

# Roman Canterbury, a journey into the past

## Teachers' Notes

### About the book

Roman Canterbury has been written for children in the 9–12 age range. It covers 400 formative years of Canterbury's history. Beginning 2,000 years ago with the Iron Age people who established a settlement on the banks of the River Stour, it goes on to examine the effects of the arrival of the Romans in AD 43. The development of a prosperous and thriving Roman provincial town is traced until its decline and eventual ruin in the early 5th century. The continuing impact of the Romans on the modern city and its people is also considered.

A strong emphasis is given throughout the book to the work of local **archaeologists**. They have brought to light the vast majority of the evidence upon which our knowledge of Roman Canterbury is based. This approach is intended to help children to understand the important concept that history is a provisional **interpretation** of the past. A real Archaeological Mystery for children to unravel is included on pages 28–29.

### National Curriculum links

These notes are intended to help teachers use **Roman Canterbury** to devise schemes of work for use with their children. The materials in the book are suitable for teaching the revised National Curriculum for History in Key Stages 2 and 3. Some of them, especially the visual materials, can be selected and adapted for use with children in Key Stage 1.

### History

In Key Stage 2 the book can be used to provide local material on the Romans for a study of **the Roman Empire and its Impact on Britain**, or as part of a **Local History Study**. The materials on archaeology can be used as an introduction to a study of **an early civilization**, **Ancient Greece** or a **past non-European society**. In Key Stage 3 the book can be used to provide material for a **Local History Study** or a **theme in British History from before 1066**.

The materials offer opportunities for pupils to develop historical knowledge, understanding and skills for teachers to assess their progress against the characteristics contained in the Programmes of Study for Key Stages 1 – 3.

### Other Subjects

Although the materials in the book are clearly history-focussed, there are strong links with other subjects which can easily be developed. For example, children could:

**English:** Imagine that they are walking through the streets of Roman Canterbury and describe what they see, hear and smell ; or write short plays to present their theories about an archaeological mystery (see pp 12 and 28–29).

**Mathematics:** Find out about Roman numerals; use scales; make a study of shapes and symmetry in Roman architecture.

**Science:** Investigate different materials and their properties; consider why archaeologists rarely find remains made of organic materials such as cloth, leather and wood; find out about forces by examining how the Romans constructed an arch and why the keystone was so important.

**Geography:** Study aspects of the historical development of their local area, including why the Romans settled in Canterbury, and use maps, compass directions and scales.

**RE:** Find out about Roman and Celtic gods, the beginnings of Christianity and different religious practices such as forms of worship and funerals.

**Art:** Produce scale drawings of archaeological finds; make their own mosaic pictures and patterns; examine the main features of Roman architecture and styles of decoration found on pottery, wall paintings and mosaic floors.

**Technology:** Make and test a Roman pottery oil lamp; compare Roman and modern approaches to heating and lighting homes.

**ICT:** Produce a 'visitors' guide' to Roman Canterbury using word-processing or DTP software; use the reconstruction drawing of the Roman town on pages 16–17 as the basis for a concept keyboard overlay for younger children.

**Cross-Curricular Themes:** Examine manufacturing in Roman Canterbury and patterns of trade in the Empire (**Economics and Business**); find out how the Romans governed Canterbury and the surrounding area (**Citizenship**); consider the relationship between the native Iron Age peoples and the Roman settlers (**Multi-Cultural Education**).

## Approaches for teaching and learning

In this section we suggest several educational approaches to help you devise your scheme of work. You will wish to select and adapt them according to the focus of your study and the age-range and abilities of the children in your class.

We strongly suggest that **Roman Canterbury** is used together with a range of sources of information, including other books about the Romans for children to carry out further research. We particularly recommend a visit to the **Roman Museum** (see p 30) where there are opportunities for your children to handle both real and replica Roman objects. You may wish to borrow a loan box of Roman artefacts from **Canterbury Archaeological Trust** for classroom work (see **Resources** below).

Please note that you are welcome to make photocopies from **Roman Canterbury** in order to produce your own classroom materials without infringing copyright.

## Asking Historical Questions

One way of introducing the topic is to tell your children that they will be investigating life in Canterbury over a period of 400 years, starting about 2,000 years ago. Ask them to 'brainstorm' a list of questions to pursue. During their investigation, they should gather information to help answer their questions. At the end of their enquiry they should consider:

- which questions have they been able to answer?
- which questions require further research?
- which questions have they been unable to answer and why?

An alternative approach would be to identify a single key question such as ‘What was it like to live in Roman Canterbury?’ Your children, working in groups, should consider what types of information they would need in order to answer the question and discuss their initial thoughts or **hypotheses**. Their work could then become a structured investigation into the available evidence to test their hypotheses.

## Chronology

To help develop their sense of chronology, ask your children whether the Romans lived **before** or **after** other historical periods and peoples they have studied, for example: **Egyptians, Greeks, Vikings, Normans, Tudors and Victorians**. You could write these words onto separate cards and ask children to place them in sequence or along a simple timeline (See the time-chart on p iv).

As they study the story of Roman Canterbury, they could record details of stages in the town’s development on a large timeline covering the first five centuries AD on the classroom wall.

## How do we know ?

Your children need to understand that historical knowledge depends upon **sources** (or clues) which survive from the past. Ask them to think about what types of sources are likely to survive after nearly 2,000 years. You could provide them with a list like the one below and ask them which are likely to survive and which are not – and why:

written accounts; photographs; coins; newspapers; complete buildings; skeletons;  
remains of stone buildings; remains of wooden buildings; pottery; tombstones; clothes;  
jewellery; plastic toys.

## Digging up the Past

Virtually all of our knowledge about Roman Canterbury is based upon **archaeological** evidence. ‘Talking heads’ of archaeologists are placed throughout the book to emphasise this fact. Discuss with your class how an archaeologist works. Have they heard about any famous archaeological discoveries?

Introduce them to the skills of drawing conclusions from archaeological evidence by preparing a selection of modern objects, such as the contents of an adult’s handbag or a child’s schoolbag; what can they tell from the objects about the identity of the owner? Or prepare some clues from the scene of an imaginary crime for them to investigate.

Many children (and adults!) find it difficult to understand why remains of the past are found underground. Ask your children if anything old has ever been dug up in their garden; if so, why was it there? The diagram and text on p 2 will help them to understand the principle of stratigraphy.

## Change and Continuity

Roman Canterbury covers a period of over 400 years. Some of your children might ask ‘How much did things change during this period of time?’ – an excellent historical question! The book provides opportunities to investigate it and in particular the changes made by the Romans after the invasion of AD 43 (see pp 3–4 and 10–22). A good starting point is to compare the artists’ impressions of the Iron Age settlement (p 4) and the centre of Roman Canterbury 300 years later (pp 16–17). Children could group their conclusions under headings such as:

**place-name; position; houses; streets; types of buildings; health; defence.**

They could also use the information and text on p 25 to examine the changes which took place **after** the Romans left Britain, using the same headings. Ask your class to discuss if changes are always improvements (or **progress**).

## Cause and Effect

Questions about why things happened and what effects they had are central to the study of History. The illustration at the top of p 9 provides a useful starting point for investigating why the Romans invaded Britain in AD 43; children could discuss how these factors might have led to Claudius’ decision and which they think was the most important. The material on pages 21–23 can help them reach conclusions about why the Romans eventually left Britain. Children can use the information and sources on pages 10–22 to identify the effects of the Roman conquest for local people; its long-term impact is examined on pp 26–27. Pages 23–25 can be used to reach conclusions about the consequences for the locality of the Roman army’s departure from Britain.

## Using Sources

The ‘talking heads’ in the book show children how archaeologists draw conclusions from the evidence they find which are often theories rather than facts. Children can use the source material throughout the book to come to their own conclusions about life in Roman Canterbury and consider how certain they can be. For example, use the selection of archaeological finds on pages 14–15. Ask your children to examine them carefully, perhaps working in groups on particular groups of objects. For each object they should consider:

- its size
- its design and decoration
- what it was made from
- how it was made
- what it was used for
- what it can tell us about people’s lives in Roman Canterbury

You could design an ‘Archaeologists’ Record Sheet’ on which to record their ideas. When they have studied all the finds they could discuss their conclusions and prepare an illustrated report under headings such as:

**clothing; hygiene; leisure; religion; homes; cooking and eating; crafts; trade.**

Older children should begin to consider the likely reliability of the sources they use. Ask them to prepare a list of questions to ask about a written account of an event. For example:

- who wrote it?
- when was it written?
- was the author an eye-witness?
- if not where did he get his information from: hearsay? rumours? or studying a wide range of sources?
- why was it written? to provide accurate information or for some other purpose?

They should then apply these questions to some of the written sources in the book such as the extracts from Caesar (pp 3, 7, 8), Bede (p 20) and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (p 24).

## Different Interpretations

Working with sources naturally leads on to a consideration of why different interpretations of the past can arise. For example, show your children this artists' impression of the Roman theatre in about AD 300 and compare it with the view on pp 16–17:



Detail from the 'time-view' painting of Roman Canterbury on view at the Roman Museum and available as a postcard.  
© Canterbury Museums

What similarities and differences can they see in the two pictures? What reasons can they think of to explain the differences? Why can neither artist be **certain** about what this theatre looked like?

Read the different theories about what happened to Roman Canterbury during the 5th century (pp 23–24). Why are historians and archaeologists so unsure about why people abandoned the town?

Ask your children to study the Archaeological Mystery on pp 28–29. Discuss the different theories they suggest. Which do they think is the best explanation of what happened and why? What would they need to prove who these people were and what happened to them?

## Diversity

Roman Canterbury was a multi-cultural community. To help your children understand the wide range of people who lived in and travelled through the town, ask them to make a list of all the different kinds of people they can find. To help them understand how and why there can be a variety of attitudes and beliefs in a community or society, ask them to consider what the different people in their list might have thought or felt about an event such as:

- Boudicca's Revolt in AD 60 and the presence of Roman soldiers in Canterbury
- the arrival of Christians in the town during the 4th century
- the departure of the last Roman soldiers from Britain in about AD 400.

## A 'Roman Event'

You might wish to complete your investigation by holding a Roman Day in school or a Roman Evening for parents. Using the results of their research, your children could choose Roman names, dress up in Roman costume, play Roman games, prepare Roman food and perform Roman music. They could present short dramas about particular events from Canterbury's past which they have studied and perform them in authentic settings, e.g. in the dining room of a house, in a potter's workshop, at the market, the theatre or the baths. You could invite a Living History group into school. For further details see **Resources** below. If possible, why not time the event to coincide with your school's OFSTED inspection!

## Resources

Suggestions for places to visit and other resources are given in **Roman Canterbury** on pages 30–34. In addition, however, we would like to draw your attention to the following:

**Living history:** The Ermine Street Guard and Legio Secunda Augusta are two societies which are dedicated to reconstructing Roman life, especially the weapons, armour and tactics of the Roman Army. They have local groups all over the country and take part in major public displays at English Heritage sites such as Richborough Fort and Dover Castle. They are willing to visit schools (a charge will be made). For further information contact:

English Heritage Events: [www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/whats-on/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/whats-on/)

The Ermine Street Guard: [www.erminestreetguard.co.uk/](http://www.erminestreetguard.co.uk/)

Legio Secunda Augusta: [www.legiavg.org.uk/](http://www.legiavg.org.uk/)

**Ancient Rome and Roman Britain:** a range of useful teaching resources from the British Museum (free to download) [www.britishmuseum.org/learning/schools\\_and\\_teachers/resources/cultures/ancient\\_rome.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/learning/schools_and_teachers/resources/cultures/ancient_rome.aspx)

**Canterbury Archaeological Trust:** for news about past and current excavations in East Kent (and beyond) and excellent Education pages with a range of resources to buy, loan or freely download. [www.canterburytrust.co.uk/](http://www.canterburytrust.co.uk/)

**Canterbury:** Marjorie Lyle; see chapters 1 and 2 (English Heritage / Batsford, 1994).

**Canterbury History You Can See:** Marjorie Lyle (Tempus Publishing 2008) Indispensable guide to the visible remains of Canterbury's past.

**Discovering Archaeology in National Curriculum History, Key Stages 1,2, and 3:** Marion Green (Canterbury Archaeological Trust) – an essential guide to incorporating aspects of archaeology into the curriculum, full of practical suggestions and pupil activities. Free download from: [www.canterburytrust.co.uk/learning/resources/discovering-archaeology/](http://www.canterburytrust.co.uk/learning/resources/discovering-archaeology/)

**Food and Cooking in Roman Britain:** Jane Renfrew (English Heritage, 1985).

**Historical Association:** is the main subject association for History teachers at all levels. It runs regular CPD events, publishes a termly journal, *Primary History*, and its website includes a wide range of useful resources including schemes of work, podcasts and lesson materials. <https://www.history.org.uk/primary>

**Hands on History Dig!** Hands on archaeology activities for children from the BBC. [www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/hands\\_on\\_history/dig/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/hands_on_history/dig/)

**Loan Boxes:** including the highly acclaimed CAT KITS, containing a selection of Roman objects are available for schools on free loan from Canterbury Archaeological Trust (Tel: 01227 462062)

**Lullingstone Roman Villa Teacher Kit:** essential guidance for a school visit from English Heritage (free download). [www.tes.com/teaching-resource/lullingstone-roman-villa-teacher-kit-6162249](http://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/lullingstone-roman-villa-teacher-kit-6162249)

**Roman and Medieval Canterbury:** historical map produced by the Ordnance Survey, on sale in local bookshops.

**Roman Britain – A Very Short Introduction:** Peter Salway (Oxford University Press, 2015), good background information for teachers.

**Roman Britain: Poster Set (Invasion & Resistance and Life & Civilisation) and Interactive Timeline (class pack):** available from Wildgoose Teaching Resources. [www.wildgoose.ac/history\\_s/1477.htm](http://www.wildgoose.ac/history_s/1477.htm)

**A Teachers' Guide to Learning from Objects:** Gail Durbin, Susan Morris & Sue Wilkinson, English Heritage, classic guide to using artefacts in the classroom (free download). [www.tes.com/teaching-resource/learning-from-objects-a-teacher-s-guide-6059739](http://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/learning-from-objects-a-teacher-s-guide-6059739)

**The Romans in Britain:** an extensive range of free classroom resources for KS2 from the Hamilton Trust. [www.hamilton-trust.org.uk/browse/theme/lower-key-stage-2/block-a-introduction-to-the-romans/109520](http://www.hamilton-trust.org.uk/browse/theme/lower-key-stage-2/block-a-introduction-to-the-romans/109520)

**Thinking History:** a huge range of fantastic resources for teachers including several excellent teaching activities about the Romans in Britain. [www.thinkinghistory.co.uk/ActivityKS/ActivityKS2AllList.html#topics](http://www.thinkinghistory.co.uk/ActivityKS/ActivityKS2AllList.html#topics)

**Using Roman Sites – a Teacher’s Guide:** excellent guidance from English Heritage for organizing learning activities at a Roman site (free download).

[www.tes.com/teaching-resource/using-roman-sites-a-teachers-guide-6059768](http://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/using-roman-sites-a-teachers-guide-6059768)

**Various postcards** of Roman Canterbury, including some of the illustrations contained in the book, are available from Canterbury Archaeological Trust and the Roman Museum.

**Wessex Archaeology Gallery:** a very useful online library of images related to archaeology

[www.flickr.com/photos/wessexarchaeology/collections/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/wessexarchaeology/collections/)

**What can Archaeological Evidence tell us about Roman Life?** Classroom resource from Historic England based on Lullingstone Roman Villa, includes teacher’s notes, PPT presentation and worksheet (free download). [www.heritage-explorer.co.uk/web/he/teachingactivitiesdetail.aspx?crit=&ctid=117&id=1193](http://www.heritage-explorer.co.uk/web/he/teachingactivitiesdetail.aspx?crit=&ctid=117&id=1193)

**Would you make a good Archaeologist?** An excellent range of classroom activities to help children understand the process of archaeology produced by the National Trust for Scotland. [www.nts.org.uk/learn/downloads/archaeology/Would\\_You\\_Make\\_a\\_Good\\_Archaeologist\\_0611.pdf](http://www.nts.org.uk/learn/downloads/archaeology/Would_You_Make_a_Good_Archaeologist_0611.pdf)

The author and publisher will be pleased to receive your comments about **Roman Canterbury**, details of successful approaches which you have used in the classroom and examples of children’s work. Please contact the The Education Officer:

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**e:** [Annie.Partridge@canterburytrust.co.uk](mailto:Annie.Partridge@canterburytrust.co.uk)

*Andy Harmsworth, August 2018*