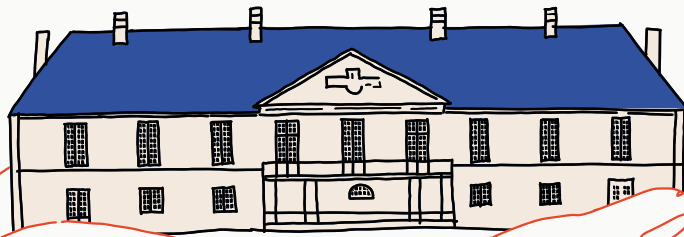


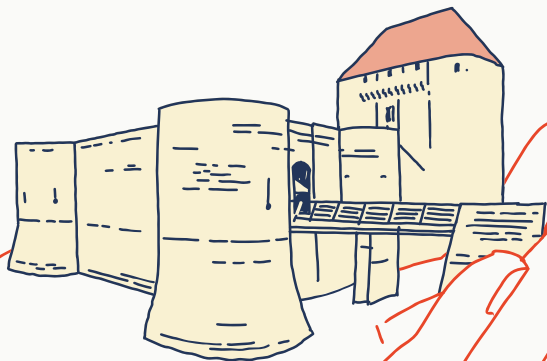
Musée de
Normandie



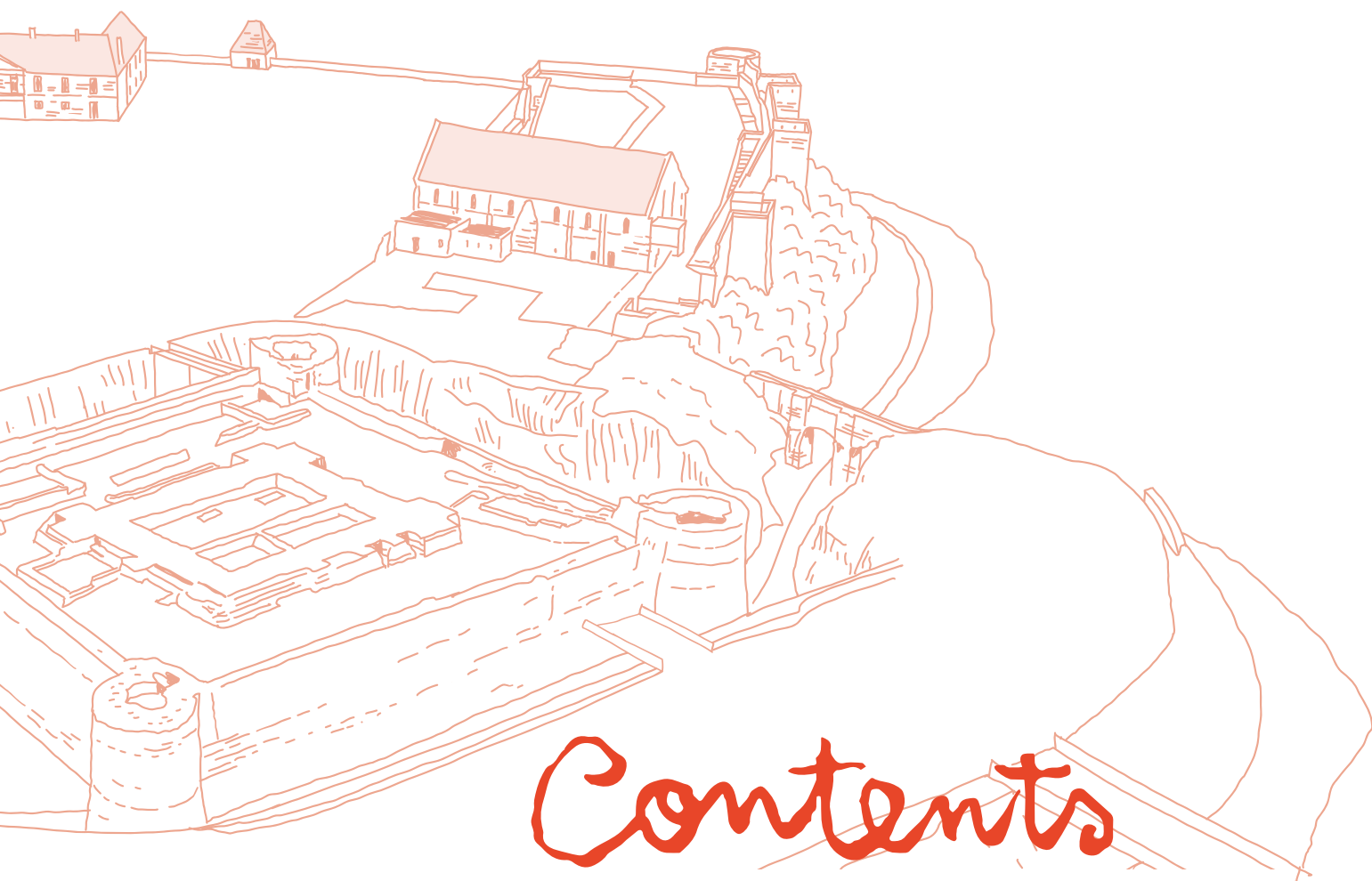
CAEN CASTLE

TEACHER'S FILE

A practical and educational guide for teachers



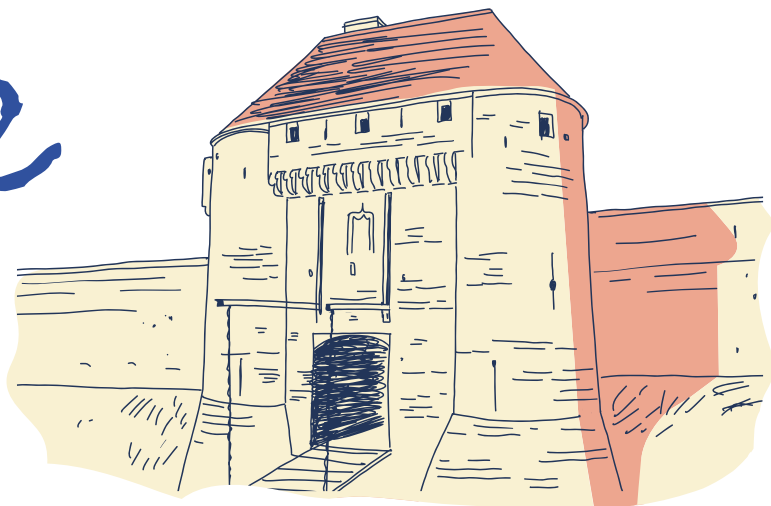




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Welcome TO CAEN CASTLE



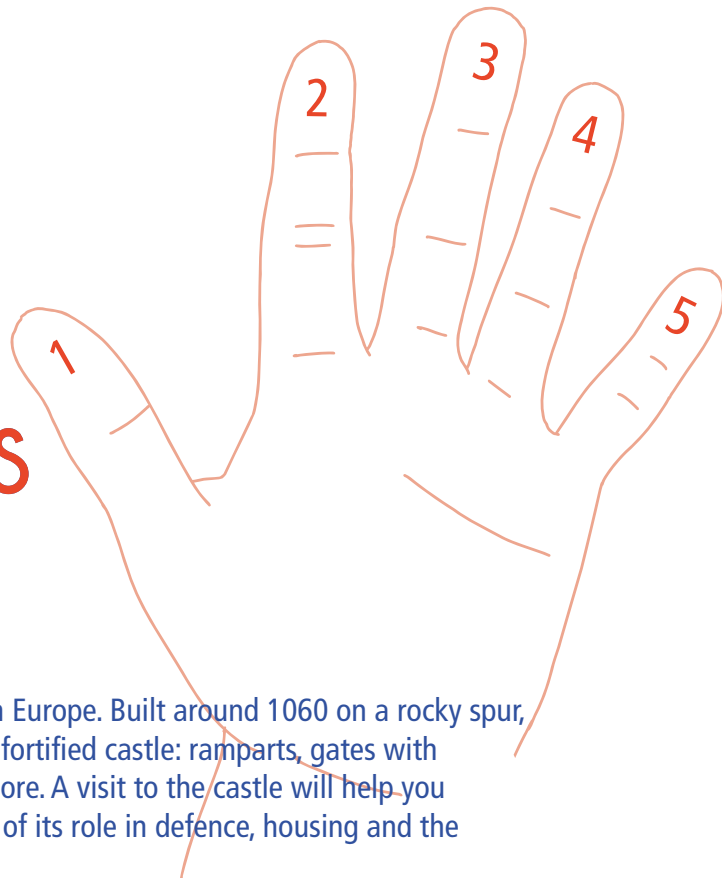
Following two years of work corresponding to operation B of the Master Plan for development and conservation, between 2023 and 2025, the castle will be given a new look, with the creation of a wooded park covering more than 4 hectares, a veritable green lung at the heart of the town, and the reopening of previously inaccessible areas such as the remains of the Keep, the rampart towers and other hidden treasures. A walk along the parapets in the footsteps of the castle's sentries leads to Saint George's church, and completes a stroll affording a perspective on the history of the town and its fortress.

A new reception pavilion, the starting point for exploring the château for individual visitors and groups, offers a wide range of services: ticket office, shop and cloakrooms. The reception pavilion is also where all types of visitor, including school groups, can find newly designed information to help them benefit fully from their visit. On the programme: guided tours, self-guided tour aids and activities for youngsters from nursery to high school age to discover or rediscover this thousand-year-old fortress!



5 GOOD REASONS

TO COME TO CAEN CASTLE WITH YOUR CLASS:



1. Be at the heart of one of the largest medieval fortresses in Europe. Built around 1060 on a rocky spur, Caen Castle covers 5 hectares and has all the hallmarks of a fortified castle: ramparts, gates with drawbridges and machicolations, remains of the keep, and more. A visit to the castle will help you understand how a medieval fortress was organised, in terms of its role in defence, housing and the representation of power.

2. Discover the thousand-year-old history of the Château de Caen and the historical figures who have shaped it. Built by William the Conqueror, Caen Castle became a favourite residence of the Dukes of Normandy and Kings of England. With 1,000 years of history behind it, the château has witnessed many great events and played host to some of history's most famous figures: Richard the Lionheart, Philippe Auguste, François I, Henri IV, Napoleon, etc.

3. Take advantage of an educational offer tailored to your needs. With the help of teaching materials, a visit to Caen Castle, accompanied by a guide or on your own, allows you to tackle concepts linked to school curricula in a way that is adapted to the level of your class.

4. Raising pupils' awareness of archaeology. The Château de Caen is home to a number of standing buildings, as well as archaeological remains (the old palace and the keep). A visit to the castle provides an opportunity to learn about archaeology and heritage conservation.

5. Enjoy a day on site visiting the park, the Musée de Normandie or the historic centre of Caen. The Musée de Normandie-Château de Caen team welcomes you for a full day for a visit to the Château de Caen and the Musée de Normandie. Find out more about the Musée de Normandie-Château de Caen on our website : <https://musee-de-normandie.caen.fr/visites-en-groupe/groupe-scolaires>



Visits on Offer

The Musée de Normandie-Château de Caen will welcome your class, from nursery school level up to high school level, from Tuesday to Friday (9.30am-12.30pm and 1.30pm-6pm).

Find the full range of educational activities in the catalogue : <https://musee-de-normandie.caen.fr/visites-en-groupe>



Exploring the castle with a guide

Guided tours with a cultural guide, suitable for all levels of classes from primary to senior high school:

● From primary school to high school :

Guided tour including the Keep and the Queen Mathilda Tower

From the founding of the castle by William the Conqueror to the changes made to the site throughout the Middle Ages, this tour explores the notion of a fortified castle, a place of power and defence, and everyday life in the Middle Ages. The tour includes exclusive access to the Keep and Queen Matilda's Tower, and commentary adapted to the level of the class, with short activities.

Duration: 2 hours (including breaks) / Price: 35 €, booking required



Discovering the castle on your own

Self-guided tour materials and games booklets are available for school groups. They can be used on their own or combined with a guided tour or commentary for a whole day on the site. There are three levels of visit to suit all classes :

● Primary school pupils

A games booklet is given to each pupil

Duration: 1 hour / Price: Free, booking required

● Junior high school pupils

A games booklet is given to each pupil

Duration: 1 hour / Price: Free, booking required



Booking

Group booking service

Telephone number: +33 (0)2 31 30 40 85

E-mail: mdn.groupees@caen.fr

All school visits to the Musée de Normandie-Château de Caen must be booked in advance.

The castle is open to the public every day.

Booking required: at least 15 days before the desired date.

A booking is considered definitive on receipt of the dated and signed order form and contract.



Access

Bus / tram: stops Université / Château-Quatrans / Saint-Pierre.

Parking: coach, minibus, car, bicycle outside the château

SNCF railway station 10 minutes away by bus or tram.

Bus : Three bus drop-off points near the château: Université / Rue de Geôle / Avenue de la Libération.

Shared parking spaces at Place Courtonne / coach park with intercom at Cours Montalivet.

Access is on foot via Porte Saint-Pierre, Porte des Champs (the Field Gate) or the entrance opposite the University (Esplanade de la Paix). PRM: drop-off possible by prior arrangement.

Method of payment

Payment must be made on the day of the activity, on arrival at the site in cash, by credit card or by cheque (made payable to the 'Régisseur des musées'), or at a later date.

Late arrivals Changes Cancellations

Late arrivals must be reported and will result in a shortened visit or activity. For any arrival more than 30 minutes behind schedule, visits will be cancelled and charged at the full rate.

Any changes or cancellations must be notified in writing (mdn.groupees@caen.fr) at least 5 days in advance. Any booking cancelled less than 72 hours in advance will be invoiced.

Reception The reception pavilion

The Reception Pavilion is the meeting point for groups (see map). Please arrive 15 minutes before the start of your activity to complete the final administrative procedures (validation of your booking contract, payment for activities, etc.).

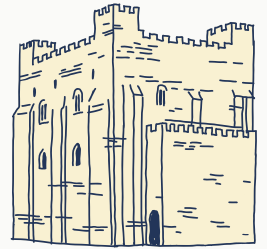
This is where you will meet your facilitator/guide to start your activity and/or pick up the materials for your self-guided visit.

Services

The Reception Pavilion offers a range of services (group cloakrooms with storage lockers, waiting area) during the building's opening hours: Tuesday to Friday: 9.30am-12.30pm and 1.30pm-6pm. Toilet facilities are also available during the château's opening days and times. You can picnic on the site, on the outdoor lawns only (there are no tables or covered areas).



map



The keep

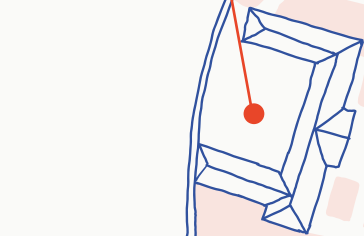


The Exchequer Hall



Governor's Residence

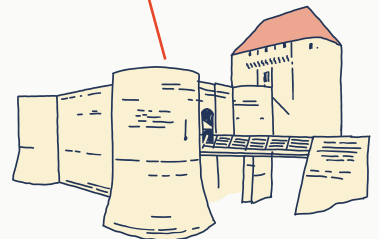
University entrance



Saint Pierre gate entrance



Fields Gate entrance



The Fields Gate



Saint Georges's Church



Castle reception

Scientific content and teaching method

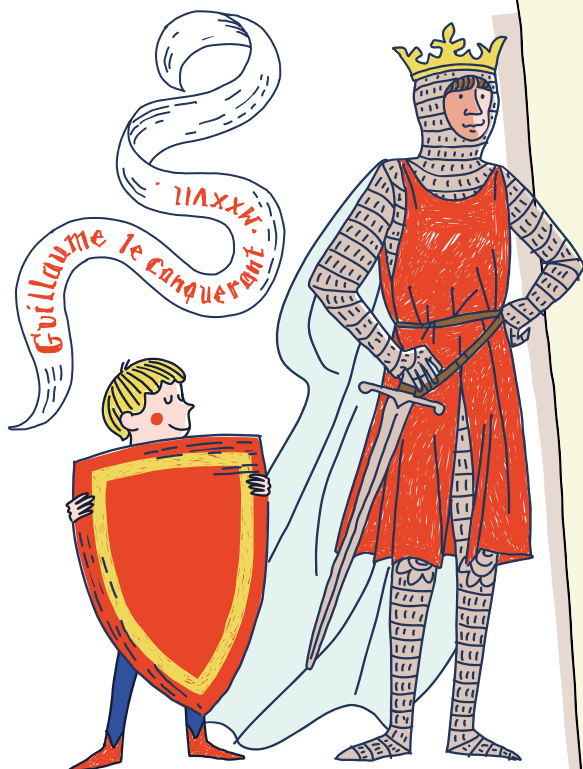
Here is a presentation of the main points of interest at the Château de Caen, to help you prepare for your visit or to reinforce and reactivate your knowledge in class following your visit. The texts are taken from the discovery and interpretation trail available on the site.

Subject to availability at the time, all points of interest are freely accessible, with the exception of the Dungeon and Queen Mathilda's Tower, which are only accessible during a guided tour with a guide.

Interpretation panels and orientation tables are to be found on site.



An artistic rendering of Caen Castle from the north-west, circa 15th Century.
© Musée de Normandie - Ville de Caen / Hélène Balcer, 2024.

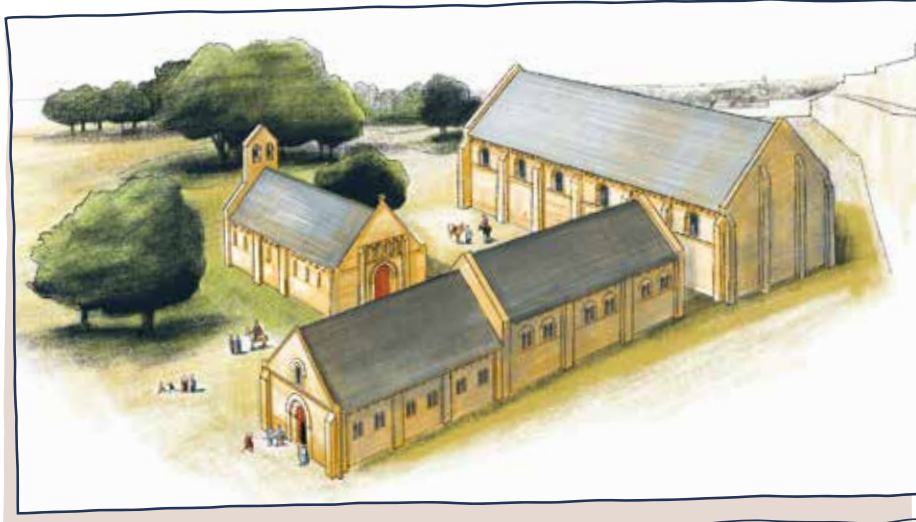


Built around 1060 by William the Conqueror, the ducal castle became a favourite residence of the Dukes of Normandy, Kings of England (1066-1204), who transformed it into one of the largest fortified enclosures in Europe. Over the centuries, this monument was transformed into a royal fortress and then a conscript barracks: each period in its history has left many traces of different periods down the ages.

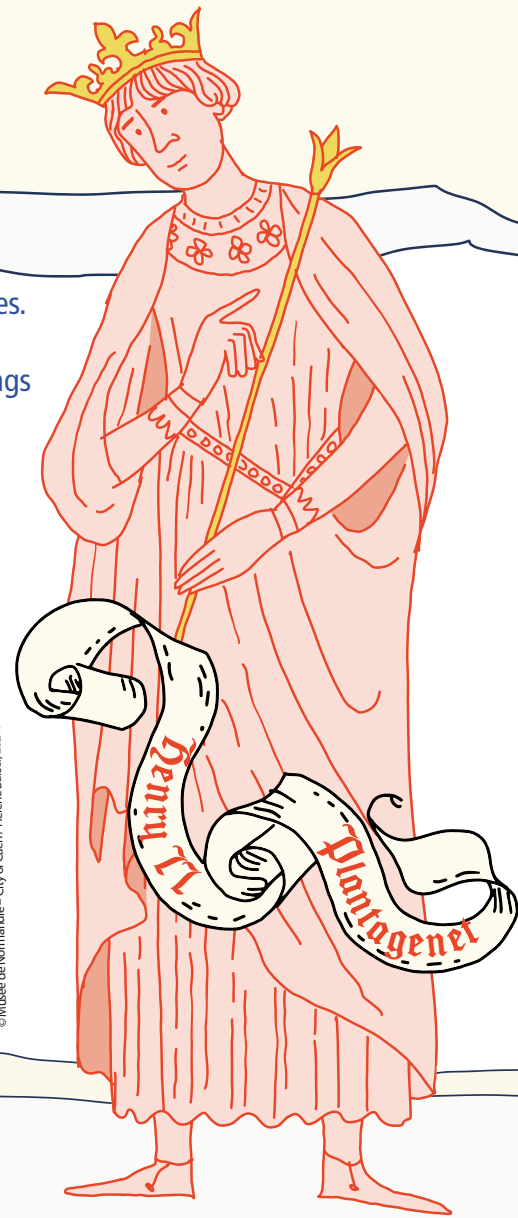


The Old Palace

Around 1060, Duke of Normandy William made Caen one of his principal residences. He built his palace in the castle, which traditionally comprised a reception hall for the court, private apartments and a palatine chapel. The foundations of the buildings uncovered during archaeological excavations in the 1960s can still be seen nowadays. Subsequent research suggests that the palace was a more complex ensemble. The interpretation of these remains is therefore still open to question.



The Old Palace in the 12th Century, proposed artistic reconstruction (state of knowledge 1966).
© Musée de Normandie - City of Caen / Hélène Balcer, 2024.



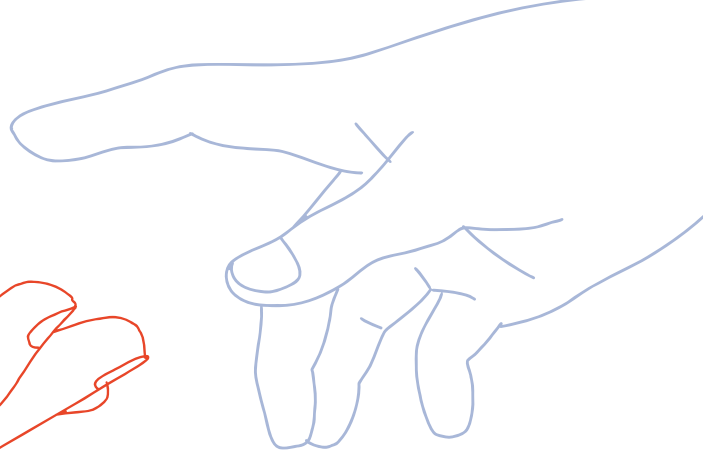
The Exchequer Hall, the great hall of the Dukes of Normandy

The great reception hall at Caen castle has a beautiful Romanesque façade, often mistaken for that of a church. The hall was probably built for receptions at the court of King William II (William Rufus) (c. 1098) and may have replaced earlier facilities.

It was named the Exchequer Hall in memory of the sessions of the fiscal and administrative court that was sometimes held there (counting with tokens on a chequered table). Recent archaeological research has shown that the great hall was linked to numerous buildings forming a vast palatial complex bounded by a paved courtyard.



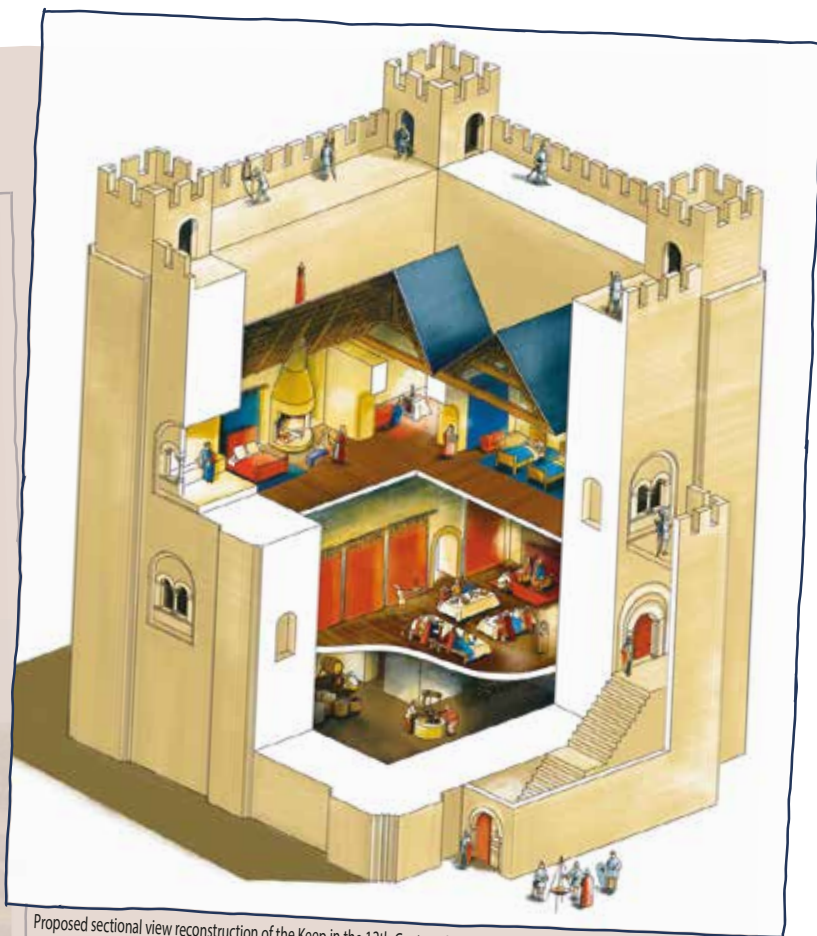
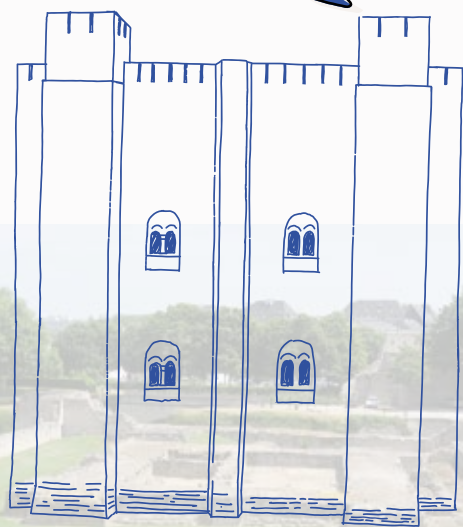
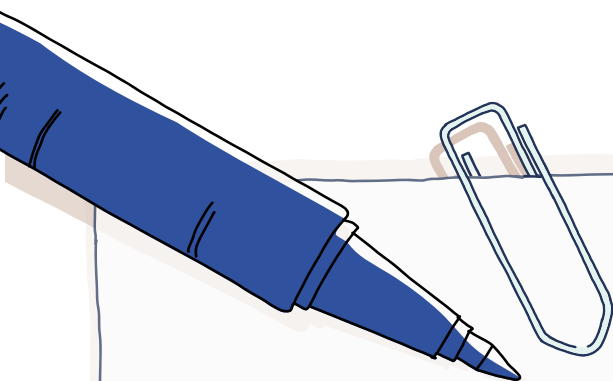
The chessboard or exchequer hall, photograph taken before 2023. © Musée de Normandie - City of Caen



from the Anglo-Norman keep to the French chatelet

Built around 1120 by Henry I Beauclerc, the great tower was at least 25 metres high. After taking control of the Norman fortresses (1204), King of France Philip Augustus built a protective chemise wall with four corner towers around the great Norman tower and its annexes, surrounded by a deep moat. It created thus a reinforced citadel in the northern part of the castle: the Donjon. During the French Revolution, orders were given to destroy this "feudal" monument, although it was not completely levelled until the 19th century. Excavations have uncovered its remains, which have been interpreted and developed into their currently visible condition.

Access only on guided tours with a facilitator/guide.



Proposed sectional view reconstruction of the Keep in the 12th Century © Musée de Normandie - City of Caen / Hélène Balcer, 2024.

Remains of the Keep, photograph taken before 2025. Musée de Normandie - City of Caen

The "Roquette" and the Warren



Oblique projection of Caen castle (details), the so-called « Louis XIII » Atlas of fortifications, circa 1650, Service historique de la défense, Vincennes

A princely castle was often associated with a large game park, a reserve for shooting or hunting. A large area known as the Warren was located north-west of the castle. It is often mistaken for the Roquette, a fortified platform surrounded by a moat north of the Donjon, which may have been built during the second part of the Hundred Years' War (1417-1450) to protect the Donjon from an attack from the north, clear a defensive position and keep canons at a distance.



The artillery terrace, photograph taken before 2025. Musée de Normandie - City of Caen

The Artillery Terrace

In the early 16th Century, substantial earth embankments were laid along the eastern part of the castle walls, reinforcements required to counter the progress in gunpowder artillery and allow the installation of cannons on top of the remparts. In the late 16th or early 17th century, another huge earthwork was pushed up against the wall in the north-west corner of the castle. In the process, a large forge building and a 14th century dwelling house were buried, the ruins of which can still be seen within the restored, grassed-over bulk of the artillery cavalier (Salles du Rempart, 2005-2008).



The rampart overlooking the town and the Puchot Tower

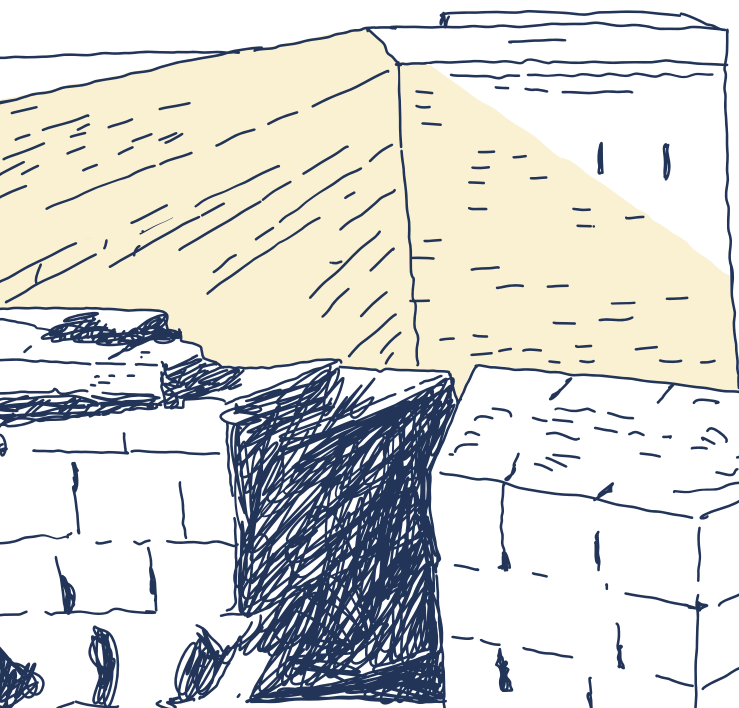
An embankment and a stone wall formed the first rampart of Caen Castle in the 11th Century. The huge quantity of earth and stone removed when digging the ditch provided the materials. Square towers were added from the middle of the 12th century onwards, followed by a round tower, the nearby Puchot Tower, at the beginning of the 13th century. Caen Castle has more than 800 metres of ramparts, enclosing a vast area of almost 5 hectares. It offers great views over the city, and the Puchot Tower is the point where the city wall used to join the castle ramparts above the Faubourg Saint-Julien.



Governor's Residence

The Governor's Hall was the official residence of the king's representative. The facade with its grand staircase opening onto the castle courtyard and the wing straddling the rampart express the dual power of the bailiff, captain and then "governor of the castle and fortifications of Caen".

In the Middle Ages, the bailiff combined the power of military command with judicial, administrative and fiscal functions. He probably resided in the Donjon at first, but texts mention a separate residence from 1338 onwards, a date recently confirmed by archaeology. There were offices, a private chapel and a courtroom where "criminals were judged".



Altered in the 16th and 17th centuries, the residence remained the seat of the highest representative of the local nobility. In the 19th century, it was used as a storage building for weaponry and various artillery equipment. It was badly damaged in 1944, then restored, but without its front staircase, which was removed in 1952. In 1963, the residence became home to the collections of the Museum of Normandy.

Saint Georges's Church

The first written record of Saint-George's church is a charter from 1082, which refers to the parish whose boundaries were defined by the castle. The remaining elements of the Romanesque church are the nave (c. 1060) and the chancel arch (c. 1100). The windows are Gothic (14th century), and the choir and doorway were altered in the early 16th century. Inside, the nave is covered by a timber frame built by the time of the English garrison during the Hundred Years' War. The wooden bell tower was removed when the church was converted into a service building for the army (19th century). Each century in the castle's history is thus represented in the church, which was adorned with new stained glass windows post-1970. As a memorial, exhibition space, and visitor and interpretation centre, it is still the castle's beating heart.



from the Herb Garden to the governor's gardens



The presence of gardens and parks is attested in historical records and confirmed by the name of the "Gardener's Tower". In the Middle Ages, the castle probably included several plots of cultivated land. One can imagine vegetable gardens and orchards associated with the houses. Texts even mention espaliered vines planted along the well-exposed walls. Finally, the "priest's garden" was probably used to grow "simples", plants used for cooking and medicine. The presence of these private areas, the "walled gardens" of privileged residences, cannot be confirmed at Caen Castle, but plans prior to the French Revolution show large French-style landscaped areas and smaller plots close to the dwellings. The gardens planted here, on a deep layer of infill, well above the level of the medieval ground, offer an interpretation of this tradition of "herb gardens" and pleasure gardens.

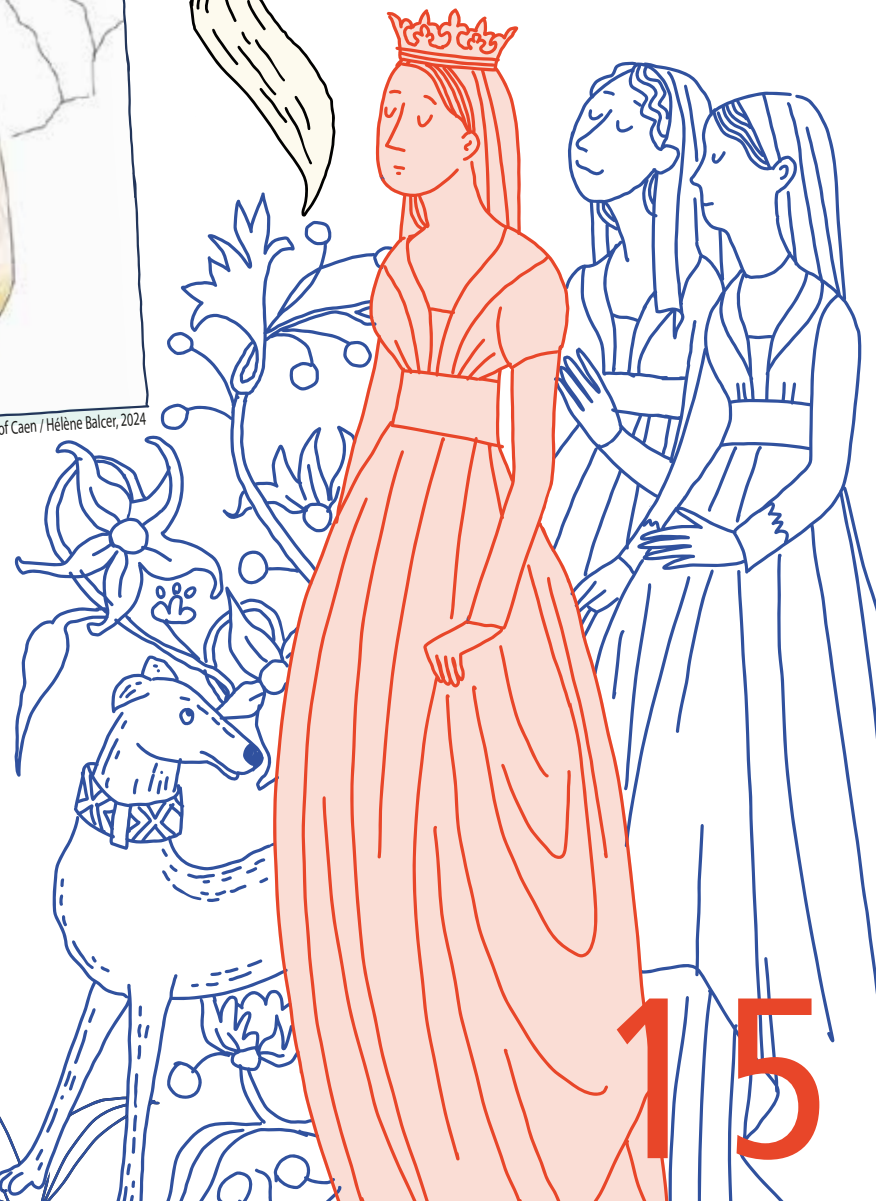
Queen Mathilda's Tower



Proposed sectional view reconstruction of Queen Mathilda's tower in the 15th Century. © Musée de Normandie - City of Caen / Hélène Balcer, 2024

This robust, circular artillery tower, with six firing chambers adapted to the use of gunpowder weapons, dominates a broad area to the east and south of the castle, with the ramparts in enfilade, and overlooking the suburb and the town gates.

The tower was built around 1440 at the height of the Hundred Years' War, under English occupation. It was part of a programme to considerably strengthen the castle's defences, along with the new barbicans and other enhancements.



However, the tower's two vaulted chambers were fitted with cushioned windows, fireplaces and latrines, all of which are remarkable features of comfort that, along with the large mullioned windows, may indicate that they were used as residences outside the periods when they were used for defensive purposes.

In the 16th century, a major earth embankment covered the base of the tower, which became only accessible via an underground passage leading to the lower room. The tower was converted into a gunpowder magazine (16th to 18th century) and then as a storage area for various military equipment (19th century).

Access only on guided tours with a facilitator/guide.

The Barbican and Saint-Pierre Gate

In the 11th century, the entrance to the château was a simple gate tower with a drawbridge in 1355. A forebuilding with two turrets was added around 1440, the last of which, under English occupation, is probably what can still be seen on the 1650 plan, which shows a Gothic-style facade.

The gatehouse opened onto a long tunnel passage protected by a stunner, portcullis and shutter systems. In 1793, the Republican government ordered its destruction.

The gate was rebuilt in 1804 in the style of the First Empire. Two fluted half-columns adorned the entrance surmounted by a pediment sculpted with military trophies.

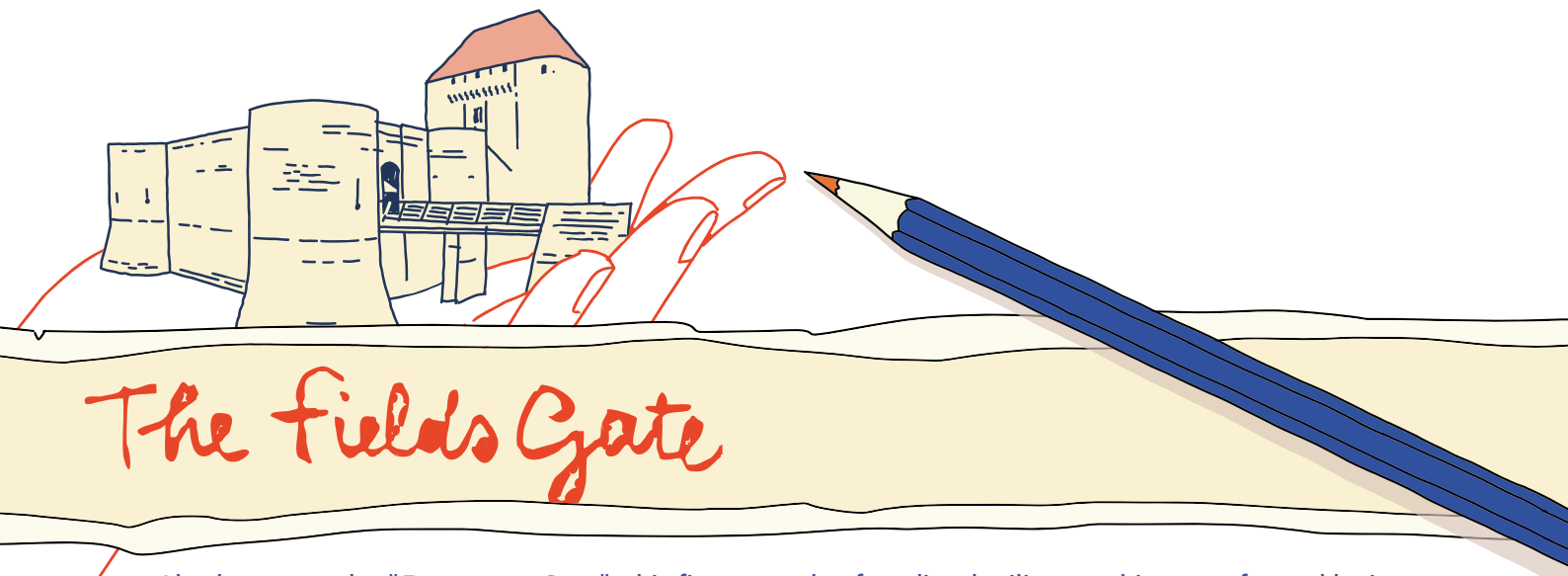
This ruined decoration was removed around 1950 and the wall screen, pierced by a tear-out supposed to represent the site of the original rampart, was built back from the door. Traces of a 12th century masonry foundation were found in 2023.

The Barbican and the Fields Gate

After 1204, King of France Philip Augustus had the castle opened up to the east, onto the countryside outside the town walls. This position explains the name Fields Gate, as opposed to Saint-Pierre Gate, to the south, opening inside the city walls. Built c. 1440-1445, the barbican protects the gateway, standing before the large moat crossed by a bridge, followed by a drawbridge and a portcullis. This monumental entrance is strongly defended by two crenellated towers and a machicolated main façade just above the passage. The escutcheon of a coat of arms on the facade of the gate remains an enigma, but underlines the prestige of this entrance to the castle.

Perspective on Caën Castle, seen and drawn from the side, from a high point outside the City (details), Gaignières collection, 1702, watercolour painting, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Cabinet des Estampes (Va 14, t.3)



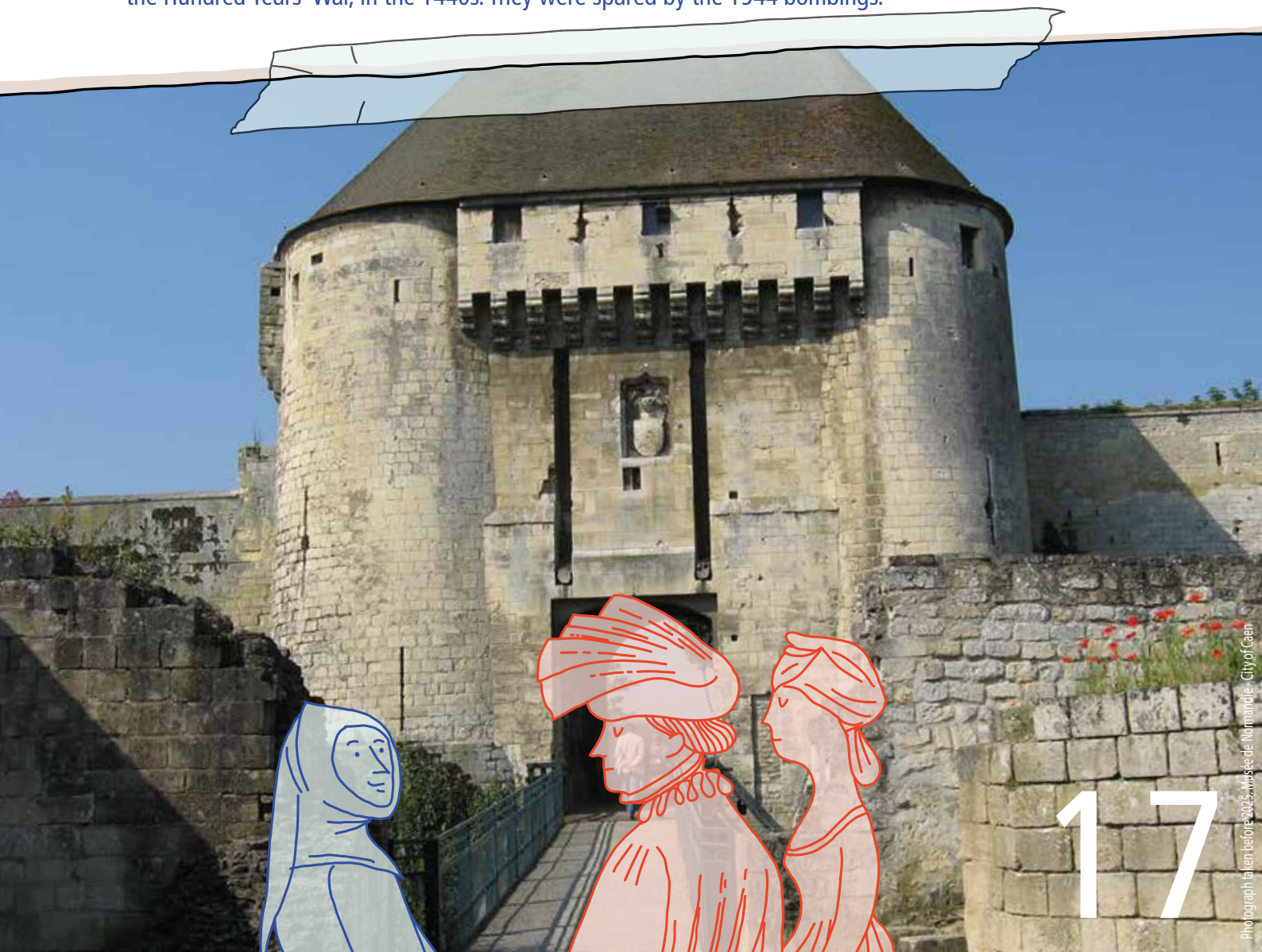


The Fields Gate

Also known as the "Emergency Gate", this fine example of medieval military architecture, fronted by its barbican, opened onto the Vaugueux faubourg and the countryside ("the Fields"). The latter was urbanised only recently. It allowed the castle to be supplied and reinforced from, or evacuated to, outside the city walls.

Built in the early 13th century, it was the work of Philip Augustus, King of France. At the time, it was a gateway with two crenellated towers framing a carriage entrance with a portcullis. In the late Middle Ages, it underwent a number of changes, including the addition of a central section to house a drawbridge with gaffs and an additional floor.

Archaeological research has confirmed that the roof timbers date back to the English occupation during the Hundred Years' War, in the 1440s. They were spared by the 1944 bombings.



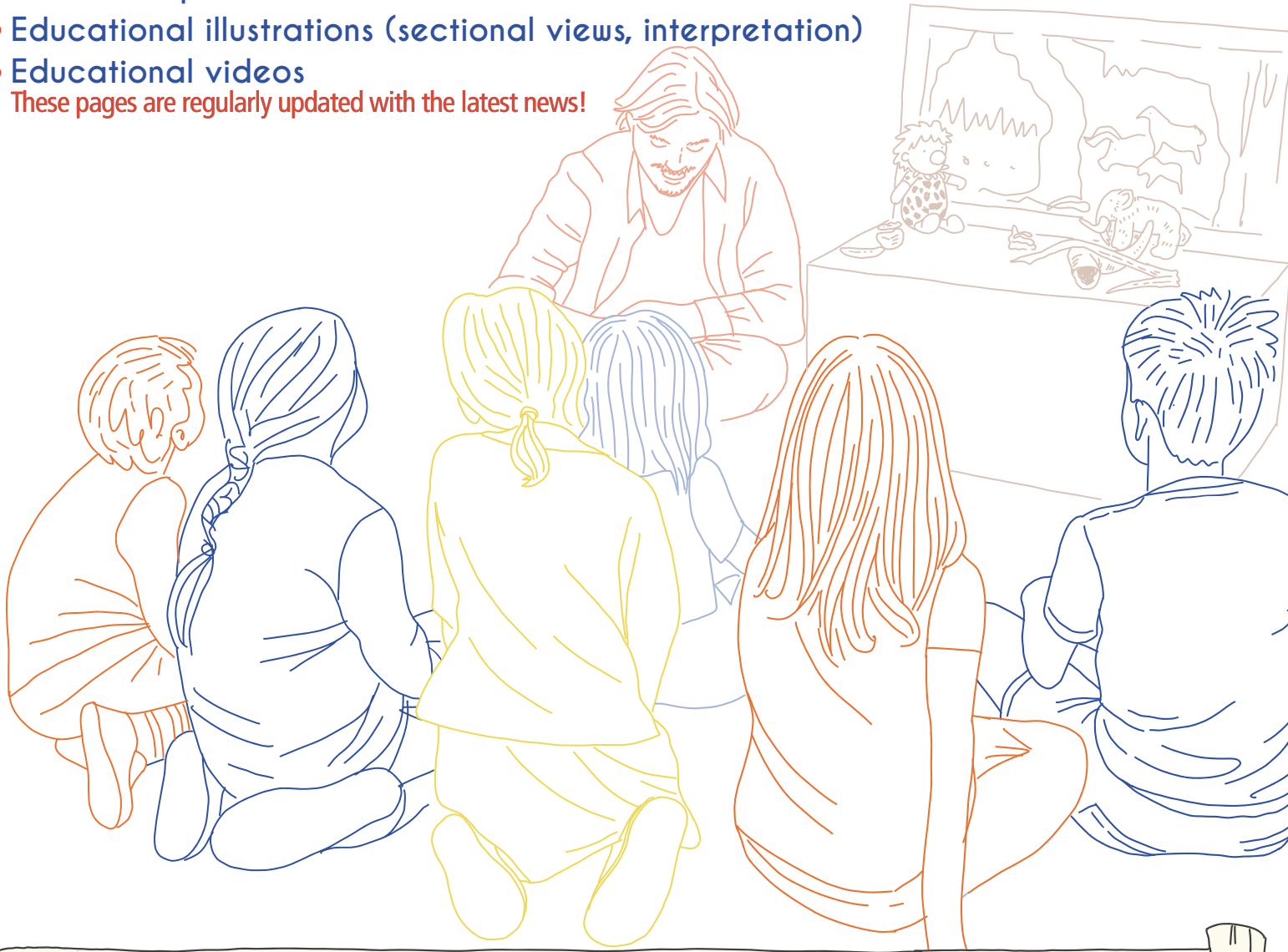
Teaching suggestions

Online resources

To find out more, check out all the online teaching resources: <https://musee-de-normandie.caen.fr/boite-outils>

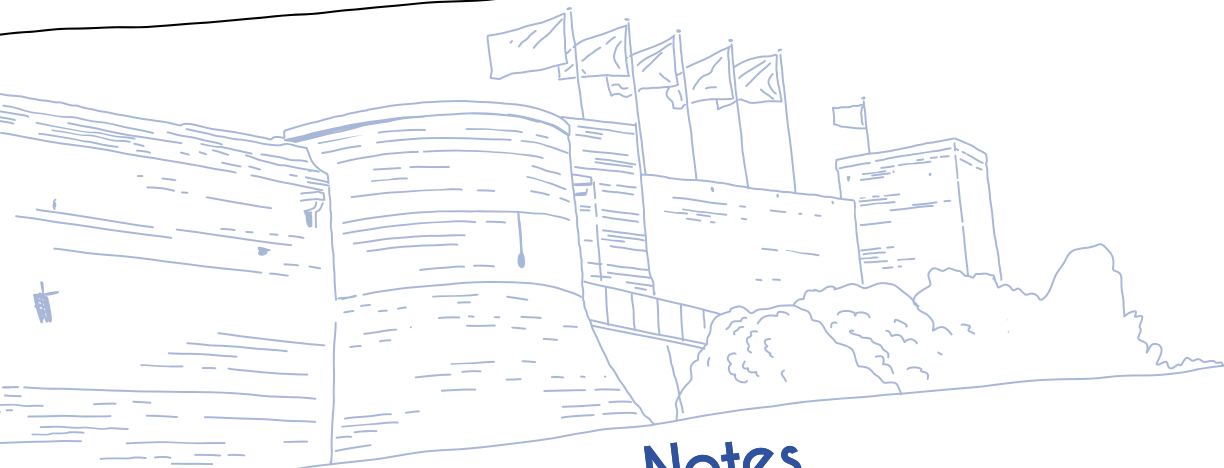
- Detailed information on offers for schools
- Additional pictures
- Educational illustrations (sectional views, interpretation)
- Educational videos

These pages are regularly updated with the latest news!



Take advantage of your visit to Caen Castle to visit the Musée de Normandie - guided tours and/or activities by prior arrangement - or discover the history of the city on our self-guided tours. The Musée de Normandie, housed in the Governors' Residence, is a museum of history and society, with a wealth of archaeological and ethnographic collections. It presents a panorama of people's lives across the whole of Normandy, from prehistory to the great migrations of the early Middle Ages, and from changes in the rural world to the first upheavals of industrial society. The museum gives visitors a chance to see and understand the objects and practices of everyday life, as well as masterpieces of folk art and tradition.

Every year, in the Rampart Rooms, it presents temporary exhibitions devoted to the history of Normandy, the regions of Europe, or other transformations in society and lifestyles.

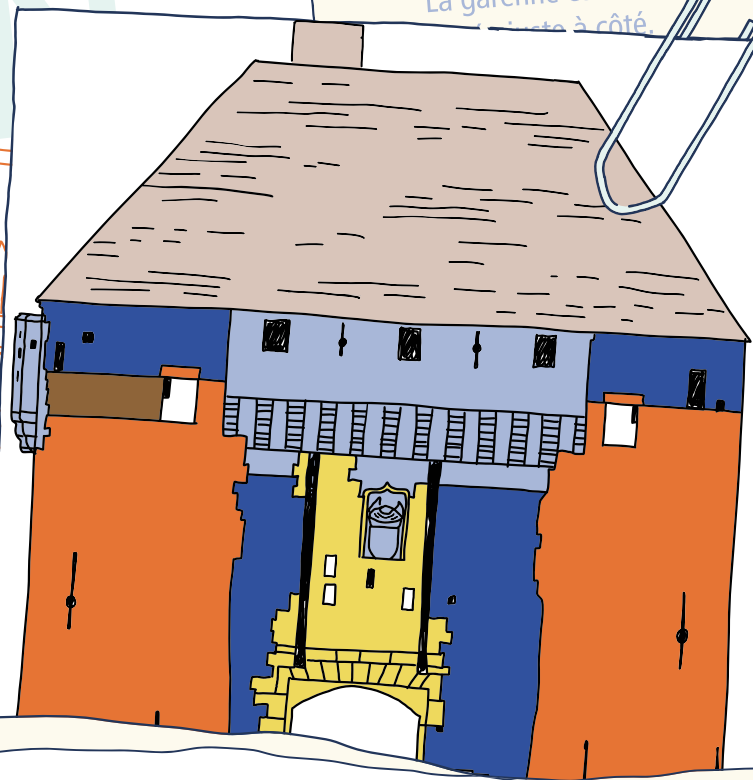
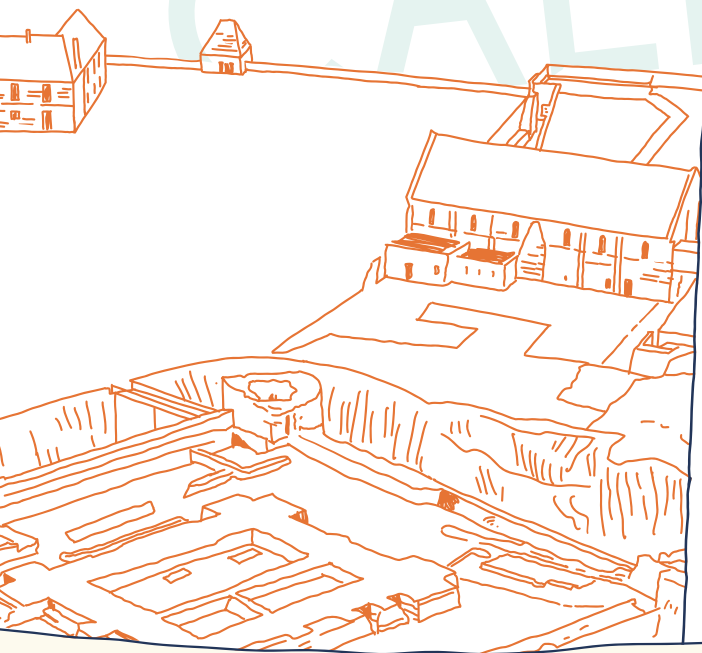


Notes

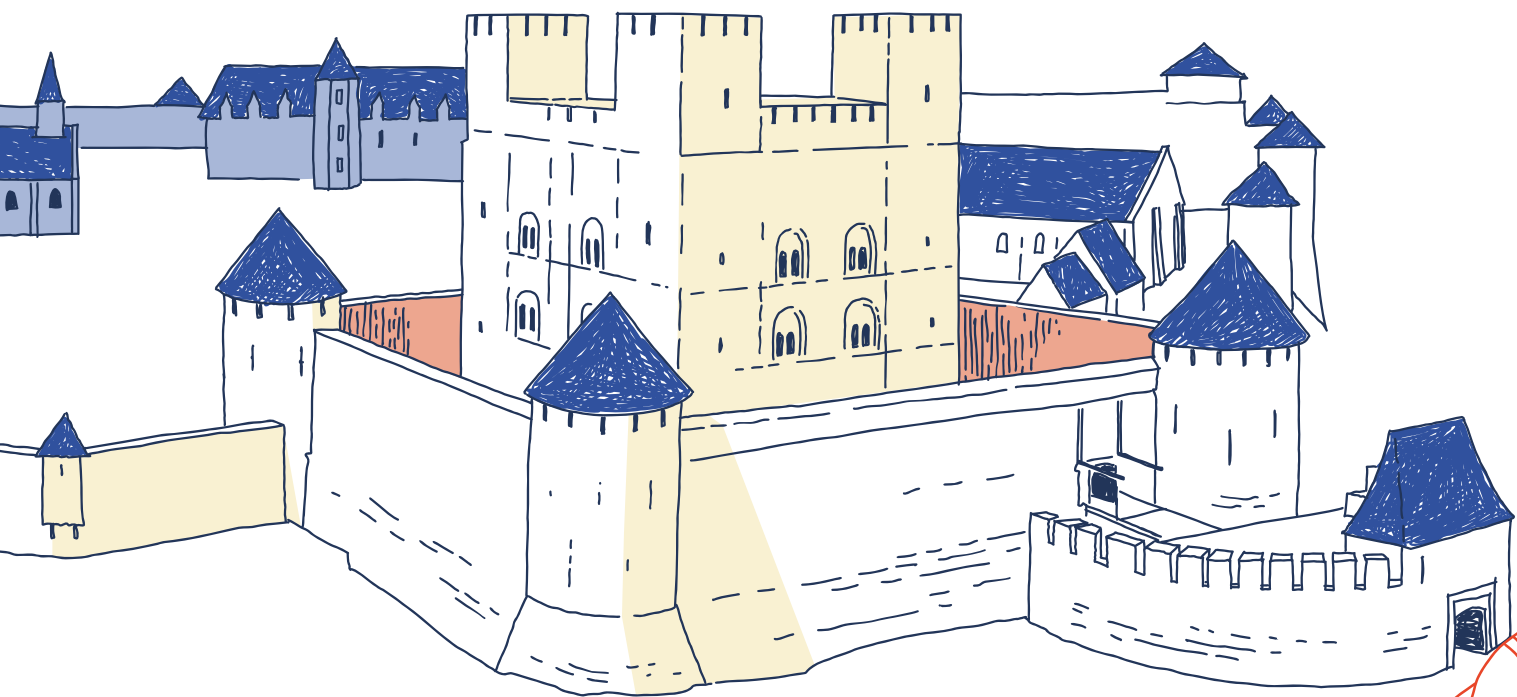


CHÂTEAU DE CAEN

La garenne, identifiée sur les plans anciens, est un v...
chasse du château. Elle était située au r...
entre les fossés nord-ouest et l'actuelle...
La garenne est souvent confondue avec...
à côté.



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Construit vers 1060 par le duc de Normandie, le Château de Caen est devenu une des plus grandes forteresses de France. C'est une des plus vastes enceintes fortifiées d'Europe.

Château CAEN fort par nature

Musée de Normandie

musee-de-normandie.caen.fr

Soutenu par:

Union européenne

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RÉGION NORMANDIE

Calvados LE DÉPARTEMENT

CAEN NORMANDIE