

# Spalding Castle - fact or fiction?

*Nancy Snowdon*

**T**here once was a castle in Spalding. No, this is not the beginning of a fairy tale. You may doubt its existence, many have. It is not well known, and little interest has been shown in it by archaeologists and historians.

A Norman soldier-knight, Ivo Taillebois, arrived with William the Conqueror in 1066. William, who did not give his trust easily, particularly in putting men in positions where they might challenge him, appears to have trusted Ivo enough to allow him large estates and almost unlimited power and Ivo spent his life fighting for him.

Ivo Taillebois lived with his wife, Lucy, in Spalding, in a castle on the Pinchbeck road. No one knows what the castle looked like, and Ivo is not well documented; he does not appear in lists of witnesses to documents or as a hero in battles.

It is clear he went to the north of England to assist William in quelling the rebellious Northerners and the invading Scots. He may well have been with William on the notorious retaliatory expedition known as the Harrying of the North, and he may have been with him in 1069 when the Scots invaded Cumberland.

Apparently William rewarded Ivo by giving him a large part of Westmoreland centred on Kendal. The motte and bailey in Kendal still survive, and are the right date to have been built by Ivo.

Ivo became known as the first Baron of Kendal. Many motte and bailey castles were built at this time, for defensive reasons, all over the border country, as there was continuing dispute over the lands on the borders.

Ivo had a daughter, whose

mother is still a mystery. His daughter Beatrix had a son Eldred, and for three generations all the sons were known as the Barons of Kendal.

The family progressed up the social ladder, and left their wooden tower on the mound on the outskirts of Kendal. Still it survives today and can be identified. In 1220 it was superseded by a stone castle built by Ivo's descendants on the other side of Kendal, which is known as Kendal Castle and is now a dramatic ruin.

In about 1070 Ivo arrived in Lincolnshire to deal with the Fenlanders' Revolt. The leader, Hereward the Wake, soon gathered many followers. His guerrilla tactics in the Fens led to King William arriving and enlisting Ivo to attempt to defeat him. Hereward's date of death is not known, but William forgave him and the rebellion ended.

William must have been impressed with Ivo for he rewarded him with a Lincolnshire heiress who brought with her enormous estates. She was young and inherited lands from many of her relations. Lucy was not a Saxon princess but the daughter of an aristocratic Anglo-French mother, brought up in England, but she had some Saxon relatives. Presumably Ivo was free to marry Lucy, and that the first 'wife' was dead. As the new Lord of Holland he took over all Lucy's Lincolnshire estates. He was given great status and soon became the Sheriff of Lincolnshire.

It does not seem to have been generally known in Spalding that he had huge northern estates and a family there, or was known as the Baron of Kendal,

but in Kendal they thought he came from Lincoln. It must be assumed that he kept his finger on the pulse of all his estates in Lincolnshire as well as in the north, through his network of stewards and bailiffs.

Although there were probably many manor houses on his estates, Ivo wanted to impress and either built or refurbished a castle as his base in Spalding, although the caput of his lordship was Bolingbroke. He chose a dry bit of Spalding overlooking the town on the road to Pinchbeck. Clearly marked on old maps it is now the site of the Castle Fields sports complex.

Grundy's map of 1732 is to scale and clear. On the large site is marked both the keep and the moat, and it is set in the middle of freeholders' land. It remained open land. When the castle fell into ruin and disappeared is not known.

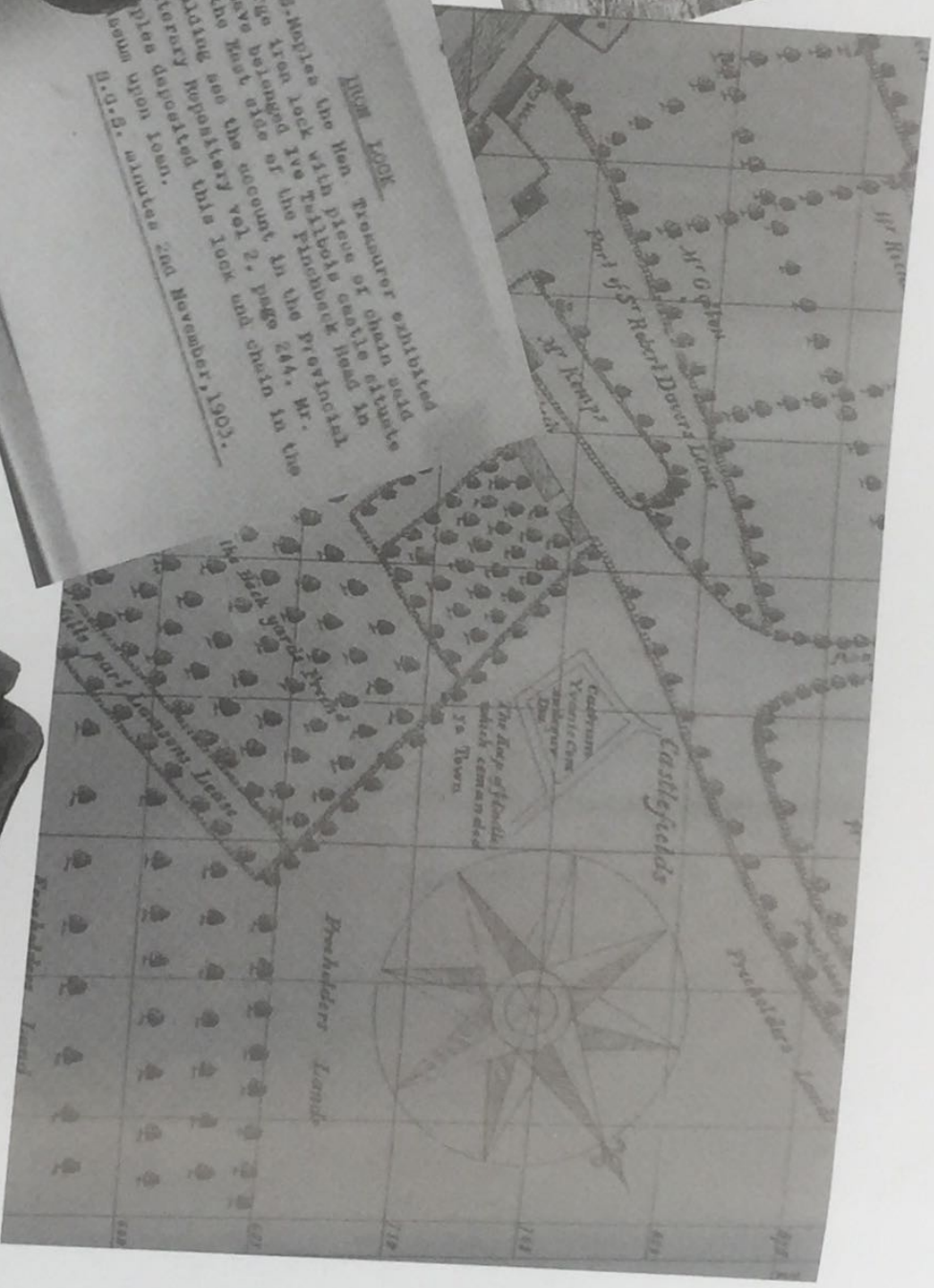
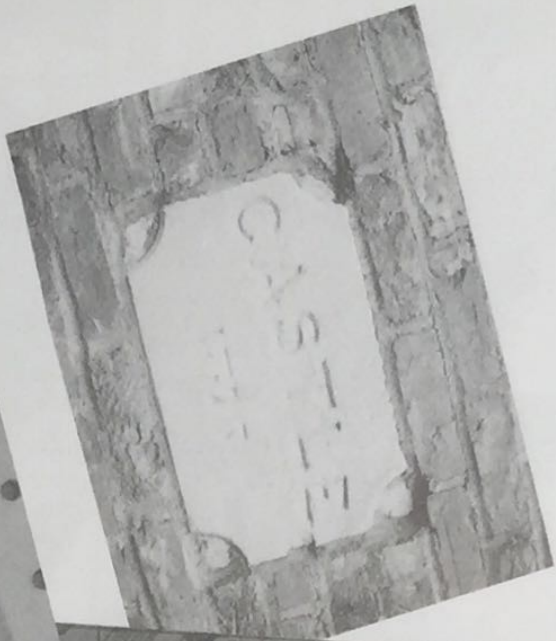
There was apparently nothing left by the time of the antiquarian Maurice Johnson, but he knew about Ivo Taillebois, although there is no account of him visiting the site. In his introduction in 1710, when the Spalding Gentlemen's Society was inaugurated, he pictured Ivo in his castle living with 'great pomp and splendour'.

The site of the castle, which may have been partly made of stone, is reasonably easy to work out, but it has never been excavated or researched.

As there are still plans by South Holland District Council to sell the sports complex, the only real park or open space within the town of Spalding, for development purposes, some heed should now be taken of the site of historic Spalding Castle. ■

# SPALDING CASTLE—FACT OR FICTION?

Little of Spalding Castle remains. Pictured below are Grundy's enclosure map of 1732, showing both the keep and the moat, a plaque on the wall of an 1875 development near the site and an iron lock that has been on display in Spalding Gentlemen's Society (SGS) museum.



**IRON LOCK**  
The Hon. Treasurer exhibited  
Mr. H. G. Mable's the Hon. Treasurer exhibited  
a large iron lock with a piece of chain and  
to have been used by the Treasurer in the  
Spalding Hospital. This lock and chain in the  
factory deposited 1905.  
H. G. M. minutes 20th November 1905.



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