

Hastings Fishermen's Museum

Education Pack



English Version



Hastings Fishermen's Museum

Introduction to the Education Pack

- The education pack has been designed to be used across a range of ages and abilities.
- Some questions can be answered simply by finding the information somewhere in the display.
- There are also open ended questions, which do not have 'right' answers, but call on imagination and creativity. These can be answered in as much depth as is suitable to the individual's age and ability.
- Students are encouraged to make drawings of exhibits, or from their imagination.

We would like young visitors to make use of the education pack when their visit is over. Perhaps they may follow up some of their story writing notes with longer stories, poems, or even sea shanties. They might create larger and more detailed pieces of artwork about the sea, boats, smugglers, or ghosts, or make models of the net huts, or of the museum building. Perhaps they will be inspired to research something that particularly interests them on the internet.

We hope that you and your students will enjoy using this education pack and that it will increase the pleasure and enhance the experience of your visit to the museum. It is possible to arrange talks for groups on request in advance.

- 1) Model fishing boats
- 2) The Albatross
- 3) The Stained Glass Window
- 4) The Horse Drawn Capstan
- 5) The Winkle King
- 6) The Tubman
- 7) The Stade
- 8) The Net Shops
- 9) William Henry Borrow Painting
- 10) The Church of St Nicholas
- 11) The Enterprise
- 12) Answer Sheet



Hastings Fishermen's Museum

Model Fishing Boats



There are many attractive model boats in the museum, several in the style of Hastings fishing boats. One model is especially interesting. This model shows how a boat would have left the yard. The rigging out with fishing gear and other equipment would have been done by the owner.

This model was made by Bob Lower, of R Lower and Sons boatbuilding business, set up in 1945 by Richard William (Dick) Lower. Dick and his sons Charlie and Bob built various types of craft, including many for angling clubs in Hastings, Eastbourne and Brighton, pleasure boats, and boats for the Hastings fishing fleet. Two of which the "Valiant" and the "Grace Georgina" are now on display outside the museum.



What can you find out about these two model boats?

If you built a boat, or had one built for you, what would you name it?

Draw a picture of the “Valiant” or the “Edward & Mary”, or one of the model boats.



Hastings Fishermen's Museum

The Albatross



Albatrosses are very large seabirds that live in the area of the Southern Ocean and the North Pacific. Great albatrosses have the largest wingspans of any birds, up to 3.70 metres.

Albatrosses use air currents to help them to soar and glide over great distances. They can travel around for months on end, without touching dry land. They feed on squid, fish and krill (tiny shrimp like creatures).

Albatrosses nest on remote islands. It takes several years for them to find their ideal mate, but once they do, they will stay together for life. They have long lives, the oldest recorded bird being 61 years old.

The word *albatross* is used in an expression “to have an albatross around his neck” which mean “having a burden”. This is a reference to Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798). **In the poem, an albatross starts to follow a ship. This was generally considered good luck, because like the sails boat, the birds needed the air currents to travel [the birds would follow the air currents] that meant they were destined for good weather and a strong breeze.** The foolish mariner shoots the albatross with a crossbow. His shipmates believe that the ship will be cursed, and punish him by making him wear the dead albatross around his neck. Eventually all but the mariner die from the curse. He is forced to wander the earth forever, telling his story to those he meets. Thus the albatross can be an omen of good or bad luck, as well as a metaphor for a burden to be carried.

A true story that also has an albatross as the main character. On the 9 March 1887, the Tamaris, a French sailing boat was wrecked on the Crozet Islands and the crew took refuge on the Pig's Island. Short of supplies, they wrote rescue messages which they hung around Albatrosses necks. One of them travelled almost seven weeks to cross the 6.000 km of sea to land, exhausted, on an Australian beach where it was found with the following message in French “Thirteen shipwreck have taken refuge on the Crozet Island, 4th of August 1887”. A rescue boat, “La Meurthe”, was despatched from Madagascar to the Crozet Islands, by the time it arrived the seamen had perished in an attempt to reach nearby Possession Island.

How did the Albatross come to be in the Fishermen's Museum?

What size is the Albatross in the Fishermen's Museum? _____

What is unusual about there being an Albatross in a museum in Hastings?

The bird in the museum is quite old. It is an example of 'Taxidermy', which means it has been stuffed. This form of display was very popular in the past, particularly with the Victorians. Why do you think it is not so popular today?

Write your own short story or poem about, or make a drawing of an Albatross.

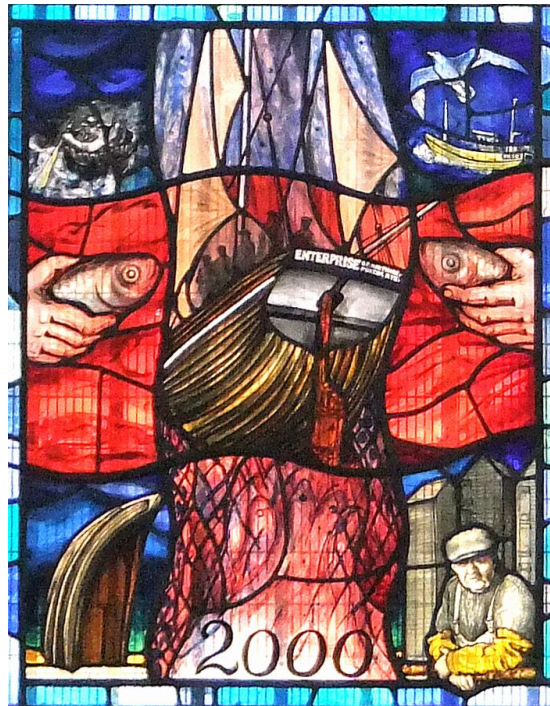


Hastings Fishermen's Museum

The Stained Glass Windows



The top part of the stained glass window shows Jesus talking to the people from a boat. It was made by Mary Dobson and donated to the museum in 1958, to replace the window which was destroyed during the war. To mark the Millennium, the museum commissioned Alan Wright to make a new lower panel, which is dedicated to fishermen lost at sea. This replaced a painted panel which had been installed in 1957.



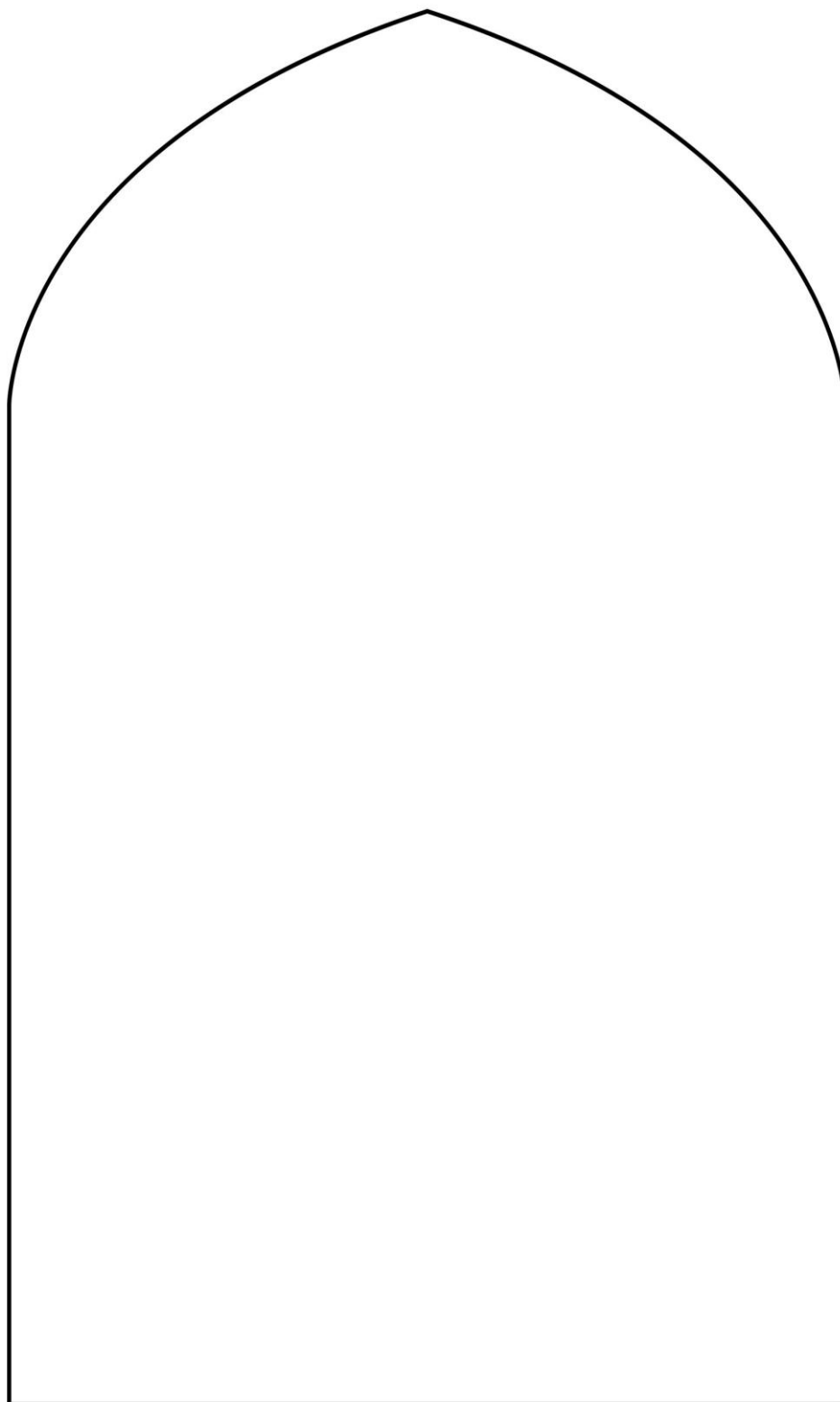
Look carefully at the new part of the window. Make a note of all the things you can see that are in and around the museum.

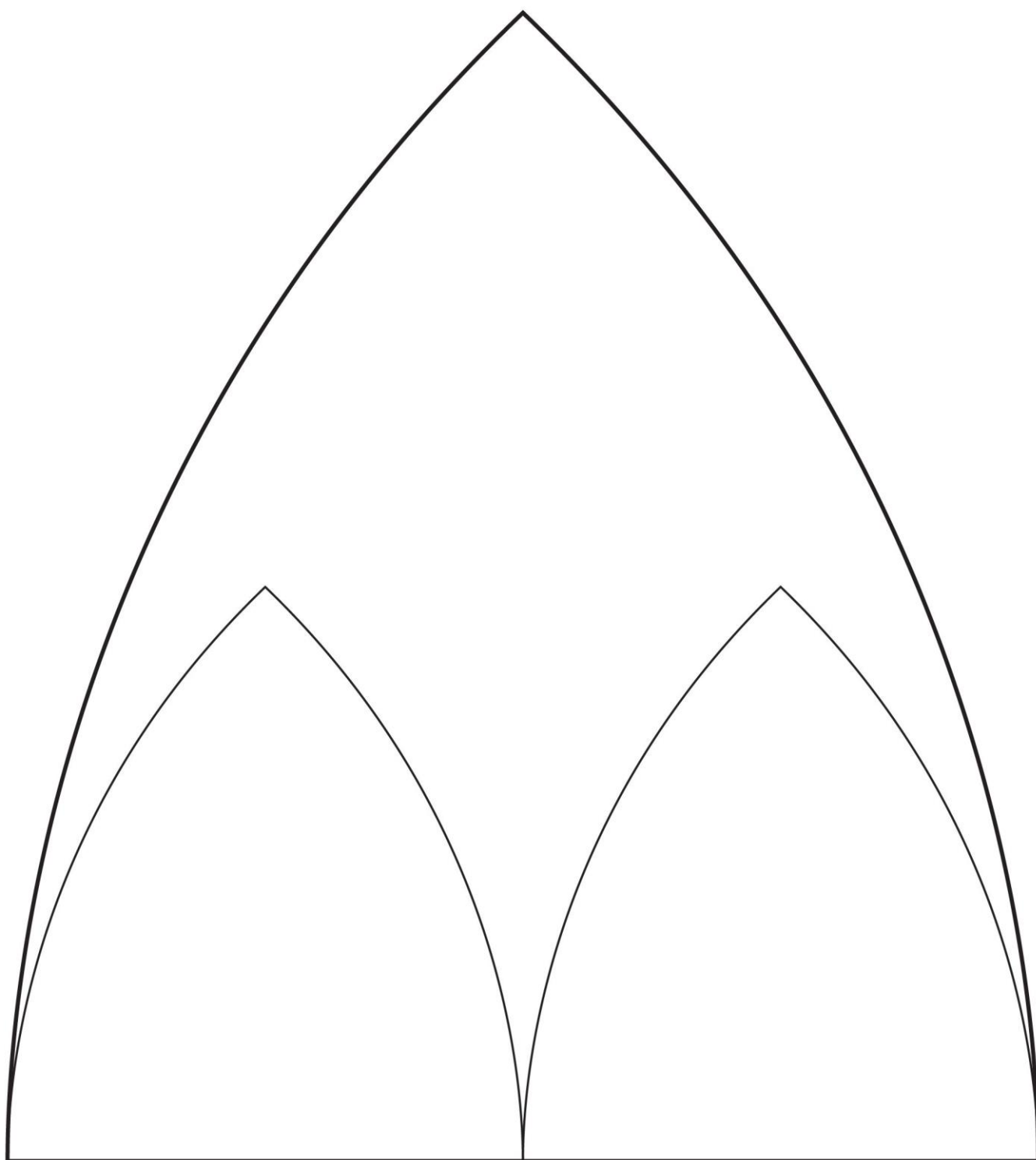


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Design your own stained glass window for the Fishermen's Museum. You can draw some of the things that are in and around the museum, as well as using your imagination.





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Horse Drawn Capstan



Capstans are mainly nautical devices used for lifting and pulling heavy weights. They work by winding a rope or chain around a cylinder and can be used to raise an anchor or in the case of the pictured capstan, to haul a boat up the beach to safety above the high water mark. As you can see from the picture, until powerful enough engines became widely available, the capstans in Hastings were powered by horses. Today capstans have been replaced by motor driven winches which work in much the same way as a capstan but are mounted horizontally rather than vertically.

Try to think of some other uses for capstans on ships or boats.

Make some notes about what it was like to be a horse working on the beach.

Draw your own picture of a horse on the beach





The Fishermen's Museum, Hastings

The Winkle King's Suit



The suit was made and worn by Walter "Slogger" Hoad. The silver painted winkle shells are hand sewn to the suit and hat.

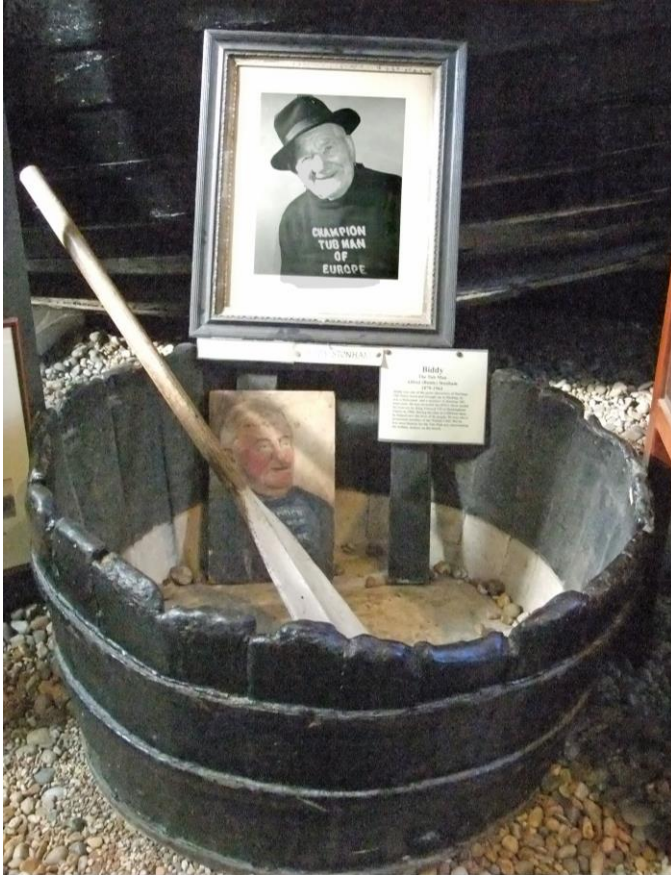
When do you think Walter Hoad would have worn this special suit?

What would you use to decorate a special outfit that you could wear at festivals or other special occasions?

Design your own special costume or outfit to wear at a parade to collect money for charity.

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The Tubman



Wooden barrels were used for all sorts of things connected with fishing and the sea; as containers for tar, vital for maintaining the wooden boats; for oil, wine and other liquids brought into the country by sea; for storing and transporting the fresh or salted fish to different parts of the country and a hundred other things.

When the barrels got old or damaged they were recycled for other uses, tables, wash tubs, plant pots, and in this case a 'tub boat'.

Who was the Tubman? What was his story? What did he do that was special?

What other things could you do and make with old barrels? Make some notes and drawings of your own ideas. Nothing is too crazy.



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The Net Shops



Hastings is famous for the tall, narrow, black painted, wooden buildings that were used to store nets and other fishing equipment on several floors. They are “Net shops”, they were so called because the fishermen used the ground floor as a workshop where they made the nets. It is erroneously thought that the fishermen dried their nets inside but as the nets were made of rope/hemp they would have rotted. The nets were dried out on the beach or on the hills. The nets are now made from nylon.

Why do you think they were built narrow, tall and black?

Make a drawing of a group of net shops.

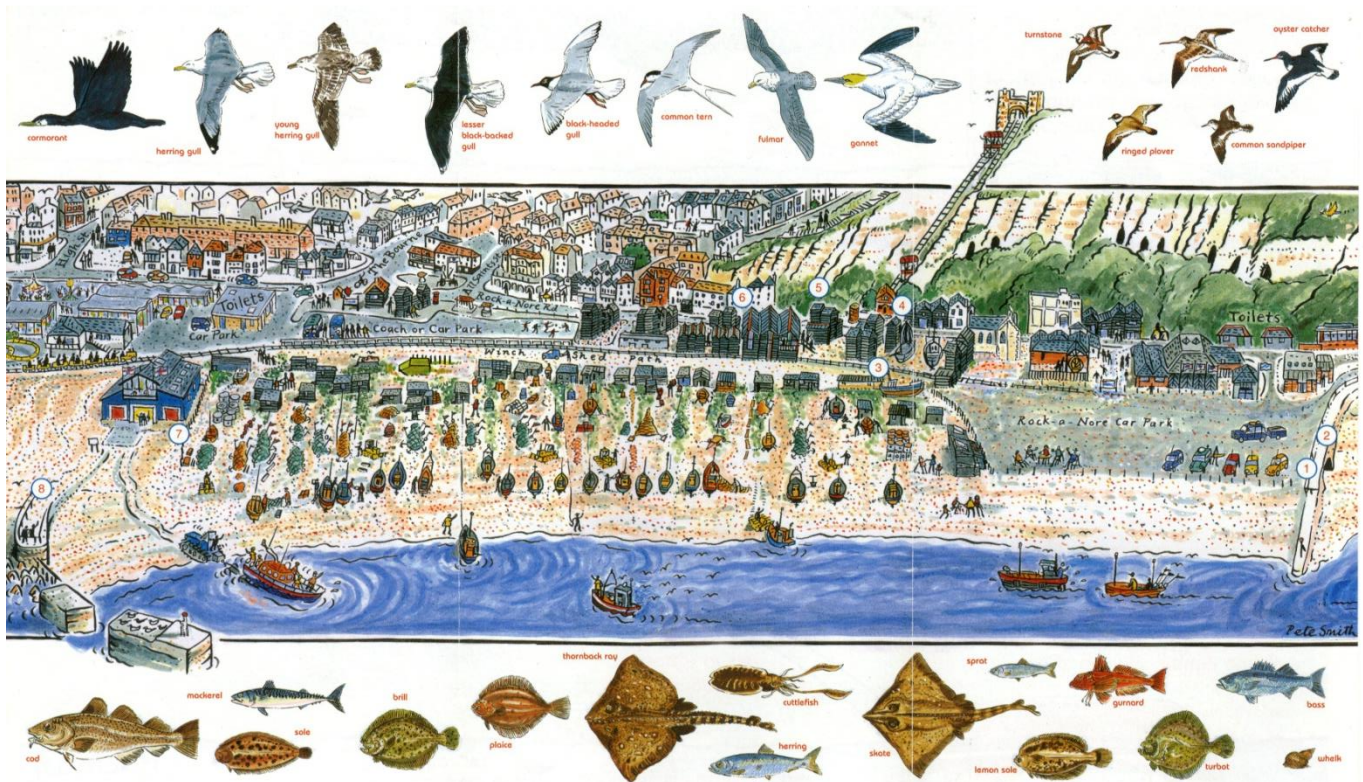


Tucked in among the net shops are two very unusual buildings. They are two halves of 'The Golden Sovereign'.

Make notes for story about why the boats were sometimes cut in half, or make an imaginative drawing about it.

The Fishermen's Museum, Hastings

The Stade



The Stade is the area of shingle used by one of Britain's oldest fishing fleets. The area includes the harbour, the fishing beach, the winch sheds, the net shops and the fish market. There are two museums, the lifeboat house and many other fascinating places of interest. To the east is the majestic cliff coastline, rich with fossils where dinosaur footprints have been found. Above is the country park with superb views over the Channel. You can see a model of the Stade, made by a fisherman at the entry of the vestry gallery.

Stade is an Anglo-Saxon term for "landing place" because Hastings fishing boats have always been landed on the beach rather than in a Harbour. The right to the ownership of the Stade has been disputed for many years. The Fishermen believe that they have an ancient right to free use of the Stade. This is now largely accepted.

The Hastings fleet is the largest beach launched fishing fleet in Europe. There have been many attempts to build a Harbour but all have failed. Nowadays there are about 15 boats that go out regularly, each employ 1 to 3 fishermen and a boy ashore. The Hastings Fleet has always fished in an ecological and sustainable manner realising that fish stocks need to be maintained for future years.

Make a list of things which are on the Stade



How many fishing methods are used on the Stade?

What is left in the pots to attract the cuttlefish? Why do you think this works?

Draw your favourite fishing method



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William Henry Borrow paintings



Paintings of Hastings fishing beach by William Henry Borrow

The Fishermen's Museum is fortunate to have several paintings by the celebrated artist William Henry Borrow. Some show the East Hill as it was many years ago.

When and where did William Henry Borrow live?



Write down what you think has changed on the beach and the East Hill from the time these pictures were painted until now.

Some things have not changed. What do you think they are?

Make your own drawing of the fishing beach and East Hill



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St Nicholas Church



Built in 1854, the museum was originally the Fishermen's Church of St Nicholas. Members of the fishing community seldom attended nearby churches of All Saints or St Clements, so St Nicholas was built specially for them. At first opposed by the fishermen, the church soon became popular. Although never formally consecrated, it is still used today for baptisms, harvest festivals and carol concerts.

At the beginning of World War 2 in 1939 the area known as the "Stade", which included the land upon which the Church stood, was occupied by the Military and became "off limits" to civilians. After the war it was not reopened as a church for various reasons and was used for storage until opened as a museum in 1956 by the Old Hastings Preservation Society.

The church was built as a "Chapel of Ease" and was regularly attended by families of the fishing community. On some occasions the wives and families of fishermen waited for them to return, particularly if they were out in bad weather. There have also been Memorial Services held here to remember those lost at sea.

It has been said that the building may be haunted although nobody has ever seen a ghost as far as we know. However there is a photo taken around 1930 which appears to show two ghostly figures also when the pictures was taken the church was empty. Moreover the atmosphere inside when closed and unlit is certainly eerie and "interesting."

Why might the museum be haunted? Make some notes for your own short story.



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The Enterprise

The centrepiece of the museum is the **Enterprise, RX278**, a sailing "lugger" built in 1912 by Tom Betts, whose boatyard was where the fish market now stands. Built for local fishermen Tom and Jack Adams, she was first skippered by Richard "Grizzle" Phillips, and then by Harold Pepper who bought the boat in 1944. Harold Pepper donated the Enterprise to the museum in 1955.



What is the meaning of the RX number on the side of the Enterprise?

What are some of the differences between the old fishing boats, like the Enterprise, and modern fishing boats?



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The Fishermen's Museum, Hastings

Answer Sheet

1) Bob Lower's model fishing boat

- The one on the right is the *Enterprise*, which real boat is on display on the Museum. The left one is the old Life Boat.

2) The Albatross

- Mr Parkin shot the albatross in the South Atlantic on December 2nd 1890. Later he gave it to Mrs Prideaux's who brought it to the museum on January 3rd 1964.
- This albatross wingspan is 2.80, he was not full grown.
- Because they are usually found in Southern Hemisphere.

3) The Stained Glass Window

- Biddy and the tub boat, the *Enterprise*, one half of the *Golden Sovereign*, The Netshops, the Albatross

4) The Horse Drawn Capstan

5) The Winkle King

- For ceremonial purposes.

6) The Tubman

- His name was Biddy, he was a fisherman and a member of the Hastings lifeboat crew. He performed acrobatics in his tub at sea for the people on vacation.

7) The Net Shops

- Because there was a shortage of space and also the rent depended on the space they occupied on the floor. They are generally eight foot square and some even have cellars! Also the sea used to come much closer to the shore than nowadays. They are black because they used tar to waterproof them but it was highly flammable.
- When people were very poor they used them to live in such as *Half Sovereign Cottage*. If a smuggler was caught his boat used to be cut in two and thrown into a 'condemned hole' so it could never be used again. The Museum is partly built over such a hole: Smugglers were then hanged.

8) The Stade

- Boats, Netshops, the museums, seagulls, the life boat station, the fish market, tractors...
- Five
- A female cuttlefish, which attract the male who want to reproduce

9) William Henry Borrow's paintings

- He lived in Hastings between 1840 and 1905, during the Victorian area.
- The sea was closer. The boats have sails. The fish were landed straight onto the beach.

10) The Church of St Nicholas

11) The Enterprise

- The RX identifies the boat's harbour. Normally the first and last letter of the port is used, eg. RE, the first and last letters of Rye but when registration practice changed after 1868 this was used by another harbour (Ryde or Ramsgate). Therefore, it was decided to use the 'X' from Sussex. You will notice Hastings boats will have 'Hastings, Port of Rye' to identify them as Hastings boats.
- The old boats had sails and couldn't go out without wind; they didn't have radios to communicate with anyone on land; radars to know where the rocks were or GPS to navigate.



