



# FOB NEWS

Friends of Berry Castle Newsletter

Issue 5: August 2016

Welcome to newsletter number 5. Exciting times! It has been a hectic few months and a great deal has been achieved. Firstly, thank you to all visitors and stallholders who came along to our Open Day and made it such a great success. We had a range of stalls and displays which focused on history and/or archaeology. A diorama of Berry Castle was unveiled, beautifully made to scale by Phil Martin and Harry Cox. The day also saw the launching of 'Hawhnuts' a book written by Richard Sears who grew up in Huntshaw in the 1960s. The Big Berry Wave proved to be popular and you can watch the video on Youtube. From the feedback it seems that everyone enjoyed the day finding it interesting and informative. The volunteers did an amazing job and get everyone's heartfelt thanks.



Also in this issue read about the local Army Cadets who have worked incredibly hard clearing the Berry Castle site in recent months. And we announce the generous grant awarded to FOB from the Coastal Recycling Fund. We introduce Linda Thomas our new treasurer and membership secretary and thank Chris Tattersall for his excellent work as treasurer since the inauguration of FOBS. He will be missed but we know where to find him so he will not get away from us completely! The News Update indicates just how busy we have been over the past three months and just 12 hours before this newsletter was sent out we received the long awaited report on the geophysical survey that was conducted in June. We have not had time to digest this yet but have included a brief summary of findings. And finally, continuing our theme of how people lived read about methods of cooking and the utensils that may have been used at Berry Castle in its heyday.

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## THE LUCKY WINNERS OF THE OPEN DAY RAFFLE

1. The hamper: - Mrs Petherick, Bideford.
2. Milky Way complimentary tickets: Mr & Mrs Branch, Bickington.
3. Combe Martin Wildlife & Dinosaur Park complimentary tickets: - Mr Pearson, Barnstaple.
4. The Big Sheep complimentary tickets- Mrs Frayne:, Atherington.
5. RHS Rosemoor Gardens complimentary tickets: -Caroline James.
6. Bottle of wine - Nick & Polly

The Friends of Berry Castle are grateful for permissive rights granted by Clinton Devon Estates

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## LOCAL ARMY CADETS SUPPORT BERRY CASTLE

During the spring and early summer, we have been fortunate to have local army cadets helping with final clearance of the site and creating a series of paths around the perimeter of the hillfort. Around 40 cadets from the Torrington, Holsworthy and Bideford detachments came along with their commanding officers on three separate occasions to work diligently in all weathers.



The rain came down hard and fast on the first day but this did not deter anyone. There was much cheerful banter and camaraderie and one person was heard to say "I didn't know that raking could be so much fun". The work carried out by the cadets made the site more accessible and safer for visitors and was an essential part of preparations for our first major community event – the Open Day.



As if that wasn't enough the same cadets then came to help us on during the Open Day carrying out duties including car parking management, handing out information leaflets and assisting visitors. They found time to enjoy themselves participating in activities such as dowsing and metal detecting and consuming Iron Age porridge.

A main event during the Open Day was a formal ceremony to reward the army cadets for their hard work at Berry Castle. Col. Ashley Fulford, MBE Commandant of Devon ACF awarded certificates of achievement for community work to each cadet. The certificates will contribute to a Duke of Edinburgh award.

**The FOB committee would like to thank the army cadets and their commanding officers for their support and hard work over the past three months.**



## THE BERRY CASTLE DIORAMA



The Berry Castle diorama was unveiled at the recent Open Day. This impressive model of Berry Castle includes Iron Age houses, people and animals which makes it more 'real' and represents a good example of what it may have looked like 2,600 years ago. The model has been made to scale by FOB members Phil Martin and Harry Cox and it is shortly to go on display in the new Torrington Heritage Museum. Our grateful thanks to Phil and Harry for producing such an accurate replica of Berry Castle.

We will let you know when it is on display so go along to see it and support our local museum at the same time. The photos show Harry presenting the model to visitors at the Open Day. He is also one of the army cadets who also helped with site clearance work.



## AWARD OF A GRANT FROM THE COASTAL RECYCLING COMMUNITY FUND



The Friends of Berry Castle are delighted to have received a grant of £8,500 from the Coastal Recycling Community Fund. The Fund supports community projects in close proximity to Coastal Recycling's operations in Devon and as most of you will know, Berry Castle lies within a mile of its Deep Moor Recycling Centre and Landfill Site at High

Bullen. We are one of six organisations that have benefited from being awarded grants in the latest round this year.

Harry Wild, Coastal Recycling Community Fund Manager said, "We are delighted to be able to support such worthy initiatives across Devon. Each successful project demonstrated a positive impact on its area, so we very much look forward to seeing these projects come to life."

More than £3.8m has been awarded through the fund to date, securing hundreds of community projects for the county.

### How will the grant be used?

The grant will be used to fund two major projects. Firstly, a geophysical (Magnetometer) survey of Berry Castle (already carried out) as part of a research programme into the origins of the site. Secondly, FOB are commissioning a series of interpretation boards that will be placed around the site to help visitors understand how the site was used. We are working with Clinton Devon Estates and Historic England in order to design and make the signs. This work is in progress and we hope to be well on our way to putting the boards up by the autumn.

### A big thank you

The Friends of Berry Castle are very grateful to Coastal Recycling for their generous grant award as this has enabled us to move closer to achieving two key objectives which is to raise the profile of the site and to find out more about it. We also wish to thank GrantScape, who administer the Fund, for making the whole process of grant application straightforward and painless. There will be a lot more information on progress in future editions of the newsletter.

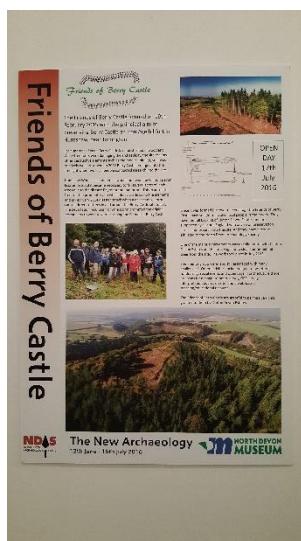
# NEWS UPDATE

## ECOLOGICAL SURVEY

On Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June members of the Barnstaple branch of the Devon Wildlife Trust conducted an ecological survey of Berry Castle and the surrounding area. Ornithological expert Paul Madgett identified 11 different species of birds, plant expert Mary Breeds identified more than 60 different plant species and insect expert John Bradbeer identified 14 species of insects including butterflies, bumble bees, dragon flies and beetles. The data collected will be entered into the data base of the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre (run by DWT). The Friends of Berry Castle are grateful to the DWT and are considering creating an ecology interpretation board for the site. More on this to follow.

## BIDEFORD HERITAGE DAY

On Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> July members of FOB went along to the Bideford Heritage Day, an annual event that celebrates and promotes Bideford's past. Michael prepared a magnificent display that proved to be popular with visitors and we were able to enlighten many people who had still not heard of Berry Castle. Some FOB enthusiasts donned Torrington 1646 costumes. Unfortunately, we have not yet acquired Iron Age dress so borrowed from another era demonstrating our willingness to embrace other periods. It was good fun.



## A BARNSTAPLE MUSEUM EXHIBITION

From 12<sup>th</sup> June to 16<sup>th</sup> July the Barnstaple Museum and the North Devon Archaeology Society put on an exhibition to showcase 'New Archaeology' in North Devon. We were invited to submit a poster of our activities and some of us attended a cheese and wine reception at the museum which formally opened the exhibition. We found that our poster was part of an impressive display with exhibits from many local societies and groups. It was clear that there is a lot going on in the field of archaeology throughout North Devon.

## NOMINATION OF FOB FOR AN AWARD

We are honoured to have been nominated for a 2016 Historic England Angel Award by Charlotte Russell of Historic England. The Annual Historic England Angel Awards celebrate and reward the efforts of local people in saving their heritage and are co funded by the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation. FOB has been nominated under the 'Best Community Action Project' category. Four applicants will be short-listed for each of the five award categories and short-listed applicants will be invited to meet Andrew Lloyd Webber and other judges at the Award Ceremony at the Palace Theatre in London's West End in November. We await the announcement of short-listed applicants. We would never have been nominated without the support of our members so thank you all.

## A NEW TREASURER FOR FOB

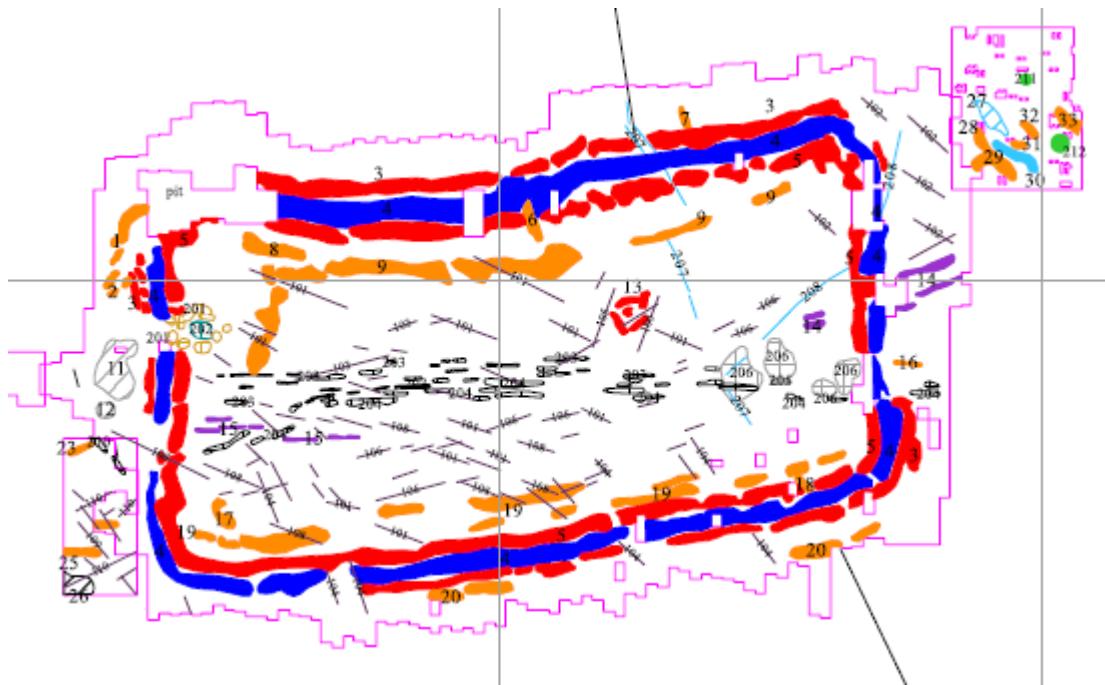
We are pleased to introduce Linda Thomas who has joined the FOB committee as our new treasurer and membership secretary. Linda lives at Merton now but formerly lived in Huntshaw. She has been an active member of FOB. Linda comes with experience as she and her husband Ron are the UK and Overseas membership secretaries of The Vincent HRD Owner's Club, a worldwide vintage motorcycle club with over 2000 members.

## RESULTS OF THE GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

The first ever geophysical survey of Berry Castle was completed in early July and the full report was released only 12 hours before this newsletter went out. The survey consisted of a magnetometer examination which is designed to detect variation in the Earth's magnetic field. We were concerned that extensive roots of trees that covered the site until recently would obscure magnetic signals, however, our fears proved to be unfounded. Thirty-three magnetic anomaly groups were recorded as representing possible archaeological deposits or features making it likely that past human activity of some sort had taken place on the site.

We had hoped to be able to provide more information in this newsletter on the outcome of the survey however we require Ross Dean to explain the technicalities of the report before we can make sense of it. We will send out more information in due course including plans for further research.

I have included below one of many diagrams that appear in the report to demonstrate how technically challenging it is to interpret.



The survey was carried out by local archaeologist Ross Dean from Substrata.

## INTERPRETATION BOARDS

Our next big project is the design, construction and placing of interpretation boards around the site. A few of us have visited various sites in Devon, Hampshire and further afield to look at examples of other boards focussing specifically on their design and content. We have found varying degrees of quality and have gained some exciting ideas that we are taking forward. We hope to have this work well underway by September.

# THE BERRY CASTLE OPEN DAY

On Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> July the Friends of Berry Castle held their first major community event to celebrate the Council for British Archaeology's annual Festival of Archaeology. We were a little apprehensive about whether the preparation and planning would pay off however it turned out to be a successful day with close on 300 people coming along. And the sun shone throughout! There were a variety of stalls, displays and activities including archaeology, history, re-enactments, displays of dowsing and metal detecting and hands on archaeology for children. FOB also put on their own display that included an update on local archaeology and a replica of the Huntshaw dagger.



The event was opened by Peter Christie, local historian who rang a bell to announce the start of the day. John Wilding MBE, representing Clinton Devon Estates, spoke about recent forestry work including the project to remove conifer trees from the Berry Castle site. I outlined the history of FOB.

## THE BIG BERRY WAVE

A key event was the Big Berry Wave which

involved the visitors standing on the top of the banks of the site and waving energetically at a drone that videoed the spectacle. The drone was operated by our favourite Drone Man Ian Kevern, SkyzInk who is a regular photographer of the site. To see the video access this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQpCxrCVsZU&feature=youtu.be> (search for 'Big Berry Wave')



or find it on Youtube



The army cadets were on hand to help the day run smoothly and the photograph shows them being briefed on their tasks for the day.

## GUIDED TOURS

Our own FOB expert, Michael Jones conducted a series of guided tours throughout the afternoon in which visitors were taken around the Berry Castle site as well as introduced to some features that lie outside of the hillfort and which are of interest for future research. The tours proved to be very popular and Michael was kept busy.

## DOWSING

The Tamar Dowsers and the Devon Dowsers introduced visitors to the ancient skill of dowsing which proved to be a popular activity throughout the day. The dowsers were also busy surveying the site and came up with some interesting findings concluding that Berry Castle was never a defensive site but that it housed a farming community of 15 – 20 dwellings. The ramparts served to keep stock in and wild animals out and it was suggested that the site had never been attacked and that one had ever been killed there. A few crematory graves were identified within the enclosure. At the end of the afternoon, Nigel Twinn, Chair of the Tamar Dowsers reported the results of the dowser's work to assembled visitors. Many admitted to having some scepticism before having a go but were surprised at the being able to master the skill and at the findings.

You will find a comprehensive report on the dowsing activity at Berry Castle on this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/432302696948193/>



## ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

There were lots of things for children to do during the afternoon including facepainting (the Celtic way), making Iron Age jewellery and Celtic tattoos. The children also learned about the importance of poo in archaeology and were told that nothing gets an archaeologist excited more than a cesspit. There were a selection of Iron Age and Roman poos on hand which the more adventurous were able to dissect. The photograph shows children excavating in an archaeological trench that was created especially for the day. All sorts of exciting things were found in the trench including an Iron Age hearth, bones, jewellery and pottery.

## REFRESHMENTS

Here we see Ed giving the Iron Age potage a stir. There were also barbecues, cream teas and strawberries and cream on hand.



## RE-ENACTMENTS



Dumnonika, an Iron Age re-enactment & history group provided an insight into how the people of Berry Castle may have lived.



For some it was enough just to sit and watch events from the sidelines. Thank you to everyone for supporting us.

## COOKING METHODS AND UTENSILS USED IN THE IRON AGE by Dee Hannah



In the Iron Age most food would have been cooked on an open fire, outside during the summer or inside on a large central open-hearth during the winter. The hearth would be used to cook food, provide warmth and give light and the fire would have been maintained 24 hours a day. We recently visited Butser Ancient Farm in Hampshire where we were able to see for ourselves how people would have cooked.



We acknowledge that the accompanying photographs for this article were taken at the Farm.

### QUERNS



Querns were used for grinding corn and grains into flour. Early Iron Age querns were known as saddle querns and consisted of the lower saddle stone and the upper rider stone. The grain was placed in the centre and pushed backwards and forwards to grind the grains. Later Querns were made of a thick lower stone with a socket for the spindle and a beehive shape stone with a hole for the spindle. The top stone turned around an axle that came up through the hole in the centre, while the lower stone did not move. These were known as beehive or rotary querns.



### POTTERY

Early Iron Age Pottery was hand made using the ring-coil method with local materials, but by the later period evidence shows there may have been specialised regional centres. There is also evidence that the pots were wheel thrown. However in the West of England traditional hand methods lasted until after the arrival of the Romans.



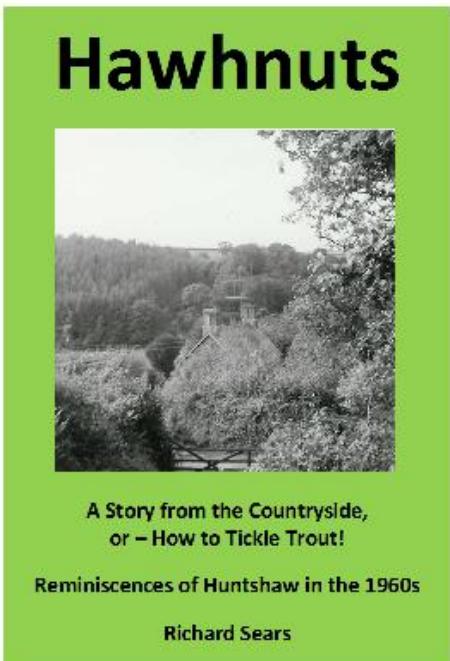
### IRON



Various metals were utilised in the Iron Age to provide both practical and luxury items. The Iron Age saw the replacement of bronze with iron for the manufacture of tools and weapons. Iron cauldrons, cauldron chains and fire dogs were used for cooking. Fire dogs consisted of two uprights that supported a bar and could be used as spits or to hang cauldrons above the flames. They frequently had animal like heads on the uprights. These were found mainly in the south east of England.

# Hawhnuts

A story from the Countryside, or – How to Tickle Trout



Richard Sears lived in Huntshaw in the 1960/70s and has recently returned to the village and looked up people who played a part in his childhood. I am fortunate to be one of those people. Richard lived in Huntshaw Mill Cottage and was very involved in village life. He roamed the woods and lanes, attended the local church and went to the Bluecoat School in Torrington.

Richard has many stories to tell of his early life and has captured them in a booklet that was originally written for his four daughters. I was privileged to read the book and it brought back many memories of those idyllic times when we lived a much simpler life that revolved around farming and the church. The book is a fascinating social history of Huntshaw from 50 years ago. We decided to print copies to share with other interested people.

To obtain a copy of the booklet contact Emma Barrow on 01805 623266 or [emmacbarrow@msn.com](mailto:emmacbarrow@msn.com). Price £4.00. All proceeds go to FOB.

## FOB DIARY OF EVENTS

### AN AUTUMN STROLL:

Meet at the car park, Foxes Cross      Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2016, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm

FOB NEWSLETTER: Issue 6      Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2016

### A VERY MERRY BERRY CHRISTMAS:

Our Christmas card from last year proved to be popular so we are planning to produce another one.. Come along if you want to feature in it. The theme for the card will be announced in the next newsletter. It will be fun – I promise! Mulled wine and mince pies will be served to get us in the mood. A winter stroll around the site will be included.

Friday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2016 , 10:30 am – 12:30 pm. Meet at the car park, Foxes Cr





# Friends of Berry Castle

*Affiliated to the North Devon Archaeology Society*

A group of volunteers who are dedicated to preserving Berry Castle, an Iron Age hillfort in Huntshaw on the borders of Weare Giffard and Torrington.

## Membership Application Form

Name(s):

Address:

E-mail Address:

Telephone No(s):

Age if under 18:

Any relevant experience or areas of interest:

I (we) wish to become a member(s) of the Friends of Berry Castle

1 (we) enclose a subscription of £3.00 (single) / £5.00 (couple)      (Delete as necessary)

(Membership free to children up to the age of 16)

Cheques to be made payable to: Friends of Berry Castle

Signed:

Date:

Return this form with your subscription to Emma Barrow, Friends of Berry Castle Secretary, Knockworthy Farm, Huntshaw, Torrington, Devon EX38 7HJ    [emmacbarrow@msn.com](mailto:emmacbarrow@msn.com)

Telephone: 01805623266

*Personal information will remain confidential and made available to committee members and designated others only.*



Weare Giffard Parish Council

Alverdiscott and  
Huntshaw Parish Council





