Gatehouse News

28 Nov 2014

Developments of the Gatehouse Website. The comprehensive bibliography and gazetteer of the castles, fortifications and palaces of medieval England and Wales.

Over the last couple of months I've spent much time trying to catch up on my reading list, notably articles from the Château Gaillard colloquium reports. I've added a number of bibliographical references to Gatehouse.

I have now finished the review of Northumberland sites and this now bring all the Gatehouse records up to scratch. Where a site can be located the location is now accurately given to a five decimal place latitude/longitude. All site now have descriptions with reasonably clear sources given. However I still need to create a 'comments' field for the English records. Currently my own personal comments are in the description field, usually after the authoritative description.

With the completion of a major review of the Gatehouse database I have renewed the data and slightly redesigned the three statistic pages in Gatehouse. These pages were now three or four years old so there has been some slight change to the data. The first of these pages is chart of the number of various types of sites. The second page is a chart of the accepted sites by historic county and is now in a sortable html table so clicking on a column header now sorts these columns (perhaps unsurprisingly Yorkshire has the most castles, although Shropshire tops the list for timber castles). This second page deals with all fortification types but the third page deals only with castles. This page gives the density of castles in each historic county are by this measure it is

Herefordshire which has the most castles. Those familiar with David Cathcart King's *Castellarium Anglicanum* will know he did this at the start of each section of that book. However the two sets of figures are not directly comparable. King's counties were those as they were at the start of his studies in the 1950s/60s - that is the counties as they were just before the major change of 1974 (resulting from the Local Government Act 1972). However Gatehouse generally uses as it historic counties the counties as they shown on 1st edition 6 inch Ordnance Survey map (which are the counties after the major change of 1844 - resulting from the Counties (Detached Parts) Act 1844 - but before the changes of 1889 resulting from the Local Government Act 1888).

While writing this news I have given this further consideration and although my 'historic county' is closer to the medieval political division, it is not a satisfactory arrangement (people don't look for Tamworth Castle in Worcestershire and if I do this properly and go to the actual medieval county who would think of looking for Crayke Castle as in County Durham - which is was until it was moved into Yorkshire in 1844). Therefore, I will be bringing the Gatehouse records into line with King and listing site by the counties as they were in 1973. This is not just to respect King but also because the Victoria County Histories and a number of other important sources use those county divisions. So having redone those statistics pages I will be redoing them again soon. Equally the downloadable databases, which had been reposted will be reposted again fairly soon.

Regarding the download databases I've decided to no longer provide an Excel version of the databases. This is because this version actually has no advantage for Excel users than importing the tab delimited version and some of the data was truncated in the Excel version.

A slight design change I hope makes the Google search box fit a bit better into my navigation menu.

NEW SITES ADDED
• Black Heatherwick Bastle
Rereading the PastScape record for Monkridge Old Hall I noted a reference to a second bastle. This has been added as a separate site. However this does show one of many difficulties with the recording of bastles (the first being they should really be called pelehouses) in that the records are not always good at identifying how many bastles are recorded in one record. In gatehouse I've tried to use a standard where each bastle is given a separate record except where two bastles share a wall (What Peter Ryder has called the 'extended bastle').

I'm not yet sure in my own mind about such extended bastles - general one is is somewhat later than the other but are these 'extension' to an existing house giving more room for one family or is it a new house (a semi-detached) for a different (although probably closely related) family.

It should be noted that while I'm trying to be consistent in this regard the official databases, complied by many people at many times, vary quite considerable in this regard and a number of 'extended bastles' are recorded as two separate sites in those databases.

In his paper called "Castles of Communities': Medieval Town Defences in England; Wales and Gascony' (2006 *Château Gaillard* Vol. 22 pp. 75-86) Oliver Creighton included a map with a table which had three town defences (of earthworks) not previously record in Gatehouse, although I have doubts about all three.
The most probable, although still questionable, is
• Trowbridge Town Defences
where a Saxon church and graveyard were within the bounds of castle.
• Castle Rising Town Defences
There is also a Saxon church within the bounds of the castle at Castle Rising and this has been suggested as the original pariah church but the evidence for it being within a defended enclosure before the castle seems absent.

Certainly the massive banks of the castle defences, which partly bury this church, can not be town defences.
In both these cases it maybe the church was a private lordship church within a Saxon manorial house complex (probably lightly defended) rather than being parish churches within a defended village.
• Down End Town Defences
I can't find anything to support this suggestion or even identify where it might come from.

• Corsenside church of St Cuthbert
In the recent published 2012 copy of Archaeology in Northumberland (a magazine from the Northumberland County archaeology department - online at http://issuu.com/northumberlandcc/docs/archaeology_in_northumberland_2014) Peter Ryder gives an account of St Cuthbert's church at Corsenside. In this he suggests that the west end of the nave was vaulted about 1600 to support a 'thick-walled defensible retreat'. I suspect there are other interpretations for his findings but I've added this as a possible defensible church.

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