

## Roman History at Robin Hill

What can you discover about Roman life at Combley Villa?

### Student Introduction

- ▶ This activity tests your reading skills
- ▶ You will learn about Romans at Robin Hill

### Did you know?

There was once a Roman villa at Robin Hill!

### TASK

- ✓ Read the information texts on page 1 and 2
- ✓ Answer the questions on each text

### The Romans at Robin Hill:

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Romans were on the Isle of Wight for about 350 years.

The area where Robin Hill is now was called Combley. In the beginning,

Combley Villa was the home of a powerful family who made money from

owning the villa. They had a hypocaust floor which allowed them to move

was a large farmhouse, probably 30m long. The owners must have been rich

to be able to afford this.

During the 3rd Century A.D. Combley Villa made brown pottery called 'Vectis Ware'. It wasn't very good quality pottery, but had a rich red colour. Pieces of 'Vectis Ware' have been found as far as Normandy in France.

In later years, the owners installed a bath house with floor covered in mosaics, one featuring a dolphin (see left). They also had mosaic floors in the main living and entrance rooms as well. By the 4th Century, Combley Villa would have sofas and open fire places. Doors would have iron locks for the first time.

No-one really knows why the villa crumbled away in the end.



### Questions

1. How long were Romans on the Isle of Wight?
2. What was a hypocaust floor?
3. What was the name of the pottery made at the villa?
4. Where was the dolphin mosaic found?

## Combley Villa: The Excavations



The villa was first officially discovered in 1910 by the Fleming's estate steward, Arthur Arnold.

Between 1968 and 1970, local archaeologist L.R Fennerly carried out more work and found that the villa was larger than thought before.

Three coins were uncovered at that time (shown on the left):

- 1) Dates from A.D.305-309, with the head of Emperor Maximinus II
- 2) Dates from A.D. 117-138, with the head of Emperor Hadrian
- 3) Dates from A.D. 259-268, from the reign of Emperor Gallieus

Combley Villa was then completely re-covered and is protected and cannot be disturbed unless permission from *English Heritage* is given.

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2. What are the names of the 3 Emperors linked to the 3 coins?

i.

ii.

iii.

3. Who would you need to ask if you wanted to uncover the villa again today?

Can you design your own mosaic?  
What pattern would you choose? List some ideas here:

- 
- 
- 
- 

Have a go in class using coloured pencils and white paper or small pieces of coloured paper to form a mosaic collage!

