

**** PRESS RELEASE ****
BERKELEY CASTLE
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

BBC TV's 'Digging for Britain' at Berkeley Castle

A new BBC TV programme starts this week (19th August 2010), where Dr Alice Roberts follows a year of British archaeology, joining up the results of digs and investigations the length of the country.

The episode due for screening on Thursday 2nd September, will feature the University of Bristol's Archaeological dig in Berkeley, Gloucestershire. The dig, now in its 5th year, has proved hugely successful, and during this year's dig students unearthed a series of 12th century buildings, a Saxon hearth using recycled materials from an earlier Roman building, as well as Anglo Saxon and Elizabethan coins – all from the paddock just outside Berkeley Castle's entrance gates.

In the adjacent garden of the Edward Jenner Museum finds this year included Roman deposits in the footings of what is thought to be 3rd century ancillary farm buildings. This is the first evidence of Roman activity in Berkeley. The wall of an Anglo Saxon building was also discovered along with 9th century pottery fragments and a strap end (a metallic cover of the end of a strap or belt).

In addition to the dig, Digging for Britain, will also feature a rare and valuable gold Saxon ring that is part of the Berkeley Family's private collection. The ring was last publicly displayed at the V&A in 1972. It is believed that the ring dates from the early part of the 9th century, and that the ring may have been made locally or by someone familiar with a regional artistic tradition.

The ring has been among the collections at Berkeley Castle for over 150 years, however there are no records to suggest how the ring came to be part of the family's collections. It does appear in the Castle's records for the first time in the 1860s when it was placed on loan for exhibition in London for the first time.

The series is on Thursdays at 9.00pm on BBC2.

For more information about Berkeley Castle please contact 01453 810332 or e-mail info@berkeley-castle.com.

E N D

Note 1.

Photograph Captions
DIGGING FOR BRITAIN TX CARD.JPG
Nelme's Paddock.jpg
IMGP0166.JPG

Digging For Britain – BBC2
Bristol University Dig site – Berkeley Castle
Gold Saxon Ring - Berkeley Family Collection
(Photograph Courtesy of Leslie Webster)

Note 2.

Berkeley Castle is open until 31st October 2010. Please check our website for exact opening times. The Global Ticket provides access to the Castle, Ground and the Butterfly House and costs £7.50 for Adults, £6.00 concessions & £4.50 for children (5-16years, under 5's – free). Family tickets are available (2 adults & 2 children) for £21.00.

Note 3:

Berkeley Castle is a beautiful and historic Castle, begun in 1117 and still remains the home of the Berkeley family. The Castle was the scene of the brutal murder of Edward II in 1327 and besieged by Cromwell's troops in 1645. The Castle is steeped in history but 27 generations of Berkeley's have gradually transformed a Norman fortress into the lovely home it is today.

The state apartments contain magnificent collections of furniture, rare paintings by primarily English and Dutch masters, and tapestries. Some of the world famous Berkeley silver is on display and many other rooms including the Great Hall are available to view.

The Castle is surrounded by lovely terraced Elizabethan Gardens with a lily pond, Elizabeth I's bowling green, sweeping lawns and a walled garden containing the Butterfly House.

Note 4:

For more information about Digging For Britain log onto <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00tjps6>

Note 5.

For general information contact the Castle Office on 01453 810332, or e-mail info@berkeley-castle.com. Browse the website www.berkeley-castle.com.

For more information:

Vicky Parr, General Manager

T: 01453 810332

E: Vicky.parr@berkeley-castle.com