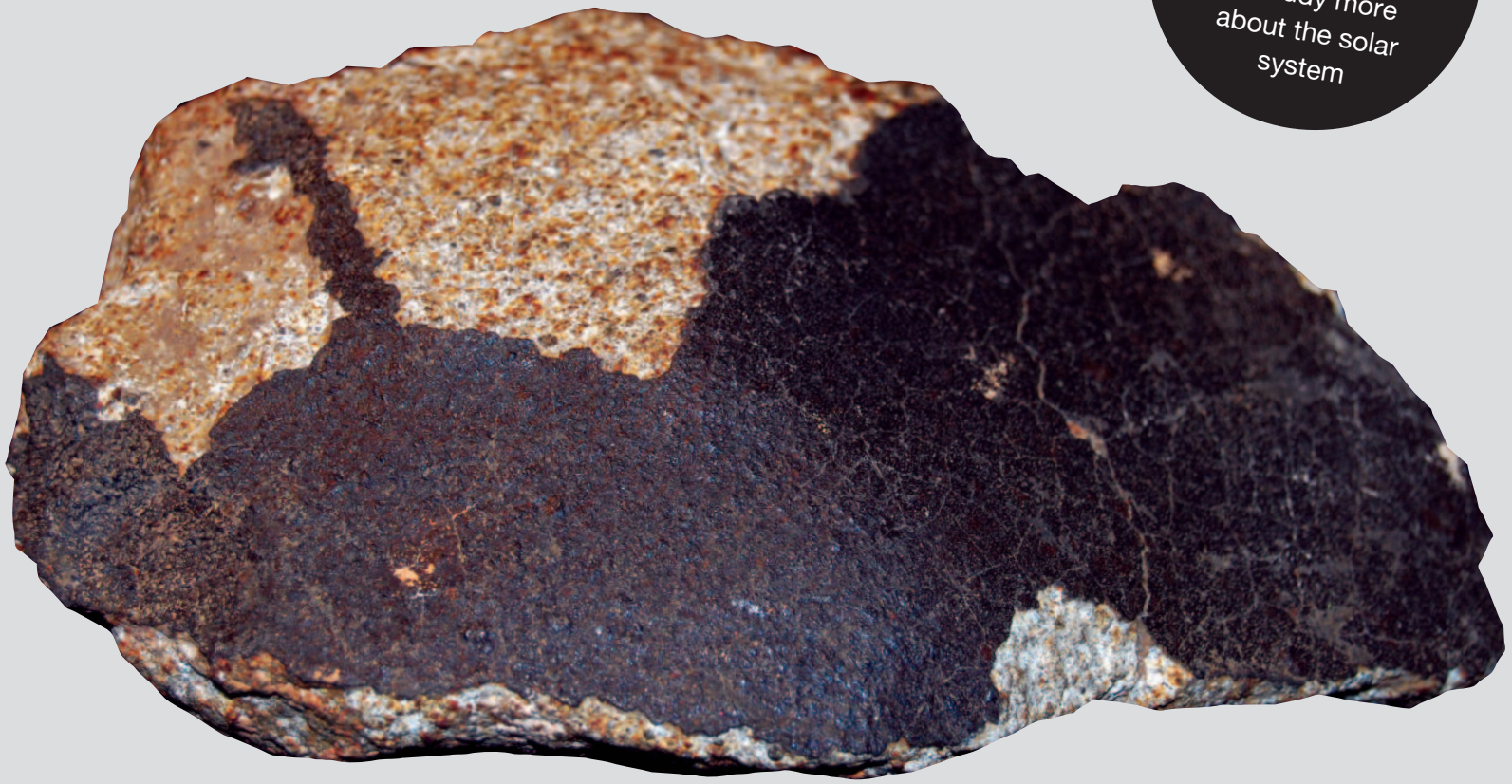
THE BARWELL METEORITE

SANDFORD CASCADE PROJECT

HERITAGE FUND

FACT
Scientists use meteorites and rocks collected from space to study more about the solar system



Background Information

The Barwell Meteorite is the oldest object in the museum! It is 4.5 billion years old.

To try and put that into context the dinosaurs died out about 65 million years ago. A long, long time ago, but just a fraction of time in comparison to how old the meteorite is.

A meteorite is a piece of rock which has fallen to earth from outer space. This piece of rock burnt through the atmosphere and landed in the Leicestershire village of Barwell on Christmas Eve, 1965. A fireball of burning rock was spotted in the sky which exploded into thousands of pieces, showering the village.

Do you know... To this day, this meteorite is the largest recorded in British history and this piece is the largest of the meteorite fragments in the museum collection

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

How old are your parents? 30-40?

How old are your grandparents? 50-60?

How about this then, how long ago did the Victorians live?
Over 100 years ago.

When did the Romans first occupy Britain?
Nearly 2000 years ago.

When did our earliest ancestors appear in the world?
Almost 200,000 years ago.

Wow! That's a very long time ago.
What about the dinosaurs?
Were they alive then?

It is thought that the dinosaurs appeared about 250 ***million*** years ago… if you think about it that is about 1250 times the number of years that humans have been around so an awfully long time ago.

A million is a thousand thousands.

A billion is one thousand million.

The meteorite is four and a half thousand million years old! (4500 million years old).

OBSERVATION ACTIVITY

Look closely at the rock.

At a first glance would you think it was special?
Knowing what you know about it now, does that make you look at it differently? Discuss in groups.

DRAWING ACTIVITY

The dark surface of the rock formed as the meteorite started to break up in the earth's atmosphere.

Look at the other rocks on display. Look at their surfaces.
Some are brightly coloured and shiny.
Some have patterned surfaces.

Find the Pryrite, sulphur and opal. Each are unique.
Draw the patterns and shapes you see on the surfaces.

LITERACY ACTIVITY

Choose a rock or mineral which you like.
Create a word bank to describe it.