



Pupil Activities

Building the Castle at Pilsbury: Put Yourself in Their Shoes.

Be a detective and find out what it was like to be a Norman knight or an Anglo – Saxon labourer at Pilsbury Castle around the year of 1086. You can look for clues in the information on the following pages or look at the files in the 'REFERENCES FOR THIS FACT SHEET' scroll below, these can be found on the website in the 'Project documents' section, visit the web site at www.pilsburycastle.org.uk to find out more.

You will need a notebook to jot down your thoughts and ideas.

References for this fact sheet

- (hd_10) Food medieval, venison
- (hd_11) Food medieval, frumenty
- (hd_12) Food medieval, pudding
- (hd_23) Normans & Hunting
- (hd_13) Saxon ploughman
- (hd_18) Castles - building a motte & bailey castle

Writing a diary

You are going to write a diary which records your life during a week in the year 1080. Read below about the sorts of people who might have worked at Pilsbury, as well as about the castle itself. When you have gathered the information, talk with your friends about what you have discovered using your notebook to jot down your thoughts.

Now you can start your diary.

When you have written your diaries you can read them to one another and guess who you are - an Anglo-Saxon man or woman or the Norman knight.

You can then talk together as a class about whose shoes you'd choose to wear.

Pilsbury Castle

SHEET 2

Scenario

You are now going to imagine that you are either:

1) An Anglo- Saxon who has been forced to help build Pilsbury Castle.

Both men and women are likely to have done many of the jobs listed below :

- Insert picture of men building motte from Bayeux tapestry
- dig the ditches to make the motte
- cut down the wood and split it to make the palisades
- build the tower from the cut wood
- build the bridge from the motte to the bailey/
build the hall on the bailey
- gather wood for the fires and light them and keep them going
- cook food such as frumenty, broth and boiled venison
- make the beer
- feed all the labourers and the Normans and clear up afterwards
- fetch water from the river and carry it up the hill
- sew and mend clothes



Building motte - taken from Bayeux Tapestry



Saxon women carrying water

2) The man in charge of all the building – a Norman knight called Ralf Rouge

He is a tough master but he can also be kind, especially when he has eaten his favourite meal of frumenty and boiled venison. He is not very happy at being sent by his Lord - Henry de Ferrers, to Pilsbury, such a remote place, away from his wife and children and all his friends at Tutbury Castle over 30 miles away to the South.

Now read about how the Pilsbury Castle was built:

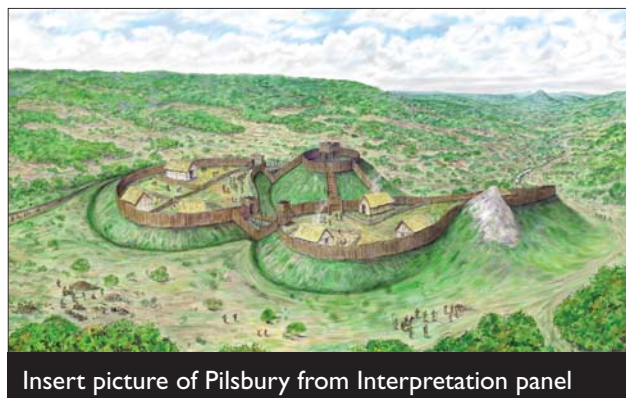
Pilsbury Castle

SHEET 3

Building the Castle at Pilsbury

When Henry de Ferrers had permission from the King - William the Conqueror, to build a castle at Pilsbury, he then had to set about building it. But of course he didn't build it himself. It is possible that he would have used local people as the labour – people who might have lived at Pilsbury and from around the rest of the Dove Valley. And what a labour it would have been! This was before the days of tractors and JCBs. The men only had a spade made of wood - tipped with metal and a simple pick to dig the ditches and to throw the earth to form the mound or the motte. Here is a description of what the archaeologists thought Pilsbury Castle looked like when it was built.

Pilsbury is a motte and bailey castle and the motte was the defensive core of the castle, perhaps with a wooden watchtower. The two baileys contained timber buildings such as the hall – the heart of any castle and kitchens, stables and storerooms as well as accommodation for the garrison. The baileys were protected by ditches and banks which would have had wooden palisades on top of them.



Insert picture of Pilsbury from Interpretation panel

Some historians have guessed how long it might have taken to build the motte - perhaps 50 men five years or less and this doesn't include the time it would have taken to build all the palisades - the fencing around the motte and the two baileys, as well as the tower on the motte.

All these things would have been made from timber. We know that Henry de Ferrers had woodland nearby at Hartington and Soham, so perhaps he used wood from there for the palisades and the buildings.