

KING ARTHUR

RULE YOUR DESTINY



Welcome to this special edition movie map featuring King Arthur, the epic new blockbuster at cinemas this summer.

To celebrate the release of this spectacular film, VisitBritain have teamed up with Buena Vista International to bring you this fascinating movie map detailing important Arthurian sites around the UK and exploring the truths behind the man, the myth and the legend.

From the producer of Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl and director of Training Day comes King Arthur, a tale of a man who sacrificed himself to become a leader and earned the right to be called King. Clive Owen, Keira Knightley, Ray Winstone and Ioan Gruffudd star in this big screen version of the legend of King Arthur, a thrilling action packed adventure of historical grandeur that looks at the true origins of one of the greatest stories ever told.

Historians have thought for centuries that King Arthur was only a myth, but the legend was based on a real hero, torn between his private ambitions and his public sense of duty. A reluctant leader, Arthur (CLIVE OWEN) wishes only to leave Britain and return to the peace and stability of Rome. Before he can, one final mission leads him and his Knights of the Round Table - Lancelot, Galahad, Bors, Tristan, and Gawain - to the conclusion that when Rome is gone, Britain will need a leader to fill the vacuum.

Britain needs a king - someone not only to defend against the current threat of invading Saxons, but to lead the isle into a new age. Under the guidance of Merlin, a former enemy, and the beautiful, courageous Guinevere (KEIRA KNIGHTLEY) by his side, Arthur will have to find the strength within himself to change the course of history. Thrilling adventure, edge-of-your-seat action and historical grandeur come together in this unique look at the origins of one of the greatest legends ever told.

www.thefilmfactory.co.uk/kingarthur

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ENGLAND

TINTAGEL CASTLE, CORNWALL

Geoffrey of Monmouth, in his 12th-century *History of the Kings of Britain*, claims this as the birthplace of Arthur. The dramatic ruins of the castle, which date from the 12th to the 13th centuries and are thus too late to have anything to do with the real Arthur, have nonetheless inspired romantic speculation. A much earlier 6th-century site, on the island immediately behind the castle, is more or less contemporary with Arthur. Excavations in 1994 indicate that this may have been a Celtic site associated with a local leader of some importance. www.english-heritage.org.uk

The 'Arthur' Stone, found at Tintagel, is now in the Truro Museum.

MERLIN'S CAVE, CORNWALL

The 19th-century poet, Tennyson made this site famous in his 'Idylls of the King' when he described a huge wave that carried the infant Arthur to the shore, where he was discovered by Merlin. Local legend has long associated this cave with the great enchanter. It is certainly a very atmospheric place, where one might expect to see Merlin coming with his shining staff held up to illuminate the darkness of the cave. www.tintagelweb.co.uk

GLASTONBURY ABBEY, SOMERSET

Here, according to tradition, the Holy Grail was brought by Joseph of Arimathea, the uncle of Jesus. He founded the first Christian church on the ancient island of Tyns Writin, also known as Avalon, and now as Glastonbury. Here also, it is claimed, the body of Arthur was brought for burial. To this day a plaque marks the spot where, in 1191, builders working on the restoration of the abbey apparently uncovered his tomb. www.glastonburyabbey.com

GLASTONBURY TOR, SOMERSET

Rising like a beacon from the flat Somerset plain, Glastonbury Tor seems to beckon the pilgrims who journey in their thousands to this remarkable spot. Beneath the hill is said to lie a subterranean kingdom ruled over by the Lord of the Wild Hunt. *Gwynn ap Iudd*. The Tor may once have been an island, hence its identification with Avalon, to which tradition says Arthur came to be healed of his wounds. www.glastonburytor.org.uk

BADBURY RINGS, DORSET

This iron-age hill-fort is among several contenders for the site of Arthur's greatest battle against the Saxons - Badon Hill. The claim is based primarily on the similarity in the names, but there is also some evidence based on its strategic importance and the fact that it was re-fortified during the Arthurian period. The current site is heavily fortified throughout most of its eighteen acres, and is a favourite spot for weekend walkers. www.theheritageportal.co.uk

STONEHENGE, WILTSHIRE

Among the many legends of this famous site is one which tells of its construction by Merlin. Asked by Arthur's father, Uther Pendragon, to construct a fitting memorial for his brother Ambrosius and the warlords of Britain, the enchanter journeyed to Ireland in search of the fabled Giant's Dance. Merlin conveyed the stones by magic to the shore of the sea, then floated them on rafts across to Britain and set them up in the plain near Salisbury. It has been suggested that this story may retain a distant memory of the method by which the ancient bluestones, quarried in the Prescelly mountains far to the north, were brought to the site. www.english-heritage.org.uk/stonehenge

THE ROUND TABLE - WINCHESTER, HAMPSHIRE

The Round Table, at which Arthur's knights met to tell of their deeds, and from which they set forth in search of adventure, was first mentioned by the Norman chronicler Wace in 1155. The large wooden table which currently hangs in the Great Hall at Winchester dates from no earlier than the 14th century, when it was probably made at the command of King Edward III. It was later repainted at the order of Henry VIII, who is shown in the guise of Arthur on the current table. www.hants.gov.uk/discover/places

ALDERLEY EDGE, CHESHIRE

Here, according to a local tradition, in the ground below the great outcrop of sandstone known as the Edge, is a cave in which Arthur and his knights lie sleeping. Near Merlin's rock is a mossy outcrop from which water drips into a small stone trough. Above it a bearded, weather-beaten face can be discerned. Under it is written: DRINK OF THIS AND TAKE THY FILL FOR THE WATER FALLS BY THE WIZARD'S WILL. www.nationaltrust.org.uk

THE GREEN KNIGHT'S CAVE - WETTON MILL, STAFFORDSHIRE

In the great 14th-century poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* the hero encounters a fearsome giant with green skin, red eyes, and green clothing, carrying a great axe and riding a huge green horse. They meet at a cave known as the Green Chapel, which local tradition places at this site near Wetton Mill. The poem was almost certainly composed in the area, and it is likely that the anonymous author knew the area around Wetton. www.walkingbritain.co.uk

RIBCHESTER (BREMENACUM VETERANORUM), LANCASHIRE

The site of one of the largest Roman forts in the Midlands, Ribchester was also home to some 3,000 Sarmatian cavalry who were stationed there for as long as 40 years. The title of the site shows that it was a settlement for veterans - those who had served their time in the Legions and chose to settle there. Archaeological evidence suggests they formed an independent community there. It was from here that Sarmatian cavalry were posted to Hadrian's Wall. Their leader was Lucius Artorius Castus. www.ribchestermuseum.org

PENDRAGON CASTLE, CUMBRIA

The ruins that crown a hill near Kirby Stephen are said to have belonged to Uther Pendragon, Arthur's father. The present castle is medieval and belonged to Hugh de Morville, one of the murderers of St Thomas à Becket. However, there are remains of earlier fortifications underneath the present building. A local legend tells how Uther tried to divert the nearby River Eden to fill a moat around the hill. A rhyme commemorates this: 'Let Uther Pendragon do what he can/ Eden will run where Eden ran'. www.english-heritage.org.uk

HADRIAN'S WALL, CUMBRIA AND NORTHUMBERLAND

Hadrian's Wall was begun at the command of the Emperor Hadrian around AD120 and finally abandoned in AD383. It was made to keep out the wild tribesmen from the north, and to mark the most extreme northern frontier of the empire. It extended originally from Wallsend, near Newcastle upon Tyne, to Bowness-on-Solway on the Solway Firth. Originally 73 miles long, ten feet wide, 15 feet high and topped with six feet of timber and stone battlements, the wall took 10,000 men eight years to build. It must have been a formidable barrier then as it still is today.

Much of the wall still survives in Cumbria and Northumberland, in places still 14 feet high. Ruined turrets, milecastles and forts are reminders of its imposing strength over 1,700 years. Among the best preserved are Vercovicium (Housesteads), Camboglanna (Birdoswald), Vindolanda (Chesterholm) and Segedunum (Wallsend). Birdoswald, once known as Banna, has been for many years one of the sites associated with Arthur's last battle at Camlann. It has also been suggested as the original Camelot. The presence, 20 miles further along the wall, of a fort (no longer standing) called Avalanna, has caused speculation that this may have been the original Avalon. www.hadrians-wall.org

NORTHUMBERLAND

BAMBURGH CASTLE, NORTHUMBERLAND

Towering above the tiny village of Bamburgh on the sandy coastline of Northumberland, this massive medieval fortress is believed to be the original site of Sir Lancelot's castle, Joyous Gard. A Dark Age stronghold did indeed occupy the site, which may account for this tradition. At the time the site was known as 'Din Guayrd', which may have suggested its Arthurian identity. www.bamburghcastle.com

RICHMOND CASTLE, YORKSHIRE

On a hill overlooking the town of Richmond stands the ruins of a Norman castle, believed to have once contained the entrance to an underground chamber where Arthur and his knights lay sleeping. A local potter named Thompson is said to have found his way in and to have discovered the king and his men, together with a sword and a horn. Apparently he picked up the horn, at which point the sleepers began to stir. Potter Thompson fled in terror, and as he did so a voice called out after him that if he had drawn the sword first and then blown the horn he would have had great luck - presumably by getting the treasure. www.english-heritage.org.uk

YORK (EBORACUM)

York was founded in AD71 as a camp for Roman Legions advancing north. The fortress, named Eboracum, housed several thousand soldiers, and with a town which grew up around it became a leading city of the Roman Empire. Constantine the Great, who founded Constantinople, became Emperor in York in 306AD. There is an unlikely suggestion that the later emperor Constantine III, who withdrew the last Roman Legion from Britain in 407, was Arthur's grandfather. Today's city is full of visible Roman remains. www.york-tourism.co.uk

LONDON (LONDINIUM)

The Roman city of Londinium was the international key to unlocking Roman Britain - sited at the heart of the communications network both by land and sea, it became an administrative, financial and commercial capital. The Museum of London has an excellent selection of Roman artefacts. www.museumoflondon.org.uk

SCOTLAND

THE KING'S KNOT, STIRLING

Lying in a field below the walls of Stirling Castle is the King's Knot, otherwise known in local tradition as King Arthur's Round Table. The Knot is really a series of interlinked earth-works, and is octagonal rather than round, though there is a mound measuring about 40 to 50 feet across at the centre. It appears to date from around 1627, but may have been used earlier for one of the medieval chivalric entertainments known commonly as 'Round Tables'. The French writer Beroul, who wrote one of the earliest versions of the Tristan legend, mentions a stone slab kept at Stirling around which Arthur and the knights used to meet, and though no trace of this exists, the chronicler William of Worcester, writing in 1478, said 'King Arthur kept the Round Table at Stirling Castle'. www.stirling.com

ARTHUR'S SEAT, EDINBURGH

This huge crag, which rises to a height of 822 feet above sea level above the city of Edinburgh, has been known as Arthur's Seat since the 15th century. The 'seat' itself is said to be the notch between the highest point of the peak and a secondary point a little way to the south. Edinburgh itself is identified with the Castle of Maidens in several Arthurian tales. An old Welsh poem speaks of Arthur and his men fighting 'on Eidynd's mountain'. This suggests a much earlier association, almost contemporary with Arthur. www.edinburgh.org

MERLIN'S GRAVE, DRUMELZIER

Merlin has many presumed resting places, with several areas eager to claim his bones. This site lies at the junction of Powsail Burn and the River Tweed, and a prophecy attributed to the Scots seer Thomas the Rhymer has it that: WHEN TWEED AND PAUSAYL MEET AT MERLIN'S GRAVE SCOTLAND AND ENGLAND SHALL ONE MONARCH HAVE. This prediction came true in 1603, when the Powsail overflowed its banks and joined with the Tweed. That same year James VI of Scotland was crowned James I of England, uniting both countries under a single monarch. www.mysteriousbritain.co.uk/folklore/thomas.html

HARTFELL HILL, MOFFAT

Merlin was rumoured to have retreated to Hartfell following the Battle of Ardeydd in 573. Signs of his presence can be found in the names of the surrounding features, Arthur's Seat and Merlin's Cave can be found just below the ridge. Gawain, Lancelot and Arthur were all trained at a military instillation in Sweetheart which is now New Abbey across Nith River near Dumfries. www.borderwalking.co.uk

WALES

BARDSEY ISLAND - GWYNEDD, NORTH WALES

Set in the sea off the coast of Wales, local legend tells that this was the island to which Merlin retired to live in his observatory, which had 70 windows through which he could observe the stars and the affairs of men. Another story tells that here are hidden the Thirteen Treasures of the Island of Britain, including the Cauldron of Diwrnach the Giant, the Whetstone of Tudgylid, and Arthur's Mantle of Invisibility. Merlin is said to be their guardian. www.bardsey.org

ARTHUR'S QUOIT - ST DAVID'S HEAD, WALES

Perched dramatically on St David's Head, overlooking the storm-tossed Atlantic, this is one of many prehistoric burial chambers which bear the name of Arthur. Whatever local legend may originally have been attached to it is no longer remembered, but it is part of a general trend throughout the lands once ruled over by Arthur to remember him in this way, by naming significant, and especially sacred sites, after him. www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk

MAEN CHWYF - ANGLESEY, NORTH WALES

Also known as Arthur's Quoit, this massive stone is one of a number of such natural features which have been chosen as evidence of Arthur's prodigious strength. Here, as in the several 'Arthur's Stones' found as all over the land, most are the focus of local legends, in which Arthur appears as a giant and either engages in some rough sport in which huge boulders are tossed about, or finds a stone in his shoe and flings it several miles. Any original connection with Arthur has not survived. www.anglesey-history.co.uk

CAERLEON ON USK, GWENT

Here, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth's 12th century 'History of the Kings of Britain' was Arthur's chief city, rivaling the later Camelot in its splendour. Here Arthur is crowned and holds his first court, presiding over a rich company. The present site contains the ruins of a Roman amphitheatre and extensive buildings including bath houses and a military barracks. Until recent times a central earth-mound was known as 'The Round Table'. The town's Roman name, City of the Legions (Caer-Leon) has suggested a possible site of the 9th of the twelve great battles fought between Arthur and the Saxons. www.caerleon-tourism.org

DINAS BRAN, GLAMORGAN WALES

Above the north side of the Vale of Llangollen rises the high and remote hill of Dinas Bran, named after the Celtic god. On the brow of the hill stand the dramatic remains of a medieval castle, believed by some Arthurian experts to be the original model for the castle of the Grail. Bran, who was wounded in the thigh by a poisoned spear, may have been the origin of the mysterious Fisher King, the Grail's guardian who also suffered from such a wound. The 13th century romance 'Perlesvaus' mentions Dinas Bran as the actual Grail castle. www.borderlands.co.uk



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