Dirt Detectives
Teacher Resource Pack
Primary Program | Stage 2 History
Acknowledgements

The Big Dig Archaeology Education Centre programs were originally designed for Sydney Harbour Youth Hostel (YHA) and Sydney Learning Adventures by education consultant Louise Zarmati.

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Dr Grace Karskens and Dr Wayne Johnson.

Sydney Learning Adventures is an initiative of Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority.

Materials within this resource pack may only be reproduced for educational purposes relating to a program booked with Sydney Learning Adventures.  © 2010
Contents

1. Introduction 4
2. Curriculum outcomes 5
3. Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority 6
4. Sydney Learning Adventures 7
5. Sydney Harbour Youth Hostel (YHA) 8
6. The Rocks Discovery Museum 9
7. Learning with us 10
8. Background information 11
9. Resources to photocopy 17
10. Glossary 21
11. The Rocks map 22
12. Bibliography and suggested resources 23
13. Contact and bookings 24
1. Introduction

Thank you for choosing to bring your class to a Sydney Learning Adventures education program. This Teacher Resource Pack is a practical guide to assist you in planning your excursion. It contains a curriculum links and outcomes table, background information relevant to the program, teaching suggestions and activity worksheets, a glossary for students and a resources reference guide.

The Dirt Detectives program enables students to work as archaeologists and learn about what life was like for convicts living in The Rocks during the early years of the colony. Students will excavate artefacts from our simulated dig, take an exclusive access Big Dig site tour, then examine and discuss the artefacts using our interactive ‘map mat’. It is intended that students will gain a sound understanding of how archaeologists find out about the past.
2. Curriculum outcomes

Key inquiry questions
Why did the great journeys of exploration occur?
What was life like for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples before the arrival of the Europeans?
Why did Europeans settle in Australia?

Dirt Detectives inquiry question
What was life like for convicts who lived in The Rocks?

NSW Syllabuses for the Australian Curriculum History K -10 STAGE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic &amp; Outcomes</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Historical Concepts &amp; Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First contacts</td>
<td>Stories of the First Fleet, including reasons for the journey, who travelled to Australia, and their experiences following arrival (ACHHK079)</td>
<td>Concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The nature of contact between Aboriginal people and/or Torres Strait Islanders and others, for example, the Macassans and the Europeans, and the effects of these interactions on, for example, families and the environment (ACHHK080)</td>
<td>Continuity and change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cause and effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Empathetic understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The past in the present</td>
<td>The history of a significant person, building, site or part of the natural environment in the local community and what it reveals about the past (ACHHK044)</td>
<td>Concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The importance today of an historical site of cultural or spiritual significance; for example, a community building, a landmark, a war memorial (ACHHK045)</td>
<td>Comprehension: chronology, terms and concepts (ACHHS065, ACHHS081)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The impact of changing technology on people’s lives (ACHHK046)</td>
<td>(ACHHS066, ACHHS082)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis and use of sources (ACHHS068, ACHHS084, ACHHS215, ACHHS216)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Perspectives and interpretations (ACHHS069, ACHHS085)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Empathetic understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ACHHS067, ACHHS083)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Explanation and communication (ACHHS070, ACHHS086) (ACHHS071, ACHHS087)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority

Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority owns and manages some of New South Wales’ most significant assets, including Sydney’s heritage and cultural precincts at The Rocks and Darling Harbour.

With more than $1.5 billion in assets, and around 240 employees, the Authority manages significant commercial and retail leases, provides security, cleaning, building maintenance and other facility management services, and cares for the public domain and more than 140 heritage items.

The Authority also operates education, tourism and marketing services and holds significant events in The Rocks and Darling Harbour each year. Between them, these two precincts attract more than 40 million visitors annually.

The Authority also owns sites at White Bay Power Station, Rozelle Rail Yards and Ballast Point, and manages other major waterfront assets around Sydney Harbour on behalf of other agencies.

Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority was formed in 1999 under the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority Act 1998 to consolidate the work and functions of City West Development Corporation, Darling Harbour Authority and Sydney Cove Authority.
4. Sydney Learning Adventures

Sydney Learning Adventures (SLA) is an initiative of Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority. The vision of Sydney Learning Adventures is to create quality educational experiences that are enriching, diverse, accessible and sustainable.

Since 2002, Sydney Learning Adventures has been bringing the histories of Sydney, New South Wales and Australia to life for thousands of students every year.

Designed for all stages of learning from kindergarten to year 12, SLA’s curriculum-linked programs provide an interactive, multi-layered learning experience. All programs are developed by teachers and implemented by SLA’s dynamic guide team.

Students engaged in the artefact mapping activity at The Big Dig Archaeology Education Centre
5. Sydney Harbour Youth Hostel

Youth Hostels Australia (YHA) worked in conjunction with the site’s owners, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, to construct a youth hostel on the Cumberland and Gloucester Streets site. The innovative architectural design of this ‘floating’ building preserves the important archaeological remains of the site. In addition, the YHA is committed to providing first-class interpretation and education programs for school students and the public, to encourage people to explore the heritage of The Rocks.

Sydney Harbour YHA stands above remnants and artefacts dating back to the earliest days of European settlement. The hostel is raised off the ground on pillars, allowing public access to the archaeological site along the re-established laneways. Interpretation panels, historic streetscape images, interpretive brochures and special interpretation spaces within selected excavated building footings have been incorporated into the structure. Original artefacts are displayed in museum cases positioned near their original find-spots.

During the planning of the hostel, the YHA realised that many groups visiting the Big Dig site would be from outside Sydney, and that it was important to provide affordable hostel accommodation for school groups; for this reason a special wing was added to the hostel to accommodate up to 38 students and their teachers.

The Big Dig Archaeology Education Centre

The YHA’s Big Dig Archaeology Education Centre includes two purpose-built classrooms, with clear views across the foundations of houses and backyards built by and for convicts and free settlers. Each classroom has the capacity for up to 30 students to learn first-hand about the work of archaeologists on the only authentic archaeological dig open to the public in Sydney.

Sydney Learning Adventures, in conjunction with YHA, conducts a range of exciting education programs from The Big Dig Archaeology Education Centre. A simulated dig, set into the original archaeological remains of a small terrace house now located inside the Education Centre, provides Stage 1, 2 and 3 students with the opportunity to excavate artefacts recovered during the original 1994 archaeological dig.
6. The Rocks Discovery Museum

The Rocks Discovery Museum, housed in a restored 1850s sandstone warehouse, tells the story of The Rocks from pre-European days to the present. It is home to a unique collection of images and archaeological artefacts found in The Rocks, and has exhibits that are highly interactive, using touchscreens and audio-visual elements to bring the history of the area alive.

An interactive journey of discovery through four exhibits includes stories of the traditional land owners, the establishment of the English colony, and the time when sailors, whalers and traders made the area their home, through to the union-led protests in the 1970s which preserved this unique part of Sydney.

We suggest a visit to The Rocks Discovery Museum to compliment any Sydney Learning Adventures program. Entry is free; however bookings are essential for self-guided school groups. For more information and bookings please call (02) 9240 8680 or visit therocks.com.
Our interactive programs are designed to stimulate students’ interest in, and enjoyment of, exploring the past, whilst our hands-on approach to learning helps them to develop a critical understanding of the past and its impact on the present.

**Experiencing the past…**

“When I touch things that belonged to people who lived centuries ago I feel shivers up and down my spine; I feel really connected to them.”

This is a common reaction for students when they visit an historic place like The Rocks, or handle ‘old things’. A tactile, sensory handling experience can awaken a child’s inquisitiveness and sense of wonder, as well as giving them an emotional link to the people who owned, made or used the artefact.

We want children to feel not only physically connected to the past, but connected to the present, to their own immediate experience when they visit The Rocks; research has shown that emotional connections can have a profound effect on long-term memory and learning.

Children’s memories of an experience can be triggered by visual, aural and olfactory stimuli, as well as by memories of the social interactions that took place on the day: of the fun of being there with friends, what they ate on the day (“we went to McDonald’s”), and, most importantly, if they liked the educator.

Quite often they will connect what they remember about the history of a place to their memory of “that nice lady who told us all about the Gadigal people” or “that archaeologist who dug up the shark’s bone”.

It is this approach to teaching and learning history and archaeology that forms the basis of our education programs. We hope that students who participate in our programs are so impressed by their visit that they’ll ask their parents to bring them back to The Rocks; or maybe even one day bring their own children to visit and explore the area.

Integrating our experiential learning programs into a teaching unit will provide kinaesthetic, haptic and sensory learning experiences that have a profound effect on students’ long-term memories and increase their understanding of history.

Pre- and post-visit classroom activities have been designed to familiarise students with relevant terms and concepts and consolidate their learning experiences with us. These activities can be downloaded from our website: sydneylearningadventures.com.au.
8. Background information

All of Sydney Learning Adventures’ programs incorporate visits to significant historical archaeological sites in The Rocks precinct. A great deal of the enduring evidence of Sydney’s early colonial and Aboriginal heritage is preserved in the land and foreshore areas here. Some of the richest archaeological sites are located in Cumberland and Gloucester Streets, Foundation Park and Dawes Point (Tar-ra) Park, and artefacts and remains of structures uncovered at these sites reveal a wealth of information about the area’s early inhabitants and their lifestyles.

Aboriginal inhabitants of The Rocks

It is important to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of the land upon which this excursion takes place. The Aboriginal people who lived in and around The Rocks area at the time of first contact with the British are the Gadigal clan of the Eora nation; their land stretched from South Head to Darling Harbour, along the south side of the city.

It is not known for certain how long the Gadigal and their ancestors had been living here. The oldest archaeological sites in the Sydney region are around 15,000 years old—more than four times older than the Pyramids of Egypt; however, it’s likely that the area was occupied long before that—up to 50,000 years ago—but these older sites were probably flooded by rising seas.

Most archaeological sites in Sydney that date from before British arrival are near the harbour, suggesting that for the Gadigal people life was centred on the water. However, all areas of the land were used at different times and for different purposes; most engraved and painted images, for example, are on rock platforms on ridge tops with views of the surrounding country, well away from permanent water sources.

Three Aboriginal sites have been identified near The Rocks—one in Cumberland Street, another at Moore’s Wharf (Bond Street), and a third in Angel Place (George Street); it is likely that others were destroyed by urbanisation.

Gadigal knowledge was passed on orally and through ceremony, dance, songs and stories; sadly, with the great loss of life and social upheaval caused by the arrival of Europeans, much of that knowledge was also lost. The earliest documentary evidence we have of the Gadigal people is in the letters, diaries, drawings, paintings and official records of the First Fleet—records which are not only far from complete, but are perspectives on a culture that the new settlers did not understand; much of the Gadigal way of life would have also been hidden from these strangers.
The First Fleet

On 13 May 1787, over 1,500 men, women and children in 11 ships set sail from Portsmouth, England; 252 days later they arrived on the east coast of what is now known as Australia.

Led by Captain Arthur Phillip, this historic convoy, now known as the First Fleet, carried convicts, as well as officers, crew, marines and their families, from Britain to a distant and little known land on the far side of the world.

The fleet consisted of two Royal Navy ships, HMS Sirius and HMS Supply, escorting six convict transports, the Alexander, Charlotte, Friendship, Lady Penrhyn, Prince of Wales and Scarborough, and three store ships, the Borrowdale, Fishburn and Golden Grove.

From Portsmouth the First Fleet travelled via Tenerife and Rio de Janeiro to the Cape of Good Hope, its last port of call before striking out for ‘Terra Australis’. It arrived in what is now known as Botany Bay on 18 January 1788, but despite Sir Joseph Banks’ glowing initial report the bay proved unsuitable for permanent settlement, as it lacked a supply of fresh water.

On 26 January the fleet moved to a new anchorage slightly further north. The new site had everything these first settlers needed: deep water close to the shore, shelter and fresh water (the Tank Stream). Phillip named the site Sydney Cove, after the then British Home Secretary Lord Sydney. Today this date is celebrated as Australia Day, marking the beginnings of European settlement.

First Contact

Although Sydney Cove was the site of the first European settlement of Australia, the area surrounding what the Europeans called Port Jackson was already home to thousands of people, the original inhabitants, the Gadigal.

Captain Arthur Phillip, as the colony’s first Governor, was given instructions to “open an intercourse with the natives, and to conciliate their affections”. He attempted to maintain friendly relations with the local Aboriginal people, referring to the settlers as ‘guests’ and ensuring that their ‘hosts’ were fed from government stores; however, on the question of land ownership there was no compromise. The cultural beliefs of the military officials who ran the British colony presumed the superiority of white Christian ideals. Most of the newcomers didn’t, or couldn’t, understand Aboriginal law and customs; they were convinced that they had a God-given right to bring ‘civilisation’ and contemporary European methods of land management to the new colony, a place which they considered to be ‘the ends of the earth’.

Despite Governor Phillip’s instructions, it appears that although a number of important figures from the local tribes were ‘cultivated’ by the early settlers, many settlers simply wanted the Aboriginal population out of the way. In his book Anchored in a Small Cove (1997), historian Max Kelly describes how, within months of the First Fleet’s arrival, the Aboriginal people of the region had become “fringe-dwellers in their own land”.

In addition, Indigenous Australians had no resistance to diseases brought by the settlers, and it is estimated that within a year nearly half the Aboriginal population of the Sydney area had died of smallpox.
As historian Grace Karskens points out in her book *The Colony: a History of Early Sydney* (2009), the Aboriginal people of Sydney did not disappear entirely from the landscape; even after their decimation through disease they came back into the new town and mixed with the settlers. However, as European settlement spread outward from Sydney Cove the Aboriginal population in the region was massively reduced, and little physical evidence of their occupation of the land remains.

Nowadays Australia recognises Indigenous Australians’ prior ownership, and the nation is on a journey of reconciliation and healing. Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority has been involved in attempts to preserve the memory of the Gadigal people, through archaeological work in The Rocks and other areas.

The history of Indigenous involvement in the growth of the city of Sydney, as it spread north and west around the harbour and along the Parramatta River, is complex and largely untold. Researchers have begun to unravel some of the mysteries and piece together some of the stories; symbolically, these tales are dispersed throughout the city’s landscape.

Shell middens that marked the site of significant and long-term dwelling places have been removed; the first Europeans quickly discovered they were an valuable source of lime for the simple mortars they needed to hold together their own dwellings; in some parts of The Rocks this early ‘cement’ can still be seen between the sandstone blocks of the houses and stores. These remnants, and our knowledge of the sites where Indigenous rock carving or painting is found, are a quiet reminder of the more than 20,000-year association between Indigenous Australians and Sydney Harbour’s foreshores.
### Development of The Rocks—timeline

This timeline provides snapshots of the development of The Rocks from 1788 to the 1970s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event / Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td><strong>26 January</strong>&lt;br&gt;The First Fleet, commanded by Captain Arthur Phillip, arrives in Sydney Cove carrying 736 convicted prisoners transported ‘beyond the seas’ to the far-flung continent of Australia. The convicts have been exiled by the British Government in the hope of relieving overcrowded conditions in many of Britain’s jails. Survival in the infant convict colony is not easy, and the convicts and their jailers rely heavily on Britain for food, supplies and instructions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Convict Francis Fowkes, transported to Sydney Cove for stealing a coat and a pair of shoes, probably drew this first sketch map of the colony. Believed to have been created approximately three months after the First Fleet landed, it shows a rudimentary settlement heavily reliant upon the supply of fresh water afforded by a permanent creek, which later became known as the Tank Stream. Fowkes draws a settlement sprawled across the cove and comprised of tents housing convicts and soldiers, a bakery, a stone quarry, a farm, garden plots, and a store to hold the food supplies brought from Britain, Rio de Janeiro and the Cape of Good Hope. His map also shows the locations of Governor Phillip’s residence, and of shingle cutting convict chain gangs. From the sketch it is apparent that the physical appearance and ecology of Sydney Cove are already undergoing changes. Governor Phillip is concerned that the changes should be orderly—an extension of the British ‘civilising’ influence prevalent at the time. However, most of his grandiose plans are never realised due to a combination of factors, including lack of labour and scarcity of building materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792</td>
<td>The western slopes of Sydney Cove are now lined with rows of convict-built, timber-framed, thatched or shingle-roofed dwellings which, initially following the contours of the natural rock ledges, are described as being ‘on the rocks’; this area is still referred to as ‘The Rocks’ over 200 years later.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>The streets of The Rocks have been formally named, although the locals have nicknames for many of the alleys and laneways. As the colony grows larger and becomes more economically viable, modest sandstone houses slowly replace rough convict-built huts, and a few mansions are even constructed for the more prosperous residents. Many of the inhabitants of The Rocks are convicts who were either tradespeople or Irish political prisoners before being transported. Some are savvy enough to take advantage of the burgeoning business opportunities offered by the growth of the settlement; free settlers are also being encouraged to migrate to Australia and make the most of the opportunities offered in the new colony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840s–90s</td>
<td>The area changes considerably, with large plots of land subdivided, and rows of commercial buildings constructed along George Street. Many public houses and terraces are built throughout the area. In the second half of the 19th century, as the density of the dwellings increase, overcrowding, sub-standard dwellings and inadequate sanitation result in slum conditions. The Rocks becomes notorious as the haunt of ‘The Rocks Push’, larrikin gangs of mischief-makers who beat and rob unsuspecting passers-by.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>The bubonic plague reaches Sydney, carried into port by fleas on shipboard rats. Only three of Sydney’s 103 plague deaths occur in The Rocks; however, the rest of Sydney considers it a disease-ridden slum, and for four months it is barricaded whilst its buildings are cleansed, fumigated and disinfected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901–20s</td>
<td>In an attempt to eradicate the plague, The Sydney Harbour Trust, acting on behalf of the State Government, is formed to manage the wharves and land between Sydney Cove, Darling Harbour, Milers Point, Observatory Hill and The Rocks. A proposed waterfront clean-up aims to create a ‘working man’s paradise’, and more than 900 houses, commercial buildings and wharves are demolished, at a cost of one million pounds; however, the original vision for the redevelopment of The Rocks is never fully realised due to the outbreak of World War I. After the war, redevelopment resumes at a much slower pace—effectively saving much of what is now left of The Rocks from wholesale demolition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923–32</td>
<td>The construction of Sydney Harbour Bridge changes the face of The Rocks dramatically, as whole streets disappear under its southern approach. However, construction of the bridge creates much-needed employment for many families in the area during the depression years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>Public protests culminate in trade unions imposing a series of ongoing ‘Green Bans’ in The Rocks, halting development and saving the area from complete demolition. The Rocks precinct is subsequently revitalised, and the remaining buildings preserved, and it is now recognised as being of great national archaeological and historical significance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Big Dig site—1994 to the present

Following the outbreak of bubonic plague in The Rocks and public protest against 'slum' housing conditions, the NSW government resumed almost all the land in The Rocks, including the Big Dig site between Cumberland and Gloucester Streets, and between 1902 and 1915 they demolished all the buildings. The land was then used for a variety of purposes, including light industry and as a parking lot.

In 1994 Sydney Cove Authority engaged a team of archaeologists to undertake an archaeological investigation of the 2,675 square metre Cumberland Street site. During the six-month dig the site became a popular attraction affectionately known as 'The Big Dig'; hundreds of Sydneysiders came to watch, with many volunteering to dig.

Evidence of the lives of people who lived, worked and died in this small neighbourhood for over two centuries was slowly and painstakingly uncovered. The remains of more than 40 houses and shops, and hundreds of thousands of artefacts used in the daily lives of the inhabitants of The Rocks, have since become an important resource for the study of Sydney’s colourful past.

In 2008 additional archaeological excavations took place before construction of the Sydney Harbour YHA could begin, and further excavations are planned.

What is archaeology?

The term ‘archaeology’ is derived from the Greek words 'archaeo' meaning 'ancient', and 'logos' meaning ‘the study of’; it is the study of objects from past human societies. Through archaeology we can gain some understanding of how people lived in the past.

Historians and archaeologists

Historians study and interpret written records that document significant cultures and events from the past. However, written records are not always accurate representations, and frequently leave significant gaps in information. They often present the subjective viewpoint of their author, which has been moulded and shaped by a host of both internal and external factors, including the life experiences, gender, knowledge, values and attitudes of the author. These factors, in turn, are influenced by the prevailing beliefs and social traditions of the era when the author was writing. For example, most surviving historical records were written by literate, elite men, whose opinions usually represent the values and attitudes of a minority within the population.

Archaeologists use artefacts and other evidence from the material culture of past societies to interpret and record history. Archaeological evidence is the only source of information available concerning human life and society before people developed writing approximately 5,000 years ago. Moreover, archaeological findings based on the interpretation of artefacts ensure that many aspects of daily life are examined and interpreted, giving a more holistic idea of what life was like across all social spectra. Historical archaeology is a term hotly debated by academics in historical and archaeological circles. However, it is generally accepted to refer to ‘the study of remains from any historic period’, with ‘historic period’ referring to those periods which have generated written records. In this sense, historical archaeology represents a partnership in which written records are used to extend or confirm archaeological observations, or in which the validity of written records is tested through archaeology.

Top left: Children in Carahers Lane, 1901. Image courtesy of the Bertie family.

Right: Ceramic doll’s head discovered at the Cumberland and Gloucester Streets dig site.

Top right: Some of the artefacts found in our simulated excavation pit
Why is conservation of the past important?

Conservation of the past helps to contextualise our cultural heritage and provide an explanation of our identity and place in the world. It also enables us to apply knowledge and understandings from the past to the present and future. The conservation and preservation of written and oral communications, as both primary and secondary sources, provides clues about the roots of modern ways of life. Archaeology also provides a tangible connection with the past, as it is concerned with material culture. Archaeology is about seeing, holding, touching, feeling and experiencing things made and used by previous generations. It is vitally important that archaeological and historical fragments attesting to the past survive, as they will help to inform future generations about the cultural heritage of their ancestors.

Archaeological sites in The Rocks

Much of Sydney’s early colonial and some of its Aboriginal heritage are preserved in the land and foreshore areas of The Rocks. Some of the richest archaeological sites are located in Cumberland and Gloucester Streets, Foundation Park and Dawes Point (Tar-ra) Park. Artefacts and remains of structures uncovered at these sites reveal a wealth of information about the area’s earlier inhabitants and their lifestyles. When all this archaeological information is combined with detailed historical records held in a variety of national and state institutions, such as the State Library and the Museum of Sydney, it provides a fascinating snapshot of the lives of Sydney’s earliest inhabitants.
9. Resources to photocopy

Pre- and post-excursion activity suggestions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-excursion activities</th>
<th>Excursion</th>
<th>Post-excursion activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 x 50 minute lesson</td>
<td>Dirt Detectives program 2hrs</td>
<td>1 to 2 lessons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- View ‘The Rocks Beneath Our Feet’ video (10 mins)
- Discuss the inquiry question: ‘What was life like for convicts who lived in The Rocks?’
- Simulated excavation
- Exclusive access site tour
- Hands-on artefact analysis and ‘map mat’ activity
- Interpretation and discussion of findings
- Imagine you are Anne Armsden. Write a letter to your sister in England describing what happened to your husband, George Legge.
  OR
- Imagine you are convict butcher George Cribb. Explain how all those expensive dinner plates ended up in your well.
  OR
- What education were the children in the Byrne family given, and why?
- Create a discussion between Margaret and Richard Byrne about whether the girls in their family should have the same education as the boys.
Families who lived on the Big Dig site

The following notes consist of dates and key events in the lives of three convicts, and their families, who lived on the Big Dig site.

Convict—George Cribb

George Cribb was transported for 14 years for being in possession of forged bank notes.

1808 George arrives in Sydney aboard the ship Admiral Gambier. Fanny Barnett is transported the same year on a different ship, the Speke.

1811 George and Fanny marry at St. Philip’s Church.

1813 George buys up so many allotments that he owns approximately half of the Big Dig site.

1814 Having found out that his first wife, Martha, is intending to join him in the colony, George gives Fanny three hundred pounds for her passage and living expenses to leave the colony.

1815 Fanny departs Sydney on the ship Indefatigable, but dies on the journey in Batavia (now called Jakarta) from malaria. In the same year, Martha arrives in the colony to live with George.

1817 Business is flourishing, and George builds a small butcher shop next to the house, advertising its opening and selling of the “finest meats of every description”. He also builds a pub next door called the Turk’s Head.

1818 Martha (Mary) dies. George then marries a widow and publican Sophia Lett, who moves into his house with her five children.

1824 Through reckless dealing George is forced to sell up all of his property in The Rocks.

1827 Sophia dies aged 43.

1830 George is charged with cattle theft at Parramatta Court.

1833 George, aged approximately 55, tries another butcher business, placing an advertisement in the local newspaper which offers “ready cash for fat cattle” and appealing for orders from his “old and numerous customers”.

At age 64 George was described as “an old man well known in the slaughtering line” and “a most noted character”. We don’t know where he lived after this, where he died or was buried.

Convict—Anne Armsden

1787 Anne is convicted of stealing a bundle of cloth from a woman during a highway robbery. She is originally sentenced to death, but is reprieved and her sentence changed to 14 years’ transportation.

1790 She arrives in Sydney on the ship Lady Juliana, and is sent on to Norfolk Island.

1795 Anne has met and married George Legge on Norfolk Island; they are allocated land in The Rocks, where they build a house.

1805 The couple are given permission to return to England, but the ship’s captain refuses to take women on board during wartime.

1807 In June George Legge drowns when his boat capsizes whilst fishing in Botany Bay. He is dragged down by the weight of his coat; his Aboriginal companions try to help him but are unable to; they survive and deliver the bad news to Anne. A week later George’s hand is found in the stomach of a shark, and in July, the rest of his body is discovered by some other Aboriginals.

1810 Anne marries the baker George Talbot at St. Philip’s Anglican Church.

1834 Anne Armsden and George Talbot are admitted to the Benevolent Asylum.

1835 Anne dies.

1837 George dies.
Convict—Margaret Byrne (nee Mary Kelly)

Margaret, originally named Mary Kelly, was an Irish domestic servant who migrated to England, became a lady’s maid and stole goods from her employer. She was sentenced to 7 years’ transportation.

1804 Mary Kelly arrives in Sydney on the ship *Experiment*.

1805 Richard Byrne, a convict who has been sent to Norfolk Island for trying to escape from Australia, is granted a conditional pardon and returns to Sydney, where he meets Mary Kelly; they marry, and she becomes Margaret Byrne. Margaret works from home as a seamstress.

1806 Catherine Byrne (daughter) is born.

Between 1806 and 1841 Richard & Margaret have 7 children and live on Cumberland Street.

- The sons are educated by private tutors.
- The daughters go to school sporadically.
- All the children move away except for Catherine, who lives in The Rocks all her life.

1841 Richard Byrne dies.

1970 Nita McCrae, a descendant of the Byrne family, founds the Rocks Residents Action Group and enlists the help of the Builders Labourers Federation, who prevent the redevelopment of The Rocks by imposing a Green Ban on the area.

1995 Nita McCrae dies. The following year, a plaque honouring her achievements is unveiled at 35 George Street, her home during the campaign to save The Rocks.

Records show that descendants of Margaret and Richard Byrne were still living in The Rocks in the 1990s; it is possible they still do to this day.

Building workers at Sydney Cove in 1821. Image courtesy of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
Activity 1: What is the artefact?

Activity 1:
Draw your artefact

This artefact is:

Circle who it could have belonged to:
Anne Armsden    George Cribb    Margaret Byrne

Activity 2: Convict profile

Circle one fact in each box below

I was convicted for
Highway robbery     Stealing from my mistress     Possession of fake money

My punishment was
7 years’ transportation     14 years’ transportation     Sent to Norfolk Island

My job is
Butcher     Seamstress     Baker

Write down any other facts you can remember about your convict
10. Glossary

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
The original occupants of Australia, including the indigenous people of the Torres Strait Islands off northern Queensland.

archaeology
The study of objects from past human societies in order to discover facts about the past.

archive
Both a collection of public records, documents, etc., and the place where they are stored.

artefact
Something made or given shape by humans; for example a ceramic vessel, or a stone tool.

chronology
A list of events and dates in order of time.

circa
Meaning approximately, or around, and usually used for historical time, ‘circa’ is commonly abbreviated to ‘c.’—for example, c. 1975.

colonisation
A process by which a different system of government is established by one nation over another group of people(s). It involves the colonial power asserting and enforcing its sovereignty according to its own law, rather than by the laws of the colonised.

evidence
The information contained within a source that tends to support an historical argument or provides information for a specific historical inquiry.

excavation
A process of removing earth that is covering objects buried in the ground.

historical inquiry
The process of developing knowledge and understanding by posing questions about the past, and applying skills associated with locating, analysing, evaluating and using sources as evidence to develop an informed argument or interpretation.

indigenous peoples
This term is used when referring collectively to the first peoples of a land in international communities. The term Indigenous Australians is used for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within Australia.

interpretation
A way of understanding and explaining what has happened in the past. The discipline of history acknowledges that there is often more than one view of what has happened in the past.

perspective
A point of view from which historical events, problems and issues can be analysed, e.g. a gender perspective (either masculine or feminine) on the past.

primary source
A source (see source, below)—e.g. a diary, letter, photograph, ceramic fragment or coin—that was created during the time period being investigated.

secondary source
A source (see source, below) describing an historical event—e.g. a textbook, historical account or painting—that was created after the time period being investigated.

source
Any written or non-written material that can be used to investigate the past. A source becomes ‘evidence’ (see evidence, above) when it is used to support or refute a viewpoint, or contributes to an historical inquiry.
11. Map of The Rocks

1. The Big Dig Archaeology Education Centre (meeting spot)
2. Sydney Harbour YHA entry
3. The Rocks Discovery Museum
Bibliography

Attenbrow, V. (1992), *Port Jackson Archaeological Project—Stage II*. Unpublished report to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Studies


Connah, G. (1998), *Of the hut I builded—the Archaeology of Australia’s History*. Cambridge University Press, UK


Johnson, A. W., *Foundation Park: Excavation and interpretation of archaeological features*. Sydney Cove Authority, Sydney


Websites

Information about The Rocks: www.therocks.com

The Rocks Discovery Museum: www.rockdiscoverymuseum.com

City of Sydney Council: www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au


NSW Heritage Office: www.heritage.nsw.gov.au


State Library of NSW: www.sl.nsw.gov.au

State Records of NSW: www.records.nsw.gov.au

Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority: www.shfa.nsw.gov.au

Heritage on the NSW Board of Studies site: www.teachingheritage.nsw.edu.au


Tropman & Tropman Architects: www.tropmanarchitects.com.au

13. Contact us

Your Booking
If you have any questions regarding your booking or would like assistance in planning your day, we can help in combining programs with other education providers or customising packages to suit your needs.

Programs
- All programs are held at the Archaeology Education Centre at Sydney Harbour YHA.
- Programs run for 120 minutes unless otherwise stated.
- Risk assessments can be downloaded from our website.
- Toilet facilities are available at the Archaeology Education Centre.
- Bus drop-off and pick-up is on Cumberland Street in front of the Sydney Harbour YHA.

T 02 9240 8552

The Rocks Discovery Museum
2-8 Kendall Lane, The Rocks, NSW 2000
- Entry is free.
- Information at the museum will compliment any Sydney Learning Adventures program.

T 02 9240 8680

Accommodation at Sydney Harbour YHA
110 Cumberland Street, The Rocks, NSW 2000
T 02 8272 0900
F 02 9264 4516
E sydharbourgroups@yhansw.org.au