



Parc le Breos

Located in the same dry valley as Cat Hole Cave on the Gower Peninsula is a Neolithic transepted long cairn of Severn-Cotswold type which was first excavated by John Lubbock in 1869.

Sir John Lubbock recorded the nature of the discovery of the monument in his report in the journal *Archaeologia Cambrensis* for 1871.

'In the spring of 1869 Mr Vivian [later Lord Swansea] was making a new road; and for that purpose the workmen attacked a heap of stones which stood conveniently, and the true nature of which was not the suspected. After removing a certain portion of the cairn on the north side, the men came upon some large upright stones forming a cell or chamber, and in the chamber they found portions of a skeleton. Upon this being reported to Mr Vivian he at once ordered that no more of the cairn should be removed and asked me [John Lubbock] to come down and see it explored'.



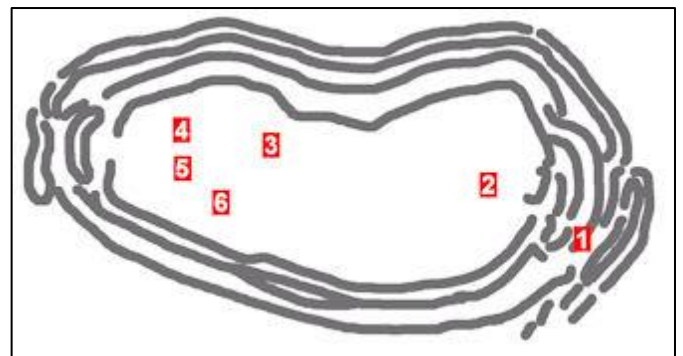
This excavation revealed a number of skeletons that were all carefully reburied in the chambers of the tomb from which they came. In 1937

Glyn Daniel undertook some excavation at the tomb but the main excavations took place during 1960-1961 by Professor Richard Atkinson of Cardiff University. Atkinson was working on behalf of the Ministry for Works and it was at this time that the site was cleared of trees and fully consolidated for public visiting. It is only though in recent years that the excavation report has been published. This has enabled the application of modern scientific techniques to the human remains that were re-excavated during these works. The tomb is yielded a range of radiocarbon dates ranging mostly between 3800 - 3000 BC.

CAS visited Parc le Breos on Saturday 9th July 2016.

Maiden Castle

The finest Iron Age Fort in Britain, Maiden Castle was first laid out in 600BC over the remains of a Neolithic settlement. During the following centuries the hill fort was extended and additional defences thrown up around it. In AD43 it was taken by the Roman army and its inhabitants moved to the new town of Durnovaria, modern Dorchester.



[1] The Western Entrance: The banks and ditches that surround the hillfort are the end

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result of many centuries of modification and enlargement during the Iron Age. The first hillfort of the early Iron Age (880-400 BC) enclosed only the eastern end of the hill. In the middle Iron Age (400-120 BC) the settlement area expanded to 47 acres and also enclosed the western end of the hill. This allowed more people to live within the defences. The complex entrances meant the people entering the hillfort had to take a long and twisted route, allowing their approach to be seen and making any direct assault on this gateway difficult to achieve.

[2] A Neolithic gathering place.

[3] Iron Age life inside the hillfort: At first, the hillfort was home to a small, self-sufficient community, but in the following 400 years, Maiden Castle became the principal settlement in southern Dorset. Excavations reveal early Iron Age postholes in square arrangements within the hillfort. These are thought to have been above-ground stores that were used to keep grain produced in the surrounding fields. The grain may have been used to feed the workforce that was building the huge ramparts. In the middle Iron Age, the layout of the interior was reorganised. Randomly arranged houses were now organised into rows, and roads built for traffic. This reorganisation suggests some control existed over life within the fort. In the late Iron Age this organised system broke down and the eastern end of the hillfort became the focus for occupation once again.



[4] The Eastern Entrance: During the early Iron Age occupation was focused on the eastern area of the hill. Like the western entrance, it was modified and enlarged over time. During the 1930s, excavations by the famous archaeologist Sir Mortimer Wheeler revealed the complex development of the eastern ramparts. The original rampart was probably dumped earth, stone and chalk from the ditch with a timber retaining wall flanking the entranceways. The rebuilding of the entrance resulted in the creation of narrow, complex passageways, overlooked by stone platforms, on which guards could have monitored and, if necessary, defended the entrance. In the later Iron Age, much of the interior of the hillfort was abandoned, and occupation was concentrated between the banks and ditches of the entrance. The area immediately outside the gates was the location of a blacksmith's workshop and within the entrance a large cemetery was established.

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[5] The "War" Cemetery: Sir Mortimer Wheeler's excavations in the 1930s uncovered an extensive late Iron Age cemetery of more than 52 burials. Some of the skeletons from the cemetery displayed multiple injuries. Wheeler believed that this was a war cemetery and the result of a fatal attack on the hillfort by the Roman army following their invasion of Britain in AD 43. In the 80 years since Wheeler's excavations, ideas about this cemetery have changed. Both men and women were buried in the cemetery and displayed evidence of healed and fatal trauma. However, individuals had been carefully buried with grave goods, such as personal ornaments, pottery and joints of meat. These funerary rituals do not suggest hastily dug graves after a single battle, but rather a cemetery that was used to bury people over a period of time. Some of these individuals were injured fighting the Romans, but it is equally possible that some were involved in local skirmishes.



[6] The Roman Temple: Maiden Castle was abandoned following the foundation of Durnovaria (Roman Dorchester) at the end of the first century AD. It was not until nearly 200 years later, in the fourth century AD, that a Romano-British temple complex was built on the hilltop. At this time, a fusion of native British and classical Roman religion was becoming popular. It is common to find shrines located in rural locations and the abandoned hillfort of Maiden Castle provided an ideal setting for this new religion. Close to the temple was an oval hut which may have been a shrine. It was built directly on top of an Iron Age hut and may indicate continuous use of an earlier building. Excavations uncovered a range of finds from both the temple and hut shrine. These include hundreds of coins and several statues, some imported from the Mediterranean. These were offerings brought to the deity who presided over the temple.

CAS visited Maiden Castle on Saturday 9th July 2018.

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Highlights from the Magazines

Current World Archaeology Feb-Mar 2021

The Late Roman Villa of Caddeddi, Sicily - Living in luxury in rural Sicily

An Unexpected Tomb - Inside an Etruscan Hypogeum on Corsica

Artic - Culture & Climate

A Digital Dive - Sharing the secrets of a 2,700 year old Phoenician Shipwreck

A Museum for the Coming Decades - the new Penn Museum, United States

The Horizon of Khufu - Inside the Great Pyramid

The Dancing Satyr of Mazara del Vallo

Minerva - Archaeology & Art Mar-Apr 2021

The Pursuit of Leisure - Stabiae, Italy

Sacred Light, Brilliant Matter - Shiny Gold objects from the Americas

Saving Tigray's Painted Churches - Ethiopia

The Emperor's Doctor - Galen, the Roman Physician

UK Heritage

British Archaeology Mar-Apr 2021

The Dig - a movie set at the excavation of the Sutton Hoo ship burial

Three Hillforts on the Tay

Radiocarbon dating of Pottery has arrived

Principal Place - Dating Early Neolithic London

Mount Pleasant in Dorchester - a turning point in prehistory?

Unlocking Eddisbury hillfort

Current Archaeology May 2021

From Isca to Excester - Tracing the fluctuating fortunes of Roman and medieval Exeter

From Mounds to Monastries - Examining burials in late Iron Age and early medieval Ireland

Reinterpreting a Tudor Flagship - New thinking on the Mary Rose and her Crew

Stringbags to Star Wars - An archaeology of airfields

The Women of Sutton Hoo - Exploring female stories from the celebrated cemetery

Richard's Castle, Herefordshire



[1] Gatehouse [2] Garderobe [3] Chamber Tower [4] Curtain Wall [5] Site of Later Dovecot [6] Keep [7] Chapel [8] Moat

The community of Richard's Castle is in Herefordshire and Shropshire. The castle is one of a handful built by the Normans before 1066, although we cannot be certain that the motte and bailey dates to that time. The castle takes its name from Richard Scrope or fitz Scrob, a favourite of Confessor.

The strong motte supports the remains of an octagonal donjon or keep with a later apsidal projection, perhaps a porch with chapel above. The bailey has a gatehouse and a series of mural towers. The castle was excavated by Peter Curnow and Michael Thompson of the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate in the 1960s.

The Norman and later church of St Bartholomew, vested in the Churches Conservation Trust, has a fourteenth-century detached tower housing the bells. Norman nave,



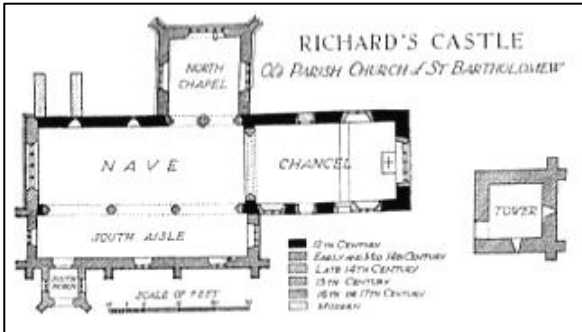
south aisle, chancel and north transept fourteenth century. A notable feature is the series of struts supporting the south arcade, with large screw threads, perhaps made by carpenters familiar with the construction of cider presses. The village has a series of timber-framed houses of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.



There is some very fine ancient glass in some of the windows dating back to the 13th century, especially that of the East window in St John's Chapel, which is said to be the coronation of the

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virgin. Also to be noted is the East window in the South Aisle, in the tracery of which is the crowned head of a king, said to be Henry II in roundel foliage borders of castle and fleur-de-lis (14th century) which were the emblems of Eleanor of Castille, wife of Henry II.



CAS visited Richard's Castle on Saturday 21st July 2018.

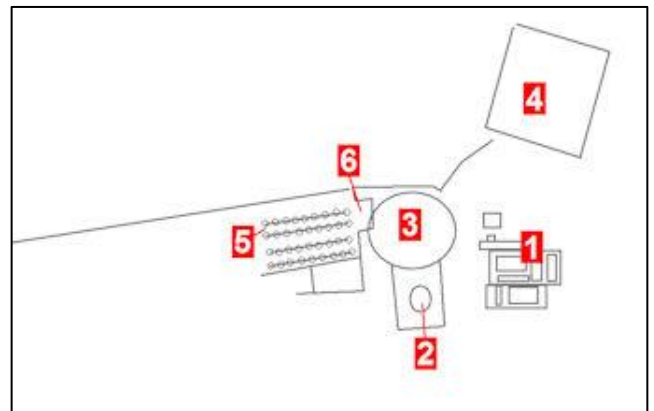
Quiz

1. Dead Sea, documents found in caves in Israel in 1947.
2. Rear or side entrances to a building.
3. Coffin made from stone or a hollowed tree.
4. The Middle Stone Age.
5. Richard of Wallingford (1292-1336) was a member of this profession.
6. British archaeologist, author of *Scythians and Greeks* (1913).
7. Old name for China.
8. Mammal such as the Eocene Hyracotherium.
9. stone circle, Neolithic monument such as Stonehenge.
10. First pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty.

Ram Hill Colliery

Ram Hill Colliery was a privately owned colliery in the Coalpit Heath area north-east of Bristol. It operated between about 1825 and 1865.

Ram Hill Colliery was sunk sometime between 1820 and 1830. It was owned by the Coalpit Heath Company, which included Sir John Smyth as a shareholder. Sir John was one of the main proponents of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Railway, which linked the pit and others in the area to Cuckolds Pill in Bristol. At this date workable coal was dependent on a means of transport to market, so that the railway and the pit were interdependent.



[1] Engine House [2] Shaft [3] Horse Gin [4] Possible Reservoir [5] Dramway Rail Shoes & Stone Sleeper Blocks [6] Arch

Ram Hill was 558 ft deep and was originally worked by a horse gin, the remains of which were still visible in 2006. In later years it was worked by a beam engine. The pit was linked under ground to Churchleaze and Rose Oak Pits, forming the hub of 19th century coal mining in Westerleigh parish.

Abandonment plans show that the colliery, along with other Coalpit Heath pits at Churchleaze and New Engine, closed in the 1860s as the nearby Frog Lane Colliery increased production.

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In later years land in the area was purchased by the Great Western Railway for the construction of their direct route between Wootton Bassett and the Severn Tunnel via Badminton. The new line passed through the area in a deep cutting immediately north of the pit.

The site was rediscovered by local archaeologist and author John Cornwell in 1981 and has since been excavated, first by workers on a job creation scheme, and latterly by the "Friends of Ram Hill Colliery" who cleared the area of flora and removed two spoil heaps which were formed during earlier excavations.



The Arch

Excavation of the Ram Hill site exposed more of the railway, including stone blocks with cast iron chairs in situ and the remains of a boiler house for a steam engine. Other remains at the site included the foundations of a horse gin and the uncapped shaft of the pit.

A geophysical survey, using resistivity, at Ram Hill Colliery has revealed clear traces of a reservoir in the northern corner of the site.

In 2006 the Ram Hill Colliery site was designated by English Heritage as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, recognising the national importance of the site and protecting it in the future.

The Serridge Engine Pit was sunk in 1785 and located near to Serridge House. This mine was linked by an early tramway to the old Ram Hill pit. The underground map of around 1850 shows that the underground roads of the nearby Ram Hill Colliery and Churchleaze pits joined together with those of the Serridge Engine and New Engine pits.



Dramway Rail Shoes & Stone Sleeper Blocks

David Hardwick of the South Gloucestershire Mines Research Group is to present a lecture on the Serridge Engine House to CAS on 8 April 2021.

Recent Events

Zoom Lectures

March 18, 2021 - **Cleopatra - How much 'Egyptian'** illustrated lecture by Professor Alan B Lloyd FSA, University of Swansea, President & Ex-Chairman of the Egypt Exploration Society. Prof Lloyd outlined the life of Cleopatra from a long line of Ptolemaic pharaohs and explained how history tried to portray her as an Egyptian rather than a Greek. Cleopatra was probably the only Ptolemaic to actually speak Egyptian. Professor Lloyd went on to explain why he thought she had not died from a Cobra bite but was rather poisoned as displayed in a contemporary painting.

March 25, 2021 - **Welsh Heroes? The Statues in Cardiff City Hall** illustrated lecture by Brian Davies, Founder and Secretary of the Great Western Colliery Preservation Trust. Joseph Larke Wheatley, town clerk, presided over the installation of 12 marble statues in Cardiff City Hall. Brian Davies outlined the biographies of these outstanding Welsh-men and -women which included St David, Hywel Dda, Gerald of Wales, Boudica, Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, Dafydd ap Gwilym, Owain Glyndŵr, Henry VII, Bishop William Morgan, William Williams - Pantycelyn and the infamous, Sir Thomas Picton.

Future Events

Zoom Lectures

The present programme of additional Zoom lectures is intended to carry on with

8 April - **Discoveries and Dilemmas: Excavating the Serridge Engine House (c.1790)** by David Hardwick of the South Gloucestershire Mines Research Group;

22 April - **Investigations in Llandaff** by Dr Tim Young of GeoArch;

6 May - **Social evening with Quiz.**

(All subject to change.)

Links to Websites

Recorded Previous Lectures:

[The London Society of Antiquaries](#)

[Nautical Archaeology Society](#)

[Churches Conservation Trust](#)

[St Edmundsbury Cathedral](#)

Related sites:

[Scotland's Rock Art Project](#)

[Archaeology & Numismatics at the National Museum of Wales](#)

[The Buildings at St Fagans National Museum of History](#)

[Living Levels](#)

[Maritime Archaeology Trust](#)

Answers to Quiz

1. Scrolls 2. Posterns 3. Kist 4. Mesolithic 5. Watchmaker
6. Ellis Minns 7. Cathay 8. Equine 9. Concentric 10. Ahmose