



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Helmsley Castle Tudor Mansion

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS



English Heritage Photo Library

View of the west range

INTRODUCTION

This booklet supports teachers visiting Helmsley Castle and focuses on the Tudor development of the castle site. It can be used in conjunction with the Helmsley Castle Information for Teachers booklet which includes a complete timeline for the castle.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

By the middle of the sixteenth century, England had become a more peaceful and civilised country. Standards of living were steadily improving and expectations of comfort were much higher than they had been throughout the medieval period. Wealthy families sought to influence and impress others by improving and modernising their own castles and

estates and the Manners' family at Helmsley Castle was no exception. They felt that the great medieval hall in the south-west corner of the bailey had become outdated and uncomfortable. In 1560, Edward Manners decided to build a more substantial house which would be better suited to a sophisticated Elizabethan lifestyle and the family's social position. The new residence was built in the latest, most fashionable style.

Helmsley Castle remained in the Manners' family until 1632 when it passed to George Villiers, First Duke of Buckingham, as part of the dowry of his wife, Katherine Manners. Villiers had a number of grander houses and there is no evidence to suggest that he ever occupied Helmsley Castle.

A substantial part of Manners' mansion remains intact although

most of the castle was destroyed in 1644 during the Civil War. In

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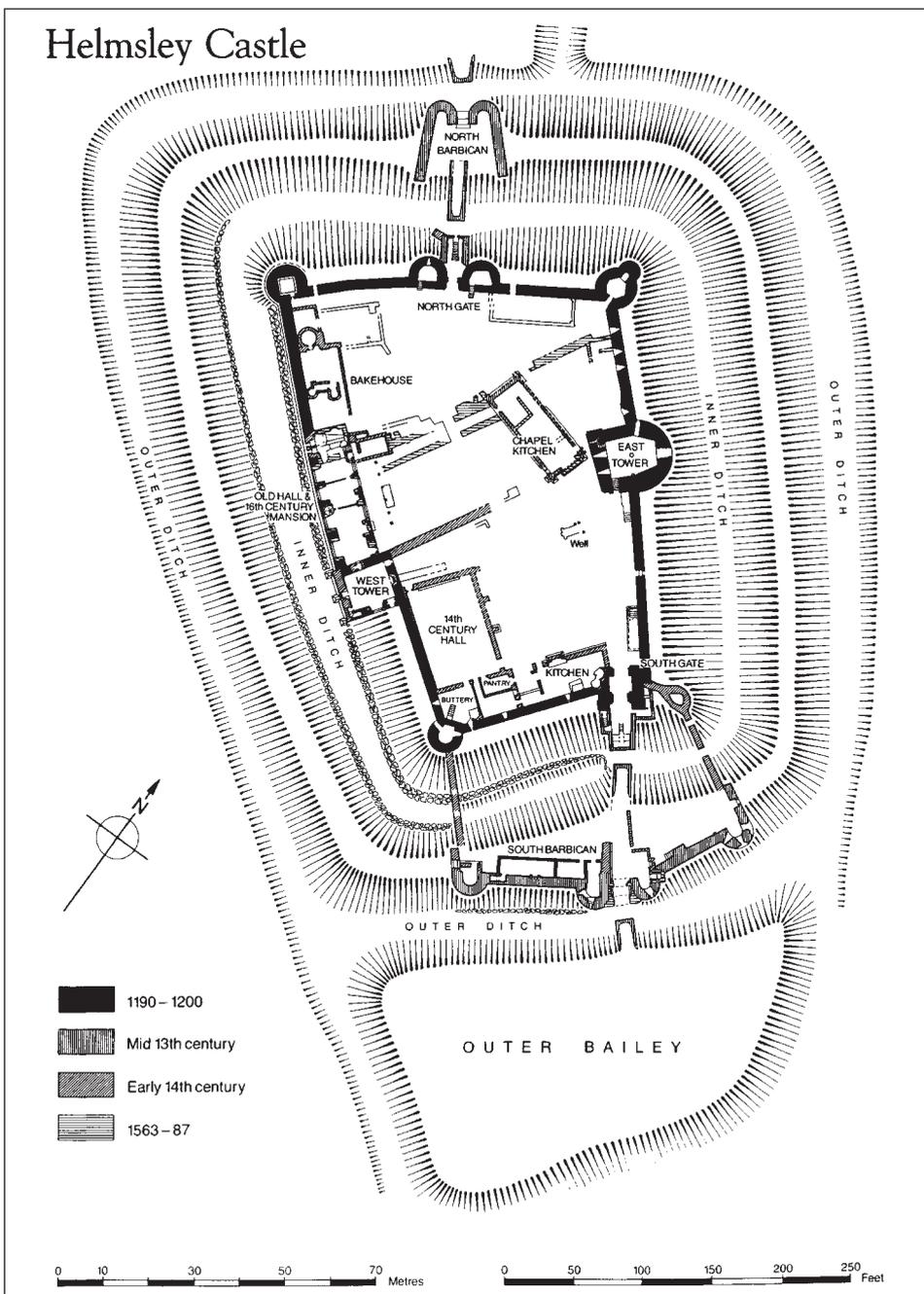
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1689, the estate was purchased as a country home by banker and politician, Sir Charles Duncombe. After his death in 1711, the Helmsley Castle estate passed to his partner and brother-in-law, Thomas Brown, who took the name of Duncombe. It was Thomas Duncombe who abandoned the Tudor mansion, preferring to build a new, more fashionable house in the adjacent park. This has since become known as Duncombe Park and remains the home of the current Lord Feversham. Today the castle is managed by English Heritage.

GLOSSARY

<i>Bailey</i>	The area within the castle walls.
<i>Chamber</i>	A private area used for sleeping.
<i>Fleur-de-lis</i>	lily-like flower with three petals, often used in heraldic emblems.
<i>Frieze</i>	A patterned strip or design around a wall.
<i>Garderobe</i>	A locked chamber in which articles of clothing were kept. Also a private room, bedchamber or privy.
<i>Jamb</i>	The upright of a doorframe to which the door is attached.
<i>Latrine</i>	A toilet and private washing /dressing area.
<i>String course</i>	A horizontal band of stone or brickwork set in a wall, often projecting.
<i>Stud partition</i>	Internal division constructed of wooden posts, the areas in between filled with wattle and daub, covered with plaster and white wash.
<i>Vice</i>	Circular stair.

Helmsley Castle



DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The existing medieval castle walls, east tower, and gatehouse would have provided a powerful backdrop to the new Tudor mansion. Alterations had already been made to the south barbican gatehouse to improve facilities with a room above the passageway, which included a large Elizabethan window. There is also evidence of latrines (toilets) and fireplaces inserted at this time in the range of buildings along the walls of the bailey. The buildings within the bailey including the fourteenth-century hall and kitchens may also have been remodelled and updated by Edward Manners when the Tudor mansion was built.

The Tudor mansion was built against the western stretch of the curtain wall and incorporated the basic structure of the west tower, the shell of the late twelfth-century hall and stores built by Robert de Roos (or Fursan, as he was also known), and the fourteenth-century latrine tower.

The west tower

The west tower had served as the Lord's solar or private chambers since the twelfth century and was partially rebuilt in the 1570s. At this date, the mid fifteenth-century windows were blocked up and



Artist's impression of the castle about 1580

replaced by larger windows which cut through the original string courses marking the earlier floor levels. Fine carved fireplaces and an extra floor with smaller windows were also added.

The latrine tower

The latrine tower was built in the fourteenth century to serve a chamber block that extended out into the bailey, of which little evidence remains. When it was incorporated into the Manners' new mansion in the sixteenth century, it was converted into private dressing rooms.

The twelfth-century hall

Much evidence of the twelfth-century hall has been obscured by the sixteenth-century rebuilding. Fursan's hall was a first floor hall, with chambers and stores at ground level, entered by the round headed doorway at the south end of the eastern wall. This can still be seen beneath the reconstructed wooden stair. There are doorways through to the west tower at both ground and first floor level. The level of the first floor in this early building was one metre (3ft) below the existing sixteenth-century

floor, and can be recognised by the stone 'ledge' visible on the fireplace wall of the large ground floor room.

The remains of the early hall are best seen on the outside of the bailey wall, where the base of a chimney and the blocking of its flue are still visible. This hall was relegated to use as a steward's hall in the mid-fourteenth century when a new hall was built in the south-west corner of the bailey.

The Tudor Mansion

The main rooms of the Tudor

mansion contain a wealth of evidence including the survival of many original features.

The ground floor

On the ground floor, the original stud partition survives, dividing the area into one large room, and two smaller rooms. All these rooms were well lit, with large windows onto the bailey and deep-set internal bays overlooking the park. Many of the original windows were bricked up in the eighteenth century to reduce the amount of window tax paid. The various alterations are best seen from the outside of the building.

The main ground floor room has a fine Tudor fireplace, which was built on the site of the twelfth-century hearth. It also has a door leading through to the west tower, which would have been reached by a wooden stair or platform. A large amount of fine oak panelling was recovered from the ground floor earlier this century suggesting that this room may have been used for some meals and entertaining.

The central room has a circular stair or 'vice' of exceptional quality, leading down to the inner ditch. This stair is part of the earlier building that was incorporated into the sixteenth-century building. It is probable that this room



A romanticised nineteenth-century engraving of one of the first floor rooms

served as a preparation room for meals and banquets. The smooth hole in one of the studs of the partition may have been a spy hole for servants to check on the progress of the meal. The food would have been brought across from the kitchen along a covered passage, although there is a fireplace in the room, which suggests that some food preparation may also have taken place here.

The third room was also a service or storage room of some kind, and has a door through to the remains of the covered passage to the kitchen. It currently contains a small Civil War period display.

The upper floor

At this level, there are two rooms with fine plasterwork and oak panelling, which has survived in excellent condition. The high standard of decoration in these rooms shows that they were reception and hospitality rooms, for dining and entertaining.

The southernmost room has a large area of its original plaster ceiling, which features polygonal panels with knots and roses, and a frieze decorated with the third Earl's coat of arms and those of his



A view of the panelled room

wife Isabel's family. The spaces between these are filled with fleur-de-lys, mermaids and dolphins.

This room also has the best examples of the original oak panelling, dating from 1570, and a Tudor fireplace surround decorated with marquetry, with the date 1582. Large windows project out over the inner ditch with views of the park beyond, although some of the windows were bricked up in the eighteenth century. There is evidence of two doorways through to the west tower, one of which is now blocked. The larger doorway, reached by a short flight of stairs, is Tudor, the blocked door however, is of an earlier date, probably built to link through to the circular stair of the west tower.

The room beyond the panelled partition wall is again of high quality, and would also have been oak panelled. Small areas of plasterwork remain as evidence that this room was decorated in the same style, with many of the same designs, as the adjacent room. An

intricate fleur-de-lys pattern in plasterwork relief can be seen above one of the fireplaces. There are also traces of plaster and paintwork on the fireplace surround. The presence of two fireplaces in this room illustrates the increased emphasis on comfort in the late Tudor and Elizabethan periods. In this room only one window has been partially blocked showing the level of light that would have entered the room before the eighteenth-century alterations. There are two doorways in the end wall, an earlier door at a lower floor level which gave access to the back of the latrine tower and the Tudor doorway, built when the latrine tower was incorporated into the mansion. The tower was converted into private dressing rooms with the addition of fireplaces that can be dated to the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century.

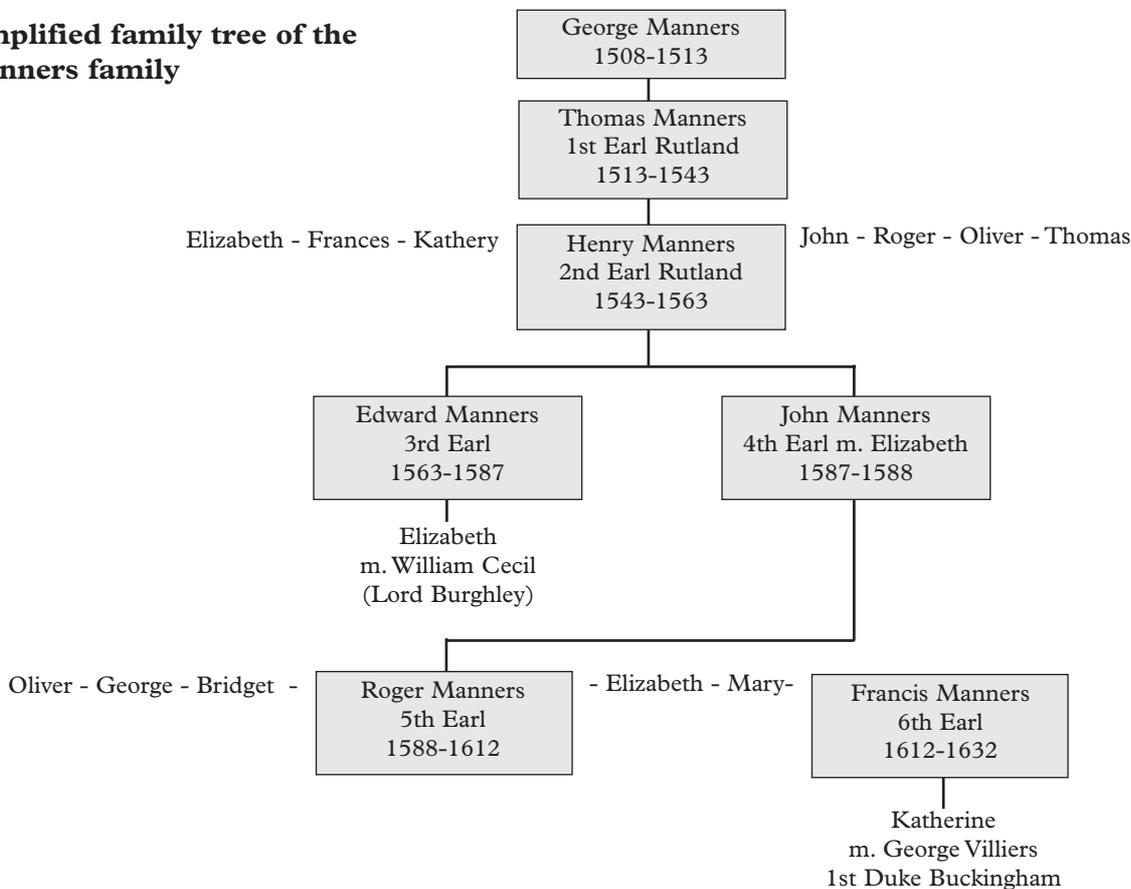
The kitchen

The mid-thirteenth century chapel near the east tower was converted into a kitchen in the sixteenth century to serve the new mansion. The building was subdivided and a great open fireplace was inserted into the east wall. Access between the kitchen and the Tudor mansion was along a covered walkway, the low walls of which can still be seen.



Detail of the frieze with dolphins and polygonal panels

Simplified family tree of the Manners family



DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

The Manners family at Helmsley maintained a close relationship with the court of the monarch during the sixteenth century and some members of the family were able to secure positions within the royal court. In 1589, Edward Manners' niece Bridget was received as a lady in waiting to Elizabeth I.

Letter from Elizabeth, Countess of Rutland to the Countess of Bedford:

1589, July 26. Winkburne.

I understand from Mr. Roger Manners of the Queen's gracious disposition towards my daughter Bridget for receiving her into her service. I did not expect the favour because it pleased the Queen so lately to receive Lady Elizabeth Vere. But as it is the Queen's pleasure I hope she will behave herself as shall be pleasing. I send 200l. towards furnishing her for the place...

In a politically unstable period

such as the sixteenth century, this close allegiance was potentially very dangerous. In 1601, Roger Manners inadvisably joined the Rebellion against the Queen with the Duke of Essex. Essex was executed for his role in the plot, while Manners escaped execution with a fine of £30,000. He was imprisoned in the Tower of London pending his trial. The following extract is interesting because it shows the comforts allowed by Roger Manners while he was in the Tower of London and it describes the furnishings and personal items that would have been in the private apartments in the west tower of Helmsley Castle.

1600, February 9.

'Delivered the ixth of February 1600 by virtue of a tooke sent from my Lord Admyrall by one Mr. Mynne, his Lordship's servaunte, to me, Chidiock Wardour esquire, these thinges following, to be sent to the Earl of Rutland to the Tower by his servaunte, Thomas Scryven.

Out of the Earles bedchamber: one seild bedstead with the vallence and curtaynes and quilte, all of ashe coloured damaske. Item one white rugg.

Item one spanishe blanket.

Item one payer of fustian blankettes.

Item one feather bed and bolster.

Item one quilte.

Item one pillowe.

Item one mattres.

Out of the chamber over the kitchen:

Item one greene rugg. Item one

Spanishe blankett. Item one feather

bed and bolster. Item iij payer of

sheets, Item iij pillow beares, iij payers

of pallate sheetes: for the Earles bed

Item iij table clothes, item j dosen of

napkyns: of dyaper

Item j chamber pott

A charyre, A stoole, a long quishon:

Ash-coloured damask

A suyt of hanginges of tapistry con

taining five pieces that hong in the

great chamber.

A rounde red carpet of clothe.

Ij foote of Turkey carpetes

Pupils can use this transcript, with-

the original spelling, to list or try to draw some of the furniture.

EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

A visit to Helmsley Castle to study the Tudor mansion would be of particular interest to pupils at KS2 studying the Tudors or an aspect of local history. A visit with pupils at KS3 may relate to the History study area Britain 1500 - 1750. At all Key Stages the Tudor mansion at Helmsley Castle provides opportunities for work in a range of National Curriculum subjects and activities to support literacy and numeracy projects.

Preparation

This should include a planning visit by staff to familiarise themselves with the site and to consider the possible activities that can be undertaken by their group. Activities should be tailored to the needs and abilities of each group and where possible link to activities before and after the visit. Before the site visit pupils can:

- research basic architectural terms and examples of Tudor style windows, doors and decoration
- list features they would expect to find in a Tudor house or building. Consider how these might be different from modern houses, for example sources of heat and light or bathroom and kitchen facilities
- use a plan to devise their own route around the site so that they can look particularly for evidence of Tudor features.

During the visit

To orientate pupils on site, allow the group time to look at the castle features and consider what they might have looked like during the Tudor period before focusing on the Tudor mansion:

- pupils can approach the south

entrance to the castle and consider what statements the building makes about the owner or lord in the Tudor period (impressive gatehouses, banks and ditches)

- using the evidence on the site, the artists' impressions and their imagination, pupils can draw the Tudor mansion or the kitchen in more detail.

History

Changes in lifestyle between the medieval and



The Manners coat of arms

English Heritage Photo Library

Differences between Medieval and Tudor lifestyles

With the establishment of domestic peace in the Tudor period, heavily defended medieval castles and fortified houses were no longer needed. People began to adapt and rebuild their castles as domestic residences and expectations of comfort and privacy increased. The communal lifestyle of feasting and entertaining in large open halls, characteristic of the medieval period was now seen as undesirable. The late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw the introduction of more private, socially and physically segregated areas. Many wealthy families were by this period separating the mix of social groups which would once have dined and been entertained together, into different areas of the building. The Tudor mansion provides evidence of this transition from communal to private living in both its layout and decoration. The survival of many of these features at Helmsley Castle is particularly exciting, as they have been removed from many other castle sites by later refurbishment. The ground floor

of the hall is built on a medieval layout with a large room which could have accommodated a whole entourage of aides and servants, as earlier medieval halls would have done. The higher status end led to the private chambers in the west tower, and the lower status service end was used for food preparation and storage.

The upper floor with its high quality furnishings and decor is more typically Tudor. These rooms created separate areas for exclusive entertaining and political discussion, which was an increasingly popular pastime for gentlemen by the seventeenth century. The creation of such areas is evidence of a new desire for leisure and high status entertaining areas, a stark contrast to the communal bustle of medieval halls. The wood panelling and decorative plasterwork, which was added throughout the principal rooms of the Manners new residence, would be recognised by guests and visitors as evidence of wealth and fashionable taste.

Tudor periods are central to understanding this period and can be seen clearly at this site.

Comparisons to modern houses and lifestyles can also be made. The use of a variety of sources of evidence, such as documentary sources and artists' impressions, with the evidence on site can help pupils to find out more about Tudor life. Pupils can sketch or photograph the room and features of interest to create a pattern book. Using the nineteenth-century impression and the description of furniture sent from Helmsley to the Tower of London in the Documentary Sources, pupils can create their own versions of what the upper rooms in the mansion may have looked like.

English

Activities on site ensure that pupils will practise and develop their English skills by talking, listening and responding to each other. Pupils can also respond to the different atmospheres within the parts of the Tudor mansion with their own writing on how they feel about the place.

■ collect descriptive words about different areas such as the panelled room, the large downstairs room or the west tower. What can pupils see and hear, what do surfaces feel like, how do the rooms make them feel. They can use these as a framework for writing a story or poem

■ language for different purposes can be explored through writing an advertisement, a formal report or a descriptive letter to a friend.

Maths

Using the site provides opportunities to practice a range of numeracy skills.

■ plans of one of the rooms could be drawn using estimates (paces) or accurate measures of the size

the position and sizes of doorways, fireplaces, windows and steps can be added

■ the main rooms within the Tudor mansion can be compared considering the size of the room, the number and size of the windows, size of fireplaces and decoration to produce a score sheet that ranks the rooms in terms of importance or status

■ the plaster wall frieze would have continued around both rooms. The frieze panel can be drawn and measured (by estimating) and the number of panels required to fit around the room worked out. Pupils may have to consider whether the panels will fit

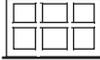
exactly along the length of the walls or what will happen in the corners.

Art

The surviving decoration, particularly the plasterwork and marquetry, can provide inspiration for artwork. Pupils can make a class catalogue of the different designs featured in the plasterwork. Copies of some of the design elements could be made in clay in the classroom and when dry, plaster copies of the designs could be produced. This also shows how the panels were produced. Pupils can make their own composition of decorative elements and produce these as panels round the top of the classroom wall to create a frieze.



Detail of panelling

	How big?	How high?	How many windows? 	Window sizes.	How many fireplaces? 	Decoration.
Ground floor hall						
Upper floor panelled room						

Design and technology

There are various styles of doors in the Tudor mansion and around the castle site. Drawings and photographs can be used to record the various styles of door, doorframes and evidence for different door fittings (hinges, locks, bolts, draw-bars). This information can be used to make a design book of doors and fittings. The different doors and fittings can be compared and assessed including comparison to modern doors and fittings.

The inside of the latrine tower shows evidence of a complex sequence of alterations. By carefully studying the interior walls pupils can work out how many floors, windows and fireplaces there were and whether this changed.

MAKING A VISIT

Opening hours

1 April - 30 Sept 10 am - 6 pm daily, 1 Oct - 31 Oct 10 am - 5 pm daily, 1 Nov - 31 March 10 am - 4 pm Wed - Sun.
Closed 1 - 2 pm through the year, 24 - 26 Dec and 1 Jan.

Booking

Application forms from:
English Heritage,
37 Tanner Row,
York, YO1 6WP,
Tel: 01904 601901.

Educational visits for on-site investigation are free if booked at least two weeks in advance.

Please note that pupils should be supervised at all times.

You should make a preparatory visit to plan your work. When your booking is confirmed you will be sent a free permit for your planning visit. If you wish to make several visits to English Heritage sites you may like to consider the *Windows on the Past* scheme.

Maximum party number: 100 With an adult to pupil ratio of 1:15. Please be attentive to safety procedures and not let pupils climb on

the walls or ditch banks.

Facilities on site

Access for people with disabilities:

Access to the earthwork is up a steep gravelled path and the remains are uneven with steps into the buildings.

Parking: 100 metres from site.

Toilets: in public car park 100m from the site entrance.

Picnics: you are welcome to picnic in the grounds, but please take your litter home.

Shop: our custodians welcome school groups as all proceeds contribute towards the continuing work of English Heritage.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Bibliography

Allen, A et al., *Using houses and homes*, English Heritage, 1998, ISBN 1-85074-398-3.

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Planel, P, *Battlefields, Defence, Conflict & Warfare*, English Heritage, 1995, ISBN 1-85074-590-0.

Sets of 20 laminated artists' impressions are available from the custodian for use on site. Notes and suggestions for use are available. Please ask to see these on your preparatory visit.

Posters

Interpreting the Past, pack of six A3 posters of artists impressions with notes for teachers.

CD ROM/book

Real Castles, English Heritage/TAG Developments, 2000, ISBN 1-9-2-804-0115.

Videos:

(for sale or available on free loan)
Looking at a castle 14 min KS2, 3 &4, 1980.

Teaching on site, English Heritage, 73 minutes. Looks at using historical sites for the teaching of other subjects in the curriculum.

All English Heritage resources are available by post from English Heritage Postal Sales, c/o Knights of Old, Kettering Parkway, Kettering, Northants NN15 6XU
Tel: 01536 533500
Fax: 01536 533501

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Written and produced by Virginia Lloyd and Julie Ward
Designed by Michael J Richardson
Printed by Palladian Press, Colchester
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