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Burgh Castle Roman Fort

Activities Pack for Schools





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Burgh Castle Fort Activities Pack for Schools

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See www.norfarchtrust.org.uk/schools for further resources and information on how to book volunteer support for school visits.

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1 INTRODUCTION: WHY STUDY BURGH CASTLE FORT?

Study of the site provides opportunities for fulfilling National Curriculum requirements in the following subject areas.

History:

Key Stage 1:

- Events beyond living memory
- Their own locality

Key Stage 2:

- Iron Age tribal kingdoms, farming and culture
- The Roman Empire and its impact on Britain
 - the power of its army
 - British resistance, for example, Boudica
 - 'Romanisation' of Britain and the impact of technology
 - culture and beliefs, including early Christianity History
- Britain's settlement by Anglo-Saxons
 - Roman withdrawal from Britain in c. AD 410 and the fall of the western Roman Empire
 - Anglo-Saxon invasions, settlements and kingdoms: place names
- a study of an aspect of history or a site dating from a period beyond 1066 that is significant in the locality.

Key Stage 3:

- a local history study
- the study of an aspect or theme in British history that consolidates and extends pupils' chronological knowledge from before 1066

Geography curriculum:

Key stage 1

- develop knowledge about the world, the United Kingdom and their locality.

Key stage 2:

- use fieldwork to observe, measure, record and present the human and physical features **in the local area** using a range of methods, including sketch maps, plans and graphs, and digital technologies.

English

- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas.



2 ON-SITE ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Walk back in time

Description:

Volunteers lead a group from the English Heritage Site Board to the entrance to the Fort field. Pupils are told that this is a 'walk back in time'.

Purpose/ educational value:

History:

- Pupils develop their chronological knowledge and understanding of British, local and world history,
- They address and sometimes devise historically valid questions
- They develop their understanding of change, cause, similarity and difference, and significance through their exploration of the site.

English:

- listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas

Outcome: Students have an understanding of the context of the Roman Fort in time, and the history and development of the site;

Time needed: 15 minutes

Resources:

Flags (optional); Timeline and steps instructions (as below)

Location on site: Start at English Heritage site board

Activity

- 1 step = 10 years
- Pupils work as a group and count each pace out loud, as instructed by the volunteer.
- Ask the pupils to calculate how many steps they need to take for each event. 'Now we've got to go back 90 years? How many steps?'
- Also, see if they can give dates for events. 'Who knows when Henry VIII was king?'
- Each of the events listed below are marked with a flag/marker (optional).
- At the end the pupils can look back at their journey and see how far back in time they have travelled.



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NOW: 2017 (adjust as necessary...)

1 step: goes back to 2007 [before they were born?]

9 steps = 90 years: WWI starts 1914

50 steps = 500 years: Henry VIII/Tudors 16th century

50 steps – 500 years: Normans invade 1066

20 steps - 200 years: Vikings invade Norfolk AD865

40 steps - 400 years: Anglo-Saxons invade AD410

12 steps – 120 years: Burgh Castle Roman Fort circa AD280

We have arrived in the Roman Period!!

TOTAL 182 steps



Activity 2: Be a Roman Soldier!

Description:

Pupils learn some simple Latin commands and then make their way to the Fort, obeying commands given by the volunteer.

Purpose/ educational value:

History:

- They address and sometimes devise historically valid questions
- They develop their understanding of change, cause, similarity and difference, and significance through their exploration of the site.

English:

- listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas

Outcome: Pupils develop an understanding of the context of the Roman Fort in the wider Roman Empire, and its function.

Time needed: 15 minutes

Resources:

Be a Roman Soldier commands [see below]

Location on site: Start at English Heritage site board [as alternative to 'Walk back in time' activity] or use at any point where it could make walking around the site more engaging for the pupils.

Activity

Latin was the common language across the Empire. Orders were given in Latin, so soldiers from different countries could understand them. March from the car park or other parts of the Fort using Latin commands. You could also try playing a version of 'Simon says'.

Volunteer/teacher reads out each order and explains what they mean (it is a good idea to practise these at school beforehand).

Volunteer/teacher explains that every time they call the order out, the children have to follow it. Practice each order once or twice and then play Simon Says using the different orders until you arrive at your destination.



Be a Roman Soldier!

Move! ("Move-ay")

March!

Accelera! ("Achel-er-a")

Speed up!

Retarda ("Re-tar-da")

Slow down!

Mandatum Captate ("Man-dar-tum Cap-tar-te")

Attention!

Percute! ("Per-coo-shay")

Charge!

Claudorum ("Clow-dorum")

Halt!

Testudo ("Tes-tudo")

A protective screen formed by a body of troops holding their shields above their heads in such a way that the shields overlap.





Activity 3 Guard at the Gate

Description:

Volunteers help pupils to think about the type of people who lived at the Fort site, what kind of jobs and occupations they had, and who would have lived inside the fort, and who would have lived in the Vicus (civilian settlement).

The questions will encourage the pupils to hypothesise and test their own theories; build on their prior knowledge, and ask their own questions.

Purpose/ educational value:

History:

- Pupils develop their chronological knowledge and understanding of British, local and world history,
- They address and sometimes devise historically valid questions
- They develop their understanding of change, cause, similarity and difference, and significance through their exploration of the site.

Geography:

- human geography, including: types of settlement and land use, economic activity including trade links, and the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water

English:

- listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas

Outcome: Students have an understanding of the history and development of the site; of its significance; of its layout and function etc. Pupils have an understanding of the life of the people who lived at the Fort and how it was similar/different to ours.

Time needed: 15 minutes

Location on site: East gate (the main pedestrian entrance)

Resources

- Character cards & Answer Card (see Resources section)
- Replica spears (optional, supplied by volunteers)

Activity

- Introduce the game to the group:



In Roman times this field was divided into two areas, the Fort and the *Vicus* (civilian settlement). The Fort was home to between 500 and 1000 Roman foot soldiers or up to 500 mounted soldiers and their horses.

There are sentries at the gate to the Fort and their job is to decide who lives inside the fort and is allowed in; and who lives in the *Vicus* and will be kept out.

- The teacher/s pick 2 sensible children – who won't favour their friends - to be the Roman sentries.
- Each sentry is given a spear (if available). They stand where the (East) gate to the Fort is and bar the way with their spears by crossing them.
- The other children each take a character card and line up at the gate in front of the sentries.
- One by one the children read out their character card description.
- The 2 sentries decide whether they should be let in or kept out.
- If the sentries decide they should be let in they part their spears and let the character through the gate into the Fort. If they decide they should not be let in they must send the character back into the *Vicus*. These children should stand outside the fort walls.
- When all the children have read their cards, and are either inside or outside the Gate the Answers Card is used by the volunteer to go through all the characters in turn telling the children where they *should* be standing ie. either in the Fort or outside in the *Vicus*. Anyone in the wrong place moves to where they should be.
- Ask the children to summarise who lives where - the Roman army lives in the Fort and everyone else lives in the *Vicus*.
- Then ask them:
 - Do you/your characters get on with each other? What might cause problems?
 - Do you need each other? [Yes – the army needs food etc and the people in the *Vicus* need protection etc.



Activity 4: Measuring the Walls

Description

Pupils learn about the measurement systems used in Roman times, and then measure parts of the fort using these measurements

Purpose/ educational value:

History:

- Pupils develop their understanding of similarity and difference
- 'Romanisation' of Britain and the impact of technology especially on public health culture and beliefs

English:

- listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations

Maths

- measuring and estimating

Outcome: Students have an understanding of the history and development of the site; of its significance; of its layout; of its size.

Time needed: 15 minutes

Resources: Questions sheet (see below)

Location on site: South and east walls of fort site

Activity

What are the walls made of?

- do you know what the stones are called that make up the wall [Flint]? Where do you think they come from?

Explain

- Flints can be found underground in Norfolk. Deep down in this part of Norfolk, but nearer the surface in other areas, and was probably collected from fields or dug out in shallow quarries and brought to Burgh Castle by boat.
- Put your hand on the wall (and invite the pupils to do the same), on a prominent flint, and get the pupils to think about the fact that that the flint was placed there by a Romano-British builder nearly 2000 years ago, and we can touch that same flint.
- Before the Romans came to Britain, buildings were made from timber and earth. Using flint, brick and lime mortar was a new technology



- After the Roman period, local people went back to building with timber and earth. Flint building didn't happen again for 600 years!
- What would the Romano-British think of us and the houses we live in?

Units of measurement

- If you were asked to measure your desks/tables back at school, what would you use? (rulers, tape measure.)
- What measurement units do you use? (centimetres, metres) Do they know about the measurements units 'inches' 'feet' and 'yard'?

Explain

- In Roman times units of measurement were based on parts of the body.
- *inch*, based on length of thumb from knuckle to end of nail
- *cubit* from elbow to tip of fingers
- *foot*, or *pes* length of foot. Plural of *pes* is *pedes* and this is the origin of the word pedestrian (do they know what pedestrian means?).
- 5000 *pedes* is a Roman mile, *milles passus*, almost exactly the same distance as an English mile today - and is where we get the word mile from.
- Until very recently, in Britain we used the measurements of inch, foot, and yard established by the Romans. The metric system was only adopted by this country in the last forty years.

Activity:

- Introduce another measurement unit: 'cubit'. Ask a child to demonstrate a cubit by using their forearm to measure the thickness of the wall (about 5 cubits).

Measuring the walls

- Explain to the pupils that 2 steps equals 1 Roman 'pace'; and that a 'pace' is about 1 metre (or a yard)

Activity

- Count the number of steps from the fallen bastion in the south wall to the south-east corner (i.e. half the wall).
- Help the pupils to work out the length in metres of the section of wall we have just 'paced' – by multiplying the number of steps x 2.
- Then help them to work out the length of the whole south wall (Multiply by 2).
- Now measure the distance from the south-east corner to the gate i.e. walking along half the east wall.
- Help the pupils to work out the length of the whole east wall – by multiplying by 2.
- They can now work out the approximate measurement for all four walls of the fort by adding the south wall and east wall totals together, and multiplying by 2. This is an opportunity to check they realise that there was originally a fourth wall.



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- Help the pupils to understand the size inside the fort by relating it to a football pitch
- ask them to guess how many could fit into the fort [Answer is 4]



Activity 5: Who built the walls?

Description:

Volunteers work with a group to work out what the fort was built out of and who organised its construction

Purpose/ educational value:

History:

- Pupils develop their understanding of similarity and difference
- 'Romanisation' of Britain and the impact of technology especially on public health culture and beliefs

English:

- listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations

Geography:

- name and locate places in the area
- identify human and physical characteristics, key topographical features and land-use patterns; and understand how some of these aspects have changed over time
- human geography, including: types of settlement and land use, economic activity including trade links, and the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water

Outcome: Pupils will develop insights into the lives of people in the Roman period, through exploring how important buildings were made and who was involved in building them.

Time needed: 15 minutes

Resources: Picture cards (See Resources section)

Location on site: East and South walls

Activity

1. **From the East Gate (main entrance) walk the children along the *outside* of the Fort wall. Stop at an appropriate time and talk about:**
 - How the original flint facing has been taken away and used elsewhere for building material
 - The Bastions: why do they think they are there? [they act as watch towers, provide space on top of the wall for 360 degree views.



- From this, check that all the pupils realise what the building is [a fort!]
- What was the fort for? [possibly defence from outside attack, but first and foremost a watching post to protect trade through the estuary; and a harbour for imports and exports]

2. Walk round to the south side

- encourage the children to have a closer look at the wall, touch it etc , but explain that they musn't try to break bits off!
- ask them to gather around and discuss what it is made of

They may be put off by the way the wall leans - explain that it has been fixed with steel fixings and is checked regularly.

Points to elicit from them:

- Ask them to name the materials the wall is made out of [flint, brick, mortar]
- Why do they think the bricks are used in straight lines? [levelling, and tying-in courses to tie the wall together through its thickness]
- What are bricks made from? [clay from ground]
- Where might the bricks have come from? [probably made locally – show picture of brick kiln]
- Where did the flint come from?
[Flint came from different sources depending on locality. **Gravel pits:** globular in shapes as the result of erosion that has taken place during the movement of the gravel by glaciation; **Chalk pits:** varied and irregulars shape, and can be very big; **Seashore:** eroded smooth and round by the action of the sea; **Field surfaces:** similar to those found in gravel pits but usually smaller in size and in many cases shattered. Flint for Burgh Castle Fort probably gathered from fields and/or local quarries to avoid transport costs.
Point out that the facing flints have been knapped, the rubble core has not.
- What is the mortar made from? [limestone – dug as stone from ground in another part of the country - imported from elsewhere [see picture card of Roman cargo ship]

3. Who built the wall?

Use the picture cards to help elicit the answers. Give the relevant picture to the pupil who gets the answer.

- Ask them who they think would have ordered the wall to be built? [The Roman Emperor]
- Who would have received the order here at Burgh Castle [the General]
- Who would he have asked to design the Fort? [the surveyor]
- Who would have actually built the fort [Roman soldiers, and probably local people too]



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The children may not know the word for Emperor and may say King instead – point out the difference.

The children may not know the word 'surveyor' or what a surveyor does – will need to be explained.

Use pictures to talk about available technology and how the walls would have been built. Point out that it was the Romans who brought masonry building to Norfolk – before this building materials were timber and mud/clay. After the Romans left, flint was not used for buildings for 600 years (11th century), and brick not made here for over 800 years.

Pupils with picture cards can stand in a line along the wall so the group can see how many people it took to build the wall.

Extra activities

- If time permits, have a look at the upturned bastion beforehand.
- If the group is not going to do the Ships and Food activity ask them to trace out the horizon on the other side of the water, so they can understand how much of this area was underwater and why it was a good idea to build a fort here.



Activity 6: Ships & Food

This activity gets pupils to think about what the Roman Fort and its context looked like in the 3rd century. They learn about how the Fort was by the side of the Great Estuary and important for trade routes. This leads on to what was imported and exported, and the kinds of food and drink available in Roman times, compared to modern diets.

Purpose/ educational value:

History:

- Pupils develop their chronological knowledge and understanding of British, local and world history
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- They develop their understanding of change, cause, similarity and difference, and significance through their exploration of the site.

Geography:

- name and locate places in the area
- identify human and physical characteristics, key topographical features and land-use patterns; and understand how some of these aspects have changed over time
- human geography, including: types of settlement and land use, economic activity including trade links, and the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water

English:

- listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas

Outcome: Pupils will develop insights into the context of the Fort in the wider Roman Empire, and into the lives of people in the Roman period, through exploring their diet, where different foods come from, and when they became available

Time needed: 15 minutes

Resources

- Food and Drink images (see Resources section)
- List of foods available during Roman period (see below)

List of foods

Below is a list of food and drink which might have been consumed at Burgh Castle Fort



- Vegetables: purple carrots, cucumbers, cabbages, radishes, garlic, onions, leeks, peas, broad beans, celery, turnips, asparagus.
- Olives and olive oil.
- Herbs: Rosemary, mint, thyme, bay, basil, cumin – and a strong tasting fish sauce called “garum” or “liquamen”
- Fruit and nuts: Apples, grapes, mulberries, cherries, walnuts and sweet chestnuts.
- Animals: Chickens, rabbits, pheasants, brown hares, sheep, cattle (milk and beef), pigs, geese, horses, dogs, deer, wild boar ... and dormice!
- Mussels, oysters and fish
- Honey
- Drink: Wine (imported and local), mead, ale and weak beer.
- Water was usually clean enough to drink in the countryside, as long as it wasn't polluted by the runoff from animal waste or industry. Romans thought it very uncivilised to drink wine neat– it was always mixed with water at the table.

Activity

What can you see and hear today?

- Hear - boats; tree; reed beds; rustling trees, mobile phones; cars
- See - 3 walls of the fort; church tower; windmills; houses; fields; grass; flowers; people; dogs; river; boats

If we were standing here in Roman times what would we have seen and heard?

Get pupils to give some answers and talk about how different things would have been then

Put out your arm and index finger and trace along the darker line of the ridge – where the land meets the sky – on the far side of the marshes in the distance.

In Roman Times the whole area in-between was a 'great estuary' (the mouth of a large river where it meets the sea) – so all the marshes we can see would have been under water. No Great Yarmouth town or schools.

So what would not have been there in Roman times?

None of the buildings, no marshes – just sea and some ships

Why do you think the Roman's built the Fort here?

Possible reasons:

- Possibly a naval base built to control and protect ships bringing goods in and out of the country from the North Sea. Probably a harbour here.
- To protect the area from invaders from across the sea. It is thought unlikely that any Saxon raiders actually did attack here. They were more likely to creep ashore in small bands away from the fort.



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What do you think is missing from the Fort?

The 4th wall. Probably fell over and sunk into the marshes (and was used by locals to make other buildings later)

What was brought into the Fort from the sea? e.g. Wine, olive oil, other foods, equipment for soldiers, pottery.

What was taken away on ships?

Probably grain and wool

Where was it going to?

Other parts of Britain, and other parts of the Roman Empire

Show map of Roman Empire (see Resources section)

Where did the Romano-British people living here find the things they needed for day to day living?

- The *Vicus* (village next to the fort) would have had local traders, providing bread and locally grown food and meat. Also blacksmiths and carpenters to make things. Temples for worship. Inns for drinking

What do you think the Romano-British people ate? Let's look at some pictures and guess.

- Show 1st picture of foods – ask pupils to choose which foods they think were eaten in Roman times.
- Show 2nd picture – what did they get wrong/right? Why were some of the foods not available (Hadn't been discovered yet)



3 WET WEATHER ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Rota board game

Resources

- Paper gaming boards (see Resources section)
- Glass counters (volunteers supply)

Rota is an ancient Roman game similar to the modern game of 'Tic Tac Toe'. The picture shows a 2,000 year old Rota gaming board scratched into the floor in the Roman city of Leptis Magna in Libya.



Rules:

- For 2 players, each having 3 counters.
- The object of the game is to get 3 counters in a row.
- The players each put one piece on the board, in turn, in any open 'spot' (the spots are shown as circles in the pictures above) attempting to form a row of 3.
- When all 3 pieces are on the board, each player in turn must move one piece.
- A piece may move along any line or curving edge of the circle to the next empty spot.
- A piece may **NOT** jump other pieces nor move more than one spot.
- The first player to get 3 in a row wins.



Activity 2: Guard at the gate indoors

Resources:

- Use laminated photo of East Gate to show children where the guards would have stood (See Resources section).
- Set up a 'gate' using two chairs, or perhaps use a door into one of the rooms. Continue with activity as if you were on site.

Activity 3: Who built the wall indoors

Resources

- Use images of the wall to discuss the materials (See Resources section).
- Use the picture cards as on site to discuss who would have built the wall

Activity 4: Food & Drink indoors

Resources

- Use the resources from 'Ships and Food' for a more formal activity in groups using paper and pencils (see Resources section for images).

Show the children the image of food and drink and ask them to group them into items that were available in the Roman period and those that were not.

- Pupils could work in groups to draw up their lists.
- Get them to think about the questions they need to ask: e.g. Where do the items or their ingredients come from? How would they have been brought to *Venta Icenorum*? How are they made?
- Once each group has completed their list, show them the next slide which has the food grouped correctly
- What did they get right? What did they get wrong? Why?



Activity 5: Mosaic - making

Resources

- Paper mosaic grids (see resources)
- Self adhesive paper tesserae (volunteers to supply)

Wealthy people in the Roman period liked to decorate their floors and walls with mosaics. A mosaic is a picture that is made up of small pieces of coloured stone called *tesserae*. More than 2,000 Roman period mosaics have been discovered in Britain. Most of them are decorated with patterns and about 200 contain figures of animals or people.

Here are some examples of Roman period mosaics that were discovered in Sussex:



You can make a simple mosaic by sticking some of our tesserae onto a card. Here are some ideas for your own mosaic:



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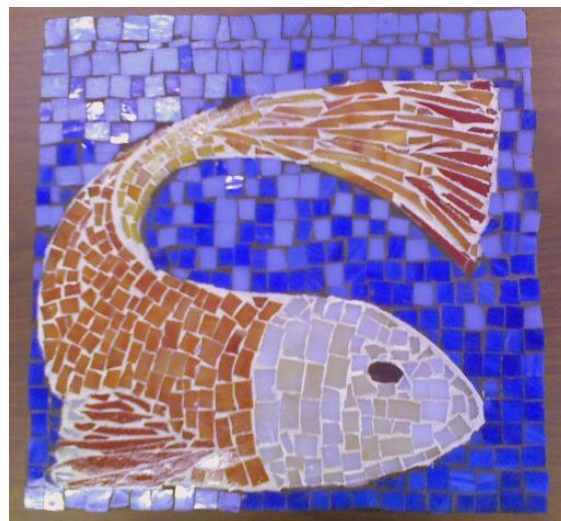
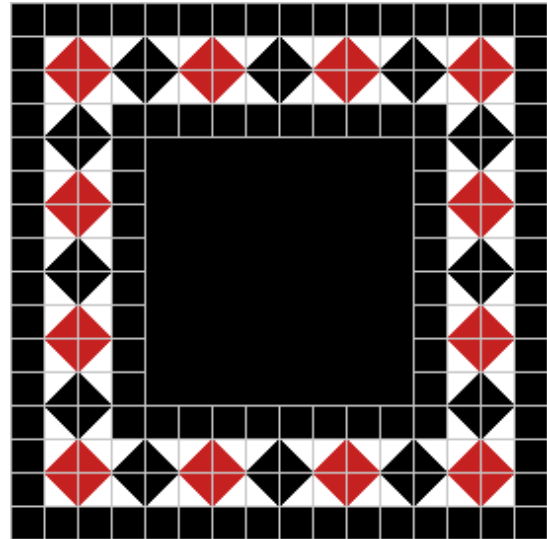
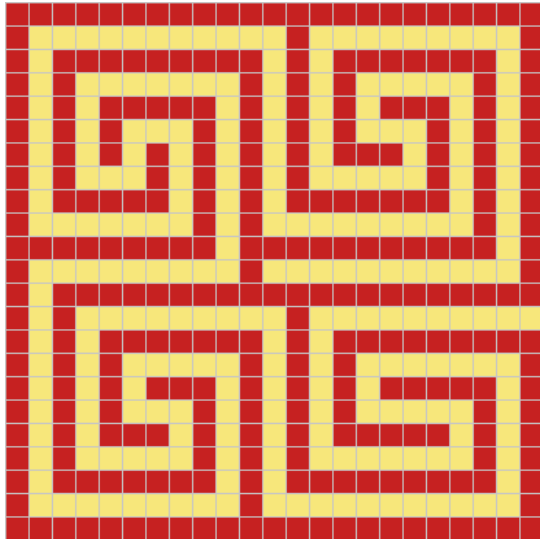


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4 OTHER RESOURCES

The following resources are available to download from the Norfolk Archaeological Trust's website (<http://www.norfarchtrust.org.uk/schools-information>) in the Burgh Castle Fort section:

Appendix 1: Guard at the Gates Picture cards

Appendix 2: Who built the walls? Picture cards

Appendix 3: Picture resource: includes Maps; Food & Drink; images of Fort walls)

Appendix 4: Rota game board

Appendix 5: Mosaic grid

Appendix 6: English Heritage Interpretation panels

Appendix 7: NAT interpretation panels