

Local History Notes:

Teaching Objective:

To learn what life was like in Somerset 500 years ago, in the days before Glastonbury Abbey was shut down

Introductory lesson:

Use cards from medieval crafts pack to discuss what life was like in pre industrialisation period.

Method: Small group work, looking at the pictures taken from contemporary paintings of the period, showing craftspeople at work.

Key Questions to work to: (Verbal response in plenary)

What do you think the people in this picture are doing?

What tools are they using?

Is this a job that we would see people doing today?

Would we use different tools to do this sort of work?

Are there any people alive today who still know how to work in the old fashioned ways?

Topics for discussion in class:

What work could people do?

Very few people lived in big towns during the Middle Ages. Whatever skilled trade people could do, they also had to be able to grow their own food if they lived in the countryside. On market days people would all come to the nearest small town to sell what they had made or spare food they had grown, to buy things from other people or perhaps to swap what they had made or grown for something they needed which other people had made/grown. So if you knew how to make something that other people didn't know how to do, you could become rich. There were no big shops for people to look round and choose what they would buy and very few people had more than a tiny bit of money to spend.

Small group activity:

Make a list of 10 jobs that you think could only be done in the 21st century:

for example - Be a pilot of a Jumbo Jet

On the other side of the paper make a list of 10 jobs that you think people have always needed to do:

for example - Milk the cows

Many Tudor people were skilled in crafts to make the things they needed for their homes and families. They traded what they made between each other.

In medieval times you worked where you lived. Most people never travelled more than 20 miles from where they were born for the whole of their lives. Different areas were known for different trades. If you lived in an area surrounded by withies or willows, then that is the material that you would have worked with most often.

Who did you work for?

Who you worked for depended on who owned the land you lived on. If you lived on Glastonbury Abbey estates, then you paid your rent to the abbey and also paid a tithe (one tenth of your crop) to the abbey. If you lived on a manor belonging to a lord, then you paid your tithe and work dues to him. You would have a small patch of land to grow your own crops and would tend this after you had finished your work day, or your wife (if she didn't have work of her own) and children would work this for you.

Small group activity:

Talk about what happens in your own family.

How many families still grow their own food?

Does your dad/mum work for a 'boss' or for themselves?

Does your mum/dad walk to get to work?

What is your surname?

If you are a Baker, Wright, Carpenter, Glover, Fuller or Smith, then that name may tell you what sort of work your ancestors did. It is obvious what Baker, Carpenter and Smith did, but perhaps not so apparent that a Fuller cleaned the fleeces and Wrights were once makers of wheels.

Smith not only covered the work of Blacksmiths, but also Silversmiths. This is where Silver Street in Glastonbury gets its name, as the silversmiths had their workshops against the exterior abbey wall, living above the workshop.

What would your working day be like?

For a man:

If you were a farm labourer then you would be expected to begin your day extremely early. You would have your team of oxen harnessed and in the field ready to start work at dawn. The work day wouldn't finish until dusk, which meant you would work until at least 8.00 pm each evening but you were allowed up to two hours each day for breakfast, dinner and taking a drink.

For a woman:

Being a servant was one of the jobs women were allowed to do, besides weaving and sewing.

For children:

A young boy would often be indentured to a master as an apprentice. Their pay and duties were in their contract and they often were apprenticed for a period of up to ten years. Many apprentices didn't receive a wage but only food and lodging or 'bed and board'. An apprentice wasn't even allowed to marry without the permission of his master.

Follow up work:

How does this compare to your school day? Make a daily timetable for your day and a timetable for the day of a farm labourer and see which bits are the same

How did work change?

NB This may be a sensitive area in the current climate, but shows that people's employment changes throughout history. Today you are able to support your family through hard work and qualifications. In Tudor times you need to win the patronage of a wealthy person to get ahead.

Trades and work have changed through time. Often work performed is no longer needed and this causes change or unemployment. Sheep were a valuable commodity at this time as the demand for wool was very high. Many farmers stopped growing crops and started keeping sheep. This meant there was less work for people. It takes fewer people to tend sheep than it does to plough, sow, and harvest crops, and if fewer crops are being grown then there is

less food available. The difference today is that we have a system of social welfare to prevent death by starvation.

What happened if you were sick?

You had to give the owner of the estate a certain number of work days each week. Being too sick to work wasn't a good idea as you were only allowed to offer someone else to take your place for two or three days each year. After that you would lose your place and that meant you would lose your home too. There is no benefit system in place, so without work and somewhere to live the chances are that you will starve. The abbey would feed the very poor by 'doling' out crusts of bread upon which their pottage had been served.

Follow up research: Could be homework

Do you know anyone who is too ill to be able to go out to work?
What does the government do to help people who cannot work?

Supplementary activities for Tools of the Trades project:

How people worked in medieval times.

1. Which of the items in this collection belong in the medieval world and which belong in the modern world? Split these things into 2 lists; one for Modern and one for Medieval.

Electricity	sheep's wool	nylon thread
Knives	quern	machinery
Reeds and willow	stool	swivel chair
Concrete	shave horse	plastic bags
Plastic	pole lathe	pedal power
Flour	butter	cream
Grain	potatoes	tomatoes

Are there any things that might belong in more than one time? Can you add 3 more things to each list that belong in the past or the present?

2. Choose one of the things you saw being demonstrated and write about what had to be done: Choose from:

Making bread, butter and soft cheese;
Making a one legged stool
Making woollen thread from sheep fleeces
Making a braid with the inkle loom or the disc braid
Making a basket from willow

3. Imagine you are talking to a child of your age from the past, and tell him/her about your favourite toy and how you play with it. Do you think they will get confused about things like electricity and computers?
4. Find out about the jobs that your family do in the modern world. Can you compare it to the way things worked in the medieval world? Which world would you like best to live in?

Discussion on crafts and skills in 1500

This activity is based on a picture resource pack produced by The British Library for KS3 Medieval Realms, entitled: "Medieval Crafts, men and women at work", ISBN 07123 0428 2. It contains a set of 15 source cards and a large A2 poster showing medieval craftsmen at work building the Tower of Babel. It also contains student notes and teachers' notes on ways of using the resources.

- Use the poster as the initial stimulus material for each class group. It can be shown, using the interactive white board, without any real introduction:

"I'd like to ask you to work with your partner and just take a few minutes to note down anything that strikes you about the picture I am going to show you. It may be questions you would like to know the answer to, it may be things you have noticed that seem strange to you. I would like to know if any of it brings to mind what you have already discussed in your history lessons, or in any other subject you have studied for that matter."

Give pupils about 10 minutes to write their ideas down. Lower ability groups can offer their observations verbally to an adult who scribes their responses.

Then discuss how this picture relates to the topic of looking at working patterns in the 1500's. The picture shows a lord and his nobles discussing the project as well as a variety of craftsmen and artisans building a rather ecclesiastical tower. At the top, angels are trying to destroy the tower, and the story of the Tower of Babel may need to be explained before students can concentrate on the historic comparisons, rather than the story.

- The extension work is for pupils to look, in pairs, at the 15 source cards to see if they could identify what work was taking place and whether such a job would have parallels in today's society. Using the sheet of structured questions to guide their ideas proved very helpful.

Questions to help with activity cards:

Name:

Picture number:

This picture shows people in Tudor Times doing some work.

What do you think they might be doing?

Are they using any special tools or equipment?

Do you think people in our time do this sort of work?

Would be use different tools to do this nowadays?

Think of some questions you could ask about this picture:

Teacher stimulus questions

When you come to lead the plenary session after the small group discussions of the pictures from the British Library pack, here are some questions to help you lead the discussion.

Holding up the different cards in turn:

- Are the people here doing something that we might be doing today? Eg.

YES

Cooking –	but not on an open fire
Painting pictures –	no changes
Washing linen –	we have washing machines
Metal smelting –	we would have a factory for producing

this

NO

Making armour – but people still work on weapons and tanks
etc

- What can you tell from the pictures about how the world has changed since Tudor times?

We can make things using fewer people but we have more complicated machines to help us. We often make things in factories, with our machines which can be safer than doing things at home or in the village (see picture of blacksmiths covered in burns) Most of our work takes place inside buildings whereas many of the pictures show working outside (eg laundry)

- Can you think of jobs that are still done as they used to be done (eg painting)

Make a list of some of the things that we need to make for our modern lives.

Make a list of the things a Tudor person would need

Think about what has changed or developed, to make these lifestyles so different.

Research Activity: can you find out what some of these people did?
List of Trades and occupations in the medieval world

Alabastermen, antler-workers, arkwrights, armourers,

Barkers, battours, bedemakers, belyeters, blacksmiths, bladesmiths, bone-workers, botellers, bowyers, braisiers, brewers, bricklayers, brick-makers, buckle-makers, burnishers, butchers

Carpenters, cartwrights, carvers, challoners, clock-makers, clothiers, cobblers, cofferers, combmakers, coopers, coppersmiths, cordwianers, corvesers, crossbow makers, curriers, cutlers

Drapers, dyers, Embroiderers, enamellers, engineers, engravers

Farriers, fellmongers, finers, fletchers, founders, fullers, furbours, fusters

Gilders, glass-makers, glaziers, glass-painters, glovers, gold-beaters, goldsmiths, gunmakers

Hafters, harness makers, helmet-makers, horners,

Illuminators, ironmongers, Jewellers, joiners,

Latteners, leather-dressers, leather-sellers, linen-drapers, lockyers, lorimers

Marblers, masons, mazerers, merchants, millwrights, miners, moneyers, mould-makers, metal workers

Nailmakers, needleworkers

Painters, paternosterers, pattenmakers, pavoiurs, pewterers, pinners, plumers, potters, pouchmakers, pursers

Saddlers, sawyers, sculptors, sheathmakers, skinners, smiths, spanglers, spoon-makers, spurriers, stone industries

Tailors, tanners, tapiters, tawyers and whit-tawyers, tillers, tinnerns, turners, textile industries,

Waranciers, weavers, wheelwrights, wiredrawers, wrights, woodworkers