



The History of Castell Coch

A HISTORY OF CASTELL COCH

It is believed that the first castle was built sometime after 1081, when the King of England, William the Conqueror and his Norman army, invaded Wales. The castle was built to defend the newly conquered Cardiff from the Welsh. At this time, the castle was made of wood and was built on a simple motte, or mound with a moat dug around it. This castle was probably abandoned in 1093 when the land borders changed.

William I 'The Conqueror'
1028 - 1087, reigned 1066 - 1087



THE NORMAN CONQUEST OF WALES

After William I conquered England in 1066 he wanted good relationship with Wales but the Welsh rebelled against the Normans. William sent some of his most trusted men to build castles to keep an eye on the Welsh. One of these castles was Chepstow Castle.

Gilbert de Clare, Lord of Glamorgan
1243 - 1295, Lord 1262 - 1295

In 1267, the Lord of Glamorgan, Gilbert de Clare built Caerphilly Castle to defend his lands from the Welsh. As the Castell Coch motte was perfectly located between Caerphilly and Cardiff, he reoccupied it.



The de Clare
coat of arms

A HISTORY OF CASTELL COCH

Gilbert built a stone curtain around the motte and a tall, circular tower. He also built a square hall and a gatehouse to defend the castle. A few years later, two more towers were added to add further defend the castle.



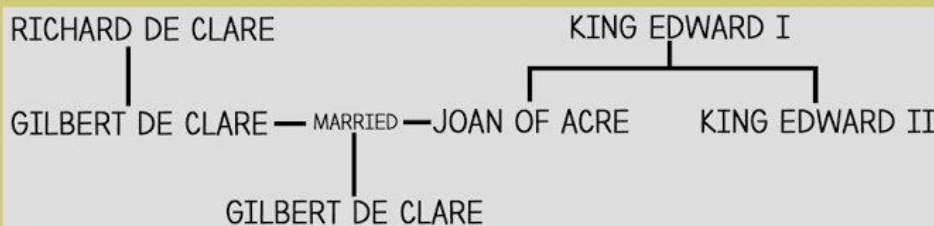
Joan of Acre, Daughter of Edward I
1272 - 1307, married to Gilbert 1290 - 1295

After Gilbert de Clare died in 1295, Castrum Rubeum or the Red Castle, was passed on to his widow, Joan of Acre, the daughter of the king and then to Gilbert and Joan's son, also named Gilbert.

THE BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN

This was a battle between the Scottish and the army of King Edward II. It was a Scottish victory and was the first battle for Scotland's independence from England.

After Gilbert died fighting the Scottish at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, the castle was destroyed in a Welsh uprising and the site was abandoned.



A HISTORY OF CASTELL COCH

Hundreds of years later, in 1841, the ruin of Castell Coch was inherited by the Marquess of Bute, John Crichton-Stuart. The Marquess was a very rich man because his father had developed Cardiff Docks which allowed the expansion of the South Wales coal industry. He soon became friends with William Burges, an expert architect who helped him rebuild Cardiff Castle and later Castell Coch.



The Marquess of Bute
1847 - 1900

William Burges
1827 - 1881



Burges was instructed to rebuild the castle in a Gothic style to make it look traditionally medieval. They hired expert builders, sculptors and painters to make and decorate Castell Coch. After Burges died in 1881 work continued. Paintings of Bute's family were made to replicate those in Cardiff Castle and put up on the walls.

Towards the end of his life,
the Marquess lost interest

in the castle and when he died his widow, Gwendolen and daughter, Margaret, stayed in the castle for a short period of time.



CASTLE JOBS

THE LORD

The lord lived in the castle so that his lands were protected from attack from enemies. The lord was rich and because of this, he wore more expensive clothes than others in his castle, like velvet and other soft materials. He would eat mostly meat and fish hunted by his men and sometimes by himself.

The Lord of Glamorgan during the time Castell Coch was built was Gilbert de Clare. The lord was responsible for protecting his villagers and paying taxes to the King.



THE COOK

It was the cook's job to prepare and cook all the food for everyone in the castle. When there was a garden available, the cook grew herbs, fruit and vegetables in the kitchen's garden. Water was collected for cooking from a near well. The cook rarely had their own bed so often had to sleep on the kitchen floor with other kitchen staff.

What did they eat?
Bread, grain, oats
barley, meat stews,
and leafy vegetables
and only some of
the things eaten!



CASTLE JOBS

The Soldiers

The soldiers took turns to patrol the castle walls and gatehouse to defend the castle from enemy attacks. They used a sword or bow and arrows to defend themselves and sometimes even threw rocks from the castle walls or poured boiling oil from holes when soldiers were attacking.

A suit of armour that would have been worn by a knight.

The Knights

At the age of 7, a knight would go to a Lord's house to begin training in riding and fighting. This training lasted for 14 years until the knight was a skilled horseman and warrior. For their help, the Lord would pay them with lands. A knight wore a helmet to protect his face and very heavy armour!



The Servants

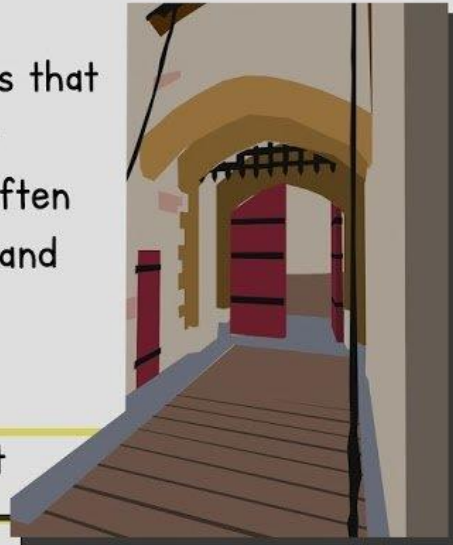
The servants had to sleep on the cold and dirty floor in a castle. They had many jobs including helping the cook, boiling water, sewing, and laundry to name a few! Those servants who weren't so lucky had to stay outside the castle. These servants looked after the knight's horses, mended armour and looked after the gardens.

PARTS OF A CASTLE

Drawbridge

These were large wooden structures that could be raised or lowered to allow access to the castle. Chains were often attached to the end of the bridge and guards pulled the chains in the gatehouse to quickly raise the drawbridge.

The drawbridge at
Castell Coch



The Gatehouse

The gatehouse guarded the entrance to the castle. There was often a large, metal gate called a portcullis that dropped down if an enemy was attacking. Often there was a large wooden door behind the portcullis.

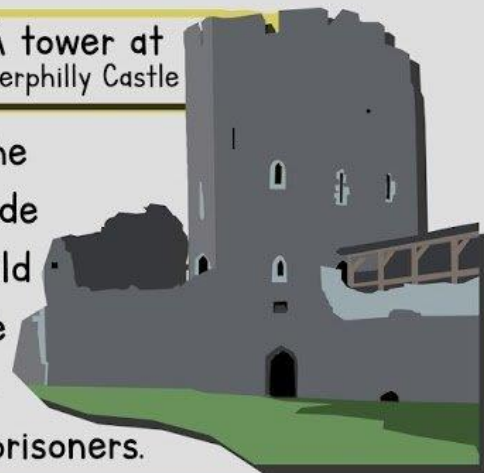
Castle Walls

The castle walls surrounded the castle. They were made to be strong so that they couldn't be destroyed by the attacking enemy using battering rams.

A tower at
Caerphilly Castle

Towers

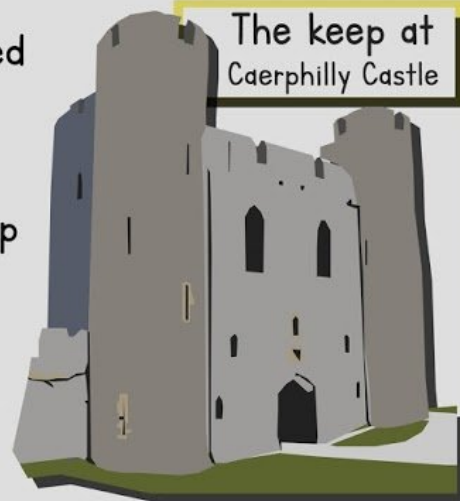
Towers were often built around the walls of the castle. They were made tall so that defending guards would be able to see outside the castle to check for enemies. Sometimes these towers were used to keep prisoners.



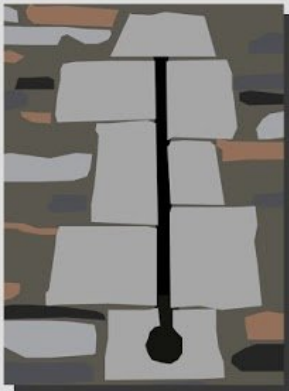
PARTS OF A CASTLE

Keep

The castle's keep was often situated in the middle of the castle. It was built higher than the rest of the castle so that those inside the keep could see over the outside walls. This was always the strongest part of the castle and built in the most secure place.



The keep at
Caerphilly Castle



Arrow Slits

These were often made in the walls of the castle. An arrow slit was a tall, narrow hole in the wall where an archer would be able to see and shoot out of if the castle was under attack.

Murder Holes

Most castles had murder holes above the main entrance. Defending soldiers above the entrance would wait until the attacking soldiers were below and then would throw stones and pour hot oil down to stop them.

The Moat

Some castles had moats built around them. These were trenches that were filled with water to make it harder for the castle to be attacked. The drawbridge would then be lowered over the moat to allow access to the castle.

BUILD YOUR OWN CASTLE

Plan and Build your own castle using recycled materials you have at home!

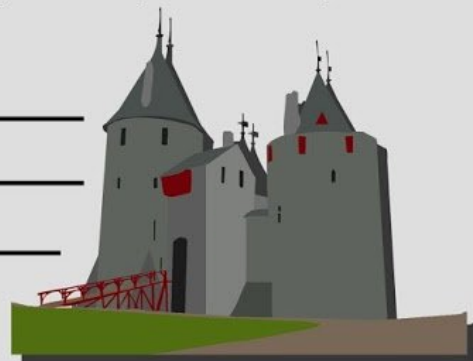
List all the materials you will need

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

What design features and characteristics will your castle have? _____

Build your castle!

Now that you have built you castle, what is your favorite part? What could you improve if you made it again?



WRITE A DIARY

Write a diary as if you were living in a castle during medieval times.



Who are you?

Think about what job you have in the castle. Are you a cook? Are you a servant? What do you do everyday? What do you enjoy doing?

Where are you?

Where is your castle? Is it on a hill? Is it surrounded by a moat? Where do you sleep? Is it comfortable?

What do you do for fun? Do you play games with other people in the castle? What do you eat?

Remember! This is a diary so try your best to add dates. Use the information to help you. Here is an example to help you...

Friday 17th June, 1289

Dear Diary,

Another sleepless night! I slept on the floor again with the other kitchen workers. All night I could hear the rats scraping at the barrel where we keep the oats.

They must eat more than we do!

This morning the cook has told me that I need to collect herbs from the herb garden. Hopefully the bees will let me.

FACT FILE

Use the facts given to make a fact file about someone through the history of Castell Coch.

If you want, you can do some research yourself and find your own facts!

Here are some people you could choose.



William I



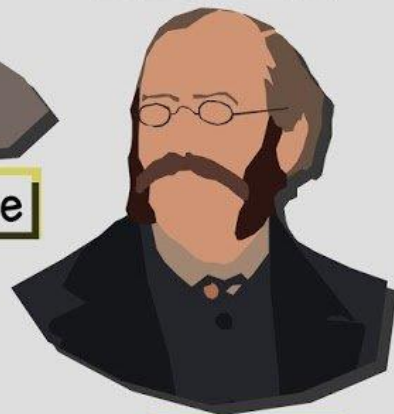
Edward I



Gilbert de Clare



Joan of Acre



William
Burges



The Marquess
of Bute



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government