

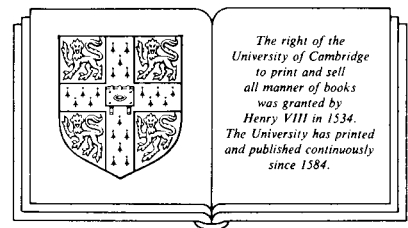
Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-08397-3 - The Decline of the Castle
M. W. Thompson
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

The Decline of the Castle



M. W. Thompson

The Decline of the Castle



Cambridge University Press

Cambridge New York New Rochelle Melbourne Sydney

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-08397-3 - The Decline of the Castle
M. W. Thompson
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521321945

© Cambridge University Press 1987

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1987
This digitally printed version 2008

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Thompson, M. W. (Michael Welman)
The decline of the castle in England and Wales.

Bibliography.

Includes index.

1. Castles – England – History.
2. Castles – Wales – History.
3. Great Britain – Antiquities.
4. Great Britain – History, Military – Tudors, 1485–1603.
5. Great Britain – History, Military – Stuarts, 1603–1714.

I. Title.

DA660.T46 1987 942.05 86–32642

ISBN 978-0-521-32194-5 hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-08397-3 paperback

Frontispiece: the round keep and moat of the brick castle built by Sir John Fastolf at Caister in Norfolk in the 1430s (RCHM).

Contents

	<i>List of abbreviations</i>	vi
	<i>Preface</i>	vii
<i>Chapter 1</i>	Introduction	1
	2 Fifteenth-century contrasts	17
	3 Warfare in England and France	32
	4 A rival – the courtyard house	43
	5 A martial face	71
	6 Accelerating decay	103
	7 A continuing theme	117
	8 Destruction	138
	9 Nostalgia	158
<i>Appendix 1</i>	Derelict or abandoned castles in the fifteenth century	170
	2 Condition of castles mentioned in Leland's <i>Itinerary</i>	171
	3 Parliamentary demolition, proposed or executed, 1642–60	179
	4 Demolition of Montgomery Castle, Powys, June to October 1649	186
	<i>Notes</i>	194
	<i>Select bibliography</i>	200
	<i>List of illustrations</i>	203
	<i>Index</i>	206

Abbreviations

AJ	Archaeological Journal
<i>Ant J</i>	Antiquaries' Journal
CA	D. J. King, <i>Castellarium Anglicanum</i> , 2 vols. (New York, 1983)
CCR	<i>Calendar of Charter Rolls</i> (HMSO)
CIM	<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous</i> (HMSO)
CIPM	<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem</i> (HMSO)
CJ	Journals of the House of Commons
CP	G. E. C., <i>The Complete Peerage . . .</i> , 2nd edn, 13 vols. (London, 1910–59)
CPCC	<i>Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Compounding Delinquents</i>
CPR	<i>Calendar of Patent Rolls</i> (HMSO)
CSPD	<i>Calendars of State Papers, Domestic</i> (HMSO)
DNB	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i> , Compact edn (London, 1975)
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
JBAA	<i>Journal of the British Archaeological Association</i>
KW	H. M. Colvin (ed.), <i>The History of the King's Works</i> , vols. ii–iv (HMSO, 1963–82)
<i>Leland</i>	L. Toulmin-Smith (ed.), <i>Leland's Itinerary</i> , 5 vols. (London, 1910)
LJ	<i>Journals of the House of Lords</i>
MA	<i>Medieval Archaeology</i>
RCAHM	<i>Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales, Inventories</i> (HMSO)
RCHM	<i>Royal Commission on Historical Monuments in England, Inventories</i> (HMSO)
<i>Rushworth</i>	J. Rushworth (ed.), <i>Historical Collections, Abridged and Improved</i> , 6 vols. (London, 1703–8)
TAMS	<i>Transactions of the Ancient Monument Society</i>
TBG	<i>Transactions of the British and Gloucester Archaeological Society</i>
VCH	<i>Victoria County Histories</i>
WW	J. H. Harvey (ed.), <i>William Worcester, Itinerarii</i> (Oxford, 1969)

Preface

'I am king of the castle', building sand castles, castles in Spain, castles in the air, 'an Englishman's home is his castle' – the image is introduced from earliest infancy, and nursery books abound with pictures of castles. By the time he reaches adulthood the normal Englishman or European has the idea deeply embedded in his mind, although the image that exists there is often at variance with reality. The fierce controversies about the nature of the castle at the time of the Norman Conquest at the turn of this century were partly psychological: the average historian could not bring himself to believe that the earthworks belonging to the earth-and-timber structures described by Round or Mrs Armitage would really have to be substituted for the vision of 'cloud-capped towers' that he had imbibed from his early childhood. It offended common sense. The image he cherished derived from the final period of the castle's history when function played less and less part and display or even fantasy ever more part in the minds of the builders. Fantasy which outlived the real thing was given a new lease of life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and, in the present century, by cinema and television.

This book attempts to relate the particular course of events in this country from when castles stopped being erected anew, through the period of decline in use but survival in fantasy, up to the final destruction in the Civil War. Events took a very different course on the Continent and in Scotland and Ireland, and by drawing attention to the contrasts the colours of the picture are sharpened and the development made more intelligible, no more so than by differing response to the new weapon, artillery, here as opposed to that on the Continent. Some attempt is also made to relate alterations in design to contemporary social changes, without, I hope, trying to climb too far up the greasy pole of socio-architectural history! Special attention has been paid to the systematic destruction of the Interregnum, far more extensive than is usually appreciated, while the concluding chapter briefly describes the extraordinarily enticing quality the image has continued to hold over the last 300 years.

viii Preface

My interest in this subject was first aroused when I was able to demonstrate that the great brick entry tower at Farnham Castle, Surrey, which so dominates the town, was not a Tudor addition but was erected in the fifteenth century, apparently as a direct imitation of the tower at Tattershall Castle, Lincolnshire. Later events brought me into a position of guide-writer to the latter and I also had considerable dealings with Lord Cromwell's manor at South Wingfield, Derbyshire. Over some years I had seen the demolished stump of Bolingbroke Castle emerge from the turf, and subsequently I had not a little to do with the great Jacobean and Carolean edifice at Bolsover, Derbyshire, and afterwards with the remarkable reconstruction of the Marquess of Bute at Castell Coch, Glamorgan. Peter Smith's map of tower-houses concentrated my thoughts, and a first essay in this field was a contribution on the abandonment of the castle in Wales and the Marches. The subject clearly needed further treatment.

The appendices that provide the material on which the book is in no small measure based will, it is hoped, have independent use for reference. As we are venturing into new ground the reader has to be supplied with the information that is not available in published sources. The illustrations have been chosen to further understanding of the text rather than purposefully to beautify it. There is always a temptation to do the latter; the library shelves groan under the weight of lavishly illustrated volumes that seek precisely to do that and not much else. If the fantasy element is to be discussed it is perhaps as well for the author not to be drawn himself too much into the fantasies!

Acknowledgement is made in the list of illustrations to those who have kindly allowed their use. However I must record my gratitude to those colleagues (alas, not all alive today), inspectors and architects, in the government service, from whom I have learnt so much. I am particularly beholden to my former colleague Mr J. K. Knight, for the material used in Appendix 4, to Dr D. F. Renn for drawing my attention to a number of useful articles, and to Mr A. Emery for advance loan of his article on South Wingfield. My wife has carried the burden of typing the text, and has taken most of the photographs.

M. W. Thompson

Cambridge, 1986