



The Castle Studies Trust

Surely by now castles have been studied to death? Like churches and abbeys, they were among the first historic buildings to attract antiquarian attention. Can there be anything left to learn? In fact, very few have a definitive history – not even such showpieces of the genre as Windsor Castle or Dover, both of which attract huge numbers of visitors and earn large sums for their respective curators, the Royal Collection and English Heritage.

Then there are the castles that you cannot see any more, like Pleshey Castle in Essex, now minus any of its buildings but with impressive earthworks, bailey and moat, or Baynard’s Castle, used by Henry VIII for lavish banquets and fireworks displays, and home to three of his wives, but destroyed in the Great Fire of London – and now remembered only as the name of a pub. As for castles abroad, the topic is vast: every hill on the Continent is crowned with the towers and curtain walls of Medieval castles, few of which have ever been recorded or studied.

So despite decades of study, there is still a huge amount to know, which is why castle enthusiasts have banded together to form the Castle Studies Trust to raise money for new research. John Goodall, Architectural Editor of *Country Life* and author of the award-winning book *The English Castle* (CA 255), is one of the patrons; the other is Edward Impey, who glories in the title of Master of the Royal Armouries, which means he runs the Tower of London, the Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds, and Fort Nelson in Hampshire.

Founded in July 2012, the Trust has already announced its first tranche of awards. These will be used to fund a 3-D reconstruction of Holt Castle, Denbighshire; an architectural and topographical survey of the standing remains of Ballintober Castle, County Roscommon; a topological survey of the gardens and landscape surrounding Wressle Castle, East Yorkshire; and a geophysical survey of Tibbers Castle, Dumfriesshire, one of the biggest and most important castle sites in Scotland.

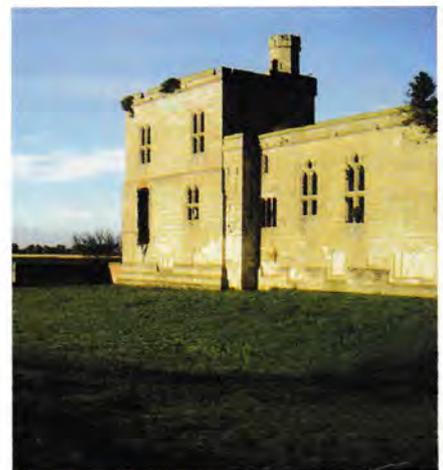
Anyone who makes a donation receives a newsletter three times a year, reporting on progress and new research findings. Stone by stone, those castles will be conquered, but in a scholarly way. @

Further information: www.castlestudiestrust.org

Is there a society that you would like to see profiled?
Write to matt@archaeology.co.uk



Recipients of the first Castle Studies Trust research awards: Grade I-listed Holt Castle (TOP) was originally built in the 13th century in the shape of a pentagon, with a tower at each of the five angles; almost all the stonework was removed from the site in the 17th century, leaving only the sandstone foundation; unusually, Ballintober Castle (MIDDLE), built in the 1290s, lacks a central keep, having instead polygonal corner towers in which the residential apartments are located; only the south range survives of Wressle Castle (BOTTOM), built around 1380 for Sir Henry Percy and destroyed by fire in 1796 – the formal moated gardens, contemporary with the castle, will be investigated.



TEXT: Christopher Catling

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