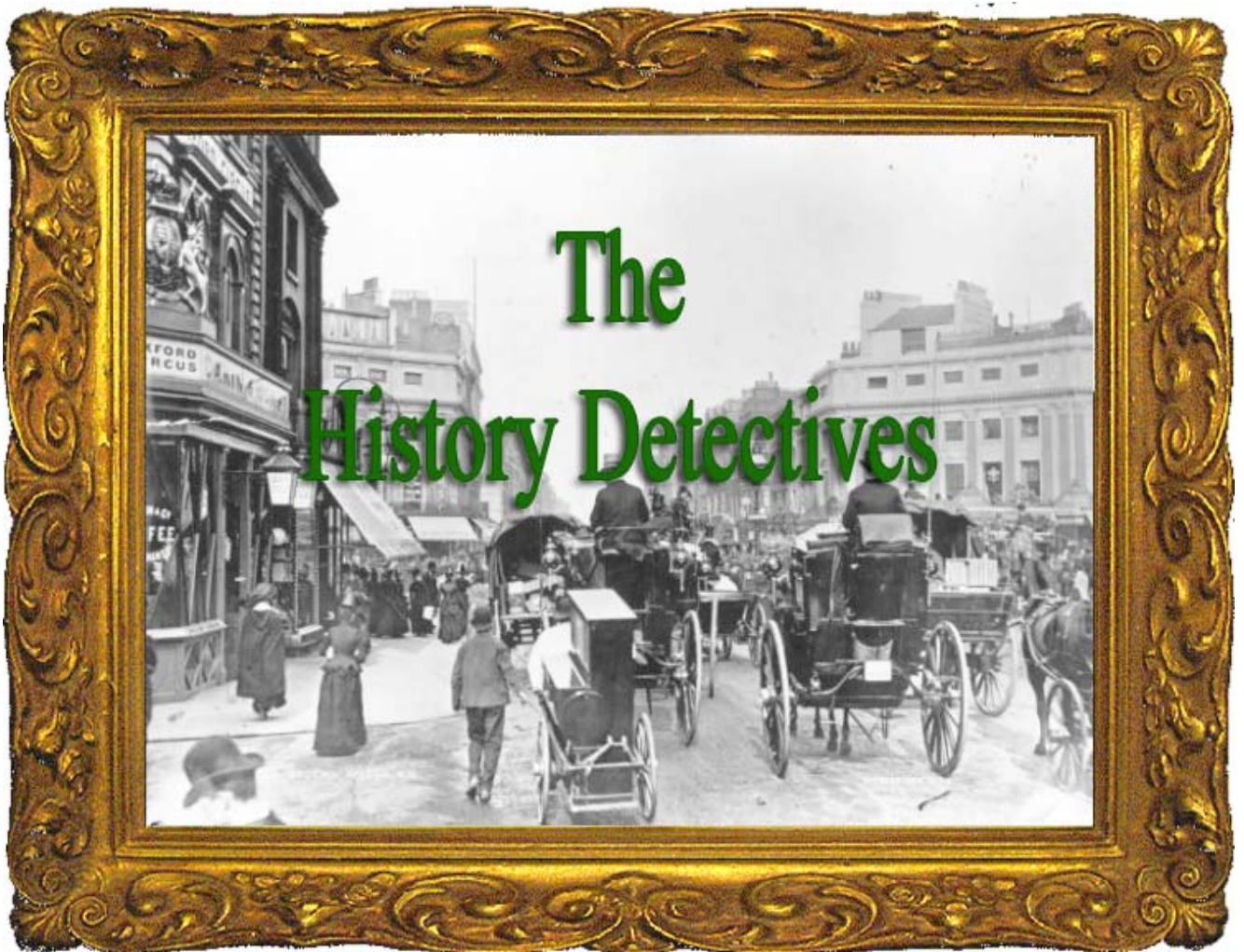


A CASE STUDY



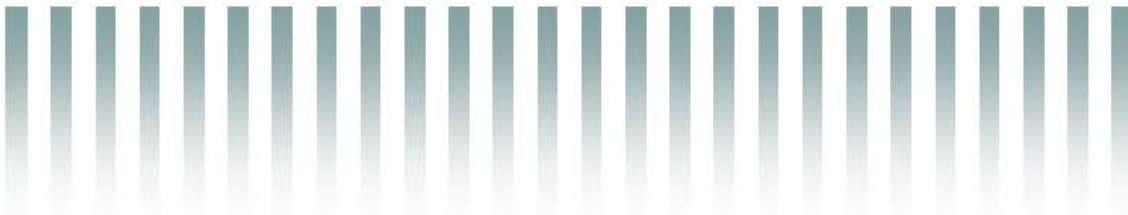
‘The History Detectives’

February half term 2010

Islington Arts & Media School
and

Highbury Fields School


Supported by Learning Plus



WANTED!
HISTORY DETECTIVES

TO INVESTIGATE THE TERRIBLE
CRIME OF
BABY FARMING
IN
19TH CENTURY ISLINGTON

MON 15 — WED 17 FEB
AT IAMS, TURLE ROAD
N4 3LS
10AM—4PM



During half term we will bring to life the story of the first two women to be hung in Holloway Prison.

Visit the London Dungeon
Meet local Author Caitlin Davies
Stage a performance of the crime
ONLY 10 FREE PLACES AVAILABLE
SO SIGN UP NOW!

History Detectives - a half term project

Best practice in Out of School Hours Learning (OSHL)

Background

This project was initially conceived as a local history activity by the OSHL Co-ordinator and a History teacher at Islington Arts and Media School (IAMS). The latter had run a mock detective scenario in class in which students used clues to find out about a crime. The lesson was very popular and the school was keen to make history in KS3 more 'hands-on' and possibly develop an after school club for interested students.



Subsequently it became a collaboration with Highbury Fields School (HFS) linking up with a Teaching Assistant who leads an after school history club. The idea developed into a project about Baby Farming, a practice in the Victorian and Edwardian period. The project focussed on a case which mostly took place in Islington and made headline news at the time. It explored the fascinating story of two women, Annie Walters and Amelia Sach who were tried, found guilty of 'procuring' a baby who was subsequently murdered, and both hanged at Holloway prison in 1903. This crime provided a local history focus and plenty of material for research, including detailed reporting of the trial at The Old Bailey. A number of elements fell into place during the inception of the project. It coincided with an exhibition at the Islington Museum 'It's a Fair Cop' - crime and punishment in Islington. A local author had written the exhibition display information about this case having already undertaken extensive research for her book. She was able to provide valuable input to the project.

The aims for the project were established early on;

- To find out how historians discover the past using clues or sources.
- To enhance knowledge and achievement by bringing history to life with real connections to Islington and relevance to society today.
- To engage students through a range of activities and experiences in the process of researching and presenting their findings.

The brief

- **To learn about Edwardian baby farmers** through the case of Amelia Sach and Annie Walters.
- **To be able to place them in a cultural and historical context**, having examined and understood a variety of sources and evidence.
- **To discuss the case and come to a conclusion as to their guilt/innocence.**
- **To produce a dramatisation of the trial using artefacts and costumes** from the Education Library Service (ELS)

The staff involved had a pre course planning meeting and regular contact to clarify individual roles and inputs, organise the museum visits and activities, identify resources and publicise the course to students.

What took place

The three day programme took place in February half term. The programme was advertised to students in years 8 & 9 (including G&T) at IAMS, through flyers and assemblies, and to students attending the History club at HFS. The course was designed for 20 students with 22 signing up. One key selling point was clearly the free trip to the London Dungeon.

The project plan

Day 1 Visit to London Dungeon followed by workshop at the Islington Museum to research topic and make pinhole cameras.

Day 2 At IAMS, workshops on clues, sources and analysis of evidence .
Context of baby farmers -newspaper reports from the day and the details of the case and characters, trial reports and time line.
Group work on development of characters.
Use of artefacts.

Day 3 At IAMS, writing up scripts for characters/scenes, a craft activity reproducing evidence - death certificates, needlework and fingerprint documents.
Rehearsal for a re-enactment of the Old Bailey trial.
Public performance.

Recruitment and retention were excellent with 17 students attending all 3 days. Students were focussed and engaged, were able to take in and retain large amounts of information, to use sources and evidence to make up their own minds about the case. They gained a good understanding of social life in Edwardian London, the individual people involved in the case, their roles and possible motivations. Students demonstrated a variety of skills and used their imagination to develop the characters, scripting the short scenes using artefacts as props, and either performing or, in the case of two students, electing to take on the stage management roles. The activities were delivered through different teaching and learning styles and personalised learning was evident. Family and friends were invited to the Wednesday afternoon performance. A programme was produced, designed in the style of the day. Evidence was displayed and at the end of the mock trial the Judge summed up and asked the audience to consider the verdict and show hands if in disagreement. (No one did!)

Keys to success

- **Good planning**, well in advance
- **Wide spread of skills and expertise** in the staff team
- **Promotion**, recruitment flyer distributed
- **Involvement of author** and her research
- **Museum visit**
- **Use of artefacts and costumes**
- **Cross curricular multi faceted project**. A range of activities, practical and creative
- **Evidencing learning through a variety of methods**, (video, photos, recorded discussion, evaluation questionnaires)

By the end of the project all students were familiar with the terms 'primary' 'secondary' 'fact' 'fiction' 'evidence' and 'sources'.

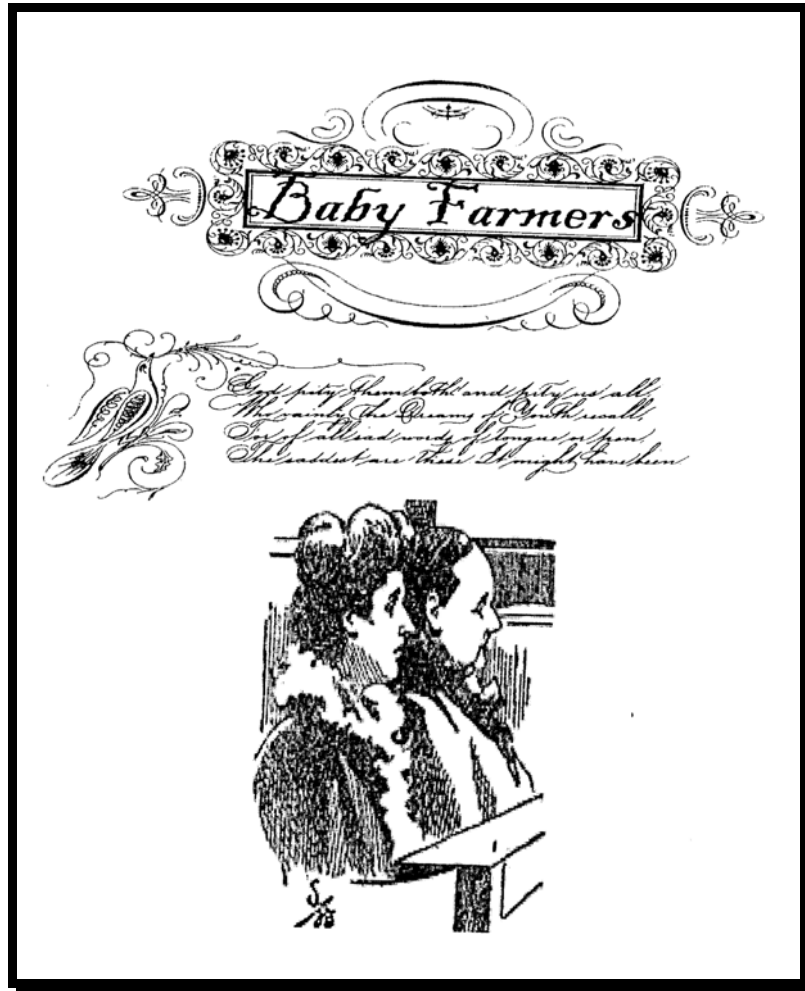
The performance demonstrated depth of knowledge and understanding of nineteenth century social living conditions and motivations for crime. They learnt about what a policeman's job involved, sending a telegram, that people walked the streets at night, and what a 'lying in home' was. Their investigations into different characters and key elements of the case based on real events enabled them to script dialogue. They demonstrated an ability to discuss 'what is fact' and how to draw conclusions based on evidence.

It was clear that they had enjoyed the process, had willingly taken on roles and were able to share what they had learnt.

Staff suggestions at the end of the programme

- **To review the timing and length of sessions, some far too short.**
- **Too much information, better to split into two sessions, one on baby farming, one on the actual case.**
- **Reading from the fictional account of the baby farmers would have been better during the activity on character development.**

The History teacher at IAMS plans to incorporate this project into a scheme of work for KS3, with a focus on Britain 1750 – 1900, the social impact of the industrial revolution in the late Victorian era, and crime and punishment. It will be integrated into a cross curricular activity with Humanities and Drama



Performance programme cover



Preparing for the performance

Pupils said

(from evaluation questionnaires and 'transcribed' video interviews)

Was the course what you expected?

"Better, because the teachers made it fun"

"exciting and more interesting than I thought it would be"

"fun and energetic"

What have you learnt?

"I found out what happened if you are pregnant and not married"

"I've learned a lot about history"

"I have learnt what baby farming is and have tried solving a mystery"

"the skills of being able to interpret the history of baby farming in a drama piece"

What have you enjoyed the most and why?

"the acting and in the London Dungeon, because they were more active instead of sitting down"

Do you think the course will be of benefit to you in school?

"I'm more confident and have become more excited in history"

"confidence – interesting questions to ask in class"

"It will make me use evidence in humanities"

Was the teaching and learning the same or different from normal lessons in school?

"It was better because we were more involved in what we learnt and how we did it"

"different because it was practical yet educational" "different – school should be like this all the time" "different – you could express your feelings"

Overall - A few pupils felt there was too much writing and research and preferred the acting and the 'fun visit' to the London Dungeon. Others said they wanted to do more, another detective project, one suggested Jack the Ripper; another suggested a similar activity in science. One wanted "*longer time to practice*" "*maybe we could have one more day*".

New skills noted were; researching, investigating, acting, gaining confidence, discussing the case/evidence.

They mostly reported finding the teaching different from school (fun, interesting, kinder teachers!) Many said the programme was better and more interesting than they expected.

Most gave a high 5 out of 5 rating, a few 3 & 4. Some not completed.

Parents said

Parents who had attended the mock trial performance said that it was excellent and that they had not expected such a professional performance in such a short period of time. They were also very impressed with the pupil's knowledge of baby farming. Many had never heard of the topic before so learnt something from their children.

Tutors said (evaluations and verbal feedback)

"The programme was well attended and better than students expected in many ways"

"I was surprised how many students said they had fun, was pleased they said it boosted their confidence. I thought they might find some aspects boring. Their evaluations show they enjoyed the hands on approach to history and found the intimate relationships with teachers more rewarding than school"

"They all enjoyed the acting – one suggested the course could have been run for 4 days with more time left for the performance- I agree"

"Craft workshops needed to be longer, to provide more time to develop skills and produce their own folders of work"

"The London Dungeon trip was a big carrot, however we lost a few students after that, next time plan the visit on day two"

"The involvement of the historical author was incredibly useful and kept us all on our toes"

"The students were very focused, the fact they were able to use their imagination to develop characters – I found scripting the scenes and performing them to be a great success"

"Fantastic project"

Report by

**Kate Kelly, Learning Plus Manager,
Cambridge Education @ Islington**

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Thank you to

- Ashley Grey Islington Arts & Media School staff
- Ann Conway Islington Arts & Media School staff
- Sally Young Highbury Fields School staff
- Caitlin Davies Freelance author

Learning Plus publications

- Evaluating the Impact of Out of School Hours Learning in Islington.
Full report, February 2008
- Evaluating the Impact of Out of School Hours Learning in Islington.
Report summary, April 2008
- A guide to Best Practice: Out of Schools Hours Learning in
Islington.
60 page book + DVD, December 2007
- Case Study: Cookery Club (Secondary).
Full report, June 2009
- Jack Petchey Foundation OSHL in Islington.
Newsletter, April 2009

For more information on Learning Plus, Islington School staff may refer to our pages located within the School Improvement Service area on Fronter.

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