

Later Neolithic decorated pottery

adults must use when involved in present-day planning and economic management.

The printed materials which accompany the disc could even be used independently, for the teachers' handbook offers a clear, basic introduction to prehistory. So often it is hard to associate a flint scraper with the early hand that used it on an animal skin. The very word "artefact" can be a barrier to teacher and child alike, so the simple drawings are careful to give emphasis to the people. Their "sites" are "homes", their "artefacts" are "tools".

The booklet amplifies the computer program, and is tied in with the site cards which use actual plans and archaeological drawings for the site being examined by the kids. They demonstrate how accessible such visuals are to non-specialists, which should be heartening to those preparing pupils for GCSE. Here is "primary material" from the archaeologists presented for lower secondary approaches. The program should therefore be sustaining to teachers using new methods and to the learners coming to terms with real-life data sources.



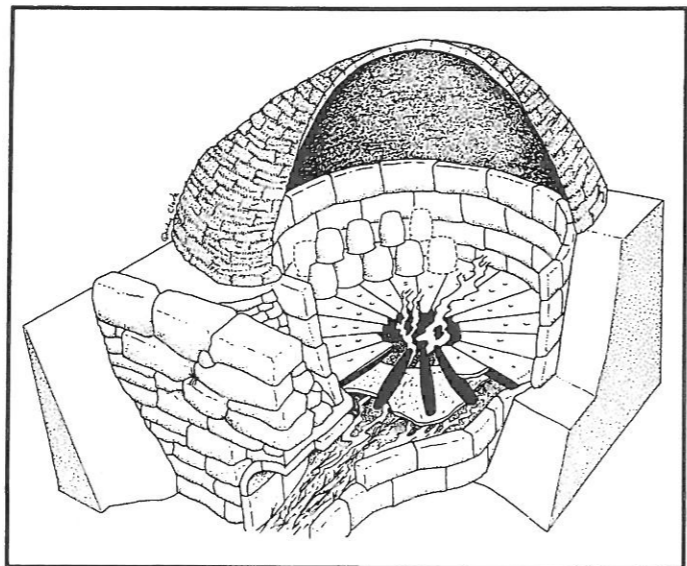
A bronze smith at work

Perhaps heritage education does not always lag behind in cosy traditional ways after all. This project is in the forefront of the growing use of computers for subjects in the humanities. It stretches and extends, so beware those Luddites who claim computers tie you to a little screen and a shackling logic. It will help your kids in their computer skills, but also get them arguing and debating about the land they live in.

It also cuts across the curriculum in asking for interpretive and persuasive skills in language, as well as convincing presentation techniques. One trial school produced a video which made Panorama look like a tea-party. The pupils will need these skills in an England which is rapidly changing. As they have to consider the financial implications of their decisions, they will all turn into budding economists too. By a marvellous chance, during the trials in schools for the project, a new gas field really was discovered in the area and the simulation became a reality with the planning enquiries happening inside and outside the classroom. The great god Relevance was satisfied!



A Mesolithic hunter wearing an antler "mask"



A Roman pottery kiln

The work was all done by Roger Martlew at Leicester University. He is one of that rare breed: part teacher, part archaeologist and part computer researcher. It is important that the material in the project is regarded as first class by both the professional archaeologist and the practising teacher, so we have been lucky to have him — a digger into the past with an eye on the future.

The project is expected to be published in January 1989 and will cost £20-£25 but English Heritage will be providing copies to most LEAs. If you would like further information, contact the Humanities Information Officer, MESU, Unit 6, Sir William Lyons Road, Science Park, Coventry, CV4 7EZ.

Sue Bennett (MESU) and Jim Lang (English Heritage).

## HARPHAM

## TOTAL EXCAVATION

Site Code: 5638

Estimated excavation time: 81 man-days.

Present land use on site: cereal crops.

Evidence in advance of pipeline: long narrow mound of chalk about 2m high; shallow depressions along each side.

Plough damage.

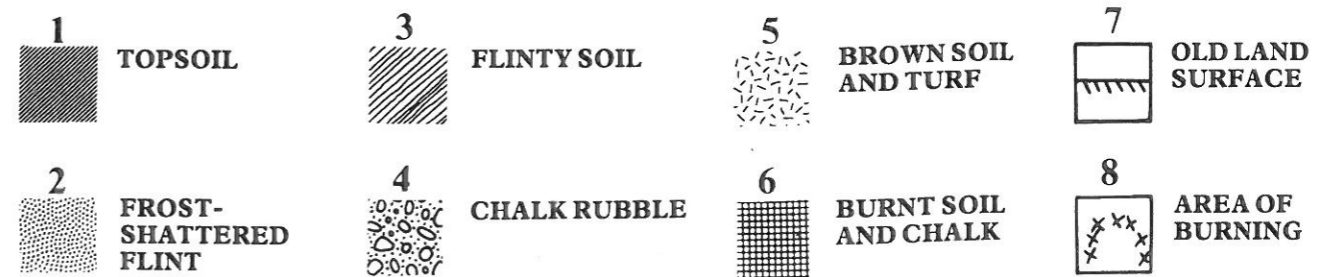
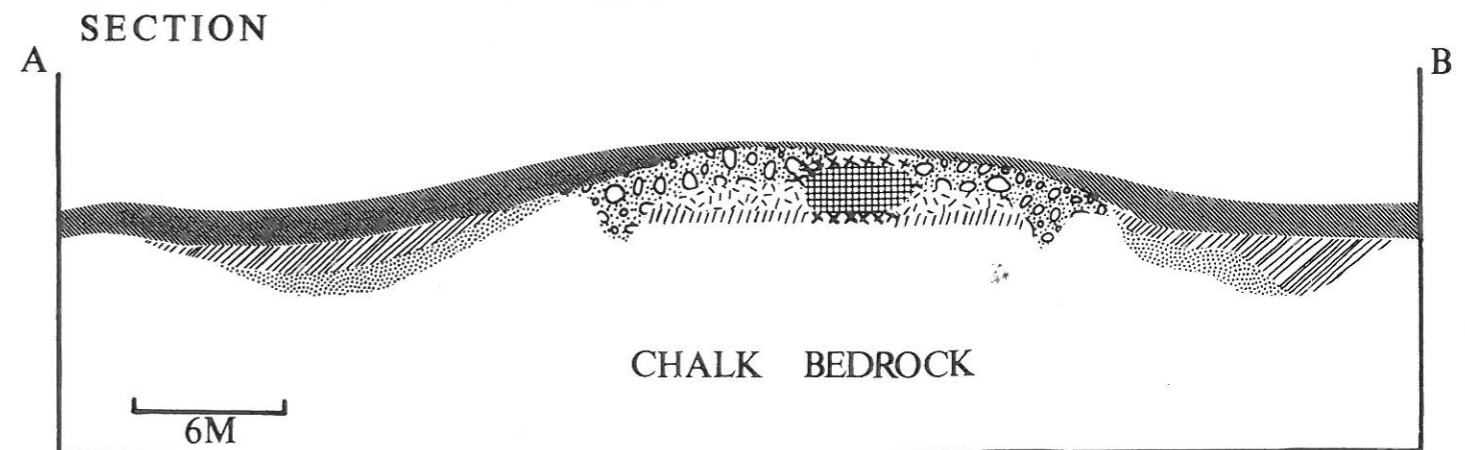
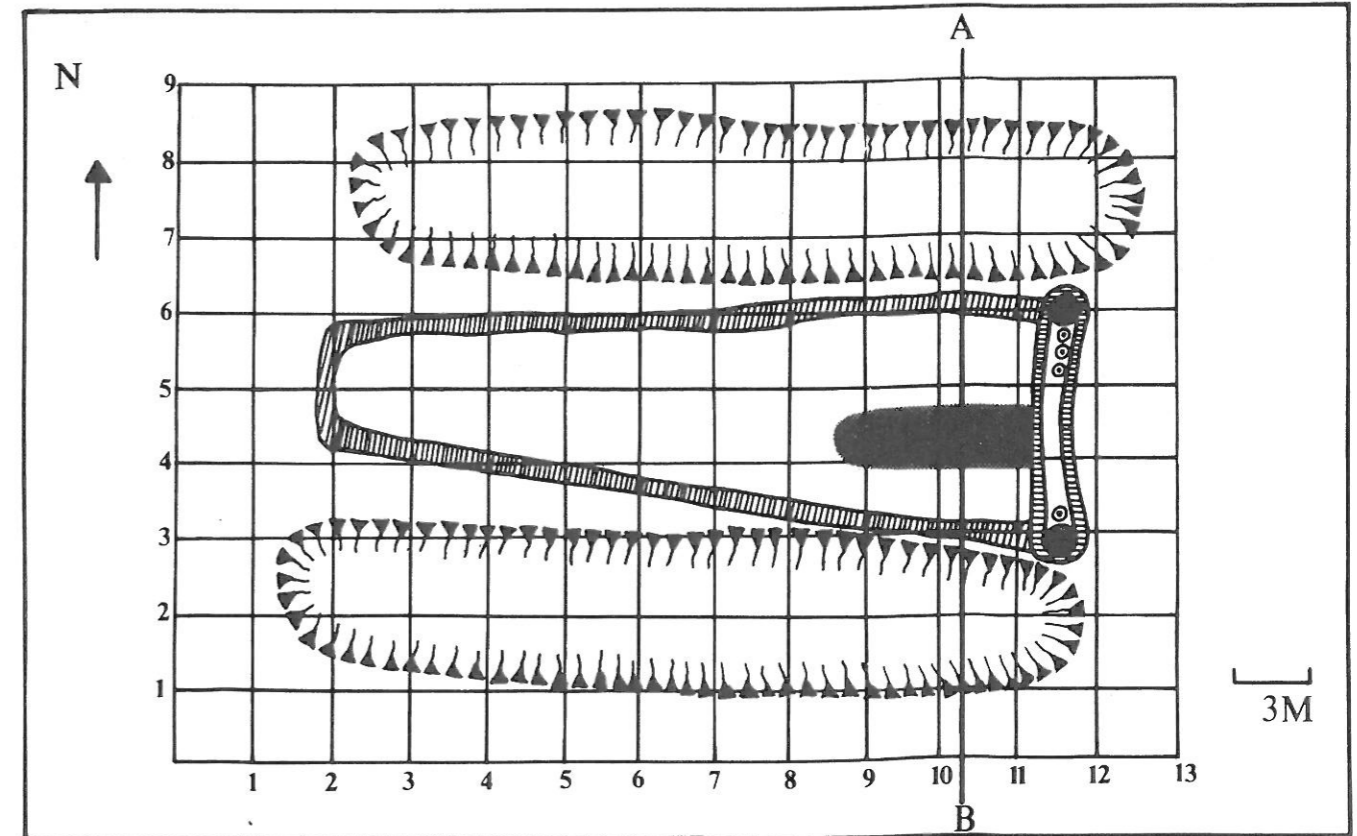
### Archaeologists' report

The site was built in a number of stages, starting with timbers set in a bedding trench: larger postholes were found along the eastern end. A mound of chalk rubble covered this, with evidence of burning at the eastern end.

Pottery, human bone, flint and stone artefacts were found.

### Research questions

1. What was the original purpose of the site?
2. How old is the site, and to what period does it belong?
3. Where could the large amounts of frost-shattered flint in the ditches have come from?
4. What does the distribution of the pottery tell us about the history of the site?
5. How does the position of this site compare with the position of other sites like it in East Yorkshire?



One of the site cards from the project

# One square kilometre

A local studies project gives schools the perfect opportunity for cross curricular as well as historical studies. Your area may appear dowdy, unprepossessing and lacking any historical potential. Don't despair. Our study had to be limited to suit the 9-13 humanities policy devised by the comprehensive school and its seven other feeder primary schools. Each primary school restricts its survey to a small area so that at secondary level the skills and concepts already acquired can be used to expand the study outwards. Since my primary school shares a site with the comprehensive we agreed to explore only the square kilometre round the school to avoid repetition.

This appeared to be the most unremarkable patch of a very ordinary town. Thousands pass through Newton Abbot, but few stop there. What is more, the potential "plums" of the town, its railway station, once so influential, its historic houses and its ancient links with the Newfoundland cod trade, were all outside our kilometre. However, we soon learnt that every street, building and ruined wall had a past and a story to tell.

There are obvious advantages in the "square kilometre" approach. We can go out for an hour or half-a-day as often as necessary, returning whenever the children decide to follow up a particular theme. We use the Autumn or Spring term, saving the Summer for longer visits to major sites. Cancellations through bad weather are easy and, since our traffic is much lighter in the winter, walking is less hazardous. Also, working mums can more easily find time to accompany us: they are a wonderful help and we could do no field work without them. We take two teachers with 60 children aged 9-11, sometimes the "special needs" teacher or a student, and as many mums as possible. Maps, worksheets and quizzes are a good idea occasionally, but they can be a nuisance on a windy February day!



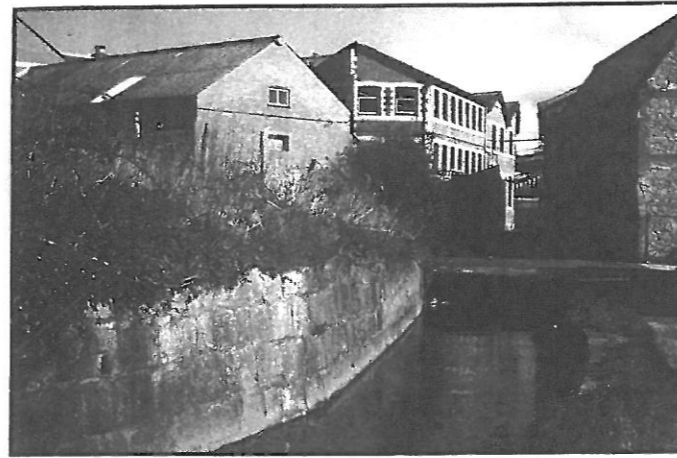
The town leat with an overflow sluice still intact

The greatest advantage must be the growing appreciation by the children of their own environment. They begin to see why it takes the form it does, how it has changed shape and will continue to do so. This always leads to a blossoming sense of responsibility or "stewardship". Many town schools now contain increasing numbers of "dis" children — disadvantaged, disillusioned, disaffected and definitely disruptive. We have a good share and they, of all pupils, need to appreciate their environment since they could be the vandals of the future.

We begin, very locally, by walking up to the crest of a hill. From here the lie of the land and the physical features which led to the siting of the town are easily pointed out. It stands at the confluence of two rivers where they become navigable, on an old tin and granite route from moors to sea, in the centre of a farming region and at the edge of a major clay extraction area. We can see the early settlement patterns — two historic sites and a Norman



The stone commemorating the declaration of William of Orange as King in 1688



The leat entering the town by a Victorian woollen mill and tannery

castle motte. On the walk back we find evidence of two medieval town centres, focused upon churches, which gradually developed into the two communities of today's town. Plenty of mapwork follows, using not only history but geography and maths too.

Then we walk the town leat, a time line in itself, which begins below an iron age settlement and flows past a medieval manor house, Victorian mills, the Edwardian market and under a modern multi-storey car park. It looks decidedly sludgy as it emerges in a mess of coke cans, but the little anecdotes we have collected help to bring to life a picture of how it looked when it drove the town's mills and fuelled its prosperity. Researching its course on old maps can be very challenging for children.

Gradually it becomes clear that this town, like so many, owes much of its prosperity to sheep, and a central theme emerges. From the middle ages onwards its heart has been the livestock market, which gave rise to industries connected with wool, leather and farming. Evidence of old mills, many no longer in existence, testify to past occupations. One Victorian family were so enterprising, prolific and influential that they became the "Dynasty" of the day.



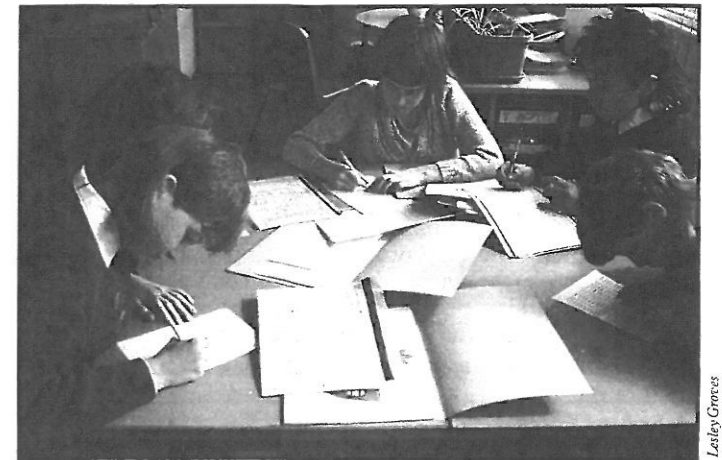
Handling a lamb in the market

A visit to the livestock market is a "must" since the past is best understood by an appreciation of the present. The market place is the living legacy of the town's past. Much provocative discussion comes after this visit and emotions run high. One child even became a vegetarian! When given a choice of how to record the visit, more children chose poetry than any other form of communication.

This year we were fortunate to be asked to a Dartmoor sheep farm to help with the lambing. Yes, it was beyond our kilometre, but chances like this to extend the project are not turned down by

opportunistic teachers! Watching a hardened, streetwise youngster birthing a lamb is a rare experience.

Most towns have had minor public figures whose story enlivens the past. Our kilometre contains the home and the grave of John Lethbridge, 18th century inventor of the first independent diving machine. A letter describing the machine in detail has led us into science and technology, as well as producing some amazingly impossible illustrations! The town also housed a fire-and-brimstone non-conformist preacher who, turned out of his living in the local church, conducted services illegally in a natural pit deep in the woods which our children visit. King Charles I came, as well as Oliver Cromwell (not together!) and a record of the banquet put on for Charles which included "ninety two rabbits, twelve sea larks, eleven curlews, twenty-one and a half dozen larks, two nunnets, six seapies and three peahens" stimulates lively discussion, artwork and drama. William of Orange's army camped here, whilst he was declared king in the town centre, not far from the school. An eye witness account of this army of 30,000 in procession gives rise to a rich variety of language work.



Analysing census returns

"Evidence" is a strong theme throughout the project and we have collected many first-hand sources which are used and interpreted by children. Copies of the census returns for 1881 in the nearest street to the school and the tithe map of 1830, with its schedule, were obtained from the County Records Office and Westcountry Studies Library. Like all schools in Devon, we have recently received a "parish pack" containing copies of all the relevant research material for our parish, thanks to the work of the Records Office, Manpower Services and Devon Library Services. Perhaps your local authority might take a hint! We researched old newspapers and collected many photographs and articles reprinted in current issues. Some primary evidence can be found simply by observing the locality, e.g. its street names or housing styles and by comparing old maps with new. Children find interviewing elderly inhabitants or conducting street surveys rewarding and it helps to forge links with the community. Traffic counts lead to maths work. The list is endless. It is the term which runs out before the possibilities are exhausted.

Secondary evidence, mainly in books, is easier to find. As well as the usual town guidebooks we have three local histories and a book of the memories of an old lady. We persuaded one author to come and speak to the children.

Since history becomes the present, we take our children to the local Town Council offices. We have always been enthusiastically received, and this year held a "mock" council meeting complete with our own Mayor (ably assisted by the real one) and an agenda. We also visit the District Council offices which are adjacent to an interesting Jacobean house. All the officers have been extremely helpful: we approach them well beforehand and always send copies of follow-up work afterwards.

Using the "one square kilometre" approach to a local study has taught me that history is not only the stuff of castles and mansions, but is all round us in the environment. It tells the story, not just of the great and famous, but of the common folk of the district from whom we have inherited so much.

Lesley Groves, Highweek Country Primary School, Newton Abbot, Devon.

# Supersites 2: Super entries!

'Supersites', for readers who have just joined us, is a competition aimed at encouraging children to investigate their built heritage so they may understand and enjoy it better. It is jointly organised by the Department of the Environment and English Heritage.

The first 'Supersites' competition involved studying aspects of historic houses in the London area; the second competition 'Supersites II' went national and involved the study of listed buildings in a school's own locality. There was an especial reason for bringing listed buildings to people's notice this year — by the end of 1989 the listing sections of English Heritage and the Department of the Environment will have completed a re-survey of the entire country. As a result of this, more buildings of historic interest will be listed and thus protected from demolition or unacceptable alteration.

Guidelines for the investigation were sent to interested schools. To enter the competition children had to channel their findings into a form able to be appreciated by others: a model; a wall chart; or a drama.

The judges' task was not easy. Eventually some entries were considered more outstanding than others. Classes and teachers responsible for these entries were invited to attend the prize-giving ceremony and a celebratory tea at the Banqueting House, Whitehall, on 26 May 1988.

On the day, Woodhill Primary School, Woolwich, began the ceremony by performing a play based on their research into a listed house near to the school, number 65, Wood Street.

After their confident performance, a few short speeches put the ceremony into context and the prize-giving commenced. Those

**Prize winners for the various categories were as follows:**



Woodhill Primary School performing their play

giving the prizes included Colin Moynihan, Environment Minister with responsibility for heritage (as well as sport); Lord Montagu, Chairman of English Heritage; Roger Finn, of BBC Newsround; and representatives of the organisations who sponsored the prizes (see below).

## The Norwich Union Awards (involving the study of one or more listed buildings in town or country).

- 8 years and under: Kempshott Infants School, Basingstoke, Hants. Project: Holly Cottage and the village of Collingbourne Ducis.
- 9-12 years: Thornby County Primary School, Estover, Plymouth, Devon. Project: Buildings in Plympton St Maurice.
- 9-12 years (runner up): Bramley Grange Junior School, Bramley, Rotherham, South Yorkshire. Project: Hellaby Hall, a 17th century mansion.
- 13-17 years: Baston School, Bromley, Kent. Project: The building of the Rectory, Hayes.

## The Campaign for the Countryside Awards (involving the study of one or more rural listed buildings).

- First prize: Abberley Parochial Primary School, Abberley, Worcs. Project: Abberley Stores, the local village shop (now closed).
- Second prize: Mount Carmel High School, Accrington, Lancs. Project: Rough Hey Farm, Oswaldtwistle.
- Special prize: Hampton First School, Hampton, Evesham, Worcs. Project: 64 and 66 Pershore Road.
- Sponsor: National Westminster Bank.

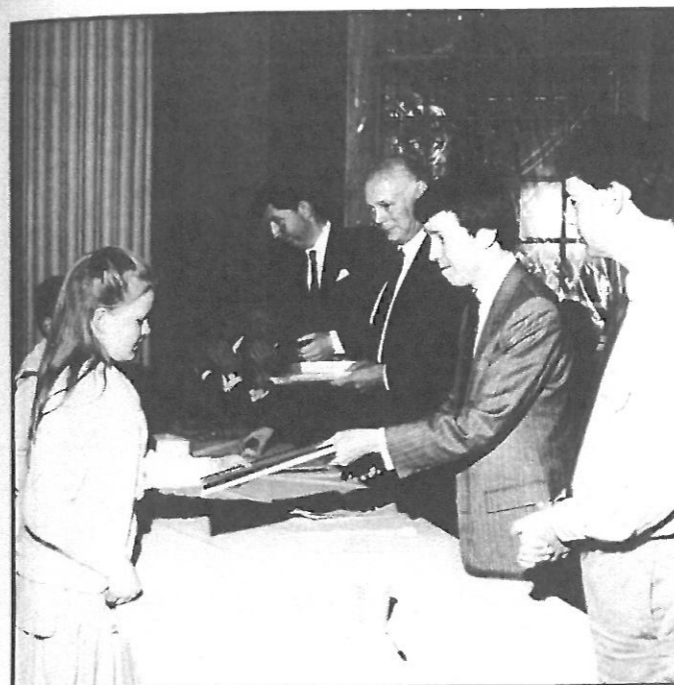
## The Railway Heritage Awards

- First prize: The Hamblett School, St Helens, Lancs. Project: The planned railway settlements around the Vulcan Foundry.
- Second Prize: Hale Preparatory School, Altrincham, Cheshire. Project: Hale Station.
- Sponsor: British Rail and the Railway Heritage Trust.

**Teachers' Prize** (involving writing an article on an educational project run in co-operation with a local heritage conservation group).  
**Winner:** Mrs Winifred Hogan, Mount Carmel High School, Accrington, Lancs. Project: Aspen Valley 'fairy caves' (which are actually derelict, bee-hived shaped, coke ovens).

## Extra Prize

Although not originally a prize-winner, a prize was awarded to Woodhill Primary School for their enjoyable dramatisation.



Reward for hard work

It was uplifting to see so many examples of good practice entered for the competition; for instance the computer-run model of the winding house and headstocks at Bestwood Village was obviously the culmination of thorough research and accurate recording.

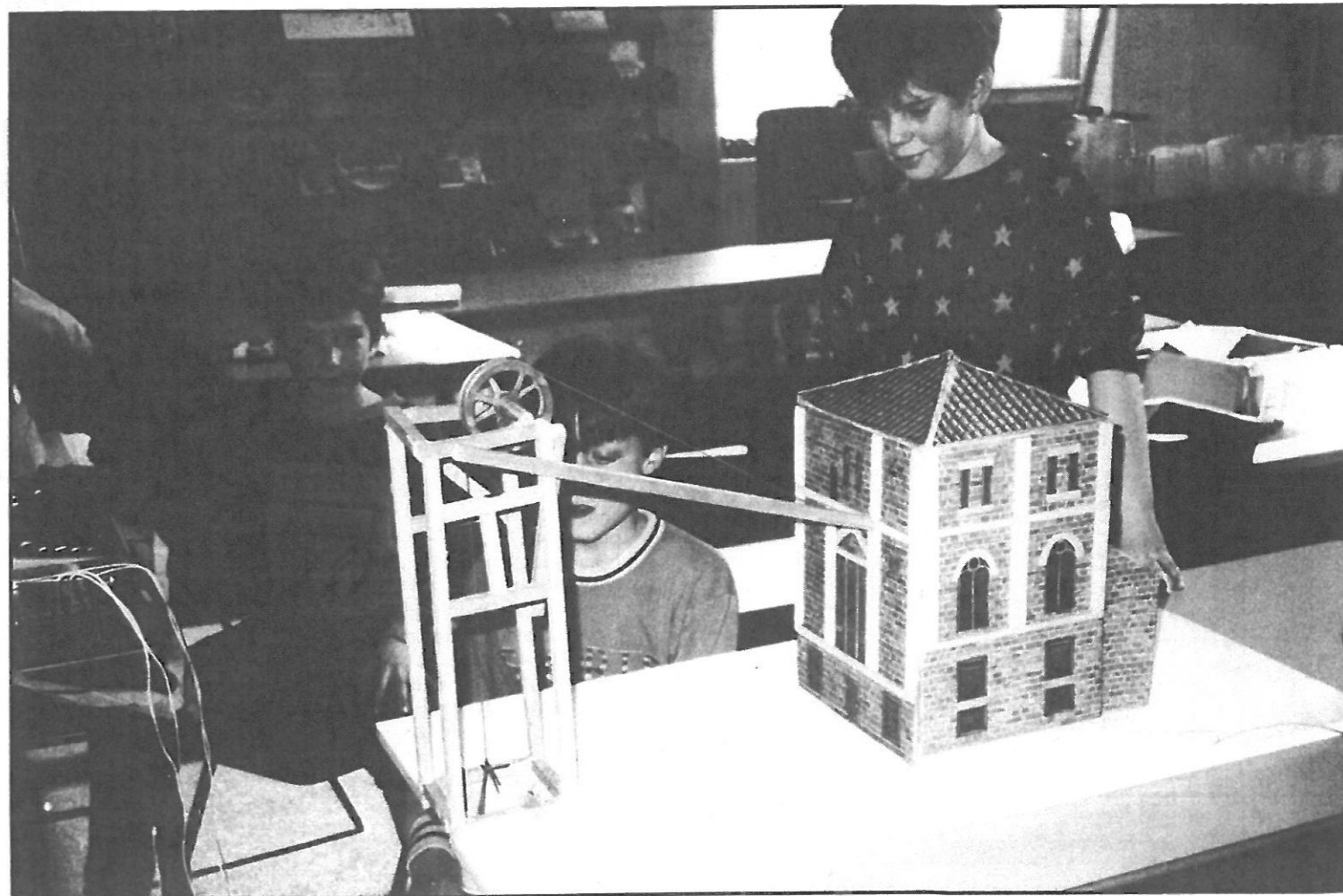
Drama, sent in on video or audio-tape, allowed children to develop a special feel for the past through actively re-constructing it. A particularly vivid script came from pupils at Baston School, Hayes, based on their research into local records.



Hamblett School in front of their prize-winning entry

Most schools however, preferred to submit wall charts. These showed history unearthed through a process of observation, recording, analysis and further research. Some also highlighted the problems that can arise when a building is abandoned or undergoes a change of use.

In-depth investigation was prominent in entries from the 9-12 age group. The wall chart from Hampton First School, Evesham, demonstrated the pupils' technique especially clearly. They had first made a preliminary tour of their building and listened to oral



Testing, testing, testing ...