

CMRC Study Day 23 Jan 2017

## **Strong Hold: the Castle in Imagination and Culture**

Avenue Campus, Lecture Theatre C

**9.15 Registration and Coffee**

**9.45 Welcome**

**10.00 Keynote: 'Capture the Castle' – Tim Craven and Steve Marshall, Southampton City Art Gallery**

A rationale and description of the upcoming major exhibition at Southampton City Art Gallery, May-September 2017

**11.15-11.30 Coffee**

**11.30 – 1.00. Castles and their sites**

**David Hinton: The archaeology of Corfe Castle and its landscape**

Corfe Castle has Oliver Cromwell to thank for its picturesque condition. It is situated on a natural chalk knoll where two streams have cut through the long chalk ridge that runs from Swanage to Lulworth. It overlooks a valley, beyond which are the Purbeck limestone ridge and cliffs. The fossiliferous building stone is still quarried, for ornamental features and hard-core, but is open-cast working from the surface. Until legislation in 1963, most of the stone was extracted from underground 'quarrs', shafts dug into the lower strata from at least the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and shipped out through Swanage rather than from Poole Harbour. There are over 60 different stone 'beds', the famous marble being composed of fresh-water shell-fossils, all the others being marine. The surrounding heathlands and the Purbeck hills have other resources: prehistoric exploitation of sea-water for salt, clay for pottery and of Kimmeridge shale for turned cups and spindle-whorls was intensified in the Roman period, with Black Burnished pots taken up to Hadrian's Wall and beyond. Furniture fittings were added to the shale repertoire, and Purbeck marble was used for building columns, inscriptions and

mortars. Marble is now extracted only for very special restoration work, but the 'freestone' is still used, mainly for decorative features, and clay is still dug. Oil is extracted at Wych Farm, but from deep sandstones, not from Kimmeridge clay. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, attempts to produce copperas, alum and other minerals had limited success – otherwise, the Industrial Revolution might have happened in Dorset.

### **Stephen Bending: Gothic Castle Landscapes in the 18<sup>th</sup> century**

(Abstract to follow)

### **Roger Leech: Bristol Castle Reinvented**

This paper will show Bristol Castle as currently imagined to be an archaeological reinvention of the 1960s and 1970s. Documentary sources for a castle closely resembling in plan that of Southampton have been disregarded in the course of the destruction of surviving archaeological evidence undertaken in construction works for a museum never built, in the interpretation of evidence gleaned in the ensuing recording, and in the destructive construction of a new Castle Park designed by the architect Sir Hugh Casson and intended to echo its past history.

## **1.00 -1.45 Lunch**

## **1.45 - 3.15. The Idea of the Castle in Non-military Power and Commerce**

### **Lynn Forest-Hill: Castles as perilous female space in the fourteenth-century romance Sir Bevis of Hampton**

In Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Bertilak's lady imperils Gawain's reputation when she visits his chamber in her husband's castle. This is the best-known example of perilous female space (understood also as domestic space pace Roberta Gilchrist), but in the earlier Sir Bevis of Hampton spaces within castles that are assigned to females imperil lords and knights in more diverse ways. Focussing on select examples, this paper argues that in this romance female space is a much wider testing ground for

personal virtues and social conventions, interrogating tropes of male dominance; faith; and female motivation.

### **Rob Blackmore: 'For syche is my destine': English officials in Bordeaux's Château de l'Ombrière and the castle's role in the Gascon wine trade during the late Middle Ages**

The Château de l'Ombrière in Bordeaux was the hub of political and economic power in the duchy of Aquitaine – the English crown's farthest-flung continental possession (ruled from 1152-1453). This labyrinthine castle served as the centre of the administration of the wine trade between the territories of Gascony-Guyenne and England; a commercial relationship that underpinned not only the duchy's prosperity, but defined the bond between the two polities. The paper proposed, based on my current PhD research, will explain how, in the late medieval period, the wine trade was managed by English officials from this imposing citadel, overseen by their superiors in the Exchequer in London; at the behest of king and council.

### **John Hare: Housing the bishops of Winchester: castles and residence in medieval England.**

The bishops of Winchester were the richest bishops in the country, and they possessed a large number of residences some of which at particular times could be described as Castles. But even when they were not, these residences, with their parks and fishponds were an essential part of the maintenance of political power and superiority in the area. They are also extremely well documented and significant parts of some of them survive. This talk will use the documents and buildings as a means of assessing the nature and function, both military and non military of these residences, and of the changing nature of the buildings themselves.

## **3.15-3.30 Tea**

### **3.30 – 4.30 Castles in decline? The role of the castle in later medieval and early modern conflicts**

**Dan Spencer: Royal castles and coastal defence during the great invasion scare of 1385 to 1386**

In his opening address to parliament, on 15 November 1384, Sir Michael de la Pole, Chancellor of England, stated that the kingdom was in great peril as it was 'entirely surrounded...by deadly enemies all in league with one another'. Over the next two years the country faced the prospect of invasion from sea by the French and Castilians and by land from the Scots. This has been described by some historians as the greatest threat posed to England in the Middle Ages. It is also notable for the role played by royal castles in coastal defence. The fourteenth century has traditionally been seen as a period in which the military role of the castle began to decline. Yet royal castles played an important part in the defence of England in the years 1385 to 1386, with garrisons placed in many of them and their fortifications repaired. It also saw the widespread deployment of guns to royal castles for the first time in England, thereby marking an important period in the development of artillery and fortifications. This paper will argue that English royal castles continued to play an important role in coastal defence in the late fourteenth century, with the crown keen to improve their defences through the deployment of artillery.

### **Alice Hunt: Castles in an English Republic**

During the English civil wars of the 1640s the castles that studded the English countryside, representing centuries of family ownership, wealth and power, became the sites of fierce conflict. Holding onto, capturing or destroying these fortified homes were decisive episodes for both sides during the wars. Some castles became garrisons and prisons; some saw new families move in; many were looted; and others were deliberately pulled down and left to ruin. This paper tells the story of what happened to a few of Britain's castles once the wars had ended, and the republican regime established. It includes those demolished by order of Parliament (such as Mulgrave and Belvoir Castles); those that had been famously won by Parliament (Tower of London); those held back from the Sale of the Late King's Goods (Windsor Castle), and those acquired by up-and-coming Cromwellians (Fonman Castle in Wales, bought by army officer and Cromwell's comptroller of the household Philip Jones). The story is not a simple one however, of royalists and their castles. In 1654, John Manners, the Earl of Rutland, began to rebuild his ancient family home, Belvoir Castle. Manners had fought for Parliament, not for Charles I.