

# THE CASTLE STUDIES GROUP BULLETIN

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Image above,  
Caernarfon Castle from the  
west, Moses Griffiths 1780s.  
(see pages 8-10)

## Editorial

The effects of Covid-19 are, alas, still very much with us. I hope that this bulletin finds you safe and well. Things are starting to head in the right direction with historic sites, museums, libraries, and archives starting to reopen their doors to visitors and researchers again. There are, of course, some limitations that will remain in place for a little longer.

Thank you very much for those who have sent pieces or suggested items for this bulletin. If you have anything you would like to contribute for the next bulletin, please send it to [Bulletin@castlestudiesgroup.org.uk](mailto:Bulletin@castlestudiesgroup.org.uk).

Therron Welstead  
CSG Bulletin Editor

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## Diary Dates

### Annual CSG Conference, Carmarthen

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> April - Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2022

(see page 2)

### Online Talks

(See page 3)

**30<sup>th</sup> June**, Richard Nevell, 'Rack and ruin - understanding why castles were demolished'

**28<sup>th</sup> July**, Audrey Thorstad, 'The Fight for Gresham Castle (1448-1451): Materiality, Gender, and Violence'

### Clare Castle Open Days

20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>th</sup> September

For more information visit the Clare Castle Country Park's [website](https://www.clarecastle.org.uk/).

## Castle Studies Group 2022 Annual Conference

*Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> April - Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2022*

As you will already know, the 2021 Carmarthenshire CSG Conference was postponed due to the Covid19 pandemic, until April 2022. It may still be based at the Ivy Bush Royal Hotel, Carmarthen, but the venue will be decided and confirmed in the next Journal in December 2021.

The proposed site visits will mainly be in the Pembrokeshire area and will be predominantly those in private ownership, many of which we have never been to before as a group. They will (possibly) include visits from the following list: Carmarthen Castle and town; Northern Pembrokeshire (Haverfordwest, Roch, Newport, Nevern), Cardigan; Southern Pembrokeshire (Narberth, Picton, Carew, Upton, Manorbier); one or two sites in the Gower peninsula; with a final drop-off at Swansea Railway Station for delegates catching return trains (a more frequent service), and back to Carmarthen for car drivers.

Further details will be available at the end of 2021.

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## CSG Small Projects Grant

Each year grants totalling £1000 are available for castle-related research and excavation undertaken by CSG members. Members are invited to send in proposals, which will be reviewed by the Funding Committee. Applications will be considered on their merits and any funding will be granted on a one-off basis. Applications should be sent to the CSG secretary by 31<sup>st</sup> October for projects in the following year. Decisions will be agreed by 31<sup>st</sup> January of each year. Successful applicants will be expected to submit a report on completion of the work, which may be published in the CSG bulletin. The application form can be found [here](#).

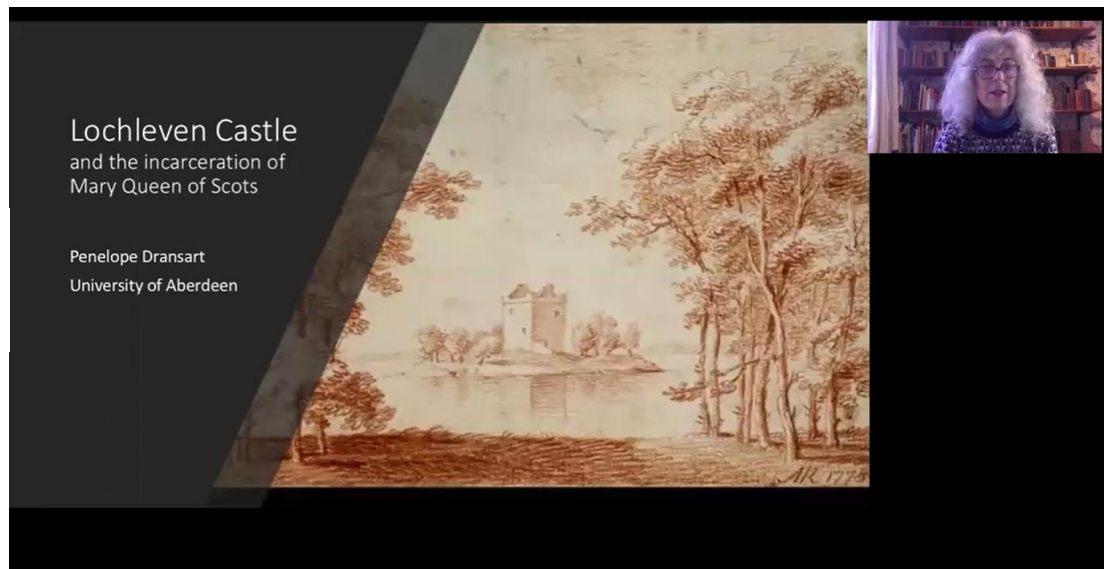
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## Burgen und Schlösser

The latest issue of BuS, vol. 62, no. 1 (2021) contains a number of items of interest including an article by Kurt Frein on the 14<sup>th</sup>-century outer shield wall of Sterrenberg am Rhein; an expanded version of the paper given by Peter Purton and Christof Krauskopf at the 2020 Leeds virtual IMC, 'Defending the frontier or keeping up with the neighbours? The evolution of late medieval and early modern artillery fortifications'; and Jens Friedhoff on the lower castle at Siegen. Purton & Krauskopf is in English and there are English summaries for the others. If you want to read any of them, please contact [treasurer@castlestudiesgroup.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@castlestudiesgroup.org.uk) to arrange copying.

## CSG Online Talks

A screen grab of Penelope Dransart's CSG paper on Lochleven Castle



During the lockdown, many organisations have started hosting online talks as a way to stay in touch with their members. Back in October 2020 the CSG began considering online alternatives to in-person events. Since then, we have set up a successful series of monthly talks.

Penny Dransart was the first to test the water with her talk in January on Lochleven Castle and Mary Queen of Scots. This was followed by talks from James Wright on the castles of Richard III, Tom McNeill on mottes, Pamela Marshall on Tattershall Castle, and a joint talk from Oliver Creighton and Robert Liddiard on their warhorse project.

Each of the talks has been attended by at least 50 people. Where possible, we have shared the talks on Vimeo, and each video is close to doubling the number of people who watch live.

We have the rest of the year mostly planned out, with talks from Sam Stones, Rachel Swallow, and Will Wyeth in the works.

For now, registration is open for June and July's talks:

30<sup>th</sup> June - Richard Nevell, 'Rack and Ruin - understanding why castles were demolished' <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/155122462461>

28<sup>th</sup> July - Audrey Thorstad, 'The Fight for Gresham Castle (1448-1451): Materiality, Gender, and Violence' <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/152276269421>

The talks have been outstanding and the CSG would like to thank our speakers for taking the time to talk to our members, and the members for turning up and making it worthwhile. We hope you're looking forward to upcoming talks.

***Richard Nevell***



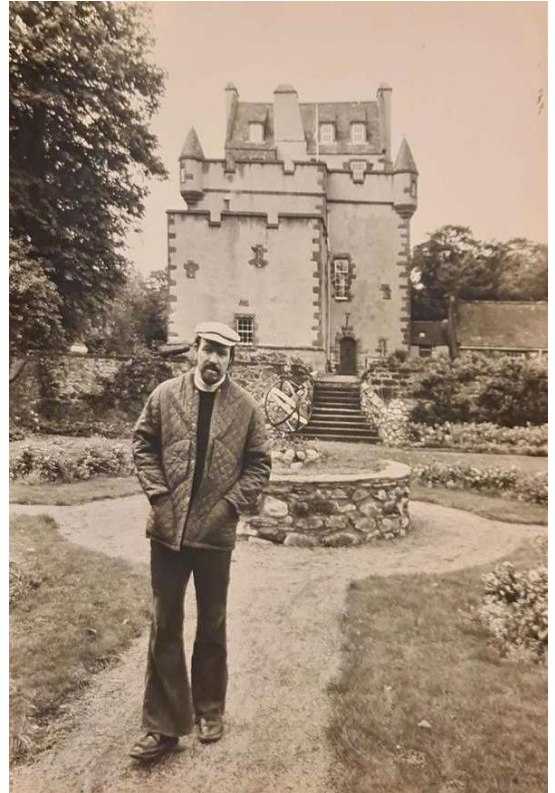
## Obituaries

### Mark Ellington

Mark Ellington - born in Boston, Massachusetts - for many years was primarily known as a musician; from the age of 20 he was sharing a stage alongside the likes of Joan Baez and Bob Dylan. Through playing in clubs, he had become a minor pop star.

Mark Ellington in front of Towie Barclay Castle.

In 1967 he moved to Scotland, whilst music continued to be an important part of his life his passion for Scotland and Scottish culture grew, not least with taking up the bagpipes. He and his wife, Karen, looked at several castles that were for sale and brought the ruined castle of Towie Barclay (Aberdeenshire). It is a mid-sixteenth L-plan tower. In 1792 the upper two storeys collapsed. They spent seven years restoring the castle into a family home for themselves and their two daughters, financed by his music. The project won a Saltire Award in 1973, in part because it included the setting up of the Scottish Traditional Skills Training Centre, which aimed at encouraging students to learn traditional skills such as stonemasonry.



Mark was invited onto the boards of several organisations including National Galleries of Scotland, Historic Scotland, the Historic Building Council for Scotland, and the Heritage Lottery Fund Committee for Scotland. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from Aberdeen University in 2014 for his conservation work.

On 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021 he died from a serious heart condition

In 2017 he summarised the restoration project of Towie Barclay.

“When Karen and I decided to restore Towie Barclay it hadn’t been lived in for 200 years, it was nothing but a ruin when we started work in 1969. There was ivy everywhere but we had a vision and we’ve stayed true to it. We were unlucky enough not to have pictures and plans of what the castle used to be like and the restoration process took us four years. I

am passionate about the history and heritage of Scotland and in particular Aberdeenshire which is very dear to my heart, there are moments when I sit here and look around in wonder. We tried to conserve and restore the features of the original building and although we made alterations for contemporary living we kept that side to a minimum. I feel very inspired here and although I don't feel any ghostly presence I can imagine what went on. When I first saw Towie Barclay I saw not what it was but what it could be - it was a ruin desperately in need of restoration."

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### Peter Curnow

John Kenyon writes: Peter Curnow died on 20<sup>th</sup> March in Ludlow. Born in 1927, Peter retired in 1987 from what had become English Heritage as Principal Inspector of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings. He had a wide range of interests, but castles were his great love. Members will be aware of his work with the late Mike Thompson on Richard's Castle in Herefordshire, and he was the co-author with R. Allen Brown of one of the finest 'ministry blue guides', that to the Tower of London. He was very involved with the Château Gaillard colloque, and organised the 1994 conference based at Abergavenny, which is where I got to know Peter well, and became President of CG's Comité Permanent. We worked together on Mortimer's Tower, Ludlow Castle, for the Logaston Press book published in 2000. He lived in the Shropshire village of Hopton Castle and wrote a detailed account of the castle for the R. Allen Brown Festschrift in 1989.

His work as Principal Inspector included advice on Royal Palaces and Parks as well as government historic buildings, Whitehall and the Palace of Westminster, as well as Windsor Castle and Osborne House.

A fuller obituary and a list of his castle publications will appear in our journal at the end of this year. I am indebted to his colleague Juliet West for some of the above information.

***John Kenyon***

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## Conference Review

### New Perspectives in Castle Studies

6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> April 2021

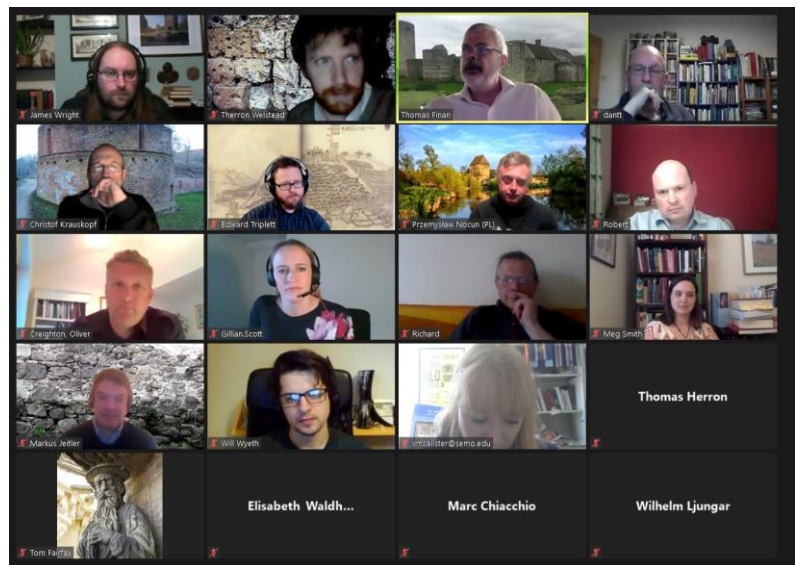
An online conference sponsored by Department of History, Saint Louis University

Covid-19 has meant that many conferences were cancelled or were forced online. Thomas Finan (Saint Louis University) decided to create a stand-alone conference, primarily for Ph.D. students and those early in their career, who are researching castles. The 4-day event was sponsored by the Department of History at Saint Louis University.

Although relatively small, the conference was international with attendees from many countries including Austria, India, Ireland, Poland, Sweden, UK, and USA. Although it was attended by people from quite a few different time zones, the conference programme was worked out so all attendees could take part despite being spread over 3 continents. There were really only very minor issues with connectivity throughout the conference, something not every online conference in the last year can boast.

Although I prefer ‘in person’ conferences, this provided an opportunity for young scholars to ‘meet’ who would not have had the opportunity otherwise. It also helped those, including myself, who due to restrictions of Covid-19 are feeling a little academically lonely.

A screen grab of some of the attendees of the conference, during a discussion of one of the papers



Each day were papers by PhD students and those early in their career as well as key note papers given by well-established scholars. Below are papers included in the conference.

#### ***Tuesday***

‘Fortification Reforms as a Reaction to the Mongol Invasions of Europe’, **Stephen Pow**

‘The Rock of Lough Key and the Siege of 1235: What were the Anglo-Normans Attacking’, **Thomas Finan**

‘Re-thinking Castles in Maritime Contexts: Galley-power, tolls and fish’,  
**Richard Oram** (Keynote)

***Wednesday***

‘Wild Boar Ivory in the Late Medieval Trautson Castle: Identification of an Object through Raman Spectroscopy’, **Hubert Ilsinger**

‘How much can we get out of dendrochronology? A case of a 14th-century keep in Siedlęcin (Poland)’, **Przemysław Nocuń**

‘A preliminary study on the impact of Biodeterioration on the Medieval Stone Monuments’, **Mayank Singh**

‘In Ruins: Trautson Castle as a Case Study in the Taphonomy of Bomb Damage and Renewal at Late Medieval Castles’, **Elisabeth Waldhart**

‘The Hofburg Project’, **Markus Jeitler** (Keynote)

***Thursday***

‘New Perspectives on Rural Nucleated Settlement at Irish Castle Sites’  
**Vicky McAlister** and **Jenny Immich**

‘A Ring of Mottes and Monasteries: John de Courcy’s Strangford Lough’,  
**Thomas Barrows**

‘Continuation and Inconvenience or: cemeteries and castles in the eleventh and twelfth centuries’, **Therron Welstead**

‘Queen Captive: Eleanor of Aquitaine’, **Kailen Kinsey**

‘The Castle as a Node of Internecine Conflict in Gaelic Ireland’,  
**Margaret K. Smith**

‘The fortresses of the eternal kings. Connections, castles, and royal saints in the borderlands of Swedish power, 1450-1523’, **Wilhelm Ljungar**

‘Castle Context and Digital Methods’, **Edward Triplett** (Keynote)

***Friday***

‘Kilcolman Castle in VR: New Visions in Teaching, Research, and Outreach’ **Thomas Herron**, **Vicky McAlister**, and **Ruth Canning**

‘The Architectural Afterlife of Tattershall Castle’, **James Wright**

‘The most castlely-castle ever: Examining visitors’ perceptions of castles’, **Lynsey Coombs**

‘“A special case”? Historic Scotland’s restoration of Stirling Castle and the Scottish castle conservation debate’, **Tom Fairfax**

‘Castles and Equine Landscapes: Problems and Possibilities for Integrated Analysis’, **Oliver Creighton** and **Robert Liddiard** (keynote)

***Therron Welstead***

## Antiquarian Topographical Prints & Drawings 1550-1850 (as they relate to castles)

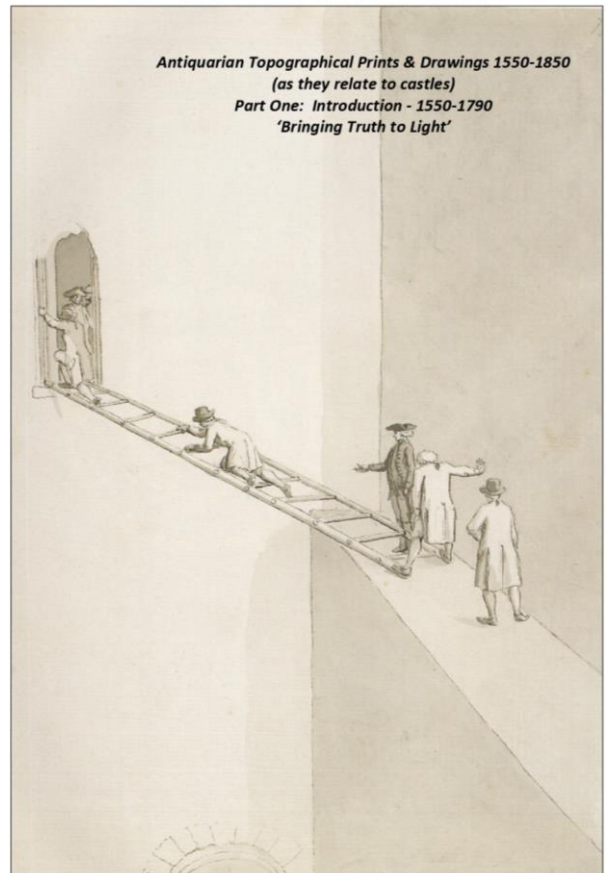
In the last ten years much greater accessibility to museums, galleries and documentary archives has been opened up through greater investment in image digitisation. Institutions such as the British Museum, British Library, Yale Center for British Art, the Royal Collection Trust and the national galleries and libraries of Wales and Scotland, have made great strides in presenting their huge stocks of hitherto storeroom collections (i.e. not on display) into public view.

‘The entrance to the prison chamber at Lincoln, under the NW tower of the cathedral’  
Samuel Hieronymus Grimm, c. 1784

Many allow onscreen high-definition enlargement of images to a degree unknown before, allowing an intense scrutiny of views, prints, book plates and other previously overlooked details. Some of the drawings of castles recently located and examined highlight architectural or earthwork features no longer present and never discussed, either in castle guidebooks or monographs. Much can still be found with diligent and intelligent research.

To capture this enhanced level of accessibility, a new detailed 90-page essay on the meaning of topography and the history of antiquarian topographical prints and drawings has been added to the CSG’s website, under the [‘Research’ tab](#). It includes sections on ‘The Art of Topography’; An illustrated summary of artistic developments during the period 1500 - 1850: The early-to-mid sixteenth century -manuscripts - bird’s-eye views and ‘platts’; Mid-to-late Sixteenth century; Seventeenth century - topographical etchings and engravings - Daniel King, Hollar and Place; Leonard Knyff, Johannes (Jan) Kip, Francis Grose and Edward King etc. and finally a section on ‘Bringing truth to light’ highlighting a number of examples of antiquarian prints that are illuminating previously unknown details of castle plans, forms and architectural features.

This is followed by a chronological **catalogue** of nearly 40 artists and engravers, some little known. Each entry includes a brief biography on





his or her life and accomplishments, and a selection of their paintings, sketches and engravings often illustrating how their skills and outlook changed over time. In total there are nearly 200 colour plates, and more space is devoted to certain influential artists (number of examples illustrated) - e.g. John Norden (7), Wenceslaus Hollar (16), Francis Place (15), Samuel and Nathaniel Buck (13), and Francis Grose (8). The full list (to date) is as follows (up to 1790): *John Speed; John Norden; Anton van den Wyngaerde; Ralph Agas; George Braun & Frans Hogenberg; William Smith; William Haiward; John Bereblock; Cornelis Bol; Daniel King; Wenceslaus Hollar; Alexander Keirincx; Hendrick Danckerts;*

*Willem Schellinks; John Slezer; Francis Place; Michael Burghers; Jan Kip & Leonard Knyff; Robert Harman; William Stukeley; Bernard Lens III; Antonio Canaletto; Samuel & Nathaniel Buck; George Vertue; William Borlase; Thomas Badeslade; Francis Grose; Edward King. Women antiquaries and restorers including: Lady Anne Clifford; The Frankland sisters; Miss H. S. A Horton; Elizabeth Elliot; Edith Palmer; Mary Ward; Mary Anne Lathbury; Amelia Long; Amelia Noel.*

Willem Schellinks.  
1662. Winchester  
town and castle  
viewed from the  
north-east.  
Original in the  
Austrian National  
Library, Vienna: Ref  
00025152.



Discovering **women artists** involved in topographical pursuits is in its early stages, but it appears that initially they were the wives and daughters of aristocratic families who had the leisure time, backing and finances to pursue their own interests as ‘amateurs’; that is, the skills acquired were driven by choice rather than the needs of employment, e.g. Mrs Humphrey Weld\* (fig. 102). In addition to the Frankland sisters, perhaps schooled by J Vilet, in the entry on women artists mention is made of: Miss H. S. A. Horton; Elizabeth Elliott; Edith Palmer (1770-1834); Mary Ward; Mary Anne Lathbury, Maria Katharina Prestel (1747-1794), Amelia Long\* (Lady Farnborough) (1772-1837), and Amelia Noel (1759-1818), with examples of their oil / watercolour paintings of medieval buildings. Further names are mentioned in James Storer’s *Antiquarian and Topographical Cabinet* (1810-19) (10 Vols). Other eighteenth century women artists include: Lady Diana Beauclerk (1734-1808) a highly gifted artist who used her aristocratic connections to further her career as a professional painter and designer. She painted portraits, illustrated plays and books, provided designs for Wedgwood’s innovative pottery, and decorated rooms with murals. Within her artistic circle were Emma Crewe (1780-1850) and Elizabeth Templetown

(1746/7-1823). Other names include: Maria Luisa Caterina Cecilia Cosway (née Hadfield) (1760 -1838), and Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807) a highly successful Swiss neoclassical portrait and history painter and very popular in England.

West view of  
Spofforth Castle,  
Harriet Frankland,  
c. 1772-7



The final section - the **Bibliography**- is an up-to-date six-page bibliography covering Antiquarianism; Topographical Prints and Painting, followed by individual bibliographical entries for each artist or engraver.

There is also a page listing 40 antiquarian writers and publishers whose works contain invaluable original prints and illustrations. In the Index the listing includes about 100 castles, many with multiple views: Dover (11), Richmond (5), Rochester (5), Tower of London (10), Winchester (5) Windsor (5). There are 20 views of Welsh castles.

## Part II

Whilst **Part I** of the essay concludes with Francis Grose and Edward King and a short discourse on the little-researched subject of women artist antiquarians from 1630 to 1830, Part II, in preparation (not yet online), is an account of the golden age of water-colourists when artists honed their skills and eventually went beyond capturing an objective record of an actual building or place and entered into the visionary and often imaginary romantic realms of artists like J. M. W. Turner. Purely topographical artists seemed to morph into Romantic landscape artists during this period of overlap. So if you cannot find a particular artist in the list above, we will next move on to the prodigious output of S. H. Grimm and into the refined art of Paul Sandby, Richard Wilson, Thomas Hearne and many others until the mid-19th century; most still remaining true to their honest topographical sensitivities. Entries for artists in Part II will include those who continued to have a specific interest in capturing the detail and landscape setting of castles, yet with greater painterly and draughting skills.

*Neil Guy*

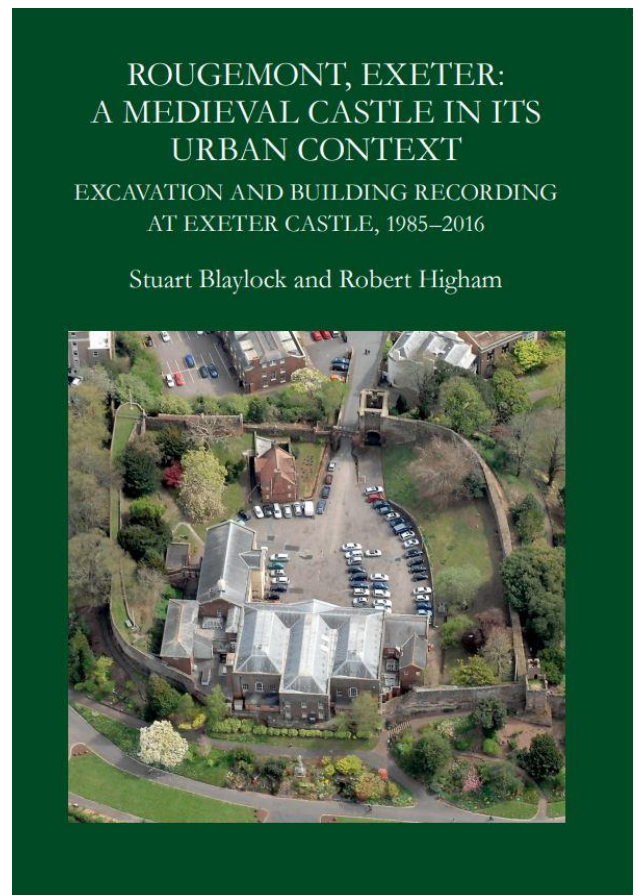
## Book Advance Notice

### ***Rougemont, Exeter: A Medieval Castle in its Urban Context. Excavation and Building Recording at Exeter Castle, 1985-2016***

By Stuart Blaylock and Robert Higham (with contributions by Julie Gardner, Andrew Passmore and Jenny Durrant)

This new study of Exeter castle will be published by the Devon Archaeological Society in the summer of 2021 (edited by John Allan as Devon Archaeological Society Monograph 2; Exeter Archaeological Reports Volume 9). It concentrates on fabric recording, excavation and site survey carried out since the 1980s but also reviews much earlier work (starting in the 1890s). The results of these efforts are analysed in the context of the site's history, known from both documentary and pictorial sources. The evidence confirms some established ideas but also suggests new ideas about the site's pre-Norman use and about the form of the Norman castle.

Cover of the S.  
Blaylock & R.  
Higham's book on  
Rougemont Castle



Further details, as well as information about purchasing, will appear in the October issue of the CSG Bulletin. A review will appear in the next issue of the CSG Journal.

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## Archaeology Under Threat at Universities

The last couple of months have been dark for archaeology. At the end of March the University of Chester informed that it planned to make 86 redundancies, with archaeology staff amongst those under threat. In May the University of Sheffield announced plans to close its internationally renowned archaeology department, showing that excellence is no guarantee of safety. This is in the context of reduced government funding for archaeology.

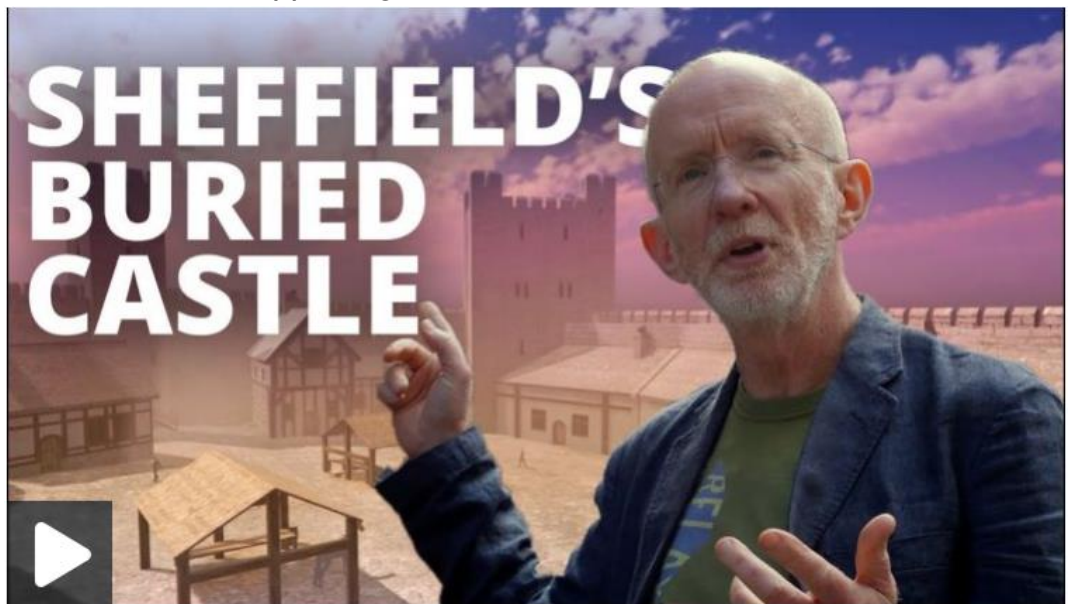
The outcome at both universities remains uncertain. Sheffield's plans will be put to the university council for approval on 12<sup>th</sup> July, so there may be time to change course. At the time of writing, for Chester, the petition to save the archaeology department has reached more than 6,000 signatures, while one for Sheffield's department has managed an impressive 35,000.

[Chester petition](#)

[Sheffield petition](#)

The loss of Sheffield's archaeology department and potentially Chester's is bad news for archaeology as a whole and castle studies in particular. Both institutions have played important roles in bringing through researchers and supporting research staff.

A still from the YouTube video 'Sheffield Archaeology: Excavating Sheffield Castle'. With Prof. John Morland explaining archaeological evidence found at the site of Sheffield Castle, which was made for the University of Sheffield



Prof. Matthew Johnson began his teaching career at Sheffield. Prof. John Moreland and Prof. Dawn Hadley (who now works at the University of York) did invaluable work on Sheffield Castle, writing a book synthesising recent excavations and otherwise published work in the 20th century. Their work on the castle was an important part of efforts to revitalise



the area and enrich Sheffield's history. Archaeology and castle studies add value to communities, but all too often that is not fully recognised.

Chester and Sheffield have trained students who have gone on to make important contributions to castle studies. From Chester, Matthew Thomas contributed to studies of Poulton and Tattenhall, with Dr. Rachel Swallow. Former Sheffield students include Susan Greaney, who works for English Heritage and worked on the presentation and interpretation of Hadleigh Castle; Greg Laban who excavated Crowmarsh Gifford Castle while at MOLA; Dr. Jennifer Thoms of Archaeology Scotland who analysed animal bones from excavations at Dundonald Castle; and Ross Dean who has carried out geophysical surveys at Barnstaple Castle; Dr. Joanne Kirton directed excavations at Bamburgh Castle and completed a Ph.D. at Chester at the same time.

Both universities have cultivated important doctoral research. Dr. Charles Ryder's Ph.D. examined spiral stairs in castles, providing an invaluable dataset for debunking certain perennial myths! Dr. Rachel Swallow advanced landscape studies while at Chester and has continued to bring her much needed insight to castles in north-west England and Wales. Dr. Rachel Askew's Ph.D. at Sheffield led to important studies of the destruction of Eccleshall and Sheffield castles as a result of the English Civil War.

No doubt there are people who have been missed, but we can at least start to quantify the impact of both universities on castle studies. The loss to the future is harder to calculate.

How many people will not find their way in archaeology? How many communities will not benefit from their insight? How many who would have started at Sheffield and Chester and gone on to help elsewhere will now find other paths outside archaeology?

Archaeology helps us understand the past and enriches our present and future. Closing the archaeology department at Sheffield leaves a chasm behind and another threatens to swallow Chester's archaeology department. These closures affect us all. Without archaeology departments at Sheffield and Chester, castle studies would be much, much poorer and the loss of potential is shattering. We hope all the staff and students affected go on to thrive.

***Richard Nevell***

## Monteagudo Castle in Southern Spain is Secured

Monteagudo Castle. The inner curtain wall with closely spaced interval towers built directly onto bedrock. The adobe walls and the form of the defences are typical of many C12 Islamic castles in Spain.

©P. Burton



The castle of Monteagudo, complete with its surrounding historic landscape, has been purchased by the local government of Murcia. After a programme of archaeological investigation, the consolidation of the castle remains and new visitor access works, the site will become one of the regions most important tourist attractions. Some two million Euros have been secured from Murcia City Council to purchase the land and to create an Archaeological Park covering 1.6 million square metres. The park will include the main castle on the rock, the nearby fortified Governors' palace known as *El Castillejo*, an associated mill building, an Islamic pool and the surrounding medieval landscape.

The castle, perched high on a huge outcrop of rock rising above the plains of Murcia and topped with a massive statue of Christ, is unmissable to anyone travelling through this part of south-eastern Spain. The most visual aspect of the remains are the tall concentric curtain walls with closely-spaced square towers, one circuit above the other. These structures were built in the second half of the twelfth century by the Muslim overlord of the area Muhammad Ibn Mardanish (1147-72), although a castle was known to be on this site from at least 1078. The building is made of rammed earth or *Tapial*, and brick, typical building materials for Islamic castles in this period.

What makes this site particularly special are the remains of the associated residential palace complex with its irrigated gardens and fortified enclosure. As with many other high status centres of power in Islamic Spain the castle complex was often divided between the military garrison who occupied the most secure part of the complex and the separate residential quarters of the Emir or Governor. This arrangement can be seen at the castle of Malaga with its upper garrison castle (*Gibralfaro*) and the royal palace complex lying beneath. There is a similar association at the Alhambra Palace in Granada. Unlike those two sites, where the residential parts of the castle are in close proximity, at Monteagudo the fortified palace is 2 Km away from the main castle but in striking visual contact.

Monteagudo Castle on its rock outcrop to the rear and the fortified palace of El Castillo in the foreground.

©P. Burton



The fortified palace of *El Castillo* probably started as a *Munya* or country residence of the Murcian Muslim elite of the eleventh century before taking on defensive features in the twelfth. Its pleasant location and sumptuous surroundings helped with its survival after the Christian conquest of southern Spain in 1243. At this point the site was incorporated into the Kingdom of Castile and *El Castillo* became the Murcian residence of King Alphonso X although records show that the king often resided within the actual castle on his visits to Murcia, perhaps due to its superior defences. A programme of preparatory archaeological investigation has already started at the *Castillejo*, held during the summer of 2020 by government archaeologists of the Laboratory of Archaeology and Architecture of the City, helped by the local community.

The Christ figure that forms the most visible landmark on top of the castle has its own history. First installed during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship in 1926 the statue was destroyed in 1936 at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. It was replaced in 1951 during the Franco

dictatorship with the fourteen-metre high statue there today. Recent proposals to remove the figure from the castle have been strongly resisted by local people and the Christ statue will now be conserved and is to remain in place.

The castle has been in a state of abandonment with no public access for many years. An original plan of intervention was first produced in the 1990s and a modest visitor centre was completed in 2003 in the small village close to the castle in the hope that it would attract visitors. However, for various reasons including land ownership issues, the visitor centre remained closed and boarded up. It is to be hoped that now, with the purchase of the surrounding land and a significant budget earmarked, that the scheme to open the whole site up for visitors will finally become a reality.

***Peter Burton***

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## **Ayrshire CSG Conference**

It is all too easy to forget something that never happened but given the serious amount of effort that went into the initial planning, later unscrambling and final resuscitation in printed form of parts of the CSG's might-have-been 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Irvine, Ayrshire, I thought it worth remembering that 27-30 May marked the 2021 equivalent of its first anniversary.

However, rather than focusing on it merely as a regrettable non-event, I would like to pay special tribute to Neil Guy and those contributors whose positive efforts ensured that something of the content and flavour, if not the camaraderie, of the lost conference has been recreated virtually and permanently in the pages of the *Journal*.

CSG should be justifiably proud of this achievement and should remember it well. After all - who really knows? - something similar may have to be done again.

***Geoffrey Stell***



## Castle Vandalism

Ravenscraig Castle

© David C. Weinczok

When looking at castles in the news, one of the common topics is vandalism and heritage crime. This sadly does not disappear. Vandals recently carved ‘obscenities’ in the wooden door going into Pickering Castle (N. Yorkshire) in mid-May. At Ravenscraig Castle (Fife) there has been repeated damage undertaken



at the site: people have climbed on top of the East Tower and thrown wall-head stones from the castle walls, and a window grill on the first floor had been forced open causing damage to some of the stonework. Fencing was put up around the castle to protect the castle, but this too has been damaged by people who are determined to enter the property and ground. This type of story is all too common, but it should also be noted that there are efforts not only to prevent the damage, but also prosecute those who have done it.

Beeston Castle

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In Vol. 31 of the CSG bulletin there was a piece on nighthawking (pp. 6-8) which mentioned two people being arrested for digging up items from the Woodland Park that surround Beeston Castle. As a result of the arrest and further investigations, three more men were arrested, and a number of items were found including two Bronze Age axes and coins. At least 70 holes were dug in the grounds of the castle, and it was also found that they had also targeted Roche Abbey in Yorkshire. In May, all five men were fined and have been handed criminal behaviour orders that prohibit them from visiting any historic site in England and Wales,

and from metal detecting for 5 years.

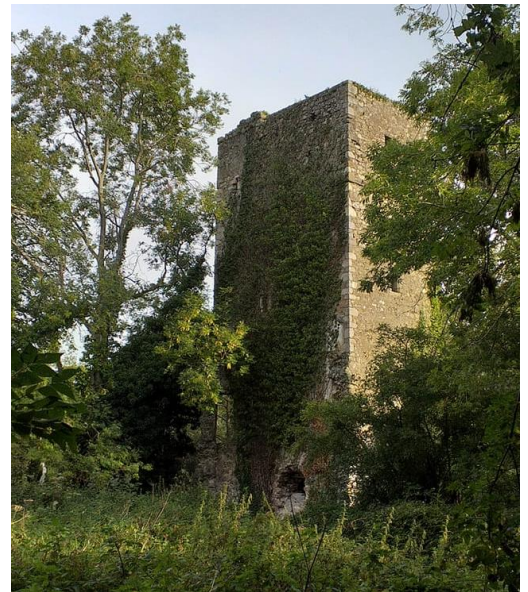


Old Court Castle in  
September 2020

©Protect Old Court  
Castle Bray

At Old Court Castle, in Bray (Co Wicklow) there has been an ongoing battle with vandalism at the castle. Following sustained damage to the fifteenth century tower, the local community highlighted the vandalism with calls for restoration of the monument. The damage included a hole being made in one of the walls giving access to the interior of the castle.

As a result of an inspection of the site in September 2020, the hole was filled in and other areas of the castle were repaired in early-January. The efforts were undone, and the hole was reopened with further sections of the original wall also being destroyed. Some individuals were witnessed causing damage to the castle and information was passed onto the Gardaí. The hole was covered over once more in an attempt to stop the vandals. Further information can be seen on Protect Old Court Castle [Facebook page](#).



The hole in the  
tower of Old Court  
Castle

Top Left  
The hole in May  
2020



Top Right  
The filled in hole in  
January 2021



Bottom Left  
The hole reopened  
in March 2021



Bottom Right  
The reopened hole  
covered over



©Protect Old Court  
Castle Bray

*Therron Welstead*



## Conservation work at Oystermouth Castle

Conservation and restoration work is being taken at a number of castles, including Oystermouth Castle. In the early 2010s the castle received much attention including a £3.1 million project to conserve the castle structure. The current £155,000 project, part funded by the Welsh Government's Cultural Recovery Fund will remove and replace the softcapping layer on top of the chapel walls. This is to not only to protect the masonry, but also to slow down the decay of the 14<sup>th</sup>-century paintings located inside chapel.

The chapel at Oystermouth Castle following the installation of a glass walkway in 2011

©Swansea Council

The traces of paintwork, discovered in 2011, are in southern recess of the chapel and on an area of plaster beneath the vault. These consist of a repetitive diamond pattern containing flowers and coats of arms.



## Haverfordwest's town wall revealed?\*

Haverfordwest Castle is now the subject of an enhancement programme to improve access, carry out essential repairs and redevelop the museum. The scheme extends to the castle's setting, with improved landscaping and restoration of the surrounding burgage-plot boundaries. Preliminary archaeological work includes geophysical survey and test-pit recording.

Investigating the castle exterior in early 2021, at the summit of the steep bluff, Andy Shobbrook of DAT came upon a stretch of walling that appears to have evaded previous investigations. Now of no great height, but probably truncated, it is pierced by a wide segmental arch of convincingly medieval form. Although absent from published plans and descriptions of the castle, it is shown on the large-scale 1:500 map of

the town produced by the Ordnance Survey in 1889, on which it is labelled 'Arch' in the Gothic script reserved for antiquities.

The arch found by  
Andy Shobbrook

© Andy Shobbrook

The walling may be part of the medieval town wall rather than the castle defences. The town of Haverfordwest was founded soon after the castle, and by the close of the Middle Ages had become the *de facto* county town of Pembrokeshire.



Defended by an earthen bank and ditch from an early period, probably before 1200, it was walled in stone after the issue of a murage grant in 1264. The defended area was relatively small, immediately next to the castle and always known as the 'Castleton' - while the extensive suburb around the extra-mural marketplace to the south received fortified gateways, they were never connected by any solid barrier. The town wall had largely disappeared by 1700 and, while the gatehouses survived rather longer, the last were removed at the end of the eighteenth century.

Vestiges of the wall were apparently still detectable in 1900 but all traces were thought to have been lost soon afterwards. Stretches of its former line are marked by property boundaries but its entire course is not precisely known, nor the points at which it connected to the castle defences. The walling discovered in 2021 butts against the donjon at the northeast corner of the castle inner ward, and runs northwest for 5 metres before petering out. The remains of a return at its northwest end correspond with a 90° turn shown on the 1889 map, on which it is shown to then run north-eastwards before turning west to continue along the outer edge of the castle's northern ditch. But the medieval wall must have deviated from this line at some point, to run northwards to the eastern town gate. The arch is 3m wide but was probably always too low - and perhaps too wide - to represent an entry. Its function may simply have been to drain the area immediately to the west, which slopes steeply downhill towards the east and seems to have been a continuation of the castle ditch where it ran out at the crest of the bluff.

**Neil Ludlow and Phil Poucher.**

\*Note, this piece is adapted from the Castle Studies Trust [Blog](#)



## The Castle Studies Trust



Despite the lockdown, good progress on both last year's and this year's projects has been made with many of last year's ones finished or close to being finished.

### 2020 Grant Award Updates

**Shrewsbury, Shropshire:** To fund a second year of excavation, this time to understand the rampart of the inner bailey. The excavation in September has come up with some unexpected and interesting results, notably the rampart looks as though it was a 13<sup>th</sup>-century creation meaning the inner bailey of the castle was of negligible size. With the pottery report completed, the final report to be reviewed by one of our assessors will be with us shortly.

**Lincoln, Lincolnshire:** To develop a reconstruction drawing of the castle as it would have been in the latter part of the 12th century. The model has now been completed and has been signed off, so look out as we will be publishing the image shortly.

**Sowing the Seeds:** The aim of this project is to try to better understand everyday life in castles by seeing if there are any surviving plants at four Irish castles that were planted, grown and cared for by medieval people. A heavy workload delayed the finishing of the report but it has now been delivered and is currently being reviewed by one of our assessors.

**The Wirk, Orkney:** Could the Wirk be a Norse castle? The survey took place in mid-September. The project team will be carrying out the excavations in the weeks of 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> July.

**Warkworth, Northumberland:** Using various forms of geophysical survey to try to understand the subsurface features for one of the major castles of the earls of Northumberland. The survey work was carried out in mid-November and the findings are going to be written up along with the 2021 project we funded.

### 2021 Grant Award Updates

#### **Greasley, Nottinghamshire:**

The production of an interpretative phased floor plan for Greasley Castle in Nottinghamshire. The castle, built in the 1340s, has an obscure history and the understanding of its architectural phasing is at best very cloudy. The first part of the survey was done at



the end of April focusing on the farmyard buildings. The team will then go

James Wright  
surveying Greasley  
Castle.  
©James Wright

back in in early July to survey the farmhouse once covid restrictions have fully lifted. To see what James Wright found in the first part of the survey you can go to our [YouTube channel](#):

**Caerlaverock, Dumfriesshire:** The aim is to understand the chronology and geography of extreme weather events in the high medieval period, and the effects they wrought on archaeological features that led to the abandonment of the old castle in favour of the new. Work is due to start by mid-June, pending approval from the Scottish government. Given the time it takes to process the results of the different processes the final results are not likely to be known until this time next year.

**Richmond, North Yorkshire:** Co-funding a three-week excavation of Richmond Castle, one of the best preserved and least understood Norman castles in the UK. The aim is to understand better the remains of buildings and structures primarily along the eastern side of the bailey. Scheduled Monument Consent has been granted and the excavation will start on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> July.

**Laughton-en-le-Morthen, South Yorkshire:** To provide professional illustration and reconstruction, which will be integrated into a co-authored academic article. Part of the monies will be used to produce phase plans of Laughton during key stages of its development, and a small percentage will pay for a line drawing of the 11<sup>th</sup>-century grave cover incorporated into the fabric of the nearby church. The work is due to start at the end of May.

**Warkworth, Northumberland:**

Geophysical survey to explore evidence for subsurface features in and around the field called St John's Close in a field adjacent to the castle. The geophysical survey was completed in March and the results will be ready for us to review by the end of June along with those of last year's survey.



Geophysical survey  
being undertaken at  
Warkworth Castle

©William Wyeth

**Old Wick, Caithness:** Dendrochronological assessment of timber at the Castle of Old Wick, Caithness, which is thought to be one of the earliest stone castles in Scotland. The taking of the samples will be done in September with the results known early next year.

If you have any questions about any of the projects we have funded this year or the Trust in general, please do not hesitate to contact the chair of Trustees at [admin@castlestudiestrust.org](mailto:admin@castlestudiestrust.org).

**Jeremy Cunningham**

## Ph.D. and M.Phil. Abstracts

If you are working on a Ph.D. or M.Phil. thesis and would like your abstract to be included in a future bulletin for CSG members to read, please send it to [bulletin@castlestudiesgroup.org.uk](mailto:bulletin@castlestudiesgroup.org.uk) along with the names of your supervisors and the university and/or organisation you are affiliated to. It is a means of piquing people interests into your studies, but also a means of opening up discussions.

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## In other news...

### Jabs in Bran Castle

By now many of you will have had one or both of your vaccinations against Covid-19; that however is not the case in every country. One such example is Romania. Around half of Romanians say that they are not inclined to get the jab, giving the country one of the highest reluctance levels in Europe. Despite this, there is a hope that 10 million people will be vaccinated by September. Anyone visiting Bran Castle is being offered a Pfizer shot as part of the government's drive to encourage Romanians to get jabbed. By having this vaccination centre at the 14<sup>th</sup>-century castle - associated with Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* - it is hoped to help counter this reluctance.

Part of the advertising, which encourages visitors to Bran Castle to receive their vaccination.

