

Children find castles exciting. Even the most ruined castle can help bring history to life and fire the imagination. This resource focuses on the castles of the Middle Ages and their transformation into elaborate mansions of the 18th century.

# INVESTIGATING CASTLES IN SCOTLAND

Information for teachers



EDUCATION



INVESTIGATING HISTORIC SITES: PLACES



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Cover image: Caerlaverock Castle

## Using this resource

This resource is designed for teachers who are investigating the exciting theme of castles in Scotland with their classes. It aims to help teachers make the link between work in the classroom and work on-site. It is most suitable for lower to middle primary classes, though some of the background information may be of use for older classes.

Please note that the material is intended for teacher use, and while elements may be suitable for more able pupils, it is not designed to be copied and distributed to pupils. Suggestions for suitable pupil material are provided.

This resource includes:

- a brief overview of the development and decline of castles in Scotland
- background information about castle life, including attack and defence
- suggestions for preparatory, on-site and follow-up activities
- notes showing how site visits can contribute to delivery of Curriculum for Excellence

### Castles: an introduction

For more than 3,000 years people have constructed fortifications in Scotland both to protect the people within and to defend against outside attack. Fortifications include forts, brochs, defensive walls, castles, defensive earthworks and military gun batteries. They date from the late Bronze Age remains from 900 BC found at Edinburgh Castle rock to the military defences on Inchcolm island built during the Second World War. Even today, we still have state 'forts' in our protected military bases, and defend our own houses with gates, walls and burglar alarms.

The most eye-catching of these fortifications are the castles built during the late Middle Ages (1100–1650). There are well over 1,000 of them, many in the care of Historic Scotland. Some are roofless ruins; others are grand family homes even today. Some have been adapted and modified over the years, while others were abandoned as the owners rebuilt on a grander scale. Only the faintest traces remain to show that some castles ever existed. Others are still the focal points of their area and are major tourist attractions.

Castles were introduced into Scotland in the 12th century by David I. They were designed to be fortified homes for the monarchy and landowning aristocracy, from where they could run their estates and administer law and order locally. They were places of protection, where the lord and lady, their household and tenants could defend themselves from attack. Castles were often sited to protect and defend important river or border crossings, seaports, land, or valuable assets such as silver mines.

As society in Scotland developed during the course of the later Middle Ages, so too did the role of the castle. Central government became stronger, so castles declined in importance. Gradually, they evolved into stately mansions. Even after they ceased to be necessary, landowners continued to build their houses to look like castles.

### Site visits

Curriculum for Excellence aspires to motivate and challenge pupils through a wide range of learning experiences. Site visits have a particular role to play in joining up learning outcomes in a genuinely cross-curricular way, and in their capacity to offer learners a degree of personalisation and choice. **See page 4 for more detailed links to Curriculum for Excellence.**





## Booking a visit

Historic Scotland holds the key to the nation's historic environment, caring for 345 historic sites across Scotland. Many of these are staffed, while others are unstaffed with minimal visitor facilities. A list of relevant castles and fortifications can be found on page 35. Visits to most of our castles by booked education groups are FREE.

### Contact details

Historic Scotland Education Unit  
Tel: 0131 668 8793/8736  
Email: [heducation@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:heducation@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)  
[www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk)

To book a visit to any of the Historic Scotland sites featured in this booklet, please call the number above or for the sites listed in Themed Visits on pages 36–7, contact the sites direct on the numbers given.

Two types of visit are currently available for schools:

#### Teacher-led visits

Teachers are encouraged to lead their own class visits to our sites. All visits must be booked. Historic Scotland operates a year-round free admission scheme for teacher-led educational visits. The exceptions to this are visits to Stirling Castle and Edinburgh Castle during the months of May–August inclusive, when there is a charge.

Site investigation packs for many of the castles and fortifications featured in this pack are available to download from the Historic Scotland website. These contain background information, a suggested tour route and notes for activities and discussion.

#### Special events and activities for schools

Many sites run special activity sessions for school groups. To book or to find out more about these activities, contact the Education Unit on the number above, or look at our Schools Activity Programme on the website. There is usually a small charge for these activities.

### Travel subsidy scheme

Schools can apply for a travel subsidy to visit any Historic Scotland site. This provides financial assistance with transportation costs between the school and the chosen site. To find out more about the scheme, please call the Education Unit, or download an application form from our website.

### Risk assessment

Risk assessment of the site is the responsibility of the teacher in charge of the group. To assist with this, hazard information sheets are available on the Historic Scotland website, or contact the Education Unit for more information.

We strongly encourage teachers to make a free pre-visit themselves before bringing a class. This gives teachers the chance to carry out a risk assessment, try out material, meet site staff and become familiar with the site. Please discuss this when booking your class visit.



*Urquhart Castle occupies a strong defensive position on the shore of Loch Ness.*



## Supporting learning and teaching

### Curriculum for Excellence

Curriculum for Excellence presents teachers with an unrivalled opportunity to make the most of site visits, both in specific curriculum areas and through cross-curricular studies.

The guiding principles behind Curriculum for Excellence are at the heart of learning activities suggested here and in our downloadable site investigation packs. While providing guidance and suggested activities for teachers or parent helpers who are unfamiliar with the topic and the site, they aim to build in opportunities for personalisation and choice and for pupils to set their own research goals and targets. Suggested activities should be regarded as a starting point; ideally, pupils, if properly prepared, will be setting their own agenda on-site and understanding the purpose and relevance of all activities and of their visit.

The power of learning outside the classroom is well-documented, as pupils benefit from learning in context and through experience and place. The less formal environment can have positive effects on social development as a different kind of relationship develops among pupils and between pupils and staff.

Most teachers will be visiting a historic site to support ongoing work in achieving outcomes in *Social Studies: people, past events and societies*. More broadly speaking, a visit can help support the development of the four broad capacities of Curriculum for Excellence, as outlined in the panel opposite.

A visit and use of any supporting material will help to:

#### Develop successful learners by

- Exploring places, investigating artefacts and discussing the past
- Encouraging pupils to think critically about the nature of historical evidence and arrive at their own conclusions
- Making links between current and previous knowledge
- Providing a real context for learning which helps to bring the past to life

#### Develop confident individuals by

- Providing opportunities for pupils to share and present their learning to others using a range of media
- Giving pupils opportunities to communicate their own views on historical events and issues raised during the visit

#### Develop responsible citizens by

- Encouraging greater understanding of and respect for their own historic and built environment
- Experiencing examples of the work of historians, archaeologists and conservationists and understanding why this is important

#### Develop effective contributors by

- Encouraging pupils to record and express their observations following on-site investigations
- Providing pupils with the opportunity to develop life skills such as photography during their visit





## Learning in Social Studies

Most teachers will be visiting a castle to support ongoing work in achieving outcomes in *Social Studies: people, past events and societies*. A study of castles with a focus on a site visit will help pupils work towards the following broad outcomes:

Children and young people participating in experiences and outcomes in Social Studies will:

- *develop an understanding of how Scotland has developed as a nation, resulting in an appreciation of their local and national heritage within the global community* by considering the impact of the castle on their local environment
- *broaden their understanding of the world by learning about human activities and achievements in the past and present* by finding out how people lived in the past in their local area through investigating places and researching objects
- *develop their understanding of their own values, beliefs and cultures and those of others* by comparing society in the past with how we live now
- *learn how to locate, explore and link periods, people and events in time and place* by focusing on a series of events in the past
- *learn how to locate, explore and link features and places locally and further afield* by using maps to plot the location of a castle and consider the reason for its location
- *establish firm foundations for lifelong learning and for further specialised study and careers* by developing life skills such as photography and understanding more about jobs in conservation and heritage



## Cross-curricular studies

Curriculum for Excellence actively promotes learning beyond subject boundaries. A site visit offers obvious learning opportunities across many curricular areas in addition to Social Subjects. Key areas are as follows:

### Literacy

Pupils will read and write, talk and listen as they find out about their chosen castle and express what they have learned. Activities on-site will promote listening and talking in groups. There are opportunities for reading as they research the society and relevant sites and for producing functional, personal and imaginative writing for a range of audiences.

### Numeracy

Pupils will have authentic, contextualised opportunities to develop their skills and confidence in numeracy. A site visit provides opportunities to count, estimate, measure and plot; to collect, handle and present data.

### Expressive Arts

Many pupils have strong reactions to historic sites such as castles, which may be expressed and explored through art and design, music, dance or drama. Some schools may use their visit as a springboard for exploring the traditional music of Gaelic and Scots.







### Using ICT to promote learning

There are several activities suggested within this pack for utilising the power of technology to motivate and challenge pupils. Key examples are:

- Pupils can become familiar with how to use data-base websites such as [www.scran.ac.uk](http://www.scran.ac.uk) to stimulate questioning and provide background information before and after a visit
- Pupils can take photographs of the site using digital cameras. At a lower level, these can be used to design postcards which can be sold as part of an enterprise project. At a higher level, these can be developed into a PowerPoint-type presentation about their visit or as evidence to support their research findings. Pupils can learn how to embed photographs within text documents as part of a class or school newsletter, or on a school website.
- Pupils can storyboard, script and film or audio-record their own responses to or recreations of events which took place at the visited site.



*Both primary and secondary pupils enjoy investigating siege engines.*





## Integrating a visit with classroom studies

Your visit to your chosen castle site will have the greatest value if it is planned into a scheme of work in advance. The activities which follow are suggestions designed to supplement ongoing classroom work.

### Before your visit

- Discuss with pupils what they think a castle is. What kind of people lived there? What kind of people worked there? Do people still live in castles today? What makes a castle different from a house?
- Many castle buildings have evolved over several centuries. If your focus is on life in the castle, it is probably best to focus on just one period, ideally one which has been well researched so as to include the names of the family who lived there.
- To help develop a sense of time and chronology in your pupils, make a large timeline together. This can be made on a long strip of paper, or use a piece of string on which events and dates can be pegged. Mark the current year at the right-hand end of the string, then help your pupils count backwards, ideally in decades ('2010, 2000, 1990, 1980,...'). This will be a useful tool for discussion of dates, decades, centuries, how many years ago, etc.
- Investigate key events which took place at the castle and add these to your timeline.
- Pupils might also like to find out about how the castle was built: what materials were used, where these came from, who built it. The website [www.guedelon.fr](http://www.guedelon.fr) explores an ambitious project to build a castle in France using entirely 13th-century methods.
- Develop a class dictionary of key terms associated with castles. This will make it easier to discuss the castle on-site. Key terms include *arrow slit*, *chamber*, *crenellations* and *merlons*, *curtain wall*, *drawbridge*, *dungeon*, *garderobe*, *great hall*, *gunloop*, *gunport*, *machicolations*, *moat*, *motte and bailey*, *murder hole*, *spiral stair*. Although some of these terms sound overly technical, they are quite precise and your pupils will enjoy the opportunity to use them.
- If possible, involve pupils in planning your visit. Help them collect information about the site, using Historic Scotland guidebooks and website or the useful Undiscovered Scotland website ([www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk](http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk))
- Pupils gain most from their visit if they have a clear idea of why they are going. Help define this with them in advance, and help them to see the site as a resource, a source of evidence. For example, you might set pupils challenges such as: 'What was it like to live and work in a castle?', 'How did people inside the castle defend themselves against attack?'. When pupils visit the castle, they can collect evidence based on what they see or experience, which they can share with the rest of the group afterwards.
- Discuss with pupils in advance how they might collect evidence on-site. They could describe, draw, or photograph what they see. Can they design a pro-forma for collecting evidence themselves?
- If your site was the location for a specific incident, for example the siege of Kildrummy Castle in 1306, help pupils research this in advance. They could then script some short scenes to perform when in the castle itself. These could be photographed and used to create a 'photo story'. Such work could also lead into further research into suitable costumes and so on.





## Working on-site

- Many of the sites mentioned in this booklet also have accompanying downloadable tours. These provide background information, points for discussion and suggested activities for that particular site. These can be found on our website: [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk)
- Consider the location of the castle. Why do pupils think it was built exactly here? Does the castle have good vantage points which might be important for defence? Does it make use of any natural features such as hills, cliffs, or rivers to add to its defensive strength?
- Also from our website you can download a general Evidence Record, on which pupils can record evidence about what they see around them. Otherwise pupils can look for, interpret and record evidence in a range of ways – through drawing, writing, photography, etc.
- If pupils have defined their 'mission' for visiting the site in advance, for example, to find out what life was like for people working in the castle, this will provide the main focus for the visit. Pupils can collect and record evidence about this in a range of ways as they go around.
- If pupils have prepared short scenes to perform in the castle, make sure they have time for a short rehearsal and then performance. Take photographs – or appoint official photographers – so that the pictures can be used back in class.
- Some castles have access to the Historic Scotland *Investigating Objects from the Past: Medieval Castle Life: Handling Box*, which contains replica objects relating to castle life. This may be used on-site by pupils when visiting. Please ask when booking. For further details about this box, see page 29.



*Pupils working on-site*

## Follow-up work

Following the visit pupils can pool their findings to form a broad view of the castle. This material can then be used as the basis for a number of presentation activities, for example:

- using the evidence they have found to complete a research project
- preparing their own guidebook to the site
- preparing a slide show with commentary about the site and their visit to show another class
- designing a poster or leaflet to promote the site, incorporating photographs or artwork
- drawing and producing postcards or other souvenirs of the site as part of an enterprise project

There is also scope for pupils to respond imaginatively and expressively to the site, for example by:

- writing diary entries for an imagined site inhabitant or writing imagined newspaper reports describing an incident in the history of the castle
- using drama or role play to investigate the feelings of those involved in an event at the site
- describing their own reactions to the site through simple poems
- using a combination of photography and artwork to 'rebuild' the site, perhaps creating a class frieze of the castle, either as it was in the past, or as it is now

Pupils could make a large-scale model of the castle – or part of the castle – in the classroom, using cardboard boxes as a starting point. Pupils in groups could use construction kits such as Lego to design their own castles in response to a design brief.

Following discussion of the construction of the castle, pupils could be challenged to design tools such as cranes to make it easier to lift heavy loads.





**Visit:** Antonine Wall, Ardoch Camp, Broch of Gurness, Burghead Well, Castlelaw Fort, Chesters Hill Fort, Dun Carloway Broch, Dunadd Fort, Glenelg Brochs, Mousa Broch

## The rise and fall of castles in Scotland

This section outlines the development of a wide range of fortifications, and highlights key examples which you can visit with your class. Sites suggested are shown on a map on page 34. Terms in *italics* are explained in the Glossary on page 38.

### Early fortifications (1500 BC–AD 1100)

The earliest remains of defended settlements in Scotland are the *hill forts* of the Bronze and Iron Ages, dating from around 1500 BC. These ranged from simple fortified settlements built of stone and timber to more elaborate ring forts surrounded by a series of ditches and earth dykes. Other defensive structures were built on specially constructed islands, known as *crannogs*.



Rough Castle, Antonine Wall

Particularly in the west of Scotland, circular forts known as *duns*, from the Scots Gaelic *dùn* (fortification), were built with very thick stone walls which enclosed a courtyard containing timber buildings. Today, in most cases, little remains of these forts apart from earthworks, but their locations are often evocative and dramatic and well worth a visit.

More substantial remains survive of *brochs*. These stone towers are structures unique to Scotland and were mostly built between 100 BC and AD 100. They tapered to a height of around 9 metres and could be as much as 20 metres in diameter. Around some brochs you can see the remains of a village, evidence of the wider community who would have come into the broch for protection if under attack.

Around AD 79 the Romans invaded Scotland and occupied the country intermittently until around AD 213. The most significant of surviving Roman fortifications is the **Antonine Wall**, which stretched from the Firth of Clyde to the Firth of Forth; pre-dating the wall, however, are the remains of Roman camps and other forts and watchtowers.

Others in Scotland also left their mark on the landscape during this time. The Britons of Strathclyde built forts at Dundonald and Dumbarton, the Scoti from Ireland made **Dunadd Fort**, south of Kilmartin, the capital of their kingdom of Dál Riata, and remains of Pictish forts can be seen at Urquhart Castle, Burghead and Auchindoun.



Broch of Gurness, Orkney, an outstanding example of an Iron Age broch



**Visit:** Aberdour Castle, Bishop's Palace, Crookston Castle, Coulter Motte, Cubbie Row, Druchtag Motte, Duffus Castle, Edinburgh Castle, Huntly Castle, Stirling Castle



*Druchtag Motte, an example of a motte and bailey castle*

*An artist's impression of the motte and bailey at Duffus Castle*



### Early castles (1100–1200)

When the Normans under William the Conqueror invaded England in 1066, they brought with them their castle-building techniques. David I of Scotland (1124–1153) invited the Normans to settle in Scotland. He and they built our first castles. David's grandsons continued the tradition and by the end of the 12th century there were castles all over what was then Scotland.

Most of these first-generation castles were built using earthwork and timber. They were normally built in naturally defensive positions, such as on a commanding rock, as at **Edinburgh** or **Stirling**, or beside a river crossing or loch, as at **Urquhart** or **Huntly**. These castles served as well-defended residences for the landowner and his household, and the base for local administration and law and order.

Castles built in the more stable heart of the kingdom (essentially the south and east, but not Galloway) were relatively modest in defensive terms. At his home of **Crookston**, Robert Croc built a *ringwork*, a courtyard level with the surrounding ground and protected

only by an encircling earthen bank with a stout wooden fence or *palisade* on top. However, lords living on the more remote fringes of the realm found it wise to build castles based on a new design brought to Scotland with the Normans: the *motte and bailey*. **Druchtag Motte** in Galloway is one of these.

The *motte* was a huge mound, either natural or constructed from earth. On top of the motte was built a wooden tower or *keep*, surrounded by a palisade. The tower was usually where the lord and his family lived. Next to the motte, but separated from it by a deep ditch, was a defended courtyard known as the *bailey*. Inside the bailey were a gathering hall, a chapel, stables, workshops and other service buildings.

There are over 250 motte castles in Scotland today, but many of them are hard to find, as they were often replaced by stone castles at a later date. **Duffus Castle** in Moray is particularly interesting: the original wooden tower was later replaced with a stone one, but the motte buckled under the increased weight. You can still see how the stone castle slipped downhill.

Earth and timber were the main building materials, but stone *was* used, particularly for higher-status structures. St Margaret's Chapel, in **Edinburgh Castle**, built around 1130, may well have been part of the royal family's residential tower there. Ironically, the best-preserved stone keeps built by Scottish kings now lie in England: Carlisle Castle and Bamburgh Castle built when Cumbria and Northumbria were under Scottish control (1130s–1150s). The only surviving Norman keep in Scotland is at **Aberdour**. In the parts of Scotland which were held by Norway at this time stone keeps survive at **Cubbie Row**, Orkney and **Old Wick**, Caithness.





**Visit:** Balvenie, Bothwell, Caerlaverock, Craigmillar, Dirleton, Dundonald, Dunstaffnage, Hailes, Inverlochy, Kildrummy, Loch Doon, Lochmaben, Rothesay, St Andrews, Skipness, Sween, Tantallon, Urquhart



*Dunstaffnage Castle, Argyll, is a good example of a curtain-walled castle.*

### Curtain-walled castles (1200–1350)

In the 13th century, noble families increasingly turned to stone to build their castles. These gave extra protection against more sophisticated siege weapons. Some castles, such as **Rothesay**, were built by men returning from the Crusades. They had seen how easily the mighty stone castles in the Holy Land withstood their own attacks. Castle owners realised that not only were stone castles stronger and more fire-resistant, but they added greatly to the status of the owner.

The first generation of these new stone castles comprised massive *curtain walls*, often more than 3 metres thick and up to 30 metres high. They might be rectangular as at **Sween**, polygonal as at **Dunstaffnage**, or circular as at **Rothesay**. By the mid-13th century lofty towers were being added to the curtain walls; **Dirleton** was among the first to include this feature. These walls provided not only a tough defensive barrier, but also additional opportunities for attacking from

positions along the top of the wall, high above, and from the towers to the side. All castles were defended by moats or deep ditches; others made additional use of natural defences such as hillocks, cliffs or rivers. **Tantallon**, built on a cliff-edge overlooking the Firth of Forth, was the last great curtain-walled castle to be built (around 1360). It is still immensely impressive today.

These castles were not indestructible, however, and could be destroyed or damaged by fire, battering rams, giant catapults called *trebuchets*, and, from the mid-15th century, by artillery such as cannon that used gunpowder. During the Wars of Independence (1296–1357) many castles, such as **Bothwell**, were badly damaged by invading English, while others, such as **Edinburgh**, were deliberately destroyed or *slighted* by the Scots in order to prevent their use by the invaders. In the 17th century, many surviving castles were so badly damaged by powerful guns that they were abandoned by their noble owners: **Caerlaverock** was attacked by the Covenanters in the 1640s, and **Tantallon** by Cromwell's invading army.



*Tantallon Castle, the last great curtain-walled castle to be built*



**Visit:** Aberdour, Auchindoun, Balvaird, Blackness, Broughty, Burleigh, Cardoness, Carnasserie, Carsluith, Castle Campbell, Clackmannan Tower, Claypotts, Corgarff, Craigmillar, Craignethan, Crichton, Crookston, Doune, Drumcoltran Tower, Dundonald, Edzell, Elcho, Glenbuchat, Greenknowe Tower, Hailes, Hermitage, Huntingtower, Kilchurn, Kinnaird Head, Kinneil House, Kisimul, Lochleven, Lochranza, MacLellan's, Muness, Newark Tower, Noltland, Orchardton, Ravenscraig, Rowallan, Scalloway, Scotstarvit Tower, Skipness, Smailholm Tower, Spynie Palace, Threave, Tolquhon



*Smailholm Tower, a modest tower-house castle*



*Doune Castle, a grand tower-house castle, built by the Duke of Albany*

### Tower-house castles (1300–1650)

At the end of the 13th and beginning of the 14th century, south and central Scotland was a dangerous place to live as bitter hostilities broke out between England and Scotland. Even during peacetime, reiving (cattle raiding) and clan feuds were rife, so more and more landed gentry defended themselves by constructing fortified tower houses.

These were usually smaller than curtain-walled castles but included many of the same features. The lord and lady and their family lived in a stone tower, and the surrounding *barmkin* or courtyard was defended by a stone wall of middling strength. The barmkin contained a hall, kitchen, barn, stables and workshops. The entrance to the

tower was sometimes at first-floor level as at **Threave**, or on the second floor as at **Lochleven**, and was reached by portable steps which could be pulled into the tower in times of attack.

Such tower-house castles were built by all landowners, great and small. At the top end of the scale were castles such as **Doune**, built by the Duke of Albany (third son of Robert II), **Spynie Palace**, built by the Bishop of Moray, and **Hermitage**, built by the 1st Earl of Douglas. These were almost on a par with the earlier great curtain-walled castles. At the other end of the scale were more modest castles such as **Corgarff**, built by the Forbeses, and **Smailholm Tower**, built by the Pringles. **Orchardton**, built by the Cairns family, is unique in being circular in shape.





**Visit:** Blackness, Cardoness, Craigmillar, Craignethan, Edinburgh, Hermitage, Newark, Noltland, Ravenscraig, Spynie Palace, St Andrews, Stirling, Tantallon, Threave

## Castles and cannon

From the early 1400s, gunpowder began to have an impact on castle design and by 1500, cannon had taken over from conventional weaponry such as longbows and trebuchets. The showdown between James II and the Black Douglasses in the early 1450s resulted in the building of Scotland's first purpose-built artillery fortifications at Threave. The artillery wall here included vertical gunholes in the shape of inverted keyholes. From then on, new castles such as those at **Ravenscraig**, **Cardoness** and **Newark** included gunholes like these in their design.

By 1500, gunpowder technology had developed to the extent that a new form of gunloop appeared, which was wide-mouthed and horizontal. This type first appeared in Scotland at **Dunbar** Castle around 1515, and was soon appearing elsewhere, for example at **Tantallon**, **Blackness** and **St Andrews**.

By 1550, cannon were becoming so powerful that they were making castles ineffective as defences. Cannonballs could blast through even the stoutest walls. In response, a new kind of fortification was developed, using the oldest of building materials: earth. Massive earthen mounds were built in front of castles which could soak up the incoming cannon balls much like a sponge soaks up water. This type of defence was invented in Italy and was known as the *trace Italienne*. You can still see examples of the *trace Italienne* at **Hermitage**, **Tantallon** and **Huntly**.



*Vertical gunholes at Threave Castle*



*A horizontal gunloop at Blackness Castle*



*Hermitage Castle, built by the 1st Earl of Douglas*



*The great cannon known as Mons Meg, still on display at Edinburgh Castle, arrived in Scotland from the Continent in 1457.*



**Visit:** Aberdour, Carnasserie, Castle Campbell, Claypotts, Craigmillar, Crichton, Doune, Earl's Palace, Edinburgh, Edzell, Elcho, Greenknowe Tower, Huntingtower, Huntly, Kinneil House, Linlithgow, McLellan's, Newark, Rowallan, Stirling, Tolquhon

## The castle as residence

The design of castles changed in response both to technical advances in weaponry and to changes in society. As Scotland became more peaceful under the Stewart monarchs, gradually style and comfort became more important than defence. Castles became places in which to live and entertain, rather than defensive bases. The royal palaces at **Stirling** and **Linlithgow** led the way in these developments, employing skilled craftspeople to create elegant, highly decorative bases for the royal court.

These changes filtered down through society. Owners added fashionable wings to their castles and tower houses and some castles, such as **Claypotts**, were built in a Z shape, with two wings jutting out from a central tower. Some castles were built from scratch to new designs, for example the airy and elegant **Earl's Palace** in Kirkwall – though it is doubtful whether the enslaved workers who built it appreciated its graceful design.



*A water spout carved to look like a cannon at MacLellan's Castle*



*A painted ceiling in Aberdour Castle*



*The airy and elegant Earl's Palace, Kirkwall*



*The Palace block at Stirling Castle*

All across the land new features were being added to existing castles. They included such delights as the diamond-shaped decoration of the courtyard of **Crichton Castle**, dating from the 1580s, the open-sided walkway or *loggia* in the courtyard of **Castle Campbell**, and the lovely walled garden at **Edzell Castle**. Thick, almost windowless walls gave way to walls with large windows which allowed light to flood into spacious rooms. The palace at **Huntly** is a good example of these changing styles, and shows the influence of features from French chateaux around the 1550s. Some castles, such as **Tolquhon**, built in the 1580s, included gunholes that were more for show than any real defensive intention. At **Aberdour**, **Huntingtower** and **Kinneil House** you can still see beautifully painted ceilings and walls and at **Newark** and **Rowallan** you can still see some of the timber fixtures in the bedchambers.





**Visit:** Argyll's Lodging, Balvenie, Blackness, Bothwell, Broughty, Corgarff, Crookston, Duff House, Dumbarton, Edinburgh, Kinnaird Head, Ruthven Barracks, Stirling

## The decline of castles

In many cases, older castles were adapted by their owners to make them suitable for more modern ways of living, but others, such as **Crichton**, were simply abandoned and left to fall into ruins, their stone often recycled into other, humbler building projects. Their wealthy landowners built grand new residences nearby instead, such as the Earl of Forfar's Bothwell House (1690s) and William Duff's Balvenie House in the 1720s. Another William Duff, Earl of Fife, built **Duff House**, designed by leading architect William Adam in the 1730s.

Other castles were completely remodelled for different purposes. The royal castles of **Edinburgh** and **Stirling** became garrison strongholds for the British army. Their medieval

great halls were divided up internally to create much-needed barracks rooms. The Gordons' castle at **Ruthven** was demolished altogether and replaced by a new barracks after the 1715 Jacobite Rising, whilst **Corgarff** was gutted and rebuilt internally following the 1745 Rising to form a barracks for around 50 men.

**Kinnaird Head** was turned into one of Scotland's first lighthouses in the 1780s. In the later 19th century **Broughty Castle** was converted into a coastal defence to counter the threat from Russia, whilst **Blackness Castle** was converted into Scotland's central ammunitions depot, serving the gun batteries of the Firth of Forth. During the Second World War the castles at **Dumbarton** and **Crookston** became anti-aircraft ('ak-ak') stations.



*Ruthven Barracks occupies the site of a former castle.*



*Kinnaird Head became one of Scotland's first lighthouses.*



*Duff House, the elegant residence built by William Duff, Earl of Fife*



**Visit:** Fort George, Fort Charlotte, Hackness Battery and Martello Tower, Inchcolm Island

### New fortifications

In the modern era, entirely new fortifications and defences were built. They included **Fort George**, built after the 1745 Rising as the British army's main base in the Highlands. The fort still houses a large garrison today. In Shetland, **Fort Charlotte** was substantially rebuilt in the 1780s for defence against the Russians and French. **Hackness Battery and Martello Tower** in Orkney were built in the 1810s to help defend the Scapa Flow anchorage during the war with the United States. Finally, new gun emplacements were built on **Inchcolm Island** in the Forth during the Second World War.



*A gun emplacement on Inchcolm Island*



*Fort George, built as the British army's base after the 1745 Jacobite Rising*





## Castles today

Many of Scotland's castles survive only as ruins. A few today are in the hands of the families whose ancestors built them: **Blair Castle**, and **Thirlestane Castle** are examples of these. Many, such as **Kisimul Castle**, Barra, are cared for by the state through Historic Scotland, while others, such as the iconic **Eilean Donan Castle**, are maintained by charities or trusts such as the National Trust for Scotland.

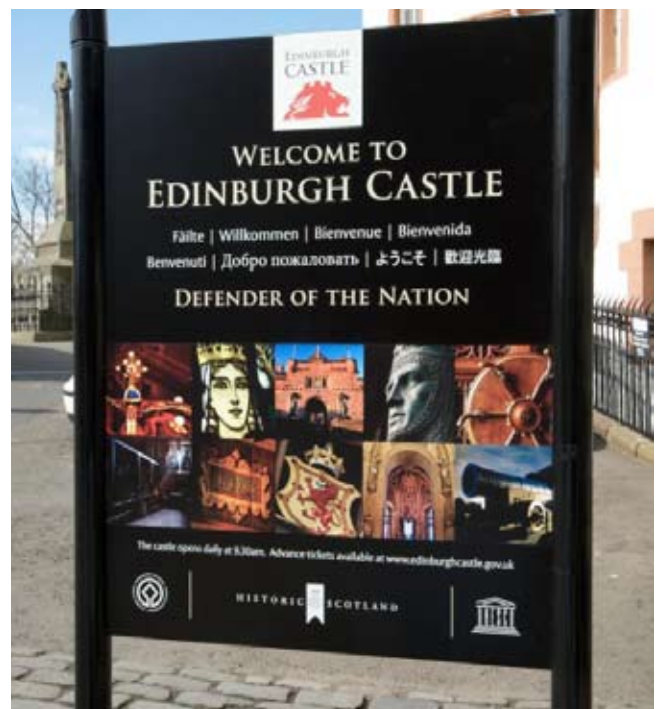
Some still perform a role not so different from their original one: **Edinburgh Castle**, as well as being a major tourist attraction is still an army garrison. But the main role of most castles today is as tourist attractions: generating funds for the conservation of the building, offering employment, and providing a tangible source of evidence for learning about Scotland's past and the lives of the people who once lived within the castle walls.



*Kisimul Castle, spectacularly sited on a rock in a bay and accessible by boat*

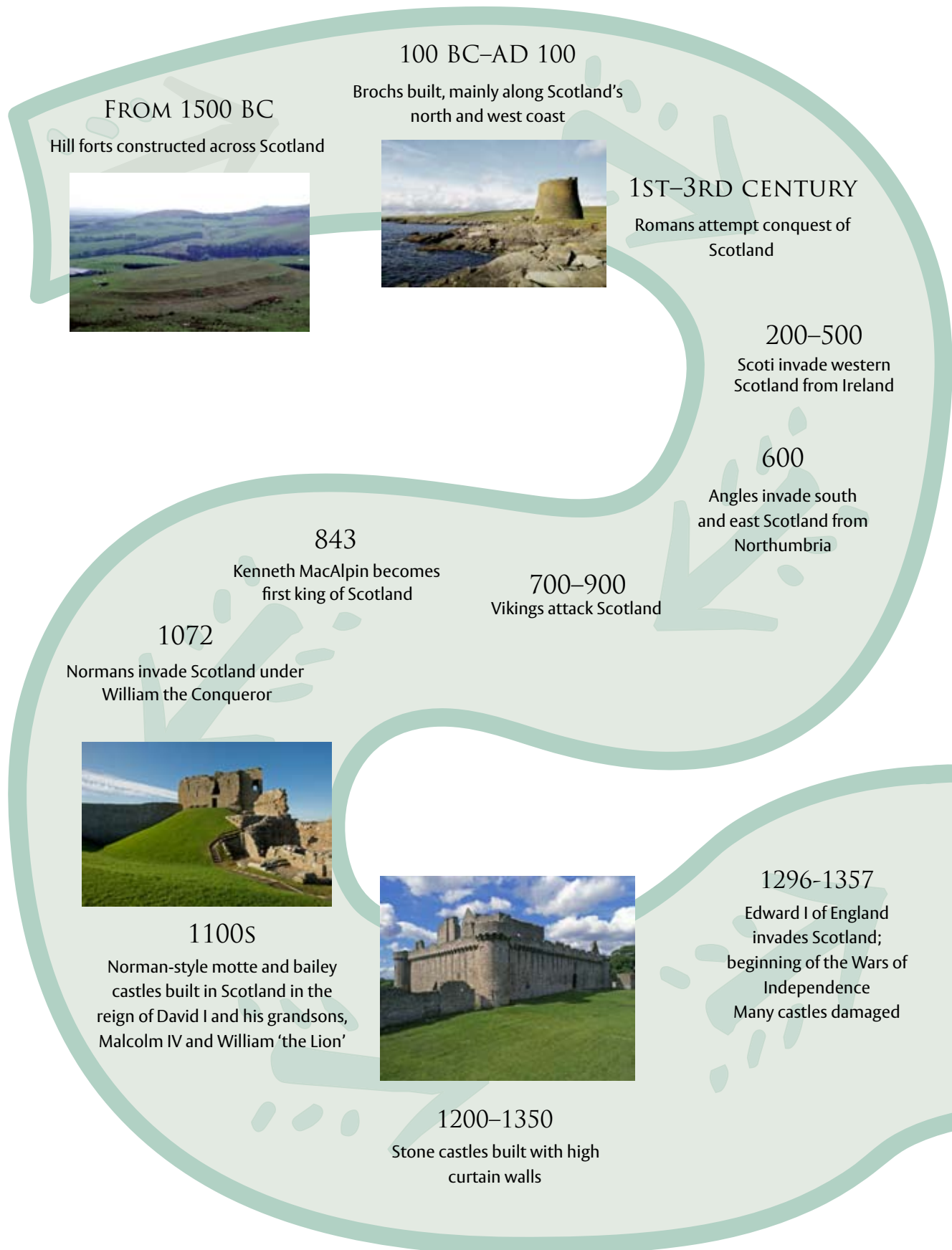


*Edinburgh Castle attracts over a million visitors every year.*





## The rise and fall of castles, a timeline







1939–45  
Second World War  
Crookston and Dumbarton used  
as anti-aircraft stations  
Gun emplacements built on  
Inchcolm Island

1999

The Great Hall at Stirling  
Castle is restored to its 1504  
condition



2010

Over a million people visit  
Edinburgh Castle every year

1908

Scalloway Castle, Shetland, is  
the first castle to be taken into  
state care

1800s

Many castles fall into  
decline

1750–1800

Fort George built  
A few castles adapted for  
military purposes after the  
Jacobite risings

LATE 1600S–  
MID-1700S

Jacobite wars: former castles  
used as garrisons; many  
castles damaged



1300–1650  
Tower-house castles built

1450s  
ONWARDS

Gun-powdered artillery  
such as cannon begin to  
be used



1500s

Castles become more  
decorative and elegant  
domestic residences; new  
earthwork defences built

MID-1600S

Many castles damaged  
by Covenanted Wars  
and Cromwell's  
invading army



### Look out for

- Look out for stonemasons' marks on castle stones as you're walking round. Masons were paid by the stone, so they 'signed' each stone they finished with a special mark.
- Look out for family shields when you visit a castle. These include family symbols and patterns, and demonstrate who lived inside. If two important families were joined by marriage, the shield might include symbols from both families.



A mason's mark at Craignethan Castle



These marks in the wall at Dirleton Castle were made by guards sharpening their knives.

## Castle life

### The feudal system

In the Middle Ages only a few people owned land. Land was granted to loyal supporters of the Crown in exchange for military service. These Crown tenants were the lords. They were the king's representatives, who administered law and order in their area from their castle headquarters.

In turn, these lords let other people, or *vassals*, use parcels of their land in exchange for services. These services could be military (for example, providing knights to fight), ceremonial (for example, being a standard bearer) or practical (for example, supplying flour). The vassals were also given protection in times of conflict.

This system was known as the feudal system.



The duke's hall in Doune Castle, restored in 1883 to how it would have looked when the duke lived there.



Claypotts Castle, a castle built by a more modest landowner

### Home, business centre and workplace

Castles were at their height during the period 1200–1600. Many of the castles which survive to this day date from this period, and most of the features mentioned should be easily spotted at your local castle.

Castles varied enormously in size and scale according to the wealth and rank of their owners. **Doune Castle**, for example, was built for the son of Robert II, who ruled Scotland on behalf of his inept elder brother, while other castles, such as **Claypotts**, were built by more modest landowners. Whatever their size, castles served the same purposes: to protect the owner and provide a home for his family, and to act as a centre for the business of running the castle estates.

The castle was also the workplace for a large number of people, and as local people rented land from the owner, the castle was frequently the focus of activity in an area.





*Crichton Castle with the stable block on the left*



*The unusual horseshoe-shaped doorway of the stable block at Crichton Castle*

## The family

Castles were fitted out for the domestic and formal life of the lord and lady, their family and servants. The household had to be ready to accommodate high-ranking guests, even royalty, along with their households, so when a castle was occupied, it would have been very busy and crowded.

Significant members of the nobility, such as the Haliburtons of Dirleton, spent much time away from the castle attending to matters of court or politics. The family, servants and possessions would follow the lord around the country on longer visits, so all furniture had to be suitable for packing onto a baggage train.

The sons of noble families were often sent away to be educated, while daughters were educated at home.

## The household

The grander the family, the more people there were living in the household. There might be as many as 150 people working in and around the castle of an important lord. There were generally four key members of the household:

- **The steward:** the most important member of staff. He was in charge of the household and all its servants – the cooks, maidservants, carpenters, laundry maids, bakers, etc. He represented the lord when he was away, and dealt with taxes and rents. He was often a family member and enjoyed many privileges. You can see a steward's room at **MacLellan's Castle**, complete with its own fireplace, toilet and bed-closet.
- **The constable or keeper:** responsible for castle security. He was in charge of military personnel, porter, gaoler and watchmen. Many castles have guardrooms and lookout towers. At **Dirleton** you can see the marks where bored guards have sharpened their knives on the stones. **Urquhart** has a constable's suite of rooms, close to the porter's lodge and *portcullis*.
- **The marshal:** in charge of travel arrangements. He organised the horses and associated staff, such as grooms, farriers, smiths, carters and huntsmen. You can see a fine stable block at **Crichton**.
- **The chancellor or chaplain:** in charge of spiritual matters and the running of the castle chapel. He also wrote business and personal letters on behalf of the lord. **Craigmillar** has good chapel remains.



## The castle household



**Steward**



**Cooks**



**Bard**



**Piper**



**Doctor**



**Gentlemen  
Servants**



**Ladies-in-  
Waiting**



**Musicians**



**Stonemasons**



**Carpenters**



**Wardrobers**



**Tailor**



**Laundress**



**Undercooks**



**Larderers**



**Bakers**



**Alewife**



**Poulterers**



**Gardeners**



**Constable**



**Gunners**



**Men-at-arms**



**Armourers**



**Porters**



**Doorwards**

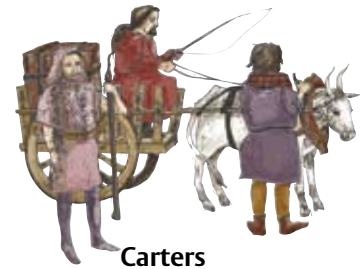




Marshall



Blacksmiths



Carters



Farriers



Muleteers



Boatmen



Stable Lads



Chaplain

Clerk of the  
Writing OfficeClerk of the  
Chapel

Choir Boys



Assistant Clerks



Sacristan



## Living in the castle

There was a clear hierarchy within the castle, in some cases literally set in stone:

- Beyond the castle walls was the **castle-toun**, containing middens where rubbish was dumped. Activities such as smithing would have taken place out there.
- The **service close** lay within the castle walls. This was where most of the servants worked, in storerooms, bakehouses, brewhouses and workshops.
- The **outer close** was dominated by the castle's great hall. People seeking an audience with the lord would be allowed that far.
- The **inner close** contained the private rooms for the lord and his family. Access to these areas was limited to family, close friends and trusted servants.
- A castle always had two entrances: a front entrance for the owner and his guest, and a *postern*, or back gate, for use by servants and workmen.

At **Urquhart** the different boundaries are well-defined.

Looking at the bare walls and roofless rooms of castles today, it is easy to gain the impression that life in castles must have been utterly cheerless. And by modern standards, castles were dark and cold. But when the noble family was in residence, the castle was transformed. Rooms were heated with blazing log fires and lit by candles, rush lights, or flaming torches made from rope treated with pitch. You can see vast fireplaces at most castles and at **Doune** you can see replica fire braziers in the centre of the great hall.



*A replica brazier in Doune Castle*



*Large windows allowed light to stream into the Earl's Palace, Kirkwall.*

Early castles have small windows, but those built later, such as the **Earl's Palace** in Kirkwall, have large windows through which light could stream in. Shutters, curtains and elaborate and beautifully woven wall hangings would have kept out the draughts and added to comfort.

Some castles still bear traces of their former decorative beauty. The amazing painted ceilings at **Huntingtower** and **Aberdour** show fabulous painted birds, animals and mythical creatures. The carved stonework at **Huntly** is still impressive, as is the warm, domestic decoration at **Tolquhon**. Other castles may have had carved wooden decorations, like the circular carved oak ceiling



*A painted ceiling in Huntingtower Castle*





### Did you know?

The six main rooms of the Royal Lodgings within the Palace at Stirling Castle are now presented as they may have looked in the 16th century, richly decorated and furnished for James V and his queen, Mary of Guise. They include magnificent four-poster beds and rich tapestries on the walls. At least one of the king's rooms had a panelled ceiling which included circular carved and painted heads, known today as the Stirling Heads. Replicas of these have been hand-carved and decorate the ceiling of the King's Inner Hall. The originals are on display on the upper floor of the Palace.

decorations at **Stirling**, known as the Stirling Heads. Walls, which are now bare stone, would have been plastered and may have been painted too. You can see traces of this at **Huntingtower** and **Kinneil House**.

Furniture and furnishings were simple and constructed so they could be dismantled, packed up and moved with the lord as he travelled around the country. This included in the early days the lord's 'board' or dining table, from which comes our phrase 'board and lodging'. Only the lord and his immediate family slept in beds. Servants slept near the fires on floors strewn with rushes. You can see replica four-poster beds at **Claypotts**, curtained for extra warmth, and an authentic wood-panelled bed-closet at **Newark**.

There was no running water in castles, but most had their own well within the castle walls. All water was carried in by servants, and tipped away down one of the slop-chutes after use. In many castles you can see *garderobes*, stone toilets with chutes which carried



*An artist painting a replica Stirling Head*

waste away outside. Elcho is particularly well-equipped in this respect. Toilets like these were draughty and from the 1590s were generally replaced by 'closed stools' which were emptied daily, a bit like portable toilets today. **Huntly** still has a wooden toilet seat, one of the oldest in Scotland!



*The well in Bothwell Castle*



*A toilet in Castle Campbell*



*An artist's impression of a castle bedchamber with four-poster bed*



*The dovecote at Aberdour Castle*



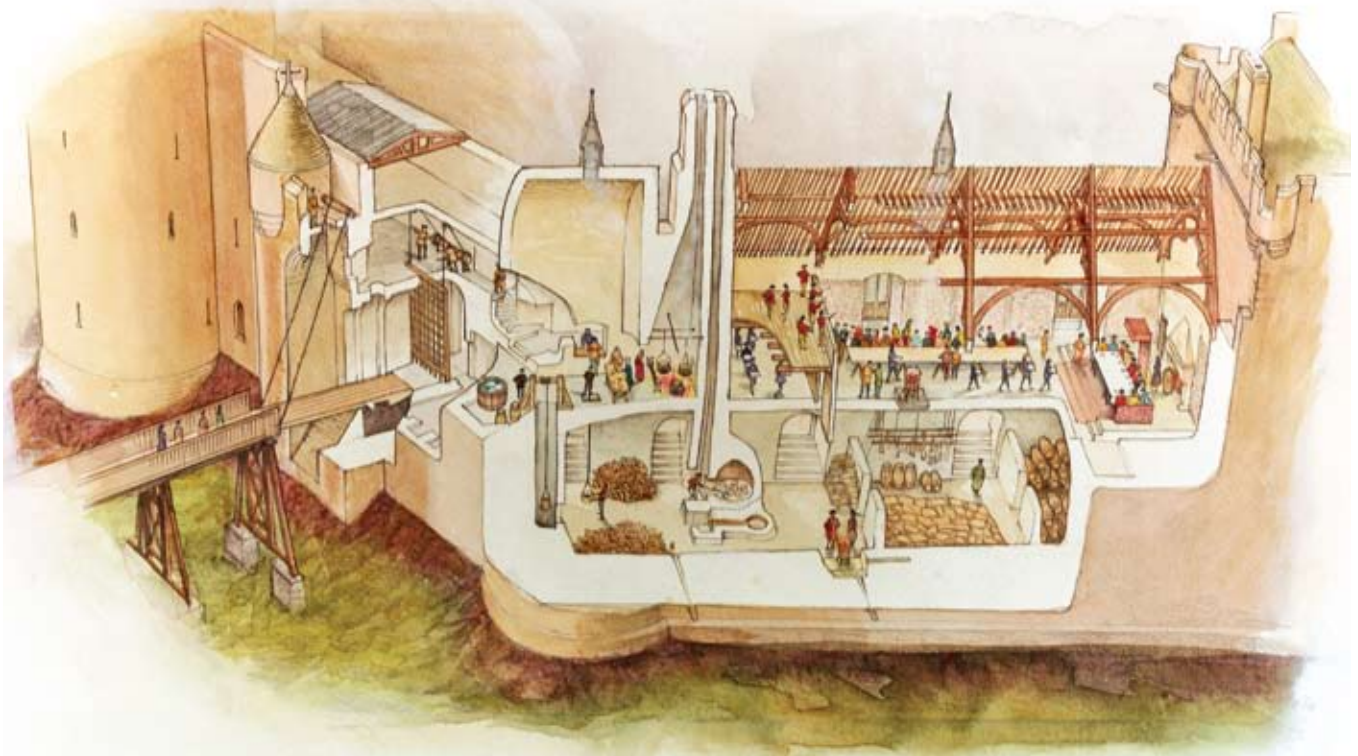
*The orchard at Aberdour Castle*

### Eating and drinking

Castle estates provided mutton, beef, pork. Small birds such as blackbirds were caught in traps and many castles had dovecots ('doo-cots') where pigeons were kept, providing a reliable source of fresh meat and eggs all year round. You can see a beehive-shaped dovecote at **Aberdour** and a lectern-type dovecote at **Tantallon**. Fish and eels were caught in estate rivers and lochs, or were farmed in a castle fishpond such as that at **Craigmillar**. An eel-spear is on display at Linlithgow. Hunting was not only a popular leisure activity for the nobility, it also supplied fresh meat: venison, boar, partridges, rabbits and hares. On special occasions there might be roast peacock or swan. Food was flavoured with herbs grown in the garden, or spices imported from abroad.

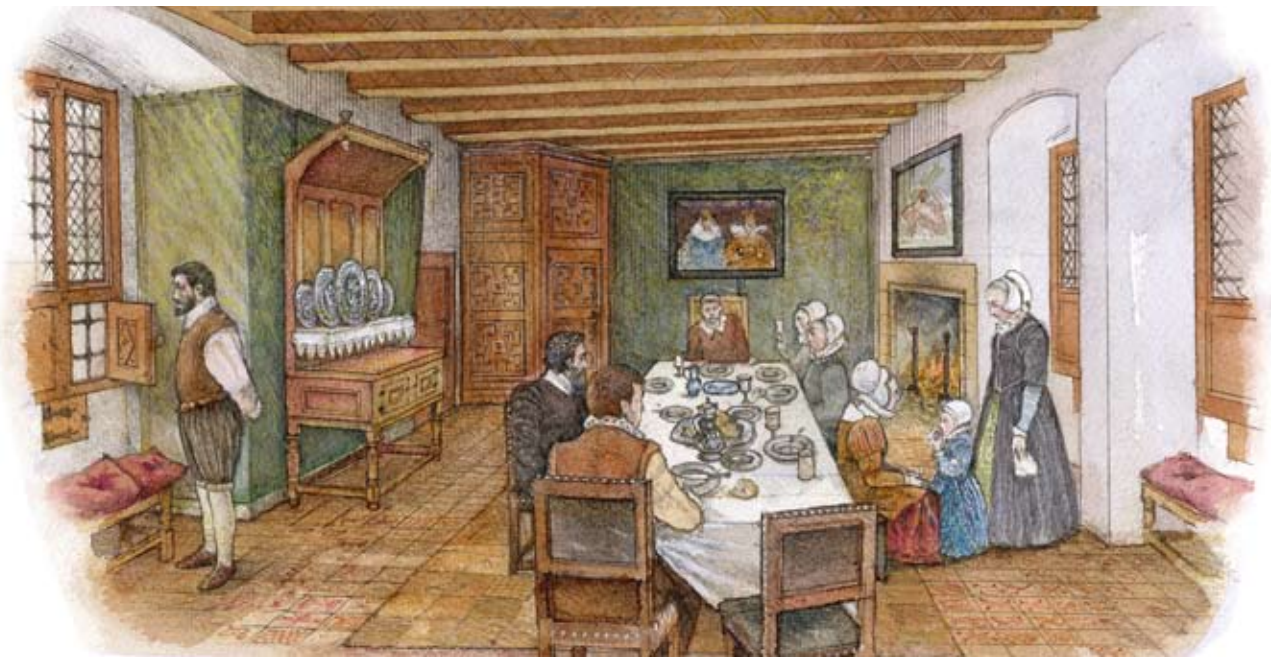
The main grain eaten was oats. This would have been grown on estate farms, or received as payment in kind from tenants. Castle gardens supplied fruit such as apples, pears, plums and quinces, and vegetables such as leeks, cabbages, onions and peas. You can get an idea of a 16th-century orchard by visiting the modern orchard at **Elcho**. Honey was used as a sweetener; at **Tolquhon** you can see alcoves in the wall where beehives were kept.

Food was preserved for winter use by salting, smoking, pickling and drying. In many castles, **Claypotts** for example, you can see alcoves by the fireplace where precious salt was stored. Many castles, such as **Dirleton**, have impressive cellars where food was stored. In times of conflict, these storerooms were packed with food to enable the castle to withstand a siege.



*A reconstruction drawing of Dirleton Castle showing halls and cellars*





*An artist's impression of family dining in Dirleton Castle*



*The cellars in Dirleton Castle as they look today*

Bread was baked on-site every day in bakehouses, and ale was brewed for all to drink. You can see good examples of a bakehouse and a brewhouse at **Huntly**. Many castles have a bake-oven beside their main kitchen fireplace.

Some meat was roasted over the huge fire in the kitchen. A servant, called a *turnbrochie*, often a young boy, sat close to the fire, turning the spit of roasting meat over the fire. Other food was boiled in a cauldron which hung over the fire, or was baked in a nearby oven. **Stirling Castle** has a wonderful reconstruction of a busy kitchen scene.



*At work in the kitchens of Stirling Castle*



## Entertainment

The main form of entertainment in a castle would have been the feasts on festival days or when important visitors were staying. As well as lavish food and drink, the diners would have been entertained by musicians performing from the minstrels' gallery, such as the one at **Doone**. There would also have been dancing, harp and pipe playing and recitals of epic stories and poems by bards, particularly in areas of Gaelic culture. Games such as billiards and backgammon were also popular. The royal palaces of **Linlithgow**, **Holyrood** and **Falkland** had tennis courts for playing 'real tennis'; you can still see the court at Falkland (in the care of the National Trust for Scotland).

Hunting with dogs was a popular form of entertainment for the noblemen of the castle, together with other sports which prepared them for battle and fighting. As well as archery, people took part in jousting tournaments, where they attacked targets while on horseback. Noblemen and women enjoyed falconry, training birds of prey.



*Re-enactment of a jousting competition at Linlithgow Palace*

## Law and order

The lord of the castle had responsibility for law and order locally. The lord acted as judge in disputes and had the power to imprison criminals or suspected criminals. Many castles had prisons – or even a suite of prisons to accommodate prisoners of differing status.

At **Dirleton** you can see a relatively spacious prison, with a fireplace, where higher-status prisoners would have been kept. A trapdoor in the floor, however, leads to a grim, windowless pit prison where the lowest-status prisoners would have languished. A group of women accused of witchcraft were imprisoned at **Dirleton** in 1649, probably in the pit, before being burned at the stake. At **Blackness**, a state prison almost from its earliest days in the 1450s, the pit prison is awash with seawater at high tide. Another particularly unpleasant prison can be seen at **St Andrews**, where the prison is a bottle-shaped dungeon. Religious prisoners were tossed in here during the struggles of the Reformation in the 16th century.



*Prisons at St Andrews Castle – notice the bottle-shaped dungeon.*





## Medieval Castle Life Handling Box

At several castles in the care of Historic Scotland, teachers can book the *Investigating Objects from the Past: Medieval Castle Life Handling Box* to use with pupils as part of their visit. Pupils can handle high-quality replica objects to investigate themes of Castle Defences, Domestic Life and Court Life.

Teachers' notes to accompany the Handling Box can be downloaded in advance from the Historic Scotland website. The box is free for booked educational groups. To book the box, please contact the castle direct.

The box is available at these castles:

- Aberdour (Tel: 01383 860519)
- Bothwell (Tel: 01698 816894)
- Blackness (Tel: 01506 834807)
- Caerlaverock (Tel: 01387 770244)
- Doune (Tel: 01786 841742)
- St Andrews (Tel: 01334 472563)
- Urquhart (Tel: 01456 450551)

**Each type of arrow head was designed for a specific purpose – hunting, piercing armour, or causing maximum damage to the enemy.**



**This chafing dish was a bit like a medieval barbecue. Hot coals would have been burned inside it and a pot placed on the legs at the top.**



**The great helm protected the wearer's whole head and face.**



**A pewter dish like this would have been used by high-status guests in the castle.**



**Shackles like these were used to hold the prisoners in the castle prisons. Those shown here are leg irons.**



**The chief purpose of a seal like this was to authenticate documents.**



**A hood like this was used to train hawks for hunting.**



**This is a typical iron cauldron that would have been used in castle kitchens.**

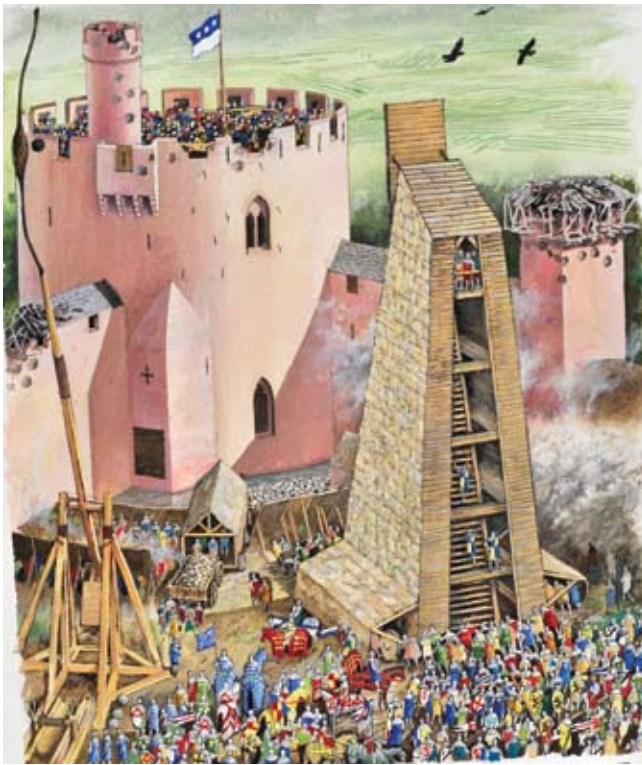


## Castle warfare

Most castles were built to protect their owners from attack. Clan feuds, the Wars of Independence, the wars during Mary Queen of Scots' reign, the invasion by Cromwell's troops at the time of the English Civil War, and the Jacobite Risings all tested castle defences to their limits. Over time, as the technology of weapons developed, castles had to be modified to take into account new strategies and methods of attack.

### Attacking a castle

Castles were usually taken by siege. The attackers would surround a castle and stay there until the people inside starved or gave in. A siege could last for several days or even years. Sieges were costly and time-consuming, so besiegers often tried to speed things up, either by negotiating or by full-scale attack. Another technique was to take the castle by surprise, by attacking at night, by tunnelling under or through walls into the castle, or by gaining entry by trickery.



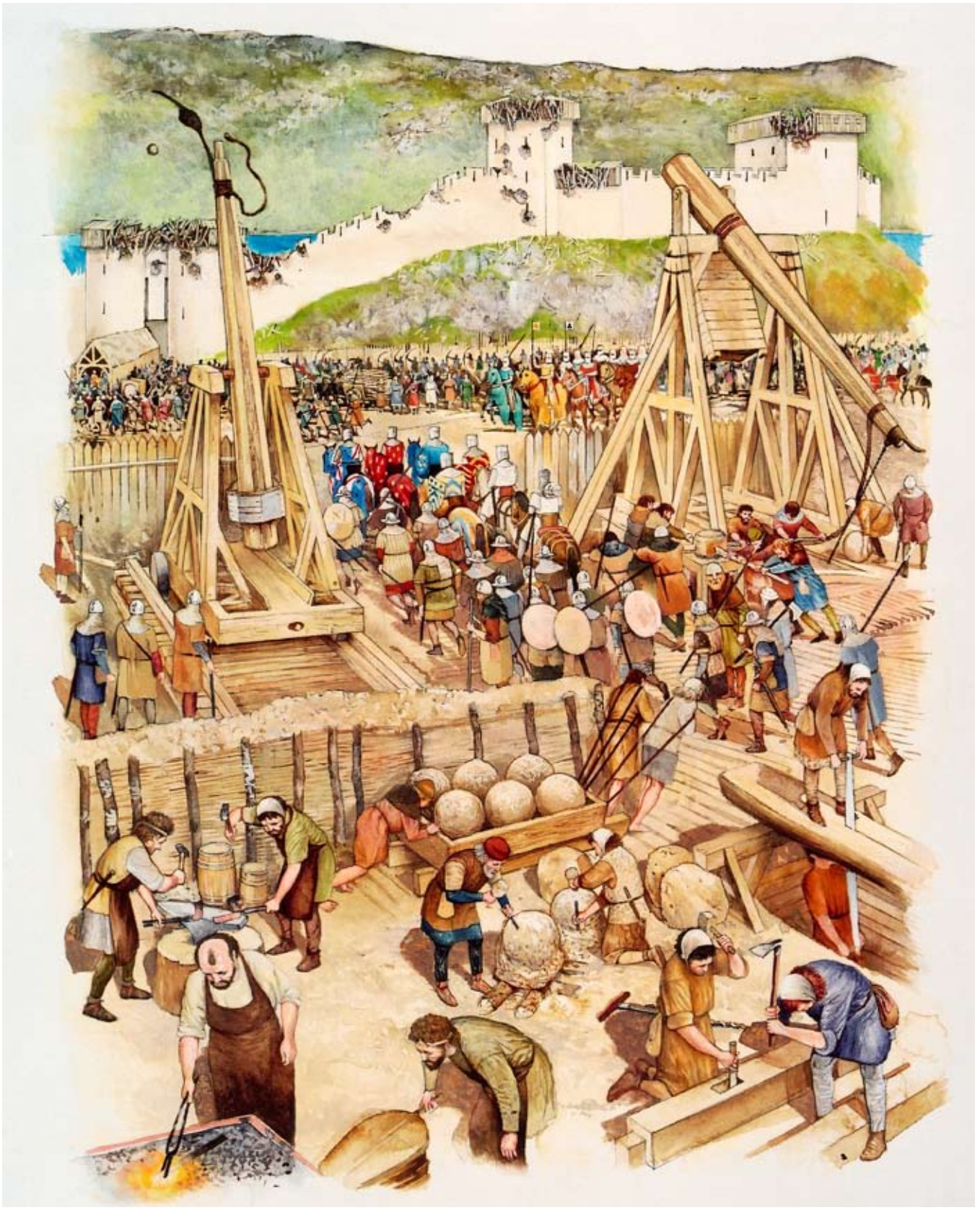
*An artist's impression of a siege tower in use during an attack on Bothwell Castle*

How would your pupils force their way into a castle?

Here are some of the weapons, tools and techniques used by castle attackers. They were sometimes used by defenders too:

- **Trebuchet** ('treb-oo-shay'): A massive long-range catapult which fired rocks at the castle walls. It could demolish battlements, roofs and any people who got in its way. Larger trebuchets could fire missiles as far as 400 metres. Sometimes severed heads of prisoners were thrown to demoralise those still inside the castle. The illustration opposite shows trebuchets in action.
- **Mangonel**: Another kind of siege engine, smaller than a trebuchet, which fired smaller stone shot and was brought closer to castle walls to pick off defenders.
- **Springald**: A mechanical crossbow which fired bolts and sometimes flaming arrows into a castle to set it on fire.
- **Cannon**: Cannon began to replace trebuchets and other siege engines from the 1400s.
- **Battering ram**: A giant tree trunk or ram could be used to smash down castle gates.
- **Siege tower**: A mobile tower with a drawbridge at the top used for scaling castle walls or attacking at close range. It could be wheeled into position. Ladders were also used, but climbers were very vulnerable as they climbed up.
- **Sow**: A wooden gallery on wheels and covered by wet hides that was used to shield men hewing their way through the castle walls.
- **Tunnels**: Really determined attackers dug tunnels or *mines*, burrowing under castle walls. You can see an amazing example of this at St Andrews, including a *countermine* dug by the defenders in an attempt to intercept the attackers.





*Edward I besieged Urquhart Castle in 1296. Trebuchets were used to fire rocks at the castle walls.*





## Defending a castle

Today, you can still see defensive elements built into the fabric of most castles, making this an interesting and exciting theme to explore with pupils on-site. Before entering a castle, get pupils to identify defensive features – how many can they spot?

**St Andrews Castle** has been taken as a model here, but many of these defensive features can be found on most castles:



Yett at Blackness Castle



Drawbridge at Blackness Castle



Arrow slit at Bothwell Castle

### 1 Strong defensive location

The castle is defended on two sides by cliffs and the sea. Other castles, such as **Stirling**, were built on natural vantage points.

### 2 Steep-sided ditch

Steep sides slowed down men and horses. Some ditches were filled with water, for example at **Bothwell Castle**.

### 3 Curtain wall

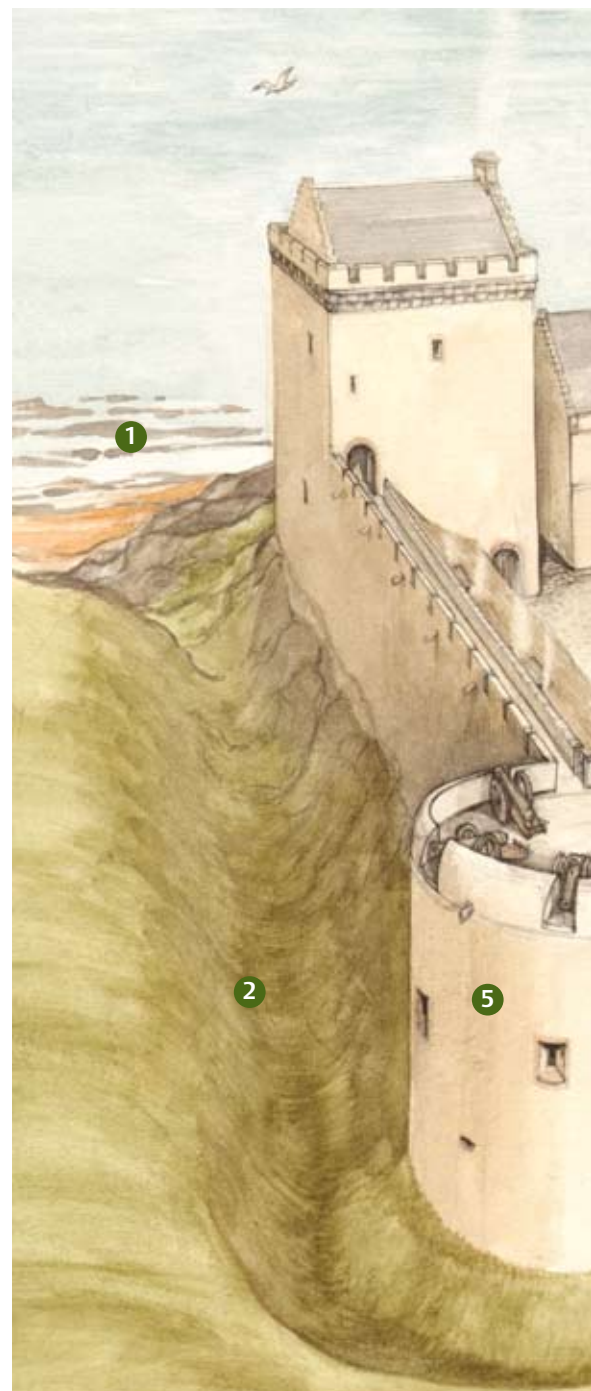
A high stone wall made it hard to get into the castle. These walls could be 3 metres thick to make them more resistant to attack from siege engines or cannon fire. Many walls had a walkway along the top to enable armed men to patrol the castle.

### 4 Battlements

Gaps along the top of the curtain wall, called *crenels*, gave defenders space to shoot or fire through. The upright sections, called *merlons*, gave them cover to reload. Some castles, for example **Threave** and **Hermitage**, had wooden balconies called *hoards* from which missiles and arrows could be dropped more easily. Later hoards were built of stone, and were known as *machicolations* ('ma-shick-o-lations'). You can see one at **Craigmillar Castle**.

### 5 Towers

Towers gave defenders both the advantage of being able to see the enemy from afar and a position to fire on them from above. The round towers here, which replaced earlier square towers, were constructed so that missiles glanced off them more easily than off flat surfaces. Many towers had wide bases so that attackers would be forced away from the tower and into the line of fire, for example at **Rothsay Castle**.



### 6 Gatehouse

This tower was the original gatehouse at St Andrews. The gate was later moved to the location shown here. Gatehouses in early castles were heavily defended, from above and from within. Some had a *murder hole* in their ceiling so that boiling liquids could be poured onto invaders, for example at **Craigmillar Castle**.



**7 Drawbridge**

A bridge over the ditch that could be raised to make access to the castle almost impossible.

**8 Windows**

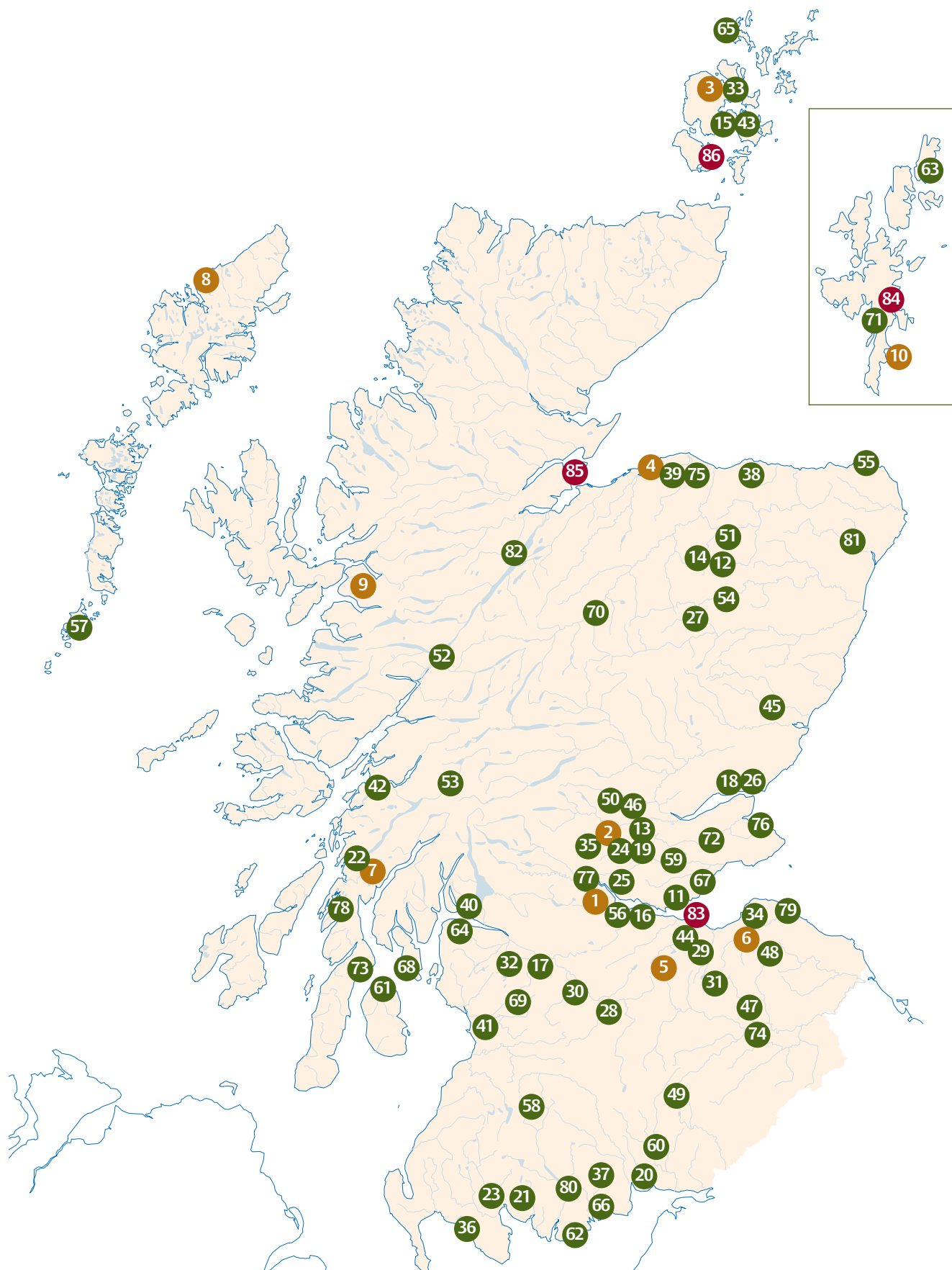
High narrow windows kept the strength of the walls and made it difficult for attackers to get inside.

**9 Portcullis**

Early castles had an iron *portcullis*, a grille suspended by chains, which could be dropped down to trap enemies or prevent them from entering the castle. Inside the portcullis there was often a timber door and an iron gate called a *yett*.

**10 Arrow slits**

Many castles had slits for firing arrows through. Many of these were altered later to accommodate guns or cannon and were known as gunloops.







## Places to visit

The locations of castles and fortifications which feature in this resource are shown on the map opposite and listed below. With the exception of the three sites marked with an asterisk, these sites are all in the care of Historic Scotland. Opening times vary, with many sites closed in the winter months. Site investigation packs for many of the Historic Scotland sites can be downloaded from the Historic Scotland website [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk)

For all visit and booking enquiries, please contact 0131 668 8793/8736.

### Early fortifications

1. Antonine Wall
2. Ardoch Camp
3. Broch of Gurness
4. Burghead Well
5. Castlelaw Fort
6. Chesters Hill Fort
7. Dunadd Fort
8. Dun Carloway Broch
9. Glenelg Brochs
10. Mousa Broch

### Castles

11. Aberdour
12. Auchindoun
13. Balvaird
14. Balvenie
15. Bishop's Palace, Kirkwall,
16. Blackness
17. Bothwell
18. Broughty
19. Burleigh
20. Caerlaverock
21. Cardoness
22. Carnasserie
23. Carsluith
24. Castle Campbell
25. Clackmannan Tower\*
26. Claypotts
27. Corgarff
28. Coulter Motte
29. Craigmillar
30. Craignethan
31. Crichton
32. Crookston
33. Cubbie Row
34. Dirleton
35. Doune
36. Druchtag Motte
37. Drumcoltran Tower
38. Duff House
39. Duffus
40. Dumbarton
41. Dundonald
42. Dunstaffnage
43. Earl's Palace, Kirkwall
44. Edinburgh
45. Edzell
46. Elcho
47. Greenknowe Tower
48. Hailes
49. Hermitage
50. Huntingtower
51. Huntly
52. Inverlochy
53. Kilchurn
54. Kildrummy
55. Kinnaird Head
56. Kinneil House\*
57. Kisimul
58. Loch Doon
59. Lochleven
60. Lochmaben
61. Lochranza
62. MacLellan's
63. Muness
64. Newark
65. Noltland
66. Orchardton
67. Ravenscraig
68. Rothesay
69. Rowallan

70. Ruthven Barracks
71. Scalloway
72. Scotstarvit Tower\*
73. Skipness
74. Smailholm
75. Spynie Palace
76. St Andrews
77. Stirling
78. Sween
79. Tantallon
80. Threave
81. Tolquhon
82. Urquhart

### Other fortifications

83. Inchcolm Island
84. Fort Charlotte
85. Fort George
86. Hackness Battery and Martello Tower



## Themed visits

Many teachers will want to explore their local fort or castle with their classes. If you wish to focus on a particular theme, here are some suggestions for places to visit:

### Castle life

- **Aberdour Castle**, Fife. First built in the 13th century and one of the oldest standing castles in Scotland. Handling Box available.  
Tel: 01383 860519
- **Claypotts Castle**, Dundee. Complete and well-preserved tower house. Downloadable tour available.  
Tel: 01786 431324
- **Craigmillar Castle**, Edinburgh. Well-preserved medieval castle with tower house, courtyard and gardens. Downloadable tour available.  
Tel: 0131 661 4445
- **Dirleton Castle**, East Lothian. Formidable fortress with a wide range of domestic rooms in a beautiful setting. Downloadable tour available.  
Tel: 01620 850330
- **Doune Castle**, near Stirling. Magnificent late 14th-century courtyard castle. Downloadable tour available.  
Tel: 01786 841742
- **Huntingtower Castle**, near Perth. Two fine tower houses combine to form one castle, with amazing painted features. Downloadable tour available.  
Tel: 01738 627231
- **MacLellan's Castle**, Kirkcudbright. The 16th-century home of the MacLellans of Bombie. Downloadable tour available.  
Tel: 01557 331856
- **Newark Castle**, Port Glasgow. Well-preserved 15th-century tower house with some internal fittings.  
Tel: 01475 741858
- **Tolquhon Castle**, near Inverurie. Picturesque and well-preserved castle with beautiful grounds and decorated gatehouse. Downloadable tour available.  
Tel: 01651 851286.
- **Urquhart Castle**, Loch Ness. Atmospheric castle with displays of artefacts in Visitor Centre. Handling Box available. Downloadable tour available.  
Tel: 01456 450551



*Craigmillar Castle*



*Dirleton Castle*



*Tolquhon Castle*





*Caerlaverock Castle*



*St Andrews Castle*



*Tantallon Castle*

## Attacking and defending

- **Blackness Castle**, West Lothian. Massively fortified 15th-century castle, reinforced against artillery attack and to allow cannon to be fired from within. Handling Box available.  
Downloadable tour available.  
Tel: 01506 834807
- **Bothwell Castle**, Uddingston. Mighty 13th-century castle which was besieged during the Wars of Independence. Handling Box available.  
Downloadable tour available.  
Tel: 01698 816894
- **Caerlaverock Castle**, near Dumfries. Dramatic setting surrounded by a water-filled moat. Replicas of siege engines on-site. Handling Box available.  
Tel: 01387 770244
- **St Andrews Castle**, St Andrews. The best-preserved mine and countermine in Europe – and the infamous bottle dungeon. Handling Box available.  
Downloadable tour available.  
Tel: 01334 472563.
- **Tantallon Castle**, near North Berwick. Dramatic clifftop location, the remains of fortifications and a mighty curtain wall.  
Downloadable tour available.  
Tel: 01620 982727
- **Threave Castle**, near Castle Douglas. Besieged by James II, this island castle is highly defended against artillery attack.  
Downloadable tour available.  
Tel: 07711 223101

## Royal castles

- **Edinburgh Castle**, Edinburgh. Scotland's main royal castle in the Middle Ages and still a garrison today. Great location, exhibitions and site to explore.  
Downloadable tour available.  
Tel: 0131 225 9846
- **Stirling Castle**, Stirling. Dramatic location, fortifications from several periods and displays. Six rooms of the Royal Lodgings now presented as they would have looked in the 16th century.  
Downloadable tour available.  
Tel: 01786 450000



## Glossary

- **Artillery** – large guns such as cannons, and other missile launchers
- **Bailey** – the outer courtyard of a castle
- **Barmkin** – a courtyard surrounding a tower house, defended by a perimeter wall
- **Broch** – a circular drystone tower used as a fort and residence
- **Crannog** – an artificial or modified natural island on which a defensive residence was built
- **Crenels** – gaps along the top of a curtain wall, giving defenders space to fire through
- **Curtain wall** – a high stone defensive wall
- **Dovecot** ('doo-cot') – a building for keeping pigeons in
- **Dun** – a hill fort, particularly from the west of Scotland
- **Garderobe** – the castle toilet
- **Gunloop** – an opening in a defensive wall through which attackers could fire a gun
- **Hill fort** – an early defended settlement
- **Hoards** – wooden balconies projecting from the top of castle walls
- **Keep** – a large tower within a palisade; the main residence block of a castle
- **Loggia** – a covered, open-sided walkway, often with arches, running along a wall
- **Machicolations** – stone balconies projecting from the top of castle walls
- **Mangonel** – a siege engine used to fire small stone shot at castle defenders
- **Merlons** – upright sections along the top of a curtain wall, providing protection for defenders
- **Mine/countermine** – tunnel dug to attack/defend a castle
- **Motte** – a mound of earth on which early castles were built
- **Murder hole** – an opening in a ceiling through which rocks or liquid could be dropped onto invaders
- **Palisade** – a stout wooden fence made of stakes driven into the ground
- **Portcullis** – an iron grille suspended by chains to defend an entrance
- **Postern** – the back entrance to a castle, used by servants and tradespeople
- **Ring fort** – a hill fort surrounded by a series of ditches and protective dykes
- **Ringwork** – a series of defensive ditches and dykes surrounding a residence
- **Sow** – a wooden gallery on wheels used to shield attackers
- **Springald** – a mechanical cross-bow used to fire bolts and flaming arrows
- **To slight** – to destroy one's own castle deliberately, in order that the enemy will not be able to use it
- **Trace Italienne** – earthwork ramparts built to defend castles against cannon fire
- **Trebuchet** – a giant catapult, used to fire huge stones to demolish roofs and battlements
- **Turnbrochie** – a servant whose job it was to turn the meat on the spit over the kitchen fire
- **Vassal** – a person granted the use of land in return for services to a lord
- **Yett** – an open-barred iron gate



*The loggia at Castle Campbell*





## Other resources

### Books for teachers

Most Historic Scotland sites have their own guidebook which may be useful background reading for teachers. These can be bought at the property.

Chris Tabraham *Scottish Castles and Fortifications* Historic Scotland 2000

A useful overview charting the development of castles in Scotland.

### Books for pupils

Terry Deary, *Horrible Histories: Bloody Scotland* Scholastic 1998

Popular with pupils, provocative and surprisingly informative.

Christopher Gravett *Eyewitness Castle* Dorling Kindersley 2002

A lavishly illustrated guide to castles across the world.

English Heritage *The Big Book of Castles* 2007

Simple text and very detailed drawings, focusing on English castles. Designed to provoke discussion. Also available in larger format for group or class discussion. Available from [www.english.heritage.org.uk](http://www.english.heritage.org.uk)

### Websites for teachers

[www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk](http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk)

This site has lovely photographs and a good historical overview of a large number of castles and other fortified sites in Scotland.

[www.scran.ac.uk](http://www.scran.ac.uk)

This database includes hundreds of images and resources relating to castles and forts in Scotland, useful for preparatory work.

[www.guedelon.fr](http://www.guedelon.fr)

The website of a remarkable project in France to build a castle using only 13th-century building techniques.



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