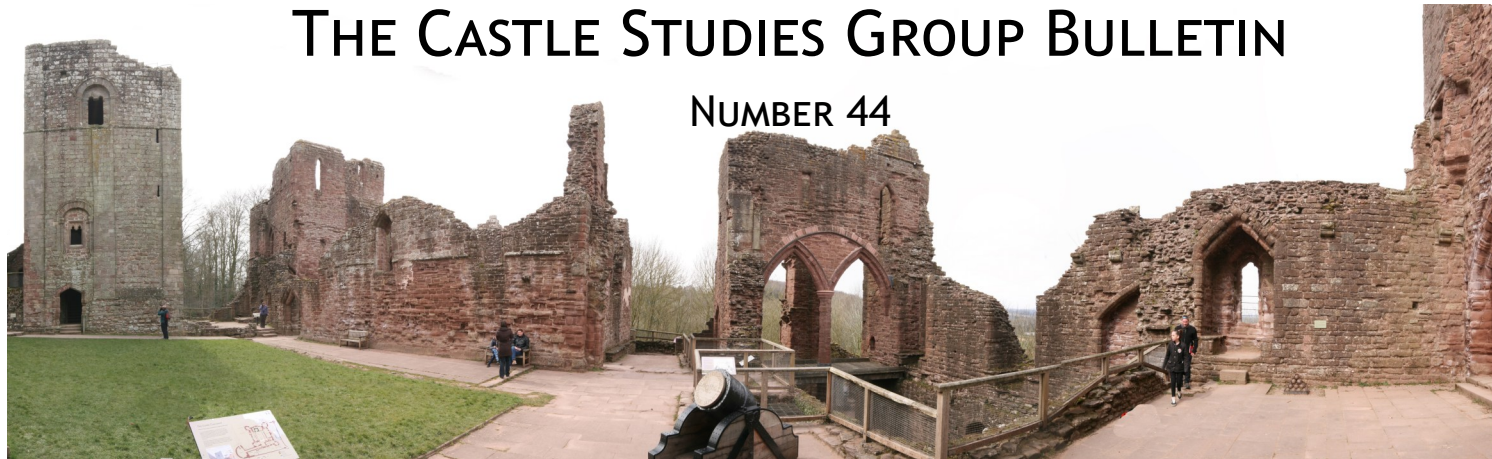


THE CASTLE STUDIES GROUP BULLETIN

NUMBER 44



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*Image Above,
Panorama of courtyard of
Goodrich Castle (See Page 7)*

©T. Welstead

Editorial

This year started out very wet, but as I type, the sun is shining. I hope that you are all able to take advantage of this improvement in the weather whether it is to excavate in a less damp trench, study an architectural detail in the sun, or even take part in one of the many easter egg hunts taking place in castle grounds in the next couple of weeks with your family!

I’m very much looking forward to the CSG conference later this month, especially as it’s an area I don’t often get the chance to explore. I know I will see many of you there.

Thank you very much to everyone who has written or suggested items for this bulletin. If you have anything you would like to contribute for the next one, please send it to bulletin@castlestudiesgroup.org.uk. I would particularly love to hear from research students who would like their abstracts on castle-related research to be included in the CSG bulletin (see page 5).

Therron Welstead, CSG Bulletin Editor

Diary Dates

CSG Conference, Carlisle and Scottish Borders

Thursday 16–Sunday 19 April

CSG Online Talk

27 May - Przemysław Nocuń, title TBC

See Page 4

Chester Castle Symposium.

20 June , See page 8

CSG Online Talks

24 June - Emma Fearon, “Opening the gates: interpreting queer stories at Nottingham Castle”

29 July - Ali Norton, “Examining the Structure and Elements of Castle Communities in Norman Devon and Dorset”

30 September - Katharine Keats-Rohan, “‘For the defence of the realm’: the role of Wallingford Castle and town 1067-1646”

Heating the Castle Conference, Château de Pierre-de-Bresse

16-18 October 2026, See page 16

CSG Conference Student Bursary

Undergraduate and postgraduate students who are writing a dissertation or thesis on a castle-related topic may apply to attend the Conference at half cost. Applications outlining the theme of the dissertation/thesis should be sent by letter/email to the Secretary to arrive no later than January 31st. The successful applicant will be expected to submit a short report to the Secretary secretary@castlestudiesgroup.org.uk.

Ph.D. and M.Phil. Abstracts

If you are working on a Ph.D. or M.Phil. thesis (or know someone who is) 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 along with the names of your supervisors and the university and/or organisation you are affiliated with. Including your abstract in the bulletin is a means of not only piquing people's interests into your research, but also opening up discussions and providing new ideas and ways of thinking.

Burgen und Schlösser

The latest *Burgen und Schlösser*, vol. 66/4, contains articles by A. H. Schmidt on Burg Saffenberg in the Ahrtal, Markus Blaich and Annika Werner on Stauffenburg bei Zorge, in the Harz, Hilmar Schwarz on the use of the Wartburg on title pages at the time of Goethe, and Simon Paulus and Markus Jager on the collections of Albrecht Haupt as source materials for castle studies. Anyone interested in any of these articles should contact treasurer@castlestudiesgroup.org.uk to arrange copying.

*Front cover of
Burgen und Schlösser
vol. 66/4*



CSG Membership Fees Reminders

Following the increase in membership fees from 2024, most members have already updated their standing orders. Members are asked to check their standing order mandates with their bank to ensure the rate is correct. The rates are as follows:

Individuals based in the UK - £35 per year

Two members based at a single UK address (one journal mailing) - £40 per year

Individuals based in Eire or mainland Europe - £41 per year

Individuals based outside the UK, Eire, or mainland Europe - £45 per year

Organisations - £50 per year

Standing orders are the preferred payment option as they are regular and reliable, though we do also accept bank transfers, PayPal payments, and cheques.

If you have queries, please contact membership@castlestudiesgroup.org.uk.

Richard Nevell, CSG Members Secretary

CSG Journal

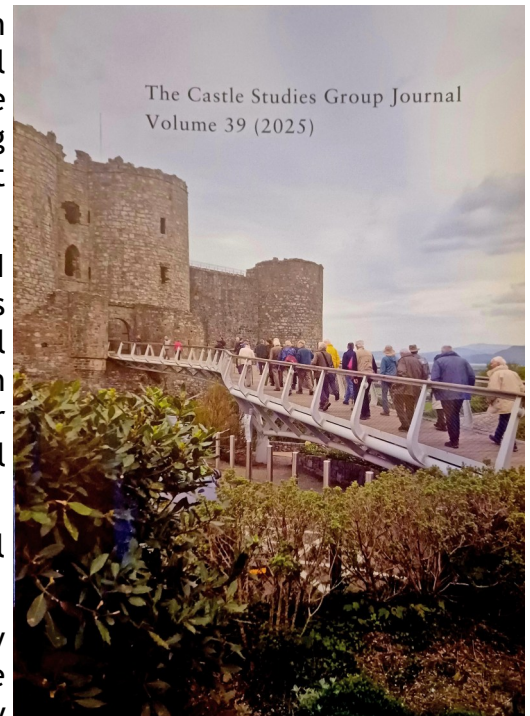
Firstly, I must apologise for the delay in getting the 2025 volume of the Journal produced. I'm still getting to grips with the processes, and we had a few issues getting to print. But we finally managed to get it out in early February.

I'm now beginning work on Volume 40. I have a few articles submitted, but there is space for a few more. I'm open to full research articles or shorter discussion pieces. If you would like to submit a paper or discuss an idea, please email editor@castlestudiesgroup.org.uk

The deadline for papers for Volume 40 will be Friday 1st May.

If anyone is aware of any new or recently published books that they feel should be reviewed in the Journal, I would be very grateful if you could send me details. Offers of reviews would also be gratefully received.

Duncan Berryman, CSG Journal Editor



Front cover of the CSJ journal Vol 39.

CSG Small Project Grants

A reminder to CSG members that applications for grants from the CSG Small Project Fund are open until the end of October. The fund for this year will be announced at the CSG AGM in April.

The grants are available for castle-related research and excavations undertaken by CSG members. Members are invited to submit 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.

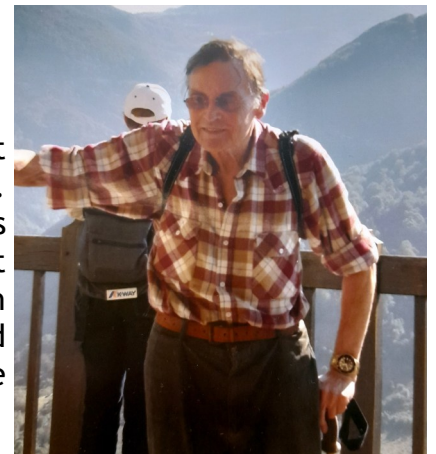
Applications should be sent to the CSG secretary by 31st October for projects in the following year. Decisions will be agreed by 31st January of each year. Successful applicants will be expected to submit a report on completion of the work, which may be published in the CSG Bulletin. The application form can be found at the end of the bulletin.

David Newman Johnson 1933-2025

*David Newman Johnson
after the climb up to
Montesgur Castle, 2010*

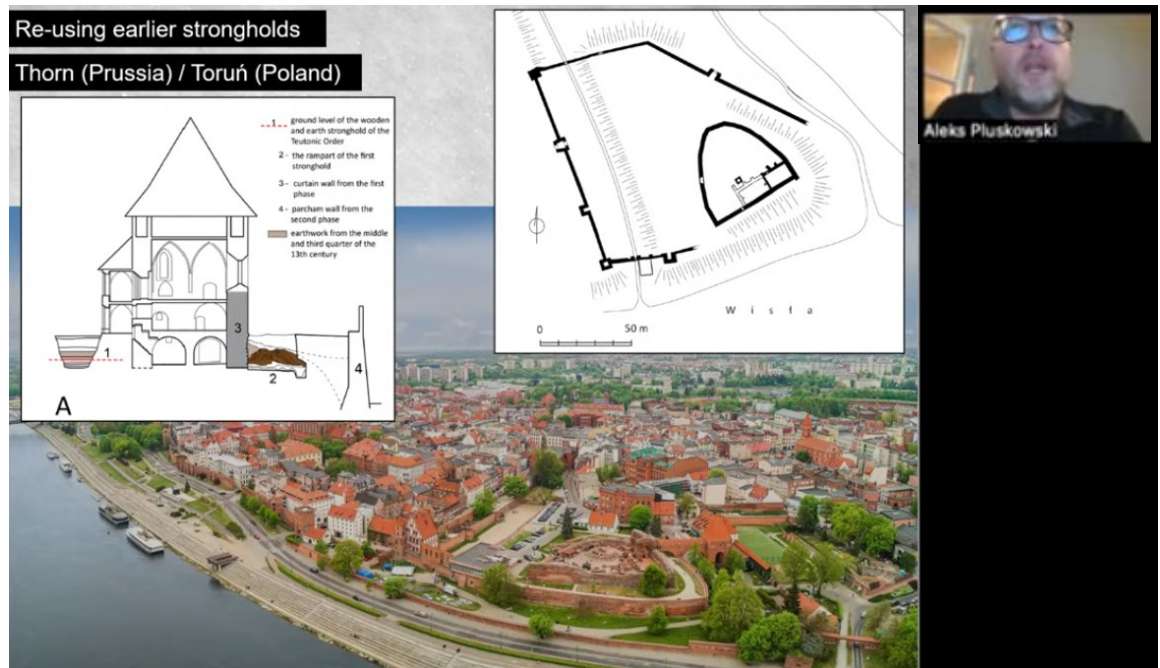
©R. Eales

Many of you will have heard the sad news that David Newman Johnson died in October last year. He will be remembered not only for his distinguished professional work as an architect and as an Inspector of National Monuments with the Office of Public Works, but also for his valued friendship. There will be a full obituary in the next CSG journal.



Upcoming CSG Online talks

Screen Grab of Aleks Pluskowski's CSG talk on the Teutonic Order's Castles.
November 2025



This year's Zoom talks for members will resume in March. Where possible, and with the speaker's permission, the talks will be recorded. The speakers confirmed so far are:

- 27 May - Przemysław Nocuń, title TBC
- 24 June - Emma Fearon, "Opening the gates: interpreting queer stories at Nottingham Castle"
- 29 July - Ali Norton, "Examining the Structure and Elements of Castle Communities in Norman Devon and Dorset"
- 30 September - Katharine Keats-Rohan, "'For the defence of the realm': the role of Wallingford Castle and town 1067-1646"
- 25 November - David Mercer, title TBC

Please note that while we typically aim for a 6pm start, the March talk will begin at 7pm. There will be specific emails with the Zoom details and reminders of the start time.

Recordings of previous talks are available on the [CSG YouTube channel](#).

Nuclear Bunker found at Scarborough Castle

The uncovered entrance to the nuclear bunker at Scarborough Castle.
©English Heritage

In March, following a ground survey, English Heritage rediscovered a Cold War bunker buried at Scarborough Castle. It was built in 1963-64 as part of a UK-wide network of over 1,500 Royal Observer Corps (ROC) posts. These posts were designed to detect nuclear explosions and monitor fallout. The compact underground shelters housed a few volunteers, along with monitoring instruments, communication tools, and basic living facilities. The bunker was sealed in 1968 and its location forgotten. The discovery is part of a project led by English Heritage to mark the ROC's 100th year in 2025 .



New light on an old portrait

Geoffrey Stell

The recent revision of an essay on Scottish castellologists has prompted a re-examination of a portrait of William Mackay Mackenzie (1871-1952) reproduced here as Figure 1. Unusually, the portrait features a sheet of ink-line architectural drawings suspended prominently behind the sitter, and part of a plan is visible on a second sheet underneath it, just behind his chair. The subject (s) of these drawings have never been identified.

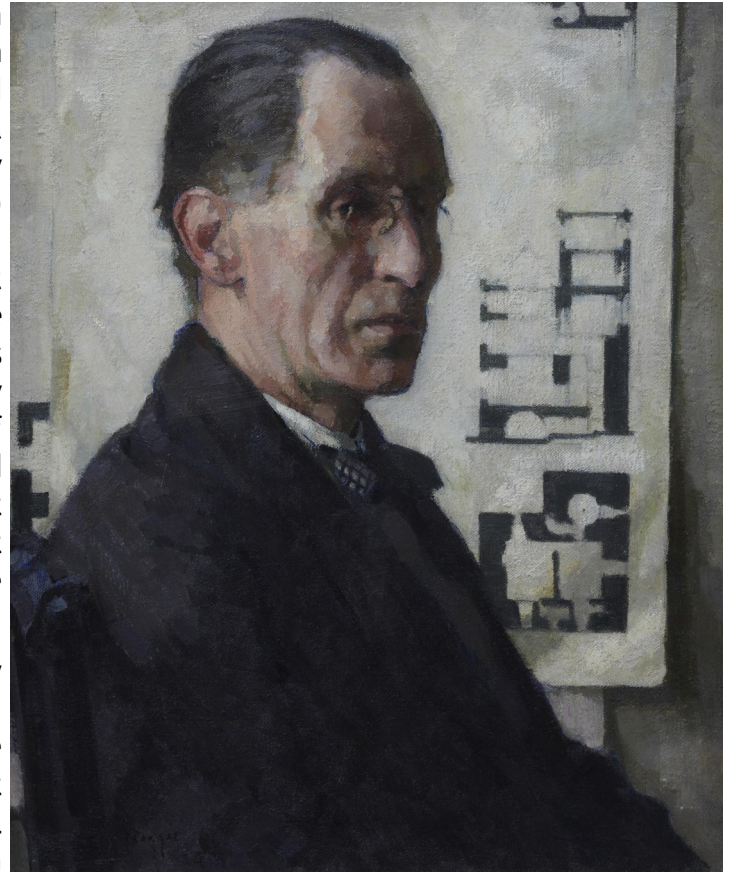


Figure 1

Portrait of William Mackay Mackenzie by David Foggie, oil on canvas, 1914,

PG 2312, National Galleries of Scotland.

©National Galleries of Scotland

The oil painting is by David Simpson Foggie (1878-1948) and is stored in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery of the National Galleries of Scotland through

which it is viewable online at [here](#). A black-and-white photograph of the portrait is also held by Historic Environment Scotland and a digital copy is available at [here](#).

National Galleries Scotland record the portrait as dating from 1914, which is the year after Mackenzie had been appointed Secretary of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) in succession to Alexander Ormiston Curle, the Commission's first Secretary from 1908 to 1913. The early history of RCAHMS, now absorbed into the all-embracing heritage agency known as Historic Environment Scotland, has been well covered by John Dunbar in *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society*, volume 36 (1992), pages 13-77, while the scholarly significance of the relatively unsung Mackenzie, already referred to in *Castellologica Bohemica*, volume 12 (2010), pages 69-78, will be enlarged upon elsewhere. The focus here is on the associated drawings and is timed to coincide with the upcoming CSG Scottish Borders Conference in April 2026.

Mackenzie's first major tasks as RCAHMS Secretary were to see through to publication the fifth and sixth reports produced by the indefatigable Curle. They appeared in 1914 and 1915 accompanied respectively by the *Inventory of the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright* and a revised edition of the *Inventory of Berwickshire*, first published in 1909. Survey material had also been assembled from many parts of Scotland, ranging from the Outer Hebrides to East Lothian and Dumfriesshire, and, before survey operations were suspended in March 1916 for the rest of the war, priority was given to the publication of the seventh report and associated *Inventory of the County of Dumfries*. Unfortunately, as Mackenzie himself later recounted, 'on the eve of its issue, in the early summer of 1916, a fire in the printers' works totally destroyed the whole material, which had to be assembled afresh for publication'.

Figure 2

RCAHMS, *Inventory of the County of Dumfries* (Edinburgh, 1920), page 39, figure 34, drawings of Hoddom Castle

Reproduced from Internet Archive ([link](#))

The *Inventory of the County of Dumfries* was not finally published, phoenix-like, until well after the war in December 1920, the first of the Scottish volumes to appear in an enlarged, illustration-friendly quarto format closely akin to RCHME *Inventories*. Always a likely source of clues to material in gestation in 1914, the Dumfriesshire volume does indeed provide conclusive identification of the main set of drawings on the Mackenzie portrait. Corresponding with components of Figure 34 on page 39 of the *Inventory* reproduced here as Figure 2, they represent, from bottom to top, the second-floor plan, a cross-section and part of the roof-plan of the 16th-century **Hoddom Castle** in Annandale, one of the sites visited by the Group during its 2002 annual conference (and summarily described in *CSG Newsletter*, 16 (2002-3), pages 9-10).

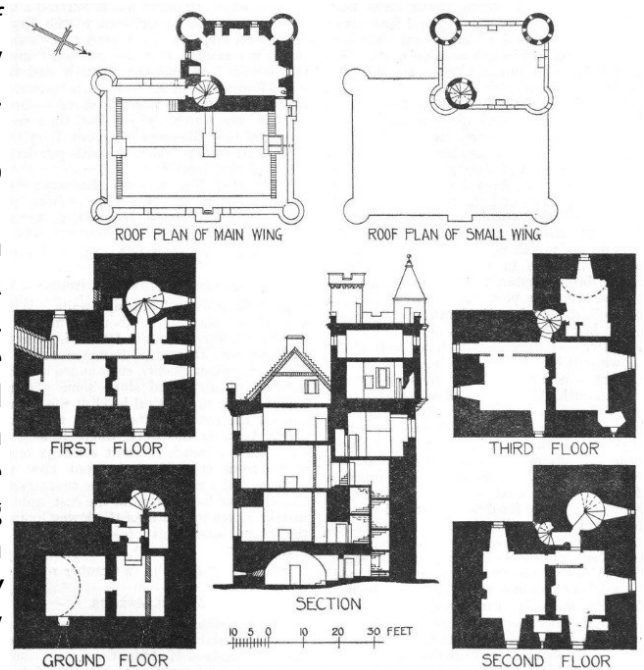


Figure 3
Hoddom Castle in 2015

©Billy McCrorie
CC BY-SA 2.0



Understandably, bearing in mind that this portrait may bear the only surviving indirect record of just one of the many sheets that were burnt in 1916, there are discernible minor, mainly cosmetic, differences in the drawings as they appear in the portrait and as they were eventually presented and laid out in the recomposed publication. It must also be

acknowledged that the date of 25-6 March 1915, which is attached to the published entry on Hoddom Castle, is not readily reconcilable with the date of the portrait, but RCAHMS practice has long been to assign such dates to the final recensions of its published accounts, while the date of 14 August 1914 which is attached to the entry on the nearby and closely associated Repentance Tower does point to survey activity in the vicinity of the castle in 1914.

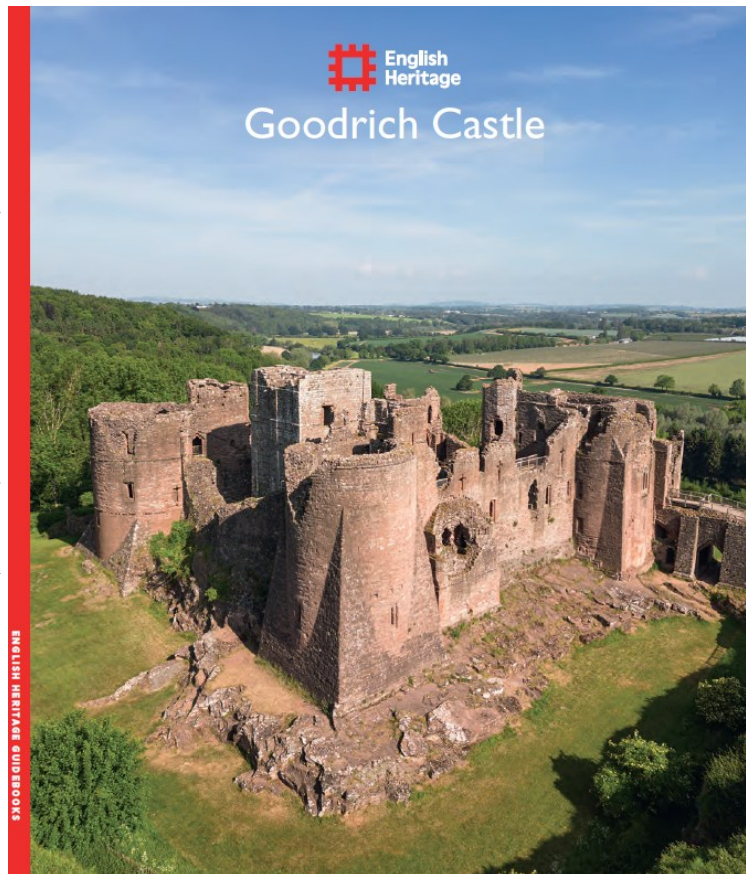
The partial view of an inked rectilinear plan on an underlying sheet in the bottom left-hand corner of the portrait depicts an opening and walls of different widths in a manner which also reflects an identifiable subject. However, other than a general but unconvincing similarity with parts of the plan of the church foundations at Hoddom Bridge, described and illustrated on pages 93-4, there is nothing in the Dumfriesshire volume that comes close to matching this tantalising glimpse. Better clues may be lurking in the pages of other RCAHMS volumes which were published in the 1920s - East Lothian, Outer Hebrides and Midlothian/West Lothian - and which embodied the results of some initial fieldwork carried out in and before 1914. An initial trawl has failed to produce any positive results but do please contact the editor if you strike lucky!

New English Heritage Guidebooks

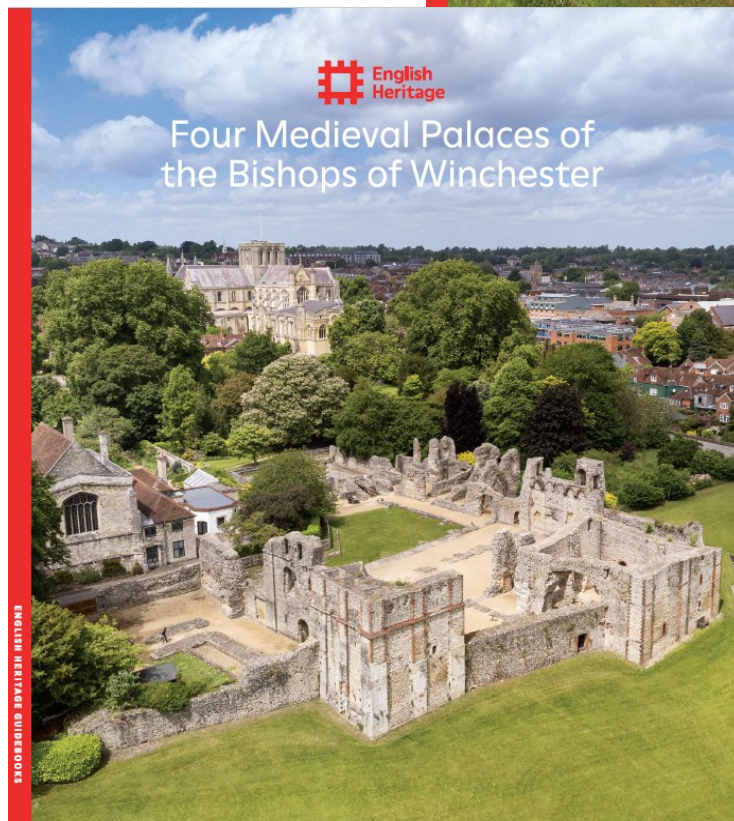
Jeremy Ashbee, *Goodrich Castle* (2025).

This is an updated version, in the new format, of the Red Guide published in 2005. The interpretation of the castle's development is still substantially that proposed by Ron Shoesmith et al, published in 2014), but a few new discoveries have been incorporated, including a fragmentary medieval wall-painting in the chapel. The guidebook includes a new section with extracts from the correspondence between the combatants in the siege of 1646.

Front cover of J Ashbee's Goodrich Castle Guidebook



ENGLISH HERITAGE GUIDEBOOKS



ENGLISH HERITAGE GUIDEBOOKS

John Hare, *Four Medieval Palaces of the Bishops of Winchester* (2025).

This is an entirely new guidebook in the Red Guide Series, covering Wolvesey 'Castle' (as English Heritage conventionally labels it), Bishop's Waltham Palace, Farnham Castle and Winchester Palace in Southwark. John Hare is the author of the previous edition for Bishop's Waltham, and has published several important synopses of the residences of the bishops of Winchester, building on the work of Martin Biddle (Wolvesey) and Michael Thompson

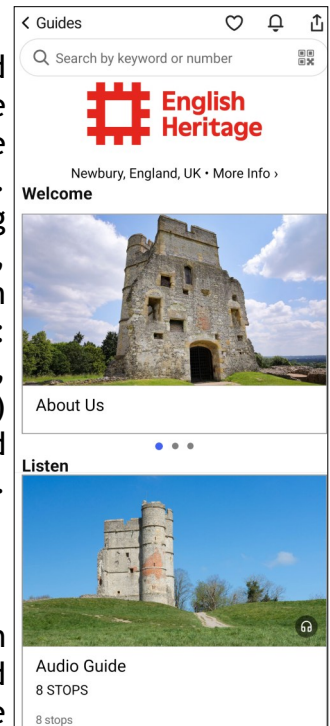
(Farnham), and his own researches on Bishop's Waltham. The guidebook is illustrated with entirely new photography, and new reconstructions of Bishop's Waltham.

.....

English Heritage Digital Guides

At the time of writing, English Heritage has produced new digital guides for six medieval castles in the charity's care, along with two of Henry VIII's 'device forts', with more guides planned over the coming years. The guides are available through the free Bloomberg Connects app, allowing visitors to access site histories, audio tours and other material through their own phones, at home or at the site. Sites in question: Donnington, Dover, Tintagel, Norham, Kenilworth, Warkworth (in prep: Chester, Christchurch, Pevensey) The Henry VIII's device forts are St Catherine's and Yarmouth Castle. Further information can be found [here](#).

Screen grab of English Heritage's Digital Guides on Bloomberg Connects.



Chester Castle reinterpretation

Following research, Chester Castle has been reinterpreted by English Heritage. Agricola Tower and other sections of the castle are in the care of the charity. From June 2026, there will be new interpretation panels at the site which will be supported by digital content including the English Heritage Website. One highlight will be a new suite of reconstructions, including the chapel of St Mary de Castro in its 13th-century heyday. If you are planning to visit, check the English Heritage [website](#) as the site is only open on certain days.

There will also be a ticketed one-day symposium to celebrate recent research on the castle, and the completed interpretation project, on 20 June at St Mary's (Creative Space) near the castle. Anyone interested in attending can email Will Wyeth: william.wyeth@english-heritage.org.uk for more information.

Ballymoon Castle Receives Excavation Grant



The Royal Irish Academy is granting €22,463 to Nial O'Neill to continue excavations at Ballymoon Castle, County Carlow to further understand how the site was used at different point of time.

O'Neill's earlier works in 2024 showed that there was clear evidence that the site was in use in the 16th

century. A section of the boundary ditch was deliberately infilled for this 16th-century activity. Due to a clay base for a large hearth and 4 smithing hearth cakes, the excavations may have located a blacksmith's forge.

The grant was part of €190,000 given by the Royal Irish Academy under three different schemes; Archaeological Research Excavation Grants, Archaeology Legacy Grants and Archaeological Archival Research Grants. The grant schemes are supported by the National Monuments Service (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage).

Ballymoon Castle

©Lisamoriarty1
CC BY-SA 4.0

Clifford Castle partial collapse

Aerial photo of Clifford Castle prior to the collapse.

©Si Davies

3D model of the damaged section of Cliffords Castle

©Adam Stanford



In early February, there was a major masonry collapse of the Rosamund Tower at Clifford Castle, Herefordshire.

The damage is being surveyed and Historic England is working with Keith Hill to determine how to prevent further deterioration of the site.

Currently, it thought that the sheer amount of rain that has fallen recently penetrated the earth mortar core, causing the tower to collapse. Due to the collapse and risk of further falling masonry, the site is closed to visitors.

Keith and his wife purchased the vegetation-clad site 15 years ago. In 2017, the Castle Study Trust granted £7,500 to undertake a geophysical survey and excavations led by Tim Hoverd and Nigel Barker. As part of the 14-month stabilisation project of the upstanding remains the vegetation was removed, masonry surveyed, and mortar repointed. The 2018 Historic England research report about the site can be read [here](#).



The collapsed masonry of Rosamund Tower

©Keith Hill

£14m restoration and conversion of Galgorm Castle

A full planning application has been submitted to transform Galgorm Castle, Co. Atrim into a hotel and to create two arts venues with its grounds.

The castle was purchased by the Galgorn Collection in 2024 from the Brooke family. While the hotel group retains ultimate ownership of the castle, a new company—Galgorm Castle Education and Preservation Ltd (GCEP), chaired by the former DUP MP Ian Paisley - was established to oversee the heritage aspect of the project.

If the project is given the green light, the project will see the investment of over £14 million and aims to create 90 permanent positions once the restoration project is completed. There are a few different elements to the proposed plan. The castle, stables and courtyard would be restored and

Galgorm Castle
©Mainlymazza
CC BY SA 4.0

converted into a 30-bedroom boutique hotel. The church in the grounds would be restored and converted to a 60-seat 'heritage hub' for literature, drama and historic performances. The Ploughman's House would become a 120-seat performance centre for traditional music and arts, creating a place for performance, creativity, public gatherings and visitor space.



The castle was built in the early seventeenth century and is a very good example of Jacobean architecture, which is why it has a Grade A listing.

Ian Paisley, Chair of the Trustees of GECP, said, "Our vision is to move beyond piecemeal development and address the estate's decline through a single, holistic and genuinely transformative plan; one that respects Galgorm's built fabric, honours its intangible heritage, and recognises the special place it holds in the heart of the community."

"We believe the proposal achieves an exciting and carefully considered balance between commercial viability and clear, lasting public benefit... Our proposals show how sensitive commercial activity can sit alongside environmental protection and community benefit."

Funding helps keep Broughty Castle open.

Galgorm Castle
©Mat Fascione
CC BY SA 2.0



In 2024, the operator of Broughty Castle proposed to close the historic attraction to save around £80,000 a year.

At a meeting in February last year, councillors agreed to extend the lease with Historic Environment Scotland for a further 12 months. Following discussions, the charity Leisure & Culture Dundee said that match funding from Dundee City Council and the Northwood

Charitable Trust would ensure that the site will remain open for the next three years. During this period £150,000 has been committed with the council also continuing to fund essential maintenance costs associated with the castle. An independent Friends of Broughty Ferry Castle group has been set up which will help with further fundraising and tapping into potentially accessing funds that are not available to larger organisations.

The castle, which overlooks the mouth of the River Tay, was built in 1490 by the 2nd Lord Gray in response to increased English naval activity. After changing hands several times, the castle gradually fell into ruin. The castle was updated in 1860 to become an artillery defence due to the threat of French invasion. During the two world wars the fortification was altered again. The museum housed within the castle explores the area's maritime, military, and social history.

Heritage at Risk Register 2025

In November, Historic England published the 2025 *Heritage at Risk Register*. The annual register identifies heritage sites most at risk of being lost due to neglect, decay, or inappropriate development in England.

The survey started in 1991 as the *London Buildings at Risk Survey*. In 1998, the survey was widened to include all of England, and became *The National Buildings at Risk Survey*. Since then, the surveys have included other types of historic places and sites.

In the 2025 Heritage at Risk Register there are 4,891 entries. The number of entries has slightly increased; 129 were removed from the register for positive reasons, but there were 138 new entries.

Crayke Castle
©Philip Davis



In total, there are 280 castles, town walls, and fortified ecclesiastical sites included in the Register.¹ Of these, five are new entries this year; these are Crayke Castle (North Yorkshire), Mileham Castle (Norfolk), Rotherhithe Palace (Surrey), Shurland Hall (Kent), and Wingfield Manor (Derbyshire).

The new entries have been added to the list for differing reasons. The sites of Mileham Castle, Rotherhithe Palace, and Wingfield Manor, there are concern about ‘significant localised problems’ putting the archaeology at each site at risk the archaeological site. At Crayke Castle, the site has been assessed as having a ‘slow decay’, with no solution agreed. At Shurland Hall, there is concern of ‘immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric’. In this case, there is a solution agreed, but plan has not been implemented yet.

In more positive news, there were five entries that were removed from the Register. These were Astwell Castle (Northamptonshire), Evesham Abbey (Worcestershire), Hussey Castle (Lincolnshire), Ormside Church of St James (Cumbria), and Tote Copse Castle (West Sussex).

Tote Copse Castle in
2006

©Simon Carey
CC BY-SA 2.0



If you would like the full list of all the castles on the Heritage at Risk Register, please contact bulletin@castlestudiesgroup.org.uk.

¹ The number of castles on the Register was achieved by comparing the HARR to entries in the *Gatehouse Gazetteer*.

Castle Studies Trust awards a record amount of money to eight applicants

The Castle Studies Trust is delighted to announce the award of eight grants, totalling a record £44,500, to a wide range of projects involving a variety of research methods. This total means that, since our foundation, we will have given nearly £350,000 to castle research projects - a landmark to celebrate.

Cockermouth, Cumbria:

Cockermouth Castle is an extensively surviving major multi-phase northern fortress whose evolutionary history has never been subject to systematic or formal assessment. The building survey will focus upon developing a detailed understanding of the physical fabric of the castle's inner ward structures with a view to mapping their evolution, and to provide contextualization by relating the major building periods to the site's known history and occupancy, and in terms of the broader evolution of castle architecture.



Cockermouth Castle
©Richard Oram

Ellesmere, Shropshire:

Geophysical survey of the large motte and bailey castle in Shropshire which, prior to June 2024, had never been surveyed before when the large motte was surveyed by GPR which revealed possible buildings. The resistivity and magnetometry surveys will extend the survey to the rest of the site, which played an active part in the Marcher disputes in the reign of Henry III. The



*Aerial view of the
Ellesmere Castle*
©Joe Bickerton

survey will take place in the week starting 9 March, with the results expected in the early summer.

Newcastle, Northumberland: To co-fund the publication of the report of the excavations at Newcastle Castle, one of the major royal castles in the North East of England, which took place over 20 years between 1974 and 1995. The funds will be for synthesising the different excavations, updating specialist reports and preparing relevant reports. We are only part funding £2,000 of the £8,000 asked for, as we lacked the means to fund any more. The grant from the CST will allow the applicate to commission the illustration work for the building interpretation and the excavation illustrations. The part funding has also spurred on other funders to cover the remaining part of the grant.

Kilkenny, Leinster, Republic of Ireland: This project proposes the use of geophysical survey to locate and map the lost Flemingstown of Kilkenny Castle - a unique example of a purpose-built Flemish colonial suburb. While some of the outer ward has already been investigated, the one area missing has been around the site of the township's tower. The survey will take place in early to mid March.

Fyvie Castle
©National Trust



Fyvie, Aberdeenshire: The project aims to create new interpretation drawings to showcase key stages in the architectural development of the castle, which dates to the thirteenth century, and share these as part of outreach and engagement. The project will undertake the first stage, which will be a review of the historic building survey, definition of the exact time periods to cover, and provide a brief with an

architectural overview to Jan Dunbar, (the illustrator) by April. From here Jan will work on each drawing sequentially. These do take some time, and so we discussed that final versions of all drawings would be complete by the end of February 2027.

*Outer Courtyard of
Sudeley Castle*
©Andy Moir

Sudeley Castle, Gloucestershire: Tree-ring dating and recording with 3D imaging the original roofs of Sudeley Castle's outer courtyard ranges. The castle site dates to the anarchy but the castle was rebuilt in the fifteenth century by Lord Sudeley. The photography and sampling will take place on the 25th and 26th of February.



*Twelfth-Century
entrance door in
Durham Castle*
©Andrew Ferrara



Durham Castle, County Durham: Investigating the twelfth-century entranceway of Durham Castle. The aim of the project is to utilise digital archaeological techniques to create high-resolution images and models of the twelfth-century archway into Durham Castle's North Range, enabling detailed investigation of the architectural features.

Ruthin, Denbighshire: Co-funding a structural survey and analysis of the great gatehouse of this formidable thirteenth-century baronial castle that was a key part of Edward I's strategy to secure the conquest of Wales.

2025 projects update

Canterbury, Kent: To create an interactive digital model of the castle's keep. The keep is one of the largest surviving from early Norman England dating to the late eleventh/early twelfth century. Now much ruined and inaccessible to visitors due to instability, the project will use the findings of previous archaeological research to create an interactive model. The Visualising Canterbury Castle project is now coming to a close, having held the final co-design session with our group of stakeholders in January. The digital reconstruction of the Norman keep is complete and the project team is currently developing assets for public dissemination and curriculum resources. Timelines for this have been slightly delayed to enable better integration of this material with the Canterbury Castle interpretation material also now in development. The first set of these assets and resources are planned for the end of April 2026, and we will formally close the project at this time.

Additionally, 'Visualising Canterbury Castle' has officially been designated as an official project for the 2027 EU Year of the Normans initiative and was showcased to a delegation of heritage and tourism representatives from Normandy in late November. The pop-up exhibition of the project has also been exhibited at Canterbury Cathedral's Archive and Library in November 2025 and January 2026.

Clavering, Essex: To fund an excavation to help understand the development of the site which was occupied for over 600 years, and which could be one of the very few pre-conquest castles in England. The excavation will build on the extensive survey work carried out by the local group on the site. The excavation was carried out in June 2025. The key to getting dating evidence will be the radiocarbon dating of the bones, expected by late 2026.

Archaeological finds
from the trackway of
trench 1 found
during the June dig
at Clavering Castle
©Jeremy Cunnington



Crookston, Glasgow: A community-led geophysical survey, using multiple techniques, through which the Friends of Crookston Castle in conjunction with HES hope to learn more about Glasgow's only castle. While the standing remains are believed to date from the early fifteenth century, it is thought that the castle dates back to the twelfth century. The report is now with our expert assessor for review, so we should be able to publish the results within the next month or two. Initial findings, as seen in our recent supporters' site visit, suggest that there is evidence of multiple periods of occupation and use inside and outside the castle ditch.

Knepp, West Sussex: An excavation building on a geophysical survey to better understand the site's development and its relationship to the local area of this important baronial centre, thought to have been built by the de Braose family. The first documentary evidence is from 1210 when it was under royal control, recording repairs, while the geophysical survey shows activity that pre-dates the extant stone tower. Excavations will start on 20 April 2026.

Transcription and translation of a seventeenth-century Dutch Engineer's Survey of English Castles and fortifications: A joint project between Dutch academic Dr Esther Raamsdonk, Dr Paul Pattison and English Heritage to transcribe and translate part of an early seventeenth-century manuscript of a Dutch surveyor's examination of castles and forts in England. The sample covers six of what was thought to be 23 castles and fortifications in the document, number SP 9/99 held by the National Archives in Kew. The document is filled with detailed drawings and maps of these fortifications with often lengthy descriptions of their condition. The transcription and translation is now complete, bar a few technical words on which Esther and Paul are consulting Dutch fortification experts.

The 23 folios (46 pages) now seem to indicate that there are at least 29 fortifications surveyed rather than the 23 originally thought. The work on the six castles/forts is now complete, and they will shortly send through an article for our blog, which will be reviewed by one of our assessors so it can be signed off. The team has also written a very extensive article on the manuscript, including some discussion of Pendennis Castle and St Mawes, and what we have learned from SP9/99 about these sites, which is to be published in *Fort*. They are working on another article on the provenance of SP9/99 and possibly linking it to another manuscript in the British Library.

2024 Projects update

Lowther Castle, Cumbria: The 2024 project follows on from 2023's excavations funded by the Trust, to see if this earthwork castle and village was an example of early Norman colonisation in the late eleventh century. In the second season, the team carried out excavations to see if there was a ditch and gatehouse, and looked for finds within the interior. The plan now is to combine the information from last year's excavation which we funded, with the one carried out this year which we did not (which included the village) and thus be able to include all the environmental sample data, which has yet to be analysed.

This has been further delayed due to the crisis in the university sector, which has meant the academic leads have had to divert time to rewriting their curricula to stave off cuts. We hope they will be able to return to the work later in the year.

Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire: The project team has undertaken a geophysical survey of the castle where nothing remains above ground. This former Duchy of Lancaster castle was completely destroyed during the reign of Henry VIII. The castle has extensive accounts dating from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, but nobody knows what it looked like. The survey results are now back from our assessment and the findings are intriguing. You can see the final blog post here which also has a link to the final report: [Higham Ferrers - A Royal Castle Revealed - Castle Studies Trust Blog](#)

In the meantime, 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 me.

The Castle Studies Trust is completely reliant on donations from the public to fund its work. If you would like to support our work, you can donate here: [Kindlink Donation Form App](#)

Call for Conference Papers

Heating the Castle: Techniques, practices, and uses for thermal comfort in elite residences (10th–18th centuries)

16-18 October 2026, Château de Pierre-de-Bresse (Saône-et-Loire)

Everything has been said and everything is known about heating in the castles of the *Ancien Régime*. Fireplaces, sometimes stoves - everyone has seen them and thinks they know how they worked. Yet what a difference there is between our society, accustomed to living with temperatures of 19 to 21 °C in interior rooms, and one in which the bedroom temperature was equivalent to that outside! Wood-fired heating, which is now most often only a superfluous accessory to our thermal comfort, had completely different roles - social, practical, and technical - which the dry architectural and archaeological terminology cannot capture.

This conference will be devoted to the question of thermal comfort in elite residences, starting with the castle. Given that the topic is particularly rich in aspects that cut across research disciplines, it will be organized along fairly open lines, focusing on four broad themes including non-exhaustive sub-themes, which will avoid constraining authors to an overly rigid or formalistic approach. The objective of this conference is to understand the relationships that the inhabitants of castles, palaces, and other elite residences had with the sensation of cold and the search for warmth, their heating solutions, and the social uses of what we today perceive as inherent to the notion of comfort.

These themes and sub-themes are as follows:

A - The perception of cold and heat in the castle. How do the sources provide insight into how a castle's inhabitants experienced the difference between external and internal temperatures? How did medieval and *Ancien Régime* societies perceive heat and cold in the home? What was the difference between populations living in the castle, those who were frequently active outdoors, and those who led more sedentary lives? What was their appreciation of the difference between daytime and night-time temperatures?

B - Protection against the cold. What insulation techniques were used, and how did they develop? For instance, caulking, insulation, and ways of dressing indoors and outdoors. The issue of humidity.

C - Keeping warm. What active heating techniques were used in the castle? Fireplaces, stoves, braziers, hypocaust heating and hot air: advantages and disadvantages, geographical distribution of the various techniques, and cohabitation. Distribution of heating accessories in the various rooms of the castle: efficiency, position of the heating source in the room, trends and hierarchies.

D - Creating beauty from heating. Does its important, even ostentatious role make the decoration of the heating apparatus a central element of the room? What symbolism does it employ, and where does it lie within the trend toward 'staging' through decoration? (sculpted, painted, etc.).

Authors are free to propose topics that fall within this framework; they may also deviate from it if they believe they can make new and innovative contributions to the subject.

Proposals should be returned to the organizers before 1 May 1 2026, with a 10- to 20-line summary:

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