



TEMPLE BAR RETURNS TO THE CITY



After nearly thirty years of negotiations and three years of highly complicated construction work, Temple Bar – the only remaining London gateway – finally returned to the City last November; and it has been delighting visitors to the Capital throughout the Summer.

Temple Bar's origins lie in the late thirteenth century, when it was probably a simple chain or 'bar' placed across the road. It was used to control traffic entering and leaving the City of London along the major western thoroughfare where the Strand meets Fleet Street. Hence it was named after the nearby Temple Law Courts. The bar was soon transformed into one of the great medieval city gates. Aldgate, Aldersgate, Bishopsgate, Cripplegate, Ludgate, Moorgate and Newgate had all been demolished by the end of the eighteenth century. However, Temple Bar – though rebuilt in its present form by Sir

Christopher Wren in 1672 – survived in place until 1878. Possibly this was because it played an important role in Criminal Punishment, as well as the City's ceremonial life. For it was one of the places where traitors had their heads displayed on spikes to deter would-be followers! It was last used in this way in 1745. An old tradition also insists that, upon entering London, the monarch must stop at Temple Bar to request permission to enter the City. In return, the Lord Mayor presents the Sword of State as a sign of loyalty. The ceremony is still very occasionally re-enacted at the monument marking the bar's original site.

Eventually, the Portland stone archway succumbed to Victorian traffic congestion. It was decided to take it down very carefully with numbered stones ready for re-erection when a suitable site was found. In 1880, a brewing magnate bought the stones and set up the Bar as an entrance to his mansion at Theobalds Park in Hertfordshire. The house is now a conference centre and, over the years, the bar had become neglected and somewhat ruinous. However, in 1976, a former Lord Mayor of London set up the Temple Bar Trust with the intention of returning the Bar to the City. Only eight years later, they purchased it and – with plans afoot for the redevelopment of the unsightly 1960s office buildings in Paternoster Square, next to St Paul's Cathedral – gained permission for its re-erection there. In 2003, the Corporation of London agreed to fund most of the work at a cost of just over £3m. So, after a considerable amount of conservation and restoration work by specialist contractors, the bar, and its Royal statue (Kings James I, Charles I, Charles II & Anne of Denmark), have now been installed adjacent to the north-west tower of St Paul's Cathedral, forming a pedestrian gateway into the redeveloped Paternoster Square. A unique part of the City's heritage has returned from obscurity.

WARWICK IS TOPS FOR TOURISTS



For those of you heading to the Midlands to seek out the delights of Stratford and its Shakespeare connections, don't forget that just down the road is Warwick (pronounced Worrik), the county town of Warwickshire, with a plethora of historic attractions to fire your imagination.

Most people visiting Warwick head straight for the castle, the oldest continually occupied castle in the country. Surprisingly, it does not belong to the National Trust or English Heritage. It's not even privately owned. Though it had been in the hands of the Earls of Warwick since the Norman Conquest, in the 1970s, the 7th 'actor' Earl sold up to Madame Tussaud's, the waxwork people. Though this may seem a great shame, it does have the added advantage that the Tussauds Group really know how to present attractions to the public, and, with no-one living there any more, you can go absolutely everywhere. The entry fee seems quite expensive, but you have to remember that everything is included and you can easily spend all day exploring. You only pay extra for the new ghost experience! If you like climbing towers and running along wall-walks, this is the place for you. And there are regular displays of birds of prey, archers and often jousting too. You can meet some Royal villains outside, but the places where the waxworks really make the castle come alive are the state apartments and the undercroft. Exploring the former, you come across Edward VII and his friends getting ready for a party! My favourite area, however, is down below, where you are transported back to 1471 as the castle and its garrison prepare for the Battle of Barnet, during the War of the Roses. The great Earl of Warwick – the Kingmaker – has just deserted his cousin, King Edward IV, and is throwing his lot in with his rival, Henry VI. But what will be his reward?

Of course, you shouldn't spend your whole day at the castle, because the town is only a few steps through a gate in the castle wall (on the left, just before the entrance courtyard) and it has many treasures to share. Two gates remain from the old town wall, both with chapels over them! St. James' Chantry Chapel over the west gate adjoins Leicester's Hospital, a fine timber-framed complex of buildings originally housing the chantry priests, but later transformed by Queen Elizabeth's favourite, Lord Leicester, into a retirement home for ex-servicemen. And eight old soldiers still live there in modernised flats. There are many other timber-framed buildings in the town and there is a good museum, but personally I can never go to Warwick without visiting the Collegiate Church of St. Mary. It was founded in 1123 and almost destroyed by the Great Fire of Warwick in 1694 when the local people are said to have stopped the flames at the entrance to the Beauchamp Chapel – one of the great glories of Medieval England! Built in the 15th century as a mausoleum for Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, King Henry VI's foster-father, it is a magnificent example of European ecclesiastical architecture and ranks among the country's greatest treasures. Taking centre stage is the gilt bronze effigy of the Earl surrounded by tiny 'weeping' friends and relatives, including the only known image of the Kingmaker. It is the only non-Royal effigy of its kind to have survived and the only gilt-bronze effigy outside Westminster Abbey and Canterbury Cathedral. Do not, however, be distracted from the superb saintly and angelic carvings around the east window, a rare survival of the Reformation in almost perfect painted condition. And the medieval glass is a fine collection of what survived destruction by Cromwell's soldiers. Some of the saints actually have bejewelled clothing. Most people have fun looking for all the bears – the symbol of Warwick.

The Beauchamps have been joined by later Dudley Earls of Warwick, Ambrose and his brother, Lord Leicester. Leicester lived at nearby Kenilworth Castle, another excellent, though ruinous, place to visit. Excavation has recently revealed details of Leicester's magnificent garden where he entertained Queen Elizabeth I and dreamt of becoming her king. It is soon to be restored to its former horticultural glory.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ENGLAND'S TRUE PATRON SAINT



Well, doesn't time fly? One minute, he's a tiny baby living in exile, then he's king. And before you know it, it's the millennium anniversary of his birth. Yes, Edward the Confessor would be one thousand years old this year and his birthplace of Islip in Oxfordshire has been celebrating in style. Throughout the Summer, there have been country fairs and fetes, a Bayeux Tapestry exhibition, a Saxon Living History Weekend (with re-enactors' encampment and Viking Ship burning) and performances of Beowulf. There are also lectures, visits and exhibitions still to come.

Edward was the eldest son of King Aethelred the Unready (or Ill-Counselled) by his second wife, Emma of Normandy. He had six elder half-brothers, so the chances of his inheriting the throne must have been thought slim during his childhood. It became all the more unlikely because of the Danish Conquest of England in 1016, when Edward was twelve. King Aethelred died the same year and Edward's widowed mother married the Danish conqueror, Canute the Great, not long afterward. The little prince's parentage, however, made it advisable for him to remain at his uncle's court in Normandy. After Canute's death in 1035, the English succession was disputed between the late king's two sons by his two wives: Harold *Harefoot* the son of Aelfgitha of Northampton and Hardicanute the son of Emma. Edward made a play for the throne himself, leading an unsuccessful raid on Southampton, while his younger brother, Alfred, landed in England in 1036; but Emma's English sons received no support from their mother and poor Alfred was even murdered for his trouble. Harold *Harefoot* established himself as King, and Hardicanute later succeeded him. The latter quickly became unpopular amongst the English ealdormen and, in 1041, Edward was able to return to England and be recognised as his half-brother's heir. He succeeded him after Hardicanute's sudden death the following year.

Edward's tight control of England was largely due to the powerful family of Earl Godwin of Wessex. Several of his sons became earls and Edward harboured a deep-felt grudge against Godwin who had been implicated in the murder of the King's brother. Edward brought many friends from Normandy to England, notably Robert of Jumieges, to whom he gave the diocese of London. In 1050, the King favoured Jumieges over another of the Godwin clan as Archbishop of Canterbury, subsequently allowing his followers to erect the first English castles in the earldoms of Godwin's sons, Swein and Harold (in Herefordshire & Essex respectively). The following year, Edward's brother-in-law, Eustace of Boulogne, arrived in the country and set about organising the erection of another castle at Dover, part of Earl Godwin's own domain. The people of Dover objected with force, killing nineteen of Eustace's men. Godwin refused to take any action against the men of Kent and the King was thus presented with the excuse he needed to arrange for Godwin's exile. By 1052, however, Godwin staged a come-back and his supporters forced the King to restore his position and to exile his enemies instead. It was around this time that King Edward is said to have offered the future English crown to his maternal cousin, Duke William of Normandy.

Towards the end of Edward's reign, the King mostly threw himself into hunting and building. He was a very pious man with little interest in earthly affairs. The major project for which he is remembered is the refounding of Westminster Abbey. In the meantime, Earl Harold had succeeded his father, Godwin, as the King's chief advisor. In 1054, his ally, Bishop Aeldred of Worcester, travelled to central Europe in search of the King's nephew, Edward *the Aetheling*. He arrived in England three years later but died - apparently murdered - almost immediately. His baby son, Edgar, was subsequently raised at court. Earl Harold became very popular in the country through his successful military campaigns, notably against the Welsh (1055-63) and Northumbrian rebels (1065). Although he may have sworn to uphold the Duke William's claims to the throne, Edward changed his mind on his deathbed and nominated Harold as his chosen successor. He died 5th January 1066 and was buried at Westminster Abbey, which had been consecrated only ten days earlier. Edward was canonised almost a hundred years later, in 1161, and was known as England's patron saint until St. George was introduced to unite the Saxon and Norman people of the country in the 13th century. Along with that of St. Wite in the obscure little country church of Whitchurch Canonicorum in Dorset, his shrine at Westminster is one of only two to still contain their saintly occupant.

PROTECT YOURSELF THIS FALL



Now August is over, it's safe to go blackberrying once more. For there is an old superstition in southern England that you should never pick this fruit before September or "The Witches will get you"! Now, although today we may not take the witch reference seriously, the people from Saxon through to Victorian times, and even later, were very frightened of what might happen if they crossed the local 'wise-woman' – and every village had one.

It was well known that you should never refuse a witch a ride in your cart or on your horse; and there are frequent stories of the foolhardy doing just that and finding themselves spellbound for hours – both horse and handler standing in the road unable to move!

The most serious threat to one's personal security, however, was the possibility of a witch getting into your house. There were supposed to be two key ways to prevent this. The first was to ensure that the witch could not enter through the usual doors or windows. Every latch in the place should be etched with a St. Andrew's Cross to prevent her from lifting them – and if you were sensible, you'd do the same to the hinges too! Churches in particular would be sure to have such precautions in place and often had locks installed on the font cover to prevent the theft of holy water.

The second and very easy way to deter witches from even approaching your house was to hang up 'hag-stones'. These are stones, however small, which have naturally gained a hole all the way through them. A string could be threaded through the holes and the stones hung from the eaves or other convenient places around the outside of the house. They may have represented eyes and thus were used to ward off the 'evil eye'.

There are still people who carry hag-stones around in their pockets, but, these days, it's just treated as a good luck charm. Crosses can be seen on old style latches in many houses in Britain and have largely become part of door furniture fashion. But I never pick blackberries before September!

CHURCH OF THE MONTH

As well as being an active place of worship, the parish church reflects the history of every village in Britain. This month, we take a look at:

CHRISTCHURCH PRIORY



This month we take a whistle-stop tour round Christchurch Priory in historic Hampshire. Once a monastic complex, only the Norman church has survived the Dissolution for use by the local parishioners. But what architecture, and what an amazing collection of medieval fittings it houses. They would be long lost in most churches.

There is a superb array of misericords (13th-16th century) on the choir stalls where the monks could perch during long services – and, unlike many cathedrals, they are all on display. They are highly carved with wonderful scenes of daily life and even some medieval jokes like a fox preaching from a pulpit. The Jesse Tree (showing Christ's ancestry) carved into the reredos beyond is largely intact and surprisingly colourful. To the left of the high altar is the beautiful chantry chapel built for the last of the Plantagenets, Margaret, the Countess of Salisbury, niece of both King Edward IV and King Richard III. Her ancestors, the Montacute Earls of Salisbury, were great patrons of the priory and owned the adjoining castle. Unfortunately, she was beheaded (1541) in the Tower of London by order of her rival to the throne, King Henry VIII, and she was not buried here. There is also a memorial to the poet, Shelley, under the tower. His wife, Mary, is buried in nearby Bournemouth with his heart.

And the name Christchurch? While it was being built, a carpenter arrived on site who did marvellous work, but never drew any pay. He lengthened the now famous 'miraculous beam' which had been cut too short and then he disappeared. It was Christ himself and the church was named after him!

MEDIEVAL PALACE RESTORED

Guildford Borough Council has reopened the keep (central tower) of the town's castle to visitors after a whole year of extensive conservation work carried out by Nimbus Stone Conservators and Ingram Consultants. And while, without explanation, the outside just looks like it had a good clean, you won't recognise the interior. For, amazingly, what was once an empty shell has been completely transformed with the insertion of floors and a roof!

This unusual move, which has also been employed at Rochester and Tonbridge (both in Kent), has made the building much easier to understand and given visitors access to a much larger area. Matthew Alexander's new model of the castle in 1300 and a permanent history display further enhance the castle experience.

The castle was founded by William the Conqueror soon after the Conquest, but the keep is believed to have been built as Royal apartments during King Stephen's reign (1135-54), making it the only surviving structure built on his orders. In the 1160s, his successor built new private rooms in the surrounding bailey and the sheriff seems to have taken over the keep as an office and a prison. Guildford only saw regular Royal visits during Henry III's reign. The monarch spent vast amounts of money turning it into a luxurious palace where he liked to spend Christmas.



The restoration work has revealed a number of previously unknown features. The removal of previous attempts at consolidation uncovered a missing medieval toilet, as well as rendered and whitewashed battlements that show the keep was originally a much lower two-storey structure before being extended upwards. Such discoveries are of considerable national importance because of the current interest in castle keeps and their function. Once assumed to be purely defensive, work at Guildford has helped experts reassess such structures more as a symbol of power.

SIR MORDRED THE MARRYING KIND?

The evil Sir Mordred of Arthurian legend appears in many sources with several different wives. BHC members have asked, who did he really marry?

Sir Mordred (or Medrod) was supposed to have come from modern Scotland, a son of King Lot of Lothian or Orkney. Occasionally he is said to have married Cywylllog, the daughter of Caw, another great warlord from Southern Scotland. Cywylllog is supposed to have been a minor saint who lived at Llangwylllog on Anglesey. Her feast day is said to be on 7th January, but the real

dedication of this church is to her sister, St. Gwrddelw, whose feast day is also on that day. The Cywylllog & Mordred reference comes from Lewis Morris' 'Alphabetic Bonedd' and is due to a misunderstanding of a statement made by the 16th century antiquarian, Hector Boece. Boece actually said that Mordred married a daughter of the great British king, Gawolane – perhaps King Cadwallon Lawhir of Gwynedd.

Mordred's wife is more usually said to have been Gwenhwyfach, the mysterious sister of Queen Gwenhwyfar (Guinevere) who appears in the Welsh Triads. The two sisters basically have the same name – Gwenhwy-fawr (the Great) and

Gwenhwy-fach (the Less) – and may originally have been the same character. Mordred is certainly said to have married Guinevere after he deceitfully told all the World that Arthur was dead. Although, his two grown-up sons who continued the rebellion after his death must have come from a previous union. Alternatively, the Gwenhwyfar/fach sisters may be the origin of the False Guinevere story in which the queen's identical twin sister takes her place at court.

So it seems that both Mordred's recorded wives may never have existed.

ORKNEY'S MYSTERY MOUND

If you find yourself at Kirkwall Airport, on the Orkney Isles, with half an hour or so to kill (not unknown in the mists), get yourself over to Mine Howe, a prehistoric attraction next door.

Pay a small entry fee and put on your hard-hat. Make your way out into the field in front of you, for you are about to descend into one of the most intriguing places in Britain. Mine Howe is a natural mound of boulder clay in a low-lying boggy region into which has been sunk a bizarre underground structure consisting of stone galleries and twenty-eight steep steps leading down into a high roofed chamber which regularly fills with water.

But what is this peculiar feature? Although first discovered in the 1930s, Mine Howe has been a mystery ever since. Only recently has an extensive archaeological investigation begun to reveal more. The design and building techniques appear to be similar to those of Iron Age brochs (defensive towers) in the same area and some Iron Age pottery has been found at Mine Howe. However, its function is less clear.



The mound was surrounded by a ditch up to four metres deep with a monumental stone lined entrance. Round and about was an industrial complex for iron and bronze production, including iron smelting hearths and an incredibly rare Iron Age smithy with a woman buried under the floor. Mounds, underground passages and watery places all had a religious significance at this time. The production of metal weapons from rock ore was also seen as a magical gift from the Gods, so it seems most likely that Mine Howe was some kind of pagan religious centre. A nearby chapel of St. Ninian may have christianised the area in Pictish times. Will we ever know for sure?

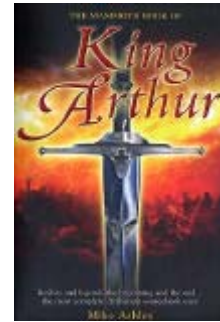


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Contact: Rod Hampton, Director E-Mail: rhampton@britannia.com
Tel: 302.897.1036 (betw. 8am-6pm ET, Mon-Fri)

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BEST BOOKS



Mikes Ashley's 'The Mammoth Book of King Arthur' Constable & Robinson Ltd £9.99

This book claims to be the "most comprehensive guide to the real Arthurian World and the legends that surround and often obscure it". Heard it all before? Well, this weighty tome does actually go some way to fulfilling its promises.

As part of a large series of 'Mammoth Books' by a non-Arthurian author, I was not overly optimistic when I picked up my copy of 'King Arthur'. Mike Ashley's previous 'British Monarchs' is a truly excellent reference work, but I found his analysis of Arthur's contemporary Early British Kings therein a little disappointing. With his King Arthur effort, however, I have been extremely impressed.

Perhaps the subject needed a fresh approach from a new author with no preconceived ideas. Ashley certainly manages to bring together details and opinions on almost all of the many strands of Arthurian research, as well as giving us a taste of modern Arthurian culture from the worlds of art, fiction and cinema.

Split into three parts – the origins of Arthur, the growth of the legend and the obligatory Who's Who and What's Where – this Mammoth book covers 670 pages. It gives an excellent introduction for Arthurian beginners as well as being a comprehensive reference work from which the old-hand can look up those obscure details of the legend that they've never really looked into. Sadly there are no illustrations, but it should still find pride of place on every self-respecting Dark Age enthusiast's bookshelf.

[Buy The MB of King Arthur on Amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)