

count of his Cornish upbringing, was always very close to his heart.

In my Devonian context I owe him a big personal debt of gratitude. When I excavated Okehampton Castle in the 1970s, as a very young man, Andrew became Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments. He was an immensely supportive mentor and ally and, very soon, a good friend. One of my best social memories of him is of an end-of-digging-season party at Launceston in the 1970s, to which all my Okehampton team were invited. It was frankly riotous. But I also retain one paradoxical memory of Andrew: though an immensely sociable person when in his element, he once told me – in a reflective conversation – that he could also be very shy and could find sociability hard work.

In the 1990s, Andrew invited me to represent the UK - with him - on the International Castles Institute (IBI) Scientific Council, under the Europa Nostra umbrella. We visited fascinating places all over Europe, learning about academic and conservation issues there and making our contribution by lecturing about how such issues were handled at home. How they were handled at home was, of course, in no small measure due to Andrew's own professional example and influence over many years. I understand that IBI will, fittingly, dedicate its 2009 meeting (in Rhodes) to his memory.

Andrew Saunders more than earned his place in the story of British archaeology. Everyone in the Castle Studies Group owes much to him, whether directly or indirectly. We are very proud to have been associated with him professionally and, at a personal level, we will miss him enormously.

***AFTERTHOUGHT: Launceston, Lydford, Richard of Cornwall and current debates.***

When the history of castle studies in the second half of the twentieth century comes to be written, to Andrew Saunders will be attributed an important and influential role: in his research - as excavator, field-worker and documentary historian; in his posts at the Ministry of Works and its successor bodies - as a formulator of attitudes towards conservation and public presentation; and of course as influential *guru* in national and local societies and other groups. A skilful digest of his contributions in these fields was written by Jonathan Coad as an obituary published in *The Times* (26/03/09).

I would like here briefly to raise an issue which I have been mulling over during the last year while having a re-think about shell-keeps: a well-known “type” (so-called) of castle structure which I suspect has been a little less understood than we might imagine. Inevitably, one matter I have been thinking about is how observations about shell-keeps might fall into the on-going debate (and will it *ever* go away? - see my earlier thoughts from 1998-99) about the relative importance of the defensible and symbolic characters of castle design.

Andrew's best-known field project on a castle was his long-term exploration of Launceston in Cornwall, published magnificently in 2006. The top of Launceston's motte bears a famous and complex structure, one element of which was a twelfth-century shell-keep, re-furnished in the thirteenth century and to which was added a “high tower” (as it was called in a survey of 1337). And so, while thinking about shell-keeps, I began to think about Richard, earl of Cornwall, who was proposed by Andrew as the great re-designer of Launceston in the 13<sup>th</sup> century (as well as of Lydford, in neighbouring



*Launceston Castle. Image © Oliver Creighton.*

Devon, published by Andrew in 1980). I feel it should be said that, in a pragmatic and non-polemic way wholly typical of the man, Andrew contributed more to the evolution of the “building symbolism” debate than he recognised. In the late 1950s, he drew attention to the re-building of the Lydford castle/prison in pseudo-motte and tower fashion, a choice which – by the standards of the later 13<sup>th</sup> century – was surely image-driven rather than defences-driven. And this sort of thinking ran through much of his approach to why and in what manner earl Richard re-built Launceston on a lavish scale (2006, 456-460). He (and others, in consequence, for example Creighton 2009, 170-171) saw that the complex of tower and shell on Launceston’s motte may have evoked military strength but what it also did – and probably more crucially – was to provide an elevated view of the castle’s manipulated parkland landscape as well as a platform for ceremonial displays to the castle’s

occupants. One of Andrew’s articles – far less known than it deserves to be – is entitled “The English castle as country house”. Published in 1993 when most people were not yet thinking along these lines, it laid out an effective argument which in later years has become (obviously, for appropriate sites and not for all castles) widely accepted.

The reason I raise this “castle symbolism” issue here is not, however, to review it generally, nor to concentrate on the shell-keeps, but to think specifically about Richard, Earl of Cornwall, younger brother of king Henry III, and to a degree about his son Edmund who succeeded him as earl of Cornwall. I would like to extend some observations which are inherent in Andrew’s report on Launceston but which, in retrospect, he might have pursued further. So I am confident he would have approved broadly of the following discussion, which is offered as a tribute to his stimulus.

Andrew and his specialists argued (2006, 33-34, 58, 64, 256-7, 282, 455-6) that the pottery dating evidence allowed only a general inference of a major thirteenth-century re-building of both the motte-top and the bailey at Launceston, and that the various phases in which this was accomplished were spread throughout Richard's tenure of the earldom (1227 – 1272) and quite possibly into the tenure of his son, Edmund (1272 – 1300). Although the weight of the pottery evidence pointed often to the period after circa 1250, he felt it reasonable to assume that Richard commenced his re-building early on, in order to assert his new authority in the south west, the title of earl having been revived for him (it had lapsed in 1175). But he also allowed for some elements – including the high tower on the motte – being built much later, during earl Edmund's tenure. In contrast, Lydford (with Dartmoor, held by Richard only from 1239), Andrew argued on the basis of associated later thirteenth-century pottery, was re-built late in the 1260s, about the time (1267) that Richard acquired a market and fair for the borough (Saunders 1980, 161-162): both actions showed an enhanced seigneurial interest in the place. Archaeologically, however, the possible end-date for Lydford's rebuilding – based on the pottery alone – could be later on in the thirteenth century.

What the excavator's views on these two re-buildings – one extensive and multi-phase, the other smaller in scale and single-phase but nonetheless very impressive – reminds us, is that there are two dimensions to the “symbolism” argument in castle interpretation. One dimension has been with us since the earliest days of modern castle studies: late nineteenth-century commentators understood very well that castles were designed not just to be defended but also to make statements about their owner's status and wealth. The other dimension is of more recent devel-

opment: an appreciation that castle-building or re-building often related to specific contexts in the social, economic and political circumstances of individuals and families. To take the eleventh and twelfth centuries as an example, we have become accustomed to this line of thought in an aristocratic context from the work of Philip Dixon, Pamela Marshall, Jonathan Coad and others. The argument has also been applied in royal contexts of the same period by Rick Turner, Sandy Heslop and others. Like many good arguments in academic pursuits, it has precedents: points made by people in earlier years when a wider debate had not yet emerged. I feel this was true of myself and my collaborators in the 1970s at Okehampton (re-built by Hugh Courtenay soon after 1300 in status-enhancing circumstances) and I feel it was true of Andrew's work at Lydford: illuminating the re-building of the site in a “pseudo-motte and donjon” form revealed simultaneously how a rich and powerful magnate re-created a castle with both “function” and “image” in mind.

Andrew was convinced that a major motive in Earl Richard's re-building of Launceston – involving the bailey buildings and defences, the motte top and its complex structures – was his wish to have a castle that was not only up-to-date in defensive terms but which provided a suitable administrative centre for his Cornish estates; as well as one whose form would impress both local society and visiting peers with its towering aspect, domestic facilities and ceremonial pretension (for example, 2006, 257: “a very public statement of his status and prestige”). Andrew also knew that the effort expended on Launceston's rebuilding was all the more remarkable for two reasons. First, though it was the centre of the Cornish estates, and it was from Cornwall that his earldom took its title, Launceston was not the *caput*: this lay, in the thirteenth century, at Wallingford and later Berkhamsted. Second, dur-

ing his long tenure of the earldom, Andrew reminded us that Richard seems to have visited Cornwall in person only infrequently (*ibid.*, 33-36). He might have asked: didn't Richard go to rather a lot of trouble with a castle for which he didn't have much personal use?

It is the further exploration of this apparent paradox which I wish to pursue briefly here. In so doing, I have been stimulated by a re-reading (after many years) of Denholm-Young's biography of Richard of Cornwall (1947) and by reading two new and very informative discussions of Richard's experiences in the politically-tumultuous 1260s (Page 2000; Jobson 2009). In particular, in thinking of Richard and the south west, it seems (to me) important to bear in mind the following points:-

First, Cornwall was never Richard's main area of residence, or even a regular one. The chronicle and charter evidence specifically reveal him in Cornwall on only six occasions between 1227 and 1272: in 1229, 1238, 1240, 1249, 1252, and 1259 (Denholm-Young 1947, *passim*; Page 2000). On his return from Gascony in 1243, Richard landed first at Scilly (Denholm-Young 1947, 49) so there may be another Cornish visit implied here. It must also be said that there are significant periods in his life when his itinerary is not known, for example six months in 1259 (Denholm-Young 1947, 99). But even allowing for deficient sources, the record doesn't add up to much. The impression given is that of an essentially absentee lord as far as the Cornish estates were concerned. Nor is it possible to know what to make of the time he did spend in Cornwall: we do not know how long his visits lasted. One at least was not significantly pre-planned. On 7<sup>th</sup> December 1259 he was in London. On 11<sup>th</sup> December he was in Mere (Wilts). At Christmas he was in Launceston where he also celebrated his

51<sup>st</sup> birthday. On the face of it, this itinerary appears to have been the result of advance planning: the celebration in Launceston being the sort of occasion for which much preparation in stocking or even building works at the castle might be in order. But this was not, apparently, the case. Denholm-Young informs us (1947, 100-101) that when in London, in early December, Richard had been planning to go to France with his brother, king Henry III. But he changed his plans and the king went alone. Going to Cornwall – in the context either of Christmas or his birthday – had not been his original intention at all. The clear impression from his known movements is that Richard used Berkhamsted and Wallingford, the main administrative centres of the whole earldom, as his major English residences. The role of Berkhamsted as a residence for the wives of the thirteenth-century earls has also been noted (Remfry 2009, 63-78). The year 1263, was a politically tense one in the run-up to further dramatic political events and Richard spent the period from July to October in or around Berkhamsted (Denholm-Young, 120-122; Jobson 2009).

This was an unusually long time for any magnate to spend in one property. What is revealing is that he did not take himself off to Cornwall: he stayed in the English heartland of his earldom. This suggests that he did not regard his Cornish estates as a “territorial power base” - unlike, for example, many of the barons of the marcher lordships. In 1264, he did however raise some troops in Cornwall in advance of the Battle of Lewes (Denholm-Young 1947, 125). Denholm-Young reminds us (*ibid.*, 164) that while Cornwall was “practically a palatinate” under its twelfth-century earls, under Richard and his son Edmund this was not the case: Cornwall lay in the king's financial and judicial administration even though the earls appointed the sheriffs.



Lydford. Image © Oliver Creighton.

Just as we must remember that Cornwall was not the “centre” of the earldom (above), so we must remember that Richard's castles in Berkhamsted and Wallingford consumed major expenditure. The works carried out there, noted by contemporary chroniclers (who were silent on Launceston), tell us much about his priorities (Brown *et alii* 1963, 562, 850). Documentary work currently being pursued at Wallingford by Judy Dewey shows, however, significant expenditure occurring just before Richard's tenure: linking subsequent works with Richard and Edmund is difficult because no accounts survive. In 1254 on the other hand, according to the Dunstable annalist, Richard built a three-storey tower with leaded roof at Berkhamsted, presumably the great tower on the motte referred to in 1337; the motte carries remains of what has been thought a shell-keep (*ibid*, 561-3) though Paul Remfry suggests these are remains of a roofed

*donjon* (2009, 94-96, 104-107). In 1259, on the occasion of the dedication of Hailes abbey (Gloucestershire) - Richard's own foundation – Matthew Paris noted that the earl remarked how great his expenditure at Wallingford had been (Denholm-Young 1947, 76). It was recorded on that occasion that building works at Hailes, started in 1245-46, had by now cost ten thousand marks. In our enthusiasm for monitoring medieval castle-building, castellologists should not forget that the families in question were often also patrons of significant church foundation and that this, too, drew on their resources. Neither was Richard content to use only castles which he was given. In 1253, he received permission from the king to build a new one at Mere (Wilts.). Much work was done there from 1259 – 1262 (Denholm-Young 1947, 77, 113). But when he fell ill he was at Berkhamsted, where he died in 1272 (*ibid*, 152).

Second – in this heavily “absentee” lifestyle - it is clear what Cornwall's value to Richard (and his son, when earl) actually was: he had been granted not only revenues from land but, more important, the wealth arising from its tin. In 1239, his acquiring of Lydford and Dartmoor from the king has sometimes been seen as an extension of the same interest in the mineral wealth of the neighbouring shire of Devon. Commentators vary, however, in their views on whether Devon's tin was exploited by Richard, some assuming it to be the case because of the Lydford connection. On the other hand, Denholm-Young (1947, 129 and n.5, 168) asserted that what he received in 1239 was the Forest of Dartmoor but not its mines. Elsewhere, it is noted that Edmund received the farm of the Devon tin mines only in 1278 (*ODNB*, 17, 770-773). Overall, it seems, Richard's income from tin (whether in one shire or two) was his biggest single source of income, approximately £2,000 per annum out of a total of some £5,000 - £6, 000 per annum (Page 2000).

Third, while this essentially exploitative approach to Cornwall was tempered by the granting of charters (starting with Launceston itself) to several Cornish boroughs between the 1230s and 1260s, it is mirrored also in Richard's relationships with the Cornish. Page's analysis shows that Cornish knights did not figure much in the earl's personal household nor in his wider affinity of supporters. In fact, he had often tense relations with them: arising from his frequent appointment of sheriffs from outside Cornwall and his virtually unbroken practice of appointing outsiders as stewards to his Cornish estates. The Cornish probably regarded him as simultaneously remote but interfering. It is telling that one of Richard's early ventures into local land-deals involved acquiring Bossiney and Tintagel and building a castle at the latter. It was not a residence or administrative centre, however, but

simply a monument to the notions of Cornish kingship known through the Arthurian legends as popularised by Geoffrey of Monmouth. Padel's (1988) exposition of this episode – the creation of a symbolic coastal folly in all but name – is wholly convincing and perhaps reveals more of Richard's attitude to his Cornish possessions than we have hitherto acknowledged.

Fourth, as well as taking a full role in English political life, Richard also had very significant overseas commitments. He was on crusade from June 1240 to January 1242 and in Gascony from May 1242 to October 1243 (Denholm-Young 1947, 41-44, 46-49). From 1257 to the end of his life he was king of Germany, spending about four years in total there spread over some four visits (*ibid, passim*). Tellingly, the English retinue at his coronation at Aachen in 1257 included no-one with Cornish connections (*ibid*, 90-91). All this adds to an impression of an overlord whose financial and other interests were continuously felt by the Cornish but whom they hardly expected ever to see.

Fifth, Denholm-Young (1947, 1) informs us that Richard “was universally believed to be the richest man in England” and points (*ibid*, Chapter 4) to the years 1247-1256 as crucial in his creation of personal wealth. This came from the profits of tin, from his re-organisation of the royal coinage, and from various deals with influential Jewish financiers. Defining a particular period of personal prosperity is not only helpful in understanding the man's career. It may also help to reveal in which years he may have been most able to invest in major building projects. In the case of royal castles, the Pipe Rolls reveal specific years and amounts spent. For non-royal projects, such date-specific guidance is rarely available and we have to assess contexts from our knowledge of the changing circumstances of individuals and families (and from architectural and archaeological evidence if available). It



*Restormel Castle. Image © Oliver Creighton.*

would be fascinating to know in exactly what periods Richard allocated expenditure on Launceston. Even accepting its excavator's argument - that Richard is likely to have commenced work early - we may wonder whether most building effort (as at Hailes abbey in the 1250s – see above) may have been later in his tenure of the earldom rather than earlier.

Sixth, in addition to financial circumstances we should consider political ones. While an assertion of authority through grand building would have been (as Andrew believed) appropriate in the early years, the events of much later years may also have been important in this respect. In particular we should note what Page (2000) and Jobson (2009) - in extension of Denholm-Young's discussion (1947) - tell us about the role of Cornwall in Richard's political life, which, despite his undoubted wealth and power, was marked by sharply contrasting periods of influence (or lack of it) with both his

brother (the king) and his brother's baronial opponents. The nadir of Richard's political fortunes came in 1264 when, after the Battle of Lewes (in May) he was captured and incarcerated, forfeiting his lands and castles which were administered for a time by Simon de Montfort's family. In marked contrast, however, was his political recovery in 1265, which had a marked impact on Cornwall. Now, he merged the offices of sheriff and steward in Cornwall (and continued to give this powerful position to outsiders). He also persuaded the Cardinan and Vautort families to sell him the castles and estates of Restormel (in 1268-69) and Trematon (in 1270) respectively. All this, Page (2000) argued with good reason, would have alienated Richard even further from the Cornish knightly class. We might, I think, wonder seriously whether it was in this context that some of his building works at Launceston occurred, designed to restore his recently-damaged reputation and authority. Although no

more than speculation, we may wonder whether the re-building of the motte-top, whose *donjon* is such a visible and potent symbol of lordship, occurred at this time? Was it, indeed, modelled in any way on the tall tower he had already built at Berkhamsted (see above)? I have suggested elsewhere (Higham *et alii* 1985) that a possible early-fourteenth-century re-building of Plympton by Hugh Courtenay, with a tower and shell on the motte, may have been inspired by Launceston. The late 1260s may have been when the *donjon*-inspired rebuilding of Lydford took place (see above). And thus the re-building of Restormel by Edmund, his son and successor, may be seen perhaps as a continuation, in Cornwall, of his father's tradition? At Restormel as well as at Lydford, we find the throwing up of an earthwork against the masonry to create an impression of a traditional mound with a structure rising from it. Indeed, given the scope of the pottery dating evidence from both Launceston and Lydford, it is not impossible that Launceston's high tower and Lydford's pseudo-motte and *donjon* were actually the work of Edmund rather than of Richard. Restormel must have been Edmund's work: Richard did not have it until 1268 and he died in 1272.

Do these ruminations achieve anything? For me personally, they are evocative of the sorts of discussion I had with Andrew on several occasions over the years, during his seasons of work at Launceston and his subsequent years of post-excavation and publication preparation. We did not discuss precisely these points, but I feel sure he would have engaged with them enthusiastically. What emerges, I think, is an issue which I have not hitherto thought sufficiently about. Others may have done so and they will find the conclusion to this little offering perhaps rather obvious. I have always made a simple correlation of the "image" or "symbolism" argument about castles

with the person who was a castle's builder or main occupant: the owner was rich and powerful; the design and grandeur of the castle impressed that fact on local society as well as on visitors from the owner's peer-group. But what I think I had not taken into account was the great variability in the degree to which the owner was actually in residence. I had fallen back on a loose generalisation along the lines of "of course the aristocracy and gentry led peripatetic lives; for much of the time their castles were occupied by skeleton staffs of servants and officials". While this was broadly true, as an explanation it begins to break down when we consider not the "middling" group, of which it may be a fair description, but the uppermost and lowermost groups. Richard of Cornwall was a prime example of the former: a man so rich and so active on the national and international stage that he spent little time at all (as far as we can see) at the castle from which his Cornish estates and tin incomes – his biggest single slice of income – were administered. Though his career did not have Richard's international dimension, Edmund inherited all of his father's English lands and titles and was also an immensely rich man who continued his father's tradition of lending money to kings and nobles and of patronising church foundations (Rewley and Ashridge). But – as far as we know – he hardly ever went to Cornwall or Devon: though there is no biography of him (cf. Denholm-Young's on Richard) the full account of Edmund's life in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (vol. 17, 770-773; for Richard, *ibid*, 46, 702-712) refers to not a single south-western visit. On the other hand, John Allan informs me (in person) that Edmund's arms are found on floor-tiles from several south-western monastic sites, from which we might infer some impact on the region's society.

At the other end of the spectrum, we may consider the humble lord of a

handful of manors whose family aspired to greater status by building a little castle in their *caput*. Europe as a whole had thousands of such people. In contrast to the great magnates, their lifestyle was less peripatetic and they were often in residence, in their little castle or in some nearby manor house. These extremes of the spectrum are instructive. The local lord, with modest status and modest resources, impressed his authority on local society by being an active part of it for most of the year. Not only might his funds not stretch to building a castle with great “symbolic” pretension in design, but, equally important, his presence in local society might make such symbolism superfluous: his power emanated daily from his person. But the great magnate who was less frequently in residence at any one place differed from his humbler counterpart in two important respects. First, he had loads of money. Second, his frequent absences from each of his seats of power gave him more incentive to make them of grand design: the symbolism of status inherent in this grand design acted as a visual reminder to local society of the man's authority, exercised *in his absence* by stewards and others who thus lived within a grandness of environment far outstripping their own social position.

While it would be naïve to pursue this argument to a general law of “inverse ratio” along the lines of “the grander the design the more the lord was absent”, as a general point it may help explain why magnates such of Richard of Cornwall and his son Edmund developed impressive castles at Launceston, Lydford and Restormel when they knew they would hardly ever be there. A mixture of years of absence at a time and non-too-harmonious relations with the local knightly class, on top of an essentially exploitative attitude to the Cornish lands and their mineral wealth, added up to a significant need to have castles of strong appearance convey-

ing all the accustomed symbols of status through architecture and design. It was this – rather than an intention of regular personal use - which merited the considerable expenditure which such re-buildings must have involved.

So far, so good. But we are left with an awkward problem. If Richard (and presumably Edmund – who in any case moved the centre of his Cornish administration to Restormel and Lostwithiel) was at Launceston so little, we can see why expenditure on defences, administrative buildings and lesser accommodation was justified: they sustained the everyday functions of stewards and others. But what justified grander accommodation and what, in particular, justified the manipulation of a *donjon* design – at first sight a traditional, defensive, lordly residence – into what was in reality an impressive viewing tower with associated platform from which the manipulated landscape of the adjacent park could be enjoyed and on which ceremonial occasions might be organised? We seem to have three options here. First, Richard and Edmund may have visited far more frequently than the written records reveal and this facility was enjoyed by them, their family and visitors. Second, it may have been designed for the use and enjoyment of the chief officials of the earls. Third – and extreme though this suggestion may seem I think it should not be discounted in view of Richard's and Edmund's enormous wealth – it was built in advance of a very specific visit made by one of them and his entourage in the context of some particularly important occasion or meeting: linked to Richard's re-assertion of personal authority in Cornwall after 1265, perhaps, or to Edmund's succession to his father and his shift of centre from Launceston to Restormel-Lostwithiel? There is a tendency, perhaps, for us to match the permanence of a building in the surviving physical record with an assumption of its regular or even frequent use. But given the

ceremonial side of the castle life enjoyed by the very richest in medieval society, we should not overlook the possibility of “occasion-specific” building enterprises. This is, however, to fly kites. We are faced here with a general and recurrent problem in castle studies. The history will tell us of individuals, families and events, often specific to particular dates. The archaeology will tell us of broader trends in building evolution, but mainly in the context of looser chronologies. Matching the two approaches up is no easy task. Historical interpretation can be frustrated by the looseness of the archaeological dating; archaeological interpretation can be frustrated by a perceived need to link the observed physical data with known people and events. Both may lead us into false suppositions, and away from the truth, as easily as towards reliable reconstruction of the past.

In future I will think more about how much time castle builders spent in their castles, and why, as well as about their wider interests in particular localities and regions. It may help me understand better the nature of the castles themselves. The published studies of Launceston and Lydford – seen in the wider context of the earldom of Cornwall - provide stimulating material for this challenge, as well as for many others: they are a very important part of Andrew Saunders's scholarly legacy.

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