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Edited by

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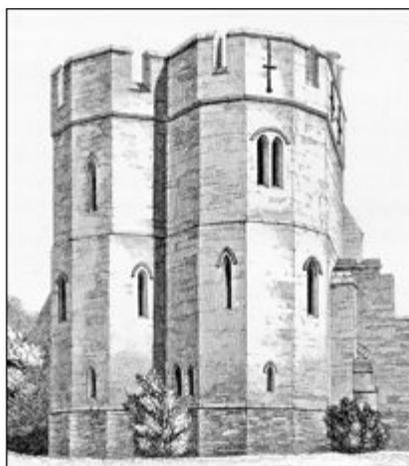
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Front Cover:

Ludlow Castle from the north-west. From a watercolour by Thomas Hearne. 1788. (detail). Hearne, (1744-1817) was one of the finest landscape painters, engravers and illustrators of the late 19th century. His watercolours were typified by applying a wash of subtle subdued colours over a clear outline in fine brush, pen or pencil. His techniques were studied by younger artists such as Thomas Girtin and J. M. W. Turner. © Victoria & Albert Museum, London.



End Cover:

Stokesay Castle

The South Tower. A detailed drawing in T Hudson Turner and John Henry Parker's 'Some Account of the Domestic Architecture in England', 1851. (Turner & Parker). (After p. 158). Drawn by O. Jewitt. View from the south-east. The first of five Turner & Parker outstanding fine-line illustrations of the castle. Please see the CSG website for a 20 page review of the visit to Stokesay.

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The 30th Annual CSG Conference Hereford Castles of the Welsh Marches

About 70 delegates enjoyed a pleasant four days in those most tranquil and unspoilt of counties, Shropshire and Herefordshire. The conference was made more memorable by the good weather and the accompaniment of knowledgeable local experts and evening speakers: Bill Klemperer, Tim Hoverd, Richard K Morris and Ron Shoemsmith. In addition we had good, enthusiastic support from local private owners, including Keith and Ann Hill of Clifford's Castle, Mari Fforde and the management at Hay on Wye castle (just over the border); Edward Harley owner of Brampton Bryan, and Suzanne & Martin Hughes at Lyonshall. Bill Klemperer (Historic England) and his wife were with us throughout the conference, and Bill has been instrumental in supporting the remedial work or proposed works of consolidation at Snodhill, Clifford and research and excavation at Longtown. Four sites, Stokesay, Longtown, Wigmore and Clun are under the care of English Heritage. Gary Crook and the Snodhill Castle Preservation Trust kindly facilitated our visit to Snodhill, where there is a lot being done, and a lot more work to do; (there was another brainstorming Time Team-style research day on site in October).

The whole conference was something very special. It was excellently organized by Chas and Frances Hollwey, Peter Purton and Jeremy Cunnington, and it was a pleasure to see old friends like Bob Higham, the CSG founder, and Jeremy Knight. Local historian Bruce Copleston-Crowe was on hand, and he supplied a number of valuable supplementary notes expanding on the histories of the sites. The sites visited were book-ended by magnificent Goodrich on Thursday and impressive Ludlow on Sunday. Sandwiched in between we looked at: Longtown; Snodhill; Hay on Wye; Clifford; Richard's Castle; Wigmore; Clun; Brampton Bryan; Lyonshall; Stokesay; Ludlow. Of these places, there is work going on (research or survey or consolidation) at Longtown, Hay, Clifford, Snodhill). It was also good to see a lot scaffolding around Stokesay. So, in the light of developing ideas about the roles and functions of castles, their landscapes and pleasure grounds, no matter how

many times we have looked at some of these sites, there is always something or some new aspect to consider and some detail to study that hitherto did not seem important or relevant on previous visits years ago.

At evocative Wigmore we look back over 20 years since it was formerly opened and discuss the benefits and downsides of the philosophy that underpins its preservation and its public appearance. At Clun we would suggest that more work needs to be done in regard to promotion, presentation, interpretation, and safe accessibility. A new guidebook, dedicated to just that one site would be helpful. At Clifford the owners are keen to preserve and understand the ruins of this wonderful early 13th century motte top shell-type keep with towers. At Richard's castle the new display boards are good and helpful, and at Hay castle a Heritage Lottery Fund financial package will see the whole area - keep, gatehouse, Renaissance house and walling - rehabilitated, under the guidance of Cadw, Will Davies and Rick Mather Architects.

So there is a lot going on along the Welsh Marches and that is all greatly encouraging for the enjoyment and better understanding of these ancient monuments. My main concern is with Ludlow. Ludlow is one of the finest castles in Britain. To its great credit it is open most days of the year. Yet, whilst it has a hugely interesting series of buildings dating from the 1090s through to the 16th century, attracting about 100,000 visitors a year, it seems to lack something. It is not necessarily neglect of the fabric; important work has been done, although there are some areas where renewal and repair appear to be required. It just seems to be neglected by a complacency and lack of enthusiasm to inform and enlighten public understanding of such an ancient and venerable building. It feels unloved. Signage is a problem; Mortimer's Tower is a mess; the keep is not much better. The sad-looking Great Hall has 'temporary' boards up blocking off passages and stairs: *'The North West Tower is closed to the public for repair works to the flooring. We apologise for the disappointment this may cause'*. This sign has been up for a number of years. We look forward to future improvements. (For the castle summaries see pp. 126-150).

Neil Guy