

In the Morning Room is a magnificent series of early Brussels tapestries depicting the story of Isaac and Rebecca, and Sodom and Gomorrah, woven by the Pannemakers after cartoons by Raphael. Accompanying these is a suite of carved giltwood furniture embroidered in petit-point by Elizabeth Drax, the wife of the 4th Earl. The very fine refectory table traditionally came from Fountains Abbey, Yorkshire.

THE LONG DRAWING ROOM

On leaving the Morning Room and passing up a short flight of stairs you come to the Long Drawing Room. One of the main features of this splendid room is the superb series of carved gilt wall mirrors, two of which incorporate the Berkeley Arms in the cresting. Above is the King's Pew, formerly in the Chapel.

THE SMALL DRAWING ROOM

Continuing through to the Small Drawing Room; gilt furniture and another series of fine Brussels tapestries help to make this a charming room, soft and mellow in colour and very suitable for its purpose as an evening room.

The corner cabinet contains an attractive collection of objects in soapstone, ivory, jade, amber and bronze. The tapestries, the subjects of which are taken from Ovid's Metamorphoses, bear the name of their weaver, Jan Cobus, and the Arms above them are those of the Dutch family Leyden. The carved door and the bird painting by de Koninck over the fireplace are of particular interest. The roof timbers are 14th century originals.

BEER CELLAR

After returning through the Long Drawing Room descend the Grand Staircase, turn left into the outer porch and down the steps leading to the cellars. During the 19th and early 20th centuries beer was brewed on the premises in what is now the outside Tea Room and piped under the inner courtyard to the cellar. The small casks hold 450 gallons and the large ones 600 gallons (4,800 pints).

THE GARDEN

The meadows surrounding the Castle could be flooded at will to make life difficult for any potential adversary. The ditches are locally called rheens.

The late Captain Berkeley simplified the terraces into grass walks with narrow borders of low plants together with some choice shrubs and wall climbers. The Bowling Green is flanked on one side by an immensely high wall and on the other by a row of ancient yews that are visible as a series of arches on 18th century pictures of the Castle. There are excellent views of the Castle from the far end of the Bowling Green.

Below the Green is a long rectangular swimming pool, now a lily pond. The recently installed plume fountain has been funded by the Friends of Berkeley Castle. Across the meadows visitors can see the kennels and stables of the Berkeley Hunt and, on the high ground beyond, the Deer Park that has herds of red and fallow deer.

BUTTERFLY HOUSE

The Butterfly House was created in the 1970s and is set in the walled garden adjacent to the car park. Tropical butterflies are flying here and you may see them emerge from their pupae. Some tropical species are imported as pupae from as far away as Japan and Indonesia. Hundreds of these beautiful and fascinating creatures, representing up to 42 different species, are in free flight among unusual flowers and plants in this tranquil oasis.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Guided tours of the Castle are available free of charge throughout the day subject to availability. Tours start from the Keep Steps. If you need assistance, or have a question – please ask one of our Guides. Don't forget to let us have your comments in our Visitors' Book located in the Woodshed by the Tea Room and Shop.

ACCESS

- Please be aware that the Castle and grounds retain much of the original layout, which includes steep steps. Access to these areas for those with mobility impairments or push-chairs is difficult. However, our trained Guides will be able to advise you of the most easily accessible areas of the Castle.

DOGS

- Other than service dogs on leads, dogs are not allowed anywhere on the premises.

PICNICS

- Visitors are welcome to picnic within the designated Picnic Area adjacent to the main car park. Picnics are not allowed in the Castle or anywhere else within the grounds.

SMOKING

- Smoking is not permitted within the Castle.

PHOTOGRAPHY

- Photography is not permitted within the Castle.

CASTLE CONTENTS

- Please note that valuable items within the Castle are alarmed.
- Please do not touch any of the artefacts, pictures, furniture, fabrics or tapestries – many are delicate.
- Please do not touch the taps in the kitchen.

IN THE CASTLE

Please be aware of:

- Uneven steps, particularly the trip steps at the entrance to the Keep.
- Low head-room in doorways.
- Uneven flagstones and floorings and polished (slippery) floors.
- Unexpected steps, particularly in the Tower Room, Larders, Kitchens and across the Great Hall.

IN THE GARDENS

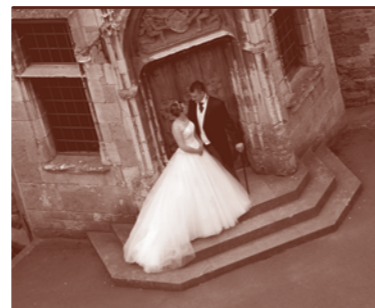
- Please do not climb on the cannons.
- Please be careful of the steps, especially in wet weather as the stone can be very slippery.
- Please be careful near the Lily Pond/Swimming Pool. The water is 5ft (2m) deep in places.
- Please be careful of the DEEP WATER ditches (rheens) at the extremities of the garden.
- Please do not eat berries, or pick plants or foliage as some may be poisonous.

CHILDREN

- Please supervise children at all times and keep children outside any roped off areas.

PRIVATE

- Kindly remember that the Castle is home to the Berkeley Family, so please do not open doors marked 'PRIVATE' – Thank you.



BERKELEY CASTLE

A truly unique venue for any special occasion

Berkeley Castle can be yours exclusively for your special day, offering a unique and intimate service in a stunning location. The Castle is available for receptions, and is also licensed for Civil Weddings and Partnerships.

BERKELEY CASTLE



WALK INTO HISTORY



CASTLE GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

In the charter granted to one Robert FitzHarding by Henry II, Henry covenants to build up a castle himself, "secundum voluntatem ipsius Roberti", which we could translate to mean "according to the said Robert's wishes". Whether King Henry or FitzHarding actually bore the cost of the work is not known, but we do know that the construction of the Keep began around 1154. It is of the type known as a shell keep; and is of special interest in that it surrounds the whole of the original mound instead of following the usual practice of being perched on top of it.

Mr Berkeley, the present owner who lives in the Castle, is directly descended in the male line from that same Robert.

For more information call

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www.berkeley-castle.com

THE KING'S GALLERY

On entering the Inner Bailey turn to your left and follow the Keep Steps up to the King's Gallery. This room is the home of one of Berkeley's most dramatic stories, the imprisonment and eventual murder of King Edward II. But today it contains a fine collection of paintings depicting members of the Royal family. A notable item of furniture is the cypress chest that is believed to have once belonged to Sir Francis Drake.

In the far corner of the room is a semi-circular hole in the floor surrounded by a railing. This drops 28 feet to the level of the Courtyard and is popularly believed to have been a dungeon. According to the Chronicle of Geoffrey le Baker, written some 30 years after the event, rotting animal carcasses were thrown down in the expectation that the stench would asphyxiate the poor prisoner in the room above. The Chronicle goes on to say that Edward's constitution must have been strong because he survived to be murdered in his bed by his jailers, Sir John Maltravers and Sir Thomas Gurney. However, the lurid details of this account are not supported by other evidence suggesting that Edward was held in honourable captivity and that Thomas, Lord Berkeley was allowed £5 per day for his expenses, a very large sum at that time. Thomas, Lord Berkeley was in the Castle at the time of the murder and although he was later charged with complicity the charges were dropped.

DRAKE'S ROOM

On the right of the King's Gallery is a door to what is known as Sir Francis Drake's Bedroom. It contains a beautifully carved oak four-poster bed and a fine pair of portraits of John and Jane Berkeley by Sir Peter Lely. It is said that Drake was a frequent visitor to the Castle.

TOWER ROOM

Through a narrow door and passage which cuts through the thick walls of the Keep is the Tower Room. This contains an unusual collection of mid 17th century Indian ebony furniture that came into this country from the East Indies under the influence of Queen Catherine of Braganza, the Portuguese wife of King Charles II.

THE PICTURE GALLERY

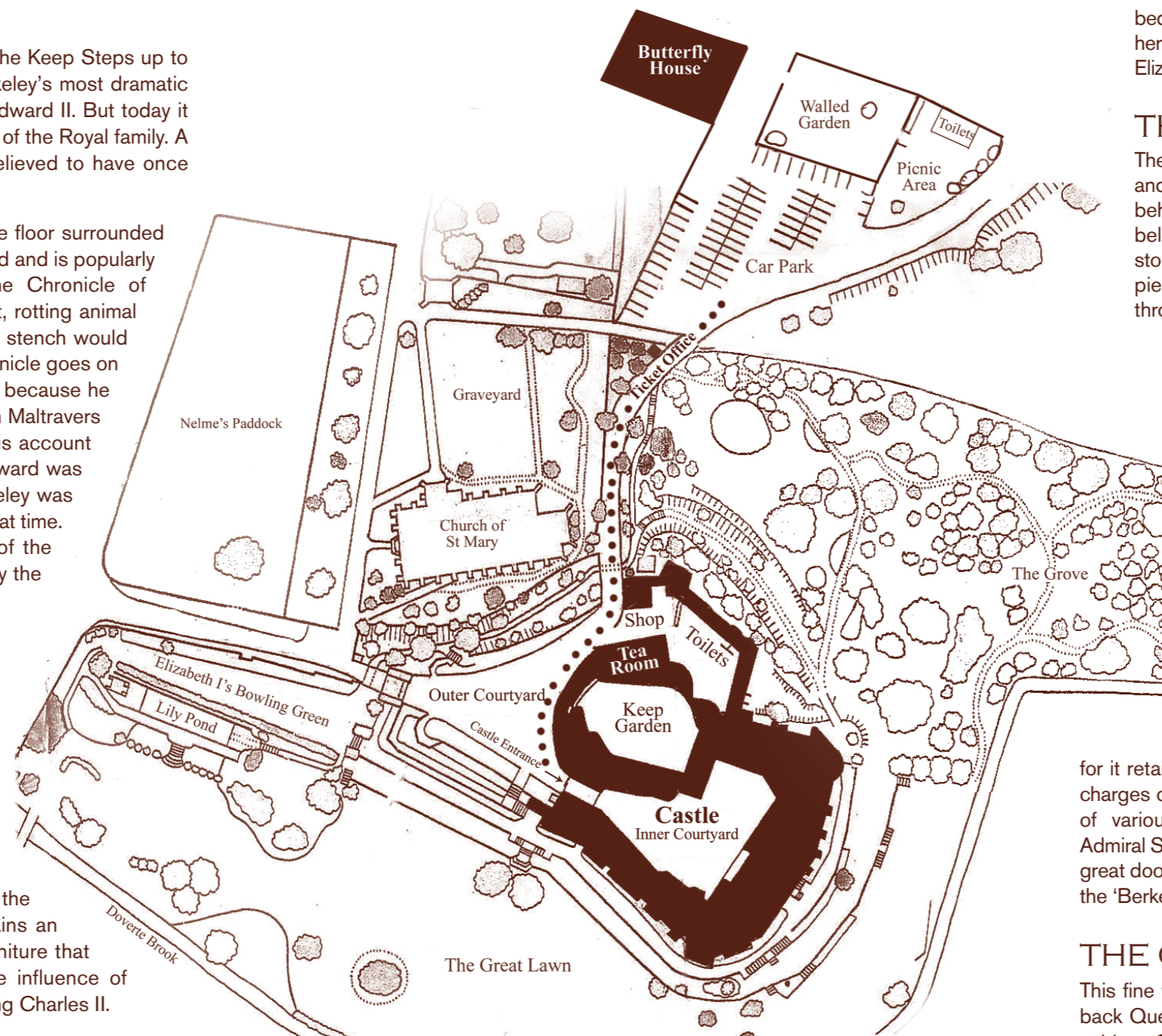
Take care on the short flight of steps down to the Picture Gallery. The sea pieces are of special interest because the majority of the ships illustrated were commanded by members of the Berkeley family. If you look closely you can see their coats of arms on the sterns of the vessels.

There are some fine Dutch and English painting and marquetry tables and furniture of the late 17th century. The wooden model in the centre is a fine example of an Admiralty model used when constructing warships.

THE DINING ROOM

Via a staircase displaying portraits of the 19th century Lords Fitzhardinge, you reach the Billiard Room, now displayed as the Dining Room. Although not originally designed as such, it is the perfect space to display the large late 18th century dining table and accompanying furniture and the fine silver tableware which is mostly 18th century English. A collection of Berkeley portraits is on display, one particularly interesting example being the portrait of Sir William Berkeley who became Governor of Virginia in America in 1641.

The Dining Room is also home to the Castle's recently restored French hurdy-gurdy, dating from around the late 16th, early 17th century.



bedspread said to have been owned by Queen Elizabeth I and used during her visits to Berkeley. In the window is a case containing some facsimiles of Elizabethan embroidered cushions of the same series.

THE HOUSEKEEPER'S ROOM

The Housekeeper's Room contains a collection of late 18th century furniture and several interesting pictures including a winter scene by Ruisdael. Shown behind a grille in the wall is the Godwin Cup that by tradition is said to have belonged to Earl Godwin, father of King Harold. It is not known how this story about the Godwin Cup arose but it has since been identified as a Tudor piece, probably made in about 1585. Across the Screens Passage and through the large wooden doors you will reach The Great Hall.

THE GREAT HALL

This magnificent Hall, measuring 32½ feet high, 62 feet long and 32 feet wide, is of the 14th century and built within the 12th century curtain wall of the Castle on the left, where it has been pierced for two window openings. The Great Hall was built on the site of the original hall in the reign of King Edward III c. 1340 by Thomas III, Lord Berkeley. The roof dates from the same period, but there are historical records of extensive repair in 1497 when it is possible that the upper part was lowered to the present saddle-topped style. The walls are hung with a fine series of Oudenarde tapestries illustrating the story of Esther and Ahasuerus.

The installation of stained glass in the windows that show the various alliances of the family took place in the 1930s.

The 16th century Screen at the far end of the Hall should be noted, for it retains its original painted decoration, although the painting of the heraldic charges on the shields has been changed. The pictures above the tapestries are of various members of the family. Above the fireplace is a portrait of Admiral Sir George Cranfield Berkeley by Gainsborough. From the dais of the Hall, great doors open onto the Grand Staircase. Notice the well-preserved example of the 'Berkeley Arch'.

THE GRAND STAIRS

This fine wooden staircase dates from 1637. On the landing are beautiful hoop back Queen Anne chairs with their embroidered seats, and a Chinese lacquer cabinet. On the walls are some examples of late 16th century embroidery formerly part of the hangings of a bedchamber in the Castle and by tradition hangings from King Henry VIII's tent at the Field of the Cloth of Gold. The portrait between the doors is a contemporary copy by Old Stone of a Self Portrait of Van Dyck. Also the portrait by Francis Cotes of Admiral Sir George Cranfield Berkeley as a midshipman, and one by Reynolds of Elizabeth Drax, 4th Countess, who embroidered the suite of furniture to be seen in the Morning Room.

THE MORNING ROOM

To the left at the top of the Grand Staircase, at one time the Chapel of St. Mary: the Morning Room is interesting mainly for its timber roof with contemporary painted decoration, chiefly in reds and greens somewhat restored, and containing verses from an early translation of Revelation of St. John the Divine. The translation is believed to date back to the building of the Chapel in the 1340s, at the same time as the Great Hall. The translation from Latin to Norman French is interesting not only for its decorative value but also because it is part of one of the earliest attempts to render the Scripture into the language of the nobility of the time. It is unlikely that John Trevisa made this translation as was rumoured. He is famed for his translation of text books into English but is not known to have made any translations into French, which by 1387 had been superseded as the language of the English nobility. The suggestion probably arose because Trevisa mentions this translation in a prologue to another book which he completed in 1387.

THE GAME LARDER, BUTTERY & KITCHEN

The Game Larder walls have been decorated with paintings, tapestries and objects of interest. The medieval Buttery and Kitchen date from the 14th century and are very little altered. These would have been the centre for life at the Castle. In the Buttery the sinks, pestle and mortar, chopping blocks and other kitchen utensils have been retained. The arches on the walls show the positions of early bread ovens. In the Kitchen the old grate with a large series of spits is of interest, as is the whole arrangement of this 14th century Kitchen with its several fireplaces.

Particularly notable survivals are the Tudor timbered roof and the sinks of solid lead. Underneath the Buttery is a subterranean passage which leads to the main well of the Castle, situated underneath the Courtyard. The water in the well comes from a very powerful spring a mile away at Wanswell and until fairly recently it provided water for the whole Castle.

THE CHINA ROOM

This room contains cabinets displaying a fine collection of services including Worcester and Wedgwood. In many cases these are decorated with the arms of the Berkeley family. In a perspex frame opposite the entrance is an embroidered