

ENGLISH HERITAGE

Richmond Castle

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS



English Heritage Photo Library

Richmond Castle stands on a commanding cliff above the River Swale. It encloses a triangle of ground, known as the Great Court, with steep approaches on the east and west sides. The only easy approach to the castle is from the town towards the apex of the triangle.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The first castle was built by Alan 'the Red'. He had fought alongside William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings who gave his most trusted followers large estates along the frontiers of his new kingdom. Alan was granted his estate in order to suppress Yorkshire, to act as a buffer defence against the Scots and Danes, and to ensure the permanency of Norman rule. This estate became known later as the Honour of Richmond.

Earl Alan probably chose Richmond for his main residence and administrative centre because of its defensive position. He began building his castle shortly after 1071. Most early Norman castles were built of earth and timber but much of Alan's castle was built of stone from the beginning.

Conan 'the Little' (1146-71) inherited the castle at a time of increased turmoil and insecurity. He set about strengthening the castle's defences, building a new

keep, constructing the barbican, replacing the wooden palisade on the south with a stone curtain wall and rebuilding the Cockpit with stone walls, towers and a gate. On his death these were completed by Henry II, who was the guardian of Alan's daughter, Constance.

In 1174 King William the Lion of Scotland was captured while invading England and imprisoned in the middle chamber of the Gold Hole Tower.

During the baron's rebellion against King John in 1215 the castle was held by Roald the Constable, for the rebel barons, and appears to have withstood a siege.

In 1265 Richmond was held by supporters of Simon de Montfort against King Henry III.

In 1384 the castle was confiscated by the king and became a royal possession, eventually belonging the Henry Tudor, who in 1485, became Henry VII.

The castle by then had no military value and was not needed as a residence. Consequently, it was abandoned and fell into ruin.

The eighteenth century saw a revival of interest in medieval ruins, as sources of romantic inspiration and for their picturesque quality.

Between 1761-1764 £350 was spent on repairs to the castle.

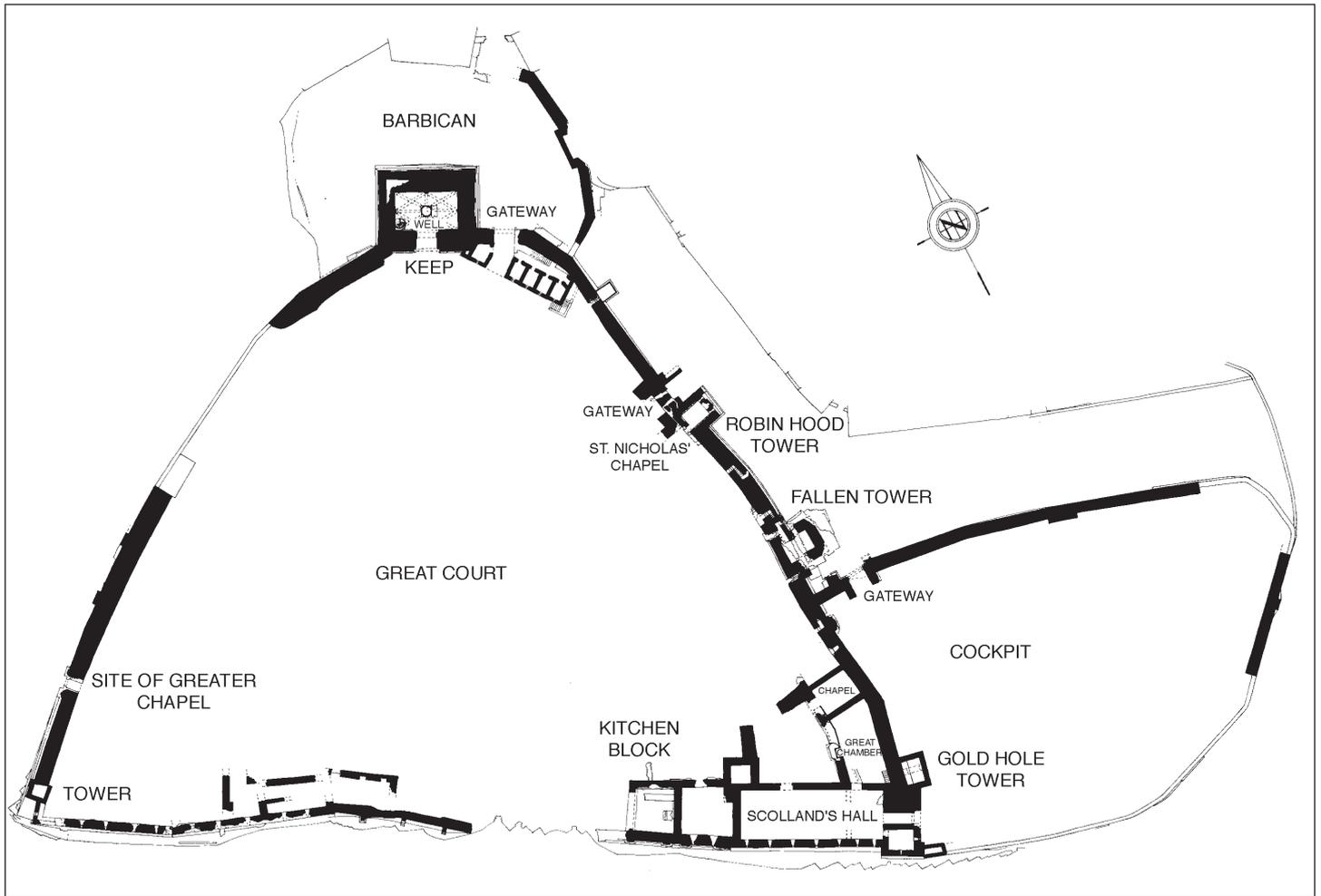
In 1855 the castle once again became a military installation and was used as the HQ of the North York Militia. A large barrack block was built along the west side of the Great Court (demolished in 1935). The keep was converted into a military store, the Great Court was levelled to form a parade ground and the main entrance was rebuilt.

In 1910 the castle was placed under the care of the Office of Works. It returned to military use during the Wars. During World War I conscientious objectors were incarcerated in eight cells in the present gatehouse. Many were local men who refused to fight on religious grounds, and became known as the Richmond Sixteen.

The castle is now in the care of English Heritage.

A visitor centre and museum at the entrance to the castle provides a good introduction to the main periods of the castles history. The displays include building the stone castle, the domestic life of the castle and links with the town. The military history of the castle includes a reconstruction of one of the prison cells and a computer interactive that allows visitors to explore the cells. There is a booklet for teachers that provides further information about conscientious objectors and the Richmond Sixteen.

EDUCATION



DESCRIPTION OF RICHMOND CASTLE

The barbican and gatehouse

This was built to defend the main gateway, but only fragments of it remain. Modern brick walls now enclose its original area. It was defended by a moat and drawbridge. The present gatehouse was built in the nineteenth century and stands on the site of the twelfth-century gatehouse.

The keep

This is a very fine example of a keep. It has many features to help teachers demonstrate castle design and function. External features to note are the:

- shallow buttresses strengthening the walls
- sloping plinth (batter) around the base of the keep. This allowed the defenders to bounce missiles into the path of the attackers
- three arched windows at first floor

level indicating the living area

- door on the first floor of the south-west wall (now a window). It once led to the wall walk
- arch on the second floor (now blocked). It may have been a door to a gallery or viewing platform
- corner turrets rising above the roofline
- crenellations, between which defenders could shoot arrows or hurl missiles and then retreat behind for protection from attack.

The basement

The large eleventh-century entrance arch was the original gateway into Earl Alan's castle. Its decorated stonework was clearly designed to impress visitors. The arch was walled up when the keep was built over it in the twelfth century. The arch was probably unblocked in the nineteenth century. Features to note include the:

- different stonework on the south

- face where the older building was incorporated into the present keep
- very thick walls of the keep
- ribbed vaulted roof, inserted around 1330. The roof of the basement was of stone to provide extra support for the building above, to resist attack by fire and to maintain a cool basement for long-term storage of food
- high windows which were subsequently blocked by the vaulting
- modern flagging in the corner which covers the pit in the floor
- many holes inside the arch which held hinges, bolt-holes and drawbar slots. The hinges were made by hammering the iron piece into a lead base embedded into the masonry. To strip the lead, when the castle was ruined, these holes were forcefully enlarged
- central pillar over a well
- spiral staircase descending from the first floor. This was the only way into the basement and

protected the castle's vital water supply from attackers wishing to poison it.

The first floor

Access into the keep was on the first floor which made it easier to defend. On this floor is a small lobby and a large chamber with two small side chambers built into the thickness of the walls. Features to note include the:

- decorated arched entrance
- three large round-headed windows high in the wall
- large round pillar to support the floor above
- window on the south-west. This used to be a door onto the wall walk
- squared stones. These are the original masonry, the irregular stones are in fact later repairs.

The second floor

The stairs leading up to it are built into the thickness of the wall. There is one large chamber, which served as the Great Hall, two small rooms, in the thickness of the wall, and a third small room with a latrine. Features to note are the:

- nine faintly recessed slots at the eastern end of the main chamber. It has been suggested that these are evidence of an additional floor as other larger holes at the same level in the north and south walls may have housed supporting beams for the long east-west beams
- putlog holes. These supported scaffolding during construction
- gabled roof of the keep. This is modern but a similar one would have originally been here, well below the level of the battlements.

The east curtain wall

This side of the castle was the most vulnerable. It was defended by three rectangular towers - Robin Hood Tower, a collapsed tower known as the Fallen Tower and Gold Hole Tower. There are traces of Norman 'herringbone' masonry along this stretch.

Robin Hood Tower

The name is modern. The two lower levels were built in the eleventh century, recognised by the large blocks of dark brown stone and the upper level was added in the fourteenth century. On the ground floor is the chapel of St Nicholas, one of three chapels the castle once had. The walls and vault were originally coated with thin white plaster and decorated with patterns and colours to reflect the candlelight. Features to note are the:

- barrel-vaulted roof
- arcading (decorative arches placed against a solid wall)
- circular double-splayed windows
- window sill with recesses on either side, used as the altar.

To the north of the Robin Hood Tower is a postern (small defended entrance through the curtain wall). It provided a convenient access point during times of war and could be used by the garrison to launch surprise attacks during a siege. Close by is a well.

To the south of the tower are five openings in the curtain wall. These are for the latrines. Most of the other buildings in the Great Court were for the upkeep of the castle and the maintenance of the Earl's large household. They were probably made of timber and included stables, guest lodgings, stores, kitchens, bakehouses, brewhouses, a dovecote, slaughterhouse and workshops.

Scolland's Hall

This was named after Earl Alan's steward and is one of the earliest examples of a stone built hall in England. This was Earl Alan's living accommodation, designed for defence as well as providing a palatial residence.

The ground floor was probably used as a lower hall for retainers and was divided by a wall near the eastern end. This eastern section contained a passage to the Cockpit.

The upper floor contained the

Great Hall. The Earl would have sat on a raised platform (dais) at the solar end. This was nearest the hearth and furthest away from the noise and smells of the service areas. Features to note are the:

- holes at the sides of the ground floor windows. These housed the fittings for shutters and wooden partitions subdividing the space
- small, plain square-headed windows and lintelled doorways on the ground floor
- large, round-headed Norman windows on the first floor. Each window was divided into two by a shaft with a carved capital
- remains of the stairs leading up to the main entrance
- large arched main entrance, only fragments of its rich carved decoration remain
- large ornate fourteenth-century window at the east end. It replaces an earlier one and was enlarged to give more light to the dais where the Earl sat
- holes to support the beams for the ceiling of the ground floor
- carved corbels (stone supports for supporting beams) indicating the roof of the first floor. Two are carved with human faces and another has a beast's head.

In the twelfth century the hall block was extended. New doors in the west wall led into the buttery (for storing butts - large casks of beer and wine), pantry and kitchen. This triple entrance arrangement was usual for the time.

In the fourteenth century a two-storey addition was built to the north of Scolland's Hall. It contained the Great Chamber, a chapel and chapel chamber, all at first floor level.

Solar and Great Chamber

Leading off the Great Hall is the Solar, the Earl's private room. It has a fireplace and two ornate thirteenth and fourteenth-century windows. A doorway led to a

gallery overlooking the Cockpit. Its beam holes can be seen on the outside.

A door to the north led to the Great Chamber and another door led into the Gold Hole Tower, part of which served as a private latrine for the Earl and his family. The Earl's private rooms had their own staircase from the Great Court.

Chapel and chapel chamber

Features to note are:

- the foundations of steps up to chapel and chapel chamber
- a squint in the wall between the Great Chamber. This small square opening allowed people to look into the chapel or watch services
- a piscina. This is a stone container for washing sacred vessels
- the chapel window. It used to be divided into three sections
- the groove along two walls. It shows where supporting beams for the chapel's floor had rested
- the chapel chamber window. It is divided into two sections
- joist holes. These show where the floor of the chapel chamber was.

The Cockpit

This is called after its later use for cock fighting. It may have originally been the castle gardens. Its gateway was protected by the Fallen Tower. Note the drawbar slot, built into the thickness of the adjoining curtain wall. The exterior of the Robin Hood and Gold Hole Towers can be studied from here. Features to note are:

- how the towers project from the curtain wall to provide crossfire protection for the entrance into the Great Court and along the curtain wall
- the massive batter (sloping base) of the Robin Hood Tower
- the garderobe chutes
- the nearby buttress, added to give extra support.

The west curtain wall

The cliff end has a small square

tower. Towards the southern part of the curtain wall is another postern gate. Above the gate is a large arched window, all that remains of the Greater Chapel. At various places on the curtain wall Norman herringbone masonry can be found.

DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

Castle Guard at Richmond, from a fourteenth-century manuscript Register of the Honour of Richmond.

In return for land and privileges Earl Alan's chief men were required to do castle guard with their own men for two consecutive months each year. This fourteenth-century register gives the names and duties of eight men, describing where they had to guard, indicated by their coats of arms on the drawing below.

"The place of the Constable in the enclosure of the Tower (Keep)".

"The place of Conan looked next to the enclosure of the tower on the east side outside the wall".

"The place of Ralph FitzRobert in the Castle of Richmond near the Chapel of St Nicholas".

"The place of the Chamberlain on the east of Scoulandhall next the oven".

"The place of Brian FitzAlan in the Great Hall of Scotland".

"The place of Ralph FitzHenry to the west of Scoulandhall".

"The place of Torphin FitzRobert of Manfield between the kitchen and brewhouse (middle of the south curtain wall)".

"The place of Thomas de Burgh on the west of the Greater Chapel of the canons on the walls".

Provide pupils with a plan of the castle. Then, either on site or in class, ask pupils to identify each area and say why they were selected as guard points. Before you give pupils a copy of this source ask them to identify which eight areas they would consider the most important areas to guard, and then compare them with this list.

Give each pupil the identity of one

of the Castle Guard and ask them to draw up a list of orders for the men under their command detailing how they would patrol or defend their allotted position. Get pupils to describe what they would see, hear or smell at their position in the medieval period.

Using visual sources

You can use old prints and artists' impressions on site as part of your historical investigation. They are particularly good to develop observation and recording skills and can be used in familiarisation exercises. Give pupils large photocopies with some features deliberately deleted, and get them to locate and complete the missing features. Or ask pupils to identify and colour-code those parts of the site which no longer exist, those parts which are still visible and those which have been altered.

EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

Before the visit

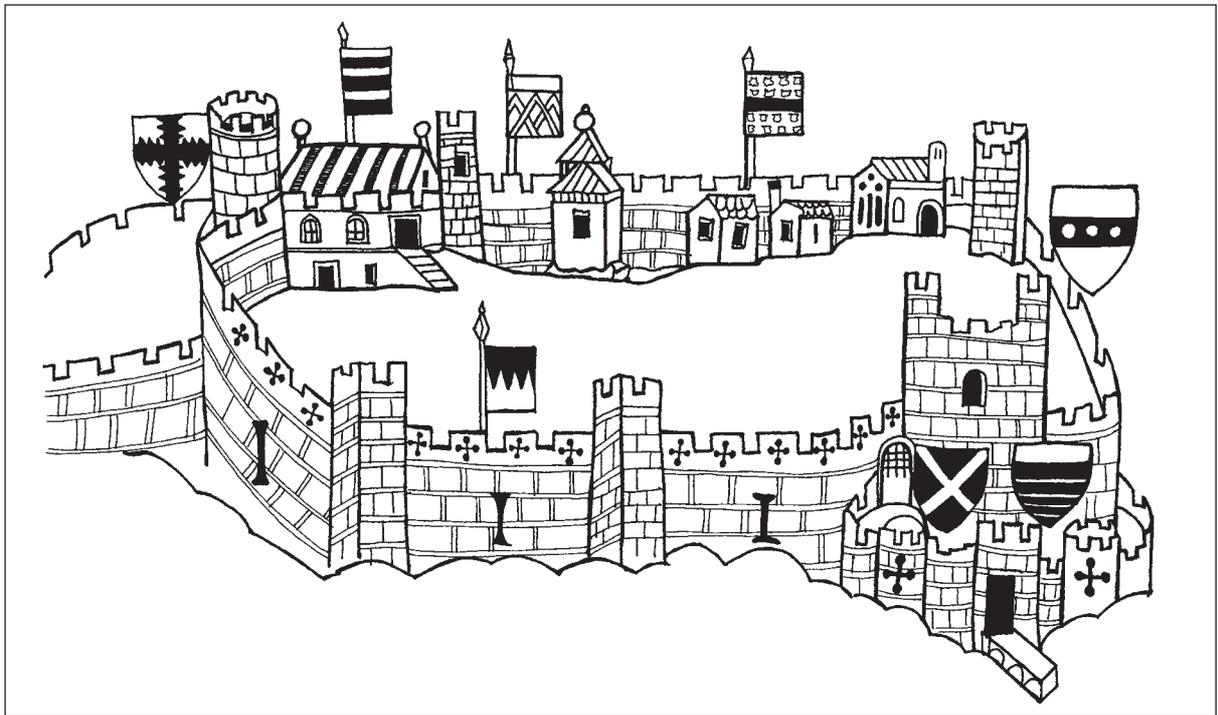
To prepare pupils for the visit they could:

- study an aerial photograph of the castle and its surroundings to establish which natural features have determined the shape and layout of the castle and how natural weaknesses were compensated

- analyse the plan and compare it with the plans of other castles

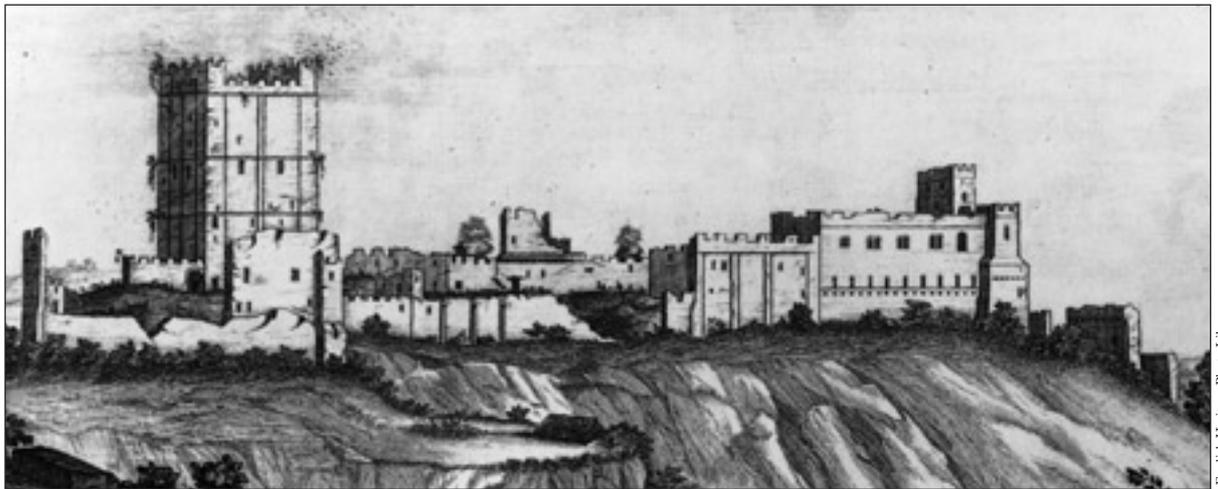
- design their own castle for the site. You will need to give pupils a map of the area with all reference of the castle removed. When they have done this you could compare their designs with what was actually built and then get pupils to explain any differences

- identify defensive techniques used in castles and to become familiar with castle terminology.



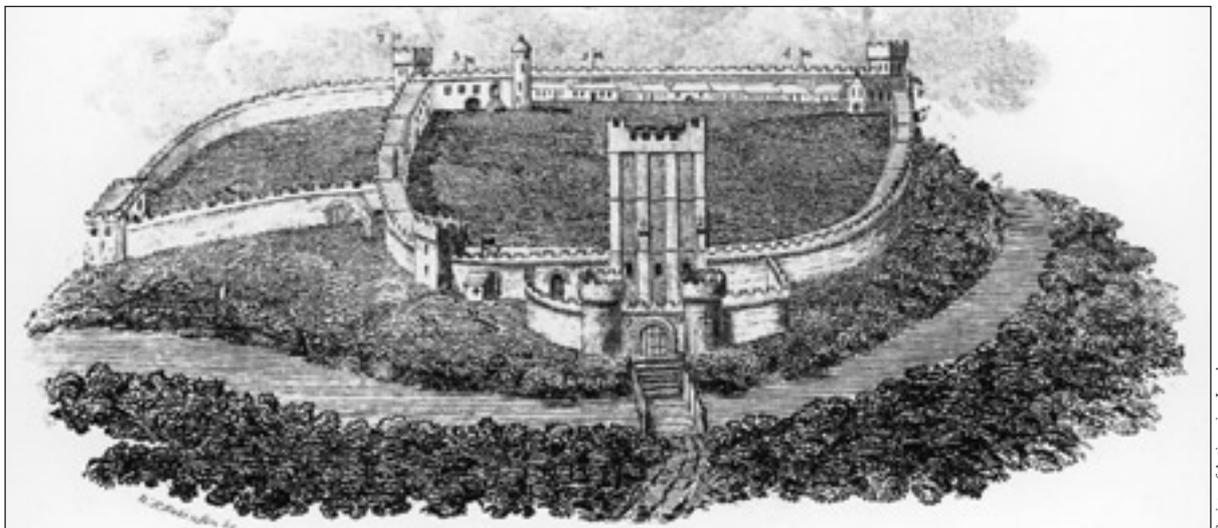
English Heritage Education

A drawing adapted from a fourteenth-century illustration of Richmond Castle. It shows the main features of the castle and the places of the 'Castle Guard', indicated by the different coats of arms.



English Heritage Photo Library

Samuel Buck's Drawing of the castle in 1721, before the restorations to the keep.



Society of Antiquaries, London

An illustration produced around 1821.

Get pupils to draw a checklist of possible design features. Use this on site to get pupils to locate them and then to mark them on a plan of the site. This will make a good familiarisation activity

- research the requirements of the household of a powerful earl and how it operated.



David Walmesley

The keep at Richmond is one of the most imposing in the country. It contains many classic features to help teachers demonstrate the role of castles in medieval society.

Attack and defence

The military functions of the castle are an essential topic for study. Adequate preparation in school will ensure that pupils can identify defensive elements, explain their functions and evaluate their effectiveness. Relate this to the site by asking pupils to:

- locate the naturally defensive elements of the site
- establish how any natural weaknesses were strengthened
- gather data on the height and thickness of walls
- assess the protection afforded to the various entrances to the castle

- analyse the effectiveness of the curtain wall and the positioning and distribution of towers along it.

Activities 'in role'

Providing a context or structuring your activities around actual events can give additional motivation.

- Ask pupils to imagine that they are a spy who has just gained access to the castle. They have been instructed to make a report of the defences as their lord intends to mount an attack. This could be a paired exercise, with the other partner detailing how the castle's garrison would respond to the various strategies suggested. Each pupil could then write their respective report back at school.

- Refer to the siege of 1215. Ask pupils to look at what human and material resources would be needed, how and where they would be housed, and how the manpower would be deployed. Develop this further by asking pupils to suggest what offensive measures the attackers might employ and how the defenders would retaliate.

- Point out to pupils that King William of Scotland was imprisoned in the Gold Hole Tower. Send pupils on a mission to help him escape. First, find an entrance into the castle and explain how they will approach it whilst defending themselves against any expected resistance. Once inside the castle get pupils to describe the route they would take to the King and then work out how they would escape from the castle.

- Get pupils to make their own preparations for an attack. Tell them they only have sufficient men to attack three places. Having surveyed the castle pupils should outline their plans, justifying their choices, identifying the obstacles which will confront them and how they will overcome them.

Communicating findings

Once pupils have collected information to show how the castle functioned and how people lived and worked in it, they could demonstrate their understanding in a variety of forms:

- write and illustrate a short book for younger children to explain how people lived in the castle
- design backdrops for a puppet show based around a real or imaginary event at the castle
- compile a storyboard for a TV documentary about the castle, summarising below each frame the text to be used by the presenter
- illustrate an educational wallchart about defences within a castle. Base this on Richmond and illustrate it with sketches taken on site
- produce a cartoon story about the Harrying of the North and the castle's subsequent role in subduing the region. Spoken information can be relayed using speech bubbles
- write a letter which Earl Alan would have sent to King William outlining the measures which he has taken to defend the area
- devise a medieval board game about attacking a castle - use the coats of arms of the castle guard as players
- invent a children's trail sheet by selecting a range of features around the castle which children must find and complete any missing parts
- produce a tape tour which should only feature sound effects, music, conversations and noises of the medieval period which help bring alive particular areas of the castle. Avoid narrative to force pupils to think of more imaginative ways of describing how these areas were used.

Clues for rooms

Look for evidence to show what each room was used for. Help pupils to do this by recording all findings on a data collection sheet or chart. Use the following list to help structure investigations.

Room: Note the size and height. What can this tell pupils about the intended use? Do they lead to other rooms or are they private? What is the stonework like on the walls? What do the rooms overlook, or do they have no outlook at all?

Windows: Note the size, design and amount. Have they been built with defence in mind, as an observation point or to provide light for interiors? Why do some windows have splayed openings and others parallel sides? Is it due to position, design or age? Which areas have no windows and why? Look for examples of alterations: some have been enlarged, others filled in.

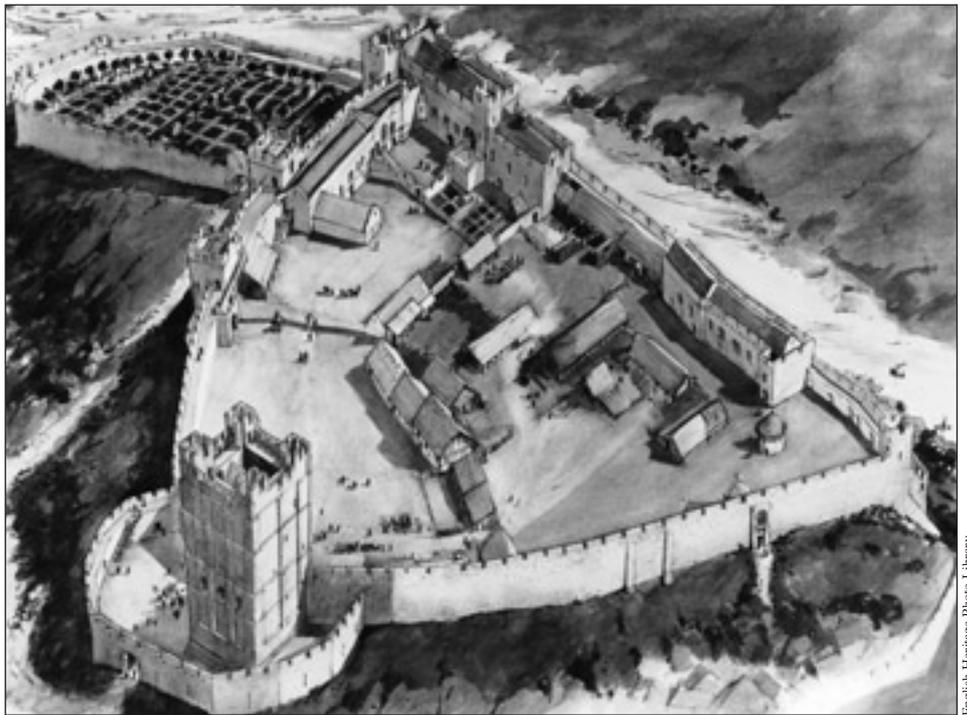
Doorways: Which are large and decorated - clearly designed to impress? Where do the doors lead to? Some rooms have many doors - does this suggest a public room? Which doors are arched and which have only a flat lintel stone? Why?

Fireplaces: Which rooms have fireplaces? Which rooms have no fireplaces and why? How big are they? Do they have any decoration? On which levels are fireplaces usually found?

Because so much remains of Scolland's Hall pupils could make their own models of how they think it would have looked like when complete. Take detailed sketches on site, and then back at school, complete the interior fittings and furnishings through research.

English

All new environments invite exploration and stimulate verbal



Sets of artist's impressions to use on site and teachers' notes on how to use them can be obtained from the custodians.

responses. This provides valuable material for language-based work.

■ Inform pupils that they will be producing a piece of work about a daily event, incident or moment in time involving one person living in the castle. The purpose of their visit is to gather factual information for their work. This should involve detailed sensory descriptions of two or three places in the castle and the journey between them. Back in class get pupils to research the role and duties of their chosen person and find out what this person would have worn and eaten where they would have slept and what possessions they had.

■ Producing a site survey uses a different type of language. This activity will be more successful if you provide pupils with a reason for doing it. Ask them to imagine that the King does not need the castle any more and wants to sell it for as much money as possible to pay for a new palace. Pupils pretend to be an estate agent taking measurements and writing descriptions for a brochure. They

Informing the visitor

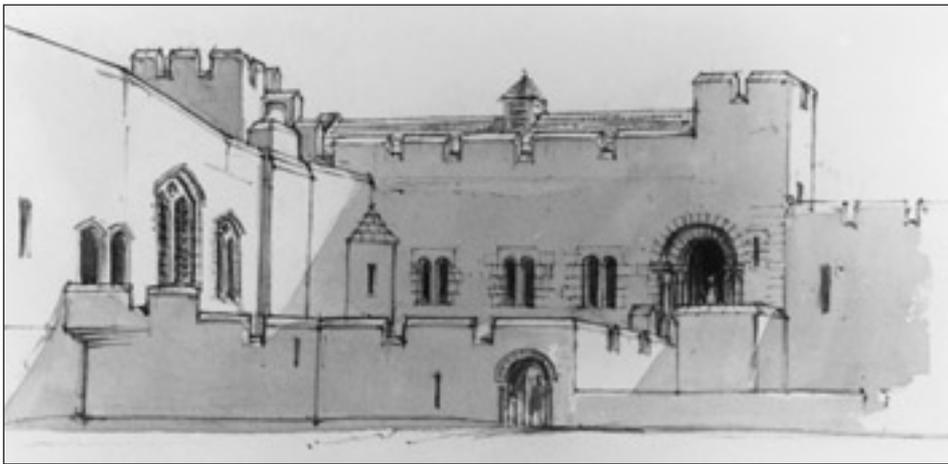
Ask groups to produce a new series of information panels for the site. Each panel should feature a character in role who points out to visitors how that part of the castle was used and what clues remain to prove this. Additional material can be included through research back at school.

need to stress the castle's defensive features and its extensive domestic accommodation.

■ Give pupils the headings I see, I hear, I smell and I feel. Ask them to record three words under each heading at different locations around the castle. The battlements, chapel, gateways, Cockpit and barbican are contrasting environments. Then, get pupils to think about what they would see, hear and smell in medieval times. Use this information to help with creative writing exercises.

Technology

Richmond Castle contains many



English Heritage Photo Library

Scolland's Hall was separated from the rest of the castle by a wall. It had a defensive purpose but also gave the Earl some privacy. To the left are the fourteenth-century additions to his lodgings. On site, get pupils to look for differences in style between the very early Norman architecture and the later and more decorative medieval style.

examples of medieval building techniques. Explore this by asking pupils to:

- make diagrams to compare the design of types of vaulting - ribbed vault in the keep and barrel vault in the chapel. Encourage pupils to add explanatory notes to explain how they support a roof

- catalogue the different types of windows and doorways, noting which are defensive, decorative or utilitarian. Describe how each design is different and how they support the weight of the masonry above

- identify different ways that floors and ceilings were supported - corbels, joist holes or grooves

- sketch the design of fireplaces, and how they were built into the walls

- describe the sanitation system and water supplies. Discuss what labour was needed in extracting and delivering water

- explain how the latrines operated.

MAKING A VISIT

Opening hours: 1 April-30 Sept: Daily, 10am-6pm. 1 Oct-31 March: Daily, 10am-4pm.

Booking procedure: Educational visits are free if booked at least two

weeks in advance via: English Heritage Yorkshire Region, 37 Tanner Row, York YO1 6WP. Tel: 01904 601901.

Maximum party numbers: 100 with a staff:pupil ratio of at least 1:15. Pupils must be supervised at all times.

Facilities

Wheelchair Access: Stair lift to museum displays. Steps in places on site, no access to upper floors in the keep.

Toilets: Nearby in town centre.

Shop: Our custodians welcome school parties as all proceeds contribute towards the work of English Heritage. Please supervise your pupils when visiting the shop.

Picnics: can be eaten on site. Please take all litter home.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Collins, F, & Hollinshead E, *English and the Historic Environment*, English Heritage, 2000, ISBN 1-85074-330-4

Copeland, T, *Maths and the Historic Environment*, English Heritage, 1992. ISBN 1-85074-329-0.

Copeland, T, *Using Castles, a teacher's guide*, English Heritage, 1994. ISBN 1-85074-327-4.

Lockey, M, & Walmsley, D, *Art and the Historic Environment*, English Heritage, 1999, ISBN1-85074-651-6

Barnes, J, *Design and Technology and the Historic Environment*,

English Heritage, 1999, ISBN 1-85074-651-6
Sets of 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: *Castles*, pack of six A3, 1994, ISBN 1-85074-490-4
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: *Role Up* - History through role play, English Heritage, 1994, 30 minutes. Illustrates simple drama and role play techniques.
Mighty Monuments, English Heritage, 1996, 20 minutes KS3.

English Heritage Education

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Edited and produced by David Walmsley
Designed by Small World Design
Printed by Palladian Press
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