



Ceumannan - Discovery Trails & Map Making
Staffin Primary School
2006/07

The *Discovery Trails* project is a learning activity at the Staffin Primary School. It is organised by staff of the Staffin Community Trust and will run in the school year 2006/07. Accompanied by experts and an artist the pupils (P3 – P7) will explore sites of historical and environmental interest in the area. Afterwards the artist will create a number of maps with the children using different techniques. All these will be pulled together in a final map, the *Discovery Map*.

Aims

- to raise awareness and understanding of the local heritage and environment.
- to introduce maps in general and the new *Staffin Data Atlas* in particular.
- to explore geology/ palaeontology and archaeology/ history, and sites/ walks of *Ceumannan*, the Staffin Ecomuseum project.
- to strengthen pupils sense of place and identity.
- to let the pupil express their discoveries with the help of art & poetry.
- to create a *Discovery Map* and documentation/resource pack.

Schedule

April – July 2006	Finalise details & apply for funding
August – June 2006/07	<i>Discovery Trails & Map Making</i>
July/ August 2007	Exhibition at Columba 1400, Staffin

Artefacts/ final products

We will make the following products if funding can be secured.

- 1 - About seven maps following walks/ site visits (pupils)
- 2 - A final map, folded (A3 *Discovery Map*, 100 copies)
- 3 - A documentation/ teaching resource pack (spiral bound book, 75 copies)

This will include information on all the walks/ sites/ art classes, additional information about the topics and area. A copy will go to each primary school in the Skye & Lochalsh area and the libraries.

Involvement

- Classroom sessions: introduce the project, maps & map making
 - Classroom/ PE sessions to introduce orienteering/ map reading
 - 10 site visits and trails, including orienteering, map reading exercises and a night time walk
- Depending on the topic these are accompanied by:
- teachers: Mrs. Cruikshank, Mrs. Wright, Mr. Ross
 - PE teacher
 - artist, Caroline Dear
 - Highland Council Countryside Rangers: John Phillips, Sarah Kay
 - archaeologist, Martin Wildgoose
 - local poet, Maoilios Caimbeul
 - Cultural Coordinator for Schools, Susan Walker
 - flint knapping: Val & John Lord (www.flintknapping.co.uk)
 - project officers (Staffin Community Trust): Duglad Ross, Meike Schmidt
- 11 artist led workshops back in the classroom

Trails

Some site visits/walks involved will be either led by a local expert, an archaeologist, the Highland Council Countryside Ranger or the ecomuseum project officer who will provide the pupil and teachers with background information about the walks/sites that they can take back to the classroom and use in additional lessons/ projects. Others will be designed as self-guided discovery trails to make the pupils observe, read and understand the landscape. These will also be combined with orienteering and map reading exercises.

Map making

An artist will also accompany the pupils on most walks. The artist will encourage them to collect material from the site, make sketches/maps, take photographs or a video. Back in the classroom the pupils will be asked to think about the sites/ walks, to reflect on what they have seen, the information learnt, and how they personally responded to the landscape. They will produce 7 maps. With the map making they shall explore a range of skills as listed below.

Besides using a different technique with each map they will also discover a different way of looking at a map and its key elements (language: colour, graphic, symbols, verbal, numerical; scale: size & distance, contour lines; historical information etc).

At the end the maps will be pulled together to design the *Discovery Map* of Staffin.

Exhibition

There will be an exhibition of the map and images at the Columba 1400 centre in Staffin in 2007.

Teaching Resource Pack

The artists and project officer will produce a booklet to document the project but also designed to be used as a teaching resource pack with additional information about the sites visited and useful local contacts if the schools would like to make visits independently in the future.

This will include information on all the walks/ sites/ art classes with additional information about the topics and area. A free copy will go to each primary school in Skye & Lochalsh area and the libraries.

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- Classroom 1 Introduction to the project** **13th September**
Maps & map making (Caroline Dear & project officers)
 Where do you live? How do you get to school? Where do you go shopping, swimming, walking etc? Describe your community to a visitor. Which are the main landmarks (maybe go outside)? - Draw a picture (map for the older ones) of their house and the area around it or township (for the older ones).
- Classroom 2 Orienteering & maps** (PE teacher & Meike Schmidt)
 How do people orientate? What do you need if you are going on a discovery trail e.g. the right clothes, knowing where you going and how to get there, a map, time, food? Introducing the basics of map and compass. Do some easy orienteering exercises.
- Trail 1/2** **Pre- & recent history** **14th September**
 Garafad to An Corran
 (Martin Wildgoose & Dugald Ross)
- Classroom 3** Pre/history (follow up & map making)
Map 1 **A graphic exploration** focusing on the (first) settlers, path ways/ transport people used and how they lived in the landscape.
 ("flight map" of prehistoric people)
- Activity** Flint knapping demonstration by John & Val Lord **4th October**
- Trail 3/4** **Seashore past & present:** Dead (fossils) and living creatures
 (including seaweed/seafood)
 Staffin Sands and Museum **2nd November**
 (Sarah Kay & Dugald Ross)
- Classroom 4** Ecology & geology (follow up & map making)
Map 2 A tide map/ seashore colour photography (seaweed ect)
- Classroom 5** Orienteering & map/ compass reading (PE teacher)
 Orienteering exercises
- Trail 5** **Map reading & Orienteering**
 Brogaig (PE teacher & project officer)
- Trail 6** **Orienteering & Discovering local fauna and history** **April?**
(Digg/ Loch Seanta)
 Digg/ Loch Seanta (PE teacher & project officers)
- Classroom 6** Reading the landscape (follow up & map making)
Map 3 **Printing with plants** (natural materials available)
- Trail 7** **Within & beneath: Ecology & History** **February?**
 Rubha nam Brathairean (Brothers' Point)
 (John Phillips & Dugald Ross)
- Classroom 8** Within and beneath (follow up & map making)
Map 4 **A stick map** relating to different ways of seeing the land and orientate.

At Rubha nam Brathhairean the relationship between land and man is visible in the human remains. Shell middens have been found in the banks of the river, evidence for the **Mesolithic** hunter-gatherers. There are **Iron age** remains (*Dun Hasan*) on the furthest rocks of the promontory. Marks of monk cells from the **Early Christian** time can be seen at the furthest edge of the promontory. Later there probably has been a **medieval castle** on top of the Iron Age Dun, and the demolished buildings and lazybeds at the end of the path show that people were living here and harvesting the fruits of the land and sea in more recent times, including salmon fishing.

All settlers looked at the landscape differently and where here for different reasons – food & shelter, solitude & spirituality, natural defence, land & sea – but they all left their marks.

There are also the stories about how the promontory got its name. Does it derive from the Early Christian monks, the clearly marked pancake shaped stones on the foot of the cliffs (Gaelic name?) or the brothers who supposedly drowned in the sea.

Stick maps: The Polynesians used to make charts from palm sticks tied together with coconut thread. The sticks represented the sea, with tiny shells threaded on to show the islands. They were the first people to explore the Pacific Ocean, over 2,000 years ago. They had no charts or instruments to guide them. Yet they were skilled navigators and sailors who used the changing direction of the wind and waves to find land. Over the centuries, Polynesian sailors have continued to travel thousands of kilometres across the sea – like the Mesolithic people.

Trail 8 Poetry of rocks: Language & Geology March?

Loch Langaig to Loch Hasco (poetry, place names, geology)
(Maolios Caimbeull & Ranger or Dugald Ross)

Classroom 9 Poetry of rocks (writing a poem & map making)

Map 5 **A word map** (lettering as image, overall patterns, different typefaces, word as place)

This could be using the words of a poem the children write with the help of Maolios Caimbeull or words describing the landscape and have the poem on the map somewhere.

Trail 9 Up, up and away: Bird's eye view May?

Bealach/ Quiraing car park to get a bird's eye view of the community

Map 6 **A sketch** drawing of the aerial view
(pens, pencil, charcoal, pastel, paints.....)

Classroom 10 Aerial photographs & Making maps (follow up & map making)

Talk about how maps are made from aerial photographs and introduce the *Staffin Data Atlas* (3D Map/ CDROM). Searching sites and data.

Session 9 (artist & project officer) – *Staffin Data Atlas* and *Discovery Map*

Classroom 11 Using all your senses: Orienteering in the dark

Talk about orienteering in the dark/ senses. Set up the light equipment (reflective path markers, lights) with the pupils. Invite the community to do the walk set out.

Trail 10 Night walk 1st December 8.00pm

Digg path
Map 7 **A video** (sound, senses, light/dark, editing) or a "sense map"

Classroom 12 Discovery Map May/ June

Pulling all the maps together in a larger map and getting it ready for printing.

Additional Mapping the world: Our island and the world (Ranger)

Explore Skye's place in the world and what makes it such a special place.

Make a paper globe (teacher or project officer)

What do we want them to feel, to do and to know? – sample site visits

We want the pupils to be “hot on the trails“ of things they can discover within and beneath their environment whether they are marks of nature or culture e.g. rocks and fossils, prehistoric settlements, dinosaur footprints and today's creatures on the seashore, place-names and recent history. Following are some sample visits.

- Discovering archaeology: Supervised by adults the pupils will walk in small groups the Columba 1400 car park to An Corran, Staffin sands. It will be laid out as an orienteering course/ treasure hunt. At each station a question will be asked which will make them aware of what they have discovered and relate it to the landscape e.g. Why do you think the Stone Age people built the chambered cairn in this location? Why do you think people built their hut (circle) in this place? Can you find more remains? What did they eat and where do you think they got their food from? How did they travel here?

Having reached An Corran, the site where the first evidence of people on Skye was revealed, we shall talk about the pupil's discoveries and explain about the importance of the site. Depending on time we shall either walk back the same way with an archaeologist on the same day or come back for another visit, talking about life in prehistoric times in more depth.

We shall also make them aware of the human remains from more recent times.

In the 19th century the “trail” which descends to the shore was constructed by funds from a government department known as the Famine Committee which was set up to alleviate the severe hardships which were incurred after the potato crop failure of the 1840s. The main purpose of the path was to provide the townships with a good footpath access to a central locality where Cargo boats would discharge their supplies. The supplies would largely consist of basic goods such as oatmeal and it was quite common to see women carrying half boll sacks along the path as they headed for distant townships. Half a boll equalled seventy pounds in weight. The square stone building at the top of the slipway was also constructed for this purpose. It has been known as the storehouse.

Looking across to Staffin Island, we can see the small buildings and net poles which were used for commercial salmon fishing during the summer until about 20 years ago. This type of fishing was done by anchoring a series of net systems at various points along the coast. The fishermen would use a specially designed open boat called a coble. The clinker built cobles were very distinct with an uplifted sharp bow and a square stern. Due to the present day scarcity of the wild atlantic salmon this industry has largely declined in recent years.

- Discovering geology & ecology: With the Highland Council Ranger and the project officer, Dugald Ross the pupils will go on a geological and ecological trail discovering what used to live and lives on the seashore.

The first stop of this site visit will be the fossilised dinosaur prints which were found on the seashore in 2002 just down from the Mesolithic site the pupils have already discovered. The footprints have been identified as being from a large carnivore known as Megalosaurus. Casts have been taken which are on display in the local Staffin Museum which should also be visited for the post-visit review.

Questions to be asked and answered: Imagine the landscape at the time when the dinosaurs lived here. What happened then? What kind of stones are there? How old is a fossil compared to you? How did the Quaraing get there and what it is made of? Why did the fields of potatoes slip into the sea in Flodigarry? What lives on the seashore today?

To interweave the earlier discoveries re the prehistory we shall also talk about food from the seashore i.e. the seafood in the diet of the Stone Age People, salmon fishing stations and how to make a traditional seaweed soup today?

As a post-visit to review what we have discovered and learnt about “rocks and fossils”, there will be a visit to “Staffin Museum” and a session back in the classroom. The “seashore” could be picked up on again on our visit to Rubha nam Brathairean.