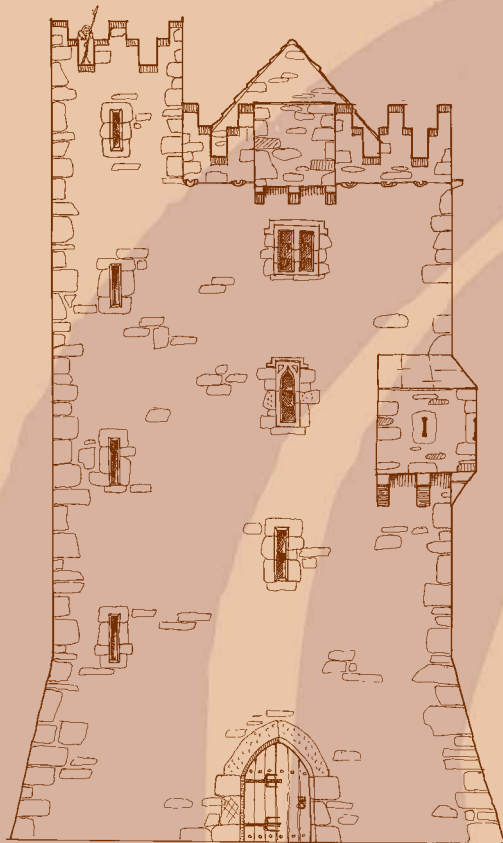


Defence

LESSON 2

Irish Castles Throughout the Ages



ARCHAEOLOGY
time in transition

IT'S ABOUT TIME 2

**Aim(s)**

To give the students an understanding of the development of castle building in Ireland.

**Objective(s)**

To explore the different types of castles built in Ireland from the coming of the Normans in the 12th century through to the end of the tradition in the 17th century and to examine the factors which influenced their development.

**Time Period**

Medieval Period (12th century – 17th century)

**KEY INFORMATION****Lesson**

- Timber Castles: Motte and Bailey and Ringwork (late 12th century).
- Stone Keeps (12th century).
- Curtain wall with mural towers built around keeps (13th century).
- Enclosure Castles (13th century).
- Tower Houses (15th and 16th centuries).
- Fortified Houses (late 16th/early 17th century).

Context

- Stone castles were introduced to Ireland by the Norman invaders to provide protection for themselves.
- They were also administrative and political centres.
- Castle building developed over time until the invention of gun powder brought about their demise.

**METHODOLOGY & MEDIUM**

- Instruction
- Visual–PowerPoint
- **Worksheet 1** Main Features of a Castle
- **Worksheet 2** List the Defensive Features of the Tower House
- **Worksheet 3** Floor Level Functions
- **Factsheet** Battle Scene
- **Student Handout** Castles

**SECTIONS**

- Section 1** The Normans
- Section 2** Motte and Bailey and Ringworks
- Section 3** Stone Castles
- Section 4** Main Features of a Stone Castle
- Section 5** Defensive Features of a Castle
- Section 6** Means of Attack
- Section 7** The Development of Stone Castles
- Section 8** Castles as Residential and Administrative Centres
- Section 9** Tower Houses
- Section 10** The End of Castle Building



Key Question(s) Who were the Normans?

Slide 1 Irish Castles Throughout The Ages

We will now look at the different types of castles built in Ireland from the coming of the Normans to the end of the tradition in the 17th century.

Slide 2 The Normans

- Arrived in Ireland 1169 AD.
- By 1200 AD they had conquered $\frac{2}{3}$ of Ireland.
- Their success is due to their military skills, and the building of castles on conquered lands.

Slide 3 Who were the Normans?

- Vikings who had settled in northern France and established the kingdom of Normandy.
- Conquered England after the Battle of Hastings in 1066.
- Conquests were based on superior military skills.
- Mounted knights clad in chainmail.
- Skilled use of crossbow and longbow (deadly within 100m and quite effective to 200m).
- They built castles as part of their military campaigns, and to establish control over conquered areas.

Slide 4 The Ringfort

In Early Christian times the typical defensive enclosure in Ireland was the ringfort—a farmstead surrounded by a bank and ditch, with a wooden palisade on the bank.

Slide 5 Trim Castle, Co. Meath

This illustration of Trim Castle in Co. Meath—one of the greatest Norman castles in Ireland—conveys the overwhelming impression which a medieval castle made on the landscape.

- The Normans brought a new tradition of fortification with them to Ireland—the medieval castle. The first castles were built in France in the 10th century.
- But castles were much more than military bases. They were an integral part of the way Norman society organised itself. Castles were residences for noble lords and ladies, administrative and legal centres, and places where important social occasions took place like feasts and tournaments. They also made a social statement about the status of their owners.

Slide 6 Norman Castles

The first castles built by the Normans in a military campaign were not of stone, but of *timber* on an earthwork foundation. A stone castle takes a number of years to build and is expensive though when built is more secure than a timber castle. The two types of timber castle built by the Normans were

- the *Motte and Bailey*, and
- the *Ringwork*.

These *timber castles* are relatively quick and easy to build and so suitable in a military context.



Key Question(s) What is a *motte and bailey*?
What was a *ringwork*?

Slide 7 Motte and Bailey

This is an aerial view of a *motte and bailey*.

Teacher Instruction

Ask the students to describe what they see— (*a circular mound with a rectangular enclosure attached*). Ask them to consider how difficult it would be to attack a mound like this with a timber castle filled with well-armed Norman soldiers on top.

- The mound is the *motte*. The *motte* is a conical flat-topped mound of earth with steep sides.
- The enclosure is the *bailey*.

Slide 8 Reconstruction Drawing of a Motte and Bailey

- This type of castle was relatively quick and easy to build, cheap, and effective for its purpose.
- The *motte* is a conical flat-topped mound of earth with a timber superstructure on top.
- The *bailey* is a circular or rectangular enclosure, attached to one side of the *motte*, surrounded by a earthen bank with a timber palisade. The *bailey* is necessary because space is needed for much more (like stables and storage buildings) than can fit on top of the *motte*.

Slide 9 Distribution Map of Mottes

- Archaeologists have identified the remains of about 300 mottes in Ireland. This map shows their distribution.
- Here are some examples of mottes in Ireland today.



One fact which puzzles archaeologists is why there are so few mottes in some areas conquered by the Normans, like Limerick, East Cork, North Kerry and Connaught. Is this a reaction to local conditions or a change in strategy?

Slide 10 Ringwork

- A ringwork is essentially a 'bailey' on its own—a circular area enclosed by an earthen bank with a wide external ditch (*fosse*), and a strongly defended gateway.
- Fewer of these appear to have been built than *motte and baileys*. About 90 examples have been identified in Ireland.
- This illustration shows the earliest phase of castle building at Trim, Co. Meath. Evidence for this ringwork castle was discovered during the archaeological excavations carried out here.
- A 12th century poem written in medieval French entitled "The Song of Dermot and the Earl" describes the building of this castle

*Then Hugh de Lacy
Fortified a house at Trim
And dug a ditch around it
And enclosed it within a stockade.*



Key Question(s) Why build a stone castle?

Slide 11 Stone Castles

- Once an area came under Norman control the new lord could start to think about building a more permanent castle in stone.
- It would also act as a strong point from which to control the newly conquered territory.
- A stone castle would provide a protected residence for the lord's retainers and family.
- Castles also functioned as centres of local administration where the lord could keep his taxes, control trade and markets, hold legal courts, and entertain his guests.
- A stone castle was an imposing symbol of power.

Slide 12 What Survives Today?

Nearly all the stone castles built by the Normans in Ireland are now either in ruins or have disappeared from the landscape. Around 200 examples survive in some form. What survives to be seen?

- All the timber features have long since rotted away and all we are left with are bare stone walls.
- This is Trim Castle in Co. Meath. It is now a National Monument in State care. Over the past thirty years the buildings have been intensively surveyed. A series of archaeological excavations have also been conducted here. The buildings have been conserved and Trim Castle is now one of Ireland's leading tourist attractions. In its day, Trim Castle was one of the greatest castles in Ireland.

Slide 13 Reconstruction of Trim Castle

Trim is one of the largest Norman castles built in Ireland. It was built by Hugh De Lacy in the 1180s and 1190s.

- This shows a reconstruction of Trim castle around 1200 AD.



Teacher Instruction

Ask the students to describe the main features of the castle. Establish what they know about it. Distribute **Worksheet 1: Main Features of the Castle**.

SECTION 4 Main Features of a Stone Castle



Key Question(s) What are the characteristic features of a Stone Castle?

Slide 14 Features of Medieval Stone Castle

- Trim Castle began with a ringwork in 1172.
- It was burnt in 1175 and soon after a stone castle was built with a central keep (the lord and his family lived in the upper floors).
- A curtain wall with mural towers and fortified gateways was then built around the keep.
- Outside the curtain wall is a water-filled moat.
- In front of the gateways, on the far side of the drawbridge is an extra protective feature known as a barbican.
- The largest timber building within the ward of the castle is the great hall.

Slide 15 More Features of a Medieval Castle

Here is another drawing of a medieval Castle. This is a more advanced design than Trim castle (the previous slide). Here there is no large central **tower**.

- A *fortified gateway* defends the entrance into both the outer and inner **ward**.
- Instead the castle is built around two open courts: an *inner* and *outer* **ward**.
- Tall *curtain walls* surround these **wards**.
- The curtain walls are defended around their perimeter by *mural* **towers**.
- There is a *drawbridge* in front of the gateway to the outer ward.

This type of castle is termed an *enclosure castle*. (Other features present at Trim but not at this castle are the barbican and the moat. These are not necessary as the castle is built on a steep-sided rock outcrop that provides extra defence.)

SECTION 5 Defensive Features of a Castle



Key Question(s) What are the special defensive features of a castle?

Slide 16 Massive Masonry Walls with a Base Batter

- A castle must **have** strong thick high walls if it is to withstand attack. The walls were built of quarried stones bonded by a lime mortar.
- The front base of the wall was given added protection by sloping it outwards—**giving** it a *base batter*. This made the wall stronger and more difficult to undermine. (on left Shanid Castle, Co. Limerick; on right Kilkenny Castle)

Slide 17 Arrow Loops

The basic hand-held weapons of those defending and attacking castles were longbows and crossbows. In order to give the defender maximum protection and yet allow him to get a reasonable view of his target, special openings in the wall were developed called arrow loops. The opening in the wall was a narrow vertical slit (sometimes with a short horizontal extension). Inside this was a large opening in the wall—large enough for somebody to use a longbow (the castle is King John's Castle in Limerick City). The design of an arrow loop was a compromise between the need to protect the archer inside but allow him the maximum field of fire (view of attackers).

Slide 18 Fields of Fire

An important part of the design of a castles is the positioning of arrow loops. Enough loops were needed to cover as much ground in front of a castle as possible, but too many loops would seriously weaken the structure of the walls (because of the large opening on the inside needed to allow space for a longbow). It also helped if the ground in front of the walls sloped away from the castle allowing the defender a greater field of view.

The great advantage of projecting towers was that they allowed the defender **shoot** along the front of the curtain wall (flanking fire).

Slide 19 Battlements

On top of the walls of a castle were its *battlements*.

- These had **upright** *merlons* for the defenders to hide behind,
- and **openings** or *crenels* for them to shoot out through.

A wall walk on the inside allowed the defenders access along the battlements.

Slide 20 Machicolations and Hoards

- One of the weakest points in a castle's defences is the base of its walls. These are difficult to defend without exposing one's self to hostile fire (from high up you have to look out a long way to see the base of the wall). In order to do this safely machicolations (pronounced *ma-chic-o-la-tions*) were developed.
- **These** are stone-built projections on top of the wall, with openings in their floor through which defenders can drop stones on, or fire down on, the attackers **below**.
- A hoard is the same thing except made of timber. These can be identified today as a line of large holes just below the top of a castle wall which held the timber beams that supported the hoard.

Slide 21 Protected Gateway

The entrance gates were the most vulnerable section of the curtain wall because these were the largest opening through it. They needed special protection. Flanking towers with arrow loops protected the gateway from frontal attack. The attacker was also faced with a series of **obstacles**.

- A drawbridge spanned the moat and this could be **retracted**.
- The passageway itself was sealed by a portcullis –an iron grill lowered across the **passageway**.
- The vault over the passageway had holes in ceiling, called *murder holes*, used to bombard the enemy below. Arrow loops were also placed along the sidewalls of the **passageway**.
- The passageway was also blocked by a heavy wooden door reinforced by a solid **drawbar**.
- Extra protection was sometimes built in front of the drawbridge, on the far side of the moat. This is termed a *barbican*.

SECTION 6 Means of Attack



Key Question(s) How would you attack a castle in medieval times?

Slide 22 Means of Attack**Teacher Instruction**

Ask the students how they might go about attacking a medieval castle.

The attackers will try to get in by climbing over, batter their way through, undermine or bombard the walls. Taking the castle by force meant scaling walls—ladders, ropes attached to grappling **irons**.

- A scaling tower gave attackers protection approaching a high wall. **This** was a safer way to reach the top of the castle's walls rather than climbing a **ladder!**
- A number of machines were used to damage the walls –battering **rams**, mangonel, pronounced *man-go-nel*, (large catapult—range of c. **200m**).
- Trebuchet, pronounced *treb-u-chet*, (quick firing catapult—range c. 400m with higher trajectory than mangonel so could get over walls easier—fireballs used to set fire to buildings, even dead animals thrown in to spread disease), mining—undermining the foundations often very effective particularly on corners of buildings).

If all that fails the castle can be put under siege. Starving the defenders into surrender was often the most effective policy. This is why some castles have a well inside the walls.

Slide 23 Attacking a Castle

This picture shows a castle under attack.



Teacher Instruction

Distribute the **Factsheet** Battle Scene. Discuss the picture with the students in terms of identifying the various ways a castle could be attacked and defended.

Note the scaling tower, mangonel and trebuchet. Also note how the attackers are setting fire to the wooden hoard on top of the walls. Ask the students who they think (attackers or defenders) will win this battle.

SECTION 7 The Development of Stone Castles



Key Question(s) How did castles develop over time?

Slide 24 The Development of Stone Castles

Stone castles developed in three basic stages

- **Firstly** were the great towers, or keeps. This is the type of stone castle being built by the Normans when they first came to Ireland. The best examples in Ireland are the keeps at Trim Castle, Co. Meath, and Carrickfergus Castle, Co. Antrim. There is a great circular example at Nenagh, Co. **Tipperary**.
- By the late 12th century defences were being improved by building a curtain wall around the keep, with defended gateways and corner **towers**.
- By the mid-13th century castles were being built without any central tower—all the accommodation was now in the gate tower and the corner towers. These are termed enclosure (or keep-less) castles. Examples are Dublin Castle, Kilkenny Castle, Roscommon Castle, Ballymote Castle, Co. Sligo, King John's Castle in Limerick and Liscarroll Castle Co. Cork (pictured). In all these cases the centre of the castle is an open area.



The shift from a single tower to an enclosure castle was to improve defence. It was difficult to defend a single tower because it had too many blind spots for the defenders. With an enclosure castle, projecting towers allowed defenders a much better chance of firing at attackers, the towers covering each other with flanking fire.

Slide 25 Building a Stone Castle—a Major Undertaking

Building a stone castle took a lot of time, effort, money and skill

- The walls were **built** of quarried stone bonded by a lime mortar. Walls could only be built to a certain height (around 3.65m) using lime mortar before the mortar had to be allowed dry and set—this could take a number of months. Fresh lime mortar also had to be protected against frost so many building sites were closed down and the walls covered by straw, during the **winter**.
- A large castle could take anything from 10 to 20 years to build and a large skilled works force was required.
- It was a costly **affair**—around 1200 AD it cost a lord c. £100-150 a year for 10 years to build a reasonable sized castle. A lord's average income at the time was around £1,000 a year. By contrast a motte and bailey castle was built in a few weeks at Clones, Co. Monaghan in 1211, and cost only **£20**.
- Given the turbulent nature of Ireland at the time it was only in exceptional circumstances that a lord, like Hugh de Lacy at Trim or John de Courcey at Carrickfergus, as able to build a great stone castle. Hence the relative scarcity of large 12th century keeps in Ireland (c. 20 examples).

Slide 26 Building a Castle

Building a castle required a lot of skilled craftsmen—quarrymen, stone masons, mortar mixers and carriers, stone cutters, carpenters, blacksmiths, diggers etc. **Each** trade was overseen by a master craftsman and the whole **operation** was the responsibility of a master builder. **The** master builder designed the structure and this was a very complicated business. Not alone did he need to be up with the latest military technology, but he had to know how to make a tall, multi-roomed structure work for all those who lived and worked in it. He also had to know how to make it stay up!

SECTION 8 Castles as Residential and Administrative Centres



Key Question(s) What other functions did a medieval castle have?

Slide 27 The Great Hall

Castles fulfilled a lot more functions than their military role.



Teacher Instruction

Ask the students to describe the scene in the illustration.

- The Great Hall of the castle is the place where banquets and entertainments are held—these were an important part of medieval life. The hall usually had a ground-floor (under-croft) where food and drink was stored.

- The main room was on the first floor and had an entrance door approached by an external staircase. The lord, his family and chief guests were seated at the high table and everybody else on side tables, ranked in distance from the lord according to rank.

Slide 28 Administrative and Judicial Centres

- The castle was also an important administrative and judicial centre. Many lords were high sheriffs of their counties and had the right to hold a manorial court.
- Castles also contained prisons though a person found guilty in a medieval court was either fined, mutilated or executed. However, prisons were used to hold prisoners captured in battle until a ransom was paid or justice administered!



Teacher Instruction

Ask the students to imagine what is happening in this scene.

Slide 29 Private Chambers

- The castle was used as a residence by the lord, his extended family as well as his retainers and soldiers.
- The private chambers of the lord and his family is called the solar (sunny room).
- The need for privacy became a growing concern for the upper reaches of society as the medieval period progressed. In earlier times there was little concern for 'private space' even in the highest ranks of society.

Slide 30 The Chapel

All large castles had a small chapel, usually tucked away in a corner tower. A priest was an important part of a lord's retinue. Not alone did he say mass, hear confessions, shrive the dead etc. but he also read and wrote letters for the lord (who was likely to be illiterate).

- This illustration is the chapel in Trim Castle. **As** with all churches in Christendom the altar is to the east.
- **Beside** it (on the right) is the piscina for washing the sacred vessels (see *Places of Christian Worship* T1,U1,L2).

Slide 31 Settlement Pattern

- This map shows the main stone castles built in Ireland by the Normans in 12th & 13th centuries. The distribution reflects the settlement pattern of the Norman colony. There is a noticeable scarcity of castles along the western seaboard, particularly in west Ulster, west Connaught, Clare and the South-West. These are the areas still under Gaelic rule.

Slide 32 Walled Towns

The Normans used the same techniques of castle-building to enclose and protect their towns with stone walls and towers. This illustration shows a typical 13th century walled town.

Like many Norman towns it is located adjacent to a stone castle. The features of the town **include**

- A curtain **wall**.
- Mural **towers**.
- Fortified gateways.
- Church.
- Market place.
- Market cross.

This is typical medieval town with streets lined by timber-framed houses behind which are narrow plots running back to the town walls (see *Beneath the Streets* T2,U3,L2).

Slide 33 Fourteenth Century Decline

Very few castles were built during the 14th century. This was a period in which the Norman colony in Ireland came under economic, political and military **pressure**

- The Bruce Invasion (1315-1318) Robert and Edward Bruce of Scotland invaded Ireland and greatly weakened the Norman lords **militarily**.
- The Black Death arrived into Ireland in 1349 and greatly effected the Norman population, especially in the **towns**.
- Gaelic clans began to push back the borders of the colony until it eventually shrunk to an area around Dublin known as The **Pale**.
- Leading Norman families intermarried with leading Gaelic families, began to speak Gaelic and adopt native **customs**.
- Normans became 'more Irish than the Irish themselves'.



The Normans founded the country's first network of inland towns (see *Towns* T2,U3). These towns were surrounded by a stone wall that had many of the defensive features of castles. For example St Lawrence's Gate in Drogheda is a barbican which was part of the town's defences. The 14th century saw a general decline in all aspects of medieval society, not just in Ireland but throughout Western Europe. This is the period the Black Death—a plague which took a heavy toll on the urban towns especially. There was also much political upheaval, including the Bruce Invasion. The power of the English monarch eventually shrunk to The Pale area around Dublin.

SECTION 9 Tower Houses



Key Question(s) What are Tower Houses? Who built them?

Slide 34 The Return to Castle Building

- **There** is a return to castle building in the 15th century. By the early decades of the 1400s, a new type of castle was being built in **Ireland**.
- These bear a striking resemblance to the Norman keeps of the 12th **century**.
- They are a response to the local situation where small-scale warfare was endemic and each local lord or clan felt the need to protect their family and **possessions**.
- These castles are now termed *tower houses*.

Slide 35 Distribution of Tower Houses

- These were built in great numbers throughout most parts of Ireland—over a thousand were built—nearly one in every rural parish.
- Today, most of the ruined castles in the Irish countryside are tower houses. They are recognizable as tall 3, 4 or 5 storey towers with narrow windows (some with the distinctive 15th/16th century ogee arch) and stepped battlements.
- Their distribution shows the lingering influence of the Normans, with dense concentrations in the areas the colonised.
- Tower houses were built equally by Gaelic and Old English (of Norman origin) families.

Slide 36 Name the Defensive Features**Teacher Instruction**

Distribute **Worksheet 2** to the students and ask them to name the defensive features of a typical tower house.

Slide 37 Defensive Features

Most of the defensive features on a tower house are also features of the earlier Norman keeps.

- On top of the wall are battlements—now with merlons stepped up in the middle—a distinct Irish feature.
- A small 'box' machicolation is positioned directly over the entrance door. These are termed 'bartizans' and are found mid-way up, or on top of, the corners of the tower.
- The windows on the lower floors have narrow openings but are larger on the upper floor where the living rooms are located.
- Other features include
 - a base batter to the walls,
 - a strong door protected by an iron yett.



By the late 16th century some are being fitted with 'gun loops' for firing out through with pistols and muskets.

Slide 38 Stepped Irish Battlements

Stepped Battlements are a characteristic feature of 15th and 16th century tower houses in Ireland. The battlements functioned in the same way as they did on Norman castles (see above).



Tower houses are also found in Scotland and Northern England. These areas were also subject to much local warfare in the later medieval period (14th, 15th and 16th centuries) and so landowners needed to protect their family and property by building tower houses.

Slide 39 Internal Defences

The door into the Tower House was the most vulnerable part of castle.

- The door, made of solid planks of oak, was secured on the inside by a strong wooden drawbar.
- There is an iron grill (yett) in front of door that could be pulled closed by a chain from the inside. This was used when parleying with an attacker—it allowed the defenders talk face-to-face with the attacker but prevented him from storming in.
- If the intruders got inside there was a hole in the roof over the lobby, known as a *murder hole*, through an attacker is fired on from above.
- Access upwards in the tower was usually by a narrow spiral stone stairs. These were built in a clockwise direction; this gave the defender wielding a sword an advantage if right handed.

Slide 40 Bawn Wall

- Extra protection was provided by the bawn wall.
The area inside the bawn wall provided room for timber buildings.
- Bawns have mural towers and fortified gatehouses for defensive reasons.

Slide 41 The Tower House as a Home

The tower house was a residence with all the basic elements of a house.

- The walls were built of stone bonded with lime mortar.
- The roof was timber supporting a thatch, wooden shingle, or slate covering.
- Windows on the ground floor were narrow. Larger ones occur higher up.

The heads of some windows had an ogee arch—this arch form is a diagnostic feature of 15th /16th century Irish buildings. The upper floor windows were larger to facilitate more comfortable living in brighter rooms.

- The main rooms occurred one on top of the other—with each level having a different function.
- Later tower houses had fireplaces set into the walls but the earlier ones had hearths set in the floor over a stone vault (stone vaults help to fireproof the building and also add to its solidity).
- The floors were mostly of wood but with a stone vault (arched stone roof) over one or two of the floors.
- The toilet (garderobe) is an important feature of a tower house.

**Teacher Instruction**

Distribute **Worksheet 3** to the students. Explore the different functions of each floor level based on this reconstruction drawing of a tower house. Discuss the results.

Ground floor—storage and entrance.

1st floor—sleeping and living quarters of servants/soldiers.

2nd floor—general living space and kitchen.

3rd floor—private bedrooms of lord's family.

4th floor—main hall and living space for the lord's family.

Slide 42 Doors

The door openings **had** cut stone surrounds with a pointed arch. The wooden door was hung **from** a stone socket (hanging eye) and secured by a drawbar.

Slide 43 Yett in Front of Door

In front of the ground-floor entrance door was an iron grill, termed a yett. This allowed the door itself to be opened but prevent an attacker rushing in. Through this yett the tower's inhabitants could talk with their attackers.

Slide 44 Windows

- **Windows** on the lower floors were narrow vertical openings for defensive reasons. Higher up (beyond the reach of a ladder) the windows had larger openings to allow more light into the **tower**.
- A distinctive feature of these windows was the ogee arch—this is a typical feature if 15th and 16th century Irish buildings.

The interior of the window openings (embrasures) were splayed wide to allow extra light in and to provide space for window seats. Glass is very rare in windows which were closed by wooden shutters.

Slide 45 Wooden Floors

Most of the floors were timber.

- These were **composed** of joists **supporting** floorboards. These **rested** on a wall plate.
- The wall plate was **supported** by stone corbels.
- The stone corbels and the sockets for the wall plates are the only evidence for these floors today as all the timbers have long since disappeared.
(Note: look out for these features if you visit a castle)

Slide 46 Wicker-centred Vaults

Most tower houses have at least one stone vault. There is a distinctive Irish way in which these were constructed. A wicker mat was made in the shape of the vault (centering). Lime mortar was poured on top of the wicker mat and the stones for the vault set into it. When the mortar is set the vault is stable.

Today, the imprint of the wickerwork is often still visible in the mortar on the underside of the vault. Vaults helped fireproof the tower house and consolidated the structure.

Slide 47 Garderobe

For the toilet a vertical shaft was built into the thickness of the wall, with an exit near the base of the wall on the outside. At the top of the shaft was a wooden seat. This seat was in a small chamber somewhere convenient in the tower.

The garderobe could be a vulnerable part of the tower's defences as it was possible for an attacker to climb up through it—though not a very pleasant task!



Key Question(s) What brought an end to castle building?

Slide 48 The End of Castle Building

The use of gunpowder and canon was the death knell of castle building. Castles were too easy a target for cannon balls.

In Ireland tower houses continued to be used into the early 17th century as canons were very scarce. The use of guns by the Cromwellians in the 1650s ended the usefulness of tower houses as effective defences.

Slide 49 Fortified Houses

By the late 16th century tower houses were being replaced by larger buildings which were more concerned with comfort than defence. These are termed 'fortified houses' because they still retained some defensive features though primarily houses rather than castles. Examples include Kanturk Castle, Co. Cork and Leminagh Castle, Co. Clare.



Teacher Instruction

Ask the students to describe the differences between the two.

The fortified house has

- more rooms on each floor.
- more chimneys and therefore more fireplaces.
- more light from the larger windows.

Ask the students whether they would prefer to live in a tower house or a fortified house?

Slide 50 Gun Loops

A characteristic feature of fortified houses are gun loops—small openings for firing out through with muskets or pistols. Handguns, pistols and muskets were in widespread use by the late 16th century.



Gunpowder was invented in ancient times, probably by the Chinese. The first guns in Europe appear in the 14th century. Guns were a feature of most wars in Europe from the 15th century. Handguns were known in Ireland from this time but cannon (artillery) did not become widespread here until the 17th century.

Slide 51 Summary

Castles in Ireland went through considerable development over a period of 500 years, from the 12th to the 17th century. There are five major types
 Timber Castles: *Motte* and *bailey* and *ringwork* (late 12th century).
 Stone Keeps (12th century).
 Enclosure Castles (13th century).
 Tower Houses (15th and 16th centuries).
 Fortified Houses (late 16th/ early 17th century).

Slide 52 Romantic Castles

During the late 18th/early 19th century some wealthy landowners built houses to look like ancient castles. Although they appear to be defensive in nature all the defensive features are false, like those at Wilton Castle, Co. Wexford (see The Big House T2, U1, L1). Castles have now come full circle from military institutions in times of war to fanciful inventions in a more relaxed and peaceful era.

Background Information

Today castles are often seen in a romantic setting like the Disneyland fairytale castle which features in stories like The Sleeping Beauty, or as something more mysterious and gothic, like Harry Potter's school at Hogwarts.

"I visualise Hogwarts as a huge, rambling, quite scary-looking castle, with a jumble of towers and battlements."

J.K. Rowling

**Castles as Tourist Attractions**

- Some castles are now major tourist attractions: Blarney Castle, Co. Cork; Ross Castle, Co. Kerry; Bunratty Castle, Co. Clare.
- These are all tower houses. However, the vast majority of tower houses in Ireland are in ruins and in private ownership.

See Projects section: Build your own Castle

WEB LINKS**WWW.**

National Monuments Service

www.archaeology.ie/

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

www.buildingsofireland.com/

Castles of Britain

www.castles-of-britain.com

Offaly Castles Laser Scanning Project

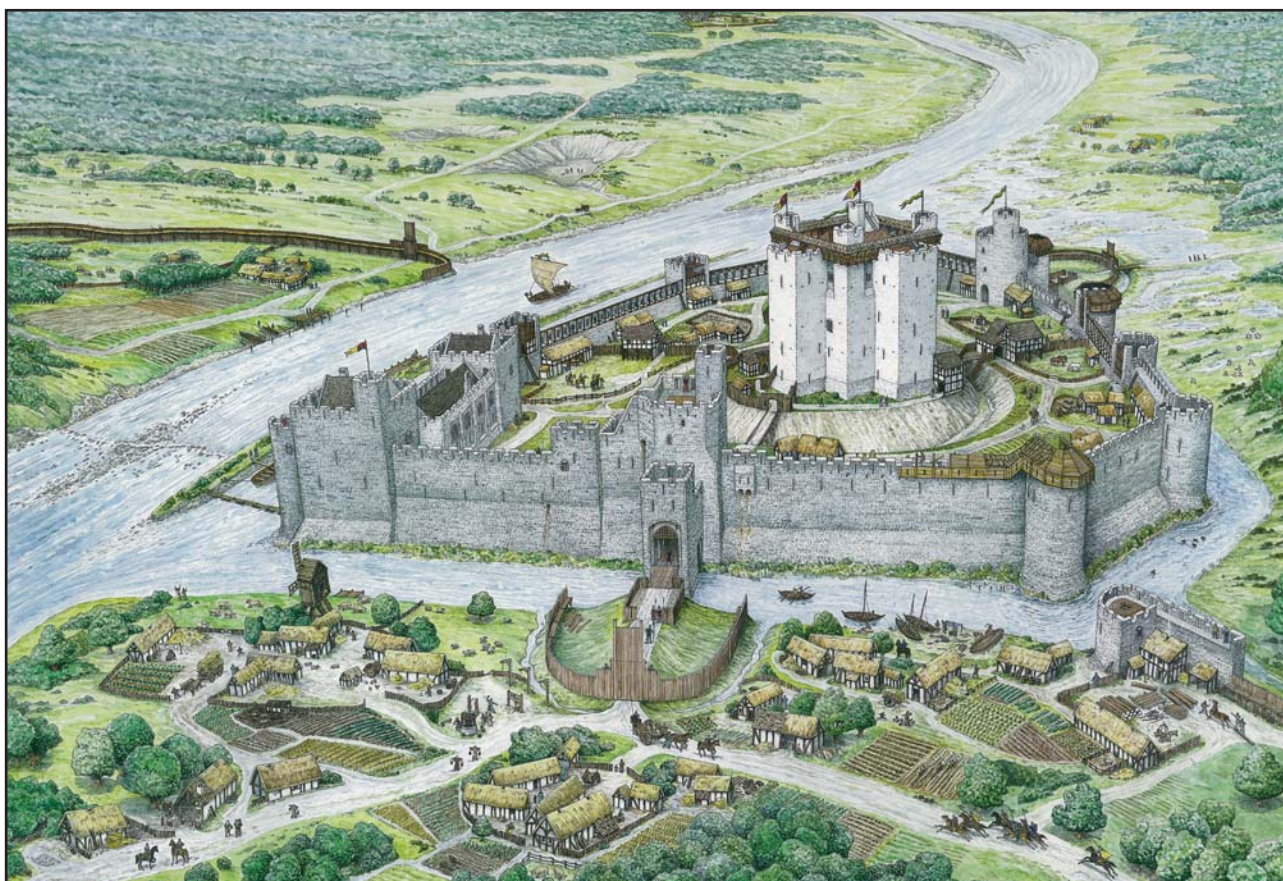
www.gridpointsolutions.com/occ_castles/

Castle on the Web

www.castlesontheweb.com

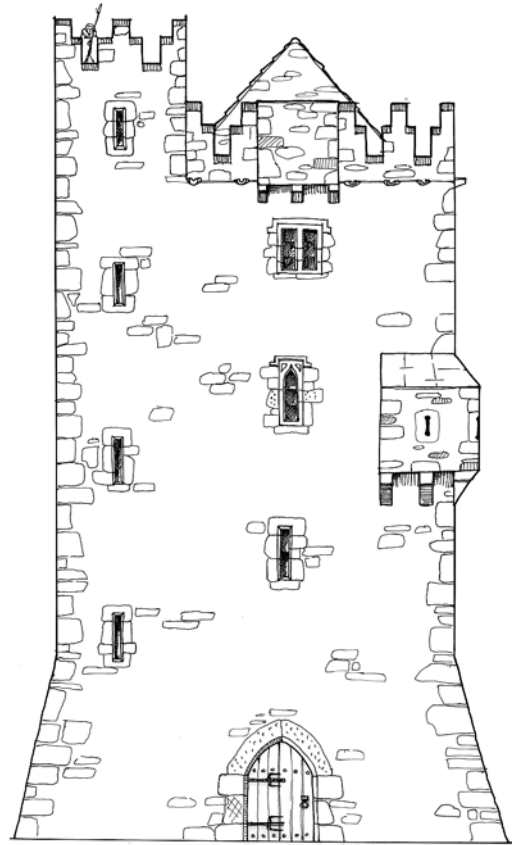
Castles of Ireland

www.askaboutireland.ie/search.xml?query=castles



List the main features of the Castle

[illegible]



List all the defensive features

Describe the functions of each floor level

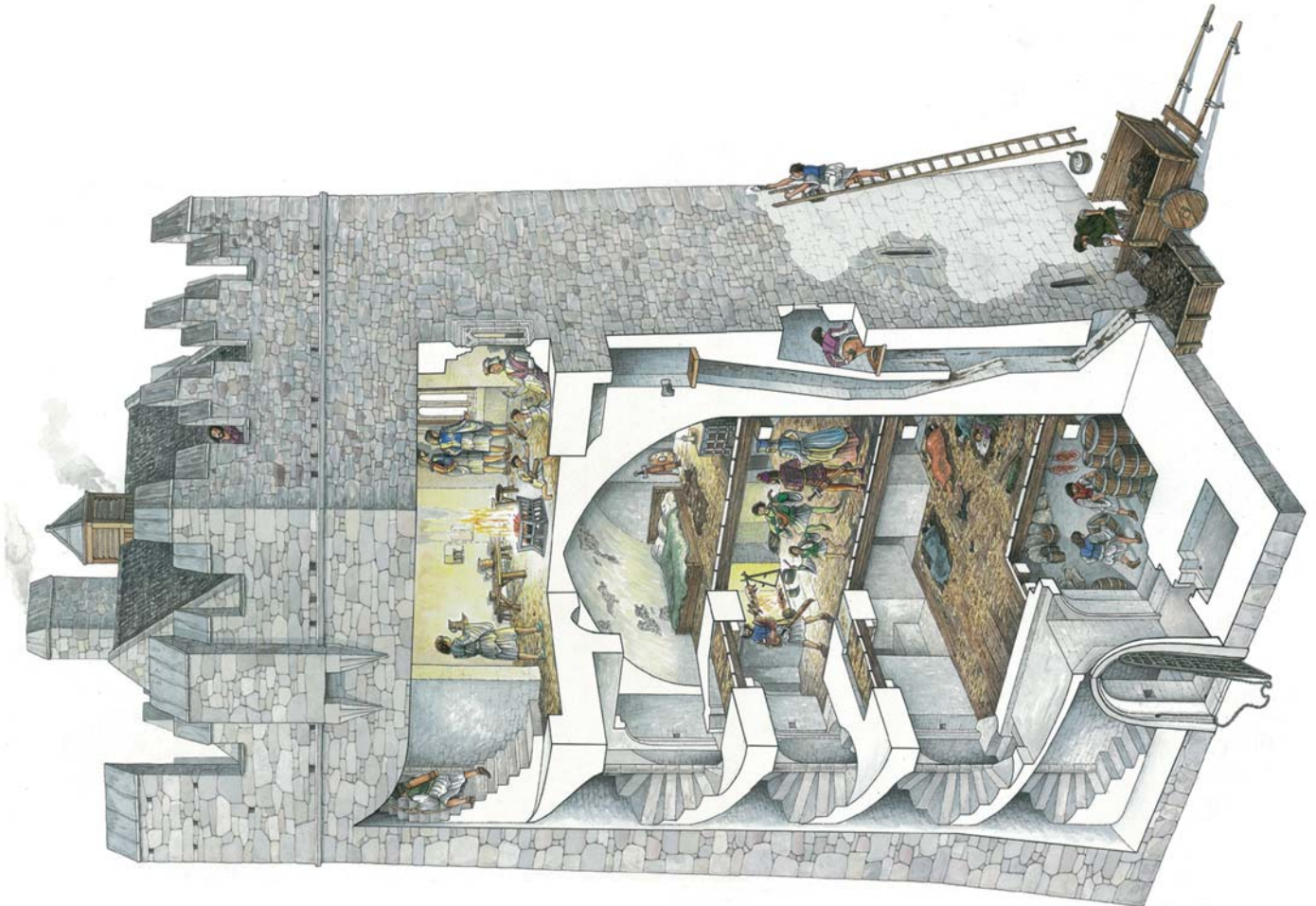
Fourth Floor

Third Floor

Second Floor

First Floor

Ground Floor







Motte and Bailey

- Built in 12th century by Normans.
- Built during military campaigns.
- Earthwork with timber superstructure.
- Quick and cheap to build.
- Motte: high conical mound.
- Bailey: attached enclosure.
(Approximately 350 in country)



Stone Castles

- Built in 12th century.
- Took time and money to build.
- Tall stone towers with stout walls.
- Battlements and arrow loops.
- Machicolations and hoards.
- Symbol of a lord's power.
- Centres of administration and justice.
- Residence for lord and his family.
- Places of entertainment and feasting.
(Approximately 200 in country)



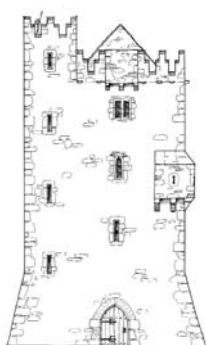
Attack

Attack

- Mangonel
- Trebuchet
- Scaling tower
- Battering ram
- Undermining
- Scaling ladders
- Fire arrows

Defence

- Machicolation & Hoard
- Battlements
- Arrow loops



Tower Houses

- Built in 15th and 16th centuries.
- Tall towers with thick walls.
- Three to five stories high.
- Wicker-centred stone vaults.
- Garderobes.
- Ogee arch on windows.
- One main room at each level.
(Approximately 1,500 in country)



Fortified Houses

- Built in late 16th/early 17th century.
- Larger windows.
- More fireplaces.
- Gun loops.
- Machicolations.
- No stone vaults.
(Approximately 150 in country)