

= Piel Castle =

Piel Castle , also known as Fouldry Castle or the Pile of Fouldray , is a castle situated on the south @-@ eastern point of Piel Island , off the coast of the Furness Peninsula in north @-@ west England . Built in the early @-@ 14th century by John Cockerham , the Abbot of neighbouring Furness Abbey , it was intended to oversee the trade through the local harbour and to protect against Scottish raids . The castle was built using stones from the local beach , and featured a large keep with surrounding inner and outer baileys . It was used as a base by the Yorkist pretender Lambert Simnel in 1487 , but by 1534 it had fallen into ruin and passed into the hands of the Crown . Sea erosion began to cause significant damage to the castle in the early 19th century . In the 1870s the castle 's owner , the Duke of Buccleuch , carried out extensive restoration work and erected outworks to protect it against further damage from the sea . In 1920 the castle was given to the town of Barrow @-@ in @-@ Furness and is now in the care of English Heritage .

= = History = =

Piel Castle was built on Piel Island , overlooking the deep water port of Piel Harbour outside of Barrow Haven , now called Barrow @-@ in @-@ Furness . There may have been an earlier 12th @-@ century fortification on the island , possibly built by the local monks in the reign of King Stephen , but this is uncertain . The castle was built by the John Cockerham , the Abbot of Furness Abbey around 1327 , when Edward III gave the abbey a licence to crenellate on the site . Comprising a keep with an inner and outer bailey , the castle was intended to oversee the trade through the harbour , and to provide defence , as the Abbey had faced raids from Scotland in 1316 and 1322 .

Architectural historian Anthony Emery argues that the castle was built in three phases , starting with the central keep , which he believes was intended as a largely unfortified summer residence for the Abbot . With the increased threat from Scotland and the granting of the licence to crenellate , Emery suggests that the inner bailey wall was then constructed to better defend the keep , followed by the outer bailey wall in a final phase of work .

In 1408 , the Abbot John Bolton decided that the cost of maintaining the castle was excessive , and attempted to pull down the defences , but was prevented from doing so by Henry IV ; this was followed by a period of rebuilding around 1429 . The castle was used for smuggling by the Abbey , leading to complaints from merchants in English @-@ controlled Calais that they were illegally trafficking wool , which in this period could only legally be sold through the French port . In 1487 the Yorkist pretender Lambert Simnel landed on Piel Island . He sought help from potential local supporters and held court at the castle , before advancing inland and ultimately being defeated at the Battle of Stoke Field . By 1534 the castle had fallen in ruin and was described in a report as " sore decayed " . In 1537 , on the dissolution of the Abbey , it became the property of the Crown , and after 1660 , was given to the Duke of Albermarle .

By the late 18th century , the island had become used as a base for maritime pilots , and the castle passed into the possession of the Dukes of Buccleuch . In 1811 , the poet William Wordsworth visited the area and wrote a poem entitled " Peele Castle " describing the site . The sea caused significant erosion during this period , and one side of the keep collapsed in the early 19th century . Walter Scott , the Duke of Buccleuch , purchased the rest of the island and carried out an extensive and expensive restoration of the castle between 1877 and 1878 , destroying most traces of the medieval occupation of the site in the process . The restoration involved constructing outworks to prevent further sea erosion , replacing damage to the ashlar stone features of the castle and protecting the tops of the stone walls .

In 1919 John Scott decided to sell the island and castle ; the local mayor , Alfred Barrow , intervened and the following the year the Duke instead agreed to give the castle and island to the local authorities as a memorial to those who had lost their life in World War I. The castle passed into the care of central government in 1973 , and is now controlled by English Heritage , who operate the site as a tourist attraction . An archaeological survey was commissioned by English Heritage in 1984

, carried out by Rachel Newman of Lancaster University ; the findings of the survey led to a program of restoration work , completed in 1991 . It is protected by law as a grade I listed building .

= = Architecture = =

The castle is built to an Edwardian concentric design , with a keep in the south @-@ eastern corner , protected by an inner and outer bailey with stone curtain walls extending out to the north @-@ west . The castle is built using stones from the local beach bonded with a liquid mortar , with the finer stonework , such as the doorways and windows , made from red ashlar sandstone imported from the mainland . Much of the surrounding island has been eroded by the sea and some of the castle has been lost , with fallen stone fragments still visible on the beach below .

The three @-@ storey keep stands on a low mound of clay , similar to that making up the base of the rest of the castle , and is 45 @-@ foot ( 14 m ) high , 76 feet ( 23 m ) by 74 feet ( 23 m ) across , reinforced with protruding buttresses , and a tower on the south @-@ eastern corner . The original entrance would have been at ground level , but a gatehouse , 25 feet ( 7 @-@ 6 m ) by 16 feet ( 4 @-@ 9 m ) , was then built along on the north side , raising this to the first floor . A carved female figure can be seen above the entrance arch , which may have been a representation of Salome . The keep had large windows on the first and second floors , although the lower level of these was later blocked up , and was unusually divided into three sections , creating a central hallway on each level . The eastern side of the keep has collapsed as a consequence of land erosion . Anthony Emery argues that the term " keep " is inappropriate for the building , which should be seen more as a residential tower house , similar to that at Langley Castle .

The inner and outer bailey walls have also been damaged by sea erosion , but they originally formed concentric squares around the keep and were protected by ditches . The outer bailey wall , 8 @-@ foot ( 2 @-@ 4 m ) thick in places , is no longer very substantial , but even when first built it may have been quite weak ; it is protected by a moat , up to 13 metres ( 43 ft ) wide and 3 metres ( 9 @-@ 8 ft ) deep . Both the baileys are protected by towers ; the outer bailey towers are each 15 @-@ 5 @-@ foot ( 4 @-@ 7 m ) wide . The inner bailey wall is 8 @-@ foot ( 2 @-@ 4 m ) thick , protected by a 25 @-@ foot ( 7 @-@ 6 m ) wide moat . Its towers were a later addition to the original design , and a gatehouse in the inner bailey wall was also built shortly after the construction of the castle . The fortifications would have been slightly old fashioned for the period . The outer bailey holds a stone building called " the chapel " , 31 feet ( 9 @-@ 4 m ) by 15 feet ( 4 @-@ 6 m ) in size . Its original use is unknown and it appears to have been built late in the castle 's history , possibly after it became ruinous .

Local legends exist of a tunnel between the castle and Furness Abbey , allegedly used by the monks as escape route from the mainland . No such passageway exists .