

# **Castle Hill Calne, Wiltshire**

## **Archaeological Field Evaluation and Post Excavation Assessment**



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**Castle Hill  
Calne Wiltshire  
Archaeological Field Evaluation  
And  
Post-Excavation Assessment**

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### **1.3 Summary**

The Archaeology Field Group of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society applied to and obtained a license from Wiltshire Council to carry out a geophysical survey and evaluation in Castle Hill Park, Calne, Wiltshire (centred on National Grid Reference Number ST39967552-17088527, this being one part of the ongoing research in the western area of Calne using the title “Seeking Roman Calne”).

The existing Castle House is a Grade 11 listed building of mid 17<sup>th</sup> century origins, with later alterations.

The formal gardens and park could have been designed and laid out very soon after the house and auxiliary buildings were constructed. There is a real possibility that it was at this time that the remnants of the previous buildings including the round structure (tower) were finally demolished and the lands at the rear of the house levelled.

The archaeological evaluation comprised a geophysical survey, followed by the excavation of seven trenches in the park and one at Chavey Well.

The results of the evaluation produced evidence for the continual use of the site, from the prehistoric to the Post Medieval period.



### 1.3 Acknowledgements

The Author would like to thank Wiltshire Council, and the Committee of CARP for their permission to carry out the archaeological investigation.

The Association of Roman Archaeology and the Council for British Archaeology for their generous donations to “Seeking Roman Calne” which provided funds to buy equipment for the Castle Hill Excavations.

Dr. John Oswin and Owen Dicker from the Bath and Camerton Archaeological Society assisted by members of WANHS Archaeological Field Group who undertook the geophysical survey.

Members of WANHS ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD GROUP undertook the Excavation and post analysis/assessment.

The author would also like to thank the following persons:

The Calne Project Committee of Wendy Smith, John Baumber, Stella Maddock, Jean Martin and David Rider.

Stella Maddock & Jean Martin 2010 *Historical Evidence for a Castle at Calne* and Lynn Amadio. 2011 *Castles and Tower Houses* wrote the historical background as part of the evaluation report and it is duly acknowledged.

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Friends of Calne Heritage Centre.

David Dawson and the Staff of WANHS.

Tony Fidele for detecting (metal) the excavation and spoil heaps areas

## **1.4 List of Abbreviations**

A.F.G.	Archaeology Field Group [WANHS]
A.R.A.	Association of Roman Archaeology
B.A.C.A.S.	Bath and Camerton Archaeological Society
C.B.A.	The Council of British Archaeology
C.A.R.P.	Canal and River Park Association
H.E.R.	Historic Environment Record [Wiltshire]
N.G.R.	National Grid Reference
N.M.R.	National Monuments Record [English Heritage]
Q.M.	Quarter Master
S.M.R.	Sites and Monument Records [Wiltshire]
W.A.N.H.S.	Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society

# **Castle Hill Calne, Wiltshire**

## **Archaeological Field Evaluation And Post-Excavation Assessment**

### **2 Introduction**

This report constitutes the results of the archaeological work undertaken at Castle Hill, Calne, Wiltshire and represents the findings of the historical research, geophysical survey and the excavation of the site.

The work was undertaken over twenty-seven days in April, July and October 2010 and May 2011.

#### **2.1 Location of the area.**

Castle Hill is located (SMR ST97SE462) to the West of Patford Street, South of Castle Street and North of Chavey Well in the town of Calne Wiltshire.

Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference Number ST39967552-17088527

Ground Survey Height of 76.6 metres above mean sea level.



**Fig. 2, Location of the area maps**

## **2.2 Description of the site**

The site is approximately 192 metres in length by 165 metres in width (3.168 hectares).

Castle House and the Baptist Chapel now occupy the northern area of the site.

The site slopes towards the south, but has a pronounced flattened platform at the north-eastern area of the site, where local tradition states, was the location of the Castle. The area is currently being transformed from an overgrown wilderness to an area of parkland for the enjoyment of the public, but with an emphasis that it should sustain and encourage wildlife.

## **2.3 Geology and soils**

Castle Hill site occupies the middle to southern area of a spur of land that protrudes in a southerly direction towards the river Marden and would once have commanded an unobstructed view over the locality.

The underlying geology of the site is predominantly a Sandy Jurassic Limestone of Corallian or Coral Rag, over which lies a sandy gritty soil, dark greyish- brown in colour. A very dark brown loamy topsoil of varying depths in turn overlies this.

Water drains naturally in a southerly direction away from the site; several springs have emerged at the base of the escarpment, the largest being Chavey Well or Clamy Spring.

## 2.4 The Site Location Map



Fig. 3, The site and location map

## 2.5 Location of Study Area

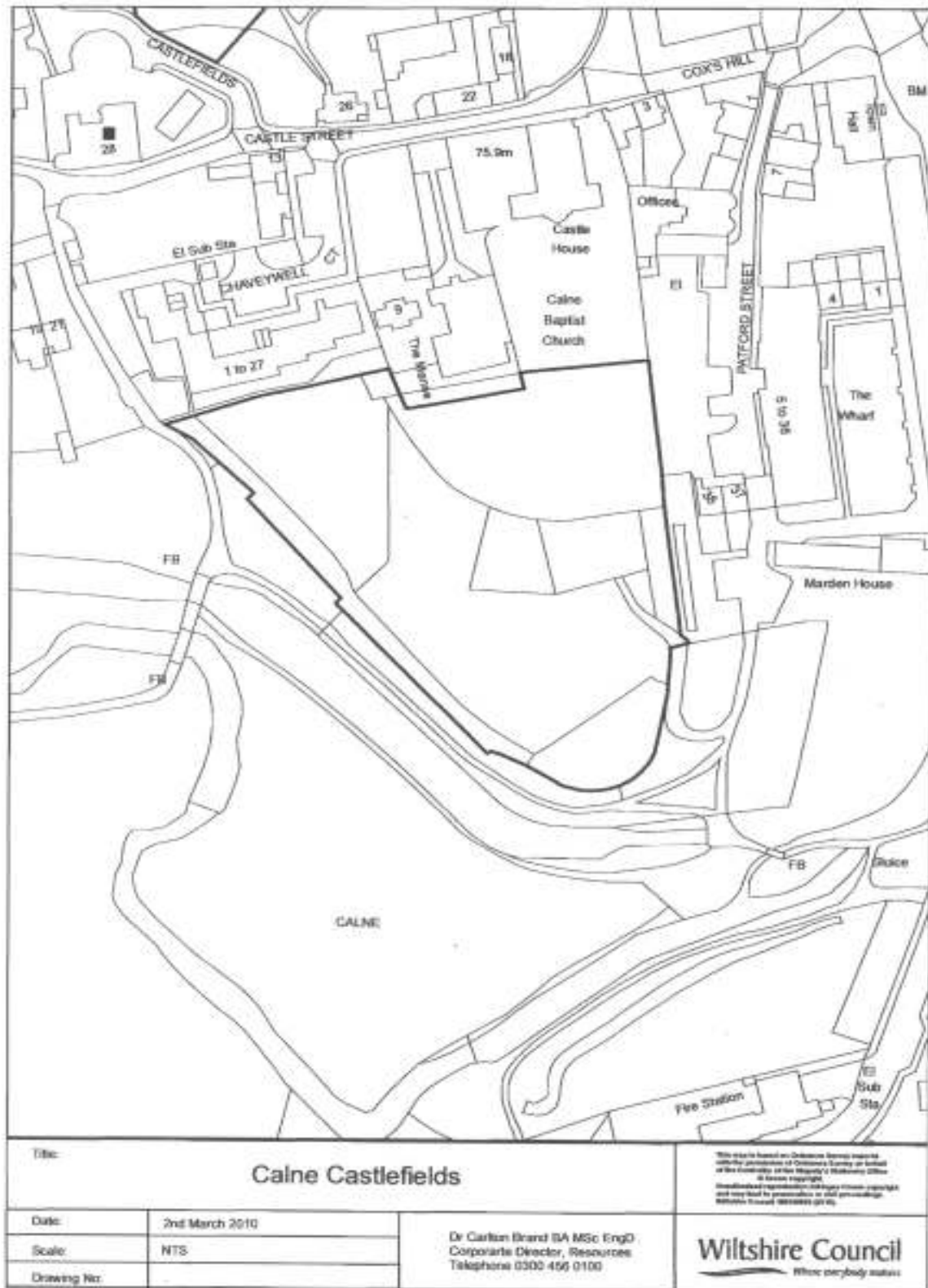


Fig. 4, Location of the study area map.

## **2.6 Research Aims and Objectives**

The Project Design was to locate any archaeological structure or remains that might suggest that this area was the location of a castle or the possible position of a Saxon building where the Witanagemot was held in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present. To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features, as well as establishing a stratigraphic sequence.

To obtain a coherent plan of the site in terms of complete structures, particularly buildings and to attempt a reconstruction of the history and use of the site.

To recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefacts, and environmental samples to assist in defining the character and to the dating of activity on the site.

To address relevant research issues relating to medieval buildings on the site, and to place them into context locally and nationally, to make available and to publish the results of the investigation.

## 2.7 Summary of Previous Investigation at or in the Vicinity of Castle House Calne

Key to sources:

A = SMR B = NMR Excavation Index C = Calne Extensive Urban Survey (Phil McMahon Wilts County Archaeology service)

D = NMR Pastscape E = A.E.W. Marsh "A history of the borough and town of Calne" 1903

**Table 1**

Location	NGR	Type of work	Date	Who did it	Main findings	Report refs.	Source of info.
Castle House	?	1) Observations 2) Observations during excavation work in the garden	19 <sup>th</sup> cent. 1880s/ 1890s ?	1) Canon Jackson's observation 2) F.W. Pinniger	1) "There are still to be seen vaults of a size unusually large for a modern private house, some of the stones having been, apparently, used in some previous building – but of what exact date is uncertain." Marsh says the walls are, in places, 6ft thick. 2) A 'stone-walled chamber' close under the boundary wall of Castle House lawn, some feet below the surface.	Jackson WAM Vol. 24 1888 and reiterated in Marsh p.22	Jackson article in WAM Vol.24 pp.166-219 And quoted in C & E
Castle House	ST99657094	OS Field Investigation – topographical survey	1968	OS Field Investigator	Failed to find any evidence to support hypothesis that this is site of Medieval castle - no artificial scarping of Castle Hill and cellars of Castle House not unusually large, as per Jackson above, and have brick barrel vaulting (not stone) prob. 19 <sup>th</sup> century	NMR Monument No. 212393 ST97SE7 OS Field Investigator's comments Ref. F1 NVQ 14-FEB-68	D
Castle House	?	Observations (Possibly during work after Castle House acquired by the Local Authority (LA).	1969	LA?? Reported by Harry Ross to Ken Annable at Devizes Museum	"I am informed that an underground passage way or conduit passage has been uncovered. ...It seems to be a brick vaulted passage brick built." (Ross)	Copy of Ross's memo to Annable held by the Wiltshire Buildings Record.	Wilts. Buildings Record
Castle House	ST99737085	Watching brief on construction /groundwork's	1972	W.J.Ford Wilts. Archaeological Service	Recorded substantial undated wall footings in new foundation trenches on the south side of the house, which appeared excessively large for the building now standing on the site. Unassociated sherds of early Med coarse pottery were recovered within the grounds of Castle House. An unlined well 30ft deep, cut through solid rock, was found north of the house.	Wiltshire Archaeological Service  WAM Vol. 68 p.138 1972	A C  WAM Vol. 68 p.138



**Table 1**

Location	NGR	Type of work	Date	Who did it	Main findings	Report refs.	Source of info.
Castle House	?	Inspection carried out in connection with preparation of an Archaeology Report*	? 1998?	? Author of *? ?D.Faulkner	“At least part of the barrel vaulted cellars still exist below the new building. The vaults are of stone rather than of brick but from a relatively cursory inspection there appears to be little support for Jackson’s statement that some of the building stones seemed disproportionately large. The workmanship is of a high standard...The stone is well dressed and at least part appears to have received a thick lime plaster coat. Door openings are of dressed limestone and are square headed and finished with chamfer to the outer face. There is no evidence to suggest that the vaults represent the remains of the undercroft of the castle and it is much more likely that they are contemporary with the Adam’s building of the 18 <sup>th</sup> century.”	* Unpublished, undated and anonymous report: “Archaeological Report – Castle Fields, Calne” possibly written by someone at the CAS or NWDC?	Found copy of * in ‘Excavations’ records in filing cabinet, Devizes Mus.
Castle House Grounds	ST996708	Geophysical survey (resistivity)	1999	WANHS AFG	Confused interpretation, due to lack of Data- logger device!	Unpublished report.	WANHS records

**Table 1**

Location	NGR	Type of work	Date	Who did it	Main findings	Report refs.	Source of info.
Grounds of Castle House	ST9970	Geophysical survey (resistivity)	2000	GSB Prospection Geophysical Surveys of Bradford	Resistivity survey of the Castle site identified no significant structural elements, possible due to its timber construction	GSB/2000/Calne Castle – Geophys. Survey/Report No.00/073 CAS ref.: GSB Prospection 2000 'Geophysical Survey report 2000/106:Calne Castle' Unpub. Report. On ADS and CAS have copy	B  C
Patford Street Nos. 5/8/8a	?	Building survey	2000	North Wilts District Council D.Faulkner	Revealed that the present house – of late 17 <sup>th</sup> & early 18 <sup>th</sup> century origin – incorporates a massive east-west aligned wall up to 2m thick, thought to be of Medieval date. The wall does not extend to the present Patford St frontage and appears to relate to a former structure situated to the west. Also revealed the presence of a stone-lined cellar sited on the street frontage, the walls of which are misaligned with those of the overlying building and which the surveyor considered to pertain to an earlier, possibly medieval, structure on the site.	D. Faulkner, 2000 '5/8/8a Patford Street, Calne: archaeological survey and report' Unpublished report, Conservation & Urban Design Group, North Wilts DC	C

## 2.8 Calne: Entries from Historic Environment Record (HER formerly SMR)

Table 2

### Palaeolithic

There are no recorded finds for the Palaeolithic.

### Mesolithic

The HER currently has no recorded Mesolithic finds; however, microliths and other worked flints have been found at ST99375 70940 and will be reported to the HER.

### Neolithic

Currently the HER has one Neolithic find spot recoded.

SMR No.	Site name and NGR	Description
ST97SEU01	Unlocated Calne	Two Neolithic greenstone axe heads

A further find has recently been made and will be reported to the HER. A small assemblage including a horseshoe scraper has been found at ST99375 70940

### Bronze Age

SMR No.	Site name and NGR	Description
SU07SWU01	Cherhill	Bronze Age pottery fragments
ST97SE150	ST995714	Bronze Age burial
SU06NWU08	Calstone	Animal bone, antler and pottery of Bronze Age date found in 1833

### Iron Age

SMR No.	Site name and NGR	Description
SU07SW202	SU00337122	Iron Age gold coin
ST96NEU14	Calne area	An Iron Age catch plate of a brooch

### Romano-British

SMR No.	Site name and NGR	Description
ST97SE303	ST97477125	5 R-B coins
ST97SE308	ST97197109	R-B pottery fragments
ST97SE306	ST98417095	R-B pottery possibly Roman building material
ST97SE315	ST986713	3 pieces of R-B tesserae
ST97SE316	ST99667231	Possibly a boundary ditch
SU07SW307	SU00497280	Ditch with R-B pottery
ST97SE305	ST99787101	R-B pottery
ST97SE302	ST98157035	R-B villa
ST97SE304	ST96507160	R-B coin of Emperor Victorinus
SU07SWU04	Between Gas Works and Low Lane	R-B coins
ST96NEU01	Whetham Farm	R-B urn
ST97SE550	Cottage east of Soho Inn	Undated spear or ferrule could be A-S

**Table 2****Anglo-Saxon**

<b>SMR No.</b>	<b>Site name and NGR</b>	<b>Description</b>
ST97SE400	ST998710	Town having Saxon origins.
ST96NEU13	Unlocated	Saxon decorated strap-end
ST97SEU04	Unlocated	Saxon penannular brooch
ST97SE550	Cottage east of Soho Inn	Spear or ferrule could be R-B

**Medieval**

<b>SMR No.</b>	<b>Site name and NGR</b>	<b>Description</b>
ST97SE462	ST998710	Alleged site of Medieval castle
ST97SE551	ST998710	Undated wall footings
ST97SE468	ST998708	Medieval metal working site
SU07SW459	SU00107115	Farmstead with Medieval origins
ST97SE458	ST99807107	4 fragments of Medieval pottery
ST96NE476	ST990660	Medieval ampulla
SU06NW453	SU06NW453	Settlement with Medieval origins
SU07SW462	SU00497280	A Medieval pottery fragment
ST97SE451	ST99787101	Several Medieval objects and pottery fragments
SU07SW468	ST99987098	Probably the site of the Medieval monastic lodge or retreat since the 13 <sup>th</sup> century of St Edmund of Canterbury
SU07SWU05	Unlocated between the Gas Works and Low Lane	Medieval coin
ST97SE452	ST97SE452	Farmstead with Medieval origins
ST97SE456	East of Conigre Farm	Small unenclosed Medieval rabbit warren
ST97SE608	East of Studley House Farm	Field system probably Medieval

### 3 Historical Evidence for a Castle at Calne

An essential part of the Castle Hill excavations project has been research to find historical evidence for the existence of a castle of some kind in Calne. There is a strong tradition locally that at some point in history Calne had a castle and various writers, most notably Aubrey (Jackson 1862, 33), Jackson (1888, 176) and Marsh (1903, 21-23) have made claims about the existence of a castle. However one main difficulty we have encountered is in identifying ‘Calne’. In medieval and early modern documents the name can be used to signify the borough, the town or its neighbourhood, or the administrative Hundred.

No primary document has yet been found that conclusively states the existence of a castle. The evidence put forward to date is circumstantial. We have critically examined this evidence and extended it through our own searches of manuscript and printed records held by Wiltshire & Swindon Archives (WSA) at the History Centre in Chippenham, the National Archive (NA) at Kew, the Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Society (WANHS) in Devizes, and other archives including material available on the Web.

The results of our examination of primary sources and secondary opinions to date are summarised below.

#### 3.1 Place names

What appears to be the strongest evidence for a memory of a castle or fortification of some kind comes from place and field names in Calne, for example Castlefield, Castle Street, Castle House. The earliest references we have found so far are:

- The cartulary of Lacock Abbey includes a grant of land c.AD 1242 “...between the place of the king and Chastle in the field of Stocke....” (Rogers 1979, 86). Whether or not ‘Chastle’ can be interpreted as ‘castle’ is uncertain but Stock common field came up as far as Patford (Crowley 2002, 90).
- ‘Castylfelde’ (Castlefield) mentioned in Chancery pleadings dated between 1493 and 1500 (NA CA 1/211).
- ‘Castle Street’ occurs in 1526 – a grant of a reversion of a barn with a curtilage and orchard in ‘Castel Street’ made by the Prioress of Kington St Michael Priory to John Aleyn of Calne (Suffolk Record Office 449/2/757).
- A property called ‘The Castle’ in Castle Street was owned in 1620 by Elizabeth Burnell the widow of Alexander Staples (WSA 212B/987). From Alexander Staples’ will (NA prob/11/76) it is likely that he bought the property in Castle Street from William Allen who we are fairly sure was a descendent of the John Aleyn referred to above. We are continuing with research to trace back land ownership in the Castle Street area.

John Aubrey, writing in the 1660s about his visit to Calne, says “Here was anciently a castle which stood where Mrs. Norborne’s house now does” (Jackson 1862, 33). Mrs. Norborne owned Castle House in Castle Street which her husband had built c.1650 (Crowley 2002, 36). Various commentators, Jackson in particular, have conjectured from Aubrey’s statement that the Castle House site was originally the site of perhaps a Roman and “certainly” an Anglo-Saxon residence for some public official under the crown (Jackson 1888, 172). Haslam (1984, 102-6; 1976, 13-14) on the other hand, considers the site of this residence and the

Saxon town is likely to have been in the vicinity of Kingsbury Street ie. near the church on the other side of the river to Castle Street.

It is worth noting that several ‘castle’ field and minor names in Wiltshire, such as Castle Copse in Great Bedwyn parish and Castle Barn in Wilcot parish, are derived from the Old English ‘*ceastel*’, ‘heap of stones’ and are directly associated with Roman villa or settlement sites (Draper 2006, 19-20). The ‘heap of stones’ could have described the crumbling ruins of Roman buildings which would have provided a ready source of building material in the Anglo-Saxon period.

### 3.2 Royal connections and visits

The Victoria County History (VCH) entry for Calne states that by the 10<sup>th</sup> century the king may have held a large estate called Calne which became the administrative Hundred (Crowley 2002, 3). That Calne was a royal ‘vill’ (*villa regia*) is implied by the Domesday entry that the ‘vill’ paid ‘a farm of one night with all customary dues’ (Williams 1992, 162). Williams citing Campbell says that Saxon ‘royal vill’ (*villa regis*) were the ‘centre of a fairly wide area’ to which the inhabitants paid *feorm*, defined as ‘a rent in kind, whose purpose was to feed the itinerant household of the king’ (Williams 1999, 40; Campbell 1986, 109). By the late Saxon period the ‘vills’ were administrative and judicial centres (Williams 1999, 40-42).

Jackson (1888, 171), and later Marsh (1903, 15), have caused some confusion by interpreting the term ‘*villa regia*’ used in writings by Wulfstan (c.1000) and Marianus Scotus (1028-82) about Calne in the 10<sup>th</sup> century quoted in Leland’s *Collectanea* (Jackson 1888, 171), as referring not to the area or town but to an actual building owned by the king and occupied by his officer. That such a building existed in the Calne area occupied by the king’s local administrator is possible if Calne was indeed a royal ‘vill’ (Crowley 2002, 34). Earlier evidence from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle mentions a building in Calne where the upper floor collapsed when the *Witan* (Kings Council) met there in AD 978 (Whitelock 1961, 79). A two-storey building capable of accommodating a large number of people is implied, probably a different one to the king’s officer’s house (Crowley 2002, 34). Where these buildings were located is unknown. However, as noted in the previous section, Haslam considered the Saxon town lay to the east of the river. Information provided by the Domesday Survey (Williams 1992, 162) states the manor – probably equivalent to Calne Hundred – belonged to the king. In 1086 there were 45 burgesses, a church but no mention of a castle.

Several assertions have been made about various later royal visits which might imply Calne had a substantial building (eg. a castle) to accommodate the monarch and his/her retinue. Both Jackson (1888, 176) and Marsh (1903, 21) say that the Empress Maud (Matilda) stayed in Calne one night on her way from Arundel to Bristol in 1139. William of Malmesbury (Potter 1955a, 35), writing in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, implied that Matilda passed through Calne not that she necessarily stayed overnight. Similarly, Marsh (1903, 23) asserts that King John stayed in Calne in 1215 but it appears from Hardy’s work on the itineraries of King John (Hardy 1835a, 109) that although John was in Calne on 7<sup>th</sup> July he had spent the previous night (6<sup>th</sup> July) at Bradenstoke and stayed the night of 7<sup>th</sup> July in Cirencester. Marsh also claimed that Henry III stayed in Calne on 28 March 1223 and other sources (Calendar of Patent Rolls 1901, 369; Hardy 1835b, i 539) indicate that a royal document was signed at Calne on that day. But, as noted in the introduction above, ‘Calne’ in documents frequently covered a wider area than the town.

Other assertions about royal visits have yet to be verified. Of note is the proximity of Calne in the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the royal forest of Chippenham and Melksham (Crittall 1959, 407, 446-7; Close Rolls 1902, 103-4). It is quite likely that John and/or Henry would have hunted there and stayed somewhere in the vicinity, at a royal hunting lodge for example.

One qualification to the king owning a residence in Calne is that by c1200 Calne had ceased to be a royal manor. The VCH states that c.1199 King John probably granted the “lordship of Calne hundred” to Fulk de Cantelo (Cantilupe), “with the rump of the estate called Calne” (Crowley 2002, 5). The lordship continued in the Cantelo family until 1274 when the lordship passed via marriage to the Zouche family (Crowley 2002, 65,126). We have been unable to find any records of a ‘licence to crenellate’ in the 13<sup>th</sup> or early 14<sup>th</sup> centuries when many fortified and semi-fortified houses were built or enhanced with the permission of the King. Nor do the *Inquisitiones Post Mortem* descriptions for the Cantelos in Calne in the 13<sup>th</sup> century reveal the presence of a castle at Calne (Fry 1908, 8,16-18,73-84,222-5). Land records held in private family archives may hold the key but these are either inaccessible or scattered throughout the country.

### **3.3 Tradition relating to a record of a castle built at ‘Cernei’ in 1139**

Primary sources - *Gesta Stephani* (Potter 1955b, 61-2) and William of Malmesbury (Potter 1955a, 36) describe Stephen’s attack in 1139 on a small fortification put up by Milo of Gloucester at Cerne/Cernei. Stephen was on route from Wallingford to Trowbridge and Jackson (1888,176) suggested that Calne was the most likely location. However modern commentators post Jackson, notably the VCH (Crowley 2002, 34) and Creighton (2000, 111), generally agree that on the weight of evidence, etymological and circumstantial, Cerne was not Calne but near South Cerney/Ashton Keynes on the Wiltshire/Gloucestershire border, a site possibly now represented by earthworks called Halls Close.

### **3.4 Tradition relating to the Borough arms.**

Local tradition suggests that the depiction of a castle on the Borough arms/seal is indicative of there having been a castle in Calne. In heraldic terms the castle image on the Borough arms is a ‘tower’, and Buckeridge (2000, 1 IV) states that all the early borough seals of Wiltshire had castle towers on them. The Calne arms are only definitely known back to 1565 (Metcalf 1897, 11-12), although they may well be older, and there is no documented explanation of what the castle alludes to.

By local tradition also, Calne had a connection with the Black Prince which is why, it has been suggested, three ostrich feathers are depicted on the Borough arms. The black background and the silver ostrich feathers are similar to the arms of the Black Prince c.1376 (Buckeridge 2000, 1 2) but may relate to Calne Borough’s membership of the Honour of Wallingford as the Honour was formerly part of the Duchy of Cornwall and the Black Prince was the first Duke of Cornwall. So, according to a letter from the Duchy of Cornwall Office in 1810 reproduced by Jackson, the Calne arms “might have been adopted when the Prince of Wales, as Duke of Cornwall, was Lord of the Castle and Honour of Wallingford” (Jackson 1888, 207).

### 3.5 Conclusion

To date we have found no conclusive documentary evidence for a castle in Calne. Some of the circumstantial evidence that has been put forward in the past is suspect or inconclusive. But the place-name evidence is strong. That a building occupied by a royal official existed in Calne in Saxon times seems likely but where it was, and whether it continued into the Norman period is unknown and could be irrelevant to the castle question. The same uncertainty applies to the building where the Witan met. The erection of a castle during the Anarchy period is possible but not conclusively documented; it would have been very short-lived but could have given rise to the name Castlefield.

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## 4 Castles and Tower Houses

The word 'castle' has been loosely assigned to many large structures built in the past. For instance, Iron Age hillforts are often called castles, among them: Barbary Castle, Liddington Castle, Uffington Castle and Maiden Castle. Some were arguably defensive structures, but others seem to have had different functions, including settlement, meeting and trading; and religious or ceremonial.

When, in AD43, the Romans arrived as conquerors, different building styles and techniques were introduced. Timber forts were erected in preference to earthen ramparts. As the occupation lengthened, stone replaced timber as the material of choice in the construction of dwellings and defended sites.

After the fall of Rome, the withdrawal of the Legions and the subsequent invasions of Britain from the north-east by Angles, Saxons and Jutes, many technologies including building in stone were lost. As the Anglo-Saxon era progressed, however, construction in stone began again. Historians once considered that all stone buildings erected at this time were ecclesiastical but excavation has revealed secular constructions of stone such as the two-storey tower or, possibly, house at Lower Brock Street, Winchester, cAD800, or that at Sulgrave, Northamptonshire, with walls approaching two meters high, built *circa* AD1000. (Bailey 1983, Higham 1992) Documentary evidence (the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*) exists for a third building at Calne in which members of the Witan (*Witenagemot* or 'supreme council') met in AD978. During the meeting the structure collapsed, killing or injuring all present except Archbishop Dunstan who was standing on a beam (Bailey 1983). Thus, it was believed, validating his point of view.

Following the Norman Conquest the first 'real' castles were built. Initially they were timber towers and palisades on man-made mounds known today as Motte and Bailey constructions. A second early form of Norman defensive structure was 'ringworks' (enclosures) (Kenyon 1991, Higham 1992) both forms were held mainly by private individuals. Norman castles were often sited on former prestigious or defensive locations such as Iron Age hillforts, (Creighton 2003) Roman forts, (Kenyon 1991) and Anglo-Saxon High status settlements. Goltho in Lincolnshire, (Steane 1985, Creighton 2003) and various Burhs (fortified town) (Kenyon 1991) being examples of Anglo-Saxon antecedents.

In 1138 Henry of Blois, Archbishop of Winchester, (Kenyon 1991) built a masonry keep (tower) as stone began to replace the earlier timber structures. By the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century few castles remained simple enclosures bounded by ditch and palisade. (Wood 1965, Gravett 2009)

Moated sites, the natural successor of smaller earthwork castles, (Ryder 1990) developed between 1275 and 1325. (Wilson 1985, Lever 1993, Platt 1994). A moat is defined as a broad flat-bottomed or U-shaped ditch that enclosed a platform of land on which a castle or large house was built. (Wilson 1985). In most cases the ditch was filled with water but at a few sites on hilltops or slopes the ditch was never meant to hold water. (Steane 1985)

The Tower Houses that evolved in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century were compact, fortified and several storeys high. (Lever 1993, Curl 2006). There are many in Scotland, Northern England and Ireland but fewer to the south in England. Pounds argue that in England Tower Houses are poorly documented, some have been destroyed and some await discovery. (Pounds 1994)

During the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries a new socio-economic class, later to be termed 'gentry', with aspirations to nobility arose bringing with it new waves of castle building such as at Nunney, Somerset, 1373 and at Wardour, Wiltshire, 1393.(Creighton 2003) French nobles, captured during the Hundred Years War (1337-1458) and subsequently ransomed furnished not only wealth for their captors but also continental designs for impressive new castles. (Braun 1936) Although the King's permission to add battlements to a building (a licence to crenelate) was mandatory, some less law-abiding castle owners avoided compliance.

## 4.1 Discussion

At the time of writing, research and fieldwork (excavation) have failed to produce a definitive answer to the question 'Was there a castle in Calne?' This paper will consider the question from a mainly archaeological standpoint, with the occasional use of documentary evidence.

As intimated in the paragraphs above, there were two main reasons for building castles: defence and status. The medieval period was a lawless and turbulent one, the borders of England were assailed from without, and competition for dominance ravaged all levels of society within. What little documentary evidence exists indicates that Calne may have included royal estates (Crowley 2002), which in the late Saxon period became administrative and judicial centres, (Williams 1999) arguably reason enough to postulate the existence of a status-claiming castle in Calne. Circumstantial evidence in the form of place names locates the castle on top of a steep sided promontory with a river flowing at its foot from the northeast to the south and west.

Approximately half way up the south face of the slope is a ditch that may have been dug in the Iron Age as part of a promontory fort defence.

Excavation (this report) produced Iron Age pottery; potsherds of like date were previously found in the vicinity. This excavation also discovered part of a Roman building together with Roman pottery, further indicating multi-period use of the site.

The Anglo-Saxon Witan of AD978 is said to have been held across the river from Castle Hill; it is equally possible that it took place on the hill. The excavation produced Anglo-Saxon potsherds and a bone knife handle arguably dating from this period.

There is a second ditch enclosing the summit of the hill that could be an example of a Norman 'ringworks' of which there are a further eight in Wiltshire. (Higham 1992) It has been noted above that early Norman castles re-used former Iron Age hillforts, Roman forts and high-status Anglo-Saxon sites. Here there are potentially all three.

Other, possibly contentious, evidence is based on Calne being given the right to hold two markets and fairs, one for the King's Manor and the other for the Church. These grants resulted in two triangular market places gracing the town. One, the Green, believed to be for the Church was sited southeast of the 11<sup>th</sup> century church, the other to the northwest of places now known as the Strand, the High Street and Market Hill. These grants are understood to date from the reign of King John (1199 -1216). (McMahon 2004) The Green has a spatial relationship to the church, but Market Hill has no connexion to areas of Calne with place names that include the word King or to the presumed site of the *villa regia*. Conversely the second market area is close to the site of this excavation.

It is also conceivable that a dry-moated house stood here, on Corallian limestone, a porous rock that would have made water retention virtually impossible. As noted previously, not all buildings with pretensions to being castles had licences to crenelate. Should, however, such a structure already have been in place by the 13<sup>th</sup> century there would have been no necessity to apply.

The foregoing is based largely on archaeological research from other sites and areas; it also covers some circumstantial evidence for the likelihood of there having been a castle in Calne. Fieldwork together with more documentary research may yet provide the definitive answer.

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