

Bolton Castle Access Statement

Introduction

Bolton is one of the country's best preserved medieval castles, situated in the heart of Wensleydale with stunning views over the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Completed in 1399 by Richard le Scrope, Chancellor of England to Richard II, its scars bear testament to over 600 years of fascinating history including involvement in the Pilgrimage of Grace, Mary Queen of Scots imprisonment and a Civil War siege. The Castle was partially ruined during the siege but incredibly about one third of the rooms and three quarters of the walls remain intact giving us great insight to its turbulent past.

The Castle is run as a tourist attraction and a venue for weddings, paranormal investigations, school visits and private functions.

Aims

Bolton Castle is a beautiful and unique castle to visit. However, as an ancient historical monument, it was built before the days of the Disability Discrimination Act and disability access requirements and, while we will do everything possible to ensure all of our visitors can access as much of the attraction as possible, there are many parts of the Castle which are not accessible to those with reduced mobility due to the nature of the building. There are spiral stairs up to almost every level (five floors in total) and we are unable to have a lift installed due to the nature of the building. There is uneven flooring and cobbles throughout the

building as well as ruined sections which can include trip hazards.

As we are aware of the access limitations in the Castle we will do everything possible to enable people to enjoy as much of the attractions as possible through making arrangements to open the portcullis to allow people with reduced mobility to access the courtyard and some of the ground floor to see the Hawk and Owl displays and archery demonstrations. We have provided large print guides to the Castle available on request and much of the garden is wheelchair accessible.

At Bolton Castle we are committed to helping all of our visitors learn more about this inspiring Castle, its' fascinating history, the families who lived here and how it is looked after today.

We aim to provide an excellent service to all of our visitors at all times and will always do everything possible to enable our visitors to access and enjoy the Castle and all it has to offer. We are continually striving to improve the Castle experience for all and are working to add new elements to the attraction so that as many people as possible can enjoy learning about its' rich and varied history.

We currently offer:

Pre-Arrival

- An excellent website which is kept up to date with new developments to the Castle and Gardens, events, opening times, prices, information on group visits, educational days out, weddings and much more.
- Information can be provided in large print when requested
- We respond to email enquiries promptly

- A castle leaflet with information on everything we have to offer, opening times, current prices, events, map of the Castle and grounds and more.
- Information available on many tourism websites including Welcome to Yorkshire, Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate, Visit Britain, Enjoy England, and many more.
- Information available in many printed literature including Bedroom browsers, tourist guides, Great Houses, Castles and Gardens booklet.
- Member of the Historic Houses Association.
- We are opposite the local bus stop and a 25 minute walk from the local railway station (Wensleydale Railway)

Arrival & Car Parking Facilities

- We have our own car park and public loos available.
- There are no disabled loos in the Car park
- The car park is pay and display but this is refunded to visitors of the Castle or Gardens.
- The route from the car park is down a short sloping road and then flat road approximately 30 metres from car park entrance to front door.
- Visitors can be dropped off at the front door if required but we cannot allow parking in front of the Castle as this is needed for access at all times.

Main Entrance & Reception

- There are 13 stone steps to the main lobby and tea room with a hand rail on one side. These steps are straight and even and 90 cms wide at narrowest point.
- There are 3 steps down, 2 steps up and a final step down to get to the Gift shop and loos through a narrow windy corridor which is 64 cms wide at its narrowest. The steps are all different heights and widths.

- The alternative entrance to the Gift shop and loos is up 20 external stone steps which are 1.5 metres wide and are uneven in places. There is a handrail on one side and a stone support on the other side.
- The doors to the loos are 80 cms wide and they are on one level.
- The door to the Gift shop is 80 cms wide and there is a very small step up to get into gift shop.
- From Gift shop there are four slightly spiraling steps into the Old kitchens of the Castle. There are tables and benches here for visitors to sit on if wished.
- From the Old Kitchen there are spiral stairs both up and down into the rest of the Castle.

- We offer free entry to carers of people with disabilities.

Public Areas - General (Internal)

- The Castle contains many potential hazards to visitors which we have tried to reduce through making visitors aware of the risks with our Health and Safety signs around the Castle and the guidelines that we give out to Groups and schools before visits.
- Flooring in the Castle includes cobbles (courtyard and downstairs rooms), flagstones, wooden floorboards, sloping earth floors and concrete and many of the stone floor surfaces are uneven and can be slippery even in warm weather.
- There are 5 floors to see and most access includes walking up spiral stairs which are worn, uneven and different heights.
- There are benches and possible seating provided up to the 3rd floor level. After that there is no seating available.
- Lighting is dim in areas to enhance the atmosphere.

- There are ruined areas in the Castle which means there are some stones/half ruined walls which must be avoided.

Special Access Arrangements

- For visitors who are unable to walk up the stone steps into the Castle we can open the portcullis allowing visitors to walk on one level from the car park round into the courtyard of the Castle. To arrange for us to open the portcullis, please call the castle in advance to arrange a time of the visit. Alternatively one member of the group can come into the gift shop to ask for the portcullis to be opened. The access to the portcullis is via a sloping road and then up a cobbled driveway which will still be difficult for wheelchairs to access.
- The courtyard is cobbled and very uneven. It can also be very slippery in certain weather conditions.
- In the courtyard visitors can watch the hawk and owl display, archery demonstrations and access some parts of the ground floor of the Castle including the archers' garrison, stables, Guest tower, Great Hall and Well chamber.

Public Areas - WC

- There are no disabled loos inside the Castle as there are steps up to the level of the loos. Once in the lobby next to the loos they are all on one level.
- There are three ladies WCs available and 1 mens' WC.
- There is a baby changing mat available
- There is no alarm call system but the loos are right next to the gift shop where a member of staff is present at all time and so visitors would be heard quickly if in distress.

Tea Room

- Our tea room provides homemade, locally sourced fresh cakes, light snacks and lunches and a range of hot and cold drinks.
- Our tea room is able to provide specific meals for a whole range of dietary requirements if requested in advance.

Laundry, Shop, Treatment Room & Leisure Facilities (Inc Outdoor Facilities)

Laundry

- Not Available

Shop

- There is a gift shop selling a range of Castle souvenirs, luxury gifts, food items and much more.
- Staff are in the gift shop at all times to help with any questions/requests and to take payment.

Leisure Facilities

- We have a falconry experience, archery demonstrations and have a go, wild boar park and bee keeping displays as part of the attraction.

Outdoor facilities

- We have a beautifully restored medieval garden which is almost completely accessible for wheel chairs although the paths are either grass or gravel and can be uneven in places.
- The garden includes a vineyard, maze (not accessible for wheelchairs) bowling green with flower borders, rose garden, herb garden and wild flower meadow which is accessible but is down a steep grassy slope.

- We now have falcons weathering in the gardens during the day and so can no longer allow dogs in the gardens.
- We have stone benches adjacent to the castle which can be used for picnicking. These are wheelchair accessible across a grass lawn or gravel path.
- We have a wild boar park which is wheel chair accessible across the car park field.

Conference & Meeting Rooms, Banqueting, Clubs, Entertainment

- We can hire out our Great Chamber for Conferences, private events, wedding ceremonies and other events during the day.
- We can also hire out the whole Castle for Weddings and Private Events. If you are interested in this please contact the Castle for more information and availability.

Bedrooms

- Not Available

Bathroom, Showeroom & WC [Ensuite or Shared]

- Not Available

Attractions (Displays, exhibits, rides etc.)

- There is a laminated returnable large print short guide to the Castle which gives background history and a tour of the main room available on request.
- There are plans of the Castle on many of the interpretation boards to help people orientate themselves
- Lighting is provided to enhance the atmosphere and illuminate the main items in the room including tapestries. Lighting is dim in some areas to enhance the

atmosphere so care must be taken.

Additional Information

- Service dogs are welcome as long as we are informed in advance and can ensure that this does not affect the falconry experience.
- We provide a water bowl at the front entrance.
- We operate a no smoking policy throughout the Castle.

Contact Information

- Telephone : 01969 623981
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 - Email: info@boltoncastle.co.uk
 - Website: www.boltoncastle.co.uk
- Address: Bolton Castle
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Hours of operation: 11am-5pm (February 19th - October 30th 2011)

Taxi: Peter Flemming (Up to 9 passengers) T: 07855 320467

Local Public Transport: Bus: [www.northyorks.gov.uk/
businfo](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/businfo)

Train: www.wensleydalerailway.com

Future Plans

- We have plans to create a film about the history of the Castle which will provide an introduction to the visit and give people the background to the Castle.
- We have plans to redesign all of the interpretation panels to include artists impressions of what the rooms might

have looked like when inhabited to aid the imagination. The new panels will also have art work dating from the different time periods to enhance the visual information available.

- We are going to create a children's adventure playground in the image of the Castle to enhance children's understanding of how the Castle would have looked when complete and also how it would have defended itself against attack.

We welcome your feedback to help us continuously improve if you have any comments please phone 01969 623981 or email info@boltoncastle.co.uk

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