

Excavations at the Peel of Lumphanan, Aberdeenshire, 1975–9

Norman S Newton* & Eric J Talbot†

with contributions by J D Bateson, C A Dickson, J H Dickson,
D B Gallagher, J B Kenworthy, J C Murray & M J Stenhouse

ABSTRACT

Five seasons of excavation on this earthwork castle provided fragmentary information about the initial modification and occupation of a natural drumlin, with associated wet ditch, outer bank and stone causeway. In its earliest phase the site was associated with the Durward family. Ceramic and numismatic evidence indicates an initial occupation span from the mid 13th century to the early 14th century. Subsequently the site was reoccupied in the late 15th century and a 'hall-house' known as Ha'ton House was built, going out of use in the 18th century. A wall enclosing the summit of the mound was shown to date from a period of agricultural improvement in the 1780s. A small assemblage of Mesolithic flints is also described. The excavation and post-excavation work were funded and managed by Historic Scotland.

INTRODUCTION

The Peel of Lumphanan (NGR: NJ 576 036), also known as the Peel Ring or the Peel Bog, lies about 1 km south-west of the 19th-century railway village of Lumphanan in Aberdeenshire (illus 1). The site sits astride the ancient route from Strathmore to Moray, by way of Fettercairn and Cairn o'Mounth, crossing the Dee at Kincardine O'Neill and the Don at Alford.

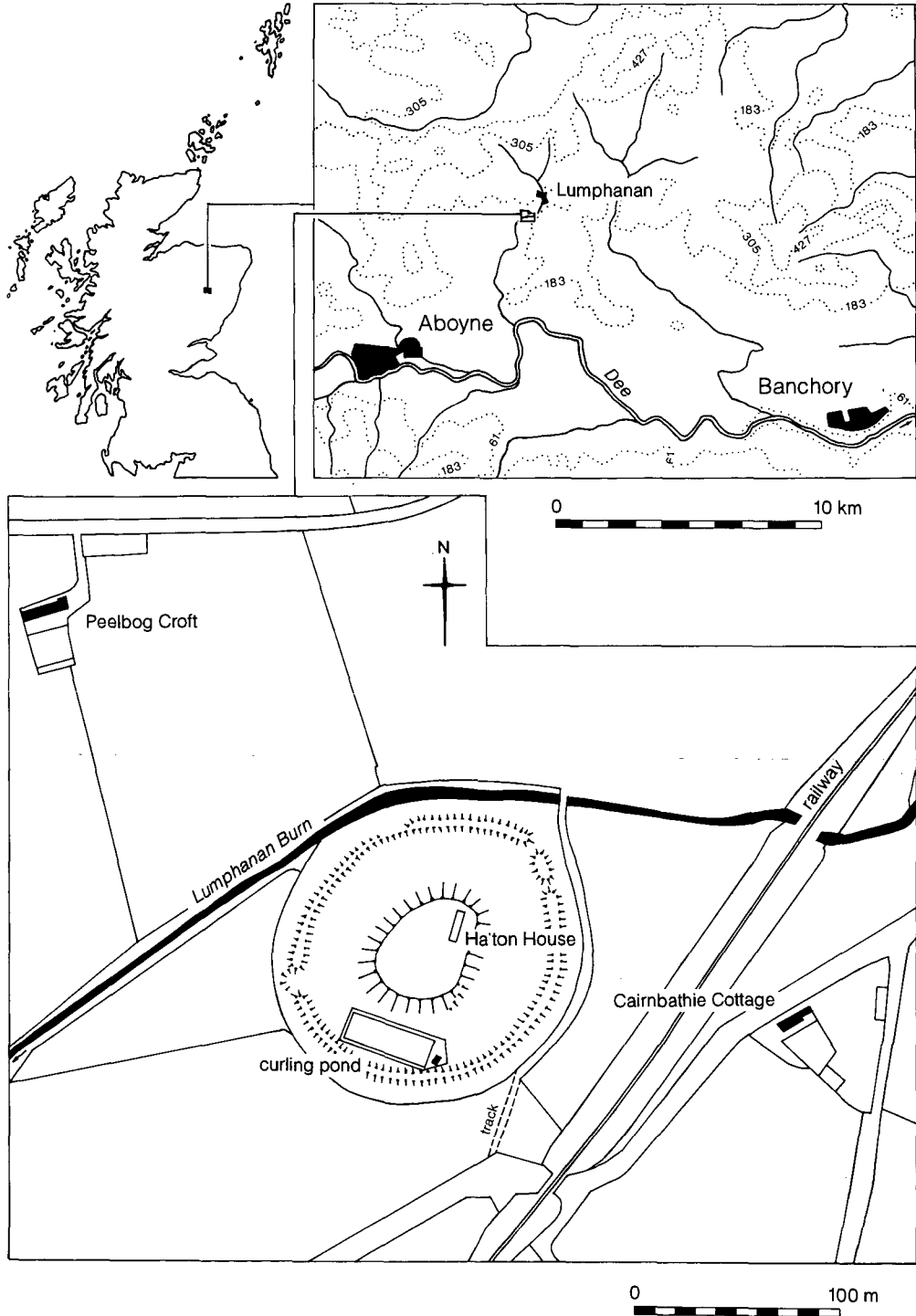
SITE DESCRIPTION

The pear-shaped mound of the Peel of Lumphanan measures 55 m by 36 m across the summit and is a drumlin of glacial origin. Surrounding the mound was a wet ditch, up to 15 m wide, itself enclosed by a circular bank. The water level was controlled by a sluice system. In the south-west sector of the ditch can be seen the rectangular outline of a curling pond built soon after 1920. The height of the mound above the current base of the ditch is 5 m, of which up to 2 m may be due to human modification of the natural mound.

Before the excavation the level summit of the mound was enclosed by a dry-stone dyke. This feature is now known to be of 18th-century date, but before the excavation results were known, it had been suggested that the main elements of the site were a motte with a contemporary

* 41 Blackwell Road, Culloden, Inverness IV1 2DZ

† 93 Tylacelyn Road, Pen-y-Graig, Rhondda, South Wales CF40 1JR



ILLUS 1 Location map. (Based on the Ordnance Survey map © Crown copyright)



ILLUS 2 Aerial view of Peel of Lumphanan from NNE. (*Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland* © Crown copyright)

curtain wall, in effect a 13th-century shell-keep (Cruden 1981, 27–8). There were traces of the remains of structures on the top of the mound, and well-defined foundations of a rectangular stone building could be seen abutting the supposed ‘curtain wall’ on the east side. This was identified as Halton House, a manor house known locally as Ha’ton House, which was occupied from 1487 until soon after 1745.

The area of the summit was calculated as 0.424 acres (0.17 ha) by the Ordnance Survey in 1868 (*Aberdeenshire 25-in. map*). This makes it considerably larger than a ‘normal’ motte, of which the excavated example at the nearby Castlehill of Strachan (Yeoman 1984, 315–64) is more typical. Indeed, there is enough room on top of the mound at Lumphanan to combine the functions of both a motte and bailey.

HISTORY

About 400 m north-east of the Peel is St Finan’s Church and Churchyard, traditionally founded by St Finan, who may have travelled to Deeside in the company of St Mungo soon after AD 573. The place-name Lumphanan betrays the Welsh-speaking origin of the sixth-century saint: ‘Llan-Finan’, the Church of Finan. In Gaelic, which was spoken on Deeside until the 19th century, the place-name was ‘Lann Finain’. The earliest spelling (before 1100) is Lumfanan, while in 1299 it is Lumfannan.

The earliest reference to Lumphanan (though not, it should be noted, to the Peel) is the record in a contemporary chronicle of the death of Macbeth at the hands of Macduff ‘in

Lumphanan' in 1057 (Anderson 1922, I, 600). Tradition associates several local sites with Macbeth. Lumphanan has been incorporated into a widely promoted heritage trail and in 1957 the Peel of Lumphanan was taken into state care as an Ancient Monument, marking the passing of 900 years since Macbeth's death. There is no evidence that Macbeth ever visited the Peel, however, or that any structure existed on the site until at least 150 years after this.

As Anglo-Norman influences reached this part of Scotland in the late 12th/early 13th century, mottes were constructed throughout the north-east, particularly along the straths of the Dee and the Don (Yeoman 1984, 317, illus 2). Although there is no direct charter evidence, it is likely that the Anglo-Norman De Lundin family erected the first earthwork castle at Lumphanan, presumably enclosed by a 'palacium' or palisade from which the Peel takes its name. They held the hereditary royal office of Door-keeper or Door-ward, from which their more familiar family name of Durward derives. It is thought that the Durwards may have acquired a great portion of the Earldom of Mar about 1228, including the southern half of the Howe of Cromar, and stretching northwards to Alford and eastwards to Skene (Simpson 1923, 47-8). Their territories also extended down Deeside to Invercanny, and included the Feugh valley at least as far as Strachan.

Thomas Durward appears to have been the first of his family to hold lands in the north; he built a bridge over the Dee at Kincardine O'Neil, while his son built a travellers' hospice near the bridge in 1233. His son was the famous and powerful Alan Durward, who attained the position of chief adviser to Alexander II from 1244 until the King's death in 1249; he contested power with his great rival Walter Comyn, Earl of Menteith, during Alexander III's minority and after. The Durwards' major stronghold in the north-east was at Coull Castle (Simpson 1923, 45-99). Alan Durward died in 1275 (A Young, pers comm) and the Durward lands were divided among his three daughters.

In 1296 Lumphanan was the venue of the submission of Sir John de Melville, of Raith in Fife, to Edward I of England. The itinerary of Edward's travels in Scotland in that year states that he was at Lumphanan on 21 July. In order to take Melville's oath of fealty in person, Edward made a considerable detour from his main route north which took him from Aberdeen to Kintore, then to Fyvie (Bain 1884, no 787, 195; Stevenson 1870, vol 2, 29). This diversion is otherwise unexplained, but perhaps suggests that Lumphanan itself held some significance (G Simpson, pers comm).

In 1299 a deed was executed conveying the lands of Coull and Lumphanan to Sir John Hastings, Lord of Abergavenny, for his lifetime (Bain 1884, no 1108). Various subsequent transfers of ownership have been identified (Fraser 1929, 7-14; David 1978, 83-93) until in 1487 the lands were granted, with others nearby, to Thomas Charteris of Kinfauns, who seems to have built the residence which came to be known as Ha'ton House, or Halton Peel. This 'manor house' appears in the record in 1657, when Patrick Irvine obtained a charter from Cromwell, and in 1702, when Francis Ross received a disposition of the lands of Auchlossan, Cairnbady (Cairnbeathie), Bogloch, Craigton of Lumphanan, 'and the Peill thereof called Halton of Lumphanan'. In 1790, among the lands entailed by the Trustees of Francis Farquharson of Finzean, were 'All and Hail the lands of Halton, with the Peill and Manour-place thereof'. It is almost certain that Ha'ton House was unoccupied by that time and this description of the property may simply have been copied from previous legal documents (Fraser 1929, 11).

It is not known precisely when Ha'ton House was abandoned, or under what circumstances. It has been suggested that after the Jacobite Rising of 1745 the continued occupation of a site of great natural strength 'would be looked on with suspicion' (Fraser 1929, 11). Equally plausible, perhaps, may have been a disinclination to live on top of such an exposed hillock, surrounded by

bog. Roy's *Military Survey of Scotland* (1755–7) shows the Peel of Lumphanan as a pear-shaped blob surrounded by an irregular rectangle which may represent the outer bank, with the Kirkton of Lumphanan shown less than 1 km to the east. The ruins of Ha'ton House were evidently still visible until the early 1780s, when the summit was cleared and levelled by a zealous improver (the tenant of neighbouring Bogloch Farm); the rubble was used to enclose the summit with a drystone dyke and in building houses in the neighbourhood (*NSA* 1845, 1089). By the 1790s the site could be described as 'a fort, built chiefly of earth from the moat around it, not perpendicular but contracting as it rises; it appears round but is really oval . . . It measures $86\frac{1}{2}$ yards in circumference at the top and the area may sow 6 or 7 pecks of oats. The moat at the base is 23 yards wide. Without lies another ring 350 yards round' (*SAS* 1793, 388). These observations give some hint of the agricultural use of the site after the 'improvements' of the 1780s and also accord broadly with a subsequent description, in the 1840s:

the Peel Bog, situated in a marshy hollow near the church, is an interesting monument of antiquity. The circular earthen mound, 46 yards in diameter, rises about 12 feet above the level of the bog, and is surrounded by a moat. The course by which the water was conveyed from the burn of Lumphanan may still be traced; the measurement of the circumvallation by which the water was confined may still be made; the situation of the drawbridge is still discernible; the path leading from the fosse to the top of the mound may still be trodden; and the sluice by which the water issued from the moat was laid bare by the flood of 1829 (*NSA* 1845, 1089).

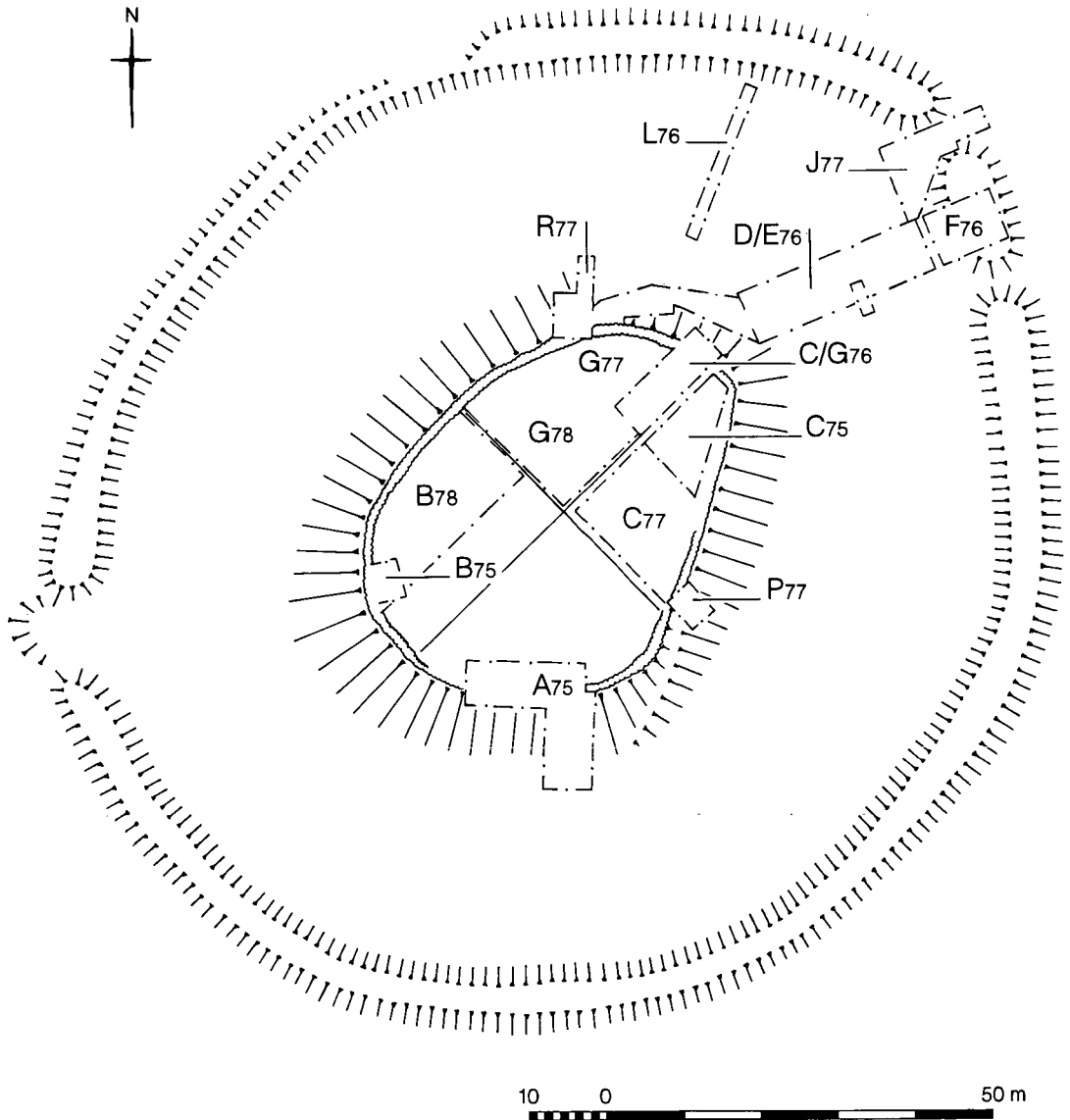
Unprecedented flooding affected the whole of the north-east of Scotland after tremendous thunderstorms in August 1829 (Grant 1979). The floods may well have exposed remains of a sluice system at Lumphanan, but this was not confirmed by excavation, or by infra-red aerial photography. However, the excavations at the Doune of Invernochty (Simpson 1936) give some idea of the degree of technical sophistication which could have been achieved.

PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS

The mound appears to have been investigated on at least two previous occasions, but it has proved impossible to pin down the dates of these 'excavations'. An inconclusive excavation on the mound is attributed to 'Mr Farquharson of Finzean, proprietor of the Peel Bog' by Fraser (1929, 10). The writers were verbally informed by a visitor to the site of an unrecorded excavation around the year 1907. Unfortunately, despite appeals, no further details of this have become available. Traces of these earlier investigations were identified by the present excavation. It was clear that the trenches were superficial and did not impinge on the occupation levels on the summit of the mound.

THE EXCAVATIONS

Excavations were carried out by a team from the Department of Archaeology at the University of Glasgow between 1975–9, under the direction of Eric Talbot. The work was undertaken on behalf of the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate of the Department of the Environment (now Historic Scotland), into whose care the earthwork had been entrusted in 1957. Concern had been expressed with the dangerous state of the path giving public access to the mound, and the danger to children of large, loose stones tumbling off the dyke which enclosed the summit. It was decided,



ILLUS 3 Trench locations

therefore, to undertake small-scale archaeological investigations in advance of consolidating the monument and improving public access.

One of the aims of the excavation was to locate the original entrance through the enclosing bank so that this could be reused for public access. Equally important was ascertaining the age of the enclosing dyke, which was carefully dismantled in the search for medieval walling round the edge of the mound (none was found). On the summit, the chief aim was to identify and consolidate the remains of the late 15th-century Ha'ton House.

THE OUTER BANK

Before excavation, the outer bank appeared as a circular, grass-covered feature 2 m high and 8 m wide, surmounted by trees, with gaps in the west, north and east. Portions of the bank were removed opposite the end of the causeway (below), and eventually a section through the bank was excavated (Area F; not illus). Sherds of medieval pottery were found beneath the bank and in the core. Elsewhere, however, beer bottles and soft-drink cans indicated that much of the bank, on its outside at least, is of relatively recent date; while tree-planting, probably undertaken in the 1830s, enhanced its height considerably. It is likely that a substantial part of the original outer bank was washed away in the 'Muckle Spate' of 1829, and that the surviving bank is due for the most part to landscaping and repair operations soon afterwards.

The Lumphanan Burn was re-directed when the Deeside railway was constructed in 1859. Up until that date the burn ran on the south side of the Peel; now it runs on the north side (illus 1). A ditch encountered beneath the outer bank on the east side could well have been a sluice bringing water into the site (Area F; not illus), though neither monochrome nor infra-red aerial photographs show any sign of an infilled watercourse beyond this. The constraints of the excavation design did not allow further investigation of this feature.

THE CAUSEWAY

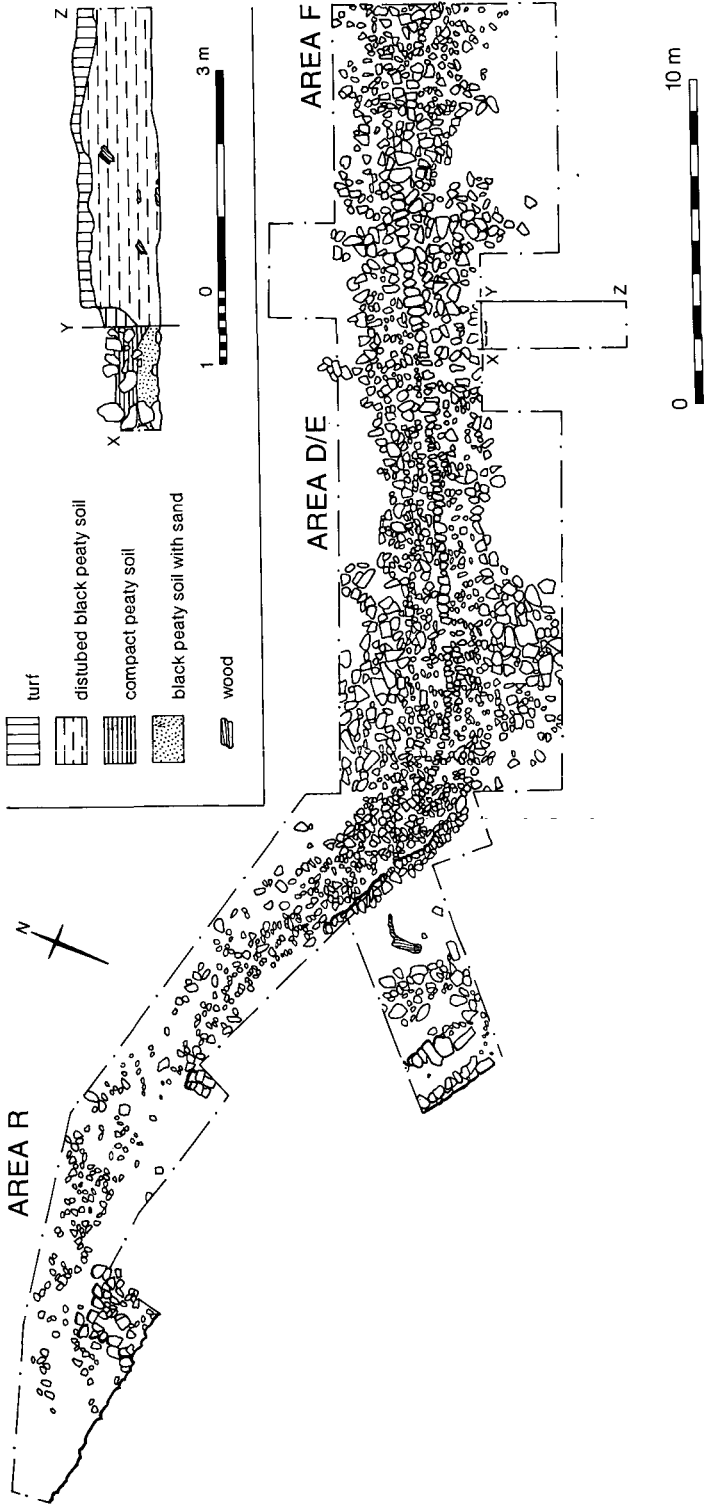
There were no visible indications of the 'drawbridge' reported in the 1840s (*NSA* 1843, 1089) but during the very dry summer of 1975 a strip of grass across the ditch below Ha'ton House turned a parched shade of brown (Area J), and a trial trench revealed a well-laid pathway. Subsequent excavation revealed an impressive causeway (illus 4 & 5) which led from a break in the bank and continued as a well-laid path to the top of the mound. No defensive controls could be identified — in the form of a gateway, for instance — though it should be noted that the area where the path gained the top of the mound was very disturbed.

As a drain was to be laid across the causeway to facilitate public access, the opportunity was taken to remove the stones from a small area, which was then excavated mechanically to take a drainage pipe (not illus). This exercise revealed that the causeway was of one period only, well founded, and apparently built on top of a matting of twigs and branches, presumably laid to stabilize its foundations. A wood sample from beneath the causeway was radiocarbon dated and produced a date within the last hundred years (GV-1276; see Stenhouse, below). This was from the edge of the causeway, however, and is unlikely to indicate the date of this feature. The causeway did not appear to be modern and is not recorded by any previous description of the site known to the writers. Thus, though it may have been built during late 18th-century agricultural improvements, it is much more likely to date to the building of Ha'ton House soon after 1487, or perhaps to the earlier occupation of the mound in the 13th century. It may, of course, have been partly repaired in the last century.

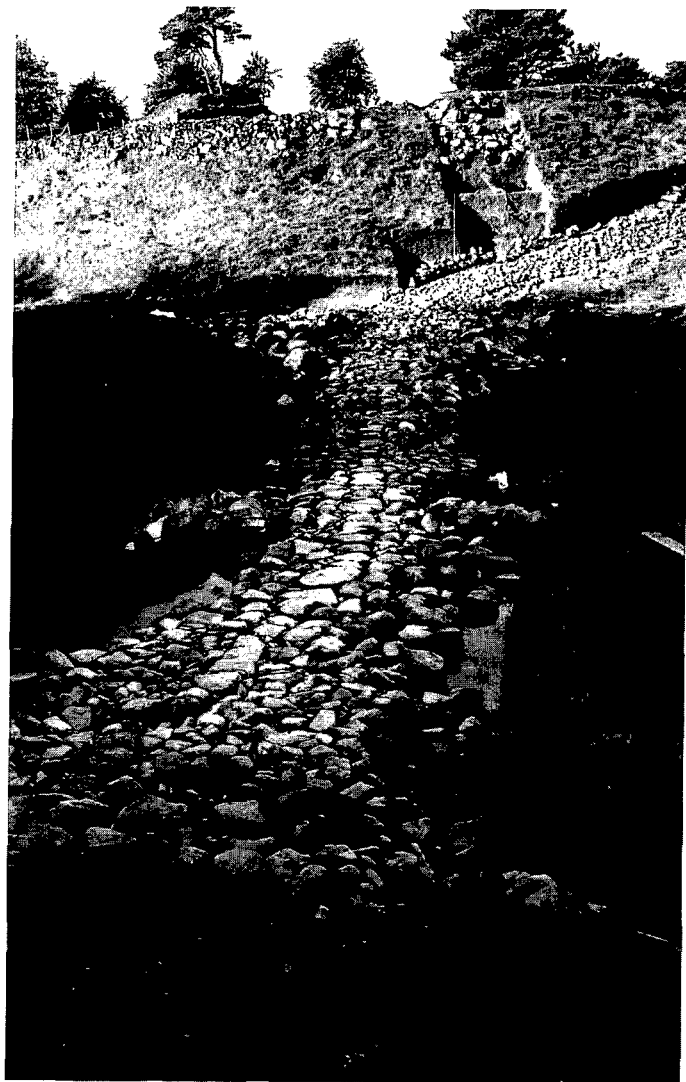
Wood from the causeway

C A Dickson & J H Dickson

The wood litter beneath the causeway consisted of branches 15–25 mm in diameter, and from four to seven years old. Transverse and longitudinal sections were examined with the aid of a microscope. All the branches showed a similar anatomical structure. Vessels of early spring wood form a single ring but later vessels are mainly in radial lines. The vessels had scalariform



ILLUS 4 Plan of the causeway



ILLUS 5 The causeway and path to the top of the motte

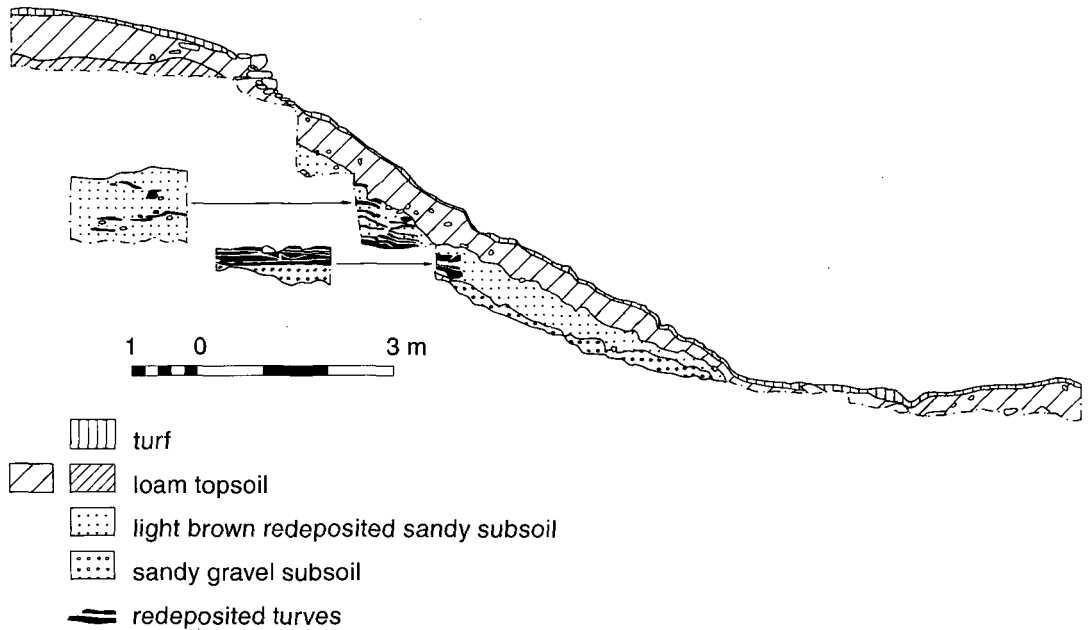
perforation of about 25 bars. The rays are long, uniseriate, occasionally aggregate and almost all homogenous. All these features accord with those of *Alnus* (Alder).

Radiocarbon date

M J Stenhouse

The following date was derived from a wood sample from beneath the causeway.

LAB CODE	SAMPLE MATERIAL	YRS BP	dC13%
GV-1276	<i>Alnus</i> (Alder) twigs, 5–15 mm diameter with bark; wet wt c 43 g	< 100 yrs	–25%



ILLUS 6 Section through the mound edge in Area A

13TH-CENTURY FEATURES

The summit of the mound was deeply covered by layers of humic topsoil, consisting for the most part of soil thought to have been introduced to the site during the agricultural improvements of the 1780s. These were excavated to the level of the foundations of Ha'ton House, in keeping with the main aim in this area, but the opportunity was also taken to examine earlier features where these became exposed. Likely 13th-century features included floor remnants, a possible palisade and a turf-built bank or platform by which the natural mound had been raised considerably in height. Two 13th-century coins were also found.

The mound

The investigation and removal of the enclosing dyke afforded the opportunity to explore the make-up of the mound. A trench down the shoulder of the mound (illus 6), showed that it was naturally formed of glacial deposits which had been heightened in the 13th century by carefully laid turves — possibly the remnants of a turf rampart. Scarborough Ware and a Henry III silver long cross penny of 1248–50 were found amongst the turves; lack of wear on the coin strongly suggests a date soon after 1250 for this feature.

Possible palisade?

Area A was extended for a short distance along the mound edge in the hope of picking up evidence of a palisade or stockade. No definitive evidence was found, though fragmentary traces of shallow depressions fronted by small packed stones might be interpreted as remains of some kind of defensive feature comprised of wooden palings or posts (not illus). On the whole, these features were slight and the evidence for a palisade was unconvincing.

The interior

The summit was found to be very disturbed, both by agriculture and faunal activity, as well as by the previous investigations (above). Thus, for instance, medieval pottery was found in disturbed contexts at all levels, including the spoil heaps of earlier investigations. An Edward I silver penny of 1282–9 was found in a very disturbed area near the north-west corner of Ha'ton House. This was fairly worn, suggesting loss in the late 13th or early 14th century. Traces of possible floors and spreads of decayed mortar were found in this area but were not explored in depth. (Illus 6 gives some indication of the depth which would have to be removed from the mound top before sustained archaeological investigations of 13th-century levels could begin.)

15TH-CENTURY FEATURES

The north-east quadrant of the summit (illus 3, Area C) was explored to investigate the remains of the 15th-century manor house, known locally as Ha'ton House, and to look for the possible remains of a bridgehead or entrance gateway. The foundations of the house were exposed and are interpreted as remains of a two-storey 'hall house'. No trace of a gateway was found. Finds include fragments of a glass vessel, window glass and a late 16th-century coin.

Ha'ton House

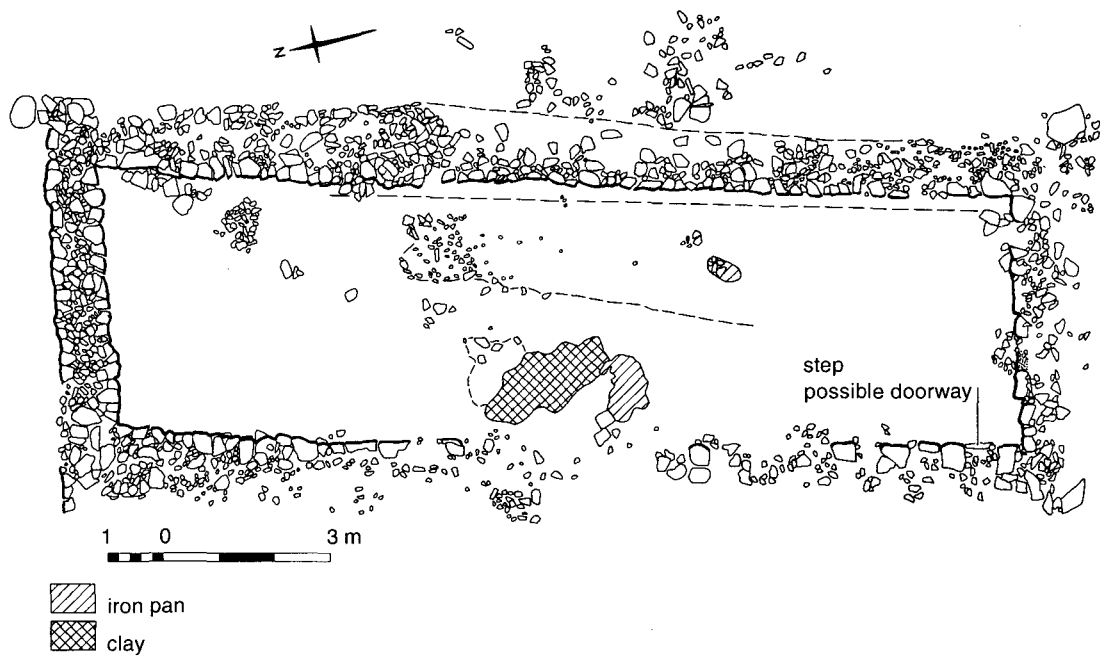
The wall remnants of Ha'ton House were exposed beneath layers of humic topsoil (some of this — at either side of the wall lines — was interpreted as upcast from previous excavations). The building was 16 m by 5 m within walls c 1 m thick (illus 7 & 8). Only the foundations remained. These were cut into a sandy brown soil containing medieval pottery sherds (a similar layer occurred in Area 3 at this level). The west wall was severely denuded, but a gap near the south end (0.65 m wide) was identified as a possible entrance. Patches of clay near the centre of the building and a spread of small stones by the south wall are interpreted as possible floor remnants. Other traces of a possible floor level were found throughout the interior, consisting of soil with mixed charcoal, clay, (possible) decayed brick and burnt bone. Patches of material interpreted as leached plaster were found in the area between the north gable and the enclosing dyke, perhaps dating from the demolition of the house in the late 18th century.

No traces of room divisions were found, in the form of post-holes or internal foundation trenches. This suggests that the building was of the 'hall-house' type, a two-storey block with an upper hall over an undercroft. This suggestion is supported by the discovery of a 'sleeper-beam' trench to the east (not illus), presumably supporting the timbers of an external staircase leading to an entrance on the first floor. Post-holes inserted within the trench suggest that this feature may have been refurbished at least once. An iron nail (illus 10; small find no 43) was recovered from the base of one of the post-holes.

Other finds include part of a possible stone tile, sherds of window glass, fragments of a wine glass, a whetstone fragment, a James VI billon eightpenny plack of 1583–90 (see Bateson, below) and some sherds of medieval pottery. The coin, whetstone and glass fragments were recovered from the spoil mounds of earlier investigators.

AGRICULTURAL IMPROVEMENTS

The dyke enclosing the summit was carefully dismantled. This is interpreted as entirely a product of 18th-century improvements, as no evidence for any earlier phase could be found. The deep topsoil is also attributed to 18th-century improvements. Deepening the topsoil on the mound would have allowed crops to be planted on the summit. The origin of this soil is unknown; it may have been imported from the floodplain of the Lumphanan Burn.



ILLUS 7 Plan of the remains of Ha'ton House



ILLUS 8 The remains of Ha'ton House (from north-east)



ILLUS 9 The 18th-century dyke which enclosed the summit

THE FINDS

POTTERY (NOT ILLUS)

J C Murray

Over 80 pottery sherds were recovered from contexts which appear to have been medieval in date (late 13th to early 14th century). There are 60 sherds of Scarborough Ware. These are mostly bodysherds; some are decorated and at least two are from a face-mask jug. Without exception this is Farmer's (1979) Phase 2 Scarborough Ware, dating between 1225–1350. Scarborough Ware is ubiquitous in north-east Scotland. Apart from its occurrences in medieval towns along the coastline, it has also emerged as a dominant feature of medieval ceramic assemblages from inland sites such as Kildrummy (Apted 1963) and, more recently, Castlehill of Strachan (Yeoman 1984). The only other evidence for imported wares is provided by two small bodysherds, one of possible Rouen Ware and one northern French: both of these occurred in disturbed contexts in Area A. In addition, there are 20 sherds of local red wares; these are very similar to 13th/14th-century wares found in Aberdeen (Murray 1982).

Post-medieval pottery was found on the site in small quantities, including one sherd of a (probable) 16th-century chafing dish in a local ware.

WORKED FLINT (NOT ILLUS)

J B Kenworthy

Eight pieces of struck flint were recovered (from Areas C, J & T). Although the group is small, it is not without interest, since it apparently belongs to a single industry, typical of the later

Mesolithic period in north-east Scotland. The material comprises a small waste flake, a core-trimming flake lacking the distal end, three bladelets (one incomplete), the snapped proximal end of a bladelet, and two modified pieces, one a bladelet and the other an end-scraper. The raw material was river cobble flint. As this is absent from Strath Dee, the cobbles were probably brought in from the Buchan area, a distance of perhaps 60 km. The original context of the worked pieces can only be guessed, however, as they may have been imported to the site amongst the quantities of soil which were spread over the summit during late 18th-century improvements.

A catalogue of the flints from Lumphanan forms part of the excavation archive.

Modified pieces

Of the modified pieces, the first is a bladelet, lacking the proximal end, which bears a notch 5 mm long by 3 mm broad, punched inversely from the left-hand edge near the proximal break. The notching is the first stage in Mesolithic microlith production from segmented bladelets, and the snapping of the proximal end of the piece may be due to a mis-hit during the segmentation process. The size of microlith which could be produced leaves no doubt that this represents a later Mesolithic industry.

The other modified piece is a heavy-duty end scraper on one end of a reworked exhausted uniplane core. The edge angle indicates use on a hard material, as does the heavy step-flake damage to the working-edge (this is heaviest on the left-hand part of the edge, and indicates that the worker was right-handed). The wear-damage, and limited microscopic examination of the ventral surface, where there is non-extensive micro-polish, suggest that the material worked may have been bone. The core-form is typically Mesolithic.

COINS

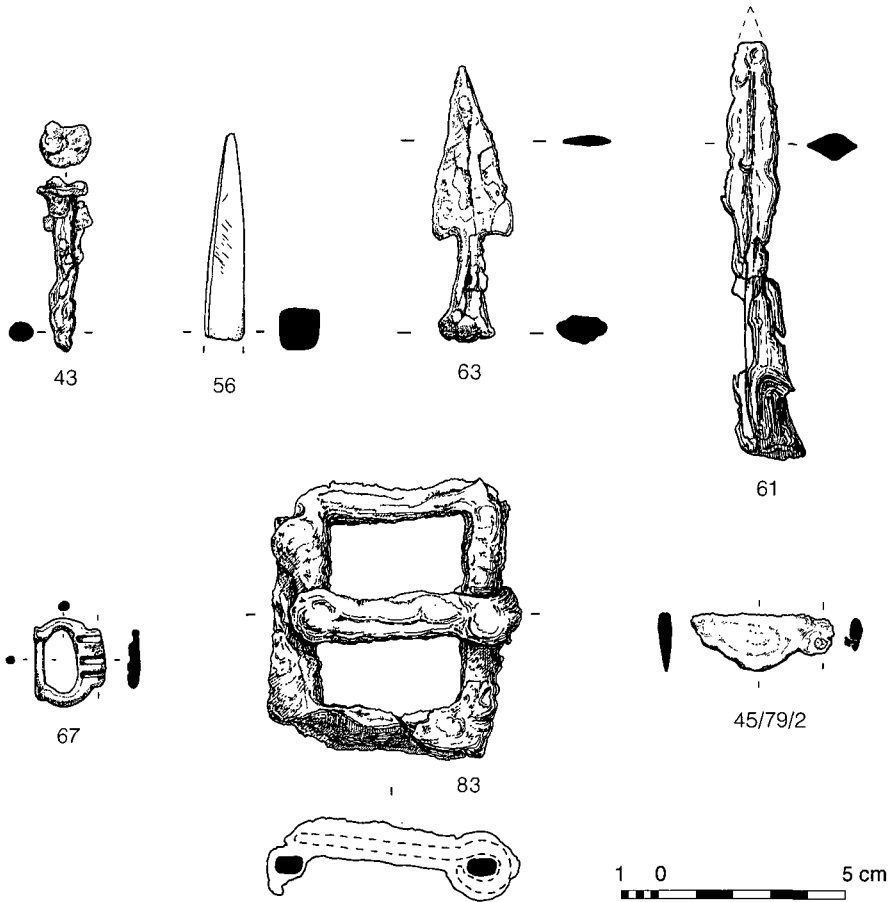
J D Batson

- 1 **England: Henry III silver long cross penny** class 3(bc) (1248–50); mint: London, moneyer: Nicole; in three fragments (now repaired) and bent; wt 14.2 grains (0.92 g); die axis 160°; obverse corroded but little wear; could have circulated as late as 1280 but lack of wear suggests a date of loss fairly soon after 1260 (North 1980, vol 1; 987.1). From Area A; SF no 2.
- 2 **England: Edward I silver penny** class Ivc (1282–9); Canterbury; incomplete and bent; wt 16.1 grains (1.04 g); die axis 60°; fairly worn; probably lost about 1300 (North 1975, vol 2; 1025). From Area C; SF no 35.
- 3 **Scotland: James VI billon eightpenny plack** (1583–90); almost no detail visible; wt 21.9 grains (1.42 g) (Burns 1887; 959.1). From Area C; SF no 32.
- 4 **Scotland: ?James VI copper turner or twopence**, 1623; corroded with little detail remaining. From Area B; SF no 60.
- 5–7 **Scotland: Charles I/II copper turners or twopences**, issues of 1640s/1663; corroded with almost no detail visible. From Area B, SF nos 62 & 77; Area A, SF no 75.

CLAY PIPES (NOT ILLUS)

D B Gallagher

Twenty-six clay pipe fragments were recovered, chiefly from contexts in Areas A and B. The fragments were recorded according to the guidelines recommended by Davey (1981). They include Dutch bowls from the period c 1630–70, and Scottish bowls from the mid 17th-century, as well as 19th-century Swinyard pipes and fragments. A catalogue of material, with illustrations and a fuller discussion, forms part of the excavation archive.



ILLUS 10 Small finds

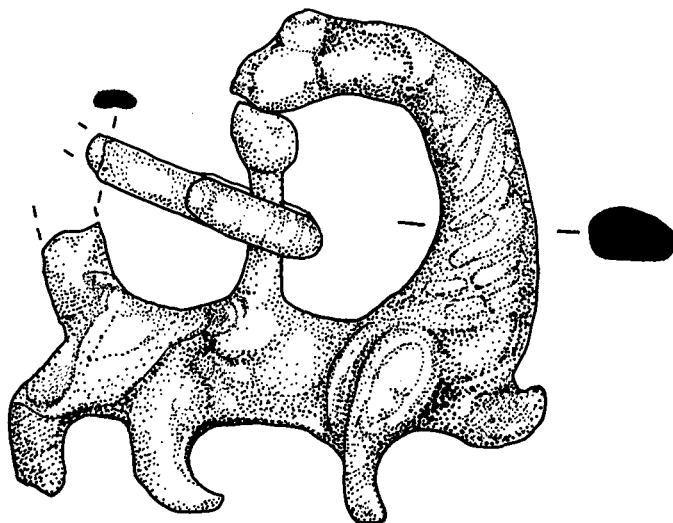
OTHER ARTEFACTS

N S Newton

Most of the remaining small finds were from disturbed contexts. The iron objects were generally poorly preserved and unidentifiable. The few exceptions are listed below, along with two objects of copper and bronze, and a broken whetstone. A few small glass fragments were also recovered (not illus), some possibly of medieval date. A full finds catalogue forms part of the excavation archive deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland.

Catalogue of illustrated objects (illus 10 & 11)

- 41 **Zoomorphic gilt copper buckle.** The animal's tail has presumably returned to form a figure-of-eight buckle. The pin is collared and there is an associated gilt-copper buckle plate. This is likely to be of 13th- or 14th-century date — given the general context of the find — but an earlier date should also be considered. L 55 mm, W 52 mm (buckle); L 9.0 mm, W 6.0 mm, D 0.5 mm (plate); L 3 mm, W 2 mm, D 0.5 mm (plate fragment). Area C.



30 0 30 mm

ILLUS 11 Zoomorphic buckle

- 43 **Iron nail.** L 45 mm, W 6 mm. Oval in section. From the base of the sleeper beam slot adjoining Ha'ton House. Area C.
- 58 **Broken whetstone.** L 54 mm, W 11 mm. Square in section. Regular faces tapering to a flat base. From an old spoil heap. Area G.
- 61 **Iron spearhead.** Socketed. L 1101 mm, W 18 mm, D 9 mm. Area B.
- 63 **Iron arrowhead.** L 72 mm, W 190 mm, D 5 mm. Area B.
- 67 **Bronze buckle.** L 19.5 mm, W 22.5 mm, D 10 mm. Area B.
- 83 **Iron buckle.** L 70 mm, W 60 mm. Area A.
- 45/79/2 **Iron knife blade.** Fragment only. L 38 mm, W 14.5 mm. Area A. (As no small finds number was allocated to this, the museum accessions number is given here instead.)

CONCLUSIONS

In retrospect, the excavations of 1975–9 were disappointing. The strategic framework under which they were carried out did not allow more than an incidental exploration of the 13th-century levels. On the positive side, much was learned about the later history of the site, and the 18th-century date of the 'curtain wall' was clearly established, thereby laying to rest the notion of a 13th-century 'shell-keep'.

Although the excavation of 13th-century levels was very restricted, enough was done, especially on the edge of the mound, to have revealed traces of a stone rampart or palisade if these had been present. As it was, only remains of an insubstantial turf rampart were found, if indeed it was a rampart and not simply levelling deposits with turf revetting on the edge of the mound. It has not been ascertained, however, whether the apparent absence of defensive controls at the outer bank and on the ascent to the mound summit were due to the limited nature of the excavations, to the absence of any contemporary defences, or to their slighting, perhaps during the Wars of Independence. The problem of the dating of the causeway also remains unsolved.

Alternatively, it might be that the Peel was never built with serious defensive arrangements in mind, but was an example of symbolic defence, enhancing and occupying a striking natural feature, and modifying the surrounding boggy area to create a wide ditch (Coulson 1979, 73–90). The effect would have been impressive, if not impregnable. If Lumphanan is seen as a subsidiary residence, with Coull as the Durward's chief seat, its reduced defensive provision is perhaps more easily understood.

The proposed abandonment of the site in the 14th century is supported by the pottery evidence: the small assemblage is dominated by 13th- or early 14th-century wares, the remainder being of post-medieval date. The reoccupation of the Peel with the building of Ha'ton House in the late 15th century was confirmed. The quadrant of the summit containing the hall house and associated features was severely disturbed by agriculture and earlier trenching, but the foundations of the building were moderately well preserved and appear to represent a hall house of two storeys.

ARCHIVE

All excavation records, including site notebooks, photographs, files and drawings have been deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland (RCAHMS).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors thank Chris Tabraham of Historic Scotland for his support and confidence, and for placing the considerable resources of his department at our disposal. We are indebted to the staff of the National Monuments Record of Scotland for their prompt and efficient service, and to other staff of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland for their advice and assistance. The staff of the National Library of Scotland Map Room and of Aberdeen University Library helped with the provision of research material. Grant Simpson and Alan Young both helped with analysis of documentary and historical evidence. Thanks are due to the several specialists who co-operated in making the most of scanty evidence, and to the diggers who suffered extremes of heat and cold during successive seasons. Special thanks are due to the supervisors, Andrew Foxon, Robert Gourlay, Brian Kerr, Peter Lucas, Ifor Rowlands and especially the late Alastair Gordon, whose interpretative insights were often in demand. The site survey was completed with the enthusiastic help of David Tait of the Geography Department (Topographic Science), University of Glasgow. For local help and encouragement, Mr Lilburn of Coull, the late David Riach and many other villagers are gratefully acknowledged.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, A O 1922 *Early Sources of Scottish History*, 2 vols. Edinburgh.
 Apted, M R 1963 'Excavations at Kildrummy Castle, Aberdeenshire, 1952–62', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 96 (1962–3), 208–36.
 Bain, J 1884 *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland and Preserved in HM Public Record Office, London*, vol 2. Edinburgh.
 Burns, E 1887 *The Coinage of Scotland*. Edinburgh.
 Coulson, C 1979 'Structural symbolism in medieval castle architecture', *J Brit Archaeol Assoc*, 132 (1979), 73–90.
 Cruden, S H 1981 *The Scottish Castle*. Edinburgh.

- Davey, P J 1981 'Guidelines for the processing and publication of clay pipes from excavations', in *Medieval and Later Pottery in Wales*, 4 (1981), 65–88.
- David, I A F 1978 'The Peel Ring of Lumphanan', *Deeside Field* (3 ser), 2 (1978), 83–93.
- Farmer, P G 1979 *An Introduction to Scarborough Ware and a Re-assessment of Knight Jugs*. Hove.
- Fraser, G M 1929 'Lumphanan and its historical interests', *Deeside Field*, 4 (1929), 7–14.
- Grant, D [1884] 1979 *The Muckle Spate of 'Twenty-nine'* (new edn). Edinburgh.
- NSA 1845 'Parish of Lumphanan', by Revd C McCombie, in *New Statistical Account*, XII (1845), 1079–95. Edinburgh.
- Murray, J C (ed) 1982 *Excavations in the Medieval Burgh of Aberdeen, 1973–81*. Edinburgh (= Soc Antiq Scot Mongr Ser, 2).
- North, J J 1975–80 *English Hammered Coinage*, 2 vols. London.
- SAS 1793 'Parish of Lumphanan', by Revd W Shand, in *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, 6 (1793), 382–9. Edinburgh.
- Simpson, W D 1923 'The excavation of Coull Castle, Aberdeenshire', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 58 (1922–3), 45–99.
- Simpson, W D 1936 'Excavations at the Doune of Invernochty', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 70 (1935–6), 170–81.
- Stevenson, J 1870 *Documents Illustrative of the History of Scotland from the Death of Alexander III to the Accession of Robert the Bruce, 1286–1306*, 2 vols. Edinburgh.
- Yeoman, P A 1984 'Excavations at Castlehill of Strachan, 1980–81', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 114 (1984), 315–64.

This paper is published with the aid of a grant from Historic Scotland