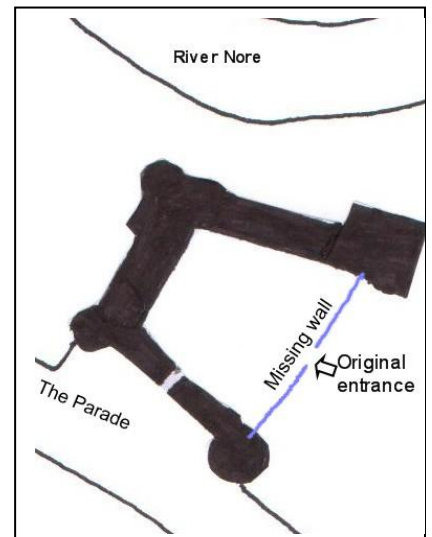


Kilkenny Castle Trail Background Information

When Strongbow and the other Norman knights came to Kilkenny in 1172, the high ground beside the river was chosen as an ideal site on which to build a wooden tower. Being up high helped the soldiers to see the enemy coming in the distance and this along with being beside the river Nore, made it easier to fight the enemy off. When Strongbow died, his daughter Isabel became the owner and she married a Norman Knight called William Marshall. This was the man who built Kilkenny Castle in 1207. It looked much different than it does today, as a fourth wall used to face the Castle Park and this wall had the main entrance. The Butler family bought the castle in 1391 and it was owned by this family until 1967. We don't have any pictures of the early castle, but there is a model of Kilkenny City in 1641 in St Canice's Cathedral and here how the castle probably looked at that time.



The wall facing the park was badly damaged in a war in 1650. It was removed at the end of the



18th century to make way for a better view of the Castle Park which was laid out at that time.



The entrance that we see today was created over 300 years ago. James Butler, who was living in Kilkenny Castle at the time, had seen this style of building when he lived in France and he wanted to copy it. He didn't live long enough to see the entrance finished, but his grandson made sure it was done when he took over the castle after James died. The stone that was used to build Kilkenny Castle is called limestone. It came from the Black Quarry which is about 1km from the city. Other old buildings in Kilkenny are built of limestone too.

Limestone was formed millions of years ago. Kilkenny was under a warm shallow sea at that time. When fish or animals died, their bones sank to the bottom of the sea. Over millions of years, the weight of the water turned them into rock. These are called fossils. If you look at the limestone, you can still see the outline of some of the creatures. Here is an example of one that was alive 350 millions years ago!



This is a fossil of a brachiopod. It was alive around the same time. There are lots of brachiopods to be



seen around Kilkenny. Have a look at the footpaths in High Street the next time you are shopping.

The Main Entrance

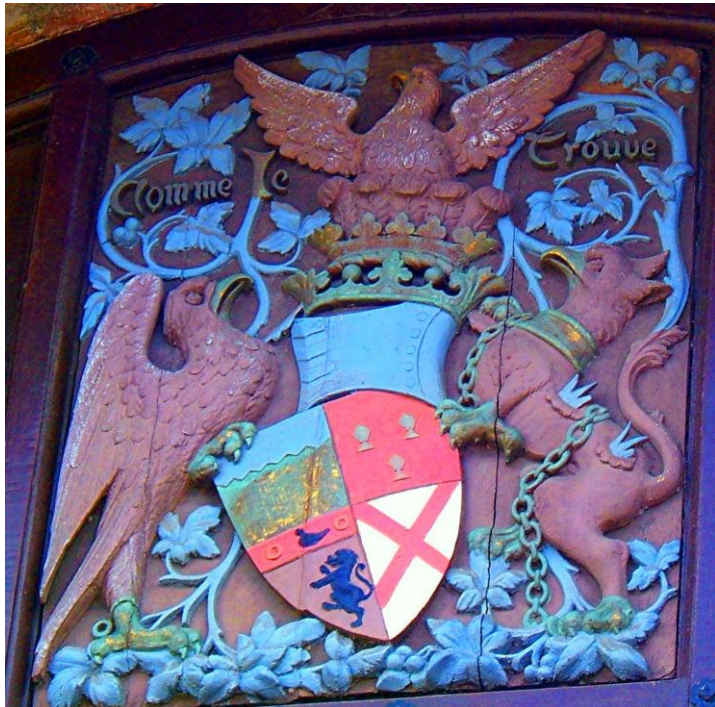
Above the entrance is the Butler coat of arms. This showed people who were entering the castle, the important family who lived there. The real family name was 'Fitzwalter', but it was changed to 'Butler' because in the 12th century Theobald Fitzwalter was appointed as the chief butler to the king.



When a new king or queen was crowned, the Butlers offered him/her the first cup of wine. That's why there are three covered cups on one part of the shield.

The top left of the shield stands for the Fitzwalter family. The bottom left stands for the Butler family in Carrick-on-Suir - an important branch of the Butler family - and the bottom right stands for another family that was connected to the Butlers, the Fitzgeralds. The motto in French: *Comme Je Trouve* means 'As I find'. It is thought to mean 'I take things as I

find them.' To the left of the shield is a falcon; to the right is a griffin (the body of a lion and the head and wings of an eagle). The top part, known as a crest, is a falcon rising out of a crown.



Here is a much older Butler Coat of Arms which was on the side of a tombstone (16th century) in St Canice's Cathedral. This only has the Fitzwalter and Butler names represented.

Sallyport and Moat



When it was built first, Kilkenny Castle was surrounded by a moat. The moat was filled in when the Butlers were building the street outside, known as the Parade. In the 1990s, archaeologists carried out a dig here to find out more about the castle. They uncovered the moat that surrounded the castle. Many castles would have their moat filled with water, but Kilkenny Castle's moat was a dry moat. It was even wider than it is today and the stone footpath out of it towards the city can be seen. The stairway and entrance to the castle as shown in the photo was also discovered during the

dig. This door is called a sally port. When the castle was under attack and the main entrance couldn't be opened, soldiers came out of these sally ports to attack the enemy.

Above the sally port was an important window. This type of window is known as an arrow loop and was put here to protect the soldiers that were leaving through the sally port. The soldiers who remained in the castle were able to shoot arrows at the enemy through this arrow loop. In those days there was no glass in the windows. Inside, the opening in the wall is much wider. This design made sure the person had enough space to shoot with a bow and arrow.





People went to the toilet in a garderobe in the castle and the waste materials came down here.

Here is evidence of the footpath.

Parade Tower

We are now looking at one of the original towers of Kilkenny Castle. Look at the different style of windows. Can you spot an arrow loop?

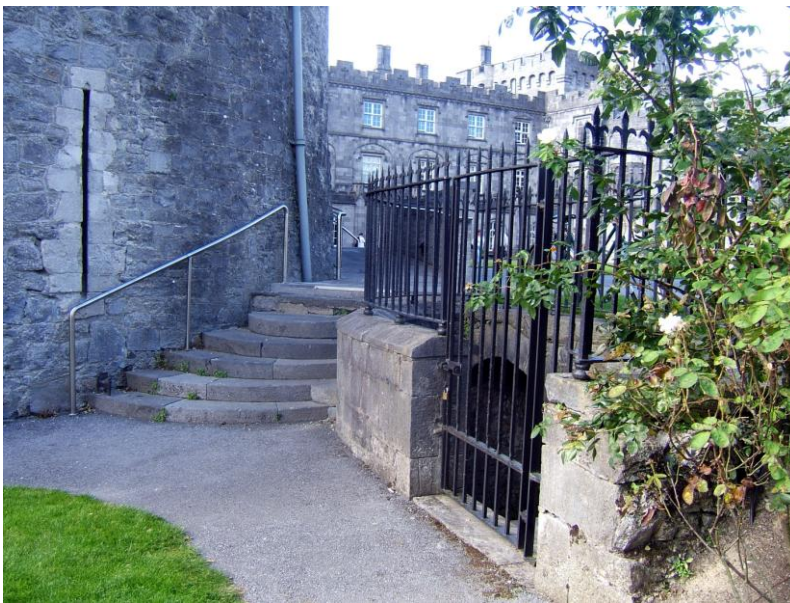


The Parade Tower

The Servants

In the old days there was no electricity, so all the work in the castle had to be done by hand. This meant that the Butlers had a large number of servants working for them. *What kind of work had to be done? How was the work done before electricity?*

A special passage for the servants was built underground from the courtyard into the castle. The entrance is shown in the photo. Inside the castle, the servants had their own staircase and in some cases, their own doors into the family rooms. Lots of castles and big houses in Ireland had this. *What do you think was the reason for this?*



Servants' Entrance

Other Features



James Butler, the first Duke of Ormonde, had a lot of work to do on the castle after it had been attacked in 1650. One of his projects was to install new drainpipes made of lead. On the lead hoppers, which are at the top of the drainpipes, he had the year **1682** and the Butler crest - a falcon rising out of a crown - engraved. *How does that connect with the coat of arms over the entrance?*

If you look each side of the door going into the castle you will see the three cups of the Butlers engraved in a shield. *How does that connect with the coat of arms over the entrance?*



Until the 20th century, the only way to heat the castle was by lighting open fires in the fireplaces. Then, in 1904, a new boiler was put into the basement of Kilkenny Castle. Coal was burnt in this to heat the water in the pipes and radiators throughout the castle. It took a lot of coal to heat such a big building. When the coal was bought, trapdoors such as the one in the photo were opened up and the coal was thrown down into storage areas called bunkers. These were along the corridor in the basement of the castle close to the boiler.



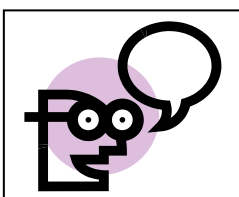


View South



View North: St John's Bridge

These views taken from the top of the Rose Garden shows why this site was chosen for the castle to be built on. It is up on a height and is beside a bridging point on the River Nore. When Kilkenny Castle was built in 1207, it was very important to have a site that would help the soldiers inside the castle to defend it. *Why do you think this is such a good place to build a castle?*



This picture is on the trail leaflet and it means that the answer is spoken instead of written.

