



**STORIES  
FROM  
THE SEA**



# **STORIES FROM THE SEA**

**Using Museum Collections to support Literacy**

**A resource for Primary school teachers**

# Introduction

## Stories from the Sea

Stories from the Sea is a partnership between the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, and Time and Tide Museum, Cromer Museum and Henry Blogg Museum in Norfolk. Together we create and deliver innovative, curriculum-linked programmes and resources to develop children's skills and confidence in writing and storytelling from EYFS to KS2.

As an island nation, Britain, its people and its relationship with the wider world has been shaped by the sea. Using our combined collections and themes, we draw on Britain's rich maritime heritage – its stories from the sea – connecting it with local stories and children's lives today.

From the Tempest to The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch, the sea has inspired some of our most enduring and much loved stories. Stories from the Sea inspires the young writers of tomorrow by immersing them in the salty world of fearsome pirates, intrepid explorers, sailors, ships and shipwrecks through world-class museum collections, intriguing stories and unforgettable characters.

## Using this resource

Do you visit the seaside for your holidays? Have your family travelled across the sea to live in Britain? Does someone you know work on the sea? Or maybe you are lucky enough to live by the sea? For people living in Britain, the sea is a part of everybody's lives – even those who have never even paddled in it. From carving out the cliffs, coves and beaches of its coastline, to bringing new people, ideas and delicious things to eat and drink from countries on the other side of the world, the sea has shaped the multi-cultural Britain of today and the lives of its people.

This resource supports the development of children's skills and confidence in writing and storytelling at Key Stages 1 and 2, through the theme of 'ships and the sea'. Drawing on real people and events from Britain's extraordinary maritime history, and fascinating objects from our museums, it provides a wealth of useful and engaging curriculum-linked opportunities to enrich children's learning.

It is designed for use in the classroom and includes concise background information for teachers, tried and tested ideas for classroom activities and a set of collection images. It can be used to support a visit to one of our museums or as a stand-alone classroom resource.

## Museums: a rich resource for learning

Full of weird, wonderful, mysterious and captivating things to stimulate curiosity and ignite imaginations, museums are a rich and unique resource for children's learning. Real objects, artworks, maps, photographs, letters and diaries create meaningful and memorable connections with people and places from different times and cultures. Active, hands-on, multi-sensory and immersive learning experiences enrich children's skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.

From using one simple object or painting as a creative stimulus, to exploring interactive displays and meeting colourful characters during a visit, museums offer a wealth of opportunities to support the development of children's skills, motivation and confidence in writing and storytelling. Through museums and their collections, children:

*Stories from the Sea has really helped to make our curriculum more exciting and helped us to make it more local and relevant to the children. It's too good a resource not to use.*

*The events are so engaging - especially for children who say they 'don't like writing'*

- **develop new language and vocabulary** to help them narrate, persuade, question, describe and argue in their writing
- **generate ideas** as they explore using all their senses – what stories might a pirate's sword tell? What might we see, hear, smell as we climb inside a painting and step on board a sailing ship rolling in a tempestuous sea?
- **create believable characters, imaginative settings and inventive plots** for stories through encounters with real people, places and events
- **encounter a range of different types of writing** from everyday signs, labels and leaflets, to letters, journals and records of the past, inked in cursive handwriting, sometimes in the strangest of places
- **have a purpose for their writing** through real world experiences, challenges and responses.

## Our Museums

### National Maritime Museum

Discover gripping stories of exploration and endeavour that shaped the world we live in today in the world's largest maritime museum.  
<http://www.rmg.co.uk/national-maritime-museum>

### Time & Tide Museum

Discover Great Yarmouth's fascinating history, its rich maritime and fishing heritage and some of the colourful characters who made their living from the sea, all housed in a converted Victorian herring curing works.  
[http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/Visit\\_Us/Time\\_and\\_Tide/index.htm](http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/Visit_Us/Time_and_Tide/index.htm)

### The RNLI Henry Blogg Museum

Visit the Museum and learn about the life of Henry Blogg, the most decorated lifeboatman in RNLI history and discover the remarkable stories of the Cromer lifeboat crew and their daring rescues at sea.  
<https://rnli.org/find-my-nearest/museums/henry-blogg-museum>

### Cromer Museum

Step inside a cosy Victorian fisherman's cottage, explore Cromer's history as a seaside resort and learn about the lives of the fishing community that supported the Cromer lifeboat.  
[http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/Visit\\_Us/Cromer\\_Museum/index.htm](http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/Visit_Us/Cromer_Museum/index.htm)

*The children's writing has had a step change. They're using adjectives and adverbs all the time now!*

*'The work they've been producing is some of the best we've ever seen. I think that's because the Museum really gave them a tactile sense of what life was like. I don't think they'd have got that any other way.'*

Our museum sessions and online resources provide practical, tried and tested activities, tips and ideas to develop children's skills and confidence in writing and storytelling skills both during a museum visit and in the classroom. Through Stories from the Sea, children are enthused, motivated, proud of their work and have a desire to write more. Teachers tell us that skills gained and writing generated are of a consistently high quality and exceed expectations:

Stories from the Sea is funded by Arts Council England's Museums and Schools initiative.



## OUR OTHER RESOURCES



### What stories can they tell?

The Stories from the Sea project delves into Britain's rich maritime heritage using objects and their stories to inspire and support children's writing. As well as this introductory resource, we have produced a wealth of information, images, films and classroom activities on these exciting themes:

### Pirates

Throughout history, people have attacked and stolen from ships transporting goods across the sea. These thieves became known as pirates. While real pirates really did fly the Jolly Roger flag of the skull and cross-bones, and sail the seas in search of 'pieces-of-eight' (Spanish coins), famous stories and films like Treasure Island and The Pirates of the Caribbean have created many pirate myths. Did they really make their victims walk the plank..?

**Find out more about real pirates** like the fearsome Blackbeard who lit live fuses and placed them in his hair and beard to terrify all who tried to cross him, and the terrible, pistol-wielding Anne Bonney **here:** <http://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/explore/sea-ships/pirates>

Find our **Pirates** resources here: <http://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/teacher-resources/stories-from-the-sea/pirates>

## Shipwrecks

For as long as people have sailed the sea in ships, boats and rafts, their vessels have been holed by cannons, overcome by storms or struck by rocks and sunk to the bottom of the sea as shipwrecks. It is thought there are nearly 40,000 shipwrecks waiting to be found off the coast of Britain, each with its own treasures to find and stories to reveal. Perhaps the most famous shipwreck story of all is that of the Titanic, the 'unsinkable' ship which, on the night of April 14th 1912, struck an iceberg and sank to the bottom of the North Atlantic Ocean, taking 1523 of the 2228 men, women and children on board with it.

Find out more about shipwrecks here: <http://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/explore/sea-ships/shipwrecks>

Find our **Shipwrecks** resources here: <http://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/teacher-resources/stories-from-the-sea/shipwrecks>

## Exploration

Just as the mysteries of Space and life on other planets intrigue us today, compelling astronauts to make daring missions into the unknown, the question of what lies across the Sea drove the British explorers of the past to voyage into the uncharted. The frozen worlds of the North and South poles have also inspired remarkable journeys of exploration, often with disastrous consequences.

Find out more about intrepid explorers like Francis Drake, Captain James Cook, Robert Falcon Scott and Ernest Shackleton and their stories of adventure, daring, triumph and disaster here: <http://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/explore/exploration-endeavour>

Find our **Explorers** resource here: <http://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/teacher-resources/stories-from-the-sea/exploration>



The Kongouro from New Holland (Kangaroo). By George Stubbs  
© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.

## Lifesaving at sea

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) is famous for its dedication to safety at sea. Its lifeboats, crewed by volunteers, have been carrying out daring sea rescues off the coast of Britain since it was founded in 1824. One of its most famous lifeboatmen was Henry Blogg who joined the crew at Cromer in Norfolk in 1894 and went on to carry out 387 rescues, saving 873 lives. Find out more and view resources here: <https://rnli.org/find-my-nearest/museums/henry-blogg-museum>

Find out more about ships and the sea here: <http://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/explore/sea-ships>

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

These activities are designed to support the development of children's confidence and skills in writing, and to develop enquiry skills through intriguing, and often unusual, museum objects.

A set of images is included in the next session, each providing a gateway into different sea-related themes, people and stories through collections from our museums. A Fijian canoe made entirely of renewable materials, a high-tech, remotely-operated submersible and Yinke Shonibare's giant 'ship in a bottle' each take us on different voyages over and under the sea. Edward Barlow's extraordinary journal of his adventures at sea inspires us to write about our own lives, while a love token etched into a coin and a decorated ostrich egg remind us just about anything can be used to record our thoughts, feelings and

ideas. Paintings and photographs bring to life the drama of a daring sea rescue and the hustle and bustle of a busy fishing port. An arctic sledge provides a fascinating insight into just what it might have been like to be a frozen explorer searching for the North Pole over 100 years ago.

Project the images onto a whiteboard to look at them really closely, print them out, cut them up or add them to presentations, word documents and other digital applications. Use the classroom activities as described or adapt them to suit your classroom needs.

For even more objects and curriculum-linked activities from Stories from the Sea, exploring themes of Pirates, Exploration, Shipwrecks and Lifesaving visit: [www.rmg.co.uk/storiesfromthesea](http://www.rmg.co.uk/storiesfromthesea)

### Look closer

Spend some time exploring some of the images with the children. What can they find out just from looking carefully? Each image is accompanied by information to support discussion, and questions to help children look closer. Here are some more:

### Objects

- What colour is it?
- What is it made from?
- Might it make a noise?
- What might it smell like?
- What was it made to do?
- Who was it made for?
- Are there any moving parts?
- Is it decorated?
- What is it?

### Paintings and photographs

- Look very closely at the whole image, including all four corners. Describe what you see.
- What do you think is happening in the picture?
- Are there any people in the picture?
- What are they wearing?
- What do their clothes tell you about them?
- Can you see the expressions on their faces? What does this tell you?
- Are they holding anything?
- If you could step inside the picture what do you think you might hear, smell, feel, taste?
- What might have happened just before the scene in this picture? What might have happened afterwards?



## KEY STAGE 1:

### ASK ME A QUESTION

Encouraging Key Stage 1 children to ask questions in class, can be more difficult than getting them to answer them. Objects from museum collections are often intriguing, and can prompt lots of questions. This is a great opportunity for modelling question asking, encouraging group discussion and introducing the use of question marks. For young children it's best to begin with a 3D object that has some familiarity, so you could use an old-fashioned copper kettle, a black and white photograph or a wooden "dolly" peg. You can model holding up a cardboard question mark and asking questions like "What does it do?", "What is it made of?" "What does it remind you of" "What could this bit be for?" Leave "What do we think it is?" as the final question. Then children can take turns using the question mark and different objects asking and answering each other's questions. With their questioning skills developed you can project images of museum objects onto the whiteboard and children can write their own questions using the question mark at the end of each one. You could use these to make an interesting display, alongside the image.

#### **Curriculum Links**

##### **English skills: Spoken language**

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

##### **English skills: Writing**

###### **Composition:**

- write sentences by: composing a sentence orally before writing it, planning or saying out loud what they are going to write about

###### **Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation:**

- begin to punctuate sentences using e.g. a question mark
- learn how to use sentences with different forms: e.g. question





## SHIPWRECK ISLAND

Why not create an island role play area, where children can pretend to have landed when their ship ran aground? Show them the image of the Fijian sailing canoe and talk about the materials it's made from. What could children make a canoe with, using materials on their island? Children can use the island backdrop and the canoe they create to role play stories of being at sea, the terrible storm, how their boat was damaged when it hit the shore and what they might find on the island. They can make maps of their island and draw pictures of the amazing creatures they have spotted. The famous Stubbs painting of a "Kongorou" [http://www.rmg.co.uk/sites/default/files/import/14\\_15\\_georgestubbskongourooanddingo.pdf](http://www.rmg.co.uk/sites/default/files/import/14_15_georgestubbskongourooanddingo.pdf) in the National Maritime Museum's collection, was painted without ever having seen a real kangaroo. The artist, George Stubbs, only had sketches, some written descriptions and a stuffed pelt to work from. Having imagined some tall tales, why not wrap up the role play with each child writing a message in a bottle. Would they call for rescue or record what they've found? For fluent writers this is a chance to write an extended narrative.

### Curriculum Links

#### English skills: Spoken language

- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates

#### English skills: Writing

##### Composition:

- develop positive attitudes towards and stamina for writing by writing narratives about personal experiences and those of others (real and fictional)

## THE SOUNDS OF THE SEA

Children could look at lots of different paintings that feature the sea. Often the sea is stormy and wild, as in the picture of Henry Blogg coming to the rescue of the *Sepoy*. Other times the sea is calm such as the National Maritime Museum's *A Ship in a Calm Sea*. Children might enjoy more impressionistic paintings of rough and calm seas too, by Courbet or Turner. Having talked about a range of paintings children could make soundscapes for rough and calm seas using their voices and musical instruments. In groups they could think up adjectives to describe the sea in each state and write them on strips of paper. Then in their groups they could record their seascape sounds and read out their words over the top.

### Curriculum Links

#### English skills: Writing

##### Composition:

- read aloud what they have written with appropriate intonation to make the meaning clear

##### Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation:

- using adjectives, including forming them with suffixes e.g. -less (the restless sea)
- expanding noun phrases, e.g. the calm sea, the quiet sea, the crashing waves



## LOWER KS 2:

### CARELESS CURATORS

Children could role play being museum curators and writing labels for a set of objects, or pictures of objects printed from this resource. Working in pairs, children could explore their object and write down as much information as they can about it. Younger children might find it useful if the labels have headings to write to, e.g. Object name, Object size, Material made from, What it reminds us of, How it might have been used, Who probably owned it. Once all the labels are written, put the objects together into a display and then explain that the lead curator has been a little careless and left the labels on a desk top, where they got knocked and muddled up. Children could take turns seeing if they can match the labels to the correct objects before the public arrive for the exhibition! Why not ask family adults in to see the display at home time.

#### Curriculum Links

##### English skills: Writing

##### Planning:

- discussing and recording ideas
- Drafting and writing:
- building a varied and rich vocabulary and an increasing range of sentence structures



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## DEAR DIARY

Often when we learn about stories from the past, it's stories about the great and the good. The stories of everyday people are not usually recorded. When they are, they give rare insight. One way ordinary lives are captured is in people's diaries or journals. Children like to learn that Pepys buried his cheese when the Great Fire was sweeping through London or that Anne Frank wrote her diary as if it were letters to "Dear Kitty". Edward Barlow was an ordinary sailor from Manchester in the 1600s, and his journal is very rare, containing wonderful drawings as well as first hand accounts. Having discussed his journal, children could keep their own daily journal about school life for a week, thinking about what would be significant to include and how best to describe the detail of their everyday experiences. Journal writing also gives the opportunity to organise paragraphs around themes or use simple ways of structuring text such as headings.



### Curriculum Links

#### English skills: Writing

##### Planning:

- discussing writing similar to that which they are planning to write in order to understand and learn from its structure, vocabulary and grammar

##### Drafting and writing:

- organising paragraphs around a theme
- using headings and sub-headings (e.g. dates)



## SETTINGS, CHARACTERS AND PLOT

Historical objects have stories at their heart. Stories of the people who owned them, where they have been, what has happened to them. They can also be great at helping children to inject some imagination into their own stories. Images of objects can be printed off, stuck onto card and put into “Setting”, “Character” and “Plot” bags. Children can then work together to build a story drawing pictures from each bag in turn. Objects for the “Setting” bag should provide an environmental clue, whereas objects from the “Character” bag could either belong to a character or be used as a character themselves. The “Plot” bag should contain objects that could be encountered, lost, broken, traded or made thereby providing direction for the storyline. Children could pick out just one setting, then then two characters, then three plot objects to build their story. Younger children may benefit from prompts:

“This story begins in ...”

“One day Character 1 was planning an adventure. He/she thought about...”

“Then he/she met Character 2, who said ...”

“So they decided to ...”

“The first thing they found was ...”

and so on

Suggestions for using the objects in this resource are listed below.

### **Settings:**

The painting of the rescue of the Barge Sepoy

The ‘orange’ submarine

The painting of the Dutch fair at Great Yarmouth

### **Characters:**

The sledge for Arctic exploration

The love token

The ‘orange’ submarine

### **Plot:**

The love token

Nelson’s ship in a bottle

The ostrich egg

Edward Barlow’s journal



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**Settings:** calm seas, choppy seas, rivers, lakes, rocky shores, islands

**Characters:** pirates, sailors, royalty, children, cats, dogs, rats, a ship's wheel

**Plot:** a map, a globe, a telescope, a life jacket, an oar, a tent, a gold coin, a feather

**You can find lots more images to print for this activity at:**

<http://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/teacher-resources/stories-from-the-sea/shipwrecks>

<http://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/teacher-resources/stories-from-the-sea/exploration>

<http://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/teacher-resources/stories-from-the-sea/pirates>

### Curriculum Links

#### English skills: Spoken language

- give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others

#### English skills: Writing

##### Planning:

- discussing and recording ideas
- Drafting and writing:
  - in narratives, creating settings, characters and plot



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## UPPER KS 2:

## WOULD I LIE TO YOU

Children could play a version of the TV quiz 's game: "This is my ...". In teams of three, children choose an object. They are given a card which states the real identity and use of the object, which only they can read. Together they can make up two other possible explanations for what the object is and what it was used for, and then write all three in their own words. Each team then reads out their explanations and the rest of the class can ask up to six questions to try to work out who might be telling the truth. The class vote for the explanation they think is true and the person who read that out must say if they spoke the truth or a lie. In crafting three equally believable explanations children will be able think about the grammar and vocabulary they use, understanding how such choices can change and enhance meaning and may "give the game away". Writing collaboratively will enable them to suggest changes to vocabulary, grammar and punctuation to enhance effects and clarify meaning.



### Curriculum Links

#### English skills: Spoken language

- give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes

#### English skills: Writing

##### Drafting and writing:

- selecting appropriate grammar and vocabulary, understanding how such choices can change and enhance meaning

##### Evaluating and editing:

- proposing changes to vocabulary, grammar and punctuation to enhance effects and clarify meaning



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## LIFESAVING COURAGE

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) is famous for its amazing volunteer crews who brave the seas to help others. Many children will have heard stories of Grace Darling or Henry Blogg. Although many lifeboat crew receive medals for outstanding courage, most of these volunteers are quiet heroes. They are not however “unsung” heroes. People have always sung songs about the sea. In the past these may have been about press gangs or shanties to help with the work on board a ship. More recently a song was written, and recorded in Ireland, which has been unofficially adopted as the anthem of lifeboat crews all around the UK and Ireland.

The lyrics are reproduced on the next page and there are a number of performances available on YouTube if children wanted to learn the tune. Children could discuss the emotions in this song and how the language used conveys these. They could read the song aloud as a poem or write the lyrics out and perform the song in an assembly.



### Curriculum Links

#### English skills: Spoken language

- articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates

#### English skills: Reading

##### Comprehension

- identifying and discussing themes and conventions in and across a wide range of writing
- identifying how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning
- discuss and evaluate how authors use language, including figurative language, considering the impact on the reader



## Home from the sea

On a cold winters night  
With a storm at its height  
The lifeboat answered the call.  
They pitched and they tossed  
Till we thought they were lost  
As we watched from the harbour wall.  
Though the night was pitch black,  
There was no turning back,  
For someone was waiting out there,  
But each volunteer  
Had to live with his fear  
As they joined in a silent prayer.

Chorus:

Home, home, home from the sea  
Angels of mercy, answer our plea  
And carry us home, home, home from the sea  
Carry us safely home from the sea.

As they battled their way  
Past the mouth of the bay,  
It was blowing like never before.  
As they gallantly fought,  
Every one of them thought  
Of loved ones back on the shore.  
Then a flicker of light  
And they knew they were right.  
There she was on the crest of a wave.  
She's an old fishing boat  
And she's barely afloat.  
Please God, there are souls we can save.

Chorus

And back in the town  
In a street that runs down  
To the sea and the harbour wall,  
They'd gathered in pairs  
At the foot of the stairs  
To wait for the radio call.  
And just before dawn  
When all hope had gone  
Came a hush and a faraway sound.  
'Twas the coxswain he roared  
All survivors on board  
Thank God and we're homeward bound.



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## ORGANISED EXPLORERS

As historians, we love organised people who write things down. Some of the richest historical records are essentially lists and records, from the Domesday Book to the Census, from passenger lists to ships manifests. Children can read the supply list for the sledge for Arctic exploration as a great example of a practical list that also gives historians insight into the details of an historical event. They can compare the summary of the list with the full list and discuss which makes the better historical record. Challenge children in groups to write a supply list for an imaginary expedition to somewhere they've studied in geography. Show them how to use bullet points for each item and to group items under headings to make it easier to read. Can they turn it into a checklist for packing, using a table?



### Curriculum Links

#### English skills: Writing

##### Planning:

- identifying the audience for and purpose of the writing, selecting the appropriate form and using other similar writing as models for their own
- using further organisational and presentational devices to structure text and to guide the reader [for example, headings, bullet points, underlining]

##### Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation:

- using a colon to introduce a list, punctuating bullet points consistently



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## PICTURE THIS

There's an old saying that "A picture is worth a thousand words" and it's true that photographs and paintings can be a rich resource for stimulating both imaginative and analytical writing. Children are likely to be aware of the way that Photoshop can be used to alter images, so that's a good place to start a class discussion about how reliable a photograph is as historical evidence. Paintings also have their advantages and disadvantages as historical sources. The artist was rarely at the scene and may be painting from memory, a sketch or a photo. If the painting was commissioned, the person paying may have wanted the picture to look a certain way. Children can look at paintings of historic events and try to work out what they can say with certainty from the picture and what they might be able to infer. This is a good opportunity to get them to indicate degrees of possibility using adverbs (perhaps, surely) or modal verbs like might or must. To inject some fun, children could play a version of the "This is my..." game above: "This is a picture of..."



### Curriculum Links

#### English skills: Writing

#### Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation:

- using modal verbs or adverbs to indicate degrees of possibility



## NELSON'S SHIP IN A BOTTLE

**Date made:**

2010

**Artist:**

Yinka Shonibare, MBE

**Object reference:**

REG10/000343

**Credit:**

National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, courtesy of the artist and Stephen Friedman Gallery, London and James Cohan Gallery, New York  
<http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/563014.html>

### Description

This giant ship in a bottle can be seen outside the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich. It was made by Yinka Shonibare, MBE, one of Britain's best-known artists. The work is an incredibly detailed, scaled-down replica of Nelson's flagship HMS Victory with 80 cannon and 37 sails, based on the traditional craft of making intricate ships in bottles.

The Ship in a Bottle reflects and celebrates how the past has shaped Britain as a multicultural society. The artist describes it as 'honouring the many cultures and ethnicities that are still breathing precious wind into the sails of the United Kingdom'. The richly patterned sails were inspired by Indonesian batik, using patterns and colours now strongly associated with African dress and identity. The ship represents Britain's ongoing relationship with the sea and the wider world as an island nation. Placing it all in a giant bottle draws on British craft traditions, makes the work playful and intriguing and invites us to stop and think and wonder...

### Questions

(Project the image onto a whiteboard to look really closely)

1. How Yinka Shonibare put the ship inside the bottle is a closely guarded secret. How do you think he did it?
2. What colours, patterns and symbols can you see on the sails?
3. here are lots of different types of boats and ships - why do you think Yinka Shonibare chose a sailing ship for his artwork?

### Did you know..?

Yinka Shonibare's Ship in a Bottle is one of the most photographed objects in London. (If you ever see it, try taking a photo which makes it look as though you are holding it up with your hand, or drinking from it.)



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## JOHN EDWARD BARLOW

**Date:**

1659-1703

**Object reference:**

JOD/4

**Credit:**

National Maritime Museum

<http://collections.rmg.co.uk/archive/objects/505786.html>

### Description

Edward Barlow was an ordinary sailor from Manchester. After teaching himself to write, he went on to create his famous journal – an account of his life of over 40 years at sea in the 1600s.

Edward wrote detailed accounts of his adventures sailing around the world. He illustrated them with lavish pictures of the places he visited – like India, Brazil, Taiwan and Jamaica, the people he met and the things he saw along the way such as elephants, rhinoceroses and sea creatures. He told stories of fighting in wars, being captured and taken prisoner, and of being shipwrecked – which he believed was caused by Norwegian ‘witches’ wreaking their revenge after an argument with the ship’s crew. He also told stories of how hard life was on board ship. Most people living in Europe at the time would never



see anything like the scenes Edward witnessed and illustrated in his journal.

A journal like this is very rare and, to this day, is one of the few ways we can find out first-hand what life as a sailor was really like 400 years ago.

### Questions

(Project the image onto a whiteboard to look really closely)

1. What do these illustrations from Edward Barlow’s journal tell us about his experiences?
2. How might modern sailors record their experiences at sea?
3. Why do you think journals like this are so rare?

### Did you know?

Sailors in the 1600s often spent months – even years – working away at sea without any contact with their families.



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## Fijian drua (sailing canoe)

**Date**

made: 2014-15

**Artist:**

Photograph: Steven Hooper

**Credit:**

National Maritime Museum

### Description

This photograph shows a drua, a Fijian sailing canoe, in the harbour at Suva, Fiji's capital. It was made to encourage traditional canoe-building skills and to highlight alternatives to using fossil fuels for transport at sea. This drua is a smaller version of the great Fijian voyaging canoes of the 1800s which were probably the biggest canoes ever built. They were 30m long - about the length of a swimming pool - and could carry 150 people. This canoe is just 8m long and is made entirely of renewable materials including wood, coconut fibre cords and a sail made of pandanus leaves (more usually used as a flavouring in cooking).

Druas are still a symbol of Fiji today. This one raced at the 2015 Hibiscus festival in Suva, and featured in the Queen's 90th birthday pageant at Windsor Castle.

### Questions

(Project the images onto a whiteboard to look really closely)

1. How many people can you see on this boat?
2. Where would you sail to..?
3. Fiji is in the Pacific Ocean. Can you find it on a world map?



## Sledge for Arctic exploration

**Date:**  
circa 1875

**Object reference:**  
AAA3997

**Credit:**  
National Maritime Museum  
<http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/3752.html>

### Description

This sledge was used on an expedition to explore the Arctic in 1875, led by Sir George Nares. It carried supplies and equipment for eight men for 45 days and would have weighed over 100kg – the weight of about eight baby elephants! Pulling a sledge in the freezing Arctic is exhausting and very slow. The men had to cut a ‘road’ through tons of thick ice rubble and snow drifts that came up to their waists. Their shoulders became raw from pulling the heavy loads – sometimes vertically up cliff faces.

Supplies carried on the sledge included:

- A tent and sleeping bags
- Spare clothes for each man including snow goggles, mittens, and only one spare pair of pants (or ‘drawers’)
- Soap and towels
- A shovel, knife, saw and pickaxes to clear the ice and snow
- Matches and twine
- A gun
- A kettle
- Medical supplies including laudanum

(a powerful, opium-based pain killer), carbolic acid (an antiseptic), tourniquets and splints

- Rations including a large tin of pemmican (a long-lasting, high-energy food made of dried meat mixed with fat).

(See next page for a full list)

### Questions

(Project the image onto a whiteboard to look really closely)

1. Can you see what the sledge is made from?
2. How has it been designed for Arctic conditions?
3. How might a modern sledge packed for Arctic exploration look different to this one from nearly 150 years ago?
4. Which supplies give the impression that the Arctic can be a dangerous place? What dangers might the explorers face?

### Did you know...?

Around four million people live in the Arctic

## SLEDGE FOR ARCTIC EXPLORATION:

### FULL SUPPLY LIST FOR 8 EXPLORERS

- Tent
- 8 sleeping bags
- 8 knapsacks containing:
  - 2 x pairs blanket wrappers
  - 1 x pair wadmill hose
  - 1 x pair moccasins
  - 1 x skullcap for sleeping in
  - 1 x woollen 'Eugene' cap
  - 2 x pairs of mittens
  - 1 x flannel shirt
  - 1 x pair of drawers
  - A comforter
  - 1 x pair snow spectacles
  - 1 x towel
  - 1 x piece of soap
- 2 pickaxes
- Shovel
- Store bag containing:
  - Pemmican chopper
  - Pemmican chopping board
  - Snow knife
  - Spare lashings of hide for the sledge
  - Matches
  - Slow match
  - Twine
- Gun and ammunition
- Scientific instruments
- 45 x days' provisions for 8 x men including tinned pemmican
- Medical stores - containing
  - 2 x phials of sal volatile and aromatic spirits of ammonia
  - 2 x phials of laudanum
  - 2 x phials of wine of opium
  - 1 x small tin of Gregory's powders
  - 12 x papers (10 grains each) of Dover's powders
  - 32 x papers (15 grains each) of chalk powders
  - 30 x papers (4 grains each) of sugar of lead
  - A bottle of turpentine liniment
  - 1 x phial of carbolic acid
  - Glycerine ointment
  - White ointment
  - Carbolic plaster
  - 4 dozen purgative pills
  - Oil silk
  - Sponge
  - Pins
  - Expanding splints
  - Carbolized tow
  - Cotton wool
  - Catheter
  - Tourniquet
  - Truss with pad
  - Lancet
  - Twill
  - Persian gauze
  - 2 x eyeshades
  - Small splint
  - Scissors
  - Flannel
  - Ice goggles
  - Tape
  - Mustard
  - 3 x calico bandages
  - 2 x flannel bandages
  - Lint





## Love token

**Artist:**

Unknown

**Date made:**

1821

**Object reference:**

MEC1685

**Credit:**

National Maritime Museum

<http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/39125.html>

## Description

Love tokens were traditionally made by sailors to give to their sweethearts as a way of remembering them while they were away on long voyages at sea - sometimes for months or even years at a time.

They were made by writing or inscribing messages or poems on all sorts of objects and materials, including whale bones and ships biscuits.

This love token was made by pricking words into a smooth coin. It was made by a man called Samuel Chips who was being transported to a prison in Australia (for stealing a handkerchief!). On the front of the token, Samuel has written the words 'When this you see think on me until I get my liberty'.

## Questions

(Project the images onto a whiteboard to look really closely)

1. Can you see what is written on the back of this token?
2. Can you work out how old it is?
3. Why do you think there is a hole in it?

## Did you know..?

Between 1788 and 1868, about 162,000 people were transported from Britain to prisons in Australia - often for petty crimes.



**STORIES  
FROM  
THE SEA**



## Summersible

**Designer:**

Graham Hawkes

**Date made:**

c. 1978

**Object reference:**

GRYEH : 2009.203

**Credit:**

Time and Tide Museum

### Description

Submarines like this are used to explore areas and carry out tasks deep under water – often in places too dangerous for divers. These submarines are like underwater robots, there are no people on board. A camera sends images and film back to the people on the surface who control it remotely. This one was built in Norfolk and won an award for its innovative design which made sure it didn't leak in the high pressure conditions deep under the sea.

In 1985 it broke a world record by descending to over 700 metres (nearly half a mile) in the Atlantic Ocean. Imagine how heavy half a mile of water would be – and the pressure that would put on the submarine! A submarine just like this one was used in the James Bond film 'For your eyes only'.

### Questions

(Project the images onto a whiteboard to look really closely)

1. Can you see the lights on the front of the submarine? Why do you think they are there?
2. What do you think the black 'pincer'- shaped parts of the submarine might be for?

### Did you know..?

It is thought that 95% of the world's oceans are still unexplored. What might be down there..?



## The Coxswain Henry Blogg Driving the Cromer Lifeboat onto the Deck of the Barge 'Sepoy', December

**Artist:**

Charles Dixon (1872-1934)

**Date made:**

1933

**Credit:**

RNLI Henry Blogg Museum

### Description

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) is famous for its dedication to safety at sea. Its lifeboats, crewed by volunteers, have been carrying out daring sea rescues off the coast of Britain since it was founded in 1824.

Henry Blogg is one of Britain's most famous lifeboatmen. This painting shows Henry and the brave Cromer lifeboat crew coming to the rescue of the *Sepoy*, a Thames Sailing Barge which was wrecked off Cromer beach in December 1933. With the assistance of his crew, Henry carried out 387 rescues, saving over 873 lives from the North Sea. He is the most decorated (awarded the most medals) lifeboatman in RNLI history.

It wasn't until 1969 that women began to crew the lifeboats alongside men. Before then it was thought they wouldn't be strong enough to pull heavy, water-soaked survivors from the sea, or have enough stamina to control the boat in a gale. In 1969, Elizabeth Hostvedt, an 18-year-old Norwegian student, became the first qualified female crew member. In 2004, Aileen Jones became the first female crew member to receive an RNLI award.

The first woman to ever receive a medal from the RNLI was Grace Darling who, in 1838, along with her father William, famously risked her own life to save the stranded survivors of the wrecked steamship *Forfarshire* by rowing out to them in a terrible storm.

### Questions

(Project the image onto a whiteboard to look really closely)

1. Both of the crew members were rescued from the *Sepoy*, which two men in the painting do you think they might be?
2. What sounds might you hear if you could step into this painting?
3. Find three different ways this painting shows the lives of the people in it might be in danger.

### Did you know..?

Since it was founded in 1824, the RNLI's lifeboats have saved over 140,000 lives at sea.



## Photographs: Launching and returning the RNLB *H.F. Bailey* at Cromer

### Date made:

Published 10 December 1938

### Object reference:

CR:2004.192

### Credit:

Weekly illustrated, RNLi Henry Blogg Museum

## Description

When going to rescue people at sea, every second counts. The fastest way to launch a lifeboat is by releasing it down a slipway. As soon as the crew were ready, the boathouse doors were opened, the rope holding the boat was released and the lifeboat raced down the slipway and into the sea.

Returning the lifeboat took a lot longer. On returning to shore, the crew lined the boat up with the slipway using marker buoys in the sea. It could then be slowly winched back up to the boathouse. The crew would often have to wait for good weather before this could be done.

A maroon (a rocket) was used to alert the lifeboat crew that they were needed for a rescue. When a ship was in trouble, the maroon was fired from the cliffs. The noise could be heard across the town. Wherever they were, the volunteer lifeboat crew would drop whatever they were doing and race to the lifeboat station. The first eight men to grab a life-jacket and get onto the boat crewed the rescue.

This short film shows this happening in Cromer. The lifeboat featured is named after Henry Blogg <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPzaAVIKbjU>

Today, pagers are used to alert most lifeboat crews.

## Questions

(Project the images onto a whiteboard to look really closely)

1. How many crew members can you see in the photograph of the returning lifeboat?
2. What might they be saying to each other?
3. What is written on the side of the lifeboat?

## Did you know..?

RNLi is a charity and its lifeboats have always been crewed by volunteers. This means they are not paid to risk their lives to help others.



**STORIES  
FROM  
THE SEA**

## The Dutch Fair at Great Yarmouth; painted 1821

**Artist:**

George Vincent

**Date made:**

1821

**Object reference:**

GRYEH: 1956.136

**Credit:**

Time and Tide Museum



### Description

The town of Great Yarmouth began as a herring fishing settlement over 1000 years ago. A free Herring Fair was held every year, attracting merchants from all parts of Europe. It was particularly popular with the Dutch who were very successful at fishing and eventually began to settle in Yarmouth. They also invented a process for curing the herring (with salt) so it could be preserved. Herring became a very popular food and catching, curing and selling it was a lucrative industry that turned Great Yarmouth into a bustling town. Because of this, the herring became known as the silver darling.

This painting shows Dutch fishermen arriving in Great Yarmouth before the fair, which by then had become known as the 'Dutch fair'. During their stay they would trade in pipes, dried flounders, Dutch toys, gingerbread and 'Domino clumps' – balls of crystalized white sugar with lemon peel in the centre.

The Nelson monument can be seen on the left hand side. This commemorates the famous Admiral, Horatio Nelson, who was born nearby in Burnham Thorpe in 1758

and died at the battle of Trafalgar in 1805. Great Yarmouth was an important naval base at the time and Nelson had strong connections with the town. The Yarmouth windmills can be seen in the background behind the jetty.

### Questions

(Project the images onto a whiteboard to look really closely)

1. What do you think is happening in the foreground of the painting?
2. What might the people be saying to each other?
3. Which people do you think are the visitors to the town, who have arrived on the ships?

### Did you know..?

Time and Tide Museum in Great Yarmouth was a herring curing works in Victorian times. Some parts of it still have a lovely smoky smell.



**STORIES  
FROM  
THE SEA**



## Scrimshaw Ostrich egg

**Artist:**

Unknown

**Date made:**

Late 1800s

**Object reference:**

GRYEH : 1967.189

**Credit:**

Time and Tide Museum

### Description

Scrimshaw is the art of carving designs onto bone, ivory, teeth and even ostrich eggs and was popular among sailors in the 1700s and 1800s. It began when American sailors started decorating whalebone and teeth to relieve the boredom of long whaling voyages across the Pacific Ocean in the 1700s.

Designs often included portraits of the ship or its captain, whaling scenes, mermaids and sea creatures. This ostrich egg shows a sailing ship flying a British flag.

### Questions

(Project the images onto a whiteboard to look really closely)

1. Why do you think the maker has particularly chosen an ostrich egg?
2. What would you carve into an egg like this to represent yourself or something important to you?

## Further resources and information

This resource has been created as part of the Stories from the Sea project. Our museum sessions and online resources provide practical, tried and tested activities, tips and ideas to develop children's skills and confidence in writing and storytelling skills both during a museum visit and in the classroom.

For exciting, curriculum-linked Museum visits to support writing and storytelling:

National Maritime Museum  
[http://www.rmg.co.uk/plan-your-visit/schools/national-maritime-museum/sessions?field\\_key\\_stage\\_tid%5B%5D=67455&field\\_key\\_stage\\_tid%5B%5D=67456&field\\_school\\_subject\\_tid%5B%5D=68558&combine=](http://www.rmg.co.uk/plan-your-visit/schools/national-maritime-museum/sessions?field_key_stage_tid%5B%5D=67455&field_key_stage_tid%5B%5D=67456&field_school_subject_tid%5B%5D=68558&combine=)

Time & Tide Museum  
[http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/Learning/Great\\_Yarmouth/Time\\_and\\_Tide/index.htm](http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/Learning/Great_Yarmouth/Time_and_Tide/index.htm)

Cromer and Henry Blogg Museums  
<http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/Learning/Cromer/index.htm>

### **For more information and curriculum-linked Stories from the Sea resources:**

Stories from the Sea [www.rmg.co.uk/storiesfromthesea](http://www.rmg.co.uk/storiesfromthesea)  
Pirates <http://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/teacher-resources/stories-from-the-sea/pirates>  
Shipwrecks <http://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/teacher-resources/stories-from-the-sea/shipwrecks>  
Exploration <http://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/teacher-resources/storiesfrom-the-sea/exploration>

### **For information and learning resources from the RNLI visit:**

<https://rnli.org/youth-education>

### **For information about our Museums:**

National Maritime Museum <http://www.rmg.co.uk/national-maritime-museum>  
Time and Tide Museum [http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/Visit\\_Us/Time\\_and\\_Tide/index.htm](http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/Visit_Us/Time_and_Tide/index.htm)  
Henry Blogg Museum: <https://rnli.org/find-my-nearest/museums/henry-blogg-museum>  
Cromer Museum: [http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/Visit\\_Us/Cromer\\_Museum/index.htm](http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/Visit_Us/Cromer_Museum/index.htm)