

Lyonshall Castle, Lyonshall.

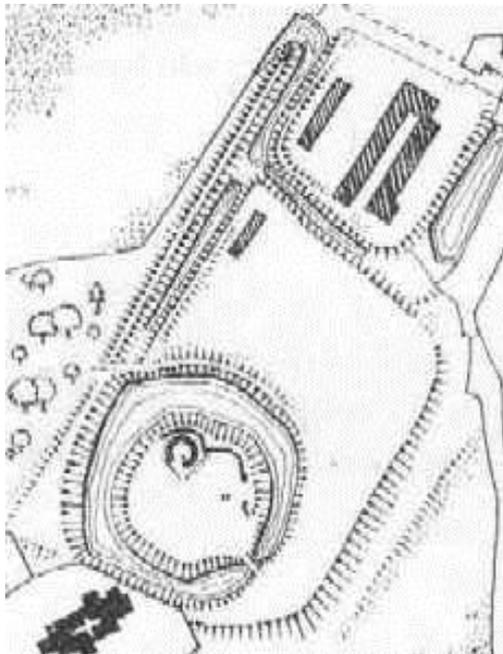
SMR NO. 355 GRID REF: SO 3315 5630

Within a fragmentary, partially buried curtain wall just NE of the church lies a circular inner bailey about 45m in diameter.

The inner bailey and motte are surrounded by a wet moat crossed by a modern wooden bridge on the SE and lying within the SW end of a rectangular outer bailey.



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A 3rd almost square enclosure lies to the NE. The moats of the outer enclosures are incomplete and partly water filled. No stone walls or buildings remain.

On the N side of the inner bailey the wall projects out as more thinly walled but better preserved

On the motte remains of a circular tower keep with polygonal curtain wall remain. The walls of the keep are 12.6m in diameter and 2.8m thick. It stands on a sloping platform with roll moulding around the top.

The area surrounding the motte is quite wooded and the ground begins to slope down almost immediately from the motte.

History of the castle.

At the time of the Domesday survey it was in the possession of Roger de Lacy and had belonged to Earl Harold in the reign of Edward I the Confessor. It consisted of 5 hides with 2 ploughs in lordship. There were 3 villagers, 11 smallholders and 3 riding men as well as 5 slaves, male and female. 100d was given by some men who had settled there for as long as they wished to stay.

Late 11th century: The De Lacys or one of their knights probably founded this castle.

1188: It was also probably one of two castles belonging to John Devereux, which are mentioned in the Pipe Rolls for this year.

1220-27: Stephen Devereux is thought to have erected a circular keep on the site in imitation of his overlord Walter de Lacy's at Longtown.

During Edward I's reign Lyonshall was the chief seat of William Touchet, who gained a licence for a weekly market and annual fair at Michlemas there.

The castle later passed by marriage to John de Vere, Earl of Oxford.

1386-1388: Sir Simon Burley held the castle until his execution. Lyonshall then reverted to Sir John Devereux.

1391: John Devereux made a contract with John Brown, mason of Hereford, for the erection of a hall 13m long and 8m wide with walls 1m thick. The contract also included orders for the rebuilding of the gatehouse with **portcullis** and guard lodgings.

John Devereux died leaving an heiress who married Walter, the 5th Baron fitz Walter.

1404: Henry IV orders the refortification of the castle against Owain Glyn Dwr.

Middle 15th century to 1641: The castle was back in the hands of the Devereux family, but there is no evidence to say that they lived in it. The Thynne family inherited it as a ruin and later sold it to the Cheese family.

Visits may be permitted by prior arrangement with the owners – obviously at their convenience. Please contact Mr Derek Brookes on 01544 340385