

History Mysteries

Gill Tanner and Tim Wood
A & C Black, 1992.

Cooking ISBN 0-7136-3491-X
At School ISBN 0-7136-3490-1
Travelling ISBN 0-7136-3492-8
Washing ISBN 0-7136-3493-6
£5.99 each.

Turn of the Century

A & C Black, 1991.
Rubbish, Gill Tanner
ISBN 0-7136-3351-4
Keeping Clean, Eleanor Allen
ISBN 0-7136-3352-2
Babies, Jenny Wood
ISBN 0-7136-3353-0
£5.95 each.

A & C Black have published two new history series which both teachers and pupils will enjoy using to explore the details of recent social history.

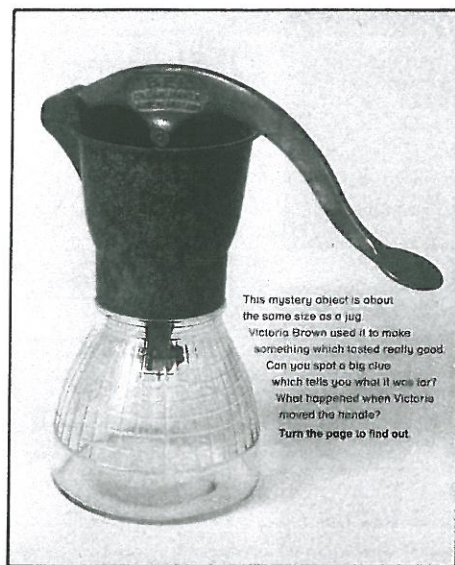
'Turn of the Century' is a series for junior school children. I read the ones listed with great interest but there are seven books in the series (including Breakfast, In the post and Washday).



Each book has a timeline at the beginning which lists significant developments in its topic from pre-1880s to 1980 and one or two important events for each decade: the death of Queen Victoria, and the invention of penicillin are shown separately as a general background to this. At the end each book has a 'How to find out more' chart. This has suggestions about places to go and people to ask with some useful questions. Meanwhile the books themselves have plenty of facts to give children an understanding of how different things were. They use quoted information from real people born in 1900 and are illustrated with many pictures of modern children personally investigating the objects.

Each book is full of fascinating memorabilia from museum displays. In 'Christmas' half-forgotten rituals such as 'Stir-up Sunday' and Christmas Goose Clubs, in 'Rubbish' itinerant tinkers who mended people's buckets and bowls can be investigated. 'Rubbish' also shows readers how many uses people found for things as diverse as meat bones and hair clippings which we now throw away. 'Keeping Clean' has some fascinating facts about lavatories, while in 'Babies' I particularly enjoyed the illustration of a modern girl modelling a vaccination guard made of metal and rag.

The 'History Mysteries' series is possibly aimed at slightly younger children. All the books feature the same



This mystery object is about the same size as a jug. Victoria Brown used it to make something which tasted really good. Can you spot a big clue which tells you what it was for? What happened when Victoria moved the handle? Turn the page to find out.

family — in 1990, 1960, 1930 and 1900. Each book has twelve 'mystery objects' which are illustrated and described. Over the page the object is shown in use by members of the appropriate family and its use is explained. A chart at the end shows all the objects and their 1990 equivalents.

Finally parents and teachers are given an extra paragraph of information about each object and there is a list of things to do. Photos of actual objects are combined with drawings of them in use among the imaginary families in a very satisfying way.

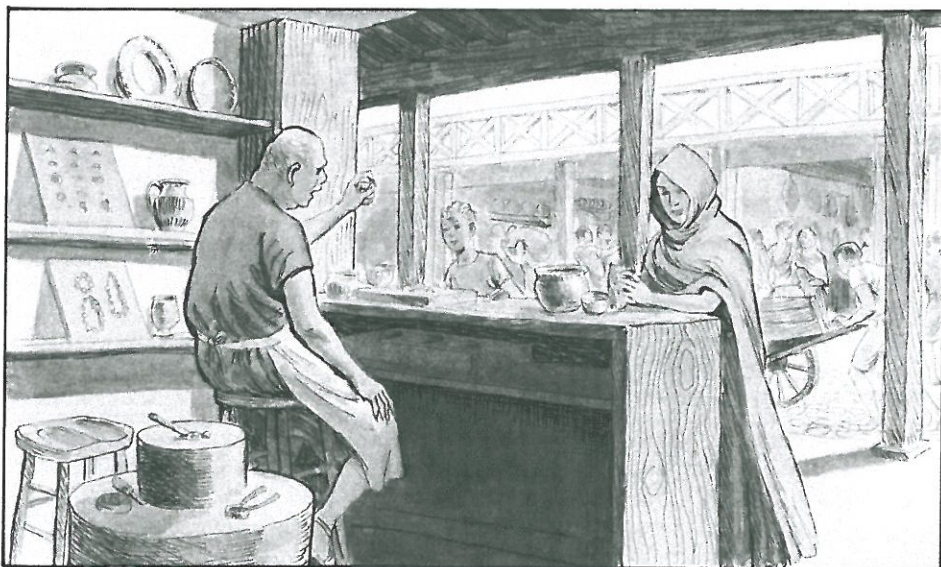
Both these series are excellently thought out. Children can use them by themselves but there is also plenty of information for teachers and potential for development topics from the books.

Gill Corbishley
Great Oakley Primary School, Essex

'CATVS: A Child In Roman Britain, AD 80'

Teresa Woodbridge.
Tempvs Reparatum, 1989
ISBN 1-871314-01-1
£4.95 hardback

It is very easy for children to get hypnotised by the achievements of the



Roman army and the high level of material culture that supposedly followed the invasion of AD 43. Reading the average book on the Romans in primary or secondary school libraries it is easy to see why this is so. Glossy pages with pictures of the legionaries' battle armour, bird's eye views of Roman forts, the mandatory photograph of the sculpture of the uncivilised Celt being trodden under the heel of the Roman soldier, the cutaway illustration of the Roman villa or forum or baths, all contribute to the impression of the invincible right of the Romans to conquer Britain and to give it Pax Romana and the civilisation it needed. But what about the experience of the conquered? Well there is Boudicca, and of course Maiden Castle, but both of these topics in the National Curriculum Orders seem to reinforce the stereotype that the Roman Conquest was a 'good thing', and although hard fought, the right side won. We sometimes forget that to have conquerors someone had to be conquered, so how did it feel to live in a country recently invaded by the Legions? One person's experience is described in this book, CATVS: A Child In Roman Britain, AD 80, the second of the excellent Journeys Through Time series. CATVS is refreshing reading in that it does show that there is another side to the story and that the experience of the conquered was not necessarily gratitude for a delivery from barbarianism.

The story is attractive and has a happy ending. Catvs is sold into slavery by his father, who is a dispirited Celtic warrior. Luckily Catvs finds himself working in King Tiberius Claudius Cogidubnus' palace at present day Fishbourne. He starts work in the kitchen, but later moves into the main house because he is so good with children and gets on well with the Romanised British King's grandchildren. His travels take him to Aquae Sulis (Bath), and Venta (Winchester). On the journey his master's party is attacked by a group of Free Britons, and this makes Catvs consider escaping to be free once more. He makes a decision to stay with his Romanised owner and is eventually given his freedom, although he chooses to live in the new culture.

As with Sheldra, the first in the series, this book is very well researched. Professor Barry Cunliffe acted as archaeological adviser during its writing, and he had excavated at both Fishbourne and Bath, so you can be sure the details of the story are accurate. Since Catvs works both in the kitchen and in the main palace, he has a lot to be surprised by, and we are told a great deal about Roman life at this time. The detail of the attractive illustrations, the temples, the shops, the interiors of buildings, the costume, are all based on sound archaeological evidence, much of which can be seen in situ at the places or in museums. Here we have an authentic picture of life in the newly conquered province of Britannia. Beyond the material aspects, we also are given an imaginative portrait of the political and social conditions of the time, issues that are not usually raised in books on Roman Britain, from the point of view of both Celt and Roman in a narrative that a child of between 9 and 13 could easily identify. It is a balanced and informative account that not only describes the achievement of the Romans, but also reminds us that the peoples of Britain lost some of their freedoms and did not necessarily gain from the Invasion.

As a hardback CATVS is amazingly good value for money at £4.95 (including postage) and will provide a welcome additional resource for Invaders and Settlers at KS2 or The Roman Empire at KS3. It can be obtained from Tempvs Reparatum, 29 Beaumont Street, Oxford OX1 2NP.

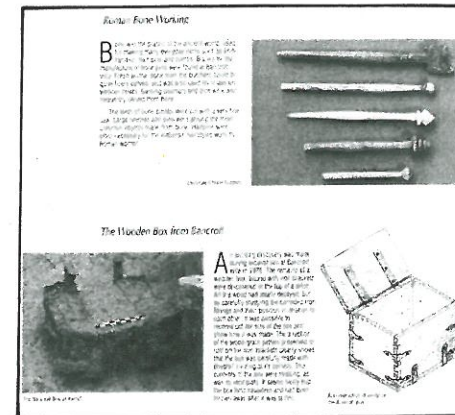
Tim Copeland
Head of the Centre for Heritage Education
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Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education.

Windows on the Past: Archaeology in Milton Keynes

Marion Blockley
Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit, 1992.
ISBN 0-950-9501-2-2
Available from the Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit, 16 Erica Road, Stacey Bushes, Milton Keynes MK12 6PA.
£3.95 + 50p postage.

Twenty-one years of archaeological investigations, from prehistory to the medieval period in one of Britain's new towns has been squeezed into 72 pages. Marion Blockley has produced an easily understandable text full of beautiful colour and black and white photos with lots of reconstruction drawings she has done herself. The book is nicely designed — every page is attractive.

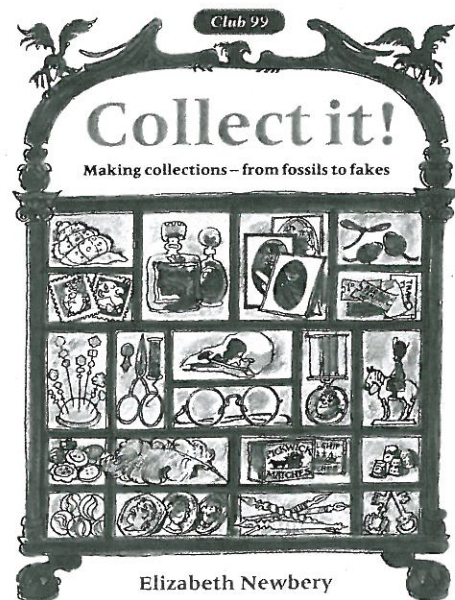
I particularly liked the reference back to the real evidence — a photograph of a Roman box with only its iron hinges and corner strengtheners surviving is matched with a little reconstruction drawing, for example.



The book is divided into themes, such as Home Life and Crafts and Technology, with evidence from various periods within each. Teachers far from the Milton Keynes area will find plenty of material here for National Curriculum History as well as for other subjects.

If only all archaeological investigations were published in this way for non-archaeologists to read and enjoy!

Mike Corbishley
Head of Education, English Heritage



Collect it!
Making collections — from fossils to fakes
Elizabeth Newbery
A & C Black, 1991
ISBN 0-7136-3515-0
Price £3.99

Elizabeth Newbery has turned children's natural instinct for collecting into good account with this colourfully illustrated, easy to read book. She includes all types of collections — from badges to Victorian bottles, cleverly making no alienating inference that fossils might be better than cuddly pandas.

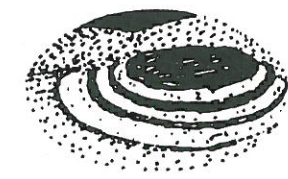
The book is full of the sort of information children most relish; practical tips on what to collect and the do's and

don'ts of how to collect it, or how to sort large collections into some sort of order. There is a step-by-step guide on how to mend things and store them, and a useful resources section on how to find out more. The author unobtrusively parallels this practical detail with notes on how museums do it, showing that all collectors share the same problems, and neatly giving museums a more human face.

Eight year olds and upwards will enjoy this book, which is a 'must' for the library corner.

Rural Landscapes

This cross-curricular resource booklet is published by the National Trust and is aimed at teachers of Key Stage 2 and 3 pupils. It covers how rural landscapes were formed, ways in which they are managed, what lives in them and how to read them for clues to human past involvement. The



Hill-forts and earth works

48 pages are packed with illustrations and photographs, and there are useful suggestions for on-site and classroom activities. The ideas for introducing children to the various competing groups all demanding a say in how our countryside is used are particularly good. Copies cost £2.50 including postage and packing from:
The National Trust (Enterprises) Ltd
PO Box 101
Melksham
Wilts
SN12 8DZ

Mobil Greensight Pack

This pack is the result of a three year project involving secondary schools in ten local education authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and is intended to enable students to make their own documentary video investigating the relationship between industry and the environment. It contains a handbook for teachers, photocopiable materials for the students to research, plan and execute a production; a video in which television professionals demonstrate video production techniques, and a wall chart.

The pack features five case studies covering a variety of schools, locations and industries, from open cast mining to dockland regeneration and urban construction projects. It costs £37.50 for schools and educational institutions. For further information contact:
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