

LESSON PLAN

Barry Hill Fort

AIM:

Through learning a little about Barry Hill Fort, we can:

- begin to discover some ways in which we learn about people in the past
- consider the challenges of living without the modern luxuries we have now
- appreciate that where we live is special and worth looking after
- better understand what a museum is and what it offers
- learn by creating and by working with others
- learn how to do very simple weaving and sewing
- work out how to construct a model using simple resources
- learn about maps and better understand contour lines

Background Material

- Historic Scotland books about the Picts
- Images of Barry Hill Fort, of Pictish dwellings, of evidence of archaeological remains from above, see 'Look' section and here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=COI5_ijHc7M with a catalogue of what each photograph is here: <http://commonculture.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/CCWCommonGround-ExhibitionAPCatalogue.pdf>
- Website about the Lair Archaeology project which has been excavating Pictish Longhouses: <http://www.glenshee-archaeology.co.uk>
- Pictures of standing stones locally
- How to build a roundhouse (excellent visual presentation) http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/british_prehistory/launch_ani_roundhouse.shtml
- Further ideas about archaeology (Young Archaeologists' Club) Resource packs available at Historic Scotland
- www.yacuk.orghttps://www.bing.com/search?q=young+archaeologists&form=EDGEAR&q=AS&cvid=cec9634bc84f4d78bc8321040f5d9904&cc=GB&setlang=en-GB
- Standing Stones available to view in Meikle Pictish Stone Museum

ACTIVITIES:

Creating a model of a late prehistoric settlement and a scale map of the same model

What you need:

- 9 bits of very stiff card measuring 50cm x 50cm marked with a 10 x 10 square grid
- newspaper
- gravel/fine aggregate
- sand
- glue
- loads of wee sticks (lolly-pop sticks/the skinny end of willow/toothpicks)
- plasticine/salt dough
- space to leave models as work in progress
- table covering
- paint

The list of resources can stretch to whatever you can find that you think might add something to the model.

You will start to create a model of Barry Hill together, so the class learns how the models and the maps will work. The teacher should have resources ready for making the Barry Hill model.

First, taking a 50cm x 50cm piece of, decide where Barry Hill will sit on the card and draw the shape of the outermost part of the hill onto the card. This shape then needs to be transposed over onto the 25cm x 25cm paper. Use the grid to keep the shape accurate. Now, draw another contour and copy it over, then another and so on until you have a rough plan of the hill. The children will be a bit bewildered most likely, but keep going.

Next, cut a piece of card from the off cuts, the same size and shape as the lowest contour on the 50 x 50 map. then cut the next contour out and the next and so on. You can now glue these onto the card square to make the hill. You will need lots of spacers to give the structure height. Make sure the spacers are the same size (You can use 4 small bits of card piled up and stuck together to make one spacer). Once this is all stuck down, children will better understand the contour lines and your hill will be taking shape. You can then add a couple of hillocks round the side following the same method (remember to add features to the scale map). Once you're happy with the skeleton of your plan, get paper maché-ing. Cover in papier maché until you have a smooth landscape. Of course, the whole class doesn't want to papier maché the one plan, so it's time to get groups started on their models.

It is worth noting that most Hill Forts are not 'forts' where people would go under threat. They had lots of functions and it is not completely clear what all their uses were but they were mostly central gathering areas. Nevertheless, they were generally steep, high places and a lot of effort would be needed to get up to them and they would not have lived there all the time.

The other 8 cardboard squares are going to be models showing how the Picts lived and the way they used the landscape around them. There will be a river or stream, there'll be piles of stones which have been cleared from the earth to allow for planting, there will be timber houses - possibly longhouses (See photos in the 'Look' section) there will be some animals and some crops growing round and about. There will be evidence of coppicing most likely and places to have fires. There may even be a place where they throw their rubbish and sewage! The children can think of other features likely to exist and as this activity is ongoing, you can drip-feed information as you go to enable them to cram as many informative features into their models. I have seen children making models of fish smoking, berries collected to make dye, clothes hanging over rocks to dry. Factual accuracy is nice, but the idea is that they are thinking about how things might have been with the information they're given, so sensible artistic licence would seem OK as long as they can justify it.

The next thing to do is to lay out all nine bits of card in the order they will be ultimately in three rows of three. Label each square so you know where they belong (label them underneath so the label doesn't get covered over). Then draw on the river so it goes wherever you want it to. Get the children to copy the river onto the scale maps straight away. In my experience, the river sometimes gets a bit muddled, but if this happens, you can sort it at the very end when all models are brought back together.

Each group (no more than four in a group - three is even better) can set off and create a house for a family, some farming features, use of a river demonstrated in some way and so on with there being a deadline set for completion. Once the models have been papier maché-ed, they are then painted with poster paint combined with PVA glue and features added. Sand can be mixed into paint, or scattered over paint to add texture. Soil too can be added. Pebbles make good boulders. Roundhouses take a bit of figuring out as you have to get the sticks to stand up. I found dough useful (plasticine or salt dough). Some children glued a stone wall down using the fine aggregate and used this wall to support the wee sticks. This all needs a bit of time and patience. For the roof, some children used more sticks, others cardboard. Some went and gathered moss. Other features can be designed as they are dreamt up and should be added to the scale map as they are created. This becomes slightly tricky as the grid is covered up by papermaché, but it should be possible to fit things in around each other.

Ultimately you will end up with 9 models which can be fitted together to create one big model to be used as the centrepiece for a museum about the Picts, created by everyone in the class. The maps should be coloured and a key added and this should

be displayed beside the 3D model.

Lastly, the children should create some information boards to support their model.

Creating a piece of Pictish fabric (weaving)

Another ongoing job and one which children can usually pick up and put down with minimal input once they've got the hang of it. Each child is given a weaving board. You can buy these - a bit of very thick cardboard with a jaggy edge top and bottom. You string twine round the cardboard so it sits in each v of the jagged edges and tie it off to produce the weft. The children then select from wools you provide and weave over-under-over, turning at the ends, until the space is full. You then cut the weft at one end and they knot each strand to another beside it to secure the weave, then repeat at the other end and tidy up the sides. Each piece of weaving can be displayed distinctly, or (if you had time) someone could sew them together to create a blanket, or even a tunic (a small one).

If you feel brave enough, you could also make nettle cord. Collect nettles (use gloves) strip them of their leaves. Flail them (bash them against something) and then twist them into cord with one person twisting a small number of stems one way and someone holding the other end, twisting the other way.

This job will help inform the model as you will have to learn what Pictish clothes were most likely made of. Use wool and fibrous plants (like nettles). The model will have to show how these resources were gathered and stored.

Sewing inspired by Pictish Carvings

You will need:

- Photocopied outlines of straightforward Pictish carvings (see appendices)
- Pieces of pre-cut mesh fabric
- Thread
- Suitable needles
- A light coloured pen

Lay the mesh over the picture.

Draw the shape onto the mesh.

Sew along the drawn line.

It is nice to do something with the finished products. You could sew them individually onto potato sack material as a backing, making a rough hem along the top and inserting a stick from which to hang it. All together, they look very impressive. This way, a helpful parent could probably create a wall hanging to roughly mimic a standing stone?

Dissecting coprolites

There is a lot about the Picts that we don't know, but how do we learn about the Picts (and other groups from history)?

People who lived in crannogs would throw rubbish and waste into the water. Archaeologists have been able to examine this waste and learn from it. It is a fun activity to make coprolites (fossilised poo) and to present each child, or pair of children, with one to dissect.

To make the poo, you must make salt dough (1 part salt, 2 parts flour, about 3/4 parts water/brown paint). Add water and paint bit by bit to get the right colour and consistency. This is just good fun!

Next, add food for the young archaeologists to find. You can be as historically accurate as you like. The point of the exercise is to learn how we learn. Fish bones (You could use noodles for this), barley, blueberries, raspberries, brambles, dried peas - these all work well.

Before getting stuck in, a conversation is required about how best to go about the job to ensure you don't miss or damage anything. You could provide toothpicks. Also, children should record what they find. You could get the children to record by laying each item on a white board, labelling it and photographing it, then completing the record sheet.

It is fun to present the children with the coprolites on a whiteboard, perhaps with a pair of gloves each and let them decide whether or not they are real.

A walk up to see Barry Hill Fort

There are a number of ways of doing this. You can walk onto the East side of Loyal Hill (also known as McRitch Hill) by leaving the square in Alyth, walking along Losset Road and onto the golf course (assuming it's still a golf course), then walking along till the golf course meets the road to the Five Roads Roundabout and continuing towards Glenisla for perhaps 100m, then crossing the road and heading up through the fields and onto the hill. Once you get up, you can look down on the Hill Fort and get a really good view. On the way, you pass a standing stone on the Golf Course and get a wee sense of the effort involved in walking about on varied terrain.