



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Carisbrooke Castle Education Centre

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

INTRODUCTION

The Education Centre is housed in the museum building. It has been equipped with resources to be used by classes to enhance their visit to the Castle. The Centre needs to be booked (see '*Practicalities*' section). A maximum of 35 pupils can be accommodated in the room for safety reasons. The resources have been selected to support study of the castle in the medieval period. The features of the room itself can also be used as a teaching resource.

THE RESOURCES

The Centre has been equipped with various reproduction items.

- Equipment for a Norman soldier:
 - chainmail hauberk and sample of riveted mail
 - waist belt and scabbard
 - helmet
 - sword
 - shield
- Protective clothing for a castle crossbowman (fourteenth-century):
 - aketon (padded jacket)
 - bascinet (helmet) with aventail (chainmail attachment)
 - crossbow
- Model of castle wall and siege weapons:
- Cannon balls
- Costume for thirteenth-century lady: Countess Isabella de Fortibus
- Costume for thirteenth-century gentleman: Constable of the castle
- Wall pictures
- Laminated A3 illustrations.

You will probably not have time to use all the above resources. These notes will help you to select which resources will help you achieve the objectives of your visit.

THE ROOM AND ITS FEATURES

The architectural features give us a timeline of the history of the room.

A medieval solar

In the medieval period the room would have been a solar, or private sitting room. The original room (now mostly destroyed) ended to the left of the small window below.



The window dates from around 1270. It was part of the outside wall of a private chapel, which was where the stairs for the museum are now.

To the left of the small window almost at ground level is an opening (now blocked) which is angled towards the east end of the chapel.



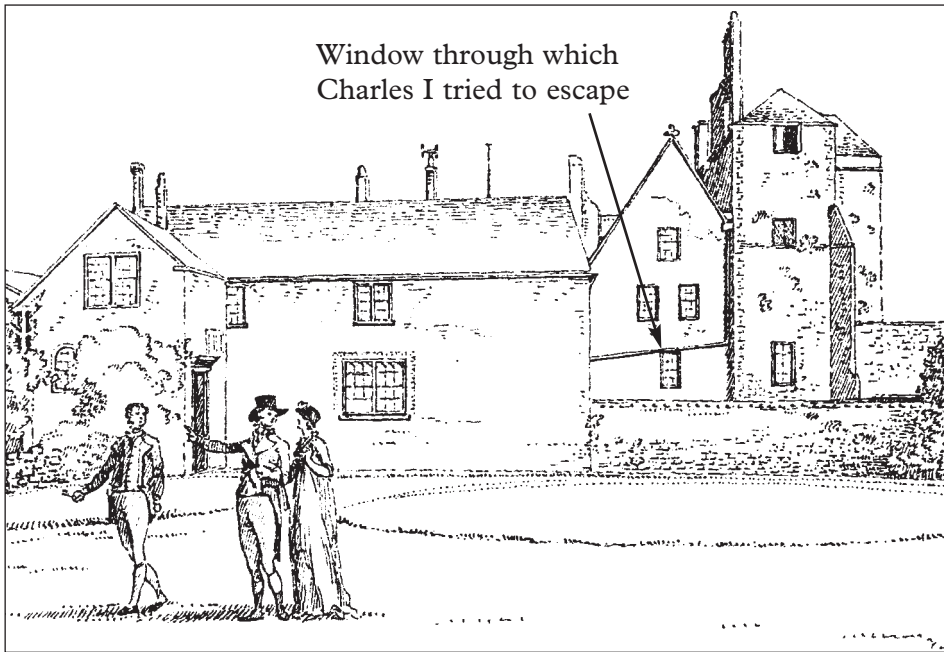
This is a squint (see above), which, in the original solar, would have given people a view of the altar and the priest in the chapel. They could follow the service from the comfort of the sitting room.



The fireplace (above) is fourteenth-century and dates from the time when the room (again a solar) was re-built to its present size.

Bedroom of Charles I

The large windows currently in this room are Victorian. Below is John Livesay's drawing of 1798 showing the window as it was in the time of Charles I. From November 1647 until early September 1648 Charles



John Livesay's drawing of 1798 showing the window as it was in the time of Charles I.

I was imprisoned at Carisbrooke Castle, and it is almost certain that this was his bedroom for the first part of his imprisonment. He attempted to escape from the room with the help of loyal friends, and the plan included the King climbing out of this window and lowering himself by rope to the ground.

However, having got his head through, he then got stuck between the bar and the edge of the window. Fortunately he was able to ease himself back in, but the escape plan failed.

Princess Beatrice's dining room

Princess Beatrice used Carisbrooke Castle as her summer residence from 1913 to 1937. This room was her dining room. The doorway behind the wipe board was once the entrance to a lift which was installed for her towards the end of her life. The wood panelling with the double doors and mock minstrels' gallery (there is no way up to this!) would have been features of the room at this time, as these were added in Victorian times. Note the serving hatches in the doors. The stuffed deer heads were added whilst Princess Beatrice was living here.

USING THE EQUIPMENT FOR A NORMAN SOLDIER

Castle context

Carisbrooke Castle originated as a Norman motte and bailey castle. A Norman knight (William FitzOsbern), started building it, having been given the Isle of Wight to control by William the Conqueror under the feudal system.

Waist belt and scabbard

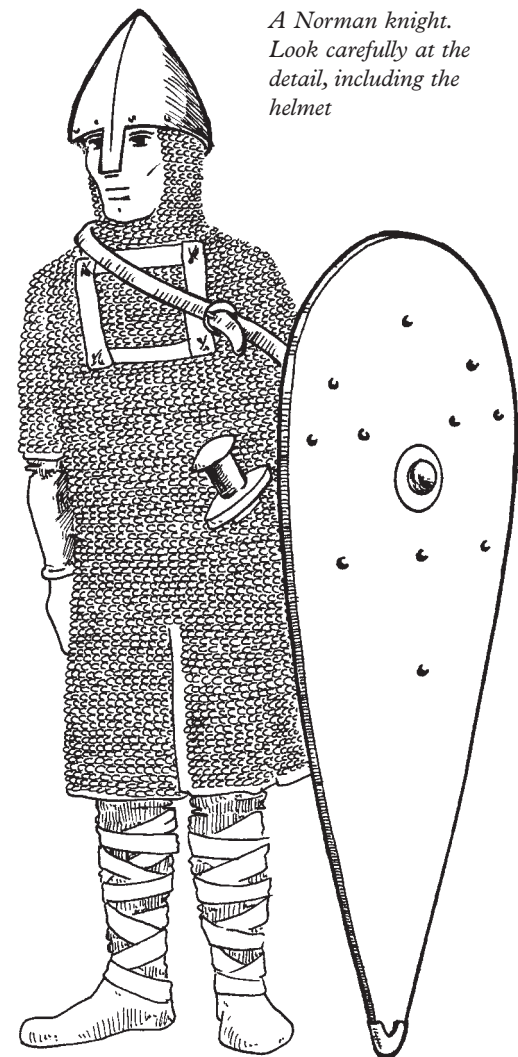
The waist belt and scabbard were frequently worn under the hauberk. This is clearly indicated in illustrations on the Bayeux Tapestry. The scabbards were made from wood covered with leather and lined with fur, wool or parchment.

Chainmail hauberk

To put it on: carefully lift over head on to shoulders. Ensure arms are in arm holes before hauberk is pulled down and head covered. Do up chest protector by tying the pieces of leather to rings on the shoulders

To take it off: ask pupil to bend over with arms outstretched and head tucked down. Peel off hauberk from bottom turning it inside-out as it comes off. Please then turn the armour the correct way round.

This is a reproduction of an eleventh-century knee-length chainmail tunic with all-in hood and chest protector. The rings are butt-joined (split rings pushed together) whereas the original hauberks would have been made of riveted mail (a sample piece is available in the room). In riveted mail every ring was beaten flat at the ends, holes made in these and the ends overlapped and a rivet put through to join them together. A Norman soldier would probably have worn a linen shirt and a tunic (likely to be woollen) underneath the mail. It is possible that some sort of padded garment may have been worn but there is no real evidence for this.



A Norman knight. Look carefully at the detail, including the helmet

Teaching suggestions

Questions to ask the wearer:

■ what does it feel like? Where do you feel the weight? Why? (being

loose fitting it hangs from the shoulders)

■ what is the advantage of it being loose fitting? (flexible/ able to move) any disadvantages? (uncomfortable/ heavy).

Suggest they walk around and move their arms about to test flexibility. Discuss what the flap at the front is for (chest protector) and why this was needed. Ask why there is a split in the armour front and back (riding would be difficult otherwise). Note the small hole on the left side of the mail. Ask what this is for (sword goes through into scabbard worn underneath mail)

Ask why an undergarment such as a woollen tunic was important for protection (against bruising). Discuss the protection the mail might have given against a sword, spear, arrow or crossbow bolt. There is little evidence to draw on to answer this. However, it is likely that most swords and spears would cause heavy bruising on impact. Some chainmail head-pieces have been found with cuts through them, suggesting some weapon (perhaps an axe or could it have been a sword?) was able to cut through mail. Crossbow bolts and some arrowheads would almost certainly have split the rings. Refer to the difference between the butt-joined and riveted mail (butt-joined mail would split open very easily).

Helmet

The replica helmet, beaten out of one piece of metal, illustrates the best type of helmet made around the time of the conquest. Other types of helmet made at this time included ones with segments riveted directly to each other, and probably the earlier Spangenhelm type which incorporated segments and bands. The helmet has been lined, as evidence of rivets in surviving helmets together with evidence from later helmets suggests that linings were probably fitted. Extra padding (hay, wool,

old cloth or tow) may have been added under the leather lining to make a tighter fit. Contemporary sources refer to lacing helmets which is why ties (fastening under the chin) have been added.

Teaching suggestions

■ Discuss how the helmet feels and what protection it gives. Note the nasal (nose-piece) protects the face against sword slashes. Discuss the main considerations when designing helmets (protection/visibility/comfort).

■ Ask why the lining and chin straps would be important (comfort/protection/secure on head).

Shield

The first Normans had circular shields, but the new kite-shaped shields were introduced around 1000. They were used by infantry and cavalry. Unlike earlier shields which were carried by a metal bar, these were carried by straps. The metal boss on the front is therefore purely ornamental as there is no need for a hole to accommodate the knuckles. No shields from the eleventh century have survived. They are likely to have been made with wood covered with leather as in this reproduction. From illustrations including the Bayeux Tapestry it is clear that a variety of strap arrangements were used.

Teaching suggestions

■ Pupils can try out the straps. Put left arm under the lower strap and grasp hold of the upper one. Can they suggest different positions for straps to suit infantry or cavalry?

Sword

Safety: This sword is blunted but has a heavy blade which could cause damage and injury. Please only use under supervision with extreme care.

The sword is a replica of a brazil-nut pommel sword from the time of the conquest.

The sword was the key weapon for a Norman knight.

Teaching suggestions

■ Discuss the purpose of the cross-piece (protection) and the pommel (heavy weight to counter-balance the weight of the blade).

USING THE EQUIPMENT FOR A CASTLE CROSS-BOWMAN

Castle context

In 1377 during the Hundred Years War Carisbrooke Castle was besieged by the French. The French were defeated. A legend attached to this siege tells of the expert crossbowman Peter de Heynoe killing the French commander, who was patrolling near the gatehouse, by firing his 'silver' crossbow from a loophole on the west side of the wall. A crossbowman of this period could have worn chain mail, metal plates, a padded jacket and/or a coat of plates. He may have worn a bascinet helmet or kettle hat.

Aketon

An aketon (a padded and quilted jacket) from this period was waist-ed. It could be worn with armour over the top of it or independently, with most foot soldiers wearing it as their main body protection. This aketon is made of linen stuffed with wool. It is thought from recent tests that cloth armour such as an aketon would have given considerable protection (the padding absorbs the energy of the blow).

Teaching suggestions

■ Discuss the advantages/disadvantages of wearing an aketon as the main body protection (consider also comfort/weight/manoeuvrability).

Bascinet helmet with aventail

The bascinet was a very popular type of helmet around 1377. By

this time it was almost invariably worn with an aventail. The aventail protected the throat and neck in particular and was attached using staples (vervelles) and a leather band.

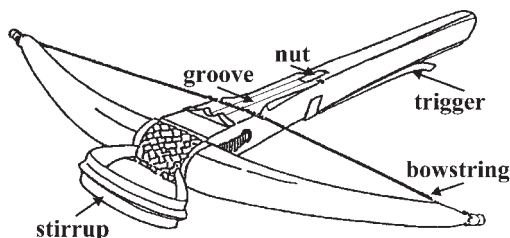
At tournaments bascinets were worn under a great helm (a helmet which enclosed the entire face), but at other times they were worn independently. They were sometimes worn with a visor. Armour was often stamped with the mark of the armourer (notice the mark on the reproduction helmet).

Teaching suggestions

- Discuss why soldiers may have preferred not to wear a helm over the bascinet for general wear.
- Ask how they would rate the helmet with regard to comfort, visibility and protection.

Crossbow

By the twelfth century crossbows had become very important weapons. They could fire over



longer distances than longbows and were more powerful and accurate, using simple machinery to fire the bolt. The disadvantage was cost of production and a slower rate of fire. The reproduction crossbow shows features of a fourteenth-century weapon but is far lighter in weight. It cannot be fired but is useful for talking through the procedure a crossbowman used. He:

- attached a hook to his waistbelt
- knelt down and fixed hook over bowstring
- put foot in metal stirrup to keep crossbow in place and stood up, thus spanning bowstring (getting it in loaded position)
- made sure the string was held in catch (nut) half way along the bow

- laid crossbow bolt in groove
 - fired bolt by pressing up rear of trigger.
- Notice the fifteenth-century crossbow in the museum with a windlass for spanning the bow.

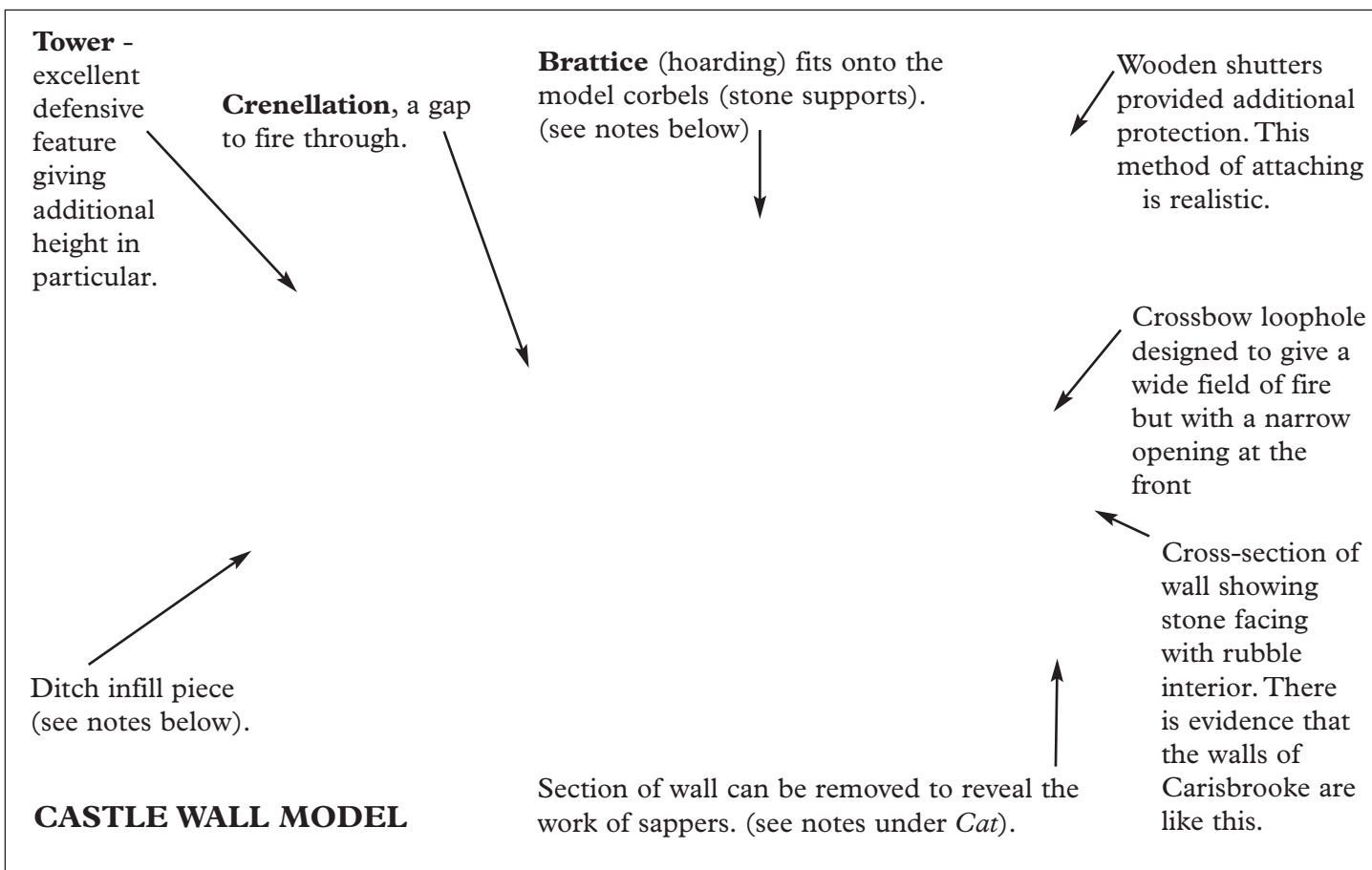
Teaching suggestions

- Discuss the purpose of each of the features, and the advantages/disadvantages of the crossbow in comparison with other bows.

CASTLE WALL MODEL AND SIEGE WEAPONS

Castle context

The defensive features of Carisbrooke Castle indicate that its designers were aware of the type of siege weapons which could be employed in an attack. The siege of the castle in 1377 provides a good context for considering castle defence and attack in the medieval period. There is no record of the French using siege weapons, but the possibility was there. At this period the castle was

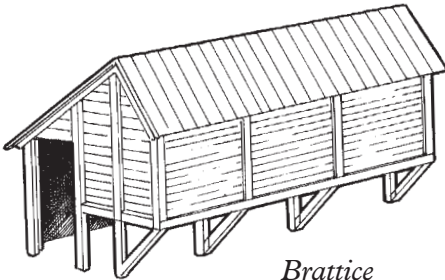


in its heyday (see the artist's impression drawing on wall).

Using the models

The models have been worked out to scale as far as is possible, and on each model is a figure to indicate the scale used.

Brattices were fitted to enable



Brattice

defenders to drop missiles through gaps in the floor outside the walls. This can be demonstrated on the model using a paper/polystyrene ball (in plastic container).

Attackers may have tried to fill in the ditch with earth, stone, turf, or wood which could then be covered with planks (forming a ramp). This would enable wheeled siege weapons to get close to the wall. However at Carisbrooke the slopes would make such an approach impossible.

The castle wall model has a removeable ditch piece and ramp.

The siege weapons

Scaling ladder

Attackers with ladders needed to get up to the base of the wall. Forked poles were used to help erect ladders. Many had iron hooks for gripping the parapet. Sometimes ladders had iron points to dig into the earth or wedges were used to secure them.

Siege tower

Siege towers were higher than the castle wall. Once the tower was close enough to the castle wall, the drawbridge was let down to enable attackers to capture the top of the wall. As its approach would have

been slow, it needed to be well protected against fire. Raw hides were used for this purpose.

Battering ram

This was usually an enormous tree trunk with an iron head, suspended inside a shed. It was swung repeatedly against the wall or door. If the outer stone facing could be penetrated, the core of rubble made an easier target to attack. Sometimes rams were operated by up to sixty men.

Cat

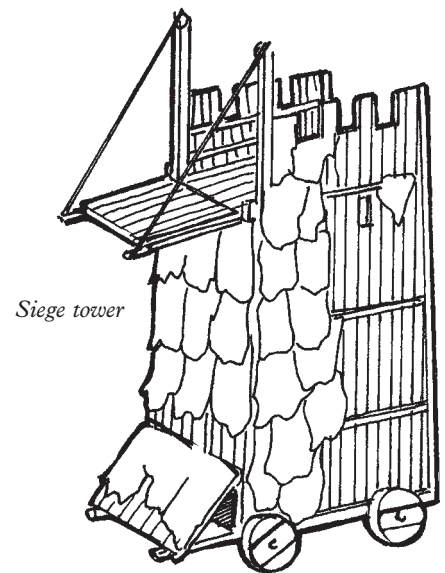
The cat, or sow, was an all-purpose shelter on wheels, often used by attackers attempting to undermine or pick away the base of the walls. The easiest way to undermine walls was to use men known as sappers. They dug a trench up to the castle wall, covering it with planks as they progressed.

Once up to the walls, they propped a wooden defence against the wall and under its cover attacked the wall with picks. The cavity was then shored up with timbers, filled with flammable materials and set alight. When the props burned through, a section of the wall would collapse.

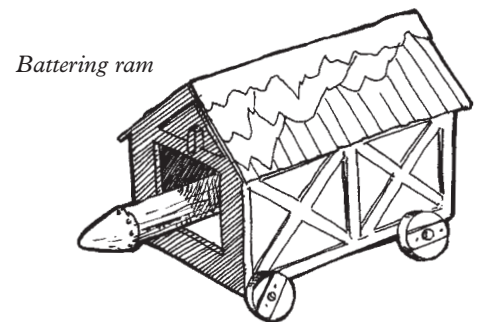
Trebuchet

The trebuchet, pictured on page 6, is on a separate unit. It was probably the most effective of several different siege machines used for hurling rocks and other missiles at a castle. Dead animals, manure and offal were also thrown inside the walls to spread disease.

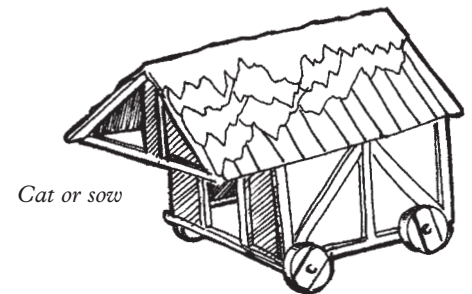
The weight on a counterweight trebuchet consisted of a box filled with earth, stones, sand or lead. A long sling was essential for good performance, and this was contained in a trough below the machine. The size and weight of missiles obviously varied, as did the size of the machines, but on average stones would have been between 45-90kg and could be thrown about 270 metres. Large machines may have been



Siege tower



Battering ram



Cat or sow

transported in sections and constructed on site.

Teaching suggestions

Safety: Please ensure that your pupils are carefully supervised when using the trebuchet. They should stand to the side, facing the machine, clear of the swinging arm.

■ Use the model wall and siege weapons to simulate a possible sequence for a siege.

■ Ask pupils to talk through the likely sequence when firing a trebuchet in medieval times.

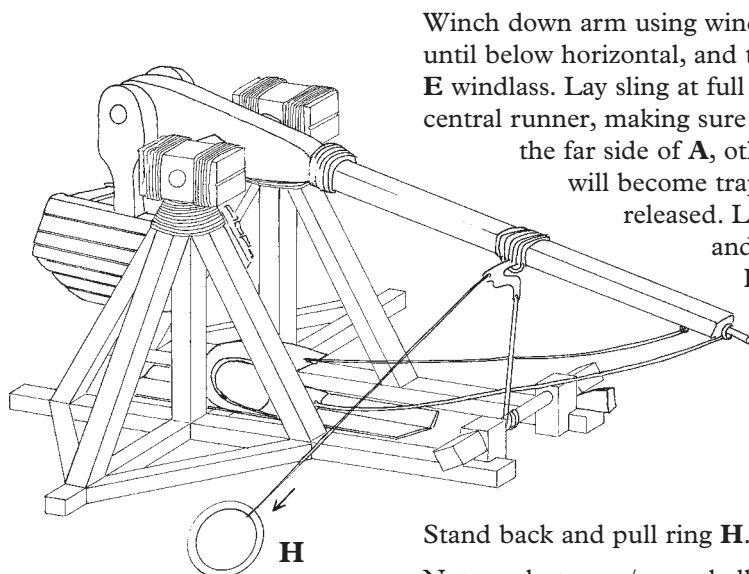
Note: the pieces of wood attached to the side of the trebuchet were for climbing up when the hook was being attached into the loop. The arm would have been wound down by means of a windlass.

Trebuchet

Instructions for use

Unwind string **A** from windlass **B**.
Place hook **C** - pointing away
from you - through
eyelet **D**.

L



Winch down arm using windlass **B**
until below horizontal, and then chock
E windlass. Lay sling at full extent on
central runner, making sure it is on
the far side of **A**, otherwise it
will become trapped when
released. Load sling
and attach ring
F to post **G**.

Stand back and pull ring **H**.

Note: polystyrene/paper balls for firing
are in plastic container.

The method of pulling the rope out
to the side was one way of releasing
the hook to fire the machine.

■ Explain that it was probably
extremely difficult to move a tre-
buchet backwards and forwards to
alter its firing range. Can pupils
suggest alternative methods (alter-
ing the length of the string, using a
different weight, missile or counter-
weight).

■ Discuss the relative dangers of
using different attacking methods
(for example, ladders are easily
pushed away and are targets for
rocks, scalding water or wine, hot
sand or fire pots).

■ Consider the strengths the castle

had (refer to the features shown on
model castle wall and consider
gatehouse defences such as
portcullises).

■ Consider the qualities needed
from siege weapons (strength,
protection including from fire,
transportability)

■ Consider why it is difficult to
use wheeled siege weapons at
Carisbrooke (ditch and slopes).

■ Look for the features illustrated
on the model wall when looking
around the castle.

Cannon balls

Gunpowder was known in Europe
in 1260, but it was not until the

1400s that cannons were widely
used in castle battles. For many
years guns were used alongside
stone-throwing machines. Early
cannons were fired against wooden
gates and other easier
targets as they were not powerful
enough to demolish strong walls.
Stone or iron shot could be used.
Stone cannon balls were cheaper
and needed less powder to fire but
were less powerful as they were
lighter. The cannon balls are
original but their date and place of
origin are unknown. Two are of
iron and one is of stone.

Teaching suggestions

**Safety: please ensure these are
only handled under careful
supervision. Estimate the
weight of the cannon balls then
weigh them using the scales.**

■ Discuss the effectiveness of
stone/iron.

■ Discuss the force needed to
propel them and the damage they
could do.

COSTUMES

Castle context

Throughout the medieval period
the castle was a home, and the cos-
tumes are intended to represent the
domestic side of castle life. The
costumes are replicas of the type of
clothing worn by:

■ Countess Isabella de Fortibus,
one of the wealthiest women in
England who was the owner of
Carisbrooke Castle from 1262 to
1293 and used it as her main resi-
dence

■ the Constable at the castle dur-
ing this same period who was in
charge of all military staff and
responsible for ensuring the castle
was secure.

Please select two slim pupils to
dress in the costumes as a demon-
stration for the class.

Teaching suggestions

Talk through the points as you
dress the chosen pupils.

■ Name the materials used and what they indicate. Wool was the most common fabric used at the time. Silk was expensive and hard to obtain, and only worn by those in court circles or high offices of the church. Linen varied in quality; notice the differences in the garments here. Linen was the only material washed, outer garments being brushed and treated to remove stains.

■ Discuss the colours used and their significance. Dyes were expensive. The deeper more vivid colours reflected wealth as the cloth needed repeat dyeing. Black was the richest colour of them all.

■ Ask the wearer what it feels like wearing particular garments. Can they think of any advantages/disadvantages of wearing the items in the fourteenth century?

■ Discuss whether materials or particular features have been selected/selected for warmth, comfort, to be functional, to impress or to economise.

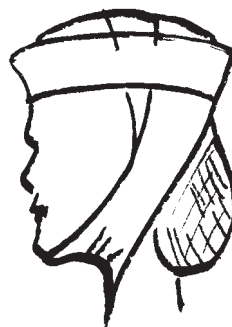
Costume for a thirteenth-century lady

The items in order of dressing are:

- yellow wool stockings with tablet-woven wool garters.
- white linen smock.
- gold cord tied around waist.
- drawstring velvet purse tied on to gold cord - purses could be worn under or outside of the kirtle. Silk velvet was very new to England at this time.
- linen and silk brocade kirtle (dress) with train - note the pocket holes (vertical slits at front) called fitchets.
- brooch to do up V opening - based on original design, modern catch.
- tablet-woven girdle with gold thread added- please don't tighten too tightly (see illustration). Material can be bagged over the girdle. (Please remove brooch and loosen lacing on sleeves before taking off kirtle.)

■ three-quarter circle purple wool mantle (cloak) lined with silk - amount of material and lining both reflected wealth.

■ thin gold cord put through rings behind brooches and tied, holding mantle together. The headdress (see illustration) consisted of the crespine (hairnet) worn on crown of head and fitted over plaits of hair at back - silk net with pearls and gold thread. (This could be pinned to hair or the barbette if necessary). The barbette was a linen band wound around head and under chin twice (pinned to itself). The fillet or coronet (stiffened linen circle) was worn on top of the barbette.

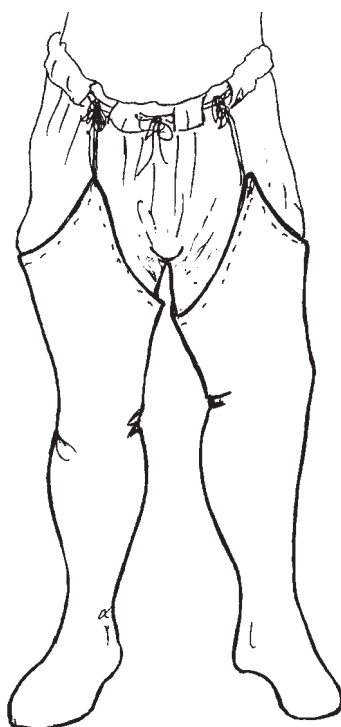


The shoes are called turnshoes from the method of making them. They are court shoes made of thin leather. The laced boots with fairly pointed toes are typical of the period.

Costume for a thirteenth-century gentleman

The items in order of dressing are:

- linen braies (underpants) - farm



labourers sometimes worked in these alone

■ single- leg cloth hose (stockings) tied to braies

■ linen shirt

■ woollen tunic made with regular pieces of cloth to limit wastage of fabric. Dyed to produce a deep blue-green

■ dyed leather girdle with pewter fittings. Tunic can be bagged over girdle to adjust length (calf to ankle).

Labourers would have a shorter length

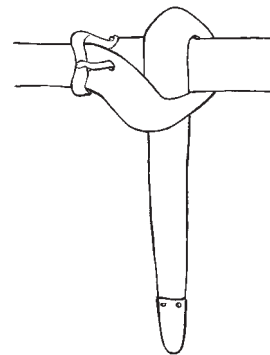
■ woollen supertunic (herygoud)

with hanging sleeves and hood - arms could be put through long slits in upper parts of sleeves for convenience, and sleeves left hanging.

hand cast pewter buttons from originals.

The coif, or linen bonnet, was popular from the twelfth century until 1440. The felt hat is made from processed wool.

The boots are made of thicker leather. Men and women wore similar styles.



WALL PICTURES

The wall pictures provide snapshots of what Carisbrooke Castle was probably like at different periods of history.

They include:

- motte with wooden keep at Hastings as depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry. Carisbrooke, a motte and bailey castle, almost certainly started this way, with the wooden defences gradually being replaced by stone. When excavations were carried out it was discovered that the motte was constructed with layers of chalk as in this picture
- an artist's impression of Carisbrooke Castle in the late fourteenth century, drawn in 1990.

This shows the castle in its heyday, and provides a useful source when thinking about the siege of 1377 and the strengths and weaknesses of the castle

■ an artist's impression of Carisbrooke Castle at approximately 1600, drawn in 1900. This illustrates in particular the outer defences which were added to the castle at the end of the sixteenth century due to fear of attack by the Spanish. They were designed in the knowledge that cannon was by then the chief weapon employed in attack and defence

■ an engraving of Carisbrooke Castle as a ruin in the early nineteenth century. This shows the windows in these domestic buildings before they were remodelled in 1856, including the one which Charles I tried to escape through

■ an aerial photograph of Carisbrooke Castle. This provides a useful source for highlighting changes and features of the castle.

Illustrations

Also available are various laminated copies of other relevant illustrations.

Many of these provide evidence from contemporary medieval sources for the items in the Education Centre. They include:

- an early fourteenth-century manuscript illustrating a siege at the Tower of London. It features a trebuchet, scaling ladder, crossbow and bascinet helmets
- a manuscript picture showing miners under the protection of a mobile shelter (cat or sow)
- a photograph of a carving of the head of Isabella de Fortibus at Priory Church, Christchurch in Dorset showing her headdress
- a manuscript picture showing soldiers wearing bascinets, kettle hats, chainmail head-pieces and cloth armour
- a photograph of an original helmet from Olmutz in Moravia which is typically Norman in style. Constructed in one piece it has a

slight ridge from front to back and an integral nasal

■ a modern drawing of a method of undermining a castle wall.

PRACTICALITIES

You should book the Education Centre at the same time as you book your visit to the castle. To book a visit to Carisbrooke Castle, please telephone 01983 280201. Sessions are booked on the hour. The room is not large and a maximum of 35 pupils can be accommodated in any one session for safety reasons. The centre is through a doorway half way up the stairs in the museum building.

All teaching sessions must be led by you/your own staff and the resources need to be used under careful supervision. Please ensure that the resources are always treated with extreme care and are left tidily in their correct places ready for the next class.

There are coat hooks in the corridor outside the Education Centre.

Please note, though, that this corridor is a fire exit, and you should not therefore block the way with pupils' bags.

Any comments on the Education Centre should be passed on to English Heritage staff in the ticket office at the castle entrance.

RESOURCES

Cooper, R, *Carisbrooke Castle, A Teacher's handbook*, English Heritage, 2002.

Durbin, G., Morris, S. and Wilkinson, S, *A teacher's guide to learning from objects*, English Heritage, 1990, ISBN 1-85074-259-6.

Edge, D. and Paddock, J.M, *Arms and armour of the medieval knight*, Defoe, 1988, ISBN 1-87098-100-6.

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knight 950-1204 AD, Osprey, 1993, ISBN 1-85532-270-6.
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Looking at castles (Poster pack), English Heritage, 1994, ISBN 1-85074-490-4.

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English Heritage Education

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