**READING EEAOC**

**1 Read the article. For questions 1-5, choose the correct answer (A, B, C, or D).**

# Mudlarking in London

Few hobbies combine collecting Roman artefacts, medieval coins, and discovering bodies. But the very British hobby of mudlarking is making a comeback.

Mudlarking is a pastime that has become more popular in the last few years in London. It involves going to the River Thames at low tide and digging in the mud for valuable objects. A person who goes mudlarking is called a mudlark.

Mudlarking has its origins in 18th-century London. But in those days, it wasn't a hobby at all. It was actually a way for many children – and those too old to be employed – to survive. This was at a time when there were hardly any bridges crossing the river, so most people caught boats across. Getting on and off the boats, people dropped things. These were then found by mudlarks, the poorest level of society, who sold them to earn money, which would hopefully be just enough for a meal.

Steve Brooker is a modern-day mudlark and he's had this unusual hobby for 30 years. He's found everything from glass bottles and clay pots, to coins dating from Roman times right up to the present day. He says he has found many extraordinary things, but finding a human skeleton was particularly terrifying. He later found out the bones were 300 years old, but even so, it's an experience he is happy he hasn't repeated.

Steve often goes to the river near where he lives, but on the day I met him, he accompanied me in my boat to the east of the city. Steve was excited because he hadn't had a boat for a few years, and this meant he could reach an area where he hadn't been for some time. 'Getting caught out by the tide is a real danger,' Steve explains. He advises us, as he does with anyone he has guided on the river, to watch for the water level and always have an escape route. We appear to be ok and our boat is our way on and off the Blackwall foreshore.

Apart from a permit, the only tools required for mudlarking are a bucket and something to dig with. At 25°C, we are lucky with the weather, but even on rainy days, keen mudlarks can be found by the water's edge. 'Every day, as the water level rises and falls it moves objects in the mud,' explains Steve. 'So it's possible to find really good things any time of the year.' Steve quickly fills his bucket with coins, Victorian pipes, old keys, and even a jar that he says came from an old food factory that used to be nearby. He knows exactly where to look and hardly digs down at all. After an hour, his top object is a metal toy from the 1800s. Much of what he finds goes to local museums. 'That's what anyone who goes mudlarking usually does,' says Steve.

Steve explains why the river mud holds such treasure. 'It is anaerobic, which means it doesn't hold air. Therefore, anything in it stays in great condition,' he says. 'Once they are opened up to the air, however, their condition starts to break down, so mudlarking is all about keeping things that would otherwise fall to pieces'.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

**1 In 18th-century London, mudlarking...**

A was mainly done by the elderly.
B was a popular hobby for boat owners.
C was often practised by restaurant staff.
D was a way for some young people to stay alive.

**2 What does the author say about Steve Brooker?**

A He has uncovered coins used in different periods of history.
B He has discovered an animal's bones while mudlarking.
C He hopes to continue this hobby for many more years.
D He hopes he will find more bones soon.

**3 What advice does Steve offer other mudlarks?**

A They should buy a boat.
B They should have a plan in case of an emergency.
C They should travel up the river whenever they want to.
D They should practise their hobby on all parts of the river.

**4 Steve says that for mudlarks, finding the best objects depends on ...**

A the tools.
B the location.
C the river.
D the time of day.

**5 Most modern mudlarks ...**

A hold on to what they find.
B clean what they find and then sell it.
C hand over what they find to someone else.
D keep what they find for ages and sell it at a later stage.

**2 Match five of the highlighted words / phrases to the definitions. Drag and drop the corresponding word in each definition.**

Example: the structure of bones in a person *skeleton*

Artefacts valuables caught out escape route fall to pieces

1 to be surprised by something
2 break easily
3 very useful or important
4 a way out in case of emergency
5 an object of historical interest

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