



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

CAERLAVEROCK CASTLE



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HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

NAME OF PROPERTY

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1 Summary

1.1 Introduction

The monument consists of the two castles of Caerlaverock, the 'old' and the 'new', along with the surviving earthworks associated with the two castles and the site of the harbour initially associated with the old castle. The name may mean either 'fort of the lark' (from British *caer* 'fort'; and Old English *laverock* 'lark') or 'elm fort'.¹

The 'old' castle, now represented by stone foundations atop a grassy mound surrounded by a wide ditch, was occupied for around 50 years (c.1220–70); a silted-up harbour and other associated earthworks beside it may predate the castle. This first castle was abandoned in favour of the 'new' castle to its north. This stands largely complete and is amongst the foremost examples of Scottish medieval secular architecture. Its triangular-shaped curtain wall is unique in Britain, and the Nithsdale Lodging within, dating from the 1630s, is one of the finest examples of Renaissance architecture in Scotland.

Caerlaverock Castle was the chief seat of the Maxwells, one of the great noble families in southern Scotland. Their castle is famous in history and literature through its siege by Edward I of England in 1300, commemorated in the contemporary poem, *The Siege of Caerlaverock*. It was captured in 1640 by the Covenanters after a protracted siege and thereafter abandoned as a lordly residence.

Another major attraction of the site is the surrounding open grassed spaces and the boggy alder woodland, or 'alder carr'². A nature trail links the 'old' and 'new' castles.

The visitor centre at the entrance to the site displays many of the fascinating objects found during archaeological excavations at the two castles. Beside it are two full-size working replicas of medieval siege artillery - a trebuchet and a mangonel. There are also children's dressing-up clothes, and a children's trail and quiz. Interpretation panels guide visitors around both castles and the nature trail, and there is a guidebook for sale.

The visitor centre also has a small shop, café (with limited opening hours) and toilets.

There were about 31,000 visitors in 2013/14, 28% of visitors had children in their group.³

The castle is about 8 miles SE of Dumfries. There is limited car parking. Most people arrive by car; it is possible to access the site by public transport, (6A Stagecoach West Scotland Service.)

¹ D. Dorman, *Scotland's Place-names* (Trowbridge, 1998), p. 34

² Used in Eastern England see (carr | car, n.2 2014)

³ (Historic Scotland & National Trust for Scotland 2014)

1.2 Statement of significance

Caerlaverock is one of the most striking and distinctive of Scotland's castles. It is immediately appealing to visitors with its moat and drawbridge, and presents exactly the appearance which many expect of a medieval castle. The actuality of its history lives up to this appearance with documentary and archaeological evidence of sieges and skirmishes. It is nationally important for a number of reasons including:

- The 'old' and 'new' castles together chart the fortunes of their Maxwell lords, one of the most important noble families in southern Scotland, particularly in the West March, over five centuries.
- The 'old' castle is the most closely studied 'moated site' in Scotland to date. The 1998-9 excavations revealed the remains of an exceedingly rare (for Scotland) hall-and-chamber block residence that, during the course of just 50 years, developed from a largely timber-built construction to one built almost entirely of stone.
- The 'new' castle is one of the best-preserved 13th-century curtain-walled castles in Britain; additionally, its triangular shape is unique. Its construction is remarkable given that the Maxwell lords were not then in the top rank of the nobility.
- The metrical poem recording the English siege of 1300 is not only of great literary and heraldic importance, but also of great historical importance for presenting an eye-witness account of the logistics, tactics and execution of siege warfare of the day.
- The alterations and additions made to the 'new' castle over the course of its 400-year existence display many of the improvements, both domestic and defensive, made to such residences in Scotland by the senior nobility. They culminated in the Nithsdale Lodging, a most remarkable Renaissance mansion built within the ancient walls in the early 17th century.
- The important collection of artefacts recovered from both castles is one of the best surviving from any Scottish castle, and illuminates the less-tangible side of everyday castle life. The high-quality decorated leatherwork, in particular, is rare and especially interesting, whilst the Islamic glass fragments help place Caerlaverock in an international setting.
- The natural environment of woodland and salt marsh around the two castles is as important as the cultural resource. In terms of sites under HES management, Caerlaverock offers among the most important natural heritage assets.

The above short statement encapsulates our current understanding of the main significances of this site. A broader overview of the cultural and natural heritage values of the place is given below.

2 Evidential values

2.1 Background

The Maxwells and their association with Caerlaverock⁴

The Maxwells were one of the most important landed families in the Scottish West March. During their 400-year association with Caerlaverock they held many important State positions, including chamberlain of Scotland, justiciar (chief law officer) of Galloway and sheriffs of Dumfries and Teviotdale. In addition to Caerlaverock, their chief seat, they controlled a substantial landholding throughout Dumfriesshire and Galloway, and elsewhere in southern Scotland, as well as numerous other castles, including keepership of the royal castles at **Lochmaben** and **Threave**.

Around 1157, Radulph, lord of Strath Nith (Nithsdale), granted the estate of 'Karlaueroc' to Holm Cultram Abbey, across the Solway Firth in west Cumberland, founded by David I of Scotland in 1150. The abbey may have established a grange (estate centre) at Caerlaverock, from which produce could be easily shipped to the abbey's harbour at Skinburness, about 13km to the south across the Solway. By 1174, however, the Caerlaverock lands had passed from the abbey into royal control.

In the 1220s, John de Maccuswell (an estate near Roxburgh, in south-east Scotland - whence Maxwell) was granted the lordship of Caerlaverock, most probably to help the Scottish Crown's continuing struggle to overcome the threat posed by the rebellious Gallovidians beyond the River Nith to the west. John de Maxwell built the 'old' castle'.⁵

Sir John's nephew, on inheriting the estate from his father Aymer in 1266, took the decision to build a new and much grander castle 200m NW. Subsidence at the 'old' castle, then hard by the salt-marsh, may well have prompted the relocation, but Herbert grasped the opportunity to rebuild in a much more grand and impressive style; his family was then on the way up the aristocratic ladder and such a building would have better reflected his family's increasing wealth and power. A charter of 1276 describes Sir Herbert Maxwell as being 'of Caerlaverock', indicating that by then this was his chief residence. Even so, Herbert was still not in the first rank of the nobility (eg, earl) and his splendid 'new' castle is something of a puzzle given that it was of a better standard than most of his superiors, including the Crown itself. (**Bothwell** and **Dirleton** are other examples of great curtain-walled castles built by lords not in the first rank.)⁶

⁴ Much of what follows is taken from W. Fraser, *The Book of Caerlaverock: Memorials of the Maxwells, Earls of Nithsdale*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1873). For a far more succinct, and recent, account, see A. M. T. Maxwell-Irving, 'The Maxwells of Caerlaverock', in R. Oram and G. Stell (eds.), *Lordship and Architecture in Medieval and Renaissance Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2005).

⁵ M. Brann, *Excavations at Caerlaverock Old Castle, Dumfries and Galloway, 1998-9* (Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society, Dumfries, 2004)

⁶ See F. Watson, 'The expression of power in a medieval kingdom: thirteenth-century Scottish castles', in S. Foster et al. (eds.), *Scottish Power Centres from the Early Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century* (Glasgow, 1998), pp. 61-2.

In 1291 Sir Herbert was one of the nobles appointed as an auditor to preside over the process of deciding the succession to the throne, following the death, without heir, of Queen Margaret in 1290. He voted for John Balliol, his neighbour across the Nith, who became King John. During the Wars of Independence with England and the civil wars between the Balliols and Bruces that followed King John's deposition by Edward I of England in 1296, the Maxwells' allegiance alternated between the Scottish and English causes. The 'new' castle was subjected to a number of sieges, the most famous being that of Edward I, in 1300, when the might of the English army was brought to bear on the Scots garrison, as recorded in a unique, contemporary poem.⁷ The castle suffered as a result, but was substantially repaired in the 1330s, according to the evidence from dendrochronology, thus coinciding with the concerted attempt by Edward Balliol, King John's son, to seize the Scottish throne, aided by Edward III of England. The Wars of Independence ended with the return to Scotland from English captivity of David II in 1365. Shortly thereafter John Maxwell set about rebuilding the shattered castle; a new bridge has been dated by dendrochronology to 1371.⁸

By the early 15th century, the Maxwells had allied themselves with the powerful Black Douglases. In 1424, Herbert Maxwell was created Lord Maxwell by a grateful James I, whom he had helped return to Scotland from long captivity in England. Following the Black Douglases' dramatic fall from grace in 1455, the Maxwells soon supplanted them as the leading power in the West March. Even though John, 4th lord Maxwell, died with three of his brothers at Flodden in 1513, the family managed to recover. In 1536-7, Robert, 5th Lord Maxwell acted as regent during James V's absence in France. During all this time, the Maxwells controlled all the major castles in the area, including **Lochmaben** and **Threave**, and made substantial improvements to Caerlaverock, which remained their chief seat.

The Maxwells were devout Catholics. Even after the Protestant Reformation of 1560, and the flight of Mary Queen of Scots in 1568, they continued to support her, and following her execution in 1587, John, 8th Lord Maxwell, plotted with Spain in the attempted invasion of England. He strengthened Caerlaverock's defences in anticipation of attack. Somehow, despite the defeat of the 'Spanish Armada', the Maxwells contrived to retain their position in society. James VI restored them to their castles and estates, and in 1620 made Robert Maxwell, the 9th lord, first Earl of Nithsdale. Apparently, the Crown could ill afford to lose the wealth of experience in controlling the West March accrued by the Maxwells over four centuries at Caerlaverock. The earl celebrated his new position by building a fine new mansion, the Nithsdale Lodging, within the castle's ancient walls.

⁷ Earliest surviving manuscript of 'The Roll', 'The Song' or 'The Siege of Caerlaverock' as it is now known, is in the British Library: Cotton Manuscript Caligula A. XVIII. Online antiquarian edition. See also T. Wright (ed.), *The Roll of Arms of the princes, Barons and Knights who Attended King Edward I to the Siege of Caerlaverock* (London, 1864) and C. Scott-Giles (trans.), *The Siege of Caerlaverock* (The Heraldry Society, London, 1960).

⁸ For the dendrochronology, see I. MacIvor and D. Gallagher, 'Excavations at Caerlaverock Castle, 1955-66', *The Archaeological Journal*, 156 (1999), pp. 162-86.

Caerlaverock's days, however, were numbered. Charles I's troubles with his Scottish subjects saw Covenanters besiege the castle in 1640, which resulted in substantial damage to the fabric. The castle thereafter was abandoned as a lordly residence. By the 18th century the ruined medieval stronghold had become an object of considerable antiquarian interest.

The 'old' castle⁹

In c.1220 John de Maccuswell (Maxwell) was granted the barony of Caerlaverock by Alexander II, and soon set about building the 'old' castle. A length of structural timber thought to be from the access bridge crossing the moat from its northern side has been dated to c.1229.

The castle was built on a trapezoidal platform measuring c. 30m by 27m. This was surrounded by a wet moat, the upcast from which was used to create flat-topped outer banks. To its south lay a 70m-long basin, thought to have been used as a tidal harbour, and to the NW and NE were two ditched enclosures that probably served as baileys (outer service courts). Other banks and ditches have been recorded within the vicinity. It seems possible that some of these earthworks, including the putative harbour, predate the 13th-century castle.

The initial complex consisted of a timber-built ground-floor hall along the south side and a stone-built chamber block, close by but detached from it, along the east side; the latter had a stone forestair indicating at least one upper storey. A third, smaller timber structure stood in the NW corner. A small timber gatehouse protected the entrance across the west moat.

By degrees, and over the course of the next fifty years, the complex was developed. The timber hall was replaced by a stone-built three-bay hall on the same footprint, and the gap between it and the chamber block infilled, to create an L-shaped range. A stone perimeter wall was built around the edge of the mound (presumably replacing a timber palisade, though no evidence for it was found). This wall had a projecting tower (latrine tower?) at the NE corner, beside the chamber block. Subsequently, three more small square projecting stone turrets were added at the other three corners. The timber structure in the NW corner was replaced with a more substantial one.

The dating of the first bridge at the 'new' castle to c.1277 (see below) implies that the 'old' castle was only occupied for about 50 years. Archaeo-magnetic dating of the two hearths found in the hall of the 'old' castle indicates last firings in 1270x75 and 1250x1310.

This short period of occupation is possibly explained by the evidence of subsidence in the surviving stretches of perimeter wall; it is possible that the three towers may have been added to try and buttress it.

⁹ See Brann, 2004, *op. cit.*, for a full description of the 'old' castle, based on the 1998-9 excavations, and all the details that follow in this section.

Post-occupation activity on the mound included the construction of an oven or grain-drying kiln and evidence of smithing activity. These may pertain to building works associated with the ‘new’ castle; alternatively, they may be evidence of siege activity.

The ‘new’ castle¹⁰

The exact sequence of building of the ‘new’ castle is not certain. However, a combination of documentary, architectural and archaeological evidence has provided a reasonably robust broad outline.

The initial building of the 1270s

The symmetrical design, the twin-towered gatehouse and the fish-tailed arrowslits date the origins of the ‘new’ castle to the later 13th century, thus confirming the evidence from the dendrochronology of the bridge timbers, which shows that the original bridge over the moat (Bridge 1) was constructed c.1277.

Despite the fact that Sir Herbert’s castle was subsequently badly damaged during siege and thereafter heavily repaired and rebuilt, its basic form is clear. Its stone curtain wall was triangular, roughly twice the size of the ‘old’ castle. There was a circular projecting tower at the SW and SE corners and an impressive twin-towered keep-gatehouse at the north, facing the main, landward, approach; this latter housed the principal hall and private chambers of the Maxwells. There was a wide, water-filled moat around the curtain wall. A drawbridge (described as a turning-bridge - *pont tourniz* - in the 1300 poem of the siege) gave access through the keep-gatehouse from the north, whilst there is evidence for a postern (back gate) at the west end of the south wall.¹¹ The gatehouse is the only structure that sits directly on top of natural bedrock, for excavation showed that the site slopes away to the south, requiring the rest of the triangular structure to be built on artificially raised ground. Structural settlement is evident, particularly at the SW corner of the keep-gatehouse. The manner in which the builders created several offset courses to underpin the curtain wall at a low level led previous authorities to discern different building phases in the stonework where there were probably none.¹²

Repair and rebuilding in the 14th century

The English siege of 1300, and subsequent reward from Robert I (Bruce) to Eustace Maxwell c.1312 for ‘demolishing the castle’ the castle to make it

¹⁰ This section on the ‘new’ castle is largely based on I. MacIvor and D. Gallagher (1999), *op. cit.*

¹¹ Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, *An Inventory of the Monuments and Constructions in the County of Dumfries* (Edinburgh, 1920), p. 13.

¹² For an account of the initial building phases, see MacIvor and Gallagher, *op. cit.*, p. 190. For previous building analyses, see W. D. Simpson, ‘The two castles of Caerlaverock: a reconsideration of their problems’, *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, 21 (1936-8), 180-204, and B. H. St. J. O’Neil, *Caerlaverock Castle* (1951).

unusable by the English,¹³ seem to have resulted in severe damage to the fabric, though there is now no way of knowing the extent of the destruction. However, by 1332 Sir Eustace had rejoined the Balliol cause, siding with Edward Balliol, the late King John's son, in his attempt to regain the throne. Evidence of significant repairs being made to the castle at this time has come from dendrochronology of the bridge timbers, showing a major repair in 1333. Following Edward Balliol's resignation of the Crown and return to England in 1356, the castle was retaken by the Scots for David II, King Robert's son. Abbot Walter Bower, writing in the 1440s, tells of Sir Roger Kilpatrick, sheriff of Dumfries, demolishing it to the ground – evidently another gross exaggeration.¹⁴ However, the castle was clearly in a bad way for dendrochronology of the bridge timbers has shown that a completely new bridge (Bridge 2) was constructed in 1371. The fact that it had a lifting span that drew up into the forework between the two gatehouse towers indicates that the forework and bridge were contemporary. The rest of the work carried out in the 1370s is likely to have been repairs rather than modifications. This is evidenced by patchings visible on the east and west curtain walls and the east tower of the gatehouse, and possibly the rebuilding of the SW tower. It is also possible that, at this time, the bank to the south of the castle was enlarged to create a broad platform 30m across.

Major modifications of the 15th century

The timbers of the third bridge across the moat (Bridge 3) have been dated by dendrochronology to the second quarter of the 15th century, and it is possible that the modification of the forework, including the erection of the buttresses and segmental arch, was carried out at that time. Other major additions and embellishments were made to the castle during this century, including most notably the raising of the wall-heads and the erection thereon of triple-corbelled crenellations (embattled parapets). These are remarkably similar to those at **Bothwell Castle**, provided by Archibald, 4th Earl of Douglas (killed 1424), such that Caerlaverock's machicolations may also have originated around this time, for the Maxwells were then firmly in the Black Douglas' camp.¹⁵ A reference that Robert, 2nd Lord Maxwell (1453-85) 'completed the bartizan of Caerlaverock' suggests that it had been his father, Herbert, created 1st Lord Maxwell (1424), who may well have instigated the upgrading scheme.¹⁶ Within the castle, the most significant new work was the construction of a new west range, with fine fireplaces dated architecturally to c.1500.

Defensive upgrades of the 16th century

During the 16th century, improvements were made to the castle's defences to accommodate the new-fangled gun-powdered artillery. Wide-mouthed gun-holes were formed in the gatehouse towers, of a type introduced to Scotland after 1513; the variety of shape hints that they date from separate episodes.

¹³ See Fraser, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

¹⁴ W. Bower, *Scotichronicon* (ed. D. E. R. Watt) (Edinburgh, 1996), bk. XIV. p. 297

¹⁵ M. Brown, *The Black Douglases* (East Linton, 1998), pp. 112-3.

¹⁶ *History of the Maxwells*, in Herries Peerage Minutes (1851), p. 296; quoted in Fraser, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

New earthwork defences were also constructed beyond the 13th-century ditch. The chief work was the digging of a new outer ditch on the north side, cut through rock and with its spoil used to form a high bank, itself protected by a timber breastwork, as found during excavation. The new ditch was crossed by a timber bridge aligned in such a way that it created a more awkward 'dog-leg' approach into the castle. The bridge timbers have been dated to c.1559 - 1594. An illustration of Caerlaverock by an English spy dating to 1563-66¹⁷ doesn't show these defences, suggesting that they date from after then. Two possible dates are: (1) the 1570s, after, and in response to, the successful attack on the castle by the Earl of Sussex in August 1570, and (2) 1593, when Robert, 8th Lord Maxwell, was reportedly refortifying the castle. The date '1595' is carved on the back of the gatehouse, and the decorative cap-house at the top may also date from that time.¹⁸

Upgrade and destruction in the 17th century

The elevation of Robert, 10th Lord Maxwell, to the earldom of Nithsdale in 1620 seems to have prompted him to rebuild his residence on a lavish scale. The result was the so-called 'Nithsdale Lodging', described by a contemporary as 'that dainty fabric off his new lodging'.¹⁹ Building work began at some stage following the accession to the throne of Charles in 1625; it was completed by the mid-1630s (the date stone on the surviving east range gives 1634). It is probable that the new earl was anticipating a visit from his new sovereign during his coronation visit (planned for the later 1620s but carried out only in 1633).

The earl's new lodging took the form of a lavish new L-planned mansion along the south and east sides of the courtyard. Large windows were made in the curtain walls and an elaborate facade was created overlooking the courtyard. Little of the south range, housing the state rooms, survived the battering by artillery that soon followed, but the east range survives largely intact, with a beguiling array of symbolic stone carvings on the window pediments. The building work also included the construction of a new, smaller fixed bridge and causeway at the front entrance (Bridge 4) and the abandonment of the 'dog-leg' approach in favour of a direct one (the cutting through the outer bank dates from then). A new stone outer gate into the policies was also built (it still stands beside the visitor centre).

The earl barely had time to enjoy his new residence. King Charles's struggle with his Scottish subjects led to the 'Solemn League and Covenant' (1637), and the Maxwells' continued adherence to Catholicism made Caerlaverock vulnerable to attack by the Presbyterian Covenanters. The remains of a ravelin (triangular gun defence) beyond the later-16th-century north outer ditch may be the earl's attempt to further strengthen his castle (his garrison at **Threave** constructed something similar at the same time). If so it failed. On 29 June 1640 the castle was attacked by Covenanters led by Lt. Col John Home.

¹⁷ British Library. MS. Cotton Titus, C. XI, reproduced in D. Grove and P. Yeoman, *Caerlaverock Castle: Official Souvenir Guide* (Edinburgh, 2006), p. 30

¹⁸ See MacIvor and Gallagher, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

¹⁹ See Fraser, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 137.

The siege lasted until 26 September, when the castle was surrendered, at Charles I's own instruction. During the siege, the Covenanters' artillery destroyed the south curtain wall, much of the south range and SE tower. The castle was then looted, and there is no record of anyone living there afterwards, apart from a Covenanting cavalry unit, the Earl of Lanark's Horse, in 1644.²⁰

2.2 Evidential values

The earthworks and archaeology of the outer enclosures of the 'new' and 'old' castles are of great importance and have the potential to inform us of the support framework for the castle's owners; they may well hold valuable evidence regarding pre-castle use of the area. It is also likely that amongst the earthworks are the remains of siege works.

The 'old' castle

The harbour should contain key evidence for the understanding of transport and communications in relation to the 'old' castle, in much the same way as the much smaller harbour at **Threave Castle** did for our understanding of everyday life there. The harbour will doubtless contain waterlogged deposits with a good potential for the survival of leather and wooden artefacts, exceedingly rare on most archaeological sites, as well as palaeo-environmental data.

Although the summit of the mound of the 'old' castle was the subject of extensive area excavations in 1998–99 (preceded by the work of Maxwell of Breoch in the 1860s and Miller in 1979), substantial primary deposits remain unexcavated. The structural material and artefacts that were discovered were greatly significant. The large assemblage of 13th-century pottery of probably local origin has wider implications as a benchmark in the study of medieval ceramics from SW Scotland. The ditch has been largely untouched, and it will almost certainly contain further invaluable evidence in the form of midden material, as well as a wealth of palaeo-environmental data. In addition, a survey of the surrounding ground confirmed the existence of two large outer wards, or baileys, to the north of the castle, and identified two previously unmapped features, including another enclosure, to the west and SW. All this indicates that a great deal of archaeological potential yet remains at and around the 'old' castle.

The 'new' castle

It should be assumed that any clearance work done in the 19th century at the 'new' castle was superficial – apart from the clearance of the well in the east range, cleared out in the mid-19th century²¹ - and therefore that the potential for archaeological preservation is high, both within the *enceinte*, and in the ditches beyond. The latter will undoubtedly contain invaluable evidence in the form of midden material from centuries of occupation, as well as a wealth of palaeo-environmental data. This potential was revealed in the major

²⁰ See Fraser, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

²¹ See Fraser, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

campaign of excavations directed by Iain MacIvor between 1955 and 1966 and done in parallel with the Ministry of Works' consolidation programme. MacIvor retrieved an important assemblage of artefacts from the area of the drawbridges, notably fine leatherwork, wooden objects, pottery, and weaponry. These shed valuable insights into medieval castle life. In particular, the leather, textile and wood artefacts, are uncommon as waterlogged conditions are rarely found on archaeological sites. The pottery is also of particular value as there are relatively few ceramic assemblages from medieval Scotland that can be ascribed with any certainty to the later medieval period.

MacIvor's work concentrated mostly on the bridge area of the inner moat, along with the outer rock-cut ditch to its north, whose timber bridge was dated to c.1559x94. A timber structure, of unknown function, was also found in the south moat beside the SE tower; this may have something to do with the timber sluice-gate found nearby in the mid-19th century.²² Smaller-scale work in the courtyard demonstrated the good survival of archaeological deposits there also. The unexcavated areas of the moat are also likely to be areas of great archaeological significance, particularly the south moat, where the postern was situated (and where a lot of waste material may well have been dumped), and where substantial remains of the south curtain wall, blown to bits in 1640, are likely still to survive.

The upstanding building is also of great evidential value. Although the curtain wall was much rebuilt during the course of the four centuries, it still has considerable original stretches surviving, most noticeably along the west side where plinths with chamfered tops (similar to those noted at the 'old' castle) are associated with areas of tight-jointed ashlar work. Much of the keep-gatehouse too is original, albeit much rebuilt and added to, and its first-floor lord's hall still retains evidence for its stone ribbed vault springing from the side walls, and for the arrangements made for working the portcullises and drawbridges. Other 13th-century features include the portcullis arrangement in the gatehouse and numerous shovel-ended arrowslits.

A thorough standing building survey would doubtless yield results. In addition, there is at least one major structural timber that could yet yield a vital dendrochronological date.

2.3 Historical values

Associative

The Maxwells

As noted in the background section, the two castles of Caerlaverock are intrinsically linked to the Maxwell family. Indeed, the fortunes of both castles mirror those of the family and vice-versa. Also the history of Caerlaverock is reflective of the wider history of the Scottish West March.

The 'Siege of Caerlaverock'

²² See Fraser, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

The new, triangular castle will always be associated with Edward I of England, the Wars of Independence, chivalry and heraldry due to the *Siege of Caerlaverock*, a poem most likely written by a herald in Edward I's train, about the English siege of the castle in July 1300.²³ This contemporary literary work, written in French and describing the siege, is a unique survival. The poem consists both of a roll of arms and descriptions of all the English knights that were present, and a detailed, if romanticised, description of the siege. The triangular castle is immediately recognisable from its description:

Cum uns escus estoit de taile,	It was formed like a shield,
Car ne ot ke trois costez entour,	For it had only three sides in circuit,
E en chescun angle une tour;	With a tower at each angle;
Mès ke le une estoit jumelée,	But one of them was a double one,
Tant haut, tan longue, e tant lée,	So high, so long, and so large,
Ke par desouz estoit la porte	That under it was the gate,
A pont torniz, bien fait e fort,	With a drawbridge, well made and strong
E autres deffenses assez.	And a sufficiency of other defences.

The poem is a treasure trove of information, on a number of fronts. The academic treatment of the work has mainly concentrated on the heraldic aspects as it is probably the earliest English roll of arms to exist, but it can equally inform debates on: castle and defensive architecture, military tactics, and courtly life.

The Nithsdale Lodging

The fine Renaissance facade of the Nithsdale Lodging, completed by Robert Maxwell, 1st Earl of Nithsdale, in the mid-1630s, is intrinsically linked to him because the stone carvings on the window pediments may be symbolic of particular episodes in his life.

The context for the building of the Lodging was the peace that the Borders had experienced since the Union of the Crowns in 1603, and the pomp and circumstance that was set to accompany Charles I's Scottish coronation. This was anticipated to be held in the later 1620s, following his accession in 1625, but eventually took place in 1633. Robert Maxwell would have been well versed in the intellectual fashions of the time and the new court ideology and moralism that was a 'popular part of Continental Counter-Reformation piety, often sponsored and encouraged among the upper and literate classes of Catholic Europe'.²⁴ After being restored to his inheritance in 1618, Robert

²³ Wright, *op. cit.* See also Fraser, *op. cit.*, p. 43-51, for a detailed account and analysis of this poem.

²⁴ J. Hunwicke, 'Robert Maxwell of Caerlaverock and his fashionable windows', *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, 68 (1993), pp. 107-21 for a full account of this movement that was redolent with symbolism that was clearly demonstrated in a series of masques in the period.

Maxwell spent much of his time in London and, in 1624, was sent to Rome to secure the dispensation for the marriage of Henrietta Maria to Charles, Prince of Wales. It was probably upon his return, and possibly flush with cash after being appointed collector of the special taxes granted by the Estates in 1626, that he set about redeveloping his ancestral home, perhaps on the understanding that King Charles would visit him there during his coronation tour.

The models for the stone carvings are believed to have been *Emblemata Andree Alciati* (published 1621) and Francis Quarles' *Emblemes* (published 1635) – so up-to-date that the latter book came out after building-work was completed. Some of the symbolic links to the Maxwell family, ventured by Hunswicke, are:

- 1) The scene of the despoiled body of Patroclus, which Quarles titled *Opulenti Haereditas* ('the rich inheritance'), may have been chosen as a reference to the despoiling of the corpse of the earl's late father (brother according to Fraser) which, following his execution in Edinburgh 1613, lay unburied for five years
- 2) The scene of Prometheus chained could be a reference to the earl's periods of imprisonment. The bird shown pecking at the chain, which is not in the original model, could suggest release.



Figure 1 Nithsdale Lodging – Patroclus Carving



Figure 2 Prometheus carving

Illustrative

Strategic importance

The history of the two castles at Caerlaverock and the surrounding area is illustrative of the strategic importance of the crossing point from Skinburness over the Solway Firth, over a long period. In the 1st century AD the Romans constructed a fort on Ward Law, possibly to protect a port (Ptolemy's *Uxellum*?) on the nearby coast; indeed, it has been postulated that the harbour beside the 'old' castle may have originated at this time.²⁵ The harbour was almost certainly in use as a trading port in the later first millennium.

The strategic importance of the location would have been reinforced as the border between Scotland and England came more sharply into focus after the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, and particularly after Edward I of England's invasion of 1296. The 1300 siege was one of several such investments. The documentary evidence of numerous sieges and military activity is also represented in the archaeology of the 'new' castle, where spearheads, arrowheads, daggers and axes from different periods have been found, as well as numerous stone balls, most likely trebuchet ammunition, and a powder chamber for a small 16th-century 'cutthroat' gun.

Domestic life

The large number of artefacts and animal remains recovered from excavations at both castles gives some limited insight into diet and lifestyle of the castle's occupants.

Animal remains from the 'old' castle were difficult to identify due to the soil conditions. However, those that were (15% of the total recovered) indicate that cattle, sheep and pig were eaten; all high-status foods. There were also smaller amounts of wild animals, birds and salt fish, though not in the numbers that might have been expected bearing in mind the location.

²⁵ Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, *Inventory of Monuments and Constructions in the County of Dumfries* (Edinburgh, 1920), 11-24, no. 33 (2)

The most common find, at both sites, was pottery sherds. Of these, 95% at the 'old' castle and 80% at the 'new' castle were from jugs. This is usually indicative of high-status sites as they are predominantly used as tableware. The vast majority of the ceramics were of a local construction, though there is no evidence as yet for a pottery in the vicinity.



FIGURE 1 ISLAMIC GLASS VESSEL.
HSIMAGE 008-001-009-459-C

Fragments of an Islamic glass vessel were found on the hall floor in the 'old' castle. This object, which makes the surprising connection between 13th-century Scotland and distant Syria, was possibly brought to Caerlaverock as a souvenir by a returning Crusader. This serves to remind us that Caerlaverock – and Scotland - were not as remote as we might think in the Middle Ages, but through the wealth and connections of the likes of the Maxwells, plugged into the wider world, even if it was off normal trading routes.

The wealth of the Maxwell family is further illustrated by other domestic artefacts recovered from the moat of the 'new' castle (which itself represents a sign of substantial affluence). Some of the finds that indicate high status are: fragments of silver that were probably composite mirrors; lanterns – a very uncommon item; high-quality decorated knives; horse equipment; purses; keys; locks; and decorated bone combs. In particular, a richly decorated early 15th-century boot-piece, a leather jerkin decorated with grotesques, and a leather armorial case bearing the crest of the Maxwells, all point to great wealth and status.

For the later period, which is less represented in the archaeology, there is the documentary evidence from two inventories from around 1640.²⁶ The fixtures and furnishings included: 'Five beds, two of silk and three of cloth, each with silk fringes and a silk counterpane tester decorated with braid and silk lace; accompanying stools and chairs to match; feather beds (mattresses),

²⁶ Quoted in Fraser, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

blankets, bolsters and pillows to serve the timber beds; 10 lesser beds, 20 servants' beds and 40 carpets; a library of books; and trunks full of sheets, pillowcases, table cloths, napkins and towels'. These are the furnishings of a comfortable country house, not a medieval fortress.

Working life

There is clear evidence of work activities taking place in the vicinity of both castles. Artefacts from the 'old' castle included a lead plumb-bob, knives and a quern stone. The 'new' castle had several carpenters' hammers, a pick-axe, mill-pick, trimming axe, woodman's axe and splitting wedges.

There is also evidence of ore smelting and metal-working at the 'old' castle, albeit from the post-occupation phase, so after c.1270. It is tempting to see these relating to the 1300 siege, but use during the construction of the 'new' castle is also a possibility. The 'new' castle also had some evidence of smelting: two lumps of slag and a furnace bottom.

2.4 Architectural and artistic values

'Old' castle

In its initial state, the castle consisted of a timber ground-floor hall with a detached, stone-built storeyed chamber block, defended only by its rectangular moated enclosure. (There may well have been a timber palisade around the edge of the mound, but no trace was found in excavation.) The stone perimeter wall, with its four small projecting turrets at the corners, was added later, as was a stone hall.

This 'old' castle is of a monument type known as 'medieval moated site'. These are common in England and Wales, where over 5,000 have been identified, but only about 50 have been identified in Scotland.²⁷ The 'old' castle is the only one that has been seriously examined archaeologically. It has affinities with so-called 'hall-houses' in northern England, of which twenty-six have now been identified.²⁸ Many are only lightly fortified, indicative perhaps of the generally peaceful state of the Anglo-Scottish Border in the 13th century, particularly after the Treaty of York (1237). Not all of their builders are known but those that are were men of standing in regional society, as was Maxwell of Caerlaverock.

The addition of a stone perimeter wall, and finally corner turrets, turned the site into a 'quasi-castle', making it comparable to a group of castles termed 'simple rectangular castles of enclosure' identified by John Dunbar and Archie Duncan. About a dozen examples have been recognised in Scotland, including Kincardine (Aberdeenshire), Kinclaven, (Perth and Kinross) and Tarbet (Argyll and Bute), being the most similar to Caerlaverock in terms of

²⁷ P. G. B. McNeill and H. L. MacQueen, *Atlas of Scottish History to 1707* (Edinburgh, 1996), p. 431.

²⁸ P. Dixon, '“Mota, aula et Turris”: the manor-houses of the Anglo-Scottish Border', in G. Meirion-Jones and M. Jones (eds.), *Manorial Domestic Buildings in England and Northern France* (London, 1993), pp. 22-48.

size and date; Kinclaven and Kincardine were built between 1217 and c 1260. Tarbet is thought to date to the 1220s.²⁹

'New' castle

The building of a new, 'state-of-the-art' stone castle in the later 13th century represented a huge investment for the Maxwell family. Its construction is surprising, for the Maxwells were not in the top flight of the nobility, and few of the latter were committing to such an investment. (Caerlaverock's contemporaries, including for example the castles at **Bothwell** and **Dirleton**, were also built by nobles in the second-rank.)

Due to the surrounding boggy landscape the castle could only be approached on foot or horseback from the north. Showing a clear understanding of defensive principles its architect ensured that this northern approach was protected by the castle's strongest feature – its twin-towered keep-gatehouse. The manner in which the castle's flanking walls recede rapidly and obliquely away contrives to make this north front a bulwark against frontal attack. The distinctive triangular shape of Caerlaverock is unique among the numerous later-13th-century castles of *enceinte*.³⁰

Castles of *enceinte*, or curtain-walled castles, appeared on the Continent earlier in the century (eg, Coucy, near Amiens, built by Duke Enguerrand c.1220, father of Alexander II's queen).³¹ Caerlaverock bears closest resemblance perhaps to Edward I's castles in North Wales; the plan of Caerlaverock is similar to the inner ward of Rhuddlan Castle, one of Edward's earliest castles, laid out in 1277 and thus contemporary with Caerlaverock. Therefore, Caerlaverock cannot be derivative of those castles. As MacIvor and Gallagher state, Caerlaverock's design 'shows the ingenuity of the master mason working with a keen awareness of contemporary developments in defensive architecture. It demonstrates a pleasure in geometry that elsewhere inspired such designs as the pentagon of Holt Castle and, further afield, the octagonal Castel del Monte.'³²

Of the post-13th-century features, the most notable include:

- The crenellated parapets crowning the curtain walls and towers. These have recently been attributed to the later 15th century,³³ but are so like those at **Bothwell Castle**, which date from the first quarter of the 15th century, that it seems likely Caerlaverock's crenellations are of around that time also. **Bothwell's** crenellations were added by Archibald, 4th Earl of Douglas, who was one of the most renowned warriors of western Europe, and their appearance there was probably intended to suitably reflect his martial prowess, rather than to simply defend the castle. The Maxwells,

²⁹ (Brann 2004, 115)

³⁰ See S. Cruden, *The Scottish Castle* (3rd ed., Edinburgh, 1981), pp. 64-83.

³¹ D. MacGibbon and T. Ross, *The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland*, (Edinburgh, 1887), I, pp. 37-9.

³² MacIvor and Gallagher, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

³³ J. Gifford, *The Buildings of Scotland: Dumfries and Galloway* (London, 1996), p. 144.

who were in the entourage of the Black Douglases until their downfall in 1455, are likely to have taken inspiration from Bothwell's architecture.

- The hall block along the west range, dated to c.1500 by its array of fine fireplaces at first-floor level, with their smart moulded jambs and capitals, some decorated with rosettes and foliage. This new hall admirably reflects the wealth and status of the Maxwells at their peak.

Caerlaverock has one other singular architectural masterpiece – the Nithsdale Lodging. Although much reduced in size – the building originally dominated the south and east ranges – it provides a striking counterpart to the martial character of the rest of the castle. Completed in 1634 for the 1st Earl and Countess of Nithsdale, it has been described as ‘the most accomplished and sophisticated Scottish Renaissance building south of the Earl's Palace, Kirkwall’.³⁴ The Lodging scarcely proclaimed its presence from the outside of the castle (a situation closely comparable with the 5th Earl of Bothwell's late 16th-century lodging in **Crichton Castle**). However, once in the courtyard it overwhelmed – and still does, despite the fact that the south range has all but disappeared. What survives is an essay in classical Renaissance architecture, a symmetrical façade whose door and window pediments – some triangular and some segmental – are adorned with a feast of stone carving. These display the coats-of-arms of the earl and countess's families on the ground floor and allegorical scenes from classical mythology above. These allegorical scenes are likely to have had meanings very pertinent to Nithsdale's life and situation, and would all have been part of the intellectual challenge presented by the Nithsdales, to be read, and hopefully understood, by their peers.³⁵ Among them, it was anticipated, would be Charles I himself, and the Lodging's south range, now largely gone, may have been built as a suitable place wherein to receive him fresh from his coronation as king of Scots. Its surviving ground-floor front wall, of five bays, has at its centre a classically-framed doorway, its once arched head springing from square capitals and carved with egg-and-dart ornament.

2.5 Landscape and aesthetic values

The first view on arrival at the castle presents an iconic image of all we think a medieval fortress should be. An important contribution to this is played by colour, with the wide green sward leading the eye down to, and contrasting with, the red of the Locharbriggs sandstone. The setting is further enhanced by the mirror-like reflections of the architecture provided by the moat, whereby another inverted castle appears to exist.

The powerfully geometric lines of the invasive works of man are softened by apparently untamed nature, in the form of the backdrop of ancient semi-natural woodland.

Caerlaverock was widely recognised in the 19th century as an idealised romantic ruin, and was sketched and painted as such.

³⁴ (Cruden 1981, 66)

³⁵ (Hunwicke 1993)

2.6 Natural heritage values

Caerlaverock is one of the most notable sites in Historic Scotland management in terms of its natural resources, and aspects of these can also illuminate the history and development of the site. Geologically the old castle is located on the shore area created by a post glacial raised beach consisting of sand, silt and clay deposited by deposition of both sea and river action. There are also a number of pebble banks as result of sea inundation. These are a lot lower than the more obvious embankments raised artificially for defence or woodland management. The castle gatehouse is built on an outcrop of old red sandstone, and the castle is built from locally quarried old red sandstone.

The woodland is of particular interest due to the many different ground conditions and historical management by coppicing and pollarding, which has given rise to a diverse understory of grasses, flowers and shrubs. There is also an excellent wetland assemblage from open water through swamp to wet ground and eventually woodland giving rise to many different habitats. Nearby Caerlaverock National Nature Reserve is SSSI designated and famous for its wildfowl and wetland habitats. The grassland is of significance as much of it is unimproved by agriculture. The site provides bat roosts and therefore is of considerable wildlife importance.

A fuller account of the natural heritage values of Caerlaverock Castle, including detailed species lists, is given in the Statement of Natural Significance available from Cultural and Natural Resources team.

2.7 Contemporary/use values

Community values: One social role is as a visitor attraction. In particular, due to the large areas of green space and the fact castle is so much what the public expects a castle to be (towers, battlements, a moat), Caerlaverock has been a focus for Historic Scotland as a venue to provide events aimed at family audiences. The *Medieval Mayhem* event, which concentrates on activities for children, has been a recurrent event in the summer school holidays for the last four years. However, the lack of suitable parking at the site acts against its suitability as an event venue.

The site, again due to its pictureque qualities, is very popular for weddings.

Economic: Certainly a small economic driver, considering the area. Was Historic Scotland's 15th most visited property in 2013/14.

As mentioned above, the site is popular for weddings so it is likely that this is also a small economic driver in the area and it may stimulate demand for caterers etc.

The site has also been used for filming: for example part of the *Decoy Bride* was filmed there in 2010. This may have had a small economic impact on the area.

Access & Education: provides an ideal environment for education both in medieval history and natural heritage. However, its isolated location and small number of people in its catchment area acts against this.

3 Major gaps in understanding

Was the harbour or any of the earthworks built by the Roman army? This area, not as yet examined, may hold the greatest archaeological potential in its waterlogged deposits for understanding the origins and development of Caerlaverock as a place of human settlement, particularly regarding its probable use as a port and settlement in Roman and Early Historic times.

What is the detailed building history of the 'new' castle? A comprehensive standing building archaeological survey of the upstanding masonry may considerably enhance our understanding of this major survival of later medieval secular architecture.

Does a castletoun survive, or any siege works? Given that Caerlaverock is surrounded by extensive grounds scarcely affected by post-medieval settlement activity, geophysical survey and archaeological excavation has the potential to add considerably to our understanding of these little explored aspects of medieval castles.

4 Associated properties

(other significant castles of the Maxwells of Caerlaverock) – **Lochmaben; Threave**

(some other well-preserved 13th-century curtain-walled castles) – **Bothwell; Dirleton; Dunstaffnage; Inverlochy; Kildrummy**; Kinclaven; **Loch Doon**; Lochindorb; Mingarry; **Rothsay; Skipness; Sween**; Tarbert; Tioram (other castles with important collections of artefacts recovered through excavation) – **Edinburgh; Threave; Urquhart**

5 Keywords

Moated manor; early stone castle; geometric castellated architecture; Maxwell lords; border defence; decorated leatherwork; medieval bridges; artillery defences; Renaissance mansion.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Timeline

- **late Iron Age** – a native tribe builds a hillfort on the summit of Ward Law, ½ mile north of Caerlaverock Castle.³⁶
- **1st century AD** – the Romans, under Agricola, invade Galloway as part of their attempted conquest of Caledonia. They construct a Roman fort immediately north of Ward Law fort, possibly to protect a port

³⁶ (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland n.d.)

(Ptolemy's *Uxellum*?) on the nearby coast.³⁷ The harbour beside the 'old' castle may have its origin at this time.

- **c.1157** – Ralph son of Dunegal, lord of Strathnith (Nithsdale), grants the estate of 'Karlaueroc' to the Cistercian abbey of Holm Cultram (Cumbs), founded by David I of Scotland in 1150.³⁸ The monks possibly establish a grange (estate centre) here, from which produce can be easily shipped to the abbey's harbour at Skinburness 8 miles across the Solway.
- **c.1220** – Alexander II grants Caerlaverock to Sir John de Maccuswell (Maxwell is an estate near Kelso), sheriff of Roxburgh and Teviotdale. The Crown needs a loyal supporter to help defend the kingdom from the rebellious Gallovidians to the west.³⁹ John builds the 'old' castle.
- **1231** – John is appointed chamberlain of Scotland by Alexander II. He dies in 1240 and is buried in **Melrose Abbey**.
- **1241** – Aymer Maxwell succeeds his brother John as lord of Caerlaverock. In addition to serving as chamberlain, he becomes sheriff of Dumfries and Peebles and justiciar of Galloway.
- **1266** – Aymer's nephew, Herbert, inherits the estate. He is the first Maxwell to be styled 'of Carlaverock', indicating that Caerlaverock is now the family's chief powerbase. He builds a new, even more impressive residence 200m NW of the 'old' castle.
- **1291** – Herbert is one of the auditors appointed to choose a successor to Queen Margaret (dies 1290). He votes for John de Balliol, his neighbour across the River Nith, who becomes King John in 1292.
- **1296** – King John is forced to abdicate by Edward I of England shortly after the latter invades Scotland to begin the Wars of Independence. In 1298, Herbert dies and is succeeded by his son Eustace. Edward I, following his victory over Wallace at Falkirk, forfeits the Maxwells and grants Caerlaverock to Sir Robert Clifford, lord of Brough (Cumbs). The grant, however, is ineffective for in 1299 it is reported that 'a castle called Caerlaverock' does great damage to English-held **Lochmaben Castle** (ie, Caerlaverock's garrison, with Robert Bruce the younger, tries to recapture the place). During that attack, Sir Robert Cunynghame, keeper of Caerlaverock, is taken prisoner, executed, and his head impaled on the top of **Lochmaben's** great tower.⁴⁰
- **1300** – Edward I invades Galloway and besieges Caerlaverock Castle. Eustace Maxwell is not in residence. The two-day siege is famously recorded by a herald in Edward's retinue in a poem, *The Siege of Caerlaverock*. Caerlaverock is now held by the English. According to the poem the Scots were released and given fresh clothes.⁴¹ A more

³⁷ (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland n.d.), (McNeill and MacQueen 1996, 37, 38)

³⁸ 'The lease was confirmed by Malcolm IV (1153–65).... The exact date of the grant may have been 1157, for it was in that year the monks were given waylease through Annandale by Robert de Brus....' (Brann 2004, 3)

³⁹ (Brann 2004, 4)

⁴⁰ (Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland 1884, 279 no.1101)

⁴¹ (Wright 1864, 35)

likely outcome is recorded by the *Lanercost Chronicle* - that many men were hanged.⁴²

- **1312** – Eustace Maxwell joins the cause of Robert I (the Bruce). He is besieged in his castle by the English but holds out. Bruce, however, orders him to render the castle militarily useless, and Eustace is subsequently compensated for demolishing it.⁴³
- **1320** – Eustace appends his seal to the Declaration of Arbroath.
- **1332** – following the accession (1329) of Robert I's son, David II, renewed civil war breaks out between the Bruce and Balliol factions. Eustace sides with 'King' Edward Balliol, John Balliol's son, and attends Edward's coronation at Scone. He repairs the castle and places it at Edward's disposal, who makes Caerlaverock and Hestan Island (Kirkcuds) his main bases. Eustace dies at Caerlaverock in 1342 and is succeeded by his brother John.
- **1356** – Caerlaverock Castle is besieged and badly damaged following a devastating raid through Nithsdale led by William Douglas (later 1st Earl of Douglas) and Roger Kirkpatrick of Closeburn, sheriff of Dumfries and Ayr. In 1357 Kirkpatrick is murdered at Caerlaverock.
- **late 1360s** – the Maxwells are back in David II's favour. John Maxwell sets about rebuilding the castle.
- **1373** – Robert Maxwell succeeds his father as lord, and continues the task of rebuilding.
- **1409** – Robert dies and is succeeded by his son Herbert. He joins the retinue of the powerful Archibald, 4th Earl of Douglas, and is appointed to the prestigious post of steward of Annandale. He dies in 1420 and is succeeded by his son, also Herbert.
- **1424** - Herbert Maxwell accompanies James I back to Scotland after long captivity in England, and is knighted 1st Lord Maxwell during the king's coronation at Scone. He embarks on a scheme to enhance the castle, including remodelling the gatehouse. In 1425, Murdoch, 2nd duke of Albany, is held prisoner there, legend has it in Murdoch's Tower.
- **1438/9** – Herbert is granted safe conduct to travel to the Holy Land, perhaps to bear James I's embalmed heart to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem.⁴⁴
- **1440** – following the execution of William, 6th Earl of Douglas, at the 'Black Dinner' in **Edinburgh Castle**, Herbert disassociates himself from the Douglas cause. He dies in 1453 and is succeeded by his son Robert, 2nd Lord.
- **1455** – Robert helps defeat the Black Douglases at the battle of Erkinholme, and as a result supplants them as the leading power in the region. He is recorded as 'completing the bartizan (battlements) of Caerlaverock'. He dies in 1485.
- **1488** – Robert's grandson, John, 4th Lord, abandons James III and helps the king's son, James IV, win the battle of Sauchieburn. He is

⁴² (The Chronicle of Lanercost 1272–1346 1913, 170)

⁴³ (Register of the Great Seal of Scotland A.D. 1306–1424 1984, 456)

⁴⁴ A. Macquarrie, *Scotland and the Crusades 1095-1560* (Edinburgh, 1997), p. 93.

rewarded for his services. John may be the builder of the new hall-block in the west range.

- **1513** – John and three of his brothers are killed alongside James IV at the battle of Flodden. His son Robert succeeds as 5th Lord. He rises to become progressively warden of the West March, hereditary keeper of the castles of **Lochmaben** and **Threave**, James V's master carver, lord admiral and first gentleman of the inner chamber. His career reaches his zenith when, in 1538, he stands proxy bridegroom for James V at the latter's first wedding to Mary of Guise at Châteaudun, in France.
- **1542** – James V uses Caerlaverock as his base prior to the battle of Solway Moss. Robert is captured by the English at the battle, and dies in captivity in the Tower of London in 1546. James V retreats to Caerlaverock after the battle prior to returning home to Falkland, where he dies. His son Robert succeeds.
- **1544** – early in the 'Wars of the Rough Wooing', Caerlaverock is surrendered by negotiation to Henry VIII of England. It is retaken in the following year.
- **1560** – at the Protestant Reformation the Maxwells continue to espouse the cause of Catholicism. Even after Queen Mary's flight to England in 1568, John Maxwell, 8th Lord, continues to support the 'Queen's Party'.
- **1563x6** – an English spy reports that Caerlaverock is impossible to defend against bombardment.
- **1570** – the castle is besieged and taken by an English force, led by the Earl of Sussex, coming to the help of the 'King's Party'. They reportedly 'threw down' the castle, self-evidently an exaggeration.⁴⁵
- **1585** – John, created Earl of Morton in 1581, celebrates mass at Lincluden College, in defiance of the king. In 1587, following Mary's execution at Fotheringhay, he clandestinely visits Philip II of Spain to help arrange the Armada invasion of England. In 1588 he is temporarily imprisoned by James VI in Edinburgh, but comes to a reconciliation with him and returns to Caerlaverock.
- **1593** - John is reportedly fortifying Caerlaverock 'and [has] many men working at his house.'⁴⁶ The gatehouse, probably damaged in the 1570 siege, is repaired. The works may be connected to a blood-feud with the neighbouring Johnstones of Annandale and not to any national emergency. John is killed in a 'clan' battle – the battle of Dryfe Sands - this same year, but his son John, 9th Lord, continues the building works, as the date 1595 carved onto the gatehouse shows.
- **1613** – John, 9th Lord, following terms of imprisonment for continuing to espouse Catholicism, is executed at Edinburgh's mercat cross for murdering the laird of Johnstone. His brother Robert succeeds him as 10th Lord.

⁴⁵ (Boyd 1903, 327 no.436), (Diurnal of Occurrents 1833, 184), (The Historie and Life of Kings James the Sext 1825, 60)

⁴⁶ (Bain, The Border Papers 1894, 470)

- **1619** - Robert, by now returned to his elder brother's forfeited estates, marries Elizabeth Beaumont, a first cousin of James VI's favourite, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, and in 1620 is created 1st Earl of Nithsdale.
- **1634** – Earl Robert completes building a new family residence - the Nithsdale Lodging - within the castle, probably in expectation of a visit by Charles I during his coronation tour of Scotland. The outermost castle gate, beside the visitor centre, probably also dates from this time.
- **1639-40** – Earl Robert supports Charles I against the Covenanters and fortifies Caerlaverock in readiness for siege. In 1640 a Covenanting army, led by Lieut. Col. John Home, invests Caerlaverock for 13 weeks before the garrison surrenders. The south curtain wall is badly damaged and the SE tower all but destroyed by artillery bombardment. Two inventories are made of the castle's contents, graphically showing how fine a residence Caerlaverock has been.
- **late 18th century on** – Caerlaverock increasingly becomes the subject of antiquarian interest. Thomas Pennant visits in 1771, Captain Grose in 1789, and J M W Turner in 1831; all make sketches.
- **1860s** – Mr Maxwell of Breoch, vice-president of the newly founded Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society, leads an antiquarian excavation at the 'old' castle.
- **1949** – the 16th duke of Norfolk entrusts the castles into state care. Masonry conservation begins.
- **1955-66** – Excavation work at the 'new' castle' is directed by Iain MacIvor of the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments. The work includes a partial excavation of the surrounding moat where substantial remains of the drawbridges are found.
- **1976** – a trench is excavated across the moat of the 'old' castle, which finds evidence for it being of 13th-century date. The trees on the site are felled and left to rot *in situ* pending further archaeological excavation.
- **1977** – the drawbridge timbers recovered from the 'old' and 'new' castles are dated by Mike Baillie, of Queen's University, Belfast, for the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments.
- **1998-9** – a major excavation of the 'old' castle is directed by Martin Brann, for the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments, following which the site is laid out for display and linked by a nature trail to the 'new' castle.

Appendix 2: Summary of archaeological investigations

Date	Description	Reference
1860s?	Excavations at old castle	
1949?	Excavations at old castle	
1955–66	Excavations of new castle & moat. Bridge remains dated (though later), several artefacts gathered.	MacIvor, Iain, and Dennis Gallagher. "Excavations at Caerlaverock Castle, 1955–66."

		<i>Archaeological Journal</i> , 1999: 143–245.
1976? 1995	Excavations at old castle Geophys of area between visitor centre and triangular castle	
1996	Attempt to retrieve timber uncovered in previous excavations.	Kirkdale Archaeology, HS PiC Minor Archaeological Works 1996: Caerlaverock Castle 13 December 1996
1998-9	Excavations at Caerlaverock Old Castle:	Brann, Martin 2004, <i>Excavations at Caerlaverock Old Castle 1998-9</i> Dumfriesshire & Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society
1999	Field drain and soakaway excavation: no deposits of great archaeological significance, but surface scarp on field identified as raised beach.	Kirkdale Archaeology, HS PiC Minor Archaeological Works 1999: Caerlaverock Castle 11 October 1999
2000	Watching brief for two test pits for soakaway: no archaeological finds. C-horizon level established.	Kirkdale Archaeology, HS PiC Minor Archaeological Works 2000: Caerlaverock Castle 6 October 2000
2001	Archaeological monitoring during tree felling: no significant damage was noted, the earthworks in the wooded area of Caerlaverock were noted to be more complex than previously thought.	Kirkdale Archaeology, HS PiC Minor Archaeological Works 2001-2002: Caerlaverock Castle October/November 2001

2002	Archaeological monitoring of minor excavations for soakaways and septic tank: it was discovered the area (the current car park) had been used for dumping debris. This appears to have sealed the surviving archaeology. Also archaeology survives below the pasture.	Kirkdale Archaeology, HS PiC Minor Archaeological Works 2001-2002: Caerlaverock Castle October 2001 - January 2002
2004	Archaeological monitoring of telephone cable trench excavation: nothing of archaeological significance found.	Kirkdale Archaeology, HS PiC Minor Archaeological Works 2004: Caerlaverock Castle 2-4 August 2004
2004	Watching brief of excavation of BT telephone pole hole: very limited opportunity to see any archaeological deposits.	Kirkdale Archaeology, HS PiC Minor Archaeological Works 2004: Caerlaverock Castle November 2004
2006	Archaeological monitoring of five trenches in advance of potential drainage system: establishing profile to be established to north of castle.	Kirkdale Archaeology, HS PiC Minor Archaeological Works 2006: Caerlaverock Castle June 2006
2006	Archaeological monitoring of five trenches for information boards: no finds or features of archaeological significance found.	Kirkdale Archaeology, HS PiC Minor Archaeological Works 2006: Caerlaverock Castle August 2006
2006	Archaeological monitoring of excavation for two soakaways and drainage channels: finds and features from 19 th & 20 th century. Field/property boundary wall probably 18 th /19 th century.	Kirkdale Archaeology, HS PiC Minor Archaeological Works 2006: Caerlaverock Castle October 2006

2006	Archaeological monitoring of excavation for electricity cable: no finds or features of archaeological significance found.	Kirkdale Archaeology, HS PiC Minor Archaeological Works 2006: Caerlaverock Castle November 2006
2007	Archaeological monitoring of excavation for drain in north car park. (originally excavated in October 2006): further examination of the previously excavated wall suggested it may have been an outbuilding for one of the cottages.	Kirkdale Archaeology, HS PiC Minor Archaeological Works 2007: Caerlaverock Castle February 2007
2008	Stone Inventory: small collection of late and post-medieval stones	Mary Márkus 2008 Caerlaverock Castle Inventory of Carved Stones <i>Discovery & Excavation Scotland 9</i>
2008	Excavation of electricity trench cable: A small section of post-medieval wall was uncovered	Sneddon, David (GUARD) 2008 Caerlaverock Castle <i>Discovery & Excavation Scotland 9</i>
2010	Watching brief for excavation of power cable: provided valuable insight into formation processes that created the anterior mound of the moat.	Kirkdale Archaeology, HS PiC Minor Archaeological Works 2010: Caerlaverock Castle November 2010
2010		
2011	Opening of trenches north of visitor centre to access suitability of field for car parking: time constraints prevented full excavation. Several archaeological features were discerned, however, including possible postholes. The only excavation revealed a smashed Bronze Age pot.	Kirkdale Archaeology, HS PiC Minor Archaeological Works 2011: Caerlaverock Castle June 2011

