Moated sites in Tayside and Fife

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Moated sites, or moated homesteads as they are also known, are one of the most distinctive and striking features of the medieval landscape, and are found across much of Britain, Ireland and north-western Europe. As a class of field monument they have attracted considerable interest since the 1970s (the Moated Sites Research Group was formed in England in 1972), although not in Scotland. Most Scottish moated sites for which there are standing remains are scheduled ancient monuments, but, other than a short section in South East Perth: an archaeological landscape (RCAHMS 1994, 108–9), and in the Atlas of Scottish History to 1707 (Corser 1996, 431), there is little published information on this class of site.

As with all earthworks, moated sites are vulnerable to erosion from, for example, rabbit burrowing, root damage, livestock and natural weathering. In response, Historic Scotland funded this regional management survey of moated sites. Tayside and Fife proved a good starting point for the pilot study, as Peter Corser of the Royal Commission (RCAHMS) had already identified some 28 sites in east central Scotland for the recently published South-East Perth: an archaeological landscape (RCAHMS 1994). Although this was a management study (Coleman and Perry 1997) assessing current and potential threats to sites in Tayside and Fife, it also provided general background information on moated sites, of which this paper is a summary.

Moated sites: the archaeological and historical background

The introduction of feudal systems of land tenure during the 12th and 13th centuries was accompanied by the construction of defensive earthworks such as mottes and ring-works. Another, perhaps lesser known, form of earthwork was the moated site. On present evidence, moated sites in Scotland appear to form a smaller group of medieval earthworks than mottes and ring-works, of which there are around 320 known examples (Stell 1996, 430). Within the medieval period, the time span within which moated sites were constructed is at present uncertain, although they rarely occur outside the known areas of Anglo-Norman penetration (Corser 1996, 431).

Nationally, there are approximately 60 known or probable moated sites (Illus 1), 17 of which are presently scheduled. In Tayside and Fife there are 20 sites (Illus 2), 19 in the former Tayside and one in Fife. Only five of these survive as upstanding monuments, three of which are presently scheduled: Ardargie (1), Brigton (2) and Fortingall (5, Illus 3); two sites are known only from documentary sources, while 13 survive as crop marks. When compared with the rest of Britain and Europe these figures are striking. In England and Wales over 5,300 are known (Steane 1984, 58), with some counties, such as Essex and Suffolk, having nearly 800 sites alone (Martin 1989, 14). In Ireland there are over 750 sites (Barry 1987, 93). Moated sites also occur in their thousands across north-west Europe, particularly in the Low Countries, but also in France and Denmark.

Classification

A number of problems attend the study of moated sites in Scotland (Corser 1996, 431). The moated sites discussed in this paper (Illus 1) are of medieval date and typically comprise a rectilinear enclosure surrounded by a broad, often wet, ditch. The defences of some moated sites (not discussed), however, were developed to the point that they are best considered as components of timber castles, and some stone castles were also enclosed by moats. As many sites survive only as crop marks, there are further problems in distinguishing moated sites from the numerous prehistoric rectilinear enclosures commonly found south of the Forth.

The typology of moated sites is also extremely complex, and they often defy straightforward analysis. There have been numerous attempts to define moated sites, but the only unifying feature
is the moat itself, a wide ditch, more often than not water-filled, enclosing an area of ground usually occupied by a dwelling and associated structures. The ditch does not always surround the inner platform on all sides, and natural features are often utilised. For example, the moat at Ardrargie (1) surrounds only three sides of the platform, a steep ravine forming the fourth; while at Clochfoldich (4), the moat only surrounds two sides of the platform, a steep ravine and a natural terrace on the hill side forming the remaining two sides (Illus 4). The upcast from the digging of the ditch would have been used to form or raise the inner platform, and was also spread either side of the ditch to form a low bank. These are often the first features to erode away. Traces of banks can be seen at
Ardargie (1) and Cloichfoldich (4), but there are better preserved examples at other sites in Scotland, notably Muirhouselaw (Ettrick and Lauderdale) and Peel of Gartfarren (Stirlingshire). A timber stockade or palisade would often have topped the inner bank. Internal palisades and stone revetment walls are visible, for example, on aerial photographs of Hallyards (8, Illus 5), Links (9) and Rossie Priory (16).

Access across the ditch onto the platform in some cases would have been by a bridge or drawbridge, in others by causeways, examples of which survive at Ardargie (1) and Fortingall (5). Gaps in the course of the ditch, which may be indicative of a causeway, are also visible on aerial photographs of Mains of Gourdie (10), Monzie (12), and Kirklands of Damside (19). Causeways should, however, be treated with caution as they may not always be original features.

Within the moat, there are considerable variations in the shape and size of the inner platform. Usually rectangular, it can also be square, trapezoidal, circular, oval, or D-shaped, and there can be single, double or sometimes multiple enclosures. One of the few double enclosure moated sites in Scotland, which may be indicative of higher status, is Muirhouselaw. This fine example of a moated site, which displays many of their most common features, lies in flat parkland (Baldwin 1985, 84–5). Here, two contiguous enclosures share a common outer ditch and are separated by a single dividing ditch. The smaller of the two enclosures, which only partially survives, is approximately half the size of the 67m square main enclosure. The steep-sided ditch is still marshy at the bottom, and measures 6–9m at the top narrowing to 2–3m at the base, and survives to a depth of 1.5m. Low banks of stoney upcast material are preserved on either side of the ditch, and a causeway across the ditch in the north-east corner matches a gap in the rampart. Close to this entrance there are the remains of two structures, possibly contemporary. The larger of the
two is rectangular in plan, probably a two-roomed building with double walls. The other, a square structure around which a mound has been cast up, may have been a tower. A slope leads down from the main enclosure to a large pond which may again be an original feature (fish ponds are commonly associated with moated sites in England).

**Water source**

Water was, of course, an essential resource, for defence, drinking, fire-fighting and sewage disposal, as is emphasised by the proximity of moats to rivers and streams. Attempts have been made to classify moats by their relationship to water supply, but, unfortunately, the changes in the water table since medieval times, and its effect on streams and springs, has meant that identifying the contemporary source of water can be difficult. Many derived water directly from streams or rivers, or indirectly by a series of channels controlled by sluices; others were dug through low-lying marshy ground and were filled by a combination of natural seepage and water channels. At West Lingo (20), near Crail, the only moated site in Fife identified so far, the ditch incorporates part of an old watercourse, as does Fortingall (5), also known as Praetorium (Illus 7). At Heugh there is rare evidence for a water
sluice, fish-ponds and possibly reclaimed marshes. An original fish pond may also survive at Muirhouselaw. Natural springs were used to fill some moats, possibly at Mains of Gourdie (10) and Wood of Coldrain (18), though these are more difficult to identify. Some moats, however, were always intended to be dry, particularly those sited on hill tops and hill sides, such as Ardargie (1, Plate 1).

Function

The function of moated sites in Scotland is uncertain, and they may have filled a variety of needs. Only the richest and most powerful feudal lords could afford the building and upkeep of castles, and most manorial lords had to be content with surrounding their more modest timber residences with moats or earthen enclosures. Moats were not formidable defences but they were important psychological barriers and good insurance against fire, whether accidental or deliberate, and wild animals. Essentially, moated sites functioned as farmsteads, centres of manors (the smallest self-contained unit in the feudal lordship) from where the landowner controlled the feudal system of agriculture. They were constructed by all seigniorial (feudal superior) sections of medieval society, whether secular or ecclesiastical, and most were designed to enclose a house and associated structures such as barns and stables. Unfortunately, few of the moated sites that survive today contain above-ground evidence for buildings and associated structures. In the absence of archaeological excavation, Blind Harry’s description of the Peel of Gargunnock, Stirlingshire in the 1470s (in the poem The Wallace) is particularly useful (Duncan 1975, 442). This mentions a drawbridge over the dike, and within the enclosure a ‘closs, chawmer and hall’ – a closs, an enclosure, probably a courtyard, a chawmer, the lord’s chamber, and the hall a public room.

Some served as hunting lodges for the nobility and clergy, of which Peel of Garthfarren near Aberfoyle, and Ballangrew near the Port of Menteith, both in the marshes of the Flanders Moss, are thought to be examples (Stevenson 1995, 102-3). Given the boggy landscape of West Lingo (20), this may also have been a hunting lodge. Moated sites are also known to have functioned as granges (monastic farms) and as lodge houses of foresters, deer park keepers and rabbit warreners. Others moats are thought to have been empty of buildings, probably surrounding orchards or gardens. Here the moat would have effectively drained the land whilst providing a ready source of water.

Place-name evidence

Place-name evidence is often a good indicator of the presence of moated sites, with the function of the moated site embedded in the place-name itself. For example, ‘hall’ (building), as at Newhall of Kinrossie (14) and Gascon Hall (6); ‘yard’ (courtyard or enclosure), as at Palace Yard and Hallyards
Illus 5. Hallyards. The linear feature running diagonally across the moated site is the 19th-century Dundee water pipe (RCAHMS, Crown copyright).

(8); 'peel' (palisade or stockade), as at Peel of Gartfarren and Peel of Tibbermore (15); and 'dyke' (ditch), as at Castledykes (3) and Dykeheads. 'Orchard' is also common, and Gascon Hall (6) is known locally as The Orchard. 'Hallyards' is perhaps the most common. Wood of Coldrain (18) is actually referred to as 'Hall Yard' in documentary records, and there is a third 'Hallyard' site, near Loch Gelly, Fife. All that remains here are the fragmentary ruins of a possible 16th- or 17th-century house lying in a ploughed field. Whether this structure replaced, or was built within, an earlier moated enclosure is not clear.

**Paleo-environmental evidence**

The potential of wet ditches for preserving artefacts and paleo-environmental evidence connected with the occupation of the sites they surround makes them, and therefore moated sites generally, an important archaeological resource for medieval rural settlement. Ideal for the preservation of organic materials – artefacts, plant and animal remains – the contents of the ditch can provide clues as to the contemporary landscape, the function of the site (estate centre, hunting lodge, orchard or gardens), the ditch itself (drain, sewer or fish pond) and the status of the owner. In a wider context, the sediments in the ditch are often layered
and can reflect changes over time in the diet and economy of the site and the surrounding landscape.

A recent programme of excavation at Wood Hall, West Yorkshire, for example, produced evidence of both leather-working and wood-working (North Yorkshire County Council 1995). Finds retrieved from the ditch included wooden bowls and plates, a cheese press, a child’s toy, a tuning peg from a musical instrument, a bowling ball, archer’s equipment and a fisherman’s fork for trapping eels. Evidence for leather-working included shoes, straps and part of a glove. Glass vessels and jewellery were also recovered, and animal remains included peacock bones. Part of the moated site was found to have been laid out as gardens, in which both vegetables and herbs were being grown.

Previous archaeological work

To date only three Scottish moated sites have been subject to archaeological investigation. Bombie, Kirkcudbrightshire, a much ploughed out site, was excavated in 1947 (Anderson 1947) and was shown to be roughly rectangular in shape, measuring c. 30m internally (NE-SW), with a ditch c. 10m wide. There were slight traces of upcast banks either side of the ditch. No datable finds were recovered from the excavation. A second Kirkcudbrightshire moated site, Dunrod, was excavated between 1964 and 1965 (Burdon-Davies 1966). Here, the rectangular platform measures c. 36m (N-S) x c. 33m (E-W), surrounded by a ditch c. 6m wide. Traces of a rectangular structure are visible in the northeast corner, and there is a possible entrance onto the platform at the south-west corner. Pottery recovered during the excavation indicated a 13th-century date of occupation, although a few fragments of 15th- or 16th-century pottery suggested that it may have been reoccupied. Unusual amongst the Scottish sites, the moat lay at the centre of the now deserted village of Dunrod, which also contained the 12th-century St Mary’s and St Bric’s church.

The most recent excavation of a moated site took place at Castle of Wardhouse, Aberdeenshire in 1988 (Yeoman forthcoming). The defences of this 13th-century moated, oval enclosure, measuring some 70m (N-S) x 40m, were found to be well preserved, but plough damage had destroyed almost all traces of the buildings on the platform, including the 13th-century chapel known from contemporary documents. Evidence recovered during the excavations suggest that the defences were slighted in the 15th century and a stone tower-house constructed on the site in the late 15th century (the tower-house was abandoned in the 17th century). The moated earthwork castle at Wardhouse is a rare example of a middle-status, defended residence, a class of site largely absent from the archaeological record and one of only a handful that survive in the Lordship of the Garioch where around 40 principal tenanted units have been identified (Yeoman forthcoming).
Moated sites in Britain and Ireland

The study of moated sites has been dogged by the difficulty of associating individual sites with the scant documentation and also of dating their construction. However, we know from other parts of Britain and elsewhere that they can date from the 12th to the 18th century, and the English evidence, in particular, provides a useful context within which to study the Scottish examples. The vast majority are medieval, with up to half of the 5,300 sites thought to have been built between the mid-13th and early 14th century. Moated sites in England are concentrated mainly in lowland areas underlain by clay in northern, central and eastern England, and on the heavy, often clay, soils of East Anglia and the south-east Midlands. In many other parts of England the numerous isolated moated sites dotted about the landscape are thought to chart the process of colonisation. They are often associated with areas of secondary and late occupation, and in many cases can be shown to have been built during periods of forest clearance. The pattern is, however, much more complex, and archaeology has shown that some sites clearly had much earlier origins. Some date back to late Saxon times, the digging of the moat in the 13th or 14th century merely the culmination of a long history of settlement (eg, Northolt, Middlesex).

Moated sites were clearly status symbols and a type of construction preferred by the wealthier members of society. The sheer number of sites, however, suggests that they were also fashionable amongst those of less wealth and social standing, so much so that during the 13th and early 14th centuries, a period of population growth, even prosperous yeoman farmers were building them. Changing climatic conditions, economic decline, war and disease, however, brought about a marked contraction in settlement in the 14th and 15th centuries and produced the thousands of isolated and abandoned moated sites which lie all over the Midlands and East Anglia. Others, however, continued to be occupied and new sites were also built.

Of the 750 sites that have been identified in Ireland, the vast majority are located in the south and east counties, concentrated along the border areas of the Anglo-Norman colony. From the few excavations that have been carried out, these appear to be broadly similar in date to the English sites, mainly 13th and 14th century in date. The major difference is that, concentrated along the borders areas, where the settlers were often under pressure from the native Irish keen to reclaim the better agricultural land, many were relatively isolated, located several miles from the nearest known medieval nucleated settlement. To this extent, the Irish examples, unlike the Lowland English sites, are defensive farmsteads, the water-filled moat and earthen banks topped with timber palisades for extra protection, and over time they were increasingly replaced by fortified stone tower houses.
Discussion

Moated sites are only one component of the medieval countryside in Scotland and should not, therefore, be studied in isolation. Many other types of site, such as agricultural settlements and field systems, mottes and ring-works, granges, forests and deer parks equally require investigation and research (Barclay 1997, 34–5). The relationship between moats, mottes and all the other elements of the medieval countryside, however, are little understood (Yeoman 1988, 130). On present evidence, settlement nucleation in Scotland (mound or motte, church, settlement and field system) was uncommon, Dunrod being one of the few examples. An analysis of the distribution of moated sites (and earthwork castles) is useful, however, in that it enables us to identify communication routes and frameworks of power in the countryside (Yeoman 1995, 86) and, perhaps, chart colonisation as the population expanded in the 13th and 14th centuries. Moated sites may also mark general expansion into traditionally independent areas such as the Lordship of Garioch. Here, they may also be linked to significant changes in land-holding and agricultural management.

What is clear is that earthwork castles were not the only ‘manor houses’ of the lesser nobility. These lesser nobles and free farmers may well have defended their more modest homes and farms with moats which have since been ploughed out or lie beneath modern farm buildings (Peel of Tibbermore 15, for example). Several of the moated sites in Tayside and Fife also appear to enclose stone tower-houses (Gascon Hall 6, Moncur Castle 12 and Newhall 14) and it is possible that this reflects a natural progression for minor nobility from earthwork castles to stone towers from the 15th century onwards.

Moated sites were undoubtedly of high status, but may not provide so biased a snapshot of the economy as castles and abbeys, for example. Although up to 95 per cent of the population lived in the countryside, towns were the driving force of the economy, and it was to these markets that the produce of the farms were brought. The huge range of finds from archaeological excavations carried out in the burghs over the last twenty years, now provide a useful database with which to compare and contrast the diet and economy of rural settlements like moated sites. Worlds apart, the fortunes of the two were inextricably linked.

List of moated sites in Tayside and Fife

A copy of the full, referenced gazetteer has been deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland. Please note, permission to visit any of these sites should always be sought from the landowner.

1. Ardargie NO 0827 1437 Sheet NO 01 SE 1
   Upstanding earthwork and Scheduled Ancient Monument. Three-armed ditched, square enclosure, cut into lower slopes of Ochil Hills, near Forgandenny. Fourth arm of the ditch formed by steep, wooded gully. Traces of outer and inner banks and possible causeway entrance.
   The origins of this site are unclear. It seems to have been part of the barony of Elcho, which belonged to the family of de Pincerna until 1304, when it was acquired by the family of Inchmartine. Their estates, including Ardargie, were subdivided between heiresses from the late 14th century. In 1615 most of the Ardargie lands were acquired by Ninian Oliphant of Culeuchair and erected into the barony of Ardargie.

2. Brigiton (Kirkton) NO 4183 4667 Sheet NO 44 NW 9
   Upstanding earthwork and Scheduled Ancient Monument. Tree-covered, oval enclosure in the flood plain of Kerbit Water, near Forfar.
   The lands of Brichtoundike were granted to Alexander Strachan by Robert III (1390–1406) sometime during his reign. The ‘dike’ may refer to a ditch or mound around the moated site. References to the ‘manor place’ may imply the moated homestead was still inhabited as late as the early 17th century. However, Brigiton House, largely Georgian in date, may contain an early tower-like structure which could also be the manor place referred to. The Strachans held the barony of Brigiton till 1622 when it was acquired by Frederick Lyon.

3. Castledykes NO 2893 4815 Sheet NO24 NE 3
   Nothing remains of this site, which now lies within a tree plantation. In 1794, it was described as a square enclosure, surrounded by banks and a ditch, and almost an acre in size.
   The church of Ruthven was granted to Arbroath Abbey by Robert de Lundin, illegitimate son of William the Lion (1165–1214) between 1196 and 1214; this implies he had land at Ruthven. In or before 1363 the barony of Ruthven was granted to Alexander Lindsay by the Earl of Mar. Lindsay’s successors, the Earls of Crawford, held it until 1502 when it was acquired by the family of Crichton. Their residence was at the tower or fortalice of Ruthven.

4. Clochfidalch NN 9001 5278 Sheet NN 95 SW 16
   Upstanding earthwork. Two-armed, ditched square enclosure set on wooded terrace above north bank of River Tay, near Strathay. Third and fourth arms of ditch formed by natural features. Traces of outer and inner banks.
No documentary references to this site have yet been found. The earthwork is said to have been constructed by soldiers of Edward I (1272-1307), perhaps by temporary garrisons. Near it were the ruins of a house called ‘Tigh an-t-Sasnaich’ – the Englishman’s house. In the late 17th or early 18th century there were living in Strathtay two families of the name of ‘Mac an-t-Sasnaich’.

5. Fortingall (Prætorium) NN 7340 4665 Sheet NN 74 NW 1
Upstanding earthwork and Scheduled Ancient Monument. Four-armed ditched enclosure on sloping ground close to north bank of River Tay. Burn still flows through south arm of ditch. Possible inlet/feeder channels for moat to north of site.

The thaneage of Fortingall was crown property until Robert I (1306-29) granted it to Thomas Menzies sometime during his reign. It was later acquired by the Stewarts of Garth whose main residence was at Garth.

By 1543 Fortingall and Garth had been acquired by the Earl of Atholl with whose successors it remained until they disposed of it to Campbell of Glenorchy early in the 18th century. The western part of Fortingall was mortgaged to a member of the Dewar family by 1st marquis of Atholl: his mansion stood near the site of the ‘Roman Camp’.

6. Gascon Hall NN 9865 1742 Sheet NN 91 NE 14,31
Crop mark. The site lies on a river terrace overlooking the north bank of River Earn. Aerial photography has revealed a ditched enclosure, within which lie the ruins of Gascon Hall. Possible inlet for moat to north of site.

This site seems to have been called variously Nether Gask, West Gask, Gask-Murray and Easter Gask. The Earl of Strathern owned the estate in 1266 when he granted the Augustinian canons of Inchaffray the right to quarry stone on it. In August 1304 Edward I (1272-1307) stayed at West Gask during a journey between Stirling and Perth and back. Robert, Earl of Strathern, later Robert II (1371-90), granted it to Walter Murray of Tullibardine, with whose descendants it remained. In 1599 a document refers to ‘the manor place, tower and fortalice of Gask’.

7. Friarton NO 1409 3051 Sheet NO 13 SW 31
Crop mark. Rectangular in plan, the east and north ditches of a possible moated site are visible on aerial photographs.

This estate belonged to the Abbey of Scone in 1452 (part of it seems to have belonged to the Charterhouse of Perth). By 1566 it had been feued to the family of Blair.

8. Hallyards NO 2790 4641 Sheet NO 24 NE 9
Crop mark. This well-defined and large crop mark enclosure lies in the floodplain of the River Isla. A possible stone revetment wall is also visible.

This site was originally in the barony of Ballindoch. The barony was granted by the Earl of Mar to Alexander Lindsay along with Brigton of Ruthven in or before 1363. It remained with the Lindsay, Earls of Crawford until 1605 when the ‘toun and lands of Hallyards’ were granted to Thomas Fotheringham of Powrie, who shortly afterwards, in 1608, granted them to William Fullerton of Ardo. At that time the ‘manor of Hallyards’ was made the principal messuage of the barony of Fullerton. Hallyards is first definitely mentioned in 1506, possibly in 1498. In 1688 William Henderson was ‘of Hallyards’. In 1727, the house of Hallyards is described as protected from the floodwaters of the Isla ‘by ditches encompassing it’.

9. Links NO 1825 3864 Sheet NO 13NE 55
Crop mark. Aerial photography has revealed a small moated site on the edge of a terrace with evidence of an internal palisade overlooking the River Isla. The course of the river has altered in past and the site may have lain much closer to river than it does at present.

This site was in the barony of Cargill. It was formerly called Haltoun of Cargill and is first mentioned in 1506. This monument may be tentatively identified as the estate centre of William, son of Alexander, to whom Richard de Montifiquet granted lands in the barony of Cargill at the end of the 12th century; these lands included an ooxgang and toft beside Leyston. The farm of Links was formerly called Easter Hatton, which is on record by the 16th century. The ‘half’ element of this ('Hat-toun’) place-name may refer to the buildings that formerly stood within the moat.

10. Mains of Gourdie NO 1210 4195 Sheet NO 14 SW 7,37
Crop marks. The present house was built in 1765. It is not clear whether the numerous crop marks in this field are parts of moats or formal gardens, associated with an earlier house. One may be a ditched enclosure, with an entrance visible, within which there are traces of a rectangular structure.

This was part of the barony of Fardill which belonged to the family of Scrymeour. In 1528 a chapel of the Holy Spirit was founded in the ‘manor’ of Little Gourdie with a piece of land lying at the ‘manor’, near the well commonly called the Gyris-well, for a chamber and yard. In 1620 the lands and manor place of Little Gourdie were sold to James Moncur, who sold them in 1631 to John Kinloch. The house and policies are depicted by Roy.

11. Monzie NN 8829 2416 Sheet NN 82 SE 78
Crop mark. The site lies within the policies of Monzie Castle. There is an entrance visible on the north side of the private road, which cuts through this possible moated site.

The lands of Monzie were part of the earldom or stewartry of Strathern. In the 16th century, three-quarters of the estate belonged to the Scott family, who had apparently held Monzie since the late 13th century, and whose heiresses carried it to the Grahams and Drummonds. The other quarter was held by the family of Tosheoch, a name derived from the Gaelic toiseach or thane, whose heiress conveyed it to the Campbells.

12. Moncur Castle NO 2835 2952 Sheet NO 22 NE 2,11
Moncur Castle is a small tower-house of the period 1540-1700, destroyed by fire about the beginning of the 18th century. On the WSW side of the house there is a ditch, possibly the remains of an earlier moated enclosure. Aerial photography has also revealed a series of linear crop marks in the fields surrounding the castle, some of which may be derived from the layout of policies and roadways in the vicinity.

The site of Moncur is mentioned about 1400 as part of the Kinnaird estate, although the family who take their name from it are mentioned as early as 1296. In 1634 it was sold to Patrick Kinnaird of Inchture.

13. Murroes NO 4615 3525 Sheet NO 43 NE 48
Crop mark. This site lies close to the edge of an elevated terrace overlooking Mill Burn.
The grant of the church of Murroes to Arbroath Abbey by Gilchrist, Earl of Angus, was confirmed by William the Lion (1165–1214) between 1201 and 1205. The estate of Murroes was divided by a burn, the land on the east side of the burn belonging to the Earls of Crawford by the 15th century, and their vassal, Richard Lovel in 1438. In 1461 the Fotheringhames of Powrie acquired this estate, which was erected into a barony of Brichtie in 1598. The moated site is on the west side of the burn.

14. Newhall NO 1865 3192 NO 13 SE 14
In 1810, when the proprietor of Dunsinnan carried out some ‘diggings’, the walls of the castle were still standing some 2m high. The probable site (no trace survives today) either occupies a hummock in the centre of an undulating field, or lies closer to the adjacent wood where there is also a burn and two springs. This moated site is referred to in 1546 as ‘the moat called Newhall of Kinrossy’, when it belonged to the Hallburtons of Pitcur. In 1586 Newhall was ‘the fortalice or principal place of Newhall’ in the barony of Kinrossie. In 1633 it was ‘the south town of Kinrossie called the Moat Newhall of Kinrossie’, part of the barony of Pitcur.

15. Peel of Tibbermore NO 0551 2354 NO 02 SE 57
Crop mark. The moat is partly overlain by Peel farm, near Tibbermore. Pennant (1776) described the site a ‘rhomboid intrenchment, called the Ward’, and almost certainly the moat at Peel. Tibbermore was an estate of the Ruthven family from the 12th century when the ancestor of the Ruthvens granted land in Tibbermore to Scone Abbey between 1183 and 1199. In the late Middle Ages at least, a sergeant of Dunkeld Abbey was baset at Tibbermore charged with the duty of collecting the abbey’s dues, both in money and kind, from part of the abbey estate north of the Forth. Peel is mentioned in 1514–15 when the widow of Walter Ruthven lived there. After the forfeiture of the Ruthvens in 1600, Tibbermore was granted to the Earl of Montrose in 1606 and to Francis Hay of Balhousie in 1633.

16. Rossie Priory NO 2915 2982 NO 22 NE 19
Crop mark. This N-S aligned rectangular enclosure occupies the flatlish part of a raised ridge, cut by the private road from the nearby lodge house to Rossie Priory. A possible internal revetment wall around the inside edge of the ditch is visible on aerial photographs. The original name of this site is unknown, therefore its history is untraceable. It may have been the predecesor of Drimmie, which was the site of the mansion of the Lords Kinnaird until the present Rossie Priory was built early last century. Drimmie was part of the barony of Baledgarno, a property of the Cameron family in the 13th century. In the 15th century the Lords Halliburton owned Baledgarno and through their heiresses the estate was divided in three between Lords Ruthven, Crichton and Home. In 1512 Drimmie, occupied by George Irland, was sold by Lord Crichton to Finlay Anderson, burgess of Perth. In 1548, while still occupied by the Irlands, it was acquired by Patrick Ogilvie of Inchmarne from Patrick Kinnaird of that ilk.

17. Wallacetown NO 1628 1850 NO 11 NE 69
Crop mark. In the shadow of Moncrieffe Hill, this broad-ditched, rectangular enclosure is situated on the edge of a ridge, possibly a former raised beach, on the north bank of the River Earn. A burn, now piped, probably fed the east ditch.
This land was in the lordship of Methven and belonged to the Edmonstons of that ilk in 1465. It was acquired by the Ruthvens of that ilk in 1482 as security for a loan which was presumably not repaid as the Ruthvens retained the land. In 1560 Lord Ruthven granted the land to Murray of Tibbermore whose family held it until 1611 when it was acquired by Sir John Moncreif of Kinmonth.

18. Wood of Coldrain NO 0838 0075 NO 00 SE 5
Crop mark. In 1796, there was a square ditched enclosure here, known as ‘Hall Yard’, and measuring around an acre in extent. However, by 1854, the ditches were filled up, and the area had been ploughed over. In 1464 Coldrain belonged to the Stewarts of Lorn. Later it belonged to the Murrays of Atholl. Hall Yards is mentioned in 1628 but the site was abandoned by the end of the 18th century.

19. Kirklands of Damside NN 9634 1465 NN 91 SE 32
This T-shaped crop mark lies in a hollow at the western edge of an undulating ploughed field, close to a burn. There is a possible entrance on the east side. Before 1171 the church of Aberuthven and its lands were granted to Inchaffray Abbey by Ferteth, Earl of Strathearn. After the Reformation the abbey’s lands were secularised as the temporal lordship of Madderty in favour of James Drummond, although the lands of Kirklands were occupied by Grahams.

20. West Lingo NO 4964 0877 NO 40 NE 1
Upstanding earthwork. Today this small site is almost completely ploughed out and bears little resemblance to that described by RCAHMS in the 1950s and 1960s. Rectangular on plan, it had rounded corners, bank and external ditch. The ditch on the west side incorporates part of an old watercourse.
Robert de London, illegitimate son of William the Lion (1165–1214), granted Lingo, which was part of his ‘waste of Kellie’ to the priory of May. His grant was confirmed by Alexander II (1249–86). Ulf of Lingoc is mentioned about this time and may have been Robert’s tenant in Lingo. The land became part of the estate of the priory of Pitenweem, and after the Reformation the priory lands were secularised in 1609 as a temporal lordship in favour of Frederick Stewart, son of the last commendator.

Other sites referred to in the text:

- Ballangrew: NS 617 988
- Bombie: NX 707 301
- Dunrod: NX 699 460
- Dykeheads: NT 582 073
- Hallyards (Fife): NT 211 913
- Heugh: NJ 447 006
- Muirhouselaw: NT 631 284
- Palace Yard: NX 614 543
- Peel of Gartfarren: NS 536 953
- Castle of Wardhouse: NJ 593 289
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Bibliography


Abstract

This paper summarises the results of a study of moated sites in Tayside and Fife. Although essentially a management study, undertaken by the Scottish Urban Archaeological Trust for Historic Scotland in late 1996 and early 1997, the report also provided new data on this, one of the least studied classes of medieval site in Scotland. The recommendations addressed a range of management issues and put forward a strategy and research objectives for further work. This paper concentrates on the archaeological and historical background to moated sites.

Keywords: moat, castle, manor