

School Pack



ARTHUR TRAIL
ASSOCIATION



Dark Age Tweeddale



Foundation
Scotland

Society of Antiquaries
of Scotland



www.dark-age-digs.com

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This School Pack contains cross curricular information and activities to complement the teaching of Curriculum for Excellence at Level 2.

Prepared by:

Robin Crichton, Malcolm Laurie & Jane Baxter
Arthur Trail Association

Arthur Trail Association
Keepers House
Traquair House
Innerleithen EH44 6PP

Tel: 01896 831 188
Email: crichton.efp@gmail.com



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www.merlintrail.com
www.dark-age-digs.com

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A person in a white dress riding a white horse through a sunlit forest. Sunbeams stream through the trees, creating a magical atmosphere. The rider is seen from behind, moving away from the viewer into the distance.

What is a Legend?

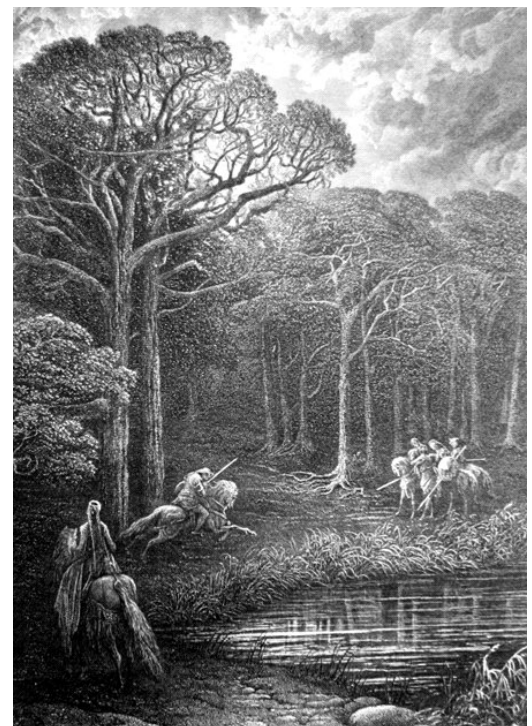
A legend is an old story from long ago which over time has had new things added to it to make it more popular and up-to-date.

When you go home after school, maybe you watch something on TV or the internet. In olden times, there were no films or TV or even books... but there were stories.

Round the fire in the evening, tales were told of monsters and maidens and fantastic champions who came to the rescue and performed daring deeds – the sort of amazing heroes which you might want to be like when you grow up.

These old stories from long ago were learned by heart by generation after generation and told again and again. They gradually spread by word of mouth to far and distant lands and as the stories travelled, they were adapted to make them even better for local audiences by placing them in new local landscapes and adding in new local heroes.

Over the centuries, the stories became legends in many different versions but at the heart of the story there is usually always a real event or person hidden somewhere in the make-believe.



Engraving by Gustave Doré for Alfred Lord Tennyson's 'Idylls of the King'.

The Merlin Story



In the Early Dark Age everyone in the South of Scotland spoke Welsh. Merlin lived in the sixth century so the earliest accounts of Merlin are in sixth century.



Welsh poetry which was learned by heart and passed down from generation to generation until it was finally written down a couple of hundred years later.

Merlin was a man of many talents – warrior, scholar, bard, prophet, healer and priest. In his clan on the Solway, he was more important than the Chief.

He was the power behind the throne and he championed traditional pagan beliefs.

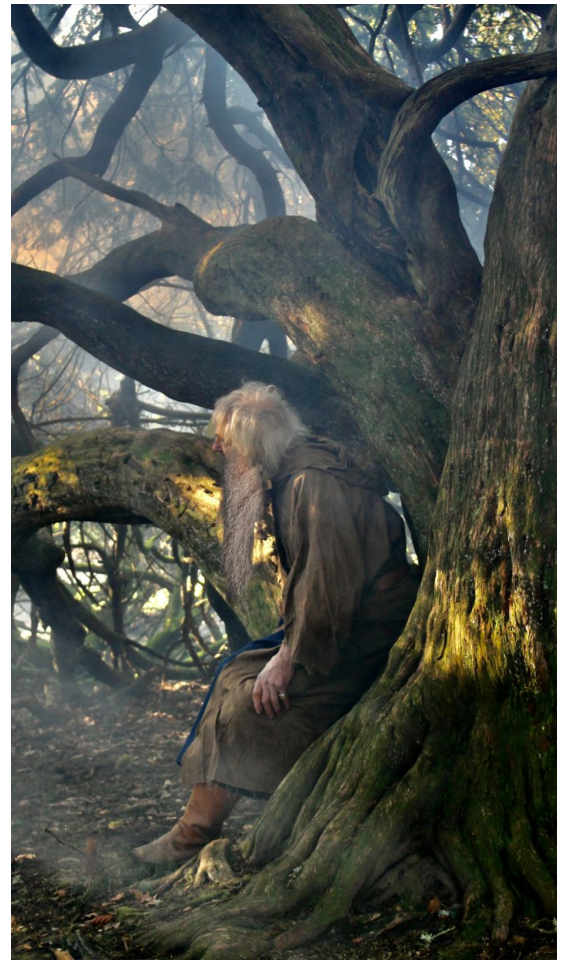
There were many gods who came and went but Christianity claimed it was the only true faith and Merlin had no time for it.

His twin sister was married to Rydderch, the High Chief of Strathclyde. He was the richest and most powerful man in Southern Scotland.

Rydderch was a fervent Christian and determined to convert the whole of Southern Scotland to Christianity through his missionary front-man St Mungo who in 673 AD came up from Wales with 698 monks to help him achieve the task.

When Merlin was born, probably in the 620's, southern Scotland was still essentially pagan. Christianity had arrived but was largely influenced by Ireland and restricted to coastal areas. Mungo and Merlin were a clash of opposites. Merlin thought everyone should be free to question religious ideas and choose whatever they wanted to believe in.

But Mungo believed he had all the answers and did not welcome the questioning of Christianity. As far as he was concerned it was the only true faith!



St Mungo meets Rydderch Stained glass window Glasgow Cathedral.





Just before Mungo's arrival there was a great battle in which Merlin's clan on the Solway was massacred.

His three brothers and his chief were all killed and Merlin was forced to flee.

The horror of the slaughter of all his friends and family sent him mad.

The battle of Arfderydd (Arthuret) 572AD



There was a price on his head. He was a wanted man – a threat to Christianity.

His hideout was a cave high up in the Moffat Hills, where, for ten long years, he lived off what nature could provide.

Everywhere they went, the missionaries hunted high and low but they never found him.



Hartfell Spa in the Moffat Hills (Merlin's Cleuch in the centre).

Find out more: www.merlintrail.com/hartfell

Merlin's Cleuch, a hidden place of bare rock.



Merlin's Cave is high enough to sit in.





On the one hand, his twin sister was caught between loyalty to her husband Rydderch and on the other hand her love for her brother and her desire to ease his suffering.

She had to play a dangerous, diplomatic balancing act of supporting both but betraying neither.

Mungo was extremely successful in his conversion and at the end of the ten years Merlin's sister persuaded her husband, the Chief to allow Merlin free passage to come out of hiding and meet Mungo to see if a compromise could be reached.

Merlin



Mungo



High up in the hills the winters were cold. Merlin had animal skins to keep him warm but his clothes were threadbare and he was short of food. He had grown thin and haggard.

His sister hoped that he could be allowed to come in from the cold and be cared for in his old age.

The meeting took place at Stobo on the Upper Tweed. But the compromise meant Merlin had at least to pretend to accept Christianity.

Merlin refused. He was an old man. Ten years of being half starved and exposed to the bitter cold of the winters had taken its toll.

He felt he was going to die soon and he had predicted that he would suffer a triple death by 'bludgeoning, piercing and drowning'.



Read more on www.merlintrail.com/merlindale



*Site of the ford across the River Tweed
where Merlin was assassinated.*



On his way home, he had to ford the Tweed at Drumelzier. Bridges were few and far-between so the way to cross a river, without getting your feet wet, was on stilts.

In mid-stream he was attacked by a crowd of hoodlums who emerged from hiding in the bushes. They stoned him, knocking him off balance. He fell forward off his stilts on to a fisherman's stake for salmon nets.

It pierced his body and he fell into the river. His head went underwater and he finally drowned.

That (very briefly) is the story of Merlin.
But what was his wider world like?

History

The Early Dark Age World of Merlin



Tinnis Hillfort as it may have looked in the late sixth century.

The Early Dark Age is the 300 years from the departure of the Romans in 410AD to the death of St Columba 597AD.

Merlin lived and died in at the end of this period, in the late five hundreds.

The Age is called 'Dark' because there is very little written evidence from this period.

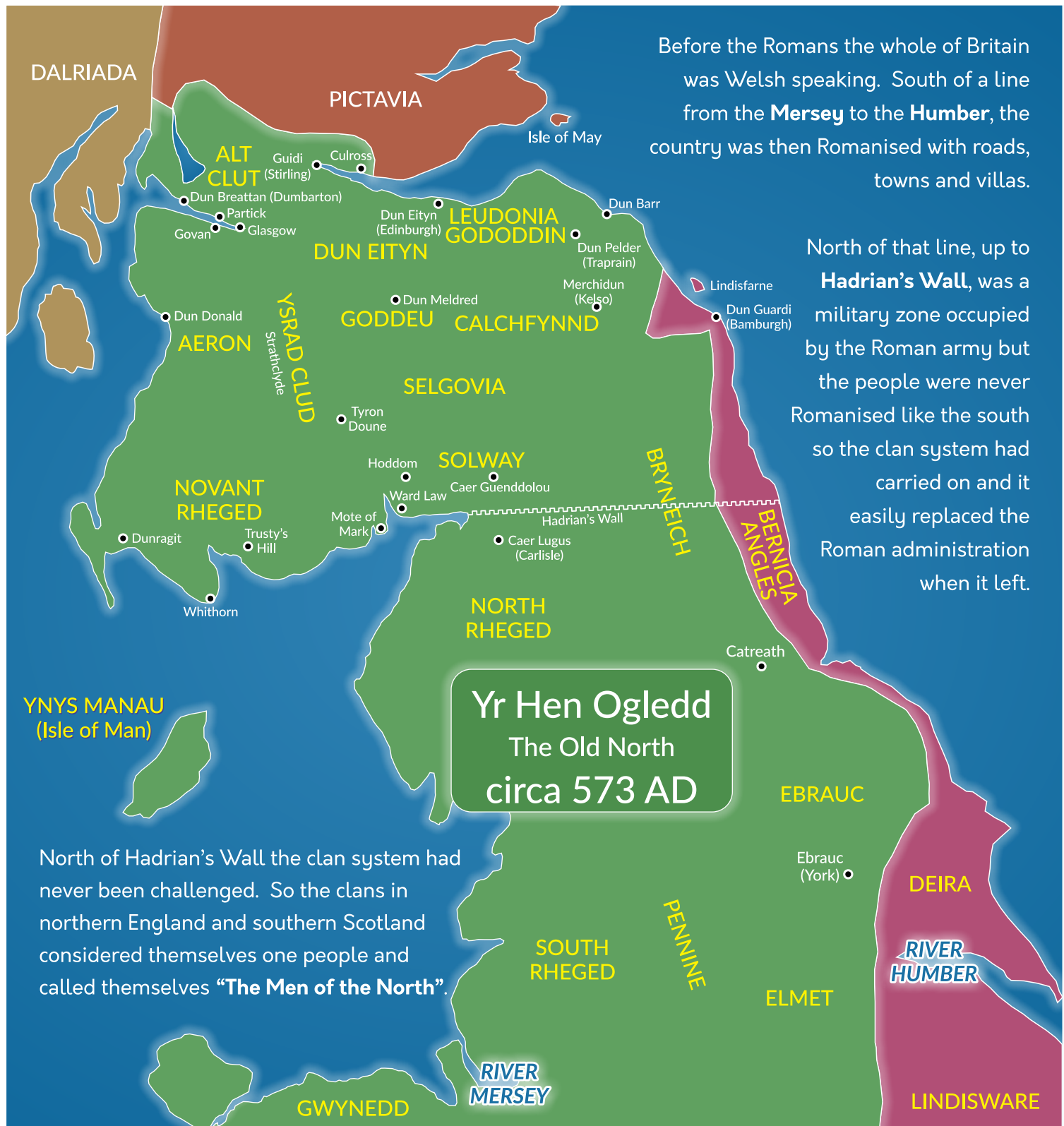
Druids like Merlin could read Greek and Latin but when it came to recording events they believed that learning and performing from memory was far more reliable than writing things down.

Handwriting can easily be mis-copied either accidentally or to deliberately to change something for political reasons.

Memorised stories were learned with a strict syntax and spoken to a rhythm so any mistake immediately stood out like playing a bum note on the piano.

These memorised stories, passed down from father to son, were preserved in their original form although not written down till a couple of hundred years later.

They were based on real events. Their main purpose was not so much to record history but more importantly to promote the valour, bravery, honour and cleverness in the deeds of their heroes to serve as an inspiration for future generations.





The clan chiefs were commanders in chief with a war band of cavalry. They were the aristocracy and were garrisoned at a hill-fort.

In Welsh the Chief was called the “Protector” and his full-time job was to defend the clan.

But more important than the “Protector” was the Arch-druid who was like a prime minister.

He was the chief politician and ran the government with a network of associate druids. Druid means “Man of Learning”.

They represented many different professions and served as judges, lawyers, diplomats, historians, teachers, philosophers, astronomers, prophets, councillors, political advisors, healers, bards and musicians.

They passed on not only practical knowledge but also the magic that went with it.

Their learning was their power. They lived in a separate settlement, probably a holy place of healing and ritual ceremonies but within easy reach of the hillfort.



There were no towns or villages, just farming settlements whose purpose was to produce food for the clan. Farmers were not allowed to go to war.

They lived in small round houses often with three or four generations all sharing the same small space.



What is Historical Fact?

Was Merlin a real person?

Was he actually called Merlin?

This is where we all can become detectives.

How do we go about it?

Against this background, how much of the Merlin story is true?

First of all, who and what is acceptable as historical fact?

a) **Merlin and his sister** are clearly identified in early Welsh poetry composed in the 6th century.



b) Merlin and his three brothers belonged to the **Solway clan of Guenddolou the chief** and Merlin's brothers were all killed 573AD in the battle of Arthuret (Arfderydd).

Merlin was driven mad by the horrors of seeing his whole clan wiped out and fled to hide in the Caledonian woods of the Moffat Hills.

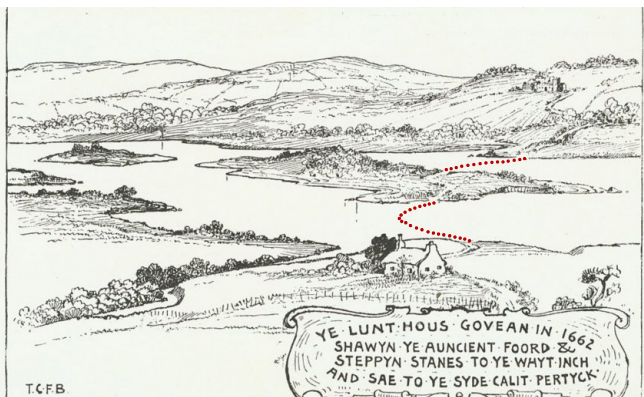
Here he hid for more than ten years, living in a cave and living off what nature could provide until he was assassinated in about 584AD.



c) **Mungo**, also known as Kentigern, arrived with 692 Welsh monks to Christianise the Southern Uplands of Scotland in 573AD.

He was the first Bishop of Glasgow and died in 612AD.

His bones lie in the crypt of Glasgow Cathedral.



d) **Rydderch** was the first Christian High Chief of Strathclyde. His capital was at Dumbarton on the Clyde but his royal estate and the administrative centre were further upriver on opposite banks of the Clyde at Partick and Govan.

In those days the river was much shallower and the two settlements were connected by stepping stones which allowed the crossing of the river at low tide.

Rydderch was also overlord of a number of sub-kingdoms and controlled most of South West Scotland.



e) **Meldred** is recorded in a 12th century document as clan chief in Tweeddale at the time of Merlin and ruled a territory, probably known as Goddeu, (which means 'the land of trees').

It was a sub-kingdom of Strathclyde and Meldred is recorded as going riding with Rydderch to counter an Angle invasion from Northumbria.

He is said to have given his name to Drumelzier which is said to derive from Dun Meldred (Meldred's fort). **Tinnis**, the name of his fort derives from the word 'dinas' which is Welsh for 'fort'.

We are pretty sure there is already enough evidence to say that all this is probably true. So how do we check it out?

Archaeology: A Process of Detection

What can we actually see?

First of all we look at and measure the site both from the ground and the air.

Tinnis Castle sits on a rocky hilltop overlooking stone towers.

Historical records tell us that this is all that remains of a mediaeval castle which was blown up with gunpowder around 1525 on orders of the king.

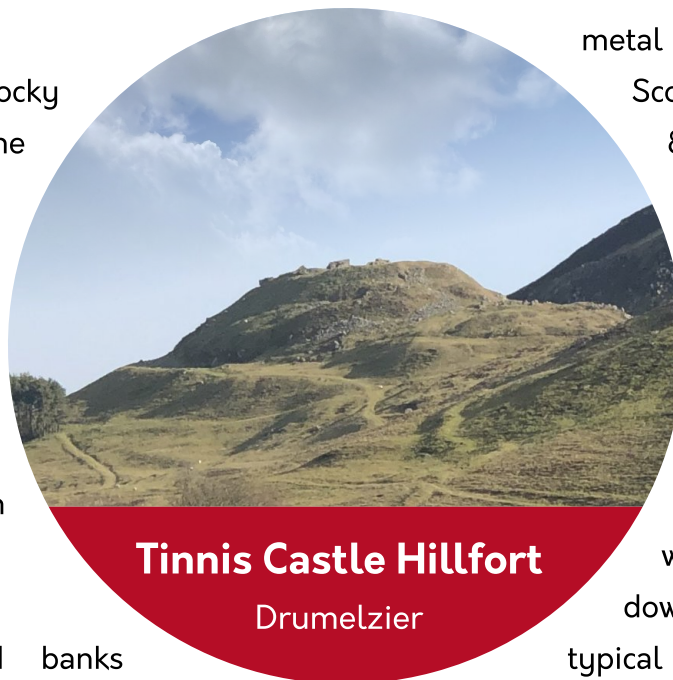
Large deep ditches and banks encircle the hill and you can see traces of an older fortification. The remains of a rampart runs round the edge of the summit of the hill and there are also more stone ramparts further down the slopes that suggest that the remains an earlier fort lies underneath the castle ruins.

Was this a Dark Age hillfort?

Hillforts generally date from the Iron Age, so called because of the discovery of iron metal working and its use in Scotland from approximately 800 BC to 400 AD.

But some hillforts were also used in the Dark Ages.

This layout of ramparts at Tinnis – a Fortified Summit with smaller enclosures lower down the rocky slopes – is typical of a stronghold of a wealthy family and a Dark Age Chief.



Tinnis Castle Hillfort
Drumelzier

Was this the fort of the Chief Meldred where Merlin stayed just before his assassination?

The Process of Detection

Many historians have claimed that the whole Merlin story is probably made up because there is not enough written evidence which can be cross-checked to prove it happened.

But the past can also be discovered from what has NOT been written down. Archaeologists are detectives.

In a similar way to how the police investigate a crime, archaeologists identify places where events have happened and people have lived and died.

Tinnis Hillfort

First of all there may be clues on old maps or in historical records.

Aerial photographs can also show outlines of previous occupation and land use.



Figure 1: Mostyn Armstrong's 1775 map of the County of Peebles



We can accurately measure all the lumps and bumps in the landscape to get a better idea of how the soil has been worked and what remains of buildings and their occupants may lie under the ground.

This is called the **topography**.





Volunteers worked with the archaeologists on Tinnis Hillfort using shovels, trowels and brushes to carefully reveal the hidden stone walls.

It looks promising. So we can start the ‘dig’.

The deeper we dig, the further back in time we go. In each layer we may find evidence like stone walls or floors. Different coloured dirt may show the place of a fire, a drain or where a wooden post once stood.

And on every level there is rubbish – things that have been broken or dropped or thrown away.

These layers, which we call the **strata**, reveal the timeline of the occupation of the site and its people from start to finish. Everything we find is carefully photographed, mapped and recorded.

We won’t excavate the whole site but we will select what we think are the most promising areas and start to carefully dig measured **trenches**.





Loose earth from the trenches is put in the green tray and sifted for clues before the earth is dumped on the spoil pile.

The only way to discover more is to dig down and see what we can find. We hope we will find things that the occupants left behind or threw away.

These are the clues from which we can try to gradually piece together a picture of who lived here and when. What did they do? How did they leave their mark on the local environment? What were their contacts with the wider world?

Can we be sure that the fort was actually occupied in Merlin and Meldred's time?



Horseshoe



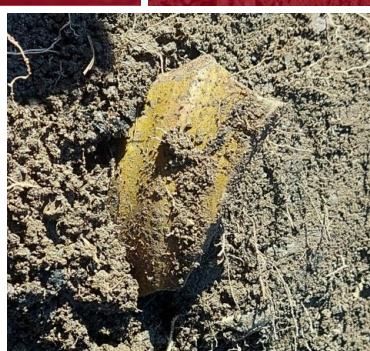
Animal bone



Pottery



Iron nail



Pottery



Animal teeth



Animal tooth



We found the base of the rampart that once encircled the top of the hillfort.

It was 1.7m wide. The outer and inner faces were built with large stones and smaller stones were used to fill in the middle.

Smaller stones were placed in the middle of the rampart.

Then the to level the stones belonging on the rampart of the mediaeval castle were cemented together by mortar.

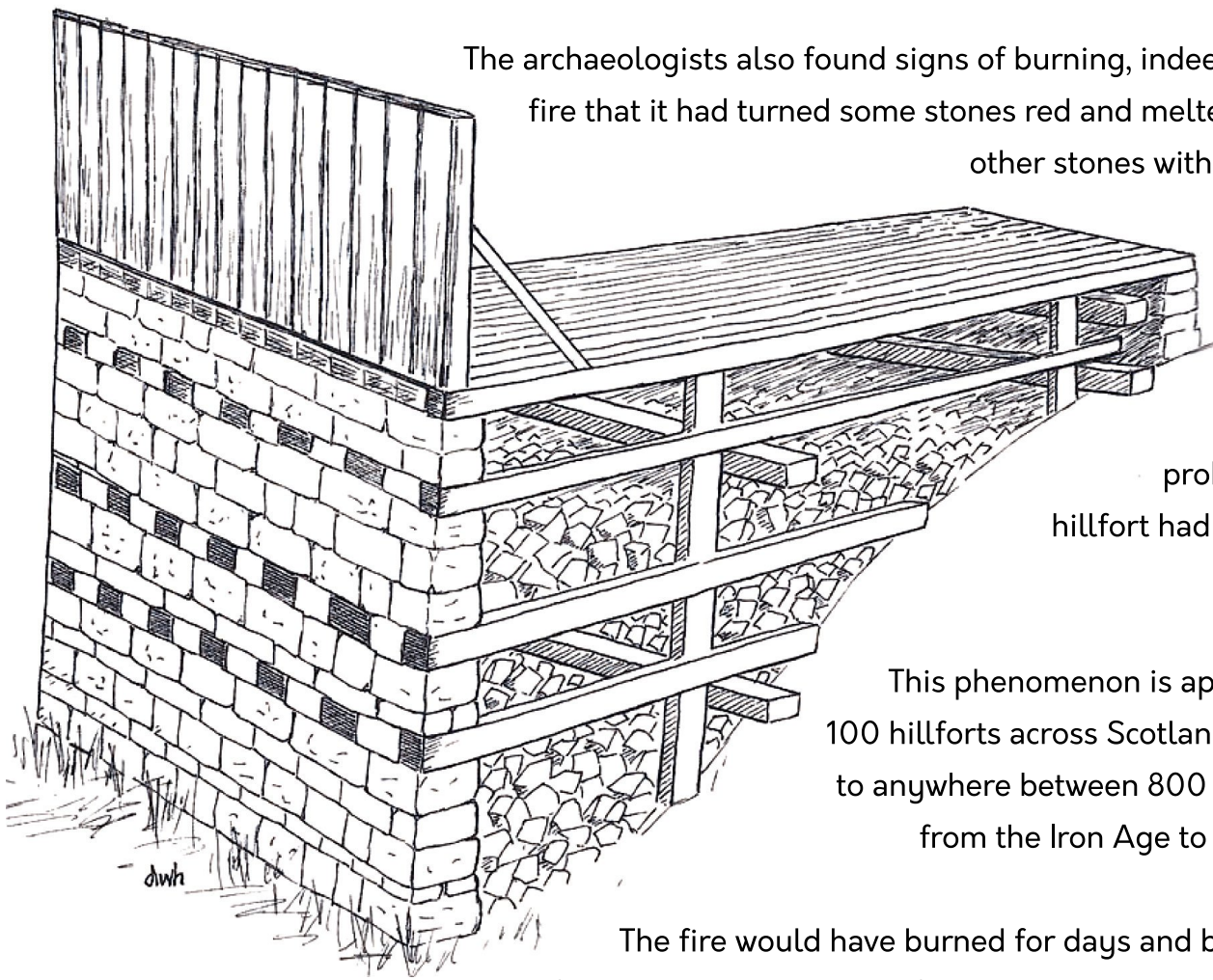
Below the mortared rampart was a much earlier rampart made of dry stones – without mortar.

This was what we had been looking forward to.

It fitted with the Meldred period.



The archaeologists also found signs of burning, indeed such a fierce fire that it had turned some stones red and melted (or vitrified) other stones within the rampart.



This was no accident but deliberate destruction, probably after the hillfort had been captured by enemies.

This phenomenon is apparent on over 100 hillforts across Scotland that can date to anywhere between 800 BC to AD 900, from the Iron Age to the Dark Ages.

The fire would have burned for days and been seen from far away as a statement of victory over the conquered people.

*Timber-Laced Drystone Ramparts
(before being burnt and vitrified)*



Vitrified stone from the south-west corner shows that this was once a timber-laced drystone rampart that was deliberately burnt to the ground, causing the rubble to melt (or vitrify).

So far we do not have any clear evidence of when the fort was built or destroyed.

A possibility could be nearly a hundred years after the time of Merlin and Meldred in the late 7th century when the Angles conquered and occupied the area.

But we did find lots of charcoal and animal bones from within the rampart. These will be radiocarbon dated and this will reveal dates of occupation.

Assembling all the evidence is like is piecing together a giant jigsaw puzzle. It is all written up for recording and publication and like all good mysteries we are gradually rediscovering of our forgotten past.





Merlin's Grave

Merlin's Grave has been marked on maps since 1775 and the place has been known for centuries before that.



Merlin's Grave has been marked on maps since 1775 and the place has been known for centuries before that.

The historian William Chambers was shown the site by the local minister in 1824.

He describes it as 'a sort of tumulus' (a burial mound). But this no longer exists.

However, twenty years later it is shown on the first edition of the ordinance survey maps.

There is a story of a cist grave where the dead were buried inside a pit lined with stone slabs being found near here but no one knows for sure.



As far as we know, no grave has ever been found although dowsers (diviners) say there is something under the ground here.



To see if there are actually any archaeological remains near this location we brought in the 'Geofizz' – short for **geophysics**.

This beams signals into the ground which bounce back and record changes when they hit something like buried walls, or ditches.

A computer then plots these on a map.

The geophysics results revealed nothing at the location of Merlin's Grave marked on maps but it did show something archaeological, a little distance away in the same field. Only excavation may prove this.

Sometimes Geofizz works. Sometimes it doesn't as we discovered at another nearby burial site where people may have been buried during the Dark Age.

The results of the survey are on:

www.dark-age-digs.com/merlins-grave-site-geophysics-survey



Thirlestane Barrows

At Thirlestane, a few fields to the west of Drumelzier near the village of Broughton, is a barrow cemetery.

A barrow is an ancient burial place covered in a mound of earth, often with a ditch dug around it. Most barrows are round like this example in Avebury but some are square.



Bronze Age barrow at Windmill Hill, Avebury, Wiltshire | © National Trust Images/Emma Weston

Thirlestane Barrows

Where barrows have been excavated, a grave containing a skeleton or cremated (burnt) bones is usually found near the centre of the barrow. These would originally been buried beneath a small mound of earth that was cast from the ditch when it was first dug.

We excavated this Round Barrow...



The Thirlestane Barrows were discovered during the dry summer of 2018, when cropmarks were spotted from a nearby hillside.

An aerial photographic survey revealed at least four barrows, two round barrows in the western field, plus one round barrow and one square barrow in the eastern field.



... and this Square Barrow

(Can you spot any other interesting marks in these fields?)



Square barrows can date from the Iron Age to the Dark Ages (800BC to 900AD).

One of the Thirlestane Barrows is a square barrow. We excavated this to find out if it was the grave of someone who perhaps might have lived at Tinnis Fort.

The archaeologists excavated one of the corners of the square-shaped ditch. But at some stage, the skeletons or remains had been removed – probably during the 18th century agricultural improvements when the barrows would have been levelled and ploughed over.

But because the two rectangular graves orientated east to west, this told archaeologists that the burials were Christian.

Previously people were buried curled up in a ball (like a baby in the womb) or they were cremated.

This means that the square barrow probably dates to the Dark Ages, perhaps around the same time as Tinnis Hillfort.



Follow the progress of this excavation on:

www.dark-age-digs.com/category-daily-dig-diary-thirlestane-barrows



Round Barrows were built for many years, from approximately 2,500 BC to 800 BC in Scotland).

This period is called the Bronze Age this because of the discovery of bronze metal working which was used throughout the period. Environmental samples sent to a laboratory for analysis may reveal the burial dates.

This will be posted on the project website when the date is revealed:

www.dark-age-digs.com

This round barrow turned out to be a sepulchre used over a long period of time where generations after generation were buried on top of each other.



The bodies were cremated and placed in burial urns. We discovered a partial urn and carefully removed it for further investigation back in the lab.



A complete Bronze Age burial urn

Can you imagine the excitement of uncovering the cremated bones of someone who lives and died here thousands of years ago?



Suggested Activities for Your Classes

Take photos – send to **darkagedigs@gmail.com** to appear on www.dark-age-digs.com website and Facebook group www.facebook.com/groups/darkagedigs (Photo permissions permitting.)

Invite Peeblesshire News for articles with pictures in local paper.

www.biggarmuseumtrust.co.uk/learning/teacher-resources – see Biggar Museum information on Medieval ‘handling boxes’ – loan of artifacts for 4 weeks – to use in class or via www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/learning/loan-kits

All activities can be differentiated, individualised or altered to suit your particular children.

Activities can be used as part of a carousel, for whole class, groups, pairs or individuals.

Most activities have Es and Os at Early, First and Second level.

Self and peer assessment are encouraged. The suggested questions can also be used as part of assessment.

Success Criteria can be discussed prior to launching in, and at intervals throughout activities, similarly assessment can be used throughout, as well as during plenary and feedback sessions.

Potential discussion/ research ideas in advance:

- What is archaeology?
- What is the purpose of archaeology? (discover where, when, how people lived in the past)
- What are some important aspects of archaeology?
e.g.
 - Taking time – slowly, carefully, looking for small changes (no hurry, not a race, digging deeper doesn’t mean digging better!)
 - Record every step of the way (no shortcuts – no cheating!)
 - Think carefully – evidence is very important. Some things might be ‘best guesses’ having looked at close comparisons.
 - Keep samples separate – don’t mix up different soil/ gravel etc. Look up ‘contamination’.
 - “What do *you* think” and “how do you know?” are really good questions to ask!



1. Waste Investigation

I explore and appreciate the wonder of nature within different environments and have played a part in caring for the environment.

SOC 0-08a

I can consider ways of looking after my school or community and can encourage others to care for their environment.

SOC 1-08a

I can discuss the environmental impact of human activity and suggest ways in which we can live in a more environmentally-responsible way.

SOC 2-08a

Introduction:

Take a look at the laboratory tests where bagged samples from Tinnis and Thirlestane were investigated:

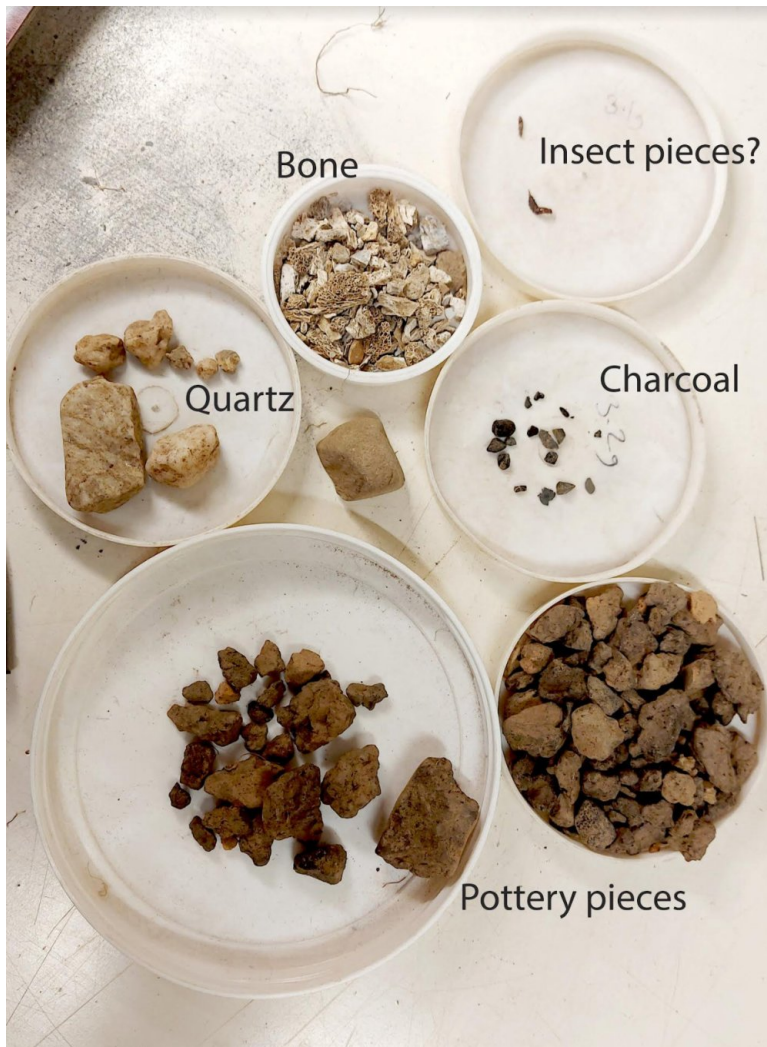
www.dark-age-digs.com/floating-in-the-lab

www.dark-age-digs.com/post-excavation-day-at-the-lab

Q - What can we find out from our waste? (Ask at start and end)

Preparation:

- Make up some false 'poo' to examine in the classroom.
- In advance – create a mix of earth/mud, small pieces of plastic/ small plastic toys, charcoal, broken pottery, pieces of broken jewellery, seeds, stones, zip, material (pieces of school tie), coins, plastic beads etc.
- Create a blank chart for findings – to be filled in by child at each 'find'.
- Idea: (also look up examining owl pellets – if you know of a local source). See also Floating/Sinking activity
- Set up a 'lab' area, if space/resources allow.
- You will need (or could find helpful):
Water, paper towels, sorting trays, tubs, angle-poise lamp/ well-lit area, tweezers/ spoons, magnifying glass and 'findings' sheet/chart.
- One 'poo' per pair/group (or individual if you have the resources!)



Sorted small finds from Tinnis and Thirlestane in the lab

Activity:

- Children carefully dissect the 'poo' – separate 'finds' (and sort into categories).

Questions:

- What kind of things 'decay' in time? (most food/ fruit/ vegetation/– cotton etc, hair, soft body parts, wood) 'organic' materials – things that once lived.
- Can you explain what causes decay? (e.g. 'environment' – water, things in the soil – bacteria/ fungus, wind, sunlight)
- What kind of things are preserved (don't decay)? (plastic, (e.g. polyester), sometimes teeth, metals, pottery/ 'china', sometimes bones, stones – man-made materials.
- How many items can we list in each category?
– e.g. Will be here in 1 year/ Won't be here in a year

What kind of things will archaeologists find in the future if they were to dig in/ around where our school is?

Assessment Q - What can we find out from our waste?



Linked activity (also good for Green Flag activity):

Create a 'waste display' in the playground.

I explore and appreciate the wonder of nature within different environments and have played a part in caring for the environment.

SOC 0-08a

I can consider ways of looking after my school or community and can encourage others to care for their environment.

SOC 1-08a

I can discuss the environmental impact of human activity and suggest ways in which we can live in a more environmentally-responsible way.

SOC 2-08a

Q – How can we show/ evidence the differences between things that degrade and things that don't?

Q – How can we explain the differences?

Q – What is the problem with things that don't degrade?

Activity:

Hammer various things to a pallet and leave in the playground for observation over time (photographs for evidence).

Preparation – examples:

Slice of bread, banana peel, a leaf, orange peel, cotton facecloth, paper towel, sheep wool, school tie, jam jar, plastic bottle, empty crisp packet, plastic toy, toothbrush, kitchen sponge, lollipop stick, school rubber, gym shoe, pencil, pencil case etc.

What else could we use?

Make predictions:

What will still be there tomorrow/ next week/ after the holidays/ next year/ 'when I am in primary 7'/ when you have died...

Create a chart/ make a graph showing the classes predictions.

Revisit after 1 week, 1 month etc. How would you rate our predictions?

Q – Can you explain to a school visitor what the purpose of this experiment is?

Q – Could you design and write the text on an information board for the waste display?

FEEDBACK





2. Archaeology Equipment

I have developed an awareness of where grid reference systems are used in everyday contexts and can use them to locate and describe position.

MTH 1-18a

I can use my knowledge of the coordinate system to plot and describe the location of a point on a grid.

MTH 2-18a

- What do you already know about archaeology?
- What equipment is needed on a 'dig'?
- Have a look through some of the pictures in the www.dark-age-digs.com/blog
 - What equipment can you spot?
 - Why do archaeologists need to consider health and safety?
 - What situations could occur if care wasn't taken on site?
 - What would you do to avoid that situation happening?
 - What would you do to help if a bad situation did happen?

Visiting archaeologists bring e.g.:

- trowels, goggles, hard hats, gloves, matic, 'weather writer', steel toe cap boots, waterproof paper notebook, kneeling mat, GUARD hi-vis vests, shovel, sun hat/sun cream, waterproof trousers, hoe, bucket, skills passport, water sprayer, grid, digital camera, drawing board, packed lunch box, banana, first aid kit etc.

and

- sandals, football, snorkel, school tie, toy dumper truck, swimming costume, cuddly toy, football shorts, paper aeroplane, other 'silly'/unnecessary items.

Each item revealed out of rucksack/ box individually

- What items are essential? Why?
- What is each item used for?

Enough for everyone to 'have a go' / try on the kit? (photo opportunity!)

Discuss health and safety on site

Q - What do we need to think about and remember?

Activity:

- Use trowels etc. to dig a 1m square or 'prepared' area in the playground/ sandpit (see also 'Recreate a burial urn' below) – activities could be combined).
- Use a grid/ string to demarcate each plot/trench.
- Were there any 'finds'?
 - use a flag to mark the position
 - plot position on graph paper/ map of area

Q – What have you learned?



Any photos to share of 'dressing up as an archaeologist' or activities/ finds?

Email them to us at: darkagedigs@gmail.com



ACTIVITY SUGGESTION

3. Merlin Drama

I enjoy creating, choosing and accepting roles, using movement, expression and voice

EXA 1-12a

I can create, adapt and sustain different roles, experimenting with movement, expression and voice and using theatre arts technology.

EXA 2-12a

I can respond to the experience of drama by discussing my thoughts and feelings. I can give and accept constructive comment on my own and others' work.

EXA 0-15a / EXA 1-15a / EXA 2-

- Re-read '**The Merlin Story**' from the School Pack.
- Listen to Robin Crichton tell 'the Merlin Story' (teacher watch first) from the project website:
(Second video at: www.dark-age-digs.com/merlins-grave-site-geophysics-survey)

Activity:

- In small groups – re-enact the Merlin story/ one part of the legend/ or use puppets to tell the story.
- Consider filming the performances – to share on school website and because it is helpful for groups to watch their own performances!
- Be part of a supportive audience – watch other children's drama.
- Give feedback on their work – what would be good questions to ask?



Things to consider:

- What makes a successful performance?
- Who is your audience? – Why does this make a difference?
- What are the most important parts of the legend you need to get across?
- Time limits – how long should the performance be to tell the story (and retain attention!)?
- How many performers are there – does everybody have a role?
- How to get the story across – will there be a narrator? Will everyone have a speaking part?
- Do you need props? Will you have time to make them?
- Giving feedback – is it helpful, tactful, useful? (think ‘2 stars and a wish’!)
- Can I use the experience of watching other groups’ dramas to improve my own performance?



FEEDBACK



4. Interview – Archaeology Volunteer/ Local Historian/ Storyteller

Interview ideas, read together:

www.dark-age-digs.com/category-interviews

www.dark-age-digs.com/category-meet-the-volunteers

LIT 0-02a / ENG 0-03a, LIT 1-02a, LIT 2-02a

ENG 1-03a, ENG 2-03a

LIT 0-04a, LIT 1-04a, LIT 2-04a

LIT 1-05a, LIT 2-05a

I can show my understanding of what I listen to or watch by responding to and asking different kinds of questions.

LIT 1-07a

I can show my understanding of what I listen to or watch by responding to literal, inferential, evaluative and other types of questions, and by asking different kinds of questions of my own.

LIT 2-07a

To show my understanding, I can respond to different kinds of questions and other close reading tasks and I am learning to create some questions of my own.

ENG 1-17a

To show my understanding, I can respond to literal, inferential and evaluative questions and other close reading tasks and can create different kinds of questions of my own.

ENG 2-17a

I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience.

LIT 1-20a / LIT 2-20a

I am learning to use my notes and other types of writing to help me understand information and ideas, explore problems, generate and develop ideas or create new text.

LIT 1-25a

I can use my notes and other types of writing to help me understand information and ideas, explore problems, make decisions, generate and develop ideas or create new text.

I recognise the need to acknowledge my sources and can do this appropriately.

LIT 2-25a

Information:

Some volunteers at Moffat and Biggar Museums volunteered on the digs at Tinnis and Thirlestane. The museums have volunteers who have expertise in local history, storytelling, drone flying etc.

Write a letter/ email to the museums to invite these volunteers into your classroom to take part in an interview – to be used as e.g. a podcast/ blog article/ news report/ blog for school website/ newsletter etc.

Q – What makes a successful interview?

- What words would describe a successful interview?
- Can you foresee any potential problems?
- What will you do to avoid these issues happening?

Activity:

Working in pairs or small groups:

- Decide on the format of final interview
- Does everyone have a role/ job?
- Compile a list of interview questions – peer and teacher assess
- Practise – set up, equipment required, relevance of questions etc.
- Set up and record (sound/written/video) interviews
- Create and present finished article – podcast/ newspaper article/ film clip/ blog for school website

Q – What makes a successful interview?

- Was everyone involved?
- Did you have any difficulties with your interviewing process?
- How did you overcome this/ these difficulties?
- What will you do differently next time?

FEEDBACK



5. Recreate a burial urn



MNU 0-11a, MNU 1-11a, MNU 1-11b, MNU 2-11a, MNU 2-11b, MNU 2-11c

MTH 0-16a, MTH 1-16a, MTH 2-16a, MTH 2-16c

I have developed an awareness of where grid reference systems are used in everyday contexts and can use them to locate and describe position.

MTH 1-18a

I can use my knowledge of the coordinate system to plot and describe the location of a point on a grid.

MTH 2-18a

By exploring some places and investigating artefacts, I am developing my knowledge of the beliefs of world religions and my awareness of their role in Scottish society and the world.

RME 1-04b

I can show understanding of the beliefs of world religions and explore the similarities and differences between these and my developing beliefs.

RME 2-04c

I can talk about my own beliefs, or express them in other ways.

RME 1-04c

I can create a range of visual information through observing and recording from my experiences across the curriculum.

EXA 0-04a / EXA 1-04a

Through observing and recording from my experiences across the curriculum, I can create images and objects which show my awareness and recognition of detail.

EXA 2-04a

Group/ pair activity

Initial discussion and teaching

- What is a burial urn?
- How does this differ/ and what is similar to what we do today?

Use information and pictures in the pages of the burial urn found at Thirlestane. In particular, watch the summary video of excavating the burial urn (from start to finish):

www.dark-age-digs.com/bronze-age-burial-urn-excavation-video

www.dark-age-digs.com/day-9-thirlestane-barrows-full-of-surprises

www.dark-age-digs.com/day-8-thirlestane-barrows-packaged-up

www.dark-age-digs.com/day-7-thirlestane-barrows-trench-5-trowelling

www.dark-age-digs.com/day-6-thirlestane-barrows-day-1-of-trench-5-early-revelations

www.dark-age-digs.com/post-excavation-day-at-the-lab

Images of reconstructed urns (not from Thirlestane):

www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk/bronze-age-prehistoric-and-medieval-discoveries-on-the-a477-carmarthenshire

Activity:

- Find pieces of pot (pre-broken and buried in e.g. playground/large pot/ potato sack/ sand pit)
- Use a grid and ruler to plot the location or depth of each piece on a drawn plan (squared paper) before lifting – number each piece
- Carefully clean pieces (basin of water and paint brushes as seen in lab blogs above)
- Piece together the urn (from e.g. pieces of pre-broken terracotta pot) – there may be some missing pieces...

Q - What would be the best medium to ‘mend’ the pots? Clay? Glue? Blue tac? Chewing gum? Sellotape?! Why/ why not? (for future ideas - look up ‘kintsugi’)

- Record the completed urns – What would be a good way to keep a record of the urns?
e.g. – photographs/ drawings – displayed with annotations? Information posters? Other ideas from the children.



Pieces of broken burial urn actually found at Thirlestane



FEEDBACK



ACTIVITY SUGGESTION

6. Floating/ Sinking

Another class/ group/ pair or individual activity

I can make and test predictions about solids dissolving in water and can relate my findings to the world around me.

SCN 1-16a

I have participated in practical activities to separate simple mixtures of substances and can relate my findings to my everyday experience.

SCN 2-16a

Within real and imaginary situations, I share experiences and feelings, ideas and information in a way that communicates my message.

LIT 0-09a

When listening and talking with others for different purposes, I can exchange information, experiences, explanations, ideas and opinions, and clarify points by asking questions or by asking others to say more.

LIT 1-09a

When listening and talking with others for different purposes, I can:

- share information, experiences and opinions
- explain processes and ideas
- identify issues raised and summarise main points or findings
- clarify points by asking questions or by asking others to say more.

LIT 2-09a

I have experienced the energy and excitement of presenting/performing for audiences and being part of an audience for other people's presentations/performances.

EXA 0-01a / EXA 1-01a / EXA 2-01a

View/ read and discuss together:

www.dark-age-digs.com/floating-in-the-lab

Q - How can we recreate a floatation tank/ filtration system to separate bagged soil samples?

Q - What could we use in the classroom/ playground?

(containers/ sieves /net curtain/ fine material/ coffee filters...)

Preparation:

- Labelled 'sample' bags of various sized pottery pieces/ stones/ gravel/ soil/ sand/ leaves/ small pieces of stick/cork etc.
- Set up a 'floatation tank' with various grades of sieves
- Set up some clear jars (to observe floating/sinking/settling at eye level)
- Sort 'finds' into groups – what would be a good way to group items? (There may be more than one good way)

Prepare charts/tick boxes to record findings including:

- What sinks
- What floats
- Size of objects trapped in various sized sieves/ filters

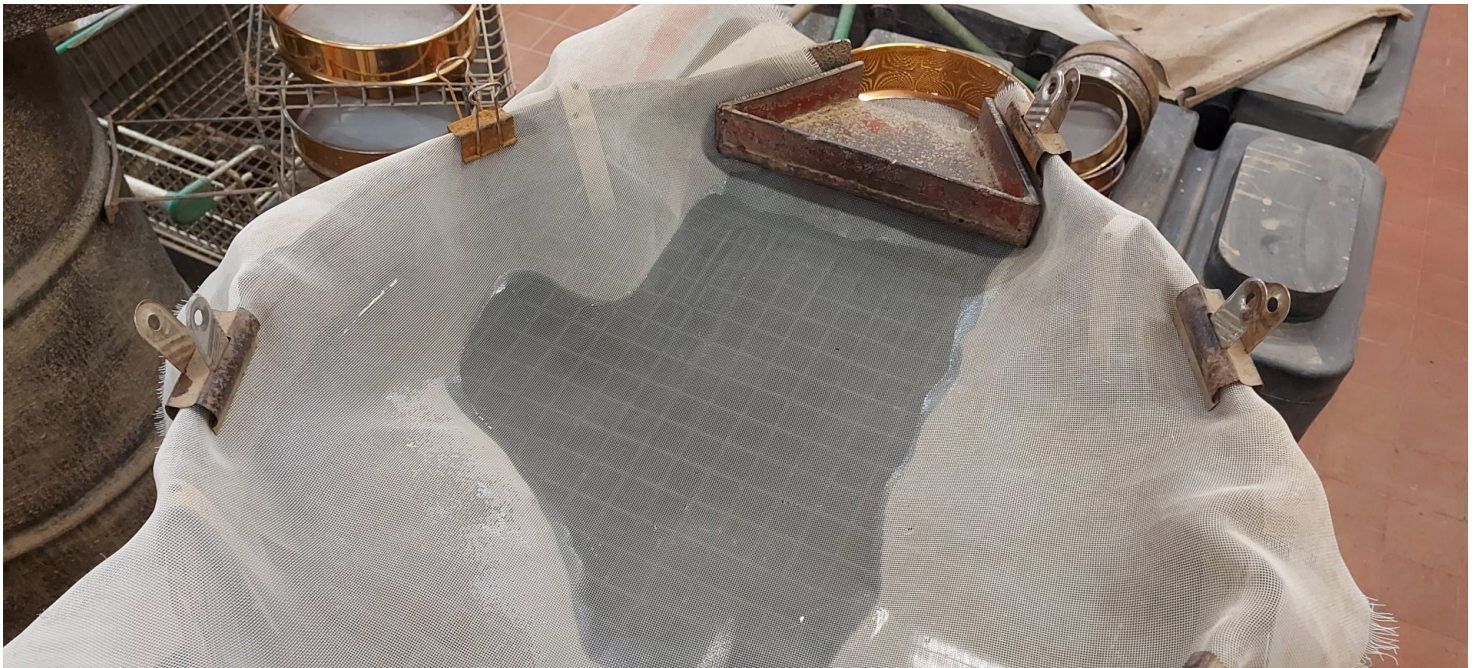
Q – What have you learned from this experiment/ activity?

- How can you show what you've learned?



Present findings:

e.g. – assembly presentation/ filmed explanation for blog/ 'be the teacher' demonstration for the class
– include a QandA session



Floatation tank in the lab

FEEDBACK

7. Comparison – Then and Now



I can make a personal link to the past by exploring items or images connected with important individuals or special events in my life.

SOC 0-02a

By exploring places, investigating artefacts and locating them in time, I have developed an awareness of the ways we remember and preserve Scotland's history.

SOC 1-02a

I can interpret historical evidence from a range of periods to help to build a picture of Scotland's heritage and my sense of chronology.

SOC 2-02a

I am developing respect for others and my understanding of their beliefs and values.

RME 0-07a / 1-07a / RME 2-07a

LIT 0-14a / LIT 1-14a,b / LIT 2-14a

I can create a range of visual information through observing and recording from my experiences across the curriculum.

EXA 0-04a / EXA 1-04a

Through observing and recording from my experiences across the curriculum, I can create images and objects which show my awareness and recognition of detail.

EXA 2-04a

As a class/group/pair or individual activity

Read the 'History: The Early Dark Age World of Merlin' in the School Pack.

- See chapter 3 The Old Religion from 'On the Trail of Merlin in a Dark Age' by Robin Crichton.
- Including research through books/ internet/ asking parents/ grandparents/ older neighbours etc.

Compare (think up your own comparison categories) e.g.

Where people live/ lived

- Location – type of house – size of dwelling – facilities inside and out
- What do/ did they sit on – where did they sleep – did they have any privacy in house? – How many people live/ lived here – Is /was privacy important?

How people get/ got their food

- What kind of food people eat/ ate
- Where did / does food come from? (eg hunting, fishing, trapping, reiving, breeding, growing, foraging vs supermarket/ online today)

How do bathroom facilities compare?

What people do/ did for work

How does our clothing compare? – eg Materials used (eg skins, fleece, woven cloth, polyester)

- Where does/ did clothing come from?
- What do/ did clothes tell you about the person wearing them. (Eg chiefs have 12 different colours in their cloth, and slaves had just one – ‘hodden grey’).

What people do/ did for entertainment?

Celebrations – what was/ is important throughout the year?

- How were these occasions marked?
- Why were/ are these celebrations important?

How people defend/ed their land?

End of life – how was/ is death approached?

- What beliefs are/ were held?
 - What ceremonies take/ took place?
 - What happened/ happens to the bodies?
 - What beliefs are there for after death?
- eg: Traditional Celtic belief of ‘Life in the land of eternal youth’ vs modern beliefs.

Q- Which would you prefer in each category – then and now?

Present your thoughts and findings:

What would be a clear way to share what you’ve learned? E.g. poster/ mini-book/ illustrated chart

Q – What was the most important thing you learned in this activity?

Consider a visit to Biggar Museum for their streetscape (along with Iron Age/ Medieval artefacts)

Possible game playing pieces found in the lab, from Tinnis Hillfort:



FEEDBACK

8. Storytelling – Fact, Fake or Fiction?



To help me develop an informed view, I am learning to recognise the difference between fact and opinion.

LIT 1-08a

To help me develop an informed view, I can distinguish fact from opinion, and I am learning to recognise when my sources try to influence me and how useful these are.

LIT 2-08a

I can match objects, and sort using my own and others' criteria, sharing my ideas with others.

MNU 0-20b

I have explored a variety of ways in which data is presented and can ask and answer questions about the information it contains.

MNU 1-20a

I have used a range of ways to collect information and can sort it in a logical, organised and imaginative way using my own and others' criteria.

MNU 1-20b

Having discussed the variety of ways and range of media used to present data, I can interpret and draw conclusions from the information displayed, recognising that the presentation may be misleading.

MNU 2-20a

I have carried out investigations and surveys, devising and using a variety of methods to gather information and have worked with others to collate, organise and communicate the results in an appropriate way.

MNU 2-20b

(Towards the end of your project).

Re-cap previous learning from the School Pack.

Look at our online resources discussing fact, fake and fiction surrounding the Merlin Story:

www.merlintrail.com/merlinconference

www.dark-age-digs.com/merlin-fact-and-fake

Discussion:

- What is a 'fact' (how do we know, what does it need?).
- What is 'fiction'?
- And how that might differ to 'fake' (in this instance e.g. – made up to deliberately fool or even deceive)
- From whose point of view is the story being told and why. Who are the 'goodies' and the 'baddies'? Who is the story being told to (the audience)? What difference does this make? Can you think of examples?

Activity:

Create a card game – write each card with either a relevant fact from the Merlin Legend, or other historical or present-day fact from what you've learned. You could also completely make up outlandish 'fake' cards – no more than two!

- There should be more facts than fiction/ fake.
- Make sure you have a note of which is fact, fiction or completely fake!
- Challenge the class/ other groups to your 'fact, fiction or fake' questions – how many did they put in the correct category?

or

Create a Venn diagram using your cards/ cards from another group (you could use hoops on the ground, or draw Venn diagram hoops on paper. Are there any cards that could come into one or more category?

Human Venn – 'facts' are read out – children have to stand either side of a fact/ fiction line or run to one side of the hall or other – pre-designated as fact or fiction.

Then:

Create a written/ drawn chart/ graph or diagram using the 'fact, fiction or fake' cards from another group. How many facts, how many fiction, how many completely fake cards in each category?

Choose three cards to write a story. Read story to class. Is this story Fact, Fake or Fiction or a mixture of all of them? Can the class tell?

Q – Where might you find facts/ fiction/ fake things in the world today?

Q – What is your opinion on the subject of fact/ fiction/ fake?

- Is an opinion fact? How did you come to have this opinion? (family/ friends/ internet/ news?)
- Why? What is the evidence? How can we tell?
- Why is a subject fact/ fiction or fake? How can you explain this classification is true?



9. Mapping



I explore and discover the interesting features of my local environment to develop an awareness of the world around me.

SOC 0-07a

I can describe and recreate the characteristics of my local environment by exploring the features of the landscape.

SOC 1-07a

I can describe the major characteristic features of Scotland's landscape and explain how these were formed.

SOC 2-07a

Through activities in my local area, I have developed my mental map and sense of place.

I can create and use maps of the area.

SOC 0-07a

To extend my mental map and sense of place, I can interpret information from different types of maps and am beginning to locate key features within Scotland, UK, Europe or the wider world.

SOC 0-07a

Explore the locations for the archaeology project:

www.dark-age-digs.com/investigations

- What do we/ can we use maps for?
- What other things are available to use so we don't get lost nowadays (but maybe weren't around when your parents/ grandparents were your age)?

Investigate 'our place in the world':

- Use Google Earth to locate Europe, the UK, Scotland, The Borders, our school ('my house!')
- Look at maps of the local area from different ages maps.nls.uk
- Examine aerial photos of Tinnis Castle Hillfort:
www.dark-age-digs.com/investigations/tinnis-castle-hillfort
- Look at map keys together – how are things like roads/ hills/ churches/ rivers and other landmarks represented?
- Find relevant local places on an Ordnance Survey/ OS map – or use online maps:
e.g. Tinnis, the River Tweed, Merlin's grave site, A701, standing stone, Broughton School, Drumelzier Village Hall, trees/ forests, churches and grave yards, surrounding hills, Thirlestane/ fields with the crop marks etc etc.

- What are things to think about to make your map an accurate representation of the local landscape? (Success criteria) E.g.
 - Scale and how to keep the scale of relative landmarks accurate
 - How large an area will your map cover?
 - How will you make sure your features are in the right places?
 - Colour – will you use realistic colours in your map? Why/ why not?
 - How much detail will you use? (How much time do you have?!)
 - What features are important on a map? (e.g. title/ location, symbols/ key, legible writing)
 - Will you use the traditional symbols on your map, or create new ones just for you?
 - Where will you put your key?
- Draw/create your own scale map (2d/ 3d/ papier mache) or create your own, local, online ‘Google Map’
- Use a key
- Include all the landmarks and locations above (including ‘my house’!)
- Where will you display your maps? Would your town/ village hall hold an exhibition?
- Use post-it notes to give feedback on your classmates’ maps.
 - Does the map meet the success criteria?
 - What has been most successful?
 - What could be improved another time?
 - Other useful feedback?



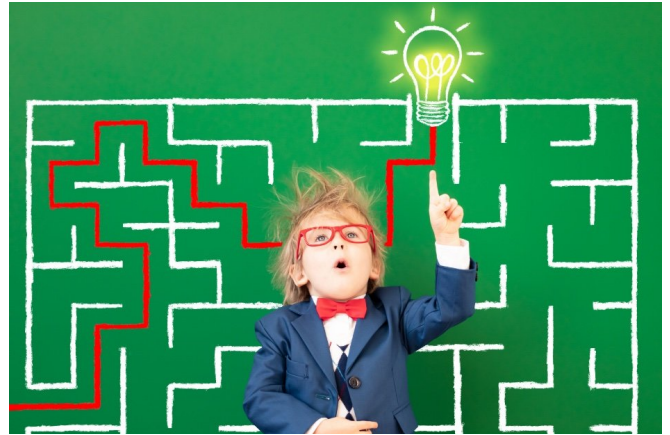
10. A Few Further Ideas



School/garden excavation – mark out 1 meter square plots/trench in playground/playing field – dig down to see if you find anything of interest! (Remove and replace turf –and worms – with care “Leave no trace”)

Have a think...

What have you learned about our local area? Can you imagine people living here all those years ago? How different is our lives to theirs? How could you present this information to share through part of a wall display/ an information booklet for parents/ a power-point presentation for other classes in the school? How else would you like to share this information?



Create your own wordsearch or crossword puzzle (will require previous teaching)

- Include: Schools Pack Appendix 1: Key Words and Definitions
- Squared paper

Reconstruct the landscape and Tinnis Hill Fort in (wet) sand/ papermache/ using ‘junk’ (cereal boxes etc) – photograph for display (and send to darkagedigs@gmail.com for inclusion in the website and Facebook group.

Paint Tinnis Castle being burnt down (using photos of the hill as reference).

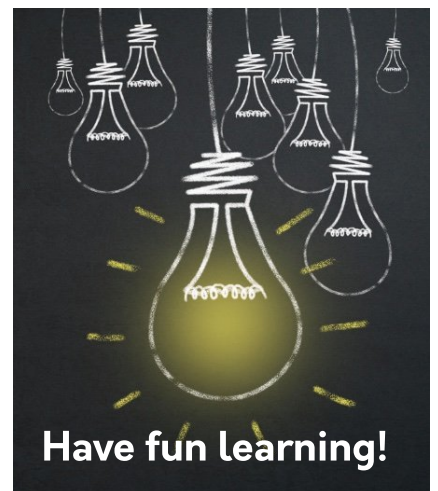
- Focus on colour – cool colours/ warm colours
- Perspective and scale – is your painting from a distant hill or close up
- Texture
- Drawing from ‘life’ (hill) and imagination

Alternatively – used mixed media/ collage (and see above – making a 3d map/ model)

In pairs – **write and illustrate a brief story of Merlin** – take turns to be author/ illustrator. Alternatively – create a ‘comic strip’ or storyboard.

Dowsing – find out about dowsing. How was it was used ‘in the olden days’ – ask grandparents/ farmers etc. How could it be used nowadays? Have a go!

FEEDBACK



Write a blog article (or make a video) about what you’ve learned about archaeology, your local area, history, the environment, recording and presenting information, what you’ve enjoyed etc and we will publish your work on the www.dark-age-digs.com blog! Send to: darkagedigs@gmail.com

Appendix 1: Key Words and Definitions

- **Angles** – one of the groups of raiders from Denmark and Germany who settled across the eastern part of Britain during the Dark Ages and created kingdoms such as Northumbria; the name ‘English’ comes from Angles
- **Archaeologists** – people who are paid to study archaeology
- **Archaeology** – the study of past people through the material things they left behind
- **Artefacts** – the material things that past people left behind
- **Bailey** – the outer wall of a castle
- **Barrow** – An ancient burial place with one or more burials beneath a mound of earth
- **Barrow Cemetery** – A site with multiple barrows
- **Britons** – these were the native people of Britain during the Iron Age, whom the Romans encountered; they spoke a form of ancient Welsh called Cumbric
- **Bronze Age** – a prehistoric period from approximately 2,500 BC to 800 BC in Scotland, defined by the first uses of bronze to create tools, weapons and jewellery
- **Burn** – A stream
- **Christianity** – the religion that was adopted by people in Britain from the Roman period onwards; in Scotland Christianity is first apparent in Galloway around AD 450 and spread across Scotland during the Dark Ages
- **Cist** – A grave lined with stone slabs
- **Cairn** – A pile of stones that was used as a boundary, place marker, a memorial, or a burial site
- **Columba** – an early saint of the Scots kingdom of Dalriada based on the island of Iona (521AD - 597AD)
- **Dalriada** – the early kingdom of the Scots during the Dark Ages; covering modern-day Argyll and Bute
- **Dark Ages** – the early medieval period from AD 400 to AD 1000
- **Din Eidyn** – the name of Edinburgh during the Dark Ages; this was a hillfort on the site of Edinburgh Castle Rock
- **Excavation** – the act of digging an archaeological site by archaeologists

- **Facts** – Things that are known or proven to be true
- **Features** – these are the elements of an archaeological site like walls, floors, pits, ditches and post-holes; mapping these helps archaeologists to untangle the layout of a site and the process of how that site was created
- **Finds** – artefacts that archaeologists find on an excavation
- **Geophysics** – a scientific technique used to read magnetic signals from features beneath the ground and help archaeologists look below the ground without actually excavating
- **Gododdin** – (pronounced Gaw-dawthin) the kingdom of the Britons of south-east Scotland during the Dark Ages; covering the lands south of the Forth and much of the modern-day Scottish Borders, these people were descended from the Votadini people whom the Romans encountered
- **Hillfort** – a hilltop settlement of the Iron Age and Dark Ages that was enclosed by ramparts and ditches
- **Iron Age** – a prehistoric period from approximately 800 BC to 400 AD in Scotland defined by the first uses of iron to create tools and weapons
- **Kentigern** – an early bishop of the kingdom of Strathclyde who lived around AD 600, though Kentigern was a real person, there are many legends about Kentigern across different parts of southern Scotland
- **Laboratory** – where artefacts are taken to after an excavation so that specialists can analyse the artefacts to find out more information about them
- **Legend** – a traditional story, sometimes thought to be historical but not based on proven facts
- **Material Culture** – objects and architecture made and used by people
- **Medieval** – the period of time from AD 400 to AD 1600 in Scotland
- **Ogham** – A form of Irish script that combine series of lines of different lengths to equal Latin letters
- **Pictish symbols** – a collection of hieroglyphic-like symbols that the Picts used on stones and jewellery; combinations of these symbols were perhaps used to communicate people's names or family names but no-one knows for sure; no-one has yet been able to translate what Pictish symbols actually mean

- **Picts** – the Britons who lived in the northern part of Scotland from Fife all the way up to the Highlands, Western Isles and the Orkney and Shetland Islands; they spoke a form of Ancient Welsh language
- **Ramparts** – Defensive walls that encircled a fort
- **Relationships** – archaeologists are always looking to understand how features and artefacts relate to one another in the ground to help tell the story of how and when that archaeological site came to be
- **Rheged** – this Dark Age kingdom of Britons was centred upon Galloway but may have stretched all the way from Ayrshire down to Lancashire at one time; Urien of Rheged was remembered as the pre-eminent king of the north during the late sixth century AD
- **Rhydderch** – (pronounced Ritherk) was a king of Strathclyde around AD 600, at the same time as St Kentigern
- **Rig and Furrow** – lines of ridges and plough scars that look like waves in the ground, created by ploughs pulled by oxen or horses
- **Roman Britain** – that part of Britain that became part of the Roman Empire between AD 43 and AD 410; this covers modern-day England and Wales; southern Scotland was briefly conquered and settled by Roman soldiers before the Empire's permanent frontier moved to the south (Hadrian's Wall)
- **Rubbish** – archaeology often looks for past people's rubbish because often the only things that survive are the rubbish that past people threw away
- **Saxons** – one of the groups of raiders from Denmark and Germany who settled across the southern part of Britain during the Dark Ages and created kingdoms such as Wessex; they spoke a Germanic language that became English during the medieval period
- **Scots** – The Scots were originally raiders from the north-east coast of Ireland; who settled in modern-day Argyll and Bute during the Dark Ages to create the kingdom of Dalriada; they spoke Gaelic
- **Site** – a place created and used in the past where archaeological remains survive
- **Story** – archaeologists try to construct a story from the rubbish people left behind
- **Strathclyde** – the kingdom of the Britons of western Scotland; covering the lands around the River Clyde

- **Stratigraphy** – the layer cake effect of how the ground develops over time; as layers of soil develop over each other, the ones underneath are older; archaeological finds from the layers can therefore be dated relative to each other
- **Survey** – often the first fieldwork that is done is a thorough survey of the site to help the archaeologists find the best places for finding buried evidence
- **Trenches** – the measured excavation areas where archaeologists investigate archaeology below the ground
- **Urns** – Pots used to contain the ashes of people that were cremated
- **Vikings** – the 8th and 9th century groups of raiders from Scandinavia who settled in the Shetland and Orkney Islands, the Western Isles and Northern Scotland
- **Vitrified Ramparts** – timber-framed drystone walls that have been deliberately set alight and burned to such a high temperature that the stones have burnt and melted

Appendix 2: Further Information

Helpful Links:

The results of the project can be read on www.dark-age-digs.com

An image pack is available from www.dark-age-digs.com/images.zip

www.merlintrail.com has a wealth of information about Merlin and the period he lived in.

Other useful online resources:

www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/archaeology

digimapforschools.edina.ac.uk

education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/people-of-medieval-scotland

forestryandland.gov.scot/what-we-do/biodiversity-and-conservation/historic-environment-conservation/learning/the-picts?highlight=picts

www.historicenvironment.scot/learn/learning-resources/gaelic-resources

www.scottisharchaeology.org.uk/?q=node/17

study.com/academy/lesson/bronze-age-scotland-first-inhabitants-settlements-burial-sites.html

www.twinkl.com/kw/resource/cfe2-h-069-the-picts-resource-pack

Further Reading:

Angels, Fools and Tyrants: Britons and the Angles by Chris Lowe (published by Historic Scotland)

Picts, Gaels and Scots by Sally Foster (published by Historic Scotland)

Saints and Sea Kings by Ewan Campbell (published by Historic Scotland)

On the Trail of Merlin in a Dark Age by Robin Crichton (published by Edinburgh Film Productions)

Scotland's Merlin – A Medieval Legend and its Dark Age Origins by Tim Clarkson (published by John Donald Publishers)

The Lost Dark Age Kingdom of Rheged: The discovery of a Royal Stronghold at Trusty's Hill, Galloway by Ronan Toolis and Christopher Bowles (published by Oxbow Books)