

# 2025

## Inspiration Pack – Hidden Histories: On Your Doorstep



An annual art competition for  
schools in Fife organised by:



Scottish Fisheries Museum  
*Boats, fish and folk...*

For more information about the Art  
Competition please contact:

Julia Branch  
Learning and Engagement Officer  
[julia@scotfishmuseum.org](mailto:julia@scotfishmuseum.org)  
01333 310628

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Buckhaven Exhibition .....	4
Buildings and Landmarks .....	5
People, Their Jobs and What They Wore .....	9
Communication and Sharing Information .....	12
The Home: Then and Now .....	17
Map Explorer Worksheet .....	19
Sources of Further Information .....	20

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Scottish Fisheries Museum  
*Boats, fish and folk...*

# Introduction

*"Fife has always been one of Scotland's most distinctive counties ... Not surprisingly for a county of such extraordinary historical resonance, Fife contains a huge number of churches, castles and houses that witnessed events that have quite literally shaped the nation."*

*- Raymond Lamont-Brown, Historian -*

Fife has a unique history. There are 4,973 listed buildings in Fife and 48 conservation areas. These buildings and areas are of historical importance to Fife's local history and Scotland's national heritage. With all this history across Fife there is a rich history to explore right on your doorstep.

By exploring your local area you can discover the stories behind the places you and your pupils interact with each day and compare and contrast how people lived there in the past to how we live today. From street names, historic buildings and local folklore there's lots to discover.

We have split the inspiration pack into different themes to help you decide what area of your local history to explore:

- Buildings, Landmarks and Street Names
- People, Their Jobs and What They Wore
- Communication and Sharing Information
- The Home: Then and Now

In this year's Art Competition, schools are invited to explore **Hidden Histories On Your Doorstep** and compare how things used to be to today. This is inspired by our temporary exhibition **Buckhaven's Hidden Harbour** created by P6 pupils at Mountfleurie Primary School, Leven. The exhibition opened in January and explores the history of the harbour and the fact the harbour no longer exists. We hope that you will be inspired to create some diverse and original artworks in response to the history in your local area.

For inspiration you can visit the museum to see the exhibition or use the information and images in this document in the classroom. You can also borrow our loan box 'Fisherman's Home' to use in your classroom which explores how homes in the past are different to how we live today.

# Buckhaven's Hidden Harbour Exhibition

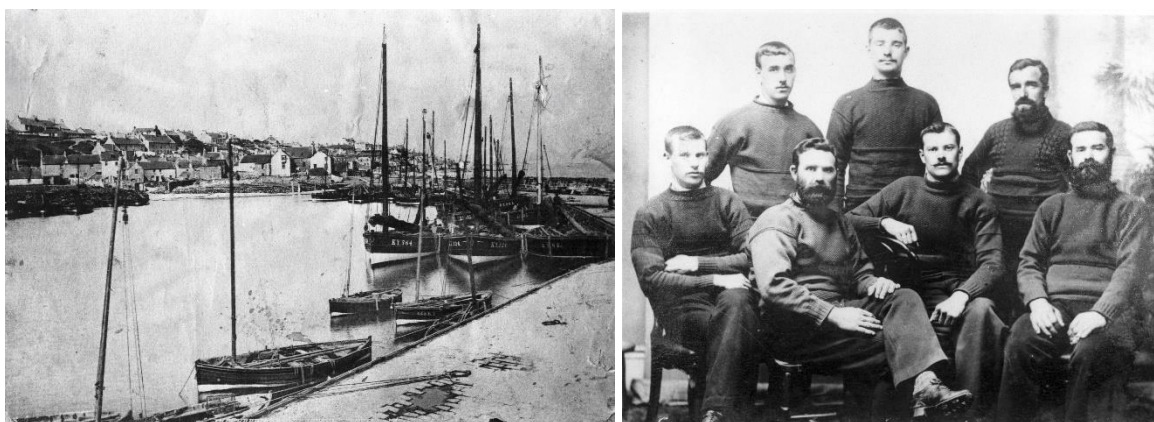
The Curatorial Team at the Museum supported the pupils at Mountfleurie Primary School to curate the exhibition about the history of Buckhaven Harbour. What you see in the exhibition are the pupil's own words, the stories they found interesting, and their choice of objects.

The exhibition title is 'Buckhaven's Hidden Harbour' because this local landmark no longer exists. Anyone who looks around the area today would see little evidence that a fishing fleet used to moor there.

In 1831, Buckhaven was a natural harbour where 198 fishing boats landed their catches on the beach. It was the second largest fleet in Scotland with the first being Buckie and the third Anstruther. The fishermen raised funds to build a permanent harbour and the initial harbour was built in 1838. Extensions to the harbour were made in 1840 and 1849 using the natural rock formations for protection, making it one of the safest harbours of its time.

In 1937, a storm raged for two days and nights breaching the East Breakwater. Over time the natural reef that protected the harbour had silted up with the waste of the nearby Wellesley Coal Mine and allowed the full force of the waves to hit the harbour, destroying it. The repairs were too costly given that, by then, there were only five boats using the harbour and a decision was made. It was allowed to deteriorate until 1942 when the lighthouse crumbled into the sea.

The pupils enjoyed exploring the history of the harbour and discovered many interesting stories and local characters that are highlighted in the exhibition. We hope this small glimpse into their exhibition will inspire you to discover more about the history on your doorstep. The exhibition is on until Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May and you are welcome to visit with your class.



Left: Buckhaven Harbour in the Snow, 1894. Right: The Buckhaven crew of 'Agenora', KY534, 1895.

Over the next few pages we will explore some of themes in the exhibition to inspire you to discover the heritage on your doorstep.

# Buildings and Landmarks

Buildings and well-known local landmarks are a good place to start when thinking about your local history. Some building may even be 'Listed'. There are 4,973 listed buildings in Fife and these are buildings that historically important and should be protected.

There are three listed buildings categories:

- A-listed:** Building of national or international importance, either architecturally or historically.
- B-listed:** Buildings of regional importance, or major examples of a particular period, style or type.
- C-listed:** Buildings of local importance, local examples of a particular period, style or type.

To find out more about listed buildings in your area visit 'Listed Buildings' on Historic Environment Scotland's website here:

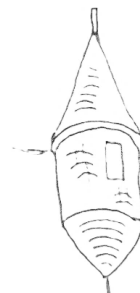
<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/listed-buildings/search-for-a-listed-building/>

When investigating the history and architecture of your part of Fife you could explore spacious marketplaces, narrow wynds and closes, street names that give clues to the past, specific buildings like churches and town halls. In the coastal towns you can explore the 'little houses' that were home to Fife's fishing families.

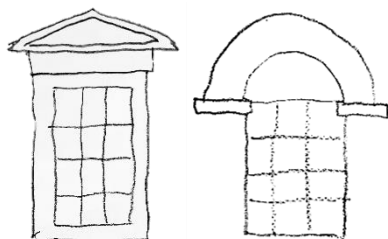
Some of the common architectural features you can find in Fife are:



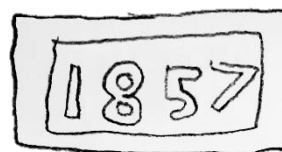
Crowstepped rooflines



Turrets



Pedimented windows or doors

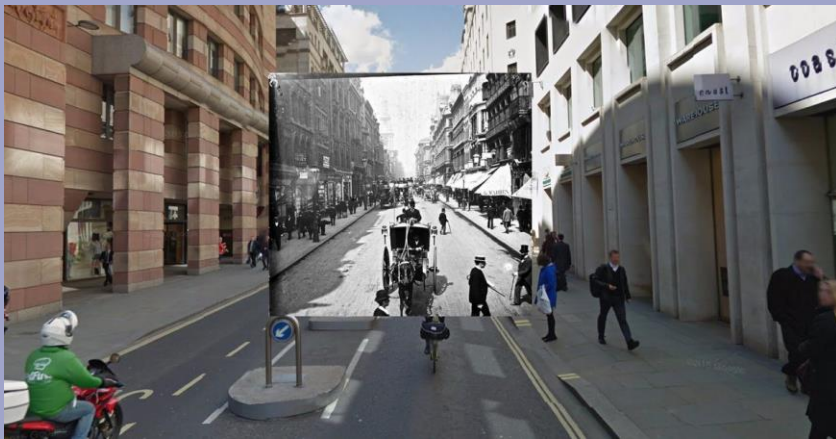


Date Stones

## Explore Ideas: Go for a walk in your local area

Go for a class walk around your local area and look at the buildings, landmarks and street names. You might spy date stones, different styles of architecture, unique stone features, plaques and lots more.

**Take it further:** If you have some old photos of your local streets, try to find where these photos were taken from. Hold the old photo up and take a picture of it from the same place - like the image below.



A Street in London (Image Credit: English Heritage)

### **Exploring your local area through historic maps**

In simple terms, maps are a drawing of an area viewed from above. Maps are great **primary and secondary historical sources**. They show us how places have changed and developed over time. For example, street names, changes in road layouts and how towns and cities have expanded. Maps give us a better understanding of our local area. We can see what landmarks, buildings and features were important to the mapmaker and how they relate to each other.



## Arty Ideas: Create Your Own Heritage Map

Pupils could create their own map of your local area. In the middle of a piece of paper draw their school/house.

Around this label or draw sites. They could include:

- Places that are important to them
- Interesting historical facts
- Historic buildings or landmarks
- Road names
- Buildings that have disappeared that used to be there

**Take this further:** use printouts of historical photos, maps and archive documents to make a collage map.



# The People, Their Jobs and What They Wore

Photographs are important **primary sources** as they are a window to the past and provide a first-hand account of what things used to be like. When exploring local history, you can use photos to see how places have changed, but they also show us what people were like, what they did and what clothes they wore.

Photographs are **staged** by the photographer to present the viewer with a specific message. We can gather a lot of **information** from a photograph if we consider **what the photographer wanted to achieve by taking the photograph**.

- Who/what is the main subject of the photograph? What are they doing?
- Who took the photograph? Why?
- What do you feel when you look at the photograph?
- When was the photograph taken? Do you think that this changes what you can see?
- What's in the background? Does this affect your reaction to the photograph?
- Is there something not shown in the photograph?

When we think about these questions, we can create a **narrative of events** through the eyes of the photographer.

## Arty Ideas: Recreate an Old Photograph

Why not try putting yourself in the shoes of the photographer by recreating an old photograph from our collection?

Study the clothes, background, and poses of the people in the photographs and have some fun dressing up!

You might also want to try reinterpreting a photograph – what if you took the same picture? Would you have done something differently?

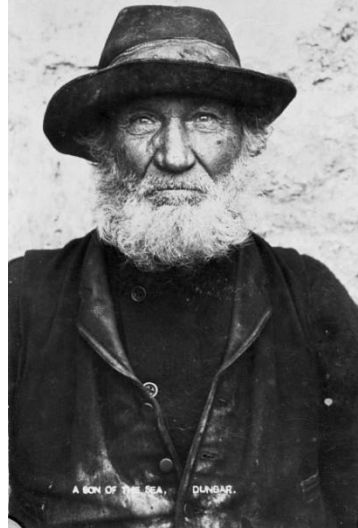
## Exploring the World of Work Through Photographs

During the 20th century, images of people at work in rural Scotland became popular among artists and scholars as an object of fascination, as they contrasted with life in the city. Today, the images from the Museum's photographic collection can help us better understand our local history and heritage. We can compare the jobs in the past with what the jobs look like today. Even if the tools and equipment used has changed

Many photos in the museum collection show us different scenes of men and women carrying out different jobs. There were lots of tasks involved in the fishing industry, and photos of people working can show us who and how they did them. Fishing wasn't the only industry in Fife. What other jobs were in your local area? Who in the community did which job? What makes a job photogenic?

Below are some photos from the Museum Collection.





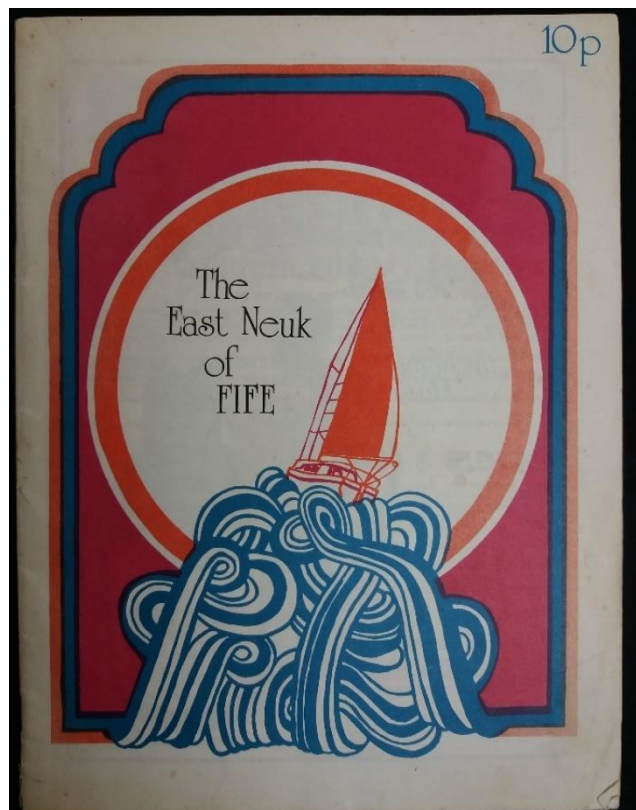
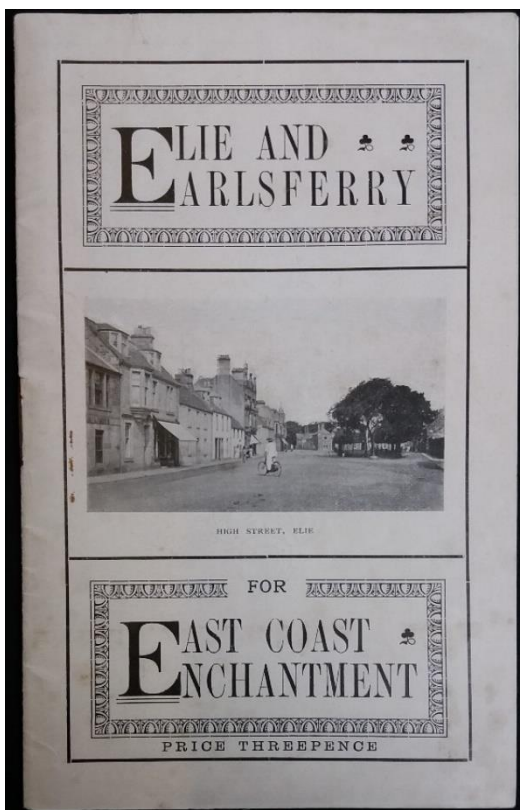
# Communication and Sharing Information

How we communicate and share information has changed over the centuries. The development of communication devices from telegrams and corded phone to smartphones has had a huge impact on how we communicate with individuals and the wider community. Today we use technology in all aspects of our lives, and it is easier than ever to find things out and get information. The existence of the internet means we can find information a lot faster than before. Despite this, some of the older methods of communication are still useful and favoured by some people.

## Tourism and Marketing

Tourism in Britain can trace its origins back to the Middle Ages, when Britons travelled to pilgrimage sites such as Canterbury and Walsingham. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century travel was more affordable, people had more free time and some even had paid leave. This led to almost everyone travelling to go on holiday in Britain. Seaside resorts and coastal areas were particularly popular and could easily be accessed by the railways.

Improvements in technology and travel coincided with new ways of marketing holiday destinations and communicating what the key attractions were in a local area. Affordable portable guidebooks started to be published. Below are some examples from the Museum collection.





## Advertising

Early adverts in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century were published in newspapers and magazines. Many early adverts were text heavy and used little imagery. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, advertising grew rapidly with new technologies, such as direct mail, radio, television. Below are some examples of adverts relating to the fishing industry.

**'HERCULES' FISHING NETS**  
 PLAIN OR MOUNTED, SINGLE OR DOUBLE KNOT  
 made from NYLON, ULTRON, POLYTHENE or COTTON  
 AS USED BY SUCCESSFUL FISHERMEN THROUGHOUT  
 THE WORLD.

TWINES : LINES : ROPES : FLOATS : Etc.

*We also manufacture*  
 AGRICULTURAL NETS DEER FENCE NETS  
 GARDEN NETS SPORIS NETS

**J. W. STUART LTD.**  
 MUSSELBURGH SCOTLAND - tel. 2552

*Branches—*  
 STONEHAVEN Tel. 2115  
 BUCKIE Tel. 2188  
 FRASERBURGH Tel. 945  
 LOWESTOFT Tel. 5326

**Shetland Salmon**  
 farmed in the wild

HALL 5 - STAND 645

**Shetland Salmon Farmers' Association**  
 Tel: 01595 695579, Fax: 01595 694494  
 Email: [ssfa@fishuk.net](mailto:ssfa@fishuk.net)  
[www.fishuk.net](http://www.fishuk.net)

**The NAUTICAL**  
 Built for Hard Service  
 on Land or Sea

**A** STOUTLY-MADE Coat of strong Black or Yellow Oilskin, with the smooth BEACON Finish, made with wide skirt and slip-on shoulders, giving an easy fit. Specially suitable for Farmers, Gamekeepers, and all outdoor workers who desire weather-comfort. Warm, serge-faced collar, and two outside pockets. Double sleeves and body lined half-way down, edges and button-holes strengthened. A coat for heavy wear and rough weather. Reliable at all times. Weight about 5 lbs.

L112. Black or Yellow, post paid .. 32/6

SIZES IN STOCK

Chest	40	42	44	46 ins.
Length	46	48	50	52 ins.

Also stocked in 48 in. chest, 54 in. long, at 35/-

The NAUTICAL is the Coat that has helped to make BEACON Oilskins famous.

**BEACON Oilskins can be re-oiled**

Image Credit: Barbour

## Arty Ideas: Local Advert

Think about your local area. What would attract people to visit? Are there any businesses that are unique to the area?

Design an advert for a local brand/business

Think about why people would want to buy their product. Why is the product special?

Design a front cover for a guidebook for your local area.

Think about what would attract people to visit your town. What are the key landmarks or things to do?

### **Postcards**

Created in 1870 the postcard shot to popularity as a means of cheap, quick communication. In 1871 around 75 million postcards were sent in Britain and volumes increased to over 800 million a year by the end of King Edward VII's reign in 1910. Since the end of the First World War postcards have predominantly been sent when on holiday and are increasingly being replaced by newer forms of digital communication.

For those that worked in the fishing industry during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century following the herring around the coast of Britain, postcards offered quick and cheap communication with friends and family back home. They could let them know where they were and that they were safe.

For many people the postcard is synonymous with the seaside and holidays. The holiday postcard is a chance for the sender to tell someone what a lovely time they are having and it is still an important part of the holiday experience today. Holiday postcards are an advert for the place they are visiting and the types of things you can do and see while there.

The images featured on old postcards offer a window into the past. On the next page are some examples of postcards from the Museum Collection.



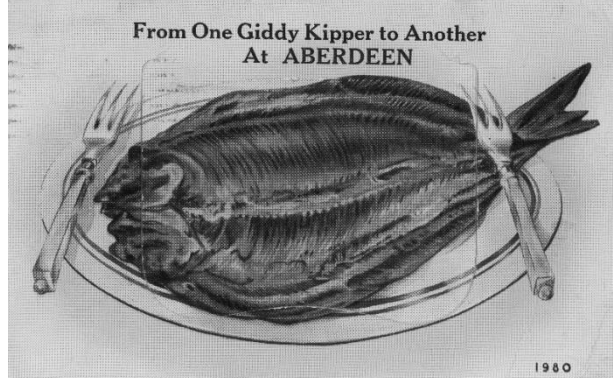
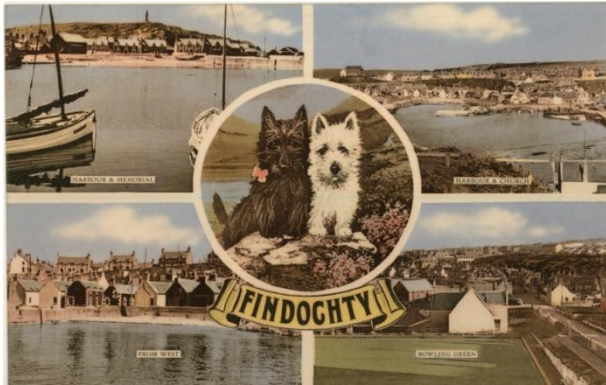
The Harbour - Tayport

4264 W



The Harbour - Buckie

4193



1980

## Arty Ideas: Postcard Creation

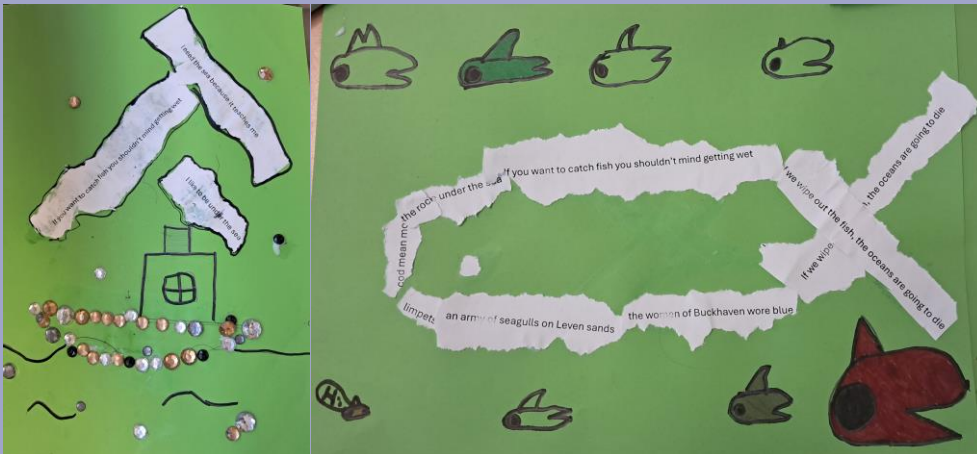
Create a postcard for your local area.

Think about:

- What things would people do?
- What places would people visit?
- Will your postcard have a slogan?
- Will you have more than one image?

## Arty Ideas: Poetry Collage

Collect phrases about the history of the local area and print them out for each pupil. Ask pupils to look through the phrases and pick ones they like to create a poem. The pupils will tear these out stick them on a piece of paper to create a poetry collage. They can draw, use art materials or print outs of old maps or photos to decorate their collage.





# At Home: Then and Now

In the Museum we have a reconstruction of a c1900 Fisherman's Cottage. Unlike houses today that have separate rooms for different functions many people in the Victorian period lived in one or two rooms. In the East Neuk many fishing families lived in cottages where they lived on the ground floor and used the upper floor to store their fishing gear. This meant that the one or two rooms were the family living room, kitchen and bedroom all in one. This meant the hearth (fireplace) was literally the heart of the home. Looking at the objects on display many visitors will recognise some of them but there will be some that especially our younger visitors will not be familiar with.

In 1900 the balance between mass-production and hand-crafting was beginning to shift. Many of the items on show, such as the range and the crockery, have been manufactured while others including most of the wooden furniture and the cooking utensils would have been made in small local workshops. Other items such as some of the textiles (the socks hanging from the range and the blankets on the bed) or fishing gear (baskets and creels) would have been made by members of the family themselves.

## **Objects to compare and contrast to today**

### Wash-Day Items

Nowadays most of us have a washing machine at home. In the 1900s the laundry was done by hand. All the different jobs your washing machine does were done by using different tools and the women often had to fetch water from a local well and heat it up before they could even start the cleaning. In the Museum cottage you can see laundry tools including a mangle, boiler (iron tub with fire underneath, scrubbing board and dolly. In addition to the tasks already described which women in fishing communities had to perform, were the usual domestic chores.

### Sleeping

Families would sleep in box-beds sometimes sharing with other family members. Box-beds were a common feature of Scottish houses. The bed recess was often covered over with curtains known as pawns. These helped maintain some privacy as well as reducing draughts.

### Keeping Clean

During the early 1900s they would have baths or wash themselves in a slipper bath in front of the fireplace. The tub would need to be filled and emptied by hand and would be replenished with hot water from a kettle kept warm on the hearth. To clean their hands and face they would also use a jug of water called an ewer and basin as they did not have running water.

They did not have toilets. Some houses had either an adjoining or outbuilding that was used as a toilet. They may also have had a chamber pot to use during the night so they did not have to go outside.



### Arty Ideas: 3D House Comparison

Using a box or something similar, create a scene that compares Victorian homes to homes today. You could split the box into two with each half showing a different time period.

# Map Explorer Worksheet

**Map Date:**

**Map Name:**

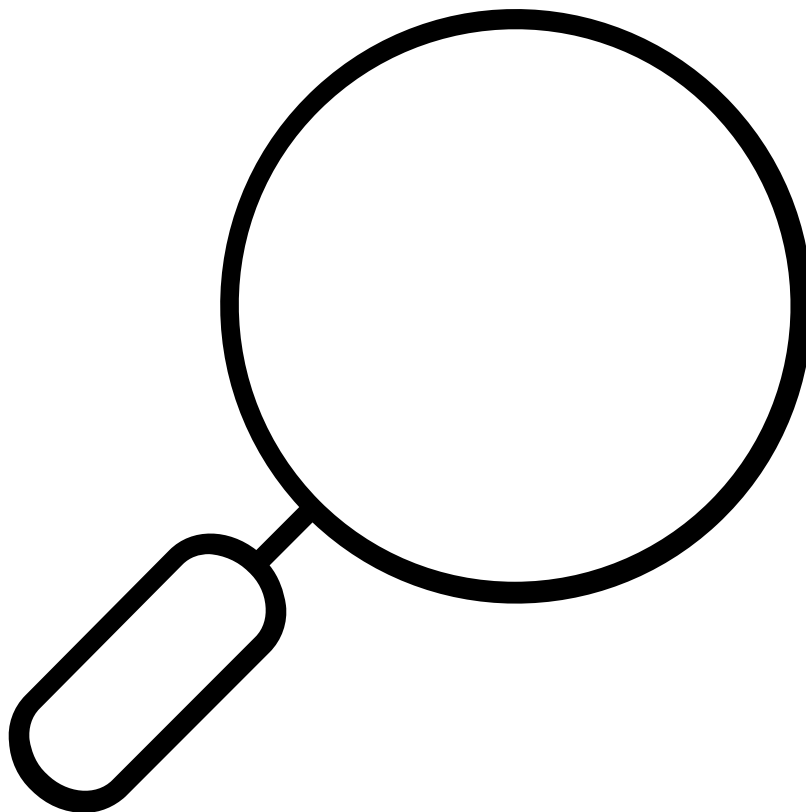
3 things that are the same as today

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

3 things that are different today/no longer there

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

1 thing I find interesting or would like to find out more about:



# Sources of Further Information

Below are some links to further information and learning resources that might be useful:

## **The Scottish Fisheries Museum – Learning Resources including Photo Detective and Fishing in Scotland**

<https://www.scotfishmuseum.org/education-packs.php>

## **The Scottish Fisheries Museum – Historic Photo Archive Search**

<https://photosearch.scotfishmuseum.org>

## **Historic Environment Scotland Listed Buildings**

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/listed-buildings/>

## **National Library of Scotland Maps**

<https://maps.nls.uk/>

## **National Library of Scotland – Mapping History Learning Resource**

<https://digital.nls.uk/mapping-history/index.html>

## **Archaeology Scotland – Heritage Resources Portal**

<https://www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/heritage-resources-portal/category/type-of-resource/activity/>