ENGLISH HERITAGE
EDUCATION

KS2 & KS3

TEACHERS' RESOURCE PACK
Warkworth Castle

This resource pack has been designed to help teachers plan a visit to Warkworth Castle, which provides essential insight into medieval England. 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

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ENGLISH HERITAGE
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HISTORICAL INFORMATION

DISCOVER THE STORY OF WARKWORTH CASTLE

Below is a short history of Warkworth Castle. Use this information to learn how the site has changed over time. You'll find definitions for the key words in the Glossary resource on pages 5 and 6.

THE EARLY CASTLE

The town of Warkworth dates back to the **Anglo-Saxon** period. The first castle at Warkworth probably consisted of an earth **motte and bailey** with wooden defences. We don't know who built the first stone castle but at some time between 1157 and 1164 the property was given to Roger fitz Eustace, a rich nobleman,by King Henry II (r.1154–89).

An aerial photo of Warkworth Castle and the surrounding area, including the River Coquet.

It's likely that Roger fitz Eustace's son Robert developed the castle layout as it is today between 1199 and 1214. Robert was a favourite of King John (r.1199–1216) and in 1203 he became **sheriff** of Northumberland, a powerful royal official. In 1213, King John visited him at Warkworth Castle.

ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND AT WAR

Life on the Scottish border was transformed during the reign of the English King Edward I (r.1272–1307). Edward was invited to **referee** a dispute over the Scottish throne and used the opportunity to claim control of the country. The result was a long-running war between England and Scotland. Castles near the border played an important role in the war, with successive English kings providing funds to develop and maintain them. The owners of Warkworth were closely involved in the fighting. In 1319, twenty-four soldiers held the castle against attack and in 1327 the Scots unsuccessfully **besieged** Warkworth twice.

A map of the UK showing the current Anglo-Scottish border, with Scotland in red.
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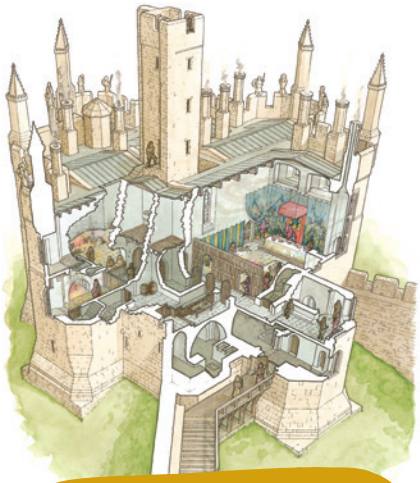
THE POWERFUL PERCYS

In 1328, Edward III granted Warkworth to Henry Percy, the 2nd **Lord** Percy. The Percys were one of the richest and most powerful families in England. They descended from a Norman nobleman who came to England after the **Norman Conquest** of 1066.

Henry Percy, the 1st **Earl** of Northumberland, began a large-scale building programme at Warkworth. He built the impressive **keep** to show off his wealth and royal connections.



A drawing of the Great Tower at Warkworth Castle as it may have looked in about 1400.

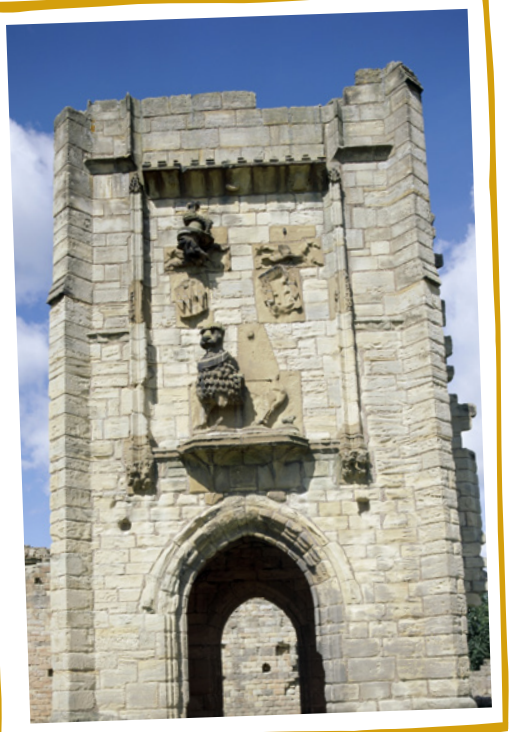
However, the Percy family spent much of their time in rebellion against various kings and queens. The 1st Earl and his son, Harry Hotspur, helped to remove Richard II from the throne in 1399. They then fought against Henry IV (r.1399–1413), who they had helped put on the throne in Richard's place. In 1403, Harry Hotspur was killed in the **Battle of Shrewsbury**, fighting against the king and his army.

His father joined another unsuccessful rebellion against Henry IV in 1405, led by the **Archbishop** of York. The king gathered an army and marched north, while Earl Henry fled to Scotland. The king's army besieged Warkworth, where the **garrison** surrendered after the king had fired just seven cannon shots.

THE WARS OF THE ROSES

The Percy family supported the House of Lancaster in the **Wars of the Roses**. The 2nd Earl of Northumberland was killed at the **Battle of St Albans** in 1455, and his son, the 3rd Earl, was killed at the **Battle of Towton** in 1461. This battle brought about a change in ruler, with Yorkist Edward IV (r.1461–83) becoming king.

In 1471, Edward IV gave the family estates to the 3rd Earl's son, another Henry Percy. Henry started to remodel the castle **bailey** and began construction of the Collegiate Church. He created the Lion Tower and added the carved **heraldry** above the door.



The Lion Tower at Warkworth Castle decorated with a spectacular display of Percy family heraldry.

THE TUDOR CASTLE

The castle was returned to the Crown in 1537 when the 6th Earl of Northumberland died without an **heir**. None of the royal officials would pay for repairs and by 1557 the Northumberland family estates were regained by the 6th Earl's nephew, Thomas Percy.

The Collegiate Church at Warkworth Castle with the crypt and tunnel underneath.

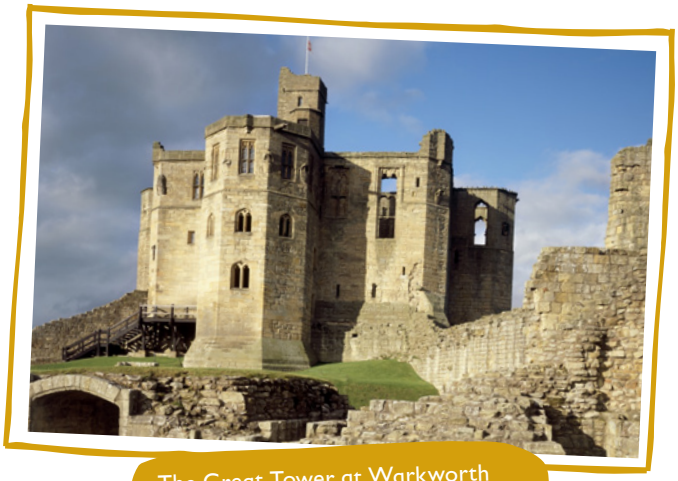
In 1569, Thomas co-led an unsuccessful Catholic rebellion supporting Mary, Queen of Scots against Elizabeth I (r.1558–1603). Queen Elizabeth's forces took control of Warkworth Castle. Thomas was captured in Scotland and executed in York in 1572.

In 1574, Elizabeth I allowed Thomas's brother Henry to take back the family titles and estates. However, his survey of the castle shows that parts of the building were now ruined.

THE STUARTS AND THE CIVIL WAR

Following the discovery of the **Gunpowder Plot** in 1605, the 9th Earl of Northumberland was imprisoned for having links to one of the **conspirators**. He was fined £30,000 and held for 17 years in the Tower of London.

During the **English Civil War** (1642–51), the Scots controlled Warkworth Castle in support of Parliament. They returned it to the 10th Earl, who also supported Parliament.



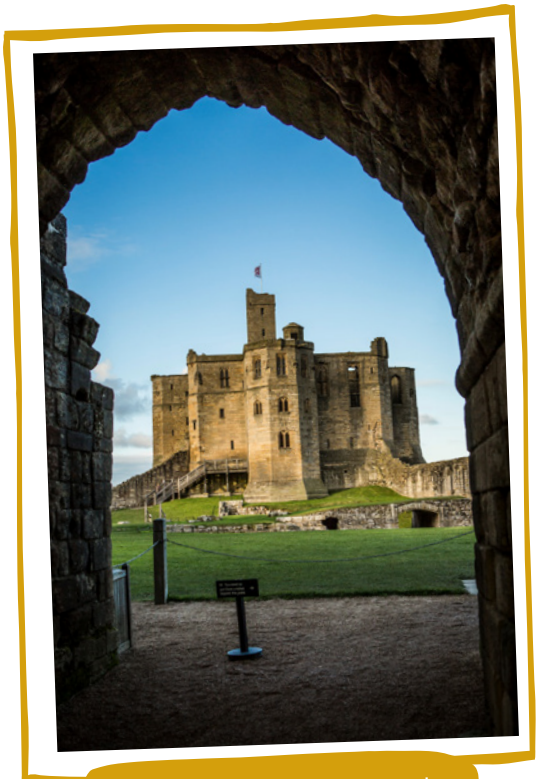
The Great Tower at Warkworth Castle, including the tunnel, as seen from the inner bailey.

RUIN AND REVIVAL

The 11th Earl's widow inherited the Warkworth estates but she had no use for the castle and let an estate official remove a large amount of timber and lead. By 1672, the castle was just a shell.

In the 1700s, the Percy family were made the **Dukes** of Northumberland. They began to take an active interest in the property once again. The 4th Duke of Northumberland, Algernon Percy (1792–1865), employed the famous architect Anthony Salvin to restore the Great Tower and add the Duke's Rooms to the upper floor.

In 1922, Warkworth Castle was taken into State guardianship. The Duke's Rooms, however, remained under the control of the Percy family until 1987.



The Great Tower viewed from the gatehouse at Warkworth Castle.

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GLOSSARY

TRICKY TERMS AND WHAT THEY MEAN

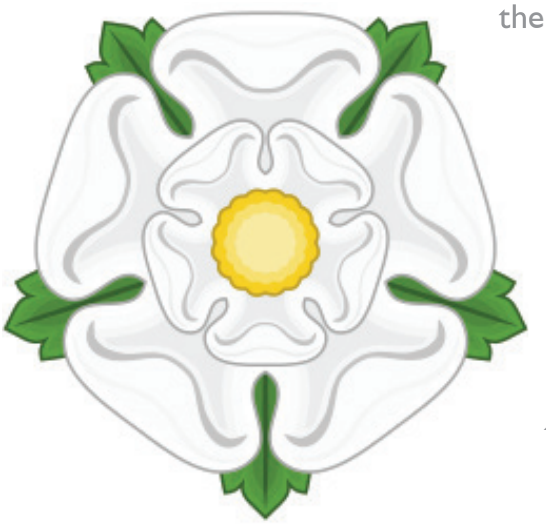
Below is a list of terms you might come across while exploring Warkworth Castle. Use this Glossary to find out what they mean.

Anglo-Saxon – the period between 450 and 1066 when the Angles and Saxons settled in England. The Norman Conquest in 1066 marks the end of the Anglo-Saxon period.

archbishop – the head of the church; the highest-ranking religious official in England.

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

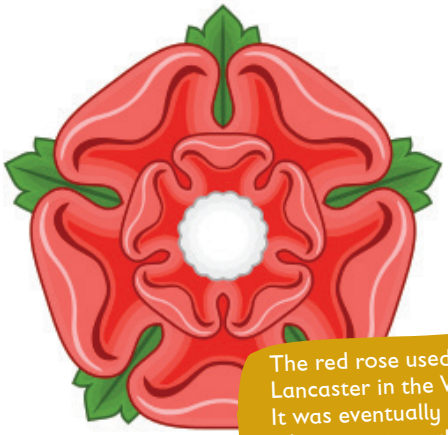
Battle of Shrewsbury (1403) – a conflict between an army led by the Lancastrian King Henry IV and a rebel army led by Henry 'Harry Hotspur' Percy. The rebels lost and Harry Hotspur was killed by the king's men.



The white rose used as a badge by the House of York in the Wars of the Roses.
© Public Domain

Battle of St Albans (1455) – the first battle in the Wars of the Roses between the Yorkists (supporting Richard, Duke of York) and the Lancastrians (supporting King Henry VI). Richard and his army won the battle and captured the king.

Drawing of an early medieval archbishop.



The red rose used by the House of Lancaster in the Wars of the Roses. It was eventually combined with the white rose to make the Tudor rose. © Public Domain

Battle of Towton (1461) – an important battle in the Wars of the Roses. The Yorkists won the battle and the victorious Edward, Duke of York, became King Edward IV.

besiege – to surround a place with an army in order to capture it or force the people inside to surrender.

conspirator – a person who takes part in a secret plot.

duke – a very high-ranking title in England, above 'earl' and below 'prince'. It is the highest-ranking title outside of the royal family.

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

English Civil War (1642–51) – a bloody conflict between the Parliamentarians and the Royalists. They disagreed on how England should be governed and by whom. The Parliamentarians believed the monarchy was corrupt and England should be ruled by Parliament instead.

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

Gunpowder Plot (1605) – a failed plan to blow up the Houses of Parliament on 5th November and kill the Protestant King James I in order to replace him with a Catholic ruler.

heir – a person who is legally entitled to the family estates. In medieval times, only male children could be heirs, and the eldest son would have the first claim.

heraldry – the use of symbols to display power and identity.

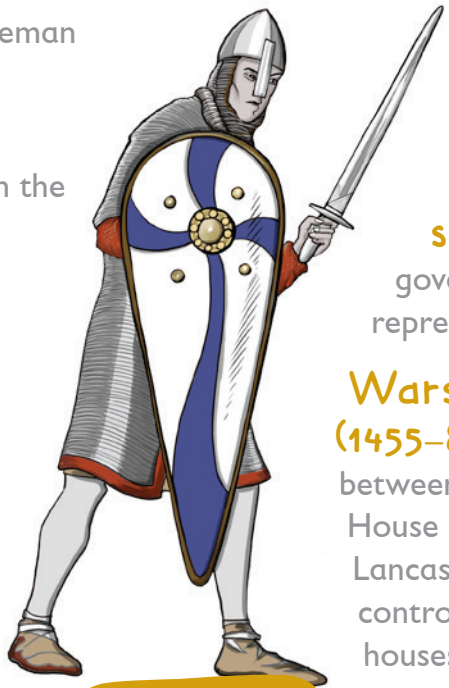
keep – the central tower of a castle, often used as a final refuge during a siege.

lord – a title given to a nobleman in England.

The Percy family coat of arms: a lion standing upright (rampant) on a shield. © Public Domain

motte and bailey – a type of castle built on a mound surrounded by an area of ground; introduced in England by the Normans.

Norman Conquest – the defeat of King Harold by the forces of Normandy after winning the Battle of Hastings in 1066.



Drawing of a Norman soldier.

referee – the person chosen to judge and regulate a medieval battle, usually a high-ranking official with combat experience.

sheriff – a powerful government official who represented the king.

Wars of the Roses (1455–87) – a series of battles between two rival houses: the House of York and the House of Lancaster. Both groups wanted control of the throne. The rival houses adopted white and red roses as their emblems, and these were worn as badges by their supporters.

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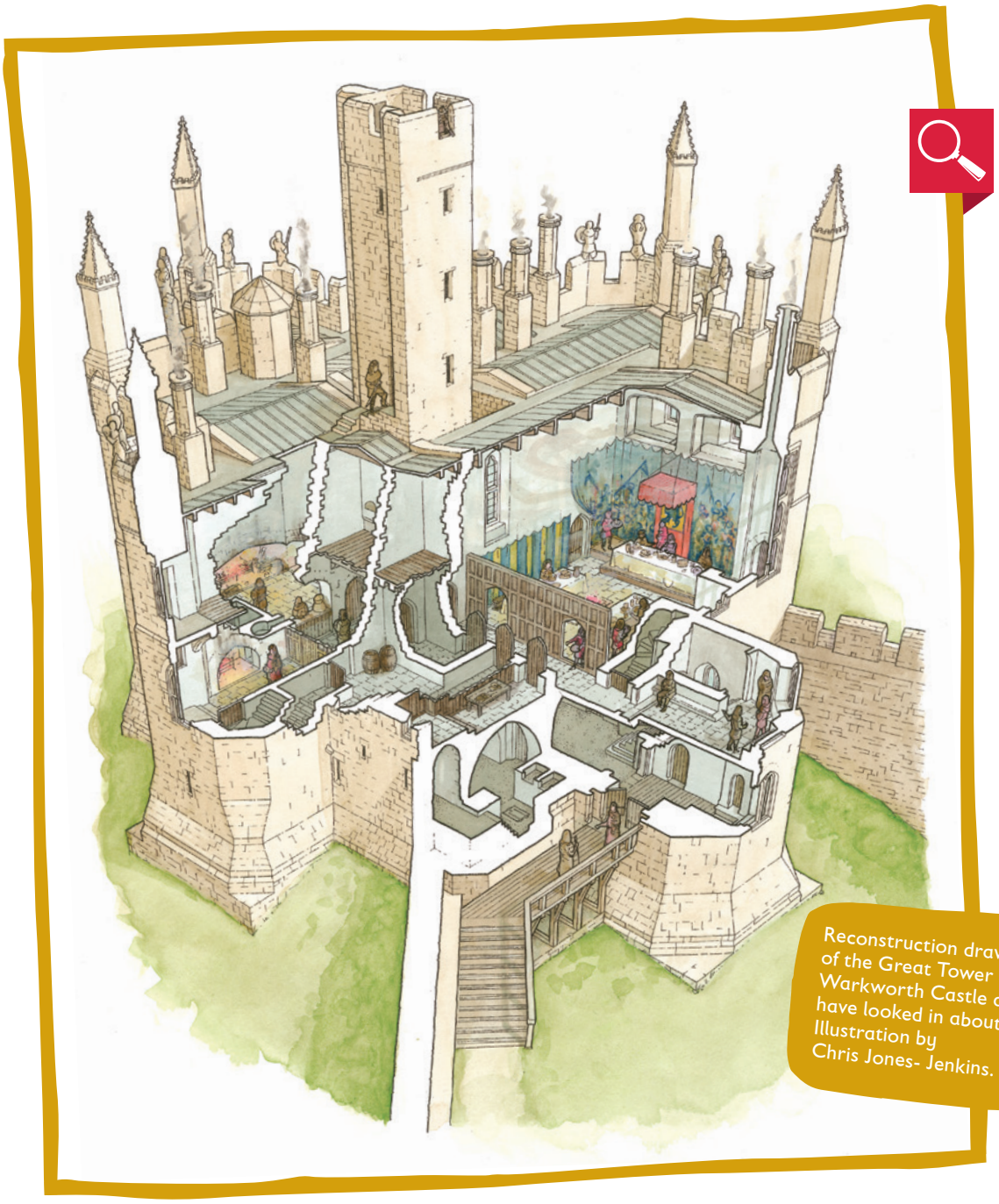
SOURCES

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 Warkworth's history.



Reconstruction drawing of the Great Tower at Warkworth Castle as it may have looked in about 1400. Illustration by Chris Jones- Jenkins.

‘Henry Percy, first Earl of Northumberland, built a great tower on the motte of Warkworth Castle […] Its internal arrangements were extraordinarily complex, and included a great hall, chambers, kitchen, buttery, pantry and store-rooms, all skilfully arranged around a central well which culminated in a tower-like lantern. Indeed, most of the great towers of the later Middle Ages displayed an extremely complex and ingenious internal planning, with interlocking halls and apartments, which contrasts with the relative simplicity of the hall- or tower-keep of the twelfth century.’

This extract is from **The Medieval Castle in England and Wales: A social and political history** by NJG Pounds.

‘BREAKFAST FOR MY LORD AND MY LADY
First a loaf of bread in trenchers [thick slices used as plates], 2 manchets [small loaves or rolls], a quart [1 litre] of beer, a quart of wine, 2 pieces of saltfish, 6 baconed herrings, 4 white herrings or a dish of sprats.

BREAKFAST FOR MY LORD PERCY AND MASTER PERCY
Item: half a loaf of household bread, a manchet, a pottel of beer [about 4 litres], a dish of butter, a piece of saltfish, a dish of sprats or 3 white herrings.

BREAKFAST FOR THE NURSERY FOR MY LADY MARGARET AND MASTER INGRAM PERCY
Item: a manchet, a quart of beer, a dish of butter, a piece of saltfish, a dish of sprats or 3 white herrings.

BREAKFAST FOR MY LADY’S GENTLEWOMEN
Item: a loaf of bread, a pottel of beer, a piece of saltfish or 3 white herrings.

BREAKFAST FOR MY LORD’S BROTHERS AND HEAD OFFICERS OF HOUSEHOLD
Item: 2 loaves of bread, a manchet, a gallon of beer, 2 pieces of saltfish and 4 white herrings.

BREAKFAST FOR YEOMEN OFFICERS OF HOUSEHOLD, YEOMEN OF THE CHAMBER AND YEOMEN WAITERS
Item: 2 loaves of bread, a gallon of beer and 2 pieces of saltfish.’

This extract is from **The Earl of Northumberland’s Household Book**, created in about 1512 for Henry Percy, 5th Earl of Northumberland. You can view the book online at: www.archive.org/stream/regulationsesta00nort#page/72/mode/2up

The household records offer an important view of day-to-day life at properties held by the Percys. This source shows the food and drink allocated to the household in rank order for the period of Lent, before Easter, when people were expected to fast.

‘Warkworth – A very proper house, in good repair. There is a marvellous proper dongeon of eight towers all joined in one house, one of which needs repair. “It rains very much” in the dining chamber and the little chamber over the gates where the Earl lay himself. A new horse mill is wanted. Cost, 40l. 3s. 4d. and 4 fother of lead.’

This extract is from a 1538 survey of Warkworth Castle. You can view it online at: **Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 13 Part 1, January-July 1538** www.british-history.ac.uk/letters-papers-hen8/vol13/no1/pp108-123

It describes the ‘dongeon’ (great tower) as ‘marvellous’ and summarises the areas needing repair.

‘The castell of Warkworth ys situate one the ryver of Cockett, one the south side of the same ryver ys one litle mount partly mad by nature of the ground with the course of the said ryver one the west syde and on theast and north sydes with motes casten and mad by men’s worke, and one the sowth part ys the waye and passadge to and from the sayd castell.’

This is an extract from George Clarkson’s 1567 survey of Warkworth Castle. You can view it online in **A History of Northumberland, Volume 4** by John Crawford Hodgson, FSA, at: http://archive.org/stream/historyofnorthum05nort#page/60/mode/2up

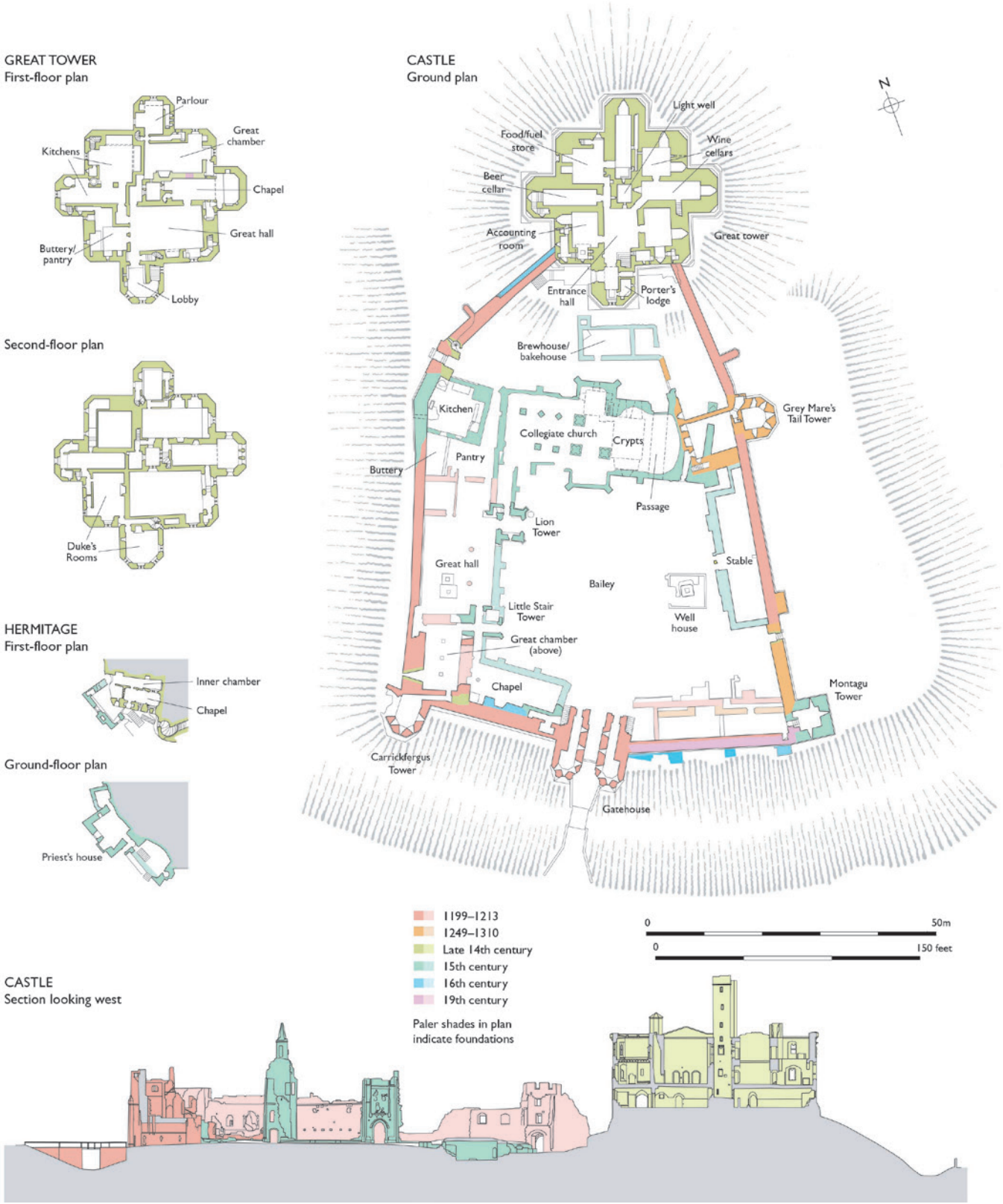
It describes the setting of Warkworth Castle and identifies the ‘litle mount’ on which Warkworth Castle was built, with the River Coquet surrounding it on three sides. The old English has been maintained to give a sense of how language has developed since the 16th century.

‘In the same square a buttrye, pantrye, and ketchinge, which are now also in utter decay and at the thentrye in the hall for the proche thereof ys raysed a litle square towre wherin is two chambers, and on the foresyd in stone portrayed a lyon verie wrokmanly wrought and therfore called the lyon towre the same ys covered with lead and in good reparacions.’

This is another extract from George Clarkson’s 1567 survey of Warkworth Castle.

It describes the hall range at Warkworth Castle, with the service rooms in ‘utter decay’ and the ‘lyon towre’ which, in comparison, is in good condition.

SITE PLAN


GREAT TOWER
First-floor plan
Parlour
Great chamber
Kitchens
Chapel
Great hall
Buttery/ pantry
Lobby
Second-floor plan
Duke's Rooms
HERMITAGE
First-floor plan
Inner chamber
Chapel
Ground-floor plan
Priest's house
CASTLE
Ground plan
N
Light well
Food/fuel store
Wine cellars
Beer cellar
Accounting room
Great tower
Entrance hall
Porter's lodge
Brewhouse/ bakehouse
Kitchen
Collegiate church
Crypts
Grey Mare's Tail Tower
Buttery
Pantry
Passage
Lion Tower
Great hall
Stable
Bailey
Little Stair Tower
Well house
Great chamber (above)
Chapel
Montagu Tower
Carrickfergus Tower
Gatehouse
1199–1213
1249–1310
Late 14th century
15th century
16th century
19th century
Paler shades in plan indicate foundations
0
50m
0
150 feet
CASTLE
Section looking west