NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

CENTURY of CHANGE

CENTURYOFCHANGE.ORG

SESSION NOTES

Miner2Major
The Real Sherwood Forest

Made possible with
Heritage Fund

Century of Change Day - Natural Environment

We suggest you complete Activity 1 as an introduction to this theme and then choose from across the remaining activities to further enhance learning around the Natural Environment of Sherwood Forest.

Background Notes for this theme provide a useful underpinning for the delivery of these activities. Background Notes are designed for teachers, but if you are working with Y6 they might provide a useful activity stimulus in themselves.

1 Activity 1. Ancient Sherwood Forest

Excite. An introduction. ***Ancient Sherwood Forest through poetry***
Communicate! Mapping the changes. ***How has Sherwood Forest changed over time?***

2 Activity 2. The Rufford Park Poachers

Excite! Watch the Ballad of Rufford Park. Share the story of the Rufford Park poachers. ***Meet the Rufford Park Poachers***
Explore and uncover. Explore the different interests and levels of power at play in this story. Who is in the right? Who has the power? What does justice look like? ***Judge and jury***
Create a ballad for modern times about issues important to Sherwood Forest. ***A ballad for our times.***

3 Activity 3. Making a difference. An impassioned plea from Sherwood Forest Trust

Excite! ***What are the challenges facing Sherwood Forest and the charities managing the grassland, heathland and woodland.***
How might they overcome these?
How might children help?
What is the key message that SFT would like people to take away?

1 ACTIVITY 1. ANCIENT SHERWOOD FOREST

Excite! An introduction.

Ancient Sherwood Forest through poetry

Today children will explore the Natural Environment in and around the Sherwood Forest area.

A great way to start this session is to use Sherwood Forest Trust's video Sherwood Forest Trust

Ancient Sherwood Forest by Ian Major and Tom Dennis
https://vimeo.com/457723396

Today children will explore enquiry questions:

- What is a forest?
- What is a forest for?
- How has Sherwood Forest changed over time and why?
- What was it like to live or work in the Sherwood Forest area through the Century of Change?

Invite children to use the Activity Mat to explore what they know about Sherwood Forest.

Resources

Ancient Sherwood Forest
https://vimeo.com/457723396

Activity Mat

Communicate. Mapping the changes.

How has Sherwood Forest changed over time?

Use the maps from Historic England. Look at the oldest and most recent maps. How has the landscape changed?

Look at maps in between, can children identify when major changes have taken place that might have affected the natural environment.
Focus on:

- New villages
- Industrialisation through coal mines
- Transport links.

How has the forest changed?

Using the Background Notes, create a timeline for Sherwood Forest.

What are the key events in the Forest's history? How might these events have impacted the people living in and around Sherwood Forest. Think about different groups of people. Who would benefit? Who would be badly affected by these changes?

Resources

Map Packs

Create

Watch the video of Ancient Sherwood Forest again.

This is a rousing call to action.

Invite the children to create a poem in a similar style to Ancient Sherwood Forest. How might children use language to encourage local people to visit, support and protect Sherwood Forest's natural resources?

Resources

Explainer video
https://vimeo.com/454671152

Share your poems

What are the key themes that emerge from the poems?

How can we find out what we can best do to support Sherwood Forest's woodlands, heathlands and grasslands?

Submit your poems to the Century of Change website. We'd love to share them.

Ancient Sherwood Forest by Ian Major and Tom Dennis

Ancient Sherwood Forest. Know it? You might…
But it's more than one wood where Mr Hood will put all wrongs to right.

Our landscape is a natural wonder, cloaked in millennia of mystery
But beneath our feet lies the setting of great, epic history

Pick up a pebble on heathland and get transported back in time.
Meet with the kings and rebels. Their tales are yours and mine.

If our trees could tell a tale, the words they would've spoke
Would've been so much more major than our great trees of oak.

The spirit of this forest endures all man's machines
Yet, silently it screams.

But now we see the future our lives and livelihoods
Times changing fast as we learn from the past As Outlaws said we would.

So come on this journey, discover great history.
Or it's up to you, you can keep it as a mystery.

Resources

2 Activity 2. Rufford Park Poachers

Explore/create.

Meet the Rufford Park Poachers

Sherwood Forest has always been the subject of conflicting interests. The story of the Rufford Park poachers at the very start of the Century of Change provides a perfect example of the different interests at play.
Listen to a famous folk song that's known all over the world. It was written by Joseph Taylor, who was a young boy when this piece of history really happened. It's called the Rufford Park Poachers: www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mkyA92XuTg

What do the children think this song is about?

The song tells the story of a fight in Victorian times that took place along the road from Mansfield to Bilsthorpe, in Sherwood Forest. It was a struggle between a gang of 'would be' poachers - 30 to 40 poor men from Mansfield - and the 10 gamekeepers who worked for Lord John Lumley-Savile, the wealthy man who owned Rufford Abbey and its park.

Tell the story of the Rufford Park poachers. Use the Background Notes or Rufford Park Poachers by Sam Millard.

Make sure the children understand what happened in Rufford Park.
The key points are around the roles of:

The starving framework knitters trying to get food for their families.

Lord John Lumley-Savile who had closed off any common land at a time when the local community was facing huge hardship.

Gamekeepers, who lived alongside the would-be poachers but who were paid by Lord Savile to keep them off his land.

Resources

www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mkyA92XuTg

Transcript provided

Rufford Park Poachers by Sam Millard

Judge and jury

Invite children to draw an outline of each of the groups taking part in the incident, not just the men involved in the fight but families as well.

Draw a silhouette of each of the people involved.

Invite children to research and write words outside the silhouette to describe what these people look liked on the outside.

How might they feel on the inside?
Write the words inside the silhouette.

Invite the children to choose which group they would like to be in

- Lord John Lumley-Savile and his rich family (could be represented by all wearing a paper crown - the Ducal Coronet.)

Resources

Paper, pens, crayons, computers, iPads

- Lord Savile's Gamekeepers and families (flat caps, country clothes)
- The poachers - poor men of Mansfield, and their families (wear a bandana neckerchief or a shawl).

When the poachers go to court to be tried for their crime, who is in the right - the poachers or Lord Savile? The gamekeepers have to say they agree with their boss, but inside, what do they really think?

Each group has to work out whose side they are on and why - from the point of view of their group. What do they think should happen to the poachers?

At the time it would have been the Land owners who made and dispensed the law.

End by finding out what really happened. Resource: 'Night Tales: The Incident of the Rufford Park' Poachers' www.eastmidlandshistory.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/emhhissue3.pdf

This is a summary of a booklet by local historian Sam Millard, who also occasionally gives local talks. Sam's book is based on his research into what happened to the Rufford Park Poachers.

Clothes or symbols to suggest each group.

www.eastmidlandshistory.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/emhhissue3.pdf

The Rufford Park Poachers
Sam Millard

Ballads

Sheet music has been provided to these ballads. People have used ballads to remember and share stories for centuries.

Invite children to write their own ballad, telling a tale of something that happened recently, using the melodies of their preferred ballad.

Resources

The handloom weavers lament
The Four Loom Weaver

A buck or doe, believe it so
A pheasant or a hare
Were set on earth for everyone
Quite equally to share
So poacher bold as I unfold
Keep up your gallant heart
And think about those poachers bold
That night in Rufford Park

They say that forty gallant poachers
They were in distress
They'd often been attacked when
Their number, it was less
So poacher bold as I unfold
Keep up your gallant heart
And think about those poachers bold
That night in Rufford Park

Among the gorse to settle scores
Those forty gathered stones
To make a fight for poor men's rights
And break the keepers bones
So poacher bold as I unfold
Keep up your gallant heart
And think about those poachers bold
That night in Rufford Park

The keepers went with flails against
The poachers and their cause
So no man there again would dare
Defy the rich man's laws
So poacher bold as I unfold
Keep up your gallant heart
And think about those poachers bold
That night in Rufford Park

All on the ground with mortal wound
Head keeper Roberts lay
He never will rise up until
The final judgment day
Of all that band who made a stand
To set a net or snare
The four men brought before the court
Were tried for murder there
So poacher bold as I unfold
Keep up your gallant heart
And think about those poachers bold
That night in Rufford Park

The Judge he said,
"For Robert's death
Transported you must be
To serve a term of forty years
In convict slavery"
So poacher bold as I unfold
Keep up your gallant heart
And think about those poachers bold
That night in Rufford Park

A buck or doe, believe it so
A pheasant or a hare
Were set on earth for everyone
Quite equally to share
So poacher bold, your tale is told
Keep up your gallant heart
And think about those poachers bold
That night in Rufford Park

3 Activity 3. Making a difference. An impassioned plea from Sherwood Forest Trust.

Excite!

What are the challenges facing Sherwood Forest?

Several charities work with Miner2Major to protect the natural environment. The explainer video is an empassioned introduction to the work of the Sherwood Forest Trust.
Invite the children to watch the video.
What are the key points?

- What are the challenges Sherwood Forest Trust is facing?
- How might they overcome these?
- What is the key message that Sherwood Forest Trust would like people to take away?

Gather answers. Watch the video again. Is there anything that children have missed? How can the school get involved in protecting the Woodland, Heathland and Grassland?
Sherwood Forest Trust has a tree planting programme and encourages everyone to gather acorns in autumn for the tree planting programme over winter. Other charities carry out litter picks.
There's also a great job of educating the public around challenges faced by the forest.

Invite the children to research the local charities working in the forest.
What sort of projects can they take part in.
Which of the charities might the children like to work with? All have experts who are happy to work with local schools.
How might children invite the experts to work with them?

This video www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwoG_4DqqaA shows why the heathland is important and what can be done to protect it.

The Sherwood Forest Trust works with local schools to raise awareness of the issues facing the natural landscape of Sherwood Forest.

The Greenwood Trust works with schools on a treeplanting scheme as part of the Miner2Major Project. Both are happy to work with local schools.

Resources

Sherwood Forest Trust Explainer Video
https://vimeo.com/454671152

Transcript

RSPB

Greenwood Trust

Groundwork Trust

Sherwood Forest Trust

Rural Community Action

Wildlife Trusts

Moor Pond Woods.

Make a difference

Create artwork to highlight the issues facing Sherwood Forest Trust.

The soil in Sherwood Forest is Bunter Sandstone and it is full of pebbles.

Invite children to paint pebbles with conservation emblems for the forest.

Arrange the pebbles to make an art installation or trail at school.

Send us a photograph of your installation or trail

Resources

Sherwood Forest Trust explainer video transcript

https://vimeo.com/454671152

We are Sherwood Forest Trust, as a new friend call us SFT. SFT is a small local charity; the only organisation dedicated to the ancient landscape of Sherwood Forest. If you live in or visit North Nottinghamshire, you are probably in Sherwood Forest.

Born in 1995 SFT was a pioneer of landscape scale thinking. SFT's work is about connecting nature, history, heritage, legend, tourism and local people. Like Robin Hood SFT is independent. Unlike Robin Hood we fundraise by honest means.

I've been challenged to tell you everything that's important about Sherwood Forest in two minutes. Are you ready? Let's go…

Sherwood Forest was a third the size of modern London. The name Sherwood was first recorded in 958 AD. After the Norman invasion of 1066, Sherwood Forest became a Royal Hunting Forest. King John's palace was an important royal residence. Across 200 years eight Plantagenet kings stayed at the palace. Sherwood Forest was the property of the crown.

Forest was a legal term and was subject to special laws. The laws were harsh and you would lose a hand for stealing wood. You were then outside the law, an outlaw.

Sherwood's habitats are mainly woodland, heathland and grassland. The national nature reserve is the biggest and best place to find ancient Oakland in Europe. An ancient Oak is at least 500 years old. The Sherwood constituency has 2% woodland cover. The Nottingham North constituency has 5% woodland cover. Sherwood constituency has 2020 ancient trees. The Nottingham North constituency has 2 ancient trees. 90% of Sherwood's heathland has gone. Over the last two hundred years the great forests are now just fragments in a modern landscape.

25 years ago, SFT was set up to halt this decline. SFT works in partnership with everyone. SFT brought together organisations to create the purple vision for heathland revival.

Our Guardians of Sherwood scheme empowers local landowners and farmers to drive conservation. Working with the Woodland Trust SFT helped thousands of local school children to connect with nature with the Trees for Schools Project.

With Nottinghamshire County Council Rangers SFT instigated the Major Oak Woodland Festival, showcasing local and traditional woodland crafts. The Discover King John's Palace project with Mercian Archaeology got hundreds of local primary school children to do archaeology and have a lesson from Robin Hood. Our Spirit of Wartime Sherwood Forest is getting local people hands on with World War Two archaeology and collecting their personal history before it's lost forever. Businesses big and small have sponsored our tree planting every winter for over a decade.

Over our first 25 years, SFT has made a difference. But we need to do more. Climate Change is the world's biggest challenge. We are planning to increase the amount of woodland cover, planting tens of thousands of trees, taking action over the next ten years to really make our forest a part of the solution. We want to put Robin Hood the ultimate man of the people back into Robin Hood country. We want to see a major Robin Hood Experience with the economic benefits of responsible tourism.

So unite with this outlaw charity, volunteer joyfully, donate enthusiastically, sponsor heartily, remember our name the Sherwood Forest Trust.