

TORWOOD CASTLE EXCAVATIONS

Geoff B Bailey



Falkirk Archaeological Report

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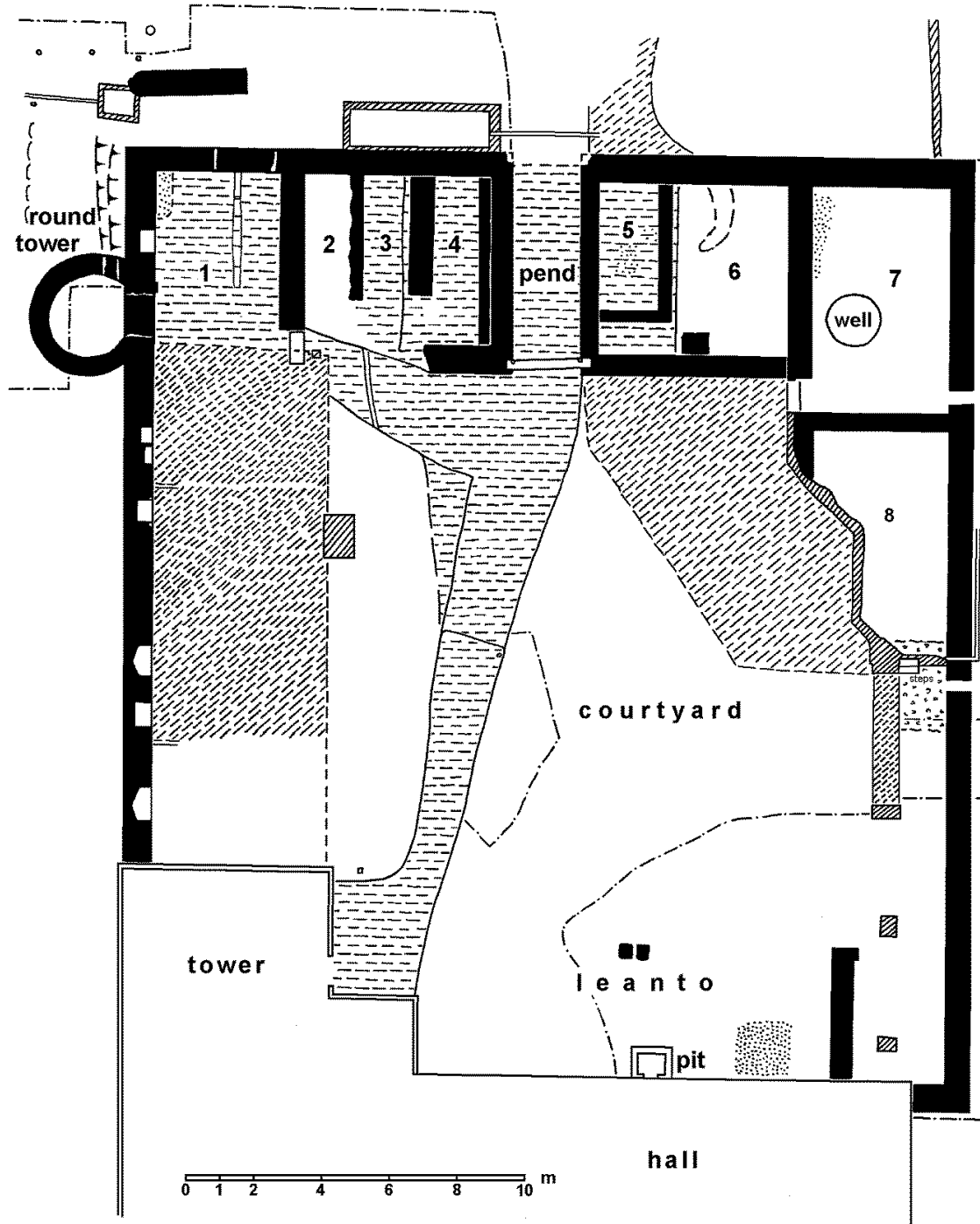
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Introduction

In 1997 the author was invited by Gordon Millar, the owner and occupier of Torwood Castle, and the Torwood Castle Trust, to undertake excavations on the courtyard buildings there ahead of a proposed development. Gordon Millar had already been diagnosed with cancer and the Trust had been established to continue his project of consolidating and reconstructing the castle within a setting free from housing estates. No funding was available and the author spent his summer holidays over the next four years with a small band of volunteers at the castle.



Illus 1: Plan of the excavated features in and around the courtyard.

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The 1998 season saw the investigation of the room east of the entrance pend (Room 5/6) and the well room (Room 7). Unfortunately Gordon died before work began. In 1999 the East Wing was explored and a small trench pushed out to the east. In the 2000 season the rooms west of the pend were excavated, along with part of the courtyard. The final year, 2001, was designed to explain the presence of a strange break in the masonry of the external wall of the West Wing near its northern end. In this it was successful and a small projecting round tower was discovered. The trench was extended along the north front of Rooms 1-4 and showed that this area had been well used when the castle was first built.

Throughout the dig the policy was to retain all of the walls dated to before the 20th century, along with well preserved areas of cobbling or mortared floors. The further investigation of earlier levels could be left until the development went ahead and it would be known which areas might be disturbed. In the event the development of the site stalled and so this work still waits to be undertaken.

Rooms 1-6 were covered with rubble which was carefully cleaned and recorded. Very few large stones were found when this was removed and it is evident that it merely consisted of stone unsuitable for use elsewhere and was clearance of the site – much by Gordon Millar. In the late 1950s he and Doreen Hunter, the first professional curator of Falkirk Museum, obtained the plan of the courtyard buildings for the forthcoming RCAHMS inventory of Stirlingshire by digging narrow trenches along the wall lines. These trenches were re-located during the current excavations and had been backfilled with this rubble material.

Torwood Castle (NS 835 843) stands on high ground between Falkirk and Stirling a little below the summit of the Tor with extensive views to the south and east, but very limited views to the north or west. Formerly it lay in the royal forest beside the line of the Roman road. The strategic importance of the area is reflected by the presence of Tappock Broch on the summit of the hill. The castle dates to the mid 16th century and is of the hall type – reflecting the transitional period from the traditional castle to a mansion. It is well described in the Stirlingshire Inventory (RCAHMS 1963, 337-339).

The Courtyard Buildings



Illus 2: The north range of the courtyard buildings looking north with the pond on the right.

Room 1: Located in the north-west corner of the courtyard buildings the room measures 3.7m internally W/E. The south wall was not located due to the presence of a recent concrete raft, but the door sill on the southeast mirrors that for room 6 giving us a N/W dimension of 6.6m. Recent stone rubble lay on a cobbled stone floor made up of rounded river cobbles. A 3.4m long line of six flat kerbstones created a shallow step and a N/S division with the cobbling on the west 0.05m higher than that in the 1.2m wide passage to the east. In the passage the cobbles were laid in such a manner that a diagonal alignment of stones created a slight channel for drainage. At the north end of the passage the north wall had been cut through for a doorway at a late date, and was subsequently blocked up using small stones. The cobbling and passage belong to the latest phase when the buildings were used for farming and this room as a stable or shippen.

Room 2 is a narrow (1.3m wide) room with no discernible floor. Its eastern wall (F107) is narrow, being only 0.4m wide, and is not faced on its inner or western side. The wall stops short of the south wall of the range and uneven rubble here, extending the cobbled area to the east, suggests that it has been truncated. The redeposited orange clay loam in this room contained some small rubble and green-glazed ware. Although there was not a lot of this pottery, it was greater in quantity than in any of the other rooms excavated and included large un-abraded pieces. This corridor-like room is therefore thought to have been a stairway, removed when the east wall was shortened.

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Room 3/4. Rooms 3 and 4 were one room until a 0.7m wide N/S stone wall (F111) of crude construction was inserted. Its southern end was more or less on line with that dividing it from Room 2. F111 had no foundation and lay directly upon a 0.1m deep layer of dark brown loam and small stones overlying earlier cobbling. That cobbling was made of angular medium-sized pieces of sandstone quite unlike the smooth water worn stones of Room 1. However, like Room 1 there was a step of rough kerbstones, located 0.2m west of the inserted wall. This continued south as far as the position of the south wall. It and the cobbling were earlier than the cobbled courtyard path F23 (see below).

The east wall of Room 3/4 had been levelled down to that of the cobbling to the east in the 1960s by Gordon Miller in order to widen the access through the pend and was not visible when the excavation began. It had been distinct before that and is shown in the correct position on the RCAHMS plan. It was of one build with the north and south walls and like them was bonded with yellow mortar. Along its inner (western) side a crude narrow shelf was set with facing stones on its west side. This wall may have supported a trough or feeding rack for animals. The relatively rough cobbled floor of Room 3/4 would suit a function for this room as a stable with the horses' heads to the east over the trough and their backs towards the lower stepped floor. Urine could then have drained out through the doorway in the SW corner of the room and along the drain cut into F23. The insertion of wall F111, the removal of the stair and the shortening of F107, would have created three separate stalls aligned N/S served by a widened doorway accessed by the new path F23.



The construction of this path had necessitated the demolition of a length of the south wall of the range to create the open entrance. The north edging of the path led to the north side of the doorway into Room 1. The cobbled path (F23), shippen (Room 1) and rearranged stable (Rooms 2-4) are all seen as Phase II features of the farmyard.

Illus 3: Cobbled path F23 overlying the south wall of the North Wing. Looking WNW.

The Pend. In the centre of the North Range is a cobbled passageway or pend 2.0m wide. The cobbling is slightly cambered and made of small worn blocks of hard sandstone with three N/S ribs of larger stone. The spinal rib occupies the ridge and has the largest stones arranged with their straightest edges on the west. The side ribs are placed close to the sides of the passageway with their centres 1.65m (5 ½ ft) apart – the gauge of a cart. Although not as neatly laid out as the central row, they have their straighter sides facing the walls. At present the cobbling stops short of the outer face of the north wall of the range in a rough line. This contrasts sharply with the southern end where a single



Illus 4: Stone sill at the south end of the pend, looking east.

long sill stone, now broken into three, is embedded 0.2-0.3m into the corners of the side walls. At either end of the sill is a check for the wooden frame of the entrance gates, which would have reduced the width of the passage to c1.8m. It is odd that the sill is a little skew from the perpendicular and it would seem that this was not its original position. At both of the north corners of the pend walls, just where we might expect good quality quoins, the stonework is missing for a depth of only 0.2m. The small size of the voids is more suitable for the ends of the sill stone than for quoins. Certainly it would make more sense to have the gates at the outer end of the pend, with the leaves opening inwards against the side walls, than at the inner end.

Rooms 5 & 6 were also at one time a single room with a cobble platform in its western section, though its history is even more complex than the rooms so far described. As it now appears this single room was 5.6m W/E by 5.1m N/S, which compares favourably with Room 4/5. The east wall of Room 5/6 survives to a height of 1.7m, but apart from a small adjoining stretch of the south wall all the others are almost down to floor level. The south wall butts up against the east wall at the north jamb of the doorway to Room 7, showing that the East Wing was constructed first. The north wall of Room 5/6 is a continuation of that of Room 7, and is bonded to the east wall – though here the north wall could simply have enclosed the courtyard before the North Range was constructed. The west wall of Room 5/6 is unusual in being built of particularly large stones that often span its entire width. Their size is reminiscent of the outer walls. The junction of this wall with the north wall also appears to be a butt join, but unfortunately the opposing junction with the south wall is

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too damaged to determine if they were contemporary. Significantly, there is a 0.3m wide gap between the cobbles of the interior and the east side of this wall, which seems to be a construction trench. We must therefore conclude that in the original scheme this room extended westward into the area of the later pend.



Illus 5: Room 5 looking north with charcoal and mortar on the floor.

The original entrance to Room 5/6 was on the south side, roughly 2.3m from its SE corner. At this point the wall has subsequently been robbed out to below foundation level and any quoins that presumably finished off the existing stub would have been removed, making it impossible to provide a precise measurement. However, what appears to have been a sill stone was reused in the later paving very close to this point. The existing cobbling inside Room 5/6 belongs to this first phase, as it is cut by the construction trench for the west wall. It now stops on a N/S line 2.4m east of that wall, but the edge is rough suggesting that it had extended further, presumably at least as far as the postulated doorway.

Illus 6: Room 5/6 looking SE with the pend on the right. The line of flat slabs (F130) can be seen below the late wall (F181).



Just to the west of the rough edge a double N/S line of small square blocks (F130) extends 3m south from the north wall. Their tops are smooth and flush with the surface of the cobbles. On the west side a curving 1.3m gap occurs in the cobbling, edged by slightly more rounded stones, partly reddened by heat. The gap was filled with a mixture of charcoal and decayed mortar, suggesting that it was related to patches of yellow mortar attached to the surface of the cobbling just to the south. To the east of this more mortar was found beyond the cobbles and here small sandstone chippings (F121) were set into the orange-brown clay floor, apparently forming a wall foundation. The cobbling in Room 5 and the earth floor in Room 6 were covered with charcoal and coal dust.



Illus 7: Room 5/6 looking NW.

Along a wide strip in front of the east wall of Room 6 the charcoal incorporated a moderate amount of broken blue slate. It is possible that this derived from the roof of Room 7, but like the slate below the floor levels in Room 7 it is probable

that it represents levelling material. The suggested sequence can be represented diagrammatically as in illus x-xx. The burning, charcoal, coal dust and the existence of a mortared structure in the NW corner of Room 5/6 suggests that this was the bakehouse for the castle, appropriately positioned adjacent to the well room (Room 7).



Illus 8: Room 5/6 looking SSW with the 1950s concrete duck pond in foreground.

At a comparatively late date two crude walls were built on the cobbling of Room 5/6 to create a large compartment in its NW corner. The N/S wall (F181) was placed at a slight skew to the

earlier double line of square blocks (F130) and extended further to the south, terminating in a single large stone. The W/E wall was composed of rectangular stones placed with their long axis in line with the wall, providing little keying to the core. No gap was left for an entrance and it is therefore probable that this was a storage bin of some sort belonging to the period of the late farm. It may have been at this time that a rough pier or buttress was inserted inside the original doorway.

Room 7 lies in the NE corner of the courtyard buildings and measures 4.1m W/E by 6.1m N/S. The south wall was previously unknown and does not appear on the 1958 plan. The room contained a substantial rock-cut well shaft. The shaft is roughly square with rounded corners and slightly bulging sides. It is approximately 2.8m square and of unknown depth. It was apparently partly re-excavated by Gordon Miller, with help from some of the local people, to a depth of about 6m without hitting the

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water table and currently has a dog skeleton on the top of the remaining fill. The bedrock reaches close to the surface and is levelled off with closely fitting stone. As noted by the RCAHMS, it is curiously vaulted, having segmental arches north and south supporting subsidiary transverse arches to form a small square aperture, which then had a circular opening of 1.5m diameter superimposed upon it using broad flat slabs.

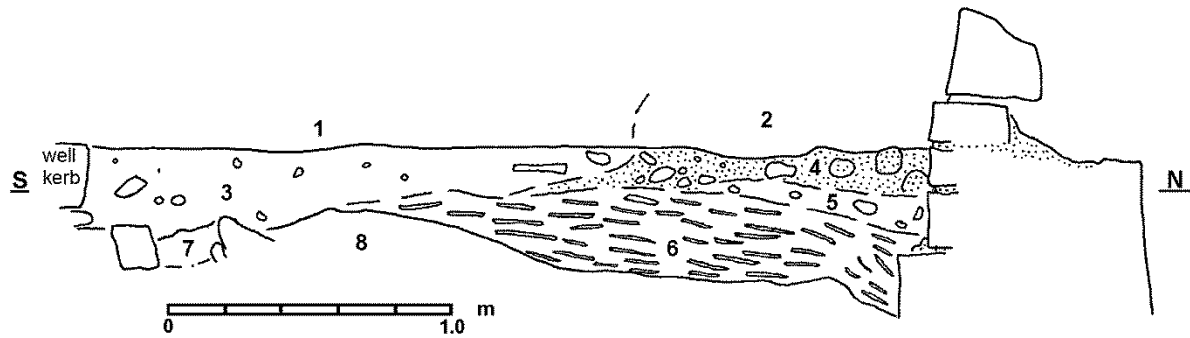


Illus 9: The well head showing the masonry arches.

The interior of this room has been substantially levelled up along its northern and eastern margins to raise the floor level to that of the courtyard using the stout outer walls as terraces. Around the well and throughout the southern part of the room the infill is composed of broken sandstone. In the SE corner a slot perpendicularly perforates the east wall and is floored at the level of the outside ground with a tapering stone trough. The trough has shallow lips on all its sides except the outer eastern one where it is narrower and acted as a drain to take water spilled onto the floor when using the well. Patches of the smooth yellow mortar floor survived against the west wall.

Illus 10: The wellhead in its setting looking east. The stone trough can be seen passing through the outer wall on the lower right opposite the doorway.





Illus 11: Section across the northern part of Room 7. 1 - black topsoil; 2 - wall collapse; 3 - dark brown loam with slate fragments; 4 - mortar rubble; 5 - buff clay loam; 6 - slate in buff loamy clay; 7 - dark buff clay loam with charcoal flecks; 8 - pale buff loamy clay (natural).

The northern half of the room was devoid of the stone bottoming and a large existing hollow in the NE corner provided an opportunity to cut a section across the floor deposits there. The surface of the natural pale buff loamy clay was undulating and sloped down to the north and east. It was cut by the foundation trenches of the walls and here the inside of the north wall had a 0.1m offset (see illus 11). As some point the sandstone rubble infill had been removed and was replaced by 0.3m thick layer of slates in a brown clay loam matrix (layer 6), covered by buff clay loam (layer 5). The levels above this were disturbed by stone robbing before the north wall collapsed inwards. The narrow trenches dug by Miller and Hunter in the late 1950s to follow the walls and recover a plan for the RCAHMS inventory were evident along the east wall and it may have been them that left the hollow in the NE corner. A turner of 1632 was found in one of the Miller trenches. Just south of the junction with the north wall the east wall had been taken down to level with the outside ground for a distance of c0.4m. The slate-filled section of floor bottoming may therefore have been part of an attempt to alleviate damp problems at this end of the room.



Illus 12: The North Wing with the pend on the left and the well room on the right. A cover now protects the well.

Room 8 occupied a large portion of the ground floor of the East Wing. Its northern wall was discovered during the second season of excavation just south of the courtyard entrance to the well room (and was incorrectly placed on the RCAHMS plan). It had no break in it for a doorway. Both the west and east walls had been robbed down to below the original floor level. The west wall was further obscured by a wall built by Gordon Miller which traversed Room 8 at an odd angle before turning to cross it on a perpendicular line, incorporating three concrete steps. The east wall of the wing returned at its southern end to meet the north end of the east wall of the castle block on line with the remaining "tusker", as conjectured by the RCAHMS. Few deposits remained above the natural within the wing thus formed. The bedrock lay just 0.2m below the modern ground level in the northern end of the room and this gave way to brown-orange clay to the south. In the northern half were the often truncated remains of terracing material consisting of angular sandstone, on top of which were patches of a yellow mortar floor. An original drainage channel cut through the east wall, its sides lined with large stones. Inside the room the associated channel had been filled with rounded cobbles and just to the north of this numerous fragments of small angular sandstone appeared to form narrow W/E lines, perhaps for a wooden structure. To the south, the whole area had been badly disturbed down to the natural clay. The rough edges of this dish-shaped disturbance described a rough circle about 4m in diameter and could best be interpreted as the area of an uprooted tree bole. This was confirmed by an inspection of old postcards that show a large tree in just this spot. Presumably when the tall tree blew over it took with it all the soil above the clay due to the shallow root system. Beyond this disturbance, against the castle, the room had been cobbled with small stones. These may have been part of a passage giving access to the garden to the south, and a large iron key was found just outside the south wall of the room.



Illus 13: Drain in the east wall of Room 9, looking west, with late road metalling inside the room.

After the west wall had been extensively demolished further layers of gravel and small cobbling were added and it was upon these that wall F177 was constructed (see below). Worn slabs were found on either side of the stones of the wing's

walls at the SE corner showing that after demolition its remains had been incorporated into a path.

It was not possible to determine whether the ground floor of the East wing consisted of a single room, or if there had been less substantial stone cross walls or timber partitions. The large drain in the east wall may hint at a possible use as a brewhouse; the wooden structure representing racking for the barrels. Its location adjacent to the well room would make it suitable for such a purpose. Water was presumably carried in buckets from the well room to an aperture in the north wall of the castle for use in the kitchen and so this was certainly a recognised route for it; or there might have been a similar aperture in the north wall of Room 8. A patch of mortar (F242) at the foot of the castle, just west of where the west wall of the range would have run, might hint at the former presence of a timber corridor. If such a construction existed it would have provided a screen between the water inlet for the kitchen and the latrine outlet or pit to the west, although the latter was also covered by a wooden lid.

Courtyard Features

The excavation of the southern end of Room 8 was extended westward to include part of the courtyard and a pit (F230) at the foot of the latrine shaft of the castle block. The stone-lined pit had already been excavated, probably in the 1950s, and so the task in 2000 was simply to remove the vegetation and clean it up. Stone rubble had been brought to the site and dumped at the foot of the castle wall by Gordon Millar for use in his reconstruction work and this gave the pit the appearance of having been sunk well below ground level, whereas it was observed that the top of the pit was level with the gravel surface of the courtyard (F234). The 0.45m square aperture at the base of the latrine shaft was capped by a well-dressed stone lintel 0.3m thick. A basal flagstone was angled at 50 degrees to project the material descending the shaft into the pit which measured 0.8m W/E by 0.6m N/S internally and was 0.45m deep from the rebated top. The rebate, designed to take a wooden cover, was created by offsetting the upper course of large squared blocks from the walls below.



Illus 14: Wall F240 on top of the courtyard surfaces.

Two gravel/cobble surfaces were noted adjacent to the pit. The upper (F234) was covered by a thin layer of dark brown silty loam (F233) containing a large number of animal bone fragments and extended around

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3.5m from the foot of the castle wall. At 1.8m west of the north-east corner of the castle block a 0.6m wide stone wall (F240) lay on top of this surface. It extended perpendicularly for 3.8m, terminating in a slight expansion. Flush with the gravel surface of F234 and 5.5m west of end of F240 were two flat rectangular stones (F239), which had evidently served as post pads. Small vertical slots in the face of the castle block set at a height of around 3m in this area suggest that F240 and F239 were part of a leanto building with an open front.

Illus 15: Courtyard metalling with post pads (F239) in the foreground.



A section was placed through the upper gravel 1.8m east of the latrine pit in an area where its survival was patchy. The lower gravel surface (F235) was a little more extensive than the upper, but was much thinner and worn in places. No trace of the west wall of Room 8 could be seen at this level and it may be presumed that F235, like F234, covered it. A section was not dug through F235, but its presence suggests a wide path across the courtyard heading east over the site of the former East Wing. The lower courtyard surface incorporated a 1.7m wide spread of white mortar (F242) whose western extent was not determined. The mortar floor may have been associated with the water delivery system for the kitchen as mentioned above.

A well-laid stone block path stretched from the main door of the castle to the pond. Much of this can be attributed to Gordon Millar. It merged with the cobbling from the pond around 11m from the door. The centre of the courtyard was not surfaced.

External courtyard features



Trench A, 2m wide, was excavated for a distance of 6m from the external wall of the East Wing adjacent to Room 8 in order to examine the topographic setting of the courtyard structures. Here again features created by Gordon Millar were found and the south side of the trench was formed by a line of dressed stone (F190) laid within the topsoil. Removal of the topsoil and small stone rubble from the demolition of the East wing showed that the external wall had acted as a retaining wall. The height difference between the sub floor of Room 8 and the contemporary ground was only 0.4m. That external surface consisted of a thin layer of orange-brown clay loam resting on a rocky natural. There was no trace of a ditch or any other defensive feature.

Illus 16: Trench A looking west.

Gordon Millar had also constructed structures, including a series of water features, to the north of the courtyard buildings. To the east of the road leading to the pond a large pond (F200) lined with thick concrete and stone rubble had been inserted and no attempt was made to remove it (see illus 8 & 12). To the west of the road was a stone trough (F202) measuring 4.5m W/E by 1.4m N/S externally, which butted against the external wall of the North Wing. It was bonded by modern cement to form a water-tight structure 0.25m deep. A cast iron pipe led from the trough to the pond and was embedded in the present road. This trough in turn had been connected by another iron pipe (possibly a scaffolding pole) to a much smaller but slightly deeper tank (F204) to the west, 1.2m square. The smaller tank was fed by a buried black plastic pipe from the farmer's cattle trough in the field to the west.

Trench B was laid out over the area to the west of the present access road and in the process the two modern stone tanks were dismantled. Over a large area, immediately below the modern topsoil, was a grey layer of fine grit (F207) up to 5cm deep. This again can be associated with Millar and the keeping of hens. As can a W/E line of post stumps north of F204 which turned perpendicularly to the south at its west end, continuing as a N/S line of stones (F205), evidently used to weigh down the chicken wire.



Illus 17: Metalling F210 with tank F202 on the left and the causeway F213 below.

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Below F207 was a layer of small rubble stones in a dark brown loam matrix (F208), representing material rejected from the orderly dismantling of the North Wing. This in turn lay over an extensive fine compacted gravel surface (F210) which was much worn. A stone spindle whorl was found on its surface. It extended north beyond the edge of the trench, but petered out in the west more or less on line with the outer wall of the courtyard buildings. Towards the east end of Trench B its southern edge diverged from the north wall of the wing, suggesting that its main access was from the west. This was confirmed when it was found that the gravel yard surface (F210) extended under two later causeways carrying the present road to the pond. The first causeway was edged by rounded cobbles (F213) set 0.5m west of the pond wall, raising the road c0.2m above F210. The second was on line with the pond and raised it a further 0.2m. The road was later surfaced with red blaise.



The small tank (F204) had utilised the west end of a much earlier stone wall (F212) which was 0.8m thick and aligned W/E. It survived in rather a poor condition and had been much mutilated and only a few traces of white mortar were found in it. It appeared to be contemporary with the gravel yard surface (F210).

Illus 18: Rubble beyond the east courtyard wall terminating in line F205.

Trench B extended around the north-west corner of the courtyard buildings. Here the external courtyard wall has collapsed and only five courses remain. Large rubble from the collapse extended 2.5m westward, where it terminated on the line of Millar's stones (F205). The rubble also filled a 0.5m wide trench (F215)

dug alongside the external wall. In places this trench was 0.85m deep and had a steeply sloped outer side. The ground is higher outside than inside the courtyard buildings at this point and the trench was probably cut in the 20th century to alleviate problems of dampness. Around 1995 the Castle Trustees dug a slightly larger trench by machine along the west and south sides of the castle block for the same reason.

Trench F215 also cut a stone foundation extending westward from the external wall at a point where there is a vertical line in its masonry. Only the upper levels of this foundation were revealed in the 2001 work and it provided the greatest surprise of the excavation. The circular stone foundation of a previously unknown tower was uncovered. At the contemporary ground level it had an external diameter of 3.5m, but this was reduced to 2.7m by an offset at the next course up, making it a rather slender structure. The ground level had been deliberately built up

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around the foundation to the level of the offset by as much as 0.5m and sloped rapidly down beyond the front of the tower. This scarp was not matched by a counter scarp, suggesting that this was part of the landscaping designed to highlight the tower rather than being part of a ditch. Over subsequent centuries the area has been levelled off with loamy soils.

Illus 19: The foundations of the circular tower looking SW with trench F215 in the foreground.

Illus 20: The circular tower foundations looking east.



INTERPRETATION & DISCUSSION



Phase I – 16th century (palatial residence).

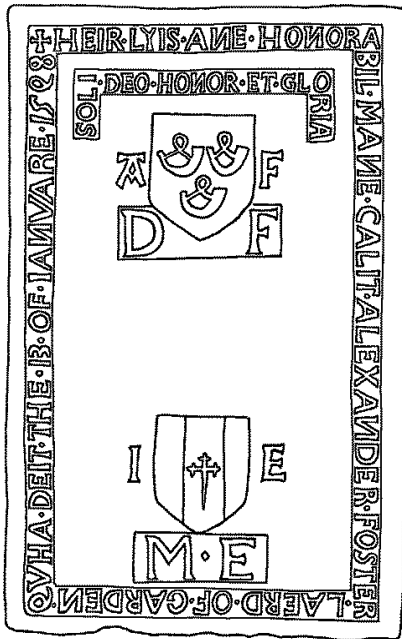
Illus 21: Datestone from Torwood.

The layout and style of the main castle block suggests a mid-16th century date for the initial complex of buildings at Torwood and a datestone of 1566 found almost 200m to the north-west in a stone boundary dyke supports that date (RCAHMS 1963, 337). The date ties in well with a confirmation by James VI in July 1567 of the office of forester and of the lands of Torwood to Alexander Forrester of Garden. The document includes the phrase “as also of building a mansion of stone and lime, with policies and plantations corresponding thereto” (Fleming 1902, 169). It is around this time, in 1588, that the expression “with fortalice and mansion” first appears in connection with the lands of Torwoodhead (RMS v.1567). No white gritty wares, Scarborough Wares or material of an earlier date, were found on the site and so it would seem that the castle was built *de nouveau* at that time. The sophisticated layout of the rooms in the castle and the deliberate disposition of architectural embellishment indicate that the layout was carefully considered and that the courtyard buildings should be examined with that in mind.



Illus 22: Ornate panel above the entrance.

The only doorway entrance into the castle has a grand setting. Its roll-and-hollow moulded frame is located at the foot of the large tower where it meets a smaller stair tower and was surmounted by a carved stone panel, now lost but presumably sporting heraldic devices. Sir Ian Bolton believed that the stone had been removed by the Dundas family to their residence at Carronhall for safekeeping before his grandfather bought the estate in 1872, and that it shared the fate of that house in being demolished (a sundial from Letham House was similarly transported). Sir Alexander Forrester of Garden was, for a time, Provost of Stirling. He married Jean Erskine and thus became affiliated with the Earl of Mar. Their gravestone is in the Garden Aisle of the Church of the Holy Rude in Stirling and displays two shields, the first depicts three hunting-horns for Forrester; the second has a cross-crosslet fitee in a pale for Erskine of the Shielfield branch. The associated motto reads “*soli deo honor et Gloria*” (Honour and glory to God alone). They provide an indication of what may have appeared on the Torwood panel.



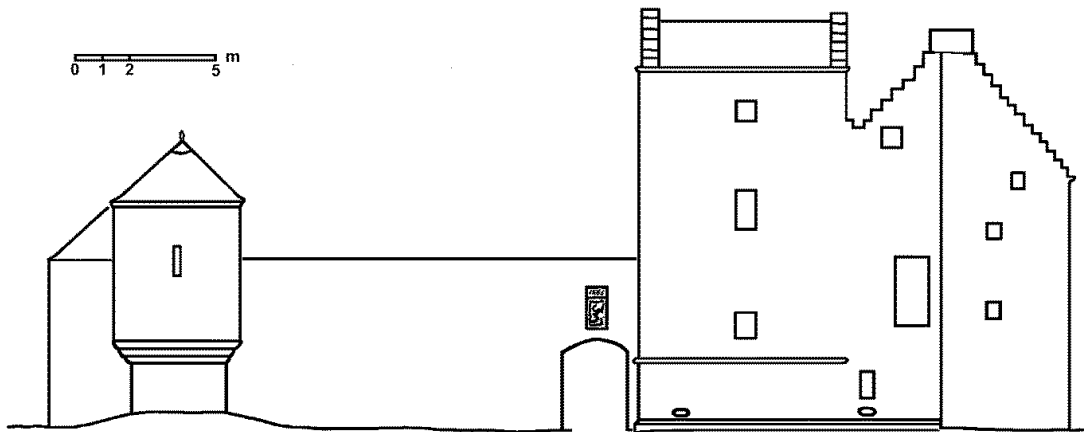
Illus 23: The gravestone of Alexander Forrester in the Church of the Holy Rude, Stirling.

Another local heraldic panel featuring the three hunting horns of Forrester and dating to 1643 can still be seen at Braes House only 1.4km to the west (RCAHMS 1963, 335).

The ornate surround of this heraldic panel consisted of pilasters and a foliate shell tympanum. This in turn was set within a moulded frame created by turning a string course around it. The moulded string course continues to either side and is echoed on the ground by a deeply chamfered plinth course. Horizontal oval gun loops cover the entrance from different directions. In combination these

decorative elements provide a pleasing setting indicating high status. Their extensions and dispositions should lead the visitor to the grand entrance, but are lost in the confusion of the present approach and later accretions of structures.

The phasing of the walls at the entrance pend, and the secondary nature of the causeway carrying the road to it, demonstrate that that was not the original entrance. The discovery of the round tower on the external west wall of the courtyard indicates that the approach was originally designed to be from the west and that the visitor would see a beautifully balanced composition of structures at ever closer quarters (as shown in illus 24). Under this arrangement the visitor's view would constantly change as they got closer due to the segmented nature of the buildings. From a distance there was a large mass at either end of the central curtain wall. That on the right was formed by a tall tower with its roof to the viewer, increasing the apparent height. The crow stepped lower gable of the main hall to its right would appear relatively conventional, but on approach the right hand side (south) would begin to protrude, breaking up the skyline in an unexpected manner. The round tower may have played a similar trick to the left in an equally playful way.



Illus 24: The western elevation as seen on the approach to Torwood Castle.

Getting closer more details would be seen. A prominent chamfered plinth course extended from the centre of the main gable to the courtyard entrance and above it were two of the iconic gun loops. A third of these came into view in the protruding gable segment sweeping the foot of that wall and the courtyard entrance. Offset from the plinth course was the moulded string course, beginning not at the centre of the hall gable, but on line with the otherwise indiscernible corner of the tower – an unexpected and thus bold statement. It was mirrored at the top of the large tower by a moulded eaves course. In between was a vertical string of centrally placed windows, also with good quality mouldings. This harsh symmetry contrasted strongly with the disposition of window apertures in the gable of the hall. These varied greatly in size, and placement. Most conspicuous was the large picture window on the first floor at the end of the hall. The protruding segment of the hall gable had only small apertures for the stairs. Even this small amount was more than that possessed by the wall curtain in the centre. As we now have it this is surprisingly blank. However, if the entrance was in this area it would have lain at the foot of the large tower in order to incorporate the gun loops on its north side into the procession. The entrance arch would have needed to be lofty so that it left the moulded string course of the tower visible, leaving a large void in an otherwise blank wall – an area of transition from the well-appointed tower. Above the arch there was probably a decorative panel, which may have incorporated the 1566 datestone.

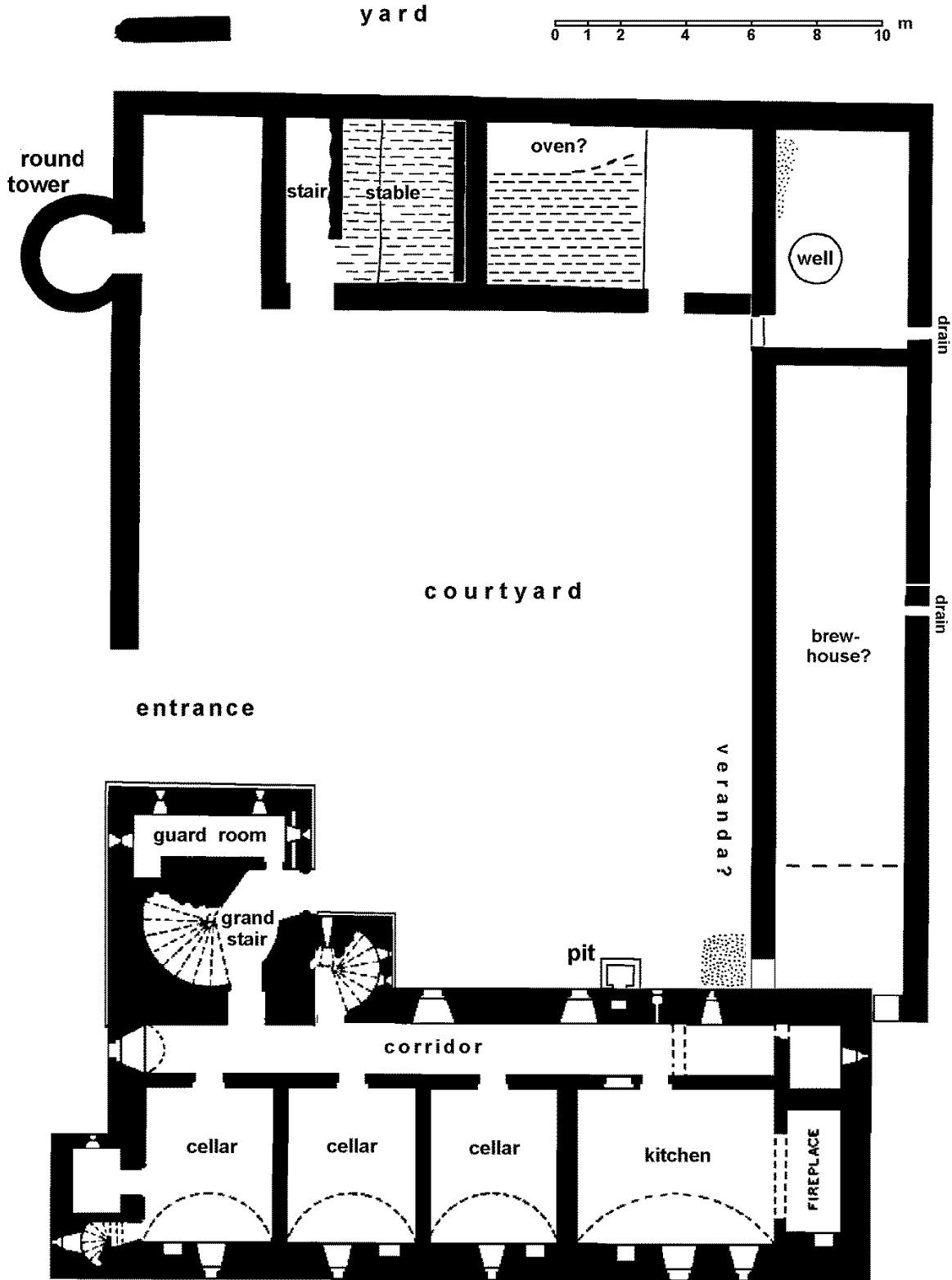


Illus 25: The chamfered plinth at the north-west corner of the tower with gun loop above. Looking SE.

To the left was the small round tower set on a low mound of earth. Its positioning some distance from the northern corner of the external wall was deliberate and the degree to which the circular structure protrudes

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from the wall curtain shows that it was mainly decorative. Its slenderness suggests that it may have possessed a corbelled top and a candle snuff roof. Had it been a doocot, it too would have continued the theme of the curtain wall in having only small apertures, probably facing south to the sun and the entrance.



Illus 26: Plan of Phase I.

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Entering the gateway the visitor was flanked on the right by the two gun loops at the foot of the tower, set just above the chamfered plinth. Above them was the string course, acting as a guide. Looking up the first three windows reflected the central line on the west side, but the two above were displaced to the east corner, indicating the direction of travel and providing distant views from the upper stories along the north avenue. Across the courtyard the visitor would have seen the two-storey East Wing. Its upper storey communicated with the main block by a doorway into the withdrawing room. This has a short well constructed arched roof passage that is clearly contemporary with the castle. There are no keying stones for this wing where it was attached to the main block and it may have been half timbered, which would have provided another interesting architectural contrast. Its long ground floor room may have been the brewhouse (Room 8), with the well room in the north-east corner of the courtyard buildings (Room 7). As the well also provided the water that was fed into an aperture in the north wall of the castle block that lay in front of the East Wing it is possible that there was a veranda in front of it. On the visitor's left was the two-storey North Wing of the Courtyard. Room 2 has been identified as the stairwell, Room 3/4 as the stables and 5/6 as the bakery. The south wall of this wing butts against the west wall of the West Wing just to the north of the doorway into the well room. This may mean that the North Wing was later, though it is probable that this was merely a phased programme of implementation of a single plan. It is not known if the West Wing was built at this time. The roof raggle set into the north wall of the large tower is late and may represent its introduction. The arrangement of alternating presses and fireplaces in the outer wall of this wing, noted by the RCAHMS, is not original as one of them obscures the entrance to the round tower.

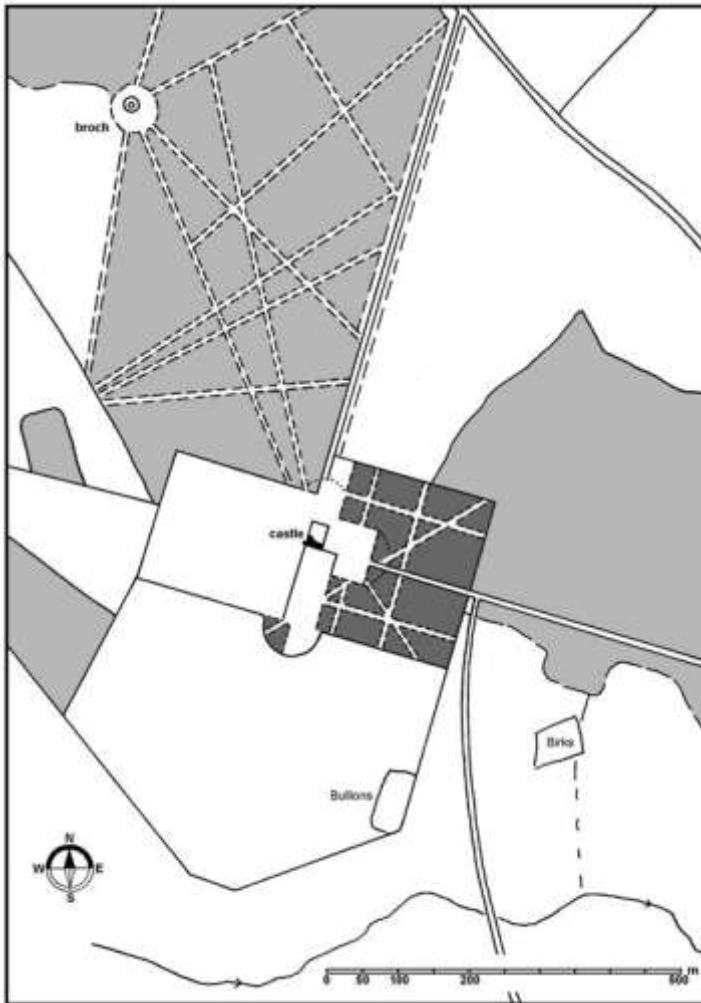
By this stage the visitor was well into the courtyard and had to turn to their right at the end of the large tower where a view of the north front of the main block opened up for the first time. It too was relatively plain, but for a large window on the first floor in the hall. Again a small vertical structure led the eye to the right end of this wall and to a neat square stair tower with similar fine stonework to that of its larger neighbour. Just above the chamfered plinth course in the stair tower was another gun loop which directly covered the only entrance to the main block and which was now finally revealed in all its finery. This entrance gave access to a splendid ceremonial stair (see Phd).

The sophisticated nature of the architecture of the castle would have extended to the grounds where we might expect formal gardens of an intricate pattern and avenues providing lines of sight. The earliest layout known to us is that shown on General Roy's Great Map in the mid 18th century. At that time the ornate garden beds lay on the level ground to the east and it is reasonable to assume that they had done so for some time. 110m south of the castle is an apsidal enclosure wall set in the

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middle of a straight boundary wall that takes the same alignment as the hall and is centred on it. It is shown on Roy's map, but a similar feature set perpendicular to it 70m east of the castle is not – though it is echoed by the open rectangular space on the map set amidst the compartments of the garden. A third apse, 60m to the north of the castle, may be deduced from the way in which the present entrance gate there projects across the line of the trackway. These apsidal walls, all centred on the castle, appear to be the vestiges of the original layout. The greater distance of the south apse from the castle may have been due to the original formal gardens having lain on the sunny side of the main block where they could be viewed from the large windows of the hall and the window seats of the floor above. Westward was the main approach, already mentioned. In order to make the best impression this should have been straight, as was the case with the later eastern approach. It should also have commenced at a distance, branching off the main road from Falkirk to Stirling whose successor is the right of way from Denovan along the west side of the field on that side of the castle.

The first editions of the Ordnance Survey maps show the Roman road running north from Camelon passing through the apse south of Torwood Castle and then west of the broch where it can still be traced on the ground. It was still visible in the 18th century (Nimmo 1777, 21), but was removed at that time by agricultural improvements. It was drawn on the OS maps from information provided by local people (the alignment was changed on later OS maps for no apparent reason, Crawford 1949, 16-17). The medieval road need not have followed its Roman predecessor, but it is likely to have been in the same general area. The small amount of pottery at Torwood is surprising, though the buildings had evidently been kept tidy during their period of usage. There is nothing in the limited finds assemblage to indicate that the site had been occupied before 1566. Yet the documentary references to Torwoodhead start much earlier (Reid 1995, 40-45). The only clue that we have for the location of its predecessor is the alignment of the avenues in the woodland between the castle and the broch. Four of the long sight lines focus on an apparently empty site just to the west of an extensive field boundary that runs parallel to the Roman road and which may represent the medieval road. Presumably the focus was the ruins of the previous principal dwelling. Again, this would support an original western approach to the 16th century castle.



Illus 27: Plan of the landscape around Torwood Castle in 1750 based upon Roy's map. Pale grey represents woodland, dark grey the formal gardens

The castle would have been completed by the time that it first enters into national history in 1585. The "banished lords" who had fled to England as a result of Arran's authoritarian rule returned to Scotland with a large armed force and financial backing from Queen Elizabeth. At the end of October they gathered in Falkirk (Gordon & Gordon 1813, 181). They included, amongst others, the Earls of Angus, Mar and Bothwell, the Lords Hamilton, Home, Glamis and Maxwell. On 31st of that month they "took and manned the place of

Woodhead, beside the Tor-wood" (Moyses 1755, 100). The following day between three and four thousand men pitched their tents at St Ninian's church and at dawn on the 2nd November they entered the town of Stirling. Within a week that castle too was theirs, along with James VI. Arran had fled.

There can be little doubt that the Earl of Mar was amongst those at Torwood Castle on this occasion. Within a few years he was back at the head of a force of 600 armed men. One of his servants named David Forrester, a Baillie of Stirling, had been murdered by the followers of the Bruces of Airth and the Livingstons of Dunipace and he escorted the funeral procession through their lands (Reid 1995, 46).

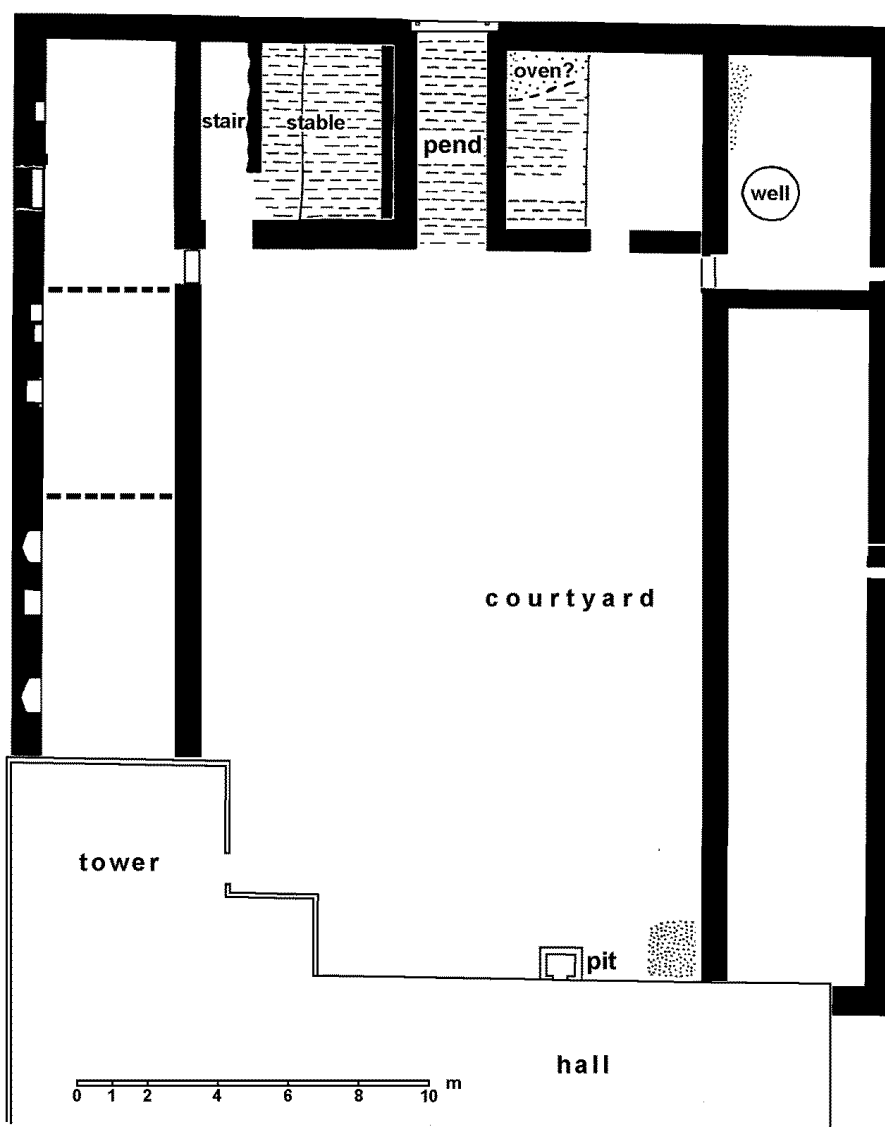
Phase II - 17th Century (Baronial House & Park).

The departure of the Royal Court to England in 1603 meant that there was less need for royal forests in Scotland and the role of the forester declined. This was acknowledged in 1603 when Charles I issued letters on 15th March 1632 to Margaret and Mary Forrester, granddaughters of Sir Alexander Forrester, granting them special permission to pursue the

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delinquents slaying the deer and cutting the trees at Torwood and to use any fines and "amerciements" levied for their own purposes (Fleming 1902, 171). The wood had evidently suffered from neglect and these new powers, along with sales of wood, were used by the family to put the estate in order. A Jesuit priest travelling to Stirling in 1643 noted that the wood "now hath nothing but some scattered oackes, dying for antiquity, which conserve the name and memory of that sometimes so famous a Wood". In 1636 Margaret and her husband, Lord William Ross of Murieston, had sold the estate to a distant relative, Lord George Forrester of Corstorphine. The lands of Torwoodhead and the forest there were erected into a barony. The ratification of the conveyance refers to the "tower, fortalice, mansion, houses, buildings, yards, orchards, tofts, crofts of the same" and notes that the mansion or dwelling was called "Forrester's mansion." It also confirmed the suppression of the name and office of forestry of Torwood, giving and granting Lord Forrester the trees and grass there (Brown et al 2007, 1641/8/300).

The grounds around the castle were revamped in the 17th century and extensive gardens were placed to the east of the castle, where they were not readily visible from the main black. The intersecting avenues between the castle and the broch, shown on Roy's map, are also likely to belong to this period. The broch was not recognised as such at the time, but the knoll formed from its collapse was evidently identified as a piece of antiquity, perhaps as a 'tumulus.' Broad terraces were placed around it with drystone retaining walls containing large boulders. The concept may have derived from the slightly earlier King's Knot in Stirling, though the use of antique mounds as terraced garden viewing platforms does seem to have occurred elsewhere in Scotland at this period (Brown 2017, 139-140). The broch mound at Torwood was used as the focus for many of the vistas – one extending from it to the large tower at the castle. For this to be effective the wood must have been replanted.



Illus 28: Suggested plan of the courtyard in the mid 17th century.

At some point the arterial road to Stirling was diverted to pass to the east of the castle. Roy shows a road running between Bullions and Birks (see illus 27), which seems to represent the last vestige of the new road. If so, it must have skirted the gardens and joined the north avenue to the present road through Torwood village. In the first half of the 18th century the better engineered turnpike was placed even further east and a straight new avenue extended out eastward to it from the castle. The main road was lined with stone dykes, which is why General Hawley preferred not to take it with his army in 1746 (Bailey 1996, 91).

These changes meant that for a time the northern approach to the castle became the main one and the opportunity was taken to place the courtyard entrance in the centre of the North Wing. This freed up the west side of the courtyard for development. It seems highly probable that it was George Forrester of Corstorphine who built the West Wing in the mid 17th century, utilising the earlier wall curtain. Fireplaces and

presses alternate in this wall in a manner which suggests that it was divided into three compartments and that more people were living here. The roof of this wing was monopitched, and in the absence of windows in the west wall we must assume that there were dormers on the first floor looking into the courtyard. The turner of 1632 found in Room 7 may also hint that the wellhead was rebuilt at this time, though its context is ambivalent. It is tempting to see this as part of a larger scheme that involved the decommissioning of much of the East Wing. If the upper storey was removed it would have opened up views of the gardens. Later still the East Wing was removed altogether. The outer wall was used as a boundary wall, presumably much reduced in height. The inner wall was hidden under the courtyard metalling and the east drive entered along the north side of the main block heading straight for the entrance. It is noticeable that the central axis of the formal gardens is aligned on the courtyard rather than the main block and that they surround an outer court here.

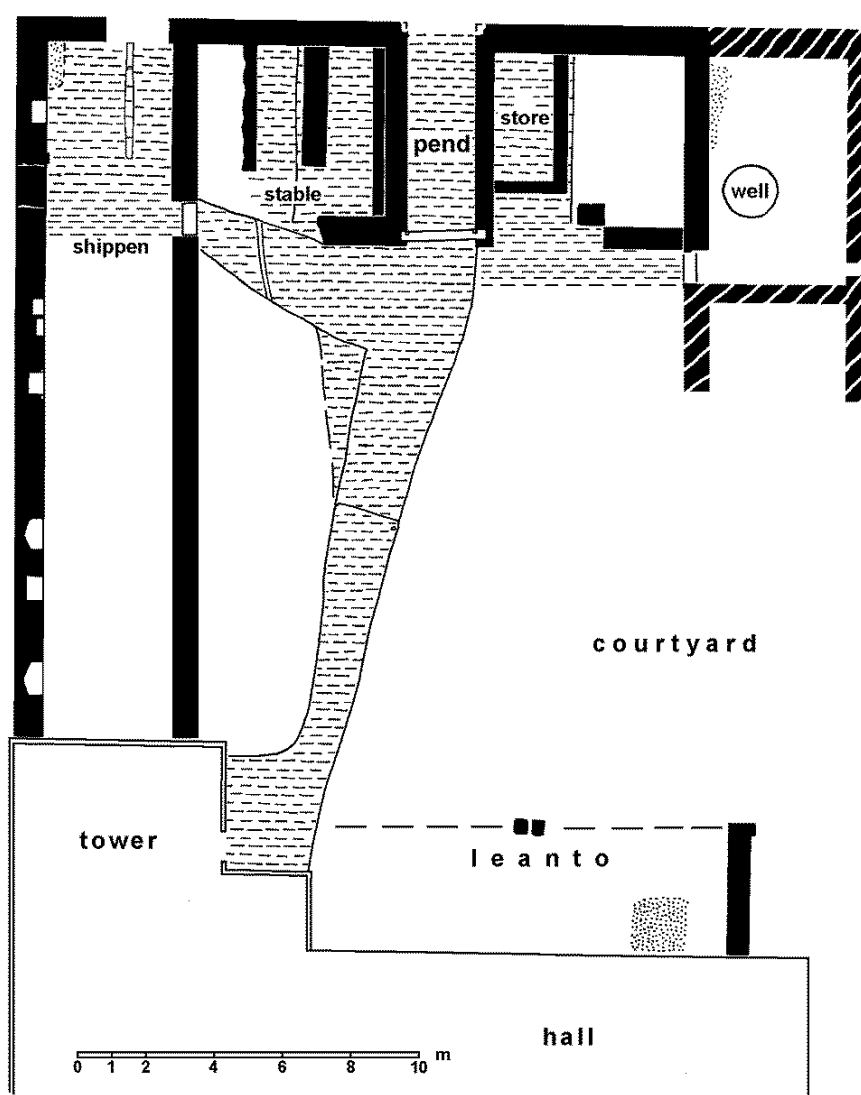
On the marriage of his daughter to James Baillie, son of Lt-General William Baillie of Letham, in 1649, Lord George transferred Torwood to the couple. As part of the marriage contract James thereafter took the name of Forrester (Reid 1995, 47). Just two years later, in 1651, General William Baillie was an officer in the Royal army and both of the houses at Letham and Torwood were used in a line of fortifications that stopped Cromwell's army from gaining a foothold on the north side of the River Carron. These defences would have been well to the south of the castle, but some cannon may have been placed there (Bailey 1992).

Phase III – 18th Century (Farmhouse)

After the Cromwellian victory at Worcester in September 1651 the estate of Torwood must have been run down, but it continued to be occupied. Over the following decades, as the property fell to more and more distant relatives with their own estates elsewhere, it ceased to be inhabited as a main residence. In the end it was sold in 1749 to Thomas Dundas of Fingask, thus ending the long association with the Forresters. The grounds still showed signs of their former splendour when Roy mapped the gardens and avenues in the 1750s. However during the second half of the 18th century the castle seems to have been used as a farm.

During this phase the courtyard buildings were radically altered to suite their new role. The East Wing was completely removed and the walls taken down to below ground level, leaving the well in Room 7 open. A spread of gravel metalling covered the southern end of the old wing and on this wall F240 was built to form the east end of a leanto shelter that fronted the castle. Half way along the front of the shed the post pad F239 indicates that it had an open front, which would have been suitable

for a cart shed. Its interior was also metalled. The entrances into the remaining rooms of the North Wing were considerably widened. Walls inserted into Room 5/6 suggest a storage bin there (see above). An additional N/S partition creating Rooms 3 and 4, along with the partial demolition of the stair in Room 2, demonstrate the reorientation of the stable stalls in this area (above). The north wall of Room 1 had a broad access doorway punched through it and the floor was repaved. These alterations would have allowed the whole of the West Wing to have been used as a shippen. A well-paved path across the courtyard from the pend indicates that the castle may have continued in use as a residence, albeit somewhat less grand. Some of the internal walls on the ground floor were cut back in order to improve the access to the vaulted store rooms, presumably at this time.



Illus 29: Suggested plan of the courtyard buildings in the late 18th century.

By the mid 19th century the place was deserted. The Ordnance Survey Name Book, completed in the late 1850s, states that: "The ruins of this castle are situated near the southern extremity of, and in, Tor Wood. The walls of it are still complete, but the roof has fallen in, an extensive

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courtyard would appear to have been attached as a considerable portion of the west wall is still standing, the remainder being traceable." (OSNB).

Illus 30: Print of Torwood Castle published in 1871 (Henderson 1871).

This description is confirmed by an illustration produced in the 1871 edition of "A Cloud of Witnesses". Inevitably the buildings deteriorated still further and stone from the courtyard was used to construct drystone field dykes in the area.



Illus 31: 1st ed OS map.

Phase IV – Gordon Miller (smallholding)

The castle's isolation saved it from the worst of the stone robbing. It had become a burden on its owner and so it was only with difficulty that a member of the public stopped the army engineers from using the buildings to practice setting explosives. In 1957 the Dundas family was happy to sell it to an enthusiast keen on restoring the castle. This was Gordon Miller, an accountant from Glasgow, who actively set about consolidating the fabric and bringing the house back into use. He trained himself to undertake the mason work and widened the pend to provide access for a wide trailer required to bring in extra stone with which to finish the wallheads. For forty years he lived in a single room which he

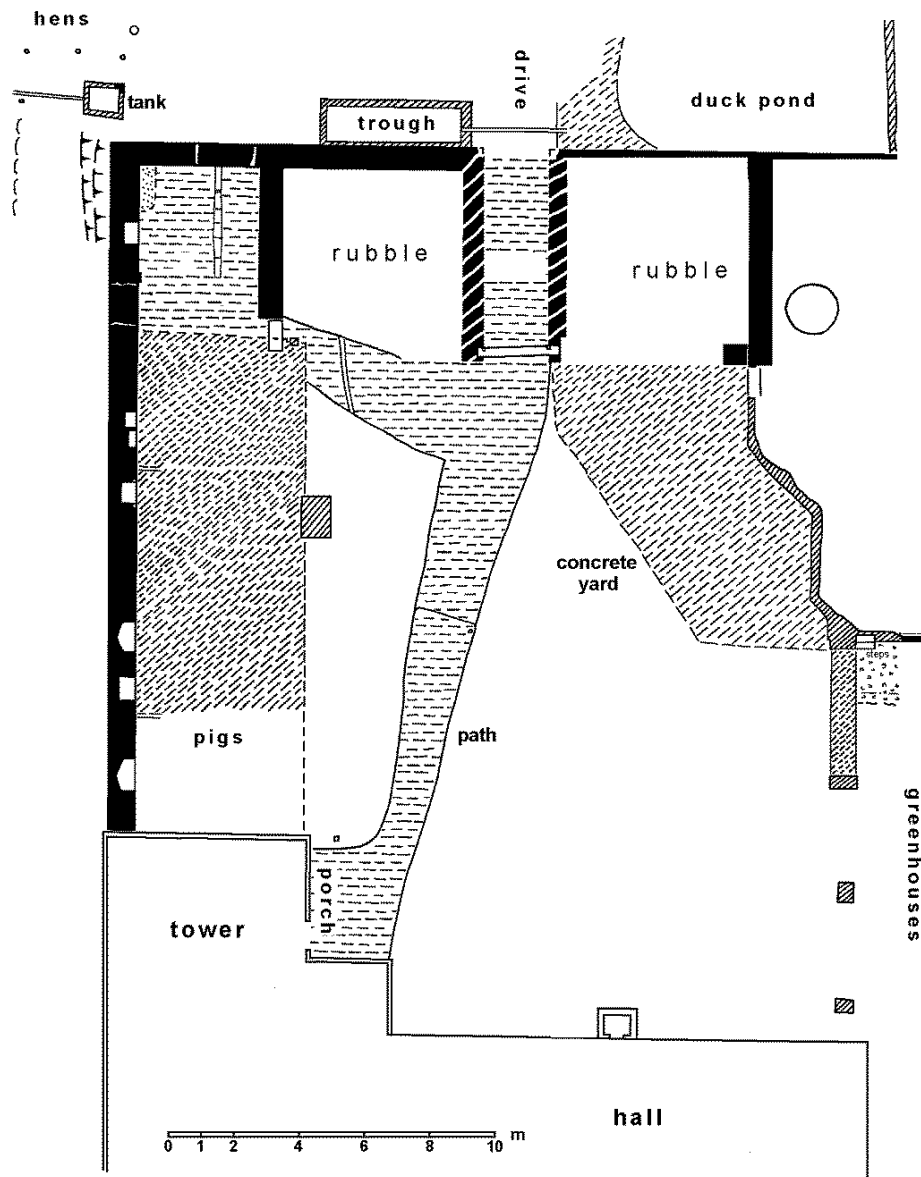
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formed off the ceremonial staircase on the first floor of the tower. The wooden shutters on the windows here are a reminder of his occupation. He also established a smallholding, raising pigs, poultry and vegetables. A concrete floor was laid in the old West Wing as far north as Room 1 and the area was enclosed with tall wooden posts supporting chicken wire. The tree that had stood in the south end of the east wing was removed and dwarf stone walls and columns built in its place to provide the bases of greenhouses. Small rubble from the clearance of these sites was piled up on the area of the North Wing. There was no water supply and so a pipe was led from the farmer's cattle trough into the concrete-lined tanks and ponds mentioned above. Gordon bathed in the pond, as did the ducks. Poultry were kept in large enclosures to the north-west of the courtyard.



Illus 32: Torwood Castle around 1940. The figure of Doreen Hunter holding a plaque can just be made out in front of the tower.

In the 1970s this romantic looking farmstead in a ruined castle was chosen as a film setting for an episode of the BBC drama called "Dr Finlay's Casebook". For the show a false window frame was inserted into the window aperture in the withdrawing room and an open timber porch covered by corrugated felt painted to look like rusting tin; both features being subsequently retained.



Illus 33: Features associated with Gordon Miller.

Gordon and his brother Hugo, who leased Castlecary Castle from Doreen Hunter, were both interested in history and archaeology. Doreen became the first professional curator of Falkirk Museum and she and Gordon dug narrow trenches about 0.3m wide along the sides of the walls of the courtyard buildings in order to clarify the plan for the Royal Commission on Historic and Ancient Monuments of Scotland which was compiling its inventory of such monuments in Stirlingshire in the late 1950s (RCAHMS 1963, 337; DES 1958).

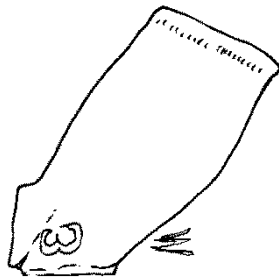
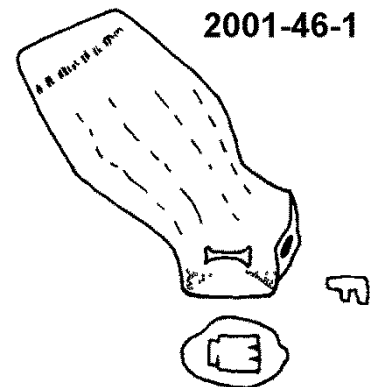


Illus 34: The foot of the tower with wooden shutters and porch still in place. The fireplace on the right is also a Miller feature.

FINDS

Clay Tobacco Pipes.

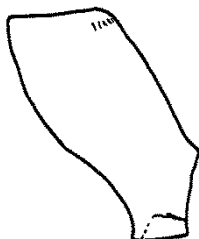
1. Bowl with milling below the rim and a "castle" stamp on the heel. The initials "IF" are poorly impressed. 1660-1680. The initials are those of John Fergusson of Stirling who began manufacturing there in 1664 (Bailey et al forthcoming). 2001-46-1 (topsoil).



2001-46-58

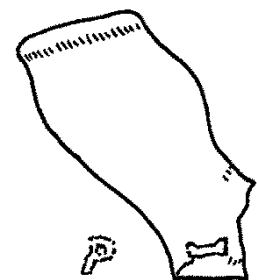
2. Bowl, milled, with mould imparted W/B. The bowl is long and barrel shaped. 1640-70.

William Banks of Edinburgh was the first Scottish maker of tobacco pipes, 1622-1661. His pipes are commonly found in the eastern part of Central Scotland, eg Edinburgh (Lawson 1976, 219, no 22), Linlithgow Palace (Caldwell & Lewis 1996, 847, no 53), Stirling Castle (Davey 19??, 49, no 11) and Tantallon Castle (Caldwell 1991, 355, nos 189-190). 2001-46-58 (topsoil).



2001-46-115

3. Bowl fragment, c1660. 2001-46-109 (TC26).



2001-46-114

4. Bowl, with the letters "IP" in relief on the sides 1660-1680. The P may be a poorly marked B for John Banks of Edinburgh. 2001-46-114 (TC37).

5. Bowl with milling and star basal stamp for Stirling. 1670-90. 2001-46-115 (TC37).

6. Bowl fragment, 19th century. 2001-46-191 (topsoil).

30 stem fragments were also collected, of which 28 can be attributed to the 17th or early 18th centuries and only two to the 19th. This corresponds well with the known history of the castle. It is not surprising to find that of the four identifiable 17th century bowls two were manufactured close by at Stirling. Indeed, in 1688 Robert Ferguson had entered into a contract with Dame Lillias Forrester to dig clay from any part of the lands of Torwoodhead for a period of seven years.

Ceramics

Torwood Castle was constructed at a time when oxidised green-glazed wares predominated. They were displaced in the 18th century by similar vessels with mica-rich fabrics fired in a reducing atmosphere producing black interiors which were available in greater quantities. Given the known history of the castle it is not surprising therefore to find the two types present in comparable numbers. The 1959 and the 1998-2001 excavations produced 367 sherds of reduced green-glazed ware and 321 of the oxidised variety. These are not large numbers and reflect the presence of only a small number of individual vessels, usually of jugs or jars. A large proportion of the oxidised green-glaze sherds came from the courtyard surfaces and from the metalling to the north of the North Wing. For broken pottery such surfaces are classic disposal sites as the sherds augment the existing surfaces. By contrast, many of the reduced examples were found inside the main block, in the North Wing or the topsoil – all of which suggests a decline in the standards of housework. Other coarsewares were present in very small quantities and included red wares, cream slip wares and brown-glazed pottery. Salt-glazed stoneware or bellarmine fragments dating to the 17th century were few (7 sherds). A handful of modern china was found, but there were no early finewares.

One of the more unusual ceramic items was the two white glazed ceramic eggs (1999-32-1) found beyond the North Wing. These belong to the Miller period and were to encourage the hens to lay eggs.

Roofing Material

Nine examples of sandstone roofing slabs with nail holes were retained, but the numerous fragments of blank slabs were not. 1999-32-2 and 2001-46-60. These were all found in redeposited contexts and presumably derived from the roof of the main block. Pantile was present but was quite scarce. Up until the end of the 19th century such tiles were often salvaged from buildings being demolished for reuse elsewhere and this may account for their small numbers.

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Stone

1. Stone spindle whorl of bulbous form with concentric grooves around the wider end of the central hole. The opposite end is worn and may also have formerly possessed grooves. 2001-46-2 (embedded in early cobbling F210).
2. Whetstone fragment of square section with rounded corners. 40mm x 40mm. 2001-46-123 (TC11).

Metal

1. Iron key. 13cm long. 2001-46-68 (topsoil outside SE corner of Room 8).
2. Wrought iron key with copper alloy coating. 2001-46-197 (TC11).
3. Horse shoe. Thick wrought iron horse shoe from the early metalled surface north of the courtyard buildings (F210). 2001-46-3.
4. Copper alloy ring made in two hollow sections allowing them to rotate independently. 2001-46-14 (TC361).
5. Lace tag end of copper alloy in the form of a tapering tube. Very corroded. 2001-46-57 (TC368).
6. Copper alloy turner with a thistle on the reverse, 1632-39. 2001-46-59 (Miller excavation trench in Room 7)

Food and Drink

17th-18th century bottle glass occurred throughout the areas investigated and are a reminder of the import of foreign wines. Bone does not generally survive very well and the bulk of that recovered came from on top of the courtyard and external metalled surfaces. It was reduced to small fragments by the traffic, but cattle and pig/sheep can readily be identified. A handful of oyster shells came from the same contexts.

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