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History Explorers

Cadw Cymru

Tretower Court and Castle



Cadw MINECRAFT EDUCATION Hwb®

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Tretower Court and Castle Practitioner Support Guide:

Welcome to the **Cadw Cymru** immersive virtual tour of **Tretower Court and Castle**, a beautifully crafted replica of one of Wales's most atmospheric medieval sites, brought to life within the Minecraft Education platform. This tour invites you and your learners to journey through the layered history, distinctive architecture, and cultural stories of **Tretower Court and Castle**, all while exploring the creative, interactive environment of Minecraft.

As you explore the castle and the nearby court, you'll uncover the remarkable transformation of the site over the centuries, from its beginnings as a defensive Norman wooden tower and later stone tower to its later development into an elegant medieval manor house reflecting the lifestyle of a wealthy family. **Tretower Court and Castle** is a living timeline, showcasing both military prowess and domestic refinement from Wales's medieval past.

Throughout this virtual experience, you will interact with **NPC Custodians** placed strategically around the site, each ready to share stories, facts, and insights about **Tretower Court and Castle's** changing purpose, its key historical figures, and the daily lives of those who lived there. These encounters aim to enrich your learners' understanding while sparking curiosity about the evolving role of castles in Wales' history.

Prepare to be immersed in a journey of discovery, creativity, and education. Wander through **Tretower Court and Castle** virtual recreation and unlock its secrets, while embracing the spirit of adventure and exploration that Minecraft fosters.

Virtual Tour: NPC Custodians



Tretower Court and Castle is populated with NPC Custodians eager to share their knowledge and lead learners into every corner of the castle and manor house.

Many of these NPC Custodians are linked to additional resources, such as videos, documents, or maps, which help bring the tour to life and encourage further independent research.

A pictorial timeline is included throughout the virtual experience, enabling learners to place the events of **Tretower Court and Castle** within the broader historical context of Wales, from the Norman Conquest to the Tudor period and beyond.

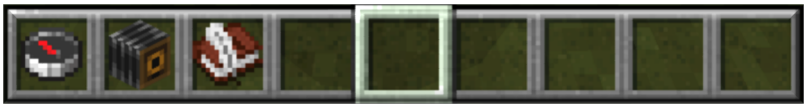


The Virtual Tour serves as an initial gateway for learners' interaction with **Tretower Court and Castle**, offering insights into historical events, architectural developments, and the cultural life of the period. The tour supports contextual understanding by linking **Tretower's** story to broader historical narratives, such as the Norman influence in Wales, the Marcher Lords, and later gentry life during the 15th and 16th centuries.

This experience also contributes to developing learners' ***cynefin***, helping them to deepen their appreciation of local heritage and understand its global connections. It promotes respect for cultural traditions and fosters an appreciation for the importance of heritage conservation.

Below are the details of each of the NPC Custodians within **Tretower Court and Castle**. Practitioners are encouraged to develop cross-curricular connections based on the knowledge each NPC provides. By drawing links between history, geography, art, and literacy, you can tailor the learning journey to suit your learners' needs and interests, enhancing engagement and promoting critical, creative thinking across the Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs). This approach encourages learners to make meaningful, real-world connections with the historical content they encounter.

When learners enter **Tretower Court and Castle**, they will automatically be supplied with a **Camera** and a **Book & Quill** in their Hotbar.



Explain to learners that these tools are virtual "field journals" where they can document their thoughts, observations, and reflections while on the virtual tour.

The Hotbar also holds a compass, allowing the learners to teleport back to the Galeri at any time. Additionally, learners can speak to the first NPC Custodian they meet at a site to return to the Galeri.

Minecraft will display pop-up text signs to aid navigation by indicating the names of key locations, such as the Great Hall, Tower House, or the Courtyard.



Hidden in **Tretower Court and Castle** is **'Lleu the Dragon'**. Encourage learners to seek out where this little Dragon is hiding. This activity boosts observation skills and attention to detail as learners shift through visual information. It also promotes patience and perseverance, as learners might need to spend some time searching.

Once the learners have completed their virtual tour, Taliesin appears again and provides an overview of the initial quest associated with **Tretower Court and Castle**. Learners are encouraged to make their way back to the castle site and seek out the Quest NPCs, easily identifiable in crimson attire, to delve deeper into the quest.



The Quest has its own **Practitioner Guide** that provides a wealth of information:

- Learning Objectives
- Areas of Learning and Experience
- Cross-curricular skills
- Integral Skills
- Guiding Ideas
- Possible questions to ask
- Learning Activity Overview
- Introduction
- Steps through the Quest
- Plenary / Reflection
- Key Vocabulary
- Details of Resources / Supporting Files

Welcome Custodian NPC



"Hello and welcome to Tretower Court and Castle. That's right, you get to explore two brilliant buildings for the price of one! I work here as a custodian. That means I take care of this site and its visitors – like you! To find out how this Virtual Tour works, click the 'Virtual Tour' Button below."

Link to video 'Welcome', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

Courtyard Custodian NPC



"Welcome to the Courtyard of Tretower Court. Today, you will embark on an adventure through time, spanning over 900 years. Where should you begin? Well, if I were you, I would click the 'Start Here' button to start your journey."

Link to video 'Courtyard', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"To visit the castle, keep your back to the gatehouse, go through the doorway to your left through the wall, and walk into the garden. Follow the path to your right, around the outside of the court, until you reach the lawn. Or to save your legs, press on my button 'Castle Green' to be teleported there!"

Who built the castle? Custodian NPC



"Now you can see the castle built by the Norman nobleman Picard, who had fought his way into this part of Wales following the Norman invasion of England. Click the "Picard" button below to find out more."

Link to video 'Picard', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"So, Tretower Castle went through some changes over the years! But what about the invasion that resulted in the building of the castle in the first place? Would you like to know more? Then click the "Invasion" button below to find out."

Link to video 'Invasion of the Normans', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"I have a challenge for you! Pretend you are a Welsh Prince attacking a Norman Castle. As loud as you can, make up your own battle cry! Let's let those Normans know we are coming!"

"Now, you should walk across the grass and across the mound to the wooden gate on the left by the stream. Cross the field heading towards the metal gate at the foot of the castle. Go through this gate towards the drawbridge. Or to save your legs, press on the 'Drawbridge' button to be teleported there!"

Drawbridge Custodian NPC



"Halt, who goes there? Friend or Foe? Only joking. But 900 years ago, if you'd got this far and you weren't a friend, you'd have already survived a lot! Click on the 'Survived' button to find out what!"

Link to video 'Survived', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"Before heading into the castle, you should find out more about the town life of 900 years ago! Click on 'Town Life' first to learn more, then take a challenge by clicking on 'Challenge'."

Link to video 'Town Life', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

Link to video 'Challenge', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

Optional Teaching Point:

The 'Challenge' video includes a mini-challenge to introduce the notion that poetry played an important role in the life of Tretower. The nuances of poetry can be drawn upon further as a full quest after the virtual tour is complete.

"Now, walk across the drawbridge, and go into the stone castle keep and walk around it before climbing up and down the steps into the keep. The keep has stone steps you can climb to get to the first floor. Or to save your legs, press on my button 'Great Tower' to be teleported there!"

Great Tower Custodian NPC



"Do you build stuff using Lego or in Minecraft? Have you ever tried building a castle? Fancy building this one? To find out more about the need for the Tower, click on the 'Tower' button below."

Link to video 'Tower', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"I have a challenge for you! In a minute, pop down into the cellar and look up. Can you see the fireplaces, windows and door openings that give us clues about how many floors the tower had? See if you can work it out and come and tell me."

"Did you manage to work it out? You should have counted four floors, including the cellar. Click on the "Keep" button below to find out more about the Keep."

Link to video 'Keep', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"Roger Picard II decided to make big changes to the castle! Instead of keeping the old shell keep, he used its stone walls to create a strong outer wall around a brand-new, great circular tower, the most fashionable kind of castle design at the time. The "New Tower" button below will tell you more!"

Link to video 'New Tower', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"It's time to make your way back to the garden and court area. You should retrace your steps, through the two gates back to the garden. Or to save your legs, you can click on the 'Garden' button to be teleported there!"

Garden Custodian NPC



"Tretower Castle passed through generations of the Picard family. But now you stand in the garden not of the castle but of Tretower Court! You may wonder why and who built this! Click on the 'Tretower Court' button to answer this question."

Link to video 'Tretower Court', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"Before we go any further, you should refresh your memory of what happened during the time you have travelled so far! Time Travel can make your brain go fuzzy! Click on the 'Time Travel' button below for a recap and a story!"

Link to video 'Time Travel', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

Optional Teaching Point:

In the Time Travel video, learners are introduced to the concept that a snake is a symbol used for various purposes, including wisdom. Learners are asked a question: "What else is a snake a symbol of?" This could be a good research point for learners. i.e., What do various snake symbols represent?

Snakes and serpents are powerful and complex symbols that have played an important role in various cultures throughout history. They continue to be a source of inspiration and aesthetic activity in historic and contemporary decorative art and design.

Garden Custodian NPC

"Now, back to the garden! A question for you…Have you got green fingers? Not literally - I mean, do you like gardening? Gardens were important in medieval times. Click on the "Medieval Garden' button below to find out more!"

Link to video 'Medieval Garden', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"It's time to make your way to the kitchen in the court area. Facing the court, walk past the fountain on your right and enter the court through the door on your left-hand side. Or to save your legs, you can click on the 'Kitchen button to be teleported there!

Kitchen Custodian NPC



"Here we are in the kitchen. What, no microwave? I hear you say! Well, kitchens have changed a lot over the last 550 or so years. Click on the 'Kitchen' button below to find out more!"

Link to video 'Kitchen', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

Ok, so that's the cooking sorted, now let's see what else went into preparing a feast… For more information about the delicious food for the lords and ladies, click the 'Food' button below.

Link to video 'Food', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"You should walk through the doorway and turn into the buttery on your right-hand side. No teleporting this time; I think you need the exercise!"

Buttery Custodian NPC



"So, you thought preparing a feast was all about roasting meat and stirring pots of stew?

WRONG! A proper medieval feast needed drinks, LOTS of drinks! And that's where Old Roger Vaughan really knew how to keep his guests happy. To find out what he gave his guests, click on the 'Buttery' button."

Link to video 'Buttery', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"So, now you know what the Buttery was for, it's time for you to investigate what the Pantry was for. You should go back into the passageway and cross over through the doorway into the Pantry. Come on, you need to get those steps in. No Teleporting this time!

Pantry Custodian NPC



"If it was butter you wanted, then that was made in the pantry, in a butter churn, that weird-looking thing with a handle sticking out the top. Click on the 'Pantry' button to find out how this worked and a bit more lowdown on the pantry."

Link to video 'Pantry', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"You are nearly at the feast now! One last stop before the Great Hall – the Servery! Time for you to get a few more steps in! Turn left out of the Pantry along the passageway into the Servery"

Survey Custodian NPC



"There are no trick names here—this was literally where they put the main dishes onto plates and dressed them like something out of medieval MasterChef, ready to be served. You should click the 'Servery' button to learn more about this preparation area."

Link to video 'Servery', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

Great Hall Custodian NPC



"Welcome to Party Central in The Great Hall! You've made it past the kitchen chaos, dodged the stressed-out steward, and survived the stampede of servants, and now, you're finally here.

THE GREAT HALL. You should click on the 'Great Hall' button to learn more about this fab place!"

Link to video 'Great Hall', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"Welcome to Instagram… 15th-Century Style! No selfies, no hashtags, no filters, but medieval lords still had to show off somehow. And how did they do it? With EPIC painted wall hangings! You should click on the 'Picture, Picture' button to learn more about this sensation!"

Link to video 'Picture, Picture', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"The Medieval Mic Drop for Roger Vaughan! Forget Social Media if you wanted to be famous in the 15th century; you needed a poet! And Sir Roger Vaughan? Oh, he made sure his name was in all the best verses. You should click on the 'Poet' button to hear more about this."

Link to video 'Poet', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"Phew, after all that, let's take a breather and move through the doorway on the right-hand side into a quieter, more private space… Yes, you can walk there! Or click the 'Solar' button to be teleported there if you are feeling a little tired!"

Solar Custodian NPC



"This was Roger's chill-out room. Somewhere to escape the noise and pressure of business and entertaining. It even had its own loo. Very posh! Click on the 'Chill Zone' button if you want to know more."

Link to video 'Chill Zone', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"Time for you to move on! You should climb the stairs on the right side of the room and enter the doorway on your right-hand side once you reach the top of the stairs. Or you could, I suppose, click on the 'Top of the Stairs' button if you want to be teleported there!"

Chamber Custodian NPC



"This was a very trendy house for its time, just right for a 15th-century social influencer like Roger Vaughan. You should click on the 'Chamber' button to find out more about this room."

Link to video 'Chamber', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"Time for you to move on again. Exit the room through the door you entered and follow the wooden path to the first and second chambers on the left-hand side. I am sure your legs will work! But if in doubt, you could click on the 'North Wing' button to be teleported."

North Wing Custodian NPC



"The Court is huge, isn't it? Like somewhere a footballer or celebrity would live today. And here you are in another long room, but it wasn't always one big space. Click on the 'North Wing' button if you want to know more!"

Link to video 'North Wing', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"Stop dilly-dallying now! You need to walk on and exit the room through the far door on your right-hand side, nearest to the court entrance, and climb stone steps to get to the next stop. Scared of getting lost? OK, you can use the 'Wall Walk' button to be teleported there if you prefer!"

Wall Walk Custodian NPC



"Imagine you're Roger Vaughan! You've just been promoted by the Yorkist King to a 'sir' – that's a knight. But things are still a bit tricky! You should click the 'Tricky Times' button to learn more about this!"

Link to video 'Tricky Times', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"If you don't want to lose your head too! You should make your way through the doorway at the end of the Wall Walk and walk through the gatehouse, keep going down a corridor to enter the west range. What do you mean you are too scared to walk! OK, click on the 'West Range' button to be teleported there."

West Range Custodian NPC



"You have gathered a lot of information on your virtual tour so far about Sir Roger. Before you carry on with your time travel, you should click on the 'Recap" button below to remind yourself and maybe learn a little more!"

Link to video 'Recap', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"You have time travelled forward about 230 years. Tretower is no longer a grand country house. You'll find pigs, not poets and shepherds instead of sirs. The Vaughans have gone and in their place are the Parry family. If you want to find out more about the change in ownership, click the 'Parry' button below."

Link to video 'Parry', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"From Grand Court to Cosy Farmhouse – The Parry Family Take Over! Can you imagine that! What would Sir Roger think? Do you think he would lose his head? You can click on the 'Farm' button to hear more about this takeover."

Link to video 'Farm', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"Tretower's Gone Batty! No, not batty as in totally bonkers, I mean actual bats! You should click on the 'Bat' button below…if you dare!"

Link to video 'Bat', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"Are you quite 'batty' now? Ok, time for you to retrace your steps to the doorway at the end of the wall walk and descend the 16 stairs on your left-hand side as you walk through the doorway. Or I suppose you could click the 'Courtyard' button if you wanted to be teleported there! "

Courtyard Custodian NPC



"So, here we are back in the courtyard where we started. But wait! Don't dash off just yet. See that big old building directly opposite? That's the North Range, and oh boy, has it got some juicy tales to tell! Click on the 'Farmyard' button if you want to hear them!

Link to video 'Farmyard', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"Your Virtual Tour and Time Travel has not come to an end yet! Oh no, you should continue with your back to the gatehouse, take the doorway on your right-hand side into the next area, the Stewards' quarters in the North Range. Or if you are tired, you could click the 'Steward' button to be teleported."

Stewards Quarters Custodian NPC



"Alright, time for a bit of time travel again! You should hop back in time to Sir Roger Vaughan's day and take a look at this room that is fit for a Boss! You need to click on the 'Boss' button below to be teleported there!"

Link to video 'Boss', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"Just one last stop on your virtual Tour. Exit the Stewards quarters from the doorway that you entered, explore the remainder of the ground floor, then make your way back to the gatehouse. Or you can click on the 'Gatehouse' button bellow to be teleported there."

Gatehouse Custodian NPC



"You're standing by the mighty Gatehouse, and trust us it wasn't just for decoration! This was Tretower's medieval security system, think of it like a super old-school front door with extra attitude. You should click on the 'Gatehouse' button to find out more!"

Link to video 'Gatehouse', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"Time travel to 1930 now, and Tretower was a bit of a wreck! You really should click on the 'Conservation' button below to hear what happened next!"

Link to video 'Conservation', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

"Did you have a blast time-traveling through 900 years of mayhem, mystery, and medieval madness? From battling barons and clanking swords to feasting lords and fancy flowers, Tretower has seen it all! You could join in the Tretower conservation work if you like! Taliesin will tell you more."

Taliesin NPC



" Bore da, time-travelling trowel-wielders!

Name's Taliesin. Wales' top bard, poet of power, spinner of rhymes and teller of truths… however gross or grimy they might be.

You lot have just been summoned on a most EPIC quest – not for gold, dragons, or ridiculously uncomfortable chainmail… oh no!"

Link to video 'Quest Introduction', which is embedded in the Cadw Cymru Minecraft World

IMPORTANT: For further details and guidance, please see the Quest Practitioner Guide.

Key Questions

Below are some key questions, and possible answers, you could ask your learners as they go through the Virtual Tour of **Tretower Court and Castle:**

Q1: Apart from the haunch of venison, which food, that was considered to be a great delicacy, also hangs in the kitchen?

A1: Eels.

Q2: Why is the other small side room named the buttery, when the butter churn is in the pantry?

A2: This is where the wine and spirit barrels, known as "butts" were stored.

Q3: When you leave the kitchen up a ramp into the servery , what happened here?

A3: The food was put on plates ready to be taken into the Great Hall.

Q4: In the Great Hall, cloth hangings cover the walls. Why do you think such wall hangings were important?

A4: Wall hangings were expensive and a sign of wealth. They also helped to keep the room warm.

Q5: In all the bedrooms of the Court, you will find garderobes, tiny rooms with what seem like stone seats. What are they for?

A5: Toilets

Q6: The upper level of the North Range of the Court seems to be one long hall, but how do we know that it was originally separated into four separate rooms?

A6: By the grooves that were cut in the beams of the roof and walls.

Q7: How do we know that there was at least one more floor in the gatehouse, above the porter's room that we can see today?

A7: There are the lowest few steps of a staircase visible, and square holes for wood beams in the walls at head height.

Q8: Which protected creatures roost in the kitchen for most of the year, especially around the old bread oven?

A8: Bats