

## Dimson Days

Situated on a ten acre small-holding with its own woodland the Award Winning Dimson Day Nursery, Kids Club and Outdoor Environmental Play & Learning introduces children aged up to fourteen years to the rhythms of the countryside and nature.

The children play and learn outside in all seasons and in many different weather conditions. They experience hands on contact with animals by being responsible for their care and management, plant flowers and vegetables in the garden, learn about the natural flora and fauna in the fields and woodland, collect and saw wood and use it to cook on the fire pit, build dens etc. They develop a feeling of custodianship and respect for all living things and the environment in which they live by appreciating that they are an important and vital part of it.

For further information please contact **Patricia or Carol**  
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Email: [DimsonGunnislake@aol.com](mailto:DimsonGunnislake@aol.com)  
Web: [www.dimsongunnislake.co.uk](http://www.dimsongunnislake.co.uk)

## TECHNOLOGY in the field...

The University of Plymouth is collaborating with the AONB team in developing a Geographic Information System (a computer-based system for storing and analysing maps and other geographic data) for the Tamar Valley. We are currently working with Plymouth schools to make available lesson plans and other resources that integrate the Tamar GIS into key schemes of work. We are focussing initially on the 'A' level Geography specifications, and on work that links GIS with rivers and catchments, but there are many others ways in which this resource could be used, including links to fieldwork. We would welcome your involvement in the pilot stages of this project over the rest of this academic year. If you're interested or would like to know more, please contact us at [elceti@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:elceti@plymouth.ac.uk)

## Open Air Laboratories

An exciting initiative is under way to bring science out of the classroom and into the great outdoors! Open Air Laboratories (OPAL) will bring scientists and people of all ages together to explore their local environments.

The five-year project, funded by The Big Lottery Fund, is a partnership between seven regional universities, The Field Studies Council, The Natural History Museum, Open University, and Imperial College London.

Nine OPAL national centres are studying the themes of soil, air, water, climate and biodiversity. Each will produce a colourful survey pack that both teaches the participant about environmental quality of their local green-space and enables them to contribute data to a national scientific study. The survey packs, which are free of charge, are suitable for Key Stage 3 Science to adults and are not dependent on prior tuition.

In spring 2009 the Soil Centre is running the first survey, teaching people how to identify soil types, test soil health and quality, and identify earthworms. This survey pack consists of a colour guide plus materials for investigating the soil, including a magnifying glass, pH paper and sachets to test mineral content of the soil. Schools submit the results online and will be able to use the interactive OPAL website to learn to interpret their findings and to compare their results with other areas in England.

As well as this, OPAL is offering FREE sessions (initially Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2) to schools, in partnership with Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Students will learn about surveying biodiversity and monitoring environmental quality in school grounds or a nearby green space. Sessions include:

### The Plants at Our Feet

By using quadrats (plastic grids) to count plant species, we can take a snapshot of what grows there and why. Pupils will learn fascinating folklore and discover how different plants are used.



### How Does your Garden Grow?

By looking at plants growing in different places (or growing our own) we can study how environmental conditions affect plant growth.



### Nature's Own Pollution Monitors

Living organisms such as mosses and lichens can be used to measure pollution in the environment. Find out more about how these fascinating organisms operate.



To find out more contact **Bethan Stagg**,  
OPAL Community Scientist for the southwest  
Email: [bethan@moortrees.org](mailto:bethan@moortrees.org)  
Tel: 0845 456 9803 or 07866149773

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through the Big Lottery Fund



# the Valley Classroom



Focus on  
Calstock



Dimson  
Days



Tamar Valley  
Learning  
Resources



## Keen to find out more about the Tamar Valley Outdoor Classroom?

Many Tamar Valley schools have already taken up the offer of a free whole school inset training session. The twilight sessions are devised to help practitioners explore the value of place-based learning and are intended to introduce teachers to the many opportunities available in their locality to support learning in and out of the classroom.

Curriculum material and resources covering a wide range of topics about illustrious characters such as Ann Glanville; Saltash's very own champion rower of the world, or our famous landmarks, like the River Tamar itself, are distributed free of charge as part of the session.

In addition, staff are offered a sneak preview of some of the activities and resources featured in the new Wheal Tamar and Market Gardening units of work being developed by the Tamar Valley Mining Heritage Project. During the session teachers also consider locations in the Tamar Valley for off-site visits and opportunities for learning outside the classroom.

If your school has not yet taken advantage of this offer and would like to book a free inset session, please contact **Claire White** on 07790778158 or email [claire@azook.org.uk](mailto:claire@azook.org.uk).



# The Valley Classroom

## FOCUS ON... Calstock

Woodlands, boat building, the Victorians, rivers, mining, fishing, market gardening, bridge building. All these topics and more can be supported by a class visit to Calstock. Nowadays, the settlement is well known for its creative community events and festivals, but the narrow streets and characterful cottages indicate that Calstock was a bustling community in the past too.

### All Aboard



Arriving at Calstock by boat is a great way to help pupils understand how the location and wealth of the settlement has been influenced by the presence of the river. Why not book a ferry trip to enjoy a flexible (tide-dependent) trip on the Tamar? Or take your class on a water borne adventure in canoes and explore the wildlife, sights and sounds of the river.

### On the Right Track

The arrival of the railway had a huge impact on communities - transforming transport, as well as changing industries and lifestyles. Settlements bordering the Tamar such as Saltash and Calstock were affected more than most with trains largely replacing the multiple goods and passenger ferries that had plied their trade from one bank to the other. Arriving or departing from Calstock by train gives pupils the chance to consider the changes in Victorian times, imagine the market produce heading for Convent Garden or to use the design of the bridge to inspire their own bridge building challenge.



### Boats and Floats

The boatyard of builder James Goss was situated on the Devon bank of the Tamar opposite Calstock. Evidence of the shipping trade remains at Cotehele Quay where the Shamrock is now kept. The refurbished Cotehele Quay Discovery Centre provides opportunities to find out more about both the boat building and salmon fishing industries which supported Calstock's economy. Easy access to the river at Calstock means that, with care, pupils can also float boats of their own design.

### Walk on the Wild Side

Convenient for exploring quite different habitats, Calstock is a great starting point for nature walks. The watery habitats can be safely accessed for dipping and sampling activities, whilst the woodland walk towards Cotehele provides the perfect environment for mini-beast safaris, tree surveys and species identification. These natural settings can be used as a stimulus for creative activities, quiet reflection, sensory experiences and dramatic storytelling such as the captivating legend of Tamara.

### Mines and Times

Calstock is in the heart of mining country. The walk to Okel Tor along the river provides easy access to a site with a productive mining past. There is much evidence of the impact of mining on Calstock in the settlement too, with the presence of nonconformist churches - quite different from the parish church, St Andrews. Such chapels were typical of industrial communities. In addition, the Calstock Parish Archive houses the mining stories and pictures of the community, bringing the past to life.

### Practicalities

The public toilets at Calstock are open all year round. Access for coaches and mini-buses is good and Calstock can also be reached by ferry, train and public footpath.

### Useful contacts:

**Calstock Ferry Co.** t: 01822 833331  
e: enquiries@calstockferry.co.uk

**Canoe Tamar**  
t: 0845 430 1208  
e: info@canoetamar.co.uk

**Delaware OEC,  
Cornwall Outdoors** t: 01822 833885  
e: delaware.outdoors@cornwall.gov.uk

**Plymouth  
Boat Cruises** w: westcountrylinks.co.uk/  
pbc/calstock.htm

**Calstock Archive** w: www.calstock-history.org.uk

**St Andrews Church** t: 01822 832518  
Revd. J A C Wilson

**Cotehele House  
& Gardens** t: 01579 351346  
w: www.nationaltrust.org.uk



# Tamar Valley Learning Resources

The Tamar Valley Mining Heritage Project is currently working with Sense of Place to develop curriculum materials specifically for the **TamarValley**. Two units are currently nearing completion and we hope to follow on with further resources exploring different themes and subjects connected to this fascinating landscape.

## Wheal Tamar

Pupils and teachers from Milton Abbot and Gulworthy Primary Schools have been working with unit co-ordinator Iain Rowe to develop a new Key Stage 2 resource, exploring the mining heritage of the **TamarValley**. Classes visited Clitters Mine at Gunnislake to explore the old mine buildings, an overgrown tramway and riverbank where one how Clitters may have looked in the past, find out more about the people who worked there and to reconstruct the mine site in its heyday. Gulworthy Primary School pupils discovered, from their school records, that many of the children who had attended their school in the past had left the school to go mining. Meanwhile a pupil at Milton Abbott Primary School found out that he was a descendant of a Clitters Mine captain.

Pupils at Gulworthy sang as they 'walked to work' across the fields and performed a song of their own composition relating the dramatic rescue of miners Bant and Rule supported by musician and artist, Rosie Fierek. At Milton Abbott pupils visited Morwellham Quay to research the clothing worn by miners and, back in the classroom, made their own miners hats and bal maidens gooks helped by textile artist Chrissy Wallis.

## Sovereigns, Madams & Double Whites

A brand new Market Gardening Key Stage 1 resource is in the final stages of development thanks to the hard work and creativity of Bishop Cornish and Gulworthy Primary Schools. They have been busy planting, growing and eating produce in order to trial the learning resource before it is published in the Spring Term. Pupils from both schools travelled by ferry to Cotehele Quay where they 'bumped into' Victorian, James Lawry. James told them how he became the first person to send strawberries from the **TamarValley** to Convent Garden in London and transformed growing practices in the valley as a result. At Cotehele, pupils visited a packing shed and explored the orchards before travelling home whilst tucking into delicious strawberries, courtesy of Mr Lawry. On returning to school, classes received letters from James Lawry asking for assistance on a whole range of planting, growing, packaging and advertising issues. As well as replying to letters from James, pupils painted orchards in the style of local artist Mary Martin, designed and made their own punnets and created a market stall display. Bishop Cornish School concluded by holding a cherry feast with music, costumes and, of course, pies! Work at Gulworthy Primary School, culminated in a Harvest Festival celebration during the Autumn Term.



Bishop Cornish's Primary School - Tamar Valley Market Stall