

As you enter through the **Gatehouse**, the old **Courtyard** of the Hall lies directly in front of you. The square building, the corner of which can be seen to the front right, is the original **Pele Tower** that formed the basis for the Hall we see today. Built in 1362, the tower was built as a defensive structure to replace the timber houses that were constantly burnt to the ground.



The battlemented walls and stone gatehouse were added in the late 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. The greatest transformation took place in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the Hall being turned into a beautiful and large manor house that was occupied right up until 1929, following the death of its last squire, **Alan de Lancy Curwen**.

Turning right, then right again, you will come to the site of the **Ladies Kitchen** (that is now the site of the Warden's Hut!) Coming out of the Kitchen, take the first right and you are standing at the end of one of the corridors that ran round the Courtyard, providing entrance to the various rooms. The first doorway, facing you as you entered the corridor, takes you into the **Chapel**.

All the wealthy families of the time would have had their own private place for morning prayers and worship, especially in a house of this size and status. The large arched window to your right was once a beautiful stained glass window. Coming out of the Chapel continue down the corridor and take the first right that leads you to a large room that was once broken up into a number of smaller rooms, which would perhaps have had a number of uses over the years such as a sitting room, study, or reading room.

Enter the adjoining room and you will now be standing in the **Justices Hall**, on the site of the original **Pele Tower**. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Workington Hall became the site of the **Manor Court**. As the **Curwen** family were **Lords of the Manor** they held all jurisdiction for the area and it was in this room that sentences against wrongdoers were passed. An interesting feature in this room is through a small doorway to your right as you enter the room. At the top of the small flight of steps there is a 15<sup>th</sup> century toilet! Walk down the ramp and enter the first doorway at the bottom. This leads you into the **Smoking Room**. This is the room where the men of the Hall would have socialised with and entertained fellow men. The room would have been men only.

Walking back into the **Justices Hall**, take your first right (passing the staircase for now) and you will enter the corridor leading to the **Cellars**. Walk straight down the corridor and take the bottom right. You have now entered the room leading to three adjacent Cellars. Turn right and walk forward into the middle Cellar where you will see some stocks.

This Cellar became a **Jail** in the 16<sup>th</sup> century when the Hall was in use as the Manor Court. In 1606 the jail achieved the status of a **Dungeon**, where at some point over 100 prisoners were squeezed into this one small space! Go back the way you came in and turn right. You are now standing in the **Vaulted Cellar** that is very different to the other cellars due to its large size.

Exit the **Vaulted Cellar** and turn right. Walk down the corridor and the first room on your right is the site of the **Housekeepers Room**. The Housekeeper would have been responsible for the general upkeep of the Hall and would have been in charge of the servants. Continue down the corridor and you

will come to a large open room on your right. Originally this was a number of smaller rooms but the walls have since been demolished. The right hand section was once the **Servants Quarters**.

Continue down the corridor and you will enter the **Kitchens**. On the wall next to the entrance you can see where the three stoves would have been placed. The small room leading off from the **Kitchen** is the **Scullery** where the cleaning of pots would have taken place and where all the cleaning equipment would have been stored. Looking up towards the top of the building in front, you can see the remains of a **spiral staircase** leading up to the **Gatehouse**.

Heading back down the corridor, take your first right and you will be back in the **Courtyard**. Go through the **archway** opposite the Gatehouse and go up the flight of stairs to your left.



At the top of the stairs take the doorway on the left. You are now standing in the room in which **Mary Queen of Scots** spent her last 3 days of freedom. **Sir Henry Curwen** and his family welcomed Mary warmly and she gave them a small **Agate Wine Cup** as a token of her gratitude, which is still in the possession of the family today. After her stay in the Hall, Mary was arrested and eventually, after 18 years imprisonment, she was executed at Fotheringay Castle in Northamptonshire.

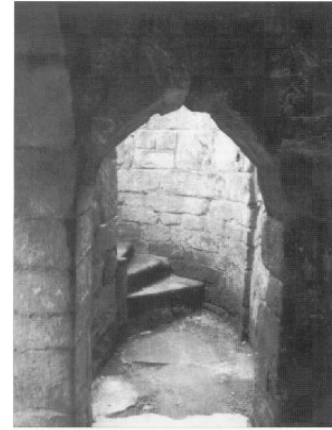


Exit the room through the doorway on the right and you will now be standing in the **Banqueting Hall**. This room would have been used for entertaining guests. There would have been a large wooden table running down the length of the room and a large open fire.

Walking straight across the length of the room, exit through the bottom right. You are now standing in a circular room in which you can see the remains of a staircase leading to the floor that used to be above. Exit this room and go down the staircase on your left. You will now be back in the **Justices Hall**. This time go past the doorway that leads to the **Dungeon** and **Cellars** and enter the next doorway.

You should now be standing at the foot of the **Haunted Staircase**. The story goes that **Sir Henry Curwen** (whose nickname was **Galloping Harry** due to his love of breeding and racing horses) was

much hated by his family – he was a Catholic, which the rest of the family were not, and he willed his half of the **Curwen Estate** to his cousin, **Charles Pelham** of Lincolnshire, that was then purchased by the **Curwens** rival family, the **Lowthers**. It is said that **Galloping Harry** was murdered on the 25<sup>th</sup> May 1725 on the order of his family and the **Ghost** is the sound of his head bumping down the stairs as his body is supposedly dragged down.



Walk past the staircase and exit through the small archway on your left. You are now standing in the courtyard and your tour is complete. Please feel free to take a look around at your own leisure and thank you for visiting **Workington Hall**. If you have not already done so, a visit to the **Helena Thompson Museum** is definitely worth it.



The **Curwen family**, whom are well renowned in the County of Cumbria, has occupied the site of **Workington Hall** since the early 13th century. Once a great manor house, the Hall was left to fall into a state of disrepair and was opened to the public in 1990 as a ruin. The building today contains 18<sup>th</sup> century ruins, the remains of a Tudor Mansion and the original fortress of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Heritage and Arts Unit, Regeneration Centre Oxford Street, Workington, Cumbria, CA14 2RS**  
**Tel: 01900 326253 Fax: 01900 326256 [heritage&arts@allerdale.gov.uk](mailto:heritage&arts@allerdale.gov.uk)**