

What lurks in the cellar

All you ever wanted to know about cellars.....

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Why have one?

- They were very expensive to build – even in 1700's
- Coal – dirty – need lots of this and don't want it upstairs
- Cool – root vegetable storage, wine, ice (if you're very rich)
- Kitchen – if you were very rich and had a massive house
- Rarely ever originally used for accommodation - damp

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How were they made?

- Mostly “barrel vaulted” – but not always
- Technique originated in Mesopotamia (Iraq)
- Adopted by the Romans (originally for sewers)
- Technique spread throughout France
- Eventually came to the UK via Normans and churches.





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How else were they made?

- Other techniques used simple excavation
- Supporting beams (oak ships timbers)
- Cheaper than barrel vaulted
- More spacious – particularly ceiling heights





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Converting cellars to suit modern needs – some problems

- Damp (they were never designed for accommodation)
- Electrical equipment (motors) can fail if dampness too high
- Floor, walls need to be isolated and sumps installed
- But once done – the space can be fabulous











A man with short blonde hair and glasses, wearing a light blue shirt and dark pants, is seated at a desk on the left. He is looking at a laptop with an Apple logo. He is wearing a white office chair with a black base.

A woman with long brown hair and glasses, wearing a white sweater with a black pattern and black pants, is seated at a desk on the right. She is looking at a laptop. She is wearing a black office chair with a yellow backrest.



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But what if you're too poor for a fancy conversion?

Can you use your cellar for other things?

Yes – but some watch outs

- Ventilation has to be excellent (a breeze running through)
- Heating helps a lot (even more important in summer)







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Other fun uses for cellars over the years?



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- Hangings (Water Tower Street)



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- Prostitution (Number 6 Kings Buildings)





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Other fun uses for cellars over the years?

- Hangings (Water Tower Street)
- Prostitution (Number 6 Kings Buildings)
- A place to dump building waste before skips were invented

Thank you for listening