

Discussion trail 1

Museum sounds

This sheet is designed to help teachers, parents or teaching assistants take younger children around the museum focusing on sounds. Objects which made particular sounds are listed and you could ask children to write, name (ring, click, scratch) or make one of the sounds, perhaps playing 'guess the object from its sound' with you. They could also put them in order of loudness or softness. The real aim is to develop speaking and listening skills.

Top floor

1. In the Bronze Age hut: wind blowing outside, rustling rats in the roof, flint knapping.
2. Okehampton Castle's bells ringing – one of the inscriptions says the bell was '*to wake Eleanor for to catch game*' but later it was to call parishioners to prayer.
3. Victorian cottage: there's a carpet beater, and there would have been special noises linked to washing clothes (scrubbing with soap, plunging, wringing out), not to mention funny noises coming from the privy!
4. Music: there's an organ, and in the Community Life case are two flutes.
5. The Fire Engine would have had a bell rather than a siren, of course.
6. There would have been many small noises, such as opening tins or pens scratching on paper.

Middle floor

7. Lots of beating and hammering in this gallery, with all the mining and quarrying. The differences in sounds made by different tools could be explored by more receptive groups.
8. In the transport section, children could take on the rôles of porter, station master, engine driver, guard and passenger to develop a conversation.
9. The police cell has sounds of creaking and slamming doors, as well as particular words spoken by guards and prisoners.
10. The World War II siren would be the noisiest object in this gallery.

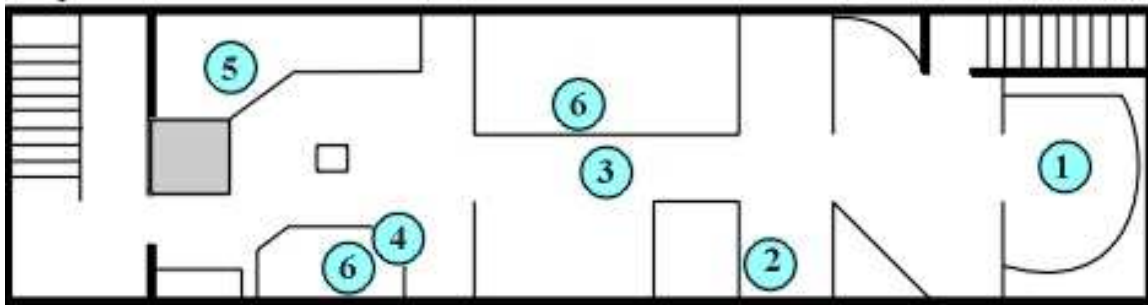
Ground floor

11. The main focus in the ground floor galleries is tools and the possibilities are almost endless here: cutting, scraping, sharpening, clipping, sawing, planing, striking, drilling, and many more.
12. The blacksmith's forge already has some sound effects, but would include the roaring of bellows, the striking of hammer and anvil and the hiss of red hot metal being plunged into water.
13. The tractor and van bring us more up to date, with the sound of motors.

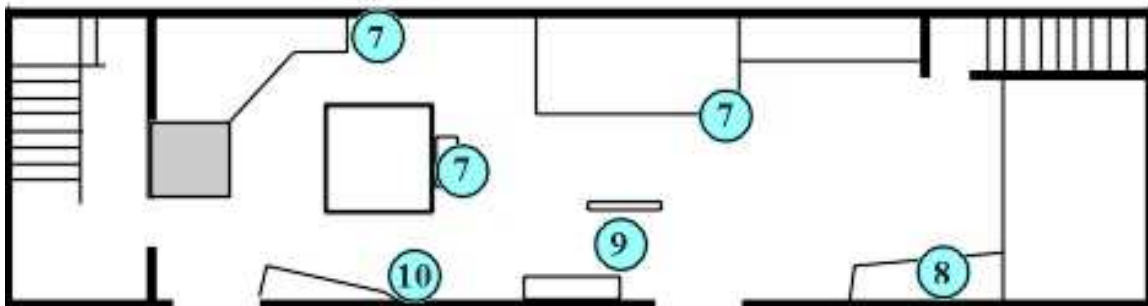
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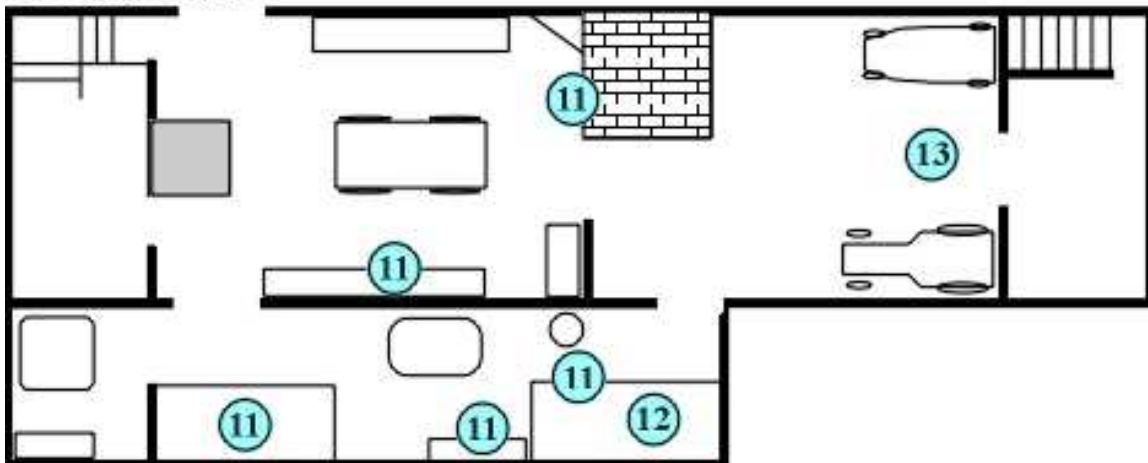
Top floor



Middle floor



Ground floor



Discussion trail 2

Materials in the museum

This sheet is designed to help teachers, parents or teaching assistants take children around the museum focusing on materials. A major aim is to develop speaking and listening skills through discussion, but materials also feature strongly in the Science curriculum. Where possible ask the children to touch the different materials and describe their qualities. They can also suggest ways that the materials are used in different settings. The trail provides starting points, but once they get the idea, the children can explore materials on their own.

Top floor

1. In the Bronze Age hut: wool, leather, straw, wood, earth (including clay) and stone were all readily available for Bronze Age farmers on Dartmoor. Children could discuss all the possible uses for these materials. What are the qualities of each material? What materials would have rotted away over time, leaving gaps in the evidence which archaeologists find (i.e. most organic materials)?
2. Two uses for metal are shown in the medieval gallery – bells and coins. Bellmetal is a bronze alloy, made of 77% copper and 23% tin – both metals have been mined on Dartmoor. See www.taylorbells.co.uk for more information. Besides being durable, metal can be moulded into many shapes, such as bells and coins.
3. In the Victorian cottage, think about how fire and water have been used to change materials in cooking and washing – through baking (flour), boiling (meat, leather), dissolving (soap), sieving and filtering (e.g. earth on clothing).

Middle floor

4. Children can see a range of different types of rock and how they were crushed and heated to extract different materials. There is Hematite (iron ore), Cassiterite (tin), Sphalerite (zinc), Calcopryrite (copper) and Galena (lead). The gallery is full of examples of how these rocks had to be treated to extract the metals.
5. Glass is a particularly interesting material and the examples from the short-lived glassworks at Meldon show how it was once molten – made from sand, salt and limestone heated to 1700° C.
6. The process of making cloth from spun wool is shown here.
7. The middle floor gallery has many examples of items made from different raw materials – wool, cotton, leather, wood, metals, glass – and some of the businesses in Okehampton which sold them.

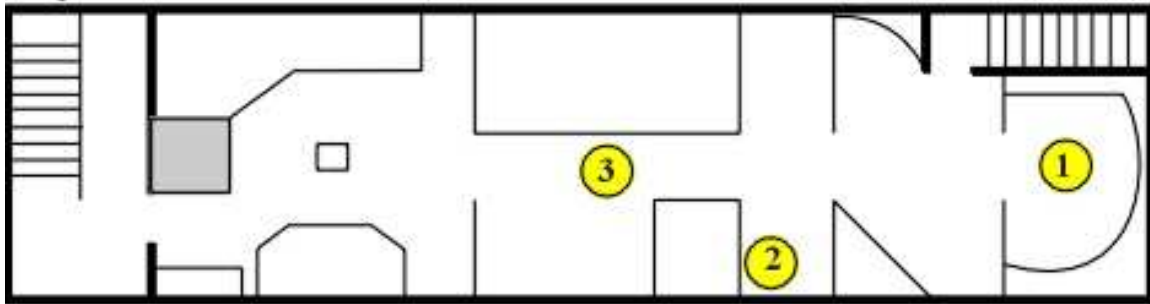
Ground floor

8. By the time you get to the ground floor, the children should be looking for materials and their uses so this gallery, with its general theme of ‘living off the land’, should offer lots of scope for discussion about how different materials could be used and changed to support the rural economy – iron and wood for tools and machinery, stone for building, sharpening and cooking (bread oven), straw for thatching, leather for shoes and protective clothing.

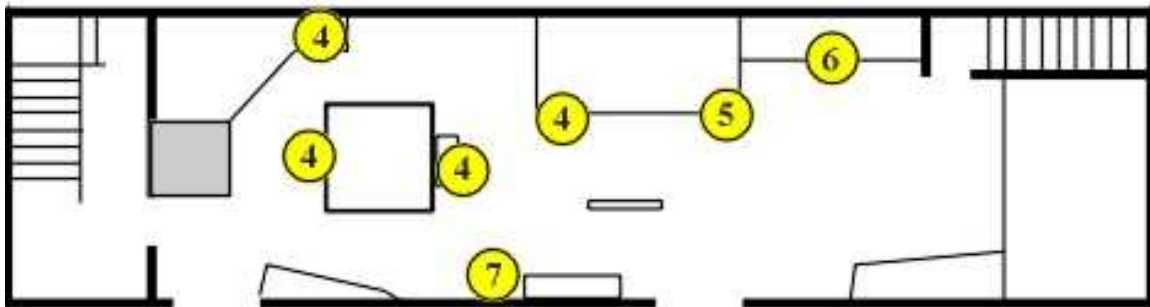
Discussion trail 2

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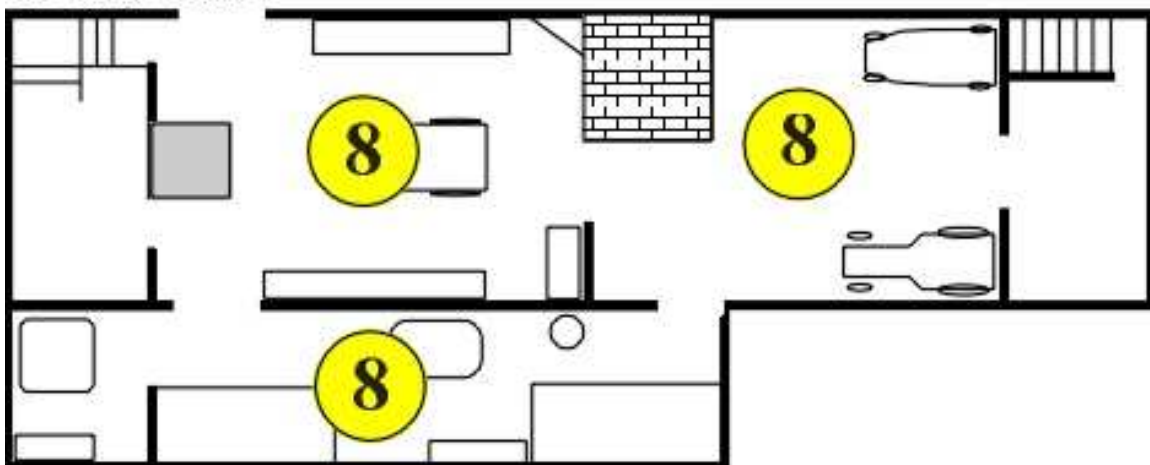
Top floor



Middle floor



Ground floor



Discussion trail 3

Strange contraptions

This sheet is designed to help teachers, parents or teaching assistants take children around the museum looking at design. Every man-made object in the museum was carefully thought about and designed to solve a particular problem. The tools and contraptions give us an insight into the kinds of problems people needed to solve at different periods in history. As you go around the museum, ask the children to try to work out what problem each of the contraptions was designed to solve.

Top floor

1. In the Bronze Age hut, you could introduce the idea of design by having a good look at the loom, which is made out of materials freely available on the moor. Some of the problems to be solved included:

- ◆ How to make clothing without having to kill the animals (use wool, not fur or suede)
- ◆ How to keep the material straight while weaving (weights keep the warp yarn taut)
- ◆ How to save time and make more cloth (a stick threaded between alternate warp threads makes weaving quicker).

2. Labour-saving devices to make washday more effective in the Victorian cottage – a ‘dolly’, hot water tongs, mangle and iron. Discuss how their design solved a problem, such as (in the mangle) applying great pressure without the need for huge strength.

3. Look for gadgets in the cottage and community life displays – a tin opener shaped like a bull, butter pats, a carpet beater, a ‘slipper bath’ (shaped for modesty?; what is the pipe on the top for?; why is there a tap on the bottom, not the top?).

Middle floor

4. Look at some of the protective clothing for miners – wire goggles, tin helmet, heavy clothing, miner’s lamp – and discuss why they were invented. Could they be improved with modern materials such as strengthened glass, batteries and plastic?

5. Pick up the weaving theme from upstairs.

6. The suitcases and trunks have been designed for strength. Why was this necessary?

7. Has the old bicycle been designed more for the rider’s comfort, or for performance?

8. Look at the folding seat by the oral history ‘listening post’. It needed to be available for visitors who wanted to sit and listen but also to fold up so that people could walk by.

Ground floor

This floor is full of tools, each one designed for a different purpose – a designer’s paradise! Particular highlights might include:

9. Horn trainers for stopping cows’ horns growing outwards, for safety.

10. Traps designed for a range of different animals (and people!)

11. Wooden barrel tap (a beautifully simple design idea)

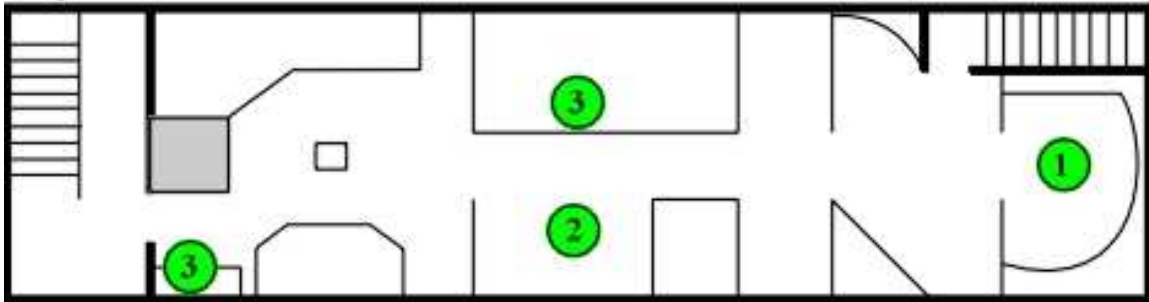
12. Drainage cobbles laid on the floor allowing water to flow in the right direction.

13. Tractor tyre designed for grip in muddy fields.

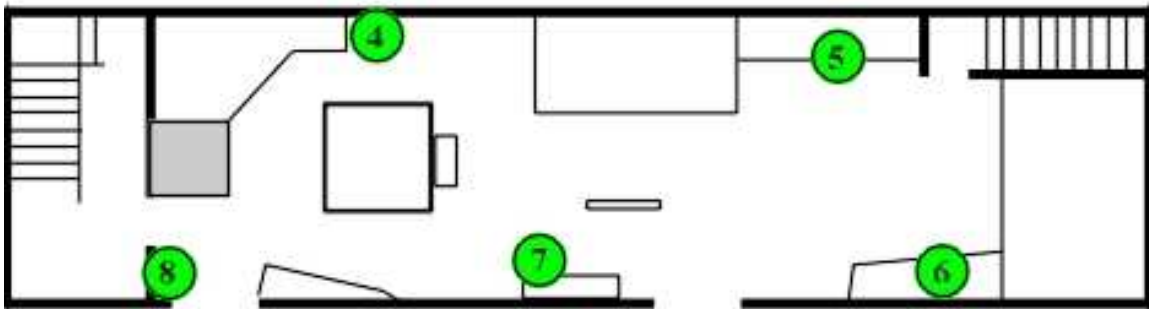
Discussion trail 3

Strange contraptions

Top floor



Middle floor



Ground floor

