

# Montgomery East

Montgomery Castle was built by Henry III in 1224, on a rocky promontory above what became the town of Montgomery. It's an ideal site with fantastic views over the surrounding countryside and across Offa's Dyke into England. After Wales and England were unified in 1536, the town played an important administrative role in the region and even had the county named after it (Montgomeryshire). The town has retained its original street plan, its charm and good looks, and has fine examples of Georgian architecture dating back to the 16th and 17th centuries.



**Did you know?** Montgomery had the first gaol in the UK with a toilet in each cell.

## Archaeological Information

On your way out of town, take time to visit St Nicholas's Church, which dates back to 1227. It has a fine hammerbeam roof from the 15th century. Hammerbeam' refers to the moulded horizontal timbers which project from the wall tops into the interior of the church. The four-storey tower was erected after 1816, replacing the earlier steeple.

The County Gaol in Montgomery was built between 1830 and 1832. It was the first in Britain to have a lavatory in each cell. Closed in 1878 and partially dismantled, the remainder was converted into flats and houses.

Montgomery churchyard holds the Robber's Grave. In 1821, a plasterer was accused of assault and robbery. Despite pleading his innocence, he was found guilty and hanged. It was reported that the sky grew dark, a storm broke and no grass grew on his grave – all of which convinced people that he was indeed an innocent man.

Montgomery has a rich heritage of interesting buildings from the 16th and 17th centuries. The impressive Town Hall, built in 1748, is Georgian. The upper storey was taken down and redesigned eighty years later. The ground-floor arches were filled in around 1900 and the clock tower was added in 1921.

Lymore Park was begun in 1675 but extensively rebuilt in 1794. Lymore Hall was a large, square, symmetrical, three-storey building with a central tower and very tall chimneys. Unfortunately, it was demolished in 1931.

The 'corrugated' ground which can be seen in the Park, is the hallmark sign of 'ridge and furrow' farming. This stems from the Middle Ages and suggests that the area was heavily cultivated. Seeds were planted in the ridges, while the furrows (hollows) between the ridges helped with the drainage.

One of the Park's claims to fame is that it has the only duck decoy in Powys (constructed in 1802), which was designed to catch wildfowl. Wildfowl would land in a central pool then swim down channels leading away from it and into the awaiting nets. When one of the pools was drained in 1860, a 17th century Civil War breastplate and helmet were found. The helmet still had the skull in it. Both now reside in the Tower of London.

