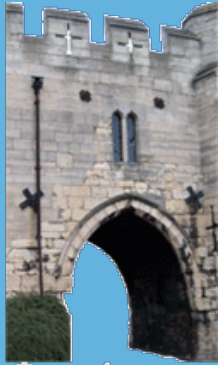



GATEHOUSE NEWS



Gatehouse

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

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Given that, these days, few people are on the dial up speeds I first designed Gatehouse for, I am, like many web sites, producing fatter and fatter pages. I have reposted my few short essays on the site as pdf files. This allows me a bit more format control over these essays and, I hope, makes them more readable, although it does make them larger files and loses the navigation menu.

These essays are

- [Defining 'The Castle'](#), first written 2009 which gives my view of developments in castle studies. Although I'd write this in a rather different way these days I stand by content.
- [Minor Castle](#), which is just a few thoughts and comments on the smaller and small castle sites and the people who lived in them.
- [Mounds of Earth](#), a few short comments on earth mounds based on my experience of looking at hundred of reports of various mounds.
- [Crenellating the Ego: Psychology and Castle Studies](#) is an essay nearly 10 years old now which tries to raise some questions about how some psychological factors have effected castles and castle studies.

Some of the other information pages in Gatehouse, such as the [Location Information](#) page and the [Distribution Maps](#) page, I intend to keep in more or less the current old style html form as this maintains a good navigation menu while being within my limited web design skills.

Since the last newsletter there have been some slight changes to a few records mainly minor additions or corrections to the bibliographies. The site pages have been reposted.

One site that has had such an update is [Pembroke Castle](#) although I'm likely to be further revising this record after the Castle Studies Group study day on the castle and town walls next week.

In England the first [results from the 2015](#) coring investigations done by [The Round Mounds Project](#) have recently been released and I've added those to the various sites. These results are;

- [Berkhamsted](#), Hertfordshire: medieval (probably post-AD 1066)
- [Wallingford](#), Oxfordshire: Mid/late 11th to mid-12th century AD
- [Bramber](#), W. Sussex: Mid/late 11th to mid-12th century AD
- [Fotheringhay](#), Northamptonshire: Mid/late 11th to late 12th century AD
- [Brinklow](#), Warwickshire: Mid/late 11th to late 12th century AD
- [Clifford Hill](#), Northamptonshire: Mid/late 11th to late 12th century AD
- [Bishopston](#), Darlington: Mid/late 11th to 13th century AD
- ["Castle 3" Hamstead Marshall](#), W. Berkshire: Late 12th to mid-13th century AD
- ["The Mount", Lewes](#), E. Sussex – 15th/16th century AD or later
- [Skipsea](#), E. Yorkshire: 5th-2nd century BC (Middle Iron Age)

Dr Jim Leary, who leads the Project, is a pre-historian so, understandable, he seems to have



Skipsea Castle motte and the village, on the other side of the usually lost mere.

been most excited by the result for Skipsea, where it appears the motte is a repurposing of a rare large Iron Age burial mound. Since the repurposing of existing mounds to be used as castle mottes is actually a fairly well known phenomena this isn't perhaps as exciting from the point of view of castle studies.

The Mount at Lewes in the grounds of the Priory, which has been considered as the site of the immediate post-Conquest castle of Lewes, has been recorded as doubtful in Gatehouse for years - the dating of this as C15/C16 means I've now rejected this as a castle site. The Round Mounds Project consider it a post-Reformation garden prospect mound, which seems highly likely although I wouldn't entirely exclude it being a late pre-Reformation feature designed as a backdrop for a mystery play.

Most of the other mounds date as late C11 to mid C12 which isn't really fine enough a dating range to answer some of the questions one may have. The important and challenging exception is the Motte 3 at Hampstead Marshall dated as late C12 to mid C13. This might be a defensive feature added to strengthen the existing castle during the troubles in the reign of King John or a piece of expensive status display designed to give the

boy king Henry III some kudos on his visit to [William Marshall's](#) old family castle in 1218 (Hampstead castle may well have been the castle of 'Newbury' where in 1152, as a child, William was given as a hostage to King Stephen and one may well imagine some festive retelling of this dramatic story to the 10 year old Henry by the then 70 year old William). Further work is being done to date [Hamstead Marshall 2](#), the smaller mound next to HM3 which I'm currently recording as questionable as a separate castle. I will need to reconsider how I record Hamstead Marshall in Gatehouse.

I've also added a link on the [Snodhill Castle](#) page to the [Snodhill Castle Preservation Trust facebook page](#). I'm not a great fan of facebook as a website resource but there is important and



The remains of the tower or shell keep on the motte at Snodhill Castle



significant content here on the important work being done at Snodhill to conserve the site and the research being undertaken to improve the understanding of the castle and its landscape. I've been most fortunate to be at a recent visit to the site by a number of notably fine castellologists where there was much interesting discussion aimed at helping the Trust consider their future investigations. The Gatehouse record will be altered in the near future as I digest what I learned and the feedback I see although one thing that did seem to be agreed upon was that the castle is built on the site of a pre-historic promontory fort.

Finally, a bit outside Gatehouses remit, a recent BBC local news report about my local castle Sandal entitles 'Sandal Castle graffiti attacks 'due to council neglect' caused me some concern when I saw it reported on Twitter and retweeted by the [Castle Studies Trust](#). Given a bit of local knowledge I felt a need to reply to that report, which I felt misrepresented the situation, and that reply (with a link to the original report), which the Castle Studies Trust also retweeted, can be seen [here](#).

NEW SITE ADDED

Andrew Herrett kindly pointed out to me a website by Martin Docksey in which he argues that the Iron Age hillfort of Berth Hill, in North Staffordshire, had a phase as a "Mott and

Bailey" castle. For no apparent reason Docksey's consistently uses Mott - the reason for this idiosyncratic spelling of motte is unclear but is not endearing and makes me feel Docksey is trying too be a contrarian for personal reasons rather than challenging pre-conceptions. Docksey's bibliography supporting his dissertation is extensive but has remarkable few recent sources and nothing from a modern castle studies writer. I've added a page but am recording this as a questionable site.

■ [Berth Hill, Maer](#)

