

Who were the first people to live in Coventry?

Art and History

What can art tell us about historical events? Analyse this painting created in 1890 by Jules Lefebvre. Use the questions below to guide you.

What time period do you think this painting was set in?

Who is in the painting?

What can you infer about the people based on their belongings?

Source reliability. How far can we trust that the painting is an accurate depiction of whatever event took place?



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Art and History - Answers

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Children may have commented on the cobbled streets, wooden homes and castle walls in the background - this might imply that it is a medieval town or city.

Who is in the painting?

Children may mention the lady on the horse, the servant or holy woman on foot or the white doves flying alongside the woman.

What can you infer about the people based on their belongings?

Children may pick up on the robes situated next to the woman. The robes are bright and colourful compared to those of the servant pulling the horse. This might imply she is rich or important. The white horse is also clean and looks symbolic.

Source reliability. How far can we trust that the painting is an accurate depiction of whatever event took place?

Paintings, much like photographs, can warp the truth of an event that took place. The artist may have added features to emphasise a certain point - such as the white doves being added as a symbol of purity and innocence (it would be an unusual sight for actual doves to fly through the streets following a subject).

Children should be taught that whilst we can use historical paintings to learn more about an event, it is important to consider what bias has been applied in order for the artist to tell their own story of the moment. The artist may have added or taken away elements to tell their own narrative.

Cross referencing art with first hand depictions, poetry, stories or other sources will help the audience gain more of an understanding of the time, place or event.



The Tale of Lady Godiva



The story of Lady Godiva in Coventry is a legendary tale that has been passed down through the centuries. The most famous version of the story is set in the 11th-century.

According to the legend, Lady Godiva was a compassionate and charitable woman who was troubled by the heavy taxes imposed by her husband, Earl Leofric, on the people of Coventry. In response to the pleas of the citizens, Lady Godiva repeatedly urged her husband to reduce their taxes, but he refused.

Growing tired of her requests, the Earl eventually agreed to grant her wish on one condition... she rode on a horse through the town naked!

True to her word, Lady Godiva mounted her horse and rode through the town, covered only by her long hair. To protect her modesty, she requested the townspeople to stay indoors and not look out of their windows. Grateful for her sacrifice on their behalf, they honoured her request.

The only person who disobeyed the decree was a man named Tom, who later became known as "Peeping Tom." Unable to resist the temptation, he peeked out of his window to see Lady Godiva. Legend has it that he was struck blind as punishment for his disobedience.



Find the 'Peeping Tom!'

If you stand in Coventry's shopping district and look up at the bridge going across Hertford Street, you might spot a Peeping Tom looking down at you!

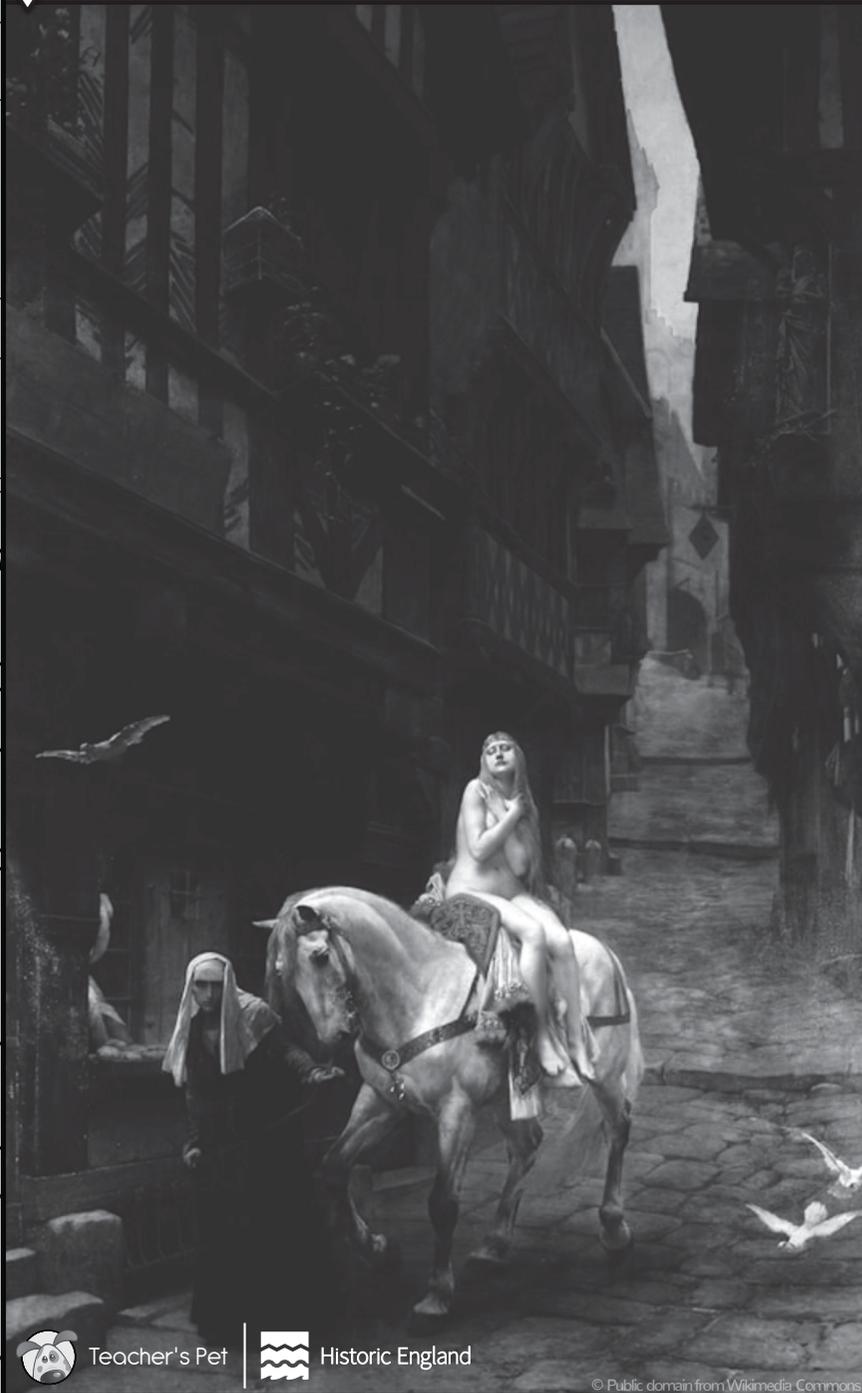
Impressed by Lady Godiva's courage and touched by her commitment to the well-being of the people, Earl Leofric fulfilled his promise and reduced the taxes on Coventry.

The historical accuracy of the tale is debated. One example of this could be the reference to Lady Godiva being naked, with some historians believing that it meant naked of royal robes rather than entirely naked. Others believe the event never took place. Regardless, Lady Godiva's legend has endured as a timeless example of courage and compassion, helping to establish her as an icon of the city of Coventry.

*What do you think?
Is the story fact or fiction?*



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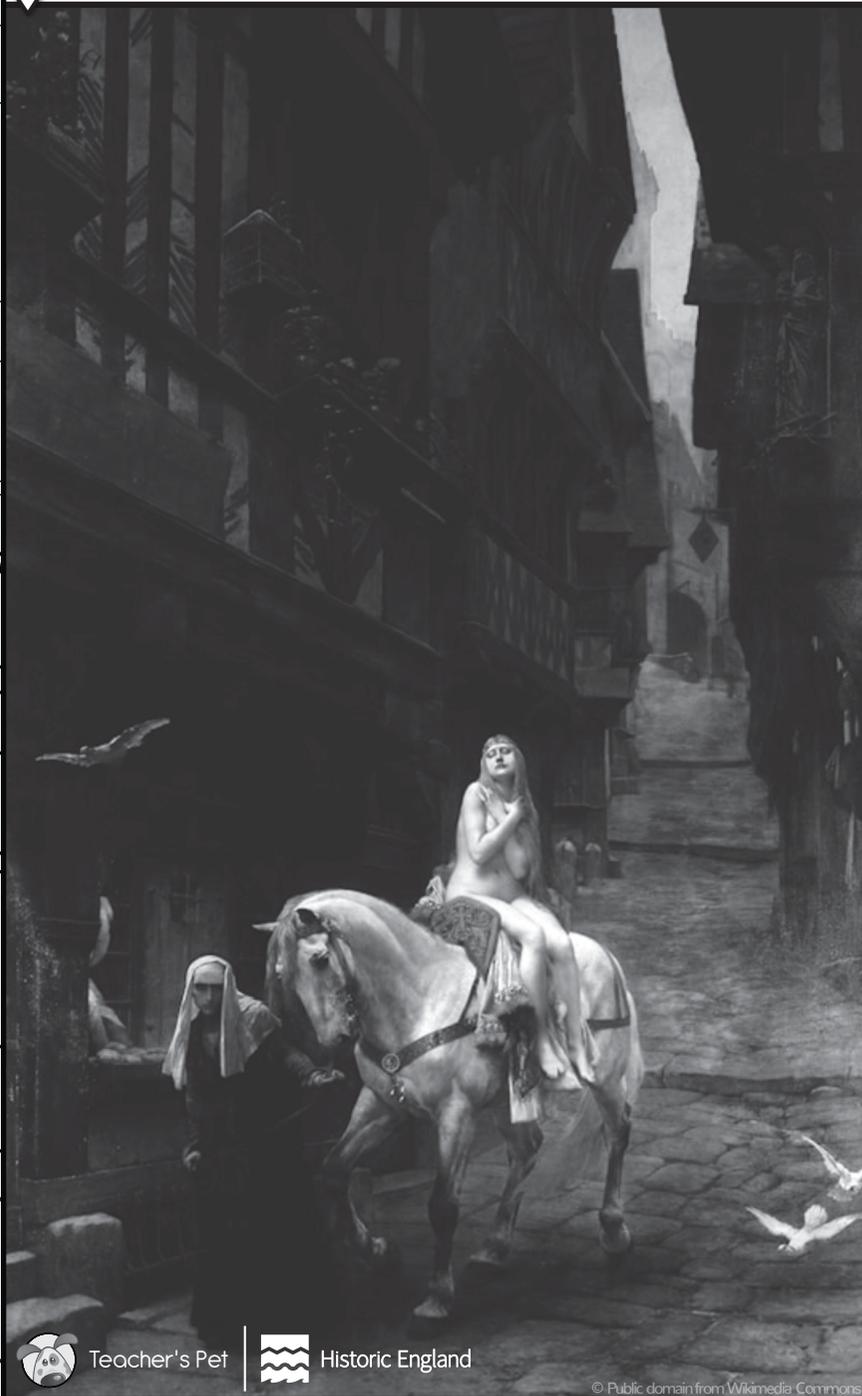
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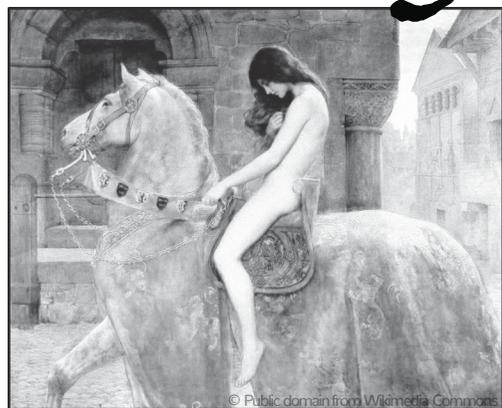
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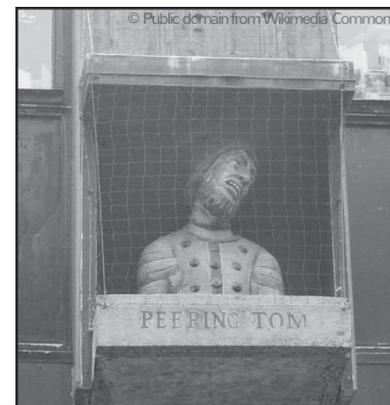
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Local History

Historic England and Teacher's Pet have come together to bring you a collection of free resources that you can use in your local history teaching.



Historic England



Teacher's Pet

Who are Teacher's Pet?

Teacher's Pet have been providing downloadable and playable educational content to early years and primary school teachers for over 14 years. We cover all areas of the curriculum and use a team of in-house teachers and designers to create engaging and memorable concepts, that the children will love.

Why local history?

At [Teacher's Pet](#) we want to empower primary school teachers by giving them the tools they need to deliver inspiring and thoughtful lessons about the local area and its history. We believe local history teaching has such an important part to play in a child's wellbeing – helping to give children a sense of pride in where they live.

Our Local History project is designed to provide teachers across the UK with everything they need to successfully carry out a full scheme of teaching about their local area, through key enquiry questions and source led activities.

Working with [Historic England](#) gives us access to archived maps and photos for resources and information from knowledgeable local historians, as well helping us to provide the content to you free of charge.

For more information about our Local History project or to find out more about Teacher's Pet Classroom Resources, please visit our website.