



**Tarbert Castle Excavation
HES Report 2**



Week Two Update

Trench 1

Half the trench was cleared down to the top of an extensive demolition/robbing/collapse deposit, this consisting of wall rubble and loose broken up mortar. Apart from a few shells which appear to have originally derived from the mortar, this deposit has so far been fairly sterile of finds.



Photo showing rubble/mortar deposit

This deposit was up to 0.50m deep across the trench and we have now partially revealed the deposit below over which this extensive layer formed. We now need to clear the demolition layer in a large enough area to explore the layer/s below.

The Inner bailey outer wall is coated in a mortar render.



Mortar render on inner bailey wall

Trench 2

The late building in Trench 2 has now been cleared down to floor layers.



Cleared building

As stated before the building is a fairly rough construction, the walls of rough randomly coursed rubble.

The floor in the eastern room is very uneven although it contains a clay spread that shows signs of burning which is likely a hearth area.



Eastern room

A door/threshold has been located into western room which has a small threshold stone and to its east side a post hole possibly for a door support. Internally a dark area of ash and charcoal with some scorching suggest a hearth position. Retrieved from above uneven floor of the building were three very worn/corroded coins, possibly Charles I two pence pieces or 'Turners', also recovered were two knife blades and a sherd of bottle glass.



Western room

Immediately south of the building threshold a small pit had been cut into the underlying rubble, this situated in the former door/window aperture of the castle. The pit was filled with a deposit that suggest it was a small cess pit, which contained some pot and animal bones, the latter perhaps food remains.



'cess' pit

As mentioned before the building is constructed over and extensive deposit of rubble that fills this wing of the castle. The rubble has numerous voids suggesting that the wall collapse was rapid.

A sondage has been cut through this deposit in the southern part of the trench around the door/window. The base of the rubble deposit has been reached in part of the sondage, which has revealed as silty clay deposit, containing the sherds of remains of a large medieval jar, this lying directly under the rubble collapse.



Sondage through the internal castle rubble
(a sherd of medieval jug can be seen just to the right of the base of the scale)



Medieval jug fragments

Trench Three

In Trench 3 it was quickly apparent that the wall of the outer bailey did not extend across the trench. This 'gap' however was filled by an extensive deposit of rubble/demolition collapse. Like the rubble in Trench 2 the numerous voids in this rubble deposit suggest its rapid deposition, possibly collapse of the tower at the west. With much rubble removed the remains of the wall of the inner bailey was revealed on the western side of the trench. This appeared to be the remains of the western side of an entrance although the facing stones on its upper extent had been robbed. Only at the basal level of the entrance did any facing stones survive, these being of blocks of dressed red sandstone, one of the blocks indicating the position of a door check. A few sherds of medieval pottery have also been recovered from the small exposed area of the floor of the entrance passage.



Robbed western side of the entrance



Red sandstone dressings at base of entrance wall with door check