



Traditions of Christmas - Pockerley Old Hall

Guidelines for Supervising Teachers

Preparing for Your Visit: It is strongly recommended that supervising staff should arrange a pre-visit to familiarise themselves with facilities at the Museum. Free tickets are available on request in order to assist with planning and risk assessments. A risk assessment is provided in order to help you with your paperwork.

Practicalities:

- **Where to Go and How to Get There:** This activity takes place at Pockerley Old Hall. If you are coming straight from the Entrance it is quicker to walk – turn right and follow the footpath until you reach the tram stop. Take the track up to the house in the trees at the top of the hill. From elsewhere on site, you can take a tram or bus to Pockerley tram stop and walk up the hill.
- **Arriving on Time:** If your school has the first session booked (10.30-11.45) it is advisable to walk straight to Pockerley Old Hall. In the event of a late arrival every effort will be made to accommodate the full time of the activity, however, due to other bookings this may not always be possible.
- **What to Bring/Wear:** Please remember that children need to be warmly dressed. Warm winter coats, hats, gloves and sturdy footwear are essential. Buildings at Beamish Museum tend to be cold as doors are often open and they are often heated by open fires. Please come prepared.
- **Storage:** Anything which is not required during the activity session will be stored out of the way during the session.
- **Toilets:** Toilets are located around the back of the Old house at Pockerley Old Hall. A member of staff can direct you to these.
- **Health and Safety Information:** If the paths look icy, please ask the group to take extra care. Before the session a member of staff will go through any health and safety issues. Fires, for example will be lit at Pockerley Old Hall. A risk assessment is provided to help you with your risk assessment paperwork.

- **Access:** Pockerley is an historic building with old and uneven steps that must be mounted in a careful and sensible manner. If there is anyone in your group with access needs please contact the bookings officer on bookings@beamish.org.uk or telephone on 0191 370 4026 and they will be able to advise you.

Outline of Activity:

In this activity pupils experience life in a house preparing for Christmas. They will play old fashioned parlour games, listen to stories by the fireside and make a peg doll decoration to take home. The lady or gentleman of the house will lead the festivities, making sure that everyone enjoys themselves.

Objectives of Activity:

- To gain a better understanding of how Christmas was celebrated in the past.
- To explore the differences and similarities between Christmas in the past and now.

Organisation of Activity:

During this activity most classes (20-30 children) will be split into three groups. These will rotate around the three activities; story telling, parlour games and making a peg doll decoration. The activities take place in different rooms around Pockerley Old Hall. Whilst these are all in the same building, one is upstairs and two are downstairs. Each group must be accompanied by an adult from the school.

Background information:

During the Victorian times Christmas developed into a family orientated festival. By the 1900's Christmas trees had become popular, decorated with sweets, dolls, toys and anything bright and glittery. By 1910, Father Christmas had become the red-robed figure we are familiar with today. Children would hang up their stocking on Christmas Eve with the hope of finding an orange, a handful of nuts, raisins and some sweets. Popular presents of the time were train sets, dolls, Noah's Arks, board games and construction kits such as Meccano and plasticine. Christmas carolling and sending cards were a part of the celebrations. On Christmas Day family and friends would gather and enjoy many of the dishes familiar to us; the roasted bird, sausages and stuffing along with pudding, brandy sauce and crackers. Through the activity session we aim to bring this time to life.

Contact Us: If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us at the Museum.

Telephone **Simon Woolley** on 0191 370 4011 or email education@beamish.org.uk