

Arise Sir Knight: Knights of Gloucestershire

A-Z of Gloucestershire Castles

There were once over 100 castles in Gloucestershire, but sadly few survive today. Quite a few saw violent sieges and battles and all were homes to knights. Use this list to find the nearest one to you!

Berkeley - Gloucestershire's earliest and most intact castle, it was built in 1067 by Fitz-Osborn, the Earl of Hereford. By 1340 it was owned by the Berkeley Family, who are still there today. King Edward II was murdered here in 1327. Open to the public.

Beverstone - Built by 1145, possibly by the Berkeley family, it did not reach its full extent until 1350. It then remained intact until the Civil War, when it was twice besieged by Parliamentary forces. After its capture it was partially demolished to prevent it being re-used.

Brimpsfield - Built by 1216, Edward II ordered the castle destroyed after its owner Sir John Giffard rebelled. It is not known whether or not it this was done as in the 15th century it came into possession of the Crown. Only a small amount of stonework now remains.

Cirencester - Located next to the church, nothing now remains of this castle which was built by Empress Matilda in 1141. It stood for just a year for in 1142 it was stormed and destroyed by King Stephen.

English Bicknor - Earthworks are all that survive of this castle which was built by Milo of Gloucester around 1100. After his death in 1143 the castle became the property of the Crown, but it was apparently destroyed sometime between 1223 and 1236.

Gloucester - Despite being built by William the Conqueror nothing is now left of this castle. It was built around 1071 and saw extensive action during the Baron's War (1263-65), when it was stormed and taken four times - the last after a 3-week siege by the future King, Edward I. It was maintained into the 15th century and not demolished until 1791 when Gloucester Prison was built on the site. Only one contemporary picture exists.

Lydney - Amazingly there is no written evidence for this roughly kite-shaped motte and bailey castle, which is thought to date from the 12th century. Some stonework is still visible. Open to the public.

Newnham - This may have been the first castle built beyond the Severn against the Welsh! It was abandoned quite early on but not before 1171 when Henry II sailed from the town to invade Ireland with a fleet of 400 ships and 5,000 men. Only an earth bank survives.

Ruardean - In 1306 Edward II granted Alexander de Bykenore a 'Licence to crenellate' his manor house and the result was a fortified building that became known as Ruardean Castle. Only one piece of walling now survives above ground.

St Briavel's - Begun in 1130 by Milo Fitz-Walter, Earl of Hereford, it was completed in the 13th century. It was known as the 'King's Great Arsenal' as it supplied over 1 million crossbow quarrels for English armies. It is now a youth hostel. Open to the public.

Sudeley - Built by Ralph Boteler about 1442 it underwent several rebuilds and many ownership changes. It was badly damaged in the Civil War when it was stormed by Parliamentary forces. Katherine Parr, Henry VIII's widow, died at the castle in 1548. Open to the public.

South Cerney - Built by the 12th century, this was another castle built by Milo Fitz-Walter. It was stormed and destroyed by King Stephen during the civil wars of the 12th century.

Tetbury - Nothing survives of this castle, which was built by Robert of Gloucester. In 1144 it was stormed and captured by King Stephen. The church is said to incorporate masonry from the castle.

Thornbury - Built in the 12th century by the Stafford family, little is known about the original castle for in 1521 it was mostly demolished and converted into a Tudor palace. It is now a posh hotel.

If you want to find out more about castles then why not visit your local Library!