

Easter was the most important time of the year for Christians.



Bolton Castle

Based on the pagan festival of Eostra and the Jewish festival of the Passover, both of which signified a new dawn and a fresh beginning, the sacrifice of Christ on the cross on Good Friday and His resurrection, gave hope to Christians that they also could share eternal life.

Copying Jesus' example of his 40 days in the desert, Medieval children, along with their parents would fast for the 40-day period of Lent that led up to Easter. Eggs were one of the foods that were forbidden during this period. Because food was scarce and could not be wasted, any eggs left after Shrove Tuesday (pancake day) were boiled to preserve them. After Good Friday, fasting was over and the eggs could be taken out and eaten.

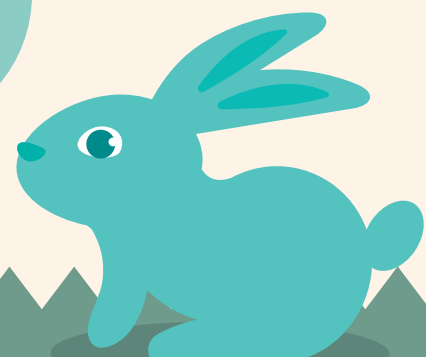
Bolton Castle's Easter reflects the early Christian traditions. The Triduum, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday led up to Easter Sunday itself. Each of these days represents a different aspect of Easter which we have tried to reflect.

Maundy Thursday, from the Latin word 'mandatum', an order, shows the instruction given by Jesus to His disciples at the Last Supper, to go out into the world and serve. Ancient monarchs copied Jesus's example of service by washing the feet of ordinary people. We won't ask you to do that, but we are going to copy our modern queen's example of service by handing out some replica Medieval coins, the Maundy money. **You will have to earn them, though.**

Good Friday is a day that many people spent in a darkened church with just one candle, the Paschal, lit to represent the 'light of Christ'. Thorns were placed on the altar, signifying Christ's agony in dying for His people. Visit our chapel to see how a Medieval church might have looked.

Holy Saturday, in our part of the world it is very rare for people to go hungry. In Medieval England it was not unusual for children to die of hunger. Fasting for 40 hours over Good Friday and Holy Saturday was the norm for early Christians, a sign of penance, but many Medieval Christians believed the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross had atoned for their sins. Consequently, they celebrated this day by starting again; new clothes and food instead of fasting, whilst also remembering Christ in the tomb.

Easter Sunday is the day of the resurrection; spent in a well lit church with much rejoicing, the people knowing they would be saved if they followed Christ's teaching.



Now it's your turn to follow the traditions of your Medieval ancestors who lived here at Bolton Castle.

Traditionally people painted hard boiled eggs in different colours. Many in England used red, whilst Christians in Germany used green and then your parents would then send you on a hunt for eggs, partly to keep you occupied, but also to represent the disciples search for the risen Christ.

The eggs are hidden around the rooms off the courtyard. On each egg you see, there will be a letter. Copy the letters onto your paper; when you have them all, and there should be 9, you will be able to spell one of the rooms in the castle. Go to that room and follow the instructions there.

Copy your letters into these squares

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Use the following squares to write down the name of the room in the castle



For the majority of people, many of the Easter traditions are now gone. Fewer people attend church. Children still search for eggs on Easter Sunday, but these are now made of chocolate. New clothes are rarely worn, although if you talk to your grandparents, they will tell you that at times such as Easter, they would have had to wear clothes that were their 'Sunday best.'

New ideas have come in such as the Easter bunny, but I'm afraid we do not have one of those. What we do have, however, is our own very special creature, a castle dragon. Alfraeda has been part of the castle's history since it was completed in 1399.

There are many stories about her. When you are at home you can download two of the stories from the castle website.

Somewhere in the castle is a dragon's egg. Once you have found it, have your parents take a photograph of the egg with you in the picture. Show that to the people in the shop, and you will receive a 'modern' reward, a chocolate egg.

With your Maundy money and your chocolate egg, you have connected the past to the present. From all the castle staff, welcome to Bolton Castle, and a Happy Easter; or, as your ancestors might have said: **Felix Pascha!**

Before you go home, don't forget to leave your name and contact number for the Easter egg raffle draw. This will take place at the end of Easter Monday.

Name

Email

