

# Bolingbroke Castle

## Bolingbroke Castle – Changes over time

Today Bolingbroke is a quiet rural village. There is a church and a pub but no shops or school. But it was not always like this. In the medieval period the village was, along with Lincoln itself, one of the most important places in Lincolnshire, and Bolingbroke Castle was the reason for its importance. When it was built in about 1220 the castle was one of the most up-to-date and fashionable buildings in the county and demonstrated how wealthy and powerful its owner, Randolph de Blundeville, was. The village would have been a very busy place with a bustling market and lots of people coming and going.

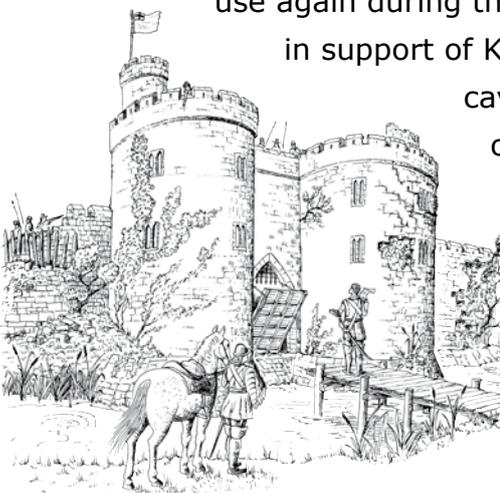


John Farrow



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Bolingbroke Castle carried on being important for many years, but by the 1500s the wealthiest people no longer wanted to live in medieval castles. The castle had stopped being used as a residence and was falling into disrepair. In 1643, even though it was not in very good condition, it was briefly brought back into use again during the English Civil War as a stronghold for soldiers fighting in support of King Charles I. These soldiers were called Royalists (or cavaliers). They were besieged inside the castle by an army of Parliamentarians (or roundheads) who were fighting to get rid of the King. They surrounded the castle and stopped anybody from either going in or coming out, which meant that no food or supplies could be taken in. Eventually the Royalists had to surrender. After this the castle was almost completely demolished so that it could never be used again.



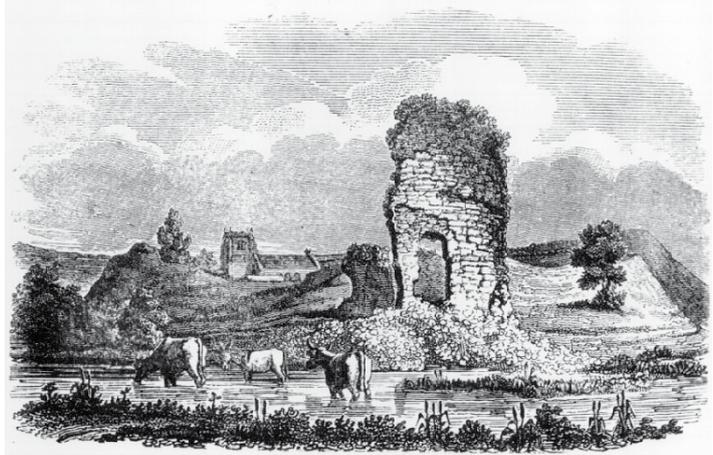
David Hopkins

*Summons to surrender, 1643*

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If you want to find out more about the Siege of Bolingbroke Castle and the Civil War battle of Winceby that took place close by you can download our Seige of Bolingbroke education pack.

After it was demolished some of the castle stone was taken away and used to build houses in the village, but much of it probably remained where it lay. The ruins of the castle gradually disappeared under earth and grass. There was still a piece of one of the towers standing in the early 1800s but this fell soon after.



This aerial photograph taken in 1957 shows that, although the shape of the castle could be seen from the air at that time, none of the stonework of the walls was visible. In about 1970 archaeologists began to excavate the castle site and they uncovered what was left of the walls and towers and the remains of some of the buildings that once stood inside the castle courtyard, such as the great hall and the kitchens. The courtyard buildings were covered over again but the main castle walls were left on view and a walkway around their perimeter was created.



© CUCAP

In around 1990 the moat was water-filled and had very few plants growing in it. Gradually more and more plants started to grow and they spread until most of the open water had disappeared. Work to clear the moat was carried out in 2009.