

# **Fieldwork at Manorbier – summer 2002**

**An interim report on fieldwork conducted by the School of Archaeology,  
Trinity College Carmarthen.**

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# 1. Introduction

Manorbier is a small village on the south coast of Pembrokeshire renowned for its castle occupied between the twelfth and seventeenth centuries AD. This report outlines the results of recent research into the importance of the castle and its local landscape setting as part of ongoing research conducted by the author into the Norman castles of the region.

## 1.1 The Origins of the Project

The author was contacted by Gerald Codd on behalf of the Manorbier Medieval Fishpond Restoration Group (subsequently referred to as MMFRG) in late 2001 for advice and help in developing an archaeological project to investigate the site of the medieval fishponds mentioned by Giraldus Cambrensis. From his twelfth-century description, the fishponds were thought to have been located below the castle on its north-west side. The author's interest in the site was twofold. As a specialist in medieval archaeology and coordinator for numerous modules at Trinity College Carmarthen (subsequently referred to as TCC) relating to medieval archaeology, Manorbier was a renowned and fascinating site. Also, the need to identify and develop a fieldwork project for the students at TCC made the possibility of work at Manorbier attractive.

A series of meetings, site visits, and preliminary research convinced me of the importance and potential of further research into the landscape context of the castle, and simultaneously, this research would build the case for the proposed community project of restoring the medieval fishponds as an attractive feature for both local people and visitors alike. Without the funding for a full-scale archaeological intervention by an archaeological contractor, the possibility of preliminary work by TCC was proposed. While only limited in its expectations, it would encourage interest and enhance the possibility of developing a funding bid for further, more detailed archaeological research. An initial proposal for exploratory work was put forward by myself and agreed upon by the MMFRG. However, an initial estimated budget to cover the costs of student participation, equipment and transport was rejected by MMFRG whose funds were limited.

The absence of funding and resources from the Manorbier community meant that the only context within which Trinity College Carmarthen (subsequently referred to as TCC) could participate in investigating the site was to draw upon funding available for training part-time and full-time undergraduate students. Generous support in time, people and resources was provided by TCC together with the voluntary help of the students. Costs in the order of c. £2,500 were incurred and paid for by the college.

In order to justify the involvement of TCC, the fieldwork project was aimed at investigating not only the area of the fishponds to the north-west of the castle, but also the church and churchyard of St James' Manorbier. The fieldwork was co-directed by Trevor Kirk, Gareth Longden and Howard Williams as part of the school of archaeology's training programme in practical archaeology.

## 1.2. Aims of this Report

The report was intended to achieve three aims, to:

1. review the fieldwork undertaken by TCC in the summer of 2002;
2. set out the case for further fieldwork to be undertaken to develop upon these initial results;
3. explain the significance of the castle and its landscape for the archaeology and heritage of Wales.

Consequently, this is more than a report on the fieldwork results. It presents the results of library-based research, field observations concerning the architecture and topography of the castle, the significance of the elements of medieval landscape of Manorbier, in addition to the outcomes of the 2002 fieldwork. The argument developed through each of these strands is that the castle at Manorbier was situated within a highly designed 'landscape of lordship' of which the fishponds were only a small part.

### **1.3. The Structure of the Report**

The report is split into three parts. Section 2 reviews the significance of medieval 'lordly landscapes' focusing upon castles and other elite residences of the Middle Ages. Section 3 attempts to reconstruct the relationship between the castle and landscape of medieval Manorbier. Section 4 then reviews the preliminary results of the fieldwork from the fieldwork and field observations conducted by staff and students from TCC in the summer of 2002 followed by suggestions for future research and a review of the key conclusions of the project to date.

## **2. Castles and Landscapes - explaining the significance of Manorbier Castle and its medieval landscape**

This section of the report aims to situate the research at Manorbier within the broader framework of empirical research and theoretical approaches to the landscapes of the later Middle Ages focusing upon the deliberate organisation of designed or 'lordly' landscapes. Drawing upon recent research that identifies the symbolic and social alongside the military and economic motivations for the careful organisation of elite medieval landscapes, the relevance of these approaches to Manorbier will be made clear.

### **2.1 Designed Landscapes in the Later Middle Ages.**

In recent years, there has been a burgeoning interest in castles and their landscapes stemming from two inter-related strands of research. The first change has been in the theoretical outlook of castle studies. As a reaction against the culture-historical and functionalist approaches that lay behind studies of castles as military technology, some recent approaches have interpreted castle planning, architecture and settings in social and symbolic terms (see Austin 1984; 1998; Gilchrist 1999; Johnson 2002). Castles were not simply residences or forts. The architecture and the setting of the medieval castle are argued to have interacted together in a visual display of status and lordly identity. While most studies have tended to emphasise the elaborate 'sham' or 'water' castles of the fourteenth century onwards, increasingly such approaches have impacted upon Anglo-Norman castles (e.g. Liddiard 2000; 2001).

A second and related line of enquiry that has bolstered these new perspectives upon castles has been the development of landscape archaeology. Fieldwork around medieval castles over the last thirty years has revealed extensive evidence for carefully designed, managed and ornamental landscapes. This evidence has challenged both accepted views of medieval gardens as small, enclosed and private spaces. The natural topography, vegetation, architectural features and water management were among the features used to good affect to create a designed setting for the castle's architecture. Previously such landscapes were thought to be novel inventions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the British Isles ((e.g. Brown & Taylor 1972; Everson & Williamson 1998| Riley & Wilson-North 2000).

In combination, these developments in castle research have shown that medieval castle landscapes were carefully designed, often heavily ornamental. As well as being centres of economic and agricultural exploitation, the gardens and parks around castles were rich in symbolic and allegorical meanings familiar to medieval aristocratic culture.

In combination, these theoretical developments and the burgeoning evidence for ornamental and designed landscapes around elite residences provides an important context within which to situate the Manorbier landscape.

## 2.2. Characteristics of Medieval Designed Landscapes

What constituted a medieval designed landscape? Certainly there remain many difficulties with the identification and interpretation. Identifying their origin, development. Consequently, there is no single 'check-list' towards their identification. Some of the features regularly found are as follows:

- water features
  - mill-ponds
  - fishponds
  - meres
- orchards
- vineyards
- gardens
- deer parks
  - chases
  - hunting lodges
- dovecotes
- rabbit warrens
- mills
  - corn mills
  - fulling mills
  - metal-working mills
- planned villages & towns
- churches
- religious houses &/or hospitals

This list shows that frequently the designed landscape extended beyond gardens to include a wide range of elements. In the Middle Ages, these were not simply the trappings of power, the building, display and use of these structures in the castle's landscape *constituted* power and identity.

## 2.3. Examples of Medieval Designed Landscapes

Here is not the place to provide a full review of recent research into castles and their landscapes. However, there are numerous examples that provide comparable evidence to the situation at Manorbier. Many are later castles, such as Bodiam in Sussex where detailed landscape survey has revealed out water features and the landscape provided a carefully stage-managed approach to the 'sham' castle of the late thirteenth century (Everson 1996: 67; Johnson 1999: 73-5; Taylor, Everson & Wilson-North 1990; Johnson 1996; 2002). Other well-known examples include the complex system of fishponds, millponds and meres at Kenilworth (Johnson 2002). Other examples are lesser known, but serve to illustrate that these designed landscapes were not restricted to the highest echelons of the medieval aristocracy. For instance at Whorlton Castle in North Yorkshire a modest motte and bailey was developed with 'chivalric pretension' in the fourteenth century including water features, a deer park and even the re-siting of the nearby village to facilitate views of the church (Everson 1998). At Shotwick Castle in Cheshire we see the same process of a motte and bailey castle transformed and elaborated with gardens

and water features during the fourteenth century (Everson 1998: 35). Similar patterns of ornamental and designed landscapes can be found associated with bishop's residences such as at Somerham palace in Cambridgeshire. Again this involved water features and incorporated the planning of the church and village (Taylor 1988). Another recent study has taken place at Ludgershall castle in Wiltshire where both the evolution of the castle's architecture and its landscape context can be explained in relation to each other. Rather than motivated by military concerns, a central concern was to enhance and orchestrate views of the castles from different directions. As at Bodiam, approaches to the castle by road and from the parks encouraged particular ways of seeing it, while a terraced walk and the great tower's roof encouraged ways of viewing the designed landscape from the castle itself (Everson in Ellis 2000: 105).

#### **2.4. Anglo-Norman Lordly Landscapes?**

These examples provide a set of expectations for the form and significance of the landscape around Manorbier and for the importance of water features like fishponds within that landscape. But could the castle of Manorbier have fitted this pattern?

A major problem with applying these arguments to the Manorbier castle concerns chronology. Yet literary evidence supports the view that the symbolic ideals that motivated the designed landscapes of the fourteenth century onwards had their roots as early as the twelfth century. For instance, Everson (1998: 32) notes that Giraldus Cambrensis described St Hugh of Lincoln's first visit to the episcopal palace and hunting park at Stow Park, 10 miles NW of Lincoln in which the palace is described as '*delightfully surrounded with woods and ponds*': a elaborate and designed landscape seems to have been the expectation and were understood in symbolic and economic terms.

Furthermore, physical evidence for Norman designed landscapes has been slowly forthcoming. Robert Liddiard has developed these ideas in relation to the Anglo-Norman castles of Norfolk. He has shown how some of the castles, from their very inception in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, show aspects of a contrived lordly landscape. With regard to Castle Rising castle, Liddiard is able to demonstrate how the castle interacted with the topography, routes of movement, and the components of the surrounding landscape: deer park, dovecote, hunting lodge, town, hospital and so on (Liddiard 2001).

So in summary, while perhaps more restricted and limited in complexity, there is every reason to expect that elite residences of the Anglo-Norman period should have elements of designed landscapes associated with them.

#### **2.5. Welsh Examples of Medieval Designed Landscapes?**

Another obstacle to the discussion of Manorbier in these terms is the applicability of these designed landscapes to the contested areas of south-west Wales. These were territories far from the relative economic wealth and security of southern and eastern England where aristocrats of the highest status and royalty where castles could afford to overlook or compromise their military prerogative. It might be reasonably argued that castles in West Wales

would be more concerned with military security than with elaborate lordly landscapes.

To this author's knowledge, it is not possible to fully test these ideas at present. A detailed study of the evidence for Welsh castles has yet to be undertaken and castles are frequently studied in isolation from their settings (e.g. Kenyon 2000). However, it can be shown that there is evidence that Welsh castles, like their English counterparts, could provide the focus for gardens and parks soon after the turbulence of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had ceased although much of the evidence is historical and literary (Whittle 1993: 8-12). For instance, Pounds cites documents showing that the minor Marcher castles of Baenllyfni and Bwlch Y Dinas both had a forest and chase associated with them (Pounds 1990: 201).

Archaeological evidence for Welsh medieval gardens and designed landscapes comes from monastic sites such as Haverfordwest priory and Whitland abbey (Briggs 2000; T.James 1978; 2000). Evidence for castles comes mainly from the borders. At Stokesay Castle recently identified evidence of moats, lakes and ponds suggests a well-organised landscape soon after the end of Marcher warfare (Taylor 1998: 5). Another former-Marcher castle at Morten Corbet also had ornamental earthworks in its later life (Wilson-North 1989).

In West Wales, the ongoing work at Carew has revealed elements of the landscape of the castle, particularly its development in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The evidence is complex, varied and difficult to date, but is adequate to suggest that the castle's landscape was carefully organised and managed, if not designed in one phase of planning (Austin 1992; 1993; 1994). Hints of other elite landscapes from West Wales include the palace at Lamphey where historical and topographical evidence hint at the presence of fishponds and a deer park found in close association with the bishop's palace (Turner 1998; Whittle 1993). Perhaps the best evidence for designed landscapes comes from those castles associated with planned boroughs and villages for both Norman, Flemish and Welsh castles (Cople & Rees 1999; Howells 2000; Kissonock 1997; Silvester 1997). Perhaps the best evidence for West Wales comes from the Welsh castle of Dinefwr in Carmarthenshire. Here David Austin has argued that we can identify the demesne land of the castle preserved within the later gardens of Newton house including the castle, its borough, woods, fishponds and a nearby monastery (see Austin 1984). Equally important for the landscape was its claims to great antiquity, whether mythical or historical, which gave the topography of Dinefwr a mixture of sacred and political authority.

In West Wales, the topography of towns like New Carmarthen, Haverfordwest, Tenby and Pembroke also show elements of a regulated, organised and in some cases even designed landscapes (T. James 1989; 1991). These include the planned and ordered street layout, defences, churches and monastic foundations (T. James 1991). Rural boroughs show similar patterns, as shown in the archaeological and topographical investigations of Anglo-Norman planned settlements like Angle, Templeton, Newport, Wiston, Llawhaden, St.Clears, Laugharne and Kidwelly (Kissonock 1997; Murphy 1995; 1997).

## 2.6. Literary Ideals of Landscape

Medieval literary resources provide further evidence for these Welsh medieval designed landscapes. As well as hinting at their characteristics they illustrate their ideological significance for elites. A literary component to the topographical and archaeological evidence from Dinefwr is partially paralleled in Giraldus Cambrensis' idealised description of Dinefwr in his 'Journey through Wales' as "*built on the top of a high hill which overlooks the River Tywi and which is held to be the royal seat of the princes of South Wales*". (Thorpe 1978 [trans.]: 139). Meanwhile in his 'Description of Wales': "*Dynevor is where the royal palace of South Wales used to be: it is well protected by its site and surrounded by woods*" (Thorpe 1978 [trans.]: 226). A similar idealised vision of a lordly landscape occurs in Iolo Goch's portrayal of the orchard, vineyard, rabbit warren, mill, dovecot, fishpond and enclosed pond with pike and fine salmon of Owain Glyndŵr's castle at Sycharth (Whittle 1993: 12).

Giraldus describes other lordly landscapes in his Journey. At Cenarth near Cilgerran a comparable description to Manorbier is given of the features surrounding the well-known waterfalls rich in leaping salmon:

*"The church dedicated to Saint Llawddog, his mill, the bridge with its fishing-station and a most attractive garden all stand together on a small plot of ground"*. (Thorpe 1978 (trans.) 173).

What Giraldus does not mention is that all these features lay close to a motte immediately south of the modern village of Cenarth (Hogg & King 1963: 108). Could the church, mill, bridge, fishing-station, garden and water-falls represent the elements of a seigneurial landscape associated with an earth and timber phase of a castle in West Wales? If so, it provides a valuable context within which we move beyond the military functions of castle architecture and location to understand the castles of the Anglo-Norman period, not simply as strategic footholds in a foreign land, but as the centre of complex and design rural and urban landscapes that might include settlements, churches, monasteries, parks and gardens.

## 2.6. Discussion

Why are these arguments relevant to Manorbier? Manorbier may have begun earlier than many of the 'designed' landscapes discussed above. It may also lie in a seemingly 'peripheral' region where military conflict may be thought to govern castle design more closely than in central and southern England. Certainly military concerns would have been paramount in the location and character of Manorbier castle in its early days at least. Also, the landscape was of a much smaller scale, and need not have been developed in a single phase. It may not have been as explicitly 'symbolic' as those designed by those Norman lords with the greatest wealth such as those in the rich counties of eastern England.

Yet the examples from Castle Rising and elsewhere show that the military and the symbolic were neither oppositions nor chronologically distinct phases of castle building. Even early Norman castles, in terms of both architecture and landscape settings were as much symbolic and military in nature. Also, in its regional context, we have seen that there are many examples of Norman and later towns with the components of lordly landscapes within which to

situate Manorbier. Furthermore, while Manorbier may appear small and unimpressive, this is only when it is compared against later castles, or those in larger and wealthier regions. When seen in its own terms, it may be regarded as an important early castle with elements of a development seigneurial landscape. Therefore, while the most sophisticated and enhanced one-phase lordly landscapes are found at wealthy high-status landscapes of kings, upper echelons of the nobility and bishops in England, this does not rule out the possibility that smaller versions developed surrounding the smaller Welsh Norman castles.

### 3 The Landscape of Lordship at Manorbier

The evidence for the landscape of medieval Manorbier takes a number of forms. We can combine post-medieval documentary, map and place-name evidence with topographical, architectural and archaeological evidence. Moreover, we are able to employ the valuable description of Gerald of Wales who portrays his family's castle and his own birthplace with fondness if not with complete accuracy and reliability in his *Journey through Wales*. The following discussion relies upon Lewis Thorpe's translation, which differs to some extent from that of Richard Colt Hoare, particularly since the latter refers to a vineyard at Manorbier and the former does not. At this stage the original medieval latin has not been consulted to address the accuracy of each translation:

*"Only about three miles from Pembroke Castle is the fortified mansion known as Manorbier, that is the house of one Pyrrus. The same man also owned Caldy Island, called by the Welsh Ynys Byr, which means the Island of Pyrrus. There the house stands, visible from afar because of its turrets and crenellations on the top of a hill which is quite near the sea and which on the western side reaches as far as the harbour. To the north and the north-west, just beneath the walls, there is an excellent fish-pond, well constructed and remarkable for its deep waters. On the same side there is a most attractive orchard, shut in between the fish-pond and a grove of trees, with a great crag of rock and hazel-nut trees which grow to a great height. At the east end of the fortified promontory, between the castle, if I may call it such, and the church, a stream of water which never fails winds its way along a valley, which is strewn with sand by the strong sea-winds. It runs down from a large lake, and there is a water-mill on its bank. To the west it is washed by a winding inlet of the Severn Sea which forms a bay quite near to the castle and yet looks out towards the Irish Sea". (Thorpe 1978 (trans.): 150-1.*

To date, the validity of the description has been assessed only in its accuracy as a window onto the landscape of the twelfth century. There are many difficulties with this approach. As well as the failings of memory and the possibilities of exaggeration and distortion to enhance his family's reputation and prestige, we account is clearly partial and incomplete, selecting only aspects of the landscape to the exclusion of others. Yet these are not the main problems with the account, since the main elements of the description are still likely to have a basis in fact.

The main problem with Giraldus' account for our purposes is the manner of its interpretation. The desire of historians and archaeologists to read it as an accurate description of a 'real' landscape rather than as an ideological construct. The account of Giraldus portrays the Manorbier landscape from a distinctive aesthetic lens inspired by religious as well as secular ideals of what a benign and fruitful landscape blessed by God ought to be like.

In support of this, it is interesting to note that Giraldus' portrayal of Manorbier has no direct comparison in the *Journey*. Those that are closest are descriptions of religious sites. For example, in his description of Llanthony Priory, Giraldus describes a similar place blessed by God where the topography, weather, vegetation and architecture interact to create a holy place:

*"As they [the monks] sit in their cloisters in this monastery, breathing the fresh air, the monks gaze up at distant prospects which rise above their own lofty roof-tops, and there they see, as far as any eye can reach, mountain-peaks which rise to meet the sky and often enough herds of wild deer which are grazing on their summits...This was formerly a happy, a delightful spot, most suited to the life of contemplation, a place from its first founding fruitful and to itself sufficient".* (Journey through Wales I.3. Thorpe 1978 trans. 98).

Also, put into the words of Bishop Roger of Salisbury, Gerald refers to the hills as a cloister:

*"The entire treasure of the King and his realm would not be sufficient to build such a cloister".* (Journey through Wales I.3. Thorpe 1978 trans. 99).

Other references to landscapes around castles are not unknown in Giraldus' account. They are brief but revealing. For Cenarth near Cilgerran, a description is provided, although focusing on the leaping of salmon:

*"The church dedicated to Saint Llawddog, his mill, the bridge with its fishing-station and a most attractive garden all stand together on a small plot of ground".* (Thorpe 1978 (trans.) 173).

What Giraldus does not mention is that all these features lay close to a motte immediately south of the modern village (Hogg & King 1963: 108: Hogg & King do not), once again his focus is upon the church and the religious sanctity of sites blessed with rich natural resources rather than upon the political organisation of the secular landscape.

In combination this evidence suggests that Giraldus' account provides little accurate detail about the twelfth century landscape, but does portray the ideological context and symbolic importance of place for the setting of an elite residence. Yet this does argue, if accepted, does not render his account useless. Indeed, given the arguments made by archaeologists concerning the subjective and meaningful nature of medieval lordly landscapes, both the physical landscape and Giraldus' literary account can be regarded as ideological and symbolic in nature. Consequently, Giraldus' account provides a window onto what the medieval elite mind wanted to see in a lordly landscape: topographies of power and identity mediated through the components and relationships between the castle and its environment.

### **3.1. The Medieval Mill and the South-East Valley**

*"At the east end of the fortified promontory, between the castle, if I may call it such, and the church, a stream of water which never fails winds its way along a alley, which is strewn with sand by the strong sea-winds"* (Thorpe 1978 [trans]: 150).

King & Perks (1970) describe the recent tipping in the area that resulted in the levelling of much of the valley obscuring medieval deposits. In fact, below Shute Cottage, the area has been transformed. Consequently, little can be reconstructed concerning the medieval character of this valley. The valley may have contained a mill or fish-ponds at some stage. In and around Shute Cottage there are earthwork features that may indicate evidence of dams for ponds, but there is no clear evidence of their date or function (see below). This is associated with terracing in the field upstream from the path from the castle to the church. Indeed, in the tithe map the area of the car park is

referred to as 'Mill Field'. This may refer to the medieval mill referred to by Giraldus. However, its position and character will remain obscure given the degree of post-medieval disturbance.

### 3.2. The Harbour

*"There the house stands, visible from afar because of its turrets and crenellations, on the top of a hill which is quite near the sea and which on the western side reaches as far as the harbour"* (Thorpe 1978 [trans]: 150).

*"To the west it is washed by the winding inlet of the Severn Sea which forms a bay quite near to the castle and yet looks out towards the Irish Sea. If only the rocky headland to the south bent round northwards a little farther, it would make a harbour most convenient for shipping. Boats on their way to Ireland from almost any part of Britain scud by before the east wind, and from this vantage-point you can see them brave the ever-changing violence of the winds and the blind fury of the waters"* (Thorpe 1978 [trans.]: 150).

The harbour described by Giraldus was an important element of the location design of the castle (see above). It is evident from the orientation of the hall-keep, that the hall-keep of the twelfth century was intended to be seen at its most impressive when visitors had approached from the sea direction. Indeed, the tight valleys on all sides of castle mean that the castle is ostensibly invisible until approached at close quarters *apart from* when approached from the sea. It is evident and implicit in Giraldus' statement that the turrets and crenellations that he describes were intended to be seen from afar, and this means that if accurate, then he must be referring to the sea-ward approaches.

Access by sea was an important factor in Anglo-Norman castle locations from the Gower, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire coasts (see Avent 1991). Castles are located at mouths of rivers to be easily supplied and to guard routeways into Wales (Avent 1991: 167). They also provided staging posts on the route to Pembroke and Ireland. Indeed, it is an almost-ubiquitous element of castle location by the sea or on navigable estuaries in these areas. While the motivation has usually been seen to relate to transportation and warfare, the social and economic motivations of this positioning also require consideration. A desire to be integrated into routes of communication used by travellers and trade, and for the castle to act adequately as the centre of economic exploitation of the environment, both on land and sea need also to be considered (see Austin 1984). For example, excavations within the early burgage plots of the medieval town of Newport showed that Ham green wares from Bristol were by far the most common imported wares from the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Murphy 1994: 75).

Yet the specific mention of a harbour leads us to consider its nature and location in terms of ideology and aesthetics. King & Perks (1970) are cynical, noting that the coast was useless for a harbour, clearly doubting Giraldus' statement:

*"If only the rocky headland to the south bent round northwards a little farther, it would make a harbour most convenient for shipping"* (Thorpe 1978 [trans.]: 150).

Yet, one of the outstanding questions concerning the topography of Manorbier is the extent to which the coastline of the area has changed since the Middle Ages. Elsewhere along the Carmarthenshire coast, there has been

considerable alterations to the coastline because of both natural and human action (T. James 1991). Heather James has noted that from the Bronze Age onwards there have been considerable changes to the coastline of southern Pembrokeshire and recalls both Giraldus' statement and the later 1609 survey alluding to the valleys and mill being affected by the encroachment of the sea (H. James 1999: 3. See also below).

Consequently, we are in no position at present to reconstruct the nature of the valley below the mill in the Middle Ages, however, it could be argued that much of the burrows that can be seen today have developed rapidly in the post-medieval period, with an inlet and harbour now covered by several metres of sand, positioned in the Middle Ages much closer to the castle. Yet, Giraldus seems acutely aware that Manorbier is far from ideal in this regard, since he admits that it does not form a natural harbour. It appears that already by the twelfth century, no sizeable and formalised harbour was present. We may instead, be looking at simply a small area for receiving rowing boats from sea-going vessels, and for local, small fishing boats to be pulled up on the sand. Indeed, as Giraldus overtly states, the trade and communications appear to pass the castle by.

Yet the size and character of the harbour does not seem to be the point, nor warrant the lengthy discussion here. The important element appears to be the visual relationship between castle and sea. Giraldus does not mention all elements of the castle's landscape, and when he does it is clearly to make a point. He is not mentioning the harbour and the sea for any other reason than its intervisibility with the castle. In other words, the lordly display embodied in the architecture and setting of the castle, could be seen by the frequent traffic along the Bristol Channel, and for Giraldus' family status and identity, this may have been held in high regard.

There is a wider cosmological significance that needs to be considered. Giraldus states that concerning its location, the one reason it is so pleasant is because:

*"What is more important than all the rest is that, from its nearness to Ireland, heaven's breath smells so woefully there".* (Thorpe 1978 [trans]: 150-1).

This seems particularly important with reference to Ireland, both connected by sea, and the very air that was experienced at Manorbier. Central to Giraldus' argument about the pleasantness of Manorbier, combined with Wales more generally, was its proximity to Ireland by terms of both air and sea. In the *History and Topography of Ireland* he describes the wonders of Ireland's air. *"The air is so healthy that there is no disease-bearing cloud, or pestilential vapour, or corrupting breeze".* (O'Meara 1951 [trans.]: 53). This aspect finds close comparison with Giraldus' description of Llanthony, where the purifying and salubrious place restores the health of the monks who have been away eastwards to England.

*"... the farther one travels to the east, the more the sky above seems to be pure and limpid, but this is only because the wind which blows it clear is harsher and more piercing. On the contrary, as one goes farther westward and northwestward, the air in those parts produces a climate which may well be more cloudy and more thick, but it is certainly more temperate and healthy".* (Thorpe 1978 [trans.]: 97).

In comparing England with Wales and Ireland, westwards is regarded as more blessed. On a broader scale, eastwards towards the heathen lands beyond the Holy land is perceived as a place of death (O'Meara 1951 [trans.]: 54). There may have been overt symbolism built up around this connection in the castle's location. The de Barri family was successful in Ireland following the Norman conquest, and Giraldus' description of the link to the sea and the airs from Ireland is rich in symbolism connecting the fortunes of his family to a divine and heavenly order.

### **3.3. The Village and Field System**

In recent years, the identification of medieval open-field systems in both lowland and upland areas of Wales has rapidly increased due to archaeological research combining aerial photography with historical and topographical survey (e.g. Aris 1997; Kissock 1997; Sylvester 2001). These include both areas of Anglo-Norman settlement associated with feudal landscapes and areas that remained ostensibly Welsh (e.g. Jones 1985). While these systems are usually argued to have been introduced and developed between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries AD, on occasions they may have developed from 'co-axial' field systems of far greater antiquity, from either the early Middle Ages or from Prehistory. This confirms with many recent studies that suggest a greater degree in landscape organisation from the early Middle Ages into the Anglo-Norman period for areas like Pembrokeshire (e.g. Campbell & Lane 1993; Kissock 1997). In southern Carmarthenshire, Murphy has charted extensive medieval field systems on Marros Mountain that would have fallen with the lordship of Laurghne (Murphy 1988). While far from conclusive concerning his precise dating evidence, Kissock has convincingly argued that at sites like Templeton, Jameston and Manorbier, the medieval landscape planned settlements were laid out over these earlier co-axial field systems, while in other instances they were integral to the planned landscapes as at Angle. In either case, whether newly planned or re-planned, they were integral elements of the feudal landscape. It has been argued that these common fields were out of use by the early 17<sup>th</sup> century soon after which some were beginning to be enclosed (Walker 1987).

As James (1999) notes, the organisation of the village in the Middle Ages has largely been destroyed by modern development, but there is no evidence that the church was ever a focus of settlement. Furthermore there is no evidence for James' suggestion that the earliest village was placed outside the inner ward before the outer ward was built in the thirteenth century. Indeed, given the distance between castle and church, it may have been an integral part of the original plan to have a gap between the village and both secular elite and religious foci.

### **3.4. Rocks and Orchard**

*"On the same side there is a most attractive orchard, shut in between the fish-pond and a grove of trees, with a great crag of rock and hazel-nut trees which grow to a great height".* (Thorpe 1978 [trans.]: 150).

There are two options of the location of the rocks and trees so described. The first is behind the dovecote where a wooded coombe heads westwards up to 'mill hill'. However, while there are outcrops here, the rocks are unlikely

to have been of substantial note. The second are the outcrops between the village and Park Farm on the north side of the valley as it winds westward. Linked to this, the entire valley at its upper end might have been easily described by Giraldus as heavily wooded and rocky. The height of the hazel trees must here refer to their location outside parkland where they would have been managed; perhaps they were trees used for building purposes.

If this is the case, then what impact does this have on our interpretation of the possible location of the orchard and fish-pond? If the fish-pond or ponds were located between the post-medieval mill and Park Farm, then we are looking for a hillside location shallow enough slope to retain an orchard. The two possibilities are the area from the dovecote west and north, both along the east-facing valley side and upon the hillside. The second, less likely alternative is in the tighter valley to the north of the outer ward. The former is a sunny valley-side that could have easily contained both an orchard. A key element to this design might be the wing-walls heading down the valley from the north-west end of the hall-keep and the middle of the outer ward. As King & Perks note, both are very well-built for simply field walls, and may be the boundaries of a sizeable garden and orchard, that enclosed the entire area from the castle across to the dovecote and beyond, on either side of the fishponds. This seems more convincing than their argument that "*the only real use these walls can have served will have been to interfere with the movements of an enemy*" (King & Perks 1970: 113-4). We have already argued that a conjectured south-western ward may have contained gardens, but the larger orchard, possible vineyard and other garden areas would be better situated in the valley to the north-west. It seems unlikely that these walls, if medieval in origin, had a defensive role, and instead, marked divisions in the lordly landscape.

### **3.5. The Park**

The location of a possible medieval park at Manorbier has been speculated (e.g. H. James 1999) but Giraldus does not mention it, even though it was by far the most ubiquitous aspect of lordly landscapes from the twelfth century, and particular in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Bond 1994; Stamper 1990). One explanation is that the deer park was a later addition (H. James 1999), or it may be because such overt symbols of lordly status did not reckon well with Giraldus' religious orientation and small-scale focus in his landscape description.

The evidence that a deer park was present at Manorbier comes from more than expectations and analogies with other castles such as Carew and the nearby bishop's palace at Lamphey. The Trefloyne rentals refer to "Manorbier Castle and Park" (Walker 198?). Manorbier Park, enclosed by a stone wall, was estimated to contain 72, 70 or 60 acres of pasture (Walker 198?). In the sixteenth century, George Owen regarded it as one of six parks in Pembrokeshire. There were no game or deer in the park by the survey of 1609, but the description of it divided into three parts is interesting. These were referred to as the North Park, South Park and Garden Park. However, Manorbier Park is mentioned in the 1582 survey, suggested to be the close under the castle. The Garden Park may refer to the valley and the field containing the dovecote (see above). Presumably the other sub-divisions

('North' and 'South') refer to the partition of a single park, rather than two separate parks, a situation that is known elsewhere (e.g. Austin 1992; Everson in Ellis 2000). Perhaps the North and South Parks were divisions based around the hunting lodge or similar natural feature that provided a convenient point of partition in the post-medieval landscape. For instance, it is tempting to see Park Farm as the site of a possible hunting lodge, with the land to the south providing the South Park, and that to the west and north providing the North Park.

The precise area and nature of the deer park is unclear. The place-name 'Park Farm' may at first indicate clear evidence for the location of medieval parkland associated with the castle, but the word 'park' is found on the tithe map referring to fields in many parts of the parish, including Ewe Park, Clay Park, Brambly Park, Ox Park, Cow Park, Long Park, Kiln Park, Thistle Park, Shipping Park and so on. There is even a field named 'Old Castle Park' because it is adjacent to a field called 'Old Castle', pertaining to the Iron Age fort at Manorbier Camp. Consequently, the significance of the place names Castle Park, in the steep valley to the north of the outer ward and Pigeon Park on the other side of the valley to the north-west including the dovecote need have no great significance for medieval land-use.

Analogies from other sites provide clues. Following the plan of other designed landscapes discussed above, then we would expect either the deer park abutting the castle, or for it to begin within view of the castle but beyond the orchards and gardens closer by the castle walls. If the latter case, and seems most likely given the discussions and arguments presented above, then the hills beyond the north-west of the castle may have provided the ideal location. As Liddiard (2000) shows for Castle Rising, and Everson for Ludgershall, even a small deer park could the impression of stretching forever if it began close to the castle and disappears out of view.

The topography and contemporary field boundaries also contain tentative suggestions. Deer parks tend to be as close to circular as it is possible to reduce the overall length of the expensive boundaries, usually a bank topped with either a stone wall or wooden pale (Bond 1994; Stamper 1990). Such a sizeable enclosure would be necessary to contain deer, who can jump up to three metres. Given the large-scale enclosing of the land around Manorbier, we should not be surprised if the deer park boundary has been completely obliterated. However, there is a distinctively circular boundary rising up from the dovecote running west and curving north to end up at Park Farm, that could have formed the south and western boundaries of the park. The eastern boundary may have run from above the dovecote along the contours of the valley towards Park Farm creating an easily protecting curving boundary that could be seen from the castle, but its western edge situated out of view to provide the expectation and impression of a much larger area of emparkment. There are traces of an earthwork recorded in the SMR on the hill north-west of the castle that may be the remains of the eastern curving boundary long since replaced by the dog-leg of a more recent boundary.

### **3.6. Dovecote**

Dovecotes were another component of the designed landscapes, and were a symbol of high status since a considerable amount of excess grain would be

required to be invested in each pair of doves. Contrary to popular belief, these were not simply for fresh meat in the winter months, but were for fresh meat all year around built by both monasteries and secular lords (Bond 2000). As prominent architectural features, they required a great deal of investment. The choice to make a stone structure was not necessary, but illustrated a comparable scale of investment to that invested in elite buildings. Furthermore, they provided an aesthetic focus for the castle's garden. They stood out in the landscape and their vaulted roofs alluded to the architecture of both castle and church. They need to be regarded as economic resources, but also as monuments to the lord as important as the elements of the castle itself. Dovecotes also held religious significance. Just as Stocker & Stocker (1996) have argued that religious symbolism embodied the location and form of medieval rabbit warrens, perceived as metaphors for the church and the Christian community, so comparable avian symbolism may have surrounded the dove and pigeon houses in the seigneurial landscape linked to the soul and its salvation. As both economic resources, symbols of status, and foci for complex religious allusions, the dovecote was an essential part of the feudal landscape.

Consequently, the location of dovecotes, usually with the gardens of castles and manor houses, were frequently orchestrated to enhance their visibility from the castle. The location of the Manorbier dovecote, at first seemingly unnecessarily distant from the castle, can be understood in relation to its location in the gardens of the castle, between the fish-ponds and both woods and parkland beyond. Had the fish-ponds (see below) existed below the walls of the inner ward, then the dovecote would be reflected in the waters of the pond when viewed from the castle. This intervisibility is comparable to the chosen locations of medieval dovecotes in other locations in Pembrokeshire and elsewhere. The dovecote at Pembroke is in an almost identical position, across water and visible from the castle walls. Equally at Angle, the dovecote is on rising ground across a tidal inlet from the possible castle and close to the tower-house.

### **3.7. Manorbier's Mill & Fishponds**

*"To the north and north-west, just beneath the walls, there is an excellent fish-pond, well constructed and remarkable for its deep waters".* (Thorpe 1978 [trans.]: 150).

We know most about marine and freshwater fisheries from monastic contexts in the Middle Ages, and Wales is no exception (e.g. D.Williams 2001: 265-68). A good example is the extensive surviving earthworks at Whitland abbey, which served mills (see above), but also provided a source of fish for the monastic diet. However, lordly residences from the late Anglo-Saxon period, frequently employed hydraulic engineering to provide supplies of water and a source of food that both denoted status and provided a richer diet of meat to be consumed on fast days.

The seventeenth century records provide some details about the mill. Whether the site of the medieval mill or not (see above), it was certainly in the demesne land in the 17<sup>th</sup> century together with the Castle and the Lord's Meadow (Walker 198?). Presumably the meadow surrounded the fishponds and was a source for the grazing of animals and the gathering of grasses and

rushes for the floors of the castle. The Manorbier farmers had to grind their corn at Manorbier mill, and this made it a focus of the lord's landscape, but the place where the relationships between lord and tenants was made manifest. As Giraldus alludes in the twelfth century, so in the seventeenth, the sea and sand were causing problems at the mill. In 1618 it is noted that '*the sea hath overflowed and overcome a greate parte*' of it (Walker 19???: 150). It is stated that '*the sea winds doe violentlie drive uppe the sand upon every storme, the land next the mill is quite covered with sand and the pastures lost and consumed*' (Walker 19???: 150-1).

Giraldus' account of the fishponds emphasises their fine construction and depth. As argued for other features in the seigneurial landscape, the social standing of the de Barri could be reckoned by this feature as much as the nature of the castle itself, but there may be religious allusions in Gerald's account. Water was laden with symbolism in medieval monastic life (Gilchrist 1995), and the use of fish-ponds may have served as an economic resource, but also to emphasise the spiritual status of the lordly family. Hence, even with the sea close at hand, freshwater fish were highly sought after as a status symbol that conferred identity and prestige that it is entirely feasible that sizeable fishponds served the Manorbier community and the castle (see Dyer 1989).

What were the fishponds like? This is a difficult question to answer since extensive studies of fishponds emphasise their almost inexhaustible variability in size, shape and design (studies in Aston 1989). It is likely that they consisted of a series of dams created a cascade of ponds leading down the valley. As well as a large pond, there may have been smaller breeding ponds. It all depended upon the management regime and the kinds of fish maintained.

Where were the ponds? If Giraldus is accurate then the ponds should be below the walls of the inner ward, perhaps the only part of the castle extant in Giraldus' youth. This would also be the situation expected for their greatest aesthetic affect, a pattern that has numerous analogies from other castle sites. Yet this does not rule out the possibility that the pond was in isolation, and that other ponds did not exist winding down the valley from the springs further to the north. This is likely if the ponds were expanded and redeveloped over time. Furthermore, the presence of a large fishpond below the castle walls on the north-west side of the valley does not rule out the strong possibility that the south-east valley also had ponds, either to serve the mill, to contain fish, or both. Consequently, there is no reason to doubt Giraldus' description, nor to limit investigations to those areas where his account is most likely to refer to.

## **4. Fieldwork at Manorbier in the Summer of 2002**

As the student training project in June 2002, the school of archaeology at Trinity College Carmarthen. The aim of the work was to initiate a series of discrete pieces of archaeological survey and investigations in and around Manorbier. For ten days, approximately twenty to twenty-five students took place in the work co-directed by Howard Williams, Trevor Kirk and Gareth Longden. A subsequent three-day field survey was directed by Howard Williams at Manorbier in August 2002. The fieldwork was limited due to a number of factors. The need to commute every day from Carmarthen, the provision of only basic equipment, the unreliability of student attendance, and the student-training nature of the exercise, all placed restrictions on the amount of work to be done. There were two primary foci for investigation, the medieval church of Manorbier dedicated to St James, and the valley to the north-west of the castle. Let us review the work carried out and some of the results of this research.

### **4.1. Manorbier Church**

#### **4.1.1. Standing Building Survey of the Church**

Following established methodologies, a standing building survey was directed by Gareth Longden of the northern and eastern side of St James' Church, Manorbier. While extensively rendered, these two sides of the building yield the greatest amount of information concerning the surviving medieval fabric and the sequence of building and re-building of the church from the twelfth century to the present day. In the east wall of the church, the remains of the earliest Norman fabric was discernible, together with a series of subsequent re-modelling and re-working. On the north wall of the church, the key surviving features of the church was identified and recorded.

#### **4.1.2. Graveyard Survey**

A graveyard survey was directed by Dr Trevor Kirk in the churchyard of St James', Manorbier. Using a range of archaeological survey techniques, the precise positions of each grave were mapped and recorded in relation to the church and churchyard boundaries and features. In addition, using a standard recording sheet used in gravestone surveys, the form, material, inscription, character and date of each gravestone was assessed and collated. The results of this survey will provide an invaluable record for the parish, and for future archaeological research into the post-medieval history and archaeology of the community of Manorbier and their strategies for commemorating the dead.

### **4.2. Investigation of the Landscape of the Castle**

This section summarises the results of the fieldwork conducted under the direction of Dr Howard Williams into the valley to the north-west of the castle, an area that was thought to contain the remains of the fishponds. A number of features were investigated within the valley, together with an auger and total station survey.

#### **4.2.1. Exploration of the Valley to the SE of the Castle**

As noted in earlier sections, the valley to the south-east of the castle has been substantially altered by dumpings of soil and the creation of the National Park car park. Having said that there are a number of terraces within the field west of Shute Cottage that would have a medieval or early modern origin. These may be cultivation terraces associated with the medieval village for instance, or occupation platforms pertaining to the same. The boggy area next to Shute Cottage is a further candidate for a medieval mill, and there are suggestions of a bank and the deliberate of a mill-pond in this area.

#### **4.2.2. Exploration of the Upper Valley NW of the Castle**

An exploration took place in the upper valley, east of Park Farm between the limekiln, the springs, and the Welsh Water installation. There is not categorical reason why there might not have been a series of ponds and medieval garden features in this upper park of the valley as well. Exploring this area in a systematic way was not possible. Despite being heavily overgrown, sections of the mill leat were identified in the upper valley, descending from Park Farm into the heavy undergrowth. The second features that were identified but not surveyed in the upper valley were evidence of a series of N-S terraces c.25m SE of the limekiln. The nature of these features is unclear, but they might be the remains of medieval fish-ponds, long since damaged and denuded by later activities. However, their precise nature is unclear given the nature of the vegetation. Below these features in the valley there was no further evidence of earthworks, although features could be easily hidden in the dense vegetation. What was investigated seemed to show that the spring had been recently channelled suggesting sizeable alteration of the terrain in recent years by Welsh Water.

#### **4.2.3. The Mill Leat.**

It was possible to identify alongside the current road heading SW-NE between the Welsh Water installation, the remains of the bank that would have marked the SE side of the mill leat in the post-medieval period. This feature is hard to identify towards the SW of the survey area near the dovecote, but it is clearly discernible in a number of locations along the SE side of the track close by the modern farm pond. A section of this leat was surveyed to provide an impression of its scale and character despite subsequent damage and alteration.

#### **4.2.4. Walls extending from the castle into the valley**

Two sizeable field boundaries are recorded on the tithe map and are fossilised as substantial dry-stone walls running SE to NW from the castle across the valley perpendicular to the NE-SW running stream. A substantial length of the wall running from the hall-keep towards the dovecote was investigated by teams of students clearing the valley. It was clear from this work that the wall was consistent in its size and character right across the valley. There seems no reason to ascribe to this feature a medieval date, and they are unlikely to have had a defensive function in relation to the castle (contra King & Perks 1970). The boundary may have marked the NE extent of the mill-pond, and served as a boundary for land divisions in the demesne

land since the Middle Ages. It may have formed the edge of the medieval gardens, defined fields for pasturing animals and may have also marked a terrace between medieval fishponds. However, the form of the wall seems ostensibly post-medieval and a typical field boundary, atypical only in its good survival.

#### **4.2.5. Feature below Outer Ward**

A sizeable bank was identified running parallel to the contour of the NW-facing slope below the outer ward. This bank was just above the valley bottom. It may have been a feature associated with the fish-ponds, but by probing, it appears to be mainly stone, and may consequently be a build-up of rubble that has fallen from the ruinous walls of the outer ward above. This seems confirmed by the fact that the feature is not existent below the inner ward.

#### **4.2.6. The Mill.**

An investigation of the mill took place, and the observation was made that the mill was situated adjacent to a sizeable embankment upon which the modern road is placed. However, given the alterations accompanying the building of the road, previously a wide lane leading to the mill, it is unsurprising that there are no unambiguous features that can be ascribed to a sizeable mill-pond dam. Having made this comment, despite the current access road to the Welsh Water installations and the overgrown nature of the landscape to the NE and SW of the mill, it seems as if this bank is the best and indeed only, place where a sizeable mill-dam that may have also served as a fishpond could have been situated.

#### **4.2.7. Auger Survey of the Valley to the North-West of the Castle**

Using basic augering equipment, an area on the north-west side of the valley, in an area approximately 100m SW-NE by 30m NW-SE. The aim of this survey was to identify the depth and character of the sediments in the valley, and to provide clues concerning the presence or absence of buried features that may pertain to the medieval fishponds and other activities within the valley.

The methodology implemented was to set out a base line along the valley running from SW to NE in the field below the inner ward on the NW side of the stream between the stream and the Welsh Water access road. From this base line, transects were made at every 10m running NW to SE from the base line. The ideal was to have transects of augers from the road all the way down to the stream at the centre of the valley, but due to the dense vegetation, this was not always possible.

With each hand-auger, the depth, texture and colour of deposits were recorded. Most augers were made as far as it was possible to go unless, on rare occasions where tree roots interfered.

The effectiveness of the survey was impeded by the limitations of the technology and the lack of experience of the students in recording accurately the results. There appears also to have been extensive disturbance by the Welsh Water in the area who have installed water extraction and processing facilities within the valley. However, the auger survey was able to provide

some clear indications concerning the sediments that have built up in the valley to the NW of the castle.

- Throughout the surveyed area, deposits were comparable and homogeneous.
- Deposits were thick, up to 2.5m of silty loam deposits were encountered before sand deposits were met with towards the centre of the valley. This material was very similar in colour and texture throughout the depth, suggesting a consistent build up of material. No notably variations were encountered or organic-rich layers were encountered that might indicate the bottom of fishponds.
- The sand that was encountered below the silty loam appears to have been dune sand, containing what appeared to be the remains of marine molluscs, indicating that they could represent wind-blown sand deposits.
- The 'dune sand' differed considerably from the old red sandstone bedrock that was encountered very close to the surface of augers taking place towards the edge of the valley. This suggests that whenever and whatever the 'dune sand' was deposited, it was not 'bedrock' or eroded bedrock.
- No evidence for the date of these sandy deposits was identified. Two possibilities exist, either that they are early Holocene, or post-medieval. At present this author has no expertise at deciding upon which is the more likely. In the first scenario, the sand dates to the early Holocene and the deep silty loam deposits above have accumulated from the Mesolithic onwards. In which case due to their relative homogeneity, there appears to be no presence of the medieval fishponds. The second scenario, that these rich silty loam deposits represent post-medieval degradation over late- and post-medieval sand deposits caused by sea encroachment, gains support from the possibility of widespread coastal changes in historical times. This might suggest that the valleys around the castle have been extensive re-worked by natural erosion and deposition of material and any remains of medieval fishponds are hidden deep beneath these deposits. Only further work is likely to reveal which scenario is the more likely.

#### **4.2.8. Probe Survey of the Valley to the North-West of the Castle**

To augment the auger survey, a long metal pole was used to survey the transects at one metre intervals. The aim of this survey was to attempt to pick up any other buried features within the sediments in the valley that might have been missed by the broader auger survey. A probe survey also took place of the area to the area on the NE side of the stream below the outer ward, where investigations revealed a pronounced bank running parallel to the contours and just above the valley bottom.

The results of the probe survey have yet to be fully assessed. However, preliminary results show that on the NW side of the valley, the probe survey enhanced the auger survey in providing a crude indication of the depth of deposits, but it was unable to locate with any certainty the presence of discrete buried features that might pertain to the fishponds. The survey confirmed that the feature on the NE side of the stream appears to be the remains of rubble fallen from the outer ward of the castle. There is no evidence that this feature has any bearing on the medieval fishponds.

#### **4.2.9. Total Station Survey of the Valley to the North-West of the Castle**

A total station survey of elements of the valley to the north-west of the castle was undertaken in August 2002 to supplement the results of the auger survey. Two main areas were investigated. The first was the main area where the fishponds were identified. The transepts used in the auger survey were surveyed and the positions plots in relation to the walls of the castle and the dovecote. In addition a possible earthwork feature on the NW-facing slope below the outerward was investigated and surveyed (see above).

Unfortunately, due to lack of time, a map of the total station survey has yet to be completed.

## **5. The Manorbier Medieval Landscape: Suggestions for Future Research**

The landscape of Manorbier has been assessed and defined by Cadw as of special historical interest. It is clearly an environment important for its ecology, archaeology and history, and to date it is argued that the full academic and heritage tourism opportunities presented by this landscape have yet to be explored. This final section outlines the possibilities for further archaeological fieldwork within the Manorbier landscape, both investigating the castle and its medieval landscape. Support for some or indeed all of these proposals would hold great benefits for the local community, the conservation of the Pembrokeshire coast, and the enhancement of heritage tourism. For this to be adequately achieved, a programme of fieldwork needs to be combined with the presentation and interpretation of both past and ongoing research into Manorbier's past.

### **The Fishponds**

There are a series of potential fieldwork projects to develop upon the work already completed. These include:

- Series of mechanical auger samples from the beech to the Welsh Water pumping station in order to ascertain a fuller picture of the geological and archaeology of the valley to the NW of the castle.
- A fuller and more detailed survey of the valley using total station and geophysical techniques.
- Excavation of the area in the fishpond area to retrieve palaeo-environmental samples, dating evidence and evidence of the uses of the pond(s)
- Excavation of the possible fishpond dams - most likely candidate being beneath the modern road running from the ruined mill to the road by the car park

The research to date has clearly identified the significance and importance of the Manorbier landscape, and the valley to the north-west of the castle, for medieval studies and the contemporary community and tourist industry. In particular, the research presented here has isolated the significance of the fishponds and their relationship with both castle and seigneurial landscape. However, given the limited funding available for the initial archaeological field survey, the work carried out in the area of the fishponds represents only a tentative step forward and consequently there is a strong case for further archaeological work in the valley to the north-west of the castle.

Many key questions remain unanswered but could be easily address with further research. These questions include:

- how many fishponds were there, what size were they, how deep were they?
- what types of fish were kept in the ponds?
- how were they managed?
- when and why were the ponds finally abandoned?
- does the post-medieval mill overlie the medieval one and if so was there an earlier mill elsewhere?

Further work is needed to answer these important questions, in order to accurately restore the fishponds to their former nature. The proposed research would attempt to build on the preliminary fieldwork already successfully completed in addressing the importance of the medieval landscape of Manorbier.

### **The Medieval Landscape**

Essential for an understanding of both the castle and the fishponds, is an appreciation of the broader nature and development of the medieval landscape of Manorbier as a whole. This involves the employment of an explicitly theorised and holistic approach to the medieval landscape as a whole, as well as specific research into the constituent elements of the castle's surrounding including the meadows, warrens, orchards, vineyards, deer park, dovecote, fishponds, the church, farms, field systems and the village itself, all of which are known, or can be expected to have been present in medieval Manorbier. This work could include:

- Fuller exploration of the landscape of the 'seigneurial landscape' using aerial photographs, earthwork survey and excavation.
- Survey of the valley SE of the castle and the site of the possible medieval mill as described by Giradlus.
- Excavations in area of the medieval mill, possibly near Shute Cottage
- Investigation and standing-building survey of the 'grange' to the south of the medieval church.
- Field-walking and survey within the area of the co-axial fields north and south-east of the village with the aim of dating and assessing the use of the landscape for agriculture and settlement from prehistory to the present day.
- A detailed survey of the village of Manorbier itself in order to identify areas for potential archaeological intervention to ascertain the origins and development of the settlement.

In combination, these elements will provide the basis for a full landscape survey of the parish and in particular, its prehistoric and medieval origins.

### **The Castle**

While the castle is the focus of this important landscape, very little is known about its precise history and development. In particular, almost nothing is known about the outer ward of the castle, now mostly derelict and its walls denuded through post-medieval quarrying for house-building. Also, despite a brief comment by King & Perks, little is known of the area on the spur upon which the castle is situated, in particular the area immediately south-west of the domestic ranges of the castle. Two elements to such a project might be suggested to investigate these areas:

- Excavations in the outer ward of the castle in order to ascertain the presence and nature of prehistoric on the site, and the development and uses of the outer ward.
- Survey and excavation of the area to the SW of the domestic ranges to test the theory presented above of a third ward outside the hall-keep. The research would also have the aim of identifying and assessing the

relationships between the castle, the harbour and the site of the post-medieval mill and fishponds.

### **The Wider Setting**

Manorbier is an important landscape, but it is not unique. Further research will also need to place Manorbier within its wider context. As this study has begun to attempt, a much fuller understanding is required of the relationship between Manorbier, its parish, region and county, as well as the national and international context that was as important in the age of Giraldus Cambrensis as it is today. Research should include:

- A comparative study of the landscape and castle of Manorbier with other castles and their settings in West Wales
- A broader search for parallels and different scenarios in castle landscapes from Normandy, England, Scotland and Ireland.

### **Heritage**

All of this evidence needs to be summarised and presented to the public as part of the ongoing strategy of development an understanding of Manorbier's past in relation to its present and future. Key elements to such a plan might include:

- a new guidebook for both the castle.
- a guide to the historic landscape.
- information boards.
- interactive web site dedicated to the prehistory and history of Manorbier.
- The restoration and development of the valley to the north-west of the castle as proposed by the Manorbier Medieval Fishpond Restoration Group.

### **Conclusions**

This study has been aimed at placing the Manorbier castle and setting in a wider academic context, as well as presenting the results of the first archaeological fieldwork conducted by the School of Archaeology, Trinity College Carmarthen, in particular the research by the author in the valley to the north-west of the castle. The results of the work by Trevor Kirk and Gareth Longden at the church of St James at Manorbier will be forthcoming. In conclusion, the work to date and the outline for future research combine to illustrate the importance of the Manorbier landscape and the many opportunities it offers for both fruitful archaeological enquiry and the development of heritage tourism.

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