



Map no Images

HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE ELY TRAIL

This will help you to find some of the interesting historic and archaeological features along the Ely Trail. These include an Edwardian Pumping Station, the remains of a Roman Villa, and the Castle and Gardens at the National History Museum, St. Fagans. Click on the 'icons' to find out more....

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Websites: www.cardiff.gov.uk/countryside, www.cardiff.gov.uk/biodiversity
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KEY



Parking



Ely Trail



Silver Stream Cottage



Altered Water Course



Ely Bridge Well



Church



Wesleyan Chapel



Ely Roman Villa



St Fagans Castle and Gardens



Greenwood Curling Rink



Outfall Sewer



Bronze Age Hoard



Stone Age Axe



Leckwith Old Bridge



Bronze Age Sword



Tower Brewery



Corn Mill



STONE AGE

The term 'Stone Age' is used by archaeologists for the broad time period when men used stone for making tools and weapons. Such items survived far greater than those made from softer materials, such as wood. Today we can find evidence of this in flint and chert pieces that were shaped or chipped for use as cutting tools and weapons in the Early Prehistory Archaeology and Numismatics collections in the *National Museum Wales*.



EXAMPLES OF STONE AGE TOOLS -
NATIONAL MUSEUM WALES

NEOLITHIC AGE

(NEW STONE AGE)

The 'Neolithic Age' saw the beginnings of agriculture, the so called Neolithic Revolution. Ground and polished stone were used to make tools for grinding, cutting, and chopping for the harvesting and processing of plants. Examples of stone artefacts from this period can be found in the Early Prehistory Archaeology and Numismatics collections in the [National Museum Wales](#).

A wax figure of a Neolithic man with a long, dark beard and hair, wearing a fur hat and a thick, brown and white fur tunic. He is holding a spear with both hands, looking down at it. The background is a plain white wall with a small informational sign and a wooden structure visible.

NEOLITHIC MAN WITH SPEAR -
NATIONAL MUSEUM WALES

BRONZE AGE

The 'Bronze Age' followed the Neolithic Age. It refers to a period when men used advanced metalworking techniques for smelting copper and tin to create a bronze alloy. These naturally-occurring ores are rare and often contain arsenic. Once melted together they were cast into bronze artefacts. Examples of Celtic bronzeworkers metalwork can be found in the Late Prehistory c2,000BC - AD43 Archaeology and Numismatics collections in the [National Museum Wales](#).



EXAMPLES OF CELTIC BRONZE ARTEFACTS -
NATIONAL MUSEUM WALES

ROMAN

'Romans' first arrived in Britain in 55BC and stayed until about AD410. During their conquest of Britain the Roman army came up against formidable opposition from the tribes in Wales, the major ones being named as the Silures, the Ordovices, the Demetae and the Deceangli. Fighting was often bitter, and it was not until AD78 that the whole of Wales was occupied by the Romans. In the countryside, particularly on the south coast, there were farmsteads and villas, which were often the homes of the rich and successful. The Roman Archaeology and Numismatics collection at the *National Museum Wales* contains finds from the villas and farmsteads at Llantwit Major, Ely and Llandough.



EXAMPLES OF ROMAN JEWELLERY -
NATIONAL MUSEUM WALES

MEDIEVAL

'Medieval' or the Middle Ages (including Norman) commonly dates from the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century to the beginning of the Post Medieval period at the end of the 15th century. Examples from this period, can be found in the Medieval and Later Archaeology and Numismatics and Art collections in the [*National Museum Wales*](#).



ST. TEILO'S CHURCH INTERIOR -
NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM

POST MEDIEVAL

'Post Medieval' is an archaeological term used for the study of material during the last 500 years, after the end of the Medieval period. In Britain, this means anything from the Tudor period (1485-1601) to present day, including, Elizabethan, Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian. Examples of Post Medieval artefacts and art can be found in the Medieval and Later Archaeology and Numismatics and Art collections in the [National Museum Wales](#).



PAINTING OF TUDOR ROYAL FAMILY -
NATIONAL MUSEUM WALES

ST FAGANS CORN MILL

In the early 17th century *St. Fagans Village* comprised the **castle**, the **church**, a few farmhouses and a corn mill by a bridge which then crossed the river. The corn mill of **Post-Medieval** date can be seen on the First Edition (OS Six Inch) maps of Ely and the Vale of Glamorgan. The mill was probably used to grind oats and barley into flour, as the climate was too wet to grow wheat. A working example of an early 19th century corn mill, originally operated by water wheel to produce white flour, semolina flour, wheat germ and bran can be found in the *National History Museum*, St. Fagans. The remains of the St. Fagans Corn Mill, which include old water channels and a wooden sluice gate, can be seen from Michaelston Road, St. Fagans but care should be taken when accessing the site.



Extract of 1878 Ordnance Survey Map - Glamorgan Record Office



Remains of St. Fagans Corn Mill sluice gates - Michaelston Road, St. Fagans



REMAINS OF ST. FAGANS CORN MILL SLUICE GATES -
MICHAELSTON ROAD, ST. FAGANS

SILVER STREAM COTTAGE

(Grade II Listed Building)

Silver Stream Cottage is one of a group of estate buildings clustered below **St. Fagans Castle**. It was previously known as Brook or Bank Cottage and was the blacksmiths house. The 'village smithy' which stood immediately to the south-west was demolished in 1972. Parts of a 16th century cottage remains, but much of it was probably rebuilt in the late 18th to early 19th centuries (still visible from the interior). It is a two storey thatched cottage with white washed rubble walls, brick chimney stacks and bay diamond leaded windows which can be seen from Castle Hill, St Fagans.

SILVER STREAM COTTAGE -
CASTLE HILL, ST. FAGANS



Name plaque

ST. FAGANS CASTLE AND GARDENS

(Grade II Listed Building)

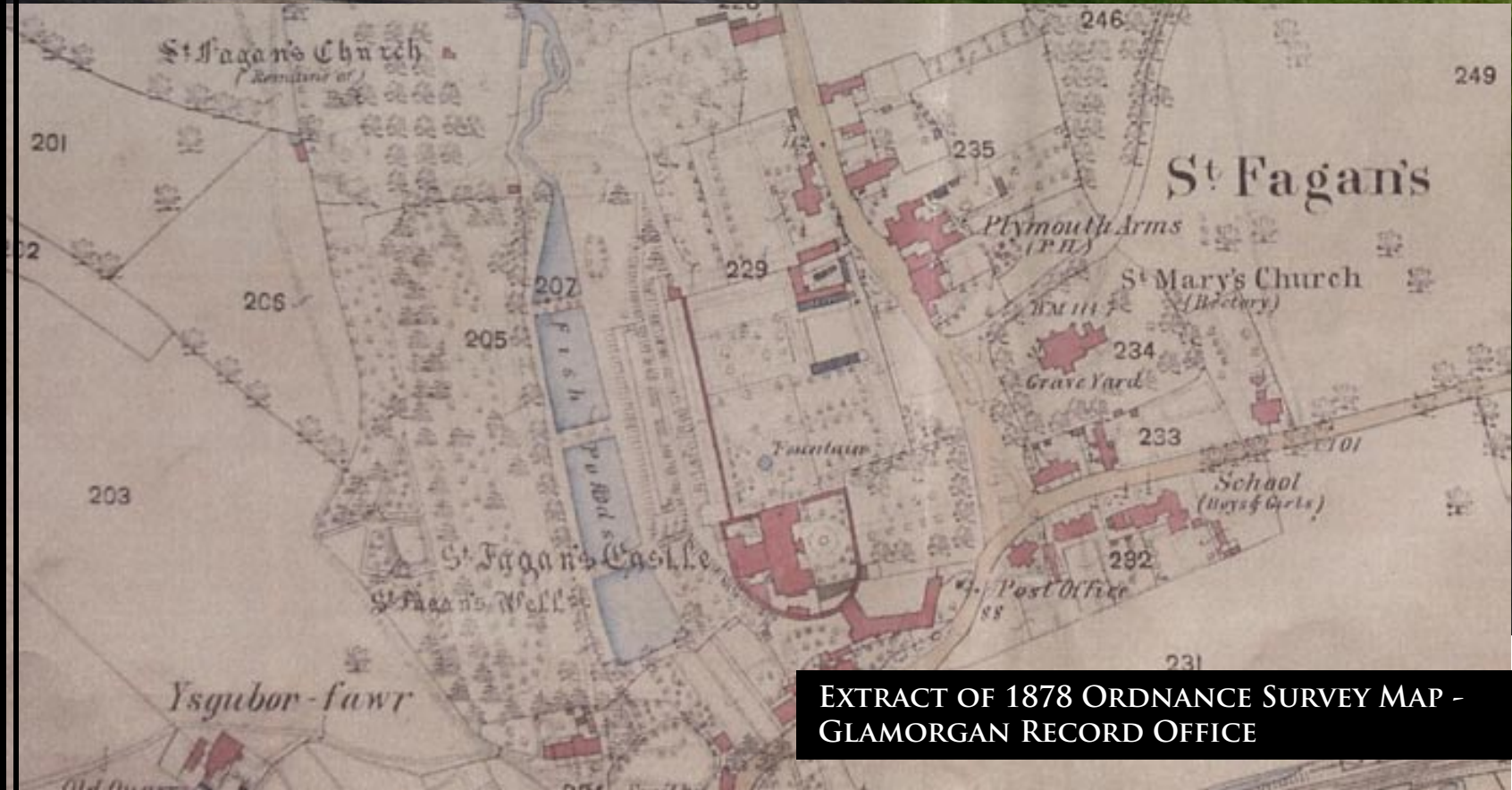
St. Fagans Castle lies in the west of Cardiff, overlooking the valley of the River Ely to the south and a lesser tributary valley to the west. The steep sides provide a natural defense, while level ground to the north and east is occupied by St. Fagans Village, much of which lies within St. Fagans Conservation Area.

The first castle at St. Fagans was apparently built by the **Norman** knight Peter Le Sore in c1091. Excavations carried out in 1978 and 1980 within the Castle grounds unearthed an area of the village known as 'The Cwm' and a **Medieval** vicarage.

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REMAINS OF 'THE CWM' -
NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM



EXTRACT OF 1878 ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP -
GLAMORGAN RECORD OFFICE

ST. FAGANS CASTLE AND GARDENS

However, any surviving **Medieval** buildings within were removed with the construction of a large **Elizabethan** country house, built by Dr. John Gibbon in c1580-86 with formal gardens set to the north. By 1616 it was owned by the Lewis Family who furnished and panelled the interior. In 1730 Elizabeth Lewis married the 3rd Earl of Plymouth, part of the Windsor family and following the death of her father, Thomas Lewis-heir to the estate in 1736, the castle passed into the hands of her husband's family. In 1852 the house was occupied by Robert Windsor Clive and his wife, Mary. When he died in 1859, Baroness Windsor continued to live at the Castle, and in 1868-9 carried out extensive restorations to the Castle and gardens.

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ST. FAGANS CASTLE - NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM
(ELIZABETHAN COUNTRY HOUSE, BUILT BY DR. JOHN GIBBON C1580-86)

ST. FAGANS CASTLE AND GARDENS

The gardens have an underlying **Tudor** structure and still maintain much of their **Victorian** and **Edwardian** layout including structural planting, set out in compartments and terraces. The formalised ponds may be **Medieval** in origin and were certainly in existence in the 16th century. The grounds also include a **Victorian** water garden designed by Pulham and Company and **experimental woodland** laid out in the early 20th century.

The Castle and grounds remained under the ownership of the Plymouth Estate until 1946, when the Earl of Plymouth donated St. Fagans Castle and eighty acres of grounds for the opening of the Welsh Folk Museum. The

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TERRACED GARDENS AND FISH PONDS, ST. FAGANS CASTLE -
NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM

ST. FAGANS CASTLE AND GARDENS

gardens were open to the public in 1947 and the castle on 1 July 1948. The site now known as the *National History Museum* is one of Europe's foremost open-air museums and Wales's most popular heritage attraction. The Castle forms the premier exhibit, refurbished in 1988 to represent a typical Welsh mansion of c1830. It now sits within a hundred acres of parkland where over forty well chosen examples of Welsh architecture from different historic periods have been re-erected. Native breeds of livestock can be seen in the fields and farmyards, and regular demonstrations of farming tasks take place. There are also galleries with exhibitions of costume, daily life and farming implements.

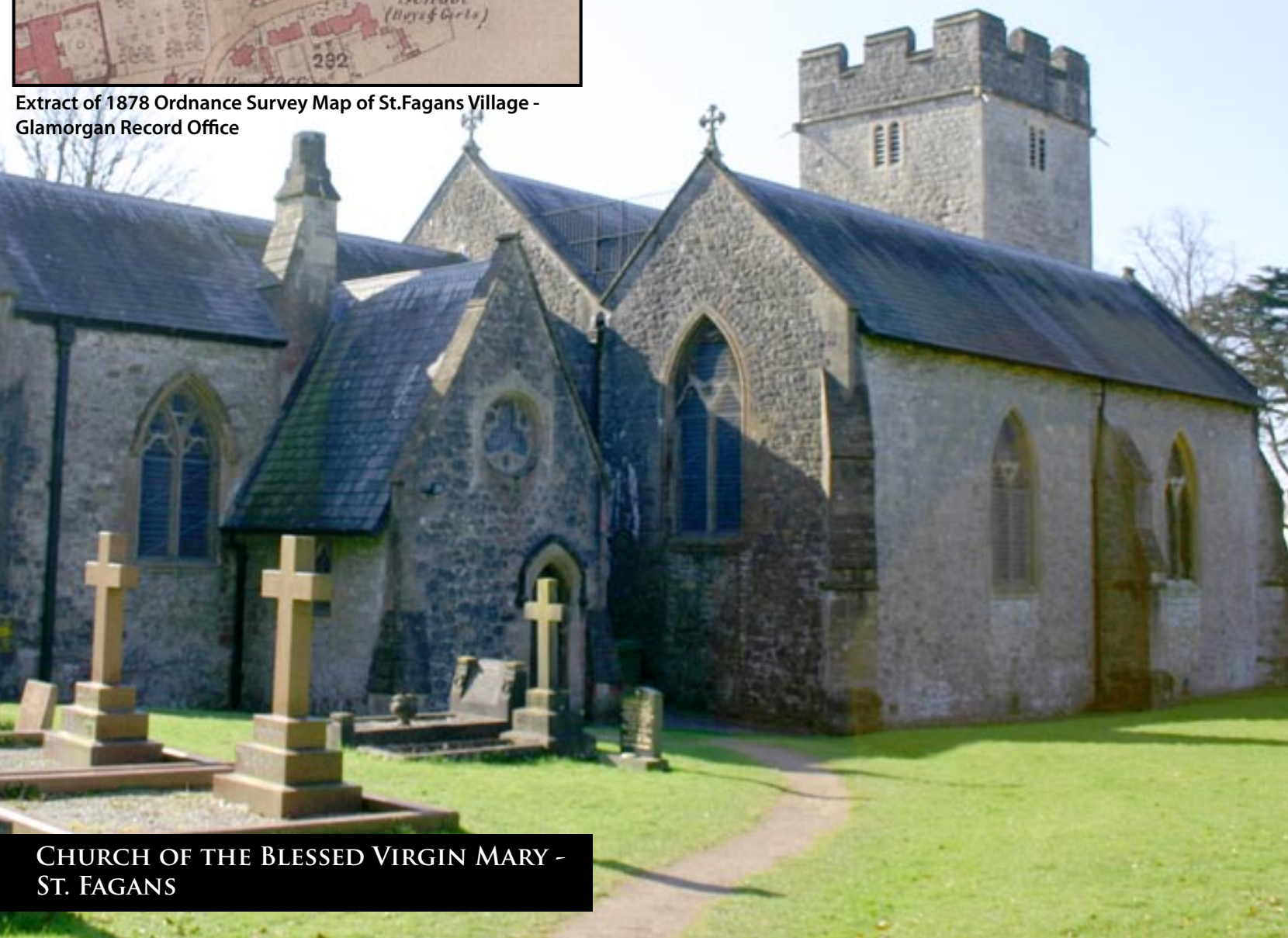
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PREMIER EXHIBIT, ST. FAGANS CASTLE -
NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM



Extract of 1878 Ordnance Survey Map of St.Fagans Village -
Glamorgan Record Office



CHURCH OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY -
ST. FAGANS

CHURCH OF ST. MARY'S THE BLESSED VIRGIN

(Grade II Listed Building)

The Church of St. Mary's the Blessed Virgin has clear 12th century origins, with its first rector being recorded in 1301. It was greatly altered and enriched in the 14th century, a porch added in the 15th century and a tower rebuilt in the 17th century. The whole church was restored in 1858-60 by G E Street and includes a series of decorated windows. The restoration work matches fairly closely with the **Medieval** and was paid for by Baroness Windsor, who occupied **St. Fagans Castle** at that time.

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REBUILT TOWER, CHURCH OF THE
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY - ST. FAGANS

CHURCH OF ST. MARY'S THE BLESSED VIRGIN

(Grade II Listed Building)

It is built of rubble stone with a roughly squared dressed stone tower, Welsh slate pitched roofs, a small pointed priest door, small vestry, ringing and bell chambers (the bells came from Leckwith Church) and some gargoyle heads. The interior is plastered and painted with a highly decorated chancel and nave. The Church, situated in the middle of *St. Fagans Village* on Crofft y-Genau Road, is still in use today.

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GREENWOOD CURLING RINK

The curling rink of **Post-Medieval** date was built by Robert Forrest, Deputy Lieutenant of Glamorgan in the 19th century. The rink's existence reflects the importance of the development of St. Fagans Village and the remains can be found in the Coedbychan Woodlands, accessible from St. Fagans Drive.



Extract of 1936 map of St.Fagans Village



Curling Rink and disused reservoir

REMAINS OF THE GREENWOOD CURLING RINK -
COEDBYCHAN WOOD - ST. FAGANS

BRONZE AGE HOARD

The hoard comprises two **Bronze Age** spearheads, five axes, and part of a sword blade that once belonged to the people who lived in Wales after 2,500BC until the middle of the first century AD. The hoard was found in St. Fagans Great Wood in 1862, while quarrying for stone to construct the Great Western Railway.

The woodland now public open space was renamed as Plymouth Great Wood in 1922, when it was given to the City by the Earl of Plymouth to be conserved as a place of public recreation. The disused Radyr Stone and limestone quarries are still visible in the

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EXAMPLES OF BRONZE AGE SPEAR HEADS AND
SWORDS - NATIONAL MUSEUM WALES

BRONZE AGE HOARD

southern section of the wood
accessible from Llewellyn Avenue,
Ely. The main railway line running
adjacent to the woods is now part
of Network Rail comprising the
Swansea to London route and can
be crossed via the level crossing
on Michaelston Road St. Fagans.

SWAMP - PLYMOUTH GREAT WOOD,
ST. FAGANS



Disused Radyr Stone quarry - Plymouth Great Wood, St. Fagans

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STONE AGE AXE

A **Neolithic** flaked flint axe-head was found in Riverside Wood, immediately north of Frank Road in Ely near its junction with Riverside Walk. The woodland overlooking the River Ely is designated as a *Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)* for its ground flora including the rare and poisonous Monkshood.



EXAMPLES OF STONE AGE AXE HEADS - NATIONAL MUSEUM WALES



Riverside Wood adjacent to River Ely - north of Frank Road, Ely

ELY CORN MILL

A Corn Mill of **Post-Medieval** date appears on the First Edition (OS Six Inch) maps of Ely and the Vale of Glamorgan. The mill was probably used to grind oats and barley into flour, as the climate was too wet to grow wheat. A working example of an early 19th century corn mill, originally operated by water wheel to produce white flour, semolina flour, wheat germ and bran can be found in the National History Museum, St. Fagans. The remains of the Ely Corn Mill can be seen from Heol Muston, off Plymouth Wood Road in Ely, near the timber yard, bowling green and tennis courts to the east of Herbert Thompson Infants and Junior School.

EXAMPLE OF 19TH CENTURY CORN MILL - NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM



Interior of 19th century Corn Mill - National History Museum



Interior of 19th century Corn Mill - National History Museum



Interior of 19th century Corn Mill - National History Museum



Water Wheel 19th century Corn Mill - National History Museum

WESLEYAN METHODIST CHAPEL

A group of tutors and students including the brothers John and Charles Wesley who met at Oxford University in the late 1720's became known as the Oxford Methodists. By the 1840's the renamed Wesleyan Methodists began an ambitious and expensive programme of chapel and school building in mainly poor neighbourhoods. Wesleyan Methodism was less popular in Wales than in England until the 19th century when English immigrants increased congregations. The site of the **Post-Medieval** Wesleyan Methodist Chapel on Mill Road Ely, as noted from the 1880 First Edition (OS) map, is now occupied by houses. However an example of an active Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, the recently refurbished Wesley Church can be seen on Cowbridge Road East in Canton.



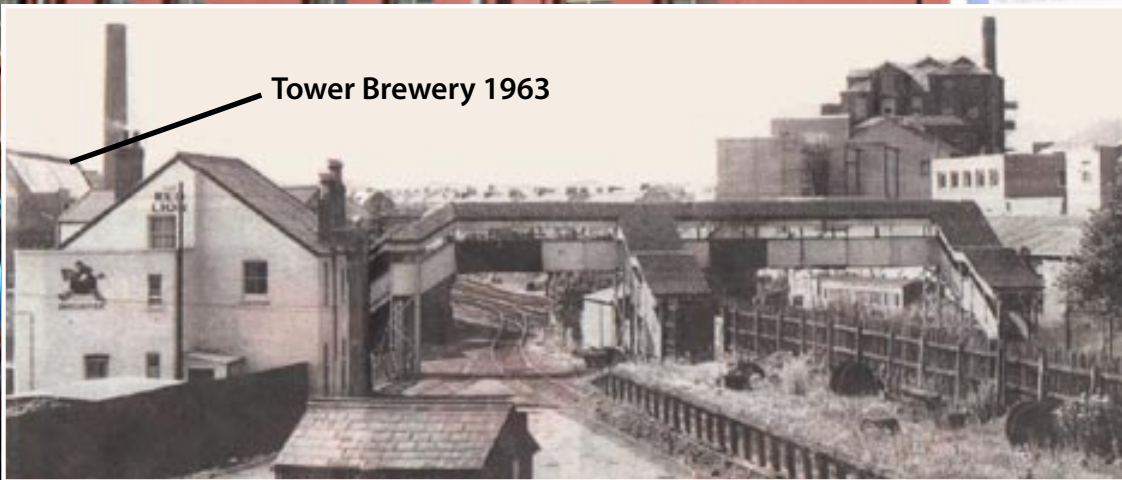
WESLEY CHURCH -
COWBRIDGE ROAD EAST, CANTON

ELY BREWERY WORKSHOPS -
STATION TERRACE, ELY

TOWER BREWERY

This is the site of the **Post-Medieval** Tower Brewery which opened in 1855 as part of the Ely Brewery Company, as noted from the 1885-First Edition (OS) map. In mid 19th century industrial South Wales it was far safer to drink the beer than to touch the water, as many victims of cholera found to their cost. According to a colour advert for Ely Brewery in an official handbook of Cardiff in 1955, its product is described as the 'Beer of Good Cheer'. In 1960, Ely Brewery was taken over by Rhymney Brewery Ltd., described as the largest brewery business in Wales with a history spanning over 140 years. It was acquired by Whitbread in the late 1960's. The site situated on Station Terrace, Ely is now the home of the Ely Brewery workshops.

Tower Brewery 1963



ELY BRIDGE WELL

This is the site of a **Post-Medieval** well near Ely Bridge, as noted from the 1885 First Edition (OS) map. It is now covered over by Riverside Terrace, Ely. The many local street names such as Everswell Road, Wellright Road and Brook Road in Fairwater give an indication to the waterways that ran through the area.



SITE OF POST MEDIEVAL WELL -
NEAR ELY BRIDGE



ALTERED WATER COURSE ALONG ELY RIVER

A Water Course of **Post-Medieval** date, identified from the First Edition (OS Six Inch) maps of the study area of Ely and the Vale of Glamorgan. The course of the River Ely has since been changed at other places too, including for the building of the Grangetown Link road.

ALTERED WATER COURSE OF POST
MEDIEVAL DATE - RIVER ELY

BRONZE AGE SWORD

The main part of the leaf-shaped blade of a **bronze** sword, commonly known as the 'Ewart Park' type, lacking the hilt-plate and the top of the blade, was found on the former Wiggins Teape (Arjo Wiggins) paper mill site, at Ely Bridge.

Wiggins Teape was a specialty paper manufacturer and merchant, founded in 1761. By the late 1970's it owned paper mills, and factories all over the world. In 1990 it merged with Appleton Papers Inc. and was renamed Wiggins Teape Appleton plc, later trading as Arjo Wiggins. Operations ceased in 2000 and the site has now been cleared in readiness for redevelopment. Works will include open space, a bridge link into Ely and the creation of the last section of the Ely Trail. This will link the existing sections from Sanatorium Park, Leckwith and Wroughton Place (off Cowbridge Road West), at Ely Bridge.



EXAMPLE OF BRONZE AGE SWORD AND STATUE -
NATIONAL MUSEUM WALES

REMAINS OF ELY ROMAN VILLA - TRELAI PARK, CAERAU

ELY ROMAN VILLA

(SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT)

On a low-lying marshy site; the villa was constructed in an angle between the main channel of Caerau Brook and a tributary which was straightened and deepened. The initial construction took place in the first half of the 2nd century and included two main blocks, Building I to the north and Building II to the west, which included courtyards. Surveys undertaken in 2001 also identified an early ditch enclosure surrounding the Villa site.

The main house (Building I) was a rectangular house with projecting wings, partly rebuilt, perhaps in the 3rd century. Building II had an attached bath suite and was demolished around the 4th century. Finds suggest occupation ceased around 325AD.

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Example of Roman pottery -
National Museum Wales



REMAINS OF ELY ROMAN VILLA -
TRELAI PARK, CAERAU

ELY ROMAN VILLA

(SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT)

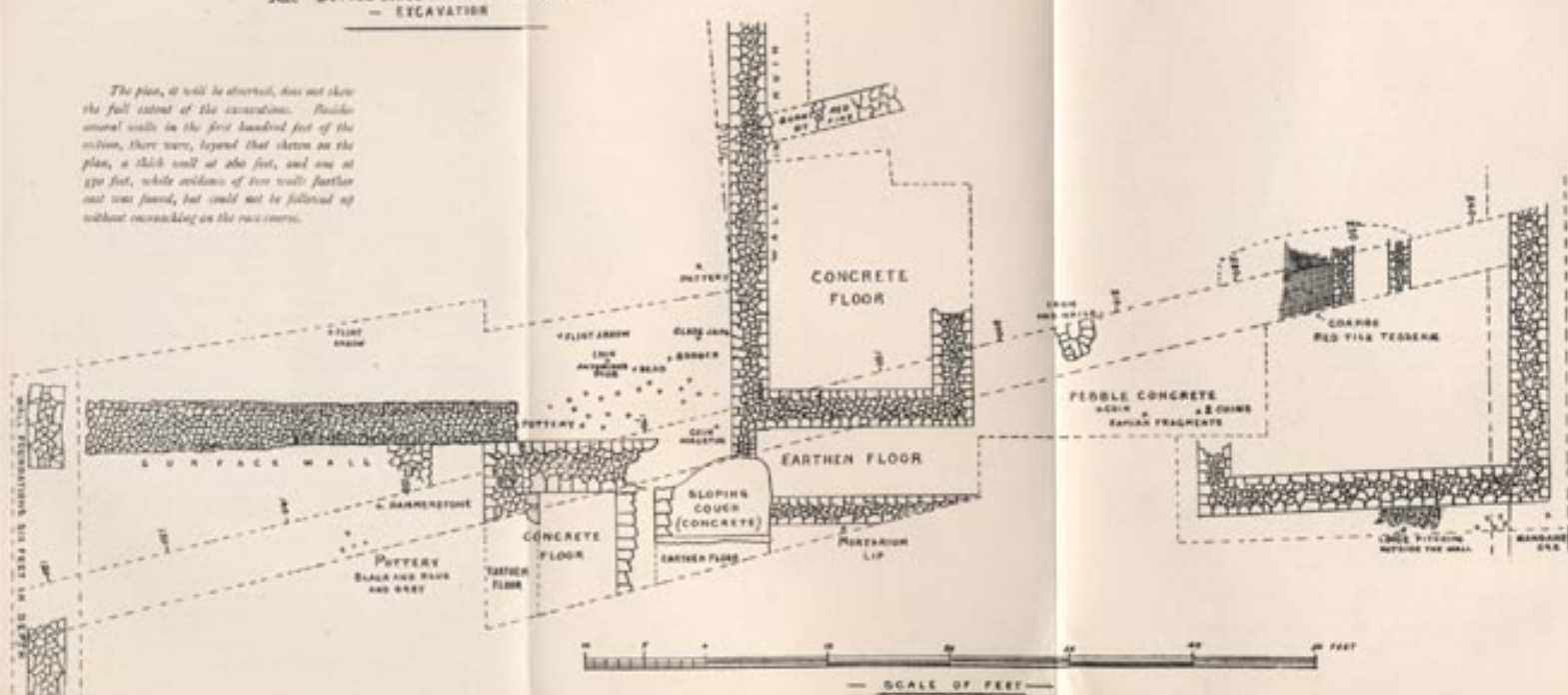
John Storrie, curator of Cardiff Museum (precursor of *National Museum Wales*) and author of 'The Flora of Cardiff' (1886), excavated the site of the **Roman** Villa on the Ely Race course at the request of the Cardiff Naturalists Society, in 1893 (as described in their Journals Volume XXVI [part II]). Many **pre-Roman** stone and pottery objects were found as well as a considerable number of **Roman** objects including silver and **bronze** coins, **bronze** jewellery, sharpening stones, pieces of pottery, pennant roofing, animal bones and part of a very thin human skull. In addition, Mr. Storrie discovered the remains of a primitive **Roman** foundry and evidence that local coal was used in its furnace for iron smelting and

EXPLORATION OF THE Remains of a Roman Villa ON THE RACECOURSE AT ELY NEAR CARDIFF

AS LAID DOWN BY MR. JOHN STORRIE,
AND RE-DRAWN BY MR. EDWIN SEWARD.

NR. DOTTED LINES INDICATE LIMITS OF
— EXCAVATION

The plan, as will be observed, does not show the full extent of the excavations. Besides several walls in the first hundred feet of the section, there were, beyond that shown on the plan, a thick wall at 400 feet, and one at 500 feet, while evidence of two walls further east was found, but could not be followed up without encroaching on the race course.



1893/4 Plans of exploration of remains of Roman Villa, former Ely Race Course site [cutesy of Cardiff Naturalists' Society]

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ELY ROMAN VILLA

(SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT)

the manufacture of a kind of early steel cAD56.

The remains of the **Roman** Villa are now preserved in the middle of *Trelai Park*, situated in Caerau on the former site of Ely Race course. The Race course was set up by the Cardiff Race Club in 1855, closing in the 1930's - the last race reportedly being won by Lester Piggott's father Keith Piggott. The site was acquired by the council in 1933, to provide parkland for the growing community of Caerau. The main access route to the park is down the lane leading off Vincent Road, Caerau. Other access points are from the 1950's housing estate to the north and a footpath which leads out of the park under the link road into Leckwith Woods.

REMAINS OF ELY ROMAN VILLA -
TRELAI PARK, CAERAU

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LECKWITH OLD BRIDGE

(SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT)

With its **Medieval** origins Leckwith Old Bridge has three arches made of course rubble stone. Two of the arches are pointed; the centre one is semi circular and has been rebuilt. It once took carriers' carts from the salt marsh of Leckwith Moors, through Leckwith Village, Cadoxton, Barry and then on to the sea. When the new bridge opened in 1935, the old one was left in place to provide access to Leckwith Bridge House, which is still situated off Leckwith Road.



LECKWITH OLD BRIDGE -
LECKWITH ROAD

OUTFALL SEWER - CARDIFF - WESTERN DISTRICT

(GRADE II- LISTED BUILDING)

Built in 1907 to 1910 by William Harper (engineer) as an **Edwardian** sewage pumping station, it comprises a single-storey yellow brick building with slate roof and six round headed bay windows with red brick arches.

Later owned by Welsh Water it is today known as the 'The Pumping Station'. Accessible from Penarth Road, it is home to 35 antique dealers covering three floors with over thirty two thousand square feet of open-plan space, stocking various antique ware including militaria, mirrors and furniture.



THE PUMPING STATION -
PENARTH ROAD



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