

## = Wressle Castle =

Wressle Castle is a ruined palace @-@ fortress in the East Riding of Yorkshire , England , built for Thomas Percy in the 1390s . It is privately owned and not open to the public . Wressle Castle originally consisted of four ranges built around a central courtyard ; there was a tower at each corner , and the structure was entered through a gatehouse in the east wall , facing the village .

After Thomas Percy was executed for rebelling against Henry IV , Wressle Castle passed into royal control . With occasional periods when it was granted to other people , the castle was mostly under royal control until 1471 when it was returned to the Percy family . Henry Percy , 5th Earl of Northumberland , refurbished the castle and gardens , bringing them to the standard of royal properties .

The castle was embedded within an ornamental landscape , with two gardens laid out at the same time as the castle was founded and a third created later . Wressle was intended as a high @-@ status residence rather than a fortress and was never besieged . However , it was held by Parliament during the English Civil War and demolished in 1646 ? 50 . Nearly 150 years later , it was further damaged by fire and all that remains above ground of the building is the south range .

## = History =

In the later Middle Ages , the Percy family was one of four major land @-@ owning dynasties in Yorkshire . The 14th century saw their properties spread into Northumberland , though Yorkshire remained important . The Percys held the manor of Wressle from the early 14th century , and it was granted to Thomas Percy in 1364 . Wressle Castle was first documented in 1402 , but was probably built in the 1390s . By 1390 , Thomas Percy had spent nearly ten years abroad as either a soldier or on diplomatic errands . From then on he was active in the royal sphere and friends of both Richard II and Henry IV . According to archaeologist and architectural historian Anthony Emery Wressle Castle was built ? as a residence reflecting [ the Earl ? s ] pedigree and distinguished state service ? .

Though Henry IV gave Thomas Percy influence in south Wales , relations between the two deteriorated due partly to delays in payment . Thomas ? nephew , Henry Percy , rose in armed rebellion in July 1403 and Thomas joined him . The rebellion culminated in the battle of Shrewsbury in which Thomas Percy was captured . Two days later , on 23 July , he was beheaded and his property ? including Wressle Castle ? was subsequently confiscated by the crown . Between 1403 and 1471 ownership of the castle swapped between the crown and those the reigning monarch chose to grant it to , though only for short periods . In 1471 , Wressle Castle was given to Henry Percy , 4th Earl of Northumberland , returning it to the Percy family . His son , Henry Algernon Percy , 5th Earl of Northumberland , undertook an extensive programme of refurbishment at Wressle Castle , refurbishing the interior and updating the gardens . At the time he was one of the richest men in England . The Northumberland Household Book was compiled around this time and details day @-@ to @-@ day domestic activities at the castles of Wressle and Leconfield , and is used by historians to study the late medieval household .

Percy died at Wressle in 1527 and was succeeded by his son , Henry Algernon Percy , 6th Earl of Northumberland . The Pilgrimage of Grace was a popular revolt against the rule of Henry VIII in 1536 partly in response to the dissolution of the monasteries . The rebels in Yorkshire were led by Robert Aske and in October he sought the support of the Percy family . Aske travelled to Wressle Castle and tried to persuade Henry Algernon Percy , who at the time was suffering from illness , to join the rebellion . Though initially opposed to Aske , Percy eventually gave him control of Wressle Castle . Percy had fallen out with his younger brothers , and when he died in 1537 his one surviving brother did not inherit because he was imprisoned for his role in the Pilgrimage of Grace . In 1537 , the crown again resumed control of Wressle Castle , and Henry VIII visited for three nights in 1541 .

Antiquarian John Leland visited Wressle Castle in about 1540 . He wrote in his Itinerary that the castle was " one of the most proper beyond the Trent , and seemeth as newly made ... The castle is all of very fair and great squared stone , both within and without " . He also gave the first surviving description of the castle gardens , noting that they were " exceedingly fair " and with orchards

beyond the moat .

The castle was garrisoned by parliamentarians during the English Civil War during which time it was badly damaged . At the time it was estimated that the damage to the castle and surrounding area would take £ 1 @, @ 000 to repair . Wressle Castle was slighted ( partially demolished ) on several occasions in 1646 ? 50 . The 1648 demolition work was focused on the castle ? s battlements , with a contemporary letter noting that ? [ Parliament ? s ] agents would show no care in preserving any of the materials , but pitched of [ f ] the stones from the battlements to the ground ? Destruction was more extensive two years later , when Algernon Percy , 10th Earl of Northumberland , was ordered to demolish everything that remain except the south range of the castle . The earl would be allowed to use the surviving range as a manor house . The damage was not confined to the castle buildings , and probably affected the ornamental landscape .

The castle remained with the Percy family until the mid @-@ 18th century when it passed to the earls of Egremont . The lands and castle were then inherited by Elizabeth Seymour who assumed the name Percy and was later Duchess of Northumberland . Wressle Castle was occupied by a tenant farmer who on 19 February 1796 caused a fire which gutted the castle ? s remaining wing . He had had been trying to clear the chimney . A report three months later in The Gentleman 's Magazine noted that ? This loss was of truly national significance " . The farm continued to be leased to tenants , and the farmhouse which still stands was built c . 1810 . By 1880 the castle was partially covered in ivy . In 1957 the castle and farm were sold to the Falkingham family who own the site today .

Wressle Castle is now a Grade I listed ruin and a scheduled monument. remains include earthworks indicating the moat , and some parts of the castle : the remains of the two towers of the south range ; and a building fragment , thought to have been a bakehouse . According to Historic England , the site was first investigated archaeologically in 1993 , when Humberside Archaeology Unit held a watching brief . The state of the site deteriorated to the point at which in 1999 Wressle Castle was included on the Heritage at Risk register . Historic England , Natural England and the Country Houses Foundation invested £ 500 @, @ 000 in repairing the castle and in 2015 Wressle was no longer considered ? at risk ? and was removed from the register . This included architectural and landscape surveys carried out by Ed Dennison Archaeological Services , with funding from the Castle Studies Trust for the landscape survey .

= = Architecture = =

A quadrangular castle , Wressle Castle was laid out with four ranges in a square around a courtyard . At each corner was a tower , and in the centre of the east side was a five @-@ storey gatehouse . Clockwise from north east the corner towers were named the Constable Tower ( where the constable who ran the castle on a daily basis lived ) , the Chapel Tower , the Lord ? s Tower , and the Kitchen Tower . Opposite the gatehouse , in the castle 's west range , was the great hall and the Lord 's Tower in the south west contained the owner 's accommodation and private rooms .

Based on architectural similarities with the castles of Sheriff Hutton , Bolton , and Lumley , historian Eric John Fisher suggested that Wressle Castle was built in the last quarter of the 14th century . This coincides with the career of John Lewyn , who designed the great tower at Warkworth Castle and worked at Lumley , both Percy properties . Archaeologist Malcolm Hislop suggests that Lewyn also designed Wressle , and that " it is difficult to believe that [ Lumley and Wressle ] were designed independently of each other . "

= = Landscape = =

The village of Wressle pre @-@ dates the castle , and was recorded in the Domesday Book . The castle was built at the west end of the settlement on one of the two main roads through Wressle . It is unclear whether this was a manorial centre before the castle was built , or whether it was an entirely new site . The castle was given multiple gardens which likely resulted in some parts of the village being built over . The River Derwent flows north ? south about 590 feet ( 180 m ) west of the

castle .

The gardens at Wressle Castle were probably created at the same time as the castle was built . Documentary evidence indicates that by the late 15th century Wressle Castle had two gardens , both located to the south of the castle . One was probably between the south moat and the castle ( the Moat Garden ) and the other was south of the moat ( the Old Garden ) . A third garden ( the New Garden ) was laid out north of the castle around 1472 ? 1517 . The Old and New Gardens covered about 1 acre ( 4 000 m<sup>2</sup> ) each ; the former had a brick wall while the later was enclosed by a wet moat . The Old Garden contained an orchard and alleys for bowling and walking , popular pastimes of the nobility from the 16th century onwards . It also contained a two storey 15th century building known as the ? School House ? where Henry Percy , 5th Earl of Northumberland , would read .

A banqueting house was built just inside the south west corner of the moat . Though it was probably built in the 16th century , it was in a dilapidated state by 1577 . A base court ( an enclosed area ) was added in front of the castle ? s gatehouse after the main complex was built , but it unclear when . Wetland areas south and east of the castle may have been used to emulate a mere , a type of broad shallow lake . As well as this , there were two fishponds , but their dating is uncertain . During Wressle Castle ? s heyday in the 16th century , the quality of the gardens and ornamental landscape would have paralleled the interior of the renovated buildings , possibly even rivalling gardens at royal properties .