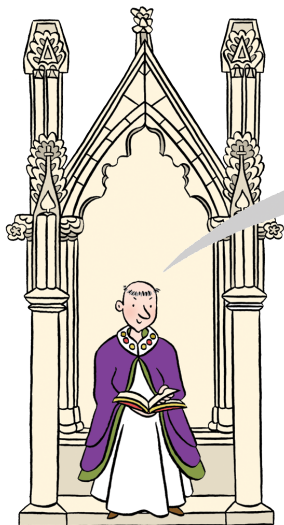


PRIOR'S CHAPEL



The beautiful Prior's Chapel was used for private prayer and worship. There are only two remaining 12th-century features in this room because it was altered drastically between the 12th and 16th centuries.



Tick off the original 12th-century features as you find them:



the broad arch in front of the window



traces of a painting low down on the left wall



Sketch the red flower decoration painted on the ceiling. Do you recognise it? If so, when do you think it was put there and why? If not, have a guess and ask your teacher about it later.



STONEMWORK DISPLAY Before you go back down the stairs, check out the interactive stonework display in the room next door.



Well done! You have successfully toured and explored Castle Acre Priory.



ENGLISH HERITAGE
EDUCATION



ENGLISH HERITAGE
CASTLE ACRE PRIORY

TOUR AND EXPLORE

DISCOVERIES BY

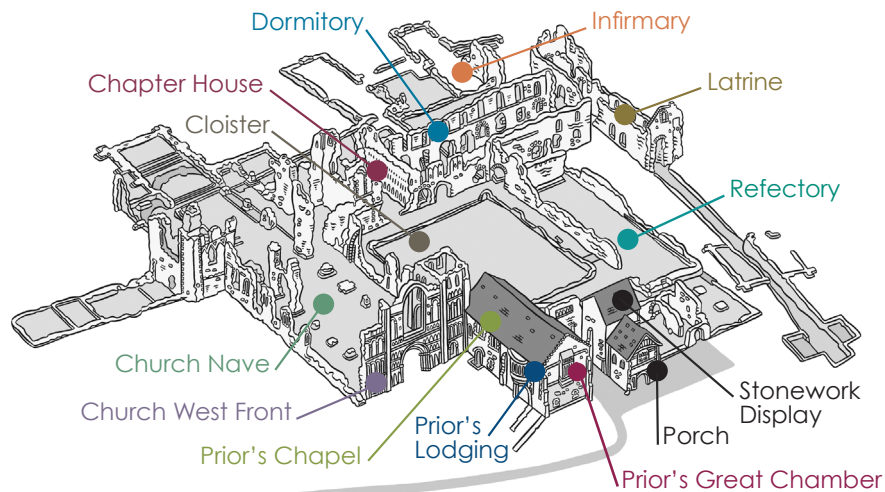


WELCOME TO CASTLE ACRE PRIORY



Hello, I'm Brother Odo. I was a monk at Castle Acre Priory during the Middle Ages. Today, it is one of the most intact medieval priories in the whole of England. It should take you between 45 and 60 minutes to tour the site and complete the challenges.

PRIORY MAP Use the map to help find your way around. You can explore the priory in any order you like. At each location, there are two challenges to choose from.



Car park

Visitor Centre

Herb garden

Education room

Try doing **CHALLENGE A** or **CHALLENGE B**. Why not try both? Challenge B is aimed at more experienced explorers, but anyone can have a go!



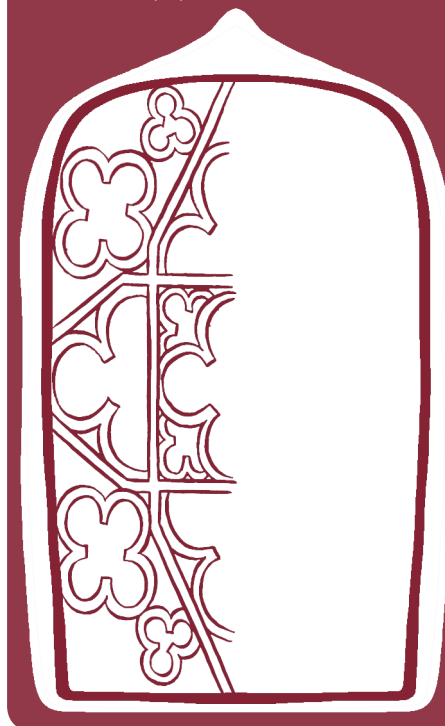
PHOTO CHALLENGES If your teacher lets you, you can complete the optional photo challenges, too.

PRIOR'S GREAT CHAMBER

At the top of the spiral staircase in the Outer Parlour, you'll find the door to the Prior's Great Chamber. It was changed a lot between the 12th and 16th centuries as the prior demanded more and more comfortable living conditions.



The bay window used to have stained glass instead of the plain glass you see today. Finish the design for this window panel by sketching a symmetrical (mirrored) pattern in the empty half.



Look for the carved sculptures sticking out of the walls. Find your favourite one and take a photo of it.



If you were the Prior in charge, name three changes you would make to this room to make it more comfortable.

1

2

3

PRIOR'S LODGING



The Prior was in charge of the monks. His rooms were bigger and more luxurious than ours. The Outer Parlour is on the ground floor. This is where he had meetings. We monks could get to it from the Cloister and visitors could access it from the front entrance. In the corner, you'll find a spiral staircase, leading to the surviving upper rooms.



Tick off any similarities you notice between the Outer Parlour and your school's main reception:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Used for greeting outside visitors | ☐ Decorated to impress |
| ☐ Faces west | ☐ Beautiful ceiling |
| ☐ Easily accessed from the inside and outside | ☐ Leads to the rest of the building |
| | ☐ Obvious front door |



Find the front porch and look up at the impressive ceiling. Use it as inspiration to sketch your own ceiling design.



CHURCH WEST FRONT



The West Front of the Church is covered in carved stonework. This was typical of Norman design. Look for the carving of Felix the cat. He's named after the local saint, Felix. Later, you can visit the stonework display in the Prior's Lodging to learn how churches like this were built.



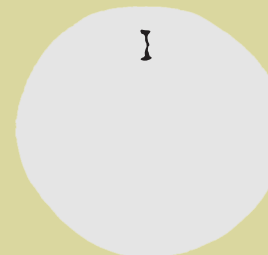
Examine the different patterns carved into the stone arches. Draw your favourite.



 Pull a face to match one of the head carvings at the West Front and take a selfie.



Norman buildings were often used as a symbol of wealth. List three ways modern people might show that they have lots of money today.



CHURCH NAVE

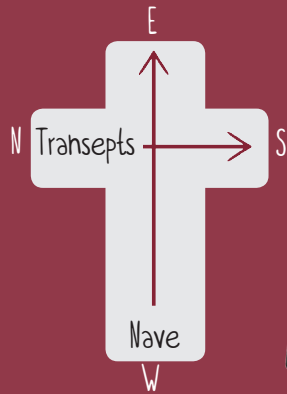


The Church is made up of the main nave with aisles either side. There used to be a great tower overhead, housing a large bell. Wings called transepts branch off from the main nave, forming a cross shape. The eastern half of the church was reserved for monks. Our servants and visitors had to remain in the less sacred western half.



Using strides which are about a metre long, travel west to east and estimate the length of the nave.

Now travel north to south and measure the total width of the transepts.



Find the oven for baking the communion bread in the sacristy (through the north transept). Take a photo of it.



Under the bell tower was the choir, where the monks stood for hours each day, praying and singing chants. List three sounds you might have heard during a medieval church service.

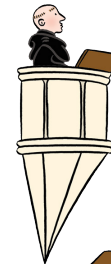


1
2
3



REFECTORY

Everyone who lived at the priory gathered here for one or two meals a day. We listened to Bible readings and ate in silence. Some of us used sign language to communicate.



Try using these hand signs yourself.



Pass the bread.



I'm thirsty.



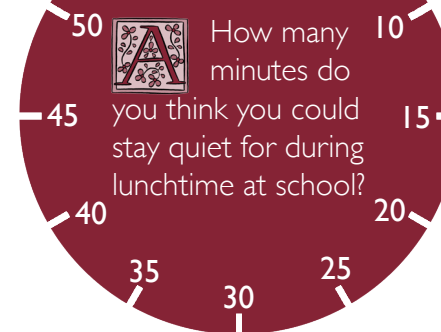
I need a knife.

Now come up with your own signs and draw them below:

I'm hungry.

Pass the salt.

I've finished eating.

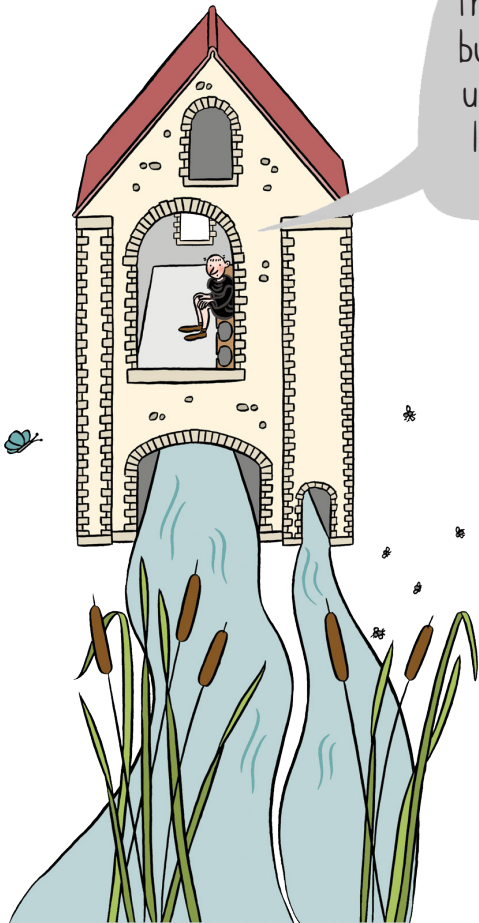


How many minutes do you think you could stay quiet for during lunchtime at school?



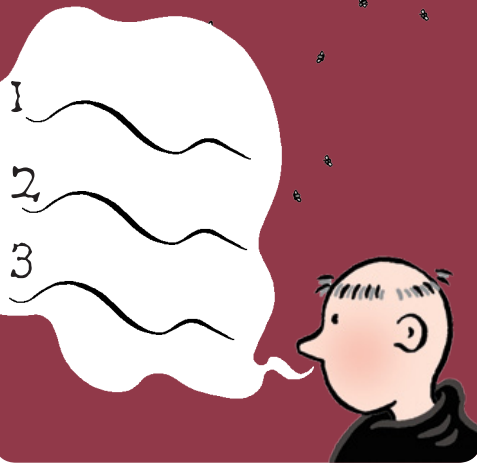
Take a photo or video of a class mate trying out some sign language in the Refectory.

LATRINE



The Latrine was a large toilet block built over a stream. 24 of us could use the toilet at the same time! It was cleverly designed for the quick disposal of waste.

A Write down three words to describe how it might have smelt in and around the Latrine block.



B Think of one way your school toilets are similar to this Latrine block and two ways they are different.

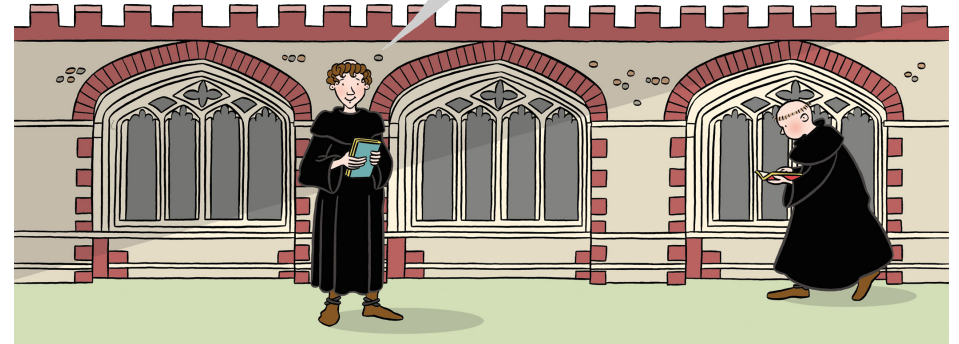
Similar

Different 1 2

CLOISTER

The Cloister was a space at the centre of the priory with a square garden. It was surrounded with a covered walkway. We used it for reading, writing and thinking.

 Take a picture of an interesting view of the priory through a doorway leading off the Cloister.



A Locate the wall cupboard next to the Chapter House. ☐ Did you find it?

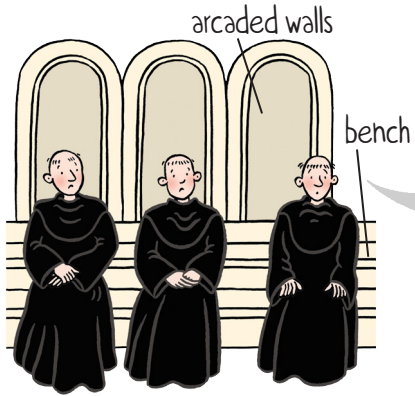
What item do you think the monks stored in this cupboard?



B Look closely at one of the Cloister walls. You can reach out carefully and touch it if you like.

Describe the texture, colour and material of the wall.

CHAPTER HOUSE



We used to meet at the Chapter House at 9 am every day to listen to a chapter of the Rule of Saint Benedict. The decorated walls show you that this room was very important to us. You can still see the remains of the arcaded walls and stone bench, on which 16 of us could sit.

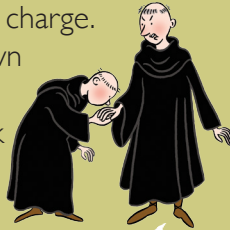


Rank the rules to show how easy or hard it would be for you to follow them: 1 = easiest 4 = hardest

- ☐ You must live in poverty.
- ☐ You must share everything with your fellow monks.
- ☐ You must remain silent at all times.
- ☐ You must not marry or have children.



Monks who broke the rules were punished by the prior in charge. Invent your own punishment to give to a monk who refused to share.



INFIRMARY



We went to the Infirmary if we got too sick or too old to keep up with the normal routine. It was a place where we could receive care, away from the rest of the religious community. We didn't know much about medicine in the 12th century. We used herbs from the garden to treat our illnesses.



Later, find the herb garden by the Visitor Centre and take some close-up photos of the herbs in the 'healing' section.



Think of one way health care has improved since medieval times.



Medieval people used to think that draining blood was a good way of removing sickness from the body. List three nasty side effects you might experience if your blood was drained.



1

2

3

DORMITORY



A staircase leads to our shared Dormitory (bedroom). We slept fully clothed on straw mattresses, with a light burning all night. The room is no longer there, but you can see the size of our Dormitory by looking at the day room beneath.



Notice the wear on the steps. This was created by the monks going up and down. Which side of the staircase do you think they used more often?

Left

Right



Most priors chose not to share a room with the monks. Why do you think this was?



I don't want to share with the monks because...