



ENGLISH HERITAGE
EDUCATION

KS1-2

KS3

TEACHERS' KIT

Belsay Hall, Castle and Gardens

This kit helps teachers plan a visit to Belsay Hall, Castle and Gardens, home to the Middleton family for nearly 800 years. Discover the medieval castle, explore the Greek Revival mansion, and get creative in the outstanding gardens. Use these resources before, during and after your visit to help students get the most out of their learning.



GET IN TOUCH WITH OUR EDUCATION BOOKINGS TEAM:

- ☎ 0370 333 0606
- ✉ bookeducation@english-heritage.org.uk
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Step into England's story

WELCOME

This Teachers' Kit for Belsay Hall, Castle and Gardens has been designed for teachers and group leaders to support a free self-led visit to the site. It includes a variety of materials suited to teaching a wide range of subjects and key stages, with practical information, activities for use on site and ideas to support follow-up learning.

We know that each class and study group is different, so we have collated our resources into one kit allowing you to decide which materials are best suited to your needs. Please use the contents page, which has been colour-coded to help you easily locate what you need and view individual sections. All of our activities have clear guidance on the intended use for study so you can adapt them for your desired learning outcomes.

You can find more practical information about your booked visit to Belsay Hall, Castle and Gardens on your Education Visit Permit and on the Belsay **Schools page**. Here, you can also find an Outdoor Learning Kit, designed to help you explore the gardens, plus an SEND resource, created to improve access for students with additional needs.

We hope you enjoy your visit and find this Teachers' Kit useful. If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to get in touch with a member of our team either via bookeducation@english-heritage.org.uk or on 0370 333 0606.

English Heritage Learning Team

ICON KEY

The icons below will help you quickly identify the types of activities and information presented.



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KSI-2

KS3

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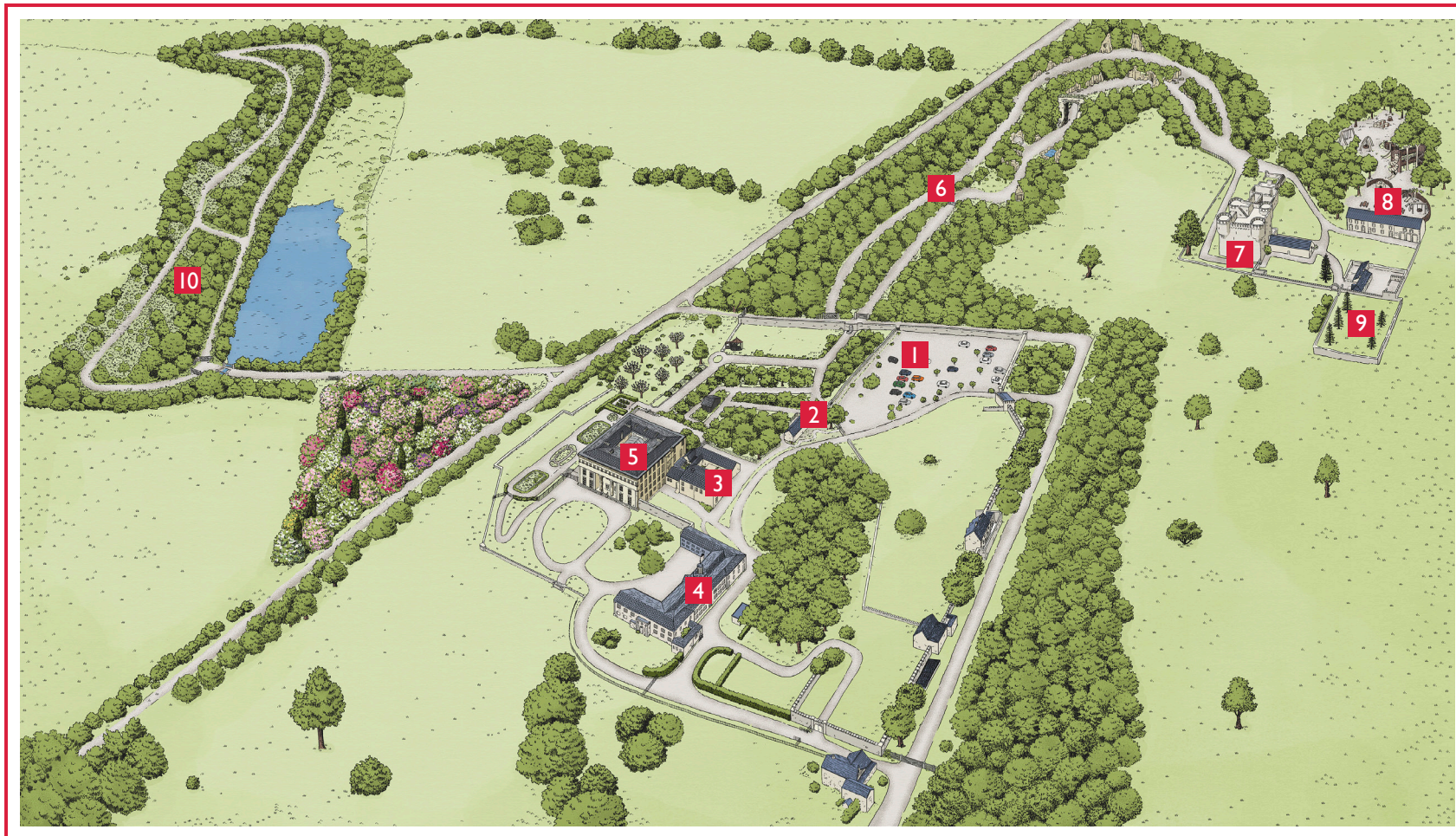


PRE-VISIT

Information and activities you can use in the classroom before your visit.

BELSAY HALL, CASTLE AND GARDENS

WHOLE SITE MAP

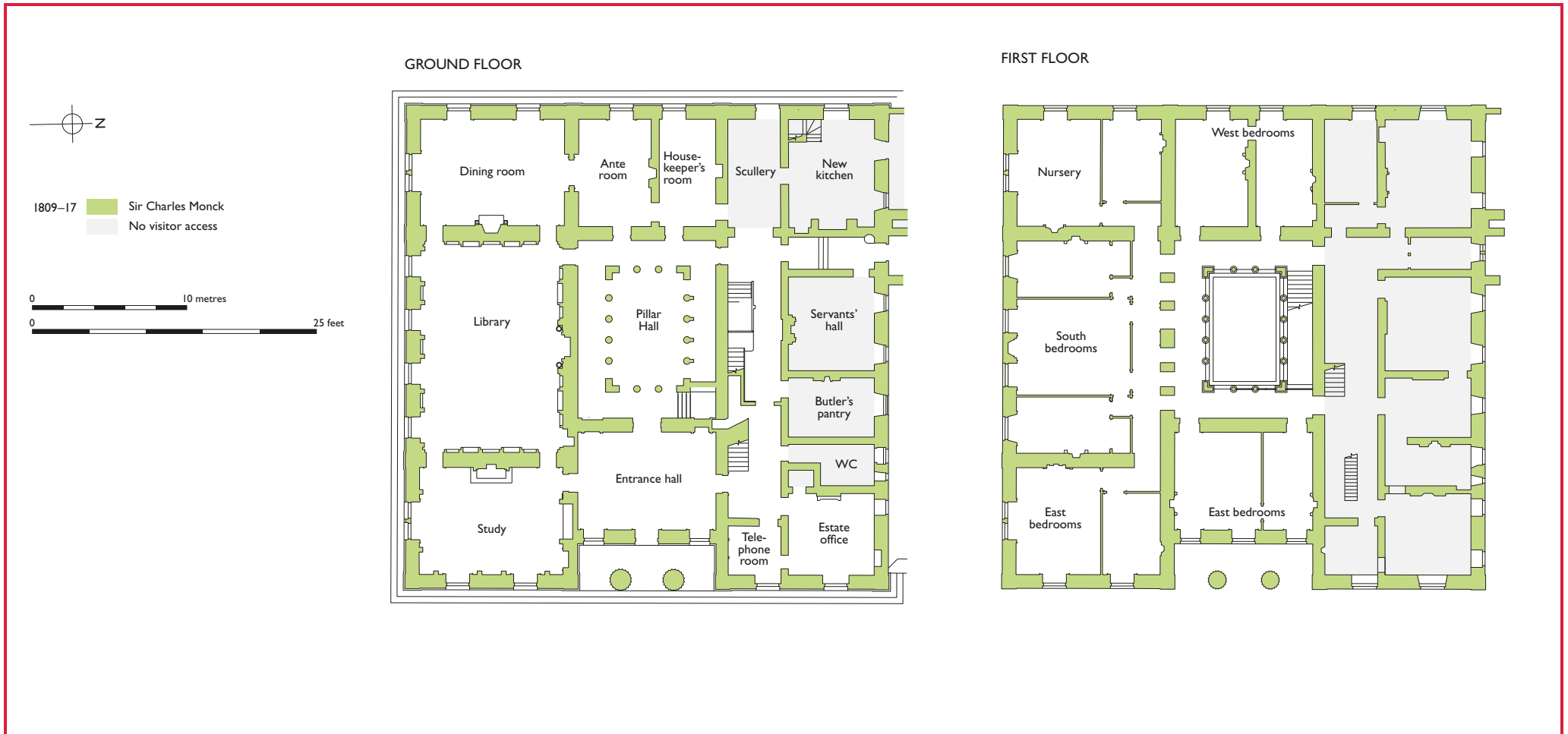


KEY

- 1** CAR PARK
- 2** TOILETS
- 3** CAFE (NEAR HALL)
- 4** TICKETS/SHOP
- 5** HALL
- 6** QUARRY GARDEN
- 7** CASTLE
- 8** CAFE/TOILETS/PLAY AREA
- 9** LEARNING SPACE
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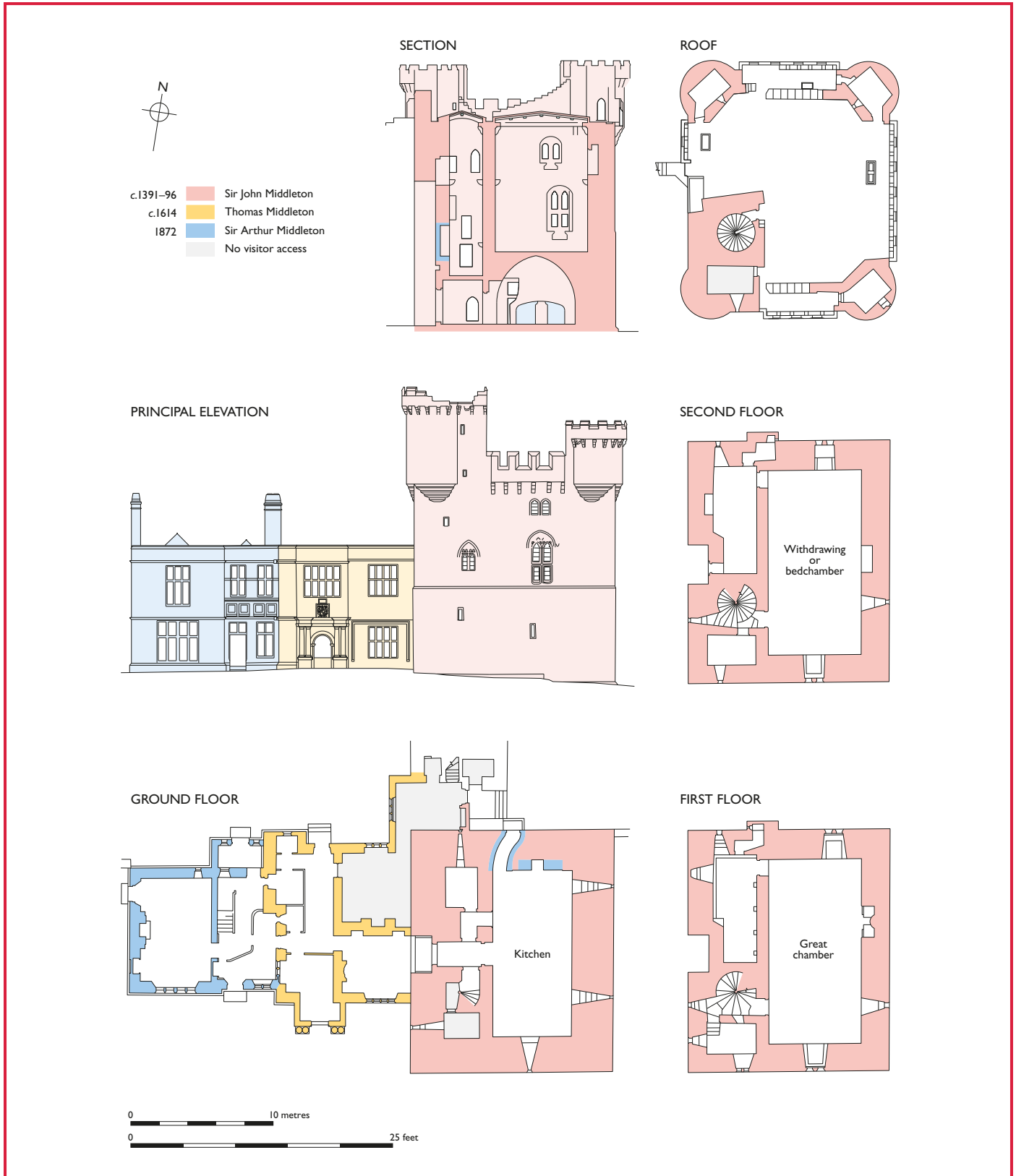
BELSAY HALL

SITE PLAN



BELSAY CASTLE

SITE PLAN



HISTORICAL INFORMATION

DISCOVER THE STORY
OF BELSAY

Below is a short history of Belsay. Use this information to learn how the site has changed over time. You'll find the definitions of the key words in the Glossary.

THE MIDDLETONS AND THEIR MEDIEVAL MANOR

The Middleton family have lived and worked on the Belsay **estate** since 1242. The earliest known record tells us Belsay was owned by brothers, John and Richard de Middleton. Richard was **Lord Chancellor** to King Henry III (r.1216–72). By the end of the 1200s there was probably a Great Hall, guest range, kitchen, stables and outbuildings, all surrounded by a high wall.

In 1298, King Edward I (r.1272–1307) stayed at Belsay for two days, during a period of war with the Scots.

The castle (or fortified house) you see today was built on the site of the original buildings and adapted by multiple generations of the Middleton family.

REBELLION AND RECOVERY

In 1317 Sir John Middleton III of Belsay joined a rebellion led by his cousin, Sir Gilbert Middleton, against King Edward II (r.1307–27). The rebels captured the Bishop of Durham (a powerful religious figure) and two cardinals (church leaders) from Rome who were visiting Scotland on a mission to reduce tensions between England and Scotland.

The rebels robbed the cardinals and held the bishop hostage. The rebellion fizzled out and Sir Gilbert and Sir John were captured by troops loyal to the king. They were charged with **treason**. Their lands were taken and eventually given to a knight called Sir John Strivelyn. Sir John Middleton IV married Strivelyn's daughter and heir, Christiana, and so regained the Belsay estate in 1391.



The Middletons' medieval tower (the taller structure to the right) with the extra wing added later (to the left).

THE POWER OF THE TOWER

The feature of the castle that stands out the most is the **fortified tower house**, built in the late 1300s, probably by Sir John Middleton IV. The 'pele tower' was made from local sandstone and built on a grand scale, much larger than many others in the district.

The tower was a display of the Middleton family's restored position in society, and a celebration of the marriage that made this possible. It was a statement of pride as well as a place of safety during a violent period of border battles.

At this point in time, England and Scotland were rival countries, who fought over land. There was a lot of fighting on the **borderlands** between England and Scotland, from the late 1200s to the early 1600s. If Scottish raiders approached Belsay, the Middleton family could retreat into their tower to stay safe.



The fortified tower house has defensive features but was as much about displaying family pride as it was about protection.

CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE 1400S



Reconstruction of the Great Chamber in the late 1400s, when the estate was owned by Sir John Middleton VII, an experienced soldier and naval commander.

The Middletons were significant figures in the north-east during the **Wars of the Roses** (1455–87). They were present at many of the important battles and were committed **Yorkists**, but didn't play a leading role.

Sir John Middleton VII inherited the estate from his father in about 1465. He was a loyal Yorkist and close to the Yorkist king, Edward IV (r.1461–70 and 1471–83).

Sir John Middleton VII developed the castle, creating new wall paintings in

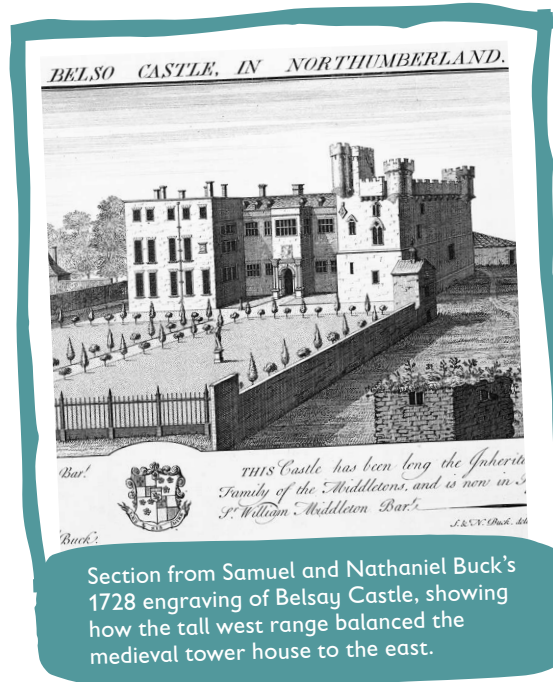
the Great Chamber, made to look like a tapestry, featuring shields hung on trees and a scene of ships, reflecting his important role as a naval commander.

A CASTLE FOR A HOME

When King James I (r.1603–25) became king, England and Scotland were unified under one Crown. The border region became more peaceful and in 1614 Thomas Middleton II (1568–1651) was able to build an undefended manor house next to the tower. Later Middletons added a further **wing** to the west to create a large and comfortable home.

When the manor house was built next to the tower, new openings were cut through the walls, to link the two buildings. The tower's rooms may have become less important than the manor house's modern, well-lit spaces.

In the 1700s, Sir William Middleton, the third **baronet**, and his wife, Anne Ettrick, improved the gardens. They created a new winter garden, built Bantam **Folly** and landscaped the grounds in the style of the fashionable landscape designer Lancelot 'Capability' Brown.



Section from Samuel and Nathaniel Buck's 1728 engraving of Belsay Castle, showing how the tall west range balanced the medieval tower house to the east.

GRAND DESIGNS FROM ANCIENT GREECE



A page from Sir Charles Monck's journal from his tour of Germany, Venice and Greece, 1804–6. © Published with kind permission of Northumberland Archives and the Belsay Estate

From the mid-1600s, **scholars** and artists around Europe were fascinated by ancient **architecture** from Greece and Rome. It was believed that **classical** architects had worked out special rules for their buildings that enabled them to create ideal designs. The Golden Rectangle is a shape based on a number sequence called the **Fibonacci series**, invented by an Italian mathematician. Designers believed this rectangle had perfect proportions, so it was used as the basis for the design of many classical buildings.

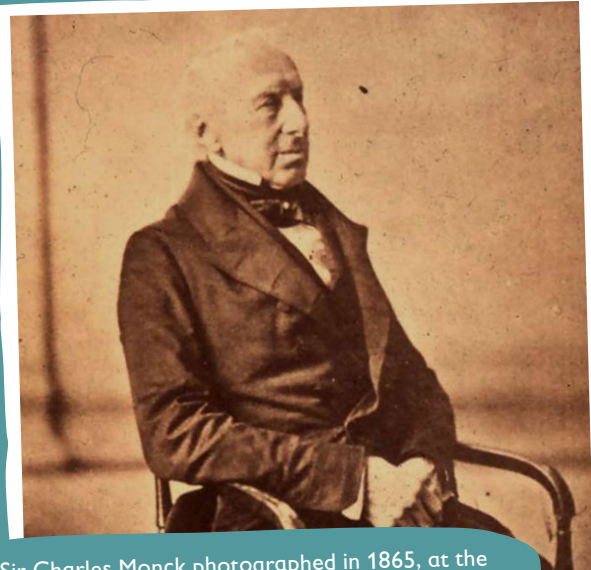
Architects travelled to places like Greece, gathering ideas and bringing them back to England. They incorporated features from Greek temples into

fashionable **neo-classical** buildings, creating a new style known as **Greek Revival**.

SIR CHARLES MONCK MAKES HIS MARK

Belsay Hall was designed by Sir Charles Monck and built between 1807 and 1817 to replace Belsay Castle as the home of the Middletons. Sir Charles, the sixth Middleton baronet, inherited Belsay in 1795. He took the last name 'Monck' as a condition of inheriting his grandfather Lawrence Monck's Lincolnshire estate.

At school, Charles took great interest in the Classics, especially Greek. When he married, he and his wife, Louisa Cooke, went on a two-year honeymoon to Greece. Once back in England, inspired by the things they saw and the drawings they made on their travels, Sir Charles built an impressive hall in the Greek Revival style, one of the first of its kind in England.



Sir Charles Monck photographed in 1865, at the age of 86. © Published with kind permission of Northumberland Archives and the Belsay Estate



The hall, designed by Charles Monck in the Greek Revival style.

Sir Charles and his family moved from the castle to the new hall on Christmas Day 1817. Parts of the castle were demolished so it appeared as a romantic ruin and its formal garden was removed. Parts of the walls of the castle court

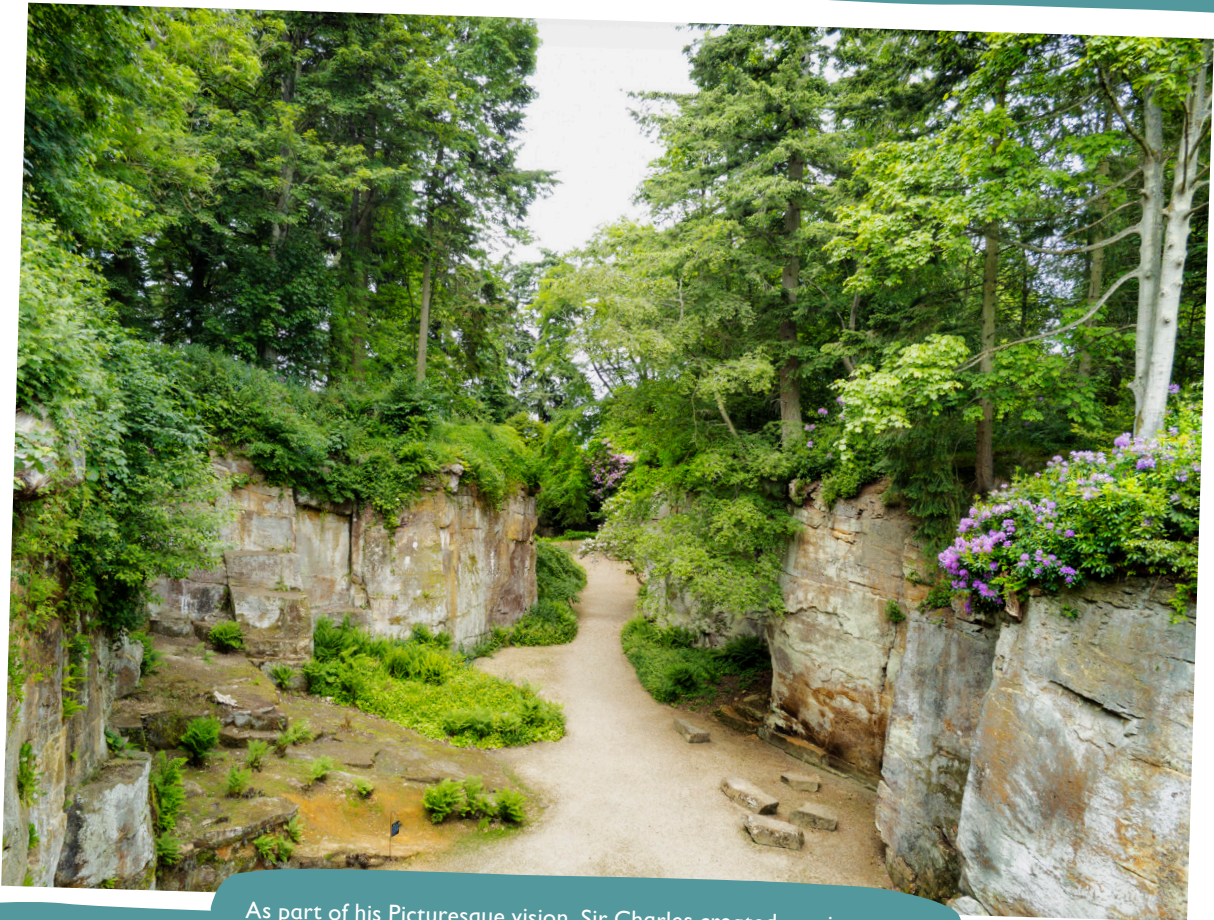
were replaced with a **ha-ha** (a surrounding ditch), so the castle appeared to rise from the ground, as a powerful reminder of the family's impressive past.

SIR CHARLES' PICTURESQUE LANDSCAPE DESIGN

The **Picturesque** movement at the end of the 1700s argued that landscape design should be inspired by rugged, natural scenery: rough in texture, wild, dramatic and awe-inspiring.

Sir Charles used these Picturesque ideas when he designed the landscape at Belsay in the early 1800s. He laid out a formal flower garden and **terraces** to enjoy with his family and friends close to the house. They contrasted with the wild-looking landscape and dramatic quarry garden he shaped beyond.

Charles' second wife, Lady Mary Monck, was a keen painter and gardener who worked with her husband on the design of Belsay's garden. In the early 1800s Crag Wood was planted with conifers newly introduced to England, Scots pines and other native trees. The original paths through the wood were planned by Lady Mary.



As part of his Picturesque vision, Sir Charles created a unique garden in the quarry that supplied the sandstone for the new hall.

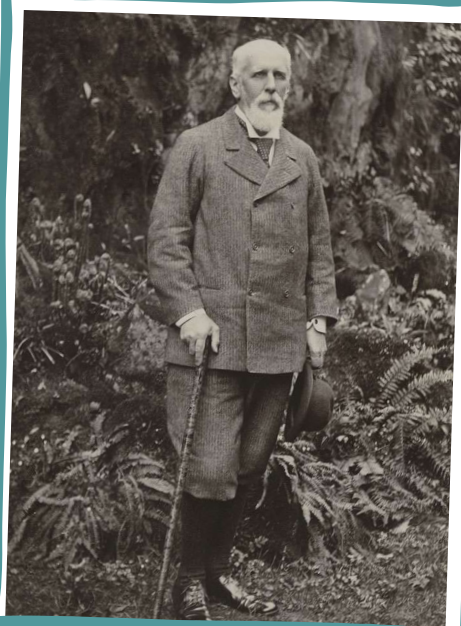
COLLECTING AND CULTIVATING PLANTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Sir Charles kept a detailed diary about his gardening activities. In 1809 he recorded how he **cultivated** some pines 'from seeds taken out of the cones which I brought with me from Greece'.

Exotic plants were able to thrive in the gardens at Belsay, alongside **native** species, due to the **micro-climates** that Sir Charles created through his clever landscaping and use of



The gunnera plant, brought here from South America, thrives in the quarry – its leaves grow to the size of the small tables.



Sir Arthur Middleton standing in the quarry garden in about 1900. © Published with kind permission of Northumberland Archives and the Belsay Estate

new plants from around the world, changing the look and feel of many garden areas, particularly the quarry.

technology. The steep sides of the quarry garden, plus the protective Scots pines and yews planted above it, mean unique plants can grow there. In the walled garden, built in the 1830s, Sir Charles constructed long '**hot walls**' to stop frosts from killing tender buds and early flowers, allowing the gardeners to grow figs and peaches.

Sir Charles' grandson, Arthur, inherited Belsay in 1867 and continued his grandfather's work. He changed his surname back from Monck to Middleton. At Belsay, Sir Arthur planted and grew trees and plants imported from all over the world, including South America, North America, China and Japan. He extended the gardens and added to Sir Charles' designs with

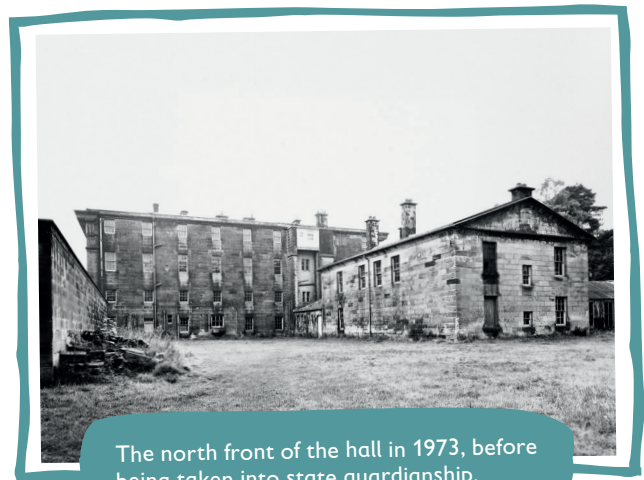
WORK, WAR AND DECLINE IN THE 1900s

A country house like Belsay Hall needed lots of staff. In 1930, the Middletons employed 12 people to help around the house, including a chauffeur, butler, footman, housekeepers, housemaids, kitchen maids, a lady's maid and a sewing maid. More people were employed to help in the gardens.

Although the work was hard, in their diaries and letters, the staff wrote about how happy they were working at Belsay. They remember watching guests arrive for parties and enjoying the staff annual Christmas outing.

During the Second World War (1939–45), Belsay was used by the Army. They trained, slept and socialised in the hall and gardens. Some of the men left **graffiti** in the lounge and bedrooms, including names and dates scratched into walls and doors. Through examining the graffiti, historians recently discovered that the well-known **Black Watch regiment** was one of several stationed at Belsay Hall during the Second World War.

The Middleton family moved back in after the war, but relocated to another smaller house on the estate in 1962, leaving the hall empty. Persistent damp and the neglected maintenance during the Second World War left the buildings damaged and in need of care. The hall, castle and gardens were taken into **state guardianship** in 1980, and some of the internal woodwork and plaster were removed to stop the spread of **dry rot**.



The north front of the hall in 1973, before being taken into state guardianship.

THE FUTURE OF BELSAY

Recently, the 'Belsay Awakes' project has opened up the site's history for more people to enjoy, safeguarding the buildings for years to come, and bringing the gardens back to their best. The project was completed in 2023, thanks to National Lottery players and a grant of £3.4 million from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. You can find out more by searching online for 'Belsay Awakes project'.



The project includes a revamped education programme, new apprenticeships, a range of volunteering roles and exciting opportunities for the community to get involved.

GLOSSARY

TRICKY TERMS AND
WHAT THEY MEAN

Below is a list of words you might come across while exploring Belsay Hall, Castle and Gardens. Use this Glossary to find out what they mean.

architecture – the design of buildings

baronet – the lowest ranking title in British nobility. Baronets can use the title ‘Sir’.

Black Watch regiment – a unit of foot soldiers, also known as the Royal Highlanders. Formed in 1715, this senior Highland regiment fought in nearly all the British Army’s campaigns and is now part of The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

borderlands – the stretch of land where two countries meet. Here, it is the land on the border between England and Scotland.

classical – a word to show something relates to ancient Greece or Rome. It could be classical literature, architecture or art.

cultivate [plants] – the act of preparing soil and growing/maintaining plants

dry rot – a type of fungus found in wood, caused by poor ventilation, that makes the wood split and turn to powder

estate – an area of land or property

exotic [plants] – from a faraway country

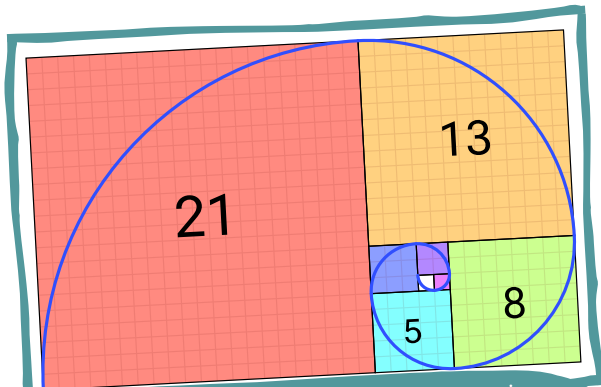


The Pillar Hall, designed by Sir Charles Monck in the Greek Revival style.



This Vitruvian scroll design seen in the Pillar Hall is inspired by classical architecture. Photo by Nigel Hooper

Fibonacci series – a sequence of numbers produced by starting with 1, and adding the last two numbers to arrive at the next: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21 etc. The ratio between any two Fibonacci numbers after 3 is 1:1.618. This is known as the Golden Ratio. The Golden Rectangle is a shape whose sides are in the ratio of 1:1.618. This shape was used as the basis for the design of many classical and neo-classical buildings, including Belsay Hall.



The Golden Ratio, seen here in the Fibonacci spiral, was used to calculate the ideal height of columns and the distance between them.
© Romain, CC BY-SA 4.0

Folly – in architecture, it is an attractive building with no practical purpose, built to look impressive and display wealth or importance

fortified tower house – a home with defensive features built into it, to display the power and wealth of the owner, while also providing extra security and protection

graffiti – writing, drawing or painting made on a wall or other public surface, usually without permission

Greek Revival – a design style, popular in the late 1700s and early 1800s, that was inspired by Greek temples



Greek Revival designs, like these Greek key and anthemion patterns, can be seen throughout the hall. Photo by Nigel Hooper

ha-ha – a type of sunken fence used in landscaped gardens from the mid-1700s. The point of the ha-ha was to create the illusion of a continuous lawn, while also stopping grazing livestock (like sheep) from wandering too far.

hot walls – a clever piece of gardening technology, used by Sir Charles Monck, to help exotic plants grow in England's cold northern climate. Hot walls were hollow with openings along the back, where fires could be lit to heat the air inside, which then heated the stone walls.

Lord Chancellor – in medieval times, the highest ranking minister in England, in charge of preparing, sealing and sending/receiving the important written documents required by the king or queen



The plants in the quarry garden are sheltered from freezing temperatures and harsh winds, thanks to the micro-climate created by the walls of the quarry and the trees planted on top.

micro-climate – a set of atmospheric conditions (such a temperature, light levels, and wind exposure) specific to a small area, that often differs from the surrounding area

native [plants] – a plant that has always grown in England, and wasn't brought here from somewhere else

naval commander – in medieval times, an experienced soldier and sailor, in charge of ships and their sailors during times of war, according to the military needs of the king or queen

neo-classical – used to describe a ‘new’ kind of classical style popular in the 1700s, based on the art and building designs of ancient Greece and Rome

pele tower – a small fortified tower, built along the English and Scottish borders, mainly between the mid-1300s and about 1600. They were free-standing and made of stone, built to keep watch of the local area, defend against attack and as a show of status.



The oldest part of this building (on the right) was originally a free-standing pele tower. The manor house and west wing (to the left) were added later.

Picturesque – a style of landscape or garden, especially in the late 1700s and early 1800s, that featured spectacular scenery which was irregular and varied, with a sense of drama and wildness in the planting

scholar – someone who is highly educated and studies for work, to develop detailed knowledge on a specialist subject

state guardianship – when something (e.g. a historic building or garden) is looked after by the government, to protect it from ruin

Terraces – an area of the garden that has been designed to have lawns and flower beds on different levels, like very deep and wide steps

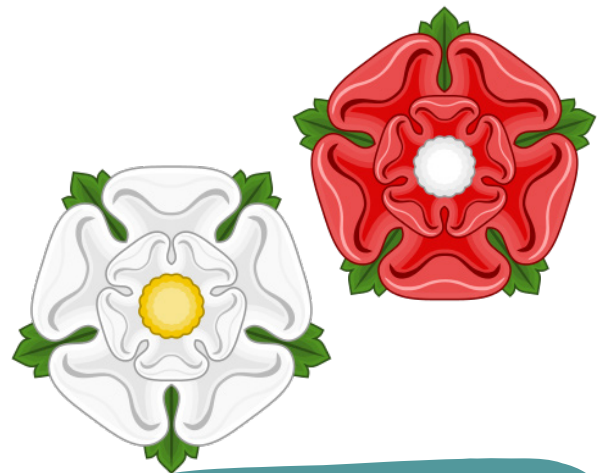
treason – when a person commits a crime against his or her country, by attempting to kill/overthrow a king, queen, or government, or by giving information to enemy countries

Wars of the Roses (1455–87)

– a series of battles between two rival houses: the House of York and the House of Lancaster. Both groups wanted control of the throne. The supporters of the rival houses wore a white or red rose, to show which side they were on.

wing – a bit of a building that extends out and away from the main part of it

Yorkists – supporters of the House of York in the Wars of the Roses. They wore a white rose as a symbol of their support.



The white rose, worn by Yorkists, and the red rose, worn by Lancastrians.

1215

King John (r.1119–1216) signs Magna Carta at Runnymede. The barons revolt.

1216

King John dies. His son, Henry III (r.1216–72), is crowned at nine years old.

1237

The Treaty of York means that the Scots abandon their rule of northern England. The border line is drawn between England and Scotland.

1296

The Scottish sign a treaty with France. King John of Scotland and Edward I of England (r.1272–1307) become enemies.

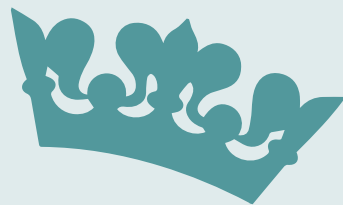
1200

1242

First record of the Middleton family owning the Belsay estate.

1298

King Edward I visits Belsay while based in northern England during battles with the Scots. By this date there is probably a group of buildings at Belsay, with a Great Hall, guest rooms, a kitchen, stables and outbuildings.



13TH CENTURY

1307

Edward I dies and his son, Edward II (r.1307–27) becomes king.

1314

The English are defeated by the Scots at the Battle of Bannockburn.

1317

Sir Gilbert Middleton leads a rebellion in Northumberland against King Edward II. Sir John Middleton (cousin of Sir Gilbert and owner of Belsay) joins the rebellion.

1327

Edward II is forced to give up his crown. His son, Edward III (r.1327–77), becomes king.

1300

1317

Sir John Middleton III of Belsay joins a rebellion led by his cousin, Sir Gilbert Middleton, against King Edward II. Sir John is captured and charged with treason. His land at Belsay is taken and given to Sir John Strivelyn, one of Edward III's loyal knights.

1391

Sir John Middleton III's grandson, John IV, marries Strivelyn's daughter, Christiana, and so regains ownership of Belsay.

1390s

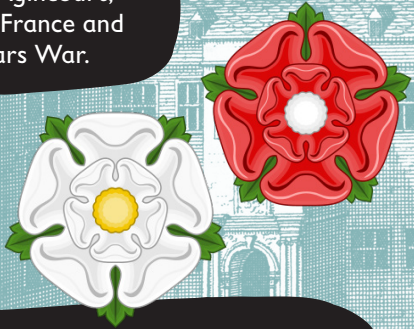
Tower house is built, probably by Sir John Middleton IV.

14TH CENTURY



1415

Henry V (r.1413–22) and his English army win the Battle of Agincourt, defeating Charles VI of France and ending the Hundred Years War.

**1455–87**

The Wars of the Roses between the Yorkists, who wore a white rose and supported Richard, Duke of York, and the Lancastrians, who wore a red rose and supported King Henry VI (1422–61 and 1470–71).

1400

1455–87

During the Wars of the Roses, members of the Middleton family are loyal Yorkists and are involved in many of the major battles.

c.1465

Sir John Middleton VII inherits the estate from his father. He is a loyal Yorkist and close to the Yorkist king, Edward IV (r.1461–70 and 1471–83).

1480s–90s

Sir John Middleton VII develops the castle, creating new wall paintings in the Great Chamber.

15TH CENTURY

1603

The English and Scottish Crowns are unified under King James I (r.1603–25). There is a period of greater peace along the English and Scottish border.

1642–51

The English Civil War between King Charles I (r.1625–51) and Parliament. The Middletons are strong supporters of Parliament.

**1649**

King Charles I is tried, convicted, and executed for high treason. The monarchy is abolished and the Commonwealth of England is declared.

1600

1614

A manor house is built by Thomas Middleton II, possibly on the site of the medieval Great Hall as the border region becomes more peaceful.

1629

A porch is added to the front of the manor house with a coat of arms including the Wildman. The formal walled garden with Wildman and Wild Woman statues is possibly created around this time.

1670s

Sir William Middleton, 1st baronet, modernises and refronts the castle (especially the west wing).

17TH CENTURY

GEORGIANS

1714–1837

VICTORIANS

1837–1901

1714

The House of Hanover takes the throne. George I (r.1714–27) is crowned king.

1745

A Jacobite rebellion, led by Charles Edward Stuart, marches south from Scotland over the border into England.

1746

The Jacobites are defeated at the Battle of Culloden. Sir William Middleton, 3rd baronet, is at this battle.

1762

Whistlejacket, a famous horse once owned by Sir William Middleton, 3rd baronet, is painted by the artist George Stubbs.

1700

1826

The world's first photograph is taken.

1830–37

Reign of George III (1760–1820)

1837–1901

Reign of Queen Victoria.

1845

The arrival of the railway.

1800



1740s–50s

The grounds at Belsay are landscaped in the style of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. Sir William Middleton, 3rd baronet, has the stables renovated for his horses—including the famous Whistlejacket.

1757

Sir William dies with large debts. To pay these off, all of his horses (including Whistlejacket), plus his furniture, are sold.

1774

Sir William Middleton, 5th baronet, marries heiress Jane Monck in 1774 and restores and refurnishes Belsay.

1795

Sir Charles Monck inherits Belsay.

1804

Sir Charles Monck marries Louisa Cooke and they go on a two-year honeymoon to Greece.

1807–17

The new hall is built in the Greek Revival style, using sandstone quarried at Belsay. The Monck family move from the castle to the completed hall on Christmas Day 1817.

1820s

The quarry becomes a key feature of Charles' Picturesque garden design.

1831

Sir Charles relocates 'Belsay Town' to make room for his garden plans.

1867

Sir Charles' grandson, Arthur, inherits Belsay and continues his grandfather's work.

18TH CENTURY

19TH CENTURY

WWI
1914–18

WWII
1939–45

MODERN DAY

1910–36

Reign of George V.

20 January 1936–11 December 1936

Reign of Edward VIII. Edward abdicates the throne.

1936–52

Reign of George VI.

1952–2022

Reign of HRH Queen Elizabeth II.



2020

Britain leaves the European Union.

2020

The World Health Organization (WHO) declares COVID-19 a pandemic.



2022

Prince Charles becomes King Charles III.

1900

2000

1930

Twelve staff are recorded as working at Belsay, including a chauffeur, butler, footman, housekeepers, housemaids, kitchen maids, a lady's maid and a sewing maid. Others helped in the gardens.

1939–45

Belsay is used by the Army for training during the Second World War.

1945

Belsay Hall is returned to the Middleton family in a state of disrepair. The family move back in but eventually relocate to Swanstead, a more manageable property on the estate, in 1962.

1980

English Heritage starts to look after the hall, castle and gardens.

2023

The Belsay Awakes project, to restore the hall, castle and gardens, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, is complete.



20TH CENTURY

21ST CENTURY

CASTLE AND GARDENS TIMELINE

SELF-LED ACTIVITY

LOOKING LOCAL, THINKING GLOBAL



Recommended for

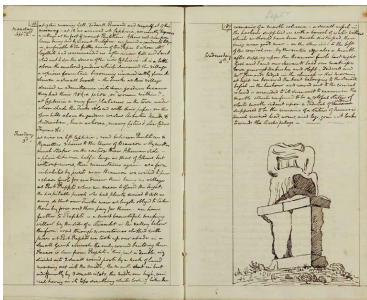
KS2–3 (History, Geography, Science)

Learning objectives

- Understand some of the global influences on the hall and gardens at Belsay.
- Make connections between Belsay and the rest of the world.
- Develop geographical skills.

Time to complete

30–45 minutes



A page from Sir Charles Monck's journal from his tour of Germany, Venice and Greece, 1804–6.
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SUMMARY

Sir Charles' diaries provide revealing insights into the ideas that inspired the design of the house and gardens at Belsay. You can see an extract from his travel journals on page 52 (Source 5).

In the early 1900s, when collecting newly imported plants was fashionable, Sir Arthur Middleton introduced more exotic species at Belsay. Many of the trees planted by Sir Arthur had only recently been introduced to Britain.

For further context, read the Historical Information section (on pages 8–14).

MAIN ACTIVITY

1. Study a world map with your class. Identify the seven different continents: Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Antarctica, Europe, Australia.
2. Locate these places on the world map: Greece, Rome, Sicily, USA, China, Brazil, India and Nepal.
3. Look at the images provided on pages 23–24 of garden and building features at Belsay. These demonstrate the site's global connections.
4. Label the world map you are studying, showing where each plant or idea came from.
5. During your visit, find these hall and garden features around the site. Refer to your labelled map to help students understand what they are looking at, and where it came from.

MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Play a 'Guess Who' style game, where students guess which plant or feature you are describing, based on where they come from and what they look like.

For more information and activities relating to gardens at Belsay, download the Outdoor Learning Kit from the Belsay Schools page.

IDEAS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

1. ARCHITECTURE AND DECORATIONS



The crepidoma (stepped plinth) is inspired by ancient Greek temples.



The huge columns and recessed portico are copied directly from the temple of Theseus, in Athens.



The central courtyard in the Pillar Hall is similar to a Roman villa.



The repeating Greek key symbol on the frieze in the Library is commonly seen in Greek temples.

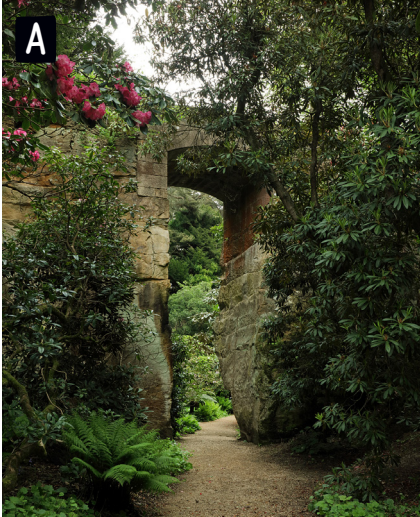


The bare stone blocks in the entrance hall are finely cut and fitted together without mortar – a building technique used in Greek temples.

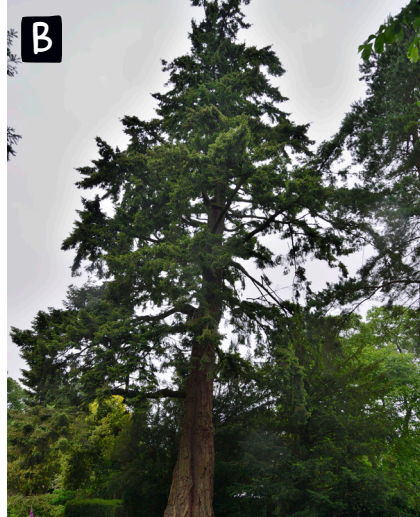


Scroll capitals at the top of pillars in the Pillar Hall hold up the floor above, as seen in classical Greek and Roman architecture.

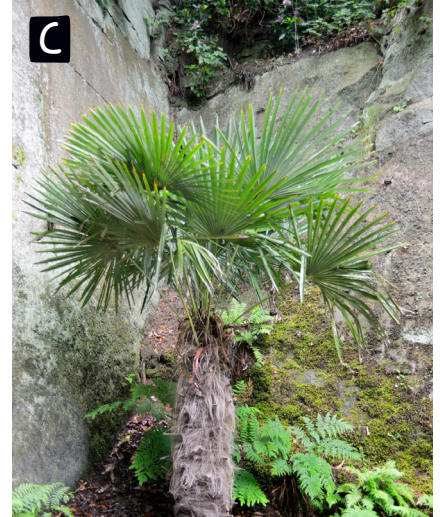
2. GARDEN DESIGN AND PLANTS



A The towering rock arch in the quarry garden is directly influenced by the ancient quarries at Syracuse, in Sicily.



B The Douglas fir in the winter garden is grown from a sample brought to England from western North America.



C Native to China, a Chusan palm was recorded at Belsay by Sir Charles Monck in 1852. The one growing in the quarry today is a more recent replacement.



D The giant redwood was introduced to Britain from California in 1853. It was first recorded at Belsay by Sir Charles Monck in 1865.



E Nicknamed 'dinosaur food', due to the prehistoric look of its leaves, the gunnera plant is native to Brazil.



F Rhododendrons are natives of the Himalayas – India and Nepal. The rhododendron garden was created by Sir Arthur between 1904 and 1930.



AT THE HALL

Activities to help you explore and understand the building.

TOP THINGS TO SEE

EXPLORE BELSAY HALL

See if you can find all of these things and complete each challenge. KS1 students can use the tick list provided while their teacher guides them around. KS2 students may want to lead their own learning in small groups, supervised by an adult.

Can't find your way? Use the map to help.



1 PORTICO

This style of building is known as 'Greek Revival' because it brings architecture from ancient Greece back to life. Sir Charles Monck got most of his ideas for this family home from notes and sketches he made while exploring ancient Greek temples on a two-year honeymoon in Greece with his wife, Louisa. The design for the pillars is copied from the temple of Theseus in Athens.



CHALLENGE TIME!

Look for these Greek temple features. Label the photo to show:

1. Crepidoma (stepped plinth)
2. Column (load-bearing pillar)
3. Capital (top of the column)
4. Entablature (horizontal beam)

DID YOU KNOW?

The house is like a stone box, calculated by Sir Charles with incredible mathematical precision! It is exactly 100 feet (or 30 metres) square. The steps up to the house are each 1 foot (or 0.3 metres) high.

2 ENTRANCE HALL

The bare stone walls surrounding you and sunken-panelled (coffered) ceiling overhead are part of Sir Charles' vision to make his home look and feel like a Greek temple. No paint, plaster or decoration was added to the walls, because Sir Charles felt that the finely cut stone was beautiful enough and gave the impression of this being an ancient building.



CHALLENGE TIME!



Imagine you are a guest, who has been invited here by Sir Charles. Think of three words to **describe** your first impressions, based on the porch and the entrance hall e.g. impressive.

DID YOU KNOW?



The blocks of sandstone used to build the hall are from the quarry. You'll notice swirling patterns and black specks of iron ore, trapped inside the rock when it formed under pressure millions of years ago.

3 PILLAR HALL



This space was designed to impress, greet and entertain guests. Standing in the centre, you are surrounded by 'Ionic' columns. These are fluted (carved with grooves) and they each have a base (at the bottom), plus a capital in the shape of a scroll (at the top). On the floor above, you can see the simpler 'Doric' columns, which are also fluted but have no base and a plain capital.

CHALLENGE TIME!



Stand in the Pillar Hall and face towards the entrance door. **Notice** how the two Ionic columns in front of you are framed by square corner pillars either side and the entablature (beam along the top). This is an example of the Golden Rectangle.

DID YOU KNOW?



The Golden Rectangle is a shape whose sides are in the ratio of 1:1.618. Because this shape is also seen in the natural world, many designers believed that buildings using the same rules would reflect the beauty and harmony found in nature.

4 LIBRARY

In a time before the internet, physical libraries like this one were the best way to collect and store information. Sir Charles collected every book on Greek architecture that existed at the time and stored them on these shelves. The decorations in this room, plus the books that were once here, demonstrate Sir Charles' lifelong obsession with ancient Greece.



CHALLENGE TIME!



Look at the empty shelves.

Discuss: if you could fill this room with books, pictures and items about one topic you are passionate about, what would you choose and why?

DID YOU KNOW?



Between 1803 and 1815, Britain was at war with France in the Napoleonic Wars. The fighting meant it was dangerous to travel to Europe to see ancient buildings, so writing and reading books about those buildings became more popular.

5 DINING ROOM



When Sir Charles died in 1867, his grandson, Sir Arthur, inherited Belsay Hall. Sir Arthur moved the dining room from the front of the house to this room, at the back of the house. This dining room was closer to the kitchen than the old one, so food didn't have to be carried as far and was less likely to go cold. The family enjoyed meals together in this room, with excellent views of the garden.

CHALLENGE TIME!



In pairs, **imagine** one of you is Sir Arthur, and the other is a servant bringing a meal to him. Is the food hot enough for Sir Arthur or does he complain? **Role play** a conversation between the two characters.

DID YOU KNOW?



Sir Arthur's staff recalled that he was fussy about his food going cold; he would test the temperature of his meals with a thermometer to check that they were hot enough.



6 BRASS BALUSTRADE

Going up the staircase and around the gallery upstairs is a brass balustrade that was designed by Sir Charles Monck's sister, Isabella. It is another example of the care and attention that the family gave to designing a space that incorporated ancient Greek design ideas, from the largest stone pillar to the smallest brass spiral.

CHALLENGE TIME!



Look down at the floor below and up to the ceiling. **Notice** the doors leading to the rooms on this floor and the floor below. **Imagine** the house at night-time. What sounds, smells and sights might you experience?

DID YOU KNOW?



When it was dark, this walkway was lit by lamps placed on lampstands, which you can still see screwed into the balustrade between each Doric column.

7 NURSERY

Walk along the gallery and find the nursery, where many generations of children slept, played and learned. There was a smaller 'night' nursery, where little babies slept with nursery-maids until they were old enough to sleep by themselves, and a larger 'day' nursery, for playing and learning. The safety bars on the windows stopped the children climbing out. The children at Belsay played with rocking horses, bikes, trikes and toy cars.



CHALLENGE TIME!



Think of one toy the children might have played with at Belsay 200 years ago. Now **discuss** some modern toys that you play with at home. What has stayed the same and what has changed?

DID YOU KNOW?



A family friend of the Middletons, Priscilla Napier, remembered how 'the wide gallery that ran around the pillared hall ... provided an excellent track for small bicycles and tricycles.'



8 EAST BEDROOM

Go out of the nursery and along the corridor to the bedroom at the other end. The two windows in the east bedroom have fantastic views of the family's land – east (across the entrance lawns to the parkland) and south (across the formal terraces to the rhododendron garden). The wallpaper and the cast iron fireplace designs are examples of British Arts and Crafts – a design movement of the late 1800s.

CHALLENGE TIME!



Imagine waking up in this room and opening the curtains in the morning. How would it make you feel if this was your home? **Think** of three describing words (adjectives) e.g. powerful, lonely, grateful.

DID YOU KNOW?



Despite plumbing technology being available when the hall was first built, Sir Charles didn't want external pipes to ruin his Greek temple design, so he didn't install toilets. The family and their guests used chamber pots by the side of the bed, which maids emptied by hand.

9 SERVANTS' WING

Go back to the entrance hall and spot the green door. This leads to the service wing. Belsay required an army of staff to maintain and to meet the needs of the house and family. The worn floors, smaller windows, smaller fireplaces, low ceilings and simpler decorations in this part of the house are all signs of domestic life behind the scenes at Belsay.



CHALLENGE TIME!



Spot the worn stone floor showing where the servants walked at the bottom of the staircase. **Notice** the lower ceilings, smaller fireplaces and simpler decorations.

DID YOU KNOW?



In the 1930s the staff consisted of 12 servants, including a chauffeur, housekeeper, butler, housemaids, footman, kitchen maids, a lady's maid and a sewing maid.

TOP THINGS TO SEE

EXPLORE BELSAY HALL

See if you can find all of these things. Tick each one off as you find it.



1 PORTICO

- Crepidoma Column
- Capital Entablature



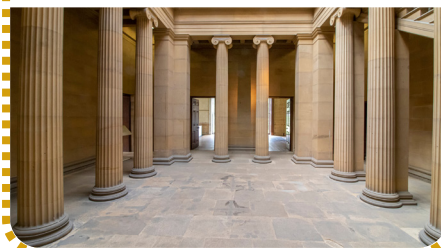
2 ENTRANCE HALL

- Coffered ceiling
- Iron ore specks



3 PILLAR HALL

- Ionic pillars Doric pillars
- Golden Rectangle



4 LIBRARY

- Frieze Bookshelves



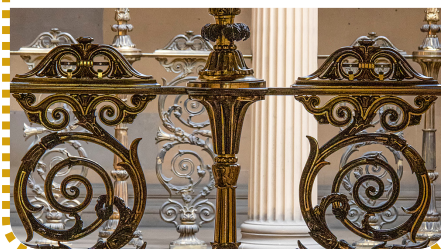
5 DINING ROOM

- Fireplace Garden view



6 BRASS BALUSTRADE

- Spirals Lampstands



7 NURSERY

- Safety bars on windows



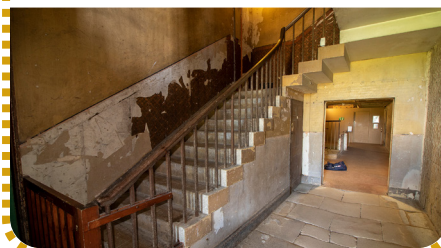
8 EAST BEDROOM

- View from windows



9 SERVANTS' WING

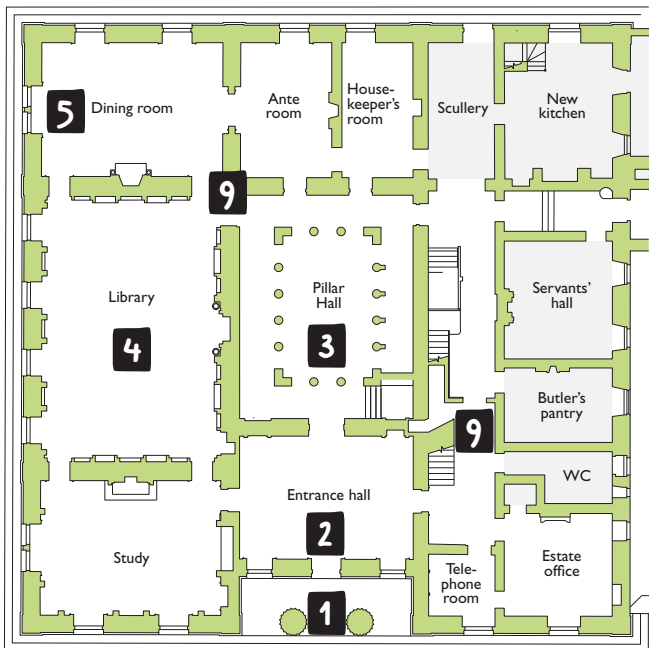
- Worn stone floor



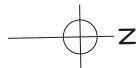
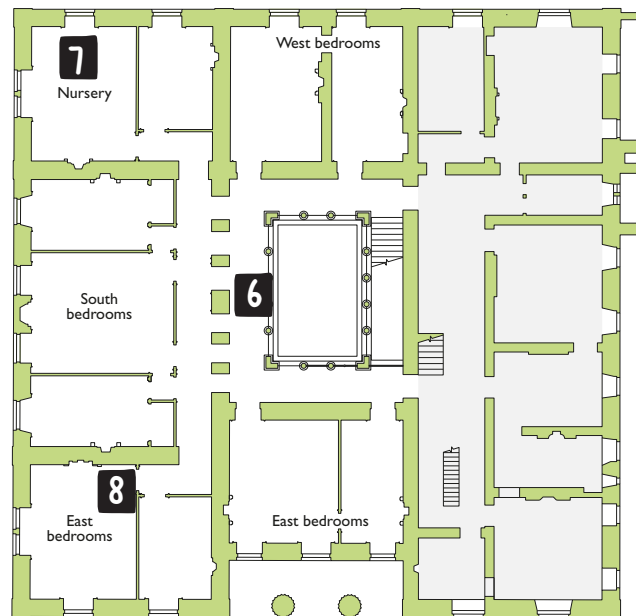
BELSAY HALL TOP THINGS TO SEE MAP



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



1809–17 ■ Sir Charles Monck
■ No visitor access

0 ——— 10 metres
 0 ——— 25 feet

KEY

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 PORTICO | 4 LIBRARY | 7 NURSERY |
| 2 ENTRANCE HALL | 5 DINING ROOM | 8 EAST BEDROOM |
| 3 PILLAR HALL | 6 BRASS BALUSTRADE | 9 SERVANTS' WING |

SELF-LED ACTIVITY

EYE SPY: GREEK REVIVAL STYLE



Recommended for

KS2–3 (History, Art and Design)

Learning objectives

- Identify some key features of the Greek Revival style.
- Understand the classical influences on Sir Charles Monck's design of Belsay Hall.

Time to complete

45–60 minutes



The repeating Greek key symbol on the frieze in the Library.



The scroll design at the top of the Ionic pillars in the Pillar Hall.

SUMMARY

Sir Charles Monck was obsessed with ancient Greece and was particularly inspired by the architecture he saw and sketched while on a two-year honeymoon in Greece with his wife, Louisa. He designed the inside and outside of Belsay Hall to look and feel like an ancient Greek temple. He paid great attention to detail including stonemasonry, walls, ceilings, plasterwork, furniture, fireplaces, railings, and even doorknobs.

MAIN ACTIVITY

Use the Greek Revival style sheets on pages 34–35 to familiarise students with some of the design ideas they will see when they visit Belsay Hall.

While at the hall, ask students to explore the house with the Greek Revival style sheets and tally how many examples they see around the building. They could annotate the hall plan on page 6 with notes about what they saw (and where), plus take photographs, to jog their memory back in the classroom.

After your visit, students could apply their understanding by designing the exterior or interior of their own Greek Revival style mansion.

MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Compare and contrast the features found in the family and guest rooms with those found in the servants' wing. The servants' quarters are more functional and domestic than the rest of the house. Look out for: size and decoration of fireplaces, size of windows, amount of natural light, wall decoration, balustrades, ceiling height and floor material (including signs of wear).

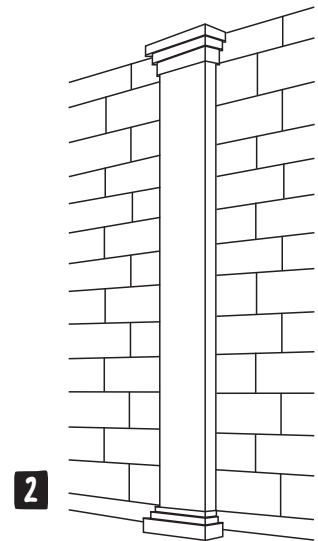
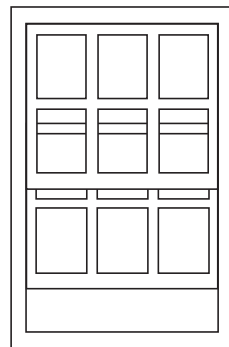
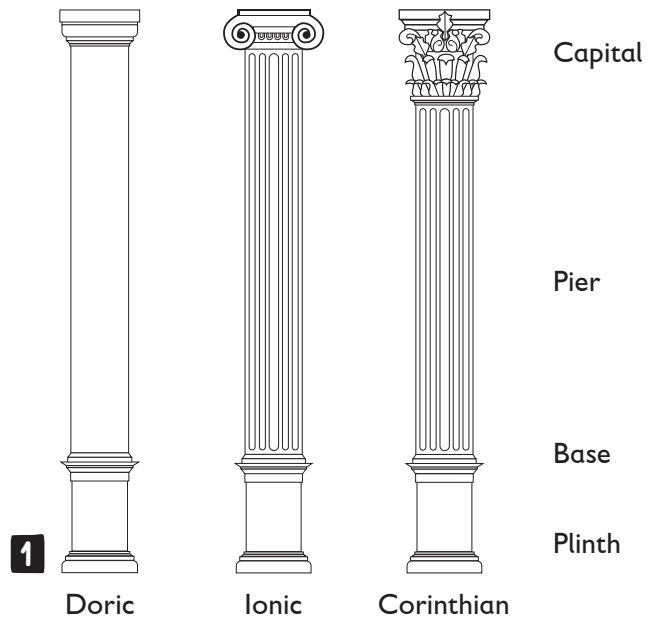
EYE SPY: GREEK REVIVAL STYLE

STRUCTURES

1 Column – a vertical supporting pillar used in classical orders of architecture. There are three main orders: Doric, Ionic and Corinthian. They are graded by the amount of decoration they have and their proportions. Doric is the plainest and stoutest and Corinthian the most elaborate.

2 Pilaster – an attached rectangular column sticking out slightly from the wall.

3 Pediment – a low-pitched triangular gable often used over a window or door.



WINDOWS

4 Sash – a window that opens by sliding up and down on pulleys.

5 Venetian – an arched window type common in neo-classical architecture.



MOULDING AND MOTIFS

Motifs are symbols with particular meanings repeated in decorations around the house. They can appear in mouldings, in ironwork and on furniture.

Frieze – a decorated band of plaster used along a wall.



Vitruvian scroll – a repeating pattern of linked spirals.



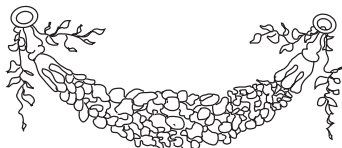
Egg and dart – an alternate pattern of egg shapes and arrowheads.



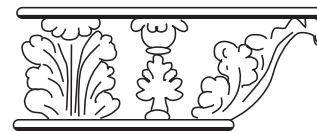
Greek key – an interlocking geometric pattern.



Festoon – a curved swag of flowers, foliage or drapery.



Acanthus – a pattern based on the leaf of the acanthus plant (from Greece).



Urn – a classical vase often associated with death as they could be used for ashes.



Anthemion – a pattern based on the flowers and leaves of the honeysuckle plant.





AT THE CASTLE

Activities to help you discover and interpret the castle's features.

TOP THINGS TO SEE

SPOT SIGNS OF LIFE

See if you can find all of these things and complete each challenge. KS1 students can use the tick list provided while their teacher guides them around. KS2 students may want to lead their own learning in small groups, supervised by an adult.

Can't find your way? Use the map to help.




1 PORCH CARVINGS: FAMILY PRIDE

Belsay Castle reflects the Middleton family's important position in the local area. It is a statement of power and pride, plus a place of protection. The tower was built in the late 1300s, when there were violent border raids between England and Scotland, who were enemy countries. The manor house was added to the tower by Thomas Middleton II in 1614. The stone plaque on the porch displays the Middleton family shield. Above it is a helmet and a Wildman figure.




CHALLENGE TIME!



The symbols on the coat of arms show what was important to the Middleton family. **Discuss** what these symbols might mean: a medieval knight's helmet, a Wildman figure, a shield showing two families joined by marriage.

DID YOU KNOW?



The inscription on the porch says: 'THOMAS MIDDLETON AND DORATHY HIS WIFE BVILDED THIS HOUSE ANNO 1614'. It is unusual for women to be mentioned in this way.

2 THICK WALLS: STAYING SAFE

Go down into the basement and look for the passageway to the left of the large fireplace. This route was cut through the base of the medieval tower at a later date and shows how thick the walls were. Notice the rubble core, plus the outer faces of the walls made of finely cut stone. This defensive feature helped the Middleton family stay safe in the tower during a period of violent raids between England and Scotland from the late 1200s to the early 1600s.



CHALLENGE TIME!



Think of three describing words (adjectives) for this space, e.g. safe, damp, cold.

DID YOU KNOW?



In 1829, an artist called John Preston Neale wrote about the castle: 'The walls at the bottom of it are ten feet thick'.

3 WELL: SURVIVAL SKILLS

In medieval times, there were no pipes or taps, so this well was a vital water supply. Having fresh water was important to stay safe and healthy, especially with the threat of cattle raids along the English and Scottish border. This room may also have been used for cooking food, storing equipment and doing household tasks.



CHALLENGE TIME!



Discuss: how would you dig this well down through the hard ground? Remember – there was no electricity or heavy machinery to help.

DID YOU KNOW?



History can be a mystery! We thought this room might have been a kitchen, because of the fireplace and well, but most medieval kitchens also have cupboards and a sink built into the walls, so we can't be certain.

4 MASONS' MARKS: EXPERT BUILDERS

The stonemasons who built Belsay Castle over 700 years ago left behind makers' marks on the stones they cut. These simple geometric symbols were used to identify which mason did the work. They can be seen all around the castle, including on the stone steps leading to the upper floors and all along the wall of the Great Chamber, on the left as you enter the room.



CHALLENGE TIME!



Spot three different masons' marks. Now **find** examples of the same symbol on different stones; they were likely carved into these stones by the same mason.

DID YOU KNOW?



Sir Arthur Middleton, who owned and lived at Belsay from 1867 to 1933, was fascinated by the medieval masons' marks and did his own research into them.



5 GREAT CHAMBER: HOME COMFORTS

This Great Chamber was used by the Middleton family to welcome guests and as a comfortable living room. The furniture that used to be in this room is now gone, and the original ceiling is missing. These features, combined with beautiful wall paintings and a cosy fire, made this room a very inviting space in medieval times.

CHALLENGE TIME!



Study the reconstruction drawing on the information panel. **Spot** the main differences between the picture you are looking at and the room you are standing in.

DID YOU KNOW?



The reconstruction artist Bob Marshall worked with historians to carefully craft this digital drawing. They combined research and skill to create a picture of the past.



6 WALL PAINTINGS: PERSONAL TOUCHES

There are traces of two schemes of painted wall decoration in here. The earliest, probably from the 1390s, is a simple pattern of vines, with bunches of grapes and flowers. This can be found mainly around the window openings. The other scheme added around 1480, by Sir John Middleton VII, has three parts: 1. a simple cube design, 2. heraldic shields, trees and a Wildman figure, 3. ships on the sea. These can be seen most clearly in the corner, to the left of the window.

CHALLENGE TIME!



These wall paintings give us an insight into the personalities and passions of the people who lived here. **Discuss:** if you could paint scenes on your living room walls at home, what colours, patterns and symbols would you use, and why?

DID YOU KNOW?



It is rare for medieval paintings like this to survive centuries of wear and tear. The wall paintings are precious pieces of evidence, helping us to learn about the lives and personalities of the castle's owners.

7 FLOATING FIREPLACES: ROOM CLUES

All around the building you will notice fireplaces that appear to be 'floating' above you. These show where missing floors used to be. Large, beautiful fireplaces can be a sign of an important room. Kitchens often have huge fireplaces, for cooking large amounts of food. Small, simple fireplaces can be a sign of lower-status rooms.



CHALLENGE TIME!



Spot a floating fireplace. **Think** about the missing wooden floor that used to be there: what happened to it? Why does wood get more worn and damaged than stone?

DID YOU KNOW?



In medieval times, there was no electricity or central heating so the owners and their guests relied on windows for light and fires for heat.



8 MANOR HOUSE: CHANGING TIMES

The manor house was built next to the tower in 1614, transforming the building from a defensive tower house into a luxury family home. Openings were cut through the tower walls to link the two buildings. The tower's rooms became less useful than the manor house's modern, well-lit spaces.

CHALLENGE TIME!



Discuss: if you could extend your home, what extra rooms would you build and what would you use them for?

DID YOU KNOW?



In 1603, the English and Scottish Crowns were unified under King James I (r.1603–25). This led to a period of greater peace along the English and Scottish border.

9 LOOKING BACK: REFUGE TO RUIN

When first built, the manor house was as wide as the tower with a large porch in the middle (which you can still see today). To balance the tower, another huge extension was added, possibly by the 1480s, and remodelled in the 1670s. When the family moved to the new hall in 1817, Sir Charles Monck turned this building into a simple home for his steward, Edward Clint. Sir Arthur Middleton made more changes towards the end of the 1800s to create several cottages for estate staff.



CHALLENGE TIME!



In the 1800s it was fashionable to have a ruined building on your land. **Explain** some reasons why people might think of old, ruined buildings as interesting and even beautiful.

DID YOU KNOW?



The ruined castle you see at Belsay today is an important part of Sir Charles Monck's Picturesque garden design, connecting the landscape with the Middleton family's medieval past.

TOP THINGS TO SEE

SIGNS OF LIFE AT BELSAY CASTLE

See if you can find all of these things. Tick each one off as you find it.



1 PORCH CARVINGS

Family Pride



2 THICK WALLS

Staying Safe



3 WELL

Survival Skills



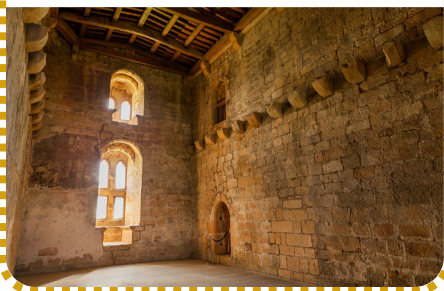
4 MASONS' MARKS

Expert Builders



5 GREAT CHAMBER

Home Comforts



6 WALL PAINTINGS

Personal Touches



7 FLOATING FIREPLACES

Room Clues



8 MANOR HOUSE

Changing Times



9 LOOKING BACK

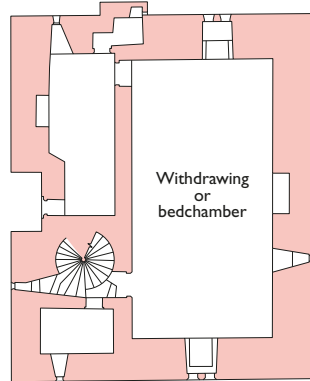
Refuge to Ruin



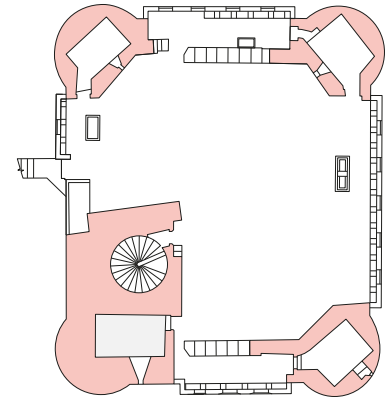
BELSAY CASTLE TOP THINGS TO SEE MAP



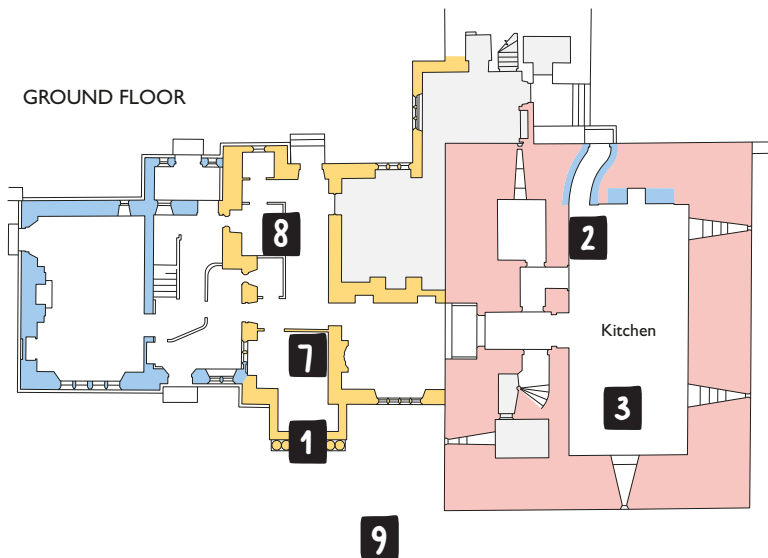
SECOND FLOOR



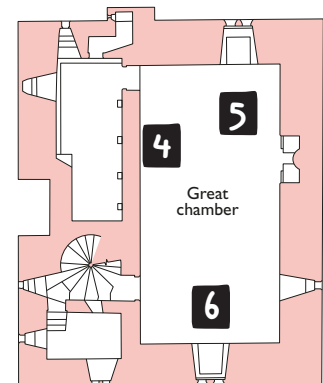
ROOF



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



KEY

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 PORCH CARVINGS: FAMILY PRIDE | 6 WALL PAINTINGS: PERSONAL TOUCHES |
| 2 THICK WALLS: STAYING SAFE | 7 FLOATING FIREPLACES: ROOM CLUES |
| 3 WELL: SURVIVAL SKILLS | 8 MANOR HOUSE: CHANGING TIMES |
| 4 MASONS' MARKS: EXPERT BUILDERS | 9 LOOKING BACK: REFUGE TO RUIN |
| 5 GREAT CHAMBER: HOME COMFORTS | |

SELF-LED ACTIVITY

READING THE RUINS: SHOW DOWN OR SHOW OFF?



KS2

KS3

Recommended for

KS2–3 (History)

Learning objectives

- Inspect and sketch/ photograph key features of the castle to identify their purpose.
- Deduce whether this castle was built mainly for defence or show.

Time to complete

Approx. 45 minutes



Close-up detail of the crenelated roof line around one of the castle's turrets.

SUMMARY

Watch 'A Mini Guide to Medieval Castles' on the English Heritage YouTube channel as an introduction to the castles topic.

Explain to students that there were two main reasons to build a castle in medieval Britain:

- 'Show down' – to provide a place of protection.
- 'Show off' – to show your importance and wealth.

Discuss: How might they find out the purpose of a castle? Answers include: by looking closely at the buildings, by comparing it with other castles and by exploring historical sources (images, objects, text).

MAIN ACTIVITY

During your visit, challenge students (in pairs) to deduce whether this castle was built mainly for 'show down' or 'show off' reasons.

Supervise students as they explore the castle in small groups for 15–20 minutes, armed with their features checklist (on pages 47–48). Next to each feature on the list, they must put a mark in either the 'yes' box if they find that feature at Belsay Castle, or in the 'no' box if they don't. For each feature they find, they could take a photo as supporting evidence.

We have provided answers in the Teacher Answer Sheet on pages 45–46.

Recall everyone after the allotted time and, as a whole group, discuss their findings, especially what evidence they used. Finally, each pair must decide if the castle is a 'show down' or 'show off'.

MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Back in the classroom, students could draw each defensive feature, then use their drawings to create a castle features matching game, or a simple card game like 'snap'.

TEACHER ANSWER SHEET

READING THE RUINS: SHOW DOWN OR SHOW OFF?

From the late 1200s to the early 1600s, there was violent fighting on the borderlands between England and Scotland. This area was a dangerous place to live, particularly if you owned lots of cattle (livestock). At this time, people's wealth was tied up in their livestock. They didn't have many personal possessions so stealing their cows/sheep was the same as stealing their wealth.

Belsay Castle was built in a lawless area, where thieves and outlaws operated. There was a continual, low-level threat of cattle raids, with enemy troops stealing cattle, burning property and destroying land along the way.

This activity would be a good opportunity to introduce the idea of 'nuance' when thinking about history: understanding historic buildings is not always as simple as 'yes' and 'no' and there are lots of things we still don't know! The buildings have been much altered over hundreds of years, further adding to the complexity.

Here is a summary of our most up-to-date understanding of the building:

- Motte – No. The castle wasn't built in a particularly defensive position (for example, on top of a hill, cliff or mound).
- Moat – No. The ha-ha is a later feature and only goes around one side of the building, so it wouldn't stop attackers from approaching the tower. It was designed to keep grazing livestock, rather than people, away from the building.
- Crenellations – Yes. These are an effective defensive feature and also show the status of the family because they had a home that looked like a 'typical' castle.
- Stone curtain wall – No.
- Stone gatehouse – No.
- Arrow loops – Yes, but not used consistently. They might be defensive but were probably more for show.
- Big windows – Yes. Windows make the castle walls weaker and more vulnerable to attack; they are a sign of the owner's wealth. They originally had decorated, painted glass with the family emblem. This is a very 'showy' feature and suggested the family cared about comfort and light as much as they did about defence. You'll notice that these large windows are only on the first and second floors, not on the ground floor. This made the building slightly more defensible.

continued overleaf ...

- Murder holes – Yes. Objects could be thrown down at raiders through openings on the roof.
- Portcullis – No, but there are lots of small doors (more defensive than large ones). The most important rooms are on the first and second floors to make them safer.
- Stone towers – Yes, the whole building is a stone ‘pele’ tower, built like many along the English and Scottish borders, mainly between the mid-1300s and about 1600. There are comparative examples in Dumfries, Cumberland, Northumberland, County Durham, and some in North Yorkshire. They were made of stone, built to keep watch of the local area, defend against attack and as a show of status. This particular one was built on a grand scale, much larger than many other pele towers in the district.
- Hall – No. The room on the first floor is a Great Chamber, which is more like an impressive living room than a Great Hall.
- Stone keep – Yes, the pele tower itself acts as the safe refuge or ‘keep’.

Students should have ticked six grey boxes and six white boxes, which suggests that the building is both a ‘show down’ and a ‘show off’ castle.

Explain to students that although we call it a castle, it’s technically a fortified tower house. Belsay Castle lacks some key defensive features found on highly defensive medieval castles. It was not designed to withstand a long siege, but it could defend against cattle raids.

Equally and importantly, the building was a statement of family wealth, pride and status.

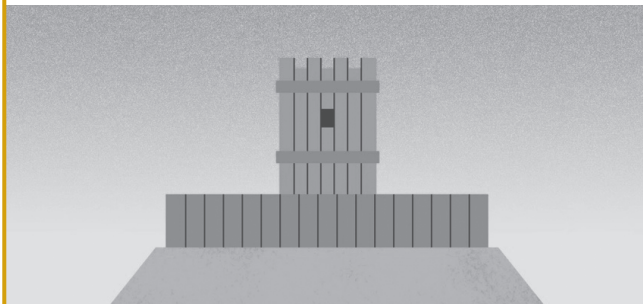
SHOW DOWN OR SHOW OFF CHECKLIST



Explore the castle and **look** for these things. **Tick** the 'yes' box if you find it and the 'no' box if you don't. **Sketch** each thing you find (or take a photo of it) as evidence.

MOTTE

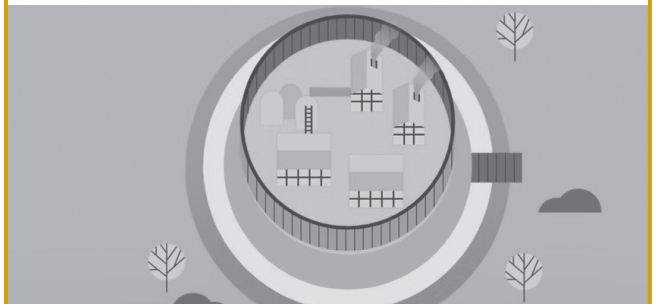
YES NO



An earth mound or high ground.

MOAT

YES NO



A surrounding ditch (dry or filled with water).

CRENELLATIONS

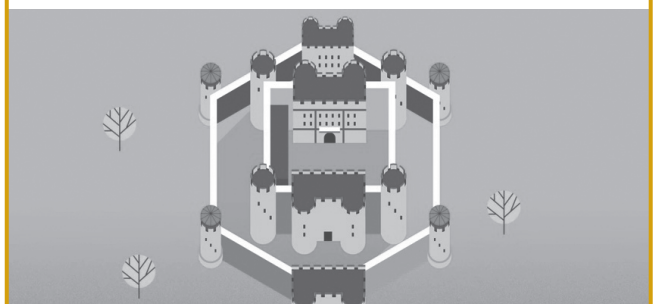
YES NO



A repeating pattern of rectangles on wall tops and towers.

STONE CURTAIN WALL

YES NO



An outer wall to protect the buildings inside.

STONE GATEHOUSE

YES NO



A highly defended main entrance to the castle.

ARROW LOOPS

YES NO



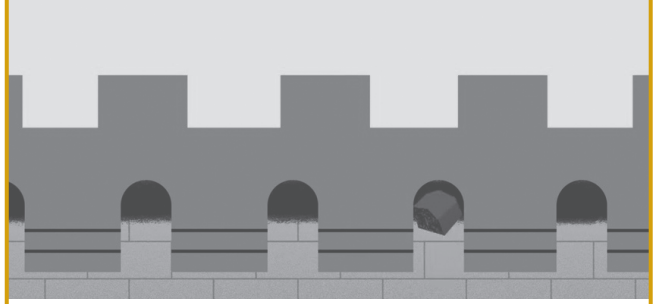
Narrow slits to fire arrows through.

BIG WINDOWS



Large enough to let lots of light into the rooms.

MURDER HOLES



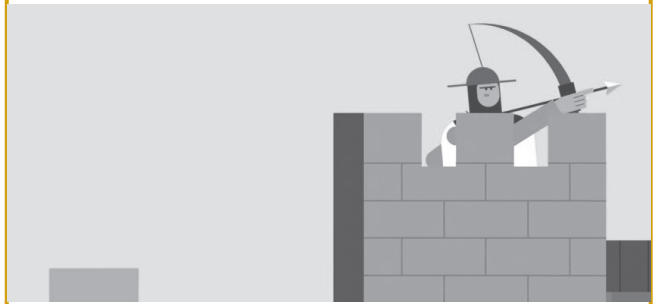
Holes overhead used to drop things on attackers.

PORTCULLIS



A strong wooden gate that can be dropped and raised from above.

STONE TOWERS



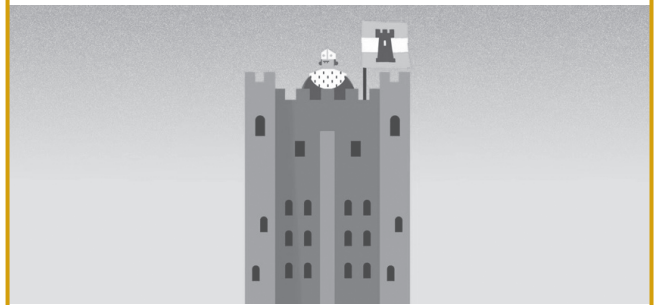
Used to look out for the enemy and fire down on them.

HALL



A grand space for receiving/entertaining guests and having feasts.

STONE KEEP



A strong tower in the centre of the castle used as a last defence.

Add up the number of grey boxes and white boxes you have ticked.

TOTAL

Grey boxes ticked White boxes ticked

If you have more grey boxes, the castle is mainly a 'show down' castle.

If you have more white boxes, the castle is mainly a 'show off' castle.



POST-VISIT

Information and activities to help you extend your students' learning back in the classroom.

SOURCES

PEER INTO THE PAST

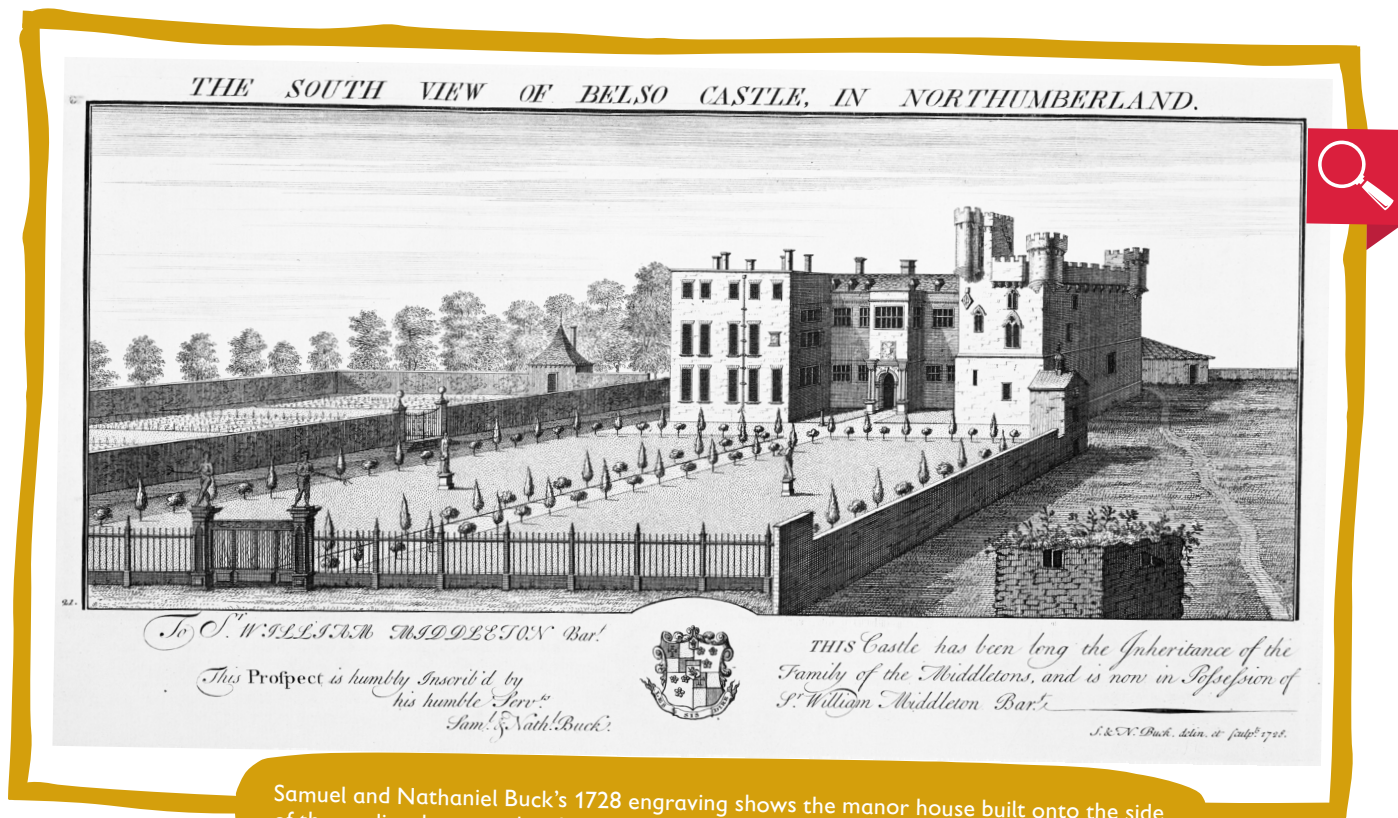
A historical source is something that tells us about life in the past, such as a document, a picture or an object. It may be a primary source, from the time, or a secondary source, created later. Our experts have chosen these sources to help you learn about Belsay's history.

SOURCE 1



Reconstruction of the Great Chamber in the late 1400s, when the estate was owned by Sir John Middleton VII, an experienced soldier and naval commander.

SOURCE 2



Samuel and Nathaniel Buck's 1728 engraving shows the manor house built onto the side of the medieval tower, plus the walled formal gardens on the south side of the castle.

SOURCE 3

COMMENTARY ON THE CASTLE

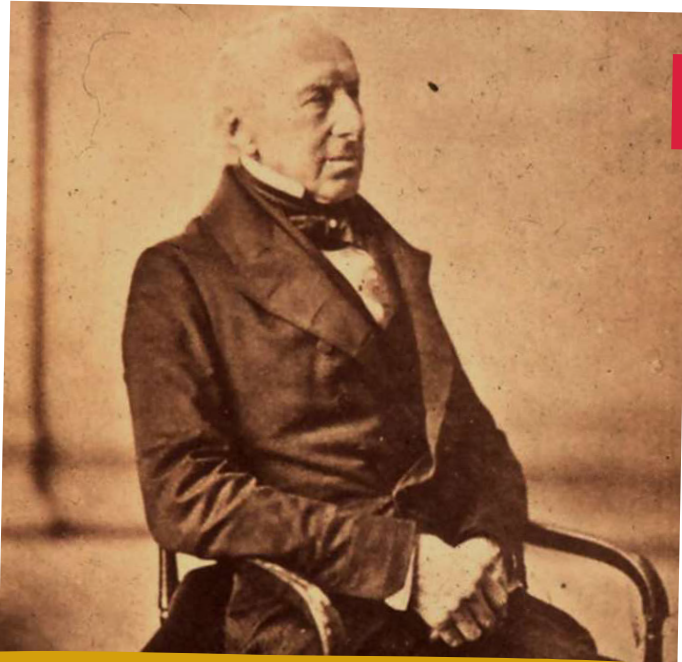
'The tower itself is certainly one of the most perfect, and by far the most imposing specimen of castellated architecture in Northumberland.'

John Hodgson, *A History of Northumberland: Part II, Vol. I*, 1820

'The walls at the bottom of it are ten feet thick, and the apartments vaulted; in these the cattle used to be secured at night against the incursions of the moss troopers.'

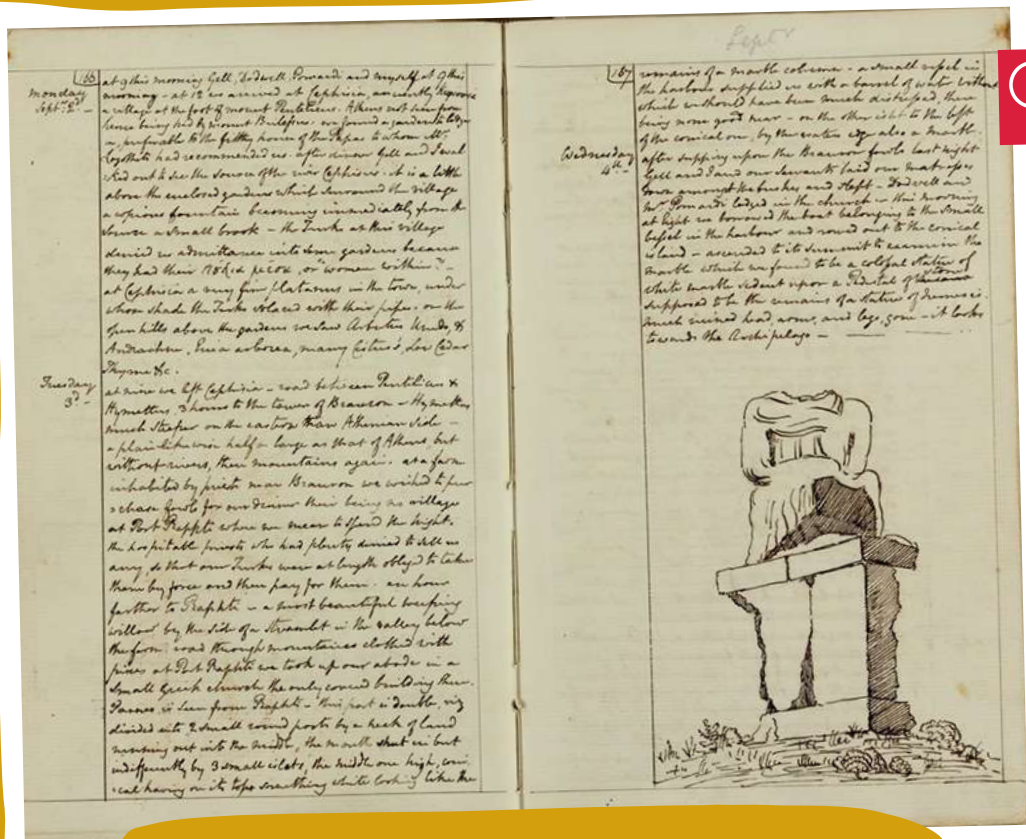
John Preston Neale, *Jones' Views of the Seats, Mansions, castles, ... of noblemen and gentlemen in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland*, 1829

SOURCE 4



A photo of Sir Charles Monck in 1865, at the age of 86. He refused to have his portrait painted but he was interested in the 'new medium of photography'.

SOURCE 5



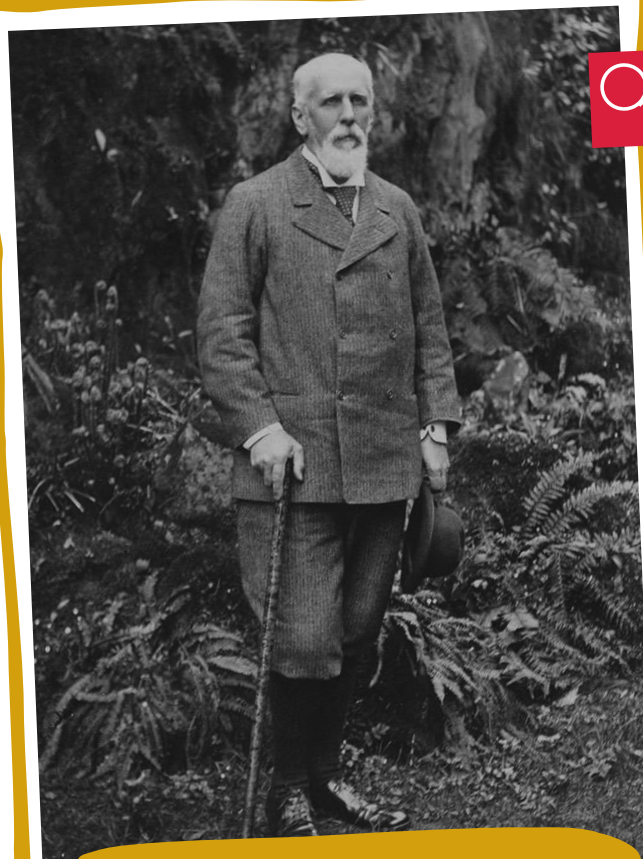
Pages from Sir Charles Monck's journal from his tour of Germany, Venice and Greece, 1804–6. He sketched many of the monuments he saw, including this statue of Nemesis at Port Raphte in Attica. © Published with kind permission of Northumberland Archives and the Belsay Estate

SOURCE 6



Sir Charles' first wife, Louisa Monck, died in 1824 and Sir Charles married Mary Elizabeth Bennett (1783–1864) in 1831. Mary was a talented painter and keen gardener. Mary probably drew this view of Belsay Hall in the 1830s © Published with kind permission of Northumberland Archives and the Belsay Estate

SOURCE 7



Sir Arthur Middleton in the quarry garden, about 1900. © Published with kind permission of Northumberland Archives and the Belsay Estate

SOURCE 8

COMMENTARY ON THE HALL

‘There had to be fresh flowers for the dining room.’

Belsay kitchen maid, Hannah Beattie.

‘Oh the children used to have swinging horses we used to get on and we used to go in little motor cars and things ...’

Noreen Lamb, daughter of the estate cartman.

‘To feel the warm welcome, to mount the stairs, candlestick in hand and see the flickering shadows of the candlelight on all the pillars was glory.’

‘It was demonstrably a happy home, presided over by Sir Arthur Middleton, who knew everything there was to be known about Northumberland.’

‘There was a lunchtime in the summer holidays, when Sir Arthur rose abruptly, announced that he could not abide hooligan manners and left the dining room as a protest against the noise.’

Priscilla Napier, in the 1990s, recalling her stay as a guest at Belsay in the 1920s.



SOURCE 9



The Middleton children enjoying a sleigh ride in front of the Belsay stable block, about 1910.
© Published with kind permission of Northumberland Archives and the Belsay Estate

SOURCE 10



The manor house was in a poor state of repair when taken into the care of the state (later English Heritage) in 1981.

SELF-LED ACTIVITY

CREATIVE RESPONSES TO BELSAY



Recommended for

KS2–3 (History, English, Drama, Art and Design, Music)

Learning objectives

- Use a visit to Belsay as a stimulus for creative projects.
- Explore the sculpture, sound and theatre pieces that have been inspired by Belsay in recent years.
- Respond creatively to the site and the stories of the people who were there.

Time to complete

Variable, dependent on depth of study



Stella McCartney's artwork for the 2004 exhibition 'Fashion at Belsay' was displayed in Belsay Castle's Great Chamber.

SUMMARY

The fascinating stories associated with Belsay offer rich opportunities for creative exploration. Use our suggested approach (below) to guide students through the process of creating an original work in response to a site visit.

SUGGESTED APPROACH

- 1) Search online for 'Contemporary Art at Belsay' to find out about art inspired by the site.
- 2) Discuss what can be learned from these case studies about how to respond creatively to a historic place.
- 3) Each student should decide what their creative output is going to be, depending on their skills and interests, e.g. painting, sculpture, photography, videography, play, poem, prose, music, etc. If there are shared interests within the class, consider putting students in groups based on these. Alternatively, students might find that working individually is better suited to their aims.
- 4) Get to work! We'd love to see the outcome of your students' hard work. Please share pictures or videos with us on social media [@EnglishHeritage](#) or [@EHEducation](#).

MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Create a class exhibition of the final pieces. It may be possible for us to arrange for your students to temporarily exhibit their finished work at Belsay. To enquire about this opportunity, please contact our Education Bookings Team either via bookeducation@english-heritage.org.uk or on 0370 333 0606.