

## Teachers' guide to Kenilworth Castle

### Contents

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Notes for teachers .....   | 2   |
| Introduction and Overview .....  | 3   |
| Key Phases .....   | 5   |
| Kenilworth under the De Clintons, 1120-1174.....                             | 6   |
| Kenilworth and the Crown: 1174 – 1244.....                                   | 8   |
| Kenilworth under Simon de Montfort: 1244-1265.....                           | 11  |
| Kenilworth under The House of Lancaster 1266-1361 .....                      | 12  |
| Kenilworth under John of Gaunt: 1361-1399 .....                              | 13  |
| Kenilworth under the Lancastrian Kings and the Early Tudors: 1399-1547 ..... | 16  |
| Kenilworth and the Dudley Family: 1547-1588.....                             | 18  |
| Kenilworth under the Stuarts .....   | 266 |
| Kenilworth and the Civil War.....  | 276 |
| Kenilworth the Farm .....  | 276 |
| Kenilworth and the Restoration.....  | 28  |

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### Notes for teachers

This resource has been developed to support teachers in teaching OCR Specification A; study of the historic environment: Castles: Form and Function c. 1000-1750.

It adopts a chronological and evidence-based approach to support exploration of the key areas outlined in the specification, namely; the location of the castle, its appearance, layout and function under its different owners, often reflecting the historical context through which the castle was occupied. Please note that all the text in the document is adapted from the English Heritage guidebook for Kenilworth Castle, with the kind permission of English Heritage.

A site visit is not compulsory; however we would encourage this if possible. For further detail on Kenilworth Castle please refer to the Histories pages on the English Heritage website <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/kenilworth-castle/history/> and the Kenilworth Castle guidebook by Richard Morris <https://www.english-heritageshop.org.uk/books-media/guidebook-kenilworth-castle> (please be aware that there is a charge for the guidebook but it is available at a reduced rate, with 20% off for every site visit made via the English Heritage Education Bookings Team <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/learn/school-visits/#section8>

Please note that the names used to describe the buildings of Kenilworth Castle throughout this document, come from the work of Sir William Dugdale (1605-1686) who published the first history of Kenilworth Castle in 1656 - *Antiquities of Warwickshire*.

### Introduction and Overview

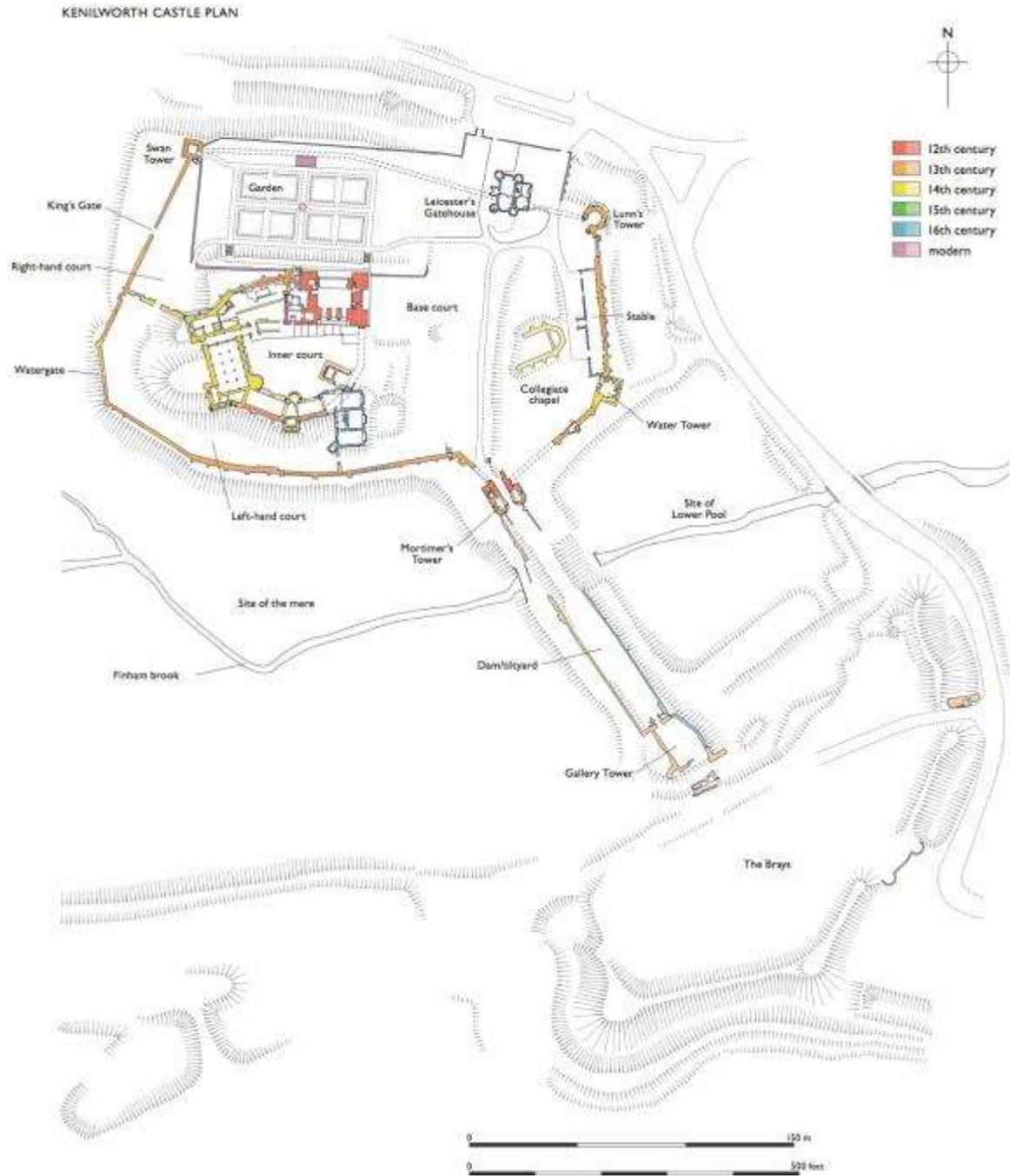
We hope you have been lucky enough to visit this historic site but even if you have not, we hope this guide will help you to really understand the castle and how it developed over time.

#### Where is Kenilworth Castle?



*The castle and landscape: Aerial view of the castle, mere and surrounding landscape.*

What is the layout of Kenilworth Castle?



Castle Plan

**Key Phases**

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 1100s | Kenilworth under the De Clintons 1120-1174                 |
| 1200s | Kenilworth as a royal fortress 1174-1244                   |
|       | Kenilworth under Simon de Montfort 1244-65                 |
| 1300s | Kenilworth under the House of Lancaster 1266-136           |
| 1400s | Kenilworth under John of Gaunt 1361-99                     |
|       | Kenilworth under the Lancastrians and the Tudors 1399-1547 |
| 1500s | Kenilworth under the Dudley family 1547-88                 |
| 1600s | Kenilworth under the Stuarts 1612-65                       |
| 1700s | Kenilworth under the Hydes 1665-1700s                      |

**Activity**

1. Make your own copy of this timeline on a sheet of A4 paper. Just mark in the seven main phases. As you read through this guide add in details of the development of the castle. This timeline will probably become a bit messy but don't worry! Keep it safe and at the end of the guide we will give you some ideas on how to summarise what you have learned.
2. There are seven periods of the castle's history listed in the timeline. Some of the English Heritage experts came up with titles for six of the periods of the castle's history:
  - An extraordinary palace
  - A stunning place of entertainment
  - A castle fit for kings
  - A formidable fortress
  - A royal stronghold
3. Which of these titles would you give to which periods? Can you think of other titles for the remaining periods?

## Kenilworth under the De Clintons, 1120-1174

### Geoffrey I

Kenilworth Castle was built in the 1120s by Geoffrey de Clinton who was chamberlain and treasurer to King Henry I (r.1100-1135). Henry granted Geoffrey land following doubts about the loyalty of Roger, the Earl of Warwick. By promoting Geoffrey in Warwickshire he hoped to counter Roger's influence in the region. In 1121 Geoffrey held the royal post of sheriff and by 1124 he was established as a great magnate in the county. Around this time he also founded Kenilworth Priory, downstream from the castle.

Geoffrey located his castle on a low sandstone hill above the point where two rivers joined. It's thought that for the first few years, his castle would have only been an earth mound (motte) topped with timber buildings. Having the king's favour probably enabled Geoffrey to build the stone tower which is believed to date from 1124. The king would have given him permission to build it and may even have helped with money and workers. The tower is similar to the other de Clinton castle at Brandon, near Coventry. It is likely that they were both commissioned by Geoffrey I.

The tower would have been at the heart of the castle's defences as well as serving as its main residence. The walls were 4.3m thick. It would have been accessed on the first floor via a staircase leading from a turret called a "forebuilding". This was converted into an open courtyard in the 1570s, but would have been an enclosed space in Geoffrey's time. There was a well in the south-east corner, latrines and access to all levels of the tower via spiral stairs in the north-east turret. A great hall occupied the upper floor. It would have been an undivided space with a massive roof spanning about 9m and lit by large arched windows. Leading off the hall were chambers, one of which may have been a chapel.

Geoffrey also built a causeway across the valley which created a dam that held back a mere (a large pond) to the west of the castle. The mere was useful for military purposes but the pools also supplied fish and wildfowl like ducks. It also powered two water mills. A charter of 1125 allowed the canons of Kenilworth Priory to catch fish in Geoffrey's 'pool' on Thursdays.

In 1130, Geoffrey's relationship with King Henry began to sour. His enemies engineered his arrest for treason although he managed to escape this charge through bribery. When he died in 1133 his son and successor Geoffrey was a minor and Roger, the Earl of Warwick was beginning to exert more influence in the county.



*Norman Reconstruction by Ivan Lapper: A reconstruction drawing of Kenilworth Castle in the 1120s*

### **Activity**

1. Make a list of the improvements made by Geoffrey I. Which ones would you say were military and which were improvements in the castle as a place to live?

### **Geoffrey II**

As a minor, Geoffrey II was supported by his uncle, William de Clinton. The two came to an agreement with Roger of Warwick, which included Geoffrey's marriage to the earl's infant daughter Agnes. Geoffrey II never had the resources to do any major work at Kenilworth. His independence was further weakened from 1135 with the accession of King Stephen (r.1135-1154) and the beginnings of civil war in England.

Geoffrey II died about 1175 at which point the castle was deemed to be of such strategic importance, it was taken into royal control. At this time it would have consisted of at least the great tower with its forebuilding and a bailey approached by a causeway across the mere.

### Kenilworth and the Crown: 1174 – 1244

Over the next 70 years, the castle's fortifications developed to the extent and form seen today. Because it was owned by the Crown we have relatively good records about developments at the castle because they were usually recorded in official documents. For example, the Pipe Rolls (records of royal income and spending) record the existence of a king's great chamber, a king's chapel and a queen's chamber in 1234-5 and 1241.

#### Henry II

The majority of the defences at Kenilworth were commissioned by Henry II (r. 1154-1189), between about 1184 and 1189. The castle had previously been garrisoned for Henry between 1173 and 1174 during the 'great rebellion'. In this rebellion Henry's sons and his estranged wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, plotted unsuccessfully to overthrow him.

The stone walls of the inner bailey date from no later than Henry's reign, as does a simple stone gatehouse that was later incorporated into Mortimer's Tower by Henry's son, John. The location of this gatehouse suggests that an outer bailey also existed at this time, probably defended by a bank and ditch. In the 1170s or 1180s, Henry may have made some modifications to the windows in the great hall of the great tower.

#### John I

Henry's son, John (r. 1199-1216) also invested heavily in the defences at Kenilworth. Between 1210 and 1215 he spent about £1,100 on the castle during a campaign to strengthen the major royal castles after the papal interdict of 1208 and his own excommunication.



*Mortimer's Tower: Remains of the twin towers of Mortimer's Tower, the main gatehouse to the castle.*

The outer bailey's circuit of stone walls with towers was probably built during John's reign. One of the best surviving examples of this is Mortimer's Tower. It was the main entrance to the castle in medieval times. It would have originally been at least one storey higher than it is today.

The twin-towered gatehouse would have had battlements and the towers linked by an entrance passage. In the passage, grooves still survive for a portcullis, which would have been operated by a winch in the room above. A door on each side led to two porter's lodges which were fitted with fireplaces. King John's gatehouse was built in front of his father's simpler, stone gatehouse. The walls of this earlier building are preserved in the inner end of the passage, together with another portcullis slot.

The best surviving of King John's wall towers is Lunn's Tower. The ground floor was powerfully equipped with five fish-tailed arrow loops, two of which survive and have been restored. Above this were two upper floors (used as residential chambers) and a wall-walk, accessed by an

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King John's additions to the castle can also be seen in the great tower where he added most of the top stage, identifiable by more fish-tailed arrow loops. He created a chamber with fine views at the top of the south-west turret and extended the forebuilding to the north to provide exterior access to the outer bailey. A small barbican was also probably added to protect the

inner bailey gate. To enlarge the mere, John had the height of the dam raised, creating a



body of water 800m long and about 150m wide.

*View across the mere.*

### **Activity**

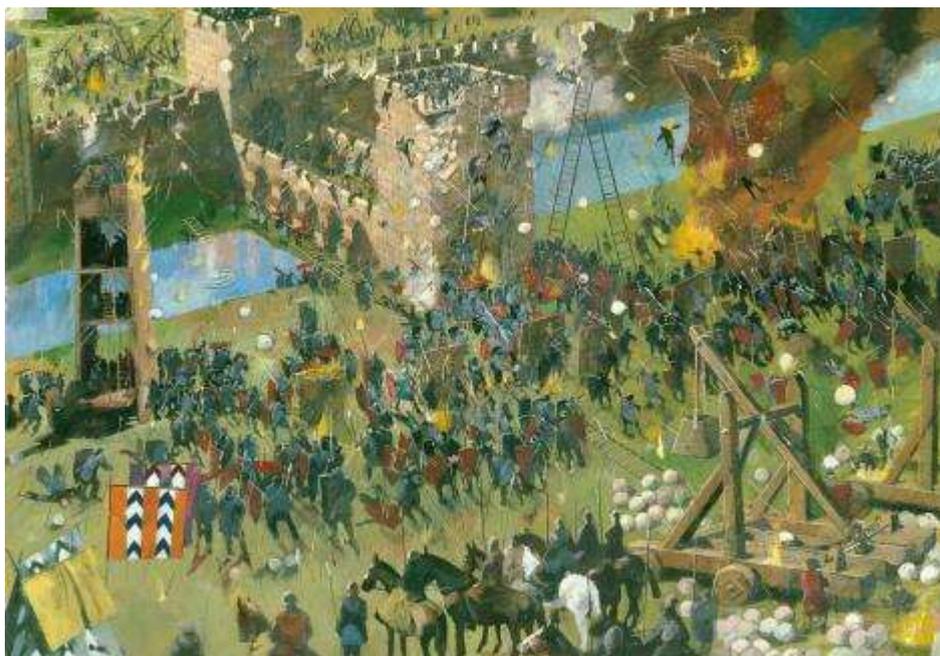
1. Make a list of the improvements made by King John. Which ones would you say were military and which were improvements in the castle as a place to live?
2. From looking at Kenilworth in this period, how could you tell that John's reign was a turbulent period in history?

**Kenilworth under Simon de Montfort: 1244-1265**

In 1244, Henry III granted custody of Kenilworth Castle to Simon de Montfort. Simon was married to the king's sister, Eleanor (m.1238) and had been made Earl of Leicester in 1239.

Despite Kenilworth already being an exceptional fortress by this time, Simon strengthened the castle further. He may have completed the scheme of defence first conceived by King John, by creating the Brays, the large defended enclosure outwork protecting the outer end of the dam. The line of its banks and huge ditches are now marked by an arc of tall trees. A chronicler also noted 'unheard of...machines' at the castle, probably trebuchets (powerful stone-throwing catapults, driven by stone counter-weights) – and Simon's work was soon to be tested.

In 1258 Simon led a group of reforming barons against Henry III. This decision eventually led to his defeat and death at the hands of royal forces at the Battle of Evesham on 4th August 1265. Following this battle, some of his followers made a stand at Kenilworth. Simon's eldest son, Simon the younger, promised to surrender the castle to the king but his supporters refused. When his messenger came back to the royal camp with a severed hand, Henry III opted for an all-out siege which began on 21st June 1266.



*Siege reconstruction by Ivan Lapper: Reconstruction drawing of the siege of Kenilworth Castle, 1266 by Ivan Lapper*

The royal forces set up stone-throwing machines to the north, facing the great tower, and to the south across the mere. The superior range of weaponry inside the castle however meant that the king had to send to London for larger machines. Excavations of the outer bailey in 1960 revealed stone balls, weighing up to 140kg, had been catapulted 320m across the mere and had violently destroyed a building inside the wall. As the water defences prevented undermining of the castle walls, the king even brought barges from Chester for an assault across the mere.

Despite Henry granting the rebels the right to regain forfeited lands providing they paid heavy fines, they still wouldn't surrender. Eventually starvation and disease ultimately brought this about on 14th December 1266.

### Activity

Consider if you agree that the story of the siege of Kenilworth proves that the work carried out by John and Simon de Montfort was effective?

## Kenilworth under The House of Lancaster 1266-1361

### Edmund, 1st Earl of Lancaster

After the surrender of the Kenilworth rebels, Henry III granted the castle to his younger son Edmund "Crouchback" who was created Earl of Lancaster in 1267. From this point, Kenilworth developed distinctly as a palace for the successive Lancastrian earls, dukes and kings.

Thomas, 2nd Earl of Lancaster and Henry, 3rd Earl of Lancaster

Edmund's son, Thomas, received a grant of his father's lands from King Edward I in 1298. He built a new hall in 1313-1314. This would have been a ground-floor hall with huge internal columns to support the roof.

He also added over 500 acres to the chase and it is possible that it was he who commissioned the Water Tower to provide additional accommodation for his officials and servants. This building has pyramidal corner buttresses and cruciform arrow loops with "eyelets" (round ends), characteristic of the period. The ground-floor door led into a private chamber with a fireplace and latrine. An internal spiral stair gave access to a superior first-



floor chamber, which has two-light windows with built-in stone seats.

*View of the Water Tower from the South East.*

Between 1314 and 1322 Thomas commissioned the building of a new chapel, staffed by a 'college' of priests, dedicated to St Mary in the castle's outer bailey. It was one of the largest private chapels of its time, standing about 14m high and at least 30m long. The foundation of a chapel was a popular way for the lord of a castle to demonstrate his piety, Thomas planned it to be for 13 secular priests, but he did not live long enough to actually establish the college. The only recognisable features that remain today are the foundations of the many-sided apse (a recess) for the chapel's altar and fragments of the seats for priests.

When Thomas rebelled unsuccessfully against Edward II (r.1307-1327), the castle was taken into royal custody Thomas was executed after the Battle of Boroughbridge in 1322. However the estates of Lancaster, including Kenilworth, were formally restored within five years to Thomas' younger brother Henry who had captured Edward II in south Wales and forced him to abdicate at Kenilworth in 1326.

### Activity

1. Make a list of the changes to the castle in this period. Do you agree that none of the changes were for military purposes?

### Kenilworth under John of Gaunt: 1361-1399

On his death, Henry was succeeded by his son, Henry of Grosmont. He in turn was succeeded by his son-in-law, John of Gaunt, the fourth son of Edward III. He took possession of Kenilworth in 1361 (and the title of Duke of Lancaster the following year). Gaunt began the most ambitious programme of building at the castle since King John. His first wife died in 1361 and in 1368 he married Constanza, daughter of the King of Castile and Leon, in Spain. When Constanza's father died she (and John of Gaunt) inherited huge wealth. He commissioned work on several of his properties but Kenilworth is the only surviving site that shows us the palatial quality of his architecture.

Between about 1373 and 1380, Gaunt constructed a new great hall at Kenilworth, with remodelled apartments, services and kitchens. They were all designed to symbolise his regal status and provide a symbol of his wealth and hospitality.

The new hall was designed to be similar to his father the king's new hall at Windsor Castle. Records show that the chief mason and master carpenter used at Kenilworth had previously worked at Windsor.

The hall was approached up twenty steps to an entrance arch which was beautifully carved. The hall's windows were very impressive. They were very high and very delicate, just like the great cathedrals. The lower sections were originally barred and shuttered while the upper sections would have had fixed glass; a real luxury. Inside, these windows featured panelled surrounds and stone seats. Benches would have been put against the side walls to create a step up to the seats, from which spectators could watch entertainments in the hall after a banquet. Tapestries were hung above the fireplaces – among the most prized possessions of 14th-century aristocrats. The duke himself would have dined in the hall only on the most important occasions. The serving of food was the most elaborate ritual which took place in the hall and allowed Gaunt to lavishly display his hospitality. To accompany this ritual he retained his own company of musicians, who probably played from a minstrel's gallery over the screens passage.

To support feasting in the hall, Gaunt needed a suitable kitchen. Kenilworth was twice the size of a normal aristocratic kitchen, measuring 19m by 8.5m. It had the capacity to cater for several hundred people at a time. Three enormous fireplaces can still be seen. Smaller recesses in between the fireplaces would have been for storing wood and utensils. The foundation of the other side wall is still visible together with a cobbled floor with a drain in the centre for kitchen waste. A fourth fireplace in the short (east) wall was equipped with a bread-oven and furnace.

Other documented facilities include a pantry, buttery, larder, scullery, pastry and dresser, although not all of these can be identified today. Most would have been housed in the Strong Tower to the right of Gaunt's great hall (this would originally have been one storey higher). The cellars of this tower provided cool, dark conditions for the larders. The first floor was occupied by the buttery and the pantry which lay on either side of the passage from the kitchen. On the second floor was accommodation, but only the inner chamber of a suite of lodgings survives today. These were designed for a senior household officer, probably the steward, because the various spiral stairs gave direct access to the services and to the hall.

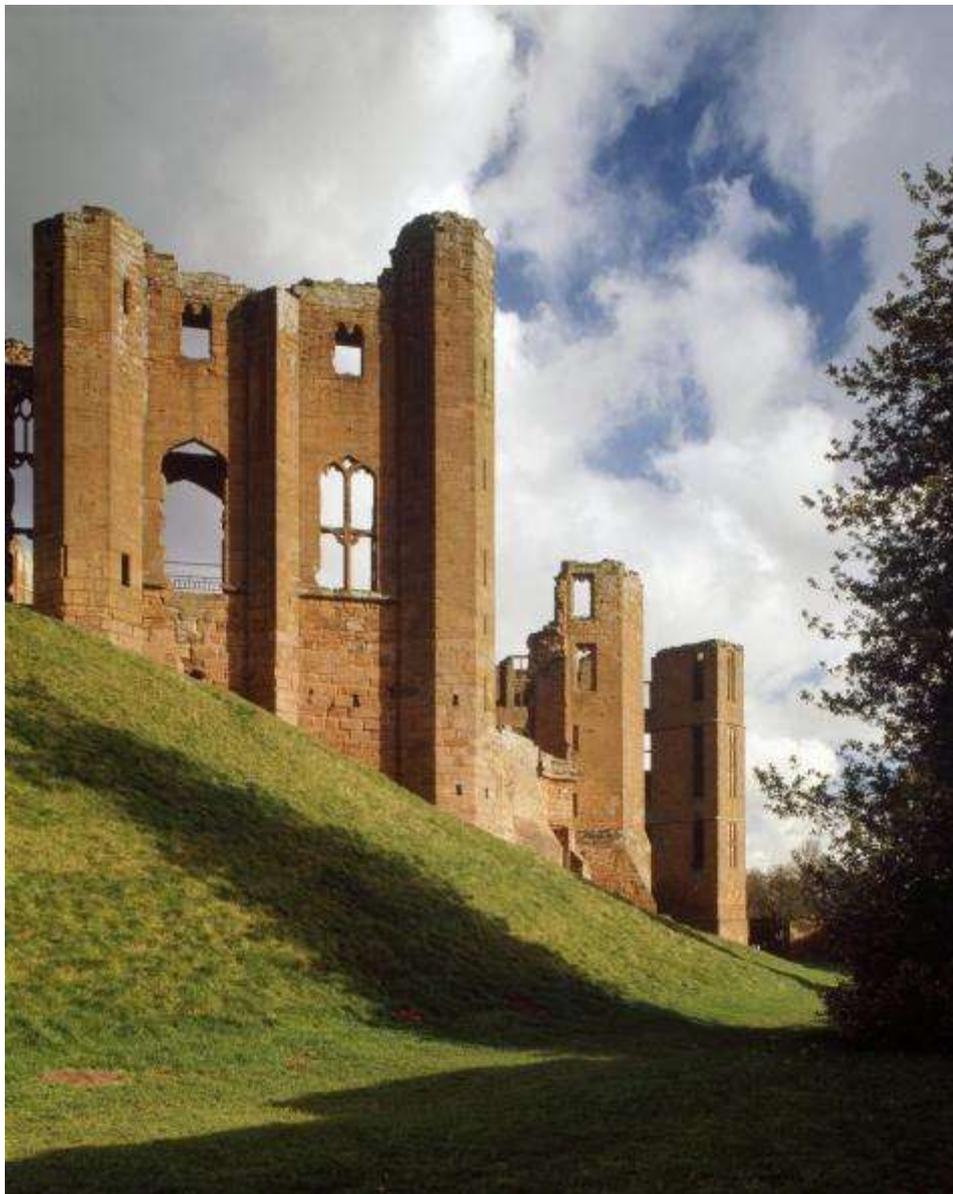


*John of Gaunt's buildings from top floor of Leicester's Building.*

Further sets of apartments could be found in the Saintlowe Tower, to the left of the great hall. Those on the second floor were probably for the chamberlain and in the space below another official, perhaps the clerk of the wardrobe. These rooms are difficult to appreciate now because their first floor has been almost totally removed since the slighting and pillaging following the English Civil War. These rooms though, would have been for use by the lord of the castle with those furthest from the hall being the most exclusive.

Gaunt is thought to have built the central oriel, Gaunt's Tower, the great chamber and the second chamber in the 1370s, at the same time as he rebuilt the great hall. No documentation exists for the use of the apartments in Gaunt's time but it's likely that the great

chamber was his audience chamber and also where the most important members of the household staff usually dined. The second chamber was probably his private dining room and beyond this would have been the state bedchamber. Gaunt's Tower provided him with his most private rooms for relaxation and admiring the views. Latrines for the household staff are still visible beneath this.

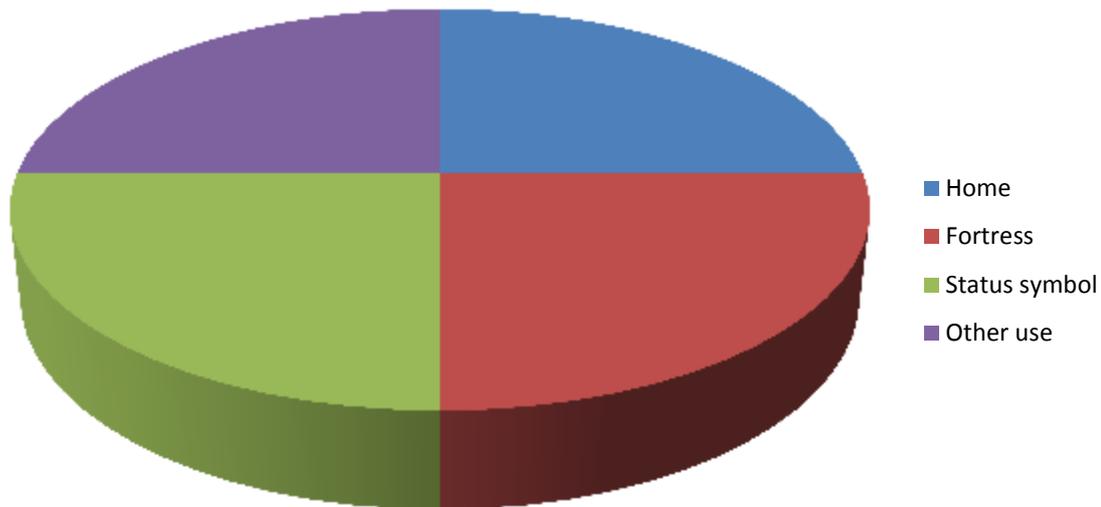


*View of the Saintlowe Tower from the West with Gaunt's Tower and Leicester's Building beyond.*

The buildings added by John of Gaunt tell us a lot about the organisation of a great aristocratic household in the period. It would have been run by the chamberlain, the steward, the treasurer and the clerk of the wardrobe. A constable was also permanently resident at the castle and responsible for its security. (He probably lived in a two-storey timber building connected to Lunn's Tower). Gaunt's household numbered over 100 male servants, many of aristocratic birth, whose primary purpose was to maintain the magnificence of his public image. Despite the works however, Gaunt rarely visited Kenilworth due to his constant involvement in national government and his expeditions abroad.

**Activity**

The diagram shows the different functions of Kenilworth under John of Gaunt as equally important. Do you think this balance is correct? If so, explain why. If not, explain how you would change it and why.

**Role of Kenilworth under John of Gaunt****Kenilworth under the Lancastrian Kings and the Early Tudors: 1399-1547**

In 1399, John of Gaunt's son, Henry Bolingbroke overthrew King Richard II and became King Henry IV. This brought the title and estates of the duchy of Lancaster to the Crown, which retains them to this day. Kenilworth became a favoured residence of the Lancastrian kings, no doubt in part for its strategic position, particularly during the Wars of the Roses, and because of its fine and comfortable buildings.

Thanks to John of Gaunt's new buildings, the work of his successors was primarily concerned with maintenance and repairs. Any additions made relate to the expansion of its facilities for pleasure and relaxation. For example in 1417, Henry V commissioned 'the Pleasance in the Marsh' out of waste land at the far end of the mere: this was a private palace in which the king could relax in private, away from the distractions of the royal court and officials.

The great tower seems to have taken on a more administrative function in the 15th century. In 1444- 1445, a payment was made for adapting the 12th-century chapel to store 'evidences' (administrative documents).

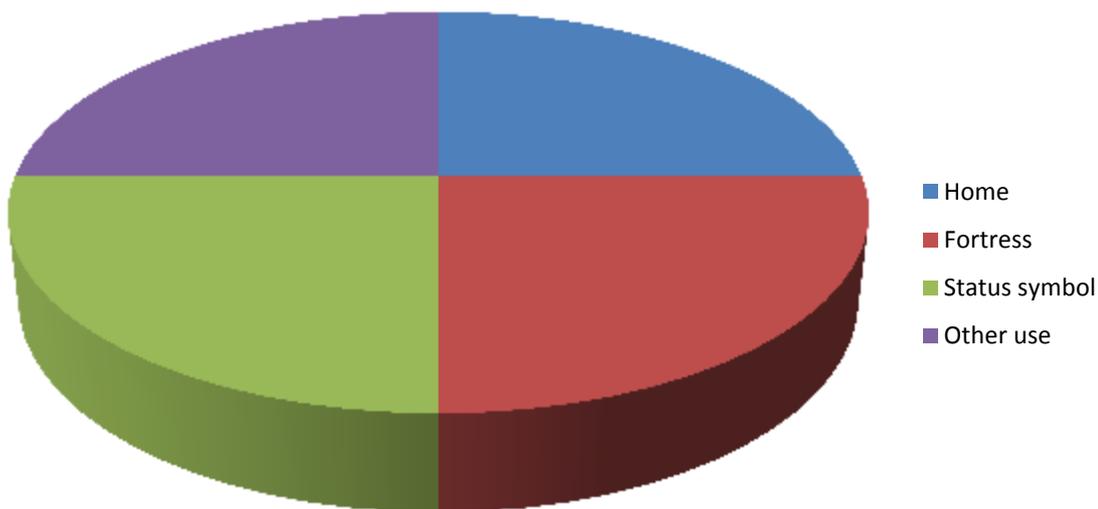
Records show the Pleasance had to undergo many repairs in the 15th century and in Henry VIII's reign it was abandoned, with at least one of its buildings being re-erected in the base court of the castle in about 1524, (possibly using the foundations of Thomas of Lancaster's collegiate chapel). Between 1530 and 1532 part of the castle's inner court was rebuilt in timber, in advance of an impending royal visit.

Named by Sir William Dugdale 'King Henry's Lodgings', this two-storey structure was likely developed to improve the private apartments and provide additional lodgings.

### Activity

Redraw your diagram from the previous activity to show the roles of Kenilworth in the period 1399-1547

### Role of Kenilworth 1399-1547



**Kenilworth and the Dudley Family: 1547-1588**

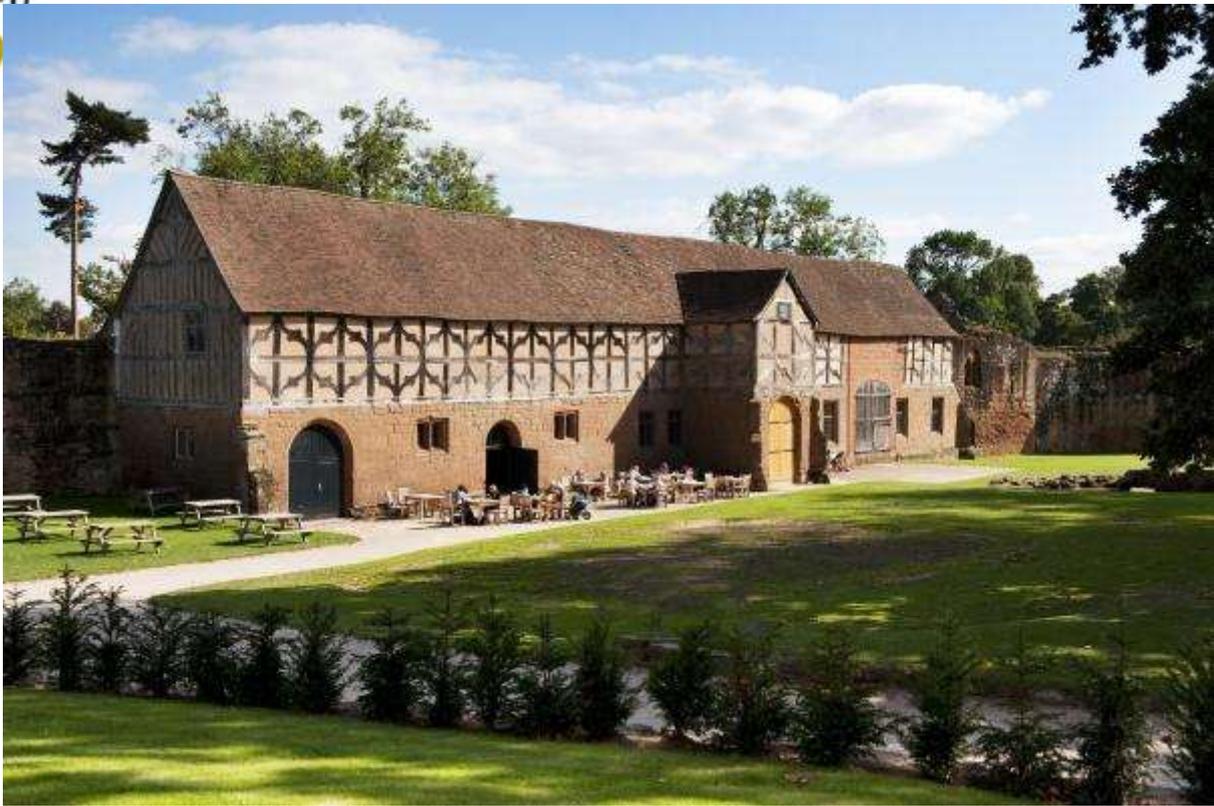
Kenilworth Castle was granted to John Dudley in 1553. John had risen in the favour of Henry VIII through military service and became a dominant force in the reign of Henry's son, Edward VI (r.1547- 1553). However, within months of formally receiving the castle, he was executed for attempting to oppose the accession of Queen Mary, Edward's sister, when Edward died in 1553.

Following Mary's death and with the accession of her sister, Elizabeth I (r.1558-1603), John's sons, Ambrose and Robert, slowly began to accrue offices, titles and estates in a bid to recover the family's fortunes. Ambrose was made Earl of Warwick in 1561 and Robert, Earl of Leicester and Baron of Denbigh in 1564.

By 1563, John's sons were back in royal favour and restoring the family fortunes. A survey from that year shows that before his death, John built new stables and widened the top of the dam to allow for jousting at tournaments, with that area subsequently known as the 'tiltyard'. He remodelled the Gallery Tower so that it could serve as a viewing gallery for tournaments.



*View looking along the causeway and tiltyard towards the castle.*



*Exterior view of the Stables.*

Robert, Earl of Leicester, inherited Kenilworth. He undertook major works between 1570 and 1572. These were apparently subsidised by substantial grants from Queen Elizabeth I, who visited Kenilworth four times: in 1566, 1568, 1572 and 1575.

During this programme of building Leicester almost certainly remodelled Henry VIII's 'lodgings' on the east range of the castle's inner court, in stone. In the great tower he added the three Elizabethan 'grid' windows to the first floor and remodelled the hall as a great chamber to serve as the equivalent of an Elizabethan long gallery where he could display his collection of paintings.

At the top of the south-east turret of the great tower, peg-holes for the square face of the castle clock can be seen. To the forebuilding, abutting the great tower, Leicester also added windows. The vertical sides of one from a first-floor chamber can be seen above the entrance, decorated with Leicester's badges and the date 1570 below it.

The entrance itself is through a restored, round-arched doorway to a small open courtyard with arches dating from 1569. This would have created a fashionable vestibule in a Classical style, to access the great tower and approach the garden beyond. The Norman slit window in the east wall shows how dark it would have been before Leicester's work.

Furthermore he renovated the apartment range. The veneer of the new masonry on the outside of the building is visible at the junction with the bay window in the great hall. The foundations of two Elizabethan bay windows survive between the hall and the central oriel, and there are also fragmentary remains of a new oriel between the second chamber (by this time the audience chamber) and the privy chamber (now the place for dining). This would have provided a direct route to the state accommodation in the new building.

Leicester had this building constructed between 1571 and 1572, specifically to provide private lodgings for the queen and her close servants. She used the new building in 1572 and after that it was improved for her visit of 1575. Evidence of the extensive work undertaken

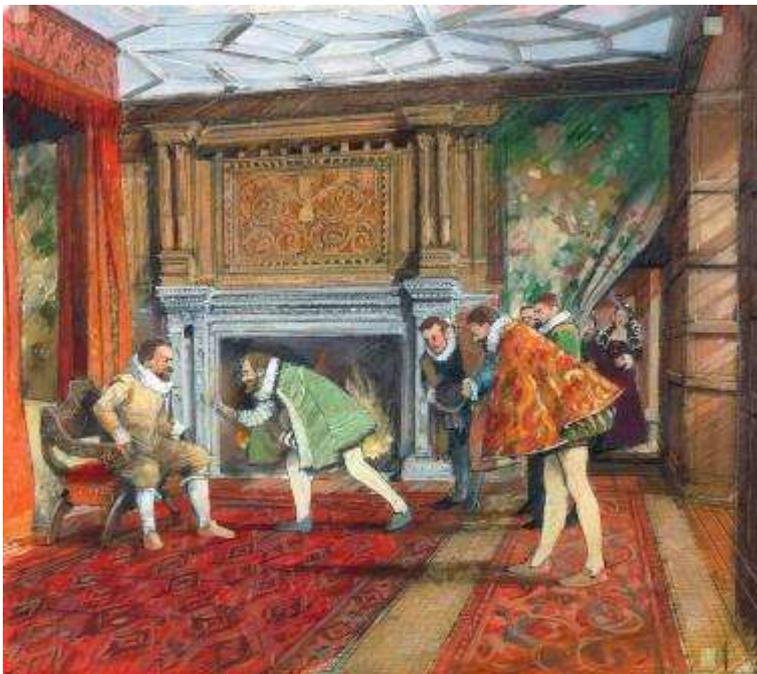
for the 1572 visit comes from letters to Leicester from his architect on ‘the new tower’ (Leicester’s building), ‘Caesar’s tower’ (the great tower) and the state apartments.

A garden probably existed at this time too, but the famous privy garden is not recorded until the visit of 1575. Elizabeth’s 19-day visit to Kenilworth in July 1575 is justly famous – it set a new precedent for elaboration in royal entertainment and in this, the new building was a fitting backdrop. Its colossal glass windows were a distinctive and much imitated feature of the new style of architecture then coming into being.



*View of Leicester's Building.*

Leicester's building is the size of a small country house and so to make enough space for it, the tower block was extended beyond the medieval curtain wall. Although a four-storey building at full height, the basement lay below ground level because the building was built within the former ditch. Leicester's building was once linked to the great tower by an east range; the remains of the connecting walls for this can still be seen on the northern wall of the building. The tallest windows indicate the principal floor and spaces for doors and fireplaces still survive. Rows of small holes in the south and west walls once held the wooden pegs that supported a tall timber and plaster frieze beneath the ceiling. Large cracks in the south facing walls suggest the whole building threatened to collapse when the south-west turret was added between 1572 and 1575 – all to provide Elizabeth I with a private stair between the upper floors! Stone for some of this work had been re-used from a dissolved monastery, possibly Kenilworth Priory.



*Leicester's gatehouse interior and Leicester's building interior by Ivan Lapper: A reconstruction of the Elizabethan Bedchamber in the first floor gatehouse annex of Leicester's Gatehouse and Reconstruction.*

Leicester's Gatehouse was also built at this time. Straddling the medieval curtain wall, it provided a grand new entrance for the castle from the Coventry direction and from Kenilworth parish church, where Elizabeth I attended a Sunday service in 1575. The gatehouse also gave access to the hunting in the chase by way of a wooden bridge across the north arm of the mere. Although battlemented, the building was a symbolic rather than defensive structure. It was secured only by a pair of gates and had many large windows. The entrance passage was wide enough for carriages at ground level and there were two floors of lodgings above.



*View of knot garden and Elizabethan garden from upper floor of Leicester's Gatehouse.*

Through his building programme, Leicester sought to promote the medieval associations of the castle; significantly he left John of Gaunt's great hall untouched and modelled the gatehouse on the gatehouse at Warwick Castle of his Beauchamp ancestors. However, his work also drew on the style and luxury of the northern Renaissance, exemplified in large glazed windows, plaster friezes and ceilings, classical fireplaces and a great garden. The image of the castle as a Renaissance country house was found elsewhere in the period, for example at Ludlow and Raglan castles, but the Kenilworth remodelling was the most extensive and remains the best preserved.

The work at Kenilworth is very significant in terms of Elizabethan architecture. By putting together Leicester's Building with the medieval great tower meant that Leicester's Building had to be of extraordinary height. This created the 'midland high house style' of which Hardwick New Hall is the ultimate statement. The brittle, thin walls and grids of windows are the prototypes for the High Elizabethan style of the 1580s and 1590s. By using the same red sandstone from quarries adjacent to the castle, Leicester helped create a sense of harmony between the buildings of the castle's inner court, despite their wide range of dates.



*Tudor reconstruction by Lapper.*

### **Everyday life at Elizabethan Kenilworth**

Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, often resided at Kenilworth, but he was not there the whole time. When he was away, a small staff would have lived there to look after the castle. At these times, the great state-rooms would have been largely empty with only basic furnishings like bed-frames and chests; the fine textiles and hangings which made them look magnificent would be in store. The castle and the estates around it would have been run by a Steward: Leicester's new gatehouse may have been built as a residence for him - gatehouses were often used in this way. When Leicester arrived with his household, the castle would have come to life. The long stable building, built in the 1550s by his father, John Dudley, would have been full; the finest horses would be reserved for Leicester and his guests to ride and for hunting, other horses for senior servants, horses and mules to pull carts. Like all great houses of the day, Kenilworth provided private chambers for the lord, his family, privileged guests, and the senior members of his household, who were probably members of Midlands gentry families. The lower servants had little or no privacy, and may have slept in common areas like the kitchen, the Great Hall or the rooms in the keep. Those who worked as personal attendants might have slept on mattresses in their master's or mistress' chambers, or on the landing outside the chamber door, to be on call. The lower servants would have eaten in the Great Hall. Upper servants, like the Dudley family and their guests, often ate in their own chambers. On grand occasions Dudley would have eaten in state in the Great Chamber and entertained guests there.

A remarkable inventory of Leicester's 'plate and other 'howseholde stuffe' at Kenilworth, dating from c. 1578, survives. Most of the objects listed are plate – silverware for dining – and textiles. There were several sets of tapestries depicting subjects like the stories of Hercules, Samson, and King David; these were imported from the Netherlands at great expense, and were great status symbols. Other rooms were lined with simpler but brightly coloured hangings. The great number of beds, bed-hangings, pillows and sheets, is further testimony to Dudley's wealth and the size of his household. Linen sheets, feather-beds and pillows, stuffed with down and set out on curtained four-poster beds, were for the nobility and

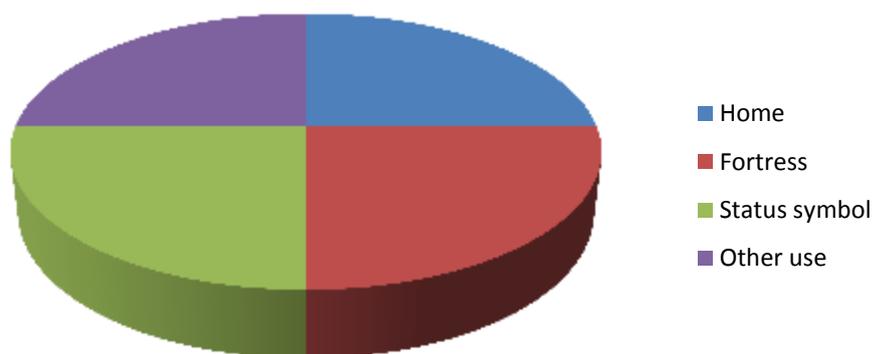
gentry; the canvas mattresses, probably stuffed with straw or horse-hair, were for the lower servants, and were probably rolled up during the day. Leicester had a substantial collection of pictures, most were portraits, for the English love of portraiture was becoming established – starting with two full length portraits of himself and two of the Queen. Surprisingly, perhaps, the castle did not house a significant armoury; only a few swords and daggers. There were a few curiosities, like the ‘bone of a fish somewhat like to a sworde blade’, and a pair of fishing rods, doubtless for use in the mere. Leicester was not known as an intellectual: Kenilworth only boasted four books – a bible and three psalters.

*Steven Brindle, Properties Historians.*

### Activity

Redraw your diagram from the previous activity to show the roles of Kenilworth in the period 1547-88

### Kenilworth under the Dudley family 1547-88



### Activity

You can use sources of evidence to understand developments at Kenilworth Castle. Here are some examples:

- Documents:
  - A survey of work done on the castle in 1563 by John Dudley
  - Letters exchanged between the Earl of Leicester and his architect
- Photographs of the remains of the castle
- A reconstruction drawing
- References to physical evidence e.g. the stone re-used from a dissolved monastery.

Of the sources that you have used which were the most useful for understanding developments at Kenilworth in the period 1547-88 and why?

### Kenilworth under the Stuarts

The Earl of Leicester died in 1588 without an heir. After 20 years of legal and family wrangling, Kenilworth Castle reverted back to the Crown. In 1612 it was conveyed to the future king Charles I (r.1625-1649) and at his marriage in 1626, the castle formed part of the marriage

portion of his new queen, Henrietta Maria, and was held in stewardship for her by Robert Carey, Earl of Monmouth.

Charles I made a number of royal visits to Kenilworth. In 1634 visitors noted that the state apartments were 'all adorned with fair and rich chimneypieces of alabaster, black marble, and of joiner's work in curious carved wood'.

### **Kenilworth and the Civil War**

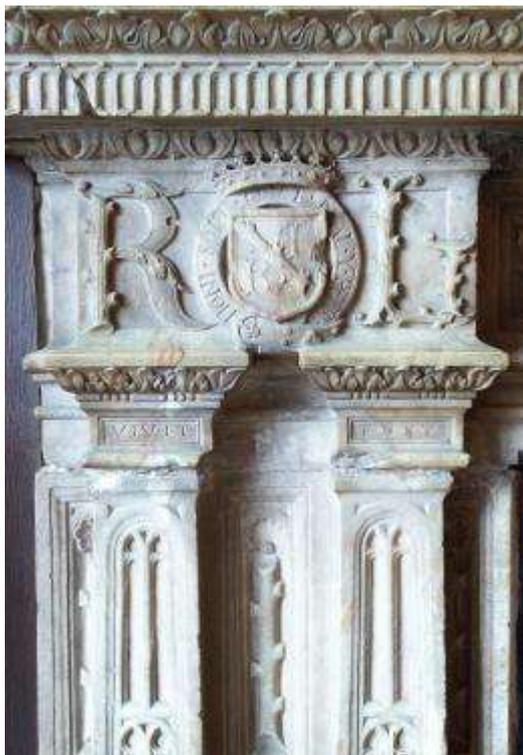
Following the outbreak of the English Civil War and an indecisive first battle at Edgehill in October 1642, Charles I withdrew the Royalist garrison from Kenilworth. The castle was then occupied by the Parliamentarians and remained largely unscathed until uprisings in 1648 following the imprisonment of Charles I, resulted in Parliament taking a harder line on the destruction of all former Royalist strongholds.

During 1649 several parliamentary orders were issued for the slighting of Kenilworth. However Henry Carey, 2nd Earl of Monmouth, successfully petitioned 'that it be slighted with as little spoil to the dwelling house as might be.' In September 1649 the local antiquary Sir William Dugdale (1605-1686), made sketches of the castle, aware it was about to be slighted. These were engraved and published in 1656 in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, together with the first known plan of the castle and a long description of its history.

Dugdale's work formed the basis of all histories of Kenilworth until the later 19th century, including the names used for many of its buildings. The slighting eventually took place in 1649-50 when the north side of the great tower was demolished and sections of the outer curtain wall were destroyed.

### **Kenilworth the Farm**

The commander who had overseen the slighting, Colonel Joseph Hawkesworth, was given the castle estate in lieu of back payments for the local militia. He retained the castle for himself and converted Leicester's Gatehouse into a residence. He built an extension on the east side to provide a kitchen, additional accommodation and a main staircase. He also blocked the passage to create a ground floor and a basement and added the west porch as a new entrance. This still displays the initials 'R L' for Robert, Earl of Leicester and shows how Hawkesworth reused materials from elsewhere in the castle. On the ground floor of the gatehouse, the southern room contains relocated Elizabethan panelling and a fine alabaster fireplace which give a good impression of what the Elizabethan fittings of the apartments of the castle would have been like.



*Leicester's Gatehouse south room interior. Detail of the alabaster fireplace with Leicester's initials 'RL'.*

The gatehouse eventually became the house for a farm established in the bottom end of the base court. Wood panelling on the first floor show how the interior of the building would have looked when it was in use as a house. The 16th-century stable block was kept in use as part of the farm and continued to be so until the Victorian period.

Hawkesworth's fellow officers divided the estate into farms for themselves. They pillaged the residential buildings of the inner bailey for building materials, leading to the castle quickly becoming a roofless ruin. Its fittings and fixtures were reused in houses all round the area. At this time too, the mere was drained and the Inchford brook returned to its natural course through a culvert in the dam.

### **Kenilworth and the Restoration**

Hawkesworth was evicted in 1660 at the Restoration of Charles II (r.1660-1685). Charles returned the castle to his mother, Henrietta Maria. In 1665 it was granted to Laurence Hyde (1642-1711), a brother-in-law of James, Duke of York (the future James II), and later Earl of Rochester. In the 18th century the castle descended through his Hyde successors, and then to Thomas Villiers, who became 1st Earl of Clarendon in 1776.

#### **Activity**

1. Look back at your work in the activities in this resource, especially the timeline you have been making notes on.
2. English Heritage wants to produce a slideshow with just five slides. You have to choose the five images which you think best sum up the history of the castle. It is up to you to choose the five slides, and to explain your choice. Good luck!

**We've now reached the end of the study of Kenilworth Castle. We hope you have**

enjoyed learning about the history of the castle.