

Information for Teachers

If Walls Could Talk...

The Priestgate Vaults KS2 Session

Under **Peterborough Museum**



The Priestgate Vaults are the historic cellars under Peterborough Museum, revealing 500 years of history from this building and the city.

The cellars have original features, including windows from the Tudor house, the Georgian/Victorian wine cellar, coal cellar and a room that was used as an air raid shelter during World War II. Each of the rooms in the Vaults is related to a different period in the building's history. They have been imaginatively restored to give visitors snap-shot in times. Pupils can further explore the contexts and themes of these historical periods through additional workshops upstairs in the main museum.

As part of a guided tour pupils will explore these rooms and meet characters from the past who will tell their stories, brought to life using new technology and theatrical effects. In each room you will meet a character who would have used this space, brought to life as an apparition from the past... The tour will first start upstairs, in the museum building, where pupils will be introduced to the characters they will meet downstairs in the cellar.



Sir Humphrey Orme
1641
Cavalier & Justice
of the Peace



John Webb
1841
Butler to the city's
Magistrate



Ethel Reynolds
1901
Nurse at the Peterborough
Infirmary



Abigail
1941
Daughter of
the Museum
Caretaker



Upstairs, Downstairs

The class is split in half, so that whilst one group is having a cellar tour, the other half are independently looking around the museum with a Priestgate Vaults trail. This trail complements the cellar tour. Pupils can also further explore the historical periods through additional museum-led workshops/activities upstairs in the main museum.

Please see '**Other information**' for additional activities that complement this local history study.

Sir Humphrey lived in the original house on this site, a grand mansion called Neville Place, parts of which can be seen in the vaults. It had been built around 1536 by his father.

He was a leading local Royalist during the **English Civil War**, captured by **Oliver Cromwell**'s soldiers when they took Peterborough in 1643.

You meet Sir Humphrey in 1641 in his Tudor home.

In 1815 the Orme family left Peterborough and sold their house to Thomas Alderman Cooke.

By 1816 the original Tudor building had been rebuilt as a substantial Georgian townhouse, much like how you see it today. Its owner was the city's magistrate, Thomas Cooke.

John Webb was the butler to Thomas Cooke, responsible for managing the servants in the grandest house in the city. You meet John in 1841 in the original wine cellar as he helps to prepare for a dinner party tonight.

After Thomas Cooke's death, this building became the **Peterborough Infirmary**, the city's first hospital. It was a charitable institution, charging those who could afford it for treatment and providing free care to the poor where it could.

In 1897 a new operating theatre had been built on the site and **Alfred Caleb Taylor** had built the Infirmary's first x-ray machine in a room under the main staircase – the first x-ray to have been built outside of London.

Elsewhere and nationally, Edith Cavell was training to be a nurse and the use of carbolic acid as an antiseptic was now common practice.

Ethel Reynolds was working long shifts as a nurse inside this building. She worked under the guidance of Matron King at a time of great advancement in medical practice.

You meet Nurse Reynolds in 1901 in the coal cellar as she collects fuel for the fires upstairs.

After **WWI** the Infirmary outgrew the building, leading to the construction of a new hospital (Peterborough District Hospital). This was completed in 1928.

The former Infirmary building was acquired by Percy Malcolm Stewart, Chair of the London Brick Company, who donated it to the Natural History, Scientific and Archaeological Society. It was opened as a museum in 1931, with the art gallery added in 1939.

After **WWII** in 1947 it took its modern title of the Peterborough Museum Society.

From 1937 – 1950, a Mr Winter was the Museum Caretaker, living in a flat on the top floor of the Museum.

Abigail Winter is the fictional daughter of the Museum Caretaker.

You will meet Abigail in the original air raid shelter in 1941 as she too takes cover from the heavy bombing inflicted on the local area. Pupils will experience the sights, sounds and even the shakes of an air raid.

National Curriculum links: History, English.

Learning objectives

By participating in this 'Upstairs, Downstairs' school session, pupils will;

- study an aspect of history and a site dating from a period beyond 1066 that is significant in the locality.
- develop a chronologically secure knowledge and understanding of British, local and world history.
- understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.
- gain historical perspective – understanding the connections between local, regional, national and international history – finding out what was happening here and elsewhere at certain snap-shots in time.



- consider and evaluate different viewpoints given by the characters.
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas about life in the past.
- make inferences based on evidence.

Other information:

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| Duration: | Each cellar tour is 30 minutes. Please allow extra time for additional groups and activities. |
| Cost per group | £ 45 |
| Maximum group size: | 15 pupils. The museum site can accommodate up to 2 classes with an additional activity. See below. |
| Recommended ratio: | Minimum 1 adult to 10 students. |
| Booking information: | To book, please contact us by phone or email. When the activities and date are agreed, a booking form and risk assessment is emailed to you. To confirm the visit we ask that you complete the booking form and email it back to us. |
| A note about behaviour: | Members of the school staff have overall responsibility for the behaviour of their pupils and we expect you to support Museum staff with this where necessary. As you know, pupils benefit significantly when school staff and adults also get involved in the activities so please join in where appropriate. |
| Classroom resource: | A Teachers' Resource Pack that compliments this session and is designed to support classroom work is available to download from our website: vivacity-peterborough.com/information-for-schools/learning/schools/ . |
| Teacher pre-visit: | For health and safety, teachers are required to come for a pre-visit. |
| Additional activities: | <p>You can include one or more of the following activities to extend your stay to a full day or if you are coming with a second class. Please contact us for more information. Extra charges are applicable to museum and guide-led activities.</p> <p>150 Million Years in an Hour The story of Peterborough's rich and colourful past is brought alive with a chronological journey from 150 million years ago to the modern day with a range of objects to analyse and identify.</p> <p>Tudor: Monks, Monarchy & Medicine Enjoy a dual-site visit with the Cathedral. Monks and Monarchs are covered at the Cathedral and Medicine is covered at the Museum. Please contact us for further information.</p> <p>Victorian: Meet Matron King Venture upstairs to the original operating theatre and meet Nurse Reynold's boss – Matron King and continue the Victorian Peterborough Infirmary story. Discover how different Victorian illnesses were treated at that time – be careful, she may need some volunteers to demonstrate on!</p> <p>WWII: Meet Mr Winter Mr Winter, the Museum's caretaker was also a volunteer in the Home Guard. Meet Abigail's father and discover his role on the night of May 10th 1941. Handle WWII artefacts and take part in drill – would you join the Home Guard?</p> <p>Historical City Tour Children will discover stories behind the buildings in a guided tour of the city centre as they literally retrace the footsteps of past inhabitants.</p> |

