Q: What is your recollection of the project?
A: It was, and still is, the highlight of my teaching career. To me, the three key elements were:
- The simplicity of the aim, to answer two questions. Who lived there, and what happened to them? The children could use all their newly acquired skills and ways of working together to answer this aim.
- The chance to work with experts who made the subject exciting and accessible to all. The children could draw directly and freely on the expertise of an archaeologist and the artist-in-residence.
- Finally, the children and the schools were encouraged always to work collaboratively, not competitively for the greater good of the project.

Q: What do you see as its long-term value (if any) for the children?
A: The project fired the children's imagination by taking them from the role of participants to that of Vergearchaeologists. The impact of the first visit to the site, where they made genuine discoveries for themselves, was tremendous. From day one they were all hooked and enthralled by identifying and interpreting their own evidence. Importantly they learnt how to ask questions, to test their evidence and to seek alternative views.

Q: Do you think the children have taken any lasting impressions?
A: Three years on, in their last year of primary school, the group were asked to recall their impressions of their time at Bushfield. The consensus was that the year they did 'the Romans' was the best ever.

Q: Do you still apply lessons learnt during the project?
A: Yes, the spirit continues. I have retained many of the skills and techniques of an archaeologist in handling, recording and questioning objects, information and sites. Other teachers come to me for ideas on how to continue the approach. On visits to the site we are still able to recap our and ensure some of the initial excitement of discovery and recording work is still at work as an archaeological detector.

Q: Would you/could you do it again?
A: I'd love to - definitely a 'yes'. Sadly, I feel there would no longer be the time to devote six weeks to a project such as this. This is ironic since it is the perfect way to match young children on to history and capture them for life.

Marion Blockley
Lecturer in Heritage Management, University of Birmingham, The Ironbridge Institute. Formerly Information Officer of the Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit.

Accentuate the positive...

Inspired by our 'Old and New' article in Remnants 18, Lowfields County Infant School in Lincoln took up the idea of setting up a museum in their own school.

This week heralds the end of another busy, stimulating and successful term at Lowfields Infant School. However, it feels quite different in many crucial respects. There is a feeling of elation and pride, a sense of achievement and worth, yet we have been led to believe there is little of this at present in schools or society generally.

In recent months much of the media coverage has just been bombarding us with negative attitudes and sweeping statements. Therefore, it occurred to me that it was time to redress the balance and start a new era in which we celebrate co-operation and share achievement.

In our own way we have managed to maintain the equilibrium by keeping hold of the positive in these depressing times. The wonderful museum envisaged, developed and used as a resource throughout the whole term, this week culminated in a fantastic exhibition open to visitors and has been our beacon in these dark times.

I was a new head to the school in September 1992. The two-year cycle of topic/National Curriculum planning was half way through. I noticed that the topic identified for Spring Term 1993 was Down Your Way. Within this topic there were focuses on engendering a corporate feel amongst children and all staff. This involvement was something I believed in passionately and this opportunity too good a one to miss.

The history co-ordinator was as enthusiastic as me, so we started to plan when and where and how would we begin? The local newspapers were helpful in publishing a photograph of our
children using artefacts already in
school and launching our campaign
for offers of donations and loans
on a long and short term basis. Letters
went out to parents and the response
was good. Everyone seemed to have
something to offer from a button hook
to an old commode!
Initially the items were logged and
housed in a small room setting in
displays arranged by one class and
labelled by another and thank you
letters sent out by another. In fact
each class took on various jobs so that
all had a vested interest and
ownership. Classes visited the museum
in large and small groups and made
observational drawings, time lines,
various comparisons and used role
play to gain access to the
History curriculum. Children were
gone readily and confidently moving
between curriculum boundaries and
express ideas stimulated by their visit
to our school museum.
We decided to share this with all of
those who had helped us to mount it.
Therefore, invitations were sent to
parents, children from junior school,
friends (especially those who had
donated items), inspectors and the
media.
On Friday before the opening all staff
stayed to mount the four main
displays. The first was clothing, the
second an old fashioned shop, the
third an old fashioned house ('How we
used to live') and the fourth as a
companion modern house ('How we
live now'). Children's work from
the previous weeks was displayed
alongside photographs, paintings and
artefacts.
Visitors had been offered a choice of
dates and times between 9.30 to
10.30am or 2.15 to 3.15pm in order to
stagger the numbers. The museum
attacked about fifty visitors each
day and guides manned each display
and the entrance. Pupils guided their
own parents around and the guides
took other visitors to view. Visitors
were asked to sign and comment as
they left and it was decided to ask for
donations rather than stipulate an
admission fee. Some elderly people
were invited in at various times during
the week to speak to groups of
children.
The arrangement was to dismantle
the exhibition on Friday afternoon and
people were asked to collect their loans
then. The staff still can't believe the
relative ease with which this took
place. The success was felt by
everyone. The behaviour, respect and
knowledge that the children displayed
was noted by everyone. Everyone is
still talking about it.
The study of items in the museum,
the writing of invitations to guests, the
role play as curator and other allied
tasks proved the value of cross
curriculum approaches especially,
with young children readily switching
between subject boundaries in their
quest to put all of this into a
meaningful context.

Above & Below: Visitors being shown round the museum.

What pleasure was found and
knowledge gained from children
discussing their prized exhibit, relating
its origins, family connections and the
value of saving our heritage. Children,
parents and teachers took on joint
responsibility for caring for the
exhibits and conducted themselves
around the exhibition in an
appropriate manner thus highlighting
the importance of such joint ventures
in education.

Instead of a weary school of staff,
pupils and disenchanted parents
dreading the next news bulletin, I am
proud to say I am working this week
with highly motivated human beings in
a positive, productive way to celebrate
our educational and community
achievements. At Lowfields perhaps
we have found a new signature tune in
the famous song:

'We're gonna accentuate the positive,
eliminate the negative, latch on to the
affirmative...'

Ms B P Fox
Headteacher
Lowfields County Infant School, Lincoln

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Buildings with Uniforms

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The great fire of 1972, which destroyed
the school, and the magnificent new
building which was built in its place.

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Streetwise investigates clues to the
past that can often be found in the
streets near your school!
from sail to stone, each page has a joyous reference to the history of mining or an example of the daily uses to which windpower has been put, like catapulting beehives at a besieged castle.

The text is good, but this almost rates as a picture book with lash, full colour illustrations on every page. These are a mixture of photographs and child-friendly, jolly but accurate drawings by Peter Bailey, with the addition of benjamin millen, sedge-camphor-rice and complacent tabley. Despite the slightly whimsical presentation, the illustrations are models of clarity, and for hesitant readers provide all the information necessary for understanding how a windmill works.

Liz Hollishead
Regional Education Officer, Midlands
English Heritage.

Linley Sambourne House
A historical workbook for teachers and children
The Victorian Society, 1993.
ISBN 0-901657-23-9
£5.00
Available from the house, or by post (add 34p per copy for postage and packing) from The Victorian Society,
1 Priory Gardens,
London W4 1TT.

Linley Sambourne House is a house museum owned by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and run by the Victorian Society. The house has largely been preserved as it was when Edward Linley Sambourne (cartoonist for Punch magazine) lived there from the time of his marriage in 1874. The workbook provides background information on the later Victorian period, as well as giving details about the house itself. This background material, which is related back to the house where relevant, will be particularly useful to teachers.

Appetite for Change
Food and Cooking in Twentieth Century Britain
by Gill Corbridge
This new book looks at developments in British food from 1900 to the present day. The change from the days of horse-drawn vehicles making doorstep deliveries, sheep's head soups, cockles and kitchen maids to supermarkets, fromage frais and microwave ovens is described and reasons for change are suggested. Developments in energy, transport and packaging and in the kitchen itself are traced through the century.

Linley Sambourne House, London W4 1TT

Exploring a Castle
Davidson and Peter Dennis
£4.99
This is a reformatted edition of the earlier Looking at a Castle in the Kingfisher 'Stepping Stones' series. The text is basically the same, with a slightly modified text and a few alterations to illustrations. The author, Brian Davidson, is one of English Heritage's leading experts on castles and he brings to the text the most up-to-date views on castle life and construction. It is a nice book, aimed at Key Stage 3 and should be a welcome sight for hard pressed teachers looking for good, suitable sources for young children. The text is simple - although a few words will need explanation - and successfully links to the illustrations to get children to look at a castle for evidence. As such it is a good stimulus for children before a visit. A good book and certainly one for all primary school libraries.

Peter Stone
Regional Education Officer, South West
English Heritage

In Pursuit of Good Ideas: The First Years of the Young Historian
This book by John Fines has compiled details of the Scheme's funding, sponsorship and awards giving a list of all prize-winning schools. History Day activities and projects including several which have been offered for print for some time or never printed before. Price £4.50. To include postage and packaging, please make cheque payable to the Young Historian Scheme and send your order to The Historical Association, 59a Kennington Road, London SE1 4HF.

Footnotes

Guide for Disabled Visitors
English Heritage has just published for the first time a guide containing details of facilities at all our staffed properties where much of the site, including its main features, may be enjoyed by disabled visitors. The guide is available on tape, as a large print version, and in a large print version, county by county. Some properties, which are not suited to physically disabled people have been included because they are particularly rewarding for visitors with visual impairment. Details are given of parking and toilet facilities, access to shops, displays and refreshments, whether wheelchairs are available and any other special facilities such as tape tours.

The booklet will be helpful to any teacher who may be bringing a group of pupils to a property who require special facilities to any of our properties and who need this information in order to plan a free visit effectively. For a free copy please write to us at our usual London address.

Our new 1993 Free Educational Visits booklet is now available, including a county by county guide to all English Heritage Historic Properties and how to book free educational visits. To obtain your free copy just complete the slip below and return it to English Heritage Education Service, Keyston House, 429 Oxford Street, London, W1R 2HD.

Please send me my free copy of the 1993 Free Educational Visits booklet.

Name:

Address:

 occupation: