

Teacher sheet – Lesson plan

Brightwork Barrels



Introduction

This lesson gives children the opportunity to learn about the 'brightwork' style of decoration which was used on many of the traditional short boats on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal.

QCA Scheme of Work KS2: Art and Design Unit 3B Investigating Pattern

Learning Objectives

To decorate a barrel template using traditional 'brightwork' decorations found on Leeds and Liverpool barges.

The National Curriculum – KS2: Ar 5d

Resources

Brightwork Barrels source sheet, Brightwork Barrels worksheet, coloured pencils.

Key Vocabulary

Brightwork, scroll, scalloped corners.

Teaching Activities

Health & Safety This lesson could take place after a visit to a canal to look at the brightwork art on boats. Prior to a waterways visit, we recommend that you undertake an activity from the [Waterside Safety](#) resource.

Introduction Prior to this lesson, it would be beneficial for the children if they had seen examples of brightwork decoration on boats or barrels and sketched some of the features.

Class Activities Ask the children what they can remember about the brightwork that they have seen. What would they say the distinctive features are? Distribute the source sheet and read through it together.

Individual Activity Distribute the worksheet. Explain to the children that they are going to decorate the barrel templates with traditional brightwork decorations. What would normally be on the side of the barrel? (Boatman's initials and scrolls.) What would normally be on the circular ends of the barrels? (Scenes). What colours would be used in the brightwork decoration? (Black, white, red, green, blue and yellow.)

Allow time for the templates to be completed.

Plenary Allow the children time at the end of the lesson to look at each other's work. Who has used scrolls on their decoration? Who has used the correct colours?

Differentiation

Older/more able children could use paints for their design.

Cross-curricular

This lesson may be linked with work in History.

Follow-up

The children could investigate 'Roses and Castles' art work, another traditional craft found on canal ware and boats, by visiting [Canal Junction-engineers](#).

The style of artwork found on traditional short boats on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal is called brightwork. No one knows for sure where the brightwork style came from but it is thought that it may be based on decorations found on seagoing boats.

Scrolls were a popular feature of brightwork and they were used to decorate panels on the boats. The scrolls were often drawn freehand so that no two panels were exactly the same. Larger panels were often decorated with a scene taken from a postcard or Christmas card. On smaller panels, flowers or geometric shapes were a popular decoration. The panels themselves usually had scalloped corners.



The boats were not the only objects to carry the brightwork decoration. Many boats kept a barrel on deck which was filled with drinking water. The sides of a barrel were often decorated with the boatman's initials and with scrolls. The circular ends of the barrels were often painted with a scene.

The decoration of the boats was not carried out by professional artists but at the boatyard. Although the men who painted the boats were not trained they would usually have many years of experience. The colours used in brightwork decoration reflect those found in a boatyard – black, white, red, green, blue and yellow.

Name

Date

