

# Montgomery West

Montgomery is the old county town of Montgomeryshire. It was attacked and destroyed several times in battles between the Welsh and English in the 13th century.

It remains a very attractive town today, with lovely Georgian architecture, far-reaching panoramic views and the wonderful remains of the castle built by Henry III.

**Did you know?** Montgomery was the site of the Civil War's largest battle fought in Wales.



## Archaeological Information

In 1279, the town's wooden defences were replaced by a stone wall. The Medieval bank and ditch defences around the town can still be seen to the west of the castle.

The town was commended by the chronicler Matthew Paris as ideal "for the erection of an impregnable castle". The town therefore didn't develop organically, but was planned – this can be seen by the layout of the streets. Henry III encouraged people to stay and live in the town by offering rewards, privileges and safe conduct to all who brought victuals for sale to the castle. In 1227 Montgomery became a chartered borough with a weekly market and a fair four times a year.

Montgomery Castle was completed in stone in 1234 and has three enclosures (or wards), each protected by a ditch up to 18m wide and 6.3m deep. The innermost enclosure originally contained the royal suite, a kitchen and a brewhouse, and was also protected by its own wall and gatehouse. When the castle well was cleared of rubble in the 1970s, it was found to be 63m deep.

In 1644, Montgomery was the site of the largest battle of the Civil War fought in Wales. The Parliamentarians claimed to have killed 4,000 Royalists in the battle.

Excavations on Ffridd Faldwyn have revealed flints, pottery and part of a stone axe from the Neolithic period. Two thousand years later, a community in the Late Bronze Age / Iron Age built a double palisade of upright timbers to defend themselves.

Earthworks and outer ditches are still visible. Over the years, these were added to and strengthened as the hillfort increased in size.

Excavations uncovered groups of close-set post-holes, usually four in number, indicating where Iron Age granaries once stood. Circular rings of post-holes indicate round houses.

Looking north from Fridd Faldwyn, a ring of trees marks the famous motte and bailey of Hen Domen. The motte (or castle mound) is about 40m wide and 8m high. The castle on it (long since gone) was probably built in 1071 by Roger of Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury.

When Montgomery Castle was constructed, the settlement gradually moved from Hen Domen to where Montgomery town is today.

