

Warkworth Castle

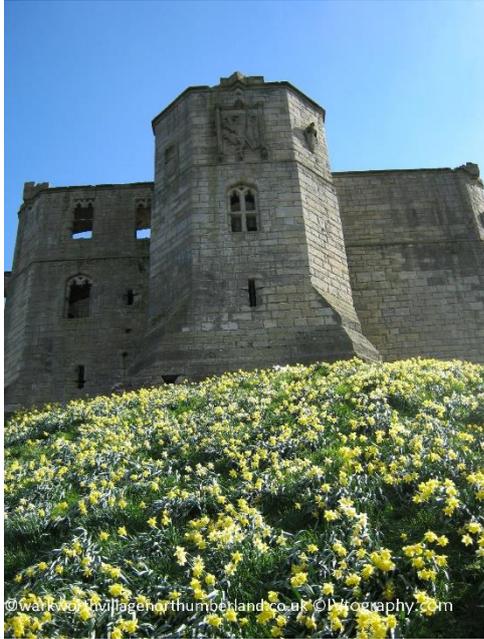
- a (very) brief history

The ruins of Warkworth Castle sit on top of a hill at the neck of the horseshoe shaped

River Coquet and dominates the village. The castle is part of the heritage of the Percy family, also known as the Dukes of Northumberland and dates from the 12th century when it was believed to be built by Henry, son of King David I of Scotland. King Edward I spent a night in the castle in 1292 and when the Anglo-Scottish wars began in 1296 the castle had to be manned by troops.



Edward III granted Warkworth and its castle to Henry de Percy II the first Earl of Northumberland in 1332, and later that century he allowed the castle to be the home of his eldest son, Harry Hotspur. The Percy family's power struggles brought them into frequent conflict with the monarchy, and the castle returned to royal control on several occasions, but the Percys had great influence and a Percy was normally soon reinstated. The sixth Percy earl, Henry, on his death in 1537, left the castle and all his possessions to Henry VIII. Subsequent attempts to reinstate a Percy brought misfortune on the castle as the catholic Percys came into conflict with the protestant Queen Elizabeth.



A failed uprising of the Northern Earls against the queen, led to the execution of the 7th earl in 1572, and to the pillaging of the castle by the Queen's servants. The castle was subsequently allowed to fall into decay. In the 19th century the castle was restored and made habitable again however the Percy family chose to make Alnwick Castle their main residence. Several rooms known as the Duke's rooms can be visited on selected days throughout the summer months. In 1922 the Duke of Northumberland passed the castle to the nation and to the Office of Works who later passed it onto English Heritage.

In the spring the castle is particularly striking especially when looking up from Castle Street or from the Sun Hotel because the mound it is built on is covered in daffodils. Warkworth Castle also features in the opening scene of William Shakespeare's 'Henry IV' part 1 where it is described as "this worm-eaten hold of ragged stone".

