

History



Find out about Astley Castle's past...



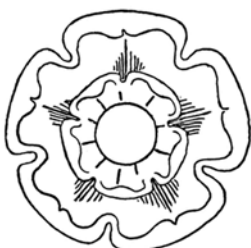
Hello! Welcome to Astley Castle. My name is Meg and I lived here in Astley. In 1461 when I was 8 Sir John Grey gave me a job as a kitchen maid. It was very exciting going to work in such a beautiful castle.

I loved working at Astley even if old Mrs Cobb the cook shouted at me for being clumsy and day dreaming. My friend Jenny who was 2 years older than me also worked in the kitchen. We chatted and giggled all day. Sometimes when Sir Grey and his wife Elizabeth were away we crept into her chambers to look at all her beautiful gowns.

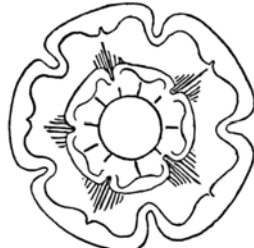
It was said that she was the most beautiful woman in Britain. Her hair was so golden it looked like the sun was shining. I wish my hair was like that. My hair is like my mum's, brown and frizzy. If only I was born a noblewoman, then I could be mistress of a castle like Astley.

Sir John Grey was a very brave knight. He was fighting in the **Wars of the Roses** when he was killed in battle. It was so sad, everyone in the house cried for weeks. Poor mistress Elizabeth, new king Edward IV of York took away all her lands as Sir John had been fighting on the other side. Colour the Lancaster rose in red and leave the York rose white.

Lancaster



York



Fact:

The '**Wars of the Roses**' wasn't roses fighting each other! From 1455, two sides of the royal family, the House of York and the House of Lancaster were fighting over who was going to be King. They fought many battles against each other.

Their battles were called the Wars of the Roses because the York supporters had a white rose as their symbol and the Lancastrians had a red rose.



Elizabeth was very brave and heard that King Edward was out hunting near her parents' house. She stood under an ancient oak tree with her two sons and waited until she could see the king to ask for her land to be given back to her.

Edward didn't stand a chance; she was so beautiful he fell in love with her. Some nasty people say that she was a witch and cast a spell on him. But how could someone so pretty be a witch? Witches are old and wrinkly with crooked noses and warts on their faces - everyone knows that!



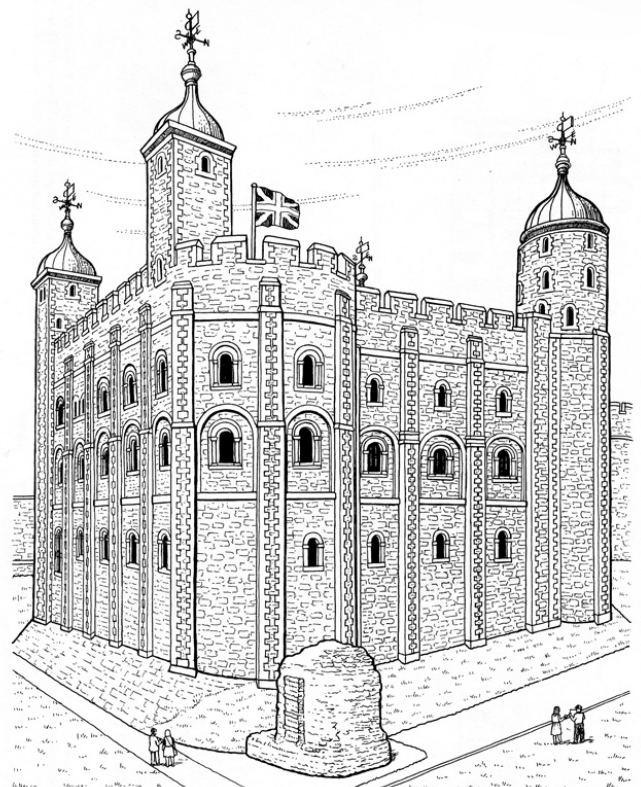
Edward and Elizabeth loved each other very much and got married in secret. The king's advisors were very angry at this. Elizabeth was not a princess or a lady she was just a commoner, a king should never marry a commoner!

Edward and Elizabeth had 2 sons and 5 daughters (imagine having to share your toys with 6 other people!) Edward and Elizabeth never really came to Astley as they lived in much bigger castles.

It was very sad when King Edward died. The two princes who were in line to be king were locked away and killed in the Tower of London by their uncle, Richard ... who stole the throne for himself. No one liked him then, and war broke out again.

I was so happy when Henry VII defeated Richard III and married Elizabeth of York, she was Edward and Elizabeth's daughter. We couldn't believe it; we now worked for a Queen of England all over again!

I loved working at Astley. I hope you have as much fun staying here as I did!



The Tower of London where the little princes were locked up – and disappeared.

Unruly Rulers

Who were the medieval (say 'med-ee-evil') kings?

Medieval means in the Middle Ages. This is roughly from when William the Conqueror and the Normans invaded England in 1066 until Henry VIII (that's the 8th) became king in 1509.



King William II Rufus

He was killed hunting.
People say that Henry I ordered it!



King Stephen

Another king who stole the throne, it was meant to be his cousin Matilda's!



King Richard I The Lion Heart

A brave king, he was always fighting a war.



King Henry III

He was a good king who gave money to the poor and liked to pray.



King Edward II

Another bad King, he only listened to his best friend Piers Gaveston and met a nasty death in a dungeon.



King Richard II

He tried to rule without parliament, so the barons helped the next Henry become king.



King Henry V

He wanted to be King of England and France. You guessed it, he started a war!

1066

William the Conqueror

He wasn't even English he came from France.



1087

King Henry I

He stole the throne from his older brother who was away on Crusade.



1135

King Henry II

Some of his knights heard that he was angry at Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury. That was the end of poor Thomas, the knights killed him.



1189

King John

Bad King John, he was a cruel and horrible man. He died eating too many peaches!



1216

King Edward I

He invaded and conquered both Wales and Scotland ruling both of them!



1307

King Edward III

He was a good king, even if he did start the 100 years' war.



1377

King Henry IV

He stole the throne from Richard when he was fighting in Ireland. Hard luck Richie!



1413



1422 **King Henry VI**

He became king at 8 months old! He was weak and hated war. He never fought in any battles.



King Edward IV

He secretly married Elizabeth Woodville. Some say she was a witch!



1461

King Edward V

He was 10 when he became king for 86 days. Then uncle Richard put him and his brother in a tower.



1483

King Richard III

He was a bad king. People say he had his nephews murdered in the Tower of London so he could be king instead.



1483

King Henry VII

1485 He defeated bad King Richard and became the first Tudor king. Hooray!



Meet King Edward IV – who ruled when Elizabeth Woodville lived here.



Hi Eddie!

So when did you become king?

I became King on 4 March 1461 when I was 19.

What are you most famous for?

I won the Wars of the Roses, crushing the Lancaster army. I never lost a battle!

What is your favourite thing to do?

I loved collecting objects. I collected lots of fine clothes, jewellery, furnishings and history books to show off how powerful, rich and clever I was.

What is the naughtiest thing you've ever done?

I secretly married Elizabeth Woodville. No one wanted me to marry her because she was common. But I married her anyway!

Unruly Rulers

Who were the Tudor and Stuart kings and queens?

This lot were a blood thirsty bunch, always chopping off heads. **Tudor** and **Stuart** are the family names of the kings and queens. The first Tudor was Henry VII in 1485 and they lasted till Elizabeth I. Then the Tudors' cousins, the Stuarts, ruled from James I to Anne.



King Edward VI

Henry VIII's only son, he had some big shoes (and clothes) to fill! King at nine and dead at 16. Poor Eddie.



Queen Mary I

Back to Catholics again. Bloody Mary was her name, burning Protestants was her game.



King James I

What a silly king, he kept thinking witches were trying to kill him! He even wrote a book on witches.



Oliver Cromwell

Not a king but still a ruler. He didn't like the royals and made himself Lord Protector of England. He didn't last too long.



King James II

A bit dim was this king. He tried to make everyone Catholic again, then ran away when they said no.



Queen Anne

A sickly queen who loved to eat!

1509

King Henry VIII

6 wives, only 1 son. Angry at the Pope horrible Henry made himself Head of the Church destroying all the Catholics churches.



1547

Lady Jane Grey

Only 16 when she became Queen for just 9 days before Mary Tudor took the throne. Off with her head!



1553

Queen Elizabeth I

Good Queen Bess knew leaving religion alone was best. (Unless the Catholics attacked!) Had lots of boyfriends but married none.



1158

1603

King Charles I

Bad King Charlie wanted to rule without Parliament. That started a civil war which he lost. Onto the block went Charlie's head. One chop and he was dead.



1625

1649

King Charles II

A merry monarch who brought back fun and games Oliver had banned!



1660

1685

Queen Mary II & William III

She and her husband took her dad, James II's throne in the Glorious Revolution. Not so glorious for James. t



1688

1702-1714



Meet Lady Jane Grey – who's family owned this Landmark



Hi Jane!

How did you become Queen?

My cousin King Edward VI wanted me to have his throne when he knew he was dying. He wanted England to stay Protestant, not go back to being Catholic. Edward was only 15 years old when he died and I was 16.

What are you most famous for?

People call me the 'Nine day Queen'. I didn't even want to be Queen, my meddling Mum and Dad made me. They are so horrible once they realised that no-one wanted me to be Queen they switched to Catholic Mary's side and betrayed me.

What is your favourite thing to do?

I love to read. King Edward VI and I used to read and talk about the books we read all the time.

So what happened to you after Mary became Queen?

I was kept in the Tower of London. At first I thought Mary would just lock me up for a bit. But my stupid dad tried to stop her marrying Philip of Spain. Dad was caught hiding in an oak tree at Astley Castle. Mary decided we were both traitors – even though I never wanted to be Queen. That was the end of me. She had both my Dad and I beheaded. Ewww

Design



Astley Castle isn't really a castle. Instead it is a fortified (say 'fort-if-eyed') manor house. It is fortified because it has a moat around it and crenellations (say 'cren-elay-shuns') along the top of the house. This means it was harder to attack than a normal manor house.

When The Landmark Trust rescued Astley Castle it was in ruins and you could barely tell what the castle looked like originally. They had a competitions for **architects** (say 'ark-i-tekts') and the winners designed the building you are now staying in. In the ruins of the medieval castle they designed a new, cool place to stay! The picture below shows you a birds-eye view of what the living room looked like before it was rescued. Quite a mess!

Fact:

An **architect** is someone who designs buildings and works out how to build them.

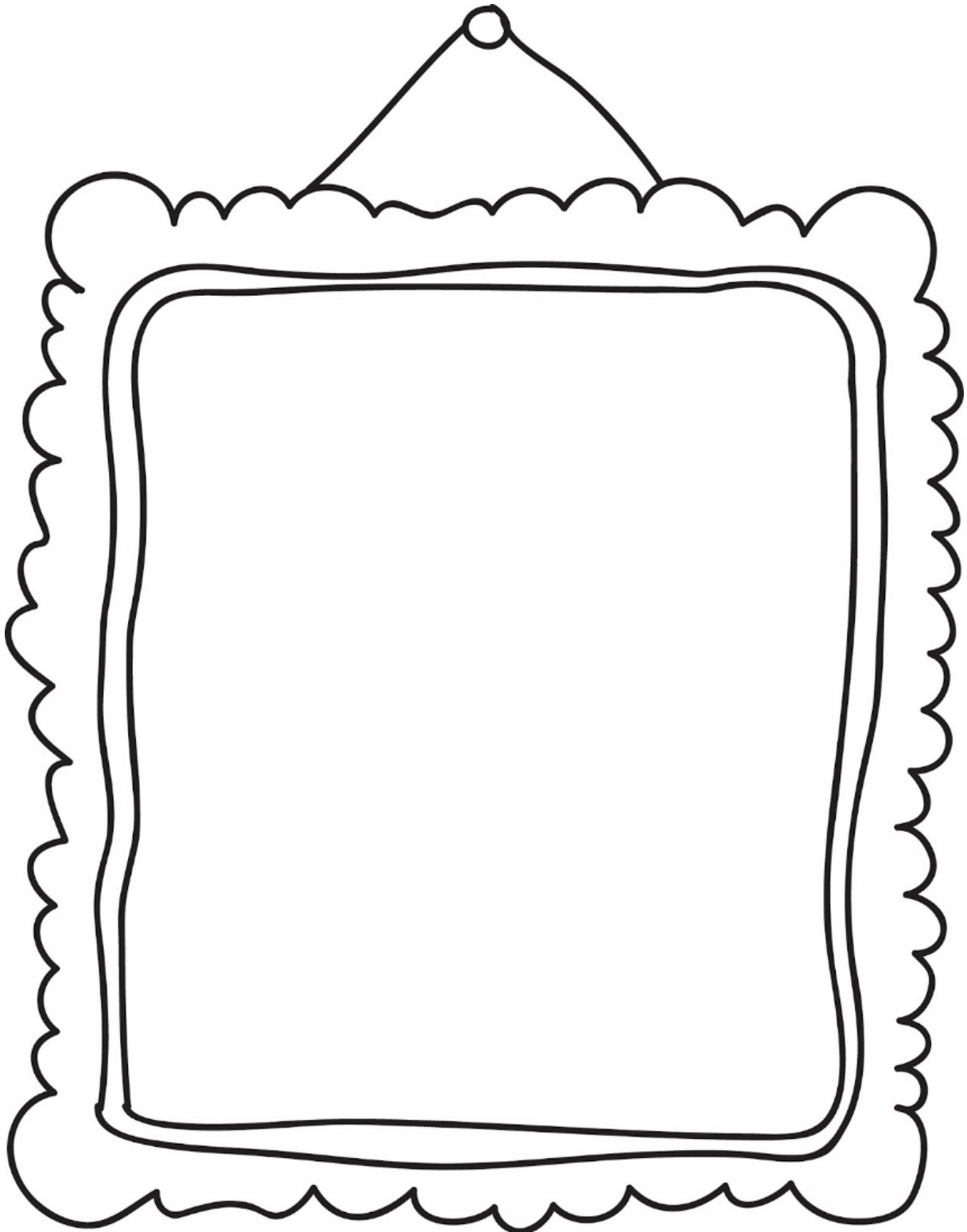




Buildings are quite easy to draw. They are usually made up of lots of geometric shapes, like squares, triangles and circles.

Have a go at drawing the front of Astley Castle.

Please tell an adult where you are going so they don't worry about where you are!
And don't worry if you make a mess of your drawing, just use the other side.





What is Astley Castle built from?

The medieval part of Astley Castle was built from stone. Stone is the solid foundation of the earth. It exists as huge mountains, rocks, stones or small pebbles washed smooth by water. There are lots of different types of stone, with different colours and textures. Some are better to build with than others.

Fact:

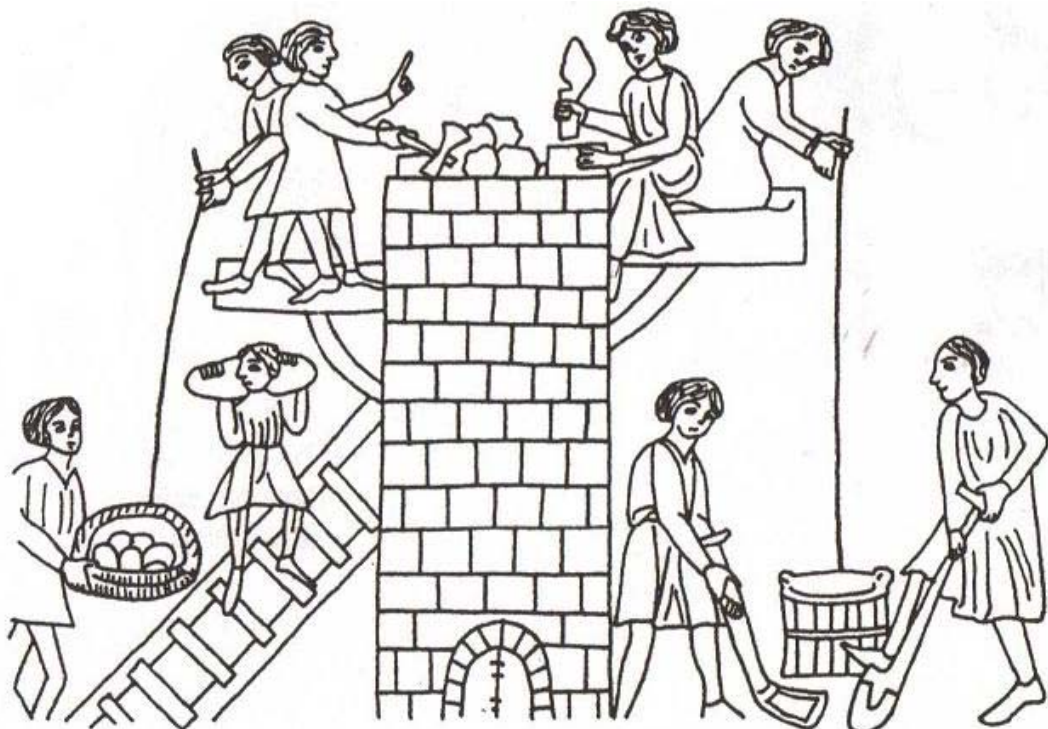
Some buildings were built from stone that was dug out of the ground when farmers ploughed the fields, other buildings were made from stone that was quarried and cut into neat shapes and sizes. There are still many stone quarries around the country today, where people get stone out of the ground.

Stone houses were once cheaper to build than brick ones. Once we could transport bricks up and down the country on the canals and railways, brick buildings become cheaper and more popular.



In medieval times, stone was taken out of the ground by hand. Today, a quarry is a place where stone is blasted out of the ground with explosives! The one in the picture shows what quarries look like now. When Landmark rescued Astley Castle they used local brick to repair and fix the building.

Colour in the medieval people building a castle below.





Sometimes stone masons carved faces and animals called gargoyles. You often find these in churches, up near the roof. Stand in front of the building and look up – who can you see? Below are some examples of what they might look like. Have a go at designing your own gargoyle. Make it as ugly as you like!



What other building materials can you find outside and inside Astley Castle?

Circle what you can see and note down where you found them.

Stone

Glass

Wood

Plastic

Metal

Clay

Flint

Concrete

Brick

Ceramic



At Astley new materials have been used to repair the old castle. Can you see where new bricks support old stone work? You won't have to look very hard!

The architects had to work out which colour brick looked best and how to lay them to look nice. Imagine you are the architect. Design your own brickwork next to the old stone wall in the space below.



Quest



Discover more about Astley Castle

Astley Castle has stood here for over 1000 years! In that time many things have changed both inside and outside the building. Follow this Quest to discover more about it.

Can you find this stonework?

The arch shape tells us that this used to be a doorway.



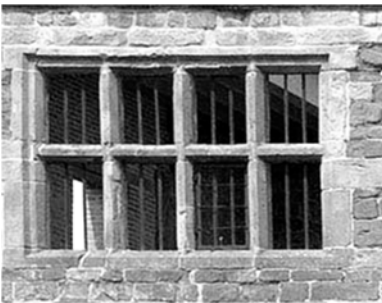
Can you find the crenellations?

Fact:

Crenellations (say 'cren- elay-shun') are the pattern along the top of the castle wall. In medieval times you had to have permission from the king to have crenellations on your castle. Astley Castle was crenellated in 1266.



Can you find all the different shaped windows? They are all from different times.



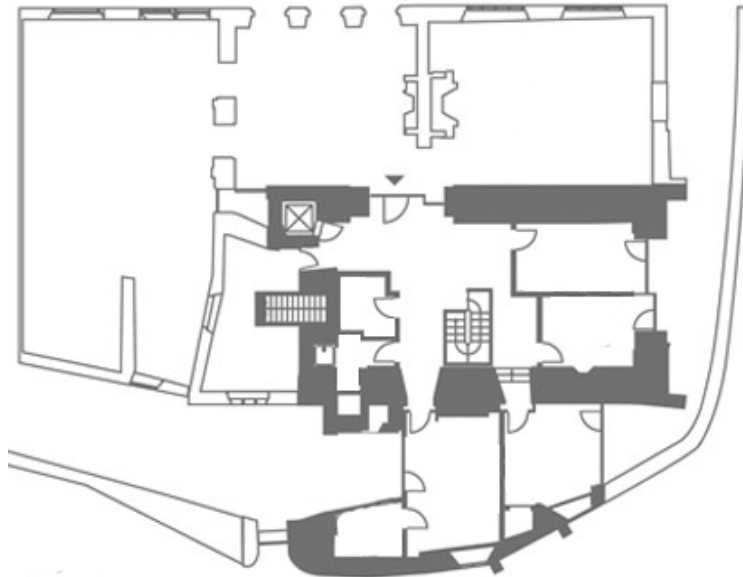
Copy your favourite in one box and design your own window in the other.



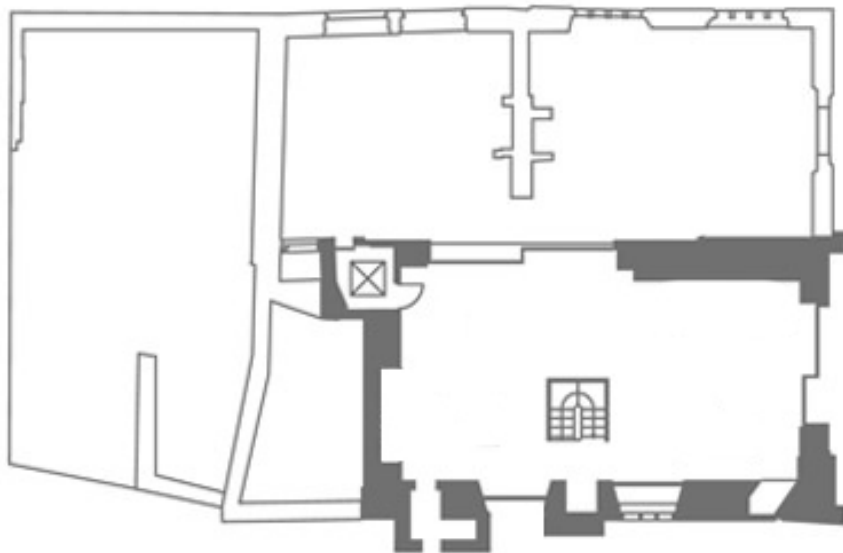
Living in Astley Castle

The floorplan of a building is a map of the rooms. Astley Castle has two floors. The plans below show you the shape of each room. Take a walk around each floor. Write on the plan what each room is used for.

Ground Floor



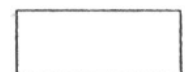
First Floor



We use these symbols to show where beds, tables and bathrooms are. Draw the symbols on to the floorplans to show where the furniture is.



Bed



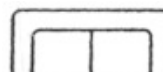
Rectangular (or a round) table



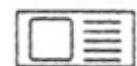
Bathroom



Cooker



Sofa



Kitchen sink



Can you find an example of each of these things inside Astley Castle. Describe, or draw the object when you find it.

Your favourite chair

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing or describing a favourite chair.

The fireplace (is it an open fire or does it have a stove?)

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing or describing a fireplace.

Draw the pattern of a rug on the floor

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing the pattern of a rug.

Fact:

Have you heard the stories of crocodiles and alligators living in castle moats waiting to gobble up enemies? Don't worry it's a lie made up to scare attackers! The only animals that lived in moats were fish and eels which people would catch and eat.

There are some wonderful views through the windows of Astley Castle. Find your favourite view and draw it.

Did you see the interpretation trail when you came to Astley? It's at the bottom of the driveway. Follow the trail to discover even more!



Castle Word Search

Now have a go at the word search. Think about different parts of the building and what might have been here in the medieval times. The words to find are at the bottom of the page.

C	E	N	C	A	S	T	L	E	N	Q	C
A	S	E	S	R	O	H	E	S	U	J	R
F	W	E	B	L	H	A	D	E	T	N	E
J	O	D	R	Z	E	L	E	Q	K	S	N
U	R	A	E	V	A	N	S	K	N	T	N
H	D	R	O	L	A	N	T	E	I	L	E
C	K	M	I	I	N	N	S	L	G	O	L
R	F	O	E	M	O	A	T	T	H	T	A
U	L	U	F	T	L	W	O	D	T	M	T
H	M	R	S	E	T	I	N	M	E	O	I
C	X	A	A	D	I	P	E	T	S	F	O
E	E	M	O	A	K	E	K	W	R	J	N
F	V	I	L	L	A	G	E	N	U	Q	L
U	I	D	U	I	E	L	B	A	T	S	D

SERVANT
STONE
SWORD
LORD

ARMOUR
VILLAGE
STEP
MOAT

CRENNELATION
QUEEN
CHURCH
STABLE

KNIGHT
CASTLE
HORSES
FEAST

How many of these words did you find? Put your score in the box.

/ 16



Can you answer these questions correctly?

1. How many arrows could an archer shoot in a minute using a long bow?

21

12

120

2

2. Which Queen who lived at Astley Castle was thought to be a witch?

Elizabeth I

Lady Jane Grey

Mary I

Elizabeth Woodville

3. Who was the War of the Roses between?

Yorks and Lancasters

Tudors and Stewarts

Windsors and Kents

Norfolks and Arundels

4. What do you call a boy training to be a knight?

Apprentice

Foot soldier

Page

Squire

5. How heavy was a full suit of plate armour?

As heavy as a man

As heavy as a two
year old child

As heavy as a 7 year
old child

As heavy as a 14
year old

6. Which one of these materials was not used to make clothes in the medieval period?

Wool

Nylon

Linen

Silk

7. What is a moat?

Type of boat

An instrument

Deep ditch full of
water around a castle

A special song

8. How many years of training did it take to become a knight?

5

10

25

14

9. Who was Queen for only nine days?

Elizabeth I

Mary Queen of Scots

Lady Jane Grey

Mary I

10. What did medieval noblewomen do for fun?

Go to the cinema

Play darts

Embroider cushions

Go hunting

To find the answers skip one page...



Which weapon is whose?

Each object is a soldier's weapon. Match the soldier to his weapon.



Did you match them all correctly? Put your score in the box.

/ 5

Now colour the soldiers in.

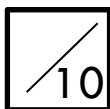


Answer sheet:

Question & Answer:

1. 12
2. Elizabeth Woodville
3. Yorks and Lancasters
4. Squire
5. As heavy as a 7 year old child
6. Nylon
7. Deep ditch full of water around a castle
8. 14
9. Lady Jane Grey
10. Embroider cushions

How many did you get right?



Fact:

If you captured a knight alive during battle, you could offer him back to his family in return for a generous **ransom**.

A **ransom** is where money is asked for in return for the release of a captive.

Imagine you lived here 500 years ago. Write an acrostic poem describing life at Astley Castle. Each line has to begin with the letter shown, so that the lines spell 'Astley Castle'!

A

S

T

L

E

Y

C

A

S

T

L

E

Create



Design your own coat of arms

Each knight had a coat of arms which they wore on their armour, on their shield or on a banner. The coat of arms belonged to their family and was used to identify the knight in a battle or when fighting in a tournament. With a helmet on, you couldn't see a person's face and a battle was very confusing. The designs were made by people called heralds. Each pattern and symbol had its own meaning and name.

Each knight had a slightly different design based on whether they were the first (or second etc.) son in the family and who they married.

In the space below design your own shield. Use the herald's list to help you. Use your imagination and draw something that you feel describes you!



Bars = Religion and honour	Pale = Military Strength	Fess = Honour	Bend = Defence	Bendlets = Protection
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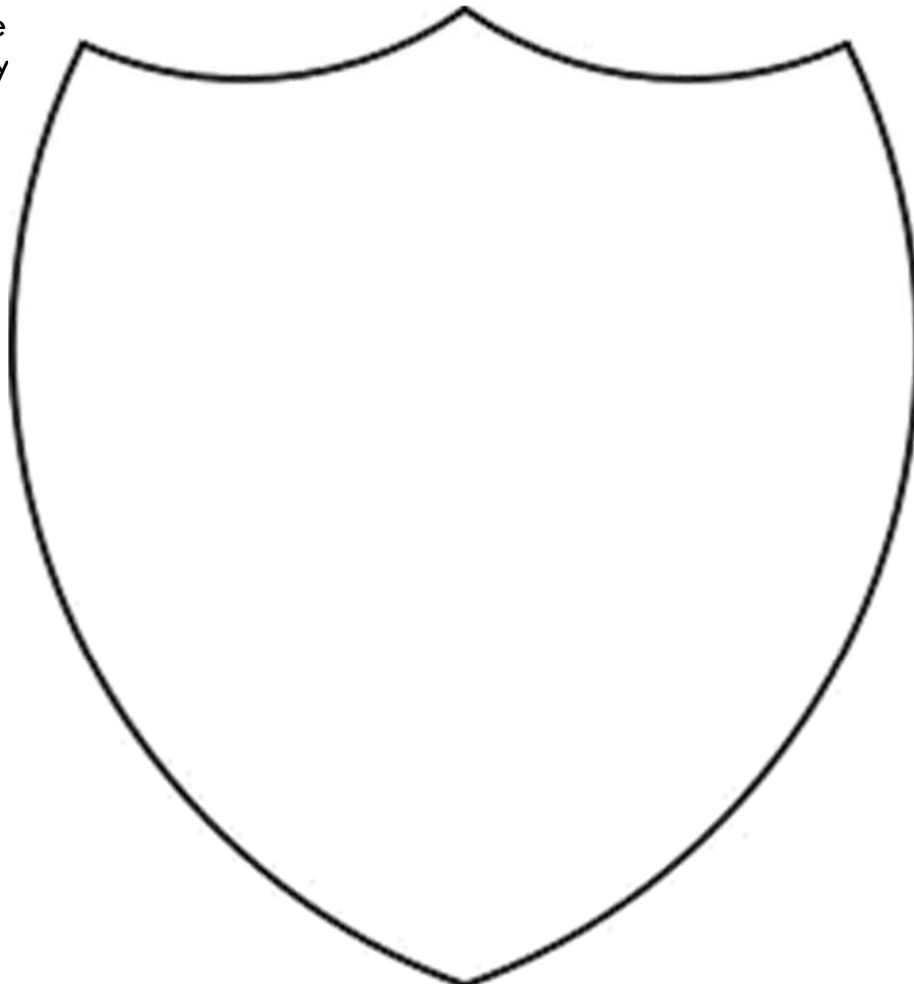
Label = First son	Crescent = Second son	Mullet = Third son	Martlett = Fourth son	Annulat = Fifth son
-------------------------	-----------------------------	--------------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------



Fleur de lis = Sixth son	Rose = Seventh son	Cross moline = Eighth son	Octofoil = Ninth son
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What colours will you use?

- Purple = Purpure
- Orange = Tawny
- Black = Sable
- Green = Vert
- Blue = Azure
- Red = Gules
- Gold = Or





Bake a honey cake

In the medieval period cakes were very simple. People either bought the ingredients in a market or grew their own. Honey was used to make food (especially cakes) taste sweeter as sugar came from the Middle East (and later Europe) and was very expensive.

Here's a simple recipe for you to try. You might need the help of an adult.

250g clear honey, plus extra 2 tbsp to glaze	100g dark muscovado sugar
225g unsalted butter	3 large eggs, beaten
	300g self-raising flour

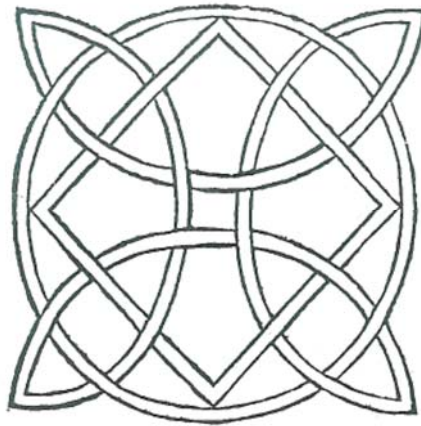
Remember to pre-heat the oven: fan 140 °C or electric 160 °C: Gas 3

- Butter a 20cm round cake tin and line it with baking paper
- Cut the butter into pieces and drop them into a medium pan with the honey and the sugar, let it melt slowly, stirring while it does.
- When the mixture looks like liquid, turn up the heat under the pan and boil for about 1 minute
- Leave to cool for 15-20 minutes (important - this stops the eggs cooking when they are mixed in!)
- Beat the eggs into the melted honey mixture using a wooden spoon
- Sift the flour into a large bowl and pour in the egg and honey mixture. Beat until you have a smooth, quite runny batter
- Pour the mixture into the cake tin and bake for 50-60 minutes. You can tell it's ready as it will be golden brown and spring back when pressed. Push a skewer into the centre of the cake and it should come out clean.
- Turn the cake out on a wire rack
- Warm 2tbsp honey in a small pan and brush over the top of the cake to give it a sticky glaze, then leave it to cool. Eat and enjoy!



Design your own knot garden

In the 1600s Astley Castle had a knot garden (and today there is a new one – can you find it?) Knot gardens were very popular, the Tudors and Stuarts wanted to show that they could control nature. They were copying gardens from the gardens in Italy, where houses and gardens followed a strict geometric (say ‘g-o-met-ric’) pattern. A knot garden was made up of neat little hedges, grown in a symmetrical pattern. Flowers were planted in it to make it look pretty. These designs are interlacing - this means they weave in and out. They fit into a square and they are symmetrical, which means one side is exactly the same as the other.



In the space below design your very own knot garden, remember to use hedges and plants and make it symmetrical.



Colour in these medieval outfits

