

## Heritage Schools Case Study

### 'Window on the World': Maps workshop at the National Waterways Museum

*An educational workshop enabling children to realise the historical importance of a museum locality through the creation of a large scale map.*

**Where:** The National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port

**Who:** Key Stage 2 Students

The National Waterways Museum, based at Ellesmere Port, is part of the Canal & River Trust. It was once at the heart of one of the largest inland waterway dock systems in the UK, with goods and cargo being transferred from sea-going vessels to narrow boats and barges; and vice versa. In 2015 the National Waterways Museum received funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund to pursue an exciting project highlighting this "Window on the World". This project tells the story of the site's history and importance in transferring raw materials to the industrial heartlands of Birmingham and Manchester; and finished products around the world.

One element of the project was the design of a new educational workshop by "Canal & River Explorers"; the education team of the Trust. This workshop would deliver the key messages of the project to school visitors. The main objective was to illustrate the various bodies of water around the museum and describe the important routes necessary for shipping goods worldwide.

With support from Historic England's Heritage Schools Programme, the workshop was facilitated using the Museum's own resources, as well as aerial photographs of the area from Britain From Above. Research into the locality was carried out and an artist was commissioned to make a small map of the area in felt.

During the workshop the children took a tour of the site and identified landmarks they would find on a map. They then carried out research within the museum's archives, looking at old maps and aerial photos and discussing landmarks that were and were not present. Finally, the children used their knowledge of the area to physically compile a large map of the locality using various pre-cut shapes, sizes and colours of felt. They worked in teams and as a whole class produced a map 4m x 4m which could be viewed and photographed from above.



#### Intended Outcomes:

- Children receiving the 'Maps' workshop understand the importance of Ellesmere Port and its locality.
- Children appreciate that goods could be transported anywhere around the world from this location.
- Children use knowledge acquired in the workshop to produce their own creative map of the area.

#### What we did:

- Children took a tour of the site and identified landmarks they would find on a map.
- The children carried out research within the museum's archives, looking at old maps and aerial photos, discussing landmarks that were and were not present.
- The children used their knowledge of the area to physically compile a large map of the locality using various pre-cut shapes, sizes and colours of felt. They worked in teams and as a whole class produced a map 4m x 4m which can be viewed and photographed from above.

#### Challenges:

- Children were very keen to observe their work from a height. Future sessions will limit the number of children climbing the stairs at any time.
- Identifying the industries in the locality on a historic map was too easy when matching labels. Future participants will find the answers to questions using the map as a resource rather than simply matching.
- Some elements of the creative map were easier to construct than others. Activities will be provided in future for groups that finish early.

#### Successes:

*"The concept of children creating a visual map out of material that was large enough for them to walk through and photograph from above worked really well. The children loved observing their work from above and the workshop has proved to be a fantastic new addition to the learning programme."* Lucinda Lewis. National Waterways Museum

- Teachers have commented upon the accessibility for all. Every pupil regardless of ability is able to achieve.
- Pupils are able to physically walk through the map and describe the waterways and importance of this locality.
- Each map is a creative representation of the area unique to each class.

#### Resources and web links:

- The support of Historic England's Heritage Schools Programme was really appreciated in putting this workshop together. [www.historicengland.org.uk/heritageschools](http://www.historicengland.org.uk/heritageschools)
- Aerial photographs were purchased from Britain from Above [http://sales.britainfromabove.org.uk/shop/image\\_sales/shop\\_download.php](http://sales.britainfromabove.org.uk/shop/image_sales/shop_download.php)
- Our large archival maps were printed at Cheshire Record Office - [RecordOffice@cheshiresharedservices.gov.uk](mailto:RecordOffice@cheshiresharedservices.gov.uk)

#### Next steps/extension activities:

- Extension activities within the Archives will be created for those who finish quickly.
- Follow up activities within the galleries of the National Waterways Museum will be recommended to teachers.
- The new 'Maps' workshop is now available for visiting school groups to book. <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/museums-and-attractions/national-waterways-museum/learning>