

# Roger of Montgomery +

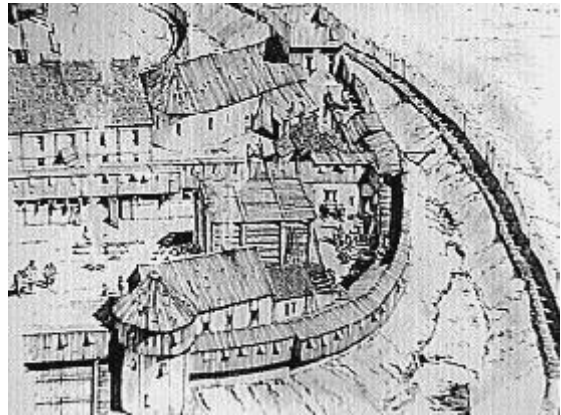
Marcher Lord - Castle builder, d. 1094



King William (William the Conqueror) turned to another close friend and advisor, Roger of Montgomery, to control the middle range of the frontier (between England and Wales), and he built up a strong feudal enclave centred on his new castle of [Shrewsbury](#). He consolidated his hold on land which was technically within England but not firmly under English control. He moved into territory which was unmistakably Welsh and which passed into the hands of his military tenants. Picot de Say was established at [Clun](#); the family of Tournai at Kinnersley, Reginald de Bailleul had his principal castle at Maesbury, and his lands became the lordship of Oswestry. The Corbets were masters of [Caus](#), east and south of Shrewsbury.

Below: Hen Domen as it may have appeared in the early 13th century  
*Illustration by Peter Scholefield*

The symbol of advance into Wales was the [castle which Earl Roger built at Montgomery](#), a typical [motte and bailey](#), of which the earthworks still survive. To distinguish it from the later stone castle built at [Montgomery](#) by Hubert de Burgh, it came to be known as [Hen Domen](#) - the old mound. It was a key point in the natural communication into mid-Wales, and beyond that westwards to Ceredigion. The gains which Earl Roger and his commanders made were compact and, with the exception of Arwystli, did not drive deeply into Wales, but they extended over a long stretch of the frontier.



Roger of Montgomery died in 1094, to be succeeded in Normandy by his eldest son, Robert de Belleme, and in England by his second son Hugh, whose tenure of the earldom of Shrewsbury was brief. Joining the earl of Chester in an invasion of Anglesey he was killed in the summer of 1098 by a Scandinavian force which mounted an unexpected raid on the island. Robert of Belleme claimed his inheritance, combining the family's Norman and English possessions. His loyalties lay with Duke Robert of Normandy, and on the accession of Henry I he joined a rebellion against him. In due course, in 1102, he was deprived of his earldom and his English estates and was forced to retire to Normandy, and with him, his brother, Arnulf of Pembroke, suffered disgrace and forfeiture.

*"Medieval Wales" by David Walker, by David Walker, Cambridge University Press.*

Jeff's note:

People are always asking me about reference sources for information about Welsh medieval history. I have to admit that of all the books I have read on this subject over the years, my favorite remains David Walker's "Medieval Wales".

I've always felt that the main strength of Mr. Walker's book is that it somehow manages to pack a great deal of straight forward information and observations into a easy-to-handle 235 page paperback. While more substantial works may be better suited for specific research, "Medieval Wales" does an excellent concise job of explaining how the Norman victory at Hastings impacted Wales and Welsh history for the centuries to come.

Mr Walker's book examines the role that Welsh castles played in the conquest, the important battles that took place, examines the leading Welsh and Norman figures between 1066 and 1410, and the lineages and intermarriages of the major Welsh kingdoms. "Medieval Wales" is appropriate for both the seasoned historian looking for quick facts, and for people who simply want to learn more about the history of Wales.



Visit the [Hen Domen Castle](#) page



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