

RYDE CEMETERY and the PRIMARY CURRICULUM



INTRODUCTION

Ryde Cemetery is an ideal location for Cross Curricular studies within Key Stages 1 and 2. Obviously it is a great starting point for historical study, be it 'Victorian Britain' or 'Our Local Area,' as the culture and society of the whole Victorian era is all around you. There is also evidence for the post Victorian period right up to modern day. However, if the Cemetery is being used for curricular studies such as Creative Writing the History box can also be ticked as it automatically includes Historical Enquiry taught through visits to historic buildings and sites.

(National Curriculum History Programme of Study 4)

WRITERS AT RYDE CEMETERY - Ideas for a Morning Workshop (Activities 1- 4)

On arrival pupils need a health and safety briefing for working within the cemetery. Also point out the need for respect within a cemetery and that this is a public space where other people may be visiting the graves of family and friends or may have come for peace and solitude.

Give a brief explanation of the layout of the cemetery using the large picture map with general information on the main display panel beside the Cemetery Lodge.

Pupils may be given individual maps to help locate their position and follow their trail through the cemetery.

1. When I come to this place.

Walk through the West Street entrance and up the main carriageway to the path on the left just in front of the twin chapels (locally known as Millionaires' Row). Find somewhere to sit and take in the feel of the whole place. Let your eyes look, your ears listen, your nose smell and your fingers touch. Look at Poem Framework Worksheet 1 and discuss ideas. Write down your ideas. Think of other lines, other words for see, hear etc. (See Poem Framework Worksheet 1A).



*When I come to this place
Where the dead people rest
I see lots of pretty flowers
I hear bird song
I smell the fresh air
I touch soft green grass
I think of those people who died
I feel tearful
When I come to this place
Where the dead people rest*

By Megan (age 8)

2. Let the object speak for itself.

Return to the West Street entrance and walk slowly along the top path towards the Old Mortuary Chapel doorway, noticing as many things as possible.

- the anchor
- headstones, monuments
- grave surrounds, coverings
- carving, writing
- flower holders
- buildings, windows, doors, walls, gates and fencing
- flora (flowers, bushes, trees, grass)
- fauna (insects, minibeasts, birds)



Look closely at one thing and try to describe it in detail. Use the list of questions on Worksheet 2 to help you and jot down some notes about it. Then change your notes into a piece of writing where the object is telling his/her story, what he/she is like, what he/she does, how he/she feels.



*I am a stone book
I am grey
I am big and square
I am very old
I was made in 1930
I tell a story
I am here to remember David Butler
I was much brighter but now I'm covered
With moss
I am grey
I am big and square
I am here to remember David Butler*

By Isabel (age 7)

3. Stories from the grave.

Turn right at the Old Mortuary) Chapel door, follow the path until you reach the headstone of Henry Wattson with a cross, turn left and walk carefully long towards the hedge. Look at some of the names on the headstones. Write down any unusual ones and notice which names were popular years ago. Write down some dates or any other information about who is buried in a grave and who they are buried with. Draw sketches of any interesting headstones. You will write something with these notes and drawings later.



GRAVE NAMES

Here lies Robert, Lily, Fred, Frederick.

At peace now Alexander, Thomas, Sabra, Sarah.

In memory of Ellen, Priscilla, John, James.

By Isabel (age 7).

Walk back along path to the main carriageway and up to the twin chapels for

BREAK



4. Then and now.

Look at the photo of the cemetery in the 1860s, consider how different it was then. Worksheet 3 gives some ideas for then and now to get you started. Add some ideas of your own. Think of what else was different then. Imagine travelling back in time, walking along the main carriageway towards the twin chapels, as shown in the photo. What would you be wearing, what might you be doing, who are you with, what would you see hear? Jot down your ideas on Worksheet 4.

*Long ago there were lots of gardeners
 And now it has only a few
 But now everything has overgrown
 Years ago they had a big bell rising up to the sky
 But now it has gone
 There used to be a few graves
 And lots of flowers
 Today all the weeds go mad
 And long ago they did that too*

By Isabel (age 7)



What else?

If time permits you may wish to walk along main carriageway beyond the twin chapels making notes or drawing sketches of anything else you find interesting. These notes can be used in the follow up session back at school.

FOLLOW UP SESSION (perhaps the afternoon of the same day)

- time to re-draft notes made on the poetry frameworks 1 ('When I come to this place') and 4('Then and Now') and notes on 'Let the Object Speak.'
- sharing time, favourite poems so far
- 'Stories from the grave'- look at name list poem example, then take time to work on 'stories from the graves' notes
- sharing 'stories from the grave'
- time for further redrafting or work from notes, sketches & anything else you remember that inspired you
- final sharing

INFORMATION COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY

The pupils could have an opportunity to word process their work and add graphics imported from the Ryde Social Heritage website www.rshg.org.uk Photographs taken at the Cemetery during the workshop could also be used. An anthology of Cemetery inspired poems could be produced.

ART

A follow up session could be used for those pupils who enjoy illustrating text with art work

OPPORTUNITY FOR PERFORMANCE / CELEBRATION

A slideshow or Power Point Presentation of graphics could be used to illustrate readings.

Poem Framework Worksheet 1

When I come to this place

Where _____

I see _____

I hear _____

I smell _____

I touch _____

I think of _____

I feel _____

When I come to this place

Where _____

By _____

Poem Framework Worksheet 1A

When I come to this place

Where _____

I see /notice/look at/ observe/ watch/gaze _____

I hear / listen/ catch the sound of _____

I smell /scent _____

I touch /feel/ handle/stroke _____

I think of / wonder/ remember _____

I feel / understand _____

When I come to this place

Where _____

By _____

Worksheet 2

Let the object speak for itself.

Look at something and try to describe it in detail

- what colour is it?
- what size and shape is it?
- how old is it?
- what is it for?
- why is it here?
- did it used to look different?
- was it used in a different way before?

Now change your notes into a story where the object is telling you all about itself. This is an 'I am' story. Put 'I am' in front of some of the describing words you have listed.

I am an old, tall and tangled rose bush and I've been standing here for over a century. My single bloom blossoms red and spiders spin webs between my spindly arms...

Don't forget to say how your object feels, are they sad and lonely or do they feel useful and proud to be here?

Worksheet 3

THEN	NOW
Lots of lovely flower beds line the carriageway.	Grass, weeds & graves everywhere.
A team of gardeners to keep everything tidy.	No team of gardeners today
Some new trees planted neatly.	Large, old trees, lots of overgrown plants, brambles & ivy.
Some new graves & monuments, lots of pathways laid out.	Many old graves with not much space between, some new graves, less pathways.
A quiet, peaceful area for people to stroll, walk their dog, have a rest or sit and think.	A quiet, peaceful area for people to stroll, walk their dog, have a rest or sit and think.
People come to visit loved ones who have died & bring flowers.	People come to visit loved ones who have died & bring flowers.

Poem Framework Worksheet 4

THEN AND NOW

Long ago _____

And _____

But now _____

Years ago _____

And _____

But now _____

There used to be _____

And _____

Today _____

And long ago they did that too.

By _____

FURTHER IDEAS FOR CREATIVE WRITING (upper Keystage 2) (Activities 5-10)**5. On this side of the wall.**

Walk along the top pathway between the West Street entrance and beyond St. Paul's (Mortuary) Chapel. This is the oldest part of the cemetery. Think about what is on this side of the wall - look and listen carefully. Look over the wall or walk back to the West Street entrance and walk around to look at the other side of the wall. Think about what is on the other side of the wall - look and listen carefully.

Write a comparison poem.

Write 3 lines about this side of the wall

On this side of the wall

There is _____

I see _____

It is _____



Write 3 lines about the other side of the wall



On the other side of the wall

There is _____

I see _____

It is _____

Add more lines of your own to each stanza to make a longer poem e.g

I hear _____

I feel _____

I think _____

It makes me _____.

You could use the same format but write about this side of the railings / gates

6. CEMETERY KENNINGS

LODGE KEEPER

PATH SWEEPER

Kennings are a way of describing someone by what they do, often using words ending in er

Think of all the people who might be in the cemetery, don't forget about people from the past as well. Try to think of unusual ones.

Make a list poem.

e.g.

Lodge keeper

Path sweeper

Grass cutter

Tree trimmer

Grave digger

Carriage driver



Choose your favourite ones and decide the best order to write them. You might make a pattern e.g. 2 modern, then 2 historic, 2 about gardening, 2 about transport. Some rhyme, alliteration and repetition will give it rhythm.

7. PERSONIFICATION

TWINS

Look at the twin chapels. They are symmetrical and joined but not quite identical. Historically the South Chapel was Anglican (Church of England) and the North was a Dissenters Chapel (for lower church e.g. Methodist, Baptist.)



The South Chapel has stained glass windows and would have conducted more elaborate services but the Dissenters had plain glass and were more modest. Today the North Chapel is the Heritage & Learning Centre and has a computer suite, lots of research and educational resources in it, small kitchen etc. The South Chapel is mostly used as an Exhibition space and can still be used for religious services.

Imagine the twin chapels are people with feelings and write a comparison poem or piece of prose..

e.g. one feels more important/ more beautiful, cleverer, one is sad and one happy, one friendlier than the other.

10. CONCRETE POETRY –

(SHAPE POETRY)

A poem describing a memorial could be written in the outline shape of the stone or monument e.g.

triangle

tops

tall

grey

spire

imposing obelisk

on granite cuboid

etched with names

surrounded by posts and railings

to keep them in or keep us out



this child lies here

lost newborn

now an angel

tall grass shelters her last bed

HEALTH and SAFETY

When in the Cemetery pupils should watch carefully for obstructions underfoot and hanging branches or brambles overhead. They should also watch for dog faeces underfoot. Pupils should not leave footpaths unless carefully watched and supervised. Many of the memorials are unsteady and should not be leant upon. Kerbs, fallen masonry and the low railings around many of the graves are obvious trip hazards. Many graves have caved in and are extremely dangerous. Care is needed at all times.

RYDE CEMETERY HERITAGE LEARNING CENTRE

BOOKING

Contact Ryde Social Heritage Group via their website www.rshg.org.uk

Ryde Cemetery is owned and maintained by the

Isle of Wight Council

Bereavement Services Department

01973 882288

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