



Scarborough Castle (English Heritage Red Guides)

John Goodall

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'I had neither chimney nor firehearth. This being to the seaside and much open, the wind drove the rain in forcibly, so that the water came up over my bed.' George Fox, imprisoned at Scarborough, 1666.

Scarborough Castle stands on a massive promontory of rock that rises above the North Sea. The site has been intermittently inhabited and fortified for nearly 3,000 years. With its own anchorage, now the harbour, Scarborough has long been an important gateway to north-east England. In the fourth century the Romans built a fortified signal station here, one of a coastal chain that watched for seaborne raiders. A castle was first established here by William le Gros, Earl of York in the mid 12th century. In 1155 he was forced to surrender it to Henry II, who built the great tower and began developing a town beneath the castle walls. Scarborough Castle featured prominently in national events throughout the Middle Ages and Tudor period and was besieged on several occasions. The castle was briefly abandoned in the early 17th century, but was reoccupied during the Civil War and twice besieged by Parliamentary forces. Subsequently the castle was garrisoned and it remained occupied by the army until the late 19th century. The town, meanwhile, prospered from the 1660s as a spa and seaside resort. In 1914 the castle and the town were shelled by German warships. The castle became a popular visitor attraction and was taken into State guardianship in 1920. This beautifully illustrated English Heritage guidebook to Scarborough Castle gives a full tour and history of the remains of this important medieval castle.

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