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CAMBRIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECTS LTD.

# **Chepstow Castle Middle Bailey Excavations, Monmouthshire**

Archaeological Excavation



Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd

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CAP Report No. 235

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION**

**Chepstow Castle Middle Bailey  
Excavations, Monmouthshire**

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CAP Report No: 235

Date: May 2003



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## **Non Technical Summary**

*This report results from work undertaken by Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd (CAP) for CADW, at Chepstow Castle, Monmouthshire. The report draws upon the excavation of a trench that was situated in the north-east corner of the middle bailey within Chepstow Castle.*

*The field excavation examined the site for the presence of a latrine shaft beneath the riverside wall that was causing its collapse, and to identify if the remains of the latrine house and porter's lodge behind the curtain wall survived. Finally the total excavation within the line of a new cliff wall set back from the present example.*

## **Introduction**

### **Location and scope of work**

In January 2003 Cambrian Archaeological Projects (CAP) carried out an archaeological excavation within the north-eastern corner of the middle bailey of Chepstow Castle, Monmouthshire (Fig 1) for Rick Turner Inspector of Ancient Monuments for CADW.

Rick Turner arranged the excavation following the discovery by engineers working on cliff stabilisation, that the cliff side boundary wall had been undermined and there was an arch-shaped crack in the wall. The engineers could not progress with their work until the wall has been dismantled following an archaeological excavation. Chepstow Castle is situated at NGR ST 533 941.

### **Geology and topography**

Chepstow Castle lies on a lengthy Carboniferous limestone promontory on top of tall cliffs overlooking the river Wye (Fig 1). The site of the excavation is located within the north-eastern corner of the Middle Bailey (Fig 2). The topography of land within the Middle Bailey slopes gently away to the north and north-east. The Middle bailey is situated between the Lower Bailey to the east and the Great Tower and Gallery to the west.

The underlying solid geology of the village comprises Tournaisian & Viséan ("Carboniferous Limestone Series") of Carboniferous age.

### **Archaeological and historical background**

The earliest fortification at Chepstow Castle (possibly constructed on the orders of William Fitz-Osbern) was constructed between the two rock-cut ditches that utilised the highest point and the two natural fissures, one in front of the great tower and the other still visible as the ditch of the upper bailey. Within the new castle the great tower was constructed using local stone and re-used stone and tile from the nearby Roman town of Caerwent. Chepstow Castle remained in royal hands until about 1115, when Henry I granted the lordship to Walter Fitz-Richard of Clare. In 1189 William Marshal found himself in possession of an old, outmoded castle, which may have

been little altered since the late eleventh century. Around 1190 work started on the lower bailey defences with the construction of the round tower gateway and curtain walls.

A second line of defence was created between the lower and middle baileys. Two round towers were constructed, one to the south at the junction with the lower bailey curtain wall and one alongside a simple arched gateway close to the riverside cliff. The defences of the lower and middle bailey were completed and the upper bailey walls were constructed with taller walls and a rectangular tower. Gilbert continued to add to the castle until his death in 1241, no male heirs could take the responsibility of the castle so the estate was divided among the Marshal brothers, sisters and descendants, by 1248 Roger Le Bigod inherited the castle. In 1270 Roger died and his nephew took over the castle estate and constructed in 1280 the stone town walls. Roger Bigod made Chepstow his main residence and developed William Marshall's fortress into a palatial stronghold; it was around 1271-1304 that the suite of buildings were constructed along the cliff side wall of the lower bailey.

When Roger Bigod died the castle and estates passed to Edward I and then to Edward II, it was during his reign that further building programmes were implemented with repairs and garrisoning. The castle passed through several families' hands throughout the later Middle ages and Tudor period. Around 1440 the castle was upgraded with the insertion of modernised windows and fireplaces. A two-storey timber-framed range was also built on both sides of the middle bailey curtain wall, linking the two towers, and the south curtain wall was also rebuilt. Two doorjambs in the curtain wall on the cliff (north) side of the gateway suggest that there may have been a porter's lodge at this point. During the Civil War the castle remained Royalist until 1648 when the castle surrendered to Cromwell's troops. It was around this period that the south-west tower in the corner of the middle bailey, and the great gate house were filled with earth to sustain cannon. The curtain walls in the upper and middle baileys were reduced in height and thickened.

The castle continued to be garrisoned after the restoration of Charles II in 1660 and during the 18<sup>th</sup> century the lower bailey was converted into an industrial estate. The tower by the middle bailey gateway became a nail manufactory and in the 1760's a glass-blowers retort was built in the hall to make wine bottles for a Bristol merchant. Large ranges of timber-framed buildings, including a malting kiln, stable, and kennel, were also erected. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century the industrial works were removed and the eighth duke of Beaufort (d. 1899) cleared out the interior of the castle, laid out paths, erected rustic seats and planted trees. Conservation of the castle began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and in 1953 Mr. D.R. Lysaght put the castle and the port, or town, wall into state care (now CADW).

## **Aims and Objectives**

### **Field Excavation**

To see if there is a latrine shaft beneath the riverside wall which is causing its collapse. To identify if the remains of the latrine house and porter's lodge behind the curtain wall indicated by the door jambs surviving in the wall, survive and can be elucidated.

To totally excavate the line of the new cliff side wall set back from the present example.

## **Excavation Methodology**

### **Scope of Fieldwork**

The excavation consisted of a single excavated trench (Fig 3) that was 2.20 m in width, and 6.70 m in length.

Site director Kevin Trott and project assistant Jason Franklin undertook the evaluation under the overall direction of Kevin Blockley (MIFA). The trench was cleaned by hand and both north-west and south-east sections were recorded and drawn at a scale of 1:10. The trench was photographed using colour slide, black and white print film and digital photography.

All works were undertaken in accordance with both the IFA's *Standards and Guidance: for an archaeological desk-based assessment and archaeological evaluation* and current Health and Safety legislation.

### **Finds**

Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context.

### **Environmental evidence**

The fill of drain [6] consisted of a medium brown silty-sand (7); the nature of sealed drain deposits enabled some environmental sampling to take place. A sample of 5 litres was retained and sieved by Kevin Blockley. The findings were poor considering the nature of this deposit, no charred seeds or charcoal were found during analysis. The only material recovered was a small piece of medieval pottery, a sheep tooth and a bird claw.

### **Presentation of results**

This presentation outlines the results from the trench. An inventory of all contexts (which includes measurements not presented within the text) is presented in Appendix 1.

## **Excavation Results**

### **Soils and ground conditions**

Generally the site and weather conditions were good for January with occasional sleet/snow falls and hard frosts alongside biting cold northerly winds. The natural bedrock encountered was Carboniferous limestone.

## Distribution of deposits

The topsoil (1) comprised of a dark brownish sandy-silt and the subsoil (2) was a dark grey-brown sandy-clay both layers were consistently present in the trench although their thickness did vary slightly within the slope of the trench.

## Descriptions

### *The Excavated Trench* (Figs 3 - 4) (Plates 1-8)

#### Phase 1

A compact light brown silty-sandy loam (4) that had inclusions of charcoal and mortar was sealed by deposit (3). A small quantity of iron working residue was retained from this deposit along with fresh pieces of 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century pottery sherds and animal bone. Both deposits (3 & 4) butted the western face of wall [5]. This wall was constructed of limestone and sandstone rubble that was held together with a decayed sandy mortar. Only two metres of this structure was exposed its width (80mm) the thickness would suggest it is probably associated with a substantial structure.

The eastern face of wall [5] formed the western side of drain [6] that used the middle bailey east curtain wall as its eastern side. This drain was capped with limestone blocks except on the southern portion of the exposed area where a void or drain was uncovered (plate 4). This void that could plausibly be a drain, was constructed into the bailey wall, if this was a functional water course it would have drained into [6] that then in turn would have carried water into the middle bailey (based on levels obtained on the base of the drain). The fill of [6] consisted of a medium brown silty sand-loam (7), during the sampling and excavation of this deposit a bronze decorated buckle plate of 14<sup>th</sup> century style was recovered alongside animal and bird bones; 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century pottery sherds and a slate counter. A small section was cut through the wall [5] and drain [6] to establish any construction phasing; it was recognised that both the wall and the drain were built on a thick deposit of hard mortar [8]. The mortar was laid upon the natural bedrock and the middle bailey east curtain wall was constructed onto this mortar, alongside wall [5] and drain [6].

Situated to the north western part of wall [5] a narrow shallow gully was exposed [9] this gully used the part of the western face of wall [5] and the eastern face of buttress base [11]. The base used the natural limestone, and its fall (based on levels) ended within the exposed terminal portion suggesting the function was to retain water than divert it towards the cliff edge. The few finds retained from its dark grey sandy fill (10) consisted of animal and bird bone and a sherd of 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century pottery. A further gully [12] was exposed to the west of buttress [11], this gully used the western face of the buttress and a single set of mortared stones to form its eastern side. The western side utilised the steep incline of the natural limestone and where this was insufficient a course of mortared stones. The fall at the base of the gully indicated by the levels that it would have fed water towards the cliff edge unlike the gully [9] and drain [6]. The fill (13) consisted of



dark grey silty sand that contained two fragments of animal bone and three sherds of 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century pottery.

The Buttress [11] was exposed on the northern area of the excavated area. The structure was built of sandstone and limestone rubble and held together with a decayed yellow mortar. The structure measured 0.85m in width and a 1m portion was exposed. The position of this structure in relation to the cliff edge and within the excavated area would suggest that this feature could represent a wall buttress.

Within the southern portion of the trench an undulation within the natural bedrock a thin deposit of medium brown pea gritty sand was recorded (14), no finds were present within the exposed area suggesting that the deposit could represent an old land surface of possible medieval or earlier date.

### Phase 2

Situated at the north-eastern part of the trench sealed by layer (2) a dark-brown-grey silty-sandy loam deposit was encountered (3), this deposit contained large fragments of limestone and sandstone probably derived from wall [5]. The artifactual material retained from this deposit was considerable and represented a medieval demolition level that contained occupational debris that could be dated to around the 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### Phase 3

A dark grey-brown loose sandy-silt layer (2) was recorded under layer (1); the extent of this cultivation soil sealed the medieval deposits and features. The finds from this layer consisted of 17<sup>th</sup> century pottery sherds and glass alongside clay tobacco pipe fragments.

### Phase 4

The turf was hand cut to reveal a dark brown sandy-silt (1) that contained limestone Chipping's, roof tile, brick fragments and 10% rootlet incursion. The depth of this layer measured 0.25m and resembled a friable garden soil. Within the central part of this trench at a depth of 0.15m a small collection of Victorian coins were found in association with a bone handled knife, its plausible to associate these finds with the duke of Beaufort landscaping works.

## **Finds**

### **Dressed Stone**

A small assemblage of dressed masonry was found during the excavations within the middle bailey of the castle. Most of the dressed stone was found in medieval deposits.

## *Inventory*

1. Two slate fragments. Phase 4, topsoil.
2. Two reddish-purple sandstone roof slabs. Surviving length 180mm, width 170mm, and thickness 17mm. Phase 2 demolition deposit.
3. Rectangular block of reddish-green Devonian sandstone. Length 260mm, Width 132mm, Height 65mm. Phase 2, demolition deposit.
4. Small central fragment of fine siltstone honestone, displaying concave wear facets along three of the four sides. Surviving length 26mm, Width 10-14mm, Height 11-13mm. Phase 2 demolition deposit.
5. Large fragment of grey Carboniferous limestone column or moulding fragment. Surviving height 95mm, width 60mm. Phase 1, wall [5].
6. Slate disk or gaming counter. Diameter 18mm, Thickness 0.3mm. Phase 1, drain [7].

## **Medieval Pottery**

### *Paul Courtney*

The pottery is classified and dated according to the type series established by Vince for the 1973-4 excavations by Ron Shoesmith in Chepstow: A. Vince, 1991. The assemblage included both local wares and a range of regional ceramics, which presumably arrived by the shipping trade.

### Phase 4 Layer 2

#### *Local medieval*

*Ha1* Hand-made cooking pot (and pitchers) in fabric with oxidised cores and red to reddish yellow surfaces, Late 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century, 1 sherd.

*Hb2* Hand-made cooking pot in black fabric with fine inclusions, 13<sup>th</sup> century, 1 sherd.

#### *Local post-medieval*

*Hd* Lead glazed local earthenware, late 17<sup>th</sup>-early 18<sup>th</sup> century, 7 sherds.

#### *North Devon*

Gravel tempered glazed coarse-ware, late 16<sup>th</sup>-early 18<sup>th</sup> century, 2 sherds.

#### *Tin-Glazed ware*

Rim from dish with blue and white decoration, late 17<sup>th</sup>-early 18<sup>th</sup> century, 1 sherd.

*Frechen*

Sherd from Rhenish jug with mottled brown glaze and applied rosette decoration, 17<sup>th</sup> century, 1 sherd.

Phase 2 Demolition deposit

*Local (sandy micaceous) wares*

*Ha1* Handmade cooking pot (and pitcher) in fabric with oxidised cores and red to reddish-yellow surfaces, Late 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century, 11 sherds.

*Ha2* Hand-made jugs in similar fabric to Ha1, thin glaze with rouletting and hand-made horizontal lines, late 13<sup>th</sup> century, 4 sherds.

*Hb1* Hand-made cooking pot in light grey fabric, some surface oxidation on 2 sherds-5 sherds, late 12<sup>th</sup>-early 13<sup>th</sup> century, 5 sherds.

*Hk* Wheel thrown jugs with yellow oxidised surfaces thin glaze, 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century or later, 3 sherds.

*Vale of Glamorgan*

*Hg* Vale fabric (?Cardiff), wheel-thrown jugs, 13<sup>th</sup>-?15<sup>th</sup>, 1 sherd.

*Bristol wares (all hand made)*

*Jc* Ham Green jugs, Late 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century, 5 sherds.

*Ka* Ham Green cooking pot (oxidised), Late 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>, 1 sherd.

*West Country wares*

*Lb* Late 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>, West Wilts chert tempered cooking pot, knife finished base, 1 sherd.

Phase 1 Occupation layer (4)

*Ha1* Hand-made cooking pot in fabric with oxidised cores and reddish-yellow surfaces, Late 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>, 3 sherds.

Phase 1 Fill of Drain [6]

*Local*

*Ha1* Hand-made cooking pot in fabric with oxidised cores and reddish-yellow surfaces, Late 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>, 2 sherds.

*Ha2* Hand-made jugs in similar fabric to Ha1, thin glaze with rouletting and hand-made horizontal lines, late 13<sup>th</sup>, 1 sherd.

*Hk* Wheel-thrown jugs with yellow oxidised surfaces thin glaze, 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> or later, 1 sherd.

*Vale of Glamorgan*

*Hg* Vale (?Cardiff) wheel-thrown jugs, ?13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>, 1 sherd.

Phase 1 Fill of Gully [9]

*Local*

*Hal* Hand-made cooking pot in fabric with oxidised cores and red to reddish-yellow surfaces, Late 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>, 2 sherds.

*Bristol*

*Jb* Bristol Redcliffe ware jug, wheel-thrown, copper green glaze, Late 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>, 1 sherd.

**Post Medieval Pottery**

Layer 1 topsoil (phase 4) produced 24 sherds of post-medieval pottery. The sherds consisted of 20 Staffordshire cream wares, a single sherd of glazed red local earthen-ware, Bristol slip-ware and 2 flower pot fragments.

**Ceramic Tile**

*Paul Courtney*

One fragment of floor tile was found in demolition deposit 3 (phase 2) the tile displays bevelled edges in local fabric with reduced core and oxidised surfaces. Worn surface with no signs of decoration and only patches of whitish glaze remaining. In addition there was one small fragment of tile in an oxidised local fabric. Two fragments of peg tile were recovered from layer 4 (phase 4).

**Clay Tobacco Pipes**

A small collection of clay pipe fragments were retained from two layers (1 & 2). Layer 1 (phase 4) produced 24 plain stems of 19<sup>th</sup> century character alongside a bowl fragment with leaf decoration associated with a style seen throughout the period 1810-1850. A single plain stem and bowl with a large flat heel was also recovered, this can be attributed to the period 1660-1720. Layer 2 (phase 3) could be dated to the 17<sup>th</sup> century with 6 plain stems and two bowl fragments. The two bowl fragments are of a style dated to the period 1640-1660 and characteristic of a London style.

## **The Glass**

Three contexts produced window and vessel glass. The collection from layer 1 (phase 4) contained 4 clear and 3 green fragments of window glass, 3 vessel fragments 1 in brown and 2 in clear glass and waste fragments (1 green and 2 clear). Layer 2 (phase 3) contained two fragments of 18<sup>th</sup> century wine bottle glass. Demolition deposit 3 (phase 2) produced a single green window pane fragment, two green fragments of vessel glass and a clear (soda) goblet base. The goblet fragment derives from the base-rim, which is folded under at the base edge, to form a hollow rim (broken) a 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century date is considered based on parallels found in London (Tyson. 2000, G49. p. 66-8).

## **Iron Objects**

The iron work from the site is in poor condition. The iron objects consist of two medieval nails, five post-medieval nails, two studs and two hinge plate fragments. None of the iron objects has been X-rayed.

## **Inventory**

1. Four nails. Length 49mm. Square head 11x0.9mm. Layer 1 (phase 4).
2. Nail. Length 111mm. Square head 13x15mm. Layer 1 (phase 4).
3. Two studs. Length 31mm. Square heads 12x12.5mm. Layer 1 (phase 4).
4. Rectangular hinge plate. Length 80mm, width 34mm. Layer 1 (phase 4).
5. Trapezoidal hinge plate. Length 70mm, width (widest end) 50mm. Layer 1 (phase 4).
6. Nail. Length 49mm. Square head 21x14mm. Layer 3 (phase 2).
7. Nail. Length (broken) 20mm. Square head 24x18mm. Layer 3 (phase 2).

## **Copper Alloy**

The few copper alloy objects found in the excavations were in reasonably good condition with little surface pitting.

Leather dress fitting? (plate 9) Upper surface has moulded band of plain relief on outer curved edge and traces on the broken straight edge. Punched rusticated decoration covers the central portion of this piece and two perforations are present on the curved edge. Layer 1 (phase 4).

Decorated bronze buckle plate; (plate 10) upper surface engraved with zigzag ornamentation and has a hole at one end, which apparently attached the plate to a thin piece of leather. Fill of Drain [6] (phase 2), Length 43mm. Width 10mm. 14<sup>th</sup> century. (Shoemith. 1991, No 12 p. 147-8).

## Lead Items

The few lead items recovered from the excavation were in reasonably good condition.

A fragment of twisted widow lead (came). This example has a parallel found at Battle Abbey in East Sussex, England, consisting of a Type E, milled in a toothed mill, straight tooth marks about 1mm apart. Layer 2 (phase 3).

Fragment of crudely twisted and folded sheet. Layer 2 (phase 3).

Lead weight or counter. Diameter 21mm. Thickness 3mm, weight 11gm. Demolition deposit 3 (phase 2).

## Coins and Jetton

Four coins and a jetton (Plate 11 & 12) were found during the excavation.

Jetton (French?) *o*. The Chatel-Tournois in a field semee of small dots; all within a granulated inner circle; a border of upright strokes. *R*. A shield containing three fleur-de-lies on the left separated with a moulded line the lion (right). This famous type of the Chatel-Tournois, for more than two centuries ubiquitous on European coins, is, by its presentment of a mixture of ground plan and elevation, illustrative of one of those confusions which are a feature of medieval art. The Chatel-Tournois is a conventional representation of the town, castle, and church of Tours, which originated on money of the Ducal Abbots of St. Martain there. At this abbey was one of the most celebrated mints of the Middle Ages. There are minor differences in the treatment of the chatel type: sometimes in the direction of curtailment, but a general similarity is maintained. Here town-walls are given in ground-plan as three sides of a square with two round towers at the unenclosed side; in the centre rises the elevation of the church spire, crowned with a cross potent, perhaps that from the arms of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. In front of the town is the ground plan of an outwork. The style of the walls and towers are related to the final and stereotyped Chatel-Tournois that occur on the French regal money in the reign of Louis IX (1226-70), and survives as late as that of Charles VII (1422-61) Barnard, 1916, 110-11). Phase 1 (unstratified).

Penny (worn) 19<sup>th</sup> century. Layer 1 (phase 4).

Penny of Victoria: 1870. Layer 1 (phase 4).

Half-penny of Victoria 1875. Layer 1 (phase 4).

Half-penny of Victoria 1885. Layer 1 (phase 4).

## Animal Bone

Eight contexts produced 188 fragments of animal bone. A single bone handled knife was recovered from (phase 1) layer 1 (19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century style). The bone is in a good to fair condition and a few fragments display typical medieval butchery practices. A single burnt fragment of bone was recovered from deposit 3 (phase 2). Little further data can be recovered from a small assemblage of bone except for species identification.

Table 1

CONTEXT	1	2	3	4	5	7	10	13
Unidentifiable	7	0	44	2	4	4	1	2
Bird	3	0	8	1	1	4	1	0
Sheep	6	5	10	4	6	1	3	1
Cow	9	3	21	9	3	0	4	1
Horse	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pig	0	0	9	1	1	2	1	0
Badger	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Rat	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Fish	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0

### Shell

A small quantity of Oyster and clamshells were recovered from four contexts. The oysters were sorted into left valves, which tend to be saucer-shaped with external frilly growth shoots, and right valves which are typically flat and much smoother on the outer surface. Layer 1 (phase 1) produced three left valves and a single right valve, one of the left valves showed signs of infestation by a harbour thriving worm called *Pomatoceros triqueter*. A fragment from a right valve was also recovered from within the wall matrix [5] alongside a small clamshell (phase 1). Further small clamshells were recovered from contexts 3 (phase 2), 7 Drain fill (7) (phase 1) and Phase 1 occupation layer (4).

### Industrial

A single fragment of coal was found in layer 1 (period 4) alongside a piece of clinker.

### Iron working residues

Some 998gm of metalworking residues were recovered from the excavations. This material has been examined visually and a catalogue is given below. The metallurgical debris comes from Phase 1, layer 4. The residues can be classified into two types, and discussed below. The debris recognisably from iron smithing and is represented by fresh formless lumps suggesting this material is re-deposited.

### *Slag flows and prills*

There are a large number of flows and prills of dense slag, with a total weight of 926gm. None of this material is conventional tap slag. It has smooth upper surfaces and rippled lower surfaces, characteristic of having cooled on a bed of charcoal. The majority of these slags are small prills which could have formed in a smithing hearth. Some of the larger pieces, which are up to 25-30mm thick, may be a product of smelting and could have formed in the base of a furnace.

### *Smithing hearth cakes*

A single cake fragment of smithing slag with a characteristic plano-convex shape was recovered. This cake is a small fragment (72gm) from a larger piece and has charcoal trapped in the base, indicating that this was the fuel used. The small example has a small irregular prill of iron visible. All have slightly magnetic upper surfaces, from hammer scale not fully absorbed into the slag matrix, and heavy secondary corrosion products.

It is clear that iron smithing was carried out on a significant scale somewhere in the near vicinity. The smithing concretions would initially have accumulated on the floor of the workshop and, from time to time, they would have been cleared out. Although these concretions indicate intensive activity, probably over a period of considerable time, only one smithing hearth slag cake was recovered. Each cake would represent perhaps a half or a full day's work. It is impossible to quantify the concretion debris with any precision.

The evidence for iron smelting is tenuous. Most of the slag flows could have been formed inside the smithing hearths. They may imply that bulk iron, still containing a high proportion of smelting slag, was being brought to the site as a raw material. The small quantity of hematite and some of the larger slag flows could be argued to indicate iron smelting, but the lack of furnace lining suggests that no smelting was carried out in the excavated area. The slag cake and a few slag flows contain entrapped charcoal, that this was a fuel used for smithing, a large piece of charcoal (0.4mm in width, by 25mm in thickness and 27mm in height) was also located within this context along with numerous flecks of charcoal.

## **Discussion And Interpretation**

### **Reliability of field investigation**

The overall findings of the excavation were informative in relation to the structural sequence of this area of the castle during the medieval period. The aims of the excavation failed to find a latrine shaft or to identify the structure associated with the two door jambs. The site was fully excavated and exposed and this work would not inhibit the proposed new cliff line wall to be constructed.

The excavation discovered a set of structural elements that relate to the period when the middle bailey east curtain wall was constructed. William Marshal added the middle bailey to the castle in



the late twelfth century as part of his complete remodelling of the castle's defences. It was during the construction of the east curtain wall that a thick deposit of mortar was used to level-out the natural slope of limestone. Onto this the east curtain wall was constructed and a structure associated with a stone capped drain followed during this construction phase 1. The buttress foundation and associated gullies could have been part of this phase of building based on the stratigraphical relationship and the pottery/metalwork dates. The demolition of the walled structure, and buttress is unclear in time scale but represents phase 2 activity, but the layer of soil sealing this demolition phase contained 17<sup>th</sup> century artefacts. It is possible that the two door jambs in the curtain wall are Tudor in date and may relate to the insertion of a pair of Tudor doors in the same wall. The excavation failed to identify any structural evidence to clarify the idea that this was part of the porter's lodge. Around the 17<sup>th</sup> century (phase 3) the curtain wall was thickened and the middle bailey tower was remodified to contain cannon. It is possible that the structures within the excavation area were demolished around the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The thick layer of topsoil (phase 4) that was removed during the excavation could be possibly associated with the eighth duke of Beaufort. The duke cleared the interior of the castle and laid out paths, erected rustic seats and planted trees; it may be that the surviving floor deposits associated with the 'porters lodge' were removed during the clearance of the grounds. It would be also hypothetical to suggest that around the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that someone sat under a set of nearby trees in the area of the excavation and lost some coinage and their bone handled knife during an evening picnic watching the sunset over Chepstow.

### **Overall interpretation**

The excavation revealed significant archaeological remains associated with the late 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> century phases of castle construction. The discovery of wall foundations and associated gullies/drain suggest medieval structures do survive in certain areas of the middle bailey. The metal working residues indicate smelting took place in the immediate environs. The animal bone, shell and pottery indicate domestic castle waste, with the loss of a few personal items. It is interesting to note that this material was not thrown over the cliff into the adjacent Wye River in the medieval period. It is plausible that rubbish was used to level-out the natural slope within the middle bailey. The successive sealing layers can be tentatively attributed to developments implemented in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **Significance**

The excavation revealed that this portion of the castle contains good archaeology, the exposed masonry was taken into consideration when the design of the new wall was implemented. Since January when the excavation took place the wall that was standing adjacent to the cliff and excavation area and a large part of the excavated area now lie under the waters of the river Wye.

## Acknowledgements

Thanks to; Kevin Blockley and Ifan Edwards for their help and advice during the compilation of this report and Jason Franklin for his assistance with fieldwork.

Also thanks to; Rick Turner at CADW, and the curatorial staff at Chepstow Castle who provided tea and heated room during the excavation breaks during the frequent snowfalls.

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**APPENDIX I:**  
**Context Register**

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## CONTEXT REGISTER

1	Topsoil
2	Subsoil
3	Demolition Deposit
4	Occupation Deposit
5	Stone Wall
6	Stone Capped Drain
7	Fill of [6]
8	Mortar Deposit
9	Gully
10	Fill of [9]
11	Stone Buttress
12	Gully
13	Fill of [12]
14	Pea-grit Deposit
15	Natural Bedrock

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Fig 01: General Site Location Plan

# Castle Ground Plan



Figure 02: Ground Plan of Chepstow Castle detailing excavation area

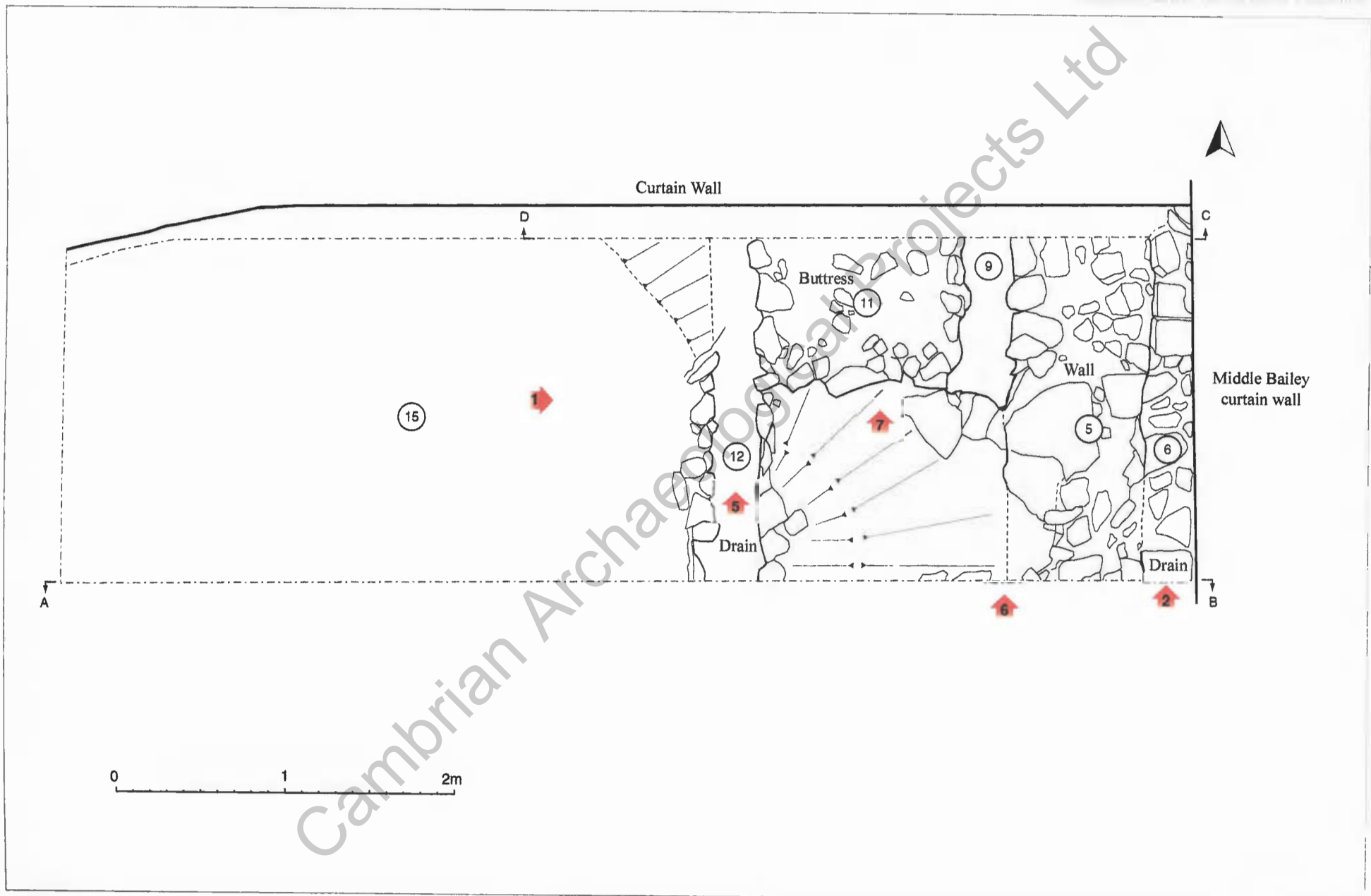


Figure 03 : Plan of Excavation Trench

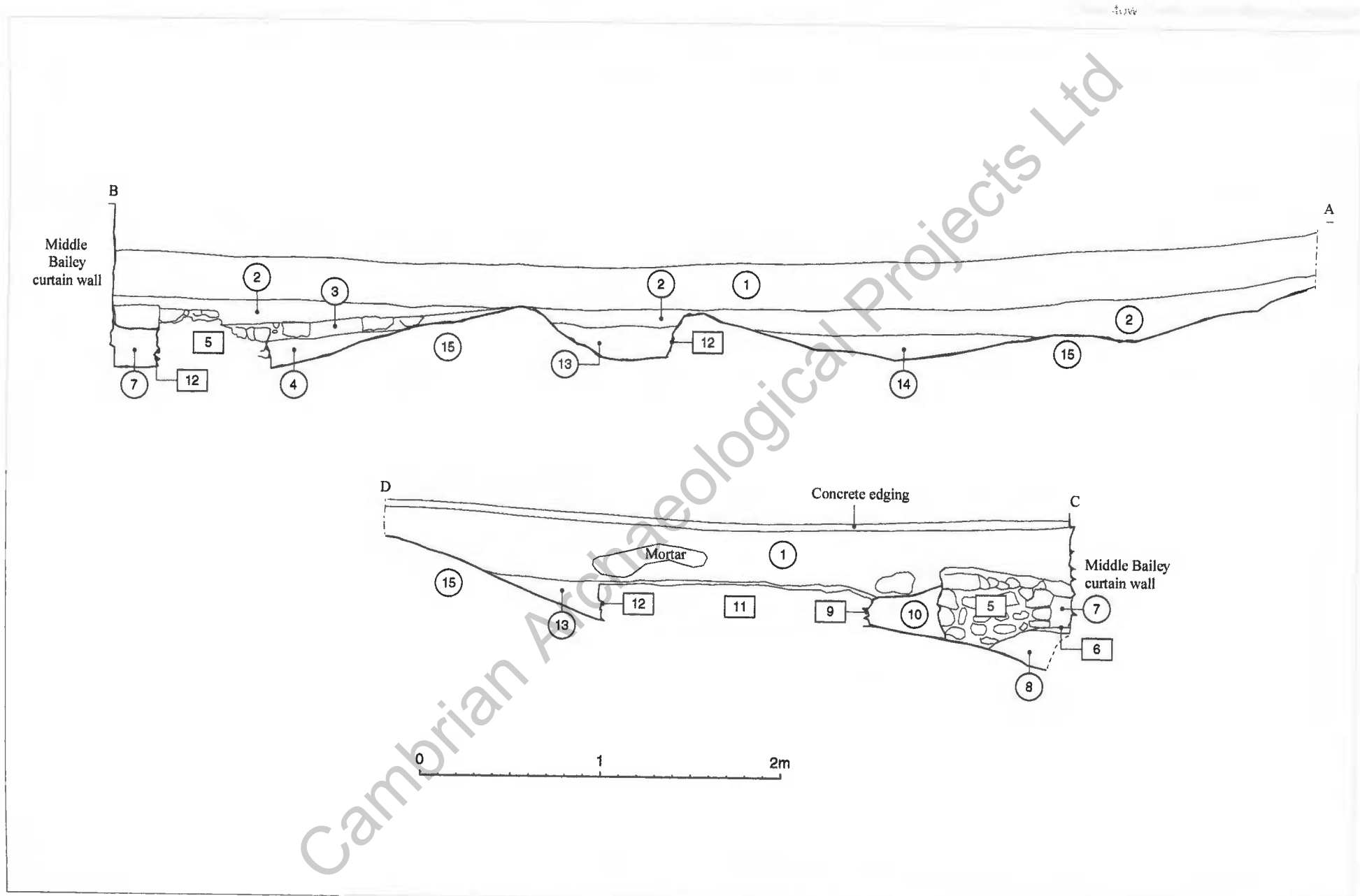


Figure 04: Section of Excavation Trench





Plate 01: View of excavated area looking east. Scales: 1m x 2m



Plate 02: Stone lined drain [6], looking north. Scale: 2m



Plate 03: Mortar deposit (8), looking east. Scales: 1m x 2m



Plate 04: drain [6], void in curtain wall, looking east. Scale 1m



Plate 05: Gully [12], looking north. Scales: 2m



Plate 06: Buttress [11], Gully [9], Wall [5] & Drain [6], looking north. Scale: 2m



Plate 07: Buttress [11], looking north. Scale: 1m



Plate 08: Mortar deposit [8], looking east, Scales: 1m x 2m

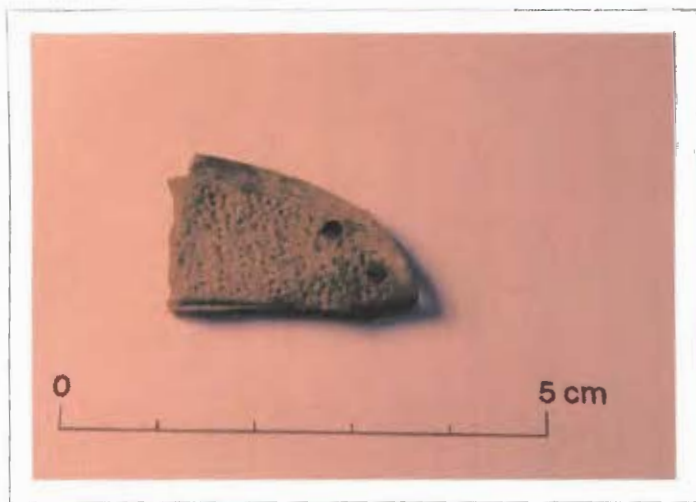


Plate 09: Dress Fitting?



Plate 10: Decorated Bronze Buckle Plate



Plate 11: Obverse View of Jetton



Plate 12: Reverse View of Jetton

# ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

**Chepstow Castle, Chepstow Museum, CADW**

Site Name: Chepstow Castle  
Site Code: CCMB/03/EXC  
PRN: 01173G  
NPRN : 95237  
SAM: MM003A  
Other Ref No: CAP Project No. 413  
NGR: ST 533 941  
Site Type: Medieval  
Project Type: Excavation  
Project Officer: Kevin Trott  
Project Dates: January 2003  
Categories Present: N/A  
Location of Original Archive: CADW  
Location of duplicate Archives: N/A  
Number of Finds Boxes: One  
Location of Finds: CADW/Chepstow Museum  
Museum Reference: N/A  
Copyright: CAP Ltd  
Restrictions to access: None