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ARCHAEOLOGY AN THE FORMAL CURRICULUM IN BRITAIN: A VIEW FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE

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*Resum: Un repàs als diferents currículum per a l'ensenyament de la Història que han existit a Gran Bretanya, per acabar en les darreres propostes (amb tot l'enrenou de canvis que han anat patint), serveixen a l'autor per donar la visió que des de l'*English Heritage *es té del patrimoni arqueològic i la seva funció i utilització educativa en els centres docents d'Anglaterra, Gal·les, Escòcia i Irlanda del Nord.*

Resumen: Un repaso a los diferentes currículum para la enseñanza de la Historia que han existido en Gran Bretaña, para acabar en las más recientes propuestas (con toda la agitación de cambios que han ido sufriendo), sirven al autor para dar la visión que desde el English Heritage *se tiene del patrimonio arqueológico y su función y utilización educativa en los centros docentes de Inglaterra, Gales, Escocia y Irlanda del Norte.*

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE FORMAL CURRICULUM IN BRITAIN: A VIEW FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE

I want to look at the way our curriculum in history has been shaped, mostly in the last ten years. First, there has been a long tradition in Britain of taking an interest in our past. Archaeology has gradually changed in this century as professional standards have been established. But archaeologists have also been concerned with education for sometime. In 1921, Crawford (1921: 28-37) berates history teachers, saying that they:

"select an arbitrary starting point, after discussing 'the ancient Britons' in few lines; they confront the student with *a fait accompli* Britain at the first, second or third conquest usually with barely a hint of the causes which preceded".

ARCHAEOLOGISTS AND CURRICULUM CHANGE

After Crawford's time there were several moves by archaeologists to influence and change the curriculum. Macalister (1925: 15-17) forcibly urged that archaeology should be "put on the curriculum of every school in the land". 1943 saw the important Conference on the Future of Archaeology. The organisers stressed that it was "essential that plans

should be made soon, to coincide with postwar reorganisation of other cultural and educational activities" (Institute of Archaeology 1943: 4). One entire session of the conference was given over to Archaeology and Education but not every speaker was in favour of archaeology being taught in schools. Philip Corder, speaking on behalf of secondary school (for 11-18 year olds) teachers, said that "no one would claim that archaeology should be taught as a school subject" (1943: 85). However, Stuart Piggott (1943; 95) disagreed and said what many have said since that,

"I certainly think prehistory should be taught in schools, as a valuable corrective to the detailed study of British (or American) history. From the archaeologist's point of view it should also condition the public to recognise the value of research, and to ultimately paying for it".

The Council for British Archaeology (CBA), formed in 1944 to represent archaeological opinion in Britain, took up the cause from its beginnings with one of its declared objects being "to obtain recognition of archaeology in education". It has organised conferences on archaeology and education frequently since then. In 1956 (CBA 1957: 20-22) while some speakers argued that archaeology should be a subject in its own right, others thought it impossible to squeeze any more subjects into the curriculum. By 1975 many archaeologists were looking objectively at their own discipline and could now claim, like Professor Evans (1975: 5), that archaeology "has now reached a stage in its development where it has a contribution to make to education in its own right, as a mature discipline with its own standpoint and methodology".

ARCHAEOLOGY A CURRICULUM SUBJECT?

The problem of trying to include archaeology, and in particular prehistory, in the curriculum in schools in Britain has been twofold. First, the problem of adding another subject to the timetable for pupils and second, the way in which history was taught in schools.
History, that is documentary history, has been a recognised school subject for centuries. In Britain it was recognised as a major subject from the 16th century. Earlier in this century (1927 and 1939) reports of the government's Board of Education stressed the importance of history in the curriculum. However, by the late 1950s there were examples of archaeology as a subject in its own right in the school curriculum. Since 1958 a few pupils have sat an Advanced Level syllabus (mainly for 17/18 year olds) specifically in archaeology. In 1977 there were public examinations at a lower age level (15/16 year olds) in archaeology. Both these levels of examination included the methodology of archaeology as well as specific periods from prehistory to the post medieval. From 1979 (Corbishley 1979, 1983; Halkon, Corbishley and Binns 1992; Henson 1996) information about these examination syllabuses were promoted to teachers by archaeologists. In the 1980s, especially, there were several teacher/archaeologists who encouraged archaeologists to take a more active approach to curriculum change and to devise programmes and

activities which enabled pupils to take part in archaeological work (Corbishley 1986).
The problem still remained that only a few pupils were being taught about the distant past, or more recent times from the point of view of 'evidence'. In the early 1970s the idea of younger pupils being introduced to evidence and its interpretation began to be popular (Corbishley and Stone 1994: 387-388). By the 1980s the concept of 'interpretations of evidence' were well established in some curricula. In 1984, Sir Keith Joseph as Secretary of State for Education and Science felt able to say to the Historical Association (reported in the Times Educational Supplement, a weekly newspaper for teachers):

"The nature of historical evidence permits a range of interpretation, though obviously not any interpretation whatever .... variety in interpretation is not only legitimate it is the stuff of history."

But this speech, among many other debates, raised another fundamental issue which has recently been revived. How much should pupils know about the history of Britain rather than, say, world or European history? Joseph said

"I therefore see an element of national by which I emphatically do not mean nationalist history as an inescapable part of any balanced school history course."

The argument, as the Times Educational Supplement's leader said at the time, was

"What stands out in the discussion, however, is the difference in fundamental objectives between those who see history as a principal ingredient in the formation of a citizen's concept of his country, past and present, and those who see it as a whetstone on which to sharpen critical faculties and powers of reasoning."

THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

But the most significant change to the curriculum was undoubtedly the introduction of a state written and organised National Curriculum in 1988. The government set up working groups for each main subject. History was one of those subjects. Several organisations tried to influence the outcome of the working party's report. Among them were the Education Service of English Heritage and the Council for British Archaeology, often working jointly. Before the group was formed the CBA's Schools Committee decided to publish its own National Curriculum for Archaeology (CBA: 1989), called 'Archaeology for ages 5-16'. This established some the principles taken up later in the official curriculum. The 'View of archaeology', as it was called, stated that:

"Archaeology is the study of past human societies from the study of material remains. The definition of material remains is not restricted to those objects

dug out of the ground; it includes any physical evidence which is below the surface of the ground or water as well as above ground. Archaeologists use written evidence to help in their research as well as comparative modern material."

It was important to state what archaeology was. It was, and still is, largely misunderstood by history teachers and government educationalists. Archaeology is seen as the methodology of studying the distant past. Many still see archaeology as an adjunct to history. The CBA and English Heritage, lobbied the government by sending them a copy of 'Archaeology for ages 5-16' and by setting up meetings with civil servants. What we failed to do was to get any archaeologist onto the working group. By June 1989 the History Working Group had published its Interim Report.

The new curriculum established that pupils needed to study a range of evidence. It even said that visits to sites form a 'central part of the history curriculum'. The other significant change to previous curricula was the specific introduction of periods to be studied. Pupils began studying their own family history at 5, worked through the Romans up to 20th century Britain by aged 11, went back and then on through 'Medieval Realms'(as the medieval period was called) and bits of world history by 14 and then looked at modern Britain again and world history post 1945 by the age of 16. Nowhere did prehistory properly figure.

The History Curriculum was controversial.The Working Group's Interim Report produced howls of protestfrom people who wanted more skills, less content but more prehistory, and at the other extreme from those who saw the references to role play and site visits as a threat to pupils being taught 'proper' history. The Group went back to produce a final report which appeared in April 1990. John MacGregor, the Secretary of State for Education and Science, accepted the report but the government was still convinced that history was a dangerous subject. In March 1991 the government issued the Order for History as it is called. By now the curriculum contained the infamous order that 14-16 year olds were not allowed to study the history of the last twenty years. When challenged the government dismissed criticism by saying that very modern events were unsuitable for discussion in history lessons.

However, there was much in the new curriculum which pleased archaeologists, for example instructions such as

"Pupils should be able to recognise that historical sources can stimulate and help answer questions about the past"

and,

"Pupils should have opportunities to learn about the past from a range of historical sources, including artefacts, pictures and photographs, music, adults talking about their past, written sources, buldings and sites, computer based material."

THE NEW NATIONAL CURRICULUM

Just as teachers were beginning to understand the complex nature of the National Curriculum and, some were coping with the mountains of paperwork which it introduced to schools, it was all change. In 1993 the government appointed Sir Ron Dearing, at the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) to look again at the National Curriculum and to scale it down. It produced its draft proposals for the new History curriculum. For the first time, real teachers were asked for their opinions and English Heritage and the CBA, offered advice as well. But it was still controversial. An Evening Standard (the only daily newspaper for London) leader stated in May 1994, after the final report had come out, that

"The teaching of history has to be based on imparting facts. Without the basic framework of constitutional and political history that is to say, kings and queens, battles and parliaments even a rudimentary understanding of the subject is not possible."

So finally, after the usual drafts and comments from outside bodies, the new 'History in the National Curriculum' was published in January 1995 (DFE 1995) and teachers began using it at the beginning of the academic year 1995/96 and were promised a five year period when no changes would be made.

But how does this new curriculum differ from the previous ones? In two ways, I think. First, the government is prepared to listen to teachers and bodies like the CBA and English Heritage and have already accepted some suggestions. Second, it is shorter and more concisely written than the previous curriculum and easier for teachers to use. There is more freedom for teachers to adapt the curriculum to theirown situations. The History curriculum may be summarised as follows:

AGES OF PUPILS	CONTENT TAUGHT
5-7	Everyday life of people in the past. Lives of famous people, eg queens. Local and national events
7-11	Romans, Anglo Saxons and Vikings Life in Tudor times Victorian Britain OR Britain since 1930 Ancient Greece An aspect of local history A past non European society (from a specified list eg Ancient Egypt, Aztecs)
11-14	Medieval realms: Britain 1066-1500 The making of the United Kingdom:crowns, parliaments and peoples 1500-1750 Britain 1750 to c1900

The twentieth century world
An era or turning point in European history before 1914
A past non European society

.
In addition, teachers are required to teach history so that their pupils understand:

* chronology - eg how to put past events into a sequence and understand terms such as Georgian, BC and AD or twelfth century.

* range and depth of historical knowledge and understanding - eg knowing that different periods had different characteristic features and styles, and understanding causes and effects of events and changes.

* interpretations of history - eg identifying that the past is represented in many ways, through documents, film, museum displays and artists' impressions of buildings and sites.

*historical enquiry - eg how to find out about the past using documents, objects, oral history, pictures and photographs, buildings and sites.

* organisation and communication - eg presenting their knowledge in different ways, such as in written reports, drawings or on aural and video tape.

Teachers need to provide their pupils with a range of resources to investigate, including both sites and artefacts. From ages 5 to 14 it will be possible to include studies of a locality using sources of evidence ranging from written material to sites.
This new history curriculum is only compulsory for pupils aged 5 to 14. After that they, or their school, can choose to take history from a range of other subjects and take public examinations in either history or archaeology, if they wish.
The government is also consulting (at the time of writing) on draft proposals for pre-school education. I can interpret archaeology here for below five year olds in a section called 'Knowledge and Understanding of the World' which includes the recommendation that

"Children talk about where they live, their environment, their families and past and present events in their own lives. They explore and recognise features of the natural and made world and observe similarities, differences, patterns and change."

and under 'Opportunities for Learning' they should

"explore and talk about objects and people of different ages and periods."

Isn't this fundamental to the archaeological approach to understanding the past?

CURRICULA FOR WALES, SCOTLAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND

In the United Kingdom of Britain there are four countries which have differing levels of local and regional government. This includes the legal requirements for the school curriculum. Each history curriculum is different (Henson: 1996)

Wales

The National Curriculum for Wales was devised at the same time as the one for England. The two curricula are largely the same. The main differences in the curriculum for history are that the Welsh curriculum requires fewer units for pupils to study and that it takes a broader view about what pupils should study. Pupils are required to learn about a pre-Roman Wales, back to the earliest hunter-gatherers. In addition, the medieval period in Wales begins in AD 1000 which allows pupils to learn about pre-Norman archaeology.

Scotland

Scotland has had a quite different educational system from both England and Wales. The curriculum in Scotland is based around five broad areas: language, mathematics, environmental studies, expressive arts, and religious and moral education. History and archaeology are taught in the curriculum area of environmental studies. Part of this area includes 'people in the past'. Schools choose which time periods to study but are required to cover the main eras of human history. Pupils are required to collect, record, interpret, present and evaluate evidence. Teachers have to encourage their pupils to develop informed attitudes and consider the meaning of 'heritage'. In another topic called 'people and places', pupils have to study the ways in which places have affected people and people have affected places.

Northern Ireland

At the time of writing, the National Curriculum for Northern Ireland is at the consultation stage and will be implemented during 1996-97. The draft proposals (Northern Ireland Curriculum Council 1991) followed many of the aspects of the English and Welsh curricula including a requirement to study the past from a wide range of sources and evidence. For pupils aged 7-11 the requirement suggested is a study of three topic areas: Life in early times (mesolithic to Celtic Britain); the Vikings; and Life in Victorian times. In addition,schools would develop their own study units including: a study in depth; a theme over a long period; and a local history topic. For pupils aged 11-14 the requirement would be three new topic areas: the Norman

impact on the medieval world; conflict in Britain, Ireland and Europe in the late 16th and 17th centuries; and Ireland and British politics in the late 19th and 20th centuries. These pupils would also cover similar school designed study units.

History may not be compulsory for pupils aged 14-16 but, if it is, the requirements suggested are two topic areas: Northern Ireland and its neighbours since 1920; and Conflict and co-operation in Europe since 1919. In addition, schools would have to choose two other topics from lists of subjects such as China 1919-1966 and Africa south of the Sahara.

INFLUENCING TEACHERS

A published National Curriculum allows archaeologists to influence teachers by matching what the curriculum demands with what resources they can promote. In English Heritage we encourage teachers to make use of the historic environment for all subjects taught in the school curriculum, not just for history (Corbishley and Stone 1994: 391-394 and, for example, Copeland 1992). A wide range of printed, video and computer resources has been published (English Heritage 1996) to help teachers use the evidence of ancient monuments, archaeological excavations, past landscapes, protected historic buildings and artefacts in museums in their curriculum work. One example (Jeffries 1990: 3) will serve to illustrate this point. A project on a Roman town which had been partly excavated and opened to the public involved every part of the school curriculum for a primary school (pupils aged 5-11). One class took the theme of 'communication' and investigated how the archaeological site and modern village communicated to the pupils and how they could communicate their findings and understanding to others. This involved the pupils in working with computers, compiling questionnaires for local residents and finally putting together their results in an exhibition. Other pupils looked at the similarities between a ruined site and modern buildings which they saw and used everyday. Another group looked at 'water' and compared modern water provision and use with the evidence from the site. All the pupils used their studies as a basis for all their school work during one term not only for history but in mathematics, science, technology, art, geography, music and creative writing.

CONCLUSION

The curriculum for history in Britain has been influenced by several factors, as it has been and continues to be influenced in other countries. The influences on the British curricula come from tradition, from teaching methods, from people's perceptions of the history and prehistory of their country and from politics.

Tradition

The tradition within history teaching in Britain was of a chronological approach with an emphasis on constitutional history. There has been a requirement in both the 19th and 20th century history teaching to concentrate on certain sections of society (eg monarchs, politicians and industrialists) at the expense of allowing pupils to understand what life was like for the majority of people in the past. This tradition lives on in the English curriculum when pupils aged 5-7 are required to know about 'famous' - that is powerful - people in the past.

I think that what is at work here is what might be called a 'cycle of deprivation'. In schools, for the most part, pupils were taught a traditional view of the past and one which is rarely updated with the latest thinking or discoveries; history teaching has always been biased against the greater portion of human history-prehistory. Some of these pupils go on to train as teachers and are themselves taught by people who went to school many years before. Trained teachers then begin the cycle over again when they go into schools. The cycle can be broken, of course, but it rarely done. The introduction of the National Curriculum has proved to be a help in breaking the cycle, especially in respect of using a wide range (that is, archaeological) of evidence in history teaching.

Teaching methods

Teaching methods in history changed radically in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s, although this was not evident in all schools. The 'new' history laid an emphasis on pupils learning how historians and archaeologists collected and interpreted evidence rather than on learning 'facts' and dates. This led some teachers to adopt a very narrow approach, concentrating their pupils' study on single topics. For example, some pupils discovered an enormous amount about the history of medicine but were unable to say which came first, the Roman or Viking periods. Fortunately, despite a backlash from traditionalists, evidence-based and child-centred learning survived within the new National Curriculum history but did not dominate it as some would have wished.

Perception of prehistory/history

The history curricula in the four countries of Britain is clearly influenced by the actual history of the countries and the importance put on parts of that history by the peoples who live in them today. For example, many Welsh people see a clear lineage to the Celtic peoples of Wales: many resent being occupied by the Normans and subsequently governed by the English. It is not surprising, therefore, to see these periods represented in the Welsh history curriculum but absent from the English one.

An almost total ignorance of prehistory amongst the population has led to it being seen as unimportant in the 'history' of the country.

Politics

The English, Welsh and Northern Ireland curricula clearly demonstrate political interference in the process of curriculum reform. The government

thought that history was the most dangerous subject in the National Curriculum. History went through more interim stages than any other subject and had specific demands from senior politicians included in the final documents (for example, disallowing teaching or discussion about the last twenty years - a requirement which has now been quietly dropped). The inclusion of studies about famous people and national events shows the unhappiness politicians in the current government have about 'modern' teaching methods. An insistence that history must be largely 'British' helps to exclude many sections of society in Britain today who do not share an unbroken lineage to the Normans or even the Celts.

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