ENGLISH HERITAGE
EDUCATION

TEACHERS' RESOURCE PACK
Peveril Castle

This resource pack has been designed to help teachers plan a visit to Peveril Castle, which provides essential insight into the Norman Conquest and life in a medieval castle. Use these resources on-site or in the classroom to help students get the most out of their learning.

INCLUDED
- Historical Information
- Glossary
- Sources
- Site Plan

Get in touch with our Education Booking Team

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Don't forget to download our **Hazard Information Sheets** to help with planning.

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Step into England's story

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

DISCOVER THE STORY OF PEVERIL CASTLE

Below is a short history of Peveril Castle. Use this information to learn how the site has changed over time. You will find definitions for the key words in the Glossary resource.

EARLY SETTLEMENTS

Before Peveril Castle, three other settlements were built in the area:

1. MAM TOR: to the north-west is the **prehistoric hillfort** of Mam Tor. **Excavations** tell us that the hillfort could be from the **Bronze Age** (c.2500 until c.800BC). It is on high ground for defensive strength and was a clear symbol of power.

View from the south-east showing Peveril Castle with Mam Tor in the background.

2. FORT NAVIO: in c.100 BC, the Romans built Fort Navio near Brough. The fort guarded the main **routeway** from the north-west and north-east of England. It also controlled access to the lead and silver mining **industries**.

3. HOPE: with good land for farming, Hope became an important royal Saxon **manor**. In the 10th century, king of the Saxons Edward the Elder (r.899–924) granted the lands of Hope to Uhtred, a royal official.

When the Normans chose a place to build a castle in the Peaks, they were attracted by the same things: routeways, industries, natural resources and control of the local population.

NORMAN CONQUEST

Two years after the Normans conquered England, people in the Midlands and in the North **revolted** against them. To strengthen his position, William the Conqueror gave large areas of land in Nottinghamshire and north Derbyshire to his loyal supporter, William Peveril.

By 1086, William Peveril had built a castle on the Peak. **Domesday Book** describes 'William Peverel's castle at Pechesers'. Pechesers is thought to mean 'Peak's Tail' or 'Peak's Arse' – both names for Peak Cavern.

Early Norman herringbone masonry in the north curtain wall at Peveril Castle.

Norman castles were usually built using wood and then rebuilt later in stone. Peveril Castle is unusual because it was first built in stone. The Norman building work is called **herringbone masonry**. This is because of the way the masonry (brickwork) is laid at angles and looks like the bones of a fish.

William Peveril's son, William Peveril II, fell out with Henry II. In 1155, Henry took over all of William's estates, including Peveril Castle.

HENRY II'S HOME FOR HUNTING

Peveril Castle was important to Henry II (r.1154–89) because he could use it as a base to keep watch over the **barons** in the Midlands. The barons had become used to acting independently, and Henry needed to show that he was in control. One of these barons was Robert Ferrers, earl of Derby. Ferrers had married William Peveril II's daughter, Margaret, and he had hoped to own William's lands.

An illustration of a medieval hunting scene. Henry II created a royal hunting ground around the castle.

Henry took land around the castle and turned it into a royal hunting ground called The Forest of the Peak (though much of the land was open **fell**). The king had a **monopoly** on hunting rights and used the forest for game (deer, stags, etc.). Henry visited Peveril three times. During one visit in 1157, Henry entertained Malcolm IV, the king of Scotland, at the castle.

In 1173, Henry's wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, his sons, and the **rebel** barons revolted against him. Henry quickly made Peveril Castle stronger and larger for protection and to show his power. Even after Henry II crushed the revolt, he made the castle even more secure and impressive by building the keep.

MEDIEVAL LORDSHIP

When King John (r.1199–1216) took the throne, Robert Ferrers' son, William Ferrers, managed to persuade John (by paying him a lot of money) to grant him the lordship of the Peak. But this did not include the castle.

The new hall as it may have looked in the late 1200s when the castle was managed by a constable. When the king was visiting, the hall would have been full of guests.

William Ferrers wasn't given the castle for another 17 years. Even then, in 1216, the royal castellan refused to surrender it to William. He eventually became the owner in 1217, though only until the new king, Henry III (r.1216–72), just ten years old, was old enough to rule independently.

Even though the rest of the 13th century was mostly peaceful in England, the Crown continued to spend money on Peveril Castle. This was probably because it was still important to have castles as symbols of royal power and governance. The king also needed to keep his royal houses in good condition so he could stay there when he travelled around the country. Henry III stayed at Peveril in 1235 and repairs were paid for after his visit.

By 1300, Peveril Castle's buildings were complete. It was now the headquarters for the lordship of the Peak. The lord controlled the mines, forests and the town of Castleton. The Crown paid a constable to look after the castle, who followed instructions from the king.
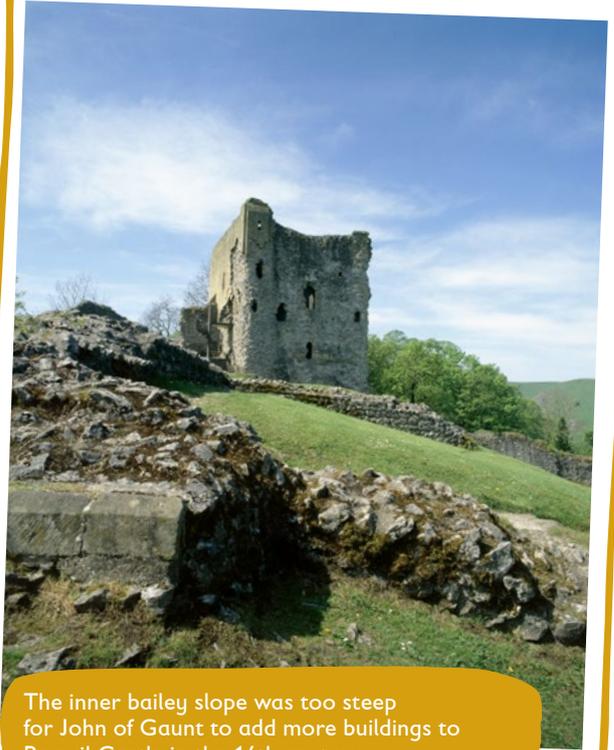
1300s: THE DUKE'S DECISION

In 1372, Edward III (r.1327–77) gave Peveril Castle to his son, John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster and the richest **nobleman** in England.

John of Gaunt quickly decided not to spend any more money on updating Peveril Castle. As well as having large halls for feasting and entertainment, the medieval nobility wanted more comfort and privacy in their homes. Many added rooms to their castles, just for their family to use. But it was difficult to have any more buildings on the hill at Peveril Castle, because of the sloping **bailey**.

The inner bailey slope was too steep for John of Gaunt to add more buildings to Peveril Castle in the 14th century.

John had at least 30 other castles to look after. He was already spending money on improving three of his major castles in the Midlands – Tutbury, Leicester and Kenilworth. In 1374 he ordered lead from buildings at Peveril Castle to be stripped and sent to be used at Pontefract Castle in west Yorkshire.

The decision not to update Peveril Castle made it very unlikely that it would ever have a royal or noble household stay in it again. This was the first stage in the castle's decline.
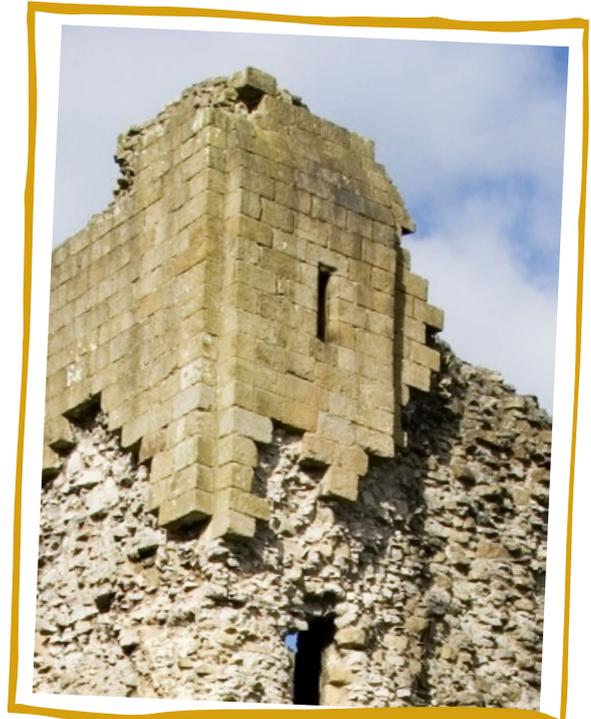
NEGLECT AND PRETTY RUIN

Eventually, John of Gaunt stopped using Peveril Castle, and managed the **estate** from his other homes. He continued to have constables looking after the castle.

When John's son, Henry Bolingbroke, was crowned King Henry IV (r.1399–1413), Peveril Castle once again returned to the Crown.

Local courts were still held in the keep to deliver sentences to criminals until 1600. Royal **surveys** carried out by the Crown during the late 16th and early 17th centuries show the castle had been left to fall into ruin. It was: 'very ruinous and serveth for noe use'. It is likely that the castle was slowly being dismantled, either by local people or by the lord, as the stone could be used for other buildings.

From the 17th century the castle was abandoned. Stone disappeared from the keep and was probably used for other buildings in the town.
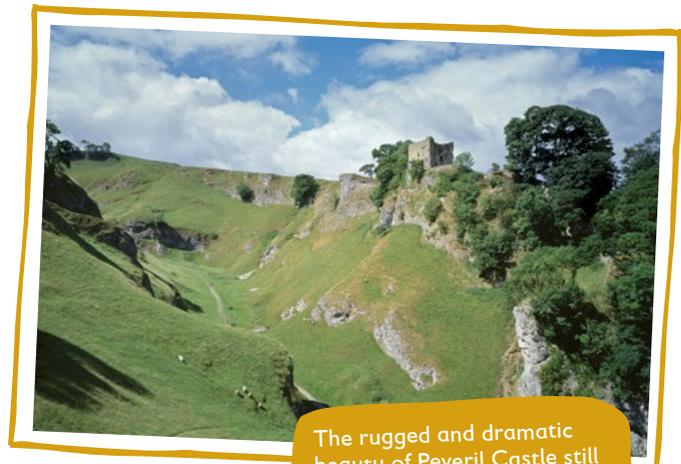
In the 18th century, the beauty of the castle's surroundings was captured by artists. People began to visit the Peak to view the scenery. Peveril Castle had become a tourist destination and became even more popular when better roads and railways were built in the 19th century.

TODAY'S CASTLE

Since 1984, Peveril Castle has been cared for by English Heritage. Today, the castle stands in a protected National Park and is still a popular tourist attraction for its rugged beauty and dramatic position in the landscape.

The rugged and dramatic beauty of Peveril Castle still draws tourists today.

GLOSSARY

WEIRD WORDS AND THEIR MEANINGS

Below is a list of words you might come across while exploring Peveril Castle. Use this Glossary to find out what they mean.

Aristocrats – people in the upper classes, who are usually rich, own large areas of land and often have titles like 'Duke' or 'Earl'

Bailey – an enclosed area in a castle, usually built next to the motte

Baron – a low-ranking nobleman; called a 'lord' in person. William the Conqueror created barons in England to govern the land in his name

Bronze Age – the period from around 2,500 BC when weapons and tools were made of bronze

Castellan – the governor of a castle

Constable – the governor of a royal castle

The Crown – the monarchy or the ruling monarch

Domesday Book – a record of the size, value and ownership of all land in England, made in 1086 by order of William I

Domesday Book was a record of who held land in England and what the land was worth. It was completed in 1086 by order of William I.

Duchy – the land owned by a Duke or Duchess and its administration

Estate – an area of land or property

Excavation – the action of carefully removing earth at an archaeological site to try to find evidence of past lives, activities and structures in the ground

Fell – a hill or high moorland, usually in Northern England

Governance – the action of controlling and managing an organisation, a region or a country

Governor – someone appointed to control a town or region

Hall – a large room in a mansion, palace or castle used for receptions and banquets
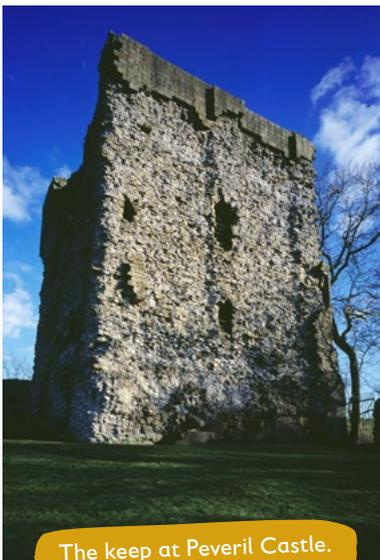
Herringbone masonry – a pattern of bricks in rows of parallel lines (one row slanting to the left, the next row slanting to the right) the pattern looking like the bones of a fish

Herringbone masonry in the north curtain wall at Peveril Castle.

Hillfort – a fort built on a hill, often enclosed by a system of defensive banks and ditches

Industry – making raw materials (like lead or silver) into products and manufacturing goods

The keep at Peveril Castle.

Keep – the strongest tower of a castle that is a final refuge during an attack

Lordship – a piece of land belonging to a lord

Manor – an area of land belonging to a lord, or other ruler, that contains his home (a castle or manor house) and lands rented to tenants

Masonry – building work in stone

Monopoly – one person or organisation having total ownership or control of something

Nobleman – a man who belongs to the aristocracy

Picturesque – (of a place or building) visually attractive, especially in a quaint or charming way

Pipe Rolls – the official records of spending by the sheriffs and castle constables on the king's behalf

Porter – the person responsible for the main entrance to the castle. He controlled who entered the gates

Prehistory – the period of time before written records

Rebel – a person who takes action to object to a government, monarch or other leader

Reign – to rule over a country as king or queen

Renovate – to repair (something old, especially a building) to a better condition

Revolt – when a group of people try to end the authority of a person or organisation by rebelling

Routeway – a track or a road used as a route to somewhere

Sheriff – an official who represented the king or queen in a particular county. His responsibilities included overseeing the local courts and arranging royal payments

Survey – checking a building in detail and assessing its condition

Tenants – people who live on land or in property rented from a landlord

A Norman nobleman from the 11th century.

ENGLISH HERITAGE EDUCATION

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. Experts at English Heritage have chosen these sources to help you learn about Peveril Castle's history.

'Gernebern and Hundine held the land of William Peverel's castle in Pechefers. These had two carucates of land assessed to the geld. There is land for four ploughs in desmesne: and (there are) three villeins with one plough and eight acres of meadow. In King Edward's time it was worth 40 shillings; now 50 shillings.'

Entry for William Peverel's land in the Peak Forest, from Domesday Book, 1086.

1 carucate = 120 acres
geld = a Saxon tax
desmesne = land for the lord's own use
villein = a peasant farmer who had to work for the lord

'In payment of 2 watchmen and the porter of the Peak, £4 10s'

An extract from the Pipe Roll of Henry II, from 1157. This significant payment continued for at least 20 years, and carried on even after the keep had been built.
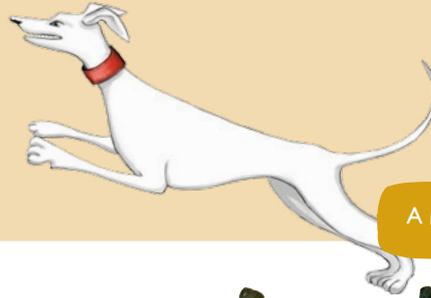
A porter was responsible for the main entrance to the castle and controlled who entered the gates.

A 12th-century porter.

'The king has commanded that the mutilation* of dogs shall be carried out wherever his wild animals have their lairs…

The king has commanded that none shall hereafter in any wise hunt wild animals by night with a view to their capture … under pain of imprisonment for one year and the payment of a fine or ransom at his pleasure.'

An extract from the **Assize of the Forest**, 1184.

*Mutilation here means the clipping of claws.
This would stop the dogs being able to be used for hunting.

A medieval hunting dog.

Artefacts discovered at Peveril Castle in 1954. The horseshoe is 12th century. The spur is made from copper and is from the 13th century. It is finely decorated. The Forest of the Peak in the land around the castle was a royal hunting ground.

'£10 1s 4d – kings board and lodgings

£27 12s 3d – board and lodging of the king of Scotland at Peveril and at Nottingham Castles

72s – bill for the wine provided for at Peak Castle for the king of Scotland's stay'

Extract from the sheriff's entry into the Pipe Roll, 1157.

These two silver pennies (top) were found at the castle. The top left penny is a rare Norman coin from the time of King William II (r.1087–1100). The bottom token is made from lead. Tokens were used in place of coins at local markets or for counting.

'Provisions for the Castle of the Peak:

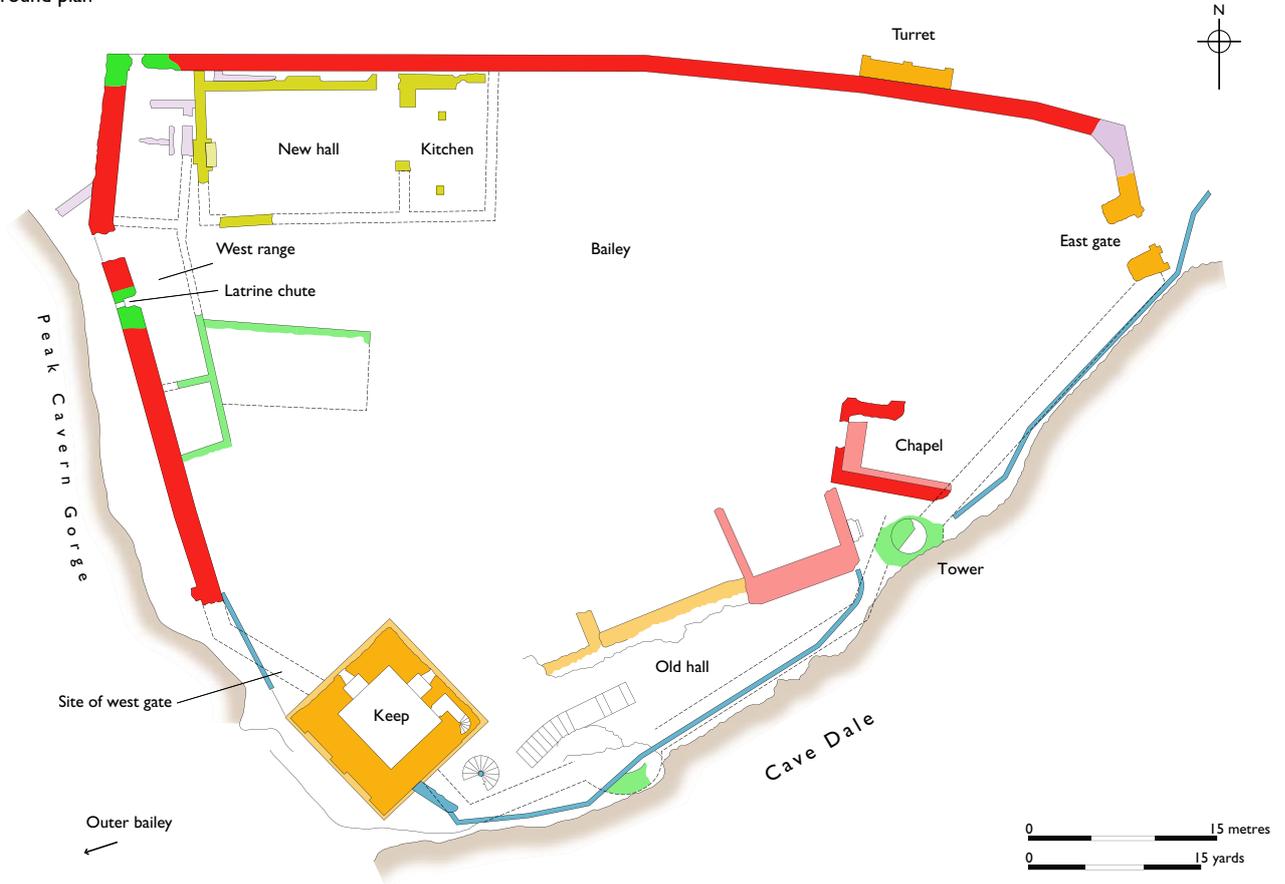50s 6d – 20 seams of corn,

39s – 20 bacons

£20 – twenty knights received for 20 days
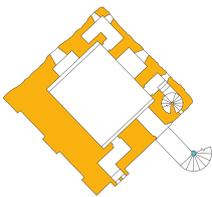
£90 – works on Peveril and Bolsover castles'

Extract from the sheriff's entry into the Pipe Roll, 1173. In that year, the barons rebelled against the rule of Henry II. Henry spent money updating and strengthening his castles. He also made sure they were garrisoned with knights, who needed provisions.

SITE PLAN

PEVERIL CASTLE
Ground plan

N

Turret

New hall

Kitchen

West range

Latrine chute

Bailey

East gate

Peak Cavern Gorge

Chapel

Tower

Site of west gate

Old hall

Keep

Cave Dale

Outer bailey

| 0 | | 15 metres |
| 0 | | 15 yards |

First-floor plan of the keep

Sections through the keep

Looking north-east   Looking north-west   Looking south-west   Looking south-east

Elevations of the keep

South-west elevation   South-east elevation   North-east elevation   North-west elevation

1066–1150
Late 12th century
1200–1250
13th century
Modern
Uncertain

Paler shades indicate foundations
on plan and rubble core in
elevations and sections