

Oak Archaeology Wales CIC

RUPERRA EDUCATION & WELLBEING PACK (PRIMARY)

The Ground Remembers – Exploring the Roman Story of Ruperra

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Digital Terrain Model (DTM) visualization showing topographic relief and features near Ruperra. Data derived from DataMapWales elevation data, © Welsh Government / licensed data. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. Image processed and annotated by Daryn Groves.

The ground remembers... every stone, every whisper beneath the grass still speaks.

Introduction

Welcome to *The Ground Remembers* — a creative and educational pack designed to help pupils explore the land beneath their feet and discover how archaeology connects us to our past.

At **Oak Archaeology Wales CIC**, our work at **Ruperra Home Farm, Draethen (Caerphilly)** has revealed evidence of a **Roman military–funerary complex** using non-invasive survey methods such as **LiDAR, Ground-Penetrating Radar (GPR)**, and traditional **dowsing**.

This pack combines science, imagination, and wellbeing — encouraging learners to slow down, observe carefully, and listen to the stories the earth still holds.

Story: The Ground Remembers

Under the long grass of Ruperra Home Farm, the land was whispering. It remembered the footsteps of people who once built, marched and worked here long ago.

One bright morning, an archaeologist named **Daryn** walked the field with two shiny **brass dowsing rods**.

They were light and gold in the sun, and when held gently they began to move — crossing where the ground seemed to hum with memory.

The rods were not magic wands but listening tools.

They showed when the land changed — perhaps where an old wall, well, or road still slept beneath the soil.



Later, big machines called **LiDAR** and **GPR** were used to listen to the same places.

Their screens drew bright lines exactly where the rods had turned.

The earth had told its story twice.

Together, the team began to map the hidden shapes: rectangles of lost buildings, the curve of a road, the outline of a pool where water once flowed through the old **morgue**.

Bit by bit, a Roman military–funerary complex appeared — a place where soldiers had been honoured and remembered two thousand years ago.

The ground had remembered everything.

All it needed was someone patient enough to listen.

Final Reflection:

Now, the archaeologists still return, listening to the land.

Each time they visit, more of the old Roman site quietly reveals itself — piece by piece, like a puzzle waiting for careful hands.

And perhaps one day, you'll be part of that team too.

Teacher's Guide

Learning Themes

- Archaeology and discovery
- Welsh heritage and identity
- Nature connection and wellbeing
- Mindfulness and observation
- Bilingual learning through storytelling

Learning Goals

Pupils will:

1. Understand how the past can be revealed without digging.
2. Learn about dowsing, LiDAR and radar as discovery tools.
3. Explore how teamwork and curiosity reveal history.
4. Reflect on how “the ground remembers.”

How to Use This Pack

Teachers can read the story aloud, then use the worksheets and creative activities to help pupils think, draw and feel what it means for the land to hold memory.

The activities can be done indoors or outside — ideally in a quiet outdoor space where pupils can feel close to nature.

Dowsing – Discovery Through Awareness

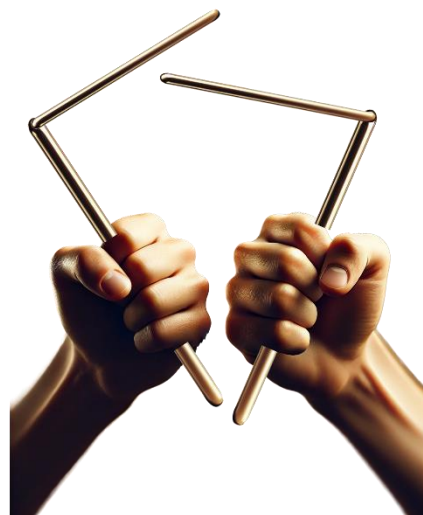
Dowsing rods are light **brass tools** that respond to very small changes as we move. When someone walks slowly and pays close attention, the rods may cross where the soil or stone beneath changes.

In archaeology, dowsing can help guide where to look using scientific tools later — such as LiDAR or GPR.

It's a way to notice and connect — a lesson in patience, balance, and respect for the earth.

Optional Try-It Activity:

- Make simple rods from two wire coat hangers (bent into L-shapes).
- Pupils hold them loosely and walk slowly across grass.
- When rods cross, mark that spot with a leaf or small stick.
- Discuss what they noticed — wind, movement, balance — and what the earth might be saying.



Primary Worksheet – The Ground Remembers

Name: _____ Date: _____ School: _____

1. What do you think it means when we say “*The ground remembers*”?
2. What did Daryn use to listen to the land?
3. What did LiDAR and GPR help to find?
4. Why might the Romans have chosen Ruperra for their buildings?
5. How does finding old places help us understand our world today?
6. If the stones could speak, what do you think they would say?

Creative Corner:

Draw or paint what you imagine the Roman buildings looked like beneath the grass.

Write one line of poetry beginning: *“The ground remembers...”*

Creative & Mindfulness Activities (Cwmwl Clyd)

1 Draw Through Time

Create three pictures:

- Ruperra as it is today
- What you imagine it looked like in Roman times
- How it might look in the future

2 Listen to the Land

Everyone stands quietly outdoors for one minute.

Close your eyes and breathe deeply.

What do you hear? What do you feel beneath your feet?

Share one word with your group.

3 Letter from the Field

Write a letter to one of the Roman soldiers buried at Ruperra, telling them what you’ve found and how the land looks now.

4 Digital Sharing

Share artwork or letters on *People’s Collection Wales* or through *Cwmwl Clyd* using tag: **#RuperraHeritageDiscovery**

About This Project

“The Ground Remembers” is part of the ongoing community heritage work at **Ruperra Home Farm, Draethen, Caerphilly**, led by **Oak Archaeology Wales CIC**.

It helps learners explore how landscapes hold stories of the past — from Roman times to the present day.

The project combines ancient awareness, like **dowsing**, with modern technologies such as **LiDAR** and **Ground-Penetrating Radar (GPR)**.

Together they have revealed a buried Roman military–funerary complex beneath the fields of Ruperra.

Supported by **Cwmwl Clyd**, **People’s Collection Wales**, **RCAHMW**, **Heneb**, **GGAT**, and the **National Lottery Heritage Fund**, the project celebrates discovery, mindfulness, and the living history beneath our feet.

Find out more or share your own stories at:

www.peoplescollection.wales | www.cwmwlclyd.com



Listening to the land, learning from the past.