

LEEDS CASTLE'S FIELD OF CLOTH OF GOLD



WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

This workshop is designed for children at Key Stages 1, 2 & 3. It will be presented at an age appropriate level and will cover History: 'An aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066' and will add to their 'understanding of how knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources'.

It will also add to the 'study of an aspect of history dating from a period beyond 1066 that is significant in the locality'.

Art and Design: 'understanding the historical and cultural development of art forms'.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The children will learn about King Henry VIII's visit to Leeds Castle in 1520 and the meeting between Henry VIII and Francis 1 of France in Guînes. They will learn about the differences between the rich and the poor in the 16th century and will be able to compare the lives of royalty with those of their servants.

The session will cover the lives of significant individuals in the past who have contributed to national and international achievements ie. The Kings Henry VIII and Francois 1^{er}. The children will also learn about significant historical events and people in their own locality

WORKSHOP SESSION

After a brief introduction there will be an in-depth study of the narrative story behind the famous paintings 'The Field of the Cloth of Gold' and 'The Embarkation'. Children will be encouraged to think about why Henry VIII wanted such an event recorded, the links between power and display in the Tudor dynasty, and the historical accuracy of the paintings. During the presentation, costumes will be used to demonstrate life in the 16th century.

TIMETABLE OF THE DAY

We are an inclusive venue and can accommodate groups of up to 100 children. The timetable you follow will depend upon the size of your group.

The timings shown are approximate and can vary depending on how the workshop and tours progress. We are able to be flexible and the Education Leaders will consult with you on the day if there are particular circumstances or considerations.

Timetable 1 - For group size 40 and below

WHOLE GROUP	
10.00 am	Coach to drive to Ticket Office where you will be met by your Education Leader.
10.15 am	Directed to the Education Centre by staff
10.30 am	Workshop session
11.30 am	Lunch & Free Time
12.45 pm	Guided Tour of the Castle
1.30 pm	Free time

Timetable 2 - For group size 41 – 75

GROUP A		GROUP B	
10.00 am	Coach to drive to Ticket Office where you will be met by your Education Leader.		
10.15 am	Directed to the Education Centre by staff		
10.30 am	Workshop session	10.45 am	Guided tour of Castle
11.30 am	Lunch	11.30 am	Lunch & free time
12.45 pm	Guided tour of Castle	12.30 pm	Workshop session (Ensure that toilets are used beforehand)
1.30pm	Free time	1.30pm	Free time

TIMETABLE OF THE DAY

Timetable 3 - For group size 76 – 100

GROUP A		GROUP B		GROUP C	
10.00 am	Coach to drive to Ticket Office where you will be met by your Education Leader.				
10.30 am	Arrive at Education Centre and workshop session	10.30 am	Free time & snack	10.45 am	Self-guided Castle tour
11.30 am	Self-guided Castle tour	11.45 am	Workshop session (Please arrive by 11:40 and ensure that toilets are used beforehand)	11.30am	Free Time & Lunch
12.30 pm	Lunch & free time	12.45 pm	Lunch & Self-guided Castle tour	1.00pm	Workshop session (Please arrive by 12.55 and ensure that toilets are used beforehand)



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

One of the most spectacular events ever to take place at Leeds Castle occurred on 22nd May 1520. In the afternoon of that day, a huge cavalcade began to arrive at the gates. Close to the front of the procession was King Henry VIII. Following behind him were over five thousand people, including his Queen, Catherine of Aragon, Cardinal Wolsey, barons, knights, countesses and an earl. Companies of soldiers and servants attended every one of the King Henry's courtiers; the procession included sixteen chaplains, a cupbearer, grooms, pages, trumpeters, guards, and even a messenger and a

Postmaster. Where was this huge party of people travelling to? Why did they choose to stay at Leeds Castle?

The answer lies in events which took place two years before. In October 1518, King Henry concluded a peace treaty with King Francis I of France, after a long and troublesome conflict. Both men wanted

to celebrate their new-found peace with a meeting that would demonstrate the power and splendour of their respective kingdoms. They found a willing and capable organiser in the person of Cardinal Wolsey, who arranged that the two kings should meet in France, a few miles inland from Calais, in June 1520. Their symbolic reconciliation would be followed by celebrations on a giant scale - weeks of feasting, jousting and even fireworks. Both Francis and Henry brought as many of their courtiers as possible to the event, all of whom were determined to make as great a display of their wealth

as possible. It was said of many of the French nobles that they "carried their mills, their forests and their farms on their backs", so great was their investment in their clothes for the occasion. The event became known as the Field of the Cloth of Gold, on account of the fabulous textiles which were used to construct the tents and other temporary buildings on the site.

Henry and Catherine and their retinues set out from Greenwich on 21st May 1520, and spent their first night on the way to the coast at Otford, near Sevenoaks. Their next night was spent at Leeds Castle, where only a small fraction of the travellers were able to spend the night under cover. Sir Henry Guildford, the constable of the castle, was paid £66-13-4d for the cost of quartering so many people. From the castle, they moved to Charing for their next night's stay. They reached Canterbury on the 25th of May, and spent a week there and in Dover, entertaining the new emperor of Germany, Charles V, before proceeding to France on the 31st of May, probably on board the flagship of the fleet, the 'Henri Grace à Dieu', or 'Great Harry'.



The celebrations themselves were preceded by months of preparations. Over eight thousand workmen were sent over to construct the immensely complex and beautifully decorated temporary dwellings, which the courtiers were to live in for a month, using prefabricated timber frames. The food for people and horses took days to be carried across by sea, and included over 2000 sheep, 26 dozen heron, 700 conger eels, and four bushels of mustard. Chestfuls of carefully packed crockery, cutlery and glass also had to be transported. The tiltyard, where the jousting took place, was dominated by an artificial tree, hung with coats of arms, with its trunk wrapped in cloth, and covered in thousands of artificial flowers and leaves.

The celebrations began on Corpus Christi day, 7th June. In a carefully choreographed encounter, Francis and Henry rode towards each other, and met on a flat area of land where neither king would appear to have a height advantage over the other. They dismounted and embraced. Two solid weeks of dancing, singing, jousting and feasting followed, which culminated in a high mass celebrated by Cardinal Wolsey, with both royal choirs participating. Before they parted, both kings agreed to build a commemorative chapel and dedicate it to peace. Unfortunately, within a year, both countries were at war again.

Despite its ultimate failure, as a symbolic gesture the event was so memorable that both kings wished to have it permanently commemorated. Francis ordered a set of marble bas-relief carvings of the events, and Henry ordered at least two paintings of what went on. The exact date when these were executed is not known; some scholars believe they may have been painted over twenty

years later. They are not thought to have been painted all by the same hand. Two of the surviving paintings, now in the Royal Collection at Hampton Court, show Henry setting off from England, and arriving at the head of his retinue at Guînes. close to where the meeting was held.

The subject matter of a Tudor portrait is almost always of a rich and powerful sitter. Most have hidden symbols within them and the portrait was often commissioned to convey messages. Poor people were seldom represented in artwork at this time, although the artist Pieter Bruegel the Elder became famous for his “peasant scenes”. The most famous portrait painter of the Tudor Court was Hans Holbein. Although Holbein is known for his portraits, he came from a very artistic family and had several uncles who were sculptors.

THE FIELD OF CLOTH OF GOLD PAINTING INFORMATION

Paintings as historical sources

Paintings can be very useful historical sources, but they cannot always be trusted to be completely factually accurate. Why should we be careful about a picture like this?

- Long time lapse means that memories of participants will have faded. Unless sketches were made at the time, people may not remember what things looked like.
- Distortion of time. Especially in the case of the field itself, events covering a fortnight were crammed into one painting, making it look as if they occurred simultaneously.
- Distortion of space. Actual topography could not be accurately painted in a rectangular painting. Buildings, coastline, and position of objects next to each other have all been altered.
- Need to flatter Henry. A meeting like this obviously had to emphasise the positive aspects of the meeting, and skate over the negative.
- Because the Field of the Cloth of Gold was such a very special event, lots of people on both sides wrote about what happened. As well as letters and other memoirs, accounts and other documents still survive for the work that was done. This gives historians an unusually easy way to check whether the painting is accurate.

Why did Henry VIII commission these paintings?

- Possibly to decorate a blank wall in one of his palaces.
- To make a permanent record of a spectacular event in his life - remember no photographs, newspapers, videos or television news that we have now to record important events.
- To promote the glory of the Tudor dynasty - a concern that was echoed in a number of the other paintings he had commissioned. To establish their right to the throne.
- Henry used magnificence to create a sense of power, and dominance over his subjects. The advent of printing meant that for the first time his image could be reproduced and spread more widely amongst the population. So effective was the way in which the Tudors (especially Henry VIII and Elizabeth I) forged an image of success and power for themselves, their images are probably more universally recognised than those of any other English monarchs.