



BELLS CASTLE

OVERBURY • GLOUCESTERSHIRE





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*A unique Gothic castle in a commanding
position with sensational views*

CASTLE

Entrance Hall • Reception Hall • Drawing Room • Sitting Room
Dining Room • Study • Kitchen & Breakfast Room • Service Kitchen • Cloakroom
Pantry • Utility Room • Side Hall • Library
Seven Bedrooms & Four Bathrooms

WEST TOWER

Three Rooms

COTTAGE (ATTACHED)

Sitting Room • Kitchen • Two Bedrooms & Bathroom
Attractive Formal Gardens • Garden Room • Loggia • Further Loggia
Covered Garden Store • Further Stores • Rear Garden • Outdoor Swimming Pool
Tennis Court area • Outbuildings & Garaging

In all about 1.39 acres

Tewkesbury 6 miles • Cheltenham 10 miles • Oxford 50 miles • London 103 miles

M5 (J9) 5 miles • A40 13 miles • A417 18 miles (Distances approximate)

SITUATION

Bells Castle is situated in a stunning elevated location within the beautiful, family owned, Overbury Estate in the Cotswolds. Built by the pirate, Captain Edmund Bell in the early 19th Century and linking an original row of Tudor cottages to a period 18th Century Tower, the Gothic property featuring battlements and turrets is exclusive and enthralling.

Overbury Village is located about half a mile away from the castle on the south easterly side comprising an idyllic private estate village. Within Overbury is its Church of England First School, private nursery school, cricket club, bowling club and the beautiful Norman Church of St Faiths. Kemerton village is about half a mile to the south west and features a village hall, pub and village shop together with interesting history dating back to Roman times. The Overbury Estate has a reputed partridge and pheasant shoot.

The Regency spa town of Cheltenham is approximately twenty minutes distant and provides a large selection of shops and amenities including Whole Foods and Waitrose supermarkets. Tewkesbury is just ten minutes distant providing a good array of shopping and local amenities. The picturesque villages of Winchcombe and Broadway are about ten and twelve miles distant respectively, providing delightful restaurants boutique shops and pubs.





Connections by road and rail are excellent. Cheltenham Spa train station is just twelve miles away providing national connections. The M5 Junction 9 is about five miles distant and the A40 is about thirteen miles away.

Good schooling is in abundance, including Malvern College, the Cheltenham Schools and Rendcomb College.

Local sporting facilities include racing at Cheltenham and Stratford, polo at Cirencester Park and there is an array of point to points including Andoversford and Upton upon Severn. There is golf at a number of local courses including Naunton, Broadway and Cheltenham.

The spa town of Cheltenham hosts a number of festivals including cricket, literature, music, science and jazz and has several theatres as well as a Michelin starred restaurant.



BELLS CASTLE —A BRIEF HISTORY

The legends, the history and the facts surrounding the iconic and fascinating story of the unique Bell's Castle abound to this day. It stands proudly upon the Overbury Estate and in a commanding position on Bredon Hill with astonishing views over the Cotswolds, the Malvern Hills and beyond into Wales.

Two particular families, for whom the Castle has been their "fortress" and above all their home, tell the story best of all; Captain Bell and the Holland-Martin family.

Captain Bell was responsible for the building and the original architectural Gothic design of Bell's Castle and the garden layout. Prior to his foresight there stood a row of farmers cottages, served by herdsmen and shepherds since the Stuart era, to the east (circa early 17th Century) and a fine water tower to the west (circa early 18th Century). He then built the Castle and attached the aforementioned to the remarkable Castle that has stood ever since.

Who was this mysterious Captain Bell and what was his fate? He was a bold buccaneer of the period of the Napoleonic Wars, a leader of a pirate crew who singed Frenchmen's beards even as Drake singed the beards of Spaniards in the days of Queen Elizabeth I. From a quote "Tis said he spoiled their merchant ships of rich cargoes of silks, wines and gold and had the loot conveyed from the Bristol Channel up the Severn and Avon rivers to Bredon Hill, and thence by pack horses to Bell's Castle there to be hidden in cavernous cellars". As men toiled at night at the disembarkation point on the river bank they could see a beacon light flashing its encouraging signal from

the top of the Castle water tower. So long as the war lasted Captain Bell was regarded as the stuff of which heroes are made and his raids counted to him of virtue. But when he continued his piratical habits in peacetime, authority could no longer turn a blind eye to his exploits; moreover he is alleged to have taken prisoners, including two beautiful French Countesses, locking them within Bell's Castle and holding them for ransom (perhaps other things besides !!). Eventually he paid the penalty for his deeds on the scaffold. Captain Bell had clearly enjoyed the good things in life of that there can be no doubt. His Castle was his home.

And then in the late 19th Century and to the present day Bell's Castle came within the ownership of the Overbury Estate and the Holland-Martin family. Four generations, including the present H-M family owner, have considered it a special part of their lives. In 1910, Sir Richard Martin, Robert Holland-Martin's uncle, was reigning squire of Overbury. One day at luncheon in that summer year R H-M announced that Uncle Richard had given a special present to the family. To the eager guesses as to its identity he replied "bigger than that", until one of

his sons hazarded "Bell's Castle", and for the next two decades Bell's Castle was the family home for the H-Ms and their six sons before RH-M's inheritance of the Overbury Estate and moving into Overbury Court. Besides RH-M making some major alterations and additions to the Castle with the assistance of the renowned architects, Ernest Newton and Sir Herbert Baker. The latter was responsible for the design of the outside dining-room. RH-M's six sons would often camp in the garden whilst he invited a never ending list of guests. It never occurred to him to worry whether his guests would mix. Lovely Italian countesses in immaculate evening dresses and the highest of high heels would find themselves next to artists on walking tours, who had carried their few rough clothes and their sleeping equipment on their backs. But all enjoyed themselves at Bell's Castle. The six sons never ceased to find all kinds of exploits to entertain themselves within the castle battlements. On one occasion they managed to take a pony into the castle and manhandle it to the upper most tower within. Apparently the journey up was considerably easier than the journey down! On another day

one of the sons, Deric, was ceremoniously tied to a selection of umbrellas and then pushed from the top tower to parachute to the ground many feet below. Fortunately he was to survive this ordeal and was, with his wife Rosamund, to live at Bell's Castle from the 1950s.

Admiral Sir Deric Holland-Martin (also Lord Lieutenant of the County) had been Commander-in-Chief Allied Forces in Malta before returning to make Bell's Castle, and indeed the Overbury Estate, a special home for himself, his wife and his children, Ben and Emma. As with Captain Bell some 150 years prior once again the castle became the home of a sailor. And like his parents prior many stories abound of entertainment and amusement within the battlements of Bell's Castle. Given his wife was a keen photographer such history is well documented in hundreds of photograph albums together with a fine painting of Ben and Emma as children in front of the castle.

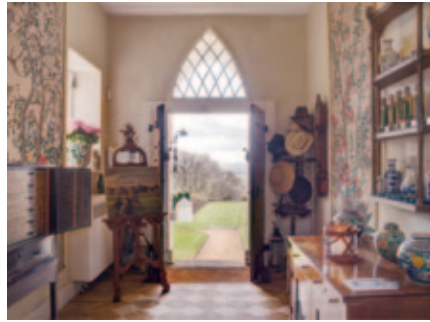
Ben, as the fourth generation of the Holland-Martin family to own Bell's Castle, is the present owner and has considered it his home since birth.

The walls and battlements of Bell's Castle have a legion of stories to tell of the last 200 years. Given its majestic and ever changing view over the Cotswolds and the Malverns with the Welsh Mountains appearing in the far distance further tales can be related. It is always a satisfying vista whichever way your eyes should wander with frequent changing colours, texture and emphasis. The opening two verses of A.E Houseman's poem sum this up best of all:

In summertime on Bredon

*The bells they sound so clear;
Round both the shires they ring them
In steeples far and near,
A happy noise to hear.*

*Here of a Sunday morning
My love and I would lie,
And see the coloured counties
And hear the larks so high
About us in the sky.*



DESCRIPTION

As mentioned by Sir Nicholas Pevsner, Bells Castle is a stunning and iconic Victorian period Grade II Listed castle built in a neo-Gothic style. The property links a row of early 17th Century period cottages to a 17th Century look out tower. The property is situated in a rarefied, elevated, location within the Overbury Private Estate.

The Castle's fascinating accommodation is situated over four levels and enjoys unparalleled views over the surrounding Gloucestershire and Worcestershire countryside. Bell's Castle provides large and intricately designed reception rooms with picturesque hallways and a good array of bedroom accommodation. The future owner has the option to enjoy the current individual period layout of rooms or can potentially alter to very different possibilities subject to the necessary consents being obtained. The interior has a Victorian Gothic arched motif throughout leading to the most enticing of rooms.

The interlinked drawing and sitting rooms provide one of the principal features at the upper ground floor level together with the beautiful reception hall. The sunken library occupies a lovely corner location with access to the gardens. The lower ground floor provides a beautiful dining room with kitchen and pantry adjacent. Beyond the kitchen is a large covered garden store and a utility room. The foot of the original tower is also accessed from here, comprising four levels with fixed ladder access.









Bedroom accommodation is situated over two levels with bedroom four occupying an exciting elevated position.

Bell's Castle has a distinctive wing that comprises a series of original cottages pre-dating the castle, thought to originate from the early 17th Century. This wing provides two storeys of ancillary accommodation, together with an office and sporting storage.

OUTSIDE

The property has two main points of access. A substantial Victorian Gothic arched door provides formal access set into the side of the castle wall. This provides access to the stunning front garden.

Everyday access is either via an entrance point further along from the formal access gate with parking opposite this side of the castle. Secure parking is adjacent to the array of outbuildings beyond the rear walled garden.

Formal gardens orientate to the south of the castle and its main elevation. A two tier lawn with ha-ha and outdoor swimming pool leads to a projected viewing point which enjoys the stunning views. Within the garden is a delightful loggia providing seating space for 10 people and a garden store room attached to the castle walls.

To the rear of the castle is a walled kitchen garden with useful store rooms. Beyond is an enclosed parking area with an array of outbuildings and a garage. At the head of this area is a dilapidated tennis court.

Nearby Bredon Hill is one of the most important wildlife sites in England, situated in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with the remains of earthworks from an Iron Age Hill Fort which is known as Kemerton Camp. At the summit, adjacent to Kemerton Camp, is a small stone tower called Parsons Folly which it is believed was built in the mid-18th Century for John Parsons MP of Kemerton Court and intended as a summer house from which a more extensive view of the countryside could be seen.

There are also Roman earthworks and a number of ancient standing stones on the hill. One large stone at the summit is called the Banbury Stone, deriving from 'Baenintesburg', a name for the fort in the 8th century. It is known colloquially as the 'Elephant Stone' because of its resemblance to that animal. Another pair of stones below the summit are known as the King and Queen Stones. Local legend tells that if you pass between them you will be cured of illness.





Gross internal area (approx):

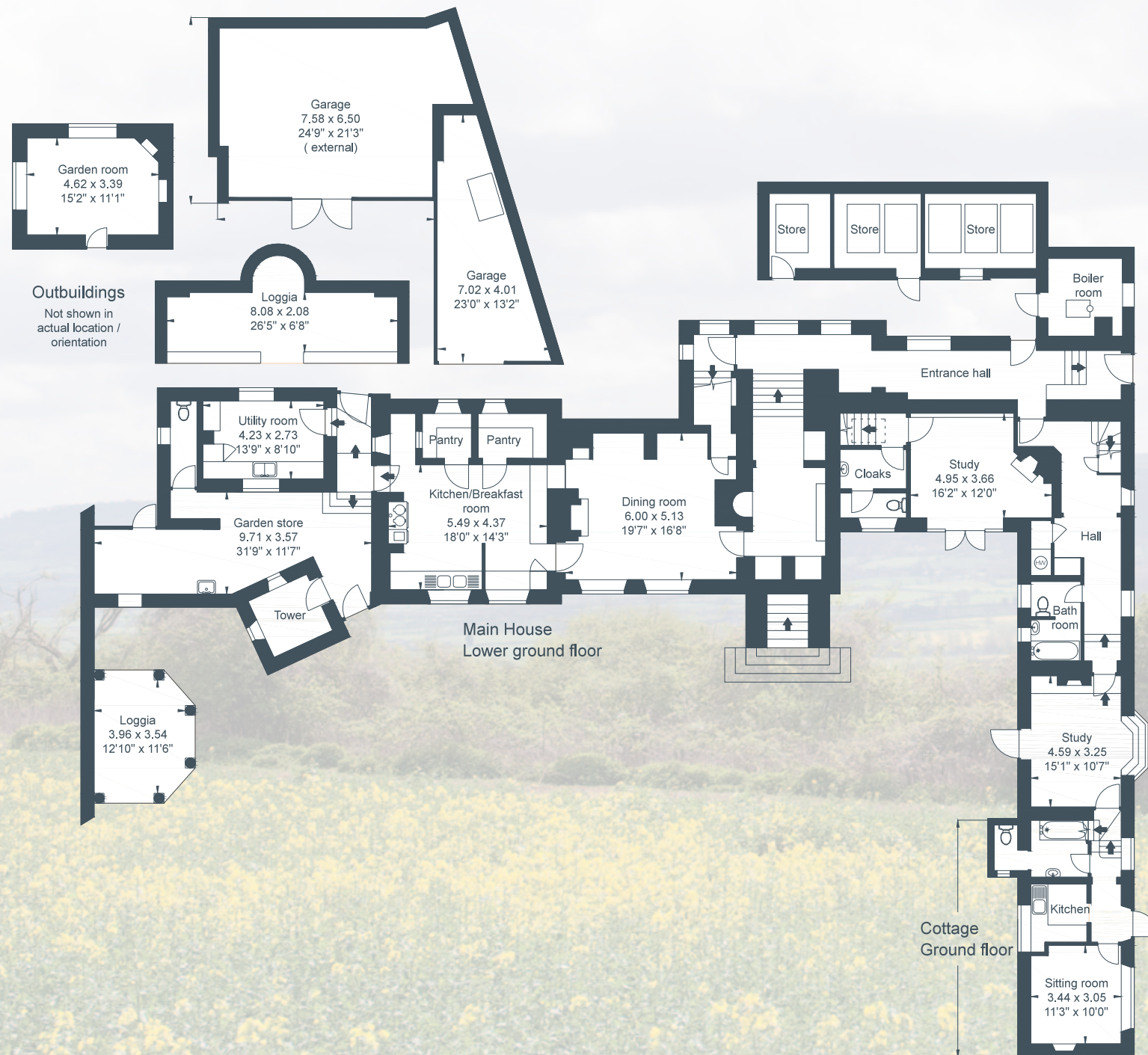
Main House: 634 sq m (6,825 sq ft)

Cottage: 54 sq m (581 sq ft)

Outbuildings: 117 sq m (1,260 sq ft)

Total: 805 sq m (8,688 sq ft)

For identification only. Not to Scale.





SERVICES

Mains electricity, private water supply from The Overbury Estate to be converted to mains supply by future owner. Private drainage, oil fired central heating.

LOCAL AUTHORITY

Wychavon District Council. Tel 01386 565000

DIRECTIONS (GL20 7JW)

From Stow on the Wold take the B4077 towards Toddington. After about 16 miles, at the Teddington Hands roundabout, take the third exit onto Crashmore Lane. After approximately 1.5 miles you will arrive at a "Give Way" in Overbury. Bear left and carry on for a further mile into Kemerton. Upon entering the village of Kemerton, take the first right passing the Church and up Castle Hill Lane. After approximately half a mile the castle will be found on the left hand side.

From Junction 9 of the M5, take the A46 eastwards for about 1.5 miles until you arrive at the Teddington Hands roundabout and then follow the directions as above.

From Stratford upon Avon/Evesham take the A46 southbound for about 9 miles until you arrive at the Teddington Hands roundabout and then follow the directions as above.

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