

In AD 62 an earthquake devastated the town of Pompeii. In AD 1976 Jim Callaghan in his Ruskin speech set off a seismic shock that shook education to its foundations. Almost two decades after the 62 AD Pompeii earthquake's warning signs the volcanic explosion of Vesuvius destroyed the town and surrounding Campania (Butterworth and Lawrence, 2006). The tremors that the 1976 Ruskin speech set off culminated in 1988 in the Educational Reform Act that had as explosive an impact upon the English Educational system as Vesuvius had had upon Pompeii. From 1988 there have been a succession of educational pyroclastic flows that have radically changed the educational scene. Three of these have directly affected the creation of this edition: The Crick Report leading to the introduction of citizenship as a national curriculum subject; the *Every Child Matters* agenda and the 2007 Ajegbo report, bearing in mind its relationship to the events of 7/7 2005 in London.

Citizenship, identity and controversial issues came together with a vengeance because of 7/7 when four ostensibly normal young men, British to the core, became its first suicide bombers (Wikipedia). It was their apparent normality, British birth [three born, the fourth settled here at the age of five months] and education that has spurred on a need to review radically education for citizenship. The *Ajegbo Report's* proposed new citizenship education aims to be an antidote to the poison of fundamentalism that led Shehzad Tanweer and his three colleagues to become suicide bombers (Ajegbo, 2007). Tanweer had been a model English schoolboy – his horrendous suicide video emphatically indicates his alienation from the British society that had nurtured him.

Central to the citizenship debate is a sense of personal identity, belonging, shared values and beliefs that history can crucially help provide. The temporal, historical dimension of identity and belonging is central to the creation of the strong ties and affiliations that serve to hold society together. And it is here that history plays a central, even dominant role: a role that has been increasingly marginalised until it has almost fallen off the English national curricular map.

Lord Adonis's paper In My View sets a **new agenda** in which History Education can [and should] return to a central role. Using the earthquake metaphor, History is the stabilising bedrock upon which society's survival depends at times of greatest shock. History Education and Citizenship Education combined put down the deep,

anchoring roots into our shared cultural and social bedrock from the earliest phase of the child's education.

'Primary school offers children a vital and caring setting in which to discover who they are. A fluid combination of citizenship education and historical study prepares pupils to be active participants – from the classroom to the local community and far beyond. Indeed, making a positive contribution is one of the five overarching aims of the Every Child Matters agenda.'

(Adonis, 2007)

Sir Keith Ajegbo analyses his own sense of **Identity**, Britishness, that is the central feature of Lord Adonis's article (Ajegbo, 2007). Sir Keith explores the multiple identities and influences that combined to shape his own personality, identity and sense of belonging. Accordingly, **Diversity** is the second feature that he highlights: the multiple factors that continuously shape and influence our identity: beliefs, ethics, religion, ethnicity, personal interests and aptitudes, cultural and emotional factors and the constant response to the evolving and changing world we inhabit. The fact that Identity and Diversity will become a fourth strand of the revised Citizenship Curriculum indicates their significance.

The Ajegbo report firmly aligns the Citizenship curriculum with History, Geography and Religious Education and questions the dominant role that PSHE [Personal, Social, Health Education] has taken. Hilary Claire examines in detail the implications of Citizenship for History Education in filling the gap that PHSE has left.

A Contemporary History Curriculum

We should take up the challenge of a contemporary history curriculum that Geoffrey Barraclough first proposed in 1964 (Barraclough, 1967).

- It highlights issues and concerns that are of direct personal, social, cultural, political and ideological significance to children, their families and communities.
- It sees history as providing perspective, depth and understanding of the current world.
- It is retrospective; it looks back from the present to the past: EC to BC, not past to present: Plato to NATO arguing that in order to understand the present we must study the past.
- Its content reflects the key issues and concerns of modern society such as war and peace; terrorism, fundamentalism and imperialism; the family as a concept; liberalism, fascism and communism;

environmentalism; monarchy and republicanism and even Prince Charles as an eco-warrior.

The Nuffield Foundation funded the creation of a *Contemporary History Curriculum* in Russia in the late 1990s; that curriculum is equally germane to contemporary Britain (Nichol, 2005). The papers in this themed edition reflect a Contemporary History Curriculum's retrospective approach, for example, *Engaging with Controversial Issues through Drama; Exploring our Roots: Migration to Britain; Dealing with the Dead: Identity & Community* or examining *Racism & the Anti-Slavery Movement, 1807*.

A *Contemporary History Curriculum* requires a highly interactive, stimulating and enjoyable pedagogy that involves pupils at every stage. Discussion and debate, drama and simulation, story telling, filming and video, model making, display and art work, music and field work rooted in *history as a process of enquiry* bring the past to life. Through 'Doing History' pupils systematically develop the high level thinking skills, protocols, procedures and processes and related concepts linked to ICT, intra-personal and social skills and qualities that they need to develop their understanding of both present and past.

The final five papers in this special issue examine in detail the implications of citizenship for the history curriculum. Remarkably, from Hilary Cooper's report on current curricular reform to Dean Smart's examination of issues and concerns during transition from primary to secondary schooling there is a clear argument that the History Curriculum urgently needs **comprehensive radical reform** to meet the Every Child Matters, Personalised Learning, and supremely the Ajegbo Citizenship agendas.

References

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