

Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork,
School of Archaeology and Palaeoecology,
Queen's University Belfast.

Monitoring Report No. 04
Duneight Motte and Bailey,
May 2004.

On behalf of



Monitoring Report: Duneight Motte and Bailey, Co. Down

SMR: DOW 014:028

20th May 2004

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CAF MR 04

1 Background

- 1.1 Archaeological monitoring of the excavation of the footprint of two new signs (an information board and a title sign) at Duneight Motte and Bailey (DOW 014:028), Co. Down, took place on the 20th May 2004. The monitoring was undertaken by Nicholas Beer of the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast. The monitoring was conducted on behalf of the Protecting Historic Monuments branch of the Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage, who funded the work.
- 1.2 The Anglo-Norman fortification site is located in north County Down, approximately three miles north-east of Hillsborough. The monument is in State Care. The dimensions of the triangular motte are 17m at its maximum length and 10 m tall (Plate. 1). A ditch 7 m wide and 2 m deep separates the motte from the bailey, which is approximately 50m at its maximum length (Jope 1966, 205-206). The motte's construction dates to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century AD, although it is built within an earlier oval earthwork of tenth to twelfth century AD date. The earlier earthwork was bounded on the north, east and west by a bank and ditch, with a steep slope to the River Ravernet on the south. Excavations in 1961 (Waterman 1963) demonstrated timber palisades had been constructed and remodelled during the early Christian period in the south west region of the bailey described as the entrance (*ibid*, 63). During the Anglo-Norman period further modifications were made to the palisade defences in the entrance region (*ibid*, 70). Excavations within the enclosure uncovered traces of three buildings built of stone (*ibid*, 68).
- 1.3 The *Annals of Ulster* refer to a *Dún Eachdhach* in the years 1003 and 1010. In the later entry the fort (*Dún*) and town (*baile*) are recorded as having been destroyed by the *Cenél Eóghain*. The strong nature of the earthwork enclosure at Duneight makes this a highly probable candidate for the fortification reported in the annals (Donnelly 1997, 86-87, Jope 1966, 206 and Waterman 1963, 67).
- 1.4 The site was converted for use as a motte and bailey in the late twelfth - early thirteenth century by the Anglo-Normans. In addition to the construction of the motte in the eastern section of the bailey, the latter's bank was also enlarged at this time, and the approach to the fort was altered to allow entry through a gate adjacent to the motte. One of the earlier buildings found within the enclosure was in part reconstructed at this time and illustrates a continuity of occupation at the site (Jope 1966, 205-206).

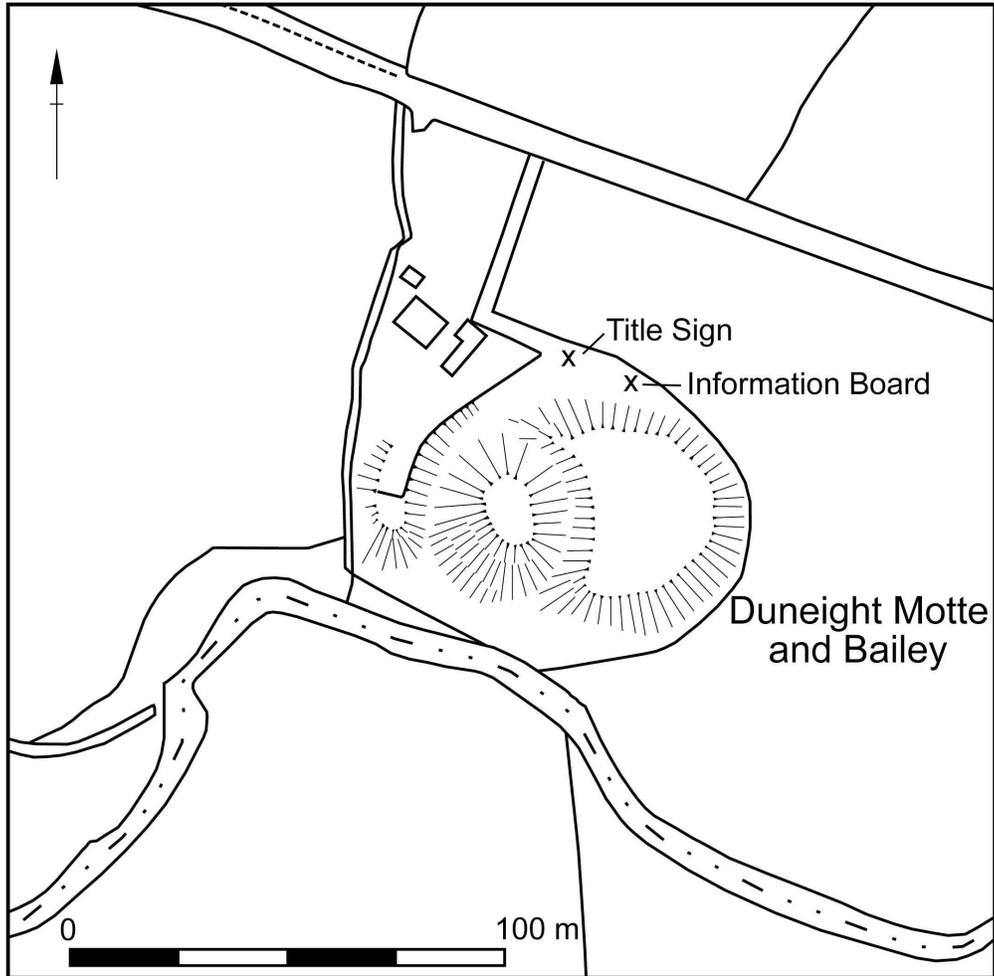


Figure 1: Location of Title Sign and Information Board at Duneight Motte and Bailey.

2 *Archiving*

- 2.1 A copy of this report has been deposited with the Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage. The records generated during the monitoring are temporarily archived within the School of Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

3 *Monitoring*

- 3.1 Staff of the Environment and Heritage Service: Regional Operations requested that monitoring by an experienced archaeologist took place during the excavation of the footprints for two new sign boards at Duneight Motte and Bailey. The information signpost was located 5 m to the north of the northern extreme of the bailey (Fig. 1). The title signpost was installed approximately 15 m to the west of the information board (Fig. 1). The principal objective of the monitoring was to ascertain the character and date of any deposits disturbed during the installation of the signposts.
- 3.2 The footprint of the information board (Trench 1) was excavated by hand. Its final dimensions were 0.5 m x 0.5 m and it was excavated to a depth of 0.4 m (Plate 2). The stratigraphic sequence consisted of two deposits; a dark brown humic topsoil (Context No. 101) overlying at a depth of 0.25 m an orange brown sandy loam soil (Context No. 102), which was excavated to a depth of 0.15 m.
- 3.3 The footprint of the title sign (Trench 2) was also excavated by hand. Its final dimensions were 0.4 m x 0.2 m and it was excavated to a depth of 0.5 m. The stratigraphic sequence consisted of two deposits, a dark brown humic topsoil (Context No. 201) overlying at a depth of 0.3 m an orange clay subsoil (Context No. 202), which was excavated to a depth of 0.2 m.

4 *Discussion*

- 4.1 The excavations undertaken to facilitate the installation of a new information board and title sign at Duneight Motte and Bailey revealed no features of archaeological significance. The stratigraphic sequence demonstrated an undisturbed natural stratigraphy, which contained no finds.

5 *Recommendations*

- 5.1 Despite the importance of Duneight Motte and Bailey, the sequence of deposits disturbed during the installation of the signposts was not of any archaeological value or interest. Consequently, it is recommended that publication of the results of the monitoring is not merited. No additional post-excavation research or other resources will be necessary

6 *Credits and Acknowledgements*

- 6.1 The monitoring was undertaken by Nicholas Beer (Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast). For their assistance during the course of the monitoring and the preparation of this report, the author is grateful to: John Davidson (Queen's University Belfast), Dr Colm Donnelly (Queen's University Belfast), Declan Hurl (Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage), Dr Philip Macdonald (Queen's University Belfast), James McEvoy (Environment and Heritage Service: Regional Operations) and John O'Neill (Queen's University Belfast). The illustrations were prepared by Ruth Logue of the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

7 *Bibliography*

Donnelly, C.J., 1997. *Living Places: Archaeology, Continuity and Change at Historic Monuments in Northern Ireland*, Institute of Irish Studies, Belfast.

Jope, E.M. (editor), 1966, *An Archaeological Survey of County Down*. H.M.S.O. Belfast.

Waterman, D.M. 1963. *Excavations at Duneight, Co. Down*. *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 26, 55-78.

Photographic Plates



Plate 1. Duneight Motte and Bailey, after installation of the title sign and information board.



Plate 2. Trench One, facing north, Context No. 102 excavated to a depth of 0.5 m.

Appendix One: Context Register

Trench One

C. 101 Dark brown humic loam topsoil.

C. 102 Orange brown sandy loam soil.

Trench Two

C. 201 Dark brown humic loam topsoil.

C. 202 Orange clay subsoil.

Appendix Two: Harris Matrix

Trench One:

| | |
|-----|-------------------------------|
| 101 | Dark brown humic loam topsoil |
| 102 | Orange brown sandy loam soil |

Trench Two:

| | |
|-----|--------------------------------|
| 201 | Dark brown humic loam topsoil. |
| 202 | Orange clay subsoil. |

Appendix Three: Photographic Register

Film One: 19 / 05 / 04

Colour Slide Film, Kodak Elite-chrome 100 ISO.

| Image | Facing | Subject |
|-------|--------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | North | Trench One, completed, C. 102. |
| 2 | South | Duneight Motte and Bailey |
| 3 | South | Duneight Motte and Bailey |