

Portraits of the Working People of Somerset

A mini project, exploring the world of work, for KS 2 pupils lasting around half a term, based around the decline of the traditional trades of the Somerset Levels.

Curriculum Focus: Local History Study



A study investigating how an aspect in the local area has changed over a long period of time, using the development of the traditional skills of the Somerset Levels as a marker for change and development through the Industrial Revolution and into the 21st Century

This project arose from an exhibition shown at Glastonbury Abbey and The Museum of Bath at Work, which was created by Visualfields. Using special techniques they made a series of digital

photographic images of local crafts people in the context of their skills which is the stimulus for this teaching pack. Thanks are due to West Pennard C of E VC Primary School, Baltonsborough C of E VC Primary School and St Benedict's C of E VA Junior School for their assistance with the pilot study for this project

Resources provided by Glastonbury Abbey Education Services
Funded by Heritage Lottery



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Susan Strong Education Officer Glastonbury Abbey

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Stuart Burroughs Education Officer Museum of Bath at work

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Susan Strong Education Officer Glastonbury Abbey

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How to use this pack:

This pack is designed to provide a series of inputs for the Primary classroom, to get children thinking about the changes across time of the world of work in the Somerset area.

We are identifying 3 main strands:

Strand 1

Pre-industrialisation period: A one day visit into schools by the Glastonbury Abbey outreach team to demonstrate working life in Somerset at the time of Glastonbury Abbey: Demonstration, active participation, hands on learning and group activities

Strand 2

Post-industrialisation period: A suggested visit to the Museum of Bath at Work to contrast this period with the changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution: Day trip to see how the invention of machines brought changes which ended the cottage industries

Strand 3

The world today: The contemporary world of work as seen through a census of jobs and skills from the families of the school: Information gathering and data collection leading to sorting out the kinds of skills which are dying out in the modern world and choosing which trades and skills should be captured by the camera for the final exhibition.

Glastonbury Abbey Education Services are offering a day visit to the Abbey, or a visit to the classroom by our team of Living History re-enactors, to provide an immersive experience of how the world of work would have been perceived by children of their age in the pre-industrial world of the early Tudor period.

This is then contrasted with the changes at the Industrial Revolution by a visit to The Museum of Bath at work to explore a soft drink bottling factory which has links to the Somerset Levels.

Finally, we suggest some approaches for the class to investigate the spread of employment opportunities available to people in the contemporary world and contrast this with what they have learned about the workplace in the earlier periods

Educational Rationale:

This project belongs in the area of learning for **historical, geographical and social understanding**. The core aims are to

develop pupils understanding of “who we are, where we have come from, where we live and where we might be going next.”

We seek to explore the different opportunities for employment in the community of Glastonbury, using the period of the town before the Abbey was closed in Tudor times, contrasted with the present day employment experiences of pupils and their families living in the same area.

1. Essential Knowledge

Children should build secure knowledge of:

- a) how the present has been shaped by the past, through developing a sense of chronology, exploring change and continuity over time
- b) how and why places and environments develop, how they can be sustained and how they may change in the future

2. Key Skills

Compare, interpret and analyse different types of evidence from a range of sources, including visiting demonstrators to the schools.

3. Cross-curricular studies

c) Enhancing children’s historical, geographical and social understanding through making links to other areas of learning and to wider issues of interest and importance

4. Breadth of Learning

Learn about the ways that the people and communities of Glastonbury and the surrounding environments have changed over time, and how they are interconnected with respect to employment and skills

5. Curriculum progression:

Early: To explore how people’s ways of life, including their own, change across time within their own locality

Middle: How identities, communities, places, cultures and traditions have changed and are changing over time

Later: To consider how people can live and work together to benefit their communities. To distinguish between fact and opinion and make choices about sources of information to find out about communities and the local area with respect to social and economic change.

Strand 1. Pre industrialisation period:

Aims: To get the class thinking about the differences between life today and life in Tudor times. To think about how everyday foods,

clothes and household necessities were made then and whether we still need the same jobs today.

Key concept: Is this something that you would find happening in our world today? Do you know anyone who can do this work today?

Main delivery method: Glastonbury Abbey Outreach team goes in to a school to work with one class of Primary age students and delivers a day of activities through in-role presentation called "Tools of the Trades in the 1500's":

We lead demonstrations, activities and group work covering

- Furniture making, by demonstrating how to use a pole lathe to turn legs for a stool
- How clothing was produced, by demonstrating a spinning wheel, a drop spindle and an inkle braiding loom
- How food was produced by demonstrating a butter churn and a quern (Making a Medieval cheese sandwich)
- Games, music and dance of the medieval period

Follow up work:

How did the people 500 years ago, work for their living at the time the Abbey was still standing?

Using Medieval Crafts resource pack British Library 1997 Picture resource cards showing people making different things which would have been common to the period and getting children to ask whether we still need these jobs today. Could there be anyone who could still do this work in today's world?

Strand 2: How industrialisation changed the way we work

This section provides an excellent way of helping children to see that, as we learned to make more complicated machines, we stopped needing to use the old ways of doing things. People lost their skills as machines took over from people. In the modern world, jobs continue to be lost as we find ways of using computers and other digital technologies to enhance our world.

Industrialisation: What happened to change the way things worked?

Delivered through a class visit to the Museum of Bath at Work to see what "Industrialisation" means.

Opportunity to explore craft and craftsmen in the context of the Victorian Workshop – using the scale reconstruction of the metal working business of J B Bowler. This could involve guided tours, costume and drama

Opportunity to explore the evolution and revolution of craft manufacturing into volume and mass production through presentation of experience of the Industrial Revolution in an urban context.

Opportunity to compare and contrast the urban and rural context of craft and the disappearance of trades, skills and craft

The Museum has three floors of displays, can operate as a venue for school visits, lectures, AV presentations, meals, receptions, etc. The Museum has good contacts with local schools.

Stuart Burroughs
Museum of Bath at Work

Strand 3: How do we provide for the needs of our lives today?

The aim of this section of the project is to make children aware of the changes we accept as standard for our world but which have caused a decline in the skills and trades which once flourished in the Somerset Levels.

As the world changed when machines began to do the work of people, so the world has changed again in our own time, with computers, micro chip technology and fast communications networks. Today some people still know how to work in the 'old ways' but they are usually done as hobbies, rather than as means of employment.

Follow up work: What do people do today for employment? Take a class/school census of all the different types of work done by local families today. Subdivide by "Crafts, Skills and Trades"; How has the Industrial Revolution changed the way these processes are worked today? There is scope for a class/whole school project on "Work in the 21st Century" – range of work done by parents; jobs done by women in the 21st century; surveys on blue-collar work rather than white collar work contrasted with data from Tudor times;

This section includes suggestions for a home work project into the families of the classes involved in the project. The aim is to make all the families aware of the 'Declining Trades' census and to discover people who still practice some of the original skills and trades and might be willing to come and demonstrate these to the school children. Children are encouraged to think of the skills that they already have, or will need to develop ready for their own turn to be part of the workplace. (Make a contribution?)

Key Questions:

- Are there any trades from the 'Abbey' period that still continue today? How have the processes changed?
- In what ways have trades adapted to the needs of modern life?
- What are the important jobs today? Are they the same sorts of work that was important in the past?
- What new jobs have been created in the last 100 years?