

# Tell Me a Story: Tribrach



*This activity has been designed to support Arts Award Explore but can readily be adapted for other levels or used to inspire fun activities undertaken without formal Arts Award assessment.*

**The inspiration for this session is a knapped flint object called a tribrach which is over 2000 years old.**

*This is a tribrach, a mysterious artefact made from stone which is over 2,000 years old. It has three arms or branches, which is what tribrach means. You might have noticed that one is slightly longer than the other? We have no idea what it was used for. Some archaeologists think it might be a tool that was attached to a wooden shaft by one of its arms. Some think it might have been used in a ceremony of some sort and could have belonged to an important person. Your idea is as good as ours! It's possibly from the Neolithic or early Bronze Age. They have all been found by accident and not part of an archaeological excavation, so it is very hard to date them. It is extremely rare. Only three similar sized tribrachs have been found in the British Isles. One miniature tribrach has also been found which was only 42mm long and 7mm at its thinnest part. The tribrach was found on a beach near Ventnor at some point after 1850 by Dr Martin. Some similar items have been found in New Zealand, Yucatan, Honduras and Russia.*



## Initial discussion at the Museum of Island History

In groups of 8-10, look carefully at the tribrach:

- ◆ Is it as big as your hand?
- ◆ Why do you think it is not smooth?
- ◆ Explain what knapping was and look for signs of where it was knapped.
- ◆ Ask for suggestions of what you think it is.

## Aim: Make up a story that has a tribrach in it

**Scenario:** Collectively, choose a setting, season and era for your story to help inform choices for rest of its creation.

Hand out questions to pairs of children. The children should write brief notes, or draw something, to remind them of their answers.

1. Choose one or two people for our story. Give them names and tell us a bit about them eg. age, character, homelife.
2. What were their favourite things to eat? What did they hate eating?
3. Think of some things they might have been scared of.
4. Think of a special skill our characters had. What could they do with this skill?
5. Describe the tribrach. What is it made from? Where was it found?
6. Who made the tribrach and what was it used for?
7. Who did it belong to? Who gave it to them?
8. What happened to the tribrach? How can it be part of the story?

Gather the ideas together and create a story. Record it in storyboard form. Work out who is going to tell which bits. Record on phone/tablet. Tell it to other groups at the museum if time allows.

## After your visit

Tell the stories created in assembly.

Record and make stories available at listening station/ put on school website

The whole group could make a book of their story, with each person contributing the section they created.

*If you're doing Arts Award, don't forget to record this and check the recording of the dialogue for audibility for assessment and re record if necessary. Ideally, ask the children to say their first names on the recording to ensure the recording can be matched with other assessment data.*

## Remote Learning Suggestion

1. Use the questions above and, either alone, or with a partner create a story that features the tribrach. Record on your phone/ tablet.
2. Some people think the tribrach may have been a ceremonial object or a trophy awarding athletic success. Write the rules for a game that involved throwing something like a tribrach. Record a 1 minute commentary given by someone watching a final throwing match between two rival tribes.
3. Design your own trophy for a throwing competition.

## Other suggestions to help achieve Arts Award

Don't forget that the creation of dialogue is one of the range of activities required to achieve Art Award 'Explore' . The evidence for this would be the recording of the presentation in a digital format (e.g.. memory stick or upload) to be submitted with the rest of the portfolio and accompanying photographs of participation in the activities/assemblies.

Children also need to give a personal response to their participation eg. "I enjoyed doing this because..."

## Art activities

- ◆ The tribrach is 203mm in diameter and 63mm thick at the centre – and it weighs 740g. Make a replica from salt dough ([tiny.cc/salt-dough](http://tiny.cc/salt-dough)). Bake in the oven to harden and then paint.
- ◆ Choreograph a 2 minute dance for the opening ceremony of the Neolithic Games.
- ◆ Write a story inspired by the tribrach as a possible boomerang type object: 'What goes around comes around'.

## Art institutions and events

Using the Tribrach as a competitive throwing item or as a trophy could lead to looking at the link between art and sport eg Olympic opening ceremony <http://tiny.cc/olympics-opening>

## Other Artists

- ◆ Flint knapping as an art form: [flintknappers.com](http://flintknappers.com)
- ◆ If the tribrach is seen as a sculpture, it could lead to looking at carving eg.

Local wood carver, Paul Sivell:

[www.thecarvedtree.co.uk](http://www.thecarvedtree.co.uk)

Barbara Hepworth: [tiny.cc/tate-hepworth](http://tiny.cc/tate-hepworth)

## Other Treasures from the Museum of Island History

### Saxon Skillet

The skillet dates from the 7th to 9th century. It is made of copper alloy and has a Christian symbol on the handle. A skillet is usually used in cooking but this one was probably used in baptism ceremonies in a period when Anglo-Saxon England was slowly becoming Christianised. It is the first object of its kind to be found on the Isle of Wight and one of just a few in England. In 661AD Christian warlord Wulfhere attacked the Isle of Wight, sending Eappa the priest 'bring baptism' to the island. Then in 686 Caedwalla invaded the Island and exterminated some 1200 'heathen' families.



#### Activities

- ◆ Make up a story about the last owner.
- ◆ What food was in here? Make up some 'Marvellous recipes for solving life's problems'

### Portrait of Giuseppe Garibaldi

Garibaldi visited the Island in 1864. He stayed at Brook House and this painting was commissioned while he was there. Garibaldi was a celebrity of his day; a crowd of over 2000 people welcomed his arrival in Cowes. The shipbuilders J.S. Whites even gave their workers the afternoon off to mark the event. When Garibaldi visited Newport, the streets were decorated with flags and banners, thousands cheered his arrival. He was greeted by the mayor at the Guildhall and later dined in the council chamber.



#### Activities

- ◆ If pictures could talk. What was Garibaldi looking at? What did they talk about while he was being painted?
- ◆ Write a welcome speech for a visiting celebrity/royalty.
- ◆ Do a pen portrait and a painted portrait of a friend.

### Arts Award

To achieve an Arts Award -Explore Level, children and young people have to collect evidence in an individual arts log of their experiences of:

- ◆ taking part in a range of arts activities, including a personal response about what has inspired them about taking part
- ◆ the work of artists or craftspeople and arts organisations
- ◆ creating a piece of artwork
- ◆ sharing with others what they have enjoyed and/or achieved through completing their Arts Award

Refer to the Arts Award website for detailed guidelines: [www.artsaward.org.uk](http://www.artsaward.org.uk)

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