



*Clough motte & bailey. Artist's impression of the settlement in the early C13. From the on-site information panel. Image © Northern Ireland Environment Agency.*

### **Clough Motte & Bailey Castle, Co. Down**

The castle was built at the end of a ridge with a relatively low, broad motte and a small bailey, all features typical of Ulster mottes. What makes Clough interesting is that Dudley Waterman excavated the whole top of the motte in 1951-2 and published the results in 1954; Hope-Taylor excavated Abinger in 1949, publishing it in 1950. Abinger presented a simple picture of a motte surmounted by a timber tower and palisade, but Clough was much more complex; Abinger shaped the popular view of what mottes were, while Clough was largely ignored. The picture it presents, with the hall on the motte, a bailey with barely room for a farmyard did not fit the conventional one of a manorial motte.

Waterman presented his results in five periods: 1, a palisade with three pits and a central hollow within; 2, a hall, perhaps of timber built on mortared stone walls; 3, a stone tower, built after the destruction of the hall by fire; 4, the perimeter palisade was replaced by a bank; 5, a stone-built extension was added to the tower,

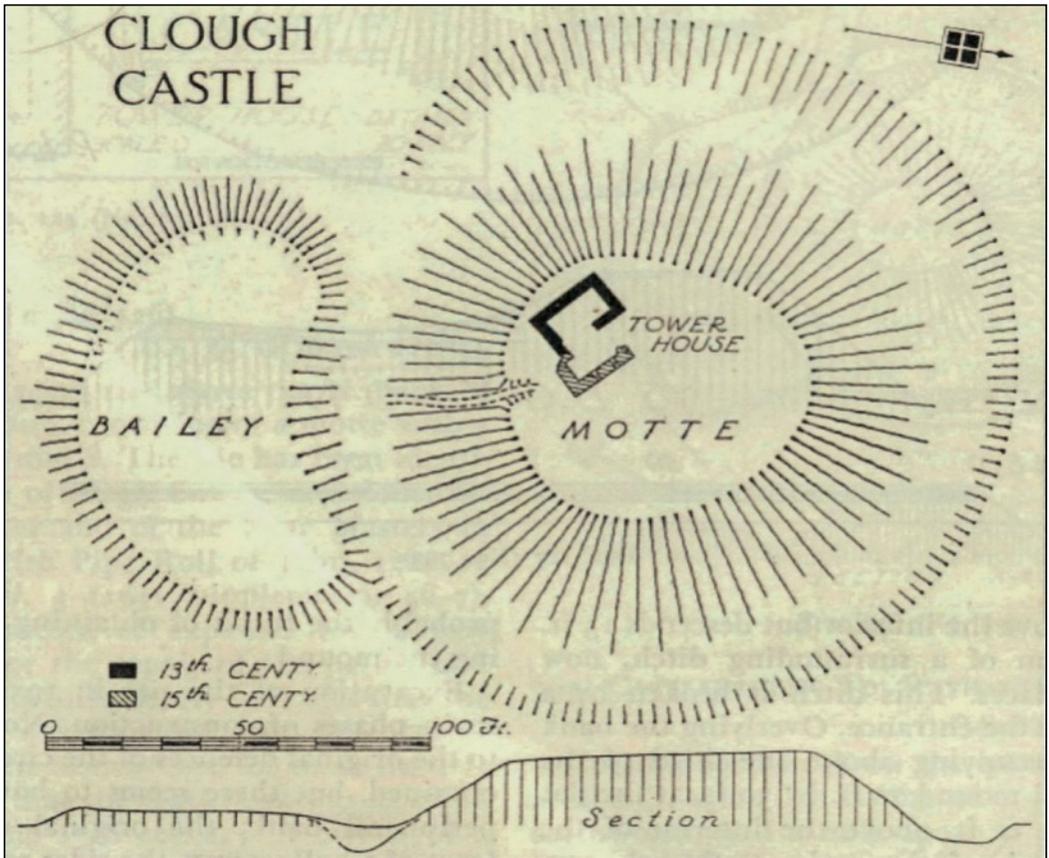
marked by loops for hand guns. This sequence has seen two revisions. Higham & Barker argued that the perimeter palisade and Waterman's phase 4 bank were part of the same structure, a clay wall reinforced with timbers. McNeill suggested that the clay wall (with two pits allowing archers to fire through it), hall and chamber tower were all of the one period, which could have been of quite long duration. Two coins of King John in the final levelling layers of the motte give an early 13th century date to the construction of the motte and its buildings; the extension to the tower must date from the 16th century.

### **Further Reading**

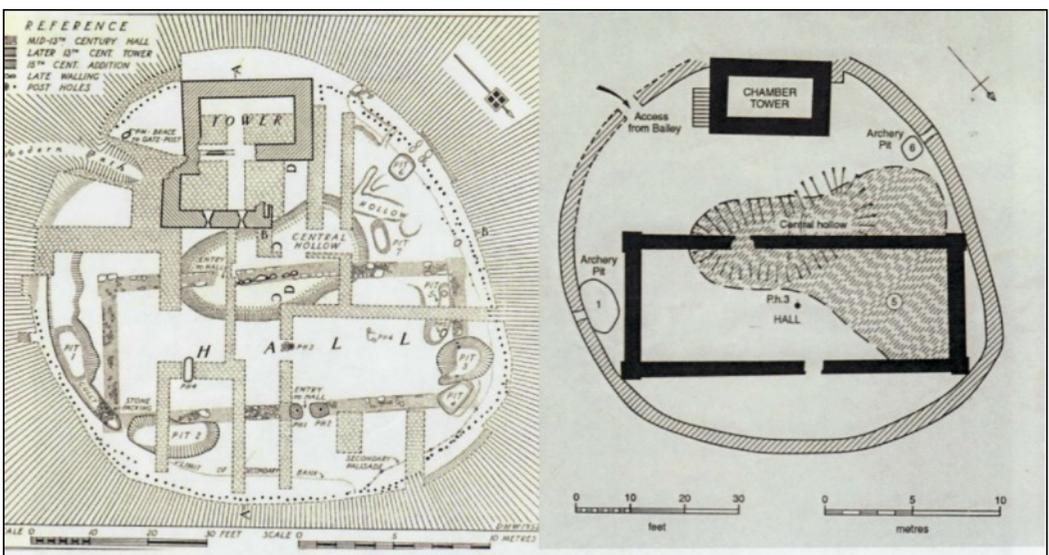
Waterman, D. M., 1954, 'Excavations at Clough Castle, Co. Down', in *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, 17, pp. 103-63

Higham, R., & Barker, P., 1992, *Timber castles*, London, Batsford, pp. 318-20

McNeill, T. E. 2007. 'Clough Castle reconsidered', in C. Manning (ed.) *From Ringforts to Fortified Houses*, Dublin, Wordwell, pp. 41-52



Clough motte & bailey. Plan of site with tower house / chamber tower and suggested hall. Above: After Waterman. Below right: After McNeill 2007, the 'main period' (C13) re-interpreted.





*Clough motte & bailey. ABOVE: View from the south. Kidney-shaped bailey to the east. BELOW: Interior of the two-storey 'Chamber Tower'.*

