



Key to the castle

St Michael's Mount

Unlock the stories of the past,
the spirit of the present and
the possibilities of the future.



St Aubyn
Foundation



Castle support notes for school group leaders

Welcome to the castle

The guide at the West Door will give a brief welcome and housekeeping notes. Please speak to the room guides who are always happy to share their knowledge and stories. Dip into these notes to support your journey around the castle.



How to use these notes

There is a one-way route to follow with objects to locate in each room. These notes are intended to provide you with some leading questions to spark interest and discussion along the way.

A colour-coded plan of the castle links to each room, so you can see how far along the route you are.

These notes could be used by leading adults to support groups of younger children or be given to older students to use more independently.

Key



The main statement and question for the space



Information about the object in the image



Simple question for discussion about the object pictured



More in-depth discussion, question or topic for further exploration

I Entrance Hall



What do the objects in this room tell us about the St Aubyn family?

They are a well-travelled family with a background in the military and a love for adventure.



This travelling trunk is over 350 years old.



What text can you read? Find the date on the front.



Talk about how travel has changed over time.



This is a coat of arms; a picture that uses symbols and animals to represent a family.



What different elements can you name?



What symbols would you put on your family's coat of arms?



2 Sir John's Room



This is a study. What does that mean?

The photos and paintings are all of the St Aubyn family who have lived here for 12 generations (more than 300 years).



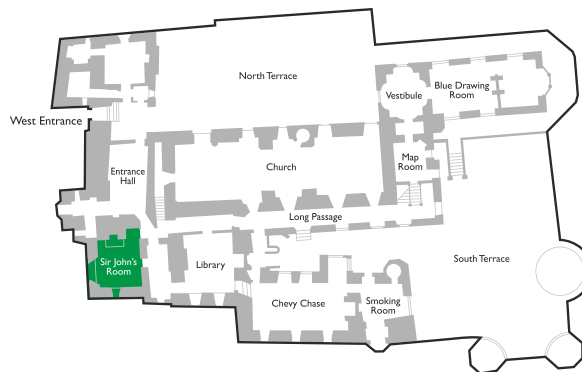
This is a photo of the current Lord St Levan's grandfather.



Follow the photos in order around the table – what stories do they tell?



Do you have family photos? Talk about your family history.



This is a tidal clock showing 'High Water at Mounts Bay' at the top.



Where was this clock made? Look closely at the face.



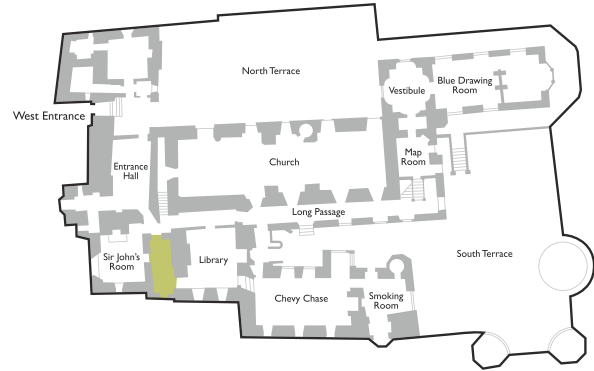
Talk about today's tide.

3 Ante Room



Why are the paintings on the left so small?

Miniatures were a way for wealthy people to have an image of a loved one to keep with them. They were the selfies of their day.



This is a lock of hair belonging to Sir John St Aubyn from 1795.



Why do you think it was framed and kept?



Portraits give us lots of clues about the era in which they were made. Look at the clothing, hair and objects in other portraits to compare.

4 Library



What do you think the family did in here?

You can almost forget that you are in a castle... it is a warm, cosy space. All the books are real, and the family would spend leisure time here.



This is a set of bellows, used to pump air into a fire to make it hotter.



What are the other objects around the fireplace?



Keeping a home warm and dry can be difficult. How has this changed over time?



This is a rosewood gaming table dating from around 1840.



What is the name of this game?
How old is the table?



What table-top games do you play with your family or friends?

5 Chevy Chase



**What do you think this room was used for?
Are there any clues?**

This was the original dining room for the monks on the island, and later for the family.



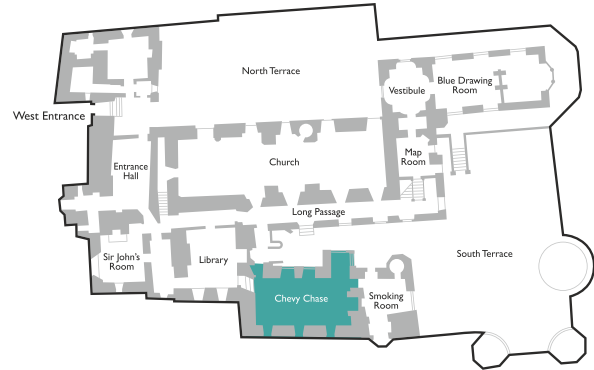
This plasterwork was inspired by 'The Ballad of The Chevy Chase' - a popular song of the time that was familiar to lots of people.



What story does the frieze depict?



What popular song, poem or story would you choose to illustrate your home or school?



This is a Glastonbury Chair. The other chairs were based on this original and were made on the Mount more than 200 years ago.



Could you think of some reasons why the Lord would sit here?



Talk about other situations in which you would have a seating plan.

6 Smoking Room



When the monks lived here, this was the Prior's office.

Later it became a space for gentlemen to retire after grand dinners to drink port and play games.



These gaming counters are from a famous club in London. They were used in card games to help understand who was winning.



A Guinea is an old currency equivalent to £1.05 today. Can you name any other currencies?



What other games and sports can you see in the pictures around the room?

7 Terraces



There are two terraces – this is the South Terrace and the North Terrace is up the steps.

The terraces are a newer part of the castle – only 150 years old. You are standing on the roof of the private apartments where the family live today.



Look up and notice the rooftops and chimneys. You can see the difference between older and newer parts of the castle.



What do you think the metal rods on the highest points are for?



Buildings can change significantly over time – look for evidence of changes on buildings you know.



For hundreds of years islanders have used boats and the causeway to get to and from St Michael's Mount.



Can you spot the three boat landings on the mainland?



It is often difficult for islanders to get on and off the Mount in bad weather. Can you come up with some modern solutions?

8 Church



What is this space? How do you know?

Sunday services are still held here in the Church of St Michael and All Angels. There are many depictions of St Michael to discover in here.



This is a bronze sculpture of the Arch Angel St Michael and the Devil.



What is happening here? Describe what you see.



Find out about the legend of St Michael and the Mount. Ask a guide or research at home/school.



Stained glass windows were created to tell Bible stories for people who couldn't read.



Can you spot something familiar in the sea of this window?



What other stories and characters can you discover in the stained glass windows?

9 Blue Drawing Room



Pause outside first...

This part of the castle is where the family would, and still do, greet their most important visitors.

It was decorated in a fashionable colour and used by ladies after dinner.



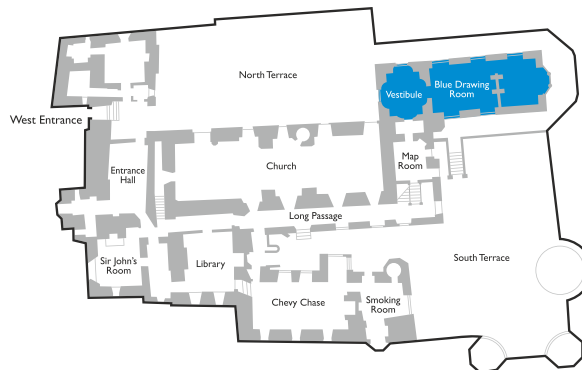
This plaque, **just before entering** the Blue Drawing Room, commemorates a royal visit.



What does it say?



What would you do to remember a royal visit to your house?



These are photos of important royal visitors with the St Aubyn family.



Who are the royals? Did you spot their footprints in the village?



Which famous people would you invite for tea and why?

10 Map Room



Maps were not so accurate in the past as they are today – why is that?

Use one of the maps to locate St Michael's Mount and/or your school.



This model was made for the family by the butler who worked for them for almost 50 years. It is made with champagne corks.



How accurate is the model? Trace your route.



It has great sentimental value. What does that mean? Do you have objects that are sentimental?



This is a 4000-year-old mummified cat from ancient Egypt. It would have been brought back to the island as a holiday souvenir.



Why do you think ancient Egyptians did this to their pets?



What kind of souvenir would you take home from your trip here today?



Long Passage



What could be behind the closed doors in this space?

The family still live here so bedrooms, bathrooms and the kitchen are all still in use today.



Glance at the artworks as you walk through the Long Passage and imagine all the people who have been here before.



Would you like to live here? Why/why not?

12 Garrison (Lower Level)



All these exhibits have been brought here by the St Aubyn family or islanders.

The model of the boatman in the red uniform was based on the photograph next to it.



This Japanese Samurai armour was likely ceremonial and not worn in battle. It is over 200 years old.



Do you think this armour is comfortable and practical compared with the breast plate in the cabinet behind you?



Walk through the Garrison to explore the range of objects and imagine their purpose and life story.



You have reached the end of the castle tour.

Follow the narrow tunnel through to the exit and head outside.

Please return this resource to the member of staff and take care descending the steep castle path.



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