



St Cadoc's Church, Llancarfan

The early 12th century church most probably sits on the site of Llancarfan's monastic clas of learning, founded by St Cadoc in the 6th or 7th century. The present building has evolved many times since the first Norman nave and chancel, with the north aisle representing the church's original footprint. The South aisle bearing the remarkable wall paintings, is late 15th century and its chapel is now known as the Raglan Chapel. Throughout the church one finds intriguing relics of pre-church history, of ancient craft, the stumps and scars of reformation and the casualties of change.

In search of the Cult of St Cadoc

The man who founded Llancarfan's Celtic monastery is said to have flourished in about 450 AD. Though a teacher of saints, perhaps a coiner of wisdom or a son of a Welsh prince, any physical image or icons are few in Wales. It is thought his relics were once held in Llancarfan, but much of his legacy rests in legend. A holy well sprang up for his baptism. He is said to have carried fire in his bare hands and stags helped to rebuild his monastery. On the downside, he blinded a king who burnt his barn, he plunged a monastic plunderer into the earth, and while his prayer book returned magically to him, after it had been lost on Flat Holm, the students he sent to retrieve it were drowned. Other legends survive in the land of his missionary work, primarily in Brittany. Few facts and many traditions still serve to confirm

his standing as a pioneer of Celtic Christianity in Wales and beyond the Severn sea-lanes.

There are 24 St Cadoc chapels or churches clustered in south-east Wales, thinning out as you travel westwards. Single surprising outliers can be found at Amlwch on Anglesey, at Cambuslang in Scotland and by Harlyn Bay in Cornwall. It takes the wealth of sites dedicated to Llancarfan's saint in Brittany to underline the far-reaching influence of Cadoc's cult. Perhaps the Reformation purges explain the dearth of Cadoc images here. A now lost Cadoc effigy was sketched in the porch at Llancarfan in 1886.

One of the more rewarding places in which to hunt for St Cadoc churches and chapels is Brittany, where one finds dozens. This Breton peninsula was apparently evangelised by the Llancarfan monk, and his iconography there is widespread. A fine chapel on the Isle de S. Cado recalls Cadoc's dubious deal with the devil to collaborate on building an island bridge, in exchange for the first soul to cross it. Cadoc's cat crossed it first and thwarted the devil. The cat survives as a statue above the chapel in Auray.

The Wall Paintings

Back in 1875, the vicar of Llancarfan reported a lack of funds with which to renovate the church, which would have unknowingly destroying the ancient limewash layers. This has proved to Llancarfan's great good fortune, for unlike England, church paintings in Wales are rarely discovered. The St George painting is the finest of only three found in Wales, and is

FEATURES

among the best-preserved representation in Britain.

In February 2008, architects discovered some thin red lines of ochre beneath centuries of whitewash, so arranged for wall-paintings conservators to come to St Cadoc's. Exposed after 500 years, were complete medieval pictures, painted to tell stories and educate the earlier worshippers. The 15th century paintings were carefully uncovered from beneath 20 layers of whitewash, plus plentiful bat droppings. The conservators skilfully revealed the hidden paintings by injecting slaked lime putty behind them to secure them for future display.

Britain's ancient churches often seem restrained or even austere by contrast to European or Asian examples, a significant consequence of the Protestant Reformation. Many of our Medieval wall decorations have been whitewashed away concealing the decorative narratives of previous culture and belief.

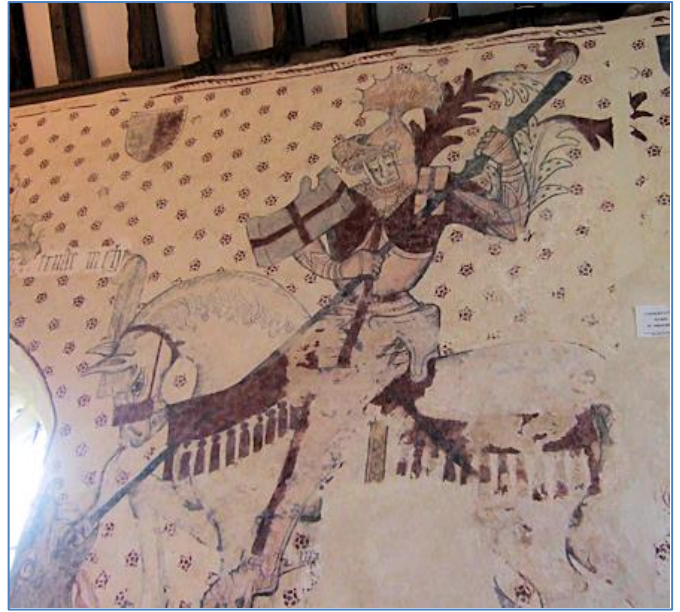
The Royals and the Lambs



The conservators unfolded ancient tales and stories last traced by the 15th century villagers of Llancarfan. One of the first to be revealed

was a royal family, best seen from the north aisle of the church. Here was the head of a queen, consort to a ginger-bearded king. Both watch, with great anxiety, their elegant daughter, the princess, with a lamb on a leash.

The Legend of St George



From murals to mummers' plays, St George is a well-known legend. Thought to be born in 3rd century Turkey, he famously rescued a princess of Silene (today's Libya) who was offered for sacrifice to a dragon. After George's ghostly leadership of Christian crusaders in 1098, he became England's patron saint under Edward III (1312-1377). As a Christian hero, he is also patron saint of Aragon, Catalonia, Georgia, Lithuania, Palestine, Portugal, Germany and Greece.

The earliest wall-painting of St George in Britain survives in Hardham, Sussex - created about 1100. The one at Llancarfan is much later. Clues to the date lie in the Princess's clothes, a design found in the late 1400s, as is George's armour. Henry VIII began the "blotting out" of church images from about 1536. So maybe the

FEATURES

paintings were only on view for less than a hundred years.

The most familiar image in pre-Reformation churches was the Virgin Mary. However, there seems to be a lack of other church wall paintings of the Virgin blessing St George's endeavours. Medieval accounts pay tribute to St George's role as "oure ladyes owen knyght". And for instance at St Neot's Church, Cornwall, a 16th century window narrates a legend of the Virgin restoring a beheaded St George to life, and then arming him to fight the evil dragon.

The Seven Deadly Sins



Lust

Diabolical encouragement will turn a chaste cuddle into lustier depravity.



Pride

In which a young monarch is flattered by his own self-importance.



Sloth

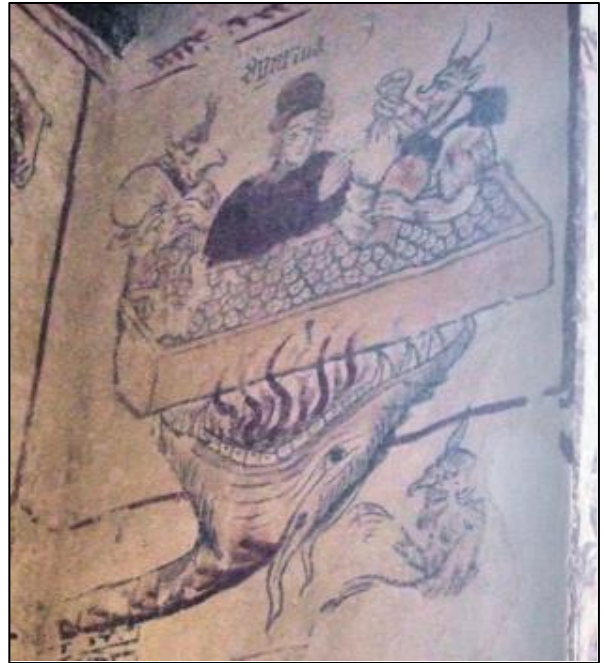
In which a suicidal victim, helped by a devil, sinks into a dragon's hellish mouth.

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Envy

Envy was predicted to emerge under Avarice.



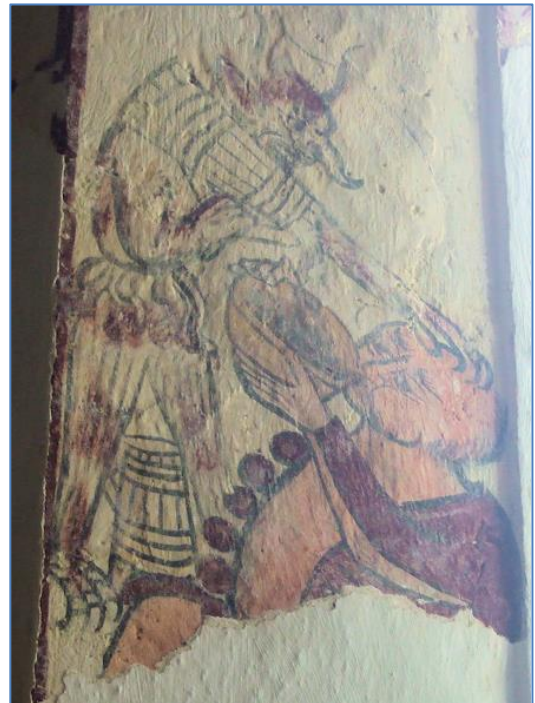
Avarice

The miser is seduced by devils bearing sacks of golden coins.



Anger

A giant devil encourages naive combatants to fight with large swords and tiny shields.



Gluttony

An insolent devil pours ale over a glutton clearly devoted to filling his belly.

The Bawdrips



Over the church entrance door is an image of Three Swans, shown on a black shield. This fits the coat of arms of the Bawdrips of Penmark and Splott, a local family connected with nearby Garn Llwyd. The Bawdrips seem front-runners for the original 15th century sponsors.

The Church Chest



St Cadoc's church chest is made of six great oak planks with iron bands and long nails. A priest and two churchwardens would have held a key to one of three locks. Such chests were built from the 13th century onwards to store church vestments, plate and parish musical instruments. This chest is yet undated.

The Apostles Creed



The Apostles Creed is thought to be Georgian (1714-1830). It begins with the words "I believe in God the Father Almighty." While every aspect of the Creed had medieval significance, this faded English text records that Jesus descended into Hell to free the righteous. It is interesting in that some representations of Christ's Harrowing of Hell have strong visual parallels with depictions of Saint George and the Dragon.

CAS visited the Llancarfan on Thursday 9th July 2014.

FEATURES

The Naval Dockyard, Portsmouth

To display the 19,000 objects recovered from the Mary Rose along with the remains of the ship, a new site was chosen in Portsmouth Historic Harbour. The sprays were turned off in 2013 and magnificent new museum was fully opened in 2016. The Museum gives a unique insight into life in Tudor England. The Mary Rose is the only ship of her kind on display anywhere in the world.



Mary Rose Museum

The Mary Rose was the flagship of Henry VIII that served in his fleet for 34 years before sinking during the Battle of the Solent in 1545, with the king watching from nearby Southsea Castle. Her remains were raised in 1982, and are now on display along with thousands of the original objects recovered alongside the ship.



HMS Victory

HMS Victory is the Royal Navy's most famous warship. Best known for her role in the Battle of Trafalgar, the Victory currently has a dual role as the Flagship of the First Sea Lord and as a living museum to the Georgian Navy.



HMS warrior

The great Warrior is an icon today as much as it was one hundred and fifty years ago during the Age of Steam. The largest and fastest of all Royal Navy ships, HMS Warrior's fame worldwide made her the jewel in the crown. Now, Warrior has undergone a re-interpretation, reflecting what she was like in 1863 by opening up new areas of the ship and bringing stories from the period to life.

FEATURES

One point of interest occurred during my recent research at Cathays Cemetery, Cardiff where I found an inscription on plot O106 to an interred sailor who had worked on the HMS Warrior.

'In / memory of / Matilda Davies / who died at
21 Cathays Terrace / 27th January 1879 /
Aged 50 years / Also of Emma wife of John
Davies / Naval Pensioner / who died August
23rd 1897 / Aged 54 years / Also of the above
named / John Davies / of her Majesty's ships /
"Warrior", "Conqueror", "Rattlesnake" / Died
April 22nd 1900 Aged 63 years / Deeply
lamented / We miss him, Oh no tongue can tell /
How much we loved him and so well.'



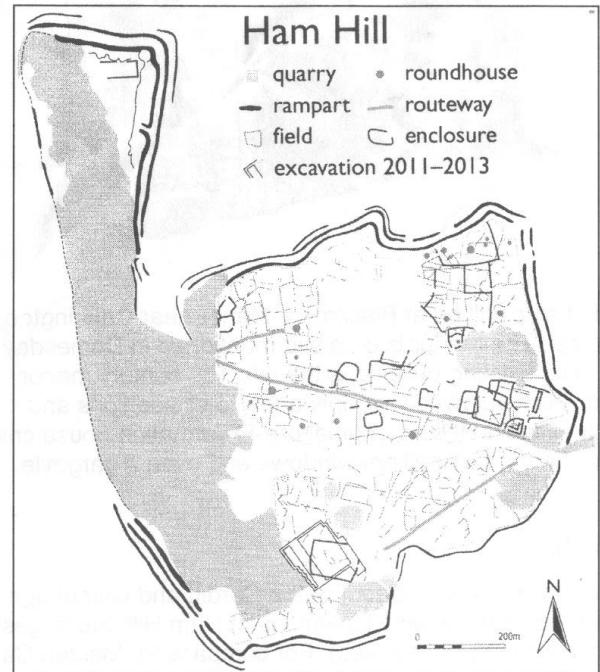
HMS M33

HMS M.33 is not only the sole remaining British veteran of the bloody Dardanelles Campaign of 1915-1916, but also of the Russian Civil War which followed. The ship is one of just three

British warships from World War I still in existence.

CAS visited the Mary Rose Museum on Saturday 7th July 2013

Ham Hill, Somerset



In 2000 CAS had a guided tour of the Cardiff and Cambridge Universities' continuing excavations at Ham Hill, the largest hillfort in Britain at 88 hectares. For comparison, Maiden Castle is only 17 hectares. Ham Hill is largely multivallate, having two and three banks around much of its boundary. The hill has been quarried since Roman times and only about half the original fort site remains. Further quarrying was required for stone to repair historic buildings, so the new quarry areas were being excavated before destruction.

FEATURES



The site has features and finds dating from the Neolithic, Beaker, Bronze Age and Iron Age periods, and a small Roman villa. There is also evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity. The project was planned for three seasons of excavations from 2011-2013 and included a geophysical survey and a full review of earlier excavations and their relevant finds. The survey showed several different layouts of regular boundaries, trackways, houses and pits. Examining the relationships and dates of the patterns was a major aim of the excavation. The Economy at the site showed some unusual features, including more horse bone and ironwork than is usually typical on other excavated hillforts, and a deposit of black mustard seeds, apparently a domestic crop.



CAS visited Ham Hill on Saturday 18th August 2012.

Highlights from the Magazines

Current World Archaeology Feb 2022-Mar 2022

Facing the Palmyrenes - Exploring life and death in a desert city

Reconnecting relationships - Uncovering genealogy in archaeology

Connecting the Inca Empire - The art of maintaining Central Andean suspension bridges

Spotlight: Ancient Greeks - Science and wisdom

Roman mosaic in Rutland

Azteken: an international exhibition, now open in Leiden Museum, presents previously unseen Aztec art

Object - Cage cup

Minerva - Archaeology & Art Jan-Feb 2022

Domitian - Dominus et Deus

The Hills are Alive - Peru at the British Museum

Divine Kings - Luxor

Honouring Augustus

A Painter's Paradise - John Craxton

Eternal Beauty - Museum of Cycladic Art, Athens

FEATURES

British Archaeology Jan-Feb 2022

Crucifixion in the Fens - Life & Death in Roman Fenstanton

Exploring English Aerial Archaeology Online

Little Church by the Railway - Romans, Normans & Victorians at Stoke Mandeville

Power for the Past - The National Grid in Dorset

Mow Cop Castle - the Height of Folly

Castle Hill Farm, Bickenhill

Current Archaeology January 2022

Cladh Hallan - Exploring the Roundhouse Way of Life in South Uist

Recent Finds at Richborough's Amphitheatre

Syon Abbey Revisited - Reconstructing Late Medieval England's Wealthiest Nunnery

Shop's of the Plainest Kind - The Architecture of England's Co-operative Movement

Photographic Memories - Neolithic Artistry in the Stonehenge Landscape

Odd Socs - The Abbey Cwmhir Heritage Trust

Current Archaeology February 2022

The Wall Warrior in Context - Exploring African identities in Roman Britain

An Experiment in Earthen Walls - Operation Nightingale, Butser Ancient Farm, and Dunch Hill Roundhouse

Lost and Found - Wall Paintings and Rood-screens in Welsh Churches

From West Africa to Wisbech - Analysing 18th Century Textiles in Thomas Clarkson's Campaign Chest

Greek Myth in Roman Rutland - Unearthing scenes from the Trojan War

The World of Stonehenge - British Museum

Odd Socs - Church Crawlers Anonymous

Quiz

1. English city known to the Romans as Aquae Sulis.
2. A..., French city with a well-preserved Roman amphitheatre.
3. European city containing the Pergamon Museum.
4. Mythical castle, identified with Cadbury Castle Hillfort in Somerset .
5. ... Graves, prehistoric flint mine in Norfolk.
6. Greek goddess of retribution.
7. Bronze Age civilisation of Crete.
8. French cave complex famous for Palaeolithic paintings.
9. S..., member of a nomadic people of the Black Sea steppes.
10. Bird sacred to the ancient Egyptians.

Usk & Usk Castle

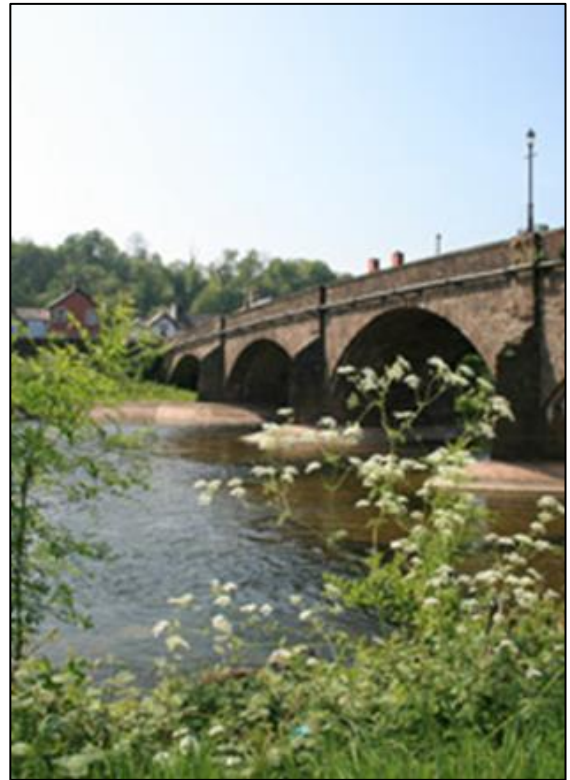
A Brief History of Usk

By the time the Romans arrived in 55 AD, there had been a scattered settlement of Iron Age farmers working in the water meadows (behind the prison) of the Usk valley who were probably living in their round huts somewhere near the site of the present Llangeview church.

The Roman construction camp was on the flat-topped hill above Casey's Court. Their fortress 'Burrium' was the regimental depot of the first pacification of south Wales. Full of officers headquarters, granaries, hospitals, barracks, baths, stables, and forges, it was occupied until 65 AD when the Legion, (of 6,000 men, plus auxiliary workers were employed in Wales) having persuaded the local population to behave themselves, withdrew to their fortress near Gloucester. They left behind a small holding force in a much reduced defended area (from the Kings Head to Mill Street, Maryport St. and the back of Ty Mawr)

The civilian population which grew up around the fort remained until about 300AD, latterly mainly occupied in the smelting of iron. There was a ready market for this from the Roman army which had returned in 75AD and built a permanent base at Caerleon which was on a navigable part of the river.

The town of Usk was a 'new' town of the medieval period, built c.1170 on the usual grid-iron layout, for the profit of Richard 'Strongbow' de Clare, on a site at that time unoccupied because of flooding. The Castle had been built some years before this, very probably the first defences being constructed shortly after 1066, on the orders of the builder of Chepstow, Monmouth, Whitecastle, Skenfrith, etc. - William FitzOsborn.

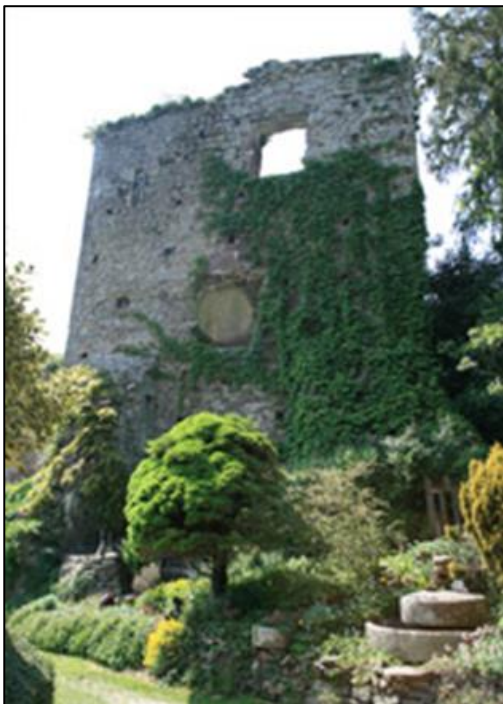


Surrounded by a defensive ditch, the town flourished, to become one of the largest in the country. It was frequently overrun, and once occupied for ten years by the Welsh in the 12th century. However, the 14th century saw a decline, the Rent Rolls telling a sad story of failed crops, dead tenants and burned houses, until the town was virtually burnt to the ground by Owain Glyndwr in 1403. The Battle of Usk in 1405 marked the beginning of the end for the Welsh rebellion, when the English forces surprised the besieging Welsh, pursued them across the river and defeated them with great loss of life. The town was rebuilt by degrees after this disaster. While they largely look Victorian, most houses in the town centre dated from the 1580s.

Fortunately Usk missed the Industrial revolution (being off the coalfield) and remained until recently a market town for the surrounding agricultural area, with the addition of some light industry (19th century Japan Ware) and now a small industrial estate and tourism.

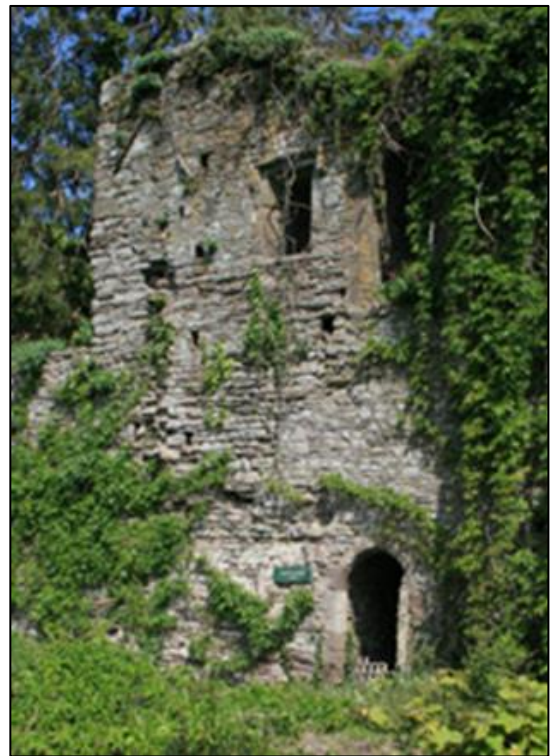
Usk Castle

Standing on a hill overlooking the town of Usk, on a site probably already used for many centuries to guard the river crossing, the castle was first mentioned in 1138, and the Norman gatehouse was probably built in the 12th century by the de Clare family. Giraldus visited Usk in 1188 to recruit support for the second crusade, and by offering to pardon those in prison if they joined, met with some success. The castle was strengthened by William Marshall, who had proved himself in tournaments sufficiently to marry Isabella, a de Clare heiress. He is famous for his skill in castle building - Pembroke, Chepstow to name just a few, so the design for the Garrison Tower at Usk, where the wall-walk passes the tower to give it greater protection, was likely to be his work. Created the 4th earl of Pembroke, he was still leading his men into battle when he was over 70. His fame was assured when, on his death in 1219, the Archbishop of Canterbury said 'Behold the remains of the best knight who ever lived.'



Usk castle was further strengthened by succeeding generations, the outer wall and gatehouse built and a new gate to the Inner

Ward replacing the original Keep gateway. Through some serious political manoeuvring on their part it fell into the hands of the notorious Despenser family, as Hugh the younger son got his hands on more lands in south Wales. Elizabeth de Burgh, the rightful heir after her father Gilbert was killed at the Battle of Bannockburn, was tricked into accepting Gower instead. However, on the death of Edward II she regained her estates and celebrated by holding a magnificent Christmas feast in 1326. By the time of her death in 1360 she had spent a great deal of money repairing and improving the castle.



The Welsh rebellion of 1400, led by Owain Glyndwr, resulted in an edict from Henry IV to strengthen and supply castles in south Wales against the rebels. The castle was besieged in 1405 as the English forces sheltered within after fleeing from Grosmont castle. Surprised by the determination of the English soldiers, led by Lord Grey of Codnor, Glyndwr's men were routed and fled to the marshy ground by the river, and many were taken prisoner. The massacre of 300 of these below the castle walls was a brutal reprisal indeed.

EVENTS & LINKS

William ap Thomas held Usk after 1431, a supporter of the Yorkist cause. Both he and his son, William Herbert, are recorded as ruthless and highly unpopular. Herbert was created 18th Earl of Pembroke in 1468, and carried out improvements to make the castle more comfortable - the large windows and fireplaces in the Keep date from this time. William Herbert was killed at the Battle of Edgecote in 1469, and Usk Castle seems to have declined from then on, superseded by the large new castle at Raglan which had been built for the new weapons of warfare, cannons. By 1564 Roger Williams was accused of taking stone from the castle with which to build his new house, Ty Mawr, in Old Market Street.

By the time John Humphreys came to live in the gatehouse in 1908, the castle had the appearance of a farmyard overgrown with ivy and large trees, although the gatehouse had become a 'gentrified' town house. With the purchase of the castle in 1933 for £525, which included one donkey and one flag, the castle began to come back to life, as Rudge Humphreys spent the 1930's excavating parts of it and planting the bulbs and shrubs which today visitors appreciate as creating a place of beauty and tranquillity.

Unfortunately the castle is presently closed to the general public, though organised visits are still possible.

CAS last visited Usk in 1989.

Past Events

Lecture: 2nd December 2021 - Beacons of the Past - Investigating the Chilterns Landscape

by Dr. Wendy Morrison, FSA, Project Manager, Beacons of the Past, Hillforts in the Chilterns Landscape, Chilterns Conservation Board.

Dr. Morrison currently works for the Chilterns Conservation Board as Project Manager of the NLHF funded Beacons of the Past Hillforts project. She also is Senior Associate Tutor for Archaeology at the Oxford University Dept. for Continuing Education. Her research areas are Prehistoric European Archaeology and Landscape Archaeology, and she has over a decade's excavation experience in Southern Britain, the Channel Islands, and India.

Beacons of the Past is a project which seeks to engage and inspire communities to discover, conserve, and enjoy the Chilterns' Iron Age hillforts and their chalk landscapes. Now in its fourth and final year, Dr. Morrison presented some of the results of the UK's largest bespoke archaeological LiDAR survey, the project's outreach programmes, and indicated what shape the final 12 months will take.

Lecture: 13th January 2022 - Social Inequality and Climate Change in the Nuragic Culture of Bronze Age Sardinia.

by Dr Emily Holt, Marie Skłodowska Curie Fellow, SHARE, Cardiff University.

Water had important ritual significance in the later Nuragic period, resulting in the construction of dramatic and impressive water temples in the Final Bronze Age 1200-900 BC. In this excellently presented and richly illustrated talk, Dr. Holt discussed her ongoing research documenting evidence for small-scale water management at early Nuragic sites on the Siddi Plateau in south-central Sardinia and explored the possible relationships between water management, social inequality, and climate change during the Nuragic cultural trajectory. The subject is little known in the UK and Dr Holt's lecture explained the fascinating history of this diverse culture that had little contact with the outside world.

Future Events

Zoom Lectures

Our 2022 season of Zoom lectures will continue with a change to our advertised programme:

27th January 2022 - Arming the Weak: Considering Juvenile and Female Weapon Burials in Early Medieval England by Ellora Bennett.

10th February 2022 - The Patients' Story: New insights into 18th/19th century surgery, anatomisation and medical teaching at the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford by Dr Louise Loe, Head of Heritage Burial Services, Oxford Archaeology.

24th February 2022 - The Boxgrove People and the Early Occupation of Northern Europe by Dr Matt Pope, Principal Research Fellow in Palaeolithic Archaeology, Senior Geoarchaeologist University College London.

10th March 2022 - Annual General Meeting Further details regarding the AGM will be forwarded to members nearer the time

Links to Websites

Recorded Previous Lectures:



Adam Gwilt: The Pembrokeshire Chariot Burial Project

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRFKub1WXfU>

Adam Gwilt of Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum of Wales discusses the 2018 discovery of an Iron Age chariot burial in Pembrokeshire, one of the most remarkable late prehistoric finds of recent times. The lecture describes its

excavation, ongoing research and community engagement.

Ken Murphy: The excavation of an early medieval cemetery at St Patrick's Chapel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pOFW32MNeFQ&t=28s>

Ken Murphy of Dyfed Archaeological Trust describes the excavations undertaken at St Patrick's Chapel, Pembrokeshire, between 2014 and 2021.



The Rutland Roman Villa Project with Jennifer Browning

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G530JW9L-yQ>

Jennifer Browning from ULAS talks on The Rutland Roman Villa Project. This is the first chance to hear about one of the most exciting excavations since the discovery of Richard III, an extraordinary Roman mosaic discovered beneath a field in Rutland. The mosaic is the first example in the UK displaying scenes from Homer's The Illiad, and one of only a handful from across Europe. It is considered one of the most remarkable and significant Roman mosaics ever found in Britain.

Leicester Cathedral Revealed Part 1 with Mathew Morris

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8YENNuM1T4>

Leicester Cathedral is building a new heritage learning centre on the site of their old song school, which was built next to the church over part of the burial ground in the 1930s. In this recorded talk, Mathew Morris from University

EVENTS & LINKS

of Leicester Archaeological Services, provides an update on what the Cathedral is doing and what (and who) the excavation has found during Phase 1 of the archaeological excavation (October 2021 - January 2022).

Answers to Quiz

*1. Bath 2. Arles 3. Berlin 4. Camelot 5. Grimes 6. Nemesis
7. Minoan 8. Lascaux 9. Scythians 10. Ibis*