

Leeds Castle Teachers Guide

With Heraldry Links

Heraldry Room

Welcome to Leeds Castle. We hope you enjoy looking around. This guide will tell you more about the different rooms in the castle and who lived here, and you will hear more about some of those people in your workshop session today. We ask that if talking to the children in a room, you group them in such a way that they do not block any doorways, and other visitors can get past.

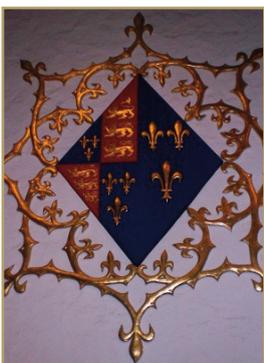
A brief history of Leeds Castle

When the Normans invaded England in 1066, William the Conqueror and his knights built many castles. Some were built for defence; others, like Leeds, were built as homes, to show off wealth and strength. The manor of Leeds was given to William I's half-brother, Bishop Odo until he disgraced himself and was sent home to France. Leeds Castle was built in 1119 by a Norman Knight called Robert de Crevecoeur. In 1278 Queen Eleanor of Castille, wife of King Edward I bought the castle and surrounding lands. The King then commenced building work, and also created the moat. Leeds Castle stayed a royal castle until 1552. Its most famous owner was Henry VIII, and he visited several times. In 1520 he had a sleepover her with his wife Catherine of Aragon. Soon after his death, the castle passed into private hands where it remained until 1926 when a very rich lady called Lady Baillie bought it to create a fabulous country house. She spent over £20 million in today's money restoring it. She had French artists and craftsmen rebuild the inside to make it look like it did in Tudor times - and then filled the place with rich and famous guests, playing croquet and golf, swimming in the pool, and enjoying the grounds, which had zebras and llamas grazing.

The Coats of Arms of all the families who have owned Leeds Castle are shown here.

Follow the timeline and see how the English Royal arms developed from a simple Gold Lion to the United Kingdom Arms, which include the symbols for Scotland, (Red Lion) Ireland, (Harp) and sometimes France as well.

Queens Room



Above the fireplace is the Arms of Catherine of Valois. It is in a lozenge (diamond) shape to show that she was a widow. Her husband, King Henry V had been the King of England, as depicted by the lions and the Fleur de Lys is for her father, King Charles VI of France (Charles the Mad)!

When two Coats of Arms are put side by side like this it is called "impalement" and shows a marriage

Royalty and Noble people often carved their symbols in their homes, on door frames, fireplaces, walls etc. In this room the fireplace has several symbols. Which ones can you see?

Queens Bathroom

Again, carvings on the fireplace, here you can see a very old Shield carved.



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Queens Gallery

The fireback was made for Leeds Castle. It shows birds in reference to the Aviary that was here at the time it was made and the Arms are those of Lady Baillie, the last private owner “impaled” with those of Eleanor of Castile the first Royal owner.

Henry VIII Banqueting Hall

The large Armorial Tapestry celebrates the marriage between two noble houses. Tapestries often told a story and this one teases the bride groom, who is shown as the proud lion, no longer allowed to roam free but fenced in. His rather glum face stares through the bars of his visor.



Occasionally the Banqueting Hall is used for banquets! If this is the case today, we are sorry that you cannot see the tapestry clearly.

Look at the large painting of Ships – this is Henry VIII leaving Dover, and you should be able to see the Royal Standard and also several England Flags (cross of St. George) that are evident on shields and banners.

In the portrait of King Richard II with Lord Lumley, the Lumley shield is clearly visible.



Upstairs, First (Boardroom) Corridor

Along this corridor are several doors with Tudor frames. How many symbols can you find and what might they mean?

(Tudor Roses, Lions Face, Fleur de Lys, Pomegranite – Catherine of Aragon’s Badge)

Main Stairs

Here are hung 5 Funeral Hatchments (the coat of arms of a deceased person) for members of the Wykeham Martin family, owners of the castle from 1821 until it was sold to Lady Baillie in 1926. These would originally have hung above the entrance of the castle, to announce to visitors and passers-by that a death had occurred. They would remain in place for a period of mourning and as a mark of respect.

