

historic past can be extended beyond buildings and landscapes to include objects housed in museums, historic costume, old portraits and early photographs, documents and recipes offering a taste more familiar to our forefathers. This variety of evidence exposes children to an exciting stimulus and offers a varied experience of the past to contrast with the present.

English is concerned with the way we see the world around us. It helps us think about and put a framework of understanding on our experiences. The introduction of English into the National Curriculum has provided a new framework for study. All four modes of language, speaking and listening, reading and writing, can benefit directly from a programme of work using the historic environment. A site can function not only as background, providing atmosphere, but stimulates exploration and analysis to promote a range of original assignments. The enigmas of the past can pose a challenge for problem solving activities which often form the basis for discussion and team work or initiate collecting a series of clues which will provide information about past inhabitants.

Speaking and listening

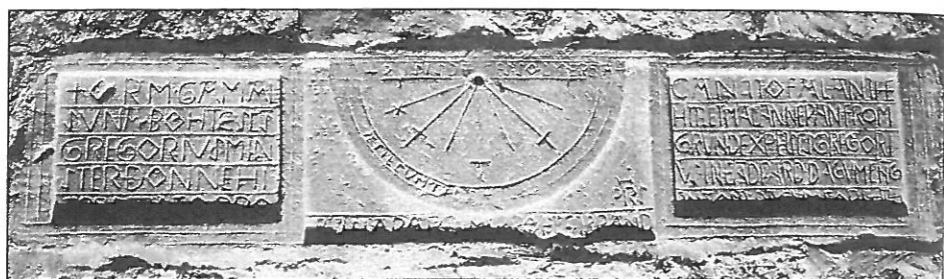
The historic environment lends itself particularly well to storytelling because it offers both an atmosphere to enhance the story and a special space which can vividly complement the storyline, so that the elements of the story can blend with their surroundings. Folktales, myths and legends can spark ideas for curriculum work in English, developing knowledge, skills and understanding. During a site visit the children, working in small groups, can examine objects from a handling collection such as a piece of jewellery, a key or a piece of floor tile and then, using those objects, be encouraged to make up a collaborative story which can be tape recorded. A similar exercise can be performed with pieces of historic costume such as a hat, a shoe and a sword. All sites will carry evidence of human activity ranging from the dressing marks on stone, the shield containing symbols above the door of an historic house to the mason's marks on the stones of a medieval castle or abbey. These can also be used as a focus for getting the children to create a story by imagining someone making the marks and orientating them against a background of the site and its inhabitants.

Historic sites are a safe place for practising the useful skills involved in interviewing. Examine the site carefully and prepare a series of questions which might focus on interviewing visitors at the site to discover what they liked and disliked about their visit and which services they considered could be improved.

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Left: Prisoners carvings in the Keep at Carlisle Castle



Sundial at St Gregory's Minster, Kirkdale.

Answers could be tape recorded with the interviewees' permission. In another project the site custodians could be interviewed to find out more about the site, such as what events happen there, how they think the site could be improved, or why they think their site is important.

A valuable approach to problem solving on site and one designed to ensure everyone can contribute entails the use of a jigsaw technique which will permit a great deal of information to be gathered in a short time. Each member of a home-base group is given a different task which will contribute to solving the group's assigned problem. One member from each of the home groups joins each of the expert groups who will examine and record the clues before analysing the assembled evidence. On re-uniting, the home group should have gleaned sufficient information from each of its members to formulate an answer to the overall problem. Under this system everybody contributes to the exercise

and everyone is supported by the group.

Reading

Reading, in its widest sense may also be developed through a use of the historic environment. There are two main areas where it can help develop skills and ideas. The first involves the variety of ways in which the past can be read, including reading source documents on paper, stone, wood, tile and other media. A useful example, where the code can be read with help, is the Old English inscription on the sundial above the door at St. Gregory's Minster, Kirkdale now a small parish church in North Yorkshire. The sundial is not only a primary document but can be used as an example of the history of the language. The inscription tells a unique and exciting story in its own right. The translated version reports that 'Orm, son of Gamal, bought St. Gregory's Minster when it was utterly ruined and collapsed and had it rebuilt from the foundations [in honour of]

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Christ and St Gregory in the days of King Edward [the Confessor] and Earl Tosti'. It also tells us that Haward made the sundial and the name of the priest was Brand. What a wealth of potential stimulus material lies here. An investigation might be developed as the basis for drama or as the background for an imaginative story - there were no watches or clocks in the 1060s and the parish sundial was very important.

An example of a story in picture form rather than words appears on the end of a pew at Brent Knoll church in Somerset. It is a rich tale which anyone familiar with the plot of Ben Johnson's *Volpone* will recognise immediately. The wood carver has told his version of the well-known medieval fable of Reynard the Fox preaching to the birds. The fox, dressed comically as a bishop charms the bird-witted onlookers crowded on the branches. The carver makes fun of both preachers and the congregation because he knows the aim of the Fox's sermon is to entice his audience so that he can devour them. Recognising and reading a pictorial story like this using a tape-recorded discussion will probably only be a starter for a sustained project. This might include the writing of a drama script or a modern version of the story which could link satisfactorily into artwork, technology or religious studies. It could equally be developed as a news story or a poem. Wall paintings, plaster work or stained glass windows in churches, castles or historic houses also provide the basis for developing a worthwhile project.

The other important area linking reading with the historic environment is reading for pleasure. Reading sections of old manuscripts can be a great achievement as well as providing a fascinating window into the past, as can the diaries of early visitors to historic sites. Some fiction is set against the backdrop of an historic site, such as a deserted medieval village in the novel *Astercote* by Penelope Lively, the Roman town at Wroxeter for parts of Rosemary Sutcliff's *Dawn Wind* or for older children the island of Lindisfarne in Gordon Honeycombe's *Dragon under the Hill*. To read *Astercote* in conjunction with a visit to a deserted medieval village like Wharram Percy, North Yorkshire, can be a rich experience and form the basis for a variety of assignments including descriptive writing, a documentary video, the production of a local guide book or a classroom frieze to show to other classes.

Writing

Writing serves a variety of uses and a site visit can be the stimulus for some worthwhile 'real purpose' writing. In descriptive writing, accuracy is important and this can be checked out by dividing the children into small



Pew end, Brent Knoll Church, Somerset.

groups, letting them describe a section of the monument which they have explored before passing their description over to another group for verification. Projects based on producing a site guide, specifically written for young visitors with plans and illustrations, will provide the opportunity to examine how the official site guide has been written, criticise it and write their own version which can be put together back in the classroom.

Discursive writing can also be based on evidence gleaned from a site for there are plenty of controversial issues related to the historic environment. One recent topic which caused heated debate was the question of whether Windsor Castle should be restored after the great fire, whether it should be rebuilt by modern methods in a contemporary style or just left as a ruin without a roof. Linked to that controversy was a further topic of who should be responsible for paying for the restoration work.

Short stories can form the basis of imaginative writing. Careful detective work on site will allow the groups to discover how earlier inhabitants of the site lived and will provide ideas and background information. The chosen story could be of the 'given beginning' type or the site could be used as the background for a ghost story, perhaps based on a local legend if one exists. Creative writing can be garnered out of an examination of medieval floor tiles or through objects like the St. Gregory's Minster sundial mentioned above.

Journalism designed in newspaper format on a computer print-out can be a very successful method of exploiting an historic site. A thirteenth century fire in the roof of Gisborough Priory gutted the building and must have been a spectacular sight. Fortunately a description of the fire and its cause was preserved by the monks and is an invaluable document providing evidence for budding journalists to create their vivid newsprint stories. A

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block of advertising would be a useful addition to the front page. Letter writing and report writing can also feature in a programme arising from a site visit.

Integrated programmes

An integrated approach to planning site work can be most rewarding. One of the best examples of this type of work is a project on a conservation issue, a topic which children readily appreciate. There may be a conservation issue in the locality which could be used as a focal point. For example there may be a plan to demolish an historic building or an attempt to obtain planning permission to change the historic townscape. Such issues can be identified in the media or be investigated in the local planning office as part of the project.

Once the group has planned to extract all the available evidence, they can set about interviewing people to sound local feeling, particularly amongst the conservation lobby and the business community. There will also be opportunities for letterwriting, newspaper articles, writing reports and making radio or video programmes on the topic or instituting a debate. This project can dovetail with a historical assessment of the area to discover background information and other subjects can be recruited to help such as art to enhance the visual impact of the campaign message. This type of integrated approach demonstrates to children that they can contribute something worthwhile and gives them a stake in their own communities. Further it can show how all the skills they are learning can combine to give them a sense of power through being articulate.

To make the most of the project its organisation is crucial. In a three part approach the site visit is usually the middle section, providing the material stimulus for the final piece of work. The teacher has to define accurately the skills, concepts and attitudes to be developed. The initial preparation can include the introduction to the mode and language techniques which need practising. A brainstorming session may follow in which the children, guided by their teacher, decide how best to frame the questions to tackle the project during the site visit. The work can then be divided amongst the group. On site all the required data should be gathered and can then be taken back into the classroom for processing to create an interesting and stretching end product for assessment.

Language work can be integrated with literature and drama and in a cross-curricular way linked to other National Curriculum subjects including History, Science, Maths, Geography, Technology, Art and Music. The National Curriculum indicates the need for all subjects to include stimulus from beyond the school environment and has suggested



OSBORNE Aug 17. 1857.
 Dearest Mother,
 Many thanks for
 happy returns of your
 birthday has arrived
 of flowers received it
 & now thoughts are
 with you I send you
 a little newspaper & return
 you these letters.

Letter from Queen Victoria to her mother, the Duchess of Kent, August 17, 1857, sent from the Royal holiday home at Osborne House, Isle of Wight.

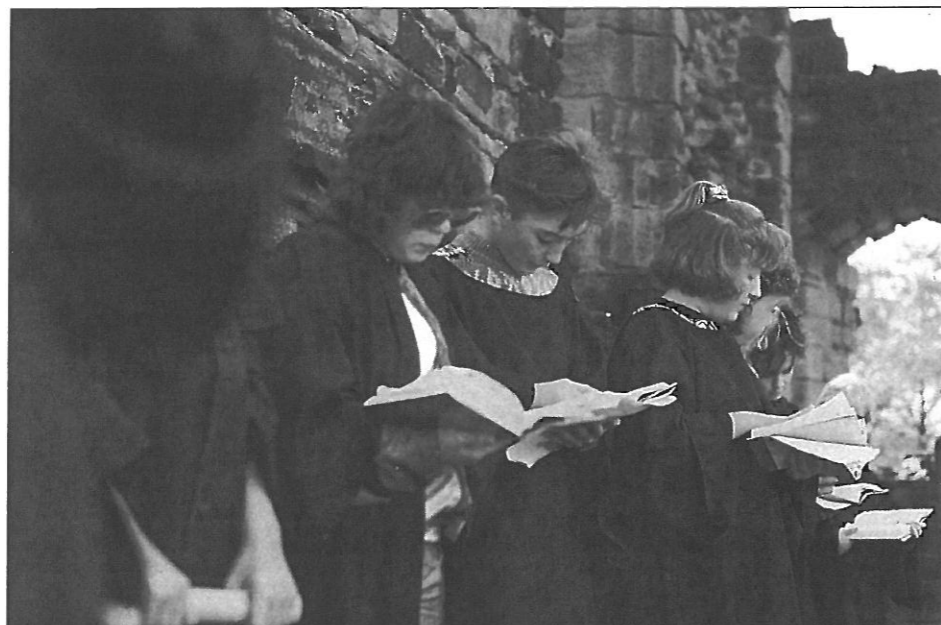
the historic environment as a satisfactory source to fulfil this need. Why not arrange a joint visit between English and History (or any other subject) and maximise the benefit to the National Curriculum?

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 Regional Education Officer, North
 English Heritage

**A Teacher's Guide to
 Storytelling at Historic Sites** by
 Eric Maddern is now available,
 price £4.75 from English
 Heritage, PO Box 229,
 Northampton, NN6 9RY.

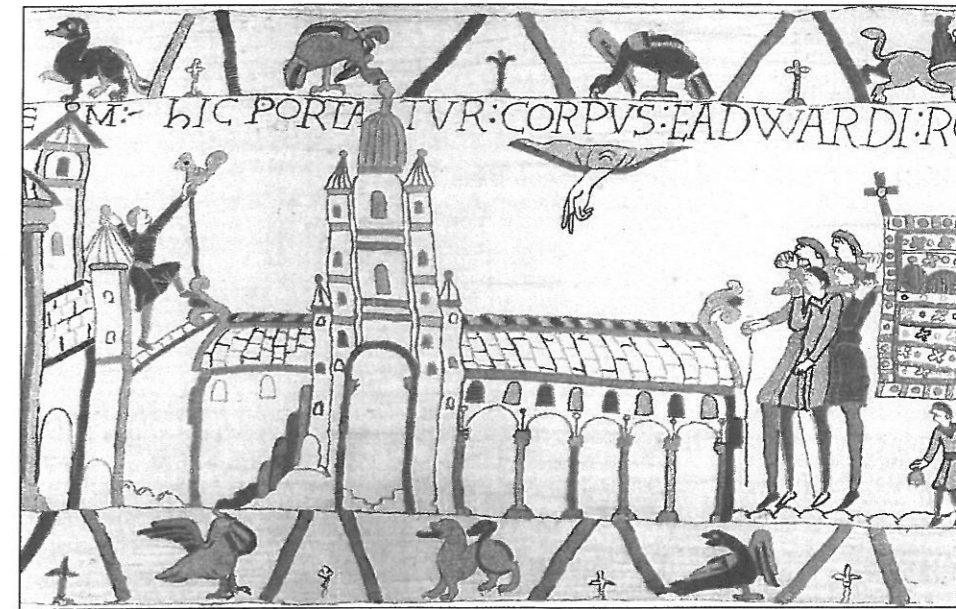
**A Teacher's Guide to English
 and the Historic Environment**
 by Mary Sewell will be published
 soon.

Below: History day at Monk Bretton Priory,
 South Yorkshire.
 Bottom: Working on site at Hutton le Hole.



Artists' Interpretations of the Past - Links with National Curriculum History

English Heritage site presentation increasingly uses artists' interpretations of how the site might have looked at different periods in the past. Such interpretations appear in guide books and on site panels. They are there to explain features and to excite the imagination. Teachers can exploit their existence to develop their pupils' understanding of interpretations of history. (AT2 in National Curriculum History).



The Bayeux Tapestry - Westminster Abbey

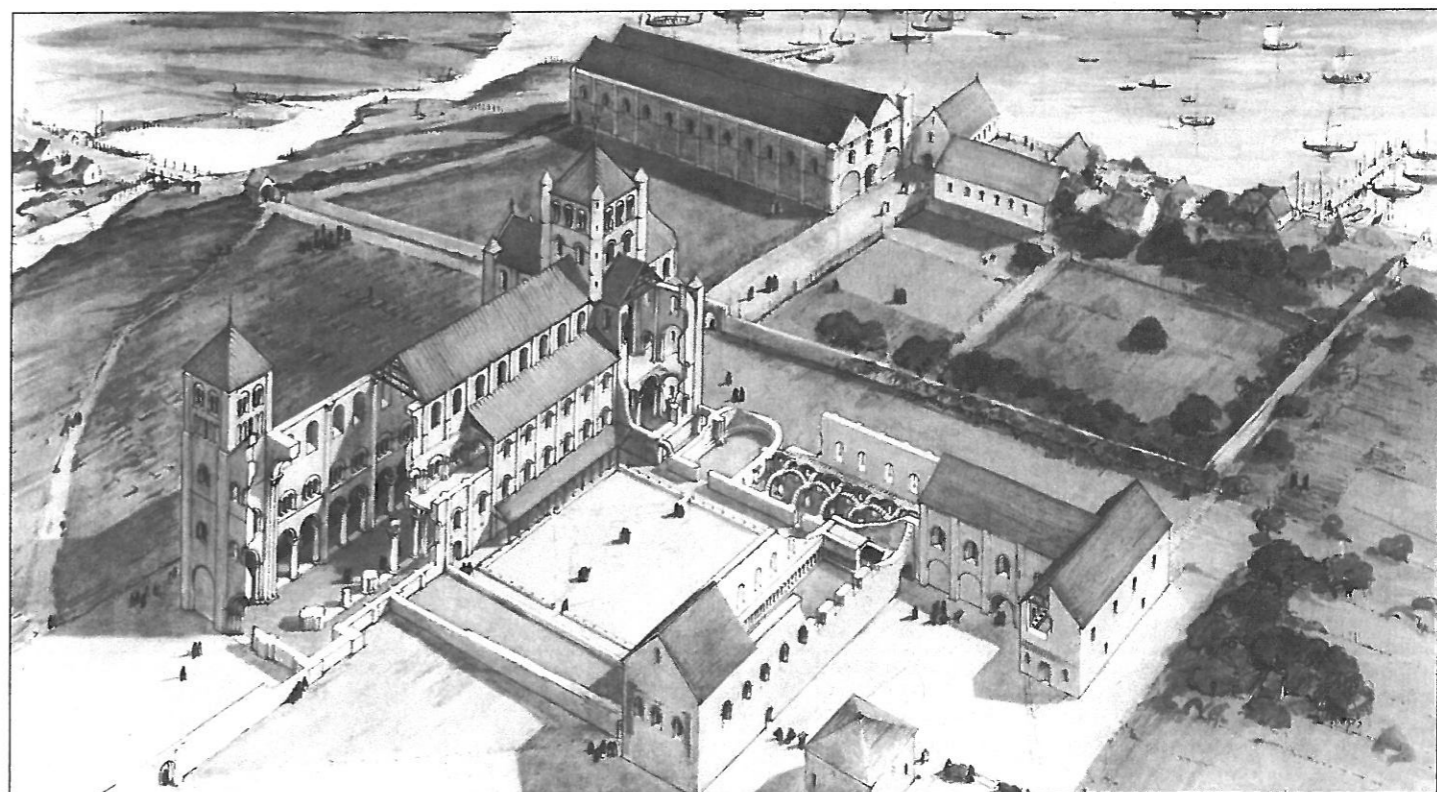
The purpose of this article is to give some insights into the processes involved in constructing a drawing to develop understanding of AT2. The drawing chosen is of Westminster Abbey done by Terry Ball in 1980 (Below) to accompany an article by Richard Gem, 'The Romanesque Rebuilding of Westminster Abbey', Proceedings of the Battle Conference ed. R Allan Brown pp 33-60 (Boydell, Suffolk, 1981). This is a little known drawing of a major tourist attraction and fits into KS3 CSU2 Medieval Realms. The approach, however is applicable to many other drawings. The drawing was selected not only because it is in itself a work of art and can add visual immediacy to the world

of the eleventh century, but because its compilation involved the use of a variety of different sources, the study of which links the activity to AT3: The Use of Historical Sources. The drawing itself shows how the use of imagination is necessary to make sense of the fragmentary evidence for the abbey. Finally, the drawing itself is clearly an interpretation rather than a reconstruction of reality because it employs the cut away technique to show details which would otherwise be hidden from view.

a way that parts of it could be used as the basis for classroom activities. Links between the Attainment Targets are suggested at the end.

**Visual Source:
 The Bayeux Tapestry.**
 This was the starting point for the drawing of the abbey church. It shows Edward the Confessor's unfinished abbey at Westminster. Pupils can perform a simple matching exercise between the tapestry and the modern interpretation. The design of the pillars, the high arches under the

Below: Westminster Abbey by Terry Ball



tower, the turrets at the corners of the tower and the weathercock can all be identified as originating from the tapestry. Pupils could be asked to colour code the features which match and then discuss where ideas for the non-coloured parts came from.

Written Source:

The Lives of Edward the Confessor
Two medieval 'Lives' of Edward survive which have descriptions of Westminster Abbey. One written c1065 describes building in progress and a later one of c1245 describes the abbey just before its thirteenth century rebuilding. Pupils could again link the details to the drawing. They could also begin to consider any corroboration between these and the other sources. Which details are only recorded here? The extracts have been simplified for classroom use, but they are still difficult, and will need further explanations of terms.

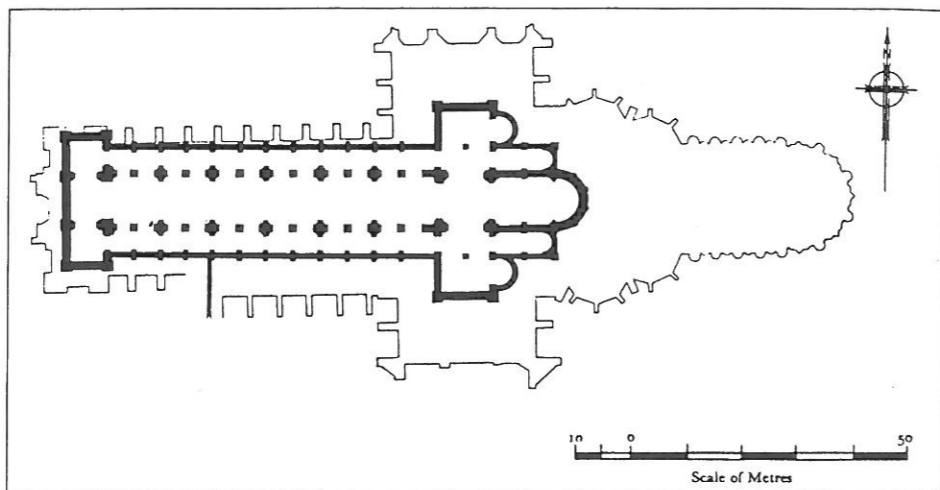
'And so, at the King's command, the church is being built successfully, without counting its cost, so long as it will be acceptable to God and St Peter. The home of the high altar, raised up with very many high arches, is surrounded by walls of square stones, carefully cut. Further on is the crossing which supports the lofty central tower with very many spiral staircases. The wooden roof is carefully covered in lead.' c1065.

'In the middle the builders raised a tower, and two at the west front. They made a cloister, and a chapter house with a round front at its eastern end ... and the refectory, the dormitory and other rooms round about.' c1245.

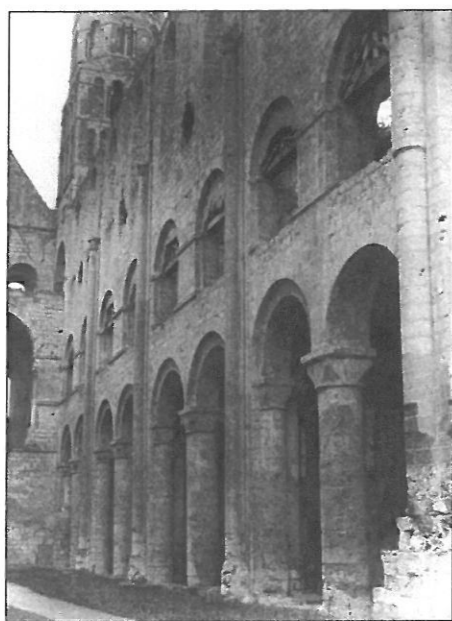
Archaeological and Architectural Parallels: Jumiäges

When part of the nave of Westminster Abbey was excavated in 1930, archaeologists found the bases of the pillars of Edward's church (Top). The shape and spacing of the bases were very similar to the bases of the pillars of the nave of the abbey church of Jumiäges in Normandy, (Above right) and so it seems reasonable to accept that the styles of the whole pillars were similar. Pupils could be taught here about how the evidence from under the ground gave clues for the architecture above ground. This hypothesis is supported by the knowledge that the abbot of Jumiäges in 1040, Robert Champart, was appointed Bishop of London in 1044. Seven years later he was made Archbishop of Canterbury. He had started the rebuilding of Jumiäges in 1040, and returned for its completion in 1052. The building of Westminster started in 1050. The building of Westminster was modelled on that at Jumiäges. This latter is now a ruin, but the nave was never rebuilt and so it provided Terry Ball with a model for his drawing.

Right: Arches leading to The Little Cloister.



*Above: Plan of Westminster Abbey showing The Confessor's Church in relationship to the existing Abbey Church.
Below: Nave of the abbey church of Jumiäges in Normandy.*



David Aldred

Westminster Abbey lies on what was once Thorney Island. The position of the Thames and the inlet are also based on the discoveries of archaeologists. The boats have been derived from those shown in the Bayeux Tapestry.



David Aldred

Surviving Structures

Actual remains of Edward's abbey can only be found in a few places. Those accessible to the public are confined to the eastern side of the cloister. The arches in the Pyx Chamber, museum room and passage to the Little Cloister (Below) are represented in cut away style in Terry Ball's drawing. Fragments of the southern range survive inside Westminster School (Opposite above) and the artist used these also.

It is difficult to judge whether the present crossing tower incorporates the eleventh century tower (Opposite below). There are clear similarities between the two but the tower does not appear in all the historic prints of Westminster. In the distance, Westminster Hall has been portrayed using some of the eleventh century structure which can be seen inside the existing building. Pupils could be asked whether the fact that some of the features still survive makes that part of the evidence more useful and/or reliable.

Links to AT2 (Interpretations of History)

Three threads run through AT2 and its Statements of Attainment. They provide a useful guide for structuring activities.

- Interpretations combine fact and

opinion (in this case, fact and imagination)

- Interpretations are based on sources which are incomplete.
- Differences between interpretations can be identified and explained. The explanation requires an understanding of how and why interpretations are constructed.

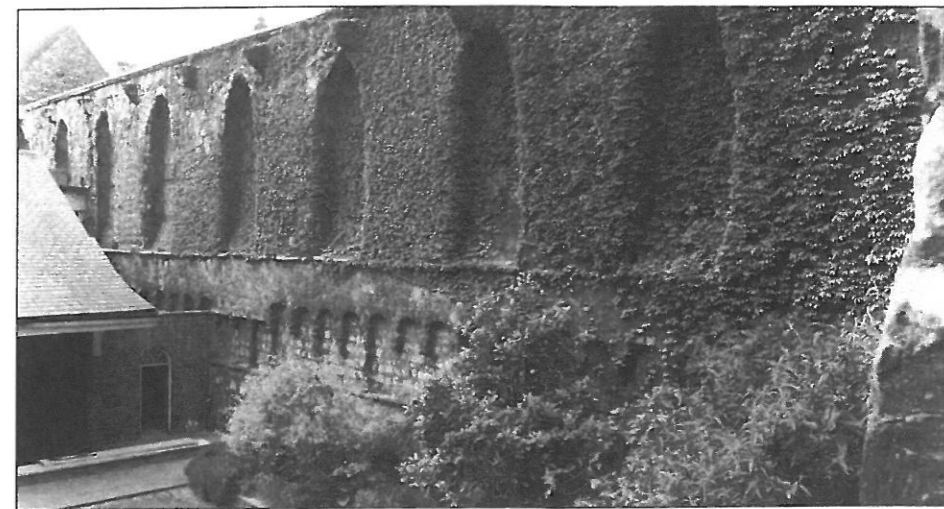
The Statements of Attainment reflect these threads but the threads themselves are not tied to specific statements. Therefore Level 3 'distinguish between a fact and a point of assessment, but it needs to be constantly revisited because it underpins the higher levels. For example 'describe the strengths and weaknesses of different interpretations of an historical event or development' (Level 7) is likely to involve balancing statements of fact with those of opinion.

Links to AT1 (Knowledge and Understanding of History)

Pupils will need a sound knowledge and understanding of the eleventh century in order to be able to make informed judgements on the nature and reliability of the sources used and the interpretation itself. This can range from a simple awareness of Romanesque architecture to a more sophisticated awareness of the power of medieval church and its links to the monarchy.

Links to AT3 (The Use of Historical Sources)

Questions about the nature, usefulness



Fragment of the southern range in Westminster School.

Richard Gem

and reliability of the sources used from a natural point of understanding how Terry Ball drew his picture of Westminster Abbey. Such questions merge with those which can be asked about the validity of the final drawing, and in so doing illustrate the interlinkages between AT2 and AT3.

Not every interpretative drawing can be analysed in this detailed way, but similar processes can be incorporated into many other activities. Pupils could be helped to draw their own interpretation of a Romano-British villa or medieval castle, and then discuss the validity of each others' drawings by reference to the sources upon which they were based. AT2 can both build upon and help to shape the individual interpretations of the

past which belong to each one of us. I wish to thank Terry Ball for this wholehearted co-operation in the production of the article.

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Cambridge University Press will shortly be publishing Castles and Cathedrals, The architecture of power 1066-1550 by David Aldred, ISBN 0-521-42842, in paperback, price about £4.25.

Below: The Crossing Tower of Westminster Abbey



David Aldred