



LEEDS CASTLE

KENT ENGLAND

Leeds Castle Children's Guide

The History

The Saxon manor of Esledes was an ideal place for one of William the Conqueror's lords, Robert de Crevecoeur, to fortify and build a castle in 1119.

Leeds Castle passed into royal hands in 1278 and became part of the Queen of England's dower - the settlement widowed queens received upon the death of their husbands. Over the next 150 years it was held by six mediaeval queens: Eleanor of Castile; Margaret of France; Isabella of France, Joan of Navarre; Anne of Bohemia and Catherine de Valois.

In Tudor times Henry VIII visited often, notably with his Queen, Catherine of Aragon, and their entire court on the way to the tournament of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, which took place in France in 1520. Henry's son, King Edward VI, granted the castle to one of Henry's courtiers for his services.

Since then it has been in private ownership. It has been used as a garrison, a prison and a convalescent home, as well as being the home of the Culpeper, Fairfax, and Wykeham Martin families.

Lady Baillie bought the castle in 1926. She invested over £100,000 into restoring the castle. At the end of her life she established the Leeds Castle Foundation, to which she bequeathed the castle and its surrounding park upon her death in 1974.



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When you are ready, go down the corridor until you reach:

The Queen's Room

This room is set up as it would have looked in the 1420s when Henry V's widow, Catherine de Valois owned the Castle. It is actually a day room where the Queen would sit (on the chair beside the bed) and receive guests. Beds at this time were very expensive, with only Royalty or nobility being able to afford them, and the large bed is purely for show and to impress her visitors.

The Queen's Bathroom

The bath is made from wood. The cloth covers would stop the Queen from getting splinters.

The Queen's Gallery

The Marble statues of Henry VIII and his three children were made when Elizabeth I was alive. The picture above the fireplace of a child in a white dress is of Thomas Smythe. Boys wore dresses up to the age of 7.

Henry VIII Banqueting Hall

England's most famous King held parties in this room and ate banquets of exotic food like roast peacocks and swan! His face appears in a few paintings in here but can you find him in one picture with other kings & queens?

The Chapel

King Edward I and his Queen, Eleanor of Castile had 16 babies! When she died, he built a chapel at Leeds Castle to remember her.

The Spiral Staircase

Count the stairs as you go!

The Boardroom

Many important meetings, including some between world leaders, have taken place in this room. Meetings still take place to this present day, therefore the room may be closed at certain times.



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The Seminar Room

This room used to be a bedroom for Lady Baillie's son Gawaine, but was turned into a meeting room in 1978.

Lady Baillie's Dressing Room

As you pass through this room, look at the luxurious bathroom on your right. Every bath in the Castle has a bell next to it, to ring for a servant to help you get dressed!

Lady Baillie's Bedroom

This was Lady Baillie's bedroom and the bed was designed for her. The Louis Vuitton trunk belonged to Lady Baillie and was just as fashionable then as it is today.



Catherine of Aragon Bedroom

When Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon stayed here in 1520, this side of the upper floor housed Catherine's suite of rooms. Look out for the rare picture of Catherine after her divorce, to the left of the door as you go out.

Main Staircase

Upstairs are the bedrooms that are used by people who visit the Castle for meetings, weddings and parties and are not open to the visitors.

Yellow Drawing Room

The walls in this room are covered in silk, not wallpaper. The piano is over 150 years old and sometimes played by volunteers.

Thorpe Hall Drawing Room

The wooden panelling on the walls comes from Thorpe Hall in Cambridgeshire. The panels were taken from Thorpe Hall and sold to Lady Baillie in 1927. So the walls are 200 years older than the room, and they had to alter the room to fit the panels.

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The Inner Hall

The 16th century horseman is carved from oak and is the oldest horse statue in England. The knight holds a battle hammer. Look behind you to see another battle hammer above the door.

The Library

This room was once the school-room for Lady Baillie's two daughters. When they grew up it was turned into a library – there are now 3,000 books in this room. If it took you a week to read each one it would take 57 years to read them all!

The Castle Dining Room

If this room is open today you may see a large dining table that can seat up to 30 people. This room is also used for weddings and dinners.



We hope that you have enjoyed your look inside Leeds Castle and wish you an enjoyable day.