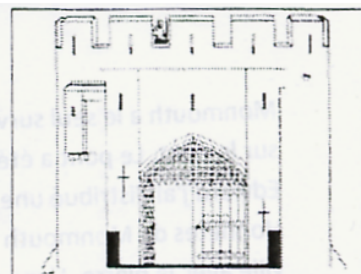


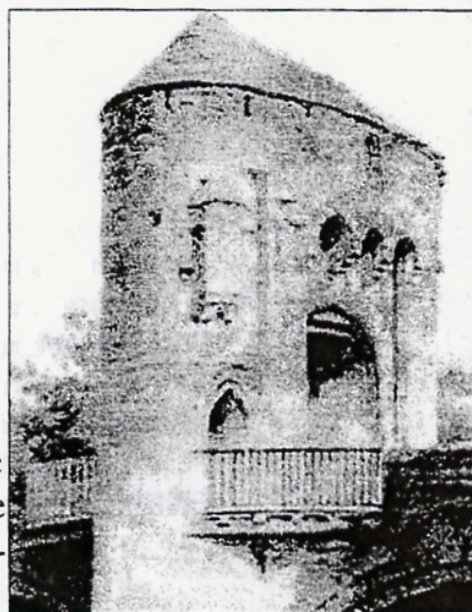
Monmouth has the only surviving medieval bridge in Britain with the gate tower standing on the bridge. The bridge was built in the late 13th century and the gate added after 1297 when Edward I issue a murage grant, enabling the 'Bailiffs and Honest Men of Monmouth' to raise money from tolls to replace the town's defences with stone.



The appearance of the bridge remained much as shown above until early in the 18thC when Monmouth Common Council ordered it 'to be repaired and fitted up' into a 'good and sufficient dwelling house'. The battlements were replaced with a higher, pitched, tiled roof and an extension was added, projecting out over the river, supported on a stone pillar and wooden beam.



The 19thC was a time of rapid change in Monmouth. The town's first 'bypass' (Priory Street) was built, the course of the Monnow was altered at its confluence with the Wye, and Monnow Bridge was adapted to the modern age. First, in 1815, the extension over the river was demolished. Then, the first pedestrian passage was cut on the upstream in 1819 at a cost of £3.10s. Since the road was only as wide as the central arch, the passageway was reached along a timber walkway out over the river. This passageway destroyed the stone winding staircase which gave access to the tower room and a new stairway and access door were built in the opposite tower, across the road. In 1826 or 1827, the bridge was widened for the whole of its length on the upstream side, and a pavement constructed. In 1830, the bridge was widened along the downstream side and a platform allowed pedestrians to pass round the side of the gate tower. In 1832, the roof was rebuilt with deeper eaves and four decorative corbels on each facade.



Finally, in 1845, in the last major structural change, the passageway in the downstream tower was cut 'at an expense not exceeding five pounds'. Since then, work has been primarily for repair or maintenance. In 1889-92 work was done to stabilise the building: ties to hold the walls together were added and the bridge was strengthened.

