

historic buildings also form a focus for study, but historic sites can offer much more than that. It is not only in our present time that human beings have been faced with the problems of the use and misuse of natural resources, the quality and vulnerability of different environments or devising schemes for protecting and managing environments. If we look at some periods in the past we can see that the people in England destroyed their local environment by over use, but conversely at other times they went to great lengths to manage the natural world so that it survived for further use. By studying the historic sites preserved for us we can get an insight into how the environment was used by past peoples and we can also consider the management problems that face us now.

Looking at the environmental quality of an historic site

Before they visit an historic protected site children need to be aware that the site has certain qualities that make it worthy of protection. It may be the best example of a particular class of site, eg castle, abbey etc. It may be the only surviving example of a particular type of site, or it may be a unique site, such as Stonehenge. It is important that the children are aware why a particular site is being preserved, and who is protecting it.

Children will also need to be aware that the site, as a 'heritage' site, is now the focus of much visitor activity. The presence of the attraction will have consequences for the local environment. So, the site itself is not only of importance for its past activity, but also in the present geography of the landscape. The site may have been an abbey or castle or hillfort or long barrow and in many ways it still is, but now it is also a social amenity.

Looking at the environment in the past

Children need to explore the site in order to find the evidence that will answer key questions such as:

■ What was this place like? Why was this place like it was, how and why did it differ from, or resemble, other places?

■ In what ways was this place connected to other places?

■ How did this place change and why?

■ What would it have felt like to be in this place?

The neolithic flint mines at Grimes Graves in Norfolk used non-renewable flint and caused major landscape scars.



Interviewing visitors to gather information.

Each of these questions generates further sub-questions:

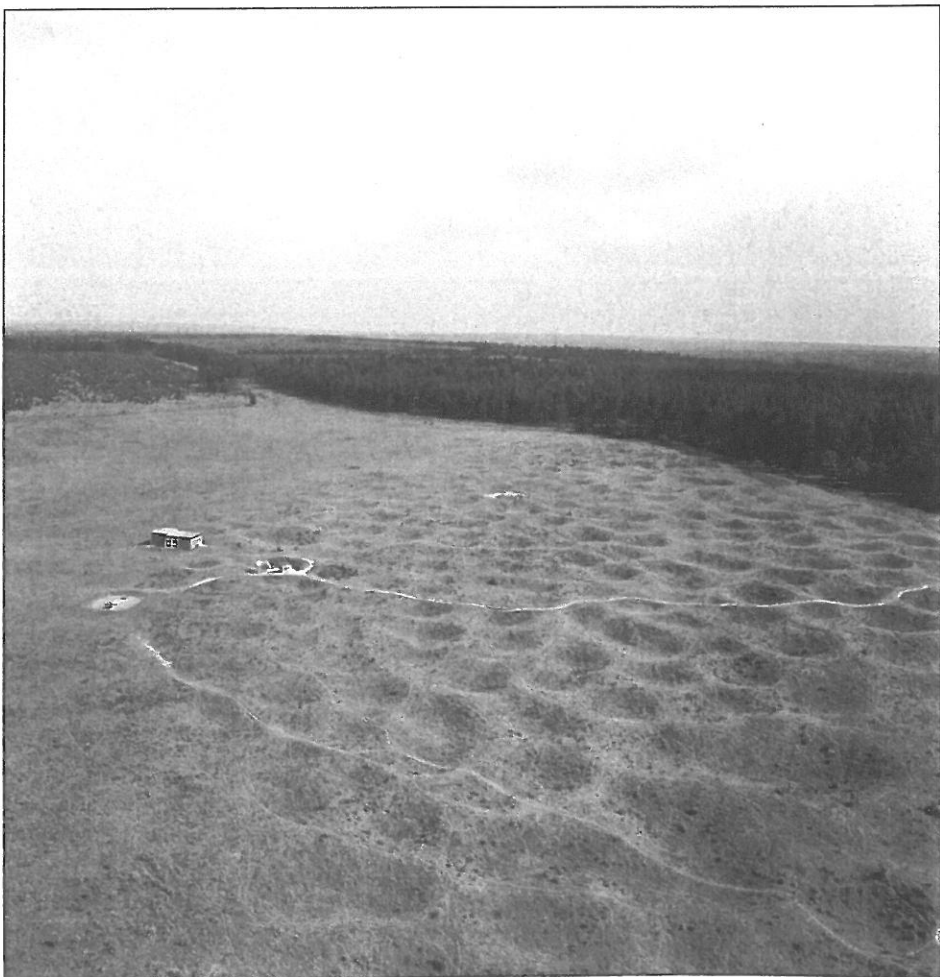
■ What natural resources were used to build it? Were these renewable or finite resources? Is there any evidence remaining of the extraction of natural resources for building such as quarries?

■ What other natural resources were used everyday at the site such as water or materials for agriculture or industry? How were they brought to

the site? Where were they stored and used?

■ What activities went on at the site that might have resulted in damage to the quality of the air and water?

■ How did the inhabitants get rid of their rubbish or waste products? Was it put in particular areas? What does the rubbish tell us about those who used the site? How did they dispose of polluted water?



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■ Why was the site abandoned? Was it because resources became scarce?

Into the present

The key questions in this case are similar to those asked about the past of the site:

■ What is this place like?

■ Why is this place like it is, how and why does it differ from, or resemble, other places?

■ In what way is this place connected with other places?

■ How is this place changing and why?

■ What does it feel like to be in this place?

These in turn might generate other questions and activities:

■ Interview other people who are visiting the site. Where have they come from? Why are they here? Interview the custodian or examine the previous months entries in the visitors book.

■ Where have people come from? Which month has the most visitors, which the least? Why?

■ How do people get to the site? Do they all come by car? Is the site accessible by public transport? Does the site need to have a car park? Does the parking of your coach cause a problem? Does the car park spoil the site or is it hidden?

■ How has the site been made accessible to visitors? Is the site suffering damage from so many visitors? Are there parts of the site that are not accessible because they are vulnerable to damage? How are they made accessible to viewing from a distance? Are there arrangements for disabled as well as able bodied people? What arrangements could be made to enable the site to be more meaningful to children of a range of ages, and more accessible to a range of people including disabled people and those who do not have English as a first language?

■ Does the site have facilities for its visitors: toilets, picnic areas, shops? Are they visible? What effect do they have on the site?

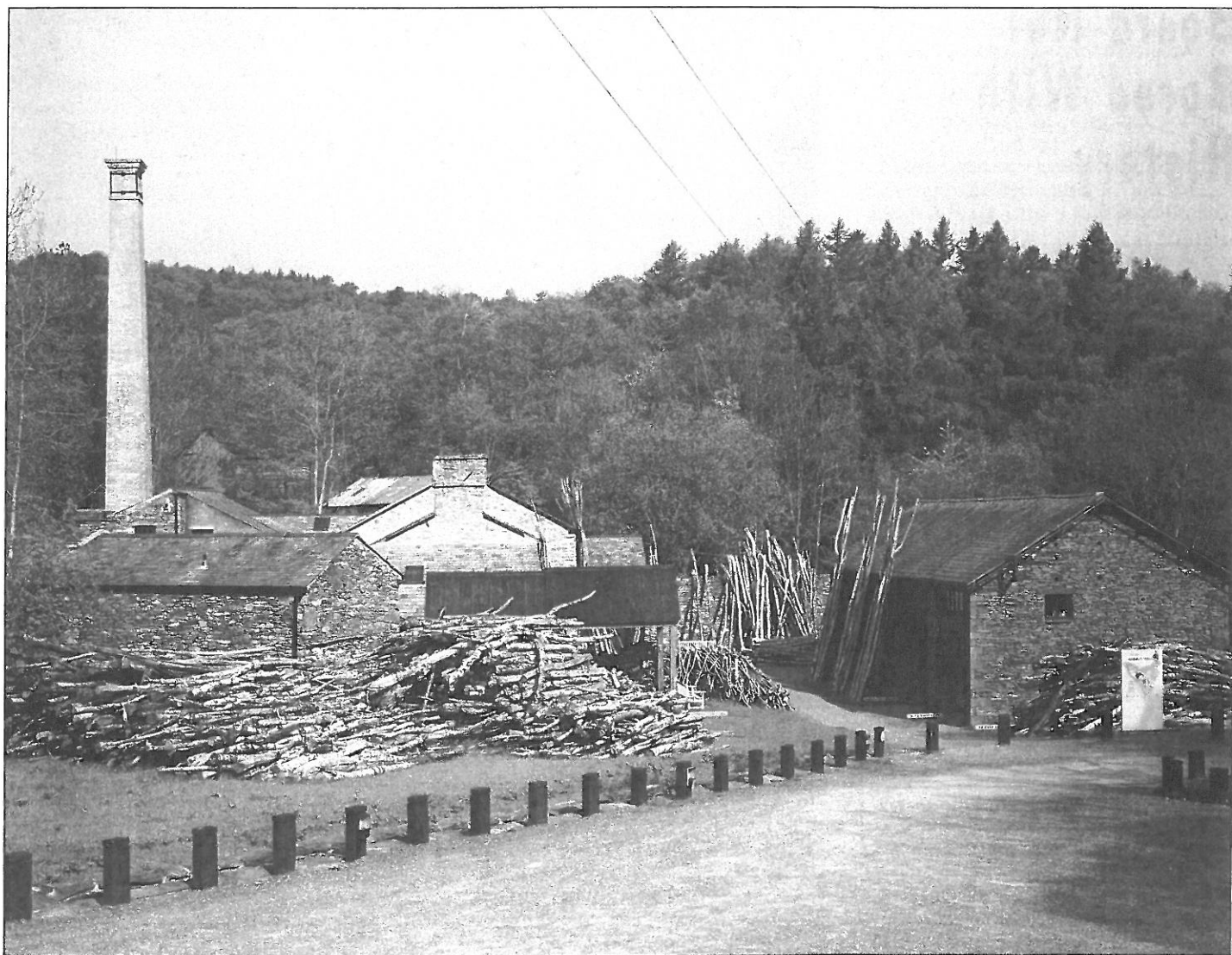
■ If it is possible, interview local residents about the effect the site has on the locality. What are the advantages of its existence? What are the disadvantages?

■ Are there any indications that the site supports wildlife and is this being managed?

Past and presentation

The children will be using fieldwork and recording techniques in collecting the data and this satisfies many aspects of AT1. The children's findings can be presented in a variety of ways using maps and diagrams, particularly in contrasting the use of the site in the past and present. Looking to the future of the site, the children might put forward a management plan that would make the site and its surroundings a better place for tourists and for residents. They might also consider how one could be made more attractive to wildlife. Perhaps some of the information boards might be designed so that past and present environmental threats are highlighted. There may be an opportunity for direct comparison of the historic site with a structure used for the same purpose in the present, such as a house or factory, and the ways that the

Stott Park Bobbin Mill in Cumbria made wooden bobbins from its own coppices and so used renewable resources.



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environment was and is being considered in their construction.

By undertaking a study of the past and present environmental quality of an historic site children can begin to understand at their own levels that:

■ There has always been use of the natural environment by human beings.

■ There has always been a tension between using the protecting the natural environment.

■ If we can understand how human beings in the past and present have damaged and managed environments we may be able to learn valuable lessons for the future.

Tim Copeland,
Head of the Centre for Heritage
Education, Cheltenham and Gloucester
College of Higher Education

A Teacher's Guide to Geography
and the Historic Environment by
Tim Copeland will be published
by English Heritage in July
this year, price £5.95.

Board Not Bored With History

Asking children to invent and then play their own games can provide an exciting part of any historical study. Two Year 5 and 6 teachers from Shropshire describe one aspect of their work on Tudors and Stuarts.

It is quite a challenge to make Core Study Unit 2 - Tudors and Stuarts - both manageable and meaningful to children aged nine and ten.

A previous investigation by children in our two classes had involved number and the production of mathematical games for use in the classroom. The idea that a similar approach could be used in history was exciting. The children had been enthusiastic in the construction and thoughtful in the rules of the games and had experienced many hours of enjoyment playing them.

Part of our work on Tudor and Stuarts involved a visit to Boscobel House, an English Heritage site situated five miles from the school. During the autumn term 1992, a class



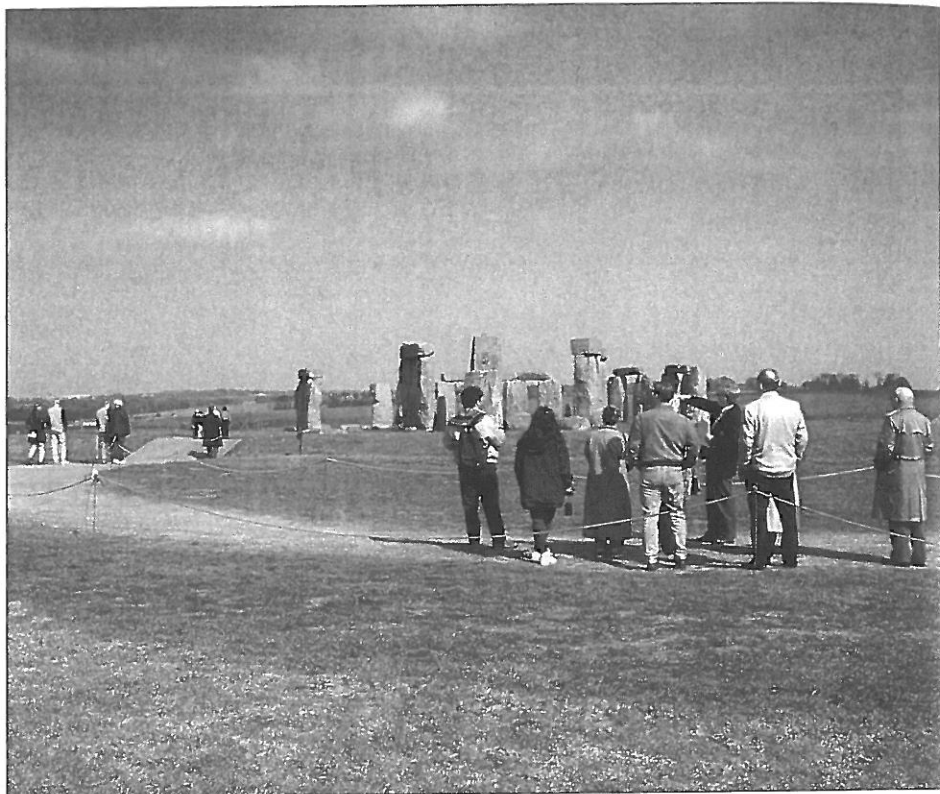
Boscobel House, Shropshire.

of 32 children headed off, clip boards at the ready, to investigate their local heritage.

Previously we had visited the site to plan the work, as sixty four children from our two classes would eventually visit the site on two separate dates. The historical importance of the site, and the fact that the future Charles II had narrowly escaped the pursuit of the Roundheads after the Battle of

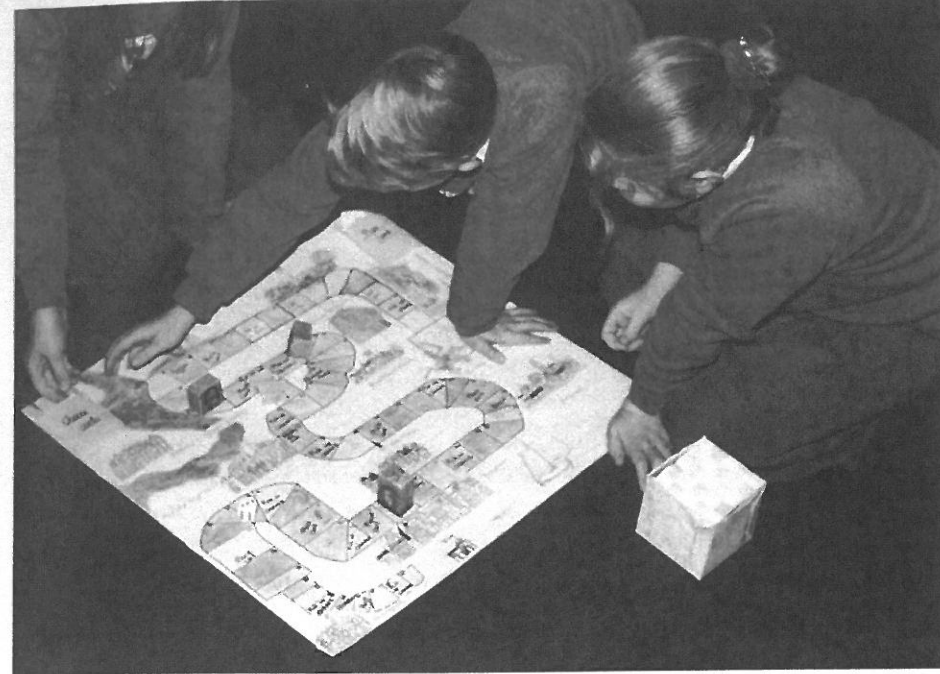
Worcester during the Civil War offered an ideal opportunity for an escape story.

On the day of the visit the children were divided into two groups and, as part of their task, they were asked to gather evidence that could be used as a basis for a board game. One group now take up their own account of the follow up activities:



Erosion of the landscape is often caused by a high volume of visitors to an historic site such as Stonehenge.

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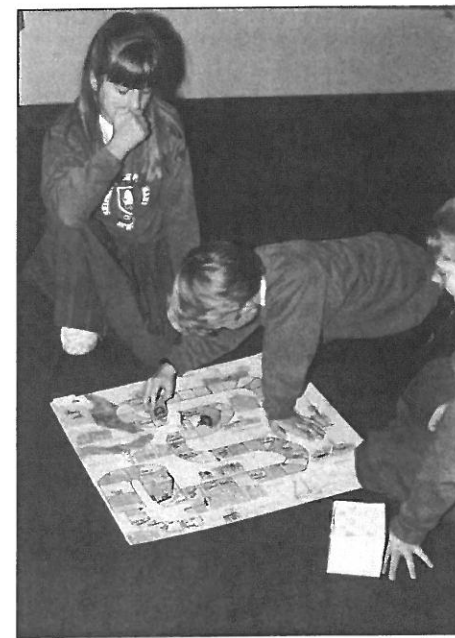
Oliver Aston

'During our visit the guide, Mrs Madely, explained about how Charles hid in the Oak Tree. Rain was pouring down and it meant that the Roundheads spent little time searching the surrounding woods. Charles also hid in a priest hole in the attic at Boscobel. One of the tasks we would be doing when we returned to school would be using the information to produce a board game based on the flight of Charles II through Shropshire.

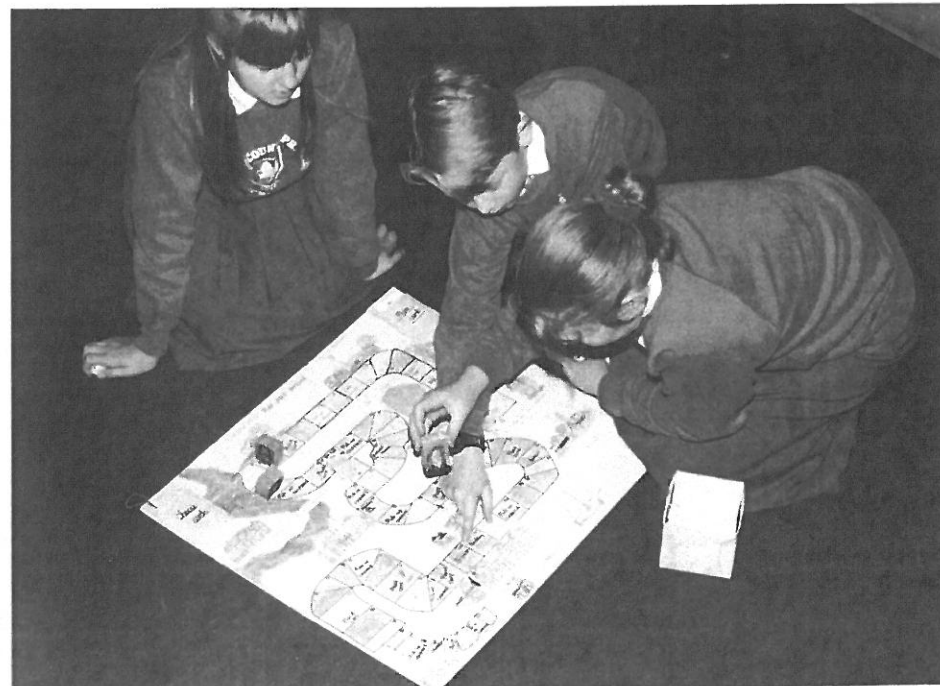
We took notes on our visit and when we returned to school we decided to make a board game using this information and also historical facts from pamphlets, books, maps and local studies material. Another member of the class brought in a book on the parish of Boscobel containing interesting facts for our game.

We decided on giving each other different tasks to do; Edmund and Adam, two members of the group did the

ABOVE & BELOW: Playing the Boscobel inspired games.



Oliver Aston



Oliver Aston

illustrations of the buildings that Charles II visited, for example White Ladies Priory and Moseley Old hall. Joanne was responsible for writing the names of the buildings to be used for the labels and the instructions for the games. Mary designed the board, and made the Chance and Place cards.

When we made our game we wanted to make it fairly simple so that children between the ages of 7-11 could understand how to play and make it enjoyable to learn history.

To produce our game we decided to use one piece of strawboard cut to size and measuring 60cm by 60cm. We then stuck a piece of 2cm squared paper on top of the strawboard to help us measure and design our board game.

When we designed our game we had to consider the size of the illustrations and labelling and the neatness and general appearance of the board. With the board we also made a cardboard container for the six balsa wood figures, a die and a balsa wood bridge.

In making this game we learnt about the flight of Charles II in a more enjoyable and interesting way and this has given us ideas for the future when we tackle our thematic work.

Below we have written the instructions to our game.'

Instructions

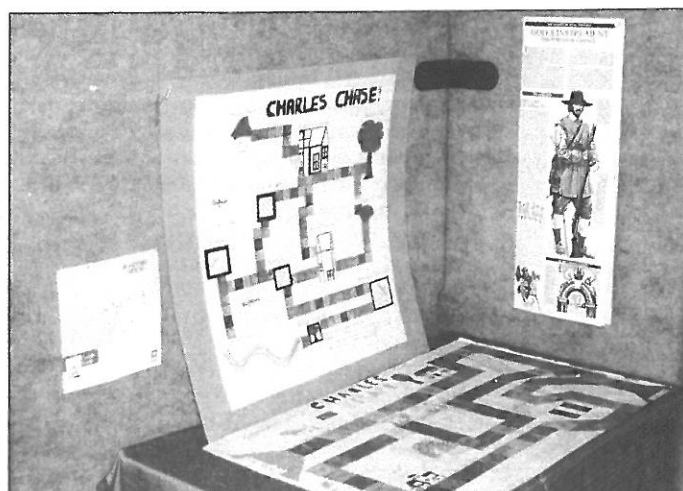
There are six players; Oliver Cromwell, Charles II, Sir Thomas Fairfax, George, Richard and Mary Penderel.

1. You each have a shake of the die in turn, do not have an extra turn for a six.
2. Make your way around the board stopping to collect either a Chance card or a Place card if you land on an instruction square.
3. The winner is the person who lands on square sixty five and goes on the creek near Shoreham and escapes to France.

Edmund Higson, Joanne Hartland and Mary Skillings

With a task such as this, there are ideal opportunities to develop subjects across the curriculum. The visit to Boscobel brought history to life for the children and began an investigation on what life was like for a king facing persecution. The evidence gained from follow up work using secondary resource material also gave the children an opportunity to discover further useful information. The use of historical sources (AT3) was well covered by both investigations and children were encouraged to collect evidence and decide which information would be beneficial to their game.

Groups of children developed speaking and listening skills during the planning and execution of specific tasks and were involved in drafting out their basic rules of the game.



Oliver Aston

Two of the board games based on Boscombe House

Important decisions had to be made - would Charles II escape every time? Research for the questions and answers cards offered another style of writing and the use of word processing encouraged a professional approach to the task.

The design and technology work involved inventing and making the

board; illustrations were made as historically accurate and as colourful as possible. The sequencing of the events of Charles' journey developed chronology and involved real-life historical characters. Elements of map work and other geographical skills were introduced.

Several commercial board games are

currently available for various historical eras. We feel that asking children to invent, and then play, their own games can provide an exciting part of any historical study.

Peter Jackson and Tessa Moore
Shifnal County Primary School,
Shropshire

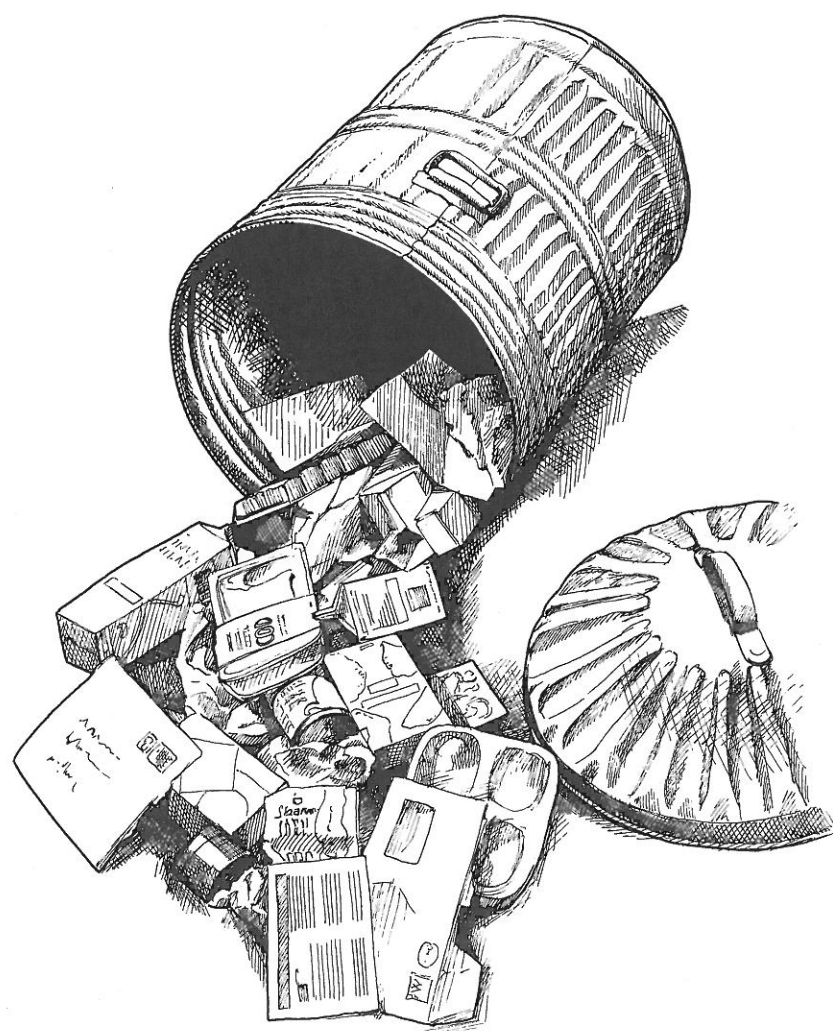
Teaching Rubbish in the Classroom

Archaeology based activities can be a good way of teaching about the past and encouraging children to ask historical questions.

At Key Stage 2 the History National Curriculum includes a study of a past non-European society. In this study unit children should look at the uses of archaeological evidence, but this is not the only place in history curriculum where archaeology is relevant: it could be used in each of the first three Key Stages. Archaeological activities can support work in the history attainment targets, providing opportunities for work on sequencing and chronology, looking at change, looking at interpretations of history and providing opportunities for asking questions, making deductions and comparisons.

As a primary classroom teacher with nine National Curriculum subjects plus RE, I am keen to find cross curricular activities that cover the National Curriculum in a way that excites and interests the children. Whilst not being the same as a real archaeological dig, archaeology based activities introduce children to the ideas and purposes of archaeology and give them access to attainment targets in history and other subjects in an interesting and different way.

I have introduced archaeology to



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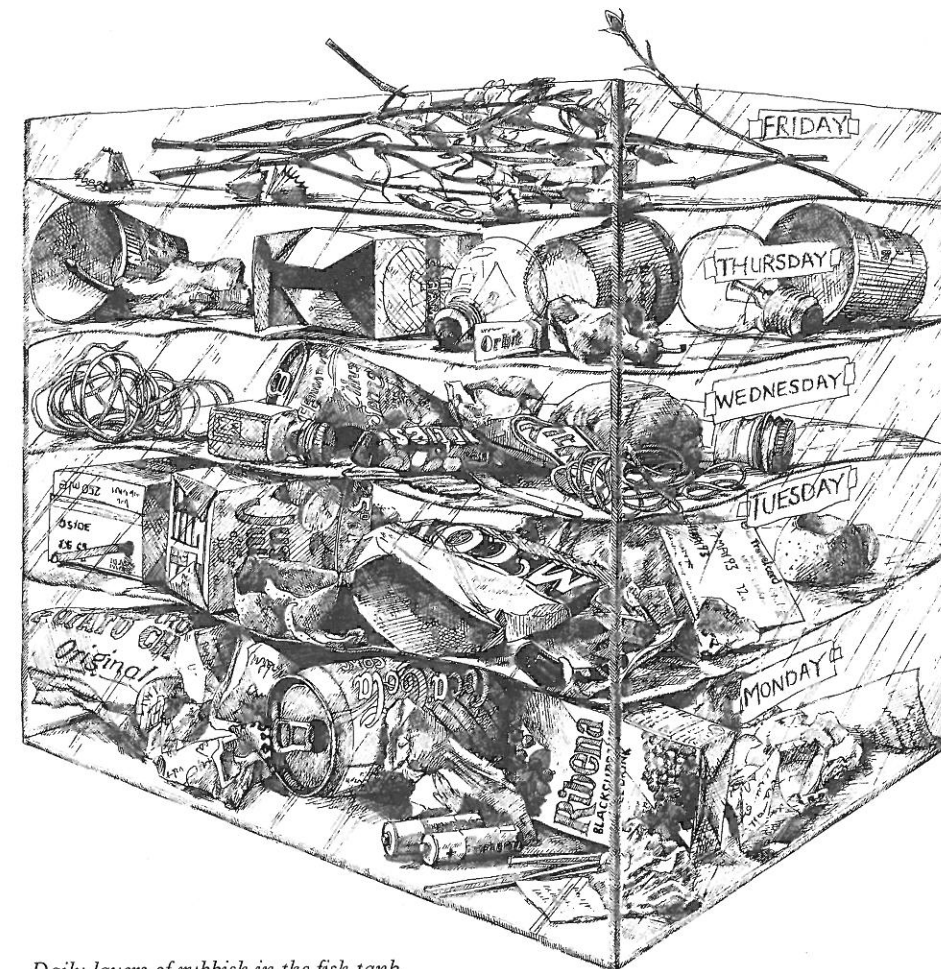
children in a wide range of contexts including considering how we would interpret the artefacts found on the Mary Rose and attempting to answer the question 'how do we know about the Romans?' The work on the Mary Rose led to consideration of the special problems faced by marine archaeologists. The children were fascinated by the idea of information being left from the past and problems of understanding it. I found that many of the same basic activities could be used right across the primary age range and that differentiation came from the questions the children asked and were expected to ask, the follow up work, and the context the activities were set in.

I usually start with the idea that archaeologists find out about the past by looking at what was left behind. One thing we leave behind is rubbish, so we looked at rubbish. I gave each group of children a selection of 'clean' rubbish and asked them to find out as much as they could about the people who had left it behind. This helped the children to see that history and archaeology are concerned with putting together a picture of the past from the evidence you have. Many children were amazed to realise how much a pile of rubbish could tell us.

The next issue we discussed was where would archaeologists find the evidence they were looking for. I discussed with the children about surveying sites and encouraged them to look at aerial photographs so they could see that some things can be seen from the air but not from the ground. We considered the idea that artefacts found on the surface could lead to the discovery of a buried archaeological site. We discussed using other sources to suggest where a site might be. All age groups love the story of Schliemann setting off with a copy of Homer, starting to dig and finding Troy.

Bound up with the question of where, is the question of how deep. One of the basic concepts in archaeology is that, under normal circumstances, the older something is the deeper it is buried. To introduce this, I took a large empty fish tank and got the children to collect a sample of the classroom rubbish each day and put it in the tank. I put a piece of sugar paper on top of each day's layer and labelled it on the outside of the tank. I tried to make sure there was something distinctive from each day, because one day's empty drink cartons and scrap paper look much like another's. At the end of the week we looked at what had been collected and saw that the first day's rubbish was at the bottom. I asked some groups to think about what would happen if the layers were mixed up, how this might happen and what problems it might cause archaeologists.

Another issue to think about with children is why archaeologists find



English Heritage / Judith Dobie

Daily layers of rubbish in the fish tank.

some things but not others and why they find some things in one place, but not somewhere else. This is in part due to chance factors, what happens to things when they cease to be used and how they are preserved. So things made from metal are rarely found, unless they were lost or buried deliberately, since the metal could be re-used, while less valuable or less easily recyclable materials such as glass, bone and pottery are found more widely. However, the major factor controlling what archaeologists find is preservation. The children conducted various experiments to measure how different materials are affected by being buried and under what circumstances materials begin to decay. The children chose a selection of materials (e.g. bone, hair, paper, clay, plastic, metal, etc). They predicted what would happen to them when they were buried. We then buried them for a month. After that time we dug them up, examined them and recorded any change. We repeated the process for several months. Another way to look at preservation is to bury a particular material e.g. a piece of paper, in a variety of different soils for a set period and see how it reacted in the different circumstances.

Having discovered children's fascination with what others have left behind it seemed obvious to go on to look at what we leave behind. There are two basic types of archaeological evidence - things that are preserved

deliberately and things preserved unintentionally. The latter group can be used to bring the children full circle back to the 'rubbish bags' and encourage them to think about the effect we have on the environment. The children also thought about what they might put in a time capsule for future generations to provide them with evidence about our way of life. This led to much consideration of what would be a good source and the different ways in which things can be interpreted.

Archaeology based activities can be a good way of teaching about the past and encouraging children to ask historical questions. They can be used in a wide variety of contexts to teach about different historical times and places in a way that captures children's imagination and enthusiasm.

Sara Alston
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Archaeological Detectives Poster Games

This set of four A3 poster size games for the classroom includes The Dustbin Game, The Layer Game, The Skeleton Game and The Archaeological Detectives Game. The pack costs only £2.95 including P&P and is available from English Heritage, PO Box 229, Northampton, NN6 9RY. Please quote product code XR 10503.