

# The Landmark Trust

## Clavell Tower Education Pack



## Teachers' Help Notes

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## 1. Pre visit or learning about Clavell Tower in the classroom

### **Clavell Tower – back ground notes for teachers**

#### **Origins of the estate**

The Smedmore Estate has been in the same family since 1391 when Henry Smedmore sold the estate to his tenant William Wyot. William Wyot's daughter married John Clavell in the 1440s. Their great, great grandson John extended the estate in 1554 by purchasing the manor of Kimmeridge which had previously belonged to the Abbey of Cerne.

#### **William Clavell and alum works**

Sir William Clavell (1568-1664) was knighted by James I as a reward for putting down an Irish rebellion. Sir William developed the established salt industry at Kimmeridge, setting up an alum works.

Until the late 19th century, alum was an essential ingredient for several industrial processes. Its main use was in the textile industry, where it was used as a mordant, or fixing agent, for holding natural dyes to fabrics. England's most important medieval industry, the wool trade, relied upon a steady supply of alum since the value of the cloth depended on how well it was dyed. The main sources of alum during this period were the Middle East and, after 1461, the Papal States north of Rome. These sources were susceptible to disruption, however, and a domestic supply of alum was sought in England.

In chemical terms, alum is a group of double salts that contain aluminium sulphate in combination with a second sulphate (either potassium or ammonium). Alum can form as a natural mineral (alunite) under volcanic conditions, where it solidifies from solution to form large crystals of a characteristic shape. It does not occur in a pure state in this country, although at some stage it was discovered that alum could be manufactured from certain types of shale.

Sir William also tried his hand at glass production but a local rival forced his glass works to close and got Sir William imprisoned!

#### **John Clavell – Tower builder**

In 1774 George Clavell died without leaving an heir. The estate passed to his sister's son William who was required to change his name to Clavell when he inherited. William's brother John inherited the estate when he died in 1818 and he also took the name of Clavell.

John (Richards) Clavell was a local clergyman being the Rector of Church Knowle and Steeple and it was he who built the Tower in about 1830. He was around sixty when he inherited the estate and no one knows why he built the Tower. It was known locally as The Tower of the Winds.

John died in 1833 and the estate passed to his niece Louisa Moreton Pleydell who was married to a John Mansell. The Mansell family still own the estate today.

### **The Thomas Hardy connection**

Thomas Hardy was engaged for a time in the 1860s to Eliza Nicholls. Eliza's father served as a coastguard at Kimmeridge Bay until the late 1850s and lived in one of the coastguard cottages. The relationship with Eliza inspired a poem called "She to Him". To illustrate the poem in Wessex Poems Hardy sketched a man and woman, hand in hand, on the path up to Clavell Tower.

### **History of the Tower**

Clavell Tower has become a landmark along the Dorset coastline. (Illustration 1) When it was first opened a writer in the Dorset County Chronicle said it could be seen from the esplanade in Weymouth!

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Tower was in use as a watchtower by the coastguard. (Illustration 2) It fell into disuse sometime between the First and Second World Wars and was gutted by fire. Uncared for it deteriorated into the ruinous state it is in today. (Illustration 3)

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century however it was still visited and seen as a landmark. Shell even included it in one of their motoring guides and commissioned Paul Nash the famous artist to paint it for them. Paul Nash (1889-1946) is one of Britain's most influential, 20<sup>th</sup> century artists. Renowned as a war artist he was also well known for his English

landscapes. (Illustration 4) You used to be able to drive right up to the Tower. (Illustration 5)

In 1985 the Tower was used as a backdrop for a drama based on the PD James novel *The Black Tower*. (Illustration 6)

### **The Landmark Trust and the Tower today**

“The Landmark Trust is a charity which rescues buildings in distress, and then revives them and gives them a new life, usually by letting them for holidays.” *The Landmark Trust Handbook*

A landmark is defined in the dictionary as:

1. A prominent object on land serving as a guide. 2. A conspicuous object in a place or district.

The Landmark Trust is a charity principally concerned with building conservation. Since its formation in 1965 the Trust has restored over 170 buildings and each year over 40,000 people stay in one or more of these buildings. Through its efforts to conserve the built environment the Landmark Trust enables people to access buildings of historic and architectural merit in a unique way.

Clavell Tower is a Grade 2 listed building which stands on Hen Cliff above Kimmeridge Bay in Dorset, now designated as a World Heritage Site. The Tower dominates the coastline and has become a significant landmark on the south west coastal path.

Unfortunately the Tower is in danger of collapsing into the sea. The geological reasons which make the area a world heritage site are responsible for the erosion of the cliffs around Kimmeridge Bay. (Illustrations 7 and 8)

Following various studies to assess the options available for the tower's future, the only viable solution is to dismantle the tower piece by piece and move it 25 metres inland before the cliff erodes further. (Illustration 9) The Tower will be refurbished and turned into a property that can be rented for holidays. (Illustration 10)

The Mansell family who own the Tower have agreed to give it to the Landmark Trust if they can save it.

**Group Poem Example Sheet**

<p>I found a box          In the middle of the table.          It had a big label.          Stable, paint.          It feels rough          Dusty, musty, crusty, rusty!          Erhh!          Like wood.</p> <p>I'm going to open it.          I feel impatient, bored, moody,          Scared!          Excited, anxious, frightened.          What's inside?          Chocolate?          Money, a book, euros.          Old things!          Bugs, cobwebs, jewellery.</p> <p>I'm opening the box.          Oooh – dead butterflies.          They're real and lots of them.          Wicked, fantastic, astonished          Wow!</p>	<p>Children were asked:          What can you see?          What can you smell or imagine it might          smell like?</p> <p>We're going to open it – how do you feel?</p> <p>What might be inside?</p> <p>Reactions to opening it</p>
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**This poem was composed about a collection of butterflies in a box by a year 4 class in a London primary school.**

<p>In the country          Fenced in stands the mysterious Tower of          Crooked Red and grey brick          Leaning and slipping from the cliff to          The sea, glinting in the sun          Boats trundling across the sea          Mad man dancing by the shore.</p>	<p>Children were asked to use and call out          parts of their visualisations of the Tower.          How it looked, what was happening to it,          where it was etc.</p> <p>This poem required some rearranging and          amalgamation on the phrases as they were          shouted out.</p>
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**This poem was composed about Clavell Tower by Wool First school year 4 class.**

## Storytelling Example

This story was put together by Wool First school year 4 class.

Story point	Memory notes
1. Happy beginning	Bethany – village below Clavell Tower
2. Problem	Tower rolling
3. Attempt but failure to fix the problem	Villagers try to block path – keeps rolling
4. Introduce a hero	Bethany visits circus – sees Milo strongman
5. Hero has plan	Milo to roll Tower back
6. Hero solves the problem	Rolls back but upside down
7. Happy or sad ending	Villagers celebrate

### This is how they told the story:

(1 and 2) There was a happy village at the foot of the hill below Clavell Tower. A little girl called Bethany lived in the village. One morning she opened her window and saw that the Tower which everyone thought might one day fall into the sea was actually rolling down the hill towards the village.

(3) Bethany called to her mother and they roused the whole village. The villagers ran out and blocked the path of the Tower with big boulders and logs of wood. It stopped it for a while but every morning when the villagers checked the Tower, it had moved a few more centimetres closer to the village. The rocks and wood made horrible cracking noises and the villagers were worried about the village being demolished.

(4) Bethany went on a visit to the circus and who should she see performing but Milo the world's strongest man. Milo was seven feet tall and as round as a barrel. Bethany asked Milo to come and help the village.

(5) Milo agreed to come and look at the Tower. He examined it very carefully from every angle and decided that he was strong enough to push it back up the hill all on his own.

(6) And that is exactly what he did. He rolled up his sleeves and leant his massive back against the Tower. He braced his legs and started pushing, huffing and puffing, his eyes closed in concentration. When he got to the top he put the Tower back in its position but when he opened his eyes he realised he had put it back up side down.

(7) The villagers were too happy to care and anyway it added a bit of character to the view. So they left it as it was and had a big party to celebrate the saving of the village and to thank Milo.

### 3. Importance of Heritage

#### The Importance of Heritage Discussion Notes

##### Thinking about heritage

- Encourage the children to call out places they have visited
- Write down the places they call out on the board
- Ask them if they know the names of the two organisations that help look after built heritage eg National Trust and English Heritage.
- Give them hints eg might be members, name of place we live etc.
- Give examples of places owned by NT and EH if they haven't given examples already - NT – Corfe Castle, Studland Bay - EH – Stonehenge, Lulworth Castle
- Talk about taxes and how we all contribute to looking after heritage eg taxed if they buy sweets etc
- Entrance fees and souvenirs contributing to upkeep of heritage

##### Tourism

Get the children to think about the benefits of tourism to local area and not just heritage

- Where do tourists stay? Where do they spend their money? Where do they eat? How do they travel around?
- Explain that this helps economy of local area – may pay parents wages if they are a chef, waitress or bus driver.

## The National Trust



### Where does it get its money from?

- ❖ Membership fees – over 3.4 million members.
- ❖ Donations.
- ❖ Income from the shops and restaurants it runs.

### What does the National Trust do?

It looks after and protects....

700 miles of coastline

316 historic properties

These include houses, castles, churches and chapels, mills, pubs and inns.



### How many people visit National Trust properties every year?

62 million



## English Heritage



### Where does it get its money from?

- ❖ The Government.
- ❖ Membership fees – about 260,000 adults and 200,000 families.
- ❖ Income from shops and restaurants it runs.

### What does English Heritage do?

It advises the Government about historic houses.

It looks after over 400 historic properties and monuments including Stonehenge.

It keeps a register of England's most important buildings.

It gives money to other organisations to help look after historic buildings.



### How many people visit English Heritage properties each year?

11 million



## Heritage Statements Answer Sheet

**It is a good idea to look after our old buildings and sites because.....**

people can work there and earn money.

visiting tourists spend money  
in the local area.

our history is something to be proud of.

it's fun to learn about history by visiting somewhere  
and not just by reading about it.

families can visit and have fun together.

history is interesting.

if we look after our heritage today people in the  
future can enjoy it too.

thinking about the past can sometimes help us plan  
the future.

**It is a bad idea to look after our old buildings and sites because....**

it's a waste of money.

we could spend the money on  
hospitals and schools instead.

visitors cause pollution.

visitors cause congestion on the roads.

history is boring.

old places should be knocked down and the land  
used to build new houses.

we should think about the future and not worry  
about the past.