



Gatehouse

Gatehouse News

9 September 2013

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

The records for the sites in the historic county of [Somerset](#) have been brought up to standard. Somerset has been well served by castle studies writers and medieval historians. The [Victoria County History for Somerset](#) is extensive and much of it is recent although, unfortunately, the earthwork chapter from 1911 is not available online. The main volumes of histories of the parishes were edited by Robert Dunning who also wrote a guide [Somerset Castles](#) (Somerset Books, 1995). From the archaeological view Somerset was one of three regions used by Stuart Prior in his contentious book [A Few Well-Positioned Castles: The Norman Art of War](#) (The History Press, 2006) and he describes in some detail the castles of Somerset, although his original thesis, on which the book is based, is more useful for my purposes.

Despite, or possibly because of this attention, Somerset has a number of sites which are disputable.

- [Wimble Toot](#) to my mind is an obvious bowl barrow but is called a motte by David Cathcart King and Stuart Prior.
- [Burrow Mump](#) is scheduled as a motte castle but King and Dunning both have doubts about the site, which I share.
- [Castle Batch at Kewstoke](#) is another site scheduled as a motte but doubted by King.
- [Edithmead](#) might be a low 'building platform' type motte or just an untypical moated site.

- Some poorly defined earthworks near [Portbury](#) accepted by Prior as a motte but not even mentioned by King or Dunning seems pretty obviously Iron Age to me.



Lyddington Bishops Palace

A short trip to Lyddington Bede House, a former palace of the bishops of Lincoln, inspired me to add a listing and distribution map of [post-Conquest pre-Reformation episcopal palaces and houses](#) organised by diocese (or see). The [map](#) is rather limited and really needs to show the boundaries of the dioceses and I hope to improve it in the future.

The review of Somerset castles, as with all such reviews, has resulted in some improvements to the site bibliographies. Added to the Gatehouse general bibliography is [The Seigneurial Residence in Western Europe AD c800-1600](#), kindly lent to me by Neil Guy. The [Castle Studies Group bibliography](#) for 2013 has been sent to members and a few references I'd missed have been added to Gatehouse



although there are a couple of texts I need to look at in more detail.

Sir Humphrey Wakefield has kindly given me permission to reproduce online the licence to crenellate *Chevelyngham* (Chillingham Castle) and I also added a fuller transcription and translation of this licence. However I'm not a paleographer nor a latin scholar so I'd be more than happy to receive feedback on my transcription and translation.

Trying to ensure as good a translation as possible lead me to find [The Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources website](#) which has a useful [Further Resources](#) page to which I've added a link from the [links](#) page.

NEW SITES ADDED

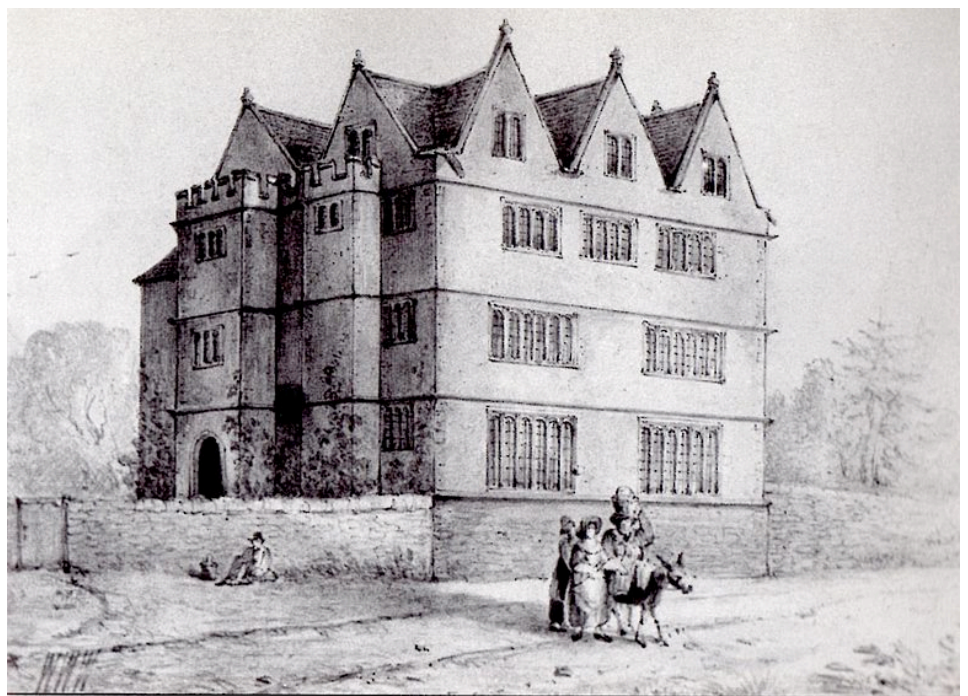
From Prior's Thesis

- [Tickenham Court](#). Some vague earthworks near the fine 14th century hall house are rejected as a ringwork.
- [Wambrook Castle](#). Some poorly defined earthworks and place-name evidence are rejected. The castle name here seems to come from surname of a 14th century land owner Laurence du Chastel.

Although I first read Dunning's Somerset Castles a number of years ago, at a time when my criteria for 'fortified' was rather

different, rereading the book lead me to realise I'd not included a number of possible fortified houses suggested by Dunning.

- [Combe Florey manor house](#).
 - [Cothay Manor](#).
 - [Naish Priory](#).
 - [Norton sub Hamdon manor house](#).
- and also added is a site he rejects.
- [Beckington Castle](#) a 16th century house. This house was called castle house in the 19th century and has been associated with what Dunning calls 'romanticism and pretence'. It is clearly a grand house, but not of manorial status, built by a wealthy clothier but was dressed up with battlements and is a fine example of the enduring fascination with the architectural expression of militarism.



Beckington Castle, 1842