

The Calverley Story: Teachers notes.

Below are some helpful teaching prompts to use during the classroom session 'The Calverley Story'.

Activity 1: Source activity.

Group 1- Walter Calverley 1340-1404

Discussion points:

- **What rent was due on Walter's land each year?** ANSWER: A single rose.
NOTE: Ask the pupils to look at the land transaction source to help with this.
- **Was Joan rich or poor?** ANSWER: Rich.
NOTE: Pupils should use the sources relating to Joan's clothing bill and compare what this would have bought in this period.
- **Were Joan and Walter married long?** ANSWER: No, they were only married 3 years.
NOTE: Pupils should use the family tree to help with this.
- **Did Walter only have one wife?** ANSWER: No, Joan Bigod was Walter's second wife.
NOTE: Pupils should use the family tree to help with this.
- **What happened to the land after Walter's death?** ANSWER: The land would have transferred to Joan.
NOTE: Use the land transaction source to help with this. In particular pupils should consider the wording "for their lives, and the life of the survivor".

Group 2- Sir Walter Calverley 1483-1536

Discussion points:

- **Which King did Walter fight for?** ANSWER: Henry VIII.
NOTE: Use the images to see whether pupils recognise the name of the King. The 'field of cloth of gold' source also mentions Henry by name.
- **Where did Walter fight?** ANSWER: In France, at the Battle of the Spurs.
NOTE: Pupils should identify the battle using the battle of spurs image.
- **How was Walter rewarded for fighting?** ANSWER: He was knighted by Henry VIII.

NOTE: Pupils should identify the 'Sir' at the beginning of Walter's name.

- **How did relations between the two countries change during the King's reign?** ANSWER: Relations between France and England improved during Henry VIII's reign.

NOTE: Pupils should use the '100 Years War' source and picture of Henry and Francis at the Field of the Cloth of Gold as comparisons.

- **Look at the portrait of the King. How might he protect himself in battle?** ANSWER: Using protective armour.

NOTE: Pupils to use the image of Henry's armour. Discussions can be had around what the armour might be made of and whether they think it may be heavy. They should also consider that the armour may have been worn on horseback. Do you think Walter Calverley might have had similar armour?

Group 3- William Calverley 1507-72

Discussion points:

- **What happened to William in London and why?** ANSWER: William was imprisoned in the Tower of London for his Catholic faith in the mid-1530s.

NOTE: Pupils should use the Tower of London image to help, and may want to consider the painting of King Edward VI, noting that both he and King Henry VIII were protestant.

- **Do you think William was Catholic or Protestant?** ANSWER: The Calverley family were Catholics, however at this time it was dangerous to be Catholic as most of England was Protestant. William's Catholic faith led to him being briefly imprisoned in the Tower of London. Pupils should use the answer to the previous prompt to help them, along with the Pilgrimage of Grace source.

NOTE: Pupils should consider the Pilgrimage of Grace banner source to help with this.

- **Why do you think William might have written 'a dyalogue'?** ANSWER: William wrote 'a dyalogue' when imprisoned in the Tower of London. The document was a way for William to renounce his Catholic faith, and may have been a way to try and prove that he was loyal to both the crown and the Protestant faith.

NOTE: Pupils should consider the source 'A dialogue' and may also consider the painting of Edward VI, who was Protestant like his father, Henry VIII. Further discussion with pupils can be had regarding whether William's 'dialogue' was just a way to be set free, did he really give up his faith?

- **Describe one of William's achievements.** ANSWER: He became Sheriff of York in 1549.

NOTE: Pupils should identify William as a Sheriff from the historical context information provided.

- **What did William do at Calverley Old Hall?** ANSWER: It was likely William who commissioned the 'painted chamber' at Calverley Old Hall, an elaborate scheme of Tudor wall paintings which still survive today.

NOTE: Pupils should consider the sources related to the wall paintings at Calverley.

Group 4- Walter Calverley 1582-1605

Discussion points:

- Do you think Walter was happily married? ANSWER: It is unlikely that by 1605 Walter was happily married. Some sources refer to the marriage as a 'forced marriage', although Walter also broke off an existing engagement in Yorkshire to marry Phillipa, so perhaps it was a love match at first.
- **Why might Robert Cecil want Phillipa and Walter to marry?** ANSWER: Robert Cecil was 'Master of the Ward Court', a title which meant that he had responsibility for administration of the estate of anyone who was an underage minor. This included Walter Calverley who did not have a guardian. Robert Cecil was also Phillipa's uncle and guardian, so this meant that he was able to marry her off to a man from an important family like the Calverleys. It also meant that Cecil was able to indirectly control this 'seat' of Yorkshire, which was an important one at the time. Walter could therefore be useful in Cecil's political aims to introduce James I as Queen Elizabeth's heir to the throne, with Yorkshire proving a key area to keep onside.

NOTE: Pupils should consider the sources relating to Robert Cecil and his relationship to both Walter and Phillipa. Discussion can also be had

related to the source noting the relationship between Robert Cecil and Queen Elizabeth I and King James I.

- **Was Walter given any money by Phillipa's family?** ANSWER: Yes, Phillipa's family gave a dowry of £1000 with their daughter in marriage to Walter. This was a lot of money back then!
NOTE: Pupils should consider the letter from Anne Brooke.
- **What happened in April 1605?** ANSWER: In April 1605, Walter Calverley murdered his two eldest sons, and attempted to murder his wife, who was saved from his knife by the boning in her corset. The youngest son survived as he was with a wet nurse elsewhere. Walter was arrested and put to death by pressing (using large stones or weights) in York.
NOTE: Pupils should look at the sources 'A Yorkshire Tragedy' and 'Two most unnatural and bloody murders' to help with this.
- **Who was originally thought to have written 'A Yorkshire Tragedy'?**
ANSWER: William Shakespeare was originally credited as the author of the play 'A Yorkshire Tragedy', which is based on the events of April 1605. However it has since been proved that this was not the case, and the play is now credited to Thomas Middleton.
NOTE: Pupils should examine the source 'A Yorkshire Tragedy' closely.

Activity 2: Tudor paint

A brief history of the painted chamber at Calverley Old Hall.

- The painted chamber was discovered in 2021 during some exploratory works at Calverley Old Hall. It had been covered up with plaster and lath which meant that it remained well preserved beneath the plastered wall surface. The paintings were probably initially covered in the 1600s as the style of decoration fell out of fashion and then subsequently re-covered in later years.
- For many years, this room had been a bedroom in one of the small cottages after Calverley Old Hall was subdivided into smaller dwellings in the 1700s.
- The painted chamber is an excellent example of the 'grotesque' style of painting, which was popular in the Tudor period.

- 'Grotesque' style comes from the word 'Grotteschi' or 'Grotto' which was inspired by the painted frescoes found in Nero's palace in Rome, which had been rediscovered in the 1400s. (Photos of this are available online- see below for example of fresco paintings).



Photo: Romewise.com

- Inspiration was taken from the newly discovered frescoes in Rome and passed through Europe in 'pattern books' before reaching England in the 1500s.
- Unlike many other similar examples which have suffered harmful varnishing or other works, no preservation work has previously been done on the paintings at Calverley Old Hall.
- The paintings have been tested to find out which colours or 'pigments' are present in the paint used.

This has revealed:

- **Carbon black** (possibly charcoal or similar) which was crushed and mixed with a 'base'- i.e. water or an oil to form a paint.
- **Gypsum white** (often used as a plaster) which was again crushed and mixed with a base to form a paint.
- **Iron oxide red** (a mineral found naturally in some stone) again crushed and mixed with a base to form a paint.

The paintings form a regular pattern with striped backgrounds, painted onto both plastered slate and bare wooden beams. Originally, it is thought that the whole room would have been painted, however we now only have surviving paint on 3 of 4 walls, with the exception of a frieze which runs all the way around the top of the room.

What is shown in the paintings?

Painted walls: A range of features including figures such as demons, angelic figures, dog-like creatures, Tudor roses, birds, classical style urns.

Freize: repeating pattern of Tudor roses, pomegranates, and shields.

Are the paintings important?

The painted chamber is of a quality rarely seen anywhere else. The paintings are very important both in Yorkshire, and could even have national significance, being an excellent example of the 'grotesque' style of painting.