



Welcome to the third issue of *Talking History*, your History update. We hope that you enjoy this issue, and, just as importantly, that you find it useful. We've designed it to provide helpful and relevant information for our History centres and our History community, and to highlight developments in the teaching of our GCSE and A Level History that you might find interesting. We'd love to hear from you if you have a story to tell about your school or college and your History work. Please get in touch by emailing general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

In this issue . . .

-  Unique CPD event – Studying Margaret Thatcher in GCE History
-  Spotlight on unit F966
-  Focus on . . . Prince Henry's Grammar School
-  Q and A's with Professor Tim Blanning
-  Coming soon! Exclusive free Crusades resources
-  Practical support for GCSE controlled assessment
-  Key dates for your calendar including CPD's
-  Get involved with our History consultative forum
-  Exciting online resources

We're throwing down the gauntlet – share your story...

The teaching of History is the focus of much attention at the moment. A recent survey, published by The Historical Association, highlights some areas of concern and the current government has of course shown its interest, with History likely to play a prominent role in a revised 'core' curriculum.

At OCR, we firmly believe in the worth of History and our suite of History GCSEs and A Levels allows for student engagement across the spectrum of historical perspectives.

In *Talking History* we'd like to include real examples of History teaching and learning in practice and would welcome the chance to feature schools and colleges teaching our specifications.

You may have an unusual tale to share, a success story, details of partnerships, inspiring visits or field studies, or improved exam results... whatever you do with History, we'd like to know.

We might introduce your school or college in a forthcoming issue of *Talking History* and possibly even feature you and your students in a video case study. We can come to your centre, interview and film you.

Your students could well be motivated by this challenge, so please contact me and let us know about your story.

By the way, if you're wondering what's in it for you (apart from the chance to highlight your school or college's good work) we'll contribute **£500** worth of resources if your centre is selected.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Neil Cameron
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Humanities
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Close up on...

Studying Margaret Thatcher in GCE History - Course Code OHIL7

Tuesday 8 February 2011, Churchill Archive Centre in Cambridge

Gain access to subject specialists, share innovative ideas for teaching and enjoy exclusive resources on this NEW, full day course.

This exciting 'Lead the way' event will take place at the Churchill Archive Centre – the home of the private papers of Baroness Thatcher, and among the largest, most significant political archives of the late 20th century.

It's an essential CPD event for those teaching Thatcher in A2 Level History A, Unit F965 and in AS Period Studies, Unit F961. Its focus will be on helping you understand the debates about Thatcher. It'll provide valuable sources and expert comment from keynote speakers and our subject experts.

- Hear first-hand accounts from Margaret Thatcher's own Chief Press Secretary for 11 years, **Sir Bernard Ingham**
- Enjoy a unique opportunity to join the leading historian and author of *Thatcher's Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the 1980s* - **Professor Richard Vinen**
- Find out about strategies for engaging learners in the subject matter, with examples for use within the classroom
- Experience a special opportunity to view archive materials, including discussion of their use in the classroom

- Benefit from contextualised analysis of the skills needed for learners to progress in Period Studies
- Hear an examiner's advice on delivery and coursework.

This unique CPD course is priced at £232, including refreshments, lunch and course material. Places are strictly limited so book now.

Book now



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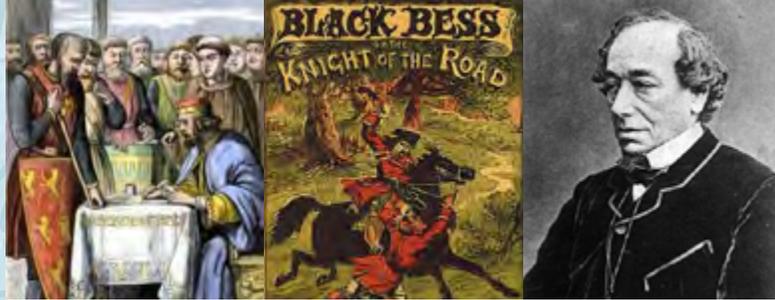
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Spotlight on a key unit for A*: F966

For many GCE History A students, F966, Historical Themes, is the key unit for A*. It carries the greater weighting, 60%, of A2. The pointers contained in this article are drawn mainly from the recently completed autumn INSET programme for the unit. We understand that many centres aren't able to attend all training, so if you'd like to get a course pack, please contact our Training Division (training@ocr.org.uk) to request a complimentary copy or to find out about future Themes courses.

What did the 2010 assessment cycles show?

Let's start with the strengths revealed in 2010's assessment cycles. There was an increase in the number of students who were able to explain and analyse reasons, and Examiners reported pleasure in marking large numbers of essays that showed synthesis and analysis. There were few unfinished essays, and the extra time was often used well. However, there was also evidence of students using the extra time to include even more of 'what I know' rather than 'what I think about...'

Principal Examiners Report



The mark scheme has two Assessment Objectives: AO1a, which tests knowledge; and AO1b, which tests explanation, analysis and synthesis. There are twice as many marks available for AO1b as for AO1a. For many, it might therefore be better to focus on improving skills rather than content.

And it is the *key skill of synthesis* that many students don't demonstrate as well as they might, yet it's needed for Levels 1 and 2.

What do we mean by synthesis?

Put most simply, it's the bringing together of material from across the period. BUT it isn't simply writing about events from different periods in the same paragraph; there must be comparisons between events, rulers etc. A paragraph that writes about the religious causes of the Pilgrimage of Grace, the Western Rebellion and the Rebellion of the Northern Earls isn't automatically synthesis: the answer must look for similarities and differences between the rebellions; it must compare.

Some good exam practice tips can help students here:

- Focused introductions to answers can help synthesis throughout the essay
- They should spend some of the planning time to define terms used in the question.

...continued



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Introductions

A good practice in an introduction is to introduce an immediate comparison between the start and finish of the period, so introducing change and continuity. Examples of effective introductions can be seen on page 34 of the Teacher Guide

Teacher Guide



Here's a particularly effective one:

Did the Russian peasantry receive better treatment under Tsarist or Communist governments during the period from 1855 to 1964?

The Russian peasantry were poorly treated by both tsars and communists for much of the period 1855–1964. In 1861 when Alexander emancipated the serfs, most must have believed that progress would accompany freedom but this was not to be and successive tsars sought to shackle the peasants economically, socially and politically. Lenin promised the peasants bread and freedom, and for a brief time in the 1920s he permitted them to own their land and profit from it, but the needs of the state under Stalin took precedence and, from 1928 until the end of the period, the peasantry were downtrodden workhorses and no better off than in 1855.

This is leading the student into an answer that will provide a synoptic assessment of historical evidence. Synthesis, of course, needs to be maintained throughout the answer.

Defining Key Terms

A bit of time spent thinking about the terms in the question, and then defining them in the answer, will often lead naturally in the right direction. For example 'nation state' may lead to a definition that includes:

- Territorial unity
- Legal or linguistic unity
- Geo-political developments
- Social developments
- Religious unity
- Administrative developments.

And thinking in terms of these themes will prevent a chronological approach.

However, there's also the problem of the command stem:

- 'most important factor' – candidates need to compare a range of factors
- 'dangerous threat' – what's a dangerous threat?
- 'effectively' – what makes the handling effective?
- 'significantly' – what makes something significant?

Students thinking about the question carefully, and defining their terms, are less likely to end up presenting a chronological narrative.



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Teaching strategies for synthesis

Our INSET programme for F966 devotes time to teaching strategies as well as strategies for the student in the examination. A2, of course, builds on AS and many teachers report that they start from the known: the F963/4 Historical Enquiries question (a) – the comparison question. By comparing two events and then increasing the number of events considered (as it's unlikely that two will be sufficient to explain a pattern), students can begin to get used to the synoptic skills required in F966. For example:

- What was the main characteristic of Louis XII's policy towards the nobility?
- What was the main characteristic of Francis I's policy towards the nobility?
- How similar were their policies towards the nobility?
- Why did they follow similar policies?
- What differences were there in the policies towards the nobility? Why?
- Now write an opening sentence to a paragraph that compares the policies of Louis and Francis towards the nobility.
- What is your evidence to support the assertion made in the sentence?
- Develop this into a paragraph of about 150 words.

As befits a synoptic unit, there are other skills to develop as well. Understanding continuity and change, and especially turning points, is a challenge, but is one that strategies such as the above will help address. Much more on Unit F966 is available in Heinemann's Planning and Delivery Resource.

Heinemann's Planning and Delivery Resource





Focus on ...

Prince Henry's Grammar School

Andy Milner is Curriculum Leader for History at Prince Henry's and a Team Leader and Assistant Moderator for us at OCR.

Prince Henry's Grammar School ['PHGS'], despite its name, is a comprehensive school with a mixed but upwardly-skewed intake in the Wharfe Valley. It has around 1500 students, 300 of whom are in the Sixth Form.

About the History Department

The History team at PHGS consists of six specialist History teachers working out of an old but roomy suite of five teaching rooms, one of which is a dedicated sixth form teaching room with good ICT facilities. At the moment there's no wider Humanities faculty here, and we're able to design our own curriculum across all three key stages. We work closely with OCR, offering its courses at KS4 and KS5, and the whole team work as Examiners, either at GCSE, A Level, or both. We're lucky that we have enthusiastic Key Stage 3 students; History is a very popular choice at GCSE and A Level, and our public examination results have traditionally been very good indeed. I'm proud to lead such an enthusiastic team.

Our curriculum

The great variety of courses at Prince Henry's has enabled me to develop all the essential skills needed as a young historian aiming to study History further at university. The investigation coursework allows me to independently explore a topic of personal interest, which is invaluable preparation for higher education, and through both thematic and in-depth studies I have been introduced to a range of fascinating perspectives,

changes over time and significant events. Medicine Through Time was an ideal way to introduce synoptic studies, which is followed up by the A2 course Russia and its Rulers. This continuation of skills from Key Stage 4 to 5 is useful for developing expertise in historical skills.

Joanna Hargreaves, Year 13 student, PHGS

We're very pleased with the curriculum our students follow. We hope we've designed it in a way that makes the transitions between the key stages, and into higher education, as smooth as possible. At the same time, we feel we've made choices that help students engage as widely as possible with History.



Prince Henry's students and staff outside the Winter Palace in St Petersburg, Russia, Winter 2009



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...continued



Key Stage 3

Our Key Stage 3 curriculum still runs through Years 7 to 9, and in part follows traditional National Curriculum fare, though we've made some 'tweaks' which suit the department and its students. We're still working to bring local history into sharper focus now the National Curriculum has placed greater emphasis on this. This is a genuine chance to make History more relevant to students in our specific schools and we're anxious not to squander that with sudden rash change.

In Years 8 and 9 we have the opportunity to set students in each 'half' of the school, and do so by both ability and gender, so we have boys' and girls' sets. This is very popular with the students and over the years has allowed us to develop tasks (not content!) that we feel specifically engage boys and girls separately. Our main assessments across each year (we aim to have one each half term) are based on GCSE source and essay skills and then 'counted back' to National Curriculum levels, and we're sure this has raised standards in Key Stage 4 itself. Central to that skills-based approach is a depth study in the first term of Year 9 focused on the assassination of JFK. Students over the years have found this topic fascinating, and the detailed knowledge they're eager to acquire makes it possible for us to genuinely stretch them. Our main Year 9 examination is set to the same rigour as a GCSE Paper 1, with a compulsory source section (including inference, comparison and evaluative questions) and an essay section where students choose one three-part essay from a choice of three. The quality of those examinations always impresses us!

Key Stage 4

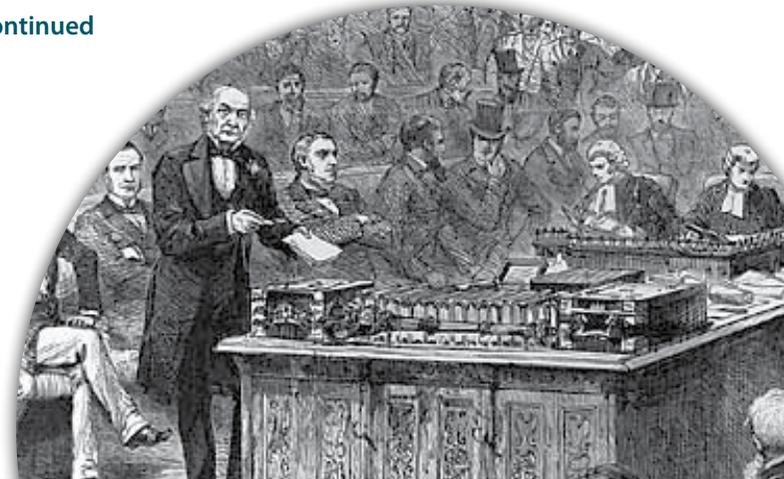
I personally (and I know a lot of my friends have too) have really enjoyed History at PHGS. The wide variety of courses which I have studied over the years has really opened my eyes and made me realise there is a lot more to History than you would think. Some of the courses which I have

particularly enjoyed were Jack the Ripper and JFK. The way the courses are taught really enables the students to engage in the lesson. The content of the courses is rich, and I've learnt so many interesting facts from studying History. I chose History for GCSE and it is by far one of my favourite subjects. The Medicine Through Time course was fascinating and I'm really looking forward to studying about Germany and the Rise of Hitler. History over the years has persuaded me to take it for A Level, and I can't wait to learn about Russian history!

Grace O'Halloran, Year 11 student, PHGS

For GCSE, we offer OCR's new SHP specification: a natural 'follow on' from the legacy paper which our candidates sat for over a decade beforehand (the department piloted a Modern World GCSE to run alongside it but levels of student enjoyment and examination results meant that we decided to keep all our eggs in one basket). We made the decision that we would continue to 'rear load' our public examinations to the end of Year 11 (which in view of possible curriculum changes to 'modular' GCSEs may well have been the right move). The combination of 'old and new' the current SHP specification offers in our view strikes a great balance.

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The SHP GCSE course has served our students well over the years. For us (and them) it strikes a balance between the cut and thrust of modern historical study in the form of the Germany depth study, but also a rare chance – in the guise of Medicine Through Time – to consider 'broad brush' thematic history over thousands of years. This is something our students look back on fondly in Key Stage 5, and while some of them find it hard to adjust to this type of study at the start of their GCSE, they soon acclimatise, succeed and enjoy. We feel our experience as public examiners helps us do this. Thinking in themes – and from long-term/short-term perspectives – is one of the ways that students can pick up marks in AO1(b) of the AS essay unit, and has obvious relevance to the A2 thematic study.

For us, the SHP course provides a smooth transition to A Level study and this is why we remain 'wedded' to it. It certainly isn't necessary for students to have GCSE History in order to succeed in History at A Level but it certainly helps them 'hit the ground running' and find the assessment style less daunting.

The controlled assessment aspect of the new specifications is a clear deviation from the old ways of undertaking coursework, and one my team welcome. We feel that the shorter, supervised, more concentrated burst of effort acts not only as a social leveller but also to focus the efforts of the most able. The new specification mark scheme is also more demanding, in terms of its requirements for students to properly evaluate the sources, the need to focus explicitly on an argument and to remain succinct. As a team, we feel the increased rigour and expectations of our students genuinely helps prepare students more fully for the demands of the AS course in Year 12; the ability to weave sources into an argument while evaluating their relative worth is a key skill for the AS source unit and we hope our current Year 11 cohort will find it a massive advantage when they start their A Level studies in September.

I think that the GCSE History course has been thoroughly enjoyable. I think that for me, it isn't just a study of events gone by, it is a study of human beings as a whole. I've found out that there are so many things from the past that can be related to the present. I sometimes watch the news and the knowledge of the past issues there makes it seem much more understandable or outrageous. It is also genuinely fascinating. The Medicine Through Time course gives an interesting insight into the very development of humankind. I am going to take History A Level as I am genuinely fascinated and it is a subject which, to me, isn't just about learning, it's about enjoying.

Adithya Kale, Year 11 student, PHGS

Key Stage 5

We follow OCR's History A; if, as a consequence of the White Paper, our student numbers for A Level increase any further then we'll seriously consider offering History B alongside our existing course to give students more of a choice, and allow us to evaluate the courses side by side. Our course is based around 19th and 20th century British and European history, and while we could be accused of being narrow in that approach, extensive questioning of our students tells us this is what they want! Our budding History undergraduates are encouraged to look outside this period for the 'Investigations and Interpretations' coursework unit.

At AS Level, our students follow The Age of Gladstone and Disraeli for the Enquiries unit and Democracy and Dictatorship: Italy 1896–1943 for the Period Study. The Italy course is well received – students enjoy some of the parallels between the rise of Hitler and Mussolini – and we've had success in the past two years in coaching our students to rise to the significant challenge of writing the AS essay compared to the GCSE one. The teaching team – and most of our students – prefer the Gladstone and Disraeli course, though; the characters and the

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context have inspired us to produce resources we're very pleased with and the students to read around the subject. Though our least able find some of the source material challenging, we're confident that the course is accessible and enjoyable. As I said above, my team believe that next year's Year 12 cohort – trained as they have been in the newer more rigorous requirements for source evaluation in the GCSE controlled assessment – will find the sources even more accessible to work with.

For the A2, our thematic study is Russia and its Rulers. We selected this as most of the department are Russia specialists and the legacy A Level course on Russia always fascinated our students. The students thoroughly enjoy being able to see the bigger patterns of change and continuity across such a long period and in such an exotic society. Some of the stark continuities in Russian history have truly shocked them! For the coursework unit, we encourage our students to create their own Investigations piece, and we've had some truly fascinating results. Last year's cohort wrote very successful pieces ranging from an evaluation of Margaret Thatcher's impact on British society to the actions of Lorenzo de Medici. While this places great strain on school library facilities (particularly given my meagre budget!), we encourage our students to move beyond what the school can provide. In the summer term we take our Year 12 cohort to Leeds University Library as part of their outreach programme and immerse them in the sheer range of resources available to them there. This doesn't just help them with finding resources for an independent study, it introduces them to the joy of learning independently, and in higher education. Many of our students return there to help them with the A2 coursework and the results have been outstanding.

As well as taking the students to Leeds University, we've tried hard to structure the Key Stage 5 course with a view to easing the transition for students between A Level and undergraduate study, since the

overwhelming majority of our Key Stage 5 students go on into higher education. For example, we introduced a Short Loans system in our main school library similar to those in universities, which encourages our students to read widely, efficiently and spreads out the books we have available. We've also built in a weekly 'seminar lesson' in Year 13 to support the thematic Russia course, where students are expected to work in a similar style to undergraduate lessons. Some of these are chaired by our most able students, helping with the 'stretch and challenge' now expected of them at A Level.

The practice of considering a theme in history rather than a chronological progression of events has encouraged me to take a similar look at other areas of history that I have studied, as well as examining themes in current British politics, an issue which I am pursuing by writing my independent coursework on the 1945 General Election and the birth of the NHS, a question clearly pertinent to today's culture of cutbacks.

Jack Richings, Year 13 student, PHGS

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The Team's Public Examination Work

Our students' attainment, their positive experiences in History and our ability to deliver their courses confidently are underpinned by the work my team and I carry out for OCR. I make no apologies for evangelising about it! With the ongoing support of our head, we mark and moderate across virtually all the public examination specifications we offer. It helps my team and our students at so many levels, providing as it does such a close familiarity with the mark schemes, and the scripts we work with give us abundant ideas to write our own model answers and indicative content for mark schemes.

The board's practice at standardisation meetings has become the way my own department operates to reach common views of mark schemes. All our Key Stage 4 and 5 assessments are standardised in this way, with colleagues taking it in turns to lead those meetings. In recent years, we've fed back to students on their essays in similar style, with the class teacher acting as the Principal Examiner, some of our most able students working as Team Leaders and the others as Assistant Examiners. These sessions were very well received across our classes. I believe that reaching these common standards – and sharing them fully with our students – underpins their academic success in History at our school.

History isn't just about passing examinations, but it's a key part of what our students – and we as teachers – are expected to do as part of their wider social and academic development. Any process that makes us more effective in doing so is warmly recommended by our department, and we encourage others to do the same! In fact, because we now make examination-focused assessment so discreet and build it into our lessons, we find we end up doing less of this across the year, but when we do it, it's done more effectively.

Enrichment

At PHGS, we're proud of how we've harnessed and developed our students' views in History to help us develop our wider curriculum and contribute to students' broader education. The national press has been vocal in mocking 'student voice' but we feel we use it to our advantage. Like most schools, we hold yearly 'breakdown days' where the timetable is suspended. The poor siting of our school's own war memorial sparked enough concern among students for the History department to run a breakdown day with our Key Stage 3 students on the need to remember those who fought in war. Subsequently, student feedback from that caused us to run a 'follow up' day this year on how war has affected civilians, since they felt it was missing from our first session. The walls of our department are filled not with the ubiquitous comments about the value of History from famous people, but rather by those of our own students. I think this student ownership of the department is crucial in building their enthusiasm for History at our school.

Another part of our 'service' to students is to offer them the chance to access History outside of our school, and we're lucky that the socio-economic base within the school supports this. As well the yearly History Around Us visit to Fountains Abbey for Year 10 and a revision day at the Thackray Medical Museum, we now run biannual trips to a range of different destinations linked to our curriculum. Key Stage 3 students visit the European Battlefields and all our sixth form students have the opportunity to travel to Northern Italy and Russia to enrich their experience of A Level. These visits – whether students go on them or not – have helped to create a 'buzz' about our department and I'm sure increase student interest when they choose their subjects in Year 9 and Year 11.

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Current challenges

Teaching History is an exciting job, and there are frequently new challenges to face. Like buses, these seem to have all come at once, and our team see four major issues that we need to address over the next couple of years:

- The resourcing implications of controlled assessment. We've been lucky in the first year of running controlled assessment that the school was able to supply us with ICT facilities for all five of our Year 11 classes for the entire 'high supervision' period. As other departments in school came 'on stream' with their own requests, it quickly became clear that the school couldn't cope with the huge demands for ICT rooms being made, and that next year it's unlikely our students will have such extensive access. I think the potential lack of ICT facilities is the elephant in the room for controlled assessment; students clearly have an advantage if they can word process their work, in terms of playing with structure, adding further ideas and of course in legibility and presentation. This is an issue which many of us as History teachers face.
- The recently revised Ofsted criteria for judging lessons. The Ofsted focus on observing less than an entire lesson while still wishing to see an assessment of all students' progress has no doubt caused many of us to revise our teaching styles, with greater emphasis on strategies like 'mini plenaries', use of mini whiteboards and a greater emphasis on active student participation in lessons. We've worked hard as a department to integrate these, and in Key Stage 3 are very pleased indeed with the result. We're a little more concerned that with the more complex material we address with our public examination groups it can lead to disjointed lessons and actually make it harder for students to think broadly across a topic. This is especially the case at A Level, where I think there's a greater need to balance what Ofsted 'wants' with what the students need to acquire the knowledge and skills to pass

the exam and crucially prepare for the teaching they'll encounter in higher education. While variety, engagement and ongoing assessment are clearly crucial, by Year 13 it might not always be appropriate for learning to be taking place in 15-minute chunks!

- Implications of the new A* grade at A Level. We were thankfully successful in helping our very best students achieve A* grades last year; just under 20% of our cohort did so. As students' UCAS offers will now increasingly include A* requirement, and the difference between a B and an A* grade potentially being as little as 1 UMS, I think there's a genuine need for the profession to make sure colleagues – and especially students – understand the way in which the A* grade is calculated and the crucial nature of the A2 year in that. The students' sustained effort during their A2 coursework unit has to be central to this.

...continued



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- Implications of the White Paper and the 'English Bacc'. No doubt far more details of this will be available by the time this article is read! It seems likely, however, that many schools will be moving towards placing greater emphasis on 'the Humanities' at Key Stage 4. Counting as it does towards the 'Bacc', it looks like the profiles of History departments across the country are going to be raised. This can only be a good thing! It might involve a return in many schools to a compulsory 'History or Geography' options choice at the end of Key Stage 3. While few historians would complain at the thought of retaining more students at GCSE, there are implications here for staffing; will schools deal with more GCSE History classes by simply using non-specialists in Key Stage 3, for example? Will future cohorts be more reluctant because there was an element of compulsion to study History at GCSE?

I hope this article gives you a brief insight into the History Department of another school, our relationship with OCR, the things we're proud of and the issues we're tackling!

If you have any questions about this article or want to open a dialogue about some of the issues it raises, then feel free to email Andy on milneras02@leedslearning.net

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Q and A's with Professor Tim Blanning

Until his retirement in 2009, Tim Blanning was Professor of Modern European History at the University of Cambridge. He remains a Fellow of Sidney Sussex College and has been a Fellow of the British Academy since 1990.

He has published extensively on the political and cultural history of Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries and is also general editor of *The Oxford History of Europe* and *The Short Oxford History of Europe*.

His book *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture* (Oxford University Press, 2002) was short-listed for the British Academy Book Prize for 2003 and won a prestigious German prize as the best book in any language published in 2002 on early modern Europe.

His best-selling history of Europe between 1648 and 1815 – *The Pursuit of Glory* – was published by Penguin in hardback in 2007 and in paperback in 2008. His most recent book is *The Triumph of Music*, which was published in 2008 by Penguin in the UK and by Harvard University Press in the USA. It was issued in paperback in 2009. In 2000 he was awarded a Pilkington Teaching Prize by the University of Cambridge.

Q: As a historian teaching in a university, do you have a strong opinion either way about what best prepares potential undergraduates?

A: No, I don't have any strong opinions on this matter, mainly because I know so little of what goes on in schools – and my own direct experience is so long ago as to be of no value. What is most important is that students should have acquired the habit of reading a great deal, thinking about historical issues and presenting their thoughts in lucid prose.

Q: Much of your recent work has concentrated on cultural history – when and how did your interest in this area develop?

A: As with all my interests, this arose out of preparing and giving lectures to the Cambridge History Faculty on the culture of 18th century Europe. Indeed, this has been the source of any half-decent ideas I have ever had. The need to organise and articulate generates its own momentum.

Q: Many university academics, when asked how sixth formers should best prepare for further study in History, reply 'read as widely as possible'. Do you concur with this – any further thoughts?

A: Students should be encouraged to read outside the curriculum for enjoyment and that will necessarily take them to intensive study of their particular interests. It is highly desirable that some of the great historians of the past should be on the list, not least because they wrote so well.

Q: Did you enjoy History at school? At what stage did you think you might like to pursue the study of History as a career?

A: Yes, I did enjoy History at school. It was always my 'best subject'. I was taught very well at the two schools I attended – St Dunstan's School, Burnham-on-Sea (now, alas, defunct) and King's School, Bruton (still going strong nearly 500 years after its foundation). I think I had always hoped to become a professional historian but that plan only firmed up when I did well as an undergraduate at Cambridge.

...continued

Unique CPD event – Studying Margaret Thatcher in GCE History

Spotlight on unit F966

Focus on . . . Prince Henry's Grammar School

Q and A's with Professor Tim Blanning

Coming soon! Exclusive free Crusades resources

Practical support for GCSE controlled assessment

Key dates for your calendar including CPD's

Get involved with our History consultative forum

Exciting online resources



Q: As a professional historian do you still read history for fun? Have you found any recent books/television series/ exhibitions, etc – perhaps from outside your own research areas – particularly inspiring?

A: Yes, I still read history for fun. I particularly enjoy reading Gibbon (*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is on my BlackBerry), Treitschke, Macaulay and Carlyle. The book I have most enjoyed recently is Daniel Snowman's *The Gilded Stage – A Social History of Opera*. Norman Stone's *The Atlantic and its Enemies: A Personal History of the Cold War* is also a great read.

Q: Do you have a 'typical' working day that you can describe?

A: My alarm clock goes off at 6.20. As my wife goes swimming every morning, it is my job to get the children up, dressed, washed and fed. After cycling them to school, I go to my office in Sidney Sussex College, where I research, write and teach, with a short break for lunch in College, until it is time to collect the children and take them home. I cook for them and make sure they do their homework. When my wife gets home, I return to my books.

We would like to thank Eric Boston for arranging the interview with Professor Blanning.

We featured Eric who is the Head of Humanities at CATS College, Cambridge in our first issue of Talking History. You can read his article [here](#):



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Spotlight on unit F966

Focus on . . . Prince Henry's Grammar School

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Coming soon! Exclusive, free Crusades resources

This year, we're delighted to be able to publish a series of essays and images provided exclusively to us by leading Crusades historian Professor Jonathan Phillips.

Professor Jonathan Phillips

This collection will be available free of charge to download from our website, and will enable teachers to illustrate aspects of this fascinating study topic with a unique range of photographs of the landscapes, buildings, arenas and imagery of Crusading history – all put in context with a series of accessible, purpose-written commentary-essays by Professor Phillips.

We plan to publish the full collection in spring 2011, and, as a taster, here's an excerpt: a description of The Church of Sainte Foy, Conques, in southern France, tackling the issue of the religious motivation of the Crusaders.

The central figure of Christ, much larger than anyone else, dominates the scene. Christ pronounces that those on his right (welcomed by a raised hand) are to be welcomed to the kingdom of Heaven and eternal life, but those on the left (with the lowered hand pointing down to hell) are sinners who will be sent for eternal torment (See Picture 007)

In essence those on his right are God's chosen people and we can see the Virgin Mary leading Saint Peter, followed by those who had contributed to the abbey's good fortune. Below Christ we see the weighing of souls with the devil trying to pull down on the (broken) scales (Picture 009). We also see the resurrection of corpses with the dead rising from their coffins and St Faith herself, prostrate on the ground, interceding before the hand of God (Picture 011). The lower register has, on its left (as the viewer

sees it) an image of celestial Jerusalem with the Elect being welcomed through a door and taking their place in a serene and attractive environment (Picture 013). On the right, a devil shoves a sinner into the jaws of Hell (Picture 010). Then, inside Hell, a series of terrible torments are handed out according to one's sins. Hideous creatures torment people with fire, and weapons; one sinner is flayed alive, a forger is made to drink molten metal, a prideful knight falls from his horse, an adultress awaits Satan's verdict, and so on (Pictures 008, 010, 012).

Sections will include:

- The Motivation of Crusaders
- The Constantinople and Byzantine Emperors
- The Seljuk Turks
- The Crusades' Journey through Asia Minor
- Muslim Syria - Nur ad Din and Saladin
- The Knights' Templar and Pilgrimage
- Crusades Jerusalem
- The Battle of Hattin
- Religious Life in the Holy Land
- Crusades castle

These will all have photographs and images, and a supporting essay. We hope this will prove a valuable and stimulating resource for teachers and candidates of the AS Crusades options in the Enquiries and Period Studies units. We'll let your centre know as soon as the material is available.

Following the success of last year's event at the V&A, look out for details, too, of a Crusades 'Lead the way' INSET, to be held in May 2011, with further input from Professor Jonathan Phillips.

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 Q and A's with Professor Tim Blanning

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 Practical support for GCSE controlled assessment

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 Exciting online resources





Check it out – practical support for GCSE controlled assessment

As you're no doubt aware, controlled assessment has been introduced as part of nearly all new GCSEs to replace coursework. Students follow a programme of study devised by the centre, which doesn't cover any of the same content studied for the examination papers. We set the tasks and they're available on Interchange from March/April the previous year. The tasks can be adapted to fit into your programme of study, and are valid only for the specified examination session.

Why not make the most of our support materials and training courses to improve your delivery of controlled assessment:

- The guide to controlled assessment for History A 
- The guide to controlled assessment for History B 

These are comprehensive guides to the requirements of controlled assessment, including planning and delivery, and teacher guidance on marking the tasks.

- Controlled assessment consultancy service 

An opportunity to consult with a senior assessor on managing the controlled assessment or seeking approval for your adapted task.

- Planning, marking and managing controlled assessment training days.

History A



History B



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Spotlight on unit F966

Focus on . . . Prince Henry's Grammar School

Q and A's with Professor Tim Blanning

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Key dates for your calendar

1. January examination series

The January series is now upon us. The below is a handy reference to key dates relating to results and post-results services:

Restricted release of results to centres only by EDI and OCR Interchange on	9 March 2011
Release of results to candidates on	10 March 2011
Requests for priority scripts to be received by OCR by	18 March 2011
Enquiries about Results applications (including Missing and Incomplete Results) to be received by OCR by	12 April 2011
Requests for non-priority scripts to be received by OCR by	28 April 2011
Certificates will be despatched by	31 May 2011

For a full list of key dates



...continued



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Spotlight on unit F966

Focus on . . . Prince Henry's Grammar School

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2. Coming soon...

A NEW programme of CPD events

Following the success of the latest CPD training events, we're currently planning a full range of courses to support you in the delivery of our History specifications. Each full day event will focus on a specific topic or theme and will include keynote speakers and subject experts. In some instances, we're offering a choice of lectures or workshops so that you can tailor the day to meet your needs.

When the details are finalised, you'll find them featured on the 'events' section of our website or you can go directly to OCR EventBooker, using the course codes provided. We'll also add them to the History and Humanities training booklet, which can also be found online. Please note - the details are subject to confirmation and may change.

View the range of events in the mini brochure opposite.

OCR Eventbooker



History training booklet



If you'd like to receive information as soon as it's available, please email training@ocr.org.uk, providing your centre details and a direct email address.

Forthcoming CPD events

Studying Thatcher	08 February 2011
Course code OHIL7	
Crises and the Mid-Tudors	14 March 2011
Course code OHIM3	
US and Cold War in Asia	March 2011
Course code OHIL8	
German History Post War to 1963	Summer 2011
Course code OHIL9	
American History Conference	Summer 2011
Course code OHIM2	
Crusades and Crusader States	18 May 2011
Course code OHIM1	



Click on the arrow to find out more



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Spotlight on unit F966

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3. FREE workshops for schools from the Wallace Collection

Following a highly enjoyable OCR INSET (September 2010) on the French Revolution, hosted by the Wallace Collection in Manchester Square, central London, which included an insight into their world-leading collection of French 18th century paintings, we're pleased to publicise their own, free courses*.

On offer throughout the year is **Liberty, Fraternity, Equality! Study the causes of the French Revolution.**

Pupils will enter a house filled with the treasures of pre-revolutionary France and will discover at first hand the luxurious lifestyles of those that could afford it, including the French Royal family. This session has direct links to the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum where pupils are expected to learn that the privileges of the ruling classes weren't enough to explain the revolution and that there were many causes. It also complements the A Level study topic '*The Origins and Course of the French Revolution*'. Web resources are available.

The workshop is suitable for all key stages.

To book ring **0207 563 9577**. Check the Wallace Collection website for a diverse range of other **FREE** history, art, DT and English workshops.

Wallace Collection website 

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*Please note that these workshops are not being endorsed or produced by OCR.



 **Unique CPD event – Studying Margaret Thatcher in GCE History**

 **Spotlight on unit F966**

 **Focus on . . . Prince Henry's Grammar School**

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Get involved with our History consultative forum

In December, we convened a meeting in a Cambridge hotel to discuss a variety of matters related to History, education and assessment. In among the Christmas decorations, those who had battled through the snow and ice included representatives from higher education, from the Royal Historical Society, the Historical Association, the museums sector, the National Archives, the Institute of Education, and beyond.

Lots of people are 'talking History'

Such is the level of press surrounding History at the moment, and so great the volume of opinions flying about, that capturing and defining the issues is a delicate and daunting task. But surely one of the most important points, and one that rang clearly at our forum, is the current good health of the subject (witness the growing candidate numbers, the equality of performance between male and female candidates, the variety of options and types of history studied, the retention from AS to A2, and, not least, the glowing reports about History teaching coming out of Ofsted). Too often stated as a given, or as a casual aside, or even misrepresented, the current success of History teachers, and indeed of recent developments in curricula, is in fact one of the most useful starting points for discussions about future directions.

Of course, teaching History is a challenging job (and Andy Milner in his piece in this newsletter articulates some of those challenges across the key stages – without even mentioning the horrors of trying to organise a Year 13 trip to Russia, which he was juggling with the task of meeting our deadline) – and there may be more that those of us in the educational sector but outside schools can and



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Spotlight on unit F966

Focus on . . . Prince Henry's Grammar School

Q and A's with Professor Tim Blanning

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should do. So, we want more teachers on our consultative forum – please contact our Stakeholder Relations Division to find out more.

Why launch a consultative forum?

The consultative forum provides a platform which allows us to consult with key stakeholders so that their requirements and expertise can inform our plans and developments in History. It considers issues related to our plans and developments for qualifications in History, and also those related to emerging external developments and policies that may impact on our existing or planned qualifications in History.

The first meeting of the forum provided much interesting debate, sharing of issues, and prospects for collaboration in terms of support for teachers (see the details earlier in this newsletter of the forthcoming Crusades project, courtesy of Professor Jonathan Phillips, for one example of how this might appear).

The proportion of candidates entering for our medieval and early modern options at AS has remained stable from 2000, but at A2 it's dropped significantly each year, and especially with the four-unit specification. Why is this (and does it matter)? How can we address it? At GCSE, the pilot we've been running for several years attracted much support, being labelled (quite fairly) as 'applied history'. Is there an increased role for this type of qualification?

Opportunities exist in the current climate to address these types of questions in thoughtful, practical and influential ways, and that, of course, is why the forum was launched.

We'll give you updates through this newsletter on future meetings of the forum, and the developments it leads to, but in the meantime do let us know if you want to get involved, or if there are issues you

want addressed. We'll also discuss the implications for History of the government's strategy and White Paper, as more details emerge.

More on the EBacc

For now, a key Government document is the Statement of Intent 2010 – Addendum (the English Baccalaureate).

Statement of Intent 2010 – Addendum



This Addendum gives details of how a new English Baccalaureate indicator will be reported in the 2010 School Performance Tables, which will be published in January 2011. It provides details/information on which subjects and qualifications will count towards the English Baccalaureate (and some that won't). The document's only a statement of intent and may be subject to further refinement and the DfE intends to review the precise definition of the EBacc for the 2011 Tables. However, the inclusion of Ancient History should be noted. We've have previously featured Ancient History in Issue 1 of this newsletter, and would encourage anyone with any queries about this qualification to contact ocr.classics@ocr.org.uk

OCR GCSE Ancient History website



Talking History Issue 1



Unique CPD event – Studying Margaret Thatcher in GCE History

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Join today our **NEW** OCR History Community

New online platform – Helping you to discuss, debate and collaborate... with your History colleagues and us.

Start a discussion!

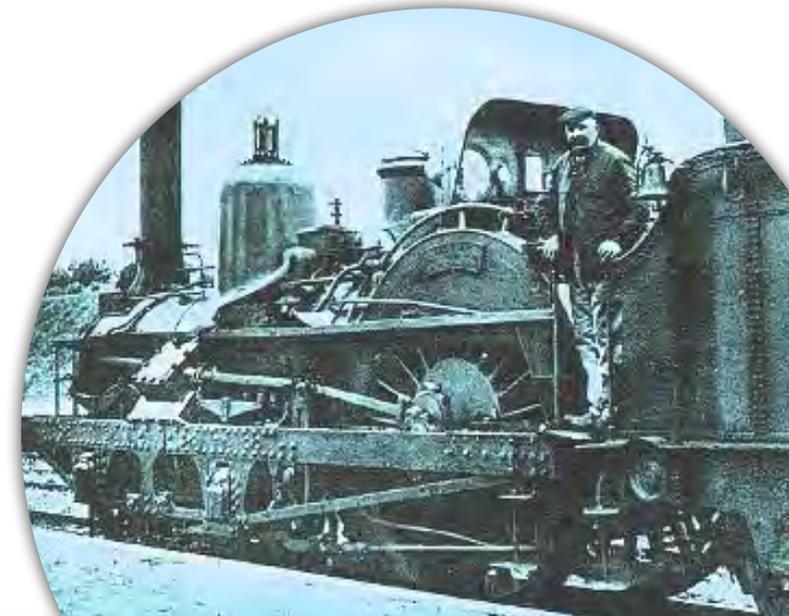


Picture this: access exciting resources through our website

You can now take advantage of some useful resources through our website to help with teaching History. You'll find access to Heritage Explorers National Monuments Record's teaching activities, which provide selected images, supported by a teaching idea and associated worksheets, notes or whiteboard downloads.

They've mapped these resources to the relevant sections of our History qualifications so just follow the link below, and then click on the unit title to display the topics and the associated resource links. Why not take a look today?

Resources



Unique CPD event – Studying Margaret Thatcher in GCE History

Spotlight on unit F966

Focus on... Prince Henry's Grammar School

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