

Malvern Museum of Local History

Suggestions & questions to stimulate children to think about the past

The Collection

Why do some objects survive well and others don't? How is the past interpreted? How are objects conserved?

The Museum Building

The Gatehouse is one of only two surviving buildings from Malvern's medieval monastery. What is a monastery? There were many buildings – why were the others pulled down? [Henry VIII and the dissolution of the Monasteries, 1539]. How were the building materials re-used? [Town development]. How might these changes have affected the people of Malvern then? [Care of the sick and the poor].

Skills of Investigation and Observation

Fill a box with a selection of items. Allow pupils to handle the objects and ask what can be deduced about the owner. How much is certain and how much can only be guessed? Are these different interpretations? What does this tell us about historical research?

Pupils might begin to draw objects, which are then removed after a short time and the drawing to continue from memory. What happens to the accuracy, and how can this lead to different conclusions about the objects?

Show How Historical Accounts of the Past Can Differ

Divide the class in two and tell each group in turn a story about the past. Allow them to ask questions. A few days later ask them to record the story from memory. Select one version from each group and then let the whole class compare the versions.

What has happened? How is this relevant to the problems of historical interpretation?

Archeological Evidence

This might be simulated by asking a person to lie down, with a selection of possessions nearby, and pretend to die! What might be left in 10 years time? 500 years time? Could these materials usefully tell us about the life and times of the person's life? What sort of wrong conclusions might be drawn?

Questions for Key Stage 1 and 2 Pupils on a Visit to the Museum

Outside

Look under the archway at either side of the walls. What would the large hinges have been used for? Who might have been looking through the little window and why? What is happening to the stone work and what ought to be done? Where could the money come from to repair the damage? If this was the main gateway into the monastery, what must have been in place either side of the Gatehouse? Why has this disappeared? What would the stones have been used for perhaps?

Inside

How can rocks millions of years old tell seaside stories? Since the hills are made from granite, why should this make it difficult to live **on** the hills?

Look at the information boards on the 2 Iron Age hill forts. What were the houses like? Would you have liked to live on top of a hill in one of these houses? Why? Why did these hill forts come to an end when the Romans arrived? What would have happened to the people living in the hill forts?

Look at the outline of the hills on the wall behind the counter. Which is the largest hill? How have the hills been used by people in the past? How are they used today? Before going upstairs, look at the beehive. Why are bees

useful? What is their home like?

Upstairs

Look at the case which has objects recently given to the museum. Are there any that you really like? Do they all look really old?

Medieval Room

What building is pictured in this room that can still be seen today? Has it changed in any way? Who would have worked here? Who works in it today?

Look at some tiles. Do they look like the ones in houses today? Are they very old? Where were they used? What are they made from?

Malvern used to be a large forest. Why did kings come to the forest? What has happened to the forest now?

What is Brother Luke wearing? What job is he doing today? Why did people need food from the monks? How else did the monks help local villagers? Who does this work nowadays?

Water Cure Room

Look at the map of Malvern on the wall as you go in. Can you see where the Priory Church is? What else can you recognise? What buildings are missing?

Look at the bottles in the display case. Are they like our bottles of water today? What sort of bottle tops were used? (Screws tops, marbles, corks etc.) Why do we use different tops today? What is strange about the shape of one of the bottles? How did the marble work in the bottle? What did the bottles contain? Why was this important to the people of Malvern / the visitors to Malvern? Where can you still get spring water? What do people / businesses use it for nowadays? Which famous person drinks it wherever she goes in the world?

The Water Cure

Study the model, pictures and descriptions of the cures used by the doctors in the Water Cure. Which one would you have found the nicest / the worst? Do you think the patients felt better after these 'cures'? What sort of people came to Malvern to be cured? What would they have liked about Malvern?

What sort of buildings had to be built in Malvern because of the Water Cure? Do you think the people of Malvern wanted these new buildings or do you think they would think the same as people do today about new supermarkets, housing developments?

The Victorian Room

Look at the information board on the railway. What do you think was the biggest problem when building a railway from Worcester to Hereford? How did they solve it? Find out what has happened to some of the railway stations. What do you think the local people might have felt about this new form of transport? (Noise, shaking, speed, smell). Is the railway ABOVE or BELOW ground level in Great Malvern? Why? How did the railway change the sort of visitors to Malvern?

Find the differences between the types of schools in Malvern. What sort of pupil would go to Malvern College? What sort of pupil would go Malvern Parish School in Manby Road? Look at the medal and certificates given to the pupils – what were they for? What does this tell us about school attendance? Does this still happen today?

Look in the display cases and the exhibition on the raised platform. Find something that interests you and describe it to a friend or teacher. Does it remind you of something similar that is used today? How does it differ? Could you design something even better? If you went back in time and lived in Victorian times, what would you miss most about life today? From what you have seen in this room, do you think Victorians living in Malvern would have thought life was: very good / quite good / not very good? Would it have been better to live in Malvern or the centre of Birmingham in Victorian times? Can you think what the main differences might have been?

The Twentieth Century Room

Look at the display boards on the early motor cars. Malvern is famous for the Santler car and is still famous for the slightly later car, the Morgan. Find the differences between these early cars and modern cars. Would the early cars have been comfortable? Why? What do you think people at the beginning of the 20th century would have felt about this form of transport?

Malvern became very famous in the 1930s for its Festival Theatre. Who were the famous people associated with the Theatre? What took place in the Winter Gardens in the 1930s? Do the same events take place today? Can you think of any other events that happen in Winter Gardens today? Look at the puppet in the display case. What is he made from? How is he dressed? How does he perform? Is he a toy?

Malvern During the Wars

Like all towns, Malvern sent many soldiers to fight in the 1st and 2nd World Wars. What groups of people **came** to live in Malvern during: the 1st World War / the 2nd World War? Why? Did any bombs or planes fall in the area in the 2nd World War? How might local people have felt when hundreds of scientists moved there in 1942 to carry out secret work? Look under the window ledge. How did masks protect local people?

Take a close look at the dentist's drill. Is it like the one used on people today? Would you like your teeth to be drilled by this? How else has the dentist changed nowadays?

Look at the vacuum cleaner and carpet sweeper. What are they made from? What are these objects made from today?

The Upstairs Corridor – Radar

Radar – a way of working out where objects are by using radio waves – was developed here in Malvern. What are the radar objects next to the scientist made from? Do they look old? Who might have used them and what for? How do you think radar helped in the 2nd World War? How else is radar used? (fire control, navigation, Metropolitan Police).

What has radar to do with cooking? (microwave). What other inventions connected with Malvern's radar work have benefitted people in general? (calculator technology, some of the space age programmes, infra red images, traffic light sensors). What is the radar establishment called today?

The Upstairs Corridor – Elgar

What is Edward Elgar famous for? Where was he born and how long ago? Why do you think he was able to write such beautiful music when he lived in Malvern? Would you have liked to have been one of his friends? Why?

The Upstairs Corridor – Medieval Timber Beams

Look carefully, but try not to touch, the large wooden beams. Are they very old? How can you tell? Find out where they come from. Work out where they might have been in the artist's drawing. Why would anyone want to keep these beams after the building was pulled down. What problems do you think the museum has in looking after these beams?