

Castle Life

Digging up the Past

To understand more about activity in the castle complex over time we turn to archaeological records.

From 1989 to 1991, a major excavation of the site of the Castle Mall shopping arcade revealed the shapes of castle defences and uncovered thousands of small objects.

With the evidence from the site we can picture a noisy, busy enclosure. We can also see that there were frequent changes, additions and repairs to the castle defences.

The artist's impression here shows what the Castle may have looked like when King Henry I visited at Christmas 1121. It is based on the evidence from the Castle Mall excavations.

In the finds from later medieval times there is evidence for crafts and industries ranging from arrow-manufacture to bell-founding in the castle area.

The evidence for the 16th-18th centuries shows that this area became a mixture of housing, animal grazing and rubbish tips.

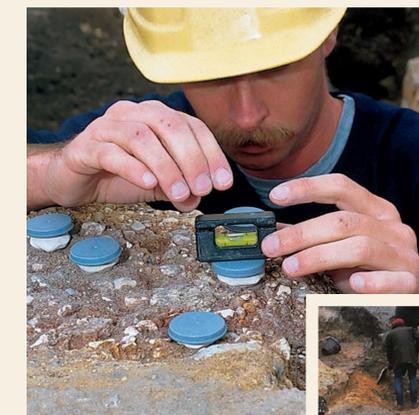
La vue d'artiste montre ici à quoi le château aurait pu ressembler lorsque le roi Henri I y vint à Noël de l'an 1121. Elle s'appuie sur les signes des murs et structures trouvés lors des fouilles archéologiques du centre commercial « Castle Mall ».



The excavations provided information about the form of the defences and some of the activities which took place around the Castle.



Excavations in progress at the Castle Mall site in 1990. The remnants of the south bailey rampart can be seen on the left of the picture.



Measurements being taken for archaeomagnetic dating of a pottery kiln.

Iron particles in the baked clay contain evidence of the earth's magnetic direction at the time the clay was fired.



Excavating one of the early Norman ditches in the south bailey.

This is what we think Norwich Castle may have looked like when Henry I visited at Christmas 1121.