



Ventnor - Home of writer Alfred Noyes

Alfred Noyes, who is probably best known for his ballad 'The Highwayman' moved to Lisle Combe, in Ventnor, in 1929 for the last years of his life. He was buried on the Isle of Wight in St Saviour's Church yard in Totland after his death in 1958. His grandson, Robert, and his wife, Ruth, still run the house today as a bed and breakfast.

In the year 1952, he wrote the poem 'Daddy Fell into the Pond'. This humorous poem describes the change in a family's mood after the children's father falls into the pond. Your teacher will provide you with a copy of this poem to read.



LITERATURE ACTIVITY

Read through the poem 'Daddy Fell Into The Pond' to follow

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- ✓ Craft your own poem. Your poem should follow the same structure so that the mood is bleak in the first stanza and the reaction of those around you lifts the mood in the second and third. As per Noyes' poem, you could personify the animals around you, as if they are 'in' on the comedy aspect.
- ✓ Try to use the same rhyme scheme too – this will add challenge!
- ✓ If you haven't had an experience which is similar, create one so that you can compose your own poem.







Composition based on the senses

Although Alfred Noyes was a pacifist (he disagreed with war and violence), he fought during World War One because he believed that he had no option but to support the Allied Forces. However, it was during this war that he was officially excluded from fighting due to his poor eyesight.

In later years, when his increasing blindness took hold, his works were dictated.



CREATIVE WRITING ACTIVITY

1. Whilst in Ventnor, find somewhere to sit and experience what is around you.
2. Use your senses (other than eyesight) to write a few notes, below.

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3. Consider what you can hear around you and in the distance. Are there any scents which are particularly strong? What can you feel (for example, the breeze on your skin or the sun on your face)?
4. After spending some time picking up on the things that surround you, draft a composition of choice which uses senses other than eyesight. You could craft a story opener or poem which could be written from the perspective of a person with poor eyesight, like Noyes.
5. Discuss with your class mates whether you found this task much more difficult without the benefit of describing what you can see.
6. Post-visit, you could try to complete a similar activity, removing a different sense. Which one is hardest, and why?



The Highwayman



One of the poems for which Noyes is most famous is entitled 'The Highwayman'.

In this ballad, Noyes tells the story of a highwayman who steals gold. Bess, his true love, lives in an inn and the highwayman often visits her there.

Tim, the ostler (a person who looks after the horses of people residing at an inn), also loves Bess and one night overhears a conversation about a proposed meeting between the two lovers.

He advises the King's men (who are searching for him) about their meeting and they arrive at the inn, waiting for him to appear.

They tie Bess up so that she is not able to escape but they sit her by the window, where she can see him

riding in the moonlight. In order to warn the highwayman of their presence, Bess shoots herself and he rides away.

Tragically Curriculum relevant materials supporting school trips to the Isle of Wight

Book today with Education Destination and get full access to this and hundreds more quality resources at the inn, where Bess waits for him.

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ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Listen to a reading of the poem; your teacher can find you an online version, or you can search for one yourself.
- ▶ What do you notice about the ballad form? How does Noyes tell the story using rhythm, rhyme and repetition? Look at the imagery which enriches the story telling.

- ▶ Can you have a go at writing your own ballad? Plan some ideas below:



HEALTH & HISTORY IN VENTNOR

By 1840 the population of Ventnor was over 1000 and by 1850 it was 3000, all were attracted to it for their health.

The air was known to be good at improving the lung diseases common in Victorian cities and at the same time its coastal location meant visitors could indulge in hot or cold sea-water baths.

The next turning point was the arrival of the railway in 1866. You got to Ventnor through a long tunnel and the station was half way up the cliff. So the view as you left



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Not long after this in 1869, the prestige of Ventnor as a health resort was enhanced by the opening of the Royal National Hospital. It was founded by Arthur Hill Hassell, another famous doctor, he chose the site after conducting several scientific experiments to prove the healthiness of the town.

Sadly, the hospital was knocked down in 1969 but its ground became Ventnor Botanic Gardens and the stained glass from its chapel put in St Lawrence parish church, where it can still be enjoyed today.

The hospital added to Ventnor's popularity as a tourist destination and by 1900 the population had reached 6,000, which is where it stands today. However, it declined as a health resort in the twentieth century especially after the development of antibiotics in 1942.

In preparation for World War Two a radar station was put on the downs above Ventnor. It was part of the early warning system that allowed RAF fighters to be directed where they were needed as soon as possible and this played a massive part in winning the Battle of Britain in June 1940. However, it meant that the Luftwaffe bombed Ventnor far more than you would have expected, for a small town famous up to that point only for its healthy air.

So in 1942 Ventnor was as bad for your health as it had been good in 1842.

ACTIVITY

- Imagine you are a patient in a hospital here. Write your thoughts and feelings in a diary entry.