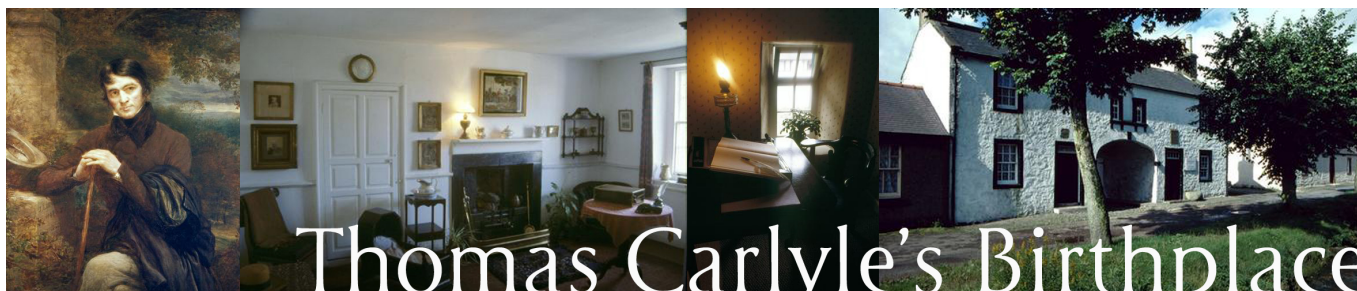




Thomas Carlyle's Birthplace

Teacher's information



Thomas Carlyle (1795 – 1881) was an historian, essayist and satirical writer. The eldest of 8 children, he grew up in Ecclefechan, in a strict Calvinist family. He was educated at the village school, Annan Academy and Edinburgh University (where he studied arts and mathematics). After graduating in 1813, he became a teacher in Kirkcaldy.

In 1818, Carlyle moved to Edinburgh and wrote for the *Edinburgh Encyclopaedia* and *Edinburgh Review*. He began translating German writers such as Goethe and Schiller and wrote *The Life of Schiller* (1825). In 1826, he married Jane Baillie Welsh and they moved to London.

Carlyle was a friend of the liberal philosopher, John Stuart Mill, and wrote articles for Mill's *Westminster Review*. He published several books including *The French Revolution* (1837), *On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History* (1841) and *Past and Present* (1843). His work inspired writers and artists such as John Ruskin, William Morris and Charles Dickens, who were interested in social reform. Later in life, however, Carlyle became undemocratic in his views; this is reflected in works such as the *History of Frederick the Great* (1858-1865).

Ecclefechan remained a constant factor in Carlyle's life. At his death, his instructions were to refuse a place in Westminster Abbey. Instead, he was buried in the local kirkyard beside his parents, a few hundred yards from his place of birth.

Carlyle's Birthplace: The Arched House was built over a cobbled pond by Carlyle's father and uncle, both stonemasons, in c1791. It presents a typical home belonging to a Victorian family on a small income. Downstairs is a low-ceilinged kitchen with open fire range, stone flagged floor, cloutie rugs, cooking utensils and furniture typical of the period.

Some of Carlyle's personal possessions are still within the house - such as his hat, writing desk, tobacco-cutter and letters. In the bedroom (where he was born), the children's cradle still stands beside the parents' box bed. An extra item is the sofa which came from Carlyle's home in London (24 Cheyne Row, Chelsea).

A school visit offers opportunities for cross-curricular work and engaging with the Curriculum for Excellence:

- Guided tours of the house – suggested study areas: Carlyle; Victorian Life
- Tours can be adapted to suit the requirements of your class
- Tour of Ecclefechan Village

Resources for schools:

- Illustrated leaflet (for sale on site)



Thomas Carlyle's Birthplace

Teacher's information

Planning your Visit

- To book: please contact the property manager
- Book well in advance to avoid disappointment
- The House is open for schools all year round (but all visits must be booked)
- Maximum class size: 30 pupils, with a ratio of 1 teacher/adult to 10 pupils
- Access: we regret that this historic house is not accessible for wheelchair users
- Toilets: there is a toilet on site, and also public toilets nearby
- Clothing: if you have booked for the Ecclefechan Village guided tour, then clothing should be appropriate for outdoors.
- The site has been risk assessed. Teachers should prepare their own RA for the visit
- There is more information about planning a visit to a Trust site on the NTS Learn website:
www.nts.org.uk/Learn/schools_plan.php
- For more information about Thomas Carlyle's Birthplace, please go to:
www.nts.org.uk/Property/Thomas-Carlyles-Birthplace/

Charges:

- There is no admission charge for schools with NTS educational membership
- Non-members are welcome but there is an admission charge of £2 per pupil
- Accompanying adults are admitted free.
- All class teachers are encouraged to make a free preparatory visit to the site
- Membership: please apply to Thomas Carlyle's Birthplace – or go to the NTS Learn website:
www.nts.org.uk/Learn/schools_membership.php

During your class visit:

- Tours of the House and the Village will be led by NTS staff and volunteers.
- A House tour takes around 45 minutes; the House and Village tour takes around 1½ hours.
- A class of 30 pupils should be split into 2 groups - each group must be accompanied by at least 1 teacher/ school helper
- Teachers are responsible for pupils and their behaviour.
- We regret that pupils cannot take photos within the House
- There is no shop on site.
- On arrival, please knock on the door of the House to be admitted

Getting to Thomas Carlyle's Birthplace:

- Thomas Carlyle's Birthplace is situated in Ecclefechan, which is on the A74, off the M74 (signposted on the motorway). It is 5 miles southeast of Lockerbie and 6 miles northwest of Gretna Green. Ordnance Survey Reference: NY193745
- Schools coaches can park on the road in front of Thomas Carlyle's Birthplace

For more information and a booking form, please contact:

Property Manager, Thomas Carlyle's Birthplace, Ecclefechan, Dumfries & Galloway DG11 3DG T: 0844 493 2247 E: carylyesbirthplace@nts.org.uk