

CASTLES AND CROWDFUNDING – PART ONE

July 26, 2013 Spencer Gavin Smith Buildings, Community Archaeology, Day of Archaeology
2013, Education, Excavation, Journalism, Medieval, Military, Survey Holt Castle, Wales

The joy of archaeology is that you never know what's going to happen next, and so far the 'Day of Archaeology' has more than lived up to this.

My name is Spencer Gavin Smith, and I live in two archaeological worlds which occasionally cross over. My day job is as a Contract Archaeologist for the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust <http://www.heneb.co.uk/> and my other work is writing my PhD – part time – on the topic of 'Parks, Gardens and Designed Landscapes of Medieval North Wales and North West Shropshire'.

Yesterday I received a phone call from a journalist with the 'Daily Post', which is the daily newspaper for North Wales. His editor had seen my tweets about my crowd funding page for my PhD <http://www.gofundme.com/medievalgardensandparks#> and could he send a photographer to meet me today to take a picture to go with the article he had been asked to write.

So, this morning I met the photographer at Holt Castle (Longitude 53.077958; Latitude - 2.880319) to get a picture taken and also to see the excavation work being carried out there by Wrexham County Borough Council and local volunteers from the community.

The castle at Holt is a bit of a hidden gem of North East Wales. You can't see it from the road through the village of Holt, and for many years it certainly didn't really look like a castle either. But now, thanks to several heritage organisations working together, this once beautiful building is beginning to reveal its former glory.

As part of my PhD research I'm looking at the relationship of castles to their surrounding landscape and at Holt there is an excellent survival of the relationship between Holt Castle and its Little Park.



Excavation at Holt Castle – with Cadw, Northern Marches Cymru, Wrexham County Borough Council and Holt Local History Society all working in partnership.

Little Parks (sometimes known as Inner Parks) were constructed next to castles for the enjoyment of the owners, so they could look out of their castle windows and into their park, or ride with invited guests through the park looking at the castle as a backdrop.



The view out from the apartments into the Little Park, the original boundary is the line of trees across the image with the park starting behind them.

This morning I spoke to the Excavation Director, Stephen Greuter, to find out what this year's excavations had revealed, and this afternoon I'll be working on another part of my PhD research.