

Guidance Notes for Teachers

Mary Anning



Mary Anning

This collection looks at the past via this significant individual, whose achievements were often overlooked both during her lifetime and afterwards. Only in recent years has the real scope of her achievements been recognised.

Clothing

The clothing can be used for pupils to role-play events associated with Mary's story or to articulate ideas about how Mary may have felt about her life at different times.

Pupils should also compare the clothing to the two contemporary portraits of her. One a formal portrait shows her formally dressed, the other is a sketch of her at work on the shoreline near Lyme Regis.

Dress and cape



Top hat

Mary wore a top hat when working on the cliffs and shoreline of Lyme Regis to protect her from the ever present risk of rock falls while she searched for the fossils that supported her and her family.



Tools of her trade

Fossil hammer

Mary used this type of hammer to split rocks to reveal small fossils, such as the ammonites etc contained in this collection. Great skill is required to just remove



or split the surrounding rock without damaging any fossils that may be present.

Modern fossil hammer

The modern fossil hammer is included to show that modern fossil collectors and



palaeontologists still work in the same way Mary pioneered over two hundred years ago.

Folder for carrying sketches and paper

Wooden pencil case, dip pen, pencil and lead holder

Mary recorded what she found and where she found it by sketching. Her sketches were detailed and accurate, even though they were hastily done in the field. More detailed sketches could be made once the fossils had been cleaned and, in some cases, assembled.



What do pupils think modern fossil collectors and palaeontologists would use today? (Probably an Ipad.)

Fossils

The Anning family made a living by selling fossils found along the local coastline. The family home was right on the seafront in Lyme Regis and had a small shop at the front. Mary learned how to find and clean fossils by working with her father from a very young age. When he died Mary had to do her best to continue finding fossils to support the family financially. Later she learned more about categorizing the fossils from the Philpot sisters. Today, Lyme Regis museum stands on the site of Mary's former home. In Summer 2017 it opened a brand new wing dedicated to Mary.

Two ammonites

The larger of the two is quite badly eroded.



Pair of very small ammonites embedded in rock – these are from Lyme Regis and are still embedded in a piece of the local rock, just as the ones Mary found would be.



Whilst these fossilized ammonites are all very small, much larger fossilized ammonites exist - up to 4.5m diameter for the largest species found. The Cobb (harbour) in Lyme Regis has some large ammonites still preserved in the rock used to build it.

Two trilobites



Fossilized leaf within a split rock



Models of ancient creatures and fact sheets

Models of some of the fossilized creatures Mary found are included so pupils can see what the living creatures are thought to have looked like. Each model has an accompanying fact sheet.

NB the models are not to scale.

Ichthyosaurus model



Mary's earliest important find, was at first thought to be some sort of crocodile due to the long jaw lined with dozens of teeth. Her specimen was about 10m long. After much debate it was named Ichthyosaurus because of its fish like body and lizard like head - ichthys = fish, saur = lizard.

The model Ichthyosaurus is depicted eating an ammonite, the collection also includes an ammonite model and assorted fossils.

Pterodactyl model

Mary's last important find. Hers was the first intact pterodactyl fossil found in Britain.

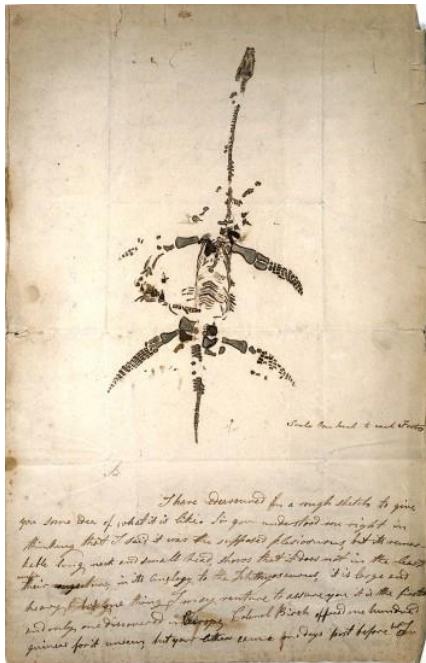


Ammonite model



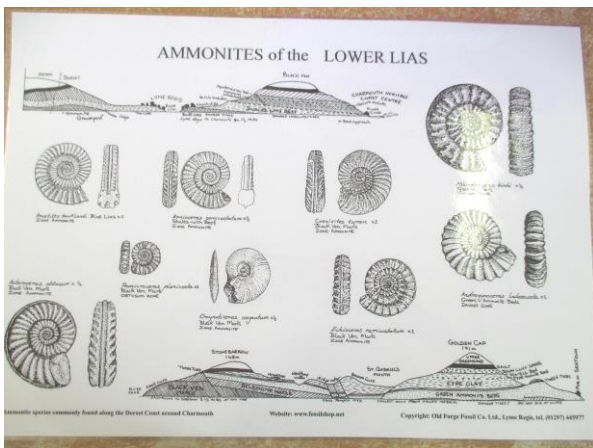
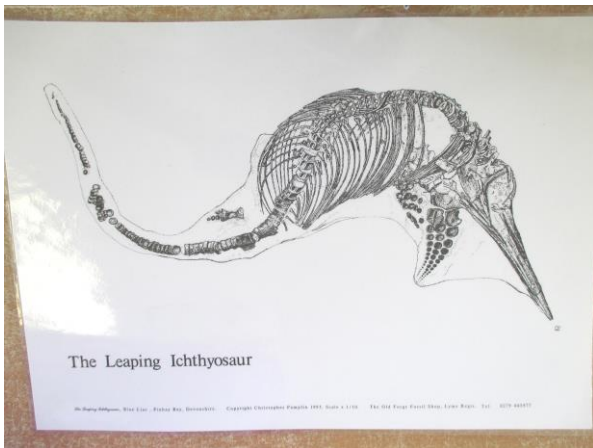
Other resources

Drawing of Mary's Plesiosaur fossil

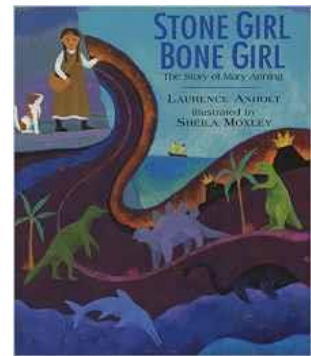
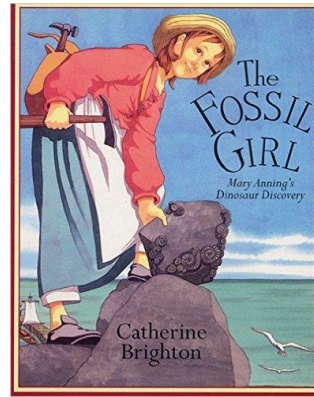


Posters

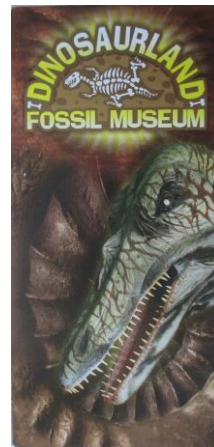
Both posters feature fossils that are local (relatively) to where Mary lived and worked.



Books



Dinosaurland leaflet



This advertising leaflet details the attractions of just one of the many places in and around Lyme Regis that now thrive thanks to Mary's work having helped to put the town very firmly on the tourist map.

This is one of the consequences of Mary's life and work and one which she could never have anticipated.

How do children think Mary would feel if she knew how important what she did so long ago is to the town she lived in all her life?

Activities to try with this collection

Most activities are likely to include some form of **role play** e.g.

- Role-playing various episodes in Mary's life, especially some of the surprising things Mary did e.g. cutting huge fossils from the cliffs and getting them safely to the shop – very difficult without the modern lifting and transportation equipment of today
- Exploring feelings Mary may have felt about her life at particular times e.g. when her father died, on finding new species, or her treatment by the scientific community at the time.

Convert the home corner to Mary's fossil shop

Please ensure the fossils and other items provided with the collection are treated very gently if you choose this option.

Task small groups of pupils to spend sessions role-playing Mary and her family working there – what things might they do?

- 'Clean' fossils (using soft, dry paint brushes),
- Make drawings of the fossils
- Explain what different fossils are to customers visiting the shop
- Sell fossils and take payments from visitors

Make a class museum dedicated to Mary and her work using objects from the collection as well as work produced by children as part of their enquiry.