

= Goodrich Castle =

Goodrich Castle is a now ruinous Norman medieval castle situated to the north of the village of Goodrich in Herefordshire , England , controlling a key location between Monmouth and Ross @-@ on @-@ Wye . It was praised by William Wordsworth as the " noblest ruin in Herefordshire " and is considered by historian Adrian Pettifer to be the " most splendid in the county , and one of the best examples of English military architecture " .

Goodrich Castle was probably built by Godric of Mappestone after the Norman invasion of England , initially as an earth and wooden fortification . In the middle of the 12th century the original castle was replaced with a stone keep , and was then expanded significantly during the late 13th century into a concentric structure combining luxurious living quarters with extensive defences . The success of Goodrich 's design influenced many other constructions across England over the following years . It became the seat of the powerful Talbot family before falling out of favour as a residence in late Tudor times .

Held first by Parliamentary and then Royalist forces in the English Civil War of the 1640s , Goodrich was finally successfully besieged by Colonel John Birch in 1646 with the help of the huge " Roaring Meg " mortar , resulting in the subsequent slighting of the castle and its descent into ruin . At the end of the 18th century , however , Goodrich became a noted picturesque ruin and the subject of many paintings and poems ; events at the castle provided the inspiration for Wordsworth 's famous 1798 poem " We are Seven " . By the 20th century the site was a well @-@ known tourist location , now owned by English Heritage and open to the public .

= = Architecture = =

Goodrich Castle stands on a high rocky sandstone outcrop overlooking the River Wye . It commands a crossing of the river , known as Walesford or Walford , Ross @-@ on @-@ Wye , about 26 kilometres ( 16 mi ) from Hereford and 6 @.@ 4 kilometres ( 4 @.@ 0 mi ) from Ross @-@ on @-@ Wye . The castle guards the line of the former Roman road from Gloucester to Caerleon as it crosses from England into Wales .

At the heart of the castle is an early Norman square keep of light grey sandstone , with Norman windows and pilaster buttresses . Although the keep had thick walls , its relatively small size ? the single chambers on each floor measure only 5 @.@ 5 by 4 @.@ 5 metres ( 18 by 15 ft ) internally ? would have made it more useful for defence than for day @-@ to @-@ day living . The keep originally had a first @-@ storey door for safety , this was later turned into a window and the entrance brought down to the ground floor . The keep would originally have had an earth mound built up against the base of it to protect against attack , and the stone work remains rougher in the first few courses of masonry .

Around the keep is an essentially square structure guarded by three large towers , all built during the 1280s from somewhat darker sandstone . On the more vulnerable southern and eastern sides of the castle , ditches 27 metres ( 90 ft ) long and 9 metres ( 28 ft ) deep have been cut into the rock , exploiting a natural fissure . These towers have large " spurs " , resulting from the interface of a solid , square @-@ based pyramid with the circular towers rising up against the walls . This feature is characteristic of castles in the Welsh Marches , including St Briavel 's and Tonbridge Castle , and was intended to prevent the undermining of the towers by attackers .

The castle 's fourth corner forms its gatehouse . Here the classic Edwardian gatehouse design has been transformed into an asymmetrical structure , with one tower much larger than the other . The gatehouse included portcullises , murder @-@ holes and a drawbridge . Beyond the gatehouse lies a large barbican , inspired by a similar design of the period at the Tower of London and possibly built by the same workmen , designed to protect the causeway leading to the gatehouse . The barbican today is only half of its original height , and includes its own gate , designed to trap intruders within the inner defences . The gatehouse and barbican are linked by a stone causeway .

The gatehouse 's eastwards @-@ facing tower contains the chapel , an unusual arrangement driven by a lack of space , with a recently restored east window of reset 15th @-@ century glass

designed by Nicola Hopwood , which illuminates the priest 's seat , or sedile . The 15th @-@ century window frame itself replaced an even taller , earlier 13th @-@ century window . The chapel 's west window is modern , and commemorates British servicemen who died between 1936 ? 76 in radar development . The altar itself is particularly old , possibly pre @-@ dating the castle .

The bailey was designed to include a number of spacious domestic buildings . These include a great hall , a solarium , kitchen , buttery and pantry , with a luxuriously large number of garbages and fireplaces . The large towers provided additional accommodation . The design of the domestic buildings was skilfully interlocked to support the defensive arrangements of the bailey . The great hall for example , 20 by 9 metres ( 66 by 30 ft ) , was placed in the strongest position overlooking the river Wye , allowing it to benefit from multiple large windows and a huge fireplace without sacrificing defensive strength . Water for the castle was originally raised from the courtyard well , but was later piped in from a spring across the valley ; the castle kitchens had acquired running water by the beginning of the 17th century . The design of the buildings ensured that the servants and nobility were able to live separately from one another in the confined space of the castle , revolutionary at the time .

Beyond the main bailey walls lies the stable block , now ruined but with a visible cobble floor . The stables and the north and west sides of the castle were protected by another , smaller curtain wall , but this is now largely ruined . Accounts suggest that the original stables could hold around 60 horses , although by the 17th century they had been expanded to accommodate more .

= = History = =

= = = Medieval history = = =

= = = = 11th and 12th centuries = = = =

Goodrich Castle appears to have been in existence by 1101 , when it was known as Godric ? s Castle , named probably after Godric of Mappestone , a local Anglo @-@ Saxon thane and landowner mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 . Victorian historians , however , believed the castle to date back further to the pre @-@ Norman conquest days of King Canute , and the site may have been among a small number of Saxon fortifications along the Welsh border . By Norman times , Goodrich formed part of the Welsh Marches , a sequence of territories granted to Norman nobles in , and alongside , Wales . Although Goodrich lay on the safer , English side of the border , the threat of raids and attacks continued throughout most of the period .

During the 12th century the attitudes of the English nobility towards the Welsh began to harden ; the policies of successive rulers , but especially Henry II , began to become more aggressive in the region . In the mid @-@ 12th century Godric 's original earth and timber fortification was dismantled and replaced by a tall but relatively small square keep built of stone , sometimes known as " Macbeth 's Tower " . The keep was designed to be secure and imposing but relatively cheap to build . It is uncertain , however , precisely who was responsible for this rebuilding or the date of the work , which may have been between 1120 and 1176 .

At the beginning of the 12th century , the castle had passed from Godric to William Fitz Baderon , thought to be his son @-@ in @-@ law , and on to his son , Baderon of Monmouth , in the 1120s . England descended into anarchy , however , during the 1130s as the rival factions of Stephen and his cousin the Empress Matilda vied for power . Baderon of Monmouth married Rohese de Clare , a member of the powerful de Clare family who usually supported Stephen , and there are records of Baderon having to seize Goodrich Castle during the fighting in the region , which was primarily held by supporters of Matilda . Some suspect that Baderon may have therefore built the stone keep in the early years of the conflict . Stephen went on , however , to appoint Baderon 's brother @-@ in @-@ law , Gilbert de Claire , the Earl of Pembroke , and Gilbert de Clare eventually acquired Goodrich Castle himself . Gilbert 's son , Richard de Clare , known as " Strongbow " , succeeded

him in 1148 , and Richard is another candidate for the construction of the keep . In 1154 Richard fell out of favour with King Henry II because of the de Clares ' support for Stephen , and the castle was taken into royal hands . Some argue that the king himself may have ordered the construction of the great keep .

== == 13th and 14th centuries == ==

During the following reigns of King Richard I and his brother John , the castle and manor were held by the Crown . King John , however , lost many of his lands in France which in turn deprived key English nobles of their own estates ? John became concerned about possible opposition to his rule . Accordingly , in 1203 John transferred Goodrich Castle and the surrounding manor to William Marshal , Earl of Pembroke , to partially compensate him for his lost lands on the continent . Marshal was a famous English knight with reputation as a heroic warrior , and he expanded Goodrich by building an additional towered curtain wall in stone , around the existing keep . Marshal had to intervene to protect Goodrich Castle from Welsh attack , most famously in 1216 when he was obliged to leave Henry III 's coronation feast in Gloucester to hurry back to Goodrich to reinforce the castle .

Marshal 's sons inherited the castle after their father 's death ; Marshal left the castle to his eldest son , William , who in turn gave it to his younger brother , Walter . After William 's death , however , Marshal 's second son , Richard , took over the castle . Richard led the baronial opposition to Henry III and allied himself with the Welsh , resulting in King Henry besieging Goodrich Castle in 1233 and retaking personal control for a period . Walter was eventually given Goodrich back once more , but died shortly afterwards in 1245 .

The castle briefly reverted to the Crown again , but in 1247 passed by marriage to William de Valence , half brother to Henry III . De Valence was a French nobleman from Poitiers and a noted soldier who spent most of his life fighting in military campaigns ; Henry arranged his marriage to Joan de Munchensi , one of the heiresses to the Marshal estate . The marriage made Valence immensely rich and gave him the title of Earl of Pembroke .

The Welsh border situation remained unsettled however , and in the decades after 1250 security grew significantly worse , as the Welsh prince Llywelyn ap Gruffudd conducted numerous raids into English territories . The Wye valley and Goodrich were particularly affected by these raids .

Accordingly , William de Valence began to build a much larger castle around the original keep from the 1280s onwards , demolishing Marshal 's earlier work . As part of the extremely expensive construction work , Valence used oak trees drawn from several royal forests . Valence was building at the same time that his nephew Edward I was constructing his major castles in the north of Wales , and the concentric castle that he built at Goodrich is both very similar in design and a rarity in England itself . Valence 's son , Aymer de Valence built an additional line of outer defences before his death in 1324 , including the external barbican , inspired by that at the Tower of London , and for which the earlier Valence barbican at Pembroke may have been an experimental forerunner . The effect was an early success in converting a fortress into a major dwelling , without damaging its defensive arrangements , and influenced the later castle conversion at Berkeley .

The castle then passed to Aymer 's niece , Elizabeth de Comyn , a well @-@ connected young noblewoman . By the middle of the 1320s , however , England was in the grip of the oppressive rule of the Marcher lords Hugh le Despenser the older and his son Hugh Despenser the younger , the royal favourites of King Edward II . As part of a " sweeping revenge " on their rivals , especially in the Marches , the Despensers illegally seized a wide range of properties , particularly from vulnerable targets such as widows , wives whose husbands were out of favour with the king or unmarried women . Upon her inheritance , Hugh le Despenser the younger promptly kidnapped Elizabeth in London and transported her to Herefordshire to be imprisoned in her own castle at Goodrich . Threatened with death , Elizabeth was finally forced to sign over the castle and other lands to the Despensers in April 1325 . Elizabeth then married Richard Talbot , the 2nd Baron Talbot , who seized back the castle in 1326 shortly before Queen Isabella of France landed in England and deposed both the Despensers and her husband Edward II ; Talbot and Elizabeth

regained their legal title to the castle the following year . Richard later received permission from Isabella 's son Edward III to create a dungeon under the keep for holding prisoners .

= = = 15th and 16th centuries = = =

Goodrich remained the favourite home of the Richard Talbot 's descendants for many years . During the early years , the security situation in Wales remained of concern . Owain Glyndŵr rebelled against English rule in 1402 and Welsh forces invaded the Goodrich area in 1404 and 1405 . Gilbert Talbot was responsible for fighting back the Welsh advance and securing the castle . As time went on , however , the threat began to diminish . During the 15th century the Talbots considerably expanded the size of the lord 's quarters in the castle and provided additional accommodation for servants and retainers .

The Talbots became the Earls of Shrewsbury in 1442 , shortly before the Wars of the Roses in which they supported the Lancastrian faction . The wars meant that the Talbots were frequently fighting elsewhere in England , and often staying at their castle in Sheffield . John Talbot died in the Lancastrian defeat at Northampton in 1460 , and the castle was forfeited and transferred to the Yorkist William Herbert . John 's son , also called John Talbot , later made his peace with the king , however , and regained control of his lands and Goodrich Castle before his death in 1473 .

By the 16th century the castle was becoming less fashionable as a residence . Goodrich was too distant from London to be a useful power base , and was gradually abandoned in favour of more stylish residences , Goodrich continued to be used as a judicial centre however ; the antiquarian John Leland noted that some of the castle was used to hold prisoners for the local court during the 1530s , and the castle ditch was sometimes used to store confiscated cattle taken from local farmers .

In 1616 , Gilbert Talbot died with no male heir and Goodrich passed into the hands of Henry Grey , Earl of Kent . The Greys chose not to live at Goodrich , but instead rented the castle to a series of tenants .

= = = English Civil War = = =

Goodrich Castle became the scene of one of the most desperate sieges during the English Civil War in the 1640s , which saw the rival factions of Parliament and the king vie for power across England . In the years before the war , there had been a resurgence of building at the castle . Richard Tyler , a local lawyer , became the tenant and constable of the castle , and during the early 1630s there had been considerable renovation work . Shortly after the outbreak of war , the Earl of Stamford , with support from Tyler , garrisoned the castle for Parliament until December 1643 , when increasing Royalist pressure in the region forced his withdrawal to Gloucester . The castle was then occupied by a garrison led by the Royalist Sir Henry Lingen . The occupation was not peaceful , with Royalist troops burning surrounding farm buildings ? Tyler himself was imprisoned by Lingen , although not before he had begun to sell off his livestock and other moveable property . Some references to Goodrich Castle during this period refer to it as Guthridge Castle , a variant on the name Goodrich .

As the Royalist situation deteriorated , the south @-@ west became one of the few remaining Royalist strongholds . Lingen , with 200 men and 90 horses at Goodrich Castle , conducted raids on Parliamentary forces in the region , representing a continuing challenge . No action had been taken , however , to strengthen the castle 's defences with more modern 17th @-@ century earthworks , and the castle remained essentially in its medieval condition .

In 1646 , the Parliamentary Colonels John Birch and Robert Kyrle marched south from their successful Siege of Hereford and besieged the castle , with the aim of eliminating one of the few remaining Royalist strongholds . There was some personal animosity between Lingen and Birch , and both were outspoken , impulsive men . Birch 's first move was to prevent further attacks from Lingen , and on 9 March he burned the weakly defended stables in a surprise night attack , driving away the Royalist horses and temporarily denying the Royalist forces ' mobility . Birch was unable to

press home his advantage however , and over the next few months Lingen succeeded in replacing some of his horses and resumed his attacks on Parliamentary forces .

In June , Birch returned and besieged the castle itself . He found that it was too strong to be taken by direct attack , and instead began laying down trenches to allow him to bring artillery to bear on the structure . Parliamentary attacks broke the pipe carrying water into the castle , and the cisterns in the courtyard were destroyed by exploding shells , forcing the garrison to depend on the older castle well . With the castle still holding out , Colonel Birch built an enormous mortar called " Roaring Meg " , able to fire a gunpowder @-@ filled shell 85 ? 90 kilograms ( 187 ? 198 lb ) in weight , in a local forge .

Birch concentrated his efforts on the north @-@ west tower , using his mortar against the masonry and undermining the foundations with his sappers . Lingen responded with a counter @-@ mine dug out under Parliament 's own tunnel . This would probably have succeeded , but Birch brought his mortar forward under the cover of darkness and launched a close @-@ range attack on the tower , which collapsed and buried Lingen 's counter @-@ mine . Down to their last four barrels of gunpowder and thirty barrels of beer , and with a direct assault now imminent , the Royalists surrendered . According to tradition , the garrison left to the tune of " Sir Henry Lingen 's Fancy " .

Despite the damage , Tyler was able to move back into his castle , which was now protected by a small Parliamentary garrison . After investigation by Parliamentary agents Brown and Selden , however , the castle was slighted the following year , which rendered it impossible to defend . The Countess of Kent , the new owner of the castle , was given £ 1 @,@ 000 in damages , but chose not to rebuild the fortification as it was by then virtually uninhabitable .

= = = 18th and 19th @-@ century history = = =

After the Civil War , Goodrich Castle remained with the Earls of Kent until 1740 , when it was sold by Henry Grey to Admiral Thomas Griffin . Griffin undertook some restoration of the castle but retained it as a ruin .

During the 1780s the concept of the picturesque ruin was popularised by the English clergyman William Gilpin . Goodrich Castle was one of the ruins he captured in his book *Observations on the River Wye* in 1782 , writing that the castle was an example of the " correctly picturesque " landscape . By this time , the castle was in a slow state of decay . Theodore Fielding , an early Victorian historian , noted how the " castle 's situation , far from human dwellings , and the stillness which that solitude , insures to its precinct , leaves contemplation to all the solemnity , that is inspired by the sight of grandeur sinking in dignity , into decay " . The Regency and Victorian watercolour artists David Cox and William Callow also captured Goodrich Castle and its landscape in paint , again invoking the picturesque , romantic mood of the setting at the time .

The castle was praised by William Wordsworth as the " noblest ruin in Herefordshire " . Wordsworth first visited Goodrich Castle in 1793 , and an encounter with a little girl he met while exploring the ruins led him to write the poem *We are Seven* in 1798 . Other poets from this period were also inspired by the castle , including Henry Neele in 1827 .

By the 1820s , visitors could purchase an early guidebook at the site outlining the castle 's history , and Victorian tourists recorded being charged six @-@ pence to wander around the castle . In the early 1820s , the antiquarian Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick attempted to purchase the site , with the aim of converting the castle back into a private dwelling , but was unable to convince the owners to sell . Instead , Meyrick built the neo @-@ gothic Goodrich Court in a similar style next door , which greatly displeased Wordsworth when he returned to Goodrich in 1841 and found the view spoilt by the new building . The new bridge over the river Wye , built in 1828 , and the 1873 railway line added to the number of visitors .

Goodrich Castle then passed through various hands , until in 1915 the Office of Works began discussions with its then owner , Mrs Edmund Bosanquet ; large @-@ scale collapses of parts of the north @-@ west tower and curtain wall in 1919 contributed to Bosanquet 's decision to grant the castle to the Commissioner of Works in 1920 . The Commissioners began a programme of repairs to stabilise the ruin in its current state .

= = Today = =

Today , the castle at Goodrich is considered by historians to be the " most splendid in the county , and one the best examples of English military architecture " . The castle is classed as a Grade I listed building and as a Scheduled Monument .

Substantial remains still exist and are open to the public , managed by English Heritage . The adjacent Victorian castle of Goodrich Court was demolished in 1949 , restoring the original landscape . The Roaring Meg mortar , preserved by Herefordshire Council , has been returned to the site , along with a number of civil war cannonballs found at Goodrich during excavations in the 1920s .

= = Folklore = =

Several legends surround the castle at Goodrich . The Great Keep has the alternative name of the " Macbeth tower " , after stories of an Irish chieftain held prisoner there . According to some tales , he died attempting to escape and his ghost is said to still haunt the tower .

The events of the English Civil War also have left their mark . Local stories tell that Colonel Birch 's niece , Alice Birch , fell in love with a handsome Royalist , Charles Clifford ; according to these stories the two attempted to escape before the final assault but died in a flash flood while trying to cross the River Wye , and live on as ghosts on the site .