John Keats in Shanklin

John Keats visited the Isle of Wight in April 1817 with the intention of staying over the summer whilst recovering from illness. He stayed in Shanklin.

He spoke with enthusiasm of the beauties of Shanklin, but found that the sea often kept him awake, as he was not used to it. He linked this to the passage in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, 'Do you not hear the sea?'

Keats crafted his own famous sea-sonnet:

Find a place to sit where the sea can be watched. Read the poem 'On the Sea' by Keats.

Teaching resources by Education Destination Ltd.
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
www.edudest.uk

TASK

Think about [illegible] and the season or time of year. Writers use the sea to evoke their mood.

Take a few notes, based on your observations:

How is the sea presented to you? _____

What sounds can you hear? _____

What can you see, and what colours or images does the sea produce? _____

SONNET

It keeps eternal whisperings around
Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
Gluts twice ten thousand Caverns, till the spell
Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.
Often 'tis in such gentle temper found,
That scarcely will the very smallest shell
Be moved for days from where it sometime fell.
When last the winds of Heaven were unbound.
Oh, ye! who have your eyeballs vexed and tired,
Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea;
Oh ye! whose ears are dinned with uproar rude,
Or fed too much with cloying melody---
Sit ye near some old Cavern's Mouth and brood,
Until ye start, as if the sea nymphs quired!

POETRY ACTIVITY:

- Draft your own poetry response to the sea before you, using your notes and knowledge of its different moods, sounds and behaviours.
- You could try to use the same rhyming structure as Keats. You may, however, want to use your own – the choice is yours!

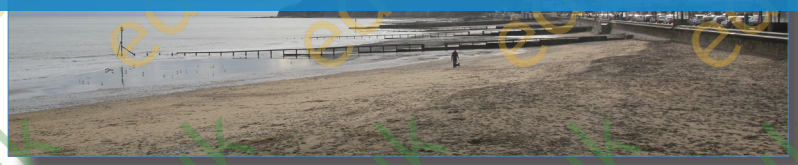
Teaching resources by Education Destination Ltd.
Curriculum relevant materials supporting school trips to the Isle of Wight
Book today with Education Destination and get full access to **this** and **hundreds more** quality resources
www.edudest.uk

SHANKLIN - A SHORT HISTORY

In 1791 Shanklin had a population of about 100, and like most coastal villages locals made their living from fishing. Their thatched cottages were clustered around the top and the bottom of Shanklin Chine. Slightly higher up the hill was the medieval church of St John and Shanklin Manor, but all of this was about to change.

George III had popularised sea bathing, however the French Revolution of 1789 made travel abroad dangerous, so resorts sprang up along the south coast. These are delightfully described in many of Jane Austen's novels. People always wish to share their holiday experiences with those at home and before photography, people did water-colours or sketched what they saw. Some artists, William Daniell, John Nixon, and the Brannon family went further and published books of their travels and these served as the earliest tourist guides. Shanklin was always described as a place not to be missed for two reasons, firstly the Chine and secondly Shanklin was the gateway to the Undercliff. The climate of the Undercliff meant that the vegetation was lush and exciting different; a place where people could convince themselves that they really had gone abroad.

Teaching resources by Education Destination Ltd.
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
www.edudest.uk



By 1831 the population of Shanklin had risen to 260 and a more fashionable holiday trade was being established. Many of the cottages were being converted into hotels so they still fulfil their original function. In the nineteenth century families would rent a whole house and decamp there with some of their servants for anything between three weeks and four months. By 1851 the population of Shanklin had increased to 355 full time residents, but the population would be nearly double when all of the villas were occupied. As a consequence of this the old medieval church was not large enough and it was extensively remodelled in 1859; this is in contrast to Bonchurch and St Lawrence where they built new churches. At the same time, it was rededicated to St Blasius, whose history is more fully explained on the church's website.

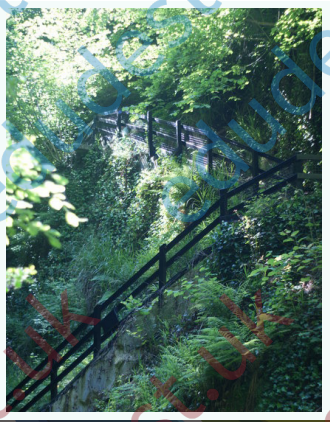
The next turning point in the history of Shanklin was the arrival of the railway in 1865. In truth the railway did not go into the village of Shanklin, but a point nearly a mile away from it. Regent Street was built to connect the railway station with what became known as the Old Village with its collection of thatched cottages. The space between the two was rapidly filled with all manner of shops, schools, businesses, a theatre and more houses. By 1900 Shanklin had spread and joined Lake, which in turn had spread and joined Sandown. The population is now nearing 9,000 and tourism continues to be a big part of the life of the town.

Artistry at Shanklin Chine!

Many artists are inspired by the beautiful surroundings at Shanklin Chine and the nearby parks and gardens. Will you be inspired too? Explore the area and consider doing one of these activities:

- Sketch the landscape or close up features.
- Use pencil, paper or any other technique you like!
- You could even photograph scenery for follow up work!

Resources needed: Soft pencils, paper, clip board, camera (optional).



Themes of the Sea...

Gerard Manley Hopkins spent one summer at Shanklin Manor in 1863 where he completed several poems. Later, in 1918, he completed one on the sinking of the HMS Eurydice off the coast of the Island, an extract from which can be seen below:

THE LOSS OF THE EURYDICE

Foundered March 24. 1878

1

THE Eurydice—it concerned thee, O Lord:
Three hundred souls, O alas! on board,
Some asleep unawakened, all un-
Felled and furled them, the hearts of oak!
And flockbells off the aerial
Downs' forefalls beat to the burial.

3

For did she pride her, freighted fully, on
Bounden bales or a hoard of bullion?—
Precious passing measure,
Lads and men her lade and treasure.

4

She had come from a cruise, training seamen—
Men, boldboys soon to be men:
Must it, worst weather,
Blast bole and bloom together?

5

No Atlantic squall overwrought her
Or rearing billow of the Biscay water:
Home was hard at hand
And the blow bore from land.

6

And you were a liar, O blue March day.
Bright sun lanced fire in the heavenly bay;
But what black Boreas wrecked her? he
Came equipped, deadly-electric,

7

A beetling baldbright cloud thorough England
Riding: there did stores not mingle? and
Hailropes hustle and grind their
Heavengravel? wolfsnow, worlds of it, wind
there?

8

Now it overcuffs Appledurcombe;
It hurls, hurls off Boniface Down.

9

Too proud, too proud, what a press she bore!
Royal, and all her royals wore.
Sharp with her, shorten sail!
Too late; lost; gone with the gale.

Teaching resources by Education Destination Ltd.
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
www.edudest.uk

Hopkins described Shanklin in a letter to a friend as:

'...a delightful place. If you were here you would have soon forgot the clouded Forth, the gloom that saddens heaven and Earth. [...] The sea is brilliantly coloured and always calm, bathing delightful, horses and boats to be obtained, walks wild and beautiful, sketches charming, walking tours and excursions, poetic downs, the lovely Chine, fine cliffs, everything'.

TASK

- Write your own description of Shanklin, in Hopkins's style.
- What did you find beautiful about it?

Original content © Education Destination Ltd. 2016.
Logo provided by Red Funnel Ferries.
Images used under licence or public domain except Shanklin Chine image © Peter Trimming reused under CC-BY-SA-2.0