

Puzzlewood

A Magical Woodland in the Forest of Dean

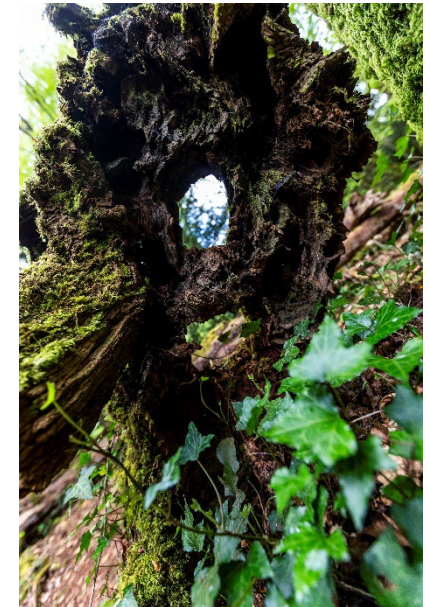
The Romans KS2

Puzzlewood is a designated ancient woodland. It is a special, important and protected place. The woodland is so old it has developed intricate communities of plants, animals and fungi.

It is an ideal environment for introducing or extending your teaching and learning about the Romans.

The landscape is eerie and particularly atmospheric, full of weird and wonderful natural scowles from which the Romans extracted and used iron ore.

We strongly recommend that you visit the site before your visit, as there are so many varied opportunities for creative curriculum development.



National Curriculum Programs of Study:

History:

Pupils should be taught about the Roman empire and its impact on Britain

This could include:

- a. Julius Caesar's attempted invasion in 55-54 BC
- b. the Roman Empire by AD 42 and the power of its army
- c. successful invasion by Claudius and conquest, including Hadrian's Wall
- d. British resistance, for example, Boudica
- e. "Romanisation" of Britain: sites such as Caerwent and the impact of technology, culture and beliefs, including early Christianity

This is a suggested plan for using Puzzlewood as inspiration for teaching about the impact of the Roman empire and its impact on Britain and subsequent cross-curricular work.

For local schools it is an excellent opportunity to discover how the local area was shaped and used by the invading Romans.

This excellent book can be purchased to help illustrate the story of the Forest of Dean: <https://www.forestofdeanhistory.org.uk/publications-for-sale/books/>

Suggested Learning Activities

Before you visit:

Focus on chronology and a timeline to place the Roman period in Britain (75 AD to 410AD) in context to build an overview of British history.

Key questions to focus on:

Why did the Romans invade? <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zqtf34j/articles/z9j4kqt>

Who was already living in Britain? <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zqtf34j/articles/z9j4kqt#zmhthcw3>

How did the invasion affect the culture, geography, architecture of Britain?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zqtf34j/articles/z9j4kqt#zd3q7yc7>

During your visit:

You are requested to stay on the marked paths in order to preserve this important ancient site.

Key Question: Did the Romans live in the Forest of Dean?

The scowles at Puzzlewood are naturally occurring pits and cavities in carboniferous limestone and sandstone. They are thought to be unique to the Forest of Dean. They are naturally rich in minerals and iron ore. It is this iron ore and the surrounding trees and forests that drew the Romans to this area.

https://www.romanobritain.org/11_work/raw_mining.php

Hold, touch and talk about the iron ore sample. Discuss the importance of iron ore and what it was used for by the Romans. How did the Romans turn iron ore into iron for use? What other natural resources did the Forest of Dean offer to process the iron ore?

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mining_in_Roman_Britain#:~:text=Many%20underground%20mines%20were%20constructed,1500%20%C2%B0C%20using%20charcoal.

Working conditions in the mine would have been poor – slaves sometimes worked in the mines too. Discuss how it would have felt to work outside in the heat of summer and cold of winter. Improvise short sketches to try to understand the life of a mine worker.

Walk around the Roman Coins trail. There are 10 numbered signs to find. Look carefully at the landscape and scowle formation. Sketch and draw the formations, possibly using charcoal. Photograph and collect banks of words to describe what can be seen, felt and heard for use back in school.

What other evidence is there that the Romans came to the Forest of Dean? In 1848 a hoard of over 3000 Roman-era coins were discovered in Puzzlewood hidden in three earthenware jars behind a block of stone.

Look at images of Roman coins (print before you arrive):

<https://www.all-your-coins.com/en/blog/antique/romaines/comment-identifier-les-monnaies-romaines>

What did coins usually depict and why? Design your own Roman coin.

After your visit:

Write a recount of your visit.

Use the collected banks of words and images to write: descriptions of the scowles and woodland, a story setting, poetry, a diary recount from the viewpoint of a Roman mine worker.

Find out more about the process of turning iron ore into iron. Write as instructions or an explanation text.

The Romans used the extracted iron ore to make tools and weaponry - Design your own roman sword.

Find about how the Romans used Glevum (Gloucester) as a fort and Colonia.

<https://www.museumofgloucester.co.uk/>

