

Case Study: Crowcombe Federated C of E Primary Schools, Somerset

Background

Stogumber and Crowcombe Federated C of E Primary Schools are situated at the foot of the Quantock Hills, an area of outstanding beauty, deep in rural Somerset. The school is located in West Somerset within one of the government's 12 Opportunity Areas.

Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 from both schools are educated at Stogumber, and all children in Years 3, 4, 5 & 6 are taught at Crowcombe.

There are 49 students in Key Stage 2 taught in two separate classes. The Heritage Schools project involved the mixed Year 5/6 class and was taught by the teacher covering Planning/Preparation/Administration (PPA).

Undertaking a Heritage Schools project appealed because it could be delivered as a stand-alone project by this teacher who teaches the class once a fortnight. The aim of the project was to cover history and geography with a focus on learning outside.

"The project hit loads of boxes in terms of history and geography, map reading, land use and changes"

Year 5/6 heritage project

The overall project was looking at changes over time to appreciate how peoples and places have altered. The village itself has lots of historic buildings, the study of which formed the basis of this heritage schools project.

The teacher had previously used 'story walks', a digital platform to present student's story writing about walking in the Quantock Hills. As the planned output from this heritage schools project was for the students to produce a digital heritage trail the same software package was used again.

As this was the first time the teacher had been involved with heritage schools he worked closely with the LHEM (Local Heritage Education Manager) and through this was introduced to a specialist who came to do a geophysics survey with the children.

"I love having experts in because they just bring a massive extra dimension to the child"

As a starting point the LHEM did a lesson with the students on how to use the census, followed by looking at historical maps of the local area provided by Historic England. The value of such advice and support was clearly evident.

"He [LHEM] was brilliant, he had some very simple worksheets, he was facilitating, he started with old maps, asking questions, which led to the census. He gave them the skills and the confidence to give it a go [read census data]. It was really empowering for the children because he let them explore, dig and come up with their own assumptions which they discussed with each other; it was very much a discovery type session, it was super"

From the classroom mapping and census lessons the students had built up a mental picture of the village as it had been in the past. They then went for a walk to look at the actual places and buildings which they had explored in the classroom. The site visits enabled the students to visually link key buildings with the information they had already found out about who lived there and what the occupants did from their census study.

The students knew from their census research which buildings they wanted to put into the village trail. During their site visit students took photos of the historic buildings they were researching and made notes to help write up an entry for their trail. Once back in the classroom they did additional internet and book research and wrote an entry / information about the building.

“The words and the writing is all them; then one of our TAs went through it with them and helped them re-draft it”

The local village heritage trail (with photographs, images and informative text) was then uploaded on to <https://crowcombe.storywalks.info/> and available for the public to use.

Walk to the Butter Cross, which you can see from this location, just down the road.



Chapter two

The Buttercross

A Buttercross, also known as Butter Cross, is a type of market cross associated with English market towns and dating from medieval times. Its name originates from the fact that they were located at the market place, where people from neighbouring villages would gather to buy locally produced butter, milk and eggs. The fresh produce was laid out and displayed on the circular stepped bases of the cross.
(Wikipedia)

Walk down the road until you get to the church, then turn left, and then walk to the stone walled area outside the church house, and you should be there.



Chapter three

The Pound

The building you are standing outside now is called The Pound. The Pound was used to lock up people if they got too drunk; they were locked in The Pound for a night and released in the morning. Another use of the Pound was to lock up animals if the owner had not paid their debts. The animals would be released when the owner had paid the fine.

As you probably know, the building attached to The Pound is called Church House. There has been some sort of Pound in Crowcombe since 1642.

The word 'pound' actually comes from the word 'pund' which is a Saxon origin word, meaning 'enclosure'. It is thought that Crowcombe Pound ceased work in the 1920s or 30s.

Gates to crowcombe house

In 1901 there were a number of people who lived in Crowcombe House. Ellen M Young, age 58, lived in Crowcome house. She had 4 children called Bella, Henry, Nessie, Raludu Young, but where's the husband? Could he be dead? Or could she be divorced?

Henry Young age 35 was rich like his mum, and it says on a census " he was man of the Church of England " which means he could have been the village Priest.

At the front of the drive, there are two gates and they are listed which means they can't be changed. If you want a listed building to be changed you have to talk to Historic England.



Geophysical surveying

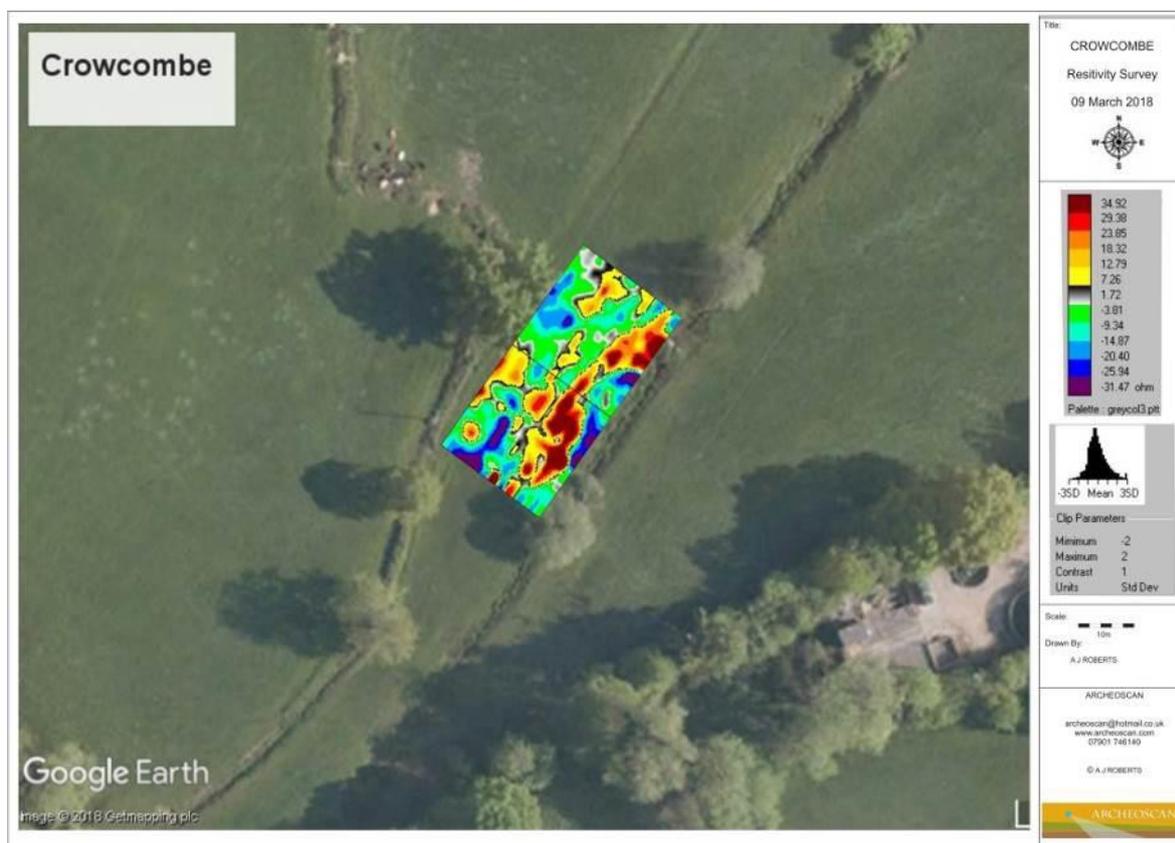
As all Heritage School projects are bespoke and tailored to each school's project, a conversation during the initial set-up with the LHEM resulted in the students getting some real hands-on experience of doing archaeology.

“One of the fields we use for our forest school has these weird sort of earthworks in there. He [LHEM] suggested he knew some people who might be able to come along and actually do some studies on it. He obviously has really good links with the archaeological community because he set that all up”

One of the additional benefits from Heritage Schools is seen as the access to experts, opportunities and experiences via the connections the LHEM has which the school was unaware of and wouldn't have been able to easily source themselves.

A 'real-life archaeologist' came to the school with equipment to do some ground mapping in the area. The students went out in groups to help and had the opportunity to use the geophysical equipment.

They produced a hand-drawn version of the geophysical resistance and later got computer print-outs of the same data back from the archaeologist.



Impacts of the heritage project

The production of a digital heritage trail was the intended outcome at the beginning of the project; this was achieved and is now publically available.

Having the guidance of an 'expert' from Historic England showed the teacher a different and more engaging way to incorporate a challenging historic document (i.e. the census) into a local study.

This helped enhance what students got out of this session. Having seen the lesson demonstrated by the LHEM, the teacher will next time use the same approach but deliver the lesson himself.

"I've done censuses before but I've always felt it was didactic, me talking them through it, not giving them as much free rein as he [LHEM] did, it was fascinating letting them go like that ... they were absolutely absorbed by it"

The project covered history, geography and English skills in different and engaging ways. In hindsight the teacher recognised that the project, given the students level of interest and engagement in this local study could have been used as a springboard to cover many more aspects of the curriculum.

"There was so much more we could have done if there was more time, we could have gone in to non-fiction and art, creative writing, there was so much there, all these questions prompt the imagination"

Given the level of student engagement the teacher wished there had been even more time for the project. They ran out of time to do anything with the geophysics outputs and ideally would have liked to have sent the story walks link to parents and governors in order to publicise the work the children had done; being completed at the end of one term meant they then moved on to a new topic at the start of the next. One change next time will be to build in time to celebrate the students' work.

"I don't think I managed to get enough celebration out of the children's work, usage or impact out of it as I could have done"

Not only has working on a Heritage Schools project enabled students to learn or practice particular skills, because it has been different for students the experiences are deemed to be more impactful. The teacher was extremely enthusiastic about the benefits of doing the project and the desire to continue doing similar studies in the future; even after only a single Heritage Schools project they have become a strong advocate for this approach to teaching a variety of skills through a history study.

"I'm sure the skills they have learnt in terms of the research, the communication, the argument, all of these things will contribute further in their learning, it's definitely not siloed ... things like this [Heritage Schools project] are memorable, purposeful and challenging and there is a reward at the end of it in terms of what they have created; you can't give the children too many rich experiences"

The project was also considered to have had a considerable impact on the students' sense of community, belonging and local pride; something the teacher recognised as being very important.

"It places them [students] in time, [has] given them a context to their lives, this is who they are and where they are from"

"Places people's lives into context and makes them realise they are part of a continuum ... I'm sure it has added to it but I didn't evaluate it at the end, they enjoyed the project and they learnt more about their area and the people who lived there"

Summary

The school's first experience of doing a Heritage School project has been extremely positive, which the school is keen to replicate again. The key change being to allow even more time and build on the interest and engagement students have to use the project as a vehicle to cover other areas of the curriculum.

"We ran out of term [i.e. Christmas curtailed further activities], in terms of a heritage schools project, it's absolutely brilliant, wonderful, it is just wishing we could have spent more time on it and done it more completely"

The love of learning that their project had fostered is clear; when asked for a mental snapshot that summed up doing a Heritage Schools project the image was one of students being thoroughly engaged in studying the census records.

"It's them poring over the census reports, for these kids to be bending over these old manuscripts and be discovering exciting things was wonderful"

Having the help and guidance of the LHEM has been crucial in making this project different and memorable. The skills training the teacher received from seeing a new approach to using census materials means they can now replicate this in future years themselves to help students get the most out of doing a local study.

This Case Study was produced by Qa Research, an independent full-service social and market research agency commissioned by Historic England to evaluate their Heritage Schools Programme.