

PRIMARY

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# HISTORY

The primary education journal of The Historical Association



***History,  
Drama and  
the Classroom***

# The Historical Association Primary Teachers Conference

Saturday 17 May 2008

Leeds Trinity and All Saints

Starting at 10.00am and finishing by 3.30pm



Tickets: £65 Members /  
£80 Non Members and can be  
purchased via our online shop.

Closing date for bookings  
18 April 2008.

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**Early Bird  
discount!!!!**

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to receive this discount.

Chair of Primary Committee Rick Weights will open the day, and HA Vice-President Tim Lomas will deliver the keynote talk highlighting all that is good in current primary practice and how the HA has been contributing to that over recent years. There will also be a special induction for Initial Teacher Trainers.

There will again be a major publishers' exhibition, with time to explore what is new in the world of history.

In the past year the HA has been running projects on:

- Teaching Controversial Issues, where new support materials for all Key Stages should be available on line in the Spring.
- Primary Initial Teacher Training, where units on storytelling and progression are complete, and units on citizenship, leading and managing history, and inclusion are being developed.
- a Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 Project Box, in co-operation with other subject associations, to provide quality cross-curricular learning experiences in all subjects.
- online CPD materials to be freely available on the HA website.

Many of these projects will provide the subject matter for workshops on the day. Last year's Conference was the best yet – this year will be even better! Come and be part of the Primary History Event of the Year!

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Letters, articles and other contributions to the magazine are welcome. They should be typed, double spaced, on one side of the paper. Please keep references to a minimum. A direct style free from jargon is preferred. Photographs and children's work are welcome. The maximum article length is 1,500 words. Send to The Editor, *Primary History* c/o The Historical Association (address left).

Publication of a contribution in *Primary History* does not necessarily imply the Historical Association's approval of the opinions expressed in it. The Primary Committee of the Association has particular responsibility for matters of interest to primary teachers and schools. Suggestions and comments are very welcome and should be sent to: the Chairholder, Rick Weights, c/o The Historical Association.

*Primary History* is published three times a year and is available at substantial discounts to members of the Historical Association. Membership including *Primary History* is £29.00 for individuals, £45.00 for schools and other corporate bodies and £24.00 for students and NQTs.

*'The human memory is not an orderly place with slots or shelves for each item to remain inertly until called for. It is more like a shifting turmoil stirred by those emotions and intentions that are part of us. Virtually nothing emerges from the human memory in the same form it was initially learned. All kinds of associations curl around each new fact, there is endless blending and coalescing, and connections are made, broken and remade. And no small part of this activity involves the imagination. The more energetic and lively the imagination, the more are facts constantly finding themselves in new combinations and taking on new emotional colouring as we use them to think of possibilities, of possible world... The classroom, to confirm with the requirements of imaginative learning, has to be more hospitable to students' emotions. Genuine education inescapably involves emotional engagement.'*

(Egan, pp.50-52)

Drama supremely involves the pupils' imaginations: it forces them to think actively, logically and emotionally about the human situations, problems and challenges that they encounter in unfolding scenarios. History provides the substantive, factual framework of information that the pupils use in bringing the past to life through drama and role play. As such, Drama develops possibilistic open-ended and creative thinking which makes links and connections and enables children to deepen their understanding of historical events and the individuals who people the historical stage. It is this depth and variety that produces high level pupil thinking and language skills.

The Drama edition opens with two *In My View* contributions from eminent figures in their field. Their brief was simple: to put forward their personal views, no matter how controversial they may be so as to set a challenging agenda for the edition. For *In My View* we are delighted to include an interview with Tony Robinson and an article from the founding figure of **Drama in Education**: Dorothy Heathcote.

*Think Bubble* is a continuing feature of PH – here Peter Vass raises the issue of how Drama can light up the learner and give them a powerful way of engaging with the past. Four articles follow which build upon the first three pieces. The greatest figure in Drama education in History was the late John Fines. His paper 'Working through

Drama' sketches what is involved in adding Drama to a teaching repertoire. Ray Verrier, John's close colleague, expands upon John's contribution: fittingly as he was the co-author with John of *Drama in History* (Fines and Verrier, 1974) that introduced Drama as a carefully worked out teaching approach to History teachers. Peter Vass sketches the theoretical underpinnings of Drama – without a theoretical foundation teaching is rudderless with little or no sense of direction. Viv Wilson and Jayne Woodhouse bring up to date their pioneering work of 15 years ago.

On pages 18-33 are six varied Case Studies: it is up to the reader to reflect upon and take from them what inspiration they may provide, perhaps relating these to Kieran Egan's battle cry above; to promote the kind of imaginative thinking that Drama involves as **being essential for the high level thinking that is needed to survive and flourish in the modern world.** Drama also has a second, priceless part to play in improving learning: it is **highly enjoyable, stimulating and motivating: it is affective.** As such it helps provide a solution to the problem of getting pupil horses to drink at the educational trough.

### Primary History: Themed Editions

This Drama edition of *Primary History* reflects the 2007 decision of the editorial board of *Primary History* to focus upon key themes, topics and areas of interests that would enable History to enrich the primary curriculum.

The concept of themed editions has now become established: themes fall into two main categories: specific curricular issues and concerns and aspects of the history teacher's craft: pedagogy. In Spring and Summer 2007 we addressed curricular issues: *History in the Foundation and Early Years*, and, in the summer, *Citizenship* with an emphasis on **Controversial Issues** and **Identity**. Our emphasis switched in the Autumn to pedagogy: *Thinking through History – Opportunity for Equality* raised what expert teaching involves. We examined in detail provision for pupils with outstanding ability: the gifted and talented. This edition puts another aspect of teaching, Drama, under the microscope.

The new look *Primary History* builds upon the considerable success and strengths of its previous decade: the editorial board has continued unchanged as an harmonious, creative blend of classroom practitioners, providers of professional development and researchers – often all three. As such, *Primary History* sits at the leading edge of theory, research and practice with a

clear focus upon applied knowledge, i.e. what helps pupils learn effectively and in an exciting, stimulating, rewarding and empowering way. The Drama edition turns to the area of pedagogy: the history teacher' craft. While it is an ASBO [A Statement of the Blatantly Obvious] that how pupils are taught and learn is crucial, relatively little interest is shown in, and support given, to developing high quality teaching that challenges, stimulates, enriches, rewards and enables the progressive development of children's thinking and their production of high quality work in a range of appropriate genres.

The evolved *Primary History* format has four main elements:

- ▶ **Position pieces** like *In My View* and *Think Bubble* that can be controversial and which aim to stimulate,
- ▶ **Articles** that present the latest findings in the field and provide detailed support and guidance and
- ▶ **Case Studies** that illuminate and hopefully inspire and enrich through providing exemplars of first class teaching and learning.
- ▶ **Guides and information pieces** History Coordinators' dilemmas provides advice on the leadership role for History and Noticeboard is an invaluable guide to news and events.

Combined, these aim to promote the highest possible quality teaching and learning via the medium of History. This is how we aim resoundingly to answer the threat to History as an element in the primary curriculum from the iron regimen of the **SATocracy**. In order to survive and even flourish History needs to be seen as playing a central, invaluable part in children's education while helping to meet the targets that the assessment driven culture of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has produced. The whole thrust of government policy through the *Every Child Matters*, *Personalised Learning*, *Assessment for Learning* and *The Children's Plan* can put History centre stage to enrich the primary curriculum both substantively through the knowledge and understanding that informs Identify and syntactically through the high level thinkings skills, conceptual understanding and protocols that 'Doing History' promotes in children.

### Reference

Egan, K. (1992) *Imagination in Teaching and Learning ages 8-15*, Routledge  
Fines, J. and Verrier, R. (1974) *The Drama of History*. London: New University Education

# in my view

## THE SERIOUS BUSINESS OF COMEDY: IN CONVERSATION WITH TONY ROBINSON

— Tony Robinson interviewed by Peter Vass

Tony Robinson is a man who takes his comedy seriously. He has worked extensively with Comic Relief and Oxfam and this has taken him to Africa, Brazil and The Philippines where he has witnessed poverty and suffering on a monumental scale. Yet, despite the problems many of these people experience in their day to day to living, they are still able to smile and laugh...testimony to the transmogrifying power of comedy!

Recreations of the past appear in a multitude of forms on television but few have the appeal of those that take a comic form. In this context the creation of the down-trodden, 'put upon' scapegoat for almost everything, Baldrick, in BBC TV's *Blackadder* series was an act of comic genius for all those concerned but, most particularly, for Tony whose job it was to make flesh of Elton and Curtis's original character.

I met Tony Robinson when he received his honorary doctorate at Oxford Brookes University back in September 2006, one of five he has received for his contributions to both drama and history. He struck me immediately as a man interested in the process of making history as testified by his many screen portrayals and his presenting of *Time Team*, now in its 11<sup>th</sup> year. I was delighted, therefore, when he agreed to be interviewed for our History and Drama edition.

Tony's first imaginings of history came out of stories his father told him about being with the RAF on the North-East coast of Scotland during World War Two. Like many boys (myself included) of that generation it was the action and excitement that had the big appeal. His early 'playing out' of history was limited by the fact he was an only child but he does remember 'throwing myself around the front room being skewered by Norman knights'.....early preparation for Maid Marian perhaps?

There is often an uneasy relationship between comedy and history particularly where educators are concerned. Terry Deary's *Orrible 'Istories*, for example, have had their critics springing largely from the feeling that these books trivialise the past. Tony was clear about these positions, "the opposite of trivial is serious," he explained "not comic". Comedy at its best has much to say about the human condition and often says it darkly and ironically; *Blackadder* had both these qualities in plenty. But could we learn history from it? The producers worked very hard to re-create that proper 'look of the past' throughout all the series. Tony cited the contributions of the advisory team who had degrees in costume, architecture and a multitude of other related fields who made the historical setting as accurate as they could. "The only piece of genuine fiction was the

dialogue", he told me which, of course, ranged through the anachronistic into the surreal at times. However, it was here that the history and the comedy and the irony often worked remarkably well in concert. Anyone who saw the final frame of *Blackadder Goes Forth* wouldn't doubt that.

Tony recognises the considerable power that lies within his chosen profession and that acting is also a medium through which children can learn. By building role play and drama into their sessions teachers can give children real insights into history, geography and, more recently, citizenship issues. "Role play can help children empathise and sympathise with people and their problems...not only people from history but people who are living today," he told me. "They need to do this to help them understand the world better."

Tony Robinson cares deeply about the state of the underprivileged and disadvantaged. He is very conscious of the enormous inequalities that exist in many parts of the world and has spent a considerable amount of his time trying to do something about them. Is there a little bit of Baldrick in Tony? More than just a little he might admit! And will the Baldricks of this world get a chance to have their say? Well, you never know.....perhaps that's what *The Cunning Plan* was about all along.

**My thanks to Tony Robinson  
for giving his time for  
this interview.**

# in my view

## Means and Ends: History, Drama and Education for Life

— Dorothy Heathcote

*"We deliberate not about ends but about means. For a doctor does not deliberate about whether he shall heal, nor an orator whether he shall persuade, nor a statesman whether he shall produce law and order, nor does anyone deliberate about his end. They assume the end and consider how and by what means it is to be attained."*

Aristotle

### Introduction

I begin this piece wishing I could lay my hands on my copy of John Fines' 'The Drama of History' but it is too late now so I shall just have to manage. John, Raymond Verrier and I frequently taught as a team trying to discover where drama work and history meet. We were interested in helping children get a grasp of past events which have influenced their own times; clothing, shelters, laws, habits, rituals, tools, beliefs, to name a few, bare witness to past events. History and drama beam a light on what it means to be human. Dramatic work involves people in the present exploring social events of whatever kind, by actively demonstrating they are thinking and behaving from within created circumstances.

They must recognise that it is sustained by their will, and not become confused by indulgent pretence. Because they create the actions and consider the motives which lie behind and drive behaviour, they can also monitor the appropriateness of their decisions. This begins the process of self-spectatorship which is at the centre of all artistic work. The judgement arises from within the participants not through an outside examiner. I have never supported the notion that dressing up and moving through story lines will give children any useful notion of the past, anymore than reading a Shakespeare play text around the class would help them realise how the form of the Globe Theatre, and the need to earn a living inside it, would illuminate his plays.

I am still teaching and devising ways of helping my students learn by what we do together, so I am constantly monitoring the means I am using to achieve some sort of understanding. The curriculum demands that students can temporarily subdue their own immediate interests in order to engage with the content and direction imposed by the system they encounter. The demands I place upon myself involve relating with Aristotle's means: to first attract, then beguile into co-operation, gain some interest and attention, leading to productive obsession by which time I hope they will drive themselves to become involved. My expertise lies in using a sense of the dramatic, the dramatic imagination

which ranges far wider than merely enacting scenes. This drama involves using a whole range of signs to help students construct significance and meaning.

### Some thoughts on Learning Styles

Where shall I find the sources of information which become the curriculum? Like many teachers I have no formal study of history to fall back on. As I see it, there are three distinct styles of learning each making different demands upon teacher and students.

#### Style 1 was devised originally to provide a literate work force essential to collective manufacturing.

I shall call this 'production line' learning and in doing this I intend no denigration of the system. This style demands assessing aptitudes and judging the individual abilities and talents of each student, so as to get them all through the process as well as they can. The curriculum provided in this circumstance is the text book, devised to give useful factual information as a basis for grasping the element of the subject. Text books now are augmented by technology.

#### Style 2 is the education to become professional.

This is competitive process and every aspect of being professional is taught, as far as possible, in sequence. There are other professions than law and medicine and the church! All garage maintenance persons must be highly skilled and do regular study to keep up with technology and emergent hazards, including laws. The curriculum for the professions is the case study, whether in the form of manuals, surgical operations or famous trials at law. These are more than factual text books. Moreover case studies and the professions must involve ethics and conscience.

#### Style 3 comes into action when people determine their personal interests and exercise these over periods of time.

When this becomes the centre of their lives they return over and over again to their sources and resources. These are creative people who never retire. They continue their interests until they lose their capacities to continue to the standard they impose upon themselves. Such a system of learning and teaching requires mentors, who will challenge, seek out appropriate resources and demand high standards in collaboration with their mentees.

This is the scholar stage and is akin to the master – apprentice – guild relationship. As a teacher I am drawn to the last two styles than the first. Using drama methods does not fit comfortably with the text book curriculum and neither, I suspect, does grappling with history so I am, by

inclination, seeking out case studies of humans in social events and trying to mentor individuals in developing a greater personal knowledge of events.

### The Mantle of the Expert

This brings me to a style of teaching I learned when escorting three recalcitrant boys at the top end of a North East Primary School to Bethlehem! The whole school was involved. I selected the naughty boys who would bring the magi gifts. During that week they made their wills in case they did not return to their kingdoms, and gradually progressed from wayward lads to being responsible and thoughtful travellers. I became their 'gofer' with no rank, but plenty of opportunity for placing troubles in their way which gradually developed their own understanding of authority, dangers, co-operation, hardship, determination, orientation, stars and maps of the Heavens.

When we finally reached Bethlehem around 2 o'clock on Friday afternoon they 'dropped off' their gifts and demanded back their long and frivolous wills which they destroyed and rewrote. Like Eliot's magi they had had a change of mind about what it meant to be a king, drawing on North East family values and aspirations. Historians may find little to rejoice about regarding the magi as truth or myth or dates.

The gift given to me was 'the Mantle of the Expert' style of teaching. I realised that John Fines and I had occasionally ventured into this system when we created historical dilemmas requiring children to enter the work from a point of view and an urgent requirement to help someone else understand it. The title is strange and often misunderstood. 'Mantle' to me is the striving for responsibility, rigour and realisation. With these I can be recognised as having ethics and conscience while carrying out the work the history/drama processes engage me in. 'Expert' means I will study the skills and information I need in order to be recognised to be fit to wear the mantle.

Every establishment has its history and like all dramas must begin in the middle. No drama activity involving people 'doing' and 'behaving' has a beginning point in people's lives, they are always in a focussed circumstance. Hamlet's father is already dead and his mother remarried so when students enter an enterprise to serve a client they will be in a position to create their past or have it laid upon them depending upon how the enterprise draws upon its past.

Recently I heard of a class who were museum designers recreating the past by making a Euclid Museum in Alexandria. This involved creating the layout for the harbour and considering the workers who would labour there – their clothes, tools and means of measuring. From within this context the Euclid Museum was created. They made still images of his mathematical constructs and prepared statements of his system of teaching drawing upon primary sources not text book distillations. This way of working permits all three systems learning styles to be used but case studies and mentoring are the negotiations most open to the teacher.

I teach all ages of students in formal education settings and in my amateurish way I use a sense of history throughout. Small children can, through stories, get a grasp of concepts which are embedded in the narratives; well meaning and evil people, the responsible and the foolish, rich and poor folks, events with tension and all explorations about bonding – kin, neighbours, friends and enemies, society and power takers and givers. With older children more questions than answers are generated and implications considered as facts are processed into meaning. One event can be seen to relate to wider fields of social issues and governance. With young adults the skills of penetrating events are introduced through points of view and client-related debate.

What I would dearly love would be some guidance from historians interested in teaching basic concepts so people like myself could work with children in some sort of sequential order. Is this possible? Perhaps I am just dim.....?

[Editorial comment. The issue of the conceptual framework for History is addressed in several places in this edition. The fullest and clearest statement is in Tim Lomas's *History Coordinators' Dilemmas* on page 8, overleaf. The question of History's curricular role will be addressed in a forthcoming themed edition of *Primary History*, possibly in either the autumn or winter edition.]

**Professor Dorothy Heathcote** is one of the most foremost educational innovators of the past and present centuries. As a teacher, thinker and writer on drama she has transformed pedagogical practice through her unique methodology. Her 30 years as lecturer in drama at the University of Newcastle inspired a whole generation of teachers. Her recent collaboration with Gavin Bolton over *Mantle of the Expert* has synthesised many of her practices. She still teaches.

# history coordinators' dilemmas

## Drama, creativity, literacy and the curriculum

### dilemma

I'm a newly-appointed subject leader for history. Before that I was the co-ordinator for the creative arts and I thought I had some excellent ideas on how history teaching could be much more creative. The headteacher though is not so sure and has knocked my confidence a bit. She has said that I should keep history simple following the basics of the programme of study. Because she does not see history as any kind of priority when our literacy results are as mediocre as they are, the best solution she has is to keep on what we are doing at the moment. Staff are already exhausted with the focus on the core subjects.

#### Introduction

The only thing I can really sympathise here is with the current demands placed on staff. All the evidence suggests that many teachers and support staff are working long hours and there are many stresses. Obviously any good subject leader needs to be aware of that and there can be a tendency amongst some newly-appointed ones to expect major exciting new changes without considering the impact on the most important resource of all – the teachers.

That said, the rest seems to make little sense. Perhaps the case was not well-communicated to the headteacher and all she could see was more exhausted and demoralised staff. Your task could be more fundamental than merely suggesting a bit more creativity. In so many schools, the problem is that so many colleagues and senior leaders do not understand the essence of history.

It would be interesting to see what your headteacher regards as the basics of history. Most monitoring does suggest that it is still seen largely in content terms by many. Others still feel that the comfort blanket of the QCA schemes of work is the way to stay focused.

#### Creativity, History and Drama

There is a strong argument that suggests that history should be one of the most creative areas of the curriculum. A structured imagination might be regarded as one of the strongest indicators of progression. If history is taught well, pupils need to imagine historical scenes and situations, they have to imagine how events seemed to those involved and the range of choices people had in making decisions. They have the really challenging task of trying to forget hindsight and seeing historical situations – not as neat and inevitable – but as confused, mysterious, inconsistent and with the participants having mixed emotions and feelings.

If history is not about people in their various guises, it is not complete. It is about people responding to a range of circumstances spread over time, theme and location. This simple message that justifies the place of history in the curriculum as one helping develop pupils' understanding of their fellow human beings and their behaviours is often the one that has the most impact with curriculum planners. In this sense, the creative arts become not just a desirable companion for history but something much more essential.

#### Imagination, Drama and History

Good history should give pupils the opportunity to use their structured imagination to imagine themselves in historical scenes – for example, imagining what their grandparents felt about going to school or at the Greek Olympics or at a Tudor masque or as a child labourer in the Industrial Revolution. Role play and hot seating are seen as key parts of the repertoire in many classrooms. Giving pupils the opportunity to imagine things from different viewpoints is one of the essential components of history. Your headteacher needs to understand that using the skills and techniques of the creative arts is one of the most effective ways of developing learning regarding historical interpretations – one of the mandatory components of history.

#### History, Evidence and Literacy

Another requirement for history is that pupils use evidence. Again the ideas you intend to import from the creative arts help standards and enjoyment in history. Sources should





not be depicted as dry artefacts or written accounts for extracting information. One of the best ways to ensure both greater motivation and deeper thinking is to make the sources come alive – for pictorial evidence to be probed not just for what is observed but for what people in the scenes were hearing, smelling and thinking. Pupils can re-enact events from sources possibly reconciling differences in sources. They can imagine the life and feelings of the compilers of sources. One of the key ideas that pupils should grasp is that sources do not provide us with all the information we need, so we have to use our imagination to fill the gaps, to imagine what might be missing. *And, crucially through working intensively and with commitment on sources pupils are hitting a range of advanced literacy targets.*

### **Causation, motivation and explanation**

If that were not enough justification for the closeness of the creative arts and history, there is also the link with the important concept of causation and motivation. History is centrally concerned with explanation – not just what happened but why it happened. What better ways to ponder the reasons for human action and reaction than through the use of drama and other techniques. It helps people become three-dimensional. It allows pupils to make that all-important link between people in the past and themselves – sharing the idea of common humanity. It helps past people to come alive with their own feelings, emotions and values. Pupils can put themselves centre stage and be involved in decision-making. Comparing their decisions with those actually taken certainly moves historical thinking to a much higher level.

### **Communication of understanding [literacy]**

The “basics of history” which your headteacher is so keen to emphasise actually requires pupils to communicate their historical understanding in different ways. There is still a tendency amongst many that history must inevitably involve a great deal of writing. There is no reason why the use of drama techniques, role play, debates, re-creating events, planning speeches and the like should not be a central part of the way that history and the creative arts are connected.

### **Standards and the core curriculum**

Almost everywhere we go, schools are preoccupied with the standards in the core subjects and it would probably cut little ice to be a thorn in the flesh of your headteacher arguing that schools are required to offer a broad and balanced

curriculum, that excessive concern with testing is having a detrimental effect on pupils’ well-being and that the current agenda is more focused on the needs of the whole pupils. It may be worth arguing though that the evidence from Ofsted and others is that good history has a positive effect on literacy and other areas of the curriculum.


### **Standards, Oracy and Literacy**

If you can convince your headteacher and staff of the benefits and the fact that it need not involve much more work on their part, the opportunities are endless. Just some I have come across in recent years include the teacher taking on the role of a historical character such as Howard Carter or Florence Nightingale with children preparing questions, pupils role playing an evacuation complete with spam sandwiches and gas masks and another as part of Boudicca’s army and one where pupils are in the cellars under Parliament with Guy Fawkes. Such approaches can be adopted with even the youngest pupils through play areas dealing with houses, shops and roles in the past. Children can be involved in organising and equipping their play area.

### **Conclusion**

A final word of warning though. Just telling pupils to put together a Tudor feast or a scene involving Greek democracy will not automatically lead to good history. There can be a danger that it leads only to dressing up. The historical ideas behind it need carefully thinking out and there needs to be opportunity for the pupils to research and prepare for it, *i.e to force them to think and use a range of genres and communication modes/genres*. There needs to be an emphasis on authenticity with a strict regard for evidence. Linkages across curriculum areas can be effective but they can equally be tokenistic, lacking clear objectives and coherence. The overall aim must be to use linked dimensions because they improve understanding and link naturally together rather than as a means of saving valuable curriculum time.

**Tim Lomas** is Principal School Improvement Adviser,  
Lincolnshire School Improvement Service  
and Deputy President of the HA



# THINK BUBBLE

## LIGHTING FIRES

I have a very old photo in my 'archive' taken in the 1970s of a much-younger me dressed in, what can only be described as, a vague suggestion of 18<sup>th</sup> Century costume – thread-bare jacket, a sort of lacy cravat, corduroy trousers and white football socks pulled up to the knee. I am talking to group of children and clutching a mysterious box. I remember the moment vividly for I was employed at the time as an actor/teacher with the Devon Drama-in-Education Team – DIET (publicity material always included such witty epithets as "Is it time you went on a DIET?"). I was playing the part of a ship-wrecked sailor and the children in question were all Caribbean islanders whose job it was to help me get back to England.....with my mysterious box!

Our work at the time was part of Devon LEA's curriculum development programme on learning through drama. Our brief, as the then County Drama Advisor described it, was to 'light fires in schools'! We would return, at a later date, to see the outcome of the conflagration! Many of the programmes we devised had historical themes – we all loved the subject and found children took very readily to stories set in the past. In terms of my own professional development it was a very important time and established a *modus operandi* that I still employ.

Returning to the 'Caribbean Island' a few weeks later we were confronted with a remarkable array of follow-up work. The children had read and dramatised the story of Robinson Crusoe, there was a wall display on Alexander Selkirk (the real Crusoe), a hand-made book by a boy on 'Pirates of the Caribbean' (he'd be about the same age as Johnny Depp now – I wonder?), a huge hand-drawn map of the West Indies and so it went on. In the context of current curriculum priorities the teacher, strange to say, rather shame-facedly admitted that much of the work the children had done had taken place at home! The Drama Advisor, however, was very impressed by the fire we had lit.

## THE BIG POINT

As teachers we all know that, for better or worse, most of the things children learn take place outside of the classroom. Any work they do at home will always be most profitable when they are keen and eager to do it – drama has the facility to motivate and excite children and can be used very productively for 'out of classroom' work.

I did a project with a group of students a while back on the story of the mysterious death of Amy Robshart, the wife of Elizabeth's favourite Robert Dudley. As it is set at the beginning of her reign it offers considerable potential for the Tudors study unit. The students told the story in role to a class of Y6 children then set them up as historical characters, ranging from high born noblemen to cooks and servants, all involved, to a greater or lesser degree, in the narrative. They were then required to investigate the background of their characters so aspects of Tudor country, town and court life were researched.

All of this took place at home through websites, books, CDs and other available media. Armed with their new knowledge a coroner's court was convened in the classroom and the children, in character, gave their

evidence in order to discover the cause of Amy's death. Here the children's roles came into play as the historical characters faced the problems of the story and made decisions about the significance of their evidence. It was a sparkingly interactive session which almost spiralled out of control on some occasions....firm handling was required by the coroner...no guesses!

However, the game that was the thing! The children were intrigued by the story and having specific roles provided a focus for their researches. The role play game provided a vehicle for their characters to 'come alive' and for them to gain some understanding of the nature of the historical dilemma. Most of the historical knowledge they acquired took place outside the classroom but 'twas ever thus! It was drama that lit the fire and made the learning memorable.

**Peter Vass** is tutor in history education at the Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes University.

# WORKING THROUGH DRAMA

— John Fines

## Drama – into the unknown

Drama puts the fear of God into some teachers. Some, jolly sensible souls, just don't feel dramatic, fear wearing feathered hats and using funny voices; others know, deep in their hearts, that plays always lead to trouble, sword fights getting out of hand, etc; others wonder whether it isn't all just 'playing about', wasting time that should be spent on proper work; others still consider that the past is no place for the imagination, you can't go 'making up' history.

## Drama, depth knowledge and speculative thinking

I feel a deep sympathy for all of these points of view, yet I use drama a lot, for two very specific purposes, which I consider valid as historical thinking in themselves.

- ▶ First we need from time to time to concentrate our understanding on specific moments in the past when there is a great richness of texture to the events and a special quality of feeling that something important is happening. To understand such moments one must climb inside them, try them on, use whatever parallels and analogies one has to hand to bid for a feeling – an understanding of what was going on, a properly disciplined imaginative recreation.
- ▶ Second (but not wholly separated from the first purpose) there are some questions one has to ask about the past that require a broad band of speculation for them to work effectively. Such big questions may only be responded to by looking at a full range of possible answers, from the plain daft to the very sensible. Often enough, such speculation leads one to reconsider one's judgements about the daftness of some ideas, and it is through this route that re-evaluations, revisions enter historical thinking.

*Depth knowledge* Let me try to illustrate these two modes of enquiry and give some notion of what teaching skills one needs to carry them out. The first encompasses the teaching strategy Expressive Movement.

## Informed speculative, probabilistic thinking

To illustrate the second kind of drama let me describe a piece of work I completed recently with some eleven year olds. We had read some excerpts from a Viking poem and from the Anglo Saxon poem, the Battle of Maldon.

*The problem: War into peace* The children quickly isolated many qualities that differentiated these two peoples and explained their hostility to one another. I explained that we had a great deal of evidence from the past to illustrate their hostility to one another, but what we lacked was any real notion of how these two alien peoples came to settle down in one country and live peaceably alongside one another. This is a real historical question, I explained, I really did not know the answer but was intrigued to explore it. To do so we would need a wide range of possible explanations and

then to judge which ones struck us as being likely, a word I spent some time considering with them. Likelihood was really the historian's chief tool of judgement, but he could not exercise it without the speculation that produced the material on which to judge.

As the children considered these propositions on the nature of history I moved them into groups to prepare for me a moment we could all watch when war for some reason turned to peace. I stressed the 'some reason' part of this saying that the quality of their presentation depended on the clarity with which the audience could discern the reason for peace breaking out.

So they set to work, and produced in a very short period of time some highly presentable works: in some cases religion featured heavily, in others it was the appeal of women that called for peace; some stopped fighting because they were distracted, others out of inanity; one memorable group were brought to peace by someone neither English nor Viking, a Scot, who showed them how much they had in common.

*Thinking through drama* As the children viewed the presentations they enjoyed the fights, the jokes, the good feeling induced by all theatre, but they also thought hard about the problem, and went away from that class to find out more about the subject to help them make their choices, and to write their history of how the Danelaw came to be.

All this took some time, of course – drama is a slow, time-consuming process, and it looked often incoherent and disorderly in comparison with classes in rows of desks. Yet the quality of thought that came out of it and the richness of the historical experience (for they were, in essence, thinking like historians) was great. In terms of time taken, we should remember that central to drama is language work, and *here we are explicitly addressing the higher level demands of the Literacy Strategy*.

## Introducing drama – first steps

There are a hundred and one ways to do drama – any drama teacher will tell you that my ways are cramped and uncreative and that there are better ways to do it. The important thing is to try, at first something very simple, contained and controlled, and not to expect too much – you will be surprised and not a little delighted to find what you get. Why not talk to the specialist in English or drama in your school today about a joint enterprise?'

John Fines was president of The Historical Association, co-director of The Nuffield Primary History Project and a visiting professor at Exeter University.

# DRAMA – CHOOSING AN APPROACH

— Ray Verrier

There is a range of drama strategies that we use all the time. The important point is to select a strategy with which you feel confident. For example, the collective making of a map by the teacher and class provides a 'safe' way of edging into drama work.

- a Teacher in role.** It should be understood that this is not about the teacher turning into an actor! It simply requires the teacher to take on the point of view of someone else. The power of teacher in role lies in:
- being able to feed pupils information about the historical situation under consideration; and
  - helping the class gain confidence in taking on a role themselves.
- b Hot-seating.** Using this technique the teacher or pupils can question or interview someone who remains in character. Initially, it might be the teacher who keeps the role of an historical character such as Alfred the Great. The pupils question the teacher who responds in his or her historical role. After a while a pupil or pupils take over the hot-seat. They take on historical roles and respond to questions as characters from the past.
- c Making maps or plans.** This is a collective activity in which the class make decisions about a place or building in which the drama will take place.
- d Still image / Expressive Movement.** Using this technique groups of pupils using their own bodies attempt to crystallise a moment in time, an idea or theme. This can be a very useful device for studying a painting or portrait. Get a group of pupils to take up the position of people in the picture and then gradually bring the picture to life.
- e Active image** Pupils use their own bodies to bring to life a particular historical situation through reproducing the actions of the historical characters.
- f Forum theatre.** A situation chosen by the teacher or group is enacted by a pair of pupils or small group whilst the rest of the class observe. Both the actors and observers have the right to stop the action and to give directions or advice. Observers may step in and take over roles or add to them. This is a useful method for helping pupils explore an historical situation based on documents or story as the observers use the evidence to check the actors' actions.
- g Overheard conversations.** Conversations that add tension or information to a situation, but which should not have been heard.

- h Meetings.** The class gather together within a piece of drama to hear new information, plan action, make collective decisions. The teacher in role is needed to help neutrally chair such meetings, but not to take away from the pupils in role their opportunities for making decisions.

[Editorial comment]

The key point about each of these approaches is their relative simplicity when they occur on a small-scale. As such, they can be used as building blocks to create dynamic learning scenarios which fully engage the pupils.

An example from Ray's teaching illustrates this point. He and John Fines were teaching a class the story of the Minotaur in its setting of Mycenaean Crete. There is a certain correlation between the Minotaur myth and the ruins of Knossos. So, in order to involve the pupils in the topic at the point Theseus arrived at and was imprisoned in the palace of King Minos Ray and John came up with the idea of getting the pupils in small groups to plan a Cretan king's palace.

The teaching involved:

- *Setting the problem* – the pupils were told they were teams of architects who have the job of competing to win the contract to design the king's palace.
- *Brainstorm* They pupil were split into small teams – two or three to a team. Then, as a class of 8-10 teams they had to brainstorm all of the kinds of rooms and spaces that they might want to have in their palace.
- *Planning* Having been given the list, the children in groups on sheets of A3 paper had to plan out their palace, annotating what the rooms and spaces they planned were used for.
- *Comparison of Knossos* with their Palace The final stage was to compare their own plans with the ground plan of Knossos.

Ray Verrier was the Project Officer at The Nuffield Primary History Project and co-author with John Fines of *The Drama of History*.

# DRAMA AND HISTORY; A THEORY FOR LEARNING

— Peter Vass

## Introduction

When I visit primary schools these days it heartens me to see how often drama is used in classroom teaching. Looking back over my own career, drama and role play have always been an integral part of my practice from the early days at the end of the 60s when I made up improvised plays with my class of 7 and 8 year olds to theatre-in-education work in the 70s to role-playing with teacher trainees in the 90s. The principles I applied then are the principles I apply now – involvement, imagination and time for reflection. The ways of teaching through drama are vast and various but the effectiveness of the medium to motivate, engage and ultimately educate children, is beyond dispute.

## Enacted Worlds

Enactment has been described as a special state of consciousness which requires the actor to hold two 'worlds' in their minds at the same time, the actual and the fictitious. The first, the 'real' world, provides a secure position to explore the second, the world of the imagination. To be fully effective this exploration requires children (and adults!) to act as if the fictional world is real. This 'suspension of disbelief' appears as a feature of enactment in all human groups whether the involvement is active or passive and appears to happen naturally within them. On this convention are ritual, theatre, film and other performance media founded.

For primary-aged children the world of the imagination is very immediate and accessible. The fault lines between reality and fantasy merge and blend, they are not hard and sharp. The business of moving between real and imagined worlds is not difficult for them, it surfaces quite naturally, for example, in playground games. It is through these imagined worlds that children can act out scenarios and situations that are not possible in reality. Within these contexts children can fly, travel in space stations and score winning goals in cup finals. It is this facility to enter imaginary worlds that is most useful in teaching history.

The fact that educational drama can be a powerful and engaging medium can sometimes distract the child from its purpose. The sheer pleasure of participating in the form can result in the medium submerging the message. When I first started to use drama to teach history I taught many lively sessions where children explored ancient Egyptian tombs, defended medieval castles and rescued passengers from sinking liners, all engaging and exciting stuff, but I'm not sure how much historical learning took place. To learn history through drama the child must have the opportunity to consciously transcend the here and now for the 'there and then' and reflect upon that experience. By treating the drama experience as a real experience the child can encounter problems in the past and try and resolve them in the present. It is the proximity of the learner to the experience which is of fundamental importance here. This has often been described as 'inside' learning, for the child engages directly with the imaginary experience through their emotions. 'Outside' learning, through the medium

of books and ICT for example, though valuable, does not necessarily touch children in such a direct way.

## Different modes

My interest in drama as a learning medium started in the 1970s when I was peripherally involved in Ken Robinson's School's Council project on learning through drama (McGregor et al, 1977) in schools. In those days the practice of drama in the curriculum varied from school to school for theoretical positions were little understood or appreciated. Two principle contentions evolved; whether the discipline should be founded within aesthetics, as an art form, a personal mode through which the individual makes an artistic statement like composing a piece of music or painting a picture, or as education where the subject is perceived principally as a mode of learning. There were difficulties balancing these positions. The aesthetic makes particular demands on the individual for, as a creative act, it requires free rein being given to the imagination, almost a submission to it. Much experimental drama has this quality. The results can sometimes be profound, occasionally shocking, for the individual is often exploring uncharted waters. However, when the learning intention is educational and, in this context, historical the point of discovery should always be revelatory of the past. This requires the activity staying within the restrictive parameters of the historical context.

Gavin Bolton (1979) attempted to rationalise these positions. He argued that aesthetic attendance involves the learner as an individual and it will resonate personally whether they are in the act of observation or creation. The outcome of this experience makes personal sense even though it may not communicate universally. However, drama work usually exists in a social context when it is taught in schools. This gives it a particular dynamic which needs to be negotiated between the involved members. The debates between children that ensue can be extremely valuable, particularly when they are endeavouring to resolve a historical dilemma.

My understanding of drama as an educational process was principally formed by Bolton's seminal work on the subject in the 1980s (Bolton, 1984). As a way of differentiating between the purposes to which drama is put in schools, it has seldom been bettered. It is no coincidence that Bolton cites a number of examples of drama in an educational form through a historical context for it is, in many ways, the ideal subject for imaginative exploration. He refers, inevitably, to the work of Dorothy Heathcote who used history a great deal in her work with children. Her intention was that the outcome of their work revealed to them something of the human condition. She had few concerns about historical veracity as such, preferring the past to be used as a tinderbox for igniting children's ideas and imagination. Bolton suggests that (Bolton, 1984 p171) "an important feature of her (Heathcote's) work is that it often lies on the edge of context, facilitating movement further in or out, but an important dynamic of her work is also that the 'living through' remains partial." By this he means that the dramatic play gives children a context for enquiry by placing the historical feature

in a more familiar setting. The notion of 'living through' utilises children's everyday knowledge of the people's lives as a starting point for their own exploration of character. They are also allowed to determine the level and degree of their involvement for themselves. He cites the example of a programme that begins with children looking at Bronze Age wall drawings 'as if we were in a gallery'. This 'first contact' ultimately leads on to drama, role play and some form of acting out. However, one feels with all of Heathcote's work, that the context is always secondary to the drama.

### Transforming knowledge

The active, open nature of educational drama does not always lend itself easily to children gaining historical knowledge. Much of the best history/drama work I have witnessed builds on historical information that children have already acquired. However what it can do, if taught well, is to help transform that knowledge into understanding – the difference between 'warm' and 'cold' knowledge as it is sometimes described. This became apparent to me some years ago when I carried out a small piece of research on the teaching of the story of the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb to two parallel Year 5 classes. One class explored the subject through drama and role play whilst the other took a source-based approach. It was a fascinating exercise as both classes were highly motivated and carried out much 'out of classroom' research. However, whilst the 'source' group were able to identify the key moments in the narrative and chart the chronology accurately, it was the 'drama' group that better understood the motives and feelings of the archaeologists involved and used this to give them a broader understanding of the events that followed. For me this endorsed the notion that the most valuable and retained knowledge is that which is gained when the child is engaged cognitively *and* affectively in the act of learning.

One of the most significant features of drama as a learning medium is that it operates within a social context. It is the children's interaction with their peers and, occasionally, with 'acting adults' that shapes their learning. When the context is historical there are opportunities for the child to gain insights into the past and recognise that its inhabitants are not strange aliens but people like them with whom we share a common humanity. Drama allows children to experience the past symbolically through an imagined situation usually created by the teacher. McGregor et al identified this some years ago writing, "They (Children) are given the opportunity to increase their understanding of people and their circumstances through their changing perceptions of how they react personally on both real and symbolic levels within the acting out" (McGregor, 1977 p.31). This statement has implications for drama as a learning medium and for the learning of history. When putting children into imaginary historical situations we are asking them to pretend they are real. The activities are, of course, no more than simulations but the human nature of the problems transcend place and time.

### Empathy – time for re-hab?

One of the 'great debates', that took place in history education in 1980s was whether empathy should play a part in children's historical imagining of the past. This is not an appropriate forum to re-visit that issue as the arguments then, unsurprisingly, often produced more heat than light. My feelings were at the time, and still are, that it is one of the key skills employed in reconstructing the past and has implications these days for teaching in all the humanities including citizenship.

The demands of good thinking in historical empathy are rigorous, however, and require a clear understanding of historical context. Nobody put it better than Chris Portal, "empathy as a skill must compromise both the evocation of a personality from the clues presented by the sources of the past and the process of refinement of this evocation into a consistent character in an authentic context." (1987 p93). Portal, as a historian, puts the scholarly aspect of the process very much to the fore, the requirement to compromise, to refine, to evoke a consistent character and place them in an authentic context all make demands on the intellect. This is historical thinking dominating the stage but, ironically, with primary-aged children it is often the freedom of drama that presents the best means to achieve this. What Portal believes empathy can do is help us better understand historical characters and the process of acting out, for primary-aged children, can be the means by which this is achieved.

Whether empathy is an intellectual, thought-driven process or largely a matter of responding to feelings will always be debated. Clearly, it is not possible to think someone else's thoughts or feel someone else's feelings but, what children can do, is project their own ideas into the character. In this way their 'personal luggage' – opinions, ideas, experiences and prejudices – can be aired, examined and discussed and from this a clearer understanding of historical context emerge.

I remember a project I did many years ago with a class of Year 6 'reluctant learners'. We studied the 1842 Mines Act by re-creating a 19<sup>th</sup> Century coal mine in the school hall using every bit of PE equipment we could find. Role play, acting out and group discussion were active features of this work. At the end of one of the sessions a boy who was notorious for the problems he caused in class said to me, "You know, doing it (history) this way really shows you what people were up against."

### Conclusion

Any method of teaching that helps children understand people better has an enormous contribution to make to humanities education. In her book on teaching citizenship the late Hilary Claire (Claire, 2004) placed considerable emphasis on the use of drama not only in learning history but in the whole arena of citizenship education. The drama process allows children to enter worlds of imagination and also gain insights into historical and contemporary dilemmas. By using drama in imaginative curriculum planning it is possible to link the historical past to the geographical present with a view to encouraging children to become active citizens in a wider, global community.

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# HISTORY THROUGH DRAMA, A TEACHERS' GUIDE – REVISITED

— Viv Wilson and Jayne Woodhouse

## Introduction

It is now some seventeen years since the publication of our original pamphlet by the Historical Association [HA] as part of the *Teaching of History Series* (Wilson and Woodhouse, 1990). This article offers a personal review of what we consider to be some of the significant changes in primary school history since that time.

The Drama pamphlet arose out of our collaborative work with Hampshire schools, while we were both lecturing at LSU College of HE (now also in the past). From 1985, we had been developing a shared interest in this teaching method through our particular disciplines: Viv as Head of Drama and Jayne as lecturer in History Education.

The publication gave us the opportunity to describe in detail our approach to history through drama. This built upon the work of John Fines and Ray Verrier (1974) and Roger Day (then County Drama Adviser for Wiltshire), and was influenced by the approaches to drama first promoted by Dorothy Heathcote. It was based on the assumption that any single teacher could enhance children's enjoyment and understanding of history through the deployment of drama strategies in the classroom. We promoted essentially a cross-curricular approach, integrating subjects across the curriculum where appropriate (see, for example, Woodhouse and Wilson, 1988). Prior to the publication of the pamphlet, we had already documented many of our ideas in journal articles and, most notably, a video production by Wessex Television Consortium, based on the Tudor Court Leet in Southampton (Wessex Film and Sound Archive, 1987). The video had been taken up by representatives from HMI and used to promote speaking and listening in schools. We had also been greatly encouraged by Joan Blyth, who was instrumental in bringing us to the attention of the HA.

All of the projects described in the pamphlet worked towards a final day in role, although we emphasised that it was not essential for schools to adopt this practice. These 'History through Drama days' were never 're-enactments' or an excuse for dressing up. We planned them as a culmination of considerable preparatory work, where the knowledge and skills children had acquired in the classroom could be applied in a new context, and sustained over a lengthy period.

From 1985 until the early 1990s, we were supported by our institution and the local authorities in developing large scale, collaborative projects with numbers of schools. By the end of this period, we estimate we had both personally worked with around 1,500 children.

## Drama and the early National Curriculum

The timing of the pamphlet's appearance in 1990 reflected the rising interest in primary history around the time of the introduction of the National Curriculum. Proposals to

include history as a compulsory subject at Key Stages 1 and 2 prompted a rush of publications and curriculum support for teachers, many of whom had been able to ignore history up to this point. At the same time, the importance of speaking and listening [Oracy] was being emphasised within the English Orders, and drama and role play were included as part of the range of activities pupils were expected to experience.

Curriculum documents that followed soon afterwards validated drama as an important teaching method. *History for ages 5 to 16* (DES, 1990), the proposals that would lead to the National Curriculum Order, included drama and role play within the section 'Bringing history to life' (paras. 10.4, 10.5). This included a reference to ensuring there was 'an uncompromising respect for evidence', which reinforced our own approach, and also linked these methods to literacy as sources of 'good, imaginative writing.'

Moreover, drama was included a year later in the Non-Statutory Guidance (NCC, 1991), to support the teaching of history in the National Curriculum (teachers of a certain age still bear the marks of carrying the combined weight of these ring binders for each subject!). This listed 'role-play and drama' as one of a number of teaching methods (para. 8.0) and as part of the process of historical communication (para. 8.6), where children present their findings about a particular period or topic.

Our pamphlet proved to be a popular HA publication, as it offered a practical solution to teachers who were keen to use this officially-endorsed approach in their own schools. They felt able to retain the familiar, child-centred and topic based pedagogy which pre-dated the introduction of the National Curriculum, while implementing the new proposals. In HA terms, it became a best seller!

## Changes in early 1990s

The 'golden age' of primary history was short lived, however. In December 1991 the then Secretary of State Kenneth Clarke advocated a return to subject specific teaching. The 'Three Wise Men' report rapidly followed (Alexander et al, 1992), in which cross-curricular approaches to curriculum delivery were criticised for lack of subject rigour. The 1993 Dearing revision to the National Curriculum narrowed both history and English curricula: the virtual disappearance of drama from the English Orders further reduced opportunities for teachers to engage with the approaches we had sought to promote. Crucial was the dismantling of the infrastructure involving key agents for / of change – Local Authority drama advisers.

Local Authority Advisers become Inspectors at the same time, the role of the Local Authority Adviser was shifting towards that of an inspector. In our earlier work we had been fully supported by the County Advisory service, but this



became more difficult, as the business model for generating income through inspection or in-service programmes gained way within LEAs.

During this period, although teaching history through drama went 'underground', it did not disappear. In our own teaching we continued to promote pedagogical links between the subjects, with Jayne including school-based HTD as an essential part of her course for history subject specialists and Viv using history-based topics to develop students' repertoire of drama teaching skills. Paul Goalen (1995), documenting a research project undertaken between 1992-1995, also made it clear that the use of drama to support history was retained within schools where teachers had previously been enthusiastic. His work was also, like ours, a collaborative enterprise, with Goalen working alongside a drama specialist. Goalen demonstrated that once teachers, particularly in secondary schools, had familiarised themselves with the new syllabus, they then re-introduced strategies such as the use of drama. This reflected their core beliefs in the significance of interpretation and understanding as part of learning in history.

Nevertheless, further interventions into the primary curriculum continued to have a hugely detrimental effect on history teaching. The introduction of the Primary Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in 1998/9 was followed by David Blunkett's announcement by that from September 1998 Programmes of Study in some foundation subjects, including history, were no longer compulsory. For most schools, the impact of the literacy and numeracy hours on the timetable pushed history into an occasional slot during the afternoon, where it struggled to compete with all the other subjects being squeezed into inadequate curriculum time.

The 'History Through Drama' pamphlet went out of print, and no new edition was commissioned.

### A turning tide?

Within a relatively short time, concerns about the narrowing of the curriculum were being expressed from a range of perspectives. *All Our Futures* (DfEE, 1999) called for a greater emphasis on encouraging creative thinking in schools, and in 2002 Ofsted published *The curriculum in successful primary schools*. This outlined ways in which some schools were making effective links between subjects to provide a broader and more balanced curriculum experience:

*'The schools in this survey achieve what many others claim is not possible. They have high standards in English mathematics and science, while also giving a strong emphasis to the humanities, physical education and the arts.'*

(Ofsted 2002, p7)

The lack of emphasis on talk within the Literacy Strategy had also been criticised by literacy practitioners, despite the fact that Curriculum 2000 had raised the status of drama within the Programme of Study.

In more recent years, there are signs that the wheel may be turning full circle, particularly in regard to rebuilding a cross-curricular and creative framework for children's

learning. The launching of the Primary Strategy in 2003 acknowledged the importance of promoting creative thinking. *Excellence and Enjoyment* (DfES, 2003a) called for a recognition of speaking and listening as an 'essential component of all effective learning' and for the need for primary pupils to have a 'rich and exciting experience'. Teachers are now encouraged to be more flexible, to take greater control of the curriculum and to plan for opportunities for pupils to engage more creatively with learning.

History and drama, both separately and together are re-emerging as vital components of this enhanced curriculum. Examples of good practice on the QCA website, *Innovating with history* ([www.qca.org.uk/innovating](http://www.qca.org.uk/innovating)) include references to drama and role play to support history learning. Case studies in the Primary Literacy Strategy materials, *Speaking, Listening & Learning* (DfES, 2003b), also include history role play lessons as exemplars of good practice.

### Conclusion

For the first time for many years, we feel cautiously optimistic that teaching history through drama may be regaining the interest and respectability it enjoyed at the time our pamphlet first appeared. Perhaps it's time for a reprint?!

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# CASE STUDY 1: GETTING STARTED WITH DRAMA

## FROM FREEZE FRAME TO PERFORMANCE THE PLAGUE AND THE VILLAGE OF EYAM

— Hugh Turner

If you are a little nervous of using drama in your history lessons, here is a safe way to start but look out for the many opportunities that arise for developing empathy, personal opinion, understanding of motivation, decision making and and problem solving that will bring alive your history lessons.

This project is based on the famous story of The Roses of Eyam set in the plague year of 1665. Eyam, in Derbyshire, was a small village at the time that had the misfortune to contract plague through a flea-infested bundle of cloth delivered to a local tailor from London. As villagers developed the symptoms of plague and died they had to consider how they, as a community, should react. Their decision to quarantine the whole village has become a landmark in self-sacrifice and altruism.

### Stage 1:

Tell the narrative of the story as *'teacher in role'*, telling the story from your viewpoint as one of the main characters, for example as Rector Mompesson, George Vicars (the local tailor) or Mrs Riley who brought out and buried seven members of her family, one by one. You might prefer to choose to be a less prominent member of the community; a servant or scullery maid, a traveller passing through or a farmer's lad from the next village.

The children will want to ask you questions, so let them *'hotseat'* while you are in character. Both these activities will draw out your feelings, your attitude to the situation and the dilemmas you had to deal with in the 'isolated' Derbyshire village. The children may admire you or be openly critical of your decisions, but they will come to realise that they were not easily made!

Organise the children into groups (about 5 in each). Ask them to:

- Discuss and agree on which are their *three key moments* in the story teller's narrative and who are their key characters. Can they identify the *'dilemmas'* facing each one. More able, imaginative children may wish to create key moments that may not be in the story as told but which are implicated by it, or they may choose *'flashbacks'* or *'flash forwards'* (cause or consequence of the event): for example, the villagers' contented (or otherwise) lifestyle before the plague occurred, or even five years later; other nearby village people gossiping about events in Eyam; the King and Government officials in a dilemma about action they should take.
- Turn these key moments into three *freeze frames*. As they are developing these, ask them to think: Who am I? Where am I? What am I doing? What is my dilemma? How do I feel about the action being shown in the freeze-frame and how do I relate to the other people around me?

Digital cameras/photographs can help support aesthetic and dramatic judgement and answer the question, 'Will an audience understand what we are trying to show?' These could be immediately put up on the IWB. Remember, children 'showing' cannot see themselves, they can only be judged and informed by the audience response. So let them assess themselves digitally before 'showing' to the rest of the class!

### Stage 2:

Ask the groups to take each of the three freeze frames one by one and in each:

Help every character to *come alive* for a moment and *speak or utter their innermost thoughts*. They could 'say' one thing and 'think' (out loud) another ..... a daughter says 'mother, you will feel better soon' *but thinks (aside)* 'she has only moments to live.' Each character could be 'tagged' by a player (or a *narrator*) to bring them alive but this is often not necessary and it can spoil the fluidity of the performance.

### Stage 3:

Ask the groups to find a way to link their three freeze frames with an appropriate *transition*. Some examples of transitions (which can be combined, but keep it simple!):

- A simple dance or movement about the performance area
- Improvisation, mimed or using speech
- Use of a *narrator*

### Stage 4:

Ask the groups to prepare to show their work and then, if they feel good about what they have produced, they can show the rest of the class. Children should *respond* to their own and others performances, by evaluating, and applying knowledge and understanding of the historical event as they now see it. If digital photos have been taken, these can be shown as the basis for discussion in a further lesson but ONLY show pictures that will enhance self-esteem.

Within this simple framework there are opportunities to use other techniques and strategies to draw out the children's opinions and attitudes to the situation of the inhabitants of Eyam. Two examples:

*Conscience Alley*: Catherine Mompesson (the rector's wife) cannot decide whether to stay with her husband in the village to help the dying parishioners or escape from the village with her children. The whole class (in role as villagers perhaps) will form a tunnel for Catherine to pass through on her way to make the decision. Each child will briefly but persuasively give her a reason for staying or escaping. Based on what she hears, she will then tell everyone of her decision.

*Diary extracts*: these can be written and then given a *dramatic reading in character*, illustrating the feelings and emotions of individual villagers or onlookers. Look for the many other opportunities for characters to write 'in role' using letters, brief messages, notes or notices, warning posters or notices of the deceased in the village.

Two books that will give you a rationale for these techniques and strategies and give you many further examples are:  
Baldwin, P (2004) *With Drama in Mind* Network Educational Press  
Neelands, J. (1992) *Learning through Imagined Experience* Hodder & Stoughton

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# CASE STUDY 2: HOW MUCH DRAMA, HOW MUCH HISTORY?

## UNPICKING THE LEARNING POTENTIAL IN CREATIVE APPROACHES TO STUDYING WORLD WAR II

— Dani Compton

### Introduction

'The biggest issue for school history is its limited place in the curriculum.'

(Ofsted, 2007)

This central concern of Ofsted's 2007 report, *History in the Balance*, could equally apply to the teaching of drama in primary schools. As an issue this is complicated by drama suffering from its own identity crisis: *Is it a subject in itself or a tool through which to teach across the curriculum?* Whilst this debate continues (see Fleming, 2003) and drama officially remains part of the English Curriculum, what potential is there for drama and history to support each other in the curriculum and, most importantly, provide meaningful and valuable learning experiences for pupils? Over five weeks of the summer term, it was the task of twenty-eight BA (Primary Teacher Education) students from Oxford Brookes University and ninety KS2 children to explore that possibility.

### Setting the Scene: The Project

Under the remit of exploring creative ways of extending children's communication, language and literacy skills, the students spent every Monday afternoon working in pairs with a small group of children. Their role was to augment the work the children were doing in their individual classes on the whole Key Stage topic of World War Two. As the students were given the freedom to be as creative as they liked, many chose to be driven largely by the children's choices regarding *what* they wanted to explore and find out about, and *how* they wanted to go about it.

As a result, drama featured heavily as both a medium through which a variety of ideas and experiences could be explored but also a means through which to communicate understanding and interpretation to an audience.

Approaches included:

- radio broadcasts from the period;
- still images of scenes used as a backdrop to poems and letters;
- scripted performances in which children from then and now travel across time to meet and question each other;
- a combination of mime and live action to the backdrop of a taped narration and sound composed by the children in response to a photograph of evacuated children. Particularly noteworthy was the creation of a contemporary children's documentary programme entitled 'Come and Explore with Us' in which a band of intrepid history explorers find a variety of artefacts from the war period. Their questions trigger a flashback 'clip' of black and white film in which they portray the history behind each artefact.

Although the new technologies of film-making, digital photography and their manipulation and presentational

software are staggering and the new ways of looking at the past that these advances afford were interesting, it was the raw work in drama that provided the substance and motivation. Why?

### The Students' Experience

Although initially daunted by the sheer breadth of the possibilities that the brief afforded them, the students quickly engendered what Craft (2000) calls 'possibility thinking'; 'What is possible when trying to imagine what it might have been like for an evacuee?' and, 'How can I help the children to engage with this on a more than superficial level?', were some of the questions raised in their minds. However, it was not just open thinking on their part that was significant. Letting the children be agents in their learning was a powerful experience for second year trainees who might previously have played it safe with a topic such as World War Two...more newspaper articles about the Blitz?

The folk pedagogy of history teaching, as a medium for transmitting factual information and a conservative cultural message, leads to formulaic approaches to teaching, where paper-based activities account for the majority of teaching and learning experiences. Here teachers are trapped in a culturally impoverished pedagogy that means they are unwilling to take risks with their teaching, to be creative and treat the subject as bringing the past to life. Such teachers provide negative models that are a potential pitfall for the trainee!

The students discovered that it is a fine line between allowing the children complete freedom to do what they like and remaining in control of a quality learning experience. Through trial and error, many found that the most powerful and profound moments, in which the children revealed their depth of not just knowledge about history, but real understanding, was when their emotional selves were engaged with the people and events of that period. For example, in one group, the children unanimously voted in favour of exploring the experiences of evacuees through a series of freeze-frames rather than the music composition activity that the students had wanted to encourage! In the end, a compromise was agreed and the children set to work on 'composing' a series of black and white photographs of themselves as various people involved in the evacuations with music to accompany a slide-show of these images.

Throughout the process, in which they were utterly focused, several conversations took place regarding what the images should depict. One child decided that they should consider showing how parents might feel having just put their children on the train. The conversation that followed involved a consideration of how the parents might be feeling and why; what they would be going back to and therefore, how they might have looked at that moment in time. Questions were raised as to why the parents didn't go with the children and others related how those parents might

*Evacuees waiting to be 'chosen'*



have felt to how their own coped with waving them off on a residential trip. The teacher's role was then to draw out how the two experiences would have differed in terms of context and impact.

The students learnt that not only did the children voice their knowledge through negotiating the activity, but they entered into the world of those people, demonstrating empathy to the extent that is possible for ten-year-olds to achieve. Through doing and looking, they also linked what they knew about *then* to their own experiences of *now*. How was this achieved? Through drama, of course!

They also discovered that even the most reluctant of pupils can be motivated to literally throw themselves into the drama; dressing up and 'acting' while the camera rolls is no mean feat for some Year 6 boys! When the students were asked to reflect on what *they* had learnt, many felt that this was because, if the drama is experienced in a 'safe' environment where no one risks being made to look a fool, not many children can resist the urge to enter into what is essentially, imaginative play (Neelands, 1992). Strategies such as decision ally, hot-seating, teacher-in-role and freeze-frame (see Baldwin and Fleming, 2003) all served to structure the experience for the children in the weeks leading up to their final presentation. Introducing the concepts, people and historical frameworks through known parameters of these strategies *before* being asked to improvise gave the children a good deal of knowledge, in the first instance, and secondly, the confidence to explore more freely. This kind of developmental, structured, even 'scaffolded' approach is all too often neglected in drama where children are left to their own devices to improvise a scene without being given the necessary tools to do so.

### The Children's Experience – What did they learn?

It is here that the question of how much their learning was related to the History curriculum and how much was about drama techniques comes to the fore. Historical knowledge is something children construct through enquiry, reflection and internalisation: it involves them engaging with the record of the past with teacher support and guidance. It is certainly clear that where the children were given a degree of freedom to choose the area of history they wanted to explore, their resulting motivation played a large part in their knowledge acquisition.

One boy who was desperate to find out about military tactics and weaponry was encouraged to do so to the extent that his PowerPoint presentation, worked on at home independently, was incorporated into the whole group's performance and linked to the more personal experiences of the soldiers involved. Facts and human experience, it would seem, can go hand in hand. Indeed, without a good degree of knowledge about the aspect each group chose to explore, be that evacuation, life in London during the Blitz or the experiences of different family members, the entering into the human experience through drama couldn't have happened. This is well illustrated in the scenario previously described. However, the important element is not just that the children *knew* all about the evacuation of children out of London, but that they *felt* something that gets close to what those people might have felt.

Empathy is a slippery slope; how close can today's children get to feeling what it was like for a soldier then? The children can, to some extent, give us the answer. During a hot-seating activity, a child was in-role as a soldier just returned from duty and when asked about his experiences the response was as follows:

*"I thought that I wanted to go to war as it would show everyone how brave I was and I wanted to fight for my country to keep my family safe, but it isn't brave to have to kill someone. I wish I hadn't gone."*

Empathy, it would seem, is getting as close to the lived experience as is possible within the confines of time, space and experience. Where it is grounded in the record of the past it enables the children to have genuine historical experiences and insight into the thoughts, feelings and actions of those involved in the historical situation. At least the drama let them feel something.

### Playing the History Game?

What conclusions can therefore be drawn from the project? How much History, How much Drama? I think that in this instance, the mode of learning that drama offers, which is experiential, engaging emotion as well as thought, connects directly with the nature of History itself, being about the experiences of people throughout time. Understanding humanity transcends time. What pupils are therefore learning is not simply just *about* history, but *from* it because it resonates with their emotional selves; arguably a far better tool for memory than a list of dates and facts.

Drama, alongside ICT, dance, photography and music can therefore be seen as a means through which pupils can both *connect* with historical people, events and themes and *communicate* their understanding of the same. Furthermore.

*'These are not trivial means of communicating history; they require not only good quality history but also good communication skills, as some of our most successful, revered, contemporary British historians have shown.'*  
(Ofsted, 2007)

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# CASE STUDY 3: RESEARCHING HISTORY

## TIME TRAVELLERS AND ROLE PLAYERS

— Zara d'Archambaud

### Introduction

'Ok children, time for history.'  
Distant moans from the back of the class.

Would I be surprised by this reaction?

No, not if the teacher was diligently following the QCA guidelines for teaching history.

Yes, if the teacher had realised the potential of using drama to teach history and had consequently injected lessons with the life, passion, enjoyment and the relevance that drama can offer.

Unfortunately in far too many primary schools the teacher's subservient attachment to the QCA schemes of work, with

its limited use of the medium of drama, has left many pupils feeling bored, disengaged and the passive recipients of information.

This is the reason why I decided to carry out an intervention project in 2002 as part of my MA in Education. I strongly believed that drama has the power to engage and motivate teachers and pupils in their teaching learning of history. Furthermore in engaging the pupils drama can develop the skills needed to access the history curriculum and make the learning real. In the current unrelenting, yet necessary, drive to raise standards in literacy, drama has the potential to make creative links between history and literacy and raise standards through enjoyment of learning rather than simply through being able to answer a Standard Assessment Tasks question.

### The Context for the Study

The study was carried out in a middle school and involved three Year 5 classes and their teachers. The school was situated in a culturally diverse area with approximately 50% of pupils claiming free school meals, over one third on the SEN register and standards below national expectations.

### The Intervention

The intervention involved an 8 week scheme of work based around The Aztecs. I worked alongside the teacher modelling the drama techniques and supporting the teachers to deliver them independently. Each lesson involved the drama techniques that are described in the approach section. Pupils and teachers were interviewed pre and post the intervention on their attitude and perception of learning in history.

### The Drama Approach

My approach to enhancing the QCA schemes of work is based around the Time Tunnel approach where the pupils can travel to any time in history and gather evidence using their history skills to build up an understanding of the time.



## Roles

During the lessons the teacher will either play the role of a Museum Curator or lead character from the period of history. The pupils will either play the part of Researchers of the Past (ROTP) or characters from the period of history.

It is important that the pupils are clear which roles they are in and are responding to. A scarf and ID badge can be used to signify the Museum Curator and ID cards for the Researchers of the Past.

This approach can be adapted across the QCA topics so eliminating the 'no time plan drama' argument. The majority of the approaches involve all the pupils and so discard the audience getting restless scenario and the 'I don't want to stand up on stage in front of everyone' excuse.

## The Process

Pupils go into role as Researchers of the Past



Researchers of the Past are called to the museum (Adapt to suit needs e.g Aztec Museum, Museum of the Tudors)



Researchers of the Past meet the Museum Curator who tells them about their assignment and that they must travel through the time tunnel to reach the period of history that will give them the opportunity to find out the information.



Researchers of the Past travel back in time using the Time Tunnel. The time tunnel can be a constructed prop or linked arms to form an archway.



Researchers of the Past arrive in the period of choice and set about gathering the information. \*



Researchers of the Past return to the museum with their information. The teacher in role as the Museum Curator then questions the Researchers about what they have found out. \*\*

\* The information that the Researchers of the Past (ROTP) gain whilst they are back in time can be gathered in various ways:

- ROTP observing the teacher in role then interviewing the character.
- ROTP hotseating the teacher in role.
- ROTP helping the character to solve a problem.
- ROTP asking the character for help on identifying artefacts, pictures, problems.
- ROTP becoming involved in a series of events (pre planned by teacher/teaching assistants/pupils in role).

\*\* When the ROTP return back to the present day museum they can draw upon and apply the information in various ways:

- ROTP are questioned by the Museum Curator.
- ROTP set up a museum exhibition.
- ROTP work in action groups to address a problem or issue given to them by the character that they have met.
- ROTP write a newspaper article.
- ROTP create a play based on key events that they have observed. Thought tapping can be used to empathise with the character's feelings.

This approach gives the children a way to access and acquire information and skills other than watching a video or reading a book. It also provides the opportunity for the children to internalise and reflect on the information and skills needed in order to develop a richer level of thinking and learning.



## Applying the Principle

These are examples of how this process can be used to enhance the teaching and learning of history as set out by the QCA guidelines.

QCA	QCA suggested Activity	Dramatising the QCA
Unit 7: Why did Henry VIII marry 6 times? What was Henry VIII like as a person?	Give the children a written description of Henry and ask them to underline the key descriptive words. Ask them to compare these words with what they have already heard about Henry VIII.	ROTP go back in time and meet Henry (played by the teacher). Children hotseat Henry with their pre-written questions then take the information back to the museum.
Why did Henry divorce Catherine of Aragon?	Give the children a text with a simple description of Henry's problems, eg the need for a son, Catherine's age, the need for money. It should also include a few solutions. Ask the children to identify the problems. Help the children place the problems in order of importance and to suggest solutions and produce a grid with two columns: problems and solutions	ROTP go back in time and meet Henry who tells them about his problems. ROTP then go back to the museum and form action groups to find solutions to his problems. They can then return to Henry and suggest solutions to him.
Why did Henry marry six times?	Ask the children to suggest reasons why Henry married six times, eg need for alliances, falling in love, need for power, money. Ask them to list the reasons in order of importance.	ROTP plan a This is Your Life for Henry. They can gather the information from evidence in the museum or going back to visit Henry and other significant people.
Unit 9: What was it like for children in the Second World War?  What was the World War?	Establish what children already know about the war. Use their responses, or provide a brief narrative, to introduce key information, including when the war took place, the main countries involved, why it started (Hitler's invasion of other countries and why Britain tried to stop him), how it was fought (invasion of other countries, mass bombings, sinking of ships using submarines), the names of leaders (such as Hitler and Churchill), and the defeat of Germany and Japan by the allied nations.	Explain to the ROTP that they will be going back in time to find out about WWII. They could be sent back with key information, words, names or questions. On their return they will be asked to create an exhibition in the museum.  Forum theatre could also be used to retell the sequence of events that led up to the war. Thought tapping could be used to find out more about what key characters might be thinking.
What was it like to be an evacuee?	With the children's help, produce a list of questions about evacuees. Ask the children to answer the questions using selected sources, eg photographs, extracts from novels, oral accounts, letters, memoirs.  Ask the children to imagine they are evacuees and to write a letter home or diary extracts.	Explain to the ROTP that they are going to build up their own profile of an evacuee. To help with this they will go back in time to meet some WWII children. Once they have established their own profile they will return to WWII to a town hall where they will be evacuated to the country.  This activity could also include Conscience Alley depicting the pros and cons of being evacuated.

## Conclusion

After eight weeks of using the time tunnel technique with the children, the enthusiasm and quality of learning was very much evident. The drama helped the children to acquire knowledge but more importantly with understanding this knowledge. The benefits of using drama to teach history demonstrated by the post intervention interviews and ongoing observations can be grouped as follows:

- Drama helped reach pupils of all abilities.
- Drama improved historical understanding through empathy.
- Drama was motivating.
- Drama aided the quality of information recall.
- Drama helped pupils to question and problem solve.
- Drama improved pupil participation and had a positive effect on behaviour.

As a teacher and Headteacher I believe engagement is the key to effective learning. When I visit classes I look at the children and their faces, it is lessons where the children demonstrate unrestrained excitement and absorption in their learning that remind me why I went into teaching.

Drama has the potential to give children and teachers more of these lessons and change the answer to 'what did you do at school today?' conversation from the classic 'nothing

much' to 'We have been learning about the Aztecs. We went back in time and met an Aztec, he was making one of those islands. What was it called...? Oh I know Chinampas. We helped them make their island on the lake because the god told us to. We had to put posts into the bottom of the lake and weave branches around them then fill it with mud.' (Year 5 pupil)

Zara d'Archambaud is headteacher of New Marston Primary School, Oxford.





# CASE STUDY 4:

## THE DRAMAS OF HISTORY

— Luke Abbott

### Introduction

I am always reminded of the work of John Fines (Fines & Verrier, 1974) when I embark on any historical investigation with young people using dramatic methods. Since his tragic death there has been a development throughout the country - tackling the history curriculum through not only his pioneering drama methods but also based on Dorothy Heathcote's pedagogic system – 'Mantle of the Expert' (MoE). John had always revered the work of the great pioneer of drama in education Dr Dorothy Heathcote who still works at the forefront of innovation and educational reform at the age of 81!

### The Mantle of the Expert

The Mantle of the Expert [MoE] dramatic system works quite simply whereby classes are first of all invited to imagine. Within this imagined world – the class view their world through the eyes of other people – and for a period of time – they wear a 'mantle of expertise' associated with the point of view of these fictional people. In the world of the imagined-an enterprise or a company or a business is invented that holds the seeds to educational investigations. The MoE idea is to enable a longer term exploration of learning-rather than a short term dramatised event-though this in no way detracts from the huge benefits of dramatising historic moments. It merely offers yet another choice to teachers in the quest to find effective learning across the curriculum as well as in the subject domains.

**MoE, Creativity and Schools** I was recently asked to work with a cluster of schools that were moving into a position where they wanted to get more creativity into their curriculum and move beyond the Qualifications Curriculum Agency [QCA] schemes of work into personalising learning for their primary aged students-particularly in the 'gifted and talented' category. I was asked to run a series of demonstration lessons using dramatic methods I had been trained in by Dorothy Heathcote herself when I took my Masters degree at Newcastle University.

Since then (back in the 1980s) – I have been trialling the methods in schools as a teacher, member of leadership teams, later on as a curriculum adviser and now as the national project director for MoE. In all these various circumstances -trying to construct the best learning experiences with and for students, the outstanding feature we managed as teachers and managers was the engagement of learners in the imagined worlds we and they created-as well as the plethora of historical knowledge skills and understanding dramatic enquiry seems to bring to the educational table.

### MoE – Theory into Practice: A Classroom Example.

**In running a MoE structure** – there are a few clear boundaries.

- Firstly there is always an imagined enterprise that is being created-with an imagined client who drives the curriculum enquiry by supplying the class with a need for a 'job to be done'.
- Second, the system has at its heart the notion that classes can take responsibility together on an equitable basis within the fictional events-which is perhaps a far cry from many experiences children have as learners where they may often have to open their mouths to be fed for a lot of the time!

**The class in question** were year 5 [nine and ten year olds] and had already embarked on the Tudors for their half term explorative project. My brief was not only to focus on Drama and History but also to work within guidelines for teaching the Gifted and Talented. I was told the pupils had 'done Tudors' and knew a lot about the Tudor times, people and events of significance. I had the idea that we could begin an evaluation of their work to date (and help the class assess their learning) by creating a company called 'Tudor Times Limited'. The client the company would have to deal with was a fabulously wealthy industrialist who had just renovated an authentic Tudor mansion similar in style to Kentwell Hall in Suffolk. The person concerned wanted to collect together authentic Tudor artefacts, furniture, furnishings and fittings for the whole house-down to an authentic fire and utensils in the kitchen.

Those of you who remember the work of Dr John (Fines) will recognise the elements he often used, a beguiling context that would enable the class to use their existing knowledge skills and understanding as well make new discoveries along the way. This was so well exemplified in his series of videos on Primary History. (I suppose in a nutshell we were investigating 'Tudor houses' in a slightly different way.)

**This approach** also allows a class to make connections and become immersed in aspects of practice associated with provision for the gifted and talented – of which of course there is a whole can of worms to open up! [For a guide to what the G&T agenda and its complexity means for the teaching of history, please see *Primary History Issue 47, Autumn 2007*] My simplistic view is that all children have gifts and talents – and are all therefore gifted and talented – and with a few prompts from the G&T guidelines I felt working with the class concerned would tackle the challenges the guidelines suggest.

**G&T Students** The Essex guidelines to challenge G&T students are as follows: creating opportunities for students to experience:

- Self direction
- Opportunities for group work
- Experience of 'difficulty'
- Imaginative and creative work
- Incubate ideas
- Originality
- Being led
- First hand experience
- Intellectual challenge
- Time to dream
- Enrichment
- Thinking skills
- Collaborative group structures
- Independence and research skills
- Problem solving/investigation/creative work in any field

The trouble with lists like this is that is exactly what they are, *and in the case of the one above what should be on offer to all pupils!* But, I hope this outlines the general idea of the framework within which learning to *incorporate* G&T features can be structured. *It is for you to judge the extent to which the team reflected the G&T principles above, and those that the Gifted and Talented edition edition of Primary History, Issue 47, Autumn 2007 presented on pages 5, 15 and 16.*

### Into the classroom

I had a diagram of a door on a flip chart that the class had seen me pin up. On the door I wrote in a lower case script (with appropriate capital letters of course).

### tudor times limited

**Before we began** I asked the class to agree that the diagram represented a Tudor door. They agreed – with one exception – that if it was an authentic Tudor door then no one in their right mind would put a plaque on it as such an act would be 'historic vandalism'. I of course concurred and tried another drawing with the help of the class who now placed the title of the firm above the door and then proceeded to inform me – through adding significant details on the door – of a (Tudor door) such as the squared nails, the oak panelling for the construction of the door, the struts used to hold it firm and secure, the see-through grill to look at the people who wanted to go across the threshold but could be seen before they did so, the door knob, the key, the wooden lock, the thickness of the wood and finally the hinges. In the words of Dorothy Heathcote-they were putting their Tudor eyes in!

**Imaginative construction** It was then that I asked the class what they supposed might be on the other side of the door with such a sign above it, especially to help a visitor visualise the place. The first response clarified that there was a

reception area – fitted out in Tudor fashion – with authentic leather and oak chairs and tables with wall hangings and paintings – all of which were authentic Tudor. We could have gone on talking all day-but I felt we could begin to 'transmediate' their knowledge (a term I learnt from Professor Gerry Harste from Indiana University) as the class were now getting very excited about what else was behind the door in other parts of the building.

**Mantle of the Expert: Imagination to visualisation** As I know the system of MoE quite well now-I was happy to let the class invent and create the objects of great worth and meaning that lay behind the door of Tudors Times Limited. I knew that there would be simple steps from creating the building with all its marvellous furnishings and artefacts to inventing the actual people whose job it was to take responsibility for the security and safe keeping of such wonderful objects. I asked the class to stand in the place in our Tudor Times building where the objects they were discussing were able to be viewed. This the class did with great skill – here I scaffolded their learning by using some of the first 8 of the series of conventions for representation from Heathcote's dramatic toolkit. Within minutes the class created a 'visualisation' of their building.

**Labelling** The next task was to label the artefacts created (some of them were):

- The arm of Jesus Christ as a relic in a glass box
- St Peters hand and his ring in a glass container
- A painting of Henry VIII hunting deer
- A peasant caught poaching on the king's land (a sculpture on a table)
- A wall hanging of the royal party hunting with hawks
- A painting by a famous painter of Henry VIII after a battle
- A painting of Anne Boleyn
- A tapestry of the Queen Catherine with her royal helpers
- A picture of Pontius Pilate washing his hands
- A table owned by Henry VIII
- Silver plates used for dining at a royal banquet
- Sword owned by royal family
- Eating and drinking objects used by the poor
- Eating and drinking objects used by the rich

I had been swiftly around the room as they were creating their objects to ask if any were for sale and if so could they give me a clue as a possible buyer for a rich client how much the objects were on sale for. This had the immediate effect of classification into objects of national importance (not for sale) and objects that would go on sale at an appropriate price. Teacher observers could see how the class then created a label to describe the objects and whether they were for sale or not. We then 'signed up' our building once more by placing the 'objects' (i.e. class representing their objects).

**Questioning** These 'objects' could answer any amount of questions from interested observers-such as teachers and their peers. It was when the questions started that we could see the potential for long term work unfolding in front of us-questions such as:

- 'How did Tudor Times Ltd. manage to get ownership of you?' (Referring to the object being represented). Such questions helped create and build the 'history' of the Tudor Times Ltd., another feature of MoE as a system.
- 'If you are not for sale (referring to the object as described on the paper plaque by the object) could you let us know the reasons?'
- Have you been used to make miracles? (Referring to the 'relics' in the building-Christ's bones and St Peter's hand.....)

**Discussion** This led to a further discussion out of the fictional mode – of the value of relics in Tudor times and the mystical nature of how they were used as well as a class discussion on the nature of miracles, religious beliefs, Islam (through the knowledge of 'ambassadors') and the life of Christ as some children were a little vague on their understanding of how people became sanctified like St Peter for example.

**Continuation** Although this session lasted only an hour and a half, the potential for further investigations using the context of Tudor Times Limited seemed a strong drive from the children's point of view. The next session would begin by making contact with the rich client as well as clarifying the

'value system' of Tudor Times Ltd.. So much to do for the future.

This is only a small glimpse into how the system known as mantle of the expert works-and more can be found on our website [www.mantleoftheexpert.com](http://www.mantleoftheexpert.com)

### Conclusion

The long term potential using the Mantle of the Expert pedagogy to teach historical skills for 7-11 year olds is detailed in an exploration of 'Nelson's Box' taught by Tim Taylor, a trained historian (also an Advanced Skills Teacher in MoE) and Emma Hamilton-Smith, class teacher. Both were at Tuckswood Community First School Norwich where MoE was the dominant pedagogy used to engage very hard-to reach learners. Other examples include how a demolition company – Diamond Demolition Ltd – helped a class of year 2 students engage with Victorian England for 2 terms with Julia Walshaw at Bealings County Primary school Woodbridge Suffolk – they too have a website [www.bealingschool.com](http://www.bealingschool.com)

### References

- Fines, J. and Verrier, R. (1974) *The Drama of History*, Phillimore  
 Heathcote, D (1984) 'Signs and Portents' in L. Johnson, L and C. O'Neil, C, eds. (1984) in *Dorothy Heathcote – Collected Writings on Drama and Education*, Hutchinson

**Luke Abbott** is currently seconded to Essex CC Director and Tutor of the national Mantle of Expert project.

The screenshot shows the homepage of Mantle of the Expert.com. At the top, there's a purple header with the site name and the Essex County Council logo. Below that is a navigation bar with tabs for Home, Information, Studying MoE, Resources, Community, and Register. The main content area is white with a purple sidebar on the right. The sidebar contains a 'Welcome' message, a 'SITE NEWS' section with 'New articles just added', and 'Conference information available'. The main content area features a large photo of two children in a classroom setting, one pointing towards the camera.

# CASE STUDY 5: COLUMBUS

## THINKING ABOUT QUESTIONS TO ASK A SAILOR WHO KNEW COLUMBUS

— Ray Verrier

### Introduction

The drama was an element in teaching a topic on Columbus with a class of 6-7 year old pupils. The Scheme of Work's title was **WATER** which lasted six weeks. The history element lasted for three of these weeks and was designed to meet the National Curriculum requirements that pupils should study:

- 1 aspects of the way of life of people...beyond living memory
- 2 lives of different kinds of famous men and women
- 3 past events of different types

We chose Columbus, two other teachers decided to study Drake and Cook respectively.

The **Key elements** addressed in the Columbus topic were:

- sequence events and objects
- use common words or phrases relating to the passing of time
- aspects of the past through stories from different periods...
- stories and eyewitness accounts
- recognise why people did things, why events happened, and what happened as a result
- identify differences between ways of life at different times
- identify different ways in which the past is represented
- find out about the past from a range of sources
- ask and answer questions about the past
- communicate their awareness and understanding of history

### The teaching

The account which follows of the drama element is based partly on the class teacher's notes and partly on my observations of the sessions we shared. Not all the topic is described for I have endeavoured to highlight those aspects which seemed on reflection to be particularly significant.

The teaching opened with discussion of what an explorer was. The teacher, Lynn, followed this with a close examination of a poster of Columbus – the pupils built up ideas about him through questions, observations and discussion. Lynn then told the story of Columbus, using five or six pictures. Next, the children in groups were given a set of pictures about Columbus – they had to:

1. choose eight
2. sort them into a story telling sequence,
3. add caption and
4. produce their own zigzag books telling the story of Columbus.

The next lessons looked at how we commemorate famous people – the pupils produced their own shields that told why Columbus was remembered. The foundations had been laid for the drama lesson.

**Drama** The focus of the Columbus drama was a whole class discussion that faced very young children with problems of historical interpretation and controversy. The debate arose from involving the children in questioning a sailor, Francisco Pinzon, who was an opponent of Columbus; Francisco Pinzon went with his brother Martin, captain of the PINTA which sailed alongside the NINA and SANTA MARIA to the West Indies. Martin Pinzon was very critical of Columbus' handling of the voyage. Martin died almost immediately after his arrival back in Spain which is why Francisco took up the fight against Columbus on his behalf.

**The teacher in role** As Francisco, I would represent the critical viewpoint of his brother Martin about Columbus. Up to the point of the interview the children had formed an heroic view of Columbus as a great man. As Francisco I would answer the pupils' questions in a way that was highly critical of Columbus. How would they reconcile this view with the fresh evidence of Francisco?

Lynn asked the children to prepare a range of questions to ask Francisco Pinzon. Each pupil knew s/he would have the chance to ask at least one question.

### Questions devised by the class to ask Francisco Pinzon

1. Was Columbus a good captain?\*
2. How many times were you sick?
3. How did you feel about going on this journey?\*
4. Did you like Columbus?\*
5. Which ship did you go on?
6. What kind of shoes did you wear?
7. Did you fall off the ship?
8. Was it nice food?
9. What did Queen Isabella say when you got back?\*
10. How did you feel when land was first spotted?\*
11. What kind of food did you have?
12. How many miles did you sail?\*
13. How much gold did you find?\*
14. Were the people in America different from Spanish people?
15. How many weeks did it take?
16. What sort of instruments did you use on the ship to find your way?\*
17. Who spotted land first?\*
18. Did you believe in sea monsters?
19. Did you enjoy the trip?\*
20. Did you see any sea monsters?
21. What kind of clothes did you wear?
22. Which way did you have to sail?\*
23. Were you happy when you found land?\*
24. Did you bring back spices?
25. Was it cold or hot?
26. Did you think Columbus was cruel when he brought back native people to Spain?\*
27. How many sailors on each boat?
28. What language did you speak?
29. What were the sailors' names?
30. Were you sorry to leave your parents?

The questions marked with a \* were ones which enabled Francisco to express his personal views about Columbus.

### Teacher in role as Francisco

The interview with me as Francisco lasted 50 minutes during which time every child asked at least one question.

### Class discussion: pupil opinions

**The neutral chair** Lynn decided upon a neutral stance, accepting all the children's ideas, whilst trying to get them to elaborate and develop their thinking. The discussion developed smoothly under her control through stages a-e.

#### a teacher questions

Lynn asked pupils to give their opinions of Columbus or Francisco Pinzon, based on what they knew about the historical situation.

#### b pupil responses

Comments were directed at Lynn. However there was one instance where a pupil said "Ben's right in a way. Instead of Columbus, Martin Pinzon should have the glory" showing a qualified agreement with another pupil.

The pupil who said 'If Columbus hadn't had the idea that the world was round, everyone thought the world was flat' made that very important first statement in favour of Columbus. (Lynn's heart must have leapt at hearing this!! A sure reward for her patience and skill in maintaining a neutral stance.)

#### pupils and evidence

The children were more than willing to accept as gospel the testimony of Francisco, as if it had been printed in a reference book on Columbus. Not surprising for these are young children and this was the first occasion on which they had been asked such a question as 'Do you think Francisco was telling the truth?' The children were unanimous in their view that he was.

#### c the teacher guides the discussion

At this point in the discussion Lynn had three choices:

- 1 simply to close down this aspect of the discussion and move on elsewhere;
- 2 to point out to the children some of the bias in Francisco's account – for example that he'd said in the interview that he'd only actually seen Columbus on one occasion and that his views were based solely on the opinions of his brother Martin;
- 3 to suggest, in a question, one reason why Francisco may have held a biased view of Columbus.

It was this last course of action that Lynn decided to take, followed by that all important pause for the children to have time to consider.

#### d The class debate

The class as a whole registered a wide range of views on the leadership of Columbus – some very critical and based on just one incident of Columbus' actions and personality, others supporting his vision in undertaking such an enterprise, and a few who are making some preliminary moves towards making a balanced appraisal of Columbus (a very high level of thinking for young children). For example

'It was Columbus' idea in the first place and they wouldn't have found all the things they did if it hadn't been for Columbus'

#### e resolution

Lynn allowed different views a place in the final stage of the discussion. She refrained from trying to sum up 'neatly' thus introducing children naturally to the nature of historical debate. Just think of the number of books written on Columbus and the variety of assessments they offer on the Admiral of the Oceans.

### The whole class discussion: considerations

**Lynn's intention** was to enable every child to take part and to learn from the contributions of the more able and articulate pupils. Every pupil contributed. All pupils responded to Lynn's questions about their opinions of Columbus or Francisco Pinzon.

#### Post interview discussion

After the interview Lynn discussed the sailor's point of view with the class by focussing upon three questions:

- Do you think the sailor was telling the truth?
- Was Columbus as bad as the sailor said?
- If you were newspaper reporters what would you write about Columbus?

**The teacher's active participation** in the discussion was essential to give direction and momentum to the children's thinking and to enable open ended, exploratory thinking and discussion to occur.

#### Exploring language

Thus many children explored language as they tried to put together their thoughts. Often their utterances were understandably hesitant, exploratory and rather inarticulate.

#### Teacher perception

From the teacher's point of view this was a challenging activity requiring careful listening to small and often indistinct voices whilst making moment by moment decisions about her next utterance.

#### Conclusion

The drama element was one factor in a pattern of interactive whole class teaching in which the key was to challenge and engage the pupils in stimulating, constructive activities which developed their understanding of the topic. The pitch, pace and modes of working were linked closely to the abilities and capacity of 6-7 year old pupils to respond. The teaching, when broken down into its elements, reveals a range of relatively simple techniques which the teacher used to build up driving, sustained and purposeful learning that developed a range of thinking, communication and social skills as well as, crucially, developing pupils' conceptual and factual knowledge and understanding.

**Ray Verrier** was the Project Officer at The Nuffield Primary History Project and co-author with John Fines of *The Drama of History*.

# CASE STUDY 6: DRAMATISING BOUDICCA AND THE CELTS

## A CASE STUDY FROM THE CLASSROOM

— John Rainer and Pat Hoodless

### Introduction

The story of Boudicca lends itself equally well to both history and drama. As a key part of work on 'The Romans', it is an example of how history and drama when used together can contribute to children's understanding of sources of evidence and how these can be used to achieve greater understanding of the daily lives and the likely views and opinions of people living in the distant past. Children can also begin to understand how contradictory accounts of people and events arise. They can communicate their understanding through the use of dramatic techniques.

This article outlines some ideas on ways of linking drama and history, which were explored in a series of drama sessions run in a Manchester school. The sessions used an historical context to engage children's imagination. We have identified five lessons to give a flavour of the kind of work

that can arise from linking history and drama. The lessons bring to life the thoughts and feelings of Celtic villagers when confronted with the prospect of a major war against the invading Romans. A class of Year 5 children re-enact key points in the events leading up to war using a number of dramatic techniques.

Much of the dramatic activity requires children to act in role, and the roles change frequently. It is useful, therefore, to have some sort of 'cue' to facilitate these changes in role to help the lessons run smoothly; lighting is suggested here.

### Context of the lessons

The children are first told that they are going to do some 'time travelling', starting in a museum, looking at some ancient objects from Celtic times, and then travelling back to see what it might really have been like to live in those times.

They are also going to have the chance to meet the great Celtic Queen, Boudicca.

The classroom is arranged like a museum for the beginning of the lesson, with artefacts, replicas and pictures of artefacts arranged on tables around the room.



### LESSON 1

#### Objective:

#### History:

- Historical enquiry Find out about the events, people and changes studied from an appropriate range of sources of information, eg artefacts, pictures, accounts.

#### Activities:

The teacher explains that the children are in a museum, and they are the curators, the people in charge of the exhibits.

The children act in role as museum curators, examining the artefacts, and speculate as to their purpose or use.

#### Plenary:

They present their theories at a 'research meeting'.



## LESSON 2

### Objectives:

#### History:

- Chronological understanding  
Place events, people and changes into correct periods of time.

#### Literacy Framework: Traditional stories:

- Group discussion and interaction  
Plan and manage a group task.
- Drama:  
Perform a scene making use of dramatic conventions.

#### Activities:

Children examine a picture of a Celtic village. They describe it and compare it to a modern day village, looking for similarities and differences. They consider how long ago such a village would have existed and use a timeline to trace back to the Celtic period.

The teacher lowers the lights in the room and asks the children to imagine what life might have been like for the people who live in a Celtic village like the one they have just seen. She explains that they are now travelling in time back to the age of the Ancient Celts. The teacher adopts the role of a fellow villager, who welcomes the tribe into the meeting hall. The children are encouraged to take on the role of Ancient Celts, surrounded by some of the things they would have used in everyday life.

The objects are sorted into groups according to their function, ie all the domestic objects are grouped together separating out those used for cooking and those used for other things, such as jewellery, combs etc. Other objects are sorted into sets of tools or weapons.

The teacher organises the children to work in groups and allocates each group one of the objects.

In groups, children talk about and enact the moment when the object was lost. For example, a child may be eating from a bowl, which is dropped on the floor when she runs to her mother. Or perhaps a tool might be broken, and thrown with other useless objects onto a rubbish heap. The children decide on various different scenarios, which they rehearse together.

#### Plenary:

Out of role, the group views the enactments using the criterion of likelihood. They give critical feedback to each group.

## LESSON 3

### Objectives:

#### History:

- Historical enquiry  
Find out about the events, people and changes studied from an appropriate range of sources of information, eg artefacts, pictures, accounts.



### Literacy Framework: Traditional stories:

- Group discussion and interaction  
Plan and manage a group task.

- Drama:  
Perform a scene making use of dramatic conventions.

### Activities:

Children examine further pictures of Celtic villages:

- In groups, children establish 'families', deciding on the role of each person in the group.
- Each family creates a tableau of life in the village, for example, feeding the cows, milking, digging, washing clothes, scraping hides, sewing, cooking, etc.
- Each 'villager' speaks his/her thoughts in turn as they carry out their jobs.
- In the same groups, each family creates a short sequence of still images representing a typical day in the life of the village.

### Plenary:

Each group then adds a narrative to their sequence and presents their work to the rest of the class.

## LESSON 4

### Objectives:

#### History:

- Historical interpretation  
Recognise that the past is represented and interpreted in different ways.
- Historical enquiry  
Find out about the events, people and changes studied from an appropriate range of sources of information, eg artefacts, pictures, accounts.

### Literacy Framework: Traditional stories:

- Group discussion and interaction  
Plan and manage a group task.
- Drama  
Perform a scene making use of dramatic conventions.

### Citizenship

- Preparing to play an active role as citizens  
Why and how rules and laws are made and enforced, why different rules are needed in different situations and how to take part in making and changing rules.

### Introduction:

The teacher raises the issue of conflict. She outlines some of the situations which might cause conflict within the village or with neighbouring villages and tribes. For example, food might be stolen, or cattle taken away by neighbours. The teacher poses the question, 'How does the village make decisions?' She explains that this is the problem which the class needs to solve in their roles as Ancient Celts.

### Activities:

- Again, in a dimmed room, the children assume their roles in order to become once more the Ancient Celts.
- The children establish a ritual for turn-taking at meetings. For instance, they may use an object which is passed from person to person which gives them the right to speak.
- The teacher sets up a village meeting; villagers share news and stories.
- The meeting is interrupted by a 'stranger' (Teacher in Role as a messenger from the Romans), bringing news of the arrival of the Romans and a warning about a very evil woman called Boudicca. The messenger reads out to the meeting a description of Boudicca and a warning sent to their village by the Roman governor:

*There is a most dangerous enemy near to your village, who goes by the name of Boudicca. She is very clever and more intelligent than you would expect a woman to be. In stature she is very tall. If you have the bad luck to see her, her appearance is terrifying. As she glances towards you, her eyes are most fierce and her voice is harsh. You can recognise her easily, by her immense size and the great mass of the tawniest hair which is so long that it falls to her hips. Around her neck wears a large golden necklace. She wears a tunic of colours over which a thick mantle is fastened with a brooch. She is now usually seen grasping a spear to aid in terrifying all who have the misfortune to see her. You are urged not to let this woman into your village or to listen to her.*

After the stranger's departure, the villagers discuss what they should do if Boudicca does come to the village.

### Plenary:

They vote and a decision is made.

## LESSON 5

### Objectives:

#### History:

- Historical interpretation  
Recognise that the past is represented and interpreted in different ways.

### Literacy Framework: Traditional stories:

- Group discussion and interaction  
Plan and manage a group task.
- Drama:  
Reflect on how working in role helps to explore complex issues.  
Perform a scene making use of dramatic conventions.

### Citizenship

- Preparing to play an active role as citizens  
Why and how rules and laws are made and enforced, why different rules are needed in different situations and how to take part in making and changing rules.



### Activities:

The class re-assembles in role as Ancient Celtic villagers. They resume their discussions about Boudicca and what they think of what they have heard.

- A message comes from a neighbouring Celt, who rushes into the meeting out of breath – the Great Leader is about to arrive.
- The villagers make preparations, according to their view of Boudicca.
- Boudicca (Teacher In Role) arrives. The villagers receive her and sit down to listen to what she has to say. They are impressed by her fine clothes and royal appearance – signified, perhaps by a cloak:

*I am Queen Boudicca of the Iceni people. We are good, honest people, who work hard like you and have much to lose from these evil invaders, the Romans. I do not come just as a Queen however. I come as one who has had terrible wrong done to me and to my family. I have seen my own treasures stolen by the Romans, treasures and lands that were left to me by my dear dead husband. I have been whipped and beaten, and so have my daughters, in front of our own people.*

*But we have fought against them so well that now these brave legions are hiding in their camps, afraid what might happen next. They will not be able to stop us in our armies of thousands when we charge and beat them. We have right and justice on our side, for we need revenge for what they have already done. We must fight them to win or die in the attempt.*

- Boudicca (TIR) sweeps out of the meeting and the villagers begin to talk about her. They discuss what she seems like, compared with what the Roman messenger said the day before.
- The villagers realise that Boudicca brings prospects of war. They discuss what they should do. Will they support Boudicca or not? A vote is cast and the decision made.

### Plenary:

- The children think about their decision; were they right? Should Boudicca fight the Romans?
- On the eve of the battle, if they could give advice to Boudicca, what would it be?
- The children form a 'Conscience alley' – two parallel lines of children. As Boudicca walks down the 'alley' created, the children – still in role as villagers – whisper their advice to her. Afterwards 'Boudicca' can tell the group of the decision she has made: to fight. 'Prepare for battle!'
- The villagers position themselves to wait for the Roman attack. In small groups children create freeze frames showing the Celtic villagers at readiness.
- As the villagers 'look down from their fort', they hold their freeze frames and speak their thoughts aloud.
- The villagers continue to hold their freeze whilst the teacher reads the account of the battle. (see appendix)

As a conclusion to the series of lessons, the children consider how acting in role helped them to think about the problems faced by the Ancient Celts.

### What learning takes place in activities like these?

As can be seen, these activities relate to specific requirements in the history curriculum, the Framework for Literacy and the curriculum or Citizenship.

In the first lesson, the children are using the skills of historical enquiry to solve the problem of what the artefacts might be and what they might have been used for. They are developing skills in source analysis through asking and answering questions, while at the same time practising their dramatic skill of role play. Lessons two and three develop their sense of chronology; they are travelling back in time and the teacher could emphasise this point through the use of devices to illustrate the 'distance' they are going, such as a timeline or a line of string carefully scaled so that they can 'measure' back to the Celtic period. They are extending their sense of period, through the work with pictures of reconstructed villages and through the use of drama, their historical imagination.

Lessons 4 and 5 begin to introduce notions of decision-making and conflict resolution, issues related to citizenship education. The children are also introduced to the idea of different versions of Boudicca, along with the decision about whether to take her side or not. Throughout the series of lessons, the children have ample opportunity to communicate their historical understanding through drama and speaking and listening. The children who took part in these lessons found them thoroughly enjoyable because they were both inclusive in their approach and motivating for all who took part. They are not likely to forget their experiences of Boudicca and Celtic life.

### Appendix

The teacher can choose which battle to read about at the end depending on the effect they wish to produce, since Boudicca won several battles, but of course, lost her final one. The following websites contain some different brief accounts:

#### The final battle

[www.romans-in-britain.org.uk/](http://www.romans-in-britain.org.uk/)  
[www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic\\_figures/boudicca](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/boudicca)

#### The battle of Colchester

[www.24hourmuseum.org.uk](http://www.24hourmuseum.org.uk)

#### The sacking of London

[www.24hourmuseum.org.uk](http://www.24hourmuseum.org.uk)

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**Pat Hoodless** is Senior Lecturer in History Education, Institute of Education, MMU.

## ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

Pupils' interest in archaeology never seems to waver and many schools have established good links with local archaeological officers. One of the best initiatives is taking place in North Yorkshire. Children from primary schools there are taking part in "Time Travellers" a scheme giving hands on experience of archive resources and archaeological artefacts. It is a partnership involving the Record Office, the County Council's Historical Environment Record, Yorkshire Museums and Community Archaeology Ltd. Contact: [www.northyorks.gov.uk/archives](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/archives)

## BLACK HISTORY

"The First Black Britons" is a DVD aimed at Key Stage 2 through to Key Stage 4. In it, Gary Beadle explores black Britons from the Napoleonic Wars to the imperial age visiting archives, museums and sites in London, Liverpool, Windsor, Barbados and Jamaica focusing in depth on the hidden history of the West India Regiment. There are 3 x 18-minute episodes. See [www.swettpatootie.co.uk](http://www.swettpatootie.co.uk) for further information.

Two recent resources from BBC Active:

- "Famous people: Gandhi/Mandela";
- "Black Britons from Roman Times to the Second World War" – 20x20-minute programmes covering people such as Francis Barber, a black plantation worker who worked as Dr Johnson's assistant and Noor Inayat Khan, a female Asian secret agent working in Paris in the Second World War.

Contact 0870 830 8000 or [www.bbcactive.com/schoolshop](http://www.bbcactive.com/schoolshop)

QCA have produced a bibliography for teaching and learning about multi-ethnic histories especially in key stages 2 and 3. It provides details of web and print resources.

It can be downloaded from [www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_12071.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_12071.aspx)

## CROSS-CURRICULAR WORK

If you are looking for some ideas for a cross-curricular theme, you could do worse than look at the resource produced by The British Postal Museum and Archive (BPMA)'s recent product. "First Class" is a resource pack on stamps aimed at teachers of Key Stages 1,2 and 3 with activities on mathematics, history, citizenship, art and design and technology. There are fact files, activity sheets, documents and teacher notes. Email [info@postalheritage.org.uk](mailto:info@postalheritage.org.uk) for a free copy or download from [www.postalheritage.org.uk/firstclass](http://www.postalheritage.org.uk/firstclass) Online you can access supporting resources such as images, documents and a sound file.

This very active archive now has printed copies of its two free educational resources, "Last Post" based on the theme of the post in World War 1. Designed to support teaching of history, citizenship and literacy with a strong emphasis on Remembrance, the resources cover the age range from Key Stage 1 to 4. Further details from Louise Mitton on 020 7239 2574 or see [www.postalheritage.org.uk](http://www.postalheritage.org.uk)

Another idea aimed specifically at Key Stage 1 was published in a recent "Humanities" section of the TES Magazine. Michelle Dexter from Lincoln Manor Leas Infant School focused on Mary Anning, the fossil hunter, for a cross-curricular topic on fossils. It involves work on the role of archaeologists and how evidence is gathered. The pupils were introduced to recording techniques and produced an archaeological report. Use was made of a local museum loan box consisting of local historical remains. The cross-curricular topic also involved literacy and art work.

## ENGAGING MINDS

The Engaging Minds Schools Programme is produced by Times Media and is aimed at primary and secondary teachers. Signing up enables teachers to be kept current with forthcoming features to be published by the Times and Sunday Times and to request free activity packs on a range of themes. The first theme is Ancient Egypt. Email: [sophie.bickford@newsint.co.uk](mailto:sophie.bickford@newsint.co.uk)

## EVERY CHILD MATTERS

So much of the education agenda these days focuses on the contribution to Every Child Matters and the need to ensure that the needs of the child are paramount. Few teachers have yet considered the implications for history but the autumn edition of "Heritage Learning" from English Heritage includes an article on their contribution to the 5 outcomes of "Be Healthy", "Enjoy and Achieve", "Make a Positive Contribution", "Achieve Economic Well-being" and "Stay Safe". The article provides examples of possible activity for each of the outcomes.

## FAMILY HISTORY

The DCSH has awarded a contract for the "Who Do You Think You Are" programme to a consortium of the Geographical Association, The Historical Association and Paula Kitching. The aim is a programme in the summer term of 2008 to engage young people in issues of identity, citizenship and diversity.

## USING NEWSPAPERS AS A HISTORICAL SOURCE

Many teachers have enjoyed using newspapers with their pupils especially when teaching local history. Access, however, has been a problem for many teachers. A long-term project by the British Library may gradually solve this problem. The Historical Newspaper Project aims to put newspapers covering the period 1800-1900 on the web. This year they hope to add another 60 titles.

## INDUS VALLEY

A prize for individual or group work is again being available through The Young Historian Competition on the Indus Valley at Key Stage 2. Schools have until the end of July to enter. Details of past winners and teaching ideas, links and sources along with information on how to enter can be found at: [www.harappa.com/teach/yhistindex.html](http://www.harappa.com/teach/yhistindex.html) The 2007 winner was St Wilfrid's Primary School from Ripon, North Yorkshire who produced "The Amazing Indus Valley – a Musical Extravaganza".

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## HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Do remember:

- the Primary Education Conference is being held on 17 May 2008 at Trinity and All Saints. For details contact [www.history.org.uk](http://www.history.org.uk)
- all copies of "Primary History" from 1999 onwards are available online and can be searched by word, subject or author.

Go to: [www.history.org.uk/Primary\\_History.asp](http://www.history.org.uk/Primary_History.asp)

## PRIMARY SUBJECTS

The DCSF are funding "Primary Subjects", a resource for all primary subjects and involving all subject associations contributing an A4 foldover leaflet. The first edition will have as its theme, "Making Every Child Matter" and should be in schools in March 2008.

## IRELAND IN SCHOOLS

A number of schools have become aware of the excellent resources and teaching ideas available through the Ireland in Schools Project. Some have used the material as a variation from the usual historical characters covered such as Florence Nightingale. Some new resources have been produced on pirates and immigrants. <http://iisresource.org/pirates.aspx> examines the image and reality of pirates with particular reference to Grace O'Malley at Key Stage 1 and Drake at Key Stage 2. <http://iisresource.org/immigrants.aspx> examines the experience of immigrants in Victorian Britain covering areas such as settlement, worship and work

## THE NATIONAL SCENE: WATCH OUT IN 2008 FOR

Major implications are likely to stem from the 170 page Children's Plan which includes a review of the primary curriculum led by Jim Rose. The central concern is the overcrowded curriculum and the possible need to streamline. With no let up on the primacy of the core subjects and the introduction of modern languages, there must be some concern over the status of history, or at least history as a single subject. Meanwhile the major primary research programme led by Robin Alexander is likely to have a fair bit to say on the role of subjects. Changes also at Ofsted where Paul Armitage has retired as the lead for history. His replacement is Mike Maddison and we look forward to working closely with Mike. The Historical Association continue to be represented on the Ministerial Advisory Group. A recent meeting with the Schools Minister, Jim Knight, revealed that there is a current interest in the incorporation of the Olympic Games into the curriculum. Are there any interesting examples of innovative history which covers the Olympic Games? Another interesting element in the Children's Plan is the desire to have new teachers studying for a Master's Degree during their early years in the profession – the next logical stage after making it an all-graduate profession. Watch out also for developments on the support staff front. The continued rise in the number of teaching assistants including those with higher level status has implications for subject knowledge and training amongst this vital group.

## ENGLISH HERITAGE DEVELOPMENTS

A potentially useful resource for primary history may be available soon from English Heritage. With partners in Scotland and Wales, English Heritage has acquired the Aerofilms Collection of 800,000 aerial photographs covering the period 1919-1990s. This was the first commercial aerial photography company and their work covered the countryside, industrial and urban landscapes, buildings and archaeological sites. Eventually there will be public access.

A recent resource from English Heritage is "Teaching Primary History" (ISBN: 978-1-905624-80-8). It consists of two films – the first focusing on the Key Stage 1 classroom and the second on how knowledge and expectations have changed by key stage 2. The films include on-location footage and the way in which pupils respond to story, artefacts, puppet narrators and history games. The cost is £5.99p.

Also available is the "Talkin Series" of DVDs. This uses a chat show format with a studio audience of children. There are interviews with characters from the past including a Roman centurion, a Celtic farmer and Boudicca. The DVDs also include activity games, songs and rhymes. Costing £7.99p each, they include "Talkin' Roman", "Talkin' Saxon" and "Talkin' Vikings".

## TIME FOR THE SUBJECT

A team from the University of Manchester's centre for formative assessment studies has been carrying out a 10-year review of primary education on behalf of QCA. Their conclusion was that children are now taught an "alarming" amount of mathematics and English at the expense of science, arts and the humanities compared to 1997. Around half of teaching activity is on these two subjects. They lay the blame squarely on the testing of "core subjects". Primary schools were asked to list the percentage of teaching time for each subject for every school year. The report concludes "the narrow concept of a core curriculum – politically valued because it is tested – reinforces shallow teaching and learning practice. In other words teachers are being forced to teach for test... It is the extent of the diminution of the foundation, as evidenced by our data, which is alarming". Most foundation subjects had no more than an hour a week on average. Another key feature was the great combining of subjects. In the early 2000s, subjects such as history were largely taught separately (72% history in 2001) but their latest findings reveal that it now combined with other subjects for around 80% of the time. In 2003 only 17% schools thought that "Excellence and Enjoyment" was likely to lead to a return to "cross-curricular teaching" but 85% now think that has impacted on themed work.

## 'Who and where we are' Saturday Nov.1st 2008

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On Saturday 1st November, 2008 join other primary educators at  
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- Influence the changes sweeping through the primary sphere.

Bring your perspectives to issues such as how to develop cross-curricular studies and gaining understanding from looking at children's every day lives and environment. The conference will also look at how to bring the wider world in through school linking and equipping children as citizens for their sustainable future.

It's a great opportunity to inform your own professional development and take back ideas for that staff INSET.

There will also be stands available and you can see and buy new resources such as the Primary Project Box S1

To register your interest email: Lucy Oxley – [LOxley@geography.org.uk](mailto:LOxley@geography.org.uk)  
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