

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS AT
TALBOT'S TOWER, KILKENNY 2010**

PROGRESS REPORT 3

7th JULY 2010

KILKENNY ARCHAEOLOGY

Brief findings

Excavations have concentrated on the removal of the 'garden mound' from the top of the tower. The mound was found to be of clay and rubble construction, 5m diameter x 0.6m deep (max.), and was put in place in the late 18th-early 19th century to cover a large 'gouge' into the structure of the 15th century roof of the tower.



Excavations underway on the garden mound on the top of Talbot's tower

The sod layer which covered the mound contained a multitude of artefacts that give insights into how the top of Talbot's tower was used over the past two hundred years. Fragments of Victorian wine bottles, clay tobacco-pipes, hair pins, lace-chapes and a large quantity of ladies buttons all attest to the use of the roof as a place for particular types of recreation! Of interest also were a number of .303 bullets and cases which may have been used by Free State forces against the Republican occupation of Kilkenny castle in 1922.

Underneath the south side (Ormonde road) of the mound was a 0.3m thick clay platform from which two Charles II farthings (c.1660) and a piece of musket shot were recovered. This may have been deliberately put in place to provide a level surface on which to place a gun/cannon in the second half of the 17th century.



A selection of the finds recovered from the garden mound, Talbot's tower. Top left to right: birds head terminal, iron key, two musket balls. Middle left to right: Charles II coin, Victorian marble. Bottom left to right: 1868 penny, selection of buttons, lace-chapes, .303 bullet.



Flagstones on the southern perimeter of the roof



Truncation of the upper vault of Talbot's tower



Cat skeleton placed into the garden mound. Its head was found nearby.

The roof itself was relatively well preserved and its perimeter was paved with fine stone flags. The flags had been robbed from the central dome of the roof, revealing the stone rubble core beneath. The truncation of the roof had also opened a 'slice' through the upper levels of the stone vault which showed it was constructed using alternating layers of stone rubble and mortared masonry, probably to a thickness of c.0.75m – 1m.

Over the past weeks the site has been visited by groups from the Galway Archaeological Society, the Heritage Council, the Kilkenny Archaeological Society, the Kilkenny Education centre and approximately 80 individuals have also been given tours of the excavation.

The archaeological excavations have now been completed at Talbot's tower and the post-excavation assessment on the finds and archive has begun.