

CAERWENT HISTORIC TRUST

July and August 2002

Dear Friends,

DON'T TAKE THE HUMP ABOUT THE TUMP!

I gather there has been some disquiet about the recent work done by Cadw on the south east corner of the Roman Wall. The tump just doesn't seem to be "our tump" any more.

The tump was the remains of a Norman "motte" - a conical mound carrying a minor fortification. Due to the weather, sheep and (mainly) the effect of bushes whose roots prise the earth apart, this motte had deteriorated at an ever increasing pace.

Is it legitimate to restore it? Well, most ancient monuments have been restored to some degree, including the Roman Walls. Is this restoration excessive? I thought so at first, then found the photo below in the Caerwent Scrapbook, taken I think by David Lewis about 50 years ago.



Obviously just as we don't notice the wrinkles as they creep across the face of OUT beloved, we hadn't noticed how badly our tump had gone downhill, so to speak.

So due credit to Cadw for this restoration - if it were not restored now it would soon have been absolutely unrecognisable. It was bad

luck that the weather was so terribly wet when it was first rebuilt followed by a drought as soon as the grass seed was sown. Hopefully it will soon settle down now.

An almost perfect example of a rather larger motte is "The Berries" in between Crick and Caldicot. It's hidden by trees south of the motorway and west of the Dinham railway embankment. Hopefully we'll include it in our walks over the winter.

Best wishes

John Nettleship

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