

FOB NEWS

Friends of Berry Castle e-Newsletter

Issue 7: February 2017



A new year sees a bumper edition of FOB News sent out to a wider audience. Until now the newsletter has been limited to members only but we now want to let more people know what is happening at Berry Castle. So, it will be circulated to a wider audience via social

media and other means. In this edition, which has been edited by your chairperson, you will find an evidence-based article on the Druids written by our very own Michael Jones. There are a lot of myths around who the Druids were and what they did and Michael has attempted to unravel the facts from fiction. Michael has been prolific in recent weeks and has also submitted an article summarising his talk on prehistoric Torrington, delivered in November at Weare Giffard village hall. There is a feature on the Great Torrington Heritage Museum which is due to reopen in the Spring after refurbishment. Its opening is eagerly anticipated by many. Our series on flora and fauna continues with a look at grasses and sedges found at Berry Castle. Our diary for the year is evolving and apologies as many dates have not yet been finalised. We will keep you informed. And finally look out for Lord Kitchener – his finger is pointing at you!

The photograph above shows a bleak and cold Berry Castle (taken on 11th February)

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

For information on Clinton Devon Estates contact: Kate Ponting, Countryside Learning Officer,
kate.ponting@clintondevon.com Tel: 01395 43881 <http://www.clintondevon.com>

NEWS UPDATE

Prehistoric Torridge



On Thursday, 24th November 2016, FOB committee member, Michael Jones delivered a fascinating insight into prehistoric Torridge at Weare Giffard village hall. Starting with Mesolithic occupation at Westward Ho! around 8,000 years ago, when our ancestors were hunter gatherers Michael took us through the Neolithic period, the Bronze Age and ended 5500 years later, in the Iron Age, at our own

Berry Castle. See a summary of Michael's talk later in the newsletter.

The talk was followed by a Quiz Night in which our host, Chris Tattersall posed a series of very difficult questions. I'm sure they were more difficult than last time!

A Traditional Iron Age Christmas

We kicked the Christmas celebrations off on Sunday, 4th December when around 30 festively attired members, guests and dogs enjoyed mulled wine, mince pies and bara brith. Chestnuts were roasted and marshmallows were toasted. A decorated Christmas tree brought some Iron Age bling to the event and we hung up our stockings in anticipation of presents. (Alas, Father Christmas did not visit). Afterwards we went to the Cyder Presse pub at Weare Giffard where Nigel and team put on a wonderful Christmas lunch. And we produced the second Berry Castle Christmas card out of the event.



ACE Archaeology Society

We were delighted to welcome members of the ACE Archaeology Society to our Christmas event. The ACE Archaeology Club is based in Mid Devon. The club is an active local group of people of all ages devoted to the promotion, use and investigation of all the many aspects of archaeology, from the palaeolithic to more recent times. The Club provides opportunities to meet others interested in archaeology, to visit sites of interest and to take part in practical and experimental archaeology. As none of the ACE members had been to Berry Castle before Michael took them on a tour of the site.



Proposed Excavations

We were hoping to carry out an excavation this year, however, it now looks as if this won't happen until 2018 at the earliest. Thank you to the enthusiastic diggers who have offered to help. Hold on to your trowels for the moment and we will keep you informed of progress.

Progress with the interpretation boards

The construction of the final two interpretation boards is almost finished and we are currently working with a digital illustrator and an artist to design what we put onto the boards. We are thinking of having a simple *signpost* board at Foxes Cross with four further boards on the site of Berry Castle. A board on the western side will put Berry Castle into context with other Iron Age sites in the area and include an illustrated photograph of the panorama looking out to the west. The main board will contain scenes of what the site may have looked like in its heyday. The content of the third board has yet to be decided while the fourth board will focus on the flora and fauna. We hope to place the main board on a plinth within the enclosure in 2018 but in the meantime, we will be locating it in a temporary position on the eastern side.

Berry Castle's First Award

We are very proud to have received a Certificate from The Historic England Angel Awards in recognition of our preservation work at Berry Castle. We have been highly commended and congratulated for our efforts. This award is for all of our members and friends as without your continued help and support we would not have got this far.



FOB Talks

In April, we will hold the first a series of talks on a range of topics that we hope will be of interest to you. Some talks will have a historical flavour while others will not. The talks will be free to members with a small fee of £2.00 for non-members. As this was agreed just last night at our AGM some of the detail including the venue has yet to be confirmed.

“The times they are a-changin”

A look at what made our ancestors give up the hunter-gatherer life and settle down to become farmers. The farmers went on to discover bronze and then iron which led to the invention of the first ever plough.

Thursday, 27th April 2017 7:00 pm

Speaker: Michael Jones Venue: In Torrington.

Free to FOB members. £2.00 for non members

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM took place on Sunday, 12th February 2017, 3:00 pm at the Cyder Presse, Weare Giffard. The following officers and committee members were elected:

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

Secretary: Emma Barrow emmacbarrow@msn.co.uk Tel: 01805 623266

Treasurer: Linda Thomas ronandlinda@btopenworld.com

Clinton Devon Estate representative: John Wilding MBE

Newsletter editor: Dee Hannah thehannahs1@sky.com

Committee members

Keith Hughes	Ann White	Carolyn Ledger	Simon Carroll
Michael Jones	Phil White	Michael Barrow	Adrian White

Welcome to new members Adrian and Simon



Newsletter. Photographs also wanted

Would some physical activity in the fresh air enhance your wellbeing? The site maintenance parties are starting soon. If you can offer a couple of hours at weekends or week days, please let us know.

Do you have an interest in birds, insects, flowers, plants? Then join our ongoing eco survey of BC by recording and photographing what you see. A list of species identified to date is available on request.

Would you like to join our Committee? We meet every 6 – 8 weeks for interesting and lively discussion that involves some work.

Would you like to try your hand at writing? Then put pen to paper and submit your work to the editor of the

Email: theHannahs1@sky.com

Have you got something interesting to say? Then how about speaking at one of our regular talks that are due to start in April? Any topic considered and it does not have to be about the past.

Any other offers of help are most welcome as are your opinions and suggestions

The Druids – A Personal View by Michael Jones

For many people the term 'Druids' brings to mind the white-robed and bearded gentlemen who perform arcane ceremonies at the summer solstice at Stonehenge or at the Welsh National Eisteddfod. This image of Druidism though, is a purely late 19th century invention based upon the fanciful ideas of 17th and 18th Century antiquarians, who on reading re-discovered classical texts, linked the Druids with the great megalithic stone circles like Stonehenge and Avebury. One of the most prominent of these antiquarians was William Stukeley (1687 – 1765), who considered himself to be an Arch Druid and is largely responsible for the Druidic revival. He believed that the Druidic religion was in many ways Christian-like, having its origins in Britain and was somehow linked to the patriarchs of the Biblical Old Testament several centuries before the birth of Christ.



Stukeley's impression of a Druid, from his book of 1740 'Stonehenge, A Temple Restored to the British Druids'

(*Geography*) and Pliny the Elder (*Natural History*) who speak at some length about their functions, while other writers of the time make only brief mention of the Druids. Many modern Neo-Druids dismiss some of these accounts, particularly Caesar's, as being 'Roman spin', probably on account of their graphic accounts of the 'barbaric' human sacrifices performed by the Druids upon their own people, who they considered as little more than slaves. - Not what the gentle Neo-Druids want to hear or be associated with! In contrast to this, among Greek scholars of the early Christian period there arose an idealized notion of the Druids as 'Noble Savages', simple but powerful mystics who were untainted by civilisation. Irish and Welsh annals and mythic tales, like the Ulster Cycle, written down between the 7th and 12th centuries AD, and deriving from earlier oral traditions, generally portray the Druids more as

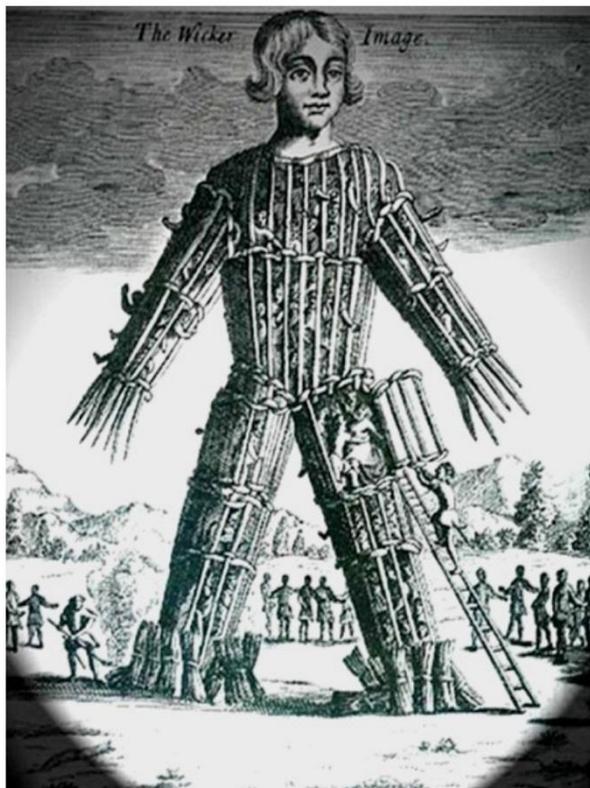
In fact the Druids were the priestly class of the Celtic tribes who migrated from parts of Central Asia? into much of Southern and Western Europe during the 6th and 5th centuries BC, although the impetus for this large-scale migration remains unclear. The origins of the name Druid are also uncertain, the Roman writer Pliny the Elder claimed that the name came from the Greek 'dru' meaning 'oak', the sacred tree of the Druids, while many scholars believe the word is of Celtic origin and means 'wisdom' or 'sacred of the oak', but in Welsh 'derwydd or drwydd' means 'wizard or sorcerer' and in Irish Gaelic 'draoidh', a magician or sorcerer.

Although much has been written about the Druids during the past three centuries, we actually know very little about them. The only written sources we have to go on are by Greek and Roman scholars writing between the 2nd century BC and the 2nd century AD. Among the most prominent of these are Julius Caesar (*Gallic War*), Strabo

'Merlin like' figures, magicians, wizards or prophets, which is reflected in their name in these languages.

What many of the classical writers agree on is that there were both male and female druids, and also there seemed to have been three classes or branches of Druidism; Bards, Vates (or Ovates), and Druids. Whether these functions were performed by both genders is not known, or whether each function was performed by separate individuals or by individuals who could perform more than one of them is also unclear.

Bards were musicians, poets and storytellers who kept alive the oral history of their clan or tribe. They sang songs and told lengthy tales about their clan's glorious history, its fierce and fearless warrior ancestors and of their heroic deeds and exploits in countless battles. In order to gather this information Bards went along to battles, not to fight but to record the event which they later composed into verse to be sung and related to the people of their clan. Bards were free to move about the battlefield with impunity as it was enshrined in Druidic law that no Bard should be harmed or killed in battle. This Bardic tradition of song, poetry and storytelling continued to be highly respected and valued among the Celtic peoples of Ireland and Wales throughout history and into modern times.



An Imaginative 18th Century Engraving of a Wicker Man

Vates, thought to be a Celtic word which continues in Irish Gaelic as *fáith* - "prophet or seer," maintained the clan's harmony with the natural world. They knew and understood the order of the myriad of gods and spirits that inhabited and controlled every aspect of nature and the lives of their people. The Celts saw the presence of supernatural powers as an integral part of their world. The sky, the sun, the moon, the wind and dark places underground all had their individual spirits. Every mountain, river, lake, spring, bog, tree, and rocky tor was believed to be endowed with its own unique divinity. The Vates understood the complex and mysterious interactions between these forces and how to placate them through their intervention, maintaining a harmonic balance with nature in order to prevent storms, drought, sickness, crop

failure and a host of other misfortunes that could befall both humans and their livestock at any time. They were also healers and skilled herbalists, using their extensive knowledge of natural healing remedies and spells to cure illness and dispel malevolent spirits.

According to the classical sources the Vates also performed gruesome sacrifices of both animals and humans under the direction of a Druid. By examining the creature's entrails and observing the manner in which it died and its blood flowed, the Vates or the Druids could foretell specific future events. The Roman writer Tacitus speaks of these 'dreadful rites

involving human sacrifice in sacred secluded groves'. Another sacrificial event was described by the Greek biographer Diodorus Siculus, and the geographer Strabo as follows; 'They set up a colossus of wood and straw'- which presumably had the appearance of a gigantic basket-like figure - 'shut cattle, wild animals and human beings in it, and set light to the whole thing'. According to Caesar this ceremony, now known as the 'Wicker Man', was conducted at the feast of Beltane where fire played an important role in the purification of the land and its people, thus ensuring a good harvest and continued prosperity. According to some sources individuals volunteered to be sacrificed in order to carry requests from their people in this world to the gods in the 'otherworld', or willingly gave themselves to prevent a catastrophe, which had been foretold by a Druid, from occurring. The Celts believed in an afterlife and didn't fear death, so anyone who died a violent death would be instantly born anew, which may also explain their apparent recklessness in battle. There are claims that when a Celtic chieftain was killed in battle, those who were close to him would cut their own throats to follow him into the next life.

Druids performed several functions and seem to have been the most senior of the 'Druidic Triad'. They were above tribal kings and chieftains', being tribal elders who paid no taxes, they were also priests, law-makers, judges, wise-men, soothsayers and keepers of the genealogy of their clan. In a society with little or no written language, keeping track of important matters such as the ownership of land or property, rights of inheritance, together with complex laws and religious rituals would have required a formidable feat of memory and mental agility, some of them taking up to twenty years to learn this knowledge. They dispensed justice in both criminal and civil matters, their judgement being absolute. Those who rejected or questioned the judgement of a Druid, for whatever reason, became outcasts throughout their society. Druids are believed to have conducted the most important rituals of their religious year and communicated with their gods on a higher level than the Vates. Caesar states that the Druids did not take part in wars, but such was their status and power among the Celtic tribes that they could put themselves between warring clans in battle and call a halt to the fighting, both parties heeding the Druid's call and leaving the battlefield without further ado.

Britain, and in particular Anglesey, seems to have been the seat of this Druidic learning, with students travelling there from across the Celtic world for instruction. Druids performed their complex religious rites and ceremonies in dark secluded groves of trees, especially oak trees, their sacred tree, and on the edges of bogs and lakes, such places being portals into the Otherworld of the spirits. A passage in [Pliny's Natural History](#), briefly describes the 'Ritual of Oak and Mistletoe', in which a white-robed Druid climbed a sacred oak and cut down with a gold knife the mistletoe which grew on the tree. He then sacrificed two white bulls and used the mistletoe to brew an elixir which could cure infertility and counteract the effects of poison. Sounds all rather fanciful me thinks,- climbing a mature oak tree in a long white robe, and using a gold knife – a metal too soft to hold a cutting edge, to cut mistletoe which very seldom grows on oaks? But this brief passage has gone a long way to shape the image of the Druids in the popular imagination.

Throughout the 1st century AD the Druids and their religion faced the might of the Roman Empire, largely because they wielded too much power and influence over their people, although other reasons were usually given by Rome. It may not therefore be a coincidence that the uprising against Roman rule in Britain, led by Boudicca, the queen of the Iceni tribe, in 60AD took place at the time of the Roman army's campaign against the Druids stronghold and seat of learning in Anglesey. After all the Druids were pivotal in the society of the Britons. The assault on Anglesey resulted in the destruction of the Druids seat of learning and the cutting down and burning of their sacred oak groves, which were probably situated around

Beaumaris, and so signalled the end of Druidic power and resistance against Rome throughout Southern Britain, although the tribes of the north continued to remain hostile to Roman rule for a further century or more.



Part of the Llyn Cerrig Bach hoard

The discovery in 1942 of a large number of artefacts of Iron-Age date beneath the edge of the marshy lake of Llyn Cerrig Bach in the north of Anglesey have since been widely interpreted as votive offerings. The 150 or so items deposited in the lake included chariot-fittings, presumably once entire chariots, cauldrons, weapons, shields, tools, two slave gang-chains and bronzes, including a superb crescentic plaque decorated with a bird motif. The site of Llyn Cerrig Bach is of particular interest in its possible association with the Druids. Tacitus chronicles the confrontation between the Roman legions, under the command of

Suetonius Paulinus, and the Druids of Anglesey. He gives a graphic description of the Druids sacred grove, with its gruesome remains of human sacrifices, and the shores of the island lined with armed men and black-robed women with dishevelled hair who dashed about like furies screamed curses and abuse at the Romans about to invade and destroy their sanctuary. It is not difficult to speculate as to whether Llyn Cerrig Bach may have been the centre of a major Druidic shrine or holy place, in which case the offering of such prestigious objects would be understandable as a response to the impending Roman destruction of their sacred abode and their way of life.

The ruthless campaign waged by the Roman legions against the Druids can be seen in the light of the decree by the Emperor Tiberius (14-37AD) banning Druidic practices throughout the Roman Empire 'because of the reported barbaric and repulsive practice of human sacrifice conducted by the Druids'. Claudius (41-54AD) was particularly harsh on Druidism, stating that it was totally incompatible with the state religion of Rome and decreed that anyone swearing a 'Druidic Oath' would be tried in a court of law and if found guilty would be put to death. But the real motive behind these actions was surely the elimination of a powerful tribal elite who possessed the potential to ferment insurrection among Rome's subjugated Celtic people. Probably as a result of this sustained Roman oppression and the gradual rise and influence of Christianity across Europe, Druidism seem to have gradually faded away and by the middle of the 3rd century AD little or no mention is made of the Druids by either Greek or Roman writers.

But if the Romans really did attempt to destroy Druidism, it does not seem to have been entirely successful, at least in Gaul. Here, manuscripts dated to the late 3rd and early 4th century AD record the presence of a Druidic prophetesses and fortune teller, together with priests and teachers 'descended from Druid stock'. In the more remote parts of the British Isles the influence of the Druids also persisted for several more centuries, particularly in Ireland, Wales and possibly the Isle of Man, until it was finally displaced by, or incorporated into Christianity, but probably not until as late as the 13th century in some insular parts of Ireland.

THE GREAT TORRINGTON HERITAGE MUSEUM



One of our greatest local heritage assets is the Torrington Museum. It is a compact and friendly museum that reflects the diverse history of this ancient market town. The museum is run entirely by a dedicated team of volunteers many of whom I am privileged to know.

The museum is now in a new home at 14 South Street, on the Square next to the entrance to the pannier market. It is currently closed for major refurbishment with the aim to develop a modern interactive museum experience for visitors of all ages. I visited the museum during the summer and found exhibitions on a range of topics such as the English Civil War 1646, the Rolle Canal, Torrington Vale Creamery and the World Wars. The barbaric looking Torrington Stocks were on show reminding me of the terrifying pastimes that passed for fun in days gone by. I was impressed with the display on the glove making industry which I remember from my childhood. My favourite exhibition however focused on Thomas Fowler, a famous Torringtonian who was born in 1777. Not only did he invent the first convective heating system but he developed a mechanical calculating machine that is credited as being the very first computer.

In early December, the museum volunteers opened a Pop-up Shop in the reception area in which they sold books written by local historians. I went along and bought my first Christmas presents of the season. In the photograph above, Sue Scrutton, Val Morris and Arthur Martin are displaying their favourite books.



In this photograph, Arthur and Sue are joined by me and a Parliamentarian soldier and Mistress Coombes who lived in the Shambles. Her husband went to fight on the Royalists side at the Battle of Naseby.



The Museum reopens in the Spring so come along and have a look at the new displays.

The Prehistory of the Torridge Valley by Michael Jones

Mesolithic 8000 – 4000BC

By about 6000BC we find the first evidence of hunter-gatherer groups in the Torridge area. Flint flakes, the waste product of flint knapping, are found at a few sites along the pebble Ridge at Westward Ho! At this time the mean sea level was about 10m lower than at present so the Torridge/Taw estuary was an open low-lying marshland, exploited by the Mesolithic people for both wildfowl and fish, with the shoreline a source of shellfish. Their encampments have not survived from this period as the subsequent rise in sea level has changed the character of the area and these now lie beneath the sea and river silts. A kitchen midden, dated to 4650BC has been identified on the beach at Westward Ho!, which composed mussel, oyster, limpet and winkle shells together with traces of an occupation site. Flint scatters have been found at a number of sites along the River Torridge, at Landcross, Annery and Weare Gifford, although many more sites must have been lost due to the changes in the river's course and the build-up of alluvial sediments. A source of flint nodules, but of poor quality, has been found together with flint flakes at Orleigh Court, Buckland Brewer. These sites have been dated to the later Mesolithic and indicate extensive exploitation of the Torridge, its steams and its forests during this period.

Neolithic 4000 – 2300BC

Little direct evidence of Neolithic activity has been found in the Torridge valley, with only a few stone/flint tools and flint knapping debris to testify to the presence of the first farmers. The heavy soils of the area were not suitable for their cereal production, so their farming was probably limited to the rearing of sheep/goats and cattle together with the cultivation of small garden plots. Hunting was a significant part of their economy, with the forests of the Torridge valley an important resource. Pork seems to have been the most widely eaten meat during the Neolithic, but it is not certain whether pigs were domesticated or hunted in the wild.

Bronze Age 2300 – 800BC

During the early Bronze Age life was much as it had been in Neolithic with few bronze tools evident, but as bronze became more available during the middle of the Bronze Age it radically changed beliefs and affected the way of life. Bronze Age settlement sites have yet to be found around the Torridge valley and there is also a lack of their monuments, stone circles and standing stones, but people must have lived in the area in considerable numbers, if their burial mounds are anything to go by. Round barrows, many which may have containing cremated human remains in cists (stone boxes) or pottery vessels are scattered across the region, with some grouped together in 'barrow cemeteries', the most significant of these being that on Darracott Moor. In one of these barrow, excavated in 1875 by George Doe, a Torrington archaeologist, a bronze dagger was found, of a design which originated in Central Europe but was copied in Wessex. This Ogival dagger, from its shape, is now known as the Huntshaw Dagger and dates from 1650-1400BC. It is a significant find and must have been a very prestigious possession, and was likely to have been given to a powerful 'local' as a gift or acquired through trade. It raises the possibility that its owner may have been involved in, or

even controlled, the trading of goods from the Continent via Wessex or the South Devon coast into North Devon and maybe on into Wales? The discovery of a bronze weapon of Cypriot origin during the ploughing of a field 'near Torrington' in 1950 may also add weight to the theory that local people were in some way, involved in a Bronze Age pan-European trading network. Very few of these 'hook-tang weapons', also dating from 1650-1400BC, have ever been found in the British Isles.

The Huntshaw Ogival Bronze Dagger
1650 - 1400 BC

Length 24.2 cm.
Width 5.7 cm.



What it may have looked like



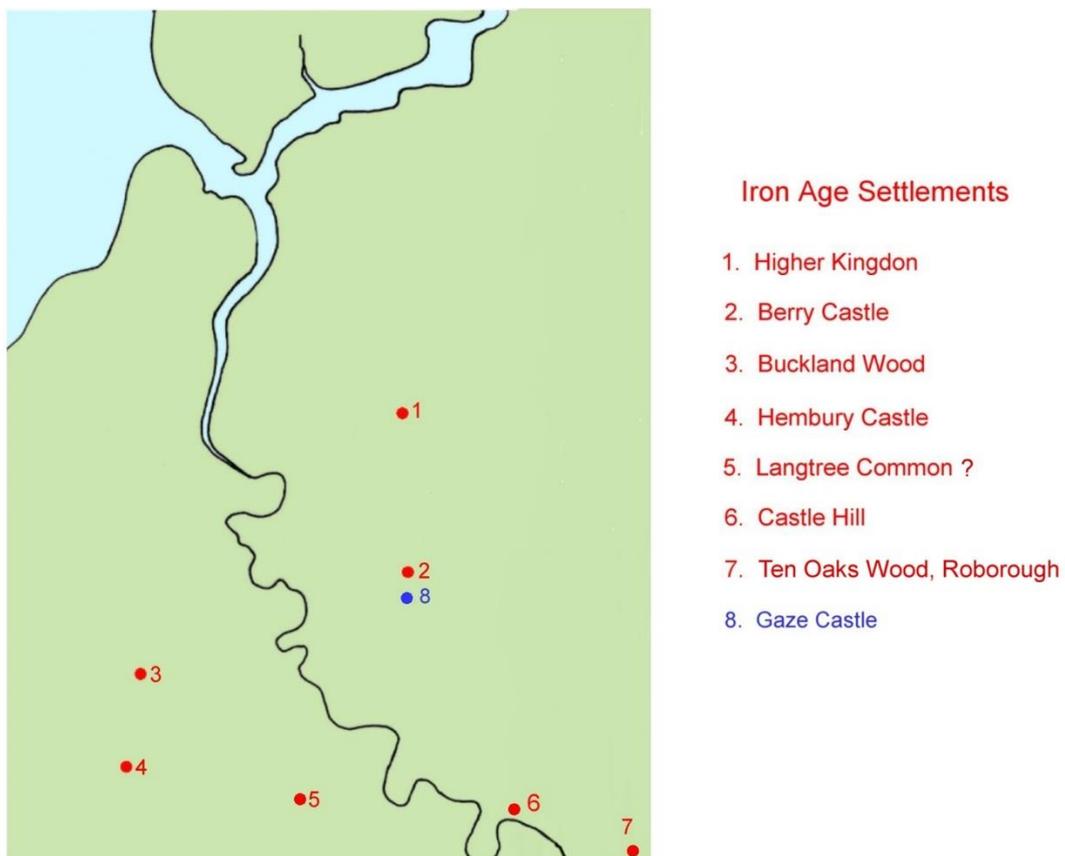
Cypriot Hook-Tang Bronze Weapon 1650-1400 BC
Found during the ploughing of a field 'near Torrington' in 1950
Length 38.5 cm. Shoulder width 3.2 cm.

Iron Age 800BC – 43AD?

The introduction of iron working during the early Iron Age led to a revolution in farming practices, as iron tools enabled much larger areas of land to be cultivated and harvesting made easier. This, together with the introduction of higher yield crops, led to a steady increase in the population, resulting in the merging of extended family groups into larger social groups or clans, each with their own strong identity. It is likely that tensions between these clans over the ownership of land or access rites to natural resources led to the development of the enclosures usually known as hillforts. The term hillfort is now thought inappropriate for these enclosures as it does not reflect modern thinking on the function of these sites. The term 'hilltop enclosure' or 'promontory enclosure' has therefore been adopted. Their function remains somewhat unclear, as little evidence of occupation has been found within Early Iron Age hillforts, but they may have been used for seasonal gatherings, trade, exchange, the performance of rituals and as a safe place for people and their livestock. What is certain is the enormous amount of effort invested by these communities in the

construction of even a modest enclosure such as Berry Castle. The undertaking of such a huge communal task is thought to have bound a community even more tightly together, creating a very visual statement of the clan's tenure of the surrounding land, its unique identity, presence and permanence in the local landscape.

Berry Castle does not stand alone in the Torridge Valley, but is one of a number of small Iron Age enclosures in the area, one or two probably having their origins in the late Bronze Age, while the enclosure at Higher Kingdon, Alverdiscot is likely to have been occupied after the Roman invasion of 43AD. These enclosures, with the exception of Higher Kingdon, are all located on high ground above the Torridge or above the larger streams which feed the river. Together they indicate that the area was populated by numerous well-established farming communities who are likely to have had their roots in the Bronze Age.



In the past, largely due to the lack of notable prehistoric monuments and the small number of 'finds' from the Torridge area, archaeologists have considered it to have been a 'backwater with little or nothing going on'. I hope this has gone a little way to dispel this 'myth'

BERRY GRASSES AND SEDGES

Last time we covered Berry birds now we introduce Berry grasses and sedges

BERRY GRASSES

False Oat Grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*

A tall, fluffy-looking perennial. One of the most common grasses that may well be familiar as the grass that many of us catch in our hands and absent-mindedly strip it of its seeds as we walk along.



Sweet Vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*

A common perennial that flowers between April and July. Its dense clusters of flowers form cylindrical spikes that sit atop stiff stems. Aromatic when dried, sweet vernal-grass is a favourite chewing grass for many people as it provides a sweet, vanilla-like taste.



Wavy Hair-grass *Deschampsia flexuosa*

A tuft-forming perennial grass. It is the food of the caterpillar of the Wall Brown Butterfly, which is classified as a Priority Species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Wavy Hair-grass has fine leaves and loose flower heads with open clusters of delicate, purplish spikelets held on wavy stems.

Sweet Vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*

A short-lived perennial herb. It is most frequent on acidic soils, and avoids drought-prone or waterlogged sites.



Annual Meadow-grass *Poa annua*

An annual growing in man-made habitats. It is a familiar garden weed.

Rough Meadow-grass *Poa trivialis*

A stoloniferous perennial herb



BERRY SEDGES

Sedges are a group of plants which form clumps, mounds, or tussocks: they have long, narrow leaves and are often evergreen. Some of them are ankle height, others are knee height, and some can grow to waist height. They are particularly useful in situations with poor soil, as they are remarkably tough and establish themselves well, often being capable of spreading quite extensively. Most Sedges will grow almost anywhere, but they particularly like damp soils, and are perfect for waterlogged soil, and can often provide dramatic water-side foliage.

Green-ribbed Sedge *Carex binervis*

A perennial herb of both wet and dry acidic soils. Its preferred sites are generally open but it also occurs in shady places, including deciduous and mixed woodlands.



Pill Sedge *Carex pilulifera*

A perennial herb of dry sites on base-poor, usually acidic soils; its habitats include sandy heaths, dune grassland, open woodlands, upland grassland and moorland.

Remote Sedge *Carex remota*

A tufted perennial herb of damp woodland and woodland rides, often growing in considerable shade.



The grasses and sedges above were recorded in June 2016 by the Barnstaple branch of the Devon Wildlife Trust. Let us know if you identify any others.

FOB DIARY OF EVENTS FOR 2017

Bring gardening gloves for maintenance days.

Sunday, 19th March 2017 10:00 am – 12:30 pm.

SITE MAINTENANCE PARTY Meet at the car park, Foxes Cross



Sunday, 9th April 2017 10:00 am – 12:30 pm.

SITE MAINTENANCE PARTY Meet at the car park, Foxes Cross

Thursday, 27th April 2017 7:00 pm “The times they are a changing”! A talk on what caused the transitions from Mesolithic to Neolithic to Bronze Age to Iron Age.

Speaker: Michael Jones **Venue:** In Torrington. To be confirmed.

Free to FOB members. £2.00 for non members (or join FOB on the night)

Sunday, 14th May 2017 10:00 am – 12:30 pm SITE MAINTENANCE PARTY

Meet at the car park, Foxes Cross

Monday, 15th May 2017 NEWSLETTER: Issue 8

Sunday, 11th June 2017 10:00 am – 12:30 pm SITE MAINTENANCE PARTY

Meet at the car park, Foxes Cross

A date in July FORMAL UNVEILING OF THE INTERPRETATION BOARDS ON SITE

More detail and the date to follow.

A date in July HISTORIC TORRINGTON TREASURE HUNT (WALKING)

Start at the Great Torrington Heritage Museum. Followed by a Big Picnic.

Free entry. Donations welcome with proceeds shared between the museum and FOB.

More detail including the date to follow.

Monday, 14th August 2017 NEWSLETTER: Issue 9

Thursday, in September 2017 7:00 pm A talk (Title to be confirmed)

Speaker: Ros Ford **Venue:** In Torrington.

Free to FOB members. £2.00 for non members (or join FOB on the night)

Thursday, in November 2017 7:00 pm A talk. Detail to be confirmed.

Venue: Torrington. **Free to FOB members. £2.00 for non members**

Monday, 13th November 2017 NEWSLETTER: Issue 10

Sunday, 3rd December 2017 The Berry Christmas card with mulled wine and mince pies on site



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

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**



