



WARWICK CASTLE

THE GAOL (JAIL)

The Gaol, which is the true Dungeon at Warwick Castle, has been in place almost certainly as long as the great tower above it.

Caesar's Tower would have been used for accommodation and to house noble prisoners captured in battle, who would be treated according to their station whilst awaiting the payment of their ransom.

Below ground in the Gaol however it was a different matter for the poor unfortunates imprisoned within it's walls. Within this cold, dark place they would have had little food and would certainly have endured torture and beatings from their jailors. Around the walls of the dungeon can be found graffiti scratched into the stone by prisoners some from the 14th and 15th Centuries possibly captured in battle during the hundred years war, other graffiti can be found put there by Royalist prisoners captured during the English civil wars. The civil war is the last recorded period that the Warwick castle Gaol was used.

Probably the most gruesome aspect of the Gaol is it's oubliette. This is a small grated pit barely large enough for a man to stand up in. The word oubliette comes from the French verb oublier, which means to forget. If you were condemned to the oubliette you were likely to be forgotten and destined to a slow agonising death.

It is likely to be no coincidence that the religious graffiti in this area of the dungeon is close to the only light source. Imprisoned down here you would have had little hope, only God. One has to wonder if the prisoners have created an Alter to God down here.

