

## CASTLE HALL, MIRFIELD

*A tourist's guide to interesting archaeological sites in West Yorkshire*



*[The overgrown motte of Castle Hall Hill, Mirfield. The church tower can be seen in the background.]*

### **History**

Like many other townships in West Yorkshire, Mirfield was given to Ilbert de Lacy after the Norman Conquest and formed part of a large manorial holding called the honour of Pontefract. The de Lacys did not directly administer all these holdings themselves. Some of them were passed on to sub-tenants as 'knight's fees'. In effect the tenant held the manor on the promise that he would provide a knight when the landlord wanted to go to war. At the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086 the manor of Mirfield was held by Swein son of Alaric, one of the foremost knights in the honour of Pontefract. It was Swein, or possibly his son Adam, who built the castle at Mirfield at some time between 1086 and 1159 when Adam died without a male heir. The estate was divided into two. However, the castle was possibly not abandoned immediately as the phrase 'castle of Mirfield' still appears in later medieval documents. By the time of Henry VIII the castle had been

replaced by a timber framed manor house. It is this long-demolished structure which gave the present name to the site.

### **The Remains**

The motte at Mirfield is a 10m high mound which would have been topped by a wooden keep. It is surrounded by an 8.0m wide ditch. On the east side the ditch is interrupted by a causeway which would allow access to the bailey.

The present parish church of St Mary, a Victorian edifice designed by Gilbert Scott, stands on the site of the bailey, which is further obscured by the modern graveyard. The original parish church was situated just outside the perimeter of the bailey to the south east. Today only the tower is still standing. This was probably a 13<sup>th</sup> century addition to an older church. The belfry was added in the 15<sup>th</sup> century although the pyramidal roof is Victorian.

***This guide was written by Dave Weldrake (© WYAAS 2010)***

**External Links**      [Pastscape](#) features detailed information on the site from English Heritage.

Old photographs of the motte and the Old Church can be found by browsing the [Kirklees Image Archive](#).

**Location**              In St Mary's churchyard adjacent to Church Lane at SE 2110 2046. For map [click here](#).

**Access**                 There is no direct access to the motte but this can be clearly seen from the surrounding churchyard.

***NB:*** *There is more information about Castle Hall, Mirfield and other historic sites in West Yorkshire held within the West Yorkshire Historic Environment Record (HER), Contact us via 01924 306797 or [wyher@wyjs.org.uk](mailto:wyher@wyjs.org.uk). Alternatively search our records online via the Heritage Gateway website - [www.heritagegateway.org.uk](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk)*