



Teacher Fellowship Programme

Local history: untold stories of the people of Britain

What has changed in the history of Handsworth Road and why?

David Fernley

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David Fernley – Local History Teacher Fellowship – Handsworth Road Study

Enquiry

This is a six-week study of a local main road that is very close to our school. It includes several sources of evidence, including maps, trade directories, photographs, built environment, local walk, newspaper clippings and brochures from local historical groups and the local church. Each week of the enquiry includes a sub-question that invites the children to consider a different aspect of Handsworth Road whilst building on their prior learning. Various sources of evidence are used each week, but timelines and maps are used regularly for context. The aim of the enquiry is for the children to develop an understanding of the significance of the history of the immediate local area in the development of Handsworth (the area in which they live) and Sheffield (the city in which they live) and to identify the changes over time of their local area. Links can be made to the bigger picture nationally and, where appropriate, globally in the different periods discussed during the study. The enquiry is aimed at Year 4 children but could work equally well with support and minor adjustments of content in any year group in Key Stage 2. The resource covers the National Curriculum objective of a local history study, with a focus on the significance of the local area and the change and continuity within it over time.

Rationale

Why did you develop this enquiry?

Our school is situated in Handsworth in Sheffield and our cohort is predominantly from Handsworth or Darnall, two multicultural, socially deprived areas of Sheffield. Handsworth Road is the main thoroughfare that connects these two areas and is the one used by most of our children to get to school. It is a busy city road with large retailers and a range of fast-food chains and many smaller independent shops and businesses. St Mary's Church, which is situated in the middle of Handsworth Road on the brow of the hill overlooking the industrial and agricultural valleys around it, was founded in 1170 and is one of the oldest churches in Sheffield. It was founded by the same family who are said to be the founders of Sheffield. Handsworth Road has an industrial history, being situated close to local pits such as Orgreave and the steel works of Don Valley. The inventor of the crucible process, Benjamin Huntsman, lived in a cottage on Handsworth Road. The road also has an agricultural history, with many of the people who lived and worked in the area being employed in nurseries for grass, trees and holly that were accessed by Handsworth Road.

Our history curriculum incorporates many local links, as we look for a local connection in nearly every topic that we teach. This study is part of a broader study into the history of Sheffield, which takes place over the course of the children's time at Athelstan across both key stages in both history and geography. Our children study the shops on Handsworth Road and how these have changed in living memory in Year 1, learn about the Orgreave Miners' strike in Year 2 and investigate how our local area was settled by Vikings and Saxons through local place names earlier in Year 4. In Years 5 and 6 we have local history units on the Sheffield cutlery and teel industry (where children learn more about Benjamin Huntsman) and an in-depth study of the four days of the Sheffield Blitz. This unit will be part of a term-long study into the local area and will be followed by a geography topic on

how the local area has changed in terms of land usage, as such there are numerous cross-curricular links with geography.

What did you want your pupils to learn from this enquiry?

Our children have no idea as to the rich history of the road that they use every day, and a study of it will help them to develop a sense of the history of their locality. Through a study of records, artefacts, buildings and the physical environment, the children will build an appreciation of how people lived and worked in the local area in the past and how this compares to today and the national picture at the time. While also developing their local history knowledge, the children will build a deeper chronological understanding of the topics in our history curriculum by continued use of timelines. This will allow the children to place their locality into the bigger picture of the history topics that they have studied previously and build a chronologically secure understanding of the changes in their local area.

The study will be one of a normal everyday busy main road, but aims to show the rich history that has gone before to make the road that is seen and used today. My aim in developing this unit was for the children to feel proud about the area in which they live and to begin to understand its place and relevance in history.

Why did you structure the enquiry in the way in which you did?

I wanted an enquiry with a smaller focus, as the scope of our local area was huge and there was clearly a lot of history there. I had read about road studies carried out in different ways and this seemed perfect for our area due to Handsworth Road being an extremely busy main road where a lot of the history had taken place, with several of the older buildings still standing and still in use in some way. I settled on the enquiry question *What has changed in the history of Handsworth Road and why?* because it included one of our key history concepts of change and continuity and invited the children to make connections between what they were learning about their immediate local area of Handsworth and the wider local area of Sheffield that they study through their time with us in school, with scope to connect to the national picture and analyse significance of changes where relevant.

I divided the overarching enquiry into six smaller enquiries, with a view to using a different type of source to gather information each week with a focus on a different aspect of life on Handsworth Road, from land use and housing to jobs/occupations and usage of the St Mary's Church. Being an 850-year-old listed building on Handsworth Road, I was certain that St Mary's needed to be a focal point of the study as well, so a visit to the church, meeting the vicar and youth pastor, alongside a study of church records from the 1800s and the church's own brochure was an essential part of the enquiry, as it would allow the children to understand the significance of religious buildings in the development of an area.

The final activity of creating a timeline of Handsworth Road allowed the children to use the knowledge that they had acquired and to develop their understanding of the concept of change and what would be of importance to someone who was not from Handsworth but wanted to learn about its history. They were able to select the most relevant pieces of information, while also questioning the wider significance of the facts that they were using. For example, there was some debate as to

whether they should include 'Handsworth holly' on the timeline, as it might not be important to people who were not from Handsworth.

Reflections

What made the enquiry powerful?

When I set out to create this resource, my goal was for the children to be able to talk about the history and development of their local area with the adults in their lives. If just one child had been walking up the road and said 'Did you know that St Mary's Church is over 850 years old and that this whole area was famous for its holly?', I would have been happy. However, the study has provided much more than this for the children in Year 4. From the moment that we started the enquiry and they realised that they were learning about *their* Handsworth Road ('The one with Asda on it?'), the children were engaged and inspired. Every day we were asked 'Are we doing history today?'; the children and even staff members were bringing in photos of their parents, carers and grandparents when they were younger, information about their houses and when they were built and, more importantly, they were talking about how they used their local area and the history that they had noticed. The power of studying a road so well known to them was evidenced in their enjoyment and engagement. Placing the history walk in the middle of the enquiry was very successful, alongside having our local historian present with us, because it meant that the children could see evidence of some of the things that they had found in the old photos, maps and trade directories. Through their initial studies, they had also generated questions, which they were able to ask while on the walk. The use of maps throughout the enquiry was also successful as it allowed the children to plot the changes of the area through the different time periods, while also allowing them to situate themselves with how things are today.

What are the underlying principles of the enquiry?

One of the guiding inspirations for this resource was Hales' (2018) article 'The local in history: personal and community history and its impact on identity'. In the article, Hales discusses the importance of children's understanding of the history of their locality in their developing sense of cultural and self-identity. It is easier for a child to develop new understanding if they start from something that they know. I wanted our children to be able to answer the question 'What is special about our local area?'; therefore, I created this enquiry with this in mind.

Focusing on a very busy local main road allowed the children to take something extremely ordinary in their lives and examine it through the lens of historical sources to find out the quite extraordinary things about it and what its place was in the national and global picture. In doing so, they developed their historical enquiry skills and their ability to interpret and offer explanations, while also making chronological links using timelines. While my enquiry is very specific to the local area of my school, as it should be for a successful local enquiry, the principles and structure could certainly be transferred to different contexts. Every locality has history, and it doesn't have to be major national events to engage the children. Putting something personal and local to the child at the centre of the enquiry makes it equally engaging and meaningful to the children.

No locality stands alone in history and there are many links to be made between the local and the national and even global history. Placing the events, developments and changes in a locality chronologically and referring to these as the enquiry progresses really helped the children to

develop their chronological understanding skills, as they were placing their own locality into the history about which they had previously learned. The children in my class were amazed that the name of their own local area, Handsworth, could be traced back to the Vikings and the Saxons to a man named Hand, who cut down some trees and built a little farm. Suddenly, their previous learning was connecting with their current learning and seemed more real and relevant, as it took place in the area in which they live.

Planning and resourcing

The planning and resourcing of this enquiry was an extremely rewarding and fulfilling experience. One of the first things that I did, alongside keyword searches for my local area online, was to contact the local historical society for information, and they were extremely helpful in signposting me to certain areas of interest and offering their services. I then looked on the website of my local archives (www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/libraries-archives/access-archives-local-studies-library), which had a vast range of resources and research packs available online, alongside links to other websites that provided me with photographs (www.picturesheffield.com) and newspapers (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk). I then contacted my local archives directly to find out what sources they had available at the local studies library and in their archives. They were extremely helpful and, alongside explaining exactly what they had on offer and how I could access it, they also signposted me to other places to gather sources, such as Godfrey Maps (www.alangodfreymaps.co.uk), who specialise in recreating historical Ordnance Survey maps that include a copy of that year's trade directory with them.

Once I knew what was on offer and where to find it, I set about planning and structuring the enquiry. This allowed me to focus on the exact sources that I wanted to use each week, rather than visiting the archives and local studies library and taking everything that they had on offer. Due to the opening hours of my local archives, accessing them would have been a problem had I required numerous visits; however, identifying exactly what I needed first by using their online catalogue to plan meant that I could make a quick visit during school hours to access the church records that I needed for one of my weekly enquiries.

My advice to anyone planning a local history study would be to choose your local focus, find out what is available online, contact your local services and groups (historical societies, archives, local studies libraries), plan the overview of the enquiry and then gather the required sources and resources.

Key resources that inspired this resource

Hales, A. (2018) 'The local in history: personal and community history and its impact on identity' in *Education 3–13*, 46, no. 6, pp. 671–684.

This article was the inspiration for the resource and brought up ideas that I thought about throughout the planning stage. It discusses the positive impact that local history knowledge can have on the developing minds of young people and the lack of engagement that can result in a curriculum that has no roots in the locality.

Dixon, L. and Hales, A. (2015) 'What makes good local history?' in *Primary History*, 71, pp. 19–25.

A brilliant article that details several approaches to creating a local history study and the key things needed for it to be successful.

Burn, K. and Todd, J. (2018) 'Right up my street: the knowledge needed to plan a local history enquiry' in *Teaching History*, 170, *Historians Edition*, pp. 50–60.

Reading this article gave me the idea of studying one street, which became the focus of my enquiry. It allowed me to see how much historical learning can come from a seemingly small area.

National Library of Scotland maps, <https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side>

This is an incredible website that not only allows access to a wide variety of historic maps but also offers a side-by-side view, which was incredibly engaging for the children (and staff at a staff meeting) when tracking the changes in an area over time.

Timmins, G. (2018) *Exploring Local History: a practical guide for teachers in primary and secondary schools*, Sheffield: BALH.

This book is essential for any teacher looking to create a good local history thread in their curriculum; it is full of ideas, approaches and possible sources to use in a successful history curriculum.

Lesson focus and learning objectives	Learning activities	Resources for the lesson
<p><u>Lesson 1</u> Where is our place in the history of the local area?</p> <p>To inspire pupils' curiosity to know more about the past</p>	<p>What is special about where you live?</p> <p>Children will discuss how everyday history is created and the relevance of the things that they do in their daily lives.</p> <p>Start by discussing how history is studied. Ask the questions: Are you part of history? Is what you do day to day relevant to the history of Handsworth?</p> <p>Look at the geograph website: https://m.geograph.org.uk How will this help future historians?</p> <p>Children to be given a map of the school area. Children to annotate it with everyday things that they do in this area – visit KFC, Costa, shopping with adults, playing out with friends, route to school, etc. How did this change during lockdown?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map of Handsworth Road, including the area around school
<p><u>Lesson 2</u> What are the key features of</p>	<p>Map work: Begin by discussing the different maps used in the lesson.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1828 county map • 1850 OS map • 1901 OS map

<p>Handsworth Road and how has it changed over time?</p> <p>Pupils should continue to develop a chronologically secure knowledge and understanding of British, local and world history, establishing clear narratives within and across the periods that they study</p> <p>Children will develop their understanding of continuity and change by analysing trends and drawing contrasts</p>	<p>Explain that children will be using maps to travel back in time 200 years. Work through the slides on the PowerPoint. Children will discuss and compare maps of Handsworth Road and track the changes over the last 200 years.</p> <p>Children will be given an 1828 county map, 1850 OS map, 1901 OS map, 1950 OS map and modern satellite images. Plot the changes on clear acetate or laminate sheets. Working backwards using chalk pens, create a key to show how the area has changed on one map that they have created (numbered instructions are on the PowerPoint).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1950 OS map • Modern satellite images
<p><u>Lesson 3</u> Who has lived and worked on Handsworth Road?</p> <p>Children will understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims</p>	<p>Children to use images and trade directories to build an understanding of the type of people who lived and worked on Handsworth Road during the 1800s and early 1900s.</p> <p>Begin by discussing the jobs on the road today. Explain that these would be different to jobs on the road in the past. Children to consider how life and jobs differ from those on the road today.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade directory, 1879 • White's Directory of Sheffield & Rotherham, 1901, p. 838 (available from University of Leicester, http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p16445coll4/id/292321/rec/2)

<p>Children will understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources</p>	<p>Activity 1: Using the Godfrey Maps introduction, children use skimming and scanning skills to answer five quick-fire retrieval questions.</p> <p>Activity 2: Children to look at a series of photos of life on Handsworth Road in the late 1800s and early 1900s. List five things that they can learn from the images.</p> <p>Activity 3: Children to be given 1879 and 1901 trade directory for Handsworth. Children to create a tally chart for the different jobs that they spot.</p> <p>During the plenary, discuss the similarities and differences between jobs/occupations from the 1800s and today.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspaper clippings from the British Newspaper Archive • Images from Picture Sheffield: www.picturesheffield.com/frontend.php?action=search2&keywords=Ref_No_increment%2CDate_Period%2CImage_Date%2CTitle%2CFurther_Information%2CKeywords%2CPhotographer%2CImage_Copyright%3BMYSQL_MATCHES%3B%2BHandsworth+%2BRoad
<p>Lesson 4 What parts of Sheffield's history can we see on Handsworth Road?</p> <p>Children will frame historically valid questions</p>	<p>Local history walk with local historian (Sandra Gillot).</p> <p>Visit to the local museum.</p> <p>During the walk, talk about the importance of oral history. It is important for children to note that, while this is powerful, it can often lead to differing interpretations of the past.</p>	

<p>Children will begin to discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed</p>	<p>Take photos of different sites along the road (Handsworth stone houses, proximity of old quarry, Jeffcock memorial, site of old glasshouses, the original boundary lines, St Mary's Church).</p>	
<p><u>Lesson 5</u> How significant is St Mary's church to Handsworth Road? Has this changed over time?</p> <p>Children will understand how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources</p> <p>Children will construct informed responses that involve thoughtful selection and organisation of relevant historical information</p>	<p>Children to use a number of sources to study the history of the church and how it has been used over the years.</p> <p>Visit from Allison Powell, children and family services pastor at St Mary's.</p> <p>Start the lesson by recapping the previous week's walk and visit to the church. Explain that children will be studying the records of the church in this lesson and that everything they are studying took place in the same space that they were in last week.</p> <p>Activity 1: Children to work in groups to gather information from the St Mary's 850-year celebration handbook. Each group to be given a different section and to report back to the class their findings.</p> <p>Activity 2: Children to study the images of the church records to gather information on the type of people who used the church during the 1800s.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Mary's church 850-year celebration handbook • Marriage records from 8 February 1865 to 29 March 1892 – PR158/18(M) • Baptism records from 5 April to 1 February 1931 – PR158/7(M) • Photos of records taken by David Fernley (permission from Sheffield Archives)

	<p>Activity 3: Children to write a written answer to the key question.</p>	
<p><u>Lesson 6</u> What has changed in the history of Handsworth Road and why?</p> <p>Children will discuss how several aspects of national history are reflected in the locality</p> <p>Children will develop a chronologically secure knowledge and understanding of British, local and world history</p> <p>Children will construct informed responses that involve thoughtful selection and organisation of relevant historical information</p>	<p>Start with the question: Do we know enough to answer the question?</p> <p>Display a map of Handsworth Road on the board. Jot down the significant things that the children have learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benjamin Hunstman • Nursery fields and Handsworth holly • St Mary’s Church • Stone houses and Handsworth quarry • Jobs on Handsworth Road <p>Briefly recap each one. Keep referring to the map at the start of the lesson.</p> <p>Final activity: In groups, children to work together to create a detailed timeline for Handsworth Road (this activity can be done independently). Have examples of timelines ready to share. Model an example if necessary. Where should we start the timeline? (Domesday entry would be a sensible starting point.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maps from previous lessons • Images taken on the walk • Examples of timelines

	Extension: What has been the most significant change in the history of Handsworth Road and why? (Use a literacy lesson to answer this if necessary.)	
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