



STORIES FROM THE SEA

PIRATE OBJECTS



SCRIMSHAW

Date made

19th century

Object ref.

NWHCM : 1945.57.6

Credit

Great Yarmouth Museums

Description

This whale's tooth has a picture carved into it. This carved picture is called scrimshaw. To make this, a sailor would have to very carefully cut into the tooth with a small knife. Lots of pirates and sailors made scrimshaw to stop themselves getting bored. There was no TV or computers and not very many books, so sailors were always thinking of ways to keep themselves entertained.

Questions

1. The picture on this scrimshaw is a ship. Probably not a pirate ship though! Why not design your own scrimshaw?
2. What other things could pirates do to entertain themselves?
3. How do you think a sailor ended up with a whale's tooth?