

Castle Cary's Past

The Norman Castle from which Castle Cary takes its name has long gone, but some of its stones can be found in the facade of the George Hotel. The town was granted a Market Charter in 1468 and wool, flax and horsehair have contributed to its prosperity. Today Castle Cary has much to offer to anyone interested in historical and genealogical research.

Castle Cary & District Museum & Preservation Society



At the Market House

Come and see our extensive collection of agricultural, industrial and domestic artefacts ranging in date from the Middle Ages to modern times. Our geology section shows how this area was once under the sea.

Each season we have temporary exhibitions reflecting specific aspects of local history.

Permanent displays include the life of the diarist Parson James Woodforde, T.S. Dome & Sons Rope & Twine Works, John Boyd's Horsehair Factory, and Douglas Macmillan, founder of the Macmillan Cancer Support.

The Museum library and archives contain material for local history and genealogical research. Bound copies of the original Castle Cary Visitor, a monthly magazine edited by the Macmillan family from 1896 to 1915, provide a unique resource.

Groups and school visits can be arranged outside normal opening hours and during the closed season, by appointment.

Open: April to October
Mon-Fri 10.30-12.30 2.00-4.00
Sat: 10.30-12.30
Open Bank Holidays
Entry is Free.

Detail of John Ward's map of Castle Cary, 1682-4. Facsimile in Castle Cary Museum



Parson Woodforde

Parson James Woodforde (1740- 1803) lived in Ansford in the earlier part of his life before moving to Norfolk and his much-loved diaries provide an insight into everyday rural life. He attracts interest from all over the UK and abroad, and visitors to Castle Cary can see St Andrew's Church in Ansford, where his father was rector. The Old Parsonage where James was born is close by.



To find out more: www.parsonwoodforde.org.uk

John Boyd Textiles

In 1837 John Boyd set up his horsehair weaving factory in Castle Cary. Horsehair had been favoured by the greatest furniture designers such as Chippendale and Hepplewhite as an upholstery material. John Boyd Textiles continues to weave horsehair fabric on 19th century looms - one of only two such factories in Europe. Their fabric is now exported all over the world and is used in royal palaces and exclusive hotels. Visitors are able to tour the factory at Higher Flax Mills and see the manufacturing process.

Please note that these are for groups only and by appointment.
To arrange a visit Tel: 01963 350451
or visit: www.johnboydtextiles.co.uk



Medieval Wall Paintings at Lower Cockhill Farm

Castle Cary was a prosperous place in the 15th century as can be seen by this rare survival of a yeoman farmer's hall-house just over a mile from the town. Rare wall paintings have recently been uncovered.

The house can be visited only on open days or by appointment (Sunday afternoons preferred)
Small admission fee.
Tel: 01963 351288