

Let's take a virtual walk to the middle of Ely. Here is a google map of the area near the Cathedral. When you walk past the Cathedral, you cannot fail to see the cannons on the green area outside. On the map, the place is marked with a blue tab to draw tourists' attention to it.

(Cannons, with spelling double n, are big guns. Canons, spelt with one n are people who work in a cathedral.)



As part of our local history project, we want to be able to link our local history to major periods of history. It makes sense then, to find out about the cannons as they are historical landmarks associated with the cathedral.



There is a plaque next to the cannon which says:



When you are thinking about local history, it is important to ask questions. Have a think. Which questions pop into your head when you read this? Jot down your questions.

Maybe, you thought about something like this?

- Why did the Queen present the cannon to the people of Ely in 1860?
- What and when was the Crimean War?
- Who were the Ely Rifle Volunteers?

We are trying to think about the links to national history and this plaque makes us think of Queen Victoria and The Crimean War. Both the queen and the war have histories beyond the people and places in Ely.

When we are at home and unable to visit museums and libraries, we have to look to the internet to find out about things. We need to check information from different sites and cross-reference – this means check that the sites say similar things so we can trust that they might be correct. Also, always choose sites that you know have been checked. The BBC is a site which employs people to fact check.

The history of the Crimean war is very complicated. An account which goes into details can be seen here: it is quite tricky to read.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/crimea_01.shtml

A simple version, for children, is available at

https://kids.kiddle.co/Crimean_War

The main thing to notice is that the war was very important in history from the point of view that there were important changes, caused by the war.

The Kiddle site states:

*The Crimean War was a very important point in the **history** of **warfare**. It was not only different in the weapons it used, it was also the first war related to by press, by **photography** and **journalists**. Another very important factor was that it was the first war with real field **hospitals**, started by **Florence Nightingale**. The **defeat** of Russia in the war caused increased development of weaponry and the end of **serfdom** in **1861**.*

You have probably heard of Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole as they really helped the soldiers who were sick and injured. Their work at the time led to big changes in the way soldiers were fed, looked after and the way hospitals were organised.

The newspapers sent reporters to the battle fields to report on the war and people back in Britain were very interested in what was happening. Many of their men folk were sent to fight in the Crimea and people wanted to know what was happening. This was an important change in the way wars were reported.

The weapons used in battle were new and more sophisticated and a new rifle was used for the first time. This gave the British riflemen an advantage.

Here is a piece of writing on the Ely Museum Facebook page. Notice the highlighted sections:

Following this Siege of Sevastopol, the British seized several cannons and sent them to several important cities across Empire. The cannon in Ely was cast in 1802 at the Alexandrovski factory in Petrozavodsk, north west Russia, where the factory director was Charles Gascoigne, an English Industrialist who had moved to Russia in 1786 to reorganise the production of iron works and cannons. The Sevastopol cannon weighs in at over 4000 kg and is now mounted on a heavy iron carriage, parallel to the Bishops Palace.

Queen Victoria's gift was also given in recognition of the successful formation of the Ely Rifle Volunteers which were formed in 1860. They became part of the Cambridgeshire Regiment in 1908 and fought during the The Great War with them, later becoming part of the Royal Anglian Regiment. As there are no Territorial or Reserve infantry to continue their traditions, the Royal Anglian Regiment disbanded in 1999, though the current soldiers of D (Cambridgeshire) Company of the 1st Battalion, and the Cambridgeshire ACF still foster those links.

Additionally, above St George's chapel in Ely Cathedral, the Colours of the 30th (Cambridgeshire) Regiment of Foot, who fought at the 1854 battles of Alma, Inkermann and Sevastopol, during the Crimean War can be seen.

This last comment links the riflemen from Ely, who fought in the Crimean War to the cathedral – their flag is displayed there.

Things to do:

You can find out some things about Queen Victoria for yourself. (You probably remember a lot from your Year 3 work!) Use the sites below to research her life around 1860.

Find out about Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole. You could write 5 bullet points about each of them and how they helped soldiers during the Crimean War.

The Woodlands site is always a good one to try for children

<http://www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/victorians.html>

<http://www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/victorians/soldiers.html>

<https://www.theschoolrun.com/homework-help/mary-seacole>

Look at the time line

<http://www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/timeline/victorian.htm>

List 5 things that were happening around the time of the Crimean war (around the time 1850 to 1860)

Have we been able to answer our questions?

Have we linked the cannons and the Cathedral to major events and important people in history?