

# Tarbert Castle Excavation Publication Draft



Roddy Regan October 2022



Le taic bhon Chrannchur Nàiseanta tro Mhaoin-Dualchais a' Chrannchuir

ÀRAINNEACHD EACHDRAIDHEIL ALBA

ENVIRONMENT

SCOTLAND

#### Abstract

An early historic C7<sup>th</sup>-C8<sup>th</sup> date recovered from a deposit sealed below the castle walls raises the intriguing possibility of the site being the 'Tairpirt Boittir' mentioned in the Irish annals. The excavation work has also shed light on several important aspects of the construction and layout of the Medieval Tarbert Castle. It has been shown that both the inner bailey and outer bailey the castle were likely constructed at the same time and not the result of two separate building campaigns as previously thought. Dating of the mortar within the walls indicate these were constructed between 1210calAD and 1290calAD. The work has also confirmed the presence of two portcullis gates into the outer bailey of the castle and shed some light on the corner tower at the southwest of the same enclosure. The work has also shown that well preserved medieval deposits survive within both enclosures, the occupation within the former dated between 1282calAD - 1398calAD. The excavation also located the remains of one medieval building along with medieval deposits lying on the ridge south of the main castle, these likely confirming the previously postulated presence of the medieval on this ridge.

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# 1. Introduction and the Background to the Project

In order to better understand the scheduled site of Tarbert Castle, Kintyre, Argyll and promote it within the community and beyond Tarbert Castle Trust (TCT; formerly the Tarbert and Skipness Community Trust) aimed to conduct an archaeological investigation.

Tarbert Castle - Our Castle of Kings, a Community Excavation Project was initiated by TCT who own Tarbert Castle on behalf on the community, maintaining the castle fabric and keeping the castle grounds open to the public as a Heritage Park. <u>www.tarbertcastle.info</u>

Over the past 13 years the Trust has undertaken a strategy involving an extensive community effort to make the site more accessible to the public and to save and consolidate the remaining built structures. This included creating a sustainable conservation plan and a major consolidation of the Tower House. The Trust has improved access to the site by upgrading and consolidating paths through the castle site and providing improved information signage to the castle itself.

With this in mind, in 2013 and funded by HLF, TCT commissioned a historical and non-invasive survey of the monument (Explore Tarbert Castle - YH-12-03691), this involved

- i) The production of a Desk Based Assessment which collated existing information about the history and archaeology of Tarbert Castle
- ii) A laser scan of the castle
- iii) A geophysical survey of the castle
- iv) A descriptive and photographic survey of the castle remains

The results of this work were combined in the subsequent report (Regan 2013a).

The proposed excavation within the scheduled area of the castle and burgh required Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) and with this in mind an Excavation Project Design was prepared by Roddy Regan to accompany the SMC application (Regan 2018b).

Other works within the castle have included a watching brief and a survey of the tower (CFA 1993; Wood 2010).

#### 2. Location and Topography

The castle occupies a prominent ridge on the southeast side of East Loch Tarbert within the parish of Kilcalmonell. (Illus. 1-3, Centred NR 86770 68730, Tarbert Castle, Canmore ID 39316; Tarbert Mediaeval Burgh, Canmore ID 39321). The castle sits above a small well-sheltered harbour at East Loch Tarbert overlooking the present Tarbert village. The castle remains occupying and uneven ridge standing between 22m and 35m above the village and its outer walls are naturally defended on the north, east and west sides by steep rocky scarps around the edge of the ridge, these sheer in places, particularly on the west side. To the southwest the ground falls away from the castle in a series of ridges towards the present village of Tarbert. The village is situated on a small low-lying piece of land on the northeastern shore of the isthmus separating Loch Fyne and the Clyde Estuary from the Sound of Jura and the Atlantic Ocean effectively

linking the Kintyre peninsula to Knapdale and the rest of mainland Argyll. This position is reflected in the placename Tarbert (Gaelic; *Tairbeart*) which is a toponym meaning porterage a name often given to places, usually isthmuses, where boats could be transported between two bodies of water. Lying some 1.5km away to the southwest is the north end of West Loch Tarbert, a narrow fjord-like loch some 14 km long that comprises the western side of the isthmus.

The orientation of West Loch Tarbert reflects the underlying geology of the wider Grampian region including Argyll which is dominated by southwest-northeast orientated Dalradian metamorphic strata including Ardrishaig Phyllites to various Schistose lithologies. Tarbert is situated across several parallel lithostratigraphic layers within this sequence, including a narrow stratum of Loch Tay Limestone which outcrops on the foreshore of Loch Fyne to the north of East Loch Tarbert.

The main nucleus of the Castle is formed by the Inner Bailey which occupies the highest outcrop on the ridge; the lower ridges are enclosed by a curtain wall (the Outer Bailey) including a Tower House at the west. Over the past seven years the site, has been steadily cleared of a substantial amount of scrub and vegetation cover by TCT. The castle grounds are now mainly covered in sheep-maintained grass cover, with a few gorse bushes.



Illus. 1 Argyll



Illus. 2 Tarbert Castle layout and Scheduled Monument area

# 3. Historical and Archaeological Background

#### 3.1 Tarbert Castle: Early Origins?

It has been argued that nearly all Scottish western seaboard castles were likely to have been built on earlier sites such as prehistoric forts, duns and brochs (Raven 2012). Raven suggested that there was a significant phase of occupation beginning in the thirteenth century, accelerating in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but then declining although still occurring in the seventeenth century (Raven 2005). The work has thrown up a complicated picture of their use, from convenient places of refuge to communal meeting places, summer dwellings and even fishing lodges. There also appears to be a link between the re-use of sites with a desire to naturalise Gaelic familial lineages with a place, particularly after a period of Viking and Norse influence, these places seen as representing links to a pre-Norse past with legitimacy of occupation that perhaps stems from such claims. While the majority of duns, forts, brochs and crannogs in Argyll show no evidence of having been reoccupied, a number of excavated sites have, including the sites at Kildonan (Canmore ID 38756 Fairhurst 1939), Ugadale (Canmore ID 38760 Fairhurst 1956), MacEwan's Castle

(Canmore ID 39861 Marshall 1982) and Dun Mhuirich (Canmore ID 39122 Regan 2013b). Few castle sites have yet produced evidence of earlier prehistoric use although this may be due to the lack of extensive excavation in and around existing castle sites in Argyll and elsewhere. It may also be partially explained by the removal of any earlier evidence by the large-scale groundworks and site clearance required during the construction of a castle.

Oram has also argued that while many smaller fortified sites in the western Highlands and Hebrides show a continuity of occupation between the earlier and later medieval periods, there is a discontinuity between sites that have associations with kingship or similar authority pre-800. For example, sites such as Dunadd were abandoned or declined in status with new royal centres of authority that were quite different in character developing between *c*.800 and *c*.1100.

While evidence of prehistoric occupation at Tarbert and other castle sites in Argyll still largely eludes us, there is the possibility that the site may be the *Tairpert Boiter* mentioned in the Annals of Ulster, named alongside Dunollie (*Dun Ollaigh* Canmore ID 23027), Dunadd (*Dun Att* Canmore ID39564) and Dunaverty (*Aberte* Canmore ID 38302). Dunollie was a stronghold of the Cenél Loairn while Dunaverty and Dunadd along with *Tairpirt Boitter* were likley controlled by the Cenél nGabráin. Cenél Loairn and Cenél nGabráin appear to by the two most prominent kindreds of Dalriata in the 8<sup>th</sup> century and the two mentions of *Tairpirt Boitter* in the Irish annals appear to be the result of conflict between them (Bannerman 1974). Excavations and both Dunadd and Dunollie have shown that their mention in the annals are based on occupation evidence during the periods they are mentioned.

The Annals of Ulster mention the burning of a fort at Tarbert on two occasions in 712, '*Combusti(o) Tairpert Boiter'* (The burning of Tairpert Boiter, AU 712.2) and in 731 '*Combustio Tairpert Boitir apud Dunghal*" (The burning of Tairpert Boitir by Dúngal, AU 731.4).

Although the 712 entry doesn't mention who actually burnt '*Tairpert Boiter*' it is likely it was carried out by Selbach Mac Ferchair of Cenél Loairn, who also besieged Dunaverty in the same year ('*Obsesio Aberte apud Selbachum*' - The siege of Aberte by Selbach AU 712.5). The second entry refers to Selbachs son Dúngal also leader of Cenél Loairn against the Cenél nGabráin leader at that time Eochaid, Eochaid's son.

If the present Tarbert castle is indeed the site of the *Tairpert Boiter* of the annals, then the question must be where are the earlier remains? The other sites mentioned in the annals, Dunollie, Dunadd and Dunaverty along with many other duns and forts in Argyll are built on prominent geological stacks. If an earlier structure existed at Tarbert, and these geological determinants were followed, then the place most likely for the position of an earlier fortification would be on the rise now occupied by the inner bailey, and if so, its construction may have eradicated most if not all the evidence of any such building, although pockets of earlier occupation might survive.

After this period the castle is seldom mentioned in extant historical records until the 14<sup>th</sup> century although Tarbert as a strategic place continues to be mentioned.

#### 3.2 The Medieval Castle and Burgh

The cultural and historical understanding of the surviving castle fabric has long been framed around the narrative of its construction and control by the Scottish Crown and its strategic importance in controlling the western isles and in royal eyes its often-non-compliant inhabitants.

The castle was surveyed and described by MacGibbon and Ross in the late 19th century who proposed three major phases of construction (MacGibbon and Ross 1887). The first phase consisted of the

construction of a small sub-square enclosure 'Castle' situated on the summit of the site which they ascribed it to their 13th-century 'First Period' of Scottish castle construction based on a 'strong resemblance to Kinclaven Castle' in Perthshire (Canmore ID 77407). The second phase involved the construction of large irregularly shaped 'Lower Courtyard', attached to the earlier smaller primary enclosure with drum towers adjacent to a probable entranceway in the north-east with two further mural towers projecting from the south-west curtain wall. They ascribed this phase to the early 14th century based on a surviving account of John De Lany, the castles constable, in the Scottish Crown's Exchequer Rolls detailing various 'additions and repairs' undertaken at Tarbert Castle in 1325/6 during the reign of Robert I (Stuart and Burnett 1878). The third phase comprised the construction of a four-storey 'Keep', which straddled the south-east curtain wall of the Lower Courtyard. This construction was ascribed to the late 15th or early 16th-century on the basis of the general masonry style and various architectural details underlined by a historical account of 1494 mentioning the 'biggin of Tarbert', in the same year that King James IV reportedly met with several West Highland magnates on the site (Dickson 1877). A second extensive survey of the castle fabric was undertaken by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCHAMS) for their Inventory of Kintyre (RCHAMS 1971 No. 316, 179-84). They produced a more detailed account and plan of the site which confirmed the MacGibbon and Ross phase development suggesting that the walls of the 'Outer Bailey' were secondary and abutted the otherwise complete ground-plan of the 'Inner Bailey' located on the site summit.

With some changes in terminology, other interpretations have followed MacGibbon and Ross's initial threephase developmental scheme. Dunbar and Duncan for example later described Tarbert castle as '...three distinct units...' that appear '...to be the outcome of a separate period of building activity' suggesting the Inner Bailey could be identified as belonging to a group of early 'simple rectangular castles of enclosure' characterised by a 'substantial curtain-wall of stone, pierced with few openings, enclosing an oblong or square courtyard around which there were ranged lean-to buildings of stone or timber' These authors acknowledged that 'closely datable features are conspicuously absent' from these buildings, but suggested that the remains at Tarbert were most closely comparable to the largest of these castle structures; at the royal sites of Kinclaven as mentioned above and Kincardine (Canmore ID 36061) (Dunbar and Duncan 1974).

The wider history of Tarbert and its castle has been previously outlined by Dugald Mitchell this later summarised by Ian MacIntyre (Mitchell 1886; MacIntyre 1974) and articles about the castle have appeared in editions of the *Kist* (Campbell 1972 and 1987; Clerk 2002).

The castle was scheduled in 1935 (SM 276).

The Burgh of Tarbert appears to be a creation of Robert I as the exchequer rolls of 1328 list the expense (7 shillings and 8 pence) to produce a cocket for the burgh *'Et pro factura unius cokete ad burgum de Tarbard'* (Stuart and Burnett 1878 53, 118).

The location of the burgh however has remained unresolved although Dunbar and Duncan state that it 'probably occupied the flat-topped ridge immediately to the south west of the castle...' and '...there may be seen traces of buildings, bounded by a rock-lined ditch...' (Dunbar and Duncan 1971 15-16). The Royal Commission saw no reason to question this interpretation and the area of the presumed medieval burgh was scheduled in 1975 (SM 3410).



Illus.3 Tarbert Castle from above



Illus. 4 Location of excavation trenches



Illus. 5 Tarbert Castle from above showing the excavation trenches 2019

# 4. Excavation Results

Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) was granted for the excavation within 8 trenches (Trenches 1-8, Case ID: 300026684 and Case ID: 300033153). Trenches 1-3 were located within the Castle scheduled area (SM 276) and Trenches 5-8 are within the Burgh scheduled area (SM 3410) while Trench 4 fell within both scheduled areas. Consent was also given by HES under the granted SMC to examine wall relationships in three further areas (Areas A-C). In 2020 SMC was sought to explore the possibility of the existence of a gate between the two drum towers along the north wall of the Outer Bailey this area forming Trench 9 (SM276 Case ID: 300043382, Regan 2020a). The site code used during the excavation work was TAR 19 and the initial results of the excavation appeared in the subsequent Data Structure Reports (Regan 2019; Regan 2020b).

The nomenclature employed for the main areas of the site will follow that previously employed by the RCAHMS (RCAHMS 1971); the Inner Bailey, the Outer Bailey and the Tower House and where possible, the results are presented in stratigraphic order from oldest to youngest.



Illus. 6 Laser scan of Inner Bailey showing positions of Trenches 1-3



Illus. 7 Locations of Trenches 1 and 2 and Areas A and C from northwest above



Illus. 8 Trench 1 plan

#### 4.1 Trench 1

This trench was located on relatively flat ground at the junction of the Inner and Outer Bailey walls (Illus. 8). Natural bedrock was encountered within the excavated trench at 33.08m OD or 1.30m below the present ground surface. Above this lay a dark grey peaty soil Context 076. This soil was observed to contain organic material, wood and plant material, which likely survived due the anaerobic nature of the soil and it also contained carbonised hazel (Illus. 14 and 15). The upper surface of this deposit was fire reddened in part indicating burning had taken place on the ground surface although it was impossible to determine if this represented limited burning, as in a hearth area, or represented more wide scale burning.

Overlying this buried soil horizon were the foundations of the walls of the castle (Illus. 9, 10, 12, 13 and 14). The earliest wall was that of the Outer Bailey, C047, that formed the western side of the trench. No cut or foundation trench for the wall was apparent within the trench the walls sitting directly over the subsoil mentioned above, although given the limited area of foundation that was exposed the presence of such a cut cannot be entirely discounted. Wall C046, forming the north side of the Inner Bailey abutted wall C046 and was thus later. In no part of the trench were either of these walls observed to be founded on or built directly onto natural bedrock, although attempts may have been made by the builders to achieve this aim. In the absence of contact with the bedrock the builders had stepped out or offset the walls along their basal courses to give added support to the walls with both walls having offset scarcements dividing the vertical internal wall faces (here surviving up to 1.6m high) from a roughly battered foundation (of approximately 450mm high). The walls were constructed from a mixture of undressed schistose rubble blocks (including slabs with faces up to 800 x 200mm) laid in informal level courses. The walls retain extensive evidence of lime-bonding. As both wall C046 and C047 lay over the same deposits and were also sealed by the same deposits then it might be inferred that the construction of the earlier wall was followed

closely by the later wall, with no deposits between suggesting no great time gap between their respective constructions.



Illus 9: Trench 1 wall CO47 elevation



Illus. 10: Trench 1 wall C046 elevation



Illus. 12 Trench 1 wall C046 from southeast



Illus. 13 Trench 1 wall C046 abutting wall C047 from northwest

The outer face of the Inner Bailey wall was coated in a firm mortar render which survived in height up to 1.5m above the wall footings at the western end of the wall, where it abutted wall CO47. The render had been preserved and protected by the later deposits that had built up against the wall face. Above this where the wall had been exposed to weathering and the affects of plant growth there was no evidence of any render or indeed any mortar pointing along the wall face.



Illus. 14 Trench 1 northwest facing section



Illus. 15 Trench 1 deposit C076 with burning, below deposits C075, C074, C073 and C065



Illus. 16 Trench 1 floor/occupation deposits from above north

Overlying the wall footings was a deposit of loose mortar C075 that probably relates to the construction of the wall. Above this mortar deposit was a series of occupation deposits C074, C073, C065, C064 and C023 that appear to represent a mixture of midden and levelling dumps, the later possibly also utilised as floors or surfaces.

The presence of possible surfaces suggests that this area lying against the west wall of the outer bailey may have contained structures although, beyond possible floor surfaces no firm evidence of structural footings for buildings were seen within the excavated area.

The earliest of these C074 was a mixture of mortar and sand that also contained some horizontally lain stones that sloped down to the southwest, possibly indicating the presence of a runoff or drainage channel. Over C074 was a patchy layer of sandy mortar C065, this suggestive of mixed floor repair/make up and midden material containing animal bone, pottery, charcoal and some iron nails along with carbonised hazel and oak. When excavating this deposit, we came across surviving wood fragments and given the fragility of such deposits and that the excavation budget had no contingency for dealing with preserved wood, excavation of this deposit was stopped after samples were taken.

Deposit C065 was in turn sealed by a red/yellow sandy deposit C064 again this suggestive of a floor or floor make up. The uppermost of these deposits, C023 produced animal bone, some slag and medieval pottery (dating to the 15th-16<sup>th</sup> century), these, along with its dark colour and organic nature, suggesting this was a midden accumulation The animal bone fragments appear to be large and may be the remains of primary butchery. The layer was also very sandy in content and contained fragments of mortar, which might suggest that the walls of the castle were either beginning to degrade or that they might have begun to be dismantled.

Above this was an extensive deposit of wall collapse/demolition C014. This rubble deposit was up to 0.50m deep across the trench and contained some substantial masonry blocks surrounded by degraded mortar. Numerous voids between the rubble blocks suggested that this deposit formed relatively rapidly. Apart from the rubble and mortar content this deposit was relatively sterile of finds, the exception being an intact smithy base.



Illus. 17 Trench 1 top of rubble deposit C014 exposed in eastern side of area

Sealing the rubble dump was a dark grey soil C003 that contained a mixture of post mediaeval finds throughout, although some medieval pottery sherds were also recovered. This soil has been interpreted as an agricultural/horticultural soil. A band of rubble C008 also lay along the outer wall of the inner bailey This appears to have formed at the same time as the agricultural soil was being worked. Area C

The upstanding wall remains within Trench 1 suggested that wall CO47 of the outer bailey was earlier than the abutting wall of the inner bailey CO46. In order to see if this relationship still held good at their southern junction topsoil was stripped in a small area in Area C. This revealed that wall CO45 did indeed abut wall CO47 and was thus later.



Illus. 18 Area A internal face of wall C046 abutting wall C047

# 4.2 Trench 2

This trench was located in the western part of the northeast range of the Inner Bailey which also contained a series of earthworks indicative of wall lines representing three rooms or bays.

Trench 2 was primarily excavated down to the top of an extensive rubble deposit across the whole of the trench. It quickly became apparent that the earthworks suggestive of walls belonged to a building inserted within this wing of the inner bailey. The two 'rooms' of this building revealed in the trench were excavated down to their upper floor levels, as was an area to the south of the western room. Two areas, Area D and Area E, were then selected for deeper excavation in order to assess the earlier deposits within the castle.



Illus. 19 Trench 2 plan of medieval deposits

# Medieval Occupation

Excavation revealed internal wall faces on three sides of the Inner Bailey northeast range the walls all similar in character and bonded to one another with alternately bonded long stone slabs – clearly suggesting contemporaneity – although the relationship between these features and the adjacent cross-wall at the north angle was obscured by the remains of an oven-like masonry feature surviving in the north corner of the range. In both Area D and Area E natural bedrock was exposed and above this were medieval occupation sequences (Illus. 19).

#### Area D

Area D was located against the south wall of the northern range of the Inner Bailey around what appeared to be an opening or doorway through wall C044 connecting this range with the courtyard of the Inner Bailey (Illus. 20 and 24). Within Area D bedrock was encountered at a height of 34.98m OD, or 1.70m below the present ground surface, this appearing to be a ridge sloping off sharply to the east. Bedrock was sealed by a deposit of dark grey humic soil C063, this deposit also containing birch charcoal, which suggested pre-castle activity in this part of the site and a fragment of this produced dates of 677 (51.4%)

749cal AD and 785 (30.2%) 837calAD at 95.45 probability. Constructed directly over this and natural bedrock was the southern wall of the inner bailey C044. Only a small area of the wall footing was exposed in Area D, although it was built directly onto natural bedrock on the western side and stepped down to the east.



Illus. 20 Trench 2 Area D northwest facing section



Illus. 21 Trench 2 Area D east facing section

As with wall C046 in Trench 1, where the builders did not make contact with bedrock, the wall footings were wider or were offset at the basal course to the rest of the wall above. The wall in the trench stood up to 1.70m high and was bonded and coated with a firm cream/off-white coloured mortar. The wall also contained an opening, most likely a door, being 1.35m (4 feet) wide. The base or threshold of this opening was 0.95m above the base of the wall below, however only 0.32m above the basal internal floor C035, indicating the opening function as a door rather than window opening.



Illus. 22 Trench 2 Area D east facing section from southeast

The mortar coating the wall was similar to, if not the same as, the compact mortar deposit C035 which also appeared to have been utilised as the primary floor surface of the castle in this area. This deposit dropped off steeply to the east and north away from both the wall and the underlying natural bedrock. This 'slumping', which was recorded as C032, appears to have been caused by the floor lying directly over soft underlying soils, rather than directly onto bedrock where the sealing deposits had little or no evidence of slumping. Above this surface was a light brown sandy gravel C034, possibly a floor make-up, although this also contained pottery and bone and charcoal (alder, birch, hazel and oak) suggesting some mixing with midden material which was likely trampled into this probable floor surface. A fragment of birch from this deposit returned a date of 1299-1398calAD at 95.4% probability. Above this was a more extensive deposit, or dump of stones and gravel, C033, that may have been deposited to counteract the effects of slumping and providing a rough surface in this area.



Illus. 23 Trench 2 Area D slumped floor deposit C033 from southeast above



Illus. 24 Trench 2 Area D doorway within wall C004

This rough surface had in turn slumped and filling the subsequent dip was a midden deposit C027. The deposit contained over 30 metal artefacts, the presence of these perhaps suggesting they had been collected as scrap and for recycling, however these also included a cauldron or pan, a flesh hook, a knife and possible spoon suggesting perhaps cooking/food preparation. The deposit also contained a large concentration of shells mainly edible periwinkles (*Littorina littorea*) with lesser amounts of limpets, suggesting these had also been selected and used for a specific purpose before disposal. The animal bone from this deposit (mainly cattle) suggests the dumping of table waste and/or consumption. The deposit also contained tap slag and a smithy base indicating possible metal working in the immediate vicinity. Sealing

this midden material in Area D was an extensive deposit of rubble and mortar C026 which like the rubble deposit in Trench 1 contained voids, perhaps again suggesting rapid collapse/demolition.

# Area E

This was located in the northwest of Trench 1 where bedrock was encountered within the western half of the excavated area, this lying at a height of 36.42m OD or 0.80m below the present ground surface (Illus 13). This appeared to represent the top of a ridge crossing the area from southwest to northeast and dropping off to the east and west. A small section of the footings of the northern Inner Bailey wall C046 was revealed at the northwest of the area and these were built directly onto the bedrock ridge, with no intervening deposits.



Illus. 25 Trench 2 Area E footings of wall C046 built over bedrock from southwest

The upper extent of the internal junction of walls C045 and C046 suggested that wall C045 abutted wall C046 although this was not clearly established, the presence of the upstanding oven in this part of the trench preventing further investigation of this relationship.

To the west of the bedrock ridge was a deposit of gravelly sand and stones C071 that appeared to be a levelling deposit, perhaps flattening out the natural undulations caused by the sloping bedrock ridge in this area. Some horizontally lying stones were also seen at the top of this deposit, which suggests the use of this levelling deposit as a surface. This deposit was not excavated. Lying over this at the east of the area and over natural bedrock was a dark grey deposit C066, this appearing to be an occupation accumulation containing bone, pot and charcoal (alder, birch, hazel and oak) and slag.

At the junction of walls C046 and C045 at the northwest of the area it was noted that two stones had been discoloured by burning, suggesting the presence of a fireplace or fire installation C072 in this corner of the range. Possibly associated with this feature were two thin deposits of charcoal C069 and C067 (containing alder, birch, hazel and oak) separated by an equally thin deposit of mortar C068. The lower charcoal deposit lay over a sandy gravel deposit similar and possibly the same as C033 in Area D, although this was not proven. Built over the upper charcoal deposit and possibly a replacement for the burnt feature was a small 'key-hole' shaped hearth or boiler C058 (Illus. 19, 26, 29 and 31).



Illus. 26 Trench 2 Area E from southwest with hearth C058



Illus. 27 Trench 2 Area E fire reddened stones C072 sealed by later hearth C058



Illus. 28 Trench 2 Area E charcoal and mortar deposits running under wall of hearth C058



Illus. 29 Trench 2 Area E hearth feature C058 from southeast

This feature was constructed from rubble and clay, the walls standing up to 0.63m in height. The internal walls of C058 and the clay floor C039 were pink/red in colour, the effects of burning. It is hard to see how this feature functioned as an oven as the internal floor was lower than the floor level around its mouth or entrance and there was no evidence of any collapsed roof within its internal space. While this might be explained by later robbing, it seems more likely this feature did not have a roof and if this feature was indeed open then it is possible this was used in the heating of a cauldron or vat, although this must remain speculation. Little evidence of any fuel was left in this feature as it appears to have been cleaned out after its last use.



Illus. 30 Trench 2 Southwest facing elevation of wall C046



Illus. 31 Trench 2 Area E profile through hearth

Above the floor of the hearth was a mixed deposit of grey clay C038 that partially covered the hearth floor, but again contained little that was suggestive of its use, although the wood charcoal (birch, hazel and oak) present perhaps represents the fuel of one of the last firings with a fragment of birch returning a date of 1282 (48.1%) 1321calAD and 1358 (47.4%) 1390calAD at 95.4% probability.

Lying outside the mouth of this feature was a mixed deposit of clay and silt C048. This contained quantities of charcoal (alder and oak) and suggests this was a trampled floor the charcoal representing fuel rake-out Lying along the eastern outside edge of the hearth was a dark grey occupation deposit C070 that also contained pot and slag Located around the upper edge of the hearth and against walls C045 and C046 was what appeared to be a deposit of midden-like material, C031, this containing pot, bone and slag.

The whole of Area E was sealed by the rubble collapse or demolition of the castle walls, C030, this deposit equivalent to deposit C026 seen in Area D.



Illus. 32 Trench 2 East facing cross section



Illus. 33 Exposed deposits from above in Trench 6 and Area A prior to backfiling



Illus. 34 Trench 2 Plan of Structure 1

#### Later Occupation

Built directly over rubble C030/C026 was Structure 1 (Illus. 34).

The earliest part of Structure 1 revealed in the excavated area were walls C055 and C056 these forming the western and southern walls of a room that continued beyond the excavated area to the east, with the northern wall of the Inner Bailey utilised as its northern side. The floor of the structure was very uneven, reflecting the underlying rubble, although an oval patch of fire affected clay C020 showed that this room had a hearth area. Abutting the southwest corner of this structure was wall C057 which constituted the southern wall of a northern room to this building, this again utilising the inner bailey wall as its northern and western sides.

A gap in the wall, along with a flat threshold stone and posthole C089, indicated a doorway to the building. The wall of this building extended into what was the space of the original doorway into the castle entrance pend. Internally the floor of this western room was more even than the room to the east and perhaps some attempt had been made to level the floor area. A dark area of ash and charcoal (alder, birch and hazel) with some scorching suggest a hearth position C025. Retrieved from above the uneven floor of the building C007 were five very worn/corroded coins, possibly Charles I and II two pence pieces or 'Turners'; also recovered were two knife blades, sherds of bottle glass and the upper stone of a rotary quern.

Immediately south of the building threshold and situated in and around the former door/window aperture of the castle was a dark grey midden deposit C012 sealing or contemporary with a small pit C018 had been cut into the underlying rubble. Metal items recovered from midden material included a possible table knife, a key and a body fragment of a cast iron cauldren. The fill of the pit C017 which was suggestive of cess contained some pottery fragments and animal bones, the latter perhaps food remains.



Illus. 35 Trench 2 Structure 1 from the southeast



Illus. 36 Trench 2 Structure 1 threshold stone and post hole C089 from southwest



Illus. 37 Trench 2 Structure 1 upper rotary quern stone in situ



Illus. 38 Trench 2 Small pit C017



Illus. 39 Trench 2 Rubble fill within Structure 1

Both the internal and external areas of the building were the filled with both what appeared to be rubble from Structure 1 itself along with rubble from the original castle walls these recorded as deposits, C004, C005 and C006.

# Area A

As mentioned above, the upper extent of the internal junction of walls C045 and C046 suggested that wall C045 abutted C046 although this was not clearly established. In order to more fully examine the relationship of these walls, vegetation cover was removed within Area A. Unfortunately, if anything the relationship of the walls on this side was less clear than on the inner junction. However, this small, exposed area did reveal the eastern side of the gate into the Inner Bailey. This comprised a door check in red sandstone masonry.



Illus. 40 Area A door-check within entrance pend from southwest

The red sandstone block within the internal door rebate had a curvilinear groove either carved or worn in its upper surface. If carved, then it is possible that this block was reused from an earlier building. However, it is possible that the groove comes from wear, or has been deliberately fashioned to receive a door mechanism, although what type remains unclear.



Illus. 41 Trench 3 plan

# 4.3 Trench 3

This trench was placed between the eastern wall of the Inner Bailey and the projecting tower situated along the southern wall of the outer bailey where it was thought that there may have been a gate into the Outer Bailey (Illus. 41).

It became quickly apparent that the line of the Outer Bailey wall did not extend across the trench and the trench was indeed placed over a previously unrecorded southern entrance into the castle complex. The work in the trench principally involved the removal of rubble and mortar sealing the gate remains prior to their recording.

Revealed within the gateway was a small exposure of what was likely natural bedrock at a height of 30.98m OD or 1.35m below present ground surface.

Lying west and east of this possible outcropping bedrock were the remains of a substantial outer bailey southwestern gate, the western and eastern sides respectively recorded as C043 and C053.

Most of the facing stones on the western side of the entrance C043 had been robbed (Illus. 42-46). Only at the basal level of the entrance did any facing stones of the gate survive which consisted of red-coloured dressed sandstone external reveals (square to the external wall face) with chamfered external arrises, a portcullis slot, and a doorframe intake or door-check. Internally, the wall is rubble-built and splaying,

dominated by large roughly squared blocks and narrower slabs laid to formal courses and extending past the internal face of the curtain wall on the southeast side. A moderate concentration of red sandstone spalls was also visible in the wall core rubble close to the northwest reveal face, where extensive volumes of constructional mortar in full face-core-face cross-sections has also survived.



Illus. 42 Trench 3 gateway from northeast above



Illus. 43 Trench 3 western side of gate from northeast



Illus. 44 Trench 3 elevation of western side of gate


Illus. 45 Trench 3 portcullis slot and door check at western side of gate



Illus. 46 Trench 3 portcullis slot at western side of gate

The eastern side of the gate C053 mirrored the arrangement of the western side of the gate with redcoloured dressed sandstone external reveals with chamfered external arrises, a portcullis slot, and a doorframe intake or door-check.

Although badly robbed, part of the wall face of the gateway survived above the basal course on the western side of the gate, here the wall standing up to 1.90m in height. Attached to this surviving masonry face was a red sandstone block which may be a surviving springer-stone for an arch, its base 1.70m above the upper surface of the entrance (Illus. 47-50). It was also apparent that the wall of the western side of the gate continued north beyond the edge of excavation and beyond the northern edge of the gate on the

western side. What this represented is unclear, possibilities being a gatehouse structure or perhaps access to a portcullis chamber above the gate.



Illus. 47 Trench 3 eastern side of gateway from southwest



Illus. 48 Trench 3 eastern side of gateway from northeast above



Illus. 49 Trench 3 elevation of eastern side of gate



Illus. 50 Trench 3 portcullis slot in eastern side of gateway

On its southern, outer extent, the entrance gap was 3m wide as was the gap between the two portcullis slots. However, the entrance widens to the north of the opposed door-checks, to 3.30m and from here both eastern and western sides to the gateway splay out to 3.50m on the northern side of the gate.

Within the gate there were the remnants of a worn channel running between the portcullis slots. The channel ran through sequential layers of mortar and clay that likely represent the upper surfaces or makeup for surfaces within the entranceway. It is possible the area had been paved, with only a few surviving horizontal stones suggestive of this, the rest possibly robbed. The surfaces within the entranceway remained unexcavated, apart from darker deposit C013 located along the base of the western gate, which produced some pottery, bone and slag.

Most of the facing stones of both side of the gate have been extensively robbed and the trampled mortar deposit C019 that lay in the entranceway may represent detritus from this systematic robbing. However, at some time the remnants of any upstanding gate superstructure must have collapsed into the gateway, creating the extensive rubble deposit C010. That this happened rapidly is suggested by numerous voids seen within much of the lower rubble. That demolition and robbing of the castle structure continued is suggested by the mixture of post medieval material from the upper extent of the rubble.

# Area B

To examine the relationships of the walls topsoil was removed from the external junction of walls C050/C053 and C051 within Area B. This revealed that wall C051 was a later addition to the corner of walls C050/C053.



Illus. 51 Area B junction of walls C050/C053 and C051 from northeast

Previously this relationship had been misinterpreted, with the corner of wall C050/C053 being described as a later addition to wall C051. However, as can be seen from Illus. 51 above C050/C053 is the more substantially built wall, although for the most part having lost most of its larger quoin blocks from robbing.

# 4.4 Trench 4

This trench was placed over the remains of the southwest tower of the Outer Bailey. Initial investigation in this area led to the decision not to fully excavate the area as proposed in the project design, but to expose smaller targeted areas to better understand the tower remains (Areas F-I, Illus. 52).



Illus. 52 Trench 4 plan



Illus. 53 Trench 4 from east above

### Area F

In Area F the external face of the southeast corner of the tower C042 was exposed. The area was excavated down to the basal course of the foundation the wall (Illus. 54-56). The wall survived to 1.9m high, with the core of the wall to the north standing 0.9m higher, and was constructed to a batter of approximately 1:10, the wall face was tightly built in well-bonded rough courses of large narrow schistose slabs up to 1.15 x 0.21m. No protruding foundation plinth is apparent at the base of this wall, although the adjacent external face of wall does display a low battered plinth.



Illus. 54 Trench 4 Area F elevation of external face of tower wall C042



Illus. 55 Trench 4 Area F southeast corner of tower wall C042 from southwest

The wall face was traced for a length of 4.3m from the southeast corner of the tower. No foundation trench was apparent, and the wall appears to have been founded on natural glacial till, although some extra support was added on the corner of the wall where the wall stepped out to the east. The wall face had some traces of a sandy mortar render although for the most part this appeared to have degraded from the surface.



Illus. 56 Trench 4 Area F deposit C085 and rubble C037 against wall C042 from east

The basal courses of the wall were then sealed by a deposit of clayey silt C085, this very similar to the glacial till below the wall foundation and this possibly represents redeposited natural protecting the foot of the wall after its construction. This deposit sloped away from the wall to the south and may have formed a bank along the outer face of the wall.

Sealing this was an extensive deposit of rubble C037, the upper extent producing a quantity of post mediaeval artefacts.

# Area G

Area G investigated the internal arrangement of the tower, showing that the tower wall C054 was continuous along its eastern side, being 7.1m long internally with no evidence of an entrance on this side (Illus. 57-60).

The wall stood up to 2.3m in height in the excavated area the wall faces having been neatly constructed using smaller mica-schist slabs than used on the outer face. Traces of mortar render were apparent along most of the exposed wall face but best preserved at a lower level down where it had been protected from weathering and root damage. The tower wall had been badly robbed at the junction between the tower wall C054 and the Outer Bailey wall C043. Despite this robbing activity the remains of the eastern side of an entrance or doorway C090 doorway survived this framed by dressed red sandstone blocks with chamfered external arises, this giving access through what was presumably the northern wall of the tower. The remnants of the door consisted of finely dressed red sandstone blocks with the remnants of a door check or jamb and a threshold. Both threshold and vertical jamb had chamfered outer edges. There was

also evidence of a cobbled surface lying to the west and south of the threshold stone. The south facing section at the northern end of the excavated area was different from the adjacent west facing section, the difference likely explained by robbing disturbance above the eastern side of the doorway.



Illus. 57 Trench 4 Area G internal northwest facing elevation



Illus. 58 Trench 4 Area G remains of doorway C090 from northwest



Illus. 59 Trench 4 Area G architectural detail of door C090



Illus. 60 Trench 4 Area G southwest facing section

Sealing the doorway in the south facing section was a deposit of rubble C062. Above this and absent from the west facing section was ash/charcoal layer C061, this sealed by a rubble and mortar deposit C060 which had been discoloured red/pink by burning (Illus. 60). Both deposits C061 and C060 suggest the burning and

collapse of some of the superstructure of the tower. Sealing this burning episode was rubble and mortar deposit C059.

# Areas H and I

Area H revealed the line of the wall of the Outer Enclosure C043 while Area I revealed the junction of walls C043 and C054. Once these were established no further excavation took place in these areas.

Illus. 61 Trench 4 Area I Junction of walls C043 and C054 from southwest

# 4.5 Trench 5

This trench was placed over the remnants of a ditch system lying to the south of the Inner Enclosure and berm of the castle, an area that also had some geophysics results suggesting underlying features The excavation quickly revealed that natural outcropped very close to the surface and natural subsoil lay just below the turf C021. Because of this it was decided to limit the size of the proposed excavation area. The trench revealed that the slight linear depression which can still be seen as an earthwork was indeed a ditch or channel although very shallow in nature. The channel C029 was filled with C028 and may have functioned as a drain as it runs along a natural rock outcrop against which water still collects.

# 4.6 Trench 6

This trench was placed either side of an upstanding revetment wall C084 (Illus. 62).

Natural bedrock was reached within the western part of the trench at a height of 23.62m OD or 1.30m below the present ground surface on the western side of the wall. Above natural bedrock was a thin spread of material C081 that included burnt bone and charcoal, while the natural bedrock showed distinct signs of being reddened by fire C082. It is possible that the bedrock had been burnt when it was utilised as the floor a feature such as a kiln although no walls or superstructure were located within the excavated area.



Illus. 62 Trench 6 plan



Illus. 63 Trench 6 northwest facing section

Above this deposit was a large dump or dumps of soils C079 and C080 these both containing a relative abundance of small to medium sized, mostly angular stones. These deposits also contained medieval pottery and some large fragments of slag, the later likely representing smithy bases. The nature of these deposits remains unclear, but they appear to be levelling deposits of mediaeval date and could possibly relate to a track leading up to the castle entrance, although no obvious consolidated surfaces were apparent within the make-up of these deposits and this interpretation has to remain speculative.

Above these stony deposits was a fairly uniform deposit of yellow brown silty loam C078 containing postmedieval glass and pottery. This has been interpreted as the remains of a plough soil, although one that may have collected in a natural dip over time due to weathering of soils that may have originated from the higher ground to the east.



Illus. 64 Trench 6 showing deposits below wall C084 from northwest

Over this soil was constructed wall C084 which must also be of post mediaeval date. Lying against the wall face on its western side was a heap of stones C022, these possibly deriving from field clearance, these stones in turn sealed by deposit C015, another plough/agricultural accumulation. The nature of the revetting wall C084 is still unclear but it may have had a dual function of demarcating a property or field boundary but possibly also constructed to counteract weathering of soil down slope.

Excavation on the higher ground on the eastern side of the wall demonstrated that plough/agricultural soil C041 had accumulated against the wall on this side, this deposit only partially excavated. Indeed, the height of the wall may have been added to over time as suggested by a narrow band of stones/packing C040 which coincided with the upper course of the wall, this lying over plough/horticultural soil C041. C040 in turn was then sealed by deposit C016, this another plough/agricultural accumulation.

# 4.7 Trench 7

This trench was placed within a relatively flat or terraced area lying to the south of the Outer Bailey (Illus. 65).

Natural bedrock and glacial till lay below the present ground surface in the northeast corner of the trench. Built against/over the sloping western side of these natural deposits was rubble wall CO83 which crossed the trench from northeast to southwest, beginning to turn to the south at the southern edge of the trench. The wall stood up to 0.7m in height and was between 0.8m and 1m in width.



Illus. 65 Trench 7 plan

To the south of the wall was a mixed deposit of clay and stone C086 that was only partially excavated. Given the darker colour of this deposit to the soils above and the presence of charcoal and a few sherds of pottery, this deposit likely represents floor or use deposits lying within the building.

The floor was then sealed by a mixture of rubble and red orange clay deposit C077 over this, lying against the southern face of the wall. The northern face of the wall was sealed by subsoil deposit C088, this in turn sealed by quite an extensive rubble deposit C087, this likely a spread of collapsed building material (Illus. 68).

The rubble deposit and the rest of the trench was overlain by plough soil deposit C011 that contained pottery, glass and fragments of clay tobacco pipe amongst mainly post medieval finds. These artefacts were generally small in size and well dispersed, suggesting midden material had been imported onto these areas which were likely field areas in the post medieval period.



Illus. 66 Trench 7 and wall C083 from northeast



Illus. 67 Trench 7 wall C083 with floor C086 at base of scale from west



Illus. 68 Trench 7 northwest facing section



Illus. 69 Trench 7 rubble spread C087 of wall C083 from southeast above

# 4.8 Trench 8

Like Trench 7 his trench was placed within a relatively flat or terraced area lying to the south of the Outer Bailey. Natural glacial till was exposed along the northeast of the trench and beyond this to the west was either lower plough soil or perhaps a colluvial deposit. Cutting through both these deposits could be seen numerous plough scars. Lying above this was plough soil C024 and like deposit C011 in Trench 7 contained mainly post medieval finds and again like C011, some of the pottery and glass appeared to have been worn smooth by the sea, suggesting the possibility that seaweed may have been gathered from the foreshore and brought up to the fields and used as fertilizer.

# 4.9 Trench 9

The northern entrance into the Outer Bailey of Tarbert Castle is located between the two drum towers that line the northern wall of the castle. The 3m wide gate is not quite centrally placed between the two towers, lying 6.9m from the western tower edge and 5.6 from the eastern tower (Illus. 70-73).

Bedrock which can be seen below the eastern drum tower drops off in steep rounded ridges from west to east. The current ground level also falls off in a steep incline to the north. Given the natural undulating formation of the bedrock it seems likely that the bedrock was levelled prior to the gate being constructed, given that the bedrock below the eastern side of the gate was only 2cm in height above the bedrock lying below the western side of the gate.



Illus. 70 Laser scan of the eastern tower with surviving wall lying above the gate position



Illus. 71 Surviving wall of outer bailey to the east of the gate from the north (Note the tree stump at bottom left of photograph)



Illus. 72 Eastern drum tower external face from southeast



Illus. 73 Trench 9 position of the gate between the two drum towers

The eastern gate side C092

As mentioned above natural bedrock was revealed lying just below the lowest course of the eastern side of the gate, which like the southern gate to the Outer Bailey, had red-coloured dressed sandstone external reveals, a portcullis slot, and a doorframe intake or door-check. Internally, the wall is rubble-built and splaying, dominated by large roughly squared blocks and narrower slabs laid to formal courses. Thin packing/levelling stones were used to support the lowest dressed sandstone block forming the outer face of the gate. The red sandstone blocks survived in four courses standing up to 0.9m in height, the largest block measuring 0.39m x 0.30m x 0.25m. These were bonded by a hard light grey mortar. The portcullis slot lay 0.62m from the outer face, this measuring 0.13m by 0.12m. Lying 0.24m beyond the portcullis slot internally was the door-check. The upper surviving stone that formed the door check had what appeared to be the southern edge of a carved vertical slot although any corresponding northern edge was not observed. It is possible this slot held a vertical timber for the door surround.



Illus.74 Trench 9 plan



Illus. 75 elevation of eastern side of gate

Above these red sandstone blocks forming the door arrangement the face stones of the entrance passage had been robbed, however above and beyond the door-check the face stones of the entrance passage survived to a height of 2.3m above the natural bedrock located on the outer face of the gate. At the northern end of these surviving face stones, some stones projected beyond the line of the inner wall face, and these also appeared to slope down from east to west. While this may have been caused by later disturbance it appears more likely these represent the basal stones of an entrance archway, while one block of red sandstone, still in situ, might be the remains of a dressed sandstone archway surround (like the stone seen on the eastern side of the southern gate). The wall forming the eastern side of the entrance passage is 3m wide which widens at its southern inner end beyond the door-check, a similar arrangement to that used in the southern gate. The wall to the east of the gate stands to a height of 5.2m (17 feet) above the basal course of gate.



Illus. 76 Trench 9 external face of west side of gate from northeast above



Illus. 77 Trench 9 basal courses of external face of west side of gate from northwest



Illus. 78 Trench 9 portcullis slot and door-check of eastern side of gate from northwest above



Illus. 79 Trench 9 wall face of gate passage from northeast (evidence of the springer arch is above the scale)

## The western gate side C093

Only the basal course of the entrance wall survived on this side. Lying directly onto natural bedrock was a deposit of small schist blocks, which was likely used as a bedding/levelling deposit. Over this deposit were laid the basal blocks of the wall, the largest observed block measuring 0.70m by 0.40m x 0.20m. Lying between and partially over these blocks were the remnants of a light-yellow brown clay deposit, this no doubt used as a binding agent. None of these blocks had evidence of mortar bonding, suggesting this was only used within the wall above, which had been completely robbed.



Illus. 80 Trench 9 footings of the western gate from east, the remains of the western drum tower are in the background beyond the scale.

Sealing the remains of the wall on this western side of the trench was a deposit of light brown sandy silt C094 with frequent fragments of mortar and occasional fragments of red sandstone, suggesting this deposit is the remnants of the robbing activity. A similar deposit was not observed on the eastern side of the trench where the wall had been less severely robbed.



Illus. 81 Trench 9 section of western side of the gate



Illus. 82 Trench 9 plan of western gate side and collapsed rubble

Sealing this deposit and the remains of the eastern gate was a series of rubble/demolition deposits interspersed with more soil-like accumulations, suggesting more than one episode of robbing/collapse. The lowest of these deposits consisted of a brown sandy loam that contained some large irregular stone blocks C095, along with some small fragments of mortar and some patches of more sandy soil. Above this was a deposit of more structured collapse, indicated by the presence of mortar bonded stones, a series of coursed stone blocks and two rows of red sandstone blocks C096.



Illus. 83 Trench 9 collapsed red sandstone blocks from northeast



Illus. 84 Trench 9 chiselled dressing on one of the collapsed sandstone blocks

These red sandstone blocks might be the remains of the inner and outer arches of the entrance, these collapsing along with the surrounding blocks. This perhaps suggests that part of the eastern side of the archway continued to stand after the western side had been robbed, but eventually collapsing. This collapse was sealed by a dark grey silty loam which included some rubble C096, this supporting the vegetation cover.

# 5. Specialist Reports

Over 4,500 individual artefacts were recovered from the excavation the majority of these recovered from post-medieval plough soil or horticultural deposits. All finds are listed and briefly described in the Data Structure Report while only potentially medieval artefacts or artefacts from secure contexts were sent for further analysis.

# 5.1 The Pottery Derek Hall

# Introduction

These excavations produced an assemblage of 280 sherds of pottery ranging in date from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. All of the material has been examined by eye and x10 lens and where possible assigned to a recognised fabric type. A spot dated catalogue was also prepared and in presented in Table 1.

## Transitional Craggan/Redware

There is a single sherd from context C011 <027> which appears to be in a fabric that is a mix between a handmade Craggan Type ware and a Redware. Similar fabrics have been identified from excavations at Baliscate on Mull (Canmore ID 294740, Hall 2017) and at Iona Primary School (Canmore ID 351310, Hall 2019) and dated between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### Redwares

The 67 sherds in Redware fabrics present in this assemblage share the attributes that have previously been attributed to the Scottish Redware industry dating between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries (Haggarty, Hall and Chenery 2011). Vessel wise it is plain undecorated splash glazed jugs that dominate the assemblage with a single potential fragment from a figure jug being present from context C066 <039> (Illus. 85). There is a partially complete jug profile from context 'tower' which is splash glazed green, decorated with raised horizontal cordons and has a complete strap handle, this appears to be of a slightly later 15<sup>th</sup> century date (Illus. 86). The closest known Scottish Redware production centres are in the Clyde Valley, and it seems likely that this may be where these vessels originate from.

# Reduced Gritty Wares

These hard fired reduced gritty fabrics have been identified as potential 'local' West Coast products since their identification in assemblages from Ayr, Dundonald Castle and Dumbarton (Franklin and Hall 2004; Caldwell and Campbell 2004; Franklin and Hall 2012) and have since been also identified from Rothesay Castle (Hall 2009). All of the sherds in this assemblage are from well made plain jugs which are hard fired, well glazed and have simple strap handles. A basal angle from context C080 <043> is decorated with occasional thumb marks and has a visible kiln stacking scar on its base (Illus. 87). A group of 39 bodysherds from Context C034 <035> come from a single vessel and have raised cordons running around the vessel (Illus. 88). Generally, these fabrics would seem to date between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

# Unidentified Whitewares

Included amongst the fabrics that are assumed to be of Scottish manufacture are some distinctive whitewares (24 sherds). These are present in contexts C027 <033> and C080 <043> and contain red (sandstone?) inclusions. There are also joining pieces from a whiteware rim and bridge spout from context

C080 <043> that show traces of iron leeching out of the fabric on one side of the top of the spout. Similar fabrics have been seen in assemblages from excavations in Ayr (pers comm G Haggarty) and future chemical sourcing would be the only way of confirming the Scottish origin of these fabrics. These vessel forms would suggest a date of the  $13^{th}/14^{th}$  centuries for these fabrics.

# Dating

The lack of a good datable chronology for Scottish West Coast medieval pottery makes the dating of assemblages that are dominated by presumed locally produced wares fraught with difficulties. There are no obvious  $12^{th}$  century wares present in the assemblage, the whiteware vessels from contexts C027 <033> and C080 <043> are of  $13^{th}/14^{th}$  century date, the vast bulk of the assemblage dates to between the  $13^{th}$  and  $15^{th}$  centuries and the domination of glazed jugs as the preferred vessel type would also fit that date bracket.

Catalogue	Context	Sherd			
No.	No.	Count	Description	Spot dates	
025	003	8	rim and bodysherds from green glazed redwares	15th-17th	
			bodysherd from glazed green/brown vessel in a		
025	003	1	reduced grey fabric	15th/16th	
			bodysherd from green glazed vessel in a reduced		
025	003	1	blue grey fabric	15th/16th	
			rimsherd and bodysherd from internally glazed		
025	003	2	vessel in light redware fabric (durg jar?)	17th/18th	
			bodysherd from splash green glazed vessel in gritty		
025	003	1	fabric (Scottish)	15th/16th	
			bodysherd from splash green glazed vessel in grey		
026	004	1	fabric with white internal surface		
			bodysherds from green glazed vessels in reduced		
027	011	6	grey fabric	15th/16th	
			rimsherd and bodysherds from splash glazed vessels		
			in a whiteware fabric with a light brown external		
027	011	5	surface (Scottish)	13th-15th	
			bodysherd from green glazed vessel (well glazed) in		
			a well sorted redware fabric with at least one large		
027	011	1	rock inclusion	15th/16th	
			bodysherd from splash glazed vessel, odd		
			shapepossibly just below rim? reduced grey fabric		
027	011	1	with light brown surface 1		
			bodysherd from green glazed vessel in gritty		
			redware fabric with burnt out inclusions. Scottish	bric with burnt out inclusions. Scottish	
027	011	1	trans Craggan/Redware?	13th-15th	
			bodysherd from green glazed vessel in Redware		
027	011	1	fabric with grey core	13th-15th	
			bodysherd with handle junction in a coarse		
027	011	1	micaceous fabric with traces of splash glaze	13th-15th	
			smoke blackened basal angle from splash glazed		
028	013	1	vessel in white fabric with red inclusions 1		
			two green galzed bodysherds in redware fabric with		
028	013	2	a grey core 13th-2		
			Bodysherd from green glazed vessel in a redware		
028	013	1	fabric with raised cordon 13th-1		

			Bodysherds from green glazed vessels (well glazed)	
028	013	2	in a whiteware fabric	13th-15th
			Bodysherd from vessel splash glazed green in	
029	015	3	redware fabric	13th-15th
			Bodysherds from vessels splash glazed green with	
			visible slight external rilling in hard fired reduced	
030	017	3	grey fabric	
			Rimsherd and side wall from open vessel form, well	
			glazed green internally and externally. Reduced grey	
031	023	1	slightly gritty fabric	15th
			Green glazed bodysherds in a reduced grey gritty	
			fabric, one sherd has raised brown vertical strip	
031	023	6	decoration	15th/16th
			Bodysherds from green glazed vessels (well glazed)	,
032	024	2	in light redware fabric	
			Bodysherd in hard fired redware fabric splash glazed	
032	024	1	green	17th/18th
			Bodysherd from green glazed vessel in reduced blue	
032	024	1	grev fabric	
032	024	1	Bodysherd from unglazed redware vessel	
032	024	-	Bodysherd in thin redware fabric internally white	
032	024	1	slinned	17th/18th
032	024	1	Bodysherd in brown glazed stoneware	18th/19th
032	024	-	Pimsherd from vessel glazed light green in hard	1011/1511
032	024	1	white fabric	
032	024	1	2 rimchards and 11 hadyshards (2 joining from	
			bandle junction) from a splach glazod jug in a	
			whiteware fabric with a reduced grey core and	
			occasional red (sandstone?) inclusions Light brown	
033	027	14	external surface	
033	027	14	Stran handle, large bodyshord with handle junction	
			and bodysherds from splash glazed jug in a bard	
033	027	36	fired reduced grey fabric	12+h_15+h
033	027	50		13(1-13(1)
			Basal angles and hodysherds from solash glazed	
			vessel in hard fired reduced grey fabric with light	
033	027	9	brown surface some concretions on interior of base	13th-15th
			2 joining bodysherds and 19 bodysherds in a	
			whiteware fabric with red inclusions from a splash	
033	027	20	glazed vessel with light brown exterior surface	
			Rimsherds from splash glazed vessel in hard fired	
033	027	2	redware fabric	
		-	2 joining thin basesberds and two bodysberds from	
			unglazed cooking vessel? in hard fired whiteware	
			fabric with incised throwing marks on interior of	
033	027	4	base.	
033	027	3	Green glazed bodysherds in whiteware fabric	
		-	Two unglazed basesberds in whiteware fabric with	
033	027	2	red inclusions	
			basal angle and bodysherds from splash glazed	
033	027	18	vessels in a reduced grev fabric	

			Unglazed bodysherd in whiteware fabric with light	
033	027	1	brown external surface	
			Unglazed bodysherds in redware fabric with light	
033	027	2	grey brown external surfaces	
			Bodysherds from vessels splash glazed green in	
034	031	5	reduced grey fabric	
			Rimsherd from jug splash glazed green brown in	
034	031	1	whiteware fabric	13th-15th
			Bodysherd from unglazed vessel in whiteware fabric	
034	031	1	with red inclusions	
			Bodysherds from green glazed jug (well glazed), 6 of	
			the sherds have raised horizontal cordons in	
			micaceous sandy fabric with grey core light brown	
035	034	39	internal surface (Scottish Redware?)	13th/14th
			Bodysherd from green glazed jug (well glazed) in	
036	036	1	Scottish Redware with reduced grey fabric	15th/16th
			Bodysherd from green glazed jug (well glazed) in	
037	038	1	micaceous reduced grey fabric (Scot Red?)	13th-15th
			Bodysherd from green glazed jug (well glazed) in	
			micaceous fabric with grey core and internal red	
037	038	1	brown surface (Scot Red?)	13th-15th
			Bodysherds from green glazed vessels in reduced	
038	065	4	grey fabric	13th-15th
			Bodysherds from spash glaazed jug in hard gritty	
			redware fabric with grey core , traces with burnt out	
039	066	2	organic inclusions on internal surface.	
			Larger shred has applied pad decorated with vertical	
			incised slashes suggesting this may be from a figure	
			jug. (Scot Red?) fabric is noiticeably layered and	
			slightly splayed	13th/14th
			Bodysherds from green glazed jug in reduced grey	
039	066	6	fabric	14th/15th
			Bodysherds from green glazed jug (well glazed) in	
039	066	3	light grey gritty fabric (not Scottish?)	14th/15th
			Bodysherd from green glazed vessel with fragment	
039	066	1	of handle junction in white gritty fabric (SWGW?)	13th-15th
			Bodysherd from green glazed vessel in whiteware	
039	066	1	fabric with grey core and white grey interior	13th-15th
			Bodysherd from green glazed vessel in light brown	
039	066	1	fabric with light brown core	
			Bodysherd with very abraded external surface in a	
039	066	1	pink red fabric	
			Green glazed bodysherds in reduced grey fabric	
040	070	6	from jug (largest sherd has part of handle junction)	13th-15th
			Rimsherd from splash glazed vessel in a Redware	
041	077	1	fabric (Scottish?)	
			Bodysherd from green glazed vessel in a fine less	
041	077	1	gritty Redware fabric (Unid)	
			Basesherds from splash glazed vessel in slightly	
041	077	2	gritty whiteware (Scottish?)	
L				

			Bodysherd from green brown glazed vessel in	
041	077	1	whiteware fabric	
			Bodysherd from green glazed whiteware vessel (well	
041	077	1	glazed) Scottish?	
			Joining pieces from abraded splash green glazed	
042	079	2	strap handle in a whiteware fabric (Scottish?)	13th-15th
			Joining rimsherds, strap handle, decorative handle	
			and bodysherd from splash green glazed jug	
042	079	5	(figure?) in reduced grey fabric (Scottish?)	13th-15th
			Thumbed handle junction from unglazed (?) vessel	
			in red brown fabric with dark grey brown external	
042	079	1	surface (Unid)	
			Bodysherd from green glazed vessel with vertical	
042	079	1	bovril strip in well sorted redware fabric	
			Bodysherds from green glazed vessel in fabric with	
			grey core and red brown internal surface (Scottish	
042	079	2	Redware?)	13th-15th
042	079	1	Bodysherd from unglazed vessel in blue grey fabric	
042	079	1	Rimsherd from unglazed vessel in a redware fabric	
			Bodysherd from unglazed vessel in fabric with blue	
042	079	1	grey core and red external surface	
			Bodysherd from green glazed vessel (well glazed) in	
			a well sorted redware fabric (could be a Yorkshire	
042	079	1	Redware?)	13th/14th
			Basal angle from splash glazed jug with occasional	
	thumb marks on basal angle, traces of external			
			white slip in a reduced grey redware fabric with an	
			external red brown surface (traces of purple heat	
043	080	1	skin) (Scottish Redware)	13th-15th
			Basal angle and bodysherds from splash glazed jug	
043	080	4	in a hard well sorted slightly gritty whiteware fabric	
			Bodysherd from a splash glazed vessel in a redware	
			fabric with a grey core and an internal light brown	
043	080	1	surface and an external light brown surface (Unid)	
			Bodysherd in a Redware fabric with a blue grey core	
			and interior and a light brown external surface,	
043	080	1	traces of splashed glaze	13th-15th
			Bodysherd from green glazed vessel with reduced	
043	080	1	grey fabric	13th-15th
			Rimsherd from splash glazed vessel (Scottish	
043	080	1	Redware)	13th-15th
			Joining pieces of rim and bridge spout from splash	
			glazed jug in gritty whiteware fabric with light red	
			brown in and ext surfaces. Fabric has distinctive	
043	080	3	black inclusions. (Unid)	13th/14th
			Bodysherd from green glazed jug (well glazed) in	
044	086	1	micaceous reduced grey fabric (Scot Red?) 131	
			Bodysherd from green brown glazed jug (well	
			glazed) in fabric with grey core and light brown	
044	086	1	internal surface (Scot Red?)	13th-15th

			Small unglazed sherd in gritty whiteware fabric with	
044	086	1	light brown external surface (Scottish Whiteware?)	13th-15th
			Abraded Scottish Redware bodysherd grey core and	
			interior red brown exterior with slight traces of	
	path	1	splashed glaze	14th/15th
			Rim, neck and sidewalls from green glazed jug with	
			attached complete strap handle raised horizontal	
			cordons similar to <035> fabric is micaceous has	
			occasional burnt out inclusions and is reduced grey	
045	Tower	1	with light red brown surface	15th/16th
	Total	280		

Table 1 Pottery Catalogue

# Discussion and Recommendations

The pottery assemblage from the excavations at Tarbert Castle is an important addition to the study of Scottish medieval pottery from the Scottish West Coast. There are no obvious imported wares and all of this pottery would appear to be of Scottish manufacture. Consistently the fabrics are highly fired and well potted implying the existence of available good local potters, a similar picture is seen in Fife where imported pottery vessels also tend to be in the minority (Hall 1997). It has long been recognised that our current understanding of pottery manufacture, use and trade on the West Coast and Islands is sadly lacking when compared to the rest of the country. Previous published reports on assemblages from Dumbarton, Ayr and Dundonald Castle (Franklin and Hall 2004; Franklin and Hall 2012; Caldwell and Campbell 2004) have started to create the background to pottery fabrics, vessel types and their use in the medieval burghs and castles of the West of Scotland but the subject still lacks a proper synthetic overview and the considered use of chemical sourcing to identify potential production centres.



Illus. 85 Bodysherd from figure jug in Scottish Redware with remains of junction from applied decorative handle (C066).



Illus. 86 Rim, sidewalls and complete strap handle from a splash glazed jug (Context 'tower')



Illus. 87 C080 Basal angle from jug in Scottish Redware with occasional thumb marks and visible kiln scar on base.



Illus. 88 C034 bodysherds from green glazed jug with raised cordons

# 5.2 Metal Finds Andrew Morrison

A metal finds assemblage comprising 150 artefacts (Mass: 3,399.0g) was recovered during recent excavations at Tarbert Castle, in Tarbert, Argyll. The castle is situated atop a promontory along the southeastern side of East Loch Tarbert, with its original construction thought to date from around the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and a long history of occupation, use, and alterations taking place through the 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (RCAHMS 1971, 180-2). The assemblage comprises ferrous and non-ferrous metals (largely copper alloys, but also lead and tin.

The metal finds assemblage is dominated by building fixtures and fittings, including 81 nails and a number of clench bolts and roves, and also includes coins, dress accessories, copper alloy sheet metal repair patches with paperclip rivets, knives, utensils, and other household items, tools, and security items. Many of the finds are long-lived types and cannot be closely dated, however of the ones to which a broad period can be assigned, the assemblage is split into two distinct groups: those associated with medieval and early post-medieval features approximately 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century in date, and those associated with contexts attributed to the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

## Condition

The ferrous and non-ferrous metal assemblages display varying degrees of post-deposition corrosion ranging from light corrosion, to being completely obscured by heavy corrosion and concretions and visible through x-ray analysis only. The majority of the assemblage, however, displays only moderate corrosion (though in some instances, still active) with the object forms clearly visible and the original surfaces remaining. Only in a few cases were the finds corroded beyond the point of positive identification. A large number of the finds also survive intact with very little post-deposition damage or distortion which also aided in their identification.

# Contextual analysis

The metal finds from Tarbert Castle were retrieved from a total of 16 separate contexts from approximately six different areas including the castle's Inner and Outer Bailey, the portcullis gateway, and a medieval oven feature. The vast majority of the finds (almost 50%) were retrieved from context C027 which is described as an occupation/midden deposit above the floor level of the Inner Enclosure.

Grouped by area, the majority of finds were retrieved from the Inner Enclosure (51.4%), followed by the medieval oven feature (17.6%), the 17<sup>th</sup> century structure (16.9%), the Outer Enclosure (4.0%), and the Portcullis Gateway (1.2%). Table 2 below lists the total quantity of finds retrieved by context and area, with the percentage of the total quantity of the assemblage they represent.

Context	Area	Quantity
003	No context information	1
007	17 <sup>th</sup> century structure	16
012	17 <sup>th</sup> century structure	8
013	Portcullis gateway	2
017	17 <sup>th</sup> century structure	1
023	Outer Bailey midden	6
026	rubble infill	1
027	Inner Bailey floor deposit	75

031	Medieval oven	4
034	Inner Bailey floor deposit	1
038	Medieval oven	11
048	Medieval oven	11
065	Outer Bailey	6
066	Inner Bailey	2
067	Charcoal spread	3
070	Inner Enclosure floor deposit	3
Total		150

Table 2: Quantity of metal finds retrieved by context with area

# Classifications

The assemblage comprises both ferrous and non-ferrous metal artefacts, including 122 iron finds, 26 in copper alloy, one in lead, and one possibly in tin. As some of the finds are adhered to one another in corroded masses, some individual measurements and weights were not obtainable, including the tin strip mentioned above (Cat.229.3). Table 3 below illustrates the quantity and mass divided by material classification.

Material	Quantity	Mass (g)
Iron	122	3,245
Copper Alloy	27	76.5
Lead	1	8.0
Tin	1	-
Total	150	3,329.5

Table 3: Quantity and mass by material of metal finds under discussion

# The Non-ferrous metal finds

The non-ferrous metal finds assemblage comprises 28 objects (Mass: 75.5g) recovered from five separate contexts. The majority of the finds are in copper alloy (Q: 26), with one lead object, and one likely tin object also recovered.

# Copper Alloy

The copper alloy assemblage is made up of 26 objects, and includes: eight coins, three sheet vessel repair patches with *in situ* staple rivets (Cat.149) and 10 fragments of cold working waste including staple rivets and sheet off-cuts, one composite strap-end plate (Cat.144), one pin shank fragment (Cat.269), and three non-diagnostic sheet fragments possibly associated with cold sheet metal working.

# Coins

A total of eight coins were recovered from two separate contexts: one from context (C003), and seven from the floor deposit C007 within the western room of Structure 1. The coins are all copper alloy, and range in condition from lightly corroded and completely legible, to heavily worn and corroded and completely illegible. Two of the coins (Cat.165 and Cat.166), though heavily worn and corroded, are still partially legible, with enough of the design elements visible to suggest a possible ruler, date, and denomination. The coins recovered are all Scottish coins, spanning in date from 1559-1668, and represent the reigns of Mary, Queen of Scots, Charles I, and Charles II.

The coin retrieved from context C003 is a copper billion lion/hardhead of Mary Queen of Scots, and Francis (Cat.154) with a crown over an FM monogram with two flanking dolphins facing left on the obverse, and a

crowned lion rampant facing left on the reverse. These coins were issued in 1559-1560 following the marriage of Mary, Queen of Scots to the French Dauphin Francis in 1558. The Tarbert example dates to late 1559-1560 where the coins were minted with the flanking dolphins facing left instead of right as on the earlier coins (Holmes 1998, 42). This coin also bears the countermark of the crest of the Earl of Morton, a star within a heart, that was applied in 1575 under Act of Parliament signifying this coin as legal tender which was a necessary measure due to the large number of forgeries of this coin, as well as others, in circulation at the time (ibid, 46).

The remaining seven coins are all from the floor deposit C007 within the western room of Structure 1, which has been interpreted as dating to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The coins are all from the reigns of Charles I and Charles II, and date from between 1632 and 1668 which matches with the period assigned to the structure. These coins comprise three 'Stirling' turner two pence of Charles I with a crown above CIIR on the obverse and a thistle on the reverse, issued between 1632 and 1639 (Cat.160, Cat.162, and Cat.163), two heavily worn copper turners of Charles I, likely third issues from between 1643-1650 (Cat.165 and Cat.166), a copper turner of Charles II issued between 1663 and 1668 (Cat.161), and one coin that is completely illegible, though based on size, shape, and composition, is likely to date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Cat.164).

#### Catalogue

#### Cat.154 Context C003

A Scottish copper billion lion/hardhead of Mary, Queen of Scots, and Francis.

Diameter: 14.0mm, weight: 0.7g

Moderately corroded, crown over FM monogram and two flanking dolphins facing left on the obverse. Suggestion of a worn and corroded crowned lion rampant facing left on the reverse. Bears a countermark in the form of a star within a heart of the Earl of Morton. Issued late 1559-1560, countermarked 1575.

#### Cat.160 Context C007

A Scottish copper 'Stirling' turner two pence of Charles I.

Diameter: 15.9mm, weight: 0.6g

Moderately corroded with some surface loss. Crown above CIIR on the obverse, and a thistle on the reverse. Issued 1632-1639.

Cat.161 Context C007 A Scottish copper turner of Charles II. Diameter: 19.5mm, weight: 1.7g Moderately corroded with some surface loss. Crown above CR II on the obverse, and a thistle on the reverse. Issued 1663-1668.

#### Cat.162 Context C007

A Scottish copper 'Stirling' turner two pence of Charles I. Diameter: 15.8mm, weight: 0.8g Partially obscured by moderate corrosion. Crown above CIIR on the obverse, and a thistle on the reverse. Issued 1632-1639.

Cat.163 Context C007 A Scottish copper 'Stirling' turner two pence of Charles I. Diameter: 15.7mm, weight: 0.6g Partially obscured by moderate corrosion. Crown above CIIR on the obverse, and a thistle on the reverse. Issued 1632-1639. Cat.164 Context C007 Illegible. Diameter: 17.1mm, weight: 0.9g Heavy wear and moderate corrosion. Very little of original surface remains. Form suggests a 17<sup>th</sup> century date.

Cat.165 Context C007 Likely Scottish copper turner of Charles I. Diameter: 17.9mm, weight: 1.9g Heavy wear and corrosion making the coin almost completely illegible. Very faint crown above CR on the obverse, and a thistle on the reverse. Likely 3<sup>rd</sup> issue, 1643-1650.

Cat.166 Context C007 Likely Scottish copper turner of Charles I. Diameter: 18.5mm, weight: 1.2g Heavy pitting and corrosion making the coin almost completely illegible. Very faint crown above CR on the obverse, and a thistle on the reverse. Likely 3<sup>rd</sup> issue, 1643-1650.

## Dress Accessories

The dress accessories identified amongst the assemblage include an angle-ended plate from a composite strap-end (Cat.144) retrieved from the occupation/ midden deposit C027 from above the floor level of the Inner Bailey, and a circular sectioned pin shank and tip fragment (Cat.269), recovered from a cesspit context C017 associated with the 17<sup>th</sup> century structure 1. The pin fragment may be from a wound wire-headed pin or similar dress pin and is not closely dateable.

The strap-end plate (Cat.144) was likely part of a composite strap-end that would have had a sheet spacer spanning the whole width of the base. This type of strap-end is considered a relatively short-lived type, with the 12 examples that were excavated from sites in London all dating exclusively from 14<sup>th</sup> century deposits (Pritchard 2002, 148 and 147, fig.96, 692, 694). This type of strap-end would have been used to protect the end of a fabric or leather belt measuring around 8.2mm in width.

### Catalogue

### Cat.144 Context C027, Composite strap-end plate

Straight attachment edge tapering to an angled end. Undecorated. Two rivet holes centrally located, one at each end. Marks from iron rivet heads survive on the strap-end face. Likely part of a composite strap-end with sheet spacer occupying the whole width. Likely 14<sup>th</sup> century. L: 19.7mm, W: 6.1mm – 8.2mm, Th: 1.0mm, Hole Diam: 1.2mm, Mass: 1.6g.

### Cat.269, Context C017, Pin shank

Pin shank and tip, likely from a wound wire-headed pin. Circular section. Not closely dateable, though most likely post-medieval. L: 14.0mm, Diam: 0.9mm, Mass: 0.01g.).

### Sheet vessel repair patches and cold metalworking waste

A number of finds were recovered that indicate that the cold metalworking of copper alloy sheet and the repairing of vessels was taking place on site. These objects include three sheet vessel repair patches with *in-situ* paperclip rivets (Cat.149.1, Cat.149.2 and Cat.149.3), three separate paperclip rivets (Cat.149.4, Cat.343 and Cat. 364), a cut sheet fragment (Cat.149.7), and three sheet vessel repair patch fragments (Cat.149.5, and Cat.149.6).

The finds were all retrieved from the occupation/ midden deposit C027 above the floor level of the Inner Enclosure, apart from (Cat.343) which was retrieved from the occupation deposit C066 from the floor of the Inner Enclosure.

The three sheet vessel repair patches are thin, relatively large irregular sections with *in-situ* paperclip rivets and display possible creases formed by the vessel they were intended to repair, though each display additional post-depositional distortion. The sheet fragments are likely to have joined with one another and in an overlapping manner, as is evidenced by the differential staining on the individual sections and the two fragments that are still joined by paperclip rivets (Cat.149.3). Individual hammer marks are visible in the xray, arranged in regular columns to thin-out and shape the copper alloy sheet. Two of the fragments display regular, finished straight edges; one of these (Cat.149.2) has four straight edges, two meeting at a 90degree angle and two meeting at 45-degree angles. The remaining edges are either scalloped, possibly intentionally or as a product of hammering and thinning or have been lost to corrosion. Unfortunately, there is no overall discernible form indicated by these fragments that might indicate the type of vessel these patches were intended to repair; the staining on the fragments suggests that they were used on or over the hearth, therefore a vessel such as a cauldron or pan seems plausible.



Illus. 89 sheet vessel Cat. 149 and riveted section

The paperclip rivets are formed by the folding over of lozenge-shaped copper alloy sheet off-cuts and are used to repair vessels either individually for small flaws or in conjunction with repair patches for larger areas of damage (Cox 2004a, 60). Paperclip rivets work by feeding the tapered ends of the rivet through a punched rectangular slot, either in the vessel or the repair patch, and flattening and pinching either end to create a fix. Paperclip rivets are not considered to be closely dateable, as they are known from contexts dating from the Saxon period up to and throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Egan 2005, 101).

Evidence for the cold metalworking of copper alloy sheet is almost ubiquitous on medieval and early postmedieval sites where the conditions allow for the good preservation of metals (ibid, 133). Though finds of sheet off-cuts and even paperclip rivets are relatively common, the recovery of larger sections of sheet repair patches with *in-situ* paperclip rivets are far less so.
Paperclip rivets together with repair patches have been uncovered on a number of Scottish sites including: Meal Vennel, Perth (Cox 1996, 768, illus.19, No.115-6, 144), Perth High Street (Goodall 2012, 108, illus.123, 124), and from late 14<sup>th</sup> to late 15<sup>th</sup> century contexts at Canal Street II in Perth (Ford 1987, 127-8, illus.63, 39-41), and also at Castlecliffe, in St. Andrews (Caldwell 1996, 636, illus.26, No.11), from 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century contexts at the Scottish Parliament site in Edinburgh (Cox and Hall 2008, 45, fig.3.26, 35), in situ on substantially intact vessels from Dowalton Loch, Dumfries and Galloway (Hunter 1994) and from 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century contexts at Portmahomack, on the Tarbat peninsula (Carver et al 2016, 315), *inter alia*.

#### Catalogue

#### Cat.145 Context C027

Thin, rectangular sheet. One terminal folded over into a loop. Non-diagnostic. Not closely dateable. L: 0.9mm, W: 8.7mm, Th: 0.4mm, Mass: 0.5g.)

#### Cat.146 Context C027

Thin sheet fragment. Cut triangular strip with slightly curled end. Likely trimming. Not closely dateable. L: 33.5mm, W: 5.1mm, Th: 0.5mm, Mass: 0.4g. Context (27): Occupation/ midden deposit from above the floors of the Inner Enclosure.

#### Cat.147 Context C027

Thin sheet fragment. Half of a crescent-shaped off-cut. Iron corrosion on one face. Not closely dateable. L: 30.6mm, W: 8.4mm, Th: 0.5mm, Mass: 0.9g.

#### Cat.148 Context C027

Thin sheet fragment. Crescent-shaped off-cut. Possible staple rivet. Not closely dateable. L: 33.6mm, W: 7.0mm, Th: 0.5mm, Mass; 0.6g.

#### Cat.149.1 Context C027

Sheet vessel repair patch with in-situ paperclip rivets. Irregular linear fragment with undulating or scalloped edges. No discernible vessel form. Possible intentional crease, though the patch is crinkled, torn, and distorted. Some lustrous bronze sheen remaining. Three paperclip rivets in situ, all different sizes, and two punched rectangular holes now torn and lacking rivets. Hammer marks from flattening sheet visible on x-ray. Differential staining suggests the patches were overlapping. Likely medieval. L: 188.2mm, W: 49.7mm – 72.2mm, Th: 0.3mm, Rivet W: 9.6mm - 22.5mm, Mass: 20.8g

#### Cat.149.2 Context C027

Sheet vessel repair patch with in-situ paperclip rivets. Irregular, slightly trapezoidal fragment with four finished straight edges- three meeting at two 45-degree angles and two meeting at a 90 degree angle, and one irregular edge. No discernible vessel form. Five paperclip rivets in situ and two empty punched rectangular rivet holes spaced along the finished straight edges. Patch is slightly bent and distorted, with differential staining suggesting the patches were overlapping. Hammer marks from flattening sheet visible on x-ray. Likely medieval. L: 142.0mm, W: 16.2mm – 54.9mm, Th: 0.5mm, Rivet W: 10.5mm - 11.5mm, Mass: 20.9g.

#### Cat.149.3 Context C027

Two fragments of attached and overlapping sheet vessel repair patches fastened with paperclip rivets. Two large paperclip rivets in-situ within the base fragment, and two smaller rivets joining the smaller fragment to the larger below. Irregular fragments with only one straight edge intact and no discernible form. Patches are crinkled and distorted with some loss to corrosion, and hammer marks from flattening sheet are visible on x-ray. Likely medieval. L: 119.3mm, W: 53.6mm – 82.6mm, Th: 0.4mm, Rivet W: 7.7mm - 20.6mm, Mass: 13.4g.

#### Cat.149.4 Context C027

Cut lozenge-shaped sheet folded over on itself and pinched mid-length. Likely medieval. L: 20.1mm, W: 10.1mm, Th: 0.5mm, Mass: 0.7g.

Cat.149.5 Context C027

Small fragment of sheet vessel repair patch with scalloped edge and staining from overlapping sheet. Likely medieval. L: 31.3mm, W: 17.1mm, Th: 0.4mm, Mass: 0.3g.

#### Cat.149.6 Context C027

Small, irregular fragments of a sheet vessel repair patch with staining from an overlapping sheet. Likely medieval. L: 20.3mm, W: 18.1mm, Th: 0.3mm, Mass: 0.4g.

#### Cat.149.7 Context C027

Irregular fragment of cut copper alloy sheet with shear marks along one edge and an undulating surface. Likely medieval. L: 27.5mm, W: 22.8mm, Th: 1.1mm, Mass: 2.2g.

Cat.343 Context C066 Thin sheet fragment. Crescent-shaped off-cut, bent over width-ways. Possible paperclip rivet. Not closely dateable. L: 14.8mm, W: 5.7mm, Th: 0.2mm, Mass:0.1g.

#### Cat.364 Context C027

Cut lozenge-shaped sheet folded over on itself. Likely medieval. L: 21.1mm, W: 20.1mm, Th: 0.5mm, Mass: 0.1g.

#### Non-diagnostic

Three of the copper alloy finds recovered are classed as non-diagnostic, meaning that they cannot be identified to perform a specific function or definitively grouped into a particular object category. The finds were all recovered from the occupation/ midden deposit C027) from above the floors of the Inner Bailey and comprise: a thin rectangular sheet strip (Cat.142) with a slight S-shaped profile and a rectangular indentation at one end, a slightly curled tapering sheet fragment (Cat.143) with two small triangular tabs folded beneath, and a heavily corroded sheet fragment folded into a triangular packet (Cat.275). Though their function is not readily apparent, there is a possibility that they may be associated with cold sheet metal working similar to the other working waste and repair patches retrieved from the same context C027.

#### Catalogue

#### Cat.142 Context C027

Thin sheet strip. Flat rectangular with slight S-shape section. Long edges are cut, as is one terminus. Other terminus broken. Small linear indentation on one face near cut terminus. Iron corrosion on face opposite indentation. Non-diagnostic. Not closely dateable. L: 21.7mm, W: 7.8mm, Th: 0.8mm, Mass: 0.9g.

#### Cat.143 Context C027

Flat sheet cut to form a tapering rectangle. One flat terminus, two sides expanding to slightly concave terminus. Curled slightly upwards at short end. Underside has triangular tab bent under on one long side close to convex end and one smaller triangular tab folded over to one side on convex end. Possible wood remnants underneath. Non-diagnostic. Not closely dateable. L: 19.7mm, W: 6.1mm - 8.2mm, Th: 0.3mm, Mass: 0.5g.

#### Cat.275 Context C027

Heavily corroded sheet fragment with iron corrosion staining. Folded packet, roughly triangular in shape. Non-diagnostic. Not closely dateable. L: 22.7mm, W: 21.0mm, Th: 6.8mm, Mass; 2.9g.

## Lead

One lead or lead alloy object (Cat.141) was recovered from the occupation/ midden deposit (027) from above the floors of the Inner Enclosure. The find has a thin, semi-circular base with a rectangular sectioned stem protruding from the top. There are fold marks at the stem and base junction where the material was pinched to form the stem, and linear irregular scratches along one face of the base. The stem is broken at the top, and an even horizontal cut or tear with burrs forms the long edge of the base.

This find most likely represents the junction between the lower portion of the stem and the top portion of the bowl of a lead spoon. The shape formed by the junction between the stem and the bowl, the profile of the stem, and the bowl form displayed on the Tarbert example are all consistent with lead spoons dating from between the 12<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries (Egan 2005, 2010). Lead spoons of the medieval and early post-medieval periods tended to have long, thin, gently tapering stems with different-shaped sections including triangular, hexagonal, trapezoidal, and rectangular amongst others, and are sometimes finished with a decorative knop at the tip. Spoon bowls can take a number of different shapes, including rounded, oval, fig-shaped, and pointed (Egan 2010, 246). Spoon bowl profiles also vary from deeply dished as in modern spoons, to more shallow and even flat which may have had more specialized uses at the dinner table, where it has been suggested that they could have been used for softer foods and the serving of salt (*ibid*, 245).

The fragment from Tarbert fits with the established spoon typologies in that it displays the base of a narrow, rectangular sectioned stem, expanding to the top of a curved, flat bowl. The Tarbert fragment also displays linear scratch-marks on the bowl surface, possibly through use, that have been shown on other examples excavated from early to mid-16th century contexts from riverside sites in Southwark, London (Egan 2005, 110, fig.100, 527). A number of 16<sup>th</sup> century spoons recovered from Southwark also display a tear along the top of the bowl near to the stem junction (ibid, 133, fig.103, 546), or bowl fragments with missing tops and stems and a tear along the same area (ibid, 115, fig.106, 553), indicates that the top of the spoon bowl near to the stem junction was a weak point that was prone to bending and breaking which explains the tear with burrs along the base of the Tarbert example.

## Catalogue

## Cat.141 Context C027

Likely spoon fragment. Base of stem and top portion of bowl surviving. Stem is rectangular in section (W: 5.7mm, Th: 2.3mm), with visible folds shaping the top portion of the bowl. Straight tear along the top portion of the bowl, retains some burrs. Light scratch-marks present on bowl surface. H: 35.6mm, W: 38.2mm, Bowl Th: 0.7mm, Mass: 8.0g.

## Tin

One possible tin fragment was recovered from the occupation/ midden deposit C027 from above the floors of the Inner Enclosure. The fragment (Cat.229.3) is a long, narrow, and thin strip with tapering terminal that is part of an amalgam of iron finds adhered to one another through corrosion (Cat.229). Possibly working waste or inlay, only one terminal is visible protruding from the mass, however, x-ray analysis shows the strip to be relatively long and loosely wound in a bundle.

Catalogue

## Cat.229.3 Context C027

Possibly tin, long, thin cut strip. Part of a composite of objects adhered through corrosion. Xray indicates a small wound bundle of thin tin stripping within the iron corrosion. The protruding tip tapers to a point. Non-diagnostic. Not closely dateable. W: 2.6mm, Th: 0.3mm.

## The Ferrous metal finds

The ferrous metal assemblage comprises 121 objects (Mass: 3,214.5g) recovered from 14 separate contexts and a number of amalgams, particularly from context C027, adhered together through corrosion.

The iron assemblage is dominated by nails, and to a lesser extent, clench bolts and roves. Other building fixtures and furniture fittings were also retrieved, as well as a number of household items and tools, knives, a lock and key, and a number of unidentifiable or non-diagnostic fragments. These finds represent items associated with the day-to-day use and habitation of Tarbert Castle during the medieval and post-medieval periods, and in the large percentage of nails and clench bolts and roves, may reflect episodes of structural alterations and repairs.

The ferrous metal finds were recovered from a number of different areas, including the 17<sup>th</sup> century structure C007 and C012, the Inner Enclosure C013, C027, (034), C066, and C070, Outer Enclosure C065, oven feature C031, C038, and C048, and fire installation C067. Iron finds were also retrieved from contexts C023 and C026 for which there was no information available.

## Knives

A total of six knives or knife fragments were recovered, including four associated with the 17<sup>th</sup> century structure (a likely scale tang handle fragment (Cat.82.1), two intact or largely intact whittle tang knives (Cat.185 and Cat.186), and a possible table knife blade (Cat.191)) and two associated with earlier deposits from the Inner Enclosure and the medieval oven feature (a non-diagnostic blade fragment (Cat.229.2) and a possibly serrated blade tip (Cat.299.2). On medieval sites, knives are generally one of the most common tools recovered, when preservation permits, as they were carried by large numbers of people as general-purpose tools, including for eating and also at times, for self-defence (Franklin and Goodall 2012, 132).

Knives can be broadly divided into two categories: whittle tang knives, which have a long and thin tang extending from the blade back that is inserted into the handle, and scale tang knives, which have broad tangs forming the core of the handle to which grip plates are attached via rivets. Knives can also be difficult to classify as their forms do not always coincide with their use, and it may be that the design was selected based on the taste of the smith or the consumer. Also, it can be difficult to assess the degree of change from its original form the blade has undergone, either through wear, damage, or excessive sharpening. Because of the inconsistencies of the blade, the blade back is most often used to classify knives, as it is one of the knife's most distinct features, is less likely to have undergone change through use, and is more robust so more likely to withstand the effects of weathering and corrosion (Ottaway 1992, 559).

A widely used typology when classifying medieval knives is that set out by Ian Goodall based on 11<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century excavated assemblages from across Britain. Goodall subdivided whittle tang and scale tang knives based on blade back form and the angle at which they run in relation to the cutting edge and meet with the blade tip (Goodall 2011, 106, fig.8.2). As knives are long-lived tool types that saw very little change over time from the Iron-Age to modern periods, this typology can apply to a much broader period of time. It

should however be noted that though whittle tang knives are the earliest form and continue in use throughout history, scale tang knives begin to appear from around the mid to late 14<sup>th</sup> century and start to outnumber whittle tang knives from around the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, which is likely attributable to their greater strength (Franklin and Goodall 2012, 132).

Four of the knives and knife fragments recovered from Tarbert Castle were retrieved from deposits associated with the 17<sup>th</sup> century structure. These include a largely intact whittle tang knife (Cat.185) classified as a Goodall Type G, where the cutting edge rises up to meet the tip of a straight back, and an intact whittle tang knife (Cat.186) classified as a Goodall Type C, where the cutting edge rises to the tip, rounding to a point. The Type C knife (Cat.186) is of considerable interest as the analysis of the X-ray suggests that the blade is marked with a large letter 'S' possibly followed by another illegible letter, in a vertical orientation positioned centrally to the blade near to the shoulder, choil, and tang. The mark of the 'S' may represent a cutler's mark or a potential monogram of the knife's owner. The use of a single capital 'S' as a cutler's mark is known, with examples noted on finds from London such as that of Thomas Okys, who was in operation from the early to mid-16<sup>th</sup> century (though the 'S' was orientated horizontally), and of John Romayne, who was in operation during the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, amongst others (Hinde & Herbert 2005: 152). During the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, a flourishing cutlery industry existed in the nearby Ayrshire village of Kilmaurs, which is said to have produced very fine cutlery of the highest quality (Beattie 2000: 90) that certainly would have been suitable for the inhabitants of Tarbert Castle. Of the known cutler's marks attributed to the Kilmaurs makers however, a capital 'S' is not among them; instead these are mainly known by a scimitar mark followed by the initials of the maker.



Illus. 90 Knife blade Cat. 186 after full restoration



Illus. 91 X-ray of knife blade Cat. 186 showing detail of 'S' stamp inlay

A scale tang handle fragment with bi-lobed terminal (Cat.182.1) was also recovered from the same context (C007) as the knives mentioned above. Also retrieved from an occupation deposit (C012) associated with the 17<sup>th</sup> century structure is what is interpreted as a table knife blade (Cat.191) which has a slightly curving concave back and an abrupt tip that drops slightly before rounding outward to the cutting surface.

The two other blade fragments were recovered from contexts associated with medieval activity, though in themselves are not diagnostic. A section of blade broken before the tip and the tang (Cat.229.2) was noted within an amalgam of corroded finds recovered from the Inner Enclosure C027, and a small, possibly serrated blade tip (Cat.299.2) was recovered from the medieval oven feature C038.

#### Catalogue

#### Cat.182.1 Context C007

Possible scale tang knife handle. Irregular flat rectangular strap with two visible and one partial square punched perforations (c.4.0mm x 4.0mm). Bi-lobed terminal, one side slightly larger than the other. Handle is broken prior to the blade. Not closely dateable. L: 121.1mm, W: 26.2mm – 33.0mm, Th: 3.3mm, Perforations: 4.0mm x 4.0mm, 44.5mm apart. Mass: 59.1g.

#### Cat.185 Context C007

Whittle tang knife. Goodall Type G. Cutting edge of blade rises up to meet the tip of a straight back. Broken tang, with folded in sides, rising up to abrupt shoulder. Robust back. Rounded choil and irregular cutting edge. Broken tip. Not closely dateable. L: 150.9mm, Blade L: 131.0mm, Blade H: 22.6mm, Th: 6.2mm, Mass: 44.3g.

#### Cat.186 Context C007

Whittle tang knife. Intact. Goodall Type C. Flat, straight back. Cutting edge rises to the tip, rounding to a point. Short shoulder and sloping choil. Thin, slightly bent tang. Marked with a large 'S' orientated vertically and positioned centrally on blade forward of tang. Not closely dateable, likely post-medieval. L: 133.4mm, Blade L: 78.9mm, Blade H: 19.7mm, Tang L: 52.7mm, W: 9.2mm, Th: 3.5mm – 5.6mm, Mass: 23.3g.

#### Cat.191 Context C012

Blade fragment with straight to slightly concave back, rising to abrupt tip that drops slightly before rounding outward to the cutting surface. Cutting surface is intact and tapers inwards towards break. Possible groove along side parallel to blade back. Broken before shoulder and choil. Potentially a table knife. Not closely dateable, though likely post-medieval. L: 97.7mm, H: 16.5mm, Th: 4.2mm, Mass: 21.5g.

## Cat.229.2 Context (027)

Blade fragment with V-shaped section. Tip and tang broken. Part of a composite of objects adhered through corrosion. Not closely dateable. L: 42.9mm, W: 14.2mm, Th: 3.3mm.

## Cat.299.2 Context (038)

Triangular blade tip with rounded end. Potentially serrated. Torqued and snapped. Not closely dateable. L: 24.4mm, W: 13.3mm, Th: 1.7mm, Mass: 1.3g.

## Building ironwork and furniture fittings

The classification encompasses all of the iron fixtures and fittings associated with the structural components of a building and the doors, windows, and furniture it contains. Of the iron objects recovered from Tarbert Castle, this classification includes a large assemblage of nails and clench bolts and roves (which will be discussed further below), as well as a spiked bar (Cat.194), a wedge (Cat.231.1), two stapled hasps (Cat.224 and Cat. 235.3), and a possible hinge strap (Cat.248.1).

The spiked bar (Cat.194) was recovered from the midden/ occupation layer (012) associated with the 17<sup>th</sup> century structure, and is a long, thin and narrow bar with a circular sectioned central portion with an extending arm on either side, one rectangular in section with a broken tip, and the other diamond-shaped in section with a pointed tip. The interpretation of this object is not certain, however it seems plausible that it was used as a complement to the castle's masonry acting, likely in series with others of the same type, as a spiked barrier embedded in the masonry to act as an access deterrent; another spiked bar of similar size and form was recovered from Dryslwyn Castle, in Wales, was interpreted as such (Goodall 2007, 172, fig.6.12, M65).

Other finds recovered include: a wedge (Cat.231.1), a stapled hasp (Cat.224), and a possible stapled hasp (Cat.235.3) from the occupation/ midden deposit from above the floors of the Inner Enclosure C027, and a possible hinge strap (Cat.248.1) from a door hinge or similar, from the rake-out material of the medieval oven-feature C048. The wedge, though a common tool used in many trades including woodworking, is similar in size and shape to one found at Dryslwyn Castle that was interpreted has having been used with building construction, inserted into masonry to help strengthen any weak points (ibid, 171).

Another object of note is the stapled hasp (Cat.224) recovered from the same context C027. Stapled hasps were used together with locks to fasten chests, caskets, and doors (Goodall 2011, 167). The Tarbert example can be categorized as a Goodall Type 1, which is a stapled hasp fixed to the chest by and end loop and a U-shaped eye acting as a lock catch. Similar examples to (Cat.244) have been recovered from early to mid-13<sup>th</sup> century contexts at Oxford (ibid, 214-5, fig.9.25, H573), and early to mid-12<sup>th</sup> century contexts at Winchester (ibid, H574).

## Catalogue

Cat.194 Context C012

Spiked bar. Long, thin bar, with slight upwards bend. Three distinct sections: one arm diamond-shaped in section terminating in a pointed tip (L: 118.0mm, W: 9.5mm, Th: 9.0mm), central portion (L: 39.2mm) has a circular section 8.8mm in diameter, and other arm is rectangular in section, tapering lightly to a damaged tip (L: 130.0mm, W: 8.5mm, Th: 5.0mm). Function uncertain; possibly embedded in masonry to deter access. Not closely dateable. Overall L: 292.7mm, Mass: 63.9g.

#### Cat.224 Context C027

Stapled hasp fragment. End-loop Goodall Type 1. End loop has rounded expanded sides and a protruding rectangular tab at the top. Circular hole with possible tapering groove below. Body narrows before expanding to possible leaf-shaped tip. Retains off-centre U-shaped eye. Tip broken. Possibly 13<sup>th</sup> century. L: 56.1mm, W: 15.4mm – 19.6mm, Th: 1.3mm, Hole Diam: 4.5mm, U-shaped eye: H: 8.1m, W: 14.5mm, Th: c.5.1mm, Mass: 10.3g.

## Cat.231.1 Context C027

Wedge with flat rectangular top and slightly burred head, tapering on both faces to a convex tip. Moderate corrosion with heavy concretions. Identification aided by x-ray analysis. Not closely dateable, but similar wedge from Dryslwyn Castle, Wales dated to the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. H: 58.6mm, W: 21.6mm, Th: 19.7mm, Mass: 92.9.

## Cat.235.3 Context C027

Dumbbell-shaped hasp formed from flat sheet. Two circular lobes connected by a stout strip. Possible hole in centre of one lobe visible through x-ray. Part of an amalgam of objects adhered through corrosion. Not closely dateable. L: 66.6mm, Th: 2.0mm, Smaller lobe Diam: 27.7mm, Strip W: 13.6mm, Larger lobe Diam: 30.0mm.

## Cat.248.1 Context C048

Tapering flat rectangular sectioned perforated bar fragment. Possible hasp. Remnants of two square holes, one at each break. Not closely dateable. L: 90.3mm, W: 27.0mm – 31.8mm, Th; 5.6mm, Mass: 65.4g.

## Nails

A total of 83 nails were recovered from 12 contexts at Tarbert Castle, by far the most numerous of the finds types represented within this assemblage. A full catalogue of these finds are presented in the archive and are summarised in Table 4 below. The majority of the nails (Q: 35, c.43%) were recovered from the occupation/midden deposit from above floors of Inner Enclosure C027, with a further four coming from other contexts within the Inner Enclosure (contexts C013, C034, C066, C070, 6 from the Outer Bailey C065, 22 from the medieval oven feature C031, C038 and C048, three from the fire installation C067, 5 from the 17<sup>th</sup> century structure C007 and C012, and six from context C023 a mixed midden deposit within trench 1 in the Outer Bailey.

A total of 14 out of 83 of the nails remain intact, with further examples classifiable where the head form was visible. In a few instances, the presence of mineralized wood was observed as incorporated within the corrosion product, but in some cases it was not clear if this wood represented the remains of the timber fixture or indirectly associated wood incorporated in the corrosion due to proximity post-deposition.

Nails are ubiquitous on settlement sites, with hand-wrought nails being long-lived types that saw very little change over time, and as such, most nail forms are not closely dateable. Nails are typically classified using well-established nail typologies constructed to categorise large and well stratified excavated assemblages. A more general nail typology often used, was created by Goodall based on nail assemblages from large medieval excavations at Waltham Abbey, in Essex, and Ospringe and Stonar, in Kent (2011). Here, nails are divided into broad types based on head form and size. Following Goodall's typology, the classifiable nails

recovered from Tarbert Castle can be divided into five different types. By far the most numerous are the Type 1 nails, characterized by their square, rectangular, or rounded flat heads, of which 28 examples from seven separate contexts were identified. Two examples of Type 2 nails- having circular or rounded rectangular domed heads- were recovered from two separate contexts, one Type 3 nail with a flat, narrow rectangular head, one Type 5 nail with a flat head in a figure of eight shape, and one Type 6 nail with a flat rectangular head formed by a flaring, wedge-shaped shank were also recovered (see Table 3).

Nail head and shank forms were recorded with measurements, as well as the overall condition of the nail, for example if the shank is straight, slightly bent, bent in an L-shape or an S-shape, or it the tip is clenched, which can all help to indicate whether the nails had been removed from their fixtures, perhaps for salvage, or if their fixtures had rotted with the nails *in-situ*. Of the identifiable examples, 16 of the nails have straight shanks, 23 have slightly bent shanks, three have been heavily bent 90 degrees, two have been bent in an S-shape, and three have clenched tips.

Nail Type	Total	Intact	Contexts								
	Quantity										
Type 1	29	9	(007) (027) (031) (034) (048)								
			(065) (066) (070)								
Type 2	2	1	(013) (027)								
Туре З	1	-	(070)								
Type 5	1	1	(027)								
Туре 6	1	1	(027)								
Non-	49	2	(007) (012) (023) (027) (031)								
classifiable			(038) (048) (065) (067)								
Total	83	14									

Table 4: Quantity of nails retrieved by type with number of intact examples and associated contexts

# Clench bolts and roves

This category of fitting encompasses nails with clenched tips that are used in conjunction with iron plates known as roves to secure two pieces of timber together. The clenched nail secured the two layers together, while the rove prevented the nail from pulling through. Clench bolts and roves are common in shipbuilding, but are also commonly associated with doors, window covers, and well covers (Goodall 2007, 175; Thompson 2007, 175).

A total of 13 clench bolts and roves were recognised amongst the fittings, including four clenched nails with the roves still attached, and nine individual roves. The finds were retrieved from six separate contexts associated with the 17<sup>th</sup> century structure C007 and C012, the Inner Bailey C027 and C070, the medieval oven feature C038), and one from C026. The majority (Q:8) were recovered from the occupation/ midden deposit within the Inner Bailey C027, mostly roves both square and lozenge-shaped, with one intact clench bolt and rove recovered as well. The distance between the base of the head and rove for the intact examples is variable: (Cat.195.1) recovered from C012 is 33.2mm, for (Cat.201) recovered from C026 it is 66.3mm, and for (Cat.299.1) from C038 the distance is 20.7mm.

# Locks and Keys

Two finds within the assemblage can be categorized as pertaining to security and safe keeping: the first, an intact key (Cat.190) recovered from the midden/ occupation layer C012 associated with the 17<sup>th</sup> century

structure, and the second, a U-shaped padlock bolt fragment (Cat.202) recovered from the occupation/ midden deposit C027 from above the floors of the Inner Bailey.

The key is partially obscured by heavy corrosion, though with the aid of x-ray analysis, it is shown to display a solid stem, pointed D-shaped bow formed from a bent rectangular strip and likely held in place by a rivet. The bit form is not entirely clear due to corrosion, but it appears to be solid with horizontal grooves cut on either side. This type of key is similar to a Goodall Type-H key, most likely dating to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and later, and is similar to a late 15<sup>th</sup> to early 16<sup>th</sup> century example from Winchester (Goodall 2011, 294, 1578). This type of key would have been designed to be used from one side of the lock only.

The U-shaped padlock bolt (Cat.202) survives in two joining fragments, with the single spine curving around to a thin, tapering free arm. This type of padlock bolt is associated with barrel padlocks and would have been opened via a slide key designed to compress the spines (missing from this example) and free the bolt from its casing. Barrel padlocks are known from around the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD but are most commonly associated with the medieval period (Franklin and Goodall 2012, 151). The Tarbert example likely dates from around the 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, with similar examples coming from the High Street, in Perth (ibid, 155, illus.139, 254), and from Lochmaben Castle in Dumfries and Galloway (Goodall 2011, 246-7, Fig.10.7, 145).

#### Catalogue

## Cat.190 Context C012

Intact key with solid circular stem, and a pointed D-shaped bow formed from a bent strip and likely attached by a rivet. Tip possibly hollow. Bit form is visible through x-ray only, appearing solid with cut horizontal grooves on either side. Goodall Type H. Likely post-medieval. L: 78.2mm, Bow: H: 34.8mm, W: 6.2mm, Th: 3.1mm, Stem Diam: 7.0mm, Bit: H: 15.6mm, W: 14.6mm, Mass: 32.6g.

## Cat.202 Context C027

U-shaped padlock bolt in two fragments. Single spine with a possible expansion at its head. Spine is broken, bent and sheared at the break, and the leaf spring is missing. Rectangular section spine, and a circular section free arm with slight step between. Survives in two joining fragments. Possibly 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century. L: 79.1mm, W: 8.8mm, Th: 4.4mm-9.4mm, Free arm Diam: 5.0mm, Mass: 21.5g.

## Household equipment

Four items associated with the household furnishings and cooking activities were recognised. Two of the objects were recovered from contexts associated with the 17<sup>th</sup> century structure: a possible vessel leg (Cat.184) from the floor of the floor of the western room in Structure 1 C007, a probable cast-iron cauldron body fragment (Cat.192) from the midden / occupation layer C012, and two of the objects were retrieved from the medieval occupation/ midden deposit C027 from above the floors of the Inner Enclosure: an annular loop (Cat.225) possibly part of a chain (Cox 2004b, 66), and a flesh-hook (Cat.233).

The possible leg (Cat.184) may be associated with a fire grate, trivet stand, or similar object, though its exact use is unclear due to the fragmentary condition of the surviving fragment. A robust, tapering leg with rounded foot is fixed through a thin slightly curved sheet of iron, and the leg has been punched-through width-ways below the sheet and an iron peg has been inserted, presumably to help take the weight of the object and prevent the sheet fragment form sliding down the leg. This is likely a secondary repair intended to prolong the use of the object it is associated with.

The fleshhook (Cat.233) is heavily corroded and distorted but can be categorised as a Goodall Type 1 fleshhook, with two hooked arms set on a short, angled stem (Goodall 2011, 298). Fleshhooks were principally used in cooking to extract meat from cooking pots while over the fire (ibid). Similar examples of two armed fleshhooks are known from the Saxon and medieval manorial complex of Faccombe Netherton, in Hampshire (Goodall 1990, 418, fig.9.8, 400), from 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century context at Wroughton Copse in Wiltshire (Goodall 2011, 309, fig.11.4, J17), and 11<sup>th</sup> century context at Goltho Manor, in Lincolnshire (ibid, J15).

#### Catalogue

#### Cat.184 Context C007

Repaired leg for fire grate or similar. Robust square sectioned tapering leg with rounded tip. Runs through flat slightly domed iron sheet fragment with possibly scalloped edges. May be part of a vessel or resting surface. Leg is punched through below sheet and a short length of iron rod is inserted, likely to take weight and prevent the surface from slipping down the leg. Not closely dateable. L: 108.7mm, Leg: W: 17.9mm x 19.0mm, Vessel L: 62.3, W: 45.0, Th: 4.1, Peg L: 45.3, W: 7.4, Mass: 153.9g.

#### Cat.192 Context C012

Plate vessel body fragment. Possible cauldron fragment with domed body with everted section likely leading to lip. Possible rivet visible through x-ray, may be a handle attachment. Possibly post-medieval. L: 154.0mm, H: 112.6mm, Th: 3.4mm, Mass: 464.7g.

#### Cat.225 Context C027

Small annular loop with circular section. Wood adhered through corrosion product. Diam: 17.0mm, Th: 3.2mm, Mass: 2.1g. Not closely dateable.

#### Cat.233 Context C027

Fleshhook. Rectangular sectioned shank fragment split into two widely spaced arms. Both arms are broken, one surviving as a short stub, the other, longer, and bent inwards on itself. Not closely dateable, but most likely medieval. L: 51.1mm, W: 37.0mm, Th: 12.7mm, Arm Diam: 5.1mm, Mass: 43.2g.

#### Leatherworking Tool

A single needle (Cat.274) was from the medieval occupation/ midden deposit C027 from above the floors of the Inner Enclosure. This needle, though not closely dateable, is similar in size and form to needles associated with leatherworking, such as the 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century example from St Peter's Street, in Northampton (Goodall 2011, 75, fig.6.3, E60).

#### Catalogue

#### Cat.274 Context C027

Possible needle. Circular section, slightly bent, tapering to a pointed tip. Top possibly flattened or ovoid in section, partially obscured by corrosion. Potentially associated with leatherworking. Not closely dateable. L: 44.1mm, Shank Diam: 3.3mm, Mass: 1.7g.

#### Non-diagnostic

Eight iron objects are not readily classifiable due to their form or current condition. Two of the finds were retrieved from contexts associated with the 17<sup>th</sup> century structure: a possible strap fragment (Cat.182.2)

from the floor of the western room C007 in Structure 1, and a perforated strap fragment (Cat.193) recovered from the midden/ occupation deposit C012.

From the contexts associated with an earlier date, a robust, bolt-shaped object (Cat.243)- heavily corrodedwas retrieved from the medieval oven feature C038, four bar fragments (Cat.206, Cat.215, Cat.234, and Cat.235.2) and one unidentifiable lump were retrieved from the medieval occupation/ midden deposits C013 and C027 from above the floors of the Inner Enclosure, and one unidentifiable lump (Cat.193) was recovered from Occupation/midden deposit from above floors of Inner Enclosure.

#### Catalogue

## Cat.182.2 Context C007

Possible strap fragment. Flat irregular rectangle in shape. One slightly rounded terminal and one straight side. Other sides are broken. Not closely dateable. L: 32.4mm, W: 32.6mm, Th: 3.4mm, Mass: 8.7g.

## Cat.193 Context C012

Perforated strap fragment. Thin, rectangular section with irregular edges and broken terminals. Square punched hole and circular punched hole. Not closely dateable. L: 65.5mm, W: 30.1mm, Th: 2.7mm, Hole Diam: Square: 4.6mm x 4.7mm, Circular: 3.5mm, Mass: 24.2g.

#### Cat.196.2 Context C013

Unidentifiable lump. Faint square section visible on surface. Wood adhered. X-ray inconclusive. Not closely dateable. L: 35.5mm, W: 30.7mm, Th: 20.3mm, Mass: 22.4g.

## Cat.206 Context C027

Bar fragment. Straight, tapering flat rectangular section with rounded tip. Not closely dateable. L: 69.5mm, W: 20.7mm, Th: 4.7mm, Mass: 46.8g.

#### Cat.215 Context C027

Bar fragment. Slight curve. Rectangular section transitioning to a square section. Both ends broken. Not closely dateable. L: 103.0mm, W: 11.5mm – 13.2mm, Th: 11.5mm, Mass: 69.1g.

#### Cat.234 Context C027

Bar fragment within corroded mass. Visible square section tapering to a rectangular section. Slight bend. Not closely dateable. L: 68.1mm, W: 12.9mm, Th: 8.8mm-11.9mm, Mass: 192.9g.

#### Cat.235.2 Context C027

Bar fragment. Rectangular section with parallel sides. Part of a composite of objects adhered through corrosion. Not closely dateable. L: 54.0mm, W: 11.1mm, Th: 5.9mm.

#### Cat.243 Context C038

Unidentifible. Possible robust bolt. Diamond-shaped head and possible circular shank. Xray inconclusive. Not closely dateable. L: 54.2mm, W: 52.7mm, Th: 31.3mm, Mass: 75.0g.

## Summary and Discussion

The metal finds can be grouped into two classes, medieval finds, including those associated with the Inner Enclosure and medieval oven feature, and the post medieval finds associated with the 17<sup>th</sup> century structure. Overall, the Tarbert Castle metal assemblage is notable for its good state of preservation,

particularly for a few of the copper alloy and iron objects, and for the finds recovered from the medieval occupation/ midden deposit C027 from above the floor of the Inner Bailey.

The assemblage is dominated by building fixtures and fittings- particularly nails and also clench bolts and roves, but perhaps also notable is the absence of any materials classifiable as weaponry, which is slightly unusual for a Scottish castle, but may be down to biases caused by the areas that were excavated.

Overall, the Tarbert Castle metal represents day-to-day household and craft activities, as well as providing evidence for potential periods of castle construction and alteration and is an excellent assemblage of medieval and post-medieval finds with the potential to make an important contribution to the study of Scottish life that took place within the castle walls over a 400 year period.

# 5.3 Charcoal Report Genoveva Dimova

# Factual data

A total of 38 bags of charcoal separated into fractions were submitted for environmental assessment from the excavation at Tarbert Castle. The charcoal was collected from a series of occupation deposits, spreads, ovens and pits believed to date to the Medieval and post-Medieval periods.

# Methodology

Only those fractions which had charcoal fragments larger than 4mm were selected for species identification. A maximum of 10 fragments where possible were selected for further study from each fraction. Species identifications were confirmed by analysing the transverse, tangential and radial sections at x70-x450 magnification and aided by established guides (e.g., Schweingruber 1982) and a comprehensive reference collection stored at AOC Archaeology Group premises.

The charcoal assemblage while small was concentrated within specific contexts. To ensure as much accurate information as possible was obtained, the following criteria were used as a rough guide in interpreting this assemblage. Large concentrations of charcoal of a single species were viewed as more likely to represent the burning of *in situ* structural elements or artefacts whereas deposits of mixed fragments were interpreted as the remains of fuel debris.

## Results

Charcoal was present in 38 fractions but fragments suitable for species identification were collected from 22 samples. The results are recorded in full below in Table 5 and are summarised by context in the following section.

The charcoal assemblage comprised 571.2g of fragments in total and 160 fragments were identified. The species represented included alder (*Alnus glutinosa* L), birch (*Betula* sp), hazel (*Corylus avellana* L), ash (*Fraxinus* sp), and oak (*Quercus* sp).

The dominant species was oak (41%), followed by birch (28%), hazel (16%), alder (14%), and ash (1%). There were 14 pieces of roundwood identified as birch (42%), hazel (42%) and alder (16%).

Preservation of the fragments ranged from poor to excellent. Those fragments described as poor were noticeably friable and there was some evidence of oxidisation.

							Round		
						_	wood		
Feature	Context	Cat No	Fraction	Species	Name	Frag	Frag.	Weight (g)	Comments
Pit associated with 17 <sup>th</sup> century structure	017	265	sample 1 flotation	Alnus glutinosa L.	Alder	4			
Pit associated with 17 <sup>th</sup> century structure	017	265	sample 1 flotation	Betula sp.	Birch	5	1	27	
Pit associated with 17 <sup>th</sup> century structure	017	267	sample 1 1mm					2	No fragments suitable for id
Hearth deposit	025	319	sample 8 flotation	Alnus glutinosa L.	Alder	2			
Hearth deposit	025	319	sample 8 flotation	<i>Betula</i> sp.	Birch	6		26	
Hearth deposit	025	319	sample 8 flotation	Corylus avellana L.	Hazel	1	1		
Hearth deposit	025	321	sample 8 1mm					4.9	No fragments suitable for id
Occupation/midden deposit	027	270	sample 2 flotation	Alnus glutinosa L.	Alder	1	1		
Occupation/midden deposit	027	270	sample 2 flotation	<i>Betula</i> sp.	Birch	1		67.7	
Occupation/midden deposit	027	270	sample 2 flotation	Quercus sp.	Oak	7			
Occupation/midden deposit	027	271	sample 2 4mm	Alnus glutinosa L.	Alder	2			
Occupation/midden deposit	027	271	sample 2 4mm	Betula sp.	Birch	1		8.1	
Occupation/midden deposit	027	271	sample 2 4mm	Corylus avellana L.	Hazel	1	1		
Occupation/midden deposit	027	271	sample 2 4mm	Quercus sp.	Oak	5			
Occupation/midden deposit	027	280	sample 2 1mm					15.5	No fragments suitable for id
Floor/make up	034	287	sample 3 flotation	Alnus glutinosa L.	Alder	1			
Floor/make up	034	287	sample 3 flotation	<i>Betula</i> sp.	Birch	2		15.9	
Floor/make up	034	287	sample 3 flotation	Corylus avellana L.	Hazel	1			
Floor/make up	034	287	sample 3 flotation	Quercus sp.	Oak	6			
Floor/make up	034	289	sample 3 4mm	Alnus glutinosa L.	Alder	2		0.5	
Floor/make up	034	289	sample 3 4mm	Quercus sp.	Oak	2			
Floor/make up	034	292	sample 3 1mm					2.5	No fragments suitable for id
Oven fill	038	296	sample 4 flotation	<i>Betula</i> sp.	Birch	4		25.1	
Oven fill	038	296	sample 4 flotation	Corylus avellana L.	Hazel	1			
Oven fill	038	296	sample 4 flotation	Fraxinus sp.	Ash	1			
Oven fill	038	296	sample 4 flotation	Quercus sp.	Oak	4			
Oven fill	038	297	sample 4 4mm	<i>Betula</i> sp.	Birch	2		3.8	
Oven fill	038	297	sample 4 4mm	Fraxinus sp.	Ash	1			
Oven fill	038	297	sample 4 4mm	Quercus sp.	Oak	7			

							Round		
							wood		
Feature	Context	Cat No	Fraction	Species	Name	Frag	Frag.	Weight (g)	Comments
Oven fill	038	302	sample 4 1mm					3.1	No fragments suitable for id
			sample 12						
Oven floor	039	344	flotation	Corylus avellana L.	Hazel	1			
			sample 12						
Oven floor	039	344	flotation	Quercus sp.	Oak	1		0.8	
Oven floor	039	346	sample 12 1mm					0.5	No fragments suitable for id
			sample 13						
Oven rake out	048	348	flotation	Alnus glutinosa L.	Alder	3		13.6	
			sample 13						
Oven rake out	048	348	flotation	Quercus sp.	Oak	6			
Oven rake out	048	349	sample 13 4mm	Quercus sp.	Oak	2		0.4	
Oven rake out	048	352	sample 13 1mm					1.2	No fragments suitable for id
Burnt material	061	307	sample 6 4mm	<i>Betula</i> sp.	Birch	3	1		
Burnt material	061	307	sample 6 4mm	Corylus avellana L.	Hazel	3	3	7.7	
Burnt material	061	307	sample 6 flotation					0.3	No fragments suitable for id
Burnt material	061	310	sample 6 1mm					3.5	No fragments suitable for id
Pre wall soil of inner bailey	063	304	sample 5 flotation	<i>Betula</i> sp.	Birch	3		3.3	
Pre wall soil of inner bailey	063	305	sample 5 1mm					2.1	No fragments suitable for id
Occupation horizon in outer bailey	065	313	sample 7 flotation					2.5	No fragments suitable for id
Occupation horizon in outer bailey	065	315	sample 7 4mm	Corylus avellana L.	Hazel	8		1.2	
Occupation horizon in outer bailey	065	315	sample 7 4mm	Quercus sp.	Oak	2			
Occupation horizon in outer bailey	065	317	sample 7 1mm					0.6	No fragments suitable for id
			sample 11						
Floor of inner bailey	066	335	flotation	Alnus glutinosa L.	Alder	2			
			sample 11						
Floor of inner bailey	066	335	flotation	<i>Betula</i> sp.	Birch	2	1	71.3	
			sample 11						
Floor of inner bailey	066	335	flotation	Corylus avellana L.	Hazel	1			
			sample 11						
Floor of inner bailey	066	335	flotation	Quercus sp.	Oak	4			

							Round		
		<b>.</b> .	<b>-</b>	. ·		_	wood		
Feature	Context	Cat No	Fraction	Species	Name	Frag	Frag.	weight (g)	Comments
Floor of inner bailey	066	336	sample 11 4mm	Alnus glutinosa L.	Alder	1		0.8	
Floor of inner bailey	066	336	sample 11 4mm	Corylus avellana L.	Hazel	1			
Floor of inner bailey	066	336	sample 11 4mm	Quercus sp.	Oak	2			
Floor of inner bailey	066	340	sample 11 1mm					2.2	No fragments suitable for id
Charcoal spread	067	323	sample 9 flotation	<i>Betula</i> sp.	Birch	4	3	110.6	
Charcoal spread	067	323	sample 9 flotation	Corylus avellana L.	Hazel		1		
Charcoal spread	067	323	sample 9 flotation	Quercus sp.	Oak	2			
Charcoal spread	067	324	sample 9 4mm	Alnus glutinosa L.	Alder	2	1		
Charcoal spread	067	324	sample 9 4mm	<i>Betula</i> sp.	Birch	4		39.8	
Charcoal spread	067	324	sample 9 4mm	Quercus sp.	Oak	3			
Charcoal spread	067	328	sample 9 1mm					14.2	No fragments suitable for id
			sample 10						
Charcoal spread	069	331	flotation	<i>Betula</i> sp.	Birch	1		13.2	
			sample 10						
Charcoal spread	069	331	flotation	Quercus sp.	Oak	9			
Charcoal spread	069	333	sample 10 1mm					72.3	No fragments suitable for id
			sample 16						
Pre castle deposit	076	360	flotation	Corylus avellana L.	Hazel	1		5.7	
			sample 14						
Occupation deposit	081	354	flotation	Corylus avellana L.	Hazel	1			
			sample 14						
Occupation deposit	081	354	flotation	Quercus sp.	Oak	3		0.4	
Occupation deposit	081	355	sample 14 4mm	Quercus sp.	Oak	1		0.2	
Occupation deposit	081	357	sample 14 1mm					0.7	No fragments suitable for id

Table 5: catalogue of charcoal fragments examined and identified, per bag, per context.

# Discussion

# Pit associated with 17th century structure context C017

The charcoal (29.0g) was composed of birch (60%) and alder (40%). Birch roundwood formed 10% of the identified assemblage. This mix of charcoal fragments and roundwood is representative of fuel debris. The birch roundwood from this stratified pit may be a good candidate for radiocarbon dating.

## Hearth deposit context C025

The charcoal (30.9g) was birch (60%), alder (20%) and hazel (20%). There was hazel roundwood (10%). The charcoal is fuel waste from the hearth which was not removed during cleaning of this feature.

## Occupation/midden deposit context C027

The charcoal (91.3g) was a mix of oak (60%), alder (20%), birch (10%) and hazel (10%). Roundwood was identified as alder (5%) and hazel (5%). This charcoal is fuel waste which was deliberately disposed of within this midden.

## Floor/make up context [034]

The charcoal (18.9g) was oak (57%), alder (22%), birch (14%) and hazel (7%). This assemblage has derived from fuel residue.

## Oven fill context C038

The charcoal (32.0g) was oak (55%), birch (30%), ash (10%) and hazel (5%). The charcoal is fuel waste which was not removed from the oven during cleaning of this feature.

## Oven floor C039

There was one fragment of hazel and one of oak (1.3g).

## Oven rake-out context CO48

The charcoal (15.2g) was oak (73%) and alder (27%). The charcoal is an accumulation of fuel debris which is likely overspill from when the oven was cleaned.

## Burnt material context C061

The charcoal (11.5g) was hazel (60%) and birch (40%). The roundwood was formed of hazel (30%) and birch (10%). These remains are fuel waste.

Pre wall soil of Inner Bailey context C063

The charcoal (5.4g) was composed of three fragments of birch. This material is re-deposited fuel debris.

## Occupation horizon in Outer Bailey context C065

The charcoal (4.3g) was hazel (80%) and oak (20%). These fragments are re-deposited fuel debris.

## Floor of Inner Bailey C066

The charcoal (74.3g) was a mix of oak (43%), birch (22%), alder (21%) and hazel (14%). There was birch roundwood (7%). These charcoal fragments are likely fuel waste which was trampled into the floor surface. *Charcoal spread C067* 

This feature had the largest quantity of charcoal (164.4g) recovered from site. The species were birch (55%), oak (25%), alder (15%) and hazel (5%). The roundwood was composed of birch (15%), alder (5%) and hazel (5%). This material has accumulated through the disposal of fuel waste.

# Charcoal spread context C069

The charcoal (85.5g) was oak (90%) and birch (10%). These are the remains of fuel debris.

# Pre castle deposit C076

There was one fragment of hazel (5.7g) which was of little interpretive value.

## Occupation deposit C081

The charcoal (1.3g) was oak (80%) and hazel (20%). These fragments are re-deposited fuel debris which was trampled into the floor.

## Wood species

The wood species found at Tarbert Castle would have grown locally in the surrounding landscape and been easily accessible. Hazel tends to grow in hedgerows; alder, birch and ash normally favour more damp habitats whereas oak tends to grow wherever the soil and climate will allow (Linford 2009; Martynoga 2012, Stace 2010).

# 5.4 Faunal Assemblage

# Helen Newton & Ingrid Mainland

Excavations at Tarbert castle, Argyllshire during 2019 revealed occupation deposits and other evidence dating to the Medieval and post-Medieval periods within the inner and outer bailey area of the castle. The small assemblage of animal bone recovered during these excavations derive mainly from the Medieval occupation (13-15<sup>th</sup> century), a period during which there is very little archaeological evidence for diet or animal husbandry in the West of Scotland nor indeed more widely in Scotland. This assemblage is also of interest because of its potential to shed light on elite dietary tradition in this period. A much smaller assemblage of animal bone was recovered from post-medieval deposits, thought to date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century AD. The presence of these later deposits potentially enable identification of any diachronic changes in husbandry/diet during the c. 400 years of occupation represented.

Analysis of the Tarbert faunal assemblages aimed to:

- 1. Provide an overview of species and anatomical representation for the two main phases of occupation
- 2. Identify where possible age-at-death for the main species
- 3. Explore dietary customs at a high status Medieval to Post-Medieval site in the west of Scotland
- 4. Identify any changes in diet between the  $13-15^{th}$  and  $17^{th}$  centuries AD

# 5.4.2 Methods

# 5.4.2.1 Recovery methods

The faunal assemblage reported on here was primarily recovered by hand during excavation with a smaller amount arising from flotation/wet sieving of soil samples. Only mammal and bird from the >4mm residues were recorded. The hand-collected and wet-sieved residue assemblages are reported separately below.

# 5.4.2.2 Identification and recording system

All mammal and bird fragments were weighed and whenever possible were identified to species, anatomical element and body side. Where this was not possible fragments were assigned to one of the following size classes: L.ung (large ungulate – e.g. cattle/horse/red deer); S.ung (small ungulate – e.g. sheep/goat/pig); S.mam (small mammal sized – e.g. dog/cat); Mam (indeterminate land mammal) and I.sea (indeterminate sea mammal); L. Avian (large avian, e.g. cormorant-sized and above); S. Avian (small avian, e.g. ducks, guillemots, puffin- sized); S. Passerine (small song bird – sparrow, etc.). Vertebrae and ribs were not identified to species (or side for rib) but were grouped into one of the size classes above. The presence of particular diagnostic zones on elements were also recorded and specifically whether 50% or greater of the zone was present. This system allows for quantification and a study of fragmentation within the assemblage. Epiphyseal fusion was also recorded for all bones identified to species, any bone completely fused and not displaying signs of erosion was measured using criteria set out in Von den Driesch (1976). Finally, all fragments were examined for signs of pathology, butchery, recent breaks, erosion or weathering, burning and canid gnawing. For the purpose of this report, species relative frequency has been assessed using the total number of identifiable fragments (NISP).

Mammalian and avian species identification was achieved using the modern reference collection in the UHI Archaeology Institute, University of the Highlands and Islands with reference to identification manuals such as Schmidt (1976), Cohen and Serjeantson (1986), Boessneck (1976) and Halstead et al. (2002).

# 5.4.2.3 Quantification of species and skeletal elements

Relative frequencies of species and body part were estimated using the total number of identifiable fragments (NISP). MNI (minimum number of individual) was calculated for the main species represented on the basis of body side and epiphysial fusion. Bone fragmentation was not taken into account.

## 5.4.2.4 Ageing

Age-at-death (mortality profile) was assessed using tooth eruption and wear following Payne (1987), Mainland and Halstead (2005) for ovicaprid, Halstead (1985) for cattle and Grant (1982) for pig.

## 5.4.2.5 Metrical Data

Metrical information was taken on any completely fused bones not displaying signs of damage or erosion following criteria set out in von den Driesch (1976).

## 5.4.2.6 Butchery

Evidence of butchery was recorded by producing a sketch of the element, illustrating the position and type of mark. Marks were classified as either cut (produced by a knife) or chop (using heavier action like that of a cleaver).

# 5.4.3. Taphonomic indicators and depositional practices

A total of 424 bone fragments were recovered by hand with a further 219 collected in the >4mm wet-sieve residues (Table 1). In the Medieval phases (i.e., 13-15<sup>th</sup> centuries) bone was recovered from 11 contexts (Table 2). The bulk of this Medieval assemblage (n=135, 43%) derives from a midden deposit (C027) which appears to have collected within a dip caused by slumping of original floors around a doorway within the inner bailey and is assumed to relate to occupation and/or activities within the inner bailey. A further 62 fragments of bone were recovered from sample 2 which was taken from this midden (Table 8). A smaller assemblage was found in contexts associated with an oven structure, including from the fill of this features (C031, C038, C039 and C048). Samples 4, 12 and 13 derive from these contexts comprising 24, 8 and 6 fragments, respectively. The remaining bone (n=131) dating to the Medieval phase of occupation was recovered from floor or occupation deposits in both the inner and outer bailey. In addition, bone was recovered from two further contexts described as potentially dating to the Medieval period and relating to wall collapse/mortar trample (n=21). The post-medieval assemblage was mostly recovered from a ploughsoil deposit (C003) with a smaller fraction (n=25) associated with a 17<sup>th</sup> century structure located in the inner bailey. The small sample sizes in individual contexts and areas of the site (i.e., Inner versus Outer Bailey) preclude a detailed analysis of spatial patterning in bone deposition by species or element for most contexts.

A small amount of mammal/bird and fish bone was recovered from the 14 samples (Table 6), a high proportion of which was burnt (97%); very little of this material was identifiable (Table 7). Burnt bone was recovered from contexts associated with the oven feature but was also spread through the midden, floor and other occupation layers. Over half of the burnt bone (from the hand-collected and samples) was calcined (n=78, 60%), indicating combustion at high temperatures.

Overall, bone preservation was good though c 7-8% of fragments showed evidence of weathering suggesting some exposure to the elements prior to deposition. The relative high frequency of loose teeth in the post-medieval deposits is indicative of greater fragmentation and may relate to the fact that the bulk of this material is derived from plough-soil deposits (Table 7).

Trench	Phase total	GN		ER		BUT		BRT		WE		LT	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
?Medieval	21											1	4.76
Medieval	307	6	1.95	3	1.0	6	1.95	31	10.10	24	7.82	2	0.65
Post-Medieval	96			2	2.08	1	1.04	3	3.13	6	6.25	12	12.5
TOTAL	424		1.42	5	1.18	7	1.65	34	8.02	30	7.06	15	3.53

Table 6a Hand collected bone assemblage

Trench	Phase total	GN		ER		BUT		BRT		WE		LT	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
?Medieval													
Medieval	215							93	43.26			2	0.93
Post-Medieval	4							4	100				
TOTAL	219							97	44.29			2	0.91

Table 6b Wet-sieved bone assemblage

Table 6 Taphonomic indicators at Tarbert Castle for the hand collected (1a) and wet-sieved bone (1b): lists for each phase the total number and % of fragment (n) which show evidence for modification by dogs (GN), of bone surface weathering (WE), erosion (ER), butchery (BUT) or burning (BRT). The final column indicates the numbers of loose teeth (LT) per trench. Only phased bone is included.

Period	Context	Description	Sample	Hand-collected
			– TNB >4mm	- TNB
Pre-Castle	63	Pre-castle deposit	S5-0	0
Medieval	23	Occupation deposit		21
		Occupation/midden from above	S2-62	
	27	floors of inner bailey		135
	31	Midden material around oven		20
	34	Floor	S3-34	40
	38	Above floor of medieval oven	S4-24	8
	39	Fill of oven above floor	S12-8	3
	48	Floor in front of oven	S13-6	10
	65	Occupation, outer bailey	S7-28	42
	66	Floor, inner bailey	S11-8	16
	67	Charcoal deposit	S9-26	0
	69	Charcoal deposit	S10-4	0
	70	Floor, inner bailey		10
	81	Occupation	S14-19	2
?Medieval	19	Mortar trample		17
	26	Wall collapse		4
Post-	3	Plough-soil		63
medieval		Rubble, associated with structure 1,		
	5	inner bailey		4
	7	Floor of structure 1, inner bailey		7
	9	Dump, inner bailey		5
		Dump, associated with structure 1,		
	12	inner bailey		1
	17	Cess pit, inner bailey	S1 - 17	8
	59	Rubble collapse, outer bailey		8
	25	Hearth deposit of structure 1	S8-1	0

# Table 7 Bone deposition by context type and phase of occupation. Only phased bone is included

# 5.4.4 Species, anatomical representation and age-at-death

Six mammal species were identified in the Tarbert castle assemblage: cow (*Bos taurus*), sheep/goat (*Ovis aries/Capra hircus*), pig (*Sus domesticus*), dog (*Canis familaris*) and red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) (Tables 8-10). The assemblage is dominated by domesticates and in particular by cattle.

		?Me	edieval	Medi	eval	Pos	t-Medieval
	Species	n	%	n	%	n	%
	Cow	3	27.27	72	33.33	30	42.86
	Sheep/Goat			9	4.17	13	18.57
Domestic	Pig			4	1.85	1	1.43
Mammals	Dog						
Wild							
mammals	Red Deer			2	0.93		
	Large						
	ungulate	7	63.64	101	46.76	13	18.57
	Small						
	ungulate	1	9.09	28	12.96	13	18.57
	Small						
	mammal						
Other							
	Mammal	9		88		26	
	Fish	1					
Unidentified	Avian			3			
Total id.		11		216		70	
Total unid.		10		91		26	
Total (TNB)		21		307		96	

Table 8 Tarbert mammal species representation by period - hand-collected bone: lists the total number of bones (TNB) recovered and the number (n) and (%) of fragments identified to species (NISP) and/or mammal size category

						Pos	t-
		?Med	ieval	Medi	eval	Med	dieval
	Species	n	%	n	%	n	%
	Cow			1	5.26		
	Sheep/Goat			1	5.26		
Domestic	Pig			1	5.26		
Mammals	Dog			1	5.26		
Wild							
mammals	Red Deer				0.00		
	Large						
	ungulate			9	47.37		
	Small						
	ungulate			9	47.37		
	Small						
	mammal			1	5.26		
Other							
	Mammal			186		4	
Unidentified	Fish			5			

	Avian		1		
Total id.			23	0	
Total unid.			192	4	
Total (TNB)			215	4	

Table 9 Tarbert mammal species representation by period - wet-sieved residue (<4mm): lists the total number of bones (TNB) recovered and the number (n) and (%) of fragments identified to species (NISP) and/or mammal size category.

Species	?Medieval	Medieval	Post-Medieval
Cow	1	3	2
Sheep/goat		2	1
Pig		1	1
Dog		1	
Red deer		1	

Table 10 MNI for mammal species identified at Tarbert Castle

Due to sample size, age-at-death could only be assessed for cattle (Table 11) and was based on epiphysial fusion data. This data is very limited but suggests that in the Medieval phase beef was largely derived from individuals which had reached skeletal maturity, i.e., older than 3-4 years, with some limited culling of 'prime' cattle, i.e., those which had reached optimum meat weight, c. 2-4 years. The small number of long bones epiphyses (n=3) represented in the post-Medieval assemblage were derived from fully fused individuals along with at least one neonatal/foetal calf (2 metacarpals, 1 LHS and 1 RHS). This individual was recovered from the plough-soil deposit (C003) and may reflect disposal of a calf which had died at birth.



Table 11 Cattle epiphysial fusion in the Medieval phases (12-18m, n=2; 24-36m, n=2, 36-42m, n=14)

There was only sufficient data to explore anatomical representation for cattle in detail (Table 12-13). In the post-medieval deposits element representation is consistent with what is expected when entire carcasses are processed and deposited, perhaps reflecting an origin of the assemblage in generalised midden refuse which had accumulated from carcasses processing, food preparation or perhaps disposal of fallen animals. An articulated lower hind-leg leg joint (distal tibia, calcaneum, astragalus, RHS) of cattle was recovered from 17<sup>th</sup> century rubble deposits associated with Structure 1 in the Inner Bailey. This part of the carcass does not contain much meat and may reflect disposal of primary butchery waste arising from removal of the feet. Weathering of the bone indicates exposure for some time prior to deposition. A partially

articulated sheep carcass was also recovered from post-Medieval rubble deposits (C059), in this case at the gate of the outer bailey.

A slightly different pattern of cattle element representation is apparent in the Medieval phases, where there is an apparent emphasis on meat-bearing elements from the upper limb and an under-representation of feet elements. Analysis of C027, which may derive from activities within the inner bailey indicates a similar trend. Here, refuse deriving from table waste and/or consumption may be indicated.



Table 12 Cattle element representation: Medieval (Medieval NISP=62; Cxt 27 NISP=22)



Table 13 Cattle element representation: Post-Medieval (NISP=22)

Five bones were measurable: 2 cattle astragalus (C026, C027), a cattle radius (C034), a sheep/goat astragalus (C066), a sheep/goat radius (C027) and a pig radius (C064) (Table 14). These indicate relatively small animals broadly similar in size to cattle, sheep and pigs found elsewhere in Scotland at this date (e.g., Small 2015; McCormick 1996; Noddle 2000; Mainland in prep.).

Cxt	Species	Bone	GL	Вр	Bd	SD	GLI	GLm	DL	Dm
34	Cattle	Radius		72.45						
27	Cattle	Astragalus			40.55		60.93	57.1	36.7	36.5
27	Sheep/goat	Radius	136	27.26	25.25	14.17				
65	Cattle	Astragalus					58.65	52.86	37.85	36.26
65	Pig	Radius	122.75	27.8		17.09				
66	Sheep/goat	Astragalus			16.85		24.84	26.25	15.86	15.36

Table 14 Metrical data for Tarbert Castle faunal assemblage (all date to the Medieval phases) (measurements after von den Dreisch 1976)

## 5.4.5 Discussion

Cattle are the dominant species in both the Medieval and Post-Medieval phases of occupation, as shown by both NISP and MNI calculations (Tables 8-10). A similar emphasis on cattle is evident at other archaeological sites of this date in the west of Scotland, such as Dun Mhuirich (Small 2015), Iona (McCormick 1993), Castle Sween (McCormick 1996), Dunadd (Noddle 2000) and Dunyvaig (Canmore ID 38002, Mainland in prep), where %NISP values are typically between 60-80% of NISP identified to species. Cattle played an important role in Highland Medieval society not only for subsistence but as sources of wealth, indicators of status and as form of social currency, eg as gifts in feasts in dowries or as plunder during raids (Dodgshon 1998). In Scotland and more widely during the Medieval period, a major political focus for those in any level of power was control of pasture. Tarbert Castle is likely to reflect the economy of multiple estates where social power created the system to divide land or give divisible access to land, possibly with a profit. This took place with initiatives such as cattle clientship and cattle loans. The 1326 accounts of John de Lany, who was constable of Tarbert at this time (Bannatyne Club 1889, 1-10; Innes 1854 33-35), provides evidence for these kinds of activities when recording the dues owed to those looking after the Tarbert flocks and herd:

# 'for keeping forty of the King's sheep before the arrival of the King, 12d; for keeping the King's marts and swine by two shepherds and two lads (pagetes), seven bolls meal, price 14s., and in silver 6s. 3d'

The technical ownership of the cattle by those in power while allowing secondary products, specifically milk for the production of butter and cheese, to be utilised by tenants and other lowe down the social strata created a system whereby there could be increased earnings for the rich through a variety of sources (Patterson 1994; 94). Butter and cheese, along with milled or malted grains were widely used in rental payments by tenant farmers (Dodgshon 1998). The significance of cheese in the economy (and diet) of Medieval West Highland estates is again documented by John de Lany's accounts in which a circulation and redistribution of cheese can be traced. Cheese is brought in from estates under the jurisdiction of John de Lany:

'3,564 lbs meal and cheese from John McDonyle, bailie of Ile (Islay) reckoning 7d per lb; £124.7.4d; ... 96 lbs cheese from bailies of Kintyre, of the lb of that place, at I2d per lb; £4.16.0'

It is then used in payment for work undertaken,

'four codri of cheese to the men who came round the Mull (le Mole) with a ship which belonged to Donald M'Gilhon',

is sent onwards in taxation due to the king and others,

# 'for eighty stones cheese sent by John Fitz-Maurice (fil-Maricio) to Cardros to the King'

or is consumed by the inhabitants of the castle,

## 'for twelve codri of cheese delivered to John clerk of the kitchen (Coq'ne)'

The age profile of the Medieval cattle at Tarbert, which emphasises adults with some culling of 'prime' adults is consistent with meat consumption rather than a production of milk and by extension cheese or butter. Thus, although cattle herds will have been owned by the castle inhabitants with some likely kept in the vicinity of the castle, their primary function was for providing meat for the table rather than secondary products. This focus on consumption is also evident in the anatomical representation for cattle.

Distinction between sheep and goat was only possible for one fragment, a radius from C027 which was identified as *Ovis aries*. Both species were present in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland during the 13-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, though sheep tend to be more commonly represented than goat when species can be ascertained (Small 2015; McCormick 1996). Sheep will have provided meat, wool and potentially milk; goats were milked and may also have been eaten. There is some indication that sheep/goat increase in relative importance during the later phases of occupation (ratio of cow to sheep/goat – Medieval = 1:9; post-Medieval = 1:1:2). A similar trend towards increased numbers of sheep/goat in later Medieval and 17<sup>th</sup> century deposits was also evident at Dun Mhurich in North Knapdale (Small 2015) and across Scotland more widely (Mainland in prep). Pigs were also reared, but likely in small numbers. A herd associated with Tarbert castle is, however, recorded in 14<sup>th</sup> century accounts of John de Lany (see above). Unlike in Medieval England, where pigs were an elite foodstuff, the consumption of pork was not common in Scotland in urban, rural or elite contexts (Smith 2001).

Two fragments of red deer were recovered from context 23, a Medieval phase occupation deposit. These are a proximal femur and fragment of tibia, i.e., hind leg elements, both from the right-hand-side of the body. It is conceivable that these reflect a haunch of venison, though they were not in articulation nor was any evidence of butchery or meat removal found. Hunting of red deer was an important elite activity and in Medieval Scotland was carefully regulated to ensure limit access to other sectors of society (Dodgshon 1998; Malloy et al 2013). Hunting will have been undertaken with dogs, and hunting dogs of different sizes are documented in historical sources for this period and are found in archaeological contexts. At Tarbert only one fragment of dog was recovered, a lower canine from C027 indicating a medium-sized individual. Their presence in the castle is also indicated by gnawing marks in the bone assemblage and from John de Lany's accounts, which note a payment 'for watching bran (breni) for the dogs at Wester Tarbart for three weeks, 2s. 6d (Bannatyne Club 1889, 1-10))

# 5.5 Conclusions

The small assemblage of animal bone from Tarbert Castle indicates that cattle were the mainstay of the economy during the 13-15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries AD and will have provided the bulk of the meat consumed. Mutton and pork were also eaten. The Medieval assemblage, which largely derives from deposits associated with activities within the inner bailey are interpreted as table refuse and/or discard from food preparation. These demonstrate an emphasis on beef, but venison was also being consumed. In the later

post-Medieval assemblage, although cattle remain the most common species represented sheep increase in importance, an economic shift which is more widely seen across Scotland at this date. There are some hints of a change in function for the castle environs in the depositional practices documented by the post-Medieval assemblage which suggest the castle and its environs were being used as a dump for carcasses processing or more generalised food refuse rather than table waste.

# 5.5 Vitrified Material Dawn McLaren

A sample of vitrified material recovered from potential occupation/use deposits were examined. In total, twenty-eight fractured fragments of heat-affected, fused and vitrified materials were recognised, weighing 192.8g. Visual examination has enabled classification of these slags as waste deriving from ironworking but each of the fragments lack diagnostic characteristics to enable closer identification of the stage of the metalworking process that they derive from.

# Classifications

The fragments of vitrified material were visually examined with the aid of a low-powered binocular microscope allowing the material to be classified into broad categories on the basis of size, colour, texture, level of vesicularity and response to a magnet. A wide variety of different vitrified materials can be produced during various industrial and non-industrial processes but only a few, for example, hammerscale or tapped slag are considered to be truly diagnostic of metalworking (McDonnell 1994).

No scientific analysis was undertaken at this time to investigate aspects of the chemical and microstructural composition of the individual fragments and the classifications presented below are based on macroscopic examination only. The assemblage has been described using common terminology (e.g., McDonnell 1994; Spearman 1997; Starley 2000) and has been catalogued in full as a separate Excel spreadsheet which is presented in the archive and is summarised in Table 15.

Туре	Count	Weight (g)	Contexts						
Indicative of ironworking									
Unclassified ironworking slag (UIS)	28	192.8	C013, C026, C027						

 Table 15 Summary of the Tarbert Castle slag assemblage

# Ironworking

All of the vitrified material from Tarbert Castle consists of randomly shaped amorphous fragments of dark red-brown/orange-brown waste. The surface of each of the fragments is coated in patches of a powdery orange-brown iron oxide layer which incorporates natural grits. The material itself is generally dense and responds to scanning with a magnet, reflecting the iron-rich content of the fused lumps. Although these fragments are undoubtedly waste relating to ironworking, the individual fragments lack any distinctive surface characteristics to allow them to be more closely identified and as such are best described as unclassified slags (Starley 2000; Crew and Rehren 2002, 84). Such slags are common components of many assemblages of ironworking waste (Heald et al 2011, 20) and could be rake-out material from an ironworking furnace (e.g., smelting) or blacksmithing hearth. The small, fractured fragments of unclassified slags from context (C027) incorporate small charcoal flecks and impressions, indicating the wood charcoal was used as the main source of fuel in the hearth or furnace.

# Distribution

The unclassified slags were found in Trenches 2 and 3. Two fragments, weighing 44.9g, were incorporated within a midden or occupation layer C013 at the base of the western gate between the eastern wall of the inner bailey and the projecting tower. Twenty-five small, fractured fragments (78.7g), each incorporating small charcoal flecks and impressions, were recovered from midden deposits C027 abutting the south wall of the northern range (Area D) of the inner bailey. A single amorphous fragment (69.2g) was also found amongst rubble and mortar collapse C026 in this same area, overlying the midden deposit just described.

# Discussion

The limited size of the assemblage examined and its restricted range in terms of the classification of slag types present makes it impossible to say anything pertinent about the scale of ironworking activities at Tarbert Castle, but the slags are suggestive of the presence of a smithy, if not in the castle itself then perhaps in an ancillary building. This assertion is entirely speculative on the basis of such limited evidence, but it is likely that such a smithy would have engaged in the repair and maintenance of day-to-day implements and tools but could also have manufactured bespoke items such as horseshoes, knives and any other items needed by the household, including nails and chains.

Although these fragments of ironworking waste are not inherently datable, their recovery from midden, occupation layers and rubble relating medieval and post-medieval use Castle is entirely consistent with the picture presented of everyday crafts and activities represented amongst other Scottish Castle assemblages, such as that Inverlochy Castle (Camore ID 23701), Inverness-shire where slags recovered were suggestive of blacksmithing (Cullen 1998); at Carrick Castle (Canmore ID 40804), Argyll and Lochmaben Castle (Camore ID 66315), Dumfries and Galloway where both ferrous and non-ferrous metalworking was in evidence (Cressey 1998; MacDonald and Laing 1975, 144); and at Castle Sween, Knapdale, bloomery slags may have been used as ballast post-dating activity at the castle itself (Ewart and Triscott 1996, 518)

# 5.6 Radiocarbon Dates

Table 16 includes the carbon dates from the Inner Bailey wall and the southwestern gate structure of the castle obtained by Mark Thacker.

In summary the earliest date 677-877 calAD (BP 1246  $\pm$ 24 95% probability SUERC-96577) was obtained from a pre-castle soil C063 lying under the Inner Bailey wall.

The southwest gate structure produced a date 1210-1290 calAD (BP 788 $\pm$ 31 95% probability SUERC-93141) while the cross wall of the Inner Bailey produced a date of 1220-1290 calAD (BP 775  $\pm$  31 95% probability SUERC-93140).

Occupation above the earliest floor of the Inner Bailey (C034) produced a date of 1299-1398 calAD (BP 622  $\pm$  24 95% probability SUERC-96572).

Charcoal recovered from what was very likely the fuel from the last firing/use of the hearth in Inner Bailey produced a date of 1282-1390 calAD (BP  $622 \pm 2495\%$  probability SUERC-96573)

Feature	Sample Sample	Sample	Terminal Ring	Laboratory Code	δ <sup>13</sup> C (‰)	<sup>14</sup> C Age (BP)	Calibrated Date Ranges	
	Code	Code Taxon					68%	95%
Pe-inner	TAR19	Betula	None	SUERC-96577	-28.0	1246±	691-823	677-877
Bailey	<5>					24		
Deposit	[063]							
SW Gate	TCA.I	Corylus	None	SUERC-93141	-25.6	788±31	1220-1270	1210-1290
Cross-wall	TCA.F	Betula	None	SUERC-93140	-27.0	775±31	1220-1280	1220-1290
Inner	TAR19	Betula	None	SUERC-96572	-27.0	622±24	1303-1394	1299-1398
Bailey	<3>							
Floor	[034]							
Hearth	TAR19	Betula	None	SUERC-96573	-26.9	622±24	1289-1384	1282-1390
Feature	<4>							
	[038]							

Table 16 Summary of MERLF sample radiocarbon results. Determinations have been calibrated using OxCal 4.4 against IntCal.20 atmospheric calibration data (Bronk Ramsey 2009; Reimer et al 2020), with date ranges rounded out to 10 years.

# 6. Discussion

# Pre-castle activity

The exposure of deposits pre-dating the construction of the castle was limited. Fragments of charcoal and burnt bone were recovered from the soil below the castle wall in Trench 2, indicating some form of pre-castle occupation. A fragment of birch was dated to 677-877 calAD (BP 1246 ±24 95% probability SUERC-96577) which obtained from a pre-castle soil lying under the Inner Bailey wall.

Within Trench 1 an earlier pre-castle soil was also revealed, and this had evidence of burning on upper extent, although whether this related to pre-castle activity or to the construction of the castle itself remains unclear. The early historic date for the soil below the castle wall in Trench 2 is of course intriguing and raises the question as to whether this deposit relates to the two burnings of the putative fort mentioned in the Irish annals in 713 (*Combusti(o) Tairpirt Boitter*) and 731 (*Combustio Tairpirt Boittir apud Dunghal*). While it may be attractive to conflate the carbon date to the events mentioned in the Irish Annals, without further substantial proof of a defensive structure occupying the ground below the present Inner Bailey the case for this site being *Tairpirt Boittir* is still unproven.

## The Medieval Castle

The excavation work has shed light on several important aspects of the construction and layout of Tarbert Castle. The excavation and the subsequent buildings analysis undertaken by Dr Mark Thacker has demonstrated that the cross-wall dividing that effectively creates the Inner Bailey is secondary to the surrounding curtain walls of the Outer Bailey and this sequence is contrary to the earlier interpretations of the castle wall chronology first suggested by MacGibbon and Ross in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and followed by later interpretations (Thacker in Prep). This has important implications for the overall understanding of the castles development and is discussed more fully below.

The excavation within Trench 4 showed that no entrance to the Inner Bailey, as previously suggested, lies near the southwest tower of the castle although this trench did reveal the scale and preservation of the southwestern tower and exposed the remains of a doorway into the tower suite.

Trenches 1 and 2 demonstrated that well preserved medieval occupation deposits survived within both the Inner and Outer Baileys. The medieval deposits in Trench 1 within the southeast corner of the Outer Bailey were suggestive of a series of floor and midden deposits, while one deposit contained evidence for the survival of organic material in this case wood. While these deposits likely represent successive floor/make up and midden deposits no structural elements beyond the walls of the Inner and Outer Bailey were identified, although it seems likely that further excavation work would uncover evidence of such structures along the walls of the castle in this area of the site. Within Trench 2 inside the Inner Bailey similar well preserved medieval occupation deposits were uncovered along with the remains of an upstanding clay and stone structure, or hearth used for heating. Beyond its heating function the true nature of this sub-circular feature remains elusive although it is suggested here that it was used as a firebox that supported a pot or cauldron for heating liquids. If so, it could have been used for a number of functions such as cooking or brewing, both of these functions attested to within the surviving exchequer rolls which mention both a kitchen (*coquine*) and brew-house (*bracina*) being present within the walls of the castle. Evidence of food preparation was also recovered from this area including butchered bone and seashells (mainly edible

periwinkles) recovered from a midden accumulation from which an iron fleshhook was also recovered. The pottery recovered from these same occupation deposits were almost entirely from jugs indicating their use as tableware in consumption and/or storing of wine and or beer. However, without further evidence, attributing such specific functions to this space must be treated with some caution, for example low quantities of slag fragments were also present within the general midden material, although perhaps not in such concentrations to suggest this took place in the immediate vicinity. The hearth feature also appeared to be the replacement for an earlier fire installation, possibly with a similar function, which, along with at least two superimposed floor surfaces, suggests some degree of longevity of use in this part of the castle. The pottery assemblage mentioned above recovered from this part of the castle was dominated by sherds from several vessels, many of these sherds conjoining and displaying very fresh breaks, this perhaps suggesting a close correlation in time between their last use and being discard into middens and/or on floors. The above-mentioned pottery group recovered from above the earliest floor dated to the 13th-14<sup>th</sup> century while the rest of the pottery recovered from all the occupation/use deposits within Trench 2 dated to the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century. These medieval occupation deposits were all sealed by an extensive deposit of rubble which appeared to have formed rapidly which can perhaps be best explained as the deliberate demolition of the surrounding walls rather than long-term degradation. Given these factors it might suggest this part of the castle was redundant as perhaps early as the later 15<sup>th</sup> century, although the charcoal from what was possibly the last firing of the hearth feature might indicate an even earlier date for this demise (i.e., before the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century). If this process was repeated elsewhere within the Inner Bailey, then it is highly likely that equally well-preserved medieval deposits survive elsewhere.

The confirmation of the positions of the gateways into the castle complex provides important new elements as to understanding of castles layout. The gates undoubtedly had several roles, defensive, controlling access to the castle, while they were also undoubtedly architectural projections of power and display. The southwestern gate into the Outer Bailey was positioned below the eastern wall of the Inner Bailey with the projecting tower in the Outer Bailey lying immediately to its west would have presented an imposing approach and façade. The entrance on the opposite northeastern side of the castle was arguably even more impressive with the portcullis gate positioned between the two projecting drum towers. With its sloping access ramp, the southwestern entrance would have been the easier approach particularly for animal-drawn vehicles, while the northeastern gate is situated above what appears to be a very steep slope. As such it remains unclear as to how this gate was accessed from the sea (which now lies some 80-90m to the north). It is likely that much of the original topography is masked by the rubble collapse from the castle itself as well as being covered in extensive vegetation. Certainly, there appears to have been extensive reworking of the lower slopes below the gate with the creation of garden terracing at the rear of the Victorian houses that now line the south side of Pier Road (A8015). However, current topography suggests that the approach must have wound up from the sea to the castle from either the western or eastern sides by passing below one or other of the drum towers, as the ground immediately in front of the gate appears to be too steep to accommodate a direct approach to the gate from the north, unless of course steep steps are involved. Whatever the case further topographic and survey work needs to be done on this side of the castle to shed more light on the access to the castle in this area.

The confirmed presence of an entrance gate on this northeast side of the castle might justifiably focus more attention to this area of the Outer Bailey. Immediately to the southwest of the gate is strip of relatively level ground some of which is currently occupied by the linear remains of nineteenth century outbuildings (see Illus 4). Given the steep rocky nature of much of the rest of the internal area of the Outer Bailey and its relative unsuitability for building, it may be in this more level area is where some of the yet unidentified buildings mentioned in the exchequer roll, including hall, chapel, brewhouse, smith and

goldsmiths workshop etc. As such this appears to be an area worthy of closer examination by geophysical survey. Examination of the masonry at base of the Tower House appears to show that this is tied into the masonry of the Outer Bailey wall, which would suggest that the work is contemporary with the construction of the Outer Bailey Wall and if so, may represent a projecting tower may have existed here prior to the construction of the Tower House in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. However, closer and more specialist examination needs to be undertaken to confirm or contradict this observation.

The medieval artefact and ecofact assemblage excavated from the Inner Bailey would appear to date to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, while that from the Outer Bailey within Trench 1 appears to be of a similar date, although the uppermost occupation deposits may continue into the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The Tarbert assemblages, however, are relatively small so any conclusions must treated with caution.

Other castle sites in Argyll have produced excavated evidence for occupation in the late 13<sup>th</sup> and early 14<sup>th</sup> centuries including Achandun (Canmore ID 23018), the Lismore seat of the Bishop of the Isles built sometime between *c* 1295–1310 (Turner 1975; Caldwell and Stell 2017), Dunstaffnage (Canmore ID 23036), a MacDougall stronghold probably constructed in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century (Lewis 1996; Radley 2000; Stewart 2004; Breen et al 2010) and Castle Sween (Phases 2 and 3, Canmore ID 39028) constructed by the MacSweens in the late 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> century (Ewart and Triscott 1996, Thacker 2020). However, within the published reports few of these artefact groupings are firmly dated to the 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> centuries or are in significant enough quantities to conduct anything more than broad comparative analysis, such as the similar preference for the eating of cattle seen at Castle Sween.

# The Medieval Burgh

The area to the southwest of the castle within the scheduled area occupies a ridge of undulating ground that slopes off to the east and west. The results of the excavation suggest that medieval topography may be partially masked by what appears to be the accumulations of later soils likely caused by the movement or weathering of worked soils into lower areas across the site. This process was observed within Trenches 5-7. In Trench 5 any plough/horticultural soils were very shallow, but downslope within Trench 6 there was a depth of up to 1.0m of soil covering the underlying archaeology, this likely an accumulation of hill wash/colluvial forming within existing natural hollows and it is highly likely that this process is repeated across the whole area of the ridge to the south of the castle.

The recovery of dumped medieval pottery and slag along with evidence of burning within Trench 6 along with the presence of what is likely a medieval building in Trench 7, indicates that medieval activity and occupation was present within the area to the south of the castle. The exact nature of this activity was harder to glean from the limited exposure within the excavated trenches, however, the presence of large fragments of slag and smithing bases in both Trenches 6 and 7 indicates metal working activity in the vicinity. Part of one building does not of course make a burgh but does suggest that other buildings may lie along this same ridge to the south of the castle, this perhaps underlined by the recovery of medieval pottery from a small community excavation on Bruce Hill, further south along the same ridge (Regan 2018a).

Sherds of 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century pottery along with one 17-18<sup>th</sup> century sherd were recovered from the ploughsoil deposits within Trenches 6 and 7, this perhaps indicating a decline in any burgh activity after the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This may reflect the increased importance of Inveraray (created a burgh of barony in 1472) or that any burgh activity within Tarbert had moved closer to the sea around any harbour area.

## Post medieval evidence

Within the Inner Bailey and constructed directly over the rubble collapse sealing the medieval sequence was Structure 1, the walls of which were apparent as earthworks prior to excavation and appear in the Royal Commissions published plan of the castle (RCHAMS 1971 No. 316, 179-84). This building is also depicted on the First Edition Ordnance Survey, although, prior to the excavation it was unclear whether these were a depiction of the walls of the castle or a later building (Argyllshire Sheet CXCII).

The building is probably of 17<sup>th</sup> century in date given the evidence from the coins recovered from the floor of the building. While Structure 1 utilised the walls of the castle on its western and northern sides the 'new built' walls of this structure are poorly constructed when compared to the castle walls and do not show any sign of mortar use in their construction. The floor in the eastern room was very uneven although it did contain a clay spread that with signs of burning which was likely a hearth or perhaps a work area. The western room also contained a hearth area with signs of burning on the floor in the centre of the room and lying nearby on the floor was of the upper stone of a large rotary quern. The quern might suggest a domestic use for the building however, the presence of several of 17<sup>th</sup> century coins from the building's floors might reflect the garrisoning of the castle during this turbulent century whether during the civil war period or its occupation by Cromwellian troops in 1652. This building appears to be one of a series of earthworks that suggest other structures of a similar late date occupy the internal space of the Inner Bailey.

The excavation has also shown that the area immediately to the north of the Inner Bailey had been used as a field, this area demarcated by a sinuous wall running from the entrance of the Inner Bailey to the tower house. Indeed, this wall is shown, in a much better-preserved state, in a 19<sup>th</sup> postcard of the castle.

Similarly, the area to the south of the castle appears to have been extensively cultivated, given the evidence of plough soil within all the excavated trenches. The depths of the plough soil in each trench varied this perhaps indicating that there may have been a problem of the movement of soils from the upper sloping ground to lower ground and it is possible one function of the revetment wall examined in Trench 6 was to counter this erosion. It also seems likely that the earthworks which can still be seen lying to the south of the southern berm of the inner enclosure are of late date, these representing drainage and lazy bed or narrow strip cultivation.

The relatively large number of artefacts recovered from the plough soil can perhaps only be explained by these being introduced onto field areas as midden material for soil enhancement. This process perhaps underlined by the generally small size of the artefacts, the presence of burnt/melted material and some sea-worn artefacts the later possibly indicating the use of seaweed introduced to the soil as a fertilizer.

## Re-thinking the castle

The excavation of only a small percentage of the medieval deposits within such a large castle means any conclusions presented here must be treated with caution, given that so much remains unknown archaeologically.

As mentioned above the suggestion that the castle at Tarbert dates to the 13<sup>th</sup> century was initially made by MacGibbon and Ross who suggested that Tarbert Castle was one of the Royal fortresses handed over to Edward I by John Baliol, after Edward placed him on the throne in 1292 (MacGibbon and Ross 1887, 136). They also pointed out the similarities of ground plan and size of the inner enclosure at Tarbert to Kinclaven

castle in Perthshire. The comparison to Kinclaven was later expanded upon by Dunbar and Duncan who compared Tarbert with both Kincardine and Kinclaven. They also say that 'each unit' of Tarbert, referring to the inner and outer baileys and the tower house, 'appears to be the outcome of a separate period of building activity' (Dunbar and Duncan 1971, 7). They go on to argue that as the Inner Bailey of Tarbert more closely resembles Kincardine, which probably dates to before 1249. They argue that Tarbert might also date to before that time and may have been constructed by Alexander II (1214-1249) as part of his successful campaign in 1221 and 1222 against Ruaidhri mac Raonaill to subdue the west and attempting to regain the Western Isles from the Norwegian crown (Dunbar and Duncan 1971, 13). This has been accepted and expanded on by other scholars while some have argued that it was Alexander III (1249-1286) who after gaining his majority in 1261 and continuing his father's policy of regaining the Western Isles from the Norwegian crown built Tarbert as part of crowns consolidation in the west, possibly after the treaty of Perth in 1266 when the Western Isles were ceded to the Scots. Perhaps on this basis the RCHAMS Inventory for Kintyre suggested the Inner Bailey was a product of the reigns of either Alexander II or Alexander III. However, Dunbar and Duncan's argument that Tarbert may have been built by Alexander II is wholly based on the comparative architectural evidence with Kinclaven and Kincardine. This comparison of course only works if the Inner Bailey at Tarbert is seen as a stand-alone 'simple rectangular castle of enclosure' and perhaps more importantly a structure that can be shown to be earlier than the walls of the Outer Bailey. The present work, however, suggests that the comparison with either Kinclaven or Kincardine is in part erroneous, given that the Inner Bailey was originally conceived as an integral part of the larger structure at Tarbert.

Prior to the mention of Tarbert Castle during the reign of Robert I there is little mention within contemporary documentary evidence of Tarbert in Knapdale as a place, while there is no mention of a castle. Evidence from the current work and the complementary work undertaken Mark Thacker as part of the Scottish Medieval Castles and Chapels C-14 Project, suggests that it is likely that Tarbert was constructed sometime in the latter half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and therefore would belong to the reign of Alexander III or perhaps even later, although its construction during the reign of Alexander II, cannot, yet, be discounted entirely. Two carbon dates recovered from the mortar of the southwestern gate of the Outer Bailey and the cross-wall of the Inner Bailey provided similar dates, respectively 1210-1290 calAD (BP 788±31 95% probability SUERC-93141) and 1220-1290 calAD (BP 775 ± 31 95% probability SUERC-93140) (Thacker in Prep).

The radiocarbon date returned from the occupation deposit above the earliest floor of the Inner Bailey produced a date of 1299-1398 calAD (BP 622 ± 24 95% probability SUERC-96572). The radiocarbon date recovered from the charcoal from what was very likely the fuel from the last firing/use of the hearth in Inner Bailey produced a date of 1282-1390 calAD (BP 622 ± 24 95% probability SUERC-96573). Both these dates suggest occupation and use of the Inner Bailey from the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. These dates are perhaps supported by the ceramic evidence recovered from above the floor deposits within the Inner Bailey is wholly dated between the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century and that above the earliest floor, while admittedly only a handful of sherds were dated to the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century. The absence of pottery of a 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>century date along with the absence of imported wares also tends to support the view that the castle was occupied during the latter half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Derek Hall pers. comm.)

Being one design from the start and at almost 2 acres in extent as Dunbar and Duncan noted Tarbert '*must have ranked as one of the largest and most strongly fortified castles in Scotland*' (Dunbar and Duncan 1971, 14). The size of the castle, its layout and setting with two impressive portcullis entrances suggest an edifice built to dominate and impress which might suggest a castle of royal status, while the shape and size

of the Inner Bailey do suggest a constructional lineage from the royal castles built at Kinclaven and Kincardine.

However, the impressive nature of the castle does not preclude its construction by a local magnate and if Tarbert was not a royal castle, prior to the 1320's then the question must be asked who are the most likely candidates to have built such a large and imposing edifice?

Thacker has recently examined of the socio-political relationships that existed within southern Argyll during the 13<sup>th</sup> century outlining how projections of lordship in the shape of castles had already made an appearance in the construction of Castle Sween built by the descendants of Suibhne, son of Donnsleibhe which was built c.1200 and this may have been joined by Skipness Castle (Canmore ID 39789) in the early decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Thacker in prep). Both Skipness Castle and Castle Sween along with Tarbert castle were in lordship of Knapdale in the medieval period, while both Tarbert and Skipness lay in the parish of Kilcalmonell. The presence of both Castle Sween and Skipness indicate that a large part of Knapdale was held by the MacSween family and their associated kindreds, although whether they directly held any territory that included Tarbert in the 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries is less than clear. The RCHAMS had previously postulated that the McDonalds of Islay, who likely held much of Kintyre in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, may have commissioned the building of Tarbert Castle but closer examination of political situation in Knapdale in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century appears to make this unlikely. As Thacker and others have pointed out Donald MacGilchrist is mentioned as Lord of Tarbert (Douenaldus Makgilcriste dominus de Tarbard) in a charter of 1250. Donald may have been a brother of Gillespcop and Eoghan (Eugenius) MacGilchrist who were granted large estates in Glassary and Cowal by Alexander II in 1240, in one of the earliest surviving charters relating to Argyll (MacPhail 1916, 121). The MacGilchrists claimed similar ancestry to Clann Shuibhne descending from the eponymous Gilchrist a son (or perhaps brother) of Donnsleibh. By the early 1260's there appears to be a displacement of the Donnsleibh kindred, namely the MacSweens, by the Stewarts under Walter earl of Menteith. This transference of title is highlighted in two surviving documents in the Paisley Chartulary. The first is dated to 1261 where Dugall son of Sween (Dusgallus filius Syfyn) granted to the monks of Paisley, with the consent of John, his heir, the right of the patronage of the church of Kilcolmonel (Sancti Colmaneli) in Kintyre along with the dependent chapel of St. Columba (Sancti Columbe) situated near his castle of Skipness 'juxta castrum meum de Schepehinche' (Innes 1832, 121). In the following year Walter Stewart, the earl of Mentieth (Walterus Senesceallus comes de Menthet) confirmed the grant of Dugall son of Sween (Dufgallus fillus Syfyn') previously made to Paisley Abbey before he (Dugall) gave him (Walter) his land of Skipness 'terram suam de Schyphinche)' (Innes 1832, 121-122). Walter Stewart (1225/1230 - 1293/1294) was brother of Alexander who became fourth hereditary Steward of Scotland in 1241. Boardman has argued that by this time the Stewart family in the region had firmly adopted a Gaelic identity, this underlined by Walter's use of the Gaelic byname, Bailloch or Balloch (meaning spotted or freckled) (Boardman 2007, 84-109). Walter Stewart married Mary, Countess of Menteith in 1258. Mary had become heiress to the earldom, following the forfeiture and exile of Walter Comyn of Badenoch, the former earl, who had inherited the title by marrying Mary's sister Isabella, then Countess of Menteith. Walter thus became was the earl of Menteith jure uxoris and was obviously using the title by 1261 when he witnesses above mentioned grant to Paisley Abbey of Dugall son of Sween.

Why Dugall son of Sween grants Skipness to Walter Stewart is not known but it likely underscores Stewart territorial expansion into Knapdale by the mid 1260's. This transfer of title follows on from earlier Stewart territorial expansion along the Firth of Clyde to the west which likely included Bute by the very early 13<sup>th</sup> century, expanding into Cowal by the mid 1250's their lordship possibly also including Arran by this time (Caldwell 2022, 7).
Stewart advances into the southern Hebrides was obviously seen as a threat to local established magnates and as part of the Scottish nobility were no doubt also seen as a threat to Norse overlordship. This ultimately led to major naval campaigns mounted by the Norse in 1230 under Uspak/Håkon and in 1263 led by king Håkon himself. On both occasions the Stewart caput at Rothesay Castle (Canmore ID 40395), where their regional lordship was based, was targeted being besieged and taken by the Norse and their Hebridean allies. In the later campaign of 1263 Walter Stewart and his brother Alexander played prominent roles in countering king Håkon's expedition against the Scottish islands and western mainland, being joint commanders of the Scottish force that confronted the Norse and their allies at the battle of Largs in October of that year. Joining Håkon's expedition was a 'Murchaid' who had previously been identified as a brother Angus Mòr (MacDonald) of Islay, but more recently has been recognised as the displaced Murchadh MacSween (Duncan and Brown 1958; Cowan 1990, 119; Sellar 1971, 21; 2000, 206; 2017, 37; Barrow 2003, 142; Caldwell 2022, 7) probably being the same individual, Murchadh MacSuibhne, who died from starvation in the captivity of the Earl of Ulster in 1267 (LC 1267.2; Nicholls 2007, 92; Simms 2007, 107; McWhannell 2014, 4). As such the Menteith Stewarts may well have been the dominant force in Knapdale by the mid 1260's and likely also controlled Arran by this time. They maintained this position in Knapdale up until King Johns ordinances of 1293 for establishing a scheme of sheriffdoms in the west where Knapdale is listed as being under the control of the earl of Menteith (comitis de Menteth de knapdal) (Thomson and Innes 1814, 447b). Later Walters son Alexander reportedly accompanied Robert I on his supposed re-enactment of Magnus Barelegs feat of crossing across the Tarbert isthmus in a boat, possibly in 1315 (Skeat 1894,34-37).

It is postulated that Walters brother Alexander Stewart was responsible for the rebuilding of Dundonald Castle (Canmore ID 41970) and Rothesay Castle, possibly after the treaty of Perth in 1266 and Caldwell has argued that Stewart influence in the west also extended to the construction of Brodick Castle (Canmore ID 40145) on Arran (Simpson 1939; Caldwell 2022). It appears likely that after Menteith Stewart's obtained possession of Skipness castle it was they who rebuilt the castle compound, this work attributed to the late 13<sup>th</sup> or early 14<sup>th</sup> century. It seems likely that the Stewarts may have also displaced Clann Shuibhne from Castle Sween, as they took control of Knapdale. Thacker has pointed to the c.1300 construction northwest tower at Castle Sween as likely being the work of the Menteith/Stewarts which contains cross-slit openings similar features in the nearby castles of Skipness and Brodick which also had an entrance flanked by a large drum tower (Thacker 2020, 238; Caldwell 2022, 7).

Within two of the above-mentioned castles, Rothesay and Skipness, the Stewarts added new gateways both incorporating portcullis mechanisms, a feature rare among west coast castles. While containing later additions and repairs, the original elements of the gate at Skipness have strong similarities to the surviving structural features of both Outer Bailey gates at Tarbert using similar red sandstone for the architectural mouldings and detail. The gate at Skipness is slightly narrower being 2.70m wide as opposed to the 3.0m at Tarbert. Both have door checks set internally to the portcullis slots, the examples at Skipness being 12.5cm (or 5 inches wide) while those at Tarbert were 19cm (or 8 inches wide). At Tarbert red sandstone is also used within the surrounds of the gate into the Inner Bailey and within the surrounds of entrance to the southwest tower of the Outer Bailey. Again, a comparison with Skipness can be made where doorway surrounds within the enclosure walls are rendered in moulded red sandstone blocks. The similarity in date and the similar use of red sandstone raises the question, previously postulated by Simpson, as to whether the same masons were involved in the construction of both edifices, although without closer dating evidence or comparative masons' marks this has to remain speculation (Simpson 1966).

Undoubtably the Stewart/Menteith family had the resources and the power base within southern Argyll to construct Tarbert Castle. However, the evidence at present, both historically and archeologically, cannot as yet conclusively tell us who built Tarbert Castle, although it perhaps narrows down the likely candidates. The best hypothesis then is that Tarbert castle was either a royal edifice built after the 1266 treaty of Perth as an extension of crown authority into the west and southern Hebrides or was constructed by a local magnate, most likely the Stewart/Menteith family acting as a proxy for that royal authority. Both the ceramic evidence and the radiocarbon dates from the occupation deposits within the Inner Bailey suggest early use of this part of the castle from the late 13<sup>th</sup>/early 14<sup>th</sup> century. If this dating of the first use of the Inner Bailey is correct and if the construction of the castle had begun prior to this then it remains a possibility that the castle remained unfinished. This of course would nicely explain the absence of mentions of the castle in extant historical documents before 1326, but I feel this would be too neat an explanation to what may be a more complex and nuanced story.

The evidence from the Inner Bailey indicate that the medieval occupation deposits were sealed by an extensive deposit of rubble possibly sometime before the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The *Origines parochiales* states that the castle may never have been completed, although as yet I have found no documentation that would lead to this assumption, or what source if any they may have been referring too (Innes 1854, 35). This said, there may be some validity in that argument particularly when looking at the rather incongruous rock outcrop that still dominates the central area of the Inner Bailey and which surely would not have been beyond the ability of medieval quarriers or masons to have either removed or flattened. After the 14<sup>th</sup> century there is only one mention of the castle before the reign of James IV in the later 15<sup>th</sup> century when he was responsible for the *'biggin of the castle'* this likely a reference to the construction of the Tower House although as mentioned above, this does not appear to have been completed until early in the next century. By this time, it may be that the Inner Bailey was extensively abandoned, and its walls may have provided some of the material for the building of the tower.

While the documentary evidence may again be reinterpreted it is unlikely, unless new substantive material is uncovered, to fully resolve this question. However, the well-preserved medieval archaeology within the castle grounds still has the potential to give a much clearer picture of the development, use and function of a major Scottish medieval stronghold, from its construction, its use as a royal castle from the time of Robert I and its ultimate demise.

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## 8 Appendices

## Appendix 1; John de Lany

The estate of Leny is situated near Callander in Perthshire and lay in the earldom of Menteith. Leny was held by 'Gillespic de Lani' before 1237 when it was passed to his daughter Margert and her husband Alan by a grant of Alexander III (Fraser 1880 lxxiv-lxxv). In an undated charter (c.1286-1333) John son of Alan of Leny 'Johanni filio Alani de Lany' is given the lands of Drumchastle in Perthshire previously held by his father in a charter of Malcolm earl of Lennox (Dennistoun, 48). A 'John de Lany' appears on the as a signatory on the Ragman Rolls submitting to Edward I in 1291 and again 1296 as 'Johan de Lanyn' and his seal is appended to the homage bearing a stringed hunting horn and legend 'S' JOHANNI DE L...NI' (Bain 1884 no 811). In 1304 a 'John de Lany' is listed as a knight forming a jury as part of an inquisition, before John Comyn, then Guardian of Scotland, into a dispute between the earl of Strathearn and Sir John de Mowbray (Bain 1884 no. 1592). In 1306 the lands of 'Johan de Lany de Mentieth' are listed as having been forfeited for his part in the Bruce rebellion these being petitioned to be given to 'Robert de Sapy' (Palgrave 1837 313 no. 98). If the Drumchastle charter dates to as early as 1286 then it is unlikely that John son of Alan of Leny is the 'Johne de Lany', Constable of Tarbert as he may have been too old to hold such an active position, but if later he may be the same person. Whatever that case it is highly likely the juror 'John de Lany' in 1304 and the forfeited Bruce supporter of 1306 can be equated with the constable of the Tarbert Castle.