

# The *Solway Hoard* Exhibition



## **FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES**

*TOPIC BASED CROSS CURRICULAR LEARNING*

[Waste Stories](#) / [Future Archaeologies of Marine Litter](#)

[Museums of the FutureNow!](#)

**Solway Firth**  
  
**Partnership**

The Solway Hoard Activities Pack has been created by the Solway Firth Partnership with support from Rotary International and assistance from the University of Glasgow's Waste Stories and Future Archaeologies of Marine Litter projects, which are funded by the Leverhulme Trust and the Natural Environment Research Council.



working **together** towards a  
**sustainable** Solway Firth



University  
of Glasgow

LEVERHULME  
TRUST



Natural  
Environment  
Research Council

## THE *SOLWAY HOARD* EXHIBITION

Anyone who lives near or spends time at the coast knows that we have a problem with plastic pollution in our oceans and seas.

This global problem poses a danger to wildlife and the environment. The United Nations has committed to addressing it as part of the Sustainable Development Goals, with Target 14.1 promising to Reduce Marine Pollution.

Marine litter is not only a problem in its own right.

It is also part of a bigger problem with the way we consume resources such as oil and coal, from which plastics are derived, and with the way we dispose of resources and materials once we have finished using them. We only have a limited supply of fossil fuels and we are rapidly getting through them both in energy generation and petrochemical use. At this rate, it is almost certain that our current “Plastic Age” will not last more than a few more decades before plastic becomes a rare, hard-to-find material.

The [\*Solway Hoard\* Exhibition](#) takes a look at our present problem with marine plastics, from the perspective of a future in which plastic is no longer an everyday material.

The exhibition is set in 1000 years from now – in the year 3023 – in an imaginary future museum. Each item in the exhibition has a story accompany it that describes its historical significance, from the perspective of people living in this imagined future. These stories were made with the help of members of the public.

The activities in this booklet build on the *Solway Hoard* exhibition, inviting you to think for yourselves about how our own age might be understood by future generations.

## Overview

### Detective work and creative work

The activities described in this booklet link the *Solway Hoard* exhibition to the activities relating to the *Solway Sea Chest Resource Box*.

The first set of activities help students understand the plastics that end up on our beaches, where they come from and their value as resources. In these activities, students are involved in detective work as they try to find out about the objects that are part of the *Solway Hoard*. They are also encouraged to practice the scientific skill of making reasonable estimates.

The second set of activities ask students to use their own creativity and imagination to develop the story of the Solway Hoard, and to create their own Future Archaeologies of Marine Litter.

The activities can be adapted for different ages and can be used as individual or group activities.

Together, the activities in this booklet aim to develop students as Confident Individuals, Successful Learners and Responsible Citizens.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Further background information can be found in the *Making More of the Coast* Teachers Notes in the Sea Chest Resource Box and online at:

[bit.ly/solwayresources](http://bit.ly/solwayresources) and [bit.ly/seachestvideos](http://bit.ly/seachestvideos)

# ACTIVITIES, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

## Overview

### Detective work



WHAT ARE THE ITEMS  
IN THE HOARD? WHAT  
KINDS OF PLASTIC ARE  
THEY MADE OF? WHAT  
ARE THE PROPERTIES  
OF THE PLASTICS?

science and society  
(research)

HOW COMMON ARE  
THEY? HOW MUCH DO  
THEY COST, OR HOW  
MUCH ARE THEY  
WORTH?

cultural and social  
studies, economics  
(estimation)

ARE THERE  
ALTERNATIVES?

cultural and social  
studies  
(research, innovation)

### Creative work



ORIGINS OF THE  
SOLWAY HOARD

Literacy, creative  
writing

CREATE YOUR OWN  
FUTURE MUSEUM

Sustainability, problem  
solving

# DETECTIVE WORK: THE REAL STORIES OF THE ITEMS IN THE SOLWAY HOARD

**Background:** The objects in the Solway Hoard were collected in winter 2022/2023 from beaches and shores along the Solway Firth.

They were collected by groups such as Ocean Needs Us (ONUS) and the Dumfries and Galloway EcoWarriors – volunteers who spend cold, rainy Saturdays and Sundays picking up the rubbish that washes up on our shores.

The objects are a reflection of what ends up in our rivers and seas. In this exercise, you will **do some research** to find out more about some of the objects that are displayed in the Hoard, and some of the other objects that were collected in the same beach cleans. You will probably need to use the internet to try to **search for answers** to some of the questions, such as what kinds of plastic particular items are made of. You will also need to use your general knowledge and experience to help you **estimate answers** to some of the questions for yourself.

## **Learning outcomes:**

By the end of this activity, pupils will be able to:

- describe the materials that make up some common strandline finds and some of their physical properties.
- discuss aspects of the production and consumption of these items.
- identify whether there are any alternatives to using these items or materials.

**Further development:** Students can suggest their own ideas for reducing the number of these items found on beaches and coasts.

# DETECTIVE WORK 1: BUBBLE BLOWER



- Can you find out what kind of plastic a bubble blower is made from?
- What is the lifetime of this kind of plastic? What causes it to break down?
- Can you find out or estimate how many bubble blowers are bought in the UK/Scotland/Dumfries and Galloway each year? What do you need to find out to be able to make an estimate?
- How much do they cost?
- Can you find out where are bubble blowers made?
- Do bubble blowers float?
- Are there alternatives to plastic bubble blowers?

**Further development:** Can you suggest ways to avoid plastic bubble blowers ending up on our beaches?

## DETECTIVE WORK 2: DOG TOY



- Can you find out what kind of plastic might a dog toy like this be made from?
- What is the lifetime of this kind of plastic? What causes it to break down?
- Can you find out or estimate how many dog toys are bought in the UK/Scotland/Dumfries and Galloway each year? What do you need to know to make an estimate?
- How much do they cost?
- Where are dog toys like this made?
- Do dog toys like this float?
- Are there alternatives to plastic dog toys?

**Further development:** Can you suggest ways to avoid plastic dog toys ending up on our beaches?



## DETECTIVE WORK 3: NURDLES

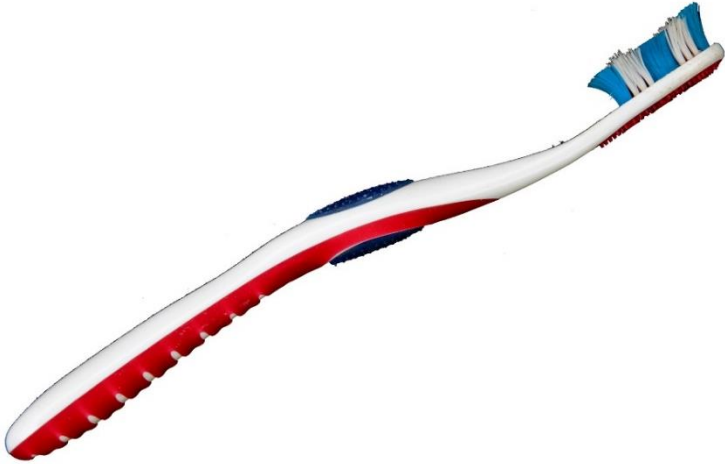


What are these?

- How are they made?
- What are they for?
- Can you tell whether they are “virgin” plastic or recycle?
- How might they have ended up in the sea/on the shore?

**Further development:** Can you think of ways that small pieces of plastic like this might be removed from water or sand?

## DETECTIVE WORK 4: TOOTHBRUSH



- Can you find out what kinds of plastic is a toothbrush like this made from? Remember to think about the bristles as well as the handle.
- What are the lifetimes of these kinds of plastic? What causes them to break down?
- Can you make an estimate of how many toothbrushes are bought in the UK/Scotland/Dumfries and Galloway each year? What do you need to find out to make an estimate?
- How much does a toothbrush cost, on average?
- Where are toothbrushes made?
- Do toothbrushes float?
- Are there alternatives to plastic toothbrushes?

**Further development:** Can you suggest ways to avoid plastic toothbrushes ending up on our beaches?

## DETECTIVE WORK 5: CREEL HOOK



- Can you find out what kind of plastic a creel hook is made from?
- What is the lifetime of this kind of plastic? What causes it to break down?
- Can you find out or estimate how many creel hooks are bought in the UK/Scotland/Dumfries and Galloway each year?
- How much do they cost?
- Where are creel hooks made?
- Do creel hooks float?
- Are there alternatives to plastic creel hooks?

**Further development:** Can you suggest ways to avoid plastic creel hooks ending up on our beaches?

## DETECTIVE WORK 6: BALLOON



Can you find out what kinds of plastic are balloons and ribbons made from? Are different kinds of balloon made of different plastics?

- What are the lifetimes of these kinds of plastic? What causes them to break down?
- Can you find out or estimate how many balloons are bought in the UK/Scotland/Dumfries and Galloway each year?
- How much do they cost?
- Where are balloons like this made?
- Do balloons like this float?
- Are there alternatives to plastic balloons?

**Further development:** Can you suggest ways to avoid plastic balloons and ribbons ending up on our beaches?

## CREATIVE WORK 1: The origin of the Solway Hoard

[The Solway Hoard exhibition website and booklet](#) describe each item in the Hoard and gives an imaginative story that explains why it is viewed as historically significant in the year 3023.



They also tell us who found the objects.

What the website and booklet don't tell us is how the items came to be collected and subsequently hidden together – that is, it doesn't tell us the story of the Hoard itself.

This is left up to us to imagine.

Use your imagination to create the story of how the objects came to be hidden together. Ask yourself:

*Who?*

Who thought these objects were treasures?

*Why?*

Why did they think these objects were treasure?

*Why?*

Why might they have decided to put them in a steel capsule?

*How?*

Were they deliberately hidden or lost?

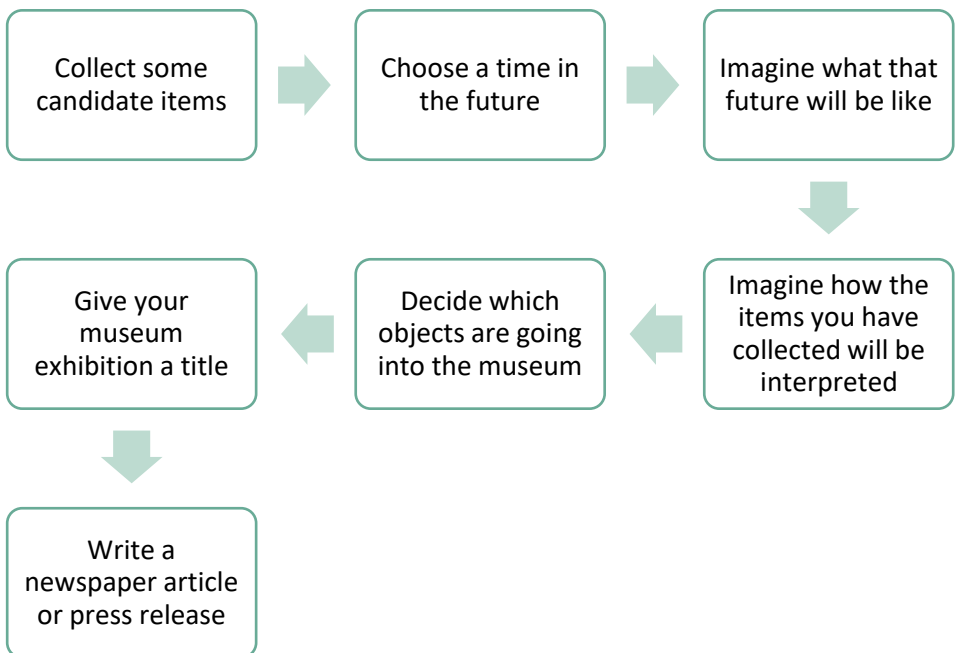
*Why / how?*

If they were hidden, why? If they were lost or forgotten, how did that happen?

## CREATIVE WORK 2: Create your own Future Museum of Marine Litter

The Solway Hoard is just one of a series of future museum exhibitions of marine litter being created around Scotland. If you want to see what kind of future stories other people have already imagined, you can view some of them at <https://futurearchaeologies.org.uk>.

You can make your own future museum exhibitions based on marine litter that you have found. A good way to do this is to go through the following steps:



## Step 1: Collecting candidate items

The first step is to collect some objects together that might go in your museum exhibit.

As a class, you might bring in objects that you, your family or your friends have found on beaches and shores near you. Or if you are lucky, you might get to go out and clean a beach yourselves. If you take part in a beach clean, you should try to set aside some of the objects that you find that you think might go into your exhibition. You probably want about two dozen items to start with, but you may have more. If they are fresh from the beach, make sure you have an easy-to-clean, tough surface to put them on.

## Step 2: Choosing a future time

Before choosing a time in the future, let's think about the past.

- What do you know about life near where you live 100 years ago?
- What did people wear? What did they eat? Did they speak the same language as now? Did they sing the same songs, read the same books, play the same games, watch the films? What kind of jobs did they have or what kind of work did they do?
- How do we know what we know?
- What don't we know for sure about life in this time?
- What about 200 years ago? Or 500? Or 1000? Or 5000 years ago?

Now that you've thought about the past a bit, how far in the future do you want your exhibit to be?



### Step 3: Describing the future we've chosen

Now it's time to decide what the future will be like.

- Do they still speak the same language? Is the weather the same? Is transport the same? What are houses like? What are people like? Will they still use plastic? If so, where will they get it from?
- What do they know about us? Do they have a record – text, photos, films? Can they read our script?
- What do they not know about us?

### Step 4: Imagining how the objects will be interpreted

Put yourself in the head of a person living in the future you have described. What will they make of the objects you have collected? Will they recognise them? What stories do they might they imagine for them? Do they get it right?

### Step 5: Choosing the objects that will go in the exhibition

You'll probably need to decide which objects are going to be in the museum (although you might be able to use all of them). Take photos, draw them and write down the stories that you think will be displayed next to them in the museum of the future.

### Step 6: The title

It's time to give your exhibition a title. Try to think of something that will intrigue people and make them want to come and visit it!

### Step 7: Write a newspaper article or press release

Imagine you are a reporter or a press officer working in the museum. Write an article about the exciting historical artefacts and discoveries on display in the exhibition.

If you want, take photos of your objects and write down the stories you have made up and send them to [info@futurearchaeologies.org.uk](mailto:info@futurearchaeologies.org.uk) – your museum exhibit can then be included in the [Future Archaeologies of Waste](#) website.

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 14: LIFE BELOW WATER

To ensure conservation of life below water, we all have to take action.

**Healthy oceans and seas are essential to our existence.** They cover 70 percent of our planet, and we rely on them for food, energy and water. Yet, we have managed to do tremendous damage to these precious resources. We must protect them by eliminating pollution and overfishing and immediately start to responsibly manage and protect all marine life around the world.



## TARGET 14.1 REDUCE MARINE POLLUTION

*By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.*

## Who we are

**Solway Firth Partnership** is an independent charity that works to support a vibrant and sustainable local economy whilst respecting, protecting and celebrating the distinctive character, heritage and natural features of our marine and coastal area.

We do this by working with people on both sides of the Solway Firth and further afield on a wide range of projects. We also contribute to development of policies for management of the coast and sea. We aim to engage with as many people as possible to help ensure that local views shape the future of the area.



working **together** towards a  
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## Contact Us

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**Waste Stories** is a project based at the University of Glasgow and funded by the Leverhulme Trust. The Future Archaeologies of Marine Litter project is funded by the Natural Environment Research Council. Contact us at

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