

# THE FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM

## EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

### Do- It- Yourself

### The Tudors

### Key Stage 2



Henry VIII PD.19-1949

This is one of our range of DIY resources, which aim to provide you with what you need to teach your pupils in the galleries. We hope that the following teaching ideas include some which are suitable for your needs. As we do not know your pupils, or the specific aims of your visit, these ideas may need adapting, but we hope they will act as a springboard. Each idea includes signpost sequences all of which point to pupil interaction with the exhibits, *example prompt questions written in italics*, and information. Many are followed by suggested extension ideas that can take place in the galleries. 'Into Action' sheets, which are linked to these teaching ideas, are available for pupils to use in the galleries.

## Aims of the Tudor session

- To use real objects as evidence for the political and social life of Tudor England.
- To introduce pupils to Tudor costume and armour.
- To uncover the technology, processes and people involved in the production and manufacture of Tudor artefacts.

## Galleries used in this session

Galleries 3, 31 and 32

## You will need to bring:

- One clipboard for each pupil.
- Paper and a pencil for each pupil.
- Rubbers and sharpeners for the class.

## Teaching Idea - Who are the Tudors?



To introduce the idea of a museum, the Tudors as a period of history and the use of real objects as evidence.

Approximate timing: 10 minutes

Location: Gallery 3, in middle, sitting on the carpet.

**Henry Wriothesley 3856**

*Where are you? What kind of museum? Why have we come here?*

*Why are they called the Tudors?*

That was their name? - talk about families/surnames.

*Were the Tudors a normal family? Why not?* Royal family - Henry VII won Battle of Bosworth in 1485 and became king. The Tudors were on the throne until 1603.

*When we say we are learning about the Tudors, who do we mean?*

All the people who lived in England at that time.

*Why study them here?* REAL objects, looking at things made and used at the time, real Tudor pictures, real Tudor paint, real Tudor artists - try to get across the excitement of this.

## Teaching Idea – Looking the Part



This activity encourages close observation of a portrait to explore the image and position of a Tudor noblewoman.

Approximate timing: 20 mins

Location: Gallery 3:

Elizabeth Vernon,  
Countess of Southampton (b. 1573) c. 1603  
Anonymous painter

### PD.6-1984

Seat the children carefully, check that they can see the whole picture, especially the top.

*Who do you think this is?* Your pupils will say Elizabeth I – don't correct them at this stage but instead encourage them to look at the portrait more carefully.

*Why do you think she is Elizabeth I?* – crown, ermine, throne – all are signs of royalty. Now get them to look more carefully. Dress – Elizabeth I's favourite colour was white, pearls – sign of wealth and they were made fashionable in England by Elizabeth I (you could discuss where pearls come from – either from East or West Indies at this time), hairstyle – Elizabethan women dyed their hair to be the same colour as the queen's, face – painted with ceruse, a cosmetic containing white lead.

*But it is not Elizabeth I...*

It is someone who wanted to look like her. She was a countess dressed in her robes for the coronation of James I. *Do you want to look like the queen? Who do you want to look like?* Here you can explore ideas of celebrities – e.g.: footballers, pop-stars, TV presenters.

*Why do you want to be like them? How do we know what these celebrities look like?* – TV, magazines etc. Contrast this with the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Elizabeth's hold on the throne was often threatened (e.g. Mary Queen of Scots, Armada) so she wanted her people to recognise her image and feel loyalty to her. She circulated her image around the country on prints and coins (the children might see the 'Armada' medal in Gallery 32 later in their visit). Elizabeth I tightly controlled her image throughout her long reign.



**Armada medal**

*Why would someone want to be painted to look like Elizabeth I?* People wanted to copy her because the queen was all powerful. Lead into idea of absolute power of monarch in 16<sup>th</sup> century.

*Who has power today?* Parliament.

## Teaching Idea – Symbols of Status



This activity uses close observation of a portrait to show how objects reflect status and wealth and to discuss trade and production in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Approximate timing: 20 minutes

Location: Gallery 5

Elizabeth Vernon, Countess of Southampton (b. 1573) c. 1603

Anonymous painter

PD.6-1984

*Look at this Tudor object. Where do you think an object like this would hang? What sort of house?*

Encourage the children to think about the size of this picture – perhaps comparing it to others in the gallery and then lead on to think about where it would have been hung. Most Tudor houses were quite small – wattle and daub, but this would have been in a large house. The painting is heavy – stone or brick wall – larger, grander house. This helps children to understand that museum objects are ‘out of context’ and build a picture of an object’s original location.

*What can you see in the painting?*

Get the children to look carefully at the painting and you can record their observations e.g. lady, dress, shoes, etc. Once the children have found one thing, encourage them to look again to find something else. From observation move to deduction.

*What do all these things tell us about this woman and who she was?*

Take each object, discuss how they demonstrate power, wealth or nobility.

*Dress* – made of silk – what is silk? *How is silk made?* Silk worms live on mulberry leaves, spin cocoons – this is the silk thread. Cocoons are put into water and the threads are then drawn out and attached to a slow turning spinning wheel. Weaving the thread was very skilled and time consuming. All the silk was handmade, probably in France or Italy – imported and very expensive. Sumptuary laws, introduced

under Henry VIII, controlled what clothes people could wear. Only 'baronesses and all above that rank' were allowed to wear silk.

*What else is made of silk?*

*Shoes* – these can be compared to our shoes today.

*Would she have worn these outside?* Discuss what roads were like in Tudor times, very dirty, sewage, etc. Go into as much grisly detail as you like.

*Curtain* – purple silk is used to frame the subject. The sumptuary laws stated that purple silk was only to be worn by 'countesses and all above that rank'. The use of purple as a mark of status dates back to Roman times when officials wore purple bands on their togas.

*Carpet* – *Do you have carpet in your house? Did everyone in Tudor times have carpets?* Carpets were special – very few people had them and they were very expensive.

*Why were they so expensive?*

Again deconstruct the making of a carpet. What is it made from? Wool. The wool had to be washed, spun into thread, dyed. Base of the carpet made and the wool was then fed through. All done by hand – the best carpets came from Antwerp and also sometimes Turkey. Again imported, expensive. They were usually hung on the walls or put over furniture – but Elizabeth Vernon is standing on this carpet. Also, this is not just a small rug – the carpet extends right back in the painting, a real statement .

*Chair* – chairs were a mark of status in Tudor England. Most people sat on stools or benches. Women wearing this type of farthingale could not sit on chairs. The chair in this portrait is a throne, covered in velvet (once again a fabric controlled by the sumptuary laws). Elizabeth Vernon is standing directly in front of the throne and has her hand on the arm of the chair – a statement of her status.

*Crown and pearls*– as a Countess, married to the Earl of Southampton, Elizabeth Vernon was entitled to wear a coronet and pearls for state occasions.

*Where is she standing? Where are we in relation to her?* Look at the viewpoint of the painting. Are we looking straight at her face? *Viewpoint of the painting makes the viewer look up to her. She is looking down on us the viewer and is also larger than life – again sign of her status.*

### **Extension Idea for Symbols of Status: *Rich and Noble***

An activity to encourage thinking about symbols of wealth and status

Approximate timing: 10 minutes

Ask the children to take a piece of paper and divide it into two columns. Give one column the title 'rich' and the other column 'noble'.

Look at the painting again and sort the objects in the painting into these two columns. Some things, such as the carpet, show that she was rich but others, such as the silk and the crown, show that she was noble.

## Teaching Idea - Court and Corset



PD.I-1963

This activity compares two Tudor portraits to explore Tudor costume and status. The children will also need to have seen the portrait of Elizabeth Vernon. This can be done through the Looking the Part and Symbols of Status teaching ideas.

Approximate timing: 20 minutes

Location: Gallery 3

Mary Tudor, c. 1553

Hans Eworth, active 1540 - 74

Sit the children in front of the portrait of Queen Mary making sure that they can see the whole painting and, if possible, can still see the portrait of Elizabeth Vernon.

Don't reveal the identity of the sitter.

Look at these two portraits. Which of these two women would you rather be?

Most children will choose Elizabeth Vernon.

*Why did you choose her?* They may feel that she looks happier than Queen Mary. *Why does she look happier?* Discuss the mood of the paintings and what makes one portrait feel different to the other. The children may mention things such as background, clothes and colours. Use their observations as a starting point for discussion.

*In what ways are the backgrounds different?*

Queen Mary- bare room, shadow – nothing in the room.

Elizabeth Vernon – sumptuous background – silk, throne, carpet (see notes in previous teaching idea) – all emphasise wealth and status.

*What is different about their dresses?*

Colour. *When do people wear black? When do people wear white?* Colour reflects mood.

*What about the shape of the dresses?* Some similarities – very small waists. Fashionable shape in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

*How do you think they achieved this shape?* Explain to the children the use of corsets which were worn underneath the dress. These corsets were boned, stiff and laced tightly at the back by a lady's maid. Poorer women laced their dresses at the front (no maids). Young girls wore corsets made of rope (which were slightly softer) from about the age of 5. Women aimed to have a 16 inch waist.

*How would it feel to be so tightly laced?* Explain how uncomfortable these corsets were. The stomach and the lungs get displaced. Also, discuss limitations on movement.

*What is different about the shape?* Elizabeth Vernon's dress has a fuller skirt (again this was a show of wealth – more silk costs more money), different neckline, collar, sleeves. *Do you think that these portraits were painted at the same time?* 50 years apart – fashions change.

*Now look at the jewellery and accessories.* Close observation reveals that both women are wearing jewellery. The book hanging around Jane's waist is called a tablet or girdle-book and would probably have been a book of devotions bound within a case. *What does this detail reveal about the sitter?*

*At this point, tell the children who this is.* Perhaps the shadow in the background of the Queen Mary portrait reflects the troubled life she led. You could ask the children whether they would change their choice now they know who the two women are.



## Teaching Idea - Power and Protection



This activity uses real objects to discuss the production and use of armour in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Approximate timing: 20 minutes

Location: Gallery 31

Give the children some time to look around this gallery, reminding them of the rules before they do so. Then sit them down in front of the suit of armour.

*What have we got in this gallery? Who would have worn these things?*

Soldiers – get the children to think about soldiers today and what they wear. Also, think about other people who wear protective clothing – the fire service, the police, doctors etc.

*What do soldiers today need protection from?* Different types of protective clothes for different situations.

*What did soldiers in the 16<sup>th</sup> century need protection from?* Think about the weapons they can see in the gallery – no guns until 17<sup>th</sup> century. Armour protects you from impact weapons.

*So can you just go and buy a suit of armour if you need one?* Talk about how a suit of armour has to fit – it has to be a perfect fit with joints in exactly the right places. Each suit of armour made to measure.

Now work with the children to deconstruct the production of a suit of armour and consider all the people involved.

*What is armour made from?* Metal.

*What sort of metal?* Iron.

*Where does iron come from?* The ground, iron ore – lump of rock.

*Where do you find the rock?* Deep down in the ground.

*How do you get it out of the ground?* You need to tunnel down into the ground.

*What happens when you start to tunnel?* Walls start to fall in.

*How can you stop this?* Support the tunnel with wooden props.

*What else can happen in your tunnel?* Get below the water table – water comes into your hole – use examples from children's own experience to illustrate this point (e.g. making sandcastles on the beach).

*How do you get the water out of your mine?* Pump it out.

*What powers the pump?* Tudors used animal power or water power.

*How do you get the iron ore out of the mine?* Hoist it up in buckets through the mine shaft.

*Once you have the iron ore, how do you get the metal?* Heat it – iron ore melts at about 1500°C. Very, very hot.

*How do you make a fire? What burns?* Wood – someone needs to collect it. Plenty of wood around in Tudor England.

*But how do you get the fire very, very hot?* Normally a fire lets out heat but if you cover it, the heat stays in e.g. oven, or in this case, a furnace. Need to make sure you have oxygen going in otherwise fire will go out. Now you can smelt the metal.

Molten metal then flattened with rollers driven by water power – sheet metal. This needs to now go to the armourer's workshop.

*How will you transport the sheets of metal?* Horse, cart and man to take it to the workshop.

*The metal reaches the armourer. What does he need to do before he can start to make the armour?* Measure the wearer very carefully. Tudor armourers made wax moulds of parts of the body and looked at the creases on worn clothes to discover where the armour needed to bend.

*How can you transfer these measurements to the metal?* The armourer would have made a pattern.

*How do you cut metal?* Armourers would have used shears to cut the sheet metal.

*How can you shape it once it is cut out?* Metal can be hammered into shape, either cold or hot. Armour was cold hammered into the rough shape and then the master armourer would do the final shaping.

Once it was finished the armour was surrounded with burning charcoal which oxidised the iron and turned it to steel.

*Why bother to do this?* Steel stronger than iron.

*How has the armourer made sure that the soldier can move easily in his suit of armour?* Get children to look carefully at the body joints. Lames (smaller plates of armour that were hinged together), hinges, leather straps and chain mail were all used to solve the problem of providing protection and mobility.

*How heavy do you think it was?* Between 18-27 kg – needs to spread the weight evenly so that it doesn't seem too heavy.

Recap on all the people who have been involved in the production:

Miners, woodmen, cart driver, apprentice armourer, master armourer, leather worker, charcoal burner, etc.

*You have your made to measure suit of armour. What would you need underneath?* Armour would hurt the wearer without padded clothing – arming doublet underneath – made of a double thickness of leather stuffed with boiled wool. Also, acted as a shock absorber. Underneath helmet – arming cap – same idea.

*Now we have talked about production, how much do you think it would cost?* Very expensive. Discuss why – costly materials, took a long time to make and many people involved in production – all of them needed to be paid a little bit.

*Did everyone have a suit of armour?*

Only the rich people had armour. Status symbol as well as protective. Look at decoration and enhancement of suits of armour.

*When would you need your armour?*

Draw up a situation for the children, such as:

You are a Catholic landowner in Cornwall. Henry VIII is married to Catherine of Aragon and also a Catholic. He has one daughter, Mary, whose portrait we have already seen. But Henry was very worried about not having a son. Also, he has met and fallen in love with Anne Boleyn, who is now pregnant. Henry has the chance of a male heir and he wants to divorce Katherine. The Pope won't let him. So Henry makes himself head of the church in England.

You are not happy with this – what can you do? Can't vote Henry out. How can you get rid of Henry? Decide to fight the King – raise an army. Make the tenants who work your land support you. You have a suit of armour, they don't.

### **Extension Idea for *Power and Protection*. Moving Parts**

An activity to explore how the design of armour was influenced by the way the body moves.

Approximate timing: 5 – 10 minutes

Ask the children to go and look at the armour in the gallery and to find as many ways as they can that armour is made to allow movement.

There are several different solutions.

## Extension Idea for *Power and Protection*.

### Design your own Suit of Armour

An activity to design a suit of armour.

Approximate timing: 10 - 15 minutes

Encourage the children to use all the information that they have gathered about armour. Using the armour in the gallery, ask them to design their own perfect suit of armour. They can use pieces of armour in any combination - a helmet from one, a breast plate from another - they will need to think about protection, mobility, weight and status.

## Resources for the Tudors

The following 'Into Action' sheets are available from the Education Department

Queen for Nine Days

Rich and Noble

Copy Cat

Two Lovely Ladies

Read on

Farmer Friar

Painted Prayers

Arms and Armour

Protect and Survive 1

Protect and Survive 2

Protect and Survive 3

The following Fact Sheets are available from the Education Department

Hans Eworth: Lady Jane Grey

Anon: Elizabeth Vernon

Armour

Manuscripts

Miniatures

Further information about many exhibits is available on our new website Pharos -

[www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/pharos](http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/pharos)