

The rise & ruin of Castle Neroche

For all to discover...

The earthworks around you are the product of three long-distant periods of occupation, when different groups of people strove to make the most of this prominent, defensible hilltop. The pictures here allow you to travel back in time to imagine how this place may once have looked.

An Iron Age Status Symbol

Iron Age period **700BC - 43 AD**

Standing here 2000 years ago, you would probably have been surrounded by the livestock and temporary shelters of a small Iron Age community, taking refuge behind the defensive banks. The high ground provided an important symbol of power and status for the local tribe.

A Norman Seat of Power

Norman period **1067 - 1087AD**

Fast forward 1000 years and you would have witnessed the building of a Norman castle within the Iron Age earthworks. Shortly after 1066, William the Conqueror's half brother Robert, Count of Mortain, constructed a large earth mound (the 'motte') topped by a wooden tower (the 'keep') connected to an outer enclosure (the 'bailey'). The Castle would have dominated the skyline, emphasising Norman control of the area.

A Fortress Amidst the Anarchy

'The Anarchy' period **1138 - 1148AD**

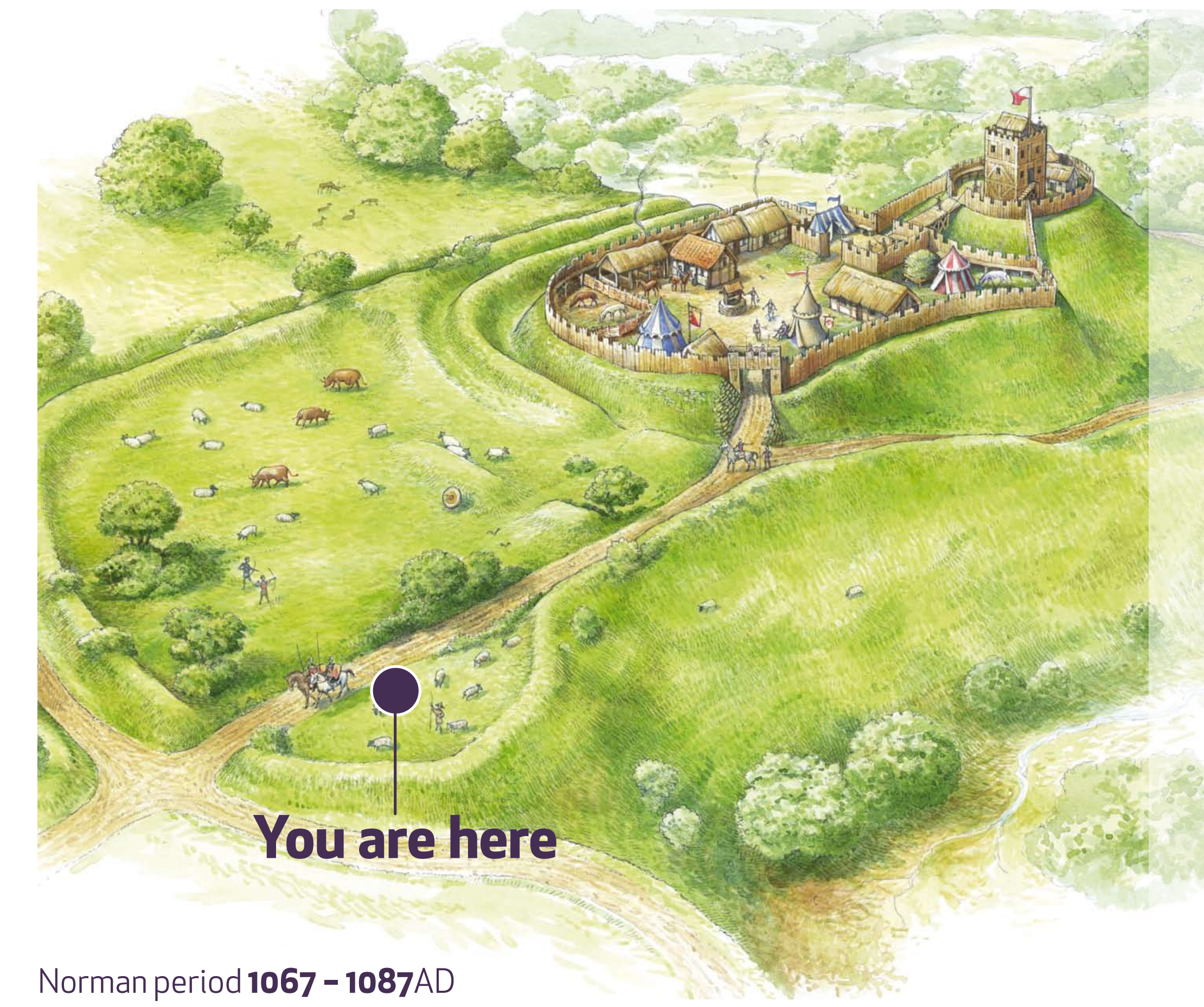
Less than a century later, following the death of Henry I, a period of civil war and anarchy led to a re-fortification of the Castle. Around 1138 the motte ditch was enlarged and the keep was replaced with a stone tower, albeit probably only occupied for a few years. Thereafter the Castle fell into disuse for more than 500 years, until the current farm was established on the site of the bailey in the 19th century.



Members of the H. St George Gray archaeological excavation, 1903



Iron Age period **700BC - 43 AD**



Norman period **1067 - 1087AD**



'The Anarchy' period **1138 - 1148AD**. Detail of motte and bailey