

# The Bancroft Villa Thriller

During the Milton Keynes Year of the Environment in 1989, the site of Bancroft Roman villa was interpreted and displayed in a public park. In 1990 local schoolchildren worked on the site and interpreted its story in a variety of ways.

*'I found it! It's a piece of mosaic and I found it! It's got straight sides like a maths cube. Oh, and this is a bit of broken land drain: it's Victorian so it is only about a hundred years old. But this has been here for two thousand years - that's twenty lots of a hundred years. And I'm the first to find it since the Romans!'*  
(Frances aged 8, 1990)

*'Grrr I'm Taranis!'*  
(Children playing in the stream at Bancroft Park two years after the event. Taranis was a Romano-Celtic god.)

*'I still get treated like a slave miss!'*  
(Darryl now aged 11, 1993)

A few months after the opening of the villa to the public, rubbish began to fill the genuine Roman pond, graffiti appeared on the interpretation panels and plants were uprooted from the 'Roman' garden. It was decided to try and give the local community a sense of ownership of the site by actively involving their children in its interpretation. For six weeks in the summer of 1990, 250 children from five local schools worked on the site and in their schools to tell their view of the villa and its story in an exciting open air performance.

The project was inspired by primary evidence; pottery, tile, oyster shells, burnt stones, bones and mosaic tesserae found on site by the children, and during the archaeological dig. The emphasis throughout was on active learning, finding out, handling and questioning the evidence in an exciting and stimulating way. The children became archaeologists searching for clues on the ground, employing all the deductive and recording skills used by the professionals. As detectives search for clues to solve a crime, so the children searched for clues to solve the mystery of the villa and its inhabitants.

## Young Archaeologists - Looking for Clues

The children quickly became totally absorbed making genuine discoveries for themselves. They rapidly distinguished between natural and

made objects. Eyes glued to the ground, engrossed in searching for clues, they walked systematically across the site to the surviving roman fish pond. Surveying the rooms of the villa, the children noted discrepancies in the plan as excavated and the reconstruction.

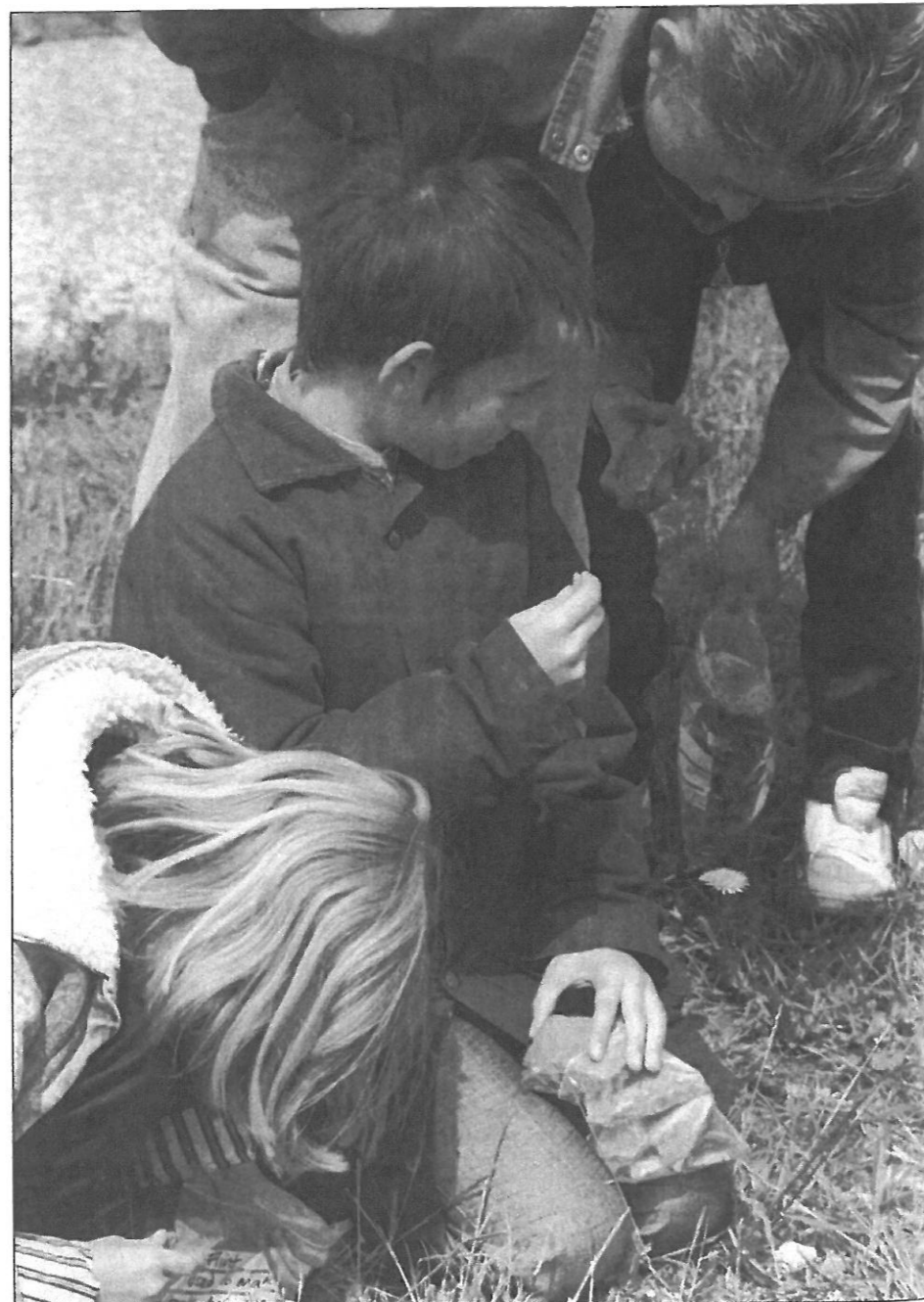
During the dig, the pond had been emptied of rubbish thrown into it over 2,000 years. Now it was rapidly filling up with new rubbish. What would the lager cans and chocolate wrappers tell us about the people who visited and used the site today? The young archaeologists soon realised how easy it is to date and interpret litter, and how we can use it to build up a picture of past societies.

Each find prompted a whole series of questions. Children researched books for more information, but soon realised that information just about the finds would not sustain a convincing

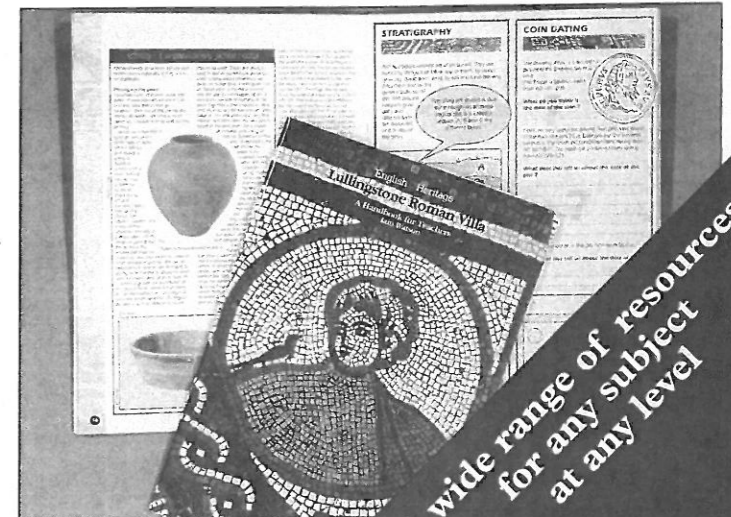
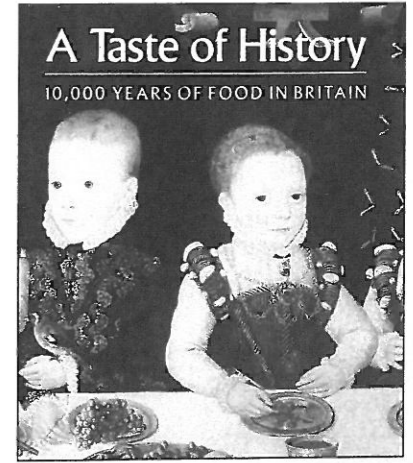
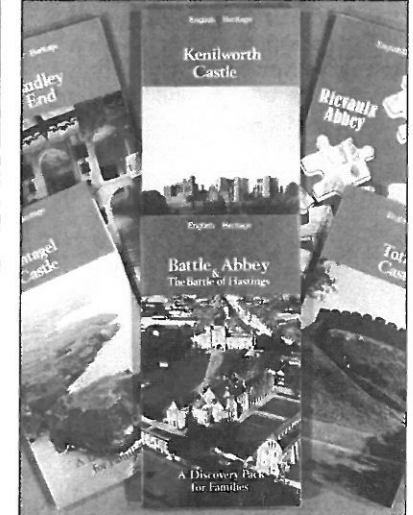
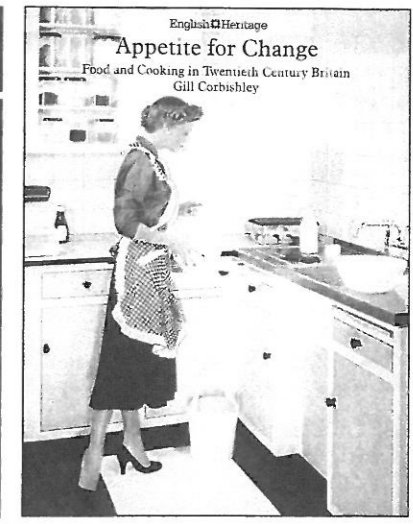
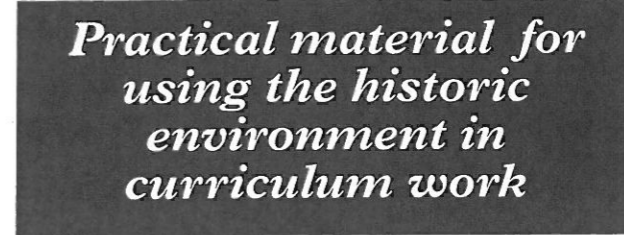
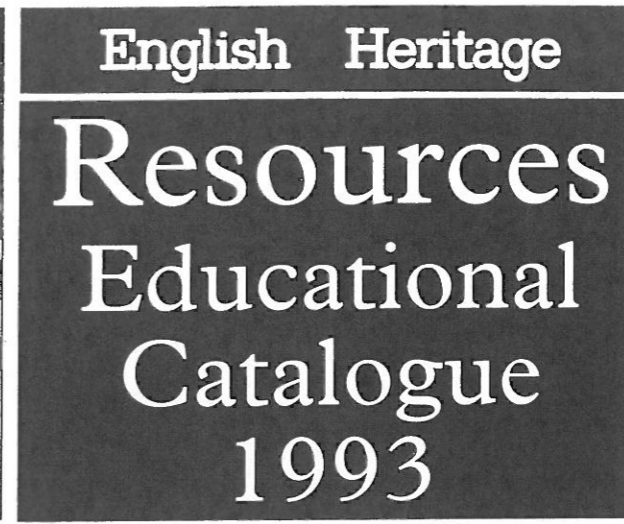
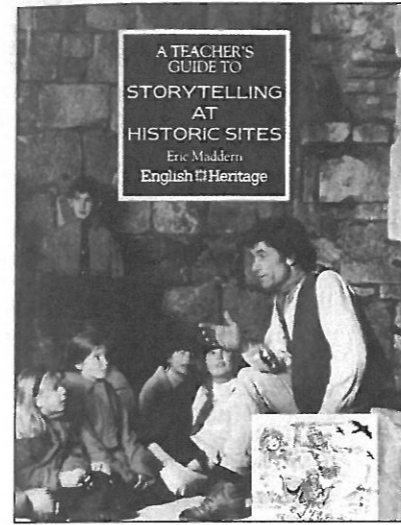
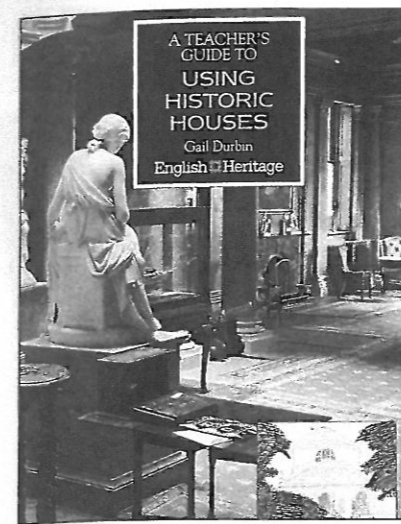
story, and began to research the wider historical context. When did the Roman occupation begin and end? When was the villa at Bancroft built, burnt down, and rebuilt? When was it deserted? What happened when Romans met Celts? How different were they? Did they influence each other? Why did the villa fall into disuse so soon after such high quality, expensive mosaic floors had been installed?

The children interpreted the evidence they found on the site (some of it planted strategically in the rooms of the reconstructed villa). From all this evidence they worked collaboratively to produce their version of events on site. They became the interpreters of the site, the adults the enablers. The archaeologists interpreted the villa's history in a lengthy report, the children by writing, designing and performing a play of their own.

BELOW: Looking for clues on site



Natron Blockley



A wide range of resources for any subject at any level

## EDUCATION ON SITE

These books suggest educational strategies for teachers to use the historic environment as part of programmes of study across many curriculum subjects. Each is packed with practical exercises and ideas to aid understanding for children at all Key Stages.

### A Teacher's Guide to Using Abbeys

Cynthia Cooksey

This book aims to give teachers all the background information they need when using abbey sites, including strategies which will enable children to understand both the physical remains and the nature of the lives that were lived there.

36 pages, A4, 1992  
ISBN 1-85074-328-2  
£5.95

Product code: XP 11511  
See also Videos

### NEW

### A Teacher's Guide to Using Historic Houses

Gail Durbin

There cannot be many schools more than 30 miles from an historic house which is open to the public. This book helps teachers plan visits and develop ways of learning from such rich resources. The book covers houses from the medieval period onwards, looking not exclusively at grander country houses but also at empty and ruined buildings and the more common furnished house.

36 pages, A4, 1993  
ISBN 1-85074-390-8  
£5.95

Product code: XP 10085

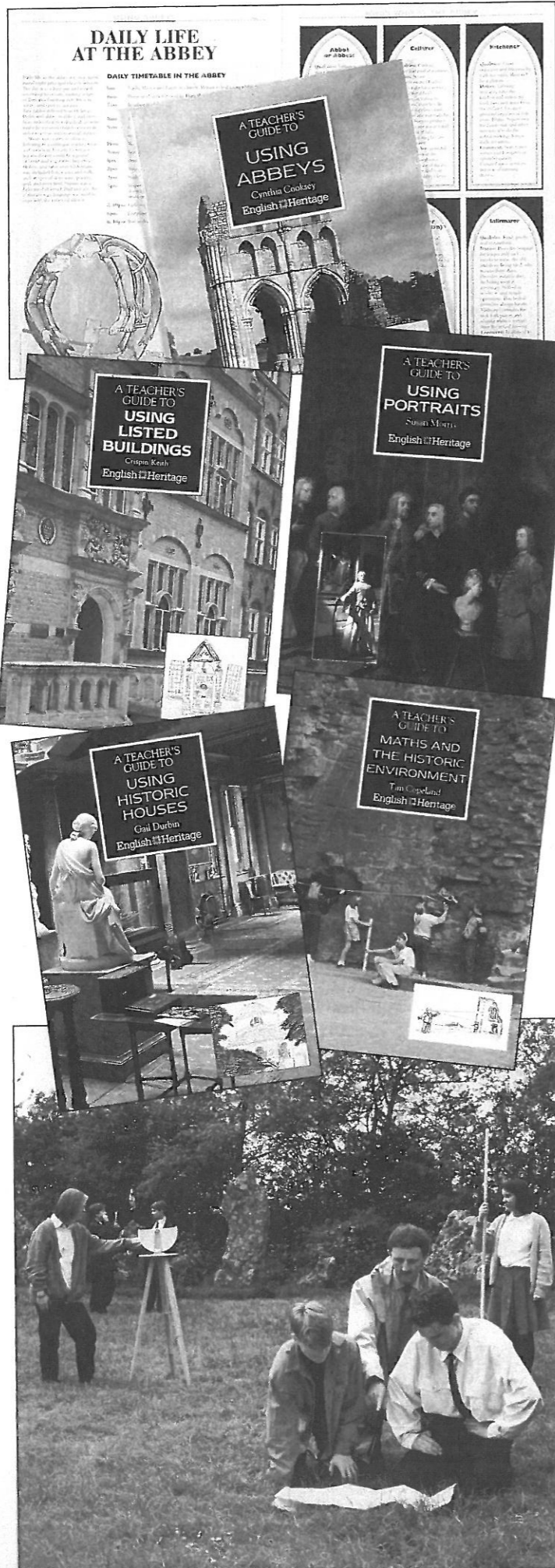
### A Teacher's Guide to Using Listed Buildings

Crispin Keith

About 440,000 historic buildings of all shapes and sizes are protected through listing. They are an easily and cheaply available local source, with a wealth of interesting and important issues attached.

36 pages, A4, 1991  
ISBN 1-85074-297-9  
£5.95

Product code: XP 11492



## EDUCATION ON SITE

### A Teacher's Guide to Using Portraits

Susan Morris

Portraits are the gossip columns, newsflashes, party political broadcasts and family albums of the past. They are found in every country house and museum and this book aims to help teachers decode some of the messages they contain.

48 pages, A4, 1989  
ISBN 1-85074-231-6  
£5.95

Product code: XP 13058  
See also Slide Packs

### NEW

### A Teacher's Guide to Geography and the Historic Environment

Tim Copeland

Geography is about places and the relationship between people and environments that shapes what a place is like and how it works. This book aims to help teachers understand the places that we live in by investigating how they were used in the past and how that past has influenced the present. It explores individual sites and local landscapes and demonstrates how a range of geographical skills may be developed through working with the historic environment.

36 pages, A4, 1993  
ISBN 1-85074-332-0  
£5.95

Product code: XP 10314

### A Teacher's Guide to Maths and the Historic Environment

Tim Copeland

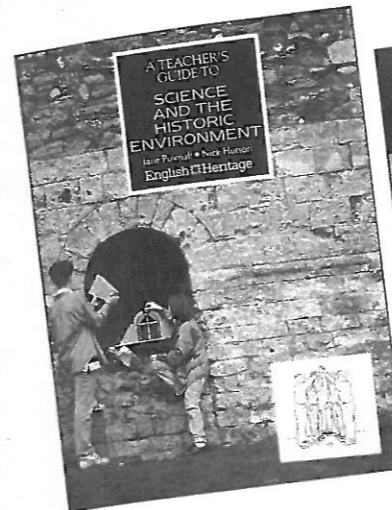
This book explores the unique problem-solving aspects of mathematical processes when applied to the historic environment. It will help teachers prepare to get the maximum from a visit to an historic site or building.

36 pages, A4, 1992  
ISBN 1-85074-329-0  
£5.95

Product code: XP 11490  
See also Videos

*A geography project at the Rollright Stones, Oxfordshire.*

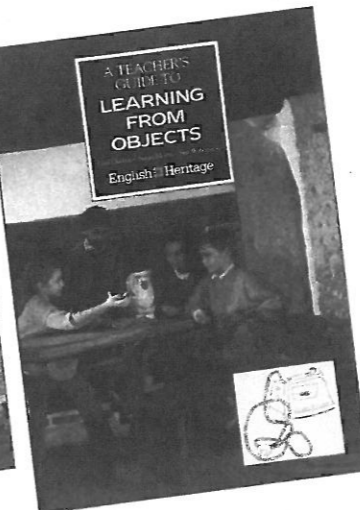
## EDUCATION ON SITE



### A Teacher's Guide to Science and the Historic Environment

Jane Pownall and Nick Hutson

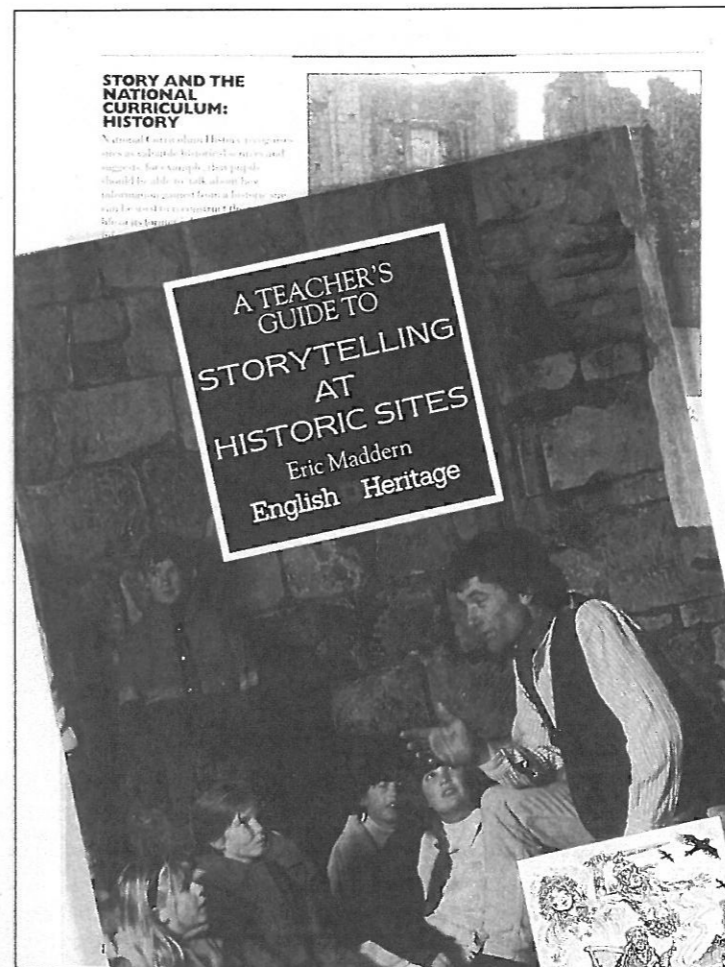
This book explores the links between history and science, and will help teachers spot new opportunities to bring science alive. There are sections on earth science and human influences on the environment; structures and forces; food and cooking through the ages; science from clothing; light in the home; museum classification



### A Teacher's Guide to Learning from Objects

Gail Durbin, Susan Morris and Sue Wilkinson

This book is for teachers who want to encourage children to learn from physical things. It suggests a method of analysing objects and a range of classroom



## EDUCATION ON SITE

### NEW

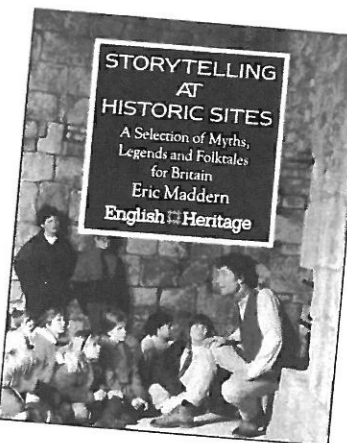
### Storytelling at Historic Sites

Eric Maddern

This book explores the kind of stories which may have been told at historic sites in Britain from the time of the hunter-gatherers through to the seventeenth century. It suggests ways to bring these historic sites alive by recreating the oral traditions of our ancestors.

36 pages, A4, 1992  
ISBN 1-85074-378-9  
£5.95

Product code: XP 10077  
See also Audio



games to help develop the skills that are necessary for fieldwork at sites or museums.  
36 pages, A4, 1990  
ISBN 1-85074-259-6  
£5.95  
Product code: XP 13435  
See also Videos

### Living History: reconstructing the past with children

John Fairclough and Patrick Redsell

This book on drama and role play projects details events at Heveningham Hall and Orford Castle, in Suffolk, and explains how schools might carry out their own projects. A useful resource list is also included.  
36 pages, A4, 1985  
ISBN 1-85074-073-9  
£2.95  
Product code: XP 13057  
See also Videos

**Special Offer**  
Order the Storytelling book and cassette pack together for the special price of £13.50, a saving of 15% on the individual prices.  
Product code: XP 10076

## THE TREE OF TALES

There are many legends of the kind that are appropriate to the kind of site that you are visiting. In fact, you can often find a legend that is appropriate to the kind of site that you are visiting. In fact, you can often find a legend that is appropriate to the kind of site that you are visiting. In fact, you can often find a legend that is appropriate to the kind of site that you are visiting.



**THE HUNTER GATHERERS**  
The first people to live in the lands of Britain were the hunter-gatherers. They were not farmers. They were not city dwellers. They were not the people who built the great cities of the past. They were the people who lived in the forests and on the hills. They were the people who hunted and gathered. They were the people who lived in the forests and on the hills. They were the people who hunted and gathered.

## HANDBOOKS FOR TEACHERS

These books are intended to help teachers planning a site visit. Historical background is combined with a variety of possible study approaches, documentary sources, and photocopiable activity sheets for classroom and on-site work, together with practical information about the site.

The activities and ideas in all these books can be adapted for different Key Stages in the National Curriculum.

### Appuldurcombe House

Elizabeth Newbery

Based on the now ruined eighteenth century house near Wroxall on the Isle of Wight, the pack attempts to reconstruct life there when it was first built. There is a trail along public footpaths to look for the remains of Capability Brown's landscape gardens.

16 pages, A4, plus 2 trails and a cut-out, 1987  
ISBN 1-85074-148-4  
£2.95

**Product code:** XN 13043  
**See also Videos**



NEW

### Audley End House

Elizabeth Newbery

Audley End was built as a prodigy house, a sort of show house for accommodating royal visitors. Over the years different parts of it have been altered to conform to changing tastes, leaving a superb record of the predominant styles in interior design from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. The park, which was laid out by Capability Brown, similarly

has areas which reflect garden design of later periods, but largely retains its distinctive eighteenth-century character.

36 pages, A4, 1993  
ISBN 1-85074-311-8  
£3.95

**Product code:** XN 10219  
**See also Discovery Packs**

### The Avebury Monuments

Lawrence Coupland

There is a stimulating range of material in this pack which covers Avebury Circles, West Kennet Long Barrow, the Sanctuary, Silbury Hill and West Kennet Avenue. A board game is also included.

20 pages, A4, 1988  
ISBN 1-85074-173-5  
£4.95

**Product code:** XN 13044  
**See also Videos**

### Carisbrooke Castle

Rosemary Cooper

Carisbrooke Castle is one of our most visited sites. Following an historical introduction this book suggests five possible approaches to the castle including the use of evidence and a maths based exercise.

36 pages, A4, 1988  
ISBN 1-85074-194-8  
£3.95

**Product code:** XN 13045  
**See also Videos and Posters**

### Chiswick House

Susan Morris

Chiswick House in West London was built by the 3rd Earl of Burlington between 1727 and 1729. It set a fashionable new architectural style for the next hundred years, and the semi-rural grounds inspired some of the most admired landscaping in Europe. The house is an ideal site for art, maths, design and drama study as well as for history.

36 pages, A4, 1992  
ISBN 1-85074-317-7  
£3.95

**Product code:** XN 11501

### Cleeve and Muchelney Abbeys

Sue Watling

Cleeve Abbey, Somerset is one of the best preserved Cistercian sites in the South West. Together with the

## HANDBOOKS FOR TEACHERS

remains of Benedictine Muchelney, the sites are representative of many other smallish monasteries, illustrating different but complementary aspects of monastic life.

48 pages, A4, 1989  
ISBN 1-85074-238-3  
£4.95

**Product code:** XN 13046

### Deal and Walmer Castles

Jonathan Barnes

These Kent castles are splendid examples of Tudor fortifications. Their symmetrical plans demonstrate many technological achievements and are a good basis for science and maths work. Walmer became the official residence of the Lord Warden of the Cinque ports, including the Duke of Wellington, and is a good place to begin a study of Victorian Britain.

36 pages, A4, 1992  
ISBN 1-85074-360-6  
£3.95

**Product code:** XN 11487  
**See also Posters**

### Dover Castle

Jonathan Barnes and Andy Harmsworth

Dover Castle, defined by an Iron Age hill-fort and graced by a Roman lighthouse and Saxon church, best displays the development of castle architecture in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. However, it remained a garrison until the twentieth century and contains important examples of Georgian and Victorian military engineering.

48 pages, A4, 1991  
ISBN 1-85074-304-5  
£4.95

**Product code:** XN 10557  
**See also Videos and Posters**

### Framlingham and Orford Castles

John Fairclough

These Suffolk castles, both with substantial remains, can be studied as entities in themselves or used to illustrate a particular period, of the locality or of different

## HANDBOOKS FOR TEACHERS

types of fortification.

36 pages, A4, 1990  
ISBN 1-85074-261-8  
£3.95

**Product code:** XN 13430  
**See also Videos**

### Goodrich Castle

Ailyse Hancock

Goodrich exemplifies all the fascinating features of castles and castle life which most appeal to children, with its moat, towers, hall and dungeon. Activity sheets on Rebuilding, Attacking, Domestic Life and Cooking and Feasting could be used in the study of any castle.

36 pages, A4, 1991  
ISBN 1-85074-310-X  
£3.95

**Product code:** XN 10558  
**See also Videos**



NEW

### Hailes Abbey

David Aldred

This book is intended to help teachers planning a class visit to this thirteenth-century Cistercian abbey, set in attractive wooded pastureland.

36 pages, A4, 1993  
ISBN 1-85074-396-7  
£3.95

**Product code:** XN 10222

### Helmsley Castle

Jane Hassid

This North Yorkshire castle offers diverse opportunities to study an ancient secular building, both as a medieval fortification and as a Tudor dwelling. Its evolution can be traced in the fabric of its walls and in documents written by its inhabitants.

## HANDBOOKS FOR TEACHERS

### Minster Lovell Hall

Pat Emery with Tony Hurley

Minster Lovell Hall, Oxfordshire, contains all the elements of a typical late medieval manor house, and the surrounding medieval village survives virtually intact.

16 pages, A4, 1990  
ISBN 1-85074-290-1  
£2.95

**Product code:** XN 13431

### North Leigh Roman Villa

Tony Hurley

North Leigh Roman Villa lies on the south east margin of the Cotswolds, and excavation has shown it to have been one of the largest and wealthiest in the area. The Handbook looks at trade in the Roman Empire and the pioneering nineteenth century excavation.

16 pages, A4, 1991  
ISBN 1-85074-316-9  
£2.95

**Product code:** XN 10559

### Okehampton Castle

Philippe Planel

The occupants and builders of Okehampton in the key periods of its history were the ruling elite of Devon. Baldwin de Brionne, Sheriff of Devon, held Okehampton in 1086 when the Domesday

survey was carried out.

36 pages, A4, 1992  
ISBN 1-85074-321-5  
£3.95

**Product code:** XN 11488

### Old Sarum

Philippe Planel

The massive banks and ditches of an Iron Age hillfort surround the remains of a Norman castle and cathedral which were abandoned in the thirteenth century. As an educational tool for exploring continuity and discontinuity of settlement over a long period the site has few rivals.

36 pages, A4, 1991  
ISBN 1-85074-308-8  
£3.95

**Product code:** XN 10560

### Osborne House

Marilyn Tolhurst

Based on Queen Victoria's seaside home on the Isle of Wight, this book suggests a number of approaches including role play, looking at the house as an example of Victorian social life and seeing it as a contemporary conservation problem.

64 pages, A4, 2nd edition, extensively revised 1990  
ISBN 1-85074-289-8  
£4.95

**Product code:** XN 13047  
**See also Slide Packs and General Books**

