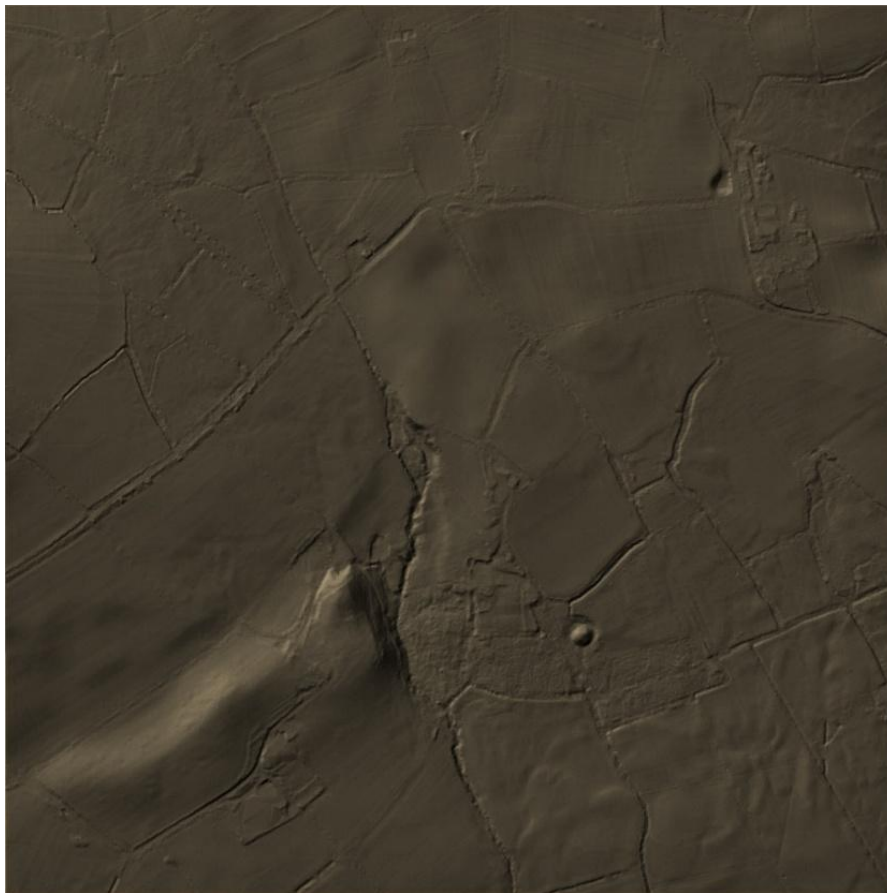


**The Earth and Timber Castles of the Llŷn Peninsula in their  
Archaeological, Historical and Landscape Context**



**Dissertation submitted for the award of Bachelor of Arts in Archaeology**

**University of Durham, Department of Archaeology**

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## **Abstract**

Castle studies in North Wales, is symptomatic of the 'Orford Syndrome'. As defined by Creighton (2005:5) where the *'wealth and architectural splendour of upstanding masonry remains have deflected attention away from associated earthworks and other features in the landscape'*. North Wales is famous for the late 13th masonry castles of Edward I, inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 1999. However their earth and timber predecessors dating from the late 11th century, built by both the Normans and the Welsh have been ignored, and as a result threatened and destroyed.

This research will discuss the evidence for earth and timber castles on the Llŷn Peninsula (Figure 1), through a detailed investigation of one motte, Y Mount, Ty Newydd, Llannor, and identification and holistic analysis of other earth and timber castles on the Llŷn Peninsula. The Ty Newydd site will act as a model for a new holistic approach to castle studies which include the application of LiDAR data, GIS modelling, geophysical survey, landscape analysis and historical research. The sites will be discussed within the wider context of the development, dating and use of earth and timber castles in North Wales, particularly in relation to the period of Gruffudd ap Cynan and the Norman occupation of the Llŷn Peninsula in 1075 and between the period 1081-1094.

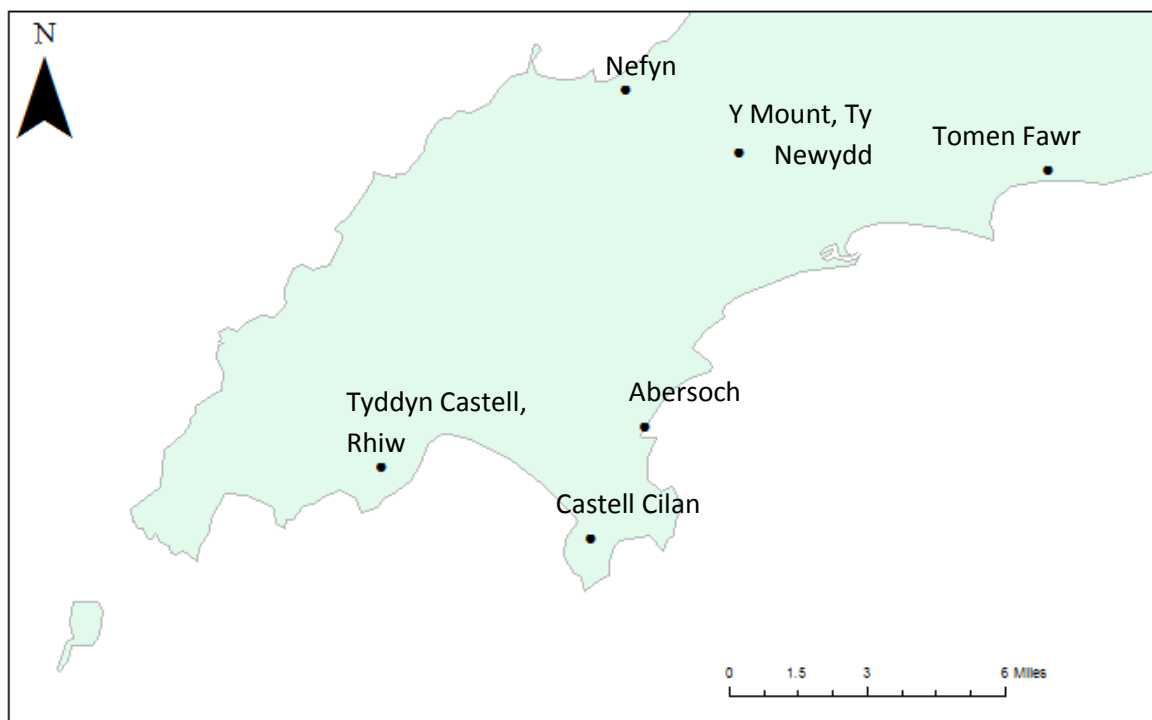
This research, into the undocumented and under researched earth and timber castles of the Llŷn Peninsula, will potentially allow a more subtle interpretation of the origin and development of the motte in North Wales to be established, feeding into the 'Research Framework for the Archaeology of Wales' initiative. The Research framework for the archaeology of Wales was published in 2003, it was identified that *'No excavation and little survey work has been undertaken on mottes'* (Davidson 2003:2) in North West Wales, and two of the ten, priority themes for research into medieval Wales were *'Norman expansion into Wales and 'Normanisation'* and *'Castle building, including earthwork castles'* (Longley 2010:1). Seven years later, in the research review, two of the four priority themes were *'Royal administration and secular and ecclesiastical lordship'* and *'Earthwork Castles'* (Longley 2010). The continual call for greater research into the Norman period Wales and earthwork castles highlights the lack of progress made in the last 50 years in Wales, especially in North Wales. It is hoped that this research into the earth and timber castles on the Llŷn Peninsula, which is a response to the lack of progress in the Research Framework, will highlight the archaeological potential for earth and timber castles, and will throw new light into the turbulent eleventh and twelfth century Wales.

**Figure 1: Survey location**



Source: EDINA 2012 Wales outline base map

The study area is the Llŷn Peninsula, located in North West Wales. It is a defined geographical area - the peninsula, with its eastern border delineated by the towns of Nefyn to the North and Pwllheli to the South. This area relates to the medieval political administrative unit of the Cantref of Llyn.



From the GIS database created which collated old parish and county maps, along with aerial photography, the LIDAR data, digital terrain model data, an EDINA raster map and old site maps.



## **Aims and objectives**

### **Aim 1-To gain a greater understanding and to accurately characterise Y Mount, Ty Newydd, Llannor**

- To collate all known evidence on the Ty Newydd motte to provide an interpretation into when it was built and by whom
- To use the LIDAR and topographical data to explore its landscape context
- To identify and confirm the presence of a bailey through the undertaking of a geophysical survey
- To identify the location of a cobbled surface reported to the RCAHMW in the 1960s, which could locate the presence of a bailey

### **Aim 2- Understand the site in its wider geographic and cultural context**

- To create a GIS database plotting the locations of known and possible earth and timber castles of the Llŷn Peninsula
- To undertake a survey identify potential other earth and timber castles on the Llŷn peninsula
- To test current theories about the classification and siting of earth and timber castles within a landscape.

## **Chapter One: Earth and Timber Castles: An Historical and Archaeological Context**

This literature review aims to provide the archaeological and historical contextual framework to interpret the site of Ty Newydd and identify similar earth and timber castles on the Llŷn Peninsula.

### **1.1: Earth and Timber Castles**

The focus of the study is earth and timber castles, which will be defined to include mottes (with and without baileys) and ringworks, as illustrated in Figure 2 (Phillips 2006:24). King and Alcock's (1966:93-94) definition of motte and ring-works will be used... *'a motte is a raised mound, and a ring-work is a raised rampart surrounding an area of ground'*.

The use of the term castle is unhelpful as it assumes predetermined functions to these sites, as defined by Armitage (1912:4-8) *'that a castle is a private, residential, defensible seat of power'*. In this paper, the term castle will follow the definition by Creighton (2005:1) *'high-status private residences and estate centres as well as military strong points'*. Including alternative functions such as campaign fort and watchtowers (Phillips 2006:31-32).

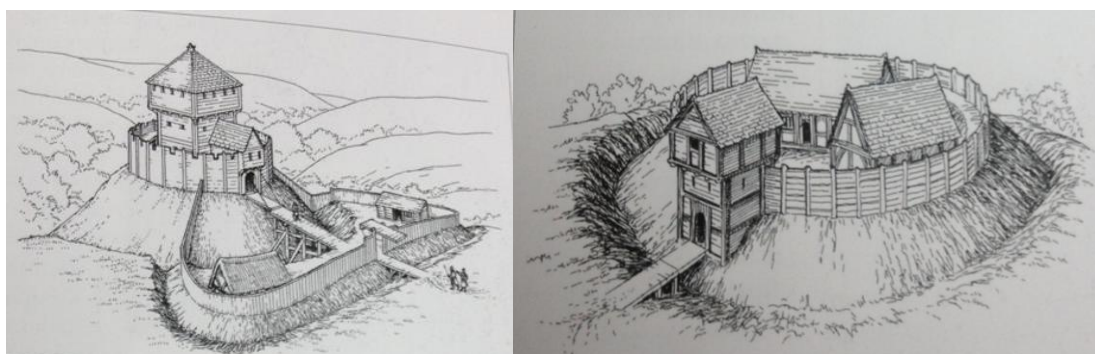


Figure 2: Reconstructions of Motte and Bailey and Ringwork sites. Davis 2007:25

The Motte and bailey is the classic form of an earth and timber castle, originating in France and brought to Britain by the Normans from the mid 11th century. They are the most common form of earth and timber castle dating from the mid 11th to 13th centuries. However, it is now accepted that there was not a homogenous form of earth and timber castle in the form of motte and bailey castles, but there was great diversity, including mottes without baileys and the often overlooked ringworks (Figure 8).

Today these sites are only ephemeral remains, often a damaged mound of earth, a fraction of its original size (Figure 3). Any evidence of structures, often timber, is buried and only evident through excavation, however in many cases destroyed by fire and lost due to ploughing. The reconstructed

motte and bailey castle at St Sylvain, France (Figure 4) provides a visible reminder of the scale and dominance of these now forgotten sites.



Figure 3: Sycharth, Musson 1993



Figure 4:1 - Saint-Sylvain-d'Anjou. Source: Closevents 2012.

Figure 4:2- Saint-Sylvain-d'Anjou. Source: Phillips 2006.

Research has been dominated by discussion of classification notably Renn 1969, Kings 1972, Higham and Barker 1994 and Phillips 2006. However all these approaches are based on observations of the morphology of the surviving earthwork, *'but the surviving shape of a motte may not bear any resemblance to its original shape'* Phillips (2006:41). All earthworks present appearance are a result of natural and human erosion and destruction, thereby any classification based on modern morphological observations alone is flawed. Frequently the size of the baileys or internal size of the motte/ringwork is overlooked.

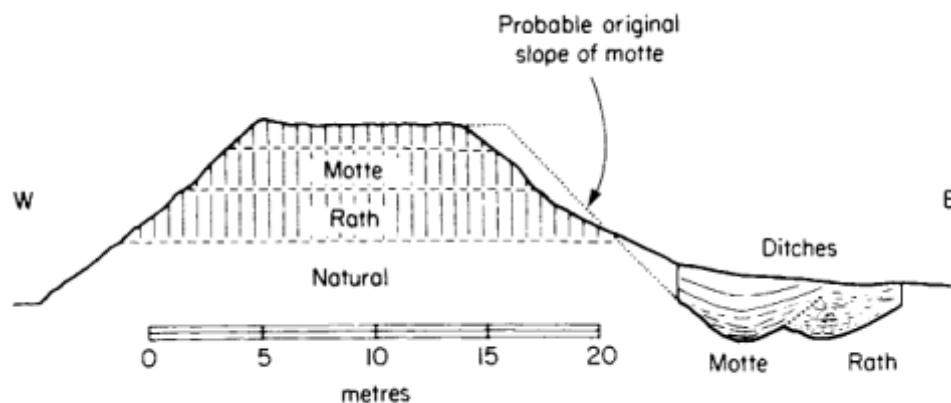
The impact of the local topography which often results in the location, size and shape of the earthwork features, is too often ignored. The height of mottes can be misleading, as many sites are built to take advantage of the natural topography, as at Castell Prysor (Figure 5), where the motte

utilised a natural outcrop and contain the remains of a masonry tower, whilst at Castell Cynfael (Figure 6) a natural spur was scarped to create the motte, and at the raised rath at Drumadoon, Ireland where the natural outcrop artificially heightened (Figure 7). Furthermore at Richards Castle excavations of the large motte revealed a small motte with the remains of a collapsed large masonry tower (Phillips 2006:42).



*Figure 5: Castell Prysor. Source: Jones, E. 2007*

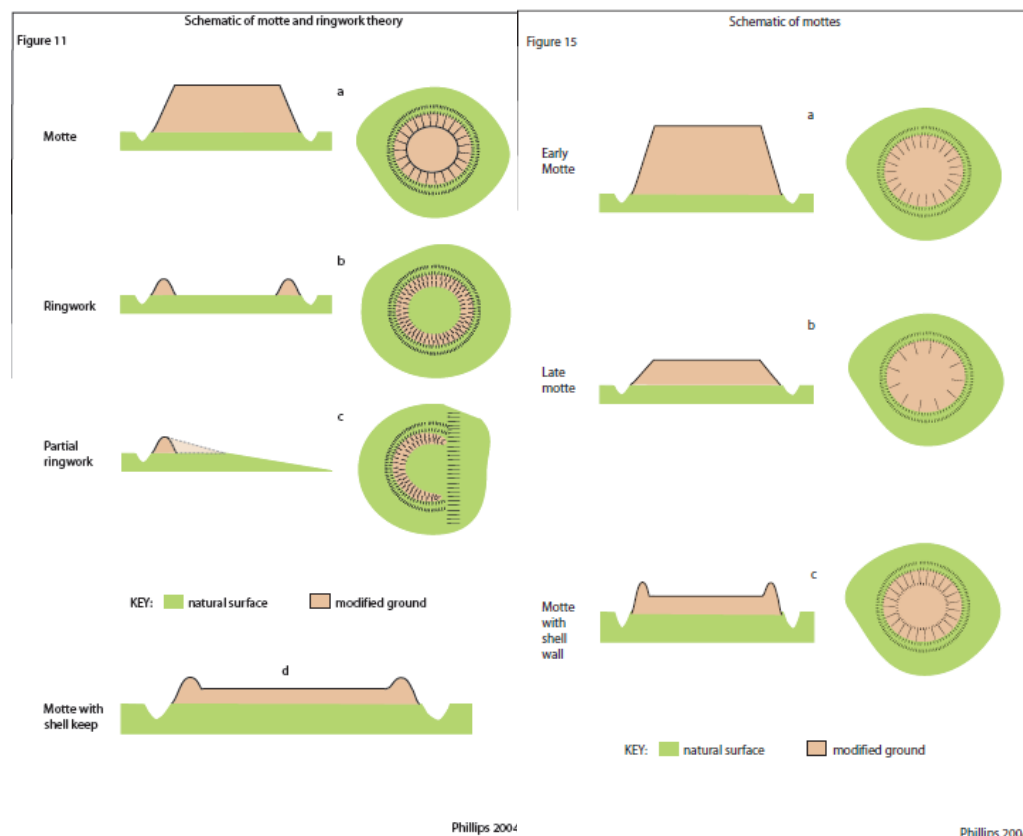
*Figure 6: Castell Cynfael. Source: Hale, I. 2009.*



*Figure 7: Simplified Section of Rathmullan raised rath and motte, Co. Down, Ireland, after Lynn 1981-2 (Barry 1988: 42)*

More recently Phillips 2006 proposed 'Form follows function' (Phillips 2006:75). Based on a quantitative approach, Phillips identifies three phases of construction, early (Pre 1100), mid (1100-1200) and late (1200-1250), based on his hypothesis (Figure 8) that tall mottes with a small top

surface are earlier, whilst short mottes with a large top surface are later, thus a reflection of their changing function (Phillips 2006:30,82). It is a holistic approach which combines quantitative analysis, with topographical information and documentary sources (where available), to assign a date and function to a site. Importantly this approach recognises ringwork sites and topographic location, which is crucial in interpreting the sites significance and purpose. It is based on this chronological classification and holistic approach, this study will follow.



**Figure 8: Motte and Ringwork classification. Source: Phillips 2006: 26,30**

The recent focus in the classification debate has been in the identification and separation of earthworks as mottes versus ringworks. However Dr Emma Arbuthnot's PhD thesis on 'The Ringwork Castles of Medieval Leinster and Meath' (2011), provides hope for the future, as it sets out four categories to be used in identifying ringworks, without excavation. The criteria, as established in Arbuthnot (2011:71-73):

1. Morphology- A circular or sub-circular platform enclosed by at least one bank and ditch.
2. Siting in the landscape- Located in a strategic or at least defensive position.

3. Siting in relation to high medieval settlement- Located close to medieval churches and the presence of other medieval features.

4. Documentary evidence - Direct references in documentary sources to the site.

These criteria will be applied when interpreting sites within the survey area on the Llŷn Peninsula in Chapter 3.

However there is growing acceptance that the two forms of site are not mutual exclusive, but that many were originally of the ringwork form, then developed into a motte and bailey form later. Two early forms of earth and timber castles have been identified- ringworks (Davidson 1969) and tall and narrow mottes (Phillips 2006). Excavations have revealed numerous instances ringwork predecessors as at Aldingham (Higham and Barker 2004:61) and Castle Neroche (Keynon 2005:7), as is common in Ireland where Rathes are developed into Mottes, as at Rathmullan (Figure 6) (Higham and Barker 2004:75). This has been suggested for sites in Wales including Tomen y Rhodwydd. An example of where a tall and narrow mottes have been lowered and widened often to support a later stone tower as at Nevern (Caple 2011:4). It could be argued that where these earlier forms of castle survive, as on the Llŷn Peninsula, they were either unfinished or short lived due to destruction.

## **1.2: Wales: The Historical Context**

The Norman 'conquest' of Wales from the mid 11th century, unlike that of England was not by the crown but '*rather the sum of individual baronial enterprises*' (Davies 1991:87). Three frontier earldoms were established on the Wales/England border (Davies 1991:29), with the Earldom of Chester, the Norman centre of power on the border in North Wales. It was from there that two figures dominated late 11th century North Wales: Earl of Chester Hugh D'avranches and his cousin Robert of Rhuddlan (Davies 1991:24). For a full historical context see Appendix 1.

Notably one of the earliest Norman incursions into North Wales was to the Llŷn Peninsula, in 1075. The week long plundering raid in response to native unrest was reportedly so devastating that the peninsula was laid waste for eight years and many inhabitants of Llŷn went into exile (Moore 1996:18). As described in the 12th century account of the Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan (Russell 2006:67)...

*Hugh, Earl of Chester and other war leaders, namely Robert of Rhuddlan, Guarin [Warin] of Shrewsbury, and Walter of Hereford, collected a very large army of cavalry and infantry, and accompanied also by Gwrgenau ap Seisill, and the men of Powys, came through the mountain passes to reach Lleyn. They placed their camp in that cantref for a week, and then plundered, routed and put to flight everything far and wide and left everywhere full of corpses to the extent that for the following eight years that region was regarded as a desert; and the populace abandoned after such a great disaster was forced by this misfortune as if scattered in a foreign land and most of them served out their harshest slavery elsewhere and scarcely any of them ever returned to their native land. That was the first disaster inflicted by the Normans and their first entry to Gwynedd after they arrived in England.*

This event will be discussed further when investigating sites on the peninsula to identify if any of them could have been built as part of this campaign.

The peak of Norman control over Gwynedd was between 1081 and 1094. The capture and imprisonment of Gruffudd ap Cynan (heir to the Kingdom of Gwynedd) in 1081 by the Earl of Chester, allowed for Robert of Rhuddlan to seize Gwynedd (Moore 1996:18). It is within this context that the first Norman castles are known from contemporary documentation such as the Historia Gruffudd ap Cynan.

The degree of Norman control is evident in the Domesday Survey in 1086, with Robert of Rhuddlan in possession of Rhos, Rhufoniog and North Wales (Gwynedd) (Moore 1996:18), whilst a Breton was imposed as Bishop of Bangor in 1092 (Moore 1996:19) and grants of Welsh land were being made to

religious institutions in Shrewsbury and Chester (Lewis 1996:62). Lewis (1996:67) has gone as far as describing it as a '*Norman principality in the making*'.

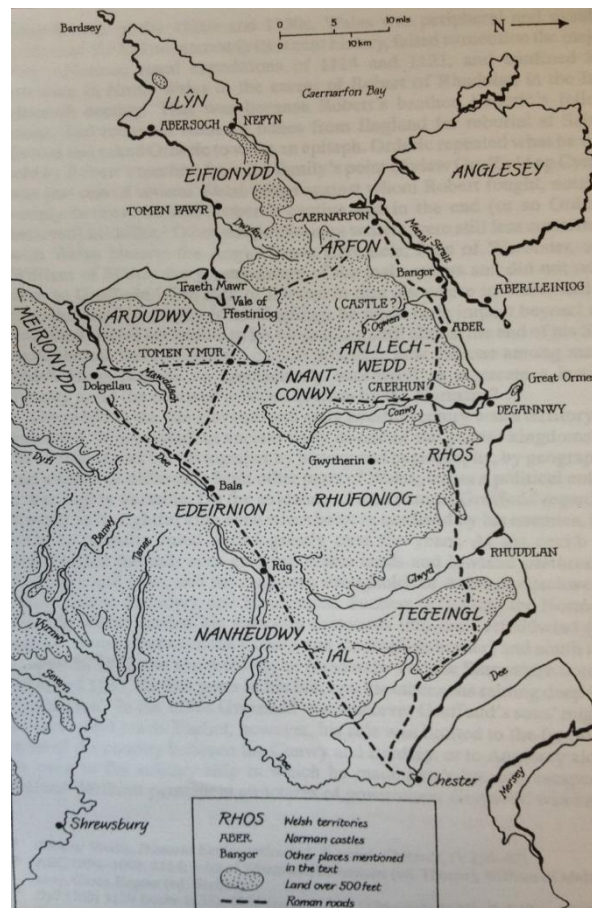
Davies (2000:31) has characterised the Norman control of North Wales into three areas after the mid 11th century. From the centre of the earldom at Chester to Bangor Isaf Coed, land was divided into Norman manorial lordships granted to followers, replacing the pre-existing Welsh settlement system. This system of conquest and land division occurred elsewhere in England and in South Wales, notably Earl Hugh of Shrewsbury's conquest of Montgomery and the Severn valley (Davies 1991:33, Phillips 2006). Rhuddlan, became the frontline base for Norman lordship and military control from 1073, seat of the overlord - Robert of Rhuddlan, described by Davies (2000:24), as a '*example of the swashbuckling Norman warrior*'. Then the land beyond the Clwyd to the Llŷn, was of '*occasional military hegemony*' and '*hesitant and piecemeal*' control (Davies 1991:32), '*an overlordship backed by military force, not intensive occupation or settlement*' (Lewis 1996:69). Because of the different nature and form of occupation and control in North West Wales to elsewhere in England and Wales it makes the interpretation of the sites more complex.

From 1093, the Normans suffered significant defeats in North Wales. Between 1094-98, revolts against the Norman occupation broke out, all calling to '*throw off the rule of the French*' (From *Brut y Tywysogion* quoted in Davies 1991:35). It was during this uprising that the all 'castles of the French' in Gwynedd were destroyed.

Following defeat in North Wales, King Henry I followed a new policy, clientage, by recognising Gruffudd ap Cynan's claim to the Kingdom of Gwynedd, following his exile to Ireland (Davies 1991:36). However as Moore (1996:19) notes '*The persistence of Norman influence in Gwynedd after 1100 is shown by Henry I's gift to Gruffudd of Llŷn, Eifionydd, Arddudwy and Arllechwedd*'.

Norman policy towards Gwynedd was not one of ultimate conquest but rather exploitive and opportunist. As Moore (1996:22) notes '*it was only the turbulence of the native polity which drew them in.*' In many cases Norman intervention was due to native invitation. For example Gruffudd ap Cynan sought Robert of Rhuddlan's assistance in 1075 against Trahaern ap Caradog (Davies 1991:32).





*Figure 9: Map showing location of known castles and cantrefs. Notably the map shows sites from the perspective of Chester highlighting the relation of sites to the coast and uplands.*

*Source: Lewis 1996:62*

The key documentary source for Anglo Norman Gwynedd is the *Historia Gruffudd ap Cynan*, which discusses the period in relation to the kingdom of Gwynedd. It is the first and only biography for a Welsh prince- Gruffudd ap Cynan (1055-1137) (Davies 1991:33). The original Latin text is lost, however Welsh translations and copies exist (Jones 1910, Evans 1990), including a recently discovered 12th century Latin copy (Russell 2006). However due to the issues of translation and copies, and the retrospective and propaganda nature of the document, caution must be applied.

Due to the lack of archaeological excavations, this documentary source has provided the only form of dating. Most notably, it identifies castles built by the Earl of Shrewsbury Hugh D'Avranches and Robert of Rhuddlan's during their control of Gwynedd, dating to c1081:

*And straightaway after he had been captured, Earl Hugh came to his territory with a multiple of forces, and built castles and strongholds after the manner of the French, and became lord over the land. He built a castle in Anglesey, and another in Arfon in the old fort of the emperor Constantine*

*son of Constans the great. He built another in Bangor and another in Meirionnydd. And he placed in them horsemen and archers on foot, and they did so much damage as had never been done since the beginning of the world.*

Evans 1990:70

The castles noted are believed to be the mottes at Aberlleiniog (Anglesey), Caernarfon (Arfon), Abergwyngregyn (Bangor), the castle in Meirionnydd is yet to be identified, however it has been suggested to be that of Tomen y Mur (Morgan 2009:25,27).

A description of the 1075 attack by Gruffudd ap Cynan on the Norman castle at Rhuddlan, built in 1073, is a clear depiction of a Norman motte and bailey castle. The account notes how the bailey was seized, but the tower on the motte where the soldiers retreated remained defended (RCHAMW 1964:cxxxix).

Unfortunately this documentary and archaeological evidence reinforces the traditional assumption towards a planned Norman penetration to *'the heart of Snowdonia, ringing it with castles'* (Lewis 1996:67) and a *'String of powerful earthwork castles'* (Lewis 1996:69, Davies 1991:90), which has dominated the studies of late 11th and 12th century North Wales, in which all motte and baileys are interpreted as being associated with the Norman occupations of Robert of Rhuddlan and Hugh D'avranches (1081-1093). Unfortunately, this is even entrenched in the Research Framework, as Longley (2010:4) states *'Mottes were the focal points of Norman penetration, colonisation and consolidation of their position in Wales.'*

However a majority of earth and timber castle sites are undocumented (as are all on the Llŷn Peninsula). Due to the short period of Norman occupation, the question of how quickly the native Welsh adopted castles through the reuse of Norman castles or the construction of their own has been re-debated. The identification, classification and interpretation of sites as of Welsh or Norman will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter four.

It has traditionally been viewed that the Welsh were *'slow to adopt'* (RCAHMW 1964), were *'tribal in condition'* and the native tradition of hall sites continued to be the primary form of administrative and political centres (Armitage 1912:251-2, Davies 1996:67). Reinforced by the documentary accounts of the destruction of early castles, as at Rhuddlan in 1075 and Gwynedd in 1096, where Gruffudd ap Cynan *'delivered Gwynedd from castles'* (RCAHMW 1964:cxxxix).

However this view is now changing, with Andrew Davidson proposing *'The motte was a Norman introduction, and yet appears to have quickly become utilised by Welsh rulers'* (Davidson 2003:2).

During such a unstable period with threats from not only the Normans in the North East but also neighbouring princes to the south, as well as pretenders from within the dynasty; there would have been benefits to the native Welsh lords in adopting castles from an early period. They would have certainly been aware from the outset of the existence and advantages of such sites, *'living cheek by jowl'* (Davies 1991:67).

Motte building in North West Wales is not confined to the period of direct occupation and control. New mottes are documented to have been built by the Welsh, and Norman ones reoccupied from the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Appendix 3). The earliest known Welsh construction was at Cymer, Meirionnydd which is the first known Welsh earthwork castle built in 1116, built by Uchdryd ab Edwin who was the Lord of the cantref of Tegeingl (Longley 1997:43).

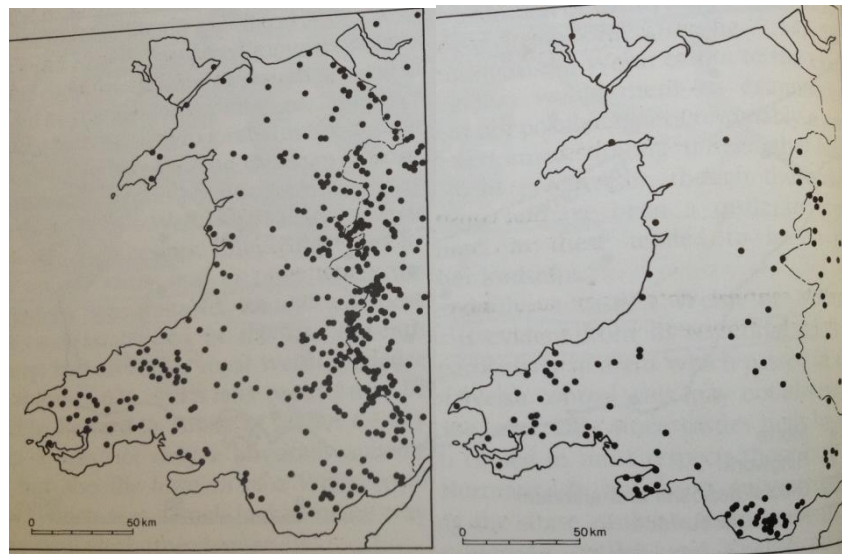
By the mid 12th century, references to the capture and construction become common (Longley 1997). In 1149, Owain Gwynedd, son of Gruffudd ap Cynan, is documented to have built the motte at Tomen Y Rhodwydd (Flintshire) and at Corwen (Meirionnydd) in 1165. Whilst his brother, Cadwalader, is documented to have built two ring-works, Castell Cynfal (Meirionnydd) in 1147 and Llanrhystud (Cardiganshire) in 1149 (Johnstone 1997:61). During the reign of Owain Gwynedd, castles were a key part of warfare both against King Henry II and the native princes and elite of the South. Notably all the above sites are concentrated on the borders of the expanding kingdom of Gwynedd.

Wales during this period was an *'highly competitive and volatile militaristic and honour society'* (Davies 1991:71), due to the Welsh laws of inheritance, not Primogeniture but partible inheritance (gavelkind); where the land was divided equally between sons, which led to conflict (King 1983a:xxxvi). As a result *'family conflicts crisscrossed with inter dynastic rivalry: the one indeed fed of the other'* (Davies 1991:73).

The agency of the native Welsh elite has been disregarded, with studies focused purely on the Norman 'conquerors'. Davies (2000: 56) states that *'power within Wales in the eleventh and twelfth centuries resided in the hands of royal dynasties and a warrior nobility'*. With regards to Llŷn, Davies (2000:68-9) notes that the *'powerful noblemen of Mon, Edeirnion and Llŷn who figure so prominently in the biography of Gruffudd ap Cynan, and who did so much to shape the fortunes, and misfortunes, of his early career.'* Furthermore one of the earliest known native castles was in 1116 in Cymer built by Uchdryd ab Edwin, who was not Welsh royalty but one of the Welsh elite. Therefore it is surprising that the role of the native Welsh elite in construction and use of earth and timber castles has been underestimated for so long.

Therefore the construction of castles would be expected due to the political instability of the period, however as Kieran O'Connor' (2005) study of Norman Ireland (which was comparable with Wales) has concluded that in reality the construction of castles by the native population is less likely. O'Connor states that such partible inheritance was a disincentive for the construction of castles, due to the periodic land redistribution (ibid:217).

### 1:3: Study of Earth and Timber castles in Wales



*Left: Distribution of mottes in Wales*

*Right: Distribution of Ringworks in Wales*

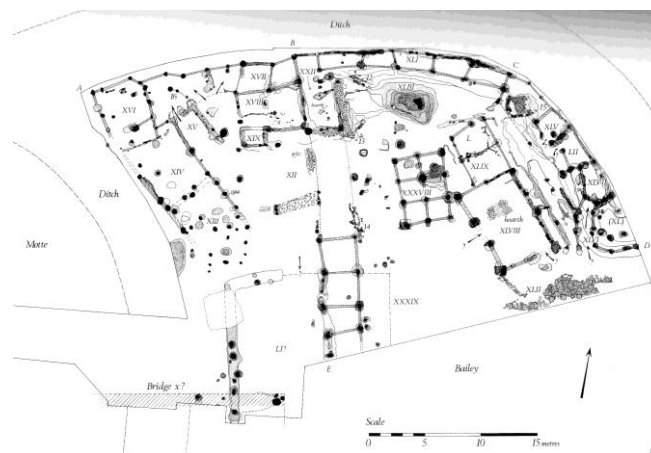
*Figure 10: Source: Higham and Barker 2004:66 after King and Alcock 1969*

In Wales, the study of earth and timber castles has been concentrated in the Marches, largely based on the work of King (1982,1983). Key surveys of both ringwork and mottes, were undertaken by King (1982) and RCAHMW through their county series (1964 for Caernarfonshire). These surveys identified 242 mottes and 77 ringworks in Wales dating from the eleventh to thirteenth century (Higham and Barker 2004:66). However since these initial surveys, individual county surveys have led to new sites being identified and previous sites being dismissed. For example Phillips 2006, survey of the earthwork castles of Gwent and Eryng, saw the addition of an unknown motte and bailey castle, as well as the dismissal of 3 sites (Phillips 2006:75-76).

As this research will highlight, new surveys are needed to reassess known sites and to identify those sites yet unknown, thanks to new interpretations and classifications such as the recognition of

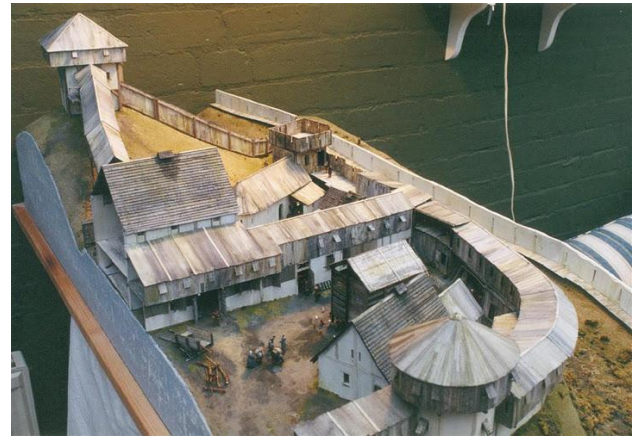
ringworks and multiphase sites, and new survey techniques such as aerial photography, LIDAR, geophysical survey, exemplified by the Universities of Birmingham and Nottingham's project at Laxton motte and Bailey castle (<http://www.tvb.bham.ac.uk/laxton/index.htm>).

Out of the known sites, most were surveyed by King (1983), however many have not been re-surveyed since then. Only 27 sites in Wales have been subject to some form of archaeological excavation (Appendix 2), a majority small trial trenches, with only a handful of those whole scale research projects (Hen Domen and Nevern). This lack of excavation has resulted in the absence of much needed absolute dating contexts.



*Figure 11: Plan of northern half of Hen Domen bailey (phase x) c 1150 AD. Source: Higham and Barker 2000: 15*

The most extensively excavated site, not only in Wales but in the United Kingdom, is that of Hen Domen, Powys, which was excavated between 1960 and 1992 (Higham and Barker 2000). The excavation revealed numerous phases of occupation dating to 1071-1300. Excavations focused on the northern half of the bailey and the motte (Figure 11), and highlighted the importance of excavation, providing an insight into how crowded baileys could become.



*Figure 12-Reconstructive models of Hen Domen c AD 1150 by Peter Scholefield.*

*Source: Scholefield 2010*

The bailey was defended by double ramparts and ditches including a wooden palisade, fighting platform and wooden towers (Higham and Barker 2000:18). Despite being well defended with its military architecture and a palimpsest of timber buildings including motte tower and two storey hall (40ft x20ft) (Higham and Barker 2000:169), the material culture does not indicate an elite residence, as Higham and Barker (2000:90) note *'the range of pottery used seems to have been no different from that encountered on rural and urban sites.'*

The site was constructed for the Earl of Shrewsbury, Rodger de Montgomery as a base for his conquests into Wales, then home to the rich vassals to the Earl, the de Boulers Family. Therefore it could be argued that such a palimpsest of archaeological strata and documentary sources is exceptional in comparison with the short lived Norman campaign fort/ watchtowers or native Welsh mottes.

As the reconstructive models (Figure 12) illustrate, and as Creighton (2005:67) concluded *'Hen Domen (Powys) has demonstrated that a castle never rebuilt in stone could be a dominating and imposing structure'*. This is important to remember when interpreting the ephemeral remains of the earth and timber castles of the Llŷn Peninsula.

North Wales has seen the smallest number of excavations (Appendix 2), which is a major obstacle to interpreting sites, as is the fact that no dating evidence can be provided aside from the historical chronology, which as discussed is fragmentary. As Davidson (2003:2) notes *'the date of construction of many of them is unknown, and thus arguments as to who built them and subsequently used them have little chronological basis.'*

Ringworks also remain ambiguous in date. In North West Wales, Davidson (2003:2) identifies the following ringworks - Pen-ucha'r Llan and Tomen Fawr, with Trefadog and Castell Crwn as possible sites. The lack of information regarding ringworks is noted by Davidson (2003:2) '*we have at present little idea of the status and background, or even nationality, of the people who built them, nor what influenced them to build in this way.*'

However recent excavation at the ringwork at Pen Ucha'r Llan, Meirionnydd, produced radiocarbon dates of the tenth or early eleventh century (Keynon 2012, Davies 2012). These dates were dismissed by the excavator who suggested that the samples were contaminated from older charcoal, as the typology of the site is consistent with the Norman period Rumney Castle and Loughor Castle.

However, Kenyon 2012 has postulated '*that we need to be careful assessing this site, and not dismiss a pre-Norman period date.*' Very few ringworks have been dated; therefore dating them by typology to the Norman period is unhelpful, as typologically they are more similar to Iron Age raths. If this site is of pre-Norman date, it has significant implications.

#### **1:4: Conclusions**

The Normans introduced mottes with their conquest of Britain; however the motte was quickly adopted by the local elite. Gwynedd was only under direct Norman control between 1075/81-94, thereby providing a historical chronological basis for dating sites. As in Scotland and Ireland, Mottes were initially seen as the visible evidence of the Anglo Norman colonization of Wales from the mid 11<sup>th</sup> century. However, there is now a greater recognition Welsh built mottes from the early 12<sup>th</sup> century and continued into the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and '*were the product of societies in which individuality flourished*' (Higham 1999:45).

For too long there has been a sole reliance of documentary sources, in providing evidence and basis of interpretation for the use and construction of earth and timber castles by both Normans and native Welsh from the mid 11th century to the 13th century. However, too few mottes and even less ringworks have been excavated which has led to an interpretation roadblock due the absence of a secure chronological context. Excavations at the motte and bailey at Hen Domen and ringworks such as Pen Ucha'r Llan highlight the importance of excavation, which provides important insight into the development and dating of such sites. The landscape context and influence of local topography should be central to the interpretation.

A study of the earth and timber castles of the Llŷn Peninsula, including a detailed survey of the Ty Newydd Motte and Bailey castle therefore provides a unique opportunity to investigate earth and timber castles within the context based on the above conclusions.



## **Chapter Two: Y Mount, Llannor**

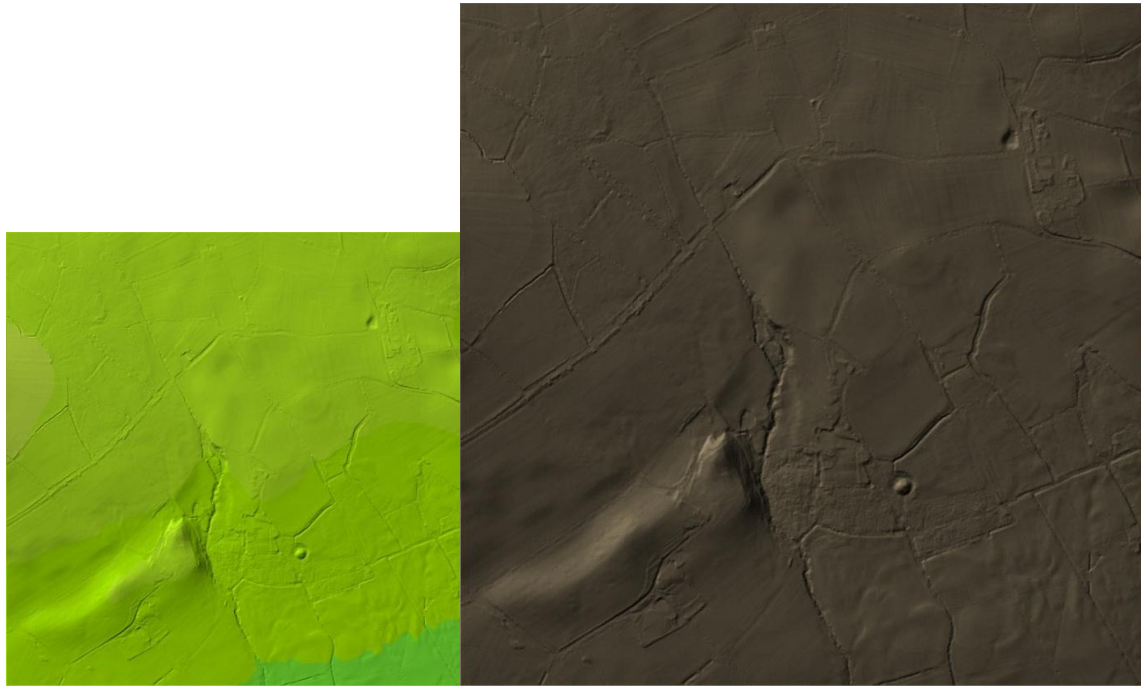
Y Mount, Ty Newydd, Llannor (SH34643829)(PRN: 1532, NPRN: 302309) is comprised of a circular conical mound, which has been classed as a motte, of Norman date. It measures c27.4m in diameter and c6.1m high, with a summit area of c8.0m in diameter, surrounded by a wet ditch and an impressive defensive bank to the west and south, and counterscarp to the east (PRN: 1532, NPRN: 302309) - see Appendix 3.

Despite being a scheduled ancient monument, no archaeological investigations have been undertaken aside from mandatory periodical inspections by CADW, and it is unknown to the people of the Llŷn peninsula. Therefore Y Mount is the case study for this research because it is the best surviving and least understood motte on the Llŷn Peninsula.

### 2:1: Topographic Data Analysis

The first step of this new approach to earth and timber castle studies was to obtain data for the site, from the latest remote sensing technique, Airborne Light and Detection Ranging (LiDAR). LiDAR data, is collected by aircraft, by pulsating laser beams to the ground, which allows the creation of an accurate high resolution three dimensional model of the ground surface (Darvill 2008:246).

LiDAR data (1m) for the Ty Newydd motte bought from the Environment Agency (Figure 13), in both JPEG and ASCII format, provides an informative approach to the site. As the site is covered by trees and dense vegetation, therefore invisible on standard aerial photographs (Figure 14), the LiDAR data allows for features beneath the tree cover to be viewed. It clearly shows the motte with its ditch around it, along with other topographical and field features. The raw data (Figure 13a) purchased from the Environment Agency, was edited in order to increase the visibility of the features (Figure 2b).



*Figure 13a: LiDAR. Environment Agency.2010.*

*Scale: Total length= 1km*

*Figure 13b: LiDAR. Environment Agency.2010. Edited using Windows Live Photo Gallery Editor, from the standard raw data yellow image into greyscale, with increase shadow, decrease brightness and increase contrast.*

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The site had been classed as a motte, with no bailey (NPRN: 302309, King 1983:34), but more recently a motte and bailey (PRN: 1532). A bailey was suggested as earthworks are visible in the field to the east, which comprised of a raised platform, with a linear depression correspondent to a ditch, in front (to the east) , which correlates both with the edge of the defensive bank to the south of the motte (Figure 14).

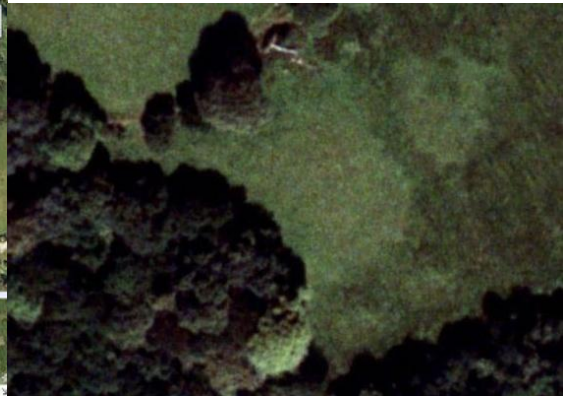


*Figure 14: Illustrated photograph outlining features of the site. Author. 2011.*

Next was the application of Aerial Photographs. Aerial photographs (Figure 15) illustrate how the bailey platform is visible as an earthwork and parch mark (light green), due to the dry conditions. The bailey platform is even more prominent during the drier conditions in the 1999 aerial photograph (Figure 15b). During these dry conditions a further parch mark is visible immediately to the east. Following processing of the LiDAR data in GIS to create a slope model (Figure 16), this second feature visible, can be interpreted as an outer bailey.



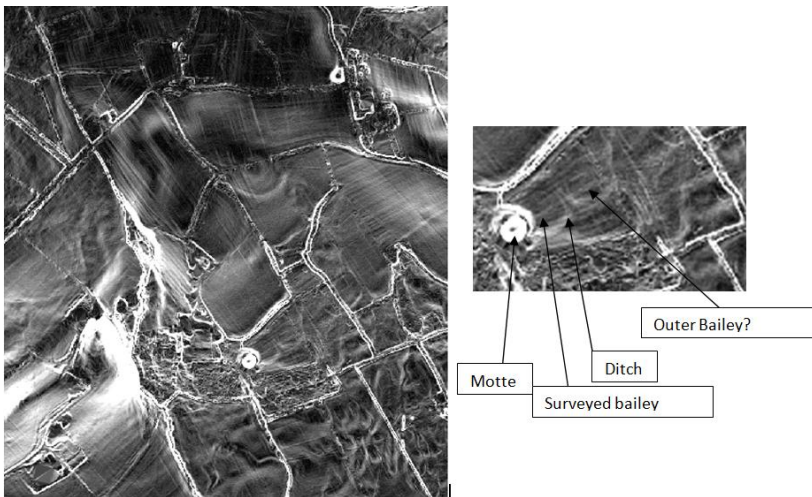
*Left: Figure 15a: Source: Google Maps 2011.*



*Right: Figure 15b:  
getmapping.com/  
Ordnance Survey 1999*

*Aerial photographs illustrates how invisible the motte (A) is due to the dense vegetation cover. This is why LIDAR proved to be a useful data source, illustrating the potential for greater use in castle studies. Furthermore, the bailey platform is visible (B), as a lighter green soil mark.*

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*Figure 16: Slope Model created from LiDAR data*

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## 2.2-Topographical observations

Unlike previous studies of castles in the area, this research recognises the importance of landscape context. This is based on the seminal work of Oliver Creighton (2005).

The topography was the most important influence in the siting of the castles. As Pounds (1993:15) notes *'Imported cultural traditions were always open to modification by local circumstance. Construction was influenced by local terrain and geology, by labour and materials, and by the random wishes and whims of an infinite number of people.'* This is evident at Ty Newydd, with its location on the slopes of the shallow valley which runs from the outcrop of Moel Penmaen to the lowland marshes below.

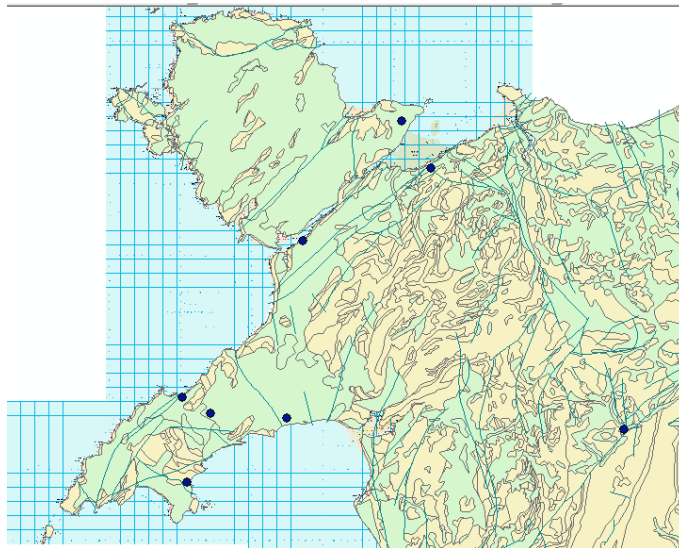
The LiDAR data illustrates that the reason that the site is located on the low-lying 'alluvium' valley slopes rather than on the higher and more strategic promontory adjacent to it was due to the soil type needed to build a motte.

N G Pounds (1990:17) has argued that there is a strong correlation between the location of mottes and low ground with clay of alluvial soil which is good for building earthworks. First proposed by Neaverson 1947 in his study of castles of North Wales, who states...

*'Drift deposits (including alluvium)... comprise the only non consolidated rock material in North Wales, and they obviously determine the distribution of the artificial mounds on which the early Norman Castles were built...The construction of these strongholds requires the presence of a suitable substratum which could be rapidly fashioned into conical mounds. Hence the distribution of Norman Castles is limited in general by the presence of Drift deposits' (Neaverson 1947:6-17)*

This theory was confirmed by Jack Spurgeon (1987), whose study of the ring-works of south Glamorgan identified that mottes were situated on drift deposits whilst ring-works were situated off the drift.

Neaverson' (1947) hypothesis is confirmed when known mottes are plotted in GIS in relation to the underlying geology, with all mottes located on drift deposits (Figure 17).



*Figure 17: GIS map displaying location of known mottes in relation to underlying geology. Green is drift deposits and cream is bedrock. EDINA Digimap.*

Initial observations reveal that the site is overlooked by higher ground to the North and especially to the west. From a modern military strategic point of view, the fact that the site is overlooked by higher ground seems to be poor choice for a castle. However as Pounds (1990:70) notes, *'the fact that a castle was overlooked by higher ground made little choice'*, the site was chosen for its soil conditions which would allow for the construction of the motte and additional defences, which in themselves would significantly enhance the strategical advantage of the site. As Pounds (1993:53) states *'they took what advantage they could from the terrain'*. It appears, they have done so at Ty Newydd by utilising the slope and building a defensive bank to the lower south west side of the motte, with the higher ground scarped to create the defensive ditch.

### 2.3- Landscape context

At first glance the site appears to sit in isolation, in empty countryside, however when the broader landscape is studied it reveals a landscape palimpsest.

Just under 400 yards north of the motte, a late prehistoric/Romano British enclosure (NPRN: 402183) has been identified by aerial photography (Ward and Smith 2001:9). The sub circular enclosure is clearly visible in the LiDAR data and even more so in the Slope Model (Figure 16).

Furthermore it is sited within a dense area of rare early medieval occupation. Just under half a mile to the north, there are two prehistoric standing stones, where nearby to these stones a rare

Christian long cist burial of a male, which included the reuse of two earlier inscribed memorial stones were discovered (Longley 2002:312-3; Heath 2006:218,222).

The site bridges the fertile lowland and important upland pastures, therefore it would have been at the heart of an important agricultural economy. The land to the west, now Boduan is recorded by the 12th century to be the demesne land of the important maerdref of Nefyn, for the Princes of Gwynedd (GAT 2012a).

The site is situated between two important medieval administrative/commotal centres, Nefyn on the north coast and Pwllheli on the south. The site is situated within four miles from the important thirteenth century Llannor parish church- the only other evidence of medieval occupation.

It is located within the late medieval hamlet of Penmaen Beuno, in the parish of Llannor (GAT 2012b). More importantly it sits directly on the border of the commotes of Dinllaen and Aflogeon (Figure 28), with a tributary of the Afon Rhyd Hir, which runs to the east of the motte forming the boundary. Notably it sits on the Aflogeon side of the boundary, of which Pwllheli is known to be the commotal centre by the 13th century. It could be postulated that Llannor was the commotal centre predecessor to Pwllheli during the late 11/ early 12th century, reflected by the location of a castle.

This proximity to water is a key feature in the siting of all earth and timber castles. A stream is located less than 200 yards to the west of the motte, therefore would have been an important factor in the positioning of the site. The relationship between the sitting of earth and timber castles and sources of water, is further evident at Abergwyngregyn and Aberlleiniog, where similarly the stream is the parish boundary (Morgan 2009:25).

Furthermore it could be argued that its location on the slopes of Moel Penmaen, provided the site with an immediate source of stone.



## **2.4: Geophysical Survey**

During July 2012, resistivity and magnetometry survey were undertaken on a 50x40m, immediately east of the motte. The aim of the geophysical survey was to assess whether the 'raised platform' and associated earthworks were the bailey.

As the area was within the scheduled ancient monument area, scheduled monument consent was needed before a survey could be undertaken. Even though geophysical survey is a non destructive technique in comparison with excavation, plastic pegs were used to mark out the grids, thus classed as 'destructive'. Following an application to CADW and permission from the landowners, scheduled monument consent was received. As part of the license, the survey complied with the best practice guidelines, as set out in the 2008 English Heritage 'Geophysical survey in archaeological field evaluation', thereby ensuring that the survey was undertaken to the required standard.

### 2.41 - Methodology

Four 20x20m grids and two 10 x10m grids were measured out, and then plastic pegs (less than 6 inches in length) were used to mark out the corners of each grid. Triangulation was used to ensure the accuracy of the square grids.

In preparation for the survey, consideration was taken with regards to the archaeological and geomorphic conditions prevailing on site. Resistivity is more successful than magnetometry due to the geology in the region as a whole; however the results proved to be the opposite. Conditions for survey were good, with dry and warm weather. In comparison to the rest of the field which was boggy, the 'raised platform' survey area was dry, accessible and flat. The site is situated on drift deposits of sand and gravel, overlying mudstone; therefore it should not have had any geomorphic interference. However the landowner confirmed the site had been ploughed until recently. Therefore any earthworks would have been eroded and any buried archaeological features disturbed, depending upon their depth.

### Instrumentation

A magnetometry survey was undertaken using a Geoscan Fluxgate Gradiometer FM 36. Readings were taken at 0.25m intervals along transects 0.5m apart, walking in a zig zag transect. The sensitivity of the instrument was set to 0.1 nT during data collection. Plastic pegs and tape lines were used for the survey, and no metal fittings were worn by the surveyors, to avoid magnetic interference, which would have distorted the results.



For the resistivity survey, a Geoscan resistance meter RM 15, with a mobile twin probe array with a probe separation of 0.5m. Readings were taken at 1m intervals along transects 1m apart, walking in a zig zag pattern.

As the grids set out were 20x20m, therefore total gridded area was 60x40m and survey size was to be 50x40m, in the third horizontal grid only the first 10m was surveyed, then the remaining 10m was entered as dummy logs. This appears a column of horizontal light blue strips in the data.

#### **2.42 - Data Presentation**

Following both surveys, the data was downloaded from the machines into Geoplot v.3 software, where the grids were downloaded and a mastergrid created, ready for the raw data to be processed and interpreted.

**Raw Data** (Displayed in Shade Plot-grey55.ptt):

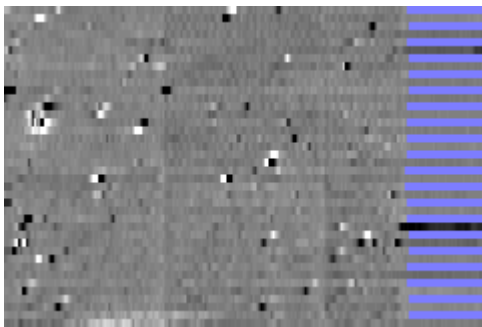


Figure 18a- Gradiometer raw data

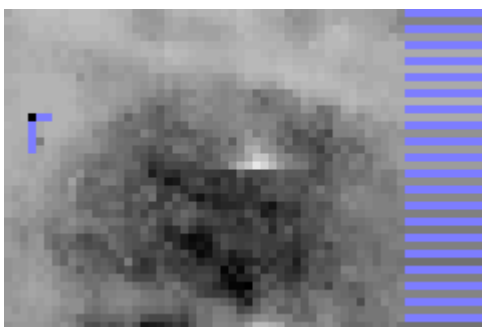


Figure 18b- Resistivity raw data

#### **Data Processing**

The only processing technique applied was Interpolate, used to enhance features of interest within the data-set. Other processing applications did not prove to be beneficial such as Despiking and Zero Mean Traverse.

Figure 19a- Interpolated gradiometer data

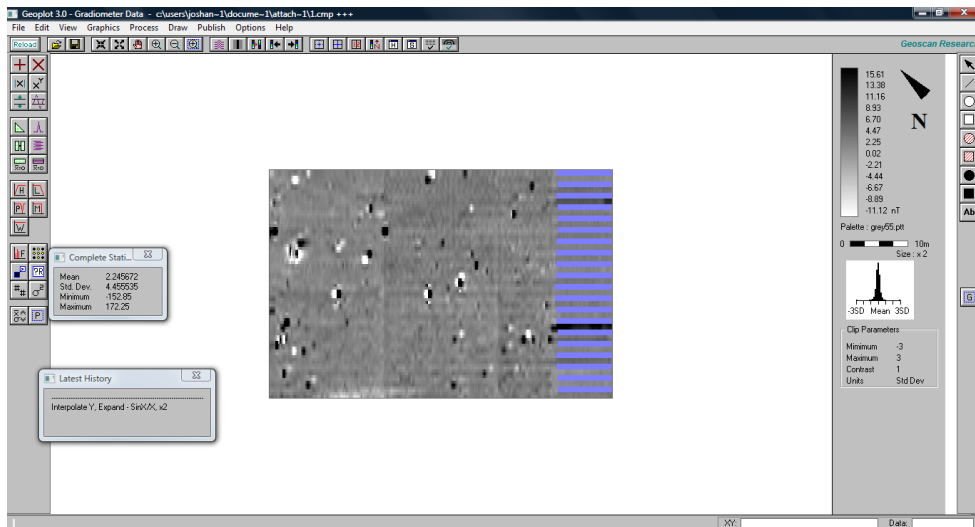
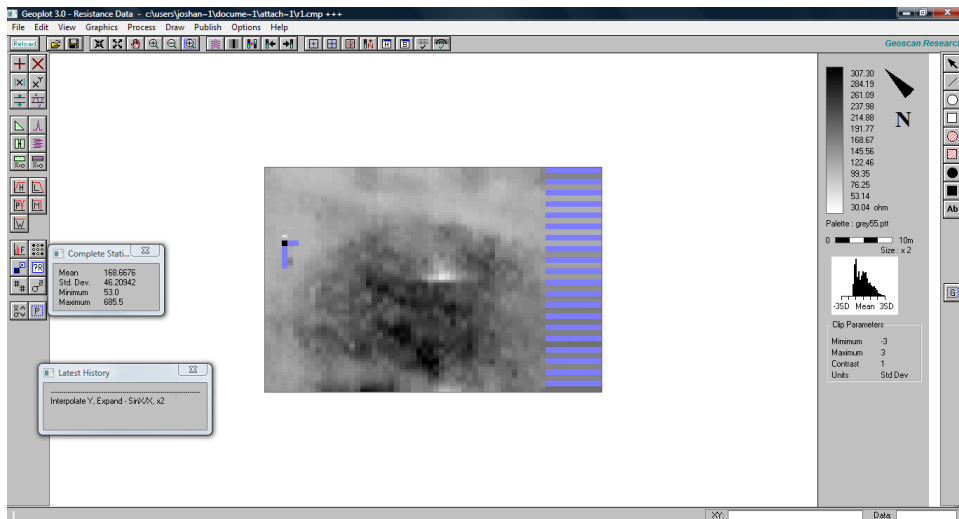


Figure 19b-Interpolated resistivity data



The presentation of the data through the various graphics applications in Geoplot however proved to be of greater benefit:

## Trace Plot

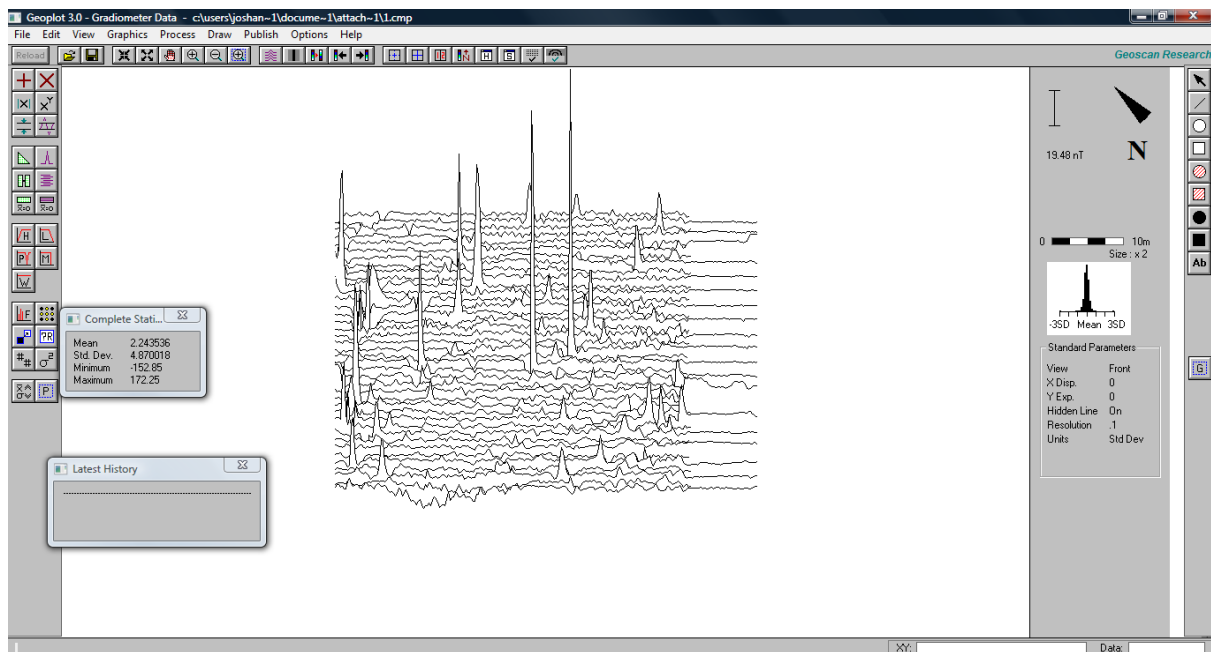


Figure 20a-Gradiometer trace plot

This trace plot of the gradiometer data confirms the numerous anomalies/spikes which are likely to be stray metal items.

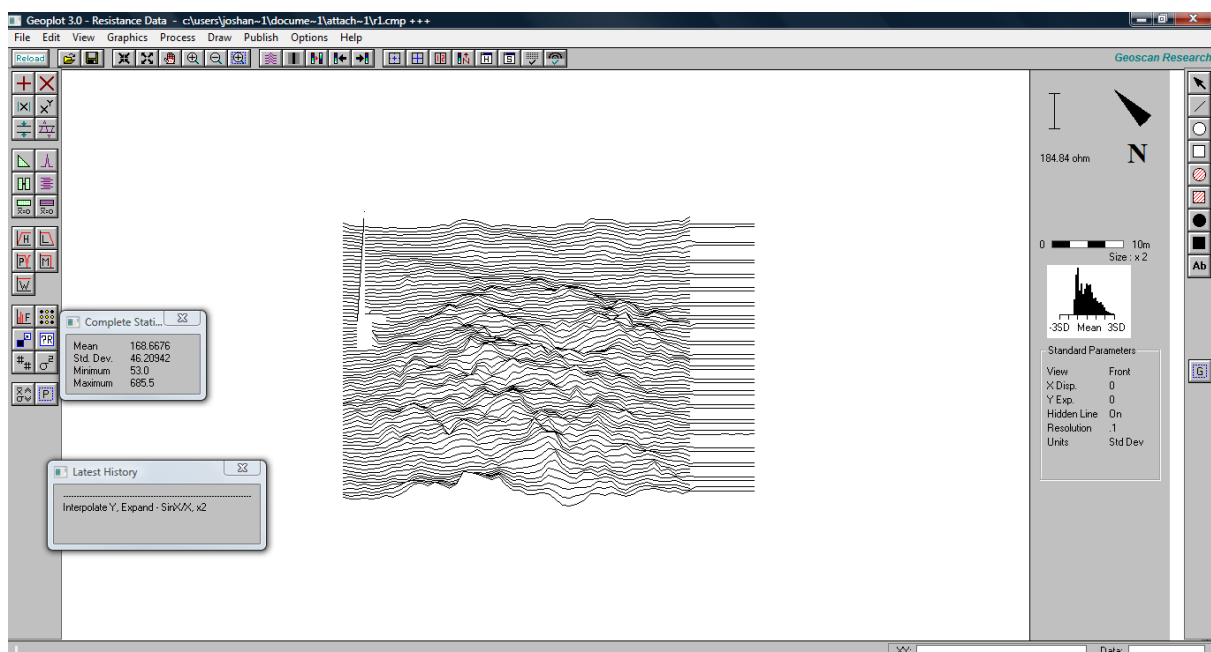


Figure 20b-Resistivity trace plot

This trace plot of the resistivity data reveals the clear curved shape of the bailey platform, as well as the ditch to the north, with evidence of a further possible platform/outer bailey beyond that.

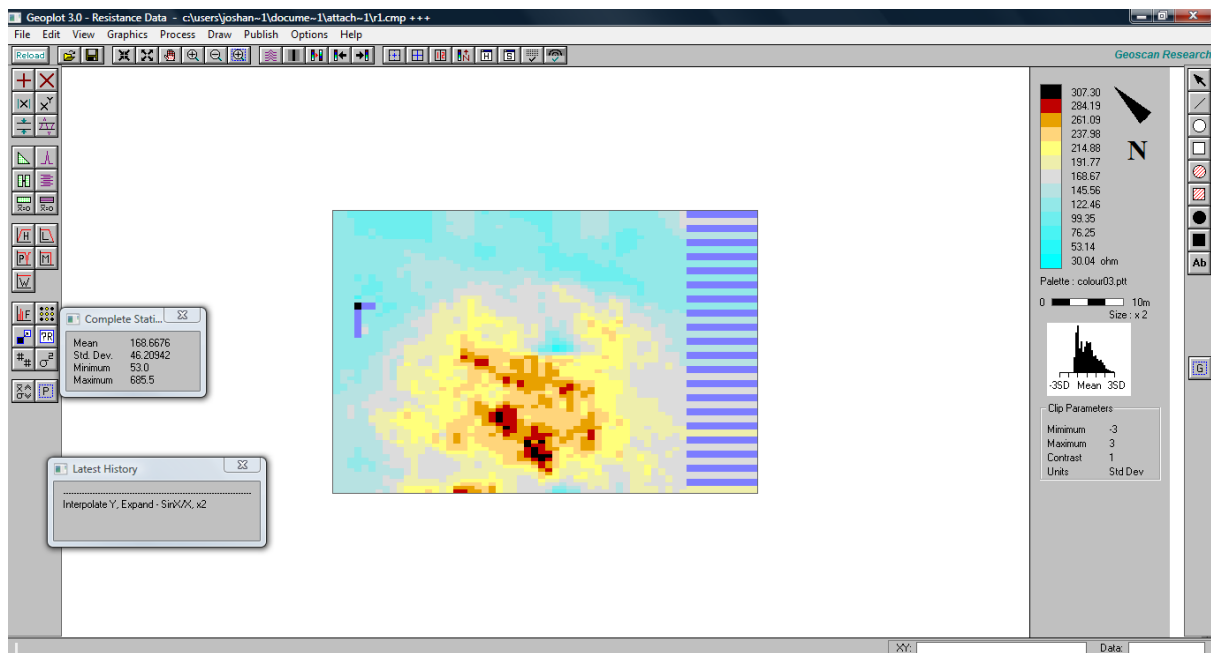


Figure 21-Resistivity shade plot

The application of the shade plot to the resistivity data reinforces the profile of bailey platform. However it clearly illustrates the two linear high resistivity features, which measure up to 10m in length, likely to be stone foundations. A break in the bailey platform in its north east edge could indicate the location of an entrance. Whilst the intense area low resistivity anomaly within the bailey (light blue), could possibly be a deep pit or a well, or be associated with an entrance/gateway.

### Geo-referenced Data

Due to the lack of signal onsite, no co-ordinates could be obtained through the application of a GPS. Therefore the co-ordinates of the southern baseline (50m) were obtained manually, by measuring the points from the known field boundary. This allowed co-ordinates to be calculated, in order to geo-reference the data into GIS.

The data which was geo-referenced had the dummy logs (striped light blue area) removed. As the raw data was 60m horizontal, as it included 10m of dummy logs in the south eastern edge of the survey area. Each grid was 20x20m and only 10m was surveyed in the two south eastern grids, to make the 50x40m survey area.



Figure 22a- Geo-referenced resistivity data



Figure 22b- Geo-referenced gradiometer data

## 2.43 - Data Interpretation

### Gradiometer Survey



Figure 23- Gradiometer data interpretation

Surprisingly the gradiometer survey returned poor results, with no evidence for features only ferrous anomalies, likely to be metal objects perhaps related to modern agriculture. Similarly both resistivity and magnetometer survey was undertaken in the southern half of the bailey at Hen Domen, where the magnetometry anomalies were interpreted as burnt clay and buried iron objects (Higham and Barker 2000:135). Whilst at the comparable site of Aberlleiniog, magnetometry anomalies were also interpreted as modern agriculture debris (Hopewell 2008:3).

## Resistivity Survey

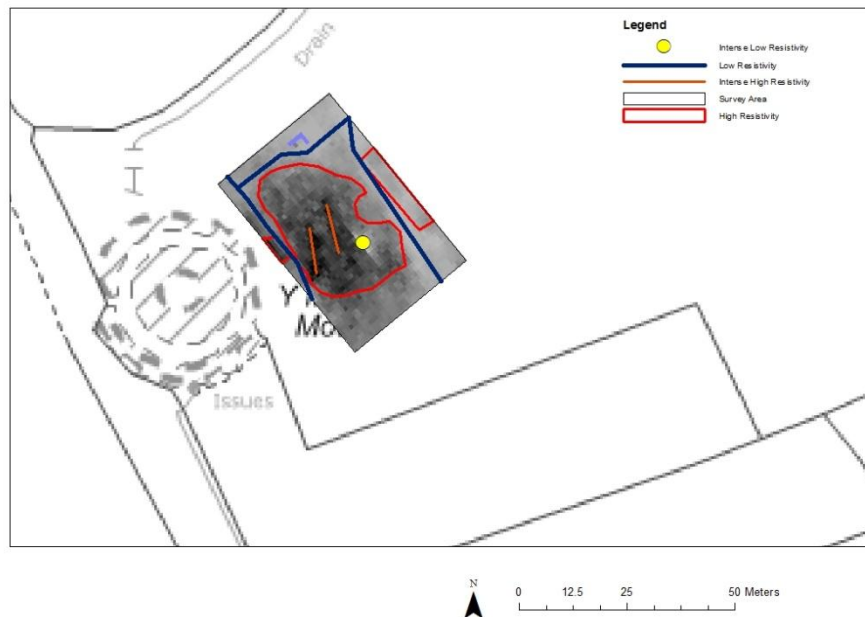


Figure 24a- Resistivity data density

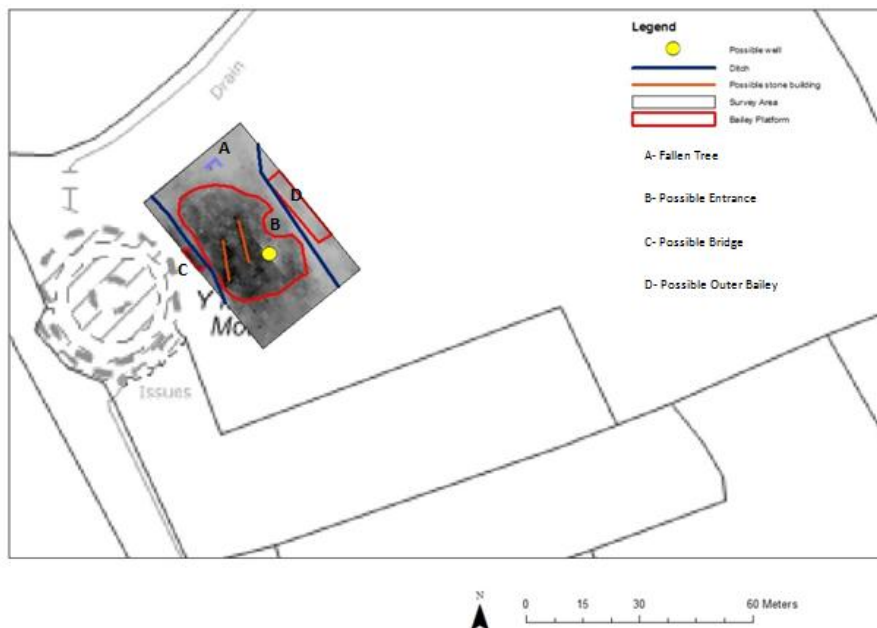


Figure 24b-Resistivity data interpretation

The resistivity survey surprisingly proved more successful. The most obvious feature is the oval high resistivity shape, which corresponds with the bailey platform earthwork, thus confirming the presence of a bailey. There have been few successful geophysical surveys of baileys, often as a result of disruptive underlying geology as at Nevers (Caple and Davies 2008:42). However there are

comparable successful results as at Aberlleiniog (Hopewell 2008, Morgan 2009) which revealed a half moon shape bailey, surrounded by a defensive bank and evidence of a possible track way, and surveys undertaken by Phillips (2006) for example Newton Tump which confirmed the presence of a bailey platform and high resistivity features interpreted as possible buildings (ibid:186).

Notably the data reveals a break bailey platform on its eastern edge which could relate to a possible entrance. A strong low resistivity anomaly to the south of this may be associated with this entrance/gateway, however due to its intense nature it is possible it is a deep pit or well.

The ditch on the east side of the platform which is visible as an earthwork is reflected by a clear linear low resistivity feature. Whilst there are traces of a ditch on the western side, adjacent to the wet ditch and hints that there may have been a ditch on the northern edge too.

Within the platform, there are two clearly visible linear high resistivity anomalies (Figure 21), which are likely to be stone walls. They measure between 8-10m in length, and it could be argued they are the foundations of a stone hall. Whether it is contemporary with the motte or later as with the 13th century stone hall/llys built in the bailey of the motte at Abergwyngregyn, only excavation can determine it.

However the presence of stone halls, termed 'Unfortified Houses', of a later date (13th century), within baileys is common in North Wales, as at Abergwyngregyn (Johnstone and Riley 1994), Castell Prysor (de Levandowicz 1998:5), Hen Blas (Leach 1960), which are comparable. The construction of later halls/llys associated with mottes, is reflective of a wider phenomenon described as '*demilitarization and manorialization*' (Creighton 2005:181).

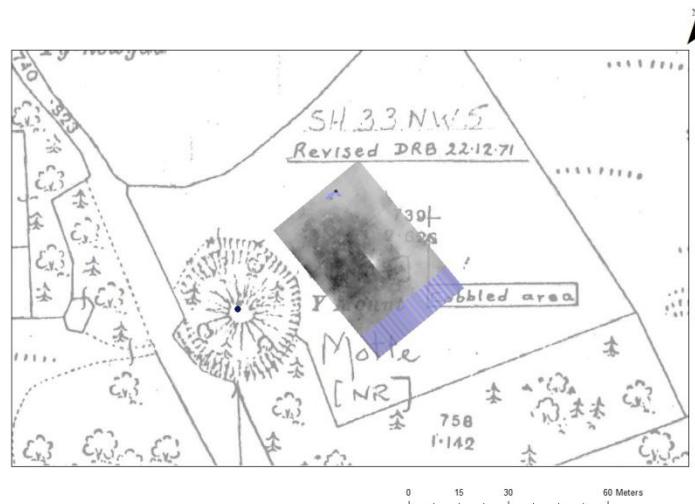
A high resistivity anomaly on the western edge of the survey area, may be evidence of a potential bridge over the wet ditch, however caution must be given due to the close proximity of the metal fence which surrounds the motte.

Finally an area of high resistivity is visible to the east of the survey area. Despite only being faint it does correspond with what can be suggested to be an outer bailey, based on evidence from parch marks following dry conditions visible in aerial photographs and as visible in slope model created from LiDAR data (Figure 15-16).

This outer bailey appears to correspond within a cobbled area 'c.40m ENE' from the motte reported by the farmer to the RCAHMW in the 1962 (Figure 25), which lay just outside the survey area. Similarly to Y Mount, Hen Domen contained a cobbled area within the bailey, and its earliest features are a stake fence and cobbled entrance (Higham and Barker 2000:18), whilst at Hen Blas,



cobbled surfaces were a common feature and provided foundations for buildings (Leach 1960). Therefore a further geophysical survey is proposed to confirm the presence of an outer bailey and the relation and purpose of the cobbled area.



*Figure 25: Geo-referenced geophysical data in relation to a RCAHMW 1971 map which includes the location of the reported cobbled area.*

## 2.5: Documentary

The final sources of evidence are documentary and cartographic sources. Unfortunately there are no direct historical accounts of the site, with the first references in the 19th century. The site is depicted in the 1830 Ordnance Survey Unions map and labelled 'Mount' (Figure 26). The earliest reference to the site, is in an 1855 edition of *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, in which it is included in a 'List of early British remains in Wales', under the heading 'Tumuli or Carneddau and Beddau', described as '*Mount- A Tumulus one mile and a quarter north west from Llannor*' (Longueville-Jones 1855:177-178).

The name Mount was also preserved in the name of a house, built less than 100 yards south of the motte. Recorded in the 1881 census, nothing remains of Tan y Mount today (rhiw.com.2010).



Figure 26: Ordnance Survey Unions Map 1830

In August 1926, the Cambrian Archaeological Association annual summer meeting was held at Pwllheli. During the weekend, they visited archaeological sites on the peninsula including the motte at Ty Newydd (Willoughby Gardiner, *Archaeologica Cambrensis* 1926). Sir John Edward Lloyd noted that *'its history was unknown'* but suggested *'it was possible it might at one time have been the seat of the 'llys' of the commote of Aflogion, a position occupied later by Pwllheli'* (ibid:436).

Notably this account provides the only reference to any associated artefacts reinforcing a medieval date, as it notes that *'Mr W Williams, the tenant of Ty Newydd, showed the lower stone of a quern, found within 100 yards of the motte, measuring 11 inches in diameter and 6 inches thick. In the centre was the tapering hole for the pin or pivot'* (ibid).

Documentation from the RCAHMW archives provides an insight into previous interpretations of the site. A letter from the RCAHMW in 1962 to the land owner attributes the site to the Princes of Gwynedd- one of the *'fortified dwellings'* / *llys* sites found in each commote. The site is described as one of the *'moated mounds of Caernarvonshire'* with *'an attached courtyard, such as this type [Llannor], of fortified dwelling usually had to hold the horses and cattle'* (RCAHMW 1962).

Notably the township of Llannor is noted as belonging to the monastery of St Beuno, Clynnog Fawr by the 13th century, and due to the site's location of the border with neighbouring Boduan, the site has been attributed to township of Boduan rather than Llannor, thus the commote of Dinllaen rather than Cafflogion. This interpretation was noted in the RCAHMW inventory when published two years later. As it notes, that Y Mount, Llannor is one of only two exceptions where a motte is outside of a commotal centre. Reiterating the above by stating it is, *'situated in a township belonging to the*

*endowment of the monastery of St Beuno at Clynnog Fawr'*(RCAHMW 1964:cxlii). However it is postulated in the footnotes '*Unless from its proximity to the parish boundary the site belonged to the neighbouring township of Bodean'* where a manor is recorded by the early 14th century (RCAHMW 1964: n11, cxlii). The grants are noted in Pryce 2005:332.

The RCAHMW provides an alternative interpretation noting the site '*was occupied by one of the leading families of Lley in the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> century'* (RCAHMW 1959), home to one of the native elite rather than that of the itinerant Princes of Gwynedd. The site is also interpreted as a predecessor to the existing 17th stone estate house...'*The proximity of the motte suggests that the site may well have been occupied ever since then, a timbered dwelling perhaps succeeding that on the motte and being replaced by the present stone house'* (RCAHMW 1959). This is a possibility, especially as the present house is called Ty Newydd (New House). Further as the geophysical survey, identified a possible stone building in the bailey, which could be a later stone hall.

However the motte and bailey is identical to the known the typical Norman motte and bailey style (Figure 2). This raises the prospect of the dating of the site. As discussed, the first known period of Norman occupation of the area was during the week long raid in 1075. Could Y Mount be the site referred too... '*They placed their camp in that cantref for a week'* (Russell 2006:67)?

Much has been written on the time taken to raise a motte. Phillips (2006:37) summarises two of the most commonly cited calculations:

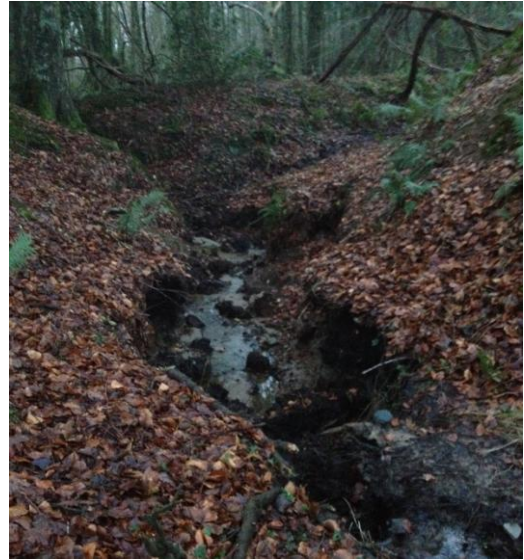
Roseff (2003:20 from Phillips 2006:37) '*a typical Herefordshire motte 40m base diameter, 30m top diameter, 2m high...would take 50 people 25 days to construct'*.

O'Connor (1993:67) '*Lodsbridge (Sussex) base diameter 43m, top diameter 16.5m, at a height of 5.3m. 50 workmen, working ten hour days = 42 days in good weather'*.

These calculations are in stark contrast to contemporary documentary references, which note that it took 8 days for the construction of Royal campaign castles at Dover (1066) and York (1086) (Higham and Barker 2004:136).

Therefore as Y Mount, which would have been more than 27.4m in diameter, 6.1m high and with a summit area of 8m in diameter (as these are based on the modern eroded and damaged site), it is unlikely the site would have been constructed within the documented weeklong period of occupation in 1075. It therefore likely the site dates to the initial occupation of 1081.

## **2.6 - Erosion Threat**



*Figures 27: Photographs taken by author January 2013.*

*Top: Photographs showing the recent erosion within the ditch at the southern base of the motte at Ty Newydd.*

*Bottom Left: Stones from eroded section of the ditch.*

*Bottom Right: Visible section of stratigraphy in the southern base of the motte.*

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Following a site visit in January 2013, significant and damaging erosion was discovered within the scheduled area. Following a winter of heavy rain, underlying sand geology and unmanaged tree growth both on the motte and bank - erosion created a crater around 9m long, 2m wide and 1m deep. Quick analysis of the section identified significant features: the section (Figure 27:Bottom Right) revealed the underlying sand geology, with evidence of a brown humic deposit which could be ditch build up and evidence for potential squared stones from within the ditch deposits.

The undercutting of the motte and defensive banks now poses a severe threat to the integrity of these features. Despite CADW being aware of the situation and assurances of section recording, environmental samples, and water management three months on unfortunately little progress has been made, reinforcing the lack of priority given to these earlier non-masonry sites.

## **2.7 - Conclusions**

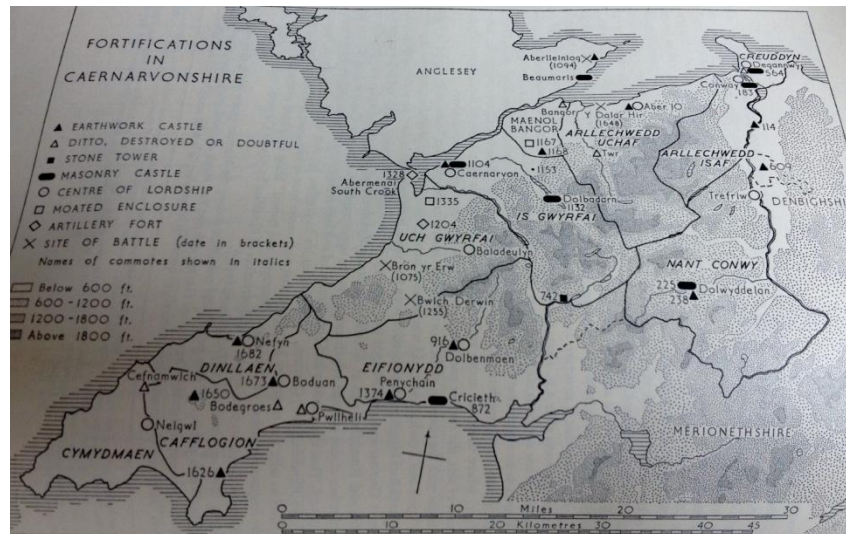
The geophysical survey has revealed the survival of archaeology at this site, thereby providing an important example of preservation of a likely Norman (in origin) late 11th century motte and bailey castle and later likely 13th/14th century occupation, in North West Wales. Excavations are needed to confirm the Geophysical survey results including the dating of the possible hall. Through an holistic approach including LiDAR, Aerial Photographs and historical records, the presence of a outer bailey is proposed, however further geophysical survey is needed to confirm this.

The motte is unlikely to date to the 1075 occupation of the Llŷn Peninsula, and is therefore likely to the 1081-1093 occupation period, with the site' morphological attributes being more comparable with motte and baileys constructed by the Normans rather those built by the Welsh.

The recent erosion and survey results strengthen the case for future geophysical survey and excavation, as ultimately only excavation can provide an insight into the chronology, development and occupation of the site, which will be important for the understanding of earth and timber castles in North West Wales in general.



## Chapter Three: Llŷn Peninsula



*Figure 28: Map illustrating medieval fortifications in Caernarvonshire including Earthwork Castles in relation to the commote boundaries and centres. RCAHMW 1964:cxl.*

The Ty Newydd motte and bailey does not sit in isolation on the peninsula. There are three other sites which have been identified as either mottes or ring-works of probable Norman date on the Llŷn Peninsula at: Nefyn, Abersoch and Tomen Fawr, Llanystymdwy (which is outside the survey area), as recorded in the NMR and HER. This chapter will discuss these sites as well as identify new sites through a holistic approach.

### 3.1 - Context

Within a landscape approach to sites, it is important to understand sites in relation to their administrative context as well as the traditional military context. Previous studies including RCAHMW (1964) and Johnstone (1999) have focused on mottes in relation to the territorial divisions.

As Johnstone (2009:55) notes, in Gwynedd the old cantref unit was subdivided into smaller administrative areas known as commotes, each with a royal hall or llys (part of a network for the itinerant royal court), located within the administrative centre, the royal bond township being known as a Maerdref. The old division of the cantref of Llyn (Llŷn Peninsula) was divided into three commotes (and Maerdref's), which were Dinllaen (Nefyn), Aflogeon (Pwllheli) and Cymyddaen (Neigwl) (Figure 28).

This transformation in *'the administrative landscape of Gwynedd'*, has been suggested to have taken place during the stability of the 12th century, *'the later years of Gruffudd ap Cynan's reign and the expansionism of Owain Gwynedd'* (GAT 2010).

However Longley (1997:43) notes the correlation between mottes and maerdrefs, that the mottes were built at *'already politically important Welsh centres'*, as a result proposing that the *'Maerdrefi were functioning in this capacity as early as the eleventh century'*.

However, too much reliance cannot be placed on these divisions, as they are based on late 13th and 14th century administrative records.

### **3.2: Survey**

Potential sites were included in an early antiquarian survey published in the 1855 edition of *Archaeologia Cambrensis*. As discussed (p31), it provides a rare reference to the Llannor site, however sites that will be discussed further are also documented. Within the list of *'Tumuli or Carneddau and Beddau'* is the Nefyn site...*'Tomen at Nevin'* (Longueville-Jones 1855:178), whilst Abersoch is noted... *'Castell-on the North side of the harbour of Abersoch'*, and Cilan *'Castell - on the hill above Pen y groes, two miles south by east from Llanengan, forming part of Mynnydd Cilan'* (Longueville-Jones 1855:176). These sites are included under the heading 'Camps and Castles', a list which includes numerous Iron Age sites such as Castell Odo, Nant y Castell, Llanbedrog and Castell/Pared Mawr hillfort.

The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical monuments Wales seminal survey of Caernarvonshire (RCAHMW 1964) which focused on the cantref of Llyn, provides important information and interpretations of earth and timber castles within the survey area.

### 3.3 - Nefyn



*Figure 29a: Map showing location of Nefyn motte. Google Maps 2012.*

*Figure 29b: Street View image illustrating location of Nefyn motte. Google Maps Street View 2012.*

The closest site to Ty Newydd, is at the important medieval commotal centre of Nefyn (Figure 1, Figure 29a), located around 3 miles to the north west, on the north coast of the peninsula (SH30664057). Known as Tomen Nefyn (Nefyn Mound), the motte measures c16.5m in diameter and c3.0m high, with a summit area of c12m in diameter (NPRN:308100, PRN:12718). Unfortunately it is significantly destroyed, as it has been encroached by the development by public conveniences and houses, and a 19<sup>th</sup> century stone watchtower built on the summit (Figure 29b). Modern development surrounds it, leaving no traces of any associated earthworks.

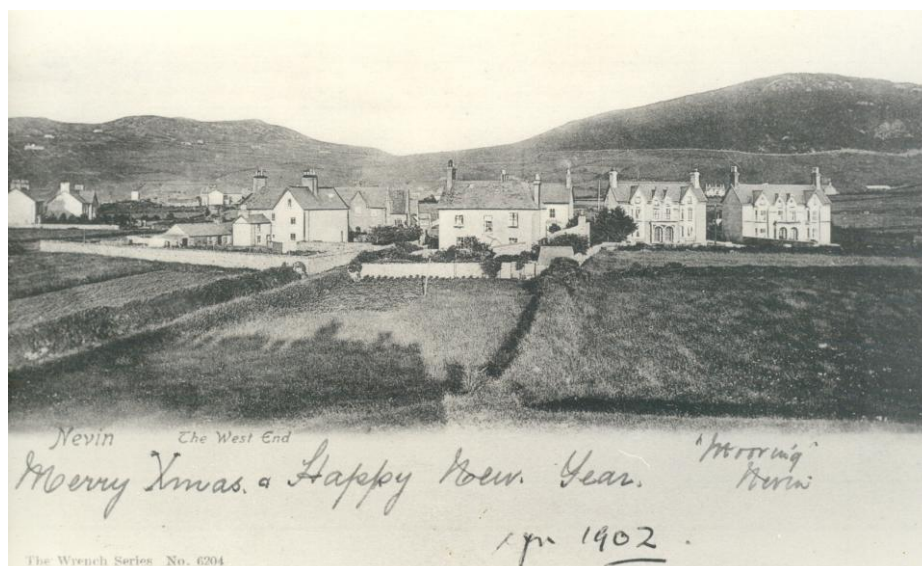
No archaeological investigations have been undertaken on the motte, therefore little is known about it. The site has been associated with a string of castles along the coast of North Wales built by the Earl of Chester and Robert of Rhuddlan from 1081 (Lewis 1996:70). However the site is not included to the list of sites noted in the *Historia Gruffudd ap Cynan*, which seems strange as it was an important administrative centre.



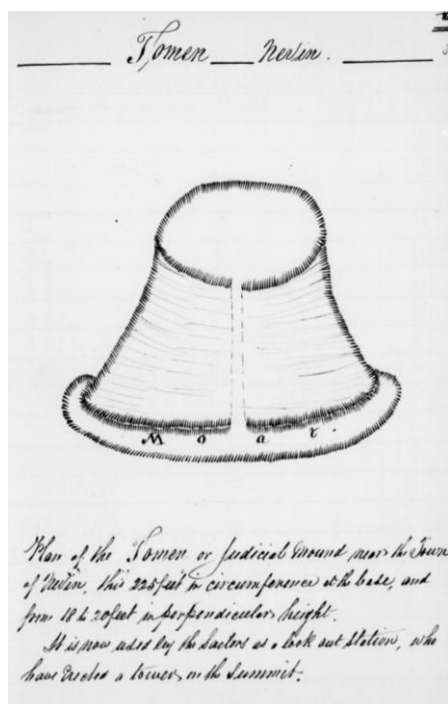
In Tywysogion (2007:56) Huw Pryce states that upon Gruffudd's return from exile to Ireland in 1094, he seized the Norman castle at Nefyn, before an unsuccessful attack against the castle at Aberlleiniog. This interpretation is misleading due to the poor wording of the historical texts which note that Gruffudd lands in Nefyn, and the castle referred to is that of Aberlleiniog... *'he sailed to Lley and came to Port Nevin. When the men of those cantrefys heard this, there came straightaway to him the men of Lley and Eifionydd and Ardudwy and Arfon and Rhos and Dyffryn Clwyd and welcomed him, as they ought as their rightful lord. After Gruffydd had been strengthened by a great host around him though the power of God, he surrounded the castle which had been mentioned above, which was in Anglesey and fought with it for some day'* (Jones 1910:137).

If Gruffudd landed in Nefyn in 1094, and the Normans had built a castle there as they had done along the North Wales coast from 1081, it does seem strange that no battle is recorded to have taken place there. It could therefore indicate there was no castle there in 1094, that's perhaps why it was a safe place for him to land?

Unfortunately the site is now too badly encroached for any archaeological investigation. However through a holistic investigation of the site, new details emerge, which confirm the existence of the motte. From early 20th century photographs, the full scale of the motte is revealed. It is clear from the photograph dated 1902 (Figure 30), that the mound is very large and dwarfs the tower built on top, reaffirming the suggestion that the mound was not built specifically for that tower, but was pre-existing and later reused. Its scale would make it comparable known Norman mottes.



**Figure 30 : Postcard from 1902 of Nefyn, with the motte visible in the background (far left) (Llŷn Maritime Museum Collection /Author)**



Antiquarian sources provide a further insight. In 1871 the site was included in a survey by S G Williams, of *'Ancient British Camps etc on Lley, County Carnarvon'* published as a manuscript, which is now held in the British Library, but the text was written as an article by Mr Edward Owen in the 1903 edition of the journal *Archaeologia Cambrensis*. Importantly illustrations of the sites were included in the manuscript.

**Figure 31: Plan and description of the motte at Nefyn from antiquarian accounts ( Williams 1871:38)**

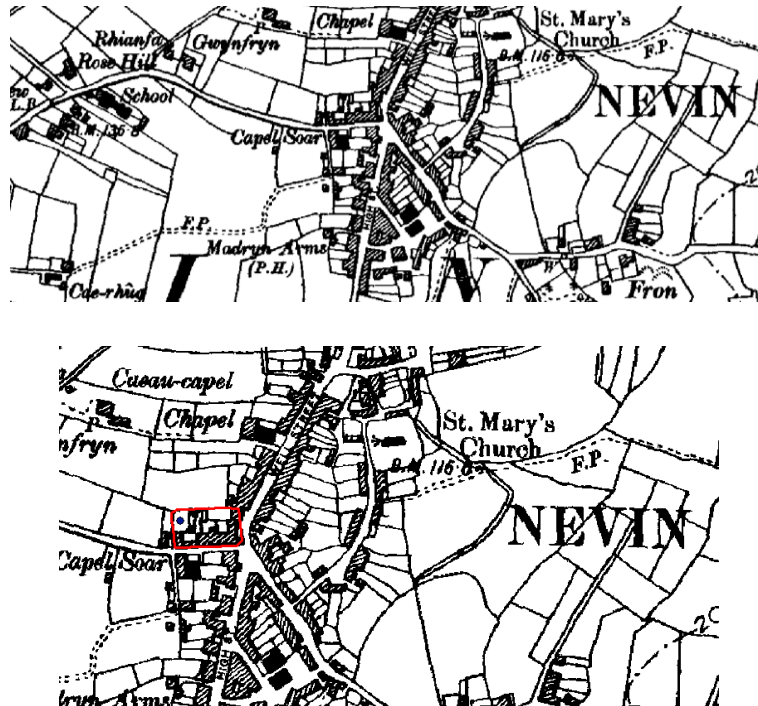
The illustration of the Nefyn motte/Tomen Nevin (Figure 31), shows it prior to encroachment from urban development. It also hints at the presence of a moat surrounding it, and contains details of its dimensions prior to encroachment...

*Plan of the Tomen or Judicial mound near the town of Nevin. It is 225feet in circumference at the base, and from 18 to 20 feet in perpendicular height. It is now used by the sailors as a look out station who have erected a tower on the summit. (Williams 1871:38).*



**Figure 32: Ordnance Survey Unions map 1830 (Harlech sheet)**

Cartographic sources could however hint at the location of a bailey, if there was one. The motte is depicted in the 1830 Ordnance Survey Unions map (Figure 32), surrounded by a potential moat and with an associated earthwork, a bank radiating south west from it. This corresponds with the curvilinear shape of field and property boundaries evident in early Ordnance Survey maps which could indicate the location of an associative bailey (Figure 33).



*Figure 33: 1901 First edition revision sheet map depicting a possible associated bailey*

The coastal locations of Norman associated mottes in North have been highlighted by Lewis (1996:701), however from the motte; the bay of Nefyn is not visible, due to the high cliffs, which would have been further away in the medieval period, due to the high rate of coastal erosion. Therefore it could be argued that the motte was located with a focus on the town of Nefyn, as the

town is located in the valley below (Figure 34).



*Figure 34: Photograph showing the prominent location of the motte on the high ground overlooking the town below notably the early medieval church/12th century priory highlighted in the photograph.*

**Conclusions:**

Despite substantial destruction by modern development, a holistic approach reaffirms the existence of a motte at Nefyn, and the location of an associated bailey can be proposed. Due to its location at an important commotal centre it would be expected to have been constructed by the Normans during their occupation; however this is doubted through re-interpretation of historical accounts. It is therefore likely that the motte was constructed during the 12th century perhaps by the Princes of Gwynedd (potentially Owain ab Cadwalader) in relation to their Llys network- as suggested by Johnstone 1997.



### 3.4 - Abersoch

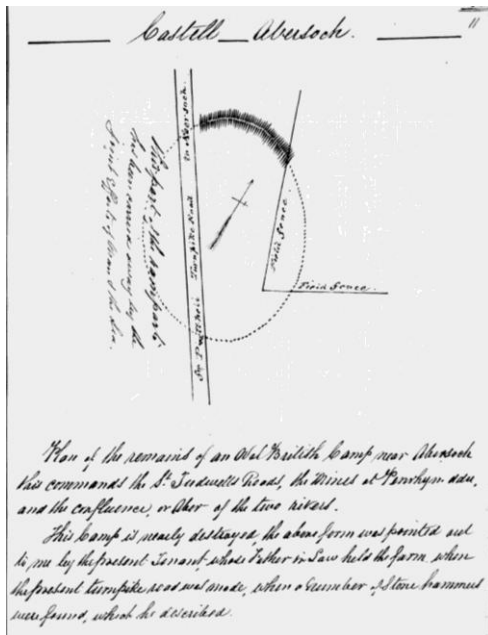


*Figure 35: Photographs of Castell Abersoch. Top: from River Soch to the east, profile of west face. Bottom: from Penrhyn Bennar to the North- south face. Author.2012.*

Castell Abersoch (SH31362855) is classified in the HER as a medieval motte, whilst in the NMR it is a defended enclosure of an 'Unknown;Iron Age' period (PRN:1239 / NPRN:302288). The site sits on the corner of a headland which overlooks the natural harbour of Abersoch. The house located at the western foot of the headland is called Castell, fossilizing perhaps the nature of the site above.

The site is largely destroyed, truncated by a 19th century turnpike road (A499) to the east and driveway to the SE and with houses built to the north, east and on the site itself. Despite the encroachment, the general profile of the site is still visible (Figure 35). Measurements taken during the early 20th century provide an insight into the shape and dimensions of the site with the top measuring 110ft from SW to NE and the ditch 54 ft wide (PRN:1239). This ditch, was reportedly visible in 1903, however this has now been filled in, due to the housing construction (PRN:1239).

Castell Abersoch was included in S G Williams 1871 survey (Figure 36). The illustration depicts the ephemeral remains of the site, with truncation by the road and erosion by the sea. The illustration is accompanied with the following text...



' Plan of the remains of an old British camp near Abersoch. This commands the St Tudwal's roads, the mines of Penrhyn Ddu and the confluence of the two rivers. This camp is nearly destroyed, the above form was pointed out to me by the present tenant whose father held the farm' (Williams 1871:11).

**Figure 36: Manuscript illustration of Castell Abersoch from Williams 1871:11**

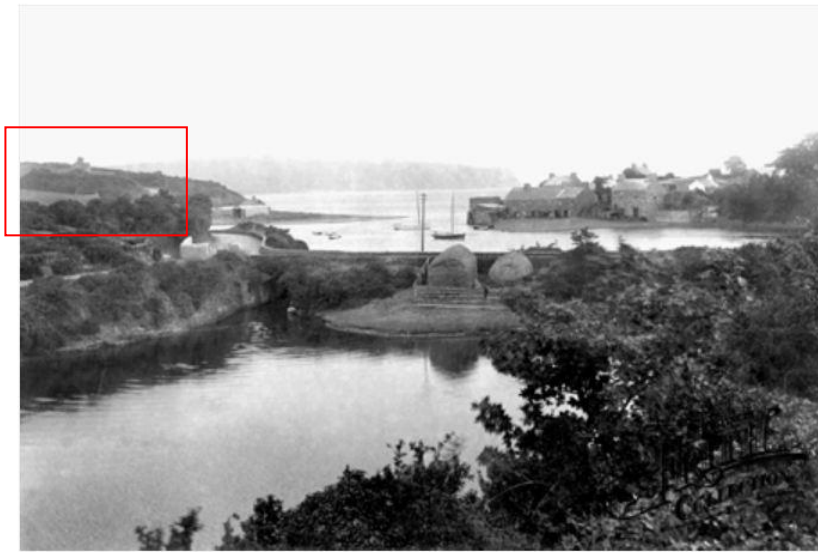
However through an holistic approach, new insights into Castell Abersoch are gained. From a photograph taken in 1954 (Figure 37), a full profile of the site can be obtained, reflective of the common concave shape of earth and timber castles.



**Figure 37: View of Castell from Penlan Street, Abersoch. Circa 1954. Author's Collection.**

However a photograph from 1901 (Figure 38), may indicate that the original form of the site more similar to a ringwork, with its distinctive scarping evident (right side of red box). It shows the site before it was levelled for the construction of the existing bungalow. Though due to nature of the topography and angle of the photograph, it is difficult to make clear interpretation. Furthermore the photograph does not correspond with the ephemeral description of the site from 1871, with both

photographs indicating that the site survived in better condition and larger in size than previously thought.

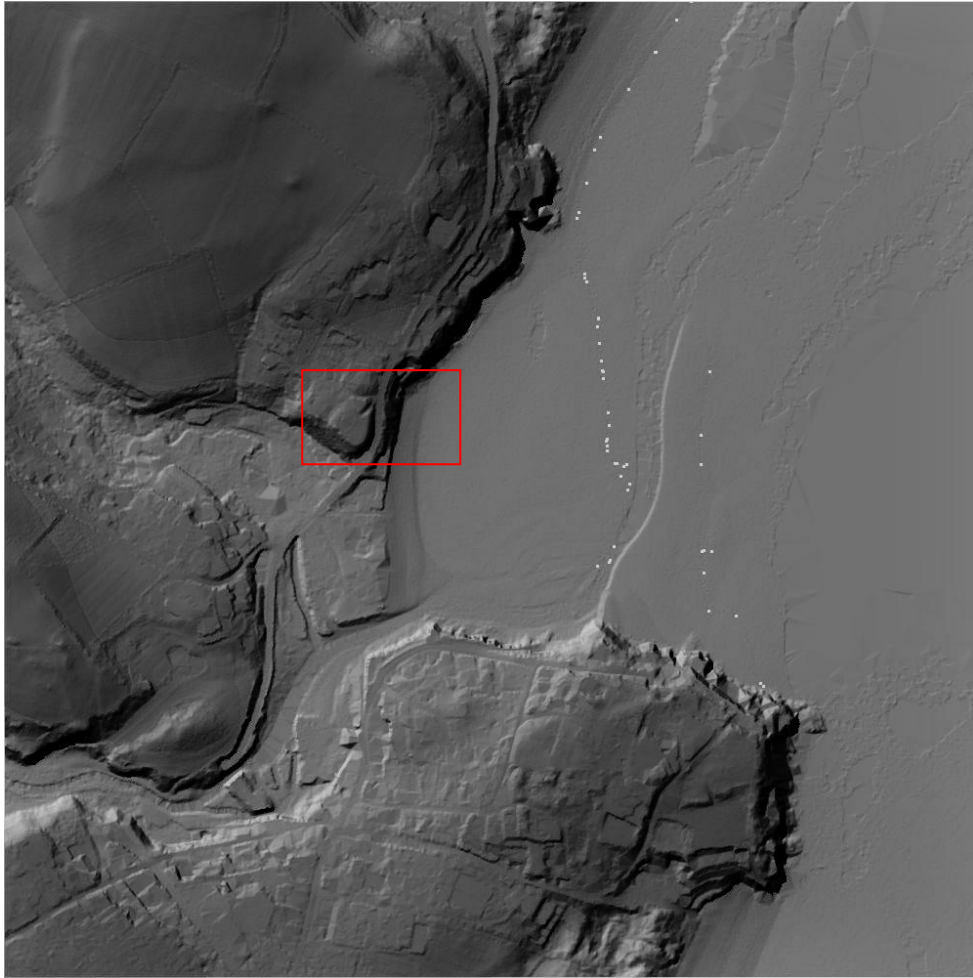


*Figure 38: Abersoch 1901. Francis Firth.*



*Figure 39: Ordnance Survey Unions (Harlech Sheet) 1830*

The site's depiction in the 1830 Ordnance Survey Unions map indicates a clear ringwork character (Figure 39). The natural headland has been utilised to create a partial ringwork, with the natural scarped edge to the west, a truncated southern edge, and a visible ditch to its north and east. LiDAR data (Figure 40) reinforces this; however modern development has significantly altered the site. Castell Abersoch is comparable to Castell Cynfael (Figure 6) and nearby Tomen Fawr, where a natural spur was scarped to create a partial ringwork. This difference in morphology from the motte and bailey at Llannor, may indicate Welsh construction as at Castell Cynfael.







**Figure 40: LiDAR. Environment Agency.2010.**

**Scale: Total length= 1km**

*Edited using Windows Live Photo Gallery Editor, from the standard raw data yellow image into greyscale, with increase shadow, decrease brightness and increase contrast.*

Unlike Nefyn, Abersoch has no '*obvious connection with the commotal organisation*' (RCAHMW 1964:cxliii). However its siting may be due to its strategic rather than administrative importance, as positive identification factor is the strategic location of the site, located on a defensive headland at the mouth of the natural harbour of Abersoch (RCAHMW 1964:cxlii).

In J E Caerwyn Williams (1996) discussion on the works of Meilyr Bryddydd who was the of the Welsh poet in court of Gruffudd ap Cynan, the site at Abersoch may be mentioned. In one of the works, the 1075 battle on the Llŷn Peninsula against Cynwrig ap Rhiwallon is discussed...'*the battle in front of Castellmarch, great its woe, And the battles of the humane but steadfast Cynwrig*' (Caerwyn Williams 1996:185). The present day 17th century manor house of Castellmarch, is located less than 1km to the east of the site of Castell Abersoch. Could the reference in the 12th century poetry, indicate the site of the 11th century battle in proximity to earth and timber castle of Castell

Abersoch, the predecessor to Castellmarch? Was the battle outside the fort of Cynwrig ap Rhiwallon, Lord of the Cantref of Lleyen?

Finally, in 2011 a reconstruction of the site was commissioned as part of a heritage trail pamphlet (Figure 41). The reconstruction is very well done, succinctly adapting the existing landscape with a tidy visualisation of the earth and timber castle similar to Figure 2. It reinforces the physical and natural dominance the castle would have had in the landscape.



*Figure 41: Mwnd 'Castell' Abersoch. Roberts, G. 2011*

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### **Conclusions:**

Despite the near total destruction of the site, an holistic approach to the site provided new evidence and an understanding of its original form. Through the utilisation of the natural topography, a partial ringwork was established in a strategic and dominant location. The difference in its morphology to the motte and bailey form, and similarities between known Welsh sites, leads to the conclusion that it is likely to be of Welsh origin from the 12th century, however if the documentary evidence is correct, it could be pre Norman in origin.

### **3.5 - New Sites**

In addition to further research into known sites on the Llŷn Peninsula, a holistic survey was undertaken to identify new possible earth and timber castles. The RCAHMW's National Monument Record online database 'Coflein' and Gwynedd Archaeological Trust's online Historic Environment Record 'Archwilio' was analysed. The databases were searched for sites within the survey area classified as a motte, ring-work, mound, castle and Unknown, and sites with Castle or Castell in their name. Many of the results were Iron Age in date and therefore were ignored; however those comparable to a ring-work in form remained for further investigation. The sites that remained were then analysed through Google Earth and then visited on the ground. As a result a further two sites are proposed and will be discussed in relation to Arbuthnot' (2011) criteria.

### **3.6 - Castell Cilan**



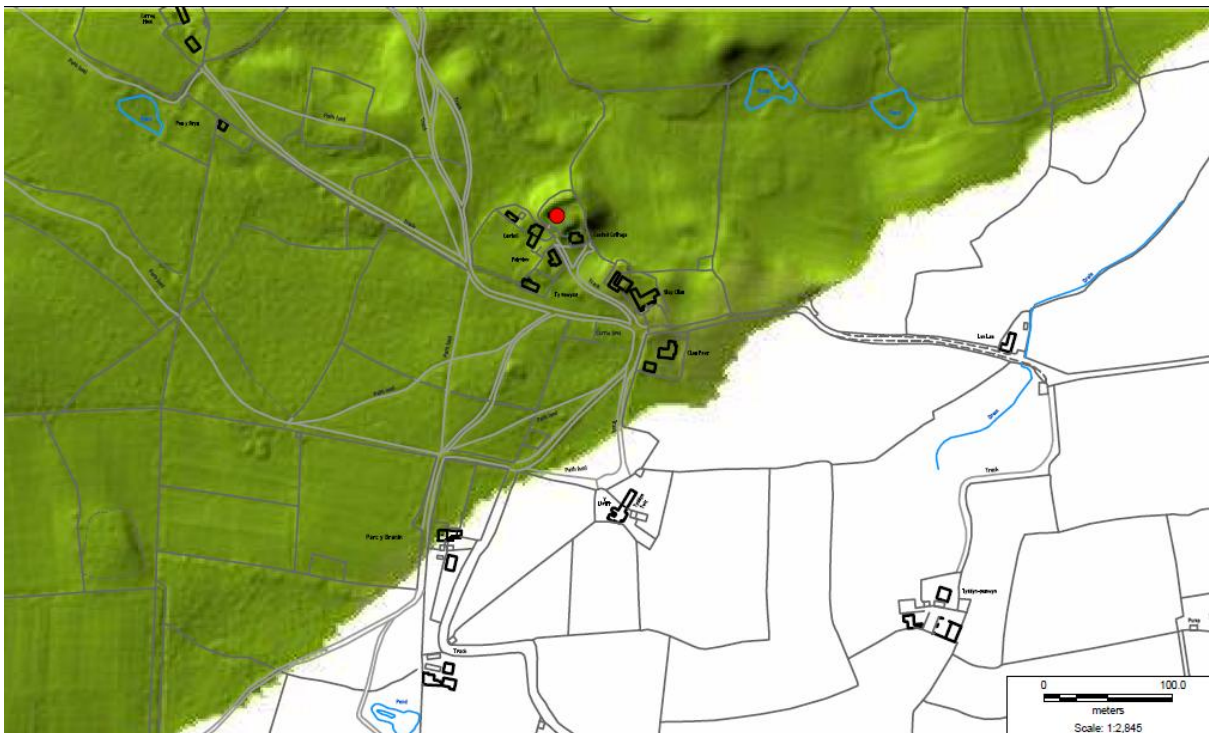
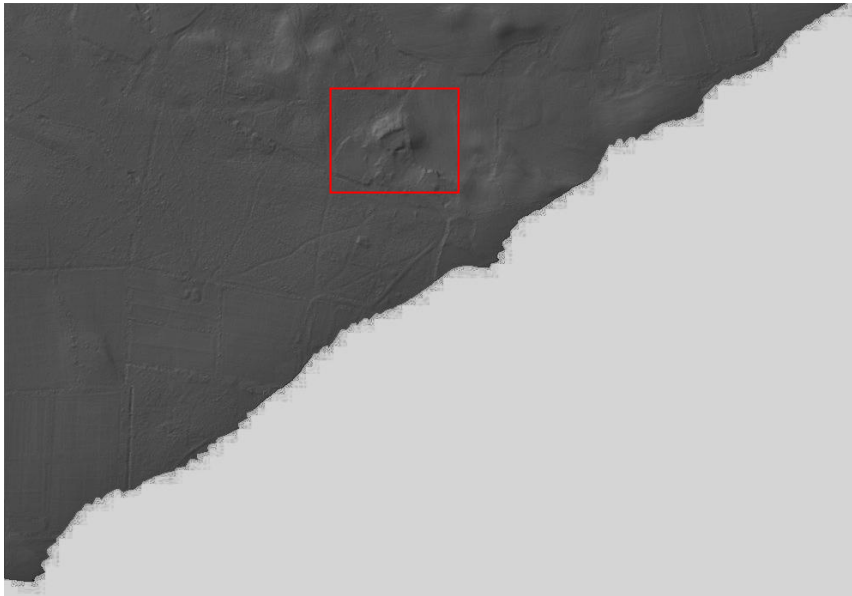
*Figure 42: Photographs of Castell Cilan*

*a-East Face. Megalithic.co.uk*

*b- North face. Author. 2012*

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The site of Castell Cilan (SH29452484) is not listed in the NMR, however it is recorded in the HER as a Post Medieval Enclosure (PRN:40001). The site is situated on Mynydd Cilan, the headland to the west of Abersoch (Figure 1). It comprises of a natural glacial hillock with evidence of defensive modification.



*Figure 43: LiDAR. Environment Agency.2010.*

*Scale: Total length= 1km*

*Edited using Windows Live Photo Gallery Editor, from the standard raw data yellow image into greyscale, with increase shadow, decrease brightness and increase contrast.*



Based on Arbuthnot's (2011) criteria:

**1. Morphology-** The site is a large glacial hillock, which rises to a maximum height of 5m (PRN:40001). Its north slope has been significantly scarped. The flat topped summit is encircled by an earth and stone wall visible in the LiDAR image (Figure 43), however most notable is the huge earth bank which cuts across the summit, dwarfing the associated dwelling (Figure 44). The disproportionate size of the bank indicates it was defensive rather than functional. It is noted to have a 'stony' surface '*which may indicate the site of a building*' (PRN: 4001). However the site lacks a defensive ditch, which is defining characteristic of ring-works.



*Figure 44: Above left: Looking North towards Castell Cottage, which is location on the southern slope of the hillock, with the eastern slope visible to the right. Author. 2012.*

*Above Right: The earth bank which cuts across the summit, which is disproportionate to the size of the enclosure. Author. 2012.*

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**2. Siting in the landscape-** The site holds a strategic and defensive position with extensive views to the North and West, notably of Porth Neigwl, the neighbouring commote and cantref of Neigwl.

**3. Siting in relation to high medieval settlement-** There is no medieval church nearby, the nearest church is that of the parish church Llanengan, located over 1mile north. The church of St Engan, has its origins in the early medieval period, with surviving architectural evidence from the 13th century. However there is evidence for medieval strip fields discovered through aerial reconnaissance, located south of the site, on the edge of headland (NPRN: 401368).

**4) Documentary evidence** - There is no direct documentary evidence for the existence of a castle. However, the place name, Castell Cilan (Cilan Castle) and the name of a cottage built into the south

face named Castell Cottage (Castle Cottage), may provide evidence of its former use, now fossilised through place-name (Figure 45).



**Figure 45: Ordnance Survey Unions, Harlech sheet 1830**

There are issues with the site as it has been proposed as a prehistoric round barrow (megalithic.co.uk). There is a Neolithic chambered tomb, located to the south of the site, providing evidence of prehistoric ritual activity. However, it is more likely to be natural, as the RCAHMW have interpreted the site '*to be a natural mound*' (RCAHMW 1964:52). King' 1983 inventory of castles, numerous sites were dismissed as natural hillocks rather than artificial including Ucheldre Mound (Clwyd) and Crugyn Tump (Powys) (King 1983 a:278, b:413), whilst Phillips (2006:39), dismisses Llanarth as natural. However there are many examples of where a natural glacial hillock has been utilised including Twyn Y Gregen (Monmouthshire) (Phillips 2006:222).

### **Conclusion:**

Castell Cilan is likely to be natural glacial hillock which was utilised for its strategic position and ready-made motte. Despite evidence for defensive modification through scarping and construction of an earth bank, the lack of ditch casts doubt upon the site.

### **3.7 - Tyddyn Castell**



*Figure 46: Photographs of Tyddyn Castell. Author. 2012.*

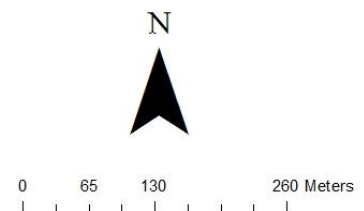
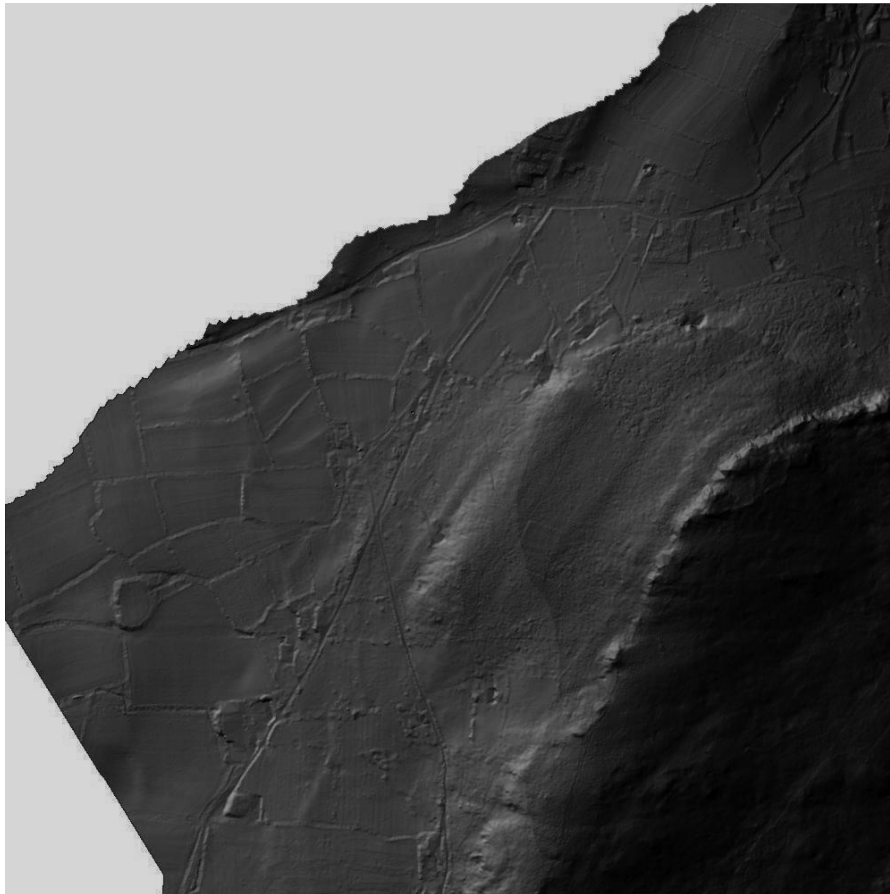
*Top: View from field to the south showing a profile of the site*

*Bottom Left: South Western face*

*Bottom Right: Western face*

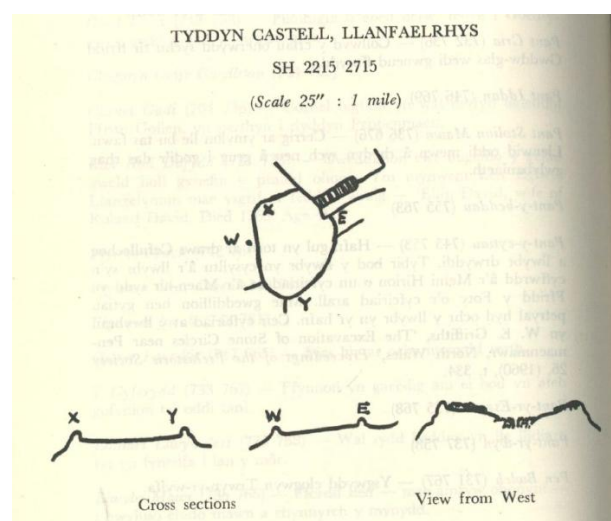
The site of Tyddyn Castell, Rhiw (SH22152731) is classed as an enclosure of Unknown period in both the NMR and HER (PRN:5051, NPRN: 300228), with no legal protection. The site is located on the on a low spur projecting south west, on the western slopes of Mynnydd y Graig, Rhiw. It comprises of a sub oval -oval walled enclosure, which measures 170ft N-S and 145ft E-W (Griffith 192:14). The interior is level and defined by stone faced bank c1m high (NPRN:300228). The enclosure takes advantage of the spur, where the tip has been scarped, therefore when viewed from the S or SW, the site appears well-defended, with the bank prominent at c4m high (Figure 46,49). The banks are encroached at the NE where a now ruined farmhouse stands and the NW where a later entrance has been cut through. These features are clearly visible in the LIDAR image of the site, in which its distinctive character is obvious (Figure 47).





*Edited using Windows Live Photo Gallery Editor, from the standard raw data yellow image into greyscale, with increase shadow, decrease brightness and increase contrast.*

Margaret Griffith (1984:129) notes the discovery during the early 1940s, of flat stones 6 inches beneath the present surface inside the enclosure (X in Figure 48), and the discovery of an overgrown well (W). Whilst outside the south side of the enclosure (Y) 'an area containing 50-70 smooth, thin, oval pebbles were found within a small area in 1982, after recent deep ploughing' (Griffith 1984:129-130). Griffith (1982) suggests they must have been brought to the site as the nearest source for such rounded pebbles is the foreshore a mile and a half to the south of the site. Only excavation, will reaffirm if the flat stones within the enclosure is evidence for structures or a courtyard, or if the pebbles are evidence of a pebbled roadway or courtyard, as at Hen Domen, Hen Blas and likely at Ty Newydd.



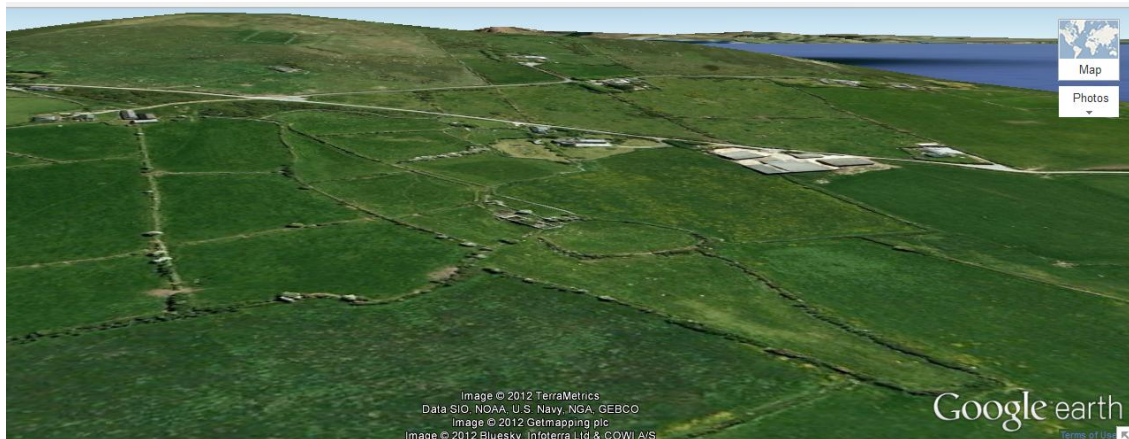
**Figure 48: Plans and sections from Griffith 1984: 128**

The presence of such features would suggest that the site was an earth and timber castle rather than current interpretations that the enclosure was built for cultivation, to which Griffith noted the present form may be a result of, and which both the RCAHMW and GAT interpret the site as 'a field or garden attached to the house' (NPRN:300228).

Based on Arbuthnot's (2011) criteria:

**1. Morphology-** As discussed the site is a sub-circular platform enclosed by a bank and scarpment. Despite its impressive defensive appearance and strategic location, there is no evidence of a ditch, which is a defining criteria of ring-works as at Castell Cynfal, Merioneth (Figure 6) and nearby Tomen Fawr, where the natural spur is divided internally by a deep ditch.

**2. Siting in the landscape-** The site holds a strategic and defensive position (Figure 49) with extensive views to the North and West, notably of the commote of Aberdaron (Figure 50). This natural visibility, similar to that of Castell Cilan and Abersoch, illustrates Creighton (2005:35) statement regarding the importance of the topographical attributes of a castle, that is '*a prominent landmark and a conspicuous symbol of power with a panoptical viewshed of the surrounding territory*'.



*Figure 49: This screenshot from Google Earth 3D illustrates the visibility and defensive characteristics of the site, with its hillside location and scarped slopes. Google Earth 2012.*

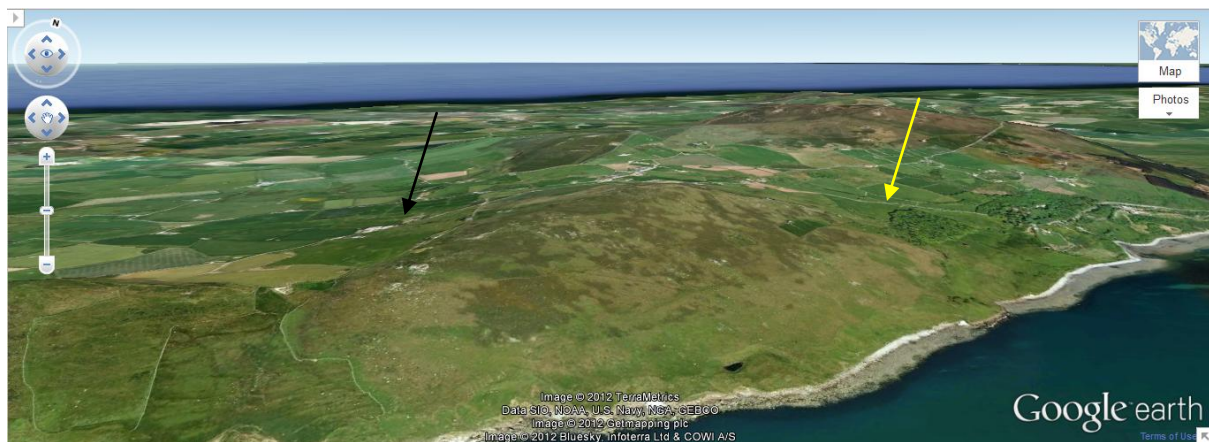


*Figure 50: This photograph taken from the site looking west towards the tip of the Llŷn Peninsula and Aberdaron, illustrates the panoramic view shed, which is common of earth and timber sites. Author. 2012.*

**3. Siting in relation to high medieval settlement-** There is no known medieval settlement, however on the eastern slopes of Mynnydd y Graig (Figure 51), there is an abundance of proposed medieval

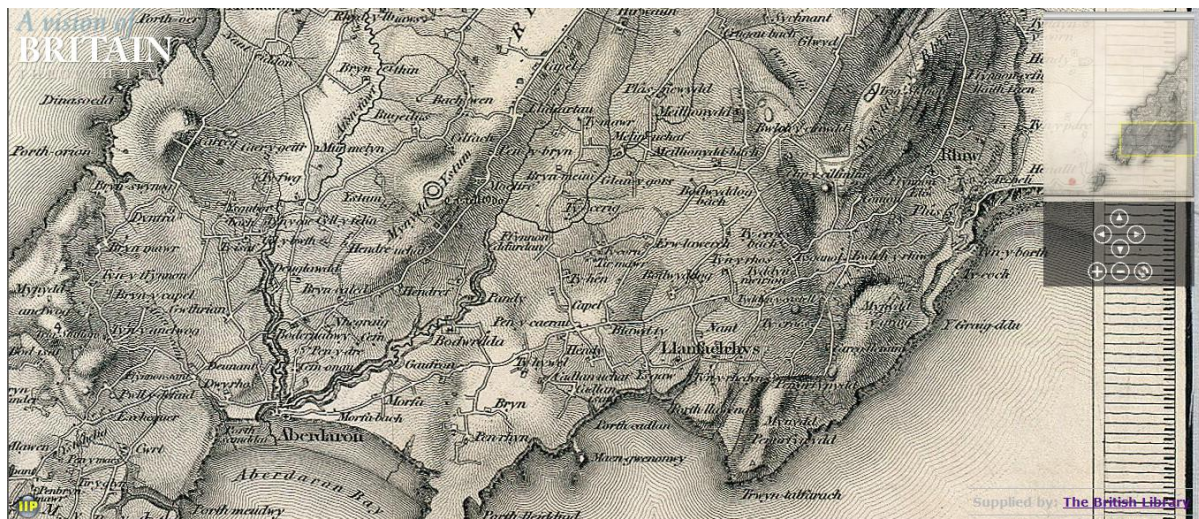


buildings- long huts, platform houses and associated field systems, which may be evidence of a lost medieval settlement (NPRN: 15052, 15094, 308043, 15126).



*Figure 51: Google Earth 3D screenshot of the location of medieval structures and possible settlement (yellow arrow) in relation to Tyddyn Castell (Black Arrow). Google Earth. 2012.*

**4) Documentary evidence** - There is no direct documentary evidence for the existence of a castle. The site is depicted as an earthwork in the First edition ordnance survey map (Figure 52). Furthermore, the place name, Tyddyn Castell (Castle smallholding) may provide evidence of its former use, now fossilised through place-name.



*Figure 51: First Series Ordnance Survey (1840/41) Sheet 75 SW. A vision of Britain/British Library. 2012.*

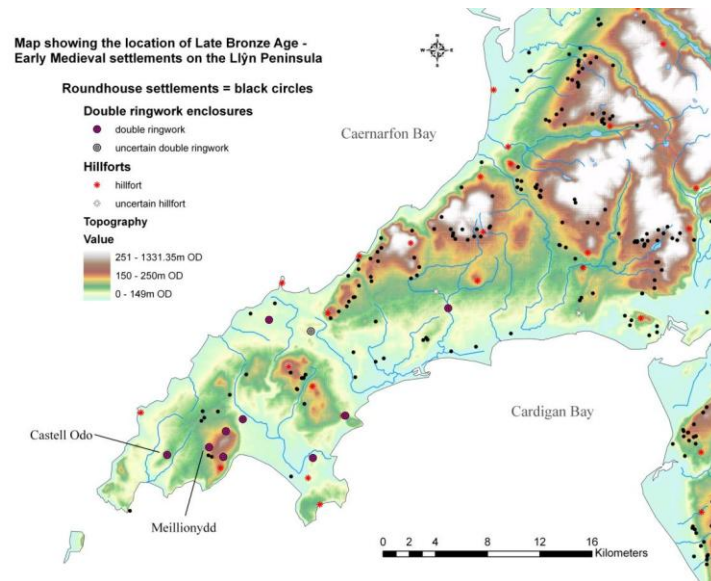
Tyddyn Castell is therefore a likely partial ring-work; however it is significantly different from the motte and bailey form attributed to the Normans or the later Welsh imitations.

Ring-works have been ignored during studies of earth and timber castles and especially medieval studies. Ring-works share many similarities with Irish Rath sites, which remained an important form of settlement from the Iron Age, through to and into the Norman occupation of Ireland during the late 12th century. In Britain, it is likely that without excavation, many ring-works will continue to be classed as Iron Age in date.

Ring-works are gaining greater understanding, including Dr Arbuthnot's (2011) criteria to identify ring-works. Furthermore Davis (2007:25), notes that medieval ring-works are smaller than those of the Iron Age, as they were not meant for communal refuge. However, Allen-Brown (1969:12) has criticised the use the term Ring-work to describe sites of Iron Age and medieval in date noting *'They represent the different concepts and different purposes at different worlds, the one a communal fortification, the other the feudal castle of a feudal lord.'*

Tyddyn Castell however sits within a dense Iron Age landscape. The Llŷn Peninsula has been a focus for Iron Age studies from Hogg (1960) studies of Garn Boduan and Tre Ceiri to Bangor University's ongoing excavations at nearby Meillionydd, therefore it is all too tempting to be complacent and add Tyddyn Castell to the list of Iron Age sites. Griffith (1984:130), did compare it to neighbouring sites Castell Caeron, Ceirion and Meillionydd. It may be due to this complacency and bias, that the medieval history and associated sites on the Llŷn Peninsula have been ignored and forgotten.

However, Tyddyn Castell is not similar to known Iron Age sites in the surrounding area. Ongoing excavations led by Kate Waddington from Bangor University since 2010 have taken place at the Iron Age site of Meillionydd. Meillionydd is a double ring-work hilltop enclosure, with concentric double ramparts with internal roundhouses (Waddington and Karl 2010:32). Figure 53 illustrates the unique density of double ring-work enclosures on the Llŷn peninsula, which is unique. The Tyddyn Castell is completely different in form to these Iron Age sites, whilst Meillionydd also sits on a prominent spur, it has not fully utilised it as Tyddyn Castell has, with its scarped tip, furthermore Tyddyn Castell contains a single enclosure and there are no known ditches.



*Figure 53: Map showing locations of late Bronze Age and Early Medieval settlements on the Llŷn peninsula include those classed as double ringwork enclosures : Waddington and Karl 2010:5*

Davies (2000:22) notes that for Gruffudd ap Cynan '*his world was still primarily of the Irish sea polity*'. Born and raised in Dublin, until at aged 20 in 1075 he made his first crossing of the Irish sea into Gwynedd to claim the throne. However he would make numerous journeys back and forth, during times of exile, as Ireland was a place of refuge and source of military support. During his time in Ireland, Gruffudd and his men would become familiar with the earth and timber castles of the Irish, often in the form of Irish raths. Therefore it does seem strange that ring-works and raths have been so underestimated and so quickly dated to the Iron Age in Wales.

No defensive sites have been identified on the peninsula for the early medieval period, until the appearance of the Norman mottes in the late eleventh century. This lack of native/ pre-existing defensive site, does appear strange, as for centuries the peninsula was ravaged by the Vikings from the ninth to mid eleventh centuries (RCHAMW 1964: cxxxix, Davies 1991:25). If Tyddyn Castell, is a defensive site, perhaps it has its origins in this period?

However, the reuse of earlier defensive sites however cannot be ignored. As Davis 2007:67 notes '*The Welsh may already have had some use of ancient earthworks so common in their land, but it was not until the coming of the Normans that they began to learn the art of castle building.*'

**Conclusion:**

Tyddyn Castell could be classed as a partial ringwork, with definite defensive characteristics sited in a commanding location; it is a likely earth and timber castle. The site has more in common with Irish rath's than Norman motte and bailey', therefore it is likely to be of Welsh origin. With known archaeology, a geophysical survey inside the enclosure and the surrounding fields is needed to identify and interpret the features, however only excavation can confirm whether it is Iron Age or later in date.

## Chapter Four - Discussion

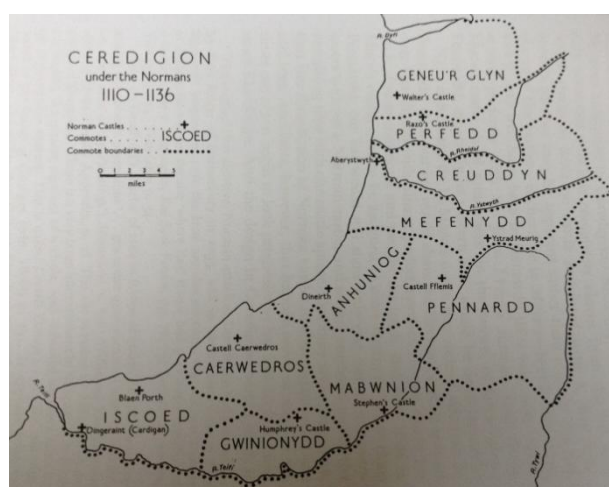
#### 4.1 - Discussion of Earth and Timber castle interpretations in Wales

There are three (four including Tomen Fawr) definite earth and timber castles on the Llŷn Peninsula and two further sites can be proposed. Two are of the motte and bailey style while four are of the ring-work/partial ring-work form.

The question remains who built these sites- the Normans, the Princes of Gwynedd or a lesser member of the Uchelwyr?

The debate regarding the identification and classification of sites as either Norman or Welsh will be discussed and criteria will be established which will aim to assist in the interpretation of the sites.

Sir John Goronwy Edwards (1956) study of c1100 Cardiganshire concluded that where castles are located at commotal centres, they are Norman in origin (Figure 54). The conclusion was reached by mapping out castles mentioned in the Brut y Tywysogion, that were either held by the Normans or attacked by the Welsh (ibid:164-166), which led to the identification that *'eleven castles are indeed evenly distributed among the ten commotes'* (ibid:166). Edwards (ibid:162) states the *'Norman 'units of penetration' was the commote in Wales'*. Reaffirmed by the RCAHMW (1964:cxli)... *'There was a basic pattern of one castle to each commote'*, located at pre-existing Welsh centres, designed to *'take over the Welsh organisation and powers'* (RCAHMW 1964:cxli). Therefore a commote was a unit of lordship, thereby in seizing commotes *'the Normans were acquiring more than land: they were acquiring 'lordship'* (Edwards 1956:170).



*Figure 54: Location of castles in relations to the commotes of Ceredigion. Edwards 1956:165*



This pattern was recognised in Caernarvonshire by the RCAHMW who note '*The distribution in Caernarvonshire corresponds fairly closely to that found in Cardiganshire*'. However this was seen as evidence of Welsh construction rather than Norman.

The RCAHMW concludes that '*The majority of these early castles must be Welsh in origin, and they are unlikely to have been built before the middle of the 12th century, there is no record of any earlier motte castle built by the Welsh themselves*'. (RCAHMW 1964:cxli-cxlii). It is therefore suggested in RCAHMW (1964:cxlii) that mottes at commotal centres, as at Nefyn (Cantref of Lleyrn), Abergwyngregyn (Cantref of Arllechwedd Uchaf), Caernarfon (Cantref of Is Gwyrfa) and Penychain/Tomen Fawr (Cantref of Eifionydd), were '*probably fortified by rivals of the princely family for their own protection*'.

Furthermore it is suggested, that those sites outside the commotal centre '*may have been due to lesser magnates*' (RCAHMW 1964:cxlii). The exceptions noted are in the cantref of Maenol Bangor, where the site of Castell was the fore-runner to the moated site of Ty-Mawr, and as discussed Y Mount, Llannor.

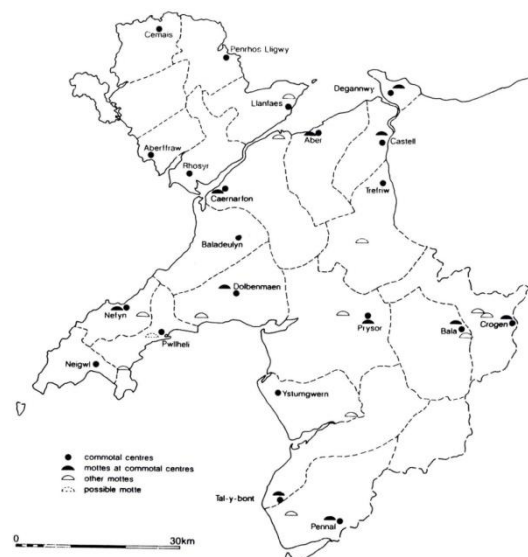
The difference in interpretation is due to the RCAHMW's suggestion of a change in Norman occupational 'strategy'. It is proposed that under William I, the policy was one in which '*few castles were built, each responsible for an extensive district*' (ibid 1964:cxli). This is in contrast to an assumed later approach in which castles were located more densely and in relation to the administrative territorial arrangement- commotal system. It is therefore suggested that the short period of Norman occupation of Gwynedd (1081-1093/4), is chronologically closer to the earlier system, on the assumption that '*the latter arrangement was not adopted until after 1094*', therefore the commotal distribution must reflect a later period of construction undertaken by the Welsh princes.

This interpretation is severely flawed. The basis for an early 'strategy' is evidence from the Domesday Book, '*which in 1086 lists only 4 castles each for the Earls of Chester and Shrewsbury, whose large territories extended well into Wales and included parts of Gwynedd*' (cxli). This is argued to be evidence of an earlier occupational strategy. However the Domesday Book was written early in the Norman occupation of Gwynedd (1081-1093/4). Furthermore it was Robert of Rhuddlan who is noted to control North West Wales in the Domesday book, not the Earls of Chester or Shrewsbury, as simply noted as lord of '*NorthWales*' (Moore 1007:18). This illustrates the lack of attention and importance given to Wales in the Domesday Book; therefore it cannot be indicative castles construction by 1086.

The interpretation is further flawed due to its focus on the dating in Edwards (1956) study, rather than the general conclusions of 'Conquest by Commote' which reflects the wider pattern of Norman occupation as discussed by King (1983).

Furthermore the interpretation is severely contradictory as it suggests Welsh construction and dating to from the mid 12th century, despite previously discussing the historical evidence stating that Abergwyngregyn and Caernarfon were constructed by the Normans between 1090-1093 (cxxxix).

The RCAHMW interpretations have been revived by Longley (1997) and Johnstone (1997), who have questioned whether mottes located at commotal centres are not an *'intrusive and short lived'* Norman phenomenon but rather *'evidence for native fortification at the maerdrefi'* (Longley 1997:53). They argue that the mottes were built by Welsh lord, as part of their llys complex (Johnstone 1997:61/Longley 1997:43).



**Figure 55: Map showing location of known mottes in relation to commotes. Johnstone 1997:56**

The commotal pattern is reaffirmed by Johnstone (Figure 55) , who justifies this by noting that aside from 6, *'all commotal centres appear to have been located in the vicinity of a motte'* (1997:61). Johnstone does not dismiss that some of the mottes were built by the Normans, such as Deganwy and Caernarfon. However he does state that...

*'the evidence clearly suggests that several mottes associated with llysoedd, such as Dolbenmaen and Nefyn, were constructed in areas outside Norman influence and are therefore certainly Welsh'* (Johnstone 1997:61).

The argument that the Llŷn Peninsula was *'outside Norman influence'* is to be questioned. Early Norman intervention is documented in 1075, during this the Normans would have seen the rich and fertile economic resources of Llŷn Peninsula (along with Anglesey), in comparison with the mountainous regions of Gwynedd, and therefore certainly when Gwynedd was under their control between 1081-1094, they would have been keen to exploit it. The Llŷn Peninsula was a documented gateway to Ireland, a key exile and entry route for Gruffudd ap Cynan and his Irish and Norse mercenaries in their campaigns against the Normans. Moreover, it was an important ecclesiastical centre, with the Clas of Aberdaron and pilgrimage centre of Bardsey. These factors along with the archaeological evidence as discussed between the similarities between Y Mount, Llannor and known Norman castles, clearly disproves that the Llŷn Peninsula, was *'outside Norman influence'* and that sites on the peninsula can all be assumed to be *'certainly Welsh'*.

Ultimately there is no doubt that the construction of castles at pre-existing administrative centres as well as at strategic locations, was undertaken by the Normans during their occupation of Gwynedd (1081-1093/4). Interpretations cannot be based purely on territorial patterns alone, especially those which ignore both documentary and archaeological evidence. Recent studies which interpret mottes as homogenous entities are also unhelpful, as this research has proved; sites need to be individually assessed rather than within a simple wider context.

Therefore the location of a site in **relation to the commotal/territorial organisation** (Edwards 1956 in contrast to RCAHMW 1964) and **relation to llys sites** (Johnstone 1997; Longley 1997) have been discussed as possible criteria for interpretation; however there are numerous additional criteria to identify sites as either Welsh or Norman origin:

- **Date-** As Longley (1997:43) proposes, where dating of sites through archaeological excavation is possible, it could be proposed *'that the earliest mottes in north Wales were certainly built during the Norman intrusive campaigns and settlement in the late eleventh century, whereas the Welsh imitation was necessarily later.'* This is likely to be correct, however as noted, interpreting the site based on the date alone would be unfair, attributes should be included.
- **Place name:** Sites such with a Mount name or that of a the lords name e.g. Montgomery Castle, Humphreys Castle, have been interpreted as evidence of Norman origin whilst sites

called Castell or Tomen have been seen as evidence for a Welsh origin. Davis (2000:27) notes place-name evidence can provide evidence for where sites change hands from Norman to Welsh. For example in the mid 12th century where Humphreys Castle is called Castell Hywel. Therefore, Y Mount, Llannor could be evidence of its Norman origins whilst sites such as Tomen Nefyn and Castell Abersoch could be interpreted as evidence of Welsh origin.

- **Location:** Sites at strategic locations have been interpreted as Norman, reflective of a Norman military campaign. As noted by Lewis (1996:70) they are located '*in positions of great strategic importance, commanding significant points around the coasts and in inland valleys.*' For example Degannwy and Aberlleiniog, with their coastal locations. As a result Nefyn and Abersoch have been interpreted as Norman due to their '*commanding outlooks to sea*' (Lewis 1996:70).
- **Documentary** - Due to the lack of excavation, origins and occupation of sites are based on known documentary evidence. As discussed sources such as the Historia Gruffudd ap Cynan and Brut y Tywysogion not only provide names of sites built and occupied by the Normans during the latter half of the 11th century, but also name sites destroyed and reoccupied by the Welsh princes including in a handful of cases new sites built (Appendix 2). It is based on this dependence on documentary sources, that the undocumented sites (which are a majority) are presumed to be Welsh rather than Norman in origin.
- **Morphology** - Lewis (1996:70) notes as well as the strategic location '*the Gwynedd castles are mostly substantial mottes without baileys*'. This criteria for the identification of Norman sites, is incorrect geophysical survey' have confirmed the presence of a bailey at Aberlleiniog, Abergwyngregyn and Y Mount, Llannor.
- **Motte V Ringwork-** King and Alcock (1969:103) proposed that the construction of a motte over ringwork was down to personal preference. As Spurgeon notes that Clwyd is the only county in Wales with no ringworks, quoting King who suggest it was an '*accident of personal preference*' in that the '*Earl of Chester simply favored mottes and this naturally influenced castle building in adjacent North Wales, their zone of activity*' (Spurgeon 1991:157). If correct, ringworks could be interpreted as Welsh constructions. However, this interpretation ignores Neaverson (1947) geological identifications and the recent proposition of a potential chronological development in earth and timber castles (as discussed p10/11).

- **Archaeological Indicators** - Excavations at Nevern (Caple 2011:76-77), revealed evidence of Norman occupation through the discovery of horseshoes and other horse equipment. Unfortunately the usual indicator, pottery, cannot be relied on. No pottery was discovered from the earliest layers at Hen Domen until the latter half of the thirteenth century (Barker 1969:20-22), as at Hen Blas where no pottery of from the 12th century was discovered (Leach 1957:13). This is reflective of Wales, where pottery during this period is rare.

Therefore there is a variety of criteria that can be used in identifying sites as Welsh or English construction, or where both are present. However all criteria should be assessed in conjunction with a holistic investigation of the site.

By the early 13th century, new Welsh castles were located for '*strategic rather than administrative*' reasons (Longley 1997:52). As Longley (1997) identified, sites such as Dolbardarn, Dolwyddelan and Cwm Prysor are located within the King's Ffridd (pasture land) and within strategic locations i.e. to control mountain passes.

It could be argued that with the construction of the 'stone castle' at Garn Fadryn c1188, if the earth and timber castles of the peninsula were constructed and in use prior to this, they would have become obsolete and thus abandoned due to the construction of such a formidable site. This would reflect a wider pattern where the earth and timber castles are abandoned in favour of a stone castle as at Dolwyddelan (King 1983:xxx).

## 4.2: Site interpretations

**Following a holistic approach to the sites and application of criteria to identify cultural origins the following is proposed:**

**Y Mount, Llannor-** A Motte and Bailey castle, with possible outer bailey likely to have been constructed by the Normans during their 1081-1093 occupation. There is evidence of later reuse of the site, indicated by a possible stone hall, perhaps late 12th / early 13th century in date and home to an Uchelwyr. Further archaeological investigations are recommended.

**Nefyn-** A Motte and possible bailey, constructed at an important commotal centre could possibly have been constructed by the Normans during their 1081-1093 occupation; however this is in doubt in relation to historical accounts. Archaeological investigations are unlikely due to significant encroachment.

**Castell Abersoch-** This ring-work is likely to be of Welsh construction of 12th century date, however if the documentary evidence is correct it could date to the mid 11th century, perhaps even evidence of a pre-existing site, which would be significantly important. No significant archaeological investigation is possible due to modern development, however small scale excavation may be possible to identify the location of the ditch.

**Castell Cilan-** This is a natural glacial hillock; however it does contain evidence of defensive modification. This site is the least likely due to the lack of defensive ditch, however geophysical survey is recommended on the summit, to confirm this.

**Tyddyn Castell-** This impressive partial-ringwork requires geophysical survey in response to known features of interest, which could indicate structures. However excavation will be needed to confirm if this site is Iron Age in date or later. This site has potential to be evidence of a pre-existing defensive site, evidence of a native tradition with Iron Age and Irish roots.



#### 4.3 - Earth and Timber Castle studies - The Future

This research has highlighted the need for future study into Earth and Timber castles in North Wales. It is recommended that a similar project to the Llys and Maerdref project (1991-1996) conducted by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust and funded by CADW which focused on 13th century administration and settlement under the Princes of Gwynedd should be undertaken in North Wales on The Earth and Timber Castles of North Wales. The project should be a multidisciplinary approach which:

- An assessment of the condition and status of known sites
- Identification of new sites with specific emphasis on Ring-works.
- It should be a multidisciplinary survey which includes Cartography, Documentary evidence, field survey and systematic analysis of LIDAR data
- Geophysical Surveys of bailey and ring-work interiors
- Excavation at a selected ring-work and motte and bailey site should be undertaken to provide a greater detail of understanding of such sites including crucial evidence for their dating and therefore their chronological development, which is immediately needed.

Such a project would greatly benefit understanding into eleventh and twelfth century North Wales including settlement and tenurial patterns, following on from the seminal work of Johnstone (1997). The project would link into the Llys and Maerdref project by investigating power and defence centres in the preceding centuries (mid eleventh to thirteenth centuries). It would provide dating evidence for both motte and bailey and more importantly ring work sites which would not only benefit North West Wales but the United Kingdom as a whole.

The project would certainly meet the aims and objectives of the Research Framework for the Archaeology of Wales (Davidson 2003, Longley 2010) - which calls for a greater understanding of *'Norman expansion into Wales and castle building including earthwork castles'* (Longley 2010:1).

The project and this research certainly, illustrates Oliver Creighton's vision for castle studies with regards to earth and timber castles, outlined at the 2012 Castle Studies Group one day autumn conference titled 'Timber Castles 20 Years On' held to mark the 20th anniversary of Higham and Barker's seminal Timber Castles publication. This vision initially outlined in Creighton (2005:226) includes methods included in this study, including greater use of geophysical survey of bailey interiors and use of *'ways in which perceived and experienced by contemporaries'* including GIS and Virtual reality technologies such as Google Earth 3D.

Furthermore as the sites in this survey illustrate, due to the lack of recognition and value, these sites are under threat. Many have been severely damaged or lost forever. As Davidson (2003:3) highlights *'Earthwork castles are inherently unstable monuments, and frequently suffer erosion and damage from burrowing animals and roots of trees.'*

Finally the political context must be addressed. The Llys and Maerdref project was well received due to its focus on pre Edwardian conquest Welsh power structures and centres- The Age of the Welsh Princes. In David Longley's assessment of research into medieval Wales, he calls for greater recognition and research into the *'multiple identities and multi-culturalism'*, rather than purely evidence of our Welsh identity and thus of resistance *'against a mighty neighbour'* (Longley 2011:4). New research into earth and timber castles of Wales must therefore recognise evidence of Norman occupation of North Wales, but also evidence of native agency through the adoption and construction of earth and timber castles during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It could be argued, it is because of this political context earthwork castles especially mottes, symbolic of foreign (not necessarily English occupation), have been so forgotten and neglected in North Wales, especially those on the Llŷn Peninsula, the heartland of the Welsh language, and that is why such a project is needed to recognise and value all sites.

## **Figure references**

**Cover:** Environment Agency.2010. *SH3438\_DTM\_1M. LIDAR Composite (October 2010)*. Purchased 2011. LiDAR. Environment Agency.

**Figure 1a:** Edina Wales outline base map 2012

**Figures 2a - b :** Davis, P R. 2007. *Castles of the Welsh Princes*. Y Lolfa. p25

**Figure 3:** Musson, C R. 1993. *Sycharth*. Available at:  
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**Figure 4.2-** Phillips, N. 2006. *Earthwork Castles of Gwent and Eryng AD 1050-1250*.British Archaeological Reports British Series. Plate 19, St Sylvian.

**Figure 5:** Jones, E. 2007. *Castell Prysor*. Available at: <http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/517929>. Accessed 11/01/2013

**Figure 6:** Hale, I. 2009. *Castell Cynfael*. Available at:  
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**Figure 7 :** Barry,T.1988. *The Archaeology of Medieval Ireland*. Routledge.p42

**Figure 8:** Phillips, N. 2006. *Earthwork Castles of Gwent and Eryng AD 1050-1250*.British Archaeological Reports British Series : 26,30

**Figure 9:** Lewis, C.P. 1996. '*Gruffudd ap Cynan and the Norman*' in Gruffudd ap Cynan. A collaborative Biography. Ed. K L Maund. Woodbridge. p62

**Figure 10:** Higham, R. Barker, P. 2004. *Timber Castles*. University of Exeter Press. p66 after King and Alcock 1969

**Figure 11:** Higham. R. Barker. P. 2000, *Hen Domen Montgomery: a timber castle on the English-Welsh border*. University of Exeter Press. Exeter. p15

**Figure 12.1-** Gathering the Jewels/ Peter Scholefield. *Reconstruction model of Hen Domen, a Norman motte and bailey castle near Montgomery [image 1 of 5].* 2011. Available at: <http://www.gtj.org.uk/en/large/item/GTJ64177/> Accessed 18/01/2013.

**Figure 12.2-** Picasa/ Peter Scholefield. *Historical and reconstruction drawings and model making. Photo 7 of 15.* 2010. Available at: <https://picasaweb.google.com/107232812839738691972/HistoricalAndReconstructionDrawingsAndModelmaking?authkey=Gv1sRgCNvqi6zy5r7MPQ#5521270656198827890> Accessed 18/01/2013.

**Figure 13:** Environment Agency.2010. SH3438\_DTM\_1M. *LIDAR Composite (October 2010).* Purchased 2012. LiDAR. Environment Agency.

**Figure 14:** Author.2012.

**Figure 15a:** Google Maps 2011

**Figure 15b:** getmapping.com/ Ordnance Survey 1999

**Figure 16:** Slope model created in ArchGIS from LiDAR data. Environment Agency.2010. SH3438\_DTM\_1M. *LIDAR Composite (October 2010).* Purchased 2012. LiDAR. Environment Agency.

**Figure 17:** Geological data supplied by EDINA Digimap Service (Crown Copyright).

**Figure 18a-Figure 24b:** Map data supplied by EDINA Digimap Service (Crown Copyright). Geophysical Data by author and processed through Geoplott.

**Figure 25:** Map data supplied by EDINA Digimap Service (Crown Copyright). With geo-referenced: RCAHMW 1971. Edited Ordnance Survey 6" 1963 map to include the location of the cobbled area reported. Unpublished Archived Document in NPRN:302309 file.

**Figure 26:** Ordnance Survey Unions. 1830. Harlech. Scale: 1:63360. Available at: [http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/maps/results.jsp?xCenter=3160000&yCenter=3160000&scale=1900800&viewScale=5805357.4656&mapLayer=osm&subLayer=os\\_unions\\_1803&title=Ordnance%20Survey%20Unions&download=false](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/maps/results.jsp?xCenter=3160000&yCenter=3160000&scale=1900800&viewScale=5805357.4656&mapLayer=osm&subLayer=os_unions_1803&title=Ordnance%20Survey%20Unions&download=false)

**Figure 27:** Author. 2012.

**Figure 28:** RCAHMW, 1964, *A Survey and Inventory of the Ancient Monuments of Caernarvonshire* Vol. 3: West (HMSO):cxl

**Figure 29a:** Google Maps 2012

**Figure 29b:** Google Maps Street View. 2012

**Figure 30:** Postcard from 1902 of Nefyn, with the motte visible in the background (far left) (Llyn Maritime Museum Collection /Author)

**Figure 31:** Williams, S G. 1871. *Ancient British Camps etc on Lley, County Carnarvon*. British Library. Manuscript :38

**Figure 32:** Ordnance Survey Unions. 1830. Harlech. Scale: 1:63360. Available at: [http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/maps/results.jsp?xCenter=3160000&yCenter=3160000&scale=1900800&viewScale=5805357.4656&mapLayer=osm&subLayer=os\\_unions\\_1803&title=Ordnance%20Survey%20Unions&download=false](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/maps/results.jsp?xCenter=3160000&yCenter=3160000&scale=1900800&viewScale=5805357.4656&mapLayer=osm&subLayer=os_unions_1803&title=Ordnance%20Survey%20Unions&download=false)

**Figure 33:** 1901 Ordnance Survey Revision Sheet. EDINA.

**Figure 34:** Author.2012.

**Figure 35:** Author.2012.

**Figure 36:** Williams, S G. 1871. *Ancient British Camps etc on Lley, County Carnarvon*. British Library. Manuscript :11

**Figure 37:** Authors Collection. Postcard c1954.

**Figure 38:** Francis Firth. Available at: [http://www.francisfrith.com/abersoch/photos/harbour-1901\\_47004/](http://www.francisfrith.com/abersoch/photos/harbour-1901_47004/). Accessed 27/01/2013

**Figure 39:** Ordnance Survey Unions. 1830. Harlech. Scale: 1:63360. Available at: [http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/maps/results.jsp?xCenter=3160000&yCenter=3160000&scale=1900800&viewScale=5805357.4656&mapLayer=osm&subLayer=os\\_unions\\_1803&title=Ordnance%20Survey%20Unions&download=false](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/maps/results.jsp?xCenter=3160000&yCenter=3160000&scale=1900800&viewScale=5805357.4656&mapLayer=osm&subLayer=os_unions_1803&title=Ordnance%20Survey%20Unions&download=false)

**Figure 40:** Environment Agency.2010. SH3128\_DTM\_1M. *LIDAR Composite (October 2010)*. Purchased 2013. LiDAR. Environment Agency.

**Figure 41:** Roberts, G. 2011. Pers Comm.

**Figure 42a:** Megalithic.co.uk. 2003. *Castel Cilan*. Uploaded by User: Clayton\_Disley. Available at: <http://www.megalithic.co.uk/article.php?sid=7386> .Accessed 30/01/2013

**Figure 42b:** Author. 2012.

**Figure 43:** Environment Agency.2010. SH2924\_DTM\_1M. *LIDAR Composite (October 2010)*. Purchased 2013. LiDAR. Environment Agency. Map data supplied by EDINA Digimap Service (Crown Copyright).

**Figure 44:** Author. 2012.

**Figure 45:** Ordnance Survey Unions. 1830. Harlech. Scale: 1:63360. Available at: [http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/maps/results.jsp?xCenter=3160000&yCenter=3160000&scale=1900800&viewScale=5805357.4656&mapLayer=osm&subLayer=os\\_unions\\_1803&title=Ordnance%20Survey%20Unions&download=false](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/maps/results.jsp?xCenter=3160000&yCenter=3160000&scale=1900800&viewScale=5805357.4656&mapLayer=osm&subLayer=os_unions_1803&title=Ordnance%20Survey%20Unions&download=false)

**Figure 46:** Author. 2012.

**Figure 47:** Environment Agency.2010. SH2227\_DTM\_1M. *LIDAR Composite (October 2010)*. Purchased 2013. LiDAR. Environment Agency. Map data supplied by EDINA Digimap Service (Crown Copyright).

**Figure 48:** Griffith, M. 1984. '*Oval enclosure at Tyddyn Castell, Rhiw*'. Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society. Vol 45: 128

**Figure 49:** Google Earth 3D maps. 2012.

**Figure 50:** Author. 2012.

**Figure 51:** Google Earth 3D maps. 2012.

**Figure 52:** First Series Ordnance Survey (1840/41) Sheet 75 SW. A vision of Britain/British Library. 2012.

**Figure 53:** Waddington, K and Karl, R. 2010. *The Meillionydd Project: Characterising the double ringwork enclosures in Gwynedd Preliminary Excavation Report*. p5 Available at:[http://www.bangor.ac.uk/history/research/early\\_celtic/meillionydd%20interim%20report%202010.pdf](http://www.bangor.ac.uk/history/research/early_celtic/meillionydd%20interim%20report%202010.pdf). Accessed 28/12/2012

**Figure 54:** Edwards, JG. 1956. *The Normans and the Welsh March*. The Proceedings of the British Academy , XLII. p165



**Figure 55:** Johnstone, N. 1997. An investigation into the location of the royal courts of thirteenth century Gwynedd. in N. Edwards (ed) *Landscapes and Settlement in Medieval Wales*, Oxford (1997)

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In identifying the Earth and Timber castles of North West Wales and the Llŷn Peninsula the author used the local archaeological trust (Gwynedd Archaeological Trust) online Historic environment record:



Available at: [http://www.cofiadurcahcymru.org.uk/arch/gat/english/gat\\_interface.html](http://www.cofiadurcahcymru.org.uk/arch/gat/english/gat_interface.html)

For Ty Newydd Motte: Primary Reference Number (PRN) : 1532

Castell Abersoch: 1239

Nefyn: 12718

Tomen Fawr, Llanystumdwy: 1329

Castell Cilan: 4001

Tyddyn Castell: 5051

The author used the Royal Commission on the ancient and historical monuments of Wales (RCAHMW), online National monuments record of Wales, as well as a visit to the office in Aberystwyth and obtained copies of all documents referenced in NPRN.

Available at: <http://www.coflein.gov.uk/en/search/>

For Ty Newydd Motte: NPRN: 302309

Castell Abersoch: 302288

Nefyn: 308100

Tomen Fawr, Llanystumdwy: 95294

Castell Cilan: No entry

Tyddyn Castell: 300228

## **Appendix 1: Kingdom of Gwynedd Historical Chronology (mid 11th to mid 12th centuries)**

### **1075**

Gruffudd ap Cynan's first attempt to recover Gwynedd with support of Hiberno Norse and Mercenary troops of Robert of Rhuddlan-lands on Ynys Mon

Gruffudd ap Cynan defeated and killed Cynwrig ap Rhiwallon, ally of Trahaern (who seized power) who controlled Llŷn

Gruffudd ap Cynan defeated Trahaern ap Caradog at the Battle of Erw Gwaed to control Gwynedd-Llŷn, Mon and Arfon

Led forces eastwards to recover Perfeddlwlad (Teingeingl/Gwynedd Is Conwy)

Attacked Rhuddlan Castle

Rebellion in Llŷn caused by tensions between Gruffydd's bodyguard and the local Welsh

Trahaearn (including men of Llŷn) defeated Gruffudd at the battle of Bron yr Erw near Clynnog Fawr

Gruffudd forced to exile to Ireland

Norman's week long raid on Llŷn

### **1081**

Gruffudd returns (lands in St Davids) after making an alliance Rhys ap Tewdwr, Prince of Deheubarth

Gruffudd ap Cynan victory at Mynydd Carn against Trahaern ap Caradog who was killed in battle

Arrest of Gruffudd ap Cynan and imprisonment at Chester. It is suggested that he was tricked by own men to meet Earls of Chester and Shrewsbury.

### **1081-1093- Norman control of North Wales**

Hugh and Robert control Gwynedd and build castles

### **Domesday book- control –Northwales -1086**

**Breton was imposed as bishop of Bangor in 1092**

**1088/1093- Gruffudd escapes and flees to Ireland**

**1093- Welsh Revolt**

Robert of Rhuddlan Killed

Gruffudd returns and lands in Nefyn

Failed attempt to destroy Aberlleiniog

**1094** - Gwynedd castles destroyed

**1095** - Gruffudd ap Cynan marries Angharad daughter of Owain ab edwyn

**1095 and 1097**- William Rufus unsuccessful invasions into Wales, possibly reach as far as Tomen Fawr

**1098-**

Earl of Chester and Shrewsbury summer campaign into Anglesey

Force Gruffudd to flee to Ireland with ally Cadwgan ap Bleddyn.

King Manus of Norway attacks the Normans - Earl of Shrewsbury Killed.

**1099**

Cadwgan ap Bleddyn and Gruffudd ap Cynan return from Ireland with help from Scandinavians

Destroy Aberlleiniog and recover Mon

**1100**

Captives from Meirionydd brought to Llŷn

**1101**

Death of Huw Dew, Earl of Chester

Henry I settlement with Gruffudd- granted Llŷn , Eifonnydd, Arddudwy, Mon and Arllechwedd- Gwynedd

**1137** - Death Gruffudd ap Cynan, Owain Gwynedd becomes King of Gwynedd

**1170**- Death of Owain Gwynedd

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## **Appendix 2: Excavated sites in Wales**

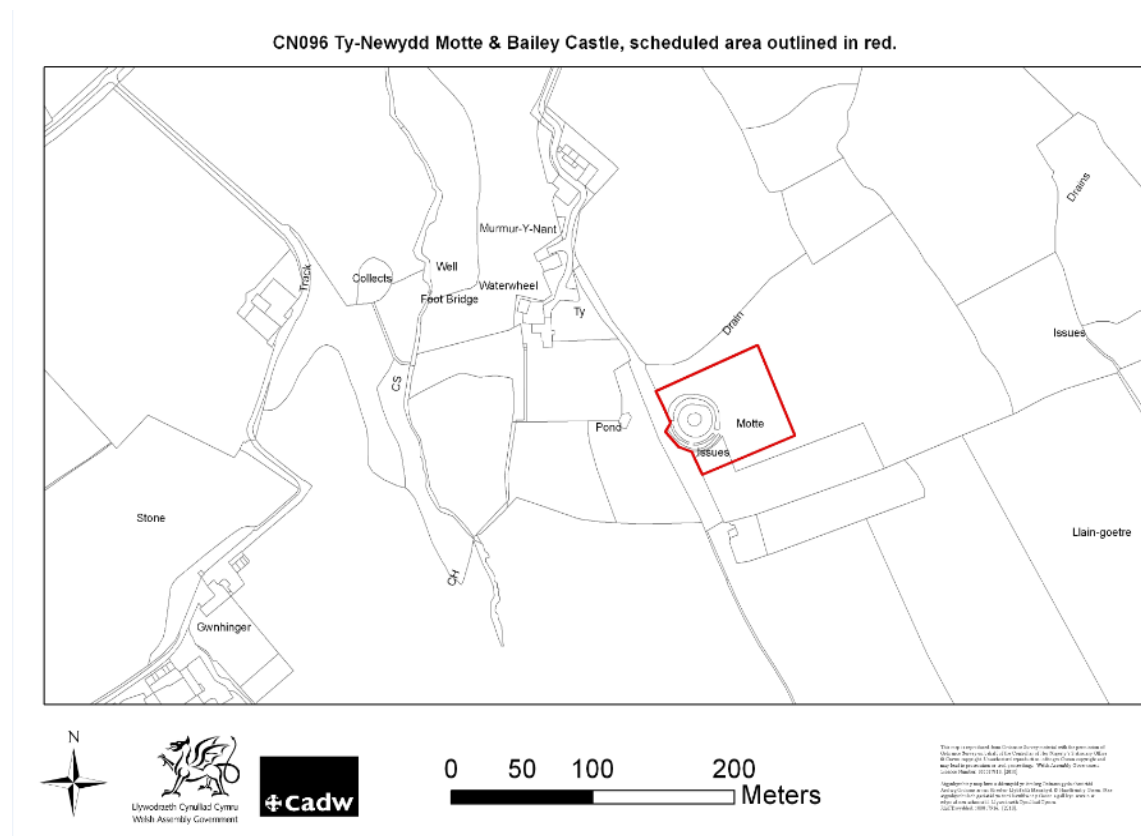
<b>Site Name</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Form</b>
Hen Blas	Clwyd	Partial Ringwork?
Rug, Corwen	Clwyd	Motte
Sycharth	Clwyd	Motte and Bailey
Llanstephan	Dyfed	Ringwork
Old Aberystwyth (Tan y Bwlch)	Dyfed	Ringwork
Coed-y- Cwm, St Nicholas	Glamorgan (South)	Ringwork
Dinas Powys	Glamorgan (South)	Ringwork
Llantrithyd	Glamorgan (South)	Motte
Pen y Pill	Glamorgan (South)	Ring-Motte
Rumney (Cae Castell)	Glamorgan (South)	Ringwork
Treoda	Glamorgan (South)	Motte
Loughour	Glamorgan (West)	Ringwork
Old Castle Camp, Bishopton	Glamorgan (West)	Partial Ringwork with bailey
Pennard	Glamorgan (West)	Ringwork
Penmaen	Glamorgan (West)	Ringwork
Penrice	Glamorgan (West)	Ringwork
Twyn-Cregen, Llanarth	Gwent	Motte
Hen Domen	Powys	Motte and Bailey
Symon's Castle	Powys	Motte and Bailey
Mathrafal	Powys	Ringwork

<b>Tomen Llansantffraid</b>	<b>Powys</b>	<b>Motte</b>
<b>Pen y Clawdd</b>	<b>Monmouthshire</b>	<b>Motte</b>
<b>Trelech</b>	<b>Monmouthshire</b>	<b>Motte and Bailey</b>
<b>Nevern</b>	<b>Pembrokeshire</b>	<b>Motte and Bailey</b>
<b>Pen Ucha'r Llan</b>	<b>Gwynedd</b>	<b>Ringwork</b>
<b>Aberlleiniog</b>	<b>Gwynedd</b>	<b>Motte and Bailey</b>
<b>Abergwyngregyn</b>	<b>Gwynedd</b>	<b>Motte and Bailey</b>

Sources: Higham and Barker 2004:358-359, Phillips 2006



### Appendix 3: Ty Newydd, Llannor, Additional Resources



Map outlining land with scheduled ancient monument status. Source: CADW.2011.

Photographs taken by the author during a site visit March 2012.



This photograph was taken facing the east side of the motte. In this photograph the motte is visible (centre), with the defensive bank (Left), separated by the wet ditch. Source: Author. 2012.



This photograph shows the defensive bank, the wet ditch and motte. Source: Author. 2012.



This photograph shows the scale of the motte. Photograph taken facing the west side of the motte. Source: Author.2012.



This photograph shows the defensive bank to the south and east of the motte. Source: Author. 2012.



These photographs provide a rough cross section of the motte, wet ditch and defensive bank on the west side of the motte. Source: Author. 2012.

#### Appendix 4: Current North Wales site origin interpretations

<b>Norman</b>	<b>Welsh</b>
<b>Rhuddlan-1073 (D)</b>	<b>Cymer -1116 (D)</b>
<b>Degannwy (D)</b>	<b>Cynfal-1147 (D)</b>
<b>Bangor (D) -1081-93</b>	<b>Tomen Y Rhodwydd- 1149 (D)</b>
<b>Caernarfon (D)-1081-93</b>	<b>Corwen-1165 (D)</b>
<b>Aberlleiniog (D-as Mon)</b>	<b>Dolwyddelen (P)</b>
<b>Abergwyngregyn (P)</b>	<b>Cwm Prysor (P)</b>
<b>Castell, near Bala (P)</b>	<b>Garn Fadryn (D)</b>
<b>Tomen y Mur (Suggested by Morgan 2009)</b>	<b>Deudraeth (D)</b>

D- Documented

P- Probable

Based on Longley (1997), Johnstone (1997), Morgan 2009