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A short guide to the Medieval Castles of Flint, Rhuddlan and Denbigh

by the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust

The castles of Flint (OS national grid reference SJ24717333), Rhuddlan (SJ02467791) were built at the orders of Edward I of England during his campaign in north Wales. Denbigh (SJ051657) was built by Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln who was granted Rhos and Rhufoniog following Edward's victory over Llywelyn ap Gruffydd.



Flint Castle, was the first to be constructed, in 1277. It is sited on a rocky outcrop on the estuary of the river Dee which may have been the site of an earlier castle. The outer ward of the castle was a simple walled enclosure but the inner was a compact enclosure with a powerful tower set in each corner. The largest tower, which was never finished, overlooks the small gate. Unlike most castles little evidence has been found for domestic buildings within the wards. The castle was surrounded by a deep moat.



Having established a base at Flint Edward I commanded the building of a second powerful castle, this time at **Rhuddlan** on the banks of the river Clwyd which allowed access by sea.

The castle was constructed between 1277-82 and at the same time the river was straightened and dredged to improve navigation. The castle plan is concentric with a square inner ward with twin-tower gatehouses on opposite corners. The outer ward, which is flanked by small square towers and turrets, is octagonal in shape except where it borders the river. Here it extends down the slope to enclose a watergate and dock for ships. The walls of the outer ward have been destroyed but the moat can still be traced on the side away from the river.

The remains of Twt Hill, an earth and timber castle built by Robert of Rhuddlan in 1086, are nearby.

Denbigh Castle was constructed with aid from King Edward and his master-masons in 1282. When first built its defences joined those of the walled town but the plan was modified to include cross-defences with massive polygonal towers to give added protection on the town

side. The gatehouse is unusual being of three storeys.

Access and parking

Flint Castle lies on the edge of the Dee estuary in the town of Flint. It is approached from the A548. When travelling west turn right in the town where the castle is signposted. Car parking is available adjacent to the castle. Open at all times.



Rhuddlan Castle lies on the north bank of the river Clwyd on the outskirts of the town of Rhuddlan just south of the A547. It is signposted from the road and has its own parking. Summer opening only, 10am to 5pm.

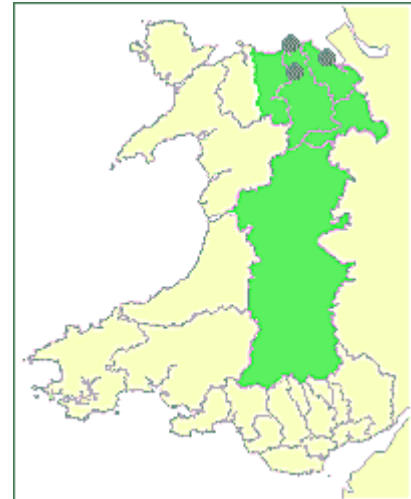
Denbigh Castle is situated within the town of Denbigh just south of the central square towards the old hospital. It is signposted from the town centre. There is a good car park at the castle. Normal entry hours 10am to 5pm.

Access times should always be checked with Cadw. Free access to Cadw sites is available to pre-booked school parties. Telephone 01222 500200. *Ordnance Survey Landranger Maps 116 and 117.*

The above information comes from the Sites and Monuments Record of the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust. For further information about the historic environment of this area, contact:-

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