





Chichester - From John Speed's *The Counties of Britain*, 1616 edition. North at the top.

Chichester City Walls.

Outline History:

- AD 43 Roman military base established at Fishbourne
- AD 50 A Roman style town was growing up, that became *Noviomagus Regnensium*.
- 2nd C Towards the end of the century stone walls were erected - which were further improved in the 3rd century.
- 4th C Bastions were added, probably 16 in all, and ditches improved.
- 9th C. In the time of Alfred the Great the town was re-fortified.
- 11th C North-east corner of Chichester enclosed to form the site of the castle for Roger de Montgomery. Chichester was then a thriving urban centre to which the cathedral was moved (ex Selsey).
- 1178 Dean obtained licence from the King to create a postern in the city wall.
- 1216 During French invasion, King John ordered destruction of castle defences. This may not have been done as orders were repeated for its demolition.

- 1261 Grant of murage for five years for city walls. Constant questions over state of city ditch.
- 1269 The castle site was given to the Franciscans, to found a friary.
- 1339 Commission to survey city walls and put city in state of defence.
- 1369 Another commission appointed to repair the city walls.
- 1377 Authority given to complete the city ditch, partly dug, with its walls, turrets and gates, and to remove houses and buildings adjacent to the wall, or where the ditch should be constructed.
- 1385 Mayor given authority to demolish all buildings and trees within 100 ft of the city walls.
- 1443 Last recorded grant of murage for city walls
- 1642 The walls were in sufficient order to withstand a week's siege during the civil war
- 1745 When a French attack was rumoured the city gates were closed for the last time.



Chichester - A rather fanciful reconstruction of the early timber motte and bailey castle, located in the area that became the Friary, seen in the north-east corner of the Speed map.

The CSG delegates looked at the south-west corner of the city walls, where the walls are at their best and clear of obstructions. The walls were laid out on a decagonal plan. None of the four gates, set at the cardinal points, survives, but the walls stand about twenty feet (6.10 m) high except on the western side of the city where they have been destroyed. The bastions are of Roman origin, but neither they nor the walls show much evidence of Roman work, having been continuously repaired. A ditch surrounded most of the town; excavation showed that one or two ditches contained 14th century pottery, and could be the ditch referred to in the grant of 1377.



In the gazetteer to Creighton and Higham's recent *Medieval Town Walls*, the entry reads:

'The irregular ten-sided circuit, based on Roman foundations survives substantially intact, accessible and walkable, although the flint-faced remains are somewhat featureless and none of the gates survive. The best-preserved and most dramatic remains are on the south-west side of the town, where two semi-circular bastions can be identified as well as a rectangular projection from the circuit with blocked up windows, marking the position of the Deanery. The south-west corner, near the Bishop's Palace Gardens is largely rebuilt in brick and the stretch either side of the West Gate is missing. A promenade along the wall top exists for most of the northern and eastern part of the circuit, carried on arches over cuttings made through the wall for Chapel Street to the north and East Row to the east.

A bastion that has become detached from the main circuit can also be identified in a garden on the north side. While the wall is extant on the south-east side, it is inaccessible and obscured and disturbed by gardens and houses built against it, including a summer-house on the wall-top. A shorter length of wall-top walkway lies on the south side inside Market Avenue, where another semi-circular bastion can be seen with a modern structure on top of it'.



Above: Christchurch town wall in the south-west quadrant, north of the River Lavant, looking south-east.

Left. An entrance, adjacent to the wall on the left, to the environs of the Bishop's Palace Garden. Beyond the entrance is a small section of wall that is more likely to be somewhere nearer the original thickness. This section has some original regularly laid Roman coursing stone at its base. It highlights just how much facing stone and flint has been robbed over the years, and the section of wall nearest has lost at least two feet compared to the end section.