

Museum of Archaeology  
Durham University

# Hidden Stories from the River Wear

Exploring 1000 years of  
Durham history  
online exhibition



[durham.ac.uk/archaeology.museum.com](http://durham.ac.uk/archaeology.museum.com)



This pack of learning activities was created by a group of students of the MA Museum and Artefact Studies course at Durham University. It is a part of the online exhibition “Hidden Stories from the River Wear” (2021 – 2022), a project focusing on Durham city’s local history, as well as the thrilling world of underwater archaeology through the weird and wonderful objects underwater archaeologist Gary Bankhead discovered while diving in the River Wear from 2007 to 2019.

In this pack, you will find a wide range of activities designed for your pupils, suitable for Key Stage 1. We would like to assure you that the material meets all the standards established by the National Curriculum. Instructions for all activities are included, and if you wish, you may share your class’s work with us in [archaeology.museum@durham.ac.uk](mailto:archaeology.museum@durham.ac.uk)

Our mascot, a mini Gary Bankhead, will guide you and your pupils through this pack, offering helpful hints and tips.

We sincerely hope this activity pack serves as a useful (as well as entertaining) learning tool for your classes.

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### *Introduction*

The types of toys that children love have changed over the centuries, but the enjoyment they get from them certainly hasn't! This sheet shows just a few of the toys found in the River Wear, ranging from the 16th to the 21st century. Ask your pupils to choose a toy and one that they enjoy playing with, and compare the two. There are several comparison prompts already filled into the table but encourage the class to think of other things they can compare. Once the table is filled in, the pupils can look at the similarities and differences, and decide if they would play with a toy that's around 500 years old.

### *Curriculum links*

- Distinguish between an object and the material from which it is made
- Identify and name a variety of everyday materials, including wood, plastic, glass, metal, water, and rock
- Compare and group together a variety of everyday materials on the basis of their simple physical properties
- Changes within living memory
- Understand the methods of historical enquiry
- A study of local history

### *Learning outcomes*

- Identify the properties of historical and modern toys
- Identify different everyday materials by sight
- Compare and contrast historical toys with modern ones

### *Success criteria*

- Describe simple properties of both historical and modern toys
- Compare modern day toys with historical ones, distinguishing the similarities and differences

### *Lesson ideas*

This activity could be a short starter or lengthened into a wider discussion around how toys have changed through the centuries. You could further expand this to look at the lives of children at the time some of these toys were around and compare this to how your class lives now.

## Comparing Toys

There have been lots of toys found in the River Wear. The oldest is 600 years old and the newest is less than 10! Pick a toy from below and one you've played with recently. Compare them in the table below. What is different? Are there any similarities?



Homer Simpson Toy



Toy Soldier



Aeroplane



Native American Chief



Toy Horse



Marbles

Use the table below to compare the River Wear toy with yours. Write the name of each toy in the top boxes and see what you find! If you can think of **5** any more comparisons, add them in too!

	River Wear object: _____	Your object: _____
Material		
Colour		
Size		
Shape		

How are they similar?

---

---

How are they different?

---

---

Would you play with the River Wear toy? (Circle one)

**YES**      **NO**

Why?

---

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Make sure to keep a tight hold of your favourite toy when outside—or it might end up in the River Wear like these!

### *Introduction*

The River Wear object sheets offer a small glimpse into the huge River Wear collection and the vast history of Durham. Using some of these - we recommend around five - ask your pupils to vote on which is their favourite and have them tally the marks in the table. Then, they can create a bar graph to discover the class' favourite object.

### *Curriculum links*

- Interpret and present data using bar charts, pictograms and tables
- Gathering and recording data to help in answering questions

### *Learning outcomes*

- Gathering and interpreting data to create mathematical charts

### *Success criteria*

Pupils can...

- Gather data in the form of a tally chart
- Construct and interpret a bar graph

### *Lesson ideas*

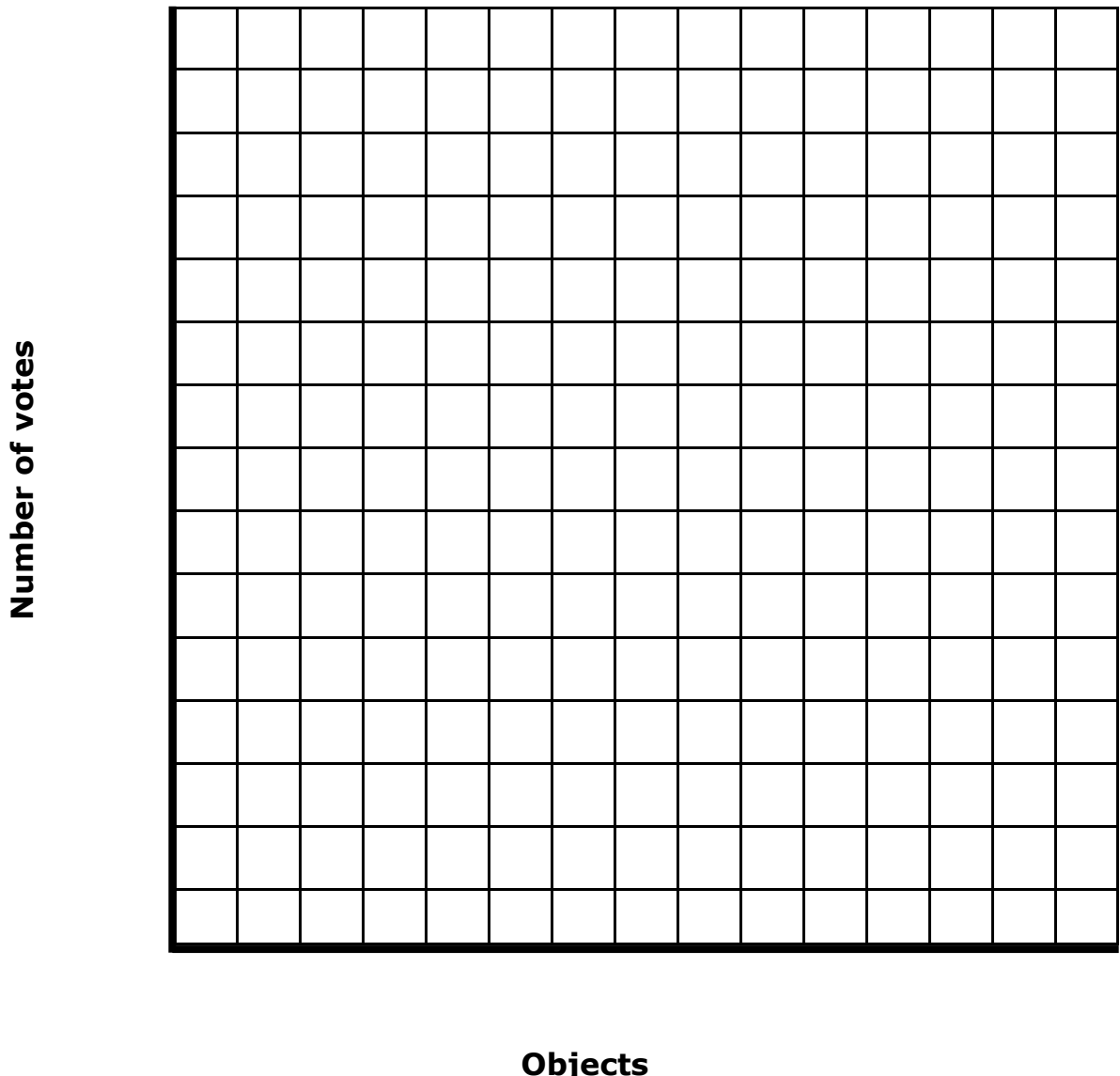
This activity can be paired with 'Looking at Objects', using the favourite object in the centre and encouraging the pupils to work in small groups to create a narrative for the object. This can then be shared as a whole class to collect and compare ideas. For large classes, it may be fun to split the pupils in half and see how their choices differ.

# What is your favourite object?

Gary found over 13,000 objects in the River Wear! Choose objects from the River Wear sheet and ask the other members of your class what their favourite object is. Tally their answers in the table below, then make a bar graph and identify right away which is the most popular!



Object	Number of votes



*Introduction*

These beautiful - and odd! - objects all form part of the River Wear collection and many are available to view in our online exhibition. This activity is designed to test phonetics and spelling, as well as the pupils' ability to recognise some less obvious objects. Encourage saying these words aloud before spelling them.

*Curriculum links*

- Apply phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words
- Spell common words
- Name the letters of the alphabet
- Begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place

*Learning outcomes*

- Improve phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words
- Improve writing proficiency
- Improve knowledge and understanding of the alphabet, pronunciation, and spelling of common words

*Success criteria*

Pupils can...

- Clearly say the words aloud
- Legibly write the letters
- Understand the meaning of the words and use them in a spoken sentence

*Lesson ideas*

More of these sheets can be made with the River Wear object sheets, using more challenging words. You could also make this activity more challenging by showing just the images, sounding out the words, and asking your pupils to try spelling them. Comparisons can be formed with how some of these objects look now, thinking about form, use, and material.



Look at the pictures below. These are all objects found in the River Wear. Say what you see out loud. What do you hear? Add the missing letter in the blank space.



t \_ y



ri \_ g



\_ o i n



h o \_ n



m a \_



h o o \_



b e \_ l



c \_ m b

### *Introduction*

These sheets encompass the River Wear objects, the natural environment, and the city of Durham. All of these are themes in our exhibition and can be linked together in a lesson that covers English, History, and Geography. The activity is designed to help pupils practice their handwriting skills by tracing the words and writing them in guided lines. Encourage your pupils to say the words aloud, in small groups or as a class, to further familiarise themselves with them.

### *Curriculum links*

- Apply phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words
- Spell common words
- Name the letters of the alphabet
- Begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- Use basic geographical vocabulary to refer to key physical and human features

### *Learning outcomes*

- Improve phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words
- Improve writing proficiency with the aid of tracing and guidelines
- Improve knowledge and understanding of the alphabet, pronunciation, and spelling of common words

### *Success criteria*

Pupils can...

- Clearly say the words aloud
- Legibly write the words with the aid of tracing and guidelines
- Understand the meaning of the words and use them in a spoken sentence

### *Lesson ideas*

This activity would serve as a good starting point in talking about the River Wear objects, the natural environment, and the history or geography of the city of Durham. A trip to the river or the city could even turn this handwriting task into a scavenger hunt!

# Things we found in the River Wear

Look at the pictures of objects we found in the River Wear. Trace them then write them in the space next to it.



Ring

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

\_\_\_\_\_



Toy

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

\_\_\_\_\_



Coin

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

\_\_\_\_\_



Comb

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

\_\_\_\_\_



Plane

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

\_\_\_\_\_



Badge

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

\_\_\_\_\_

# Things we see at the river

Look at the pictures of things we can see at rivers. Trace them then write them in the space next to it.



Water

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

\_\_\_\_\_



Tree

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

\_\_\_\_\_

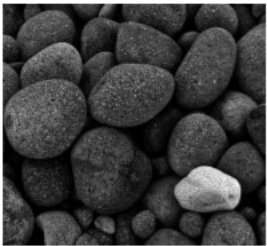


Bird

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

\_\_\_\_\_



Rocks

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

\_\_\_\_\_



Fish

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

\_\_\_\_\_



Bridge

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

\_\_\_\_\_

# Things we see in Durham

There are lots of exciting things to see in Durham. Look at the pictures. Trace them then write them in the space next to it.



River

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

\_\_\_\_\_



Castle

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

\_\_\_\_\_



Diver

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

\_\_\_\_\_



Bus

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

\_\_\_\_\_



Cross

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

\_\_\_\_\_



Bridge

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

\_\_\_\_\_

### *Introduction*

Take your pupils on a journey through time to discover popular toys from centuries ago. Using 'I See, I Think, I Wonder' as prompts, ask your pupils to think about the toys throughout their life, from creation, to play, and disposal. Many of the toys are still around today, albeit in a different form, so see what similarities and differences your class can find between their toys and those from the past.

### *Curriculum links*

- Identify and name a variety of everyday materials, including wood, plastic, glass, metal, water, and rock
- Compare and group together a variety of everyday materials on the basis of their simple physical properties
- Changes within living memory
- Understand the methods of historical enquiry
- A study of local history

### *Learning outcomes*

- Identify how historical toys were made and used
- Identify different everyday materials by sight
- Compare and contrast historical toys with modern ones

### *Success criteria*

Pupils can...

- Describe how historical toys were made and who they were used by, using the prompts as a guide
- Compare modern day toys with historical ones, distinguishing the similarities and differences

### *Lesson ideas*

Toys are an exciting topic for pupils and this activity is a great way to really get them engaged with the collection. There are more toys to choose from on the River Wear object sheets and this sheet could also be paired with 'What's your favourite object?' to get them excited about maths too. Alternatively, bring out your pupils' creativity and challenge them to draw the toys, labelling their parts and materials.



I see

I think

I wonder

Here are some hints!  
I am...made of metal  
I am...strong





I see

I think

I wonder

Here are some hints!  
I am...made of metal  
You can...play with me







I see

I think

I wonder

Here are some hints!  
I am...made of plastic  
You can...play with me





I see

I think

I wonder

Here are some hints!  
I am...made of metal  
You can...play with me



## Introduction—Create your own medal

Alexander C. Newton's War and Victory medals were among the objects found by Gary in the River Wear. If Alexander really discarded his medals, it could be an example of how traumatic war can be. So, in order to embrace the values of friendship and harmony that come with peace, instead of the hostility and violence that always accompanies war, we thought it would be a great idea to create our own peace medals instead.



World War 1 British Victory Medal  
(Empire Medals)

You will find directions for a paper medal in this pack. You can either draw or engrave peace doves or anything else you might like on them. Have fun!

# Create your own paper medal

## You will need:

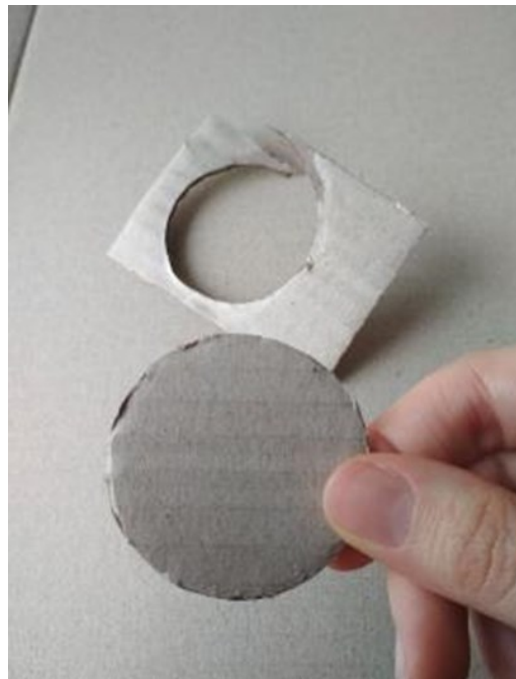
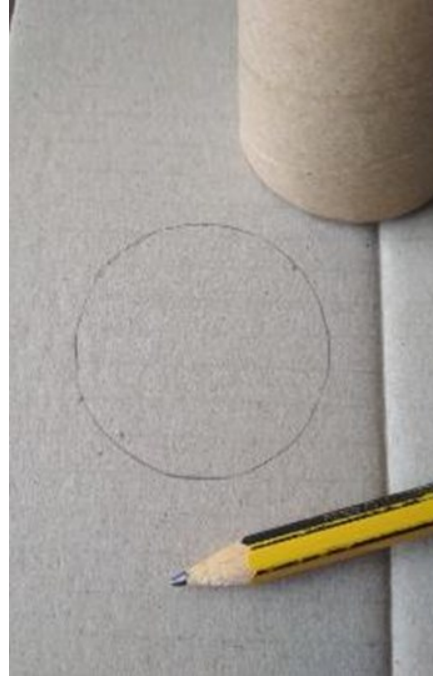
- Cardboard
- Kitchen towel roll
- PVA glue
- Pair of scissors
- Pencil
- Brush
- Ruler
- One pointy tool (like a sharp pencil)
- A ribbon or some string



Make sure you ask an adult to help you with the scissors



Step 1: Trace a circle on the cardboard using the kitchen towel roll and cut it out



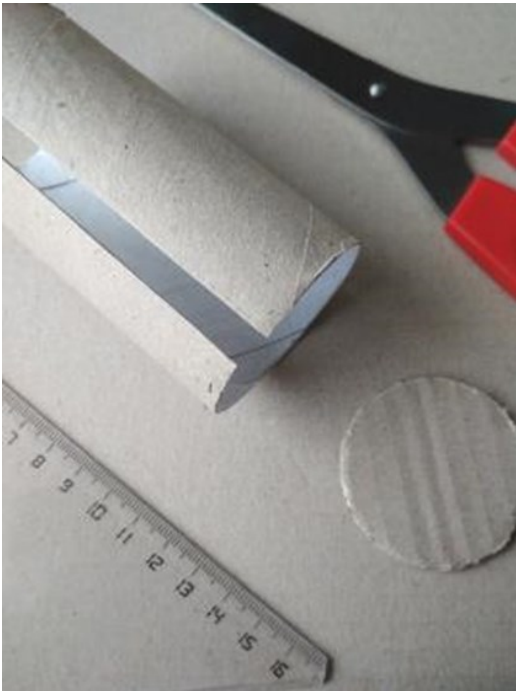
Step 2: With the ruler, measure the width of the cardboard disk.



Step 3: Measure a circle all around the paper roll with the width equal to the width of the cardboard



Step 4: Cut the kitchen towel roll in the middle. Then cut across the line you drew in Step 3





Step 5: Draw the handle on the cardboard and cut it out



Step 6: Glue all of the pieces together using the PVA glue and brush



Step 7: Use glue on the edges of one side and wait until it is completely dry (it will become transparent when it is dry)



Step 8: After the first side is dry, repeat on the other side



Step 9: With a pointy tool (such as a sharp pencil), carefully poke a hole in the handle of the medal.



Step 10: Pass the ribbon through the hole of the handle. Decorate your medal however you like!



*Introduction*

These sheets have a number of high-quality images of just some of the objects displayed in our online exhibition, "Hidden Stories from the River Wear: Exploring 1000 years of Durham History". For more objects and information, click on the exhibit link above. They are designed to be used not only with worksheets such as 'Create your own story' and 'Looking at objects', but to expand upon and enhance the activities in this pack.

## Objects

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Homer Simpson toy<br/>- <i>Plastic, 21st century</i></li> <li>1. Toy soldier<br/>-</li> <li>1. Native American figure<br/>- <i>Lead, 20th century</i></li> <li>2. Toy aeroplane<br/>- <i>Tin, pewter, 20th century</i></li> <li>3. Toy horse<br/>- <i>Lead, 17th century</i></li> <li>4. Toy knight<br/>- <i>Lead, 16th-17th century</i></li> <li>5. Toy soldier with instrument<br/>- <i>Lead, 19th century</i></li> <li>6. Marbles<br/>- <i>Glass, 18th-21st century</i></li> <li>1. Doll's skirt<br/>- <i>Lead, 16th-17th century</i></li> <li>1. Engagement ring<br/>- <i>Gold and diamond, c.1862</i></li> <li>1. Love token<br/>- <i>Lead, 20th century</i></li> <li>1. Finger ring<br/>- <i>Gold, 16th-17th century</i></li> <li>1. Obituary ring<br/>- <i>Gold, rock crystal stone, c.1775</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ironmonger shop nameplate<br/>- <i>Copper-alloy, 19th century</i></li> <li>1. British War Medal<br/>- <i>Silver, c. 1918</i></li> <li>1. Elizabeth and Walter brooch<br/>- <i>Copper-alloy, 17th-19th century</i></li> <li>1. Comb<br/>-</li> <li>1. Dress hook<br/>-</li> <li>1. Bird of prey ankle bell<br/>-</li> <li>1. Dentures<br/>- <i>Porcelain and vulcanite, c.1880s</i></li> <li>1. Pigeon ring<br/>- <i>Copper-alloy, c.1919</i></li> <li>1. Seal matrix<br/>- <i>Gilt blue glass, 18th century</i></li> <li>1. Medallion<br/>-</li> <li>1. Pilgrim's pendant - St Cuthbert's Cross<br/>- <i>Copper-alloy, 20th century</i></li> <li>1. Pilgrim badge - St Cuthbert's Cross<br/>- <i>Lead/tin, 14th century</i></li> <li>1. Sacring bell<br/>- <i>Copper-alloy, 18th century</i></li> <li>1. Devotional badge - hunting horn<br/>- <i>Pewter, 14th century</i></li> </ul> |
|---|---|



River Wear object sheets



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14



15



16



17



18



19



20



21



22



23



24



25



26



27