

## THE HISTORY

The Saxon manor of Esledes was an ideal place for one of William the Conqueror's lords, Robert de Crevecoeur, to fortify and build a castle in 1119.

Leeds Castle passed into royal hands in 1278 and became part of the Queen of England's dower - the settlement widowed queens received upon the death of their husbands. Over the next 150 years it was held by six mediaeval queens: Eleanor of Castile; Margaret of France; Isabella of France, Joan of Navarre; Anne of Bohemia and Catherine de Valois.

In Tudor times Henry VIII visited often, notably with his Queen, Catherine of Aragon, and their entire court on the way to the tournament of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, which took place in France in 1520. Henry's son, King Edward VI, granted the castle to one of Henry's courtiers for his services.

Since then it has been in private ownership. It has been used as a garrison, a prison and a convalescent home, as well as being the home of the Culpeper, Fairfax, and Wykeham Martin families.

Lady Baillie bought the castle in 1926. She invested over £100,000 into restoring it. That's over £20 million in today's money.

She had French artists and craftsmen rebuild the inside to make it look like it did in Tudor times - and then hosted weekend parties with rich and famous guests, playing croquet and golf, swimming in the pool, and enjoying the grounds, which had zebras and llamas grazing.

At the end of her life she established the Leeds Castle Foundation, to which she bequeathed the castle and its surrounding park upon her death in 1974



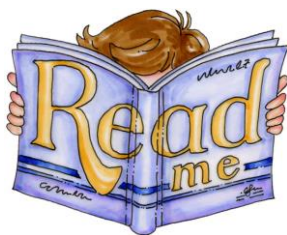
## IN THE CASTLE

### ENTRANCE HALL

Enter through the large door into the Outer Front hall and turn right into the Library

### THE LIBRARY

This room was once the schoolroom for Lady Baillie's two daughters. When they grew up it was converted into a library – there are now 3,000 books in this room. If it took you a week to read each one, it would take 57 years to read them all!



### 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.

### THE SERVANTS QUARTERS

Here you can read about the different people employed during lady Baillie's time here. As you leave this room and go down the Servants Corridor, look out of the window - you are crossing the moat into the Gloriette, the oldest part of the castle.

### THE LOWER GLORIETTE

The next four rooms will often have different displays showing some of Lady Baillie's changes.

### THE EVENING DINING ROOM

The fireplace was put into the castle by Henry VIII – Look out for his Insignia (Tudor Rose, Dragon) carved in the stone. Look too above your heads. Henry VIII put the ceilings in, but it was Lady Baillie who had the beams made, then carved to look old.

### THE GAMES ROOM

Weekend guests of Lady Baillie would play cards and games in here. You too can have a game!

### THE PRIVATE WRITING ROOM

The fireplace is again a Tudor one, with the Castle of Castille and pomegranates (emblems of Catherine of Aragon) on the right corner and the Henry VIII's coat of arms on the left.



## THE SALON

During the reign of Henry VIII the room was used for banqueting! They ate exotic food like roast peacocks and swan!

Lady Baillie used this room for dancing and the ebony floor was sprung. Why don't you join the shadow dancers and dance to the end!



## THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE

Count the stairs as you go!

## LADY BAILLIE'S BOUDOIR

This room was designed for Lady Baillie in the 1960s, but when Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon stayed here in 1520, Catherine used all the rooms on this side of the castle.

## LADY BAILLIE'S BEDROOM

This room, designed in 1936 follows the French regency style of the 18th century. The Louis Vuitton trunk is a very early one and was just as fashionable then as it is today.

## LADY BAILLIE'S DRESSING ROOM

As you pass through this room, look at the luxurious bathroom on your left. Every bath in the castle has a bell next to it, to ring for a servant to help you get dressed!

## THE BAILLIE ROOM

This room today is a temporary display space. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century this floor was added by King Henry VIII- and instead of being a straight vertical tower, it is 'rounded' making it a very safe space. With the moat, height and shape it would have been impossible for any enemies to go across the moat without being seen.

## THE BOARDROOM CORRIDOR

The rooms along this corridor have Tudor door frames that were taken from other parts of the castle and installed here, during the 1822 renovations.

## THE YELLOW BEDROOM

Lady Baillie had this decorated as a guest bedroom; it has an adjoining marble bathroom. This room too has a Tudor fireplace with carvings of pomegranate and rose.

## THE BOARDROOM

If this room is open, have a quick look in. Many important meetings, including some between world leaders, have taken in place in this room.

## MAIN STAIRCASE

Upstairs, where you cannot go today, are the bedrooms that are used by people who visit the castle for meetings, weddings and parties.

## YELLOW DRAWING ROOM

The walls in this room are covered in silk, not wallpaper. The piano is over 150 years old and sometimes played by volunteers.

## THORPE HALL DRAWING ROOM

The wooden panelling on the walls comes from Thorpe Hall in Cambridgeshire. The panels were taken from Thorpe Hall and sold to Lady Baillie in 1927. So the walls are 200 years older than the room, and they had to alter the room to fit the panels.

As you leave the room, you will see the only portrait of Lady Baillie with her two daughters.



We hope that you have enjoyed your look inside Leeds Castle

