

THE GRAFFITI

THE WRITING ON THE WALL

This selection of graffiti shows the opinions and skills of some of the conscientious objectors imprisoned in the cell block at Richmond Castle. Explore the images with your class or cut out the boxes for working in smaller groups.

EXPLORING THE GRAFFITI

There are thousands of pieces of graffiti in the cell block, from the mid-19th century to 1970. As well as showing some of the reasons for conscientious objection, the graffiti also gives us evidence about other aspects of life at the time it was drawn, such as types of jobs, the clothes people wore, the technology of the era, and social and cultural practices.

Today, because the graffiti is so fragile, English Heritage can't allow visitors to go inside the cell block. Instead, you can explore the **graffiti gallery online**: www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/richmond-castle/richmond-graffiti/cell-block-graffiti



The English Heritage online graffiti gallery.

By John Hubert (Bert) Brocklesby

Date

May 1916

Bert was one of the group later known as the Richmond Sixteen. This sketch is of his fiancée, Annie Wainwright. Her portrait may have given him strength and comfort during his time in prison.

The drawing may have reminded a different, later, prisoner of a loved one, as he relabelled the drawing 'My Kathleen'.



By William Thomas Angrave



Date

27 July 1916

This intricate floral design is probably a pattern for lace. Before the war William was a draughtsman designing lace in Long Eaton, Derbyshire. This was a town booming on the profits of the lace trade.

William was transferred from the Sherwood Foresters, Derby, to the 3rd Northern Non-Combatant Corps (NCC) at Richmond on 13 July 1916.



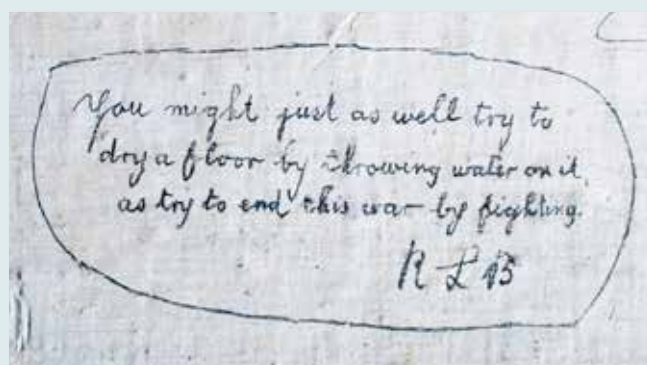
By Richard Lewis Barry

Date

circa 1916

In this playful inscription Barry, a **socialist** conscientious objector from Long Eaton, Derbyshire, explains that fighting is useless.

We do not know whether this was a quote recalled from memory, or written in Barry's own words.



By Percy Fawcett Goldsbrough



Date

August 1916

Percy Fawcett Goldsbrough was a **socialist** conscientious objector from Mirfield in West Yorkshire.

Goldsbrough was put into the cells for disobeying orders. Soon after making his mark on the cell wall he was court-martialled, sentenced to 112 days' imprisonment and transferred to Durham civil prison.



By John Hubert Brocklesby

Date

22 May 1916

Norman Gaudie was also a member of the conscientious group later known as the Richmond Sixteen. On 22 May 1916, Norman laughed while out of his cell at Richmond on exercise. However, it was his fellow objector Bert Brocklesby, another of the Richmond Sixteen, who was mistakenly identified as the culprit and confined to his cell.

In his diary Gaudie wrote how 'old Brock' 'did not waste the time for he drew on his cell wall a man lying on the ground struggling under the load of a heavy cross'. The lines below the drawing are from a 19th-century poem that was sung as a hymn in **Methodist** churches.



By an unknown artist



The date and creator of this musical score remain unknown. However, the song 'Home Sweet Home' would have struck a chord with those held in the cells.

Isolated from their families and drawn from across the country, it is unsurprising that those held here would have turned their thoughts to the comforts of domestic life. 'Home Sweet Home' was one of the most popular songs of the 19th century. Perhaps this reassuring and familiar tune was transcribed from memory by a homesick conscientious objector.



By an unknown artist

Date

1915

In his inscription, this **socialist** conscientious objector asserts his belief that 'The only War which is worth fighting is the Class War.' Like many socialists he argues for solidarity among the working classes of all nations.

After all, he writes, the working-class men of England had no quarrel with working-class men of Germany. If only they stood together and refused to fight, 'there would be no war'.



By an unknown artist



Date

Various

This battle scene was probably added to by different people over time, showing war aircraft from different periods in history, including a biplane, Zeppelins, a Second World War plane decorated with a swastika, a jet plane and a futuristic rocket that looks like something out of a comic book.

The warship is HMS Sherwood, a destroyer that came to the Royal Navy from the United States during the Second World War. She had four funnels, not three as in the sketch.



By George Davidson

Date

1939

This illustration of Newcastle-upon-Tyne by George Davidson shows the view from the High Level Bridge on the River Tyne.

The level of detail suggests it could have been drawn from a picture or a postcard, most likely by a local resident. George, whose identity remains unclear, did not limit the sketch to the iconic Tyne Bridge, but also shows the Swing Bridge, Grey's Monument, the castle and a church. It is a misremembered view – Grey's Monument should not be in the picture, and the wrong church has been sketched in the right position, suggesting this was either from memory, or was a deliberately edited version of said postcard.



SELF-LED ACTIVITY

DESIGN YOUR OWN GRAFFITI



KS2

KS3

Recommended for

KS2 & KS3 (History, Art)

Learning objectives

- Understand that art can be used to express our identity: who we are, the way we feel and what we believe in.
- Understand that graffiti art can be legal if you have permission, and is an art form that anyone can take part in.
- Explore how the graffiti in the Richmond Castle cell block is an expression of the identities and beliefs of the Richmond Sixteen.

Time to complete

50 minutes



Graffiti in the castle cell block.

SUMMARY

This activity will help students understand how some of the graffiti in the Richmond Castle cell block represents people's identity and views, and why it is important to preserve it.

Begin with a whole-class or partner mindmap session about the class's first responses to the word 'graffiti'. Do they think of it as a positive or a negative?

In discussion, prompt the class to consider graffiti as a means of self-expression. Cave art was an expression of what was important to early man. You might ask them to research online to find examples of cave art, legal graffiti or street art walls.

Introduce the examples of the graffiti in Richmond Castle cell block on **pages 31–35**, or look at our **gallery online**. Split the class into groups who each explore one graffiti example. Task them to find out what the image is of, what it means, who drew it and why? Each group explains their findings to the rest of the class. Encourage higher-level thinking through enquiry/questioning, e.g. 'Why would a lacemaker draw a section of lace?', 'What might this tell us about him?'

Show the class this **short video** (4 mins 23 seconds). Use 'think, pair, share' to discuss why conscientious objectors created graffiti in the cell block. They didn't have much means of expressing themselves and they were imprisoned because of their views.

English Heritage needs to look after the graffiti as a record of what the conscientious objectors believed. There aren't many official records of objection to the First World War, and what they believed is important to the history of this time.

Now ask the class: How would they express themselves in their own graffiti? It could be a poem, a drawing, a cartoon, a statement – whatever shows what is important to them.

MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Create a wall display in school of all your students' graffiti designs. What is important about safe, legal graffiti? Make a list of rules and stick it up on your wall, and see if other students in your school or teachers leave their own graffiti! Send your examples to us on **Twitter @EHEducation**.