

**THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST**

## **Mold Castle and its Environs**



**CPAT Report No 882**

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Report for Mold and District Civic Society

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## Mold Castle and its Environs

### Introduction

- 1.1 Mold Castle occupies a prominent, tree-covered hillock, known as Bailey Hill (National Grid Reference SJ 235644), at the north-west end of the town of Mold in Flintshire, in Welsh, Yr Wyddgrug. Despite a long recorded history as the *caput* of the lordship of Moldsdale, remarkably little is known about the foundation of the castle nor of its form, and today it appears as no more than a wooded set of earthworks, immediately intelligible only to those with a working knowledge of medieval earthwork castles.
- 1.2 This paper has been prepared on behalf of the Mold Civic Society with the specific aim of pulling together what is known and can be deduced about the nature of the castle. It also attempts to establish a wider context for the castle in the brief increasingly articulated by landscape archaeologists and historians<sup>1</sup> that no castle functioned in isolation, and in the case of Mold this view is strengthened by the realisation that the castle and town are almost invariably considered together in the national archives of medieval date.

### The Castle

- 2.1 Mold Castle sits on top of a south-eastward bearing ridge of glacial gravel, overlooking the valley of the River Alyn which runs to the north and east. Strachan in 1890 claimed that Bailey Hill (otherwise Bryn y Beili) was 'a fine example of a sand and gravel esker, the most conspicuous "drift" feature in the neighbourhood', though more recent commentators have classed it simply as a glacial landform, one of a number of such undifferentiated mounds along the Alyn valley.<sup>2</sup> Its position is thus a commanding one (see Fig 1 and its relationship to the contour patterning), but this location may also owe something to the presence at a distance, yet not far away, of Bistre, which in Domesday Book was classed as one of Gruffydd ap Llywelyn's residences and thus a centre of royal power.<sup>3</sup> Mold Castle then could also be making a political statement.
- 2.2 The Norman lords of Moldsdale, the Montalts, built the castle at Mold, perhaps in the earlier 12<sup>th</sup> century, although a date as early as around 1093 has also been advanced, although this comes from a now generally discredited source. Sir John Lloyd favoured a date around 1100, while Carthcart King claims the first historical mention of the castle was in 1146 when it was captured by Owain Gwynedd, although the site must obviously have been rather older than this.<sup>4</sup> Assuming that early references to the name reflect the castle and not the town (see below), the fact that William fitz Hugh (who came into his inheritance about 1128) had become known as William de Muhald by the time of his death around 1141 suggests but does not confirm the existence of the castle by then.<sup>5</sup>
- 2.3 The names of the castle, town and their Norman lords are interwoven. Sir John Lloyd considered that the Norman conquerors would have termed the hill *Mont haut* (in Old French) which in Latin would have become *Mons Altus* and which was gradually transformed into *Mohault*, *Moald* (in 1284) and finally Mold (in 1561). William de Muhald was also referred to as *de Monte Alto*, and the name continued to appear in government records for several generations. Ellis Davies' alternative, that the name might have referred to an unidentified spot in north-west France where the family originated (as was certainly the case with the family of Montgomery) is less plausible.<sup>6</sup> The English name clearly bears no relation to the Welsh name for the place, Yr Wyddgrug, which Lloyd translated as 'the burial mound', raising the possibility, though it must be stressed that it is no more than that, of a prehistoric barrow on the natural mound.<sup>7</sup>
- 2.4 The history of the castle as revealed by records both local and national has been documented by K L Gruffydd amongst others. It was reportedly damaged if not destroyed by Llywelyn ab Iorwerth in 1199, was repaired in 1241 when it was termed a royal stronghold, and was then

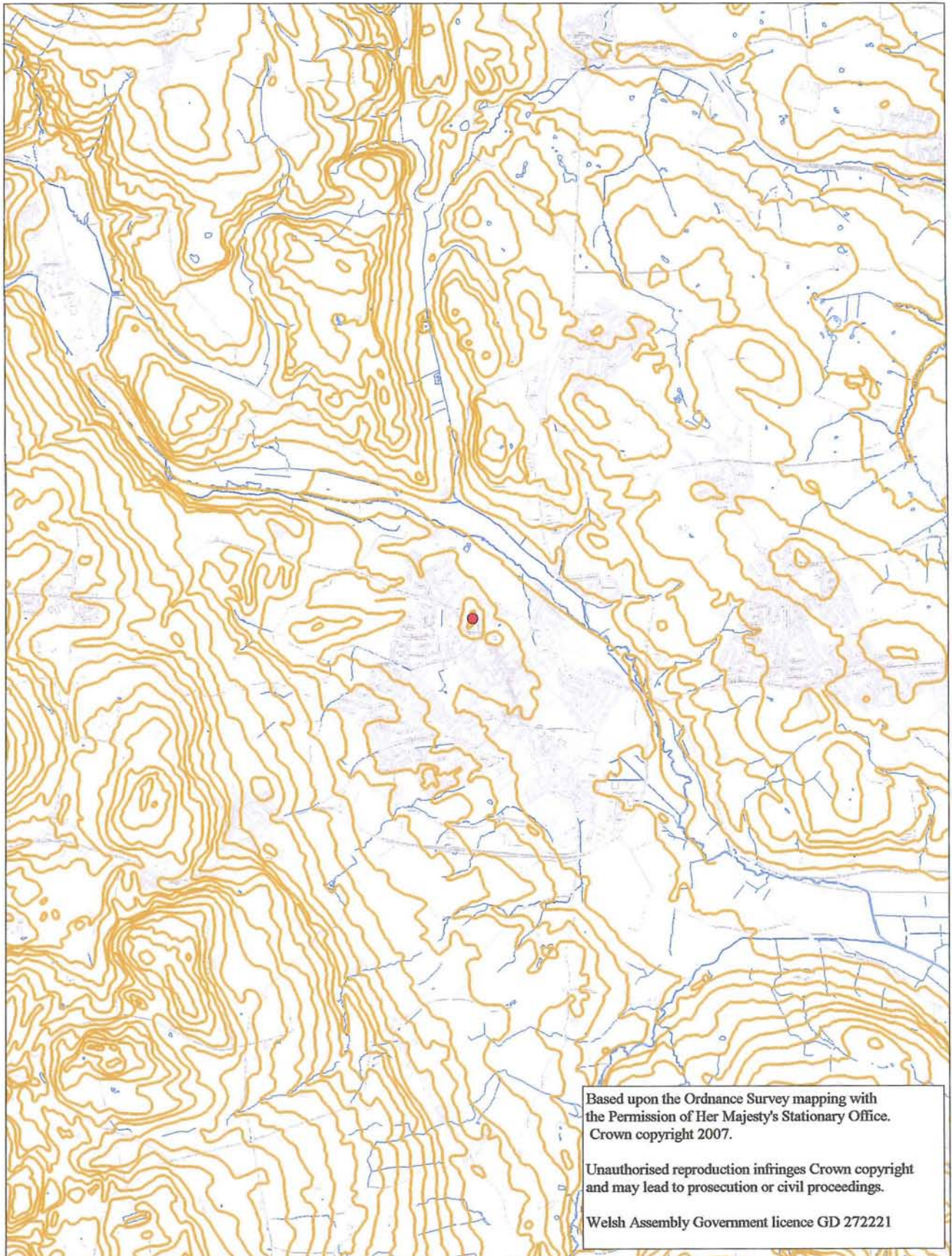


Fig 1 Mold in relation to the local topography as defined by the contours (in brown). The castle is marked by a red dot. Scale 1:40,000

taken in 1245 by Dafydd ap Llywelyn and reputedly levelled.<sup>8</sup> That this was only a temporary occurrence is revealed by the report that Mold was retaken by Edward I in 1276-7, its continuing appearance in the national records indicating that it had been and remained a significant military fortification.<sup>9</sup> The last of the Montalts died in 1329, and it may be from that time that the castle declined in importance, at least as the *caput* (or headquarters) of the lordship. But there are later references to the 'castle and town' of Mold in the Charter and Patent Rolls of the 1330s, and in an *Inquisition Post Mortem* of 1415 and again in 1421. Taking these at face value, it would seem that the castle continued to function in some fashion into the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup>

- 2.5 Sadly, its documented history is not matched by its landscape history, and it is fair to say that we can recover considerably more about its development and change over the last century and half than for its previous 750 years.



Pl. 1 Bailey Hill from the air (Copyright: CPAT Aerial Photograph 86-MB-669)

- 2.6 The castle consists of a large motte, accompanied by two baileys to the south, carved out of a natural hillock, the whole site originally extending over about 2.2ha (pl 1).<sup>11</sup> The motte was described by the Ordnance Survey in 1959 as reasonably well preserved and up to 14.0m high.<sup>12</sup> It is about 19-20m in diameter on the top and ringed by beech trees, currently eight with one fallen. The top is also slight dished in the centre, with a faintly raised lip around an arc of the north side, which it is tempting to see as a residue of the structure that crowned it. Thomas Pennant had seen a few stones on the top of the mound in the later part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the Ordnance Survey referred to four fragments of battered drystone walling at and near the top of the mound, two on the north and two on the west. These are still discernible (pl 2), the upper of those on the west, displaying a slight curve. This is significant because at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, probably about 1890, workers digging into the summit of the hill encountered a large quantity of stone, three to four feet down, and then 'a wall and part of a circle', and it could even be that what we can now see around the lip of the motte was what was uncovered at that time.<sup>13</sup> These discoveries probably led Ella Armitage, one of the first British castle specialists, to adduce a stone shell keep on the top of the mound, and we should perhaps remember that the lordship of Hawarden with which Mold is frequently linked in medieval government records had a round keep constructed on its motte.<sup>14</sup> The presence of such walling is in contrast to the Royal

Commission's statement early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that 'there are no present signs of stone walls or foundations', and the complete absence of any such indications on the 18<sup>th</sup>-century sketches of Bailey Hill (see para 2.9 below) which would undoubtedly have been included had they existed to any height.<sup>15</sup> Notwithstanding these negative implications, the prominence of the castle in the region and the length of time that it is likely to have functioned for, - e.g. at least two and possibly three centuries - would surely point to the replacement of any initial wooden superstructure on the motte top with one in stone during that time. Whether the masonry identified by the Ordnance Survey and now visible is part of such a keep remains to be established.



PL. 2 Mold Castle: drystone masonry at two levels on the north side of the motte

- 2.7 It must be assumed that the motte was originally surrounded by a ditch and perhaps an outer bank. If so the ditch on the south may have disappeared in the 19<sup>th</sup> century if not earlier. On the north the ditch was perhaps infilled, its line modified beyond recognition, when the gorsedd stone circle was erected in 1923. Its presence, however, is implied on the detailed 1:500 Ordnance Survey plan of 1869/70, though not on the smaller-scaled 1:2500 plan prepared a year or so later, and a short length of the ditch is still visible immediately to the south of the gorsedd circle.
- 2.8 Mold is unusual in having two baileys, unique in Flintshire but not beyond. The original form of the inner bailey is difficult to establish because of later modifications, but the V-shaped ditch that separated it from the second bailey to the south survives, between 2m and 5m in depth. The southern bailey too has undoubtedly seen some modification. Both baileys are encompassed by steep slopes up to 10m high, a product no doubt of scarping the natural slopes of the hill. The Ordnance Survey were able to detect only one section of defensive bank around the bailey, towards the north-western extremity of the earthwork, and claimed that there were no traces of an outer ditch, although the outer bank would appear to demarcate one. The main entrance to the castle is not readily identifiable. Most logical would be an approach from the south-east still used as the access to the bowling green and the wooded slopes around the motte. However, K. L. Gruffydd in his reconstruction infers an entrance from the south-west into the inner bailey: this is not impossible, but not confirmable either because of the damage done on this side by later quarrying.

- 2.9 With the abandonment of the castle and the deterioration of its defences, Bailey Hill lost its importance. In 1652 it was referred to simply as a piece of waste.<sup>16</sup> Then in the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Castle Hill became a focal point for painters visiting Mold on their tours of north Wales. The earliest appears to be that by Moses Griffiths who worked for Thomas Pennant and who around 1775 sketched the church and castle hill. 'Warwick' Smith produced a view of Mold in about 1790 and John Ingleby sketched the church and castle in 1796. Exceptional, perhaps fortunately, is Edward Pugh's drawing published in 1816. Distant though his view of Mold is, it clearly depicts a building, presumably intended to be a ruined castle, on the top of Bailey Hill.<sup>17</sup> There can be little doubt that Pugh was employing considerable artistic licence within his drawing. Pugh's drawing apart, the corporate value of these watercolours is that they show that Castle Hill was a bare knoll, unlike the wooded hill of today, and in at least one of the paintings, this 'open' landscape is adorned with figures walking across the hill presumably a recreational theme, though this may well be an artistic device. The bareness of this landscape, however, is not. The reason becomes clear from a draft map in the National Library's archives, undated but certainly of the 18<sup>th</sup> century which depicts, *inter alia*, Bailey Hill Common, as does a map of c. 1780 in Flintshire Record Office.<sup>18</sup> The castle mound was a common, or open ground, probably used for stock grazing and perhaps, if any were available, as a source of fuel by the townspeople.
- 2.10 Each of the main painters also shows one other element worth noting. The motte is prominent, but on the north of it the hill is stepped down, the setting of the gorsedd stone circle suggesting a further platform which if not protected in the medieval period would undoubtedly have constituted a potential weak spot in the castle's defences in the medieval period. There is, it should be said no morphological evidence for a further bailey or outlying defensive line here, and it is possible that a slight unevenness in the hill was exaggerated for artistic effect.
- 2.11 At some point after 1790 the common was 'enclosed', presumably by Lord Mostyn, and it was that family that were recorded as being the owners at the time of the Tithe survey in 1837. The most logical date would be between 1792 when the Act of Parliament for the enclosure of the Mold Commons was drawn up and 1800 when the award was made,<sup>19</sup> yet there is nothing on the enclosure maps for Mold to corroborate this belief, although it is conceivable that some reference might occur within the lengthy written award. More likely perhaps is that the landowner had, a few years previously, determined unilaterally to enclose the hill, that is an informal enclosure as opposed to a parliamentary enclosure. In a survey made by D. Mather of London for Thomas Swymmer Champneys Esq, which was conducted in September 1791, it states, in terms strongly suggestive of enclosure that Bailey Hill had recently been 'surrounded by a Substantial Stone wall lately built and containing a Neat Gothic Cottage also lately built (Stone and Slated). Part of this Hill and the rest intended to be planted and contains about 8 acres', and elsewhere that 'the present proprietor has enclosed the same with a Substantial Stone wall and is now planting the whole Hill or Mound with forest Trees, this will contribute much to improve and beautify the Town.'<sup>20</sup> By June 1801, Richard Colt Hoare could observe that 'at a short distance from the church the mound and other raised works in which stood the castle, are visible. The outward form of them will soon be lost by plantations lately made on the site of them...'<sup>21</sup> Samuel Lewis in 1833 reported that the hill was completely covered with thriving plantations.
- 2.12 To this can be added further intrusions and impacts. The bowling green, now such a feature of the castle site, was established in the inner bailey in 1849 when several human skeletons, arranged 'in regular order with the feet eastward, about two feet below the surface of the ground [were found] in what appears to have been a part of the old castle yard'. There were no traces of coffins or other coverings but metal objects included spurs, a stirrup, two iron rings and part of a copper one, a buckle, half of a pair of shears, a horse-shoe, a key and the like. There were animal bones and pottery fragments that included a mid to late 13<sup>th</sup>-century glazed jug.<sup>22</sup> There is no reason to assume that these discoveries, including the human remains, were all of contemporary deposition and indeed the presence of a corkscrew and a tortoiseshell token or counter sound to be of rather later date than some of the other finds. Objects are likely to have been lost or discarded in the bailey over many centuries, but the logical explanation for the

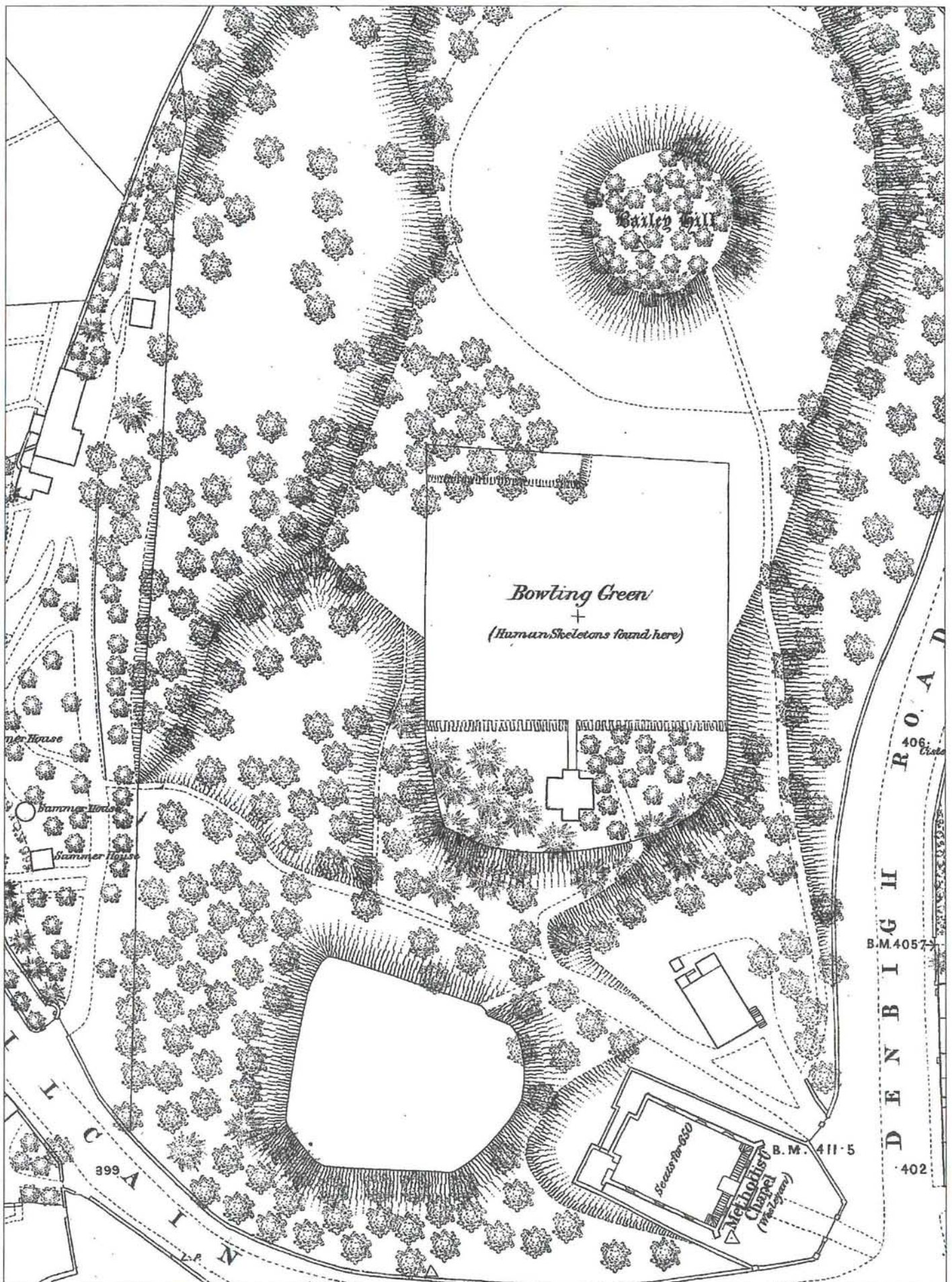


Fig 2. Mold Castle as planned by the Ordnance Survey in 1869/70 at 1:500 (or 126.7 inches to 1 mile). Scaled here at 1:700

human skeletons is that they fell at an unknown date, in a conflict at the castle, the survivors having the time to bury the dead properly, but presumably not the opportunity to have them interred in the nearby graveyard. Indeed, the 1849 discoveries should probably have come as little surprise. Eighty years earlier Thomas Pennant had written that 'on one side of the upper yard [the inner bailey] are found vast quantities of bones, some human; others of animals, mostly domestic such as of oxen, sheep, horses and hogs; and a few remains of horns of stags and roebucks'.<sup>23</sup>

- 2.13 Further human bones were found at the foot of the castle mound in about 1890, together with parallel walls, 6' and 10' thick and about 4 yards apart. Reputedly this was the entrance to a tower 'embedded in the soil and covered with trees'. Twenty years previously in 1872 two parallel walls, 4 feet and 8½ feet wide and 10 feet apart, had been found near the base of the mound on its western side.<sup>24</sup> Whether the mound referred to was the motte itself or just the hill on which the castle sat is unclear. Mr K Lloyd Gruffydd also records that a bowling-green attendant reported an otherwise unattested discovery of a human skeleton and a wall during work in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.



Pl. 3 Bailey Hill showing the bowling green, and, centre left, the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel and adjacent buildings (Copyright CPAT Aerial Photograph 86-MB-670)

- 2.14 The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel was inserted into the south-eastern defences in 1828 while its adjacent Sunday school was built early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The small building to the north of the chapel was perhaps the 'Neat Gothic Cottage built in 1791 (pl 3). Both of them can be seen on Gastineau's undated but perhaps mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century drawing of Mold. West of the inner bailey the deeply scooped hollow is redolent of quarrying though when has not been established.
- 2.15 In or soon after 1879 a new group of buildings including what is now known as Hillgrove, was added on the western edge of the earthworks immediately to the south-east of Mount Pleasant but a track that was planned to lead past them which would have inflicted further damage seems never to have been taken beyond the planning stage.<sup>25</sup> The house known as Tan-y-coed was probably added to the landscape in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

- 2.16 The earliest accurate plan of the castle to be prepared came in 1869/70, when the Ordnance Survey mapped the town of Mold at a scale of 1:500, one of relatively few Welsh urban centres to be so treated. Even at this scale, however, the plot of the castle earthworks was somewhat stylistic, as was the small-scale plan produced a year later as part of the standard mapping programme undertaken by the Ordnance Survey that contributed to the 25" mile coverage of England and Wales. Generally, throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century the castle received virtually no attention from archaeologists, a fact mirrored in dearth of information about the site in the National Monument Record in Aberystwyth and the regional Historic Environment Record. To the best of my knowledge no detailed an archaeologically precise plan has been prepared of the castle earthworks.
- 2.17 The gorsedd stone circle was erected in 1923 to mark the presence of the national Eisteddfod in Mold (pl 4).
- 2.18 In summary:
- Mold Castle was probably constructed in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century and perhaps continued in some sort of use into the 15<sup>th</sup> century;
  - It is a large and generally well-preserved set of earthworks, comprising a motte and two baileys;
  - It may well have had a stone keep and perhaps other stone buildings, but of these nothing survives above ground;
  - It has never been excavated (to archaeological standards), nor has it been the subject of a modern and thorough measured survey



Pl 4. The gorsedd circle with the remnant of the motte ditch in front of it

### *The Town*

- 3.1 It is curious that in its urban capacity Mold makes no appearance in the standard text on historic Welsh towns, *The Towns of Medieval Wales* (1983).<sup>26</sup> Nor is it referred to in that staple on medieval town planning, *New Towns of the Middle Ages* (1988).<sup>27</sup> The most obvious reason is

the dearth of readily identifiable records and pictures that pertain to Mold's earlier history, a shortage which finds a reflection in the then Clwyd Record Office's 1984 booklet on Mold which relies almost exclusively on 19<sup>th</sup>-century images to illustrate its text.<sup>28</sup> Yet there can be little doubt that like Flint, Rhuddlan and Caerwys, Mold is a planted town, deliberately created by the lords of Moldsdale below their castle. Castle and town are thus twin elements of the same environment.

- 3.2 As a town, Monte Alto is consistently referred to in conjunction with the castle in *Inquisitions Post Mortem* (IPM) as well as Chancery and other national records as early as 1267 and throughout the 14<sup>th</sup> century. While the term 'town' may be open to variant interpretations, it is this very consistency and the contrast with Hawarden – referred to as the castle and manor – with which it was usually paired, that suggests it was indeed an urban centre. Thus the Patent Rolls of Edward II refer to the 'castle and town of Mold, but the 'castle and manor of Hawarden, while nearly a century later in 1421, the IPM of Thomas Duke of Clarence refers to 'the castle, town and lordship of Mold'.<sup>29</sup> There is however, no detail to flesh out these general references to the town. In part this might be because the town appears never to have achieved the status of a borough through the provision by its lord of a charter, and thus its inhabitants could not be classed as burgesses with the likely privileges that went with the title. However, as has been pointed out in an authoritative statement some years ago, the absence of references to a charter hardly signifies that a particular urban settlement was not a borough, and that there are other classes of documents as well as topographical and morphological factors that can offer guidance on whether a town acquired borough status.<sup>30</sup> In the case of Mold, Leland's remarks of its market and fairs are relevant, and perhaps as important, there are two legal documents known as feoffments, from 1506 and 1611, which refer to burgages (*i.e* plots of land held by burgesses) in the town. Furthermore, the *Survey of the manor of Mold in 1652* contains a note of 'all ye Burgages or tenements in Mould...'.<sup>31</sup>
- 3.3 By the late 15<sup>th</sup> century the lordship had passed to the Stanley family. Records from 1477 refer to numerous town officials, the lord's mills and his courthouse (see below) in the town. A fair is recorded in 1465.
- 3.4 In the 1540s, the king's antiquary, John Leland provided the first detailed description of the town: *Sum say that Moldsdale (Mold) was ons a market toune. There be 2. fayres yet kept at Moldsdale, but the weekly market is decayed. Yet it hath the name of a maire, and a greate numbre of houses be withowt token almost destroyed, and there hath beene 2. streates, as Streate Byle, and Streate Dadlede in Walsch, in English the Court House Streate, byside other little lanes. Now in al be scant 40. houses. At the north end of Byle Streate appere diches and hilles yn tokyn of an auncient castel or buildinge there. It is now called Mont Brenebyley, and on the side of it is fayre springe. Alen Ryver cumith withyn a bou shot of Moldsdale Chirche and at the southe ende of the towne is a rylle caullid Houne, and soon after rennith into Alen.*<sup>32</sup>
- 3.5 Edward Lhuyd's correspondent at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century claimed that Mold 'contains about 6 score houses betwixt houses and huts' but gave no further details of the nature of the town, while by 1785 its housing stock was said to have risen to 682 holding a population of 4235.<sup>33</sup>
- 3.6 Historically, then, a strong case can be made for there being a nucleated settlement or town at Mold from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and this is complemented by its layout and morphology. Running south-eastwards from the main entrance of the castle is High Street which in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was called *Byle Streate*. Even modern maps show that this still widens out gradually towards its southern end, implying that this formed a market place in earlier centuries. The name, the Cross which is still in current usage and figures on the earliest Ordnance Survey maps logically describes the road layout here. It is also tempting, yet speculative, to see in it a reference to a former market cross: between 1864 and 1884 a fountain and clock commemorating the death of Prince Albert was set up here, but a lithograph of 1874 implies that the fountain was set on a three-tiered plinth, exactly what one would expect for a medieval market cross.<sup>34</sup>

- 3.7 At right angles to High Street was what are now Chester Street and New Street, the latter name suggesting that this was an addition to the original urban layout. The Lower Market Hall also known as the Assembly Hall, built in 1849 on the corner of New Street and High Street, replaced the old leet courthouse of the manor of Mold which was constructed before 1477 – it is shown but not named on the Matthews estate map of c.1780. This implies that New Street was probably the *Court House Strete* referred to by Leland. Leland's contention that there were only two main streets is also confirmed by later mapping. King Street, now so prominent a feature of Mold is shown on the mid 19<sup>th</sup>-century Tithe map cutting across the line of at least two fields and is clearly also a late addition to the landscape, while the Matthews' map does not show it at all. Church Lane, though termed Church Street in 1784, always appears to have been a cul-de-sac leading to a house which in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the vicarage. Milford Street, although shown as a way to Wrexham on the 1784 estate map was little more than a minor lane, though this may perhaps have been an original feature of the plantation. Its extension – Clay Lane or Clayton Lane – is probably of a similar age, but its original layout appears to have been modified for some reason, perhaps because it fell out of use and a tenement was built on its line, before subsequently being revived by a new access to the south-east. The age of Wrexham Road, south of the Cross is uncertain. The Matthews' estate map points to it being a continuation of the High Street and of a similar width; this could be no more than a cartographic convention, even though a case could be argued for the original width of Wrexham Road by the Cross being reduced by the introduction of buildings along the eastern side. This though is at best speculative and it is probably best to assume no more than a lane leading off the market place down the valley side to the fields and grazing grounds of the town.



Pl. 5 The town's historic core in relation to Bailey Hill (Copyright CPAT Aerial Photograph 95-011-004)

- 3.8 On the southern side of High Street, the earliest Ordnance Survey maps and, more obviously, the Tithe Map show narrow tenements stretching back from the street frontage. Had Mold been designated as a borough, these would readily have been classed as burgage plots. As it these tenements which appear to be anywhere between 46m and 121m long, are readily comparable with such medieval landholdings elsewhere. Even allowing for the general simplification of boundaries that are manifest in many of the Tithe drawings, the back boundary on the north side

of High Street, and rather less evident on the south side, suggest a degree of planning. Whether the same can be detected in the boundaries to either side of Wrexham Street is less clear-cut.

### *The Church*

- 4.1 St Mary's is a fine late Perpendicular structure to which there have been 19<sup>th</sup>-century additions including the tower. George Lloyd speculated that the original church was constructed in the later 12<sup>th</sup> century, to be replaced by a larger edifice in the 14<sup>th</sup> century which in turn may have been added to early in the following century. At the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century all but the 14<sup>th</sup>-century tower was rebuilt by Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond, although the nave and aisles were not completed until the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. The tower itself was rebuilt in 1773, and a chancel added in 1856. Some of this is indeed no more than speculation, but unless excavation proves otherwise it is probably as accurate a narrative as we are likely to get.<sup>35</sup>
- 4.2 Its circular churchyard is very obvious, and this alone strongly suggest that the church came into existence in the early medieval period, well before the Norman lords of Molddale established their castle on the adjacent hill top. And though the Montalts may well have endowed the church, it can be questioned whether its substantial value of £43 in 1291<sup>36</sup> - exceeded as the wealthiest church in mid and north Wales by only Llanbadarn Fawr (Cardiganshire) - was the result purely of Norman patronage. The wealthiest churches were usually those with the longest histories, developing as mother churches in their regions in the early medieval period. Mold may have been one such church with its dependent chapelries at Treuddyn and Nercwys, though many years ago Sir John Lloyd speculated – unnecessarily I think – that, on the basis of the presence of a priest recorded in Domesday Book, the original church might have been at Gwysaney, a short distance to the north.<sup>37</sup>



Pl 6 Mold church and its circular churchyard (Copyright CPAT Aerial Photograph 95 C 0087)

- 4.3 We can go further by inferring that the dedication to St Mary was a late one, probably replacing a British dedication, and it was Sir John Lloyd who assumed that the Marian dedication reflected the patronage of the Norman lords of Molddale.<sup>38</sup> What that British one was can only be guessed at, and it is no more than this writer's idle speculation that it might have been Garmon.

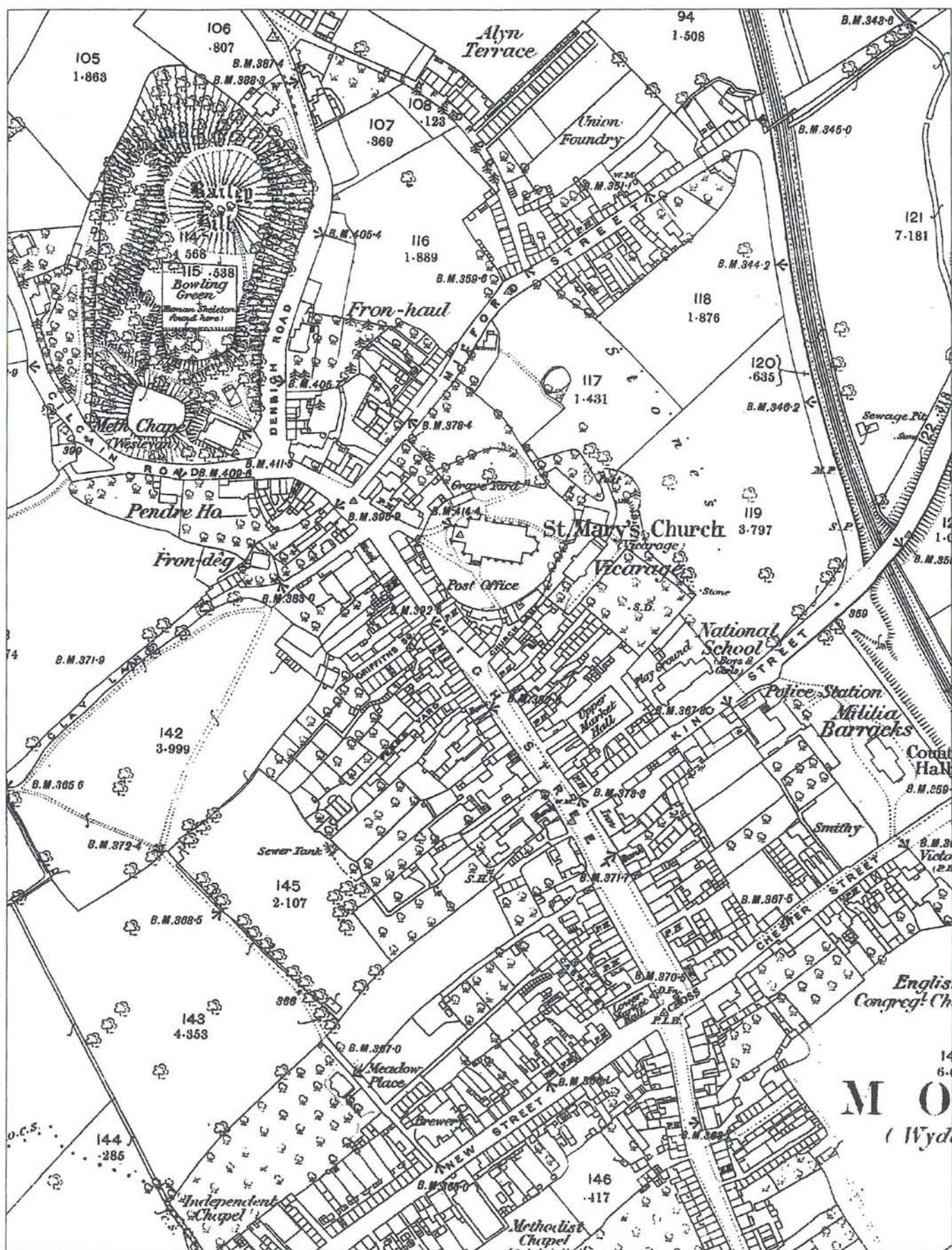


Fig 3. Mold castle and town as shown on the 1st edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of 1871. Scaled at 1: 3000

- 4.4 Various medieval stone heads, some perhaps corbels, and some other architectural fragments have been set on the garden wall of Tan-y-coed that fronts the Cilcain Road below Bailey Hill, and it is reported that various architectural fragments are (or were) incorporated into a rockery in the Vicarage garden, with more in the garden of a house called Mont Alto.<sup>39</sup> Some of the heads



Pl 7 Stone heads at Tan-y-coed, Mold

have been ascribed to the late 15<sup>th</sup> century but others, on the authority of the British Museum, could have come from a late 12<sup>th</sup>-century building. It is generally assumed that these salvaged from the church, although Cadw's representative has suggested, rather less convincingly, that they originate from Bailey Hill itself. The number appears to be gradually declining and Cadw's warden in 2000 noted that two more had been removed.<sup>40</sup>

### *The Fields of Mold*

- 5.1 It is reasonable to assume that like other Anglo-Norman planted towns, Mold would have had open or sub-divided fields surrounding it in the medieval era. In time some of these would have had individual strips permanently defined as strip fields, and subsequently these too might be amalgamated to form larger enclosures. One method of distinguishing these is from the shape of the strip fields that survived in fossilised form into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, another is by the appearance of the element, *maes*, and less commonly some others – *dryll*, *cyfir* and *talar* – in the field names, particularly at the time of the tithe survey in the 1840s, one of several terms that is taken to indicate former open fields.<sup>41</sup> It should be stressed here that no detailed research has been conducted on this subject. What follows is simply a set of initial observations based on the early Ordnance Survey and Tithe maps.
- 5.2 Strip fields are not common around Mold. Some perhaps survive to the east of the town, between the Chester Road on the south and the mill race to the north (where the Mold cape was found in 1832); the field pattern is not wholly convincing, but on the Tithe map looks suggestive.

- 5.3 *Maes* names are more prevalent. No more than 200m to the north-west of Bailey Hill, a group of *maes* field names underlies housing which has given its name to Maes-y-dre. The alignment of the fields at 45° across the precisely laid out course of the A541 at this point confirms what would almost certainly be established from other research on the road itself, namely that it is a later addition to the landscape around Mold and was laid across a farmed landscape. Just to the south-west of the town is the farm of Maes-y-ffynnon, though there are no comparable field names here, but a couple of *maes* field names lie immediately to the west of the town and just north of Clay Lane. Further to the west is *Maes Garmon*, its name retained by the farm there. The name has been linked to St Germanus and from this has arisen the belief that the Mold area was the site of a victory over the Saxons by that saint in AD 429 which goes by the name of the ‘Alleluia Victory’. There is no substantive evidence to corroborate which appears to be a local but long-lived tradition, and the supposed connection between Germanus and Garmon has been discredited, philologically.<sup>42</sup> A column was erected in 1736 to commemorate the battle, a perpetuation of what seems to be little more than a myth.
- 5.4 Finally, a small common – Maes-y-derwen common - lay immediately to the south of the town and combines the indicator of another open field with another important element of the medieval landscape of the Welsh borderland: the area of unenclosed ground that would have been used for, amongst other things, communal grazing. There are suggestions of others in the area.<sup>43</sup>

## Endnotes

- 1 Creighton 2002; Liddiard 2005
- 2 Neaverson 1947, 18; Thomas 2005, 45
- 3 Lloyd 1912, 366; 1940, 60
- 4 Lloyd 1940, 61; King 1983, 154
- 5 Gruffydd 2002, 9
- 6 Davies 1959, 113
- 7 Lloyd 1940, 61; Mills 2003, 331
- 8 Gruffydd 2002; Calendar of Liberate Rolls 1240-5, 85, 99; Calendar of Close Rolls 1237-42, 426
- 9 Lloyd 1912, 758
- 10 Calendar of Patent Rolls 12 Edward III, 1338; *Inquisitions Post Mortem* Henry V, 20, 1415; 21, 1421
- 11 It is not possible to produce a precise estimate of the original size, in part because parts of the earthworks have been disturbed or shaved off during later modifications to the site, and partly because the man-made defences merge with the natural knoll on which the site stands.
- 12 Ordnance Survey index card Flint 13 NE 4 which still provides the most detailed description of the earthwork, and the most up-to-date plan though this is a scale of no more than 1:2500.
- 13 *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 5<sup>th</sup> series, Vol. 8 (1891), 321
- 14 *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 5<sup>th</sup> series, Vol. 8 (1891), 321; Armitage 1912, 260; fig 40; Sylvester 1969, 486
- 15 RCAHMW 1912, 63
- 16 Survey of the manor of Mold (1652), 2
- 17 Pugh 1816, plate opposite p.341
- 18 National Library of Wales/Chirk F 11578; Flintshire Record Office GW 669
- 19 Chapman 1992, 95
- 20 Flintshire Record Office KK/267. I am indebted for this reference and several others to Mr K Lloyd Griffiths.
- 21 Thompson 1983, 171
- 22 *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 4 (1849), 229-30; Butler 1974, 88. A sherd of glazed medieval pottery found in 1849 is now in the National Museum Cardiff, part of the Wynne Collection (NMW acc. no.21.24/57(1)27) (L Butler: *pers comm.*; M Redknap: *pers comm.*). It is not clear where the rest of the material from the 1849 works is, or indeed whether it survives.
- 23 Pennant 1784, vol I, 423
- 24 *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 5<sup>th</sup> series, Vol. 8 (1891), 321; 4<sup>th</sup> series, Vol. 3 (1872), 165.
- 25 Flintshire Record Office LB/B/6
- 26 Soulsby 1988
- 27 Beresford 1988
- 28 Matthias 1984
- 29 *Calendar of Patent Rolls/12Edward III; Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem/9 Henry V*
- 30 Beresford and Finberg 1973, 25. The authors revealed that in England of 609 places which probably were boroughs, there is surviving charter material for only around 200 of them.
- 31 Flintshire Record Office Nerquis Hall 96; 103; Survey of the manor of Mold, 36
- 32 Smith 1964, iii, 72
- 33 Morris 1909, 89
- 34 Matthias 1984, frontispiece
- 35 Lloyd 1960, 167
- 36 Ayscough and Caley 1802, 287
- 37 Sylvester and Evans, forthcoming; Lloyd 1940, 62
- 38 Lloyd 1940, 62
- 39 Lloyd 1960
- 40 Lloyd 1960
- 41 Thomas 1973; Sylvester 2006
- 42 Bowen 1956, 32
- 43 Flintshire Record Office GW 669

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## Maps

18<sup>th</sup> century NLW/ Chirk F 11578

c. 1780 Detached farms in the parish of Mold and houses in the town of Mold in the county of Flint, by Edward and John Matthews. Flintshire Record Office GW/669

1784 NLW/Map Volume 82. By T. Slater and C. Bage

1800 Enclosure Maps. Flintshire Record Office QS/DE/9

1839(?) Mold Tithe Map and 1837 Apportionment

1869-70 Ordnance Survey 1:500 survey of the town on six sheets (Flintshire R O carries 2 of the original 6 sheets and photostat copies of all of them)

1871 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 1<sup>st</sup> edition Flintshire 13.08

1899 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Flintshire 13.08

1912 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 3<sup>rd</sup> edition Flintshire 13.08

1961 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 SJ236\*

## Prints

c.1775 Moses Griffiths

1785 Mold, perhaps by the Rev. John Breedon (National Library of Wales Drawings Volume 63, no.60)

c.1790 C 'Warwick' Smith *View of Mold in the Vale of Ystrad Alun* (National Library of Wales)

1796 John Ingleby. *Cotton factory at Mold* (National Library of Wales. PD1795)

- 1816 *Distant view of Mold*, by E. Pugh in *Cambria Depicta*, opposite p.341
- n.d. *Mold* by H G Gestein (1791-1876) (National Library of Wales, PD 7762)
- c.1861 Pring and Price line engraving. *Maesgarmon with Bailey Hill and church in the background*.

*Original Documents*

1652 *Survey of the manor of Mold* – in 18<sup>th</sup>-century copy: *NLW Mss 4998E*