

Primary History  
Problem Solving



OLIVER ASTON

a sight-seeing 'trip', whose days are numbered, surely.

All the practical ideas for preparatory, on-site and follow up work could easily be adapted to another part of the country and applied in teaching many other subjects such as maths, science, English and art as well as history itself.

For example the 'Stone Mason' activity asks the children to adopt the role of a visiting Inspector to Much Wenlock Priory and prepare a report for the local Abbot on the style and construction of the arches. There is ample opportunity here for written, calculation and art and design work on site, and for using card or clay to reconstruct and test observations later back in the classroom.

Other examples include the devising of an 'Electronic Guide' to a site encompassing the use of IT and the concept keyboard, local studies ideas such as 'Save our Town' and 'Civic Pride' which studies shop frontages and how an area might be improved in appearance.

A useful table gives practical suggestions on how one of these projects could link directly across each curriculum core subject. The author also includes a concise summary of the main elements of the recent History Working Group Final Report, which will be in itself valuable for anyone struggling with the density of the entire report; and adds his own positive thoughts on some of the challenges ahead and how problem-solving activities could fit into it all.

Amongst the comments from teachers themselves included, the inevitable question 'Yes, but will all this still be possible under the National Curriculum?' was asked and promptly answered by another 'of course, we must make sure that it is!'

As the author says in conclusion, 'Whatever the outcomes, history for primary children must remain enjoyable and exciting. It must stimulate interest in the past which will last into the future'.

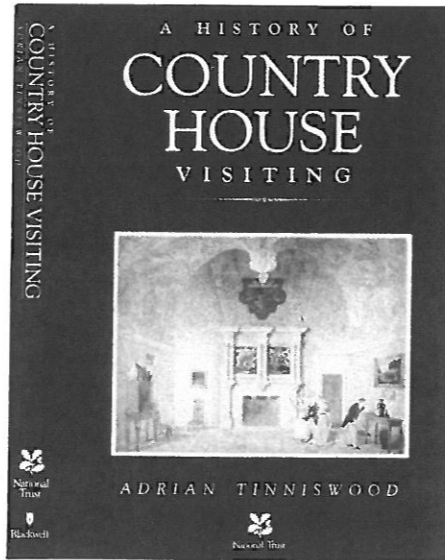
Full of good practical ideas, 'Problem Solving' is a bargain at £2.00 with full

colour illustrations, and should fire any teacher with fresh enthusiasm for tackling the problems they themselves need to solve.

Copies are available from:

Telford Teachers' Centre  
Hartsbridge Road  
Oakengates  
Telford TF2 6BA

Ken Glen  
Education Administrator,  
English Heritage



**A history of country house visiting: five centuries of tourism and taste**  
Adrian Tinniswood  
Basil Blackwell and the National Trust, 1989  
ISBN 0-631-14801-9  
£12.95

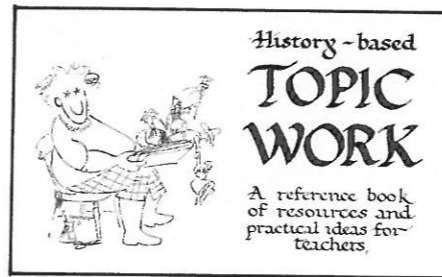
When a party visiting Strawberry Hill caused a breakage Horace Walpole complained that 'vulgar people always see with the ends of their fingers'. He did not, however, stop people visiting although by 1784 he was issuing a page of rules which limited groups to four and visits to the hours between twelve and three, and banned children. In common with other eighteenth century landowners he expected to allow complete strangers to be shown round his house for no more than a tip to his housekeeper, a tradition that has its roots in the medieval customs of hospitality.

Adrian Tinniswood traces the origin to country house visiting from these medieval traditions to the current commercial approaches. He takes in much more on the way: pilgrimage, cabinets of curiosities, the study of landscape and the past, the development of leisure and tourism, societies to protect our heritage. So much in fact that you sometimes wonder whether he isn't parting company a little with his theme.

There has been no general survey of this subject before and this book is the

product of wide research which has resulted in a collection of well-chosen quotes that I shall probably quarry for some of our own publications. The book will be of interest to teachers both as a study of the history of one particular leisure activity and as an analysis of changing attitudes to our built heritage.

Gail Durbin  
Regional Education Officer,  
South East and London Historic Houses,  
English Heritage.



**History-based Topic Work**  
A reference book of resources and practical ideas for teachers

Wiltshire County Council Education Department, 1987. £6.00 (Including post and packing).

Copies are available (Cheques to: Wilts County Council) from Advisory Services Division Education Department County Hall Trowbridge Wilts BA14 8JB

The publication of the National Curriculum History Working Group's Final Report in April 1990 provoked much discussion in the educational press.

Much of this centred on the future of history within a traditional topic-based framework and many schools and L.E.A.s must now be grappling with the implication of the Report and how the

recommended programmes of study can be integrated into the primary curriculum.

The Wiltshire document dates back to 1987 and so pre-dates the brave new world of primary history. Written primarily for use within its own L.E.A., the bulk of the booklet is taken up with sections arranged chronologically from 'Early Man' to 'The Twentieth Century' and is a comprehensive catalogue of resources including locations, reference books, cross curricular links, ideas, information and examples of successful work in primary schools.

Of more general interest to teachers outside Wiltshire are the sections on planning a visit, history through drama, and, very topically, a thematic approach to history based topic work. Here, examples of a developmental study (e.g. 'The History of Shopping') are outlined with direct links to other curriculum areas. The possible drawbacks of this approach are also mentioned: 'It can lead to superficiality and a race through history with stress laid on factual knowledge rather than the acquisition and consolidation of historical skills.' Many would say that the National Curriculum, especially at Key Stage 2, suffers from the same drawbacks.

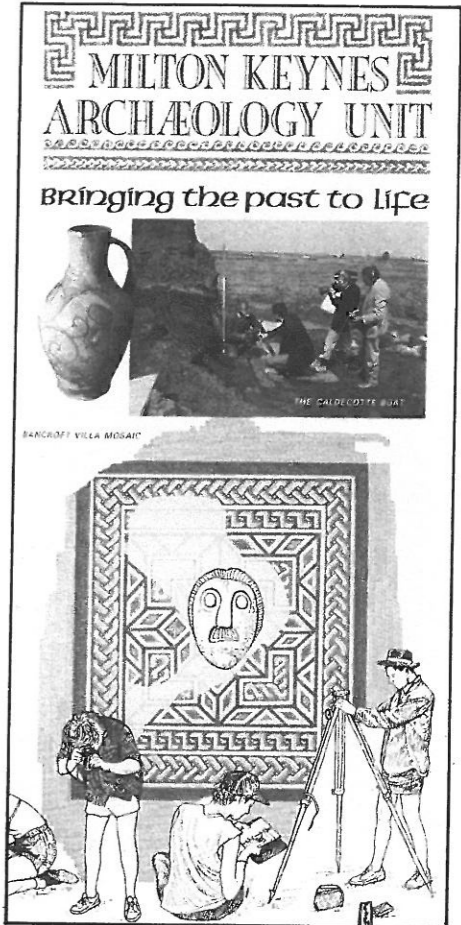
A useful resource for all primary teachers, it would be interesting to know if Wiltshire plans to update the booklet with the new attainment targets in history incorporated into the contents.

Oliver Aston  
Primary History Adviser, Shropshire

**Bringing the Past to life**  
Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit

If you've ever visited Milton Keynes, you may have puzzled over a Roman Mosaic fixed to a wall in the plate glass shopping centre, or why so many city roads have unusual or historic names?

The Archaeology Unit was set up in 1971 to investigate sites threatened by the growth of the new city, which covers the most intensively studied archaeological



landscape in the country.

There is now a huge resource of material available for study. Sadly as yet, there is no museum, so the Unit tries to fill this gap for schools locally. There is a large exhibition of finds that can be viewed by appointment in the historic grounds of Bradwell Abbey. They are keen to involve children in experiencing Archaeology at first hand through active learning, finding out, handling and questioning during visits to excavations or in workshops. On Sunday 15 July, five local schools will be recreating life at Bancroft Roman Villa in a spectacular culmination of a term's creative detective work. They are also planning a national

**Primary History**  
Problem Solving  
Oliver Aston  
Shropshire Education Department, 1990,  
£2.00 (& 20p post and packing)

Over the last three years almost 200 primary teachers have attended a series of in-service courses exploring approaches to learning using problem-solving activities with historic sites.

This highly-recommended booklet, prepared by Primary Adviser Oliver Aston, draws on the experiences of the teachers and is packed with 24 examples of the more successful project ideas that were produced, as well as suggesting how these can be directly linked in to National Curriculum Programmes of Study.

The booklet should be a big help to any primary teacher daunted by the prospect of organising site visits, showing their potential as an integral part of the teaching timetable, rather than merely as

Linking a problem to National Curriculum core subjects

| DEVELOPMENT   | SCIENCE   | MATHS  | ENGLISH   |
|---|---|--|---|
| Teacher provides suitable evidence to accompany story; e.g. photographs of what the Corbetts may have looked like; relevant artefacts; stimulus display of costume and utensils |   |  | AT1 • Discuss the family characters. (Extracts from 'Anna Then and Anna Now' by Josette Blanco Young Library: 1989) |
| Visit to the cottage with the problem of the family meal as the investigation point. Seek evidence on cooking and accommodation   | AT3 • What would the Corbetts eat during a week and was this a healthy diet for working people?                     | AT4 • Measuring the rooms. How did 7 people eat?   |   |
| Set up structured play area as the living area/kitchen in Squatter Cottage  | AT12 • Use of tape recorder   | AT8 • Weekly sequence of events to be carried out in the play area. Different jobs on different days | AT2 • Working week rhyme to determine sequence 'Wash on Monday ...'   |
| Prepare an authentic meal   | AT1 • How the food would have been cooked   | AT1 • Planning the layout of the area  |   |
| Develop a Squatter Cottage garden patch   | • What happens to the food if cooked for different lengths of time, or prepared differently (e.g. chopped smaller)? | AT8 • Measuring using non-standard units, drawing and constructing. Planning a possible meal         | AT2.3 • Evidence collection and recording   |
| Devise and manufacture the Squatter Cottage Cookbook for other children in the school   | AT6 • How was food preserved? What happens to food if left?   | AT12 • Categorise types of vegetables and monitor growth   | AT4 • Use correct terminology   |
|   | AT2 • What do we need to do to grow similar herbs and vegetables in the same way as the Corbetts?                   |  | AT3 • Use W.P. to produce cookbook  |
|   | AT13 • How could we improve production?   |  |   |

We have just published our new edition of our **Information for Teachers** booklet. If you would like a free copy please complete and return the slip below.

**Information for Teachers** contains full details on how to book a free group visit, together with practical ideas for preparatory, on-site and follow up work, and up-to-date listings of all English Heritage sites.

Please return this slip to:

English Heritage Education Service, Keysign House, 429 Oxford Street, London W1R 2HD



Please send me a copy of the new **Information for Teachers** booklet:

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ADDRESS .....

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