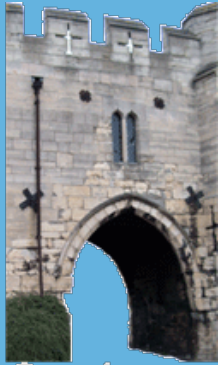


# GATEHOUSE NEWS



Gatehouse

Developments of the Gatehouse Website. The comprehensive bibliography and gazetteer of the castles, fortifications and palaces of medieval England and Wales.

## 12 July 2016

With the astonishing performance of the Welsh national football team at Euro 2016 it is timely that I've been pretty busy on the records for Wales.

Cadw have produced a new website feature [Côf Cymru - National Historic Assets of Wales](#) which is one of those mapping sites I find rather fiddle to use *per se* but this does contain the scheduled monument data for Wales and copies of the scheduled monument reports, which I've been long trying to find an online link too.

So I've been able to add a 'button' link to the scheduled monument report summary for sites in Wales and, for a good number of sites I've also added part of that summary to the site description, particularly so for the lesser known sites where other descriptions are often a bit limited.

Of the now 1160 sites recorded on the Gatehouse database for Wales (including reject and dubious sites) some 558 (48%) are scheduled, 6 (0.5%) are descheduled, 193 (17%) are listed building or are sites now occupied by listed buildings, of which 119 (10%) are either also scheduled or are closely associated with a scheduled area. That is a total of 632 (54%) sites have some statutory protection. Of the remaining 528 (46%) some are lost sites known only from documentary sources or sites destroyed at some time in the past.

The equivalent figures for England are 5085 total sites on database 1923 (38%) are scheduled, 3 are descheduled (0.06%); 1663 are listed (33%), of which 621 are also scheduled (12%). So 2965 (58%) have statutory protection.

Roger Wilson was kind enough to send me a bunch of suggested sites in Pembrokeshire. This was a most worthwhile set of suggestions and I've created records for these.

Rachel Swallow, whom I've had the pleasure of meeting a few times, has published a fine paper in the recent volume of *The Archaeological Journal*. The paper, entitled 'Cheshire Castles of the Irish Sea Cultural Zone' includes a number of castles on the north-east Welsh coast which were pre-Conquest Mercian areas and which were part of the domains of the Norman Cheshire earls. As Rachel points out the current country border has meant these castles often have not been considered as a group. Rachel is certainly



Builth Wells Castle scheduled monument [BR031](#).

inline with my views on castles although I'd probably go even further in expressing the continuity of the pre and post-Conquest 11th century political systems and their expression in buildings. I hope that at some point there will come a time when fortified elite political centres of the 11th century are seen as a unified group under the same name rather than two groups with a different name depending on which side of 1066 they lie (burh/castle). Of many interesting things in Rachel's paper is the idea that the Saxon's favoured rectilinear enclosures. I can certainly think of a number of sites with playing card shaped enclosures and possible Saxon origins of which [Longtown](#) in Herefordshire is a particularly interesting example.

Another site that might originally have been a rectilinear enclosure is [Mexborough Castle](#) in Yorkshire. This appears now to be a very



[Longtown Castle.](#)

Was the steep sided embankment on the left built by Harold Godwinson's men in 1050?

obvious motte and semicircular bailey of fairly classic form resulting from post-Conquest strengthening of the castle, including the building of the motte, exacerbated in the early 20th century by the making of a park which removed the scant traces of some slighter earthworks.

Does anyone have any other suggestions of rectilinear enclosures of possible pre-Conquest date, particularly any that were 'converted' into motte and baileys? Clearly [Goltho](#), in Lincolnshire, is the prime example but are there others?

Finally, a note I forgot to add to the last newsletter, I've added a record for [Hen Gastell](#) in Caernarfonshire. This site, previously thought to be an Iron Age enclosure, has been shown to a 11th/12th century medieval site after excavations done in 2014 although the reports of these excavations appear to have been released this spring. The [archaeological report](#), by Jane Kenney, is considered in its conclusion saying "On the basis of the current evidence it seems reasonable to see Hen Gastell as the well-defended home of a local medieval Welsh lord with tenurial rights over the adjacent lands." although the local paper, the [North Wales Chronicle](#), did make the obvious and not unfair leap and called it a castle.

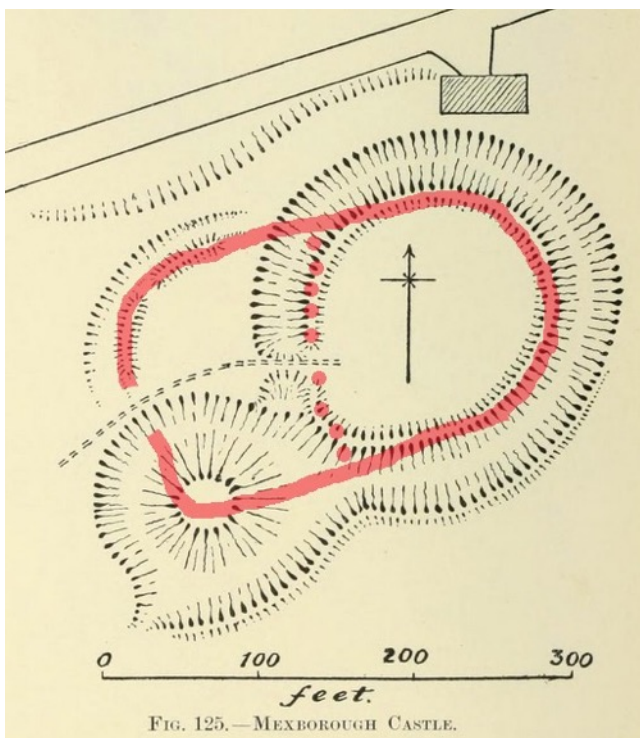


FIG. 125.—MEXBOROUGH CASTLE.

This plan of Mexborough Castle, taken from Allcroft's *Earthworks of England*, shows the form before the castle was laid out as a park. my red line suggests an original line of an underlying rectilinear enclosure, with a possible subdivision. The motte was added and the eastern bailey much enlarged, probably at some post-Conquest date, but the underlying rectilinear enclosure may have been the original *burh* of Meoc from which the town takes its name.

## NEW SITES ADDED

- [Hen Gastell](#) (Small castle/fortified manor)

From Roger Wilson

- [Court Moat Eglwysrw](#) (homestead moat)
- [King's Leat](#) (? medieval moat - although I think might be mill pond earthworks)
- [Coed-Cwnwr Moat](#) (possible FMH or foresters defended house)
- [Hodgeston Moat](#) (possible FMH)
- [Prendergast Castle](#) (dubious suggestion of a motte and bailey)
- [Trefloyne Manor](#) (possible FMH)
- [Orielson House](#) (possible FMH)
- [The Mote, New Moat](#) (rejected motte site, dubious FMH site)
- [Slebech Commandery](#) (possible fortified ecclesiastical site)
- [Syke Rath](#) (dubious suggestion of a motte in 'reused' Iron Age site)
- [Capeston Rath](#) (dubious suggestion of a motte in 'reused' Iron Age site)
- [Narberth Camp Hill](#) (reject timber castle site)
- [Wiston Manor](#) (possible FMH)

From Côt Cymru - a small number of domestic homestead moats are scheduled under the broadclass 'defense' rather than 'domestic'.

- [Llanfilo moat 1](#) (homestead moat)
- [Llanfilo moat 2](#) (homestead moat)
- [Lower Penwaun moat](#) (homestead moat)
- [Upper Address The Moat](#) (homestead moat)

From Rachel Swallow

- [Basingwerk Manor](#) - a historical reference to a fortification usually attributed to site near to but not at Basingwerk although the Abbey is sited at the most strategic location and may have been a fortified manorial site before the foundation of the Abbey in the mid 12th century.

As I was writing this Peter Burton, the editor of the Castle Studies Group Newsletter, was kind enough to let me know of a new paper 'Power,

conflict and ritual on the fen-edge: the Anarchy-period castle at Burwell, Cambridgeshire, and its pre-Conquest landscape' by Duncan W. Wright, Oliver Creighton, Steven Trick & Michael Fradley published in *Landscape History* ([online access](#)). From my first quick look this seems to suggest this classic 'Anarchy' period castle, in fact has pre-Conquest origins. Peter rather answering my question above without actually being asked it! Remarkable prescience on his part.

All the [downloadable](#) country databases have updated. For those who have previously used the databases please note the changes to the welsh database that come with the addition of two fields required for the scheduled monument data. (see [notes](#))



For a daily photograph or two from my collection you can follow me on [Twitter](#).

Philip Davis

