

Castles

Brief History of Castles



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The practice of gating and walling of castles and cities

Gated and walled cities can be traced back to ancient times. Jericho, the world's oldest city was a fortified and walled city. And then there were castles surrounded by walls. Walls in those days were needed for protection against enemies and bandits and to keep out unwanted persons.

Defensive mechanisms and structures such as curtain walls, towers, moats, gatehouses, barbicans, portcullises, heavy wooden doors, murder holes, steep inclines, etc were in fact all formidable uniquely designed obstacles to give the defenders every possible advantages over the attackers - to slow down or stop the enemy advance, to prevent them from smashing through walls, to protect the inhabitants, the castle or city. In many instances these obstacles were very effective making a castle surrender a complicated and difficult task.

To overcome these obstacles or crash all resistance in order to have almost every advantage over the defenders and to capture the castle or walled city, attackers on the other side of the walls needed carefully planned techniques and sophisticated weapons. They just needed to find or cause a weakness in the defenders "defence system" and exploit it.

When a castle or city could not be taken quickly by direct assault the attackers laid siege to these fortifications. They surrounded the castle or city then used several siege techniques (cut off supplies to the castle, etc) and a variety of siege warfare weapons (siege towers, catapults, mangonels, etc) to force it to surrender. This could take weeks, months or even years to accomplish. Many sieges failed others not.

1) Castles

The middle ages - In the days of feudalism stone castles were enclosed in solid tall outer walls and in some cases inner and outer walls (curtain walls) with high towers, battlements and arrow loops. And the entire wall or walls were often surrounded by a broad, deep water filled moat. In many instances castles were built on high ground where they had a good view of the surrounding countryside.

In a great tower (inner stronghold, the keep or donjon) the best fortified part of the castle, lived the lord and his family. The area between the keep and the curtain walls was called the bailey (courtyard). Castles were originally designed and built as fortified residences, but they also served as symbols of might, power, wealth, status, authority and prestige. The only way to cross a moat and reach the castle was via the drawbridge that could be lowered or raised by means of winches and chains from the room above the gatehouse.

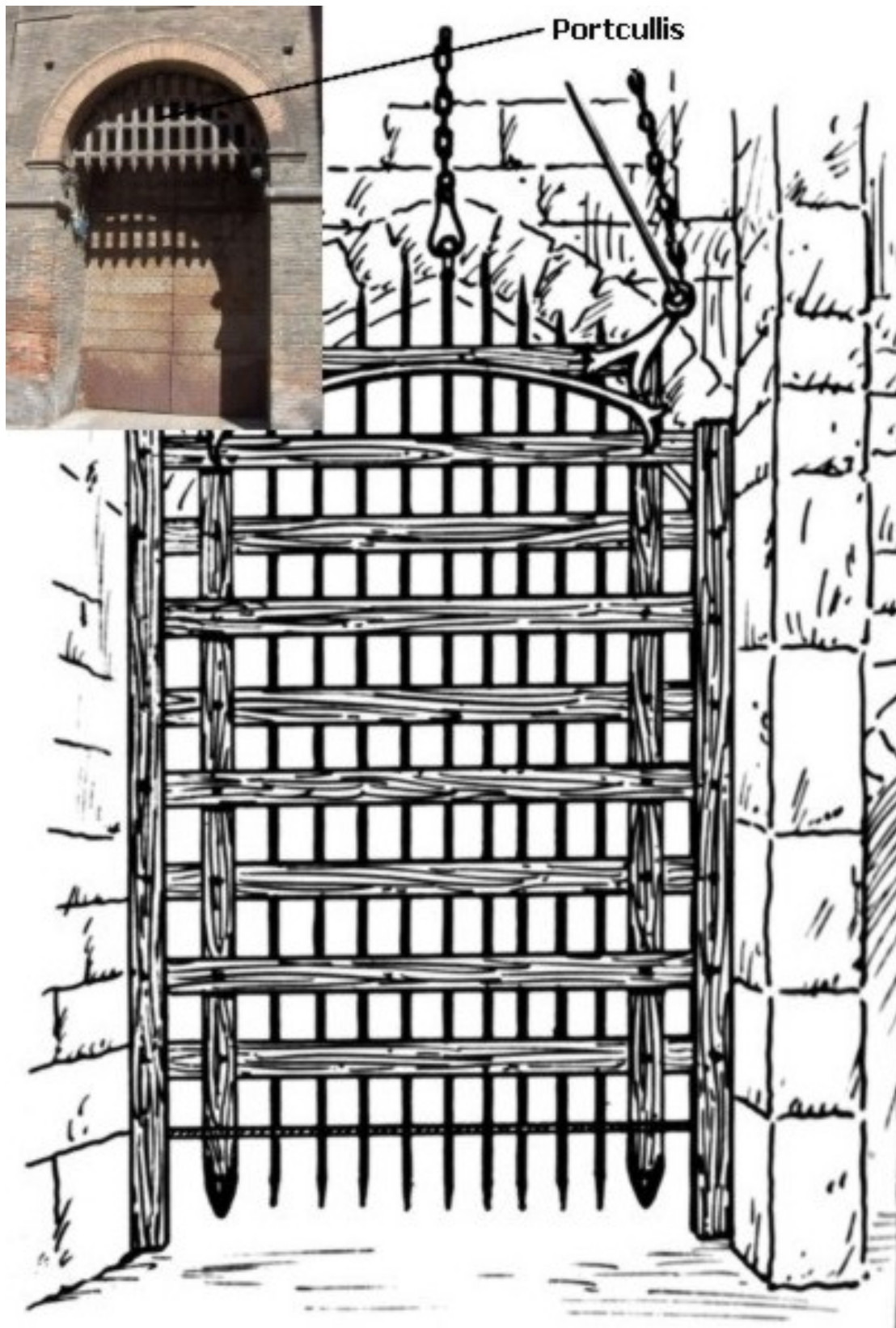
If someone was able to cross the bridge he could be stopped at the gatehouse, a fortified structure built into the wall over the main entrance. The gatehouse normally included defensive features: a heavy wooden door, murder holes and a portcullis - this heavy timber or metal grill (portcullis) could be raised or lowered in front of the wooden door to block the entrance especially when the castle came under attack. Sometimes two to four portcullises would be used to protect the entrance. Gatehouses were often defended by barbicans - a fortified structure leading to the gatehouse. See also 2) Walled Cities.



Image 1) Warwick Castle complete with surrounding walls, towers and gatehouse.



Image 2) A semi-circular barbican added to the gatehouse.



Gatehouse entrance and portcullis.

2) Walled cities

In the middle ages people used to build defensive walls around their cities as protection against foreign invaders and bandits. Massive towers or bastions and main and lesser city gates were incorporated into the walls. City gates were traditionally built to provide a point of controlled access to and departure from a walled city for people, vehicles, goods and animals. (Wikipedia). The gatehouses normally included:

- 1) a portcullis or portcullises, (When the city or town came under attack the drawbridge was raised and the portcullis lowered to protect the entrance),
- 2) a heavy iron-lined door protected by a portcullis.
- 3) a drawbridge and
- 4) murder holes (hidden opening in the floor of the room above the door of a gatehouse through which soldiers dropped heavy objects or boiling liquid down on attackers who managed to break through the drawbridge and portcullis).

Additional defensive features to strengthen and defend the main entrance were:

- 1) moats (a ditch that surrounded a castle and city walls was either filled with water or left dry),
- 2) barbicans (gatehouses were often defended by barbicans - a fortified structure leading to the gatehouse),
- 3) flanking towers (The main gate was flanked by twin towers). These towers had arrow slits (narrow openings in the wall which were used by archers).



Carcassonne, France, showing the classic features of the curtain walls, defensive ditch with arched bridge, and cylindrical flanking towers, with a gatehouse and additional wooden defensive structures, here defending a walled city.

Glamis Castle

One of the most picturesque and beautiful of the old Scottish castles is Glamis Castle. It dates back to the dark ages, having been a royal residence in the time of King Malcolm II. He was murdered in 1034 at Glamis and brought to Royal Hunting Lodge (Site of Castle). Others say he was mortally wounded in battle. Glamis Castle has been the home of the Lyon family since the 14th century.

John Lyon, was the 1st Thane of Glamis. He was granted thaneage of Glamis by King Robert II in 1372. In 1376 Sir John Lyon married the King's daughter, Princess Joanna. Construction of the castle started in the days of John Lyon, 1st Master of Glamis (1400). He built the East Wing of the Castle (Palace House). Construction of the Castle's main (great) tower started by John's son Patrick in 1435 and was completed in 1484. The North-East Wing with the Chapel and the West Wing were built in the late 1600's. The Billiard Room and service courtyards followed later.

Patrick Lyon was the 1st Lord Glamis followed by Alexander Lyon, 2nd Lord Glamis, then John Lyon, 3rd Lord Glamis, John Lyon, 4th Lord Glamis, George Lyon, 5th Lord Glamis, John Lyon, 6th Lord Glamis, John Lyon, 7th Lord Glamis, John Lyon, 8th Lord Glamis and Patrick Lyon, 9th Lord Glamis. Patrick was created Earl of Kinghorne in 1606. The titles were pretty well secured by the eccentric ancestor, Patrick, the 9th Baron of Fortviot.

His grandson another Patrick Lyon, 3rd Earl of Kinghorne after John Lyon, 2nd Earl of Kinghorn, acquired the title of Strathmore and arranged the succession to please himself, that in default of a direct heir the titles should go to any person nominated by himself that in all future ages the heirs should be styled, "Earls of Strathmore and Kinghorn, Viscounts Lyon, Barons Glamis, Tannadyce, Sydlaw and Strathdichtill. The earldom changed to Strathmore and Kinghorne (1677), and has remained in the Lyon (later Bowes-Lyon) family ever since.

Elizabeth Angela Marguerite Bowes-Lyon was the youngest daughter and the ninth of ten children of Claude Bowes-Lyon, Lord Glamis (later the 14th Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorne in the Peerage of Scotland), and his wife, Cecilia Cavendish-Bentinck. Elizabeth Angela Marguerite Bowes-Lyon was later known as Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother. She married King George VI. Glamis Castle was the Queen Mother's childhood home. And this was where Princess Margaret, her second daughter after Elizabeth II was borne.

Another interesting story is that of Lady Glamis (Janet Douglas) who was married to John Lyon, 6th Lord Glamis (1492-1528) and later to Archibald Campbell of Skipness was falsely accused of witchcraft and was burnt on the stake on Castle Hill in Edindurgh on July 17, 1537. Now it's said that the family chapel in Glamis is haunted by a "Grey Lady", who is believed to be the ghost of Lady Janet Douglas.

Glamis Castle stands a little way off the road from Dundee to Kerriemuir, in Forfarshire, Scotland, and is the center of an estate of many thousands of acres which embraces some of the most picturesque scenery of Scotland. It is one of the examples of extant of medieval architecture. The main gateway is a tripple-arched structure, batlemented and surmounted by carved lions, the heraldic emblems of the family of Strathmore. From the gate a spacious avenue, closely bordered with trees, leads for a short distance to a grassy plain, through which it passes on a straight line of a mile to the main entrance of the castle.

The general appearance of the structure from this approach reminds one of a French chateau of the sixteenth century. A quarter circle tower rises seven stories high and two wings extend at right angles. The interior of the building contains a great assembly hall, a beautiful chapel and a vaulted crypt, to which a special staircase descends.

In the thick walls narrow irregular windows look across the valley to the Grampian hills. The walls are so thick that hidden stairways and passages are frequent in them, and a secret room exists whose location, it is said, was known only to the reigning Earl, the eldest son and his business manager. The main entrance is singularly small and low, and the door is of heavy Oak, studded with iron rails. Directly inside the door is an iron gate, opening on the great staircase, which is in a circular tower and ascends spirally. The gardens at Glamis were laid out by Lord Strathmore (1901). Lady Strathmore always kept the drawing room full of flowers. Her daughters, Lady Anne Lyon and Lady Maud Lyon, were also artistic in their tastes.

The visitor, from the moment he enters the great door at the base of the tower, is convinced that it is a mysterious old castle with secret staircases, and wonders whether, like Sir Walter Scott, he would like to sleep in the haunted rooms. In another bedroom is shown underneath the floor the entrance to a staircase, with hidden passages connecting with other apartments. A secret wall in one of the great walls leads to an upper room where prisoners were once confined.

There are many handsome rooms in the castle. The dining room is a splendid banquet room. The great wall is a vaulted room with massive stone walls. It is the central tower, with its spiral staircases and dark vaulted corridors, that gives character to the castle as a medieval stronghold.



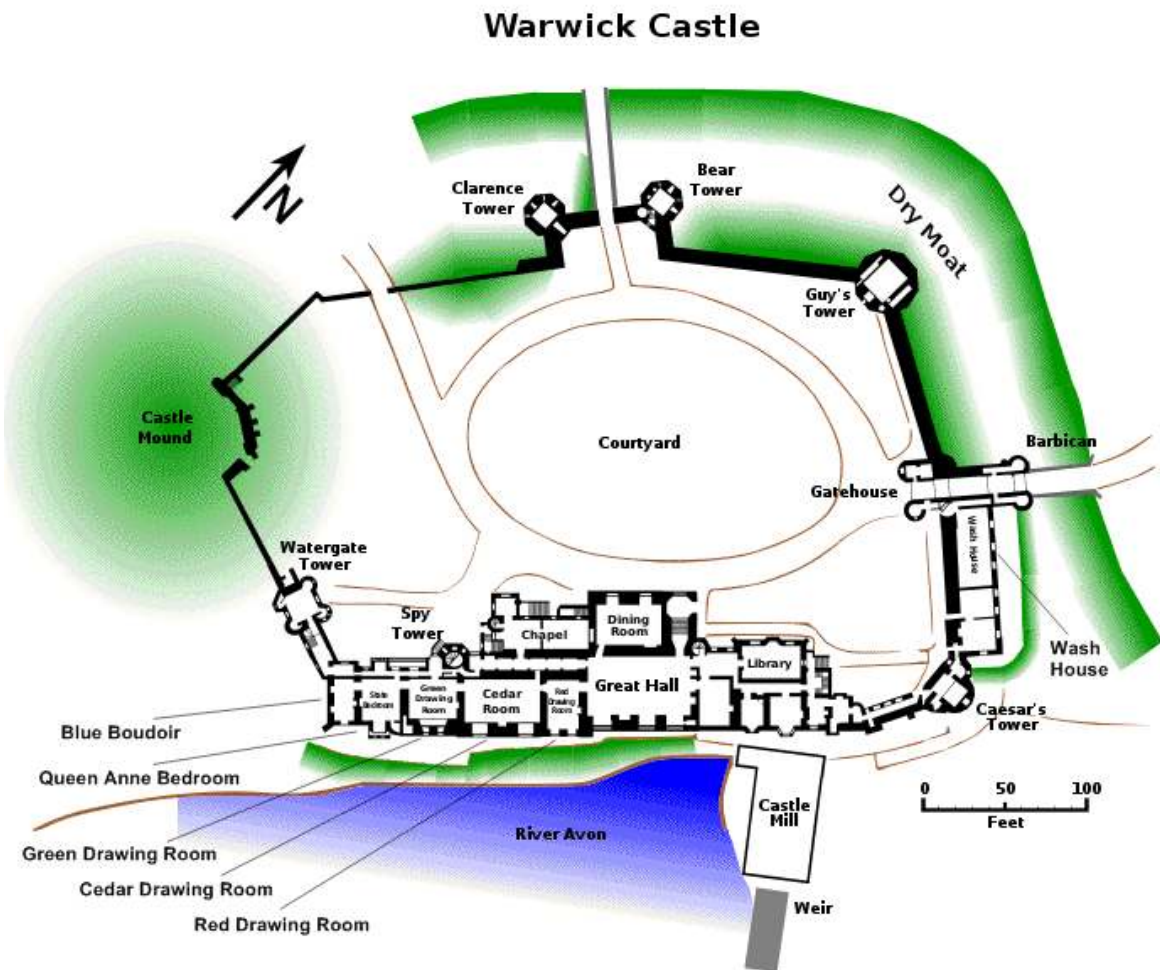
Glamis Castle in Angus, Scotland, UK. Photo. LeCardinal

Warwick Castle - The splendour and horror

A Brief history

Situated in the town of Warwick, County town of Warwickshire, on a bend overlooking the river Avon is Warwick Castle. It was originally built as a motte-and-bailey castle in 1068 by William the Conqueror in order to keep his control over the Midlands. The castle, 8 miles from Stratford-on-Avon, is one of the oldest in Britain that is still in use. The towers and walls are virtually unaltered since they were built in the 14th century.

The castle possesses all the characteristics of a medieval fortress of great strength and grandeur, and may be selected as one of the best examples in England of the castle of ancient days which played no inconsiderable part in the civil strife and in the political revolutions of the country's annals.



The five State rooms include: The Red Drawing Room, The Cedar Drawing Room, The Green Drawing Room, The Queen Anne Bedroom, and The Blue Boudoir

An Anglo-Saxon burh was established on the site in 914; with fortifications instigated by Ethelfleda, daughter of Alfred the Great. The burh she established was one of ten which defended Mercia against the marauding Danes. Its position allowed it to dominate the Fosse Way, as well as the river valley and the crossing over the River Avon. Though the motte to the south-west of the present castle is now called "Ethelfleda's Mound", it is in fact part of the later Norman fortifications, and not of Anglo-Saxon origin.

After the Norman conquest of England, William the Conqueror established a motte-and-bailey castle at Warwick in 1068 to maintain control of the Midlands as he advanced northwards. Building a castle in a pre-existing settlement could require demolishing properties on the intended site. In the case of Warwick, the least recorded of the 11 urban castles in the 1086 survey, four houses were torn down to make way for the castle.

A motte-and-bailey castle consists of a mound on which usually stands a keep or tower and a bailey, which is an enclosed courtyard. William appointed Henry de Beaumont, the son of a powerful Norman family, as constable of the castle. The castle passed into the hands of succession of kings and nobles. The title, Earl of Warwick has been created four times in the history of the castle. In 1088, 1447, 1618 and 1759. Source. Wikipedia. Warwick Castle.

Henry de Beaumont (De Newburgh) was given the position of constable of Warwick Castle and in 1088 was made Earl of Warwick.

Roger de Beaumont (De Newburgh) became the second Earl of Warwick and, in 1153, his wife was tricked into believing that he was dead and therefore gave up the castle to King Henry II (at the time known as Henry of Anjou). In a later turn of events Henry gave Warwick Castle back to the Earls of Warwick to show his gratitude for their support of his mother, Empress Matilda. Sometime later in the 12th century, during the reign of Henry II, the castle was demolished and rebuilt in stone, forming the basis of the castle that stands in Warwick today.

In 1242 Thomas de Beaumont, 6th Earl of Warwick, died and the castle and title was given to his sister, Lady Margery. The castle remained in the Beaumont family for several generations and underwent a number of changes, including the addition of towers, the re-design of some residential buildings and fortification of the facade overlooking the town.

Titleholders: Earls of Warwick. First Creation. 1088.

Henry de Beaumont (De Newburgh). 1st Earl of Warwick. 1088-1119. He married Margaret, daughter of Geoffrey II of Perche and Beatrix of Montdidier.

Roger de Beaumont (De Newburgh). 2nd Earl of Warwick. 1119-1153. He married Gundred de Warenne, daughter of William de Warenne, 2nd Earl of Surrey and Elizabeth de Vermandois.

William de Beaumont (De Newburgh) . 3rd Earl of Warwick. 1153-1184. He was succeeded by his brother, Waleran de Beaumont.

Waleran de Beaumont (De Newburgh). 4th Earl of Warwick. 1184-1203. He married Margery, daughter of Henry d'Oily and Maud de Bohu.

Henry de Beaumont (De Newburgh). 5th Earl of Warwick. 1203-1229. He married Margaret, daughter and co-heiress of Henry D'Oyly, Baron Hocknorton and Lord of the Manor of Lidney. His second wife was Philippa, daughter and co-heiress of Thomas Basset, Lord of Headington.

Thomas de Beaumont (De Newburgh). 6th Earl of Warwick. 1229-1242. He married Ela Longespee, daughter of William Longespée, 3rd Earl of Salisbury.

Margaret de Newburgh. 7th Countess of Warwick. 1242. Sister and heiress of Thomas de Beaumont. She married first John Marshal, and secondly John du Plessis.

John Du Plessis. 7th Earl of Warwick. 1242-1263

William Mauduit. 8th Earl of Warwick. 1263-1268. He was the son of Alice de Beaumont (daughter of the 4th Earl) and William de Maudit, and so was the grandson of Waleran de Beaumont, 4th Earl of Warwick. When he died, his estates passed to his daughter, Isabel de Maudit who had married William de Beauchamp. She died shortly after Warwick's death and the title passed to their son William de Beauchamp, 9th Earl of Warwick. He became the first Beauchamp earl of Warwick.

The castle and title later passed to the powerful Beauchamps.

Titleholders:

William de Beauchamp. 9th Earl of Warwick. 1268-1298

Guy de Beauchamp. 10th Earl of Warwick. 1298-1315

Thomas de Beauchamp. 11th Earl of Warwick. 1329-1369

Thomas De Beauchamp. 12th Earl of Warwick. 1369-1401

Richard de Beauchamp. 13th Earl of Warwick. 1401-1439

Henry de Beauchamp. 14th Earl and 1st Duke of Warwick. 1439-1446. After his death, his earldom was inherited by his daughter, Anne. She became the suo jure 15th Countess of Warwick at age two but died three years later. Her title as Countess of Warwick was inherited by her paternal aunt, Lady Anne (Lady Anne de Beauchamp, 16th Countess of Warwick). She was the daughter of Richard de Beauchamp, 13th Earl of Warwick, and his second wife Isabel le Despenser, Anne de Beauchamp. 15th Countess of Warwick. 1446-1449. She married Richard Neville, 16th Earl of Warwick.

In 1449 the castle passed to the Neville family as a result of the death of Anne de Beauchamp, 15th Countess of Warwick. Through his wife's inheritance of the title, Richard Neville became the next Earl of Warwick and in 1469 rebelled against King Edward IV, imprisoning him at the castle. After a brief attempt at ruling in the king's name, Neville was forced to release him and was killed in the battle of Barnet in 1471. George Plantagenet, Neville's son-in-law inherited the castle next but was executed in 1478.

The castle then became property of the crown since George's son, Edward, was just 2 years old when George died. Nevertheless, Edward later made a claim to the throne and as a result was imprisoned by Edward IV. He was held in the tower of London eventually executed by King Henry VII in 1499 for High Treason. This spelled the end of the line for the title of Earl of Warwick of its first creation.

Titleholder:

Anne and Richard Neville ('Warwick the Kingmaker'). 16th Earl and Countess of Warwick. 1449-1471. Her daughter Lady Isabel married George Plantagenet, 1st Duke of Clarence.

The castle and title now passed to the house of Plantagenet.

Titleholders:

George Plantagenet. Duke of Clarence and Earl of Warwick. 1472-1478. He was the brother of kings Edward IV and Richard III. At the age of 28 George was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London. He was tried for treason against his brother Edward IV. He was executed at the Tower of London in 1478.

Edward Plantagenet. Earl of Warwick. 1478-1499. He was a potential claimant to the English throne during the reigns of both Richard III (1483-1485) and his successor, Henry VII (1485-1509). After King Richard's death in 1485, Warwick, only ten years old, was kept as prisoner in the Tower of London by Henry VII. In 1499, he appeared at Westminster for a trial before his peers, presided over by John de Vere, Earl of Oxford. He pleaded guilty. A week later, Warwick was beheaded for treason on Tower Hill. He had no successor.

Crown Property. 1499-1509, Henry VII, 1509-47, Henry VIII. 1499-1547

Warwick Castle was repaired and renovated while in the care of the Crown, but fell into disrepair due to its age. In 1547, Warwick was granted to John Dudley, with the second creation of the Earl of Warwick title. Queen Elizabeth I visited the castle twice during her progresses. When Ambrose Dudley, 3rd Earl of Warwick, died in 1590 the Warwick title once again became extinct.

Titleholders: Earls of Warwick. Second Creation. 1547.

John Dudley I. created Earl of Warwick, Duke of Northumberland. 1547-1553

John Dudley II. 2nd Earl of Warwick. 1553-1554

Crown Property. 1554-1562

Ambrose Dudley. created Earl of Warwick in 1561. 1562-1590

Crown Property. 1590-1603, Elizabeth I; 1603-04, James I. 1590-1604

Then there was Robert Dudley, brother of John and Ambrose Dudley. When Queen Elizabeth came to the throne of England she gave the grant of Kenilworth Castle to her favourite courtier, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. He married Amy Robsart. In 1560 she was found dead. Was she murdered? Was Dudley responsible for the tragedy?

The Greville era. In 1604 Warwick Castle was converted into a country house by Sir Fulke Greville who was given the house by King James I. In 1618 the title Earl of Warwick was created for the third time. Fulke Greville was created Baron Brooke in 1621. 1604-1628. Sir Fulke Greville was a favourite of Queen Elizabeth, the most intimate friend of Sir Philip Sidney, raised to the peerage by James I, as Lord Brook. He also obtained from King James the grant of Warwick Castle which had been confiscated to the crown on the downfall of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Lord Brook was murdered when already dying by Ralph Heywood, a servant who was angered at finding that he had not been remembered in the master's will. Fulke died on 1st September 1628. The Brooks barony and the Warwick castle with all the other estates passed to Robert Greville.

Renovation began on the castle by the Greville family, and in 1642 the castle's defences were fortified in preparation for the English Civil War. Warwick Castle came under siege by Royalist forces which eventually ended on August 23 when they retreated to Worcester. After the Battle of Edgehill, prisoners were held at Warwick. Further improvements were made during the 18th century and in 1759, Francis Greville, 8th Baron Brooke, was created Earl of Warwick, the fourth creation of the title. In 1871 the castle caught fire. The loss was irreparable. Many of the costly treasures and priceless works of art had been destroyed. The Great Hall was no more. Queen Anne's bedroom and other apartments, with their ancient and modern treasures had become things of the past. Fulke Greville. Created Baron Brooke in 1621. 1604-1628.

Titleholders:

Sir Fulke Greville (owned the castle as Baron Brooke while the Earldom was held by the Rich family. The Greville's were granted the Earldom in 1759. The earldom and Warwick Castle were thereby re-united for the first time in over a century.)
Earls of Warwick. Third Creation. 1618. The Earldom held by the Rich family.

1618-1619 Robert Rich I

1619-1658 Robert Rich II

1621-1628 Sir Fulke Greville

1658-1659 Robert Rich III

1659-1673 Charles Rich

1673-1675 Robert Rich IV

1675-1701 Edward Rich I

1701-1721 Edward Henry Rich

1721-1759 Edward Rich II

Owned the Castle.

Robert Greville. 2nd Baron Brooke. 1628-1643

Francis Greville. 3rd Baron Brooke. 1643-1658

Robert Greville. 4th Baron Brooke. 1658-1677

Fulke Greville. 5th Baron Brooke. 1677-1710

Fulke Greville. 6th Baron Brooke. 1710-1711

William Greville. 7th Baron Brooke. 1711-1727

Earls of Warwick. Fourth Creation. 1759. The earldom and Warwick Castle reunited.

Titleholders:

Francis Greville. 8th Baron Brooke created Earl Brooke and in 1759, 1st Earl of Warwick in a new creation. 1727-1773

George Greville. 2nd Earl of Warwick. 1773-1816

Henry Richard Greville. 3rd Earl of Warwick. 1816-1853

George Guy Greville. 4th Earl of Warwick. 1853-1893. He was married to Lady Anne, daughter of Francis Wemyss-Charteris, 9th Earl of Wemyss.

Francis Richard Greville. 5th Earl of Warwick. 1893-1924. He was married to Frances Evelyn "Daisy" Greville, Countess of Warwick.

She earned her the nickname, "The Babbling Brooke." Her daughter Lady Marjorie Blanche Eva Greville married Charles William Reginald Duncombe, 2nd Earl of Feversham (8 May 1879-15 September 1916), known as Viscount Helmsley. He was killed in action on 15 September 1916 at the Battle of Flers-Courcelette.

Leopold Guy Greville. 6th Earl of Warwick. 1924-1928

Charles Guy Greville. 7th Earl of Warwick. 1928-1967

David Robin Francis Guy Greville, 8th Earl of Warwick. 1967-1978

The Greville family remained the owners of Warwick Castle until 1978, when it was purchased by the Tussaud's Group. Madame Tussaud's, the famous waxworks company bought the castle for 1.5m Pounds from Lord Brooke in 1978. He, David Robin Francis Guy Greville, the Eighth Earl of Warwick has been criticized for years for selling its art treasures and later on for selling the castle itself. Tussauds invested heavily in the castle, restoring the building and its grounds ready to be opened to the public.

That same year, it became a member of the Treasure Houses of England, a consortium consisting of ten privately owned stately homes with the aim of marketing themselves as tourist attractions. In 2001 the castle was named one of Britain's top 10 historic houses and monuments by the British Tourist Authority. Today Warwick Castle is a Scheduled Ancient Monument reflecting its significance as a historic building. It is also a Grade I listed building. Tussauds Group. 1978-2007 Merlin Entertainments Group. 2007-present



Left to right. Lady Warwick, mother of Lady Marjorie Greville (image2) and Viscount Helmsley who wedded Marjorie. 1914. Lady Warwick has leased the castle for some years to American friends, Henry and Frances Marsh.



Frances Marsh

In 2005, the castle became the home of the record breaking Trebuchet. At 18 metres tall and weighing 22 tonnes, it is one of the world's largest working siege engines. On August 21st 2006, the Trebuchet entered the record books as the most powerful cata-pult in the world, breaking the previous Dutch record by sending a 13kg projectile 249 metres at up to 260 km/h.



The exterior of Warwick Castle's main accommodation block from across the River Avon. Photo. Haydn Curtis.

The Splendour and horror

It houses the finest private collection of arms and armour in Britain. The castle is a setting of a paradox, offering an insight into some of the grimmest as well as some of the most impressive aspects of England's past. On the one hand, generations lived royally at the castle.

On the other, in its torture chambers and dangeon, other, poorer people died or languished. Two seperate rooms in the castle - the torture chamber and the gungeon - provide vivid and stark illustrations of the ways in which those accused of crimes in England's early days were punished. Iron bars remain to seal off the prisoners and stocks implanted in walls were used to hold prisoners upside down. For a serious offence, a man might be hung in chains near the place of the crime until his body rotted away entirely.

The official description of one tiny area - the obliette - that was used for solitary confinement says it was drained by only the open gulley in the floor, ventilated by one small shaft and hardly lit at all. Prisoners intended for the harshest treatment were placed in this small and damp pit below an ironwork grill. Prisoners left here were often forgotten and left to die.

In the torture chamber, the instruments on display are reconstructions based on contemporary engravings. The instruments give some idea of the systematic and cruel ways in which confessions were forced to those who punished. Among the instru- ments are iron foot screws and iron body belts. The latter were used to restrain prisoners undergoing torture. With the roman rack, a common form of torture, the victim was bound by the wrists and anckles and then unmercifully stretched across the top of this cruel machine, which caused bruising and dislocation.

But beyond its symbols of pain, Warwick castle also provides a sampling of the richness of the life of England's high aristocracy. Over the years, the families that have held the earldom include the Beauchamps, Nevilles, Plantagenets, Dudleys, Riches and Grevilles. Among the regal features of the castle are the State rooms and Great Hall - the richly furnished main rooms of the castle - and an area known as the private apartments. The apartment area now features a re-creation in the 12 rooms, using wax figures of an 1898 house party.

The Gatehouse and Barbican illustrate the time and lives of the 14th and 15th century Beauchamps of Warwick; the Armoury contains an exhibition of rare military hardware, including pistols, swords and muskets; and the Watergate Tower, also known as the Ghost Tower, includes a recording that recounts the history of the tower.

Guy's Tower, the Rampart Walk and Clarence Tower provide panoramic views of the castle, Warwick and the surrounding country-side. Atop the tower, the ancient notched battlements remain. The once were used by soldiers to hide behind as they fought an enemy. The castle grounds, as seen from the towers, include the neatly shaped Victorian Rose Garden; the 18th century style conservatory fronted by the quiet, formal Peacock Gardens; the River Island, from which there is a giant view of the massive river front of the garden; and a tranquil woodland area along the river, the Foxes Study and Cedar Walk.

Wikipedia. Warwick Castle. List of owners of Warwick Castle.

Historic American Newspapers.

Emma McKinney. Birminghammail. March 16, 2009.

Castle of Kenilworth, Robert Dudley and Amy Robsart



Amy Robsart and Robert Dudley

Robert Dudley was the fifth son of John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, and his wife Jane, daughter of Sir Edward Guildford. Robert Dudley was the 1st Earl of Leicester and his brothers, John Dudley, 2nd Earl of Warwick and Ambrose Dudley, 3rd Earl of Warwick.

When Queen Elizabeth, in 1558, ascended England's throne Dudley's fortune rose by leaps and bounds. He was 27 at that time and the sort of man to catch Elizabeth's attention. Dudley was in fact her favourite courtier. Dudley married Amy Robsart when he and Amy, daughter of Sir John Robsart of Norfolk, were only 17 years of age. Amy and Dudley had at first lived very happily together. But once back in the brilliant court of Queen Elizabeth, ambition soon killed Lord Dudley's love for the village beauty.

When the Queen lavished honors upon him he lost his head and began to dream of a union with the sovereign herself and of being crowned at Westminster as king-consort. And as far as he could see the sole obstacle was poor Amy. He began to neglect his gentle wife. He sent her to live in a hamshackle two-story building known as Cumnor Hall (Place), about 4 miles from Oxford. There under the care of one Anthony Forster, a sort of dependent of Dudley and with a few servants, she dragged out a lonely miserable life.

10 Years after the marriage, on 8 September 1560, came the climax whose exact story none can ever know. Thomas Blount, a kinsman and hanger-on of Amy's husband, afterward wrote to Dudley. "She would not that day, suffer any one to tarry at home, and was so earnest to have them gone to the autumn fair at Abington when any made reason for tarrying at home she was very angry. "

Why she should have wanted the house deserted that day is not clear. But there must have been some strong reason, since it made so gentle a woman so angry when any refused to go to the fair. The servants, trooping home from the fair at nightfall, found Amy's dead body lying on the floor at the foot of a short spiral staircase. The supposition was that she had fallen down the stairs and broken her neck. Was she murdered or was it suicide? Lord Robert Dudley was implicated, as having had a hand in her death since he wanted to marry the Queen. So he began to plan and plot against her.

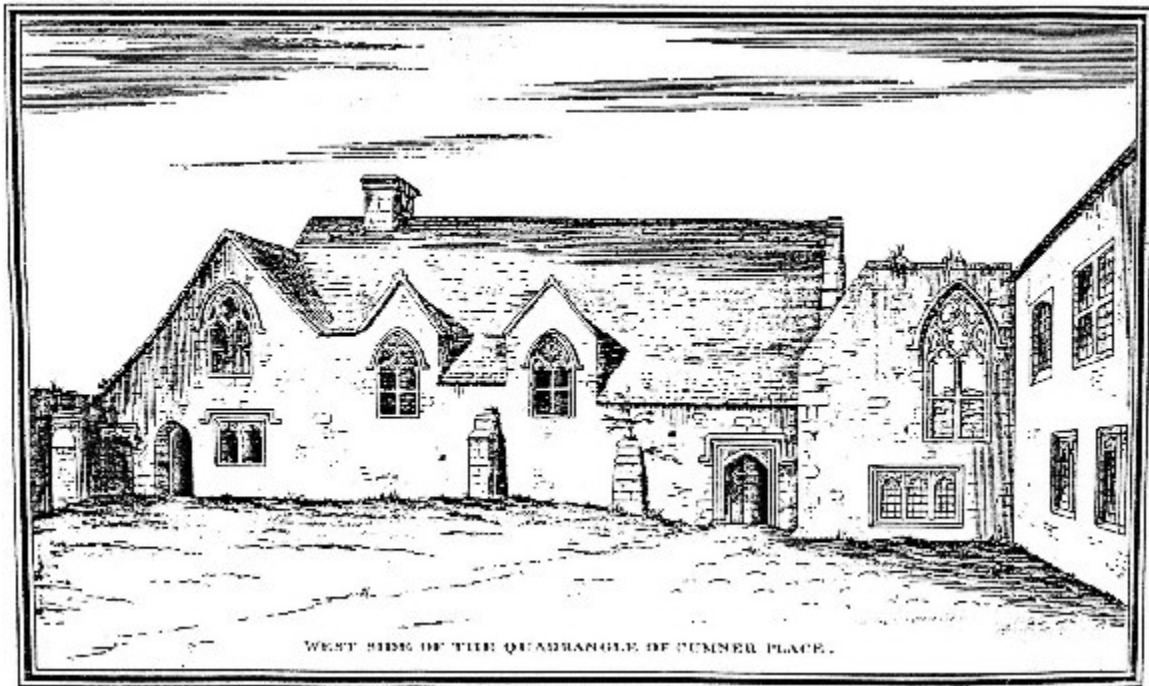
If she had suffered from an incurable malignant growth, as stated, it would have been a reason for suicide. In 1564 a pamphlet entitled "Leicester's Commonwealth" declared that Forster and another friend of Dudley's had flung her down the stairs. Another version was that Anthony Forster had called her from the door falsely announcing Dudley's arrival, and that he arranged for the stairs to collapse as she ran down to meet her husband. Another tale says that Amy was poisoned and her body laid at the foot of the staircase to give the idea of a fall.

Another said he had in his train a surgeon, skilled in the use of drugs, who made various unsuccessful attempts to poison the unhappy lady. At last the plotters succeeded, and in 1560 Amy Robsart was killed at Cumnor Place. The story then given out was that she accidentally fallen downstairs and broken her neck. But almost nobody even at that time believed it.

There was a thorough inquiry into his wife's death. The jury returned a finding of death by mischance. This finding, as definite it was, did not silence the gossips. They pointed out that even if Dudley did not incite Forster to murder Lady Amy, she might have committed suicide. Her personal maid had said at the inquest that she had heard her mistress "pray to God to deliver her from desperation" - a desperation of which the gossips held Dudley to be the cause. To this day the nature of Amy's death is shrouded in uncertainty. Dudley did not attend her funeral at St.Mary's Church, Oxford on 22 September nor visit Cumnor Place again.

Some historians believe that Dudley was not at all responsible for the tragedy. If he was, he profited little by it. Elizabeth did not marry him. He married twice after Amy's death. He also rose to great heights at court, becoming Earl of Leicester and receiving as a gift from Elizabeth, the castle of Kenilworth. Sir Walter Scott's famous novel "Kenilworth" reads Amy died 15 years before Elizabeth visited Kenilworth, three years before Dudley acquired the castle and four years before he became an Earl.

For many years Cumnor Place stood empty and deserted, believed to be haunted by the ghost of Amy. It was fast becoming a ruin when it was demolished in 1810 by the Earl of Abingdon.



West side of quadrangal Cumnor Place

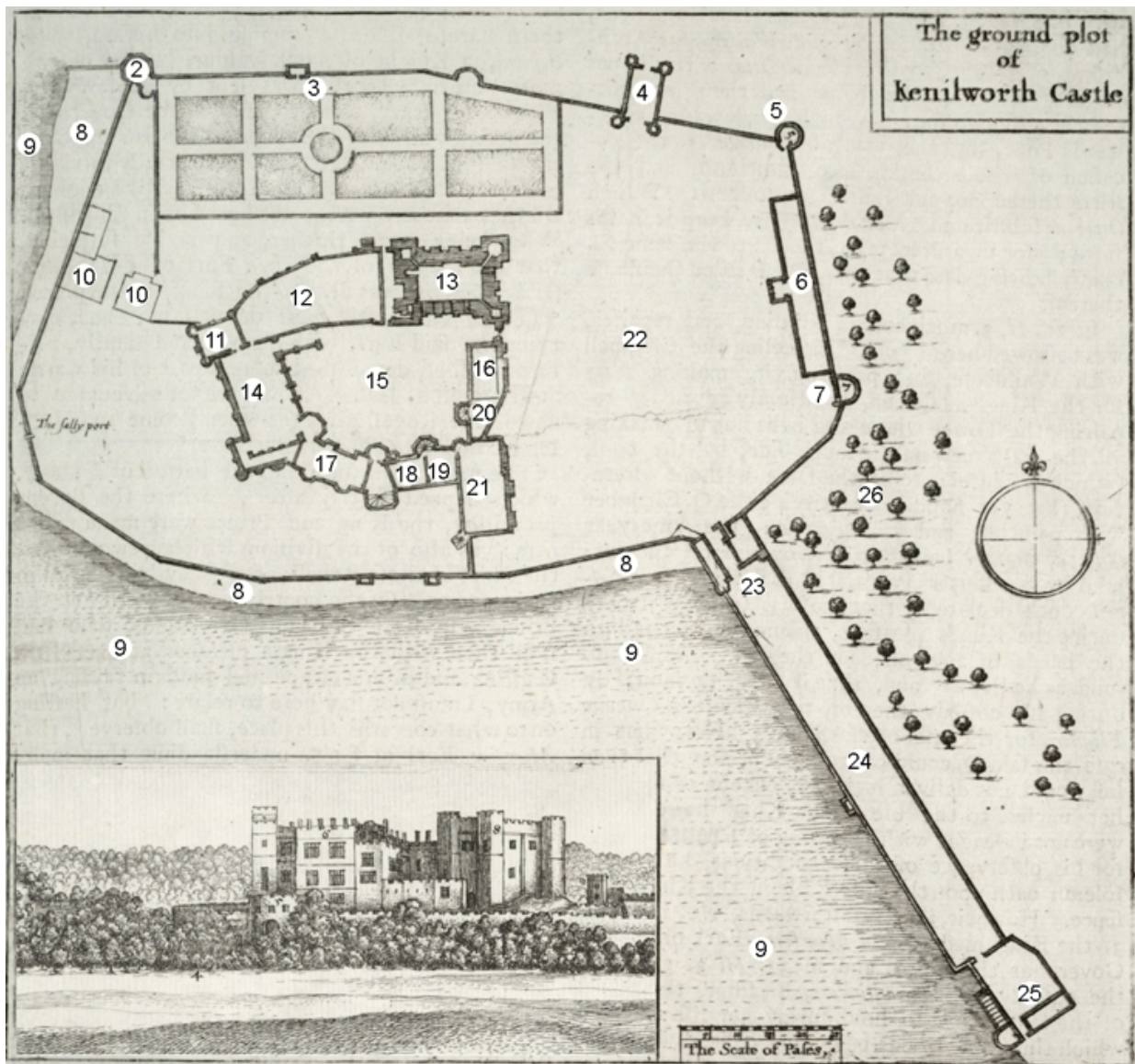
The quadrangular stone building was owned by George Owen. He inherited it from his father, Dr. George Owen, physician of Henry VIII. It was leased to Anthony Forster.

The feudal glories and regal pomp of Kenilworth Castle have long since passed away. The castle, though it must be called a ruin, is in some parts very well preserved. A castle of contradictions it always has been. A place of pomp and pageantry, a castle of delight, and a grim fortress, a pleasure place, a king's prison and a place of suffering, where an earlier Edward II gave up his crown and where Elizabeth I was feted with masque and tournament by Robert Dudley, the castle's lord and her own handsome favourite. She granted the castle to him in 1563.

Kenilworth town dates back, it is said, to a time before the Norman conquest. Henry I granted it to Sir Geoffrey de Clinton, who built the early castle about 1120, but Henry II compelled him to turn it back to the crown. It became the most important of the great "lake fortresses" and its surrounding waters made it almost impregnable.



Castle of Kenilworth



Plan of Kenilworth Castle in 1649. Artist. Wenceslaus Hollar

1. Clinton Green
2. The Swan Tower
3. The garden
4. The great gate-house

5.Lunn's Tower

6.The stable

7.The Water tower

8. The ground betwixt the wall and the poole. There joineth upon this ground, a park-like ground, called the King's Wood, with fifteen several coppices lying altogether, containing seven hundred and eighty-nine acres within the same; which in the Earl of Leicester's time, were stored with red deer, since which the deer have strayed, but the ground is in no sort blemished, having great store of timber and other trees of much value upon the same.

9.The poole. There runneth through the same grounds, by the walls of the castle, a fair pool, containing one hundred and eleven acres, well stored with fish and wild fowl.

10.The plesance (pleasance, pleasuance)

11.A strong tower arched three stories

12.The three kitchens

13.Caesars Tower

14.The Hall

15.The inner court

16.King Henry's lodgings (King Henry VIII's lodgings)

17.The White Hall

18.The Presence Chamber

19.The privy Chamber

20.S.Robert Dudley's lobby

21.Leicester buildings

22.The base court

23.Mortimer's Tower

24.The Tilt-yard

25.The Gallery Tower

26.The Orchard

Windsor Castle



Windsor Castle from the Air. Photo. Mark S Jobling

Windsor Castle is one of the largest and most magnificent royal residences in the world. It is situated in Windsor in the English county of Berkshire on the bank of the Thames. The site was purchased by William the conqueror from the monks of Westminster Abbey. He built a castle here. Edward III erected a massive round tower which still stands, and later monarchs made many additions. Extensive improvements begun in the reign of George IV were completed in the reign of Queen Victoria.

The buildings may be said to be grouped in three portions: the middle ward containing the Round Tower; the lower ward on the west containing St. George's Chapel, the houses of the military knights, cloisters, etc; and the upper ward on the east containing the state apartments, the private apartments of the sovereign and the visitors apartments.

Beneath St. George's Chapel are buried Edward IV, Henry VI, Henry VIII and Jane Seymore, Charles I, George III and his queen, and many other members of the royal family.

The Ghosts of Windsor Castle

Windsor Castle is one of the many homes of the present Queen of England, several of her royal ancestors, and "non-royal" spirits, one of whom, according to legend was an ancient Saxon hunter named Herne, who was renowned throughout the area for his outstanding hunting abilities. One story tells of Herne, as one of the Royal keepers for King Richard II (1367-1400), who was hated by the other keepers for his extraordinary skills. One day the King was in danger of being trampled by an incensed stag while hunting and how Herne putting himself between the King and the stag was mortally wounded.

In the last 250 years, hundreds of people have claimed to have seen his spirit, often accompanied by his pack of hounds. In the early 1860's the tree from which he was found hanging, was cut down, and Queen Victoria kept the oak logs for her fire "To help kill the ghost". Her plan didn't work however.

Other legends tell of witchcraft and suicide, and a demonic horned being upon whose appearance brings illness and misfortune to all who see him, especially the Royal family. He can be seen in Windsor castle's gardens with "his trademark stag's head." King Henry VIII has been seen walking the hallways of Windsor Castle. His footsteps, along with agonizing moans, have been heard by many guests of the castle.

One of his wives, Anne Boleyn, has been seen standing at the window in the Deans Cloister, as well as, Queen Elizabeth I. Queen Elizabeth I has also been seen in the Royal Library. She has been seen walking from one room to another. She is always dressed in a black gown with a black lace shawl draped over her shoulders.

King Charles I has been seen many times in the library and the Canons house, and although he was beheaded during the English Revolution, his ghost is seen as a whole. It is said he looks exactly like his portraits. King George III had many bouts with mental deterioration. During these times he was kept out of the public's eye. He can be seen looking out the windows located below the Royal Library where he was confined during the recurrence of his illness.

The first Duke of Buckingham, Sir George Villiers, is said to haunt one of the bedrooms of Windsor castle. And many spirits haunt the Long Walk, one of whom is a young soldier who shot himself after, while on his guard watch, saw marble statues moving "of their own accord." His ghost has been seen by other soldiers on guard duty afterwards.

The End