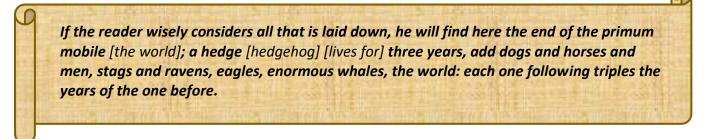### X is for X marks the spot
Solving secret messages

This challenge, should you choose to accept it, is all about the past, the present and the future. We can't tell you much more until you accept the mission. Do you think you can crack the mysterious Cosmati code and then send your own time-travelling message?

Solve the mystery of the Cosmati year

Written around the Cosmati design was a prediction of the end of time. We can't see it anymore but it was a riddle based on the mythical lifespans of animals. Can you solve the riddle?

> *If the reader wisely considers all that is laid down, he will find here the end of the primum mobile* [the world]*; a hedge* [hedgehog] [lives for] *three years, add dogs and horses and men, stags and ravens, eagles, enormous whales, the world: each one following triples the years of the one before.*

Hint: Remember your 3 times tables, and when the numbers get big, fetch a calculator!

Hedgehogs live for **3** years (times this by 3 to get your next answer)

Dogs live for ___ years (keep multiplying by 3)

Horses live for __ __ years

Man lives for __ __ years

Stags live for __ __ __ years
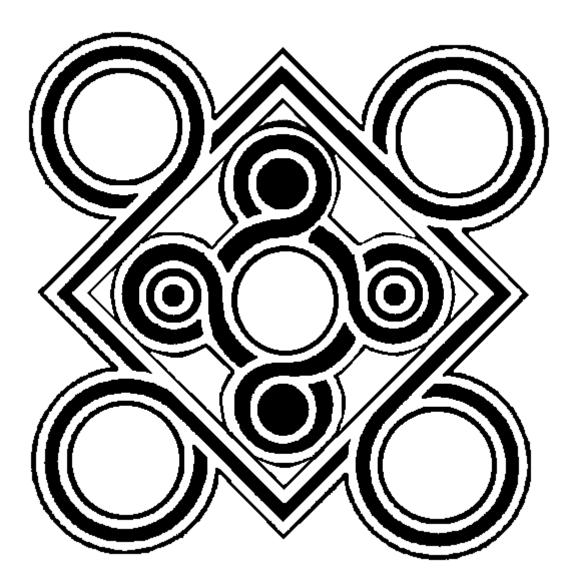
Ravens live for __ __ __ years

Eagles live for __ __ __ __ years

Whales live for __ __ __ __ years

The World will end in the year __ __ __ __ __!

Hide your own secret message

Come up with a secret message or the answer to a question that you could write in the design below. Print or copy the design below onto a piece of paper. Once you've got your message and your design, use lemon juice and a paintbrush to add your hidden message to the page. It will be almost invisible!

Ask a grown up to guess your hidden message. They can see if they got it right as you reveal the answer together by holding the paper (safely) over a flame.

Make your own time capsule

The Cosmati Pavement shows where space and time meet. Capture your own experience of where space and time meet by creating a time capsule! This is where you take a small box or a plastic bottle and fill it with items that reflect this moment in time and space. You could include drawings, photographs, stories, small coins or interesting items from your house. You could also write a prediction for the future.

Once you've created your time capsule, ask an adult if you can bury it in the garden or hide it in your home. You could leave it for someone else to discover or look at it again in a few years' time. Do you think those items will still be interesting to you? Do you think your prediction will be correct?

Answers:

<u>Mystery of the Cosmati year</u>

Hedgehogs live for **3** years (times this by 3 to get your next answer)

Dogs live for **9** years (keep multiplying by 3)

Horses live for **27** years

Man lives for **81** years

Stags live for **243** years

Ravens live for **729** years

Eagles live for **2,187** years

Whales live for **6,561** years

The World will end in the year **19,683**!

"Great work" said Livingstone the lion, "you definitely did the lion's share of solving and making these riddles."

Share your creations on Facebook or Twitter using #WAbbeyFun