

THE FOB NEWS



ISSUE 2 22 FEBRUARY 2016

Welcome to our second newsletter with news about Berry Castle and articles about the Iron Age. And to demonstrate that we are not Iron Age nerds there is even a 'Viking' article! Examining place names can provide us with a lot of information about the origins of a feature so we kick off this issue with an analysis of the name 'Berry Castle' There follows a report on the magnificent Celtic exhibition at the British Museum and then clarification of what a 'Celt' is. Then there is that Viking article that demonstrates how the animal kingdom can help archaeologists in their research. After a news roundup there is an account of an Iron Age feature at Alverdiscott. The generosity of the Torrington is highlighted. We continue our focus on Iron Age communities from around the world and learn about the people who lived in Anhadhurapura, Sri Lanka from 900 – 300 BC. Finally there is news of the first Berry Castle Open Day due to take place on the 17th July 2016 as part of the Festival of Archaeology, organized by the Council for British Archaeology. **AND PLEASE SUPPORT OUR FUNDRAISING QUIZ NIGHT IN MARCH.**



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Why Berry Castle? By Adrian White

Whilst perusing Wikipedia to see if anything is written on our local ancient site, I came across a number of ancient fortification sites with the name Berry within the County of Devon. So why Berry? Why not some other name like Huntshaw Castle or Weare Gifford Castle?

Berry would appear to be a common name within the South West of England with a number of Iron Age sites using the name berry or variations including bury, For example; Berry Castle at Black Dog, Devon, Berry's Wood Castle at Newton Abbot, Berry camp at Branscombe, Berry Head at Brixham and Berry Pomeroy Castle (Although not renowned as Iron Age it is most definitely a castle, being a fine stack of well placed stones but probably on a very ancient site). Outside of Devon there is a Berry castle just the other side of Exmoor at Luccombe, Somerset. This list is not a definitive list and many more sites exist with berry or bury contained within the place names. Other variations may include burg, boro, and borough, a misconfiguration of which may come from the Old English word of byrgan which probably derived from the Germanic language of byrgana indicating "to protect, to shelter". However, the most likely explanation derives from the Germanic language word burgz indicating "fortified elevation /castle/city" But if berry does mean Castle/fortification then isn't it rather tautological to call it Berry Castle. Answers on a post card please to Audrey or Keith!

The Friends of Berry Castle are grateful to Devon Clinton Estate for granting permissive rights to the site.

The Torrington Cavaliers support Berry Castle

On the 5th December Chris and I were privileged to accept a cheque for £250 from the Torrington Cavaliers at the Plough Art Centre. Many of you will be aware of the Trumpton Bonfire that took place in August. This was an important charity event organized by the Torrington Cavaliers in which over £50,000 was raised for local organisations.

The morning started with the hilarious Torrington Trumpton video that featured the raw acting talent of the Cavaliers. Watch the video on youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7zdYGIBfrQ> and look out for familiar faces. Then the cheques were presented to around 60 local organisations. It was a memorable occasion and humbling to hear about the good work that is going on around us by so many dedicated people.



The Torrington Cavaliers on stage at the Plough Art Center

The Friends of Berry Castle would like to thank the Torrington Cavaliers for their generosity. The money will go towards information boards that will be placed around the Berry Castle site.

You never know what you are going to find when you are out for your morning stroll!

I know that this is not an Iron Age story, nor did it take place in north Devon but it happened to the brother of Sarah, a work colleague so. As always in these situations, I became overexcited and just had to put pen to paper. Michael Horton was out walking at Torksey, Lincolnshire recently when he came across a newly constructed badger sett. The badgers had been busy throwing out not only earth but human bones. An almost complete (but deconstructed) skeleton was scattered around the ground at his feet. He called the police who notified the coroner. It is thought that the bones are Viking remains as there is a settlement nearby. The



bones remain in place until an archaeologist examines them. What can we learn from this tale? ***Never ignore a badger sett or a mole hill. Our animal friends provide a valuable contribution to archaeology.*** By Audrey Alimo



The Celts: art and identity

The use of chariots in displays and warfare are commonly thought to be a Roman invention. In fact *Celts were the first people to use chariots in this way. Similarly horned helmets are associated with the Vikings but it is likely that the first such helmets were worn by Celts. The Celts were the first people to use intimidating noise through the carnyx when going into battle and they first created abstract art. Importantly, the Celts were not the uncivilised, woad-painted barbarians as promulgated by Julius Caesar. The Celts were in fact a society of highly skilled craftsman, industrious farmers and miners who traded with Europe. They crafted intricate jewellery, elaborate ceremonial vessels, highly decorated everyday objects and ornate religious artefacts.

The Celts: art and identity exhibition at the British Museum is the first major exhibition in decades that tells the story of the Celts through the magnificent objects they made. Ann and I were fortunate to attend the exhibition recently and we came away with a feeling of awe at the stunning exhibits that showcased the sophistication and talent of the Celtic people.

The exhibition is in chronological order with an introductory section that sets the scene geographically. Starting at around 500 BC, the section on the Iron Age looks takes a broad approach looking at the pan European story in which similarities and differences among different Celtic groups are highlighted. The section on the Roman period focuses mainly on British and Irish people where distinctive Celtic identities were emerging at the edge of the Roman Empire. The medieval section addresses the birth of Christianity and the rebirth of the Celtic tradition in the 1700s. The final section addresses how Celtic traditions are interpreted today.



The Battersea shield.
c. 350–50 BC. Found in
the River Thames,
London

<http://www.britishmuseum>



The Gundestrup Cauldron c 200 BC to 300 AD

Found in a peat bog in Denmark

<http://en.natmus.dk/historical->

[knowledge/denmark/prehistoric-period-until-1050-ad/the-early-iron-age/the-gundestrup-cauldron/](http://en.natmus.dk/historical-knowledge/denmark/prehistoric-period-until-1050-ad/the-early-iron-age/the-gundestrup-cauldron/)



An amateur treasure hunter found four gold neck ornaments (torcs) in a field near Stirling. These torcs are a discovery of European significance, and show the wealth, power and connections of people during the Iron Age (c. 300-100

BC). <http://www.nms.ac.uk/explore/collec>

What and who is a Celt?

Defining what and who a Celt is has been challenging and as a result the meaning of the word 'Celt' has changed several times over the last two thousand years. The term originates from the ancient Greeks around 500 BC when they used the word 'Keltoi' to describe people living to the west of Greece and north of the Alps (but not those living in Britain and Ireland). The word then drops out of use for 1000 years and didn't emerge again until the printing press was invented in 1482 when the term Celt (or Keltoi) was rediscovered in classical texts and printed for circulation.

It wasn't until 1582 that the word started being applied to people of Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man. In the 1700s scholars studied the languages of Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Brittany and Cornwall and realised that there were connections between them. They wanted to give that language family a name and as they were in Western Europe they chose the word Celt. The word Celtic then came to resonate the descriptive languages, culture and traditions of these people. Then it went on to become the term that differentiated these people from the English and the French. However there were many different groups of people within these areas who buried their dead differently, lived in different sorts of houses, dressed differently. Although the languages were similar they were not necessarily understandable to other Celtic groups and they did not conceive themselves as the same group of people. Today the term Celt is used to describe native people from Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Cornwall.

CAN YOU TOP THIS PHOTOGRAPH OF BERRY CASTLE?



The latest aerial view of Berry Castle, taken by our ubiquitous Drone Man Ian Kevern of Skyz ink. The banks of the hillfort can be clearly seen. We would love to print your photos whether of flowers, birds, little furry creatures that scurry around at night or maybe an elusive deer. So please send your photos in to me Dee at thehannahs1@sky.com

FOB NEWS ROUNDUP



A Christmas Walkabout On Sunday, 6th December a group of FOB members, festooned in Christmas jumpers, santa hats and tinsel met for a festive walkabout around Berry Castle. Despite the rain a good time was had by all. (We FOBBERS don't do fine weather!) The walk started at the car park where all

stops had been pulled out to decorate the gate. Yes if you look closely you will see the tinsel! Although this was an Iron Age event we were honoured to have Keithwulf, a saxon chieftain and his faithful dog Briatric, join us. After the walk the mulled wine and mince pies were most welcome. Thank you all for coming along and thank you to Ann for making the delicious mince pies.



Stick Stripping And if that wasn't enough, we met again on 17th January for the first site clearance session of the year. For probably the first time ever during a FOB event it didn't rain. FOBBERS came equipped with hoes, rakes and wheelbarrows and spent an enjoyable morning clearing the eastern bank. There is of course much more clearing to do and again thank you all for your hard work.



We now have our own strimmers In preparation for the clearance work that lies ahead the Friends of Berry Castle recently took delivery of two strimmers along with safety helmets. After undertaking some training in the Spring FOB members will begin the task of keeping the site clear of brambles and bracken. We thank Clinton Devon Estates and Historic England for funding the equipment and the training and we thank Keith for posing with them. I am reminded of a Celtic warrior brandishing his weapons.



Geophysical Survey We are currently working with Ross Dean from Substrata with the aim of carrying out a geophysical survey of Berry Castle in the late spring. Watch this space for more news on this exciting venture.

What is going on at Alverdiscott? Audrey Alimo

Berry Castle is now relatively well known in the area thanks to the hard work of FOB members. However, Alverdiscott has its own Iron Age hillfort of which little has been written. That is about to change! Alverdiscott's hillfort lies adjacent to a Roman marching camp at Higher Kingdon between Woodtown and Gammaton. Like Berry Castle it is a Scheduled Monument.

Unfortunately nothing remains above ground of either the hillfort or the Roman camp as agricultural practice has resulted in them being ploughed out. The sites were however identifiable as crop marks up until the 1970s. The hillfort is described as a triple-ditched fortified enclosure that lies on a ridge which forms some of the highest ground on the edge of the Torridge valley. There are extensive views of the surrounding countryside in all directions. Until recently it has never been investigated, however, early in 2015 a geophysical survey was carried out on the site. The results of this survey have not yet been published and the results are eagerly awaited. More recently a process known as archaeological test pitting has taken place in which a series of nine test pits measuring 1m by 1m were opened across the site. Six of the test pits encountered archaeological features and deposits including two ditches and four probable ditch fills. The test pitting confirmed that a number of likely archaeological features lie within the area of the Scheduled Monument. No dating material was found. The topsoil was 0.3m deep making it unlikely that shallow features and deposits have survived the plough. (South West Archaeology, 2015. http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archiveDS/archiveDownload?t=arch-721-1/dissemination/pdf/southwes1-201266_1.pdf) **More about Roman marching camps in the next edition.**

Annual General Meeting

On Thursday, 18th February 2016 we held our AGM at the Black Horse Pub on Torrington Square.

The following officers were elected:

Chairperson: Audrey Alimo audreyalimo@yahoo.co.uk Mob: 0795 2028013

Secretary: Emma Barrow emmacbarrow@msn.com 01805623266

Treasurer: Chris Tattersall

Clinton Devon Estate representative: John Wilding MBE

Newsletter editor: Dee Hannah thehannahs1@sky.com

The following committee members were elected

Ann White

Carolyn Ledger

Michael Jones

Michael Barrow

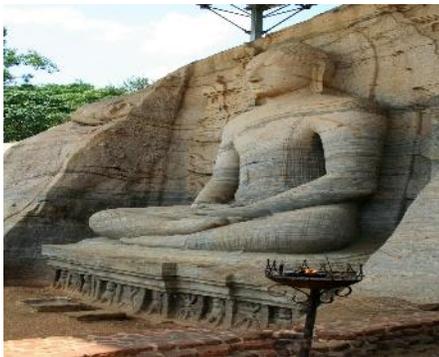
Phil White

Anhadhurapura by Dee Hannah

Here I am in Sri Lanka enjoying glorious sunshine, sea and sand. Whilst idling my time I thought it would be fun to tell you about a wonderful city and its people living during and after the time of Berry Castle. The city was developed by the Sinhalese in the 4th century BC, so approximately 200 years later than Berry Castle, but it lasted way past the British Iron Age into the 10th century AD. The city is known as Anuradhapura and it was fascinating to see the ruins that were given world Heritage Status in 1982.



Anuradhapura is a vast site so it took a full day to visit just part of it. The Iron Age (900 to 300 BC) saw the appearance of iron, pottery, domestic cattle and horses, and the cultivation of paddy fields. The city was surrounded by fertile land and had ports to the northeast and west. It also enjoyed good defence because of impenetrable dense jungle surrounding it. Between 500 -250 BC plans were made to build gates, quarters for traders, tanks (large reservoirs to hold water), a cemetery and a place of execution. This mainly occurred during the reign of King Penduhabhaya. Many religious buildings were erected for wandering monks, and a chapel erected for the 'Queen's of The Banyan Tree' alongside a lying-in centre for the ill.



The golden age for master complexes was between 275 and 310 BC when gigantic stupas (religious buildings) were developed. Many lakes and tanks were constructed using



complex irrigation systems that were probably the most advanced in the world at that time. The major religion was Buddhism which influenced the culture, law and method of governance. Anuradhapura remained an important Sacred City until it was abandoned due to frequent raids from South India in the 10th century AD.

It was a great privilege to visit this beautiful ruined city, now partially restore, and marvel at the amazing buildings, tanks and irrigation schemes that were so advanced for the Iron Age period.

BERRY CASTLE

OPEN DAY

Experience a taste of the Iron Age
Sunday, 17th July 2016, 11 am – 4 pm

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We are delighted to welcome Dumnonika, a re-enactment and living history society representing life in the British Iron Age to Berry Castle.



Other activities/displays confirmed so far:

Displays of dowsing
Metal detecting
Devon Wildlife
Storytelling
The Big Berry Wave
Guided walks



Berry Castle lies in woodland and access is via a track with some inclines. Easier access for the less-abled will be provided from Foxes Cross. Nearby parking will be available. For more information contact: Emma Barrow

emmacbarrow@msn.com 01805623266

General Knowledge Quiz Night

Saturday 19th March 2016. 7.00pm for 7.30pm start at Huntshaw Village Hall. £5.00 per person, maximum of 6 per team. Entry fee will include a cheese board, pickles and selection of biscuits per table. Wine will be available by donation. Cash prize for the winning team. All proceeds to the Friends of Berry Castle. Places are limited so book your table now. Contact Emma Barrow emmacbarrow@msn.com or tel: 01805 623266

The latest storms have left their mark



These photographs were taken on Saturday, 20th February 2016. Around 20 trees have been uprooted and grounded just beyond the northern bank of Berry Castle. It is likely that more trees will fall before the winter is over. Clinton Devon Estates and Historic England have been informed.



Join us on Facebook



Watch this space for our website

DIARY OF EVENTS 2015/16

STRIMMER TRAINING A training session on using a strimmer is to take place on **Saturday, 5th March 2016, 10 am at Foxes Cross**. Please notify Emma Barrow if you wish to attend. Emma can be contacted via email on emmacbarrow@msn.com or telephone 01805 623266

SITE CLEARANCE DAY **Sunday, 13th March 2016, 10 am – 1 pm**. Meet on site. Bring hoes, rakes and protective gloves.

QUIZ EVENING **Saturday 19th March 2016. 7.00pm for 7.30pm start at Huntshaw Village Hall**. £5.00 per person, maximum of 6 per team. Entry fee will include a cheese board, pickles and selection of biscuits per table. Wine will be available by donation. Cash prize for the winning team. All proceeds to the Friends of Berry Castle. Contact Emma Barrow emmacbarrow@msn.com or tel: 01805 623266

SITE CLEARANCE DAY **Sunday, 10th April 2016, 10 am – 1 pm**. Meet on site. Bring hoes, rakes and protective gloves.

A BLUEBELL WALK The bluebell has been voted Britain's favourite flower, and it's clear why when you see the wood covered with these pretty flowers. **Sunday, 17th April 2016, 11 am – 12:30 pm**. Meet at the car park, Foxes Cross



SITE CLEARANCE DAY **Sunday, 15th May 2016, 10 am – 1 pm**. Meet on site. Bring hoes, rakes and protective gloves.

FOB NEWSLETTER Issue 4, **Monday, 16th May 2016**

A FOXGLOVE FEST AND BRACKEN BLITZ Come and enjoy the magnificent foxgloves in full bloom while at the same time removing harmful bracken shoots from the site. **Sunday, 19th June 2016, 11 am – 12:30 pm. Meet on site.**

BERRY CASTLE OPEN DAY **Sunday, 17th July 2016, 11 am – 4 pm** Join us for an Iron Age experience. See page 8 for more information

FOB NEWSLETTER Issue 5 **Monday, 15th August 2016**

AN AUTUMN STROLL **Sunday, 9th October 2016, 11 am – 12:30 pm** Meet at the car park, Foxes Cross

FOB NEWSLETTER Issue 6 **Monday, 14th November 2016**

A WINTER WALK followed by mulled wine and mince pies. **Sunday, 4th December 2016, 11 am – 12:30 pm**. Meet at the car park, Foxes Cross

FOB newsletter Issue 2, 22 February 2016

