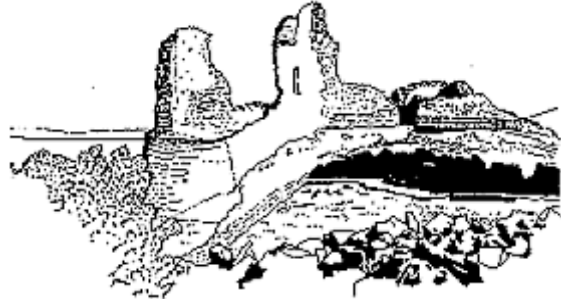


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A short guide to Montgomery Castle

by the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust

Montgomery Castle (OS national grid reference SO221967) is a masonry castle standing on a rocky promontory above the town of Montgomery, Powys. Precipitous slopes to the north and east make this an excellent defensive site.



The castle was built by Henry III to counter the growing power of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in this area of the Marches. It was probably originally built in timber in 1223 but was almost immediately rebuilt in stone and completed by 1234. The castle of Montgomery replaced the old timber castle at Hen Domen. Montgomery castle is approached from the south. The surviving defences comprise a barbican, a wide outer ditch, the middle ward, a narrower inner ditch and the inner ward.



The inner ward, protected by a curtain wall and a twin-towered gatehouse, originally contained the royal suite and apartments as well as the kitchen and brewhouse.

On the western side, a large D-shaped tower contained the well. The middle ward originally had only timber defences, but was walled in stone at a later date and manorial buildings erected within it.

The building of the castle and the growing importance of the site led to extensive clearance of woodland from the surrounding countryside particularly along the public roads. Soon after the castle was built the town of Montgomery was founded. Traders were encouraged to settle in the new town which was granted the right to hold fairs and markets and to defend itself by a wall and ditch.

The castle gradually declined in importance and by the 14th century it stood ruinous. In 1538-43, however, the castle was refurbished by Bishop Rowland Lee. The Herbert family abandoned the castle as a residence in 1580, but in 1622-5 they erected a large brick house in the Middle Ward.

At the time of the Civil War, Parliamentary troops seized the castle, and in 1649 it was demolished by order of Parliament.

Archaeological excavations by J Knight took place in the 1960s when the castle was consolidated and redisplayed. Organic material including the remains of leather shoes were recovered from the well. The excavations and history of the castle are published by J Knight in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 1992, 97-180.

Access and parking.

The castle has a small carpark adjacent to it on the hilltop. This is reached by a very steep and narrow lane leading up from the west side of the town square (behind the Town Hall), but is not suitable for coaches. Alternatively, vehicles may be parked at the Town square and the castle approached on foot. It is a short but steep walk. The castle is in the care of Cadw.

Access is free. *Ordnance Survey Landranger map 137.*

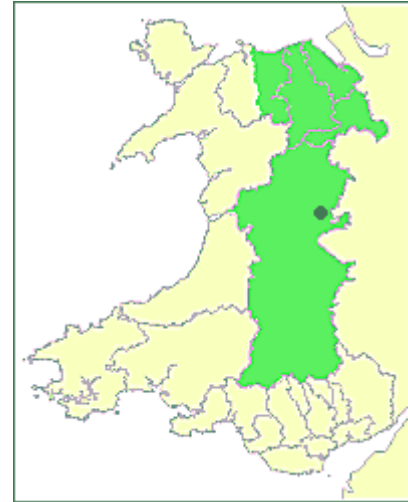
The above information comes from the Sites and Monuments Record of the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust. For further information about the historic environment of this area, contact:-

*Jeff Spencer
Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust
7a Church Street
Welshpool
Powys
SY21 7DL*

tel: (01938) 553670

fax: (01938) 552179

E-mail: trust@cpat.org.uk



Compiled for the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust by Caroline Earwood and Neville Townsend

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