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# INVESTIGATING TANTALLON CASTLE

Information for Teachers





### Timeline

**c1360** Castle built by William, 1st earl of Douglas

**1491** Castle under siege by James IV following anti-royal plot

**1528** James V attacks Tantallon for 20 days. 6th earl exiled to England. James retakes Tantallon for Crown

**Post 1528** Major rebuilding ongoing. Defences strengthened; chambers and towers in curtain wall filled in

**1543** Return of exiled 6th earl. English ambassador based here during "Rough Wooing"

**1566** Visit by Mary Queen of Scots

**1650** Tantallon bombarded by Cromwell's troops; badly damaged; abandoned by earls of Angus

**1699** Sold to Sir Hew Dalrymple

**Late 1800s** Fabric of castle secured

**1924** Tantallon taken into state care

**Tantallon Castle is one of the most impressive and genuinely awe-inspiring castles in Scotland. The giant curtain wall rears up from placid green fields. Within the castle the land plunges to the sea below. A visit here is a memorable and exciting way to inspire pupils to engage with the past.**

### Historical background

Tantallon Castle was built around the middle of the 14th century, probably by William, 1st earl of Douglas. The huge curtain wall survives from this time and it is still possible to make out the remains of the three great towers that projected from the wall.

In about 1402, the Douglas family split into two branches: the 'Red' and the 'Black' Douglases. The Red Douglases were based at Tantallon and took the title of earls of Angus. Powerful and ambitious, they kept the monarchs of Scotland on their toes with their shifting loyalties. The first challenge came in 1491 when they plotted to hand over the young James IV to the English king. James responded by besieging Tantallon from the land and the sea.

In 1525 the 6th earl married the widow of James IV, becoming stepfather to the

young James V. He held James captive in Edinburgh Castle until 1528 when the young king escaped and led an attack on Tantallon. His forces battered the castle for 20 days and the earl was later forced into exile.

James set to strengthening the castle, filling in the chambers and towers in the curtain wall to make it stronger and rebuilding the wallhead to take heavy guns. A fore tower was added to the mid tower and the outer defences were improved before the earl's unrepentant return.

Because of their associations with the English, Tantallon emerged unscathed from the English invasion of 1543. In 1651 the castle was back in the thick of events once more. A group of 91 royalists made the castle their base for disrupting Cromwell's supply lines as he attempted to conquer Scotland. In response, 2000-3000 soldiers under Cromwell's General Monk bombarded the castle for 12 days, destroying the Douglas and East Towers almost completely and forcing the garrison into surrender.

From then on the castle was uninhabitable and in 1924 it was taken into state care.



Tantallon Castle



## Supporting learning and teaching

A visit to **Tantallon Castle** is particularly appropriate for teachers working on class study topics such as:

- **The Middle Ages**
- **Castles**

The **Curriculum for Excellence** aspires to motivate and challenge pupils through a wide range of varied learning experiences. Site visits have a particular role to play in joining up learning outcomes across the curriculum. A visit, and use of the supporting materials, will help to:

- **develop successful learners** by challenging pupils to consider how life has changed for people. It will help them to think critically about evidence and arrive at their own conclusions.
- **develop confident individuals.** Pupils will learn about aspects of their community's past, develop an understanding of social changes, establish some of their own values and communicate their views on different historical and social issues.
- **develop responsible citizens.** It will help to increase pupils' social and historical knowledge and understanding and encourage greater respect for their own historic and built environment.
- **develop effective contributors** by broadening pupils' knowledge and understanding through investigative, creative and critical thinking.

## Before the visit

- Help pupils gain a clearer grasp of the time scale by making a time line with them, counting back the centuries and then marking on key events. It may help to identify the different periods of construction, possibly colour coded. This could be added to after the visit.
- Discuss the organisation of life in a castle. Pupils could investigate the roles of these key 'managers': **steward** (household staff); **constable** (security and defence); **marshal** (transport and communications); and **chaplain** (writing and spiritual matters).
- Discuss with pupils all the different activities that would have gone on in a castle. Pupils could research different topics (e.g. food, travel, entertainment, weapons) to prepare them for the visit.
- It is helpful if pupils have some terminology relevant to castles as this makes discussion on-site easier. Useful words might include: **courtyard, chamber, curtain wall, crenellations, drawbridge, portcullis, dovecot, shield, archway, gun loop, turnpike stair, battlement, cannon, siege, bombardment.** Pupils could produce a class illustrated dictionary to explain these terms.
- Some children find it hard to imagine that a castle was ever anything other than a ruin. Discuss how wind and weather can affect the look of a building as well as the deliberate changes that people choose to make to buildings.
- There is plenty of good evidence on-site relating to defending and attacking castles. Discuss with pupils the range of ways that castles could be attacked and defended.

## Working on site

When exploring the castle, pupils should be encouraged to look critically at what they see, and to make and test theories based on physical evidence.

Useful starting points are:

- Why do you think the castle was built here? What are its natural defences?
- What materials were used to build the castle?
- What evidence is there for everyday life?
- How has the castle changed over the years?

Pupils can record evidence by:

- Taking notes.
- Sketching.
- Taking photographs.
- Recording impressions into a tape recorder.

On the Historic Scotland website:

**[www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/education\\_unit](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/education_unit)** teachers can find additional resources to help with work on site. These include compiling an *Evidence Record* and a *My Impressions Record*.

## Suggestions for follow-up work

Following the visit pupils can pool their findings in groups to create a fuller record of the castle and the lives of the people who lived and worked there.

This could form the basis for a range of presentation activities, for example:

- A guide book or promotional leaflet for future visitors.
- A slide show with commentary of their visit.
- Imaginative writing based on the lives of the inhabitants or attackers of the castle.
- A series of drama sketches showing different snapshots of life in the castle through the ages.



## On the trail of Tantallon Castle

The history of Tantallon Castle is both murky and complex, and is confused further by the fact that many of the earls were called Archibald and many kings were called James. Because of this, the emphasis is rather on looking at the building itself as a source of evidence for life in the 14-17th centuries.

Our suggested **tour route** focuses on everyday life in what remains of the castle, with nine key locations, marked on the plan to the right:

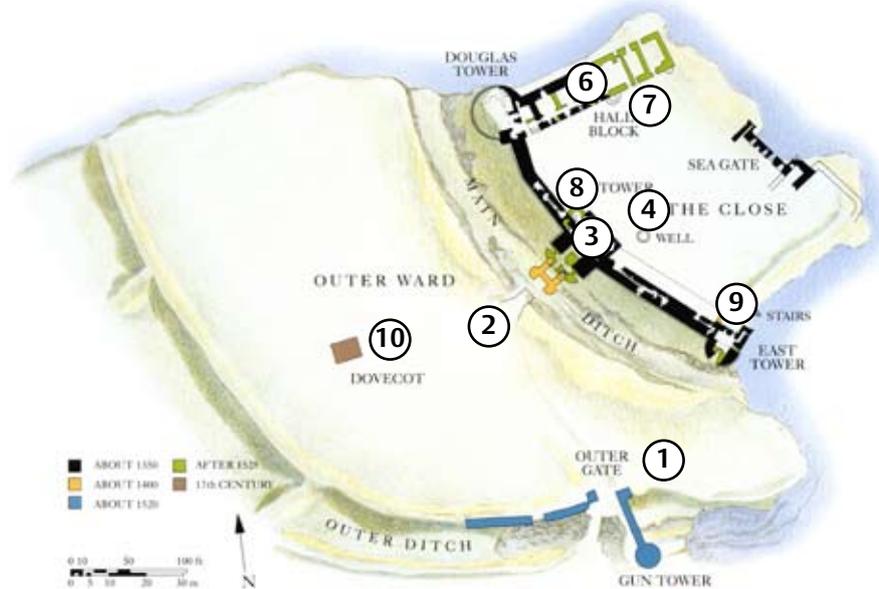
1. The Outer Gate
2. The Curtain Wall
3. The Entrance
4. The Close
5. The Pit Prison
6. The Hall
7. The Vaults and Kitchen
8. The Battlements
9. The Replica Gun
10. The Dovecot

**Background information** is given in the pack for each location. It is written in simple language so that it can be read aloud to pupils.

Also included are suggested **questions for discussion**. The focus is on encouraging pupils to **interpret** the building and deduce what they can from clues they see around them.

Allow about an hour.

## Plan of Tantallon Castle



Plan of castle



Images of altered gatehouse



### Did you know...

The coat of arms for the Douglas family includes a red heart. This is because Sir James Douglas, one of Robert the Bruce's closest supporters was given the job of taking Bruce's heart to the Holy Land after he died in 1329.

## Tour notes: On the trail of Tantallon Castle

### Outside Tantallon Castle

**Stand by the panel just past the steward's office. It shows how the castle might have looked when first built around 1350.**

**Setting the scene: This can be read to pupils.**

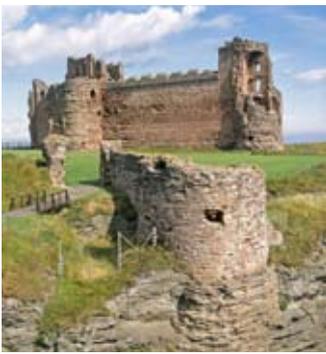
Tantallon Castle was built more than 600 years ago by the powerful Douglas family. After 1400, the Douglas family split into two parts – the Red and the Black Douglases. The Red Douglases were based at Tantallon and had the title earls of Angus. They were often involved in political plots and had lots of enemies – so they needed a strong castle. Sometimes the enemy was the king of Scotland himself! The castle was attacked lots of times and in 1651 it was bombarded so badly that the Anguses moved out. No one has lived in the castle for more than 300 years, so it looks very different now from how it used to look. As we go round, look out for evidence of how the castle was attacked and defended.

**Walk along the path towards the castle. Stop by the stone gateway, before you cross a modern wooden bridge.**

### Location 1: The Outer Gateway

**Background information for teachers. This can be read to pupils.**

- If you were attacking the castle, this would be your first big obstacle. You would have to cross the ditch and then get through the gateway.
- There used to be a huge wooden door in the gate. **Can you make out the archway?**
- If you managed to get through the door, you would immediately be shot at by people inside the castle.



The outer gateway



Remains of gun tower

#### Teacher prompts

You would have to dodge enemy gunfire from the people defending the castle. How many gunholes can you see in the wall?

What do you think the small tower to your right was used for?

What other obstacles can you see here that you would have to overcome?

This gate was added about seventy years after the castle was built. Why do you think the Earls of Angus added it?

If you were commanding the attacking troops, what do you think the best way through this gate would be?

#### Desired pupil responses

10 gunholes.

A gun tower for cannons.

Remains of a stone wall.  
Built up earthworks as barricade.  
Deep ditch, possibly filled with water.

Saw need for better defences.  
Changes in types of weapons used.

Own ideas – possibly to try to knock down wall from a distance using catapult or cannon fire.

Surprise – attack at night.

**Go through the gate and follow the path towards the castle. Stop by the panel in the middle of the grass showing the castle under siege in 1528.**



### Did you know...

The oldest parts of the castle are built out of red sandstone. If you look at the cliffs nearby you can tell that this stone came from close by. The parts that were added later were built in a different kind of stone – greenish mudstone. Look out for the green parts as you go round – handy colour coding!



Artist's impression of  
Tantallon Castle – 1360



Wall and remains of east  
tower

## Location 2: In front of the Curtain Wall

**Background information for teachers. This can be read to pupils.**

- This huge wall in front of you is the oldest part of the castle. It's called the curtain wall.
- When it was first built there were three towers. There was one on the left called the Douglas Tower. This was where the earls of Angus and their families lived. There's almost nothing left of that tower – it was destroyed about 350 years ago. In the middle is the mid tower. This was where the keeper of the castle and other officials lived. At the right you can see the remains of the east tower. This was where guests stayed when they visited Tantallon. Look at the information panel to see what the castle used to look like.
- At the top of the wall you can see the battlements from which the defenders would attack their enemy. The up-and-down parts, called crenellations, were added later.
- The mid tower has been changed a lot. There used to be two smaller round towers on either side of the gateway. Later another gatehouse was built in front of these towers, and then this tower was built right in front of the original two towers.
- There used to be a drawbridge across the ditch. This could be hauled up to make it harder for the enemy to get in. **Can you see the stone supports for the drawbridge?**
- There is scaffolding up because some of the stone has worn away. The people at Historic Scotland are working out the best way to conserve the stone so it doesn't wear away any further.

### Teacher prompts

There are hardly any windows in the curtain wall. Why do you think this is?  
What are the slits in the wall for?

Look at the mid tower. Can you see where the newer parts of the tower have been added on?

Why do you think it was changed so often?

### Desired pupil responses

Windows are weak points – would make the castle easier to attack.  
For shooting out of; also to let air into the chambers behind.

Newer parts clear to see – built in a greenish stone.

Entrance to a castle is always the weakest point – trying to make it stronger and easier to defend.

**Go across the narrow wooden bridge, over the ditch, through the entrance passage, and stand inside the ruins of the mid tower.**



### Did you know...

The keeper, also known as the constable was just one of the important jobs at the castle. Other important jobs were the steward, who was in charge of all the household servants; the marshal, who was in charge of all transport and communication arrangements; and the chaplain, who wrote letters, held church services, and advised on spiritual matters. There might have been as many as 150 servants working at Tantallon when the earls of Angus were at home.



Grooves for portcullis



Blocked off window in mid tower

### Location 3: The Entrance and Mid Tower

**Background information for teachers. This can be read to pupils.**

- The entrance to the tower was very closely guarded. It would be like going through a security check today. Guards would check who you were before they would let the drawbridge down for you and then you would be checked closely as you came through the gates.
- There used to be a portcullis at the end of the passage. This was a metal grille that could be hauled up and down. You can see a portcullis on a penny.
- The keeper or constable might have lived in this tower. He was in charge of the security of the castle.

#### Teacher prompts

Why do you think the entrance passage is so low and narrow?

Why might this be a problem for the Douglas family themselves?

The passage had doors at either end and one in the middle. Can you find any evidence for any of these doors?

Can you find evidence for where the portcullis used to be?

Look up to the top of the tower. Can you work out how many floors there used to be in this tower?

You can see that there used to be windows in this tower, looking into the courtyard. Why were the bigger windows on this side?

Look the other way. Can you see a window with window seats that was blocked up when the castle was altered?

#### Desired pupil responses

So that only one or two people could come in at a time. Easier to defend.

Not possible to fit a horse and cart through the passage into the safety of the castle.

Boltholes showing where two of the doors were.

Stone grooves visible at ground level showing where the portcullis slid up and down.

Ground floor plus four others.

Safe – looked into courtyard. Not a threat to security.

Above the archway and the plaque commemorating Queen Victoria's visit.

**Go through the doorway and stand by the well in the close.**



Looking up in mid tower



### Did you know...

Originally the well would have had a wooden roof over it to prevent rubbish from blowing in. There would have been a pulley system for hauling the buckets up 32 metres. After the castle was abandoned in 1651 the well gradually filled up and was forgotten about. It was rediscovered and dug out in the late 1800s. Do you fancy a drink from it now?



Castle wall from inside close



Mid tower and well from close

## Location 4: The Close

**Background information for teachers. This can be read to pupils.**

- The close was the inner courtyard of the castle. Originally there were high walls on all four sides of the close, but they have all fallen over the cliff edge.
- Face the castle. To the left of the mid tower look for two rows of holes in the curtain wall. This shows us that there used to be other buildings built up against the wall. The holes are where the wooden beams used to slot in. If you look very carefully to the right, you might be able to see the line where the roof of this building was.
- Although it's looking out to sea, it often feels quite sheltered in the close. This is because the wind usually comes from the land, from the south west.
- On the sea side of the close you can see the remains of some buildings. This was the sea gate, a kind of entrance way from the sea for goods coming from ships.
- Face the sea. To the left is the great hall block. You can see the big windows looking on to the close.

### Teacher prompts

Look down the well. This was the main water supply for the castle. It is 32 metres deep.

Why did they want to have the well inside the courtyard?

Why was a seagate useful?

The ditch and earthworks protect the castle on one side. What protects it on the other three sides?

### Desired pupil responses

So that there would still be a supply of water even if the castle was under siege.

So that the castle could be supplied from the sea if it was being attacked from the other side.

Often sea travel was faster than travel over land – maybe this was meant to be the entrance way for supplies and visitors who arrived by sea.

High cliffs above the sea.

**Face the curtain wall. Turn to the right towards the Douglas Tower. Go through an archway, past two doorways, and then down steep steps to the left to reach the prison.**



### Did you know...

We don't have much information about who was shut up in the pit prison. Two merchants, James Rannald and Johnne Mitchell, were held in the prison in 1584 – but we don't know why. Maybe they cheated the earl.



Inside pit prison



Latrine in pit prison

## Location 5: The Pit Prison

**Background information for teachers. This can be read to pupils.**

- The earls of Angus were not always fighting battles and defending their castle. They were in charge of governing the local area. This meant that they had to collect rent, sort out local problems, and hold trials. They were also in charge of keeping law and order in the area, so they had to have a prison to keep criminals in before their trial.
- The pit prison was for common prisoners. If a rich or noble person had committed a crime, he or she would be kept locked up in the castle, but in a more comfortable place.
- Look for the rocky floor. You can see that the castle is built straight on top of the rocky cliff.

### Teacher prompts

The steps into the prison are modern. How do you think prisoners in the old days would get into the prison?

What clues can you find that show there was a locked door into the prison?

There were two things about this prison that would have made it a little bit more comfortable than some prisons. What are they?

Do you think a prisoner could escape from this prison?

### Desired pupil responses

Might have been lowered down a rope, or thrown down, or there might have been wooden ladders.

Large bolt holes in sides of passage at top of steps.

Air vent – would have had fresh air.

Toilet - garderobe - up little steps.

Very hard – if you could squeeze down toilet you would find yourself on a cliff.

**Go back up the stairs, then take the flight of stairs to the right just before you come to the close. Go up the stairs to reach the great hall.**



### Did you know...

At some banquets the meat course was announced by trumpeters playing their instruments. There would also have been music played in the hall. Not all visitors enjoyed this; one guest at another banquet said the bagpipes sounded like “the bellowing of beasts”!



Hall showing position of roof



Stair leading to minstrels' gallery

## Location 6: The Great Hall

**Background information for teachers. This can be read to pupils.**

- This used to be the grandest room in the castle – the great hall. Lots of different activities took place here – grand feasts for important guests, or smaller dinners for the earls of Angus and their families. This was also where local people would come to pay their rent, to ask for favours, or to settle court cases.
- There used to be a special gallery high up at one end of the hall, where musicians would play to entertain guests. Underneath the gallery was where the servants would wait to serve the dishes. Look at the picture on the wall to give you an idea of what the hall looked like.
- At the other end was a fireplace and a raised platform where the earls of Angus and important guests would dine.
- The other guests would sit on benches at long trestle tables that ran up and down the hall. Look for the other fireplace that would keep them warm.
- The walls would have been covered with beautiful rich hangings that would help keep the hall warm too.
- Later on the hall was altered. A higher roof was built and another floor was slotted in. This was where the earls of Angus ended up living when they moved out of the Douglas Tower.

### Teacher prompts

How did the musicians reach the gallery?  
Have a look and see if you can find out.

You can see where the old roof used to be if you look at the end wall nearest the rest of the castle. What shape was the roof?

What evidence can you see that there was once another floor above the hall?

### Desired pupil responses

Small spiral staircase – now blocked up at the bottom – on the outside wall.

Triangular – marks of where the beams used to be are very obvious.

Stone supports sticking out from the wall.

**Go down the stairs again and look into the vaults beneath the hall.**



### Did you know...

The fireplaces were so big that there was space for a boy to stand right by the fire to turn the roasting spit. He was known as the **turnbrochie**.



Slop outlet in kitchen



Remains of oven in kitchen

## Location 7: The Vaults and Kitchen

**Background information for teachers. This can be read to pupils.**

- This used to be another hall. The servants had their feasts and meetings here.
- Later on it was divided into three huge storage rooms. Local people paid their rent in the form of food, so the earls of Angus needed somewhere to store this – as well as supplies of wine from abroad.

Teacher prompts	Desired pupil responses
What evidence can you find in the vaults to show that this was not always used for storage rooms?	Fireplace in middle vault. Latrine in outermost vault.
Why did the earls of Angus need so much space for storage?	To store food in case the castle was attacked.

**Continue past the vaults to find yourself in the remains of the kitchen.**

- This room was the castle kitchen. It would have been the warmest and probably the busiest place in the castle when the earl of Angus was staying here. There were probably two fireplaces. **Can you see the remains of either of them?**
- Food could be cooked in four ways: boiled in a cauldron hanging over the fire, roasted on a spit that turned over the fire, baked in an oven, or sometimes smoked on shelves above the fire.

Teacher prompts	Desired pupil responses
Look for the remains of the oven. How do you think the oven heated up?	Remains of rounded oven can be seen. Heated by burning fuel in the centre.
What kind of things would be cooked in the oven?	Pies, bread, sweet cakes, oat bannocks.
In modern kitchens there is always a sink for water. Where did the castle cooks get their water from?	Water came from the well in the close.
Look for where they poured dirty water.	Dirty water poured down slop hole on outer wall.
Where did the earls of Angus get their food from?	Fish from sea or rivers; grew fruit, herbs, and vegetables; hunted deer, boar, rabbits; farmed sheep, pigs, cows, goats; chickens, ducks, geese, pigeons; dairy produce such as cheese; wheat, barley, and oats for grinding into flour or for making beer.
Look at the information panel in the close to see a picture of what the kitchen used to look like. How is it different from your kitchen at home? How is it the same?	Different – fires, no piped water, no kitchen units or electric light, servants. Same – table, warmth, supplies of food, pots and pans, knives.

**To the right of the mid tower you can see a small door just visible at the top of a few steps. Go up the narrow stair and at the top, turn left. Go along the battlements to stand at the top of the mid tower, facing inland.**



### Did you know...

In 1528 James V and his army marched on Tantallon Castle. As they marched they chanted:

*Ding doon Tantalloun!*

*Ding doon Tantalloun!*

meaning that they wanted to bring down the walls of Tantallon. After twenty days of bombarding the castle, James ran out of gunpowder and withdrew his forces, but the walls had received a heavy battering.



Remains of round tower



View along battlements

## Location 8: The Battlements and Mid Tower

**Please note:** the steps leading up to the battlements are dark, uneven, and winding. If you decide to take children up the stairs, we recommend that you take them up in small groups and **supervise closely at all times**. Although there are railings all around, the battlements themselves are exposed and very high and some children may become nervous up here. Please ensure that children are supervised extremely closely at all times. We do **not** recommend that you take children to the very top of the mid tower as there is little space and it is very exposed.

**Background information for teachers. This can be read to pupils.**

- We're now standing on the top of the mid tower. When it was first built, there used to be two round towers at the top of the tower. **Can you see the remains of one of the round towers?** They used to be connected by a stone bridge, called a flying bridge. You might be standing on it now!
- The mid tower has been changed a lot to make it stronger. Look for the greenish stone that was added later.
- Look down onto the grass in front of the castle. This was an area called the outer ward. This would have been a very busy place. You could have seen horses being prepared, workmen building, animals grazing. There is only one building left now – the dovecot for keeping pigeons. Look at the picture on the information panel.
- You can get a good view of the ditches and earthworks that were built to defend the castle from here.

### Teacher prompts

Look for a triangular shape built up out of the grass. This was built as a gun platform called a ravelin. Why do you think it was triangular?

The up and down parts of the outer wall of the battlements are called crenellations. The bits that stick up are called merlons. The gaps are called crenels. What is the point of the crenellations on the battlements?

### Desired pupil responses

Could see in all directions.

Defenders can hide behind the parts that stick up and shoot through the gaps.

**Move across the mid tower and onto the battlements.**

- Look into the remains of the mid tower. You can see clearly where the rooms used to be. Have a look at the information panel that shows what the bedrooms or chambers looked like in the time of the earls of Angus.
- As you go down the stairs, look into the small rooms that have been filled in with stone. There is also a room with small displays about soldier and servant life.

### Teacher prompts

Why do you think the rooms in the curtain wall were filled in with stone?  
Do you think it worked?

### Desired pupil responses

To make the curtain wall even stronger against cannon fire.  
Probably – curtain wall has remained intact, unlike the Douglas Tower.

**At the bottom of the steps come out into the close. Turn right. Go through the last door on your right to find yourself in a room at the bottom of the east tower.**



### Did you know...

Tantallon was equipped with a huge range of weapons. Huge cannons sat on top of the towers and on the battlements and inside the castle smaller guns were positioned. Other weapons, huge spikes called pikes and halberds, were piled up by the gates.

### Location 9: Gun Room in East Tower

**Background information for teachers. This can be read to pupils.**

- This is a modern copy of the type of gun that would have been used in the castle about 500 years ago.
- This gun fired small stone balls. It could fire them more than 500 metres!

#### Teacher prompts

Find the hole in the wall for the gun to shoot through. This is called a gun loop. Look through it. What is the gun targeting? Why?

Why do you think the gun is on a wooden trolley?

#### Desired pupil responses

The entrance gate.

So that if people broke in through the gate, they could be stopped before getting any further.

So it could be moved into the right position, from one gun loop to the next.

**Go out of the castle through the main door and make your way across the grass to the dovecot.**



Replica gun in east tower



Cannon port



### Did you know...

Pigeons used to be so valuable that if you shot one of the lord's pigeons, you could be punished with 40 days in prison.

## Location 10: The Dovecot

**Background information for teachers. This can be read to pupils.**

- There used to be lots of buildings in this area, but this is the only one left. This building is called a dovecot, pronounced 'doo-cot'. It was for keeping pigeons.
- Pigeons were very valuable. The dovecot would have been kept locked with a strong wooden gate.

<i>Teacher prompts</i>	<i>Desired pupil responses</i>
Why did the earls of Angus want to keep pigeons?	Fresh meat and eggs all year round.
How did the pigeons get into the dovecot?	Flew in through a hole in the roof.
Each pigeon hole was for a pair of pigeons. Can you work out roughly how many pigeons the first room in the dovecot could hold?	Almost 1000 – about 480 pigeon holes.
Rats liked to eat the pigeon eggs. Look at the horizontally outside of the dovecot. Can you see anything that would stop the rats getting in?	Stone ridges running round dovecot make it harder to get in.



*The dovecot*



*Pigeon holes inside dovecot*



## FAQ

**Q What is the minimum number of adults required for supervision?**

**A** 1 adult to 10 pupils.

**Q Is it possible to have a guided tour?**

**A** At the moment this is not possible.

**Q Is there disabled access?**

**A** Wheelchair users can access the close but the battlements, hall, and pit prison are accessible only by stairs.

**Q Are there lunch facilities?**

**A** Pupils can picnic outside or shelter in the vaults in wet weather.

**Q Where are the toilets?**

**A** There are toilets by the Visitors Centre.

**Q Do you carry out risk assessments on behalf of schools?**

**A** Risk assessment of the site is the responsibility of the teacher in charge of the group. Hazard information sheets available on the Historic Scotland website provide information that can help teachers prepare their risk assessments

**Q Is there a shop?**

**A** There is a shop that sells postcards, guidebooks, and souvenirs.

## Visiting Tantallon Castle

**Pre visits:** We strongly recommend that teachers make a **free** visit to the castle to familiarise themselves with the site and to make a risk assessment before bringing school parties.

**Booking a visit:** Phone 01620 892727 to book a visit, discuss your needs and confirm opening times with the steward.

**Cost:** Admission is free to a range of educational groups including school parties. More information about who qualifies for free visits can be found on the Historic Scotland Education Unit website.

**Location:** Three miles east of North Berwick off the A198.

**Parking:** Coaches should park in the first car park you come to. It is then a short walk to the steward's office. Please do not bring coaches to the car park nearer the castle as it is not possible to turn and space is limited.

**Health and safety:** Please note the following:

- This site is extremely exposed. At ground level there are cliffs dropping 20 metres to the sea. The battlements are 20 metres high above ground level. Because of this pupils should be supervised extremely closely at all times, ideally in small groups.
- Steps within the castle are uneven and can become slippery in wet weather.
- Even in summer this is an exposed and windy site and pupils should dress warmly.
- At the time of writing the mid tower is covered in scaffolding for conservation work. Pupils should keep well away from this.
- As part of our commitment to Green Tourism, we ask that any rubbish be disposed of back at school.

### Historic Scotland Education Unit:

For further information about school visits, activities and resources for teachers, visit: [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/education\\_unit](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/education_unit)

## Additional resources

### For teachers

C Tabraham and D Grove *Tantallon Castle* Historic Scotland 1994. The official guidebook; essential reading for teachers for further details on the architecture and history of the site.

Historic Scotland Education *Investigating Medieval Castles in Scotland* Historic Scotland 2005 – designed for teachers, with lots of background on castle life and suggestions for class activities.

Chris Tabraham *Scottish Castles and Fortifications* Historic Scotland 2000.

### For pupils

Deary *Horrible Histories: Bloody Scotland* Scholastic 1998.

English Heritage *What were Castles For?* Usborne Starting Points in History ISBN: 0746052561.

<http://home.freeuk.net/elloughton13/castle1.htm> A good source of pictures of castle life which can be downloaded.

[http://kotn.ntu.ac.uk/castle/castl\\_fm.html](http://kotn.ntu.ac.uk/castle/castl_fm.html) Activities based on Nottingham Castle.

[www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/education/as/burghlife/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/education/as/burghlife/) Explore 16th century burgh life in Scotland.

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