



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Whitby Abbey

Cholmley's House Visitor Centre

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

The visitor centre in the seveneenth-century Cholmley's House, explores several important periods in the history of Whitby Abbey and the headland. The information in this booklet will help teachers to prepare for their visit to Whitby Abbey and in particular to the visitor centre, providing further information and follow-up activities.

Education groups may enter the visitor centre either from the entrance on the ground floor of Cholmley's House (particularly if groups have walked up the 199 steps from the town), or enter the first floor of the visitor centre from the main part of the site (coaches park at the carpark entrance). Teachers should allow at least 30 minutes for using the visitor centre and you will be given a time slot for using the first floor displays. The group is free to use the shop, ground floor displays and the rest of the site for organised educational activities. The free booklet 'Whitby Abbey' provides more detailed information on the medieval abbey and includes suggested educational approaches.

The information in this booklet has been organised chronologically following the route from the main part of the abbey site, entering Cholmley's House on the first floor. The entrances to the site, the main features and the visitor centre are shown on the plans of the site. (page 2). The period themes within



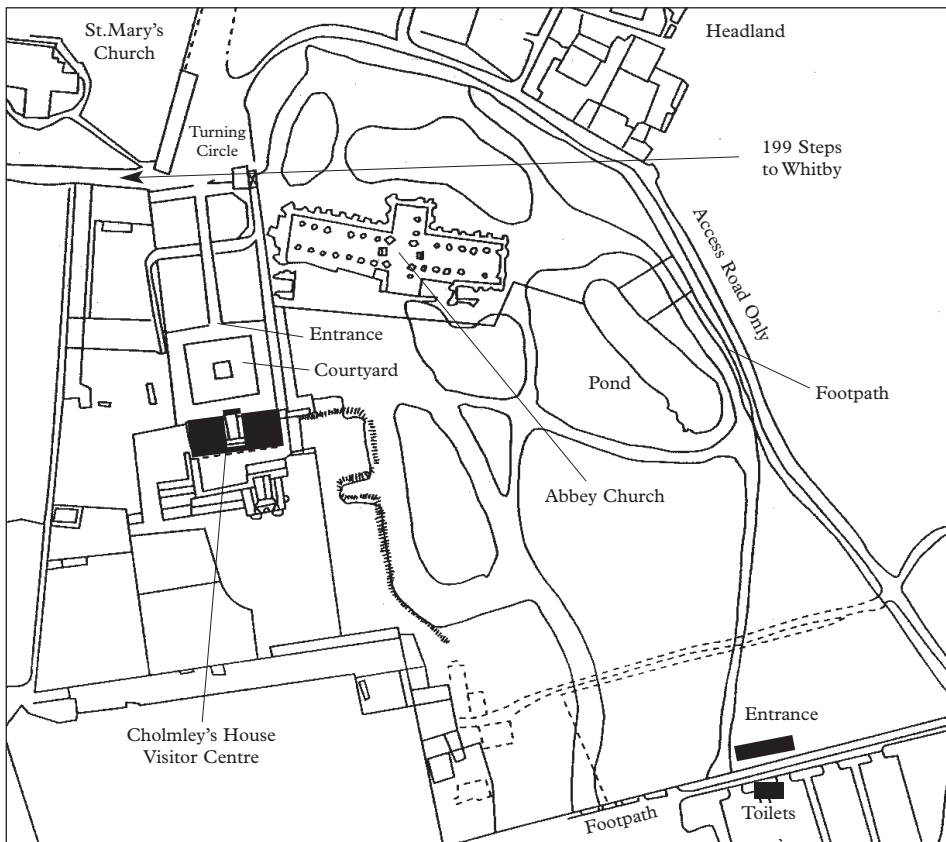
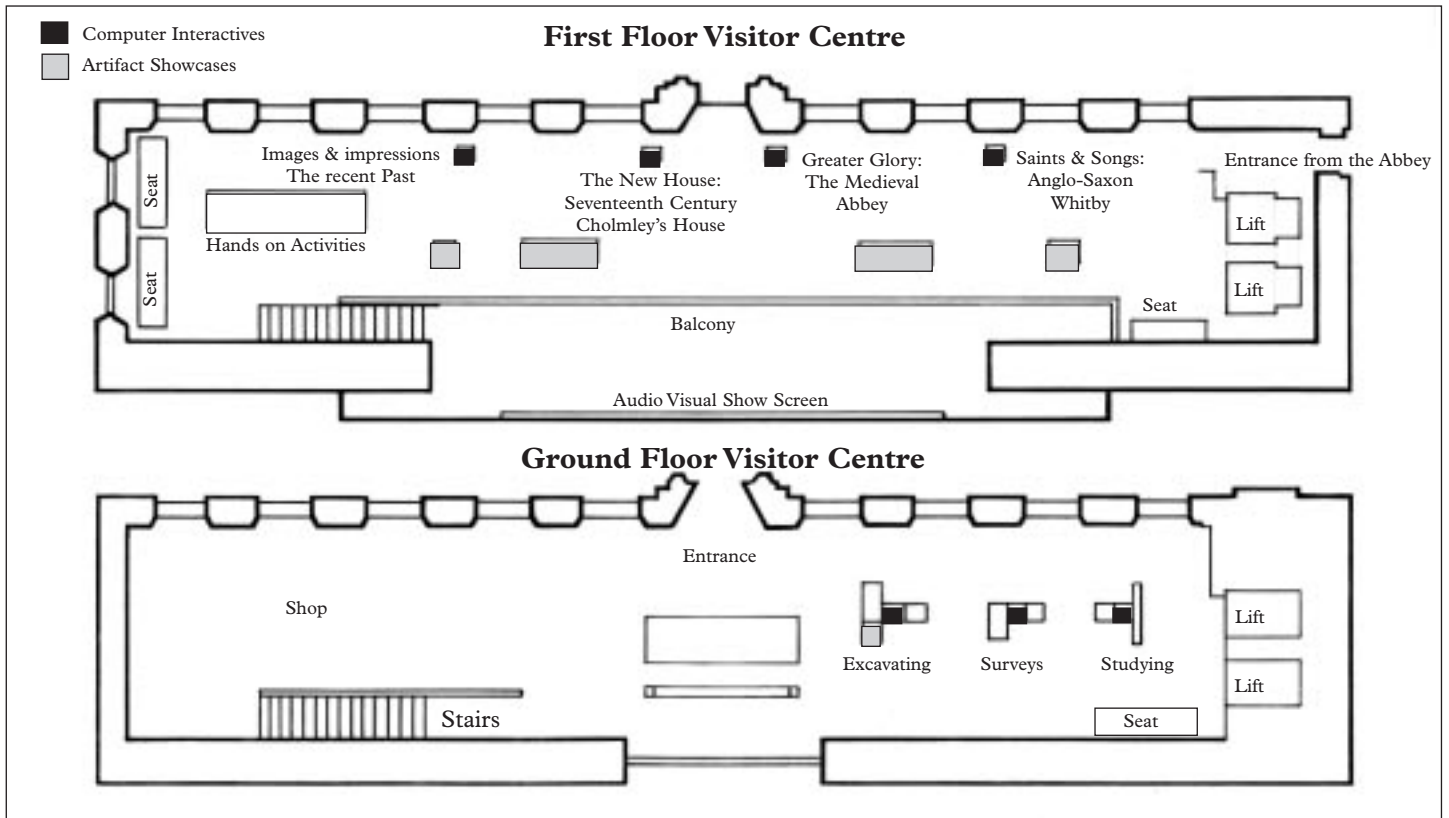
The visitor centre, completed in 2002, is behind the facade of Cholmley's House built by Sir Hugh Cholmley II in 1672.

the displays in the visitor centre support the history curriculum particularly at Key Stage 2 and 3 and include information about historical and archaeological skills. The displays also include different methods of interpretation including multi-media, computer interactives, hands-on activities and object displays.

THE VISITOR CENTRE DISPLAYS

The first floor displays follow three main periods in the history of Whitby Abbey and the headland: the Anglo-Saxon period, the medieval abbey and Cholmley's House in the seventeenth century. These sections include objects, information and a computer interactive programme where

characters can be questioned. There is also a computer interactive programme showing twentieth-century links to the abbey with Bram Stoker and Frank Meadow Sutcliffe. The period sections all have a corresponding short audio-visual sequence using computer models, shown on a screen in the centre of the first floor space. The hands-on section on the first floor includes activities linked to Anglo-Saxon and medieval writing, diet and clothing. The ground floor displays look at the sources of information about the headland including archaeology, survey work and documents. Impressive examples of carved Anglo-Saxon and medieval stonework are also included in the displays.



Anglo-Saxon Whitby

The headland on which the abbey ruins stand has been important since at least the seventh century although there may have been earlier Roman settlement or a signal tower. The Venerable Bede

(the monk who wrote *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* completed in 731) refers to Streaneshalch, which he translated as 'The Bay of the Beacon', although all evidence of this is likely to have fallen into the sea by

ongoing cliff erosion. King Oswy of Northumberland founded the first monastery in 657, one of twelve monasteries he had vowed to establish after defeating Penda, the pagan King of Mercia, at the battle of Winwaed in 655. King Oswy also dedicated his baby daughter Aelfleda to the religious life and she joined Hild (or Hilda) the first abbess at Whitby when the joint or double monastery for monks and nuns was founded. Enfleda, wife of King Oswy, retired to Whitby as a nun when her husband died and she later succeeded Hild as Abbess. Aelfleda, her daughter, in turn succeeded Enfleda as abbess. The monastery was an important place; not only was it the burial place and royal church of the Northumbrian kings, but it became an important place of pilgrimage because of the many saints associated with the abbey, Hild, Caedmon, Aelfleda, Enfleda, and Bishops Trumwin, Bosa and Wilfred. Little is known about the monastery at Whitby from the middle of the eighth century and it is thought that it was destroyed by raiding Vikings around 867.



Hild

Hild was the first abbess of the monastery at Whitby, founded in 657. She was the daughter of Prince Hereric, the nephew of King Edwin. She took her vows aged 33 and was taught by Aidan at Lindisfarne. Hild emphasised the value of learning and several men who became important Bishops were taught at the abbey. In 664, while Hild was abbess,

King Oswy presided over the Synod of Whitby, where the calculation of the date of Easter was decided. The decision favoured the Roman tradition and established Roman over Celtic practises for centuries to come. Hild died in 680, aged 66. The Venerable Bede wrote of Hild *..she put this monastery under the same regular discipline and taught there the strict observance of justice, piety, chastity, and other virtues, and particularly of peace and charity; so that after the example of the primitive church, no person was rich, and none poor, all being in common to all, and none having any property. Her prudence was so great, that not only indifferent persons, but even kings and princes, as occasion offered asked and received her advice.*

earlier twentieth-century excavations are included in the displays. They show evidence of the religious and everyday life around Whitby Abbey.

The medieval abbey

In 1078 the retired soldier Reinfrid (one of William the Conqueror's knights) came to Whitby and refounded St. Hild's monastery. Although little is known about the buildings of the monastery that Reinfrid founded, evidence of the later twelfth-century church has been excavated. During the course of the thirteenth century, the east end and transepts of the abbey church were rebuilt, although the rebuilding of the nave and the west end of the church were not completed until the fifteenth century. The abbey was surrendered to King Henry VIII's Commissioners on 14 December 1539 when there were twenty-two monks and domestic staff in residence. Further background and information about the medieval abbey can be found in the booklet for teachers, entitled *Whitby Abbey*.

The displays include finds from the medieval abbey. The audio-visual show includes reconstructed interiors of the abbey church using computer-generated images.



Caedmon

Caedmon was the first English religious poet, whose work survives. He lived at Whitby when Hild was the abbess. Caedmon was originally a shy herdsman whose poetic gifts were recognised by Abbess Hild, who invited him to become a monk. Bede recorded the story of Brother Caedmon in 'The Ecclesiastical History of England' and recorded his poetry in Early English and Latin.

cliff edge. The results of these excavations are still being studied and will provide further information about life and death on the headland. Finds from these and



The excavations at Whitby Abbey from 1998 - 2001, discovered Anglo-Saxon burials and in 2001 evidence of an Anglo-Saxon settlement was found near the existing

A computer image of the east end of the abbey church with inset of part of the abbey ruins today.



Brother William

This fictional character is used to explore a medieval monk's day at Whitby Abbey. The images and information include many areas of the abbey such as the abbey church, cloister, herb garden and refectory.

From the Rule of St. Benedict

We think it sufficient for the daily dinner, whether at the sixth or the ninth hour, that every table have two cooked dishes. Therefore let two cooked dishes suffice for all the brethren; and if any fruit or fresh vegetables are available, let a third dish be added. Let a good pound weight of bread suffice for the day. Except the sick who are very weak, let all abstain entirely from eating the flesh of four-footed animals.

We read it is true, that wine is by no means a drink for monastics; but since the monastics of our day cannot be persuaded of this let us at least agree to drink sparingly and not to satiety, because "wine makes even the wise fall away" (Eccles. 19:2).

We believe, however, that in ordinary places the following dress is sufficient for each monk:

*a tunic,
a cowl (thick and woolly for winter, thin or worn for summer),
a scapular for work,
stockings and shoes to cover the feet.*

The monks should not complain about the colour or the coarseness of any of these things, but be content with what can be found in the district where they live and can be purchased cheaply.

Seventeenth-century Cholmley's House

After the dissolution of Whitby Abbey in 1539, the Cholmley family from near Pickering acquired the abbey site and many of its lands. Sir Hugh Cholmley I and his wife Elizabeth moved into the gatehouse while the Abbot's lodgings were remodelled during the early part of the seventeenth century. Later, their son Sir Hugh Cholmley II built a grand new house, in front of the Abbot's Lodgings in the latest style.

The recent past

From the seventeenth century through to the nineteenth century the alum industry was important to Whitby and the region. In the eighteenth century Whitby grew as a port. It developed into an important port for the shipment of coal, and the remodelling of the harbour

works was paid for by a national tax on coal. Shipbuilding also became an important industry, building small coal ships and the ships that took Captain Cook to Australia. As the port grew and thrived, the abbey remained high on the headland as a navigational beacon. This was its undoing; in 1914, the German High Seas Fleet easily spotted the abbey on the Headland and opened fire. The west front of the abbey church along with houses in the town were hit by the bombardment.

Whitby has continued as a fishing port with a growing tourist industry. Artists and writers have loved the intricate streetscape, the harbour and docks, and the dramatic storms. These storms continually erode the headland and large areas are expected to be lost in the future.



Sir Hugh Cholmley I

Sir Hugh Cholmley I arrived in Whitby in 1626 and found his father living in the Abbot's Lodgings which was virtually ruined. Sir Hugh and his wife, Elizabeth set about restoring the house, living in the tiny gatehouse for ten years, while the house was restored. During this time Sir Hugh paid off his father's debts and had become a

pillar of society, an MP, a judge and a colonel in Oliver Cromwell's new army.

While Sir Hugh was in command of the garrison at Scarborough Castle he famously changed sides to support King Charles I, and was branded a traitor by the Parliamentarians. With her children safely in Holland, Elizabeth stayed with Sir Hugh throughout the siege of Scarborough Castle, even nursing the sick and wounded. The castle surrendered after six months and Sir Hugh fled to Holland.

Elizabeth took lodgings in Malton, eventually returning to Whitby by walking the 30 km from Malton, in winter. She then negotiated the terms for her husband's safe return from exile and he began successful business mining alum, which transformed the family's fortunes. Alum was essential to fix dyes on woollen cloth.



Sir Hugh Cholmley II

Sir Hugh Cholmley II was even more ambitious than his father. He became the King's surveyor

and the country's most gifted engineer in the service of King Charles II. He became famous for building a great sea wall, or Mole, to protect the harbour at Tangier, in North Africa, England's first colony. When he returned to Whitby he designed the new house himself in the fashionable Baroque style, taking his inspiration from buildings he had seen during a Grand Tour he had made with his family. The house befitted his important position and was one of the most fashionable residences in the north of England.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

Manuscripts

Medieval and Anglo-Saxon style manuscript can be produced using the rubbing plates and stamps. Monasteries were important places of learning and books were copied and decorated by monks and nuns for other monasteries and for wealthy patrons. The style of lettering in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts was 'Caroline script' and the pages were sometimes decorated by interlacing or knotwork designs. The style of lettering in medieval manuscripts was 'angular or round gothic' and pages became more highly decorated, with different coloured inks, including gold illumination.

Food and clothing

Many different sources of evidence, such as documentary evidence and archaeological finds, can help build up a picture of aspects of people's lives in the past. The activities include:

- matching the clothes for each period: Anglo-Saxon, medieval, seventeenth century, late nineteenth century and modern day archaeologists.
- finding archaeological evidence: some archaeological material such as animal teeth, fruit stones, grain, glass beads and leather fragments are also included in the hands-on activities. These show evidence of the types of food that were eaten and the clothing worn
- making a menu of foods for each of the different periods.

GROUND FLOOR DISPLAYS

The displays consider the many different sources of information that are used to build up a picture of the past. Excavating, studying and surveying all provide informa-



Bram Stoker

Bram Stoker, born in Dublin in 1847, was a civil servant and also worked as a freelance journalist,

drama critic and editor of the 'Evening Mail' in Dublin. He moved to England where he began writing a series of novels and short stories, the first of which was 'The Snake's Pass', although he was best known for 'Dracula'. The book was written in Whitby, and in the story, Dracula first arrives in England on board a wrecked schooner that crashes onto the beach. Taking the form of a giant black dog the vampire leaps to shore and takes refuge in the graveyard at the summit of the 199 steps. Bram Stoker wrote eighteen books before he died in 1912.



Frank Meadow Sutcliffe

Frank Meadow Sutcliffe created enduring images of life in Whitby through his photographs. Born in Leeds in 1853, he set up his own professional photography studio in Whitby in 1875. His work centred on the landscapes and life of fishing ports in Yorkshire. He retired from photography in 1922 but remained the Curator of the Whitby Literary and Philosophical Society until shortly before his death in 1923.

tion to produce the computer models of the headland shown on the first floor.

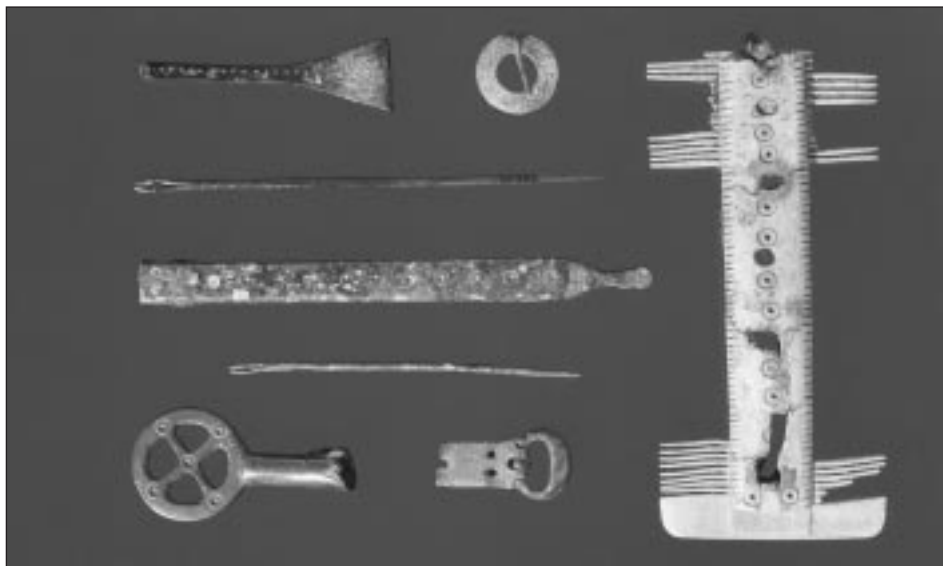
Excavating what remains below ground. Archaeological excavations uncover remains that have often been protected by the overlying soil. Excavations are now only undertaken as a last resort, preceding necessary site works or where the archaeological deposits are likely to be lost, such as on the headland owing to cliff erosion. This section includes a touch screen 'Ask the Expert', where Pete Busby, chief archaeologist at Whitby talks about the headland and the excavations.

Surveying surviving buildings and landscapes. Many different methods are used to survey an area such as the Whitby Abbey Headland. These methods can include aerial survey, surface surveys and geophysical surveys that investigate below the ground without excavating. This section includes a computer display using 3D technology.

Studying historical books and documents. The investigation and study of surviving records, documents and images can provide vital clues to the history of a site, building or area. Documents can provide important information about people in the past, although often written documents lack information about ordinary people. This section includes a computer interactive about the study of books and documents showing that it is important to remember that sources may be biased, produced for a particular purpose, or just inaccurate.

EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

The displays in the visitor centre with ruins of the medieval abbey and the wider headland tell some important stories in the history of



Anglo-Saxon objects found during the excavations included many personal items. Pupils can further research Anglo-Saxon objects that have been excavated in other areas of England using libraries, museums or web searches.

the area. There is much to see and a planning visit will help you familiarise yourself with the site and to plan your pupils' activities. Please remember that on busy days the time that your group will be allocated on the first floor of Cholmley's House will be limited to 30 minutes and therefore careful planning of your activities is needed.

Preparatory activities

These activities should be used in conjunction with those in the Whitby Abbey teachers' booklet, which concentrates on medieval monastic life and the abbey ruins.

Before your visit to the visitor centre it is valuable if pupils:

- have developed a simple timeline for events at Whitby Abbey and the headland
- know why monasteries were founded, the way of life and the layout of the buildings
- understand the reasons for the dissolution of the monasteries and why the ruins of the abbey remain.

It is important for you to decide:

- how much to tell pupils and

what to let them find out themselves

- how you will organise your group. You may decide to look at themes through the exhibition such as documents and manuscripts linked to literacy theme, people, food, clothing or archaeology.

On-site activities

The following activities focus either on the displays in the visitor centre or the visitor facilities at Whitby Abbey.

Whitby Abbey Headland

One of the periods in the history of Whitby Abbey and the headland can be researched using the displays in the visitor centre. However this activity may not be appropriate on the first floor during busy periods.

Learning objectives

Pupils should learn to:

- use different sources of information to investigate one period of history
- record information in different ways.



Cholimley's House in 1999 when excavations revealed the cobbled courtyard. The house has also been known as the new house and the banqueting house.

Teaching activities

Choose one period to research, or groups of pupils can research different periods to report back to the whole group as a follow-up activity in school. The periods that can be researched are Anglo-Saxon, medieval, the seventeenth century and recent history. Ask pupils to find one object and record it in detail using a writing frame that includes the questions such as

- The most interesting object is...
- I think it is interesting because...
- Include space for information about the materials that it is made from, decoration, when it was made and what it is.
- Pupils can also draw the object in detail.

Pupils can also investigate the life of one historic person included in the exhibition. Information can be recorded in a particular style or for a specific purpose such as a newspaper report, snatches of conversation, story, letter, leaflet, obituary or job CV.

Visitors to Whitby Abbey

Over 140,000 people visit Whitby Abbey each year and the new

Area (describe the area being studied)

What exhibition methods are used?

text panels, labels, objects, photographs, drawings, video clips, computer models, documents. (circle those used)

Which parts of this area are

Most interesting and why

Least interesting

Most informative

Least informative

Most exciting

Least exciting and why

Which part do you like best and why?

How would you improve this area?

facilities and exhibition in the visitor centre will enable visitors to have a greater understanding of the importance of Whitby Abbey through different periods of its history. Different methods have been used to tell these stories and pupils can evaluate the displays and other visitor facilities.

Learning objectives

Pupils should learn to

- evaluate the visitor facilities at Whitby Abbey
- evaluate the methods of interpretation used in the visitor centre
- develop further ideas for information for visitors.

Teaching activities

Before the visit ask pupils to discuss what visitor facilities they consider essential and those that they would like to see. Pupils can also consider the needs of different visitors.

During your visit groups of pupils can work with an adult to identify visitor facilities at Whitby Abbey, such as parking, entrances, toilets, shop, site information and so on. Pupils can mark these the



Pupils can record the badly eroded griffin that remains on the top of the gatepost at the entrance to the courts. Pupils can design a new griffin, researching what the griffin might have looked like and making models in clay, modroc or other suitable modelling materials.

plan of the site with annotated comments about the facilities including how they can be improved.

Pupils working in small groups in the visitor centre can consider one aspect of the displays such as the audio-visual presentations, the object displays or the hands-on activities. Pupils can discuss and record their findings. A recording sheet can be used to standardise each group's areas for discussion.

Pupils can also develop ideas for an audio-visual presentation about Whitby Abbey today. This could include tourism and local events. These ideas can be developed as a storyboard much as the audio-visual presentations on the first floor of the visitor centre were developed before the displays were put into the visitor centre.

Ideas for a new publicity leaflet can be gathered and developed during a visit to Whitby Abbey. The leaflet should include a picture or photograph, site description and bullet points of what there is to do. These can be further developed in the classroom, particularly using ICT for layout, font and images.

MAKING A VISIT

Opening hours

See www.english-heritage.org.uk for opening hours or contact Customer Services on 0870 333 1181.

Booking Procedure

By application form available from English Heritage, 37 Tanner Row, York YO1 6WP Tel: 01904 601901. Education visits are free but must be booked at least two weeks in advance. When your booking is confirmed, you will be sent a permit for your visit, including a free preparatory visit. The permit will give your group an allocated time in the visitor centre.

Maximum party numbers: 80, with an adult/pupil ratio of at least 1:15.

Facilities:

Parking: Council-run car park at the entrance to the site (South entrance).

Shop: The custodians welcome educational groups as all proceeds contribute towards the continuing work of English Heritage. Please supervise your pupils in the shop allowing groups of no more than 15 pupils at any one time.

Picnics: These can be eaten on the site, although not in the visitor centre. Please take litter home.

Wheelchair access: Access to most parts of the site and the visitor centre.

Toilets: Council-run, situated by the car park.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Resources

Black, M, *Food and Cooking in Medieval Britain*, English Heritage, 1985, ISBN 1-85074-535-8
Brears, P, *Food and Cooking in 17th Century Britain*, English Heritage, 1985, ISBN 1-85074-537-4
Collins, F, & Hollinshead, *English and the Historic Environment*, English Heritage, 2000, ISBN 1-85074-330-4
Cooksey, C, *Using Abbeys*, English Heritage, 1992, ISBN 1-85074-328-2
Copeland, T, *Maths and the Historic Environment*, English Heritage, 1992, ISBN 1-85074-329-0
Corbishley, M, (ed.) *Primary History*, English Heritage, 1999, ISBN 1-85074-650-8
Lockey, M, & Walmsley, D, *Art and the Historic Environment*, English Heritage, 1999, ISBN 1-85074-651-6
McAleavy, T, *Life in a Medieval Abbey*, English Heritage, 1996, ISBN 1-85074-592-7
Morris, R, & Corbishley, M, *Churches, Chapels and Cathedrals*, English Heritage, 1996, ISBN 1-85074-447-5

Other resources

Time Detectives Poster Games 2001

Videos

The World of Lindisfarne Gospels 50 minutes 2003

Talkin' Saxon 20 minutes 1997
KS2

Talkin' Viking 25 minutes 1998

Archaeology at work. Video Series for KS2 and KS3 includes *Looking for and uncovering the past* 58 minutes 1994 and *Investigating towns* 30 minutes 1994

Websites

English Heritage:
www.english-heritage.org.uk

English Heritage Education

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All photographs and drawings © English Heritage Photo Library or English Heritage. The computer models and images were developed by Continuum Group (Past-Forward).

Written and produced by Julie Ward
Designed by Michael J Richardson
Printed by Palladian Press, Colchester
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Revised 2004