

## Millennium Stones Writing Workshop

### Millennium Stones

The Millennium Stones at Gatton Park consist of 10 stones made from Caithness Stone standing in a circle. Each stone was designed to represent a 200 year time period and is inscribed with words from its respective era. Words reflect different philosophical thoughts and these are represented by typography and design of the stone, as well as the text. The stones were placed on site by the Jerusalem Trust in 2000. It was thought to be an ideal location as the ancient Pilgrim's Way goes through the estate according to archive material held at Gatton Park.

### Stone circles

Stone Circles can be found throughout the British Isles, for example in Cumbria, Cornwall and Oxford. People visit these prehistoric remains to photograph, draw and wonder why and when and by whom they were built.

A lot of stone circles have stories to go with them. For example, a 69 stone circle called 'Long Meg and her daughters' in Cumbria.



'Long Meg' is the tallest of the 69 stones, standing outside the circle. Local legend claims that Long Meg was a witch, who with her daughters, were turned to stone. They were turned to stone by a magician who caught them dancing on the Sabbath (Sunday) which in those days was not allowed. It is

said that if the circle is moved or destroyed, terrible misfortune in the form of a ferocious storm will fall upon those responsible. These stones are also said to be uncountable and if anyone does actually manage to count the stones twice in a row then the spell will be broken.

### **On site activities**

Get the children to stand in a circle: does it feel any different from standing in a crowd, or in line? Discuss why stones are set in circles, then why and when words are set in stone, e.g. as memorials, to mark important occasions.

Focus more closely on one or two of the quotations in the circle.

e.g. 'The deed is all, the glory nothing.'

'Do not wish to be anything but what you are  
and try to be that perfectly.'

Discuss what they mean. Do the children agree with these thoughts?

Typography and stone shapes (can be interspersed with letter work)

Consider how these are used to effect. Possible discussion points:

- how different fonts and letter size effect how we read the quotations. e.g. words all in CAPITALS stand out = importance.
- you have to work harder to read what is said – in keeping with a complex thought (e.g. the spiral).
- some lay-outs echo the shape of what their describing e.g. the sea lines go in waves.
- the word shallow disappears – why? (Shakespeare quote).
- some text reads vertically instead of horizontally, or both e.g. 'The deed is all, the glory nothing.' Notice the shape that this makes - what does it look like (a cross, a sword...)?
- The shape of the stone e.g. like a key; a puzzle piece.
- The texture of the stone, the colour.

Close-up on letter shapes. (Choose one from the stones as an example.)

Consider how words are made up of letters and how each different letter of the alphabet has a particular character according to its shape – e.g. angular/rounded/thin – and how it stands. Demonstrate this by standing legs astride, arms folded, in the shape of a capital A, and ask the children to guess which letter you are. Now ask them to stand in the same way: how does it feel? (e.g. safe, sturdy, angry). Now try another letter. e.g. a 'T'. Does this feel different? Do any words spring to mind? Do those words contain the letter 't'? Think of some that do.

The guessing game: Divide the children into pairs or small groups. Ask them to take turns at holding themselves in the shape of an unnamed letter; their

partners have to guess which letter they are. (Some might want to form letter shapes with others.) Share thoughts about how it felt being a particular letter. Was it any different being an upper or lowercase letter and, if so, how?

### Typography exercise

The typography on the stones was chosen as a result of the text and of the stone itself. After looking at the text on the stone, carry out this exercise to reinforce the idea that lettering can tell us something even before we read the words. You will need to photocopy and enlarge the fonts below.

<b>Gatton</b> <b>Park</b>	Gatton Park
<i>Gatton</i> <i>Park</i>	Gatton Park

It would be a good idea to ask 4 children to hold up each different font and stand at the front. The rest of the children then need to decide which font best suits the following purposes and why.

- A Birthday party invitation
- A newspaper article
- A history project
- A safety sign

For example the top left box contains a font which would be best used for a safety sign, because the lettering is bold and clear to read. It is a font that can be read quickly too, which is important in terms of safety.

### Word work (written and oral)

Ask the children if they have a favourite letter and why they like it. Get them to think of a word that explains how that letter makes them feel or what it represents for them. (Good idea to ban names!)

e.g. 'I' looks tall, straight, strong = 'independent'.

It may be useful to jot this down. Does their word incorporate their chosen letter? If not, get them to think of an appropriate word that does (it doesn't have to begin with the letter.)

Share some of the words: how do they sound? How do they feel in the mouth as you say them?

e.g. 'crud' sounds like a stomp – short, hard.

'Popcorn' pops in the mouth as you say it.

With older pupils you may consider how harsh plosive consonants and short or rounded vowel sounds affect this.

### **Developing ideas - written word work and design (may be done on site or back in the classroom)**

Choose a favourite word. It may be a word that came up in the earlier exercise, or something with more significance (again, no names!) limiting it to just one word encourages them to think about the importance of choosing a meaningful and/or unusual words that would 'earn' its place on a stone. They may choose the word for its meaning/associations/the sound of it/how it looks on the page or a mixture of all (the more reasons the better!)

Associations. Ask them what does this word means to them personally? Be specific. (e.g. words like happy are vague: why does it make you feel happy?) For older pupils this may lead to a personal definition.

e.g. *family* - safe, secure, love, acceptance.

*family* means home.

With older pupils you may extend this to more philosophical thought by introducing some expressions or quotations they can relate to or may know. Do they have a favourite line from a poem, a song? Why do they like it?

Doodle. Get the children to write their word or phrase in various ways that reflect or emphasise its meaning.

e.g. Independent/ independent / INDEPENDENT/ inDEPENDent

The letters may get bigger or bolder. Would you write it vertically or horizontally? Up and down or straight? Which font would you choose? Why?

Refer back to designs on the stones.

Draw the stone with the word/phrase inside it. Encourage them to consider a suitable shape for their stone.

e.g. the word 'unity' may suggest something almost circular.

Think about what the stone is to be made from – real or imaginary (older pupils may take into account texture, colour, etc.) If making a model point out it must have a strong enough base to support the weight. (You may illustrate this with examples of what won't work!)

### **Craft activities**

#### 1) Make a clay stone

Demonstrate how to model the stone in clay and, if able, carve the lettering on in pencil or other instrument.

Create a shadow: Ask them to draw the silhouette of this stone onto card or fresh paper and cut it out to lay at the base of their stone. They may write the words/text and any more intricate design work on the 'shadow' if unable to do so on the stone.

Arrange these models in your own stone circles with the paper shadows in place when they have finished. Alternatively:

#### 2) Make a card

Get them to draw the stones on card (you can experiment with different colours and textures of paper or card to effect).

Ask them to cut out their 'stones' and write their words/text on them. (With older children, using flaps and stiff card the stones may be designed to stand up.)

Alternatively they may make a greetings card by folding some card in two and sticking the stone cut-out on the front. The word/phrase may be written on the stone and any associations or extended word work (even poems!) may be written inside the card.

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