



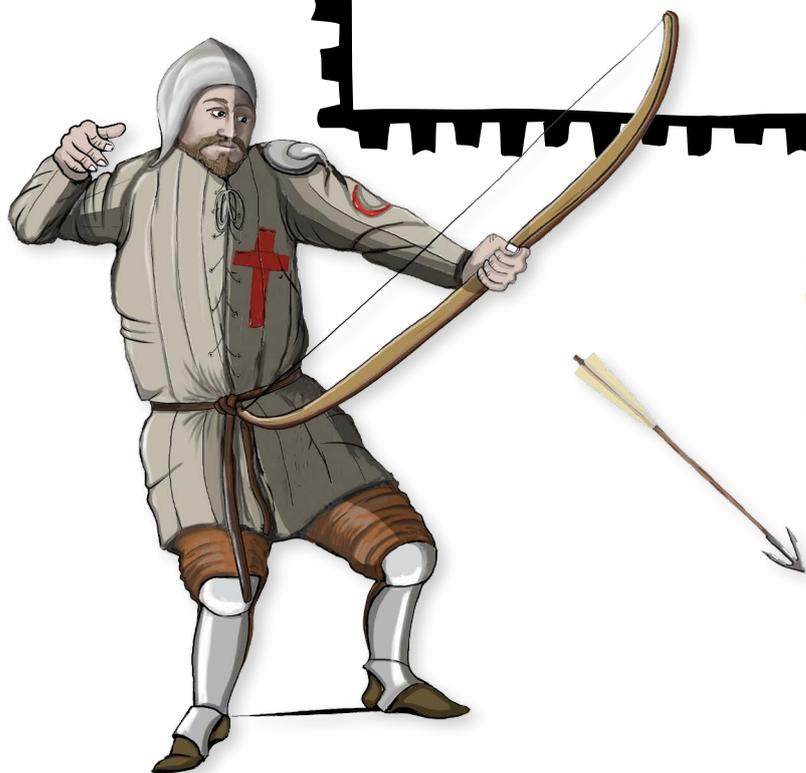
ENGLISH HERITAGE  
EDUCATION

KS2 & KS3

## TEACHERS' RESOURCE PACK

### Carisbrooke Castle

This resource pack has been designed to help teachers plan a visit to Carisbrooke Castle, which provides essential insight into defences 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** and **Discovery Visit Risk Assessments** to help with planning:

- **A Carisbrooke Carry On: How to Survive and Stay Alive**
- **Who Lives in a House Like This: Castle Life From the Anglo Saxons to the Victorians**

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Step into England's story

## HISTORICAL INFORMATION

DISCOVER THE STORY OF  
CARISBROOKE CASTLE

Below is a short history of Carisbrooke 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.

### ROMAN AND SAXON SETTLEMENTS

Carisbrooke has been an important place of **settlement** since the Romans. There were at least three Roman villas in the area around Carisbrooke and Newport that show people were living here between the 3rd and 4th centuries AD.

Evidence of a 6th century Saxon graveyard has been found on Carisbrooke Hill. Coins discovered west of Carisbrooke from the 7th century show that the Saxons living there were **trading** with countries far away from England.

Between 998 and 1009, the Vikings used the Isle of Wight as a base to invade the mainland. The local people built a **burh** on the hill as a place to be safe from, and fight against, the Vikings. The Saxon stone wall can be seen at the east and west sides of the castle today. This was probably the first building on the hilltop.



A Saxon soldier. The Saxons had to defend the Isle of Wight from Viking raiders.

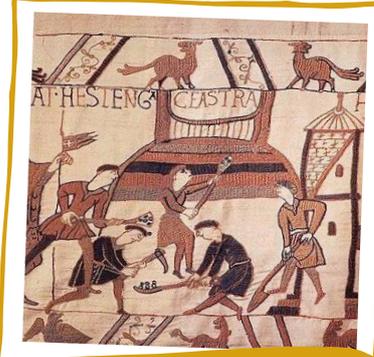
## NORMAN CONQUEST

After his victory at the Battle of Hastings in 1066, William the Conqueror (r.1066–1087) granted the Isle of Wight to his cousin, William FitzOsbern.

The Domesday Book records a castle at Carisbrooke in 1086, probably built by FitzOsbern. It's likely he adapted the Saxon burh – ditches were dug to form an inner and outer **bailey** and the castle buildings were made from wood and earth.

By 1075 the castle belonged to **the Crown** again. In 1100, King Henry I (r.1100–1135) faced a rival claim to the throne by his eldest brother, Robert. To secure his support along the south coast, Henry gave the Isle of Wight to his loyal supporter, Richard de Redvers. It was probably Richard who built the **motte-and-bailey** castle.

Richard's son, Baldwin, took over Carisbrooke Castle in 1107. Baldwin made the castle stronger by building stone walls and the **keep**. During the **civil war**, Baldwin supported Empress Matilda. But when the **well** in the keep stopped working, the castle didn't have any water. To survive, Baldwin had to surrender to King Stephen (r. 1135–1154) in 1136. Baldwin did not get his lands back until 1153.



A scene from the Bayeux Tapestry showing a motte being built by the Normans to strengthen their position at Hastings.

## ISABELLA'S MEDIEVAL EXTENSIONS

In 1263, Baldwin de Redvers' descendant, Countess Isabella de Fortibus, inherited Carisbrooke Castle when she was twenty five years old. The Countess was a powerful landowner with many estates - unusual for a woman in medieval times.

Carisbrooke Castle became Isabella's main home. She extended and rebuilt it to show how important she was. She built a great chamber for herself, overlooking the island, the **chapel** of St Nicholas, and many of the other buildings. The remains of lots of these buildings can be seen today.



One of the expensive glass windows overlooking the island that Isabella de Fortibus had in her great chamber.

## A FAILED FRENCH SIEGE

In the 14th century (1300s), the Isle of Wight was involved in the **Hundred Years War** between England and France. If the French armies landed on the island, they could sail up the river Solent and use the ports of Southampton and Portsmouth as bases to attack the rest of England.

In 1377, the French landed on the Isle of Wight and **besieged** Carisbrooke Castle. One story is that the French army were defeated when **bowman** Peter de Heynoe shot and killed the French commander. The **arrow loop** through which he is supposed to have shot his arrow can be seen at the castle today.

To protect the castle from similar attacks, more defences were built during the 14th century, like the **drum towers** around the main gatehouse.



An archer from the 14th century. Bowman Peter de Heynoe shot and killed the French commander during the siege in 1377.

## 1500s: ELIZABETHAN FORTRESS

In 1537 Henry VIII (r.1509–1547) began building new **defences** to protect England against France and Spain. **Forts** were built along the coast to defend the Isle of Wight and the mainland. Carisbrooke Castle was used to store **munitions**.

Sir George Carey, a cousin of Elizabeth 1 (r.1558–1603), was made captain of the castle in 1583. Sir George extended the castle to show off his power and built a new **mansion** in the castle grounds. He rebuilt the **well** house and **treadwheel** to raise water. This can be seen at the castle today.

To boost the castle's defences, Sir George added **bastions** to the inner bailey wall and probably built the large earthwork **barbican**. Ten years after these upgrades, the Spanish were still a threat, so Sir George transformed Carisbrooke Castle into an **artillery** fort. An earth wall was built around the castle with arrowhead-shaped bastions to defend against an attacking force with big guns. You can see the remains of the north-west bastion as you enter the castle.



A modern aerial view of the castle showing the artillery fortress, with arrow-headed bastions, built between 1597 and 1602.

## CIVIL WAR: A ROYAL PRISONER

After England made peace with Spain in 1604, the castle was no longer needed as a defensive fortress. Its next major role came when the English Civil War began in 1642. Carisbrooke Castle was quickly surrendered to the **Parliamentarians** and used as a prison.

The most famous prisoner to be held at the castle was Charles I (r.1625–1649). He had escaped from Hampton Court Palace and made his way to the Isle of Wight, believing he would be protected by the **governor**, Colonel Robert Hammond. Instead, he was arrested.

Charles was a prisoner in the castle for ten months. At first he was allowed to roam quite freely in the castle grounds. The barbican was even converted into a bowling green for him. But on the 20th March, 1648 Charles attempted to escape by climbing out of his bedchamber window in the middle of the night, only to get stuck. From then on, he was watched much more closely.

Charles was put on trial and finally executed in 1649. Following his death, his two children were brought to Carisbrooke Castle and imprisoned. Within weeks, his daughter Princess Elizabeth died from a chill caught whilst playing bowls.



Charles I got stuck in the window of his bedchamber while trying to escape from Carisbrooke Castle in 1648.

## 1700S AND 1800S: PRETTY RUINS AND MILITIA MEN

In the 1700s and 1800s forts on the coast became more important. Carisbrooke Castle is inland so it was no longer used much for the defence of the Isle of Wight. Some buildings continued to be useful as stores and a military hospital.

By the middle of the 1800s, the Isle of Wight was becoming a popular place for tourists and Carisbrooke Castle was one of the main attractions. The castle was decaying, but Victorian tourists liked to see the ruins, even with plants growing over them.

At the same time, the castle had become the home of the Isle of Wight Artillery **Militia** – **civilian** men who trained as soldiers in their spare time. They trained on the guns mounted on the north-west bastion.



Tourists exploring the gatehouse. The trees and ivy were left to make the ruins look pretty.

## THE PRINCESS'S SUMMER HOME

In 1896, Queen Victoria's youngest daughter, Princess Beatrice, became governor of the Isle of Wight. The Princess gave the castle a refresh. The **gatehouse** and the chapel of St Nicholas were restored, the great hall was re-roofed and the Constable's Lodging was extended.

In 1913, Princess Beatrice decided to make Carisbrooke her summer home. The **panelling** and the **window seats** in the Constable's Lodging show what the rooms would have looked like when she lived there.

The buildings of the south-east range were converted for the Princess's servants and a tunnel was built underground so the servants could get to her rooms.



The initial of Princess Beatrice on the outer gate.

## CARISBROOKE TODAY

Carisbrooke Castle is now looked after by English Heritage. It is still popular with tourists and people who visit to learn about the history of the castle and the island.



Visitors to Carisbrooke Castle meet one of the donkeys who work the treadwheel in the well house.

# GLOSSARY

WEIRD WORDS AND  
THEIR MEANINGS

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

**Arrow Loop** – a thin gap in a wall for a bowman to shoot arrows through

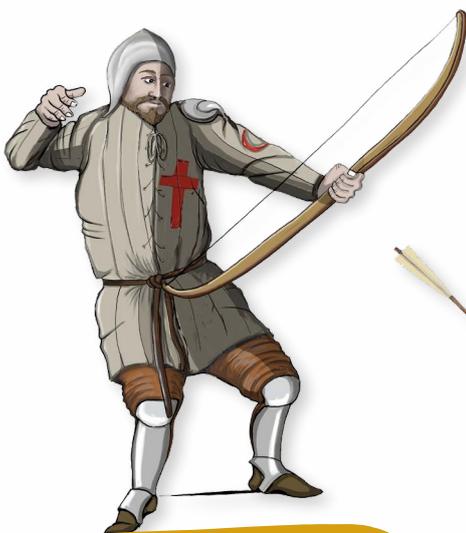
**Artillery** – big guns with a large barrel, like a cannon

**Barbican** – the outer defence area of a castle, outside the main gate and designed to defend it from attack

**Bastion** – a part of a fort that sticks out from the main outer wall, to allow guns to fire along the wall at approaching enemies



A cannon on the north-west bastion.



A bowman (archer) ready for battle in the 14th century.

**Besiege** – to surround (a fortress) with soldiers to try to capture it or starve the people living there into surrendering

**Bowman** – an archer

**Burh** – a Saxon fort

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

**Civil war** – a war between people in the same country

**Civilian** – a person not in the armed services

**Constable** – the governor of a royal castle

**Countess** – a title for a woman in the aristocracy

**the Crown** – the monarchy; the ruling King and/or Queen

**Defences** – things that help stop an attack

**Drum towers** – a round tower (shaped like a drum) built into a wall

**Earthwork** – a large artificial bank of soil, often one made as a defence

**English Civil War** – the war in the 1600s between people who supported Parliament and people who supported the King (Royalists) over how England should be ruled

**Fort** – a secure building that protects itself from an attack

**Gatehouse** – room(s) built over a castle entrance

**Governor** – an official appointed to govern a town or region

**Herber** – a garden where herbs or vegetables are grown

**Hundred Years War** – the fighting between England and France: 1337 – 1453

**Keep** – the strongest tower of a castle and the final refuge during an attack

**Mansion** – a large, impressive house occupied by an important, powerful family

**Militia** – a part-time military force, whose members are civilians

**Motte-and-bailey** – a castle built with a raised earthwork mound (motte), with an attached enclosure or courtyard (bailey), surrounded by a protective ditch and wooden

palisade (fence)

**Munitions** – military weapons, ammunition and equipment

**Panelling** – panels (flat wooden boards) used to decorate a wall

**Parliamentarians** – people who supported parliament in the English Civil War

**Settlement** – a place where people start to live and build a community

**Siege** – when enemy forces surround a town or building, cutting off essential supplies, to force the people inside

to surrender

**Spanish Armada** – a huge fleet of Spanish warships that sailed up the Channel in 1588 in an attempt to invade England

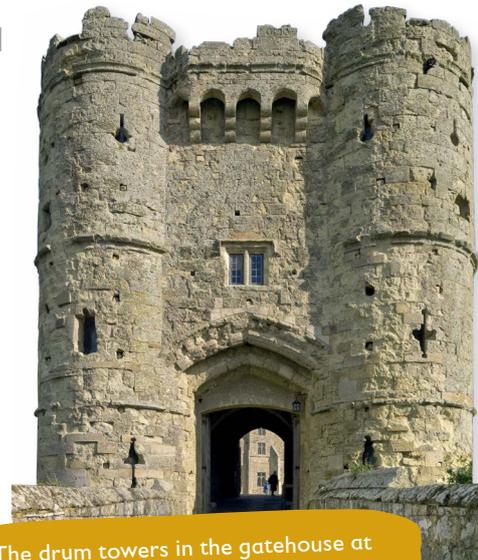
**Trading** – buying and selling goods or jobs

**Treadwheel** – a large wheel turned by the weight of people or animals used to lift water from a well

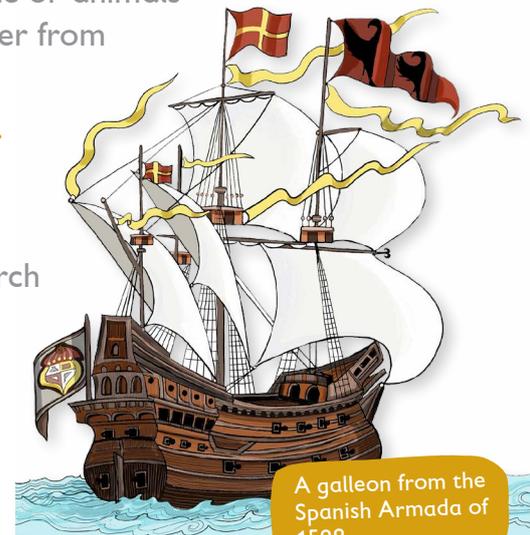
**Undercroft** – the crypt (underground room) of a church

**Well** – a long narrow hole dug into the ground to get water from the ground

**Window seat** – a seat below a window, especially one in a bay or alcove



The drum towers in the gatehouse at Carisbrooke Castle.



A galleon from the Spanish Armada of 1588

# SOURCES

PEEK 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 Carisbrooke Castle's history.



De Heynoe's loop at Carisbrooke Castle is thought to be the arrow loop through which **bowman** Peter de Heynoe shot the arrow that killed the French commander during the siege of 1377.

‘One Petrus de Heynoe came to Sir Hugh Tyrell, then Captayne of ye Island, and tolds him he woold undertake with his silver bowe to kill ye Commaunder of ye Ffrench takinge his time, for he had observed him how nyghtes and morninges he came near ye Castle; which on leave he killed owt of a loopehole on ye west syde of ye Castle, and by that means browght ye fffrench to a composition to take 1000 markes and be begone, and to do no furthor harme;’

This source describes the **siege** of Carisbrooke Castle by a French army in 1377. It is written by Sir John Oglander. Sir John was Deputy Lieutenant of the Isle of Wight from 1595–1648. The source describes the moment that bowman Peter de Heynoe killed the French commander with a single arrow.

Sir John wrote the description in the 1600s, more than 250 years after the siege.

This source is taken from ‘**The Oglander Memoirs**’, published in 1888.



- four chambers at an upper level next to a hall over an **undercroft**
- a great chapel belonging to Quarr Abbey (the chapel of St Nicholas)
- a small chapel
- a great kitchen
- a chamber for the constable over an undercroft
- a sundial in a **herber**
- a fish tank/pool
- a prison'

In 1293, Carisbrooke Castle was sold by Isabella de Fortibus to King Edward I. The King ordered lists of all the buildings and things at the castle to work out how much it was worth. This source is a list from 1294 that tells us what Isabella's castle was like. The remains of most of these buildings can still be seen today.



'...this morning began a great fight between both fleets... [which] were out of sight by three in the afternoon'

This source is Sir George Carey's written record of the moment he saw the Spanish Armada from Carisbrooke Castle on 26th July, 1588. Sir George was captain of the Isle of Wight from 1583–1603.

The source comes from the diary of Sir John Oglander. Sir John was Deputy Lieutenant of the Isle of Wight from 1595–1648.



## SIR GEORGE CAREY

Portrait miniature of Sir George Carey by Nicholas Hilliard, 1601. Sir George lived at Carisbrooke Castle as captain of the Isle of Wight from 1583–1603.

Nicholas Hilliard (1547-1619) was a painter of miniature portraits. He was the official miniature painter to Elizabeth I.



'His weekly expense in wheat-corn and pastry was constantly three-quarters, but when lords and ladies were there... he spent treble as much, for then he would have all the gentleman of the Island, their wives also there. He was a most free man in his house-keeping, and his meat was always served up to his table with a consort of wind and still music.'

This source describes how Sir George Carey spent his money while he was living at Carisbrooke Castle. Sir George was captain of the Isle of Wight from 1583–1603.

The source is part of a diary. It was written by Sir John Oglander. Sir John was Deputy Lieutenant of the Isle of Wight from 1595–1648



A photograph of visitors inside the entrance to Carisbrooke Castle in 1906. The gatehouse was used as the first Carisbrooke Castle museum.

‘My father enjoyed his time working for her in the palaces in London, and he used to tell me about all the kings he had met. At the castle [Carisbrooke] he lived in the building across the courtyard from the well house, which was connected to the princess’s house by an underground corridor.’

An account from Mrs Moira Griffin. Mrs Griffin’s father, Jack Kenway White, worked as a footman for Princess Beatrice in the 1930s.

# SITE PLAN

## CARISBROOKE CASTLE

