



BERKELEY BUTTRESS

AUTUMN 2021

FRIENDS OF BERKELEY CASTLE NEWSLETTER

Dear fellow Friends,

Welcome to this edition of The Buttress.

It was lovely to see so many of you at the Summer Party in August and to have an opportunity to catch up on each others' news. The success of the party has encouraged your Committee to finalise plans for two events this autumn; (a) our deferred A.G.M., followed by a talk by Peter Yardley, and (b) a talk by Sarah Wordsworth about 'The Women of Berkeley Castle', based on the exhibition Sarah put together for the 2021 open season at the Castle. Sarah's talk will be followed by one of the renowned teas by members of Berkeley Women's Institute. Details can be found on page six.

Once again, we are indebted to Josh, the Castle Custodian, for two interesting articles about the Castle and its contents, together with some photos which most of us have never seen. The article about the restoration of the Berkeley Banner is by kind permission of Alison Lister (you may remember some of her photos were in the Autumn 2020 issue of The Buttress). There is also a Crossword with a Berkeley theme, by one of our members.



David

*Lady Henrietta Berkeley, who caused a scandal when she ran away from home. You will have to come to Sarah Wordsworth's talk to find out why she ran away.
(Photo: Editor.)*

The Eighth Earl's Portrait

by Josh Nash, Castle Custodian

The picture of Randal, 8th Earl of Berkeley, which hangs in the Billiard Room, was painted by Sir William Orpen. Wearing his Master of Foxhounds' hunting jacket, with running foxes on the lapels and a bunch of violets in his buttonhole, he looks very distinguished. In his obituary the 8th Earl is described as showing the newly completed portrait to a friend who commented that it made him "look rather contemptuous" and the 8th Earl gave the reply "But I am contemptuous. Don't you know it?". [*Other sources say the word used was 'imperious': Ed.*]

In his memoirs, the sporting artist Alfred Munnings recalls being invited to stay at the Castle with a view to painting the 8th Earl and his hounds. Unfortunately, Munnings' visit was in vain as the 8th Earl, who Munnings describes as a "dreamer", had completely forgotten how much he had to pay Orpen for his work; when he remembered he realised he couldn't afford a picture by Munnings too.

Some newly discovered letters from Orpen give us the final bill, £1,500. Nearly £90,000 in today's money!



Randal Thomas Mowbray Berkeley, 8th Earl of Berkeley, by Sir William Orpen.

(All photos: Josh Nash.)

8 SOUTH BOLTON GARDENS, S.W.
WESTERN 3017.

Dear Miss Jackson - may I please
have a cheque £1,500 for the portrait
which is now finished and varnished
as I was doing it cheaper than usual
I cannot afford to wait for the money.
I cannot tell you how I enjoyed
painting it - and I am glad to find
out that most people who have seen
it think it is the best I have ever done
please thank his Lordship for sitting so
well to me

Yours sincerely
William Orpen

A letter from Sir William Orpen, requesting payment.

Text of the letter:

“Dear Miss Jackson - May I please have a cheque £1,500 for the portrait which is now finished and varnished [.] as I was doing it cheaper than usual I cannot afford to wait for the money. I cannot tell you how I enjoyed painting it — and I was glad to find out that most people who have seen it think it the best I have ever done [.] please thank his Lordship for sitting so well to me.

Yours sincerely,

William Orpen



Mr R. J. G. Berkeley's Memorial Garden

The Friends made a contribution towards the cost of the Castle's newest garden, designed by Rupert Golby, in recognition of the unfailing support given to us by the late Mr Berkeley. The fox was fixed to the stone slab by two of our members, who also volunteer regularly in the Castle gardens. The garden should look splendid in a couple of years, when the plants become established. (Photos: the Editor.)



BSQ2BSQ in a Berkeley Three Wheeler the Long Way

by Paul Sheperd

Long before the recent Berkeley Square to Berkeley Square (BSQ2BSQ) bicycle charity ride, another epic BSQ2BSQ took place.

Two travelling companions, Andre and Bob, collected a Berkeley T60 three wheeler from the factory in Biggleswade. They commenced their journey from Berkeley Castle and headed for Wales, then heading north to Scotland. Whilst in Scotland, they attended just two hours of the Scottish six-day Motorcycle Trial. They then proceeded to Inverness, before returning down the east side of the country, arriving at Berkeley Square after 42½ hours of driving. They were greeted with flags flying everywhere, not for them, but for the marriage of Princess Margaret and Anthony Armstrong-Jones, on May 6th 1960.

Quite an achievement considering that their combined weight was 26 stone and the car was powered by a 328cc Excelsior 2 stroke motorcycle engine. The only incident encountered was that the silencer chafed against the bodywork. Covering 1,368 miles, the average fuel consumption was nearly 70 mpg.

This edited story was published in 'The Motor Cycle' in May 1960 and is reproduced with the kind permission of Morton's Archive.



Notification of the 2021 Annual General Meeting

**The Annual General Meeting
of the
Friends of Berkeley Castle
will take place at
7.30pm on Thursday 7th October, 2021,
in the Great Hall, Berkeley Castle.**

There will be a cash bar before and after the A. G. M.

The A. G. M. will be followed by
‘A Personal Look at the Berkeley Estate Records’
A Talk by Peter Yardley
£8 for members, £10 for non-members

At the conclusion of the A.G.M., local historian Peter Yardley will speak to us on the topic of ‘A Personal Look at the Berkeley Estate Records’.

A few years ago Peter volunteered to list and organise material that needed to be moved from the Estate Office into the Berkeley Castle Muniments collection.

Part of the arrangement was that Peter could keep an eye out for information relating to his family. Professional cataloguing of the material has yet to be done, but Peter’s listing has identified items. Peter spotted items that interested him and he has spent a little more time looking at those and finding information from other sources.

As well as working on the listing, Peter was also involved in a project to photograph the Stewards’ Account Books 1700-1900 along with manorial surveys and leases of the eighteenth century. Some 15,000 photographs were taken. He is also helping Karen Davidson, the Castle Archivist, to organise the images along with more from other research projects.

Peter’s talk will use examples of different types of materials in the Berkeley Castle Muniment for the talk.

‘The Women of Berkeley Castle’

***A Talk by Sarah Wordsworth about her exhibition in the Castle,
followed by Afternoon Tea (included in the ticket price)***

***Sunday 28th November, at 2.30pm, in the Great Hall, Berkeley Castle
£12 for members, £15 for non-members***

The idea for an exhibition that focused solely on the women of Berkeley Castle came from a lack of female stories within the Castle. I thought it would be interesting to bring to the fore the lives of the women connected to the Castle who are often forgotten. I was also greatly inspired by the ‘tenacity’ exhibition about women at the Jamestown Settlement, which was part of the itinerary for the wonderful trip to Virginia, USA, organised by the Friends of Berkeley Castle that I was lucky enough to be part of. I am currently studying for an MA in Medieval Studies at the University of Bristol, so the exhibition has also served as a practical element of my course.

Usually, exhibitions at the Castle are held in the Great Hall but, because of the COVID-19 pandemic and government guidelines, it was decided that instead of risking crowding, the exhibition would take the form of a trail, with exhibits in twelve of the rooms throughout the Castle. This meant that the exhibition became much bigger than originally planned and tells the stories of twenty women connected to the Castle, stretching throughout history from medieval times right up to modern-day.

The exhibition tells the stories of love, determination and heartbreak and shows that, despite the limitations placed on women by society throughout history, many found ways to circumvent or challenge those restrictions to achieve their own ends.

Note:

The Women of Berkeley Castle exhibition has been extended and will be displayed in the Castle until 31st October 2021. I hope that those of you who haven't seen it will use your FoBC membership cards to see it. Sarah hopes to create annual exhibitions on the fascinating history of Berkeley Castle. Editor.

An Events Booking Form for both Peter Yardley's talk and Sarah Wordsworth's talk & Afternoon Tea is included with this e-mail (or enclosed, if you have received a printed copy).

It is also available to download and print at the FoBC website at www.berkeley-castle.com/friends-whats-on

Wanswell Court Chimneypieces

by Josh Nash

As part of the extensive renovations that took place at Berkeley Castle during the early 1920s, at least 25 medieval windows, four doorways and two fireplaces were imported from France at a cost of over £300,000 in today's money. Other stone features were sourced closer to home and at a far cheaper price. The fireplaces which now heat the Castle's Great Hall and Long Drawing Room (both dating from the mid-1400s) once heated the Hall and Privy Parlour respectively at Wanswell Court. In the 1920s, when the fireplaces were removed, Wanswell Court was a Berkeley Estate property. The stonework was simply removed by the estate workmen and brought the two miles to be installed at the Castle at comparatively little expense.

The fireplace in the Long Drawing Room has another story to tell. When the workmen removed the right-hand jamb stone from Wanswell Court they discovered that the backface was also carved and depicted flowing robes with traces of colour and gilding. Presumably taken from the base of a much earlier statue, the stone was presumably recycled.

All photos are by Josh Nash or from the Castle Muniments or from the Internet.



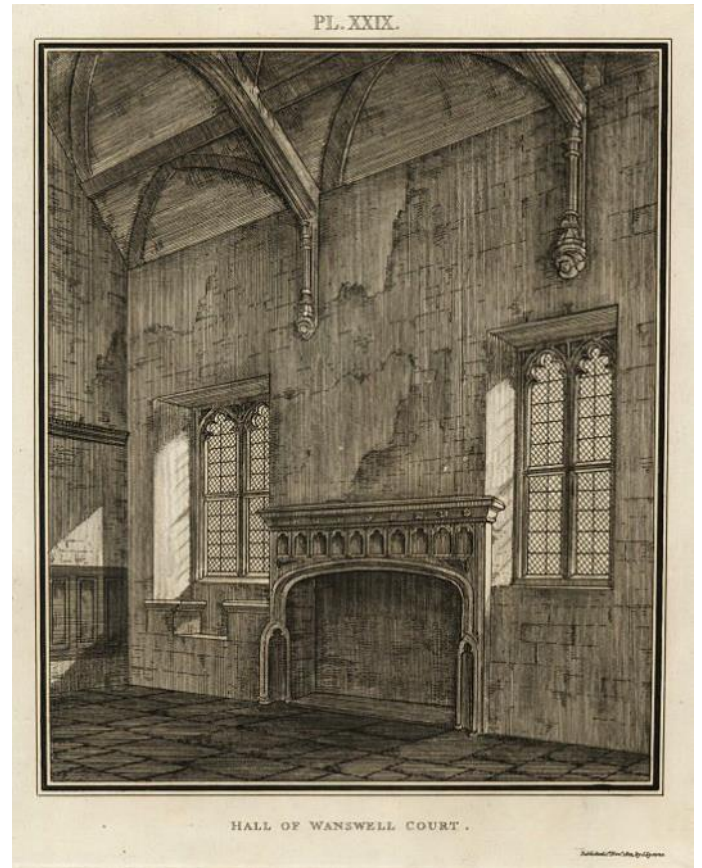
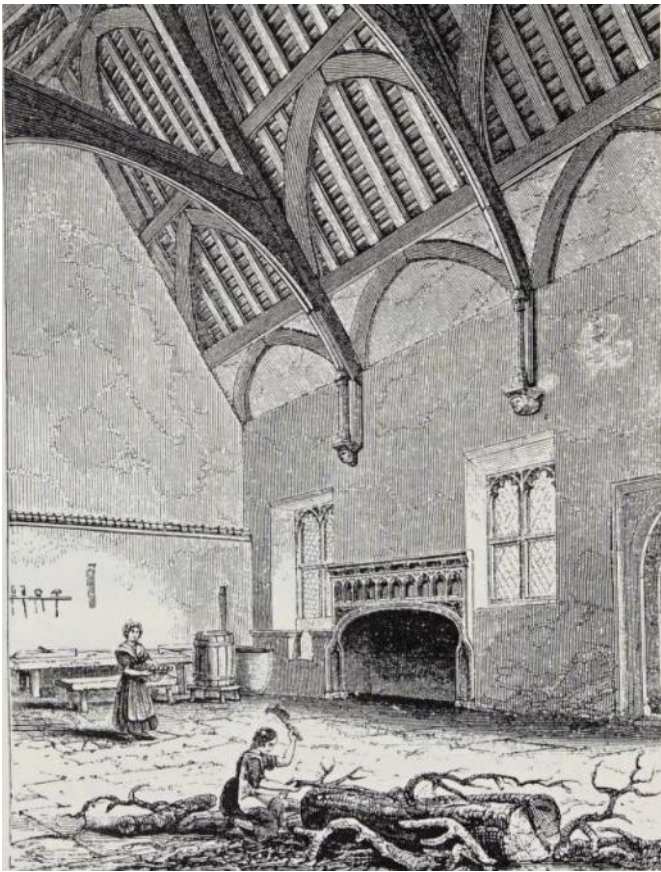
The Great Hall panelling and chimneypiece before the 8th Earl's alterations.



The Long Drawing Room chimneypiece, with the panelling and inset portraits from the room's former use as the Dining Room. The hand-embroidered furniture is still in the room today.

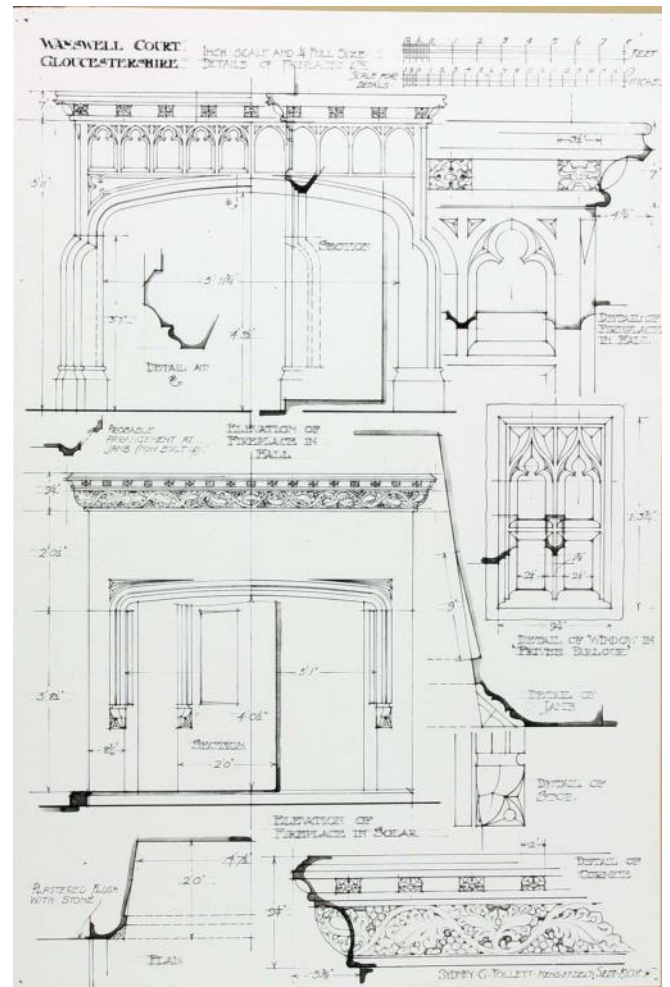


The present Great Hall (left) and Long Drawing Room (right) chimneypieces, which were brought here from Wanswell Court in the early twentieth century.



Above: The Great Hall at Wanswell Court, with its original chimneypiece.

Below: The carved and gilded figure on the re-used jamb of the Great Hall chimneypiece and scale drawings of both chimneypieces. The carved grapes on the Long Drawing Room lintel (bottom drawing) make it more suited to a dining room than a drawing room.



Restoring the Berkeley Banner

from a blog by Alison Lister, Textile Conservator

The Textile Conservation Ltd. studio has a long association (and a great fondness) for Berkeley Castle, home of the Berkeley family for over 850 years and the site of the imprisonment and murder of King Edward II in 1327. Over the past decade the team has carried out conservation work on several tapestries and pieces of upholstered furniture [*most or all were funded by FoBC. Ed.*] and advised on the care and protection of textiles when the Castle is open to visitors and during events such as weddings and filming.

When a 5m by 4.5m heraldic banner was rediscovered in a drawer in the Castle, the studio was contacted to advise on its planned display. It is made of nine widths of plain weave red wool joined with seams running from hoist to fly. The red wool is inset and overlaid with additional shaped sections of undyed plain weave wool that have been printed and painted with the coat of arms of the Berkeley family. The wool fabrics are faded, worn and degraded and the banner has numerous small tears and holes overall several of which have been repaired with coarse darning. Before conservation it was also discoloured from degradation and ingrained dirt, and heavily creased and distorted from long term storage.



Alison Lister working on the fragile banner.

(Photo © Alison Lister.)

Alison and Marina conserved the banner. It was washed in a conservation grade detergent - a pleasing step that improved its overall appearance considerably. A stabilisation treatment was then carried out, involving encasement in fine dyed net, using lines of stitching worked along seams and around holes and tears, and the replacement of the failing tape repair around the outer edge with new tape to support this fragile area.

The treatment process gave the conservators time to become more familiar with the banner's materials and construction, and to rearrange distorted areas where the design had become disrupted.

A hanging mechanism using Velcro™ was attached to the hoist edge to enable the banner to be fixed to a batten and hoisted into position. The studio has provided advice on the on-going care of the banner and will continue to monitor its condition in the future.



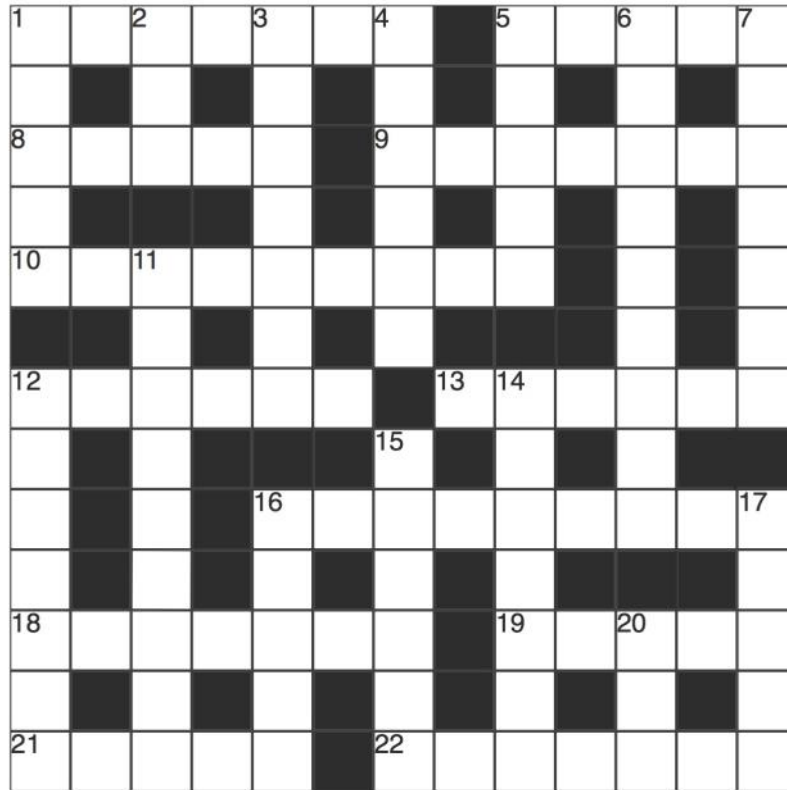
The cleaned and repaired banner in its present position, hanging from the Great Hall roof.

(Photo © Alison Lister.)

Crossword Puzzle

(answers at the foot of the last page)

(‘BC’ is an abbreviation of Berkeley Castle in the crossword clues and is not part of the clue)



Across

1. Berkeley family's _____ have been ongoing since AD1095! (7)
5. Large book in which family records were religiously kept (5)
8. Imperial unit of mass, weight or volume (5)
9. Status of many peasants during Robert Fitzharding's time at Berkeley Castle (BC) (c.1095–1170) (7)
10. Means by which a display team chose to arrive at Berkeley Show one year (9)
12. Source of building materials both in BC grounds and at nearby Cam (6)
13. At hand, imminent (6)
16. _____ de Berkeley born c.1070 at 'Berkeley Castle, Thornbury' (9)
18. Francis William FitzHardinge Berkeley (1826–1896) was a politician and notable commander of the Royal Gloucestershire _____ (7)
19. Several of these pretty windows to be found at BC (5)
21. Edward Jenner (1749–1823) administered several _____ of smallpox during his research (5)
22. Flags flown on ships to indicate nationality; sensing (anag.) (7)

Down:

1. Socially-minded FoBC itself (5)
2. Female member of a religious community (3)
3. A tree with its own glade at a nearby arboretum (3,4)
4. 15th–16th Century armour for the head, a helmet, usually ornate and without a visor (6)
5. Flat-bottomed boat for carrying heavy cargo on the Gloucester & Sharpness canal, which was originally designed to reach Berkeley. (5)
6. Item left at BC by Queen Elizabeth 1st (9)
7. From forest to floorboards until the dreaded disease (7)
11. Sets or adapts to a changed situation again (9)
12. Rejected as invalid; uprisings usually dealt with in this way (7)
14. Berkeley's fields (7)
15. Dried flower historically used for carding wool; elates (anag.) (6)
16. Accumulate, collect (6)
17. Streams, shallow channels, possibly one in Berkeley's fields? (5)
20. Low-lying pasture or meadow near a river, several along Berkeley's five miles of the River Severn (3)

The Editor (e-mail address below) will be pleased to hear from any members who have relevant pictures or articles to contribute to The Berkeley Buttress.



Berkeley Castle, The Gun Terrace.

This postcard shows the former layout of the Gun Terrace (the terrace below the Outer Bailey), where it is intended that the cannon, whose bases FoBC have paid to renew, will be placed.

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Crossword Solutions

Across: 1. Genetic 5. Bible 8. Ounce 9. Serfdom 10. Parachute 12. Quarry
13. Impend 16. Alexander 18. Hussars 19. Oriel 21. Doses 22. Ensigns

Down: 1. Group 2. Nun 3. The Acer 4. Casque 5. Barge 6. Bedspread 7. Elmwood
11. Readjusts 12. Quashed 14. Meadows 15. Teasel 16. Amass 17. Kills 20. Ing