

A Diary of Our 2005 UK Journey (page 11)

[GBCC Home](#)

Trip Part 1

[Page 1](#) [Page 2](#) [Page 3](#) [Page 4](#) [Page 5](#) [Page 6](#) [Page 7](#) [Page 8](#) [Page 9](#) [Page 10](#)

Trip Part 2

[Page 11](#) [Page 12](#) [Page 13](#) [Page 14](#) [Page 15](#) [Page 16](#) [Page 17](#) [Page 18](#)

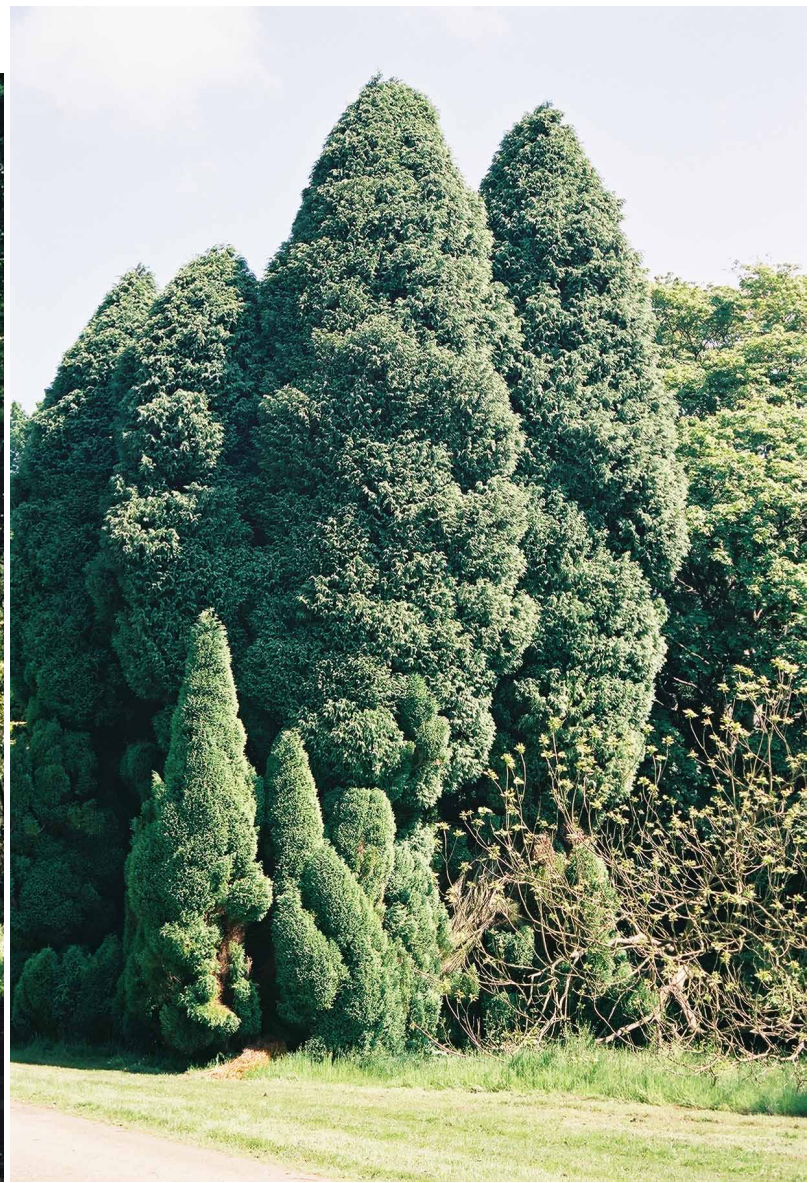
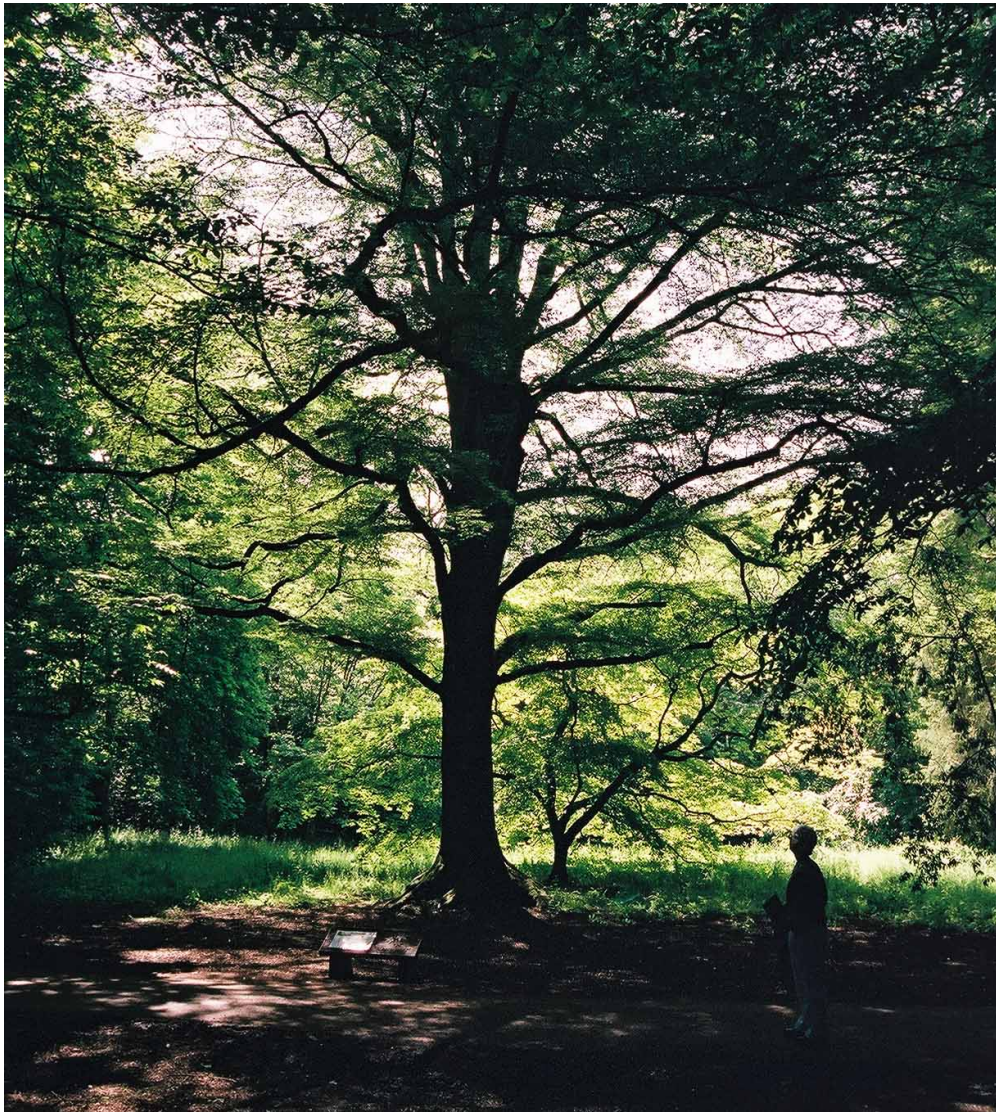
Trip Part 3

[Page 19](#) [Page 20](#) [Page 21](#) [Page 22](#) [Page 23](#) [Page 24](#) [Page 25](#) [Page 26](#) [Page 27](#) [Page 28](#)

Tuesday, 7 June 2005, Westonbirt-The Cotswolds-Stratford

Tuesday was hot and clear. This had been a day of concern as it was going to be one of the more outdoors of our days.

[Westonbirt](#) is the National Arboretum is located more or less on the drive from Bath to Stratford through the Cotswolds. Since the whole point of an arboretum is *trees*, one expects views dominated by shades of green, with shape and texture rather than color providing the diversity.





This tree is still alive (barely) but "stark contrast" comes to mind.

I think we walked about 4 miles through Westonbirt. Unfortunately, I misstepped somewhere along the path and pulled a groin muscle that made me really uncomfortable doing anything for the next couple of days.

After lunch at Westonbirt we continued northeastward into the heart of the Cotswolds region. This area in the middle of England is famous for its cream-to-yellow stone villages and gentle streams. Two of the most famous, photogenic, and *visited* villages are Bourton-on-Water and Lower Slaughter. Though we were early in the tourist season by design, it was a gorgeous day and every pensioner group and garden club in existence gravitated to Bourton. The place was jammed though my pictures don't show it -- selective views and more patience than I normally exhibit.





[Bourton](#) is a beautiful place. Like many other villages, it's quite ordinary and more contemporary once you get a couple of blocks away from the water. That's the River Windrush -- only about six inches deep and 40 feet wide. Just in front of the bridge in the lower picture is a ford for vehicles to cross. I marvel at the small amount of bank on these Cotswold streams. Most American streams of the same size would be flooding these homes on a regular basis. That they do not must be due more regular rainfall patterns and smaller watersheds feeding each stream. When we got to Telford, Tony Mitchell pointed out that the Severn River *does* flood significantly and often and we saw evidence in Ironbridge Gorge and also in Tewkesbury. But the Cotswold streams seem much better mannered and tame.

[Lower Slaughter](#) (yes there's an Upper Slaughter a mile or two upstream) is nearby. Smaller than Bourton and with no parking facilities, Lower Slaughter didn't have the tour buses, but did have an amazing number of artists crammed along its stream. There's even one across the street in the extreme right corner of this photo. Here's a panoramic mosaic of Lower Slaughter, nearly 180 degrees. The photographic mosaic distorts the curvature of the scene. While there is a curve, the stream (the River Eye) does not nearly bend back on itself. Imagine this on the inside of a half cylinder and the true perspective will be more apparent.



From Lower Slaughter, our plan was to cut across the Cotswolds to the village of Lower Quinton (just on the edge of the Cotswold region) and near Stratford. We had reservations at the College Arms Inn. When Beth tried to check in, everyone in the place laughed! The ownership had changed since we booked the reservation and the new owners had been trying to reach us (but of course we'd already set off on our great adventure). Considering the workmen were busy carrying out all the furniture and knocking holes in walls, it wasn't surprising that we couldn't stay there that night. The owners had booked us into a bed and breakfast in a nearby town run by someone they knew. It turned out to be a very pleasant place and at least as convenient to Stratford as the place we'd chosen. So after a few heart stopping moments, the Lucas adventure resumed, only slightly off plan.

We changed for dinner and the theatre. I'd booked tickets at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and had them in hand. We drove into Stratford, gave up trying to park in the town center, and headed to the periphery. We limped back into town and had a pleasant outdoor meal at a pub two blocks from the theatre. Between meal and play, we whiled away the time watching the boaters and birds on the Avon. The play was *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, certainly appropriate for the time of year. I'd hoped for one of the histories as I've never seen any of them produced, but the *Dream* was certainly a great performance. The players within the play were the most slapstick and bawdiest of any production that I've seen -- that would seem to be the true intent of their roles after all. We really enjoyed it and because we booked so early had the choice of seats (I prefer front row center of the circle rather than in the stalls as I dislike looking up at the actors and can actually see better up and slightly back.)

I didn't take my camera into Stratford. We're were going to dinner and the play and not intending to go to museums or other attractions. So no picture of Anne Hathaway's cottage and the like.

Trip Part 1

[Page 1](#) [Page 2](#) [Page 3](#) [Page 4](#) [Page 5](#) [Page 6](#) [Page 7](#) [Page 8](#) [Page 9](#) [Page 10](#)

Trip Part 2

[Page 11](#) [Page 12](#) [Page 13](#) [Page 14](#) [Page 15](#) [Page 16](#) [Page 17](#) [Page 18](#)

Trip Part 3

[Page 19](#) [Page 20](#) [Page 21](#) [Page 22](#) [Page 23](#) [Page 24](#) [Page 25](#) [Page 26](#) [Page 27](#) [Page 28](#)

Westonbirt - The National Arboretum

- [Annual Membership/ Volunteering](#)

- [Corporate information and venue hire](#)

- [Events and Concerts](#)

- [Festival of the Tree](#)

- [Heritage Collection](#)

- [Learning at Westonbirt](#)

- [Planning your visit](#)

- [Westonbirt's history and tree collection](#)

- [Back to the national arboreta home](#)

2006 - OUR ANNIVERSARY YEAR - celebrating 50 years of Forestry Commission ownership and 21 years support from the Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum.



- The [Westonbirt Heritage Collection](#)

Open 365 days a year for you to relax, recharge and "enjoy the magic"!

- Find out [what looks good in Spring](#)
- NEW for Groups - [Holford Heritage Tours](#)

Some things to look forward to in June, July & August:

2006 Westonbirt Concerts - Tickets on sale NOW [More details](#)

The Festival of the Tree (formerly known as The Festival of Wood) Come and see the amazing giant sculptures at Westonbirt's original wood-carving event - [More details:](#)

Holford Carriage Rides - On three weekends in August you can enjoy a carriage ride through the Old Arboretum - just as the Holford family would have done in the 1900s. [More details:](#)



What's of interest

A new "baby" at Westonbirt! Read about our "dinosaur" tree, the very rare Wollemi pine... Go to the "What's looking good" link

Related pages

- [- Bedgebury Pinetum](#)
- [- About the National Arboreta](#)

Useful sites

- [- Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum](#)
- [Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew](#)
- [Forest Research](#)

If you have any queries about visiting the Arboretum that this website doesn't answer, please e-mail us at westonbirt@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Westonbirt's history and tree collection



- [History of westonbirt](#)
- [Back to Westonbirt - The National Arboretum home](#)



The diversity and history that surround Westonbirt and its [tree collection](#) is truly astonishing - with every tree providing a memorable story or link to the past or future. This section of the web site explores these links - from the biggest and oldest trees in the collection to the [history of Westonbirt](#) and the great Victorian [plant hunters](#) - providing insight into the fascinating world of trees.

[Forest Research home](#)

- [Aims and objectives](#)
- [Research, products and services portfolio](#)
- [Clients](#)
- [International collaborations](#)
- [Nationwide capability](#)
- [Organisation](#)
- [Quality assurance](#)
- [Quinquennial review](#)
- [Working at Forest Research](#)

About Forest Research

One of the world's leading centres of research into woodlands and forestry

Our aims and objectives

We aim to provide research services relevant to UK and international forestry interests and inform and support forestry's contribution to UK governmental policies. Our core roles are to provide the evidence base for UK forestry practices and to support innovation.

[Our aims and objectives in detail](#)

Research, products and services portfolio

Trees have a profound influence on our lives:

- On our environment and health
- On our access to green space
- On our landscapes and their biodiversity
- As a raw material for construction, fuel and other uses
- On livelihoods and the rural economy.

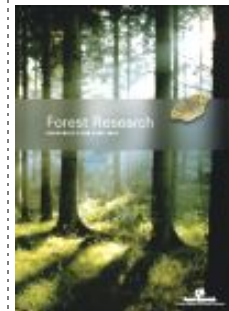
Forest Research's portfolio of [research and development](#) is diverse, as it covers all of the aspects mentioned above. Our core roles are to provide the evidence base for UK forestry practices and to support innovation. We also provide a range of products and services to support the land management and environmental technologies sectors.



Reports and plans



[Annual Report & Accounts 2004 - 2005](#)



[Corporate Plan 2005 - 2008](#)

What's of interest



森林研究所
森林委员会的研究机构

[About Forest Research](#)

Chinese version (PDF-316K)

Related pages

[Addresses & directions](#)

[Staff directory & contacts](#)

[Corporate publications](#)

Clients and international collaboration

Our core work for the Forestry Commission supports the forestry strategies for England, Scotland and Wales.



We also have a growing portfolio of work for external clients. We provide research, development and associated services to government departments and commercial organisations in the UK, European Union and elsewhere.

- [Clients](#)
- [International collaborations.](#)

Nationwide capability

Our main research stations are in Surrey and near Edinburgh and we have a nationwide network of regional offices and field stations giving us the capacity to conduct research on a GB basis.

[More about our nationwide capability](#)



Organisation

Forest Research's scientific staff are organised in six divisions. Corporate functions are provided by three further divisions. Our Executive Board comprises the Chief Executive, Research Director, Heads of the science divisions and Directors of the corporate divisions.

[More about our organisation](#)



Quality assurance

Forest Research is committed to delivering high quality scientific research which fully meets our customers' needs for quality assurance. We aim to offer a flexible approach, focused on customers' needs for quality, timeliness and cost.

[More about our quality assurance scheme](#)



Quinquennial Review

Like all government executive agencies, our work is reviewed every 5 years. The last review started in August 2001 with a consultation inviting the opinions of customers, partners and interested parties of all kinds and looked forward 5 years from April 2002.

[More about the Quinquennial Review](#)



Working at Forest Research

We are proud to be the employer of choice for many who want to work in forestry or in tree-related research. We are committed to encouraging a diversity of applicants for jobs, avoiding unfair discrimination and implementing 'family friendly' policies including flexible working patterns and part-time employment.

[More about working for us](#)



Corporate publications

You can read detailed information about Forest Research, what we have achieved, what we are doing now and our future plans, in our [corporate publications](#). These include:



- Annual Reports
- Corporate Plans
- Executive Board Minutes
- Science and Business Newsletters
- Visiting Groups Reports.



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- HOME
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- ATTRACTIONS
- FOOD & DRINK
- SERVICES
- SHOPS
- SITE SEARCH
- LINKS
- LOCAL NEWS & EVENTS
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HOMEPAGE

Dear Visitor,

Welcome to the Bourton-on-the-Water Website, the content of the site has been produced by local people so that you as a visitor, can enjoy at your leisure some of the delightful features of our lovely village and the countryside around it.

The Cotswolds have always been looked upon as the Heart of England. It is one of the few regions with an architectural style all of its own and the steeply pitched roofs, stone mullions and dormer windows are typical. Built almost exclusively in warm yellow Cotswold stone, this delightful village has such a unique appeal to visitors and residents alike.

Regularly voted one of the prettiest villages in England, Bourton-on-the-Water has more than its share of Cotswold houses and cottages, many of them three hundred years old, some dating back to Elizabethan times four hundred years ago. There is plenty to see and do here and we hope this site and the information within makes your stay as enjoyable as possible.

The Chairman,
The Chamber of Commerce,
Bourton-on-the-Water.



Children Playing in the river



The Beautiful River Windrush



The Slaughters



The thumbnails below are linked to larger pictures

Cotswold Links

[Home](#)

- [Anne Hathaways Cottage](#)
- [Bath \(feature\)](#)
- [Bibury](#)
- [Bourton-on-the-Water](#)
- [Broadway](#)
- [Burford Town](#)
- [Charlecote Park](#)
- [Cheltenham](#)
- [Chipping Campden](#)
- [Cotswolds Farm Park](#)
- [Cotswold Wildlife Park](#)
- [Coughton Court](#)
- [Hidcote Manor Gardens](#)
- [Jephson Gardens Leamington](#)
- [Painswick Garden](#)
- [Ragley Hall](#)
- [Stow-on-the-Wold](#)
- [Stratford Butterfly Farm](#)
- [Stratford-upon-Avon](#)
- [Sudeley Castle](#)
- [The Slaughters](#)
- [Upton House](#)
- [Warwick](#)



Two of the prettiest villages in the Cotswolds are Upper Slaughter and Lower Slaughter. Lower Slaughter especially is much sought out by tourists eager to record the scenery with their camera's.

The name of Slaughter has no connection with blood but is derived from the old English word Slohtre meaning a muddy place, which it may once have been but not anymore.

These villages are only just over a mile from Bourton-on-the-Water but are completely different in character, they are very secluded and quiet, no shops restaurants or attractions. Just Lower Slaughter Manor built in 1658 for the High Sheriff of Gloucestershire and now a grand country house hotel and a Victorian corn mill, with a working water wheel. The mill has been converted into a gift shop and museum and is owned by one of the countries premier former jazz singers. Also worth visiting is the pretty little church of St. Mary, which is usually decorated with flowers.

As parking is very restricted it is recommended that a pleasant walk from Bourton may be advisable

Most visitors spend longer parking than they do walking around the villages. There are some nice photo opportunities especially in the spring, and the river Eye draping itself through the centre of the village sets off the cottages and their small colourful gardens to perfection. It is well worth the effort to walk the footpath between the two villages to explore their different characters and absorb the atmosphere and beauty of the surroundings.



Upper Slaughter 2002

Upper slaughter is harder to find than lower slaughter and not so picturesque, consequently it can be missed by passing tourists, which would be a mistake as it is a charming village. It has an historic Norman Church, St. Peters with parts dating back to the 12th century.

The village consists of typical Cotswold stone houses with dormers mullions and dripstones, there have been few new buildings in the past century. The cottages that comprise The Square were reconstructed by the well known architect Sir Edward Lutyens in 1906, there is also The lords of the Manor Hotel formerly The Manor House and a tiny Methodist chapel down by the brook dating from 1865 and now in use as a pottery.



A Diary of Our 2005 UK Journey (page 12)

[GBCC Home](#)

Trip Part 1

[Page 1](#) [Page 2](#) [Page 3](#) [Page 4](#) [Page 5](#) [Page 6](#) [Page 7](#) [Page 8](#) [Page 9](#) [Page 10](#)

Trip Part 2

[Page 11](#) [Page 12](#) [Page 13](#) [Page 14](#) [Page 15](#) [Page 16](#) [Page 17](#) [Page 18](#)

Trip Part 3

[Page 19](#) [Page 20](#) [Page 21](#) [Page 22](#) [Page 23](#) [Page 24](#) [Page 25](#) [Page 26](#) [Page 27](#) [Page 28](#)

Wednesday, 8 June 2005, Warwick-Tewkesbury

Yet another hot and nearly cloudless day. This was intended to be a short driving day with only two stops, though we had considered wandering some more through the Cotswolds as we went. In the event, we did not and just focused on Warwick Castle and the town of Tewkesbury and drove no more than 60 miles.

[Warwick Castle](#) is owned by Madame Tussaud's. I have to admit after seeing the show biz web site (follow that link), I wondered how much of it was going to be show and how much of it authentic. I will admit to being pleased at what we found. Yes, there are some wax figures in the castle rooms, but not to the point of detracting from the verisimilitude they added to the scenes. It is intact and furnished which always adds to the impression.





It was clear it was another week from Leeds Castle and Bodiam Castle and not just the weather. UK schools were back in session and the field trips were storming this castle and many other attractions. From here on, gaggles of schoolchildren, each clutching his or her clipboard, were much in evidence. Here they come!



The banquet hall has got to be just about everyone's idea of what one should look like. We don't know what event was being planned, but we doubt that they have all the place settings out all the time. As the web site describes, they do hold various sorts of banquets and events there. This was shot with the existing light, a mixture of natural and artificial sources, and is one of my favourite frames.





The Mound dates from 1068, but today it is essentially a garden folly.

On to [Tewkesbury](#) (it's really hard to remember to put that second "e" in there!), a market town downstream from Stratford where the Avon River meets the Severn River. We visited Tewkesbury mostly for sentimental reasons as we live in Tewksbury, Massachusetts. The towns had linked in the past and during a boat ride on the Avon (as we tried to cool down with some breezes on the river), conversations with the ticket taker and a fellow passenger revealed that Tewkesbury is trying to rekindle the relationship. According to the passenger, The English town was going to present a tapestry to the Massachusetts town, but they can't find it! Sounds like our home town. The mind boggles where we would put it in town if they ever do find it and bring it across.





Tewkesbury is a mix of real and faux Tudor half-timbered buildings and later stone and brick edifices. The water in the second picture is the River Avon. Stratford is upstream to the left and just to the right it falls the remaining few feet to the level of the Severn. There is a lock system just upstream for boat traffic. This second photo is another of my favourites.

Dominating the town is Tewkesbury Abbey which the local population saved from the ravages of Henry VIII by ransoming the cost of the lead roof. The main tower is of Norman vintage and of local Cotswold stone.





On the grounds of Tewkesbury Abbey, we noticed a statue of four ethnically diverse children forming a cross by touching their shoes. The sculpture is called "Touching Souls" and is remarkable enough, BUT.. there is an identical statue about a half a mile from our home. The sculptor, [Miko Kaufman](#), lives in Tewksbury and we later learned that the canon of the abbey visited our town with a choir in the mid-1900s, saw the statue and asked to have it cast a second time for the abbey. This picture is from Tewksbury. To see the one in Tewkesbury, go to this [link](#). While I'm prepared to believe that people of European, African and Asian descent live in Tewkesbury, I suspect that the girl on the right is the only Native American in the town. That's not true in Massachusetts.



We're fortunate to have Miko in our community. At least four of his sculptures are exhibited in Tewksbury and more exist in the adjacent city of Lowell. Here is a whimsical fountain of firemen struggling (and losing the battle) with a fire hose with a mind of its own. It sits diagonally across the intersection from "Touching Souls" and adjacent to our neighbourhood fire station.



Trip Part 1

[Page 1](#) [Page 2](#) [Page 3](#) [Page 4](#) [Page 5](#) [Page 6](#) [Page 7](#) [Page 8](#) [Page 9](#) [Page 10](#)

Trip Part 2

[Page 11](#) [Page 12](#) [Page 13](#) [Page 14](#) [Page 15](#) [Page 16](#) [Page 17](#) [Page 18](#)

Trip Part 3

[Page 19](#) [Page 20](#) [Page 21](#) [Page 22](#) [Page 23](#) [Page 24](#) [Page 25](#) [Page 26](#) [Page 27](#) [Page 28](#)

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Monday, June 5

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You can source information on many aspects of Tewkesbury life, its community organisations, its businesses and the services & products that they

Welcome to Tewkesbury.net



"Space is almost infinite. As a matter of fact, we think it is infinite"
Dan Quayle



Tewkesbury PhotoBlog

Click on the photos below to see full size



high river level on the avon

4/12/2005
from:
tewkseye



floods again

3/12/2005
from:
tewkseye



christmas lights turned on

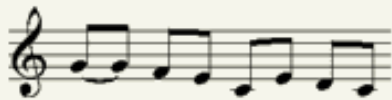
27/11/2005
from:
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frosty morning down by the mill avon

21/11/2005
from:
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Play some Tewkesbury music

LATEST NEWS



BATTLE BANNERS DECORATE TOWN

Tewkesbury Battlefield Society members are busy erecting more than 80 colourful

banners around the town centre. This is 20 more than last year and the most the town has ever seen.

[Read More...](#)

FUND RAISING SUCCESS FOR TEWKESBURY GROUP

May 31, 2006

£11,000 in one year for Crohn's in Childhood Research Association.

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HIDDEN ABBEY ON VIEW DURING FETE

May 25, 2006

Fete Offers Rare Chance to Visit Roof Space.

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FEATURES

Tomorrow's Health: Let us know what you think

Local people will have an opportunity to feedback their views on the consultation proposals through a variety of means such as drop-in sessions, via the internet or by reading information on displays and picking up feedback forms from sites around the area such as GP practices and the community hospital.

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What's On... In the next 14 days

Site Search

Networked for IT Systems Business
Charlton Networks

[meetyoulater.com](#)

This site runs on **peoplepowered SOFTWARE**

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Tewkesbury.net

offer.
The website accepts the submission of information for the Tewkesbury geographical areas described by the following UK post codes:

- GL20 5--
- GL20 6--
- GL20 7--
- GL20 8--
- GL19 4--

Masses of information about Tewkesbury [Businesses](#), [Shops](#), [Local Organisations](#) & [Tourism](#).

Tewkesbury News from [2000](#), [2001](#), [2002](#), [2003](#), [2004](#), [2005](#).

FEATURED ENTRIES ON TEWKESBURY.NET

CHARLTON NETWORKS

They provide a wide range of IT Network Services throughout Gloucestershire, the Midlands and South West of England.

[More Info](#)

FLETCHERCONSULT

Your local website design service company for Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire and the UK. (also, e-strategy, business strategy, marketing strategy, consulting, design, web design, web site design, e-commerce, content management systems, management information systems, intranets, extranets).

[More Info](#)

BARBARA FLETCHER, ARTIST

Barbara paints and draws figurative and semi abstract landscapes, seascapes, still lifes, portraits and life studies.

[More Info](#)

RENDEZ VOUS RESTAURANT

Friendly relaxing atmosphere. Variety of exciting menus, using fresh local produce. View the shop in 3D by clicking on the Ipix link immediately below.

[More Info](#)

[Ipix](#)

Don't forget that it costs nothing to list your business, community organisation or society on Tewkesbury.net
[Register now >](#)

TEWKESBURY MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL JULY 8th & 9th 2006

History will come to life before your very eyes at this year's Tewkesbury Medieval Festival. Around 2000 armed warriors from all over Europe will recreate the history changing Battle of Tewkesbury, which took place on May 4th 1471.

[Read More ...](#)



TEWKESBURY GROTPOTTERS

'Keep Tewkesbury Tidy' Group has a new name

[Read More ...](#)



News from 5 years ago:

NEW GAS PIPES ENSURE SUPPLY FOR TEWKESBURY.

(01/06/2001)

Work will take 23 weeks. [Read](#)

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photos to see the full size photos.

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high river level on the avon

4/12/2005
from: **tewkseye**



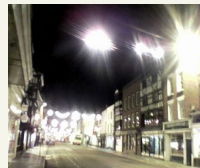
high river level on the avon

4/12/2005
from: **tewkseye**



floods again

3/12/2005
from: **tewkseye**



christmas lights turned on

27/11/2005
from: **tewkseye**



frosty morning down by the mill avon

21/11/2005
from: **tewkseye**



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In the next 14 days



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Networked for IT Systems Business
Charlton Networks



Vegetarian Centre
UK Based

This site runs on **peoplepowered SOFTWARE**



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offer.
The website
accepts the
submission of
information for the
Tewkesbury
geographical areas
described by the
following UK post
codes:

GL20 5--
GL20 6--
GL20 7--
GL20 8--
GL19 4--



the cross,
remembrance
day in
tewkesbury

13/11/2005
from:
tewkseye



remembrance
day in
tewkesbury

13/11/2005
from:
tewkseye



remembrance
day in
tewkesbury

13/11/2005
from:
tewkseye



picturesque
floods

13/11/2005
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Mico Kaufman

sculptor

[About the Artist](#)

[Monumental Works](#)

[Sculptures for Sale](#)

[Information](#)

[Home](#)



About the Artist

MICO KAUFMAN was born in Romania. He endured three years in a concentration camp during World War II. After the war, he studied in Florence and Rome before emigrating to the United States in 1951. He is recipient of many artistic awards. Among them is one from the American Numismatic Society which includes these words: "For his great ability to humanize the official and to universalize the personal."

A resident of Tewksbury, Massachusetts, Mico's art is on display throughout the United States and Europe. Some of his most inspiring public works are in Tewksbury and Lowell.

Mico has said: "If you should notice one of my public sculptures, I would like you to stop and ponder on its subject. The pause might refresh, inform, and even inspire. My work reflects on the bonds that substantiate our humanity."

Awards and Achievements

MICO KAUFMAN, Fellow of the National Sculpture Society of New York.

Designer and Sculptor of the Official 1985 Inaugural President Reagan-Bush Medal.

1987 - The official Commemorative Medal of the Federation International De La Medaille.

1987 - "ITALIA" 6ft. 4 in. Bronze Commemorative Sculpture Kennedy Plaza, Lowell, Ma.

1987 - "DEBUSSY" 6 ft. Bronze Sculpture, Lowell University, So. Campus, Lowell, Ma.

1988 - Centennial Commemorative Medal for the national

Geographic Society, Washington, D.C.

[About the Artist](#) | [Monumental Works](#) | [Sculptures for Sale](#) | [Information](#) | [Home](#)

[About the Artist](#)

[Monumental Works](#)

[Sculptures for Sale](#)

[Information](#)

[Home](#)



Monumental Works

Mico Kaufman's art is on display throughout the United States and Europe. Some of his most inspiring public works are near his home in Tewksbury and Lowell, MA. Mico has said: "If you should notice one of my public sculptures, I would like you to stop and ponder on it's subject. The pause might refresh, inform, and even inspire. My work reflects on the bonds that substantiate our humanity."

[About the Artist](#) | [Monumental Works](#) | [Sculptures for Sale](#) | [Information](#) | [Home](#)

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- Directory
- Classified
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- Directory

BUSINESS

- Directory
- Facts & figures

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- Directory
- What's on
- Where to stay
- Where to eat

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This site is the definitive Internet resource for anyone seeking information on the town of **Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, U.K.**

You can source information on many aspects of Tewkesbury life, its community organisations, its businesses and the services & products that they

Tewkesbury Pictures:

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Abbey Statue
The Statue outside Tewkesbury Abbey

17/03/2000
Credit: © FC



Gardens
The gardens by the Abbey Mill

17/03/2000
Credit: © FC



Medieval Fair
Period Costume

09/03/2000



Prince Phillip Visits
Prince Phillip and the Mayor watch the parade

16/02/2000
Credit: © FC



Tewkesbury Abbey
Tewkesbury Abbey on a sunny day.

09/03/2000
Credit: © FC



Tewkesbury Abbey in black and white
View of Tewkesbury Abbey

04/04/2000
Credit: © -



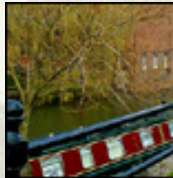
The Bell Hotel
Local hotel opposite Tewkesbury Abbey

17/03/2000
Credit: © FC



Bridge
A bridge over the River Avon

17/03/2000
Credit: © FC



Healings Mill
Healings Mill is situated by the River Avon

17/03/2000
Credit: © FC



Prince Phillip Visits
Troops from the Princes' visit

16/02/2000
Credit: © FC



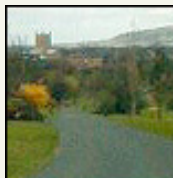
Tewkesbury Abbey
Tewkesbury Abbey on a cold winters day

20/12/1999
Credit: © FC



Tewkesbury Abbey
Tewkesbury Abbey taken from within it's gardens

17/03/2000
Credit: © FC



Tewkesbury Golf Course
A view from the top of the golf course

17/03/2000
Credit: © FC



The Black Bear
The Black Bear is a pub in Tewkesbury.

17/03/2000
Credit: © FC

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- GL20 6--
- GL20 7--
- GL20 8--
- GL19 4--



The Floods
Tewkesbury Abbey
with the floods in the
background

03/04/2000
Credit: © Gerald

Tarling



The Mill
The watermill in
Tewkesbury

09/03/2000
Credit: © FC



The Severn Ham
A picture of the
Severn Ham with
Tewkesbury Abbey in
the background.

17/03/2000

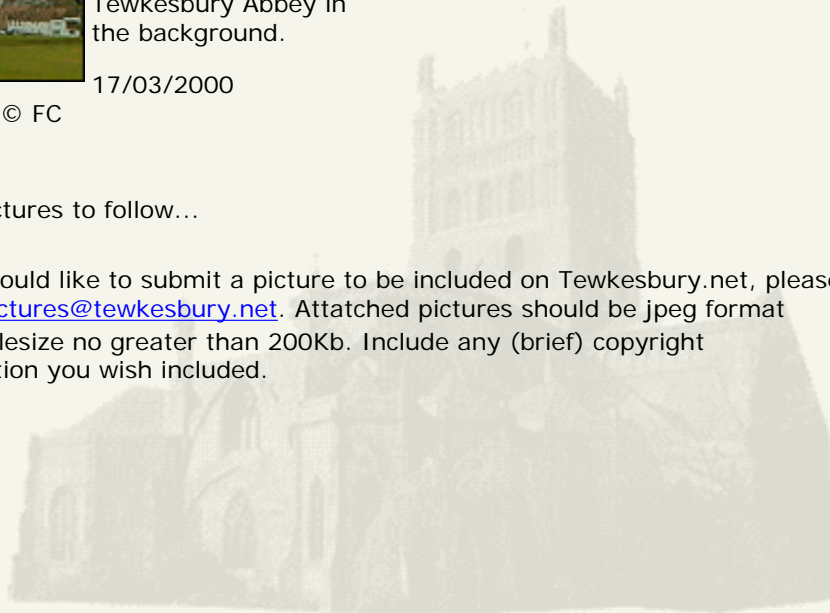
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A Diary of Our 2005 UK Journey (page 13)

[GBCC Home](#)

Trip Part 1

[Page 1](#) [Page 2](#) [Page 3](#) [Page 4](#) [Page 5](#) [Page 6](#) [Page 7](#) [Page 8](#) [Page 9](#) [Page 10](#)

Trip Part 2

[Page 11](#) [Page 12](#) [Page 13](#) [Page 14](#) [Page 15](#) [Page 16](#) [Page 17](#) [Page 18](#)

Trip Part 3

[Page 19](#) [Page 20](#) [Page 21](#) [Page 22](#) [Page 23](#) [Page 24](#) [Page 25](#) [Page 26](#) [Page 27](#) [Page 28](#)

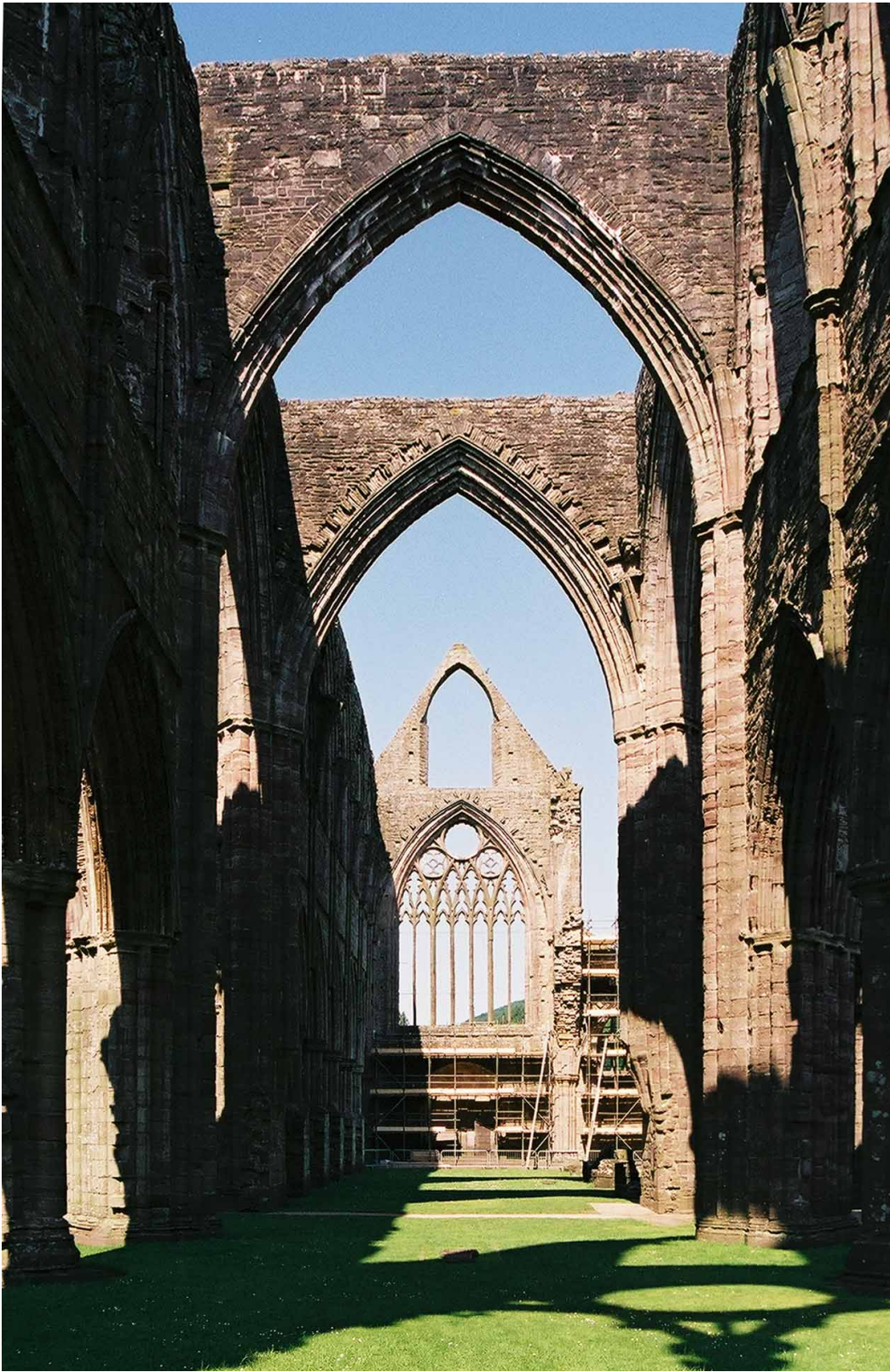
Thursday, 9 June 2005, Wales (Tintern Abbey, Caerphilly, Laleston-Porthcawl)

The good but warm weather continued. Today, we drove from Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire to Laleston, South Wales where Rhys Phillips lives. We had pencilled in three stops at Tintern Abbey, Caerleon and Caerphilly, but when shortly before our departure, Roger Stevenson was unable to meet us in Caerleon, we decided to simplify our trip and did not stop there.

[Tintern Abbey](#) lies in the Wye Valley, part of the traditional boundary between England and Wales. The Offa's Dyke Path follows the edge of the escarpment on the English side. There is an outlook above and across from the abbey called the Devil's Pulpit, but checking at the Abbey offices revealed it would be something like a three-hour roundtrip by foot from the abbey grounds. We didn't have the time (or the energy) for that.









From Tintern Abbey, we headed west, skirting the northern fringes of Cardiff to get to [Caerphilly Castle](#). Although we saw lots of castle ruins, Caerphilly seemed more actively engaged in falling down, with one corner tower surrounded by bracing after beginning to fall into the moat. It was in its day a breakthrough design in size, construction and the use of water for defense.





In the second picture on the right hand side is the great hall which has been reconstructed (somewhat controversially) for modern use. It does appear a bit incongruous amidst a general scene of decay. I saved the following picture of one of the spiral staircases as a remembrance of so many we navigated. As here, the trickiest bit is where floors and passages intersect with a staircase. This, like most, spirals clockwise as you ascend. I can remember only two that spiraled the opposite way -- Bath Abbey and I think Edinburgh Castle (though it might have been Stirling Castle). I wonder how many people they lost falling down these things? It may have been easier being smaller and more agile than I am, but these are steep and narrow.



After lunch, we headed for Laleston, South Wales, in the Bridgend area west of Cardiff. Here's the mile marker to prove we were there. It's located across the road from The Great House in Laleston where we stayed. We were there to visit Rhys Phillips, the currently the youngest member of the Global British Comedy Collaborative. Rhys earns a few quid working the very nice restaurant in the Great House. We invited him to dinner there, so he could sit for a change and be waited *upon*. Rhys is apparently the master of the dessert trolley, and his standin was very nervous with Rhys looking on! It's was a very pleasant stay at the Great House, though some of their "marketing" bordered in the too cute category. Our room was called "Lleft" and its adjoining rooms were "Myddle" and "Wright". Argh.





Rhys drove us around the Bridgend area and we drove Rhys to Porthcawl, a seaside resort town only a few miles away. Here are Rhys and I in Porthcawl. Note Rhys has mastered the eyeglasses bit, but still needs to work on the facial hair as a GBCC member! A year or two at university should take care of that.



Rhys said he'd never seen Porthcawl so sunny and calm. The Coast Guard station at the end of the Porthcawl Promenade had nothing to do, at least this day. You could have gone canoeing in the Severn Estuary and there was barely enough wind for sailing. The Somerset hills were clearly visible across the water.



Trip Part 1

[Page 1](#) [Page 2](#) [Page 3](#) [Page 4](#) [Page 5](#) [Page 6](#) [Page 7](#) [Page 8](#) [Page 9](#) [Page 10](#)

Trip Part 2

[Page 11](#) [Page 12](#) [Page 13](#) [Page 14](#) [Page 15](#) [Page 16](#) [Page 17](#) [Page 18](#)

Trip Part 3

[Page 19](#) [Page 20](#) [Page 21](#) [Page 22](#) [Page 23](#) [Page 24](#) [Page 25](#) [Page 26](#) [Page 27](#) [Page 28](#)

The Tintern Village Website

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Tintern Abbey



The ruins of Tintern Abbey lie between the River Wye and the A466 road at the southern end of Tintern village. The site is beautiful, with the tidal river frequently changing from a very low flow during Summer low tides to a raging torrent when Winter floods add to the high tides surging up the Bristol Channel.



The hills around the Abbey are covered with woods, changing colour with the seasons. The land upon which the Abbey is set makes the most of the sunlight, the Abbey receiving the benefit of the last of the sun shining down the Angiddy valley.



The actual ruins are now looked after carefully and receive a good number of visitors. Maintenance is often underway to prevent further deterioration of the fabric.

Tintern Abbey was originally founded by Cistercian monks in 1131 AD. in the reign of Henry

I. Between 1270 and 1301 the Abbey was rebuilt and by the end of the rebuilding, around four hundred monks lived in the complex. The Black Death arrived in 1349 and affected Abbey life badly but it continued to operate until 1536. In that year the Abbey was part of the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII. Within a few years the lead was stripped from the roof and the building began to decay. The Abbey then became a source of building stone and only in the eighteenth century was any interest shown in the ruin. Around 1760 the site was cleaned up and visitors to the Wye Valley began to be entranced with the beauty of the site and surroundings. Turner was the best known artist to visit Tintern at the end of that century along with the poet Wordsworth. His poem *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey* became a standard text for English students throughout the English speaking world.



Today the Abbey receives many visitors. At times the Abbey hosts special church services, although in the roofless and windowless ruin, the clergy have to compete with the cawing of the local rooks and the noise of road traffic climbing out of the valley to the south.

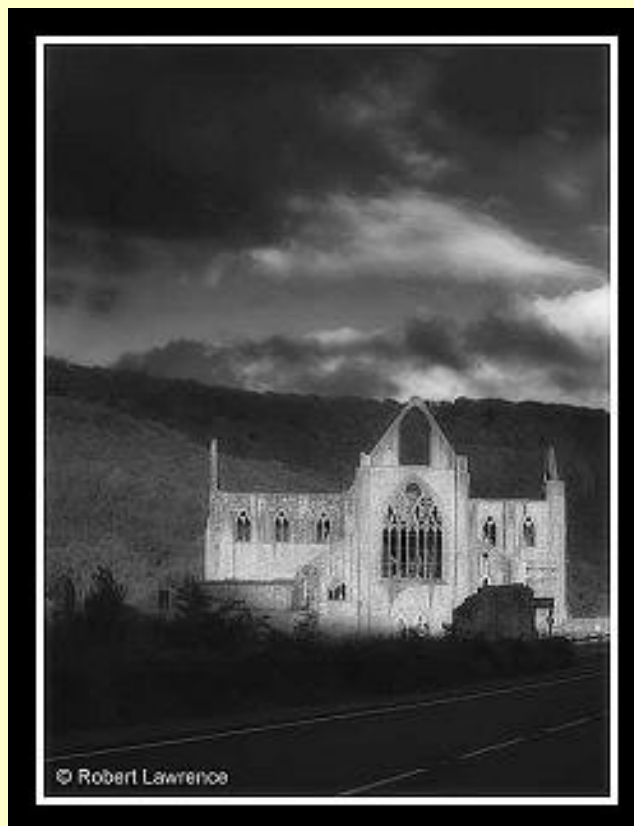


The site was taken over by the Office of Works in 1914 and is now in the care of Cadw, Welsh Historic Monuments. The Abbey is open most days. There is a gift shop attached to the Abbey which sells very appropriate items of good quality.

A good link for further description and pictures of the Abbey is www.castlewales.com/tintern.html



This unusual picture of the Abbey was taken using digital infra-red by Ray Philson of Llandogo.



This picture was supplied by Robert Lawrence (photographer) of Abbey House Studios in

Tintern

Caerphilly Castle ★★★★★



In the town centre, Caerphilly, [South Wales](#)

ST 156 871

[Location map link for Caerphilly Castle](#)

All photographs Copyright © 2002 by [Jeffrey L. Thomas](#).

[Follow this link](#) for a ground plan of the castle (71k jpg)

Rees 1971; Renn: Cadw Guide

Caerphilly Castle is one of the great medieval castles of western Europe. Several factors give it this pre-eminence - its immense size (1.2h), making it the largest in Britain after Windsor, its large-scale use of water for defence and the fact that it is the first truly concentric castle in Britain. Of the time of its building in the late 13th century, it was a revolutionary masterpiece of military planning

One of Henry III's most powerful and ambitious barons, Gilbert de Clare, lord of Glamorgan, built this castle. His purpose was

to secure the area and prevent lowland south Wales from falling into the hands of the Welsh leader Llywelyn the Last, who controlled most of mid and north Wales. De Clare built other castles on the northern fringes of his territory for the same purpose, such as Castell Coch. He had seized the upland district of Senghenydd, in which Caerphilly lies, from the Welsh in 1266 to act as a buffer against Llywelyn's southward ambitions. Llywelyn realised the threat and tried but failed to prevent the castle from being built; it was begun on 11 April 1268, was attacked by Llywelyn in 1270, and was begun again in 1271. This time it was completed without hindrance. Its message was not lost on Llywelyn, who retreated northwards. Apart from the remodelling of the great hall and other domestic works in 1322-6 for Hugh le Despenser, no more alterations were carried out, making it a very pure example of late 13th-century military architecture.

Below: southern view of the castle showing Caerphilly's postern gate (center) and the leaning south-east tower (right).



Caerphilly is unusual in being a late castle built on a virgin site. This allowed a unity of conception rare in medieval castles. It is a double-skinned parallelogram surrounded by large-scale water defences. The concentric arrangement was more flexible than earlier plans. It gave rapid access to any part of the castle by mural passages and wall-walks, towers and gatehouses could be independently held, attackers could be well covered and there was no possibility of mounting siege engines against the inner walls. The castle's cellular structure and strength is indicated by the presence of numerous portcullises.

Below: general view of Caerphilly's inner ward showing the inner west gatehouse (left) and the north-west tower (right).



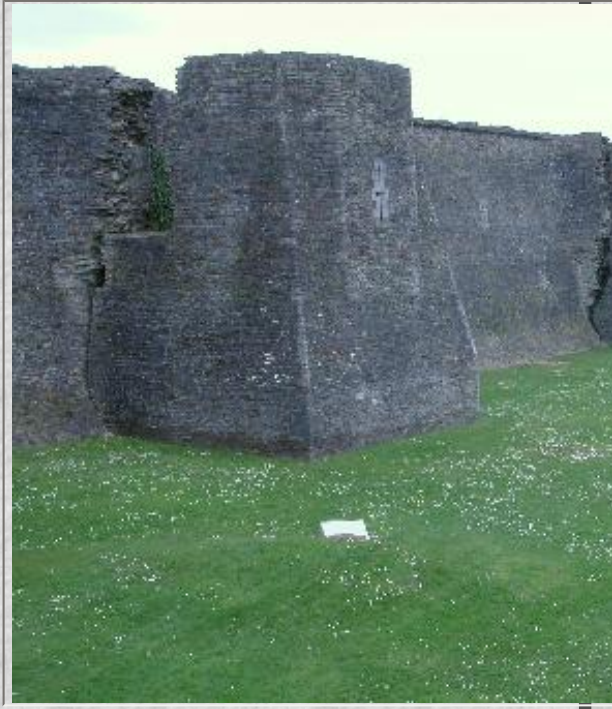
The outer skin or ward is formed by a low battlemented curtain wall with large semi-circular projections in the corners and gatehouses in the middle of the east and west sides. Only a narrow strip separates this from the much stronger inner ward which has high curtain walls, circular corner towers and two large strong gatehouses corresponding with the outer ones. The great east gatehouse is the highest part of the castle and was its nucleus. As will be seen, it could be separately defended if necessary.

The south and north lakes around the castle formed an almost insuperable barrier to attackers. The dams themselves are a major achievement of medieval engineering. The southern, earliest one is a massive earth platform revetted in stone and strengthened on its lower side by eight great buttresses (below left). To the right of the entrance to the castle is the northern dam, a narrower platform with a high outer wall with three great towers (below right) which are now unfortunately suffering from subsidence on the marshy ground. At its end is a strong postern gate and drawbridge. Outside the dam is a moat fed by sluices in the southern dam.

View of the southern dam at Caerphilly.



View of the three great towers along the northern dam.



The outer defences were completed by making a 1.2h artificial island to the west of the castle, known as the hornwork. A trench had already been dug in the early stages of construction outside the west side of the castle; now another was dug further west and the area between was raised, levelled and revetted in stone to form the hornwork. The north-west side has two semi-circular projections covering the drawbridge, the ruins of which can be seen between them.

Right: the outer east gatehouse at Caerphilly, the main entrance to the castle.

The outer gatehouse on the east side (right) is both the present and the original entrance. Here the main characteristics of the castle as deterrent become apparent - its great strength, its severity, its lack of windows and lack of decoration. Inside the gatehouse is an exhibition about the castle, and stairs lead up to roof level, from which is a panoramic view. Crossed rather than plain arrowslits in this gatehouse and in other buildings on the dams show that they are slightly later than the main castle. To the left is the platform of the south dam, the wider northern end of which may be

partly natural, but the southern end of which is entirely artificial. Half-way along are the ruins of a mill, and at the south end are two towers and a rectangular gatehouse which gave access to the medieval borough (below).



Left: the south gatehouse at Caerphilly leading to the town.

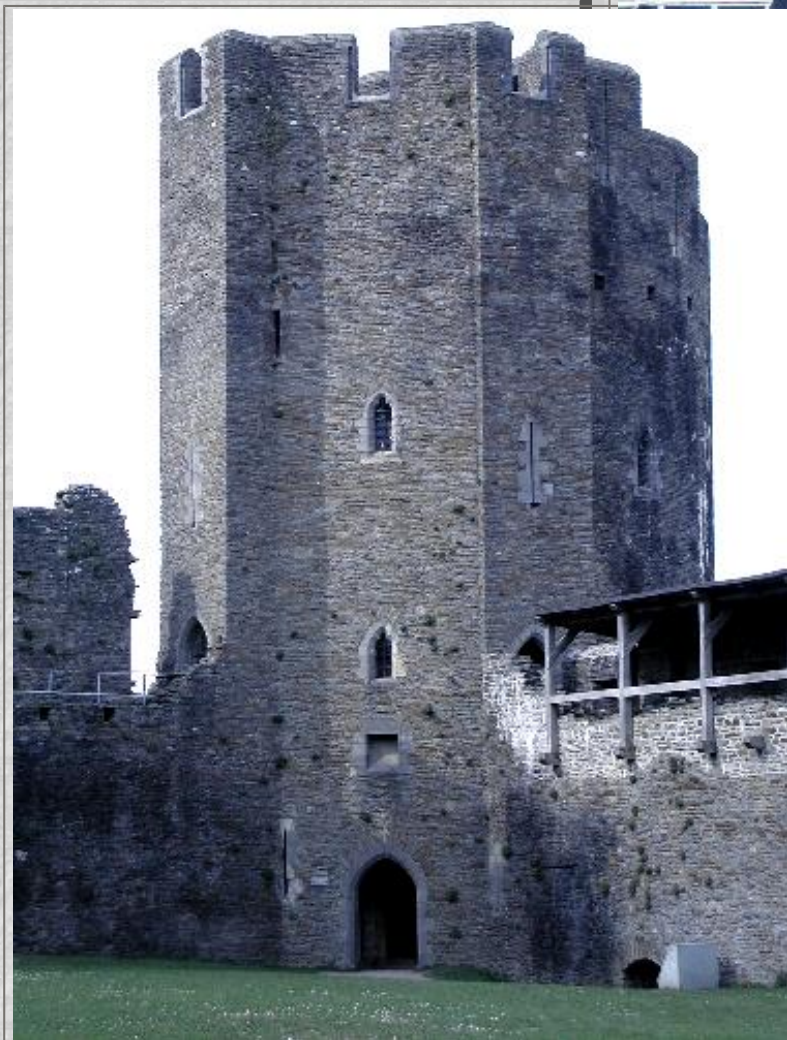


Right: view of the outer west gatehouse from the hornwork.

Next is the outer ward entered via a bridge leading to its east gatehouse with twin D-shaped towers, only the restored outer walls of which remain. Its opposite number on the west (right) is slightly better preserved. There, the stone piers supporting the drawbridge leading to the hornwork can be seen, as can chimneys and fireplaces on two floors, indicating comfortable living quarters. The false machicolation, poorer masonry and chimneys may indicate that the gatehouse was rebuilt at a later date. In the south-east corner is the base of a large rectangular building, possibly a granary. The south side is entirely blocked by a two-

storey D-shaped kitchen tower, stores and servants' quarters. Below is a water-gate to the lake.

Right: view of the restored north-west tower at Caerphilly.



The inner ward is the most impressive part of the castle. The corner towers demonstrate varying degrees of preservation. The north-west tower is complete, and an exhibition on Welsh castles is housed there. Little remains of the north-east tower and the south-east tower is partly ruined. It stands 15m high and leans at an alarming angle, 10 degrees out of true. The cause, whether subsidence or Civil War slighting, is unknown.

The imposing east gatehouse of the inner ward is the climax of any visit to the castle. It consists of twin D-shaped towers, a central passage with portcullises at both ends, and circular stair turrets on the inner corners. Like much of the inner ward it was ruinous by the 19th century, but was meticulously restored by the 4th marquis of Bute. The handsome and comfortable apartment on the second floor was probably that of the keeper, or constable of the castle. On the opposite side of the inner ward

is a similar but smaller gatehouse. Whoever occupied the first floor lived in less comfort than the constable as the portcullis came up through the floor in the middle of the room.

Below: the inner east gatehouse at Caerphilly.



On the south side of the inner ward are the great hall and state apartments. The large ground-floor hall, which was evidently a sumptuous building, was remodelled by Hugh le Despenser the Younger in 1322-6 and was restored by the 3rd marquis of Bute in the late 19th century. Originally the timber roof was lower, carried on the four carved corbels still in place in the south wall. Hugh le Despenser brought in the best craftsmen, who raised the roof and gave the four windows a decorated ogee shape, rich mouldings, and glass. The door was treated in the same way, and the whole building was faced with ashlar. The two doors at the east end led to a buttery and cellar, possibly with a small chapel over them. To the west were the state apartments, well-appointed rooms with fireplaces and a large traceried window on the first floor.



Exterior view of the great hall from the inner ward.

Inside Caerphilly's great hall.



The castle's active history was an extremely short one. By 1283 Edward I had removed the threat of Welsh independence and the need for Caerphilly had gone. Minor Welsh attacks in 1294-5 and 1316 failed to make any impact. The last action that Caerphilly saw was in the war between Edward II and his queen, Isabella. Intent on destroying the power of her husband and his favourite Hugh le Despenser, Isabella besieged the castle from December 1326 to March 1327. But by this time Edward had

fled and Hugh had been hanged. Thereafter the castle declined and fell into ruin. In the late 16th century Thomas Lewis of The Van, just outside Caerphilly, was granted permission to use its stone to build his new house, thus accelerating its dilapidation. In the Civil War it was unusable and an earthwork redoubt was built instead to the north-west, the remains of which are still visible in the trees beyond the north lake. By the 18th century the lakes were dry and houses had been built against the foot of the south dam. That the castle rose again from its sorry state is due to the visionary clearance and restoration work undertaken by the Bute family and the imaginative reflooding of the lakes by the state in the 1950s.



Restored parapet on the north side of the inner ward.



Below: working siege engines on display at Caerphilly Castle.



- [Additional photographs of Caerphilly Castle](#)
- [Location map link for Caerphilly Castle](#)
- [Follow this link](#) for a ground plan of the castle (71k jpg)
- More about [Gilbert de Clare](#) and Caerphilly Castle
- More information about the [de Clare family](#)
- [Follow this link](#) to view a layout of the castle (71k jpg)
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A Diary of Our 2005 UK Journey (page 14)

[GBCC Home](#)

Trip Part 1

[Page 1](#) [Page 2](#) [Page 3](#) [Page 4](#) [Page 5](#) [Page 6](#) [Page 7](#) [Page 8](#) [Page 9](#) [Page 10](#)

Trip Part 2

[Page 11](#) [Page 12](#) [Page 13](#) [Page 14](#) [Page 15](#) [Page 16](#) [Page 17](#) [Page 18](#)

Trip Part 3

[Page 19](#) [Page 20](#) [Page 21](#) [Page 22](#) [Page 23](#) [Page 24](#) [Page 25](#) [Page 26](#) [Page 27](#) [Page 28](#)

Friday, 10 June 2005, Wales (Laleston, Carreg Cennen, Devil's Bridge)

We ate lunch with Rhys and set off through the hinterlands of South and Central Wales with Devil's Bridge, west of Aberystwyth, as our overnight goal. our plan to was to stop at [Carreg Cennen](#), assess the climb, and see it if weather and bodies cooperated. Carreg Cennan is a hilltop castle, more along the lines of the German ones than the ones we had seen so far. There is a long history of occupation on that hill, but the castle was already in ruins by the time of Henry VIII or the Civil War.

Knowing what Carreg Cennen looked like, I'd hoped for sun on the castle and a dark thunderstorm behind it. I almost managed it! I got clouds at least, but there was no rain to be had anywhere in Wales this day. Though it is a ruin, it is splendidly situated. You have to traverse unclassified rural roads to get to it, but there WERE signs and by this time in our trip we were holding wrong turns down to a couple per day. This first view is from the south at a distance of a couple of miles.

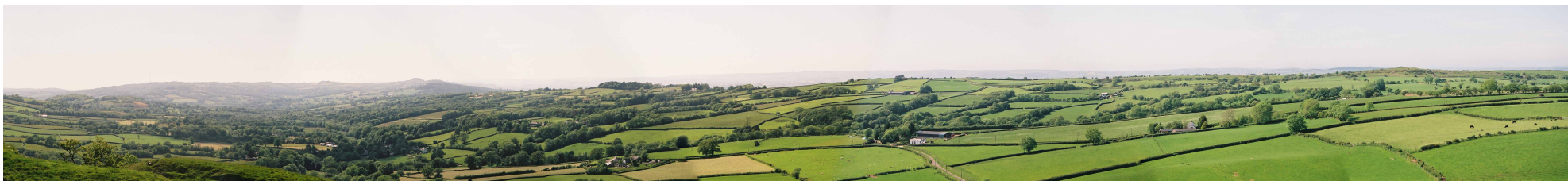




Entrance to Carreg Cennen is from a farmyard at the base. By a long tale and a curious twist, the castle is owned by the family owning the farm but managed by CADW, the Welsh antiquities agency. The path rises to the southeast, then north across the face of the hill then almost due east up the final slope.



When you get there, perhaps a bit out of breath, the view is spectacular. This panorama depicts perhaps 100 degrees from south to northwest. It was cooler and breezy on top and VERY welcome.



After a bit of a rest and a cool drink (not cold enough by any means), it was back onto to the B-class roads of Central Wales to come into Devil's Bridge by the back door. We were deliberately eschewing the major through roads to see something more of rural Wales. We ambled our way through the narrow roads, sometimes only a lane and a half wide. We followed a bus (or perhaps I should write *bws* as we are talking about Wales) for a while through an area with no significant clusters of habitation. But passengers did occasionally get on and off at lanes and driveways to farms. We figured if it was big enough for the *bws* it had to big enough for us!

As we got closer to Devil's Bridge, we entered a town I'd been hoping to encounter. Beth took this picture that I can only title, "This isn't Kansas, Toto!" Note that despite the sign, there ARE road markings, if not as many as usual. The UK really likes to paint their roads -- far more kinds and colours of lines and signs and such then are the North American norm. I'd heard this before leaving and it is certainly true. So how does one pronounce this?



Trip Part 1

[Page 1](#) [Page 2](#) [Page 3](#) [Page 4](#) [Page 5](#) [Page 6](#) [Page 7](#) [Page 8](#) [Page 9](#) [Page 10](#)

Trip Part 2

[Page 11](#) [Page 12](#) [Page 13](#) [Page 14](#) [Page 15](#) [Page 16](#) [Page 17](#) [Page 18](#)

Trip Part 3

[Page 19](#) [Page 20](#) [Page 21](#) [Page 22](#) [Page 23](#) [Page 24](#) [Page 25](#) [Page 26](#) [Page 27](#) [Page 28](#)

Carreg Cennen Castle ★★★★★



4 1/2 m SE of Llandelio, Carmarthenshire, [South Wales](#)
SN 668 191

[Location map link for Carreg Cennen Castle](#)

All photographs Copyright © 2002 by [Jeffrey L. Thomas](#).

Above: general view of the castle from the north-west. The great gatehouse of the inner ward (center) is the tallest part of the castle. To the right is the northwest tower, the only round tower at Carreg Cennen.

Below: view of the south curtain wall from the west.

by Lise Hull, copyright 1995

One of the most spectacularly sited [Welsh castles](#) is Carreg Cennen, located north of Swansea, a few miles south-east of Llandeilo on a minor road off the A483. Spell-binding views are waiting to be experienced from the sharp hilltop upon which the castle sits. Indeed, Carreg Cennen dominates its surroundings, and seems out of place in the mountainous farming terrain which it commands. The hedgerows along the minor approach road initially obscure views of the site, but suddenly the grey stone fortress springs into your line of sight, enticing you to hurry onwards.

The story of Carreg Cennen Castle is a long one, going back at least to the 13th century. There is archaeological evidence, however, that the Romans and prehistoric peoples occupied the craggy hilltop centuries earlier (a cache of Roman coins and four prehistoric skeletons have been unearthed at the site). Although the Welsh Princes of Deheubarth built the first castle at Carreg Cennen, what remains today dates to [King Edward I's momentous period of castle-building in Wales.](#)



To reach the hilltop, be prepared for an invigorating climb - and just imagine yourself as an invader intent on the ruin of the castle... The hike will undoubtedly increase your heart beat, at the very least, and make you well aware of your physical conditioning. However, do not be daunted! Little compares to the sense of accomplishment when reaching the top, and you are more than amply rewarded with simply fabulous views of Black Mountain and the colorful, distinctively Welsh countryside.



Below: Carreg Cennen farm viewed from the summit of the castle.

Carreg Cennen sits on private farm property through which you must pass to gain access to the fortress, which looms well above your head. At first glance this may seem a confusing, unexpectedly contrasting welcome to a castle, with farm animals of many variations roaming all around, but Castell Farm is interesting and adds charm to the day's events. Looking beyond to the foreboding hillock, you may choose to pause for some refreshment and a look around the farm grounds before venturing forth! Consider a visit to Carreg Cennen as an experience for all your senses - you will not be disappointed!



The excursion upwards finally brings you to the outer ward of the castle, where the view is incredible. Strewn about the ward are rocks and remnants of the outer fortifications. The outer ward enclosed the stables, workshops and lime kilns, and was protected by a small gateway and a stone wall, which continues to your right, around the more vulnerable side of the castle. The enclosure was designed to trap intruders and prevent access to the castle's interior. The huge North East Tower projected into the ward and was positioned perfectly for an assault on the confined invaders.

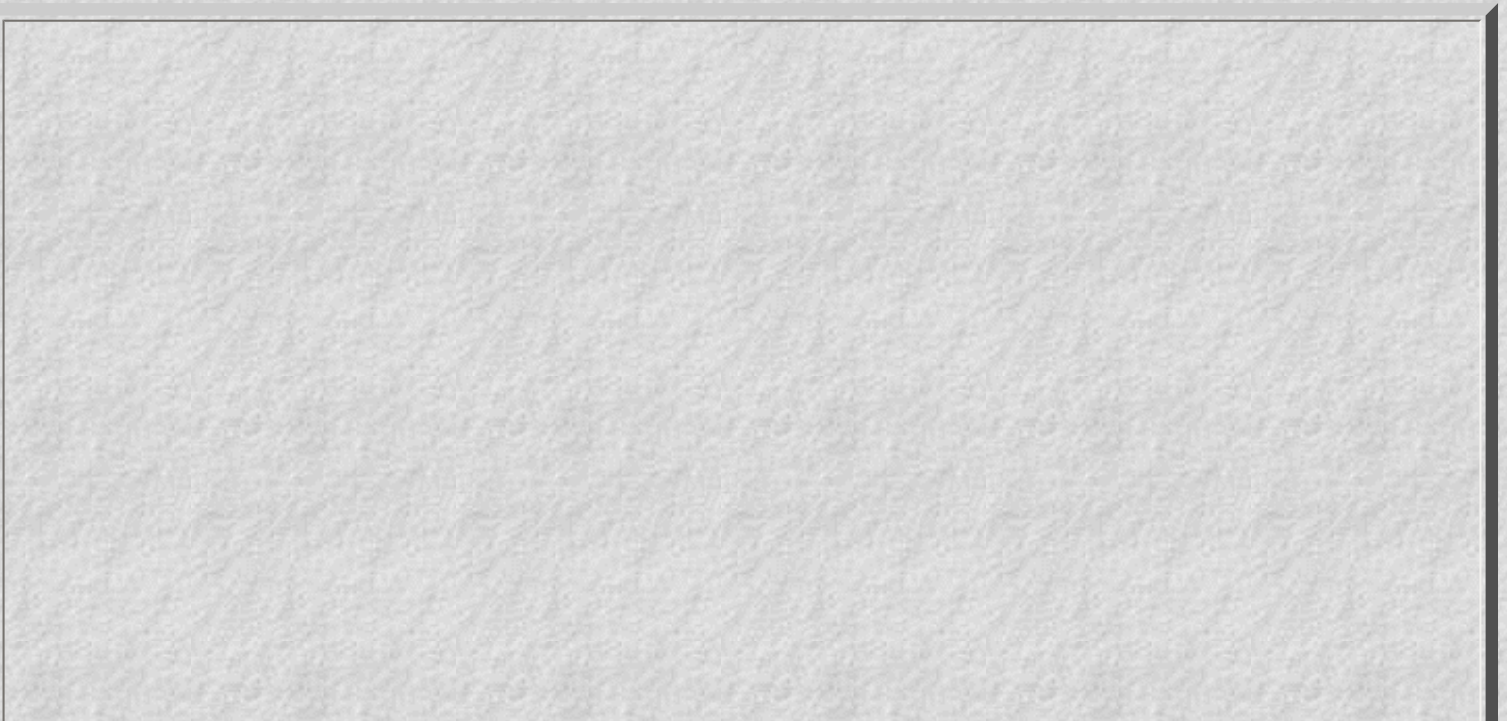
Below right: the gatehouse tower at Carreg Cennen

The castle's gatehouse was enterable only after successfully traversing the unusual barbican. Here at Carreg Cennen this defensive outwork consisted of a series of bridges across deep pits, built so that anyone seeking entry was ushered along a narrow walkway complete with sharp, disconcerting turns to both right and left. At any time the bridges overlying the pits could be drawn away from their supports, creating an insurmountable chasm-like barrier. Today the bridges have been replaced by immovable wooden ramps, but the pits remain treacherous and the barbican still intimidates.

While the exterior face of the castle presents an impression of strength and defiance, much of the interior of Carreg Cennen is considerably ruined, the result of demolition in 1462 after the Wars of the Roses. Nevertheless, we can still gain an accurate image of how the medieval fortress would have appeared. What we can see are the remains of several buildings, spaced along the walls of the inner ward. The formidable twin-towered gatehouse on the north wall was the main entry point into the inner courtyard. Immediately before the gatehouse are the remains of the Middle Gate Tower, the last line of defense before the gatehouse was breached. If attackers advanced to this point, they would have been met by a rain of arrows from this tower. (The basement level of the Middle Gate Tower was probably used as a prison.) The gatehouse was also defended with a drawbridge, and contained arrowslits, two portcullises, heavy wooden doors, battlements and machicolations (openings through which water or missiles could be dropped down on fires or unsuspecting attackers). Each octagonal tower also had a ground floor guardroom. Access to the upper floors and the wall-walk was via a spiral staircase, easing movement between the gatehouse and the two northern corner towers. In addition, the gatehouse acted as the castle's keep, the last refuge during an onslaught.



Below: the inner ward at Carreg Cennen showing portions of the gatehouse, hall and domestic buildings.





Just beyond the gatetowers in the inner ward are the remains of baking ovens and two cisterns, which would have caught rain water and augmented the castle's drinking supply. Curious structures, the cisterns consist of stone-lined pits with low containing walls. The castle's primary water container was the clay-lined ditch just outside the gatehouse. The wisdom of locating the water supply outside the main castle is questionable, since the water source would have been effectively cutoff in an attack. While the cisterns probably provided adequate short term drinking water, the shallow holding tanks would have been of little use during a protracted siege.

Below right: an ornate window from the King's Chamber.

Carreg Cennen's simple layout provided all the amenities any castle dweller needed. The most built-up side of the fortress is the eastern wing, to the left upon entry, which contained the main domestic chambers. They form a rather compact yet logically laid-out complex of buildings, and would have been the site of most of the castle's activity. The wing begins with the North East Tower, immediately east of the gatehouse. Possibly used as living quarters for the garrison, the tower contained some basic luxuries of life - a fireplace and latrines - and was located in an excellent strategic position to guard the outer ward, the barbican and the inner ward. Next to the tower was the castle's kitchen, with its huge fireplace, buttery and pantry. Alongside this structure was the hall, where meals were served and guests entertained. Notably, this room was heated with a central hearth (its base still remains). Beyond the hall is a small tower which projects into the outer ward and held the chapel, a key component of most medieval castles. Lastly, the two rooms of the lord's private apartments are at the farthest end of the eastern wing. Here a fireplace and decorative windows hint at the status of the occupant.



Below right: exterior view of the north west tower and western curtain wall.

Little remains along the south and west walls of the inner ward. The plain south curtain, with portions of the wall-walk still intact, rises to its original height. The precipitous drop outside made more elaborate defenses unnecessary. The wall held latrines and two windows with stunning views. Foundations of a rectangular structure are visible along the south wall, but the building's purpose is unclear. The intersecting arrowslitted west wall was built directly on the limestone bedrock and is poorly preserved. It is bounded by the simply-constructed South West Tower and the interesting North West Tower.



The North West Tower guarded the most vulnerable side of the fortress, and its round design would have afforded an all-encompassing view of approaching visitors. The basement had three arrowslits, one of which was altered in the 15th century to accommodate a new advance in weaponry: the musket. Why this tower was the only one with a gunport is uncertain, but the gun's longer range would have greatly enhanced its defensive impact.

The most exciting feature at Carreg Cennen Castle awaits exploration at the south east corner of the inner ward. Here a steep set of steps leads down past a postern gate into the bowels of the castle, and beyond into a damp limestone cave. Your footing may become unsure as you travel deeper inside, and torches are a necessary aid, for the exterior world rapidly falls away into complete darkness. The bedrock is cut by several of these natural fissures, but only one was modified for use inside the castle. Much of the passageway was carefully lined with stone and the ceiling vaulted. A series of pigeon holes was built into the wall, forming a dovecote (to breed a winter food supply, or possibly to house homing pigeons).

Below: the entrance to the cave from near the King's Chamber (top left), the vaulted passage leading to the cave (top right), and the actual cave (bottom left & right).



Several theories have been offered to explain the revetting of the fissure. One explanation for altering the passage relates to the water collected in the cave. It has been speculated that this supply would have provided ample drinking water for the castle, especially in times of siege, and that reinforcing the passage would have allowed safe access to the water source. However, since the spot retains only a small amount of moisture, the supply would have been undependable. Originally, the mouth of the cave was open to the outside, making the castle vulnerable to infiltration by the enemy. However, the exterior end of the fissure was intentionally blocked from the inside and effectively impeded outside access. Nevertheless, this flaw in the bedrock would have provided opportunity for undermining by the enemy, who could have gained access to the inner ward or bring down the outer wall of the castle with relative ease. Lining the passage with stone would have buttressed the breach in the bedrock and made the area less susceptible to collapse. Consequently, enemy mining would have been less successful and heavy structures could be built over the reinforced passageway without fear of failure. Carreg Cennen is one of the few castles in Britain to possess such an intriguing natural phenomenon.

Below: general view of the castle from the west.



Carreg Cennen Castle had a long and eventful history, having changed ownership numerous times. Legendary references place the original fortress in the Dark Ages, held by Urien Rheged, Lord of Iskennen, and his son Owain, knights during the reign of King Arthur. Stories claim that there is a warrior (perhaps one of the knights, or Arthur himself?) asleep beneath the castle, awaiting a call from the Welsh. The first castle on the site was probably built by the Welsh Lord Rhys, Prince of Deheubarth, in the late 12th century. His descendant, Rhys Fychan, eventually inherited the castle, but was betrayed by his mother (the Norman Matilda de Braeos) who turned over the stronghold to the English. Rhys Fychan regained control of the castle in 1248, but had it taken away by his uncle, Maredudd ap Rhys Gryg, and then seized in 1277 by King Edward I. From that time

onwards, the fortress remained in the hands of the English.

Below: view of the south curtain wall from the east perched over its imposing cliff.



The original Welsh stronghold was demolished in the late 13th century and replaced with the imposing structures we see today, by John Giffard and his son. Other owners included Hugh le Despenser, John of Gaunt and Henry of Bolingbroke (the future King Henry IV). Upon Henry's accession, the castle became Crown property. It was besieged during the rebellion of Owain Glyndwr in about 1403 and was considerably damaged. During the Wars of the Roses, Carreg Cennen's owners unfortunately sided with the Lancastrians. After the Yorkist victory in 1461, the castle was deemed too much of a threat to the monarchy and was destroyed the following spring.

Despite its ruinous state, the castle was considered a prize. Later owners included Sir Rhys ap Thomas and the Vaughans from Golden Grove, who left the castle to the Earls of Cawdor in the early 19th century. Although Carreg Cennen was placed under the guardianship of the Office of Works in 1932, the Cawdors continued to hold the castle well into the 20th century. Apparently, in the 1960's Carreg Cennen Castle was acquired by the Morris family of Castell Farm, when Lord Cawdor inadvertently made a mistake in the wording of the deeds and included the castle as part of the farm. Today, the castle is maintained by CADW: Welsh Historic Monuments, the agency which does an outstanding job preserving the architectural heritage of Wales.



Lise Hull owns and operates [Castles of Britain](#), an information and research web site providing a wide range of information on the castles of Britain. Mrs. Hull has a Masters Degree in Historic Preservation, and has visited well over 160 castles in Wales, England, Scotland and Ireland. She welcomes any and all questions concerning the castles of Britain, and invites people to [visit her web site](#) or contact her directly via e-mail at: castlesu@aol.com.

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A Diary of Our 2005 UK Journey (page 15)

[GBCC Home](#)

Trip Part 1

[Page 1](#) [Page 2](#) [Page 3](#) [Page 4](#) [Page 5](#) [Page 6](#) [Page 7](#) [Page 8](#) [Page 9](#) [Page 10](#)

Trip Part 2

[Page 11](#) [Page 12](#) [Page 13](#) [Page 14](#) [Page 15](#) [Page 16](#) [Page 17](#) [Page 18](#)

Trip Part 3

[Page 19](#) [Page 20](#) [Page 21](#) [Page 22](#) [Page 23](#) [Page 24](#) [Page 25](#) [Page 26](#) [Page 27](#) [Page 28](#)

Saturday, 11 June 2005, Wales (Devil's Bridge and Aberystwyth)

The plan was to drive from Devil's Bridge to Aberystwyth (perhaps 15 miles or so), take the Vale of Rheidol Railway back to Devil's Bridge and return to Aberystwyth, then find a laundry and when done drive back to Devil's Bridge. It sounds crazy, but the timing of the Vale of Rheidol trains really didn't allow us to board in Devil's Bridge and return.

In the event, everything worked except doing the laundry. We found the Laundromat we were looking for, but there wasn't a parking spot for miles. It was a sunny June Saturday in a seaside town and *everybody* was in Aberystwyth! No one was paying any attention to where they were walking and driving was a nightmare. We gave up as the idea of lugging our laundry across town through those crowds just didn't make sense.



The Vale of Rheidol Railway runs from Aberystwyth on the west coast of Wales inland (and uphill) nearly twelve miles to Devil's Bridge. It is an oil-fired, two foot gauge, steam railway. Just barely visible on the left side is the mainline service entering Aberystwyth. And turning around...



Here is the rolling stock of our train waiting for the locomotive and the "real" Aberystwyth train station is visible in the right corner.





It's a steady climb up the valley with a stop for water about halfway up. I was amazed at the amount of rhododendrons in bloom and naturalized through the forests and cuts.



The railway approaches Devil's Bridge through a rock cut and into a simple terminal yard. Here I am standing by the locomotive as it rests after chugging up the valley. The staff were in the snack shop filling up *their* boilers with the obligatory tea break.



Down the valley we went, tried to do the laundry and fled back up the valley in our car.

Trip Part 1

[Page 1](#) [Page 2](#) [Page 3](#) [Page 4](#) [Page 5](#) [Page 6](#) [Page 7](#) [Page 8](#) [Page 9](#) [Page 10](#)

Trip Part 2

[Page 11](#) [Page 12](#) [Page 13](#) [Page 14](#) [Page 15](#) [Page 16](#) [Page 17](#) [Page 18](#)

Trip Part 3

[Page 19](#) [Page 20](#) [Page 21](#) [Page 22](#) [Page 23](#) [Page 24](#) [Page 25](#) [Page 26](#) [Page 27](#) [Page 28](#)

A Diary of Our 2005 UK Journey (page 16)

[GBCC Home](#)

Trip Part 1

[Page 1](#) [Page 2](#) [Page 3](#) [Page 4](#) [Page 5](#) [Page 6](#) [Page 7](#) [Page 8](#) [Page 9](#) [Page 10](#)

Trip Part 2

[Page 11](#) [Page 12](#) [Page 13](#) [Page 14](#) [Page 15](#) [Page 16](#) [Page 17](#) [Page 18](#)

Trip Part 3

[Page 19](#) [Page 20](#) [Page 21](#) [Page 22](#) [Page 23](#) [Page 24](#) [Page 25](#) [Page 26](#) [Page 27](#) [Page 28](#)

Saturday, 11 June 2005, Wales (Devil's Bridge and Aberystwyth), continued

The afternoon was still young, so we decided to hike from the bridge down to the bottom of the gorge (and of course back up again). [Devil's Bridge](#) is really *three* bridges stacked on top of each other -- a medieval stone one, an eighteenth century stone one, and an early twentieth century iron and concrete one. As we'll see, there are other Devil's Bridges -- the legend was a common one.

The second photo below shows us about halfway down to the river. Dimly visible in the upper right is our hotel, the Hafod Arms. The exit from this path is directly across the road from the hotel. We could hear the Mynach waterfalls each time we went in and out of the hotel.



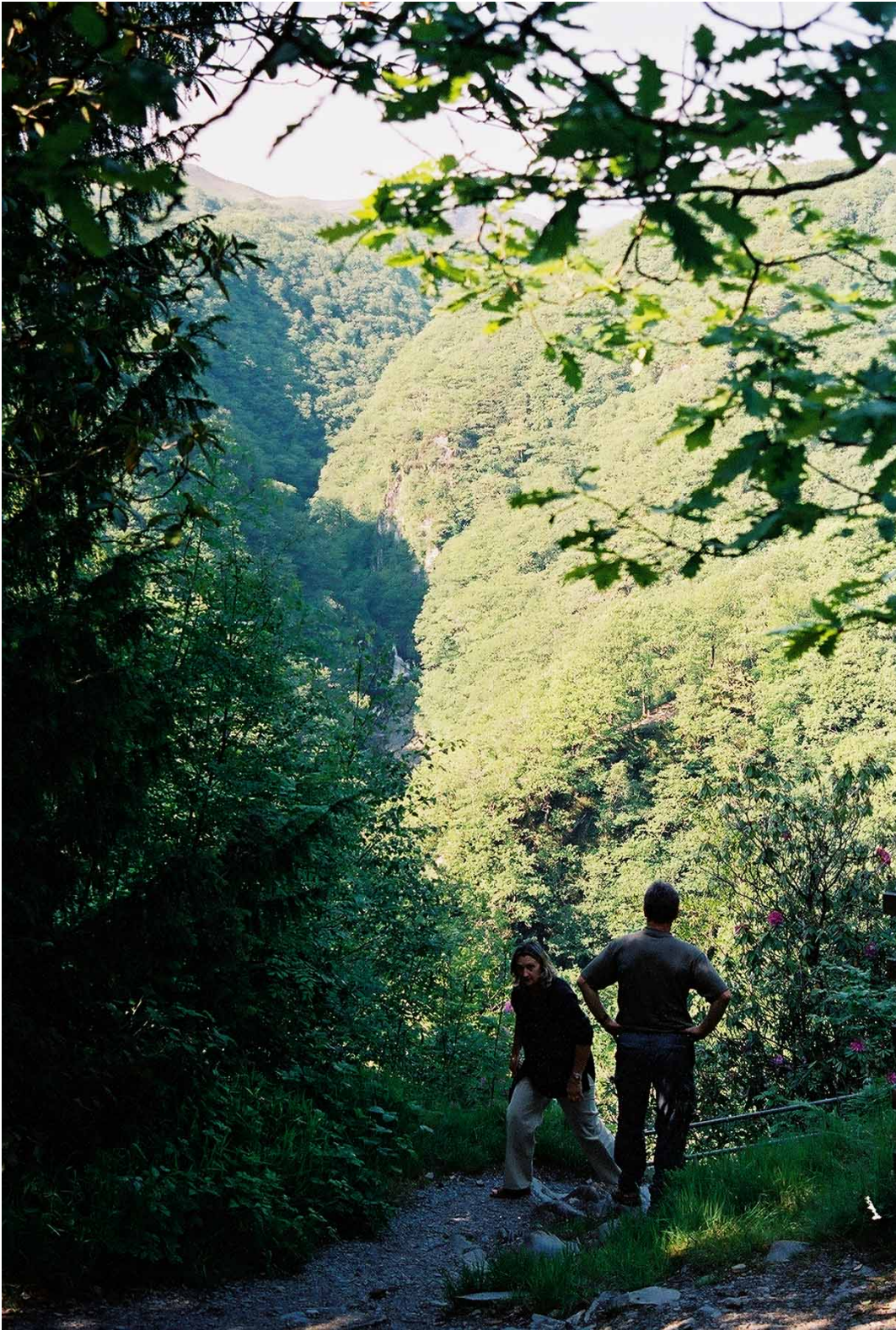


The next two pictures are near and at the bottom of the gorge. The first picture looks back up "Jacob's Ladder" which is really steep. (Note the periodic handrails projecting into the path to stop people pitching headlong down this slope.) Crossing the little bridge was a good time to take a deep breath -- it was 304 stone steps plus slopes to get back out the other side.





This is almost back to the top. We headed across the street and into the shower! It was great aerobic exercise as well as being pretty, but we were glad we were so close to the hotel. Like Carreg Cennen, this is was an exercise we might not be able to do five years from now.



Our travels up and down the road between Devil's Bridge and Aberystwyth weren't finished. After dinner by prearrangement, we tried to call Tony and Annita Mitchell to confirm our plans to meet them on Sunday. But no signal strength in Devil's Bridge! Apparently all the flocks of sheep don't constitute enough user density to merit extending cell coverage away from the coast. So back down the by now well-traveled road about halfway to Aberystwyth before we found a signal. On the way back to the hotel, we spotted what we tentatively identified as a goshawk perched on a fence post by the side of the road.

Trip Part 1

[Page 1](#) [Page 2](#) [Page 3](#) [Page 4](#) [Page 5](#) [Page 6](#) [Page 7](#) [Page 8](#) [Page 9](#) [Page 10](#)

Trip Part 2

[Page 11](#) [Page 12](#) [Page 13](#) [Page 14](#) [Page 15](#) [Page 16](#) [Page 17](#) [Page 18](#)

Trip Part 3

[Page 19](#) [Page 20](#) [Page 21](#) [Page 22](#) [Page 23](#) [Page 24](#) [Page 25](#) [Page 26](#) [Page 27](#) [Page 28](#)

PONTARFYNACH



Devil's Bridge yw'r enw Saesneg am Bontarfynach. Mae pentref Pontarfynach yn sefyll ar yr Afon Mynach lle mae'r afon wedi crafu hafn ddofn yn y graig. Roedd mynachod yn byw yn Abaty Ystrad Fflur ym 1075. Yn ôl y chwedl, cafodd un o'r mynaich ei ladd wrth groesi'r hafn. Penderfynodd adeilad pont i osgoi damweiniau yn y dyfodol, ond roedd problem fawr gyda'r hafn - gan ei bod hi'n anodd iawn i adeiladu pont.

Yn ôl y chwedl, cynigodd y diawl adeiladu'r bont, ond y pris am ei waith oedd enaid y creadur cyntaf i groesi'r bont. Ar ôl i'r diawl wedi gorffen y gwaith arhosodd am ei wobwr. Yn anffodus i'r diawl, roedd y bobl yn y pentref wedi gwneud cynllun. Ro'n nhw wedi osgoi rhoi enaid i'r diawl drwy daflu bara torth gron y bont. Aeth ci ar ôl y bara, a chafodd y diawl ddim o'i wobwr.

Yn y ddeunawfed ganrif roedd yr hen bont yn beryglus, ond i osgoi'r broblem o adeiladu pont newydd dros yr hafn, adeiladon nhw y bont newydd dros yr hen bont. Defnyddion nhw yr hen bont i gynnal yr ysgaffaldau. Cafodd y drydedd bont ei hadeiladau ym 1901 dros yr ail bont. Mae'r drydedd bont yn cael ei defnyddio hyd heddiw.

PONTARFYNACH

The English name for Pontarfynach is Devil's Bridge. The village of Pontarfynach is situated on the Mynach River at a place where the river has carved a deep, rocky chasm. Around the year 1075 there were monks living nearby at Strata Florida. According to legend, one of the monks was killed as he tried to cross the chasm. It was decided that a bridge was needed to avoid future accidents but the terrain made it very difficult to construct a bridge.



It is said that the Devil offered to build a bridge across the chasm in return for the soul of the first living creature to cross the finished bridge. The Devil finished constructing the bridge and was waiting for his prize but the people came up with a plan to outwit him. Instead of sacrificing one of the people of the village to the devil they threw a round loaf of bread across the bridge for a dog to chase and so the Devil did not get his prize.

In the eighteenth century the original bridge was thought to be insecure but instead of replacing it another bridge was built over the top. The first bridge was used to support the scaffolding during the construction of the second bridge. A third bridge was added over the top of the second in 1901 that carries traffic over the Mynach to this day.



[Welsh links](#)

A Diary of Our 2005 UK Journey (page 17)

[GBCC Home](#)

Trip Part 1

[Page 1](#) [Page 2](#) [Page 3](#) [Page 4](#) [Page 5](#) [Page 6](#) [Page 7](#) [Page 8](#) [Page 9](#) [Page 10](#)

Trip Part 2

[Page 11](#) [Page 12](#) [Page 13](#) [Page 14](#) [Page 15](#) [Page 16](#) [Page 17](#) [Page 18](#)

Trip Part 3

[Page 19](#) [Page 20](#) [Page 21](#) [Page 22](#) [Page 23](#) [Page 24](#) [Page 25](#) [Page 26](#) [Page 27](#) [Page 28](#)

Sunday, 12 June 2005, through Tuesday, 14 June 2005 England (Telford, Ironbridge Gorge and the Severn Valley Railway)

We drove from Devil's Bridge to Telford, Shropshire to visit Tony and Annita Mitchell. We had our usual assortment of random wrong terms but did make it there in the end. We spent parts of three days with the Mitchells and visited different parts of the [Ironbridge Gorge](#) on each day. This part of the Severn Valley is the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution, and it is now both a World Heritage Site and ten different museums documenting the history of the area from the dawn of the Eighteenth Century to the beginning of the Twentieth Century. The availability of wood, iron ore, coal and a navigable waterway to the sea all contributed to the flourishing of industry at this particular place and time.

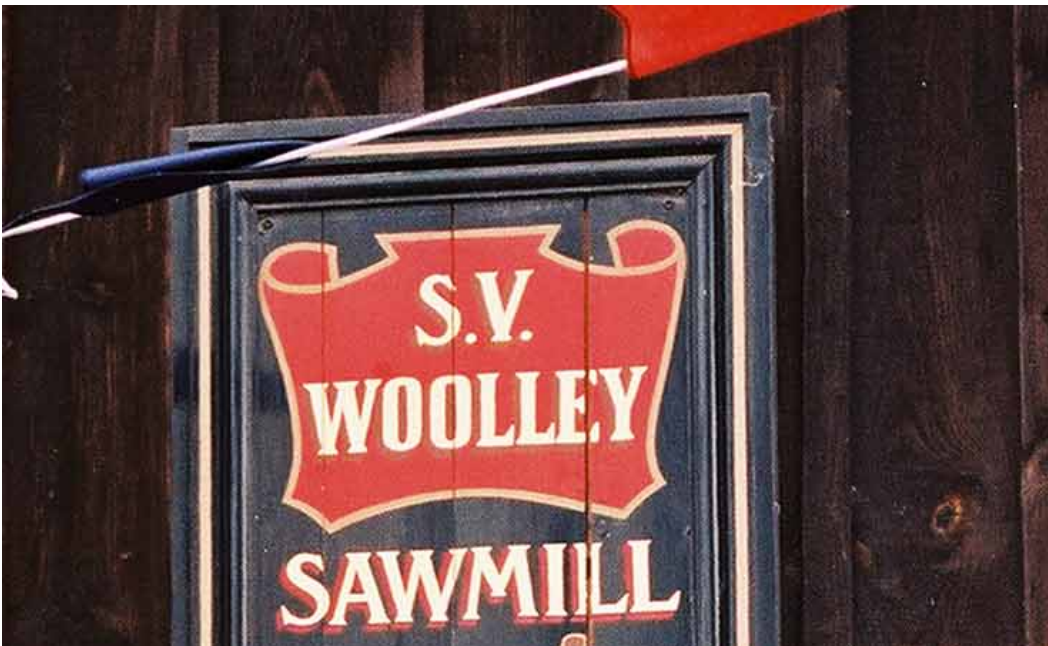
Here is the Iron Bridge itself, spanning the Severn River and a view upstream from the bridge. The toll house is the red brick building at the far end of the bridge.



This is the Severn River, looking upstream. Tony pointed out that the Severn floods frequently, soaking many of the buildings on this riverfront street (and the Museum of the Gorge where they inscribe the various high water marks on one of their windows). From Tony's description, this part of the Severn lies along a fault line and the earth is trying to close the gap by the land of the left slipping toward the right.



Blists Hill Victorian Town is a museum of transplanted, reconstructed or replicated buildings to give a semblance of a Victorian town. In this regard it is a similar concept to Sturbridge Village (Massachusetts) and the Henry Ford/Greenfield Village Museums (Michigan) in the US. Blists Hill includes mostly merchant and industrial exhibits rather than residential ones. The vintage signs caught my eye.



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While visiting Tony and Annita, we stayed in Bridgnorth a few miles south and downstream from Telford. We went around and around, even calling the hotel on the cell phone and could not find them. The key concept was to make an immediate right turn after passing this building in the town centre. We never did see that narrow street until we had parked in a nearby car park, the sensible thing to do anyway.





Bridgnorth is both along the river and on the bluff above it. So there is an upper town and a lower town. There are streets connecting them, but there is also an inclined railway that takes walkers up and down. Ironbridge Gorge has the remnants of an inclined railway too. It of course was built for industrial uses -- getting materials down to the water level for shipment.





Trip Part 1

[Page 1](#) [Page 2](#) [Page 3](#) [Page 4](#) [Page 5](#) [Page 6](#) [Page 7](#) [Page 8](#) [Page 9](#) [Page 10](#)

Trip Part 2

[Page 11](#) [Page 12](#) [Page 13](#) [Page 14](#) [Page 15](#) [Page 16](#) [Page 17](#) [Page 18](#)

Trip Part 3

[Page 19](#) [Page 20](#) [Page 21](#) [Page 22](#) [Page 23](#) [Page 24](#) [Page 25](#) [Page 26](#) [Page 27](#) [Page 28](#)



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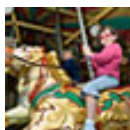
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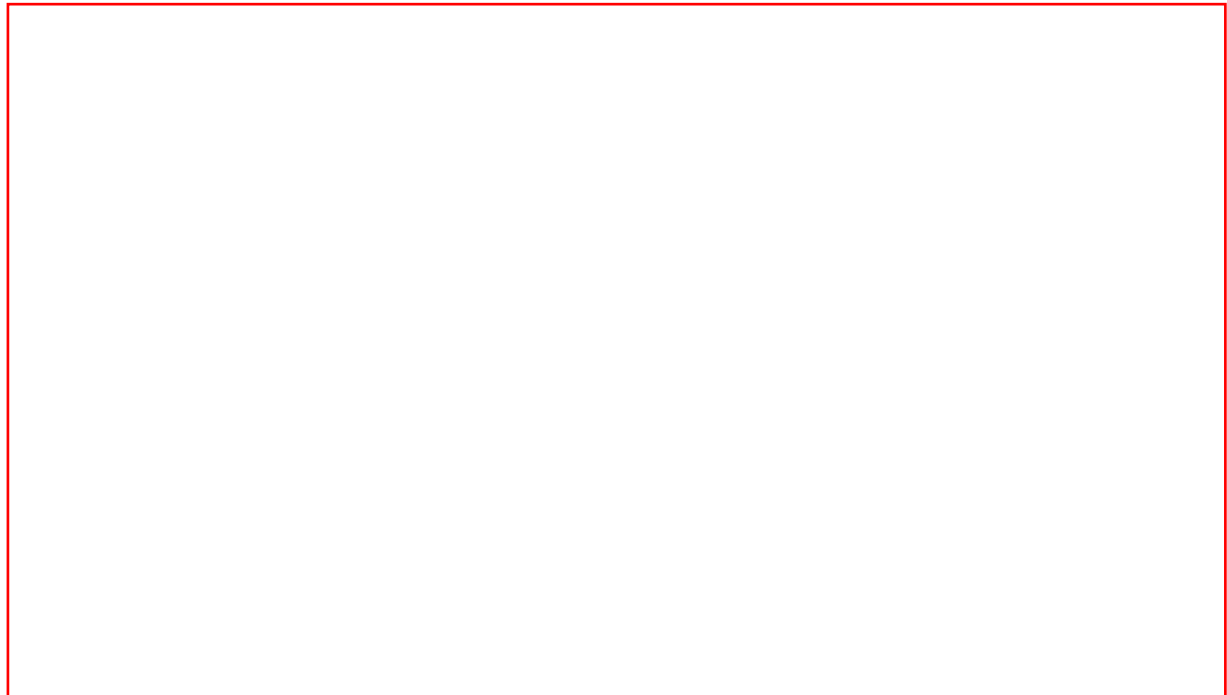
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A Diary of Our 2005 UK Journey (page 18)

[GBCC Home](#)

Trip Part 1

[Page 1](#) [Page 2](#) [Page 3](#) [Page 4](#) [Page 5](#) [Page 6](#) [Page 7](#) [Page 8](#) [Page 9](#) [Page 10](#)

Trip Part 2

[Page 11](#) [Page 12](#) [Page 13](#) [Page 14](#) [Page 15](#) [Page 16](#) [Page 17](#) [Page 18](#)

Trip Part 3

[Page 19](#) [Page 20](#) [Page 21](#) [Page 22](#) [Page 23](#) [Page 24](#) [Page 25](#) [Page 26](#) [Page 27](#) [Page 28](#)

Sunday, 12 June 2005, through Tuesday, 14 June 2005 England (Telford, Ironbridge Gorge and the Severn Valley Railway), continued

On Monday the 12th, the Mitchells and the Lucases met at the Bridgnorth station of the Severn Valley Railway. In the early discussions about our trip, Tony revealed that he'd always wanted to see the SVR, but somehow never had gotten around to doing it. We were happy to provide the excuse.

The [Severn Valley Railway](#) is a 16 mile, coal-fired, standard gauge railway featuring mainline equipment running from Bridgnorth to Kidderminster.



This is the Bridgnorth engine shed and shops. We couldn't wander around as we could on the Bluebell Railway, but there was still plenty to see.



Here are Tony and I in the obligatory pose at the Kidderminster end. Tony has the full GBCC regalia as you can see! There is a small museum of railway equipment in Kidderminster.



This isn't even a mediocre picture but I include it as an example of a "might have been". At the other "end" of this picture is a classic photo. If you look very carefully, there is a man standing next to the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal. He's looking back at our SVR steam train crossing the viaduct with a canal boat in the foreground. *That* is the picture to take! For the record, this is located only a mile or two north of Kidderminster near the Worcester Road.



We also briefly viewed the site of [Wroxeter](#). This is the location of a Roman camp and the fourth largest city in Roman Britain. It was occupied from the first century to the sixth century and was located near the intersection of Watling Street and the Severn River. The fragmentary wall of the basilica is the only remaining standing structure though extensive foundations remain. We finally saw an ancient site without rain and mist!



At Ironbridge Gorge, we also saw the Coalport China and Jackfield Tile Museums. We couldn't take pictures in the China Museum but we did see beautiful examples and a fascinating demonstration of making china flowers. I did take a lot of photos in the Tile Museum because of the diversity of colour and design. Here are but two examples.





Trip Part 1

[Page 1](#) [Page 2](#) [Page 3](#) [Page 4](#) [Page 5](#) [Page 6](#) [Page 7](#) [Page 8](#) [Page 9](#) [Page 10](#)

Trip Part 2

[Page 11](#) [Page 12](#) [Page 13](#) [Page 14](#) [Page 15](#) [Page 16](#) [Page 17](#) [Page 18](#)

Trip Part 3

THE OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF THE SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY

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ROUTE:

Scroll the page and click on each of the stations for information about your journey through the Severn Valley.

From the Window...

Make the most of your day on the Severn Valley Railway by picking up your free copy of our informative booklet 'From the Window' when you buy your tickets at one of our stations. This booklet, as its name suggests, tells you what to look out for as you enjoy your journey between Kidderminster and Bridgnorth or reverse. Complete with accompanying maps.

'From the Window' is an ideal companion to your journey and is now available here for you to [download](#) in [Adobe Acrobat PDF](#) format (please note that this file extends to fourteen pages).



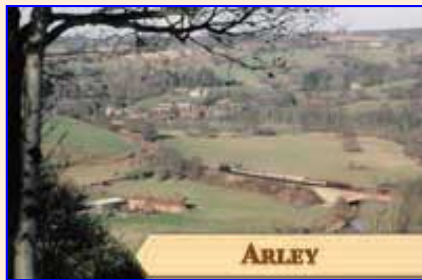
BRIDGNORTH



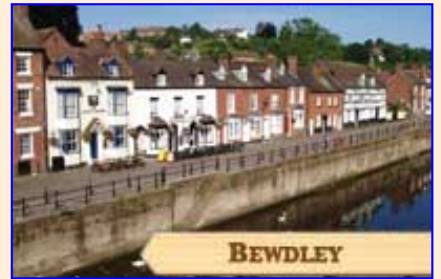
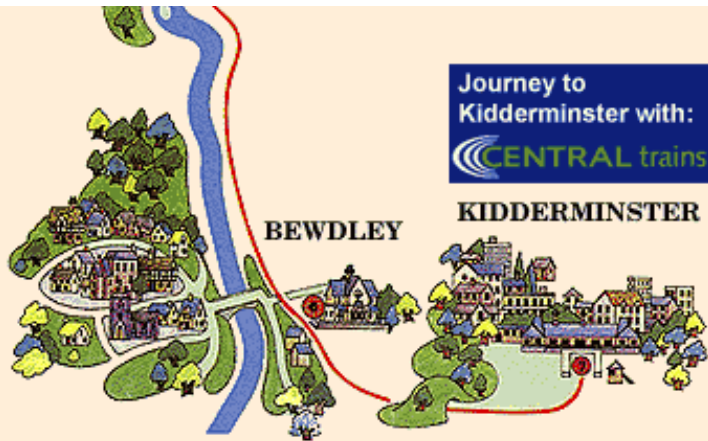
HAMPTON LOADE



HIGHLEY



ARLEY

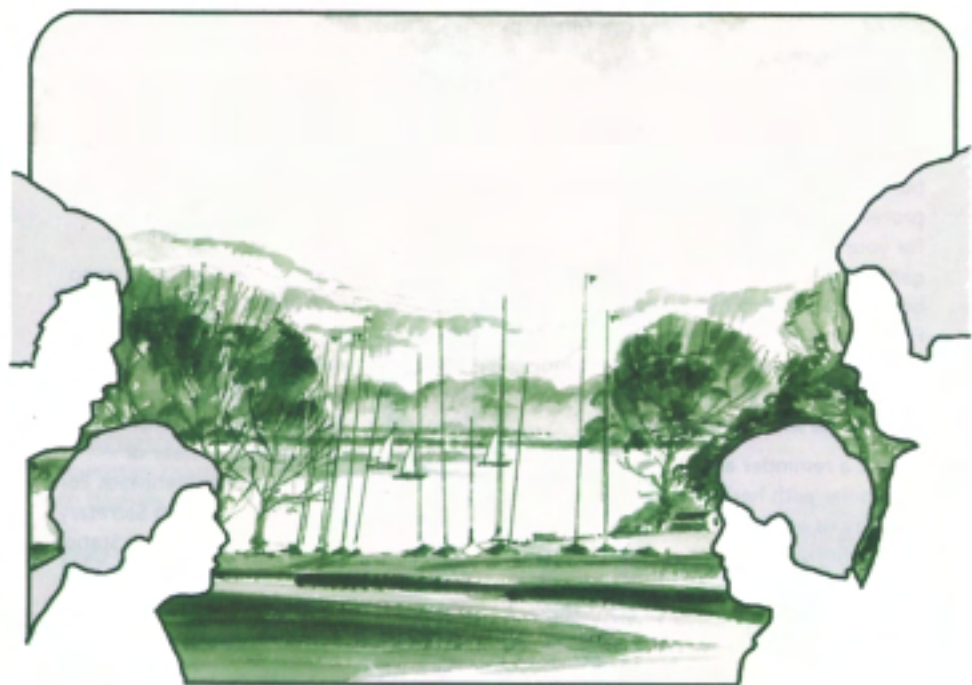


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Top

SEVERN VALLEY
RAILWAY

FROM
THE WINDOW



the line for all seasons

ENJOYING YOUR DAY ON THE SVR

Welcome to the Severn Valley Railway. Our first public train ran on 23 May 1970 between Bridgnorth and Hampton Loade and since then the railway has grown to become a major tourist attraction. If you would like more information about our history as well as the line as it is today, we recommend our Colour Souvenir Guide book which is available from our Giftshops at Bridgnorth and Kidderminster for £2.00 each.

In 2000 we completed our Carriage Shed project at Kidderminster. This huge building, one fifth of a mile long, will protect our unique collection of carriages for your enjoyment and for future generations to appreciate. The project has been supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund with a £1.75m grant. We raised over half a million pounds partnership funding to complete the project. If you contributed then please accept our thanks.

Just a reminder about safety to those unfamiliar with heritage railways. Unlike most trains on the modern railway system our trains have doors that must be closed by hand. Please don't touch door handles whilst the train is moving or lean out of windows, as a speck of coal dust in the eye or a swipe from the branch of a tree can

be painful. Our Railway is preserved as a branch line, which means that some platforms are shorter than the train. Only use doors which are level with the platform. If you are waiting for a train then please keep clear of the platform edge and look after children to prevent them falling. If you drop anything on the track then ask a member of staff to pick it up and please don't walk across or alongside the tracks, other than at authorised crossings. You may feel safe but children may copy you, so please help by setting a good example. Accidents are extremely rare on the Severn Valley Railway, thanks to your co-operation.

The Severn Valley Railway relies upon the support of nearly 14,000 members and almost as many shareholders. Around 1,500 volunteers enjoy helping to run the Railway. If you would like to become involved in the SVR please consider joining us, either actively as a volunteer or passively as a member or shareholder. For details contact The Membership Secretary, Severn Valley Railway, The Railway Station, Bewdley, Worcs DY12 1BG.
Tel: 01299 403816

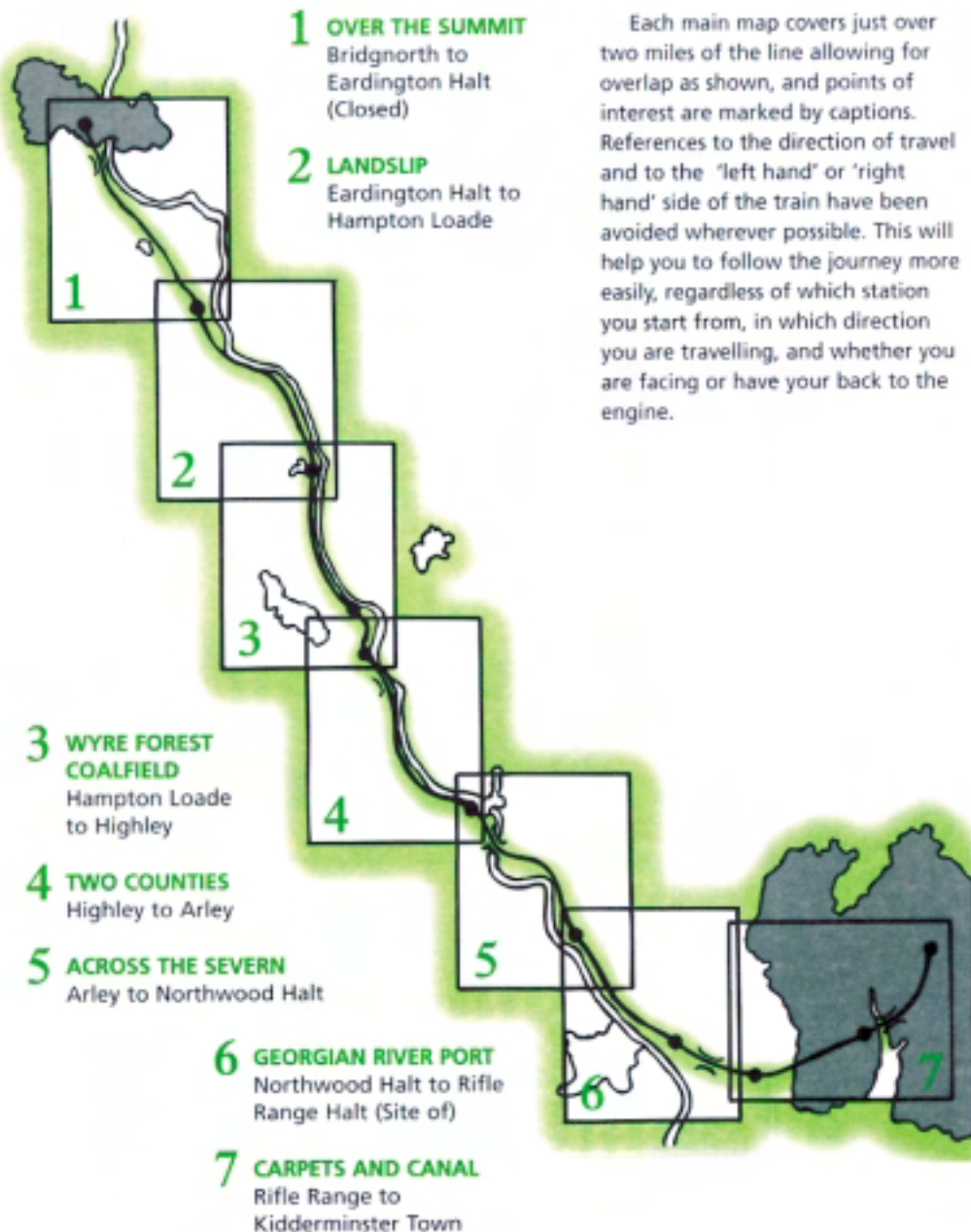
Please enjoy your journey and visit us again soon.

The Severn Valley Railway acknowledges the efforts of FRANK SHEPPERD in the creation of this booklet. We are also indebted to SIMON COWAN and STEPHEN KING for their assistance.



USING THE MAPS

Each main map covers just over two miles of the line allowing for overlap as shown, and points of interest are marked by captions. References to the direction of travel and to the 'left hand' or 'right hand' side of the train have been avoided wherever possible. This will help you to follow the journey more easily, regardless of which station you start from, in which direction you are travelling, and whether you are facing or have your back to the engine.



BRIDGNORTH TO EARDINGTON HALT (CLOSED)

LOCOMOTIVE WORKS

Three large buildings beyond the station platforms house the Locomotive Works. At the north end is a purpose-built Boiler Shop completed in 1989. Next to it, the former goods shed of 1863 now houses the Machine Shop. At the south end, the large open train shed doubles as the Erecting Shop and Running Depot. We regret that for your safety, unrestricted access to this fascinating complex is not possible, although conducted visits may be arranged by appointment.

PAN PUDDING HILL

The large grass covered hill overlooking the station is Pan Pudding Hill, and was built as a siege castle by Henry I in 1101. From there, he bombarded Bridgnorth Castle using large catapults called Trebuchet, in order to subdue a troublesome Baron. Later, in 1646 during the Civil War, the hill was used as a gun platform by Parliamentarian forces, to fire on the Royalist castle.

KNOWLESANDS BRICKWORKS

The last and largest brickworks in this area was once connected to the railway. The site of the siding is marked by an old gateway, a relic from the days when many such places were rail connected. Today the site is a busy industrial estate.

EARDINGTON SUMMIT

The summit of the line at 210 feet is marked by a board on the riverside of a long cutting which partially obscures the view. From near this point, a second line to Wolverhampton was planned but never built. Once over the summit the fireman can take a short breather whilst his train coasts downhill.

EARDINGTON HALT

Eardington Halt is a long way from the village of the same name and situated in an apparently remote location. It was sited to serve two ironworks: Upper Forge situated behind the halt and Lower Forge hidden out of sight on the riverbank. These ironworks were the last in England to produce cannons for the British Army, the last delivery went to South Africa during the Boer War. Under private ownership, Eardington was a busy intermediate stop and watering place for locomotives when services began, but was later closed and is now used principally as a track maintenance depot.

COME AGAIN! For anyone interested in history, Bridgnorth has much to offer and is well worth a return trip by train. The town grew up around its castle and later became a river port on the Severn. It is divided dramatically into Low Town, where in 1808 Richard Trevithick built Britain's first steam locomotive specially designed for hauling passengers, and High Town on a sandstone bluff above, with steps, winding alleys and the Cliff Railway interconnecting them. The Tourist Information Centre in Listley Street supplies an excellent town trail leaflet; the trail itself can be joined in the castle grounds by crossing Bridgnorth Footbridge and climbing Cannon Steps.

BRIDGNORTH CASTLE

The castle site was first fortified in the 9th century and again in the 11th century. The stone Keep and strong high town walls were built later. Bridgnorth was Royalist stronghold during the Civil War and was besieged for 4 weeks before the King's men surrendered. The walls were then pulled down and an attempt made to blow up the Keep. All that remains today is its leaning tower, locally famous as it leans more than its better known rival at Pisa.

BRIDGNORTH FOOTBRIDGE

A hundred years ago the Borough Council built a bridge so that railway passengers and townspeople could get to and from the station more easily. Sadly, that old bridge died of neglect. In 1988 a footbridge trust was formed to raise funds for the new bridge, completed in 1994. So once again, railway passengers can get to the town with ease.

BRIDGNORTH STATION

Unlike Kidderminster, the station here dates back to 1861 and is now a listed building. One of its many features is the refreshment room, today enlarged as the Railwayman's Arms and believed to be unique as the station refreshment room that never closed, even when the line was disused.

BRIDGNORTH BY-PASS

Opened in 1985, this much-needed road took heavy traffic away from the town's medieval streets. Sweeping over the Severn and under the railway, the bypass was a costly headache to the railway company, as it had to bear 30% of the cost of the railway bridge. Then only a week after it opened, part of the southern approach embankment collapsed just after a train had passed over it!

DANIEL'S MILL

As the train crosses Oldbury Viaduct, Daniel's Mill can be seen below on the riverside of the line. Milling has been carried on here for over 900 years and the 38ft water wheel powering the present Victorian mill is the largest of its type in England. The owner, who is also a founder member of the Severn Valley Railway, welcomes visitors at certain times.

CROSSING COTTAGE

CROSSING COTTAGE

The engine whistles for Crossing Cottage, built in 1859 where a private track crosses the line. The keeper who looked after the crossing gates also worked at Eardington and he used to cycle along the railway to get to work. The cottage is now the home of two working members of the Severn Valley Railway who enjoy the railway equivalent of 'living over the shop'.

Eardington
Bridge

OVER THE SUMMIT

EARDINGTON HALT (CLOSED) TO HAMPTON LOADE

EARDINGTON BANK

Hard work for northbound trains. Listen to the exhaust beat of the engine increase as it moves off almost from a standing start at Sterns. The gradient is easy for a car, but is quite a climb for a 50 year old locomotive pulling up to 250 tons behind it. On the climb the train enters a long cutting, then passes the now closed Eardington Halt.

DUDMASTON HALL

No house agent ever made a living out of the Dudmaston Estate, which was granted by King Henry I in 1147 and has never been offered for sale since. Screened from the railway by mature woodland, the present mansion was built in 1695 and given to the National Trust in 1978. It is set in a spectacular lakeside garden and filled with unusual treasures, including one of the Trust's finest collections of contemporary art.

STERNS LANDSLIP

The brakes come on and the train slows to a walking pace at Sterns, infamous in Severn Valley Railway history as the location of a landslip which has led to a speed restriction at this point from the day the line was built.

SAFETY DITCH

The deep ditch on the land side at Sterns is excavated regularly to reduce the effect of natural land movement on the line. This work is carried out by track maintenance staff (called permanent way or PW men in railway jargon).

THE POLE THAT MOVES!

Severe floods in early 1995 severely eroded the river bank and led to a major landslip that moved the track out of alignment. So 3000 tonnes of large stones were laid along the bank at the water's edge in the latest attempt to minimize land movement. Look carefully for a telegraph pole about 20 yards from the line and almost hidden in the trees. It originally stood next to the track and over the years the slip has moved it to its present position.

CHELMARSH RESERVOIR

Though not visible from the train, Chelmarsh reservoir is worth the walk from Hampton Loade station. Built in 1960, it is the reservoir of a storage system into which water from the Severn is pumped at night and, at times of peak demand, it augments West Midlands supplies via the treatment plant on the other side of the river. The reservoir is also home to a sailing club and much loved by fishermen, whilst the surrounding area is a nature reserve cared for by the Shropshire Wildlife Trust. Severn Valley Railway leaflets describing this and many other walks from the 'country stations' are obtainable from booking offices.

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE WATER COMPANY

The blue arches of the river bridge are in fact large water pipes, part of the system between reservoir and treatment plant. This independent company supplies water to the Severn Trent system. Decking suspended from the pipe arches carries a private road, which also crosses the railway at the gated Waterworks Crossing.

COME AGAIN! Visit the National Trust's Dudmaston Hall via the scenic route. First by Severn Valley train to Hampton Loade station and continuing by crossing the river on the last current - operated ferry in Shropshire. Then either a walk from the Trust car park (Severn Valley leaflet available) or, on Sundays, aboard a special vintage bus timed to connect with the trains. (Telephone first to check that the Hall is open and whether the ferry is operating, and be sure not to miss the last train home).

Eardington Halt (Closed)

Hay Bridge

Mor Brook

Sterns

Chelmarsh Reservoir

Little Rock Cutting

Waterworks Crossing

Hampton Loade Station

Dudmaston Hall

THE LONG COVERT

The stretch of woodland across the river is the Long Covert, through which a footpath from Hampton Loade to Dudmaston passes.

LANDSLIP!

HAMPTON LOADE TO HIGHLEY

HAMPTON LOADE STATION

When train services from Bridgnorth restarted under private ownership in 1970, they ran only to Hampton Loade which thus became the first 'country station' to open on the present line. Today trains pass here throughout the summer, but road access is difficult and because of this, the station often exemplifies the country railway as it once was; long periods of calm with seemingly no-one around except the signalman, alternating with brief periods of intense activity with two trains in the station at once.

Hampton Loade Station

'LION' AND 'UNICORN'

Hampton Loade village is actually on the other side of the river and one of its prominent buildings is the 14th century Lion Inn which can be reached by the ferry. This small settlement also had an iron furnace and brass foundry, and on hot summer days the workers were paid partly in beer. On the railway side, the station is in Hampton and the nearby Unicorn is more accessible for the thirsty.

MILE POSTS

Most railways provided distance markers at quarter mile intervals along the line. Here, they are on the riverside and give the distance from London Paddington via Oxford and Worcester (the original route worked by the Great Western Railway). Marker 144/1 (144.5 miles) at this point evokes sentimental memories for long serving Severn Valley Railway members as it was also the boundary of the first section of line bought from British Railways in 1970.

COAL WASHING PLANT

Picnic tables now occupy the site of a washing plant where coal from the mine was screened. It was then loaded into rail wagons waiting in the adjacent Aleyey sidings. Considerable coal traffic was worked from here, and much of it went 10 miles south to Stourport power station. Visitors can enjoy this area by alighting at Country Park halt which was built as a request stop in 1996.

SEVERN VALLEY COUNTRY PARK

For over 500 years, this area was exploited for quarrying stone and mining coal. After the last mine at Aleyey closed in 1969, large tracts of derelict land remained and scarred an otherwise beautiful landscape. These have now been reclaimed as the Severn Valley Country Park.

THE MINER'S TRACK

Across the river, Aleyey mine worked from 1939 to 1959 was the largest in South Shropshire. Many of the miners lived in Highley on this side of the river and the footpath which crosses the line here was the miners' track along which they walked to work.

ALVELEY HALT

Miners from further afield travelled to work by train alighting at Aleyey Halt, built where the miners' track crosses the line. The halt, which was opened in 1939, was no more than a short platform with a primitive shelter. No trace of it remains today.

HIGHLEY BANK

To the north of Highley trains have to negotiate the steepest gradients and the sharpest curves on the line. Originally a cutting was to have been built, but due to the unstable nature of the ground, the builders had to go around the problem. In autumn the line here is slippery with rain and leaves, and a driver needs all his skills to control a heavy train.

OLD MINERS' BRIDGE

Miners crossed the Severn by a concrete bridge built in 1937 which still exists and today gives walkers access to the country park. It also used to support an aerial ropeway which brought the coal from the mine back across the river to the washing plant.

Country Park Halt

Aleyey Halt (site of)

Highley Station

VISITOR CENTRE

Some of the finest scenery can be viewed from here. The centre was built on the former spoil heap of Aleyey mine, now landscaped and planted over. The centre houses a number of displays, which tell the story of past mining activity in the valley and provide details of flora and fauna that can be seen from waymarked footpaths today.

COME AGAIN! Meals on a train are a delight. For a Saturday evening with a difference, enjoy a wine and dine murder mystery theme evening to experience the magic atmosphere of a steam railway at night; alternatively, hire the first class club car in our restored diesel-multiple-unit for your private party. Lunch in style on Sunday, joining one of our two dining car trains. Break your return journey for an afternoon stroll and forget about driving, cooking and the washing up!

WYRE FOREST
COALFIELD

HIGHLEY TO ARLEY

HIGHLEY MINE

At the south end of the station, a short siding can be seen ending at a white gate. This led to sidings and an incline to Highley mine, which was worked from 1874 to 1940. The site of the mine is now landscaped and incorporated into the Severn Valley Country Park, and is only a short walk if you are leaving the train here.

GRADIENT POSTS

Where the gradient of the line changes, railways provided markers to inform the train crews. There are two examples at Highley: the one at the north end shows that the line is level through the station, and that it rises at 1 in 100 (or 1% in EC-speak) from the platform end.

BORLE VIADUCT

One of five viaducts on the Severn Valley Railway, Borle has suffered from mining subsidence over the years. The track has been re-ballasted so many times to keep it level, that the line is now above the parapet walls. In 1795 an early horse drawn wooden railway, that started at Billingsley nearly five miles away, terminated at the riverside here. Up to 50 tons of coal a day was once unloaded into awaiting barges, but the venture went bankrupt in 1820. All that remains here is the large restored mine manager's house and his clerk's cottage in ruins nearby.

KINLET SIDINGS (SITE OF)

The line formation sits here at the site of extensive sidings built in 1880 for the Billingsley and later Kinlet coal mines up the valley of the Borle brook. The mineral branch and sidings were dismantled in 1941 but, although very much overgrown, remains of the track formation may just be seen through the trees.

COUNTY BOUNDARY

Keep a lookout for a small bridge in a field between the river and railway near this point. It marks the Worcester-Shropshire boundary. For about a mile upstream from here to Highley, the river Severn forms the county boundary with the opposite bank in Worcestershire.

WYRE FOREST COALFIELD

Notice where the river shallows and divides either side of a small islet. This marks the southern limit of the Highley and Alveley coal mines nearly two miles away. The eastern limit was five miles away across the river over the hills and into Staffordshire. Incredibly, underground workings extended to these points.

ARLEY CHURCH

The red sandstone tower of St. Peter's Church, Upper Arley can be seen on the hill across the river. The woodlands surrounding it were once the grounds of Arley castle now demolished.

HIGHLEY STATION

Situated almost a mile from the centre of Highley, this area is actually called Stanley. The station is a delight, beautifully restored with meticulous attention to period detail and a well deserved winner of the annual Best Preserved Station award. Look for the cattle dock once used for handling livestock and the water tower still used to replenish locomotives. By the signal box is a loading gauge, which enabled staff to check that loaded wagons leaving the goods yard would pass safely under bridges. A gate from the platform gives access to the river.

THE BARGE THAT SANK

During the construction of the railway in the late 1850s, large blocks of red sandstone were quarried from the hillside above the opposite side of the river, and horses hauled them down the grassy track which can still be seen. They were then loaded onto waiting barges and taken downstream to build the abutments of Victoria Bridge. Unfortunately, one of the barges sank, and blocks in the water below those that can still be seen on the bank have been there ever since.

SEVERN VALLEY

10,000 years ago at the end of the last ice age, a vast amount of water flowed for hundreds of years carving out what is now the beautiful Severn Valley. Near Borle viaduct one of the longest and most scenic reaches can be seen curving gently away downstream.

BROOKSMOUTH BRIDGE

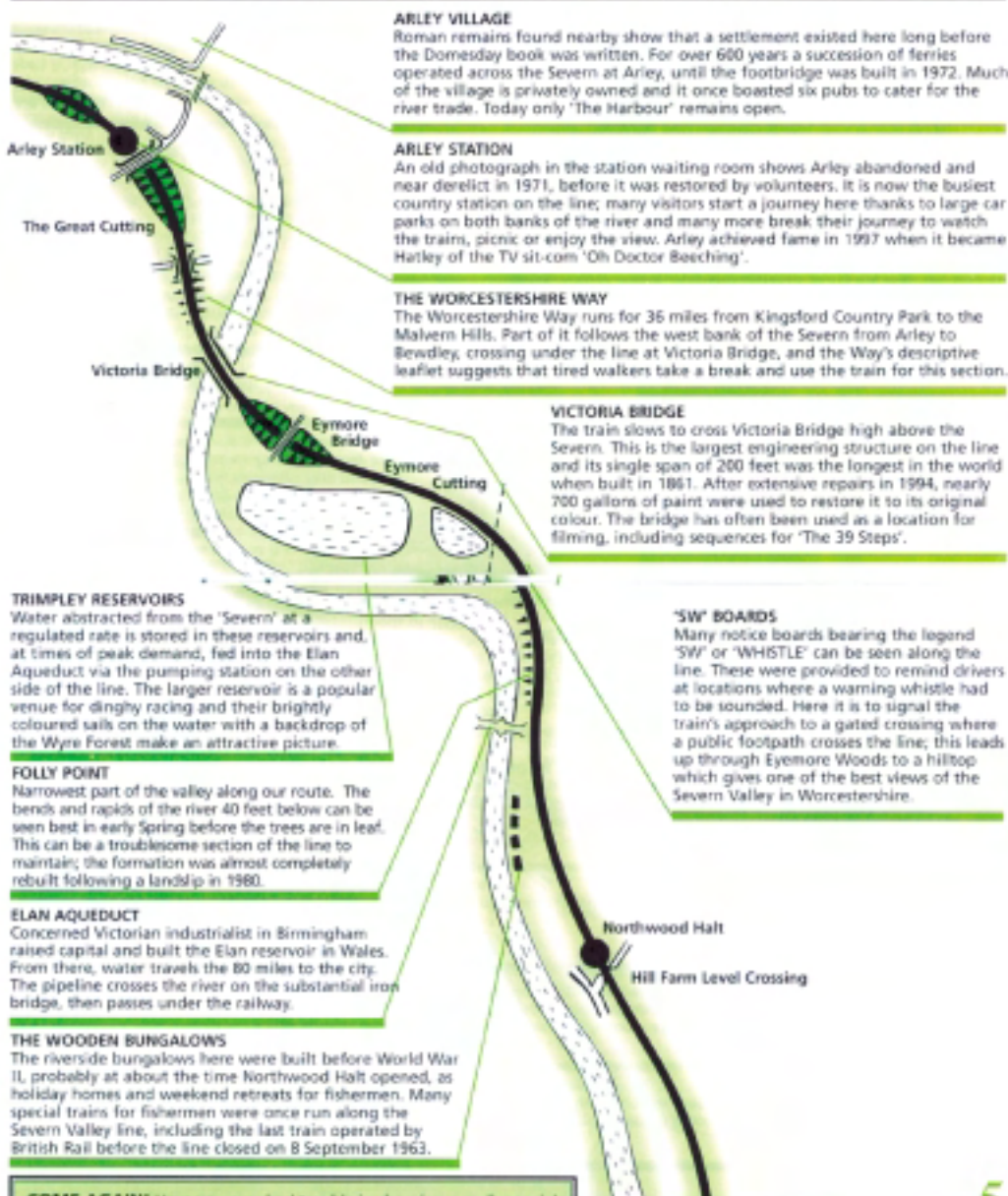
Before the railway was built, the river was a major traffic route with barges called Severn Trows carrying goods and raw materials. When travelling upstream, men called bow hauliers were employed to pull the trows against the river's flow. By 1828 when the iron Brooksmouth Bridge cast at Coalbrookdale was completed, bow hauliers had largely been replaced by horses.

BROMLEY FARM WINDPUMP

Mixed farming has been carried on here for over a thousand years and Bromley farm on the skyline across the valley is one of several farms along the line. The disused windpump below once lifted water from a spring up to the farm buildings.

COME AGAIN! An entirely different way of exploring the Severn Valley is actually on the river in a canoe. It is possible to paddle from Bridgnorth to Arley, from Hampton Loade to Bewdley or, for the more energetic, the full 14 miles from Bridgnorth to Bewdley, in each case, the return trip is made on a Severn Valley train, perhaps enjoying some well earned refreshment en route.

ARLEY TO NORTHWOOD HALT



ARLEY VILLAGE

Roman remains found nearby show that a settlement existed here long before the Domesday book was written. For over 600 years a succession of ferries operated across the Severn at Arley, until the footbridge was built in 1972. Much of the village is privately owned and it once boasted six pubs to cater for the river trade. Today only 'The Harbour' remains open.

ARLEY STATION

An old photograph in the station waiting room shows Arley abandoned and near derelict in 1971, before it was restored by volunteers. It is now the busiest country station on the line; many visitors start a journey here thanks to large car parks on both banks of the river and many more break their journey to watch the trains, picnic or enjoy the view. Arley achieved fame in 1997 when it became Hatley of the TV sit-com 'Oh Doctor Beeching'.

THE WORCESTERSHIRE WAY

The Worcestershire Way runs for 35 miles from Kingsford Country Park to the Malvern Hills. Part of it follows the west bank of the Severn from Arley to Bewdley, crossing under the line at Victoria Bridge, and the Way's descriptive leaflet suggests that tired walkers take a break and use the train for this section.

VICTORIA BRIDGE

The train slows to cross Victoria Bridge high above the Severn. This is the largest engineering structure on the line and its single span of 200 feet was the longest in the world when built in 1861. After extensive repairs in 1994, nearly 700 gallons of paint were used to restore it to its original colour. The bridge has often been used as a location for filming, including sequences for 'The 39 Steps'.

TRIMPLEY RESERVOIRS

Water abstracted from the 'Severn' at a regulated rate is stored in these reservoirs and, at times of peak demand, fed into the Elan Aqueduct via the pumping station on the other side of the line. The larger reservoir is a popular venue for dinghy racing and their brightly coloured sails on the water with a backdrop of the Wyre Forest make an attractive picture.

FOLLY POINT

Narrowest part of the valley along our route. The bends and rapids of the river 40 feet below can be seen best in early Spring before the trees are in leaf. This can be a troublesome section of the line to maintain; the formation was almost completely rebuilt following a landslip in 1980.

ELAN AQUEDUCT

Concerned Victorian industrialist in Birmingham raised capital and built the Elan reservoir in Wales. From there, water travels the 80 miles to the city. The pipeline crosses the river on the substantial iron bridge, then passes under the railway.

THE WOODEN BUNGALOWS

The riverside bungalows here were built before World War II, probably at about the time Northwood Halt opened, as holiday homes and weekend retreats for fishermen. Many special trains for fishermen were once run along the Severn Valley line, including the last train operated by British Rail before the line closed on 8 September 1963.

'SW' BOARDS

Many notice boards bearing the legend 'SW' or 'WHISTLE' can be seen along the line. These were provided to remind drivers at locations where a warning whistle had to be sounded. Here it is to signal the train's approach to a gated crossing where a public footpath crosses the line; this leads up through Eymore Woods to a hilltop which gives one of the best views of the Severn Valley in Worcestershire.

Northwood Halt

Hill Farm Level Crossing

COME AGAIN! Have you ever had trouble in choosing a really special present that is different? How about giving your nearest and dearest a chance to drive a steam or diesel engine. By joining one of our driver training courses at Bewdley? The introductory half-day courses are run frequently, they include a signal box visit, opportunities for photography and lunch (where you are welcome too).

NORTHWOOD HALT TO RIFLE RANGE HALT (SITE OF)

NORTHWOOD HALT

Northwood Halt opened in 1939 is the smallest stopping place on the line, where trains call only upon request. The level crossing, protected by automatic warning lights to comply with modern safety regulations, is the only one on the line.

THE WYRE FOREST

This ancient and once extensive forest, which dominates the high ground on the opposite side of the river, was heavily used in the making of charcoal up to about 100 years ago. The trees have grown back and now form a setting for many attractive woodland walks.

NORTHWOOD COTTAGE

Northwood Cottage is one of several dwellings built alongside the line, originally for railway staff. It is now a private residence.

DOWLES BRIDGE (PIERS)

At one time, a second line paralleled the present line north of Bewdley. An overgrown embankment can still be seen where it diverged, together with stone piers of the former Dowles Bridge which carried the rails across the Severn. The line then continued through the Wyre Forest to Tenbury Wells.

Tenbury Line (Remains of)

GEORGIAN BEWDLEY

At the north end of Bewdley station, the train crosses Wribbenhall viaduct high above the rooftops. Look out for the old rope works, Thomas Telford's river bridge of 1798, St Anne's Church in the middle of the main street, and the town's Georgian waterfront - which was seen all too frequently on television during the severe floods of 2000.

Dowles Brook

LOWER PARK HOUSE

The Severn Valley Railway was already five years old when Stanley Baldwin was born here in 1867. He was Prime Minister three times (once during the abdication of King Edward VIII and later became the first Earl Baldwin of Bewdley).

BEWDLEY BY-PASS BRIDGE

The bridge was actually constructed alongside the line in the summer of 1986. Only a few short weeks were available between summer and winter operation when trains were not running. In that time, track was lifted and the embankment removed. The bridge was then rolled into position and the line reinstated in time for the Christmas trains. The by-pass was completed in 1987.

ORIGINAL SEVERN VALLEY LINE

Earthworks and bridges of the original Severn Valley line can be seen from the site of Rifle Range Halt. It once continued to Stourport and Hartlebury. Today, a short siding at the south end of Sandbourne viaduct is all that remains.

BEWDLEY STATION

With three platforms, Bewdley station is the largest on the line and still retains the atmosphere of a small town junction. In the heritage railway business it is one of very few places where double line working is in operation, albeit a very short section between the two 1877-built signal boxes which are the oldest on the railway.

Wribbenhall Viaduct

Bewdley Station

Sandbourne Viaduct

WEST MIDLAND SAFARI PARK

Several forms of wildlife are usually running free behind the strong security fences of the West Midlands Safari Park. It is not accessible by rail as, for safety reasons, the animals can only be viewed from inside a closed vehicle.

COME AGAIN! Bewdley is an ideal destination for an outing by train. Its wealth was built on river trade from the 14th century and some fine Georgian buildings along the riverside remain as evidence of this. Then the canal age arrived and nearby Stourport, which was chosen as the interchange point, flourished whilst Bewdley declined. The town centre is only about five minutes walk from the station and a craft museum behind the Guildhall there tells more of the town's story, whilst the Tourist Information Centre can supply a detailed town trail leaflet.

6
GEORGIAN RIVER
PORT

RIFLE RANGE HALT (SITE OF) TO KIDDERMINSTER TOWN

RIFLE RANGE HALT

Rifle Range Halt was only open from 1905 to 1920 and was mainly used by Yeomanry volunteers training on the adjacent heath during World War I. Traces of the range they used still exist nearby, although the halt has now disappeared completely.

Rifle Range Halt (site of)

THE DEVIL'S SHUTTLEFUL

The sandstone outcrop now almost hidden by pine trees, is named after a legend claiming that the Devil dropped it here on his way to dam the river Severn.

BROWN CLEE HILL

Brown Clee is the highest hill in Shropshire at 1771 feet. It is 15 miles away and can be seen briefly from near the Bewdley portal of the tunnel.

BEWDELEY TUNNEL

If you are travelling towards Kidderminster, make sure the window is shut! For if not, the carriage may fill with smoke and steam as Bewdley tunnel is 480 yards long and the engine is working hard on a rising gradient.

KIDDERMINSTER SUGAR FACTORY

One reason why Severn Valley services were not extended to Kidderminster until 1984, is that the sugar factory once had extensive railway sidings and provided the last traffic handled by British Rail over this section of the line.

STAFFORDSHIRE AND WORCESTERSHIRE CANAL

James Brindley, England's canal genius, built the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal which was completed in 1770 and opened up an important link between the Severn and the Black Country. It runs from Stourport on Severn to Great Haywood near Stafford. It is 46 miles long and has 43 locks, one of which can sometimes be seen from the train.

WORCESTERSHIRE BEACON

The Malvern Hills south of Worcester are 26 miles away but are visible on a clear day. Worcestershire Beacon, at 1394 feet, is the highest hill in the county.

Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal

KIDDERMINSTER STATION SIGNAL BOX

Another seemingly 'vintage' structure, Kidderminster Station Signal Box, is also newly built and was commissioned in 1987. It houses the largest signalling installation in use on a heritage railway in Britain.

THE GOODS SHED

Across the car park, the large brick building was formerly a goods shed, built to handle the transhipment of Kidderminster's main export - carpets. It was bought by the Severn Valley Railway in 1985 and is now the carriage workshops.

KIDDERMINSTER RAILWAY MUSEUM

Adjacent to the station is a former Great Western Railway warehouse, once used for storing wool and grain. It is now Kidderminster Railway Museum, which has a large collection of exhibits.

THE CARRIAGE SHED

The Severn Valley Railway's Carriage Shed, which was constructed during 1999/2000 with the aid of Heritage Lottery Funding, is one of the largest buildings in Kidderminster. It can house up to 62 carriages from our historic collection when they are not in use on trains.

KIDDERMINSTER TOWN STATION

The southern terminus of the Severn Valley Railway seems to be a vintage structure, but it is a new building only opened in 1986, although based on a design for Ross on Wye station which was originally prepared in 1850.

COME AGAIN! Kidderminster hosts a number of special events throughout the year. Best known are those for children: Christmas trains in December which carry their excited passengers to see Santa at Arley, and our 'Day out with Thomas' weekends in early and late summer, which include cheering Thomas as he deals with the troublesome trucks under the watchful eye of The Fat Controller. If you are a little older, re-kindle memories during our popular Forties Weekends or Classic Car & Bike Day and, if you are also a railway enthusiast, Severn Valley Railway Gala events are amongst the best in Britain.

7
CARPETS AND CANAL

INFORMATION HELPLINES

For more information on any of the Severn Valley Railway services listed below, please contact the Severn Valley Railway, The Railway Station, BEWDLEY, Warcs, DY12 1BG, or telephone (01299) 403816:

School Education Service	Saturday evening scenic land cruise
Christmas trains - to Santa's grotto	Sunday luncheon services
Driving courses - steam or diesel	"Day out with Thomas"© weekends
1940's Weekends	Classic Car & Bike Day
Gala events	Wine and dine theme evenings
Heavy Horse Weekend	Corporate Hospitality

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For information on any of the following, please write or telephone as shown:

Bewdley Town	Bewdley Tourist Information Centre Load St, BEWDLEY DY12 2AE	01299 404740
Bridgnorth Town	Bridgnorth Tourist Information Centre Listley St, BRIDGNORTH WV16 4AW	01746 763257
Canoeing Services	Severn Valley Canoeing Co Ltd Sandy Bank, Stourbridge Road, BRIDGNORTH WV15 6EE	01746 780073
	Sun Valley Canoeing Co 65 Friar St, BRIDGNORTH WV16 4BJ	07774 907326
Daniel's Mill	Alan George Daniel's Mill, Eardington BRIDGNORTH WV16 5JL	01746 762753
Dudmaston Hall	The National Trust, Dudmaston Hall Quatt, BRIDGNORTH	01746 780866
Hampton Loade Ferry		07966 183728
Kidderminster Railway Museum	Station Approach, Comberton Hill KIDDERMINSTER DY10 1QX	01562 825316
Severn Valley Country Park		01746 781192

Why not help the SVR raise money in a very interesting way by opening a Severn Valley Branch Account with the West Bromwich Building Society.

For a minimum investment of just £100 you can save money, earn a competitive rate of interest on your savings and help the SVR (We receive 1% of the average annual balance of all Branch account holders).

There are other benefits for account holders, so pick up an application form from our shops or booking offices today.

For the comfort and enjoyment of all of our visitors, would passengers please refrain from flushing toilets whilst the train is standing in the station.

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WHY NOT JOIN US?

The scheme to preserve part of the original SVR began in 1965. The line from Bridgnorth to Hampton Loade was re-opened in 1970, and extended in stages, reaching Kidderminster in 1984. The SVR is largely volunteer operated - indeed, without this help the SVR would not survive. From our membership of around 13,500, several hundred actively help us run the SVR.

SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY COMPANY LIMITED MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

I/We wish to apply for SVR membership and will comply with the Memorandum and Articles of Association, Bye-Laws and other regulations thereof.

Ordinary	£13.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Junior(14-16)	£5.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senior Citizen	£9.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Husband & Wife	£11.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Husband & Wife	£17.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	(one is a Senior Citizen)		
Family	£20.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Life Membership	£240.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Includes children under 14)			Life Membership	£300.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student (in full time education)			Husband & Wife		
(17-18)	£8.00	<input type="checkbox"/>			

(Please tick the appropriate box)

I/We enclose membership fee of £ _____, together with an (optional) donation of £ _____, to the Severn Valley Railway. (Subscriptions include VAT and are renewable 12 months after date of enrolment. Free membership of the SVR Association is also included).

OR

I wish to pay by credit card/debit card _____ / _____ / _____ / _____

Expiry date: _____ / _____ Issue No. (switch card) _____

(PLEASE USE BLOCK LETTERS)

Full name

(Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms) _____

(Wife's Name) _____

Age (if under 19) _____

Full Names and ages of children under 14 _____

Address _____

Post Code _____

Daytime Tel. No _____

Date _____

(NB For insurance reasons, children under 16 cannot help on the Railway unsupervised, but please ask for details of the SVR Apprentices)

PLEASE DO NOT USE THIS FORM FOR MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Please forward your completed form to:- Membership Secretary, Severn Valley Railway, The Railway Station, Bewdley, Worcestershire DY12 1BG (01299 403816)

If you would like to become a 'part owner' of the SVR please tick the box for details.

BE A VOLUNTEER AND HELP US RUN THE SVR!

We are always in need of more assistance on our Railway, from operating the service (on-train personnel, station and maintenance staff) through to support activities such as marketing, telephone answering, assisting in shops and gardening.

If you are a member and are prepared to spare us some of your time, whether it be for just a few days each year or on a more regular basis, we will be most grateful. Full training is given where required.

Our Volunteer Liaison Officer Peter Edkins or his deputy Barry Moreton (24-hours telephone number-01299 401776), would like to hear from you. They can both be contacted at Bewdley station on Tuesdays and Thursdays or by telephone above. Alternatively, please indicate a daytime telephone number below and they will be in touch.

NAME: _____ TELEPHONE: _____

SMOKING POLICY ON SVR TRAINS

Our passenger coaches are irreplaceable antiques, each taking many years to restore. It is for this reason that we ask our visitors not to smoke on any SVR train.

This request also applies to those coaches which still carry "SMOKING" notices and have ashtrays, as these items have been retained for historical accuracy only.

Your cooperation in implementing this policy is very much appreciated, and we hope that you have an enjoyable journey.

SOUVENIR GUIDE BOOK

If you have enjoyed your visit to the Railway, please do not forget to purchase a Souvenir Guide book from either Bridgnorth or Kidderminster station giftshops. The book is modestly priced at £2.00.



YOUR LOCOMOTIVE AND COACHES

Until 1948 there were four main railway companies in mainland UK - the Great Western Railway (GWR), the Southern Railway (SR), the London, Midland and Scottish Railway (LMS) and the London & North Eastern Railway (LNER). Each of these companies built and maintained its own fleet of locomotives and coaches. Following nationalisation in 1948, these four companies were combined to form British Railways (BR), and locomotives and coaches from then on were constructed to a standard BR design for use over the whole network.

The locomotives in use here on the Severn Valley Railway are predominantly of GWR, LMS and BR origin, although we currently have one SR example and 2 from the LNER. All were built over 45 years ago. Those from the GWR, usually painted in green livery, are easily recognised by their brass and copper fittings. Our LMS and BR locomotives normally carry a black livery and are simpler in design.

Coaches on the SVR are of GWR, LMS, LNER and BR origin, and are usually made up into "sets" of up to 8 vehicles. There are currently 2 GWR sets (instantly recognisable by their "chocolate and cream" livery), 2 BR sets (one in maroon livery and one in carmine and cream), 1 set of

LMSR coaches (in a maroon livery) and 1 set of LNER (with a distinctive teal exterior). In addition to our locomotives and coaches, the railway has many wagons of all types which you will see up and down the line. Their origins are many and varied, and are used for a variety of purposes. If you would like to know more about our locomotives, coaches and wagons than is told here, there is an excellent publication (the Severn Valley Railway Stock Book, at just £3.95 and available from our giftshops at Kidderminster and Bridgnorth) giving full details of all vehicles on the SVR. It is well illustrated and is a "must" for all enthusiasts.



Severn Valley Railway, The Railway Station,
Bewdley, Worcestershire DY12 1BG

Tel: 01299 403816

Online booking with
Credit/Debit cards.
Booking fee applies.

TICKETWEB
www.ticketweb.co.uk

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Wroxeter Roman City

The site at Wroxeter has always been a wholly Roman foundation and was first settled by the Roman army in cAD48, the site being on the line of the great Roman road known as Watling Street. In the early years, the site would probably have been a 'temporary marching camp' but, in AD58 when Emperor Nero decided to invade Wales rather than defend a border with England, the fortress would have become permanent.



The fort was first discovered in 1975, and is believed to have been occupied by the 14th Legion from AD58-AD69 and then by the 20th Legion from AD69-AD80. Once the military establishment was no longer required, the site as with many other sites like Colchester and Gloucester, would have been handed over to the civil authorities to become what was known as a Coloniae. This was a settlement for retired veterans.

Wroxeter, along with Exeter, was then made a tribal centre being given its own administration and a degree of local autonomy. These tribal centres could be distinguished from lesser towns by the grid layout of their streets. They also had a law court, a market and a large public baths. The long period of permanent military occupation had already established a considerable civilian settlement outside of the fort: providing for the needs of well paid troops would have been quite a lucrative business. However, under the rule of Emperor Hadrian in the early 2nd century, Wroxeter was to become an even more substantial city. A new civic centre was built with a bath house, Basilica and other fine buildings and colonnades, providing one of the best examples of civic planning in Roman Britain.

During the 2nd century Wroxeter continued to grow and by the end of the 2nd century a new defensive ditch and bank were dug around the entire perimeter of what had now become the fourth largest city in Roman Britain. These earthworks covered a distance of some 2 miles (3.7km). As with most settlements that prospered in the first 150 years of Roman occupation, things were destined to change. Greater political unrest in the 3rd and 4th centuries, and increased maintenance costs, caused many buildings to become derelict. During the 4th century buildings were becoming unsafe and, over a period of time, were systematically dismantled. The bath house was used for grain storage for some time, and when the original floor was lifted and re-used elsewhere, three bodies were buried in the derelict ground. The reason for the burial here is unknown, but the skeletons were discovered at a later date. The Basilica also suffered the same fate as it too fell into various stages of disrepair.

Suprisingly, after the Roman withdrawal the city received a reversal in fortunes. After the old Basilica was cleared of all the small buildings that had been erected a substantial new building with two wings and a long western annexe was constructed. Numerous other buildings were also constructed along the adjacent streets, along with several barns. It is not known who carried out this phase of rebuilding, but it was probably a regional king who had reclaimed a realm out of the chaos of the early 5th century.

Opinion is divided as to when the city was finally abandoned, but it is believed to be between AD500 - AD650. Some Arthurian researchers have put forward quite compelling evidence to suggest that the site could have been the main base from which King Arthur defended the remainder of the Britons territory (now Wales) from the invading Saxons. Could this really have been the legendary 'Camelot'?

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