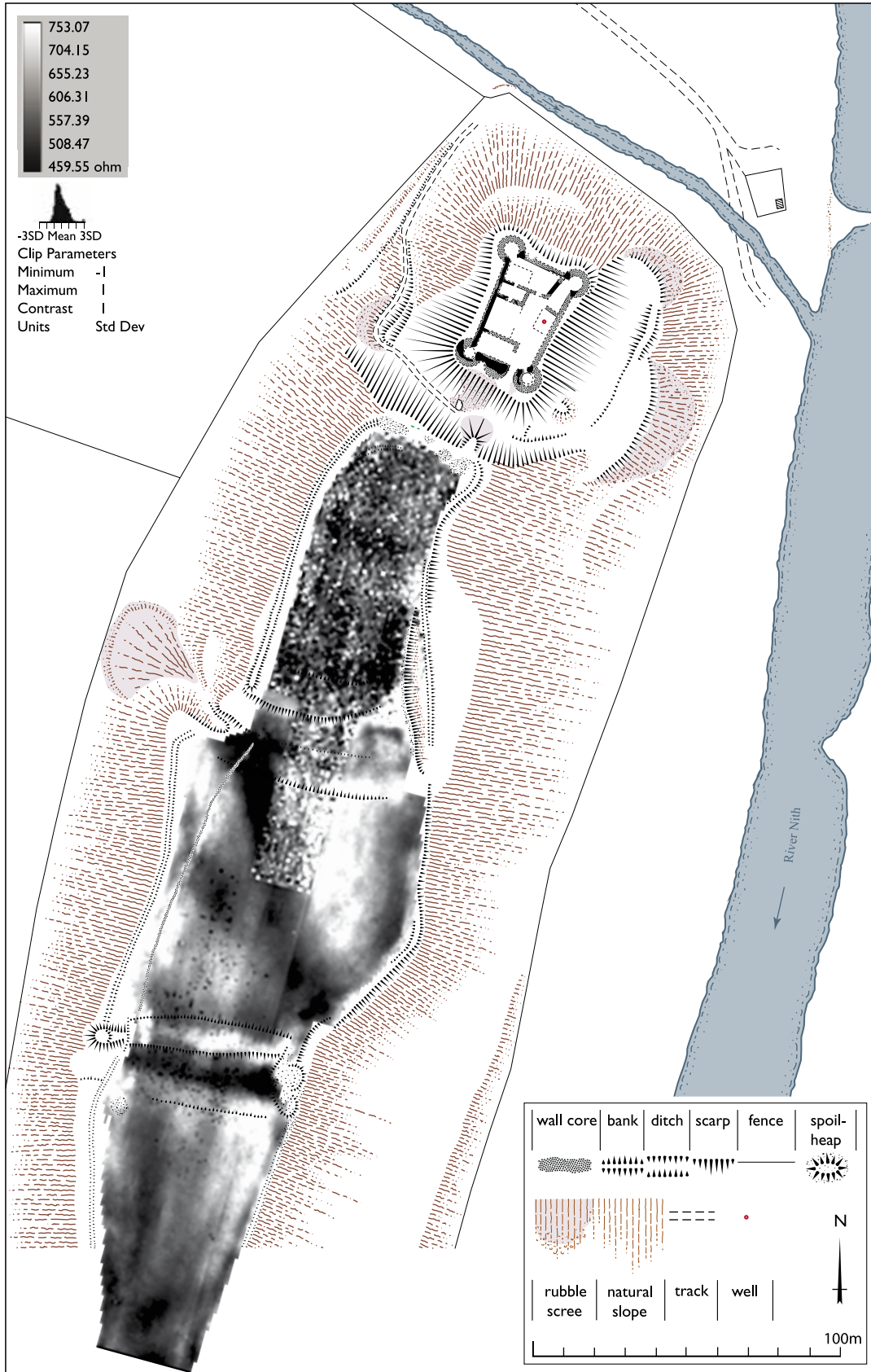


Fig 17 Resistivity survey. GV006069

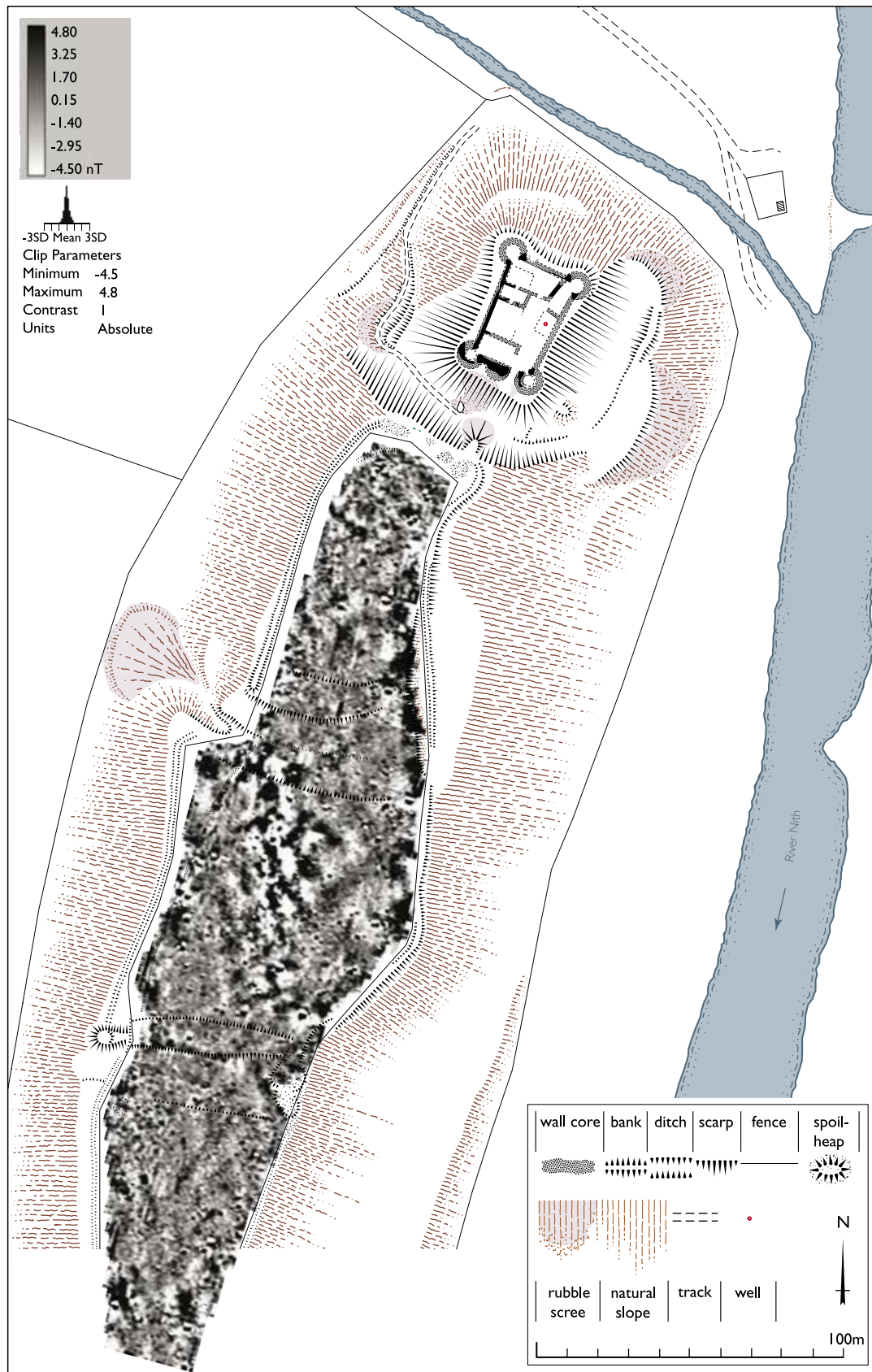


Fig 18 Magnetometer Survey. GV006074

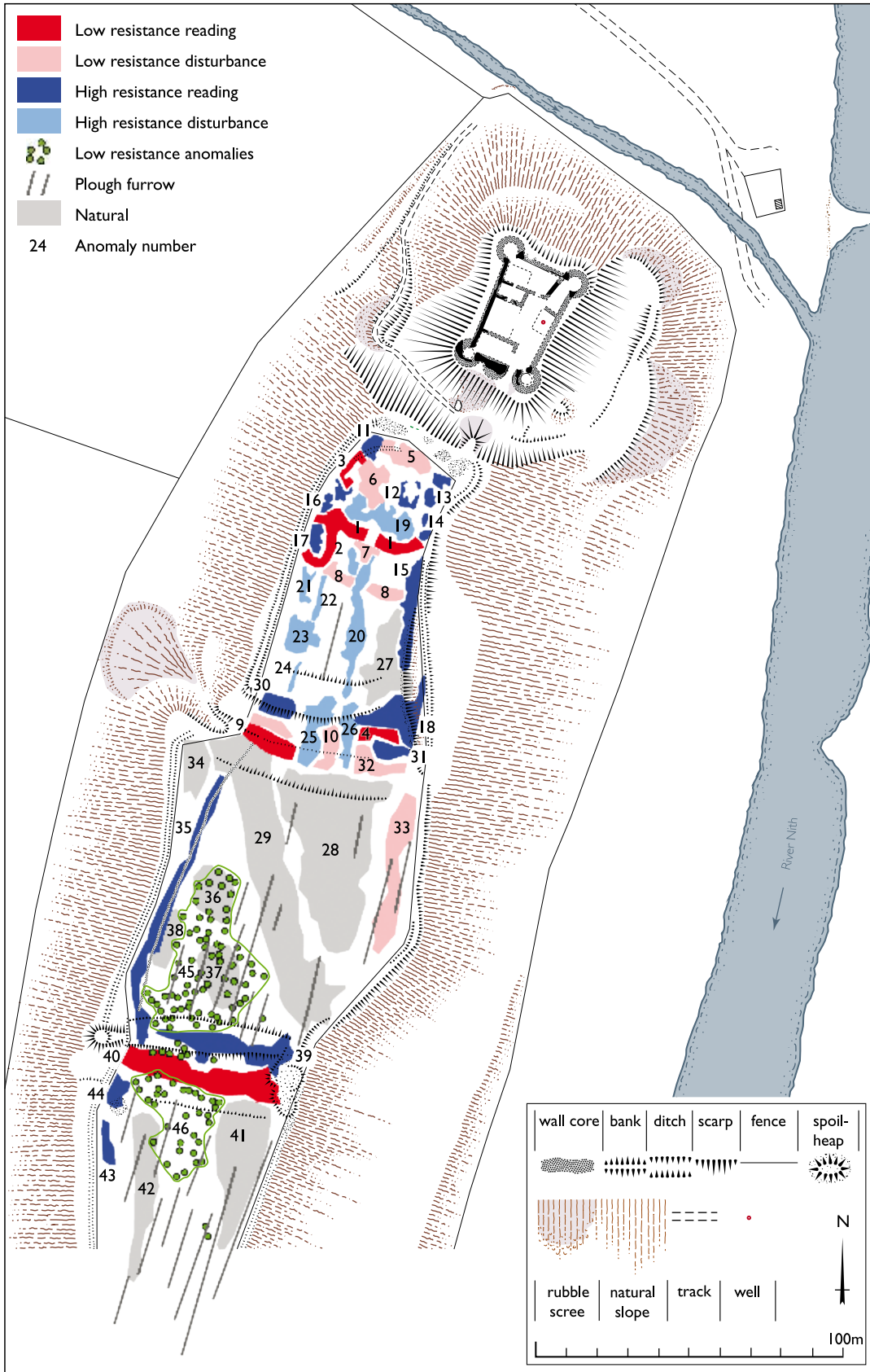


Fig 19 Resistivity interpretation. GV006071

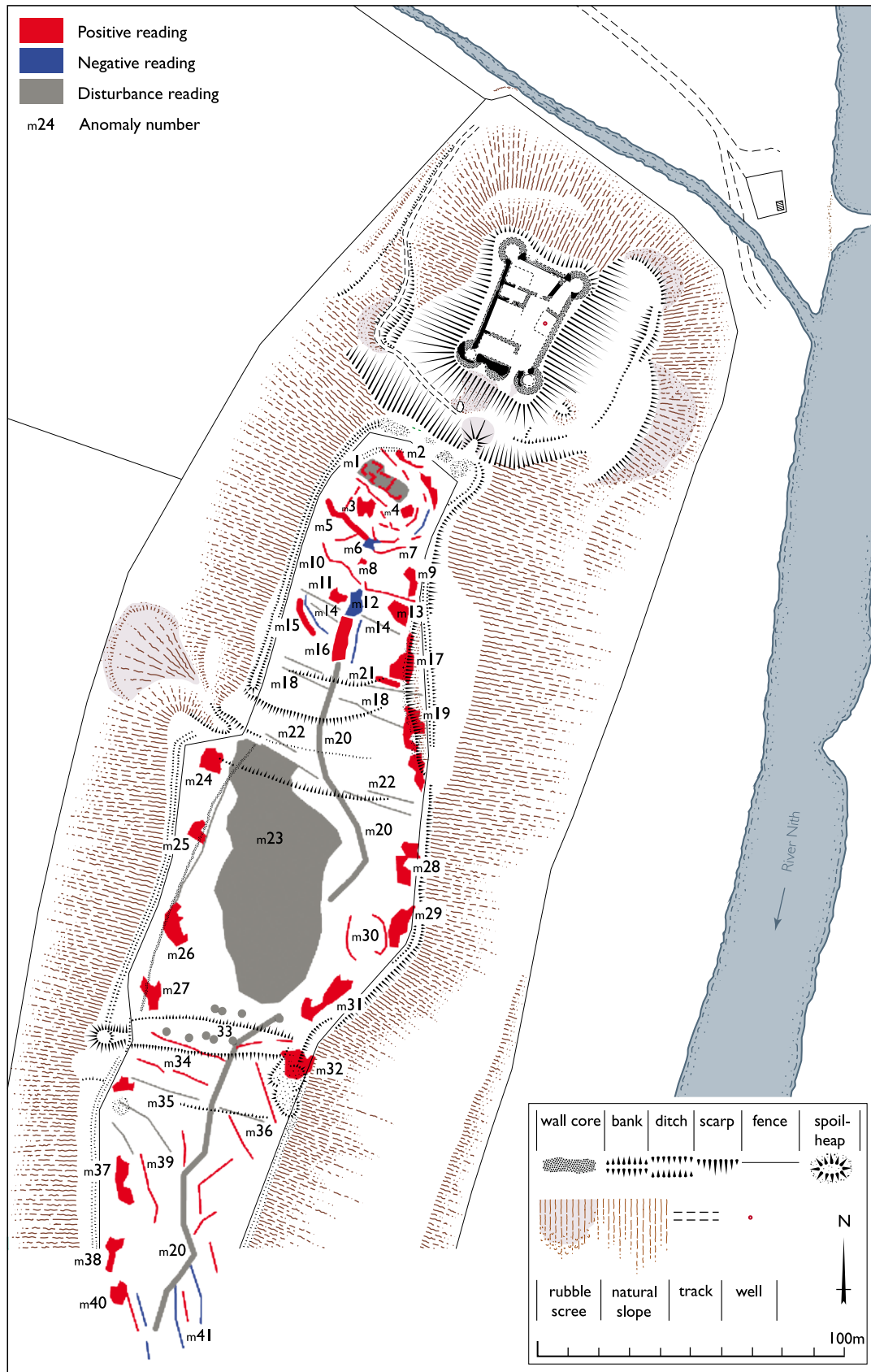


Fig 20 Gradiometer interpretation, full site. GV006072

## DISCUSSION

This castle, like many others, evolved over the medieval period. That it started as an earthwork and timber defended structure comprising a motte and bailey appears to be the conclusion that may be drawn from an analysis of the present arrangements, and the documentation that refers to 'le mote'. However, appearances can be deceptive.

The key finding of the geophysical survey for the history of the castle is that there is a primary bailey of less extensive area that includes within it what appear to be rectangular timber structures, especially towards the west side. This earlier bailey was entirely invisible on the ground at the date of survey, and although the ditch was visible from the air as a cropmark on the evidence of aerial photographs taken in 1975 by John Dewar it was not recognised until now. This suggests that there was an earlier phase of bailey of smaller extent that was superseded by the larger pair of successive ditched outworks, each of similar extent, as the ambitions of the occupants expanded in the 14th century following the construction of the stone castle.

This type of bailey or enclosure may be seen at the second Lochmaben Castle, while at Morton Castle not far from Tibbers in Nithsdale, there is a gap of 45m between the 14th century stone castle and the great ditch that encloses the promontory site on which the stone castle sits that is either from an earlier phase or an outwork of the stone castle. It has tended to be assumed that stone castles had stone-defined outer baileys, but this is a presumption. The outworks at Lochmaben have been variously explained as park boundaries or the location of a 'pele toun' (RCAHMS 1997, 204-5). Such a use for an area adjacent to a castle to secure an adjacent settlement provides an alternative interpretation for the outermost bailey at Tibbers, which may be what is referred to as the 'Peilldykes' in 1593.

The spread of pits across the outermost bailey, the ditch and beyond does suggest the possibility that the function of the pits is post-occupation, but it will require further analysis to resolve. However, these features are evident on both the resistivity data and as cropmarks, and their size and the sharpness of definition suggests they may be archaeological in origin rather than tree pits.

The south ramparts and ditches of the two baileys are substantial earthworks as they cut across the promontory, despite being reduced by modern ploughing, and beg certain questions about the scale of the ramparts along the sides of the ridge. The latter do not appear to be as substantial and certainly lack ditches of comparable size, although on the west of the ridge this is mitigated by the steepness of the slope, but the slope is less dramatic on the east and would have required a substantial rampart to defend. There is, however, a sharply defined terrace at the east return of the outer bailey (Fig 21), but nothing of much note along the outermost bailey. Since 18th and 19th century estate maps suggest that there was rig cultivation of this side of the site and that this cultivation did not respect the eastern side of the baileys, it may have led to the ramparts and ditches being reduced.

Parallels for earthwork castles that were developed into stone-built enclosure castles are surprisingly hard to find, and building *de novo* is more common, as at Inverlochty, Highland, or Kinclaven and Caisteal Dubh, both in Perth and Kinross. However, the reuse of mottes for towers does occur of which Duffus is well known, while recent survey at Invershin and Proncy mottes in Sutherland by RCAHMS have shown that stone towers and other buildings may be built on the tops of mottes in the late medieval period.

The stone castle on the motte is a well-developed castle of enclosure with corner towers which in two cases were incorporated in the adjacent buildings, in a similar fashion to the arrangements at Inverlochty and Lochindorb castles. The entrance is well defended with a portcullis in front of a gate. However, it is not clear how the portcullis was managed since there is no sign of a winding house. Within the enclosure, the buildings arranged along the west side show signs of rearrangement and evolution, consonant with an occupation of c250 years. Unlike many castles occupied in the late medieval period, no major new tower appears to have been built, which was also true of the structural history of Auchen Castle, which the Maitlands also possessed.



Fig 21 Terrace on the east side of the outer bailey marking the line of the rampart looking south. DP192505

## CONCLUSION

Overall this survey work has changed our perception of Tibbers Castle. The idea that there was a stone castle of enclosure that played a role in the Wars of Independence and occupied a motte, with a bailey beyond, may now be questioned. The two baileys along the ridge to the south are secondary to an earlier ditched enclosure, which the geophysics suggests contains rectangular buildings. The motte may, in the form it now appears, be a creation of the Siward rebuilding of the castle, and the baileys, or 'Peilldikes', protected space for other activities such as a market, reminiscent of the outworks at the later castle of Lochmaben. The geology has precluded satisfactory results from the outermost bailey and little more may be learned without recourse to excavation.



Fig 22 Arrow-shaped stop at the base of the chamfered stonework of the entrance opening. DP151880

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