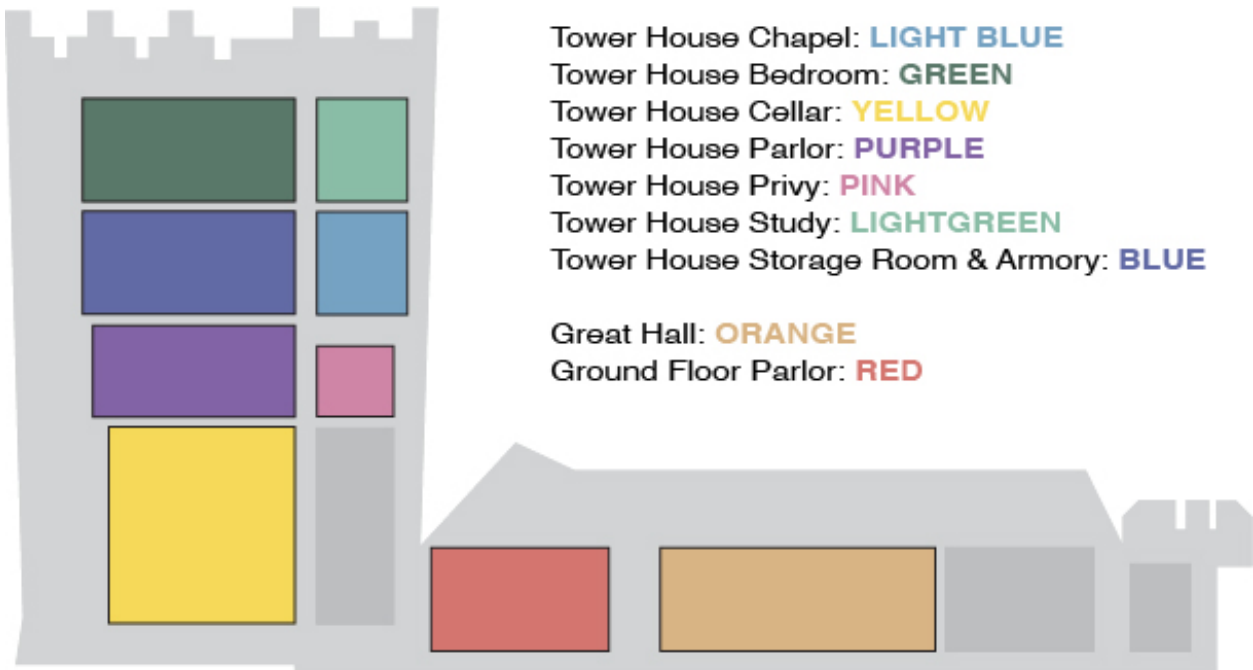
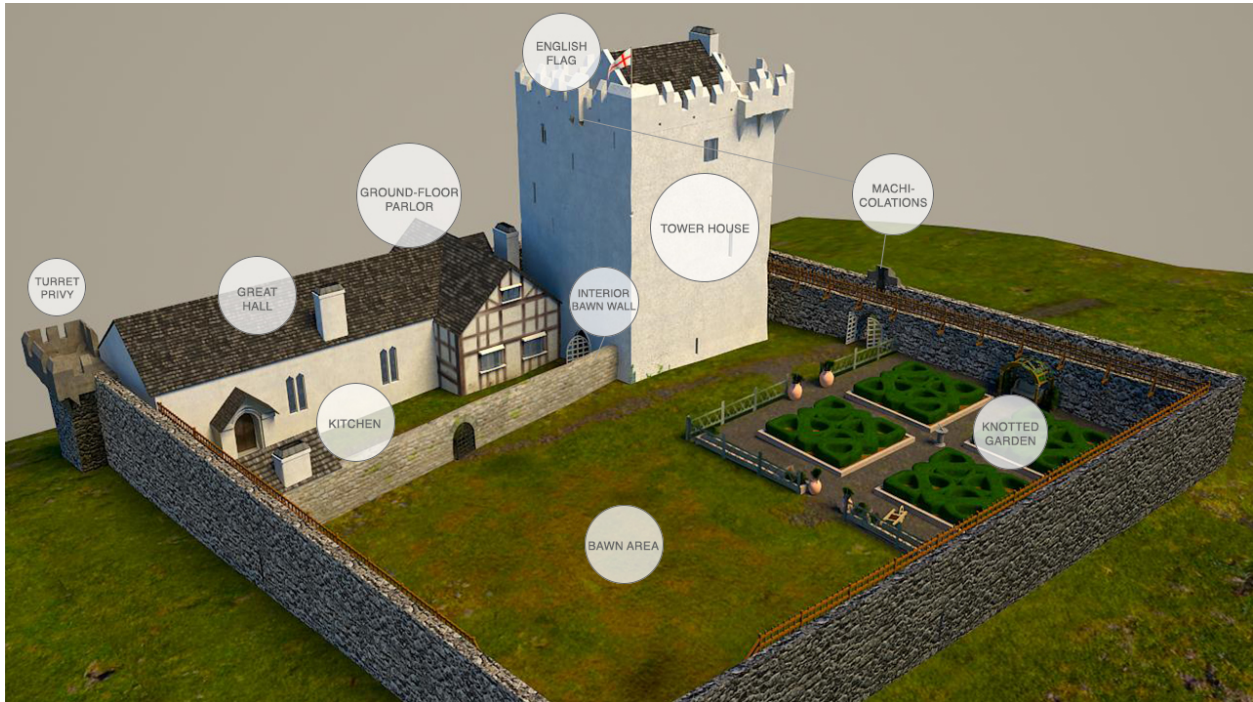


Tower House Armoury Teacher Pack



Tower House Chapel: **LIGHT BLUE**
Tower House Bedroom: **GREEN**
Tower House Cellar: **YELLOW**
Tower House Parlor: **PURPLE**
Tower House Privy: **PINK**
Tower House Study: **LIGHTGREEN**
Tower House Storage Room & Armoury: **BLUE**

Great Hall: **ORANGE**
Ground Floor Parlor: **RED**

1. Introduction: Military Practices and Identity

Early modern Ireland was a highly militarised society with the result that military service and expertise was an important component of Old English and Irish identities. This class offers

students an overview of military conditions in Ireland during the sixteenth century. The first station, the weaponry on the rack, explores martial law and its implications for the inhabitants of Ireland. The next station, the chest of armour, offers a brief synopsis of Old English military obligations. Irish soldiers were often described as unusual, but they were well suited to the terrain and tactics employed in Ireland. Thus, the final station, the leather jerkin, offers a description of traditional Irish soldiers. Students should be made aware that over the course of the sixteenth century Irish soldiers, like their continental counterparts, became skilled in the use of firearms; in fact, during the Nine Years' War (1594-1603) some English commentators lamented that Irish soldiers had become better marksmen than the English.

This class should be used alongside the tours of other rooms to better understand the series of conflicts that affected life in Ireland throughout the sixteenth century. The armory provides the basis of military affairs in Ireland while other rooms offer discussions on specific wars, like the Second Desmond Rebellion in the Ground Floor Parlor, and customs, like coyné and livery in the Great Hall.

2. Extra textual context and sources

The Leather Jerkin: Irish Soldiers and Weapons

Compare the following passages about Irish soldiers:

- a) This is another excerpt from Nicholas Dawtrey, "A Booke of Questions and Answers Concerning the Warrs of Rebellions of the Kingdome of Ireland". As a military captain serving in Ireland, Dawtrey had first-hand experience fighting against, as well as alongside, Irish soldiers.

"I will say this for the Irish souldier, I had rather haue him to serue under me, than any Countryman in the world, so he be well paide and punished for his faultes, according to ther natures, and then I think ther cannot be a better souldier under the sune. ... I think ther vallor not to be inferiour to any nation of people, and for the skill of ther owen warrs, I knowe it is such as cannot be amended, for they will obserue tyme, place and oportunity, and the naturall disposition of ther enemyes, as well as any men of warr in the world, as experience hath taught."¹

- b) As Lord Mountjoy's secretary, Fynes Moryson was a witness to the final stages of the Nine Year's War. Unlike Dawtrey though, Moryson was an administrator and his account of Irish military practices was part of a longer text describing Irish customs. There are no other official sources from this war period which corroborate his claim that the Irish severed the heads of fallen enemies.

"Divers kinds of foot use divers kinds of arms. First, the Galliglasses are armed with morions and halberts. Secondly, the Kerne and some of their footmen are armed with weighty iron

¹ H. Morgan (ed.), "A Booke of Questions and Answers Concerning the Warrs of Rebellions of the Kingdome of Ireland", *Anal. Hib.*, No. 36 (1995), pp. 93-94.

mails and jacks, and assail horsemen aloof with casting darts, and at hand with the sword. Thirdly, their shot, which I said to be so rude in the beginning of the rebellion as three men were used to shoot off one piece not without fear, became in few years most active, bold, and expert in the use of their pieces. All these foot assail the enemy with rude barbarous cries, and hope to make them afraid therewith, as also with their nakedness and barbarous looks, in which case they insist violently, being terrible executioners, by their swiftness of foot upon flying enemies, never sparing any that yield to mercy; yea, being most bloody and cruel towards their captives upon cold blood, contrary to the practice of noble enemies, and not only mangling the bodies of their dead enemies, but never believing them to be fully dead till they have cut off their heads.”²

3. Extra illustrations/ visuals

Contemporary images of Irish soldiers

This blog post by Irish Archaeology offers a collection of sixteenth-century images depicting Irish people, including Irish soldiers: <http://irisharchaeology.ie/2013/12/16th-century-images-of-irish-people/>

Costume and weapon reconstruction

For more detailed reconstructions and explanations of Irish soldiers and weapons, see the living history displays by Claiomh: <http://www.claiomh.ie/>

Irish hair

This blog post is a witty commentary on the hair styles worn by Irish soldiers: <http://irisharchaeology.ie/2013/08/16th-century-irish-hipsters/>

4. Bibliography

Ciaran Brady, *The Chief Governors: The Rise and Fall of Reform Government in Tudor Ireland, 1536-1588*. (Cambridge, 1994)

Fergus Cannan, “‘Hags of Hell’: late medieval Irish kern,” *History Ireland*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2011), pp. 14-17.

Ruth A. Canning, “‘Trust, Desert, Power and skill to serue’: The Old English and Military Identities in late Elizabethan Ireland’, in Matthew Woodcock and Cian O’Mahony (eds.), *Early Modern Military Identities, 1560-1639* (Suffolk, 2019), pp. 138-157.

² Fynes Moryson, *The Commonwealth of Ireland*, pp. 287-88 (CELT: <https://celt.ucc.ie/published/T100072/index.html>)

Sean Duffy, *The world of the galloglass: Kings, warlords and warriors in Ireland and Scotland, 1200–1600* (Dublin, 2016)

David Edwards, “‘Some Days Two Heads and Some Days Four’,” *History Ireland*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (2009), pp. 18-21.

David Edwards, “Beyond Reform: Martial Law & the Tudor Reconquest of Ireland,” *History Ireland*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1997), pp. 16-21.

Steven G. Ellis, “The Tudors and the origins of the modern Irish states: a standing army,” in T. Bartlett and K. Jeffery (eds.), *A Military History of Ireland*, (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 116-135.

James O’Neill, *The Nine Years War, 1593-1603: O’Neill, Mountjoy and the Military Revolution* (Dublin, 2017)

James O’Neill, “Like sheep to the shambles? Slaughter and surrender during Tyrone’s rebellion, 1593-1603”, *Irish Sword*, Vol. 31, No. 126 (2018), pp. 366-80.

Rory Rapple, *Martial Power and Elizabethan Political Culture: Military Men in England and Ireland, 1558–1594* (Cambridge, 2009), chapters. 6 & 7.

5. Teaching Plan

Discussion Questions

- 1) What is martial law? How was it used? And what were the potential consequences of employing it?
- 2) Why did crown soldiers behave the way the author of “The greivances of the Englishe Pale” describes?
- 3) Why were the inhabitants of the English lordship required to perform up to 40 days of military service each year?
- 4) How did Irish warfare differ from continental warfare?
- 5) Fynes Moryson claimed Irish soldiers were “most bloody and cruel towards their captives upon cold blood, contrary to the practice of noble enemies”. Is this true? And how does this compare with the actions of English soldiers in Ireland?
- 6) Discuss: does more sophisticated weaponry dictate success in war?