



ENGLISH HERITAGE  
EDUCATION

## TEACHERS' KIT

### Portchester Castle

This kit helps teachers plan a visit to Portchester Castle, which provides essential insights into more than 1,700 years of history. It was a Roman fort, a Saxon stronghold, a royal castle and eventually a prison. Use these resources before, during and after your visit to help students get the most out of their learning.

KS1-2

KS3

KS4

SEND

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*Step into England's story*

# WELCOME

This Teachers' Kit for Portchester Castle has been designed for teachers and group leaders to support a free self-led visit to the site. It includes a variety of materials suited to teaching a wide range of subjects and key stages, with practical information, activities for use on site and ideas to support follow-up learning.

We know that each class and study group is different, so we have collated our resources into one kit allowing you to decide which materials are best suited to your needs. Please use the contents page, which has been colour-coded to help you easily locate what you need, and view individual sections. All of our activities have clear guidance on the intended use for study so you can adapt them for your desired learning outcomes.

To further aid your planning, we have created Hazard Information guidance, which you can download from the Portchester Castle **Schools page**. Here you can also find information on our expert-led Discovery Visits and an overview of what your class can experience. You can find more practical information about your booked visit to Portchester Castle in the Education Visit Permit and the Site Information Pack which have been sent to you.

For more information and activities relating to the prisoners of war and the theatre, download the additional 'Performance at Portchester Castle' Learning Pack from the **Schools page**.

We hope you enjoy your visit and find this Teachers' Kit useful. If you have any queries please don't hesitate to get in touch with a member of our team either via [bookeducation@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:bookeducation@english-heritage.org.uk) or on 0370 333 0606.

English Heritage Learning Team

## ICON KEY

The icons below will help you quickly identify the types of activities and information presented.



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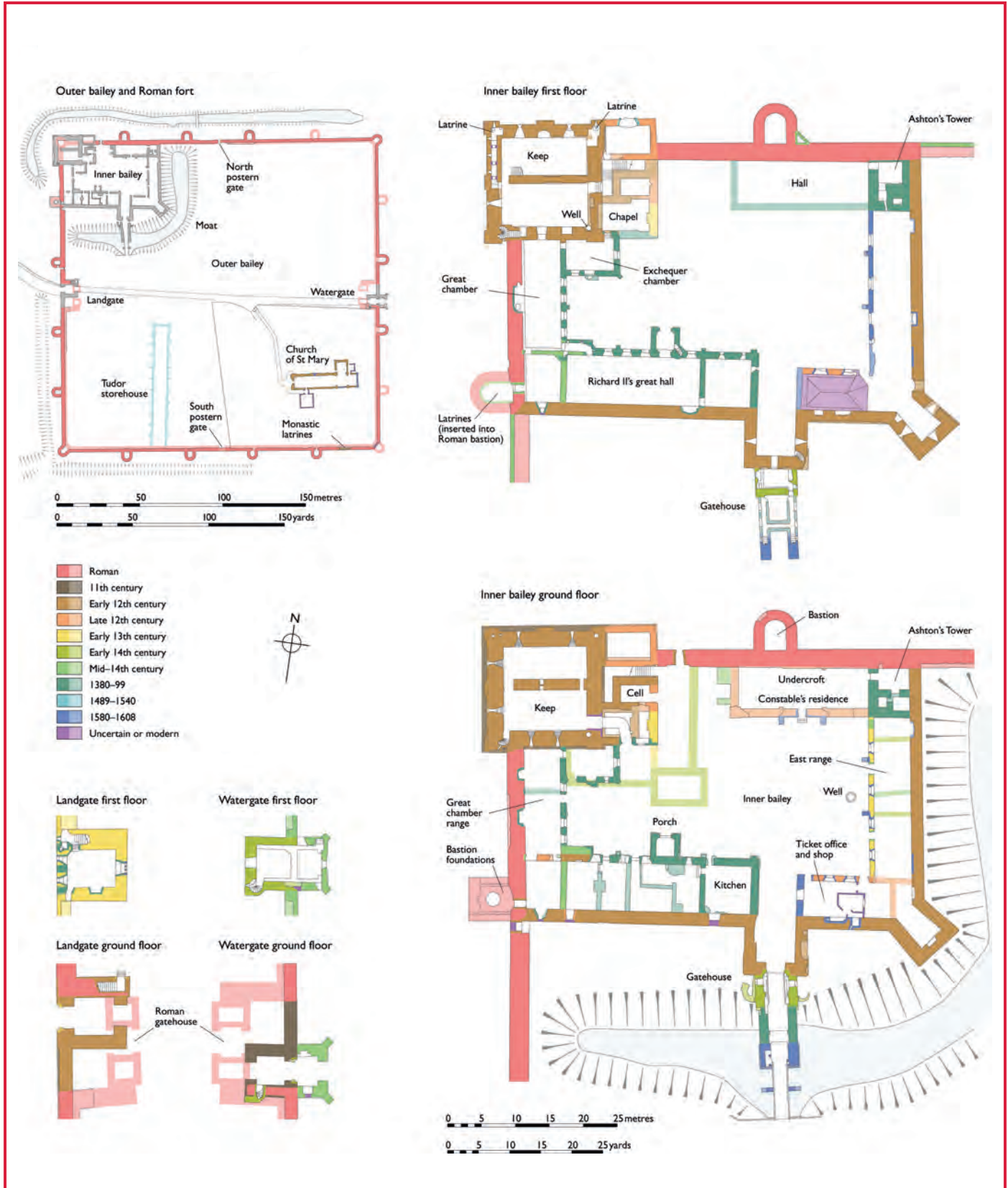


# PRE-VISIT

Information and activities you can use in the classroom before your visit.

# PORTCHESTER CASTLE

## SITE PLAN



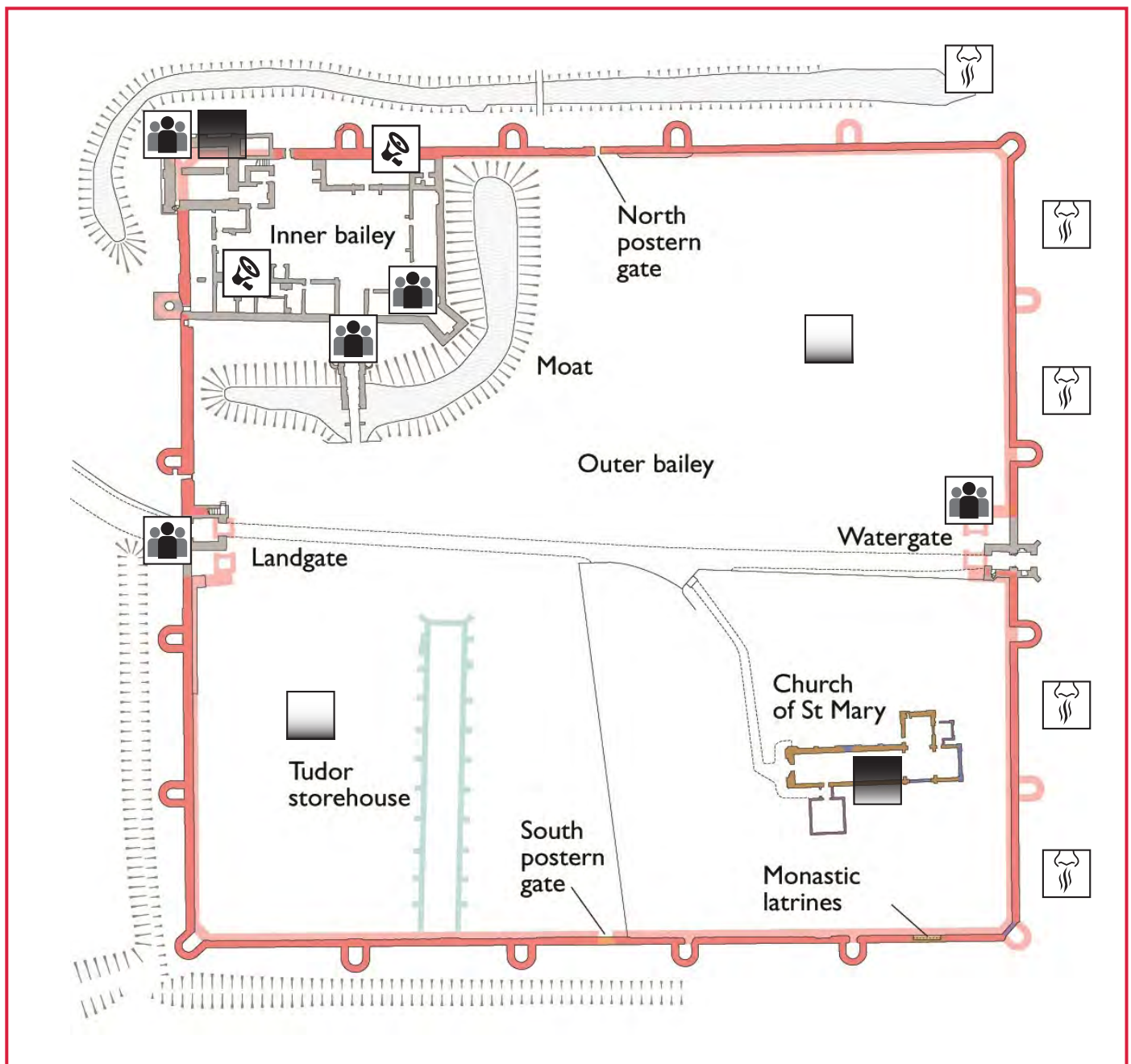
# PORTCHESTER CASTLE

## ACCESS MAP

Use the map below to identify wheelchair-accessible and sensory-friendly places in the castle. Please note that, due to the changing nature of historic environments, this information may not be up to date on the day of your visit.

The temperature varies as you explore the castle and some spaces can be quite warm or cold. You may want to bring a bottle of water and extra layers of clothing to put on.

From time to time, banging sounds from Tipner Firing Range travel across Portsmouth Harbour and can be heard at Portchester Castle.



# KEY

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## MOBILITY



The outer bailey is wheelchair accessible. Access to parts of the inner bailey is limited (steps into some buildings). The ground floor rooms of the keep are accessible via a ramp. There is no access to the first floor, second floor or roof for wheelchair users.



There is an accessible toilet in the public car park. A key is available from the ticket office.

## DEAF/HARD OF HEARING



There is a hearing loop in the shop and ticket office.

## SENSORY CONSIDERATIONS



noisy spaces



quieter spaces



potentially crowded spaces



strong smells



high levels of natural light



low levels of natural light

# PORTCHESTER CASTLE ORIENTATION PHOTOS



The large car park at Portchester Castle, where you can find coach parking and toilets.



This welcome sign is the first you'll come across if parking in the large car park.



The public toilets, including accessible toilets, can be found at the edge of the large car park.



The uniform you'll often see around the site, worn by all English Heritage volunteers.



If entering the site via the Landgate, this is the first view you'll get of the outer bailey. The ticket shop is in the buildings to your left.



If entering the site via the Watergate, this is the first view you'll get. The ticket shop is in the buildings on the right of this photo.



# HISTORICAL INFORMATION

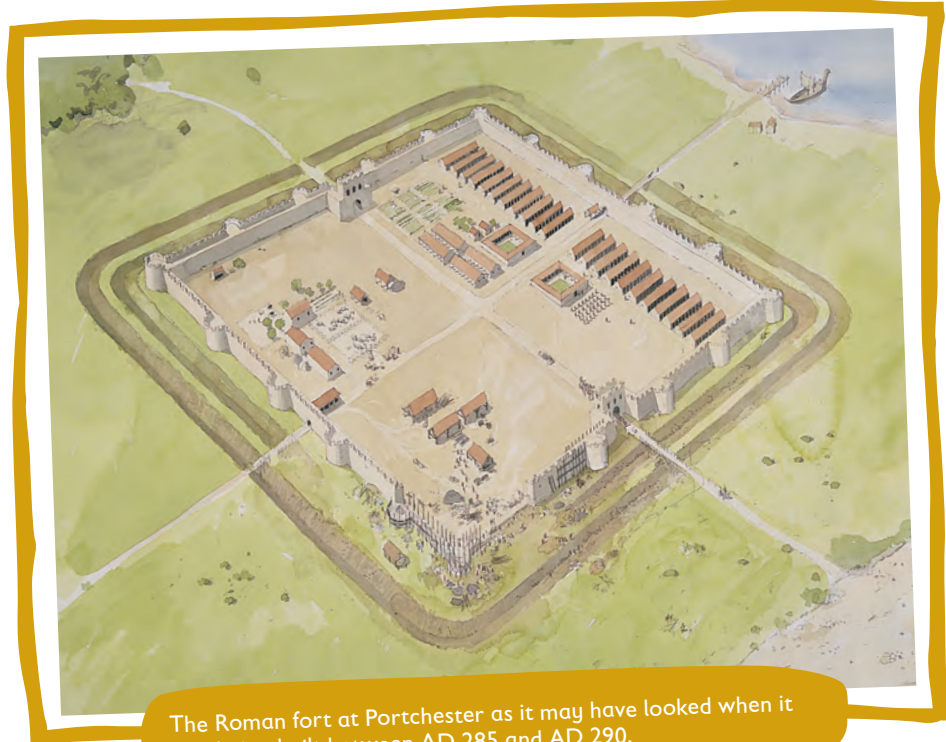
DISCOVER THE STORY OF PORTCHESTER CASTLE

Below is a short history of Portchester Castle. Use this information to learn how the site has changed over time. You'll find the definitions of the key words in the Glossary.

## A ROMAN FORT

The Roman fort at Portchester was built in AD 285–290. It was one of the so-called 'Forts of the Saxon Shore' that were built around the southern and eastern coasts of Britain as fortified posts for the Roman army and fleet, as places to protect trade, and for launching military and naval expeditions against raiders. It may have been built during the rule of Marcus Aurelius Carausius, a commander of a Roman fleet in the **English Channel**, who rebelled against Rome in AD 286 and created a mini empire in Britain, Belgium and northern France.

The Roman walls at Portchester are over 1,700 years old and remain almost complete, making it the most well-preserved Roman fort in northern Europe.



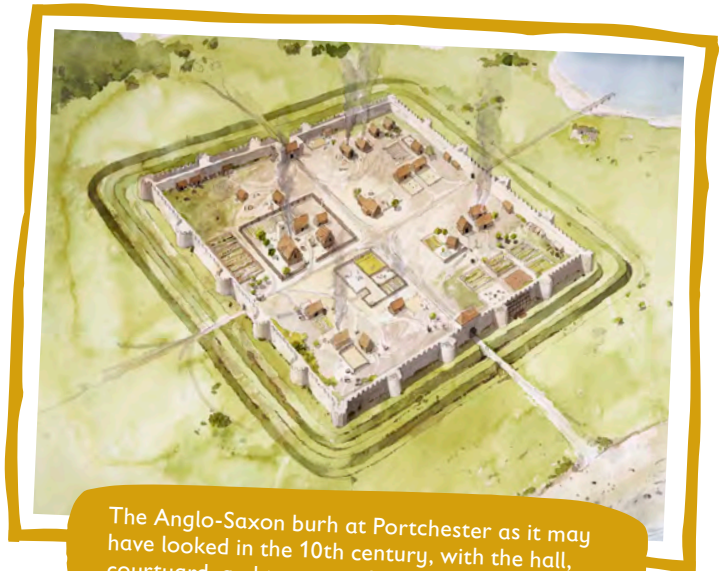
The Roman fort at Portchester as it may have looked when it was being built between AD 285 and AD 290.

## A SAXON STRONGHOLD

After the Roman army left Britain in AD 407, people continued to live within the walls at Portchester. In AD 904, the Bishop of Winchester gave the fort to Edward, king of the West Saxons (r.AD 899–924). The site became a **burh** – one of a series of forts that protected the kingdom from **Viking** attack.

**Archaeologists** have found evidence of wooden buildings within the fort's walls, from the **Anglo-Saxon period**.

In the 10th century, a large hall, a courtyard and a stone tower were built within the Roman walls. This suggests that an important man and his family lived here.



The Anglo-Saxon burh at Portchester as it may have looked in the 10th century, with the hall, courtyard, and tower to the left of centre.

## NORMAN PORTCHESTER

Following the **Norman Conquest** of 1066, William the Conqueror (r.1066–87) gave Portchester to William Maudit, one of his loyal followers. Maudit built an **inner bailey** or courtyard in one corner of the fort.

In 1120, the castle and its lands passed to William Pont de l'Arche, another Norman knight. He built stone walls around the bailey and began building the **keep**. He also founded a priory in 1128, where a community of priests lived together, within the Roman walls, until 1150. The rest of the land was divided into plots and used for farming. Outside the castle walls, the village of Portchester began to grow.



Close-up of the castle's inner bailey as it may have looked in about 1120.

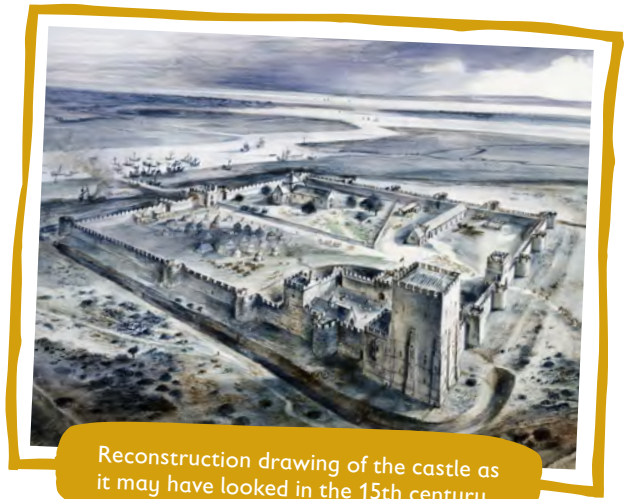
## A ROYAL CASTLE

In 1154, Henry II (r.1154–89) became king of England and took control of the castle. Henry II owned lots of land in France so Portchester was a good place to set sail from when he needed to visit.

King Edward III (r.1327–77) gathered his army at Portchester in 1346 before sailing to France, where he won the **Battle of Crécy**.

Between 1396 and 1399, Richard II (r.1377–99) added to the buildings at Portchester by building a royal palace.

In 1415, Henry V (r.1413–22) launched an invasion of France from Portchester, which ended in a famous victory against the French at the **Battle of Agincourt**. The castle remained an important coastal defence during the **Tudor period**. In 1632, Charles I (r.1625–49) sold the castle to Sir William Uvedale, whose descendants still own it.



Reconstruction drawing of the castle as it may have looked in the 15th century.

## PRISONERS AT PORTCHESTER

During the **French Revolutionary** and **Napoleonic Wars**, **prisoners of war** came to Portchester from across the globe.

In 1794, 11 new wooden houses were built inside the walls at Portchester, with room for around 400–500 men in each. The prisoners slept on shared beds in cold, cramped conditions. Some prisoners protested and were eventually allowed some freedoms; they had an **airing ground** and a market. Many prisoners practised crafts, such as carving combs and dominoes out of animal bone.

In 1810, French prisoners of war arrived at Portchester, including some who had formed themselves into a theatrical **troupe** while in captivity. The troupe was led by a Monsieur Carré, who had worked as a stage technician in a famous theatre in Paris. They created a theatre on the ground floor of the keep where they put on performances for an audience of up to 300.



A drawing of the inside of the keep showing how it was racked out with hammocks for the prisoners of war to sleep in.

## BLACK PRISONERS OF WAR

In 1793, the islands of the Caribbean, then under European rule, were drawn into the French Revolutionary Wars between the European powers, including Britain and France. When the French **abolished** slavery in 1794, many ex-slaves living in the Caribbean served in the French army.

Some of the fiercest battles between British and French forces were fought in the Caribbean. In May 1796, the French army on the island of **St Lucia** surrendered to the British. Soldiers of European and African descent were put onto ships, some with their families, and transported to Britain as prisoners of war.

In October 1796, 2,080 black and mixed-race soldiers, 333 European soldiers and 99 women and children arrived at Portchester. The Caribbean prisoners were given extra clothes and a special diet to protect them from the cold British winter, but life in prison was difficult; the European prisoners often stole their clothing and belongings.

The men and women from St Lucia were eventually **exchanged** and sent to France while others joined the British army and navy or returned to the Caribbean. Captain Louis Delgrès, a mixed-race soldier who was imprisoned at Portchester, returned to the Caribbean and became a key figure in the continuing struggle against **trans-Atlantic enslavement**.



Captain Louis Delgrès led an anti-slavery campaign in the Caribbean, taking up arms against France. On 28 May 1802, he and his followers were surrounded at Matouba in Gadeloupe. They blew themselves up rather than be captured and enslaved. Captain Delgrès is commemorated here on this French stamp.

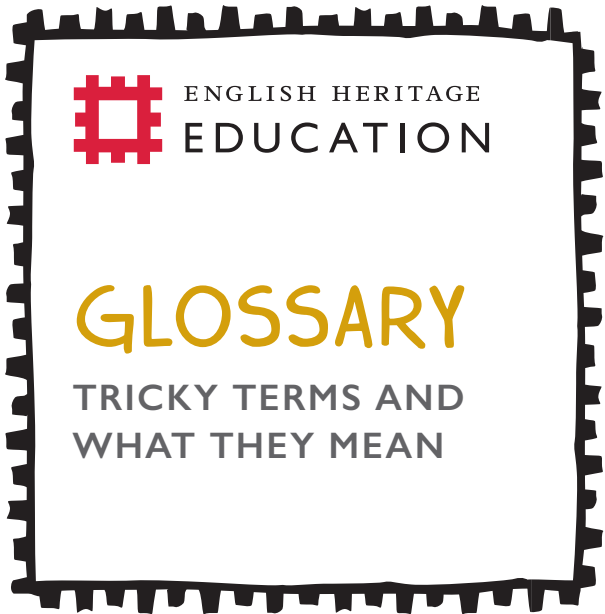
## HISTORY UNCOVERED

Between 1961 and 1979, major archaeological digs took place at Portchester, which transformed our understanding of its long history.

The excavations produced many finds from the Roman period. A Saxon **cemetery** dating from the early 11th century was also uncovered, revealing the skeletons of 21 men, women and children. A lot of vital evidence was found for life in the castle during its first eight hundred years – for which there is no written record. Many of the best finds are on display in the castle today.



Aerial view of Portchester Castle as it looks today, seen from the west.



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

**abolish** – formally put an end to a system or practice, e.g. slavery

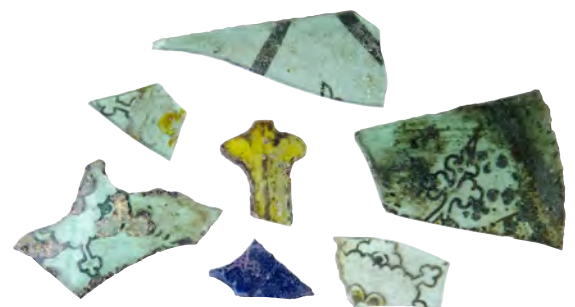
**airing ground** – a secure outdoor space where prisoners could go to get some fresh air and exercise

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

**archaeologist** – someone who studies the past by examining the remains of buildings and objects found in the ground

**Battle of Agincourt (1415)** – a major English victory in the Hundred Years War between Henry V (r.1413–22) of England and Charles VI of France. Henry V won and married the French king’s daughter.

**Battle of Crécy (1346)** – a battle between an English army, led by Edward III (r.1327–77), and French, Genoese and Majorcan troops, led by Philip VI of France. The English army won, leaving the crippled French unable to defend Calais, which fell to the English a year later and remained under English control until 1558.



Fragments of medieval painted glass, which were found in the ground at Portchester and may have once formed part of the window in Richard II's great hall.



The jawbone of a young Saxon man from the 11th century, found in the ground at Portchester.

**burgh** – a fortified location used for defence in the Anglo-Saxon period, usually on high ground or within secure walls.

**cemetery** – a place where the dead are buried, usually in the grounds of a religious building.

**English Channel** – the stretch of water separating Britain from mainland Europe and connecting the North Sea with the Atlantic Ocean.

**exchange** – an agreement between two enemy countries to swap prisoners of war.

**French Revolutionary Wars (1792–1802)** – a series of conflicts between the revolutionary French Republic, which wanted freedom and equality but used increasing levels of violence to achieve these ideals, and several European countries who feared the revolution and tried to crush it.

**inner bailey** – the strongly defended area at the centre of a castle, often surrounded by a moat and an outer wall

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

**Napoleonic Wars (1803–15)** – a series of wars fought between France (under the leadership of the general turned emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte) and several other countries, including Britain. Napoleon was eventually defeated at the Battle of Waterloo in Belgium in 1815.



William the Conqueror, the Norman leader who won the Battle of Hastings in 1066 and became the first Norman king of England.

**Norman Conquest** – the invasion of England by the forces of Normandy after William the Conqueror defeated King Harold at the Battle of Hastings in 1066.



Bone gaming counters shaped like fish, made by a prisoner of war held at Portchester in the 18th century.

**prisoner of war** – a person who has been captured by their enemy during a war. Prisoners of war came to Portchester from across the globe and were kept in the keep and purpose-built huts.

**St Lucia** – an island in the Caribbean where the French army surrendered Fort Charlotte to the British in 1796

**trans-Atlantic enslavement** – the forced transportation of people living in Africa who were sold to European merchants, to be transported in terrible conditions over the Atlantic and re-sold in the Americas. Britain outlawed the trans-Atlantic slave trade in 1807 and abolished slavery throughout the British Empire in 1833.

**troupe** – the French term given to a group of actors, dancers and entertainers who tour around different venues putting on shows

**Tudor period** – the years between 1485 and 1603 when the Tudor royal family were on the throne. Henry VII (r.1485–1509) was the first Tudor monarch and Elizabeth I was the last (r.1558–1603).



King Henry VIII (r.1509–47), the Tudor monarch famous for having six wives.

**Vikings** – seafaring people from Scandinavia who raided and settled in many parts of northern Europe, including England, between the 8th and 11th centuries.

ROMANS

ANGLO-SAXONS

EVENTS IN ENGLISH HISTORY

**AD 211**

Roman Britain is divided into two separate areas: Britannia Superior (Upper Britain), with London as its capital; and Britannia Inferior (Lower Britain), with its capital at York.

**AD 306**

Constantine I (r.AD 306–37) becomes Roman emperor.



**AD 314**

Emperor Constantine converts to Christianity and makes it the official religion of the Roman Empire.

AD 200

AD 400

**AD 285–90**

The Roman fort at Portchester is built by Marcus Aurelius Carausius, the local naval commander.

**AD 904**

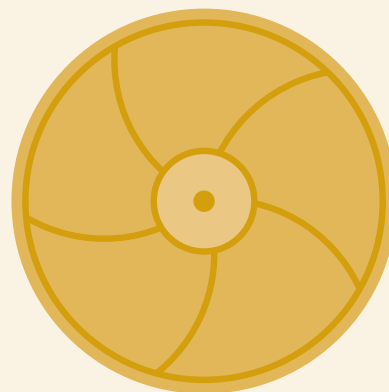
The Bishop of Winchester gives the fort to Edward, king of the West Saxons (r.AD 899–924). It becomes an Anglo-Saxon burh, used to protect Wessex from Viking attack.



EVENTS AT PORTCHESTER CASTLE



3RD–4TH  
CENTURIES



5TH–10TH  
CENTURIES



NORMANS  
1066–1154

PLANTAGENETS  
1154–1485

**1066**

The Normans invade England, led by William the Conqueror, and win the Battle of Hastings.



**1087**

William Rufus (son of William I) becomes king (r.1087–1100).

**1154**

Henry II (r.1154–89) becomes king.



**1184**

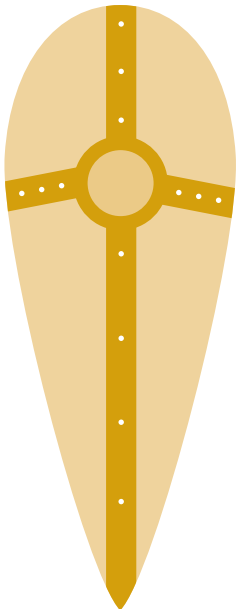
Portsmouth is founded. It becomes a busy town and navy base.

1000

1100

**1086–1100**

The castle is built by William Maudit, a follower of William the Conqueror.



**11TH  
CENTURY**

**1100–31**

King Henry I (r.1100–35) frequently stops at Portchester on his travels to Normandy, in France.



**1154**

King Henry II takes over the castle and uses it as a royal stronghold.



**1174**

The castle is armed with catapults and a garrison of ten knights is put in place.

**12TH  
CENTURY**



PLANTAGENETS

1154–1485

1199–1216

Reign of King John, who visited Portchester Castle regularly.

1296

The Wars of Scottish Independence between England and Scotland begin.

1337

The Hundred Years War between England and France begins.



1200

1214

King John brings his hunting dogs to Portchester for hunting in the nearby Forest of Bere.

1216

Prince Louis of France, supported by English rebel barons, invades England and Portchester is surrendered to him.

1217

Portchester Castle is taken back by Henry III (r.1216–72).

1346

King Edward III (r.1327–77) gathers his army at Portchester before sailing to France, where he wins the Battle of Crécy.

1369–99

Richard II (r.1377–99) improves the buildings and builds his palace.

13TH–14TH  
CENTURIES

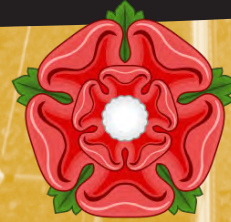
1415

Henry V (r. 1413–22) and his English army wins the Battle of Agincourt, defeating Charles VI of France.



1455–87

The Wars of the Roses between the Yorkists (supporting Richard, Duke of York) and the Lancastrians (supporting King Henry VI).



1400

1535

Henry V uses Portchester to prepare his army for the Battle of Agincourt.

1563

Portchester is chosen as the landing place for Henry VI's (r.1422–61) French bride, Margaret of Anjou.



15TH  
CENTURY

TUDORS

1485–1603

1533

King Henry VIII (r.1509–47) splits from the Catholic Church and becomes Supreme Head of the Church of England.

1558–1603

Reign of Queen Elizabeth I. The Spanish Armada is defeated by the English fleet in the Channel.



1500

1535

King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn visit Portchester Castle.

1563

Portchester Castle is used as a military hospital for the sick and wounded from the French wars.



1583

Portchester Castle is made ready for a Spanish invasion.

16TH CENTURY

STUARTS

1603–1714

1604

England makes peace with Spain.

1642

The English Civil Wars begin.



1649

Execution of Charles I (r.1625–49).

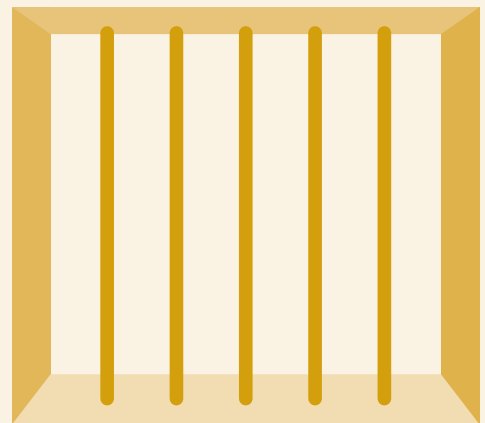
1660

Restoration of Charles II (r.1660–85).

1600

1665

Portchester is used to house 500 prisoners captured during the Second Dutch War.



17TH CENTURY

GEORGIANS

1714–1830

1714–27

Reign of King George I.

1756

Start of the Seven Years War.

1792–1815

The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.

1700

1794

11 new wooden houses are built inside the walls, so Portchester can house more prisoners of war.

1796

Portchester takes in prisoners of war from across the globe, including 2,080 black and mixed-race prisoners from the Caribbean.



18TH  
CENTURY

VICTORIANS

1837–1901

1837

Victoria becomes queen.



1800

1810

More French prisoners of war arrive at Portchester, including some who form a theatrical troupe.

1810–14

French prisoners create a theatre on the ground floor of the keep.



1814

The last prisoners of war leave the castle.

19TH  
CENTURY

20TH CENTURY  
1900-99

21ST CENTURY  
2000-PRESENT DAY

WW1  
1914-18

WW2  
1939-45

MODERN DAY

**1901**  
Death of Queen Victoria.

**1914-18**  
First World War.

**1939-45**  
Second World War.

**1952**  
Elizabeth II becomes queen.



**2016**  
Referendum on membership of the European Union. Britain votes to leave the EU.

**2020**  
Global COVID-19 pandemic.



1900

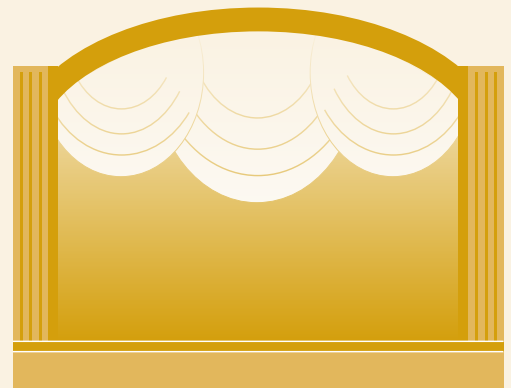
2000

**1961-79**  
Archaeological digs are carried out at Portchester Castle.



**1984**  
English Heritage takes over the running of Portchester Castle.

**2017**  
The French prisoners' theatre is recreated on the ground floor of the keep, as part of an award-winning project to re-interpret the site.



20TH  
CENTURY

21ST  
CENTURY

PORTCHESTER CASTLE TIMELINE

# SELF-LED ACTIVITY

## LOCAL HISTORY EXPLORERS



### Recommended for

KSI-3 (History, Geography)

### Learning objectives

- Consider the historical significance of Portchester Castle's location.
- Research the local area and understand how nearby places, plus the people associated with them, relate to the national story.
- Gain a better understanding of the local area and develop a sense of pride in it.

### Time to complete

Variable, depending on scope of research



Portchester Castle (red pin) and the surrounding area as seen on Google Maps © Google Data 2021

### SUMMARY

This activity helps students conduct a local history research project, exploring the people, places and events that have shaped the place where they live. We recommend doing this in groups of about three.

Select one of the following studies for students to focus on:

- A local depth study, focusing on a specific time period
- A thematic study, focusing on how one particular aspect or theme has changed over time at Portchester.

### SETTING UP THE RESEARCH PROJECT

First, read the Teachers' Notes on pages 22–23. Work with the whole class to create a list of effective research skills and techniques. Then use this list as success criteria for the project.

Next, each group should decide on an enquiry question, e.g. 'How has Portchester Castle's architecture changed since Roman times?' or 'What impact did prisoners of war from the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars have on Portchester?' Encourage group members to base their research on something they are passionate about, e.g. fashion, food, music, literature, film, etc.

Provide students with Historical Information, Timeline and Sources in this kit to kick-start their research.

### MORE LEARNING IDEAS

When students visit Portchester Castle, encourage them to use the buildings and objects at the site as a valuable source of information. They can use their trip to gather further evidence, working in their teams to take notes as they explore the site.

Historic England have some useful online resources to support this topic. Search their website for the 'Local Heritage Curriculum Planning' pages.

# LOCAL HISTORY EXPLORERS

## TEACHERS' NOTES

Use the guidance below to help students get started with their local history research projects. They should pick a nearby place (e.g. Portchester Castle) and ask the following questions about it.

### KEY QUESTIONS FOR KSI

#### Significant historical events, people and places in their own locality

- Where is it? (regional and national location)
- What other significant places are near to it?
- What are the physical and natural features?
- How are other places similar/different to it?
- Why is your place like it is today?
- What local and national events have had an impact on it?
- Which people have had the biggest impact on how your place is today?

### KEY QUESTIONS FOR KS2–3

#### A local history study

- How was your local area different during these periods: Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Norman, medieval, Tudor, Stuart, Georgian, Victorian, modern?
- How have the people and events from these periods had an impact on how your local area has changed over time and how it is today?
- What would it have been like to live and/or work in your local area at different times in the past?
- What evidence can be found of these past times?
- Which buildings or places can best tell the story of your local area?
- Which nearby buildings or places are of special local, national or even world interest?
- Can you find any evidence of the impact of migration on your local area?
- How well is the UK's rich diversity reflected in your local community?

Continued...

## Human and physical geography

- What are some geographical features of your local area?
- How has the natural geography of your local area had an impact on its development?
- What different people groups have settled in your local area in the past, and what did they use it for?
- How has human settlement had an impact on your local area?
- What man-made features can be found in your local area?
- How are other places (local and national) connected with your local area?

## LOOKING FOR EVIDENCE OF THE EVENTS, PEOPLE AND PLACES THAT HAD AN IMPACT ON YOUR LOCAL AREA

Analysing and understanding historical evidence is a vital part of studying local history. Primary sources are contemporary – from or around the time of the period of study. Secondary sources are created by people who were not there, for example a modern historian writing about an event. Particular care should be taken with archaeological evidence – excavated objects and deposits are primary, but they're always interpreted by archaeologists so are by definition secondary.

Here are some things you could look for when researching your local area:

- Built heritage, e.g. housing, retail and commercial premises, places of worship, public and community buildings, listed buildings and scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens.
- Visual sources, e.g. photographs, paintings, engravings, historical plans, postcards, murals, TV adverts and films.
- Written sources, e.g. museum archives, local history publications, maps, diaries, military records, government documents, school log books, census records, trade directories, newspapers, and birth/marriage/death certificates.
- Artefacts, e.g. archaeological finds displayed in museums or online, clothes, toys, household items, tools and family memorabilia.
- Remnants of the past, e.g. place names, plaques and memorials.
- Oral history, e.g. talking and listening to people from your locality, asking older generations about the local area, archive recordings and local historians.
- Also look for evidence of local traditions, customs and beliefs, folklore, food, festivals and music particular to your place.



# AT THE CASTLE

Activities for students to do at Portchester Castle to help them get the most out of their learning.



## SELF-LED ACTIVITY

CASTLE SENSORY: SIGHTS, SOUNDS  
AND SMELLS**Recommended for**

KSI &amp; SEND (History)

**Learning objectives**

- Explore key areas of the castle and identify what they were used for.
- Develop sensory observation skills.

**Time to complete**

45–60 minutes

**SUMMARY**

Please print the trail (on page 27) to help students explore six key parts of the castle through sensory activities. As you explore the castle, use the questions and suggestions in the Teachers' Notes (on page 26) to help connect the different parts of the castle to what they were used for. Although this is a sensory trail, please remind the group not to touch anything unless invited to.

The trail can be followed at the pace of the group and the stops can be visited in the order that best suits your group's needs. If any member of your group feels overwhelmed or overstimulated by the sensory input, Portchester Castle has plenty of calm spaces that you can use to reduce the student's anxiety. Please see the Access Map (on page 6–7) for information about sensory considerations around the site.



This activity suggests things around the castle to touch, see, hear and smell.

**MORE LEARNING IDEAS**

Create a bingo sheet with several sensory experiences for students to 'tick off' during a visit:

- Touch something soft/smooth/bumpy.
- Spot something red/man-made/an animal.
- Find a crunching sound/a sweet smell/a strange taste.

You could also play a game of 'I Spy...' as you explore different parts of the site. Each student could make a cardboard frame before your visit and then look through it while searching for things on site.

# CASTLE SENSORY: SIGHTS, SOUNDS AND SMELLS

## TEACHERS' NOTES

- **Stop 1: Landgate** – Standing outside the Roman walls, between the small car park and the castle entrance, look up at the Landgate and the two towers either side. Imagine guards standing on top of the towers, aiming their weapons at you. How would you feel as you approach the wall and towers? Form a line and pretend you are an attacking army, marching in time with each other. You hear a 'ping' and 'whoosh' sound as an arrow flies through the air towards you. Duck for cover! Decide whether to carry on or retreat.
- **Stop 2: Roman walls** – Look along the length of the wall; can you see the straight layers of flint? The stones were put there by Roman builders more than 1,700 years ago and are still standing to this day. Touch the mortar between the layers of flint. Imagine the hard-working Roman builder who originally worked on this section of wall. How many stones do you think he had to lift and place into the wall in one day? How would you feel after a hard day of wall building, with no modern machines to help you?
- **Stop 3: Outer bailey** – Two English kings are known to have gathered their troops at Portchester, before sailing to France to fight important battles (Edward III in 1346 and Henry V in 1415). Imagine being in the English army, gathered on this spot. What things might you smell and hear in the outer bailey? Possible sounds include: armour clinking, water lapping outside the walls, swords being sharpened, the chatter/laughter/shouts of soldiers, heavy boots on the grass, fires crackling and commands being shouted. Possible smells include: smoke from the fires, food cooking for the troops, the salty sea air, sweat from the soldiers.
- **Stop 4: Lost buildings** – From historical plans and archaeological evidence, we know that the space in the outer bailey wasn't always an open, grassy area. At various times in the castle's history, it was used for buildings that are no longer standing, such as a Tudor storehouse and wooden houses for prisoners of war. In 1938 parch marks in the grass in the south-west corner of the fort revealed the site of a large building. When it was excavated in the 1970s glass and pottery were found that dated it to 1475–1540. Work together to mark out the shape of a building, either by joining hands and spreading out to become the 'walls' or by lying on the floor to become the 'foundations'. Why do you think these buildings are lost when others are still standing? Answer: they were probably made of wood, so rotted over time, or they weren't needed by future owners, so got demolished.
- **Stop 5: Graveyard** – There has been a cemetery inside the walls at Portchester since Anglo-Saxon times. Close your eyes and listen for all the 'daytime' sounds you can hear around you. Now imagine being in the graveyard at night. What shadows and shapes would you be able to make out in the dark? What different sounds might you hear? How would you feel? Make up a story about something spooky that might happen here at night.
- **Stop 6: Watergate** – In Roman times, boats could moor up right outside this entrance. In Saxon times, this was an important lookout to keep watch for Viking raiders trying to attack this part of the coast. Listen to your voices echo as you pass through the Watergate towards the sea. Try to make sounds associated with water such as: splish, splash, splosh, bubble, plop. Stand on the concrete area looking out to sea. How does it feel standing outside the walls compared to being inside them? Take a few slow, deep breaths in through your nose. What can you smell?

# CASTLE SENSORY: SIGHTS, SMELLS AND SOUNDS

See if you can find all of these things.  
Tick each one off as you find it.



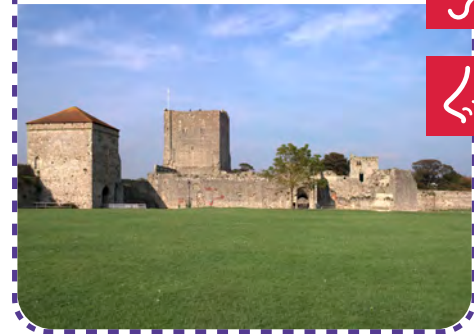
**1** LANDGATE



**2** ROMAN WALLS



**3** OUTER BAILEY



**4** LOST BUILDINGS



**5** GRAVEYARD



**6** WATERGATE



## TOP THINGS TO SEE

### EXPLORE PORTCHESTER CASTLE

Portchester Castle is more than 1,700 years old. It was a Roman fort, a Saxon stronghold, a royal palace and eventually a prison. Its commanding location means it has played a major part in defending Portsmouth Harbour and the Solent for hundreds of years.

Can't find your way? Use the map at the back to help.



## 1 ROMAN WALLS

These walls were probably built between AD 285 and 290 in the reign of Carausius, who rebelled against Rome and ruled his own mini empire in Britain, Belgium and France. The walls' core is made from layers of flint, bonded together with mortar.

 **WHERE ARE THEY?**  
Surrounding the site

**DID YOU  
FIND THEM?**



### DID YOU KNOW?



The walls still stand to what is probably their original height (6.1 metres) – this makes Portchester the most well-preserved Roman fort in northern Europe.

### CHALLENGE TIME!



**Touch** a section of the wall where the flint layers are visible (like in the photo). Why do you think the walls needed to be so thick?

Continued...



## 2 D-SHAPED TOWERS

The Roman walls form a square-shaped border, with 20 evenly spaced D-shaped towers, of which 16 still stand to this day. These towers were a symbol of power and strength, warning off potential attackers.

 **WHERE ARE THEY?**  
Around the outer bailey

**DID YOU FIND THEM?**

### DID YOU KNOW?



In Roman times, these were hollow. They were filled in and platforms were added during the medieval period.

### CHALLENGE TIME!



**Measure** the distance between two of the semi-circular towers. Try to use strides that are about a metre long and count as you walk.

## 3 LANDGATE

There were four entrances to the Roman fort, one in the middle of each side. There are two 'postern' (small) gates, and two main gates called the Landgate and the Watergate. The Landgate was rebuilt in medieval times (1390s).

 **WHERE IS IT?**  
In the west wall

**DID YOU FIND IT?**



### DID YOU KNOW?



In the 18th and 19th centuries, a room at the top of the Landgate was used to isolate misbehaving prisoners from the rest of the prisoners of war.

### CHALLENGE TIME!



**Look** along each of the Roman walls and spot the four gates. Can you see the sea through the Watergate and the trees through the Landgate?



## 4 MOAT

The moat is fed by water from the sea. In medieval times, it wrapped around the whole of the inner bailey and was deeper than it is today, creating an extra layer of defence.

 WHERE IS IT?  
Around the keep

DID YOU FIND IT?

### DID YOU KNOW?



In the 18th century, the moat was turned into a swimming pool for prisoners of war!

### CHALLENGE TIME!



**Imagine** you are trying to attack the castle. With your team, come up with a plan to get over the moat, past the gatehouse, and into the inner bailey.

## 5 WELL

In medieval times, there were no pipes or taps, so this well was a vital water supply. During a siege, attackers would surround the castle and wait for the defenders to run out of supplies, so having fresh water was really important.

 WHERE IS IT?  
Inner bailey

DID YOU FIND IT?



### DID YOU KNOW?



The well was cleared out and re-dug during the 1790s (when the castle was a prison) because people were finding it hard to get enough fresh water for cooking, bathing and washing clothes.

### CHALLENGE TIME!



**Discuss** how you would dig this well down through the hard ground. Remember – there was no electricity or heavy machinery to help.



## 6 RICHARD II'S PALACE

This palace was built by Richard II (r.1377–99) between 1396 and 1399. On the top floor, there was a great hall where members of the royal household were served their meals, in order of importance.

 **WHERE IS IT?**  
Inner bailey

**DID YOU FIND IT?**

### DID YOU KNOW?



Either side of the entrance to Richard II's palace, you can still see two little platforms used to hold lamps that lit the doorway.

### CHALLENGE TIME!



**Go** through the kitchen and turn right into the great hall. **Imagine** how it may have looked with high ceilings, painted glass windows and brightly coloured wall hangings.

## 7 PRISONERS' THEATRE

In the early 19th century, prisoners of war were kept at Portchester. Some of them were from France and had teamed up to create a theatrical troupe while in captivity. They created a theatre in the keep where they performed plays to lift people's spirits.



 **WHERE IS IT?**  
Ground floor of the keep

**DID YOU FIND IT?**

### DID YOU KNOW?



When the theatre was in use between 1810 and 1814, an audience of 300 could fit in this room. It would've been a tight squeeze!

### CHALLENGE TIME!



**Put** your face in one of the holes to see what you would've looked like in 19th-century costume!



## 8 BEAMS FOR HAMMOCKS

Portchester was one of the 12 main prisoner-of-war camps in Britain during wars between England and France between 1793 and 1815. The beams were used to hang hammocks so that more prisoners could sleep in this room.

 **WHERE ARE THEY?**  
Second floor of the keep

**DID YOU FIND THEM?**

### DID YOU KNOW?



Around 500 prisoners of war could be kept in the keep at one time. It could get very cold and was always cramped.

### CHALLENGE TIME!



**Imagine** how it would feel to be a prisoner, far from home, sleeping in a hammock in the keep on a cold winter's night.

## 9 SCULPTURES

The 'Flock of Dreams' sculpture on the second floor represents the letters sent to and from prisoners of war, flying over the English Channel like birds. The sculpture on the third floor expresses the emotions that the African-Caribbean prisoners may have felt when they were captured, transported and imprisoned here.



 **WHERE ARE THEY?**  
Second and third floors of the keep

**DID YOU FIND THEM?**

### DID YOU KNOW?



In October 1796, 2,080 black and mixed-race soldiers, 333 European soldiers, and their families of 99 women and children arrived at Portchester. They had been captured on islands in the Caribbean.

### CHALLENGE TIME!



**Look** at the sculpture of a boat on the third floor. **Discuss** what it makes you think about and how it makes you feel.



# TOP THINGS TO SEE

EXPLORE PORTCHESTER CASTLE

See if you can find all these things. Tick each one off as you find it.



**1** ROMAN WALLS



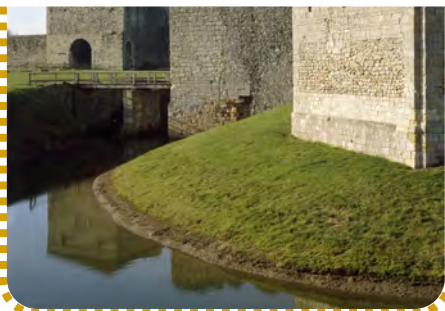
**2** D-SHAPED TOWERS



**3** LANDGATE



**4** MOAT



**5** WELL



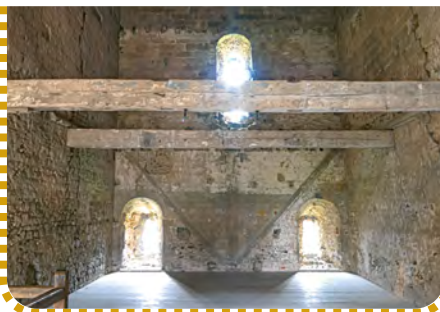
**6** RICHARD II'S PALACE



**7** PRISONERS' THEATRE



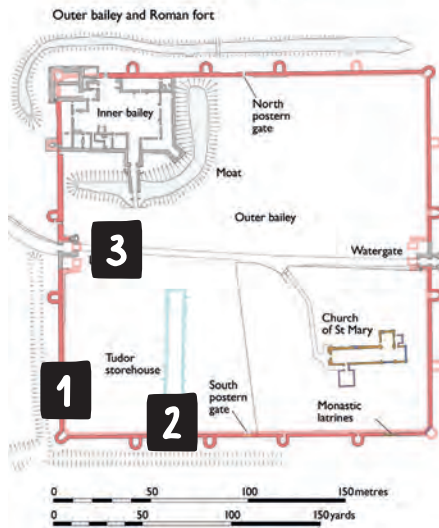
**8** BEAMS FOR HAMMOCKS



**9** SCULPTURES



# TOP THINGS TO SEE MAP



- Roman
- 11th century
- Early 12th century
- Late 12th century
- Early 13th century
- Early 14th century
- Mid-14th century
- 1380-99
- 1489-1540
- 1580-1608
- Uncertain or modern



Landgate first floor



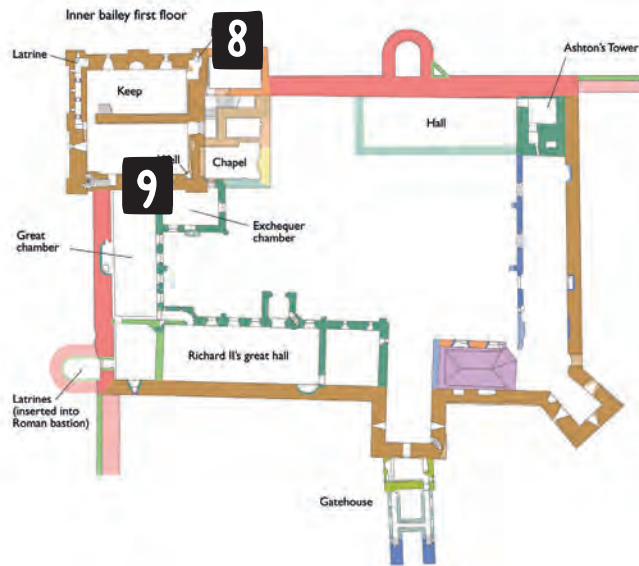
Watergate first floor



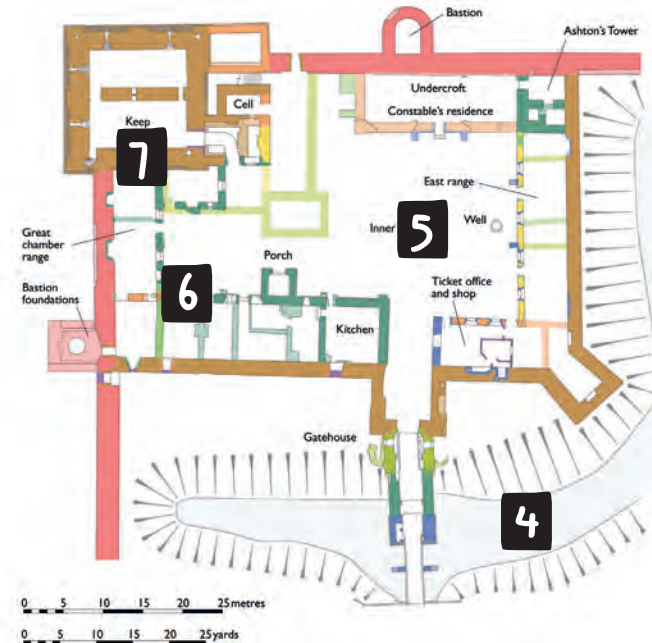
Landgate ground floor



Watergate ground floor



Inner bailey ground floor



## KEY

- |                          |                              |                             |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>1</b> ROMAN WALLS     | <b>4</b> MOAT                | <b>7</b> PRISONERS' THEATRE |
| <b>2</b> D-SHAPED TOWERS | <b>5</b> WELL                | <b>8</b> BEAMS FOR HAMMOCKS |
| <b>3</b> LANDGATE        | <b>6</b> RICHARD II'S PALACE | <b>9</b> SCULPTURES         |

## WHAT I'VE LEARNT

I think the best thing to see at Portchester Castle is:

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The most interesting thing I've learnt is:

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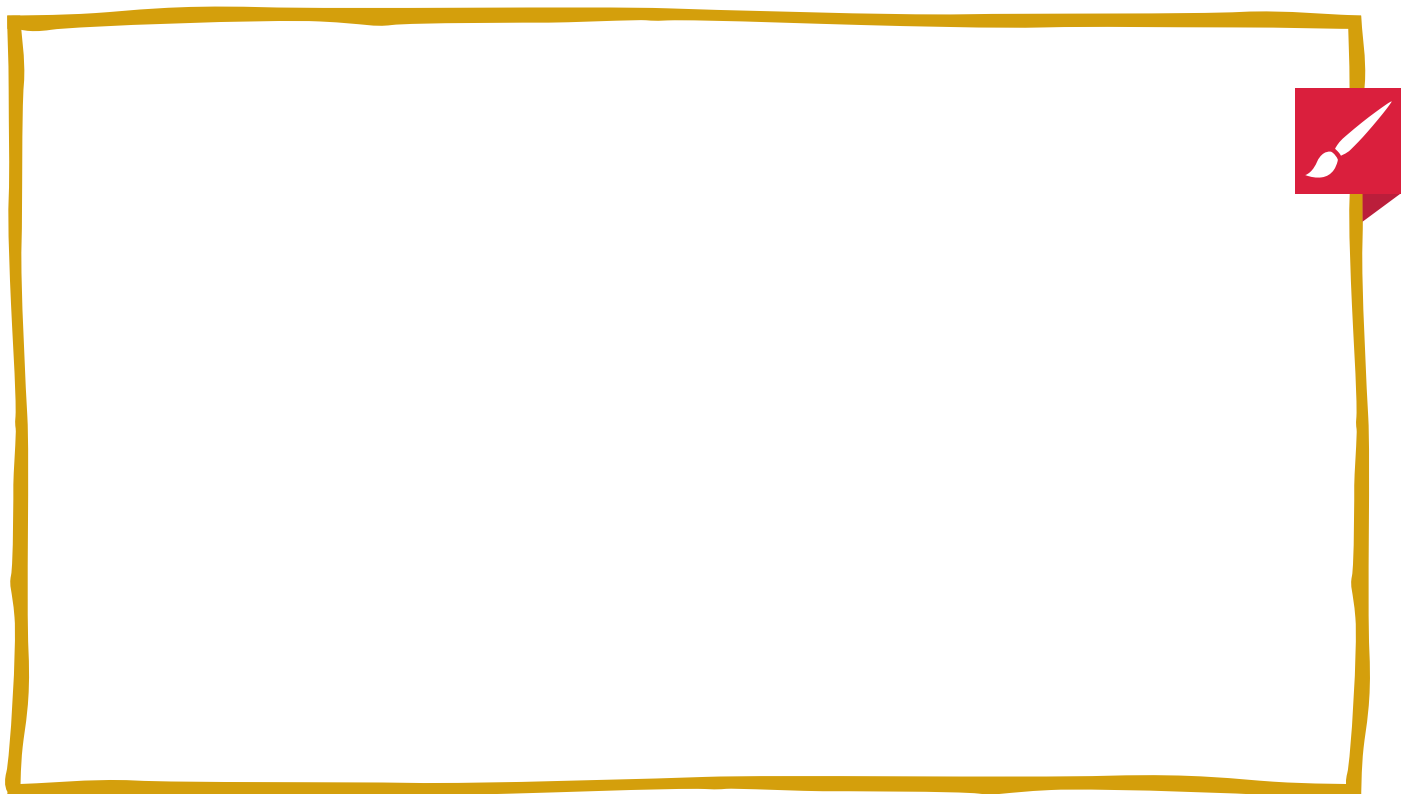
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I want to know more about:

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**Draw** a picture inspired by your visit to Portchester Castle:



# SELF-LED ACTIVITY

## JUNIOR GEOGRAPHERS



### Recommended for

KSI-2 (History, Geography, English)

### Learning objectives

- Understand Portchester Castle in its local context and develop orientation skills.
- Explore the geography of Portchester Castle and learn important geographical vocabulary.

### Time to complete

45–60 minutes



An aerial view of Portchester Castle.



The view towards the Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth Harbour from the roof of the keep.

### SUMMARY

Before your visit, display Google Maps on a projector screen and use the 'map view' to locate Portchester Castle with your class. Ask students to notice the geographical relationship between Portchester Castle, Portsmouth Harbour and the Isle of Wight. You can use 'satellite view' and 'street view' to explore the surrounding area.

For KSI students, you could print a version of the map and give it to them to label with basic vocabulary such as: north, south, east, west, beach, coast, sea, town, port, harbour. For KS2 students, you could ask them to be more specific about the location of: the English Channel, the Solent, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, Spinnaker Tower and Fort Nelson.

### ACTIVITIES AT THE CASTLE

To help with this activity, use the Site Plan on page 5.

During your visit, stand inside the Roman walls, as close to the centre as you can, and discuss compass directions. You might like to bring some compasses with you to help. Ask students:

- Where can I find the north postern gate? (students should point to the centre of the north wall)
- Where can I find the south postern gate? (centre of the south wall)
- In which direction is the Watergate? (east)
- In which direction is the Landgate? (west)
- What is in the north-west corner? (the keep)
- What is in the south-east corner? (Church of St Mary)

Next, take students up the spiral staircase to the roof of the keep, where they will get an incredible view of the surrounding area. We advise you to climb the stairs in small groups and please be aware that the roof is sometimes shut during bad weather.

Continued...

Once you are at the top, ask students to identify north, south, east and west. Explain that the castle was built on a low-lying spit of land that sticks out into the natural harbour of Portsmouth. It was the perfect place to build a fortress to defend this stretch of water.

From the roof, ask students to spot these landmarks:

- Church of St Mary in the south-east corner of the outer bailey. It was built within the Roman walls in the early 12th century.
- Fort Nelson to the north of the castle, the red building on top of Portsdown Hill. It was built in the 1860s as part of a chain of Victorian coastal forts.
- The Isle of Wight to the south-west of the castle.
- The stretch of sea known as the Solent, between the mainland and the Isle of Wight.
- Portsmouth Harbour to the south-east of the castle. It is naturally defended by the Isle of Wight and the bit of land on which Portchester Castle sits.
- Spinnaker Tower which overlooks Portsmouth Harbour. It is shaped like a sail to reflect Portsmouth's maritime history.

Finally, having done the activities above, ask students to list the reasons why this was such a good spot to build and develop Portchester Castle, e.g. close to a harbour, easy access to mainland Europe, good natural defences, intimidating sight for approaching enemy ships.

## MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Back in the classroom, you could use an Ordnance Survey map to develop students' understanding of OS symbols. You can also use this opportunity to discuss latitude, longitude and co-ordinates.

# SELF-LED ACTIVITY

## OBJECT HUNT



KS2

KS3

### Recommended for

KS2–3 (History, Art)

### Learning objectives

- Engage with the stories of some of the objects on display in the ground-floor exhibition.
- Develop knowledge about a selection of objects on display, including what they are and how they were used.
- Practise observational drawing skills.

### Time to complete

45–60 minutes

### SUMMARY

Before your visit, introduce students to the term ‘archaeology’, which is the study of things people made, used and left behind at historical sites. Many objects were dug up at Portchester and studied closely to find out about the people who lived and worked there. Ask students to think of one object that is important to them. Discuss: if this object could talk, what story would it tell about you?

### ACTIVITIES AT THE CASTLE

During your visit, take students to the exhibition on the ground floor of the keep. Ask them to look around the room and notice the special objects that have been highlighted at the bottom of the information panels (see example, left). They should use the ‘See for yourself’ boxes to read about the object, find the real thing in the glass showcases, and discuss the thinking point.

To help students look closely at the objects, ask them to pick one and draw it as accurately as they can.



A preview of one of the display panels in the ground-floor exhibition.

You could use this activity to help students better understand Portchester Castle’s chronology. They could order the objects in a timeline from oldest to newest. We’ve provided information on six key objects on pages 39 and 40, to help with this. You could also use the Timeline (on pages 15–20) to link the objects on display in the exhibition with the buildings and people associated with the site.

### MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Back in the classroom, ask students to reflect on the objects they have seen by discussing these questions: Do you own anything with a symbol that represents a place or a company? Do you own something special that an archaeologist of the future might find? Students could bring these into school and set up their own museum, deciding how to group and display the objects, and writing interpretation labels for each.

# OBJECT HUNT

## PREHISTORIC HAND-AXE

Hand-axe, flint, Palaeolithic (or Old Stone Age), c.500,000 years ago.

This is the oldest man-made object ever found at Portchester, made between 10,000 and 500,000 years ago. It was probably used for cutting down trees and butchering animals.



## ROMAN STYLUS

Stylus, iron, 4th century.

These styli were used to write on wax tablets. The flat end was used to smooth the wax so that it could be written on again.



## MEDIEVAL GAMING COUNTER

Gaming counter, animal bone, 12th to 13th centuries.

Counters like this were used for the game of backgammon which was popular at the time.



## MEDIEVAL IRON SPUR

Spur, iron, 14th century.

In medieval times, high-status people owned horses and rode everywhere. Riders wore metal spurs like this one on their heels, to prod the horse when they wanted it to move or go faster.



## 19TH-CENTURY SHAKO PLATE

Shako plate, bronze, c.1814.

Shakos were tall, cylindrical hats worn by French soldiers in the 18th and 19th centuries, some of whom were prisoners of war at Portchester. This metal eagle was a French soldier's badge and tells us which regiment he belonged to.



## 19TH-CENTURY PIPE

Clay pipe, ceramic, late 19th century.

In the 19th century, people smoked tobacco in disposable clay pipes. This one shows a hand holding a heart, symbolising love. The 'Heart in Hand' was the name of a pub in nearby Portsmouth, so maybe the pipe was sold there.





# SELF-LED ACTIVITY

## CASTLE PRISONERS: FIND THE FACTS

KS3

KS4

### Recommended for

KS3–4 (History, English, PSHE)

### Learning objectives

- Understand Portchester Castle's role as a prisoner-of-war camp during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.
- Explore Portchester Castle's international prisoner-of-war story, including facts about the African-Caribbean prisoners kept here.

### Time to complete

45–60 minutes



The second floor of the keep.

### SUMMARY

Before your visit, read the sections called 'Prisoners at Portchester' (page 13) and 'Black Prisoners of War' (page 12) in this kit. To find out more, search our website for the various online history articles relating to the prisoners of war at Portchester Castle.

### ACTIVITIES AT THE CASTLE

During your visit, gather students on the second floor of the keep (the one with a map in the centre, as seen in the photo on the left). Explain to students that they are going to find out more about the prisoners of war kept here and ask them to look at the 'Flock of Dreams' sculpture above their heads. This represents the letters to and from prisoners of war, flying over the English Channel like birds.

Split students into two groups and ask group 1 to stay on the second floor while group 2 go up the stairs to the third floor (see photo). Please ensure that both groups are accompanied by school staff. Students can explore the rooms to find answers to the questions on page 42.

Once they have completed the first set of questions, ask groups 1 and 2 to swap over and complete the three questions they haven't yet done.

### MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Back in the classroom, students could apply their knowledge by writing a diary entry in the role of a prisoner of war, sharing their experience of being captured, transported and imprisoned at Portchester. They could choose one of these scenarios to help them get started:

- You've just been captured; it's your first day on the ship.
- You've been on the ship for two months.
- You've just arrived at Portchester prisoner-of-war camp.
- You've been at Portchester as a prisoner for six months.

# CASTLE PRISONERS: FIND THE FACTS



## SECOND-FLOOR QUESTIONS

**1** Look for the picture of a prison 'hulk' (a naval ship with masts removed), painted by Captain Durrant in about 1810. Around 850 prisoners would be kept on one hulk. What did the Transport Office do to their clothing and bedding? Why?

.....

.....

**2** Find the panel called 'Portchester as a Prisoner-of-War Depot'. Between 1793 and 1815, how many prisoners of war could be kept at Portchester Castle at any one time?

.....

.....

**3** Look for the panel called 'Prisoners at Portchester' and read about the prisoners' daily routine. What two things happened at 12 noon?

.....

.....

## THIRD-FLOOR QUESTIONS

**1** Look for the panel called 'Black Soldiers at Portchester'. What happened in May 1796 on the island of St Lucia?

.....

.....

**2** Read the panel called 'Life at Portchester Castle'. What three things did the prison staff do to help the African-Caribbean prisoners?

.....

.....

**3** Find the panel called 'What Happened to the Black Prisoners?' Captain Louis Delgrès was a mixed-race soldier captured in the Caribbean and brought to Portchester. What happened to him when he eventually returned to the Caribbean?

.....

.....



# POST-VISIT

Activities and information to help you extend your students' learning back in the classroom.

# 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 Portchester Castle's history.

## SOURCE 1

### CARAUSIUS COIN (AD 291)

A silver Roman coin from AD 291, minted by Carausius, self-proclaimed emperor of Britain. Portchester was probably built during the reign of Carausius. You can see this artefact on display at Portchester Castle.



## SOURCE 2

### ROMAN SHOE

A 4th century Roman child's shoe made of leather. This type of shoe was known as a 'calceus' or closed shoe, as opposed to a 'solea' or sandal. This is the smallest and most complete example of a number of Roman shoes found at the castle.



## SOURCE 3

### SAXON SKULL

The skull of an 11th-century Anglo-Saxon man. During excavations, a small cemetery was found containing the skeletons of 21 people. This skull is from an elderly man who suffered from a disease, which deformed his bones.



## SOURCE 4

'1381. June 5.

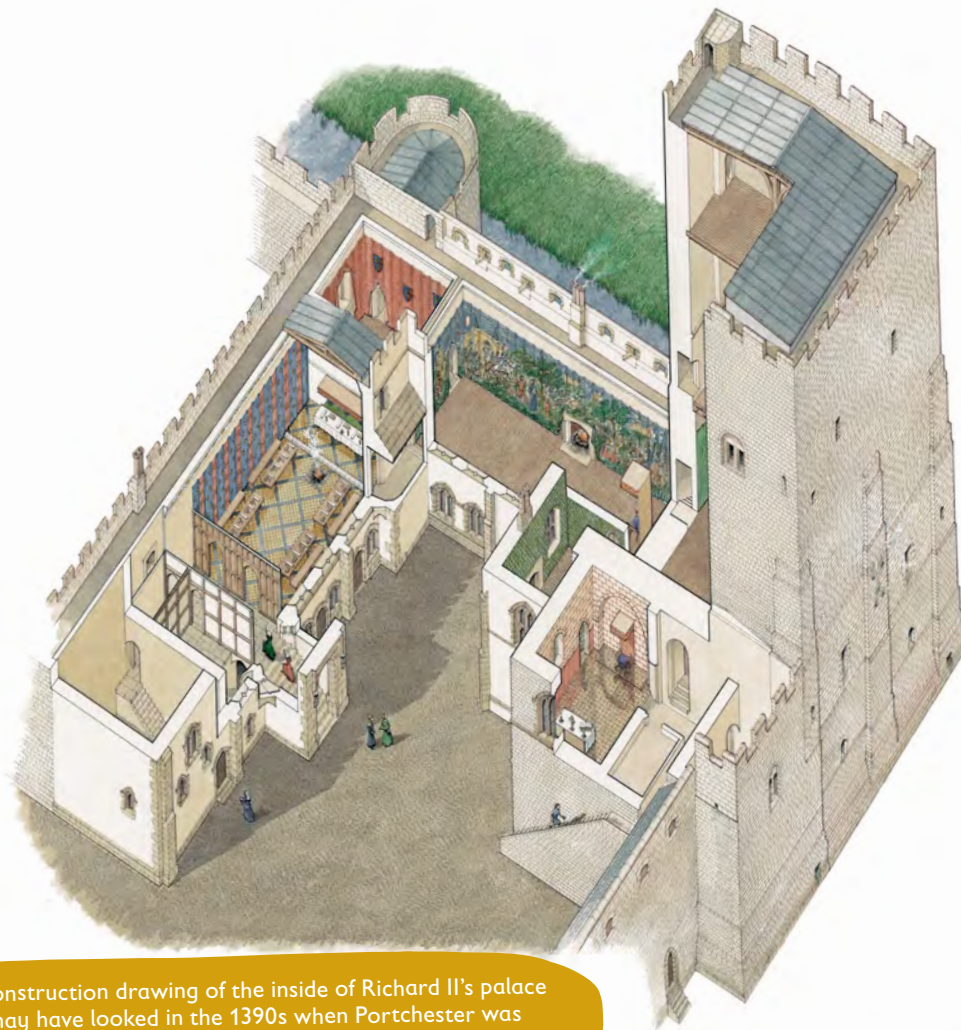
Westminster.

Appointment of the king's esquire, Robert Bardolf, keeper of the Porcestre castle, to take men-at-arms and archers and place them therein for its defence, there to remain for the summer; on information that the French are proposing to invade England.'

Extract from *Calendar of the Patent Rolls 1381–5*, p.16. The patent rolls are a series of official royal records, started by King John (r.1199–1216) in 1201, running to the present day. This entry shows some of the measures taken by Richard II (r.1377–99) to guard against French invasion in the later 14th century. You can access this source online at: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015009337612;view=1up;seq=28>



## SOURCE 5



A reconstruction drawing of the inside of Richard II's palace as it may have looked in the 1390s when Portchester was in use as a royal castle. The walls were decorated with colourful tapestries and painted wall hangings to make the rooms more attractive for royal visitors.

## SOURCE 6

This coloured engraving is called 'An Inside View', dated 1720. It shows the outer bailey of Portchester Castle in the 18th century, when it was in use as a prison. The prison guards can be seen on the left and the prisoners of war are using the fenced-off airing ground on the right.



## SOURCE 7

'T.O. 1st

November 1796

Sir Evan Nepean

Account of Prisoners of War lately arrived from the West Indies, and already landed in this country, according to the last Returns:

White... 333

Black... 2080

Women & Children... 99

Total... 2512.'

This letter was sent from the Portchester Commissioners to the Transport Office in London on 1 November 1796.

By the end of October 1796, all the prisoners from the Caribbean had arrived in Portsmouth Harbour and had been counted. The whole process took about 15 days. In this letter, the Portchester Commissioners informed the Transport Office in London of the total number of prisoners, broken down into black, white, and women and children, as requested.

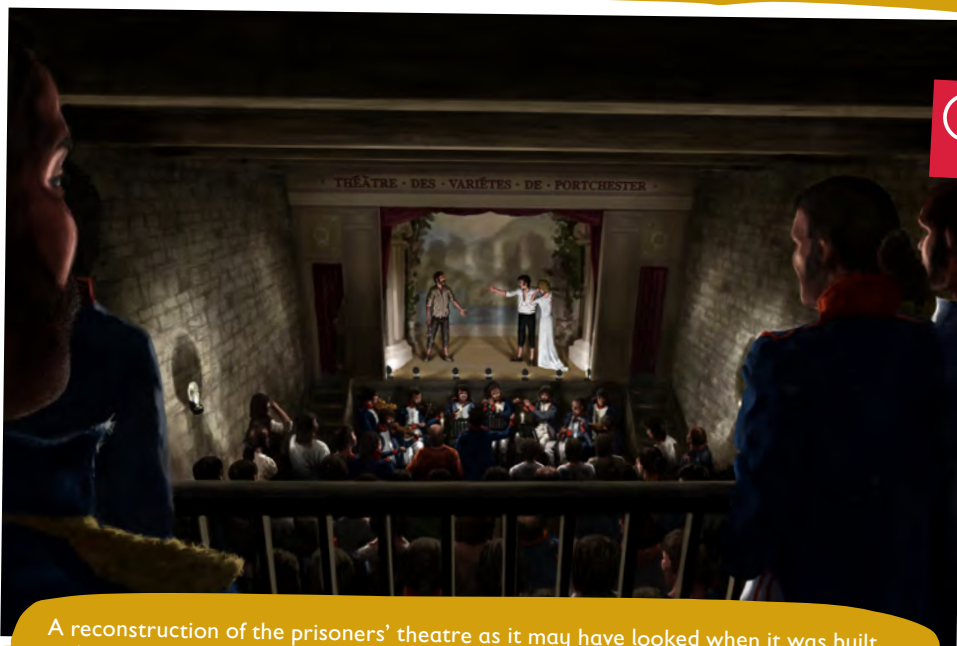
## SOURCE 8

### BONE DICE

These dice are from various dates, with the earliest at the top dating to the 17th century, the dice on the left and the bottom to the 18th century, and the one on the right dating to around 1810. They were carved and sold or used for gaming by prisoners of war at Portchester Castle.



## SOURCE 9



A reconstruction of the prisoners' theatre as it may have looked when it was built in 1810 on the ground floor of the keep by French prisoners of war. English Heritage has rebuilt the theatre at Portchester for you to enjoy when you visit.

## SOURCE 10

'In addition to what is allowed Europeans the West Indians have each a flannel under waistcoat and a thick pair of yarn socks. These advantages have been of little avail to defend them from the inclemency of this climate. [...] Others have been robbed and plundered by the European Prisoners, they considering themselves as a superior race of beings to the unfortunate Blacks.'

This extract is from an undated report from Commissioner William Otway and Dr Johnston to the Transport Board. Dr Johnston wrote many letters about the prisoners' health, diet and living conditions at Portchester Castle. He expresses particular concern for the prisoners from the Caribbean who needed extra clothing because they weren't used to the cold British climate. He also highlights the persecution faced by the African-Caribbean prisoners.

# SELF-LED ACTIVITY

## CREATIVE RESPONSES TO PORTCHESTER CASTLE

KS2

KS3

KS4

### Recommended for

KS2–4 (History, English, Drama, Art & Design, Music)

### Learning objectives

- Use a visit to Portchester Castle as a stimulus for creative projects.
- Explore the sculpture, sound and theatre pieces that have been inspired by Portchester Castle in recent years.
- Respond creatively to the building and the stories of the people who were there.

### Time to complete

Variable, dependent on depth of study



Detail of the 'Flock of Dreams' installation on the first floor of the keep.

### SUMMARY

The fascinating stories associated with Portchester Castle offer rich opportunities for creative exploration. Use our suggested approach (below) to guide students through the process of creating an original work in response to a visit to Portchester Castle.

### SUGGESTED APPROACH

- 1) Read the case studies (provided on pages 49–54) to find out about the creative collaborations inspired by the site.
- 2) Discuss what tips can be taken from these case studies about how to respond creatively to a historic place. Discussion prompts include: What are some of the opportunities and challenges of working in this way? What role should research play in the creative process? How can you strike a balance between historical accuracy and creative licence?
- 3) Each student should decide what their creative output is going to be, depending on their skills and interests, e.g. painting, sculpture, photography, videography, play, poem, prose, music, etc. If there are shared interests within the class, consider putting students in groups based on these. Alternatively, students might find that working individually is better suited to their aims.
- 4) Get to work! We'd love to see the outcome of your students' hard work. Please share pictures or videos with us on social media @EnglishHeritage or @EHEducation.

### MORE LEARNING IDEAS

It may be possible for us to arrange for your students to exhibit their finished work at Portchester Castle. To enquire about this opportunity, please contact our Education Bookings Team either via [bookeducation@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:bookeducation@english-heritage.org.uk) or on 0370 333 0606.



# CASE STUDIES

Get inspired by the creative people who have successfully produced innovative work at Portchester Castle, and gather some top tips for your own creative project.

## CASE STUDY 1 – SCULPTURE

In 2017 English Heritage worked with a design company called Cod Steaks to design and install a new exhibition in the keep at Portchester Castle. As part of this project, Matthew Arnold, an artist and set/prop maker, created some new sculptural pieces.

The ‘Flock of Dreams’ sculpture on the second floor represents the letters sent to and from prisoners of war, flying over the English Channel like birds. The designer intended to communicate the following through the installation:

‘A flock of paper birds spirals up into the rafters above the wooden ship below. Inscribed with the words of the prisoners at Portchester their flight and constant motion created by the winds moving through the castle rooms symbolises the restless soul and perpetual longing for freedom.’



The designer’s mood board for the ‘Flock of Dreams’ sculpture, showing their work-in-progress.

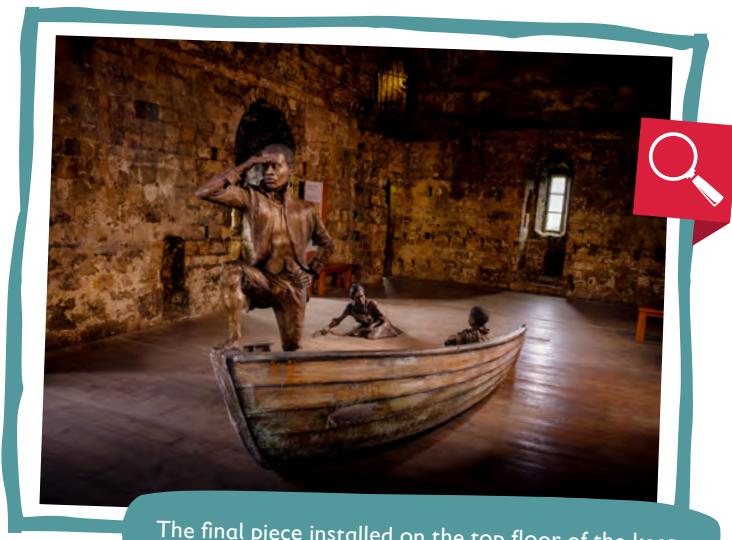
Another sculpture, on the third floor of the keep, expresses the emotions that the African-Caribbean prisoners may have felt when they were captured, transported and imprisoned at Portchester Castle.

Describing the work, the designer said:

‘We have designed an unexpected intervention on the third floor of the castle to captivate visitors’ imaginations and inspire engagement with the interpretive content that tells the story of the African-Caribbean prisoners who spent time at Portchester Castle. Intended to convey the perpetual struggle and the strength of will this story describes, it takes its inspiration from the art of protest and celebration found throughout the world. Its message is both global and individual, to be discovered and passed on.’



This mood board for the boat sculpture provides insight into the designer’s vision for the piece.



The final piece installed on the top floor of the keep.

## CASE STUDY 2 – SOUND INSTALLATION

In 2019, the lives of French and French-Caribbean prisoners of war held at Portchester Castle were the inspiration for a temporary sound installation, which brought to life the stories of French and French-Caribbean prisoners.

| Les Murs Sont Témoins | These Walls Bear Witness | was an evocative audio artwork created by London-born artist and musician Elaine Mitchener in response to Portchester's history as a building of incarceration, creativity, and freedom, using historical texts to vividly bring the past to life.



Excerpts of personal letters, registers and plays written and performed by the prisoners were heard coming out of the walls, creating an atmospheric soundscape throughout the main castle keep.

Artist, Elaine Mitchener said:

'I wanted to create a piece which shows that under the most challenging circumstances humankind has the ability to maintain their humanity. This installation attempts to draw visitors into the physical space and, through sound, engage with it in a focused and intimate way.'



### EXTRACT 1

This extract features the entry register of names from an inventory of more than 2,000 French black prisoners of war (men, women and children) held at Portchester Castle 1796–97.

<https://soundcloud.com/ehaudio/portchester-castle-names-extract/s-XyK6aI0kAm4>

© Elaine Mitchener Projects



## EXTRACT 2



This extract features Gwo Ka, from Guadeloupe, which is part of the Big Drum tradition that originated in West Africa. Although regarded by colonisers as entertainment, it was used by enslaved Africans to communicate messages, causing many plantation owners to ban it. Big Drum can still be heard in all its variants as entertainment across the Caribbean.

<https://soundcloud.com/ehaudio/portchester-castle-drums-extract/s-fj0qUGvxUZc>

© Elaine Mitchener Projects

Speaking about the project, Dominique Bouchard, English Heritage's Head of Learning and Interpretation, said:

‘This is a hugely emotive and immersive installation, which brings Portchester’s history uniquely to life for our visitors. In some places the sounds are like whispers, in others it is less subtle. We know that when the castle was used to house prisoners of war from France and the Caribbean the spaces were incredibly crowded – it would have been a sensory overload, the new soundscape reflects this in a striking and sensitive way.’



Katherine Astbury, Professor of French Studies at the University of Warwick, commented:

‘It’s been an honour and a privilege to work with such an acclaimed sound artist as Elaine Mitchener to bring the stories of the French at Portchester to life. At the heart of these stories lie fundamental questions about human rights, discrimination, identity and the power of culture to overcome national differences. The lives of the black prisoners in particular allow us to move beyond traditional narratives of the enslaved as victims to celebrating black agency. The installation touches on issues as much of relevance today as back then.’



## CASE STUDY 3 – THEATRE

Together with the National Youth Theatre (NYT) and the University of Warwick, as part of the ‘Freedom and Revolution’ project for the Shout Out Loud youth engagement programme, a new play called *The Ancestors* was created, performed and filmed at Portchester Castle in 2021. It shines a light on the lives of the black and mixed-race prisoners brought to Portchester from the Caribbean.



One of the plays believed to have been performed in the Portchester theatre was a historical drama entitled ‘The Revolutionary Philanthropist’, first staged by prisoners of war on one of the prison ships out in the bay beneath the castle in 1807. Written by a member of the naval expedition sent by Napoleon to reclaim the former colony of Haiti, the play explored how enslaved people of African descent had fought for their freedom in Haiti in 1791.

With performers from the NYT and local youth groups, and using new research from historian Abigail Coppins, this play was reimaged, switching the focus away from the original colonial male perspective, and retelling it from a black female point of view. The new play was written by Lakesha Arie-Angelo and directed by Jade Lewis.



## SUMMARY OF THE PLAY



A site-specific outdoor production that explores the grounds of Portchester Castle and the voices of black revolutionaries that history has continued to silence, until now.

A clique of Caribbean maroon warrior women, a general of Haiti and his right-hand man, an ex-enslaved couple reclaiming their land, a group of black French-Caribbean soldiers held captive in Portchester, and their wives travelling across the Atlantic to be reunited with them. These are *The Ancestors* – manifesting in our world, in the hopes we can stop history repeating itself, but do we really hold the key? What dark forces are still currently at play?

Paul Roseby, CEO and Artistic Director of the National Youth Theatre, said:

‘This new piece shines a light on vital lost voices, with a focus on women and particularly black women, and has been beautifully and poetically brought to life. The urgency of this work is more vital than ever before.’



## FIND OUT MORE

Read more about this project here: [www.nyt.org.uk/theancestors](http://www.nyt.org.uk/theancestors)

