

# BENTON PARK SCHOOL

## PROFILE OF THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT

The department prides itself on a lively approach to the teaching of history, and high academic standards. Teaching styles vary but individual teachers are encouraged to play to their strengths and to develop their interests.

Every member of the department has attended courses over the last two years on a variety of subjects, in order to develop their skills and knowledge. These include:

- Assessment at KS3, AS and A2 level, GCSE
- Differentiation
- Inclusion
- Special Needs
- Local History
- Victorian Studies
- ICT
- AfL

They have attended conferences, such as the SHP Conference at Trinity and All Saints' College and lectures organised by the Historical Association, Leeds and Bradford Universities and TASC (Trinity & All Saints College). Attendance at these helps us to update our existing historical knowledge. Through membership of the Historical Association, the Royal Historical Society, local museum groups, and by reading journals, such as Teaching History, we hope to keep abreast of new developments.

The department makes good use of local museums and their facilities, eg Leeds, Otley, Armley Mills, Bradford Industrial Museum, Bradford's National Film and Photographic Museum, the Mining Museum at Wakefield, the Medical Museum in Leeds and the Royal Armouries. Pupils have been taken to the Mining Museum, the Medical Museum, the Railway Museum in York, Armley Mills Industrial Museum, Leeds Museum and the Royal Armouries. Fieldwork has been carried out in the locality, eg Saltaire, Little London in Rawdon, Armley Mills, the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. Extensive use has been made of the Leeds Museum Service, who have loaned out artefacts for occasions such as Open Evenings and exhibitions.

The Sixth Form History Society attends conferences at Leeds and Bradford Universities and TASC. In the past they have been on theatre and cinema visits. Pupils have won prizes for 'The History Mag', local history competitions and examination work. The department encourages extra-curricular activities such as model making, film making, photography, power point displays and role play. Over the years members of the history department have taken pupils on historical, cultural and

sporting trips abroad to countries such as Russia, USA, Canada, France, Belgium, Holland, Austria, Germany and Italy. There have been several trips and visits within England: London, York, Durham, Hull, the Yorkshire Dales, Saltaire, historical walks in the area, travel on canals and steam railways.

The history department has made its own videos and films as teaching aids, eg Local Turnpikes, Blind Jack Metcalf, the Leeds-Liverpool Canal and Armley Mills. A project pioneered by the history department involving integration with other subjects such as science, technology and music resulted in an award winning film on the life of Joseph Priestley. Pupils are encouraged to make their own videos, eg Skipton Castle, Roman Ready Steady Cook, Match of the Day; Roman Times, Child Labour and audio tapes, eg Roman chariot racing, Black Death, Coal Mining children, the Suffragette Derby, the execution of Charles I. A sixth form group made a spoof drama/documentary on the French Revolution.

ICT is used a great deal, with pupils producing assignments at KS3, GCSE and A level. Pupils from Year 7 to Sixth formers are involved in power point presentations. Many pupils illustrate their own work with their own photographs. Role play exercises are used where appropriate and some of these have been filmed, eg Child Mill Workers Inquiry with lower ability Year 9s. We use school television programmes, feature films, eg Gladiator, Waterloo and history programmes such as Tony Robinson's Worst Jobs and Simon Schama's History of Britain.

We use outside speakers when possible, eg a demonstration by members of the Civil War Society; a talk by an expert on Red Indians; a soldier talking about Second World War experiences; Dorothy Thompson on Chartism; an A level examiner. We use the experiences of members of pupils' families and friends; written accounts by a concentration camp survivor; a soldier's diary and letters from the First World War; childhood experiences of World War Two; practical demonstrations of spinning and weaving.

The history department advises other departments and gives talks to their classes, eg background on First World War poetry and Chaucer for the English department; talks to pupils undertaking technology or art assignments. We have liaised with feeder primary schools. We have given talks to local groups and advised television companies making programmes for children. Local industries, community groups, and individuals have approached us for information and advice, and we have gladly offered our expertise.

For many years the history department has been actively involved in Teacher Training. PGCE students from TASC are trained by us. Not only does the college rate our training techniques highly, but this has been confirmed by inspectors. The Head of history, is a part-time lecturer at TASC, which involves verifying students

trained by other schools, and giving workshops to trainee teachers. He has also lectured at history teachers' conferences and sixth form conferences.

The department's examination results at *GCSE* and *A level* have been consistently good over a number of years. The head of department has written numerous articles ranging from women's history and local history to the history of football. He has also broadcast on radio and television and has recently published a new *A level* textbook. The second in department has published a book for *KS3*.