

Folkestone's Vanishing Villa!

You live in Folkestone and you've heard about the Roman villa buried on the cliff top at East Wear Bay.

It was discovered by a school teacher called Mr Winbolt in 1924. He was also an archaeologist and he excavated the villa. Some people say they played in the villa ruins when they were children. The ruins were buried again and they are under the grass.

Now the cliffs at East Wear Bay are collapsing and being worn away by the sea and the old villa is crumbling with them!

Bits are falling down onto the beach and people find brick and pottery from the villa when they walk their dogs along the shore.

Can anything be done about the Vanishing Villa?!

Things to discuss (see Teacher notes below)

- Should anything be done about the Roman villa falling over the **cliffs** at East Wear Bay?
- Can anything be done to stop the **erosion** of the cliffs?
- If not, can anything be done to learn more about what was on the cliff top 2000 years ago - before it is too late?!
- How will local people and tourists know what was at East Wear Bay in the past?

Folkestone's Vanishing Villa! Teacher notes.

You will find images at 'East Wear Bay Then and Now'

(<http://www.canterburytrust.co.uk/folkestone/gallery01.htm>)

and 'How do we know about the Past?'

(<http://www.canterburytrust.co.uk/folkestone/gallery03.htm>)

Learning opportunities for Local Studies, Citizenship, Geography:

Local news; caring for our heritage; investigating the coast; what was it like here in the past?

- **Should anything be done about the Roman villa falling over the cliffs at East Wear Bay?**

The Roman villa is a rare and fascinating part of Folkestone's earliest history and it is gradually but certainly being lost to Mother Nature! The cliffs at East Wear Bay are being eroded - partly by wave action at high tide, partly by pressure of the North Downs chalk on the Gault clay beneath. Especially after heavy rain, the cliffs are destabilized and slumps of clay fall onto the beach.

Two thousand years ago, the Roman villa built on the cliff top would have been safely back from the cliff edge. But since then the cliffs have gradually crumbled onto the beach, eventually taking parts of the villa with them. With continuing erosion, the Roman villa and any previous Iron Age (Celtic) evidence would disappear forever.

- **Can anything be done to stop the erosion of the cliffs?**
The erosion can't be prevented and the East Wear Bay area is one of Special Scientific Interest so can't be disturbed by huge sea defences.
- **If not, can anything be done to learn more about the cliff top before it's too late?**
What kind of people would be good at looking for things from the past? Talk about *historians* (mostly find and examine old books and documents) and *archaeologists* (mostly find and examine old buildings and objects).
- **How will local people and tourists know what was at East Wear Bay in the past?**
Archaeologists (and volunteers) will be at the site in 2010 and 2011. Talk about exhibitions (where and who for?). Could the site be kept open after the dig? (protection, conservation issues). Make a video record? A reconstruction?