



ENGLISH HERITAGE  
EDUCATION

KSI-2

SEND

## CASTLE EXPLORER TRAIL

### Warkworth Castle and Hermitage

This trail helps immerse students in castle life at Warkworth during the Middle Ages. Use this resource during your visit to explore the home of the Percy family and meet members of their household.



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Step into England's story

# SELF-LED ACTIVITY

## CASTLE EXPLORER TRAIL



### Recommended for

KSI-2, SEND (History)

### Learning objectives

- Understand the variety of jobs undertaken at Warkworth during the 14th and 15th centuries.
- Use replica objects and smell boxes to immerse students in daily life at Warkworth Castle during the Middle Ages.

### Time to complete

60–90 minutes



Discover the Great Tower or the bailey using our self-guided interactive explorer trail.

### SUMMARY

To ensure that the trail resource is available on the day of your visit, please book the resource with our Education Bookings Team.

This self-guided trail around the Great Tower introduces students to some of the people who lived at Warkworth during the Middle Ages through a mixture of interactive activities, smell boxes and object handling. This resource booklet is available as a PDF on our website and a laminated copy is held at Warkworth Castle within the trail resource. This contains Teachers' Notes with hands-on activity suggestions for each stop on the trail, along with flashcards enabling students to take on the roles of particular characters as they explore the castle. The resource also includes six coloured pouches which contain a replica object and/or smell box for students to handle and examine.

Access to the Great Tower is via a wide wooden staircase with 20 steps and there are some raised thresholds inside. Each stop on the trail has an alternative accessible stop within the bailey area. You can find these within the Teachers' Notes information for each stop in the trail booklet. There is a map of the Great Tower stops and a map of the accessible stops in the Teachers' Notes on pages 10–11.

### SUGGESTED APPROACH

In the trail resource at Warkworth Castle, you will find:

- A trail booklet, including character flashcards
- Replica objects: crossbow bolts, buttons, belt decorations, quills
- Smell boxes: medieval beer, woodsmoke, incense

Please remember to return the trail resource to the shop before you leave Warkworth Castle.

### MORE LEARNING IDEAS

After your visit, set up a balloon debate inviting students to argue that their character had the most important role in daily life at medieval Warkworth. They could work individually, in pairs or in small groups.

# CASTLE EXPLORERS TRAIL

## TEACHERS' NOTES

### KEY INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS BEFORE THEIR VISIT

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Before starting this trail, students should understand that:

- Warkworth Castle was the favourite home of the powerful Percy family from the 14th to the 16th centuries.
- The head of the Percy family during this period was the Earl of Northumberland. 'Earl' is a title given to an English nobleman ranking above a 'lord' but below a 'duke'. In medieval noble families, first-born sons were often named after their fathers. Between 1371 and 1527 there were five earls of Northumberland, all called Henry Percy! We have referred to the earl in generic terms within this trail to try to avoid confusion.
- Warkworth Castle was developed as a grand residence. Although the building is called a castle and has some defensive elements like a curtain wall and outer towers, Warkworth was more like a medieval stately home.
- The layout of Warkworth Castle is quite rare. It's really two castles in one as many of the rooms and features found in the bailey area in front of the Great Tower are replicated inside the tower. For instance, there is a chapel on the first floor of the Great Tower but there is also a chapel near the gatehouse in the bailey.

### SCENE-SETTING FOR THE TRAIL

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The characters that you will meet on this trail are getting ready for a great feast at Warkworth Castle in the early 15th century. As you look across towards the Great Tower, encourage students to imagine that the bailey area in front of them is bustling with people, horses and goods.

You can explore the rooms around the castle in any order, just find the corresponding information in the Teachers' Notes to help you explore. There is a map of the stops in the Great Tower and a map of the alternative accessible stops in the bailey on pages 10–11 of this resource.

## TRAIL CHARACTERS

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We suggest that each student (or pair) is assigned a character before you start the trail. Give each character card in the kit to a student (or pair). The character cards have an illustration on one side and a brief introduction to their role on the other. When you reach a room, invite the students carrying the cards for that room to share their roles with the rest of the group.

Each of the character cards has a different amount of text. You may wish to assign characters based on reading-confidence within your group. Depending on the age and ability of your students, they may need extra support with pronunciation of key words. Definitions of key words in the trail are listed in the Teachers' Notes alongside the character text and extra information for each stop. There are further definitions in the Glossary within the Warkworth Castle and Hermitage Teachers' Kit.

There are seven named characters on this trail. These are individuals that spent time at Warkworth during the 14th and 15th centuries and have been recently researched as part of the interpretation scheme around the castle.

- **John Lewyn** – the master builder who built the Great Tower at Warkworth Castle
- **John Hardyng** – a spy and chronicler who spent time at Warkworth
- **John del Wardrobe** – one of the earl's most trusted servants
- **Henry Percy of Atholl** – a teenage relative of the earl and a knight-in-training
- **Eleanor Neville, Countess of Northumberland** – the wife of the Earl of Northumberland
- **William Stowe** – a loyal retainer to the Earl and an experienced soldier
- **Widow Nawton** – a local fish farmer delivering fish to the castle for the big feast

There are seven unnamed characters. These are role-based and represent the kinds of people that worked at Warkworth during the period.

- Porter, usher, steward, chaplain, spit boy, kitchen scullion, maid

## COLOURED POUCHES, OBJECTS AND SMELL BOXES

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Each stop on the trail has hands-on activity suggestions for students to try. Some of these involve examining some replica objects or sniffing smell boxes to work out what rooms were used for.

There are six coloured pouches containing objects and smell boxes:

- White pouch – quill pen
- Blue pouch – medieval beer smell box
- Green pouch – crossbow bolt
- Red pouch – incense smell box
- Yellow pouch – woodsmoke smell box
- Pink pouch – buttons and belt decorations

## GREAT TOWER | GROUND FLOOR ROOMS

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### 1. PORTER'S LODGE

**ALTERNATIVE ACCESSIBLE STOP:** Near the ticket office with your back to the gatehouse. A porter would have been stationed in the gatehouse as well as in the Great Tower.

**Character:** John Lewyn

**Character Flashcard Text:** Hello, I'm John Lewyn, the master builder. I built the Great Tower here at Warkworth. I'm on my way to meet the Earl before the feast tonight. You can come inside the Great Tower with me.

**EXTRA INFORMATION:** John Lewyn was a master mason who worked in the north of England during the late 14th century. He worked on many castles including Durham, Carlisle and Dunstanburgh. John Lewyn was also principal mason at Durham Cathedral.

**Character:** Porter

**Character Flashcard Text:** I'm the porter and I watch over people coming and going around the castle. I hold a lot of keys because it's my job to keep certain doors around the castle locked.

**DID YOU KNOW?** The door to the Great Tower was locked at night but during the day the porter kept an eye on everyone who came and went.

**HANDS-ON ACTIVITY:** Think about how the porter would decide who could come into the Great Tower. How would you decide who you would let into your castle? [Possible answers: you recognise them; they're well dressed; they are not wearing full body armour; they have a message for the earl.]

### 2. ACCOUNTING ROOM

**ALTERNATIVE ACCESSIBLE STOP:** Orientation model near the gatehouse. Introduce John Hardyng as he is heading back towards the Great Tower to gather his writing materials before the big feast.

**Character:** John Hardyng

**Character Flashcard Text:** My name's John Hardyng. I'm writing down everything that happens in the castle in a big book called a chronicle. I can read and write but not everyone at the castle can.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Before paper, people used parchment made from animal skins to write on. Before pens, they dripped feather quills in ink and used them as you use a pen today.

**HANDS-ON ACTIVITY:** Find the white pouch. What is inside? Practise holding the quill – does it feel the same as holding a pen?

**EXTRA INFORMATION:** John Hardyng (1378–c.1465) fought at the Battle of Shrewsbury in 1403. He acted as a spy and surveyed Scotland for Henry V in 1418. Later, he wrote a chronicle recording the history of Britain and England.

### 3. BEER AND WINE CELLARS

**ALTERNATIVE ACCESSIBLE STOP:** Buttery near the kitchen in the bailey. The word 'buttery' comes from 'butts', the large containers that beer and wine were stored in in medieval England.

Some servants, like John del Wardrobe, didn't have their own surname. They were referred to by the job that they did – in John's case he is 'John of the Wardrobe'. What do you think John's job was?

**Character:** John del Wardrobe

**Character Flashcard Text:** My name is John del Wardrobe and I am one of the earl's servants. I bring him whatever he needs – wine, beer or maybe an important document like a letter from the king. I'm checking we have enough beer and wine for the great feast later.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Beer and wine were stored in large barrels in these rooms. Both adults and children drank beer and wine but neither was as strong as it is today. People did drink water but they were used to drinking dirtier water than we do.

**HANDS-ON ACTIVITY:** Find the blue pouch. Inside you'll find a smell box. What does this smell like? [Answer: medieval beer]

**EXTRA INFORMATION:** John del Wardrobe was a trusted member of the 2nd Earl of Northumberland's household. He looked after the Earl of Northumberland's clothing as well as undertaking lots of other duties around the castle. In 1418 he was around 50–60 years old and approaching retirement.

### 4. STAIRS

**ALTERNATIVE ACCESSIBLE STOP:** Inside the great hall in the bailey, looking towards the Little Stair Tower.

There are no characters at this stop, but take the opportunity to look more closely at the stairs here.

There are four sets of stairs on the ground floor of the Great Tower. A wide set for very important people and three narrow sets for servants and pages. Can you find them?

[In the Little Stair Tower, you can see small sets of stairs above you as you look at the tower from inside the great hall.]

page – usually a young male servant. They sometimes acted as messengers for noblemen like earls and some were training to be knights.

**HANDS-ON ACTIVITY:** Role-play how you think a servant would move around the castle and how a member of the Percy family would move around. Are they the same?

[Servants would scurry up and down the smaller staircases. The Percys and their important guests would process up and down the large staircase for everyone to show off their rich clothes and their high status.]

You could also try counting all the steps of the four flights of stairs that go up from this floor. How many can you count?

## FIRST FLOOR ROOMS

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### 5. THE LOBBY

**ALTERNATIVE ACCESSIBLE STOP:** Outside the Lion Tower (the grand entrance to the great hall in the bailey).

**Character:** Usher

**Character Flashcard Text:** I'm an usher. Visitors wait on the stone seats here until I tell them they can go into the great hall and meet the earl.

**Character:** William Stowe

**Character Flashcard Text:** I'm William Stowe, an experienced soldier who works for the earl. Meeting a powerful man like the earl can be scary so you should practise before you go into the Great Hall.

**DID YOU KNOW?** The views through the windows in the lobby helped to show off how powerful the Percys were. They controlled all the lands around the castle, including the village of Amble that you can see from here.

**HANDS-ON ACTIVITY:** William Stowe has some advice for you about how to greet the earl and behave in the hall.

- Do not pick your nose, wipe your mouth on the tablecloth or spit on the floor.
- Remember your manners or you will be removed from the hall!

Practise how to greet the earl:

You must remove your hat and kneel down with one knee touching the ground, lowering your head.

**EXTRA INFORMATION:** William Stowe was a 'man-at-arms'. This was a senior position amongst the armed-forces holding the castle but below the status of a knight. He could afford a mail shirt and a few pieces of plate armour to protect himself in battle.

### 6. GREAT HALL

**ALTERNATIVE ACCESSIBLE STOP:** Great hall in the bailey, through the Lion Tower entrance.

Imagine the hall as a lively place to be during a feast. The room would have been full of chatter, laughter, music and song. Servants walked around holding out dishes of food to guests who helped themselves to a variety of different foods. There was bread, cutlery, cups and wine or ale in jugs on the large tables. Dried grasses (rushes) were laid on the floor to soak up any spilt grease and food scraps.

Spot the two big windows at one end of the hall. Musicians stand up there in the minstrels' gallery. They play and sing to entertain the earl who sits with his family at a large table below them.

minstrel – a singer or musician in medieval times. They sang or recited poetry for the nobility, often accompanied by music.

**Character:** Steward

**Character Flashcard Text:** I'm the steward. I organise the feasts and make sure the earl is happy with the food and entertainment. Sometimes we have jugglers and storytellers here as well as musicians called minstrels.



**Character: Henry Percy of Atholl**

Character Flashcard Text: I'm Henry Percy of Atholl and I'm 14 years old. I'm one of the earl's relatives and one of his pages. I'm training to be a knight. I've been practising with a crossbow this morning but I have to help prepare for the feast now.

crossbow – a wooden bow fixed to another piece of wood, which can be pulled back and released to shoot a short arrow (called a bolt) with great force.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Young pages like Henry Percy of Atholl often trained as knights. Knights served the earl by fighting for him in battle.

**HANDS-ON ACTIVITY:** Find the green pouch. Inside you'll find the head of a crossbow bolt that Henry has been practising with. Crossbows were powerful weapons and a bolt like this could easily pierce through armour! Be careful when handling it.

What material do you think the bolt is made from? [Answer: metal]

**EXTRA INFORMATION:** The Percys rebelled against Henry IV in 1403. Henry Percy of Atholl was the most senior member of the Percy family at Warkworth when news of the earl's son, Harry Hotspur's, death during the Battle of Shrewsbury reached the castle.

## 7. KITCHEN

**ALTERNATIVE ACCESSIBLE STOP:** Behind the kitchens in the bailey, near the brewhouse and bakehouse.

[Note: the kitchen spaces in the bailey are much smaller than the kitchens in the Great Tower and are not completely accessible. Gather outside the bailey kitchens and look across into the ruins of the kitchens.]

Imagine that the kitchen was a very hot and busy space. Look at the huge fireplaces and go and stand in one of them. How many steps does it take you to walk from one side to the other?

The fireplaces were big because whole animals, like deer, pigs and beef cattle were cooked in them.

**Character: Spit boy**

**Character Flashcard Text:** I'm a spit boy and I get up at 4 o'clock in the morning to light the fires in the kitchen fireplaces. Once the fire is lit, I start to roast a pig on a spit. I keep turning it so that the pig is cooked all the way through.

**Character: Widow Nawton**

**Character Flashcard Text:** I'm Widow Nawton. I don't work here, I'm just bringing fish for the feast tonight. It's so hot in here! I've never seen such a large spit turning round and round in front of such a big fire!

**EXTRA INFORMATION:** Widow Nawton was one of the Percys' tenants. She rented land and fishponds in the local area and it's likely that she provided food supplies for feasts at the castle.



**Character:** Kitchen scullion

**Character Flashcard Text:** I'm a kitchen scullion. It's my job to wash the pots and sweep and scrub the floors. Today I'm dashing around trying to keep up with preparations for the feast.

**DID YOU KNOW?** In one year, 14,000 herring fish, 667 sheep and 124 beef cows were served at Warkworth Castle.

**HANDS-ON ACTIVITY:** Find the yellow pouch and sniff the smell box inside. What can you smell? [Woodsmoke] Imagine that you can smell the fires and meat roasting on the spit.

Then, role-play the different jobs you think people would do to prepare for a great feast at Warkworth. Here's tonight's menu to give you an idea of what the earl and his household will be eating:

Today's Feast

- Boiled venison (deer) with almond milk, onions, rice flour and wine
- Brawn (a wild pig's head) with a sauce
- Duck
- Rabbit
- Larks in a pie
- Heron in pastry
- Apples and pears with honey
- Freshly baked white bread
- Spiced wine and ale

[Role play could include: turning the spit, chopping meat and vegetables, carrying ingredients.]

## 8. GREAT CHAMBER

**ALTERNATIVE ACCESSIBLE STOP:** Great chamber in the bailey (this was in the space above you – you can still see the bases of the supports which held up the floor).

This is where the earl and his family (his wife and children) would relax. They played board games and dice games and told stories or riddles. They also talked about the news of the day.

**Character:** Eleanor Neville, Countess of Northumberland

**Character Flashcard Text:** What are you doing here? I am Eleanor, countess of Northumberland, and these are my family's rooms. I'm doing some embroidery before the feast.

**embroidery** – decorations on cloth made by sewing patterns with a needle and thread.

**EXTRA INFORMATION:** The Earl of Northumberland was Eleanor's second husband. In 1418 she gave birth to the Earl's first child, John Percy, but he didn't survive to adulthood.

**Character:** Maid

**Character Flashcard Text:** I'm one of the Countess's maids. I've brought her some water for washing. There are no sinks in the bedrooms or toilets. Don't distract me – the countess is watching and I have lots of work to do!

**DID YOU KNOW?** It was the maid's job to make the beds and clean the Percys' clothes. This was hard work in the Middle Ages because it was not usual to have sinks or bathrooms in castles like you have at home.

The Percys didn't do their own laundry or household chores like cleaning. They had servants to do this for them. Some of the women in the Percy family would spend time embroidering complicated patterns and mending clothes.

**HANDS-ON ACTIVITY:** Find the pink pouch. Take a close look at the small decorations and buttons. Do you think these would be used to decorate a rich person's clothes, like the Percys, or clothes worn by a servant like the maid?

[Answer: The Percys! The Percy family wore expensive clothing which showed that they were rich and important people.]

## 9. CHAPEL

**ALTERNATIVE ACCESSIBLE STOP:** Chapel in the bailey.

**chapel** – a small building or room used for Christian worship within a larger building such as a castle.

Faith was very important to people in the 14th and 15th centuries and the Earl of Northumberland prayed in his chapel several times a day when he was at the castle.

Imagine how the chapel looked in the past – it was a colourful room full of rich decorations and the windows were filled with coloured glass.

**Character:** Chaplain

**Character Flashcard Text:** I am the chaplain. I'm in charge of the chapel and lead services here. Sometimes I write music for minstrels. I also make sure that any leftover food from feasts is given to the poor.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Because the earl and his family were the most important people in the castle, they looked down onto the chapel from a balcony above you. This meant they were away from everyone else in the chapel. In winter, a fireplace kept them warm. Can you see it above your head?

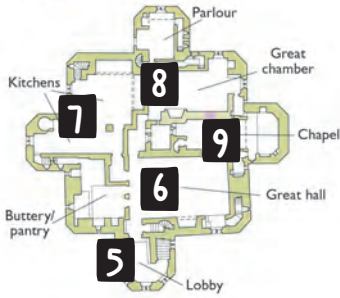
**HANDS-ON ACTIVITY:** Find the coral sculpture in the chapel and smell the base of it. What can you smell? There is also a smell box inside the red pouch.

**incense** – a substance, like gum or spices, that is burned to give a sweet smell. This was used in all churches during the 14th and 15th centuries.

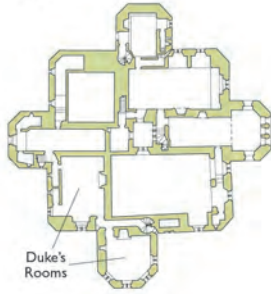
# GREAT TOWER STOPS MAP



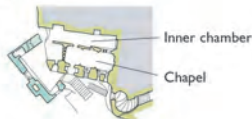
**GREAT TOWER**  
First-floor plan



Second-floor plan



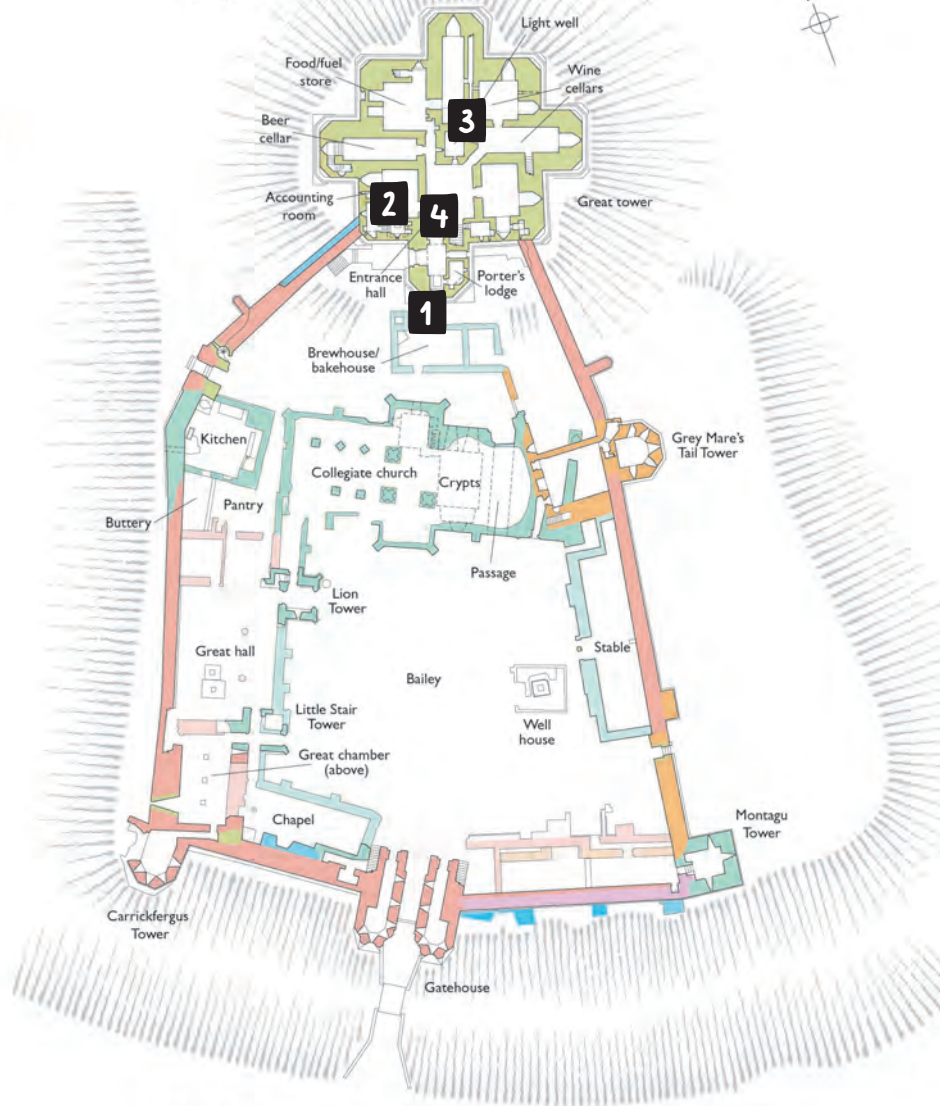
**HERMITAGE**  
First-floor plan



Ground-floor plan



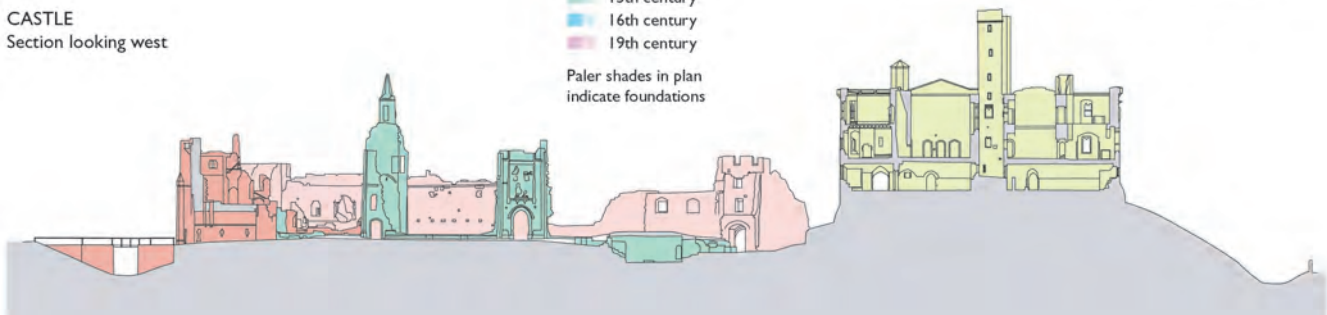
**CASTLE**  
Ground plan



- 1199–1213
  - 1249–1310
  - Late 14th century
  - 15th century
  - 16th century
  - 19th century
- Paler shades in plan indicate foundations



**CASTLE**  
Section looking west





# ALTERNATIVE ACCESSIBLE BAILEY STOPS MAP



CASTLE  
Ground plan

