Rumney Castle

Table 1 Species Present

	Total 12th,13th C		I-IV 12th C		V,VI 13th C		I	II	III	IV	V	VI
	BN	MN	BN	MN	BN	MN						
Cattle	311	44% (21)	100	(9)	211	(12)	12 (2)	37 (2)	24 (3)	23 (2)	3 (1)	207+1sk (11)
Sheep	94	13% (15)	20	(9)	74	(6)	3 (1)	4 (2)	9 (3)	4 (3)	0	74 (6)
Pig	214	30% (23)	51	(8)	163	(15)	12 (2)	10 (1)	15 (3)	14 (3)	34 (5)	129 (10)
Horse	56	8% (11)	9	(1)	47	(10)			9 (1)			47 (10)
Red deer	13	1.8% (7)	6	(3)	7	(4)	1		2 (1)	2,1a (1)		7 (4)
Others		2.7%										
Fallow	1				1							1a
Roe	3	(2)	2(1)		1		2(1)					1
Deer	3				3							3a
Dog	1				1							1
Hare	3	(3)	1		2(2)		1					2(2)
Water vole	1				1							1
Fowl	5	(4)	1		4(3)				1			4(3)
Goose	1				1							1
Duck	1				1							1
Skylark	1				1							1
Total Ident.	708		190		518		31	51	64	44	37	481

Notes. BN - Number of bones.
MN - Minimum number of individuals, calculated from the most frequent skeletal part, using age data and assuming the main parts of the site to be distinct.
a - antler.
sk - partial skeleton.

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Table 2 Skeletal Analysis

	Cattle*		Sheep	Pig	
horn core	0		0	-	
skull	10		3	5	
maxilla	1		0	12	
mandible	20		6	32	
tooth	92	28%	13	108	50%
head		37%			73%
vertebra	14		2	4	
scapula	22		7	5	
humerus	14		12	6	
radius/ulna	26		13	7	
pelvis	22		2	2	
femur/patella	27		5	8	
tibia/fibula	25		18	14	
body		45%			22%
carpal/tarsal	24		4	1	
metapodial	25		8	6	
phalanx	11		1	4	
foot		18%			5%

* Including the partial skeleton.

Table 3 Age Data

	Minimum Number Cattle	Sheep
Deciduous premolars still present	10	3
Permanent P, M3 in wear	13	3
(m_3), P_4 tooth wear stage	(2c,2h,k,l),2g	
M_3 tooth wear stage	c,f,3g,2j,k,l.	c,g.

	Min. No. Pig
Birth - M1 unworn	0
- M2 unworn	1
- M3 unworn	4 (1)*
M3 stage a - d	5 (2)
M3 stage e or more	6 (3)

Pig mandibles with complete molar rows:
j d a-29; m j c-39; m l c- 41; n k e-43.
* Mandibles only in brackets.

Tooth wear and mandible stages are defined in Grant 1982.

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Cae

Table 4 Measurements

Cattle			
radius	Breadth prox.	VI 72, 78, 81.2.	
	Bd diaphysis (unfused)	91	
astragalus	GLl/GLm/Bd	VI 54.7/51.1/34.6	
		VI 61 /56.8/40.3	
		VI 61.4/57.6/38.8	
		VI 61.5/55.6/39.2	
metacarpal	GL/SD/Bd	III 161/25.9/47.6	Ht.est.0.986m
	Bp	II 51.3; IV 47; VI 49.1, 54.	
	B distal	III 47.6; IV 45; VI 52.8.	
metatarsal	GL/SD	VI 183/23.7	Ht.est.0.997m
Sheep			
tibia	Bd	III 26.3; VI 26.3, 27.9	
Pig			
upper M^3	Length/Breadth	V 29.5/17.0	
lower M_3	L/B	IV 34.9/15.3; V 30.1/14.9; VI 33/14.7	
atlas vertebra	Height	IV 48; VI 55	
Horse*			
Scapula	GLP/SLC	VI 91/60; -/63; 89/-	
humerus	B Trochlea	VI 76	
1st phalanx	Greatest Length	VI 81	
Red deer			
mandible	$7/M_3L/M_3B$	VI 116/30.2/14.2; -/32.3/15.1	
tibia	Bd	VI 47.0, 51.6, 54.0	
calcaneum	GL	IV 106	
2nd phalanx	GL/Bp	I 44/-; IV 39.5/20	
Roe deer			
mandible	7(cheek t.row)	I 62.7	
Goose	tarsometatarsus GL	VI 88	
Duck (see text)	ulna GL	VI 77.1	
Fowl 134 (see text)			
humerus	GL/Bp/SC/Bd	100±2/28.8/9.5/22.8	
ulna	GL	96	
femur	GL/Bp/SC	114±2/25.0/11	

Measurements are defined in von den Driesch 1974, and are in mm except where stated.

* Tooth height measurements are recorded in the archive.

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area, possibly due to exposure to fire, but this is not cremated bone. The internal surface is curiously fissured, not a condition seen in life, and is a post-mortem change, probably due to the proximity of fine roots. There is one suture, probably fronto-parietal which was fused endosteally but not externally. The diploe is of human type and the general curvature that of a human parietal bone — it implies a very large cranial cavity, not found in animals except those with massive heads and thick bones. It could not be of animal origin, and indicates human parietal bone, probably from a female aged more than twenty years although determination of age from suture-fusion is not a reliable criterion.

PLANT MACROFOSSIL REMAINS. *By* DORIAN WILLIAMS[76]

The majority of these remains were carbonized seeds. A few samples were rich in the remains of cultivated plants and provide an insight into activities on this site in the medieval period.

No plant remains were recovered from Period I and were generally scarce in Period II deposits. Cereal species and a cultivated legume, field bean (*Vicia faba*) the predecessor of our modern broad bean, were recorded.

Plant macrofossils were again not common in Period III, though cereals and field bean were again present. Bread wheat (*Triticum aestivo-compactum*) from the area of the kitchen, Building C, may suggest their destruction during processing for food.

Plant macrofossil remains from Period IV are similar to those recovered from the previous phase. The majority represents the use of various waste components of the grain processing sequence for fuel.[77] The grape pip fragment (*Vitis vinifera*) from one of the post sockets for the outshoot of Building E is the only other species worth mentioning, though identification cannot be certain due to poor preservation. It probably represents imported vine produce, such as raisins, though vineyards were relatively common in this country in a period of climatic amelioration around 1000 to 1300.[78]

The small collection of grain from the fill of a Period V pit (259) provides little evidence of its origin but probably represents deliberate destruction of cereal waste. Both the oat and the Bromus species (cf. Rye-brome) have a long history as arable weeds.[79] The oat, however, was almost certainly present as a cultivated crop on this site.

Period VI contained all the contexts rich in plant remains and features are discussed separately, beginning with burnt areas within the 13th-century hall.

Material from the region of the hearth, Building M, charred through burning. The most striking feature of the deposit is the large number of field bean seeds recovered. The propagules were large, well-filled specimens. The purity of the sample indicates that it had been fully processed and cleaned ready for consumption, and would not have been deliberately destroyed. Legumes, such as peas and beans, are a valuable, easily stored source of protein. As such they were a staple part of the diet in the past and widely grown,[80] although evidence for this in Britain is still scarce.

These beans could have become charred through overheating during drying for winter storage. Equally the accident could have happened during food preparation, e.g. bean meal was used to bulk out flour for bread production by the poor labouring classes.[81] However, in view of other finds in this building which suggest high status, it is most likely that these beans represent animal feed. The species has long been cultivated for this purpose[82] and modern cultivars are still grown for silage, fodder and harvesting of seeds. The alternative name of horse bean reflects its former importance as horse fodder.

Destruction deposit, Building H. This deposit was dominated by barley (*Hordeum vulgare*). The grains were large, well-filled specimens, undoubtedly prime produce. An appreciable quantity of oat was also present and the size of the grain suggests it was probably a cultivated species such as *Avena sativa*. From the presence of a few awn fragments another species, possibly the wild oat (*Avena fatua*) is also represented. Although these cereals have been eaten by man they are both typical fodder crops, especially for horses.[83] The weeds present could be due to less effort expended in the cleaning processes than would have been done if the grain

was for human consumption. The material may alternatively represent thatch or straw strewn on the floor and destroyed during the burning of the hall. This is supported by the presence of the spikerush (*Eleocharis sp.*), which together with other tall growing vegetation of marsh and river bank, was often collected for such purposes. The presence of an appreciable amount of oak charcoal also contributes to this theory.

In conclusion there is some justification in suggesting that the species recorded were used as animal fodder, and the majority were probably charred during the destruction of the hall. This would tie in with the archaeological evidence such as the finding of horse shoe nails. Indeed, the evidence further suggests that horses featured prominently on this site, and were fed a high quality diet. The war-horse or charger was a prized possession maintained at its physical peak by regular exercise and proper feeding. It probably had a better diet than many a human being of that time.

Drain leaving the 13th-century hall. This deposit provided little information on activities in the hall, but may infer that the drain was kept open. Uncharred seeds of the three-nerved sandwort were common. Typically this is a woodland plant of rich well-drained soil. It seems, however, to have been recovered frequently from archaeological sites[84] and is likely to have been growing nearby.

Layer of charcoal in well/cistern?. It is well known that rubbish was dumped in disused wells.[85] The important feature of this deposit is the dominance of bread wheat grains. These were small, often badly distorted and showing signs of germination. A small quantity of fragmented and eroded parts of the wheat ear, such as rachis, were also present. It is probable that this material represents cleanings from grain processing, either burnt deliberately or used for fuel. This is further suggested by the presence of large weed seeds e.g. runch (*Raphanus raphanistrum*). This wheat species would have been the crop grown for human consumption.

Conclusion. There is no change in the crops in the short period represented by these deposits. However, the evidence shows conclusively that the field bean, oats, bread wheat and six-rowed barley were cultivated in this region in the medieval period.

More detailed information on individual species can be found in the site archive.

APPENDIX

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND DOCUMENTATION

Although the earliest documentary reference for Rumney Castle dates from the late 12th century, there is good reason to suppose that its foundation took place considerably earlier. Topographically, it occupied a commanding position both directly alongside the Roman road leading from Caerleon to Cardiff,[86] and overlooking the most feasible point at which the Rhymney river could have been crossed, *c.* 300 m to the S. Certainly by the second half of the 12th century, at the latest, a bridge had been erected at this point[87] and ships would have had no difficulty in navigating the river this far at high tide.[88] As control of this important route of communication would have been of vital strategic value, it is likely that the construction of Rumney Castle occurred at a relatively early stage of Norman settlement owing to military considerations.

The date traditionally given for the earliest Norman settlement in the region around Rumney is *c.* 1093, when Robert Fitzhamon is reputed to have established Cardiff after invading and conquering much of the Welsh kingdom of Morgannwg following the death of its ruler Rhys ap Tewdwr. This version of events, however, has been seriously questioned and an important reinterpretation of the period, based partly on evidence only recently identified, is summarized here in order to better understand the background of events against which Rumney Castle was most likely to have been founded.

It now seems certain that the Normans were involved in the affairs of the region far earlier than was previously thought and that the scale and purpose of their activities has been seriously underestimated.[89] A convincing argument can now be put forward that Cardiff was