

VALE OF GLAMORGAN
AMBASSADOR



LLYSGENNAD
BRO MORGANNWG

Vale of Glamorgan

A Potted History

'The Vale of Glamorgan & Glamorganshire'

Not surprisingly, historical records about the Vale of Glamorgan, often refer to just 'Glamorgan' or Glamorganshire' and each will be mentioned in this account.

Glamorgan or, sometimes, *Glamorganshire* was one of the thirteen historic counties of Wales. It was originally an early medieval petty kingdom of varying boundaries known as Glywysing until taken over by the Normans as a lordship. In later years, Glamorganshire was represented by the three counties of Mid Glamorgan, South Glamorgan and West Glamorgan. The name now survives in Vale of Glamorgan, the most southerly county in Wales, neighbouring those of Cardiff, Bridgend and Rhondda Cynon Taff.

Introduction

What stands out in terms of the history and archaeology of the Vale of Glamorgan is how its importance in a national and even world context has ebbed and flowed dramatically during its history.



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MORE THAN ANY OTHER TIME in the areas history, the Vale's star ascended during this Early Medieval, known as The Age of Saints in Wales. It is possible that Llantwit Major was one of the first centres of Christian learning in Britain and northern Europe if what is claimed of Cŵr Eurgain, the early Christian college is true. Certainly, by the 7th century, the Vale had developed a powerful triangle of monasteries – Llantwit, Llancarfan and Llandough. These were religious centres, but also the 'universities' of their time, renowned far and wide for their learning and for the early Celtic Christian missionaries they educated and sent out into the world. In turn, these missionaries or 'saints' left their mark upon religious establishments, centres of learning, parishes and communities across Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Brittany and much of the Western seaboard of northern Europe.

This region was invaded by Normans in 1093, and families such as the FitzHamons, the de Clare's and Stradlings, established themselves here and founded dynasties still evident in the family names and lineages of the Vale today.



Much later, the industrialised period in south Wales saw the Vale's fertile fields become important sources of food to sustain hundreds of thousands of workers who flocked to the upland valley areas of old Glamorgan. Its ports became vital export channels for 'black gold', the coal which powered the world at one time and which poured down like black rivers from the industrial valleys, along newly built canals and railways to Penarth and Barry docks in particular. The Vale also offered rest and relaxation to the masses, with our coastal towns developing as holiday resorts, catering both for well to do Edwardians and later Victorians as well as day tripping workers on miner's day outings and the like.



Whichever period of history is your particular favorite, you'll find something to fascinate you here in the Vale.

DID *you* KNOW?

▼ The beach at Llantwit Major
© Kay Welsh



Llantwit Major was the base for the first educational establishment in Britain, possibly in Europe.

GLOSSARY OF *English – Welsh* TERMS OF INTEREST

ENGLISH	WELSH	PHONETICALLY
History	Hanes	<i>Hahn-ess</i>
Castle	Castell	<i>Cass-tell</i>
Pirate	Môr leidr	<i>Mohr ley-durr</i>
Hillfort	Caer	<i>Kai-r</i>
Vale of Glamorgan	Bro Morgannwg	<i>Broh Morg-ann-oog</i>
Church	Eglwys	<i>Egg-loo-ees</i>
Town	Tref	<i>Trehv</i>
Village	Pentref	<i>Penn-trehv</i>

Cowbridge was home to the first Fair Trade shop in Wales.

Iolo Morgannwg, the colourful 18th Century antiquarian opened a shop on the high street selling goods that were not tainted by the slave trade which he vehemently opposed. He boycotted produce from the Caribbean and posted a notice in the window: **'East India sweets: uncontaminated with human gore.'**

He also sold radical books there and was watched by the secret police.



The world's first wireless signals over water were transmitted to Glamorgan's coastline.

On May 13th 1897 Guglielmo Marconi received the first ever wireless signals over water from Flatholm Island to Lavernock Point, south of Penarth to a mast on Flatholm Island. The project had been supported by William Preece, Engineer-in-Chief to the Post Office and George Kemp, a Post Office engineer working with Marconi who kept a diary of the trials. This first message read: **'Are you ready?'** Tests over this 3.3 mile distance were sufficiently encouraging for the receiving equipment to be moved to Brean Down near Weston-super-Mare, the transmission distance now 10 miles. A plaque on the wall of St Lawrence's churchyard marks the spot where the message was received.



▲ Portrait of Guglielmo Marconi © Ashwin

Historic Towns

LLANTWIT MAJOR

Llantwit Major is one of the most important early Christian settlements in Britain. It is the site of what is believed to be one of the oldest educational establishments in northern Europe, Cor Eurgain or Cor Tewdws thought to have been founded towards the end of the Roman Empire in Britain, around 395. It seems later to have been dedicated to the Roman Emperor Theodosius I. Today, Llantwit Major is best known as the place where St Illtud founded a church c 500 AD. Missionaries travelled from this spiritual centre throughout the Celtic world spreading Christianity as they went.



▲ Llantwit Major square



▲ St Illtud's

The beautiful church of St Illtud's that we see today, stands supposedly on the site of St Illtud's original church. It contains an interesting collection of Celtic crosses and carved stones, many of which are older than the church itself. Recently, a project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Creative Rural Communities (Vale of Glamorgan Council) has restored the former Galilee Chapel for use as a space to house and exhibit this fine collection of carved stones. It's a great place to visit, for more information see here for details:

www.illtudsgalileechapel.org.uk

The narrow streets of old Llantwit are scattered with sites of historical interest. Visitors can follow a town heritage trail, which takes in 13 historic sites marked with Blue Plaques, and unveils the story of this historic town down the centuries. Among these are fine Tudor buildings, a Medieval Grange, the ancient Old Swan Inn and Old White Hart and The Old Place or 'Old Castle' as some refer to it. The present mansion was completed in 1597 but left to ruin from around 1720 until 2011, when restoration began by a local stonemason who purchased it from the Council and realised his childhood dream of restoring it.



▲ Llantwit Major historic town

BARRY

Barry has been the site of human habitation for many centuries. Mesolithic flint tools have been found at Friar's Point on Barry Island and near Wenvoe, and Neolithic polished stone axe heads found at nearby St Andrew's Major. These testify to early human activity here.

During the Dark Ages, Vikings launched raids in the area – possibly from Flat Holm and Steep Holm islands just off the coast in the Bristol Channel. The names of these islands derive from a Scandinavian word for an island in an estuary.

Gerald of Wales describes another island: the island in the Bristol Channel separated from the mainland by a tidal estuary that we today know as Barry Island. In his 'Journey through Wales' (1191), he states that Barry derives its name from St Baruc whose remains are deposited in a chapel on the island. The local Norman Family who owned the island and adjoining estates took their name from the island, calling themselves de Barri. They established their seat at Barry Castle.

By the mid 14th Century, Barry had grown into a thriving village with its own port, church and watermill. However, the population was soon to be tragically afflicted by the Black Death and the consequences of Owain Glyndwr's rebellion against English rule under Henry IV, which swept across Wales in the early 15th Century. It took some 300 years for Barry to recover once more to hold the status of a village.

During the 1880s Barry was selected by David Davies and other leading industrialists to be developed as a coal port in order to relieve the pressure of demand on Tiger Bay in Cardiff. A group of colliery owners formed the Barry Railway Company and chose to connect the South Wales Valley coalfields with Barry, developing an industrial scale port able to process and export over nine million tons of black gold to the world by 1903. Of course, a port attracted its own trade and ship yards, cold stores, flour mills and an ice factory grew up around the port area. By 1913, Barry was the largest coal export port in the world.



▲ Barry Island taken from the beach © David Lehner



▲ Barry Island band stand © Jo Millington

The town flourished with families of the workers, as well as day trippers and visitors who came in their thousands on the railway to Barry Island. It became a popular resort and holiday destination for miners and their families across South Wales and beyond. Later it developed a pleasure park and funfair and from 1966 until 1987 was home to Butlins Holiday camp.

Most recently, Barry has been immortalized in the BBC TV series 'Gavin and Stacey', and bus tours filled with fans of the show on guided 'Gavin and Stacey' tours of Barry are a regular sight about the town.

PENARTH

Today, Penarth presents itself as a rather well to do residential town and Edwardian 'resort' by the sea and near to Wales' capital City. That however is only a very small part of its story.

From the 12th Century until 1543, the lands of Penarth were owned by the canons of St Augustine Priory in Bristol. Later, these manor lands were leased to the Earls of Plymouth who made their home at nearby St Fagan's castle. This family later purchased the manor lands outright in 1853. For much of its early history then, the area of Penarth served as a grange, providing crops and grain and grazing for livestock to support firstly a religious community then the Earls of Plymouth.

The 1801 census shows that there were just 72 people living in the Manor of Penarth. As late as 1851, Penarth was little more than a small rural farming and fishing village, little changed since medieval times. But things were about to change. The Plymouth estate office carefully managed and controlled the planning, development and construction of the new town during the Victorian and Edwardian period.

By 1861 the number of people in the five parishes of Penarth had increased to 1,898 and to 3,382 by 1871. By 1901, Penarth and its environs was home to 14,228 people, due in the main to the expansion of the South Wales coalfield and its proximity to Cardiff.

Penarth Dock opened for business in 1865. At the height of Wales' golden age of Coal in 1913, ships carried 4,660,648 tons of coal in a single year from Penarth docks, black gold from Wales which powered the ships and industry of the world.

With the arrival of a railway in 1878 that connected Penarth to the Welsh valleys, a new tourism industry began to flourish, and Penarth became a popular seaside resort, welcoming hundreds of day-trippers and weekend visitors.

In 1856, the Cardiff Steam and Navigation Company began a regular ferry service between Cardiff and Penarth. This inspired the construction of a pier, which after a few false starts finally opened in 1895. In March 2011, planning permission was granted for a £4 million revamp of the pier – including the stunning art deco style entrance – as a major tourist attraction for the area. It opened in 2013 and houses a café, restaurant, small cinema and other arts and leisure facilities and is proving to be immensely popular once again especially for its tea dances.



▲ Penarth clock

Due to its proximity to Cardiff Docks and steelworks, Penarth became a target for Nazi German bombing raids during World War II. Air raids began in 1941 and continued almost constantly for the next four years, and as elsewhere, destroyed many homes, civic buildings and churches in the town. The town was however, to play its own proactive part in the defense of Britain. In October 1943 a United States Navy Base was established at Penarth Docks. From here many of the Allied troops that took part in the D Day invasion set out for Normandy's beaches.



▲ Art Deco style pier clock © Philip Bird



▲ Penarth pier © Gail Johnson

COWBRIDGE

Cowbridge, known in Welsh as Y Bont-faen, meaning 'the stone bridge', is picturesque market town with a long history. The town lies on the site of a Roman settlement, most probably that identified by the Antonine Itinerary as Bovium (cow-place).

It is one of a few medieval walled towns in Wales. Significant sections of its walls along with the south gate dating from 1254 are still standing, and can be seen at the Old Hall Gardens behind the Community College. The centre of today's town continues to follow the plan laid out for the town during the medieval period, with one long street divided into what were known as 'burgage plots', these were rented plots of land with accommodation. The town received its first borough charter from the Norman Lord of Glamorgan Richard de Clare on 13 March 1254.

▼ Cowbridge High Street





▲ Cowbridge Physic Garden

Most of the buildings visible along the highstreet today are Georgian, though some, such as the present Town Hall probably date as far back as the Elizabethan era, and others such as the Great House are probably of Medieval origin.

The Palladian Town Hall was built in 1830, and served as a prison for much of its life. Today, it is home to Cowbridge Museum which holds archaeological finds from Cowbridge and the district alongside displays on the later history of the town. It is open every first and third Saturday of the month.

Cowbridge has a strong history society, based in the Community College, Old Hall, it is open every Wednesday morning and holds all kinds of archive material and photos regarding the history of the area.

Historic Sites

DINAS POWYS HILLFORT

A walk to Dinas Powys Hillfort takes in beautiful fields and woodlands. The defensive ramparts are impressive and the view from the top is well worth the climb.

The main fort on the site was constructed on the northernmost point of the natural hill in either the 3rd or 2nd century BC. Later, two further constructions, known as the southern banks were built further down the hillside on the southern end, sometime during the 1st century BC.

Occupation of the site seems to have been consistent through to the time when the Celtic tribes of the Silures occupied this area. However, it seems to have been abandoned sometime around the period of the Roman invasion in this part of the world.

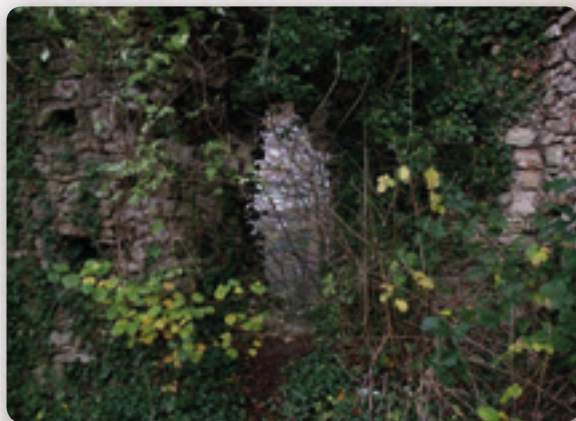
But that wasn't the end of the story for this hillfort. Sometime, during the Early Medieval period around the 5th and 6th Centuries AD, work on developing Dinas Powys seems to have begun once more. This saw the construction of at least two buildings – possibly made of stone rather than timber – built within the old fort. Archaeologists have suggested that the larger of these buildings formed a home for the local lord and his family whilst the other was probably for storage or agricultural purpose.

The archaeologist Leslie Alcock, who worked extensively on the site wrote in 1963:

“We interpret Dinas Powys as the llys or court of a local ruler, with its neuadd or hall surrounded by subsidiary buildings of stone and timber and forming the centre of a variety of agricultural, industrial and domestic pursuits.”

Dinas Powys remained in use following the Norman invasion of Wales in the late 11th Century and archaeological investigations have found a period of further construction during this time, mostly to increase the defensive capacity of the hillfort. This has lead archaeologists to surmise that during the Norman period, Dinas Powys shifted from being a fortified residence to a military strong-point, occupied only at times of attack and perhaps maintained by a tenanted garrison.

The work of excavating and investigating this important site continues.



▲ Dinas Powys Castle © Kaiser MacCleg

COSMESTON MEDIEVAL VILLAGE

What began as the reclamation of old disused quarries and tips into a country park in 1978 developed into an extraordinary find, when excavations by Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust revealed the remains of a 13th – 14th century lakeside community. Plans were re-drawn, budgets re-arranged and work soon began on a long term research programme, and an undertaking to restore the 600 year old village of Cosmeston.

Today's visitors to Cosmeston step back to the year 1350 when the Caversham family had just given the village a new lease of life, the population of Britain was just recovering from the Black Death of 1348 which killed almost half the population; King Edward III was on the throne and the land was in the throws of the twelfth year of the Hundred Years War with France.

For more information see:

[www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/
cosmestonmedievalvillage](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/cosmestonmedievalvillage)





▲ Stepping back in time at Cosmeston

CWM NASH BURIAL SITE

The coastline of Cwm Nash on the Heritage Coast near Monksnash is gradually revealing secrets taken to the grave. Since the early 1980's, coastal erosion here has been revealing human skeletal remains.

To date, three archaeological excavations have been undertaken to recover skeletal remains from the Cwm Nash cliffs, in 1993 and 2011 & 2014. Archaeologists have concluded that the site is probably revealing a series of post-Medieval burials, most probably interred by the parishioners of Monksnash between 1542 – 1607 in an 'unofficial' burial ground. It has been suggested that some locals may have preferred this site to the 'official' church burial ground at nearby St Mary's Church, due to its association with the grange and nearby holy well, and an earlier parish church.

An alternative explanation for the burial ground is that it holds the remains of shipwreck victims. Numerous ships have been recorded as wrecked on the sand bars in the channel near Monksnash.

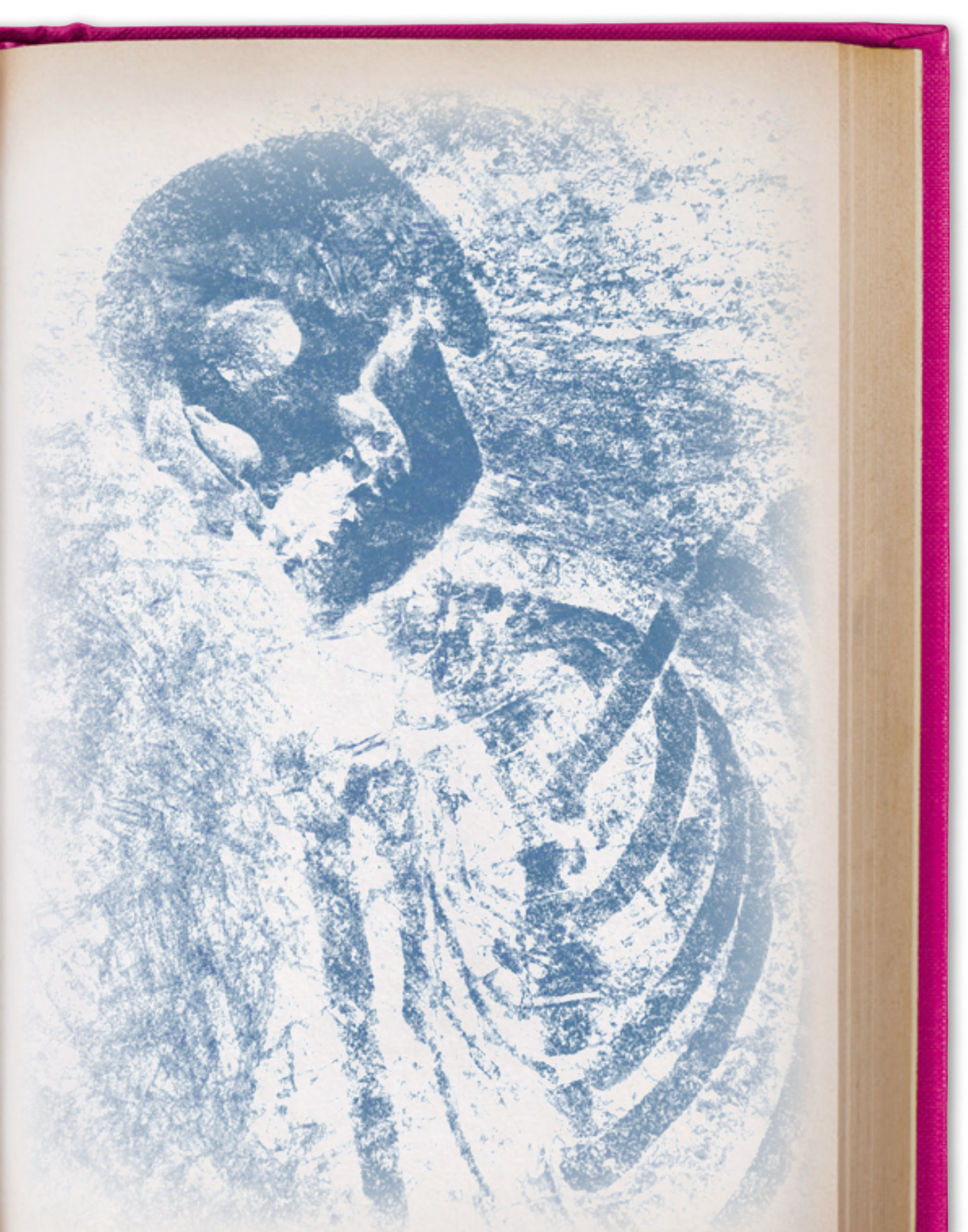
It is likely that yet more bodies will come to light in future years as the coastline is further eroded, and who knows, more secrets and further evidence of who these people are and why they were buried at Cwm Nash will come to light.

Below is a link to a recent Telegraph article about the finds.

Click **here** to read the Telegraph article



▲ The coastline of Cwm Nash and the river terraces in the Cwm © Graeme Churchard



ABERTHAW

During the 16th century, the port at Aberthaw, situated to the south east of the village, and to the east of the power station, emerged as a small but thriving harbour. From here, ships sailed laden with wool and foodstuffs and returned to Aberthaw filled with wine, dried fruit, leather and salt from the towns of northern France.

By the first half of the 17th century, boats from here were trading not only with England and France but also with Ireland and Spain. Trade also began with the West Indies, chiefly in tobacco and sugar but this ended due to the disruption caused by the outbreak of the English Civil War.

The port was central to the livelihoods of many of the 17th century residents of Aberthaw, both through legal and illegal activities. Smuggling was rife along the Bristol Channel, and the port at Aberthaw played its part. Buildings such as the fortified Marsh House, built just to the west of the village in 1636, appear to have been used for storage of illegally imported goods, especially tobacco. During the reign of George II, the Master of Fonmon sent soldiers to Aberthaw to capture the ringleaders of the smuggling gang.

In 1851, Aberthaw had a population of 495 people. By this time, the principle cargo being exported from the port was the local lias limestone, called Aberthaw tarras, which was used to make hydraulic lime that sets under water and was therefore very useful for building light houses (including the Eddystone Lighthouse) and canal locks. This limestone, considered to be of high quality, was to play a key role in the local economy during the ensuing years, beginning with the opening of Aberthaw Lime Works in January 1888.



▲ Aberthaw Lime Works
© Ben Salter



▲ Blue Anchor Inn © Patricia Ann Wallace

In 1966, Aberthaw Power Station opened, which saw the Thaw river diverted and the remnants of the old port effectively diminished and a tidal wall built. The Old Lime works remain, the river Thaw used to run past these, this was the mouth of the harbor where the boats would have loaded-up.

The principal building is the popular Grade II* listed Blue Anchor Inn, possibly one of the oldest pubs in Wales. It is a long low building with walls and low timber beams dated to 1380, with a thatched roof. Ships used to sail from the Old Harbour straight across the channel carrying cargo such as cider, sheep and pigs to Blue Anchor Bay in the West Country.

When they dropped anchor it would come up covered in blue clay, which gave the pub its name. The inn was used as a tobacco drying shed during the heyday of the smuggling trade in the area. The inn caught fire in 1922, 2004, and again in 2009, the last fire burning about 30% of the thatched roof.



Blue Anchor Inn © Hugh Trainer ►

DUNRAVEN CASTLE AND GROUNDS

Dunraven Castle was built in 1803, but Dunraven's history is much older. Several earlier buildings are said to have been built here, the first of which was reputedly constructed by Arnold Le Boteler, the butler of William de Londres, a local Norman lord. The story goes that Arnold was knighted and given the Dunraven estate by de Londres, lord of Ogmores castle in the mid 12th century, in gratitude for holding the castle against Welsh rebels in 1116.

During the 16th century, a manor house owned by the Vaughan family stood on the site. Its existence was recorded by the English poet and antiquary, John Leland.

In 1642 the mansion was sold to the Wyndham family, and remained in that family until the Second World War when it was requisitioned as a military hospital.

The castle was destroyed in 1963 to avoid taxes. Today, the castle's beautiful walled garden survives. Owned by the Dunraven Estate, it is managed on a day to day basis by the Vale of Glamorgan Council and is a lovely place for a walk and a picnic the whole year round.





You can take a virtual tour of Dunraven Castle, or see the Iron Age Hillfort at this location using the Augmented Reality App. Augmented Reality is the perfect tool for getting the children out and about around the coast; take a walk, breath in some sea air and enjoy local sites and stories along the way. Simply download the app before your visit then point your mobile device at the trigger points on location, for more information visit:

www.valeglamorgan.gov.uk/arapps



People of Note

THE SILURES AND CARADOG OR CARATACUS

The local Celtic tribe of south east Wales, the Silures were renowned for their fierce resistance to Roman conquest, which began around AD 48. Among their war leaders was Caradog (or Caratacus), a military leader and prince of the Catauvellauni (a Celtic tribe of south-eastern Britain). He fled to the Silures from further east after his own tribe was defeated. Following a vicious and long campaign against the Romans Caradog was finally trapped by Cartamantua, Celtic queen of the Brigantes who betrayed him and handed him over to the Romans.



He was sentenced to death as a military prisoner, but was allowed to speak to the Senate. His words, captured by Tacitus had a profound effect:

“If the degree of my nobility and fortune had been matched by moderation in success, I would have come to this City as a friend rather than a captive, nor would you have disdained to receive with a treaty of peace one sprung from brilliant ancestors and commanding a great many nations. But my present lot, disfiguring as it is for me, is magnificent for you. I had horses, men, arms, and wealth: what wonder if I was unwilling to lose them? If you wish to command everyone, does it really follow that everyone should accept your slavery? If I were now being handed over as one who had surrendered immediately, neither my fortune nor your glory would have achieved brilliance. It is also true that in my case any reprisal will be followed by oblivion. On the other hand, if you preserve me safe and sound, I shall be an eternal example of your clemency.”

The Emperor Claudius spared him. And it is believed that he lived out the rest of his days peacefully on the outskirts of Rome.

The Silures were subdued by Sextus Julius Frontinus in a series of campaigns ending about 78 AD. Tacitus wrote of the Silures: ‘*non atroxitate, non clementia mutabatur*’ – changed neither by cruelty nor clemency.



THE NORMAN LORDS OF OGMORE

William de Londres was a Norman knight, given land in the Ogmore area of Glamorgan by Robert Fitzhammon following the Norman invasion of this area of Wales in 1093.

William's son, Maurice de Londres famously led an army against the Welsh uprising of 1136, coming against a force led by the Princess Gwenllïan, wife of Gruffydd ap Rhys one of the leaders. Unusually for this time when conquered nobility were usually ransomed, and when the killing of noble-women was probably taboo, Maurice de Londres beheaded Gwenllïan and killed her sons near Kidwelly Castle in west Wales.

According to the custom of the times, the founding of a religious institution followed the acquisition of power – and perhaps in this case a troubled conscience. Maurice de Londres founded Ewenny Priory a mile (1.6 km) from the castle in 1141, as a cell of the Benedictine Abbey of Gloucester. He is buried there. His unmarked tombstone can still be seen in the old Priory.

Ogmore castle is now managed by CADW and is open daily with free admission. Why not download an family activity pack before your visit to help you explore the castle remains.

www.valeoglamorgan.gov.uk/familyfun





Ogmore Castle ►



▲ Stepping stones across the Ewenny river at Ogmore Castle

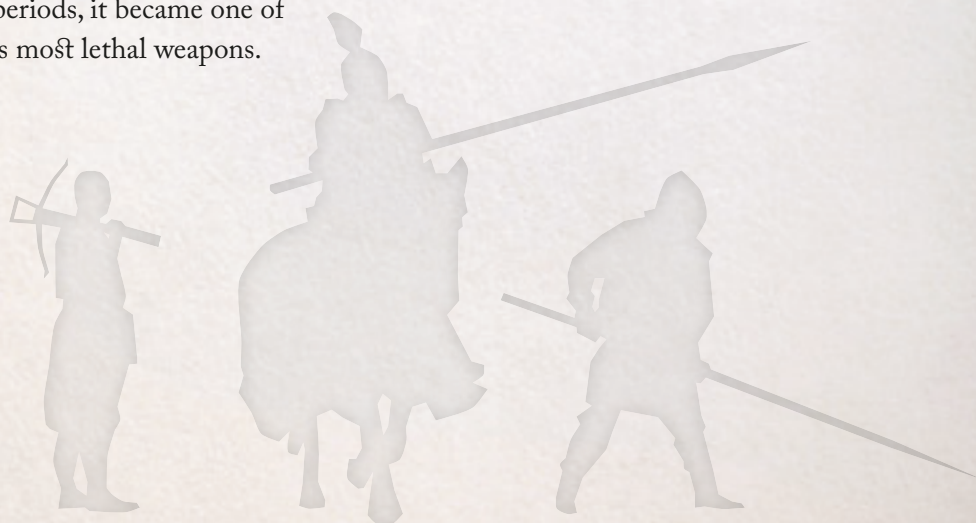
THE LONGBOWMEN OF GLAMORGANSHIRE

Longbows were first used in battle by the forces of Henry III of England, and famously used to lethal effect by Welsh archers serving Edward I at the battle of Falkirk in 1298. But it took many more years, until the battle of Crécy, in France, for these weapons to be used to their full advantage.

The longbow is made of a piece of yew the height of a tall man. Its range is much greater than the shorter bows that had preceded it. The bows that had been used by the invading Norman forces at Hastings could kill at 20 yards or so, but shields and armor were an effective defense against them. But the longbow could reach and kill an opponent over 300 yards away if shot upwards in a high trajectory. At 200 yards a yard-long goose-feather flighted arrow was lethal to an un-armored man or horse. At 100 yards, a bodkin tipped arrow could pierce not only chain mail but plate armor too. At such a range, a Bowman had a good chance of hitting what he aimed at, and with a potential rate of 10 arrows per minute for a sustained attack, or up to 20 arrows per minute for short periods, it became one of Medieval warfare's most lethal weapons.

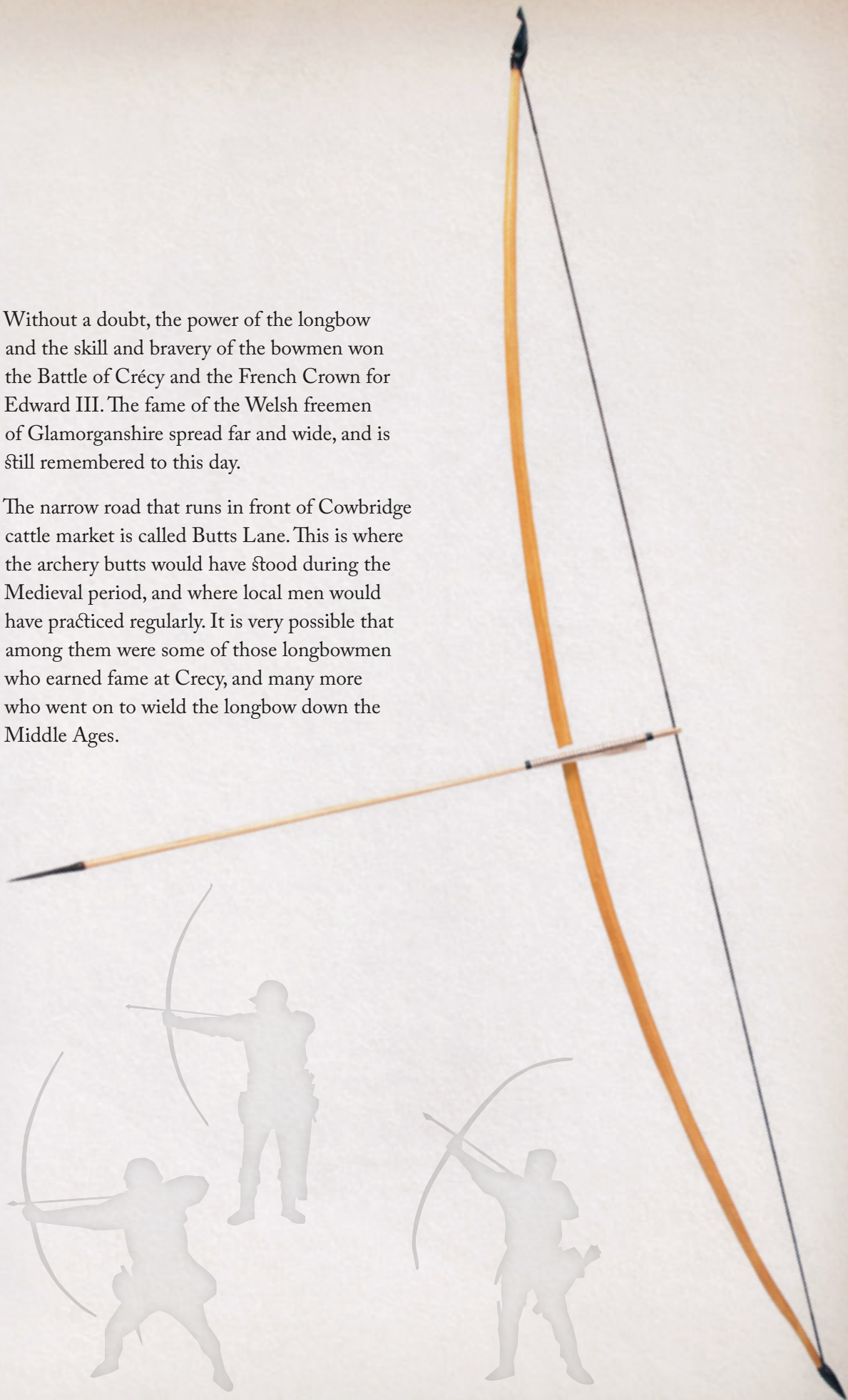
Hugh le Despenser, Lord of Glamorgan recruited longbowmen from his locality. He trained, organized and equipped a force of special troops that became known as The Black Army. They marched as part of the forces of Edward, the Black Prince, and King Edward III to fight in the most important and decisive battle of the Hundred Years War between England and France, the Battle of Crécy, on the outskirts of a small town in Picardy on 26 August, 1346.

The French King Philip's 6,000 Genoese crossbowmen were completely outranged by the longbowmen, and his lightly armored foot-soldiers suffered severe casualties. Later, he sent in his heavy cavalry to ride over the lines of English infantry. The longbowmen loosed volleys of grey goose feathered arrows to extreme range. It was said that *'arrows fell like snow'*. Men and horses fell. Those that made it through the infantry lines to engage with English cavalry were engaged at shorter range where the longbow could pierce armor.



Without a doubt, the power of the longbow and the skill and bravery of the bowmen won the Battle of Crécy and the French Crown for Edward III. The fame of the Welsh freemen of Glamorganshire spread far and wide, and is still remembered to this day.

The narrow road that runs in front of Cowbridge cattle market is called Butts Lane. This is where the archery butts would have stood during the Medieval period, and where local men would have practiced regularly. It is very possible that among them were some of those longbowmen who earned fame at Crecy, and many more who went on to wield the longbow down the Middle Ages.



IOLO MORGANNWG

Edward Williams, better known by his bardic name Iolo Morganwg (10 March 1747 – 18 December 1826) was an influential Welsh antiquarian, poet, collector, and literary forger. He had a lasting impact on Welsh culture, seen most notably in his foundation of the Gorsedd tradition, which continues to be a central part of Wales' Eisteddfod today. The philosophy he developed and the rituals he practiced have had a huge impact on the neo-druid movement of the past thirty years and as such there has been a renaissance of interest in his writings and ideas. The name, Iolo Morgannwg by which we know him today, is in fact his bardic name. It is Welsh for 'Iolo of Glamorgan'.

Iolo was born at Pen-onn, near Llancarfan in Glamorgan, and raised in the village of Flemingston. He followed his father into a career as a stonemason.

From an early date – in-keeping with the antiquarian movement of his day – Iolo was concerned with preserving, and maintaining, the literary and cultural traditions of Wales. To this end he produced a large number of manuscripts as evidence for his claims that Britain's ancient druid tradition had survived the Roman conquest, the conversion of the populace to Christianity, the persecution of the bards under King Edward I, and other adversities. In his forgeries he developed an elaborate mystical philosophy, which he claimed represented a direct continuation of ancient druidic practice.



In 1791 he founded the *Gorsedd*, a community of Welsh bards, at a ceremony on 21 June 1792 at Primrose Hill, London. He organised the proceedings, which he claimed were based on ancient druidic rites, using pebbles to represent the Stone circle now associated with the *Gorsedd*. Three years later he held the first *Gorsedd* meeting in Wales on Stalling Down near Cowbridge, and 24 years later succeeded in merging the *Gorsedd* with the Eisteddfod. Today it forms an integral part of the Eisteddfod's ceremonial, with its colourful ceremonies conducted by Welsh poets, writers, musicians and cultural leaders in flowing druidic robes, and the use of a ceremonial sword to invest the chaired or crowned poet as 'peace' is called for three times. Arguably, it is among Iolo's greatest and most lasting legacies.



Iolo also developed his own runic system, in Welsh *Coelbren y Beirdd* ('the Bardic Alphabet'). It was said to be the alphabetic system of the ancient druids. It consisted of 20 main letters, and 20 others 'to represent elongated vowels and mutations.' These symbols were to be represented in a wooden frame, known as peithynen. A commemorative plaque outside his old shop in Cowbridge (now Costa Coffee), possibly the first fair trade shop in the world, includes a line in Iolo's bardic alphabet. Deciphered, it reads '*Truth against the world*'.

A walking route is available to help visitors follow in the footsteps of this colourful local character through this picturesque county. Iolo's circular walk is 6.5 miles / 10.5km long starting and ending at Cowbridge. A wider trail includes an additional seven sites relating to his life in the Vale of Glamorgan. This walk and other Vale Trails are available to download here:

www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/walking

DAVID DAVIES LLANDINAM

David Davies Llandinam (1818–90) is regarded as Wales' first tycoon. The epitaph on his grave in the churchyard at Llandinam, near Llanidloes in mid Wales reads: *"Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might"*. His is the remarkable rags-to-riches story of a man who rose to become one of the Industrial Revolution's leading entrepreneurs. Here in the Vale, he is remembered as the man who built Barry Docks, which was regarded as one of the leading industrial ports in the world in the 19th century.

He was the son of a tenant farmer from mid Wales, the eldest of nine children, who lived for most of their early lives in a two-up, two-down cottage in the village of Llandinam. At the age of 11, he left school to work for his father as a farm hand and at sawing timber.



▲ River Severn, Llandinam bridge
© Kevin Skidmore, Geograph

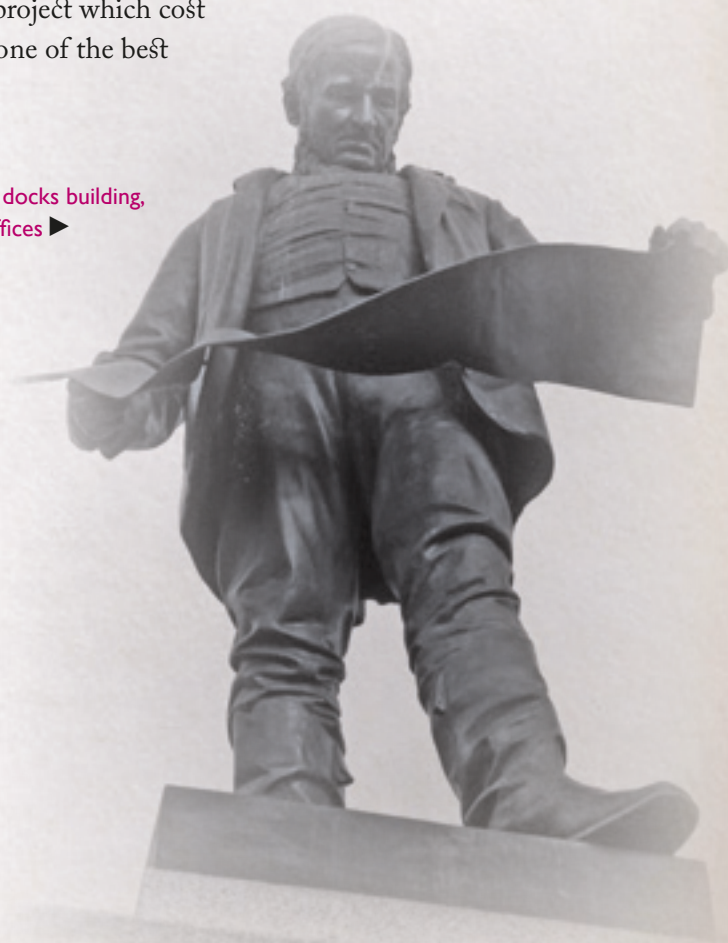
In 1844 he managed to buy his own 150 acre farm and added a second to his little empire two years later, when he was only 27. In 1850 he moved to a farm in the Severn Valley. Gwernierin Farm was set in an area prone to flooding, and with his usual focus and determination, he set about constructing ditches and banks and drainage systems to prevent flooding on his land. Davies' work so impressed Thomas Penson, the County Surveyor of Montgomeryshire, that he was asked to work on the construction of the first iron bridge in Montgomeryshire, over the River Severn in Llandinam. The bridge is still there today.

From here, Davies went on to apply his new-found civil engineering skills to pioneering railways in Wales, and a little later became interested in the coal industry. He quickly recognised opportunities in the upper Rhondda Valley and joined a small group of investors who bought a lease on land near Treorchy.

His workers dug for 15 months without a sign of coal. With funds running low, Davies called a halt to the work, but his miners sensed that they were close to hitting a seam and pledged to work one more week without wages. During that week, they struck one of the world's finest coal seams – they had finally struck 'black gold'. During the next few months, the workforce rose dramatically from a few hundred to more than 5,000 men.

In order to secure a stable route to trade his coal in overseas markets, Davies built Barry Docks – a project which cost some £2million. It became regarded as one of the best industrial ports of its time.

This statue stands proud in front of the original docks building, now home to the Vale of Glamorgan Council offices ►



Built Heritage

There are very many historically interesting buildings of architectural note to see in and around the Vale. Here's a taste of some of the most interesting:

ST QUENTIN'S CASTLE, LLANBLETHIAN

It was probably built by Gilbert de Clare in the early fourteenth-century. The remains include a massive twin-towered gatehouse. Now managed by CADW. Open daily. Free entry.





OLD BEAUPRE

This must have been a magnificent Medieval manor house during its heyday. It was modified during the Tudor period and includes a magnificent carved Renaissance porch. Now partially ruined, it still makes an impression in its beautiful landscape. Managed by CADW, open daily. Free entry.

FONMON

Fonmon is a rare example of a medieval castle that is still lived in as a home. It was built by the St John family in the early 13th century, though most of the present castle dates from the post-medieval period, the rectangular keep was built c.1200 and remains the core of the castle.

In addition to being a private home, Fonmon is also a popular event and wedding venue and is open to the public on certain days throughout the year, and provides a home for the annual Vale Show held each August.





DYFFRYN HOUSE & GARDENS

The story of Dyffryn dates back to the 7th century. It was then called the Manor of Woriton and was given to the Bishop Oudaceous of Llandaf. During the 16th century the estate was acquired by the Button family and the first house was built, and the name changed to Dyffryn House.

In 1891, the estate was bought by an extremely wealthy coal merchant named John Corey. It was he who built the present house in 1893. Corey's son, Reginald was a passionate horticulturalist and commissioned Thomas Mawson to assist him in designing the garden which visitors can still enjoy today. Dyffryn is managed by the National Trust on behalf of the Vale of Glamorgan council. Conservation work on the house is ongoing, but parts of it are now open to the public along with the beautiful gardens.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dyffryn-gardens



NASH POINT LIGHTHOUSES

Nash Point Lighthouse has been serving the maritime traffic along the Bristol Channel here since 1832. It was designed by James Walker, who chief engineer at the time for Trinity House, the official lighthouse authority for England and Wales.

Electricity arrived at the lighthouse in 1968, and it was the last manned lighthouse in Wales only becoming automated in 1998.

It continues as a working lighthouse, but today Trinity House also opens it for public tours on weekends and as a wedding venue.

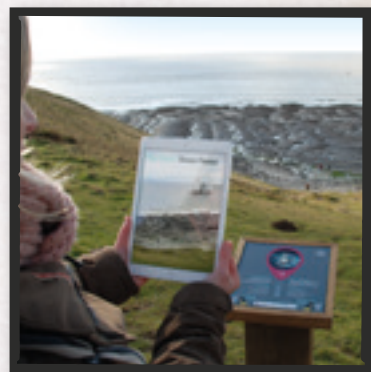
www.nashpoint.co.uk

Don't forget to download the Augmented Reality App for Nash Point before you go, the AR experience will show you how the The Frolic looked, play films placing The Frolic in the real life sea scape before you, and bring you audio commentary about the fateful events which led to the building of the twin Lighthouses at Nash Point.

www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/arapps

Or you might prefer to download a Family activity pack:

www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/familyfun



ST DONAT'S CASTLE

Today, the picturesque castle of St Donat's on the Glamorgan Heritage Coast is home to Atlantic College, the first of thirteen United World Colleges, which provide residential sixth form education and facilities for students from across the world.

Its origins however date back to the late 12th century when the earliest surviving part of the castle was in the ownership of the Norman de Hawey family. Ownership passed to a Norman family by the name of Stradling in 1298 through the marriage of Sir Peter Stradling and Joan de Hawey. It was to remain in the ownership of the Stradlings for almost 500 years. In 1728, on the death of Sir Thomas Stradling, ownership passed to Sir John Tyrwhitt.

Famously in 1925, the castle was later bought by newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst, on which the film *Citizen Kane* was based. He spent a fortune renovating and revitalising the castle, bringing electricity both to the castle and the locality for the first time. He used it as a luxury estate to privately entertain the rich and famous of the time, including Charlie Chaplin, the young John F. Kennedy and George Bernard Shaw.

During the depression of the 1930's Hearst's media empire was to fall on hard times and the castle was put up for sale, but requisitioned for use by British and American troops during World War II. In 1962 the castle was bought by Monsieur Antonin Besse II, and given to the Governing Body of Atlantic College.

While the castle itself is not generally open to the public, the Norman Church is as is St Donat's Arts Centre on site. This was converted from the estate's Medieval Tythe Barn in the late 90s. Every other July, the Arts Centre, castle and grounds play host to a world of stories when Beyond the Border International Storytelling Festival opens its doors to visitors from far and wide.



▲ St Donat's Castle

The Vale's team of Ambassadors are there to help facilitate your visit, and share their knowledge and passion for the Vale with our visitors. If you would like to know more about this dedicated team of volunteers and how they might be able to help enrich your visit, have a look at:

www.moretothevale.com or

www.lovethevale.com or

www.visitthevale.com

and check out the Ambassadors section of the site.

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RURAL COMMUNITIES

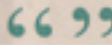


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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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