
Castles of Wales

Castles Alive - Keeps and Courcours - A Welsh Perspective (Vicissio)

Historic Scotland and Cadw share the same educational aims as English Heritage: we all want to take the teacher aright out of visits to historic monuments. These new materials certainly deliver the goods.

Written by Sydrey Wood and edited by Historic Scotland's Education Officer, Marion Fyfe, Undersanding People in the Past focuses on the different skills and approaches which can be developed on sites. The first chapter is devoted to pinpointing specific links to the 5-14 guidelines, and the science focus in the suggested activities, though there is also a helpful cross-curricular section. There are well presented activity sheets for pupils which teachers may photocopy. These are backed up by suggestions on how to tackle each activity and develop the themes introduced.

There are some particularly good ideas for stimulating class or group discussion on conservation issues. The activities are simple to set up in the classroom. I particularly liked that which asks children to touch various samples every time they pass by them for a week or so. They are doubly aimed at the effect of so many sticky hands on some materials—a simple, yet very effective way of explaining why certain objects in historic museums and galleries should not be touched. The experience which suggests that pupils make their own fire extinguisher using baking powder and vinegar is likely to be a little more lively!

There is a wealth of background information about conservation of objects, clearly explained for the non-specialist, as well as some fascinating snippets. For instance, did you know that conservators have worked on preserving a roll of toilet paper the artist Sir Stanley Spencer used for some preliminary sketches?

Available from Museums & Galleries Commission, 16 Queen Anne’s Gate, London SW1H 9AA.

Jennie Fordham
Education Officer, South East and London, English Heritage

Heritage Explorer is the magazine for young members of English Heritage and is published six times a year. Each issue has lots of colourful pages and features on a wide range of topics which will be of use to primary school teachers. Recent issues include a look at the history of school rooms, a report on the Roman in Silchester, detective work in the local streets for chairman of the Children’s Select Committee and many other lively items on historic buildings and sites. We have made over a hundred of books on topics to give away. If you would like one, please contact us quickly at English Heritage Service, 105 Oxford Street, London W1R 2HD.

Gosbecks Archaeological Park
On the outskirts of Colchester, this 500-acre farm offers visitors this summer the opportunity to watch archaeologists carrying out small-scale excavations on part of the site. School parties will be able to experience real-life archaeology. For further details and a free leaflet explaining more about what is going on, telephone Janet Lumley, Education Officer, Museum and Heritage Centre, 14 Peggate Street, Colchester CO1 1YF. Tel: 02062 282297.

On the Trail of Prince Albert— as part of the continuing conservation of the Albert Memorial in London being undertaken by English Heritage, we have produced a free four-page colour leaflet featuring a trail which looks at a number of monuments and buildings in the area connected with Prince Albert and Queen Victoria. For a free copy simply ring us on 0171 973 3442/Q. A visitors’ centre is now open from 10am to 5pm daily, where schools can find out at first hand all about the repair and restoration work in progress.

Courses for teachers arranged by our Education Service are continuing throughout the rest of this year, history (with input from SCAA), heritage conservation, medieval realms, newspapers and conservation, leisure and tourism and making music at historic sites. A free booklet giving full details of all the courses—which are mostly free for teachers—can be obtained by ringing us on 0171 973 3442/3 or writing to us at our usual address.
Lest we forget
There are memorials everywhere — if only you know where to look for them! You will find them in the names of streets and attached to buildings, as well as in the more obvious places like churchyards and cemeteries. Here are examples from places in Britain

How many examples can you spot in the place where you live?

In almost every town and village, people paid for a war memorial to their dead, like the Royal Artillery monument near Hyde Park Corner (right). Most are from the First World War (1914-1918), Names of Second World War victims (1939-1945) were usually added.

Do you know of a memorial from another war?

Some memorials record unusual events. The one on the left is for a stewardess on an ocean liner which sank in 1899. She helped to save many of the passengers in her care but was drowned herself.

There are all sorts of memorial stones on buildings. Sometimes they are foundation stones, as above left... for plaques, left, which record the date.

It is in churchyards that you find some of the most interesting memorials, above and right. You can trace family histories there and see the sort of decoration that people liked in past centuries. The symbol of death, the skull and crossed bones, was a favourite in the 18th century. Carved angels decorated headstones. Urns were often used in the 19th century — on simple headstones and in the expensive tombs of the rich.

Streetwise investigates the clues to the past that can often be found in the streets near your school!