

From the Editor

Welcome to the 2022 SATH Yearbook, launched to coincide with a return to an in-person SATH Conference after two years online. This is also the first edition since our new President, Kirsty Macdonald takes office. I'm sure you will join me in wishing Kirsty luck and in saying thanks to our outgoing president, Rebecca Hanna.

My last editorial discussed the immediate impact of lockdowns and the ways in which these had catalysed creative approaches to history teaching. Having come through the initial shocks of the pandemic, we are now in a position to think more long term about what kinds of history we need to teach. Indeed, the need to think radically differently about what school history is (and what it is for) is something of a theme of this edition.

We open with a contribution from **Riding** who urges us to take a global perspective on events that have traditionally been viewed through a national lens. Taking as an example the well-known events surrounding the failure of the Darien Scheme, he argues that existing approaches (including SQA) have treated Darien (a place on the other side of the world) as a 'Scottish History Topic.' In so doing, we commit two errors – the first is to avoid seeing Scotland and Britain as part of a wider Atlantic world, the second is to avoid the experience and the perspectives of the indigenous people of the Darien. Riding's paper helps us to explore the opportunities to teach creatively and broaden pupil perspectives, even within the confines of a narrow and prescriptive examination syllabus.

Frew is also concerned with broadening pupil perspectives, but by encouraging interdisciplinary thinking. She argues that existing approaches to Social Studies in the BGE have either reasserted disciplinary boundaries (through three-subject delivery on rotations) or dissolved these boundaries in unhelpful or undertheorised ways. Drawing on the 'Enduring Human Issues' approach pioneered in The Netherlands by van Straaten and colleagues, she suggests that meaningful overlaps between social subjects can be exploited to offer students something of value.

Ross addresses perhaps the pre-eminent consideration for History teachers looking to develop their curricula, how best to teach Scotland and Britain's colonial history and its legacy. Recent research by SATH/ UK Historical Association found that just 36% of Scottish schools teach at least one lesson on the British Empire in the BGE, with just 7% of schools paying sustained attention to the topic. Ross examines the existing picture in Scottish schools before exploring the complexity of teaching such an expansive (and potentially

controversial topic). His paper concludes that British History *is* Empire History and that schools should develop curricula which make these links explicit. Ross's paper might be read together with the last paper in this edition, an **Introductory Resource List for Teaching Britain's Empire and Black History**.

Another controversial topic – the legacy of the American Civil War – is addressed in the article by **McCrone**. Taking recent statue controversies as his starting point, McCrone emphasises the importance of pupils connecting what they learn in class to the event that they see on the news. He argues that teachers have a civic duty to explore the ways in which deep-rooted historical narratives influence current worldviews even - perhaps especially - when those narratives do not correspond with 'what really happened'. Rather than simply ignoring problematic and inaccurate interpretations of events, McCrone argues that teachers should recognise that these interpretations have considerable currency on the internet and social media. Turning to the specific case of statue controversies, McCrone suggests that pupils should be taught about the cultivation of the 'Lost Cause' interpretation of the Civil War, which presented the war as a defence of a vulnerable, unique and precious southern identity against Northern aggression. Pupils are not taught that this interpretation is historiographically credible, but they do come to see it as a powerful narrative which can only be challenged through close attention to the events of the Civil War and its aftermath.

Douthwaite draws inspiration from a recent book by Paul Betts to encourage pupils to think differently about the origins of the Cold War. She offers three sources that teachers can use in the classroom to explore how the Second World War coloured and outlined early Cold War attitudes and competition. She suggests that these sources can help pupils to better understand the worldview of those in the post-war West and consequently more fully grasp the context in which suspicion between East and West developed.

Live the Conference which accompanies it, the Yearbook is a sign of the innovative work which is taking place in history classrooms across Scotland.

Joe Smith
University of Stirling
Joseph.smith@stir.ac.uk

Please note that opinions expressed in this Yearbook are those of the respective authors and that publication in the Yearbook does not imply support for these opinions by The Editor, The committee of The Scottish Association of History Teachers or any of its members.

Cover Photo:

Ancestral head of a Benin Oba (King) in Bronze held in Bristol Museum.

Photo reproduced under creative commons.

Available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Benin_bronze_in_Bristol_Museum.jpg.

Attribution: Matt Neale from UK, CC BY-SA 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons