

# Leeds Castle Teachers' Guide

## With Tudor Links

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

### **A brief history of Leeds Castle**

ere built for defence; others, like Leeds, were built as homes, to show off wealth and strength. Leeds Castle was built in 1119 by a Norman Knight called Robert de Crevecoeur. The moat that runs around the castle was made in the 13th century and is fed by the river Len.

In 1278 King Edward I became the owner and it stayed a royal castle until 1552. Its most famous owner was Henry VIII. During the Tudor period, another floor was added to the castle providing bedrooms; windows were put in and fireplaces installed. Soon after Henry's death, the Castle passed into private hands where it remained until 1926 when a very rich lady called Lady Baillie bought it to create a fabulous country house. She spent over £20 million in today's money, restoring it. She had French artists and craftsmen rebuild the inside to make it look like it did in Tudor times - and then filled the place with rich and famous guests, playing croquet and golf, swimming in the pool, and enjoying the grounds, which had zebras and llamas grazing.

### **The Heraldry room**

Along the walls of this room, you will find a timeline of the history of Leeds Castle and the people who owned it. The portraits are all members of the Fairfax family who owned the castle from 1690 – 1806.

### **The Queen's Room**

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

The fireplace was put in at the time of Henry VIII – look out for his insignia (Tudor Rose, Dragon) carved in the stone. Catherine of Valois was in fact King Henry VII's grandmother. Following the death of her husband, Henry V, she married Owen Tudor, a commoner by whom she had several children. Their son Edmund married and had a son Henry, who killed Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth and was then crowned King Henry VII in 1485.

### **The Queen's Bathroom**

This room too is designed as it may have been in 1420. The bath is made from wood. The cloth covers would stop the Queen from getting splinters.

### **The Queen's Gallery**

The marble statues of Henry VIII and his three children were carved during Elizabeth I's reign. They were commissioned by the 1st Lord Lumley and represent 4 monarchs, through whose reigns he lived. They are unique and are thought to have been carved from Italian marble prior to 1569. The fireplace is again a Tudor one, dating to the time of Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon, as some of her symbols (Castle of Castille and pomegranates) are also carved in the spandrels.



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### **Henry VIII Banqueting Hall**

England's most famous King held parties in this room and ate banquets of exotic food such as roast peacocks and swan! On 22nd May 1520 Henry and his first Queen, Katherine of Aragon stayed overnight at Leeds Castle, together with 5000 people. They were on their way to France to meet the French King, Francois I. Can you find the picture of him in this room?

### **The Chapel**

King Edward I and his queen, Eleanor of Castile had 16 babies! When she died, he built a chapel at Leeds Castle to remember her. Subsequently, during the Reformation in Henry VIII's reign, the Chapel was closed and deconsecrated. This chapel was opened in 1978 and re-consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

### **The Boardroom Corridor**

The upper floor was added by Henry VIII, although in Tudor times it did not look as it does now. Look out for the door frames with Tudor carvings in the corners.

### **The Seminar Room**

This room used to be Lady Baillie's private sitting room, but was turned into a meeting room in 1978.

### **The Dressing Room & Lady Baillie's Bedroom**

As you pass through Lady Baillie's suite of rooms imagine what it would have been like to stay here. The clothes that you see were all made for Lady Baillie.

### **Catherine of Aragon Bedroom**

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

### **Main staircase**

Upstairs, where you can't go today, are the bedrooms that are used by people who visit the castle for meetings, weddings and parties. You are now in the 1822 part of the Castle.

### **Yellow Drawing Room**

The walls in this room are covered in silk, not wallpaper.

### **Thorpe Hall Drawing room**

The wooden panelling on the walls comes from Thorpe Hall in Cambridgeshire. The panels were taken out of the house in 1928 and sold, so the walls are 200 years older than the room.

### **The Inner Hall**

The 16th century Tudor Horseman is carved from oak and is the oldest horse statue in England. The knight holds a battle hammer – look behind you and there is one above the door.

### **The Library**

This room was once the schoolroom for Lady Baillie's two daughters. When they grew up it was turned into a library – there are now 3,000 books in this room.

### **The Dining Room**

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

