

Summary Of Dated Events

Late 11th to mid 12th centuries - The Umfravilles acquired their liberty of Redesdale, along with the barony of Prudhoe, at some stage between c.1095-1152, but most probably in the reign of Henry I (1100-35), in company with most of the other Norman barons who were established in Northumberland. The first of the lineage, Robert de Umfraville, known as 'with-the-beard' (*cum barba*), was certainly present in the north by c.1120, and must have held at least one of the lordships by then. He also seems to have been enfeoffed with the 'Ten Townships' in Coquetdale and the Breamish valley before the death of Henry I. The ringwork and bailey castle at Elsdon probably belongs to this initial early-12th century phase and it is not impossible that a timber and earthwork castle was also built at Harbottle at this time to serve as a second, more northerly fortress in the liberty.

1139-57 - During the weak, troubled reign of King Stephen, Northumberland and Cumberland, though still nominally parts of England, fell under the effective control of David I of Scotland. David's son Henry was made earl of Northumberland in 1139. The Umfravilles figure frequently in Scottish royal charters during this period, one of Robert's sons, Gilbert, serving as constable to earl Henry. Holystone Priory is first mentioned during David's reign, in a reference to one of his lost charters (*RRS* i, 111, 171 no. 93).

1157/89 - Henry II ordered and supported the construction of a castle at Harbottle by Odinel de Umfraville, part of a sustained effort by Henry to strengthen the strategic fortresses on the northern border of his kingdom (*Royal Letters Hen. III*, i, 140-1, no.856; cf. *CalDocScot* i, no 775). This may have occurred shortly after 1157, when Henry recovered his northern counties compelling King Malcolm IV of Scotland to exchange Northumberland and the Carlisle district for the earldom of Huntingdon, as with similar work at Wark-on-Tweed and Norham. Alternatively it may follow the warfare of 1173-74, when the castle was seized by King William of Scotland (see below), and represent a major reconstruction in stone of a previous timber castle damaged siege and assault. It is not made explicit in the documentary source (cf. 1220 below) whether this represents the building of a completely new castle or the the restoration of an older timber one.

c.1174 - In the course of his campaign to regain Northumbria, King William of Scotland entered Northumberland and took Harbottle Castle from Odinel de Umfraville II - *Rex Scotiae . . . cum reliqua parte exercitus sui ivit per Northumbriam, terras regis et baronum suorum devastans, et cepit armis . . . castellum de Hyrebothle, quod Odenellus de Dunfranvilla tenuit* (Benedict i, 65). The castle was recovered by Odinel following the capture of William in front of Alnwick castle later in the year.

1181 - Earliest grant, actually a lease, of pasture rights in Kidland to Newminster Abbey by Odinel de Umfraville (*NC* 73-4).

1182 - Robert de Umfraville succeeded Odinel II.

1194 - Richard de Umfraville succeeded his brother Robert. In 1199 King John granted him by charter the privilege of exclusive hunting, grazing and other rights in his forests of Redesdale and Coquetdale (cf. Hodgson 1827, pl. facing p.8).

1207 - Dispute over the wardship of the heir of Henry Bataille between Richard de Umfraville and Eustace de Vesci, lord of Alnwick. Henry Bataille had held Faudon and a moiety of Netherton in the ten townships as a fief of the Umfravilles (*Curia Regis R.*, 9 John, 58-60; *Northumb. Pleas*, 30-1, no.1030).

1215 - Richard's lands given by the king to Hugh de Baliol after he is suspected of involvement with the conspiracy of the barons.

1220 - Umfraville lands restored by Henry III and building work at Harbottle was commenced by Richard de Umfraville. However, construction was stalled by the king's suspicions, since Richard failed to apply for a fresh licence. In one of the earliest documents naming Harbottle, a brief dated July 3 1220, the sheriff was ordered to inspect the castle with a jury of 12 and to reduce it to its state before the baronial revolt of 1215-7 (*Rot Lit Claus* i, 436b). Richard successfully protested, arguing the castle had first been constructed on the orders of Henry II, and describing the castle as 'sited in the marches of Scotland, towards the Great Waste, to the great benefit of the kingdom as much in times of peace as war' (*Royal Letters Hen. III*, i, no.856).

The north tower and bailey division may date from this time (though a 14th century date is also possible); the motte itself was probably crowned by a shell keep and perhaps also a large central tower, as at Mitford Castle (cf. Crow 1998, 11). The fallen mass of masonry at the foot of the motte has multiple chamfered plinths suggesting it belonged to a 13th-century keep (Ryder 1990, 6).

13th century? {1076} - Fabrication of a deed purporting to represent the grant, by William the Conqueror, of the lordship, valley, and forest of *Riddesdale*, with all the properties formerly possessed by Mildred, the son of Akman, late lord of Riddesdale, to Robert de Umfraville (Robert with-the beard) in 1076, to hold by service of defending that part of the country from enemies and wolves (*Northumb & Durham Deeds*, 220; cf. round 1910, 296-8; Hedley 1968, 208).

1226 - Gilbert de Umfraville I succeeded Richard (NCH XV (1940), 472).

1244 - Gilbert de Umfraville married Maud, countess de Angus, niece of William the Lion.

1245 - Gilbert, '*the chief flower and guardian of the North*' (Matthew Paris), died, leaving an infant son, Gilbert de Umfraville II, with Harbottle committed to the custody of Robert de Crepping, then to Simon Montford, earl of Leicester. The manor of Harbottle then consisted of: 408 acres and 3 roods of land, 2 mills and a borough. Within the manor also were various pastures, 2 brewhouses and iron forges (*Cal IPM* i, no. 49; *CalDocScot* i, no.1667; above 7.1 *Selected Sources and Surveys* no.1).

1266 Gilbert II, first earl of Angus, came of age.

1267 - Gilbert imprisoned William Douglas at Harbottle for 11 days, and robbed him.

1275 - Walter de Sweethope complained of being imprisoned at Harbottle and continued to be harassed even after Edward I took him into his protection - suggests nature of the power of the Umfravilles.

1279 - Gilbert charged at the assizes with various accusations, incl. false imprisonment (*Northumb. Assize R.*, 372).

1293 - Gilbert claimed rights to keep a gaol, etc. by ancient right. Also claimed a market at Harbottle on Tuesday every 3 weeks, an annual fair, toll and gallows at Harbottle and elsewhere.

1296 - Resisted two-day siege by the Scots, suffering much damage. Order from Edward I to his bailiff in the liberty of Tynedale, formerly held by the Scottish king, to restock the Harbottle park with 20 live bucks and 80 live does from John Comyn's woods and parks in North Tynedale (Hemingburgh 277; Holinshed *Chron.* ii, 299; *Cal. Close R.* 1288-96, 493).

1308 - the following return followed the death of Gilbert II: "*There is a certain park, containing in circuit about 1 league, in which are wild animals....Also there is a certain borough called Harbottle, the rent of which is worth £2*" (*Cal. IPM*. v, no. 47; above 7.1 *Selected Sources and Surveys* no.2). It is also recorded that the castle, "*is worth nothing annually within the enclosed ground, because there are great and lofty buildings there which take much to support them*" (possibly a reference to the cost of repairs undertaken following the Scottish assault of 1296).

1316 - Gilbert's successor Robert given safe conduct for his envoys to obtain corn for the garrison at Harbottle (*Cal. Pat. Rolls* 1313-17, 398).

1316-17 - Robert retained 45 men-at-arms and 120 *hobelars* (light cavalry) to garrison both Prudhoe and Harbottle (cf. *Northumb. Petitions* 163-4, no.138).

1318 - Robert the Bruce captured the castle and partly dismantled it (*Chron. de Lanercost* 235; *Chron. de Melsa* ii, 335; *Scalachronica* 60).

1319 - The English ordered to dismantle the castle as part of a treaty with the Scots which returned it to the sheriff of Northumberland (*Cal Pat Rolls* 1317-21, 416; Hartshorne 1858, 56).

1325 - Site of castle still in hands of Robert de Umfraville at his death (*Cal IPM* vi, no.607; above 7.1 *Selected Sources and Surveys* no.3).

1331 - Extent of the castle given (*Cal IPM* vii, no.390; above 7.1 *Selected Sources and Surveys* no.4).

1335/36 - Gilbert de Umfraville III reported that the damage to the castle wrought by the Scots (in 1318) was still so severe that there was not a single building in which prisoners, taken in the franchise of Redesdale, could be safely guarded, as they had from time immemorial. He received the king's permission to use his castle at Prudhoe for ten years, to hold those prisoners, while Harbottle Castle, was repaired (*Northumb. Petitions*, 124-5, no.101; *Cal Pat Rolls* 1334-8, 238).

1351 - The castle was still in ruins and hence unusable as a jail. The use of Prudhoe Castle was licenced for another 10 years (*Cal Pat Rolls* 1350-54, 42).

1380/1 - Gilbert III divided the Umfraville estates, with his half-brother, Thomas de Umfraville I, succeeding to Harbottle and the liberty of Redesdale in 1381 (*Cal IPM*; above 7.1 *Selected Sources and Surveys* no.7), whilst Henry Percy earl of Northumberland acquired the barony of Prudhoe (Tuck 1986, 11-2).

1387 - Sir Thomas de Umfraville II succeeded (*Cal IPM*; above 7.1 *Selected Sources and Surveys* no.8). In the following year he fought at the battle of Otterburn.

1390 - Gilbert IV succeeded (*Cal IPM*; above 7.1 *Selected Sources and Surveys* no 9).

c.1400 - The castle had been rendered both habitable and defensible (NCH XV (1940), 482). Sir Robert de Umfraville, Gilbert's uncle, was constable, commanding a garrison of 20 men-at-arms and 40 archers. He inflicted sharp defeats on Scottish raids into the liberty at Fulhope Law (at the headwaters of the Coquet) in 1399 and Redeswire in 1400 (Hodgson 1827, 48-9; Ridpath 1848, 254).

1421 - Gilbert died childless, so Harbottle passed to Sir Robert de Umfraville.

1432 - Sir Robert empowered conscript stonemasons and labourers to repair the castle and reminded to pay the workers 'promptly and reasonably' (*Cal. Pat. Rolls* 1429-36, 219, 328).

1436 - Sir Robert de Umfraville died and the family of Umfraville ended in the male line. The castle passed to the heir of Gilbert III, William Tailbois and his wife Eleanor (sister of Gilbert III).

[1432]- Walter Tailbois, son and heir of William, confirmed to William Gledhill the constabship of the castle of Harbottle, which he was granted by Robert Umfraville, late lord of Redesdale (*Northumb & Durham Deeds*, 221 no.7 - the date is suspect as Robert did not die till 1436).

1438 - Roger Widdrington made constable, '*as wele for werr as for pece, abiding and dwelling in his propre person with his meny and houshold within the dungeon of the said castell*' (*Northumb & Durham Deeds*, 222 no.8).

1464 - William Tailbois fought with the Lancastrians in the Wars of the Roses and was beheaded after the battle of Hexham. The family estates confiscated and Harbottle awarded to Richard Ogle.

1472 - The castle , was restored to Sir William' s son, Robert Tailbois.

1483 - Richard Musgrave made lieutenant of his lordship in Redesdale and Coquetdale.

1494 - John Heron of Ford made constable of the castle.

1498 - Values individually attached to the 10 towns of Harbottle in an inquisition (*Cal IPM Hen VII*; see above, *7.1 Selected Sources and Surveys* no. 14).

1509 - Thomas, lord Dacre, prayed the council for the discharge of bonds wrongfully made for the payment of 2000 marks in the half of which he was bound to Sir George Tailbois for keeping the castle of Harbottle which the late Henry VII took from Sir George (*LP Hen VIII*).

1513 - Dacre in residence at Harbottle is clearly viewed with some suspicion by the king, on whose behalf he claims to be campaigning in Scottish territory (*LP Hen VIII*).

1515 - Royal birth: After death of James IV of Scotland at Flodden (1513), his widow, Margaret, sister of Henry VIII, married the earl of Angus (not related to the earlier earls, the Umfravilles). Margaret and her husband moved across the border to seek protection from Henry VIII after the failure of a plot against the regent, Albany (all part of the intrigue surrounding attempts to get possession of James IV's son and heir, James V). Lord Dacre sheltered them at Harbottle on 8th Oct. 1515 and on the 15th Oct. Margaret gave birth to a daughter, Margaret (subsequent grandmother of James VI of Scotland and James I of England, under whom the crowns were united in 1603). The queen was ill and on 16th November moved to Morpeth via Cartington (*LP Hen VIII*), Harbottle being in bad repair with a garrison of 80 men (NCH XV (1940), 475).

1517 - Dacre in residence at Harbottle becoming ever more deeply involved in the intrigues of Scottish affairs; constantly manoeuvring. French ambassadors at Harbottle with Dacre *en route* to Scotland (*LP Hen VIII*). Presents suggestions for fortifying the Borders and proposes rules concerning pasturing .

1518 - Dacre's arrest of Redesdale thieves ends in disaster as they are ambushed between Harbottle and Rothbury, despite which he claims that the borders are "*not far out of frame*" (*LP Hen VIII*).

1519 - Work was in progress at the king's expense (the castle having remained in the care, if not ownership, of the crown since its confiscation in 1464).

1522 - Dacre briefly describes a raid into Scotland with 4000 men, presumably assembled at Harbottle, and a Scottish raid on Harbottle leading to the theft of stock from Peals (*LP Hen VIII*);). Notes an Anglo-Scottish confrontation at Alwinton.

1523 - Dacre notes a cordial meeting with men of Redesdale at Harbottle (*LP Hen VIII*);). Description of Harbottle castle, "*in sore decay*". Sir William Bowmer has the captainship of Norham and Harbottle .

1526 - Sir William Eure confirmed as vice-warden of the Middle Marches (*LP Hen VIII*)..

1527 - Eure moves temporarily to apprehend the Lises at Felton (*LP Hen VIII*). Harbottle regarded as providing no protection for Tynedale.

1538 - The most detailed of a series of 16th century surveys was carried out and the castle described as unfit for the keeper of Redesdale to inhabit (*LP Hen VIII*; NCH XV (1940), 482). A recommendation was made for complete take-over by the Crown and a list of necessary repairs produced (thereby giving a good impression of the range of buildings present at that time, and their intended function). Poor security of Harbottle noted. *Repeatedly* described in poor terms: "*in great decay*" (no.73); *the chief strength of the Border...which is not habitable*" (no.75), etc. Note of court held at Harbottle (no.73).

1539 - Reminder to Henry VIII of need for repairs (*LP Hen VIII*).

1540 - Harbottle "*sore decayed*" (*LP Hen VIII*).

1541 - Application made for permission to bring stone from Holystone nunnery and Brinkburn priory for repairs (NCH XV (1940), 484).

1543 - Parr wrote to the council stating that Ratcliff (deputy warden of the Middle Marches) and Sir Ralph Eure (Keeper of Tynedale and Redesdale) certify the poor state of the "*key of Redesdale*" (*LP Hen VIII*). Later described as "*in sore decay*". Recommendation that the warden of the East and Middle Marches spends at least a month per year at Harbottle .

1545 - Harbottle to be declared to the king and repaired (*LP Hen VIII*).

c.1546 - The heir of lord Tailbois, his sister Elizabeth, wife of Thomas Wymbysche of Lincolnshire, exchanged Redesdale and Harbottle for other lands with Henry VIII (NCH XV (1940), 476). A view of the castle following repairs (*LP Hen VIII*).

1551 - the castle is called "*the king's majesty's castle of Harbottle*", which had been in extreme ruin but was now partly repaired (*ibid.*). The western and northern sides of the shell keep had been rebuilt since 1541 in their present form.

1552 - The castle was said to be the best residence for the warden of the Middle Marches (*Cal SP Ed. VI*).

1556 - A survey carried out by two captains from Berwick put the costs of necessary repairs at £240.

1560 - John Forster became warden (until 1595) and repeatedly complained about the ruinous state of the castle

1563 - Further repairs carried out and a garrison maintained (NCH XV (1940), 482).

1564 - A survey of the castle regarded as necessary (*Cal SP Eliz. I*; NCH XV (1940), 476).

1571 - Note of a garrison at Harbottle (*Cal SP*), and an expression of doubt regarding its cost benefits (no.96).

1580 - List of the 10 towns of Harbottle and their able bodied men in a muster book (*CBP*). Harbottle castle in need of repair .

1583 - In *Rules for the Defence of the Borders*, Harbottle with Chipchase is recommended as the main place of defence for the protection of Redesdale and Tynedale (*CBP*). It is further recommended that the garrison at Harbottle should be 50 horsemen and 400 footmen .

1585 - Queen's desire for a new survey (*Cal SP Eliz. I*). Foot garrison discharged (*CBP*); though later in the year it is suggested that 100 men should be posted there (*CBP*). A survey of Harbottle and other castles was carried out at the end of the year (*CBP & Cal SP*); it was said that the inner ward is reasonable, but the outer ward almost down.

1586 - Sir John Forster notes that the Queen has no house but Harbottle castle for the warden of the March to use on truce days.

1587 - Recommendation for a posting of 2-300 men into the Middle March (*CBP*), specifically 100 to Harbottle in case of sudden invasion . Later a figure of 150 men shared between Chipchase and Harbottle is mentioned , which in the following months is reduced to 50 at Harbottle alone , a figure finally authorised in June . The following month, however, is a report of Scottish raiding within 2 miles of Harbottle . A further survey of the Borders follows in the Autumn .

1588 - Despite recommendations for repair, little seems to have been done, for during the alarm of the Armada in August some Teviotdale thieves broke in and "*carried away much goods without either showt of crie*" (*CBP*; NCH XV (1940), 476).

1595 - A survey to examine repairs carried out at Harbottle (*CBP*). Suggestion that Sir John Forster should be replaced as warden and that in the meantime 25-30 horsemen should be stationed at Harbottle. Problems with feeding stock on hay due to wet Autumn and difficulties arising from the dismissal of Sir John Forster . Records of two Scottish raids into Harbottle . Muster record for the ten towns . At the end of the year Eure describes the poor state of the castle where his keeper lies "*in meane sorte*" .

1596 - Note regarding pay for 80 horsemen at Harbottle (*CBP*). Harbottle is described as vulnerable to attack so 20 horsemen are sent there from York . Recommendation for the repair of the gaol . Eure requests funds for the repair of at least part of the castle . By the end of June the gaol has still to be repaired, however , and by mid-July Eure is desperate; "*Harbottle crieth for help*" .

Survey of the castle carried out by the surveyor of Royal lands in Northumberland, Anthony Feldon, assessing the work carried out by Sir John Forster c. 1568 and recommending further repairs (Colvin *et al.* 1975, 253-4).

1597 - The castle was so ruined by the turn of the year that its captain had to move for the winter to Otterburn (*CBP*). A further plea for assistance follows .

1598 - Request for a commission of inspection to be sent to view the decay, since without a functioning installation at Harbottle it is said to be impossible to recover the wasted countries of Tynedale and Redesdale .

1604 - The castle was "*an old castle, much decayed*" (1604 Survey, 105; see above 7.2 *Selected Sources and Surveys*). At this time there were 15 burgers at Harbottle, 1 at the Peale, and 24 houses between them.

1604-5 - All crown lands in Tynedale and Redesdale, including the castle and manor of Harbottle, granted to George, lord Home of Berwick, created earl of Dunbar (*Cal SP James I*; NCH XV (1940), 477).

1611 - Elizabeth, daughter of the Earl, inherited his Northumbrian estates in 1611 with her husband (NCH XV (1940), 477).

1635-7 -The latter outlived his wife and sold the castle, demesne, park, tithes and water mill of Harbottle, and 23 burgages and three closes in Harbottle, to Roger Widdrington of Cartington (*ibid.*). He subsequently used the castle as a quarry to build the nearby mansion, also called 'Harbottle Castle'.

1650 - The latter's son, Sir Edward Widdrington, forfeited his lands as a Royalist (*ibid.*).

1655 - The manor house and all demesne lands of Harbottle, with a corn mill and fulling mill were sold to John Rushworth and John Brownell, but recovered by Sir Edward after the restoration (*ibid.*).

1713 - Presbyterian congregation established at Harbottle, meeting in a converted dwelling house.

1721 - Mary Widdrington died (*ibid.*).

1723 - The latter's husband, Sir John Gascoigne of Parlinton, died (*ibid.*).

1731 - Sir Edward Gascoigne, their son, conveyed Harbottle to Luke Clennell of Clennell (NCH XV (1940), 478).

1756 - First purpose-built Presbyterian chapel erected in the village.

1796 - Passed by marriage to the Fenwicks who took the additional name of 'Clennell'.

1816 - Harbottle Common enclosed by an act of George III (NCH XV (1940), 479). The award was implemented in 1817.

1829 - Harbottle (new) Castle was rebuilt by Dobson. The other estate buildings and many of those in the village probably belong to the same period.

1834 - Church of England 'National School' building and master's house constructed.

1854 - Presbyterian chapel rebuilt in a more 'ecclesiastical' form.

1880 - The Clennell Memorial Fountain was built by public subscription

1935 - Excavations carried out on the castle by Honeyman.

c.1940-47 - Occupation of the keep by the Royal Observation Corps, involving some excavation and demolition of masonry.

1990 - To arrest further decay of the castle, Northumberland County Council began the process of consultation leading to the present programme of documentation, consolidation and public display.

1997-99 - Excavations carried out by on the castle by J.G. Crow. Consolidation work undertaken.

1999 - In September Harbottle Castle was opened to public following excavation and consolidation.