

# A keep for the seigniorial family

**11** - On the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, this room called a garde-robe in the archives has the role of a hallway between the lord's large room and the banqueting hall situated in the bailey, above the kitchen, going via the parapet walkway or covered gallery of the southeast courtine (today, the door on the left opens onto empty space).

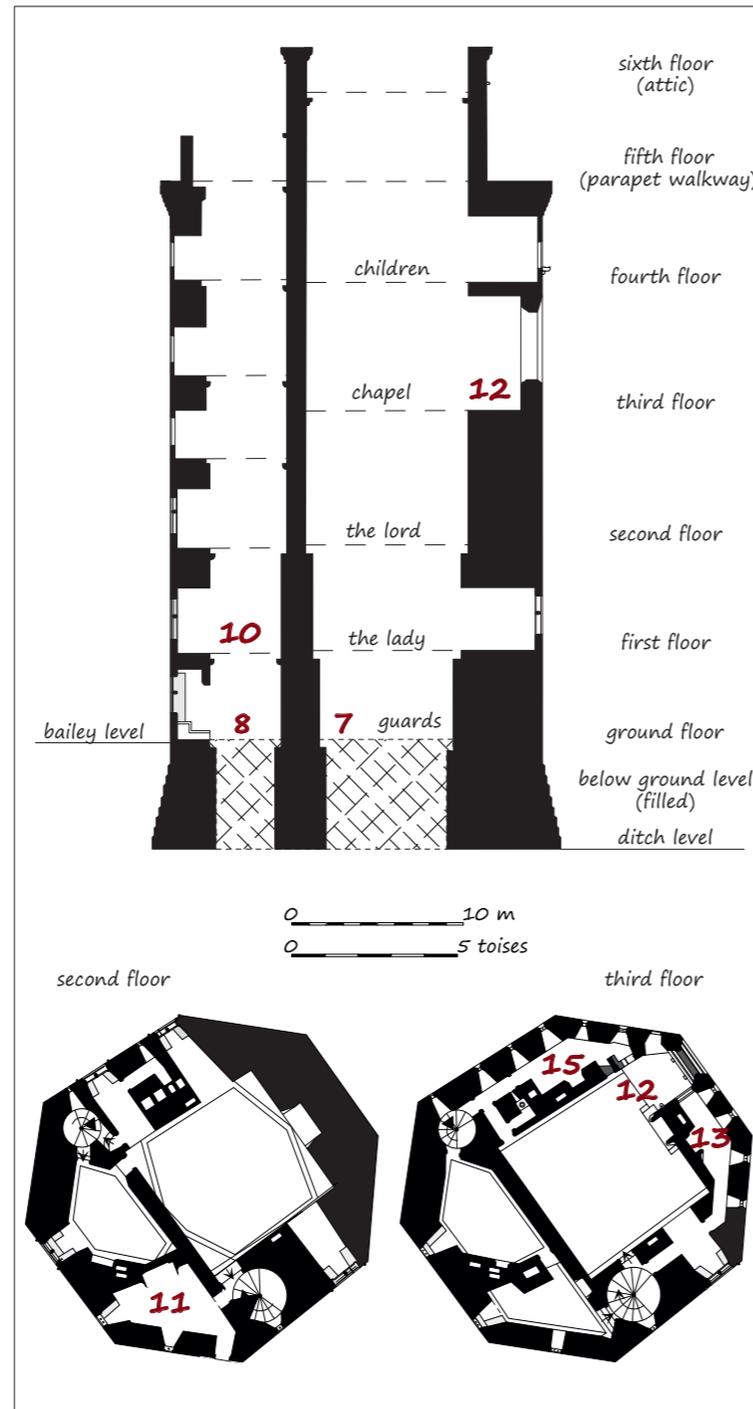
**12** - Opening onto the hall of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, the chapel was intended for the seigniorial family, members of the court and close servants. The lord and lady each had a heated oratory, separated from the altar by a hagioscope (window) which could be closed with shutters. Now walled, the big bay which was designed to have a stained-glass window was formerly fitted on the exterior with a heavy iron grill like most of the big windows of the keep.

**13** - To go from his large room to his oratory, the lord would use the big staircase and would cross the big embrasure of the window separated from the large room on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor by a hanging.

## By the small staircase:

**14** - The conduits of the six latrines of the keep fall into a shared pit accessible from the basement. The lady would have had access to her latrine from her large room or her bedroom by the small staircase. Placed at the end of an elbow shaped corridor to avoid the spread of unpleasant smells, the latrine was lit by a small window which could be closed with a shutter without glass. For more comfort, the stone seat of the latrines was covered in wood.

**15** - This same small staircase enabled the lady to get to her oratory, which was more spacious than the one of the lord. In front of the hagioscope, the "coussiège" (stone window seat) intended for the lady was covered with cushions.

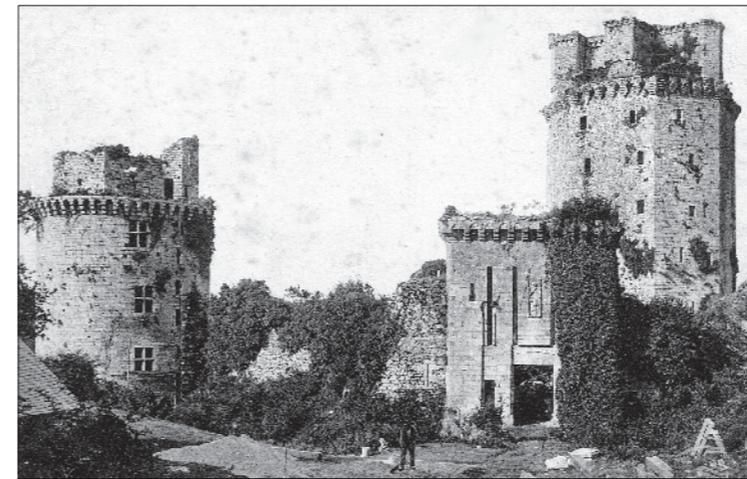


Cross-section and plans of the second and third floors of the keep

## Bailey:

**16** - The southeast curtain wall was built shortly after the completion of the keep. It opens onto the moat by a postern with tilting deck drawbridge with a single swipe beam, a layout rarely encountered as at the Mont-Saint-Michel and at the Pierrefonds castle (in Oise).

**17** - Restored in 1905 by the proprietors under the direction of the architect Jobbé-Duval, the Round Tower is probably the work of Jean IV de Rieux, modelled on the tower of the constable of the ducal castle of Vannes. Below ground level, three cannon-ports are fitted. The residential floors, all equipped with fireplaces and latrines, were linked to the south dwellings by a wooden gallery. The curtain walls attached to the tower have only been partially rebuilt. The Round Tower can not be visited.



The Round Tower, the gatehouse and the keep before 1905

## Causeway:

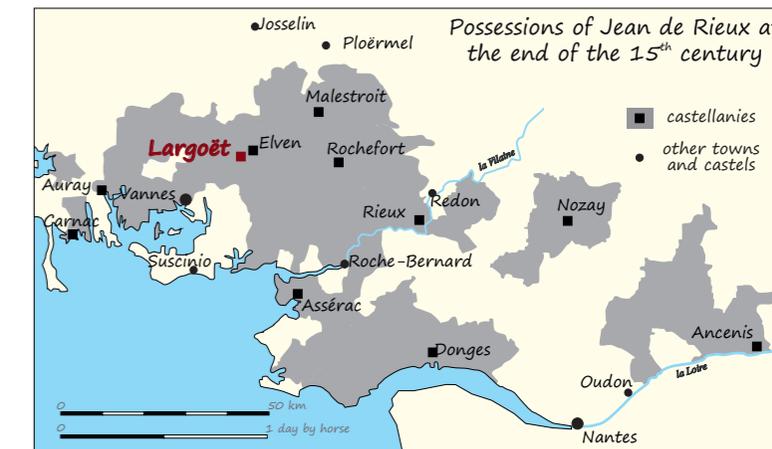
**18** - The keep rises on its base in the shape of a staircase: the thickness of the walls is close to 10 m. The causeway of the lake, fed by the Kerviler stream, offers a remarkable view of the two sleepy towers of Largoët with their many legends.

# Largoët Fortress



Welcome! The Derriens of Elven were the first Lords of Largoët. They were succeeded by the Malestroit family in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and by the Ragueneil at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Jean IV de Rieux, marshal of Brittany, close adviser of the Duke of Brittany and guardian of his daughters including the Duchess Anne, acquired the barony in 1461 on his marriage to the heiress of the Ragueneil family.

After the marriage of Anne de Bretagne to Charles VIII in 1491 then to Louis XII in 1499, Jean IV de Rieux entered the service of the king of France. It was during this period of the 15<sup>th</sup> century when Brittany was still independent from France, that Largoët experienced its most prestigious times. Sold in a state of neglect and ruin in 1656 to Nicolas Fouquet, superintendent of finances to Louis XIV then to the Trémereuc, Largoët fortress is still in the same family more than three centuries later.



Please respect the security barriers. Do not leave your children unattended at any time. Have a good visit!

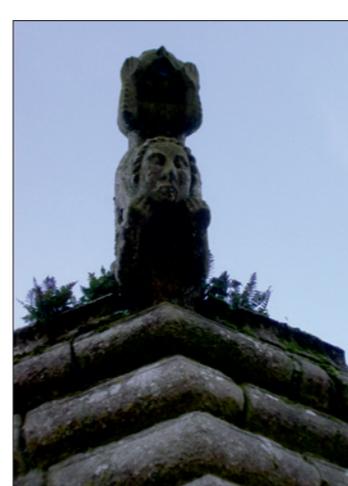
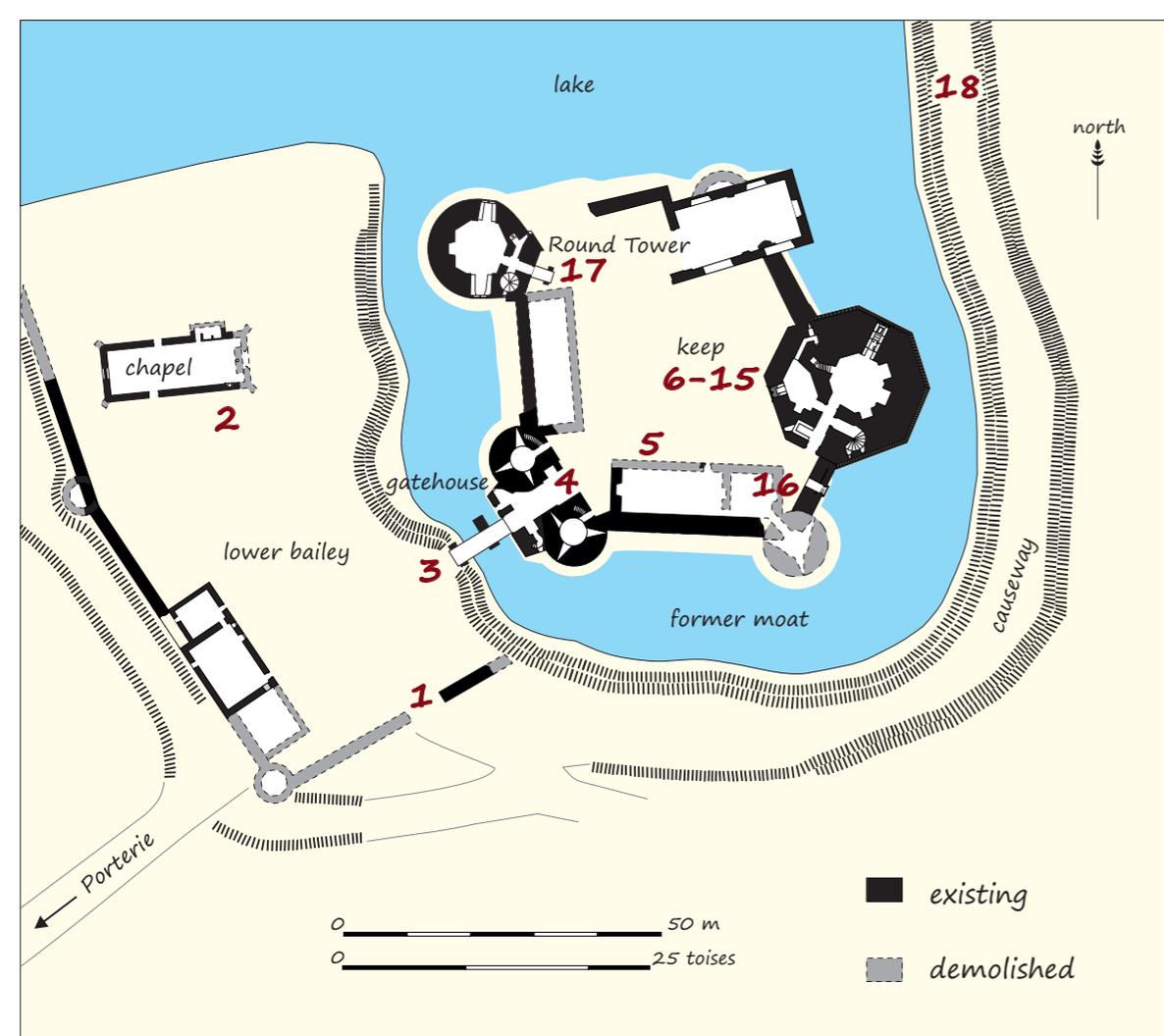


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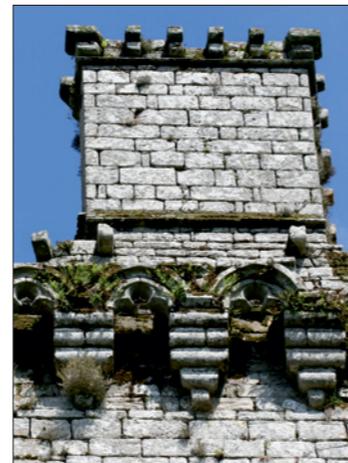


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# A fortified castle at the time of the Dukes of Brittany



Detail of a gargoyle of the keep



Detail of the machicoulis of the keep



Chapel and fireplace of the large room on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the keep

The path which leads to the castle from the entrance lodge built at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, passes through the park enclosed by walls, formerly a game and timber reserve. At the intersection of pathways, the pillars bear the names of cantons of woods, such as Folle Pensée and Château des Courtauds.

## Lower bailey :

1 - The portal of the castle, described as ruins in 1660, closing off the lower bailey with its outbuildings and chapel, opened onto the causeway of the lake and the path leading to the town of Elven.

2 - The chapel Notre-Dame, which dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, fell into ruins before the French revolution. The altar was not situated at the remaining gable but against the demolished gable, nearest the moat. The lord of Largoët and his spouse would attend the service from a lateral oratory north of the choir, the members of the court and the servants standing in the nave.

## Gatehouse :

3 - In the 1470s, the marshal Jean IV de Rieux had a new facade built, ornamented with tri-lobed lintel machicolations. Equipped with two drawbridges, one for carriages, the other for pedestrians, the gatehouse has arrow slits intended for the placing of small calibre firearms. The coat of arms of the marshal represents the ten bezant crown of the Rieux and the head of a wild boar, a symbol of the Ragueneul-Malestroit, the family of his spouse.

4 - Two round towers fitted with arrow slits surround the 13<sup>th</sup> century former door which was barred by a portcullis and thick leaves. The man of arms in charge of the manoeuvre would stand in the embrasure including a niche.

## House :

5 - Built against the curtain wall (wall connecting two towers) this building included the castle's kitchen, surmounted by the banqueting hall linked to the second floor of the keep by the parapet walkway of the southeast curtain wall.

In the keep, please be careful! As on a boat, you sometimes need to lift your feet and lower your head. After the ground floor, climb the big staircase, then the small.

## Keep :

Probably dating from the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the keep belongs to the type of residential towers raised on the model of the royal keep of Vincennes. At 45 m, it is one of the highest keeps in France! Recognised for the quality of its construction, the richness of the finely wrought parts and the internal layout.

6 - The drawbridge of the keep was very quickly made redundant by the construction of the southeast curtain wall causing the removal of the ditch which was separating the tower from the bailey.

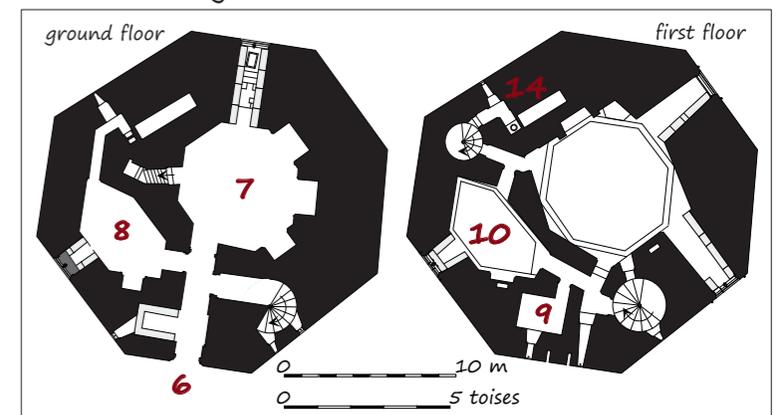
7 - 1000 m<sup>2</sup> of habitable space, 25 rooms, 24 fireplaces, on 8 levels! The lower room was the guardroom. The archives specify the use of the floors in 1481: the lady on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, the lord on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the chapel and its two oratories on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, then the children. Each has a large room, a bedroom, a garde-robe and a latrine.

8 - Called courtroom, this room was at the end of 15<sup>th</sup> century occasionally in use as a gaol for the accused, the condemned being detained on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> floors.

## By the large staircase :

9 - Vaulted in stone, without a fireplace, the archive room was the place where the archives and precious objects were kept. Tradition has it that Henry Tudor was locked up there during his exile in Brittany before becoming the king of England in 1485.

10 - The fireplace of the lady's bedroom is identical to that in her large room.



Plans of the ground floor and the first floor of the keep

## From the lower bailey to the causeway of the lake via the keep...

- |                                   |                            |                           |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 - former portal                 | 7 - guardroom              | 13 - the lord's oratory   |
| 2 - chapel                        | 8 - courtroom              | 14 - the lady's latrine   |
| 3 - gatehouse                     | 9 - archives room - prison | 15 - the lady's oratory   |
| 4 - 13 <sup>th</sup> century door | 10 - the lady's bedroom    | 16 - southeast postern    |
| 5 - former kitchen                | 11 - the lord's garde-robe | 17 - Round Tower          |
| 6 - door of the keep              | 12 - chapel                | 18 - causeway of the lake |

The fortress of Largoët has been classed as a listed monument since as early as 1862.

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