



Australian Government
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Shadows of History
Commonwealth History Project
Drummartin Primary School
Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum
Author: Francine O'Brien

Background

About Drummartin Primary School

Drummartin Primary School (Drummartin PS) is a small rural school in central Victoria. We have 14 students, predominantly from a farming community. The school has a full-time principal and a part-time classroom teacher (.7 EFT).

We have students at every year level from Prep to Year 6. The students are split into two groups for literacy and numeracy (Prep – Year 2 and Year 3 – Year 6). They come together in the afternoons for all other KLA.

Teaching history at Drummartin

At Drummartin, History is taught as part of SOSE. When teaching a KLA such as SOSE, the challenge in a small school such as Drummartin is to cater for all year levels within the same unit of study. We use a variety of strategies to meet this challenge.

Diagnostic assessment

Diagnostic assessment occurs at the beginning of the unit of study. This is usually a simple activity which can be done individually and/or as a group and/or as a class. It involves brainstorming all the things we *think* we know about the topic, for example, what do we know about the olden days. All responses are accepted, recorded and used to confirm or revise our understanding and knowledge as we learn more about the topic (formative assessment).

Immersion

To immerse ourselves in the topic, we:

- gather books
- find relevant and useful Internet sites
- bring related articles from home or elsewhere, if appropriate
- watch related DVDs, television programs, movies
- invite guest speakers
- embark on a related excursion, if appropriate.

Project work

A variety of project work is undertaken and directed by teachers or students. We use rubrics, compiled by teachers or students, to defined expected standards. The use of a rubric allows for the varied year levels as well as the varied abilities of the students. The rubric for the project may also form part of the criteria for assessment.

About my personal background

My belief is that history is based on facts which are open to interpretation. The way in which a person interprets the facts depends on their perspective in relation to the facts. For example, Captain Cook *discovered* Australia, as I was taught, versus Captain Cook *invaded* Australia, which is the view point of the Aborigines and some others.

My experience is that in the early primary years, children respond to history when they can compare it with their own life experiences. For example:

- what were schools like
- how did children get to school
- comparing sailing ships to steam ships to modern ships
- comparing horse and buggy to first motor cars to modern motor cars.

At this stage, I think children are engaged through storytelling about events in the past. For example:

- Ned Kelly
- the Lock Ard Shipwreck
- fictional stories depicting every day life in the past.

In the middle years, the students can begin gathering information from several sources and look at different opinions and interpretations of the information. They may or may not form their own opinion based on what they learn, but hopefully they gain an overall perspective of historical significance.

I believe that excursions are an invaluable aid in the teaching of history at all levels. Excursions increase students' understanding of the concepts being studied and therefore enhance the students' learning opportunities. For this reason, it is essential when choosing an excursion program to consider not only relevance to the curriculum, but the year level and sometimes the specific interests of the students.

About the host organisation

The Flagstaff Hill Village Book describes the Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum as:

“a community based non profit facility which has been open to the public since 1975 ... The unique maritime complex nestles into a hillside overlooking Warrnambool’s picturesque Lady Bay ... Visitors ‘step back in time’ and experience the atmosphere of an early Australian coastal port. The lighthouses and associated buildings and the 1887 fortifications are the original features of the site, around which the village museum has been created.

The key features for Flagstaff Hill include:

- Entrance Gallery and Theatre
- Recreated Maritime Village
- Historic Ships Moored in our own harbour
- Original 1872 Lighthouse precinct
- Original 1878 Fortifications and Battery
- Shipwrecks Museum.”

Apart from a fascinating insight into life in the 1870’s in a maritime village, the Museum spotlights the tragic tale of the Loch Ard shipwreck of 1878, where 52 souls perished and only two survived.

This story is featured in the Circular Gallery, where the magnificent Loch Ard Peacock (a life size china statue that survived the wreck) holds centre stage amid walls featuring details of the disaster.

The Loch Ard tragedy is also the focus of the museum’s spectacular sound and laser show, SHIPWRECKED. “Staged nightly, SHIPWRECKED is a spellbinding chronicle of how Victoria’s western coastline earned its cruel distinction as the Shipwreck Coast.” (from www.flagstaffhill.com.au)

The Museum offers an exciting education program for schools which focuses on interactive and hands-on experience. Education sessions are conducted by the Education Officer. A variety of engaging programs for all year levels are offered, with multiple links to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (see appendix for more detail).

About the experience

My contact with Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum began with emails to Colleen Fawkes, the Education Officer for the Museum. She was friendly, supportive and helpful from start to finish. She had a fabulous day planned for me and also helped me with the organisation of accommodation and other travel details.

I travelled to Warrnambool on a Monday afternoon and settled into the motel Colleen recommended. The next morning, I fronted up to the museum and a warm welcome from Colleen.

After introducing me to the team, I was taken away to be 'frocked up' for the day. My attire was wonderful and fashionable for the 1870's. It included a hoop petticoat, ankle length skirt with matching blouse, lovely warm cloak and gorgeously fashionable bonnet. My black tights and lace-up ankle boots completed the picture. I was beautifully warm on this cool August day and surprisingly comfortable.

Colleen briefed me on the day ahead. A Year 1 and 2 was booked in and the group would:

- play old-fashioned games in the Sail Makers Loft
- view the film about the Loch Ard shipwreck
- attend school to write on slates and answer to Ma'am (Marm)
- follow clues and answer questions set out for them on the Activity Trail.

An information package to the school, including information on the museum, copies of the activity trail and details of what the teachers and students need to supply for the visit.

Colleen greeted the students at the entrance of the Museum. They were divided into groups and led down the cobbled streets to the harbour. It was here that Colleen gave an interesting and informative talk about the Museum and outlined the wonderful afternoon she had planned for them. The teachers then each took their group to the first activity of the rotation.

My role was to wander around the village, joining in wherever I found myself. I enjoyed playing knucklebones, spinning hoops and spinning tops. In school, I learned that teachers in the 1870's had to replenish the lamp oil and fill the coal scuttle as part of their duties.

The children practised old-fashioned writing, had their nails checked for cleanliness and learned to stand when answering Ma'am's questions.

The village boasts a doctor's residence, brass founder, blacksmith, ship chandlers, shipping agent, bank, fire station, upper and lower lighthouse, lighthouse keeper's cottage and lots more. It even features its own harbour, where the shipwrights are restoring an old vessel, the Reginald M.

The views of the ocean from the village are spectacular, especially on the hill where the lighthouses are situated. I wandered the cobbled streets in my 1870's garb, chatting with other historically attired folk and delighting in all I saw. My head was swimming with plans for my class program for the next term – the olden days, immigration, travel on the high seas in sailing ships, disastrous shipwrecks and the story of Lock Ard tragedy.

New knowledge and practice

Being a small school, every two years we have a family camp. This year we were deciding whether to have it at Mildura or Warrnambool. With the rich maritime history of Warrnambool and the excellent educational value of the Flagstaff Maritime Museum, we decided Warrnambool would be an excellent choice.

Preparation

Our camp was to be in the third week of Term Four. Therefore, the afternoon sessions of the first two weeks of the term were given over to immersion in the topics of 'The Olden Days' and 'The Story of the Loch Ard'. The activities that the students participated in are outlined below.

Years 2 – 6

Internet research

The students were given a broad brief for their Internet research. They knew we were going to Warrnambool and that we would be visiting the Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum and began with this information. Their efforts revealed a range of topics which they chose to research in more detail. Some of the topics from the research were:

- Warrnambool
- Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum
- Shipwreck coast
- Loch Ard shipwreck
- Loch Ard Peacock
- Great Ocean Road
- Tower Hill Reserve
- Port Fairy.

A teacher-directed activity based on the Museum website

The students researched the story of the Loch Ard and told the tale in a series of three newspaper articles (Years 2 – 6).

Prep and Year 1

- Picture time-line of the Loch Ard shipwreck
- Shared writing telling the Loch Ard story
- Construction of the Loch Ard ship
- Colouring in of the Loch Ard peacock.

All Years

There were several afternoons of old-fashioned play-acting incorporating strict rules and manners, fingernail and hand check and copperplate writing with an old-fashioned pen and ink. The girls loved it; the boys weren't as keen!

At the camp

The immersion activities were an essential part of camp preparation. The Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum and the SHIPWRECKED Sound and Laser show took up a full afternoon plus an evening. For the students to fully understand and enjoy these activities, they needed to know the story of the Loch Ard and something about life in the 1870's. As they were prepared, the Drummartin Primary School students thoroughly enjoyed their time at the Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum.

The old-fashioned school was fun as they had some knowledge of school life in the 1870's and were able to respond appropriately and enjoy a realistic school experience in an authentic environment.

The Internet tasks had prepared the students for some of what they would see and experience in the rest of the Museum. The students followed the Activity Trail appropriate to their level and enjoyed the short movie about life onboard a ship and the hazards of sea travel in the 1870's. The cobbled streets, old-fashioned shops and buildings, the harbour and lighthouse and authentic relics from ships and shipwrecks heightened their interest in the 'olden days', sailing ships and the shipwreck coast.

With a thorough knowledge of the true story of the Loch Ard shipwreck, the students were able to easily follow the drama as it unfolded in the spectacular SHIPWRECKED Sound and Light show.

The importance of the value of an excursion as an extension to the curriculum became evident to me as I observed another school enjoying the Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum. I asked the teachers what unit of study they were doing in their classes and was surprised to find it was not related in any way to the excursion the students were experiencing that day. In an involuntary reaction, I expressed surprise at this and it was explained to me that it was just a fun day.

As I observed the students, it became evident that they didn't have the same level of understanding or appreciation of the museum as the Drummartin school students. However, they were enjoying themselves.

After the camp

Back at school, the Year 2 – 6 students were keen to learn about other shipwrecks along the shipwreck coast and a project rubric was developed.

The students chose a ship that wrecked between the years 1870 and 1910. They have been researching the story of the wreck, including aspects such as:

- ship construction
- cargo
- crew and passengers
- departure port and destination
- details of life on board the ship such as food and sleeping arrangements
- details of and reasons for the wreck
- consequences for those on board.

The Preps and Year Ones made models of sailing ships using straws, Lego and other construction materials. They have found pictures of different types of ships from different ages from a Viking ship to a modern liner, and have pasted them into a 'ships through the ages' timeline.

As they researched the Loch Ard story and their individual shipwreck, the students commented on the inconsistency of reports of the wrecks. Details and opinions differed from article to article. This

prompted a discussion on the accuracy of historical reports and the affect of personal interpretation of events.

I enjoyed my visit to the Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum so much. Dressing up in old-fashioned clothes, playing old-fashioned games, walking the cobbled streets, experiencing the school and shops, wandering through the houses and around the harbour, seeing the artifacts and reading the stories in the Circular Gallery was all such fun and yet such an eye-opening and therefore educational experience.

I could see opportunities for students to learn about the olden days and ships and wrecks and life on the sea in a fun and exciting way. This experience has reiterated my belief that history is best taught through stories, not as a series of facts.

My thanks to Colleen Fawkes and all the staff at Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum for the wonderful experience they gave me.

Appendix

VELS links to Education Program at Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum supplied by Education Officer Colleen Fawkes.

READING, w'RITING AND a'RITHMETIC

Description of program

This program provides students with the opportunity to respond to Flagstaff Hill's historical setting through role-play by re enacting the Common school situation as portrayed during the late 1860s to the early 1870s. Participating students dress in costume and engage in appropriate curriculum areas such as arithmetic (pounds, shillings and pence and multiplication tables), copperplate writing, class reading, spelling etc.

This program is very popular with local district schools utilized as an outreach component involving school based workshops for teacher development and whole community engagement.

Learning outcomes

This program supports schools in the implementation of the Victorian Essential learning standards. This outcome is addressed by the program focusing on the Arts domain in the Discipline-based learning strand, in particular the discipline of Drama (role play) and interwoven with the following aspects:

Interdisciplinary Learning Strand

- (a) Thinking (creativity, reflection)
- (b) Communication (presenting, responding)

Physical, Personal and Social Learning Strand

- (c) Interpersonal Development (working as a team member)
- (d) Personal Learning (individual learner)

The program involves Mathematics (number, measurement) and develops all the dimensions of reading, writing, speaking and listening in the English domain.

This program is adaptable for students in Years Prep to Six.

BATTEN DOWN THE HATCHES

Description of program

This program provides students with the opportunity to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Shipwreck Coast by discovering the reasons why, how and where shipwrecks occurred.

It includes the opportunity to explore the motives of immigration enabling students to make the connection with other major aspects of Australian history and Victorian history in particular.

It presents local shipwrecks in detail including the mysterious Mahogany ship which, allegedly, predates the arrival of Captain Cook and raises the issue of unidentified early arrivals from non-indigenous populations.

Learning outcomes

This program supports school in the implementation of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. This outcome is addressed by the program focusing on the Humanities domain in the Discipline-based Learning Strand, in particular the History (historical knowledge, understanding, reasoning and interpretation) and Geography (geographical knowledge and understanding) domains.

It promotes the speaking and listening dimensions of the English domain. It interwoven with the following aspects:

Interdisciplinary Learning Strand

- (a) Communication (listening, viewing and responding)
- (b) Thinking (reasoning, processing, inquiry and reflection)

The program is adaptable for students in Years Five to Ten.

“THAR SHE BLOWS!” WHALES AND WHALING

Description of program

This program provides students with the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of the whaling history of the waters near Warrnambool and to learn in particular about the Southern Right Whale that frequents the local shore in winter.

Participating students are exposed to the ancient tools of the trade (harpoons, spears, try pots, whaling boats), learn of the methods used for land-based whaling and the reasons why the Southern Right Whale was hunted almost to extinction. Students study the Southern Right: the characteristics, the breeding habits, the behaviour and identify the present day threats such as pollution, entanglement, coastal industrial activity, marine intrusive activities and discuss the implications of these issues on the response of society as a whole.

This program is frequently utilized in conjunction with a visit to Logans Beach – the winter nursery for the Southern Right Whales which is located just minutes from Flagstaff Hill.

Learning outcomes

This program supports schools in the implementation of the Victorian Essential learning Standards. This outcome is addressed by the program focusing on the Science domain in the discipline-based Learning Strand, with links to the domains of English (reading, speaking and listening), Humanities – History (Historical knowledge and understanding) and Mathematics (working mathematically – comparisons, measurement and data).

It is interwoven with the following aspects:

Physical, Personal and Social Learning Strand

- (a) Civics and Citizenship (Civil knowledge and understanding, Community engagement)

Interdisciplinary Learning Strand

- (b) Communication (Listening, viewing and responding)
- (c) Thinking (Reasoning, processing, reflection and evaluation)

This program is adaptable for students in Years Three to Ten.