

Caernarfon artefacts



Caernarfon artefacts

Replica Edward I crown

Replica Edward I crown. This is a replica of Edward I's crown. It was made by casting metal in moulds, then assembling the pieces with decorative pins, topped with oak leaves. It is large, but does fit all the men over 6 feet tall who have tried it on. We know that Edward I was 6 foot 2 inches tall, and the length of his legs and arms gave him his nickname of 'Longshanks'.

How do we know what the crown looked like?

There are very few images which date from the time of Edward I, but a painting of Edward hangs in Westminster Abbey, and we have copied the crown from that painting. The original crown was probably destroyed, along with the rest of the Crown Jewels, after the execution of King Charles I in 1649. Their destruction was ordered by Oliver Cromwell, who abolished the monarchy and declared Britain to be a republican Commonwealth. The Crown Jewels of that time were either sold or melted down and made into coins.



Caernarfon artefacts

Replica Queen's headdress

Replica Queen's Torque. This headdress is made of white silk, a fabric that only the very rich wore in the C13th. The pleated top uses more silk than a plain top, and was a way of demonstrating wealth, as silk was very expensive. This type of headdress was originally worn by noble women but by 1220 women at other levels of society were also wearing this type of headdress. By 1260, ladies began to wear their hair in 'ramshorn' plaits over their ears, and the veils became shorter. By the 1270s, the top of the hat had become wider at the top than the bottom, and in the C14th these hats often had no top, and were covered in gold embroidery and jewels.

How do we know what the headdress looked like?

This headdress is a replica of one shown in a carved stone image of Margaret of France, Edward I's second wife, at Lincoln Cathedral.



Caernarfon artefacts

Medieval ring brooch

Medieval ring brooch. Circular ring brooches have been used throughout history by both men and women. They could be plain, have inscriptions or be set with precious and semi-precious jewels. Many were given as gifts and were designed to be worn at the breast, to close cloaks, and at the shoulders of mantles.

This replica is based on the 'Oxwich Brooch', a C14th brooch found during excavations at Oxwich Castle. The Oxwich Brooch has cameos and rubies but experts think it had alternating sapphires and rubies when it was made, and that the cameos were added some time later. The brooch was clearly a very precious object, and was beautifully made. Rubies and sapphires would have been very expensive, as they would have originated in India or Sri Lanka, and would have been traded for. The gold may well have been recycled by melting down an earlier piece of jewellery, as was often the case in medieval times.

The significance of medieval jewellery goes far beyond its material or decorative value. Medieval people believed that gemstones had meanings and medicinal properties, and the stones may have been chosen for these reasons rather than for their appearance.



How do we know what the brooch looked like?

The original brooch is on display in the Origins gallery in Anmgueddffa Cymru-National Museum of Wales Cardiff, and the suggestion that it probably had sapphires originally was made by an expert at the museum.

Caernarfon artefacts

Embroidered pouches

Embroidered pouches. In the days before clothes had sewn-in pockets, everybody wore pouches hung from their belt or girdle. Embroidered velvet pouches similar to these would have been worn by nobility and royalty.



How do we know what embroidered pouches looked like?

As well as images in medieval manuscripts (e.g. 'Manesse Codex', c1300, Zurich), a small group of embroidered pouches (also known as 'aumonieres') are held in the Troyes Cathedral treasury, and another collection is held in Hamburg.

Caernarfon artefacts

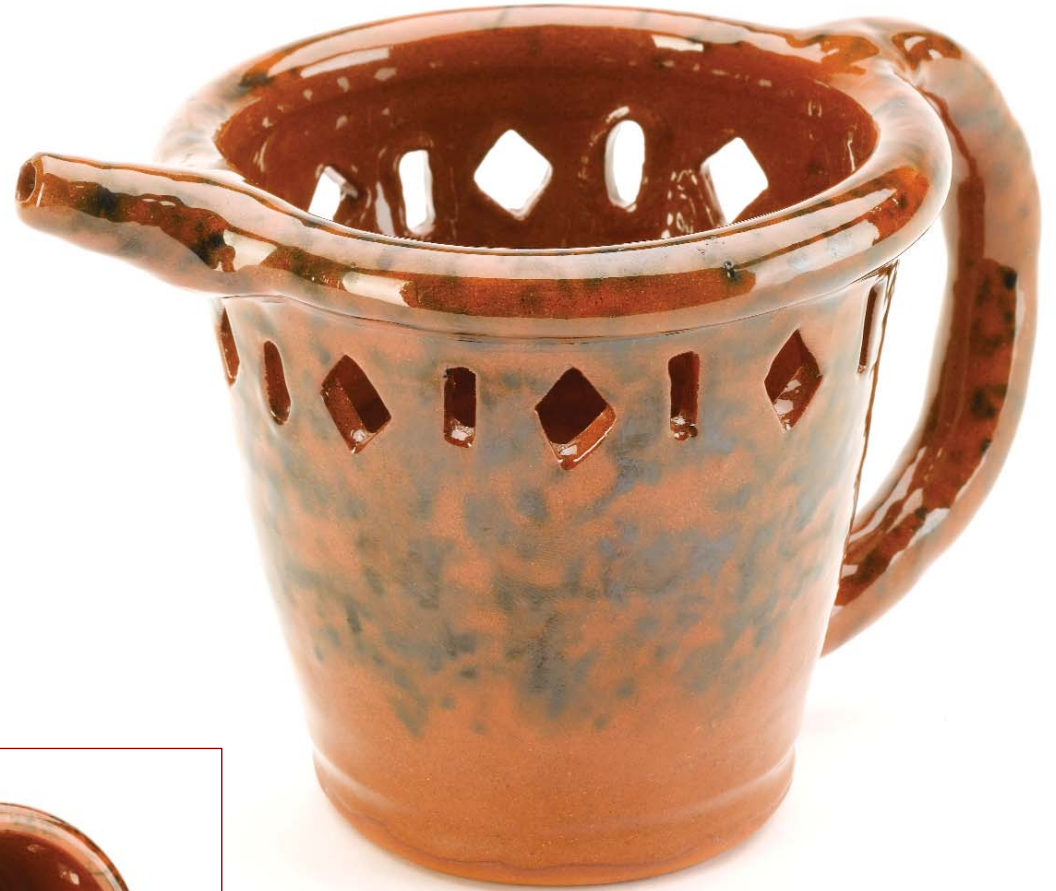
Puzzle jug

Puzzle jug. This pottery jug was made for fun and entertainment. How do you drink the liquid without it spilling from the holes around the rim? The solution to the puzzle is that the jug has a hidden tube, one end of which appears to be the spout. The tube usually runs around the rim and then down the handle, with its other opening inside the jug and near the bottom.

To solve the puzzle, the drinker must suck from the spout end of the tube. To make the puzzle more interesting, it was common to provide a number of additional holes along the tube, which must be closed off before the contents could be sucked. Some jugs even have a hidden hole to make the challenge even more difficult.

How do we know what the puzzle jugs looked like and how they work?

Puzzle jugs were made in a range of different designs, and fragments have been found at many archaeological sites in Britain and Europe. The earliest surviving jug in Britain (known as the Exeter Puzzle Jug) was made in France and dates from around 1300.



Caernarfon artefacts

3-handled drinking cup

3-handled drinking cup. This pottery drinking cup has more than one handle, which makes it easier to pass around. Food and drink were shared at feasts, and a cup such as this might be passed from one person to the next.



How do we know what 3-handled drinking cups looked like?

Various cups and pieces of 3-handled cups have been found during archaeological digs. 3-handled cups from the later medieval period are called 'tygs'.



Caernarfon artefacts

Castelette

Castelette. This is a model of an impressive and flamboyant pastry, which would have been served flambé at great feasts.

Creating a dish of this quality and complexity required a good knowledge of, and skill at, pastry work. Presenting food like this during feasts would have been a demonstration of high status, as only rich and important nobles would have had a chef who could create such items.

How do we know about castelettes?

There are descriptions of castelettes and other medieval 'subtleties' (food designed to impress the guests at feasts) in medieval manuscripts, household accounts, recipe books and books of manners and etiquette.

A household account entry shows that Edward I had a castellette made for a feast at Caernarfon Castle.



Caernarfon artefacts

Patten

Pattens. The soles of these overshoes were made from one piece of wood, or sometimes cork, with leather straps which held them in place but also allowed them to be removed easily when going indoors. They lifted the wearer above the unpaved and uneven streets and roads, which were often muddy with puddles, and strewn with refuse from daily life and animals all year round. They were worn over, and helped to protect, thin-soled, soft leather or fabric indoor shoes, which were often expensive and elaborately decorated.



How do we know about pattens?

Many paintings from the 1400s show pattens. They can be clearly seen in *'The Arnolfini Portrait'*, painted by Jan Van Eyck in 1434. There are descriptions of pattens in medieval manuscripts, and the remains of pattens have been found during archaeological digs.