

KS2/KS3 TEACHERS RESOURCES



The  
**SECRET**  
of the  
**TREASURE**  
**KEEPERS**

**A. M. HOWELL**

# The SECRET of the TREASURE KEEPERS



## NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Suitable for: AGES 9+

*Explore Themes of:* ✓ Life during WW2 ✓ Archaeology ✓ The British Museum  
✓ The role of women during and after WW2 ✓ The history of the NHS

*Subject Checklist:* ✓ Literacy ✓ History ✓ Art

The activities included here are suitable for the classroom or library sessions.

## ABOUT THE BOOK



From the bestselling and award-winning A.M. Howell, author of *The Garden of Lost Secrets* and *The House of One Hundred Clocks*, comes a brand-new thrilling historical mystery of stolen treasure, friendship and deep courage set in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War.

February 1948.

Ruth has been whisked off to the lonely Rook Farm to investigate the discovery of long-buried treasure with her mother. But at the farmhouse, she finds secrets lurk around every corner. Joe, the farmer's son, is hiding something about the treasure, while land girl Audrey watches their every move.

But before Ruth can find out more, the treasure is stolen... With a storm coming, Ruth must race to uncover the secrets of the treasure keepers before all of their lives are changed forever.



# The SECRET of the TREASURE KEEPERS

## CONTENTS:



### Keywords

#### Theme 1 – Roman treasure



**Activities:** Draw a picture of the Roman pepper pot.

**Objectives:** Visualise an object described in the text.

#### Theme 2 – Life during the Second World War

**Activities:** Use a Venn diagram to compare war-time life in London and the Fens.

**Objectives:** Be aware of the range of experiences in Britain during the Second World War.

#### Theme 3 – Healthcare and the NHS

**Activities:** Write a wireless report about the NHS; research the start of the NHS.

**Objectives:** Understand the impact the introduction of the NHS had on people's lives in post-war Britain.

#### Theme 4 – A new discovery

**Activities:** Write a description of an archaeological discovery.

**Objectives:** Compose a piece of descriptive writing using a range of literary techniques for effect.



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## BOOK COVER PROMPTS:



1. What do you notice about the front cover?
2. What do you wonder?
3. Can you make any predictions about the book based on the front cover?
4. Does the front cover remind you of any other books you've read?



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## KEYWORDS



Below are some words and phrases relating to the Second World War that you will encounter as you read *The Secret of the Treasure Keepers*. When you come across each of these words or phrases in the story, see if you can find a definition and write it in the table below.

Evacuation	
Rations	
Land Girl	
Reserved Occupation	
The Blitz	
Air Raid Siren	
Dispatch Rider	
Blackout	
The Baedeker Raids	



# The SECRET of the TREASURE KEEPERS

## THEME 1: Roman Treasure



### Extract 1, Pages 64 - 66

*“What is it?” asked Ruth, looking at the silver gilt object sitting on the table in front of them.*

*“It’s extraordinary, that’s what it is,” breathed Ruth’s mum.*

*“Is it?” asked Mary, her voice high with hope.*

*The small silver statue was about the length of an outstretched hand. It had been fashioned in the form of a woman’s head and upper torso. Her hair was parted in the middle, and she wore a bead necklace and wide-sleeved tunic with engraved decorations on the shoulders. Ruth saw she was holding something in her left hand, perhaps a scroll which she was gesturing towards with two pointed fingers. She was tinged with green and bore traces of dark soil in her folds and crevices, but despite this, the engraving was so intricate that Ruth thought the object looked recently made, rather than from centuries ago.*

*Ruth glanced at Joe and saw his cheeks were quite pale as he stared at the statue. Was he worrying that her mum was going to swipe it from the table and run off with it? She frowned.*

*Audrey stood watching quietly, her back to the range. She sipped her tea, her eyes fixed on Ruth’s mum. “You think this is important...that it could be worth something?” asked Mary haltingly, smothering a cough.*

*“This is a silver piperatorium, a roman pepper pot,” said Ruth’s mum, high spots of colour flaming her cheeks. “Roman tableware is very rare, not often found in this country, or anywhere for that matter.”*

*“A pepper pot. But I can’t see any holes for the pepper to come out?” said Ruth.*

*Joe nibbled on a thumbnail and leaned over to look too.*

*Ruth watched as her mum carefully turned the statue upside down. “You see this circular disc on the base? This would turn to allow the pepper to be shaken out, or for the pot to be refilled. This object is made of silver because it holds something rather valuable – the Romans considered pepper an exotic spice. It really is quite astonishing and of great historical value.”*

*“But is the pot valuable?” asked Mary insistently, placing her hands flat on the table.*

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What size is the object?
- What does the word ‘engraved’ mean?
- Why does Ruth think the object looks recently made?
- How do you think it would feel to hold a real Roman object in your hands?
- What impression do you get of Joe at this point in the story?
- Why do you think Mary is so keen to know how much the pot is worth?

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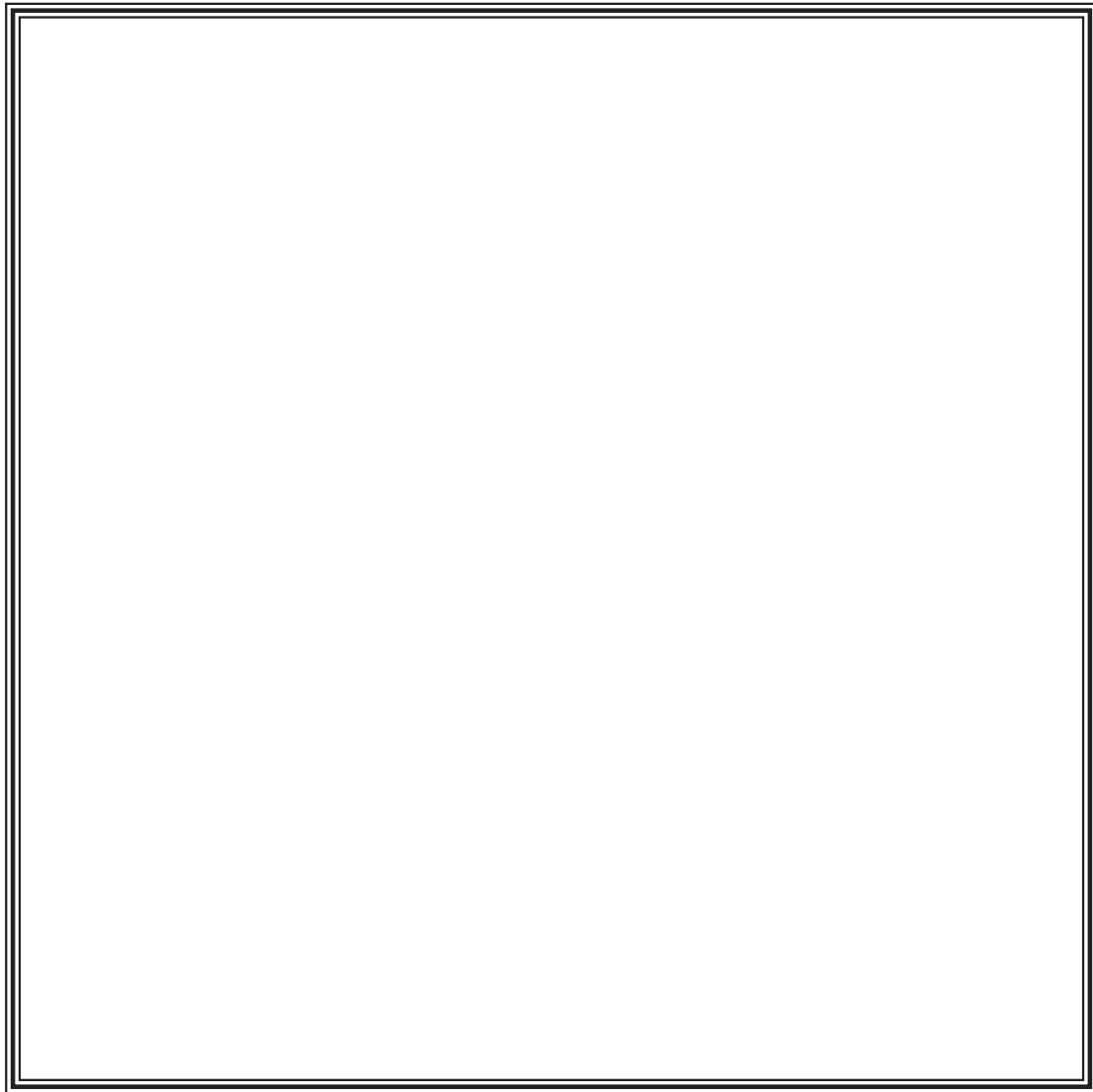


## Activity 1: The Roman pepper pot



Re-read the description of the pepper pot in extract 1 carefully. Can you imagine what it looks like?

Draw a picture of the pepper pot in the frame below:



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The author, A.M. Howell, got the idea for the pepper pot in the book from a real Roman pepper pot which is on display in the British Museum. You can find out more about the real pepper pot here: [http://www.teachinghistory100.org/objects/for\\_the\\_classroom/pepper\\_pot](http://www.teachinghistory100.org/objects/for_the_classroom/pepper_pot).

Does it look as you imagined it would?

What kind of Roman person do you think would have originally owned this pepper pot? Do you think they would have been rich or poor? What kind of house might they have lived in? What foods do you think might they have eaten?

Write your ideas in the space provided.





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## THEME 2: Life during the Second World War



### EXTRACT 2, Pages 94 -96

Ruth tightened her grip on her knife and fork as she spoke of her mum's work as a dispatch rider, ferrying important, and sometimes top secret, documents across London on her bicycle to help the war effort. This had become increasingly difficult during the Blitz when whole streets were devastated by fallen bombs and everyone was on high alert for air raids. Sometimes her mum had worked at night and Ruth remembered being taken by their neighbour Mrs Drake into the Underground station to shelter when the sirens blared. She recalled absorbing the thud of the bombs into her bones, as she lay on the narrow metal bunk, breathing in smells of sweat and urine, listening to a man cheerfully playing the accordion as a distraction for the hundreds of people cowering below ground while the ceiling shuddered and dust fell like rain. She would curl on her side and wonder if her mum was safe cycling the streets and if her dad was in danger on his ship. Ruth remembered one occasion when her mum had been cycling across Bloomsbury after a particularly bad bombing raid and seen that the British Museum, where she had just started work as a volunteer, was on fire. She had stood and watched helplessly as the fire wardens used golf clubs to clear the incendiary bombs falling onto the roof of the museum before they caught light and engulfed it in flames. Ruth had been eager for details but also fearful for her mum's safety and the loss of buildings and streets in the London she knew and loved. Mary listened open-mouthed as Ruth recounted these stories and Audrey sat back in her seat listening avidly.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do you think Ruth feels as she talks about her life in London during the war?
- What was Ruth's mum's job during the war? What did this job involve?
- Do you know what the London Underground is? Why did Mrs Drake take Ruth to an Underground station?
- What could Ruth see, hear, smell and touch whilst she was in the Underground station? What thoughts might have been going through her mind?
- How was London changed by the war?
- How do you think Mary feels whilst listening to Ruth talk about her experiences? Can you find evidence in the text to support your answer?

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## Activity 2: London and the Fens

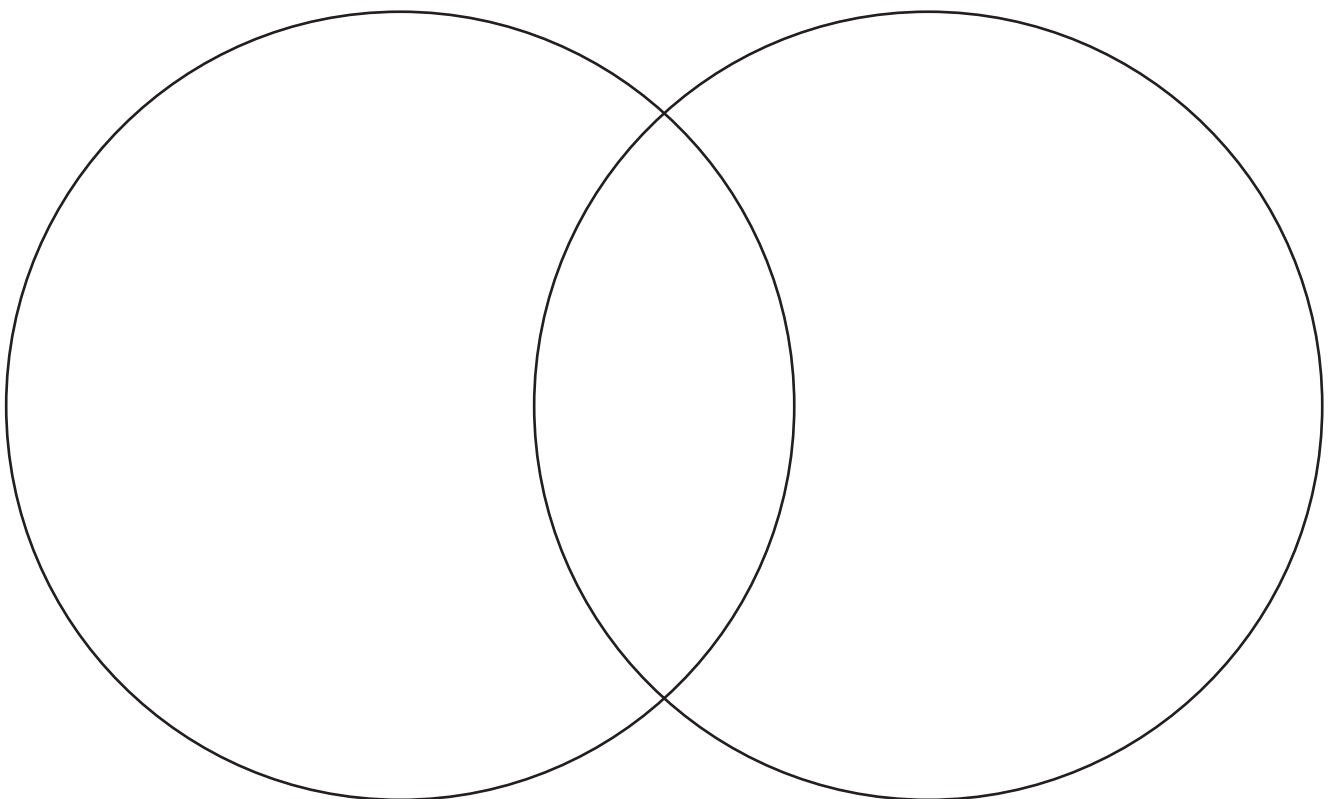


Ruth and her mum lived in the city of London during the war whereas Joe and his family lived in the countryside of the Cambridgeshire Fens.

What was war-time life like in each of these places? How was it similar and how was it different? In the Venn diagram below, write down features of life in each of these places during the Second World War. Use extract 2 plus information you have gathered from the story so far. You might like to use some of the words from the keywords grid.

London

The Fens



Continue to add to your Venn diagram as you read the book and learn more about life during the war in both places.



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## THEME 3: Healthcare and the NHS



### EXTRACT 3, Pages 126 – 127

Ruth thought of their own doctor's office in London. It was somewhere her mum liked to avoid, for a visit there could be very expensive. Last Christmas she'd had a horrid ear infection which her mum tried to cure with warm compresses soaked in a solution of mustard powder. It hadn't worked, and a week later they were at the private doctors' office paying for a consultation and prescription of penicillin. Ruth's mum hadn't said anything, but Ruth knew from her mum's drawn face that this visit would mean living on powdered eggs on toast for a few weeks. This year, though, the government were bringing in a new system of free healthcare for all. "Imagine having hospitals and doctors' surgeries that you don't need to pay to visit," her mum had said with a smile after hearing a report about the new national health service on the wireless one evening. "It will make such a difference to everyone. It doesn't matter whether you are wealthy or don't have a bean. All people will be treated equally." But the system wasn't yet in place and if Mary had to stay in hospital, it would be an extra burden Joe and his family could ill afford.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- What did Ruth's mum do when Ruth had an ear infection?  
Why did she do this?
- Why did Ruth and her mum have to live on powdered eggs on toast for a few weeks?
- Do you know what 'the wireless' was?
- What did Ruth's mum hear on the wireless?
- How does Ruth's mum feel about the idea of free healthcare for all?  
What are her reasons? Do you agree?
- The new national health service that Ruth's mum heard about on the wireless is better known today by its acronym, the NHS. What do you know about the NHS?

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## Activity 3: The history of the NHS



1. Write a script for the report you imagine Ruth's mum heard on the wireless. Include information about the new national health service that will be starting soon and the difference it will make to people's lives. You could also include interviews with different people discussing what they think about the new national health service and how it will affect them. You might choose to work on this activity in small groups and then perform your report to the class.

2. Now, research the beginning of the NHS. See if you can find answers to these questions:

When was the NHS first introduced?

Who founded the NHS?

How did the NHS change people's lives?

How many people were employed by the NHS when it first started?

How many people are employed by the NHS today?

Can you name 5 different jobs within the NHS?



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## THEME 4: A new discovery



### EXTRACT 4, Page 278

*Her trowel clinked and she paused. It didn't sound like wood this time. It sounded like metal. Had she found an axe head too? Placing her trowel to one side, she brushed away the falling snow. Feeling a wave of dizziness, she took a deep breath. Her gloves were soaking wet, the knitted wool heavy and stiff. Peeling them off, she began to feel around in the soil with her fingertips. Then she saw it. A dull, brown corkscrew of metal. With trembling hands, Ruth gently pulled the object out and wiped away the remaining mud with her glove. The dullness quickly faded, revealing something that made her breath catch in her throat. She blinked. Blinked again. The thin and rigid corkscrew of metal was shaped like a necklace with an opening at one end. And it was yellow. Gold?*



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Which of her senses does Ruth use to help her discover the hidden object?
- Can you act this scene in the role of Ruth?
- How do you think Ruth feels when she looks at the object?  
Can you underline any words or phrases that suggest how she feels?
- Can you find a rhetorical question? Can you find a short sentence?  
Why do you think the author uses these techniques? What effect do they have on the reader?
- Ruth and her mum both love archaeology. Why do you think they enjoy it?
- What skills and characteristics do you think a good archaeologist needs?



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## Activity 4: An incredible find!



Visit a museum or have a look at their online resources (the British Museum has some excellent online resources).

Choose one historical object that fascinates you. Discuss your object with a partner.

What does it look like?

What size is it?

What is it made of?

How much do you think it weighs?

Now, imagine that you were the archaeologist who discovered this item!  
Write a description of the moment you found it.

What tools did you use?

What actions?

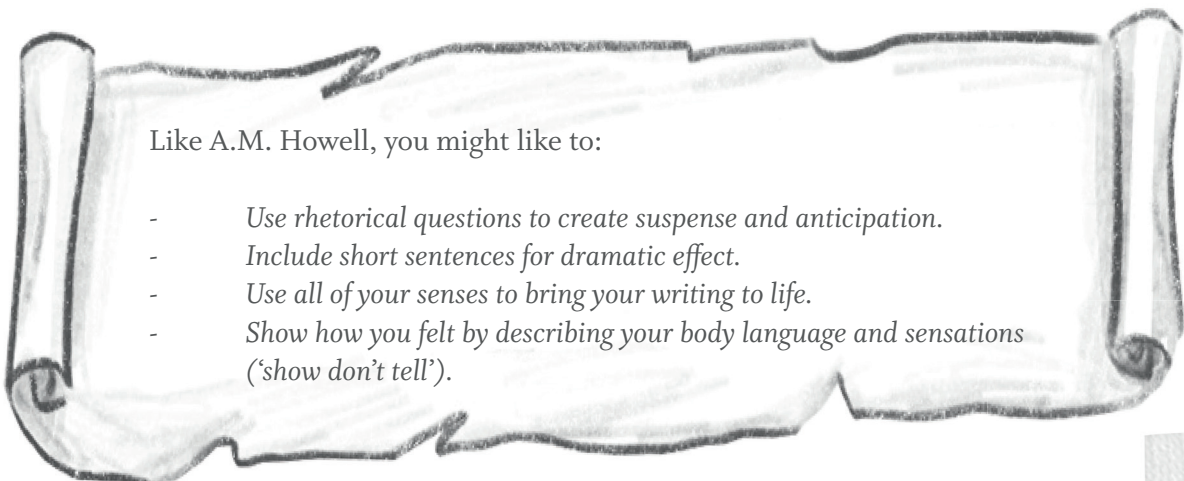
What could you see, hear and touch?

How did you feel when you first saw it?

How did it feel to hold it in your hands?



Write your description in the notebook on the following page.



Like A.M. Howell, you might like to:

- Use rhetorical questions to create suspense and anticipation.
- Include short sentences for dramatic effect.
- Use all of your senses to bring your writing to life.
- Show how you felt by describing your body language and sensations ('show don't tell').



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A large rectangular area containing 25 horizontal lines for writing, suitable for a story or journal entry.



# THRILLING HISTORICAL ADVENTURES AWAIT WITH A.M. HOWELL



“Fans of Emma Carroll will adore this historical tale of derring-do and righted wrongs.”

THE TIMES

“Atmospheric, full of period detail and, most importantly, thrilling.”

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