

FOB NEWS

Friends of Berry Castle E- Newsletter Summer 2019

Welcome to our latest Summer edition. It's been a busy time for the Friends of Berry Castle. From the Historic England site condition survey training, to putting it into practise on Lundy and the ongoing maintenance, on site.

Historic England Site Survey Training

Back in March, we organised a cross-group training day. Members of Berry Castle, as well as NDAS and ACE archaeology came together to learn about carrying out site condition surveys. The day was led by Charlotte Russell, of Historic England, who outlined the objectives of surveying and how to conduct them. The morning was spent discussing the theory, whilst the afternoon was putting it into action, on Codden Hill, near Barnstaple. Lunchtime was spent in a lovely pub, where people could get to know each other a little more.

If anybody would like to take part in the training, drop us an email and we can organise another session.

Site Survey Condition Hub

As an offshoot of the training, Friends of Berry Castle will be recording the dates of site condition surveys in the Torridge area, assisting Historic England. The idea was to avoid several groups surveying the same sites and also take a little of the workload off the already overstretched co-ordinators.

A map of all the scheduled monuments can be found on our website, along with further information.

Future group visits to sites will be based around surveys, not only providing a morning out, but also a chance to contribute to Historic England's records.

Lundy Visit

We were surprised and very pleased to be approached by Historic England and National Trust, to carry out site condition surveys, on Lundy Island.

Our original date was postponed, due to rain. The volunteers didn't quite relish the prospect of surveying sites, with a handful of paper mache! However, the weather for the reserve day proved much better. After many emails, creating maps, amalgamating HE and NT survey forms together and endeavouring to locate each site, the group of volunteers set sail.



Although though the sun was shining, the day was to be a fairly challenging one. With 41 monuments to survey, it wasn't going to be easy. Some sites were straight forward, whilst others seemed more elusive; the whole process was a very steep learning curve. However, it sets us in good stead for future surveys.

Thank you to the volunteers, who gave up their time and energy to conduct the surveys.

Site Maintenance

With the weather warming, the brambles and weeds are loving it! Sadly for our maintenance volunteers, this doesn't make their job any easier. Every Tuesday morning, 10am-1pm, we run a working party, where saplings, weeds and brambles are removed and paths are kept clear, around the site.



spot the difference



If you are free, or know somebody who may like to lend a hand, we'd be extremely grateful for any help people can offer.

Just bring some gardening gloves and a flask and join our dedicated team in the fresh air. Sadly, due to lack of support, we will no longer be running the weekend sessions. Please let us know, if you intend to join us, so we have an idea of numbers and also, we can let you know if we have to cancel. Details will be on our 'events' page on our website.

www.berycastlehuntshaw.com

Easter Egg Hunt

On Good Friday, we ran an Easter Egg Hunt, at the Berry Castle site. The weather was fantastic and offered perfect picnicking conditions. With the wild flowers bursting out, the site was very colourful. As well as the egg hunt, the 'Berry Castle Brain Buster' was on offer for those children who wished to challenge the little grey cells. All the answers can be found on the information boards, around the site. This is also now on our website, in the *Education* section, if you'd like to download it.



Summer Dig

Bringing archaeology to the community, is important to us. This is why we're planning to excavate and restore the ancient holy well, in Newton St Petrock. In a chance conversation with the landowner, he revealed that it was traditional for the families to be Christened in the well. He had originally bought the land, in order to restore the well, but due to age, he



hadn't managed to carry it out. Our original picture in our heads was of a traditional ring of stones of about 1 metre across. However, once we located it, we were astonished at the size of it. Rather than a well, it's more of a plunge pool, measuring 3 metres across, with a surrounding wall of about 1 metre high, sunk into the slope! There appears to be a stone pavement, running out of the enclosed area, along with a possible stone platform, above it. Hopefully, we will have the answers, after the dig.

Having previously researched the history around the village, the findings were presented to the local community, including previously unrecorded features, detected from a drone, during last Summer. The enthusiasm generated, was fantastic and has hopefully sparked a new interest in archaeology, with many of the residents.

The dig will take place during Wednesday 3 – 10th July. Further details will be sent out in the next week. If you are interested in volunteering, please drop us an email at berrycastle1.co.uk, where we can send the information directly to you.

Who was St Petrock?

Saint Petrock was a Welsh prince, son of King Glywys of Glywsing (ancient name of Glamorgan), who trained as a priest in Ireland and journeyed to Devon (Dewnans) and Cornwall (Kernow) in the 6th century to preach. Associations with his name stretch from North Wales, through Devon and Cornwall, into Brittany. Many wells are dedicated to saints, but rarely can they be directly associated with them. St Petrock's Well, in Newton St Petrock, was allegedly dedicated to him, when he visited.

There are a number of stories surrounding St Petrock. According to the legends, St Petrock was returning from a pilgrimage to Rome, when he stayed at Newton St Petrock. During his time there, it rained constantly. The locals asked him when the storm would stop and he told them that it would end the next day.

Unfortunately for him, it continued to rain (it's Devon, after all). He was appalled at his own presumption, that he could foretell the future and set out on a journey of penance to Rome, then Jerusalem, then India. There, he befriended a wolf, which he is often pictured with. His journey took seven years, before returning to Britain.

His understanding of storms may have been on par with Michael Fish, however, St Petrock is more commonly associated with humility and caring for animals. He is often depicted with a staff and bell, as well as being accompanied by a stag and wolf. Two stories tell of dragons. The



first is when he came across a dragon with a splinter in it's eye. St Petrock removed the splinter and bound the eye with his sash, before leading it to Padstow and releasing it into the sea. The second tells of a dragon who regularly flew down and ate the villager's sheep. He was captured, kept in a pit and fed cattle, until the villagers decided what to do with him. St Petrock was appalled by this and hooked his staff around the dragon's neck and again, led him down to Padstow, to be released into the sea. Padstow, by the way, was originally called Llanbedrog, then Petrocstowe, in honour of him, where the saint founded a monastery.

A third story tells of his time as a hermit on Bodmin Moor, where he saved a deer from a hunt, led by Constantine of Cornwall. St Petrock, apparently, converted Constantine to Christianity. Some say the saint could even turn into a stag!

When St Petrock died, he was buried in Padstow. Around 1000 AD, his relics, including his staff and bell, were taken to Bodmin, where his shrine was built. In 1177, the relics were stolen by a Breton, who took them to the Abbey of St Meen, in Brittany. The Bishop of Exeter was outraged and asked King Henry II to intervene. The King ordered the relics to be returned, but granted the Abbey one single rib.

During the Reformation, his relics were thrown into the bay of Hailemouth, near Padstow, bringing an end to any physical remains of the saint. The ivory casket, which held his relics, can still be seen at St Petroc's in Bodmin.

Visits

Durpley Castle – Early August (dependant on grass-cutting)

Keep an eye on our 'Events' page, as it lists upcoming visits and events.



Articles and photographs

If you have any reviews of sites, visits or something which you think would be of interest to our supporters, please share it with us.

We'd also appreciate any photographs you may have taken, whilst at Berry Castle, which reflect the changing seasons, at the site. Please email them in.