

# 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 29–30.

### 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 Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings in Britain or as part of a Local Study in-depth investigation. The materials on archaeology can be used as an introduction to a European Study or a World Study. In Key Stage 3 the book can be used to provide a local context for a study of the Roman Empire.

The materials offer opportunities to fulfill the requirements outlined for the development of skills, knowledge and understanding in History and assess children's achievements against the characteristics contained in the level descriptions of the History Attainment Target.

## 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 15 and 29–30).

**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.

**IT:** Produce a 'visitors' guide' to Roman Canterbury using word-processing or DTP software; use the reconstruction drawing of the Roman town on pages 13–14 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 ; 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 31) 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 Heritage Museum 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 1.)

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 3 will help them to understand the principle of stratigraphy.

English Heritage produce four excellent ‘Archaeological Detectives’ games to help children understand the work and skills of archaeologists (see Resources below).

## 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 4–5 and 11–23). A good starting point is to compare the artists’ impressions of the Iron Age settlement (p 5) and the centre of Roman Canterbury 300 years later (pp 13–14). Children could group their conclusions under headings such as: place-name; position; houses; streets; types of buildings; health; and defence.

They could also use the information and text on p 26 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 10 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 22–4 can help them reach conclusions about why the Romans eventually left Britain. Children can use the information and sources on pages 11–23 to identify the effects of the Roman conquest for local people; its long-term impact is examined on pp 27–8. Pages 24–6 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 17–8. 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 and 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 4,8,9), Bede (p 21) and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (p 25).

## Different Interpretations

Working with sources naturally leads on to a consideration of why different interpretations of the past can arise. For example:



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

Show your children this artists' impression of the Roman theatre in about AD 300 and compare it with the view on p 13–14:

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 24–5). Why are historians and archaeologists so unsure about why people abandoned the town?

Ask your children to study the Archaeological Mystery on pp 29–30. 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.

## Resources

Suggestions for places to visit and other resources are given in Roman Canterbury on pages 31–35. 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: Tel. +44 (0)171 973 3457

The Ermine Street Guard: Chris Haynes, Chairman, Oakland Farm, Dog Lane, Crickley Hill, Witcombe, Glos (Tel. +44 (0)1452 862235)

Legio Secunda Augusta: David Richardson, 288 Copnor Road, Copnor, Portsmouth (Tel. +44 (0)1705 790617)

**Archaeological Detectives Poster Games**, available from English Heritage Education Service, 23 Saville Row, London W1X 1AB.

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

**Food and Cooking in Roman Britain**, Jane Renfrew (English Heritage, as above).

**Food and Cooking in Roman Britain**, Marian Woodman, (available from Corinium Museum Publications, Park Street, Cirencester, Glos GL7 2BX).

**Education Resources Centre for Kentish Studies** has a wide range of resources for teaching about the Romans: Sessions House, County Hall, County Road, Maidstone ME14 1XQ (Tel. +44 (0)1622 694363).

**Loan Boxes** containing a selection of Roman objects are available for schools in the Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable area on free loan from Canterbury Heritage Museum (Tel. +44 (0)1227 452747)

**Lullingstone Roman Villa**, Iain Watson, (English Heritage Teachers' Handbook, as above)

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

**Roman Britain**, Junior Projects No 63, (Scholastic Publications 1992).

**Roman Britain: Invasion and Conquest and Home Life**. Two wall-charts produced by Pictorial Charts Educational Trust (27 Kirchen Road, London W3 0UD).

**The Roman Conquest of Britain**, computer simulation with teachers' handbook; available in BBC and Archimedes versions. (English Heritage).

**Roman Dover, a Handbook for Teachers**, Jonathan Barnes, available from the White Cliffs Experience, Market Square, Dover CT16 1PB.

**Sounds of the Roman Age**, audio-cassette of Roman music, available from Past Times, 8 High St, Canterbury (Tel. +44 (0)1227 786706).

**A Teachers' Guide to Learning from Objects**, Gail Durbin, Susan Morris & Sue Wilkinson (English Heritage, as above).

**Teaching the Romans in Britain at Key Stage 2**, Alan Farmer et al, (available from the Historical Association, 59a Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4JH).

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

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. We particularly welcome pupils' material to put up on this website. Please contact: The Education Officer, Canterbury Archaeological Trust, 92A Broad Street, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2LU (Tel. +44 (0)1227 462062).

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