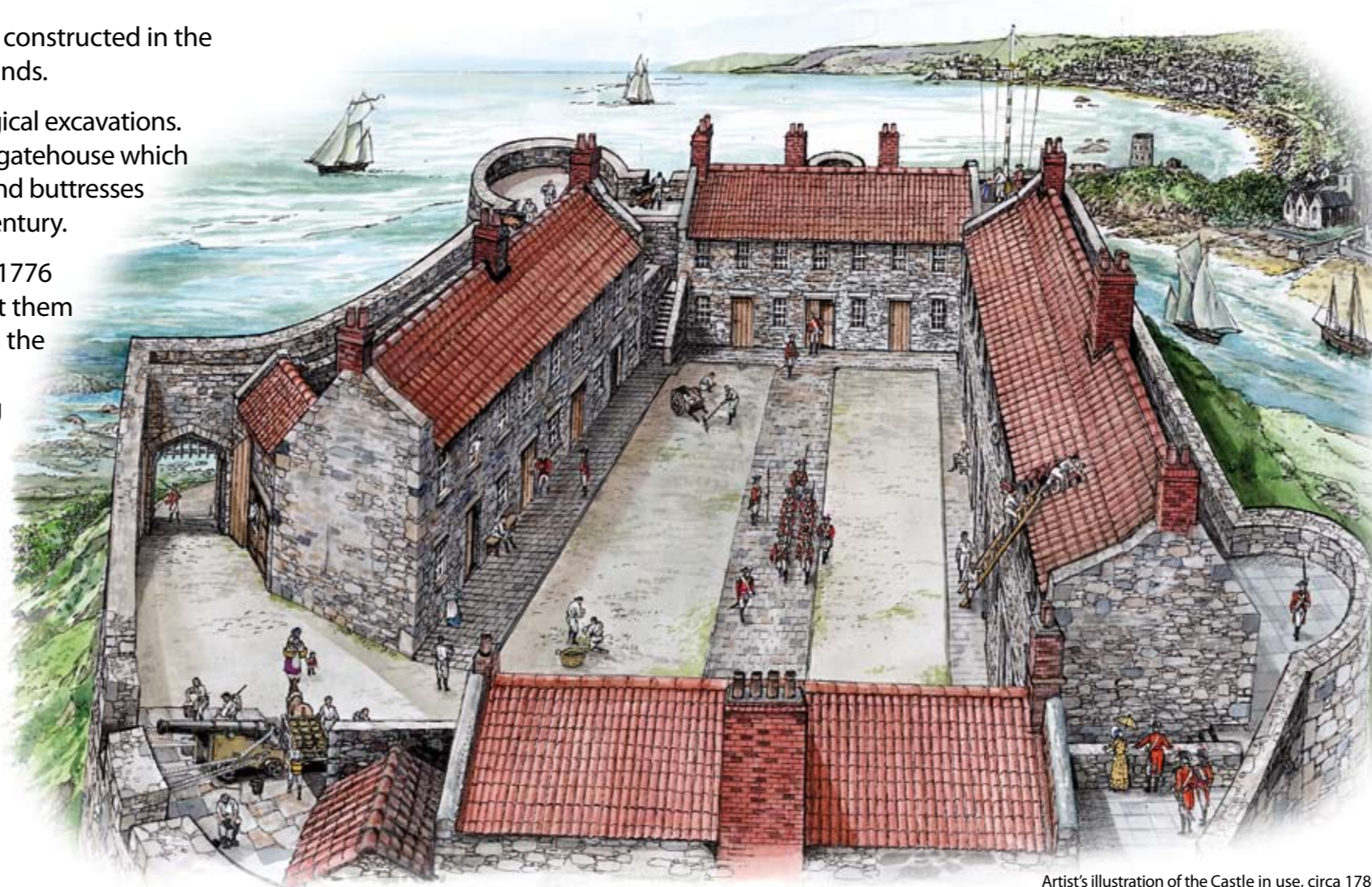# Vale Castle

1 Defensive Castle

A defensive earthwork consisting of a ditch and bank was constructed in the early Iron Age on the hill on which the Vale Castle now stands.
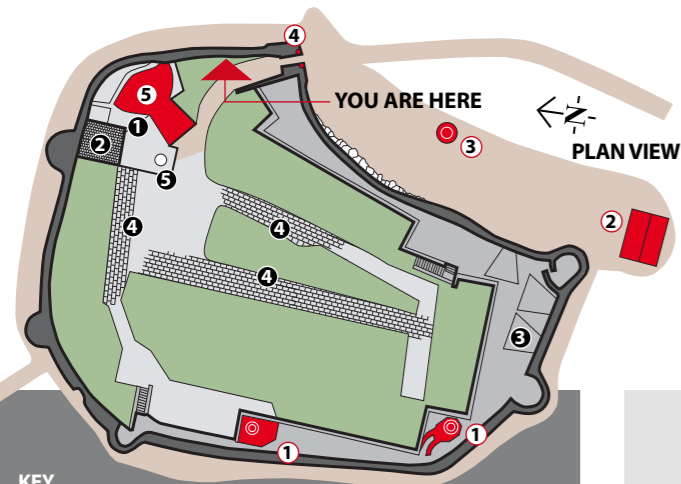
No medieval remains were found during recent archaeological excavations. The earliest part of the castle surviving is the entrance and gatehouse which date from the 15th century. The other stone curtain walls and buttresses that remain today were most likely built in the early 16th century.

At the outbreak of the American War of Independence in 1776 France became an ally of the Americans - an act which put them in direct conflict with England. Loyal to the English Crown the Channel Islands found themselves in danger of attack by the French. This prompted a re-occupation and rebuilding of the castle with barracks and officers' quarters.

During the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815) the Vale Castle was armed with one 24pdr cannon and two 9pdr cannons.

YOU ARE HERE

PLAN VIEW

KEY

18th Century use:
1. Cannon platform (under German)
2. Magazine & guardhouse
3. Cannon platforms
4. 'Roads' & paving
5. Well

1940-45 German Occupation:
1. 5cm mortar emplacements
2. Double heavy machine gun bunker
3. Concrete Tobruk pit
4. 2 concrete mounts for range finding artillery binoculars
5. Field order position for 10.5cm K331(F) field gun

Artist's illustration of the Castle in use, circa 1780
illustration by Brian Byron

Officers' Quarters (South) fallen into disrepair. Photographed in 1892
© Guernsey Museums & Galleries

Officers' Quarters (North) fallen into disrepair. Photographed in 1892
© Guernsey Museums & Galleries

During the 1940 - 45 period the German occupying forces demolished the derelict barracks and fortified the castle and its environs. They installed extensive groundworks which included concrete machine-gun and mortar positions, trenches and personnel bunkers. The defences also featured two searchlight positions and two field guns.

for more information about the German Occupation contact:
German Occupation Museum
www.occupied.guernsey.net
Channel Islands Occupation Society
www.occupied.guernsey.net
Festung Guernsey
www.festungguernsey.supanet.com

German soldier manning a 7.92mm MG34 machine gun in a concrete Tobruk pit
© German Occupation Society
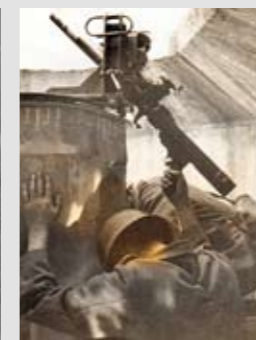
French 5cm mortar in use by German soldiers in concrete mortar position
© German Occupation Society

German soldiers with searchlight on the ramparts over the main gate.
© German Occupation Museum

Guernsey Castles
two other castles can be found in Guernsey

Chateau des Marais
can be visited all year round

YOU ARE HERE
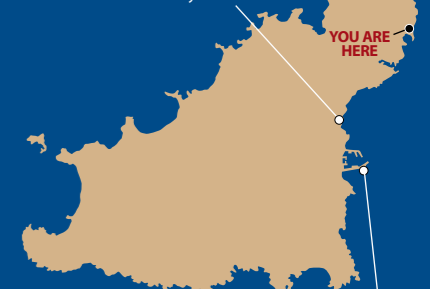
Castle Cornet
open to visitors Easter to end of October
(entry charge)