

ENGLISH HERITAGE

# Helmsley Castle

## Key Stage 1

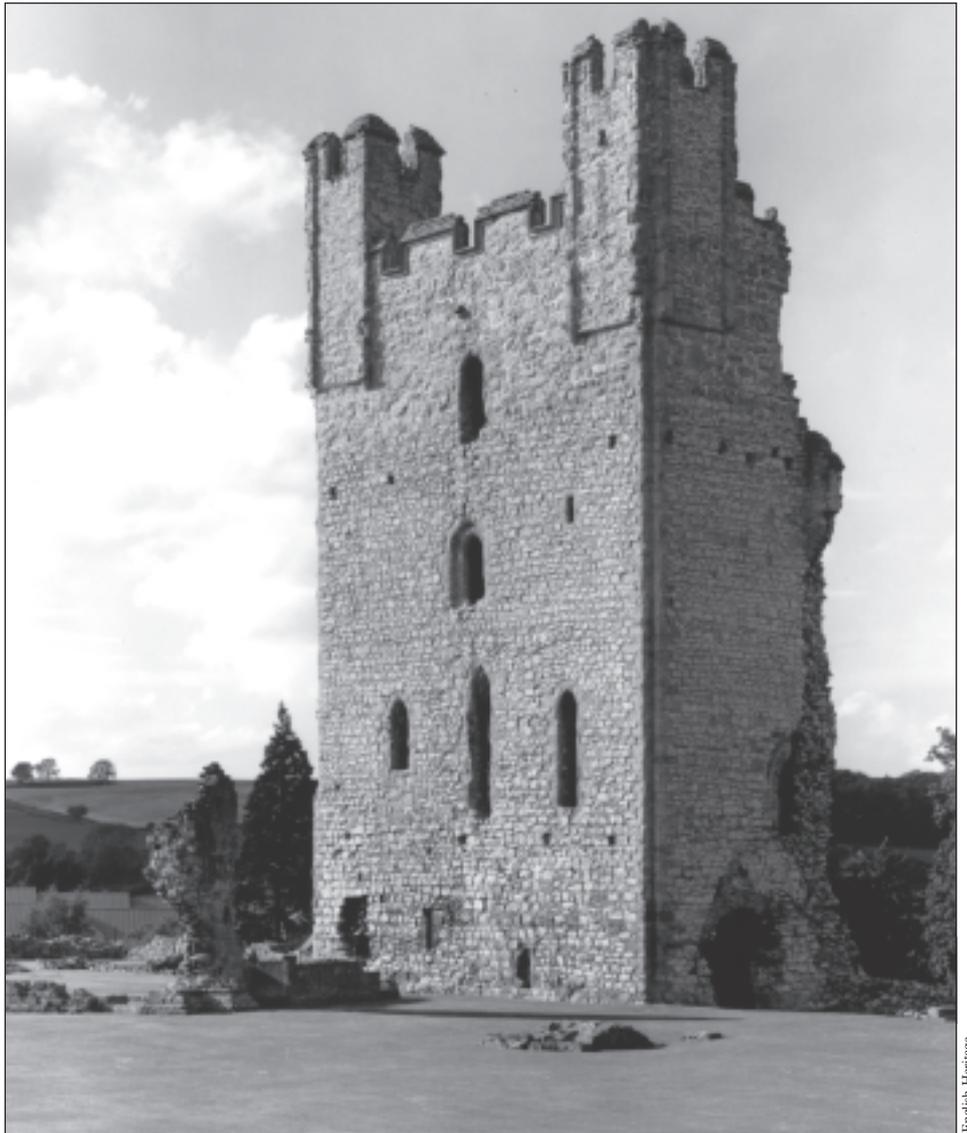
INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Helmsley Castle is an exciting place to visit with KS1 pupils. Resources are provided to help support investigations into how people lived here in the past. This booklet aims to provide background history, a description of the main parts of the castle and educational approaches to support the KS1 curriculum including history, literacy and art.

Helmsley Castle was built both as a safe place for the lord, his family and those who worked at the castle, and as a comfortable home. It was altered and rebuilt at various times throughout its history. Many features of the castle reflect the importance of the lord of the castle and how highly he was held by the king. The lands were originally granted to Walter Espec by King Henry I, who gave permission for a castle to be built. Money and power were needed to build, repair or update a castle. The lord would want to use the most up to date techniques and materials and the best craftsmen. Many men were needed to build such an impressive structure with tall towers and deep ditches.

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND** **The Medieval Castle**

Helmsley was one of many manors and estates given to supporters or relatives of William the Conqueror after 1066. However, little is known about the manor until Walter Espec, a member of the Royal court of Henry I and an



*The impressive east tower overlooks the inner bailey*

army commander, built the first castle between 1120 and 1150. Walter built a great rectangular earthwork with timber and stone walls and buildings. The castle was inherited in 1190 by Robert de Roos, who rebuilt many parts of the castle in stone. This rebuilding included the main curtain wall, the

east tower, north and south gates and parts of the west tower.

Descendants of the de Roos family rebuilt and changed parts of the castle, including building a new great hall and kitchens in the south west part of the inner bailey, during the fourteenth century.

EDUCATION

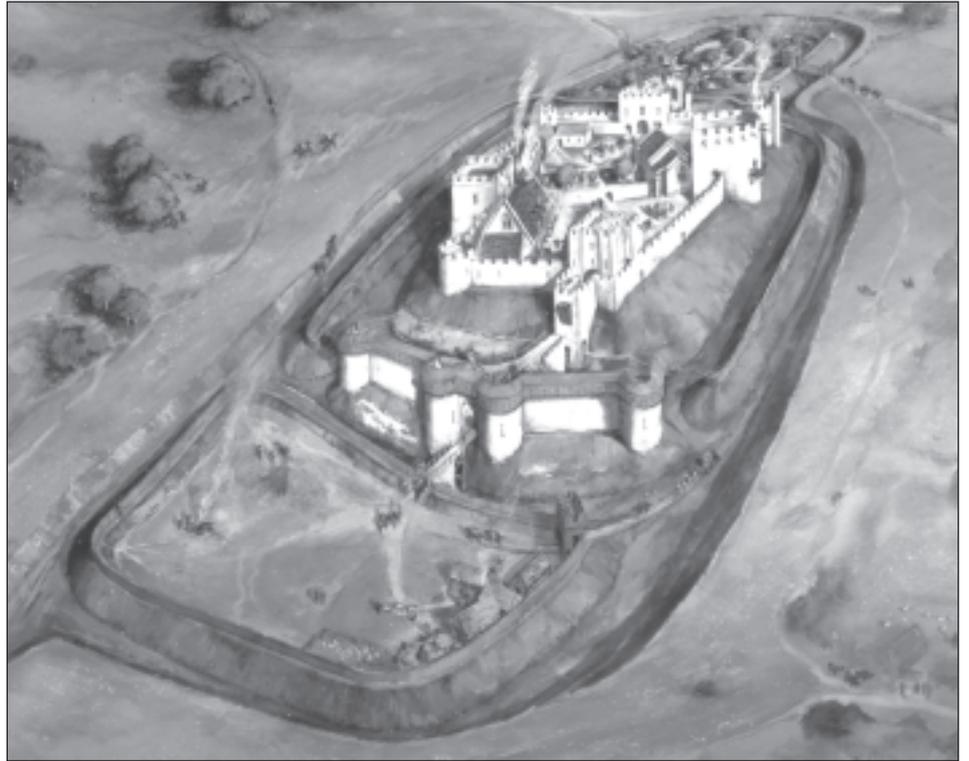
## The Tudor Buildings and Castle

When Edmund de Roos died in 1508 the castle was inherited by his cousin, Sir George Manners of Etal, Northumberland. His descendant, Edward Manners, rebuilt parts of the chamber block at the castle in 1560 as a country mansion. The main family home was Belvoir Castle, in Leicestershire. Helmsley Castle remained in the Manners family until 1632 when it was inherited by George Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham, as part of the dowry of his wife Katherine Manners.

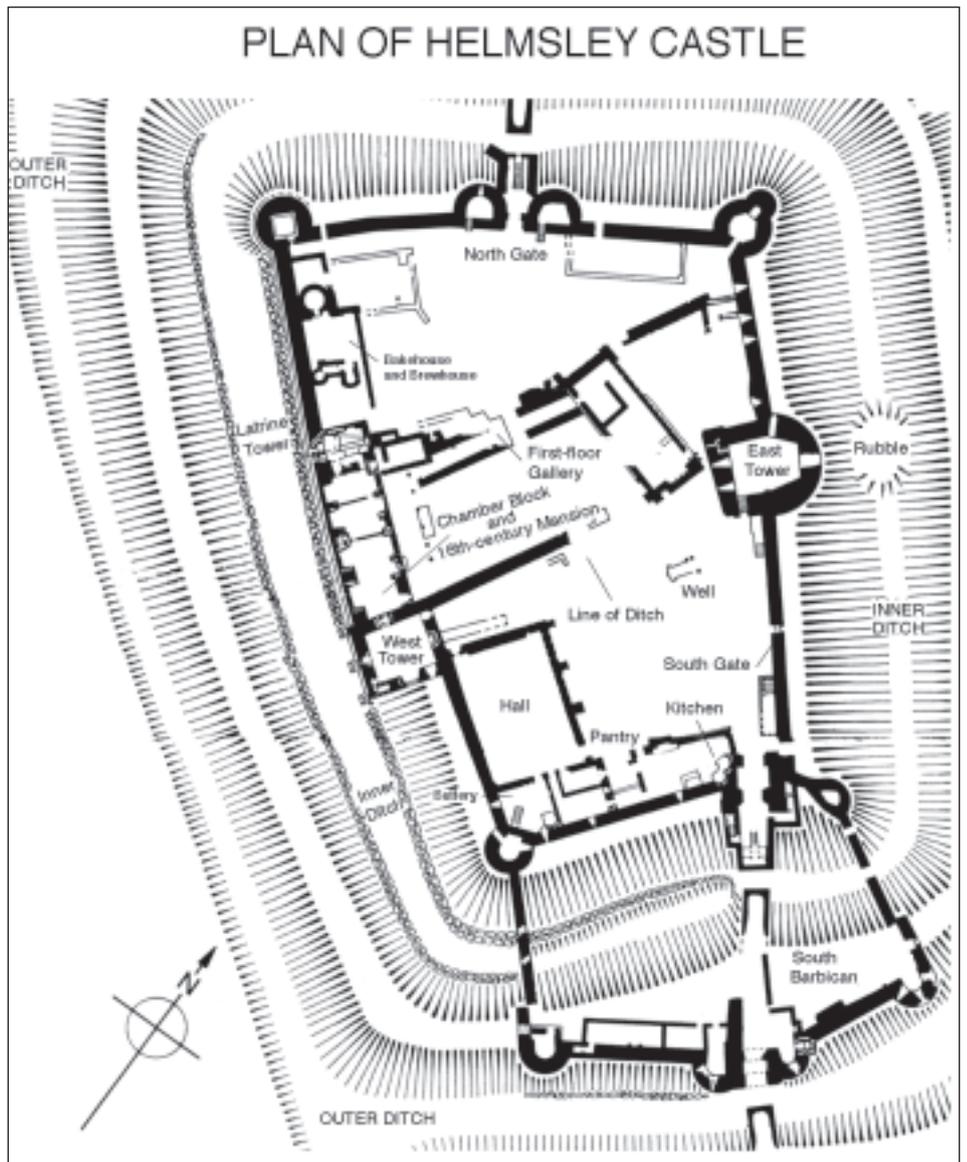
## The Civil War and after

Helmsley Castle was garrisoned by Royalist forces during the Civil War. It was besieged by Parliamentary forces from September to November 1644. When the garrison at the castle surrendered to Sir Thomas Fairfax the main military parts of the castle were blown up, although the Tudor mansion was not destroyed. Helmsley Castle was sold to Charles Duncombe after the death of the Duke of Buckingham. Thomas Brown (the brother-in-law of Charles Duncombe) later built a new house in the adjacent park (Duncombe Park). His descendant, the present Lord Feversham, still owns Helmsley Castle, which is now looked after by English Heritage.

The modern entrance building includes a shop and a temporary exhibition area. The route to the castle from the entrance passes a 3D model of the castle. Use this to show pupils the shape of the castle and the defensive banks and ditches.

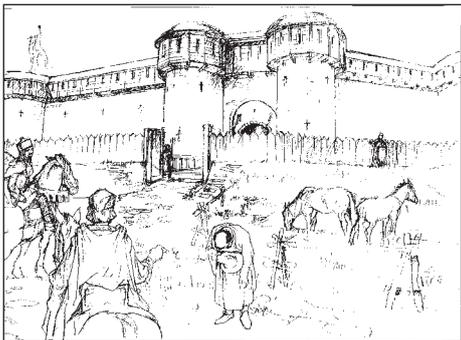


*An artist's impression showing the castle in the thirteenth century*



## DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

### Defensive features of the castle



The main entrance to the castle is through the south barbican or fortified gateway. Although the gatehouse has been altered there are still many visible features that show how the castle could have been defended. There are the remains of arrow slits in the curved walls of the towers. Soldiers could see who was approaching the castle and if necessary fire arrows through these. The deep ditches would have made it very difficult for attackers to get to the castle walls (curtain walls) which were very thick (2.5m) and high (6m), made of stone and usually had battlements and a walkway for soldiers in the castle to keep watch. The bridge over the ditch shows where the drawbridge would have been lowered from the gatehouse to allow visitors to get into the castle. There are also slots where the portcullis would have been lowered as further protection to the castle.

The second ditch would also have had a drawbridge leading to a second gatehouse (the south gate) which would have had further defences such as towers, gates and a portcullis.

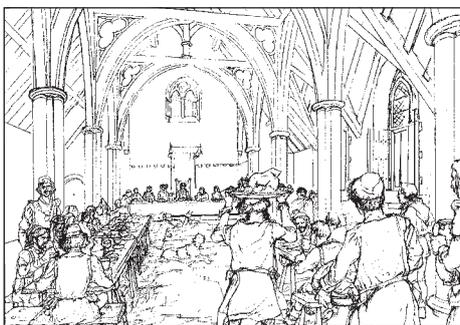
### East tower

The east tower was the stronghold of the medieval castle. If the castle was attacked the people who lived in the castle could retreat to the upper floors in this tower. The tower originally had a rounded side overlooking the town of Helmsley,

and walls 3m thick. The castle and this tower withstood a three month siege in 1644, during the Civil War, although the front part of the tower (along with other parts of the castle) was blown up after the siege to make sure that the castle could no longer be defended. The lower floor would have been used for storage and the main rooms were on the upper floors. The changes that have been made to this tower can be seen on the outside wall, where the stone changes colour from the original limestone (light coloured) to sandstone (yellow).

The inner bailey of the castle would have had stone and timber buildings for the people who lived and worked in the castle. There is still evidence of the resources that the castle needed such as the well for water, storage buildings and cellars for food, kitchens and bakehouses for preparing food.

### Where people lived The domestic range



In the south west corner of the inner bailey are the remains of some of the domestic buildings of the castle including the remains of a ground floor great hall. The great hall was used for meals, feasts and receiving visitors. The lord and the most important people sat on a raised platform or stage resting on the stone step nearest to the west tower. A door led from the hall to the family's private apartments in the west tower. At the other end of the great hall are the remains of three doorways or passageways to the buttery (where butts of beer and bottles of wine

were stored), the kitchen (where there is a large open hearth and two large ovens) and the pantry (where bread and other food were stored).

### The west range



This range of buildings includes the west tower, a chamber block and the latrine tower. These buildings, linked by doorways and stairs, formed the lord's apartments and rooms. This range of buildings was substantially altered and rebuilt in the sixteenth century.

### The west tower

The lower parts of the west tower were built in the twelfth century and included a large storage basement. The upper rooms were the private apartments and chambers for the lord and his family. The tower was rebuilt and altered several times and had garderobes or toilets added in the fourteenth century and large windows and fireplaces added in the sixteenth century.

### The Tudor mansion

There was a medieval chamber block joined to the west tower and there is still some evidence of this building including a round headed doorway (now blocked) next to the Tudor doorway.

This building was altered and rebuilt in the sixteenth century to provide a comfortable Tudor mansion with large windows, new fireplaces, timber paneling and decorative plasterwork on the walls and ceilings. There are exhibitions and displays about Helmsley Castle in this building.

### The latrine tower

This tower was added in the fourteenth century and altered in the sixteenth century. The toilets probably continued to be used in the sixteenth century but the floor levels were altered, windows and fireplaces added. This tower shows the range of alterations that have been made throughout the history of the castle.

### Chapel



*An artist's impression of the interior of the chapel*

The chapel was built in the thirteenth century. There is evidence that it was an ornate church with decorated window glass, floor tiles and green glazed roof tiles, some examples of these are included in the displays in the west range.

### North gate and barbican

There are some remains of the north gate and barbican

### EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

You can use a visit to Helmsley Castle to support the History QCA scheme 'What was it like to live in a castle a long time ago?', Literacy (particularly speaking and listening) and Art.

The resources listed below are available for you to use with your group while you are at the castle.

They can be used either in the west range or outside in the inner bailey.

### Resources available in the storage chests in Room 5

KS1 resources

- laminated photographs and picture sets 'Finding out about the castle'
- story box resource

### General resources

- seating pads that can be used around the castle when pupils are working or drawing

could be discussed before the visit:

- what are houses and homes like today?
- what facilities they need and have in their houses - water, food, heat, light
- what is a castle?
- what facilities were needed by the people who lived in a castle ?

### On site

Helmsley Castle is a large site. The suggested activities all use the buildings around the inner bailey, which is a large, flat, grassed area clearly bounded by walls. Care needs to be taken outside the inner bailey with the steep ditches and banks around the castle.

There is a 3D model outside the visitor centre that can be used to look at the whole plan of the castle.

During the walk round to the castle gatehouse, or outside the gatehouse discuss with your pupils what they can see and whether it is as they imagined a castle would be.

*How is it like a castle? Big stone walls, tower, turrets, gatehouse*  
*How is it different to what they imagined? Ruin, bigger/smaller, stone, ditches rather than a moat.*

### Familiarisation activity

In small groups (each led by an adult) find contrasting parts of the castle on a simple plan and at each place pupils can think of words or phrases to describe that part of the castle under the headings - I see, I hear, I feel. More able pupils may also be able to suggest further ideas under the headings I would have seen, I would have heard, I would have felt. These words can then be used as the starting point for a descriptive story using these parts of the castle. Suggested places are the undercroft of the west tower, the main floor of the west tower, the centre of the bailey, one of the upper rooms in the manor house.

■ sets of laminated artists' impressions and computer generated graphics showing how the castle might have looked in the past

■ flip book of images and information that can be used with your group at the display panels around the site. Please ask for a copy at the visitor centre. Please ask to see these resources during your preparatory visit.

### Preparation

A planning visit to the castle is recommended. You are welcome to use the suggested activities outlined in this booklet which are supported by the information and resources available at the castle.

Decide before the visit what information your pupils will be given and what they will find out themselves. Some of the following

**Finding out about the castle**

Included below and available (as cards) in the resources room are pictures and information that can be used to explore the castle. The following activity is one way to use the evidence at Helmsley Castle to explore how people lived in the past. Working in small groups with an adult, perhaps using a photograph of a modern object discuss why we need the facility or feature today and whether people needed that same facility or feature in the past and how it might have been different in the past. Discuss where they might find evidence in the castle, using the appropriate photograph if needed. For example, today we need water as did people in the past. Today water comes from a tap; people in the castle got their water from a well. There could be further discussion about how clean the water was and whether people drank it or used it for cooking or making ale.



Place:		
I see now	I hear now	I feel now
Think about what you may have seen, heard or felt:		
I might have seen	I might have heard	I might have felt

<p><b>Water</b></p> 	<p><b>Today: taps</b></p> <p>Wells were an important source of water in the castle. At Helmsley Castle a stone arch now covers the well for safety. We do not know how deep the well is. The water was drawn from the well and stored in cisterns, which had a tap to draw off the water. Often water in the past was not very clean and so most people drank weak beer or ale made in the brewhouse at the castle.</p>
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<p><b>Stairs</b></p>	<p><b>Today: modern stairs</b></p>
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Stairs between floors in a castle were often spiral staircases. Traditionally these turned clockwise so that it was difficult for any intruders to the castle to hold a sword in their right hand and go up the stairs. In the west range there are spiral stairs between the floors of the west tower (these are no longer accessible) and a spiral stairs from the ground floor room to a platform over the inner ditch.

<p><b>Toilets</b></p>	<p><b>Today: toilet</b></p>
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Garderobes had wooden seat over the hole or shute down into the moat or ditch. These two garderobes at Helmsley Castle would have had a wooden screen between the two toilets and wooden seats. The waste went to the bottom of the ditch in a chute. The waste was cleaned out of the ditches and used to fertilize the gardens and fields. Garderobes were also where clothes were stored. It is thought that the smells from the toilets kept the moths away from the woollen clothes.

<p><b>Window</b></p>	<p><b>Today: modern window</b></p>
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Narrow arrow slits were the only windows particularly on ground floors of castle buildings. Larger windows were used higher up in buildings but only very important buildings such as the chapel would have had painted window glass. Thin sheets of horn, parchment or small panes of glass were used to let in some light and to help keep out the cold. Windows would also have had wooden shutters.



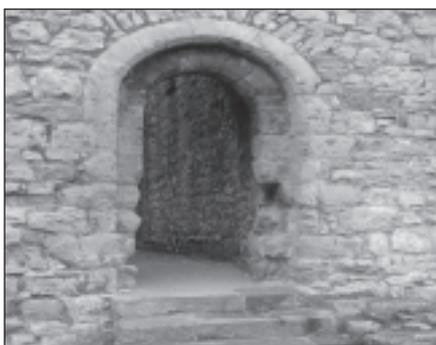
Food	Today: shops
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Food for all the people who lived and worked at the castle was usually made at the castle. Bread was very important and a separate bakehouse had ovens that were used to bake all the bread that was needed when there were lots of guests at the castle.



Storing food	Today: fridge
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Food for all the people who lived and worked at the castle needed to be stored and kept cool and dry. The buttery basement was cool all year and bottles of wine and butts (or barrels) of beer were stored here. Food, especially bread, was stored in the pantry which was next to the kitchen.



Door	Today: front door
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The earliest doors (medieval) were arched (round-headed). Doors were usually large, wooden and often studded with iron nails with different sorts of hinges and catches. Look for holes in the stonework where wooden draw bars would have held doors shut. There may also be evidence for the way that the door opened (stone jams) - usually the doors into a building or room opened inwards, whereas doors for garderobes (toilets), cupboards, storage rooms and dungeons opened outwards.



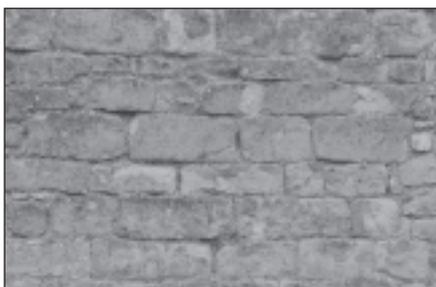
Heat	Today: radiator or gas fire
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Big fires in fireplaces were important for keeping warm in draughty castles. They were also used for cooking and keeping food warm. Clay tiles or later bricks were used to line fireplaces, these were less likely to shatter from the heat of the fire.



Cooking	Today: cooker or microwave
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The cooking for all the people who lived and worked at the castle was cooked in the kitchens over open fires (this included soup or pottage in large cauldrons) or in large ovens (usually for bread). A fire would have been built in the oven and burnt until the oven was really hot. The fire would be raked out and then the food (usually bread) put in the oven to cook. Often ovens and fireplaces were made from clay tiles or bricks that were less likely to be shattered by the heat of the fire.



Walls	Today: brick
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Castle walls were built from stone to make them very strong. Only important buildings such as churches and castles were built from stone with houses in villages and towns built from wood and plaster (wattle and daub), with just the fireplace made from stone. The remains of the stone walls of the main parts of Helmsley Castle include the towers, great hall, kitchens and chapel. There would have been other wooden buildings in the inner bailey at Helmsley Castle.

Pupils can be introduced to new words that relate specifically to castles. The following images and text can be used and there are large copies available at the castle.

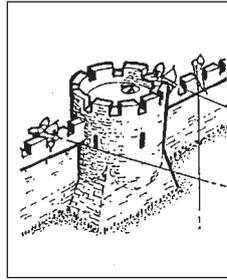
**Keep**

Many castles had a great stone tower that was the strongest part of the castle.



**Battlements**

The top part of a tower or wall with a series of gaps where a soldier can stand to fire on attackers.



**Towers**

Towers were important to let soldiers see along the wall base. Round towers were stronger than square towers.

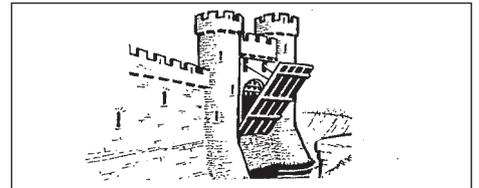


**Wall-walk**

The wall-walk along the top of the curtain wall allowed defenders of the castle to move quickly around the castle.

**Curtain Walls**

Massive, thick, high stonewalls surrounding the castle.



**Ditch or moat**

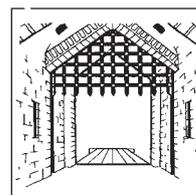
A dry ditch or a water filled moat around the castle helped to keep people out and protect the castle. Ditches also made the castle look even taller and more impressive.

**Drawbridge**

A bridge over the ditch or moat that could be hauled up to protect the castle.

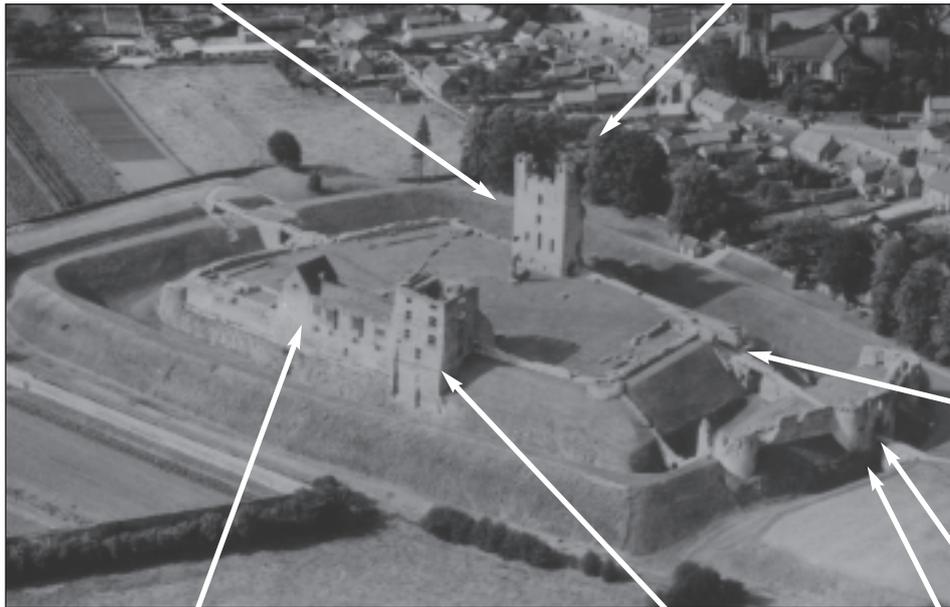
**Gatehouse**

The gatehouse was a defended entrance with a drawbridge, portcullis and a strong door.



**Portcullis**

A wood and metal gate that was lowered to protect the gatehouse.



**Chambers**

The lord of the castle and his family had their own rooms or chambers. Everyone else slept where they could, often on the floor of the great hall.

**Where people lived and worked**

Pupils can find out more about people who lived and worked in the medieval castle by using one of the following resources included in the resources in Room 5 in the west range.

**Story box**

The story box includes a story about the medieval castle. There are replica medieval objects that will help you to tell the story and pupils to find out more about life in the past. This box can be used in Room 5 in the west range or taken outside. A laminated copy of the story and further suggestions for activities are included in the story box.

**Great Hall**

This was where everyone ate and where the lord held court and welcomed guests. It was often the best room in the castle and usually had a high ceiling, very large windows, and pictures painted on plastered walls.



*A4 colour copies of artists' impressions, such as this example showing how the Great Hall may have looked, are available to help pupils envisage how the ruins may have looked in the past.*

## Detailed observation and recording

An important skill for pupils to develop is to look closely at parts of the castle and record what they see. Use part of the castle such as the east tower to encourage pupils to record part of the castle, perhaps adding labels for parts of the castle that they have found out about as part of their activities - battlements, stone walls, arrow slits, and narrow windows.

Pupils can also record a detail of the castle as a house such as:

- fireplace (a good example is on the ground floor of the west tower)
- medieval doorway (a good example is the doorway into the west tower)

## Textures and patterns

The textures and patterns in the stonework around the castle can be recorded by taking rubbings using a soft wax crayon or large-scale drawings of a section of stonework. As follow-up work back in school pupils can make textured foam or polystyrene tiles that can be used for printing using their rubbings as the starting point for their textured tiles. These textures can be printed onto card or paper and used to make a castle area in part of the classroom.

The detailed drawings of stonework can be used as a pattern to transfer onto different materials such as fabric (using fabric crayons or paints). Pupils can explore ways in which the pattern and the colours of the stonework can be used for example as a t-shirt or tie design.

## Using the exhibitions

There are many parts of the exhibitions and displays on the ground floor of the west range that will help pupils explore the medieval castle. During your familiarisation visit look for those displays that will best support your pupils. Give the adult helpers specific parts of the display to look at with pupils. These could include:

- models of the castle (including the model near the visitor centre),

kitchens and service range

- figures and illustrations showing what people wore in the past
- objects that people used such as keys, coins, pottery jugs, plates, and cutlery.

## MAKING A VISIT

### Opening hours

For detailed information on current opening hours, contact the regional office or visit our web site [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

### Booking

Application forms from: English Heritage, 37 Tanner Row, York, YO1 6WP Tel: 01904 601901 Fax: 01904 601999, Email: [education@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:education@english-heritage.org.uk) Education visits are free if booked at least two weeks in advance. 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 and the booked visit.

### Health & safety

Please ensure that you have followed the health and safety requirements of your LEA before making a visit to the site. It is important that pupils are adequately supervised at all times. Please be attentive to safety procedures and do not let pupils climb on the walls or banks.

Maximum party number: 100 with an adult to pupil ratio of at least 1:15

### Facilities at Helmsley Castle

**Access:** There are sloping gravel paths into the bailey and ramps into the ground floor of the west range. All the education resources can be used outside, please advise staff.

**Parking:** 50m from site entrance (visitor centre).

**Toilets:** in public car park 50 m from the site entrance

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

**Shop:** our staff welcome school groups in the shop as all proceeds contribute towards the continuing work of English Heritage.

## USEFUL RESOURCES

Copeland, T, *Using Castles*, English Heritage, 1994, ISBN 1-85074-327-4.

Corbishley, M, (ed.), *Primary History*, English Heritage, 1999, ISBN 1-85074-650-8.

Lockey, M, and Walmsley, D, *Art and the Historic Environment*, English Heritage, 1999, ISBN 1-85074-651-6.

Collins, F & Hollinshead, E, *English and the Historic Environment*, English Heritage, 1999 ISBN 1-85074-330-4 CD ROM/Book

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

All English Heritage publications including poster packs and videos are available from: English Heritage, c/o Gillards, Trident Works, Temple Cloud, Bristol BS39 5AZ Tel: 01761 452966

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