



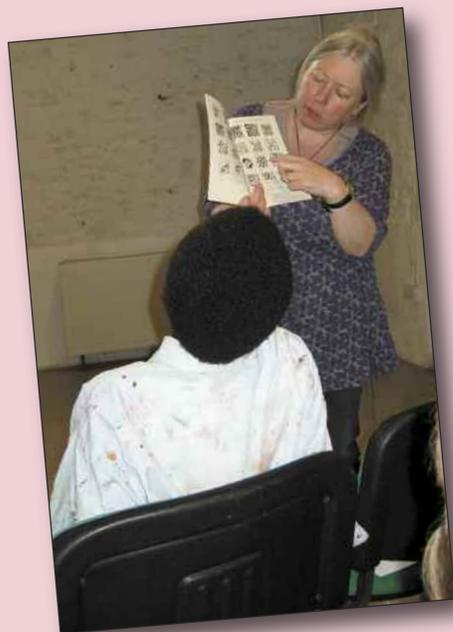
Young Heritage Hunters

Artwork Museums Learning Project (MK)

About the project

"We hope that this gift of creativity and enthusiasm will be just the start of a lifelong interest in heritage and the arts for these young people."

Helen O'Hara,
Project Coordinator,
Living Archive MK



Specialist teaching in art skills



Pair of finished tiles ready to dry and fire

Welcome to our art exhibition, inspired by visits of students from two local schools to **Milton Keynes Heritage Consortium** sites and supported by professional artist Karen Slade. Here are our creative responses to the historical material, crafted in workshops in school.

You will see not only our artwork and comments, but also the research, learning and creative processes involved in our journey towards 'Discover' or 'Explore' Arts Awards.

Artwork Museums Learning Project (Milton Keynes)

Artwork supports Arts Council England's goal to ensure that:

'... every young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts, culture and heritage both in and outside of school, particularly in areas of least engagement.'

As one of only four similar Museums Learning Projects, **Artwork** – the South East Bridge – with **MK Council** has invested this year in innovative partnerships between heritage, arts and schools in Milton Keynes, managed by **Living Archive MK**. By working together with our different skills, we aim to increase access to museums and high quality arts by supporting museum visits, artist workshops, exhibitions, professional development and Arts Awards to celebrate students' achievements.



ARTSMARK

As a result, a total of six targeted schools will be supported by us with Artsmark applications – **Arts Council England's** nationally recognised programme – to evaluate, strengthen and celebrate high quality arts provision. The quality of museum learning will also improve, through arts activity inspired by collections, skills development, partnership working and becoming Arts Award Supporter organisations, along with **Creative Learning Network** venues and **MK Libraries**.

Outcomes of the project will be: inspiration, engagement and enthusiasm to continue with similar activity and closer consultation, making museum learning more accessible and tailored to schools' needs.





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Working with an artist: Karen Slade

“... I would like to continue to explore using traditional methods and tools, but creating my own artwork which does not parody or denigrate the original.”

Karen Slade



Karen demonstrates mark making in clay tile



Learning about Medieval paint materials including Verdigris

Company of Artisans formed in 2007 and combines Karen Slade's artistic and teaching skills with husband Charlie Slade's experience as a building conservator. Karen recently qualified to deliver and assess Arts Award Discover, Explore, Bronze and Silver levels.

“We share a love of traditional crafts and historic buildings. Through this interest, we create unique interpretations of historic properties and museum collections, on and off site. These include ‘hands on’ demonstrations and workshops for the public at events, for schools and clubs. Our clients include English Heritage, The National Trust, CADW, local authorities and museums.”



Company of Artisans

www.companyofartisans.co.uk

“Having the original medieval art as inspiration did not restrict the children's ideas to traditional medieval designs. Their artwork is fresh and vibrant, showing us their interests and influences and is a reflection of living in Milton Keynes in 2014.”

Karen Slade

“I genuinely feel that I have gained as much back from working within the project as I hope I have given.”

Karen Slade



Lime plaster panel with stones and hair used in making traditional plaster



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**





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Southwood School

"I loved making the clay tiles – it was really messy but really fun!"

Nicholas, 8

"I was interested in the equipment that they used to use, as it was very different to anything I had seen before."

Samir, 9

"The tiles in the Abbey were lovely and it was good when the man added water to them so we could see the pattern."

Magda, 9

"Looking at all the patterns in the books gave me lots of ideas for my tile design."

Davide, 8

"I learnt how they used to make tiles using wooden blocks and cow horns!"

Nicholas, 7

"We went in a secret abbey that no-one goes in and made tiles using old fashioned ways."

Jayden, 7



Southwood School with Monk sculpture on their MK City Discovery Centre visit to Bradwell Abbey

Southwood School is a well established junior school in Conniburrow which aims to raise pupils' self-esteem and to create a learning environment that brings the best out of pupils with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to succeed in everyday life. A broad, balanced and creative curriculum promotes the enjoyment of lifelong learning, develops the whole child and creates a sense of well being.

THE ACE TEAM: 'Achieve, Create, Enjoy' and 'Together Everyone Achieves More' – school motto.

The after-school Arts Club for ages 7 to 11 is run by Mrs Di Williams, a KS2 teacher and arts enthusiast herself. With her Arts Award Discover and Explore qualification and a review of all its arts-related curriculum and activity, the school aims to have more than enough evidence to achieve Artsmark this year.



Looking at traditional patterns



Using traditional tile makers' tools



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Orchard and Shepherdswell Academy

“Everyone had lots to tell us in discussion when we shared the photos. It was really pleasing to see their learning and enjoyment.”

**Luke Allwood,
Year 3 Class Teacher**



All students in Year 3 at **Orchard Academy** in Springfield worked towards their *Discover Arts Award* on the project, making an exciting start to their autumn term topic *Marvellous Milton Keynes*. Initial contact came via **Living Archive MK** through its partnership with **MK Heritage Association**.

This junior school is now paired with **Shepherdswell Academy** and sponsored by **EMLC**. Its aim is to develop children’s character with varied experiences to help them grow emotionally, socially, spiritually and academically, equipping them to achieve and think for themselves. Achieving Artsmark using this project as evidence is the next logical step to celebrate the students’ creative learning.

**Every great journey begins with a single step ...
our lessons come from the journey, not the destination**

Participation in the project involved a heritage visit and arts workshops to learn the design and art skills used centuries ago by the medieval craftsmen and women at Bradwell Abbey. Children exercised their curiosity, cooperation and reflection ‘muscles’ as they worked in teams on developing and producing designs.



“For us, it’s all about giving our children as many opportunities and experiences as we can – it is so beneficial for them!”

**Luke Allwood,
Year 3 Class Teacher**



Children worked in groups to recreate the Chapel wall painting designs



Stencilled letter M symbol completed!

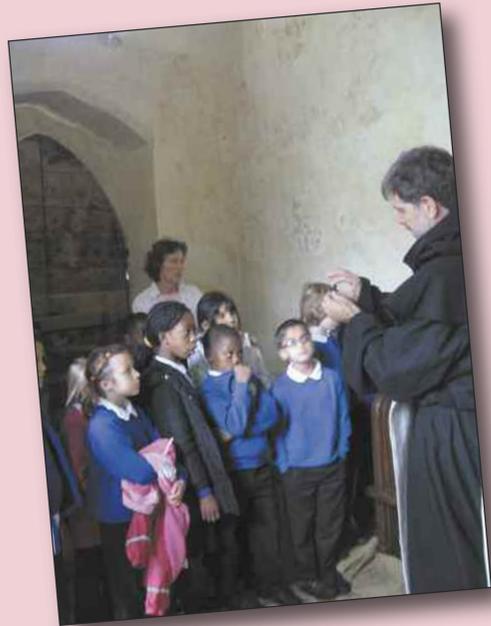


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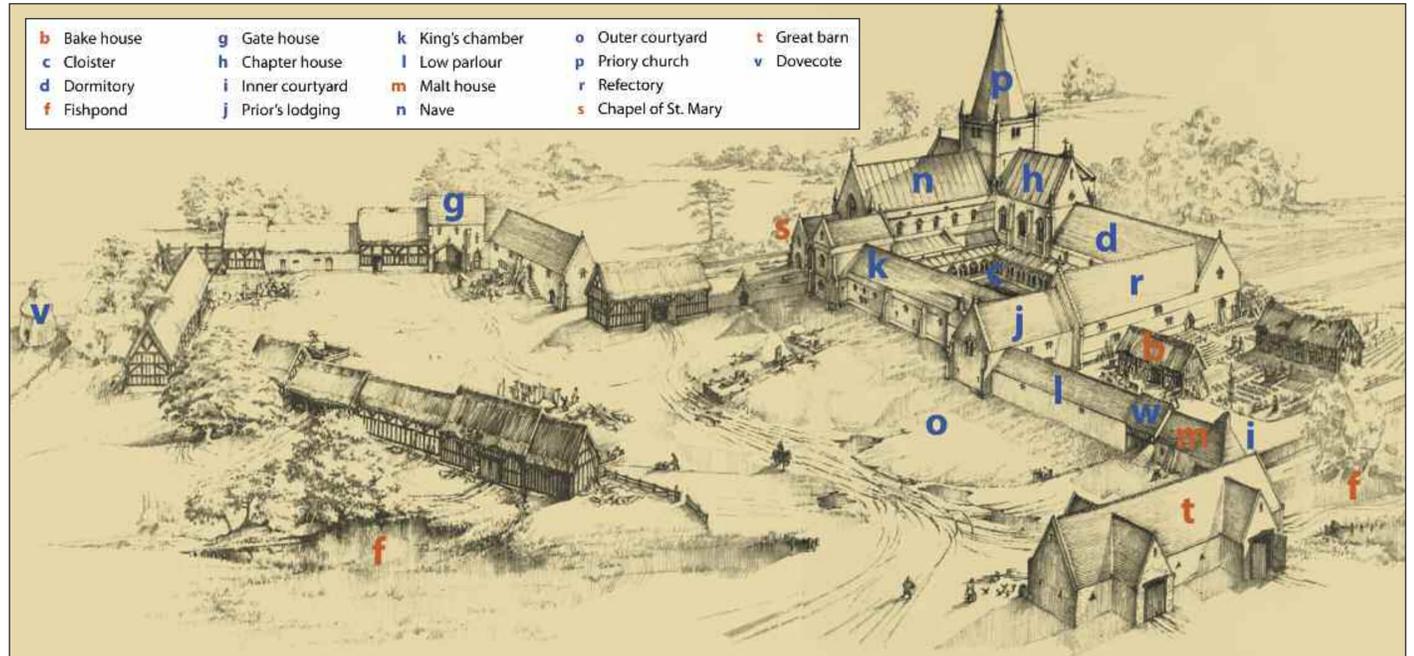


Learning at Bradwell Abbey



“Seeing the children’s enthusiasm about ancient craft techniques was exciting. This hands-on experience extends our current delivery”

**Henk van Aswegen,
Director of MKCDC**



Artist's impression of the medieval priory based on excavations and a survey for Cardinal Wolsey in 1526. The buildings coded in red are still in existence.

Milton Keynes City Discovery Centre (MKCDC) informs visitors about urban geography and new city planning – as well as the historical and natural heritage of Milton Keynes. It provides city tours, MK new towns archive, professional lectures and tours.

Since 1992, this charitable company has been based at the atmospheric rural setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument site of Bradwell Abbey. Locally, it is one of several historic sites in the area that provide major insights into medieval history – in contrast to the modern outlook of much of today’s city.

Nationally, the site is significant because it contains a large part of the medieval precinct of a key regional Benedictine priory. A 14th century standing building – the dedicated pilgrimage chapel of St Mary – preserves decorated floor tiles and stunning wall paintings in the fabric of the building, a rare survival. They show a procession of pilgrims, Christian symbols and the Virgin Mary, painted directly into the lime daub walls by accomplished artists.

Hands-on learning sessions are tailored to the curriculum for geography, history and topic work. By taking learning out of the classroom, ideas and concepts are turned into experiences that are memorable and engaging. It is hoped to continue similar high quality sessions inspired by this precious medieval art in future.



St Mary figure and symbol, Bradwell Abbey





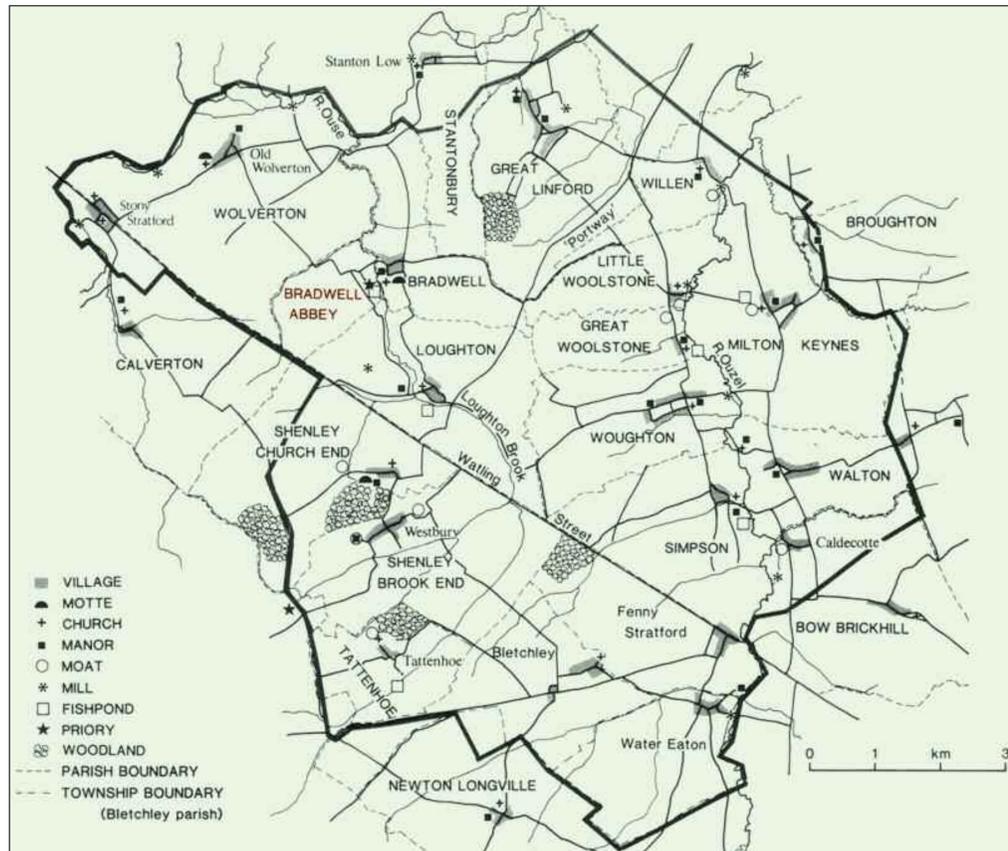
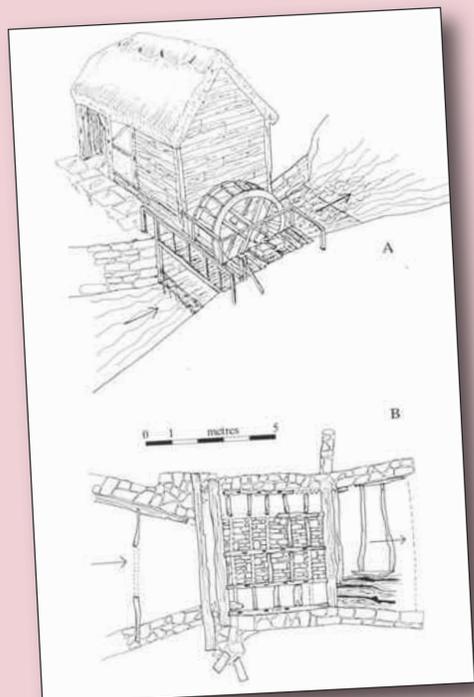
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Medieval life in Milton Keynes

“More than any other area of MK, Bradwell shows evidence of the history of England since the earliest settlers, from fragments of Bronze Age tools in New Bradwell c2000 BC to the futuristic prototype Bradwell Common ‘Homeworld ‘81’ housing.”

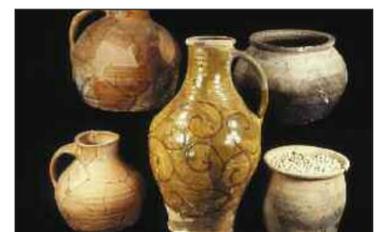
From ‘Bradwell Past and Present’ by Marion Hill



Medieval map, Milton Keynes 1066 to 1500



Brickhill tile pavement showing geometric design, Great Linford Church



Tableware and cook pots used in medieval homes, from various Bucks locations



Chess pieces made from jet and bone, Great Linford and Bradwell Bury excavations

Major excavations took place across the new town from the 1970s to 1990s by **Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit** – finds are now with **MK Council**. It had been feared that much would be lost under rapid housing development, but a major research series was produced. Survey and research by local organisations since has built up a rich picture of medieval buildings, agriculture, clothing and diet as well as major discoveries from the Roman and other periods, such as Bancroft Roman villa.

Medieval life in the modern area of Milton Keynes was rural with tiny settlements, open strip fields, woodland and mills around manor farms. Roman Watling Street (now V4) was still a major route, as green tracks could be impassable in winter. Settlements grew from their Roman or Saxon origins at river crossings such as Fenny Stratford and Old Wolverton, or on higher ground near a good water and power supply from the rivers Ouse, Ouzel and their brooks.

The economy was dominated by farming, some tile and pottery industry and the important religious estate at Bradwell Abbey. Its pilgrimage chapel, monastery, moated manor house, castle motte and mill by the brook – now sliced by the 1838 railway line – made up the biggest community after Newport Pagnell. Many routes led there across fields and woods.



Stained glass window lead as discovered near Chapel at Bradwell



Excavation next to chapel wall uncovered a Garderobe (toilet)



Kitchen or brewhouse excavated at Great Linford

Photos by MK Archaeological Unit, permission of MK Council
Thanks to Nick Crank, Archaeology Officer, MK Council for source material



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Art of the medieval tile-maker

"It was a rare opportunity for me to demonstrate medieval tile making with original tiles still in place. This helped explain their role as a part of the overall decoration within medieval churches."

Karen Slade

"I have had the best day ever! My favourite part was making the tiles. We got to use lots of different equipment."

Kieran, 10



In summer term 2014, children from **Southwood School** enjoyed a full day at Bradwell Abbey, exploring the archaeology of the site with the Director and learning medieval tile making skills.

Twenty-three Arts Club members aged 7 to 11 heard about medieval life in the monastery, handled pottery and tiles, examined the floor tile designs in St Mary's Chapel, learnt about Karen's research and work and finally created their own stamped clay work using her authentic tools. The final work shows that they used geometric layout and animal designs as a starting point to make their own creations.



"It was very interesting, even though the monk was a bit spooky!"

Noura, 8

"They quickly grasped the idea of creating a design to build into a larger overall pattern, because they had just seen the pavement and the designs."

Karen Slade

"It was fun learning about the Abbey and how the monks used to live."

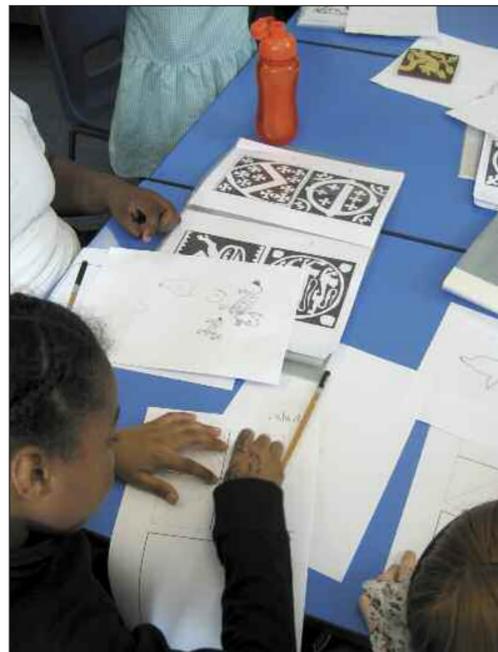
Noura, 8



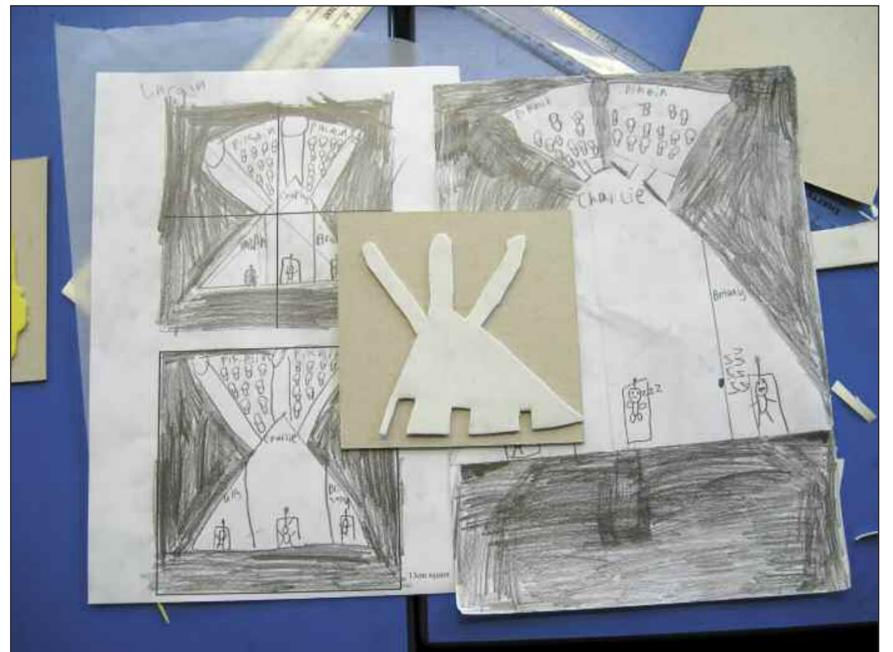


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Inspiration from original medieval tile designs



Tile drawing, design and pattern for stamping

The Arts Club had a whole workshop day in school using the medieval Bradwell Abbey tile patterns as the inspiration for their own glazed clay tile creations. Their sketches, designs and notes were kept as evidence for their Arts Awards. They responded enthusiastically to this creative style of learning with an expert.

First, the pages of the pattern books were made into larger designs, to revise their learning from the site visit to Bradwell Abbey. They worked their own favourite subject into a design, paying attention to the edges of their patterns and how these might connect across when placed next to each other.

The noisiest part was shaping the wet clay into tiles using traditional skills. After that, designs were traced, stamps made and the indented tiles were finally glazed. Later, after firing in her kiln, Karen scraped away the extra glaze to reveal their final, vibrant work.

“Working for a longer period than usual and teaching this traditional technique to children who are not restricted by boundaries of ‘correct’ interpretation has illustrated just how far it is possible to travel away from the source and yet still be defined and guided by it.”

Karen Slade





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Wall paintings at the Abbey



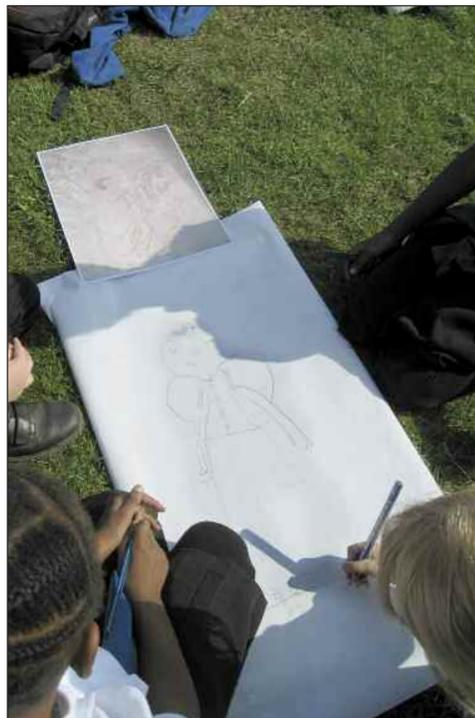
“Spending longer at a historic property meant that children could develop their own ideas and create freehand drawings, rather than working with templates. We learnt which images and ideas they responded to best.”

Karen Slade



“The project helped us combine our previously separate experiences of researching and working with historic paint pigments and the conservation of painted lime and gypsum plaster walls. We have deepened our knowledge of the relationships between these crafts and materials.”

**Karen and Charlie Slade,
Company of Artisans**



Group sketching the wall painting designs



Working together to grind the pigments into powder



Preparing the blue azurite pigment into a smooth paste using a glass muller

In the autumn term 2014, year 3 children from **Orchard Academy** investigated the medieval history of *Marvellous Milton Keynes* at Bradwell Abbey and tried out traditional painting techniques.

After hearing about monastic life from the Director of **MK City Discovery Centre** and visiting the Chapel, the children sketched its images and designs, examining the wall paintings in more detail. They smoothed on soft plaster over a traditional haired lime panel, ready for tracing designs. Making their own natural pigments (colour) from ground mineral rocks was fascinating: yellow and red ochre, green malachite and precious blue azurite.

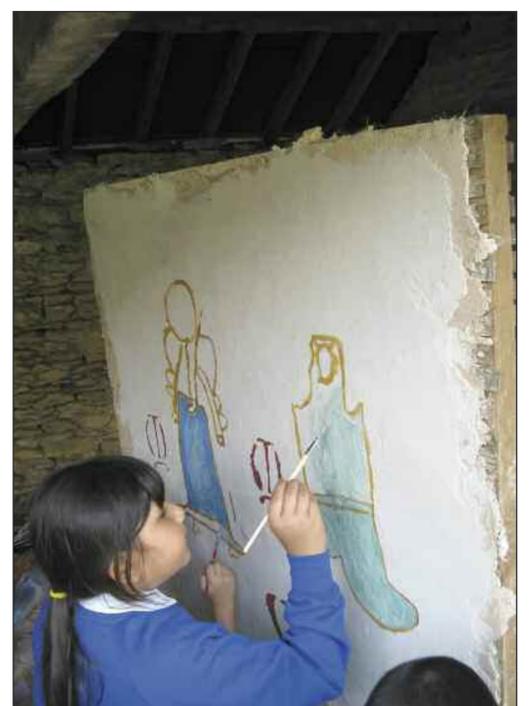
Using replica tools and stencils they made themselves, the figures and symbols were copied from the medieval art and their outlines and clothing painted in. One group recreated the M (for Saint Mary) symbol using stencilling as in the 1300s when the art was first produced on the chapel walls.



Red Ochre pigment with glass muller and marble slab



Tracing down the drawings using medieval drawing tools



Finishing touches



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Medieval art at school



Our plaster cast panels made in the classroom



The medieval animals were strange creatures, but fun to draw!

“We thoroughly enjoyed sharing our resources with children, which we had previously used for teaching older students and adults about lime plaster as a part of our conservation training.”

The art workshop at school introduced the Year 3 children to animal examples from the Noah’s Ark Bible story and medieval bestiary books. Images on wall paintings, medieval manuscripts and cathedral ceiling carvings told stories visually, at a time when most people did not read.

Karen mixed and poured powdered plaster into a frame to create one panel, in order to help them understand the chemical process – an exothermic reaction. To give practical experience of the materials used, Lego blocks were pressed into clay to make impressions, then cast to make a replica in plaster.

Children drew their four favourite animals, either from memory or chosen from source material – some fantasy beasts included! They used pre-prepared cast gypsum plaster panels to trace then paint their developed designs, using similar colours to the medieval painters. Their sketches, designs and finished work show their thoughtful response to the historical designs and use of colour.



Noah’s Ark with paired animals in medieval paintings



Zak’s drawing shows medieval animals in pairs for Noah’s Ark



Josephine chose contrasting colours as medieval artists did

“We hope that we have helped the children to better understand the methods used, as well as the meanings of the medieval wall paintings and the floor tiles in the chapel.”
**Karen and Charlie Slade,
Company of Artisans**