***‘Lords of Redesdale’ (Harbottle Castle) School Resource Pack***

Map

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Fig. 1. Harbottle Castle (artist’s impression)

**The National Curriculum in England; History Programmes of Study**

‘A high-quality history education will help pupils gain a coherent knowledge and understanding of Britain’s past and that of the wider world. It should inspire pupils’ curiosity to know more about the past. Teaching should equip pupils to ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments, and develop perspective and judgement. History helps pupils to understand the complexity of people’s lives, the process of change, the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups, as well as their own identity and the challenges of their time.

**Aims**

The national curriculum for history aims to ensure that all pupils:

* know and understand the history of these islands as a coherent, chronological narrative, from the earliest times to the present day: how people’s lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world
* know and understand significant aspects of the history of the wider world: the nature of ancient civilisations; the expansion and dissolution of empires; characteristic features of past non-European societies; achievements and follies of mankind
* gain and deploy a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms such as ‘empire’, ‘civilisation’, ‘parliament’ and ‘peasantry’
* understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference, and significance, and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses
* understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed
* gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts: understanding the connections between local, regional, national, and international history; between cultural, economic, military, political, religious, and social history; and between short- and long-term timescales’\*.

\*Source: National curriculum in England: history programmes of study - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk), accessed 09 November 2021.

The objectives of this teacher’s pack are to facilitate study through Key Stages 1 – 3: ‘Pupils should develop an awareness of the past, using common words and phrases relating to the passing of time. They should know where the people and events they study fit within a chronological framework and identify similarities and differences between ways of life in different periods. They should use a wide vocabulary of everyday historical terms. They should ask and answer questions, choosing and using parts of stories and other sources to show that they know and understand key features of events. They should understand some of the ways in which we find out about the past and identify different ways in which it is represented.’

Diagram, schematic

Description automatically generatedFig. 2 The Border Marches

The Medieval Castle

*Who made me into a ruin*

*Like an old city?*

*Was it the soldiers*

*Who rode out on horseback?*

*Was it my old enemy*

*The Scots?*

*Or was it those*

*Border Reivers?*

*Perhaps*

*It was just the centuries*

*Passing*

*The Sad Castle*

*Redesdale and Tynedale … the only two allegiances of the warriors of these wild regions was loyalty towards their own clans.*

G.M. Trevelyan

Stand, (after a steep uphill pull), at the Drake Stone, that uncompromising, great square boulder 30 feet (9 metres) high and weighing in at over 1,800 tonnes, left behind by the titanic grind of some prehistoric glacier and look down on the linear settlement below. Behind you runs Harbottle Crag with the long spine of Gallows Edge – fittingly the ideal spot for hangings!

The Coquet winds lazily around the northern flank of the castle plateau toward that sharp bend known as the Devil’s Elbow. Across the river, Camp Hills are said to be where invading armies pitched their bothies and banners. Nearby Park House denotes the site of the lord’s deer park. It all looks wonderfully calm, yet you can frequently hear the roar of the guns behind you from the MoD ranges. The school is mock Tudor from 1834 and the Clennel Memorial Fountain, erected in 1880 and designed by Macmillan of Alnwick is *inappropriate but good fun*. The almost universal sandstone is pale in texture and deeply attractive, almost reminiscent of the Cotswolds, though the climate differs. From our elevated position by the stone, we can still see how the clearly defined **motte** with its wide kidney shaped **bailey** continues to dominate the settlement. Surviving stonework is quite sparse, in the castle anyway, most was recycled to build the village.

The fortress itself sits on a steep sided, boat shaped ridge running east to west with the Coquet flowing around almost three sides. On the fourth or south flank, the village sits in a shallow groove that marks a former line of the waters. Strategically, this place is the cork in the bottle. To the north, the ground dips quite sharply towards the river and terraces have been formed from historic land spill. There’s a natural spring which rises from just below the barmkin with evidence of attempts at water management. The bailey ditch which encroaches from the west has been partially filled by a more modern track. Whether the slippage is pre or post construction is impossible to say. Four stone clearance heaps stand on the largest of these terrace features but we’ve no obvious traces of cultivation.

Judging by the name of the place, which is early old English, the value of this eminently defensible location predates the **Norman Conquest**. The position is ideal with good all round vision, that ‘long view’ so valued on the border. Scouts on the higher Lord’s Seat to the west could give warning of any impending attack and the site dominates the line of Clennel Street, winding over Bloodybush Edge and Windy Gyle (well named) to the border, one of the principal thoroughfares across the marches. Just south at Holystone, the old Roman route, the ‘swire’ from Low Learchild to High Rochester, crosses the valley. The spur on which the castle sits divides the lower and upper reaches of Coquetdale. The higher ground west, hemmed in by steep-sided hills was open pasture, shielings only.

Lords of Redesdale

Harbottle Castle and its history are inextricably linked to the powerful **Umfravilles**, Lords of Redesdale, marcher barons and frontiersmen. We tend to assume that the borderland was, from the outset, an embattled and much fortified landscape. This isn’t necessarily so. It is more likely that the tempo of conflict stepped up after the onset of the Three Hundred Years War – the steady up-grading of defences at manorial castles such as Aydon would certainly suggest this.

*William by the Grace of God king of England and duke of Normandy, to all his men whether French and English or Norman, greeting: Know you that I have given to my kinsman Robert de Umfravill, knight, lord of Tours in Vian, otherwise called Robert with the Beard* [‘cum barba’]*, the lordship, valley and forest with all castles, manors, with lands, woods, pastures, pools with all appurtenances and royal franchises, formerly Mildred son of Akmans, late lord of Redesdale and which came into our hands by conquest To have and hold to the said Robert and his heirs, of my and my heirs, kings of England, by the service of defending the same against enemies and wolves forever with that sword which I had by my side when I entered Northumbria etc…*

This is rousing stuff, almost Tolkienesque and, like Tolkien, is probably just as much fiction. The deed was unearthed in 1641 by the antiquary Dodsworth, in Latin of course and dated 10th July 1076. Most subsequent writers cast doubt on its authenticity and there’s no agreement as to the actual origins of the Umfravilles. It seems unlikely that Robert-with-the-Beard would have been old enough to have charged at Senlac Hill, though Hodgson overcomes the timeline question by offering the notion there was an earlier Robert and that, as the County History argues, this particular Robert could have crossed the channel in 1066.

Even if the charter’s a fake, it’s probably a very old fake, possibly created to justify the holding of the Lordship by subsequent generations though we can be sure the Umfraville connection is an ancient one. In terms of the historical record, we can date a Robert de Umfraville from an entry in the Pipe Roll for 1130/31. This Robert seems to have been in the affinity of the anglophile David I of Scotland who spent a very long apprenticeship at the English court and was created Earl of both Huntingdon and Northampton.

Robert’s son Odinel I succeeded his father, and his career is well attested. He appears as a witness to a range of Scottish charters between 1144 and 1153. Before 1158, he also witnessed **Henry II** of England’s grant of the churches of Newcastle and Newburn to the canons of St Mary of Carlisle. From then on, we can trace the line through the whole turbulent era to its final extinction and the story of Harbottle Castle is, in many ways, a saga of the Umfravilles. Odinel I was succeeded by his son Odinel II. The Umfravilles first strongholds were at **Prudhoe** and the impressive motte at **Elsdon** before building the castle at Harbottle began around 1157. This site is far better suited to the defence of Redesdale – the location described by Richard de Umfraville in the following century as *usefully planted on the marches of Scotland towards the Great Waste*.

Following his conquest, the Conqueror needed strong warlords planted on his borders. The line of the Tweed had been fixed after the Battle of Carham in 1018 but, in the generations after Hastings, kings of Scotland had their eye on an extended frontier or **Pale** which would stretch as far south as the Tees. David I, for all his anglophile sentiments tried to take this ground with the sword. He didn’t do too well, and the northern barons smashed his army at Northallerton in 1138, fighting beneath the omnipotent banner of St. Cuthbert their talisman, **the Battle of the Standard**.

Northern fiefs were not regarded as plums, richer, more settled pastures in the south went to those greater lords who’d stood beneath Duke William’s flag at Hastings. Nonetheless, the military class of Liberty afforded sufficient privilege and quasi-autonomy to attract those wilder spirits into the even wilder frontier-land, the ‘threap’ between two nations whose ongoing history was not destined to be one of friendship. Their job was to consolidate and hold, not just against the Scots; they were expected to curb the worst excesses of their robust marcher subjects.

If indeed Robert-with-the-Beard gained his lordship directly from the Conqueror or if the award came later, the grant was for the valley and forest of Redesdale in ‘comitatu’ – a shire to be held in private hands. Despite a brief alarum in the reign of John, the Umfravilles would hang on until 1436, nearly four centuries. In feudal terms Redesdale was a barony or chief manor of Harbottle which by 1290 included the manors of: Otterburn, Monkridge, Elsdon, Garretshields, Woodburn, The Leams, Troughend, Chesterhope, Lynshiels, Bromhope and Corsenside. A lord needs a castle. On the border this would always be doubly necessary.

In plan, the original castle is like **Mitford, Alnwick and Norham** with a strong motte standing in the middle of the south flank with the kidney shaped bailey circling on three sides. Your absolute classic motte and bailey derived from the flat packed IKEA style forts Duke William ferried over the Channel. In a later phase of rebuilding the bailey was bisected north/south by a stone outer wall, creating an inner and outer. This second phase of rebuilding in stone likely dates from the early thirteenth century. The castle William the Lion trashed was probably still timber, but the stronger re-construction withstood a siege in 1296, though it fell again to Bruce in 1318. Architectural historian **Sir Niklaus Pevsner** describes the site as *one of the finest medieval earthworks in the county*.

**Activity**

You’re planning to build a castle and site it well for all round defence so think about these points:

* How do you choose your site?
* What influence does the nature of the ground have on that choice?
* Have you thought about water?
* How do you begin to prepare your site?
* What materials do you choose?
* What about your workforce?

The Old Frontier

*Harbottle – Har, an army. Harship or Hearship, an armed raid. Har enters into the names of several places in Northumberland, as Harlow Hill, Harbottle… ‘Har’ is Anglo-Saxon ‘Here’ an army, host ‘here-bote’ abode for the army; ‘Warpath’ – road for an army.*

Professor W.W. Skete-Heslop

This setting is deceptive. For centuries this was a frontier, a *threap* where two dynamic nations battled it out. The Border wars weren’t nice at all, not tidy or in any way civilised. They were brutal and savage beyond belief. Our ancestors could easily match the horrors of modern wars such as we’ve seen in the Balkans and Syria. Just be thankful they didn’t have automatic weapons. It was war on several levels. Scottish national armies invaded, and English forces reciprocated. Fire and word were orders of the day, no such thing as a non-combatant. When we look at Harbottle and other survivors from this era we shouldn’t be swayed too much by the beauty of their surroundings. Our ancestors, the reivers, would have viewed this entire landscape quite differently.

But these reivers are ours; that’s the thing. Well, ours and the Scots of course; we spent three long and terrible centuries debating the point. Naturally, to be a proper reiver, you need the right kit; a sturdy border garron is always a handy, if a rather time consuming and expensive accessory. If you’re a re-enactor, much of your Civil War gear, if you’re not too prissy, is easily recycled, shirt, breeches, doublets, and those long leather thigh boots you wouldn’t dare wear in the Bigg Market in Newcastle of a Friday evening. Breast and back, **burgonet** with **rapier**, **backsword and dudgeon**, all good; **longbow** and **matchlock** both in service, you’re dressed to rob.

When England and Scotland were at last united under a single Crown in 1603, these two countries had been at war, outright or simmering. For three hundred years, since the time of William Wallace and the Wars of Independence, beginning in 1296, they’d fought it out. During the 16th Century there were times of intense, open warfare between the two. Scotland had long been an ally of England’s old enemy, France. Indeed, in 1512 the ‘Auld Alliance’ between these two countries was extended, and all nationals of Scotland and France also became nationals of each other's countries, a status not repealed in France until 1903.

In the following year (1513) this allegiance obliged James IV of Scotland to attack the English, in support of his French allies, who had themselves been attacked by Henry VIII. The result was the deadly **battle of Flodden**, in which the Scottish king, many of his nobles and perhaps ten thousand men were killed – *The Flowers of the Forest* of the folk song. As for **James IV,** he wasn’t that romantic, just a rather silly man who’d read all the manuals but hadn’t quite got the small-print, out-thought and out-fought; he just about defines ‘be careful what you wish for’.

And things did not improve over the course of the long sixteenth century. After a period of regency, **James V of Scotland** succeeded his father and married, (as a second wife, Scotland’s climate had done for the first) a French noblewoman, **Mary of Guise**, mother of his only daughter, Mary. In 1542, James’ rag tag army was soundly and humiliatingly scattered at the **Battle of Solway Moss** in another disastrous campaign against the English.

Already sick, he died shortly afterwards, the shock of humiliation did for him. **Henry VIII** failed in his ensuing diplomatic and then military attempts to win the hand of James’ young daughter Mary, (to be Queen of Scots), for his son Edward (to be Edward VI) – the so-called *Rough Wooing* that continued into the regency that followed Henry’s own death in 1547. Mary had been sent to France, aged five, as intended bride of the French Dauphin.

*The Border country … was the ring in which the champions met; armies marched and counter-marched and fought and fled across it; it was wasted and burned and despoiled, its people harried and robbed and slaughtered, on both sides, by both sides. Whatever the rights and wrongs, the Borderers were the people who bore the brunt; for almost 300 years, from the late thirteenth century to the middle of the sixteenth, they lived in a battlefield that stretched from the Solway to the North Sea.*

The ‘names’

Then, this harsh land north *and* south of the Border was a region of ‘riding names’, groups held together by the most powerful of all bonds – blood. Thus, not only was Northumberland subject to cross-border incursions from the Scots, but also to inter-clan raiding. Indeed, the Border Line itself meant little to the reivers:

*The raiders from Bewcastle, from Tynedale and from Redesdale were as much a nuisance to their compatriots as was anyone from over the Border. Indeed, at the time compatriot meant nothing and the Border did not count for much, for men who had made the place too hot to hold them on one side would flee to kinsmen and friends on the other, being “Scottish when they will and English at their pleasure.* They weren’t very nice people, these ancestors of course. They regularly hewed their victims in pieces.

*Reivers* (from the OE *rēafian* – to rob) were not all ‘outlaws’, although some of them most certainly were. They came from all classes and backgrounds, having in common the ability to ride and to fight and the need to survive in a hostile environment. Marauding reivers carried out cattle-thieving raids with impunity, both across the border and against their neighbours, knowing that the rule of law simply did not apply in their dales. It was an accepted way of life.

Practising systematic thievery and wholesale destruction, they have the dubious distinction of bringing the word ***bereaved*** into the English language, as indeed they did ***blackmail*,** another innovative reiver practice. *By the sixteenth century, robbery and blood feud had become virtually systematic, and that century saw the activities of the steel-bonneted Border riders – noble and simple, robber and lawman, soldier and farmer, outlaw and peasant – at their height.*

This wasn’t the good old days, not a shade of woad in sight; it was nasty, poor, very brutish and even more often short. Many a scion of the riding names choked out his life on some impromptu gallows, unless he had to be drowned when sufficient rope couldn’t be found. After all, hangmen have fees, and the river is free.

Theft was the principal business of many in the upland dales. It was simply a way of subsisting during the reiving ‘season’ from late August to February (Candlemas), whenever weather and moonlight allowed: *A foray might involve a dozen riders or half a thousand, with the graynes active every night the weather allowed, the bright reivers’ moon their guiding star. So important was this lunar conspiracy that the image appears in border heraldry – the Scott’s badge was a star and two crescent moons; mottoes such as ‘we’ll have moonlight again’ were popular amongst riding names.*

**Border Ballads** are justly famous, and Scott collected many of them in the early years of the nineteenth century. It has frequently been lamented that no-one from an earlier period thought to compile a collection of the ballads of his day, so many may well have been lost altogether. The earliest ballads, *Battle of Otterburn* and *Chevy Chase*, are probably from the fifteenth century, though the majority appear to belong to the sixteenth. Many may have originated on the Scottish side, though some are clearly Northumbrian.

*The Fair Flower of Northumberlande* tells of the infatuation of one of the Earl of Northumberland’s daughters for a captive Scottish knight. In the ballad, the resourceful girl organises her lover’s escape and flees with him back to Scotland only to discover that he’s already married with five children! Another from Northumberland is *The Death of Parcy Reed,* which is wonderfully gory. The luckless Percy, laird, or owner of Troughend, is betrayed to his enemies, (the vengeful Croziers), by the Hall family of Redesdale. He was done to death in a rather lingering and horrible manner, his hands and feet cut off and so on.

These ballads deal with subjects both violent and romantic: women left widowed, tragic love affairs that end in death, battles, duels, skirmishes, and general bloodletting. All very cinematic! Cattle raiding, the reivers’ main occupation also gets its fair share of attention as in *Jamie Telfer of the Fair Dodhead.*

A picture containing automaton

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Fig. 3, Fourteenth century armour

**Activity**

Think about your family name, what does it mean to you and to others? How does it influence the way you think and act? You life in rough times and need to raid across the border to steal cattle.

* How do you plan a raid, how many raiders do you need?
* What are the weapons and equipment each reiver needs?
* How do you plan your route and timings?
* What are you aiming to steal?
* How will you get back without a successful pursuit?
* If you’re successful, what will be the consequences?

Of bastle & pele

By the middle of the 16th Century as life in the south of England was becoming relatively safe and prosperous, the Borders were fastened in the bitter grip of continual strife. Families in the area began to replace their old steadings, made of timber and earth, with relatively strong buildings made of stone; indeed, the availability of local material was one reason for bastles being built. On the whole it was fairly well-off tenants who undertook this work rather than landlords – after all, it was their families and cattle that were under threat.

These new, defensible farmhouses were known as *bastles*, presumably from the French *bâtir* to build, as in *bastille*, a fortified building. The unruly and anarchic society in the Borders meant that the unification of the Crown in 1603 did not completely vitiate the need for bastles, which continued to be built for many years. Roughly speaking, most were built between 1550 and 1650, although many bear a later date which tends to be the date of renovation rather than that of original construction. George MacDonald Fraser memorably described grim **Hermitage Castle** in Liddesdale as *Sod off in stone* Just about right, and bastles represent a poorer man’s version; locals probably expressed the sentiment even more pithily.

They were not isolated structures. Many had outbuildings, the remains of which can often be seen, (as at **Black Middens** in Tarset), and they were often built in sight of other bastles – indeed they are often found in small groups. This would facilitate the alarm being raised and would enable those being attacked to receive support from neighbours. Evistones town-ship, near Otterburn, is a superb example of a community of bastles. Some were extended, a second building being built onto the end of a first, at the ‘byre door end’, forming a larger whole. In other cases, they were built in terraces, as seems to have been the case at Wall village, where individual bastles kept their integrity although they were linked to their neighbours.

This may be a good place to point out that some bastles are known as *peles* or *peels –* Thropton Peel is an example. The words are often used synonymously, but the etymology of *peel* is from the French *pel*, meaning wooden stake. Bastles were defensible farmhouses. As such they are neither glamorous nor pretentious. Stark, roughhewn, they stand as firm as if they had sprung organically from the harsh upland itself. Utilitarian and austere, their allure, (if they can claim such), arising from perceived romance and durability.

On the ground floor was the byre, into which cattle were driven when a raid was imminent or during particularly bad weather. Without drainage or stalls, it seems unlikely that this space was to be utilised for lengthy periods. Above lay the family’s Spartan living quarters, devoid of comfort other than a fireplace set into one gable, (usually at the opposite end to the doorway). Rarely bigger than 12m x 8m, bastles are rectangular in shape and typically have walls between 0.7m and 1.4m thick. Constructed of large, irregular stone blocks; gaps between the blocks were packed with smaller stones set in mortar. They have steeply pitched gables, and many were probably roofed initially with heather thatching.

What we lack is a Samuel or Mrs. Pepys of the border. We hear about the reivers rather than from them. How the goodwife felt about her husband’s nocturnal enterprise is generally unrecorded. Domestic life, of course did go on, people married often in defiance of the cross border prohibition, raised children and focused on the daily business of survival.

In the midst of the mayhem are the women: sitting quietly at home … Well, not really. The women of Redesdale were as notorious as their men, riding out in their own right when necessary. Those remaining in their bastles could act in defence of home and property, using gun, bow or knife to fend off intruders. Or sending out the raiders themselves; a famous painting of the C19th shows a goodwife presenting a pair of spurs on an empty platter: *Fetch the supper in.*

This is a militarised society but it also an agricultural one. Women work hard, tending animals, growing what vegetables and grain will thrive on land as poor as this and collecting whatever food is available. Wild herbs and greens collected in the spring provide much needed vitamins during the hungry gap before the garden crops come through. Later in the year, meat, poultry, and fish traded in from the coast or harvested from the rivers need to be preserved ready for winter.

Grain – oats and barley mostly, for this is not wheat growing territory, will be ground into bread-flour. In times of greatest need all will eat the horse bread which takes its name from the cereals fed to animals: dried peas, oats and barley used to make a loaf of high density and legendary keeping qualities. These same grains are the basis of that other staple, pottage. This is a thick soup/stew which simmers away on the back of the fire turning anything available into a savoury (sort of) main dish eaten by all. Meat if you have any, grains and pulses, vegetables, and herbs: in they all go. By March it is mostly water, left over barley and dried nettles. Unless the idle man of the house has managed to acquire a sheep or two. Mutton broth – the smell alone will fill a hungry stomach.



Fig. 4. Harbottle castle reconstructed (c. 1500)

**Activity**

You’re an average farmer, not a great lord and you’re about to construct a pele or bastle for your family and livestock.

* How do you intend to build your bastle, what’s the design?
* How would you react if, with the build complete, your lands are about to be attacked?
* How do you defend your bastle?
* How might you retaliate?

The Marches

When we speak of the Border, we are referring to a remote part of England, far away from the centre of power, difficult and expensive to police. In Scotland the line was much closer to Edinburgh which need not imply the Scottish crown was any more successful in imposing order. A fairly complex means of trying to keep order was established as early as 1249, when the Scottish and English governments agreed that the border should be divided into initially four latterly six districts or ‘**Marches**’ – three on each side: East, Middle and West.

From 1297 these Marches were controlled judicially and militarily by March Wardens. Latterly and in England, these officers were usually appointed from the south of the country, in order to avoid the obvious possibility of bias for or against the feuding *names* they were intended to control. The examples of both **Percy** and **Neville** in the fifteenth century evidence the risks attached to conferring such vice-regal powers on unruly local magnates.

It was the Wardens’ tricky duty to see that peace was maintained, to administer justice and to deal with 'bills' or complaints. Backed up by a staff of deputies, captains, and troopers, they tried with varying degrees of success to administer good law, but in doing so would frequently create personal enemies, (some officers were murdered) and further bitterness between already bellicose riding names. In short, they frequently caused more problems than they solved and most certainly did not implement peace and safety for the marchers. One such Warden was the notorious **Sir John Forster**, not from the south, we’re proud to say but a native Northumbrian:

*A regular subject of Border correspondence, he was the target of frequent accusations ranging from collusion with the Scots and neglect of duty, to using his office as a cloak for thieving and skulduggery, his accusers further adding that Sir John’s catalogue of shortcomings ‘would fill a large book’. Most of this was in fact true and his protestations of innocence are somewhat less than convincing.*

Sir John was a truly Falstaffian character whom I’ve played on a number of occasions. I do sincerely hope the old rogue would be flattered by these portrayals. To be fair I’ve offered him as bellicose, addicted to strong drink, a wager or two and loose women, untrammelled by any conflict between duty and reward. These are characteristics I admire though, of course, in a puritanical age blighted by the sterile Stalinism of PC orthodoxy, I’d be wary of making any such admission.

*The seventh of July the smith to say,*

*At the Reidswire the tryst was set;*

*Our wardens they affixed the day*

*And as they promised, so they met,*

*Alas that day I’ll never forgett!*

*Was sure sae feard, and then sae faire*

*They came theare justice for to gett,*

*Will never green to come again.*

**Days of Truce** had been a feature of the administration of border justice since the mid thirteenth century when the warden system was formally established. In theory each warden was to meet with his opposite number once a month, tho’ in practice this rarely occurred due to bad weather, hostilities between the two nations or prevarication on either warden’s part. The protocol was exact. Both parties, mounted and fully arrayed (i.e., harnessed for war) would approach the agreed meeting place. The Reidswire, (“swire” = a narrow neck of land), formed ideal ground. Before either warden met the two parties would eye each other up then an English rider would spur forward to ask ‘assurance’ of the Scottish warden. Once this was given the process was reversed then the two sides, warily, advanced.

Traditionally meetings were held actually in Scotland – it was said that Scottish wardens were reluctant to enter England after one of their number; Sir Robert Ker of Cessford was killed by the gloriously reprehensible **John (Bastard) Heron** at a Truce day in 1508. The assurance or guarantee of peaceful intent was to hold from that sunrise to next evening sunset to allow all present to get back home in one piece, (the most notorious breach of this observance being the apprehension of Kinmont Will Armstrong in defiance of convention in 1596).

Much business of the day revolved around the hearing of complaints from both sides. These indictments or bills were lodged beforehand by plaintiffs and heard on the day. Often a jury of a dozen, six from each side, was empanelled to decide the matter or a decision could be on the warden’s oath or ‘avower’ of some prominent man effectively acting as the defendant’s guarantor.

Trials were noisy, lively and contentious. Most did not come with entirely clean hands and if a bill was proven or ‘fyled’ then the defendant had to agree compensation, if the accusation failed and the defendant found ‘cleane’ then no redress was due. Compensation monies could be calculated on the penal basis of ‘double and sawfey’ – 3x the value of the goods lifted. Levels of compensation were defined at various times. In 1563 it was agreed as follows: An ox = 40s, cow = 30s, young ox or cow = 20s, sheep/swine = (around) 6s.

These days of truce were occasions for much binge drinking, betting, and gaming. Horse races were organised, and everyone dressed in their finery. Hearings were held in the open and the crowd no doubt contributed vociferously. Virtually all present, from both sides of the line knew each other, they’d drunk, fought, ridden and wagered many times before. Everyone went armed. Drink was a major factor in disturbances. Frequently the wardens themselves, especially men of the cut and temperament of old John Forster, were far from impartial. **Scott of Buccleuch,** (“The Bold Buccleuch”), Ker of Cessford and Lords Home and Maxwell were all active in border politics.

The ‘Raid’ of the Reidswire in 1575 was due to be one of the more memorable meetings. 7th July and Sir John Forster met his Scottish counterpart, Sir John Carmichael, Keeper of Liddesdale. It’s unclear if the two men had already disagreed but matters, from the outset, got heated. They were very different types; Carmichael appears to have been an honest and diligent official, a breed Sir John might not have been acquainted with. The meeting took place at the Reidswire and several hundred attended from both sides of the line.

Matters begin amicably enough – then a bill was brought against an absentee defendant, named Farnstein (Falstone). The case was proved, ‘fyled’ but Sir John prevaricated over the man’s nonappearance. Angry words followed between the two lawmen who like their followers, had been drinking steadily. Carmichael may have been overly aggressive, and Sir John was haughty and dismissive, reminding the younger man of his inferior status.

*Carmichael then speak out plainlike*

*And cloke no cause for ill or good;*

*The other answering him as vainlie*

*Began to reckon kin and blood*

*He raise and raxed him where he stood*

*And bade him march with his marrows.*

The rank and file happily joined in the abuse and then, it is said, the Tynedale men loosed several arrows into the ranks of the Scots and a melee ensued: *Then Tindaill heard them reason rude, And they loot off a feight* [flight] *of arrows.* The two officials, rapidly sobering, attempted to calm things down but the Tynedale riders laid on and the Scots were in difficulties until the Jedburgh men, arriving late, came up as reinforcements. The fight was long and hard but the English were eventually worsted. Many dead and wounded were left on both sides. Forster was temporarily taken prisoner as was his son in law Lord Francis Russell and Cuthbert Collingwood. The English deputy warden Sir George Heron was amongst the dead.

After a raid, with the lifting of cattle and possibly taking of lives, the thieves would naturally set off for the relative safety of tower or sheltering moss. Above all else, success would lie in the speed with which sortie and getaway were accomplished. Escaping reivers were much hampered by their four legged spoils – cattle are notoriously difficult to move at speed – and it was essential to be familiar with every step and inch of the landscape so that temporary lying up places and strategic sites for ambush were known and used with facility.

He who was left victim of such a raid had three choices: to make complaint to the Warden, to bide his time until he could wreak revenge (with interest if possible), or to mount a *hot trod*. If some time elapsed before the pursuers set out it was known as a *cold trod*. Either way, the legality of the trod depended on its being within six days of the raid, and as George MacDonald Fraser points out, *a careful line was drawn, under Border law, between a trod and reprisal raid*. If the trod was cross-Border, it was essential to make it obvious that legal pursuit was underway: a lighted turf was to be clearly visible on the pursuer’s lance point, *an earnest of open and peaceful intentions*. He had an established right to assistance from marchers across the Border and trying to hinder the trod was a punishable offence, one far more honoured in the breach than the observance.

The trod could easily become a messy affair; however strict the supposed rules, the business might frequently end in a fierce skirmish during which fighters from either side stood to lose life or limb; *the law was not likely to call a trod-follower to account if his rage got the better of him and he dispatched a reiver out of hand*.

A person holding a flag

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

Fig. 5. Sixteenth Century reiver

**Activity**

You’ve just been appointed as a march warden by the Queen of England but with limited and unreliable resources.

* How do you police your district?
* What are the main factors to be aware of?
* How do you plan a day of truce with your opposite number and what are the protocols?
* How does your responsibility differ between time of peace and time of war?

A reiver’s kit

A reiver looked nothing like a traditional knight in plate harness. As a specialist he needed the right gear. First, and most importantly perhaps, he required a horse. Remembering that borderers could be called up to fight for king and country, (never with any marked enthusiasm), horses needed to be suitable mounts both for light cavalry work in time of war, and for raiding in time of ostensible peace. Known as *hobblers*, *hobilars* or *garrons*, they were sturdy and fast, and like Cumbria’s hardy Herdwick sheep they were cheap to keep. There is evidence that they weren’t groomed and didn’t have need of shoes, said to be capable of *transporting a man from Tynedale to Teviotdale and back in 24 hours*.

*Given the need (above all) for speed and ease of manoeuvre, the reiver rarely wore expensive armour even if he could afford it, which in most cases he could not. The preferred means of protecting the body was the ‘jack’ or ‘jacke’ which was widely used until the end of the 16th Century*.

To protect arms and upper legs many dalesmen would sew on pewter or brass chains, wrapped around four or five times; their lower legs protected by long, leather riding boots not unlike modern ‘biker’ boots. Body armour might consist of plate ‘breast and back’ but more likely just a padded jack. Accoutred in this manner, they were able to combine mobility with an element of protection. On his head, the reiver would wear a form of helmet called a *burgonet*, in use from the middle of the 16th Century. This *burgonet* or *steill bonnett* was a rather more stylish helmet [than the earlier salade hat] which, in its lightest form was open and peaked. These offered good protection, having cheek plates and a flared rim at the neck as well as a peak at the front. In time (from about 1580) these were in turn largely superseded by the morion or pikeman’s pot.

Borderers carried a variety of weapons. As George MacDonald Fraser again points out, the 16th Century was the *bridge between the medieval knights and men-at-arms, with their heavy armour and weapons, and the age of firepower*. Most would sport a lance, used for thrusting and throwing at the enemy – and for fishing, too! There is a record of riders spearing salmon from horseback in the Solway Firth, testimony to their extraordinary skill with this difficult weapon.

Equally as ferocious was the ‘Jeddart Staff’, made or said to have originated in Jedburgh; this was a slim four foot (1.25 metres) blade set into a wooden staff, the blade having a cutting edge and a fearsomely dangerous spike. Another favourite weapon was the *bill*, which had a spike, a hook and a single heavy cutting edge. Both at war and on a raid, the reivers would use also a backsword, a dagger and possibly a brace of handguns, although the guns of the time were inaccurate at a distance and useless at close quarters. As a true anorak, I’m in thrall to edged weapons, frightful admission of course and I’ve promised to get counselling, but they are fine, a blend of art and deadly purpose, provided you’re not on the receiving end of course.

It was the unenviable task of the Border Wardens to seek to maintain law and order whilst also acting as local *generalissimo* in time of war. A body of unique border laws, *Leges Marchiarum*, was drafted to cope with the vibrant brand of lawlessness that prevailed. In many instances these officials, like Sir John, who clung to his office until well into his nineties, were more of a symptom than a cure. Forster was a leading shareholder in most disreputable ventures within his march and was far from being an exception!

This situation was exacerbated by the pernicious code of the vendetta, a relentless legacy of murder known as the ‘feid’ (feud). The inhabitants of southern Europe would have nothing to teach our borderers when it came to seeking revenge. Vendettas are obviously popular with re-enactors; after all they’re usually at feud with each-other anyway and the chance for a melee is never one to be missed.

**Activity**

Your family live in the English Middle March and last month a Scottish family or name raided one of your relatives farms, stole three cows and five sheep, they also killed a shepherdess.

* How do you intend to respond?
* What is your planned response?
* How do you organise that?
* How do you prepare for the inevitable retaliation?
* This feud has been going on for far too long, how might you arrange to end it peacefully?

Fortress

Harbottle, like most castles, isn’t the product of a single burst of building development. In part castles, which dominated our landscape for several centuries, are organic. They grew and changed as trends shifted; becoming increasingly sophisticated through the high middle ages, until by the early sixteenth century guns and gunpowder rendered them largely anachronistic. Norham, that great ‘Queen of Border Fortresses’ had resisted a Scottish siege for two years in 1318 – 1320. In 1513, however, James IV mighty artillery reduced the place in under a week. This was a very loud form of redundancy notice.

Warfare was for centuries dominated by the perpetual and symbiotic duel between those who sought to erect defences and those who sought the means to knock them down. This contest continued until the age of gunpowder profoundly altered the balance. Prior to that, the advantage typically lay with the defender. It was the Normans, with their timber motte & bailey fortifications, who truly introduced the castle into England, (though some now debate this). During the twelfth century timber was gradually replaced by masonry; great stone keeps such as Rochester, Orford, Conisburgh, Richmond and **Newcastle,** soared impressively.

The castle was not just a fort; it was the lord’s residence the seat and symbol of his power, centre of his administration, a secure base from which his mailed household could hold down a swathe of territory. Castles were both potent and symbolic. The dire civil wars of Stephen and Matilda had spawned a pestilence of unlicensed building, fuelling the magnatial threat to crown authority. Castles grew thickest on the disputed marches of England, facing Welshmen and Scots; in the north-west the mighty red sandstone fortress of Carlisle rose up, a clear warning to Scots who coveted Cumberland.

**Concentric castles**, influenced by Arab and Byzantine precedent, appeared when Edward I began his great chain of towering Welsh fortresses. As the country had enjoyed a long spell of peace many lords had invested in what might now be termed ‘makeovers’ – aiming to improve standards of living rather than add to defences. Larger, more ornate chapels and fine, great halls replaced their workaday predecessors; gardens and orchards were laid out to provide tranquil spaces within the walls.

Most castles of the period relied upon the strength of the great keep. Tall, massive, towering in fine ashlar with the lower vaulted basement reserved for storage and an entrance at first floor level, frequently now enclosed in a defensive fore-building. On this level we would typically find the great hall with the chapel and the lord’s private apartment or solar on the second floor above. Spirals were set in the thickness of the wall leading to a rooftop parapet walk, often with corner towers. A strong stone wall enclosed the courtyard or bailey which would also house the usual domestic offices. The keep was essentially a refuge, a passive defence.

From the reign of Henry II onward, strong flanking towers were frequently added to provide defence against mining; the polygonal keep at Orford in Suffolk (1165-1173) is a fine example. At Pembroke William the Marshal built an entirely circular keep. The curtain wall was also raised and strengthened, furnished with D shaped towers, the section beyond the curtain rounded at the corners to frustrate mining. These towers made the attacker’s job much more difficult. If he breached or surmounted a section of the rampart, he’d be corralled between the towers which would, now and in turn, have to be assaulted. This was leading toward the concentric design where the strength of the whole was distributed through the towers and the great keep, as a defensive feature, became far less important.

Traditional timber engines, whose design remained unchanged from classical times, the ballista and the mangonel dominated siege warfare during the thirteenth century – cannon and the Devil’s Roar were yet to make their appearance. The **ballista** was, in effect, a giant crossbow which hurled a bolt or occasionally stones at the enemy’s ramparts. It was intended as an anti-personnel weapon, flensing unwary defenders from the walls, used to provide covering ‘fire’ for an assault.

Chief among engines was the mighty **trebuchet**. Most probably Arab in origin, his worked by counterpoise in that the device was built with a timber beam pivoted between two sturdy posts. One end of the beam had ropes affixed and the sling was fitted to the other. Initially, when the ball was loaded into the sling, a group of hefty infantry simply hauled on the ropes, dragging upwards the shorter end of the timber, the sling, at the ‘ready’ moment released the projectile.

Latterly, a large counterweight, a timber framed box casing, filled with soil or rubble supplanted raw muscle; by now the machines were much larger and the box might weight anything over 10,000 lbs (4,536 kg). These trebuchets grew to considerable proportions and consumed much timber in their building. Missiles, which might weight 100 (45 kg) – 200 lbs (90 kg) or more, were flung at a high trajectory, like the shell from a later howitzer. So the internal spaces of the castle could be deluged in a rain of stones which, shattering on impact would send lethal shards whizzing like shrapnel. The bombardment came to resemble an artillery barrage, deadly and relentless, defenders clinging to shelter whilst it endured.

When the castellan became aware that a leaguer was imminent it was time to prepare. Supply was a major concern. Clearly, adequate foodstuffs and a clean water supply were essential to maintain the garrison for what might stretch to several months of encirclement. Sheep, cattle and livestock would be gathered in, the surrounding countryside stripped. Ditches would be cleared and consolidated; repairs to masonry undertaken, trees, bushes and inconvenient settlements would be demolished or thoroughly slighted to deny an enemy any cover. Timber hoardings, called ‘brattices’, would be erected over the parapet walk to provide a covered fighting platform, the defenders’ own artillery serviced, repaired as necessary and made ready, supplies of missiles and arrows stockpiled.

Besieged

Siege warfare was costly, time consuming and tedious, the attacker might be stuck in front of the walls for long and frustrating weeks, consuming his supplies at a fearsome rate, at risk from the defenders’ sallies, from dysentery in the crowded lines or from a relieving force. He would try to negotiate; to persuade the castellan to come to terms; if he acceded before the lines were fixed then convention would allow the defenders to march out under arms and depart unmolested.

If cajolery failed, then threats might do it, in this captives were useful tools. In 1139 King Stephen persuaded the mother of Roger le Poer to surrender Devizes or see her son hanged before the walls. **Edward III**, in 1333, when after Berwick, threatened to hang the governor’s two young sons if the place did not open its gates; The Scot refused and had to endure the agony of watching the wretched youths dance at ropes’ end.

As the siege dragged on, the quantum of mercy shrank accordingly. If the place fell to storm then attackers could put all to the sword; the offer of clemency, once extended might not be repeated. Where the defenders, finding themselves in straits, subsequently sued for terms they might find the besieger less amenable. Even when a commander was disposed to magnanimity, his soldiery, frustrated of their loot, might be disinclined to take heed. A civil war was, of course, a different matter, kings and magnates would not wish to see domestic towns and castles sacked. Unless, as in the case of the notorious siege and storming of Beziers in July 1209 during the suppression of the Cathars, that pungent whiff of heresy was sufficient for the French knights to slaughter heretics and believers alike. The Papal legate Arnaud Almaric is said to have quipped – *Kill them all. God will know his own*.

Morale was a vital factor, loss of nerve or resolution on the besiegers’ part or the effects of exhaustion and despair could swiftly erode any garrison’s will to resist. When laying siege to Stirling in 1304 Edward I refused to allow the defenders to formally surrender. The king had his engineers build a giant trebuchet, the ‘War Wolf’ and he was anxious to test its effect. Siege warfare was attritional and brutal. **Henry V**, in the fifteenth century, refused to allow French civilians, expelled by the garrison commanders as *bouches inutiles*, to pass through the lines. They became trapped in the bleak no-man’s-land, there left to squat in filth and famine whilst the siege continued. Disease was a spectre that stalked both sides, especially during hot summer weather, yet it was extremely difficult to maintain a siege during stark, freezing winter.

In terms of tactics, storming or ‘escalade’ was the quickest method of subduing a garrison but one heavy with risk, the attacker stood to sustain significant losses. Edward I stormed the rather makeshift defences of Berwick upon Tweed in 1296, his veteran knights, hardened during the Welsh Wars, broke in and the town was given over to a very bloody sacking. Such instances were relatively rare, and it was far more common for the attacker just to starve the garrison out.

This entailed less tactical risk but was inevitably lengthy. The besieger had to plan and fortify his camp, proof against sallies, stockpile his supplies, provide tents or bothies for his men and attempt some basic form of temporary sanitation. To be effective the blockade had to seal off the besieged completely from re-supply. When throwing his great ring of concentric castles around the conquered principality Edward sited these so that, in the main, they could be re-supplied from the sea. If the defenders could receive fresh supplies, then the besiegers’ task was made considerably more difficult.

Surprise and subterfuge were naturally at a premium. After the death of Edward I his son and successor lacked the fire to maintain the war against Bruce in Scotland. The latter steadily clawed back the vital outposts, several of which were won by coup de main as the Scots lacked both the resources and engineering skills demanded of the conventional besieger. Treachery was a handy component. If the attacker could cultivate or suborn a faction within the walls; some form of Trojan horse, then treachery might pay dividends.

To conduct a full scale siege of an enemy stronghold then was likely to be a long term, largely static affair, tying down the attacker’s army or certainly large portions of it and robbing him of any strategic initiative. Conversely, simply to by-pass the enemy stronghold was to leave a potential foe behind who could emerge to harass and disrupt. As an alternative, the fortress could be masked by a force sufficient for the task, simply to neutralise the defenders whilst the main attacking force remained active in the field.

‘Frightfulness’ was another tactic available to the attacker. He could terrorise the besieged into surrender by wreaking havoc on his lands. In 1123 **Henry I** ‘took up’ (i.e., devastated) all the space around Pont-Audemer for a good twenty miles or so. Contemporary writers confirm that the army’s scouts or prickers also acted as incendiaries and foragers, seizing what the army might use, destroying the rest. Again, these tactics were limited during civil strife, what king wishes, if he can avoid it, to waste his own lands. His quarrel is generally with individual magnates rather than necessarily with their wider affinity. After all, penniless subjects pay no taxes.

Where the attacking general had decided to storm the walls, he would send in his attacking troops, chosen men, who would attempt to lay ladders against the ramparts; archers, protected by timber hoardings or pavises, would unleash a missile storm intended to keep the defenders’ heads down. The castellan’s men would rely on their own bows and on a range of missiles to smash the ladders, massing to deal with those who managed a foothold, desperate and messy. If a castle was protected by a strong wet gap which frustrated attempts at mining, then the attacker might have a go with a ram or screw, manoeuvred over the moat after a pontoon of fascines, (bundles of sticks or faggots), had been laid.

This ram would be a solid baulk of timber housed in a wheeled shed which should offer the crew some protection. The beam was slung on ropes from the roof, swung to and fro to gather momentum. A screw was used to bore rather than batter. Defenders would lower large hooks to catch and fling aside or drop great boulders to smash the protective carapace and crush its occupants. The belfry was a movable timber tower, higher at its upper level than the wall and providing a platform for archers while infantry charged across a drawbridge. Like all wooden devices these monsters were difficult to move, vulnerable to fire and required a great deal of effort to construct.

Mining had an ancient provenance, Joshua before the great walls of Jericho; it was a difficult and, for the miner, dangerous business – a shaft was sunk to carry under a corner of the great tower, with a chamber excavated directly underneath; this was supported by timber props, the whole crammed with combustible material and then fired to collapse a section of wall.

Naturally military architects would endeavour to frustrate the miners’ efforts by siting the castle on a foundation of solid rock or by providing water defences. The base of the wall could be splayed or ‘battered’ to provide a more formidable obstacle. The miner had to conceal the entry to his shaft so as to avoid alerting the defenders, dead ground or buildings could provide ideal cover. As an alternative to bringing down a section of wall the shaft could continue into the bailey, like the reverse of a WWII escape tunnel, to allow a storming party of attackers to launch a surprise attack and seize the gates.

A prudent castellan might place buckets of water on the ramparts to detect tremors. If the wall was breached, then the defenders could attempt to plug the gap with timbers or construct temporary screen walls. The more enterprising, on detecting mining against the walls, might attempt to sink a countermine; the object was to break into the attackers’ shaft and engage the miners in a desperate and savage subterranean melee. Readers of Sebastian Faulks’ highly accomplished Great War novel *Birdsong* will recall how these tactics were still employed on the Western Front.

Castles weren’t just fortresses. Many never saw hostile action in their entire span. They combined several key functions within the feudal pyramid. They were a residence for the lord, his family, and retainers, also centres for his wider and all important affinity. They were certainly bastions but as much for offense as defence. A mounted garrison, well trained, well-armed, could hold down vast swathes of ground. Control of territory was what it was all about, Harbottle, as we can see, is a perfect example. The castle also acted as an administrative and judicial centre, the hub of surrounding communities, a place where justice was dispensed. All of this went to reinforce the lord’s status and ‘good lordship’ was a central pillar of feudalism. It was his duty not just to rule his people but to offer them stability and security.

**Activity**

Your castle is about to be attacked by a large enemy force. You’re aware it will take several weeks for the King to raise and organise a relief army, till then you’re pretty much on your own. This is an army rather than just a raiding party, they’re not here just to steal but to win possession of your castle for their own country and its loss will be a disaster for yours.

* How do you organise and strengthen your defences?
* How do you deal with the local population who have good reason to fear the enemy?
* How do you provision the castle?
* How do you motivate the garrison, what size of garrison might you have?
* What enemy tactics will you have to be wary of?
* How do you counter these?

A picture containing tree, outdoor, person, wearing

Description automatically generated

Fig. 6. The Silloans Sword

Of demons….

Harbottle Castle, during the length of the border wars, stood at a time where reality and superstition walked hand in hand. Witches were a constant menace. Or at least belief in them was! James VI was a firm believer and even wrote a book on the subject. The fifth Earl of Bothwell, known to be eccentric at best, was suspected of leading a great coven of witches uncovered in North Berwick. There are many stories relating to people who were “known” to be consorting with witches. For example, the wife of one Richard Swinburn was found to have sought assistance from a trio of wicked witches to capture the affections of one of the officers of the Berwick garrison. Unfortunately, the magic failed so she employed a wizard next. The degree of success here is unrecorded.

Nobody doubted that the devil was frequently out and about, stealing souls and generally causing a nuisance in society. The Earl of Surrey, victor of Flodden, wrote to Henry VIII during the siege of **Jedburgh** in 1522 explaining that the devil had visited the English lines and caused havoc amongst the horses. More likely it was Bull Dacre, full of drink, who neglected security. According to his letter, the Evil One and his attendant demons were seen by many of his soldiers. In that superstitious age, an eclipse of the sun such as occurred on 25th February 1598 – ‘Black Saturday’ – was a terrifying and inexplicable event, possibly presaging the end of the world! When a comet streaked across Scottish skies in 1556 it was christened The Fiery Besom.

**Plague** was by no means the only disease that people had to fear. In 1543 there was an outbreak at Alnwick of ‘a hot and dangerous ague’ which killed off numerous inhabitants. This was a new complaint, possibly a form of influenza. In 1568, smallpox was raging in Berwick and the ‘burning ague’ was claiming lives in Newcastle, the sufferers not lasting more than a day. Divine intervention or retribution was frequently cited as the cause of disease.

Medical science as we understand it was in its infancy. Folk remedies were plentiful and texts for amateur physicians such as that translated by **Miles Coverdale** in 1561 were in circulation. Plants and herbs were popular for their medicinal qualities, and it was generally supposed that the Romans had planted exotic herbs in the vicinity of Hadrian’s Wall. Scottish physicians were frequently seen in search of these rare specimens. Many are still eaten today; rocket was believed to be effective in that it ‘driveth from the body all kyndes of lytle beastes that grow therein’.

Beans on the other hand could be dangerous; all men of ‘feeble brains’ were advised to avoid them! Along with all the useful remedies, it must be said that certain of them were unquestionably harmful – earth worms, foxes’ lungs, toads’ hearts, all mixed together and applied as a treatment must have been of rather dubious benefit. The dung of white cats and dogs also featured in medical recipes. Medical science was obsessed with the idea of humours – some that were cold required strong herbal remedies, others being hot, the reverse.

Wounds, sustained in battle or brawl, were frequently fatal. If shock, loss of blood or tissue damage did not kill you then blood poisoning and gangrene would. Most head wounds would cause death; many exhumed bodies from mass graves on battle sites appear to have met their deaths this way. Abdominal and sucking chest woundswere very difficult for sixteenth century surgeons to treat.

**Activity**

You are a medieval surgeon and there has just been a battle, many wounded are coming in, you have to decide which casualties you treat and how.

* How do you categorise the wounded (triage) as some are not likely to recover and you have only limited resources?
* Who has got these wounded off the field of battle so you can treat them?
* What natural resources and herbs might you use and how?
* What are the bodily humours?
* How do you avoid the spells of witches?

**+**

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