



ENGLISH HERITAGE
EDUCATION

KS2–KS4

TEACHERS' RESOURCE PACK

Scarborough Castle

This resource pack has been designed to help teachers plan a visit to Scarborough Castle, which provides essential insight into 3,000 years of history. 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

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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
SCARBOROUGH CASTLE

Below is a short history of Scarborough Castle. Use this information to learn how the site has changed over time. You'll find definitions to the key words in the Glossary resource on pages 6 and 7.

PREHISTORY

Scarborough has been an important gateway to north-east England for many centuries. Fragments of pottery dating to between about 2100 and 1600 BC are the earliest signs of human activity on the **headland**.

There is clear evidence of a settlement on the headland in the **first millennium BC**. Excavations have revealed pits, **postholes** and a variety of **prehistoric** objects including axe-heads, metalwork and pottery. These finds suggest two distinct periods of habitation, the first about 800 BC (late **Bronze Age**) and the second about 500 BC (early **Iron Age**).



Reconstruction drawing showing how the settlement on Scarborough headland may have looked during the Iron Age.



Replica of a prehistoric Bronze Age sword (1000–700 BC) found at Scarborough.

ROMAN SIGNAL STATION

In the late 4th century AD, a fortified tower was built on the headland. Finds of coins and pottery, plus similarity to other Roman structures, suggest that it was one of a set of Roman signal stations built along the north-eastern coast of Britain at this time.

There is much debate about how the signal stations actually worked. Some historians think that they were part of a chain of forts, designed to watch for **raiders** and send warnings down the coast. But only four such signal stations have been identified for certain, so we have to assume there were others, at places like Whitby. It is possible instead that the stations acted on their own to warn people inland about enemy attack.



Remains of the Roman signal station at Scarborough, with the square base of the Roman tower still visible in the centre, surrounded by what's left of the wall and outer ditch.

THE EARLY CASTLE

The castle's founder was William le Gros, Count of Aumâle. He was made **Earl** of York by King Stephen (r.1135–54) in 1138, and became a strong political leader in the North. His work at Scarborough probably began in the 1130s. He surrounded the headland with a **curtain wall** and built a tower at the entrance.

But within a few years of the castle's foundation, Henry II (r.1154–89) became king and demanded the return of all royal castles. Scarborough, which was built on a **royal manor**, was one of these, and the castle passed into the hands of the Crown. Henry II spent a huge amount of money rebuilding the **keep** out of stone in 1159–69, which sent a strong message that the castle now belonged to him and he was more powerful than ever.



Henry II as he may have looked in the late 1100s, around the time he rebuilt the keep at Scarborough.

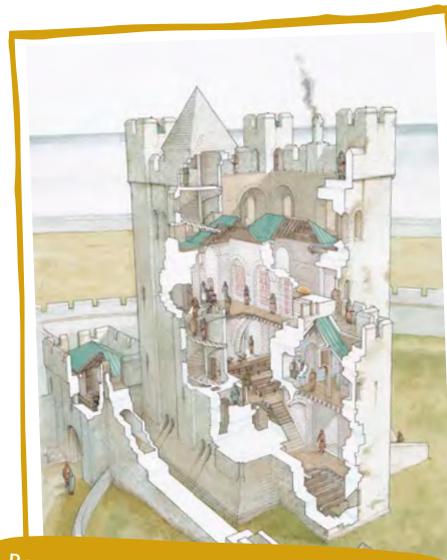
A ROYAL CASTLE

Scarborough is first clearly documented in the mid-12th century as a medieval town thriving beneath the walls of a great royal castle.

King John (r.1199–1216) visited Scarborough Castle several times and developed it further by strengthening and extending the outer walls, then adding a new royal **chamber block** in the outer **bailey**. He spent £2,291 on Scarborough, more than on any other castle in the kingdom.

In 1215, the castle was well supplied with a **garrison** of 10 knights, 72 sergeants and 13 crossbowmen.

Scarborough continued to be an important royal castle until the late 1400s. King Richard III (r.1483–5) was the last king to stay at Scarborough Castle, in 1484, while he was getting a fleet together to defend against the expected invasion of Henry Tudor.



Reconstruction drawing of the great tower in about 1200, showing the inner rooms including the king's apartments, a chapel and a hall for the royal household.

THE CIVIL WAR

Between March 1643 and 1645, during the **English Civil War**, Scarborough served as an important **Royalist** base, controlled by Sir Hugh Cholmley, governor of Scarborough. Cholmley and his garrison successfully stopped important coal supplies from reaching the **Parliamentarian** forces in London by intercepting merchant ships at Scarborough.

Early in 1645, however, Parliamentarian forces closed in on Scarborough. After three weeks Sir Hugh was forced to retreat from the town to the castle, where for five months he resisted one of the bloodiest **sieges** of the Civil War.

The bombardment was so intense that the massive walls of the great tower split in two and half the building collapsed. Eventually, Cholmley ran out of gunpowder, then money and finally food. He surrendered on 25 July 1645.



Reconstruction drawing showing the fighting that took place between the Royalists and Parliamentarians after the tower was split in two during the Civil War siege in 1645.

A SEASIDE SPA RESORT

From the 1660s, Scarborough became famous as a fashionable spa town, or 'Spaw'. It was the first English seaside spa resort where visitors could bathe in the sea and take the natural spring waters.

By the 1730s, large numbers of tourists were flocking to the town to bathe in the sea as a health and leisure activity, which was a new idea at the time. Men were taken out into the water by boat and swam naked. Women weren't allowed such freedoms and were instead wheeled down into the water in bathing machines. This was a hut on wheels, with a small ladder, which allowed women to enter the water without anyone seeing them.

The arrival of the railway in 1845 opened up Scarborough to mass tourism and caused the town's population to boom. As a result, Scarborough became a wealthy holiday resort.



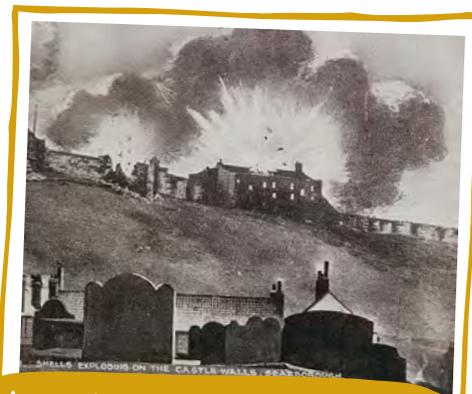
The sandy beaches at Scarborough made it a popular spa resort for holidaymakers who wanted to bathe in the sea.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

On the morning of 16 December 1914, in the opening months of the First World War, the sea fog lifted to reveal three German warships off the coast at Scarborough. One was laying mines in the distance but two **battle cruisers** were in the bay itself and at 8.05 they opened fire. The ships fired more than 500 shells on the town and castle, killing 17 civilians and seriously wounding more than 80 people.

The British public were shocked that innocent civilians had been killed and there was national outrage at the tragedy. Recruiting officers across the country used the slogan 'Remember Scarborough!' to try to persuade more young men to join the army.

Three years later, on 4 September 1917, there was a second attack on Scarborough when a German **U-boat** fired 30 shells at the town and **minesweepers** in the bay.

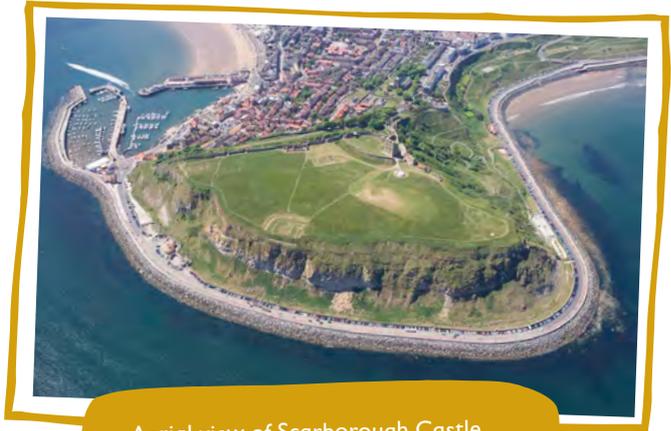


A retouched photograph from Dec 16th 1914 showing the First World War bombardment of the castle and destruction of the barracks.

SCARBOROUGH TODAY

Excavations in the 1920s revealed important information about how the Roman signal station might have been used. Further **archaeological** digs at Scarborough produced many prehistoric finds, including a Bronze Age sword which was dug up at the site of the King's Hall.

Scarborough suffered further damage during the Second World War and its economy struggled to recover once the war was over. In 1981, the spa water was declared unfit for humans to drink. However, in recent years, more tourists have been visiting the town. English Heritage started caring for Scarborough Castle in 1984 and it has become a popular visitor attraction.



Aerial view of Scarborough Castle on the headland as it looks today.

GLOSSARY

TRICKY TERMS AND
WHAT THEY MEAN

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

archaeology – learning about the past by studying the remains of buildings and objects found in the ground.

bailey – the strongly defended area at the centre of a castle, often surrounded by a stone curtain wall.

battle cruiser – a large 20th-century warship, similar to a battleship but faster and more lightly armoured.

Bronze Age (2400–800 BC) – the period in prehistory (before written history), which followed the Stone Age and came before the Iron Age, when some weapons and tools were made using bronze rather than stone.

chamber block – a royal lodging used by visiting kings.

curtain wall – a fortified wall around a castle, designed to protect the buildings and people inside.

earl – a title given to an English nobleman ranking above 'lord' and below 'duke'.

English Civil War (1642–51) – a series of armed conflicts between the Parliamentarians and the Royalists, sometimes now called 'The Wars of the Three Kingdoms' because it involved England, Scotland and Ireland. They were disputing the way in which Britain was governed.



A Bronze Age axe-head (c.1,000–700 BC) found in a pit on the headland. It can be seen on display at Scarborough Castle.



Cannonballs found at the castle, probably dating from the time of the Civil War siege in 1645.



In 1645, the walls of the keep at Scarborough Castle were bombarded during a Civil War siege, causing half of the building to collapse.

excavation – the uncovering (digging up) and recording of archaeology.

first millennium BC – the period covering 1,000 years before the birth of Christ.

garrison – the community of people based at the castle with the task of defending it, including foot soldiers and cavalry (soldiers on horses).

headland – a narrow strip of land that sticks out from the coastline into the sea.

Iron Age – the period in prehistory (before written history) when iron was made and used for tools on a widespread basis; in the British Isles this began around 800 BC.

keep – the central tower of a castle, often used as a final refuge during a siege.

minesweeper – a small naval warship designed to find and destroy underwater mines.

Parliamentarians – people who supported and/or fought on the side of Parliament in the Civil War. They believed King Charles I should be removed from the throne and that England should be ruled by Parliament instead.

postholes – holes dug in the ground to support timber posts, which would have formed a wooden structure.

prehistory – the period in the past before writing was used. It is split into three time periods: the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age.

raider – a person who attacks from the sea in order to take control of the land and steal from the people who live there.

royal manor – land held directly by the king in the medieval period after the Norman Conquest, as noted in the Domesday Survey, which recorded who owned all the land in England in 1086.

Royalists – people who supported and/or fought on the side of the monarchy in the Civil War. They believed the king, Charles I, should remain on the throne and keep his law-making and decision-making powers.

siege – a military tactic in which an army surrounds a place and attempts to capture it, either by attack or by cutting off essential supplies (e.g. food and weapons) – thereby forcing the people inside to surrender.

U-boat – a German submarine, shortened from the German word ‘Unterseeboot’.



Charles I as he may have looked in the 1640s.

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 Scarborough's history.

BRONZE AGE SWORD

A replica of a Bronze Age sword (1000–700 BC), which was excavated from the site of the King's Hall in 1980.



IRON AGE AND ROMAN BEADS

Beads found on the site of the Roman signal station at Scarborough. The large melon bead on the right is from the Iron Age and was possibly used on a horse harness. The glass bead on the left is Roman and must once have formed part of a necklace or bracelet. You can see these objects on display at Scarborough Castle.



MEDIEVAL SCARBOROUGH WARE

A pottery fragment, shaped like a face, which forms part of the decorative rim of a tall 13th-century Scarborough ware jug, used to serve drink. You can see this object on display at Scarborough Castle.





A reconstruction drawing of Scarborough Castle as it may have looked in the 1300s when it was in use as a royal castle. It shows the barbican and its bridge crossing the ditch. The great tower sat within the inner bailey, which was entered through a gatehouse. Along the line of the curtain wall is the chamber block and the nearby King's Hall. In the far distance is the chapel of Our Lady on the site of the former Roman signal station.

MEDIEVAL CROSS SHAFT

A section of a 15th-century cross shaft. This side shows Christ on the cross flanked by the Virgin Mary and St John. It once formed part of a large cross from the chapel site. You can see this object on display at Scarborough Castle.



The CASTLE & Town of Scarborough, as they appear a quarter of a mile from the SPAW—



This Castle, first built by Will^m le Grosse, Earl of Albemarle, in y^e time of King Stephen, was rebuilt in a more splendid manner, & enlarg'd by King Hen. y^e 2^d

Sam. Buck del. from a Drawing in possession of the Right Hon^{ble} Earl of Albemarle

'The Castle and Town of Scarborough as they appear a quarter of a mile from the Spaw', an 18th-century engraving by Samuel and Nathaniel Buck.

'The fall of the tower was a very terrible spectacle, and more sudden than expected, at which the enemy gave a great shout, and the besieged, nothing dismayed, betook them to their arms, expecting an assault, by omission of which the enemy lost a fair opportunity, the falling apart of the Tower having obstructed the passage to the gate house so that the guard there for present could have no release from their friends.'

This extract is from 'Sir Hugh Cholmley's narrative of the siege of Scarborough, 1644–5', edited by C. Firth and published in the **English Historical Review** in 1917.

In 1645, Parliamentary forces closed in on Scarborough and Cholmley retreated to the castle, where for five months he resisted one of the bloodiest sieges of the Civil War. During the siege, the massive walls of the great tower split in two and half the building collapsed. Cholmley eventually ran out of gunpowder, then money and finally food. He surrendered on 25 July 1645.



‘Everything fell on top of us all. Father and mother and two children were downstairs in the kitchen. Father had called out to me “Come on, lad, let’s get away downstairs. It’s the Germans. Come and look after mother.” But before I had time to get downstairs, it had all happened. [...] When at last I could look round me, I had only the shirt and slipper on [...] I found mother and the children all up in one corner. [...] Mother was on a chair [...] she had lost her hand. [...] Father was covered with debris, but somehow he pulled himself out. I don’t remember much about what happened after that, it was too terrible. My father and I got the others out as best we could. Eventually we moved mother into the yard, with little Jack and little George, but it was all too late. Mother was not dead when I was pulling them out, but she was gone by the time I got her into the yard. I then carried George into the next house, but he died as I put him down.’

This extract is from a newspaper report in the **Western Daily Press**, published on Friday 18 December 1914. It details one particularly tragic story from the First World War bombing of Scarborough by German warships. This account was given by a child from the Bennett family, a family of six who lived in Wykeham Street.

