



Follow the Trail...

...for a taster of some of the history of Abergavenny. Find the images which show the research by local schools and the Abergavenny Local History Society, illustrated by local artists on stunning ceramic and stone plaques. The trail takes about an hour and follows an easy route. You can add to it by visiting Abergavenny Museum at the Castle, which has activities for children, or St Mary's Priory Church with its internationally famous monuments. You might want to visit the Market Hall and surrounding shopping areas or end up at the beautifully restored Tithe Barn with its Millennium Tapestry, historical displays and Taste of Wales food and drink.

Abergavenny Local History Society, supported by the Abergavenny and District Tourist Association, produced the leaflet about the children's plaques, an Abergavenny Local History Society project.

Research assisted by pupils of: Llanvihangel Crucorney Primary School, Our Lady & St Michael's RC Primary School, Govilon Primary School, Gilwern Primary School, Deri View Primary School and Cantref Primary School.

Plaques designed and created by Ned Heywood (ceramics) and Jane Turner (stone).

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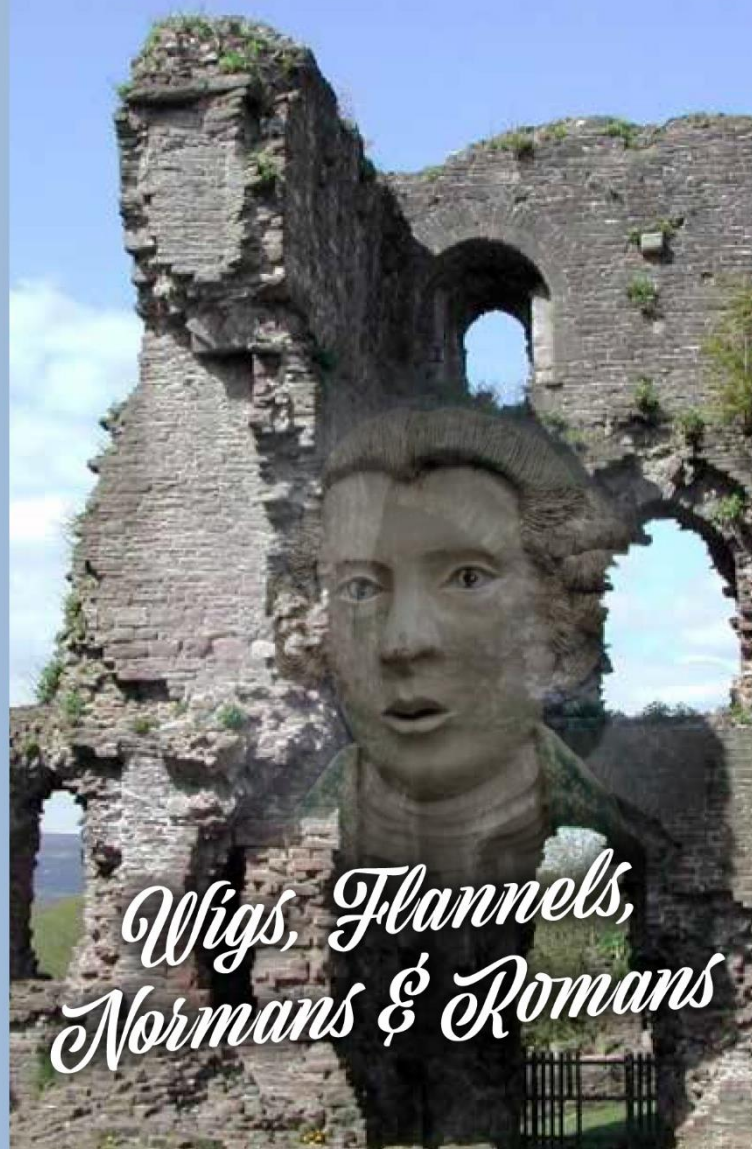
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Abergavenny Local History Society



Abergavenny Trails & Tales for Families



*Wigs, Flannels,
Normans & Romans*

Time line

- 50-150:** Roman Fort known as Gobannium; the place of the ironsmiths
- 1090:** After the invasion of the Normans, Hamelin de Ballon built a castle and a Norman town.
- 1100s:** Hamelin de Ballon gave money and land for Benedictine monks to build a priory at St Mary's.
- 1175:** Seisyllt, the local Welsh Prince, and his followers were murdered by William de Braose, Lord of Abergavenny, after being invited for Christmas dinner at the castle.
- 1182:** The castle was attacked by the Welsh in revenge .
- 1241:** New walls were built around the bigger town.
- 1256:** Castle accounts refer to the markets in the town.
- 1404:** Owain Glyndŵr burnt much of Abergavenny, still a mainly non-welsh town, but failed to take the castle, which had recently been strengthened.
- 1400s:** St Mary's Priory church rebuilt on its present site.
- 1542:** Henry VIII gave St Mary's Priory church to the town and the previous parish church, St John's, became King Henry VIII Grammar School, supported by some of the tithes previously paid to the Priory.
- 1645:** The castle was ordered by Charles 1st to be partially destroyed to prevent it being used in the civil war.
- 1658:** Oliver Cromwell granted permission for Abergavenny to hold two markets a week and three fairs a year.
- 1863:** The cattle market was opened and animals were no longer sold on the streets of Abergavenny.
- 1870:** The present market hall, replacing the previous one on the same site, was completed.
- 1898:** King Henry VIII Grammar school moved to a new building on Pen-y-Pound.
- 1913:** Abergavenny hosted the National Eisteddfod.
- 1959:** Abergavenny Museum was opened.
- 2008:** The restored Tithe Barn was opened by the Prince of Wales.
- 2016:** Abergavenny hosted the National Eisteddfod on Castle Meadows again.

The Heritage Plaques

Plaque 1 Abergavenny was once known for its soft and light flannel cloth. It was woven here in the town and surrounding villages.

Plaque 2 The former St John's Church was taken over for the first King Henry VIII Grammar School established in 1542. It is said naughty boys were hauled to the ceiling in a basket as a punishment. In 1898, a new grammar school was built on Pen-y-pound and St John's became a Freemasons' Lodge.

Plaque 3 Abergavenny was known for the manufacture of fashionable, very expensive, white periwigs. These houses here were rebuilt in 1798 and you can find out more about the houses in this interesting street on www.abergavennystreetsurvey.co.uk

Plaque 4 St John's Square: the site of the original medieval market place.

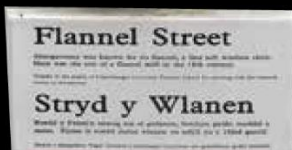
Plaque 5 Tudor Gate or West Gate. The ceramic plaque is based on an old illustration. Abergavenny was a walled town with four gates.

Plaque 6 Excavations showed Castle Street car park to be the site of the Roman Fort of Gobannium, controlling the river crossings below.

Plaque 7 Images on the stones show scenes from the life of Lady and Lord Llanover. They promoted the Welsh way of life and Lord Llanover was a Member of Parliament associated with Big Ben.



1



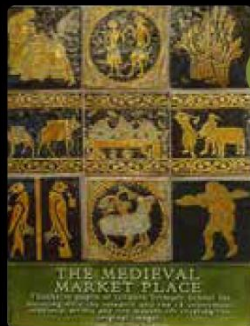
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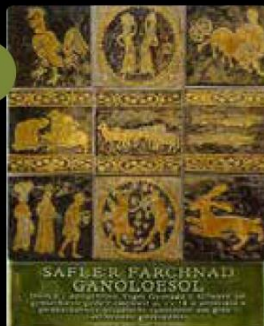
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Abergavenny

Trails & Tales

for Families



Start from the courtyard beside the Tithe Barn.

When the Tithe Barn was repaired fire damage was found. The town was burnt by Owain Glyndŵr in 1404.

The monks at the Priory stored the tithes or taxes (one tenth of a man's produce) here.

The Priory Church became the Parish Church after Henry VIII took over the monasteries – known as the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

Look at the buildings as you pass. Some of them are very old. Can you work out where the Cibi Brook passes under Monk Street?

Opposite you is the Angel Inn, an old coaching inn where passengers from London to the West of Wales stopped overnight.

Walk past the end of the Tithe Barn to Monk Street, turn right to cross at the pedestrian lights.

Go left back along Monk Street and turn right up Cross Street.

Go up Cross Street to the top. The Market Hall is on the right.



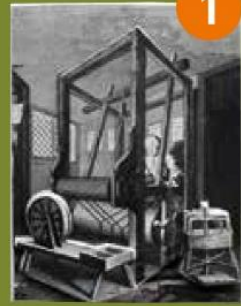
Can you see the copper top of the Market Hall tower? It is a landmark for miles around. You could visit the Market Hall and look at the decorations hanging from the roof, put up yearly for each Food Festival.

Cross the road into the pedestrianised area and take the first turning left. Walk along this street, now called Flannel Street. Look for the plaque on the left. **(1)**

Abergavenny Flannel was fine and soft. It was made here – the remains of a loom were found in the roof of the building behind during alterations. Flannel was also brought from the countryside into the town to be sold at fairs and markets.

This street used to be called Butcher's Row (where all the meat stalls were, and the animals killed). It led into Chicken Street at the top.

Why do you think the street was called Chicken Street? Look up on the right.



Flannel Street

Illustration taken from a book by the Rev. J. H. Thomas, 1880. The street was called Butcher's Row in the 18th century.

Stryd y Wlanen

Wlanen is a Welsh word meaning 'flannel'. The street was called Stryd y Wlanen in the 19th century.

Turn right as soon as you reach the end of the narrow street, and go right again down St John's Street. A small lane goes off on the left. On the corner is St John's Church **(2)**



Henry VIII founded the grammar school here. He gave the old parish church, St John's, to house the school and granted some of the taxes (the tithes) of the closed down priory to pay for it.

Go along St John's Street to rejoin the High Street.



On the corner is the Millenium Mural. Can you see the castle? And the railway?

Turn left to go along Castle Street. Look carefully amongst the bushes on the right for the next plaque **(6)**
This car park was the site of the **Roman Fort**.

The excavations here showed that two barrack blocks faced each other across a street. A big granary for wheat storage was found and pieces of window glass. Remains of metal working and pieces of harness suggest this was an auxiliary fort with cavalry.



6

Walk further along Castle Street and into the Castle grounds. The Museum is free to enter and sits on top of the Motte on which the original wooden castle was built.

Abergavenny Castle is most famous for the Christmas Day Massacre in 1175, when the Norman Lord of Abergavenny, William de Braose, tricked and murdered Seisyll ap Dyfnwal and many other Welsh chieftains. The Welsh got their revenge in 1182 when they attacked the castle. Most of William's men were captured, but de Braose was not at home.

Most of the walls you see today are the remains of the castle built between 1233 and 1295.

The castle's gatehouse was strengthened in the early 1400s in response to Owain Glyndwr's campaign – he attacked and burnt much of the town in 1404, but did not take the castle.



From the castle entrance, walk around to the left, outside the walls and down the steps. Turn left and go past Tan House.

Look to your right for the old mill wheel and across the road for the Cibi Brook rushing underneath the junction.

Tan House is marked with a Blue Plaque and remains from when this area contained many smelly tanning pits for leather.

Turn right to reach the pedestrian crossing and cross to Swan Meadows and go down the steps. Take the left hand path to the standing stones." **(7)**

Two standing stones mark the ring of stones from the 1913 National Eisteddfod held in Abergavenny.

7



The inserts on the stones show scenes from the life of Lady Llanover, who promoted the Welsh way of life. She employed harpists and all her servants had to wear traditional Welsh costume. Can you find the Bee? She helped to bring the Eisteddfod to Abergavenny and was known as the Gwent Bee.

The River Gavenny here gives Abergavenny its name.

Walk back to the Bus Station and take the left hand pavement back through the car park to the Tithe Barn and St Mary's Priory.

Try a visit to the Tithe Barn Tapestry and exhibitions, or go into the church to see the famous monuments. Or finish with refreshments in the Tithe Barn!