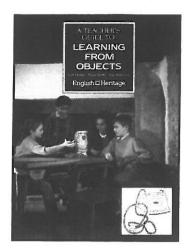
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The Activities booklet is well laid out and contains a variety of approaches to



Kings in Conflict: Ireland in the

Educational Resource Pack Ulster Museum and Public Record Office Northern Ireland 1990. ISBN 0-905691-29-6 Pack £7.00, Slides £5.00 Plus £1.00 post and packing Available from: Public Record Office. 66, Balmoral Avenue, Belfast, BT9 6NY.

This educational resource pack, whose format owes much to lessons learnt from the National Maritime Museum's Armada Discovery Pack, frames those events formative in Ireland's recent history, a struggle still pre-eminently relevant today. Initially, briefly set within a European context, a balanced expose of the events themselves is told through the words. illustrations and maps of contemporary participants on both sides of the struggle in Ireland.

This joint venture by the Ulster Museum and Public Record Office for Northern Ireland uses material from both collections to illustrate the topic but draws from other important collections to supplement the pack where necessary. The pack itself has been written by a group including teachers and museum educators. The A4 pack comprises a 31 page Activities booklet offering suggestions to help teachers exploit the pack and a 76 page Sources booklet. The pack also includes four posters: an A1 colour poster for the 1990 Ulster Museum Exhibition on this topic using paintings of the kings embroiled in the struggle, another colour poster of similar size and format reproducing William Petty's map of the counties of Ireland, a third poster carrying a painting of the Battle of the Boyne and a final poster includes a contemporary map of Londonderry and the fine Thomas Phillips coloured View of Limerick of 1685. The optional slide pack to accompany the written material comprises 20 slides mainly portraits of the main protagonists but also 3 slides of battles and one 'historic

learning the topic including a familiarisation game for the protagonists and another role playing game allowing a personal progression through the main events and exploring its personal implications for the participant. Worksheets on the historical problems are included together with a section on looking at portraits to hunt for clues, an activity sheet approach to analyse the motives and fears of the participating factions. A sensitive attempt is made to approach the propaganda war of the period. There are also hints on using the documentary and visual evidence. Although most of the activities are closely related to the historic development of the action there is also a general topic on 'soldiering in the seventeenth century' and suggestions for a local study.

The Sources book is clearly set out and plentifully and usefully illustrated, offering personal accounts of all the focal points in the development of the struggle from December 1688 until October 1691. The backgrounds of each of the witnesses are also explored so that an attempt can be made to evaluate their evidence.

This pack is a valuable exercise in exploring a complex situation, viewing an Irish problem in terms of European and Royal politics and helping participants to understand how different interpretations can arise from the same data. Although the pack was designed to accompany the 1990 Ulster Museum exhibition it is a valuable resource and stands well on its own.

Ross Jellicoe Regional Education Officer, North, English Heritage



Avebury Reconsidered from the 1660s to the 1990s

by: Peter I Ucko, Michael Hunter, Alan I Clark, Andrew David ISBN 0-04-445919 Unwin Hyman 1991 - 2 volumes, £60.00

The prehistoric monuments in and around Avebury, designated as a World Heritage Site, have been headline news over the last few years: new archaeological sites have been discovered; three public enquiries concerning proposed leisure industry 'threats' have been opened (two are still to report); and the sites' custodians, English Heritage, have brought together interested parties to develop a long term management plan for the area. Avebury Reconsidered sets out to "make a crucial contribution to current debates about policies for the conservation and management of the entire Avebury area" and is seen as 'essential reading for all concerned with the interpretation of this internationally important site'. If ever

there was a right time for such a book it is

Avebury Reconsidered traces the antiquarian interest in the Avebury area an interest on which much of our late twentieth century understanding of the monuments rests. It discusses early plans of Avebury circle, that have recently come to light through research carried out by two of the authors, and relates these in minute detail to other early plans and sketches. In doing so, the authors question not only what early antiquarians saw, but what they were trying to portray — and clearly demonstrates that the two were not always the same. This review of early plans is then complimented by discussion of recent non-destructive archaeological investigation within the main circle. A final chapter discusses the late twentieth century pressures on the monuments. The second volume contains a series of transparencies and plates referred to in the main text that can be overlain and juxtaposed to vividly 'bring to life' the inconsistencies and problems associated with the early plans.

The authors suggest that, Avebury Reconsidered is a 'frustrating' book. There seem to be three main reasons for this. First, a frequently over-elaborate English style, coupled with the occasionally excessive use of technical terminology, often distracts the reader from an extremely complex argument.

Second, there is no tabulated chronology listing the various antiquarian visits and plans: such a table would be of immense assistance to those readers not as familiar with the material as the authors. Third, (and the reason suggested by the authors for the frustrating nature of the book!), is the very nature of the evidence under scrutiny which is frequently unclear and incomplete, thereby making any analysis or discussion necessarily somewhat subjective and provisional.

This third point really holds the message of the whole book. What we see, what we understand, and how we interpret are all aspects of our own particular, individual interests, beliefs and cultural background: the same was true for those who studied Avebury before us. By charting as much of this background persona of the early antiquarians as is presently possible the authors of Avebury Reconsidered have made a significant contribution to the history of the monument that serves to act as the primary archive for its contemporary interpretation.

The great sadness of this book is its price: very few copies will find their way into private collections or even into college or school libraries. Given the important messages on perception it holds this is unfortunate especially as the transparencies and activities that could be designed around them could be wonderful teaching aids with older children and students. If only such material were easily available...

Peter Stone, Regional Education Officer, South West, English Heritage.

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