BUILDING MATERIALS

When looking round the site try to identify each of the following types of building materials. It will help if you to understand the castle if you record where you have found examples of each type.

Barnack Limestone: pale in colour imported probably by barge from a quarry in Northamptonshire, a distance of over 50 miles. Each individual stone had to be cut or dressed by skilled craftsmen called stonemasons.

Carved stone: most expensive of all the materials used was limestone that had been decorated with patterns or carvings. There are several examples of these.

Rubble: a mixture of uncut stone collected locally including flint and carstone (red/brown in colour) which was mixed with mortar or cement.

Brick: made from red clay and baked in a kiln.
Bricks were not used in the original building so if you find any features containing red brick they must be later additions or repairs.

BUILDING STYLES

Look carefully at the shape of the arches. Castle Rising was built around 1140 during the Norman period. Norman arches are always round. Can you find any arches in the castle that are not round? If so they are probably later additions. Note where these later arches are to be found.

TOUR OF THE CASTLE

The following 35 questions will give you plenty to think about as you explore the castle. Record your answers to as many questions as you can on seperate paper.

OAK AND BIRCH TREES

Coming from the Car Park/Ticket Office and before you cross the Bridge look to your right. There are two large trees.

1. Who planted them and when?
2. How old are they?
3. How can we tell that powerful and important people have been coming to visit Castle Rising for a long time?

BRIDGE

Use the Information Board near the bridge to answer these questions.

4. Who built the castle?
5. When?
6. Who lived in the Castle from 1330-58?
7. Who owns the castle now?

GATEHOUSE

Look carefully at the walls of the Gatehouse.

8. How can we tell that the Gatehouse once had a 'portcullis'?*

* Clue: if you are unsure what a portcullis is look at a ONE PENNY coin.

CURTAIN WALL

Climb the steps to the top of the earthwork.

9. What is the wall made of?
10. What shape are the arches?
11. How can we tell this section of wall was built after the rest of the castle?

CHURCH

Look at the remains of the Church inside the Bailey.

12. How can we tell that the church was there **before** the earthworks were constructed?

PLATE 3 (p.12 CASTLE RISING R. Allen Brown)
Look carefully at this picture by the artist Millicent produced in the early 18th century. Go to the **exact** spot where you think the artist must have been when he was sketching the scene. Look carefully at the buildings as they now appear.

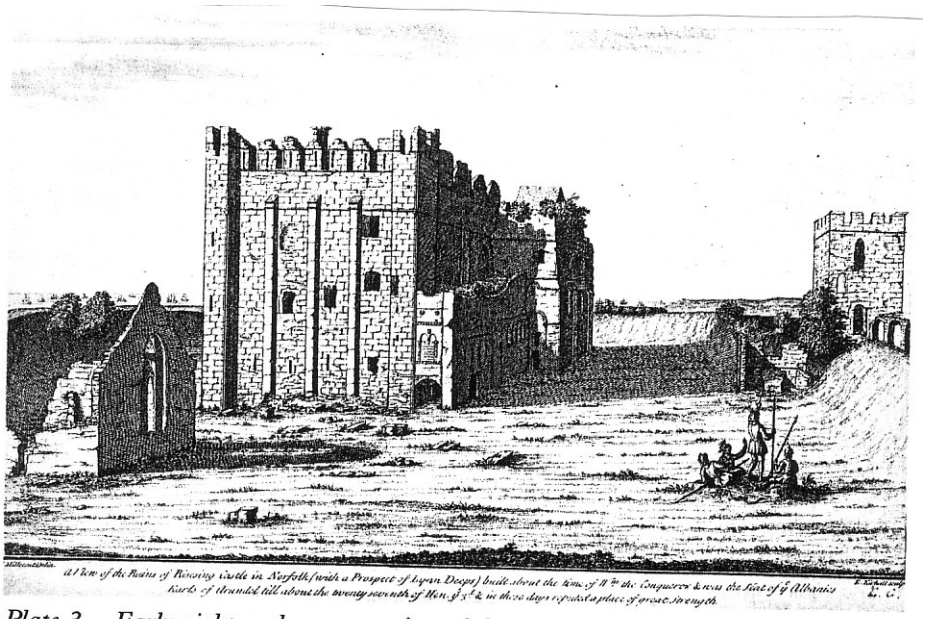


Plate 3 Early eighteenth-century view of the castle by Millicent

13. Note down as many differences you can see.

14. How can we tell by comparing the picture with the site today that a large amount of stone has been taken away?

15. Who do you think might have taken this stone away and why?

SOUTH WALL

16. How many stone pillars or buttresses are there to strengthen the wall?
17. One of the buttresses has been repaired in several places, what with?

18. What do you notice about the size of the windows and their position?
19. Can you think of a good reason why the smaller windows are lower down on the wall?

BATTER

At the bottom the wall gets thicker. This is know as a 'batter'.

20. Why might it be a good idea to make the wall thicker at the bottom?

Look at the angle of the wall at the bottom.

21. What would happen to any heavy object dropped from above when it hit the slope?

FOREBUILDING

22. Why do you think most of the expensive decorated stone is seen on this part of the castle?

Enter the Keep. Look back at the door frame.

23. How could the door be secured in time of attack?

At the bottom of these stairs is a door into the basement.
It would not make much sense to have such a weak point here.

24. Look carefully at the passageway. You should be able to work out that this passage into the basement was **not** part of the original design but a later addition. How can you tell?

Count the stairs as you climb.
Half way up the stairs (15 steps) there is another door frame.
There would originally have been another thick wooden door here.
Stop and look up.

25. What do you think the gap above was for?
26. How would it have helped defenders and made caused a problem for the attackers?

VESTIBULE (ENTRANCE HALL)

The windows at this level are much larger than at lower levels.
Originally there would have been no glass. Look carefully at the inside of the frames.

27. Can you find any evidence of how they could be made safe in times of danger?

The entrance into the Great Hall was originally through the archway that now forms part of a later fireplace.

28. Look at the fireplace and try to identify any original Norman features: building materials/style etc.

KITCHEN
Exit the Vestibule and walk straight ahead along the North Wall into the Kitchen.

29. In the Kitchen, can you find the following features?

Chimney
Drainage system to keep floor clean
Oven
Storage space/Cupboards

GARDEROBES

30. What were they used for?

GREAT HALL

31. Can you see anything on the wall opposite which helps explain how the floor was held up?

At some point the floor in the Great Hall collapsed. This cut the Kitchen and service areas off from the rest of the castle.

32. How was this problem solved by the people living in the castle at the time? Clue: they did not replace the floor of the Great Hall so had to find another way across from the Vestibule (Entrance Hall) to the Kitchen.

CHAPEL

The chapel would have been the most ornate and highly decorated room in the castle. Only one little clue remains....on the vaulting that holds up the ceiling of the Chancel traces of paint can be found.

33. What colour are they?

BASEMENT

34. Why might it be important to have a well inside the Keep?
35. Can you find any evidence on the walls of the basement that visitors or tourists have been coming to Castle Rising for a long time?

CASTLE RISING AS A MILITARY STRONGHOLD

WHY WAS IT SO HARD TO ATTACK A CASTLE?

Here is a list of the defensive features of Castle Rising.
Together they are designed to make it as difficult as possible for anyone wishing to attack the castle.

1. hill top position
2. earthworks
3. curtain wall
4. three wall towers (position uncertain)
5. bridge
6. drawbridge (no longer visible)
7. portcullis
8. gatehouse
9. batter
10. four corner turrets on the keep
11. three heavy studded wooden doors in the Forebuilding
12. murder hole (above the middle door of Forebuilding stairway)
13. arrow loops
14. spiral staircases - giving advantage to right-handed swordsmen moving downstairs
15. a well inside the keep

Imagine you were part of an attacking army.

For each of the FIFTEEN points listed explain how they would make the castle harder to attack.

CASTLE RISING AS A SYMBOL OF WEALTH AND POWER

A VISIT TO CASTLE RISING

"To begin with, the position of the castle would have ensured that it could have been seen while the visitor was still out to sea, and if it was whitewashed then this impression could only have been heightened. The traveller would then have traversed up the river Babingley and passed the dovecote - the badge of lordship conspicuously flaunted. Then they would have disembarked from their boat and passed the moated isle where perhaps they stopped for a brief rest and took some refreshment while horses were made ready for the next part of the journey. This took them through the town where they would have first passed the hospital just outside the gate and then the west face of the church and it's elaborate architecture. They would also have been made aware that they were passing through a planned town. At all times the castle would have dominated the approach..... The visitor would then have passed through the bailey and around to the gatehouse. Here they would have been met by the lord's official and they would have dismounted. They would have passed through the gatehouse, where at the final moment, the highly decorated keep, with it's connotations of power and lordship, would have been on full display. They then would have passed the forebuilding and entered the keep through the lofty palatial staircase. They would probably have then been made to wait just a little longer and then turned into the great hall. Here they would have met the lord of Rising on his dias (stage or throne)."

from **Castle Rising, A short history of Castle Rising and it's owners**
Dr. Robert Liddiard, M.A., Ph.D. (p.19)

What impact do you think all this would have had on the visitor?

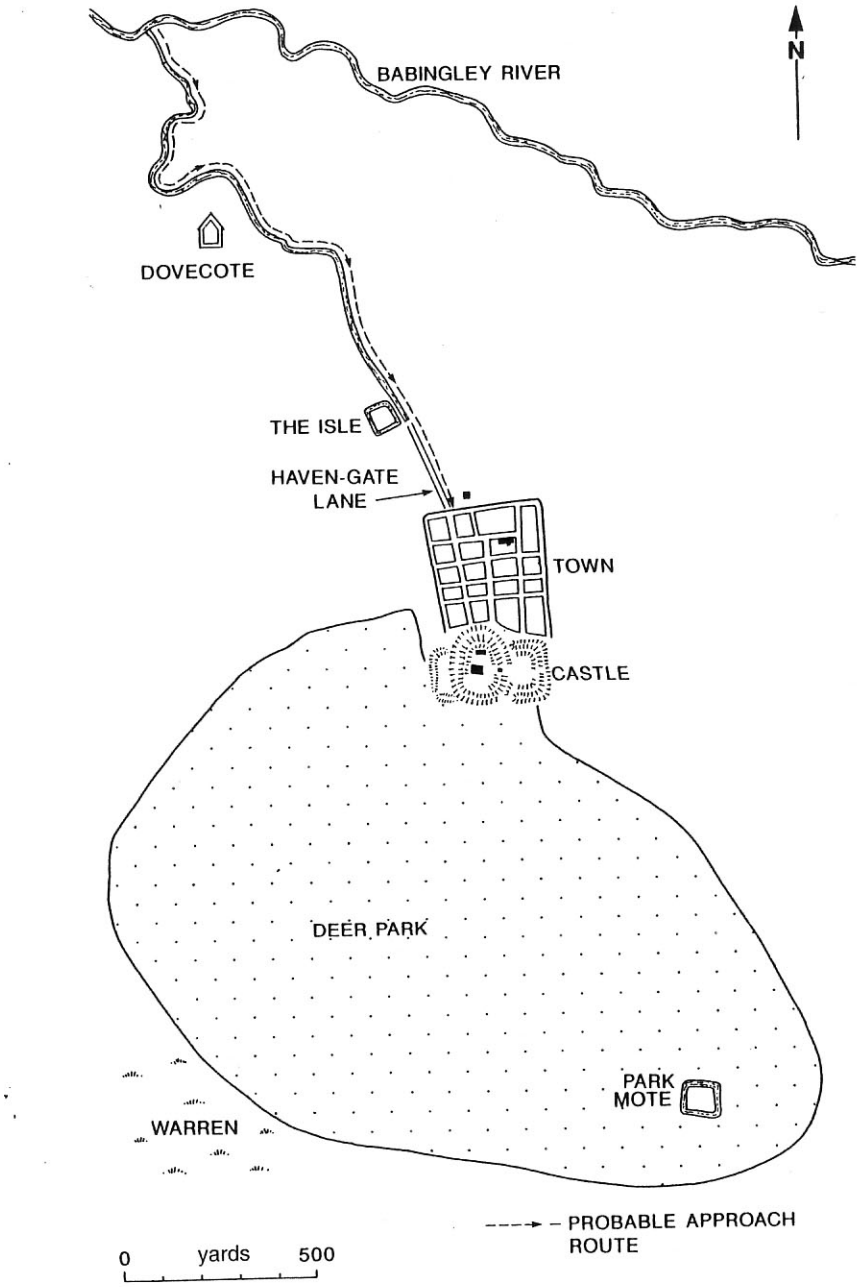
What symbols of power, wealth and importance are being used to impress anyone arriving to visit the lord of Rising? List as many as you can.

EVIDENCE OF WEALTH AND LUXURY

The following goods are recorded in various documents as having been at Castle Rising:

* tapestries to hang on the walls
* silk cushions
* a Turkish carpet
* a bed decorated with red and yellow silk from Flanders (Belgium)
* deer, hare, rabbits - all luxury meats in this period
* hounds, ferrets and hawks for hunting
* beef, pork, chicken, fish, pheasants and woodcock
* a dolphin bone! (reason unknown)

Why do you think it was so important for lords to show off their wealth in this way?


BABINGLEY RIVER
N
DOVECOTE
THE ISLE
HAVEN-GATE
LANE
TOWN
CASTLE
DEER PARK
PARK
MOTE
WARREN
PROBABLE APPROACH
ROUTE
0 yards 500

TEACHER'S NOTES

CHARACTERS AND PERSONALITIES ASSOCIATED WITH CASTLE RISING

The following important figures have been associated with the history of Castle Rising. Students could begin researching their lives by referring to:

Castle Rising, A short history of Castle Rising and it's owners
Dr. Robert Liddiard, M.A., Ph.D.

They provide numerous colourful links to a wide range of events and issues in British history from the Norman Conquest through the Reformation to pre-Reform Act rotten boroughs!

A site visit could provide powerful stimulus for empathetic/creative writing based on some of these powerful personalities.

Bishop Odo of Bayeaux : half brother of William the Conquerer. Was granted the land on which Castle Rising now stands immediately after the Norman Conquest**.** The Bayeaux Tapestry was originally made to hang in his Cathedral in Normandy.

William 'Stronghand' D'Albini II: one time owner of Castle Rising who made good when he married Queen Alice, the widow of Henry I.

"As a result he became arrogant and inordinately conceited so that he could not bear anyone being his equal, and anything that our world possessed that was special, apart from the king, was worthless in his eyes."
L. Watkiss, M. Chibnall (eds.) The Waltham Chronicle (Oxford, 1994)

Whilst William was wooing Alice another French princess offered to marry him. When he refused her she set a lion on him! William fought the beast and killed it by pulling out it's tounge! Albini's seal bore a lion rampant to commemorate this event.

Queen Isabella, the she wolf of France: with her lover **Roger Mortimer** she plotted the overthrow, imprisonment and brutal murder of her husband **Edward II** at Berkeley Castle in 1328. When her son reached the age of 17 in 1330 he took control of the kingdom and had Mortimer tried and executed as a traitor. For 27 years from 1331 Isabella lived at Castle Rising. She was hardly a prisoner - her annual income was 3,000 pounds - at a time when skilled craftsmen might expect to be paid 4d. a day. (Five pounds a year)

Edward III and Queen Phillipa: visited her at Castle Rising several times including visits recorded in 1342, 1343, 1344 and 1349.

"These, then, were great days at Castle Rising... when the captains and Kings departed, the eagles and the trumpets, one may wonder what the ageing Isabella thought about as she sat - perhaps by those windows in the keep, where visitors may now stand - and her son waged war in France. Did she marvel how she, with his useless father, Edward of Caernarfon (Edward II), now laid in pious state in his sumptious tomb at Gloucester, could ever have conceived him?"

R. Allen Brown Castle Rising Castle (English Heritage, 1978) p. 18

The Black Prince, Edward, Prince of Wales: owned Castle Rising from the death of Isabella, his grandmother in 1358. During his ownership major repairs were carried out due to fears of invasion from France. Two early cannon from this period, found at Castle Rising are displayed at the Tower of London.

The Howard Family: the section in Dr. R. Liddiard's book contains many interesting details about the early Duke's of Norfolk and their association with Castle Rising.

John Howard, 1st Duke of Norfolk died fighting with Richard III at Bosworth in 1485.

The later Yorkist kings **Edward VI** and **Richard III** are both known to have stayed at Castle Rising in their younger days.

Thomas Howard, 2nd Duke of Norfolk, (d. 1524) was injured at Bosworth and imprisoned in the Tower. Upon his release he became famous as commander of the English forces at Flodden in 1513. The Scottish king, **James IV** and a good proportion of his nobility were killed in this crushing defeat.

"The memory of this great victory won by the 'Flodden Duke' is commemorated on the Howard coat of arms in the form of the lion with the royal arms of Scotland shot through the throat by an arrow." Liddiard, p.22

Thomas Howard, 3rd Duke of Norfolk, (d. 1554) - 'a scheming and unscrupulous politician whose career is littered with infamy, most notably sending two nieces and a son to the gallows.' Even **Henry VIII** felt the need to apologise to the French for his "Foul Warfare" during campaigns in France. His wife commented: "he can speak fair as well to his enemy as to his friend... he neither regardeth God nor his honour."

Thomas Howard negotiated an end to the Pigrimage of Grace with the rebel leaders in 1536 - only to break the deal immediately by having 250 of the leaders hanged.

He arranged the marriages of two of his nieces **Anne Boleyn** and **Katherine Howard** to Henry VIII - but failed to stand by them when they were accused of treason. He is even said to have laughed aloud when the death sentence was passed against Katherine.

In 1542 he laid waste to the east of Scotland on Henry VIIIs behalf and was granted Castle Rising as his reward.

Despite being tried and found guilty of treason himself in 1547 - he was saved by the death of Henry VIII who died on the morning of his planned execution. The new king, Edward VI kept him in prison but he survived the young king to be released by Mary Tudor in 1553.

His son, Henry Howard was executed in 1547 on trumped up charges brought about in part by his father trying to save his own skin!

Thomas Howard, 4th Duke of Norfolk was also executed in1572 following his involvement in a plot to marry Mary Queen of Scots and then seek Spanish aid to restore Catholicism to England.

Other famous people with links to Castle Rising:

Samuel Pepys, famous diarist was MP for Castle Rising

Sir Robert Walpole, ‘England’s First Prime Minister’, was also MP for Castle Rising