THE HISTORY OF CARDIFF CASTLE

TIMELINE

NERO'S MARBLE BUST.
(THE BRITISH MUSEUM)

54-68 AD THE ROMANS

Archaeological excavations have raised the possibility of the Romans settling at the site of Cardiff Castle in the first half of Emperor Nero's reign (A.D 54-68). With further evidence to show four overlapping Roman forts from the 1st Century A.D to the 3rd Century A.D. (Cardiff Castle. No date.)

The fort was placed at a strategically important site where the Taff connects to the Bristol Channel and was used as a campaign base during the conquest of the Silures. In 75 A.D, the fort was rebuilt on a smaller scale with the inclusion of workshops around the Roman base. In 300 A.D, another fort was built but this time with 10 feet thick stone walls placed near an earth bank due to the threat of Irish pirate invasions. They left in the early 5thC AD. (Cardiff-Castle. No date.)

ROMAN WALLS.
(CARDIFF CASTLE).

ROBERT CONSUL
(THE VICTORIAN WEB)

1091-1216 AD THE NORMANS

Realising the strategic potential of the Roman fort, the Normans decided to build a new castle during their conquest of South Wales, within its remains. They concentrated on the defensive aspects of the castle at the western half of the site, which became their 'Inner Ward'.

Robert Consul, Earl of Gloucester is credited with the building of the stone keep which replaced an earlier timber version version build by the Norman Lord of Glamorgan, Robert Fitzhamon. The stone keep is still one of the main attractions at Cardiff Castle today (Normans. No date.)

NORMAN KEEP
(CARDIFF CASTLE)

GILBERT DE CLARE
(THE CASTLES OF WALES)

1217-1314 AD THE DE CLARES

With the everpresent threat of attack on Cardiff Castle from a hostile Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, Gilbert 'the Red' reconstructed and raised its defences with urgency. He built a central embattled wall to connect the improved keep with the black tower and south gate (De Clares. No date).

THE DESPENSES 1317-1416 AD

The castle was passed amongst royals for a while after the death of Gilbert 'the Red'. During this time, all Welshmen were removed from office, including Welsh rebel Llewelyn Bren. In 1400, the uprising of Owain Glyndwr began, and 4 years later he broke through the gate of Cardiff and set fire to the castle and the town. The only place that wasn't torched was the monastery of the Greyfriars, who's monks were said to have given Llewelyn Bren a Christian burial (The Despenses. No Date).

OWAIN GLYNDWR
(LLANGOLLEN MUSEUM)

1416-1449 AD THE BEAUCHAMPS

BATTLEMENT WALK
(CARDIFF CASTLE)

The final defeat of Owain Glyndwr brought peace to Glamorgan, which allowed Richard Beauchamp Earl of Warwick to move from the safety of the Keep. He embarked upon the construction of new lodgings against the west curtain wall. The core of the present building was built in this era, with a possibility the construction of other buildings which have now vanished (Beauchamps. No date).

THE HERBERTS & WINDSORS 1551-1776 AD

William Herbert was made Earl of Pembroke and Baron Herbert of Cardiff in 1551. He acquired many properties in South Wales through King Edward the VI, including Caerphilly Castle, Castell Coch and Cardiff Castle. His son, Henry the 2nd Earl, extended Cardiff Castle and did a lot of work to modernise it during the 1580s (Herberts. No date).

WILLIAM HERBERT
(THE TUDOR SOCIETY)

1776-1947 AD THE BUTES

LORD BUTE'S BEDROOM
(CARDIFF CASTLE)

The last family to privately own Cardiff Castle, the Butes, were arguably responsible for the biggest changes to the site. They had turned Cardiff into a major power with the development of the coal exporting port, one of the greatest in the world. This saw the population grow from 2,000 at the start of the 19th Century to over 164,000 by the end (Edwards, J. 2014).

The Bute family brought in Capability Brown and his son-in-law Henry Holland to modernise lodgings and to landscape the grounds. They stripped away the Norman knight lodgings, stripped the Keep of ivy, cut down all the trees that grew alongside the ancient mound and filled in the moat (Butes. No date).

ANCIENT MOUNT
(CARDIFF CASTLE)

THE LIBRARY
(CARDIFF CASTLE)

The 16th Century additions by the Herbert family were remodelled by Holland and the Great Hall was partitioned into a new entrance, a library and a dining room. The bedrooms above the hall were modernised and were given names such as the 'Red room' and the 'Velvet room' (Butes. No date).

Lord Bute invited the architect William Burges to report on the condition of the Castle, which was the start of the site's journey to becoming a neo-gothic palace. The 15th Century Octagon tower was restored, nurseries were built, the Bute and Herbert towers were constructed, and the famous clock tower was erected on the site of a Roman bastion. In the early 20th Century, restoration and the reconstruction of the Roman wall began which now is an important feature of the curtain wall on Duke Street. Although Cardiff Castle escaped action during WWII, two adjecent lodges were destroyed and the walls were used as air raid shelters, which had a capacity to hold 2000 people (Butes. No date).

THE CLOCK TOWER
(CARDIFF CASTLE)

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