

Year Five - History of Launceston Knowledge Organiser

Timeline:

500 - 700 CE: Celtic Church established in Cornwall, sometimes called 'The Age of Saints'. There is no evidence of when Lanstephenton was established but it is believed it was during this time.

838: King Egbert's Anglo-Saxon army defeated a joint Cornish and Viking force at Hingston Down (approx. 9 miles from Launceston).

978 - 1016: Reign of King Aethelred II. Lanstephenton's importance grows as it has the only Royal Mint in Anglo-Saxon Cornwall.

1068: Launceston Castle (Dunheved) is built by the Norman Earl of Cornwall on the opposite hill to Lanstephenton.

1075: Cornwall is given to William I's half brother Robert, Count of Mortain. Robert moves the Sunday market from Lanstephenton to Dunheved.

1155: After twenty years, the new Priory is finished by the River Kensey at the bottom of the hill between the old settlement of Lanstephenton and the new settlement of Dunheved.

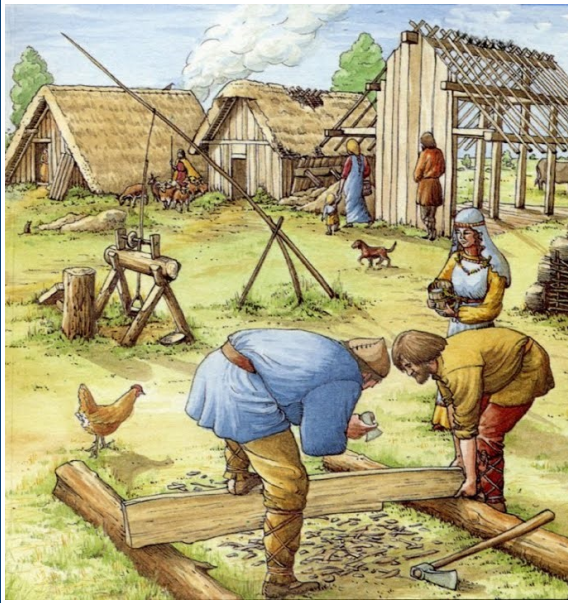
12th Century: Dunheved Castle rebuilt from stone.

1227: Richard, Earl of Cornwall rebuilt castle including a high tower for visitors to see his surrounding land.

By 1337: Richard's son, Edmund, had moved away and the castle fell to ruin and was used as a gaol.

1835: Bodmin replaces Launceston as County Town of Cornwall.

1842: Gaol closed and the site was landscaped to be a park.



Origin of the town

The Saxon settlement is believed to have been established sometime between the 6th and 8th Centuries, and would have been in the land around the school. The original name Lanstefan is thought to come from the original monastery of St Stephen, the remains of which are behind the current Church of Saint Stephen.

What's in a name?

The name Launceston is made up of Celtic and Saxon words. Lann meant church in Cornish. So it was the Lann of St Stephen. The 'ton' comes from the Saxon word 'tun' which meant farm, hamlet or estate. From ancient deeds scrolls and articles it has been called: Launceston, Lannstevan, Launcestreton, Lanstuphadon, Laundscireton, Launcestona, Lancscaveton, Lanzaventon, Lanzaneton, and Launcendaniton. Also the Castle town was known as Dunheved from the Saxon meaning summit of the hill.



The importance of the town is shown by the fact that the earliest known Cornish mint was at Launceston, which operated on a minimal scale at the time of Aethelred the Unready. The mint was near St Stephens, perhaps next to the church, where the field in front of the vicarage is said to be known locally as Mint Field. The name of the town is abbreviated on the coins to Lanstef. In the reign of William the Conqueror, the mint was moved to Dunheved. and remained in existence until the reign of Henry II, 1160. During the reign of Henry III of England, another mint was established in Launceston.



Saxon Settlements

Anglo-Saxon houses were huts made of wood with roofs thatched with straw. There was only one room where everybody ate, cooked, slept and entertained. The villages were built near natural resources. They needed food, water, fuel for heating and cooking and materials for their homes and clothes.

The natural resources had to provide the villagers with what they needed to survive.

The village also needed to protect itself. All around the village was a high fence to keep the herds safe at night from enemies and the wild animals of the forests - wolves, foxes and boars.

The Anglo-Saxons grew crops and kept pigs, sheep and cattle. They hunted other animals and fish for food. They made household goods and farm equipment from pottery, wood and metal, clothes from cloth they wove themselves. They traded goods such as hunting dogs and slaves for things they couldn't make, like glass, with people from other countries.



Norman Castles

The Normans invaded England in 1066 and after killing England's King, they set about taking over the whole country. In order to do this, they needed to build defences to protect themselves while they advanced across the rest of the country.

The Normans built motte and bailey castles to begin with. These castles were quick to build using just earth and timber. This unusual name comes from France. Motte means 'mound' and bailey means 'closed/fenced-in' land.

It was probably built by Robert the Count of Mortain after 1068, and initially comprised an earthwork and timber castle. It was built on the natural mound on the hill looking down on the existing settlement of Lanstephenton and dominating the surrounding countryside. It was called Dunheved and formed the administrative centre of the new earldom of Cornwall, with a large community packed within the walls of its bailey. It was rebuilt in stone in the 12th century.