

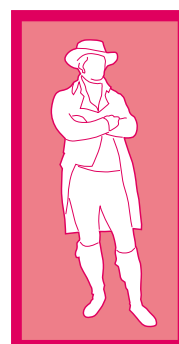
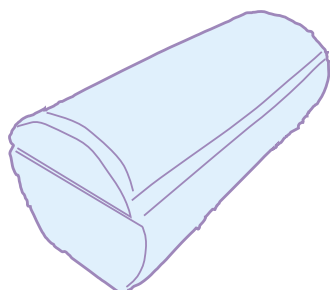
Burns Cottage and Museum: Virtual Visit Lessons

Overview

In this lesson pupils are introduced to the 18th century lifestyle of the Burnes family on their smallholding – accommodation, daily life, farming, education etc. [Note: Robert changed the spelling of his surname (Burnes) many years later to Burns since Ayrshire people did not pronounce the 'e' anyway!]

Background Information

- > William Burnes, Robert's father, built this cottage himself using clay and rubble. Its roof is made from bundles of straw tied together. This is called a thatch.
- > William and his wife Agnes lived here and Robert, one of seven children, was born here on 25th January, 1759.
- > The rooms in the house were multi-purpose. The privy or toilet would be outside; sleeping would take place in box beds in the kitchen near the fire; cooking and eating would take place in the kitchen around the range (a fire with cooking utensils over and around it); storytelling, bible reading and singing would take place in the family room and would be the main entertainment; animals would be kept in a room in the house called a byre to save on space – their heat would help keep the house warm
- > Robert's father ran his smallholding here. A smallholding is an agricultural holding smaller than a farm. Robert's father would tend animals and grow vegetables and other crops and his wife would produce cheese to sell at the local market in Ayr. This would earn them the money they needed to look after their family.
- > The farming technology we have today had not yet been invented, so farming had to be done by hand which was hard, backbreaking work.
- > Food production was basic – butter churning, cheese making, flour grinding, vegetable, cereal and fruit growing, cattle / sheep / pig raising etc. Food would be homegrown or bought at local markets and would be cooked on the range. Any food produced on the farm would be taken to a market in the town of Ayr or collected by the landowner as rent
- > In Burns' time education was not compulsory so William Burnes and 4 of his neighbours paid for a tutor, John Murdoch, to educate their children, such was the importance they placed upon it.
- > Education was very basic – reading, writing and arithmetic
- > By the time Robert left this cottage he had developed a great love of reading and music and had a creative imagination.
- > As his family grew, William looked for a larger property to support his family and in 1766 (when Robert was 7 years old) they moved to a farm nearby called Mount Oliphant



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Curricular Links

5-14 Environmental Studies (Levels C / D):
People in the Past – People, events and societies of significance from the past
Change, continuity, cause and effect
Time and historical sequence
Nature of historical evidence

Learning outcomes

Pupils will recognise that:

- > Buildings on a 18th century smallholding were simple, built from easily accessed materials and were often shared by animals and people.
- > Rooms were multi purpose and lacked the comfort and conveniences we have today
- > Farming methods, food production and distribution of goods was basic
- > Education was not compulsory

Skills

- > Plan a sequence of activities for tackling an enquiry
- > Select known enquiry methods / equipment to access, select and record information
- > Select and record specific information from a variety of sources
- > Select techniques to process / classify information
- > Present findings in a report communicating key points clearly

Resources Required

- > Plan of Burns Cottage Sheet
- > Burns Cottage, Alloway, Virtual Tour
- > Kitchen Worksheet
- > Map of Scotland Sheet (found in the Actual Visit section)

Burns Cottage and Museum: Pre Visit Activity Details

Discussion Compare And Contrast Homes And Family Life

Using the enclosed plan, discuss the layout of Burns Cottage with pupils.

Compare and contrast this with the layout of homes today. Which rooms that we have today are missing from the cottage?

Most people today live in houses built by building companies. Why do pupils think Burns' father built this home for his family? What materials do you think the house is made from? Where do you think they came from?

The rooms in the house were multi-purpose. What activities do pupils think would take part in the kitchen apart from cooking and why?

Why do they think the animals were kept in a building attached to the house?

What do your pupils like to do indoors in their spare time? What activities would a 18th century family do in their spare time in their cottage?

Discussion Compare And Contrast Food And Farming

The food we eat today comes from all over the world. Where do pupils think the Burnes family's food would have come from and what do they think the family would eat? How would it be produced and cooked? Contrast this with the food we buy today.

How has farming changed in the last 300 years? What types of machinery do we have today that had not been invented 250 years ago? What are the benefits of modern technology? Discuss.

Discuss the method of farming in rigs and baulks - narrow strips of land with ridges of soil piled up between them, no hedges or fences to divide fields. What were the positives and negatives of this type of farming?

Discuss the types of vegetables William Burnes would have grown (kail, potatoes, carrots, onions, turnips, leeks), the crops grown (oats, barley, pease, flax) and the animals he would have kept on tethers or which would have been watched by the children to stop them straying (one or 2 cows or kye (Scots) for milk / cheese, one or two sheep for wool, and hens for eggs - all allowed to roam free).

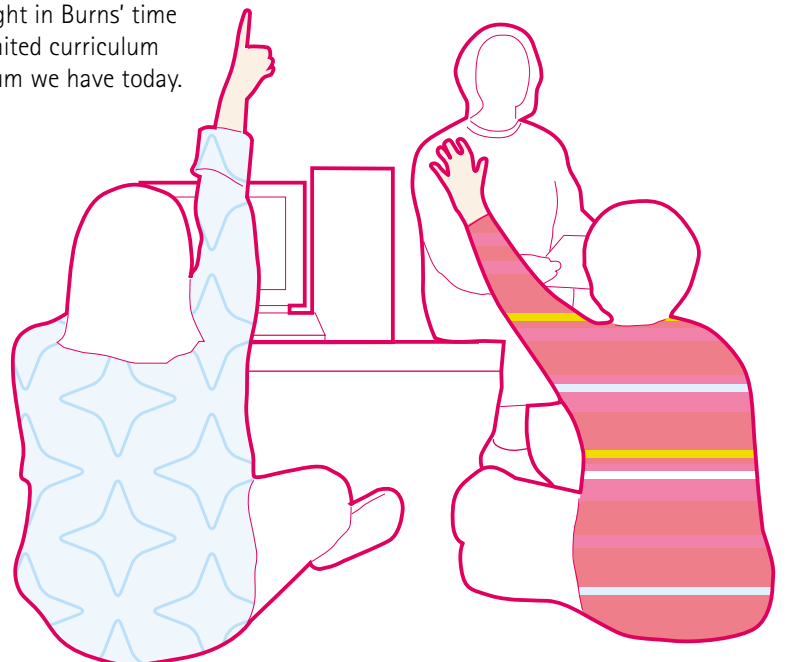
Discussion Compare And Contrast Education

In Burns' time education was not compulsory so William Burnes paid for a tutor to come to the house to educate his children, such was the importance he placed upon it.

Discuss 'cradle to grave' education today with pupils. Make an 'education timeline' with pupils detailing what type of education happens and when e.g. playgroup age 3, nursery age 4-5, primary school age 5-12 and so on.

Discuss the benefits of getting a good education and the implications of not getting a good education.

Compare the range of subjects pupils are taught today with the ones taught in Burns' time and discuss the more limited curriculum versus the busy curriculum we have today.



Burns Cottage and Museum: The Virtual Visit

Virtual Tour

Now, use the virtual tour to explore the variety of historical objects situated in this venue by clicking on the Learning and then Virtual Tours button on the website and selecting Burns Cottage.

Each object relates specifically to the learning outcomes above.

(This could be carried out with small groups at computers or as a class using an interactive whiteboard.)

Outside Cottage

Description: Robert Burns' father, William, built this cottage. In the 1700's roofs were covered with thatch - a covering of straw tied together in bundles and attached securely to the roof. Cottages were made from clay and rubble and were built in a simple style. The rooms inside were for animals as well as people!

Kitchen – general view

Description: The kitchen of the cottage would be the heart of the home for the Burnes family.

In this room, food would be cooked on the range, meals would be eaten around the fire, the bible would be read aloud, the women of the house would spin yarn for clothes and the box beds would provide sleeping space.

Range and cooking utensils

Description: A large pot on a moveable arm was used to heat food over the peat fire and simple tools for cooking were hung around the fire, or range, as it was called.

Simple meals of broth, oatmeal, eggs or fish would be cooked on the range.

Wooden bowls and horn spoons

Description: Simple bowl shapes were chiselled from wood to make the bowls seen here. Food would be eaten with spoons made from the horns of cows, sheep or goats.

Candle

Description: Candles made from melted animal fat called tallow, would provide light in the cottage

Carding tools & Spinning wheel

Description: Women used carding tools to take the tangles out of wool before it was spun. When this was done, evenings would be spent spinning sheep's wool to make clothes.

Box bed with chaff-filled mattress & straw-stuffed bolster

Description: The family would sleep in box beds. Curtains were hung around the beds to exclude draughts and to give the people sleeping inside privacy.

Mattresses were stuffed with husks of corn called chaff, and pillows or bolsters, were stuffed with straw.

Family bible

Description: The church was strict about how people lived in the 18th Century, so religion was very important to families such as the Burnes family. This is the original family bible which belonged to Robert Burns. He would read aloud from this bible to his family (as his father had) to help guide them in their daily life. You can still see the page within the bible where birthdays and dates of death were recorded by Burns.



Burns Cottage and Museum: The Virtual Visit

Byre	<i>Description:</i> The byre was a room inside the cottage where the animals were kept. The heat from the animals would help warm the house.
Milking stool	<i>Description:</i> This stool would be used when milking took place. It allowed the person milking to be in just the right position to squeeze the cows' udders to allow the milk to flow into a bucket
Milking luggie	<i>Description:</i> The milking luggie was a large urn used to hold milk
Horse collar filled with straw	<p><i>Description:</i> Horses would be used to pull things on the farm such as the plough. They would provide transport for the family too.</p> <p>The horse collar seen here would fit around the horse's neck and would be attached to things the horse had to pull.</p> <p>It was filled with straw to prevent it hurting the horse when it was pulling.</p>
Iron wall mounted hay container	<i>Description:</i> This container would have been filled with hay. Cows and horses would feed from it while they were in the byre.
Graip (pitchfork)	<i>Description:</i> Hay was used for animals' bedding and food. This long-handled fork would be used to move hay for around in the byre.
Smallholding (now gardens)	<p><i>Description:</i> Farming was a very important in Scotland in the 18th Century, and it was hard work. William Burnes farmed a small area of land where the gardens can be seen today.</p> <p>It would have been laid out in rigs – long narrow strips of land with earth piled up between them to separate planting areas. Some animals would also be kept on the farm.</p>
Painting of Murdoch Teaching Burns	<i>Description:</i> Children did not have to have an education in Burns' day, but Burns' father was keen for his children to get a good education. He employed a tutor to teach them. This gave Robert a good start in life, and his interest in writing and language stayed with him forever.

Burns Cottage and Museum: Suggested Post Visit Activities

Homes and Family Life Plan it Out – Cottage

Ask pupils to imagine they are William Burnes building this cottage for his family. Get pupils to examine the outside and inside views of the building from the Virtual Tour images on the website by clicking on Virtual Tours and selecting this venue. They can also use the Plan of Burns' Cottage Sheet to help. Next they should draw a front view of the house and a bird's eye view (top view) of the house layout. Each plan should then be annotated stating what individual parts are and describing the material each part was made from.

Home on the Range

Use the Virtual Tour of this venue to examine the kitchen of the building. This is where family life would take place. Ask pupils to make a sketch of the range from their observations using the Kitchen Worksheet provided. From the discussion on this topic you had with your pupils earlier (see Pre Visit activities), pupils should now be able to draw upon their knowledge to compare and contrast objects and their uses today and in the past

Yum Yum

Have a go at making oatcakes or vegetable broth or porridge with pupils – staple food for the Burnes family

Sense-ability

The Byre was joined on to Burns Cottage. Ask pupils to imagine they live in the cottage and are helping with the chores in the Byre. Brainstorm with pupils the many sights, sounds, textures, tastes and smells within this small room of the house, then ask them to create a 'sense poem' from the ideas they have.

Each of the 5 lines of the poem will relate to each of the five senses and may appear in any order:

I see...(Line 1); I hear...(Line 2); I feel (Line 3); I taste...(line 4), I Smell...(Line 5)

Food and Farming Measure Pleasure

If you are feeling ambitious, ask pupils to devise a method to measure out one acre (4840 square yards) in the playground or local park. This will give pupils an idea of the size of only one seventh of the area of the smallholding Burns' father owned! When you have done this, have a lie down!

Plan it Out – Small Holding

Ask pupils to draw a bird's eye view plan of the 7 acre small holding as they would like it set out. Take into account where the animals would be tethered, where the crops would be grown, where the vegetables would be grown, where the hen house would be situated and so on. When the pupils are laying out the small holding they should remember to include the rigs and baulks – the system of farming popular then.



Burns Cottage and Museum: Suggested Post Visit Activities

Education Act it Out

Ask pupils to examine the painting of Murdoch teaching Burns from the Virtual Tour image on the website, by clicking on Virtual Tours and selecting this venue.

After examining the painting, groups / class should discuss what was happening in that time snapshot, then devise short scenarios for what happened in the minutes following the scene

This done, ask groups to use their bodies to make 'still pictures' of this painting (taking care to mirror poses, expressions etc).

On the count of 3, each group should bring their picture to life, creating their scenario around this scene. When you are satisfied that enough time has been spent doing this, on the count of 3 groups should freeze in their current pose. Each group should then show the class their ideas.

Paint a Pose

You may wish pupils to sketch the above final scene poses as the basis for a range of paintings developing the one seen on the Virtual Tour.

Time Line Happy Birthday Robert!

Begin a class timeline, by plotting the year Burns was born (1759) on a long piece of paper or card. Mount this on the wall.

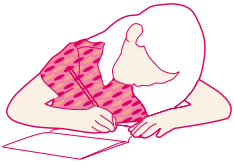
Discuss with pupils other important world events going on at the time. You may wish to have another long piece of paper or card situated below this one on the wall to enable pupils to compare relevant Burns-related dates with the other important dates you have noted e.g. Battle of Culloden 1746, Mozart born 1756, etc.

Plot It

Ask pupils to plot Alloway on the blank Map of Scotland Sheet (this is found in the Actual Visits section). You may also wish to plot some other key venues in Burns' life on the map too.

- > Mauchline (first met future wife Jean Armour here)
- > Tarbolton (set up the Bachelors' Club here)
- > Edinburgh (went here to promote his Kimarmock Edition of poetry)
- > Ellisland (farmed here and began his excise career here)
- > Dumfries (spent final years of his life here)

Burns toured Scotland to both research and promote his work. Ask pupils to find out where Burns went on his tours of Scotland. Plot these on the map too.



Burns Cottage and Museum: Kitchen Worksheet

Use the Virtual Tour to look at the kitchen range

Sketch in the box below the kitchen range and the objects which surround it

Make a list of some of the items you see on the range and describe their uses.

Item	Use
1	1
2	2
3	3

Draw one item from the range very similar to one we use today. Describe the differences in such an object today (if any).

Draw one item from the range very different to one we use today. Describe the major differences in such an object today.

Similar Object Drawing	Different Object Drawing
Then	Then
Now	Now

Description of object and changes (if any)	Description of object and changes (if any)

Burns Cottage and Museum: Plan of Cottage

