

HERITAGE EXPLORERS: A RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS



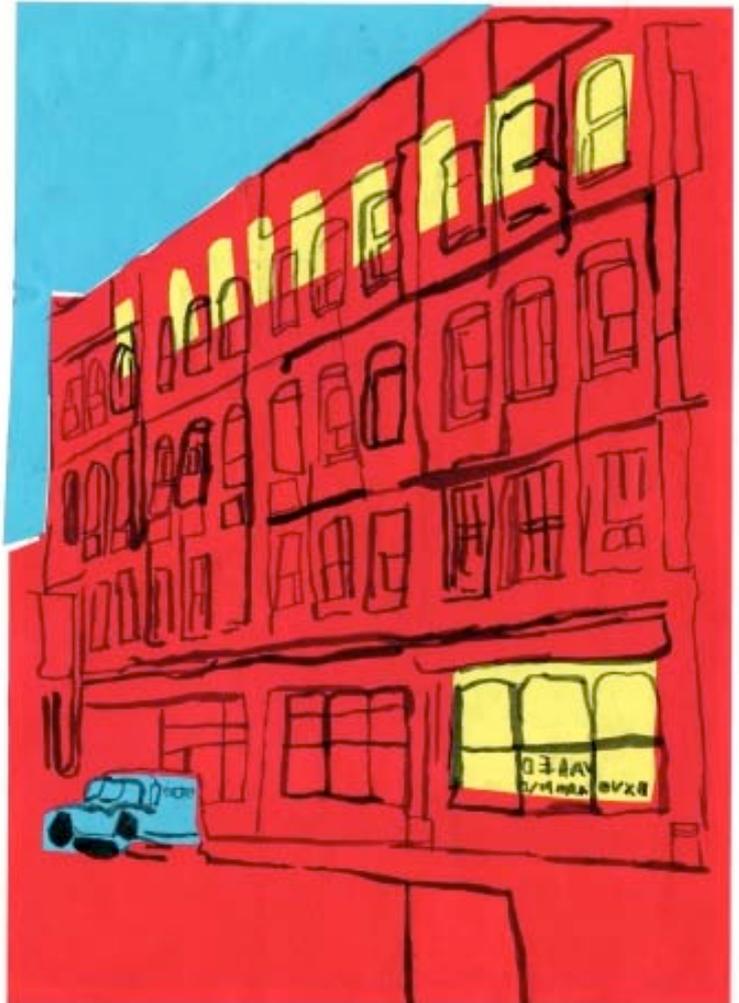
Creative approaches to exploring
local history for Key Stage 2

KS2 RESOURCE: HERITAGE EXPLORERS

INTRODUCTION

Between January and July 2012, children from two primary schools in Stratford, East London, set out to explore the heritage of their local area. They worked in partnership with **Eastside Community Heritage**, Holden Point (a community housing scheme), Community Road community centre and two professional illustrators. The project – Stratford Explorers – was managed by **A New Direction** and funded by the **Heritage Lottery Fund**.

The aim was to research and document the changes that had taken place in the area since 1945, and then create a map/heritage trail for visitors to Stratford, as well as an exhibition about the place featuring some of the children's work.



This resource offers a framework for undertaking a similar project, using our process as a starting point.

It is designed as a creative approach to working with a heritage theme.

STARTING OUT

With the many changes taking place in Stratford for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, we wanted to explore some of the town's older and lesser known landmarks. How did Stratford develop? Who were the key figures in its history? The following questions helped us to frame our project and form a starting point for planning.

1. What do we want to find out?

- Are there particular local stories we want to research?
- Do we want to pinpoint a particular moment in time or are we looking to chart the changes that have taken place over a given period?
- Are we interested in land use, industry, architecture / built environment, people, or all of these?
- Is our chosen area big enough to yield interesting findings and small enough to be manageable?

2. Who will work on the project?

- Will there be staff INSET?
- Who will be the beneficiaries?
- Will we involve parents and grandparents?
- Will we involve other members of the community (local business people, older people, councillors, local faith groups)?
- Will we work with an external partner?

30 Year 4 pupils from one of our schools, and 60 Year 5 pupils from the other were involved in the project. They worked independently, but were able to share work with each other via the partners they worked with (artists, heritage partners, project coordinator).

3. What will the outcome of the project be?

- Will there be an identifiable 'product' to aim for?
- Will there be opportunities to share the learning with others both in and out of school?
- Will we create a model which others could use in the future?

- How will we evaluate our work, and how can the evaluation be used for planning further projects?

Our Stratford Explorers project created a printed map and guide, as well as a mobile exhibition to tour the participating institutions' premises as well as public venues such as the local library. We also created this resource pack to share practice further.

4. How can we link the project to other areas of the curriculum?

Curriculum areas that could be served by the project include humanities, literacy, PSHE and art / DT. In our planning, we identified the following strands, some of which are cross-curricular:

- Chronological understanding: factual knowledge, dates, timelines, historical vocabulary.
- Understanding of cause and effect, understanding and describing the causes and process of change, exploring how humans and physical features effect change in the environment.
- Historical interpretation: understanding that there can be more than one version of a given event, using artefacts and documents to reconstruct activities and events from the past.
- Enquiry and research skills, understanding maps and aerial photos, using archive materials in libraries, museums and online.
- Organisation and communication skills: documenting and presenting findings in a variety of different ways.
- Speaking and listening, developing awareness of other people's views and sensitivities (particularly those of other generations and cultures), open and closed questions, interviewing skills.
- Performing and presentation skills when sharing learning with others.
- New techniques in drawing, painting and modelling when interpreting and presenting research findings.

LOOKING FOR CLUES: HOW TO BE AN EXPLORER OR HERITAGE DETECTIVE

Before defining the area for exploration, it may be worth taking a more general look at what's around you. Some useful exercises could include:

1. Object timelines

Gather together a selection of objects, both familiar and unfamiliar, and work as a group to see if you can make a timeline with them – which is oldest? And which is newest? How can you tell?

It can be difficult to place an object in its correct decade let alone a specific year but this exercise can encourage a closer look at the chosen objects and offer a chance to 'interrogate' them with questions such as

- What is the object made of?
- Was it made by hand? How do we know?
- Where was it made?
- What was/is it used for?
- Who would use it?
- Is it an 'everyday' object or something to be used on special occasions?
- What would it cost to buy it?
- What can it tell us about the time and place it's from?

In our project we used about 20 objects (not unique to Stratford) including pre-decimal coins, an ARP warden's tin hat from the 1940s, a slide rule, a vinyl 45rpm record of the Dr Kildare theme, a piece of hand embroidery, a man's silk evening scarf, a lorgnette, a music cassette, a Pokémon card, a knitting magazine and some theatre programmes.

Working in groups, pupils talked about the items placed on their tables using the questions above. In the event, nobody was able to arrange them chronologically – not even the teachers. However, the exercise sparked many questions and further research at home.

Pupils spotted similar items in the museums they visited, used some of the objects in their conversations with the local elders and brought some of their own things into school.

Try making your own timeline with objects brought from home or found in school.

2. Look around you: your school

Looking at your own school building can be another source of clues about the past. Think about questions such as:

- Is there evidence of separate entrances for girls and boys?
- Is there a bell tower or other interesting architectural features?
- What materials were used to build the school? Are the original materials still visible or have there been modifications/ improvements over the years? How do we know?
- Is it an accessible building?
- Are there any marks made by past pupils?
- How does it compare with other nearby schools or photographs of old schools?

Suggested activities:

- a) Try taking a walk round the building in small groups, each with a camera. Find 4-5 interesting details and photograph them. Back in the classroom, look at them on the whiteboard. Can you identify and locate the details? Can you start to gather new vocabulary to describe what you see?
- b) The same exercise can be done with a page of A4 paper divided into four equal rectangles. Ask pupils to sketch a detail from the building in each section and annotate with observations and reflections. This could form the basis of a story or a collage.
- c) If the building could talk, what would you ask it? Pupils write a question on a postcard and post it in a box. Later, they take out a card at random and write an answer as if they were the building.
- d) What will the building look like in 20 years? Sketch or use photo-collage to create a new look and annotate the key changes.

3. Looking at maps

We found that some pupils were very unfamiliar with maps and found it difficult to interpret them. We looked at a variety of different types including old paper maps, Ordnance Survey, A to Z, Google and online maps (also Google Earth and Google Streetview) and considered how features were represented. Magnifying glasses are useful for these exercises.

- Tracing fingers along particular roads and noticing features along the way.

- Looking for features and landmarks such as places of worship, parks or woodland, tramlines, houses, factories.
- Matching maps to aerial photos of a location.
- Drawing maps: understanding scale, the need for accuracy and –for clarity - what needs to be included and what can be left out.

Suggested activities:

It's possible to purchase copies of old street maps fairly cheaply online, or even download them for free. We used 3 replica Ordnance Survey maps of our area from 1867, 1893 and 1914 plus a present-day map and looked for specific changes in land use:

- a) with the dates covered up, we tried to put the maps in order chronologically
- b) we looked for particular streets, one of which had changed its name.
- c) we traced tramlines along the High Street and noticed that they weren't present on all three maps.
- d) we looked at the ratio of open space to built-up areas and how it changed with time.

4. Looking at images

Photographs are an obvious source of information about the past. As well as searching online, you may be able to obtain photos of the local area in the past from your local archive (often part of the public library service) or your local museum if there is one in your area. Some areas have local history organisations – some online research may be needed to find these. Parents, grandparents, or even members of staff (or your school archive if you have one) may also be able to contribute photos.

Once you have collected some photos together, consider some of the questions below, and discuss them together.

- Look at any people in the photos and note differences in faces, hair and clothing. Are there people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds? What are people doing in the photos? Could you create a version for today?
- Is there evidence of different modes of transport?
- If there are buildings in the photos, are they still there now? Have they changed? What were/are they used for?

- Is it possible to date the photo? What evidence is there for your judgement?



5) Visiting museums

Museums are a fantastic resource for children learning about the past. Consider contacting and visiting your local museum (if you have one) as they will have specific information about your local area that the large national museums may not.

If possible try to visit the museum in advance of your class visit to familiarise yourself with the museum and its collections, and see what is most relevant to your project. This is even more important if your group will be visiting a large/national museum. Talk to their education department to see if they can offer you a session that is relevant to your project.

Suggested activities:

On one of the visits, each pupil was given an envelope containing a question relating to an exhibit 'somewhere in the museum' (such as 'who was...', 'what does [an object] have to do with Stratford?'). These were given out at random and there were two copies of each question.

On return to school, they shared their question and answer with the rest of the group. Sometimes those with the same question had compared notes while in the museum; others exchanged their answers back in the classroom, inviting discussion where they had different findings or ideas.

MOVING ON

We identified a geographical area which included the central and older part of the town with the railway station, the high street, memorials to key historical figures and some architecturally and historically interesting landmarks. We were aiming to create a heritage trail, so we had to make decisions based on the practicalities of someone following the suggested route: not too long, easy to follow and no long boring bits.

Once the area you want to explore is agreed, the following steps might be helpful.

- Plotting the area on a map or aerial photo and noting the key features
- Conducting a sensory walk around the chosen area, collecting evidence (notes, sketches, photos)

Reviewing the walk for 'highlights'. Is this a walk that others might enjoy and, if so, what would enhance their experience?



Stratford Town Hall as seen by pupils

- Verifying that there are enough interesting landmarks and features to generate a worthwhile project.
- Checking for clues to the past that are already evident: plaques and inscriptions on buildings and memorials, tramlines in the road, architectural features (decorative and functional), street names.
- Modifying the area if necessary.

HOW CAN WE FIND OUT MORE?

External partners

Most of the ideas and activities in this resource pack draw on the skills and knowledge of the staff and broader school community and do not require funding or external resources. However, working in partnership with another organisation could bring new approaches and resources to your project and may open up access to funding possibilities through joint/partnership bids.

If you are able to work with a partner, you might want to:

- Consider the practicalities of working together. Are there constraints within the school timetable (for example, is this kind of project work only going to take place in the afternoon and, if so, will your partner(s) be happy working half-days?)
- Reflect on the skills you and your team already have and what you would like a partnership to add. In this context, it might be a new approach to working with museums, interpreting maps or gathering oral histories.
- Consider whether the partner(s) will work with one target group or whether they might also offer staff inset and/or whole school assemblies/ events.
- Think about whether the partner is used to working with the target age group. Are you looking for a partner with a lot of experience on this type of project or do you want to take a risk on someone who may not be 'tried and tested' but who may have great expertise in their field and could offer something extraordinary if given support?
- Ensure the roles and responsibilities of all parties are clearly understood and be clear about lines of communication. It helps to keep a record of all conversations, meetings and decisions made and to schedule time for 'de-briefing' and reflection at key points in the project.
- Timetable key project milestones at the beginning of the project. These might include planning time, visits, events and evaluation. Consider how you might use the latter in the planning of future projects.
- Be open to other ways of thinking and working. If your partner sees everything the same way as you, do you really need them?

Who could you partner with?

- a) Professional historians, heritage organisations and local history organisations. If you have a local community centre, you may be able to find more information about people you could work with. Look online for heritage organisations in your area.

- b) Archives and libraries. Many have specialist staff who work with schools to help them access their records and artefacts. They may also have online resources.
- c) Museums and galleries.
- d) Websites, books, films.
Does your area feature in a song, a music video, a book or a film?

We discovered that a street in our area could be seen in the film made for the Beatles' 'Penny Lane' and also in the film 'Sparrows Can't Sing' starring a young Barbara Windsor in the 1960s.



- e) Local residents, especially older people who are prepared to share their memories with your group and/or be interviewed by them. A sheltered/supported housing scheme might be a good place to start. A day centre, local business or community centre club might also offer opportunities for getting to know older people. Some things to consider if engaging with people in this way include:
- Thinking about the ethics involved in asking people questions which they may consider 'personal' and about how to respond if interviewees prefer not to answer a question or continue with the conversation.
 - Preparing questions in advance and keeping 'on track' with lines of questioning while being sensitive to what interviewees might want to talk about.
 - Considering how the interview will be recorded and documented. Will pupils use sound recording devices and attempt to transcribe all or part of the interview at a later stage? Will they use notebooks to record key points?
 - Ensuring that interviewees know what will happen to the information they give. Professional oral historians will have strict procedures when gaining permission to record and archive material. Will you use a permission form or some kind of agreement so that all parties are clear about who owns any material documented?
 - Working with professionals can really add value to this process. They have appropriate recording equipment and transcribing software to speed the process of documenting interviews. They can offer training and preparatory sessions on ethics and effective interviewing.

DOCUMENTING

Depending on your agreed outcome/objective, there are a number of options for documenting the project. We conducted a series of interviews with older people which were transcribed and archived according to recognised standards. The pupils' interviews were also recorded and transcribed for reference and to inform the artwork and design of the trail. We kept sketch books (with pockets for worksheets) where pupils could write and draw their own responses to the project activities. You might want to consider:

- Using a plain paper sketch book for the project as a good way of keeping all the bits and pieces together in one place and enabling the pupils to customise their response to the project. It can be used for museum sketches, interview notes, ideas and worksheets.
- A diary or blog can be useful for keeping track of the project and preserving the details of the moment. It does take time to keep it updated, though, and it might be worth considering who will be reading it. Will access be password-protected or limited to project participants only? Could it be written by the project partner who can upload pupil contributions and moderate its content? Will its purpose be to practise writing and would this be better served by an old-fashioned paper diary?
- A working wall.
- Archive boxes. Collecting maps, photos, newspaper cuttings and artefacts provides tangible evidence of pupils' research and is useful for children with EAL and special needs. Magnifying glasses can be included for those who want to take a closer look.

INTERPRETING

Art work

This was a key feature of the Stratford Explorers project and the artist partners brought great expertise to the interpretation of the pupils' research findings and ideas. In this project, the process was led by the agreed outcome of the heritage trail. Pupils worked on both individual and group pieces, some of which were used in the map and guide and others in the accompanying exhibition.

Examples of the artwork and captions created by the pupils involved in the Stratford Explorers are included in this resource. Some examples of the techniques they used are included in the 'How-to' section of this resource pack: see Paper-cut Landmark Illustrations, and Future Building Collages.

Any of these activities could be run by a non-specialist. Our artist partners demonstrated the techniques and brought a new vocabulary to the classroom along with vision, layout and design skills and the ability to use pupils' artwork to great effect in the final product. However, the art work produced could also be exhibited in more conventional ways: as an exhibition, postcards, a book or a slideshow.

Creative writing

The project could include elements of creative writing and drama:

- play scripts based on interviews/ conversations with older people
- imagined diary entries from the past, inspired by older people's stories
- documenting changes in the local area through 'other voices'
- role-playing/ hot-seating characters from the area's past or those alive today
- imagining how the area might be in the future: buildings, transport, people
- exploring how the local area has shaped the lives of the pupils in the class: interviewing each other about key places and experiences.

Sensory elements

As well as the visual, what evokes a sense of the past?

Pupils could experiment with trying to recreate scents and textures through foodstuffs and textiles. Shiphams fish paste, Angel Delight and a slice of Battenburg cake will take you right back to the 1960s.

The Museum of London in Docklands, for example, has a warehouse exhibit with boxes of aromatic spices, tea and coffee. It also houses the Sainsbury's archive with a 'food timeline' showing products and packaging over the last hundred years.

Many museums show household linens and clothing from the past which might jog memories about items at home which could add to the archive box. An old tea-cosy or shopping basket, a carpet beater or pair of shoes: pupils can look at materials used, the skill of the craftsperson and even how much smaller people's feet used to be in the past. These objects can be the starting point for writing or role-play.

Exploring music that was popular in different decades can also inform pupils' conversations with older people and give them a sense of popular themes and styles of the day.

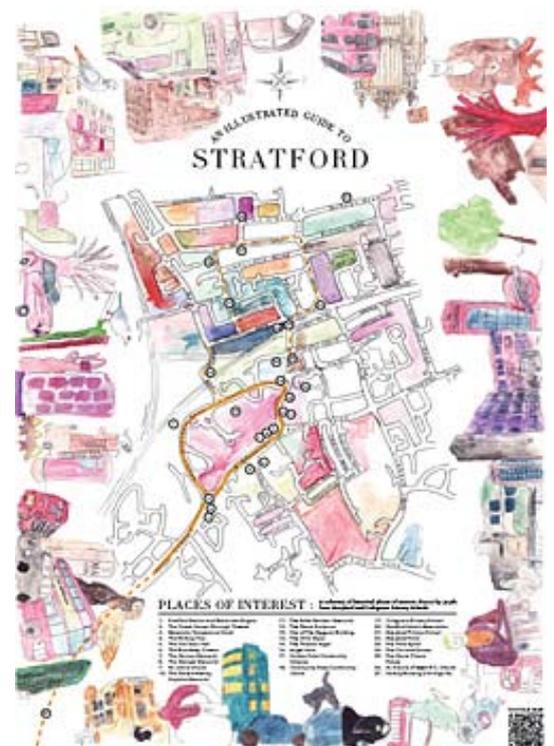
In the Stratford Explorers project, one of the SEN pupils was able to access the concept of passing time through a montage of music styles from 1940 to the present day. This, in turn, inspired a journey through different dance styles.

Listening to voice recordings is a good way to find out how people spoke and behaved. Many museums and archives offer opportunities to hear voices from the past. Old BBC broadcasts sound pretty alien to children today.

SHARING

Sharing the work with others is a key motivator. Our project included assemblies in both the schools we worked with. These involved slide shows, dramatic elements ('market cries' montage, 'Read all about it: history detectives tell all!' feature, recreated interviews) as well as art work and illustrated presentations about the museum visits and working with the artists. If you decide to share your findings, these ideas might be useful:

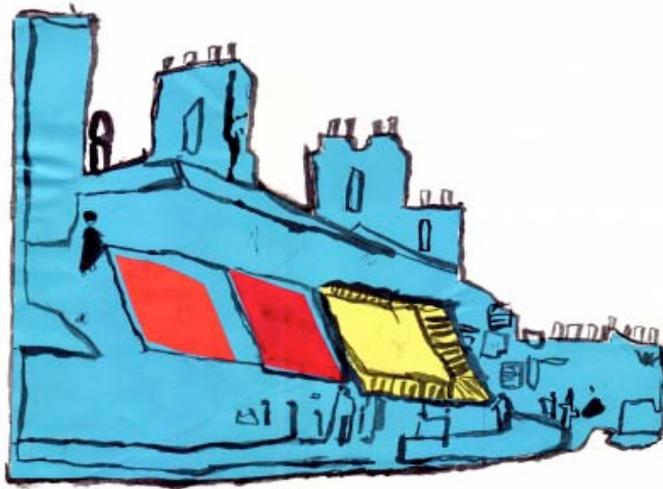
- A map or guide can be as simple or detailed as time allows. It can be printed or available to download and designed for other pupils, parents or the local community. Tracing an enlarged copy of a street map as a basis can be a useful starting point for this process.
- A performance could present your findings with dramatic scenes, film extracts, guest appearances, slide shows and music. You could include sensory elements or choose to show your work using only visual or auditory elements.
- Hold an activity day with tasks designed by the pupils. These might include recreating a street with cardboard shop facades (as shown in the Artwork included with this resource), identifying buildings from small photographed details or creating a trail on the floor with photographs of landmarks. The event could be organised for other pupils or for parents as an after-school activity.
- Create an exhibition which could travel to other venues (other local schools, the library or the borough teachers' centre).
- Make a film of the project including some of the processes.
- Create a website with opportunities for feedback and readers' own contributions.
- Create a photobook. There are many companies that allow you to upload images and text and will make a book which can then be kept in the school library or copies of which can be sold to cover costs or as a fundraiser.



EVALUATION

It's a good idea to decide what you want to evaluate and agree an evaluation structure at the beginning of the project.

Our baseline activity involved project participants assessing how much they felt they already knew about the history of their area, older people, the museums we were to visit and about art and design. They also thought about what skills they thought they would need and about what would interest/ surprise/ bore them. This same activity was repeated at intervals through the project and at the end and responses were recorded.



Angel Lane, Stratford

Giving a set of options on cards for pupils to prioritise is easier to manage than inviting free comments, though identifying '3 things I learnt today' or 'What could be done differently' can yield interesting responses.

FINALLY...

Included in this pack is a work-booklet our artist partners made as a starting point for our project. It aims to get pupils thinking about place and time and to be more observant in familiar environments. It invites them to think about the quirkiest elements as well as the more conventionally 'historical' and to place themselves in the story as a part of their area's living heritage.

USEFUL LINKS

You can find out more about our project at www.anewdirection.org.uk.

Take a look at our heritage partner's website for more information about their work in East London: www.hidden-histories.org.uk

The Heritage Lottery Fund website gives information on how to apply and includes case studies for other heritage projects it has funded. www.hlf.org.uk

If you are planning a museum visit, you might find the Making the Most of Museums resource developed for our 2011 annual schools conference useful. See <http://rosiefuller.wordpress.com/for-teachers/>.



The Shoal – public artwork in Stratford, as seen by pupils