

## 'Read all about it... What's the News from the River Severn?'

This project plan was created by Helen Iles of Coaley Church of England Primary School in Gloucestershire and John Putley, the Learning & Outreach Officer of Gloucestershire Archives.

### **Objectives for the Unit:**

- Children will learn about an aspect of local history through studying how the River Severn and its people were affected by two events, one in the recent past and the other which occurred considerably earlier.
- Children will focus on how events are interpreted, both at the time and subsequently. They will use a range of historical sources to ask and answer questions and place their own interpretation on their findings.

### **The subjects selected for the children to investigate for this project are:**

- Shipwrecks and wrecking on the Severn Estuary, c1700s.
- The Severn Railway Bridge Disaster, 1960.

The material for this comes from a range of images and archive material that is contained in the accompanying PDF files.

### **Curriculum Links:**

Literacy Y4 Non Fiction Unit 1 Newspaper Recounts; also Design Technology Unit 4a Money Containers; ICT Unit 3E email; Science 3C Characteristics of Materials; Music Unit 12 Dragon Scales (based on).

## Lesson 1: Introduction

### Key Questions:

How has the river made the news?

### PoS Coverage:

BoS 7 Local History, Literacy: PN Framework (Literacy) Y4 NF Unit 1, - 1a 1b 4b

### Learning Objectives:

- To place events on the river in the correct time period;
- To use the appropriate chronological vocabulary.
- To ask historical questions

### Activities:

- Look at newspaper and/or TV reports about the river (recent eg. 2007 floods and older).
- Recap importance of river to local people.
- What events are newsworthy?
- Introduce themes and place chronologically (time machine)

## Lesson 2: Ship wreckers

### Key Questions:

Who were the wreckers?

### PoS Coverage:

BoS 7 Local History, Literacy: PN Framework (Literacy) Y4 NF Unit 1, - 2a 2b 2c 4a 4b

### Learning Objectives:

- To use a range of secondary sources to learn about an historical event;
- To answer historical questions by researching the subject;

### Activities:

- Present folk song The Trowman's Fall. Children discuss, what questions do they have?
- View images if possible - in groups discuss main sequence of events Draw story boards. Plenary - quotes for a paper report.

## Lesson 3: Fact or opinion?

### Key Questions:

What do we think of the wreckers? What have people in the past thought about the wreckers?

### PoS Coverage:

BoS 7 Local History, Literacy: PN Framework (Literacy) Y4 NF Unit 1, - 2a 2b 3

### Learning Objectives:

- To interpret the information they receive;
- To understand that a range of interpretations may be possible for any historical event.

### Activities:

- Discuss piracy - opinions. Revisit ballad; what are view points of participants, family of crew etc?
- Set up role play groups, set scenario, rehearse and present. Plenary - revisit opinions.

## Lesson 4: The rail bridge disaster

### Key Questions:

What happened to the Severn Rail Bridge?

### PoS Coverage:

BoS 7 Local History, Literacy: PN Framework (Literacy) Y4 NF Unit 1, - 2a 2b 2c 4a 4b

### Learning Objectives:

- To use a range of secondary sources to learn about an historical event;
- To answer historical questions by researching the subject;

### Activities:

- If possible, video footage or stills of the event would be a good start. Discuss, what questions do they have?
- Groups research sequence of events via documents from Archives eg. newspaper articles, police records, photos.
- Make notes for a report.
- Plenary - summarise findings and consider how to present as a news item. NB. Could be expanded if can get Chris Wiggs as eye witness.

## Lesson 5: Fact or opinion?

### Key Questions:

What do we think about the accident? What have people in the past thought about the accident?

### PoS Coverage:

BoS 7 Local History, Literacy: PN Framework (Literacy) Y4 NF Unit 1, -2a 2b 3

### Learning Objectives:

- To interpret the information they receive;
- To understand that a range of interpretations may be possible for any historical event.

### Activities:

- Discuss the accident - revisit previous evidence.
- How are views of participants, ship's owners etc?
- Hot seat some participants in the event.
- Draft possible quotes to include in a report.
- Plenary - hear quotes.

## Lesson 6: Conclusion – bringing it all together

### Key Questions:

Presenting the news...what's your opinion?

### PoS Coverage:

BoS 7 Local History, Literacy: PN Framework (Literacy) Y4 NF Unit 1, - 4b 5a 5b 5c

### Learning Objectives:

- To select and collate information;
- To use dates and appropriate vocabulary;
- To communicate their understanding and interpretation of events to an audience.

### Activities:

- (NB follows additional time in literacy lessons to prepare newspaper recounts - children will either select the wreckers or the rail bridge accident as their topic).
- Set up classroom as a news studio - children present reports to audience.
- Allow time to evaluate effectiveness (success criteria). Could video this as evidence.
- Conclude by asking about why wreckers ceased to operate, what they think the consequences of the rail bridge accident were.