

Educational Approaches and planning a school visit

Studies based on Topholme Abbey provide a wide range of opportunities across the curriculum and at all Key Stages. Its medieval origins, its physical form, its continuing history after the Reformation, its rural setting and natural environment can all be used as a basis for both classroom based and site based activities.

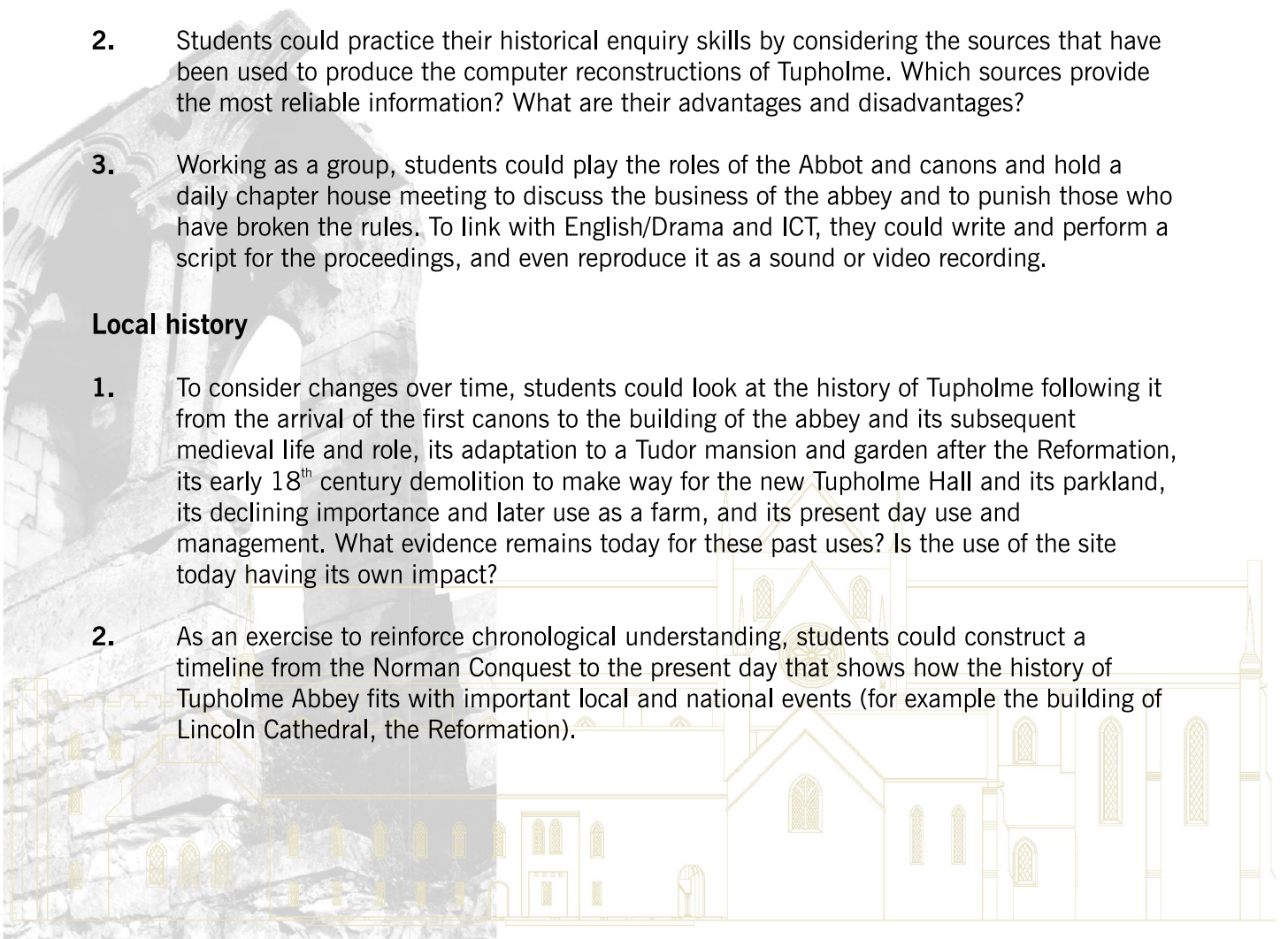
History

At Key Stage 2 the history of Topholme provides a valuable basis for a local history study of changes over time, and its dissolution and post Reformation re-use are particularly relevant to Britain and the wider world in Tudor times. For Key Stage 3 Medieval Realms it is a useful local example of a monastic house upon which studies of life in the period 1066-1500 and of religious architecture can be based. It also lends itself well to an investigation of historical interpretation and enquiry. At all Key Stages it is a valuable means of reinforcing chronological understanding. Some suggested educational approaches might be:

1. Students could carry out a research exercise by locating information about the history and physical form of other monastic sites and comparing them with Topholme. How typical of monastic houses is Topholme? What happened to other monastic houses after the Reformation? Why have the remains of some monasteries survived better than those of Topholme?
2. Students could practice their historical enquiry skills by considering the sources that have been used to produce the computer reconstructions of Topholme. Which sources provide the most reliable information? What are their advantages and disadvantages?
3. Working as a group, students could play the roles of the Abbot and canons and hold a daily chapter house meeting to discuss the business of the abbey and to punish those who have broken the rules. To link with English/Drama and ICT, they could write and perform a script for the proceedings, and even reproduce it as a sound or video recording.

Local history

1. To consider changes over time, students could look at the history of Topholme following it from the arrival of the first canons to the building of the abbey and its subsequent medieval life and role, its adaptation to a Tudor mansion and garden after the Reformation, its early 18th century demolition to make way for the new Topholme Hall and its parkland, its declining importance and later use as a farm, and its present day use and management. What evidence remains today for these past uses? Is the use of the site today having its own impact?
2. As an exercise to reinforce chronological understanding, students could construct a timeline from the Norman Conquest to the present day that shows how the history of Topholme Abbey fits with important local and national events (for example the building of Lincoln Cathedral, the Reformation).



3. Using the refectory wall as a starting point, students could bring together their knowledge of the layout and possible scale of the abbey buildings to pinpoint their approximate locations on the ground. This could be done either by using the earthworks survey as a base or students could use appropriate techniques to record their results and produce their own plans and maps.



English

There are many opportunities for using the history of Topholme to practice speaking and listening skills, and as a basis for a range of creative writing projects:

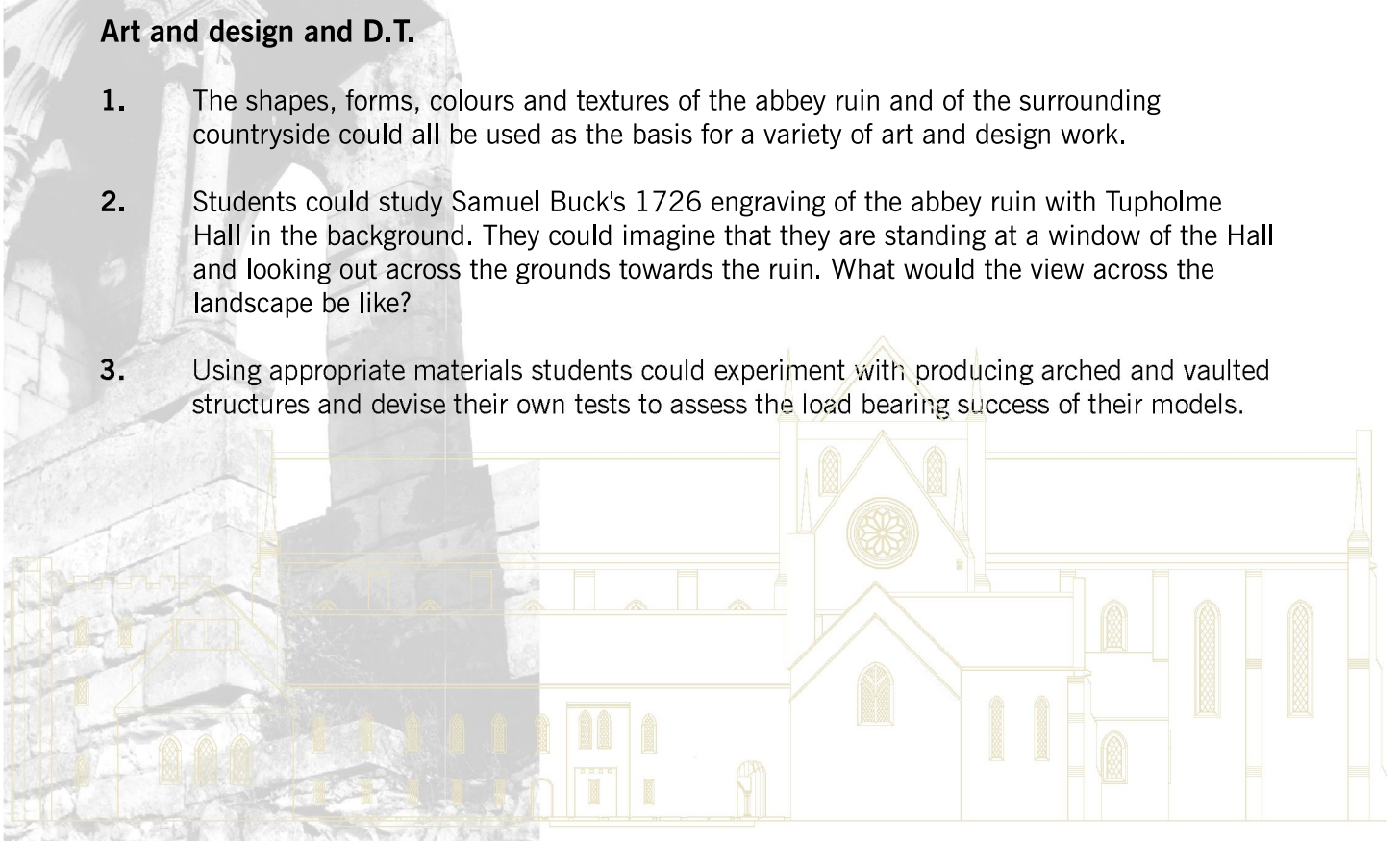
1. Students could imagine that they have just left home to become a canon at Topholme and write a diary about the first week of their new monastic life. What is their new home like? What is their daily routine like? What do they have to eat? How do they feel?
2. Students could imagine that they are a reporter for a local newspaper in 1536. Henry VIII has just announced that he is closing down all the smaller monasteries. They must visit Topholme Abbey to get the reaction of the canons there and interview ordinary people in the nearby villages to get their view. They then have to write a report for the front page of that week's issue.

3. To practice writing for a range of audiences students could design a leaflet to help people coming to Topholme today to prepare for and make the most of their visit. They could include their own photographs, maps and illustrations and information to help people understand the site, but they could also think about different groups of people in society and how the information they need and the way it is presented might differ. This exercise could link with ICT skills, art and design, and also citizenship.

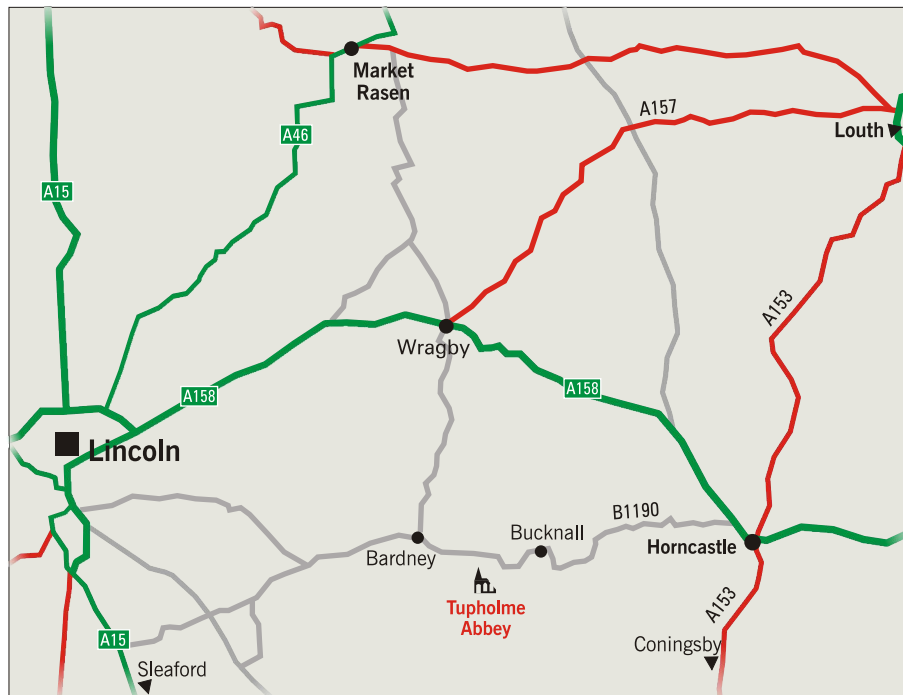


Art and design and D.T.

1. The shapes, forms, colours and textures of the abbey ruin and of the surrounding countryside could all be used as the basis for a variety of art and design work.
2. Students could study Samuel Buck's 1726 engraving of the abbey ruin with Topholme Hall in the background. They could imagine that they are standing at a window of the Hall and looking out across the grounds towards the ruin. What would the view across the landscape be like?
3. Using appropriate materials students could experiment with producing arched and vaulted structures and devise their own tests to assess the load bearing success of their models.



Visiting Tupholme



Location (Insert a Map): Tupholme Abbey is situated about 10 miles (16km) east of Lincoln. It lies just south of the B1190 between Bardney and Bucknall.

Opening hours: The site is open for school visits every day all year round.

Admission: Free

Facilities: Parking is available in the lay-by at the entrance to the site. Please note that there are no toilets at the site but the facilities at Bardney village hall can be made available by prior arrangement. Schools may be invited to make a donation to the village hall for this. Please contact Heritage Lincolnshire for details.

Access: Access is via a grassy track. The site is pasture and there may be sheep grazing. The ground is uneven in places, particularly around the monument itself. Suitable footwear is essential.

Please warn students not to climb on the ruins. They should also be made aware that there are a number of ponds around the site. As at all scheduled sites, metal detecting is not allowed.

Wellingtons and waterproofs may be necessary.

For more information telephone the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire: 01529 461499 or info@lincsheritage.org

