

## LIFE IN THE CASTLE

Many domestic objects were found during excavations at Camber castle, which give a clue as to the daily life of the Castle's inhabitants. Domestic objects such as rings, buckles, lace tags, bells, pins and leather shoes, give us information about the soldiers clothing and appearance.



Gold Ring with Latin inscription



Large iron key

Also knives, saws, picks, spades, keys, locks, and pottery pieces were recovered which provide evidence for activities in their daily life.

In addition, bones discovered at Camber Castle represent a wide range of animal types and give a clear picture of day to day living at the castle.

There are a great variety of species ranging from cat to deer and whale. Obviously not all of these were a source of food however many show signs of cuts and knife marks indicating that they were either killed or skinned after death.

The percentages of animal bones discovered gives some information about the inhabitants diet:

Sheep	66 – 36%
Rabbit	46 – 25%
Cattle	40 – 22%
Chicken	24 – 13%
Pig	8 – 4%



Small dog skull

## ABOUT THE STORE



English Heritage collections contain over 500,000 objects. The majority of the collections are archaeological artefacts, but there are also architectural fragments, social history archives and elements from historic interiors. Most of the material has come from English Heritage properties, whilst others have been

donated by members of the public. In addition there is a large archive of photographs, drawings, letters, notebooks and reports.

All the objects need to be catalogued, conserved and carefully packed. There is a huge amount to do and the curatorial team welcome committed and interested volunteers to help in the process. We also encourage use of the collections for research and personal interest.



If you would like further information on the stores, the work of the curators or about the collections, please contact us at:

Stone Hut 1  
Dover Castle  
Kent  
CT16 1HU



ENGLISH HERITAGE

# CAMBER CASTLE: THE FORGOTTEN FORTRESS



English Heritage  
South East Archaeological Store  
Stone Hut  
Dover Castle  
Kent  
CT16 1HU

Phone: 01304 241892

Store open to the public on the first Friday of every month with changing displays.

# CAMBER CASTLE: THE FORGOTTEN FORTRESS

## INTRODUCTION

Camber Castle, situated on the South coast near the Cinque Port of Rye, was part of Henry VIII's coastal defence system, built as a response to the increased threat of a Catholic invasion of England. Camber Castle was constructed between 1512 and 1543 and represents an example of a largely unmodified Henrician artillery fort. Similarly shaped castles in Henry's coastal defences include:



Camber Castle



Walmer Castle



Hurst Castle

Excavations at Camber Castle began in April 1963 under the direction of the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works and continued intermittently until 1983. English Heritage took responsibility for Camber after 1984.



## CONSTRUCTION

The castle was built in three stages:

Phase I – Built between 1512 and 1514, consisted of an artillery tower with a single storey gun deck with gun ports below.



Phase II – Begun in 1539, followed the device forts design, which was the concept of Stephen Von Haschenperg. This type of Castle emphasised close defence and internal security, with a number of hidden stairs and underground passages.



Phase III - The third phase of building arose due to doubts about the Castle's effectiveness. Only 18 months after it was armed and in use, the Castle underwent further alterations. The finished Castle was much more effective, having guns mounted at a number of levels and with improved outer defences.



In 1637 the castle was decommissioned only 100 years after its final alterations. The decommissioning was partly due to changes in fortifications, but mainly because the retreating sea had left it stranded inland.

## WEAPONRY

As Camber Castle was an artillery fort, it would have contained large numbers of weapons in case of attack. Weaponry constitutes 15% of all metalwork found at Camber Castle during excavations, a



Spear head

majority of which can be dated to between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Most of the weapons discovered were made from iron, which does not tend to survive well when buried, however canon balls, arrowheads, musket parts and equipment, swords, armour and other hand weapons were found which give an indication as to the military technology and techniques during the time of Henry VIII.



Wormer

The iron canon balls vary greatly in size which indicates that a wide range of guns were used. Also, many arrowheads were found which were specifically designed to pierce armour.



Powder flask

Muskets and other handheld guns were also used and stored in the castle. We know this because parts of muskets and musket equipment was found for example matchlocks, powder flasks, wormer and musket balls.



Halberd

Examples of hand weapons including 4 halberds and 6 pike heads have been excavated, but few sword pieces were found which is surprising as they would be expected to be found on a site of this period.