

Session title	Wetland Settlers	
Key question	How did people live in wetlands in the past?	
Session description	Bring your history topic to life with one of our living history days. Our roundhouse village is open to time-travellers during spring and autumn. Step back in time, discovering first-hand how to use reeds for thatching, and willow for walls and making charcoal. Forage for seasonal herbs and medicinal plants then grab a sword and shield to learn how to defend your wetland home.	
Key Stage	KS2	
Duration	4 hours	

Curriculum links	KS2 History Changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Iron Age, the Roman Empire, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings.	
Learning outcomes	Most learners	More able learners
	Will be able to identify two wetland plants Will be able to describe how two wetland products are used Will be able to recall two useful wetland products Will be able to explain why the wetlands are worth defending Will be able to work out how thatching is done Will be able to assemble a small patch of thatch	Will be able to devise solutions to a construction challenge Will be able to match their lifestyle with the lifestyle of ancient peoples who lived in wetlands
Key vocabulary	Celt Saxon Reed Forage	Roman Viking Thatch Iron age Willow Charcoal

Session Outline	Time
Introduction	25 mins
Learners are given a brief introduction to Martin Mere wetlands. We set the scene, get into character and walk to the roundhouse village.	
Welcome	5 mins
Learners are welcomed to the village and given a health and safety briefing The children do all the following activities, in rotation:	
Activity 1: Foraging	30 mins
Learners explore the wetland to discover and gather natural items, which could be useful for food, medicine, fire-lighting etc., depending on the season.	
Activity 2: Weapons training	30 mins

With wooden shields and swords, the children learn how to defend their wetland home against invaders, in the style and language appropriate to the historical period being studied. 'Who is defending the wetlands in your time?'	
Lunch	45 mins
Lunch in the roundhouse village and toilet break (walk to centre building) (Option to lunch in the centre building, if required).	
Activity 3: Willow weaving and charcoal making	30 mins
Learners use thin willow to build a wattle wall as a small animal enclosure, then peel short pieces to turn into charcoal over the village fire. They are given a bag of this to take away at the end of the day.	
Activity 4: Thatching challenge	30 mins
Learners figure out how thatching works and have a go on our special child-sized thatching frames, learning to tie knots and the names of the implements used in the craft, like thatching needles (which they mustn't lose in the haystack), the hazel spars and the thatching paddle.	
Plenary	
What skills have we learned? What more could we discover? What messages for the future could we take back?	20 mins
Back to the future	
Learners walk back to centre building, 'back to the future'.	15 mins